

***the polling company, inc.* for Arlington Public Schools**

2013 Site-Based Survey: Methodology

July 2013

1. Purpose and Overview of the 2013 Site-Based Survey

Arlington Public Schools (APS) commissioned **the polling company, inc./WomanTrend** to conduct a comprehensive Site-Based Survey among its students, parents, and teachers in 2013. The Site-Based Surveys are designed to provide school level feedback from students, teachers, and parents on issues including school climate, instruction and teacher expectations, curricula, classroom size, cultural competence, communication, counseling services, physical health and nutrition, teacher experience, professional development activities, and other related information.

Responses collected in the survey are shared in aggregate with principals in each of the schools, and individual school results are presented in a way that allows comparisons with results from previous years' Site-Based Surveys where questions are the same. Principals may use the 2013 Site-Based Survey results to monitor change and progress with respect to school management plans.

This process invited feedback from students, teachers, and parents in three separate surveys administered during the 2012-2013 school year. Questionnaires were developed based on past Site-Based Surveys, and with the input of the APS Evaluation Office, the Superintendent's Advisory Committee on Accountability and Evaluation, senior staff, and a number of stakeholder groups. The questionnaires were designed to respond to the APS Strategic Plan goals, and provide the results for a number of the indicators used to measure progress in these areas.

The Site-Based Survey of students, teachers, and parents was conducted in 2012, 2011, 2010, 2008, and piloted in 2005. **the polling company, inc./WomanTrend** began working with APS for the 2010 Site-Based Survey. A smaller version of the Site-Based Survey was conducted in 2012 among students, teachers, and parents at six schools.

2. Vendor Selection

Arlington Public Schools commissioned ***the polling company, inc. ("tpc")*** – a market research firm incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia and headquartered in Washington, DC – to assist with the 2012 and 2013 Site-Based Surveys as well as the 2012 Community Satisfaction Survey through competitive bid processes.

the polling company, inc. was again selected to assist Arlington Public Schools with the Community Satisfaction Survey and Site-Based Surveys from 2012-2016. ***the polling company, inc.*** manages the planning and execution of these studies including the methodological design, questionnaire development, sampling, print and mailing, data collection, and analysis and reporting.

The APS Evaluation Office was responsible for the overall direction of the study. Regina Van Horne, Assistant Director for Evaluation in APS' Planning and Evaluation Office was the primary point of contact and direction, and Lisa Stengle, Director of Planning and Evaluation for APS, helped coordinate and supervise the project. The Superintendent's Advisory Committee on Accountability and Evaluation (Advisory Committee) and select senior staff were also consulted during the survey development and planning process.

3. Survey Audiences and Sampling

The 2013 Site-Based Survey solicited feedback from three distinct groups of stakeholders: 1) students, 2) teachers, and 3) parents. The size of each population, sample, and total number of interviews are provided on pages 8-10.

Students

All elementary students in grade five completed the questionnaire. **the polling company, inc./WomanTrend** selected a sample of secondary school classrooms from grades 6-11 to participate in the 2013 Site-Based Survey. **tpc/WT** randomly selected participating classrooms from the larger population of qualifying classrooms provided by APS. Sample classrooms met the following criteria:

Grade 5	All homerooms
Grades 6-10	Sample Health/PE classes
Grade 11	Sample VA/US History classes
Arlington Mill	All English classes
Career Center, Langston, Parenting Teens, and New Directions	All students

A number of students who attended an alternative program in addition to their "home" school may have completed more than one Site-Based Survey, in conjunction with each of the institutions.

Teachers

All APS teachers received an email invitation to complete the Site-Based Survey for their assigned school. Teachers who worked at more than one school received invitations to provide feedback for each institution. The Planning and Evaluation Office furnished **tpc/WT** with an Excel file listing the name, email address, and institution for each qualifying teacher within the APS school system.

Parents

Parents of all Arlington Public Schools students, including the alternative programs, were invited to participate in the 2013 Site-Based Survey. Each household received one survey per student and per school to provide feedback on their own personal experiences and those of their students. Households with children in multiple schools in Arlington received more than one survey questionnaire to evaluate each school as appropriate.

Households with multiple children enrolled in one school (including twins or other multiples) received one survey for the school, and parents were asked to refer to the experience of their oldest child in the particular school being assessed. All Career Center students, both part-time and full-time, were included in the sample, meaning that some parents received two surveys for one child.

APS provided a sample population that included names, mailing addresses, and the student or students' institution[s] for all qualifying parents. The full population received survey packets sent by U.S. mail.

Contained within each packet were:

- 1) an English-language cover letter describing the survey, including instructions to complete the survey online and a printed signature from that institution's principal;
- 2) a double-sided English language survey;
- 3) a self-addressed business reply mailer parents could use to return completed paper surveys.

Households that APS designated as Spanish-speaking also received Spanish-language cover letters and surveys with otherwise identical content.

4. Survey Development

For the 2013 iteration of the Site-Based survey, *tpc* and the APS Evaluation Office compiled an initial set of questions by audience based on inquiries included in past studies and a number of new topics deemed important by administrators. These questions were reviewed, edited, supplemented, and prioritized for inclusion in the 2013 study by stakeholder groups.

The following table details the composition of the questionnaires by audience.

Audience	Survey Versions	Closed-ended Questions
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two versions: elementary and secondary schools • Survey Language: provided in English and Spanish 	48 questions
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One version: all teachers, regardless of school level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey Language: provided in English only 	34 questions (elementary) or 33 questions (secondary)
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two versions: for parents of elementary school and secondary school students • Survey Language: provided in English and Spanish 	38 questions

a. Translation

The questionnaires for all audiences were developed and reviewed in English. In advance of data collection, the Arlington Public Schools' Intake Center translated the student and parent surveys in the primary Spanish dialect spoken by the majority of Spanish-speaking residents in Arlington County.

Students who were previously identified by APS to receive materials in Spanish were noted during the sampling procedure. These students were offered surveys in both English and Spanish, and a Spanish-language interpreter was provided when necessary to assist with comprehension of survey instructions and content.

Parents included in this Spanish-speaking subgroup of the sample were mailed survey packets in *both* English and Spanish, including a translated letter from the principal and a Spanish language questionnaire. All parents who completed the survey online were given the option at the beginning of the survey to select to read the questionnaire in English or Spanish.

5. Methodology and Data Collection

tpc designed the methodology for the surveys of students, teachers, and parents to be most appropriate for each audience and effective for the execution of data collection.

a. Methodology by Audience

Students

Students from designated classrooms among grades 5-11 were invited to complete the paper questionnaire. Selected courses were chosen according to their status as *required* for every student within that grade.

A survey coordinator was chosen by school administration to distribute and collect survey packets within each school. Each survey packet contained instructions to the designated survey proctor, questionnaires in English and Spanish to be completed by classroom, and pre-sharpened number two pencils to be provided for students to fill in answer choices. An interpreter was made available to students who were completing the survey in Spanish.

Survey coordinators and proctors were given approximately one school-week (March 18-22, 2013) to administer the student survey in the selected classrooms. Survey packets were returned to the APS Evaluation Office in signed and sealed envelopes to protect the respondents' confidentiality. **tpc** representatives collected the completed surveys by hand in their originally sealed envelopes for processing and analysis.

Teachers

The survey of teachers at Arlington Public Schools was completed online. **tpc/WT** e-mailed an invitation to participate in the study from the address survey@pollingcompany.com on April 1. The e-mail included information on the purpose of the study, an assurance of confidentiality of responses, a link to partake in the study, and the school to be referenced in the study.

Teachers were asked to log in to the online questionnaire by providing their APS-issued e-mail address to which the invitation was sent. Data collected from teachers were examined collectively, and no identifying information that could reveal the personal identity of the participants was used in the analysis.

Two reminder e-mails were sent to those teachers who had not yet returned a completed online survey on April 8 and April 15. The online survey was available for completion by teachers for nearly three school weeks (April 1 – April 18, 2013).

Parents

Parents participating in the study were given the option to complete the questionnaire on paper (through the mail) or online. Parents were mailed a survey packet beginning on April 29 which included an instructional letter from their principal, a paper version of the survey, a postage-paid return envelope, and the letter and survey in Spanish, if identified as necessary by Arlington Public Schools.

As an alternative to mailing back their completed questionnaires, parents were invited to take the Site-Based Survey online, connecting to the web-based system through the Arlington Public Schools' website. Instructions to do so were provided in the letter from principals. Each household was randomly assigned a unique five-digit survey ID, which was required to complete the online survey.

Parents who had not completed the online questionnaire or returned the mailed survey by Monday, May 20, received a second wave of survey packets. The second wave of survey packets included the same materials as the first iteration, with a slightly modified cover letter reminding parents to complete the Site-Based Survey. The second wave of survey packets included the same materials as the first iteration, with a slightly modified cover letter reminding parents to complete the Site-Based Survey. In conjunction with APS, **tpc** extended the deadline for completed surveys one week to June 7, 2013.

b. Confidentiality and Anonymity

No personally identifying information was collected in the surveys of students, teachers, and parents. Additionally, all responses were examined and reported in aggregate for the county, school level, and site.

c. Ensuring Universal Awareness and Encouraging Responsiveness

tpc planned and executed a number of measures prior to and during data collection of the 2013 Site-Based Survey to ensure that all qualifying respondents knew about the survey and to encourage an ample response rate for each audience, including:

- Arlington Public Schools was identified as the sponsor of the survey in all communications supporting the study of students, teachers, and parents.
- All respondents were ensured confidentiality of their responses, and were guaranteed that their answers would be examined in aggregate form only.
- Parents and teachers were notified of the 2013 Site-Based Survey weeks prior to its administration.
- Parents and students were given the option to complete the questionnaire in English or Spanish, and interpreters were available to students taking the survey in Spanish as needed.
- Teachers who were invited to participate in the survey but did not yet complete the questionnaire were sent two reminder emails with a request to sign into the web-based survey system to take the survey.
- Parents who did not complete a survey by May 20 were sent another packet of information, including the paper survey through the mail.
- Parents signed up for the School Talk listserv for the selected Arlington Public Schools received three separate notifications of the study.
- Arlington Public Schools provided information on the study on a dedicated page on their website. This page also included a link for parents to complete the survey online.
- **tpc** was continuously available to respond online, in person, or over the phone to any technical questions regarding accessing the survey online for teachers and parents.

d. Survey Margin of Error

The overall margin of error for the survey is calculated at a 95% confidence interval, meaning that in 19 out of 20 cases, the data obtained would not differ by any more than the percentage points in the margin of error in either direction if the survey were repeated multiple times employing the same survey methodology and sampling method across the same population.

Students - Response Rates to the 2013 Site-Based Survey by School

School Name	School Enrollment	Students in Sample	Completed Surveys	Response Rate	Margin of Error (95% Confidence Interval)
Elementary Schools					
Abingdon	503	77	72	94%	±3.0%
Arlington Science Focus	556	81	78	96%	±2.2%
Arlington Traditional	479	72	65	90%	±3.8%
Ashlawn	478	60	56	93%	±3.4%
Barcroft	439	56	49	88%	±5.0%
Barrett	507	87	86	99%	±1.1%
Campbell	339	53	51	96%	±2.7%
Carlin Springs	519	74	66	89%	±4.0%
Claremont	604	65	61	94%	±3.1%
Drew	496	72	64	89%	±4.1%
Glebe	515	58	50	86%	±5.2%
Hoffman-Boston	388	38	29	76%	±8.9%
Jamestown	273	96	90	94%	±2.6%
Key	593	91	87	96%	±2.2%
Long Branch	605	74	74	100%	±0.0%
McKinley	468	73	66	90%	±3.8%
Nottingham	537	79	77	97%	±1.8%
Oakridge	646	100	92	92%	±2.9%
Patrick Henry	648	59	57	97%	±2.4%
Randolph	374	66	65	98%	±1.5%
Taylor	731	115	104	90%	±3.0%
Tuckahoe	657	93	75	81%	±5.0%
TOTAL	11,355	1639	1514	92%	±0.7%
Secondary Schools					
Gunston	742	358	326	91%	±4.1%
Jefferson	778	346	329	95%	±4.1%
Kenmore	754	335	316	94%	±4.2%
Swanson	968	373	319	86%	±4.5%
Williamsburg	960	369	302	82%	±4.7%
H-B Woodlawn	626	238	215	90%	±5.4%
Wakefield	1414	418	386	92%	±4.3%
Washington-Lee	1965	460	414	90%	±4.3%
Yorktown	1742	447	422	94%	±4.2%
TOTAL	9,949	3344	3029	91%	±1.5%
Alternative Programs					
Arlington Mill	316	316	195	62%	±4.3%
Career Center	712	712	642	90%	±1.2%
Langston	46	46	30	65%	±10.7%
New Directions	21	21	17	81%	±10.6%
Teen Parenting	37	37	29	78%	±8.6%
TOTAL	1132	1129	913	81%	±1.4%
County-wide	22436	6115	5456	89%	±0.4%

Teachers - Response Rates to the 2013 Site-Based Survey by School

School Name	Teachers in Sample	Completed Surveys	Response Rate	Margin of Error (95% Confidence Interval)
Abingdon	60	23	38%	±16.2%
Arlington Science Focus	50	22	44%	±15.8%
Arlington Traditional	42	31	74%	±9.1%
Ashlawn	55	24	44%	±15.2%
Barcroft	64	32	50%	±12.4%
Barrett	65	41	63%	±9.4%
Campbell	52	29	56%	±12.2%
Carlin Springs	65	36	55%	±11%
Claremont	64	42	66%	±8.9%
Drew	62	25	40%	±15.3%
Glebe	52	23	44%	±15.4%
Hoffman-Boston	56	28	50%	±13.2%
Jamestown	57	28	49%	±13.3%
Key	62	37	60%	±10.3%
Long Branch	47	22	47%	±15.4%
McKinley	49	28	57%	±12.3%
Nottingham	48	32	67%	±10.1%
Oakridge	62	29	47%	±13.4%
Patrick Henry	58	34	59%	±10.9%
Randolph	61	42	69%	±8.5%
Taylor	58	35	60%	±10.5%
Tuckahoe	53	35	66%	±9.8%
TOTAL	1,242	678	55%	±2.5%
Gunston	74	44	59%	±9.5%
Jefferson	82	27	33%	±15.5%
Kenmore	79	55	70%	±7.3%
Swanson	85	61	72%	±6.7%
Williamsburg	86	48	56%	±9.5%
H-B Woodlawn	54	33	61%	±10.7%
Wakefield	126	78	62%	±6.9%
Washington-Lee	151	86	57%	±7.0%
Yorktown	145	76	52%	±7.8%
TOTAL	882	508	58%	±2.8%
Arlington Mill	31	20	65%	±13.3%
Career Center	49	29	59%	±11.8%
Langston	12	3	25%	±51.2%
New Directions	7	1	14%	±98.0%
Teen Parenting	10	6	60%	±26.7%
Stratford Program	14	11	79%	±14.2%
TOTAL	123	70	57%	±7.7%
County-wide	2247	1256	56%	±1.8%

Parents - Response Rates to the 2013 Site-Based Survey by School

School Name	Parents in Sample	Completed Surveys	Response Rate	Margin of Error (95% Confidence Interval)
Abingdon	433	104	24%	±8.4%
Arlington Science Focus	425	160	38%	±6.1%
Arlington Traditional	375	173	46%	±5.5%
Ashlawn	377	155	41%	±6.1%
Barcroft	378	78	21%	±9.9%
Barrett	416	125	30%	±7.3%
Campbell	280	74	26%	±9.8%
Carlin Springs	439	50	11%	±13.1%
Claremont	482	153	32%	±6.6%
Drew	398	96	24%	±8.7%
Glebe	386	127	33%	±7.1%
Hoffman-Boston	229	33	14%	±15.8%
Jamestown	412	163	40%	±6.0%
Key	492	158	32%	±6.4%
Long Branch	381	138	36%	±6.7%
McKinley	393	208	53%	±4.7%
Nottingham	448	204	46%	±5.1%
Oakridge	513	147	29%	±6.8%
Patrick Henry	315	84	27%	±9.2%
Randolph	320	54	17%	±12.2%
Taylor	519	228	44%	±4.9%
Tuckahoe	467	208	45%	±5.1%
TOTAL	8878	2920	33%	±1.5%
Gunston	679	165	24%	±6.6%
Jefferson	727	158	22%	±6.9%
Kenmore	689	129	19%	±7.8%
Swanson	861	283	33%	±4.8%
Williamsburg	848	239	28%	±5.4%
H-B Woodlawn	550	179	33%	±6.0%
Wakefield	891	124	14%	±8.2%
Washington-Lee	1386	314	23%	±4.9%
Yorktown	1431	372	26%	±4.8%
TOTAL	8062	1963	24%	±1.9%
Arlington Mill	21	0	0%	-
Career Center	661	92	14%	±9.5%
Langston	38	6	16%	±37.2%
New Directions	21	1	5%	± 98%
Teen Parenting	36	0	0%	-
Stratford Program	32	7	22%	±33.3%
TOTAL	809	106	13%	±8.9%
County-wide	17749	4989	28%	±1.2%

6. Results and Analysis

a. Reporting Documents

The following reporting documents were delivered by **tpc** to Arlington Public Schools after developing Site-specific results for each principal to review.

- The topline results per question for (1) the principal's school; (2) school level if a secondary school, and; (3) countywide.
- The frequency of all responses by question for students, teachers, and parents.

7. Appendix A: Questionnaires

- a. Parent Survey – Elementary – English*
- b. Parent Survey – Elementary – Spanish*
- c. Parent Survey – Secondary – English*
- d. Parent Survey – Secondary – Spanish*
- e. Parent Survey – Web Version (English and Spanish Available)*
- f. Student Survey – Elementary – English*
- g. Student Survey – Elementary – Spanish*
- h. Student Survey – Secondary – English*
- i. Student Survey – Secondary – Spanish*
- j. Teacher Survey – English Only*