

Appendix A: Alternative Evaluation Systems

I. Introduction

The prior report presents results from the 2016-17 statewide survey on the perceptions of teachers, specialists, and administrators of the Delaware Performance Appraisal System, or DPAS-II, Delaware's statewide educator evaluation system. The following supplemental report describes educators' views of more recently implemented **alternative evaluation systems** used by approved district and charter schools.

Over the last 5 years, DDOE has been 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.

The following supplemental report provides information on perceptions of educators across all alternative evaluation systems. This appendix is similarly structured like the report, highlighting findings across three primary evaluation goals, as defined by the Delaware Department of Education¹, and summarizing the extent to which educators believe their alternative evaluation system in Delaware is meeting the 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 alternative evaluation systems.

II. Summary of Findings

Table 1 summarizes high-level findings by providing an overview of educator perceptions on the effectiveness of their evaluation system in meeting the three key outcomes of educator evaluation systems.

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

Table 1. Percent of educators who report their evaluation system 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	40%
Quality educators in every school building and classroom	41%
Continuous improvement of student outcomes	42%

* Statistically significant at $p < .001$; {chi square test}

Note: In order to test the normality of the data, we conducted a Shapiro-Francia statistical test for normality which confirmed that our data was normally distributed and would not violate the assumption for statistical testing. We then performed a Pearson's chi-squared test in order to examine the relationship between the respondents' feelings of effectiveness toward their evaluation system and the type of evaluation system under which they were evaluated.

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.

III. Views of the Purpose and Utility of Delaware's Evaluation Systems

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.

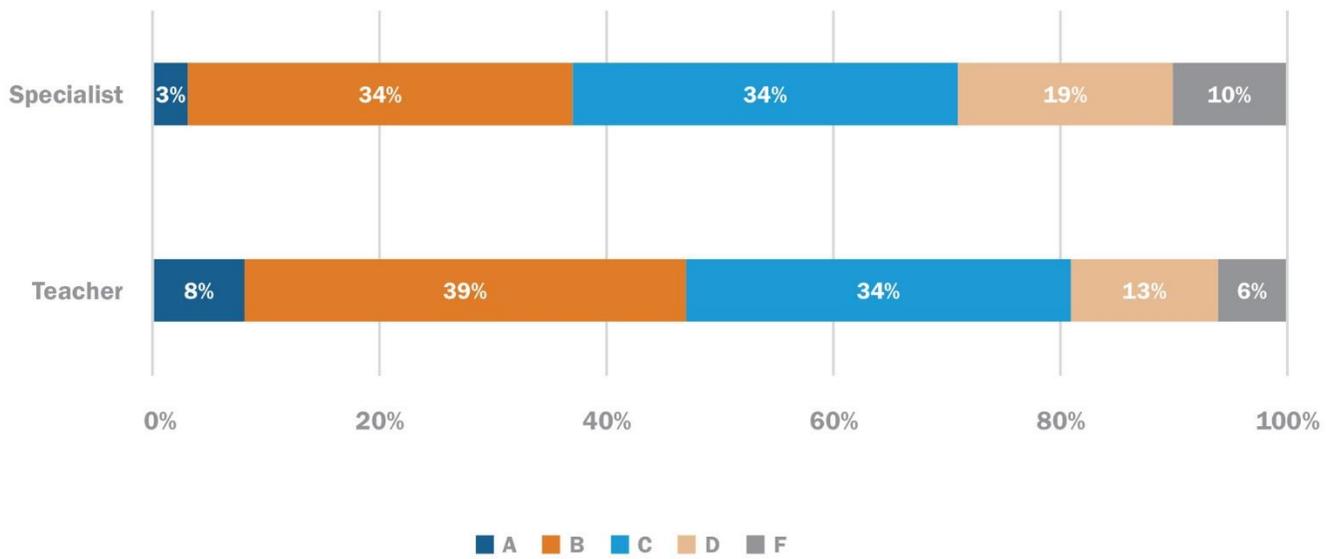
Educators evaluated under alternative evaluation systems evenly reported the purpose of the tool as both compliance and instructional improvement. Sixty-four percent of educators reported that their alternative evaluation system is “mostly” to “very” focused on compliance. A similar proportion of educators (69%) also noted that their alternative evaluation system is highly focused on instructional improvement.

To further understand perceptions on evaluation systems, this year's survey also asked educators to grade their evaluation system on a scale of A-F.

Educators evaluated under alternative evaluation systems most commonly awarded their system a grade of B (Figure 2). Eight percent awarded their alternative evaluation system an A, 38% a B, 34% a C, 14% a D, and 7% awarded their evaluation system an F.

Teachers' perceptions of alternative systems were slightly more positive than specialists' perceptions. Utilizing a scale of proficiency (grades A and B), 47% of teachers awarded their evaluation system an A or a B compared to 38% of specialists.

Figure 1. Distribution of alternative evaluation system grades from teachers and specialists

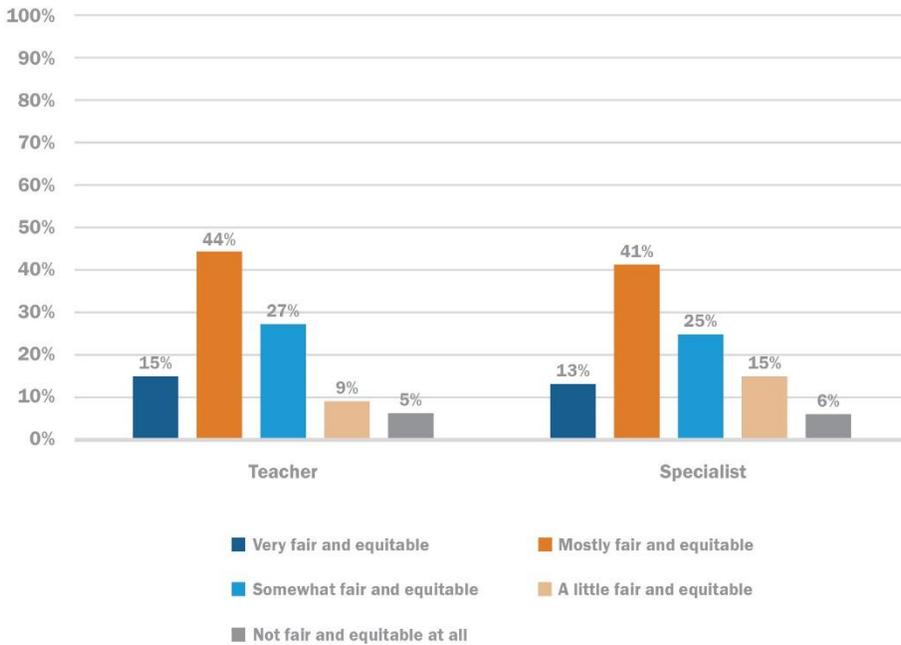


Note: N-sizes for each educator group as are follows: Specialists, n=116; and Teachers, n=554.
Source: Data from 2016-17 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action.

IV. Fairness of Evaluation Systems

This year’s survey also asked about perceptions of fairness. Figure 2 illustrates differences in perceptions about the fairness of alternative evaluation systems across educator roles.

Figure 2. Perceptions of AES fairness and equity across educator roles



Note: N-sizes for each educator group as are follows: Teachers, n=543; and Specialists, n=126.
Source: Data from 2016-17 Educator and Administrator Evaluation Systems Survey administered by Research for Action.

The majority of educators evaluated under alternative evaluation systems reported that their system is highly fair and equitable. Overall, 58% of all teachers and specialists evaluated under alternative evaluation systems reported feeling their system was “very” to “mostly” fair and equitable. Views across educator roles were similar. Fifty-nine percent of teachers and 54% of specialists reported their alternative evaluation systems were very fair and equitable.

V. Views of the Influence of Evaluation Systems in Achieving the Anticipated Goals

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

- **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 the alternative evaluation systems in Delaware are meeting the goals of educator evaluations.

Goal 1: Fostering Professional Growth

One of the primary goals of educator evaluation systems is to foster professional growth. This section summarizes the extent to which educators feel engaged and supported by their evaluators and whether educators perceive their alternative evaluation system as supportive of their growth.

Amount of Interaction with Evaluators

Table 2 compares 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 alternative systems.

Table 2. 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	27%	33%
Often	40%	41%
Sometimes	24%	19%
Rarely	7%	6%
Never	3%	2%

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. Over 70% of educators also reported that their evaluators frequently (“all the time” to “often”) expect input or self-reflections on performance and growth.

Utility of Evaluation Process

Alternative evaluation systems provide 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 3 provides a summary of the perceived utility of three key steps of the evaluation process.

Table 3. Percent of educators that reported each step of their evaluation as highly useful

HOW USEFUL ARE...	HIGHLY USEFUL
Post-observation conferences	71%
Summative evaluation conference	54%
Student improvement component conference	47%

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

Two of the three key steps of an evaluation were identified as highly useful by over half of educators evaluated under alternative systems. 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 surveyed 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. Sixty-nine percent of teachers and 63% of specialists evaluated under alternative systems 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 4 captures the themes that emerged from these open-ended responses.²

² 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 4. Themes of Actionable and Specific Feedback Received

TEACHERS AND SPECIALISTS

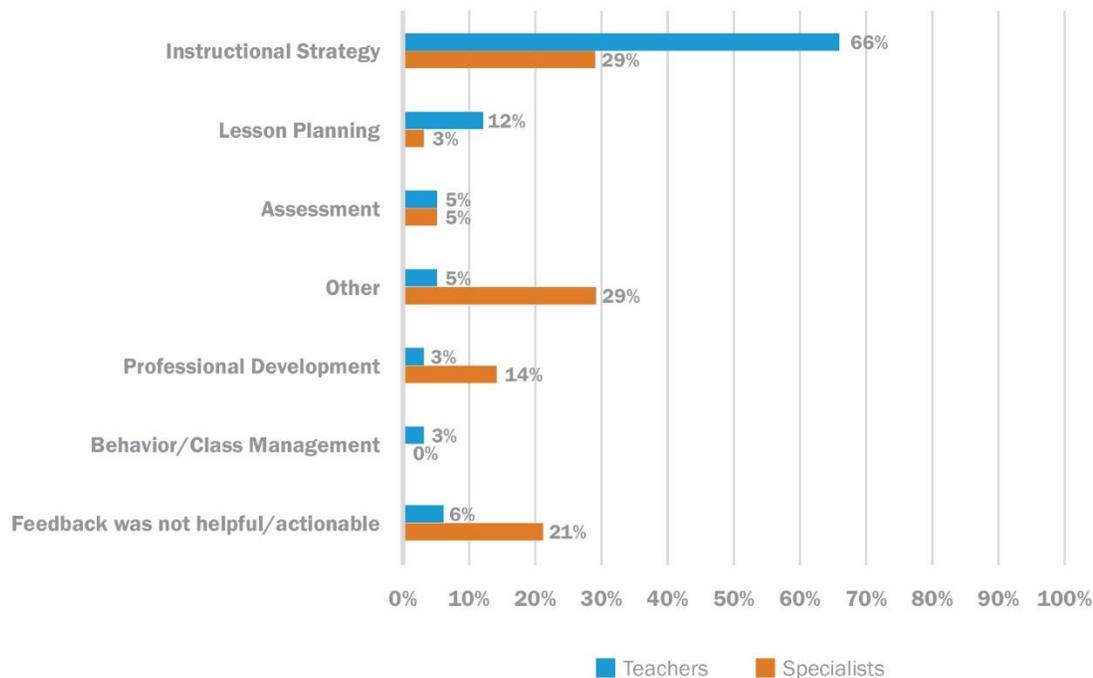
- Assessments
- Behavior/class management
- Instructional strategy
- Lesson planning
- Professional development
- Other
- *Feedback provided was not actionable/specific*

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

Frequency and Utility of Feedback

Figure 3 presents the percent of educators reporting feedback across commonly identified areas.

Figure 3. Percent of teachers and specialists reporting feedback across key areas



Note: N-sizes for each educator group as are follows: Teachers, n=339; and Specialists, n=63.

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. Sixty-six percent of teachers and 29% of specialists indicated that they had received feedback related to instructional strategy.

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.

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, 6% 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 evaluated under alternative evaluation systems how often they have access to these professional development opportunities. Table 5 summarizes these results.

Table 5. Perceptions of access to professional development opportunities across alternative evaluation systems

HOW OFTEN DO YOU...	HAVE ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES
All the time	7%
Often	23%
Sometimes	38%
Rarely	24%
Never	8%

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

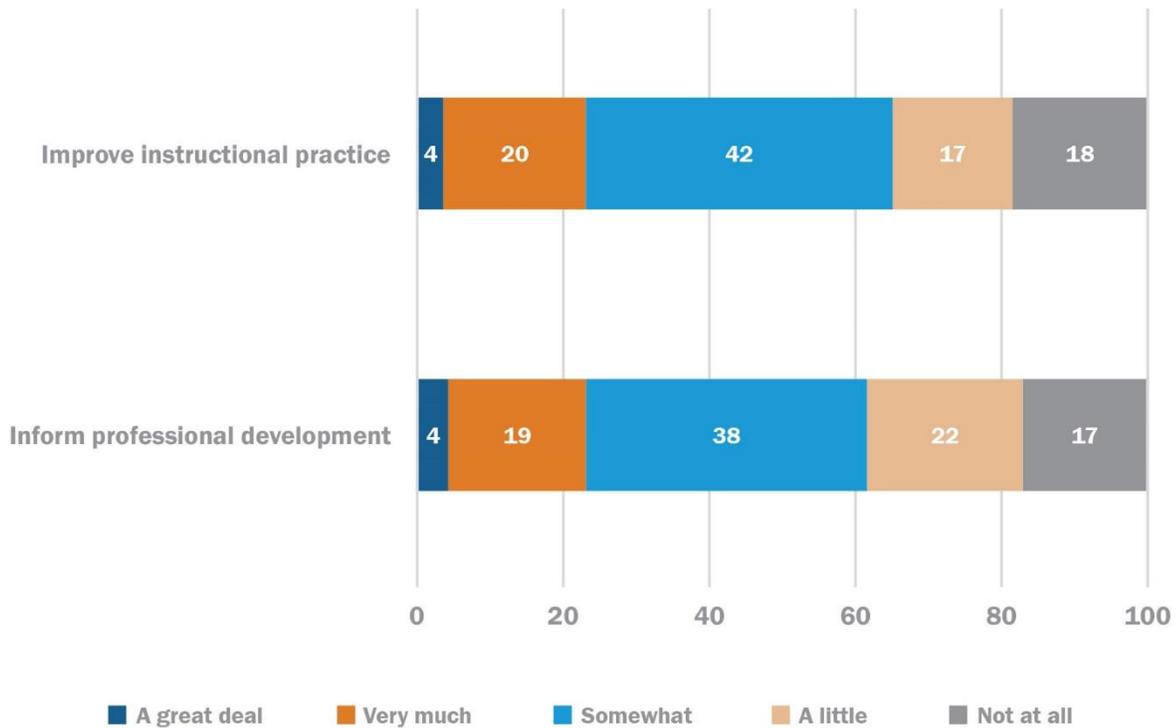
A third of educators reported having frequent access to professional development that is aligned to specific areas of growth indicated by their evaluation system. However, in contrast, a third of educators also reported have infrequent or no access to professional opportunities; as 24% of educators reported rarely having access and 8% reported having no access to opportunities that relate to their growth areas. Perceptions of access to professional development opportunities were similar across educator roles.

Goal 2: Quality Educators in Every School Building and Classroom

To address the second goal of evaluation systems, we examined teachers’ perceptions of how systems help schools and districts ensure that quality educators are in every school. 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 evaluation systems help identify and inform professional development opportunities.

We examined the extent to which alternative evaluation systems improve practice and inform professional development opportunities. Figure 4 summarizes these results.

Figure 4. Perceptions of how much alternative evaluation systems improve practice and inform professional development



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

Among educators evaluated under an alternative evaluation system, the majority reported that their system has some effect on instructional practice. Seventy-eight percent reported that their evaluation system improves practice “very much” (20%), “somewhat” (42%), or “a little” (17%). Specialists were more likely than teachers to report their alternative systems having no influence on practice. While 30% of specialists reported that their evaluation system has no influence on their practice, 16% of teachers reported the same. In contrast, the opinion that alternative systems do, in fact, drive improvements in practice was largely shared by teachers, as only 11% of specialists believe their evaluation system highly influences improvements in instruction compared to 26% of teachers.

Similarly, among educators evaluated under an alternative evaluation system, the majority believe their evaluation has some influence on professional development. Of educators evaluated under alternative systems, 79% reported their evaluation informs growth “very much” (19%), “somewhat” (38%), or “a little” (22%). However, similar to views regarding alternative evaluation systems’ influence on instructional improvements, nearly a third (28%) of specialists reported that their evaluation system does not inform professional development.

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 (the 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 5 summarizes these results.

Table 5. 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	21%
Often	35%
Sometimes	30%
Rarely	11%
Never	3%

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 50% 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 2), setting goals for student performance is the least cited activity.

We also asked respondents to share their perceptions on how much evaluation systems are assessing and influencing student growth. The following findings highlight the perceived influence of alternative evaluation systems on students.

Overall, the majority of educators feel their evaluation system has some impact on student achievement gains. Of educators evaluated under alternative evaluation systems, 72% of educators reported their systems as driving student achievement gains “a great deal” (6%), “very much” (275), or “somewhat” (39%). However, minorities of educators evaluated had more extreme views. Fourteen percent of educators under alternative systems reported no influence of their evaluation on student outcomes; at the same time, 33% of educators under alternative systems reported that their evaluation system had a substantial influence on student gains.

Teachers were the most optimistic about evaluation systems’ influence on student achievement gains. Thirty-four percent of teachers indicated alternative evaluation systems drive student achievement “a great deal” to “very much,” compared to 20% of specialists.