

# INTERVIEW AND SURVEY YOUR COMMUNITY ABOUT THE PATH FORWARD

## Process

Consider individuals or groups within your school community to schedule interviews or focus groups with. While you likely can't speak with everyone, start with identifying a mix of teachers, students, parents, support staff, and community members who encompass the intersectional identities of your school community.

Decide which topics you'd like to probe in each interview/focus group. Possible topics could include:

- Economic hardships due to COVID-19
- Comfort with technology during distance learning
- Inequitable barriers to full participation in distance learning
- Helpfulness of existing outreach efforts
- Ideas for ways the school could provide support for the community

Plan questions for each individual/group based on the topics you want to discuss.

During the interviews/focus groups, either take detailed notes or record the conversation (asking permission first!) so you have an accurate record of the conversation.

After completing your scheduled conversations, analyze your data.

- Steps for analyzing interview/focus group data
  - Read through your notes (or listen to the recordings) of each conversation once.
  - Write down any recurring themes you noticed
  - Re-read through your notes (or re-listen to the recordings) with these identified themes in front of mind.
    - As you go, pull out specific quotes that relate to the themes you identified.
    - Adjust themes (or create new ones) as new insights emerge
  - If necessary, repeat the previous step.
  - Consider bringing in multiple voices (e.g., select students, staff, etc.) into this conversation.

Create a survey to probe identified themes and quotes.

- Different members of the community will have different needs, so consider making specialized surveys for certain subsets of your community.

Use results to identify already implemented practices to continue and areas that need support. Share these results (or even collaboratively analyze this data) with your transition committee.



# Survey Templates

## STUDENTS

### Sample text for introductory email for student survey:

Dear SCHOOL NAME students,

I hope you all have enjoyed the summer break and stayed safe. The whole SCHOOL NAME community is excited to welcome you back to school this fall. The questions below will help us better understand how to kick off the school year, learning more about what has worked for you since remote learning started last spring and what is most important to you about your experience in school. We really appreciate your thoughtful feedback and are excited for the year ahead!

Principal Name

### Sample questions to include on a student survey (to be adapted to be developmentally appropriate)

- What has your experience been like since school has been closed?
- What was the best part of distance learning last year?
- What was the hardest part of distance learning last year?
- What were the top three challenges you encountered during distance learning?
  - Access to technology
  - Limited WiFi bandwidth
  - Didn't understand the material
  - Too many distractions at home
  - Other responsibilities at home
  - Not seeing my friends in person
  - Not seeing my teacher(s) in person
- What will help you learn this upcoming year?
- What can we do to make school feel even more like a community that cares for you?

This short check-in survey from Harvard's Graduate School of Education could be distributed by teachers to students to capture real-time feedback on how students are doing emotionally and what could be improved regarding student supports and distance learning with an SEL lens.



## FAMILIES

### Sample text for introductory email for family survey:

Dear SCHOOL NAME families and parents,

Thank you for your ongoing support of our school community. As the world adapted to the novel coronavirus this past Spring, our whole community - parents and family members, teachers, school leadership and students alike - rose to the challenge of remote learning. As we enter a new school year, we are aware that circumstances outside of our control might arise that require further pivots. To that end, we ask that you take the time to respond to the survey items below and help us serve you, and your child/children, to the best of our ability during these uncertain times. Your feedback and insights are invaluable to our school community.

With appreciation,  
Principal Name

### Sample questions to include on a family survey:

Multiple Choice Questions:

- How many children do you have attending SCHOOL NAME this coming year?
  - What grade(s) will they be entering?
  
- How often would you like to hear from school leadership via email about transition plans and/or remote learning?
  - More than once a week
  - Once a week
  - Every other week
  - Monthly
  
- Are you interested in serving as a family partner on our school's transition and remote learning task force?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Maybe
  
- Reflecting back on your experience with distance learning last Spring, what worked well? Please check all boxes that apply.
  - Teacher engagement
  - Access to technology
  - Time commitment of distance learning
  - Homework assigned
  - School leadership communications
  - Clear homework assignments
  - Access to learning resources
  - Student connections with peers
  - Grading
  - Access to wraparound services



• Reflecting back on your experience with distance learning last Spring, what didn't work well? Please check all boxes that apply.

- Teacher engagement
- Access to technology
- Time commitment of distance learning
- Homework assigned
- School leadership communications
- Clear homework assignments
- Access to learning resources
- Student connections with peers
- Grading
- Access to wraparound services

• Open Response Questions:

- What is on your mind as you think about next school year?
- What are your biggest hopes or worries?
- What has our school done well during the past months, and what could we have done better?
- How might you like to contribute as we prepare to transition to a new school year?

Alternately, this tool from NYU Steinhardt's Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools offers guidance for educators on connecting with and learning from families during COVID-19 school closures, including phone scripts and key questions. Some of these questions could be added to a written survey tool, as well.

## STAFF

Dear SCHOOL NAME teachers and staff,

Thank you for your ongoing work in service of our school community. As the world adapted to the novel coronavirus this past Spring, our whole community - teachers and staff, families, and students alike - rose to the challenge of remote learning. As we enter a new school year, we are aware that circumstances outside of our control might arise that require further pivots. To that end, we ask that you take the time to respond to these survey items below about your experience with remote learning last year and some reflection on the school year ahead. Your feedback and insights are invaluable.

With appreciation,  
Principal Name

Multiple Choice Questions:

- What are the top three challenges you face while working remotely?
  - Childcare
  - Communication with colleagues has been more difficult
  - Navigating the online learning platform
  - My physical workspace
  - I've been sick or caring for a family member who has been sick
  - Internet connectivity
  - Keeping a regular schedule
  - Too many distractions at home



- Please rate your level of difficulty with the following (on a scale from extremely — very — somewhat — not at all):
  - How difficult has it been for you to prioritize self-care?
  - How difficult has it been for you to work effectively?
  - How difficult has it been to navigate through distance learning?
  
- Are you interested in serving on our school's transition and remote learning task force?
  - Yes    ◦ No    ◦ Maybe
  
- How often would you like your school leadership to communicate with the staff?
  - Everyday                      ◦ A few times per week                      ◦ About once a week                      ◦ About every other week
  
- How confident are you that you have the right resources to support you through this period?
  - Very confident                      ◦ Somewhat confident                      ◦ Not so confident                      ◦ Not confident at all

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