

# Conducting the Parent and Family Involvement Survey for your school(s): Instructions and Guidelines

## The Survey Instrument

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has developed and piloted a Parent and Family Involvement Survey as a tool for schools to gauge their current family engagement practices. The 27-item survey asks families to give their perspective on the extent to which a school is providing the six areas of service and conditions that research shows are effective for engaging families:

1. Empowering families with information to support their children's learning at home;
2. Creating channels of communication between home and school;
3. Offering an array of opportunities for families to participate in school planning, leadership and volunteering;
4. Connecting families to in-school and community support mechanisms and resources;
5. Setting high expectations for students, providing high-quality instruction and meeting students' individual learning needs;
6. Providing a welcoming school climate.

Parents rate each of the 27 items using a five-response Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*, with the additional option of *Don't Know*. The items can then be analyzed separately, as well in clusters – or factors – that relate to the six areas of services and supports for family engagement. The survey also contains several questions that relate to the ODE Needs Assessment tool referenced in the Decision Framework (Level IIIC, areas 1 and 2) and provides a proxy for determining the Decision Framework indicator ratings (i.e., high, moderate and low). In addition, families who complete the survey have the option to provide written comments or suggestions on what their school could do to better support their children's learning and learning environment.

Schools can use the survey data to identify areas of success and areas that need improvement. Survey results also can be used to determine priority areas and to guide planning of strategies and actions steps to strengthen family engagement. The survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete.

## Options for Schools to use the Parent Engagement Survey:

ODE provides two options for using the survey. The first option, a pilot limited to 50 school buildings, is offered at no cost to the schools. ODE conducts all of the analyses and reports for those schools. Under Option 2, schools download the survey instrument and guidelines and assume the costs of conducting and analyzing the surveys.

### **ODE Pilot**

Option 1 is available to the first 50 schools that contact ODE and agree to the following conditions:

- The school agrees that all surveys will be completed electronically using ODE’s Vovici survey research tool. This means that the survey participants (parents and guardians) will do one of the following: fill out the survey online from the Vovici tool; use other online survey instruments; or the school will collect paper surveys and manually code the responses into the Vovici survey template.
- The school agrees to collect a minimum of 30 surveys.
- The school agrees to follow the guidelines proposed in the “Sampling” section of this document.
- The school understands that ODE will give preference if the proposed schools are middle or high schools.

### **Instructions for completing the online survey:**

1. ODE will provide your school with a link to the survey. This link should be made available to those who will participate in the survey.
2. The link will take the participant to the *Vovici* survey template.
3. The participant will choose their school from a drop-down list.
4. Participants will be taken to the survey and will complete it anonymously.
5. Participants receive confirmation when they finish the survey.
6. The results will be transmitted to ODE for analysis and report preparation.
7. ODE will provide printable electronic reports to each of the 50 participating schools.

## School-Administered

Option 2 applies to any school interested in using the ODE survey. A copy of the survey is available on the ODE School, Family and Community Partnership Framework Web page. The school may print, copy, or modify the survey to suit its needs or priorities. It also may input the questions on the school's existing survey tool or purchase a tool such as SurveyMonkey. The school will be responsible for all aspects of the survey including dissemination, collection, analysis and summarization. It is recommended that all schools consider the information and follow the guidelines proposed below.

### Sampling:

To have confidence that the survey results will not be narrow or biased, schools should choose a survey sample that comes close to representing the school population. The following guidelines will assist in this process.

- Every sample should yield a minimum of 30 actual respondents. This number should increase with the size of the total population. The following chart provides general guidance for determining an appropriate sample size, as well as an approximate number of surveys to distribute to obtain the desired sample number.

Number of students	Sample population size	Minimum number of surveys to distribute
75	30	60
150	50	100
250	65	130
350	75	150
500+	90	180

- The survey sample should include a minimum of one-third of the grades in the building.
- The grades included in the sample should be spread out, meaning that two adjacent grade levels should not be used unless the survey is distributed equally to all grades.

### Survey Considerations:

When interpreting the responses of your school's parents, keep the following cautions and limitations in mind:

- Unless you are fortunate enough to have nearly all parents respond to the survey, the survey cannot be considered a representative sample of all parents in your school.
- Although the results are available for any school that had 30 or more parents respond, keep in mind that it is difficult to generalize to all parents from small numbers of parents.
- Comparisons will be provided showing your school's responses compared to all elementary (or middle/high schools) responses so far. These comparisons currently come from a limited number of parents and schools and cannot be considered a valid cross-section of all Ohio parents.

## **Data Analysis:**

The following guidelines provide assistance in analyzing the data obtained from the survey.

- A spreadsheet program, such as Excel, will make data analysis as smooth as possible. A spreadsheet also will provide structure to the collected data.
- The scoring structure ranges from 1 to 5 for each question in the survey, with *Strongly Disagree* (SD) being 1 and *Strongly Agree* (SA) being 5. The higher the average score on that scale, the more parents have agreed with the positive statements in the survey.
- A good rule for interpreting your results is that if your school has at least 30 parents responding and your school's average score on any item differs by .25 or more from the average for comparison schools, the results signal a significant difference between your school's ratings and the comparison group. This tells you that you will need to pay closer attention to these questions or factors.
- For schools conducting their own analyses, ODE will provide the crosswalks between the 27 individual items and the six factors considered to be effective in engaging families.

## **Examples:**

This [\[link\]](#) will take you to an example of a typical report provided to the schools participating in the first pilot of the survey instrument. The tables and graphic displays shown here are the types of analyses that schools participating in Option 1 will receive from ODE. The example also serves as guidance for those schools choosing to conduct their own analyses under Option 2. ODE will provide comparison averages from all participating schools (by item, scale and school level) on its Web site.

# 2009 Family Involvement Survey

As a parent or caregiver, your involvement in your child’s learning and school is valuable and important. This survey asks for your opinions about what your child’s school does to get you involved in your child’s education. Your individual responses, which may help schools improve connections with parents and families, will remain confidential. Results will only be reported as part of a group.

For each statement below, please check one answer that most closely matches your opinion on your child’s school this current year. If you do not know or think you do not have enough information to answer please select “I don’t know.”

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/ Not Applicable
1. I receive information on what I can do at home to help my child improve or advance his/her learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I receive information on health and nutrition.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I receive information on child development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. My child’s teacher asks to meet with me face to face at least once a year to talk about how my child is doing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. My child’s school is very good about staying in touch with me (e.g., letters, phone calls or e-mails).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. When my child’s school communicates with me it is easy for me to read or understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. If I have a question, concern or comment about my child the teacher, principal or guidance counselor gets back to me right away.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I am invited to meetings so that I can learn about what is going on in the school (e.g., issues or policies).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. There are many different ways I can be involved with the school, either at the school itself, at home or in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. When I volunteer at the school, I am given training and resources to do my task well, if needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I receive regular updates from the teacher on my child’s progress.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I receive information on what my child should learn and be able to do in each grade in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/ Not Applicable
13. My child's teacher(s) adjust their teaching styles to meet the academic needs of my child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I believe my child is challenged by the school academic curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. My child's teacher(s) hold high expectations for my child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. My child receives the academic support needed to meet his/her individual needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I am asked what my goals are for my child's learning and/or what classes or programs my child should take.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I am asked about my child's talents and strengths.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. I can be involved in school improvement planning and decision-making at my child's school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. I am invited to help plan family involvement activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. I am given information about community services that help with families' needs (adult education, job, health, mental health, utilities, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. I am given information about services to support my child's learning and behavior needs and enhance his or her talents (tutoring, mentoring, camps, career exploration).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. The school helps my child feel comfortable as he/she moves from one grade to the next.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. My involvement in my child's education is valued at my school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. My child's school is a friendly environment for students, parents and families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. My child's school is a safe place to learn.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. My child's school respects all cultures and diversity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I would use the following supports if they were offered:

- Childcare  Yes  No
- Transportation  Yes  No
- Translator  Yes  No
- Networking with other families  Yes  No
- Adult education classes  Yes  No
- Parenting classes  Yes  No

My school offers the following supports:

- Childcare  Yes  No
- Transportation  Yes  No
- Translator  Yes  No
- Networking with other families  Yes  No
- Adult education classes  Yes  No
- Parenting classes  Yes  No

Please provide any comments or suggestions below on what the school could do to better support your involvement in your child's learning and school:

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Your child's grade level :  Pre-K  Kindergarten  1st  2nd  3rd  4th  5th  
 6th  7th  8th  9th  10th  11th  12th

Your race/ethnicity:  African-American  Asian /Pacific Islander  Hispanic  Multiracial  
 Native American  White  Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Your gender:  Male  Female

Your relationship to child in this school (if other than parent or step-parent): Please specify

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