

Surveys are a valuable tool in soliciting feedback from stakeholders about a process, policy, tool, or behavior. This document serves as a guide to helping each office in the Department create valid and reliable surveys, with valid and reliable data.

The Department's research team should be included in the development of any survey being released by the agency to ensure that the results will provide the most meaningful information for your team. **All surveys must be reviewed and approved by the research team prior to being released.**

Prior to drafting any survey, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What information/answers do I want from this survey?
2. Why do I want to know this information?
3. What am I going to do with this information?
4. How am I going to analyze this information?
5. Who is the audience for the survey and the survey results?

A Great Survey:

- **Uses Simple, Direct Language** – avoids big or complicated words or jargon, and words that have multiple meanings
Example: Is this tool rigorous. Rigor has different meanings to different people. Instead ask "Is this tool helping students to master the skills they need to move on to the next grade?"
- **Is Specific** – some concepts mean different things to different people.
Example: Instead of asking "Do you visit the Department's website regularly? You could ask "How many days a week do you visit the Department's website?"
- **Breaks Down Big Ideas Into Multiple Questions** – Asking for a statement about general satisfaction with a tool or event, can lead to vague responses. Instead ask multiple questions using a Likert scale about their satisfaction with the tool or event to get more specific responses.
Example: Instead of "This tool is helpful." Instead break it down into: "This tool is easy to use.", "This tool improves my practice as a teacher.", and "I would recommend this tool to other teachers."
- **Avoids Leading Questions** – Instead of "Do you think the Department should discontinue their weekly newsletter?" ask "How often should the Department communicate to school systems through a newsletter?"
- **Includes One Detail per Question** – Some questions are double-barreled meaning a person could agree with one statement but not the other.
Example: "The Department's website is informative and easy to navigate". If it is informative but not easy to navigate, the participant will have trouble answering this question.
- **Avoids Open Ended Questions** - Open-ended questions (also known as free-response questions) require more effort and time to answer and analyze. Respondents may opt to not answer or leave meaningless answers. Analyzing data for open-ended questions is difficult and time-consuming. Make a statement, and ask people to select from a set of options, or respond to the question using a scale of 1-5 or Likert scale.
Example: Instead of: "What are the tools you use daily in the classroom?" use "Which of the following tools do you use daily in the classroom?"
 - Curriculum guide
 - LEAP360
 - LDOE Planning Resources
 - Academic Standards and Grade Level Expectations
- **Doesn't repeat questions or ask the same thing in a different way** - vary the types of questions you ask, how you ask them, and space out questions that look similar.
- **Is Given a Test Drive** – Avoid misleading or confusing questions by sharing your survey with colleagues or external person in advance to be sure survey is clear.

Please contact analytics@la.gov for assistance.