

Tips & Best Practices for Surveying Counselors & CTE Educators

1 Establish a Culture of Open Communication and Candor

When seeking feedback, it is essential that participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences and expressing their honest thoughts and opinions. To encourage survey participation, leaders might explicitly communicate that they are seeking the full spectrum of feedback—positive and negative. And, to ensure participants feel safe in responding to a survey, district leaders might consider allowing respondents to stay anonymous so that there is no fear of retribution or consequence.

2 Clearly Define the Intention of the Survey

District leaders should communicate the purpose and relevance of the survey in order to be transparent with respondents. When counselors or other educators understand that the goal of a survey or listening session is to hear directly from counselors in the field to better serve and support them and their students, they are more likely to complete the survey and see it as an opportunity for communication and feedback.

3 Take Care to Write Neutral Q&A Choices

When creating a survey, it's important to make sure questions and answers are written without bias. Questions should be written simply, without any language that leads the respondent to a certain answer or absolutist phrasing that is worded too strongly. Answer choices should also be balanced with options that span a full spectrum of opinions and experiences. Surveys written with these components in mind will yield more thorough and honest feedback.

4

Ensure a Diversity of Respondents

Districts are often composed of multiple schools whose students and educators reflect a diversity of racial, ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic attributes. Within those schools, there is often a wide spectrum of backgrounds and experiences from educators, counselors, and other CTE personnel. When surveying a group, it is essential to poll a wide swath of respondents to ensure that the feedback is reflective of all of the experiences across a district.

5

Be Respectful of Respondents' Time

In most districts, counselors are responsible for large caseloads and many processes and tasks; they rarely have any extra time in their school day. With that in mind, district leaders might find ways to build survey completion time into professional development days or offer an extended window for submission. Leaders might also limit surveys to once or twice each year and consider how to balance long-answer questions with short-answer questions. After the survey is completed, district leaders should share their appreciation with participants and follow-up with reflections, plans, and next steps to show counselors that their feedback and insights are valued.