

# RAND American School District Panel

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Creation and Technical Description

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## About This Report

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The American Educator Panels (AEP) are nationally representative samples of teachers, school leaders, and district leaders across the country. The American School District Panel (ASDP) is a partnership among the RAND Corporation, the Center on Reinventing Public Education, Chiefs for Change, the Council of the Great City Schools, and Kitamba. The ASDP was created as the third member of the RAND AEP, joining the American Teacher Panel and the American School Leader Panel.<sup>1</sup> Each panel uses probability-based methods to recruit members (districts, principals, and teachers) and then to conduct surveys periodically throughout the school year, producing high-quality data covering a wide range of K–12 education topics. This report describes the ASDP sample design, methods used to recruit districts to join the panel, recruitment results through the first several rounds of enrolling districts into the panel, and methods employed to weight ASDP data to the national population of K–12 public school districts in the United States. An important part of our recruitment strategy was the use of *trusted partners* to support district enrollment. Additional information about the panel, including reports based on surveys conducted with the ASDP, is available at [www.americanschooldistrictpanel.org](http://www.americanschooldistrictpanel.org).

### RAND Education and Labor

This research was undertaken by RAND Education and Labor, a division of the RAND Corporation that conducts research on early childhood through postsecondary education programs, workforce development, and programs and policies affecting workers, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy and decisionmaking. This report is based on research funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings and conclusions presented are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. For more information and research on these and other related topics, please visit [gatesfoundation.org](http://gatesfoundation.org).

More information about RAND can be found at [www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org). Questions about this report or about the ASDP should be directed to [dgrant@rand.org](mailto:dgrant@rand.org), and questions about RAND Education and Labor should be directed to [educationandlabor@rand.org](mailto:educationandlabor@rand.org).

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<sup>1</sup> A similar technical description for the American Teacher Panel and the American School Leader Panel is available; see Robbins and Grant, 2020.

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# Chapter 1. RAND American School District Panel: Sample Design and Recruitment Strategy

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The American School District Panel (ASDP) was created as the third member of the RAND American Educator Panels (AEP), joining the American Teacher Panel (ATP) and the American School Leader Panel (ASLP).<sup>2</sup> Each panel uses probability-based methods to recruit members (districts, principals, and teachers) and then to conduct surveys periodically throughout the school year, producing high-quality data covering a wide range of K–12 education topics. This report describes the ASDP sample design, methods used to recruit districts to join the panel, recruitment results through the first several rounds of enrolling districts into the panel, and methods employed to weight ASDP data to the national population of K–12 public school districts in the United States. An important part of our recruitment strategy was the use of *trusted partners* to support district enrollment. Additional information about the panel, including reports based on surveys conducted with the ASDP, is available at [www.americanschooldistrictpanel.org](http://www.americanschooldistrictpanel.org).

The RAND Corporation, the Center on Reinventing Public Education, Chiefs for Change, and Kitamba launched a national effort to surface and examine trends in the policy and practice of school districts and charter management organizations (CMOs). The ASDP is a groundbreaking effort that provides district and CMO leaders an opportunity to share their perspectives and contribute to decisions about education policy and practice. Researchers survey leaders and staff from a representative panel of school districts and CMOs across the country and conduct a complementary set of qualitative studies, following these districts and CMOs over time to monitor trends.

During the 2020–2021 school year, a sample of traditional public school districts and CMOs were invited to join the ASDP concurrently with the administration of four surveys: fall (October) 2020, winter (January) 2021, summer (June) 2021, and fall (October) 2021. This report outlines our sampling and recruitment strategies and summarizes our recruitment and participation rates through the first year of ASDP survey activity.<sup>3</sup>

ASDP surveys have thus far explored a range of district functions, such as curriculum and instruction, professional development supports, and services for students with disabilities. The research examines district strategy, structure, policy, and practice and provides insight into how districts are changing to support school-level problem-solving.

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<sup>2</sup> A similar technical description for the American Teacher and American School Leader Panels is available; see Robbins and Grant, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Note that in this report, the term *district* might refer to both public school districts and CMOs.

## Sample Design

The ASDP sample is intended to serve several purposes. First, the sample is designed to be nationally representative so that weighted estimates can be produced at the national level and so survey responses can be further disaggregated by additional dimensions, such as locale. Second, the sample is designed to include an adequate number of the nation's largest urban school districts. Although the nation's largest urban districts are fairly few in number and represent a small fraction of the nation's more than 13,000 public school districts, these megadistricts include a significant proportion of the nation's student population and a significant proportion of Black and Latinx students. For example, the 74 domestic district members of the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) represent 0.5 percent of all school districts but 15 percent of all students, 24 percent of Latinx students, and 28 percent of Black students nationally. Finally, we included CMOs to provide an indication of how traditional districts and charters might differ. To achieve the goals of national and urban representation, the ASDP sample design includes three mutually exclusive strata to balance the multiple demands for district-level information:

1. a nationally representative sample of traditional public school districts (referred to as the national sample)
2. CGCS members (74 of the largest public school districts in the country)
3. local charter schools and CMOs that are part of the Charter School Growth Fund (CSGF).

We planned to create a panel of about 750 districts and CMOs. The nationally representative stratum was drawn from a comprehensive frame of all U.S. K–12 public school districts. We obtained this frame—which included 13,948 districts and is intended to be comprehensive of all public school districts—from MDR, a research firm specializing in the education sector that also provides samples for the ATP and ASLP. The distribution of districts in the sampling frame was skewed toward small districts with an average student enrollment of about 3,700 and a relatively small number of very large districts, with the top decile of districts containing more than half of all students. Many districts reported no students (such as supervisory unions and subdistricts,  $N = 425$ ); we eliminated these districts from the frame, as well as those that reported enrollment of fewer than 100 students ( $N = 666$ ), for two reasons. First, these districts do not represent the experiences of typical students. Second, these very small districts further skewed the national distribution of districts by enrollment size; they account for nearly 5 percent of all districts but include less than 1 percent of students. Finally, for sampling purposes, we removed CMOs ( $N = 321$ ) because we had a separate strategy for sampling CMOs (further details are provided below). We were left with 12,536 traditional public school districts in our sampling frame. Given the skewed distribution of school districts by size (large districts account for about 10 percent of all districts but about 54 percent of students), we sampled from the frame using a selection probability proportional to the square root of district size (based on student enrollment). This approach ensured a balance of large, medium, and small districts, which is important for the analytical goals of the panel. We originally pulled a sample of 1,450 districts for the national

sample and, as described below, added another 2,200 districts prior to our recruitment effort in January 2021.

To gain access to large urban districts, we partnered with CGCS to include the 74 U.S.-based CGCS members in the ASDP sample. These 74 districts, which were excluded from the national sample, represent many of the largest school districts in the country and large proportions of the nation's Black and Latinx students. Working with CGCS provided ASDP with credibility and access to the district research directors who are largely responsible for coordinating survey responses within districts.

Finally, to include CMOs in the panel, we recruited CSGF members, which are nationally recognized leaders among CMOs. The inclusion of CMOs was not intended to provide a nationally representative sample of charter districts but rather to enable us to gauge the perspective of CMOs more generally. We started with an initial list of 150 CSGF members comprising CMOs with different types of organizational structures. (This was not a frame we sampled from but the entire list of CSGF members.) CMOs that were independent or functioned as parent organizations of multiple schools were kept in the sample because they function similarly to school districts. However, CMOs that operate as schools within a larger CMO system were excluded from the sample because they function more similarly to a school than a school district. In addition, over time, some traditional public school districts in the sample became CMOs; we retained those CMOs as well.

## Recruitment Strategy

Recruitment to join the ASDP involved two steps. First, using mail and email invitations, we asked district superintendents or their designees to enroll in the ASDP by completing a short online enrollment form that confirmed the name and contact information for the superintendent and appointed a district point of contact (typically the superintendent or their designee) for future survey participation. Second, at the end of the enrollment survey, the respondent was asked if they were the appropriate person to complete an ASDP survey and provided brief descriptive language on the survey topic. If the response was yes, they were immediately redirected to a short, 10-minute survey. If the response was no, they were asked for the email address of the best person to respond to the survey, and a link was sent to that person via email with a reference to the referrer. Note that our partnership with CGCS allowed us to skip the enrollment step: CGCS sent a link to the survey to district research directors.

Districts and CMOs invited to join the ASDP are asked to participate in the panel for at least three years. Financial incentives are not offered based on feedback from superintendents and other district-level staff who reported that financial payments are unlikely to influence participation unless the payments were large and that these payments would violate policy in many districts.

In discussing recruitment strategies with the ASDP advisory group and the experience of other researchers, we determined that traditional recruitment methods based on mail, email, and phone invitations might not, on their own, be effective for recruiting districts to the panel.<sup>4</sup> Advisory group superintendents indicated that they would be unlikely to open (U.S. Postal Service [USPS] or FedEx) mail from unknown organizations or respond to unsolicited email requests to participate in surveys. However, they did indicate a willingness to open mail from trusted organizations with which they have an existing and positive relationship, such as state education agencies, state superintendent associations, and national superintendent associations. This led us to pursue a *trusted partner* recruitment strategy (see Diliberti et al., 2021). Trusted partners are organizations that districts and CMOs have an existing, positive relationship with and that support the goals of the ASDP. We engaged multiple trusted partners at the state and national levels to collaborate with us in the recruitment effort (described in more detail below).

The messaging in our recruitment materials emphasized the benefits to districts of participating in the panel, including elevating the voices of district leaders, influencing decisionmakers, and obtaining access to data and reports. In addition, because we did not expect RAND to be well known among district leaders, we tried to signal the ASDP's credibility by listing our advisory group members and our trusted partner organizations and referencing other AEP surveys and the number of teachers and principals that participate in those panels.

We had originally planned to begin recruiting districts to join the ASDP in April 2020. The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic led us to delay recruitment until mid-September 2020. Districts were recruited in three waves that launched one or two weeks apart to enable adapting our recruitment strategy over time based on the responses we received. We used multiple methods and points of contact for recruiting and enrolling districts. For the national sample, we obtained job titles and contact information for personnel in each district, including superintendents, assistant superintendents, research directors, and district administrative assistants, from MDR. Web searches were conducted for each sampled district to confirm that the superintendent's name and contact information were consistent with the data provided by MDR. CSGF provided contact information for the CMOs. CGCS conducted all outreach to its member districts.

Given the diversity (in size, organizational structure, staffing model, etc.) of the districts in our sample, we used a multipronged strategy in fall 2020 recruitment that included:

- engaging trusted partner organizations
- sending physical invitations from RAND
- sending emails from the RAND ASDP help desk
- making follow-up phone calls to districts that did not respond.

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<sup>4</sup> The ASDP advisory group has about 12 members and includes district superintendents, CMO CEOs, and state and community leaders. More information about the advisory group is available on the ASDP website at [www.americanschooldistrictpanel.org](http://www.americanschooldistrictpanel.org).

Each element of our recruitment strategy is described in more detail below.

### *Trusted Partners*

After reviewing our national sample, we identified eight states with more than 50 sampled districts, which warranted pursuing a state-level trusted partner organization. Among these states, we prioritized California, Ohio, and Texas due to the large number of districts sampled in each state. To identify potential trusted partners, we conducted online searches for state-level superintendent associations or school administrators. We also asked team members and advisory group members to suggest potential trusted partner organizations and, where possible, to provide an introduction. When we were unable to have an introduction made on our behalf, we made cold calls or sent emails directly. Our initial outreach included a brief description of the ASDP, its goals, and its formal partners and an explanation that we were looking for organizations to assist with our effort. This was challenging work that often required multiple phone calls and occasionally requests for presentations to an organization's board.

In our three high-priority states, we developed trusted partner relationships with the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA); the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA) in Ohio, and the Texas Education Association (TEA). Our trusted partners provided advance emails and/or letters to districts in the sample, and/or ads or announcements in their e-newsletters, encouraging districts to join the ASDP. Other partners that provided advance outreach to districts were the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), and the National Superintendents Roundtable. Additional partners joined while recruitment was underway and emailed nonresponding districts to encourage them to participate. These partners included the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents, the National Alliance of Black School Educators, the National Center on Education and the Economy, and the National Rural Education Association (NREA).

The organizations were asked to email districts encouraging them to enroll when they received our invitation. We provided email templates and electronic copies of the ASDP brochure to the trusted partners along with a list of the emails for the districts that they were being asked to contact. RAND also physically mailed letters on behalf of AASA. We asked trusted partners to send their email messages to arrive shortly before the RAND invitation packet was scheduled to arrive, but we were not able to control the timing.

### *Physical Invitations from RAND*

Districts in the national sample and CMOs received printed invitation packets from RAND that were sent to the district superintendent or CMO executive director. We experimented by sending half of the invitations via FedEx and half via USPS to see if one mailing approach was more effective. We anticipated using the results of this mailing experiment to inform our approach for future recruitment efforts. However, in fall 2020, so many districts were operating

remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic that we were unsure when or whether these packets were received and who opened them and were thus unable to draw meaningful results.

All invitation packets included an invitation letter from RAND and the ASDP and a two-sided, color brochure about the ASDP. Districts that were assigned to AASA as a trusted partner also received a copy of the support letter from AASA mailed earlier, which encouraged the district to enroll. The invitation letter and brochure included a brief description of the ASDP, what was required to participate, how the information collected would be used and disseminated, steps taken to ensure confidentiality, frequently asked questions, and instructions on how to enroll online (including the URL and personal identification number). Districts that had AASA as their assigned trusted partner also received a copy of the support letter from AASA mailed earlier, which encouraged the district to enroll.

### *Emails from the ASDP Help Desk*

Districts that did not enroll after receiving RAND's mailed invitation packets were sent emails with a direct link to enroll. Once enrolled, districts were immediately asked to complete the survey. Up to five reminder emails were sent over the course of four to five weeks. Initially, emails were sent only to the superintendent. If the superintendent did not respond to the initial emails, we emailed enrollment information to assistant superintendents and research directors for districts with such staff based on the MDR district contact information.

### *Follow-Up Phone Calls*

If a district did not respond after approximately two weeks from the time the first email was sent, RAND staff phoned the district to attempt to recruit them. However, the contact rate of these calls was low, which was unsurprising given that many districts were operating remotely during this time. This strategy was also resource intensive. We did not utilize phone calls for recruitment efforts beyond the initial fall 2020 enrollment period.

## **Evolution of ASDP Recruitment Strategy**

We reviewed what worked and what did not work from our first round of recruitment before starting the second. It was clear that our trusted partner strategy had value: Enrollment of districts with state-based trusted partners far outpaced enrollment among other districts. However, our original national sample of 1,450 districts was too small to generate the desired number of enrolled districts based on the enrollment rate. Before the second round of recruitment began in January 2021, we added another 2,200 districts to the national district stratum of our sample using the same probability proportional to the square root that we used for the original national sample of 1,450 districts.

For the second and third surveys fielded during the 2020–2021 school year, we continued to recruit districts to join the panel. Both newly recruited districts and previously recruited districts

were invited to take our new surveys. To do so, we again used a multipronged strategy that included:

- engaging trusted partners
- sending physical invitations from RAND
- sending emails from the ASDP help desk.

As mentioned above, we did not make recruitment calls to districts after the first survey and enrollment effort.

To increase panel enrollment for our second and third surveys, we recruited additional state-level trusted partners. New state and regional organizations supporting ASPD recruitment for the winter and summer surveys included Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, Impact Florida, Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents, Kansas School Superintendents Association, Kentucky Association of School Superintendents, Missouri Association of School Administrators, New England School Development Council, New Jersey Association of School Administrators, Mid-Hudson School Study Council (New York), New York State Leadership Group, SCOPE Education Services (New York), Educate Texas, Washington Association of School Administrators, and Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators.

State and regional partners were asked to send emails to districts that had been invited to join the panel but had not yet enrolled. Most partners sent emails for at least one enrollment effort; however, a few preferred placing ads or brief informational pieces in their e-newsletters instead. And sometimes a past trusted partner would decline to send emails for a subsequent enrollment period. In these instances, the most frequent reason they provided was that they did not want to overburden districts or make too many asks of them, particularly given the demands of the ongoing pandemic. For states where we had high enrollment rates (such as California and Ohio), we did not ask our trusted partners for help with recruitment during the winter survey. COVID-19 limited the bandwidth of districts, as well as our trusted partners, and their ability to respond to such nonessential activities as survey participation.

After our first survey, we attempted to demonstrate our credibility in our messaging by listing trusted partners on our website, providing quotes from survey participants, and listing examples of ASDP results covered in major media outlets. To help increase ASDP awareness, we also tried to find opportunities to reach out to districts between surveys, such as by emailing copies of ASDP reports to enrolled districts and inviting them to an ASDP online workshop in June 2021.

Finally, after providing a summary of aggregated and weighted survey responses based on the first survey, we developed customized reports for all participating districts that included their survey responses alongside those of districts nationally and their peer districts (defined by locale). The customized reports enabled us to provide data directly to districts, which we hope become a useful tool for them in decisionmaking and sharing ASDP findings with stakeholders.

We plan to continue providing such reports to participating districts and trusted partners after each survey and will include a description of the reports in our recruitment materials.

## Chapter 2. Results: Sample Size and Enrollment Summaries

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This section provides a summary of enrollment results through the first year of the ASDP (fall 2020 through fall 2021). Table 2.1 summarizes results from our initial enrollment effort during fall 2020.

**Table 2.1. ASDP Total Fall 2020 Sample and Enrollments**

Sample Strata	Districts	Number Enrolled	Enrollment Rate (%)	Percent of Total Enrollments
National sample	1,454	244	16.8	64.2
CGCS <sup>a</sup>	74	74	100.0	19.5
CMOs	157	62	39.5	16.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,685</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>a</sup> CGCS is an ASDP partner. All CGCS member districts are considered enrolled in the ASDP and invited to participate in ASDP surveys.

The enrollment rate of 22.6 percent fell short of our expectations and desire to enroll about 750 districts. The tepid response to our enrollment efforts might have been due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but it is impossible to determine the extent. The enrollment rate among CMOs was more than double that of our national sample of districts. This might have been due to our relationship with CSGF, which provided a trusted partner for all CMOs in our sample. A deeper dig into the recruitment numbers from fall 2020 shows the importance of trusted partners to our enrollment effort.

Table 2.2 shows the enrollment rates for the national district stratum ( $n = 1,454$ ) by state and national trusted partner. Districts in states with state-level trusted partners enrolled at the highest rates (21.4 percent to 37.2 percent). Districts with national partners did less well (8.0 percent to 19.6 percent). However, AASA member districts (19.6 percent) came close to the state-level partner enrollment rates. NREA was a late addition to our national trusted partner and, therefore, had a short window to communicate with members and generate impact. Districts without a trusted partner enrolled at a rate of less than 5 percent. Some districts did not have a trusted partner because they were not AASA members and were not located in rural areas served by NREA. These results clearly demonstrate the value of having a trusted partner aid in the recruitment process. The higher enrollment rates among state-level partners might result from the close, likely personal, relationships superintendents have with state-level organizations. However, national partners for districts without state partners are still important—districts with national partners enrolled from two to nearly five times as frequently as those with no trusted partner.

**Table 2.2 Fall 2020 Recruitment and Enrollment by Trusted Partner (National Sample Only)**

<b>Trusted Partner</b>	<b>Total in Recruitment Sample</b>	<b>Number Enrolled</b>	<b>Enrollment Rate (%)</b>	<b>Percent of National Sample Enrollments</b>	<b>Percent of National Sample</b>
<b>State-level trusted partners</b>					
BASA (Ohio)	86	32	37.2	13.1	5.9
CCSESA (California)	129	29	22.5	11.9	8.9
TEA (Texas)	126	27	21.4	11.1	8.7
<b>National trusted partners</b>					
AASA	617	122	19.6	50.0	42.4
NREA	323	26	8.0	10.7	22.2
<b>No partner</b>	173	8	4.6	3.3	11.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,454</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Given the lower-than-hoped enrollment numbers for fall 2020, we continued enrolling districts through our second (winter 2021), and third (summer 2021) survey efforts. Between fall 2020 and our next survey (winter 2021), we added 2,195 districts to the national district sample.<sup>5</sup> As noted above, we continued to recruit and engage new trusted partners at the state and national levels to assist with enrolling districts. Identifying, recruiting, and coordinating with state partners is resource intensive. Many of the organizations we reached out to did not respond or told us they were unable to help due to the overwhelming demands of the pandemic. And of course, there were many absences and staffing changes as the pandemic continued, further contributing to the numerous challenges of enrollment and survey participation.

We conducted the third survey at the end of the 2020–2021 school year, in June 2021. Again, we decided to simultaneously enroll new districts from our existing sample and administer the survey. All districts that previously enrolled were invited to take the summer survey, and districts already in the sample that had not previously enrolled were invited to enroll and then take the survey. Table 2.3 summarizes the recruitment results across all three surveys administered during the 2020–2021 school year. Although our enrollment rate reached only 22.4 percent, with the expanded sample, our total enrollment of 869 districts exceeds the targeted panel size of 750 districts.

<sup>5</sup> We sampled an additional 2,200 districts, but five of them were no longer operating or had merged with other districts; thus, the total number of added districts was 2,195.

**Table 2.3. ASDP 2020 to 2021 Enrollment Results**

<b>Stratum</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>September 2020</b>	<b>January 2021</b>	<b>June 2021</b>	<b>Total Enrolled</b>	<b>Rate (%)</b>
National sample	3,649 <sup>b</sup>	244	329	133	708	<b>19.4</b>
CGCS <sup>a</sup>	74	74	0	0	74	<b>100.0</b>
CMOs	160	62	24	3	89	<b>55.6</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,883</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>869</b>	<b>22.4</b>

<sup>a</sup> CGCS is an ASDP partner and all CGCS member districts are considered enrolled in the ASDP and invited to participate in ASDP surveys.

<sup>b</sup> The national sample began with 1,454 districts. Prior to the winter survey, we added another 2,195 districts for a total of 3,649 districts. In a few instances, traditional public schools in our sample became charter schools (they remained in the sample but were reclassified as CMOs) and a few small districts merged into a larger, regional district (the large district remained in the sample).

## Enrollment and Participation Summary—Detailed

In Table 2.4, we present the demographic characteristics of the districts enrolled in the ASDP after the summer 2021 survey.

**Table 2.4. Demographic Characteristics of ASDP Enrolled Districts**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>National Distribution<sup>a</sup> (%)</b>
<b>Total districts enrolled</b>	869	100.0	
<b>Time point</b>			
Fall 2020	382	44.0	
Winter 2021	353	40.6	
Summer 2021	134	15.4	
<b>Sample</b>			
Fall 2020	704	81.0	
Winter 2021	91	10.5	
Summer 2021	74	8.5	
<b>Region</b>			
Northeast	135	15.5	20.3
Midwest	276	31.8	32.7
South	228	26.2	28.3
West	230	26.5	18.8
<b>Locale</b>			
City	219	25.2	15.1
Suburb	294	33.8	32.3
Town	130	15.0	18.6
Rural	220	25.3	34.0
Missing	6	0.7	

	Number	Percent	National Distribution <sup>a</sup> (%)
<b>Free or reduced-price lunch eligibility</b>			
50% and above	449	51.7	46.0
Below 50%	407	46.8	54.0
<i>Missing</i>	13	1.5	
<b>Student racial and ethnic composition</b>			
Majority white	455	52.4	66.9
Majority students of color	404	46.5	33.1
<i>Missing</i>	10	1.2	

<sup>a</sup> Reported National Distribution is for the ASDP sample of 3,789 districts as described previously.

Relative to the regional distribution of our national sample of districts, our enrolled panel includes a greater proportion of Western districts and a lower proportion in the Northeast, whereas Midwestern and Southern district enrollments mirror the national distribution. Our success outside of the Northeast could be due in part to the fact that we had one of our three initial state-level trusted partners in each of the other regions (BASA in the Midwest, TEA in the South and CCSESA in the West). We considered oversampling Northeastern districts in the winter 2021 recruitment sample but rejected this tack to avoid further stratifying the sample. Instead, we prioritized engaging more trusted partners in the Northeast for future recruitment efforts. Note that our calibration weighting methods account for geographic region (and other dimensions) to ensure nationally representative estimates.

The enrolled districts are more heavily located in urban and less rural areas than the overall distribution of the sample. The relatively high proportion of city-based districts could be related to our partnerships with CGCS and CSGF, whose members are overwhelmingly urban.

Table 2.5 shows the number of enrolled districts for each sample subset that have completed zero, one, two, or three surveys. As discussed earlier and illustrated in Table 2.3, we are pleased to have enrolled nearly 900 districts with a total enrollment rate of over 22 percent. However, one challenge we identified from participation data is that 70.5 percent of districts in the sample have taken just one survey (see Table 2.5).<sup>6</sup> Districts overwhelmingly complete the first survey they are invited to take, which happens immediately after they enroll. We have been less successful in getting districts that enrolled previously to respond to subsequent survey invitations. Therefore, one of our goals as we enter year two of ASDP implementation is to increase the survey participation rate of previously enrolled districts.

<sup>6</sup> Recall that 2,195 districts were added to the sample after the fall 2020 survey and before the winter 2021 survey, so some of the districts in the national sample have only had the opportunity to take two surveys.

**Table 2.5. Surveys Completed by Enrolled ASDP Members by Strata**

	Strata							
	National Sample		CMOs		CGCS		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Zero</b>	33	4.7	3	3.3	28	37.8	64	7.4
<b>One</b>	517	73.4	70	76.9	26	35.1	613	70.5
<b>Two</b>	117	16.6	13	14.3	14	18.9	144	16.6
<b>Three</b>	37	5.3	5	5.5	6	8.1	48	5.5

## Weighting the ASDP Responses

For each survey completed with the ASDP, we create weights to produce estimates that reflect the national population of public school districts in the United States. The weighting process accounts for the probability of selection of the district to the sample for the survey and for the probability that a district or CMO responded to the survey after receiving our invitation.

To create weights, we multiply the selection and participation probabilities and then calibrate the result to reproduce the population distribution of public school districts and CMOs in the United States based on NCES data. The nonresponse adjustment is important to eliminate potential differential response that can be observed among known characteristics of districts (e.g., district size and/or geographic region) and to ensure that the weighted sample matches the characteristics of districts and CMOs 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). The main analysis weights are the product of the following two interim weights:

1. **The sample selection weight:** This is the inverse probability of selection into this survey sample using a comprehensive list of K–12 public school districts. Large urban districts were oversampled because we included member districts of the CGCS (which are very large districts and sampled with probability of 1) and CMOs, as described above, which tend to be located in cities.
2. **The survey response weight:** This is the inverse of the modeled probability of a district or CMO completing this survey.

We subsequently recalibrate the products of these weights. Recalibration ensures that the weights recover the population estimates after selection and nonresponse adjustments are applied. The sampling and weighting approach is designed to ensure a representative sample. We use the inverse of the selection probabilities ( $p_{si}$ ) as the sample selection weight; the selection probability of the district is set to be proportional to the square root of the enrollment size of the district. We estimate the response weights by modeling the likelihood ( $p_{ri}$ ) that a selected district or CMO responds to the survey, conditional on district- or CMO-level characteristics (including

enrollment size, geographic region, locale, district type, and free or reduced-price meal eligibility). For convenience and parsimony, we use a variable-selection method<sup>7</sup> to choose the model that best fits the data. We calculate the precalibration weight as the product of the sampling selection weight ( $1/p_{si}$ ) and the response weight ( $1/p_{ri}$ ), as follows:

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

Because there is no guarantee that this main weight will provide a representative weighted sample of districts, or that the weighting dimensions will sum to the population characteristics, the weight is calibrated based on district- or CMO-level characteristics to obtain the final weight. The calibration procedure assigns a weight to each participating school district or CMO based on their characteristics, so that the sum of the weights along the calibration factors closely match the national characteristics of U.S. public school districts (see Robbins and Grant, 2020, for more information). For the ASDP, the calibration factors include district size, student racial and ethnic composition, free or reduce-priced lunch eligibility, geographic region, and locale. If some of these final weights are extreme, we use a trimming process (at the 95th percentile) to reduce outliers, and the trimmed weights are reallocated for the population totals to remain the same after trimming. The final weight after calibration and trimming produced a design effect of 1.70.

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<sup>7</sup> All combinations of variables are tested, and because only prediction is of interest, the model with the best Akaike Information Criterion is retained.

## Abbreviations

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AASA	American Association of School Administrators
AEP	American Educator Panels
ASDP	American School District Panel
ASLP	American School Leader Panel
ATP	American Teacher Panel
BASA	Buckeye Association of School Administrators
CCSESA	California County Superintendents Educational Services Association
CGCS	Council of the Great City Schools
CMO	charter management organization
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CSGF	Charter School Growth Fund
NREA	National Rural Education Association
TEA	Texas Education Agency
USPS	U.S. Postal Service

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