

SURVEY MANAGEMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SURVEY MANAGEMENT	1 - 9
Plans and Procedures; Timeline	1
Sample; Custom Questions	2 - 3
Narrative Questions; Administration	3 - 4
Banner Selection	5 - 6
Data Processing	6 - 7
Ordering the Survey	7 - 8
Survey Costs	8
Survey Distribution; Completed Surveys	9

SURVEY MANAGEMENT

Plans and Procedures

The ISACS Constituent Survey works best when a comprehensive, administrative plan that addresses the administration of the survey, individuals involved in the survey process, timeline, analytic process, and presentation or use of the results is outlined. The following questions may help to plan for the survey administration, analysis, and presentation of the results:

- When will the survey be administered?
- When does the school need the survey results?
- Who are the constituents to be included in the survey?
- How many constituents will be included?
- How and by whom will the constituents be determined?
- Will the school develop custom questions in the survey?
- Are there any special issues that should be addressed in the survey?
- Will the school use narrative questions as part of the customized section of the survey?
- How does a school inform its constituencies about the survey?
- How will the survey be administered to the constituent groups?
- What compilation of the data will be most effective for the school?
- Will the results need to be presented to different groups? If so, by whom? When?
- How long will it take for the data to be returned to the school once Marketing Research Technologies (MRT) has received the completed forms?

The following sections of this guide will help you to answer these questions and formulate a complete administrative plan.

Timeline: When will the survey be administered?

When does the school need the survey results?

Many schools use the survey in connection with a Self-Study document that will be created for use with an accrediting association. Therefore, it is important to determine the overall timeline of the Self-Study process and at what point the information from the survey is critical.

Usually, the survey information will be important to include in the writing of the Self-Study; thus, the results and conclusions from the survey need to be presented at the beginning of the writing of the Self-Study. For ISACS schools, the writing of the Self-Study usually begins at the start of Year 2 of the seven-year accreditation cycle, one year before the arrival of the Visiting Team..

Three times during the school year when surveys are often administered are mid October, mid January, and mid-April. Some research has established that these are periods in the year when the constituents of a school are most likely to view the school objectively and to be open to complete the survey. Within the framework of the calendar of the year, the return of results (approximately four weeks from when MRT receives the surveys) from an October administration gives the school the second semester to review the results while a January or April administration gives the school the summer months to review the results.

**Sample: Who are the constituents to be included in the survey?
How many constituents will be included?**

An attempted census for all constituent groups within a school is the best way to gather the most comprehensive set of information from the survey. However, some constituent groups may be too large to attempt a complete census (all alumni from a school 50 years old with an annual graduating class of 250). Each school will need to determine the size of each constituent group being surveyed.

Each school can determine the constituent groups from which opinions are important and should be obtained. The constituents most often surveyed include:

- parents
- faculty
- administration and staff
- trustees
- alumni
- students (grade 8 and above are suggested)

Previous experience indicates that a school can expect a 30% or greater return from parents and a 10% or greater return from alumni.

Once a school determines the number of members of each constituent group, it must determine the number of adult and the number of student surveys needed. Because a school is charged per survey scanned, it is advisable to order 25 more surveys than the actual number for each group to ensure completion.

**Custom Questions: Will the school design custom questions in the survey?
Are there any special issues that should be included in the plan?**

Schools can design up to 10 custom questions for each constituent group. Please note that *different* sets of questions for each constituent group (10/group) can be created. For example, a school might consider different questions for parents than for faculty.

Custom questions need to be provided to each respondent on a separate page with instructions that direct the respondent to answer the custom questions by filling in the corresponding response in the **Customized Questions** portion of the survey (Page 3). Each custom question must be closed-ended and contain no more than 9 responses, labeled a- i (multiple responses can be used).

IMPORTANT – Custom questions must not be stapled to the ISACS survey form as it must be able to pass through the optical scanning equipment for accurate reading of its responses.

Some example, custom questions follow:

Customized Question Example 1: Which three of the following school priorities are the most important ones for the school to pursue at this time? (Indicate up to three responses.)

- (a) Build a new gymnasium
- (b) Raise faculty salaries
- (c) Integrate new technologies
- (d) Reduce class size
- (e) Add extended day program
- (f) Increase alumni services

Customized Question Example 2: (for a Jewish day school): How would you categorize your religious affiliation?

- (a) Reform
- (b) Conservative
- (c) Orthodox
- (d) Other

Customized Question Example 3: Do you favor the addition of a learning resource center staff member for tutorials, funded by a tuition increase?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c) Don't Know

Customized Question Example 4: Is this the first year when one of your children has attended this school?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

Narrative Questions: Will the school design narrative questions as part of the customized survey?

A school should consider adding a few narrative, open-ended response questions to the page that contains the custom questions.

Some example questions follow:

- What are the primary reasons that you selected ABC Academy?
- What are the strengths of ABC Academy?
- What are the weaknesses of ABC Academy?
- What are the most important issues that ABC Academy should address in the future?
- What are your suggestions for improving ABC Academy?

These questions will not be tabulated. The school will be responsible for reading and reviewing the answers to these narrative, open-ended questions.

**Administration: How does a school inform its constituencies about the survey?
How will the survey be administered to the constituent groups?**

Cover Letter

The head of school should write a cover letter to accompany the survey and urge each constituent who receives the survey to complete and return it to the school by a clearly stated date..

The letter should emphasize the following:

- survey importance to the school

- anonymity of the process, as the data on the survey is tabulated by MRT
- school authorities read any narrative responses (also anonymous)
- relatively short amount of time is needed to complete the survey (10 minutes)
- how to answer any custom questions, including the *Don't Know/DNA* response for questions that do not apply to the school
- include a copy of the school's mission statement
- how to return the completed survey
- deadline for completion/return of the survey

IMPORTANT NOTE: It is critical that constituents are told that their views and perspectives are being obtained on an anonymous basis. Steps should be taken to ensure that the identity of each constituent is kept anonymous.

There are a variety of ways in which the survey can be administered to each constituent group.

Designated Event

One alternative for distributing the survey is to administer the survey at a *designated event*. In other words, distribute and ask for completed surveys during back-to-school nights with parents, faculty meetings, trustees meeting and/or during core curriculum classes, such as math or English, with students. In many situations it is appropriate to allow time to complete the survey and to ask for the completed survey to be returned before the end of the meeting or session.

US Mail

Using the US Mail for survey administration is very appropriate for some constituents, in particular parents and alumni. If this method is used, it is suggested that a cover letter be included with the survey that details the mission of the school and a deadline for completion and return of the survey. In addition, it is important to provide a postage-paid return envelope to these constituents in order to increase the return rate of the survey.

Student Folders

Some schools have sent the survey home in a project folder with the student asking the parent to return the completed survey in the same folder. While very economical, this method has **not** met with considerable success.

Electronically

Schools can make arrangements to set up distribution and collection of the survey electronically. Members of the constituent groups will receive an email that contains a link that will direct each recipient to a link where the survey can be completed. Users are given an electronic, password-protected address where they will be able to complete the survey and submit their results online.

**Banner Selection: What compilation of the data will be most effective for the school?
Will the results need to be presented to different groups?**

Schools need to consider and to determine the set of constituents and/or how the data will be reviewed when it is received. Information divided by constituent groups, students, faculty, administrators, parents, alumni, etc. will be meaningful for some schools, while other schools will need to have their data divided by division (i.e., lower, middle, upper) in order to use the information effectively.

A school may select one of two **Standard Banner** (see Page 7) options as part of the ISCAS Constituent Survey package:

- Standard banner - lists each primary constituent group
- Divisional banner - lists parents and faculty by division

Details and examples of these banners can be found in the appendix of this guide.

The two standard banners have been pre-programmed and separate the data into various constituent groups or other important segments. The school will receive the Standard Banner by default unless a banner choice is specified when ordering the ISACS Constituent Surveys.

Both banners can be ordered for an additional charge of \$100. However, you may want to develop a custom banner for your school.

Standard Banner

- parents
- faculty
- students
- administration and staff
- trustee
- alumni
- alumni – graduates within the last five years

- parent - overall quality of education
 - positive rating (excellent/very good)
 - negative rating (good/fair/poor)

- faculty - overall quality of education
 - positive rating (excellent/very good)
 - negative rating (good/fair/poor)

Division Banner

- parents
 - total
 - preschool
 - lower school
 - middle school
 - upper school

- faculty
 - total
 - preschool
 - lower school
 - middle school
 - upper school
- students
- administration and staff

The data from each school's survey is automatically compared to the corresponding data in the ISACS database.

Custom Banner

This banner allows a school to specify the eleven constituent groups, segments or other data elements.

Some examples of special group divisions within a custom banner assignment are:

- previous survey results to most recent results (e.g., 1996, 2001)
- new parents who have joined the school within the last two years versus experienced parents who have been parents in the school for more than two years
- perceptions of a specific initiative (i.e., those in favor of building a new science building compared to those who do not favor such an initiative)

A school can be as creative as it would like. The only constraint is that a school must be able to define the specific group or segment by using a survey question. Please note that this includes custom questions. For example, this means a school could ask parents about their views on construction of a new building. The school could evaluate those in favor or opposed of such an initiative.

The cost to customize a banner for your school is \$300. The school will need to indicate its desire for a custom banner on the original order submitted to the ISACS office and then contact Bob Dicus at Marketing Research Technologies by email at MRT@iquest.net to specify the details for this banner.

Data Processing: - How long will it take for the data to be returned to the school once Marketing Research Technologies has received the completed surveys?

Data entry and tabulation of the results from the surveys will require approximately two weeks. Surveys will be processed in the order in which they are received. Marketing Research Technologies will email a Word file with the results in tabulated data format to the school's survey contact.

In addition to the tabulated data, the school will receive a **correlation and regression analysis** based on the results of the survey with parents. This is a standard report included with the ISACS Constituent Survey package. Schools can order additional correlation and regression analyses for other constituent groups (e.g., faculty, students, Board of Trustees, etc.) for an

additional fee. These analyses are described in the following sections of the guide and will be emailed to the school about two weeks after the tabulated data is sent.

Ordering the Survey

The order form for the Survey for schools can be found on the ISACS website:

http://www.isacs.org/misc_files/survey_order_form.pdf

There is also a copy included on Page 24 of this guide.

The form can be sent electronically (as an attachment) to the attention of kevin@isacs.org or printed out, filled in by hand and sent via facsimile to the ISACS Office, (312) 255-1278, attention Kevin Rooney, Coordinator of Accreditation Services.

BANNERS

The banner of the survey indicates different ways in which the response data of your school's survey can be returned to you. Described below are the three (3) banner types available:

Standard Banner

The Standard Banner of data columns includes breakout tabulation of results for parents, faculty, administration and staff, students, alumni, trustees as well as breakout tabulation results by gender (male and female) and by race/ethnicity (Caucasian and people of color).

Division Banner

The Division Banner includes breakouts according to division levels (parents and faculty by preschool, lower school, middle school, and upper school tabulations).

Custom Banner

In addition, you are able to order a Custom Banner. This allows you to specifically design the banner for your purpose which might include special groups or constituents or the results from the ISACS Constituent Survey for your school several years ago as compared to the results of the survey this year. The cost to customize the banner for your school is \$300. You must request a custom banner through the ISACS office and then contact Bob Dicus at Marketing Research Technologies to discuss and design the Custom Banner. (Marketing Research Technologies: 317-733-1660, or email, MRT@iquest.net .)

Samples of each type of banner are available in this guide's Appendix. pages 28 – 35.

Electronic Survey

An electronic version of the survey will be available starting with the 2005 – 2006 school year. Contact Kevin Rooney, Coordinator of Accreditation Services, for further information.

Survey Costs - Summary

SCHOOL CLASSIFICATION	USAGE FEE	SURVEY(S) FEE	BANNER FEES
ISACS Member	\$950	\$1.00/survey – minimum \$250	
NAIS Member	\$1,500	\$1.00/survey – minimum \$250	
All Other Schools	\$2,000	\$1.00/survey – minimum \$250	
Standard Banner OR Division Banner			No extra fee
Standard Banner AND Division Banner			\$100
Custom Banner			\$300

NOTE - contact Kevin Rooney, Coordinator of Accreditation Services, 312.255.1244, ext. 300, for electronic survey pricing.

This cost of the ISACS Constituent Survey includes:

- use of the ISACS Constituent Survey for your school
- ability to add ten custom questions for each constituent group
- data entry of completed surveys
- tabulation of the results
- use of the ISACS database of similar schools for comparison
- correlation and regression analysis (defined earlier)
- periodic updates of the Survey
- maintenance of the ISACS database

Once the survey results have been sent to the school, an invoice for the services used is sent from the ISACS office to the school.

Important note: the ISACS Constituent Survey may NOT be photocopied or stapled because data entry of completed surveys is processed using optical scanning equipment.

Survey Distribution

Once the survey is ready for distribution to the school's constituencies (custom questions are designed, an introduction letter is written, and all other materials are prepared), the survey should be administered to each constituent group. It is important to remember that a "census," or "random" sample, of constituents of meaningful size must have the opportunity to complete the survey.

Consideration must be given as to how each part of a school's constituency will receive and complete the survey. The United States mail is a convenient way to distribute surveys to alumni and parents, while an in-school time will likely be best for students in a *designated event* setting (e.g., a class meeting, a study hall, etc). Many schools have discovered that having the survey completed by parents in a *designated event* (e.g., parent meetings, parent conference days, etc.) is an effective way to ensure a high return from that constituent group. The survey generally takes fifteen minutes or less to complete.

Three weeks seems to be an appropriate time span during which to administer the survey. Be certain to include and emphasize the **closing date** of the survey in all materials distributed from the school. Before the final weekend of the coming due date of the survey, a school should use its community wide communication system to remind parents to complete the survey by the deadline date (coming the following week!).

It is important to track the number of surveys returned to the school so that there will be evidence of the proportion of surveys that get returned.

Completed Surveys

A person on staff with the school or a respected member of the school community should be designated as the individual responsible for collecting and categorizing by group, the completed surveys. All completed surveys should be accumulated and separated into two categories: adults and students.

The surveys should be unfolded, laid flat, and prepared for shipment. Please do not staple or copy the surveys, as optical scanning equipment is used to read the results of each survey.

The completed surveys **ONLY** should be sent to Marketing Research Technologies. The school is responsible for reading, reviewing and collating all other responses, such as narrative questions.

Box and ship the completed surveys using **UPS** or **FEDEX** to:

Marketing Research Technologies (MRT)
2734 Deer Run
Zionsville, IN 46077
Tel. 317-733-1660

Important note - A cover sheet must be included in the box of surveys clearly indicating the school's name, address, and contact person.

Notify Marketing Research Technologies by email at MRT@iquest.net of the date the surveys are shipped. Please note that NO surveys are returned to the school from Marketing Research Technologies.