



Tell Them From Me parent survey Frequently Asked Questions

Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation

1. What is the Partners in Learning parent survey?

The Partners in Learning parent survey is part of the *Tell Them From Me* suite of surveys on student engagement. The parent survey helps to clarify and strengthen the important relationship between parent and school.

The parent survey is anonymous. It can be used either as a one-off survey or to identify trends within schools over time and better inform school priorities. The survey is held once a year (Term 3), and is run at the same time as the Focus on Learning teacher survey and the second optional student survey.

Over 700 schools in NSW participated in the 2015 parent survey.

2. What are the benefits for my school?

The parent survey provides school principals and school leaders with parents' perspectives on their school as well as learning at home. Communication between parents and staff, activities and practices at home, and parent views on the school's support of learning and behaviour help build an accurate and timely picture that schools can use for practical improvements.

Data reports are provided to school leaders within three business days of the survey closing. Schools will be able to access a 'one click' PDF summary report of their school's results. A summary 'radar' chart shows your school's average scores on a ten-point scale for eight measures. The report also shows the distribution of answers for each measure which allows school leaders to target specific issues. Your school's results will be compared against state-wide averages.

3. How does this survey relate to the school planning cycle?

The *Tell Them From Me* student, parent and teacher surveys provide valid and reliable data to help schools during the 2015-2017 planning cycle, including with the annual review of strategic directions, development of improvement measures and milestones, self-assessment against the School Excellence Framework and preparation of the annual school report.

The survey data can help schools:

- understand parents' perspectives on their children's experience at school, including teaching, communication and the school's support of learning and behaviour
- understand parents' perspectives on activities and practices at home related to their children's learning
- provide evidence of areas of strength to support self-assessment and reporting
- engage the school community in discussions to identify strategic directions for school improvement
- establish quantitative improvement measures and help schools track achievement against them.

4. How are these surveys different from existing Departmental surveys on the School Survey System?

Schools have access to national and Departmental surveys of students, parents and teachers through the School Survey System. The *Tell Them From Me* suite of student, parent and teacher surveys incorporate many of the same topics and have similarly worded questions. However, they also:

- include a number of different measures
- bring student, teachers and parent surveys together in a single reporting tool
- will include data collected over multiple years
- enable comparison with state averages.

5. How will the student, parent and teacher surveys assist the Department to support better student outcomes?

The Department is committed to using data, evidence and evaluation to inform its planning and practice. The survey data allows the Department, through the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE), to analyse results at a state-wide system level as well as in comparison with other data sources, to understand better the impact of parent and student engagement, wellbeing and teaching practices on student outcomes.

6. What kind of questions will the parent survey ask?

The survey questions aim at understanding parents' perspectives on their child's experience at school, including teaching, communication and the school's support of learning and behaviour. The survey also helps schools understand parents' perspectives on activities and practices at home related to their child's learning.

Schools will also have the option to include their own custom questions in closed and open-ended format. Individual responses to the open-ended questions will not be passed on to CESE researchers.

The survey questions relate to the following drivers of student engagement:

Parents feel welcome	Parents are informed	Parents support learning at home	Parents participation at school
School supports positive behaviour	Safety	Inclusion	School supports learning

7. How does my school participate in the surveys?

CESE has invited expressions of interest from all schools for the 2016 surveys. To participate in the parent survey, schools must also participate in the student survey. Some exceptions do apply to schools in special circumstances, such as infants schools.

8. How many parents at my school can take part?

All parents are encouraged to take the survey. CESE will provide schools with advice on different ways to engage parents.

Parents can complete a different survey for each child they have at the school if they wish.

9. What is the cost to my school?

The surveys are provided free of charge to schools. In return, schools are asked to encourage as many parents as possible to complete the survey. CESE may also ask schools to take part in a feedback questionnaire once the surveys have finished.

10. How will the survey be conducted?

The survey is conducted entirely online at home or on public computers, during the specific survey window. For 2016, this will take place during Term 3. The survey will take around 15 minutes.

11. How will parent anonymity be ensured?

To protect parent anonymity, schools will create a unique URL that will allow access to the survey for their school only. The school will distribute this unique URL to parents, generally via the school newsletter. Data suppression rules are applied to the school reporting tools where there are fewer than five responses.

12. Will support be available to schools during the survey period?

Schools will have access to technical support provided by *The Learning Bar*, the company that has been contracted to supply the surveys for the Department. A free-call telephone number and email address will be provided to participating schools. Support will be available every day during term time between 8.30am and 4.30pm, before, during and after active survey periods.

13. Will training be available to school coordinators?

Online live training and information webinars will be offered to all schools. All school coordinators and principals are encouraged to attend one of these training sessions prior to the survey window. There will also be additional webinars offered at the end of the survey period providing information about how to interpret the reports and analyse the data provided by the surveys.

14. Can I see the survey questions?

Schools will be able to view the surveys online via a password protected portal once they have formally committed to undertaking the surveys. The questions in PDF form are available for participating schools. Please note that the survey questions are the intellectual property of *The Learning Bar* and must not be distributed beyond your school or used in any manner other than that stipulated by the Department.

15. How does the parent survey relate to the student and teacher surveys?

CESE is offering the full suite of *Tell Them From Me* surveys (student, parent and teacher surveys) to ensure schools can capture the views of students, teachers and parents. The surveys are complementary.

For more detail on each of the surveys, see the survey website: <http://surveys.cese.nsw.gov.au/>

16. Will the surveys all take place at the same time?

The student survey will take place in Term 1 and (optionally) Term 3. The parent and teacher surveys will take place at the same time as the second student survey in Term 3.

17. Can our school do one of the surveys and not the others?

Schools can take part in the student survey without taking part in either the teacher or parent surveys. However, schools must commit to do the student survey to be able to run the parent and/or teacher survey. Some exceptions do apply to schools in special circumstances, such as infants schools, schools for specific purposes (SSP schools) or schools that participated in the 2014 pilot Focus on Learning teacher survey. The parent and teacher surveys are designed to complement the student survey.

18. My school is small. Will the survey work for me?

To protect student and parent confidentiality, data suppression rules do apply where fewer than five parents answer a question. This may limit the capacity of small schools to drill down into their data.

Small schools can choose to cluster together, allowing them to pool data. Clustering is completely optional. To form a cluster, all schools involved must agree. If schools form a cluster this will mean that these schools receive a report that shows the combined data from all the schools in that particular cluster. These schools will also receive their individual school report if enough data has been collected to protect student and parent confidentiality.

Please indicate whether you would like to be part of a school cluster when lodging your expression of interest.

19. Can infants schools, SSP schools or other schools with special circumstances participate?

Infants schools can take part in the parent survey, even though the student survey is only suitable for students in Years 4 to 12. SSP schools and other schools with special circumstances may do the parent and/or teacher surveys without doing the student survey after first enquiring with CESE.

20. Who will be able to see my school's data?

Schools will be able to see their own aggregated data. They will not see individual parent responses.

CESE researchers will have access to anonymous survey response data for system-wide analysis. The researchers are interested in trends only, not individual responses. CESE will not be able to see responses to your school's open-ended custom questions. No parent will be identified in any publication. No school will be identified unless they have given permission.

As with other Departmental data, your Director, Public Schools and selected policy staff from State Office may view your school's report.

Schools are encouraged to use the data as part of their ongoing community and stakeholder discussion.

21. What will happen next for schools that choose to participate in the parent survey?

Early Term 3	Training for school principals and coordinators in using the survey website (conducted by webinar). Schools provided with a single log-in and password for their school for distribution to parents.
Mid-Term 3	Active period for surveys. Help desk support will be available. Schools receive their reports three days after closing their survey.
Term 4	Training for school principals and coordinators in analysing school survey results (conducted by webinar).

What is CESE?

The Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) is part of the Department of Education.

CESE has been established to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of education in New South Wales.

CESE identifies and shares what works, creating new opportunities to improve teaching and learning across all of education.

More information about CESE is available at: www.cese.nsw.gov.au

What is *The Learning Bar*?

The Learning Bar is a Canadian education company that specialises in school surveys for both primary and secondary students. Its survey, *Tell Them From Me*, is the largest national school survey in Canada, used in nine of Canada's ten provinces. More than 2,600 schools and 1.7 million Canadian students have participated in the survey over the last nine years. Australian schools have been participating in the *Tell Them From Me* surveys since 2012.

The Learning Bar is led by Dr J Douglas Willms. Dr Willms is a Professor and Director of the Canadian Research Institute for Social Policy at the University of New Brunswick, and holds the Canada Research Chair in Literacy and Human Development. Dr Willms led the development of questions on student engagement for the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

More information about *The Learning Bar* is available at: www.thelearningbar.com

If you have any questions about the parent survey, please contact CESE via email: TTFM@det.nsw.edu.au or by telephone: 9561 8331 /9561 8056 /9561 8370.