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# **Navigating School-Based Research Recruitment: Post-Pandemic Insights and Strategies for Effective Partnerships**

**Jill J. Locke PhD & Olivia Michael**

# About Us



**Jill Locke, PhD**

Associate Professor



**Olivia Michael**

Research Coordinator

# Our Projects

ASD Prep

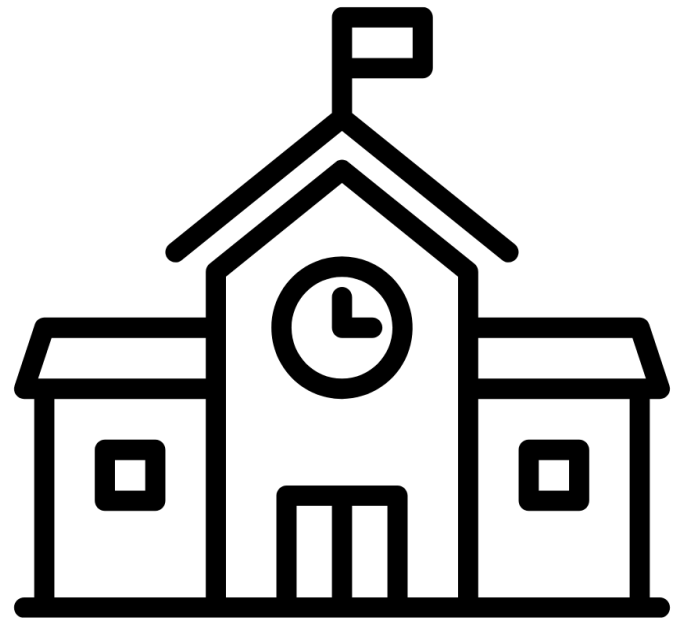


**Autism Intervention Research  
Network On Behavioral Health**

The **RUBI** Autism Network  
Building evidence-based tools for ASD



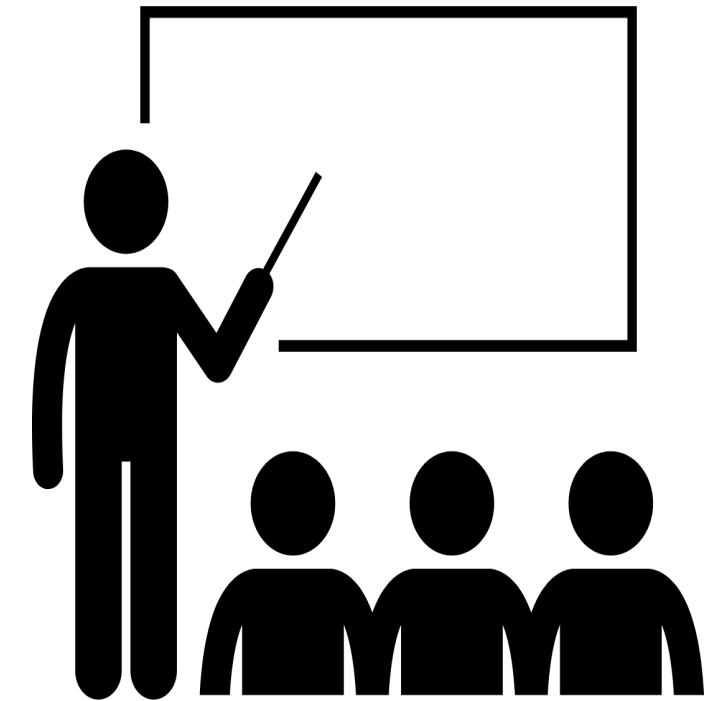
# Who We Recruit



Grades K-12



Washington, California, Oregon,  
Alaska, Canada, and more!



Educators, admin, students, and  
caregivers

# About You



# Where are you recruiting?

17 responses



milwaukee

high school

statewide

middle school  
volunteers

oklahoma

schools

high schoolers

ohio tulsa

alabama

middle schoolers

community-based orgs

## Who is your recruitment target?

8 responses

Volunteers for Florida 4-H

Middle schoolers and their families/guardians

Limited Resource Parents and their children

Elizabethtown Kentucky (Kentucky Area)

Middle schoolers and parents

Historically marginalize Middle School students and families


High school aged students from historically underserved and marginalized communities in Milwaukee

Low income youth

# Objectives

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- ❑ Provide overview of importance of school-based recruitment
- ❑ Discuss actionable strategies for recruitment and engagement
- ❑ Share templates, tools, and examples 

## Agenda

**Background**

**Recruitment**

**Engagement**



**01.**



# School-Based Research

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**There are  
increasing  
calls for  
school-based  
research.**

- Improve educational practices and outcomes
- Translate research into real-world settings
- Foster partnership between professionals
- Close the research to practice gap

[1, 2, 3]





**Recruitment in  
this setting is  
challenging.** [4, 5]

### **School Policies and Pressures**

Research protocols, competing priorities within the district, limited number of contracted hours.

### **Resource Constraints**

Difficulties with teacher retention and turnover, lack of funding, limited time to add new initiatives.

### **Timeline Considerations**

9-month school calendar, IRB approval timelines, state testing, school breaks, IEPs.

# Pivots from the COVID-19 Pandemic

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**Loss of  
instructional  
time**

**Increased  
absenteeism in  
schools**

**Shift to virtual  
recruitment  
methods**

**02.**



# Recruiting Educators

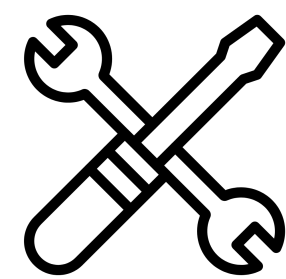
# Recruitment Lists

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**Define your targets:**  
states, grades,  
student/educator  
characteristics





# The Generalizer

The Generalizer

Begin Analysis

Designing educational evaluations  
with a *population perspective*.



Get Started

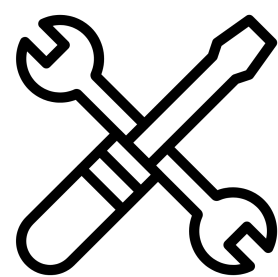
[thegeneralizer.org](https://thegeneralizer.org)

# Define Your Target Schools



CONSIDERATIONS
<input type="checkbox"/> Grades
<input type="checkbox"/> School size
<input type="checkbox"/> Free & reduced lunch classification
<input type="checkbox"/> Urbanicity/rurality
<input type="checkbox"/> Ethnicity/race distributions
<input type="checkbox"/> Student/educator population





# The Generalizer

Select the specific grade levels for your study:

Schools must offer **all** selected grades

Ungraded

Pre-K

Kindergarten

1st

2nd

3rd

4th

5th

6th

7th

8th

9th

10th

11th

12th

## Urbanicity

**Urban Locale**  
16,997 schools

**Suburban Locale**  
21,830 schools

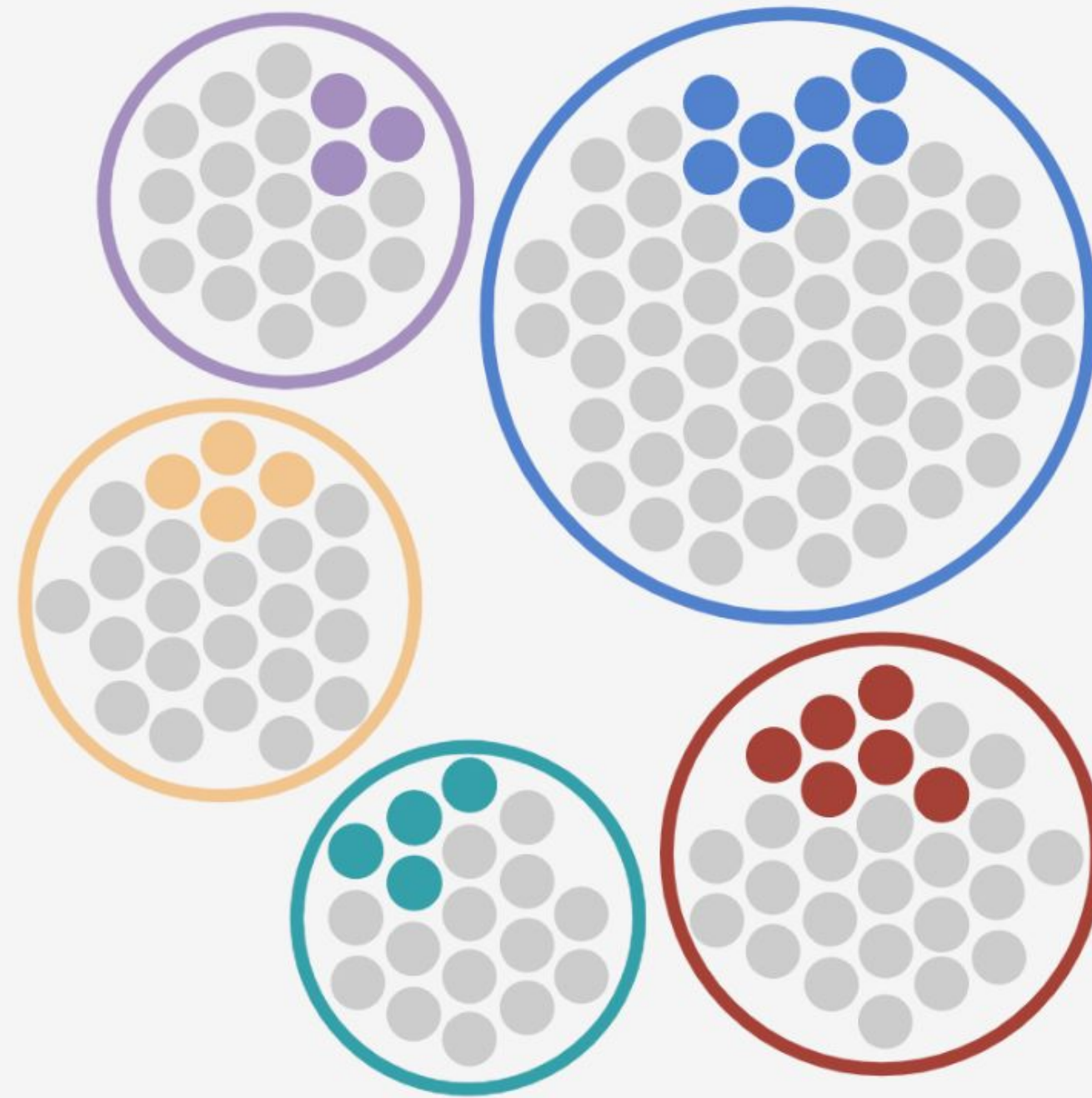
**Town Locale**  
8,073 schools

**Rural Locale**  
17,983 schools

[> More Information: Urbanicity](#) ⓘ

## Developing a recruitment plan for a future evaluation.

For researchers planning a study, The Generalizer creates a stratified recruitment plan based on the features selected. By recruiting some schools from each stratum, the final sample is compositionally similar to the inference population. Ranked lists are then provided with schools and contact information, as well as recruitment goals that can be used to guide the recruitment process.



# Recruitment Lists

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**Define your targets:**  
states, grades,  
student/educator  
characteristics



**Contact information:**  
Gather emails, outline  
recruitment goals, and  
timelines



# Recruitment Lists

State Database



The state office of public instruction/  
departments of education at the state level

School Website



Provide information on specific teachers  
emails, phone numbers, positions

NCES Lists



Provide information on enrollment, teacher  
characteristics, and finances

# Recruitment Lists

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**Define your targets:**  
states, grades,  
student/educator  
characteristics



**Contact information:**  
Gather emails, outline  
recruitment goals and  
timelines



**Strategic Interactions:**  
Craft emails, create  
graphics, disseminate  
internationally



# Craft a “STAR” Email



S

## Short/ Simple

- 75-100 words
- Focus on deliverables (interest form)
- Deadlines
- Simplify language
- Use names, title, etc.



A

## Aesthetic

- Interactive study fliers with animations or GIFs capture attention and reduce cognitive load from reading.
- Emojis and smaller visuals in email subject/ body



T

## Timing

- School holidays and breaks
- Professional development days
- First and last school days
- Standardized testing days
- Parent-teacher conference periods
- IEP deadlines



R

## Reminders

- Three reminders about two weeks with refreshed language
- Use prompts like “Are you interested in participating?”
- Provide opt-out in reminders

# Craft a “STAR” Email



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## R

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- Three reminders with refreshed language
- Use prompts like “Are you interested in participating?”
- Provide opt-out in reminders

Personalize →

Subject: UW Autism Research Invite 🍎

← Emojis

Dear [NAME],  
I hope you are well! I am writing from the University of Washington to invite you to participate in a study that aims to understand what evidence-based practices are used with autistic students who are partially or fully included in a general education setting.

**K-5 general educators, special educators, and paraeducators who work with an autistic student are welcome to participate in our study.** To be eligible, the autistic student that educators work with must spend 15 minutes or more a day in a general education classroom. Participants will receive a **\$60 gift card** for completing our online survey (~45-60 minutes), which examines the factors that predict evidence-based practice use. Some participants will be invited to a follow-up interview (~30-45 minutes) and will receive an **extra \$40 gift card**. You can learn more in our [study flyer](#).

← Requirements

← Incentive

All data collection for the study is virtual. We will not be entering schools in the 2023-2024 school year. I am attaching our [UW IRB approval](#).

Action item →

If you are eligible, please complete this [interest form](#).

Thank you very much for your consideration and support. Please let me know if you have any questions!

Best wishes,  
Jill

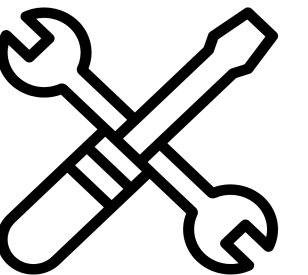


**Jill Locke, PhD**  
Associate Professor, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences  
University of Washington (UW)  
Co-Director, UW School Mental Health, Assessment, Research,  
and Training (SMART) Center  
E: [jlocke@uw.edu](mailto:jlocke@uw.edu) P: 206.616.6703 Pronouns: She, Her, Hers  
Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences / UW School of Medicine  
6200 NE 74<sup>th</sup>, Suite 110 Box 354920, Seattle, WA 98115-6560  
Named one of the "25 most prominent autism researchers in the world" by  
[Autism Parenting Magazine](#)



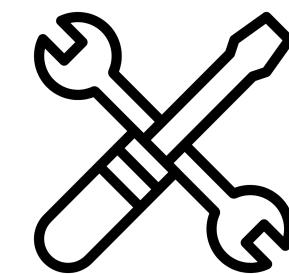
Opt out →

If you would no longer like to get emails about the study you can opt out of future emails [here](#).

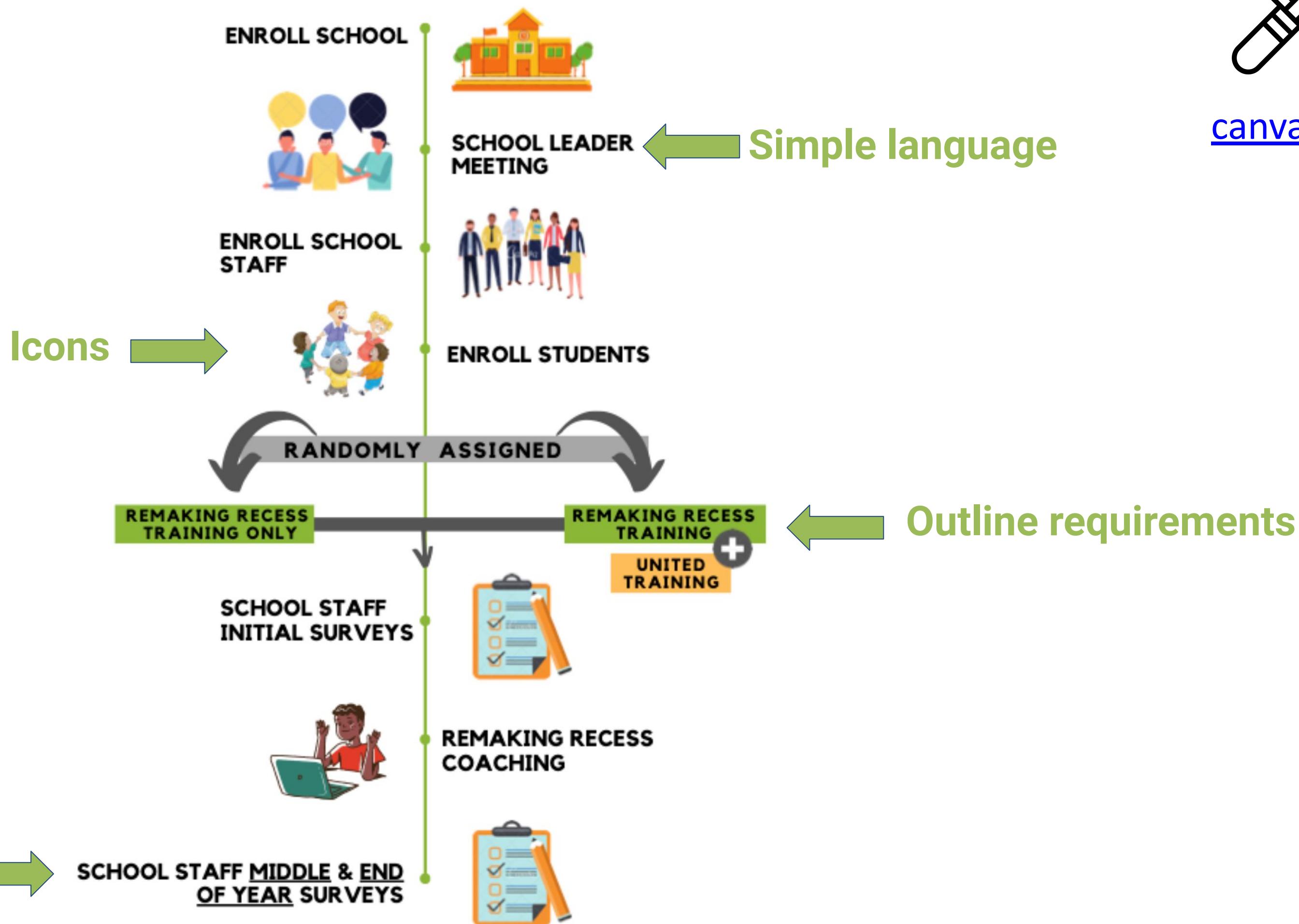


[qualtrics.com](https://qualtrics.com)

# STUDY OVERVIEW



[canva.com](https://www.canva.com)



**Icons** →

← **Simple language**

← **Outline requirements**

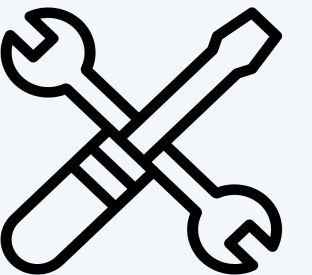
**Underline** →



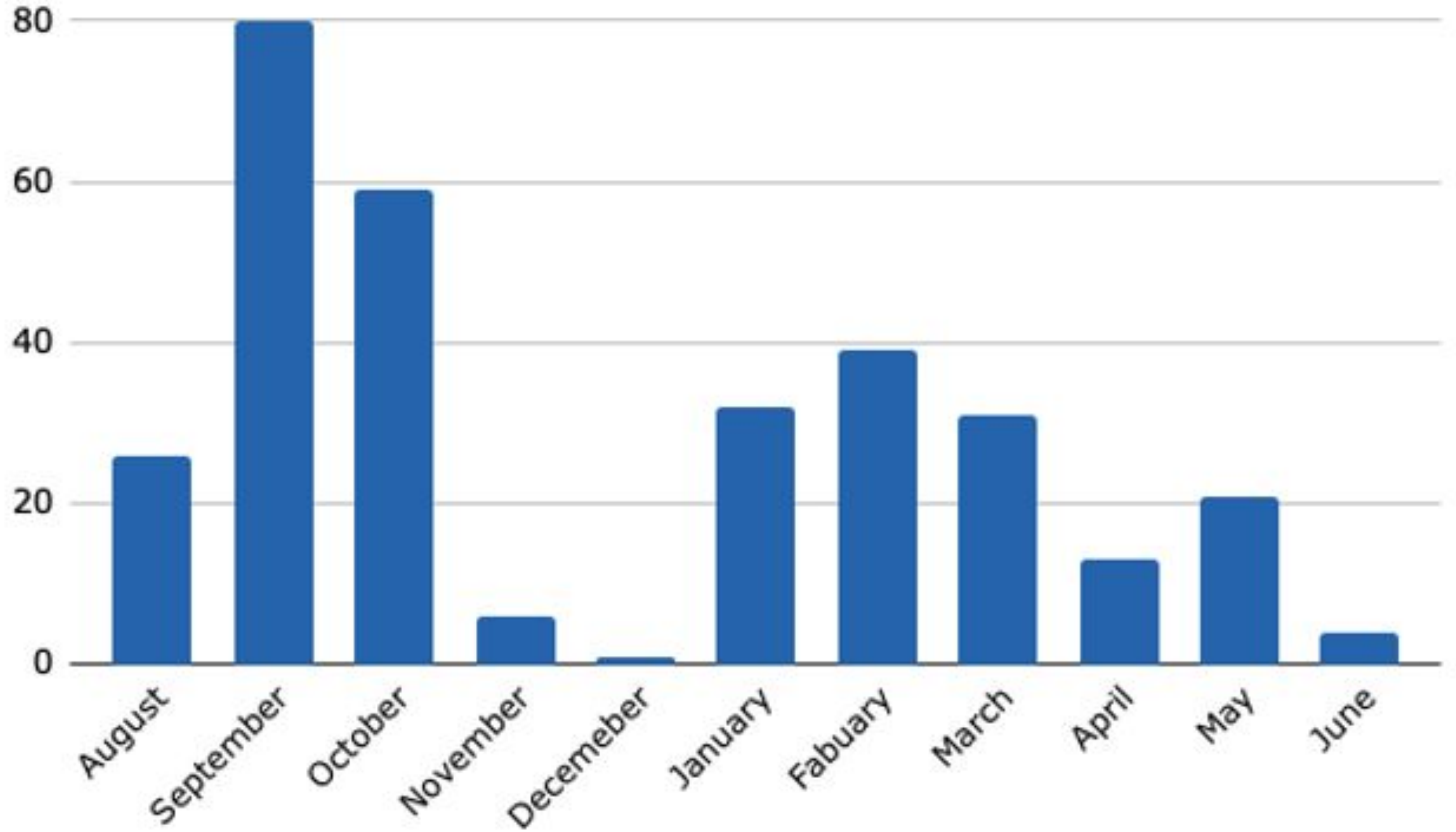
# Interest Forms

Connection between participants and researchers

- Convenient way for participants to express interest in a study
- Efficiently identify eligible candidates
- Flyers, posters, emails, and social media posts

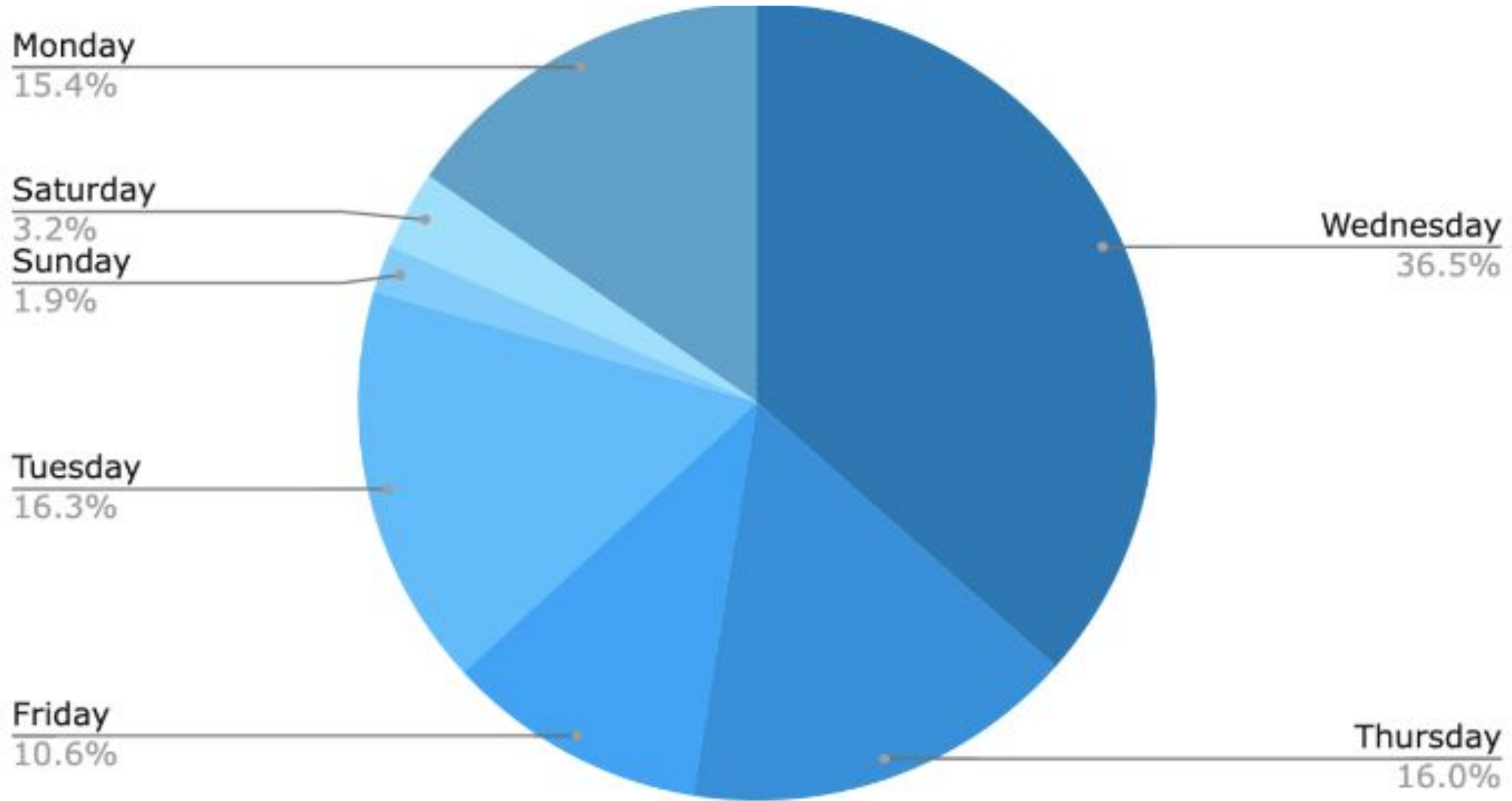


Responses



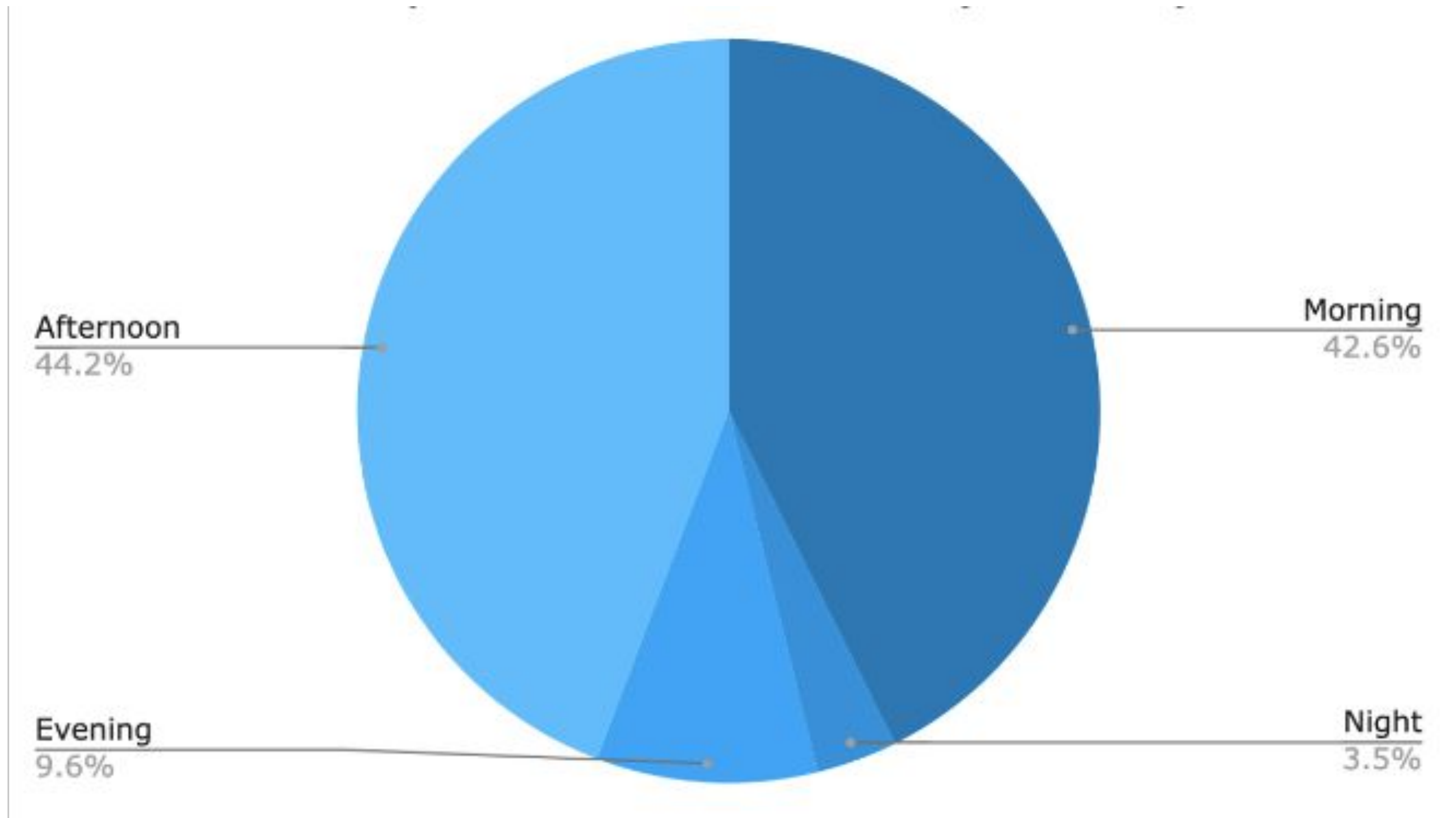
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# School Calendar



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**High Response Days**



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# High Response Times



03.



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# Recruiting Parents/Students



# PeachJar



- **Provides a platform for researchers**
  - Facilitate better parent engagement
  - Potential to reach a wider audience

**Reporting on:**

- Deliveries
- Impressions
- Views
- Actions



17.5K+  
Schools



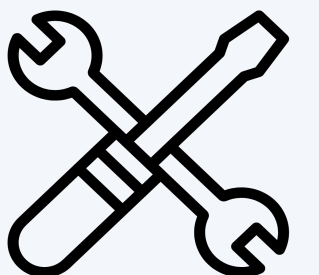
900+  
School Districts



40K+  
Organizations



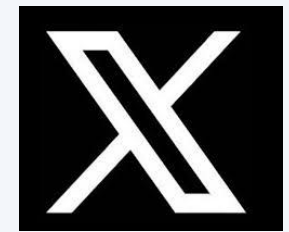
12M+  
Parents



[peachjar.com](https://peachjar.com)

# Social Media

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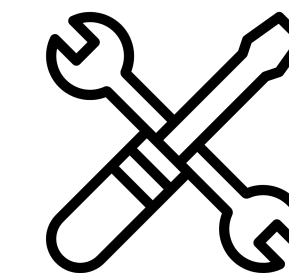
## Reaching out for a posting about your study:

- Clear Introduction
- Project Overview
- Call to Action
- Providing Materials

# ASD Prep



Preparing Teachers and Paraeducators for the Successful Inclusion of Autistic Children



[canva.com](https://www.canva.com)

Simple terms →



**You are invited** to take part in a project being conducted by the University of Washington's School Mental Health Assessment, Research, & Training Center (SMART Center).

The purpose of the ASD PREP study is to identify which evidence-based practices (EBPs) and strategies teachers and paraeducators use to more meaningfully include and retain autistic children in general education settings.

Confidentiality →

## What will this study look like at my child's school?

- ✔ **What will be asked of my child's educator?**  
Your child's educator(s) will complete an online survey about your child's social functioning and behavior in school.
- ✔ **What can I expect from my child's participation in this study?**  
There will be no direct involvement or interaction with your child during the completion of this survey. We will not enter schools. We will not collect data on your child without your permission.
- ✔ **What will be asked of me as a parent/caregiver?**  
We ask that you fill out a brief interest form, which will take 5 minutes to complete. We also will ask you to complete a consent form and a demographic form. These should take about 5 minutes to complete. If you are interested in our study, we will approach your child's school to participate. There is no compensation or fee to participate in this study.

← Incentives

## What are the overall benefits of participation?



**Contribute to a larger body of knowledge** related to improving services and supports for autistic students in inclusive school settings.



**Enhance our overall understanding** of how to successfully implement evidence-based practices.

← Visuals

Bold important elements →

**If you're interested, please let us know!**

**You can scan for the parent interest form here**  
**Click this link, OR contact us at [asdprep@uw.edu](mailto:asdprep@uw.edu)**

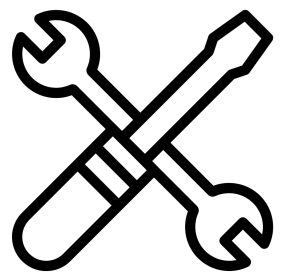


← QR code

# ASD Prep



Preparando maestros y asistentes de maestros en la inclusión exitosa de niños autistas



[canva.com](https://canva.com)



**Usted está invitado** a participar en un proyecto del centro de evaluación, investigación, y entrenamiento de la salud mental en las escuelas (SMART Center) de la universidad de Washington.

El propósito de la investigación ASD PREP es identificar las practicas basadas en evidencia que utilizan los maestros en la inclusión de niños autistas en contextos de educación general. .

## ¿Cómo funcionará esta investigación en la escuela de mi hijo(a)?



### ¿Qué le van a pedir a los maestros de mi hijo(a)?

Los maestros de su hijo(a) llenarán un cuestionario en internet sobre el funcionamiento social y el comportamiento de su hijo(a) en la escuela.



### ¿Qué puedo esperar de la participación de mi hijo(a) en esta investigación?

Su hijo no va a participar directamente en el cuestionario ó en esta investigación. Nosotros no entraremos en las escuelas tampoco. Nosotros no recopilaremos datos sobre su hijo sin su permiso.



### ¿Qué le van a pedir a los padres?

Pediremos a los padres a llenen un formulario corto (approx. 5 minutos). También pediremos a los padres que llenen otro formulario de consentimiento y demográficos (approx. 5 minutos). Si usted está interesado en nuestra investigación, nosotros contactaremos a la escuela de su hijo(a). No hay compensación ni costo asociados con la participación de su hijo(a) en esta investigación.

## Cuáles son los beneficios de participar?



### Contribuir al desarrollo de conocimientos

sobre el progreso de servicios y apoyos para los alumnos autistas en ámbitos de inclusion escolar.



### Mejorar el entendimiento general

de cómo implementar practicas basadas en evidencia con éxito.

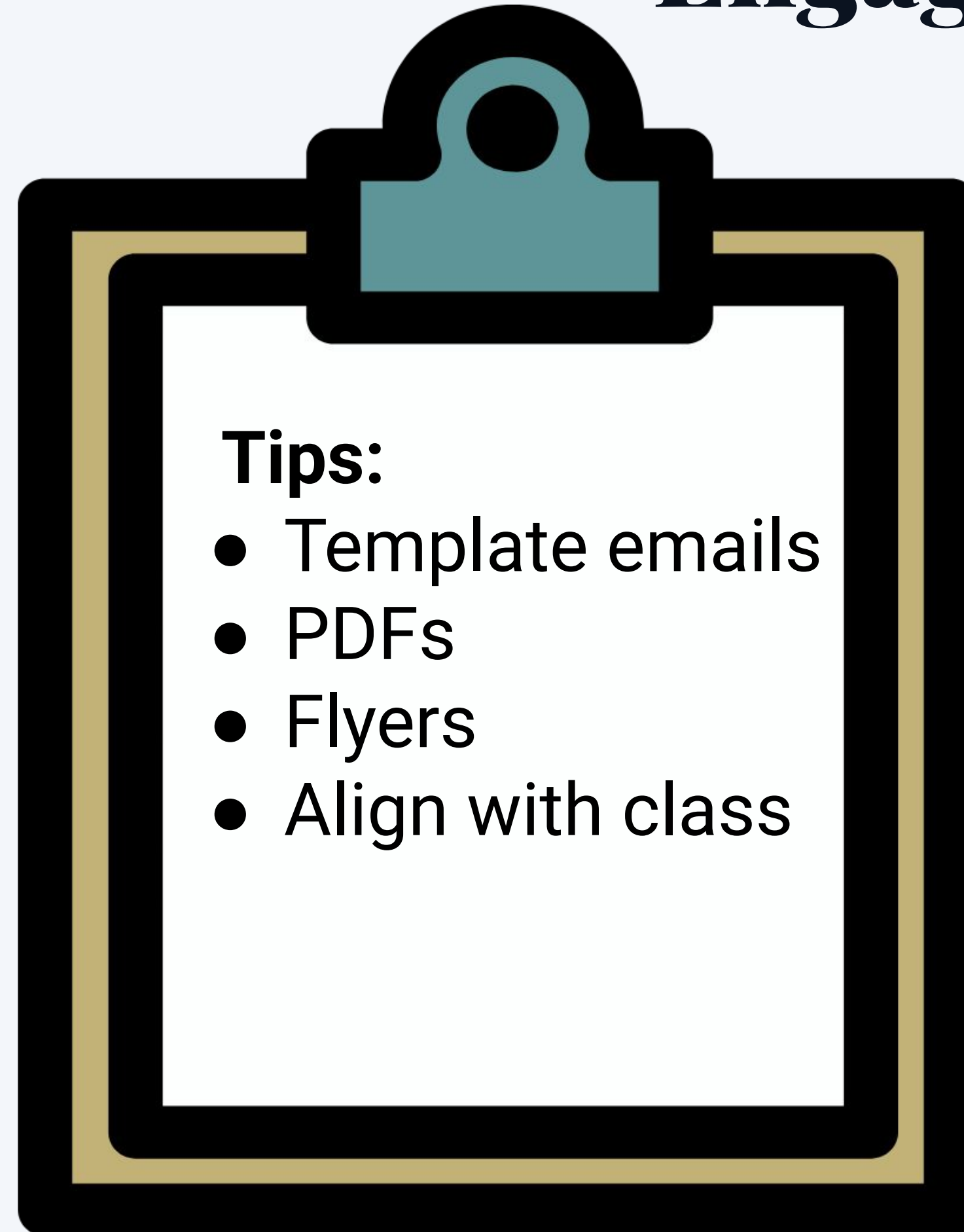
**¡Si usted está interesado, por favor díganos!**

**Usted puede escanear el formulario para los padres interesadas aquí:**  
**Haga click en [este enlace](#), o contáctenos en [asdprep@uw.edu](mailto:asdprep@uw.edu)**





# Engaging Educators





# Student Considerations

## Recruitment

- Consent forms
- Concise and not overly distracting
- Visuals and text-to-speech features
- Incentive details

## Participation

- Provide materials beforehand
- Detailed agenda
- Live captioning and chat
- Breaks

04.

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# Engagement Strategies



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Align  
research  
with the  
goals of the  
district.



- Communicate the study's objectives and requirements
- Integrate the study into existing practices
- Understanding how the study fits with the district goals
- Offering flexible data collection timing



# Consider Alignment with Schools

## Questions to consider (from IES):

- To what extent does the topic **resonate** as a need?
- To what extent does the topic meet a **student need**?
- What **challenges** has this school faced in meeting this need?
- What **excites or concerns** you about a study focused on this topic?
- What do you think is **important for researchers to know** if we embark on a study focused on this topic?

# Recruitment Advisory Board

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## Advisory Board Questions:

- ❑ What things should we consider when recruiting educators, students, etc. for our study?
- ❑ How can we more effectively engage diverse students in the study?
- ❑ What should we emphasize in our recruitment materials and study details?



**Diversity in age, identity,  
jobs, roles, etc.**

# Communication

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**Start of the study**



Asking what the participants prefer for communication

**Throughout the study**

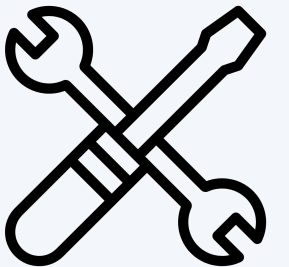


Creating a collaborative and communicative environment

**After the study**



Checking in with participants, sending study updates, gratitude



# Growing Relationships

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**Gratitude** on significant holidays, study milestones, and school calendar events

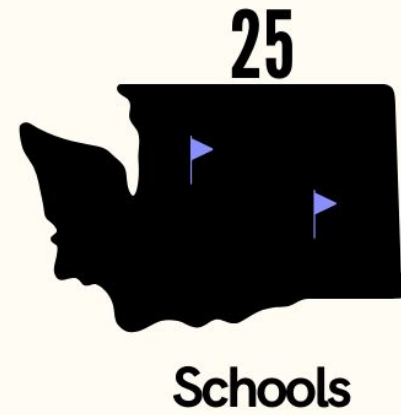
**Study progress** and a breakdown of the outcomes that are familiar to educators

**Acknowledge** the efforts of the schools and educators who participated in papers, presentations, and social media posts

[INTERVENTION] STUDY REPORT

Study/Intervention Name

Schools/Students



Educator Outcomes



[UNIVERSITY LOGO]  
[CONTACT INFORMATION]

Open Door



[INSERT UNIVERSITY LOGO HERE]

← Logo

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP!

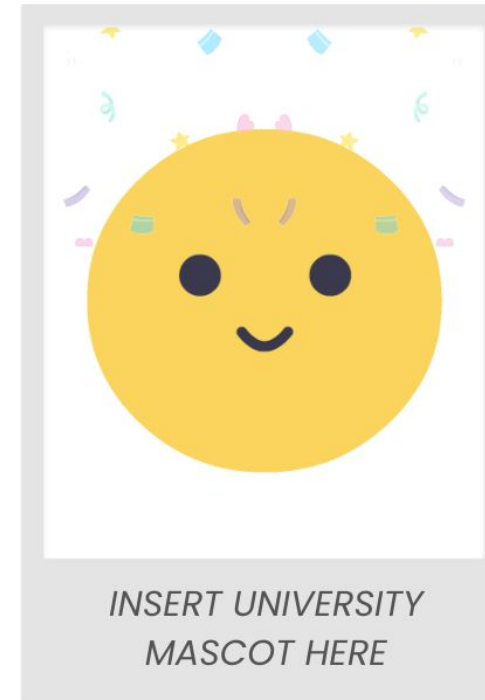


*Sample Message:*

Letter/Graphic →



It has been an absolute honor and privilege to have been able to work with you this school year. Your partnership has been such a humbling, rich learning experience for everyone on our team.



Thank you for all the dedication and kindness that you bring to this field, and for doing what we can only imagine to be so much when you are often working with so little.

← Gratitude

Open Door →



We hope the end of the school year goes smoothly for you, and please remember we are always just an email away! Please let us know at any point how we can be of support to you!

-The [Institution] Research Team

# Thank you for your time!





# Questions?

[omicha@uw.edu](mailto:omicha@uw.edu)

[jjlocke@uw.edu](mailto:jjlocke@uw.edu)



# References

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