

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE  
2015 STUDENT AND PARENT PERCEPTION SURVEYS**

**DATE: JULY 2014**

**Background and Purpose:**

The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) will administer the Student and Parent Perception Surveys annually to parents and students. DoDEA provides education to eligible Department of Defense (DoD) military and civilian dependents from preschool through grade 12 with two distinct programs: The DoD Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) for dependents at locations within the continental United States where DoD operates schools, and the DoD Dependents Schools (DoDDS) for dependents outside the continental United States. The DDESS system serves an estimated 23,000 students in 64 schools located in seven states, Guam, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The DoDDS system serves approximately 59,000 students in 127 schools in 11 countries. Courses of study in DoDEA schools parallel those found in public schools in the United States.

The Student and Parent Perception Surveys are part of DoDEA's continual efforts to improve the quality of education provided to DoD military and civilian dependents. Survey results will allow schools, districts and areas to make improvements in the educational services they offer.

The Student and Parent Perception Surveys will replace the DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey, which was discontinued in 2008. The 2015 DoDEA Perception Surveys represent a departure from tradition in that the survey will be administered to students in grades 3-12 (as opposed to grades 4-12), and will be administered annually as opposed to biennially. Participation remains voluntary but maximum participation is encouraged in order to obtain reliable and valid data.

The purpose is to communicate the implementation of the survey and increase awareness of the survey to DoDEA's internal and external audiences; increase awareness among all audiences of DoDEA's commitment and efforts to strengthen curriculum, instruction, programs and support to promote highest achievement for all students; and promote a sense of ownership and pride among teachers, students, and sponsors for their educational programs.

**Key Messages:**

Messages should contain the following basic content and be tailored to each level of leadership (Headquarters, Area, District, and School):

- The Perception Surveys will be administered annually and provide feedback to DoDEA from students and parents about the strengths and improvements needed in educational services DoD provides to its students.
- The Surveys are part of DoDEA's continual efforts to improve the quality of education provided to DoD military and civilian dependents.
- The focus of the 2015 surveys has been refined to concentrate on how parents and students of DoDEA schools feel about instruction, curriculum, programs, and services, among other topics.
- The surveys provide a forum for parents and students in DoD schools to have their opinions heard and communicate their level of satisfaction with issues related to DoD schools.
- The information gathered from all surveys will be used to improve planning efforts at ALL levels throughout DoDEA and monitor the DoDEA Community Strategic Plan.
- Survey results will allow the DoDEA headquarters, schools, districts and areas to make improvements in the educational services they offer.
- Principals are responsible for encouraging maximum participation among students and parents.
- Surveys have been developed with demographic groups in mind. . There are separate surveys for parents, students in grades 3-6, and students in grades 7-12. to allow for accurate and appropriate analysis of educational programs and services and to permit age appropriate language. However, the questions across surveys are aligned in order to permit comparison across groups.
- The opinions of students and parents teachers are important to DoDEA educators and will contribute to decisions made about DoD schools. Their voices are critical to DoDEA's continual efforts to improve the quality of education provided to DoD dependents.

### **Public Affairs Posture**

Public Affairs posture is active. Area and District Offices, school principals, commanders and public affairs officers where DoDEA facilities exist should answer questions about the CSS. Any questions outside the scope of this guidance should be referred to DoDEA Communications (703) 588-3260.

### **Talking Points**

- DoDEA provides education to eligible Department of Defense (DoD) military and civilian dependents from preschool through grade 12 with two distinct programs, the DoD Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) for dependents at locations within the continental United States where DoD operates schools, and the DoD Dependents Schools (DoDDS) for dependents outside the continental United States. Courses of study in DoDEA schools parallel those found in public schools in the United States.
- The views of parents and students are critical to DoDEA's continual efforts to improve the quality of education provided to DoD dependents and their opinions are

very important and will contribute to the future decisions DoDEA educators will make about schools.

- Survey results will allow the DoDEA headquarters, schools, districts and areas to make improvements in the educational services they offer. DoDEA will strive to take action based on the opinions voiced in the survey.
- Separate surveys will be administered to sponsors and students in grades 4-5, students in grades 6-8, and students in grades 9-12, to allow for accurate and appropriate analysis of educational programs and services. See comment above, there not separate surveys, just additional questions. Most questions are the same.
- The surveys have been developed through a review and input process of various groups, including Area offices, superintendents, Education Directorate staff at headquarters, as well as external review authorities (such as DMDC). Some questions have been adapted from the *Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward Schools* with additional DoDEA-specific questions.
- The surveys will be available online from November 1, 2008 through February 28, 2009, by accessing the website [www.dodea.edu](http://www.dodea.edu) and clicking on "Survey."
- We encourage everyone's participation – voice your opinion! The survey runs through February 28.
- There will be no paper copies this year.

### **Suggested Interviews**

- Director (Mr. Thomas Brady)
- Associate Director for Education (Dr. Adrian Talley)
- Area Directors
- Principals
- Sandy Embler, Chief of Research and Evaluation

## **Questions and Answers:**

Q1. What is the CSS?

A1. Historically, the CSS was a biannual survey administered by DoDEA to parents, students and teachers to monitor DoDEA's success in meeting students' needs.

The DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey represents a departure from tradition in that the survey will be administered to students in grades 4-12 and sponsors for each child enrolled in DoD schools from pre-kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Participation remains voluntary and maximum participation is encouraged in order to obtain reliable and valid data.

DoDEA Administrators, teachers, educational support staff will participate in a separate survey, the DoDEA Employee Satisfaction Survey, to be administered during [INSERT DATE]. As with the Customer Satisfaction Survey, participation in the DoDEA Employee Satisfaction Survey is voluntary and maximum participation is encouraged in order to obtain reliable and valid data.

Q2. Why did DoDEA change the way the Customer Satisfaction Survey is administered? Why were teachers left out of the survey?

A2.

Q3. How will teachers' opinions and attitudes be measured? How will their opinions be used in DoDEA's operation and planning?

A3.

Q4. How will the results from the Customer Satisfaction Survey be used?

A4. The information derived from these surveys will be used to improve planning efforts at all levels throughout DoDEA. Schools, districts, and areas will use the survey results to gain insight into the satisfaction levels of sponsors and students, which is one of many measures used for future planning of programs and services offered to DoDEA's students. The survey results will also be used to monitor the DoDEA Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

Q5. What is the CSP?

A5. The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) contains the strategic direction for the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) for the years 2006-2011. The plan is a road map for keeping DoDEA at the forefront in advancing the Department of Defense's agenda for education and as a leader in the Nation for improving student performance and achievement.

In April 2008, a committee composed of representatives from DoDEA Headquarters, Area Deputy Directors, and employee association officials met in Arlington, Virginia to review the 2006-2011 Community Strategic Plan. Their charge was to ensure congruency and alignment among goals, outcomes, measures, and milestones. The result of that committee's work was an alignment to the plan, called the 2008 CSP Alignment.

The 2008 Alignment to DoDEA's 2006-2011 Community Strategic Plan supplies direction for improving our continuous efforts to provide the highest quality education for all students and ensure their success inside and outside the classroom. The process used to develop this five-year plan, along with the vision, mission, guiding principles, and goals is contained in the following pages. This document clarifies the connection between the strategies, actions, and measures we will use to achieve our goals and objectives. The 2008 CSP Alignment is easier to read and understand, provides clear and specific objectives, and defines measures to better match objectives.

Q6. How were the questions developed?

A6. The surveys have been developed through a review process of various groups, including the DoDDS and DDESS teachers' unions, DoDEA Teachers of the year, superintendents, principals, students, and Education Directorate staff at headquarters. Some questions have been adapted from the *Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward Schools* with additional DoDEA-specific questions.

Q7. Who will participate in the survey?

A7. The surveys will be administered to specific demographic groups. Separate surveys will be administered to sponsors and students in grades 4-5, students in grades 6-8, and students in grades 9-12, to allow for accurate and appropriate analysis of educational programs and services.

Q8. Is the survey mandatory for people in these groups?

A8. Participation in the survey is totally voluntary. The survey is important to enhancing the school improvement process. Principals will encourage students and parents to participate because a high response rate of accurate answers will provide schools with more information about their programs.

Q9. How can parents and students complete the survey?

A9.

Q10. How long will it take to complete the survey?

A10. We anticipate it will take less than 20 minutes for each group to complete its survey.

Q11. Will you announce the results?

A11. Once the results have been obtained and analyzed, we will be happy to discuss the findings.