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**School Environment Matters: Virginia CUSD 64 Administers Sixth Illinois  
5Essentials Survey to Improve Student Learning**

*Students, teachers and parents weigh in on school climate and learning  
conditions*

November 29, 2017 - Virginia CUSD 64 will join the [Illinois State Board of Education](#) (ISBE) in the sixth statewide survey of school climate and learning conditions. The survey provides a unique opportunity for students, teachers and parents to have a voice in improving their schools. From December 5, 2017 through January 31, 2018 students, teachers and parents will be asked to take a 25 -minute research-based survey to help identify strengths and weaknesses in their school's learning environment. This survey will serve as an opportunity for schools to reflect on progress since the last statewide implementation.

We encourage all our teachers, students, and parents to make their voices heard to impact change in the school district.

[The Illinois 5Essentials Survey](#) provides a comprehensive picture of a school's organizational culture in an individualized report measuring five "essentials" critical for school success:

- Effective Leaders
- Collaborative Teachers
- Involved Families
- Supportive Environment
- Ambitious Instruction

Twenty years of research at the University of Chicago in more than 400 schools has shown that schools that were strong on at least three of the 5Essentials were 10 times more likely to make substantial gains in improving student reading and math than schools that were weak on three or more of the Essentials. Those differences remained true even after controlling for student and school characteristics, including poverty, race, gender, and neighborhood characteristics. Strength on components within the Essentials also correlated

with increased teacher retention, student attendance, college enrollment, and high school graduation.

Generated from a rigorous analysis of student and teacher survey responses, 5Essentials Reports demonstrate that what students and teachers say about their schools can serve as important indicators for school success. In the inaugural 2012-2013 statewide Illinois 5Essentials Survey, 87 percent of all schools in the state met the 50-percent participation threshold to receive a 5Essentials Report, with participation from more than 70 percent of all teachers and eligible 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders across Illinois.

Virginia CUSD 64 has consistently participated in the statewide 5Essentials Survey and is opting to administer the survey to teachers and students again this year to continue tracking and informing progress.

Principals and superintendents will receive their 5Essentials Reports in March 2018. Survey results will also be reported publically on the 2018 [State School Report Card website](#) and the full 5Essentials Reports will also be released in the fall. An optional parent survey is again available to all schools as a supplement to the 5Essentials Survey for teachers and students—results from the parent survey supplement will be included only in the individual school 5Essential Reports. Since 2013-14, the Illinois 5Essentials Survey has been normed using the 2012-13 statewide results so that all schools can demonstrate progress over time.

On behalf of the Illinois State Board of Education, [UChicago Impact](#) is providing Illinois 5Essentials to schools statewide. Teachers, students, and parents may complete the Illinois 5Essentials Survey online. To complete the survey, go to: <https://illinois.5-essentials.org>.