

From: [Cohn, Gary](#)
To: [EPS.MailList](#)
Subject: Why are Surveys like Thoughtexchange and the EES Important?
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Attachments: [image002.png](#)

Colleague, have you been getting email invitations from [Thoughtexchange](#)? I hope so; that means we haven't left you out of the conversation. Despite all of the things you have to do, I also hope you will take a few moments to respond.

The second round of [Thoughtexchange](#) email invitations is part of our most recent community engagement process. It is an effort to gain the thoughts of staff, district residents, parents, students about the district and schools.

In the past, our engagement efforts have included summer symposiums, board "community conversations" and strategic planning sessions, among other public meetings.

This year we added a new online process. We launched [Join the Conversation](#) in January, which will continue into March. In January, Phase 1 gathered more than 6,000 comments from over 1,700 people.

What is Thoughtexchange? What are these "phases?"

[Thoughtexchange](#) is a company which designed a confidential way for thousands of people to respond to open-ended questions. That was **Phase 1** of the [Thoughtexchange](#) process that opened on January 17.

Phase 2 lets you review the comments people made and "star" the ones you like or agree with the most.

Phase 3 will collate the most popular comments, based upon the star review and organize them by school and district on a [Thoughtexchange](#) website that will be live in March.

There are two ways you can take part.

1. You can respond to [Thoughtexchange](#)'s recent email invitation. Those were sent starting February 11. [Thoughtexchange](#) sent them on behalf of school principals and the district, so you may see a principal's name on the invitation.
2. If you did not get an invitation, or if you did not take part in Phase 1, you can still sign up for the remaining two phases by [registering online](#).

The process is flexible!

Phase 2 gives you lots of time to think about others' responses. You can go back and forth through the pages of comments, and you can move your stars around. Even after you hit the "submit" button at the end of the process, you can go back to change your stars – **as long as you do that BEFORE 11 p.m. on Sunday, February 22, and as long as you use the link in your original Phase 2 email invitation.**

When Phase 3 information is available in March, we will have a clearer picture of what our community (that includes you!) believes is important in our district and our schools.

The process is confidential.

All responses, yours and those of community members and students, are sent directly to [Thoughtexchange](#), which is located in Canada. The district will never see any individual comments connected to any individual emails. We did a lot of research about the [Thoughtexchange](#) company. Confidentiality of participants was a key criterion for us as we made the decision to use the company's product and services.

By the way, that same confidentiality is provided by the [Center for Educational Effectiveness \(CEE\)](#) for surveys staff, students and parents take during the fall and spring. CEE receives all of the survey responses directly.

Just like with [Thoughtexchange](#), CEE crunches the numbers and sends us final reports. Individual responses are never connected with individual staff members. Also, as an extra confidentiality measure, the results for groups are never shared. The [Educational Effectiveness Survey™ \(EES\)](#) results from CEE are invaluable as we work to continually improve the conditions, culture, and climate necessary in our schools and district.

EES data are never to be used for individuals' goal setting or evaluations. These surveys are designed for formative use; that is, for developmental purposes -- *never* for individuals' performance evaluation purposes. My view is that we must always be able to trust that these tools (like the fall EES survey and the spring collaboration time survey) will not be used in a way that undermines us, but always in ways that contribute to improved learning environments.

Thank you for your contribution to our continuous improvement efforts and for the time you invest in providing information about ways we can support you and the students we serve. I know these surveys take some time, and that can be frustrating. Know that your time and thoughtfulness are invested well, and that we listen to you at every level of our schools and our district.

Warm regards,

Gary



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