

# Communication PRinciples for Principals

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## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY



### IDEA

#### Talk it up!

By talking with parents, students, and their staff members, principals can become the “voice of the survey” in their schools.

### Opinions Count! Your School’s Participation in DoDEA’s Customer Satisfaction Survey

DoDEA’s 2008 Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS), has been underway for a month. The survey, conducted every two years, provides valuable feedback to DoDEA from its most important customers - students and parents - about the quality of education it provides and areas needing improvement.

Probably the most significant changes to the 2008 survey are in the administration and content areas. Historically, the survey was administered to DoDEA employees, students, and their parents. This year, however, parents of pre-kindergarten – 12th grade students and students in grades 4-12 will participate in the survey that runs from November 2008-February 2009. DoDEA employees (including teachers, administrators and educational support staff) will participate in a separate employee survey to be administered in March 2009.

Survey questions have also been revised, and in some areas expanded, in order to gain better insight into how parents and students feel about schools, curriculum, DoDEA programs and initiatives. This change is in keeping with DoDEA’s organizational focus on continuous improvement – Kaizen – that will ultimately result in increased student achievement.



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### How Principals Can Help

A high response rate ensures accurate information and feedback. As a principal, how can you help ensure maximum participation in the survey?

By the nature of their jobs, principals are very familiar with opinions, feedback, and listening. They are the “sounding boards” for their school community – the educational staff, parents, and students. They have valuable experience in customer relations and they know how important it is for customers to feel that their opinion counts and that they have a voice in their school community. This experience is a natural starting point for the principal to become active encouraging survey participation among the members of their audience.

## Talk it up!

By talking with parents, students, and their staff members, principals can become the “voice of the survey” in their schools.

## Here are some ways to ‘talk it up!’

- Be sure to mention the survey at staff meetings and at meetings with the installation leadership.
- Use your school newsletter, parent newsletter, and installation newspaper to increase awareness and encourage survey participation.
- Encourage teachers to incorporate the concept of surveys in all aspects of curriculum – mathematics and language arts classes have natural curriculum and educational ties to survey methodology and reporting.
- Use the communications tools in the Customer Satisfaction Survey Marketing Plan developed by DoDEA Headquarters’ Communications Office. This plan was disseminated to your area PAO and you can request a copy from them. The plan contains sample letters, articles and other strategies to help you encourage parents and students in your school to participate.
- Host an information session for parents and students, telling them how the survey works and the importance of the survey to DoDEA’s efforts toward continuous improvement.
- Set up a computer at school events (sports competitions, band concerts, plays, art shows, etc.) complete with signage to make it easy for parents and students to complete a survey.

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## TIPS



## DODEA CARES



**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY**  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY

Using these tools will go a long way toward achieving maximum participation. In addition to the messages outlined in the 2008 Customer Satisfaction Survey Marketing Plan, you might want to incorporate the following message points when communicating with students and parents:

- Voicing your opinion increases the chances that your suggestions and preferences will be implemented.
- Participating in the survey gives parents and students ownership in what happens at their school.

## Repetition and consistency are the keys

From practical experience, we all know that if we hear something often enough, we will remember it and it will become etched in our minds. As the principal and key spokesperson for your school, you have the opportunity to help further programs and implement initiatives that will make a difference to parents and students and have a positive effect on continuous improvement at your school. Reminding and encouraging participation in the Customer Satisfaction Survey is one way to make a difference for your school community. Repeat the messages, offer multiple opportunities for participation, and be consistent in what you say and do. Just as parents and students can make a difference by participating in the survey, you can make a difference by promoting and encouraging that participation.