To: District 225 Board of Education
From: Mike Riggle
Re: Hanover Research Service Agreement
Date: August 8, 2018

Recommendation

It is the recommendation of the administration that the Board authorize Dr. Rosanne Williamson to enter into a one year service agreement with Hanover Research Council LLC for $40,500 to begin upon approval.

Background

Following our decision to delay on the proposed school calendar for the purpose of gathering further input from the school community, the administration sought a third party independent research entity that could work with the district to structure and independently administer a survey on school calendar to the Glenbrook school community including the local elementary districts. In addition, we were seeking an independent analysis of the survey results. Based on recommendations from other area high school districts who have conducted school calendar surveys, two detailed telephone conferences were held with representatives of Hanover Research LLC.

Hanover Research LLC has the technical capability of administering electronic surveys to the school community that will ensure valid results by limiting the responses to one per individual. They also have a team of researchers that will work with the administration and Board to identify the most important elements to be surveyed and structure questions to collect data on those elements. The survey will be administered to both the high school and local elementary feeder districts. Hanover Research LLC also has the ability to disaggregate data to allow comparisons to be made among the various categories of respondents. Following the survey, Hanover Research LLC will analyze the results and provide District with a detailed report.

Potential Surveys in Additon to School Calendar

The service agreement does not limit District 225 to just the school calendar survey. There is no limit to the number of surveys that can be conducted and analyzed for the district during the term of the agreement. Hanover Research does, however, place a limitation on their services by limiting the services to only one survey at a time. There are several aspects of student wellness that our administrative team would like to explore and based on the comparative costs that we have experienced in the past, we feel the cost of the service is reasonable and that the service will be well used for a variety of purposes in the coming school year. Potential initiatives and topics which could use the services of Hanover Research for surveys include, but are not limited to the following:

- Homework - it is time for a follow-up on homework perceptions from students and staff to compare the results of the survey administered in 2016.

- Final exams - a survey of students and staff would give a more accurate understanding of the impact regarding the types of exams administered, the preparation required and the weighting of final exams as part of the final course grade.
- School start time and transportation - a survey in this area will give more accurate information regarding a possible change in the school start time at GBN along with information that would be valuable in reviewing current transportation services.
- Learning Spaces - as the district continues to pilot new classroom furniture, an independent analysis of student and teacher experiences in pilot classrooms may be desirable.
- One-to-one computing vs. Bring Your Own Device - the district has been one-to-one with Chromebooks for a number of years. A survey on various aspects of the program could provide valuable insights for future efforts in this area.
- School Initiatives - both schools have been working on strengthening the connection of students to the school community. They would like to replicate surveys that they have viewed in research that measure the student's belonging to the school community.
- Communication - the Public Relations Department could utilize the service to survey the school community regarding the overall effectiveness of various aspects of district communications efforts.

<u>Potential Additional Costs</u>

As part of the terms and conditions of the agreement, Hanover Research stated that there may be additional costs incurred depending on the project. In discussing this with the HR team, this would occur if the district sought to have a survey administered by producing a paper survey that was mailed by conventional mail or if it was to be interpreted in languages other than English. Since the district will be surveying electronically and can provide interpreters for additional languages, there would be no anticipated added costs to the one-year charge for services. Dr. Williamson will be the administrator in charge of the use of the Hanover Research services and will monitor all aspects of the requests to minimize or eliminate the need for any additional costs.

<u>Attached Documents</u>

As part of this recommendation, there are five attached documents obtained from Hanover Research, LLC that are important to review. These five documents include:

1. Letter of Agreement - to be signed by both District #225 and Hanover Research, LLC.
2. Client Services Terms & Conditions - these terms and conditions are referred to in the Letter of Agreement.
3. Strategies for Successful K-12 Survey Design and Analysis
4. Strategies for Successful K-12 Survey Administration
5. Sample Size

Hanover Research LLC has provided similar service to a variety of school districts in the area and recently conducted a school calendar survey in April 2018 for New Trier High School. In speaking with their administration, they are well pleased with the services provided by Hanover Research LLC.

HANOVER RESEARCH

Letter of Agreement

Date of Agreement: 07/31/2018
Client: Glenbrook High School District 225 | 3801 West Lake Ave. Glenview, IL 60026
Sponsor: Dr. Mike Riggle | Superintendent

Effective Date: 08/14/2018
End Date: 08/13/2019

Agreement
This agreement "Agreement" between The Hanover Research Council LLC ("Hanover Research") and Client runs from the Effective Date to the End Date. Under this Agreement, Client has the authority to request research services on any topic (the "Research Services"), as well as the right to ask Hanover Research to expedite work of particular urgency.

All Research Services are available to Client on a subscription basis within the confines of a sequential research queue, in that Hanover will perform up to one (1) Research Services project at a time. Client shall, in its discretion, prioritize the research projects that form the basis of the Research Services as it deems appropriate. Research Services may include, but are not limited to: custom research reports; survey design, administration and analysis; interviews with industry/issue experts; secondary research; data analysis; and benchmarking (product/service comparison, key performance and efficiency metrics).

This Agreement hereby incorporates by reference the following terms and conditions ("Terms") that are available for review by Client online at: http://www.hanoverresearch.com/client-services-terms-conditions-education/. Client's signature below shall be deemed its acceptance and acknowledgement of the Terms as they relate to the Research Services.

Annual Service Fee: $40,500

Invoicing – Net 30
08/14/2018 - $40,500

Client understands and agrees that there may from time to time be incidental costs not included in the Service Fee set forth above ("Additional Services"). Such Additional Services may include purchased database access, panel costs, survey incentives, translation costs, infographic development costs, postage/printing for mass mailings, etc. With prior written approval, Client agrees to pay for all such Additional Services to either Hanover or directly to such third party vendor if requested. If Additional Services are estimated to cost more than $5,000, Client shall either (1) contract directly with the third party vendor(s) for such Additional Services, or (2) pre-pay to Hanover the estimated costs for the Additional Services prior to the project kick-off.

Confirmation
Each person signing this Agreement represents and warrants that he or she is duly authorized and has legal capacity to execute and deliver this Agreement.

Glenbrook High School District 225	**Hanover Research Council LLC**
Signatory Name: ______________	Signatory Name: ______________
Signatory Title: ______________	Signatory Title: ______________
Signature: ______________	Signature: ______________
Date: ______________	Date: ______________

Home » Client Services Terms & Conditions

Client Services Terms & Conditions

The Hanover Research Council LLC ("Hanover") is pleased to provide ("Client") the Research Services in accordance with the following terms and conditions ("Terms"). The following Terms shall be deemed accepted and agreed to by Client upon signature of a Client Services Agreement (the "Agreement").

I. Term

These Terms with Hanover runs for a subscription period from the Effective Date to the End Date (the "Term"). During the Term of the Agreement, Client will be able to access the research services provided by Hanover (the "Research Services") in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth below. Client will have the authority to request Research Services on any topic throughout the Term within the confines of the number of sequential queue(s) specified in the Client Services Agreement, i.e., Hanover will work on one (1) Research Services project at a time in each queue. Client understands and agrees that the Agreement may not be terminated during the Term, except for material breach. Either party may terminate the Agreement should the other party materially breach the terms and conditions of the Agreement or these Terms, and such breach goes uncured for a period of thirty (30) or more days after the non-breaching party has notified the breaching party in writing.

II. Research Services

All Research Services are available to Client on a subscription basis within the confines of a sequential research workflow queue, in that Hanover will perform up to one (1) Research Services project at a time. Client shall, in its discretion, prioritize the research projects that form the basis of the Research Services as it deems appropriate. Although work is completed in a sequential fashion, Client may submit requests at any time. Individual Research Services projects will generally be commenced by the submission of a project request that will describe the project, the expected Deliverables (as defined below), any information or materials to be provided by Client and any other information anticipated to be relevant to the proposed project. The parties will negotiate in good faith and agree upon the proposed Deliverables, approach and timetable for the project, subject to assumptions regarding the availability of information and any third party participants and materials. If Hanover anticipates that it will not be able to provide the Research Services on the agreed upon schedule, Hanover shall keep Client regularly informed of the status of the Research Services and any substantial delay in delivery or any proposed revised schedule of delivery. Hanover will not be responsible for any delay in timelines due to (i) Client's modification of a project's goals or proposed Deliverables, (ii) Client's delay in providing relevant materials or responses or (iii) in the provision of any third party materials with respect to the Research Services.

administration and analysis; interviews with industry/issue experts; secondary research; data analysis; and benchmarking (product/service comparison, key performance and efficiency metrics). Deliverables will be provided in PowerPoint, PDF, Word, Excel, or Tableau formats. Client also has full access to phone based consultations with a Hanover account team member. Client agrees to designate a primary point of contact who will, to the best of his/her ability, conduct periodic calls with the assigned Hanover account team member to review performance against our shared objectives, prioritize projects within the queue, and discuss current and future projects.

The Research Services may include Client's access to Hanover's research library (the "Research Library") on the Client Portal (as defined below). The Research Library uses Hanover's extensive research capabilities to provide an archive of redacted and/or anonymized reports to supplement the research commissioned by Client as well to assist in idea generation for new research. If Client's partnership with Hanover includes access to the Research Library, then Client understands and agrees that any reports provided by Hanover to Client under the Agreement or these Terms may be used by Hanover for distribution through the Research Library, so long as Hanover appropriately deidentifies and/or anonymizes any Confidential Information of Client.

III. Client Portal

The Research Services may also include Client's access to Hanover's client portal (the "Client Portal"). Apart from the Deliverables under the Terms (as defined below), any such use of the Client Portal by Client or its representatives is governed by the Client Portal Terms of Use and Hanover's privacy policy, which may be updated from time to time.

IV. Intellectual Property Rights

Hanover acknowledges and agrees that Client owns the deliverables provided to Client as part of the Research Services under these Terms (the "Deliverables"), except as may otherwise be set forth in this Section 4. Hanover Deliverables may consist of publications, surveys, data, reports, and other Hanover information and services that are custom commissioned by and for Client. In order for Hanover to provide to Client certain syndicated products, materials and information ("Syndicated Materials"), Hanover retains a non-exclusive, royalty-free, worldwide license to use, reproduce, and distribute the data or information created or developed by Hanover in the service of the Agreement or these Terms, so long as Hanover does not repurpose or use any Confidential Information of Client. Client acknowledges and agrees that Hanover owns all intellectual property rights in the methodologies, processes or trade secrets used by Hanover to create the Deliverables and Research Services ("Hanover IP"). Hanover grants Client a non-exclusive, royalty-free, worldwide, irrevocable, non-transferable license to use, reproduce, and distribute the Hanover IP for its internal business purposes solely to the extent contained within the Deliverables. Client may not modify, reverse engineer or use the Hanover IP in any way to provide services that would be in competition with the Research Services. Deliverables may also contain third party data or materials, which Hanover may not convey ownership of to Client, but rather a license. Hanover or its third party provider may transfer or sublicense to Client usage rights, subject to any restrictions conveyed by Hanover or such third party provider to Client, and Client agrees to comply with any such restrictions. Client also acknowledges and agrees that it will not own any publicly sourced information contained within the Deliverables, but that it may use such information in accordance with applicable law, including fair use under Section 107 of the Copyright Act. Client may distribute the Deliverables on an ad-hoc basis, including but not limited to any form of online distribution, so long as it is in compliance with these Terms and the Agreement and so long as such disclaimer language included in any Deliverables, and Client agrees not to resell the Deliverables in any way.

If Client's partnership with Hanover includes Syndicated Materials provided by Hanover (including any Syndicated Materials on the Client Portal), Client agrees that it will not distribute the Syndicated Materials and that such Syndicated Materials are for its internal use only. Syndicated Materials may not be published or reproduced without Hanover's prior written consent.

V. Service Fees, Invoicing, & Additional Services

The fee payable by Client for the Term is set forth in the Client Services Agreement (the "Service Fee"). Client agrees to pay the Service Fee in accordance with the below invoicing schedule and net 30 days from receipt of an accurate invoice. Failure to pay promptly may result in project postponement.

Client understands and agrees that there may from time to time be incidental costs not included in the Service Fee set forth above ("Additional Services"). Such Additional Services may include purchased database access, panel costs, survey incentives, translation costs, infographic development costs, postage/printing for mass mailings, etc. In the event such incidental costs are required to complete a project for Client, Hanover will discuss the details with Client and obtain written approval prior to engaging in those Additional Services. Client agrees to pay for all such Additional Services to either Hanover or directly to such third party vendor if requested. If Additional Services are estimated to cost more than $5,000, Client shall either (1) contract directly with the third party vendor(s) for such Additional Services, or (2) pre-pay to Hanover the estimated costs for the Additional Services prior to the project kick-off.

VI. Warranties; Liabilities

Hanover hereby warrants that the Research Services shall be performed in a competent and professional manner in accordance with industry standards by qualified personnel. Hanover agrees to indemnify and hold Client harmless against any and all claims that the Deliverables infringe the intellectual property right of a third party, provided that the relevant claim: (i) does not arise from any modification of the Deliverable, (ii) does not arise from the combination of the Deliverable with any other information, services, products or technology not supplied by Hanover, (iii) if the relevant claim is based on the content or materials contained in the Deliverables that are provided by a third party, then only to the extent that such third party has agreed to indemnify Hanover and its licensees. Client must provide prompt notice of such claim to Hanover. Client agrees to indemnify and hold Hanover harmless against any and all claims that any materials provided by Client infringe the intellectual property or privacy rights of a third party, provided that Hanover provides prompt notice of such claim to Client. EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED IN THESE TERMS, THE RESEARCH SERVICES ARE PROVIDED ON AN "AS IS" BASIS AND THERE ARE NO EXPRESS OR IMPLIED WARRANTIES, INCLUDING THE IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. IN PARTICULAR, HANOVER DOES NOT WARRANT THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE DATA PROVIDED AS PART OF THE RESEARCH SERVICES. CLIENT'S SOLE AND EXCLUSIVE REMEDY FOR ANY MATERIAL BREACH OF PERFORMANCE UNDER THE AGREEMENT OR THESE TERMS SHALL BE, AT HANOVER'S OPTION EITHER: (1) RE-PERFORMANCE OF THE DEFECTIVE RESEARCH SERVICES OR (2) A REFUND OF MONIES PAID FOR THE DEFECTIVE RESEARCH SERVICES. CLIENT AND HANOVER BOTH AGREE THAT NEITHER PARTY SHALL BE LIABLE TO THE OTHER FOR ANY LOST PROFITS, LOSS OF BUSINESS OR OTHER CONSEQUENTIAL, SPECIAL OR INCIDENTAL, PUNITIVE, OR INDIRECT

AGREE THAT NEITHER PARTY SHALL BE LIABLE TO THE OTHER PARTY IN ANY EVENT FOR AN AMOUNT GREATER THAN THE CURRENT YEAR'S SERVICE FEE UNDER THE AGREEMENT OR THESE TERMS.

VII. Confidentiality & Non-Disclosure

The parties acknowledge and agree that as part of the Agreement, certain Confidential Information of the parties will be exchanged. "Confidential Information" means, with respect to the disclosing party, any non-public, commercially proprietary or sensitive information or materials of that party, including any proprietary intellectual property of that party. Confidential Information shall not include information which (i) is already in the public domain at the time of disclosure or becomes so at any time thereafter through no act of the receiving party, (ii) is already lawfully in the receiving party's possession at the time of disclosure, (iii) is received independently by the receiving party from a third party free to make such disclosure, or (iv) is independently developed by the receiving party. Each party under the Agreement shall hold the Confidential Information of the other party in strict confidence using at least the same degree of care as the receiving party uses to protect its own Confidential Information.

If Hanover has access to student records in connection with the Research Services, Hanover agrees to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA"), and all requirements imposed by FERPA or pursuant to regulation of the Department of Education with respect to the privacy of student information. The provisions of FERPA include, but are not limited to, ensuring that: (i) no identification of students or their parent/guardians by persons other than representatives of Hanover is permitted; (ii) the individual student data will be destroyed when no longer needed for the purpose(s) for which they were obtained; (iii) no access to individual student data shall be granted by Hanover to any other person, persons, agency or organization without the written consent of Client, except for sharing with other representatives of either Client or Hanover so long as those persons have a legitimate interest in the information. Hanover recognizes and agrees that such access will be extended by Client in reliance on representations made in this assurance, and that Client shall have a right of revocation of such access (including return of all physical forms of such data and destruction of all such electronic data) immediately upon evidence of noncompliance by Hanover.

Upon written request by the disclosing party, the receiving party shall return or destroy, at the disclosing party's option, all tangible materials that disclose or embody the Confidential Information; provided, however, that the receiving party may retain one copy of the disclosing party's Confidential Information for archival purposes.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the receiving party may disclose Confidential Information as required by law, including any governmental, judicial, or administrative order, subpoena, discovery request, regulatory request or similar method, provided that the receiving party makes reasonable efforts to promptly notify the disclosing party in writing of such demand so that the disclosing party may seek, at its sole expense, to make such disclosure subject to a protective order or other appropriate remedy to preserve its confidentiality.

VIII. Records & Audit

Hanover will maintain complete records of its operations and its arrangements with any subcontractors for Additional Services, and will provide such records to Client upon reasonable request for audit and review in accordance with applicable law.

IX. Governing Law

The Agreement and thee Terms shall be governed by the laws of the State of Delaware.

X. Confirmation

Each person executing these Terms represents and warrants that he or she is duly authorized and has legal capacity to execute and deliver these Client Services Terms and Conditions.

Both parties understand and agree that the contractual obligations of payment and services being rendered shall apply to any entity that acquires all or substantially all of either Hanover or Client's assets as a successor to the business.

Contact Us

Hanover Research
info@hanoverresearch.com

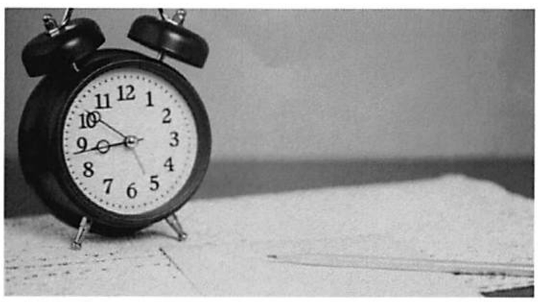
Effective Date: March 24, 2017

Corporate Headquarters:
4401 Wilson Boulevard 4th Floor
Arlington, VA 22203

Home » Insights Blog » Strategies for Successful K-12 Survey Design and Analysis

Strategies for Successful K-12 Survey Design and Analysis

Posted on: March 5, 2018 | Topic: K-12 Education



By Jill Jones

K-12 leaders often turn to surveys as an effective and efficient means to gather feedback from stakeholders including staff, parents, students, and the community. However, surveys are only useful if designed, administered, and analyzed according to best practices.

Building upon a previous blog post titled "Strategies for Successful K-12 Survey Administration," this post explores two other aspects of survey research: (1) survey design and (2) survey analysis. To design an effective survey, it is essential to understand the audience, the intended goals for the survey analysis, and the content of the intended survey.

This post provides recommendations for survey design and analysis and is grounded in survey research and Hanover's extensive practical experience surveying students, parents, staff members, and community members in the K-12 sphere.

Less is More, Keep it Short

Have you ever opened a survey expecting a 5- to 10-minute time commitment and found yourself clicking through questions 15 minutes later? Setting clear survey length expectations at the onset, meeting those expectations, and keeping the survey short improves the respondents' experience, the quality of your data, and the likelihood that respondents will complete the entire survey.

What is a "short" survey? To effectively determine an appropriate survey length, it is important to evaluate the expected attention span of respondents and their commitment to the topic. For example, for a school climate survey, you may ask more questions of parents and staff members compared to community members or students. This is because parents and staff members often have a greater commitment to providing feedback and willingness to take the time to provide feedback. Here are some length considerations for various K-12 stakeholders:

- **Students** may have shorter attention spans and get fatigued when taking long surveys, thus yielding low-quality data. For example, when analyzing data from long surveys, we often see student respondents uniformly select "strongly agree" for multiple Likert questions in a row during the later stages of their participation. Ideally student surveys would take a maximum of 10 minutes to complete for this reason.
- **Staff members** frequently have the highest attention span and level of commitment to providing high-quality responses. Assuming staff members are not over-surveyed by their district, asking them to complete a longer survey, up to 15 minutes, is unlikely to affect their survey quality and response rate.
- **Parents** are often the second most committed audience in terms of providing quality responses during longer surveys; however, parents are often hard-to-reach and therefore a 10-minute survey is appropriate for parents.

or less is best. Although incentives are uncommon for our K-12 surveys and partners, offering a survey incentive to hard-to-reach populations like community members can effectively increase their participation and completion.

Target Your Audience

Use Screening Questions to Eliminate Unwanted Stakeholder Groups

It's important to include all possible screening questions even when using a contact list. Survey respondents may forward their survey invitation onto other unintended groups or obtain access through web sources inadvertently. To combat these realities, an effective survey instrument should always include screening questions to appropriately target the intended audience. In some cases, it might also be necessary to duplicate specific screening and background questions for quality control purposes. For example, students are sometimes asked to identify their grade at both the beginning and end of the survey, thus allowing for identification (and potential removal) of respondents who provide inconsistent grade selections.

Only Show Relevant Questions to Specific Stakeholder Groups

To keep surveys brief and meaningful, ensure that participants respond to relevant questions but not all questions. For example, only staff members should see questions about staff professional development. Similarly, students and staff could report on teachers' use of instructional technology during class, whereas parents and students could report on students' use of technology at home, but all three groups should not answer both in-class and at-home questions.

Intentionally Place Survey Topics and Questions

Ease Respondents into the Survey

In some K-12 surveys, we ask about sensitive topics such as school bullying or emotional health and well-being. These more sensitive topics should appear after survey respondents have warmed up and answered easier questions – including questions about school or grade affiliation or other less sensitive questions like "school cleanliness." Each topic area and section of questions should also be evaluated to understand the extent to which one section of questions may influence responses to another section of survey questions.

Place Demographic Questions at the End

Common demographic questions such as race and gender may influence respondents' answers to other survey questions. This is commonly known as "order effects." For example, if we first ask a respondent to specify their gender identity and then ask social-emotional learning questions, respondents may unconsciously reflect on their gender identity and respond in gender conforming or non-conforming ways. For this reason, we often place demographic questions at the end of a survey.

Randomize Questions and Options where Appropriate

The row order of Likert scale questions, "select all that apply" questions, or multiple-choice questions is also important. Unless there is a natural ordinal nature to the response options (e.g., Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2, etc.) response options should be randomized within the survey to minimize order effects. For example, a respondent may "satisfice" and only pay attention to the first few options in a "select all that apply" question, thus overrepresenting those response options due to ease of access and not thoughtful reflection on the respondents' part.

Each Question Matters

As indicated above, survey designs consist of many moving parts and competing demands. In addition to the design principles, there are other more nuanced aspects of item-level question design, including the following design principles:

- **Provide reference frames for time and location.** Make sure respondents are answering questions about the same time frame and place. For example, "In the past week [...]," "In the past month [...]" are time-oriented reference frames whereas "My school [...]" or "The district [...]" are location-oriented reference frames. When using time-oriented reference frames, ensure that the time is cognitively appropriate for the target population. For example, 8^{th} graders probably can't answer accurately about events that occurred over a year ago.
- **Avoid double-barreled questions.** Double-barreled questions try to measure two (or more) things. Consider the example item "The Central Office staff is helpful and friendly." Ideally, the survey would ask about "helpfulness" and "friendliness" separately since these are two distinct aspect of customer service.
- **Use mutually exclusive answer options.** This protects the validity of your data by ensuring respondents can only qualify for one answer category. For example, asking about income should include mutually exclusive options such as $10,000-$24,999 and $25,000-$49,999 instead of $10,000-$25,000 and $25,000-$50,000.

scale) that captures these sentiments. Consider if it is reasonable for respondents not to have an answer to a specific question and then consider "Don't Know" is best suited to factual questions and "No Opinion" to perception questions.

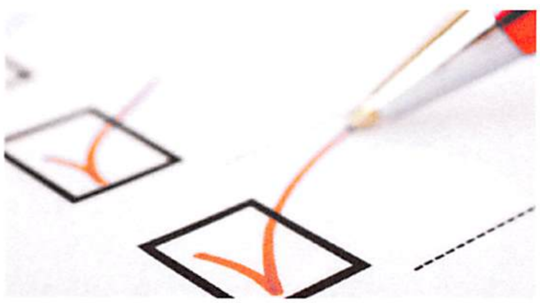
- **Three-, five-, or seven-point scales are best.** Fewer options are less fatiguing than more options, but more options allow for more nuances (or variance) in the data. Determine the optimal number of points based on overall survey length, population (e.g., children/adults), and necessity of a various scale points for interpretation.
- **Provide a middle point and anchor.** Scales with a middle point tend to produce better data. For example, you might ask a question that employs the scale "Not at All Familiar," "Slightly Familiar," "Moderately Familiar," "Very Familiar," "Extremely Familiar." In this example, "moderately" is the middle point and "familiar" is the anchor.
- **Limit the use of open-ended questions**. We typically recommend no more than one or two open-ended questions per survey. Open-ended questions should take approximately one minute to complete. Open-ended responses are supplementary to a traditional close-ended survey and should be used sparingly since open-ended responses attract mostly divergent perspective and thus are often not representative of the overall respondent group.

Consider the Analysis

It is important to plan for data analysis during survey design process. Each of the previously mentioned design principles support the analysis phase, but it is also important to consider how you plan to use the survey analysis and whether it will be important to segment and compare responses across stakeholder groups. For example, if you want to compare survey responses across schools, then the survey instrument needs to include a question asking respondents for their school affiliation. These types of essential questions should be situated earlier in the survey instrument and should require responses.

Strategies for Successful K-12 Survey Administration

Posted on: October 25, 2017 | Topic: K-12 Education



By Cate Keller

Strong K-12 leaders know that stakeholder feedback is critical to informing decisions and ensuring the success of K-12 programs and practices. Surveys are the most efficient and effective way to gather large amounts of stakeholder feedback, but they only provide K-12 leaders with accurate and useful information if designed, administered, and analyzed according to best practices.

This post provides recommendations for strategic survey administration based on Hanover's vast experience administering climate surveys, staff satisfaction surveys, parent feedback surveys, strategic planning surveys, program evaluations, needs assessments, and other surveys. Look for a future post on survey design and analysis strategies to learn more about how to design and analyze surveys that collect high-quality feedback from key K-12 stakeholders, including students, parents, staff, and the community.

Timing

The school year is busy and full of events, assessments, and meetings. Successful surveys are carefully timed so that they don't get lost in the rush of activity that accompanies each school year. In order to time surveys to maximize the *quantity* and *quality* of responses, Hanover recommends the following strategies:

- Minimize the influence of external factors by avoiding state assessment windows, extended school breaks, and the first and last two weeks of the school year.
- Keep surveys open for 2-4 weeks.
- If possible, align survey windows with staff development days (to reach staff) and parent events at school (to reach parents).

Platform Considerations

All stakeholder groups that you plan to survey for their feedback – whether students, parents, staff, the community – need to an equal opportunity to respond to the survey on an accessible platform. The last thing a K-12 leader wants to do is carefully design a survey but administer it in a way that makes it difficult and time-consuming for stakeholders to respond.

Based on our experience administering surveys through paper and online platforms, Hanover recommends administering surveys online to maximize accessibility, reduce potential data entry errors, and allow for multi-year comparisons. Surveys must be accessible via mobile devices. While families may not have a desktop computer at home, they are more likely to have a mobile device.

There are two main options for online survey platforms: open links or trackable links.

are not part of the target survey population.

- **Trackable links** send a unique survey link to a pre-selected contact list.

The most appropriate platform depends on your priorities; for example, if the survey is targeting parents who may not have internet access at home, an open link will be important to allow parents to take the survey at public locations such as the school or library.

Open vs. Trackable Survey Links:

Open Survey Links

Pros:

- Can be posted in public forums, such as websites or newsletters
- Can be administered without accessing email (easier for administering at school sites)
- Ensure respondents' anonymity

Cons:

- Do not allow for targeted survey reminders to those who have not completed the survey
- Rely on self-reported demographic data
- Are vulnerable to multiple responses per individual

Trackable Survey Links

Pros:

- Allow for targeted survey reminders to those who have not completed the survey
- Allow for connection to known demographic data from other sources
- Ensure one survey response per individual

Cons:

- Can only go to individuals with known email addresses
- Cannot be posted in public forums, such as websites or newsletters
- Are vulnerable to compromising respondents' anonymity

Outreach Strategies

Once you've decided on when to administer your survey and which platform you want to use to maximize response rates, you need to strategize on how you plan to conduct your outreach. A successful outreach strategy is carefully planned to account for the topic of the survey, the sensitivity of the survey questions, and the needs of the target survey populations.

Here are some custom strategies that are proven to increase response rates among different populations:

Students:

- Designate time during school (e.g., homeroom, all English language arts classes) for students to take the survey, utilizing computer labs or laptop carts as necessary.

Parents:

- Offer the survey in multiple languages.
- Advertise the survey through existing communication channels, such as school/district websites, parent newsletters, social media, and principal communications.
- Partner with local organizations to advertise the survey, especially those that work with hard-to-reach populations.

access the survey through their smartphones.

- Provide opportunities for parents to take the survey at the school, such as setting up a computer in the front lobby or library. Coordinate survey administration with events that bring parents into school, such as parent-teacher conferences, and encourage parents to take the survey on computers set up during these events.

Staff:

- Have principals send an email to their staff communicating the importance of the survey and requesting their participation.
- Ask principals to set aside time in staff meetings to complete the survey.
- Send response updates to principals with the number of staff members from each school who have completed the survey to encourage friendly competition among schools.
- Ask principals to consider incentives such as free food at a staff meeting if more than a certain percentage of staff complete the survey.

Reminders

Finally, don't assume that everyone will remember the survey you sent a week ago! Regular and targeted survey reminders are crucial for survey success. We recommend the following strategies:

- Clearly communicate the survey closing date.
- If using a trackable survey link, send targeted reminders to those who have not completed the survey.
- Leave the survey open for 2-3 weeks and send reminders on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays for maximum response rates.

Interested in learning more about what key issues K-12 leaders are focusing on? Download the 2017 Trend Report below to learn more.

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Sample Size

How large should the sample size be?

There's no rigid rule to follow; larger sample = more reliable data. With that said, we generally give a recommendation to follow a 5% margin of error (MoE). When the population of interest is large (larger than 20,000), we generally recommend a minimum sample size of around 400 for each segment (MoE of +/- 5%). However, larger samples are more preferable for a couple reasons. First, the data will be more precise, as the MoE will be lower. Second, a larger sample allows us to cut the data multiple ways (by stakeholder group, school level, zip code, demographic groups, etc.) if necessary. If we know that a particular segmentation is important to the client, we generally want around 200 respondents in each group. *Basic example:* A staff climate survey and the member wants to evaluate differences across three stakeholder groups, we would recommend a minimum sample size of 600, with 200 in each stakeholder group. If the member wants to evaluate differences across three stakeholder groups across three schools, we would recommend a minimum sample size of 1,800, with 200 parents, 200 students, and 200 staff at each of the three schools. It is rare for as school district to achieve ideal sample sizes from *all* schools and *all* stakeholder groups, however Hanover Research will do everything possible to make it easy for stakeholders to access and complete the survey. In any case, the MoEs will be reported for each segment analyzed, so audiences will understand the extent to which we can be confident in any set of results (see details below on statistical significance for further clarification).

You might have to adjust your recommendation downward if the population of interest is small or difficult to reach. Let's say we're surveying parents of English Learners that participate in an after school program at a small district. We probably don't need 400 respondents to get a good read on the population (and getting 400 may be difficult). You can use this as a tool to determine the number of responses needed based on population size, margin of error and confidence level desired: http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html.

Will the sample be representative?

If survey participation is voluntary, data is collected using convenience samples, not random sampling. As such, we can never say a voluntary survey sample is truly representative in the technical sense. However, convenience samples are standard in the market research industry, so this isn't something to be too concerned about. As fair warning, there is a school of thought that MoEs should never be used in conjunction with convenience samples. This is largely an academic debate, however, and most practitioners see the benefit of providing MoEs for convenience samples.

The goal here is to say that the results from the sample are typically generalizable to the population of interest. To this end, **we can use survey quotas or weighting so that the characteristics of the sample match the population on key characteristics** (e.g., income, race, gender, age, etc.). This will not completely ensure that the sample is *exactly* the same as the population, but it improves our ability to generalize to the population of interest.

Is the sample "statistically significant"?

This question is really about "can we be confident in the results?" This can be answered after going through two considerations:

- **Will the data from the survey have too much statistical error?** This is all about margin of error. If the margin of error is sufficient to answer the client's question(s), then we're all set on this point. *Basic example:* we are testing a district decision and the MoE is 5%. We find out that 55% of respondents are supportive of the decision. Are we satisfied knowing that between 50% and 60% of the population will probably support the decision? [the answer is probably yes]
- **Is the sample as representative as we need it to be?** As noted above, we can never be sure how closely a convenience sample truly represents the target population. However, we can compare the sample and population on key characteristics to see if there's a big difference that could bias the results. This is typically a concern if our sample will likely be very different from the population. *Basic example:* we are testing a decision among parents at a district in which more than 50% of students come from low-income zip codes, yet the majority of our sample size is from the district's wealthiest zip code which comprises only 25% of students, then we might have a problem.