



# Community Unit School District #205

..... *Helping Students Achieve Their Dreams* .....

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## For Immediate Release:

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### **School Environment Matters: Galesburg CUSD #205 Administers Illinois 5Essentials Survey to Help Improve Student Learning**

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

(February 11, 2013) - Galesburg CUSD #205 will join the [Illinois State Board of Education](http://www.isbe.net) (ISBE) in providing a unique opportunity for teachers, students, and parents across the state to have a role in improving their schools. Between Feb. 1 and the end of March 2013, teachers, students and parents will be asked to take a 15-minute research-based survey to help identify strengths and weaknesses in their school's climate and learning conditions.

Bart Arthur, District #205 Superintendent, supports widespread participation. "We encourage all our teachers, students and parents to make their voices heard to impact change and help guide successful learning experiences for each and every child in our District's schools."

[The Illinois 5Essentials Survey](#) (Organizing Schools for Improvement) provides a comprehensive assessment of school organizational culture with actionable reports to help drive school improvement on five indicators or "essentials":

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

Illinois 5Essentials generates data that helps schools target resources and make decisions that help accelerate learning and test score gains. Illinois 5Essentials also demonstrates that teachers and students can play a crucial role in school reform: What they share about their schools reliably predicts whether those schools are likely to improve or stagnate.

Based on 20 years of research conducted by the [University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research](#) in more than 400 schools, the 5Essentials have been shown to be strongly predictive of school improvement. Schools strong in 3 to 5 of the Essentials are 10 times more likely to improve student learning than schools weak in 3 to 5 of the Essentials. Those differences remain true even after controlling for student and school characteristics, including poverty, race, gender, and neighborhood characteristics. Strength on components within the Essentials also correlates with increased teacher retention, student attendance, college enrollment, and high school graduation.

“The State Board has long understood that test scores alone do not offer the full picture of schools and learning,” said State Superintendent of Education Christopher A. Koch. “The Illinois 5Essentials Survey will finally help us paint that fuller picture of learning conditions and guide local and state improvement initiatives so that every student has access to a world class education.”

The Illinois 5Essentials Survey, required to be implemented this school year by legislation passed in 2011, represents the first attempt by a state to administer a statewide survey of learning conditions to teachers, students, and parents. Statewide summary results will be shared with ISBE this summer. School-level results will be sent to schools this summer and will be part of the 2013 school report cards, typically released by ISBE at the end of October. Federal Race to the Top funds are covering the cost of the survey.

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