

Volunteer Survey

*Whittier Elementary School
Waukesha, Wisconsin*

To get more parents involved at Whittier Elementary, the school sent out a volunteer survey, asking families what type of activities they might be willing to volunteer for — field trips, health services, classroom projects, school decision making, or special events. The survey also asked what time of the day and year is most convenient for parents to volunteer.

From the information on these surveys, the school was able to compile a database of possible volunteers and their specific talents and availability. A new AmeriCorps VISTA assigned to the school led the project and organized the survey responses into the computer database. She also copied the surveys and distributed them in a number of ways. She gave each teacher the surveys from the families of the children in his or her class, so teachers could draw on the information when they needed someone to volunteer for their class.

Before writing the survey, school volunteers looked at sample surveys and interviewed staff and members of the PTO about the present and future volunteering needs of the school.

As an incentive for families to complete the survey, the AmeriCorps volunteer held a drawing for students who returned their parents' surveys. The first-prize winner and a friend were treated to lunch with the principal, second prize was an extra-large pizza, and third prize was two free meals at a local restaurant.

The information from the volunteer surveys was used in many ways throughout the school year. It helped the PTO find workers

for its events, the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) learned who might like to serve on leadership teams, and the whole school gained ideas for new volunteer projects throughout the school.

The volunteer survey has been an invaluable tool in getting parents more efficiently involved at Whittier.

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