



# A Descriptive Study of Six Oregon Schools: Report to the Oregon Department of Education

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# A Descriptive Study of Six Oregon Schools: Report to the Oregon Department of Education

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## About Education Northwest

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Founded as a nonprofit corporation in 1966, Education Northwest builds capacity in schools, families, and communities through applied research and development.

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## Executive Summary

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The need to implement high quality instructional practices in struggling schools has generated interest in the characteristics of schools that achieve higher than expected student achievement, especially compared to schools with similar social, economic, and academic characteristics. To this end, Education Northwest conducted this study to describe the local conditions and practices present in six Oregon schools (two elementary, two middle, and two high) that achieved higher than expected student achievement on the 2014–15 Smarter Balanced Assessments in both Math and English Language Arts (ELA), especially compared to similar schools as defined by the Oregon Department of Education. The study methods included principal interviews, teacher focus groups and a teacher survey.

We examined six research-based characteristics associated with higher than expected growth in math and ELA outcomes—leadership, instruction, assessment, collaboration, professional learning, and school conditions for learning. The study schools exhibited many of the conditions that are trademarks of schools with higher than expected growth in academic outcomes. Educators at the participating schools also identified supports that would help maintain their current success.

**Leadership.** School leaders held teachers to high professional standards for delivering instruction and using data to improve student learning. About two thirds of the teachers agreed their school improvement team provided strong leadership and established effective processes for solving problems, and that they had a coherent, shared vision for implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and common achievement expectations. However, not all teachers engaged in school leadership roles, and many teachers said they had a limited voice in regard to curriculum, school improvement, discipline, professional development, and hiring decisions.

**Instruction.** Educators at the study schools expressed the importance of having high expectations for students. These included setting clear expectations for student learning, participation, engagement, and behavior. In addition, the schools were implementing data-driven, multi-tiered, systems of support. Teachers addressed the CCSS in their instruction, and felt very prepared to do so with their general education students. Teachers were less confident in their ability to provide student-centered, culturally responsive, and CCSS-aligned instruction to academically at-risk students, students with disabilities, and students receiving English learner services.

**Assessment.** Teachers and administrators at the study schools used different assessment data for different purposes. Teachers tended to use teacher-developed assessments to make classroom instructional decisions, monitor student progress, and develop curriculum. Administrators used school- or district-developed assessments and the summative statewide assessment to monitor progress of student groups, plan and monitor school improvement, examine longitudinal trends, and plan professional development and supports. Educators identified several problems related

to collecting and using assessment data. Most teachers reported using teacher-developed assessments to identify learning gaps and differentiate instruction for student groups. Less than a third used vendor- or district-developed assessments for these purposes. Although the limited availability of these assessments is problematic, it is unknown whether other factors also influenced their use in the study schools.

**Collaboration and professional learning.** Many study school educators were provided time, and had opportunities to work in collaboration with their colleagues, to improve instruction and grow professionally. These included grade-level, content-area, and staff meetings; collaborative planning time; professional learning communities; supervisor observations; reflective practice opportunities; and workshops and conferences. They learned how to support district and school goals such as shifting to standards-based instruction, implementing new CCSS-aligned curricula, and using student assessment data. They also engaged in a variety of activities to promote student success such as discussing student performance, interventions, learning goals, content to teach/reteach, and instructional strategies; setting common grading and student assessment practices, and developing and reviewing formative or interim assessments.

**School conditions for learning.** Study schools provided a positive environment for staff members to work and students to learn. Educators reported that trust, respect, and dedication among like-minded teachers were characteristic of their school. Teachers and administrators established clear and high expectations of students; provided additional instruction, incentives, and support; and held students accountable. Positive relationships among educators, students, and parents were an integral component of the schools' success. Educators provided students with opportunities to connect with them and with one another, and were intentional in their efforts to communicate with the parents and the community in meaningful ways.

**What supports do educators need?** Educators at the study schools identified a number of needed supports including: (1) learning how to implement and use balanced assessment systems that provide the full range of data needed to inform instructional and administrative decisions; (2) access to reliable and culturally relevant assessments that identify student learning gaps and help inform differentiating instruction among diverse student groups; (3) additional time and resources to learn about and integrate student-centered, culturally-responsive, and standards-based teaching into their classroom instruction to support *all* students; and (4) effective leadership mechanisms that include teachers in decision-making and communication.

**What can Oregon policymakers do?** Policymakers can support rigorous research to increase our knowledge on the school conditions necessary for delivering high quality instruction to every student. They can implement policies and guidance that focus on establishing and sustaining balanced assessment systems that provide multiple sources of assessment data to inform administrative and instruction decisions. Policymakers can also increase the availability of reliable, culturally relevant assessments, and professional development resources to support their use at the local level.



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# Chapter 1

## Approach

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The need to implement high quality instructional practices in struggling schools has generated interest in the characteristics of schools that result in improved student achievement (Abe, Weinstock, Chan, Meyers et al., 2015). Research commonly identifies six characteristics associated with higher levels of academic outcomes—instruction, leadership, assessment, professional learning, collaboration, and school conditions for learning. The research team used the framework of these six characteristics to guide the design of the study as well as the development of data collection measures. A framework of these characteristics is provided in Appendix A.

The purpose of this study is to examine the local conditions and practices implemented in six Oregon schools that achieved higher than expected student achievement on the 2014–15 Smarter Balanced Assessments in both Math and English Language Arts (ELA), especially compared to similar schools as defined by the Oregon Department of Education. The study describes the characteristics of selected schools, including the use of assessment data to analyze student learning gaps and make adjustments in instruction (H.B. 2680, Or. 2015). The specific study questions are:

1. What are the characteristics of these six Oregon schools? What are the conditions present in these schools with regard to instruction, leadership, assessment, professional learning, collaboration, and school conditions for learning?
2. What are the perceived benefits and challenges encountered by administrators and teachers in the study schools? How do the schools address identified challenges?

### **Descriptive Study Methodology and Analytic Approach**

The study methods involved collecting data from key informants on the processes, types of support, and internal resources that participating schools leveraged to promote positive academic outcomes for each student. This included conducting strategic interviews to establish the history and context of instructional work and the supporting conditions in the selected schools, the administration of a survey, and document reviews. Researchers used quantitative and qualitative data analysis procedures to identify common themes and differences among the study schools and triangulated the findings from the interview, focus group, and survey data to identify areas of agreement and disagreement within and among schools. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) was responsible for identifying, selecting, and inviting schools to participate in the study.

## Participants

ODE identified and recruited a purposive sample of six schools (two elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools) based on several considerations:

1. Experienced higher than anticipated performance on 2014–15 Smarter Balanced Assessments in both Mathematics and ELA at multiple grade levels<sup>1</sup> compared to similar schools as defined by the Oregon Department of Education
2. Had high student participation rates on those assessments
3. Included a mix of rural and urban schools
4. Spanned elementary, middle, and high school grade levels
5. Served students who represented diversity in background characteristics and academic support needs.

Table 1 summarizes data from the participating schools' 2014–2015 Oregon Report Cards related to ODE's school selection methodology. It displays the percentage point difference between the percentage of students scoring in Levels 3 and 4 from each participating school and their "like-school average" on the Smarter Balanced Assessments in mathematics and ELA; their geographic location; grade levels served; and select student demographics.

Study participants included administrators, certified teachers, specialists, and other education professionals who worked in the six Oregon schools. After ODE recruited the schools, Education Northwest contacted them to set up times to interview principals, schedule a focus group of up to eight mathematics and ELA teachers, and identify an appropriate time to administer the survey. We collected all data in May and June 2016.

## Interviews and Focus Groups

The research team designed the interview and focus group protocol to (1) collect data on the systems and high leverage practices that participants implemented to increase student achievement and (2) provide in-depth examples from different user perspectives on how policies or practices are played out in the real world in six Oregon schools. The protocol's questions were aligned with the constructs outlined in the research framework. Specifically, the protocol includes questions on instruction, leadership, assessment, professional learning, collaboration, and school conditions for learning to describe the extent to which these conditions were present in study educators' classroom or school. A copy of the protocol and a glossary of acronyms are in Appendix B. The team conducted telephone interviews with all six principals. To yield richer information from teachers who directly implement strategies in the classroom, we conducted four in-person focus groups in four of the six schools. Telephone interviews were conducted with groups of teachers in the remaining two schools.

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<sup>1</sup> Smarter Balanced Assessments were administered for the first time in 2014-15 so data available for this study are limited to a single year.

The research team cleaned and redacted any personally identifiable information from the data. After cleaning, the data were coded using content analysis procedures to identify common themes on the strategies, challenges, and lessons learned related to the research framework, with a particular focus on assessment and instruction practices (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

*Table 1*  
*Characteristics of Participating Schools*

	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
<b>Performance on SBAC</b>						
<i>Compared to Like-School Average in Mathematics</i>						
Level 1	-2.0%	-8.8%	-16.4%	-10.3%	-18.6%	-4.8%
Level 2	+0.2%	+2.8%	-1.2%	-3.7%	+3.6%	-3.0%
Levels 3 & 4	+1.8%	+6.0%	+17.6%	+14.1%	+14.9%	+7.8%
<i>Compared to Like-School Average in English Language Arts</i>						
Level 1	+0.5%	-9.4%	-11.9%	-7.5%	-4.4%	-2.9%
Level 2	+3.5%	+4.2%	-3.8%	-4.7%	-7.2%	+1.4%
Levels 3 & 4	-5.0%	+5.2%	+15.7%	+12.2%	+11.6%	+1.5%
<b>Geographic Location</b>						
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Urban	Rural	Rural
<b>School Level</b>						
	Elem	Elem	Middle	Middle	High	High
<b>Background Characteristics</b>						
White	0–20%	61–80%	41–60%	61–80%	81–100%	81–100%
Nonwhite	81–100%	21–40%	41–60%	21–40%	0–20%	0–20%
<b>Socioeconomic Factors</b>						
Economically Disadvantaged	***	***	61–80%	41–60%	41–60%	21–40%
Students with Disabilities	11–20%	11–20%	0–10%	11–20%	11–20%	11–20%
English Learners	41–60%	0–20%	41–60%	0–20%	0–20%	0–20%
Different Languages Spoken	11–20	0–10	21–30	11–20	0–10	0–10
Regular Attenders	81–100%	81–100%	81–100%	81–100%	61–80%	61–80%
Mobile Students	21–30%	21–30%	11–20%	0–10%	11–20%	11–20%
<b>General</b>						
Students enrolled	0–500	0–500	500–1,000	500–1,000	0–500	500–1,000
Title I	Focus	–	Model	–	–	–
Graduation rate	–	–	–	–	81–100%	61–80%
Completion rate	–	–	–	–	81–100%	81–100%
Dropout rate	–	–	–	–	0–2%	0–2%
Continuing education	–	–	–	–	61–80%	41–60%



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\*\*\*Indicates that, in 2014–15, this school offered lunch at no charge to all students.

Note: SBAC refers to Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

## Teacher Survey on Instructional Practices in Oregon Schools

The teacher survey includes both fixed-response items and open-ended questions to gather the participants' perspectives on the practices they implement to promote students' academic success. The survey addressed the characteristics and indicators in the research framework and collected educators' perceptions of the instructional practices, leadership, professional development, and overall collegial environment in their school. It also recorded information about the use of assessment data to inform instructional decisions. A copy of the survey is in Appendix C. Paper surveys were provided to the schools, with directions that they be completed by certified teachers, a suggestion that they be completed during a regular staff meeting to increase response rates, confidentiality envelopes for teachers to enclose their survey prior to returning it to their administrator, and a means for administrators to return the completed surveys to Education Northwest. Education Northwest sent a total of 137 surveys to the six Oregon schools and received 105 completed surveys in return, representing a 77 percent response rate, overall. Table 2 describes survey response rates overall and by school level.

*Table 2*  
*Survey Participation, Overall and by School Level*

School Level	Surveys Sent	Surveys Returned	Response Rate
Elementary School	31	23	74%
Middle School	66	52	79%
High School	40	30	75%
All Schools	137	105	77%

Research team members transferred the responses from the paper surveys to an electronic format and cleaned the data prior to conducting analyses. The team calculated overall frequencies and percentages for survey items as well as cross tabulations by school level. These school-level results are included in Appendix D. We also conducted in-depth comparisons among sets of questions to identify trends or relationships. Across the eight composite scales we found reliabilities, using Cronbach's alpha, ranging from 0.86 to 0.98. Appendix E contains more information about this analysis.

The research team also analyzed content for open-ended questions using methods similar to those described above for the interview and focus group data. There were a total of 222 comments from the open-ended question at the end of the survey, "In your opinion, what are three reasons that your school is achieving higher than expected academic outcomes for students?" Of these comments, the highest percentage related to school conditions for learning such as school climate and teacher collegiality (38%). The remaining comments were about instruction (34%), leadership (15%), collaboration (12%), and assessment (1%). Just one comment addressed the professional learning characteristic. A summary of these comments is included at the end of the survey section in its respective chapter.

## **Document Review**

Education Northwest asked administrators to share documents related to assessment and data use, such as their comprehensive assessment plan, including assessment policies, rules, and procedures; a professional development calendar and agendas; their school improvement plan; and state report card. Very few of the documents requested were received so the research team also downloaded report cards directly from the ODE website. Because of the sparsity of documents received and the inconsistency in their format and structure, researchers only analyzed the School Report Cards. Appendix F contains a summary of documents received and this analysis.

## **Limitations**

This report has several limitations. First and foremost, only six schools participated in the descriptive study. As such, the findings in this report may not be representative of other schools in Oregon that experienced higher than anticipated performance compared with similar schools, or of other schools in Oregon. Second, because of limitations on the educators' time, there may not have been sufficient time to discuss each interview or focus group question fully. If no evidence was found of an indicator associated with any framework condition, it could be that participants did not discuss it, and not that the condition does not exist in their school.

## **Structure of this Report**

In structuring the report, the authors chose to address each of the six characteristics included in the research framework in its own chapter.

Within each chapter we present the following:

1. Findings from the survey results, including summaries from the open-ended question
2. Common themes from interviews with principals and focus groups with teachers describing how their school implemented each framework characteristic, including summaries of challenges staff members expressed during these discussions.

## Chapter 2

### Instruction

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The research framework used includes six indicators of effective instruction: high expectations for every student, responsibility for performance, customized instruction and interventions, student engagement strategies, ongoing curriculum improvement, and efficient use of instructional time.

### Survey Results

Most teachers agreed they set learning goals and expectations for students and gave them opportunities to take ownership of their learning (Table 3). Three quarters agreed they provided substantive feedback to students, but less than two thirds agreed they were very skilled in providing student-centered and culturally responsive instruction.

*Table 3*  
*Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” With Instruction Survey Items*

Survey Items	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”
I set clear learning goals and expectations for my students	98	92% (90)
I give my students opportunities to take ownership of their learning	98	90% (88)
I regularly provide substantive feedback to students	98	77% (75)
I am very skilled in providing student-centered instruction that is informed by formative assessment data	98	57% (56)
I am very skilled in providing culturally-responsive instructional practices to address achievement gaps	98	52% (51)

About two thirds of teachers agreed they had sufficient access to resources to support quality instruction (Table 4). These resources most often included office equipment and supplies, and slightly less often included instructional technology, instructional materials, and professional support personnel.

*Table 4*  
*Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” They Have Sufficient Access to Resources to Support Quality Instruction Survey Items*

Survey Items	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or Agree
Office equipment and supplies such as copy machines, paper, pens, etc.	102	77% (78)
Instructional technology, including computers, printers, software, and reliable Internet access to support instructional practices	102	64% (65)
Appropriate instructional materials	102	63% (64)
A broad range of professional support personnel such as content area specialists, behavior specialists, etc.	102	59% (60)

Just over half of the teachers said they have fully incorporated the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) into their teaching practice (Table 5). Fewer agreed that their students could master the CCSS, that their instructional materials were aligned to the CCSS, and that they had sufficient resources to implement the CCSS. Less than one third of teachers agreed that implementing the CCSS has improved student learning and/or their teaching and classroom practice.

*Table 5*  
*Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” With CCSS Survey Items*

Survey Items	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or Agree
I have fully incorporated the CCSS into my teaching practice	95	57% (54)
I believe strongly that my students can master the CCSS	98	47% (46)
My classroom textbooks and other main curricular materials are aligned with the CCSS	97	45% (44)
I have sufficient resources on evidence-based practices to implement the CCSS	98	45% (44)
I believe that implementing the CCSS has greatly improved learning for the majority of my students	99	3 <sup>1</sup> % (31)
I believe implementing the CCSS has improved my teaching and classroom practice	97	30% (29)

The majority of teachers (79%) agreed they were very prepared to teach the CCSS to their general education students (Table 6). Fewer teachers felt prepared to do so with academically at risk students; still fewer felt prepared to do so with students with disabilities; and the fewest felt prepared to do so with students receiving English learner services (38%).

**Table 6**  
**Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” They Are Very Prepared to Teach the CCSS to Different Student Groups**

Student Groups	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or Agree
General education students	97	79% (77)
Other academically at-risk students	97	50% (48)
Students with disabilities	97	44% (43)
Students receiving English learner services	97	38% (37)

One third of the comments in response to the open-ended question at the end of the survey addressed the research framework characteristic of instruction. Almost half of these comments referenced the importance of setting high expectations for students and staff members and holding them accountable.

*The teachers place high expectations on students for academic/behavioral goals and follow through. (Teacher)*

Teachers’ next most frequent comments were regarding the importance of strong instructional practices.

*We always keep the standards in the forefront of our teaching and teach the students according to their ability levels to help them move forward. (Teacher)*

The last area addressed by teachers in these comments was the ability to differentiate instruction and to provide necessary supports to students who need them.

## **Interview and Focus Group Findings**

We found strong evidence of four of the six indicators that define effective instruction in the six study schools: customized instruction and interventions, high expectations for every student, student engagement strategies, and ongoing curriculum improvement.

### **Customized Instruction and Interventions**

First and foremost, every administrator, and teachers in all focus groups, emphasized the importance of customizing instruction and interventions for students. Most principals referred to the importance of using data to identify student needs and responding accordingly. Teams of educators (e.g., data teams, professional learning communities [PLCs]) and individual teachers used data from a variety of assessments (e.g., pre-post and common assessments) to identify existing knowledge and gaps in order to plan grade-level and/or individual student instruction. It was common practice for school teams to use student assessment data for identifying the extent to which students were attaining

learning objectives and determining what content needed further instruction, or if students were ready to move on.

*In...PLCs...we focus very much on what kids are learning, what we want them to learn, and how to address those challenges. We use a team analysis of common assessments (TACA) form – which encourages teachers to reflect on assessments we are giving and adjust those and teaching strategies. We identify who struggled and discuss how we fix it. Teachers discuss what they are doing differently that caused their students to get better results. (Principal)*

*We use DIBELS [Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills] for reading and math – DIBELS is given three times for benchmark. For students who are in the yellow zone, we monitor progress every 10 days. Every six weeks, teams look at students who are not making adequate progress according to their aim lines. We progress-monitor students who are receiving interventions – teachers review the data every six weeks, look at the students' trajectory. We also look at cohorts of students, intervention groups – questions we ask include "Is it an outlier or is it the group?" to determine interventions. We shuffle and move kids around as needed. Flexible grouping is used to target the skills students need. (Principal)*

Differentiated support was another common theme. Principals reported that their school was implementing intervention blocks, providing students with *high levels of support* both in terms of staff time and materials, and were challenging students at all levels:

*Providing opportunities for students to learn important skills and information that challenge them at whatever their level is; if it is a slow learner that struggles with reading and math and you have to provide extra support – but it's still challenging to them. (Principal)*

Teachers in all focus groups also highlighted the importance of differentiating instruction for students as a component of quality teaching. Teachers shared the importance of providing "student-centered" instruction that focused on outcomes, using data to identify where students are and "grow them from there," "breaking down lessons so they are accessible for all populations," and finding high-interest texts that individual students want to read. Differentiated instruction often occurred during classroom time; sometimes individualized or small-group instruction was provided to students during afterschool hours.

*Levels of reading intervention – individualized for students. There's a lot of thought and process that goes into using data to get an accurate picture of where they are/what they need. (Teacher)*

## **High Expectations for Every Student**

Most principals and teacher focus groups addressed the importance of setting and communicating high expectations. Principals want their students to know what is expected of

them—class participation, homework, focus on learning objectives—but also that the building staff care about them and want them to be successful. Essential to this was establishing positive relationships between the staff and students.

*Making sure we have good relationships with kids and that they understand that we care about their learning, the level of success they are having, and that we are not ok with them floating through. We set high expectations that they (students) do and turn in homework and participate in class. We build a rapport with them so they know we care about them and their level of effort, with the understanding, but not an excuse, that there are outside factors that might impede that and that is part of life (that they have to work through problems). (Principal)*

According to teachers, expectations tended to pertain to students' education in general rather than performance in the classroom. Educational expectations mostly involved letting students know the staff members' vision—that they will graduate, be successful, and reach their highest potential. Furthermore, students knew that the school exhibited an atmosphere of learning and that learning was what they were to do there.

*We want to get every student to graduation – it is a realistic possibility – it is possible because we have done it four years in a row! (Teacher)*

Similar to principals, many teacher focus groups highlighted the importance of relationships in setting and holding students accountable to expectations. Teachers built relationships with students in and out of the classroom. They reported having small class sizes, and teachers and administrators acknowledged students in the hallways and celebrated their successes. Teachers were involved in sporting events and knew students' families. They indicated liking their students and sacrificing their personal time in order to do what was necessary for students to understand they cared about them.

*Part of the expectation, is that we are spending extra hours to do things with students. We are staying late or taking work home to grade. Students know we are there to care for them. (Teacher)*

## **Student Engagement Strategies**

Almost all principals and many teacher focus groups identified student engagement as a critical component of good instruction. Principals want all students “engaged and paying attention to what we are doing and contributing to class.” They want teachers to provide students with multiple opportunities to respond, time to engage in work with partners, and content and activities that are relevant to students' lives.

*When we walk into classrooms and do observations, those that are the most rewarding to see aren't the dog and pony show or worksheets, but kids engaged, asking questions, and inquiring and furthering their own learning. (Principal)*

Teachers addressed the importance of setting expectations for class participation and using strategies like choral responses, I do/we do, reducing teacher talk, and encouraging students to “make the learning their own and rearticulate the content in their own words.” Teachers also reported paying attention to pacing, incorporating technology, and making sure applications were relevant.

*Pacing is important and engagement – if there’s a lot of teacher talk, goes too long, students lose attention; if the lesson includes technology and modern applications and what they can relate to and are interested in (creative lessons) it keeps them; that’s good instruction. (Teacher)*

We explicitly asked principals and teachers how their school ensured student engagement. In their responses, they addressed engagement in the classroom and spoke of the use of a variety of strategies such as including engagement in observation protocols; using strategies advocated by Jensen (2013) and Ladson-Billings (1994): planning intentionally and including student interaction and movement in lessons; and teachers sharing their enthusiasm for the content, giving students choice, providing authentic learning opportunities, and using inquiry and sheltered instruction techniques.

*During debriefs I explore with the teachers by asking, ‘How can we increase engagement? How would you know that all students got this? Can we use academic conversation between students or turn and talk before asking for answers so everyone has a chance to talk instead of just one student?’ (Principal)*

*It is up to the individual teaching strategy – I want students to talk, I ask students questions and they have to talk about it. (Teacher)*

## **Ongoing Curriculum Improvement**

According to principals, all six study schools had adopted and were using the CCSS in mathematics and ELA. Most principals described a district-led process that involved teams of educators who worked to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment of the standards across the subject area. For example, one principal reported their team developed a “standards map that outlines the CCSS standards for ELA [at] each grade level.” Adoption included professional development, sometimes involving only subject-specific teachers and sometimes involving all staff members, which usually included establishing language/learning objectives/targets, curriculum mapping, and developing assessment strategies. Most principals also reported the adoption of new curriculum as part of that process.

*Last year, we used [curriculum] and saw incredible student growth; we attributed that to the curriculum that anchored teachers and gave them a common language. The curriculum is aligned with the CCSS. Teachers choose a priority standard and work on “unwrapping” the standard, i.e., identifying the skills that students need to learn to meet the standard. The ESD [Educational Service District] has a specialist that helps teachers*



*with the curriculum and helps plan professional development – strong critical thinking and problem solving focus. Now with lesson studies, teachers study each other and get students to explain what they are learning. (Principal)*

Teachers in a few focus groups also indicated that the CCSS adoption effort was district-led or involved district staff members. They, too, indicated the inclusion of curriculum adoptions in that process, as well as the professional development they received to support it. Similar to principals, teachers indicated that professional development included establishing language/learning objectives or targets, curriculum mapping, and developing assessment strategies. Teachers also mentioned “unpacking” the standards and identifying “power” standards and addressing depth of knowledge, critical thinking, and problem solving. In some cases, teachers commented that support continued as a result of having access to coaches. Finally, when asked about good instruction, most teacher focus groups highlighted the importance of addressing standards:

*We were fortunate enough to have a text book adoption that has the Common Core goals and assessments – adoption timing was excellent, curriculum mapping in district and time to map out what we will teach, and doing that collaboratively so that all students have exposure to the same material and we can build on that from year to year. (Teacher)*

In addition to aligning instruction to the CCSS or using a CCSS-aligned curriculum, many principals and teachers addressed the way in which they were improving the curriculum on a regular basis. Almost all principals discussed ways that educators participated in ongoing curricular improvement. Most often, principals discussed the importance of observing teachers and providing feedback; principals also advocated for teacher reflection, PLCs, and coaching. One principal described a support cycle that included professional development, time for “safe practice” with specific feedback and coaching, and, finally, assessment of the extent to which the professional development became part of the instructional routine through formal evaluation. Principals wanted to provide teachers opportunities to reflect on their work and its impact through formal strategies such as lesson studies and PLCs, and informally in their everyday practice.

Most teacher focus groups also included a discussion on the importance of ongoing curricular improvement, especially as it occurred during PLC meetings. PLCs provided time for teachers to focus on aligning the standards to the curriculum, reviewing data, discussing evidence-based practices, and identifying what is or is not working in their classroom settings.

*We focus more on the PLC aspect. As a department, we are really focused on seeing that standards are taught in the courses and that we use common assessments and common scoring for those assessments. We are working together as a department; that did not happen before PLCs. We are now more student-focused than in the past. It has worked well for us; we share teaching strategies: “yours did better than mine; what are you doing*

*different?" We all strive to be better and are seeing that reflected in what we are doing. (Teacher)*

*Marzano is research-based, CASL [Classroom Assessment for Student Learning]—use what others come up with based on research; constructing meaning. (Teacher)*

Finally, schools purchased supplemental programs and teachers enriched their instruction to ensure they were addressing critical components of the new standards such as critical thinking, problem solving, perseverance, constructing meaning, articulating reason, demonstrating skills, and communicating.

*Last year I attended a Title 1 conference and sat on a Smarter Balanced meeting. I purchased some coaching support to work on curriculum during the day. That was a good investment...It's a curriculum to prepare students for the assessment – looks like a reading or math curriculum, but with very specific targets. For example, one of the first lessons for 6th grade was how to make inferences. All the lessons have very specific targets that are clearly mimicked after SBAC. Students do extended answers, small essay... (Principal)*

*Now I focus in more depth in particular topics, building skills and problem solving; some of the math fun stuff has gone out the window in meeting the CCSS graduation requirement. (Teacher)*

### **Responsibility for Performance and Efficient Use of Instructional Time**

Principals and teachers did mention the importance of being responsible for performance and the efficient use of instructional time – but these two indicators were not the overwhelming focus of their view of effective instruction.

*We have a master schedule that is developed with teachers. The master schedule includes 90 minute blocks for reading, 70 minute math blocks – teachers are expected to teach according to the master schedule. We are trying to add a 30 minute reading intervention block. (Principal)*

### **Expressed Challenges**

Across focus groups, some teachers expressed challenges related to instruction, particularly in regard to districtwide curriculum adoptions and the CCSS. A few staff members spoke to the challenges of losing input in the case of districtwide curriculum adoptions:

*Right now, English and writing are focuses of the district. You end up with less control now that someone at district level is in charge of curriculum; we have not had the amount of say as we have in the past. (Teacher)*

Teachers at a couple of schools addressed a variety of challenges related to implementing the CCSS. These included their breadth, differences in grading, lack of research regarding implementation, and how the focus on math and reading through the CCSS is not supported in school budgets.

*CCSS have become more useful as we have been able to cull out the power standards and not be overwhelmed by the entirety of the standards that exist in ELA. The real challenge is to winnow it down to a focusable set of standards you can do justice to. There is also the challenge of putting marks in a grade book...I like CCSS as curriculum guides, but to report out in the gradebook is a challenge. (Teacher)*

## Chapter 3

### Collaboration

The research framework used includes three indicators that define effective collaboration: shared goals among teachers, principals, other staff members and parents; problem solving at all levels; and strong staff communication.

### Survey Results

Most teachers (at least 90%) reported participating in meetings with teachers in their grade or content area to promote student success by discussing student performance, interventions, goal setting, and instructional strategies (planning, aligning, and evaluating) (Table 7). Slightly fewer teachers (81%–84%) reported setting common grading and student assessment practices and developing and reviewing formative or interim assessments. The fewest teachers (less than 50%) discussed culturally responsive practices.

*Table 7*  
*Percentage of Teachers Participating in Various Activities during Grade Level or Content Area Meetings and, of Those, the Percentage of Teachers Indicating Those Activities Resulted in a “Moderate” or “Large” Positive Effect on the Quality of Their Teaching*

Survey Item	N	Percentage (Number) Responding	
		Participated	“Moderate” or “Large” Effect
Discussing student performance	100	95% (95)	82% (77)
Discussing interventions for struggling students	100	91% (91)	80% (72)
Setting goals	99	91% (90)	72% (64)
Planning, aligning, and evaluating instructional strategies	100	90% (90)	84% (75)
Setting common grading and student assessment practices	100	84% (84)	70% (58)
Reviewing formative or interim assessment results to improve instruction	100	83% (83)	75% (62)
Developing formative or interim assessments	101	81% (82)	77% (63)
Discussing culturally responsive practices	100	40% (40)	68% (26)

Teachers who participated in these activities, generally found them effective. The ones that most teachers reported having a “moderate” or “large” effect on the quality of their instruction included discussing student performance, interventions, and instructional strategies (planning, aligning, and evaluating). Activities that fewer teachers (68%–77%) reported having a “moderate” or “large” effect on the quality of their instruction included developing and

reviewing formative or interim assessments, setting goals and common grading and student assessment practices, and discussing culturally responsive practices.

About one in ten teachers provided open-ended survey comments about the research framework characteristic of collaboration. Just over half of these comments spoke to the importance of having shared goals and a genuine team approach in supporting one another and students.

*Our board, administrators, and teachers work as a team with high standards and expectations.*  
(Teacher)

Just less than half of the comments provided by teachers referenced their work in PLCs.

*Professional collaboration/development; PLC, aligning curriculum; observing each other teach; willing to learn from each other, change and grow; leadership, common goal.* (Teacher)

## **Interview and Focus Group Findings**

We found strong evidence of two of the three indicators that define effective collaboration in the study schools: shared goals among teachers, principals, other staff members, and parents, and problem solving at all levels.

### **Shared Goals among Teachers, Principals, Other Staff Members and Parents**

All of the interviewed principals reported using various meetings as venues to ensure staff members understood district or school goals, especially those tied to the school improvement plan and progress indicators. Opportunities included staff meetings, in-service professional development opportunities, and the teacher evaluation process. For example, one principal reported that communication through these venues provided an opportunity for:

*Accountability and clear direction with professional development and support from coaches (reading, math). Teachers are held accountable, but are provided resources and support through modeling, coaching, differentiated professional development, and working with other teachers...* (Principal)

Another principal indicated using a variety of avenues to share the vision/goals “during and after observation discussions; discussed at team meetings, training at the beginning of year, and other meetings during the year as we roll out core focus areas.”

According to principals, PLCs were another key setting for teachers to develop a shared understanding of and strategies for addressing goals. Although the work in which educators engaged during PLC time varied, most included using assessment data to

identify a need, and discussing strategies to address it. For example one school data team "...identified areas where assessment scores were low and strategies to address them schoolwide." Specifically, based on assessment data, a gap was identified in students' ability to take notes. Teachers taught all students four different note-taking strategies and provided multiple opportunities for students to practice the strategies as part of their classwork. All teachers agreed to use the strategies as part of their instructional routine and incorporated their use in course assignments. A second principal described how teachers in a PLC used the CCSS and assessments as the central focus of their discussions:

*Each week the PLCs look at the upcoming standard, write a true learning objective/I can statement, and build assessments (simple or lengthy). They also review the assessment data from the previous week using summative and formative data, bringing in anything from a small assessment, exit ticket, to semester data (e.g., SBAC, DIBELS, SRI [Scholastic Reading Inventory]).* (Principal)

As presented earlier, most teacher focus groups/interviews also included discussion of the expectations of teachers from students. These were often tied to overarching goals the administration had for students—that all students will graduate, be successful, and reach their highest potential. Teachers said they understood they should address common goals of their school or district that were introduced through professional development opportunities and then reinforced during the evaluation process and in PLC meetings.

Both principals and teachers addressed the importance of PLCs in supporting staff collaboration and teamwork. Teachers also addressed the importance of dedicated time to plan with other grade-level teachers as well as specialists and support personnel in the building. Principals explained their approach to team work, indicating it was expected and modeled and that time for collaboration was protected because "everything that is done when we work together, it gets done better and implemented better." One teacher explained PLCs in this way:

*The biggest thing is the PLC; we get to meet weekly, that's a nice centerfold, and we stay on top of the kids' learning. We have our weekly staff meeting. Outside of school, we have get-togethers, and that gets overlooked, but staff parties at times. It is a big deal and necessary. It creates the cohesion because we're all so different and we realize we may not be as different as we think. We get together for "data day." We look at our data. Then our leadership teams, once a month. We're not isolated in our rooms, we're a team. But we're still free to be individuals.* (Teacher)

Other common venues for collaborative teamwork included various school level committees such as leadership team and site council, grade level/department team meetings, staff meetings, and committee meetings formed around achieving school improvement goals (e.g., family involvement, Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS), literacy).

Principals and teachers also addressed communicating a common vision to stakeholders. In many instances the site council was a vehicle for gathering feedback from and sharing information with school staff members, students, and parents. While the interview/focus group protocol specifically reported on home–school relationships, several educators commented outside of this area about how others were included in understanding the vision:

*Relationships are key, so we did a lot of training with staff in that regard (86% of our families are from poverty) such as how to communicate with families as well. That's a challenge; teachers think families don't care, they won't come. We have made it clear that we are partners and want to have [positive] relationships with you and your child and that has made a huge impact on school climate. (Principal)*

*School leaders are supportive when it comes to parent and student conversations. They are available if asked. The discussions are not about the behavior but our vision and priorities. (Teacher)*

### **Problem Solving at All Levels and Strong Staff Communication**

Principals and teachers did not specifically identify problem solving as a key component of effective collaboration. However, they described using data at a variety of team meetings to identify needs and develop strategies to address those. They often discussed how to tackle both student (academic and behavior) and staff needs through common instructional strategies and professional development offerings. These areas are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, Assessment.

Finally, while principals described communicating with staff members in a variety of ways including meetings, observations, or email, it was mentioned as a critical component of effective collaboration by only a few principals:

*Open and honest communication—facilitated electronically or in person at staff meetings—to make sure we are working together to solve problems (not top down, although sometimes it has to be). (Principal)*

### **Expressed Challenges**

Across all interviews and focus groups, educators commented on two challenges associated with collaboration. First, staff members described how a lack of vision, weak focus on goals, or poor staff buy-in contributes to implementation challenges.

*Shared vision – I think since [principal] came aboard, that shared vision was there. It wasn't there before – it was a little chaotic. (Teacher)*

*I took the leadership team to that conference, gave me some leeway. I was not the only one telling them – but others saying this is what works and makes a difference, focus on what*

*we have power over and do it really well – then I was not the only one repeating it; staff who attended were also able to pass that message along and it worked really well; more understanding by staff. (Principal)*

Second, staff members at two schools reported challenges related to communication. These challenges focused on the difficulty of maintaining communication about multiple initiatives while keeping the focus on achieving their goals, the time it takes to communicate effectively, and the ability to communicate messages to all staff members.

*Vision brought up during staff meetings – staff meetings are twice a month, trying to make sure spent on meaningful communication, what is important, and how to keep school moving and students learning. (Principal)*



## Chapter 4

### Leadership

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The research framework used includes four indicators that define effective leadership: strong district, building, and instructional leadership; focus on learning and growth; commitment to give change time; and persistence.

#### Survey Results

The majority of teachers (71%) agreed that they and their leadership had a coherent, shared vision for implementing the CCSS (Table 8). Slightly fewer agreed their faculty had effective processes for solving problems, that colleagues agreed upon and embraced common achievement expectations, and that their school improvement team provided effective leadership.

*Table 8*  
*Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with Leadership Structure Survey Items*

Survey Items	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”
Teaching staff and leadership have a coherent, shared vision for implementing the state-adopted content standards	102	71% (72)
Our faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems	103	68% (70)
Colleagues agree upon and embrace common achievement expectations	103	68% (70)
The school improvement team provides effective leadership at this school	101	66% (67)
I participate in school leadership role(s)	102	58% (59)

The lowest percentage of teachers said they participated in school leadership roles (Table 8) and fifty percent or less agreed they were satisfied with their level of influence and input in a variety of decision areas (Table 9). About half agreed they had a voice in decisions regarding curriculum, school improvement, and discipline; less than a third agreed they had a voice in regard to professional development and hiring decisions.

**Table 9**  
**Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” They Are Very Satisfied With Their Level of Influence and Input into School Decisions**

Survey Items	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or Agree”
Selecting curriculum	100	50% (50)
Planning school improvement	103	47% (48)
Developing and implementing student discipline procedures	102	44% (45)
Selecting in-service professional development program topics and content	102	32% (33)
Selecting new teachers to this school	97	28% (27)

\* Pearson Chi-Square  $p \leq 0.05$

Most teachers (more than 85%) agreed their leadership emphasized high expectations for every student, held them to high professional standards, and ensured they used data to improve student learning (Table 10). About three-quarters of teachers agreed their leadership provided constructive feedback about teaching. About half of the teachers agreed their leadership established a balanced assessment system and provided opportunities to discuss the school vision or collect input on school policies and practices from a variety of stakeholders.

**Table 10**  
**Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that the Leadership in Their School Engages in a Variety of Behaviors**

Survey Items	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or Agree”
Emphasizes high expectations of success for each and every student	103	90% (93)
Holds teachers to high professional standards for delivering instruction	103	90% (93)
Ensures teachers are using data to improve student learning	103	87% (90)
Provides constructive feedback that helps teachers improve teaching	103	76% (78)
Has established a balanced assessment system that includes formative, interim, and summative assessments to improve instruction	103	59% (61)
Provides opportunities to discuss our vision with staff, parents, and key stakeholders on providing the best education to our students	103	55% (57)
Collects input from students, parents, and other community partners to design important policies and practices at our school	103	54% (56)

Fifteen percent of the responses to the open-ended survey question addressed leadership characteristics. Most of these comments spoke to the strength of the leadership and their commitment to the teaching staff and students.

*Strong principal who knows all students in the high school, is up to date on assessment requirements, and is dedicated to the success of students. He is actively involved in state testing, stressing to students the importance of their own success. (Teacher)*

Another area teachers' comments addressed was the importance of administrators giving teachers more control over their classrooms.

## **Interview and Focus Group Findings**

We found strong evidence of two of the four indicators that define effective leadership: strong district, building, and instructional leadership and focus on learning and growth.

### **Strong District, Building, and Instructional Leadership**

Principals addressed a variety of ways in which their district administrators supported them as instructional leaders. Most principals said their district provided them with professional development by supporting PLCs and coaches. For staff members, districts provided coaches, mentors, district-level training or school-specific professional development requested by principals. In addition to supporting professional development, districts provided schools with specialists such as school improvement directors, district reading coaches, information technology staff, principal coaches, behavior specialists, program assistants, and district math assistants. These types of supports alleviated duties that might instead fall on principals, allowing them to devote time to instructional needs. They also provided a sense of a team working together to support teachers and students. One principal commented:

*Support us as being instructional leaders in the classroom as much as possible and protect us from other duties. (Principal)*

Finally, two other common supports principals received from their districts were vision and consistency.

*...the consistency across the district between schools. Key is really developing a common district mission, consistent way of doing things, common language. (Principal)*

A majority of educators viewed the leadership team as a key organizational structure within their schools, but the teams' membership varied across schools. Most leadership teams included a variety of staff members, such as the principal and vice principal; teachers from different grade level teams and/or content areas; representatives from special

education, psychology, counseling, Title 1, English Language Development, and school improvement departments; classified staff; and ODE coaches. In one small district, the leadership team was a district leadership team that included the superintendent, principals, the business manager, and the special education director. In another school, the leadership team also served as site council and included PLC leaders and student and parent representatives.

*Leadership team is new, started three years ago, replaced site council. It's a nice opportunity for teachers to be involved with administrators and work towards common goals. It's real positive with that team...* (Teacher)

A commonly mentioned benefit of leadership teams was the voice it provided to its various representatives:

*Leadership team — that made a difference. Prior to my arrival there was no leadership team and teachers didn't feel that they had a voice; now we have leadership team and committees based on our five Title 1 indicators. We meet once a month (teachers and classified staff) and look at PBIS incentives and how to get families in the building.* (Principal)

Leadership teams functioned differently across the six study schools. A few addressed both district and school agenda items. In one small school, district staff members participated in a discussion of district-level agenda items and then excused themselves so the school team could continue discussing how to implement the district items at their school and other school-level needs. In another school where the team met twice a month, the first meeting of the month was focused on an administrative-driven agenda and the second meeting used a school staff member-driven agenda. A teacher commented “What is happening at the district level, the administrator is being coached to lead in their building, and then it trickles down to us.” Some educators commented that the school leadership team acted as a filter to the district agenda. For example, one teacher commented:

*Our principal tells us if this is something we have to do because it comes from a higher level. But, he/she tells us “here is how we can make this our own.” He/she asks us “How can we move around in this box? How can we make this something that we fit into our building?” Our administration is good at saying that this is a “have to and we have to work on this” or “Here is a suggestion – what do you guys think?”* (Teacher)

In addressing school-level initiatives, some schools did so as a leadership team while others used a committee structure. One school used their PLC time to handle these topics. Once a month, their PLC time is a staff meeting, and for about half of those staff meetings, staff members break into groups to tackle issues. These “alternate PLCs” are staff-led, providing staff members with leadership opportunities. Another principal described their structure as follows:

*Every staff member has to sign up for one of three teams (PBIS, family involvement, literacy best practices). They look into professional development, bring in new ideas, and develop activities. It's really very effective, gets teacher buy-in, they are presenting to peers, and builds shared/distributed leadership. (Principal)*

### **Focus on Learning and Growth, Commitment to Give Change Time, and Persistence**

Principals and teachers infrequently mentioned these three indicators when responding to leadership questions during interviews and focus groups. However, the study schools' focus on learning and growth is evident from their previous comments. Some principals and teachers mentioned how important it is for educators to grow their skills as professionals and for students to grow from wherever their starting point is:

*Looking at pre and post assessments in PLCs, it's easy to look at all students and their needs and get overwhelmed. But when we break down pre and post and see a level of growth, and that it's recognized and supported even if it's still not where they need to be, it's an incentive for teachers to strive to widen that growth. (Teacher)*

One principal addressed how they kept focus:

*One thing we do different – we don't jump on every bandwagon or trend, we try to focus on a few principles and see if they work; monitor, and if working work to strengthen; if not, get rid of it. (Principal)*

Educators frequently mentioned that the CCSS adoption had occurred over time and one principal responded in regard to PLCs:

*...sharing teaching strategies with each other – takes guts and trust to share that kind of data. We've been at it years and are just getting to that point now where they are sharing how their room is different from another teacher's room. (Principal)*

### **Expressed Challenges**

Educators did not identify challenges in these areas.

## Chapter 5

# Assessment

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The research framework used included three indicators that define effective assessment practices: regular, systematic use of assessments and analysis of data; identifying what is working and what is not; and using data in the classroom to drive improvement.

### Survey Results

The majority of teachers (79%–89%) used teacher-developed classroom assessments for most of the various assessment purposes—planning and differentiating instruction; monitoring student progress; identifying academically at-risk students, learning gaps, and interventions; setting daily learning targets; and developing curriculum (Table 11). Fewer teachers (35%–55%) used school- or district-developed assessments and other classroom data for these purposes. Less than a third of the teachers used purchased and the statewide summative assessments for these purposes.

Other trends in regard to these less-used assessments included teachers using:

- Purchased assessments to plan instruction (52%) and develop curriculum (45%)
- Statewide summative assessment to plan classroom instruction (36%) and examine longitudinal trends (38%)

The largest percentages of teachers (52%–66%) reported their school used school- or district-developed assessment and the summative statewide assessment for a variety of purposes—monitoring student progress, planning and monitoring school improvement, examining longitudinal trends, and planning professional development and supports. Less than a third of the teachers reported their school used teacher-developed classroom assessments, purchased assessments, and other classroom data for these purposes.

Other common trends on how schools are using different types of assessments include:

- Teacher-developed assessments to monitor student progress (61%)
- Purchased assessments to monitor student progress (48%) and plan school improvement (35%)
- Statewide summative assessment to plan school improvement (68%)

Between one and two thirds of teachers reported that their school used the widest variety of assessments to monitor student progress and to develop the school improvement plan.

**Table 11**  
**Percentage of Teachers Reporting Their Use, and Their School's Use, of Assessments for a Variety of Purposes**

Assessment Purpose	N	Percentage (Number) Using the Type of Assessment by Assessment Purpose				
		Teacher-Developed Classroom Assessments	School- or District-Developed Assessments	Purchased (e.g., Vendor Developed) Assessments	Statewide Summative Assessment	Other Classroom Data
How Teachers Use Assessment Data						
Planning my classroom instruction	103	89% (92)	49% (50)	52% (53)	36% (37)	38% (39)
Developing curriculum	100	79% (79)	50% (50)	45% (45)	20% (20)	30% (30)
Setting daily learning targets	103	84% (86)	29% (30)	23% (24)	10% (10)	27% (28)
Monitoring student progress	102	89% (91)	42% (43)	32% (33)	21% (21)	36% (37)
Identifying student learning gaps	102	84% (86))	35% (36)	27% (27)	23% (23)	36% (37)
Differentiating instruction for a student and/or groups of students	103	88% (91)	37% (38)	22% (23)	13% (13)	36% (37)
Identifying students who require additional interventions and support	102	89% (91)	47% (48)	24% (24)	25% (25)	40% (41)
Identifying interventions and support to match individual student needs	101	87% (88)	41% (41)	28% (28)	19% (19)	35% (35)
Differentiating instruction to accommodate a student with an IEP	102	86% (88)	42% (43)	20% (20)	15% (15)	38% (39)
Examining longitudinal trends in student achievement	102	61% (62)	41% (42)	28% (28)	38% (39)	27% (27)
How Schools Use Assessment Data						
Monitoring student progress	105	61% (64)	63% (66)	48% (50)	66% (69)	30% (31)
Planning our school improvement plan	104	31% (32)	61% (63)	35% (36)	68% (71)	26% (27)
Monitoring progress in our school improvement plan	104	21% (22)	59% (62)	31% (33)	61% (64)	23% (24)
Examining longitudinal trends in student achievement	105	24% (25)	56% (59)	33% (35)	64% (67)	18% (19)
Planning professional learning and supports	104	26% (27)	60% (62)	26% (27)	52% (54)	24% (25)

Note: Bold text indicates percentages indicate 50 percent or higher of the survey participants indicated using the assessment type identified purpose.

## Interview and Focus Group Findings

We found strong evidence of all three indicators that define effective use of assessment data: regular, systematic use of assessments and analysis of data; identifying what is working and what is not; and using data in the classroom to drive improvement.

## **Regular, Systematic Use of Assessments and Analysis of Data**

All of the principals addressed scheduling administration of assessments to students at different grade levels; although the extent to which this was a formalized district- or school-level comprehensive assessment plan varied. A couple of principals indicated their plan was in a transitional phase. Regardless, principals said that their school used a number of different assessments, on a regular basis, to collect data on student performance, and that these data were analyzed in order to inform decision making.

Principals identified a number of assessments that were administered annually:

- *A Developmental English Proficiency Test (ADEPT)*
- *Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)*
- *English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA)*
- *Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Science (OAKS)*
- *Preliminary SAT (PSAT)/SAT*
- *Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)*
- *WorkKeys*
- *Writing Local Performance Assessment (LPA)*

Assessments that were administered more frequently included district assessments; interim, formative, and summative assessments; curriculum and intervention based assessments; common assessments, pre-post assessments, student learning objectives feedback, teacher-created assessments and work samples. Specifically, principals reported administering the following assessments on an on-going basis:

- *DIBELS*
- *Inspect*
- *i-Ready*
- *Scholastic Inventories (Math-SRI, Reading-SRI, Phonics-SPI)*
- *STAR 360 math and reading*

Teachers echoed these reports. They, too, mentioned some assessments administered annually (SBAC, ELPA, Writing LPA, PSAT, and WorkKeys) and assessments administered more frequently, including, generally: district assessments; interim, formative, and summative assessments; curriculum-based and intervention-based assessments; rubrics; pre-post assessments; standard proficiency quizzes; exit slips; teacher-created assessments; informal assessments; common assessments; and work samples. Specifically, teachers reported administering the DIBELS, Inspect, and SRI assessments on an on-going basis.



In addition to assessment data, a couple of principals reported using school culture and climate data and/or discipline data, and one principal, in particular, indicated using multiple sources of data to make school-level decisions:

*We look at attendance data, enrollment data, and a lot of indicators that were incorporated into the Achievement Compacts, like the ninth grade on-track indicators (credits earned, attendance, test data, graduation data, drop out data, post-secondary enrollment data [as we can get our hands on it]); lots of different things. (Principal)*

### **Using Assessment Data to Drive Improvement**

All principals mentioned their school used data to drive instruction. Principals primarily indicated using data to inform implementing a multi-tiered system of support—identifying core courses, flagging students eligible for small group or individualized interventions, determining what interventions are needed to address their skills gaps, and monitoring student progress. Administrators also reported using data to identify areas for professional development.

*The data is looked at during our PLC and then we get together to talk about what we can do to improve instruction—addressing kids having trouble versus kids who get it, addressing those different ability levels. Twice a year, we look at our data, as a school, and analyze our strengths and weaknesses. Part of our improvement plan, really data driven. (Principal)*

Teachers reported using data to target areas for student growth and doing so primarily during PLCs. They indicated using different types of assessment data for the different purposes:

- Placement or diagnostic data to identify students to place in intervention, core, and advanced classes
- Common/formative assessments to determine what they need to reteach and “ascertain misconceptions, address those, and find the limits of [students’] understanding”
- Intervention data to monitor interventions
- Benchmark and progress monitoring data to identify gaps and develop student improvement plans
- Work sample data to identify students at risk of not meeting graduation requirements
- Statewide summative assessment data to strategize how to improve instruction in the coming year
- Office discipline referrals and attendance data to develop behavior plans

### **Expressed Challenges**

The most common challenges related to assessments were the usability, reliability, and timeliness of the assessment data, and the time required for administering them. For example, some educators were concerned that their district-level interim assessments were not correlated with other tests, were scored subjectively, or were not taken seriously by students. They noted

that administration times were lengthy and took away from instruction, that assessments took time to score, and, in some cases, teachers did not receive data back in a timely or usable format to make instructional decisions. Several educators bemoaned the loss of the OAKS statewide summative assessment because of its reporting structure and immediate access to student scores.

*Title 1 uses SRI to get a Lexile at beginning of the year or when students enter school to get a general idea of where they can access text, but there is no correlation between SRI and SBAC/OAKS. (Teacher)*

*District assessment system – is in process of development. Because of recent results of data, they are trying to determine if data is helpful or too time consuming. (Teacher)*

Other challenges related to data included the time required for teachers to learn the content covered by different assessments and how to use the data to inform their classroom instruction, the limited availability of assessment data in certain subject areas and grade levels, overreliance on some sources of data to tell the whole story, and issues related to rolling-out assessments.

## Chapter 6

### Professional Learning

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The research framework used included two indicators that define effective professional learning practices: ongoing and job embedded, and collaborative professional development.

#### Survey Results

Most teachers (at least 85%) reported participating in professional learning activities, in which they shared general communication with colleagues, received supervisor observations, attended workshops/conferences, and engaged in PLCs (Table 12). Fewer teachers (65%–84%) engaged in collaborative planning time focused on the CCSS and peer mentoring, observation, and/or coaching. Less than half of the teachers indicated participating in instructional coaching or visits to other schools.

Teachers who participated in these activities generally found them effective. The activities that most teachers reported having a moderate to large effect on the quality of their instruction included workshops/conferences and instructional coaching (at least 85%). Activities that fewer teachers (69%–75%) reported having a moderate to large effect on the quality of their instruction included sharing general communication with colleagues; collaborative planning time focused on CCSS; PLCs; and peer mentoring, observation, and/or coaching. The fewest teachers (less than 65%) reported that observations had a moderate to large effect on the quality of their instruction.

*Table 12*  
*Percentage of Teachers Participating in a Variety of Professional Learning Activities and, of Those, the Percentage Indicating the Activity Resulted in “Moderate” or “Large” Positive Effect on the Quality of Their Teaching*

Activity	N	Percentage (Number) Responding	
		Participated	“Moderate” or “Large” Effect
Sharing general communication such as successes, challenges, lessons learned with colleagues	101	97% (98)	81% (79)
Supervisor observations or classroom walk-throughs	102	95% (97)	59% (57)
Workshops, conferences, or courses	102	94% (96)	88% (83)
Professional learning communities	102	89% (91)	74% (65)
Collaborative planning time on understanding and deconstructing the CCSS	102	82% (84)	76% (62)
Collaborative planning time on aligning curriculum to the CCSS	101	81% (82)	73% (58)
Peer mentoring, observation and/or coaching	101	69% (70)	68% (47)
Instructional coaching to improve my teaching skills	101	43% (43)	85% (35)
Observation visits to other schools	101	29% (29)	63% (17)

The largest percentage of teachers (83%) reported participating in professional learning focused on using student assessment data (Table 13). Fewer teachers (68%–73%) engaged in learning focused on developing formative assessments, standards-based instructional strategies, and implementing the CCSS. Less than half indicated participating in learning focused on culturally responsive instruction and classroom management.

Teachers who participated in professional learning, regardless of topic, generally found it effective. The topic that most teachers reported having a “moderate” or “large” effect on the quality of their instruction was classroom management (79%). Topics that fewer teachers (59%–68%) reported having a moderate to large effect on the quality of their instruction included developing formative assessments, culturally responsive teaching, implementing the CCSS, using student assessment data, and standards-based instructional strategies.

Table 13

*Percentage of Teachers Engaging in Various Professional Learning Topics and, of Those, the Percentage of Teachers Indicating the Learning Resulted in a “Moderate” or “Large” Positive Effect on the Quality of Their Teaching*

Professional Learning Topics	Level	Percentage (Number) Responding	
		Participated	“Moderate” or “Large” Effect
Using student assessment data	101	83% (84)	62% (50)
Developing formative assessments	101	73% (74)	68% (49)
Standards-based instructional strategies	99	72% (71)	59% (41)
Implementing CCSS	100	68% (68)	66% (44)
Culturally responsive instruction	100	42% (42)	67% (26)
Classroom management	97	31% (30)	79% (23)

## Interview and Focus Group Findings

We found strong evidence that study schools implemented both of the professional learning practices identified in the research framework, i.e., ongoing and job embedded, and collaborative professional development.

### Ongoing, Job Embedded, and Collaborative Professional Development

All principals and teacher focus groups addressed receiving professional development. Professional development occurred in many ways, some of which were single events and others ongoing and embedded. Professional development occurred during beginning-of-the-year orientations, ongoing in-service events, monthly professional development and/or staff meetings, math teams, data teams, and work groups, PLCs, coaching, mentoring, book studies, and summer opportunities. Professional development was provided by a variety of sources including educational service districts, ODE, Oregon Education Association, public university staff members, in-school/district experts, and outside consultants.

*PLCs: three each month; all staff professional development, one each month; four four-hour professional development sessions per year and coaching (Principal)*

*I attended a conference in New Orleans; went to Doug Fisher’s close reading and Anita Archer’s engagement sessions; both were used as soon as I was back in my classroom.  
(Teacher)*

Many of the approaches to providing professional development occurred in teams of grade-level or content-specific teachers. PLCs and coaching are collaborative in nature. Both principals and teachers spoke to the collaborative nature of their professional development:

*We have a four day week – in-service every other Friday-ish (set amount of days – built into master schedule); it is expected that teachers talk to each other. Try to set aside grading days, staff meetings, and data teams to study data. You are not able to find the time when we are teaching, so the in-service days/Fridays are really valuable. Creates conversations about students. (Teacher)*

*Takes a mixture; some offsite professional development can get teachers energized and excited to try something they believe in; downside – no one else there to get as excited – uphill battle, run out of steam, not as much people to collaboratively share the vision – one person can lose focus if too many naysayers. If together onsite with team approach, it evolves together, all see benefits and downsides, and we can be more strategic about implementation. (Principal)*

Most principals and teachers indicated receiving some professional development on the CCSS in reading and/or math. CCSS topic areas included developing student learning and growth goals, constructing meaning, depth of knowledge, assessment and grading, and core adoptions. Some principals reported providing professional development around areas identified in their school improvement plans. Other areas of professional development included culturally relevant teaching, experiential learning, school discipline, trauma informed practice, poverty, technology, teaching strategies, growth mindset, implicit bias, college readiness, student engagement, and school operating systems.

### **Expressed Challenges**

Teachers in a few schools spoke to challenges associated with professional development. Most commonly, they addressed how the content of training was not always as relevant as they would like it to be. There were also some complaints about limited resources for professional development and mentoring.

*Some of the district professional development that hasn't been as focused on people in the room (not targeted/differentiated) has been frustrating and not feeling like a good use of time (umbrella training); although it seems like they are moving away from that to more targeting specific subject areas. (Teacher)*

## Chapter 7

### School Conditions for Learning

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The research framework used included eight indicators that define facilitating school conditions for learning: clear school mission, order, safety, and discipline; academic supports; student motivation; administrative and collegial support; time for collaboration and teamwork; student and teacher mobility; connectedness and strong positive relationships, including personal, social, and home-school; and dedicated and like-minded teachers.

#### Survey Results

The majority of teachers (73%–83%) agreed their school had a positive school climate as evidenced by mutual trust and respect for students and teachers, positive relationships among teachers and students, and a strong community of learning (Table 14).

*Table 14*  
*Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” With School Conditions for Learning Survey Items*

Survey Item	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or Agree
There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school for students	104	83% (86)
Our practices foster positive relationships among staff and students	103	78% (80)
Our school climate creates a strong community of learning	103	75% (77)
There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school for adults	103	73% (75)

About two thirds of teachers said they shared academic and behavioral information with parents (Table 15). Fewer, less than half, shared specific assessment related information (i.e., formative, summative), and how these data are used.

**Table 15**  
**Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” With Parent Communication Survey Items**

Survey Item	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or Agree
I contact parents/guardians directly if a student is beginning to have academic or behavioral difficulties	101	64% (65)
I regularly provide parents/guardians with positive news about their student’s progress	101	62% (63)
I share with parents/guardians how classroom assessments are used in class	101	49% (49)
I regularly provide parents/guardians with outcomes of summative assessments	101	49% (49)
I regularly provide parents/guardians with outcomes of formative assessments	101	40% (40)

Two fifths of the responses to the survey’s open-ended question addressed the research framework characteristic of school conditions for learning. Almost half of these comments referenced the mindset, qualifications, professional commitment, and the relationships among the staff.

*Excellent team of teachers who take their work seriously, support each other, and keep things positive. (Teacher)*

Teachers’ next most frequent comments addressed the importance of building strong relationships with students.

*Positive relationships with every student and at least one staff member. Most of the time multiple positive staff-to-student relationships. Oftentimes connections outside of the classroom through extracurricular activities. (Teacher)*

Other areas addressed by teachers included the importance of having behavioral expectations, a supportive community, a positive school environment, great students, and strong relationships with parents.

## **Interview and Focus Group Findings**

We found strong evidence of six of the eight indicators that define facilitating school conditions for learning in the research framework: clear school mission, order, safety, and discipline; academic supports; administrative and collegial support; time for collaboration and teamwork; connectedness and strong positive relationships, including personal, social, and home-school; and dedicated and like-minded teachers.



## **Clear School Mission, Order, Safety, and Discipline**

All educators spoke to the approach their school took for maintaining order, safety, and discipline. Principals and teachers reported the importance of communicating consistent expectations and enforcing consequences. Several districts implemented PBIS and used these strategies and practices schoolwide. Communicating expectations often involved engaging staff members in professional development and providing students with tours while reviewing behavior expectations in different areas (e.g., hallways, cafeteria, gymnasium), holding assemblies, and practicing drills. Expectations were communicated “early and often,” consistently, and in ways that let students know the staff cared. Relationships, with students and family, were often reported as an integral part of the system.

*We refer to our school as a family, understanding that we won't always get along – but that we have to make best of it...We use restorative practices ... as a teaching piece. We teach students to take responsibility for actions, find a solution, and restore the relationship. We're teaching them good social skills: if you make a mistake, acknowledge it, think about how to make it right, and keep the relationship. We want students to know that we care and are moving on. (Principal)*

*We have fewer discipline issues here because they [students] don't want to go to the office. They also know that if something is going on, they can go to tell Principal. They know it is safe to go to Principal – he/she will follow through and that he/she knows what is best for them. (Teacher)*

Incentives and rewards were common. They included a variety of ways of tracking students when they engaged in positive behaviors, motivating students through schoolwide “shout outs” and notes sent home, and providing students with parties, dances, passes, and prize drawings for good behavior.

*Schoolwide – locker sheets to earn stickers for various things; when full it gets put in a drawing for kids to win some pretty good prizes (e.g. \$150 gift card - finding things motivating for students); they also hand out PAWS passes (positive dollars) that allow students to cut in line at lunch, buy Otter Pops, participate in teacher giveaways... (Teacher)*

## **Academic Supports**

As discussed earlier, staff in the six study schools made it a priority to provide the extra supports that students needed to be successful. These included *Response to Intervention* programs; interventions like *System 44*; *STAR 360*, and *Soar to Success*; access to support staff; and less formal supports like staying after school to provide help.

*Teachers do a nice job of starting where kids are coming in at – looking at data from DIBELS and common formative assessments to meet kids where they are at academically, socially, and emotionally and grow them from there. (Teacher)*

### **Administrative and collegial support**

Most teachers in the study schools spoke to the fact that their administrators supported them. They not only allowed teachers to be the leaders in their classroom, but stood behind them in matters of academics and discipline.

*Backup; can get support for those students not engaged – talk to vice-principal and meet with students and they write up a contract; also provides opportunities for teachers to meet with vice-principal about how to get that student engaged. (Teacher)*

As noted earlier, principals also felt supported by other administrators in their district; they had the sense of a team working together to support teachers and students.

### **Time for collaboration and teamwork**

Educators reported a variety of ways in which they were provided time for collaboration and teamwork that included leadership teams and committees; staff, grade-level, and/or department meetings; and PLCs.

*Happens naturally; we work together; we have a math hall, we're all together – proximity; it's not forced. There are more opportunities for it with our new principal, it is part of the infrastructure; we're not islands anymore. (Teacher)*

Often these opportunities were tied into the schedule to protect staff members' time and ensure their participation:

*Do a good job of protecting their PLC time from other meetings – non-negotiables in place (cannot schedule individualized education plan (IEP) meetings during PLC time); PLC schedule posted at the beginning of the year and we stay true to that and they plan around it for their collaboration. (Principal)*

### **Connectedness and Strong Positive Relationships, Including Personal, Social, and Home-School**

The majority of principals and teachers addressed the importance of relationships and ensuring students are connected to the school, staff, and/or community.

*We're continually working to create a family atmosphere and getting them to feel comfortable and that every kid regardless of background and interests has a teacher on staff who shares that with them (ecology, knowledge bowl, band, choir, industrial arts, woodshop, art, ag program, sports). There is an essential expectation of success and many*

*opportunities for them to be successful and we provide a lot of avenues for students to find their success and take pride in school. (Principal)*

*Well-rounded school with a lot of activities – it is like a home because we have a lot of outlets for kids. The students know that we are inspired by their growth and what they do. (Teacher)*

Principals and teachers emphasized the importance of having relationships with parents. One principal spoke about the tenure of the administrative team and how long they had been in the community and, in some cases, were now administrators in buildings where the children of their past students were enrolled. Participants felt being in a small community or having a significant number of staff members living in the community/neighborhood all helped build those relationships.

Educators spoke about the importance of attending athletic events and providing opportunities for parents to approach them and to get to know one another outside of the school. In addition, the schools provided opportunities for parents and families to be involved in the school. For example, orientation meetings; family, literacy, honors, and rewards nights; involving parents in trainings, conferences, and offering events like “Bagels and Books,” “Italian sodas,” and “Coffee and Snacks” —were ways that educators invited families to be part of the school community or partners in their child’s education. Staff members from several schools mentioned that they provided translators and other supports, such as food and child care, to include all parents.

*Communication, website, newsletters; lots of activities that bring parents/families into school – ways to connect and administrators are always at those evening and sports events that provide times to mingle. (Principal)*

In addition to these types of events, many schools made it a priority to have meaningful conversations with parents. Staff members made personal calls home if a student had attendance problems and, in some cases, they made home visits. They reached out to parents who could not attend conferences and, in one school, administrators cancelled staff meetings and required teachers to use that time instead to make positive contacts to homes, via phone, email or postcards.

### **Dedicated and Like-minded Teachers**

At least one staff member from the six schools shared examples of the dedication and mindset of both the teaching and administrative staff such as their willingness to stay late and give up personal time to help a struggling student, putting in the extra time planning a lesson to ensure more students could meet the standards, truly wanting their students to be successful, or just wanting to be the best they can be—these teachers were special to one another, to administrators, and to students.

*People—amazing students and great teachers, leadership team— at the end of the day it's about the people. A lot of people come here to observe what we do/our systems, but you can't duplicate the passion and hunger of the people here. (Principal)*

*All teachers are so passionate to be lifelong learners – we want students to be passionate and learn. (Teacher)*

### **Student Motivation and Student and Teacher Mobility**

These were two areas that were not explicitly mentioned during interviews and focus groups. As mentioned earlier, educators primarily addressed student motivation as it pertained to setting academic and behavior expectations. Again, relationships were integral to the success of both of these.

*We set high expectations and students are achieving really high because it's a safe place to come and learn. The principal and vice-principal are in hall all the time, building relationships and having fun and being positive, but students are held accountable when they cross the line. (Principal)*

Few educators mentioned the existence or non-existence of student and teacher mobility. However one teacher commented that “Staff turnover is low, so we have a strong staff that is not constantly training and getting to know each other.” Also, as described above, one principal commented on limited staff mobility when describing the longevity of their administrative team.

### **Expressed Challenges**

In regard to school conditions for learning, staff members in a few schools cited parent involvement as a challenge. These challenges included getting parents to attend site council, parent-focused events, and conferences, and to access the online grade books. One school identified several challenges that made communicating with parents difficult.

*Online grade book system where parents have access to attendance and grade books and missing assignments - apathy on part of some families – wish more would use it; some say they don't know it's there... (Principal)*

## Chapter 8

### Summary and Recommendations

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Understanding how struggling schools can establish and sustain high quality instruction is a priority in Oregon. This study describes the local conditions at six Oregon schools that achieved higher than expected student achievement on the 2014–15 Smarter Balanced Assessments in both Math and English Language Arts (ELA), especially compared to similar schools as defined by the Oregon Department of Education. The principals and teachers participating in this study reported using many of the conditions that, according to research, successfully grow student achievement as trademarks of their schools.

**School leaders had high expectations for students and teachers.** In interviews, focus groups, and surveys, teachers said they were held to high professional standards for delivering instruction and using data to improve student learning. They also expressed the importance of setting high expectations for students. These included classroom expectations that focus on setting learning goals as well as participation, engagement, and behavior requirements. A key component of setting and getting students to meet these high expectations was developing and maintaining positive relationships with them.

**Educators were provided time, and had opportunities to work in collaboration with their colleagues to better provide instruction and grow professionally.**

These included meetings with grade-level and/or content-area teams, and PLCs where they engaged in a variety of activities to promote student success. Teachers reported that professional learning communities and certain professional learning activities resulted in larger positive effects on their instruction. These included participating in collaborative planning time focused on CCSS; discussing student performance, interventions, and instructional strategies; attending workshops/conferences; developing and reviewing formative and interim assessments; and receiving instructional coaching. While many teachers reported participating in opportunities to promote their professional growth and instructional practices, there were some areas where fewer teachers felt supported or received sufficient professional development or time to address their learning needs. These areas included culturally-responsive practices, student-centered learning, and incorporating the CCSS in their classroom teaching.

**Teachers and administrators used different assessment data for different purposes.** Teachers used data from multiple sources, most commonly teacher-developed classroom assessments, for a variety of purposes, such as planning and differentiating instruction; monitoring student progress; identifying academically at-risk students, learning gaps, and targeted interventions; setting daily learning targets; and developing curriculum. While teachers tended to use teacher-developed classroom assessments to make instructional decisions, administrators more commonly used district-developed assessments and the summative statewide assessment to monitor progress of student groups, plan and monitor school improvement, examine

longitudinal trends, and plan professional development and supports. All schools implemented data-driven, multi-tiered systems of support to allocate educational services according to students' needs.

**School settings provided a positive environment for staff members to work and students to learn.** Educators reported that there was trust, respect, and dedication among like-minded teachers. Teachers and administrators made sure students understood what was expected of them and provided support to meet these expectations while holding students accountable. Educators provided students with opportunities to connect with them, with one another, and with their communities. Members of the school and broader community shared a common vision of success. Educators communicated this, especially to parents, in meaningful ways.

## Recommendations

Ensuring that every student receives high quality instruction is an ongoing challenge for Oregon schools. The findings of this study describe the conditions that six schools established to promote student success and form the basis for the following recommendations. These recommendations reflect actions that ODE could take to support districts and schools, were the legislature to provide necessary funding.

**Recommendation 1: Provide educators with additional time and professional learning support to learn about and integrate student-centered, culturally-responsive, and standards-based instruction in their teaching practices.**

Assessment data alone cannot create the conditions necessary for student growth and academic success. In addition to understanding the information that different assessments provide, educators need access to reliable and culturally relevant assessments; and the skills to use these data to inform their practice and improve student learning. Educators need additional on-going professional development to learn how to integrate student-centered, culturally responsive, and standards-based teaching into their classroom instruction. Classroom teachers must learn how to develop and use formative assessment as a process to identify gaps in student learning, differentiate their instruction for groups of students and, as needed, to individualize instruction for each student who requires additional assistance. Educators also need time and support to access continuing education, planning and collaboration with peers outside of the classroom, and instructional coaching in the classroom.

Teachers also would benefit from on-going professional learning opportunities to increase their self-efficacy in providing student-centered, culturally responsive instruction especially to students who are academically at-risk, students with disabilities, and students receiving English learner services. These professional development activities should include time to collaborate with colleagues, job-embedded coaching, and opportunities to observe other classrooms. Administrators should also receive professional development on increasing the effectiveness of their supervisor observations and classroom walkthroughs.

**Recommendation 2: Provide guidance and the resources necessary for schools to implement, use, and sustain balanced assessment systems that collect the full range of data needed to inform instructional and administrative decisions.**

Educators need reliable and actionable assessment data to inform administrative, classroom-level, and student-level decisions. Some, but not all, of the educators said their district had an established balanced assessment system that collects formative, interim, and summative data to improve instruction. However, few could describe these systems and none of the schools provided written documents outlining the types and purposes of assessment data collected, or how to use these data to improve instruction. Clearly, schools need additional resources to establish and institutionalize efficient and effective assessment practices.

**Recommendation 3: Increase access to reliable, culturally relevant assessment and instructional resources that will enable educators to identify student learning gaps, deliver student-centered instruction, and monitor student progress.**

Educators recognized the need for multiple sources of assessment data, but most relied on teacher- or district-developed assessments to differentiate instruction and address the varied needs of individual students or groups of students. Less than a third used vendor-developed or purchased assessments despite the likelihood that these assessments would reduce their workload and produce more reliable data. Some teachers said the limited availability or lack of resources to access these assessments was a factor. Other resource constraints included office equipment and supplies, instructional technology, consultation, and easy access to instructional materials (sometimes aligned to the CCSS).

**Recommendation 4: Conduct or commission rigorous research to increase knowledge of conditions necessary for achieving significant growth in academic outcomes, and the necessary supports to implement these efficiently and effectively at the local level.**

While this study's findings are helpful, additional research would further inform policy, practice, and professional development decisions that consider the unique needs of Oregon schools. For example, understanding why and how the practices of successful schools differ from less successful schools that are similar in student demographics, size, and location can inform important policy, funding, and resource allocation decisions. Additional work on how school leadership in Oregon effectively includes teachers in decision-making and increases meaningful engagement of parents and communities would also help the state in establishing the conditions for learning essential to the success of all students.

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## Appendix A: Research Framework

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### Characteristics of Schools that Raise Student Achievement

1. Instruction
  - Including high expectations for every student
  - Responsibility for performance
  - Customized instruction and interventions
  - Student engagement strategies
  - Ongoing curricular improvement
  - Efficient use of instructional time
2. Leadership
  - Strong district/building/instructional leadership
  - Focus on learning and growth
  - Commitment to give change time
  - Persistence
3. Assessment
  - Regular, systematic use of assessments and analysis of data
  - Identifying what is working and what is not
  - Using data in the classroom to drive improvement
4. Professional learning
  - Ongoing, job-embedded
  - Collaborative professional development
5. Collaboration
  - Shared goals among teachers, principal, other staff members, and parents
  - Problem solving at all levels
  - Strong staff communication
6. School conditions for learning
  - Clear school mission, order, safety, and discipline
  - Academic supports
  - Student motivation
  - Administrative and collegial support
  - Time for collaboration and teamwork
  - Student and teacher mobility
  - Connectedness and strong, positive relationships, including personal, social, and home-school
  - Dedicated and like-minded teachers.

(Center for the Future of Arizona, n.d.; Chenoweth, 2015; Wilder & Jacobsen, 2010; Voight, Austin, & Hanson, 2013; Wilcox, Schiller, Durand, Zuckerman, et al., 2015)

## Appendix B: Administrator Interview/ Teacher Focus Group Protocol

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### Oregon Department of Education HB 2680 Administrator Interview/Teacher Focus Group Protocol<sup>2</sup>

1. Instruction and collaboration
  - a) What constitutes effective teaching in your school? How are these characteristics communicated to staff? How important is a shared understanding of good teaching in promoting student success? How does it show up in your school?
  - b) How do administrators/teachers use data and research to make decisions in your school/classroom?
  - c) Can you describe your school's implementation of the Common Core State Standards in ELA?
  - d) Can you describe your school's implementation of the Common Core State Standards in math?
2. Leadership
  - a) Can you describe the leadership structures at your school, and how effective you think they are, and why?
  - b) [Admins only] How does the district support the school's work?
3. Assessment
  - a) Does your school (or district) have a comprehensive assessment plan that is currently in use?
  - b) [Admins only] What types of assessment data do administrators use to make decisions at the school level?
  - c) What types of assessment do teachers use and how?
4. Professional learning
  - a) Through districtwide offerings, approximately how many hours of professional development in the past three years have focused on instructional practices (including CCSS)? Assessment practices? What else? What about at the building level?
  - b) How is/was the professional development delivered and by whom? Resources?
  - c) How does the administration determine the needs?
5. School conditions for learning
  - a) How does your school create positive home-school relationships and to what extent do they play a role in student success?

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Gutierrez, 2014; Hattie, 2008; Oregon Department of Education, 2013

- b) How does your school promote order, safety, and discipline and to what extent do they play a role in student success?
- c) How does your school ensure student engagement and to what extent does it play a role in student success?
- d) How does your school create opportunities for collaboration and teamwork and to what extent do they play a role in student success?

*Table B–1*  
*Glossary of Acronyms and Abbreviations*

Assessment or Resource	Acronym or Abbreviation	Website
A Developmental English Proficiency Test	ADEPT	<a href="http://www.callutheran.edu/education/crlp/adept.html">http://www.callutheran.edu/education/crlp/adept.html</a>
Advanced Academic Language for All		<a href="http://aala.serpmedia.org/">http://aala.serpmedia.org/</a>
Armed Services Vocabulary Aptitude Battery	ASVAB	<a href="http://official-asvab.com/">http://official-asvab.com/</a>
Advancement Via Individual Determination	AVID	<a href="http://www.avid.org/what-is-avid.ashx">http://www.avid.org/what-is-avid.ashx</a>
Classroom Assessment for Learning	CASL	NA
Common Core State Standards	CCSS	<a href="http://www.corestandards.org">www.corestandards.org</a>
Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills	DIBELS	<a href="https://dibels.uoregon.edu/">https://dibels.uoregon.edu/</a>
i-Ready K–12 Diagnostic and Assessment	i-Ready	<a href="http://www.curriculumassociates.com/products/iready/i-ready-takethetour.aspx">http://www.curriculumassociates.com/products/iready/i-ready-takethetour.aspx</a>
Key Data Systems (KDS) INSPECT item Bank and Assessment Solutions	Inspect	<a href="https://www.illuminateed.com">https://www.illuminateed.com</a>
Lexile Framework for Reading	Lexile	<a href="https://lexile.com/">https://lexile.com/</a>
Marzano teaching strategies		<a href="http://www.marzanocenter.com/">www.marzanocenter.com/</a>
Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills	OAKS	<a href="http://oaksportal.org/">http://oaksportal.org/</a>
Positive Interventions and Supports	PBIS	<a href="https://www.pbis.org/">https://www.pbis.org/</a>
Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test	PSAT	<a href="https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10">https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10</a>
Professional Learning Community	PLC	
Response to Instruction and Interventions	Rtl	<a href="http://www.oregonrti.org/">http://www.oregonrti.org/</a>
Soar to Success K–8 Reading Intervention	Soar to Success	<a href="http://www.hmhco.com/shop/education-curriculum/intervention/reading/soar-to-success-reading">http://www.hmhco.com/shop/education-curriculum/intervention/reading/soar-to-success-reading</a>

Assessment or Resource	Acronym or Abbreviation	Website
Scholastic Aptitude Test	SAT	<a href="https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat">https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat</a>
Scholastic Inventories	SRI	<a href="http://www.scholastic.com/">www.scholastic.com/</a>
School Reading Inventory	SRI	<a href="http://www.hmhco.com/products/assessment-solutions/">http://www.hmhco.com/products/assessment-solutions/</a>
Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium	SBAC	<a href="http://www.smarterbalanced.org/">http://www.smarterbalanced.org/</a>
STAR 360 math and reading	Star 360	<a href="https://www.renaissance.com/products/star-assessments?">https://www.renaissance.com/products/star-assessments?</a>
Foundational reading program	System 44	<a href="http://www.hmhco.com/products/system-44/">http://www.hmhco.com/products/system-44/</a>
WorkKeys	WorkKeys	<a href="http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/workforce-solutions/act-workkeys.html">http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/workforce-solutions/act-workkeys.html</a>
Writing Local Performance Assessment	LPA	<a href="http://www.ode.state.or.us/wma/teachlearn/testing/resources/es_localperformanceasmt_manual.pdf">http://www.ode.state.or.us/wma/teachlearn/testing/resources/es_localperformanceasmt_manual.pdf</a>

Note: This list summarizes the assessment instruments that participants referenced during the interviews and focus group. Inclusion on this list does not indicate endorsement of the product.

## Appendix C: Teacher Survey on Instructional Practices in Oregon Schools

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101 SW Main St, Ste 500, Portland, OR 97204-3213  
503.275.9500 | 800.547.6339  
educationnorthwest.org

May 5, 2016

Dear Teacher:

Thank you in advance for your time and willingness to complete this survey on teaching practices in Oregon schools. You have been asked to complete this survey because you teach at a school that has agreed to participate in a study, commissioned by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and conducted by Education Northwest, which aims to describe strategies that promote positive academic outcomes for students, particularly as it relates to using assessment data to improve instruction.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and we foresee no risks. If you choose to be in the study you can withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationships with your school. You are not required to answer questions, but your participation is greatly appreciated as your perceptions will provide valuable information to other educators about practices that promote positive academic outcomes for students. If you choose to not answer any question, just skip the question and leave it blank. The survey should take 25-30 minutes to complete.

After completing the survey, place it in the envelope provided, seal it, and return it to your principal. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential; once transferred from paper to computer, the digital data will be stored in secure computer files accessible to the research team only and the paper surveys will be shredded. A final report summarizing these survey data and other data collected for the study will be delivered to ODE in early June. All survey responses will be aggregated. While ODE knows which schools participated in the case study, we will not reveal your district or school, nor will the same be reported to any person outside of the research team. If you have questions, please contact Hella Bel Hadj Amor at 503-275-9500 or at [Hella.Belhadjamor@educationnorthwest.org](mailto:Hella.Belhadjamor@educationnorthwest.org).

Completing this survey indicates that you are 18 years of age or older and indicates your consent to participate in the study.

Thank you,  
Hella Bel Hadj Amor  
Practice Expert-Analytic Technical Assistance  
Education Northwest

—OVER—

## Teacher Survey on Instructional Practices in Oregon Schools

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements (select one).

<b>Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Curriculum, and Instruction</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Slightly agree</b>	<b>Slightly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
I believe that implementing the CCSS has greatly improved learning for the majority of my students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe strongly that my students can master the CCSS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My classroom textbooks and other main curricular materials are aligned with the CCSS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have sufficient resources on evidence-based practices to implement the CCSS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have fully incorporated the CCSS into my teaching practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe implementing the CCSS has improved my teaching and classroom practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am very skilled in providing student-centered instruction that is informed by formative assessment data	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am very skilled in providing culturally responsive instructional practices to address achievement gaps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I set clear learning goals and expectations for my students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I give my students opportunities to take ownership of their learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I regularly provide substantive feedback to students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>I am very prepared to teach the CCSS to...</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Slightly agree</b>	<b>Slightly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
General education students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students receiving English Learner services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other academically at-risk students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Slightly agree</b>	<b>Slightly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
Our faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I participate in school leadership role(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching staff and leadership have a coherent, shared vision for implementing the state-adopted content standards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Colleagues agree upon and embrace common achievement expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school improvement team provides effective leadership at this school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements (select one).

<b>I am very satisfied with my level of influence and input into . . .</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Slightly agree</b>	<b>Slightly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
Selecting curriculum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Selecting in-service professional development program topics and content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning school improvement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing and implementing student discipline procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Selecting new teachers to this school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>The leadership at my school . . .</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Slightly agree</b>	<b>Slightly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
Emphasizes high expectations of success for each and every student	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Holds teachers to high professional standards for delivering instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provides constructive feedback that helps teachers improve teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ensures teachers are using data to improve student learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has established a balanced assessment system that includes formative, interim, and summative assessments to improve instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provides opportunities to discuss our vision with staff, parents, and key stakeholders on providing the best education to our students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collects input from students, parents, and other community partners to design important policies and practices at our school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>I have sufficient access to the following resources to support quality instruction:</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Slightly agree</b>	<b>Slightly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
Appropriate instructional materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A broad range of professional support personnel such as content area specialists, behavior specialists, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Office equipment and supplies such as copy machines, paper, pens, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instructional technology, including computers, printers, software and reliable internet access to support instructional practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Please indicate the types of data that YOU use for the following purposes (select all that apply).

Assessment Purpose	Teacher-developed classroom assessments	School- or district-developed assessments	Purchased (e.g., vendor developed) assessments	Statewide summative assessments	Other classroom data
Planning my classroom instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing curriculum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Setting daily learning targets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Monitoring student progress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identifying student learning gaps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Differentiating instruction for a student and/or groups of students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identifying students who require additional interventions and support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identifying interventions and support to match individual student needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Differentiating instruction to accommodate a student with an IEP	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Examining longitudinal trends in student achievement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate the types of data that your SCHOOL uses for the following purposes (select all that apply).

Assessment Purpose	Teacher-developed classroom assessments	School- or district-developed assessments	Purchased (e.g., vendor developed, ) assessments	Statewide summative assessments	Other classroom data
Monitoring student progress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning our school improvement plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Monitoring progress in our school improvement plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Examining longitudinal trends in student achievement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning professional learning and supports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please describe):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate if you have participated in the professional learning activities listed below and the level of positive effect on your teaching (select one in each section).

Professional Learning and Collaboration	Participation		Level of positive effect on the quality of my teaching			
	Yes	No	No effect	Small effect	Moderate effect	Large effect
Sharing general communication such as successes, challenges, lessons learned with colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collaborative planning time on understanding and deconstructing the CCSS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collaborative planning time on aligning curriculum to the CCSS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisor observations or classroom walk-throughs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peer mentoring, observation and/or coaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Observation visits to other schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instructional coaching to improve my teaching skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional learning communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workshops, conferences, or courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Professional learning on the following topics in the past year:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No effect</b>	<b>Small effect</b>	<b>Moderate effect</b>	<b>Large effect</b>
Using student assessment data	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implementing CCSS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing formative assessments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standards-based instructional strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Culturally responsive instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Meetings with teachers in my grade level or content area to promote student success by...</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No effect</b>	<b>Small effect</b>	<b>Moderate effect</b>	<b>Large effect</b>
Setting goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Setting common grading and student assessment practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing formative or interim assessments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reviewing formative or interim assessment results to improve instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discussing student performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning, aligning, and evaluating instructional strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discussing culturally responsive practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discussing interventions for struggling students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements (select one).

School Conditions for Learning	Strongly agree	Agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school for students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school for adults	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our practices foster positive relationships among staff and students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our school climate creates a strong community of learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent Communication	Strongly agree	Agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I share with parents/guardians how classroom assessments are used in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I regularly provide parents/guardians with outcomes of formative assessments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I regularly provide parents/guardians with outcomes of summative assessments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I regularly provide parents/guardians with positive news about their student's progress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I contact parents/guardians directly if a student is beginning to have academic or behavioral difficulties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In your opinion, what are three reasons that your school is achieving higher than expected academic outcomes for students?

1.

2.

3.

**Thank you so much for completing this survey!**

## Appendix D: Survey Results, Overall and by School Level

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The tables in appendix D report the survey results for all schools and by school level (elementary, middle, and high school). Researchers used Pearson Chi-Square analyses to determine whether differences in the percentage of teachers who “strongly agreed” or “agreed” across the school levels is statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Below is a summary of statistically significant school-level differences in survey items:

Implementing the CCSS and culturally responsive teaching practices appear to be prominent at the elementary school level. Larger proportions of elementary school teachers “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the following:

- Incorporating the CCSS into their teaching
- Being very prepared to teach the CCSS to academically-at risk students and English learners
- Participate in professional learning focused on implementing the CCSS and culturally responsive teaching
- Use purchased assessments for a broader array of classroom-based and school-based decisions

Communication, relationships, and collaboration appear to be prominent at the middle school level. Larger proportions of middle school teachers “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the following:

- Worked in schools with a positive school climate and effective leadership
- Provided feedback to students regularly
- Discussed successes, difficulties, and assessment use with parents
- Discussed the school vision with and collected input from stakeholders
- Participated in collaborative experiences such as working with support professionals, engaging in peer mentoring/observations/coaching, and receiving constructive feedback on their teaching from their leadership
- Developed formative and interim assessments with their colleagues
- Found PLCs to positively impact their teaching

In the tables that follow, the N indicates the number of teacher responding to the item. The difference in the number in the “All” column is the number of teachers who did *not* “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with the item.

*Table D–1*

*Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” With Instruction Survey Items, Overall and by School Level*

Survey Items	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or Agree			
		All	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
I set clear learning goals and expectations for my students <sup>^</sup>	98	92% (90)	100% (20)	96% (48)	79% (22)
I give my students opportunities to take ownership of their learning <sup>^</sup>	98	90% (88)	100% (20)	88% (44)	86% (24)
I regularly provide substantive feedback to students	98	77% (75)	55% (11)	90% (45)*	68% (19)
I am very skilled in providing student-centered instruction that is informed by formative assessment data	98	57% (56)	65% (13)	54% (27)	57% (16)
I am very skilled in providing culturally-responsive instructional practices to address achievement gaps	98	52% (51)	60% (12)	50% (25)	50% (14)

\* Pearson Chi-Square  $p \leq 0.05$

<sup>^</sup> More than 20 percent of cells have expected counts less than 5; Pearson Chi-Square results are invalid

*Table D–2*

*Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” That They Have Sufficient Access to Resources to Support Quality Instruction Survey Items, Overall and by School Level*

Survey Items	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or Agree			
		All	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Office equipment and supplies such as copy machines, paper, pens, etc.	102	77% (78)	67% (14)	79% (41)	79% (23)
Instructional technology, including computers, printers, software, and reliable Internet access to support instructional practices	102	64% (65)	86% (18)	65% (34)	45% (13)
Appropriate instructional materials	102	63% (64)	67% (14)	62% (32)	62% (18)
A broad range of professional support personnel such as content area specialists, behavior specialists, etc.	102	59% (60)	57% (12)	73% (38)*	35% (10)*

\* Pearson Chi-Square  $p \leq 0.05$

*Table D–3*

*Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” With CCSS Survey Items, Overall and by School Level*

Survey Items	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or Agree”			
		All	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
I have fully incorporated the CCSS into my teaching practice	95	57% (54)	85% (17)*	55% (26)	39% (11)*
I believe strongly that my students can master the CCSS	98	47% (46)	65% (13)	38% (19)	50% (14)
My classroom textbooks and other main curricular materials are aligned with the CCSS	97	45% (44)	55% (11)	45% (22)	39% (11)
I have sufficient resources on evidence-based practices to implement the CCSS	98	45% (44)	60% (12)	44% (22)	36% (10)
I believe that implementing the CCSS has greatly improved learning for the majority of my students	99	31% (31)	50% (10)	27% (14)	26% (7)
I believe implementing the CCSS has improved my teaching and classroom practice	97	30% (29)	45% (9)	27% (13)	25% (7)

\* Pearson Chi-Square  $p \leq 0.05$

*Table D–4*

*Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” That They Are Very Prepared to Teach the CCSS to Different Student Groups, Overall and by School Level*

Survey Items	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or Agree”			
		All	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
General education students	97	79% (77)	95% (19)	74% (36)	79% (22)
Other academically at-risk students	97	50% (48)	75% (15)*	39% (19)*	50% (14)
Students with disabilities	97	44% (43)	55% (11)	37% (18)	50% (14)
Students receiving English learner services	97	38% (37)	75% (15)*	35% (17)	18% (5)

\* Pearson Chi-Square  $p \leq 0.05$

Note: The proportion of high school teachers agreeing they were very prepared to teach CCSS to English learner students was lower than expected, but not significantly different from that of middle school teachers.

*Table D–5*

*Percentage of Teachers Participating in Various Activities during Grade Level or Content Area Meetings and, of Those, the Percentage of Teachers Indicating Those Activities Resulted in a “Moderate” or “Large” Positive Effect on the Quality of Their Teaching, Overall and by School Level*

Survey Items	Level	Percentage (Number) Participating and Reporting a “Moderate” or “Large” Effect	
		Participated	“Moderate” or “Large” Effect
Discussing student performance	All	95% (95)^	82% (77)^
	Elem	95% (19)	78% (14)
	Middle	96% (50)	86% (43)
	High	93% (26)	77% (20)
Discussing interventions for struggling students	All	91% (91)^	80% (72)
	Elem	85% (17)	88% (14)
	Middle	94% (49)	84% (41)
	High	89% (25)	68% (17)
Setting goals	All	91% (90)^	72% (64)
	Elem	85% (17)	75% (12)
	Middle	98% (51)	77% (39)
	High	81% (22)	59% (13)
Planning, aligning, and evaluating instructional strategies	All	90% (90)^	84% (75)^
	Elem	90% (18)	88% (15)
	Middle	98% (51)	88% (45)
	High	75% (21)	71% (15)
Setting common grading and student assessment practices	All	84% (84)^	70% (58)
	Elem	90% (18)	53% (9)
	Middle	87% (45)	76% (34)
	High	75% (21)	71% (15)
Reviewing formative or interim assessment results to improve instruction	All	83% (83)^	75% (62)
	Elem	80% (16)	69% (11)
	Middle	87% (45)	78% (35)
	High	79% (22)	73% (16)
Developing formative or interim assessments	All	81% (82)	77% (63)^
	Elem	75% (15)	73% (11)
	Middle	92% (48)*	79% (38)
	High	66% (19)*	74% (14)
Discussing culturally responsive practices	All	40% (40)	68% (26)^
	Elem	70% (14)*	69% (9)
	Middle	39% (20)	74% (14)
	High	21% (6)	50% (3)

\* Pearson Chi-Square  $p \leq 0.05$

^ More than 20 percent of cells have expected counts less than 5; Pearson Chi-Square results are invalid

*Table D–6*

*Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” With Leadership Structure Survey Items, Overall and by School Level*

Survey Items	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or Agree			
		All	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Teaching staff and leadership have a coherent, shared vision for implementing the state-adopted content standards	102	71% (72)	52% (12)	87% (45)*	56% (15)
Our faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems	103	68% (70)	44% (10)	85% (44)*	57% (16)
Colleagues agree upon and embrace common achievement expectations	103	68% (70)	35% (8)	87% (45)*	61% (17)
The school improvement team provides effective leadership at this school	101	66% (67)	30% (7)	94% (49)*	42% (11)
I participate in school leadership role(s)	102	58% (59)	61% (14)	55% (28)	61% (17)

\* Pearson Chi-Square  $p \leq 0.05$

Note: Leadership appears to be less effective at the elementary level: While not significantly different from the proportion of high school teachers agreeing their faculty had effective processes for making decisions to solve problems, colleagues agree and embrace common achievement expectations and that the school improvement team provides effective leadership, the proportion of elementary school teachers agreeing with these statements was lower than expected. The percentage of high school teachers agreeing school improvement team provides effective leadership was also lower than expected.

*Table D–7*

*Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” They Are Very Satisfied With Their Level of Influence and Input into School Decisions, Overall and by School Level*

Survey Items	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or Agree			
		All	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Selecting curriculum	100	50% (50)	29% (6)*	48% (24)	69% (20)*
Planning school improvement	103	47% (48)	36% (8)	54% (28)	41% (12)
Developing and implementing student discipline procedures	102	44% (45)	23% (5)	53% (27)	45% (13)
Selecting in-service professional development program topics and content	102	32% (33)	36% (8)	31% (16)	31% (9)
Selecting new teachers to this school	97	28% (27)	50% (11)*	13% (6)*	36% (10)

\* Pearson Chi-Square  $p \leq 0.05$



Table D–8

Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” That the Leadership in Their School Engages in a Variety of Behaviors, Overall and by School Level

Survey Items	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”			
		All	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Emphasizes high expectations of success for each and every student <sup>^</sup>	103	90% (93)	91% (20)	98% (51)	76% (22)
Holds teachers to high professional standards for delivering instruction <sup>^</sup>	103	90% (93)	91% (20)	100% (52)	72% (21)
Ensures teachers are using data to improve student learning <sup>^</sup>	103	87% (90)	91% (20)	98% (51)	66% (19)
Provides constructive feedback that helps teachers improve teaching	103	76% (78)	55% (12)*	87% (45)*	72% (21)
Has established a balanced assessment system that includes formative, interim, and summative assessments to improve instruction	103	59% (61)	64% (14)	67% (35)	41% (12)
Provides opportunities to discuss our vision with staff, parents, and key stakeholders on providing the best education to our students	103	55% (57)	46% (10)	71% (37)*	34% (10)*
Collects input from students, parents, and other community partners to design important policies and practices at our school	103	54% (56)	41% (9)	77% (40)*	24% (7)

\* Pearson Chi-Square  $p \leq 0.05$

<sup>^</sup> More than 20 percent of cells have expected counts less than 5; Pearson Chi-Square results are invalid

Note: The proportion of high school teachers agreeing they had opportunities to collect input from a variety of stakeholders about policies and practices was lower than expected, but not significantly different from that of elementary school teachers.

**Table D–9**  
**Percentage of Teachers Reporting Using Assessments for a Variety of Purposes, Overall and by School Level**

Assessment Purpose	Level	Percentage (Number) Using the Type of Assessment by Assessment Purpose				
		Teacher-Developed Classroom Assessments	School- or District-Developed Assessments	Purchased (e.g., Vendor Developed) Assessments	Statewide Summative Assessment	Other Classroom Data
Planning my classroom instruction	All	89% (92)^	49% (50)	52% (53)	36% (37)	38% (39)
	Elem	91% (19)	62% (13)	62% (13)	29% (6)	33% (7)
	Mid	89% (46)	58% (30)	54% (28)	37% (19)	39% (20)
	High	90% (27)	23% (7)*	40% (12)	40% (12)	40% (12)
Developing curriculum	All	79% (79)	50% (50)	45% (45)	20% (20)	30% (30)
	Elem	72% (13)	72% (13)	72% (13)*	17% (3)	42% (8)
	Mid	81% (42)	50% (26)	44% (23)	19% (10)	31% (16)
	High	80% (24)	37% (11)	30% (9)*	23% (7)	20% (6)
Setting daily learning targets	All	84% (86)^	29% (30)	23% (24)	10% (10)^	27% (28)
	Elem	86% (18)	38% (8)	29% (6)	10% (2)	19% (4)
	Mid	83% (43)	29% (15)	25% (13)	12% (6)	23% (12)
	High	83% (25)	23% (7)	17% (5)	7% (2)	40% (12)
Monitoring student progress	All	89% (91)^	42% (43)	32% (33)	21% (21)	36% (37)
	Elem	90% (18)	60% (12)	55% (11)	30% (6)	30% (6)
	Mid	89% (46)	40% (21)	29% (15)	19% (10)	37% (19)
	High	90% (27)	33% (10)	23% (7)	17% (5)	40% (12)
Identifying student learning gaps	All	84% (86)^	35% (36)	27% (27)	23% (23)	36% (37)
	Elem	90% (18)	45% (9)	45% (9)	15% (3)	40% (8)
	Mid	89% (46)	35% (18)	25% (13)	27% (14)	35% (18)
	High	73% (22)	30% (9)	17% (5)	20% (6)	37% (11)
Differentiating instruction for a student and/or groups of students	All	88% (91)^	37% (38)	22% (23)	13% (13)^	36% (37)
	Elem	95% (20)	52% (11)	48% (10)*	24% (5)	43% (9)
	Mid	90% (47)	33% (17)	19% (10)	12% (6)	37% (19)
	High	80% (24)	33% (10)	10% (3)	7% (2)	30% (9)
Identifying students who require additional interventions and support	All	89% (91)^	47% (48)	24% (24)	25% (25)	40% (41)
	Elem	85% (17)	60% (12)	40% (8)	15% (3)	40% (8)
	Mid	92% (48)	40% (21)	23% (12)	27% (14)	40% (21)
	High	87% (26)	50% (15)	13% (4)	27% (8)	40% (12)
Identifying interventions and support to match individual student needs	All	87% (88)^	41% (41)	28% (28)	19% (19)	35% (35)
	Elem	84% (16)	68% (13)*	47% (9)*	16% (3)	42% (8)
	Mid	85% (44)	37% (19)	31% (16)	23% (12)	35% (18)
	High	93% (28)	30% (9)*	10% (3)*	13% (4)	30% (9)
Differentiating instruction to accommodate a student with an IEP	All	86% (88)^	42% (43)	20% (20)	15% (15)^	38% (39)
	Elem	85% (17)	55% (11)	30% (6)	10% (2)	50% (10)
	Mid	89% (46)	39% (20)	21% (11)	19% (10)	39% (20)
	High	83% (25)	40% (12)	10% (3)	10% (3)	30% (9)
Examining longitudinal trends in student achievement	All	61% (62)	41% (42)	28% (28)	38% (39)	27% (27)
	Elem	60% (12)	55% (11)	50% (10)*	30% (6)	35% (7)
	Mid	64% (33)	37% (19)	19% (10)*	42% (22)	25% (13)
	High	57% (17)	40% (12)	27% (8)	37% (11)	23% (7)

\* Pearson Chi-Square  $p \leq 0.05$

^ More than 20 percent of cells have expected counts less than 5; Pearson Chi-Square results are invalid

Table D–10

Percentage of Teachers Reporting Their School Using Assessments for a Variety of Purposes, Overall and by School Level

Assessment Purpose	Level	Percentage (Number) Using the Type of Assessment by Assessment Purpose				
		Teacher-Developed Classroom Assessments	School- or District-Developed Assessments	Purchased (e.g., Vendor Developed, ) Assessments	Statewide Summative Assessment	Other Classroom Data
Monitoring student progress	All	61% (64)	63% (66)	48% (50)	66% (69)	30% (31)
	Elem	44% (10)	48% (11)	65% (15)	52% (12)	30% (7)
	Mid	62% (32)	73% (38)	40% (21)	75% (39)	29% (15)
	High	73% (22)	57% (17)	47% (14)	60% (18)	30% (9)
Planning our school improvement plan	All	31% (32)	61% (63)	35% (36)	68% (71)	26% (27)
	Elem	14% (3)	64% (14)	55% (12)*	50% (11)	23% (5)
	Mid	39% (20)	65% (34)	25% (13)*	73% (38)	31% (16)
	High	30% (9)	50% (15)	37% (11)	73% (22)	20% (6)
Monitoring progress in our school improvement plan	All	21% (22)	59% (62)	31% (33)	61% (64)	23% (24)
	Elem	13% (3)	61% (14)	52% (12)*	39% (9)*	22% (5)
	Mid	25% (13)	65% (34)	21% (11)*	69% (36)*	27% (14)
	High	20% (6)	47% (14)	33% (10)	63% (19)	17% (5)
Examining longitudinal trends in student achievement	All	24% (25)	56% (59)	33% (35)	64% (67)	18% (19)
	Elem	4% (1)	57% (13)	48% (11)	48% (11)	17% (4)
	Mid	29% (15)	60% (31)	25% (13)	67% (35)	19% (10)
	High	30% (9)	50% (15)	37% (11)	70% (21)	17% (5)
Planning professional learning and supports	All	26% (27)	60% (62)	26% (27)	52% (54)	24% (25)
	Elem	18% (4)	68% (15)	41% (9)	36% (8)	27% (6)
	Mid	31% (16)	65% (34)	23% (12)	58% (30)	27% (14)
	High	23% (7)	43% (13)	20% (6)	53% (16)	17% (5)

\* Pearson Chi-Square  $p \leq 0.05$

*Table D–11*

*Percentage of Teachers Participating in a Variety of Professional Learning Activities and, of Those, the Percentage Indicating the Activity Resulted in “Moderate” or “Large” Positive Effect on the Quality of Their Teaching, Overall and by School Level*

Activity	Level	Percentage (Number) Responding	
		Participated	“Moderate” or “Large” Effect
Sharing general communication such as successes, challenges, lessons learned with colleagues	All	97% (98)^	81% (79)^
	Elem	91% (20)	74% (14)
	Middle	100% (52)	83% (43)
	High	96% (26)	85% (22)
Supervisor observations or classroom walk-throughs	All	95% (97)^	59% (57)
	Elem	91% (20)	70% (14)
	Middle	96% (50)	64% (32)
	High	96% (27)	41% (11)
Workshops, conferences, or courses	All	94% (96)^	88% (83)^
	Elem	96% (21)	79% (15)
	Middle	94% (49)	94% (46)
	High	93% (26)	85% (22)
Professional learning communities	All	89% (91)^	74% (65)
	Elem	86% (19)	53% (9)*
	Middle	96% (50)	86% (43)*
	High	79% (22)	62% (13)
Collaborative planning time on understanding and deconstructing the CCSS	All	82% (84)^	76% (62)^
	Elem	91% (20)	67% (12)
	Middle	87% (45)	84% (38)
	High	68% (19)	63% (12)
Collaborative planning time on aligning curriculum to the CCSS	All	81% (82)	73% (58)
	Elem	82% (18)	63% (10)
	Middle	84% (43)	79% (34)
	High	75% (21)	67% (14)
Peer mentoring, observation and/or coaching	All	69% (70)	68% (47)^
	Elem	59% (13)	92% (11)
	Middle	88% (45)*	67% (31)
	High	43% (12)	28% (5)
Instructional coaching to improve my teaching skills	All	43% (43)	85% (35)^
	Elem	59% (13)*	83% (10)
	Middle	47% (24)	96% (22)
	High	21% (6)*	50% (3)
Observation visits to other schools	All	29% (29)	63% (17)^
	Elem	46% (10)*	63% (5)
	Middle	29% (15)	67% (10)
	High	14% (4)	50% (2)

\* Pearson Chi-Square  $p \leq 0.05$

^ More than 20 percent of cells have expected counts less than 5; Pearson Chi-Square results are invalid

Note: While not significantly different from the proportion of elementary school teachers participating in peer mentoring, observation, and/or coaching, the proportion of high school teachers doing so was smaller than expected.

Table D–12

*Percentage of Teachers Engaging in Various Professional Learning Topics and, of Those, the Percentage of Teachers Indicating the Learning Resulted in a “Moderate” or “Large” Positive Effect on the Quality of their Teaching, Overall and by School Level*

Professional Learning Topics	Level	Percentage (Number) Responding	
		Participated	“Moderate” or “Large” Effect
Using student assessment data	All	83% (84)^	62% (50)
	Elem	91% (20)	68% (13)
	Middle	75% (38)	62% (23)
	High	93% (26)	56% (14)
Developing formative assessments	All	73% (74)	68% (49)
	Elem	91% (20)	67% (12)
	Middle	67% (34)	79% (27)
	High	71% (20)	50% (10)
Standards-based instructional strategies	All	72% (71)	59% (41)
	Elem	67% (14)	62% (8)
	Middle	72% (36)	67% (24)
	High	75% (21)	43% (9)
Implementing CCSS	All	68% (68)	66% (44)
	Elem	86% (19)*	72% (13)
	Middle	68% (34)	74% (25)
	High	54% (15)*	40% (6)
Culturally responsive instruction	All	42% (42)	67% (26)^
	Elem	87% (20)*	72% (13)
	Middle	31% (15)	71% (10)
	High	25% (7)	43% (3)
Classroom management	All	31% (30)	79% (23)^
	Elem	40% (8)	75% (6)
	Middle	27% (13)	83% (10)
	High	32% (9)	78% (7)

\* Pearson Chi-Square  $p \leq 0.05$

^ More than 20 percent of cells have expected counts less than 5; Pearson Chi-Square results are invalid

*Table D–13*

*Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” With School Conditions for Learning Survey Items, Overall and by School Level*

Survey Item	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or Agree			
		All	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school for students	104	83% (86)	65% (15)	96% (50)*	72% (21)
Our practices foster positive relationships among staff and students	103	78% (80)	50% (11)	96% (50)*	66% (19)
Our school climate creates a strong community of learning	103	75% (77)	41% (9)	98% (51)*	59% (17)
There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school for adults	103	73% (75)	36% (8)	90% (47)*	69% (20)

\* Pearson Chi-Square  $p \leq 0.05$

Note: School Conditions for Learning is not as positive at the elementary school level. While not significantly different than the proportion of high school teachers agreeing their practices foster positive relationships among staff and students, their school climate creates a strong community of learning, and there was an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in their school for adults, the proportion of elementary school teachers doing so was smaller than expected.

*Table D–14*

*Percentage of Teachers Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with Parent Communication Survey Items, Overall and by School Level*

Survey Item	N	Percentage (Number) Responding “Strongly Agree” or Agree			
		All	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
I contact parents/guardians directly if a student is beginning to have academic or behavioral difficulties	101	64% (65)	70% (14)	75% (39)*	41% (12)*
I regularly provide parents/guardians with positive news about their student’s progress	101	62% (63)	50% (10)	85% (44)*	31% (9)
I share with parents/guardians how classroom assessments are used in class	101	49% (49)	45% (9)	62% (32)*	28% (8)*
I regularly provide parents/guardians with outcomes of summative assessments	101	49% (49)	45% (9)	48% (25)	52% (15)
I regularly provide parents/guardians with outcomes of formative assessments	101	40% (40)	30% (6)	46% (24)	35% (10)

\* Pearson Chi-Square  $p \leq 0.05$

Note: while not significantly different from the proportion of elementary school teachers agreeing they share student successes with parents, the proportion of high school teachers doing so was smaller than expected.

## Appendix E: Survey Reliability

The Teacher Survey on Instructional Practices in Oregon Schools contains eight composite scales listed in Table E-1. Teachers were asked to indicate their level of agreement with scale items using a 6-point Likert scale with “1” indicating strong disagreement and “6” indicating strong agreement. Below (Table E-1) we report each composite scale’s reliability using Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha$ ), which is a measure of a scale’s internal consistency. The internal consistency describes the extent to which the scale items measure the same characteristic or idea. In other words, it is the inter-connectedness of the individual items within the composite scale. In Table E-1, the Cronbach alpha coefficients indicate high internal consistency reliability. Because some of the composite scales have very high reliability ( $\alpha > 0.9$ ) some items could be redundant and can therefore be removed in the future to shorten the survey.

*Table E-1*  
*Survey Reliability, Cronbach’s Alpha by Scale*

Composite scale	# of Items	$\alpha$
CCSS, Curriculum, and Instruction	11	0.98
Prepared to teach CCSS	4	0.98
Leadership	5	0.86
Satisfaction with teachers’ with level of influence and input	5	0.91
Leadership at school	7	0.97
Sufficient access to resources	4	0.95
School conditions for learning	4	0.91
Parent communication	5	0.97

Note: CCSS refers to Common Core State Standards

## Appendix F: Document Review

Table F–1 describes the information we received from the participating schools. Education Northwest downloaded state report cards for each school from the ODE website.

*Table F–1*  
*Documents Shared by Study Schools*

School	Assessment Materials	Professional Development Materials	School Improvement Plan	Report Card	Other
A				X	
B			X	X	
C			X	X	X
D	X	X	X	X	
E	X			X	X
F	X	X		X	

Again, because of the sparsity of documents received and the inconsistency in their format and structure, we only analyzed the School Report Cards. We used content analysis procedures to code and synthesize common themes to describe the responses the schools submitted in terms of additional supports provided to students to improve their learning and prepare them for the future. We analyzed them in the five categories the schools reported—school readiness, academic support, academic enrichment, career and technical education, and extracurricular activities.

**School Readiness.** All of the schools indicated providing *academic supports* such as counseling; attendance programs; post-secondary preparation activities such as forecasting, Advanced Placement (AP) classes, Career and Technical Education (CTE), and Education Talent Search (ETS) programs; and multi-tiered systems of support, including RTI, special education staff, and extended-day programming. Almost all indicated providing *emotional and behavioral supports* such as counseling, anti-bullying programs, social skills development, and PBIS. Most schools indicated providing *physical supports* such as breakfast and lunch and regular physical education classes and *social activities* to engage families and students in the school community. Family activities included evening events, such as back-to-school nights, and student activities comprised clubs, mentoring, and spirit week activities.

**Academic Supports.** All of the schools reported providing academic supports to special populations (e.g., Title 1, English language learners, students receiving special education services, talented and gifted [TAG]). Almost all reported providing differentiated supports (e.g., tiered reading, interventions, or accelerated classes) and extended learning opportunities (e.g., homework support, after school programming) to students.



**Academic Enrichment.** All of the schools offered programming to students who wanted additional challenge (e.g., honors, dual credit, accelerated courses, Talented and Gifted, college and career readiness activities). Half of the schools provided academic enrichment in the form of language, music, and community engagement opportunities.

**Other.** All of the schools reported offering a range of extracurricular activities including athletics, clubs, music, drama, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), student council, and afterschool classes. Both of the high schools reported offering CTE opportunities.