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## **National Survey of Public Education's Response to COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and Responses**

### **What is the purpose of this study and survey?**

Survey data will be used to describe district and charter management organization responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, including showcasing innovative approaches, identifying promising practices, and sharing knowledge about the challenges faced. Our overall goal is to provide actionable information to educators, policy makers, and researchers to inform future education practices beyond the initial public health crisis.

### **Who is conducting this survey?**

The [American Institutes for Research \(AIR\)](#) is leading and funding this project, and the survey is being administered by [NORC at the University of Chicago](#).

### **What is the American Institutes for Research?**

[AIR](#) is one of the world's largest behavioral and social science research and evaluation organizations. For nearly 75 years, AIR has been applying rigorous research to the most vexing social challenges in health and education, in communities and in the workforce, in the United States and across the globe. AIR's focus is using the best science to bring the smartest ideas and most effective approaches to improving people's everyday lives, from birth to old age, with a special emphasis on the disadvantaged. As a not-for-profit organization, AIR conducts work with strict independence, objectivity, and nonpartisanship.

### **What is NORC at the University of Chicago?**

[NORC](#) is a not-for-profit organization affiliated with the University of Chicago that has been conducting survey research in the public interest for government agencies, educational institutions, private foundations, nonprofit organizations, and private corporations since 1941.

## **Why should my district or charter management organization participate in this survey? What is the benefit to my district or charter management organization?**

At this unprecedented time, it is essential to capture information on what is happening in our school districts and charter management organizations. This information will inform how we serve our students moving forward and how we address challenges. This knowledge will inform the development of new types of supports and will be useful to policy makers as they assess district needs. Districts that participate may be invited to join other districts in an online community of practice or receive support from AIR. In addition, upon completing the survey, participating districts and charter management organizations will have the option to choose one of six organizations focused on supporting community needs, to which AIR will make a \$50 donation.

## **How will the results of this project be used and shared?**

The project team will share initial results in early summer 2020 and more detailed results in August 2020. The project team will continue to share updates throughout the 2020–2021 school year. Project updates will be shared via a website, research briefs, email communication, and events. District leaders will be able to request additional analyses. The project team will present the survey findings for different types of districts, across diverse educational settings (e.g. rural, suburban, large, small).

## **How many districts and charter management organizations were invited to respond to the survey?**

A total of 2,500 public school districts across all states have been invited to participate in this nationally representative survey. In addition, 260 charter management organizations across the United States have been invited to respond.

## **What kinds of data will be collected?**

In order to capture the effects that COVID-19 is having on school districts and charter management organizations in the United States, we are asking questions about how district and charter management organizations have coped with issues related to school closures, including the timing of school closures due to COVID-19; distance learning approaches and challenges; supporting students with disabilities and English learners; district policies and requirements, such as grading and graduation; staffing and human resources; and health, well-being, and safety.

## **What is distance learning?**

Throughout the survey, we refer to “distance learning.” For the purposes of this survey, we have a very general definition of distance learning (also referred to as “remote” or “in-home” learning). Distance learning can be any type of instructional content provided to students while schools are closed. This includes but is not limited to providing students with paper-based homework packets/worksheets, directing students to educational TV or radio programs, directing students to online learning materials, teaching students through an online portal, or using an online course provider.

## **Who should complete the survey?**

School district or charter management organization leadership can identify who is best positioned to respond. The district respondent may be the district superintendent, assistant superintendent, or other district leaders in charge of the district’s distance learning effort or curriculum and instruction. The charter management organization respondent may be the chief academic officer, superintendent, regional superintendent, or other central office leader in charge of the organization’s distance learning effort or curriculum and instruction. The main respondent is encouraged to ask colleagues for information if they cannot respond to a question.

## **Will my responses be kept confidential?**

Responses to this survey will be used for research purposes only. Study reports will present findings in the aggregate, and responses will not be connected to a specific individual or school district. We use strict data security practices to protect the privacy of information you provide. AIR and NORC follow the confidentiality and data protection requirements of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

## **Is this mandatory or can I decline?**

Your participation is completely voluntary. Participants can skip any questions in the survey that they do not wish to answer. Furthermore, we recognize that participation in this study will require staff time and energy. In appreciation for this time, upon completing the survey, participating districts and charter management organizations will have the option to choose one of six organizations focused on supporting community needs, to which AIR will make a \$50 donation.

## What is the burden of participating?

The only burden on participants is the time required to complete the survey (approximately 30-45 minutes).

## Whom can I contact to verify that this is a legitimate research project?

Please send any questions or concerns to the research team at [PERC@norc.uchicago.edu](mailto:PERC@norc.uchicago.edu) or call the study's toll-free number at 1-877-505-0253. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact AIR's Institutional Review Board (IRB), which is responsible for the protection of project participants, at [IRB@air.org](mailto:IRB@air.org), toll free at 1-800-634-0797, or c/o IRB, 1000 Thomas Jefferson St. NW, Washington, DC 20007.

## When does the survey need to be completed?

We are asking districts and charter management organizations to complete these surveys as soon as possible to achieve the collective goal of quickly providing useful information to the field about how districts and charter management organizations have responded to COVID-19-related closures in spring 2020. We hope to hear from most participating districts and charter management organizations by mid-June 2020. Survey administration will be completed by the end of June 2020 to provide useful information to districts and educators before the upcoming 2020-2021 school year.



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