



Colorado's Student Perception Survey - FAQs

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1. Why use Student Perception Survey?

The purpose of a Student Perception Survey is to provide teachers with meaningful feedback about how their practice impacts student learning and to incorporate student voice and experience into efforts to improve learning. Student surveys provide a unique tool that can give districts, schools, and teachers formative, actionable feedback. Whereas administrators can only be in classrooms during a limited number of hours each year, students spend hundreds of hours with teachers and are constantly experiencing teacher practice. Furthermore, emerging research indicates that combining student feedback with observations of classroom practice and student academic growth results is a more valid and reliable predictor of a teacher's future effectiveness and provides more meaningful feedback than any one or two of those measures alone.¹

2. What does the Student Perception Survey measure?

Colorado's survey measures elements of student experience that have been demonstrated to correlate most closely to a teacher's ability to positively impact student growth. Survey questions² are organized by four elements:

¹ See [Measures of Effective Teaching Project: Policy and Practice Brief \(January 2012\)](#), www.metproject.org

² A number of items on the Colorado SPS were adapted from items made available for non-commercial use through the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.



- **Student Learning:** *How teachers use content and pedagogical knowledge to help students learn, understand, and improve.* (Teacher Quality Standards 1 and 3)
- **Student-Centered Environment:** *How teachers create an environment that responds to individual students' backgrounds, strengths, and interests.* (Teacher Quality Standard 2)
- **Classroom Community:** *How teachers cultivate a classroom learning community where student differences are valued.* (Teacher Quality Standard 2)
- **Classroom Management:** *How teachers foster a respectful and predictable learning environment.* (Teacher Quality Standard 2)

The surveys are *not* designed to measure how well a particular teacher is liked by his or her students, but rather how frequently the teacher uses practices that facilitate learning and how the culture of the classroom engages students in their learning and their community.

Colorado has two surveys: one for students in grades 3-5 and another for those in grades 6-12. Each survey includes 34 questions.

3. Why did Colorado create a Student Perception Survey?

The Colorado Education Initiative (CEI) wanted to create a survey that was specific to Colorado's education landscape and informed by Colorado students, teachers, and districts.

Colorado's Student Perception Survey, developed by CEI, is responsive to the needs of local communities and developed in conjunction with state requirements. The survey was developed with input from teachers and administrators in Colorado schools and districts and is aligned to the Colorado Teacher Quality Standards.

4. How was the survey developed?

The Colorado Education Initiative (CEI) engaged in a rigorous development and pilot process to create a survey that is specifically designed with input from Colorado teachers and students. A number of items on the Colorado Student Perception Survey were adapted from items made available for non-commercial use through the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Surveys were piloted in 16 Colorado school districts; a mix of urban, rural, and mountain. Surveys were also reviewed throughout the process by current Colorado teachers, and revisions were made based on their recommendations. Our 16 partner districts represented a range of diversity, including:

- Districts with diverse geographies, including large urban districts, rural districts, and mountain districts



- Districts with varying levels of technological access: For example, one of our partners provides a tablet for every student in the district, while several others only have one computer lab for all schools in the district to share
- Districts with highly variable support staff structures, including some that have designated tech, data, and communications staff, and others where the superintendent might also be a principal, data coordinator, or director of human resources

The pilot period – and the hard work done by our 1,400 teachers who participated – was strategically designed to gather lessons learned, teacher feedback, and best practices to provide educators with the information they need to be able to trust and rely on their results.

5. What measures did CEI take to ensure Colorado’s Student Perception Survey is valid and reliable?

CEI utilized a thorough and thoughtful process to build robust surveys that are fair, valid, and reliable.

Over the last year and a half we have engaged in the following activities:

- Adapted survey items made available for non-commercial use through the [Measures of Effective Teaching \(MET\) Project](#)
- Conducted a small pre-pilot to test the survey
- Conducted student think-alouds
- Conducted teacher focus groups
- Made revisions to survey questions based on data collected in the pre-pilot, student think-alouds, and teacher focus groups
- Conducted two larger pilots of the revised survey

We have also released [a full technical report](#) that provides statistical analysis of the survey.

6. How did teachers have a voice in the survey development process?

CEI engaged teachers throughout the development process. Over 1,400 teachers have provided input in a variety of ways:

- Participated in a focus group to review initial survey items
- Piloted the survey to test it and provide formal feedback
- Completed an online survey about the instrument and process of administration
- Participated in focus groups to inform best practices on survey reporting

We used this feedback to revise the survey itself by changing or eliminating questions when they were deemed to be inappropriate or confusing by teachers.

7. Do students take these surveys seriously?

One of the key components in the development process was engaging students in think-alouds to ensure that they were interpreting the questions accurately and responding thoughtfully. As anticipated, students indicated that they were engaging with the survey questions in a meaningful



and productive manner. Students also indicated when words or questions on the survey were confusing and that feedback was used to make changes to the survey to ensure accuracy.

Giving feedback to teachers is a new process for many students, so it is important to talk to them about what a survey is, how this one will be used, and finally, ensure that they know that their confidentiality will be protected.

For more information on student responses to the Student Perception Survey see our [overview of student feedback for teachers](#) and the [full technical report](#).

8. Is students' confidentiality protected?

Internal and external research has shown that student confidentiality is essential for students to feel comfortable and respond honestly to survey items.

- The MET study found that “If students believe their responses will negatively influence how their teachers treat them, feel about them, or grade them, then they’ll respond so as to avoid that happening.”³
- In the think-aloud interviews that CEI conducted with students, students repeatedly said that they would feel more comfortable answering honestly if the teacher they were responding about was not in the room.

Individual student responses will remain confidential to protect student privacy and foster students' comfort level to answer honestly. Teachers and principals will never see student-level data or results; they will only receive results aggregated to the teacher level.

9. How does the student survey meet requirements set forth by SB 10-191?

Senate Bill 10-191 requires that the performance of all teachers and principals be evaluated annually, 50 percent of which will be determined by the academic performance of their students. Multiple measures of academic performance and professional practice are required to be used. The use of student perception data is strongly encouraged in the state rules implementing Senate Bill 10-191 as a means to provide teachers and principals with feedback on their performance.

10. How many times will a student be asked to complete the survey?

In general, students will be assigned one or two teachers for which they need to complete surveys. The number of surveys that each student completes will depend on their grade level, the make-up of the class (i.e., number of students in the class), and whether or not they are asked to complete a survey for a specialist teacher.

11. When is the survey administered and how long does it take to get my results?

³ [Measures of Effective Teaching Project](#): Policy and Practice Brief (January 2012)



The recommended window for survey administration is November - January. The timing of results will depend on how your district chooses to administer the survey. If your district chooses online administration, reports can come 2-4 weeks after administration. If surveys are administered in paper/pencil format, reports can take 1-3 months.

12. How many times a year is the survey administered? Do I get to see my progress from beginning of the year to end of the year with my students?

School districts can choose to administer the survey annually, twice a year, or more depending on their preference. If your district chooses to administer the survey more than once a year then you would be able to compare results.

13. Who sees my results?

Districts will choose whether or not teacher-level results will be shared only with teachers or also with principals and/or district administrators. CEI encourages teachers to work with their union and district leadership to make this decision collectively.

14. How will my results be used?

There are many ways that results can be used to inform teacher, school and district goals. CEI encourages teachers to work with their union and district leadership to make this decision collectively. Some options include:

- As a formative tool
 - Teachers can use results as a formative tool to reflect on their practice, complete their self-reflection, and create goals.
 - Principals can use results to form mentoring relationships among teachers with complementary strengths and areas for growth.
 - Schools and districts can use results to identify trends and create strategies to address them.
- As part of teacher evaluation
 - Survey results at the item level could be used as an artifact for determining ratings for professional practices (Teacher Quality Standards 1-3).
 - Survey results could also be considered as one of your multiple measures.
 - Teachers could be evaluated on the plan that they create around their results but not necessarily the results themselves (Teacher Quality Standard 4 only).
 - This is not a mutually exclusive choice; results could be used formatively by teachers to inform their practice during the year and also be included as a part of their formal evaluation.

15. Are student perception surveys applicable for young students such as kindergarteners?

Some states and districts have surveys for grades K-2, but Colorado's Student Perception survey is currently available only for grades 3-5 and grades 6-12.