AdvancED® Stakeholder Perception Surveys

The role that education plays in today’s society is more significant than in past generations. Creating and maintaining high quality schools and school systems that prepare students for responsible citizenship as well as college and careers in the 21st Century requires involvement and commitment from all stakeholders – parents, educators, school and district leaders, students, community members, legislators, and governing authorities.

Experience and research has taught us that engaging communities and families in our educational institutions is essential to their effectiveness. This is why “stakeholder engagement” is a recurring theme in the new AdvancED Standards for Quality and a key driver in the acceleration of student performance. But, establishing effective stakeholder partnerships and meaningful engagement opportunities is not easy and will not happen overnight. It requires deliberate and thoughtful planning based on reliable data and information.

AdvancED’s new generation of perception surveys are a great way to boost stakeholder involvement and gather meaningful data to guide and inform ongoing improvement planning processes focused on student achievement and school/school system effectiveness. As part of the comprehensive suite of diagnostic tools, AdvancED offers a series of stakeholder perception surveys that are grounded in research on organizational effectiveness and 21st-century skills. Administration of these survey tools produces valid and reliable stakeholder perception data aligned to the AdvancED Standards for Quality.

Beginning in the 2012-13 school year, the AdvancED accreditation protocol will include the required administration of the following AdvancED stakeholder perception surveys:

- Parent Survey
- Staff Survey
- Student Survey (elementary and/or middle and high school)

The collection and analysis of these data are managed in the AdvancED Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools (ASSIST) platform. ASSIST provides an intuitive delivery mechanism backed by a comprehensive data collection and analysis tool, to ensure that data are

Surveys are a means to systematically engage all stakeholders in two-way communication.

Through AdvancED ASSIST® schools and districts can now administer valid and reliable surveys at no additional cost!

Benefits

- Build and improve stakeholder relationships
- Generate data to inform the continuous improvement process
- Provide evidence to support the accreditation process
- Support state and/or federal accountability requirements
- Supply pre/post intervention and program perceptions
- Improve knowledge across all stakeholder groups about what the institution believes is important

AdvancED Surveys. Copyright 2011 AdvancED®
not just collected for the sake of compliance, but also used to help school and system leaders make more informed decisions. Stakeholder survey results are seamlessly integrated with other data in ASSIST, resulting in a comprehensive analysis and report that will prompt meaningful dialogue and decisions.

This document is designed to provide guidance, thought provoking questions, and ideas to consider as your school and/or district engage in the process of surveying stakeholders. The surveying process, which requires stakeholders to engage in analysis and reflection about their school or district, may be as valuable to leadership as the actual data that are collected. Schools and districts should discuss and plan the survey administration process to ensure that all stakeholders are given adequate and appropriate opportunity to provide feedback. AdvancED is committed to the importance of establishing a culture where stakeholders’ opinions are valued and solicited on a regular basis as part of the ongoing continuous improvement process.

If you have any questions about the information presented in this document, or you would like more information about AdvancED Surveys, please email us at contactus@advanc-ed.org or call 888.413.3669.

“The AdvancED online surveys made data research much easier by allowing instant feedback about the surveys. The teachers and students at our school enjoyed doing the surveys online...I will urge our school and system to use the online surveys for all our needs for the next studies.”

Judy Rutledge
Crockett County Schools
Alamo, Tennessee
Preparing for Survey Administration

Review the stakeholder perception surveys.
- View a sample of the Parent, Staff, and Student surveys at www.advanc-ed.org/schoolresources/2012.

Prepare stakeholders and build awareness.
- Consider sending a communication to stakeholders a week or two prior to survey administration to:
  1. build awareness of survey
  2. reassure stakeholders of the purpose and importance
  3. encourage participation
     See Exhibit A for a sample communication
- Talk about the importance of collecting and using stakeholder perception data during a staff meeting. Consider sharing one or more of the surveys and have a guided conversation about how staff feels about providing/collecting this type of perception data and how it will be used as part of a continuous improvement process. Encourage a culture of trust and honesty.

Identify a project manager to oversee the survey administration process.
- Once a project manager has been identified, make sure she or he has access to ASSIST and a copy of this document to help guide the administration process.

Determine and document how the school/district wants to handle the administration process.
- Taking all things into consideration (i.e., school/district calendar, resources to handle the administration process, desired dates for data review, school activities, other surveys or requests for information already distributed to stakeholders, etc.), determine the best dates for survey administration. When should the survey be distributed? How often should a reminder be sent? When should the survey be closed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Reminder Date</th>
<th>Close Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
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<td>Student (Elementary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student (Middle/High)</td>
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</table>

- Identify which stakeholders will be surveyed.
  - District Administration - Which schools will be included?
  - Which grade levels in the school will be surveyed?
  Things to Consider: You should plan to survey as many people as possible. The more responses you receive, the more valid and reliable the data. If administering a survey in early fall, perceptions of students in grade levels that are just entering the building (i.e., 6th or 9th grade) may not paint an accurate picture.
Which staff will be surveyed?

Things to Consider: Schools and districts engaged in the accreditation process are expected to survey all professional and support staff members. The demographic section of the survey contains the following roles: teachers, support staff, administrators, other. Upon completion of the survey, the survey administrator will have the ability to view disaggregated reports by role.

Which student survey will be administered to 5th grade?

Things to Consider: The validity and reliability of the Elementary Student Survey has been tested for grades 3-5. The Middle and High School Student Survey has been tested for grades 5-13+. It is up to the school or district to determine which student survey is most appropriate for their 5th grade student population.

Which parents will be surveyed?

Things to Consider: You should plan to survey as many parents as possible. The more responses you receive, the more valid and reliable the data. Schools and districts engaged in the accreditation process are expected to invite all parents to participate in the survey.

- Set and document an anticipated or target response rate.

   Things to Consider: AdvancED does not dictate a minimum response rate for accreditation purposes. Consider participation rates from other previously administered surveys or questionnaires. Engage school administrators/staff in the process of setting target response rates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Count of Stakeholders Surveyed (estimate if unknown)</th>
<th>Target Response Rate</th>
<th>Actual Response Rate</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Parent</td>
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<td>Staff</td>
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NOTE: Copy this table as needed to document the target response rate for each school.

- For each stakeholder group, create an administration plan that will best achieve the target response rate.

  What distribution method will be used?

  Things to Consider: The survey administrator will be able to download a web link from ASSIST in order to administer each survey. AdvancED does not dictate the administration process for accredited schools, but encourages the school to consider various methods of reaching and encouraging participation from all stakeholder groups.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Newsletter</th>
<th>Computer</th>
<th>Paper (Additional Cost)</th>
<th>Other (Explain)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
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**NOTE:** Districts may want to identify various administration plans by school in order to achieve each school’s desired response rate. Copy this table as needed to document the plan for each school.

- **Has a communication been drafted to post and/or distribute the surveys?**
  **Things to Consider:** Depending on the survey type and methods selected for administration, it may be necessary to develop several communication messages. Keep it short and simple – if parents have to read more than a paragraph in order to find a link to take the survey, they will most likely not respond.
  
  *See Exhibit B for a sample administration email.*
  
  *See Exhibit C for a sample reminder email.*

- **What role will schools and/or school staff play in the administration process?**
  **Things to Consider:** Will school administrators or teachers be asked to encourage participation? If so, will someone be providing them with regular updates as to the participation rate to date? Engaging school staff in the survey administration process can build awareness and acceptance when survey results are revealed, but may also skew results if only the “pro-school” parents are encouraged to respond. Care should also be taken to prevent encouragement that may be perceived as coercion.

**Struggling to Get a Good Response Rate From Parents?**

Here are a few ideas from other schools and districts that have helped increase parent engagement.

1. Open the computer lab during a parent night or school open-house and offer an incentive to take the survey. It’s amazing what a person will do for a hotdog!
2. Ask students to encourage parents to take the survey at home. Offer students an extra five minutes of recess or a homework pass if a parent certifies they have taken the survey.
3. Have parent volunteers stationed in the parking lot at the end of the day with paper surveys and clipboards. Most parents would be happy to complete the survey while they are waiting in the car pool line.
4. Hand out raffle tickets to every parent who completes a survey. Local restaurants, grocery stores, and businesses would probably donate a gift certificate or item to raffle.
Exhibit A

**Sample Pre Survey Stakeholder Communication**

Dear Parents/Guardian,

All of the schools in [insert district name] have been accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Council on Accreditation and School Improvement, (SACS CASI), for decades. In fact, [insert district name] was among the first districts in the nation to achieve accreditation as a school system.

[Insert district name] has accepted an invitation from AdvancED, the parent organization of SACS/CASI, and the Wyoming Department of Education to serve as a pilot district for the implementation of the new AdvancED Accreditation Protocol and Standards for Quality Schools and Systems. The new protocol involves the administration of student, parent and staff surveys, each of which is directly linked to the Standards for Quality Schools.

The district will be sending you an invitation to participate in the online survey between the dates of [insert dates].

Surveys are a means to systematically engage all our stakeholders in two-way communication. They provide school leaders and teachers a lens into the thinking and perceptions of our stakeholders. Careful analysis of the results enriches understanding of areas of strength and effectiveness as well as those areas that possibly need improvement. The survey results will enable our school leaders to measure stakeholders’ attitudes and help target improvement strategies focused on student achievement as well as school and district effectiveness. Taking the survey will also help stakeholders understand the AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools and provide a means for learning about what a parent, student, or staff member should be looking for in a high quality school system.

Your cooperation and support in completing the surveys will be greatly appreciated. Please be on the lookout for your survey invitation in the coming weeks!
Exhibit B

Sample Parent Survey Administration Email

Dear Parents/Guardian,

In an effort to improve system practices, [insert school/district name] is conducting a parent survey. We value your opinion and ask that you take the time to complete this survey. The web survey will be available from [insert start date] to [insert stop date].

In order to complete the survey, please go to:
[Insert web link from ASSIST]
(If this link does not work by clicking on it, please copy and paste it into your browser.)

Please be assured that your responses to this survey will be anonymous. Your honest opinion is appreciated.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

If you need technical assistance to complete this survey, please e-mail AdvancED at contactus@advanc-ed.org or call 888-413-3669 Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. ET.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact [insert name] at [insert email address] or [insert phone].

Sincerely,
[insert name]
[insert title]
[insert school/district name]
Dear Parents/Guardian,

Please be reminded that [insert school/district name] is conducting a parent survey and they value your input. The survey will only be available until [insert stop date]. We hope that you are able to take this survey.

In order to complete the survey, please go to:
[Insert web link from ASSIST]
(If this link does not work by clicking on it, please copy and paste it into your browser.)

Please be assured that your responses to this survey will be anonymous. Your honest opinion is appreciated.

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