

Think of a survey as standardized testing for your school

Measuring your school's improvement at least every other year

“In the face of the latest iteration of testing backlash, we should remember why standardized tests are essential.”

Aaron Churchill
edexcellence.net

Every fall we give our students standardized tests to find out what they know and what they need to work on this year. A school survey should function in much the same way for your school overall--you are giving parents a chance to tell you where you are hitting the mark and where you still need to improve.

The online article quoted above went on to list three reasons the author believes standardized tests are essential. The reasons also apply to parent surveys.

1. Objectivity

Parents are more likely to share honest feedback if they aren't worried about hurting your feelings—so give them an anonymous survey.

2. Comparability

This is an excellent reason for using the survey from Graceworks Ministries. You will see a percentile ranking (n>600 Christian schools) for each, individual survey variable as well as overall *satisfaction* and *willingness to refer*.

3. Accountability

This means something a bit different for satisfaction surveys than for student testing. As a school you may list areas in which you would like to improve. But if there is no way of measuring whether that improvement is occurring—by the people whose opinion matters because they fund your salary—then you don't have an effective way of holding the teachers, the board or yourself accountable.

These reasons are all, likely, part of why parent surveys are required by accreditation processes. Either the Graceworks survey or the one below will fulfill that requirement and tell you your Net Promoter Score. (Think of NPS, retention and enrollment as your school's vital signs akin to blood pressure, temperature and pulse rate.)

The template survey

A pdf of the survey I wrote can be seen by going to: [ncceducation.org>resources>marketing corner](http://ncceducation.org/resources/marketing-corner) and scrolling to March. A copy is not included here since this survey has been and will continue to be adapted.

The Graceworks survey is a much better tool than this. But if you can't use that, please use this or a structured, qualitative input gathering process, e.g. focus groups.

Delegating:

You can delegate all the logistics of sending out the survey. You and your staff must commit to acting on what you find out.

Binder tab: March

School size: All

Marketing process step:

- 1) Who are we?
- 2) What do families want?
- 3) What needs to change?
- 4) How do we tell our community?
- 5) How do we track results?