

NYC SCHOOL SURVEY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

What is the NYC School Survey?

Every year, parents/guardians, teachers, and students in grades 6-12 take the NYC School Survey. The survey helps school administrators and pre-K program leaders understand what key members of their school or program's community think about the learning environment and the quality of education children are receiving. The information captured by the survey is designed to support a dialogue among all members of a school or program's community about how to make the school or program a better place for learning.

The NYC School Survey consists of three separate survey instruments: The "Parent/Guardian Survey", the "Teacher Survey", and the "Student Survey" (for students in grades 6 – 12 only). The parent/guardian and student surveys can be filled out online or by paper. The teacher survey is only available online.

For district schools: NYC School Survey results are shared in the NYC School Survey report and incorporated into each school's School Quality Snapshot and School Quality Guide.

For pre-K programs: Anonymous results from the 2017 Parent/Guardian Survey will be shared publicly in the NYC School Survey report and incorporated into each program's Pre-K Quality Snapshot, and may be used along with other information to help the Division of Early Childhood Education understand program quality with respect to the Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards. These standards define expectations for high quality Pre-K for All programs and are grounded in the NYCDOE's vision for school improvement across the pre-K to 12 continuum, the NYCDOE's Framework for Great Schools.

Are there any changes to this year's surveys?

Like last year, the 2016-2017 version of the NYC School Survey is aligned to the [NYCDOE's Framework for Great Schools](#). Based on analysis of last year's results and participant feedback, the NYCDOE has made minor revisions to all three versions of the survey (parent/guardian, teacher, and student) this year. The survey will continue to collect vital information about a school's capacity to improve student achievement by measuring the extent to which each school incorporates the six essential elements—Rigorous Instruction, Supportive Environment, Collaborative Teachers, Effective School Leadership, Strong Family and Community Ties, and Trust—that drive school improvement and develop students to compete in the 21st century. The survey will be one of multiple measures used to help the NYCDOE assess the six essential elements.

General revisions to the survey include:

- The elimination of items that were found to be redundant.
- The addition of new items to improve the strength of existing measures or based on feedback from focus groups, feedback sessions, the Research Alliance for NYC Schools (RANYCS), and other NYCDOE offices.
- The revision of existing items to improve clarity.

*Revisions to the **parent/guardian** component of the survey include:*

- 4 questions deleted from the following elements: Collaborative Teachers and Strong Family-Community Ties;
- The addition of 3 questions to the Strong Family-Community Ties element; and

- 15 questions revised to improve clarity.

*Revisions to the **student** component of the survey include:*

- 1 question deleted from the Supportive Environment element;
- 2 new questions added to the Cultural Awareness and Inclusive Classroom Instruction element; and
- 43 questions revised to improve clarity.

*Revisions to the **teacher** component of the survey include:*

- 7 questions deleted from the following elements: Collaborative Teachers, Effective School Leadership, Rigorous Instruction, and Supportive Environment;
- 4 new questions added to the Collaborative Teachers and Rigorous Instruction elements;
- 25 questions revised to improve clarity; and
- A focus on strengthening questions in the Cultural Awareness and Inclusive Classroom Instruction measure.

What is the deadline for completing the surveys?

All teacher, parent/guardian, and student surveys must be completed online or postmarked by Friday, March 31, 2017.

THE TEACHER AND PARAPROFESSIONAL/PARENT COORDINATOR SURVEYS

How and when is the teacher survey administered?

The teacher survey is administered exclusively online. During the week of February 27th your school or pre-K program will receive a package containing sealed postcards. Each postcard contains a unique, *seven*-digit code. Postcards should be randomly distributed to all eligible teachers. Once they receive their postcard, teachers will go to the School Survey website (www.nycschoolssurvey.org), follow the link to *Teacher Survey*, enter the *seven*-digit code found on the postcard, and complete the survey. Survey administration for teachers (as for families and students in grades 6 – 12), extends until March 31, 2017.

Is the teacher survey anonymous?

The teacher survey continues to be absolutely anonymous. There is no link between the login information that a teacher receives and the identity of a teacher. Survey Coordinators are directed to randomly distribute login postcards to eligible teachers and guidance counselors. The survey can be taken on any computer, so teachers do not need to log in to their account on the NYCDOE network in order to take the survey.

In addition, in order to protect the anonymity of paraprofessionals and parent coordinators, the NYCDOE will only report survey results from paraprofessionals and parent coordinators at the citywide level. No individual responses from any school staff members will be shared with schools.

How should we distribute postcards to teachers?

The teacher survey process is absolutely anonymous, so please plan to randomly distribute sealed postcards to each teacher and guidance counselor listed on the roster provided for your school. The number on each survey postcard serves only to identify the school. No one at the school should record these numbers or keep track of who received which number.

For pre-K programs: The number of teachers in your program was *estimated* based on enrollment at your program in early November. Teachers who were employed at your program as of November 2016 are eligible to take the survey this year. If teachers currently employed at your program were not included in the total number of eligible teachers estimated in early November 2016, they are not eligible to take the survey and should not receive a postcard. If you receive more teacher postcards than the number of teachers at your program as of November 2016, please discard these extra cards.

You may want to consider distributing the login information to groups of teachers gathered together, rather than one by one, so that it is clear that there is no way for anyone to know who has received a particular number. There is no link between the login information that a teacher receives and the identity of a teacher; it is important for this policy to be absolutely clear to the teachers taking the survey.

In addition, you may want to consider discussing the process with your colleagues and UFT chapter chair to ensure that the procedure is clear and transparent. Please be thoughtful about the sensitivity of the process in your school and help make sure that your colleagues have an opportunity to provide open and honest feedback.

For more guidance on ethical survey administration, please review the Survey Code of Ethics on the School Survey website (www.nycschoolssurvey.org).

What if a teacher loses their postcard or survey access code?

If a teacher loses a postcard, direct them to the Survey Hotline at 1-800-690-8603. The Hotline will issue a new survey access code to the teacher. The Hotline will ask for the staff member's name to ensure that they are included on the list of staff eligible to take the survey. The Hotline will not record the name given and will not make any note of which code was provided to the staff member. For pre-K programs, the Hotline will ask for the staff member's site ID.

What should I do if a teacher on my roster is no longer employed at the school?

For district schools: Schools will receive rosters of eligible teachers to whom survey postcards should be randomly distributed. If a teacher listed there is no longer with the school, they'll end up with more cards than needed. Please destroy/recycle these extra cards. Do not give the postcard to another teacher or staff member who is not listed on the roster; simply notify the school's administration of the need to update that teacher's file in Galaxy. At the end of the survey period (March 31), response rates will be automatically adjusted in accordance with any changes in teacher records in Galaxy.

For pre-K programs: The number of teachers in your program was *estimated* based on enrollment at your program in early November. Teachers who were employed at your program as of November 2016 are eligible to take the survey this year. If teachers currently employed at your program were not included in the total number of eligible teachers estimated in early November 2016, they are not eligible to take the survey and should not receive a postcard. If you receive more teacher postcards than the number of teachers at your program as of November 2016, please discard these extra cards.

What should I do if a teacher is not included on my roster?

Survey materials were provided for all full-time pedagogues (teachers and guidance counselors) employed at your school as of the beginning of December. This date is used to ensure that the staff taking the survey have been at a school long enough to provide meaningful feedback about its learning environment.

Teachers and guidance counselors who arrived at your school after December, or who are not full-time pedagogical employees, are not eligible to take this year's survey. If you believe a teacher was excluded in error, please send an email to surveys@schools.nyc.gov.

There are teachers on my roster that are on leave. Should they take the survey? Can I remove them from our roster in case they don't take the survey?

Surveys were provided to all full time NYCDOE pedagogues (teachers and guidance counselors) employed at your school as of early December 2016. Teachers on leave status are sometimes counted in this population. We encourage you to focus on your current teacher population to work toward high response rates. Consider making the survey materials available to any staff on leave by directing them to call the Survey Hotline at 1-800-690-8603 for a survey access code to take the survey online at www.nycschoolssurvey.org.

Will paraprofessionals and parent coordinators take the survey?

Paraprofessionals and parent coordinators will take the survey online. Login information for paraprofessionals and parent coordinators will be provided to the school's Survey Coordinator via email during the week of February 27th. Results from paraprofessional and parent coordinator

responses will only be reported citywide in order to preserve the anonymity of the survey for all school staff.

My school did not receive a roster of eligible teachers. Who should receive these postcards?

A small number of schools do not store teacher data in NYCDOE systems and did not manually submit a teacher roster for the survey. These schools have received postcards for teachers based on the size of the school and should distribute these postcards to the full-time teachers and guidance counselors at the school.

When is the deadline for the teacher, paraprofessional and parent coordinator surveys?

All teacher, paraprofessional, and parent coordinator surveys must be submitted by March 31, 2017.

THE PARENT/GUARDIAN SURVEY

How is the Parent/Guardian Survey administered?

During the weeks of February 27 and March 6, you will receive a package with surveys for all families. Each family will receive a survey in English and Spanish, unless their “home language” in ATS is one of the other official languages that the NYCDOE supports. In those instances, the family will receive a survey in English and that other “home language.”

- The package you receive will contain Parent/Guardian Surveys sorted as follows:
 - For district schools: Materials will be sorted in accordance with the preferences each school submitted in the fall. They will be sorted alphabetically by grade, alphabetically by school, by ATS official class, or by STARS 3rd period.
 - For Pre-K programs: Materials will not be sorted by class or homeroom; instead, the parent/guardian surveys will arrive in a single package, in which parent/guardian surveys are sorted alphabetically by student last name.
- Each survey is placed in a green envelope, which contains the survey itself and a prepaid return envelope.
- Families can also take the survey online – in any of the nine official NYCDOE languages – using the **eight**-digit survey code found on their respective survey. Families completing the survey online should go to the NYC School Survey website (www.nycschoolssurvey.org), enter their **eight**-digit code, and complete the survey.
- If families have more than one child in the same school or pre-K program, they should fill out just one survey about their oldest child at that school/program. If a family has children in two or more New York City schools/pre-K programs, the family should fill out a separate survey for each school/program. However, if you receive more than one survey for a household, please send all surveys home.

What should I do if I find that a parent/guardian at my school has not received a survey?

Parents/guardians are eligible to complete a survey if their child has been enrolled in the school since early November 2016. *Students enrolled after that point will not receive a survey for their parents/guardians.* Also, we try to provide a single survey to each household in your school by looking for guardian and residence matches between students, so “missing” surveys may actually represent cases where a single survey was provided to the guardian of a family’s oldest child in the school.

My school received a survey for someone who is no longer a part of this school's community. Can I discard the survey materials?

If a school or Pre-K center receives a survey for a student or parent/guardian of a student who is no longer enrolled in that school, simply notify your school's pupil accounting secretary of the need to update the student file in ATS. At the end of the survey period (March 31), response rates will be updated in accordance with ATS records and individuals who are no longer part of your school's community will be removed from your school's final response rate. You may discard/recycle the materials that were provided for that individual.

If a NYCEEC pre-K program receives a survey for a student or parent/guardian of a student who is no longer enrolled in that NYCEEC, the survey coordinator should notify your contracting agency (ACS or DECE field office) that the student is no longer attending your program.

If a 4410 pre-K program receives a survey for a student or parent/guardian of a student who is no longer enrolled in that 4410 program, the survey coordinator should email 4410Oversight@schools.nyc.gov, notifying them of the discrepancy.

There are siblings in my school. How will the survey team account for this?

Your school's survey population will be adjusted before response rates are finalized in April based on enrollment records in ATS. Students with matching address information in ATS will be counted as a single household and your response rate will be adjusted to reflect one survey for the household.

What should parents/guardians do if they have more than one child in this school?

Parents/guardians should complete one survey per school. If a parent/guardian has more than one child in the same school, the parent/guardian should fill out one survey *based on the experience of the oldest child in that school*. If a parent/guardian has children enrolled in multiple schools, the parent/guardian should fill out one separate survey for each school.

How can parents/guardians take the survey online?

Parents/guardians can take the survey online at www.nycschoolssurvey.org using the survey access code printed on their individual surveys.

What if a parent/guardian loses the paper survey?

If parents/guardians lose their surveys or are having technical difficulties with the online survey, they should call the Survey Hotline at 1-800-690-8603. The Survey Hotline will be able to provide eligible parents/guardians with survey access information to take the survey online.

My school would like to reward participants for completing surveys. How will we know which students and parents/guardians have returned surveys?

The survey is completely confidential for parents/guardians and students, and anonymous for teachers, so there is no way for anyone from the NYCDOE or individual schools to know which people have or have not taken the survey. However, if schools would like to set up a system

whereby students drop off completed surveys in sealed envelopes or submit a completion slip signed by parents/guardians in a school mailbox in exchange for a reward to be named by the school, then school officials can reward students whose parents/guardians fill out the survey. Please remember to uphold the confidential nature of survey responses and be careful not to interfere in any way with surveys that have been completed and sealed. For more guidance on ethical survey administration, please review the Survey Code of Ethics on the School Survey website (www.nycschoolssurvey.org).

Can my school assist parents/guardians and families who are unable to read or have limited English proficiency?

Your school knows best how to empower families to provide feedback on the survey. If your school is able to provide reading or translation/interpretation assistance, please do so, but it is imperative that your school staff be mindful of the confidential nature of the survey and extremely careful not to a) influence survey responses in any way or b) attempt to review survey responses in any way. For more guidance on ethical survey administration, please review the Survey Code of Ethics on the School Survey website (www.nycschoolssurvey.org).

Is the online survey translated?

Yes. The online survey for parents/guardians and students is provided in English as well as nine languages offered by the NYCDOE: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Urdu. The online survey is available at www.nycschoolssurvey.org.

Where can parents/guardians go to complete the survey online if they don't have computers?

Parents/guardians can visit local library branches for free computer access. Schools are also encouraged to consider making school computers and space available to parents/guardians to take the survey online.

How will parents/guardians know that their online survey has been successfully submitted?

Parents/guardians have an opportunity to provide an email address while taking the online survey. This step is completely optional. If parents/guardians choose to provide an email address, a confirmation email will be sent to that address indicating that the survey was submitted. In addition, participants will see a confirmation page on the computer screen when they have submitted the survey. This page can be printed for a parent's record.

Can a parent/guardian fill out another parent/guardian's survey?

No. Parents/guardians are assigned a unique survey access code and must complete the individual survey that they receive.

How can schools and programs encourage families to complete the Parent/Guardian Survey?

- Make sure that all families receive the Parent/Guardian Survey
 - Distribute the surveys at parent-teacher conferences, awards nights, school sports events or at other events at the school or in the classroom that draw families.
 - For pre-K programs and students in younger grades:
 - Have your teachers or other program staff distribute the surveys during drop-off/pick-up.

- Send home the surveys in students' backpacks.
- **Remind** families on your program's website, in newsletters, or on social media to complete the School Survey.
 - Send home a letter or email to families conveying the essential role that their feedback will play in supporting program improvement.
 - Make clear to families that they may fill out the survey in a completely confidential manner without any influence over the nature of their responses.

When is the deadline for parents/guardians to take the survey?

All parent/guardian surveys must be submitted by March 31, 2017.

THE STUDENT SURVEY

Which students take the survey?

Survey materials have been provided for the students in your school enrolled in grades 6 through 12. A student must have been enrolled at your school in early November 2016 to be eligible to take the survey for your school. Students that enrolled after that point will not participate in the survey at your school this year.

How do students take the survey?

Students take the survey in school, during the school day. It is up to your school to determine the appropriate time and process for completion of the survey in accordance with your school's schedule, resources, and availability of computers.

Your school should plan a full class period for students to complete the survey. Please do not direct students to take the survey on their own time. Schools that plan for student completion of the survey during class time achieve higher response rates by ensuring that students do not lose survey materials.

In the fall, schools chose whether their students would take the survey on paper or online. If your school chose paper student surveys, your students may take the survey on paper or can opt to take it online. The materials that you have received consist of paper surveys with unique survey access codes. Students can complete these paper surveys or can use the survey access codes to take the survey online at www.nycschoolssurvey.org. Each survey is personalized and should be distributed to the individual student named. If your school opted to have students take the survey online, the package that you have received contains survey postcards for students to take the survey online at www.nycschoolssurvey.org. Each postcard displays a specific student's name and a unique **seven**-digit survey access code that allows the student to take the School Survey online.

How should my school send student paper surveys back in once they are completed?

Schools should collect completed paper student surveys and return them in the box in which they were provided via UPS, using the UPS shipping form provided in the box.

1. Record the tracking number from the enclosed UPS shipping form for your records. This will allow you to track your package, since tracking updates are not provided.
2. Manually fill in your school's address under section one on page one of the UPS shipping form.
3. Peel off the adhesive pre-paid UPS return label on page three of the UPS shipping form and place it on your package.
4. Give page one of the UPS shipping form to the UPS driver. Keep page two for your records. If possible, please utilize any regular UPS pick-ups that occur at your school to return the package at no cost. If you are unable to do so or your school does not have a regular UPS pick up, please take your package to any UPS location where it will be shipped at no cost to your school. Note that calling UPS to schedule a pick up at your school may result in a fee.
5. Be sure that all surveys are completed and shipped by March 31, 2017.

What should I do if I find that a student at my school has not received a survey?

Students are eligible to complete a survey if they have been enrolled in the school since early November 2016. Students that have been admitted since that time are not eligible to take the survey this year at their current schools and are not counted in their schools' survey populations. If you feel that a student has been excluded in error, please send an email with the student's name and OSIS code to surveys@schools.nyc.gov.

What should I do if a survey was sent for a student who is no longer enrolled?

If a school receives a survey for a student or parent/guardian of a student who is no longer enrolled in that school, simply notify your school's pupil accounting secretary of the need to update the student file in ATS. At the end of the survey period (March 31), response rates will be updated in accordance with ATS records and individuals who are no longer part of your school's community will be removed from your school's final response rate. You may discard/recycle the materials that were provided for that individual.

My school would like to reward students who complete surveys. How will we know which students have returned surveys?

The survey is completely confidential for parents/guardians and students, as well as anonymous for teachers, so there is no way for anyone from the NYCDOE or individual schools to know which people have or have not taken the survey. However, schools are welcome to monitor and reward participation provided that schools are careful in upholding the confidential nature of survey responses and remain vigilant in protecting against any interference with the completion process or with surveys that have been completed and sealed. For more guidance on ethical survey administration, please review the Survey Code of Ethics on the School Survey website (www.nycschoolssurvey.org).

Should Long-Term Absence Students (LTAs) take the survey?

Long-term absence students (and the parents/guardians of these students) are eligible to take the survey. While we understand that schools face challenges in administering the survey to these populations, schools should make a reasonable effort to provide the survey to these individuals.

Are all District 75 students being surveyed? Which are and which are not?

Like last year, survey materials have been provided for all students in District 75 schools. If a principal at an individual school decides that a particular New York State Alternate Assessment (“NYSAA”) eligible student is not able to take the survey, simply do not provide survey materials to that student.

Instead, discard/recycle the materials. At the end of the survey period (March 31), students with an NYSAA who did not take the survey will be removed from their schools’ final response rate.

What should I do if a student loses his or her survey materials?

This situation can be largely prevented by distributing student survey materials during class time when a class is ready to take the survey immediately. Lost student survey issues will be handled on a case-by-case basis and should be reported to surveys@schools.nyc.gov.

Is the online student survey translated?

Yes. The online survey for parents/guardians and students is provided in English as well as the following nine NYCDOE supported languages: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Urdu. The online survey is available at www.nycschoolssurvey.org.

Can a student use another student’s login information or survey materials?

No. Students are assigned a unique survey access code number and must complete the survey using the materials that they receive.

What if a student does not want to take the survey?

The NYC School Survey is voluntary and confidential. It is a student's choice to take or not take the survey. If a student objects to taking the survey in school, that student may take the survey material and complete the survey on his/her own time.

Can my school assist students who are unable to read, have limited English proficiency, or require other accommodations due to a disability?

Your school knows best how to empower students to provide feedback on the survey. If your school is able to provide reading, translation/interpretation, or other assistance, please do so, but it is imperative that your school staff be mindful of the confidential nature of the survey and extremely careful not to a) influence survey responses in any way or b) attempt to review survey responses in any way. For more guidance on ethical survey administration, please review the Survey Code of Ethics on the School Survey website (www.nycschoolssurvey.org).

When is the deadline for students to take the survey?

All student surveys must be submitted by March 31, 2017.

Other questions? Email surveys@schools.nyc.gov.