

# Tulsa Public Schools

## Frequently Asked Questions about Student Surveys

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#### I. General Information

##### **What is the Tripod Student Perception Survey?**

The Tripod student survey is a set of statements developed about students' perception of their classroom experience. Tripod student surveys are rooted in a conceptual framework where teachers' content knowledge, pedagogical skill, and relationship-building skill constitute the "Tripod of Professional Effectiveness." Measured by the 7Cs, these day-to-day instructional practices and behaviors predict student engagement, success mindsets, and achievement.

##### **How is the Survey Important to Teachers and Students?**

Researchers have recognized that positive learning environments enable teacher effectiveness and student success. The Tripod Student Perception survey gives teachers reliable information about how instructional practices related to content knowledge, pedagogical skill and relationship building are experienced by students. These day-to-day instructional practices and behaviors predict student engagement, success mindsets and achievement. Along with other measures of teaching and learning, Tripod survey results help to create a more comprehensive picture of your classroom. Your results can help inform goal-setting, self-reflection, and other aspects of professional development.

##### **How was the survey developed?**

The Tripod student survey was developed by Dr. Ronald F. Ferguson of Harvard University in collaboration with Ohio teachers in 2001 and refined over more than a decade. Since 2011, the surveys have been completed by:

- 4,580,314 students across
- 226,953 classrooms across
- 9,579 schools, and across
- 29 states

Through national research, student surveys have been shown to be the single best indicator of student growth.

##### **Why and when did TPS start using the Tripod Student Survey?**

Effective teaching requires extensive expertise and continuous professional reflection. Teachers influence how students experience the school and classroom, and contribute to how students grow as individuals. The survey complements other measures of teacher performance, and students appreciate the opportunity to provide input and have a voice about their experiences.

TPS piloted the Tripod survey in the spring of 2013 with a controlled rollout of the student surveys across the District to 50% of its schools and teachers. The first district wide administration was in the Fall of 2014 and a second administration in the Spring of 2015. TPS recognizes that positive learning environments enable teacher effectiveness and student success. Feedback from our students about how they are experiencing the classroom can help drive improvement and professional development.

### **Are the surveys reliable and valid?**

Yes. National research shows that student perception survey results are valid and consistent. The survey is not a popularity contest, but is composed of rigorously vetted and nationally research-based statements about classroom practice and climate. Research finds that the Tripod student survey is the most reliable assessment of teacher practice and student growth.

References:

- [http://www.metproject.org/downloads/Asking\\_Students\\_Practitioner\\_Brief.pdf](http://www.metproject.org/downloads/Asking_Students_Practitioner_Brief.pdf)
- [http://www.metproject.org/downloads/MET\\_Gathering\\_Feedback\\_Practitioner\\_Brief.pdf](http://www.metproject.org/downloads/MET_Gathering_Feedback_Practitioner_Brief.pdf)
- <http://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/Hanover-Research-Student-Surveys.pdf>
- [http://www.coloradoinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Planning\\_comms\\_Research-Overview-CEI.pdf](http://www.coloradoinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Planning_comms_Research-Overview-CEI.pdf)
- [http://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNTP\\_METMadeSimple\\_2012.pdf](http://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNTP_METMadeSimple_2012.pdf)
- [http://www.metproject.org/downloads/MET\\_Ensuring\\_Fair\\_and\\_Reliable\\_Measures\\_Practitioner\\_Brief.pdf](http://www.metproject.org/downloads/MET_Ensuring_Fair_and_Reliable_Measures_Practitioner_Brief.pdf)
- [http://www.metproject.org/downloads/Preliminary\\_Findings-Research\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.metproject.org/downloads/Preliminary_Findings-Research_Paper.pdf)

### **How do student surveys help students?**

Surveys are not just reliable feedback tools; they are also highly predictive of teachers' impact on student achievement growth. Peer reviewed research has repeatedly shown that a teacher's survey performance with one class of students is directly related to the academic growth of other students taught by the same teacher. This means that teachers can use feedback from their survey reports to confirm their success and adjust their practices to improve student learning in all the classes they teach. For example, the Measures of Effective Teaching study of 2010<sup>i</sup> showed that other students taught by high-performing teachers (teachers who had scored in the top 25% on a student survey administration of a different class of students) dramatically out-performed students taught by teachers in the bottom 25%, amounting to **3.7 - 4.8 more months of learning per year in math and 2.3 - 2.9 more months in English Language Arts**. Said another way, the lower-performing teachers would need 14.8 months with students in order for them experience the same growth as they would have in just 10 months with the higher performing teacher. This data confirms that students' perception of their classroom experience is a valid indicator of a teacher's ability to reach students.

### **What do the surveys measure?**

The surveys measure classroom practices and climate as experienced by students. Tripod framework identifies seven elements of teaching practices—the 7Cs—that correspond to key elements of teaching quality. The survey generates information about how students experience teaching practices in the classroom. These elements of teaching practice closely align with Tulsa Public School's instructional framework (the Tulsa Model for Teacher Observation & Evaluation). Teacher performance on the survey is correlated with student achievement growth and teacher performance on their Tulsa Model observations.

## What are the 7Cs?

The 7Cs are constructs for measuring teaching practices: Care, Classroom Management, Clarify, Challenge, Captivate, Confer and Consolidate—aspects of teaching supported by decades of research and peer reviewed publications.

1. [Care](#) –show concern and support
  - *My teacher seems to know if something is bothering me.*
2. [Classroom Management](#) (formerly Control)—sustain order, respect and focus
  - *My classmates behave the way my teacher wants them to.*
3. [Clarify](#) –cultivate understanding & overcome confusion
  - *My teacher explains difficult things clearly.*
4. [Challenge](#) –press for rigor and persistence
  - *My teacher doesn't let people give up when the work gets hard.*
5. [Captivate](#) –inspire curiosity and interest
  - *My teacher makes lessons interesting.*
6. [Confer](#) –invite ideas and promote discussion
  - *My teacher gives us time to explain our ideas.*
7. [Consolidate](#) –integrate ideas and summarize key points
  - *My teacher takes time to summarize what we learn each day.*

## How are survey items appropriate for the development level of the students?

There are different surveys for K-2, upper elementary, and secondary students. The surveys are shorter and the items are more simply stated in K-2 and upper elementary grades. In December 2014 and January 2015, a group of 20 early elementary educators reviewed the early elementary survey administration. Their resulting recommendations made the TPS Early Elementary student survey even easier to administer. These changes were so effective that Tripod incorporated some of them into their national surveys. Because of the study group's recommendations:

- ✓ Administration guidelines explicitly require the survey to be administered by a proctor for all K-2 students.
- ✓ Proctors administer the surveys to Kindergarten students in groups of 5-10 students. If a survey statement is unclear to a student, proctors use an "alternative phrasing" document to help clarify the item's meaning.
- ✓ Students in K-2 use question trackers that allow a student to only see one question at a time.

All survey items were selected and reviewed by a team of TPS and Tulsa Classroom Teacher Association (the district's teachers union) administrators. The District will continuously improve the survey and its administration with TCTA and teachers' assistance.

### **How many statements or survey items are there per survey format?**

- Early Elementary (K-2): 15 survey items / 10 student background and peer support
- Upper Elementary (3-5): 26 survey items / 12 student background and peer support
- Secondary (6-12): 34 survey items / 17 student background and peer support

See Section 2: *“Why are there student background and peer support questions on the survey?”* regarding why student background and peer support items are used. Student background/peer support items do not “count” towards a teacher’s results.

### **Will parents have the opportunity to review the survey?**

Yes. Electronic copies of the surveys used this fall are also available on the TPS website. Hard copies of the Tripod student surveys are on file at the Education Service Center’s Office of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness.

This [link to the survey detail document](#) shows which survey items count toward teachers’ results, and which do not because they are anonymous background or peer support items, as discussed above.

### **Will individual teacher survey information be made publicly available?**

No. Student survey data for individual teachers is considered confidential personnel information. No identifiable information about an individual teacher(s) will be released publicly.

### **Where can I find more information about the Tripod Project and Tripod student survey?**

More information on Tripod can be found at [www.tripodproject.org](http://www.tripodproject.org). The Tripod student survey was studied extensively by the national Measures of Effective Teaching Research Project. Research information and results are available at [www.metproject.org](http://www.metproject.org) and specific links to research briefs are found above. Alternatively, please feel free to call the District’s Office of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness or TCTA.

## II. Quick Administration Facts

### When do I administer the survey?

The student surveys are being administered twice this year during the time frames listed below. You may administer your surveys on any day during the survey window.

Fall: October 26, 2015 - November 6, 2015

Spring: February 29, 2016 – March 7, 2016 (Tentative)

### How will I get my surveys?

You will pick up your printed student perception surveys from your site coordinator at the beginning of the survey window.

### Which students do I survey?

You survey **one class of your choice**. The only caveat is that the class must have at least 10 students and may not be an advisory class. If you have only one class, that is the class you will survey. All students who are present the day of the survey and have been enrolled in your class for at least four weeks will complete a survey, even if they are not taking the class “for credit.” Absent students do not need to “make up” the survey. You do not need to administer the survey to the same students in the spring who were surveyed in the fall.

### Is this mandatory?

The survey is mandatory for all K-12 teachers with at least one non-advisory class with ten or more students. Please contact us at [studentsurveys@tulaschools.org](mailto:studentsurveys@tulaschools.org) if you believe our records are not accurate.

### When must the survey be administered to small groups?

- **Kindergarten:** Use small groups of no more than 5-10 students in all circumstances.
- **Grades 1-12:** Small group administration is not required, but is optional. This is left up to the teacher.

### Does the class need to have a proctor, or may the teacher administer the surveys?

- **Grades K-2:** Proctors are required because of the age of the students and the fact that the survey must be read aloud to them.
- **Grades 3-5:** If one or more students will need the questions read aloud to them, a proctor should be used to read the survey to the student(s) individually or in a small group. A proctor is also required if the reading levels of the students require the survey to be read to the entire class. If students will be reading the survey independently, a proctor is not required.
- **Grades 6-12:** If one or more students will need the questions read aloud to them, a proctor should be used to read the survey to the student(s) individually or in a small group. It is permissible for the classroom teacher to read aloud the survey to a whole class.

### **Who selects the proctor?**

The teacher should select or approve of the individual acting as proctor. This person should be a colleague in the building. TLE and TCTA staff members may proctor as well, upon request and availability.

### **If a proctor is administering the survey, may the teacher still be in the room?**

The classroom teacher may stay in the classroom while a proctor administers the survey. It is important, however, that students feel their answers are confidential. Please use professional judgment to determine the best conditions for your class.

### **May the teacher/proctor clarify survey items?**

As necessary, the teacher/proctor should explain meanings of words and clarify items on the survey, but the proctor must not clarify the items in a leading manner or encourage the student to select a certain response. If a student cannot understand the statement with the proctor's clarification, the student should be told to move on to the next statement. This will not reflect negatively on the teacher's score.

**K-2 Classes:** As recommended by the K-2 Student Survey Study Group, proctors are provided with an Alternative Phrasing Packet to use when clarifying survey items and to improve the consistency of the survey's administration within the district. Only the provided alternative phrasings may be used. If the student still does not understand after the alternative phrasing is used, the student should skip that statement and move on to the next statement.

### **What about SPED students?**

Please make the accommodations designated by the students' IEPs for class assignments or tests. If a student has disabilities so significant that he or she cannot reliably understand or respond to the items on the survey with accommodations, please contact your principal and the TLE office at [studentsurveys@tulaschools.org](mailto:studentsurveys@tulaschools.org) with this information so we will know that they are not participating.

### **What about ELL students?**

Please use appropriate ELL accommodations. For students who are more comfortable taking the survey in Spanish:

- K-2 Students may answer a Spanish version of the survey in lieu of the English survey. As noted in the instruction sheet for K-2 surveys, the K-2 survey is read aloud to students. If the student only speaks Spanish, the Spanish survey should be read aloud in Spanish by a district-approved translator.
- Students in grades 3-12 may choose the option of a Spanish overlay to complete their survey. The Spanish overlay is for reading purposes only. The student will record his/her responses on the English survey. Please contact your site coordinator if you need a Spanish overlay. Specific instructions for its use can be found at the end of your administration guide.

### **I only teach small classes, do I survey?**

If you have a survey pack assigned to you and you teach a group of 10 or more students at any one time, you will survey your students. If you only teach small groups of less than 10 students and have a survey pack assigned to you, you may choose to survey your students in small groups of at least 5 students. Because the Tripod survey asks questions regarding classroom management, a teacher with classes with fewer than 5 students should not survey.

### **How long does the survey take to complete?**

Usually, 30 minutes is more than ample time to complete the entire process for the survey at the upper elementary and secondary level, including material distribution and reading of instructions. When best practices are used in administering the survey in Kindergarten or first grade, the administration requires 20 to 30 minutes of student time per small group.

### **Why are there student background and peer support questions on the survey?**

Anonymous student background questions assist researchers in making the results more reliable and fair by allowing them to control for factors outside of the teacher control. The two “peer support” questions are professional reflection and district information. All surveys are answered anonymously and all individual answers to the survey are confidential.

### **How is student confidentiality protected?**

Students answer anonymously. They are provided with a blank, sealable envelope with their survey. Students place their surveys in their envelopes and then seal them before the surveys are collected.

### **I have additional questions – who do I contact?**

For questions your site coordinator is not able to answer, please contact Sam Davidson in the TLE office at [studentsurveys@tulsaschools.org](mailto:studentsurveys@tulsaschools.org).

### III. Your Survey Results and How They Are Used

#### How Do I Interpret the Results?

**Overall Score:** Your overall/composite score (also called the 7C score) is found on page 4 of the survey report. It's the center of the flower graphic. You also have component (category) level scores, one for each of the 7Cs.

**How Does the Scale Work?** The scores range from 202 to 398. The midpoint is set at 300.

**How is My Performance Compared to Others?** The scores are normed with the score of 300 at the midpoint, using the District's performance data from the fall and spring of 2014-15 for teachers in your grade level (K-2, 3-6, middle school or high school). There are controls for factors outside of teachers' influence to make the results more fair, allowing you to compare your classroom to other classrooms similar to yours in terms of class size, grade level, student background/mindset, and for secondary surveys, the subject area.

**Can I See How My Students, On the Whole, Answered Each Question?** Yes. The Item Response Detail section provides a closer look at the range of your students' responses for each survey item. These relate to your classroom and do not identify individual student response.

**What is the "Other Tripod Measures" Section?** This section presents results related to student peer support as available. While these data are not used to calculate the scores, they can provide you with further insight into your students' experiences.

**More questions?** The report has extensive instructions on how to interpret and make meaning of the results. In addition, attached to your results email is a one-page document titled "Understanding Your Student Survey Teacher Level Report."

#### Who receives the survey results?

You will receive information regarding how your students responded on an aggregate level (no individual students will be identified). Your principal will also receive teacher-level results. School level results are available to all teachers and administrators in Tulsa Public Schools.

#### If I've misplaced my previous results, where can I obtain them?

Please contact [studentsurveys@tulsaschools.org](mailto:studentsurveys@tulsaschools.org), and we can assist.

#### How are survey results used, and how does it relate to other performance information in the District's Multiple Measures System?

The primary purpose of the survey is to provide valuable information to teachers that can be used for professional reflection and growth. Data can also be aggregated to measure the whole school climate. Additionally, student survey results are one of the quantitative measures included in the [multiple measures evaluation report](#). The Multiple Measures Report includes the Tulsa Model (principal observation) scores; and when available, value added information and student survey information. Tulsa Model scores and principal judgment are still the foundation of teacher performance discussions. Quantitative measures like student surveys and value added are supplemental sources of information.

Please note that there is no single/summative score on the multiple measures report. Each measure is reported separately within the report as available. Survey and value added data do not raise or lower any other score. Further, when student surveys and value added information is in the report, they are **not** numerical scores with weights. Instead, the results are communicated within broad ranges—within the average, below average or above average range. If a teacher does not have a survey (or value added) score, the multiple measures report will simply state “data not available.” For an overview of how multiple measures work at TPS, please go to [http://tulsaschools.org/4>About/District/documents/TLE/MultipleMeasuresInTPS\\_2014-15.pdf](http://tulsaschools.org/4>About/District/documents/TLE/MultipleMeasuresInTPS_2014-15.pdf) or contact the District’s Office of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness.

**How do I determine what performance range my score is in?**

You will receive an email with a link to your student survey results approximately five weeks after the survey window closes. The results in the report are based on a scale of 202 – 398, with 300 representing a median score. The multiple measures report will identify your performance range in one of three categories:

- Average – within 1 standard deviation of the mean
- Below Average – more than 1 standard deviation below the mean
- Above Average – more than 1 standard deviation above the mean

The table below displays the 7C score ranges associated with each survey level for the 2014-2015 school year. *Your 7C score can be found on page 4 of your student survey report in the center of the “7C flower.”* Each survey level is analyzed separately.

<b>Student Survey Performance Ranges</b>			
<i>Cohort Level</i>	<i>Below Average Range</i>	<i>Average Range</i>	<i>Above Average Range</i>
Early Elementary	200 - 265	266 - 344	345 - 400
Upper Elementary	200 - 259	260 - 334	335 - 400
Middle School	200 - 263	264 - 342	343 - 400
High School	200 - 261	262 - 342	343 - 400

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<sup>i</sup> Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, “Learning about Teaching: Initial findings from the Measures of Effective Teaching Project,” Table 9, p.26, December 2010.