



Dear Parent or Guardian:

The Department of Education believes that our schools become stronger when we listen to our students. We are excited to announce a new opportunity - the *Advance* Student Survey Pilot- that allows students to share their experiences in class by responding to a student perception survey. This information will help teachers create effective lessons aimed at helping every child to learn.

This student classroom survey is part of *Advance*, the NYC teacher development and evaluation system. This year, however, is a pilot year and the survey results will not count toward teachers' 2014-15 annual ratings.

This May and June, NYC students will be asked to take the *Tripod Student Perception Survey* through the *Advance* Student Survey Pilot. The *Tripod Student Perception Survey* is a confidential survey developed by Harvard researchers and is the leading student perception survey in the country. Students in grades 3-12 will be asked to take the survey. To ensure survey questions are age-appropriate, the survey will come in two forms: one version for grades 3-5 and another version for grades 6-12. Surveys typically take 30 minutes or less to complete. The survey administration window is from May 4 to June 19, 2015. Schools have the opportunity to determine when is best to administer the survey within that time frame.

Questions on the survey ask how your child is experiencing his/her classes, such as how supported your child feels by his/her teacher, whether he/she finds lessons engaging, and whether students treat each other with respect. The survey also asks for some general personal and family characteristics. If you would like to view the items on the survey, please visit <http://tripoded.com/nycsurveys/> or contact your school's survey coordinator.

All student survey responses are kept completely confidential, which means no one in the school will know how your child responded. Students are not asked to write their names or ID numbers on the survey. When they are finished, they will seal the complete survey in an individual envelope before handing it in. The reports that teachers receive will not show the individual responses from any student, so you and your child can be confident that their responses will remain private.

The survey is voluntary. Students and families can opt out of participating in the survey by completing the form included in this letter. Students may opt out of participating in the survey at the time it is administered even if the below form was not completed and submitted. Additionally, if students do not feel comfortable answering a particular question, they may also skip any question on the survey they do not wish to answer.

Please contact your child's school if you would like more information or to see a copy of the survey.

Sincerely,

The Department of Education



**Advance Student Survey Pilot
Student Opt-Out Notification**

Please return this page by _____ to your child’s (homeroom) teacher if you prefer that your child not take the survey.

Please make arrangements so my child does not take the *Advance Student Survey*.

Name of Student: _____

Student’s Grade or Class: _____

Name of Parent or Guardian: _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Why are students being asked to take a student survey?

The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) believes students should have the opportunity to share their insights about the teaching practice they experience in their classrooms. Student voice provides valuable information to educators on ways to improve their practice to better meet students' needs. Additionally, teachers can use the information to focus on specific areas of their practice; that is, the areas where they are doing really well and the areas where there is room for improvement. Student voice is a key part of understanding effective teaching. This year, students will be asked to complete the *Tripod Student Perception Survey* as part of *Advance*, the NYC teacher development and evaluation system. The Tripod Student Survey is a research-based, confidential survey that is designed to measure teacher effectiveness based on students' responses. The purpose of the survey is to help students provide feedback about their experiences in a specific teacher's classroom. For school year 2014-15, the survey will be piloted and will not be included in teachers' annual ratings.

Why the Tripod Student Survey?

The Tripod Student Survey is one of the leading student perception surveys in the country. The survey was developed and refined over a decade by Ron Ferguson, a Harvard professor, and is supported by the organization Cambridge Education.

Who will take the survey?

Students in grades 3-12 will be asked to take the survey. To ensure survey questions are age-appropriate, the survey will come in two forms: one version for students in grades 3-5 and another version for students in grades 6-12. Surveys are designed to take 30 minutes or less to complete.

What types of questions are on the survey?

Drawing upon over a decade of research, survey items are designed to measure individual teachers' teaching practice based on student responses. Items on the survey cover topics such as how supported students feel by their teachers, whether they find lessons engaging, and whether students treat each other with respect. Sample items include, "Our class stays busy and doesn't waste time" and "My teacher knows when the class understands, and when we do not." If you would like to view all of the items on the survey, please visit <http://tripoded.com/nycsurveys/> or contact your school's survey coordinator.

Will anyone see students' answers?

All student survey responses are kept completely confidential. No one will ever track answers back to an individual student, and students are not asked to share their names or ID numbers. Students seal their surveys in an individual envelope immediately upon completion and before handing in to their proctor. Individual student responses will never be shared with teachers.

Is my child required to take the survey?

No, parents or guardians may opt their child out of the survey by completing the opt-out form. Students may also opt out of participating in the survey at the time it is administered even if the parent opt-out form was not completed and submitted. Additionally, students may skip any question on the survey they do not wish to answer.

When will the Tripod Student Survey be administered?

The administration window is from May 4, 2015 to June 19, 2015. Schools have the opportunity to determine when is best to administer the Tripod Survey within that time frame.