

# Minnesota Student Survey Webinar Q&A Session

December 11, 2019

## When does the window close for registration?

The registration window closes at the same time as the end of the survey administration window (May 31, 2019).

## Could you please address a school opting out of the survey? Do we have to survey our online schools or can we just survey our seat based schools?

Participation in the Minnesota Student Survey is voluntary for districts and schools. While many districts use their results to strengthen their case in grant applications, there are no state or federal funding ramifications for not participating. Some Minnesota Student Survey data are included on the Minnesota Report Card under the Engagement and Safety section. Schools that do not participate in the survey do not have this information, as we have no other way to collect it.

Note that local and county public health organizations rely on MSS data to support their work. If you choose to opt out, you may hear from them asking you to reconsider.

You may choose to survey only a portion of the schools in your district, though it is important to note that the data you receive will only reflect the schools that participate.

## Do we need to know anything more than the planned month of administration in order to register the schools?

To register your district/schools, you will also need to know the contact information of the person responsible for coordinating the survey and the grade levels that will participate.

## Is it possible to change our date and/or time once we register for it?

While you must list the month you plan to administer the survey when you register a school in your district, you can update this information at any time via the survey registration and administration portal. You can also update school coordinator contact information, the grades that are being surveyed in a school, and the viewing permissions for each school's registration information.

## Can the period the survey is administered be flexible throughout the school day?

You are welcome to administer the survey at any time during the school day. Surveys do not need to be administered at the same time throughout a school or grade.

## Are we allowed to post a copy of each survey on our school website and support families who want to review it to access it there?

If you would like to provide an electronic copy of the survey to parents, we prefer that you send parents the survey via an email attachment. Paper copies of the survey can also be provided.

**Does a statement in the registration booklet for high school students noting the surveys we typically participate in, as well as explaining opt out options suffice in lieu of parent letters?**

A statement in the school registration booklet constitutes the first step in notifying parents about the Minnesota Student Survey. Once you have selected your specific survey dates, you must still send parents a letter notifying them about the survey effort, their right to opt their child out of participating, and their right to review the survey questions.

**What if we don't get a response back from parents giving the ok to take the survey?**

**Can the student still take the survey?**

Participation in the survey requires passive consent. Passive consent means that parents only notify the school when they do NOT want their child to participate in the survey. If you do not hear from a parent/guardian, the student can take the survey.

**Will the survey be available in other languages? How do we access the Spanish version of the survey?**

The survey will be available in Spanish, Hmong, and Somali for parents to review by January 2, 2019. The version of the survey that students take will be available only in English, though all questions have an audio option to help students with low reading abilities.

**Where do I find the sample survey again?**

The survey for parents to review is available on the "Documents" page of the survey registration and administration portal [here](https://minnesotastudentsurvey.org/Documents) (<https://minnesotastudentsurvey.org/Documents>).

**Where do we find the MSS Student Resource Handout?**

A PDF version of the Student Resource Handout is available as the final page in each instructions packet, available on the "Documents" page of the survey registration and administration portal [here](https://minnesotastudentsurvey.org/Documents) (<https://minnesotastudentsurvey.org/Documents>). A Word version of the Student Resource Handout is available on the "Documents" page in the Instructions column.

**Is there a limit to the number of students that can take the survey at one time?**

No, the survey platform is designed to have many students completing the survey at once.

**Must the survey be completed in one sitting, or can the student use that token number to pick up where they left off?**

The survey is designed to be completed in one sitting, but in extenuating circumstances, students can return to the survey at a later time (e.g. illness, fire drill, bathroom breaks). In these circumstances, students can use the unique token number they receive at the beginning of the survey to re-access the survey at a later time.

**Is it possible to do a paper/pencil administration of the survey?**

The 2019 Minnesota Student Survey is entirely online. However, in extenuating circumstances, requests can be made to administer a small number of paper/pencil surveys. Please contact Jill Carle at [jcarle@gibsonconsult.com](mailto:jcarle@gibsonconsult.com) for any specific questions.

There were a number of questions related to the technology requirements for the survey.

- Can iPads be used instead of computers?
- Can Chromebooks be used instead of computers?
- Can MacBooks be used to take the survey?
- How do we test a computer out to make sure it will work again?
- Can the students use their own devices to access the survey?

Generally speaking, tablets, iPads, Chromebooks, MacBooks, and PCs that are less than four years old should support the survey platform without issue. If you plan to administer the survey on software older than four years, or have questions about other types of technology, please test out the links to each survey level at the URLs below on the device(s) you plan to use. Students are permitted to use their own devices for completing the survey. If students do not have access to their own devices, the school should provide a device on which to complete the survey.

Grade 5 Survey: <https://minss.org>

Grade 8 Survey: <https://studentsurvey.org>

Grades 9 and 11, JCFs, and ALCs: <https://mschoolsurvey.org>

There were a number of questions related to using/receiving unique identifiers for the survey.

- How do you get a file with student names in order to provide the Username/Password?
- When are we provided the students' unique login ID?
- Do you pull from MDE - School Specific MARSS files or do we send a file to you with the fields you have requested?
- Am I correct that there is no access code for the survey? How can we be sure it is our students completing the survey?

For the 2019 MSS administration, there are no usernames, passwords, or unique identifiers for students required in advance of taking the survey. The surveys will be accessed only from the appropriate survey URL provided in the survey instructions document. Once students put in their school and district information, they will receive a unique token number to use in case they need to re-access their survey (restroom break, fire drill, etc.). We are using other means to verify that students taking the survey are in the appropriate district/school (IP addresses, geotags, etc.)

There were a number of questions about which surveys should be administered to which grade levels.

- Is this survey supposed to be administered in 9th and 11th grade? Or, are we supposed to pick one of those grade levels?

- We are having students in grades 6 and 7 take the survey. Am I correct that Grade 6 takes the 5th grade survey and grade 7 takes that grade 8 survey?
- So, I could have both 5th & 6th graders take their level 1 survey, and both my 7th & 8th graders take the level 2 survey?
- Should ALC programs have all students take the survey?

If a district/school chooses to administer the Minnesota Student Survey, we ask that they administer the survey in Grades 5, 8, 9, and 11, where applicable. ALCs and JCFs should administer the survey to all students in Grades 7-12. Districts/schools may choose to administer the survey in additional grades. Students in Grade 6 should take the same survey as Grade 5 (Level 1). Students in Grade 7 should take the same survey as Grade 8 (Level 2). Students in Grades 10 and 12 should take the same survey as Grades 9 and 11 (Level 3). All students in JCFs and ALCs, regardless of grade should take the Level 3 survey.

### How do you recommend students get the URL they need on the Chromebooks? How can we distribute the URL?

You are welcome to distribute the URL for the survey in a variety of ways, including using an overhead or posting the URL in the classroom, creating handouts with the URL, or creating shortcuts or bookmarks on the devices intended for survey administration.

### Are headphones optional for students?

Yes, headphones are optional for students. They may be particularly helpful for students that have difficulty reading or recognizing certain words. You may want to remind students to turn the audio down on their computer at the beginning of the survey in case they do end up clicking on the “Play” button.

### How long does the survey take to complete? How many questions are on the survey?

The survey takes roughly 35 to 50 minutes to complete, including time to read instructions. The number of questions ranges from about 40 to 110 questions, depending on the grade of the student. The number also varies depending upon students’ answers, as some questions only show up when a previous question was answered in a particular way.

### Can you provide guidance on students with high special needs or limited English skills who cannot read and answer the questions? If a student/class cannot take the survey independently should we not administer the survey to them?

The Minnesota Department of Education does not recommend having an interpreter translate the questions because it compromises the anonymity of the survey. Students may be unwilling to answer or provide different answers if they know someone is listening to their responses. In cases where the student does not speak or understand English, it is probably best not to have them participate. In situations where the student can understand English and just can’t read it very well, we recommend taking it and using the audio feature. (Note: It will take longer if using the audio feature for every question. You may want to provide a separate space for students to complete the survey in those situations.)

### Should we survey Foreign Exchange Students?

Yes, as long as the student has sufficient language skills to complete the survey, they should be surveyed like any other student in your school

In 2016, many 5th graders in our district had questions when taking the survey, particularly around demographics (i.e. am I Latino if I am Mexican). How would you recommend teachers administering the survey handle this situation? Should we tell students just to do their best or can teachers help define a question if it would help them answer the question more accurately?

Teachers should ask students to do their best to answer the question.

If a student is absent on our survey date, do we need to track down absent students later in the week?

No, you do not need to track them down. While we would like to give all students a chance to participate, it is not required that every single student participate.

Is there a way we are to notify someone when we have completed all of our surveys (to meet the deadline)?

You do not need to contact us when you have completed all of your surveys. We will monitor each district/school to determine if they have completed survey administration by March 15, 2019 to receive their results by the end of the school year. The registration portal contains a 'response rate' page that shows your current estimated response rate (based on enrollment counts from the 2017-18 school year). You will be able to track your district/schools survey completion as it is being administered.

How and when do we get the results of the survey? What format will the results be shared? If we have all grades take the survey, do we get data for all grades?

State, county and district data are available on the Minnesota Department of Education website in an interactive format. PDF tables are distributed to participating districts and schools, as well as by request. These tables are provided separately for each grade. Districts/schools must have 20 or more students participate in the survey in order to receive a survey report. If your district/school has fewer than 20 students participate in the survey in a given grade, you can request a report that combines grades. Individual level data files can be requested by those who want to do their own analysis.

How do I get a copy of the power point?

The recording of the webinar is available on the survey registration and administration portal [here](https://minnesotastudentsurvey.org/HowToAdmin) (<https://minnesotastudentsurvey.org/HowToAdmin>).