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[CE SBAC] Survey feedback

1 message

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To: cesbac@capeelizabethschools.org

Tue, Apr 16, 2024 at 9:44 AM

Dear SBAC members,

I spoke to you months ago about my objections to having a second survey. Those concerns stand, and in fact were amplified during your deliberations. But, what's done is done. I'm writing today with two specific concerns:

1. I took the survey online yesterday and discovered that the straw poll question that asks respondents to choose their top design has the response set (answer choices) randomized. I believe that is highly inappropriate in this case and may affect the quality of the data. There are several known order biases with response sets, the most concerning one is typically the primacy effect; that is, people choose the first option on a list more frequently. However, any small advantage that randomizing may provide in this context is far outweighed by two issues: 1) these responses have a natural order; they literally are ALPHABETIZED (B, C, E), and 2) there is an order that people are used to seeing these in (again, B, C, E). These are two reasons, which should be known to anyone with decent experience in survey design, NOT to randomize order. In answering, first people need to even realize that the order isn't what they are expecting. Then they need to do the cognitive lifting of disentangling the order. When we create surveys, most of our energy is focused on LOWERING cognitive load. All this is to say - I would interpret those specific results with some caution, especially if they seem contradictory to other data in the survey. And as a taxpayer... I am just incredibly frustrated with the investment we've made here.
2. I still, as of Tuesday morning, haven't received the paper survey. And I know you've heard this concern from others, but it's the worst possible time to send the survey. It is school vacation week and many people are traveling. And such an incredibly short window is problematic at any time - my husband is away on business and literally the only day he's here between now and when the survey is due is Friday. Our household would have less than a WEEK to respond if we were relying on paper.

All this is to say that I'm really concerned with the quality of the data that we will be receiving. And frustrated with the amount of money that we've sunk into this. There's nothing that can be done now, except to use caution in interpreting and applying these results.

As always, I recognize what a huge investment of time and energy this work is and I thank you.

Gretchen

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