

Racial Fairness Scale

What does this SSW measure address?

The Racial Fairness Scale measures students' perceptions that teachers and other adults at the school treat all students fairly, regardless of their race. The Racial Fairness Scale is a subscale of a School Climate Survey. Another subscale of the Survey that also focus on racial climate is included in the measures database: the Experiences of Racism subscale.

For use with:

Middle school students



Racial Fairness:

Racial fairness refers to how school staff interact with students of different races at the school. All five questions ask directly about whether students perceive that their teachers and the school more generally treat students fairly. Two questions refer specifically to fairness in discipline and fairness toward Black students, respectively.

Why is it important?

Students' perceptions of fair treatment are critical for the development of trusting and positive relationships with teachers. The belief that they and others at the school are treated fairly, regardless of race and ethnicity also affects students' sense of belonging and safety at the school, as well as their willingness to engage in learning. Fair treatment of all students is an essential component of a positive racial climate at the school, which in turn is an essential component of a positive school climate more generally.

Scoring:

Scores on the five items are summed to create a total racial fairness score. The total score will range from 5 to 25 with higher scores meaning more positive perceptions of racial fairness. You can also look at scores on individual items (especially items 4 and 5) to get more specific information about issues of racial fairness that can be addressed with interventions.

What do researchers say about the quality of the scale?

The researchers report that the scale has good statistical qualities. The scale was tested with African American and White middle school students. About 30% received free or reduced school lunches.

Source: Watkins, N. D., & Aber, M. S. (2009). Exploring the Relationships Among Race, Class, Gender, and Middle School Students' Perceptions of School Racial Climate [Article]. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 42(4), 395-411. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665680903260218>

If you have questions about how to use these scales, contact Natasha K. Bowen at bowen.355@osu.edu

MEASURES FOR PRACTICE

Racial Fairness Scale

Circle the number of your response to each statement below.

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral/ Not Sure</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
1. My school treats students of all races fairly.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My teachers treat students of all races fairly.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My school system treats students of all races fairly.	1	2	3	4	5
4. At my school, students are disciplined fairly regardless of race.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Black students are treated fairly at my school.	1	2	3	4	5