

# RESEARCH BRIEF



Office of Research, Assessment, Data, Accountability, and Reporting



## Sense of Belonging: Domain Scores and Connection to Outcomes

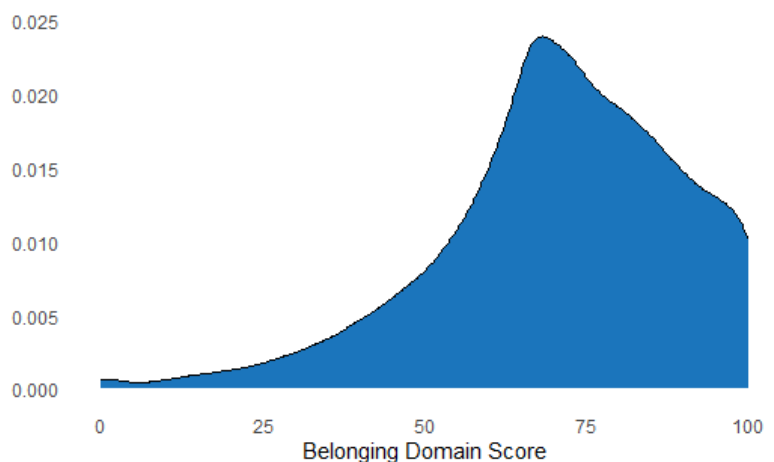
Sense of Belonging is a measure of a student's feeling of welcome and comfort within school. The Sense of Belonging – General Belonging domain score is an aggregate of student responses to the following Student Educational Equity Development (SEED)<sup>1</sup> survey items, on a scale of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree:

- I have friends at school
- My classmates care about me
- I feel welcome at school
- I like going to school
- There are adults at my school who care about me
- I feel safe talking with adults at my school
- I feel safe talking with students at my school

Domain scores are a new data product aimed at offering a summary measure of how students are responding across multiple items, to ease interpretation and trend analysis, and to support disaggregation without revealing confidential student information. For more information on how SEED domain scores are calculated, see [this guidance document](#). Domain scores are published at the district, ESD boundary, and state level on the [SEED webpage](#).<sup>2</sup> Individual belonging items on SEED have previously been shown to be correlated with [student experiences and demographics](#), including exclusionary discipline, [outcomes](#), particularly attendance, and [postsecondary enrollment](#). This brief demonstrates that, like individual response categories, Sense of Belonging domain scores are strong predictors of absenteeism, assessment performance, and other accountability indicators.

Student belonging is distributed across the scale, with a median of 71 among the students included here, which is approximately equivalent to a response of “Strongly Agree” on one item and “Agree” on the other six items (though there are many combinations of responses that would result in this score). Six percent of students had a score of 100, indicating a response of “Strongly

**Figure 1: Density Plot of Domain Scores**  
2024-25 School Year



<sup>1</sup> The SEED Survey is administered annually to students in grades 3-11. For more information on SEED and SEED participation, see the [2024-25 SEED State Report](#).

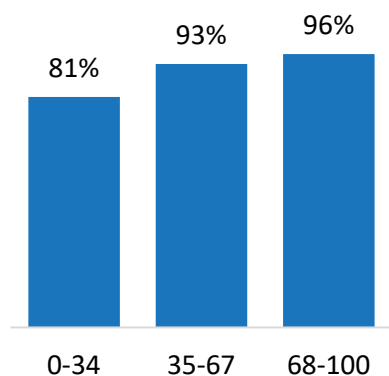
<sup>2</sup> Students may skip any SEED item for any reason. SEED domain scores presented here include only students who responded to at least five of the seven items included, although district-level scores include a proportional weighting of all respondents.

Agree” on all items, and 5% had a score less than 34, which would be equivalent to a response of “Disagree” on all items (though again, multiple response patterns could generate that score).

The Sense of Belonging domain score is generally higher in elementary grades, and lower in middle and high school grades. It also varies by student group – for more details and associated resources, see [Fast Facts: Sense of Belonging by Grade Band and Student Group](#).

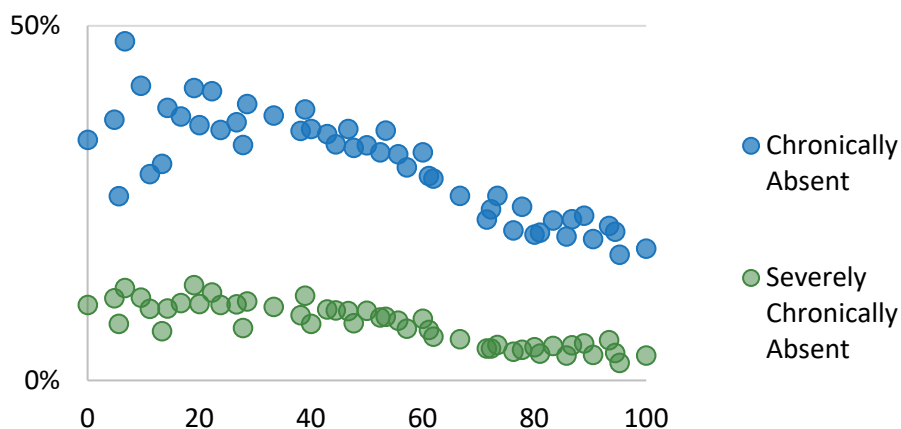
**Figure 2: Percentage of 9th Graders On-Track to Graduate**

By SEED Belonging Domain Score, 2024-25



**Figure 3: Chronic Absenteeism Rates**

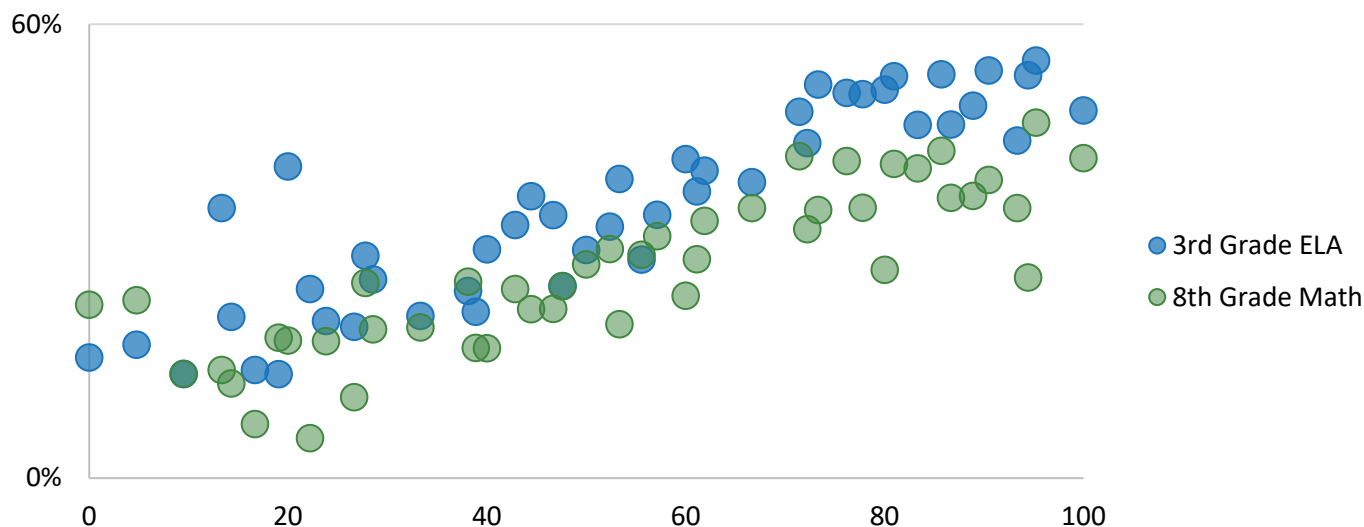
Percentage of students who are chronically absent or severely chronically absent, by SEED Belonging Domain Score, 2024-25



The Sense of Belonging domain score is correlated with an increased likelihood of being on-track to graduate, and a decreased likelihood of both chronic absenteeism and severe chronic absenteeism (missing 10% or more and 20% or more of enrolled days, respectively).

**Figure 4: Assessment Performance (Percent Meeting Standard)**

By SEED Belonging Domain Score, 2024-25



The Sense of Belonging domain score is also positively correlated with both 3<sup>rd</sup> grade English Language Arts and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Mathematics achievement, as shown in Figure 4. Together, these findings show that the domain score is a valuable summary measure of an important predictor of academic achievement, as well as a direct indicator of the belonging and wellbeing of Oregon students, one of Oregon’s [priorities for student success](#). For resources related to belonging, see [Every Student Belongs](#), [Health, Safety, and Wellness](#), and [Transformative Social and Emotional Learning](#).