

## **Interest Surveys**

At the beginning of the school year or the beginning of a unit, a teacher should take time to reach out to students and get to know them better. One highly practical method for gathering information about students is an interest survey. These surveys can cover a range of topics such as interests, goals, personal or family history, existing knowledge about the content area, or expectations and desires for class. The teacher might administer an interest survey on the first day of class, then review the survey throughout the year as needed.

### **Teacher Actions**

- Creating survey questions that elicit students' interests and goals
- Encouraging students to answer survey questions thoroughly and completely
- Evaluating survey responses to identify students' interests and goals

### **Desired Student Responses**

- Responding to survey questions honestly and in detail
- Describing the teacher as someone who is interested in them

### **Extra Support**

- Asking students to record their responses to interest surveys (audio or video)

### **Extension**

- Asking students to tell about projects or investigations they have already completed related to their interests

## **Interest Survey Item Bank**

When creating a student interest survey, teachers should consider the grade level and subject area they teach and customize their surveys accordingly. To ensure that interest surveys are not overwhelming, teachers should not include more than ten items on a survey. Teachers can choose questions from the following list, which is sorted into categories: general education, specific classes, extracurricular activities, and students' personal backgrounds.

### *Questions Related to General Education*

- What is your favorite class? Why?
- What is your least favorite class? Why?
- What class do you find to be the easiest? Why?
- What class do you find to be the most difficult? Why?
- What class do you find to be the most interesting? Why?
- What is a subject you are curious about or would like to learn more about?
- When you encounter a challenge at school, how do you address it?

## Providing Opportunities for Students to Talk About Themselves

- What is one aspect of school you find to be challenging?
- What is one aspect of school you find to be rewarding?
- What is one aspect of school you find to be easy?
- What characteristics have your favorite teachers all shared?
- What can a teacher do to ensure that you remain engaged during class?
- What is an activity or assignment from a previous class that you found to be interesting or meaningful? Why?
- What is an activity or assignment from a previous class that you thought you did a good job on? Why?
- What careers seem interesting to you?
- What careers do you think you would be successful in?

### Class-Specific Questions

- What do you expect to learn in this class?
- What is an area related to this class that you are excited to learn about?
- What do you think you already know about this subject or this unit?
- Why do you think the content in this class is important?
- How do you think this subject relates to your own life?
- What have you previously learned that you think may contribute to your understanding of the content in this class?

### Questions Related to Extracurricular Activities

- When you are not at school, how do you spend your time?
- What is a hobby of yours? Why do you enjoy it?
- Do you belong to any clubs? If so, which ones?
- Do you belong to any sports teams? If so, which ones?
- Do you have a part-time job? If so, what is it, and how often do you work?
- What are things that you are responsible for out of school? How do these responsibilities make you feel?

### Questions Related to Personal Background

- List the members of your immediate family and briefly describe each individual.
- Who would you consider your friends?
- How would you describe yourself?

## Providing Opportunities for Students to Talk About Themselves

- How would your friends describe you?
- How would your previous teachers describe you?
- What is your favorite book? Why?
- What is your favorite movie? Why?
- What is your favorite television show? Why?
- What is your favorite sports team? Why?
- If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go? Why?
- If you had the chance to have a conversation with anyone (dead or alive), who would it be and why?
- If you had one wish, how would you use it?
- If you won the lottery, what would you do with the money?
- What is something you think you are good at?
- What is something that you want to get better at?
- What is your favorite type of music or who is your favorite musical artist? Why?
- What is your favorite food?
- Explain a time you felt proud of your accomplishments.
- Explain a time when hard work has paid off.
- Do you consider yourself introverted or extroverted? (Note: a teacher may need to explain the difference between introversion and extroversion to students before including this item on an interest survey.)
- What is something you consider yourself very knowledgeable about?
- What is an interest that you have that is not related to school?