The American Teacher Panel and the American School Leader Panel

Two Innovative New Tools to “Take the Pulse” of America’s Educators

The American Teacher Panel and the American School Leader Panel provide unique sources of accurate information about teachers’ and school leaders’ evolving knowledge, attitudes, and practices, and about the conditions in which they work.
There Is a Critical Need for Information from America’s Teachers and Principals During an Era of Dramatic Change

New policies—such as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), new types of student assessments, and new procedures for measuring teacher and school leader effectiveness—all require knowledge and effort on the part of principals and teachers. Important questions, requiring rapid responses, must be addressed if these policies are to have a positive impact on students:

- What are teachers’ and school leaders’ perceptions about key education policies?
- Are teachers and school leaders prepared to transform the curricula in their schools?
- What kinds of professional development and other support do principals and teachers receive, and are they aligned with new policies and standards?
- How much time is required for school leaders and teachers to understand and implement a new policy? What kinds of obstacles do they encounter along the way, and how do they overcome them?
- Do novice and experienced principals and teachers respond differently to new demands and pressures?
- Do school characteristics (e.g., size, grade span, region, family income level) influence teacher and principal attitudes?
- How do changing working conditions, including support for school leader and teacher development, affect teachers’ and principals’ career paths and related decisions?

Quick, accurate answers to these and other questions can help practitioners and local, state, and national policy-makers, as well as other stakeholders, respond effectively to provide the best education for all of America’s students.

Taking the Pulse of America’s Educators on a Regular Basis

Both the ATP and ASLP are nationally representative panels of public school teachers and principals who respond to Internet-based surveys three or four times per year throughout their careers. The panels were launched in 2014, and surveys have been administered on multiple occasions since then.

Teachers and school leaders can be compared based on their school’s size, grade span, region, and poverty level—and teachers may additionally be compared based on experience level and subject area—allowing not only for precise estimates of national responses, but also permitting subanalyses based on school and teacher variables.

Teachers and principals participating in the panels were initially selected from the same schools to allow for
comparison of the two groups’ responses within a shared local context. However, participants who change schools remain on their respective panels, and we add new members periodically to ensure that the panels remain representative of teachers and school leaders over time.

**How Do the Panels Work?**

Surveys are administered via Multimode Interviewing Capability™ (MMIC™). Developed by RAND, MMIC is a comprehensive data collection system that provides diverse survey functionality, as well as panel maintenance and control functions. The use of MMIC allows us to program and administer a wide range of question types, including video-based items.

As Internet-based surveys, the ATP and ASLP are designed to allow teachers and principals to respond quickly and easily. At the same time, the design allows researchers and survey administrators to closely monitor survey results and response rates.

Because the panels survey the same teachers and principals at regular intervals over their careers, the information they provide helps clarify the effects of reforms on teachers and principals, as well as how these reforms are likely to affect student outcomes.

With the assistance of our partners, RAND reports the findings of its surveys to the participants, the public, and policymakers so they can follow the changing responses of educators nationwide.

**How Can Organizations and Researchers Use the ATP and ASLP?**

The ATP and ASLP serve as resources not only for RAND researchers; they are also available as tools for external parties seeking timely, accurate information from teachers and school leaders on a variety of relevant topics or policy reforms. Qualified researchers and organizations can utilize the panels by buying space on the surveys for their own questions or buying access to the panel to field additional surveys, with ATP and ASLP staff helping to design survey items and supporting the administration of the survey. Using MMIC and the Internet-based platform, ad hoc questionnaires can be programmed and administered efficiently. Preliminary results and the final datasets are easily accessed online.

Qualified researchers can also gain access to the ATP and ASLP data archives, where anonymous results from previous surveys are available for supplemental analyses.
About RAND and RAND Education

RAND is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis. For more than four decades, RAND Education researchers have been providing objective analysis to inform education policy in the United States and abroad. Sponsors of our research—including government agencies, foundations, and private-sector organizations—rely on us to inform policymaking in such areas as

- early childhood, K–12, higher, and special education
- principals, teachers, and teaching
- standards, assessment, and accountability
- arts and arts education
- school leadership, reform, and administration
- strategic planning for education
- educational equity
- international education
- out-of-school time.

In the area of K–12 education, our experts partner with policymakers, school systems, practitioners, and other stakeholders to help improve education outcomes and systems and to increase access and equity.

Contact Us

If you would like additional information about the panels or would like to use the panels in your research, please contact us at 310-451-6982 or atp-aslp@rand.org, or visit the ATP website at www.rand.org/education/projects/atp-aslp.