



# Public Engagement **TOOLKIT**

## Surveys

### **Tipsheet: Conducting Online Surveys**

Web-based tools make conducting online surveys an easy and cost-effective way to gather information from employees, parents, and other stakeholder groups. Whether you need a general survey about communications preferences, or an issue-based survey, it's important to make them part of your toolbox to build public support. These tips can help.

- Clearly define your purpose and intended outcomes for the survey. How will you use the survey results? Clarity on your objectives will help ensure you are asking the right questions.
- Make the survey short. Try not to go over nine questions. In your introduction, ask for 15 minutes of the participants' time so they have an idea of how much time the survey will take.
- Focus your questions on one issue or program. Don't make one survey do everything.
- Test your survey with others who have not been involved in writing the questions to ensure that questions are clear and the survey tool works. Also, ask them to time themselves to give you an idea of how long it took to complete the survey.
- Don't make participants leave their name in order to take the survey. Trust in the process. You can set online survey tools to allow a survey to be taken on a single computer only once.
- Promote the survey widely. Use all forms of communication to let people know about the survey and why it is important. Employ the help of other groups such as the media, PTA, booster organizations, chamber/civic groups, etc. Make sure administrators let their employees know about it, too.
- Keep the survey open for two to three weeks and continue to communicate about it. Provide a clear deadline for response.
- Check on how many people have completed the survey. Randomly ask people in different stakeholder groups if they have taken it. This will give gauge how effective your promotion has been.
- Once the survey is complete, analyze the results and write an executive summary. Give a report at a board meeting or work session. Publish the results and let people know how the information will be used.
- If the information is not shared, and people don't see a demonstration of how the information was used, they will be less likely to participate in future surveys or engagement activities.