



Superintendent's Circular

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BPS SURVEY ADMINISTRATION GUIDELINES

This circular will remain in effect unless rescinded or superseded by a subsequent version.

OVERVIEW

A federal statute, the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), 20 U.S.C. §1232h, affords some protections for students and their parents before certain student surveys are conducted. Many student surveys, however, will not come within the scope of this statute. Please assess each student survey carefully before administering it to determine if this policy applies. A student survey that is *anonymous* or *voluntary* need not comply with the following policy. Additionally, a student survey that is not *developed* or *administered* with funds received from the United States Department of Education also does not need to comply with this policy.

For those student surveys that are developed or administered using federal education funds and in which a student is required to participate, the following policy applies. This policy applies to those surveys that ask a student to reveal any of the following information: political affiliation; mental illness or psychological problems; sexual behavior and/or attitudes; illegal, self-incriminating, and demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of close family members; relationships to which a privilege is recognized, such as clergy, medical doctors, or attorneys; religious affiliations or beliefs; and income, other than for

eligibility for participation in a program. Prior to administering such a survey, the student's parent or guardian must consent, in writing, to the student's participation in the survey. Also, a copy of the survey must be made available to the parent or guardian. Any such survey should also be brought to the attention of the Office of Legal Advisor.

PERCEPTION SURVEYS

Student, teacher, and family surveys are an effective tool to support success inside and outside of the classroom. These surveys are required district-wide; however, schools and programs may choose to administer additional surveys (please see further down for guidance about administering additional surveys). It is the responsibility of all in the Boston Public Schools to use the data that emerge from the surveys to ensure that every student receives what they need every day.

Purpose

The Boston Public Schools' climate, culture, and feedback surveys support the district strategic goals of eliminating opportunity gaps and accelerating learning. The surveys:

- provide teachers, administrators, students, parents, the district, and the community with information regarding climate, culture, engagement, and student learning.
- are utilized to assess criteria for inclusion as a *Family Friendly School*.

- are included in measures to calculate school scores for the School Quality Framework and assignment tiers for the Home-based Student Assignment System.

A robust survey system includes surveys that provide information on the classroom, school, and district levels and is responsive to needs at each of these levels.

- At the **classroom level**, the student feedback survey provides teachers with data on student's perceptions of instruction and classroom climate, so that teachers may create formative goals to better meet the learning needs of their students.
- At the **school level**, the surveys provide school leaders and leadership teams with data to help them measure school success in relation to school and district goals; assess engagement and the creation of a safe and welcoming environment; and work with teachers to develop strategies that attend to priority areas.
- At the **district level**, the surveys provide district leaders with information that allows them to determine if the system, individual schools, and central departments are making progress regarding the district's long term strategic goals. Information is needed to assess the effectiveness of specific initiatives being implemented to achieve those goals, to implement effective practices, and to eliminate practices that are unsuccessful. Quality information allows comparisons across programs, schools, and classrooms to be data-driven and equitable.

Administration Expectations

Perception survey administration is required for students, staff, teachers, and families in Boston Public Schools during SY24-25.

BPS administers the Student, Family, Teacher, and Staff Surveys through [Panorama](#). Communications are sent centrally; however, school-based outreach makes the difference for many families! School leaders and coordinators have access to response rate tracking and completion lists via [Panorama's platform](#). In addition, survey coordinators and school leaders are offered training and resources for administration prior to the survey window.

The following table outlines the surveys required for students, staff, teachers, and families in Boston Public Schools during SY24-25, including the purpose, grade level, and administration windows. Specific dates are included in the annual assessment calendar released during summer 2024.

BPS Districtwide Surveys			
Survey	Purpose	Grade	Adminis- tration Window
Student Climate and Feedback Surveys	Assesses perceptions of pedagogical effectiveness, rigorous expectations, relationships, engagement, classroom climate, school culture & community, belonging, mindset, school safety, and more	3-12	<i>Mid-Year:</i> December <i>Spring:</i> April-May
Senior Exit Survey	Collects information regarding student postsecondary plans and overall experience in high schools.	Graduating Seniors	April-June
Teacher Climate Survey	Assesses perceptions of school climate, culture, relationships, peer victimization, school leadership, professional learning, etc	All	<i>Mid-Year:</i> December <i>Spring:</i> April-May
Staff Climate Survey	Assesses perceptions of school climate, culture, relationships, peer victimization, and school leadership	All	<i>Spring:</i> April-May
Family Climate Survey	Assesses perceptions of school climate, culture, school communication, school fit, school safety, engagement, etc.	All	<i>Spring:</i> April-May

Accessing Results

Teachers and other school staff can access results in Panorama: secure.panoramaed.com. (Select "Sign in with Google" and choose your BPS email to log in). Results should be reviewed and considered with respect to how they may impact planning and adjustments, and the alignment with your School Improvement 90 Day Action Plan: specifically, the Student Culture and Adult Culture goals. Resources to support are available in [Panorama Academy](#).

To ensure the data is a reasonable representation of their student population, school-level results are only shown if (1) the response rate is greater than 10%; and (2) there are at least 7 responses to ensure student confidentiality. Support is available through Panorama at support+bps@panoramaed.com.

ADMINISTERING SURVEYS TO MULTIPLE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES OR WITHIN THE CENTRAL OFFICE

The above guidelines and recommendations are to support the administration of surveys to students, families, and school staff. The remainder of this circular describes the process that will be used to create and administer surveys for central office staff or multiple school communities. To reduce the number of surveys that staff are required to respond to, the Office of Data and Accountability will review all surveys prior to their administration. Please refer to the [BPS survey calendar](#) for existing surveys and their timelines, if available. The process below describes how these offices will review survey creation and administration.

Step 1: Survey Request Process

If your office is interested in administering a survey to staff outside of your department, you will need to submit a [survey request form](#) to the Office of Data and Accountability. The form will collect information on:

- the goals and objectives of the survey
- decisions the survey is meant to inform
- tabulations and analytics results that will inform the decision
- confirmation that this information is not already being collected in other surveys
- audience and users (especially if intended to for any outside agencies)
- research approval requirement, if any
- sensitivity of data being collected and any necessary security protections
- ideal timeline for the survey/form to be administered as it relates to instructional priorities
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- ideal method for distribution.

Depending on the targeted survey population, surveys should be scheduled in coordination with any standing district surveys to mitigate overlap. Departments or teams must share the reasons for collecting information and how this information will be used. Whether responding to the collection of information is mandatory or voluntary, each team should take into consideration the timeline of requested responses in relation to other district required training, surveys, and events.

Step 2: Consultation

Once you have submitted your survey request form, the Office Data and Accountability will meet with you to review your request and determine whether it is appropriate and distinct from other survey collection tools already in use by the district. If the survey is approved to be administered, the Office of Data and Accountability will be able to recommend a level of support for creating and administering the survey. Examples of ODA support may include, but are not limited to, item and domain creation/review, sampling strategy, survey administration timing, communication; design, hosting, and analysis of collected data.

Step 3: Data Analysis and Dissemination of Information

A plan for analysis of the survey data should be provided prior to initiating the collection of data. Teams are expected to keep detailed documentation of activities and decisions informed by the data collected. Departments should plan to identify which portions of their evaluation will be shared with participants. High visibility data, such as results that will be shared with the public, the School Committee, and/or School Committee task force/working groups should be shared with the Offices of the Superintendent and Data and Accountability to interpret results from the analysis and inform the process for future recurring surveys.

BEST PRACTICES FOR SURVEYS AND DATA COLLECTION

1. Shorter surveys will lead to increased response rates.

Limiting the number of questions in a survey will increase the response rate and improve your overall ability to collect feedback. Surveys should be designed to minimize the respondent's time and ideally designed to be completed on a mobile device in 3-5 minutes.

2. Minimize open response answers.

Open response answers (short or paragraph) will increase the amount of time it takes to complete a survey and can lead to degraded response quality. Using drop-down/checkbox options as much as possible will improve your survey response rates and allow for easier data analysis.

3. Do not collect data that we already have.

A common practice when designing surveys is to ask for data that we already have in a data system, such as names, grade levels, school name, etc. However, this increases the time to complete the survey and increases risk of data leak if the responses are not safeguarded. Collecting a respondent's email address or emp/student ID number should be sufficient for identifying the person afterwards and additional identifying information that is already contained in a BPS data system should be used during analysis.

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