



# HOW ARE THE STUDENTS DOING?

...A QUESTION OFTEN ASKED, BUT IS IT OFTEN ANSWERED?



## HOW ARE THE STUDENTS DOING?

A baseline research question in effort to support social- and emotional-aspects of learning and provincial student well-being goals.

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## \* INTRODUCTIONS, CONTEXT & GRATITUDE

### Presenting author

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PhD student in educational studies, MSVU

Teacher for CCRCE

Parent of an adolescent

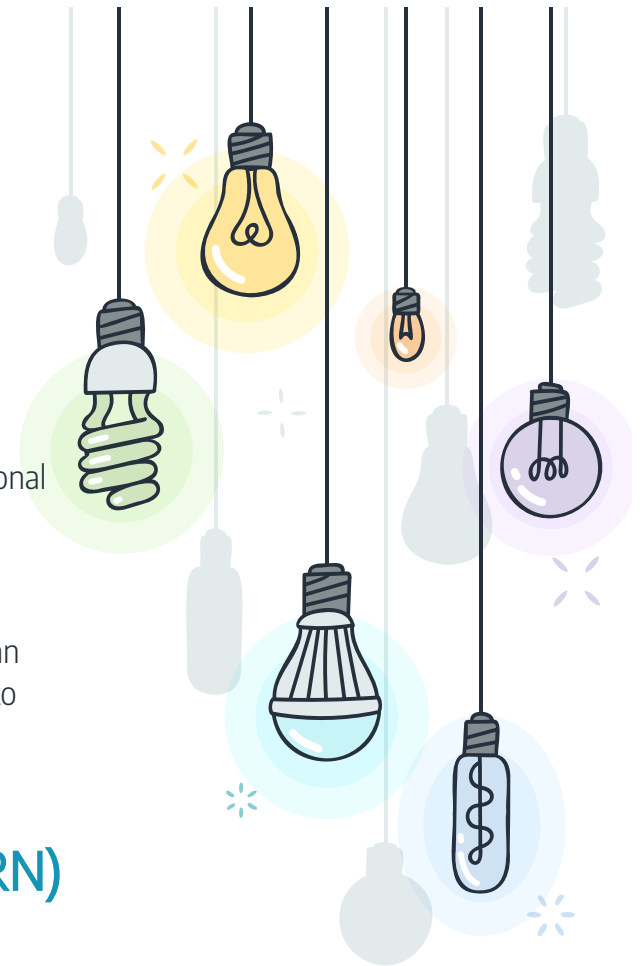
### COVID was our context

This team was initially funded to study teacher professional development regarding well-being and social-emotional learning (SEL).

COVID put a halt to that.

The province supported us to pivot to an online survey-based study that aimed to understand adolescent well-being.

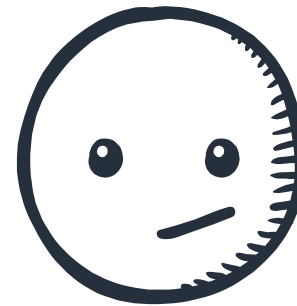
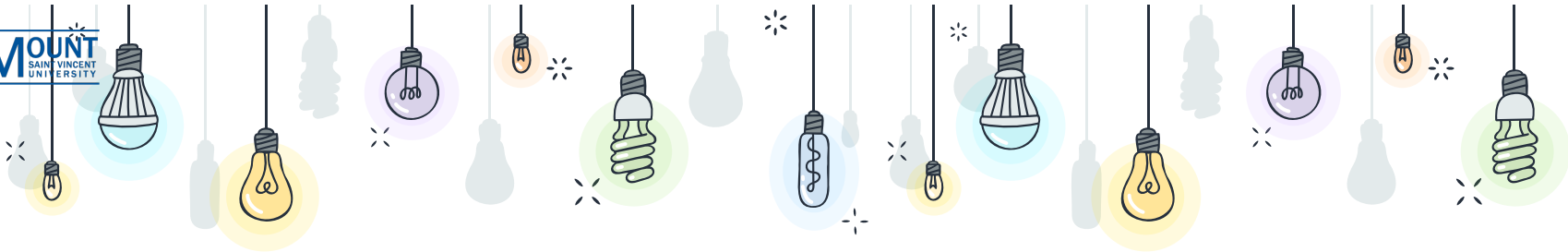
**Thank you to the Inter-University Research Network (IURN)  
for funding this work.**



# WELL-BEING AS PROVINCIAL PILLAR

Context of NSDEECD and broader academic literature





# MENTAL WELL-BEING

A state of mental health that supports mental function, social relationships and ability to adapt to change (Keyes, 2002).

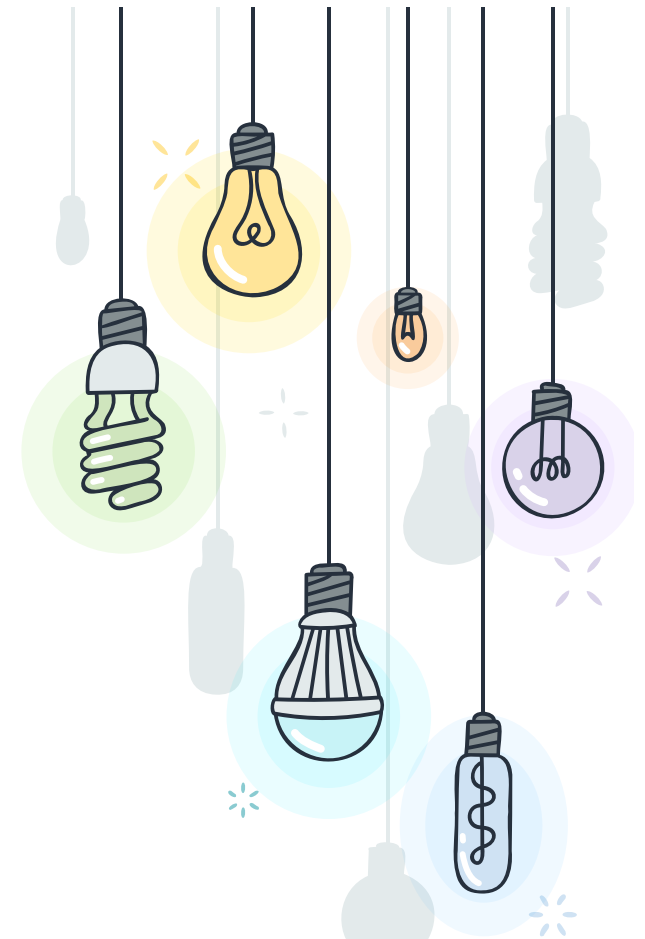
“ Inclusive education is a commitment to the well-being and achievement of every student.”

-NSDEECD 2023



## ✧ WELL-BEING AS A PROVINCIAL PILLAR

- + Inclusive Education Policy
- + Teaching Standards
- + Essential Graduation Competencies
- + Curriculum



<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/inclusiveeducationpolicyen.pdf>

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/psp/files-ppsp/docs/nsteachingstandardsen.pdf>

[https://curriculum.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resource-files/Essential%20Graduation%20Competencies%20\(2015\).pdf](https://curriculum.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resource-files/Essential%20Graduation%20Competencies%20(2015).pdf)

<https://curriculum.novascotia.ca/english-programs>

## \* WHY IS WELL-BEING IMPORTANT?

- + Rights of the child (WHO)
- + Predictive of long term health outcomes
- + Predictive of academic engagement
- + Predictive of academic achievement



Bringing it all back to the Nova Scotian context, if we do not know how the students are doing, then who does? \*

Our research team aims to better understand the well-being of high school students across Nova Scotia.





✦ IF WELL-BEING IS PREDICTIVE OF ENGAGEMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT, THEN WE NEED TO ASK, WHAT PREDICTS WELL-BEING?

+ **Belongingness needs**

- × Social status in school community/Canada
- × Social fit at school

+ **Autonomy in one's own life**

- × Social Mobility



# IURN-FUNDED STUDY

Questions, methods, results, and next steps



## \* RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- + What are high-school students' mental well-being scores in Nova Scotia?
- + How do students describe their own well-being?
- + Are measures of sense of social-status, -fit, and -mobility predictive of well-being?





## METHODS

Online anonymous survey-based study with 5 (brief) standardized scales and 3 open-ended questions for students to express themselves. Average completion time was 7 minutes.





## RECRUITMENT

(ESTIMATED 1.6 % OF N.S. HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT POPULATION)

DEECD approval to contact RCEs

3 RCEs approved the study, emailed recruitment email to principals to send at their discretion

No communication with researchers about which schools participated



## \* PARTICIPANTS, N = 163

### Sex & Gender

#### Gender:

76 female,  
79 male,  
4 non-binary (1  
transgender male,  
2 demi female, 1 fluid)

#### Sex:

81 female,  
83 male,  
0 intersex

### Racial Identity / Ethnicity

111 Euro-Canadian,  
8 First Nations, Metis or Inuit,  
3 First Nations and Euro-Canadian,  
6 African-Canadian,  
1 Indo- & African-Canadian,  
1 Chinese,  
1 Euro- & South-East-Asian Canadian,  
1 Middle Eastern or North African,  
1 Middle-Eastern or North African  
& Canadian.

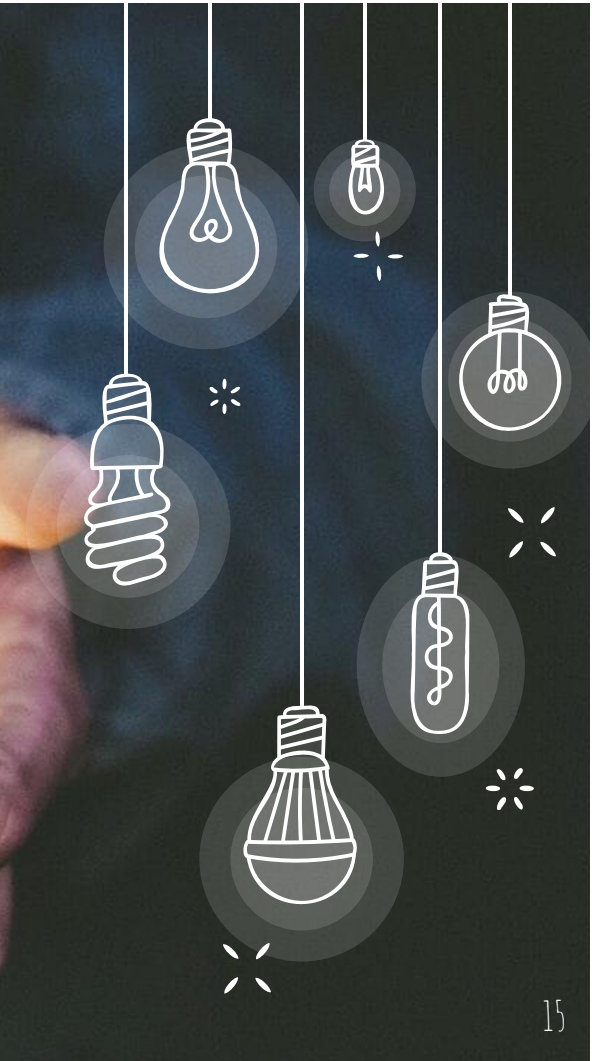
### Age, Grade & Achievement

16 to 19 years old  
62 in Grade 10  
62 in grade 11  
39 in Grade 12


Average % academic  
achievement 82.93, st. dev  
= 12.21, range from 40%  
to 99%

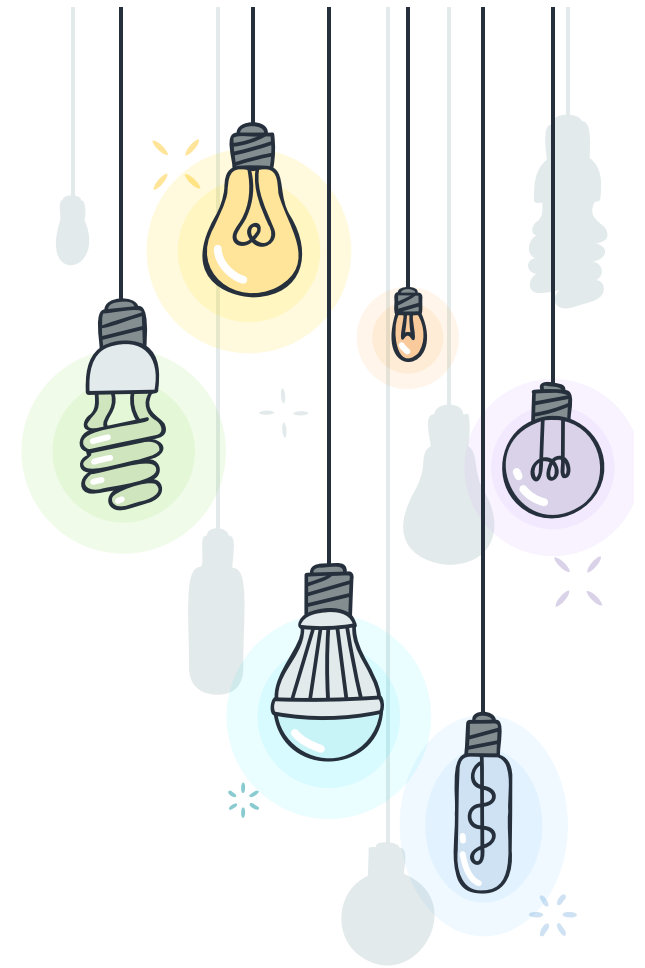


GOALS FOR  
INTERSECTIONAL  
REPRESENTATION  
NEEDED A MUCH  
LARGER SAMPLE SIZE.



## DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS, N = 163

	Lowest Score	Highest Score	Mean (95% CI)	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's alpha
Mental Well-Being (14 – 70)	14	70	45.46 (43.75, 47.18)	11.08	0.91
Social Fit at School (17 – 85)	27	85	62.74 (61.02, 64.46)	11.12	0.89
Status in Canada (0 – 10)	1	10	6.57 (6.32, 6.58)	1.65	N/A
Status in School Community (0 – 10)	0	10	7.02 (6.72, 7.31)	1.89	N/A
Social Mobility Beliefs (6 to 42)	13	42	27.38 (26.38, 28.37)	6.44	0.78

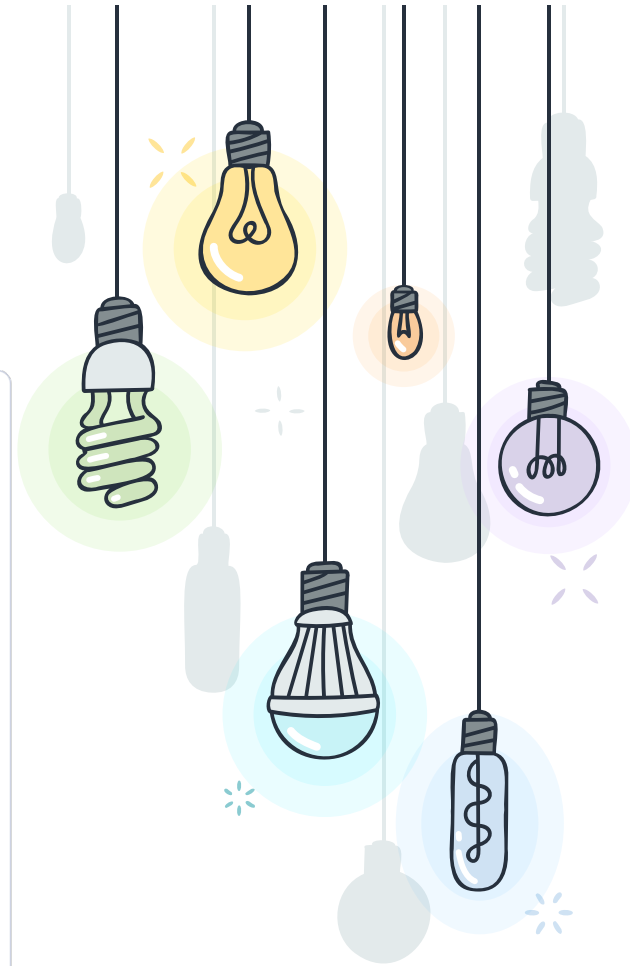
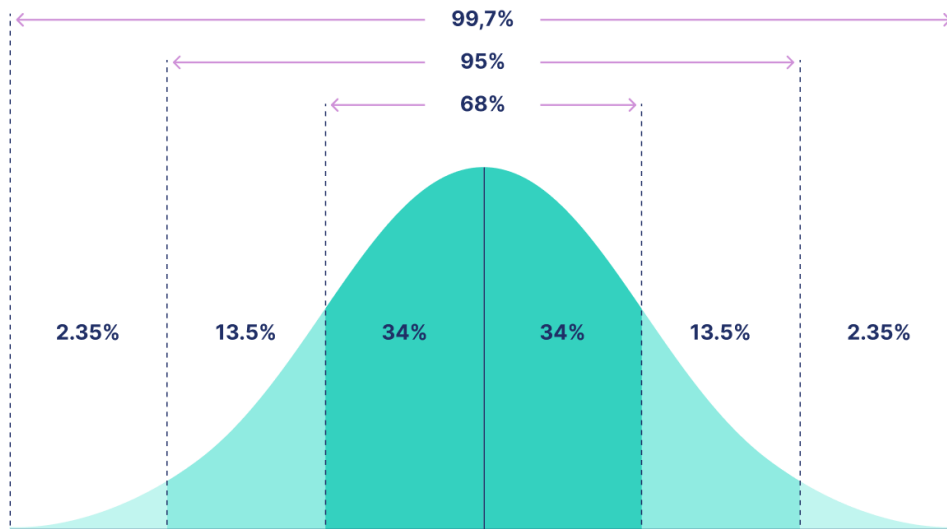




# DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS, N = 163



Using the empirical rule in a normal distribution



## \* STUDENT VOICE: BALANCED PERSPECTIVES

### Barriers to Well-Being:

Stress, anxiety and decreased motivation regarding school

Fear of impact on university goals

Loneliness

Lack of clear messaging and increased worry regarding return to school during COVID

### Indicators of Well-Being:

School as a fulfilling place with meaningful social relationships

Strengthened relationships with family members in household

New insight regarding gratitude for everything they have

Space and new perspective taking leading to making healthier choices



## PUTTING NOVA SCOTIA ON THE MAP



Social mobility, social fit and social status in school-community are positively predictive of mental well-being ( $R = 0.62$ ,  $F = 19.97$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).  
Females have significantly lower scores on mental well-being than their male peers.

~ 28,500 STUDENTS

(+ ~3% ANNUAL GROWTH)

How do we plan to move forward in their best interests?



# THANKS!

**Any questions?**

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