

# Survey Administration & Coding Guide for the Study of “Second Chance” Charter Schools

## “Second Chance Schools” Student Survey Administration

**Step 1: Informing the Students.** Let the students know that they are being asked to complete a voluntary survey that will allow you, and others who keep their school running, to gain a better understanding of their interests and concerns. You can let them know that the information they provide will help you and other educators to better design the quality of the education you provide. Please add that the focus is on both current issues that relate to their present education at your school and on their plans for the future. Please also let them know that the surveys will be administered at two points in time: near the beginning and end of the school year to see how their interests and concerns have changed.

**Step 2: Group Administration.** Try to administer the surveys in groups. Large groups are fine if you have enough administrators. There should be enough people there to answer questions and help keep the students focused. Let the students know there are no rights or wrong answers, only opinions. We are interested in their opinions. Please also add that it is important that they answer as fully and thoughtfully as possible in order for their answers to reflect how they really feel. Let them know they can raise their hands to ask questions if any of the questions are confusing. Ask the students to raise their hands when they are done with the surveys. A survey administrator should go to each student to pick up the completed survey and ask if they finished it completely and if they have any questions. Gather up all the completed surveys and store them until you are ready to analyze.

**Step 3: Getting a Strong Completion Rate.** Try to set up alternative survey times to get students who missed the main session. It’s important to get as close to 100% completion rates as possible in order for the data to be useful.

**Step 4: Analyzing the Data – see Coding Manual**

### Other issues:

**Student identification:** Ideally, you’d place codes on the surveys rather than the students’ names and then make a code sheet to match the coded surveys with the names. That is fairly time consuming, however, so if you prefer you can ask the students to neatly print their first name and last initial on the surveys.

**Confidentiality:** The students should know that their answers will be kept completely confidential and that their names will not be associated with any reports written from the information they provide. They should also know that school personnel will not use their answers to influence their grades or status at the school.

**IF YOU USE THE STUDENT SURVEY AT YOUR SCHOOL WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOU FORWARDING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION TO [INFO@PSINNOVATION.ORG](mailto:INFO@PSINNOVATION.ORG) FOR FUNDING AND DATA PURPOSES**

School Name  
School Mailing Address  
School Phone Number  
Contact Person Name  
Contact Person Email Address  
Date Administered

## “Second Chance Schools” Coding Guide

This coding guide reflects themes derived from the student surveys administered to participants from the four second-chance charter schools involved in the study conducted by researchers from Project IF (Inventing the Future) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The study was initiated and coordinated by the Project for School Innovation (PSI).

The codes presented here are reflected in the reports stemming from the study, including the Executive Summary. The intent for providing the codes here is to help other schools utilize this scheme or a related one in efforts to evaluate their work.

A code is defined as a short-hand summary of a qualitative theme or finding. To a certain degree a code is the equivalent of a “variable” in quantitative research.

### General Codes Used Across the Survey

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| ATTEND: | Any reference to attendance issues, including absences, improvements in attendance, etc.   |
| CHILD:  | References to wanting or not wanting children, pregnancy, or child-care issues. (Note that when CHILD is coded, the answer is typically double coded for “RISK,” as defined below. |
| COMM:   | Communication issues.  |
| DIP:    | Graduating from high school, or concerns about graduating.   |
| DRIVE:  | Learning to drive or obtaining a license (double code PROP if mentioned getting a car.   |
| EXC:    | Extracurricular activities including sports, non-career related arts and volunteer/community service activities.   |
| HS:     | High school-related responses that do not focus on graduating.   |
| IND:    | Living on one’s own, being independent, self-reliant, moving out of parents’ home.   |
| MON:    | Money or related financial concerns.   |
| NR:     | NO RESPONSE  |
| OTH:    | Unusual response, those not commonly mentioned.  |
| OCCP:   | Occupation or career path, including skills required for such work.  |
| PROP:   | Wanting to own a home, a car, or other reference to other material possessions.  |
| TEST:   | Test scores (double coded HS if appropriate), including SAT & MCAS.  |
| TRAV:   | Travel   |

## Codes Unique or Common to Each Question on the Survey

### ***Question 1): Hopes, Plans, Goals for coming year***

- DIP: See general code definition above
- HS: See general code definition.
- JOB: Focus on immediate work needs, rather than longer-term occupation or career.
- PROP: See general code definition.
- OTH: See general code definition.

### ***Question 2: Post high school hopes, plans, goals***

- OCCP: See general code definition.
- LEG: Legal problems, avoiding crime, going to court, community service, etc.

### ***Question 3: Reasons for responses to Question 2***

- COLL: Any reference to interest in or plans for college
- SELF: Self improvement, maturation, growth
- POS: Hopes for a positive future, e.g. being healthy, growing up successfully, looking after oneself and avoiding trouble

### ***Question 4: No coding needed***

### ***Question 5: Things needed to get into college***

- GRA School grades, typically getting good grades
- TEST: See general definition above
- DIP: See general definition above
- INI: Showing desire, positive attitude, perseverance
- MON: The need for money to go to college
- EXP: The need for work experience or related training
- VOL: The value of having volunteer experience

***Question 6: Finding information about college***

- SCH: Being able to find college information at school from guidance counselors, the library, teachers, etc.
- WEB: Finding college info on the web
- UNI: Finding college info from university sources, such as pamphlets, college fairs, or other recruitment materials
- OP: Other People: non-school or family sources, such as family friends, people in the neighborhood, etc.
- MED: Television, newspapers, or other popular media
- PAR: Learning about college from parents
- OTHER: Uncommon or unusual sources of college info

***Question 7: Things that make a good job***

- COW: Coworkers, colleagues
- BOSS: Having a good boss
- WC: Working conditions beyond coworkers and boss
- PAY: Making an adequate amount of money
- HOURS: Scheduling and related issues
- PCHAR: Personal characteristics brought to the job
- INT: Interest in the nature of the work
- OTHER: See general definitions above.

***Questions 8): Steps one can take to get a good job***

- APP: Apply, show up, pursue
- INT: Have a good interview, and dress well for it
- DIP: Get a high school diploma
- PCHAR: Have strengths or personal characteristics to offer
- EXP: Show past or related experience

***Question 9): biggest problems you faced recently or are facing now***

- ATTEN: See general definitions  
HS: See general definitions  
PREG: Concerns about being pregnant or becoming pregnant  
LOSS: Typically death, but can include other forms of loss  
FAM: Family concerns or challenges  
MON: See general definitions above  
REL: Relationship challenges with significant other or friend  
LEG: Legal issues  
SUB: Alcohol or drug issues or influences  
RACE: Racial issues  
HEA: Health problems or concerns  
RISK: Getting into trouble in general

***Question 10): things you did or are doing to deal with your biggest problem***

- NOT: Nothing, not dealing with it  
UNK: Unknown, not sure what they are doing  
LOTS: Everything, anything, trying really hard in a lot of ways  
OTH: Unusual or uncommon responses  
PAR: Talking or working with parents on it  
TEA: Talking to or working with teachers  
FDS: Talking to friends about it  
COM: Generally communicating or talking out problems

***Question 11): When you have problems, who are the adults you would expect to give you help and good advice?***

- PAR: Parents or guardians  
SIB: Brother or sister  
FAM: Extended family or relatives  
NON: No one  
COU: Counselor, social worker, or mentor  
TEA: Teacher(s)  
FDS: Friend(s), including boyfriend or girlfriend

***Question 12): List the ways this school is most helpful to you***

LEA: Learning, getting educated  
TEA: Good teachers or teaching  
CARE Provides counseling, guidance, & related support  
LIKE: Simply liking the school  
MAT: Helping to mature or grow up  
WRK: The school work is helpful  
STR: The structure is helpful  
SIZE: Small size is helpful  
NOT: Nothing

***Question 13: What would you change about the school?***

LEA: Would make the lessons either harder or easier  
TEA: Would change or improve some of the teaching  
WRK: Would make the work either harder or easier  
CARE: Would encourage more caring teachers  
STU: Would change some of the students  
STR: Would change the structure somehow  
SIZ: Either increase or reduce size  
NOT: Would change nothing; like it as is