

AIM Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)

If your school is doing both the AIM Online Climate Survey and the School Self-Assessment, what order should they be undertaken?

The order should be determined by what is best for your school, the school schedule, and the availability of staff to work on the assessment. The two parts of the assessment can be implemented simultaneously or either part can be implemented first. Implementing the Online Climate Survey takes less administrative time than the School Self-Assessment. Also note, if the Online Climate Survey is implemented first, do not share any results until the School Self-Assessment discovery committees have completed their work. The School Self-Assessment questions are designed to generate a discussion about what the participants think is happening at the school – those discussions should not be influenced by the Online Climate Survey data which indicate how the constituents actually experience the school.

Can the administration period for the climate survey be extended?

Yes. Contact the NAIS DASL Team at surveycenterhelp@nais.org.

Will each school have its own unique link to access the survey?

Yes. Schools should receive their survey link from the DASL Team. You can send it in an email to the school, or you can have your computer technical staff members add it to your website if you wish. If your computer technicians have any technical questions, they can contact the NAIS DASL Team at surveycenterhelp@nais.org.

What is to prevent someone from taking the survey more than once?

Nothing. From our past experience with other surveys, the probability of this is low. We recommend that every school encourage single-use participation.

For staff functions that are contracted out (grounds keepers, cafeteria workers, janitorial services, etc.), should we include them in our outreach and ask them to take the climate survey?

Yes. We believe this survey should be as inclusive as possible; therefore, even for school staff who aren't technically employees of your school, please encourage them to participate.

Can we have a copy of the Online Climate Survey so we can see the questions?

We prefer that each respondent to the survey see the questions for the first time when they take the survey. Each AIM Coordinator will receive the demographic questions, and a list of sample questions that will be in the Online Climate Survey.

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Can we have a copy of the *Guide to Understanding Your AIM Results* so we can see anticipate any tasks that exist after our survey has concluded?

We prefer that schools see the Guide to Understanding Your AIM Results when they get their data and report from the NAIS DASL team. Additionally, NAIS Equity and Justice Team staff members will work closely with the AIM Coordinator in order to help them feel prepared for what happens after their survey is complete.

How many people should complete the climate survey?

You should work for the maximum participation possible. Some schools have achieved 80% or 90% participation for some of their constituent groups, and others have scored higher or less. Setting a high but realistic participation goal for each constituent group and then working to achieve that goal can substantially raise participation.

What is the cut-off age for students who can take the Online Climate Survey?

Generally, the questions are not appropriate for grammar school age children – students ages 12 and older can participate in the Online Climate Survey. Students age 9 – 11 can participate in the Younger Student Survey.

If our school has two or more campuses, will we be able to see the Online Climate Survey results separately for each campus as well as for our whole school?

In order to see results separately for two or more campuses, please note this in your Registration forms.

How should the discovery committee(s) be organized?

Each committee should be organized as a focus group with eight to ten diverse participants who have something to contribute to the topic and are likely to have thoughts and opinions about the topic. Diversity here can also mean from different constituent groups of the school community. Try not to let the number of participants drop below six.

Can the discovery committee participants see the questions before they meet for discussions?

Yes. Depending on the discovery committee, some groups should have an understanding of what they will be discussing before they show up. If participants are given time to think about the questions before the meeting, the session(s) may move along more quickly. However, please note: you are not required to provide the questions ahead of time, but participants can be provided with factual information from their section prior to the meetings.

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Can we put students on the discovery committees?

For certain discovery committees it may be beneficial to have student input. Any student selected should be confident enough to be able to speak up in a discussion with adults and have background on the topics to be able to make informed comments. In addition to the discovery committee on student life for adults, some schools have chosen to convene a discovery committee of students to discuss student life. For the student discovery committee, they selected appropriate questions from the list in the School Self-Assessment document, and tailored the questions for the students.

What are the guidelines and expectations for the report to be prepared at the conclusion of the AIM Assessment?

You may use the guidelines and outline for the report provided in the Appendix of the User's Manual to assist you in preparing the report. Beyond those suggestions, we encourage schools to be as thorough or creative as time and capacity allows.

Are the Climate Survey and the School Self-Assessment questions available in other languages besides English?

Currently both parts of the assessment are available in Spanish. The Online Climate Survey is also available in Simplified Chinese and Korean, however you must indicate that you need these options when filling out your Registration form.

I need help! Who should I reach out to?

For questions regarding the Registration form or getting started, please contact Tina Wood, Director of Equity and Justice Team Administration, at wood@nais.org or (202) 973-9762.

For questions regarding training, understanding and interpreting your results, or the School Self-Assessment, please contact Michael A. Goodman, Program Manager for Equity and Justice, at goodman@nais.org or (202) 973-9761.

For any technical questions about the Online Climate Survey, please contact the DASL team at surveycenterhelp@nais.org.