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# ...Student ---Orientation ...to School Questionnaire

Program Manual 2015

## **Student Orientation to School (SOS) Program Manual - 2014**

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***Student Orientation to School(SOS)***  
**Program Manual**

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## Introduction

Improving school completion rates is an important goal of educators across the country since education is a key to the success of our society. For individual students, high school completion can make a significant difference in the workplace and in life. This manual is now cross-referenced with the *SOS-Q On-Line User Documentation*.

The *Student Orientation to School (SOS)* program was developed in response to research that showed that student engagement, resilience and school safety play important roles in student academic success.

The program has three elements:

- The SOS questionnaire: This is an assessment tool that captures feedback from students about their own engagement with school;
- Reports: Once the questionnaires are completed, reports are generated that provide feedback on cohort patterns relevant for your school and/or for individual students;
- Program Manual: This manual explains how to administer the questionnaire, provides suggested intervention strategies to improve student engagement, achievement and school completion rates, and provides links to on-going research on student engagement.

## About this Program Manual

This manual is organized into three parts so that you can easily access the information you need:

- Part A: Program Background - Sections 1-3  
Includes a description of the *Student Orientation to School* program, the background research and the program applications.
- Part B: Administering the SOS Program - Sections 4-5  
Includes procedures for administering the SOS-Q to students.
- Part C: Reporting and Interventions - Sections 6-8  
Reporting of your results and suggested interventions for school improvement or to help individual students, and links to on-going or future research.

## Part A

### Section 1: Program Description

Motivating all students to do their best and complete high school remains a challenge facing educators, parents and communities across Canada and elsewhere. Educators need to better understand why students are leaving school early and to explore different avenues of creating safe, supportive and engaging environments. While student achievement is an important indicator of ultimate success at school, recent research indicates that academic performance is considerably impacted by socio-emotional factors.

The *Student Orientation to School (SOS)* program has been specifically developed to help diagnose at various points in a student's school experience those who may be at risk of disengaging from school, and to provide support in the development of effective intervention strategies to address the needs of these students (Nadirova, Burger, Clarke & Mykula, 2007). The program identifies student traits and school environment factors that target students' affective needs and school engagement. The early identification of students at risk - academically, socially, and emotionally - is critical to their future in school and beyond. The presence of multiple risk factors increases the likelihood of early school withdrawal and demands immediate and appropriate educational responses.

There are significant transition stages in schooling during which decisions and interventions for students at risk need to be thoughtfully considered and implemented. Key transitions include primary to junior (grade 3 to grade 4), junior to intermediate (grade 6 to grade 7), grade 8 or 9 to high school to post Secondary, or to work. The *Student Orientation to School Questionnaire* program provides data at key points to guide school districts, administrators and teaching staff in identifying and responding to students' affective needs. Used in concert with achievement, assessment, observational and/or psychological data, a comprehensive program plan can be developed for students at risk of disengaging from school.

## Section 2: Program Research and Development

The *Student Orientation to School (SOS)* program originated from a research study initiated by the Alberta Department of Education with the Parkland School Division of Alberta (Nadirova, Burger & Mykula, 2008). A central belief guiding this project was that all students could experience success in learning and a key objective was to improve high school completion rates. The research team determined that a comprehensive and coordinated approach would be instrumental to remove barriers to high school completion. Therefore, a need was identified to better understand what factors encourage students to be engaged with school, as well as to develop a systematic approach to remove barriers to high school completion. Within this context research sponsored by Alberta Learning (2001) focused on the following major objectives:

- Determine the primary factors contributing to high school completion
- Identify barriers to high school completion
- Identify plausible courses of action available to the jurisdiction in addressing barriers to high school completion

A key outcome of this study was the design and validation of the *Student Orientation to School* questionnaire. This diagnostic instrument is designed to support the early identification of students who might demonstrate a predisposition to school disengagement and subsequently high school non-completion. The SOS questionnaire is suitable for using both in cohort applications (e.g., classroom, school and jurisdiction) and, individual student assessments.

The key merit of the SOS questionnaire is its potential for detecting underlying issues, such as academic and social alienation and lack of confidence and control. These may “lie beneath” and predict students’ overt directly observable behaviours and outcomes, including a lack of academic achievement, discipline, school attendance and withdrawal from school (Brew, Beatty & Watt, 2004; Cooper, 2013; Stiggins, 2001). Use of the SOS questionnaire makes it possible for school staff to better identify and address students’ needs and issues. Freeman, et. al. (2011: 64) observed, “There are much larger negative mental health outcomes that occur for those boys and girls who report less positive school experiences”, and asked, “Can we create school environments and supportive school climates that will build these young people’s emotional well-being, while also limiting the onset of negative health outcomes?”

The *Student Orientation to School* questionnaire has passed five pilot tests from 2004 to 2010. The development of the initial conceptual framework and version of the instrument was followed by a series of construct validity and reliability tests and continual refinement. A number of papers have been published on the development and application of the SOS-Q. For example see (Burger, Nadirova and Keefer: 2012) and additional publications in the Reference section.

SOS research study yielded the following results and conclusions.

- a. All constructs in the questionnaire remained stable over time and demonstrated good internal consistency.
- b. Cluster classifications of students revealed distinctive “top” (most positive SOS),



“medium” and “bottom” (most negative SOS) student profiles, thereby supporting the diagnostic potential of the instrument to identify students at risk of disengagement and potentially high school non- completion.

- c. A positive link was demonstrated between SOS and student achievement.
- d. A positive link was demonstrated between SOS and student attendance.

Research studies that support the *Student Orientation to School* program are ongoing by Rocky View Schools. Contact Dr. John M. Burger, [jburger@rockyview.ab.ca](mailto:jburger@rockyview.ab.ca) for more information.

### Section 3: Program Structure

The *Student Orientation to School (SOS)* program includes the following components:

- Questionnaires
- Program Manual
- Data Reports

#### Student Orientation to School Questionnaire

There are two forms of the questionnaire, the upper-elementary (Grades 4-6) which consists of 42 items and the junior-senior high (Grades 7-12) which consists of 55 items plus an optional 11 item school-work inter-relationships for students who work while attending school. Samples of the upper-elementary and junior-senior high questionnaires are included in Appendix A and B respectively.

#### Upper-Elementary (Grades 4-6)

The upper-elementary version consists of five factor-based constructs defined as follows:

Sub-scale Definitions	SOS-Q Item Examples
<p><b>Safe and Caring School</b></p> <p>Students' perception of school environment – the academic setting comprising of a faculty and staff that support the welfare of students and their educational environment.</p>	<p>My teacher(s) cares for me.            I can resolve disagreements with my teacher(s).            I can talk to my teacher(s).            I have fun at school.            I am able to tell/explain my needs clearly to my teacher(s).            My teacher(s) helps me understand my career interests.            Student opinion counts in my school.</p>
<p><b>Self-Confidence</b></p> <p>Students' conviction that they are capable and well-positioned to be successful at school and beyond.</p>	<p>I stay calm when things change for the worse.            I can adjust to changes in my life.            When something unfair happens to me, I am usually able to control my temper.            I follow through with the plans I make.            I bounce back quickly from setbacks</p>
<p><b>External Resilience</b></p> <p>Ability to recover quickly from (external) disruptive change or hardship without being overwhelmed or acting in dysfunctional ways; and, ability to cope and adapt successfully in the face of challenges, risk, or adversity.</p>	<p>I know what goals I can achieve.            I expect to succeed in life after school.            I can think for myself.            I expect to succeed in school.            I am confident I have the skills to succeed in school.            I can handle school work and out-of-school activities.</p>
<p><b>Internal Resilience</b></p> <p>Ability to resist anxiety and maintain internal emotional and mental balance.</p>	<p>I sometimes feel overwhelmed by school.            Often I cannot sleep because I worry about stuff.            I worry about things too much.            When I make mistakes it bugs me for a long time.            I don't know who I am as well as I'd like.</p>
<p><b>Peer Relationships</b></p> <p>Perceived supports from friends and ability to get along with peers.</p>	<p>My friends treat me fairly.            I am confident with my classmates.            I have good friends at my school.</p>

### Junior-Senior High (Grades 7-12)

The junior-senior high version consists of nine factor-based constructs defined as follows:

Sub-scale Definitions	Individual Items Examples
<p><b>Safe and Caring School</b></p> <p>Students' perception of school environment – the academic setting comprising a faculty and staff that support the welfare of students and their educational environment.</p>	<p>I am able to tell/explain my needs clearly to my teacher(s).            Students are treated fairly in my school.            My teacher(s) is friendly.            My teacher(s) understands how I learn.            I can talk to my teacher(s).            I get the help I need in school.            I can resolve disagreements with my teacher(s).</p>
<p><b>Self-Confidence</b></p> <p>Students' conviction that they are capable and well-positioned to be successful at school and beyond.</p>	<p>I am confident I have the skills to succeed in school.            I expect to succeed in life.            I expect to succeed in school.            I understand how I learn best.            I feel I have individual worth.</p>
<p><b>External Resilience</b></p> <p>Ability to recover quickly from (external) disruptive change or hardship without being overwhelmed or acting in dysfunctional ways; and, ability to cope and adapt successfully in the face of challenges, risk, or adversity.</p>	<p>I stay positive when the going gets tough.            I stay calm when things change for the worse.            When something unfair happens to me, I am usually able to control my temper.            I bounce back quickly from setbacks.            I can adjust to changes in my life.            I come up with solutions to my problems.            I follow through with the plans I make.            I can resolve my disagreements with other students.</p>
<p><b>Internal Resilience</b></p> <p>Ability to resist anxiety and maintain internal emotional and mental balance.</p>	<p>I worry about things too much.            I sometimes feel overwhelmed by school.            I often cannot sleep because I worry about stuff.</p>
<p><b>Peer Relationships</b></p> <p>Perceived supports from friends and ability to get along with peers.</p>	<p>I feel safe in school.            I have good friends at my school.            I am confident with my peers.            I have the personal skills to get along with most of the students in my school.</p>
<p><b>Extra-curricular Activities</b></p> <p>Student's participation in and perceived value of extra-curricular activities.</p>	<p>I don't have time to participate in extra-curricular activities at school.            I participate in extra-curricular activities in my community.            Extra-curricular activities in my school are no fun because it is too competitive.</p>

<p>Utility of School</p> <p>Students' sense of usefulness of school.</p>	<p>I have fun at school.</p> <p>My school supports my interests in my career plans.</p> <p>School will help me to become a better person.</p> <p>I understand why I am going to school.</p> <p>What I learn in school will help me in later life.</p> <p>My school work will help me with my career plans.</p> <p>School will help me in the future.</p> <p>I feel I am learning useful things in school.</p>
<p>Work and School Integration*</p> <p>Students' sense that work and school experience are positive and complementary.</p>	<p>My job increases my appreciation of school.</p> <p>I can resolve disagreements at work.</p> <p>I apply what I learned at school at my job.</p> <p>I can talk to my employer.</p> <p>I can balance demands of work and school.</p>
<p>Handling Work – School Pressures*</p> <p>Perceived challenges and outcomes of balancing work and school.</p>	<p>My job does not leave sufficient time to focus on schoolwork.</p> <p>My job prevents me from getting enough rest.</p>

\* The balancing work and school constructs apply only to students who work in a remunerative job outside of school.

### Student Orientation to School Program Manual

The following sections of this program manual include:

- Applications of the program
- Directions for administering and scoring the questionnaires
- Instructions on interpreting student results.
- Suggested remedial and interventions strategies

### Student Orientation to School Data Reports

The SOS questionnaires may be machine scored or scored manually. Summary reports are returned to users within seven to ten business days. SOS data are reported in Excel format.

### On-Line Version of SOS-Q Now Available

An on-line version of the SOS-Q was developed in 2014-15 and became available in the fall of 2015. The on-line version sends an email and link to the SOS-Q to students and results are available as students complete the questionnaire. Instructions for setting up and administering the on-line version of the Upper Elementary and Jr./Sr. High SOS-Q's are available in a separate document published on the Rocky View Website @ <http://www.rockyview.ab.ca/jurisdiction/research/sos-q>

### Group Analysis with Individual Student Data

Includes:

- Grade level (classroom, school, district) mean scores for each SOS questionnaire sub-scale and total score compared to national averages.
- Individual student mean scores for each SOS questionnaire sub-scale and total score compared

to national averages.

### **Custom Reporting**

Custom reports, such as correlations or inferential statistics may be available. If you have specific data reporting requirements contact Dr. John M. Burger, [jburger@rockyview.ab.ca](mailto:jburger@rockyview.ab.ca)

## Part B

### Section 4: Program Applications

The utility of the *Student Orientation to School* program is confirmed through its foundation in educational research and practical intervention strategies targeting student engagement and dropout prevention. School leaders are faced with an increasingly complex societal fabric and ensuing social pressures (e.g., increased immigration and percentage of two-income and single parent families). Diverse student populations face various challenges in handling family, community, peer, education and work pressures. Under these circumstances, it is essential that schools provide *all*, but especially disadvantaged, students with access to valuable social networks and resources including emotional support, information and guidance. Therefore, school and district staff can beneficially extend knowledge of their students beyond the normally collected achievement and attendance data in order to capture latent but important student feelings and related needs.

The *Student Orientation to School* questionnaire is a comprehensive, yet succinct instrument assessing student disposition towards school that provides school-based data collection and subsequent student support strategies. By using the SOS questionnaire, teachers and administrators can develop *evidence-based* understanding and strategies to identify potentially at risk students and help them complete high school. The SOS questionnaire provides primary student-generated information that extends far beyond conventional, less rigorous surveys that may capture only student cohort data.

The SOS-Q provides data that can:

- Be used in conjunction with conventional data such as grades, attendance and high school completion
- Identify student populations' attitudes towards school (data can be sorted by sub-scale, gender, for the school, by grade, or in relationship to any relational data that can be linked to individual student profiles)
- Demonstrate how distinctive groups of students differ in their orientation to school
- Determine elements of a school's environment that are valued the most and the least and by which groups of students (or individual students)
- Show how different groups of students (or individual students) assess their functional capabilities, which is key to success in and outside of school
- Identify the proportion of potentially at risk students who might need interventions
- Be used to support a variety of school improvement initiatives such as building safe and caring schools, bullying prevention or a range of strategies for engaging students as active participants in enhancing school culture.

The SOS questionnaire is user-friendly and requires approximately 20-25 minutes to administer. The instrument is cost-effective especially if the data provides insights into how to best re-engage a student who is losing their connectivity to school. The SOS-Q provides straight-forward student diagnostic methodologies, which can be interpreted by districts' and school's staff and shared with individual students/parents to begin to plan a strategy for re-engagement.

In summary, the SOS-Q offers a means to respond to students' affective needs within the typical school environment with benefits for student achievement and ultimately high school completion.

## Section 5: How to Administer the Program

This section provides instructions on how to prepare for the administration of the questionnaire, how to administer the instrument and how to submit the SOS questionnaires for scoring. The on-line version automatically populates the student information and scores the questionnaire.

### Before Administration

The following is a check list to assist you in planning for the administration of the SOS questionnaires.

#### i. Scheduling

Ideally, the SOS questionnaires should be administered within a concise time period such as on the same day or within the same week to all participating students in a school. When scheduling a date(s) for administration, be sure to allow sufficient time for the return of parental permission forms.

#### ii. Required Materials

Ensure that:

- There is a questionnaire, at the proper grade level, for each student
- Each administrator has a copy of the SOS Program Manual
- Each student has a pencil and an eraser

#### iii. Letter to Parents

If parental permission is required to administer the SOS questionnaire in your school, a sample *Letter to Parents* is included in Appendix D.

#### iv. Preparing Students

The day before the administration of the questionnaire inform students about the purpose and benefits of completing the SOS questionnaire. Here is a sample script that can be used to prepare your students for the administration of the questionnaire:

Tomorrow we are going to set aside 20-25 minutes for you to complete a questionnaire (either in paper and pencil format or in a digital format you will access via your computer, tablet or cell phone). This isn't a test, and there is nothing that you need to do to study or prepare in advance. Your responses will not impact your grades. We are conducting this study to see how you feel about school. The questionnaire that you are going to complete has been designed to measure your feelings about school. The results of the study are only going to be used to provide information to us on ways to help and support you to learn and be successful in school. It's very important that you answer the questions as openly and honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers; we are only interested in your feelings about school and ways that we can help to ensure your experience of school is as positive as possible. Your responses will not be shared with any other students, but can be shared with you (if the SOS-Q is being used with student names and id's being provided or if the on-line version is being administered). If you have any questions about this questionnaire, please don't hesitate to ask me prior to tomorrow.

## Administering the SOS Questionnaire

These are the procedures for administering the questionnaire:

- a. Distribute the questionnaires to your students. Instruct them to wait before filling in the questionnaires until you provide them with brief guidelines on the survey procedure (see b. through e. below). If the on-line version is being used, advise the students that they will receive an email to their school assigned email address that will provide a link to the questionnaire.
- b. Please read the following introduction to the survey procedure to the students:
  - Our school is conducting a study to find out how you feel about school. This questionnaire has been designed to measure students' feelings about school. The results of this study will be used to provide information on ways to help you to learn and to be successful in school. Therefore, it is very important that you answer the questions as openly and honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers: we are only interested in your feelings about school.
- c. If you wish student responses to be anonymous tell students, "Do not write your name on the questionnaire. Your responses will be completely anonymous and school staff will not review your responses." If you would like to receive individual student results, ensure that students print their names in the designated area, and write and bubble in their Alberta Student (identification) Number on the assigned grid. (Do not use the Power School number.) The on-line version will automatically populate the student name, gender, grade and ASN.
- d. Remind students to answer the questions about their gender and grade at the very beginning of the questionnaire.
- e. Stress that for each item only one response should be selected, i.e. only one circle should be filled in each line.
- f. Read the directions printed on the questionnaire. Take the students through an example (possibly using the whiteboard if you think this will be useful) of how they should fill in the questionnaire and/or refer them to the "Sample" in the beginning of the questionnaire. Specifically, they should read an item and fill in or select the circle that completely matches their response to the corresponding row (i.e., one of the following five choices: *Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree*). **Make sure that students know that they should select only ONE answer choice for each of the items and the questionnaire has two sides for completion.**
  - Students may use a pencil and eraser if they want to change their answers or they may change their selection in the on-line version.
  - Ask students if they completely understand the instructions. If so, ask them to proceed with filling in the questionnaire. It should take approximately 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.



## **After Administration**

Collect questionnaires and arrange for conveyance to Rocky View Schools for scoring. Detailed instructions for collating and shipping questionnaires are included in Appendix E.

Instructions for accessing reports of completed SOS-Questionnaires are included on pages 11-14 in the companion manual for on-line application of the SOS-Q.

## Part C

### Section 6: How to Interpret Results

SOS data can be reported for groups, as well as for individual students. Results can be analyzed by comparing mean scores or by sorting the data on the basis of gender, grade or by each of the factors or sub-scales. The data can also be exported to a compatible student information system or into statistical analytic software such as SPSS or SAS for further analysis.

The sub-scale mean, i.e. the average of all of the responses for each factor or construct is reported for each respondent and also is reported for the school or grade, and these sub-scale means are compared to the national norms. The sub-scale mean indicates the average based on the following scale:

5.0	=	Strongly agree
4.0	=	Agree
3.0	=	Neither Agree nor Disagree
2.0	=	Disagree
1.0	=	Strongly Disagree

A higher average score indicates a more positive orientation to school.

Standard score or Z-score is the number of standard deviations a student's score is above (+) or below (-) the mean. Standard deviation is a measure of the dispersion of a set of data from its mean. The more spread apart the data, the higher the deviation. Likewise, the further a score is from the mean the higher the Z-score. This helps you to determine whether a student's result on a SOS-Q construct or on the total questionnaire is above or below average.

### Comparing Mean Scores

Figure 1 is a sample summary report. Mean scores were calculated for each student on each of the junior-senior high level SOS factors or sub-scales by summing item raw score points and dividing the sum by the number of completed items in the factor. Student names and student identification numbers are not displayed in Figure 1. The elementary version would report only the first three sub-scales plus Self-Confidence, Peers and total score.

Figure 1 - Comparing Mean Scores - Jr. Sr. High SOS-Q

Gender	Grade	Year	Month	Safe/ Caring	safe/ careZ	Ext Resil	Ext Res Z	Int Resil	Int Res Z	Ext Curr	Ext Curr Z	Self- Con	Self- Con Z	Util Sch	Util Sch Z	Peers	Peers Z	S-W pres	SW Int	Total Z
F	9	2013	10	1.93	-2.59	1.17	4.29	2.00	1.41	1.00	3.16	1.00	5.16	1.80	3.18	1.25	4.52			3.90
M	9	2013	10	3.33	-0.50	1.75	3.32	3.50	0.34	1.00	4.20	2.17	3.25	2.40	2.36	2.25	2.90			2.31
F	9	2013	10	2.60	-1.60	2.17	2.62	1.00	2.57	3.00	0.27	3.17	1.61	3.80	0.44	1.50	4.11			1.89
F	9	2013	10	1.87	-2.69	2.08	2.76	3.00	0.24	3.25	0.22	1.67	4.07	2.40	2.36	3.75	0.48			1.77
F	9	2013	10	2.13	-2.29	2.83	1.51	1.75	1.70	2.88	0.52	2.67	2.43	3.40	0.99	2.25	2.90	2.00	3.50	1.76
F	9	2013	10	4.27	0.89	4.25	0.85	3.50	0.34	4.63	2.91	5.00	1.39	4.20	0.11	5.00	1.53			1.15
F	9	2013	10	3.93	0.39	4.67	1.54	3.75	0.63	4.63	2.91	4.83	1.12	4.60	0.66	4.75	1.13			1.20
F	9	2013	10	4.80	1.69	4.83	1.82	2.75	-0.53	4.25	2.18	5.00	1.39	4.80	0.93	5.00	1.53	5.00	4.50	1.29
M	9	2013	10	4.07	0.59	4.50	1.27	4.25	1.21	5.00	3.65	5.00	1.39	4.80	0.93	4.75	1.13	4.57	2.75	1.45
M	9	2013	10	4.93	1.89	4.75	1.68	4.00	0.92	5.00	3.65	5.00	1.39	4.40	0.38	4.75	1.13			1.58
F	9	2013	10	4.93	1.89	4.92	1.96	3.00	-0.24	4.88	3.40	5.00	1.39	5.00	1.21	5.00	1.53			1.59

## Understanding the Reports

### SOS Questionnaire Sub-scale Definitions

The sub-scales are based on the individual questions that research has shown help to identify this particular aspect of student engagement. Results are based on an average of the completed questions included in a sub-scale.

### Examples of individual questionnaire items in the sub-scales

For a list of sample questions that make up each sub-scale, please see Section 3 of this Program Manual

The report displayed in Figure 1 allows you to compare student scores that are color-coded to indicate a student's results in relationship to the national norms for each factor or sub-scale. **Red** indicates two or more standard deviations below the mean, **orange** between one and two standard deviations below the mean, **yellow** between minus one standard deviation and the mean, **green** between the mean and plus one standard deviation and **blue**, greater than one standard deviation above the mean.

The first question to consider in reviewing the SOS-Q results for an individual student is whether this data has face validity, i.e. does it align with other indicators such as attendance or other factors that may suggest the student is disengaging from school. For students with sub-scale or total SOS-Q results that are greater than one standard deviation below the mean (red or orange color coding) attention should be given to identifying strategies to support the student to evolve a more positive orientation to school relative to the sub-scale or scales demonstrative of disengagement. See Section 7 for suggested strategies to engage students.

### Students who answered all or a portion of the sub-scale questions

If a student misses one or two items for a sub-scale the mean is still reported but is corrected relative to the number of items answered, unless this number falls below a critical level and then no data is reported. If a student has a large number of incomplete items this is reported on a separate sheet in the Excel file. The on-line version requires completion of all items before a student can complete the questionnaire.

### National norms:

The number of students in the national norming study is 4112 for the upper elementary version and 11751 for the junior-senior high version.

## Section 7: How to Use the Data

Since the *Student Orientation to School* program is aimed at analyzing psychological traits that often remain hidden, SOS results may be different from teachers' or administrators' informal perceptions of a student. The Joint Consortium for School Health (2008:1) reported that, "Mental health concerns may include either externalizing or internalizing features." They further observed that, "...it is not uncommon for internalizing and externalizing features to occur at the same time...with poor academic outcomes." Therefore, the SOS data may be a very useful addition to the conventional achievement, high school completion and socio-economic status (SES) information that is used for decision-making, planning, programming and intervention purposes. SOS supplements this information by capturing students' feelings and line of thinking about different elements of the school environment and their position in this environment. Unlike anecdotal, dispersed and merely observational knowledge on student behaviour, systematically collected SOS data grouped by distinctive clusters of students makes it possible to identify specific groups of students, or individual students, who may be at risk of high school non-completion, analyze their particular characteristics and design evidence-based targeted supportive interventions.

### Intervention Strategies

The suggested intervention strategies are not the only ones that a school division or school may choose to undertake. Rather, they represent promising practices that support increases in student engagement and academic success. The interventions are divided into actions school divisions, schools, teachers, students or parents and the community may undertake. The tables offer a series of possible interventions that users of the SOS questionnaire may select from. Any single intervention may be a long term undertaking and may not preclude the uptake of additional interventions. Similarly, a school may already be implementing an initiative that will provide successful support for one of the factors and therefore additional undertakings may not be needed.

Following each table is a short list of resources that relate to one or more of the interventions described. The resource list is a starting point for further exploration of the terms and interventions described in the accompanying table. Special thanks are extended to Rocky View School's Child Development Advisors and school administrators who, during the 2013-15 school years, have provided practical insight and input into the strategies listed. Expansion of the listed strategies also is an objective of the applied research on the SOS-Q on a go-forward basis.

In addition, a listing of relevant websites that may be useful in following up SOS-Q results are provided in Appendix C. Lastly, the list of References provides some additional relevant research on student affect and engagement.

**Table 2: Safe and Caring Schools**

System	School	Teacher	Student	Parents/ Community
SWOT* Analysis of system level policies and procedures that impact upon student engagement	SWOT Analysis of school level procedures that impact upon student engagement	Examine and implement the effective use of a wide range of instructional & assessment strategies to engage students	Students understand and use goal setting portfolios to establish success goals	Parent/Teacher/ Student workshops offered on “Working Together for Student Success”
Examine system assessment and evaluation policies and practices as they relate to student engagement	Review school dropout rate, absenteeism. Monitor rates as supports for student success are implemented	Implement the conscious and consistent use of <i>Assessment For Learning</i> techniques in all classrooms	Students conduct focus groups to monitor successes and barriers to student engagement	Adults in the community volunteer to mentor students under formal mentorship programs
Create a compendium of community resources supporting parents and families	Allow and encourage students to participate in decision-making	Create a welcoming, student centered environment (decorative plants, student artwork, photos on display, etc.)		
Adopt a grand-parent program to mentor students	Ensure all students have a school adult or activity that connects them to the school	Routinely check in with challenging students to assess their perceptions of school		

*\*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities Threats*

#### Resources

Effective Student Advisories: How to Design an Advisory System for a Secondary School, Goldberg, ASCD, eBook, 1998

Instructional Strategies: The Interactive Lecture: How to Engage Students, Build Memory, and Deepen Comprehension (a Strategic Teacher Plc Guide), Silver & Perini, ASCD, 2010

Student engagement: What do we know and what should we do?

[https://education.alberta.ca/media/6459431/student\\_engagement\\_literature\\_review\\_2011.pdf](https://education.alberta.ca/media/6459431/student_engagement_literature_review_2011.pdf)

Joint Consortium for School Health - <http://www.jcsh-cces.ca/> For example, see, Schools as a setting for promoting positive mental health: Better practices and perspectives @ <http://www.jcsh-cces.ca/upload/PMH%20July10%202011%20WebReady.pdf>

Ross Green. Lost at School- <http://www.lostatschool.org/>

**Table 3: Extra-Curricular Activities**

System	School	Teacher	Student	Parents/ Community
Implement a system-wide study of the inclusiveness of extra-curricular activities and their availability in all schools	Conduct a student interest inventory and incorporate these into extracurricular offerings	Encourage participation in extracurricular activities and do not limit or deny student participation based on grades or behaviour	Students provide annual or biannual ratings of extracurricular activities and range of offerings	Partner with community resource personnel to promote out of school activities
	Schedule some extracurricular activities before school, at lunch or during flex times	Provide for interest clubs where students can share common interests		
	Monitor changes to participation rates in extracurricular activities			

**Resources**

Extracurricular Activities and Student Achievement: Everyone Gains, retrieved from:  
<http://gearup.ous.edu/sites/default/files/Research-Briefs/ResearchBriefExtracurricularActivities.pdf>

Research Link: Extracurricular activities and student motivation, retrieved from:  
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept02/vol60/num01/-Extracurricular-Activities-and-Student-Motivation.aspx>

**Table 4: Utility of School**

System	School	Teacher	Student	Parents/ Community
Provide co-op programs and volunteer options linked to local business	Provide employment resources, job search assistance	Provide feedback about student’s learning profiles, including, aptitudes and interests	Access counselors and/or teachers to discuss how your interests, aptitudes and achievement may affect career choices	Parents utilize a “parental involvement checklist” to help identify ways to support student learning at home
Establish dual credit options with post-secondary institutions	Ensure opportunities for families to participate in school activities	Implement powerful learning strategies, inquiry learning, as well as robust and engaging learning goals linked to student interests		
	Connect students with community leaders	Utilize “student advisory” periods as the opportunity to connect with students and provide mentoring assistance as needed		
	Implement weekly “student advisory” periods with home room teachers to reflect and discuss important issues for students and the school			

**Resources**

**Mentoring Programs:**

- Research Brief: High School Student Mentoring Programs, retrieved from <http://oemanagement.com/data/files/mentoring.pdf>
- Working on the Work: An Action Plan for Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents - Schlectly, Jossey- Bass, 2001.

**Table 5: Self-Confidence**

System	School	Teacher	Student	Parents/ Community
Recognize and promote the conscious and consistent implementation of AFL* as one of the most effective ways to promote student engagement and academic success	Support for PD related to how and why to incorporate AFL* practices across the school	Conscious & consistent utilization of the principles of AFL* in the classroom	Maintain learning journals to track learning and to be able to answer the questions “what did I learn today” and “how do I know when I have learned it”	Parents use effective strategies to offer home support for student learning and confidence building
Provide cultural support groups for FNMI students or students new to Canada	Meaningful and ongoing recognition of student success as determined by teachers and students	Classroom assessment focuses on student creation and recognition of quality work	Work towards understanding what quality looks like and use assessment feedback to strive for it	Parents recognize and value student success in school
	Course selection assistance based on student needs	Guidance counselors help students realize academic potential	Select and engage in extra-curricular activities with a goal of building self-confidence	
	Provide access to tutoring or review mini courses	Classroom teachers value strong relationships with students as a cornerstone to student success	Recognize that failure is an opportunity to learn	
	Develop leadership and service opportunities for students	Differentiated instruction in all classrooms becomes a key strategy to student success		

\*Assessment for Learning

**Resources**

Differentiated Instruction: Integrating Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design: Connecting Content and Kids - Tomlinson & McTighe, ASCD, 2006.

Student Success: Harbors of Hope: The Planning for School and Student Success Process - Hulley & Dier, National Educational Service, February 2005.

**Assessment for Learning (AFL) in the Classroom:**

- Assessment Balance and Quality: An Action Guide for School Leaders - Chappuis, Commodore & Stiggins, Pearson, 2010.
- Evidence to Action: Engaging and Teaching Young Adolescents through Assessment - Hume, Pearson, 2009.

Parental Involvement in Student Learning: Parents Assuring Student Success: Achievement Made Easy by Learning Together - Ban, Solution Tree, 2010.



**Table 6: Internal Resilience**

System	School	Teacher	Student	Parents/ Community
Identification and formal support for disengaged students becomes a system priority	Implement procedures that allow for effective mentor/monitor program to be established	Guidance counselors carefully monitor identified disengaged students and prepare interventions involving students, parents and teachers	Students are able to name the success they have had and the learning journey they are still on	Parents attend workshops, one-on-one sessions to develop skills to support student learning and engagement
Support heart Math and other bio- feedback curriculum	Identification and formal support for disengaged students becomes a school priority	Mentor/monitor program established so that students have an adult to act as their advocate	Keep a journal reflecting on your emotions and the coping strategies you are using	Encourage your child to talk freely about what he or she is feeling about school
	Parents contacted and supported to become partners in supporting students to experience success at school	Problem solving skills taught in the classroom		
	Provide martial arts, yoga, body mindfulness, meditation, or body awareness options			

Resources

Responsive Learning Environments: The Classroom of Choice: Giving Students What They Need and Getting What You Want - Erwin, ASCD, 2004.

Promoting and Building Resilience in Primary School Communities: Evidence from a Comprehensive 'Health Promoting School' Approach. *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*.

[Promoting Resilience in Primary Schools](#)

**Table 7: External Resilience**

System	School	Teacher	Student	Parents/ Community
Recognize and support differential and/or transactional instruction as a crucial component in promoting student engagement and academic success	Promote the incorporation of social skills learning into the classroom	Incorporate inquiry activities that promote group problem solving and collaboration skills	Students work productively with one another in and out of the classroom setting	Parents support their students in the appropriate methods of conflict resolution in and out of school
	Promote the active teaching of conflict resolution in appropriate classroom or in secondary “student advisory” periods	Incorporate reflective questioning strategies to stimulate introspection and empathy	Use physical exercise to achieve balance in your life	Ensure children eat healthy and get at least 8 hours of sleep
	Adjust daily school routines to ensure success	Develop classrooms as safe learning environments and places where a time out can be accessed	Use apps for sleep or fitness tracking	Establish a connection with teachers to ensure continuity between self regulation strategies in and out of the classroom
	Consider animal therapy to calm individual students and build resilience	Develop student’s understanding and vocabulary around soci-emotional learning and perceiving body language		

**Resources**

Conflict Resolution: Ready-to-Use Conflict Resolution Activities for Secondary Students - Perlstein & Thrall, Jossey-Bass, 2001.

Building Resilience in Vulnerable Youth, McCreary Centre Society, 2006  
[http://www.mcs.bc.ca/pdf/vulnerable\\_youth\\_report.pdf](http://www.mcs.bc.ca/pdf/vulnerable_youth_report.pdf)

Calm, Alert and Learning: Classroom Strategies for Self-Regulation - Shanker, Stuart, Peason, 2013.

**Table 8: Peer Relationships**

System	School	Teacher	Student	Parents/ Community
Recognizes and supports transactional instruction as crucial components in promoting student engagement and academic success	Promote the active teaching of cooperative learning strategies in the classroom	Utilize cooperative learning strategies to advance positive peer relationships	Students independently use self and peer assessment strategies to improve their learning	Parents assist their students to become proficient at self assessment by discussing what quality work or positive relationships look like
Offer ongoing professional development on positive mental health	Connect students with peer mentors and or big sister/big brother mentor including social media as supports	Incorporate peer assessment and evaluation strategies into classroom instruction to help develop peer “coaches”	Join social support groups that may be available in the school or community	Interact with the school regarding student’s social issues
Adopt and implement system-wide anti-bullying policy and strategies.	Consider psycho-education programs such as Leader in Me, Friends for Life or Healthy Relationships, etc.	Listen to and validate student perspectives	Report any instances of bullying to teachers, administrators or parents	
	Ensure all students and staff uphold and model rules regarding respectful behavior			

**Resources**

Inquiry Instruction in the Classroom: Inquiry Circles in Middle and High School Classrooms (DVD) - Harvey & Daniels, Heineman, 2009.

**Table 9: Work - School Integration and Handling School - Work Pressures**

System	School	Teacher	Student	Parents/ Community
Ensure curricular supports are in place to recognize and support students who work while attending school	Apply CALM or other curricular programs to assist students to manage time and other demands of work-school balance.	Encourage students to explore ways to integrate their studies and work responsibilities in assignments	Maintain realistic work commitments of no more than 15 hours per week during the school year to keep work and school pressures manageable.	Employers should ensure students work no more than 15 hours per week during the school year

## Section 8 - Networking to support on-going research on student engagement

Rocky View Schools is very interested in collaborating with school jurisdictions in Alberta and elsewhere to extend the application of the SOS-Q and to assess its usefulness as one additional tool to support student engagement with school. Building on the success Rocky View has attained with the SOS-Q as a diagnostic tool, we agree with the OECD (2014:22) analysis of correlates associated with PISA achievement data when they conclude that, “Teachers and school principals need to be able to **identify students** who show signs of lack of engagement with school **and work with them individually before disengagement takes firm root** (emphasis added).” Reflecting the OECD observation, our vision is a future where data on student voice and affective measures are routinely collected and applied in ways that maximize the potential for student engagement with school as learners keenly attuned to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning.

Please contact Dr. John M. Burger @ [jburger@rockyview.ab.ca](mailto:jburger@rockyview.ab.ca) to discuss opportunities for joint research with the SOS-Q.

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# Appendix A: Upper-Elementary Questionnaire

## Student Orientation to School Questionnaire - Upper Elementary

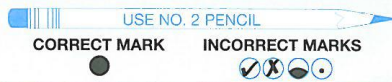
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Ab. Student Number

### Marking Directions

Please don't write anything on this questionnaire until instructed to do so.

- Use only pencil
- Darken the circles completely
- Erase cleanly



0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

What is your gender? (Fill in the circle)

- MALE       FEMALE

What grade you are currently in? (Fill in the circle)

- Grade 4       Grade 5       Grade 6

**Directions:** Please answer each item by selecting ONE of the following responses: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree or Strongly Disagree. Using a pencil, fill in the circle that best describes your answer to the question (see Sample #1). There are no right or wrong answers, but it is important that you respond to each item on pages 1 and 2.

Sample #1	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	I like ice cream.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	1. My teacher(s) care about me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	2. I am proud of what goals I have achieved.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	3. My friends treat me fairly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	4. I feel calm when things change for the worse.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	5. I sometimes feel overwhelmed by school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	6. I can resolve disagreements with my teacher(s).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	7. I can adjust to changes in my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	8. I am confident with my classmates.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	9. My teacher(s) is friendly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	10. I expect to succeed in life after school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	11. When something unfair happens to me, I am usually able to control my temper.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	12. I follow through with the plans I make.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	13. I have good friends at my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	14. I can talk to my teacher(s).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	15. I have fun at school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	16. I can think for myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17. Often I cannot sleep because I worry about stuff.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I am able to tell/explain my needs clearly to my teacher(s).	1	2	3	4	5
19. I expect to succeed in school.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I bounce back quickly from setbacks.	1	2	3	4	5
21. My teacher(s) helps me understand my career interests.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I worry about things too much.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Student opinion counts in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I am confident I have the skills to succeed in school.	1	2	3	4	5
25. My teacher(s) respects me.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Students are treated fairly in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I can get along with most of the students in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I find ways to keep my stress level under control.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I can handle school work and out-of-school activities.	1	2	3	4	5
30. My teacher(s) treats me fairly.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I understand how I learn best.	1	2	3	4	5
32. When I make mistakes it bugs me for a while.	1	2	3	4	5
33. I get the help I need in school.	1	2	3	4	5
34. I like school because of my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I come up with solutions to my problems.	1	2	3	4	5
36. I don't know who I am as well as I'd like.	1	2	3	4	5
37. My teacher(s) understands me.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Success in school means success in later life.	1	2	3	4	5
39. I know I can pull through difficult times.	1	2	3	4	5
40. I know how to do well in school.	1	2	3	4	5
41. My teacher(s) listens to me.	1	2	3	4	5
42. I stay positive when the going gets tough.	1	2	3	4	5

SAMPLE

# Appendix B: Junior-Senior High Questionnaire

## Student Orientation to School Questionnaire - Jr. and Sr. High

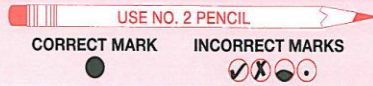
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Ab. Student Number

### Marking Directions

Please don't write anything on this questionnaire until instructed to do so.

- Use only pencil
- Darken the circles completely
- Erase cleanly



0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

What is your gender? (Fill in the circle)

- MALE       FEMALE

What grade you are currently in? (Fill in the circle)

- 7     8     9     10     11     12

**Directions:** Please answer each item by selecting ONE of the following responses: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. Using a pencil, fill in the circle that best describes your answer to the question (see Sample #1). There are no right or wrong answers, but it is important that you respond to each item on pages 1 and 2.

Sample #1	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I like ice cream.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I feel safe in school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I am able to tell/explain my needs clearly to my teacher(s).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I don't have time to participate in extra-curricular activities at school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I have fun at school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I stay positive when the going gets tough.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Students are treated fairly in my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. My teacher(s) is friendly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I have good friends at my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I worry too much about school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I am confident I have the skills to succeed in school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. I participate in extra-curricular activities in my community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. My school supports my interests in my career plans.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. When something unfair happens to me, I am usually able to control my temper.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. I am confident with my peers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. School will help me become a better person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. I sometimes feel overwhelmed by school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. My teacher(s) understands how I learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Extra-curricular activities in my school are no fun because it is too competitive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. I expect to succeed in life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. I have the personal skills to get along with most of the students in my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. I bounce back quickly from setbacks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. I understand why I am going to school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. I can talk to my teacher(s).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Often I cannot sleep because I worry about stuff.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. What I learn in school will help me in later life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. I join in extra-curricular activities even if I don't know the people there.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. I get the help I need in school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. I can resolve disagreements with my teacher(s).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. Student opinion counts in my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. I can adjust to changes in my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. When I make mistakes it bugs me for a long time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. I expect to succeed in school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
33. Extra-curricular activities in my school help me feel accepted.	1	2	3	4	5
34. My teacher(s) respects me.	1	2	3	4	5
35. My school work will help me with my career plans.	1	2	3	4	5
36. I like school because of my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I come up with solutions to my problems.	1	2	3	4	5
38. My teacher(s) listens to me.	1	2	3	4	5
39. I participate in extracurricular activities in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
40. I understand how I learn best.	1	2	3	4	5
41. I follow through with the plans I make.	1	2	3	4	5
42. School will help me in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
43. My teacher(s) cares about me.	1	2	3	4	5
44. I can resolve my disagreements with other students.	1	2	3	4	5
45. I know I can pull through difficult times.	1	2	3	4	5
46. I enjoy extracurricular activities at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
47. I find ways to keep my stress level under control.	1	2	3	4	5
48. I know how to do well in school.	1	2	3	4	5
49. I feel I have individual worth.	1	2	3	4	5
50. My teacher(s) treats me fairly.	1	2	3	4	5
51. I feel I am learning useful things in school.	1	2	3	4	5
52. Extra-curricular activities offered by my school do not match my interests.	1	2	3	4	5
53. I learn from my mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
54. My friends treat me fairly.	1	2	3	4	5
55. I stay calm when things change for the worse.	1	2	3	4	5

Answer the following items only if you work a paid part-time job outside of school while attending school

56. My job increases my appreciation of school.	1	2	3	4	5
57. My job does not leave sufficient time to focus on schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5
58. I can resolve disagreements at work.	1	2	3	4	5
59. I appreciate what I learned at school at my job.	1	2	3	4	5
60. I can talk to my employer.	1	2	3	4	5
61. My job allows me to learn from getting things done.	1	2	3	4	5
62. I can balance demands of work and school.	1	2	3	4	5
63. Expectations for me at work are similar to school.	1	2	3	4	5
64. I have been pressured by my employer to work more hours than I can handle.	1	2	3	4	5
65. It is tiresome to work and stay on top of my grades.	1	2	3	4	5
66. Schoolwork takes priority over a job outside of school.	1	2	3	4	5

How many hours per week do you routinely work?

- 1-5 hours
- 6-10 hours
- 11-15 hours
- 16 plus hours

## Appendix C: Websites for Following-up SOS-Q Results

Location	URL	Site Description
Alberta	<a href="http://education.alberta.ca/admin/supportingstudent/safeschools.aspx">http://education.alberta.ca/admin/supportingstudent/safeschools.aspx</a>	School administrators, teachers, school staff, students and community members are all partners in creating a welcoming learning environment. Strategies focused on awareness, communication, prevention and intervention are used to help build caring, respectful and safe schools that support healthy relationships and facilitate student learning. This site contains links to information for creating, maintaining and enhancing caring and safe learning environments.
Alberta	<a href="http://www.albertafamilywellness.org/">http://www.albertafamilywellness.org/</a>	The Alberta Family Wellness Initiative (AFWI) is a multi-disciplinary initiative that connects early brain and biological development and children's mental health with addiction research, prevention, and treatment. The AFWI seeks to translate current research into sound policy and practice on behalf of Alberta families.
Alberta	<a href="http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/2909.asp">http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/2909.asp</a>	This link offers a one-stop resource centre that can guide teachers, childcare staff and parents to the information they need on student/child health issues.
Alberta	<a href="http://albertamentors.ca/about-us/">http://albertamentors.ca/about-us/</a>	The Alberta Mentoring Partnership (AMP) consists of community mentoring agencies, government and youth working together to raise the profile of mentoring in Alberta. To achieve this goal, AMP partners are collaborating to establish and enhance mentoring programs in local communities. We're helping build capacity by providing access to best practices and sound research supported by tools and resources that will help mentoring agencies start new programs or make existing programs even better.
Alberta	<a href="http://www.everactive.org/">http://www.everactive.org/</a>	Ever Active Schools facilitates the development of healthy children and youth by fostering social and physical environments that support healthy, active school communities. Our goal is to help Alberta students live, learn and play in these types of environments while making it possible for these school communities to connect and share in beneficial resources.
Alberta	<a href="http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/mychildslearning/">http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/mychildslearning/</a>	Alberta is committed to creating an inclusive education system that inspires and enables all students to achieve success and fulfillment as engaged thinkers and ethical citizens, with an entrepreneurial spirit.  We recognize that parents play an important role in shaping the way their children view learning. As a parent, you understand more than anyone else how your child learns and processes information. This resource will provide you with a better understanding of Alberta's curriculum and how you can help your child. Here, you'll discover what your child is learning, how they're assessed and what resources are available to help them be successful from Kindergarten to Grade 12. This resource also contains information on the variety of educational <u>choices</u> you have for your child.

Alberta	<a href="http://bfflcalgary.com/">http://bfflcalgary.com/</a>	The Alberta Be Fit For Life Network works in collaboration to provide services, education and resources to encourage self-responsibility in Albertans to be physically active <b>The Alberta Be Fit For Life Network</b> works in collaboration to provide services, education and resources to encourage self-responsibility in Albertans to be physically active.
Canada	<a href="http://www.ophea.net/">http://www.ophea.net/</a>	Ophea is a not-for-profit organization that champions healthy, active living in schools and communities through quality programs and services, partnerships and advocacy, and is led by the vision that all children and youth value and enjoy the lifelong benefits of healthy, active living.
Canada	<a href="http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/Pages/home.aspx">http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/Pages/home.aspx</a>	The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) is Canada's largest mental health and addiction teaching hospital, as well as one of the world's leading research centers in its field. CAMH is fully affiliated with the University of Toronto, and is a Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization Collaborating Centre. CAMH combines <u>clinical care, research, education, policy development</u> and <u>health promotion</u> to help transform the lives of people affected by mental health and addiction issues.
Canada	<a href="http://www.eswbrg.org/">http://www.eswbrg.org/</a>	The Education for Sustainable Well-Being Research Group is an interdisciplinary research group of the University of Manitoba, housed in the Faculty of Education.  The research program of the research group consists in the commitment to undertake research that focuses on issues linked to education for sustainable well-being. Research projects as part of this research program are concerned with education as a means for human and societal development for sustainable well-being. A nationwide network of passionate professionals worth a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.
Canada	<a href="http://www.jcsh-cces.ca/">http://www.jcsh-cces.ca/</a>	The Joint Consortium for School Health was established by provincial, territorial and federal governments to facilitate and initiate cooperation across the health and education sectors. The focus is on providing information and support to member governments, building system capacity for promoting health through school-based and school-linked programs and being a catalyst for collaborative activities and actions.  The members of the Consortium interpret "health" in the broadest sense of the word, so a wide variety of health, social and developmental issues is addressed. Member governments pursue a number of approaches and priorities in school health promotion, so there is no one model or strategy that the Consortium promotes over any other.
Canada	<a href="http://www.shapes.uwaterloo.ca/?section=1001&amp;page=1002">http://www.shapes.uwaterloo.ca/?section=1001&amp;page=1002</a>	Among the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries, Canada ranks among the worst in the rate

		<p>of childhood obesity.</p> <p>We must implement appropriate policies and programs informed by the best available evidence in order to curb these trends. SHAPES are designed to provide data that will serve as evidence for population-based intervention planning, evaluation, and field research related to youth. In addition, schools and community groups can use SHAPES as a resource for evaluating the effects of interventions on youth attitudes and behaviours.</p> <p>SHAPES works by gathering data at both student and school levels. Using machine-readable questionnaires, SHAPES can collect data from every student in a school, grades 5 to 12. School staff then completes the <u>Healthy School Planner</u> to help characterize the school health environment. In return for their participation, schools receive an individualized profile of their results, which can be used to inform school policies and programs.</p>
Canada	<a href="http://www.phecanada.ca/">http://www.phecanada.ca/</a>	<p>We have been Canada's premier professional organization for <b>physical and health educators</b> since its inception as the Canadian Physical Education Association (CPEA) in 1933. In 1948, it became the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (CAHPER), and then the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance in 1994. The 75th year of service to the profession saw the Association evolve to become Physical and Health Education Canada (PHE Canada).</p> <p>We strive to achieve our vision by supporting schools in becoming "Health Promoting Schools", that include the provision of Quality Daily Physical Education and fostering healthy school communities. We support schools through a range of programs, resources and initiatives.</p>
U.S. A.	<a href="http://www.livesinthebalance.org/">http://www.livesinthebalance.org/</a>	<p><b>How you think about and treat behaviorally challenging kids is about to change for good! This site is based on Ross Greene's work. See his book, Lost at School...</b></p> <p>And this website contains a ton of free resources -- including guided tours, streaming video, a vast Listening Library, and lots of other helpful stuff -- to help you do it!</p>
U.S.A.	<a href="http://developingchild.harvard.edu/">http://developingchild.harvard.edu/</a>	<p>The Center is committed to:</p> <p><b>Building a unified science of health, learning, and behavior</b> to explain the early roots of lifelong impairments;</p> <p><b>Leading the design, implementation, and evaluation of innovative program and practice models</b> that reduce preventable disparities in well-being;</p> <p><b>Catalyzing the implementation of effective, science-based public policies</b> through strategic relationships and knowledge transfer; and</p> <p><b>Preparing future and current leaders to build and leverage</b></p>

		<b>knowledge</b> that promotes the healthy development of children and families and brings high returns to all of society.
U.S.A.	<a href="http://www.hfrp.org/">http://www.hfrp.org/</a>	<p>Since 1983, we have helped stakeholders develop and evaluate strategies to promote the well being of children, youth, families, and their communities. We work primarily within three areas that support children's learning and development - early childhood education, out-of-school time programming, and family and community support in education. Underpinning all of our work is a commitment to evaluation for strategic decision making, learning, and accountability.</p> <p>Building on our knowledge that schools alone cannot meet the learning needs of our children we also focus national attention on complementary learning. Complementary learning is the idea that a systemic approach, which integrates school and nonschool supports, can better ensure that all children have the skills they need to succeed.</p>
U.S.A.	<a href="http://www.theleaderinme.org/">http://www.theleaderinme.org/</a>	<i>The Leader in Me</i> is a whole-school transformation model that acts like the operating system of a computer - it improves performance of all other programs. Based on <i>The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People</i> ®, <i>The Leader in Me</i> produces transformational results such as higher academic achievement, fewer discipline problems, and increased engagement among teachers and parents. Better yet, <i>The Leader in Me</i> equips students with the self-confidence and skills they need to thrive in the 21st Century economy.
U.S.A.	<a href="http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/prpsum.htm">http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/prpsum.htm</a>	The Penn Resiliency Program (PRP), designed by our research team, is a group intervention for late elementary and middle school students. The curriculum teaches cognitive-behavioral and social problem-solving skills and is based in part on cognitive-behavioral theories of depression by Aaron Beck, Albert Ellis, and Martin Seligman (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978; Beck, 1967, 1976; Ellis, 1962). Central to PRP is Ellis' Adversity-Consequences-Beliefs (ABC) model, the notion that our beliefs about events mediate their impact on our emotions and behavior. Through this model, students learn to detect inaccurate thoughts, to evaluate the accuracy of those thoughts, and to challenge negative beliefs by considering alternative interpretations. PRP also teaches a variety of strategies that can be used for solving problems and coping with difficult situations and emotions. Students learn techniques for assertiveness, negotiation, decision-making, social problem-solving, and relaxation. The skills taught in the program can be applied to many contexts of life, including relationships with peers and family members as well as achievement in academics or other activities.
U.S.A.	<a href="http://www.selfdeterminationtheory.org/">http://www.selfdeterminationtheory.org/</a>	<p><b>Self-Determination Theory (SDT)</b> is a <u>theory of motivation</u>. It is concerned with supporting our natural or intrinsic tendencies to behave in effective and healthy ways. SDT has been researched and practiced by a <u>network of researchers</u> around the world.</p> <p>The theory was initially developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan at the <u>University of Rochester</u>, and has been elaborated and refined by scholars from many countries. Deci and Ryan are professors in the Department of Clinical and Social Sciences in</p>

		<p>Psychology at the University of Rochester, where they direct a pre- and post-doctoral training program focused on SDT.</p> <p>This website presents a brief overview of SDT and provides resources that address important issues such as human needs, values, intrinsic motivation, development, motivation across cultures, individual differences, and psychological well-being</p>
U.S.A.	<a href="http://www.boomerangproject.com/">http://www.boomerangproject.com/</a>	<p>The Boomerang Project houses the student orientation and transition programs Link Crew and WEB. We are a company equally dedicated to both educators and students; our goal is to help create schools that not only teach students, but reach them as well. Whether it be through high school or middle school orientation and transition programs, student to student mentoring programs, an incredible teacher training, a powerful in-service, a dynamic speaker, or providing useful resources, we believe educators and students deserve nothing less than the best when it comes to personal/professional development and growth.</p>
U.S.A.	<a href="http://www.casel.org/about/">http://www.casel.org/about/</a>	<p>Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is the nation's (US) leading organization advancing the development of academic, social and emotional competence for all students. Our mission is to help make evidence-based social and emotional learning an integral part of education from preschool through high school. Through research, practice and policy, CASEL collaborates to ensure all students become knowledgeable, responsible, caring and contributing members of society.</p>



## Appendix D: Sample Letter to Parents

Dear parent

(Insert jurisdiction name) is interested in developing a deeper understanding of student feelings about school as part of a study of factors that influence student achievement. Consequently, (insert school name) will be administering the **Student Orientation to School (SOS-Q)** to students in Grades (insert grades to be surveyed). The SOS-Q was developed by Alberta Education as part of a broader plan to improve high school completion by assessing students' attitudes towards school at key points in a student's school experience. The SOS-Q has been scientifically validated and the copyright is now held by Rocky View Schools in Airdrie, Alberta.

The survey results will be used to develop insights into students' connectivity to school and identify support strategies to reconnect students who have lost their positive connection to school or to reinforce students who have a strong relationship with school. This study may also support applied research into ways to enhance student engagement with school.

Student information collected with the SOS-Q will be strictly confidential and will be protected as a student's personal information similar to the safeguards applied to student's test data. The results will be available for review with the student and parents.

However, given that measures of how a student feels about school is personal information we recognize that you may not wish to have your son/daughter complete the SOS-Q. Therefore, if you would prefer that your child not participate, simply sign and return this letter to the school office and your son/daughter will be exempted from completing the SOS-Q.

If you have any questions about this project, please call the Principal @ (insert school phone number and Principal's email) or (alternative contact).

Yours Sincerely,

Principal

I \_\_\_\_\_, request that my child not participate in the SOS-Q project.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E: Shipping Instructions for paper versions

### ***Student Orientation to School*** Instructions for Returning Questionnaires

Please complete the following information and return a copy of this sheet with every group of completed SOS questionnaires that you are returning to **Schools Department, Rocky View Schools, 2651 Chinook Winds Dr. S.W., Airdrie AB, Canada, T4B 0B4**. Questionnaires should be separated by type before mailing (Upper Elementary or Junior-Senior High and identify the school and jurisdiction).

You can keep extra questionnaires on hand for future use.

*Please allow 7 to 10 business days for the analysis of your questionnaires and the delivery of your report.*

#### **General Information**

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

School Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Return Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Administration(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Questionnaires being returned:

Upper-Elementary: \_\_\_\_\_

Junior-Senior High: \_\_\_\_\_