
ESSA FEEDBACK SURVEY RESULTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Feedback Survey studied feedback from education stakeholders on topics such as academic measurement, state assessment system, support from Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), and how to use federal funds in initiatives. The analysis resulted in the following findings:

- The majority of educators prefer benchmark assessments and college and career readiness assessments, which provide more accurate and valid assessment for prompt improvement of student performance.
- Measuring growth of individual students from year to year and providing feedback to teachers and school leaders for professional development are considered the main goals of state assessment system.
- Graduation rate, opportunities for advanced coursework, and school culture are weighed as the three most important indicators for determining the academic success and college/career readiness of students.
- To support low-performing schools, stakeholders requested that OSDE provide professional development, financial support, and evidence-based instructional resources. To improve low-performing school, most educators indicated that effective leaders, student, family and community support, as well as school culture are critical factors.
- The majority of participants show positive support for current role of OSDE in development of a local intervention plan and suggest continual partnership with ongoing support.
- Efforts to retain effective teachers and leaders are regarded as the most important initiatives to use Federal Title II, Part A funds.
- Most educators agree that a strategy to align assessment, accountability and teacher quality with state academic standards so that the four elements work together toward interim goals is meaningful.

BACKGROUND/OVERVIEW

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law by President Obama in December of 2015, reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and replaces the controversial No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

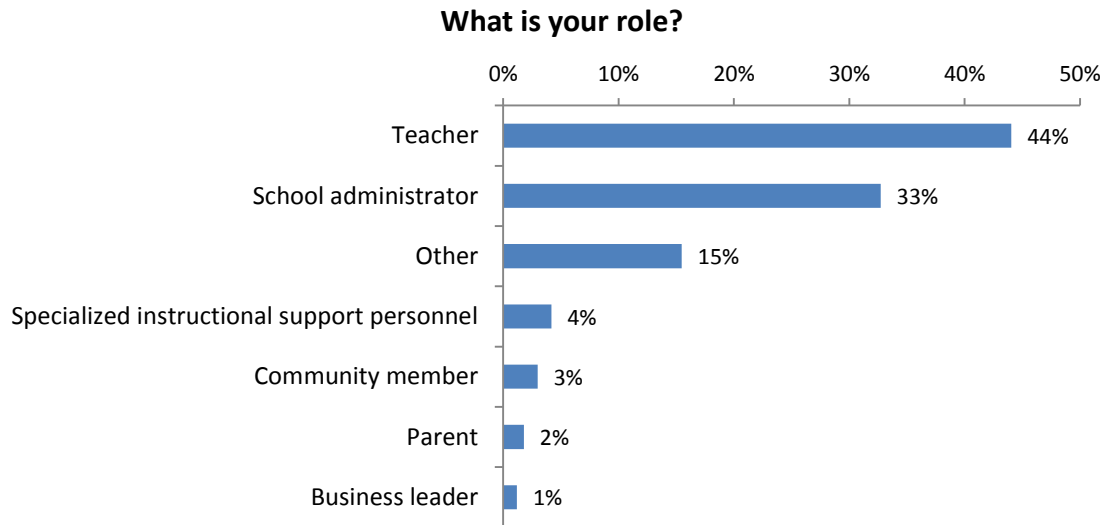
The ESSA restores greater flexibility about federal education policy to states and districts while ensuring accountability for the success of all children. In addition, the ESSA enhances the ability of the Oklahoma State Department of Education to collaborate with education's many stakeholders – including parents, educators and community members – on an ESSA state plan improving results for kids. The EngageOK Summer conference served as a venue to seek such stakeholder feedback to inform the agency on the best use of federal funds. Poll Everywhere was utilized as a tool to collect data and to engage the live audience.

RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHICS

In this survey the State Department of Education (OSDE) collected responses from at least 278 participants during one-hour sessions facilitated by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Joy Hofmeister. Some participants provided multiple responses as applicable on certain questions, and some questions required multiple selections. For this reason, the actual number of responses varies by question and results do not always add up to 100%.

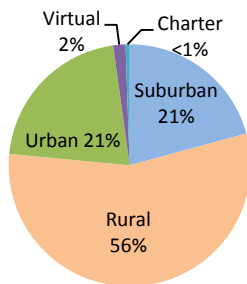
Education stakeholders from several different roles responded to the survey. The majority of responses resulted from teachers (44%), school administrators (33%), and others (15%). A small portion of participants (6%) represented community members, parents or business leaders. The variety of roles represented in this survey means the survey reflects the views of a wide variety of stakeholders rather than a single group, such as superintendents.



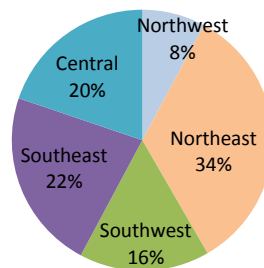
1. COMMUNITY TYPES AND REGION

This survey showed broad diversity of community and school stakeholders. It included 56% of responses from rural areas, 21% from urban, 21% from suburban, and 2% from virtual schools. As for regional distribution, all five regions (Northwest, Northeast, Central, Southeast and Southwest) participation percentages ranged from 8% to 34%.

Community/School Type



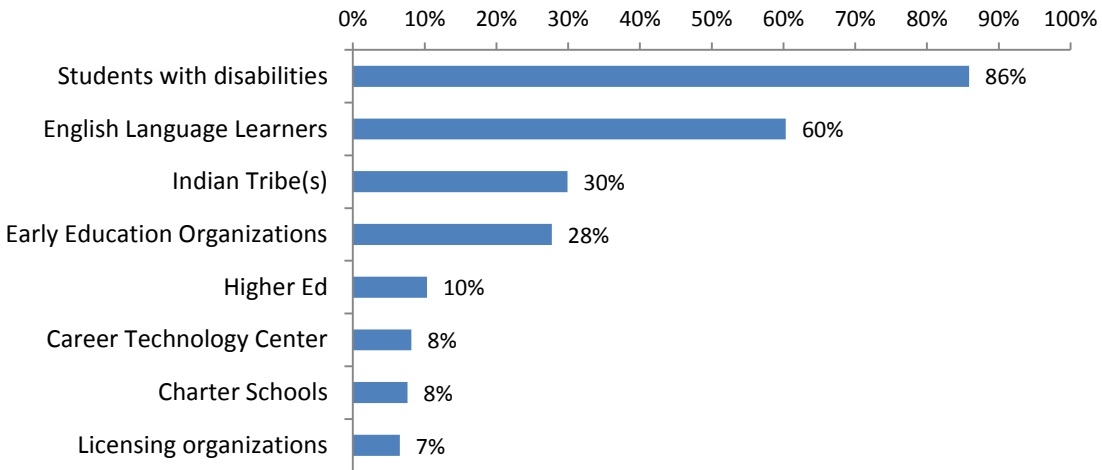
Region



2. GROUPS

Among all 435 responses from 184 respondents, the four main groups they represented were students with disabilities (86%), English language learners (60%), Indian tribes (30%) and early education organizations (28%).

What group(s) do you represent? (Select all that apply)

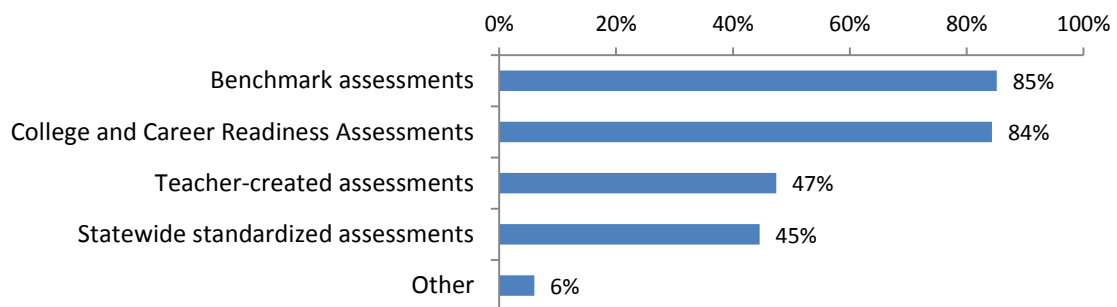


ESSA FEEDBACK

1. ACADEMIC MEASUREMENT

Responses to the measurement of student progress showed that a majority of respondents favor benchmark assessments (85%) and college and career readiness assessment (84%), while approximately half of respondents support teacher-created assessments (47%) and statewide standardized assessments (45%). It indicates that our educators prefer to have more timely and frequent feedback so that more accurate and valid assessment of student performance will be available for improvement. After recent changes in the Oklahoma state testing requirements from a total of 26 tests in 2015-2016 to 18 tests in 2016-2017 for grades 3 and up, teachers will be able to focus more on curriculum, instruction and other assessments.

How should we measure student progress toward meeting state academic standards? (Select all that apply.)

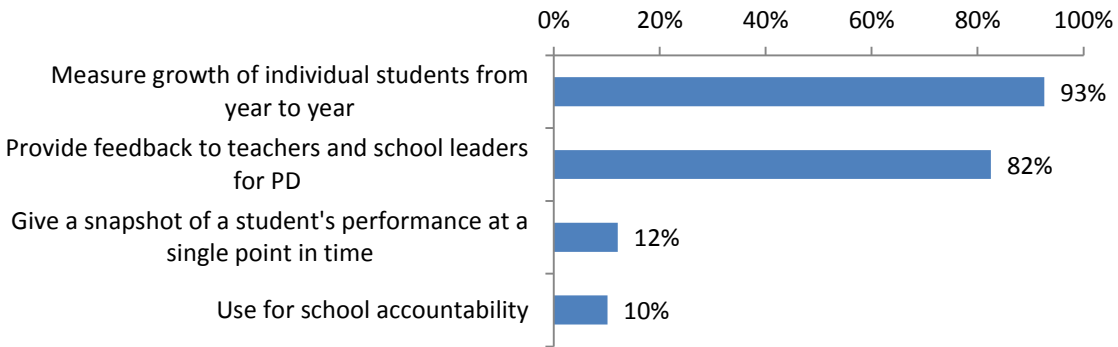


2. GOAL OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

When asked to select the two most important goals of a state assessment system, most participants highly valued the measurement of growth of individual students from year to year (93%) and providing feedback to teachers and school leaders for professional development (82%). These two goals echo with previous responses of favoring benchmark assessments, as they measure growth of individual students more often. The survey does not seem to

favor giving a snapshot of a student’s performance at a single point in time or using school accountability as a main goal of a state assessment system.

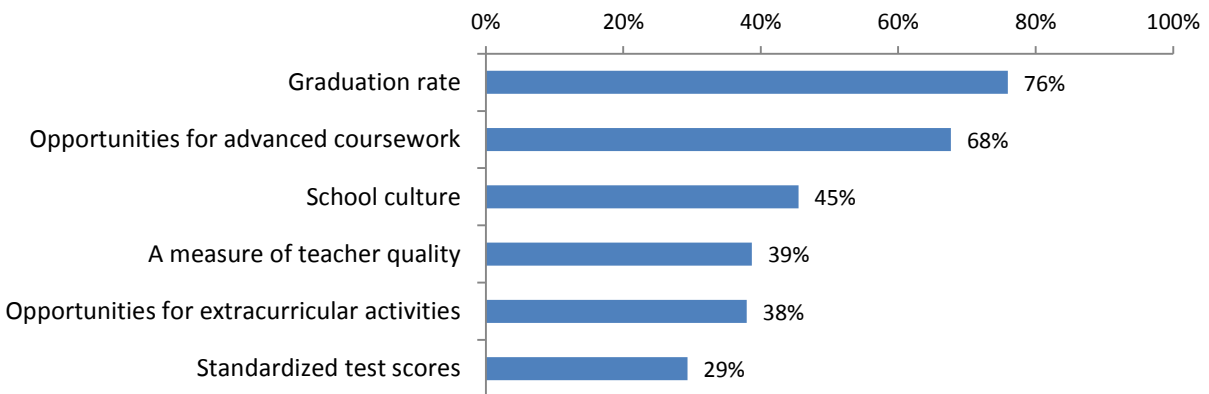
From these goals of a state assessment system, select the two most important goals.



3. INDICATORS FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND COLLEGE/CAREER READINESS

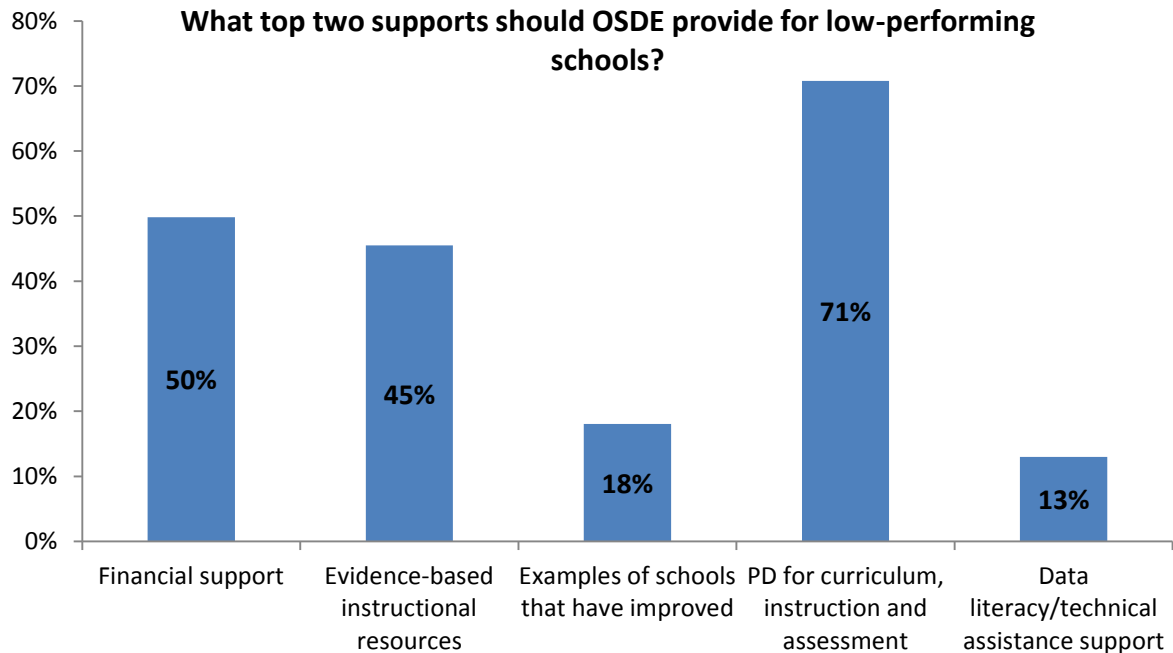
To determine the academic success and college/career readiness of students in our community, the indicators selected by survey respondents are considerably varied. The top three indicators selected by a majority of respondents are graduation rate (76%), opportunities for advanced coursework (68%), and school culture (45%). While the first two indicators are measurable and included the A-F report card grading system for accountability, the third most important indicator, school culture, is not easy to measure. In addition, only one-third of respondents report that standardized test scores are an important indicator, yet these scores are a major component of A-F report system. It could be that test scores are more likely taken as measures of student learning, not of student success.

What are the three most important indicators for determining the academic success and college/career readiness of students in your community?



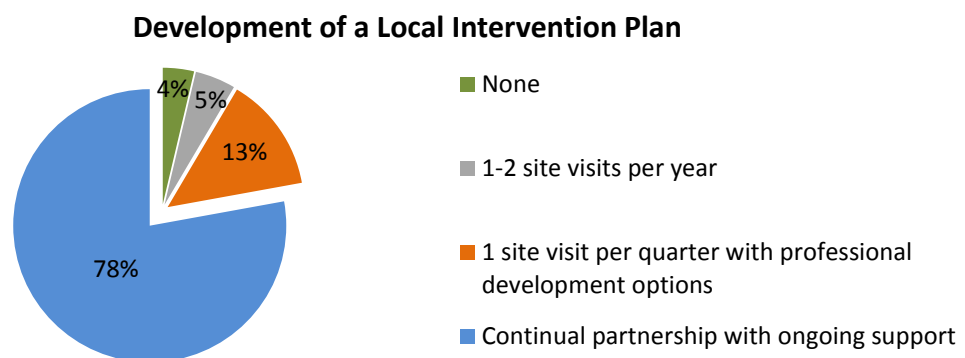
4. SUPPORT FROM OSDE FOR LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

To understand what support our communities need most from OSDE for low-performing schools, participants were asked to select top two areas among the five options. The result suggests that professional development for curriculum, instruction and assessment (71%), financial support (50%) and evidence-based instructional resources (45%) are the three most requested areas that OSDE can provide to improve school performance.



5. ROLE OF OSDE IN DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCAL INTERVENTION PLAN

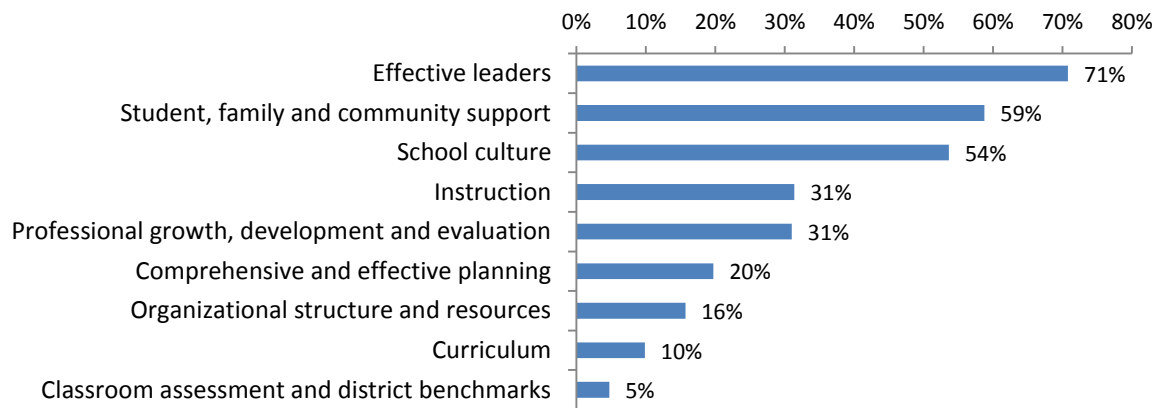
Analysis of responses as to the role of OSDE in the development of a local intervention plan indicates that continual partnership with ongoing support is mostly expected (78%). Clearly, it's a very strong and positive indication of educators' support for the previous work of OSDE. Other roles that are expected for OSDE include one site visit per quarter with professional development options (13%) and/or one to two site visits per year (5%).



6. CRITICAL FACTORS TO IMPROVING LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

To further identify areas OSDE can help in improving low-performing schools, survey respondents reported the top three critical factors to improving school performance are effective leaders (71%), student, family and community support (59%) and school culture (54%). This analysis can be related with the Equitable Access to Excellent Educators Plan (EAEE) as in this plan, professional development provided for principals and teachers was identified as a key approach to increasing access to qualified and effective teachers. Strong and effective leaders will also play a vital role in developing a diverse and inclusive community, as well as in nurturing effective school culture and working conditions.

Which of the following do you believe is most critical to improving a low-performing school? (Choose 3)



7. RANK OF IMPORTANCE FOR INITIATIVES TO USE FEDERAL TITLE II, PART A FUNDS

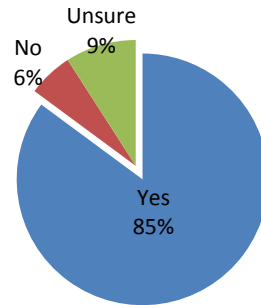
In order to obtain feedback on usage of Federal Title II, Part A funds, respondents were asked to rank the top three most important initiatives. The results show that focusing efforts to retain effective teachers and leaders is extremely high (87%). The other several initiatives getting relatively high percentages are better implementation of induction and mentoring programs for new educators (58%), efforts to attract effective teachers and leaders (40%), and assisting districts in developing differential pay and other incentives to recruit and retain educators in high need areas (40%).

Federal Title II, Part A funds can be used at the state level for a variety of purposes. Select three of the most important initiatives.	
Efforts to retain effective teachers and leaders	87%
Better implement induction and mentoring programs for new educators	58%
Efforts to attract effective teachers and leaders	40%
Assist districts in developing differential pay and other incentives to recruit & retain educators in high need areas	40%
Develop and assist districts with teacher-leader career ladder opportunities	38%
Refine teacher and leader evaluation system	10%
Revise and innovate certification system	7%

8. EVALUATION OF CURRENT STRATEGY

OSDE’s current strategy is to align assessment, accountability and teacher quality with state academic standards so the four elements work together toward interim goals. In the survey, when asked whether this strategy is meaningful, 85% of participants responded with “Yes”, and only 6% responded with “No”. This shows very strong support of this strategy from education stakeholders. Although in question 3 when asked about most important indicators for determining the academic success and college/career readiness of students, over half of respondents did not list teacher quality and state academic standards among the top three most important indicators, the responses to this questions showed that educators preferred to align these four elements, but they might not find current measures of these four elements as meaningful as they could be. As such, future reforms of these elements to make it more meaningful and effective are necessary.

Do you believe a strategy to align assessment, accountability and teacher quality with state academic standards so the four elements work together toward interim goals is meaningful?



9. PARTICIPATION OF ACTIVITIES IN PROMOTING A BETTER ENVIRONMENT FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS

The survey proposed a series of activities to involve OSDE, school districts and community-based organizations in supporting a learning environment to better prepare diverse learners (i.e. English Learners, children with disabilities, migrant children, American Indian and homeless children) for college and careers. Survey respondents were encouraged to select any activities in which they would participate. All five activities received very high potential participation rate, and 97% people said they would like to have digital communication allowing parents to interact with teachers and/or other parents. The other four activities received similar percentage ranges from 59% to 71%.

Gauge your interest or willingness to participate in one of these ways (select all that apply)	
Digital communication allowing parents to interact with teachers and/or other parents	97%
Allow parents to serve on decision-making committees	71%
Host/attend family fun nights	69%
Offer parents the opportunity to have input in their children's college/career pathway	66%
Use child- and/or parent-led parent/teacher conferences	59%

CONCLUSIONS

This study describes feedback on three major aspects of ESSA: academic assessments, state intervention and support system, and the use of federal funds.

For academic assessments, education stakeholders prefer to have a state assessment system that can provide more frequent and valid feedback to effectively improve education outcomes. Therefore, it is necessary to continue to make reforms to state testing to make it more meaningful and useful to educators. These efforts can

include steps such as the vertical alignment of tests so that they are more accurate measures of year-over-year growth and shifting from end-of-year tests to more formative assessments.

For local intervention and support from OSDE, this study found that the role of OSDE in continual partnership with ongoing support is highly endorsed. This study also identified three areas that demand most of OSDE support for low-performing schools: professional development, financial support and instructional resources. In addition, the top three most critical factors to improve a low-performing school are effective leaders, community support and school culture. All of these tie to the important role of OSDE in providing professional development for both effective leadership and effective teaching. An effective leadership can impact the community, provide positive school culture and encourage professional development for teachers to increase teaching effectiveness.

Moreover, efforts to retain effective teachers and leaders were ranked as the most significant priority in the use of federal funds. Providing more financial support to retain effective teachers and leaders will mitigate the problem of teacher shortages in Oklahoma. More research in finding the driving factors of losing effective teachers and leaders, as well as solutions to improve recruitment and retention, will be needed.