
A Strong and Healthy Start FAQ: Strong and Healthy Schools Survey

Purpose

On Sept. 28, 2020, the Vermont Agency of Education released [Memo: Strong and Healthy Schools Survey](#), introducing the [Strong and Healthy Schools Survey](#) and dates for its monthly reporting cycle. This FAQ provides additional clarification on the survey for administrators and staff completing the survey.

Q1. The survey assumes your school has a hybrid model and requires an answer to that question. If 5 out of 6 of our schools do not have a hybrid model how should I respond?

This is a required question from National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) federal partners. The question is not written with the assumption of a hybrid model (i.e., “If you have...”) but its “required” designation prevented folks from skipping the question if it didn’t apply to one, some or all of their schools. We have removed the “required” status. If 1 out of 6 of your schools does have a hybrid model you will have the opportunity to address this question for that specific school and select the drop-down that best represents your hybrid model.

Q2. For those schools running hybrid dispositions, the answer to how many students are in the building depends on which day of the week you are asking about. Do you want an average across the week? The most crowded day? The least crowded day? All of the above?

Please answer the questions to the best of your ability and in a manner that best reflects, when appropriate, a monthly average. If there are heavy days and light days during the week, and this is consistent for each week of the month, then a weekly average would be appropriate.

Q3. Why are isolation rooms part of the screening section of the survey?

This is a required question from NAEP (federal partners). This question asks about your screening procedures/protocols and uses isolation rooms as an example. There is space to add procedures if they are not represented. Please answer to the best of your ability.

Q4. What if I don’t know how many staff are at-risk? What if I didn’t survey my staff out of concern for privacy?

This question came from Vermont Department of Financial Regulation (DFR) partners and is designed to support statewide modeling efforts. Our health experts have identified at-risk populations generally as [older adults](#) and [people with certain medical conditions](#), and we know that many schools have had staff request work exemptions.

This survey does not require that you ask staff to disclose privileged information but please do your best to estimate based on your broad understanding of your staff population. Aggregate estimates should not put employee PII at risk. This information, as is outlined in the question, should be your best estimate, not an invasive, potentially personally identifiable response.

Q5. We thought visitors were prohibited; why are we being asked questions about them?

This is a required NAEP question (federal partners). Your understanding is correct and is why the question is automatically defaulted to the "no" position. You can just leave the response marked "no" and move on.

Q6. There doesn't seem to be a way for a district to indicate that they are operating remotely. How do we do that?

There is logic built into this collection mechanism. This begins on page one. Select grade levels your school serves, and you can delineate by grade level percent full remote/online, hybrid and in-person. When you select your school and the grade levels that school serves, a follow up question drops down asking what percentage of students in those grade bands engage in online, hybrid or in-person learning. If you are fully remote, you would indicate 100% online.

Q7. How will this data help our response to COVID-19? I know from the memo that you believe it will.

Survey results will inform the development of current and future guidance, enable coordinated support efforts across the state (e.g., identifying the need for supports or outreach), and meet federal reporting expectations. As an explicit example, by collecting these data we can share contextual information with federal partners when describing specific needs or obstacles related to state assessment and accountability.

These data will also be shared with the Vermont Department of Financial Regulation, who are leading the data modeling effort, and the Vermont Department of Health for public reporting.

Q8. In looking at the survey, it appears that you expect a single submission from my SU, with distinct data sets for each of my seven schools. How can I accomplish that without having to ask my building principals to send me their information and input myself?

Cognito is designed so that multiple users can edit one collection. In Cognito, anyone with the link can edit the collection. Links can be sent to anyone when "save" is clicked at the bottom of a page. Each user clicks the "Resume Now" button in their email and can edit until the collection is closed.

Step-by-step process:

1. On page 1, Superintendents can identify their district and then SAVE at the bottom of page one. Once you do, you will receive a survey link and a prompt to share the link.
 2. Insert your email address and your principals' email addresses here and hit SEND. This will share the link to the same survey via their e-mail where they will be asked to RESUME.
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3. Each Principal can complete the first page for their school. Once they have completed page 1 information for their school they hit SAVE.
4. They can either use the link pop-up function to email you back as notification they have finished; they can message you independent of the Cognito pop-up function; or you can access your SU/SD's survey through the link emailed to you and see how many schools have been completed.
5. Once all schools have completed their page 1, you can click NEXT and complete the remainder of the survey for the SU/SD.

The link sent via email looks like this:

Vermont Agency of Education

DUMMY FY21 Strong & Healthy Schools Survey

Your progress has been saved.
Use the link below to return to your form to complete your submission.

[Resume Now](#)

Superintendents have responsibility for the management of their Supervisory Union or Supervisory District, and as such this survey is deployed to them. It is Secretary French's expectation that superintendents will lead their organizations in the collection and submission of this information not just because this is important information for them to know from their principals and schools on the ground, but because it is statutorily their responsibility to collect and supply data as requested by the Secretary of Education.

Q9. Why are you asking how many staff are onsite when school is not in session? There are no days during the week when school is not in session, except vacations and holidays, when the answer would be "zero." How should a school respond?

This question came from DFR partners and is designed to support statewide modeling efforts. A school could be considered "not in session" during "after hours" (e.g., after students and day-time staff leave for the day, on weekends, etc.). Additionally, those schools that run after-school programs may run programs during vacations as well as before or after school. If you do not have staff who work outside of day-time operations, please answer 0.

Q10. How should we interpret questions about school closures due to COVID-19 during September?

If a school closed due to COVID-19 after the statewide opening on Sept. 8, 2020, you should respond "yes." If not, then respond "no."

Q11. Why do we answer what PPE visitors use if we say “No, we don't allow visitors”?

The question asks about “staff/students/visitors” because asking about visitors was required by NAEP (federal partners). Please answer the question to the best of your ability and as it relates to staff and students generally.

Q12. Do independent schools also need to complete the Strong and Healthy Schools Survey?

Yes. All Vermont SU/SDs and independent schools should complete the survey.

Q13. Where can I find a list of the questions in the Strong and Healthy Schools Survey?

[A pdf with the complete list of survey questions](#) is available on the AOE website.
