

Delaware Performance Appraisal System Second Edition (DPAS-II)

An Evaluation Report

Prepared for the **Delaware Department of Education**

by **Research for Action** • September 2017

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I. Introduction

Since 2007, the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) has engaged independent organizations to evaluate Delaware's educator appraisal process. One key component of that process is a statewide survey to teachers, specialists, and administrators that gathers data on the perceptions of educators. Research for Action (RFA) has served as the external evaluator for DDOE since 2015. During the 2014-15 and 2016-17 school years, RFA administered a statewide survey of educators to document their views of Delaware's performance assessment process.

This report presents results from the 2016-17 statewide survey. This report describes perceptions of teachers, specialists, and administrators of the Delaware Performance Appraisal System, or DPAS-II, Delaware's statewide educator evaluation system.

The report is structured around the three primary evaluation goals defined by the Delaware Department of Education¹ and summarizes the extent to which educators believe the evaluation system in Delaware is meeting those goals.

- **Evaluation Goal 1:** Foster professional growth by providing educators with actionable feedback and opportunities to improve and refine their teaching and support their students' growth;
- **Evaluation Goal 2:** Ensure that there are quality educators in every school building and classroom;
- **Evaluation Goal 3:** Continue to help students grow and succeed through targeted interventions and individualized educator professional development opportunities.

In addition, this report examines the overarching perceptions of educators on the purpose, fairness, and utility of the evaluation system.

Evaluation Systems in Delaware

Delaware was an early adopter of educator evaluation systems. In 1987, the state began to implement the Delaware Performance Appraisal System (DPAS). In 2000, the system was revised under Senate Bill 260, a state law requiring the development of a statewide educator evaluation system. Under the 2000 revisions, DPAS-II was adopted across Delaware's school districts. DPAS-II is based on Charlotte Danielson's book, *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*, and aligns the Delaware Framework for Teaching and the Delaware Professional Teaching Standards to outline the essential criteria and elements

¹ Delaware Department of Education, "Educator Evaluation Home Page", <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/domain/186>

of practice across four core components.² In 2010, when the state passed Senate Bill 263, Delaware added a fifth component. The Student Improvement Component added specific measures of student growth and achievement to educators' evaluations.³

Table 1 details the five components of the current DPAS-II system for teachers, specialists, and administrators. As outlined in Delaware's DPAS-II Guide, the five components of DPAS-II identify the five key areas of educator practice and responsibility.

Table 1. DPAS-II components for teachers, specialists, and administrators

	TEACHERS	SPECIALISTS	ADMINISTRATORS
COMPONENT I	Planning and Preparation	Planning and Preparation	Vision and Goals
COMPONENT II	Classroom Environment	Professional Practice and Delivery of Service	Teaching and Learning
COMPONENT III	Instruction	Professional Consultation and Collaboration	People, Systems, and Operations
COMPONENT IV	Professional Responsibilities	Professional Responsibilities	Professional Responsibilities
COMPONENT V	Student Improvement	Student Improvement	Student Improvement

Source: Delaware Department of Education, DPAS-II Guide (Revised) for Teachers, DPAS II Guide (Revised) for Specialists, and DPAS-II Guide for Administrators (Assistant Principals, Principals, and District Administrator).

More recently, DDOE began accepting applications from Local Education Agencies (LEAs) interested in developing alternative evaluation models. Beginning in the 2013-14 school year, DDOE approved the alternative evaluation models of four schools, all of which were charter schools. By the 2016-17 school year, two traditional districts and 11 charter schools had received approval to implement alternative evaluation systems tailored to their particular context. Further information on alternative evaluation systems and the perceptions of educators on these systems are included in Appendix A.

II. Overview of the Report: Perceptions and Practice

Broadly speaking, the primary goal of educator evaluation systems is twofold: to improve instruction and to increase student learning.⁴ To ensure evaluation systems are meeting their goals, it is important to examine whether educators value and understand the system as well as the extent to which educators believe the system affects their practice.⁵

This report explores how educators view the purpose of DPAS-II. In addition, the report shows how educators perceive their system as meeting the goals of evaluations, as defined by the Delaware Department of Education. Finally, the report provides the Delaware Department of Education with key recommendations for continued improvement of Delaware's evaluation system, professional growth, and, ultimately, student achievement gains.

² Delaware ESEA Flexibility Request, <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/deamendrequest2.pdf> (Revised July 21, 2014).

³ The Student Improvement Component measures depend on the educator group, but include Measure A and B assessments, as well as Measure C growth goals.

⁴ Little, Goe, & Bell, *A Practical Guide to Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness*, National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED543776.pdf> (April 2009).

⁵ Goe, Holdheide, Miller, *A practical guide to designing comprehensive teacher evaluation systems: A tool to assist in the development of teacher evaluation systems*. Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality; 2011.

Data and Methodology

The Research for Action study team developed an online survey for administration in the spring of 2017. The instrument surveyed two distinct groups: (1) educators evaluated under DPAS-II during the 2016-17 school year and (2) educators evaluated under alternative evaluation systems during the 2016-17 school year. All Delaware administrators were included in the first group, as all administrators are evaluated under DPAS-II. The instrument included questions for all educators as well as a series of questions only for evaluators. The Delaware Department of Education contributed to the development and review of the final survey instrument.

Between April 6, 2017, and May 1, 2017, Research for Action administered an online survey to 11,830 teachers, specialists, and administrators in Delaware. Educators received an initial invitation email and six reminder emails. Total respondents include 4,180 completed surveys and 519 partially completed surveys (Table 2).

Table 2. 2016-2017 Survey sample and response rate

	TOTAL
Total sample	11,830
Invalid email address	- 103
Total partial completes	519
Total full completions	4,180
Total respondents	4,699
Response rate (includes partials) ⁶	40%

Source: Data from 2016-2017 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action.

In the survey's opening questions, educators were asked to self-identify their role as teacher, specialist, or administrator. Then, depending on their school or district, educators were routed to questions regarding DPAS-II or their alternative evaluation system. Among survey respondents, 85% were evaluated under DPAS-II and 15% were evaluated under alternative systems (Table 3). Across both evaluation systems, 76% of the respondents were teachers and 18% were specialists. Administrators were 7% of the respondents for DPAS-II (Table 4).

Table 3. Number and percentage of survey respondents, by evaluation system

	DPAS-II	AES
Total number of educators	3,989	710
Percent of educators	85%	15%

Source: Data from 2016-2017 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action.

⁶ Counts partial interviews as respondents; $(I+P)/(I+P) + (R+NC+O) + (UH+UO)$ where I=completed surveys, P=partially completed surveys, R=refusals, NC=non-contact (in this instance, non-contact includes all individuals that did not complete the survey), O=other, UH=unknown household, and UO=unknown other (in this instance, unknown other includes all invalid email addresses that were returned to sender).

Table 4. Number and percentage of respondents, by educator role and evaluation system

	DPAS-II		AES		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
Teachers	2,969	75%	581	82%	3,550	76%
Specialists	694	17%	129	18%	823	18%
Administrators	326	8%	N/A	–	326	7%
Total	3,989	100%	710	100%	4,699	100%

Source: Data from 2016-2017 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action.

Lastly, in addition to understanding the educators who completed the survey, we also compared respondents to non-respondents. While educators that completed the survey identified their educator role, Research for Action utilized data provided by the Delaware Department of Educator to group educators into three roles—teacher, specialist, and administrator—and also identify which systems—DPAS-II or alternative systems—under which non-respondents would have been evaluated (Table 5).

Table 5. Number and percentage of respondents and non-respondents, by educator role and evaluation system

	RESPONDENTS		NON-RESPONDENTS	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
Total sample	4,699	40%	7,129	60%
Educators evaluated under DPAS-II	3,989	40%	5,940	60%
Educator evaluated under alternative systems	710	37%	1,189	63%
Teachers	3,550	37%	5,945	63%
Specialists	823	49%	848	51%
Administrators	326	49%	336	51%

Source: Data from 2016-2017 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action.

Per Table 5, a larger proportion of educators in Delaware chose not to complete this year's survey. However, of those that did complete the survey, the proportion of respondents was fairly balanced across sub-groups. Roughly 40% of each subpopulation—educators evaluated under DPAS-II, alternative evaluation systems, teachers, specialists, and administrators—opted to complete this year's survey.

Summary of Findings

Research for Action identified four themes in the survey data, outlined below. In addition, Table 6 summarizes high-level findings by providing an overview of educator perceptions on the effectiveness of DPAS-II in meeting the three key outcomes of educator evaluation systems.

Key Findings:

1. Educators have divided opinions on the purpose and utility of DPAS-II.
2. Roughly a quarter of educators recognize DPAS-II as a highly effective system in meeting the key goals of evaluation systems.

3. Trended data suggests that perspectives have remained fairly consistent over the last five years, with improvements notable in areas of fairness and awarded grade.
4. Specialists perceive DPAS-II to be less aligned to their practice and professional growth compared to teachers and administrators.

Table 6. Percent of educators who report DPAS-II is highly effective in regard to the three primary goals

HOW EFFECTIVE IS YOUR EVALUATION SYSTEM AT ENSURING AND SUPPORTING THE FOLLOWING:	HIGHLY EFFECTIVE
Educators' professional growth	23%
Quality educators in every school building and classroom	24%
Continuous improvement of student outcomes	24%

Source: Data from 2016-17 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action.

The following sections provide more detail about each of these findings. First, we address how educators identify the purpose and utility of their evaluation system. Next, we examine whether Delaware educators believe their evaluation system is achieving anticipated outcomes. Last, we provide recommendations on how to better align DPAS-II to its purpose and goals.

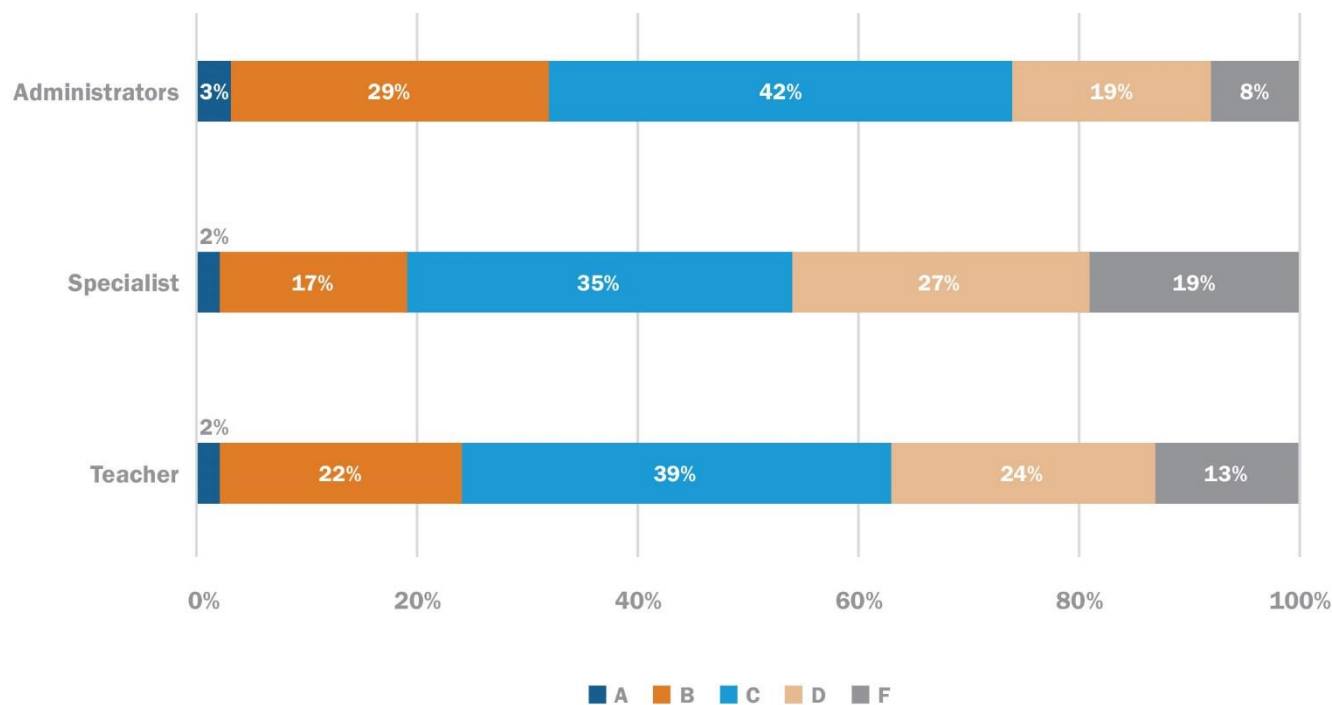
III. Views of the Purpose and Utility of DPAS-II

Evaluation systems are often designed to achieve two somewhat competing goals: compliance, which focuses on documenting measurable changes in teacher effectiveness and student achievement; and improvement, with an emphasis on providing techniques, tools, and supports for continued growth. In 2017, we surveyed educators to better understand their views on which goal their evaluation system prioritizes.

Educators evaluated under DPAS-II reported split opinions on its purpose. However, more educators believed that the system focused on compliance rather than on instructional improvements. Overall, 64% of educators reported that DPAS-II's purpose is compliance-focused, compared to 43% who reported that the system is focused on instructional improvement. Administrators, in particular, more commonly identified DPAS-II's purpose as compliance in comparison to teachers and specialists. Whereas nearly three-fourths (73%) of administrators reported a compliance focus, a smaller percentage of teachers (64%) and specialists (58%) held similar views. Opinions on DPAS-II's focus on instructional improvement were more consistently shared across educator roles – 44% of teachers, 38% of specialists, and 43% of administrators reported an improvement-focus.

To further understand perceptions on evaluation systems, this year's survey also asked educators to grade DPAS-II on a scale of A-F. Figure 1 presents a summary of grades awarded to DPAS-II across educator roles.

Figure 1. 2016-17 Distribution of DPAS-II grades from teachers, specialists, and administrators



Note: N-sizes for each educator group as are follows: Administrators, n=308; Specialists, n=651; and Teachers, n=2,863.

Source: Data from 2016-17 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action.

Educators evaluated under DPAS-II most commonly awarded DPAS-II a grade of C. When asked what grade respondents would give DPAS-II, overall, 2% awarded DPAS-II an A, 22% awarded a B, 38% awarded a C, 24% awarded a D, and 13% awarded DPAS-II an F. Administrators awarded DPAS-II higher grades than either teachers or specialists.

Trends in Delaware Educators' Views of DPAS-II

Over the past seven years,⁷ the Delaware Department of Education, in collaboration with their research partners, have asked teachers, specialists, and administrators to assign DPAS-II a grade on a scale of A-F.

In 2017, educators evaluated perceived DPAS-II less favorably than in 2010, the first year educators were asked to grade the evaluation system. Utilizing a scale of proficiency (grades A and B), in 2017, 24% of educators graded DPAS-II as proficient compared to 69% in 2010. The change in proportion of educators awarding DPAS-II a C is less extreme. In 2010, 24% of educators graded DPAS-II with a C, compared to 38% from this year's 2016-17 survey.

However, numerous revisions have been applied to DPAS-II over the seven-year time period, most notably with the full adoption and implementation of the Student Improvement Component during the 2012-13 school year; thus, it is important to note that between 2010 and 2017 respondents are not comparing the same version of DPAS-II. Considering these changes in DPAS-II, we examined the trend in perceptions following full implementation of the evaluation system, from 2013 to 2017.

Immediately following the adoption of the Student Improvement Component in 2013, educators perceived DPAS-II less favorably. Between 2012 and 2013, the percent of educators that awarded DPAS-II a grade of A or B dropped by 17 percentage points. In 2012, half of educators surveyed graded DPAS-II as proficient (grades A and B) compared to 32% in 2013. In addition, the proportion of educators reporting grades of D or F nearly doubled between 2012 and 2013. In 2012, 16% of educators graded DPAS-II a D or F compared to 30% in 2013.

Following full implementation in 2013, educator perceptions stabilized. Grades awarded to DPAS-II each year have steadied since the adoption of the Student Improvement Component. Utilizing the same proficiency scale, between 2013 and 2017, roughly a quarter of educators graded DPAS-II as proficient each year. Similarly, across all four years surveyed, most educators consistently awarded DPAS-II a grade of C. In 2013, 2014, and 2017 38% of educators graded DPAS-II a C. In 2014 this figure dipped slightly to 36% of educators awarding DPAS-II a C.

The following tables and figures show the distribution of grades awarded to DPAS-II following full implementation by each type of educator. Implementation of the Student Improvement Component in 2013 marks the first year of DPAS-II's most current iteration.

⁷ An annual survey on DPAS-II was not administered in the 2015-16 school year.

Figure 3. 2013-17 Distribution of DPAS-II grades from teachers

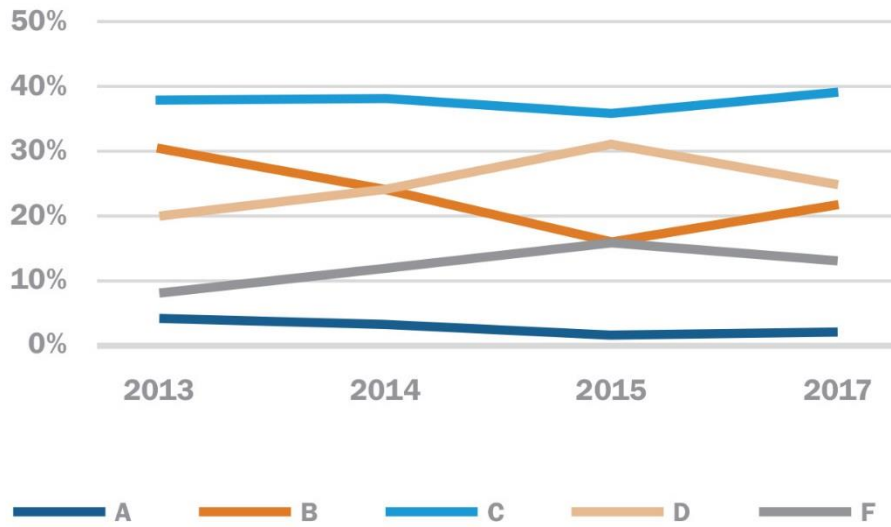


Table 7. Percent of teachers that awarded grades A-F to DPAS-II between 2013 and 2017

	2013	2014	2015	2017
A	4	3	1	2
B	30	23	15	22
C	38	38	36	39
D	20	24	31	24
F	8	12	16	13

Note: N-sizes for each year are as follows: 2013, n=4,010; 2014, n=4,233; 2015, n=4,310; and 2017, n=2,969.

Source: Data from 2016-2017 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action. Historical data from Annual DPAS-II Evaluation Reports. An annual survey was not administered in the 2015-2016 school year.

Figure 4. 2013-2017 Distribution of DPAS-II grades from specialists

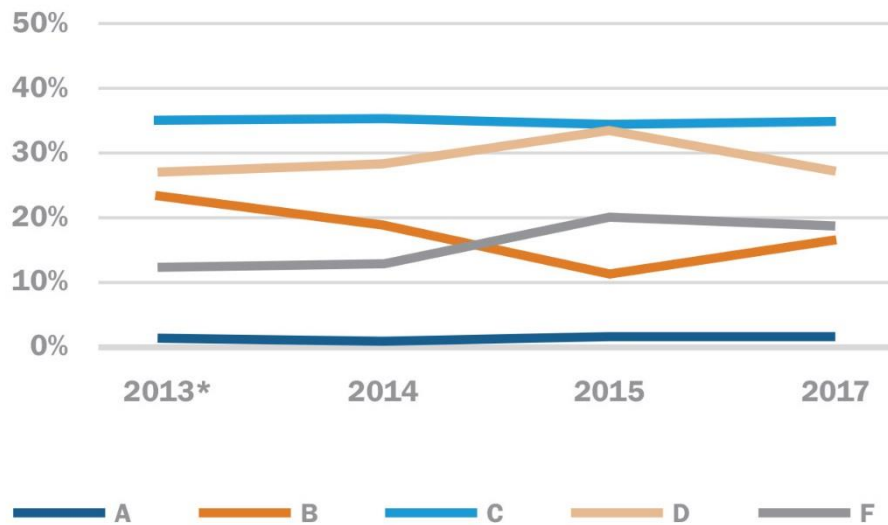


Table 8. Percent of specialists that awarded grades A-F to DPAS-II between 2013 and 2017

	2013	2014	2015	2017
A	1	1	*	2
B	23	19	11	17
C	35	36	34	35
D	28	29	34	27
F	13	13	21	19

Note: N-sizes for each year are as follows: 2013, n=605; 2014, n=625; 2015, n=705; and 2017, n=694. In 2015, the asterisks denotes that less than 1% of specialists (0.28%) awarded DPAS-II an A.

Source: Data from 2016-2017 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action. Historical data from Annual DPAS-II Evaluation Reports. An annual survey was not administered in the 2015-2016 school year.

Figure 5. 2013-2017 Distribution of DPAS-II grades from administrators

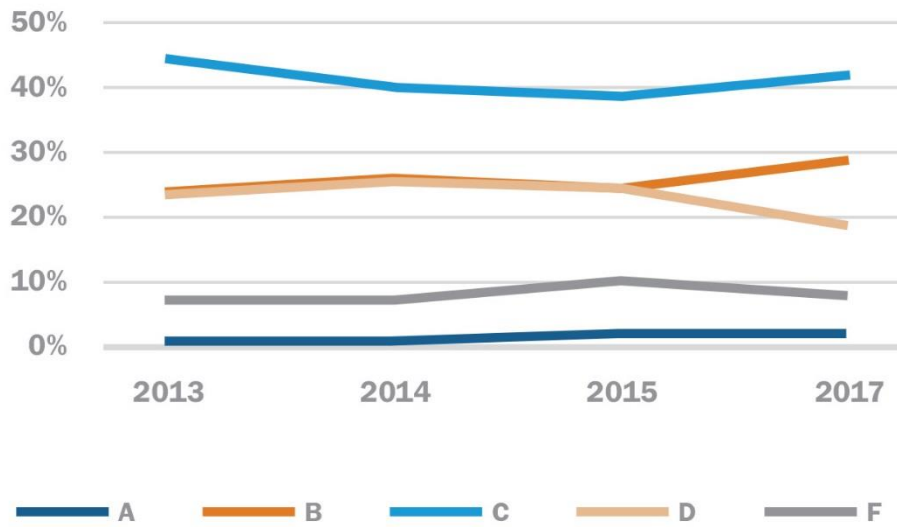


Table 9. Percent of administrators that awarded grades A-F to DPAS-II between 2013 and 2017

	2013	2014	2015	2017
A	1	1	2	3
B	23	26	24	29
C	45	40	39	42
D	24	26	25	19
F	7	7	10	8

Note: N-sizes for each year are as follows: 2013, n=265; 2014, n=362; 2015, n=433; and 2017, n=326.

Source: Data from 2016-17 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action. Historical data from Annual DPAS-II Evaluation Reports. An annual survey was not administered in the 2015-16 school year.

Fairness of DPAS-II

This year's survey also asked about perceptions of fairness. In 2015, we sought to better understand how educators defined "fairness." We found that this term is interpreted in various ways: as equity in the application of rubrics and ratings, transparency of evaluation objectives, or the perceived accuracy of summative ratings, for example. Below, we summarize each definition of fairness that educators apply to DPAS-II.

VARYING DEFINITIONS OF FAIRNESS

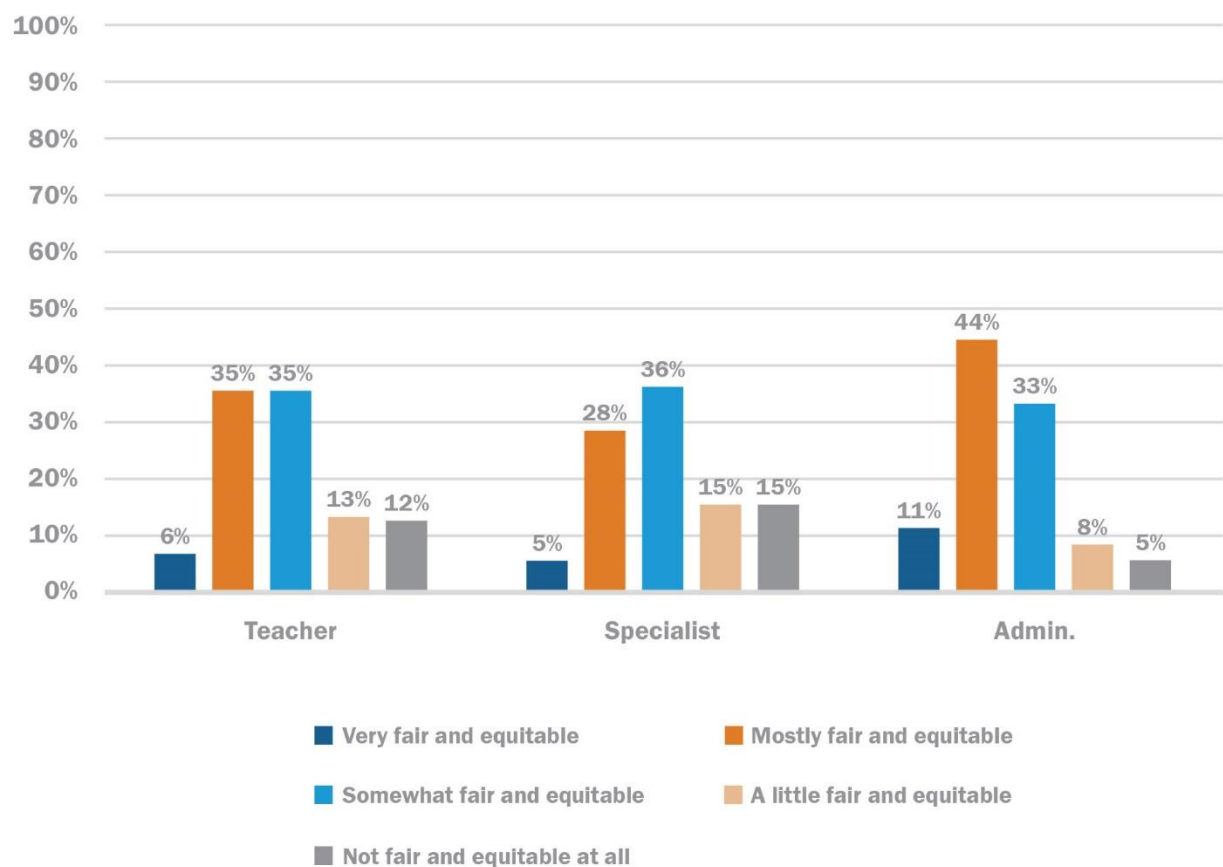
Analysis of open-ended survey responses and site visit responses that teachers and specialists defined "fairness" in the context of DPAS-II along four main dimensions:

1. **Alignment of DPAS-II to educator's job responsibilities** (including the degree to which components assessed a teacher or specialist's day-to-day responsibilities and instructional objectives)
2. **Transparency in the DPAS-II process** (including clarity of overall objectives, knowledge of the observation process, the ease of paperwork and technology systems, and adequate training);
3. **Consistency of expectations** (including teachers and specialists who stated they either wanted a greater degree of equity, or wanted flexibility and understanding for special cases);
4. **Accuracy of assessments and/or ratings** (including Component V goals and assessments, the degree to which these assessments measured areas within teachers' and specialists' control, criterion or component ratings, or summative ratings).

Source: Data from Research for Action's 2014-15 Evaluation Report of DPAS-II.

Figure 6 illustrates differences across educator roles in perceptions about the fairness of DPAS-II.

Figure 6. Perceptions of DPAS-II’s fairness and equity across educator roles



Note: N-sizes for each educator group as are follows: Teachers, n=2,913; Specialists, n=669; and Administrators, n=311.
Source: Data from 2016-17 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action.

The majority of educators evaluated under DPAS-II reported that the system is somewhat fair and equitable. Forty percent of educators reported that DPAS-II is highly (“very” to “mostly”) fair and equitable, and 35% reported DPAS-II as “somewhat” fair. A quarter (25%) of educators were more skeptical of DPAS-II’s fairness and equity, with 12% reporting that DPAS-II is not fair or equitable at all.

Perceptions of DPAS-II varied across educator roles. Over half (55%) of administrators reported high levels of fairness and equity (“very” to “mostly”). In contrast, less than half of teachers and specialists (41% and 33%, respectively) held similar views.

Trended Perceptions of DPAS-II's Fairness over Time

Here, we compare how educators perceived the fairness of DPASS-II across two points in time: 2015 and 2017. Table 10 summarizes these results.

Table 10. Percent of educators who perceive DPAS-II to be highly fair and equitable

	2015	2017
Administrators	40	55
Teachers	19	41
Specialists	15	32

Note: N-sizes for each educator group in 2015 as are follows: Teachers, n=4,449; Specialists, n=749; and Administrators, n=336. N-sizes for 2017 are reported above.

Source: Data from 2016-17 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action. Historical data provided by Research for Action's 2014-15 Evaluation Report of DPAS-II.

Perceptions across all educators improved substantially between the two years. Examining the top two responses ("strongly agree" to "agree" in 2015 and "very" to "mostly" fair and equitable in 2017), in 2015 19% of all educators reported DPAS-II as being highly fair and equitable compared to 40% in this year's 2017 survey.

Similarly, each type of educator surveyed reported higher levels of fairness and equity this year than in 2015.⁸ Again, in examining the top two responses, all educator groups increased their perceptions of fairness and equity by at least 15 percentage points.

⁸ This question has changed multiple times across survey administration. For that reason, we only report responses from this survey and the most recent survey administered in 2015. The following captures the changes between the two survey years: In 2017, the scale was changed to item-specific codes; codes for "neither agree nor disagree" and "don't know" were added in the 2015 survey.

IV.Views of the Influence of DPAS-II in Achieving the Anticipated Goals

As noted, the Delaware Department of Education defined three primary goals for their evaluation system.

- **Evaluation Goal 1:** Foster professional growth by providing educators with actionable feedback and opportunities to improve and refine their teaching and support their students’ growth;
- **Evaluation Goal 2:** Ensure that there are quality educators in every school building and classroom;
- **Evaluation Goal 3:** Continue to help students grow and succeed through targeted interventions and individualized educator professional development opportunities.

Having touched on perceptions of purpose, the following section presents survey findings summarizing the extent to which educators believe DPAS-II is meeting the goals of an educator evaluation.

Goal 1: Fostering Professional Growth

One of the primary goals of educator evaluation systems is to foster professional growth. As outlined within the DPAS-II Guides, professional growth is supported by evaluators and educators identifying opportunities for growth and skill enhancement. Growth opportunities are identified through self-assessment, reflection, and the adoption of new instructional programs or techniques.

This section summarizes the extent to which educators feel engaged and supported by their evaluators and whether educators perceive their evaluation system as supportive of their growth.

Amount of Interaction with Evaluators

Table 11 captures respondents’ perceptions on how often they interact with their evaluator, a proxy that helps us understand how their evaluation system is fostering growth. Respondents were asked to identify how often their evaluator provides the support necessary for an educator to fulfill recommendations and/or expectations identified in their evaluation. Respondents were also asked to report how often their evaluator expects input or reflections on their performance and professional growth. The following table examines the responses across educators evaluated under DPAS-II.

Table 11. Frequency of interactions with one’s evaluator

HOW OFTEN DOES YOUR EVALUATOR...	PROVIDE SUPPORT NECESSARY FOR ONE’S EVALUATION	EXPECT INPUT ON GROWTH
All the time	23%	28%
Often	38%	37%
Sometimes	25%	23%
Rarely	9%	9%
Never	5%	3%

Source: Data from 2016-17 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action.

The majority of educators reported addressing key elements of their evaluation with their evaluators “all the time” to “often.” Over 60% of educators reported that evaluators commonly provide necessary support in helping educators carry out recommendations and expectations identified in

evaluations. The majority of educators also reported that their evaluators frequently (“all the time” to “often”) expect input or self-reflections on performance and growth.

Administrators reported higher levels of interaction with their evaluator. Seventy-percent of administrators reported that their evaluators frequently (“all the time” to “often”) expect input or self-reflections on performance and growth compared to 65% and 63% of teachers and specialists, respectively. Similarly, 65% of administrators reported frequently receiving support from their evaluator support, compared to 61% of teachers and 59% of specialists.

Utility of Evaluation Process

DPAS-II provides multiple opportunities for educators to interact with their evaluator over the course of the year. At minimum, both include a post-observation conference, a student improvement conference, and a summative evaluation conference. Each interaction aims to help evaluators and educators identify areas for growth and opportunities to enhance skills and knowledge.

Table 12 provides a summary of the perceived utility of three key steps of the evaluation process.

Table 12. Percent of educators that reported each step of their evaluation as highly useful

HOW USEFUL ARE...	HIGHLY USEFUL
Post-observation conferences	66%
Summative evaluation conference	50%
Student improvement component conference	40%

Source: Data from 2016-17 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action.

Two of the three key steps in an evaluation were identified as highly useful by over half of educators evaluated under DPAS-II. Educators viewed the Student Improvement Component conference as the least useful. During the Student Improvement Component conference, educators and evaluators are provided information on how the Student Improvement Component rating will be decided. Less than half of educators identified the Student Improvement Component conference as highly useful.

Views on the Utility of the Evaluation Feedback Process

Conferences also provide opportunities for evaluators to share feedback that is timely and actionable. For example, during post-observation conferences, evaluators are expected to provide feedback on an educator’s practice, addressing Components I–IV.

Over half of educators reported that feedback received is actionable and specific. Fifty-eight percent of teachers, 49% of specialists, and 56% of administrators evaluated under DPAS-II reported receiving strong feedback as part of their evaluation. To better understand the feedback provided to educators, the survey asked for examples of actionable and specific feedback during the evaluation process. Table 13 captures the themes that emerged from these open-ended responses.⁹

⁹ While administrators reported that they receive feedback within their evaluation, 49% chose not to provide a text response sharing an example of actionable and specific feedback. The percent of administrators that reported feedback across key topics are omitted from this section given the high rate of non-response.

Table 13. Themes of Actionable and Specific Feedback Received

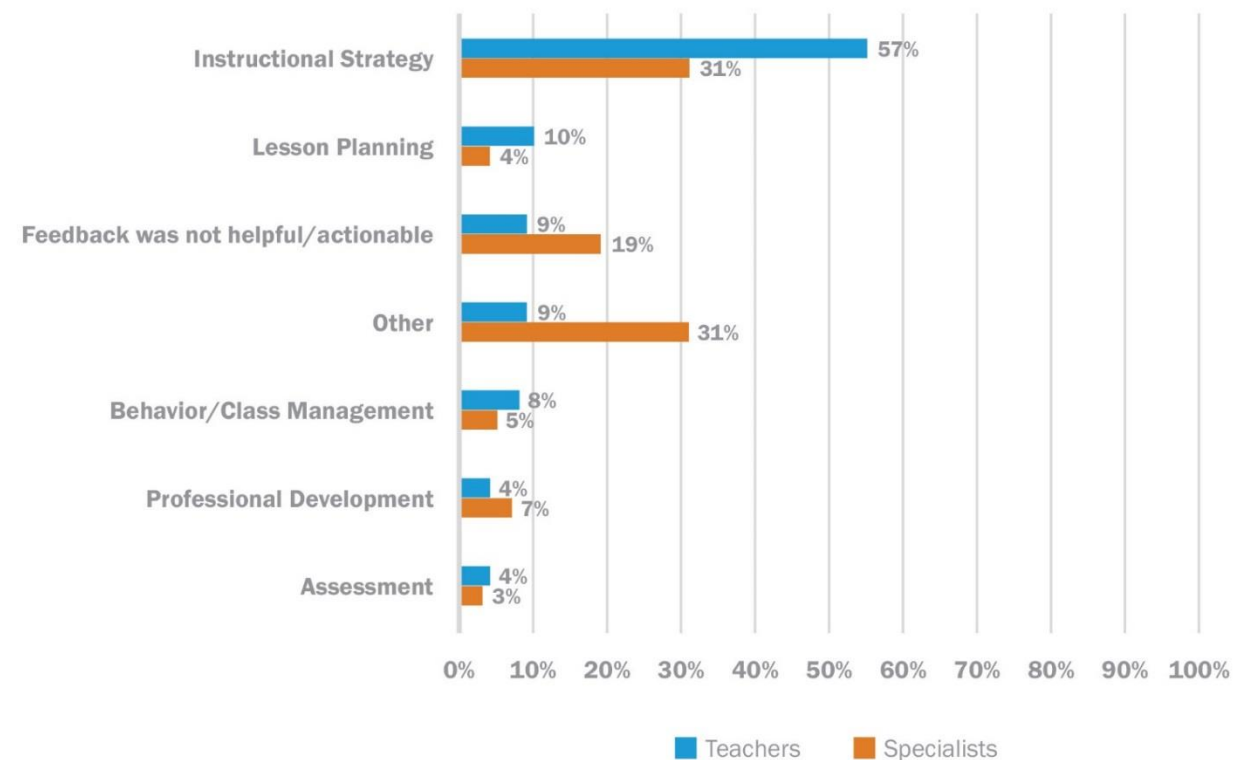
TEACHERS AND SPECIALISTS	ADMINISTRATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments Behavior/class management Instructional strategy Lesson planning Professional development Other Feedback provided was not actionable/specific 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional strategy Leadership Management Student achievement Vision and goals Other Feedback provided was not actionable/specific

Source: Data from 2016-17 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action.

Frequency and Utility of Feedback

Figure 8 presents the percent of educators reporting feedback across commonly identified areas.

Figure 8. Percent of teachers and specialists reporting feedback across key areas



Note: N-sizes for each educator group as are follows: Teachers, n=1761; and Specialists, n=337.

Source: Data from 2016-17 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action.

Teachers most often mentioned receiving feedback related to instructional strategy. This was also often reported by specialists. Fifty-five percent of teachers and 31% of specialists indicated that they had received feedback related to instructional strategy. For example, one Delaware teacher said:

My evaluator noticed my current form of student knowledge could be more effective if students were asked to perform the task prior to me modeling. This method will provide me with insight on current student level of knowledge, allowing me to differentiate my lesson more effectively.

Specialist comments were particularly broad-ranging. Given their unique roles, specialists were not as consistent in their responses as teachers. As a result, clear patterns were not discernible in about a third of their responses. Below are two examples that highlight the different types of feedback specialists receive during their evaluation.

One of the areas that I am working on this year is pushing students to engage with the community. So we are planning on involving the community with our Alex's Lemonade Stand.

Develop a document for parent resources available.

In addition, nearly 1 in 5 specialists reported that the feedback they received was not helpful or actionable. This group also contains specialists that did not receive any feedback at all. In comparison, 4% of teachers reported the same.

Access to Relevant Professional Development.

As part of one's evaluation, educators ideally receive professional development that is aligned to needs identified during the evaluation process. We asked educators how often they have access to these professional development opportunities. Table 14 summarizes these results.

Table 14. Perceptions of access to professional development opportunities

HOW OFTEN DO YOU...	HAVE ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES
All the time	4%
Often	18%
Sometimes	37%
Rarely	30%
Never	11%

Source: Data from 2016-17 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action.

Most educators evaluated under DPAS-II reported infrequent access to professional development that is aligned to specific areas of growth indicated by their evaluation system. Forty percent of educators evaluated under DPAS-II reported having less frequent access to relevant professional development, as 31% responded they rarely have access and 11% responded never having access to professional opportunities.

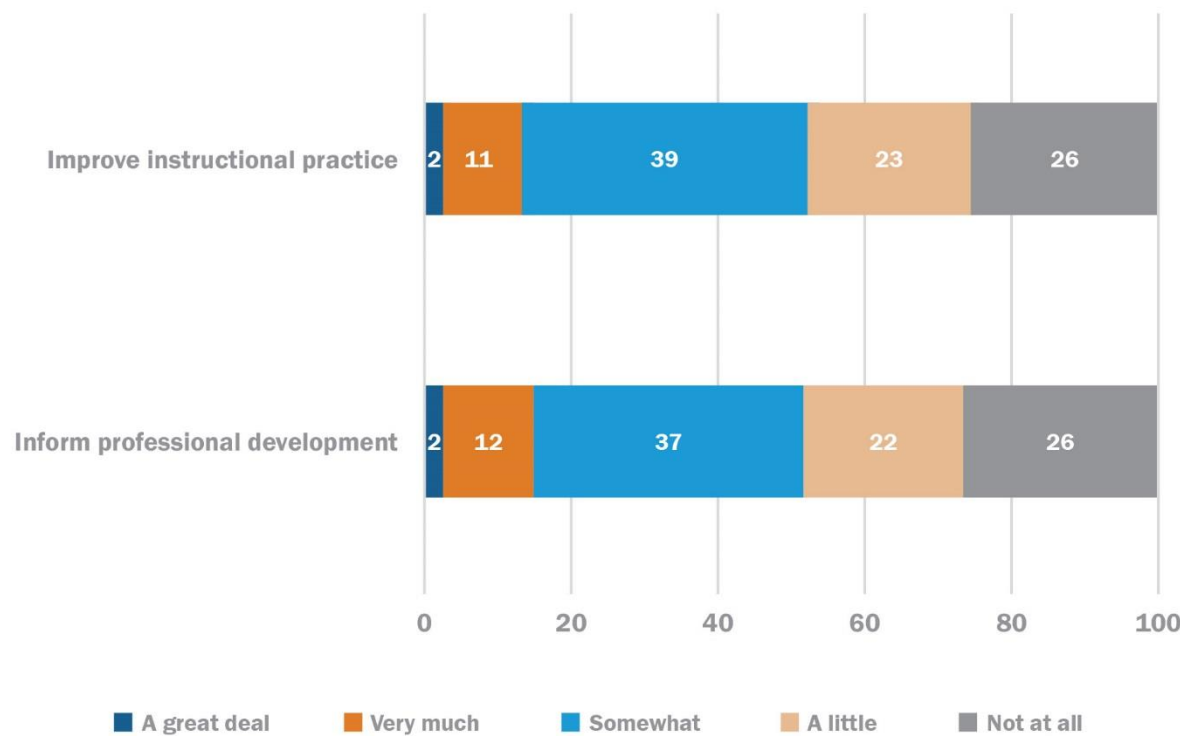
Specialists reported the lowest level of access to professional development under DPAS-II. Half of specialists reported having infrequent access to professional development opportunities that align to their areas of growth indicated by their evaluation. Nineteen percent reported never having access and 31% reported having rare access.

Goal 2: Quality Educators in Every School Building and Classroom

To address the second goal of evaluation systems, we examined teachers' perceptions of how DPAS-II helps schools and districts ensure that quality educators are in every school. The DPAS-II Guide notes that DPAS-II achieves this goal by helping educators and evaluators document evidence of performance that is used to recognize effective practice, identify professional development opportunities, and provide feedback to enhance practice. In doing so, it aims to support the growth and continued improvement of quality educators.

To understand whether the practice of assessment translates into supporting quality educators, we asked educators to indicate their evaluation system's influence on instructional improvement. We also asked them to report on the extent to which their evaluation system helps identify and inform professional development opportunities. Figure 10 presents responses from educators evaluated under DPAS-II.

Figure 10. Perceptions of how much DPAS-II improves practice and informs professional development



Source: Data from 2016-17 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action.

Among educators evaluated under DPAS-II, a majority reported that DPAS-II has some effect on instructional practice. Fifty-two percent reported that DPAS-II improves practice “a great deal” (2%), “very much” (11%), or “somewhat” (39%). Across educator roles, a larger share of administrators saw merit in DPAS-II compared to teachers and specialists. When examined across groups, 21% of administrators reported that DPAS-II substantially improves instruction, compared to 13% and 9% of teachers and specialists, respectively.

Similarly, a majority of educators also indicated that DPAS-II has some impact on informing their professional development. Fifty-one percent reported that DPAS-II informs development “a great deal” (2%), “very much” (12%), or “somewhat” (37%). Perceptions on DPAS-II’s ability to inform professional

development varied across educator groups. While administrators reported the largest influence of DPAS-II on professional development, specialists were more skeptical. Thirty-five percent of specialists reported that DPAS-II has no impact on professional development, compared to 26% of teachers and 11% of administrators.

Box 4. Trended Data

As we did with perceptions of fairness, we also compared the extent to which educators believe DPAS-II is improving practice across two points in time: 2015 and 2017. Table 15 summarizes these results.

Table 15. Percent of educators who perceive DPAS-II to be improving practice over time

	2015	2017
A great deal	2%	2%
Very much	27%	12%
Somewhat	32%	37%
A little	36%	22%
Not at all	3%	27%

Note: N-sizes for each year as are follows: in 2015, n=5,536 and in 2017, n=3,846.

Source: Data from 2016-17 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action. Historical data provided by Research for Action’s 2014-15 Evaluation Report of DPAS-II.

Perceptions of DPAS-II’s effect on instructional improvements were more positive in 2015. Of educators surveyed in 2015, 29% reported that DPAS-II greatly improves instructional practice (“a great deal” to “very much”) whereas 3% reported that DPAS-II does not improve practice at all. This year, over a quarter (26%) of educators in Delaware reported that DPAS-II does not improve instructional practice, whereas 14% of educators reported that DPAS-II improves practice a “great deal” or “very much.”

Goal 3: Continuous Improvement of Student Outcomes

Educator evaluation systems are designed to improve student achievement. Throughout the evaluation process, educators and evaluators work together to assess and reflect on an educator’s performance, identifying areas for growth and improvement to ultimately advance student achievement. As such, one core component of an educator evaluation system monitors the progress of students (Student Improvement Component) to ensure that students are benefiting from an educator’s assessment. Educators reported the following perceptions about how the evaluation system was influencing student outcomes.

First, we asked respondents how often their evaluator works with them to set ambitious goals for student performance. Table 16 summarizes the perceptions of educators evaluated under DPAS-II.

Table 16. Frequency of goal-setting with one's evaluator

HOW OFTEN DOES YOUR EVALUATOR...	WORK WITH YOU TO SET GOALS FOR STUDENT PERFORMANCE
All the time	17%
Often	34%
Sometimes	29%
Rarely	15%
Never	6%

Source: Data from 2016-17 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action.

Educators reported frequent interaction with their evaluators to set goals for student performance.

Over 51% of educators note working with their evaluator to establish student performance goals “all the time” or “often.” However, when compared to the frequency of evaluator interactions intended to provide supports or reflect on performance (see Table 11), setting goals for student performance is the least cited activity.

We also asked respondents to share their perceptions on how much their evaluation system is assessing and influencing student growth. The following findings highlight the perceived influence of DPAS-II on students.

Overall, the majority of educators feel their evaluation system has some impact on student achievement gains. Of educators evaluated under DPAS-II, 62% reported that the evaluation system has impact (“a great deal” to “somewhat”) on student outcomes. However, significant minorities of educators evaluated under DPAS-II had more extreme views. Eighteen percent of educators across DPAS-II reported no influence of their evaluation on student outcomes; at the same time, 25% educators across DPAS-II reported that their evaluation system had a substantial influence on student gains (“a great deal” or “very much”).

Teachers were the most optimistic about evaluation systems’ influence on student achievement gains. Of teachers evaluated under DPAS-II, 27% reported DPAS-II drives student achievement “a great deal” or “very much.” Comparatively, 21% of specialists and 20% of administrators held the same opinion.

V. Recommendations

In this section we present recommendations drawn from two sources. First, we provide feedback directly from educators themselves. Next, we highlight some high-level takeaways that emerged from our analysis of this round of survey data.

Recommendations from the Field

To help inform the implementation of Delaware’s evaluation systems, this year’s survey asked educators to identify potential areas for change. Teachers, specialists, and administrators were asked to identify the areas of change that they believe would improve the system. Table 17 orders the items that were most frequently identified across educators as potential improvements to DPAS-II.

Table 17. Potential changes reported by educators to improve DPAS-II

CHANGES TO IMPROVE ONE'S EVALUATION SYSTEM	DPAS-II
Reduced paperwork	62%
Reduced number of components (Components I-IV)	42%
Reduced number of criteria	33%
Revised rubrics	30%
Increased frequency of visits and feedback	17%
Decreased time of full observation visit	13%
Required annual summative for every educator	10%

Source: Data from 2016-17 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action.

Educators most commonly cited reducing paperwork as one method to improve their evaluation system. A majority of educators under DPAS-II identified this potential change. In addition, over a third of educators under DPAS-II agree that a reduced number of components and criteria could also improve their evaluation.

A large proportion of educators evaluated under DPAS-II identified multiple changes they believe would improve their evaluation. Four of the seven recommended changes were selected by a third or more educators evaluated under DPAS-II.

Recommendations from Analysis of Survey Data

Additional findings from our report point to the following areas of focus for the Delaware Department of Education:

Purpose and Utility

The Delaware Department of Education should continue to communicate the purpose of evaluation systems as tools for instructional and leadership improvement. If educators perceive the tool to be effective and useful, they may be more likely to utilize feedback and professional development opportunities, ultimately improving upon prior methods of instruction and leadership.

In addition, the Delaware Department of Education should consider investing in future inquiry as to which aspects of DPAS-II educators feel are useful for their instructional practice. DDOE could also seek to better understand which aspects of their evaluation educators perceive to be fair and equitable. In highlighting key areas that educators find effective and useful for informing their professional growth, perceptions may shift for those educators not having the same experience.

Opportunities for Professional Development

While educators reported having access to relevant professional development, less than a third of educators reported frequent access. The Delaware Department of Education, in partnership with schools and Districts, can continue to work toward providing professional development opportunities that specifically relate to areas for growth indicated by an educator's evaluation system.

Impact on Professional Development and Instructional Improvement

While the majority of educators credit their evaluation system with influencing professional development and instructional improvement, a large number of educators evaluated under DPAS-II are not making this connection. Specifically, of educators evaluated under DPAS-II, over a quarter reported that DPAS-II has no

impact on improvements in instructional practice, and that DPAS-II does not inform professional development at all. In addition, these views were often reflected by the same respondents. Of educators that believe DPAS-II does not affect instructional practice, the majority (73%) also reported that DPAS-II does not inform professional development.

In recognition of this minority, the Delaware Department of Education may want to learn more from educators about why and how professional development and instructional improvements are and are not impacted by DPAS-II.

Student Improvement Component

Although educators reported that their evaluation system helps drive student achievement gains, they continue to feel that the Student Improvement Component is not an accurate assessment of teaching and learning in their classroom. Less than a quarter of educators (23%) selected the Student Improvement Component as the component that best assesses their performance. In addition, over half of educators indicated the Student Improvement Component conference as having low utility, and educators noted interacting with their evaluator less frequently to set student performance goals than to reflect or establish professional supports. The Delaware Department of Education should continue to monitor the challenges and successes of the Student Improvement Component within the frameworks of DPAS-II.

VI. Conclusion

This report provided exploratory analyses on how educators view the purpose of DPAS-II, and whether educators perceive their system as meeting its intended goals—to improve instruction and to increase student learning.¹⁰ In addition, the Delaware Department of Education expands on these goals with a third anticipated outcome: ensuring quality educators are in every school and classroom. Our survey findings show that educators evaluated under DPAS-II are fairly split on their opinions. Through sustained partnerships with educators and Districts, and further understanding of the ways in which DPAS-II is perceived as successfully meeting the goals of evaluation, the Delaware Department of Education can continue to refine its evaluation system, ensuring that quality educators teach in every school building and classroom and that those educators have professional growth opportunities that ultimately help students succeed.

¹⁰ Little, Goe, & Bell, *A Practical Guide to Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness*, National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED543776.pdf> (April 2009).



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