

Perspectives on Student Wellbeing

Life Satisfaction from the California Healthy Kids Survey



For more information,
contact Michael Furlong
mfurlong@ucsb.edu

This document provides information on a recent enhancement to the CHKS Core Module. In 2021/22, 10 new items expanded student mental health and wellbeing coverage. These items ask students about their life satisfaction (Brief Multidimensional Life Satisfaction Scale) and the past month's emotional distress experiences (Social Emotional Distress Scale). This document brief provides information about these assessments and how a sample of 550,099 California students responded to them. It also shows how to score and interpret student responses.

Name_____

Date_____

Generally, how satisfied are you with your life?I would describe my satisfaction with my **FAMILY** life as...

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	A Little Dissatisfied	A Little Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
----------------------	--------------	--------------------------	-----------------------	-----------	-------------------

I would describe my satisfaction with my **FRIENDSHIPS** as...

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	A Little Dissatisfied	A Little Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
----------------------	--------------	--------------------------	-----------------------	-----------	-------------------

I would describe my satisfaction with my **SCHOOL EXPERIENCES** as...

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	A Little Dissatisfied	A Little Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
----------------------	--------------	--------------------------	-----------------------	-----------	-------------------

I would describe my satisfaction with **MYSELF** as...

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	A Little Dissatisfied	A Little Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
----------------------	--------------	--------------------------	-----------------------	-----------	-------------------

I would describe my satisfaction with **WHERE I LIVE** as...

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	A Little Dissatisfied	A Little Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
----------------------	--------------	--------------------------	-----------------------	-----------	-------------------

Over the past 30 days, how true do you feel these statements are about you?

I had a hard time relaxing.

Not At All True	A Little True	Pretty Much True	Very Much True
-----------------	---------------	------------------	----------------

I felt sad and down.

Not At All True	A Little True	Pretty Much True	Very Much True
-----------------	---------------	------------------	----------------

I was easily irritated

Not At All True	A Little True	Pretty Much True	Very Much True
-----------------	---------------	------------------	----------------

It was hard for me to cope and I thought I would panic.

Not At All True	A Little True	Pretty Much True	Very Much True
-----------------	---------------	------------------	----------------

It was hard for me to get excited about anything.

Not At All True	A Little True	Pretty Much True	Very Much True
-----------------	---------------	------------------	----------------

Scoring Student Responses

BMSLSS

I would describe my satisfaction with my **FAMILY** life as...

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mildly Dissatisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
-------------------	--------------	---------------------	------------------	-----------	----------------

I would describe my satisfaction with my **FRIENDSHIPS** as...

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mildly Dissatisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
-------------------	--------------	---------------------	------------------	-----------	----------------

I would describe my satisfaction with my **SCHOOL EXPERIENCES** as...

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mildly Dissatisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
-------------------	--------------	---------------------	------------------	-----------	----------------

I would describe my satisfaction with **MYSELF** as...

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mildly Dissatisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
-------------------	--------------	---------------------	------------------	-----------	----------------

I would describe my satisfaction with **WHERE I LIVE** as...

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mildly Dissatisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
-------------------	--------------	---------------------	------------------	-----------	----------------

Each statement gets one tally when the response is either Satisfied or the Very Satisfied (0-5)

BMSLSS Life Satisfaction Total (0-5) = _____

SEDS

I had a hard time relaxing.

Not At All True	A Little True	Pretty Much True	Very Much True
-----------------	---------------	------------------	----------------

I felt sad and down.

Not At All True	A Little True	Pretty Much True	Very Much True
-----------------	---------------	------------------	----------------

I was easily irritated

Not At All True	A Little True	Pretty Much True	Very Much True
-----------------	---------------	------------------	----------------

It was hard for me to cope and I thought I would panic.

Not At All True	A Little True	Pretty Much True	Very Much True
-----------------	---------------	------------------	----------------

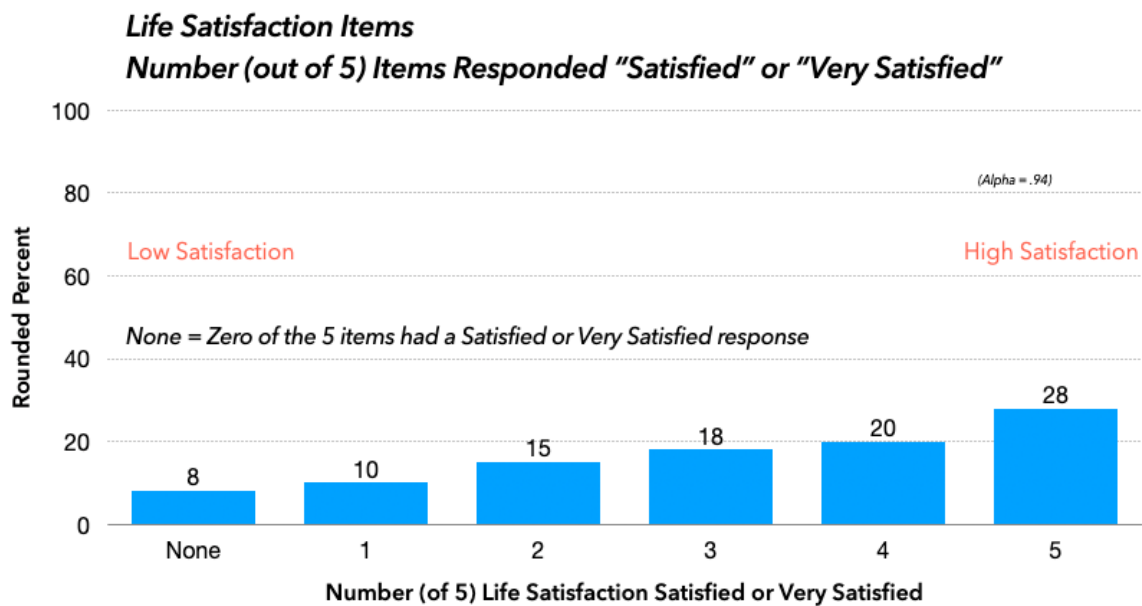
It was hard for me to get excited about anything.

Not At All True	A Little True	Pretty Much True	Very Much True
-----------------	---------------	------------------	----------------

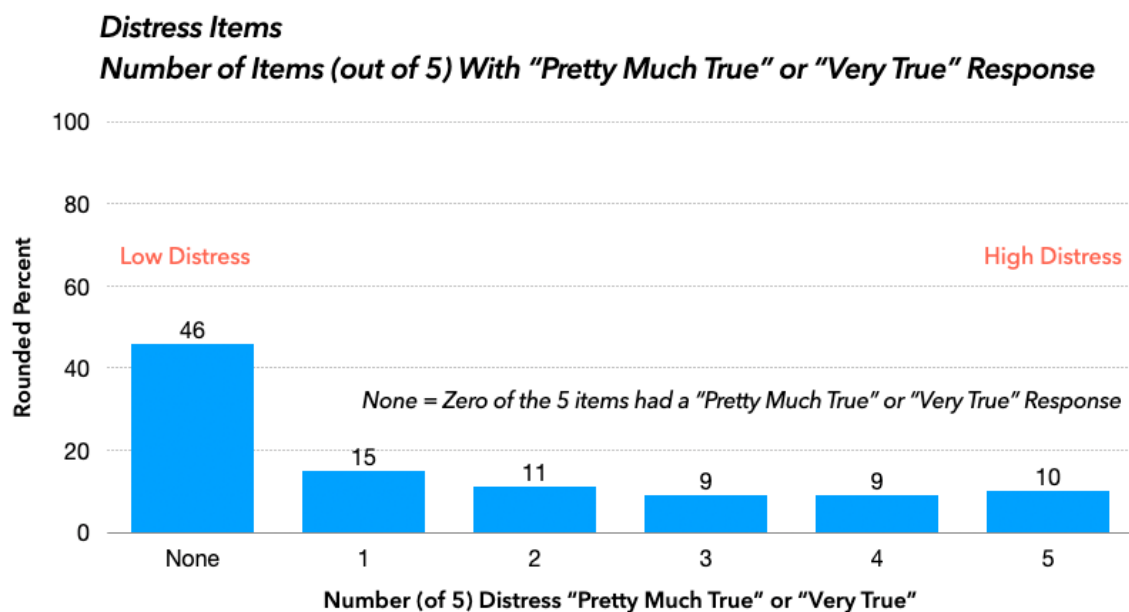
Each statement gets one tally when the response is either Satisfied or the Very Satisfied (0-5)

SEDS Distress Total (0-5) = _____

This graph shows the percentage of California students ($N = 505,099$) with 0 to 5 “satisfied” or “very satisfied” responses for the BMSLSS items.



This graph shows the percentage of California students ($N = 505,099$) with 0 to 5 “pretty much true” or “very much true” responses for the SEDS items.



Dual-Factor Wellness Model Criterion Comparison Scoring

Record the SEDS and BMSLSS total (0-5) score here.

SEDS Total = 0 1 2 3 4 5

BMSLSS Total = 0 1 2 3 4 5

Mark the cell where the Distress and Satisfaction values intersect. The percentages show the proportion of students out of 550,099 with similar responses.

		Number SEDS Distress Items Pretty Much/Very Much True		
		0-1 Low	2-3 Mid	4-5 High
BMSLSS Satisfied/ Very Satisfied Responses	4-5 High	<p>Optimal</p> <p>39.3%</p> <p>Highest Satisfaction–Lowest Distress</p>	6.1%	2.7%
	2-3 Mid	14.8%	10.0%	8.6%
	0-1 Low	6.6%	4.6%	<p>Suboptimal</p> <p>7.3%</p> <p>Lowest Satisfaction–Highest Distress</p>

Evaluating distress and satisfaction response patterns

Chronic Sadness. *This table shows the percentage of students in each distress x satisfaction zone that reported experiencing chronic sadness or hopelessness in the past 12 months.*

		Emotional Distress Indicator			
		Number of SEDS Distress Items Pretty Much/Very Much True			
		0-1 Low	2-3	4-5 High	
Life Satisfaction Wellness Indicator	BMSLSS Satisfied/ or Very Satisfied	4-5 High	Optimal 8% Highest Satisfaction–Lowest Distress	38%	66%
		2-3	24%	57%	83%
		0-1 Low	28%	68%	Suboptimal 89% Lowest Satisfaction–Highest Distress

Suicidal Ideation. *This table shows the percentage of students in each distress x satisfaction zone that reported experiencing suicidal ideation in the past 12 months.*

		Emotional Distress Indicator			
		Number of SEDS Distress Items Pretty Much/Very Much True			
		0-1 Low	2-3	4-5 High	
Life Satisfaction Wellness Indicator	BMSLSS Satisfied/ or Very Satisfied	4-5 High	Optimal 2% Highest Satisfaction–Lowest Distress	11%	25%
		2-3	8%	23%	44%
		0-1 Low	11%	35%	Suboptimal 58% Lowest Satisfaction–Highest Distress

School Belonging. *This table shows the percentage of students in each distress x satisfaction zone indicating that it was Agreed or Strongly Agreed with this statement: "I feel like I am a part of this school."*

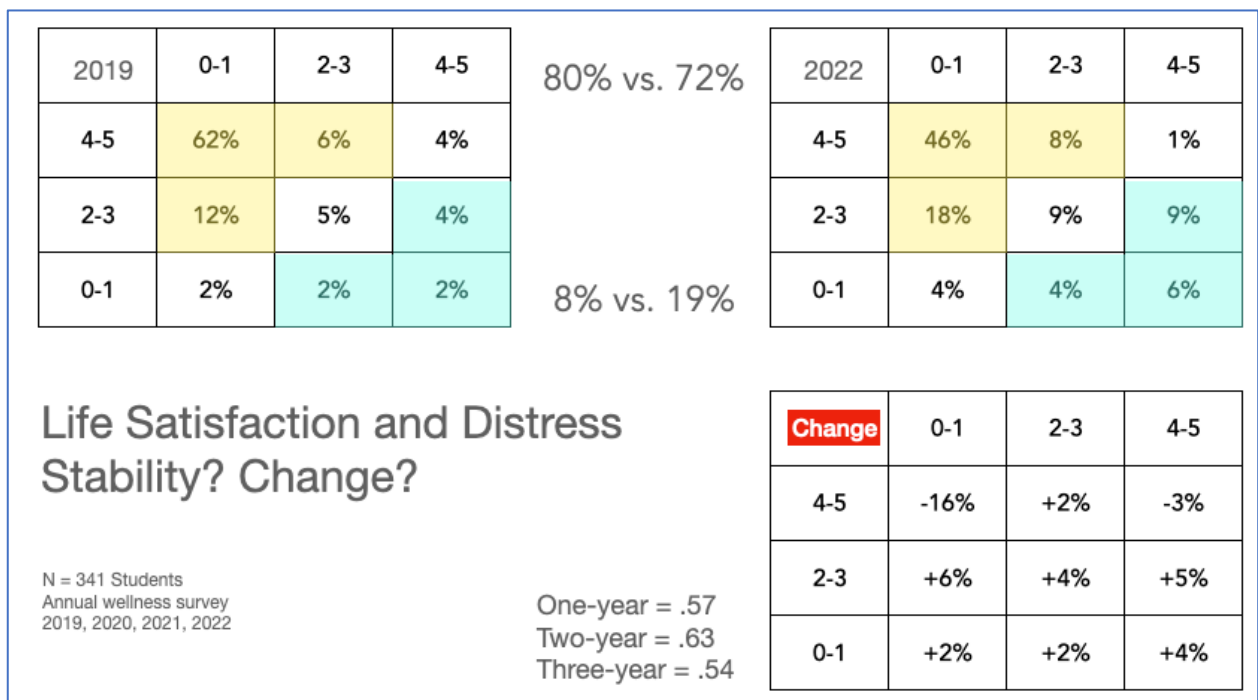
		Emotional Distress Indicator			
		Count of SEDS Distress Items Pretty Much/Very Much True			
		0-1 Low	2-3	4-5 High	
Life Satisfaction Wellness Indicator	BMSLSS Satisfied or Very Satisfied	4-5 High	Optimal 69% Highest Satisfaction–Lowest Distress	61%	57%
		2-3	39%	37%	32%
		0-1 Low	29%	23%	Suboptimal 18% Lowest Satisfaction–Highest Distress

Optimism. *This table shows the percentage of students in each distress x satisfaction zone indicating that it was Agreed or Strongly Agreed with this statement: "Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad things."*

		Emotional Distress Indicator			
		Number of SEDS Distress Items Pretty Much/Very Much True			
		0-1 Low	2-3	4-5 High	
Life Satisfaction Wellness Indicator	BMSLSS Satisfied or Very Satisfied	4-5 High	Optimal 73% Highest Satisfaction–Lowest Distress	59%	49%
		2-3	44%	34%	22%
		0-1 Low	24%	22%	Suboptimal 13% Lowest Satisfaction–Highest Distress

Response Stability

Three hundred forty-one students completed the BMSLSS and SEDS in October 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022. Grades 7-10, 8-11, and 9-12. The "2019" table on the left shows that 62% of the students had low distress and high life satisfaction. For the same group of students in "2022," only 46% had the most optimal mental wellness profile. This decrease might reflect Covid-19 pandemic effects. Students in this district were in an online learning format in 2020 and part of 2021.



Dual-Factor Wellness Model Norm Comparison Scoring

You can also evaluate a student by comparing their total response score (sum of all items) to the average responses of 505,099 California students who completed the BMSLSS and SEDS during the 2021/22 school year. First, find the student’s total scores and compare them to the charts on the following page.

Record the response value in the far right hand column.

I would describe my satisfaction with my **FAMILY** life as...

0	1	2	3	4	5	
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mildly Dissatisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	

I would describe my satisfaction with my **FRIENDSHIPS** as...

0	1	2	3	4	5	
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mildly Dissatisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	

I would describe my satisfaction with my **SCHOOL EXPERIENCES** as...

0	1	2	3	4	5	
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mildly Dissatisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	

I would describe my satisfaction with **MYSELF** as...

0	1	2	3	4	5	
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mildly Dissatisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	

I would describe my satisfaction with **WHERE I LIVE** as...

0	1	2	3	4	5	
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mildly Dissatisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	

BMSLSS Life Satisfaction Total (0-25) Record the sum of the five satisfaction items here _____

I had a hard time relaxing.

3 Not At All True	2 A Little True	1 Pretty Much True	0 Very Much True	
-------------------	-----------------	--------------------	------------------	--

I felt sad and down.

3 Not At All True	2 A Little True	1 Pretty Much True	0 Very Much True	
-------------------	-----------------	--------------------	------------------	--

I was easily irritated

3 Not At All True	2 A Little True	1 Pretty Much True	0 Very Much True	
-------------------	-----------------	--------------------	------------------	--

It was hard for me to cope and I thought I would panic.

3 Not At All True	2 A Little True	1 Pretty Much True	0 Very Much True	
-------------------	-----------------	--------------------	------------------	--

It was hard for me to get excited about anything.

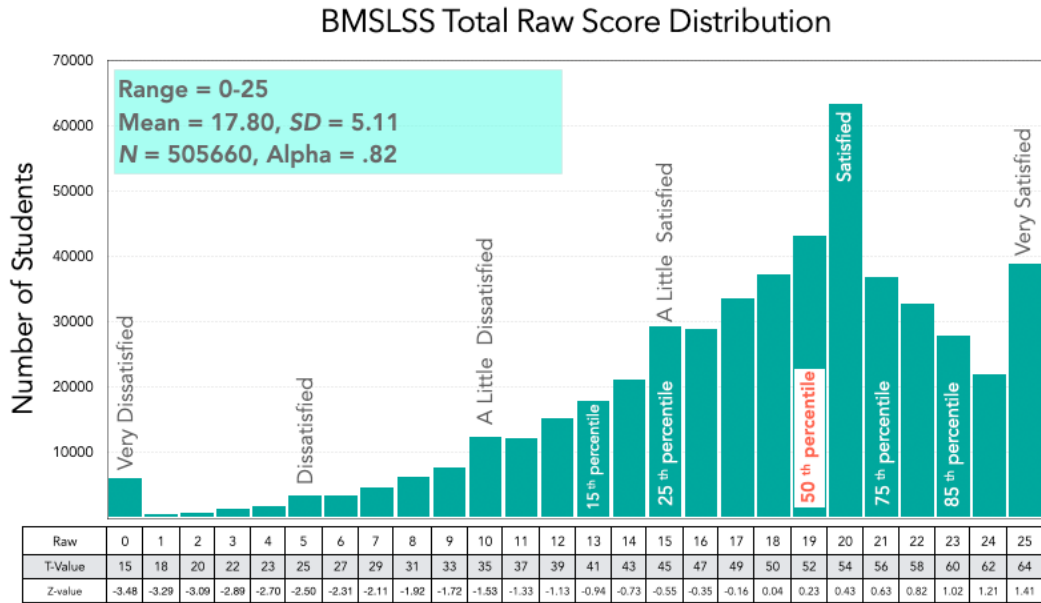
3 Not At All True	2 A Little True	1 Pretty Much True	0 Very Much True	
-------------------	-----------------	--------------------	------------------	--

SEDS Distress Total (0-15) Record the sum of the five distress items here _____

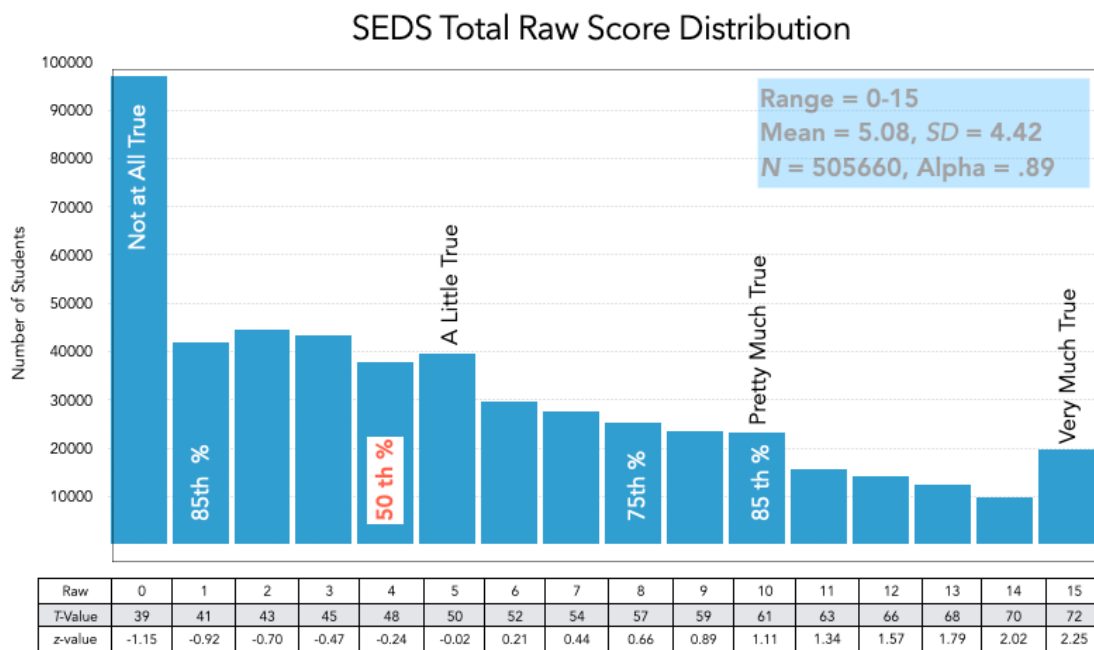
BMSLSS + SEDS (0-40) _____

This chart shows the BMSLSS total score distribution for 505,099 California students enrolled in Grades 6-12. Find the student’s total score in the row labeled “Raw.” The following row shows the T-

scores (Mean = 50, SD = 10). The chart shows the percentile range of each value. A total score of 18 is at about the 50th percentile.



This chart shows the SEDS total score distribution for 505,660 California students enrolled in Grades 6-12. Find the student's total score in the row labeled "Raw." The following row shows the T-scores (Mean = 50, SD = 10). The chart shows the percentile range of each value. A total score of 5 is at about the 50th percentile.



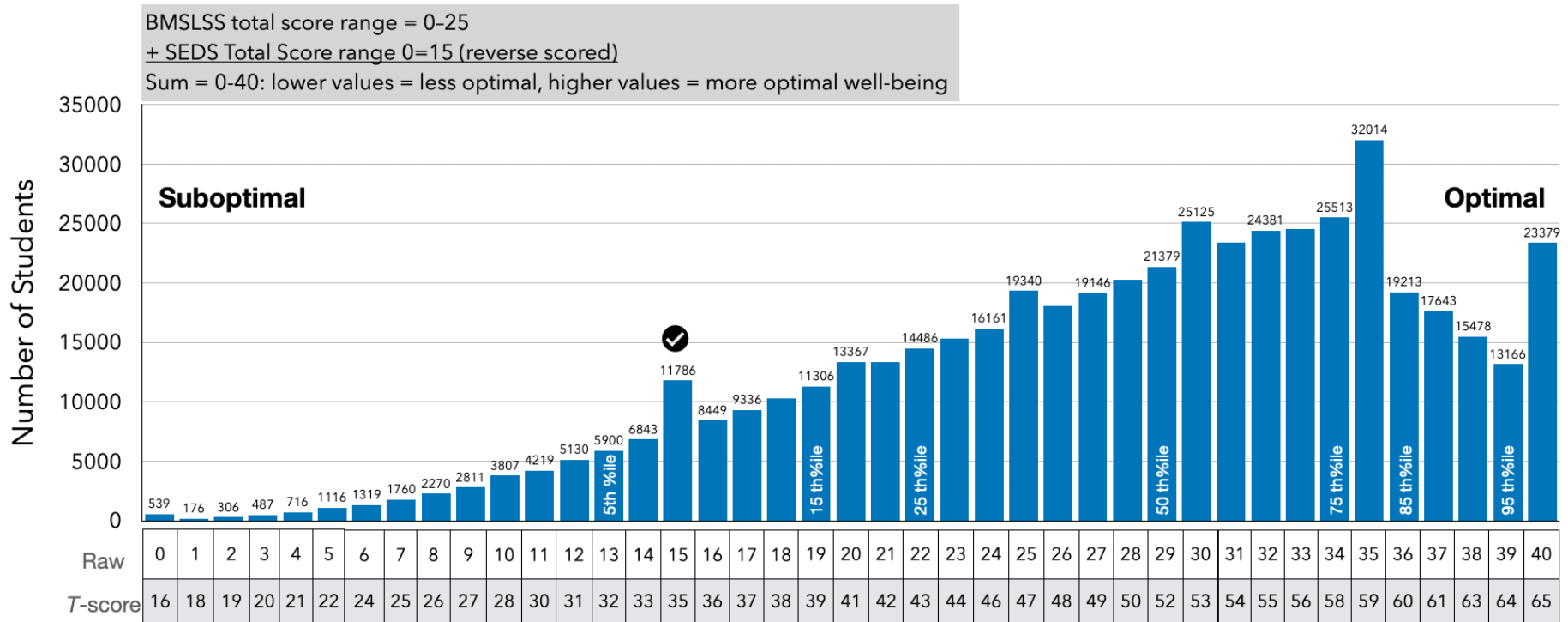
This chart shows values between 0 and 40 for 505,660 California students in Grade 6-12. These values are the sum of their 10 BMSLSS (Satisfaction) and the SEDS (Distress) items.

BMSLSS total score range = 0-25

+ SEDS Total Score range 0=15 (reverse scored)

Sum = 0-40: lower values = less optimal, higher values = more optimal well-being

Find the student's total combined score in the row labeled "Raw." The following row shows the corresponding T-scores (Mean = 50, SD = 10). The chart shows various percentile ranges. A total score of 28-29 is at about the 50th percentile.

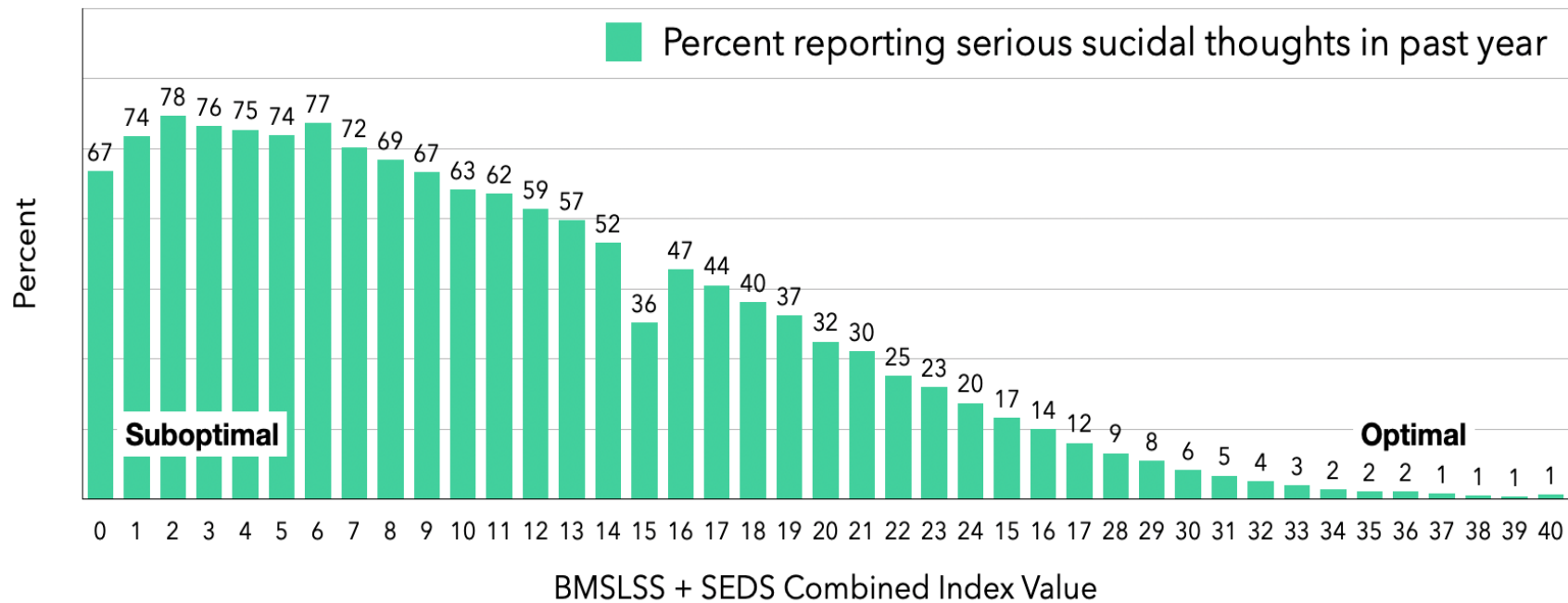


✓ 4029 of the students with a combined score of 15 had a BMSLSS total of 0 and a reversed SEDS total of 15. These students gave straight-line zero response to all 10 items. This placed them in single node "Languishing" group. See the Data Quality chapter for a additional information about these students's characteristics and implications for traditional dual-factor model classifications.

2021/22 CHKS Item **124**.
 During the past **12 months**, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for **two weeks or more** that you stopped doing some usual activities

2021/22 CHKS Responses, N = 505,606

BMSLSS total score range = 0-25
 + SEDS Total Score range 0=15 (reverse scored)
 Sum = 0-40: lower values = less optimal, higher values = more optimal well-being

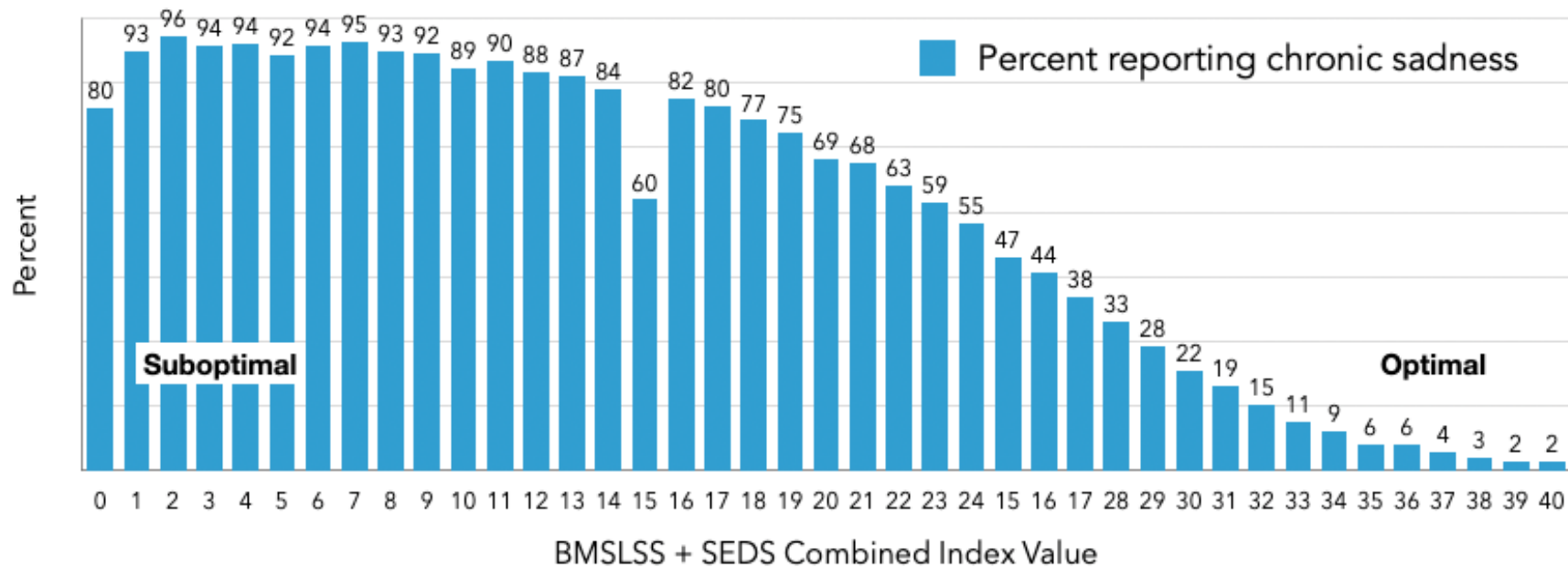


2021/22 CHKS Item **124**.
 During the past **12 months**, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for **two weeks or more** that you stopped doing some usual activities

2021/22 CHKS Responses, N = 505,606

BMSLSS total score range = 0-25
 + SEDS Total Score range 0=15 (reverse scored)
 Sum = 0-40: lower values = less optimal, higher values = more optimal well-being

Chronic Sadness for BMSLSS + SEDS Combined Index



Social Emotional Distress Scale

The original Social Emotional Distress Survey–Secondary (SEDS-S) assesses adolescents’ past month’s experiences of psychological distress. Given the continued need for and use of brief measures of student social emotional distress, this study examined a five-item version (SEDS-S-Brief) to evaluate its use for surveillance of adolescents’ wellness in schools. Three samples completed the SEDS-S-Brief. Sample 1 included a cross-sectional sample of 105,771 students from 113 California secondary schools; responses were used to examine validity evidence based on internal structure. Sample 2 included 10,770 secondary students who also completed the Social Emotional Health Survey–Secondary–2020, Mental Health Continuum–Short Form, Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale, and selected Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance items (chronic sadness and suicidal ideation). Sample 2 responses examined validity evidence based on relations to other variables. Sample 3 included 773 secondary students who completed the SEDS-S-Brief annually for three years, providing response stability coefficients. The SEDS-S-Brief was invariant across students based on sex, grade level, and Latinx status, supporting its use across diverse groups in schools. Additional analyses indicated moderate to strong convergent and discriminant validity characteristics and one- and two-year temporal stability. The findings advance the field toward comprehensive mental health surveillance practices to inform services for youth in schools.

Dowdy, E., Furlong, M. J., Nylund-Gibson, K., Moore, S., & Moffa, K. (2018). Initial validation of the Social Emotional Distress Scale to support complete mental health screening. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1534508417749871>

Dowdy, E., Furlong, M. J., Nylund-Gibson, K., Arch, D., Hinton, T., & Carter, D. (2022). Validating a Brief Student Distress Measure For Schoolwide Wellness Surveillance. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/15345084221138947>

Brief Multidimensional Life Satisfaction Scale

Global life satisfaction has been defined as a cognitive evaluation of one's life as a whole... It is distinguished from transitory affective states ... it refers to more general, enduring background appraisals encompassing white one's life overall or major facets of one's life. p. 5, Huebner (2004)

The Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale (Huebner et al., 2006; Seligson et al., 2003) was developed based on the pioneering efforts of Scott Hubner to look at student life satisfaction in the early 1990s developing the student life satisfaction skill and the multidimensional student life satisfaction scale. Huebner's interest with colleagues Valois and Zullig related to including questions about young people', perceived quality of life (QOL) with the 1997 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey in administered South Carolina. These

researchers wanted to include scale items related to students' life satisfaction judgments. Proposing that such information would enhance understanding of associated factors, they recognized the need for a brief measure. The MSLSS filled this purpose by efficiently asking students to rate their satisfaction in the five MSLSS domains: Family, Peers, School, Myself, and Neighborhood/Environment.

The high-quality stratified random sample responses of 5405 South Carolina high school students provided data for preliminary validation. Subsequent analyses documented negative relationships between students' life satisfaction and their involvement in various risk behaviors: *physical and mental health* (Valois et al., 2004); *substance use* (Zullig et al., 2001); *dieting and weight* (Valois et al., 2003); and youth developmental assets (Valois et al., 2009).

Huebner, E. S., Seligson, J. L., Valois, R. F., & Suldo, S. M. (2006). A review of the brief multidimensional students' life satisfaction scale. *Social Indicators Research, 79*(3), 477-484.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-005-5395-9>

Seligson, J. L., Huebner, E. S., & Valois, R. F. (2003). Preliminary validation of the brief multidimensional students' life satisfaction scale (BMSLSS). *Social Indicators Research, 61*(2), 121-145.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1021326822957>

Valois, R. F., Zullig, K., Huebner, E. S., & Drane, J. W. (2001). Relationship between life satisfaction and violent behaviors among adolescents. *American Journal of Health Behavior, 25*(4), 353-366.
<https://doi.org/10.5993/AJHB.25.4.1>

Valois, R. F., Zullig, K. J., Huebner, E. S., & Drane, J. W. (2004). Life satisfaction and suicide among high school adolescents. *Social Indicators Research, 66*(1-2), 81-105. Retrieved from
<https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/life-satisfaction-suicide-among-high-school/docview/60106192/se-2>

Valois, R. F., Zullig, K. J., Huebner, E. S., Kammermann, S. K., & Drane, J. W. (2002). Association between life satisfaction and sexual risk-taking behaviors among adolescents. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 11*(4), 427-440. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1020931324426>

Valois, R. F., Zullig, K. J., Huebner, E. S., & Drane, J. W. (2009). Youth developmental assets and perceived life satisfaction: Is there a relationship? *Applied Research in Quality of Life, 4*(4), 315-331. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-009-9083-9>