BRIDGETEK SOLUTIONS

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Back to School Survey Template and Response Guide

This survey template was designed for IT teams or school administration to send to teachers, students and parents/guardians to determine where schools can improve the learning experience through technology.

The survey results can help you determine which IT elements need improvement and where to allocate funding. See the survey result guide section to interpret the answers you receive and decide on next steps.

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How to Use This Template

Input the questions and answer choices into the survey tool of your choice (Google Forms and Survey Monkey are popular free options) to survey students, teachers and parents on their technology experience. You may use this template however best meets your school or district's needs, including customizing, adding or removing questions from the survey. We recommend sending this survey out to teachers, students, and parents or guardians of elementary school children.

Template email for circulating survey:

The [SCHOOL OR DISTRICT] IT department is always looking to improve your school's educational technology. Please help us deliver you or your child an even better learning experience by completing the following education technology survey. We appreciate your cooperation.

Survey Questions and Answers

1. Who is taking this survey?
   a. I am a student.
   b. I am the parent or guardian answering on behalf of a student.
   c. I am a teacher or staff member.

Connectivity

2. How reliable is the school WiFi?
   a. Very reliable - I never have problems with it.
   b. Reliable - I rarely have problems with it.
   c. Okay - I sometimes have problems with it.
   d. Unreliable - I frequently have problems with it.
   e. Very unreliable – It prevents me from doing my work effectively.
   f. Not sure/I don't use the WiFi.

3. How would you rate the WiFi speed?
   a. Very fast – I never have problems with slow loading times, video lag or digital tool functionality
   b. Fast – I rarely have problems with slow loading times, video lag and/or digital tool functionality.
   c. Okay – I sometimes have problems with slow loading times and video lag and/or digital tool functionality.
   d. Slow – I frequently have problems with slow loading times, video lag and/or digital tool functionality.
   e. Very slow – I avoid using certain tools or visiting certain sites because the internet can't support them.
   f. Not sure/I don't use the WiFi.

4. Do you have access to a computer with internet at home?
   a. Yes, I have full, easy access to an internet-connected computer at home.
   b. I have an internet-connected computer with limited access at home.
   c. I do not have access to an internet-connected computer at home.

5. How would you describe the school internet and computer availability outside of school hours?
   a. They are available to me often enough for me to complete all my work.
   b. They are not available to me often enough for me to complete all my work.
   c. N/A - I do not rely on school internet or computers after hours to complete my work.

Cybersecurity

6. How often do you reuse the same password for multiple school accounts?
   a. Always – all my passwords are the same.
   b. Often – Many of my passwords are the same.
   c. Sometimes – I have a few different passwords and a few the same.
   d. Rarely – Most of my passwords are different.
   e. Never – all of my passwords are different.

7. How often do you use the school WiFi with a device you own, like your smart phone or tablet?
   a. Daily
   b. Sometimes
   c. Not often
   d. Never
   e. Not sure

8. Do you know what to do if you receive a phishing email?
   a. Yes.
   b. I think so.
   c. I'm not sure.
   d. No.
   e. What is a phishing email?

Note to survey admins:
Fill in tool name, like Blackboard

Digital Tools

9. How easy is it to use your education management tool?
   a. Very easy – I understand how to use it and don't run into issues.
   b. Easy – I understand how to use it and don't often run into issues.
   c. Okay – I somewhat understand how to use it and/or sometimes run into issues.
   d. Difficult – It's either difficult to understand or difficult to use.
   e. Very difficult – It's very difficult to understand and I run into many problems with it.
   f. Optional Comments:

10. Do you feel you have the tools you need to complete all schoolwork?
   a. Yes.
   b. I have most of the tools I need.
   c. I only have some of the tools I need.
   d. I do not have many of the tools I need.
   e. I don't have any of the tools I need.
      - Which tools do you need that are not provided?

11. Do you feel that you received sufficient training to use all digital tools?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not sure/NA

Technical Support

12. How often do you need technical support on school devices or tools?
   a. Very often
   b. Sometimes
   c. Rarely
   d. Never
   e. N/A

13. When you need technical support, how quickly are issues resolved?
   a. Within a day
   b. Within a few days
   c. In about a week
   d. It takes over a week
   e. NA/not sure

Safety

14. How confident do you feel in the school's safety system?
   a. Very confident
   b. Somewhat confident
   c. Not very confident

Interpreting Survey Responses - What's Next?

If you received lukewarm or negative responses to certain questions, these could be opportunities to upgrade or improve technology services. Here are some improvement options to consider.

Questions #2-5: Connectivity

School connectivity is critical to academic performance. Poor connectivity can affect teachers' abilities to create engaging lessons and communicate with students. It can also prevent students from completing their work – especially if they don't have access to reliable internet at home. Here are a few ways you can improve your school's internet:

- Invest in higher internet speed. If the main problem is speed, you'll likely need to increase your school's internet bandwidth. E-rate funding can even cover internet cabling projects if your school or school district meets requirements. Read the 2021 e-rate bill for more information.
- Invest in better WiFi solutions. If reliability is the main issue, your school may benefit from router and access point upgrades. Cisco Meraki is a popular school choice for high-quality routers and access points. Wireless solutions can also be covered by e-rate.
- Create WiFi-powered workspaces with extended hours and WiFi. Consider equipping school libraries, cafeterias, gyms or even outdoor campus areas with high-powered WiFi and extending their hours to allow students to complete their homework.

Questions #6-8: Cybersecurity

Schools are facing a strong surge in cyberattacks, and IT teams need to build defenses from every angle. Negative answers to questions 6 – 8 could indicate weak points in your school's cybersecurity. Here are some ways to strengthen it:

- Require multi-factor authentication: Passwords are becoming easier to crack – especially if your users choose weak passwords or reuse the same ones for different accounts. Passwords should be just one method of defense, not the only layer of defense. Consider investing in MFA and requiring it for all student accounts and personal devices connecting to the school network. Single sign-on solutions can help reduce the friction of this added security measure for a seamless user experience. Some MFA solutions come with single sign-on included.
- Security awareness training: Students and staff should receive mandatory security training at least once a year on user best practices, including password security, how to identify a phishing email, web surfing safety, and how to respond to and report suspected incidents.
- Create an incident reporting resource: Create a designated email address, hotline, online form or another method for students and staff to report suspected security incidents.

Questions #9-11: Digital Tools

E-learning is now essential to education, and students and staff need to be equipped with the right digital tools and training. Make sure your school has the following:

- Education management tools: Education management tools can facilitate anything from student-teacher-parent communication to homework submission and grade reporting. Even a bare-bones education management system can significantly streamline learning and communication. Make sure the tool includes readily available training resources for all users.
- Collaboration tools: If your school plans to incorporate hybrid-remote learning long term, make sure it has a collaboration tool that is robust, reliable and secure.
- Software licensing: Consider investing in additional software licenses for word processors, presentation builders and other applications students will likely need. These licenses could either go toward shared school computers or toward individual students that demonstrate need.

Questions #12-13: Technical Support

When you upgrade your school or district's technology, make sure it's backed with sufficient support. If survey answers indicated insufficient IT support or long waits, consider:

- Hiring additional members: Some schools choose to hire additional IT support personnel in-house to help with technical support.
- Partnering with a third-party IT provider: Third-party IT providers distribute the helpdesk workload with the added benefits of additional IT consulting, security support, easier access to industry-leading manufacturers like Cisco through their partnerships and certifications, and other IT services.

Question #14: Physical Security

IT teams can implement technology that helps students, teachers and staff feel safer at school. Here are a few solutions to consider:

- Smart security cameras: Security cameras can now generate real-time alerts based on custom criteria, including movement in specified areas or after hours, and congregation in certain areas based on heat maps. Many also use cloud storage to allow different personnel, from security guards to the principal, to view footage in real-time. Cisco Meraki is a leading smart camera provider for schools - learn more.

- Emergency communication systems: Schools should have a means for alerting students, staff, and parents or guardians during emergencies. Make sure your school's PA system is functional and gather emergency phone numbers or email addresses for all students, staff and emergency contacts if they aren't already on file. Emergency communications should be programmed to alert people at these contact numbers and addresses immediately in case of an incident.

Need help interpreting survey answers or deciding next steps?

BridgeTek Solutions is a Cisco Premier Certified Partner that specializes in providing IT services to schools. We can help with funding allocation, including e-rate and CARES Act funding, and can provide strategic consultation to help you determine the best solutions for your school.

Learn about our work with K-12 schools or higher education institutions or contact us directly to discuss your school's needs and goals.

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