



REL MIDWEST: QUANTITATIVE NEEDS-SENSING SURVEY

Sample and Fielding Specifications:

- 1,400 district-level stakeholders, including 100 district superintendents and 100 school board presidents in each state (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin)
- 2,800 school-level stakeholders, including 200 principals and 200 teachers in each state¹

Note: the default is that questions are asked of everyone. Exceptions are noted.

General Evaluation Questions and Overall priorities

1. Overall, would you say the public schools in your community are doing an excellent, good, fair or poor job?

Excellent
Good
Fair
Poor
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

Resources and the politics of education / Local Community Issues

[SPLIT-FORM NEXT BATTERY; ASK EACH ITEM TO 50% OF SAMPLE ONLY]

2. Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and Fail to describe the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves, in your community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools that you are involved with for each of the following characteristics – an A, B, C, D or F where A is excellent and F is failure?

[FOLLOW UP, IF NECESSARY: What grade would you give DISTRICT= all schools/STATE =most districts on INSERT FROM ABOVE LIST...?]

[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

- Finding and keeping talented principals
- Finding and keeping talented teachers
- Ensuring schools have enough money to do a good job
- Holding superintendents accountable for their students' performance
- Holding principals accountable for their students' performance
- Holding teachers accountable for student performance
- Making sure students master high level math and science skills so they can compete in the global economy
- Integrating technology into the classroom
- Raising standardized test scores
- Ensuring small class sizes
- Reducing the number of students who get passed through the system without learning

¹ The targeted respondents for this survey was revised in May 2007 to include only district and school-level participants. As a result, all questions for state level stakeholders should be disregarded, as these questions will be deleted from this survey.

- Having the tools available to assess the educational progress of students.
- Creating an atmosphere of civility within the schools
- Improving teacher preparation programs in the schools
- Improving teacher development through professional development programs, such as lectures and classes
- Recruiting teachers in hard to staff schools
- Integrating online teaching and learning programs in the district
- Improving school safety
- Instilling a sense of good citizenship
- Having only highly qualified teachers in core academic subjects
- Choosing education programs that scientific research has proven to be effective
- Making adequate yearly progress in the test scores of the student population overall
- Making adequate yearly progress in the test scores of special education students
- Making adequate yearly progress in the test scores of English learners
- Keeping abreast of the NCLB mandates, state regulations and district policies
- Making adequate yearly progress in the test scores of minority students
- Making adequate yearly progress in the test scores of economically disadvantaged students

A

B

C

D

F

[VOL] Not a role for schools to play

[DO NOT READ] Don't know

[DO NOT READ] Refused

3. [DISTRICT ONLY] Now, we would like to get your opinion on how well your district is doing in meeting a variety of educational challenges. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree?

[SPLIT-FORM NEXT BATTERY, ASK EACH ITEM TO 50% OF SAMPLE ONLY]

[RANDOMIZE]

- The schools facing the greatest challenges get the money they need
- The State Department of Education understands the needs and constraints facing local districts
- Leaders from different school districts get to meet with each other and compare notes on a regular basis about improving educational results of their schools
- Parents understand and support the efforts of their schools to raise standards
- Teachers and central office administrators are working toward the same vision
- Teachers and building level administrators are working toward the same vision
- Relations between the superintendents and the school board are excellent
- School board members understand their role and handle it with professionalism
- School leaders are adept at communicating their districts' needs to the community
- The schools communicate with families regularly and clearly
- Communities feel a sense of pride about their local schools and want to support them
- The right amount of resources are being used to find and retain teachers who are really effective at helping kids learn
- Paperwork and bureaucracy involved in public education needs to be reduced
- Schools have developed effective programs for kids who are struggling academically.
- Schools have effective programs for kids who have serious discipline problems
- Most schools are safe, orderly, and respectful places for teachers and kids
- Teachers and administrators reach out to parents who not involved or lack the ability to help their kids
- Parents have high expectations of what their children can achieve

- Daily emergencies rob me of time that would be better spent on academic and teaching issues
- The typical leadership programs in graduate schools of education are out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today's school district

Strongly agree
Somewhat agree
Somewhat disagree
Strongly disagree
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

Standards

4. Using the same grading system of A-F, we would like you to grade how [DISTRICT= your schools/STATE =most districts] are doing with the following issues. Based on what you know, what grade would you give for:

[DO NOT ROTATE]

- The schools in reporting state test results back to the district accurately and in time
- The state tests in accurately measure student learning.
- [STATE ONLY] The districts in having a top-notch, challenging curriculum
-OR-
[DISTRICT ONLY] The schools in having a top-notch, challenging curriculum
- The district curriculum in incorporating what is on the state tests
- The principals being instructional leaders who focus on quality teaching
- The schools in relying on best practices to reach and motivate the least motivated students
- The teachers in [DISTRICT= your schools/STATE =most districts] in being highly qualified to teach their subjects
- The highly qualified teachers (per NCLB standards) in being truly effective in the classroom
- The state tests in accurately showing that students have met state standards
- The state tests in accurately showing that students are prepared for the next grade

A
B
C
D
F
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

When students graduate from high school, what percentage do you think will have the skills needed to succeed in college? Would you say:

None
Less than 25%
More than 25% but less than half
More than half but less than 75%
[OR] Greater than 75%

5. When students graduate from high school, what percentage do you think will have the skills needed to succeed in an entry-level position in your community? Would you say:

None

Less than 25%
More than 25% but less than half
More than half but less than 75%
[OR] Greater than 75%
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

6. For subjects other than math and reading, do [DISTRICT= your schools/STATE =most districts] clearly define academic goals for most other subjects?

Yes
No
[VOL] Not sure
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

7. [IF YES] Do [DISTRICT= your schools/STATE =most districts] effectively measure or evaluate whether those guidelines and goals are met?

Yes
No
[VOL] Not sure
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

8. In the past two years, have your schools placed more emphasis on teaching <INSERT ITEM> skills, less emphasis or have things stayed the same?

- Reading
- Math
- Science

More emphasis
Less emphasis
The same
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

9. [ASK FOR EVERY ITEM ABOVE = MORE EMPHASIS] Has this emphasis on <INSERT ITEM ABOVE> led to gains in achievement or not?

Yes
No
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

10. [IF MORE EMPHASIS FOR ANY] Because of this emphasis on basic studies, do you think that other key elements of education have been short-changed as a result?

Yes
No
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

11. [TREND] Do you think that full-day kindergarten is:

So crucial that states and districts must make it a required, fully-funded part of education [OR]
Do you think it is something good to have but only when states and districts can afford it?
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

Research and data needs

12. Do you regularly compare your results on district and state level test scores to other [DISTRICT = schools outside your district/STATE = districts] to assess how your own schools compare?

Yes
No
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

13. [DISTRICT ONLY] How confident are you that the following measurements are being reported in a consistent fashion based on the definitions provided by the district. What about [INSERT ITEM BELOW] Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident or not at all confident that this is being reported to your district in a consistent manner?

- Student attendance
- Student drop-out rates
- Student suspension rates
- Student expulsion rates
- The student/teacher ratio in each school
- Student graduation rates

Very confident
Somewhat confident
Not too confident
Not at all confident
[VOL] Don't report this
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

14. [DISTRICT ONLY] How useful is each of the following in assessing a principal's performance? Would you say <INSERT ITEM> are very useful, somewhat useful, not too useful or not at all useful?

- Test scores from state or national tests
- Test scores from district standardized tests
- Student graduation rates
- Student drop-out rates
- Measurements on school safety, such as police records or internal assessments
- College matriculation rates
- Teacher turnover rate
- Teacher feedback

Very useful
Somewhat useful
Not too useful
Not at all useful
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

15. [DISTRICT ONLY] Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following: [FOLLOW UP: Is that strongly or somewhat?]

[DO NOT ROTATE]

- I cannot always compile the state test scores in a way that satisfies the states' NCLB reporting requirement
- The computer systems and software we use to collect information about students are outdated
- Teachers need more training to interpret test scores correctly.
- Key student data we collect are compiled in a central location in the district
- I wish I had more systematic information that is relevant to the challenges I face
- Principals need more training on how to work with the data we are collecting
- I wish I had more time to step back and use the data we are collecting to see the big picture.
- A lot of the data we are required to collect and report is not very helpful to our district.
- Students are tested too often.
- Too often we are using data to comply with NCLB, but not to improve teaching and learning.
- Many teachers have a difficult time putting what they have learned from student achievement data into practice.

Agree strongly

Agree somewhat

Disagree somewhat

Disagree strongly

[DO NOT READ] Don't know

[DO NOT READ] Refused

16. [DISTRICT ONLY] How frequently are you able to find in academic research ideas or information that you can apply to schools in your district? Would you say

Often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

[DO NOT READ] Don't know

[DO NOT READ] Refused

Academic research and professional development

17. [DISTRICT ONLY] Using the same grading system of A-F, we would like you to grade how your district is doing with the professional development of teachers. What grade would you give the district in:

[SPLIT-FORM NEXT BATTERY ASK EACH ITEM TO 50% OF SAMPLE ONLY]

- Helping teachers reach academically struggling students in reading
- Helping teachers reach academically struggling students in math
- Helping teachers reach academically struggling students overall
- Helping teachers reach gifted and talented students
- Helping teachers reach students who are constant discipline problems
- Giving teachers more training on how to use technology in the classroom
- Enhancing teachers' knowledge and content in the subjects they teach
- Sharing new teaching methods to engage students with diverse skills and abilities
- Ensuring teachers are teaching what is required on the state-wide tests
- Providing mentoring or one-on-one training for newer teachers

- Providing mentoring or one-on-one training for more experienced teachers
- Helping teachers find effective ways to teach English-language learners the subject matter
- Providing teachers with effective ways to work with students at risk for dropping out
- Improving teachers' morale

A

B

C

D

F

[DO NOT READ] Don't know

[DO NOT READ] Refused

18. [DISTRICT ONLY] Are you involved in either developing, implementing or overseeing teacher professional development programs?

Yes

No

[DO NOT READ] Don't know

[DO NOT READ] Refused

19. [IF YES] How effective do you think each of the following techniques are for improving a struggling teacher's performance. Do you think <INSERT ITEM> is very effective, somewhat effective, not too effective, or not at all effective?

- One-on-one professional development where a teacher works with an administrator
- One-on-one professional development where a teacher works with a peer
- Professional development with groups of teachers
- Professional development using outside speakers or teachers not from your district

Very effective

Somewhat effective

Not too effective

Not at all effective

[DO NOT READ] Don't know

[DO NOT READ] Refused

20. Do you think that the majority of teacher professional development should be about general methods and practices that are useful to a majority of teachers or should it be personalized development aimed at individual teachers?

Should be general and useful to a majority of teachers

Should be personalized and aimed at individual teachers

[DO NOT READ] Don't know

[DO NOT READ] Refused

Teacher Staffing – Quantity and quality

21. [TREND] Based upon your experience, has the quality of new teachers coming into the profession in recent years improved, gotten worse or stayed about the same?

Improved

Gotten worse

Stayed about the same

[DO NOT READ] Don't know

[DO NOT READ] Refused

22. How serious a problem is teacher turnover in [DISTRICT= your schools/STATE =most districts]?
Would you say it is a:

Very serious problem
Somewhat serious
Not too serious
Not at all serious
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

23. How difficult is it to find qualified teachers in [DISTRICT= your schools/STATE =most districts]?
Would you say it is:

Very difficult
Somewhat difficult
Not too difficult
Not at all difficult
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

24. [IF ABOVE QUESTION = VERY DIFFICULT OR SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT] Is it particularly difficult to find qualified teachers for the math and science departments, or are other subjects equally as difficult to staff?

Math and Science particularly
Other subjects equally
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

25. [DISTRICT ONLY] Now, think about the current teaching staff in your district, are you involved with any teacher evaluation process or not?

Yes
No
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

26. [DISTRICT ONLY] [IF ABOVE QUESTION IS YES] Does your district usually get all the information you need about a teacher's effectiveness by the formal evaluations or does the district also conduct other evaluations that are not part of the teacher's formal record?

Formal evaluations only
Other evaluations as well
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

27. [DISTRICT ONLY] How confident are you that the methods you have in place to evaluate teachers will enable you and your staff to spot an ineffective teacher? Are you [READ ANSWERS]

Very confident
Somewhat confident
Not too confident
Not at all confident
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

28. [DISTRICT ONLY] How confident are you that the methods you have in place to evaluate teachers will enable you and your staff to pinpoint for a particular teacher exactly what they need to improve upon? Are you [READ ANSWERS]

- Very confident
- Somewhat confident
- Not too confident
- Not at all confident
- [DO NOT READ] Don't know
- [DO NOT READ] Refused

29. [DISTRICT ONLY] [IF ANY EVALUATIONS DONE] How useful is each of the following techniques in assessing the effectiveness of a teacher. Would you say [INSERT] is extremely useful, somewhat useful, not too useful or not at all useful in assessing the effectiveness of a teacher?

- Observations of the class made by the principal
- Observations of the class made by other teachers
- Review of lesson plans or other teaching materials independent of observing the class
- State or district assessment scores not broken out by subgroup
- State or district assessment scores broken out by subgroup
- Any other assessment scores that you use
- Parent feedback
- Anything else [SPECIFY]

- Extremely useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not too useful
- Not at all useful
- [DO NOT READ] Don't know
- [DO NOT READ] Refused

30. [DISTRICT ONLY] Once you and your staff have gathered all the necessary information from teacher evaluations, would you say it easy or difficult for to use this information to:

- Remove ineffective teachers who DO NOT have tenure? [FOLLOW UP: Is that very or somewhat?]
- Remove ineffective teachers who DO have tenure? [FOLLOW UP: Is that very or somewhat?]

- Very easy
- Somewhat easy
- Somewhat difficult
- Very difficult
- [DO NOT READ] Don't know
- [DO NOT READ] Refused

Educational Leadership

31. [DISTRICT ONLY] Here are some areas where more training or technical assistance for school administrators might improve student outcomes or meet your needs

Does your district need more training or technical assistance to help you with:

- Understanding government regulations and programs and how to meet them effectively
- Integrating technology into the curriculum

- Curriculum alignment between the material taught in the school and the state or district standards
- Serving special populations (e.g., English Language Learners and Special Education students)
- Helping new teachers become effective in the classroom
- Giving teachers better techniques for reaching hard-to-reach students
- New techniques for choosing great teachers
- Best practices for creating a positive, respectful school environment
- Helping teachers use assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses in their teaching
- Community outreach and parent relations
- Analyzing test data

Yes

No

[DO NOT READ] Don't know

[DO NOT READ] Refused

After-school programs

32. [DISTRICT ONLY] Thinking about after-school programs, approximately what percentage of students participate in after-school programs run by your schools? Would you say [READ IF NECESSARY]:

None

Less than 25%

More than 25% but less than half

More than half but less than 75%

[OR] Greater than 75%

[DO NOT READ] Don't know

[DO NOT READ] Refused

33. [DISTRICT ONLY] And, approximately what percentage of students participate in after-school programs run by other organizations, either public or private? Would you say [READ IF NECESSARY]:

None

Less than 25%

More than 25% but less than half

More than half but less than 75%

[OR] Greater than 75%

[DO NOT READ] Don't know

[DO NOT READ] Refused

34. [IF THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS IN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS RUN BY THE SCHOOLS IS NOT 0%] How effective do you think you and your staff are in providing your own after-school programs that address the students' needs? Would you say [READ]

Very effective

Somewhat effective

Not very effective

Not effective at all

[DO NOT READ] Don't know

[DO NOT READ] Refused

35. [IF THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS IN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS RUN BY THE SCHOOLS IS NOT 0%] How effective are you and your staff at assessing whether the private after-school programs address the needs of the students in your community? Would you say:

Very effective

Somewhat effective
Not very effective
Not effective at all
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

Special education

36. As far as you know, over the past few years, are the proportion of special education students in [DISTRICT= your schools/STATE =most districts] increasing, decreasing or remaining the same?

Increasing
Decreasing
Remaining the same
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

37. As you may know, the placing of special-education students in general-education classrooms for all or part of the day is called mainstreaming. Do you think that in [DISTRICT= most schools/STATE =most districts] mainstreaming is managed so that it mostly does good things in the classrooms, or does it need more fine-tuning and revision?

Mostly does good
Needs fine tuning and revision
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

38. [DISTRICT] How difficult is each of the following when it comes to special education in your schools? Would you say it is very difficult, somewhat difficult, not too difficult or not at all difficult.

[RANDOMIZE]

- Managing the volume and complexity of federal and state regulations regarding special education
- The money and resources it takes to fulfill the requirements of special education
- Sense of entitlement and advocacy which parents of special education kids bring
- Finding quality special education teachers
- Making adequate yearly progress with special education students

Very difficult
Somewhat difficult
Not too difficult
Not difficult at all
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

Now some questions about online or distance learning

39. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about online or distance learning. <INSERT ITEM> [FOLLOW UP: Is that Strongly or Somewhat?]

- Online learning improves home schooling
- Online learning improves public schools
- Online learning is a useful add-on to a student's traditional classroom education
- Online learning is a viable alternative to the traditional classroom for certain students
- Online learning is a good use of a school's resources

- [DISTRICT= your schools/STATE =most districts] are using online distance learning to its fullest potential
- Distance learning, via online or other methods, is more beneficial to students in rural districts compared to students in other areas

Strongly agree
Somewhat agree
Somewhat disagree
Strongly disagree
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

Rural school districts

40. [STATE ONLY] Which statement about small rural districts comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right? [ROTATE OPTIONS]

Small rural districts should be consolidated in order to provide more resources to benefit students
[OR]
Small rural districts should be maintained in order to ensure local autonomy.
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

41. Finally, are there any other educational priorities and needs for [DISTRICT= your schools/STATE your districts] that you'd like comment on? [OPEN-END]

Demographics

[FROM SAMPLE]
geographic areas served, etc.
urbanicity
% of free-reduced price lunch
minority density
of students and schools in district

[READ TO ALL] Now, I have a few questions so that we can describe the professionals who took part in our survey...

42. [STATE ONLY] Which of the following best describes your employer?

The state government
An education interest group
Or are you a business leader?
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

43. [STATE ONLY] In which city do you work/serve? [OPEN-END]

44. [DISTRICT ONLY] Are you a:

Superintendent
Principal
School board member
Teacher [OR]

Union leader?
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

45. [PRINCIPALS ONLY] Are you the principal of an:

Elementary School
Middle or junior high school
High school [OR]
Something else [SPECIFY]
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

46. [NON-EDUCATORS ONLY] Please describe your current job or job title? [OPEN-END]

47. [NON-EDUCATORS ONLY] How many years have you been working for your current employer?

Less than 5 years
5-10 years
11-20 years
More than 20 years
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

48. [NON-EDUCATORS ONLY] How many years have you been working in this industry?

Less than 5 years
5-10 years
11-20 years
More than 20 years
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

49. [EDUCATORS ONLY] How many years have you had your current position?

Less than 5 years
5-10 years
11-20 years
More than 20 years
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

50. [EDUCATORS ONLY] How many years have you been working in the field of education?

Less than 5 years
5-10 years
11-20 years
More than 20 years
[DO NOT READ] Don't know
[DO NOT READ] Refused

SEX [DO NOT ASK]:

Male
Female

51. What is your age? [RECORD ACTUAL AGE]

52. What is the LAST grade or class that you COMPLETED in school? [DO NOT READ]

None, or grade 1-8

High school incomplete (grades 9-11)

High school graduate (grade 12 or GED certificate)

Business, technical, or vocational school AFTER high school

Some college, no 4-year degree

College graduate (B.S., B.A., or other 4-year degree)

Post-graduate training or professional schooling after college (e.g., toward a master's degree or Ph.D.; law or medical school)

[DO NOT READ] Don't know

[DO NOT READ] Refused

53. Are you Hispanic or Latino? [READ RESPONSES ENTER ALL THAT APPLY]

No, I am not Hispanic or Latino

Yes, I am Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano

Yes, I am Puerto Rican or Puerto Rican American

Yes, I am Cuban or Cuban American

Yes, I am from some other Hispanic or Latino background

[DO NOT READ] Don't know

[DO NOT READ] Refused

54. Which one of the following best describes you? [READ RESPONSES ENTER ALL THAT APPLY]

- White
- Black or African American
- Asian
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- [DO NOT READ] Don't know
- [DO NOT READ] Refused

55. Researchers from Public Agenda may want to contact people who participated in this survey to discuss further some of the issues we talked about today. Would you be willing to talk with them later?

- Yes
- No
- [DO NOT READ] Don't know
- [DO NOT READ] Refused

56. [WEB] [ASK IF AGREE TO TALK WITH RESEARCHERS (D7a=1)] Please indicate the way in which you would like to be contacted. (*Mark all that apply*)

- Business telephone number (please specify): _____
- Other telephone number (please specify): _____
- Email address (please specify): _____

[CLOSING] That completes the interview. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation. Have a nice day/evening.