

Getting Good Data: Working with Schools to Implement a Quality Student Survey

Getting Good Data: Working with Schools to Implement a Quality Student Survey

February 16, 2011

Webinar Overview

- Working with schools to ensure the administration of a valid survey
- Ensuring appropriate survey sampling
- Supporting the Survey Administration

Working with Schools to Implement a Student Survey

- Using the survey to strengthen your relationship with your schools
- Clarifying roles and relationships as a helpful partner
- Addressing concerns related to the survey



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Roles and Responsibilities

Clarify who will:

- Coordinate with school districts
- Support schools in administering the survey in the schools
- Analyze and report survey results



Some coalitions form a Survey Subcommittee or workgroup to conduct the survey.



Build Partnerships to Conduct and Use the Survey

Grantees must engage stakeholders when planning and conducting a survey:

- Local education sector
- Coalition members
- Grant evaluator
- State agency
- Parents
- Survey provider



Help organize / participate in a committee or work group to organize the survey.



Address School Concerns

Schools may be concerned about:

- Validity of the survey
- Confidentiality
- Costs to implement the survey
- Use of the survey data
- Public perceptions of the schools
- Students being taken away from class time to complete the survey



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Address School District Concerns

Concern: Validity of the survey

Scientifically reviewed to ensure:

- Validity – the survey measures what it is intended to measure
- Reliability – the survey provides consistent measurements over time
- Honesty – the survey includes four checks to verify that students are answering truthfully

Address School District Concerns

Concern: Confidentiality

The survey is intended to be confidential:

- Administered to ensure that no identifying information is on the survey
- When the survey is reported, no individual data is given **AND** schools have control over what class, building and district data are reported

Address School District Concerns

Concern: Cost to Administer the Survey

- Coalition can help offset costs of the survey
- BUT, savvy coalitions work with the schools to take on the survey as their contribution to the coalition's community wide plan, including:
 - Participation of a school representative in preparing for the survey
 - Staff time to coordinate the survey in each building
 - Classroom time (1 period only)

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Address School District Concerns

Concern: Use of the Survey Data

- As a “partner” in the effort, schools have say in how the survey results are used
- Survey data will only be presented “in context” of a broader substance use/abuse issue
- Individual buildings, grades, districts will not be identified without school permission
- The schools may review all reports prior to publication



Address School District Concerns

Concern: Public Perceptions of the Schools

Coalition is responsible for ensuring:

- Publication of the survey data will be framed as: “Young people in the community report...”
- Publishing the findings under its name; not the school name(s)
- Publicity will emphasize what the coalition (and schools) are doing to address the issues
- That schools have access to review all reports prior to publication

Address School District Concerns

Concern: Students Will Miss Class Time

- Schedule survey during lunch time or study hall
- Many low-cost online survey packages (e.g., Survey Monkey) can be used to administer data collection efforts and avoid data entry
- Incentives for participation (e.g., pizza)
- Pizza and computer labs don’t mix!

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Helpful Hints

Engaging the Schools-Coalitions have found the following ideas helpful:

- Provide examples of how other schools have successfully administered and used surveys
- Connect Superintendent, Principal or School Board Member with peers from other communities
- Encourage the school to assign an individual to the work group to ensure school needs are met
- Create an MOU/MOA to clarify roles and responsibilities

Supporting the Survey Administration

- Addressing active/passive consent issues
- Addressing culture and language issues
- Helpful hints

Obtaining Consent: Passive Consent

What does the State or school district require in order to conduct a student survey?

Passive consent:

- Parents/guardians send back a form only if they do not want their child to take part in the survey
- If no form is turned in, schools can assume that consent for participation is given

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Obtaining Consent: Active Consent

Active consent:

- Parents/guardians must send back a form agreeing to allow their child to take the survey
- Without this written permission, the student can not participate in the survey
- If a form is not turned in, you must assume that permission is not granted

Culture/Language Issues

- Don't forget about the importance of cultural competence:
 - Translate survey forms into alternative languages to ensure that your results are truly representative (this involves cost...but many existing surveys already have alternate forms)
 - Consent forms should be translated into alternative languages (this is costly, but one of your partners may have a bilingual staff member)
 - Ensure that all surveys and forms are readable (i.e., accessible). Aim for a 7th grade reading level

Sampling Issues

- Sampling is the process of selecting a group to study from a larger population.
- Sampling can be done at:
 - The individual level (e.g., students)
 - The group level (e.g., classrooms or schools) – also called cluster sampling

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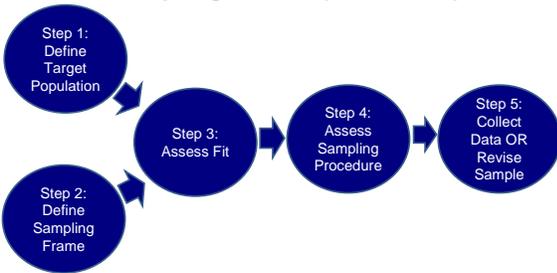
 

Sampling Issues (continued)

- Why Is Sampling So Important?
 - The data you collect needs to accurately represent your coalition.
 - The data you collect needs to accurately measure changes on key outcomes across time.
 - Without good sampling plans, it is impossible to make strong statements about the effectiveness of your coalition

Sampling Issues (continued)



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graph LR; S1((Step 1: Define Target Population)) --> S3((Step 3: Assess Fit)); S2((Step 2: Define Sampling Frame)) --> S3; S3 --> S4((Step 4: Assess Sampling Procedure)); S4 --> S5((Step 5: Collect Data OR Revise Sample));
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Sampling Issues (continued)

- Summary:
 - Identify key factors (e.g., places, student demographics) that need to be captured
 - Determine whether your sample reflects your target population
 - Determine what procedure is feasible (census, random sample)
 - Collect data – remember to ensure consistency in data collection across time!
 - Work with data holders/principals to revise sample or to gain access to additional data if needed

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Student Survey Troubleshooting

Q: What if my school requires active consent?

A: To improve participation work with the school to:

1. Address consent at parent orientation
2. Send out a letter explaining the survey
3. Provide time for parents to find out more
4. Follow up prior to the survey for those missing consent forms

Some schools have achieved >90% participation with active consent.

Student Survey Troubleshooting

Q: When is the best time of year to administer the survey?

A: Ideally, the fall is the best time to conduct a survey. By spring, some students may have dropped out.

The survey timing should be consistent from year to year. This will allow for a more valid comparison between years.

Student Survey Troubleshooting

Q: How do I ensure the survey is administered in a culturally and linguistically competent manner?

A: Take steps to ensure that all eligible students are able to take the survey by:

- Finding out if the survey is available in appropriate languages
- Administer the survey orally in the appropriate languages (while keeping responses confidential)

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Student Survey Troubleshooting

Q: How do I ensure the survey is properly administered?

A: Helpful hints to ensure proper administration:

- Create a Survey workgroup to work with schools and evaluator to oversee effort
- Assign coalition staff to work with the survey provider/evaluator (not a part-time endeavor)
- Identify a lead school staff person to coordinate in the schools
- Set timetable and deadlines

Drug Free Wicomico, Salisbury, MD

Survey Data Challenges



2007 Maryland Adolescent Survey

- ▶ Next survey was to come out in 2009
- ▶ Cigarette Restitution Funds were cut
- ▶ Therefore no Maryland Adolescent Survey
- ▶ Tried to work with people around the state to mobilize effort around Maryland Adolescent Survey (MAS) – survey became computerized



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MAS continued

- ▶ Tried to work with people around the state in getting Maryland State Department of Education or Department of Health & Mental Hygiene to take this on
- ▶ Met with Preventionists around the state
- ▶ Presented to School Health Council
 - Agreed to implementing MAS
 - Board of Education said no to implementing the MAS even if we paid for the analysis, etc.

MAS continued

- ▶ Started to look at other possible tools and decided on the PRIDE Risk and Protective Factor Survey
 - Easy to implement
 - Cost was good \$1.70 per survey and includes data analysis
 - Obtain results 2 weeks after submitting them to PRIDE

PRIDE Risk and Protective Factor Survey

- ▶ Contacted School system
- ▶ Would not agree to implementing the survey
- ▶ Contacted private schools
- ▶ They would not implement since public schools would not implement

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Plan of Action

- ▶ Contacted my DFC Project Officer, CADCA and ICF for a Conference Call
- ▶ Developed a plan of action
- ▶ Asked a coalition member (past board member) to present to School Superintendent
- ▶ Superintendent and Asst. Superintendent agreed to survey

Plan of Action continued

- ▶ Coalition member and I presented to Superintendent, Asst. Superintendent, and other staff
- ▶ All were supportive of survey tool – plan was to try to implement by March 2011
- ▶ The school system will not be implementing the survey until September 2011
- ▶ Trying to obtain a written commitment for the survey

Recommendations

- ▶ Be persistent
- ▶ If you try something and it does not work, try something else.
- ▶ Utilize and engage your coalition members/partners in selling the survey to the schools
- ▶ Don't burn your bridges
- ▶ Promote ideas that make the tool advantageous to the school system

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CADCA Building drug-free communities.

Resources

- CADCA's National Coalition Institute:
(800-54-CADCA , x 240) or training@cadca.org
- ICF National Evaluation Team:
(877) 854-0731 or DFC_Evaluators@icfi.com
