

## 2017 NYC School Survey

### How to Increase Family Engagement with the Survey

Schools that successfully engage families in the annual NYC School Survey are located in all five boroughs and serve diverse students and families. One thing these schools have in common is a strong culture of family engagement year-round tailored to the distinct communication styles and needs of their school communities. In this guide, schools with the highest parent response rates citywide share their strategies for promoting participation in the parent/guardian survey.

#### WHAT CAN YOU DO BEFORE SURVEY ADMINISTRATION?



##### REVIEW & USE THE RESULTS

Parents want to have a voice in their students' learning, and it is important for them to see how the feedback they provide through the NYC School Survey is used. Schools with strong family engagement are able to highlight their strengths and areas for continuous improvement, and share with parents how they are using results from the NYC School Survey, along with other NYCDOE reports, to inform planning and professional learning opportunities throughout the school year.

See School Spotlights: [Reviewing & Using Results](#)

[Data Protocol](#) | [NYC School Survey Report](#) | [NYC School Quality Snapshot](#)

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##### RECRUIT SUPPORT

Recruit members from your school community to help plan survey administration, coordinate events, and reach out to families at your school. Parent volunteers can help make personal phone calls to parents to encourage attendance at events and participation in the survey. Teachers can discuss the importance of the survey with their classes and share with them how feedback from the previous year's surveys is being used. Students can deliver survey materials to their parents and bring them back to school once they are completed. Last, but not least, schools with high parent response rates leverage the expertise of their parent coordinators who are critical partners in building and maintaining strong relationships with students' families.

See School Spotlights: [Recruit Support](#)

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##### CONDUCT OUTREACH

Be sure to let parents and guardians know when it's time to take the annual NYC School Survey. Use whatever communication tools work best for your students' families, whether that is a monthly newsletter or a digital learning platform that parents check regularly like PupilPath or Power School. Schools that go above and beyond also meet parents where they are, distributing information and survey materials at afterschool programs, housing developments, and other locations within the school's community.

See School Spotlights: [Conduct Outreach](#)

[Postcard](#) | [Flyer](#)

## WHAT CAN YOU DO DURING SURVEY ADMINISTRATION?



### HOST AN EVENT

Identify when families will be at your school during the survey administration period and make sure the materials they need to complete the survey are available. Many schools use their parent-teacher conferences to administer the survey. A number of creative schools use the theme of the green parent survey envelope to make the events more festive and to “Go Green!” This can mean anything from assigning a “Green Team” to collect surveys to distributing green beads to parents once their surveys are completed. Some schools host additional events throughout the survey administration period like a community breakfast or parent appreciation dinner. Food is always a great way to bring people together!

See School Spotlights: [Host An Event](#)

[Parent-Teacher Conference Schedule](#) | [Survey Delivery Dates by School](#)

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### PROVIDE ONSITE SUPPORT

The highest parent response rates are often achieved when parents are able to complete the survey at their child’s school. Whether this is at a parent-teacher conference or during a visit to the school for drop off/pick up, an event, or a meeting, these schools make sure that parents and guardians have the materials and resources they need to complete the survey. Computer labs and libraries are kept open during drop-off and pick-up times, writing tools are available, and translation support is provided through school staff and even students when needed.

See School Spotlights: [Provide Onsite Support](#)

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### OFFER INCENTIVES

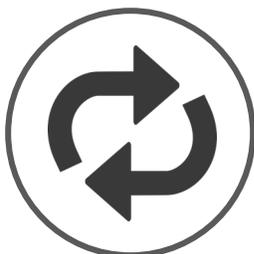
Schools with high parent response rates often find ways to encourage participation through a variety of incentives. Some examples are:

- Every class to return 100% of their completed parent surveys gets a pizza party or free entry to a dance or event.
- A one day homework pass
- A raffle prize (e.g. MTA cards for parents, small gift certificates, etc.)

See School Spotlights: [Offer Incentives](#)

[Survey Ethics Reference Guide](#)

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### FOLLOW UP

One tip nearly every school with a parent/guardian response rate over 80% has for schools wishing to increase family engagement with the survey at their school is to *follow up!* The most effective strategies schools found for guaranteeing as many parents/guardians participated in the survey as possible was to track completion and follow up with a personal phone call from the principal or other trusted staff member – for example, the school’s parent coordinator or guidance counselor – and home visits when feasible. Schools also use automated message systems like Phone Masters or RoboCalls.

See School Spotlights: [Follow Up](#)



## 2017 NYC School Survey Increasing Family Engagement: School Spotlights

### REVIEW & USE THE RESULTS

At **Staten Island Technical High School (31R605)**, students understand that the NYC School Survey is an opportunity for their families to have a voice in decision making at their school.

School leadership makes sure students know how the feedback students and parents/guardians provide through the survey has impacted current initiatives and will drive future planning. Students are then key partners in making sure this information is communicated to parents and guardians.

Prior to survey administration, the student organization puts together a schedule during which student organization members can go to all classes to review the results of the previous year's survey and discuss their importance.

After this presentation, every student receives their parent or guardian's copy of the survey to take home. Students are responsible for sharing the information they learned about the survey with their parents/guardians and then returning the completed surveys to their school. Classes to return 100% of their completed parent/guardian surveys get a pizza party.

### RECRUIT SUPPORT

During the survey planning and administration process at **New Visions Charter High School for the Humanities (84X553)**, the school principal recruits support from her parent coordinator, who is the resident expert in family outreach and engagement.

The parent coordinator's strong relationships with students' families help her identify the most appropriate methods for communicating with parents/guardians about the survey - e.g. when a message via WhatsApp will be more effective than an email reminder - and tracking their participation.

In addition to the parent coordinator, the principal also relies on parent volunteers to help promote participation in the survey and follow up with parents who have not completed the survey through personal phone calls and direct appeals.

### CONDUCT OUTREACH

At **M.S. 324 - Patria Mirabal (06M324)**, extensive outreach efforts result in exceptionally high engagement with the parent/guardian survey.

In addition to sending communications to every parent/guardian via email and SchoolMessenger encouraging them to take the survey, the school principal also attends Parent Association meetings in order to communicate in-person the importance of the survey in helping the school understand how to better serve students and families.

Similar to other schools, parents/guardians also have the option to complete the survey during Parent-Teacher Conferences.

Parents/guardians who do not complete the survey prior to or during the Parent-Teacher Conferences receive a personal phone call from the school's Parent Coordinator or a member of the Parent Association to set up a time and date that is convenient for the parent/guardian to come to the school to complete the survey.

To engage especially hard-to-reach parents, the Parent Association at **P.S. 150 Christopher (23K150)** further personalizes outreach efforts by conducting home visits to deliver survey materials directly to students' parents/guardians, and also bringing them to a nearby housing development with an afterschool program where a number of the school's families pick up their children in the evenings.

### HOST AN EVENT

Similar to other schools that achieve high parent/guardian response rates in the NYC School Survey, **P.S. 021 Edward Hart (25Q021)** and **Brooklyn Landmark Elementary School (23K599)** leverage planned events, like their annual parent-teacher conferences, to maximize participation among families.

However, what sets P.S. 021 Edward Hart and Brooklyn Landmark Elementary School apart is the spirit with which their teams promote the NYC School Survey at their schools' events.

At **P.S. 021 Edward Hart**, classroom teachers individually distribute the surveys to their students' parents/guardians during their meeting. Tables are set up in the

lunchroom for parents/guardians to complete their survey by paper, and computers are also available for parents/guardians who prefer to complete the survey online. Snacks are provided to families as they complete their surveys, and a designated “Green Team” collects all completed surveys at tables decorated with green balloons.

At **Brooklyn Landmark Elementary School**, parents/guardians have the option to complete their surveys as they wait to meet with their child’s teacher. The team at Brooklyn Landmark Elementary School ensures parents/guardians have a comfortable space and the appropriate materials and resources to fill out their survey forms either by paper or online. Similar to P.S. 021 Edward Hart, staff at Brooklyn Landmark Elementary School promote the survey by wearing all green.

### PROVIDE ONSITE SUPPORT

**Health Opportunities High School (07X670)** distributes the majority of parent/guardian surveys directly to families onsite during regularly planned events, meetings, or other visits to the school.

To ensure that parents/guardians can complete the survey accurately, Health Opportunities High School provides parents/guardians with a number of onsite supports. During planned events, the school makes sure to have the materials and resources available for parents/guardians to complete the survey online or by paper.

In addition, the school enlists teachers and students to provide translation support. If parents/guardians are unable to complete the parent/guardian survey during a planned event, they are advised to stop by the parent coordinator’s office when visiting the school at any point during the survey administration period, e.g. for an IEP meeting with their student’s teacher. The parent coordinator is then available to administer the survey to the parent/guardian online.

### OFFER INCENTIVES

At both **P.S. 021 Edward Hart (25Q021)** and **Brooklyn Landmark Elementary School (23K599)**, participation in the survey during the parent-teacher conferences is further promoted through various incentives.

Parents/guardians completing their surveys have the opportunity to enter a raffle. In addition, students receive a reward when their parents complete the

survey. At **P.S. 021 Edward Hart**, each class to reach 100% parent/guardian participation in the survey receives an ice cream treat. At **Brooklyn Landmark Elementary School**, students whose parents/guardians complete the survey and three other items on their parent-teacher conference to-do list (e.g. visit the science lab to learn more about the upcoming Science Fair) receive a ticket to the Annual Spring Dance.

While many schools have developed strategies for incentivizing participation in the NYC School Survey, similar to other family engagement efforts, the most effective approaches tend to demonstrate a strong knowledge of each school’s community and correspond with the particular needs and interests of their students and families.

To avoid any possibility of misconduct, schools are encouraged to review the Survey Code of Ethics, available at [www.nycschoolssurvey.org](http://www.nycschoolssurvey.org), prior to survey administration.

### FOLLOW UP

**P.S. 284 Lew Wallace (23K284)** has a simple solution for promoting high parent/guardian participation with the NYC School Survey that is replicated by many schools with similarly high parent/guardian response rates: personalized follow up.

If a parent/guardian does not complete their survey at the school’s parent-teacher conference, then they receive a direct phone call from the school to arrange a time to come in and complete their survey.

If the school is unable to reach a parent/guardian by phone, then they visit the family’s home to deliver the survey in-person. Other schools with high response rates have found home visits to be an effective way to distribute surveys to parents/guardians of chronically absent students.