



Tell Them From Me student survey Frequently Asked Questions

Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation

1. What is the *Tell Them From Me* student survey?

The *Tell Them From Me* student survey provides school principals and school leaders with insight into student engagement, wellbeing and effective teaching practices at their school, from the perspective of students.

The survey is confidential and can be used either as a one-off survey or over time to identify trends within schools and better inform school priorities. The survey is held once a year, with an optional second survey within the year.

More than 78,000 secondary students from over 170 NSW public schools and students in 55 NSW public primary schools participated in a pilot of the survey in 2013-2014.

2. What are the benefits for my school?

The *Tell Them From Me* student survey provides school principals and school leaders with insight into student engagement and wellbeing, and the impact of teaching practices at their school, from the perspective of students.

Data reports are provided to school leaders within three business days of the surveys closing. Reports include a 'one click' pdf summary report of their school's results; interactive charts which look more closely at their school results for specific groups of students (e.g. by gender or year group); and reports that allow comparisons against external data. The Learning Bar's system enables comparison with a replica school – a virtual school of students who have similar characteristics (year, gender and socio-economic characteristics). Currently, this consists of data collected during the NSW pilot surveys.

3. How does this survey relate to the new school planning cycle?

The *Tell Them From Me* student, parent and teacher surveys can be used to evaluate the achievements of the previous school year and to gather evidence and baseline

data for the 2015-2017 planning cycle.

Tell Them From Me student surveys can provide valid and reliable evidence of strengths and areas for improvement from students' perspectives in critical aspects of school performance such as social and institutional engagement, emotional health and the quality of instruction. The surveys provide insights into students' perceptions about learning climate, student-student and student-teacher relationships and their own academic success.

Tell Them From Me data can be very valuable for school leaders to use in leading the school community to identify strategic directions for school improvement. The surveys can also provide improvement measures, inform the development of *Products* to be achieved over the three years of the cycle and provide evidence of impact in school plan *Milestones*.

The timeframe for schools to publish their plans has been extended to the beginning of Term 2, 2015. This provides time for schools to conduct the TTFM student survey in Term 1, 2015, and use the results to enhance the school plan. Results from the parent and teacher surveys can be incorporated into or used with the plan later.

4. How are these surveys different to existing Departmental surveys on the School Survey System?

Schools have access to national and Departmental surveys of students, parents and teachers through the School Survey System. The *Tell Them From Me* suite of student, parent and teacher surveys incorporate many of the same topics and have some similarly worded questions. However, they also:

- include a number of different measures
- bring student, teacher and parent surveys together in a single reporting tool.
- will include data collected over multiple years
- enable comparison with state averages and like-for-like replica schools.

5. How will the student, parent and teacher surveys help the Department to contribute to school and student outcomes?

The Department is committed to using data, evidence and evaluation to inform its planning and practice. At present, there is little system-wide information available in New South Wales about student engagement and wellbeing. The survey data allows the Department, through the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE), to analyse and better understand student performance data and the impact of engagement, wellbeing and teaching practices on student outcomes.

6. What kind of questions will the student surveys ask?

The survey questions relate to the following 15 measures for **primary schools**:

Participation in sports	Behaviour at school	Effective learning time
Participation in extra-curricular activities	Homework behaviour	Teaching relevance
Sense of belonging	Interest and motivation	Teaching rigour
Positive relationships	Effort	Experience of being bullied
Valuing school outcomes	Skills and learning challenge	Advocacy at school

The survey questions relate to the following 22 measures for **secondary schools**:

Participation in sports	Homework behaviour	Teaching relevance	Expectations for success
Participation in extra-curricular activities	Behaviour at school	Teaching rigour	Positive learning climate
Sense of belonging	Interest and motivation	Effective learning time	Advocacy outside school
Positive relationships	Effort	Experiences of being bullied	Student aspirations: finishing Year 12, university, TAFE
Truancy	Skills and learning challenge	Advocacy at school	
Valuing school outcomes	Feelings of worry or sadness	Positive teacher-student relations	

Some additional questions will also be asked to gain a socio-economic status (SES) profile of students. Students do not need to answer these questions if they do not wish to.

7. Which student groups will take the survey?

The primary school survey has been specifically designed for students in Years 4 to 6. The secondary school survey is designed for students in Years 7 to 12.

8. How many students can take part in the surveys?

All students in Years 4 to 6 and 7 to 12 are encouraged to take part. The more students who complete the survey, the more reliable a school's data will be.

9. What is the cost to my school?

The surveys are provided free of charge to schools. In return, schools are asked to ensure that:

- time and computers are made available to students to take the survey
- as many students as possible complete the survey.

CESE may also ask schools to take part in a feedback questionnaire once the surveys have finished.

10. How will the survey be conducted?

The survey is conducted entirely online during specific survey windows. For 2015, this will be during Term 1 for the first survey, and Term 3 for the optional second survey. The survey will take 15 to 20 minutes on average and no more than 35 minutes for most students.

Schools will need to make school computers available for students to complete the survey. Schools will be provided with information and consent forms for distribution to parents. Schools will also be provided with unique student usernames and passwords prior to the start of the survey period.

To protect student confidentiality, data suppression rules are applied to the school reporting tools where sample sizes are too small.

11. Will support be available to schools during the survey period?

Schools will have access to technical support provided by The Learning Bar, the company that has been contracted to supply the surveys for the Department. A free-call telephone number and email address will be provided to participating schools which will be available every day during term time between 8.30 AM and 4.30 PM, before, during and after active survey periods.

12. Will training be available to school coordinators?

Online live training and information webinars will be offered to all schools. All school coordinators and principals are encouraged to attend one of these training sessions prior to the survey window. There will also be additional webinars offered at the end of the survey period providing information about how to interpret the reports and analyse the data provided by the surveys.

13. Have changes been made to the questions since the pilot study?

Feedback from school principals and teachers has been incorporated into the survey. Some changes have been made to the questions. For example, there have been changes made to the question on extracurricular activities to make the question easier to understand for NSW students.

14. Can I see the survey questions?

Schools will be able to view the surveys online via a password protected portal once they have formally committed to undertaking the surveys. A draft of the 2015 questions in pdf form will also be available towards the end of this year for interested schools. Please note that the survey questions are the intellectual property of

The Learning Bar and should not be distributed beyond your school or used in any manner other than that stipulated by the Department.

15. Can I ask my own questions?

CESE is exploring the possibility of schools including customised questions for the optional second snapshot in 2015. For the first student survey in Term 1, 2015 there is no scope for customised questions at the school level.

16. How does the TTFM student survey relate to the teacher and parent surveys?

CESE is offering the full suite of *Tell Them From Me* surveys (student, parent and teacher surveys) to ensure schools can capture the views of students, teachers and parents. The surveys are complementary.

For more detail on each of the surveys, see the survey website: <http://surveys.cese.nsw.gov.au/>

17. Will the surveys all take place at the same time?

No. It is anticipated that the student surveys will take place in mid-Term 1 and (optionally) Term 3. The parent and teacher surveys will take place at the same time as each other in Term 3.

18. Can our school do one of the surveys and not the others?

Generally no, schools must commit to do the TTFM student survey to be able to run the parent and/or teacher survey. The only exceptions are infants schools or schools participating in the pilot 2014 *Focus on Learning* teacher survey.

19. Has the survey been used in Australia before?

To date, over 200 Australian schools (more than 90,000 students) have used the *Tell Them From Me* student survey. Most of these are public secondary and primary school students in NSW. A small number of schools in Queensland and Victoria are also using *Tell Them From Me*.

These schools have all helped The Learning Bar adapt their survey so that it is appropriate for use in an Australian context.

20. My school is small. Will the survey work for me?

The survey can provide useful insights for schools of all sizes. To protect student confidentiality, data suppression rules do apply where fewer than five students answer a question.

Small schools can choose to cluster together, allowing them to pool data. This will mean that the data reports received by the schools after the survey is completed will relate to the cluster of schools pooling the data, not to the individual school.

Please indicate whether you would like to be part of a small school cluster when lodging your expression of interest.

21. Can infants schools participate?

The student survey is only suitable for students in Years 4 to 12. However, infants schools will be able to take the teacher and parent surveys.

22. What provisions are made for students with low literacy?

The Department is currently investigating text-to-voice technology for the 2015 surveys to assist students with low literacy.

23. Who will be able to see my school's data?

Schools will be able to see their own aggregated data. They will not see individual student responses.

CESE researchers will have access to student level data for system wide analysis. The researchers are interested in trends only, not individual student responses. No student or school will be identified in any publication.

As with other Departmental data, your Director, Public Schools and selected policy staff from State Office may view your school's report.

Schools are encouraged to use the data as part of their ongoing community and stakeholder discussion.

24. What will happen next for schools that choose to participate in *Tell Them From Me*?

2014	Term 4	Schools formally commit to the survey through completing an online EOI form.
2015	Early Term 1	Schools provided with information and consent forms for parents.
	Early Term 1	Training for school principals and coordinators in using the survey website conducted via webinar. Schools provided with student log-ins and passwords.
	Mid-Term 1 – end of Term 1	Active period for surveys. Help desk support will be available.
	Early Term 2	Training for school principals and coordinators in analysing school survey results (conducted by webinar).
	Mid-Term 3	Active period for optional teacher and parent surveys.
	Term 3	An optional second student survey snapshot will be available to schools.

What is CESE?

The Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) is part of the Department of Education and Communities, within the Office of Education.

CESE has been established to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of education in New South Wales. CESE will identify and share what works, creating new opportunities to improve teaching and learning across all of education.

More information about CESE is available at: www.cese.nsw.gov.au

What is The Learning Bar?

The Learning Bar is a Canadian education company that specialises in school surveys for both primary and secondary students. The *Tell Them From Me* survey, is the largest national school survey in Canada, used in nine of Canada's ten provinces. More than 2,600 schools and 1.7 million Canadian students have participated in the survey over the last nine years.

The Learning Bar is led by Dr J Douglas Willms. Dr Willms is a Professor and Director of the Canadian Research Institute for Social Policy at the University of New Brunswick, and holds the Canada Research Chair in Literacy and Human Development. Dr Willms led the development of questions on student engagement for the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

More information about The Learning Bar is available at: www.thelearningbar.com

If you have any questions about the *Tell Them From Me* student survey, please contact CESE via email: TTFM@det.nsw.edu.au or by telephone: **9561 1212 / 9561 8331 / 9561 8370**.