

2021-2022

Maryland School Survey Frequently Asked Questions

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Maryland State Department of Education
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Document Control

Document Information

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Document History

Document Version	Date	Summary of Change
1.0	11.1.2018	Initial Document
2.0	2.14.2020	Updated for the 2020 administration
3.0	3.25.2022	Updated for the 2022 administration

Purpose

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document provides answers to questions about reporting survey results, survey design, survey administration, survey accessibility features and accommodations, and general questions regarding the Maryland State School Survey.

The Division of Assessment, Accountability and Performance Reporting administer the survey annually, in the spring, for the academic year in which it is administered.

The Maryland School Survey is used to support state and federal reporting requirements.

Relevant State and Federal Requirements

The Maryland State Department of Education is authorized to collect data by state and federal laws.

State Law

Annotated Code of Maryland

Education Article, §7-203, 7-203.4 as amended by the Protect Our Schools Act of 2017.

[Maryland Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) Consolidated Plan](#) as amended by the Protect Our Schools Act of 2017.

Federal Law

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (34 CFR § 200.1-200.79).

Subsequent Reporting

Data collected for the Maryland School Survey are published on:

Annual State Report Card

The Maryland annual report card is available at [Maryland Report Card](#).

Federal Reporting

Data provided are reported to the U.S. Department of Education through EdFacts in this file:

- FS202 – School Quality or Student Success Indicator Status

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Timeline and Due Dates

Date	Activity
Nov-Dec 2019	2019 Maryland School Survey Results released
Feb-Apr 2020	2020 Maryland School Survey Operational Administration
March 2020	The survey was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic
Feb-Apr 2022	2022 Maryland School Survey Operational Administration
TBD	2022 Maryland School Survey Results released

Changes from the Prior Year

Below are the changes that took place from the prior year:

- This document was updated to reflect changes to the 2020 guidance document for the Spring administration.
- The Educator Survey is now referred to as the Instructional Staff Survey.

Introduction

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law on December 10, 2015. The U.S. Department of Education approved [Maryland's ESSA consolidated State plan](#) on January 16, 2018 and again in September 17, 2018. The Maryland ESSA plan was developed through stakeholder engagement and feedback provided from citizens across the state. A Maryland School Survey was included in response to the Protect Our Schools Act of 2017.

The purpose of the survey is to provide schools, local education agencies (LEAs), and the State with valuable information about each school's learning and working environment. The survey measures students and instructional staff's perception of a school in providing an environment that supports learning and working. Information about instructional staff receiving feedback is also collected. During the 2017-2018 academic year, the survey tool was developed with engagement from LEAs, stakeholders, and researchers at Mathematica.

The survey will be administered each spring and is computer-based. Spanish translation is also available.

General Questions

Q1. What is the Maryland School Survey?

A1. Describing a school with traditional measures such as academic achievement, graduation rate, and attendance is important, but these alone cannot capture the quality and character of school life. That is why the Maryland accountability system also includes a School Survey of students and instructors. The survey is intended to provide information to support a positive learning and working environment that promotes success for all students.

Q2. Why did the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) implement this survey?

A2. Maryland's stakeholders have long recognized that test scores alone do not provide a full picture of teaching and learning in any one school. Under legislation (Protect Our Schools Act of 2017), the MSDE is required to include a school climate survey of students and instructors as part of the State's ESSA plan.

Q3. What does the survey ask?

A3. The School Survey asks students and instructional staff questions about their perceptions, experiences, attitudes, and activities in school in four topic areas.

The School Survey also asks instructional staff questions about the quality of instructional feedback.

Q4. Who takes the survey?

A4. All 5th- through 11th-grade students participate in the survey.

Instructional staff in any grade participate in the survey.

Q5. Are students required to participate in the survey?

A5. Yes. The MSDE wants to ensure that all students' input is heard. In addition, schools must be responsible for the experiences of all their students, not just some of them. It is very important that all students participate. Therefore, all students must be provided the opportunity to respond. However, students are not required to answer questions, and may submit the survey without responding to some or all of the questions if they choose.

There are two participation exceptions detailed in [Q29] and [Q30] that apply to students with the most significant disabilities and English Learners.

Q6. Why do teachers take the survey?

A6. All instructors will have the opportunity to respond to the Maryland School Survey during the same time period as students. The MSDE wants to ensure that all instructors' input is heard. It is very important that all instructional staff participate. Information from the survey will ensure that schools across the state promote a climate that supports student learning and that instructors receive important instructional feedback.

Survey Design

Q7. Who developed the survey?

A7. The survey design was led by the MSDE in collaboration with experts at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Education Lab. A steering committee, which included a superintendent-designated representative from every LEA in the state, gave important direction and input at every stage in the design process.

Q8. What will the survey measure?

A8. The Maryland School Survey for students will measure four domains: safety, environment, engagement, and relationships. Each domain looks at topics and together the domains and topics will provide valuable information about each school's learning environment.

The **safety domain** has four topics and asks students if they feel safe from violence (physical and emotional), bullying, and controlled-substance abuse. The **environmental domain** has three topics and asks students about their instructional and physical environment, if school rules are clear and fair, and if good behavior is supported and rewarded. The **community domain** has two topics and asks students if they are treated equally and they have the opportunity to participate in all school activities, including those that occur outside of the regular school day. The **relationships domain** has two topics and asks students about the nature of teacher-student and student-student relationships and if their school has a culture of caring and respect.

The Maryland School Survey for instructors measures the same four domains and topics with additional questions on instructional feedback.

Q9. What types of responses will students need to provide?

A9. All responses will use the same four-point scale of "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree."

Q10. What type of questions does the Maryland School Survey ask students or instructors?

A10. Questions ask about the way that the individual feels about the school. For example, a student might be asked if students at the school respect others who are different from them, but not whether they personally have been treated with respect (or whether they have personally mistreated others).

Q11. How many questions are on the survey?

A11. Elementary and middle school students in grades 5-8 take a survey with 53 questions. High school students in grades 9-11 take a survey with 54 questions. Instructors take a survey with 72 questions.

Q12. How long will it take for students to complete the survey?

A12. The survey is untimed. Most students should complete the survey within 30 minutes once they have logged in to the system.

Q13. Who can see the survey questions?

A13. Because schools are being held responsible for the results, it's important that the survey questions are confidential. Survey questions are not available to the public. Only Survey Administrators, Proctors, Accommodators, and School Test Coordinators who sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement are permitted to administer or participate in the administration of the Maryland School Survey.

Q14. Can you provide examples of the questions?

A14. The following links provide examples of the types of questions that can be found in the School Survey:

- [ED School Climate Survey](#)
- [Delaware School Climate Surveys 2019-2020](#)

Survey Administration

Q15. When is the survey administration window?

A15. For the 2021-2022 school year, the Maryland School Survey will be administered for both students and instructors between February and April.

Q16. How will students access the survey?

A16. Survey participants will receive a username and password which they will be prompted to enter at a login page. The username will be the student's state ID. The password will be assigned by the LEA and provided to the student at their school. A generic login will be available for students new to the building.

The results of the survey are part of the school accountability system; therefore, survey questions are confidential. Only Survey Administrators, Proctors, Accommodators, and School Test Coordinators (STC) who sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement will be permitted to administer or participate in the administration of the Maryland School Survey.

Q17. Does the survey have a timeout feature?

A17. Yes. For survey participants who leave the computer for a prolonged period of time or who forget to close the browser before leaving, the session will automatically log the participant out after 60 minutes of inactivity.

Q18. Who can administer the survey?

A18. While the Maryland School Survey is not an assessment, the MSDE requires that Survey Administrators be eligible to administer a state assessment. The Survey Administrator must be an employee of the school system and be trained by the STC. School principals and other school administrators cannot administer the survey. Staff serving as accommodators or proctors, who are not eligible to be a Survey Administrator, must be under the direction of an eligible Survey Administrator.

LEA-level personnel who hold a Maryland Teaching Certificate may support a school by administering the survey. They must be trained by the STC in the given school unless the LEA allows them to be trained by the Local Accountability Coordinator (LAC).

Note: Eligible Survey Administrators, proctors, and/or accommodators may not serve in the same room as a student who is a family member or resides within the same dwelling.

Q19. What applications (apps) will be used to administer the online survey?

A19. The survey is web-based and does not require any applications beyond a web browser.

Q20. How will students access the survey system?

A20. The survey is computer-based and students can access it through any internet browser on any device. Phones will not be used to take the survey. The grade specific surveys and Instructional Staff survey will be accessible from links that are available from the MSDE website <http://marylandpublicschools.org/marylandschoolsurvey>. Each LEA may offer students and instructors the ability to link from their county webpage.

Q21. What happens if a student transfers into a school during the survey window?

A21. If the student has not already taken the survey, the receiving school should provide the opportunity for the student to participate in the survey. A generic login will be available in the new school.

Q22. What if a student's login and password do not work?

A22. If, for some reason, a student's login and password do not work, the school should provide a generic login for the student.

Q23. Do all students get the same survey?

A23. Students are given the survey based on their grade level. Grades 5 through 8 are given the elementary/middle school survey. Grades 9 through 11 are given the high school survey. If a school has both middle and high school grades, each student will be assigned the survey appropriate for their grade. A student will not be able to select a survey that is not grade appropriate.

Q24. Does the survey have error codes?

A24. The survey does not have error codes. Technical issues associated with the administration of the survey should be reported ASAP to Pauline Carey (pauline.carey@maryland.gov or 410 767-9952)

Q25. What days are allowed or not allowed for administering the survey?

A25. Students and instructors may take the survey during any school day during the administration period in order to provide as many opportunities as possible to participate in the survey. This is not an assessment so, therefore, you may offer the survey on any school day. An LEA may choose to suspend testing on religious holidays listed on the State Testing Calendar or other local calendars.

Reporting

Q26. When will schools and LEAs receive the results from the survey?

A26. The Maryland School Survey is part of the school quality and student success indicator in each school's accountability report card. Information from the survey will ensure that schools across the state promote a climate that supports student learning, and that instructors receive important instructional feedback. Results from the survey will be available as part of the state's accountability reporting system and can be viewed on the MD report card site (link: <https://reportcard.msde.maryland.gov/>).

Q27. What will be reported to schools and LEAs?

A27. Maryland School Survey results are provided at the school level. Results are also provided by student groups when the student groups are sufficiently large enough to ensure confidentiality.

Accessibility Features and Accommodations

Q28. What accessibility features and accommodations are available on the survey?

A28. The survey does not have individualized accessibility features or accommodations built into the online platform. Accessibility features and accommodations that are generally used in the classroom should also be used for the Maryland School Survey to ensure all students are provided the opportunity to participate.

Because the survey does not include a text-to-speech feature, students who normally use this feature on assessments may have the survey read to them in groups of no more than 10 students. The Survey Administrator will need a Generic Proctor Login from the STC. This login should be treated as a secure document.

For guidance on providing accessibility features and accommodations, see Appendix A: SAMPLE Guidance on Student Accessibility Features and Accommodations.

Q29. Can students who take an alternate assessment for state accountability purposes take the survey?

A29. Students who participate in an alternate assessment for state accountability purposes should have the opportunity to take the survey. Therefore, if it is practical for the student to attempt the survey with the same support given during instruction, then they should be given the opportunity to participate.

Q30. Are first-year English Learners who are exempt from the state ELA assessment required to take the survey?

A30. Students who are English Learners and are exempt from the MCAP ELA assessment during the school year should have the opportunity to take the survey. These students may need additional support that would have been provided on the other MCAP assessments in Math,

Science, or Social Studies. Therefore, if it is practical for the student to attempt the survey, they should be given the opportunity.

The MSDE will also provide a Spanish-language version of the survey instrument.

Appendix A: SAMPLE Guidance on Student Accessibility Features and Accommodations

The goal of the Maryland School Survey is to understand aspects of each school's climate. The Maryland School Survey should be administered so that all students have access to the survey questions using supports provided during instruction and assessment. Whenever possible, students should complete the survey independently without assistance from proctors or other school staff; however, in some cases, students may require or be eligible to receive proctor assistance while completing the survey. Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), 504 Plans, and English Learner (EL) Plans are eligible to receive supports and accommodations to ensure they can access the same academic and non-instructional materials as their peers. Additionally, students who utilize accessibility features on state assessments may also benefit from specific supports. These accessibility features and accommodations, generally used in the classroom and/or on assessments, should also be implemented on the Maryland School Survey to ensure all students have the opportunity to participate. Schools should review this guidance to ensure the appropriate accessibility features and accommodations are implemented for students participating in the Maryland School Survey.

For information on accessibility features and accommodations please refer to the [Maryland Accommodations Manual](#).

Note: The Maryland School Survey will not have the technical ability to provide Text-to-Speech; therefore, students using this feature on other assessments may have a Human Reader to provide this accessibility feature/accommodation. For the administration of the Maryland School Survey, students may be placed in groups of no more than 10 to provide this accessibility feature/accommodation.

Appendix B: SAMPLE Non-Disclosure Agreement

This form must be signed by all individuals who administer or participate in the Maryland School Survey. These individuals may include:

- School Test Coordinators (STCs);
- Survey Administrators (SAs);
- Persons designated as Proctors;
- Instructional Assistants or other personnel who provide accommodations to students with disabilities and/or students who are English Learners (EL);
- Teachers or others who support the survey administration or who have access to survey materials;
- State appointed representatives participating in state approved development or review activities; and
- Anyone else with access to survey materials or involvement in administrations.

Only persons who are employees or agents of the school district and who have signed this form may supervise, administer, proctor, or assist with the administration of the survey. The school system must retain completed forms on file as specified in Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.03.04.03.

It is my understanding that the content of the Maryland School Survey is confidential. I agree to maintain the security and confidentiality of the survey just as I would for a Maryland State assessment as outlined in the attached COMAR 13A.03.04. As part of the COMAR regulations, I understand that I am:

- Not to duplicate survey materials for any reason except as authorized by the MSDE directly or through the Local Accountability Coordinator (LAC).
- Not to make ANY TYPE of notes as a result of my access to the survey. This includes notes pertaining to topics, content, and/or the structure of the survey unless directly authorized to do so by the MSDE.
- Not to provide any part of the survey for examination or other use by any other party.
- Not to disseminate any of the survey materials to any other party.
- Not to discuss the topics and/or specific content of the survey with any other party.

I have read the above and agree to the terms as applicable.

Name: _____ Title: _____

LEA/School: _____ Project: Maryland School Survey

Signature: _____ Date: _____