

# Nevada Peer Matching Tool User Guide

Last Updated October 12, 2018

The Nevada Peer Matching Tool (“the tool”) was developed to provide schools and stakeholders with more information to help data users meaningfully understand and use results from the Nevada School Climate/Social Emotional Learning (NV-SCSEL) survey. The tool allows users to compare the school climate from one school (a “target school”) to the climate in similar schools in Nevada. School climate data come from the 2018 NV-SCSEL survey, which asks students about their perceptions of the cultural and linguistic competence, relationships, physical safety, and emotional safety of their school, and about their social and emotional competencies.

The tool automatically matches schools based on key characteristics of the school and students served. The tool’s automated matching functionality can be used with three simple steps:

1. Choose the target school (your school).
2. View survey results from your school and the peer schools selected.
3. Inspect match quality.

Users can also customize the way that peer schools are chosen for matching by selecting matching options in the first step.

Users also have the option to manually select a peer school for comparison by using the “Manual Comparison” tab described in Section 4.

## 1. Choose target school (and select matching options [optional])

Choose your school from the dropdown menu (top left). Your school’s survey results and the results from the matched group of peer schools will automatically be populated in the results pane (right).

The following additional options are provided (bottom left) for users wishing to customize the way that peer schools are chosen:

- 1) Match within grade level;
- 2) Change matching variables; and
- 3) Change number of matches.

If “Change matching variables” or “Change number of matches” is selected, more options will appear beneath these selections. For example, by selecting “Change matching variables,” school and student characteristic variables will be displayed, and users can select/unselect the characteristics that will be used to identify the schools that are most like the target school. The results pane is automatically updated as new options are selected.

If “Change number of matches” is selected, a field is displayed where users can increase or decrease the number of peer schools (from the default of five peer schools).

The screenshot shows the 'Choose Your School' interface. On the left, there are several sections of matching variables:

- Choose Your School:** A dropdown menu showing 'Beatty High School'.
- Match within grade levels? (e.g., high school to other high schools)
- Change matching variables?
- Change number of matches?

Below these are three sections of variables, each with a red box around it and a red arrow pointing to the 'Change matching variables?' checkbox:

- High School-Specific:**
  - ACT Composite Score
  - 4-Year Graduation Rates
- Race/Ethnicity:**
  - % Am In/AK Native
  - % Asian
  - % Black
  - % Hispanic
  - % White
- Special Populations:**
  - % Individualized Education Program
  - % English Language Learners
  - % Free/Reduced Priced Lunch Eligible

On the right, there are tabs for 'Matched Averages', 'Graphics', 'Matched Schools', and 'Manual Comparison'. Below the tabs is a table with the following data:

	Your School	Peer Schools
Cultural and Linguistic Competence	375	338
Relationships	359	334
Emotional Safety	357	324
Physical Safety	409	348
Social and Emotional Competencies	70	74

Below the table is a link: [↑ Click a row to show variable description.](#)

A red arrow points from the 'Change matching variables?' checkbox to the text: **Change matching variables here**

*Tip:* Attempting to match on a large number of characteristics may reduce the quality of the matching results (i.e., may result in identified peer schools that are not strong matches). If using the options to change matching variables, use caution not to select too many matching variables and always inspect match quality as part of data interpretation.

## 2. View survey results

Compare survey results between the target school and peer schools by viewing the “Matched Averages” and “Graphics” tabs.

The “Matched Averages” table shows the target school’s survey results on Cultural and Linguistic Competence, Relationships, Emotional Safety, Physical Safety, and Social and Emotional Competencies alongside the combined scores of the peer schools for each topic. Users can learn more about each topic by clicking on the table row for that topic.

## Matched Averages

↓

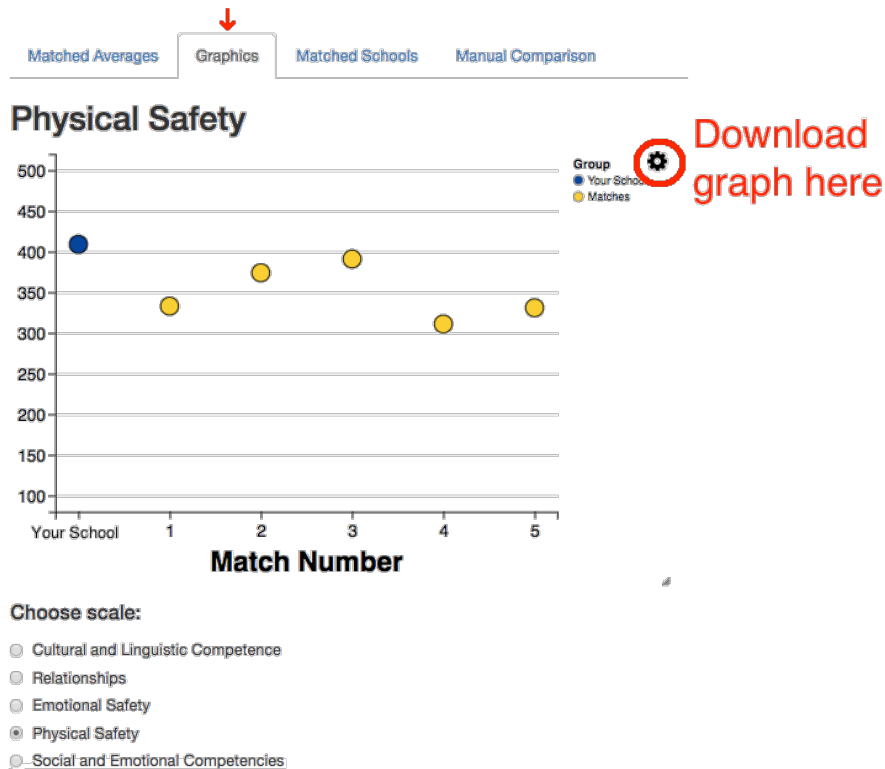
	Matched Averages	Graphics	Matched Schools	Manual Comparison
			<b>Your School</b>	<b>Peer Schools</b>
Cultural and Linguistic Competence			375	338
Relationships			359	334
Emotional Safety			357	324
Physical Safety			409	348
Social and Emotional Competencies			70	74

### What These Results Mean

**Physical safety** refers to the protection of all stakeholders - including families, caregivers, students, school staff, and the community - from fear of or actual exposure to physical violence, theft, intimidation, intruders, harsh punishment, and weapons. In order to establish a secure learning environment, physical safety is paramount.

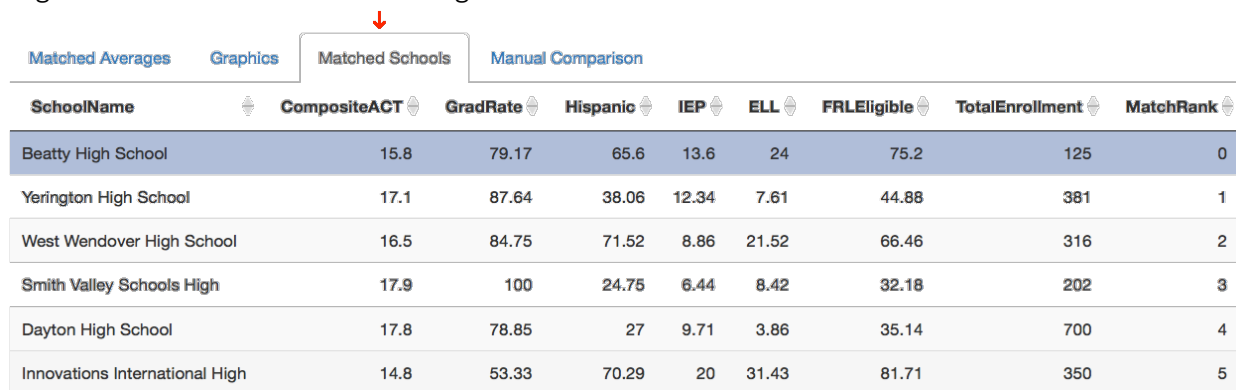
The chart in the “Graphics” tab displays the target school and each peer school’s survey results from the topic selected. Clicking on the data circles will display the school name and scale score. Topics can be selected from the list below the graph, and graphs can be downloaded for use outside the tool.

## Graphic Comparisons



### 3. Inspect match quality

The tool provides information about the target school and each of the peer schools on the “Matched Schools” tab. The Matched Schools table displays demographic information used in the matching process to allow users to inspect how closely the peer schools are matched to the target school.<sup>1</sup> Click on the matching variable header to sort schools on that characteristic.

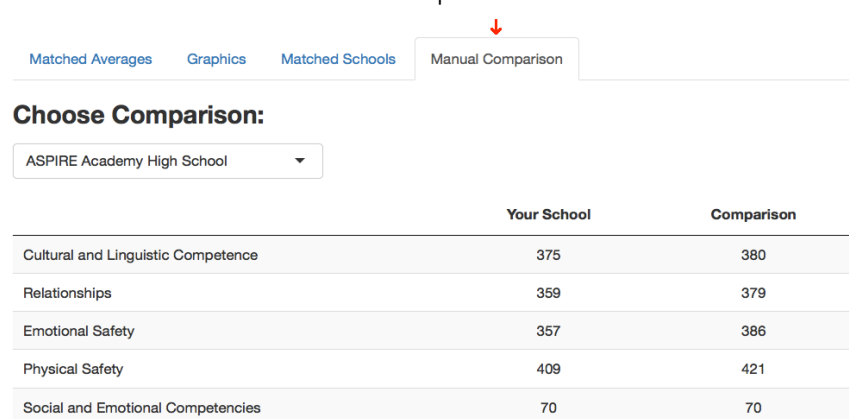


SchoolName	CompositeACT	GradRate	Hispanic	IEP	ELL	FRLEligible	TotalEnrollment	MatchRank
Beatty High School	15.8	79.17	65.6	13.6	24	75.2	125	0
Yerington High School	17.1	87.64	38.06	12.34	7.61	44.88	381	1
West Wendover High School	16.5	84.75	71.52	8.86	21.52	66.46	316	2
Smith Valley Schools High	17.9	100	24.75	6.44	8.42	32.18	202	3
Dayton High School	17.8	78.85	27	9.71	3.86	35.14	700	4
Innovations International High	14.8	53.33	70.29	20	31.43	81.71	350	5

If the characteristics of the peer schools substantially differ on characteristics that are key to your examination, refer to Section 2 for information on how to customize the tool’s matching algorithms.

### 4. Manually select a comparison school

Under the “Manual Comparison” tab, users can select a specific comparison school. This option is independent of a school’s characteristics or match rank. Simply select the comparison school from the dropdown menu and a table will be presented that displays the target and comparison school’s scores on each climate topic.



	Your School	Comparison
Cultural and Linguistic Competence	375	380
Relationships	359	379
Emotional Safety	357	386
Physical Safety	409	421
Social and Emotional Competencies	70	70

<sup>1</sup> Note that Nevada Report Card school and student characteristic data (used for the tool’s matching algorithms) are available at the school level, whereas NV-SCSEL survey data are usually available at the grade-band level (elementary, middle, high). It is, therefore, possible that multiple NV-SCSEL schools (e.g., School X elementary and School X middle) will share the same school-level characteristics data.