AMERICAN SCHOOL DISTRICT PANEL

Research Report

BENJAMIN K. MASTER, CLAUDE MESSAN SETODJI, GERALD P. HUNTER, SAMANTHA E. DiNICOLA, AK KESKIN

Technical Documentation for the Twelfth American School District Panel Survey

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About This Report

This report provides information about the sample, administration, and outcomes of a K–12 public school district leader survey in fall 2025 via RAND's American School District Panel (ASDP). The ASDP is a research partnership between RAND and the Center on Reinventing Public Education. The panel also collaborates with several other education organizations—including the Council of the Great City Schools and MGT—to help ensure we produce actionable results. For more information, please visit the ASDP website at www.americanschooldistrictpanel.org.

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Technical Documentation for the Twelfth American School District Panel Survey

The American School District Panel (ASDP) is a member of RAND's American Educator Panels (AEP). The AEP began in 2014 and also includes the American Teacher Panel (ATP) and the American School Leader Panel (ASLP).

We recruit AEP members using probabilistic sampling methods from the most-comprehensive lists of teachers, principals, and school districts available. This sampling method allows us to weight survey results to generalize to the national populations of these educators and school districts. AEP designed these panels to generate samples of sufficient size to facilitate national-level analyses, including analyses of prevalent subgroups. We conduct independent sampling for each panel; although there might be overlap between districts, schools, principals, and teachers in the AEP, it is incidental. We administer all AEP surveys online and in English. The AEP is transparent about its survey methodology and is a proud member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research's Transparency Initiative.

This report is an update of the technical documentation from previous ASDP survey cycles (Grant et al., 2025). Starting in fall 2025, we modified two key components of our methodology: our sample and our weighting process. We detail these modifications in the following sections. Still, much of the language used in this document aligns with language used in previous technical documentation.

Survey Sample and Administration

We developed the twelfth ASDP survey in consultation with our project partners: the Center on Reinventing Public Education, the Council of the Great City Schools, and MGT. The survey sponsors (the Gates Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and The Wallace Foundation) provided feedback on the survey; however, RAND researchers maintained final editorial control of the survey items. The survey had an approximate administration time of 12 minutes and was fielded online from October 21, 2025, to December 16, 2025.

Prior to the fall 2025 ASDP survey, we limited participation to a sample of school districts that we selected to invite. Starting with the Fall 2025 survey, we invited all regular U.S. public school districts to participate in the ASDP survey. For consistency, we did not invite certain types of school districts, including charter management organizations and districts with schools on military installations or reservations. We emailed invitations to participate in the survey to the district's superintendent. The invitations included instructions encouraging the superintendent to share the survey with other district staff, if appropriate, so that the most knowledgeable person in the district responded to each section of the survey. For example, we recommended that a section

on math be completed by a district superintendent or director of academics. Thus, we expect that it was common for multiple people in a district to have worked together to complete the fall 2025 survey on behalf of their district.

We invited 12,274 districts to participate in the fall 2025 survey, up from the 7,888 that we invited in spring 2025. Of the districts that were invited to participate in the survey in fall 2025, 345 participated in this survey, for a response rate of 2.8 percent.[1] This includes districts that fully completed the survey or completed enough of the survey (at least 10 percent of the questions or the first module) that they were included in the data file. Among the respondents, 204 were districts that had not previously participated in an ASDP survey, while 141 had previously participated in one or more ASDP surveys.

Method for Creating the Sample and Survey Weights

We created weights to produce estimates that reflected the national population of public school districts in the United States. Prior to the fall 2025 survey, our weighting process accounted for both the selection of districts sampled for the survey and for district response. Starting with the fall 2025 survey administration, for which we did not draw a true sample of districts but instead invited all public school districts in the U.S., our process does not account for the probability of selection of districts sampled for the survey. As not every invited district responded to the survey, the weighting process still accounts for the probability that a district responded to the survey after receiving our invitation. To create the weights, we calibrated the participation weight (i.e., the inverse of the modeled probability of a district completing this survey) as base weight to reproduce the population distribution of public school districts in the United States. The nonresponse adjustment is important to eliminate known sources of bias and ensure that the weighted sample matches the characteristics of districts nationally. This weighting approach is widely used for probability sample surveys (Deville and Särndal, 1992), including U.S. Department of Education surveys, such as the Teacher Follow-Up Survey (Taie and Goldring, 2020), and to adjust for nonresponse (Kott, 2006).

We estimated the response weights by modeling the likelihood (p_{ri}) that a selected district would respond to the survey, conditional on district-level characteristics. Data on the district's enrollment size, geographic region, locale, and student racial/ethnic composition were obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics' Common Core of Data (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024). Data on the district's poverty level were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program School District Estimates (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023).

[1] The reported response rate was calculated by dividing the number of completed surveys by the number of districts invited to participate in this survey.

For convenience, we used a variable selection method to choose the model that best fit the data for assessing the likelihood to respond to the survey. We estimated the base weight as the inverse of the response probability:

$$main\ weight = \frac{1}{p_{ri}}.$$

Because there was no guarantee that this main response weight will sum to the total of the population characteristics, the weight was calibrated based on district-level characteristics to obtain the final weight. If some of these final weights were extreme, we used a trimming process (at the 95th percentile) to reduce the outliers, and the trimmed weights were reallocated for the population totals to remain the same after trimming. As some of the districts only participated to the first module of the survey, for analyses purposes, two sets of weights were created using the methodology described above. One weight is for the participation in the first module only (n = 338) and can be used for any analysis regarding questions on the first module. The second weight is for the smaller sample of participants that fully completed the whole survey and completed at least 10% of the survey questions (n = 259). The only difference in the weighting process for these two samples is the participants in each of those samples.

Table 1 provides weighted descriptive statistics for survey respondents for the full survey, and Table 2 provides the one for the first module only participation sample. The weights are intended to ensure that each of these samples reflect the national population of school districts.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Fall 2025 Survey Respondents—Full Survey

Survey Respondent Characteristics	Percentage		
	Sample, Unweighted	Sample, Weighted	Population
District enrollment size			
Small (fewer than 3,000 students)	66.41 [60.62, 72.2]	74 [68.62, 79.38]	73.79
Medium (3,000 to 9,999 students)	15.83 [11.36, 20.31]	18.52 [13.75, 23.29]	18.85
Large (10,000 or more students)	17.76 [13.08, 22.45]	7.48 [4.25, 10.71]	7.36
Locale			
Urban	14.67 [10.33, 19.01]	6.96 [3.84, 10.08]	6.84
Suburban	32.05 [26.33, 37.77]	23.73 [18.51, 28.96]	23.34
Town	11.2 [7.33, 15.06]	15.05 [10.66, 19.44]	15.27
Rural	32.05 [26.33, 37.77]	23.73 [18.51, 28.96]	23.34
Region			
Northeast	27.8 [22.31, 33.29]	20.58 [15.62, 25.54]	20.24
Midwest	42.08 [36.03, 48.14]	37.86 [31.91, 43.81]	37.23
South	15.44 [11.01, 19.87]	23.63 [18.41, 28.84]	24.89
West	14.67 [10.33, 19.01]	17.94 [13.23, 22.64]	17.64
Poverty status[a]			
Low poverty (Quarter 1)	24.71 [19.42, 30]	24.84 [19.54, 30.15]	24.43
Mid-low poverty (Quarter 2)	28.57 [23.03, 34.11]	26.1 [20.71, 31.49]	26.14
Mid-high poverty (Quarter 3)	21.24 [16.22, 26.25]	23.72 [18.5, 28.94]	24.34
High poverty (Quarter 4)	25.48 [20.14, 30.82]	25.33 [20, 30.67]	25.09
Percentage of minority students			
0–49 percent	63.71 [57.81, 69.6]	71.92 [66.41, 77.44]	72.39
50–100 percent	36.29 [30.4, 42.19]	28.08 [22.56, 33.59]	27.61

NOTES: This survey sample consists of 259 survey respondents, while the population sample consists of U.S. public school districts (approximately 12,500 districts) in the original sampling frame for ASDP recruitment. We obtained district characteristics from the Common Core of Data files for the 2022–2023 school year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024) and the U.S. Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program School District Estimates (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). Weighted proportions were calculated using survey weights, which were calibrated to match national averages.

[a] We divided public school districts into quartiles based on the family poverty rate of their 5- to 17-year-old population in the district's attendance boundary. Per NCES guidance, we chose our cut points for these quartiles such that each quarter contains roughly the same number of students.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Fall 2025 Survey Respondents—First Module Only

Survey Respondent Characteristics	Percentage		
	Sample, Unweighted	Sample, Weighted	Population
District enrollment size			
Small (fewer than 3,000 students)	65.68 [60.59, 70.77]	73.78 [69.06, 78.49]	73.79
Medium (3,000 to 9,999 students)	20.12 [15.82, 24.41]	18.84 [14.65, 23.03]	18.85
Large (10,000 or more students)	14.2 [10.46, 17.94]	7.38 [4.58, 10.19]	7.36
Locale			
Urban	13.02 [9.41, 16.62]	6.87 [4.16, 9.58]	6.84
Suburban	32.25 [27.24, 37.26]	23.43 [18.89, 27.97]	23.34
Town	12.72 [9.15, 16.29]	14.96 [11.13, 18.78]	15.27
Rural	32.25 [27.24, 37.26]	23.43 [18.89, 27.97]	23.34
Region			
Northeast	28.11 [23.29, 32.92]	20.31 [16, 24.63]	20.24
Midwest	43.79 [38.47, 49.1]	37.37 [32.18, 42.56]	37.23
South	13.31 [9.67, 16.95]	24.61 [20, 29.23]	24.89
West	14.79 [10.99, 18.6]	17.7 [13.61, 21.8]	17.64
Poverty status[a]			
Low poverty (Quarter 1)	28.4 [23.57, 33.23]	24.52 [19.91, 29.14]	24.43
Mid-low poverty (Quarter 2)	27.22 [22.45, 31.99]	26.23 [21.52, 30.95]	26.14
Mid-high poverty (Quarter 3)	21.01 [16.64, 25.37]	24.07 [19.48, 28.65]	24.34
High poverty (Quarter 4)	23.37 [18.84, 27.91]	25.18 [20.52, 29.83]	25.09
Percentage of minority students			
0–49 percent	65.68 [60.59, 70.77]	72.57 [67.79, 77.35]	72.39
50–100 percent	34.32 [29.23, 39.41]	27.43 [22.65, 32.21]	27.61

NOTES: This survey sample consists of 338 survey respondents, while the population sample consists of U.S. public school districts (approximately 12,500 districts) in the original sampling frame for ASDP recruitment. We obtained district characteristics from the Common Core of Data files for the 2022–2023 school year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024) and the U.S. Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program School District Estimates (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). Weighted proportions were calculated using survey weights, which were calibrated to match national averages.

[a] We divided public school districts into quartiles based on the family poverty rate of their 5- to 17-year-old population in the district's attendance boundary. Per NCES guidance, we chose our cut points for these quartiles such that each quarter contains roughly the same number of students.

Abbreviations

AEP	American Educator Panels
ASDP	American School District Panel
ASLP	American School Leader Panel
ATP	American Teacher Panel

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