Next Generation School Accountability in Utah

A Report of the Utah Accountability Redesign Advisory Committee to the Utah State Board of Education

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report presents recommendations for the redesign of Utah's School Accountability System. The overarching goal of the redesign process was to create a system that supports schools in implementing a Personalized and Competency Based learning system and facilitating student achievement of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions represented by Utah's Portrait of a Graduate. Another key goal was to make the system as simple and transparent as possible while recognizing that evaluating school quality is a complex endeavor.

The recommendations stem from the Accountability Redesign Advisory Committee as well as from broad-based community input. The Advisory Committee engaged in almost a year-long deliberative process working through the development of a detailed theory of action, articulating clear principles to guide the selection of indicators and the system design, and offering policy recommendations to support the proposed system design. The 29 Advisory Committee members represented school and LEA leaders, LEA assessment directors, teachers, and parents. The Advisory Committee is composed of members from the following stakeholder groups: Assessment Directors, Teachers, LEA Specialists (Growth, Special Education, DTL, ALS, Ed Tech), Executive Directors, Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Local Board, principals, and Parents.

The Executive Committee was comprised of key Utah policymakers. The Executive Committee met three times to help establish the "ground rules" for the overall system and to review the early work of the Advisory Committee. The full Executive Committee was not able to meet during the fall of 2022 due to scheduling challenges. However, approximately half of the Executive Committee was able to convene and review this report on October 31, 2022. They did not think they should vote to accept or endorse the report without a quorum present, but one of the Committee co-chairs suggested that we note that the Executive Committee "received the report." All participating Executive Committee members agreed with that position.

The Committees put forth several important recommendations, but we present two of the most important ones in this summary:

- Inclusion of local indicators, and
- Use of a "profile approach" for reporting accountability results.

Inclusion of local indicators

The Advisory Committee recognized that if organizations are to improve, they must have some control over their goals, processes, and evaluations. Therefore, the system should require the full inclusion (i.e., they count) of local indicators in the following three domains.

A. **School Climate:** The Advisory Committee strongly favors including school climate as a local indicator because of the important role that a positive school climate plays in supporting PCBL implementation.
B. **Supporting Learner Agency:** Supporting learner agency and school climate are two important intermediate indicators in the theory of action, so the Committee thought it was important to require all schools to gather data on the degree to which they are supporting students in developing the ability to guide and monitor their own learning. Further, the Committee

recommended that USBE support the development and use of high-quality learner agency tools and processes.

C. **Portrait of a Graduate:** The Advisory Committee felt strongly that local LEAs should choose between one and three Portrait of Graduate characteristics as part of their local indicator system.

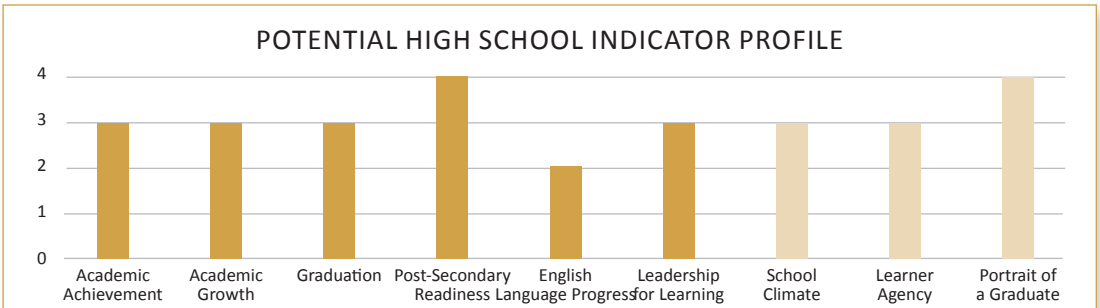
The Advisory Committee clearly supports the use of local indicators in the accountability system. But it also recognizes that it would be challenging for many of Utah's LEAs and schools to engage in this work meaningfully without considerable state support and guidance. Additionally, the Committee recommended phasing in the use of local indicators as school and LEAs developed the capacity to fully implement the new system.

Use of a "profile approach" for reporting accountability results

The Advisory Committee recommends using a "dashboard" or "profile" approach for displaying the results like the example for high school below. The advantage of this approach is the transparency that comes with prominently displaying every indicator rating, rather than obscuring such information in a total score and/or school grade. Many are familiar with the Consumer Reports rating scheme that offers a wealth of information about various products. For example, when evaluating automobiles, Consumer Reports generally includes information about predicted reliability and satisfaction, road test results, mileage, acceleration, braking distance, routine handling, emergency handling, and noise. While Consumer Reports produces a type of total score (e.g., "best buy"), they do not feature in the same ways as these distinct indicator scores. Someone who's interested in acceleration and emergency handling is likely to focus on different indicators than someone who's interested in reliability and mileage. The advantage of the profile approach is that it allows each user to tailor the report to their preferences, while making all indicator ratings fully visible, not obscured by a complex score calculation.

While the dashboard or profile approach does not rely on a total score to provide information to stakeholders, such an approach must have a clear and consistent way to evaluate each school's performance on each reported indicator. Typically, states report indicators using a 3, 4, or 5-point scale (or shaded parts of a circle, for Consumer Reports). The Advisory Committee recommended using a 4-point scale for each state and local indicator.

If the goal is to support Portrait of a Graduate and PCBL implementation, schools and LEAs need to be able to easily monitor their own progress on these indicators. The profile approach makes this easy to do so and to communicate with local stakeholders.



Example of a High School Indicator Profile Report

Policy Recommendations

Much of the current Utah accountability system is prescribed by state law. Therefore, many of the recommendations for a revised system will need to be permitted by changes in the existing statutes and regulations. The committees offered several recommendations in two major categories—accountability and school improvement—designed to facilitate the implementation of the design recommendations presented in this report.

INTRODUCTION AND CHARGE

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) released a Request for Proposals (RFP) during the summer of 2021 for a firm to support the redesign of Utah's School Accountability System so that it's more aligned with Personalized, Competency-Based Learning and Utah's Portrait of a Graduate, but still simple and transparent. The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (Center for Assessment), along with KnowledgeWorks, was awarded the contract to lead this important work for USBE.

> Utah's Portrait of a Graduate identifies the ideal characteristics of a Utah graduate after going through the K-12 system. These are aspirations not necessarily meant to be quantified and measured. These characteristics begin at home and are cultivated in educational settings.
>
> Personalized, Competency-Based Learning (PCBL) moves the focus of the classroom from teaching to learning based on fixed and well-defined targets for all students. It provides equitable access for each student to demonstrate core knowledge and skills in personalized and differentiated ways and can also empower students to engage in opportunities for deeper learning. PCBL moves instruction beyond information dissemination to a focus on transferable skills necessary for success in the modern world.

The current Utah School Accountability System was established through S.B. 220 during the 2017 legislative session, prior to the Personalized, Competency-Based Learning and Portrait of a Graduate initiatives. The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) wanted to reexamine the theory of action that underpins Utah's school accountability system. In addition, the pandemic highlighted the shortcomings of a state accountability system's heavy reliance on state assessment results. Given these dynamics, USBE wanted to engage stakeholders to examine and recommend a redesigned school accountability system inclusive of the additional initiatives; be more comprehensive in its evaluation criteria; and support continuous school improvement in all schools.

This project was instituted to provide technical, practical and policy recommendations for an accountability system that can better attend to the holistic nature of learning and that supports real and sustained change through the use of a balanced and reciprocal accountability approach to support improvements in local educational systems.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND MEETINGS

The Accountability Redesign Initiative employed a committee structure that recognizes the multiple responsibilities for school accountability in Utah. The Executive Committee was comprised of five members from the Utah Senate, four each from the Utah House, and State Board of Education, as well as four additional members representing several key political constituencies such as the Governor's office, the state school boards' association, and state superintendents' association. The Executive Committee met three times between November 12, 2021 and May 26, 2022 to help establish the "ground rules" for the overall system and to review the early work of the Advisory Committee. The 29 Advisory Committee members are school and LEA leaders, LEA assessment directors, teachers, and parents. The Advisory Committee is composed of members from the following stakeholder groups: Assessment Directors, Teachers, LEA Specialists (Growth, Special Education, DTL, ALS, Ed Tech), Executive Directors, Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Local Board, principals, and Parents.

The full Executive Committee was not able to meet during the fall of 2022 due to scheduling challenges. However, approximately half of the Executive Committee was able to convene and review this report on October 31, 2022. They did not think they should vote to accept or endorse the report without a quorum present, but one of the Committee co-chairs suggested that we note that the Executive Committee "received the report." All participating Executive Committee members agreed with that position.

The Advisory Committee met almost monthly from December 2021 through September 2022 and was responsible for creating a theory of action, design principles, selecting indicators, and creating the rules by which the system operates (e.g., how measures will be combined into indicators). Agendas and materials for all of the Executive and Advisory Committee meetings are available here and here.

THEORY OF ACTION

A theory of action is a critical tool when designing and evaluating a policy instrument. It can help illuminate alternatives and competing or contradictory claims about how a policy initiative should work. In the case of school accountability, policymakers and designers must very explicitly lay out what the proposed accountability indicators and design choices are intended to accomplish; in other words, *why* the accountability system is in place. In addition to the *why*, system designers and policymakers must also describe the *how*. For example, one might assert that holding schools accountable for increases in student test scores will lead to more focused instruction and ultimately improvements in student learning. But that is just an empty wish without specifying the processes and mechanisms necessary to bring about these learning gains, and the evidence that would be required to substantiate such claims.

Therefore, the Advisory Committee was charged with specifying the mechanisms by which these accountability uses will lead to the intended changes in teaching and learning. For example, one might postulate that incentivizing schools to begin incorporating performance-based assessments will help educators develop higher expectations for student learning. These higher expectations, in turn, will encourage deeper learning among students. Having to articulate both the aims and mechanisms of the

program in a theory of action will expose the weak points in proposed policies for evaluating schools, and shed light in fruitful ways to meet the major policy goals.

Theories of action are intimately linked to the purposes and uses of the accountability system. The system's purposes and uses of the accountability results should be aligned with its stated goals. The validity of the accountability system rides, in part, on how well its results drive intended improvements. Through this process—explicitly stating the crucial link between the purposes and uses of the accountability system, and how those processes will lead to what the accountability system is ultimately designed to achieve—theories of action can help us focus our designs on the right things and illuminate where we need to apply research-based approaches. By using this process, we gain another key benefit: seeing where a theory of action is falsifiable. The theory of action is not just a set of beliefs; it represents a series of hypotheses that should be based on research or previous practice. This explicit grounding is critical. When outlining the theory of action, the design team must ensure that connections among various aspects of the accountability system are not simply belief statements, but things that can be supported by research, ideally, or at least by best practice, if research is not available.

Overarching Vision

The Advisory Committee was committed to developing an accountability and reporting system that incentivized and supported schools in maximizing learning opportunities for students. Specifically, the Advisory Committee focused on learning opportunities tied to Utah's Portrait of a Graduate. The Portrait of a Graduate outlines a set of ambitious competencies for students grouped into three major categories: mastery, autonomy, and purpose. The Utah State Board of Education defines these three categories as follows:

- **Mastery** is the ability to demonstrate depth of knowledge and skill proficiency and includes the following characteristics:
  - Academic Mastery
  - Wellness
  - Civic, financial, and economic literacy
  - Digital literacy
- **Autonomy** is having the self-confidence and motivation to think and act independently. It is characterized by the following characteristics typically referred to as "21st Century Skills":
  - Communication
  - Critical thinking and problem solving
  - Creativity and innovation
  - Collaboration and teamwork
- **Purpose** guides life decisions, influences behavior, shapes goals, offers a sense of direction, and creates meaning. Purpose includes characteristics typically thought of as "21st Century" indicators including:
  - Honesty, integrity, and responsibility
  - Hard work and resilience
  - Lifelong learning and personal growth
  - Service
  - Respect

The Advisory Committee did not envision a system that held schools accountable for ensuring each learner achieves all of the Portrait of a Graduate competencies. Instead, it wanted to design a system that would incentivize and support schools as they worked toward deeper and more meaningful learning for all of Utah's students. The Committee recognized that there are multiple approaches that could help students attain Portrait of a Graduate competencies, but it noted that the state's own Personalized, Competency Based Learning (PCBL) framework offered a promising set of strategies. The Committee felt strongly that the current accountability system did not support, and even hindered, schools' efforts to implement PCBL systems to help students meet the knowledge, skills, and dispositions described in the Portrait of a Graduate. For that reason, the Advisory Committee focused, as much as possible, on designing an accountability system that supported the implementation of PCBL approaches and builds local capacity to create structures that help students meet Portrait of a Graduate competencies.

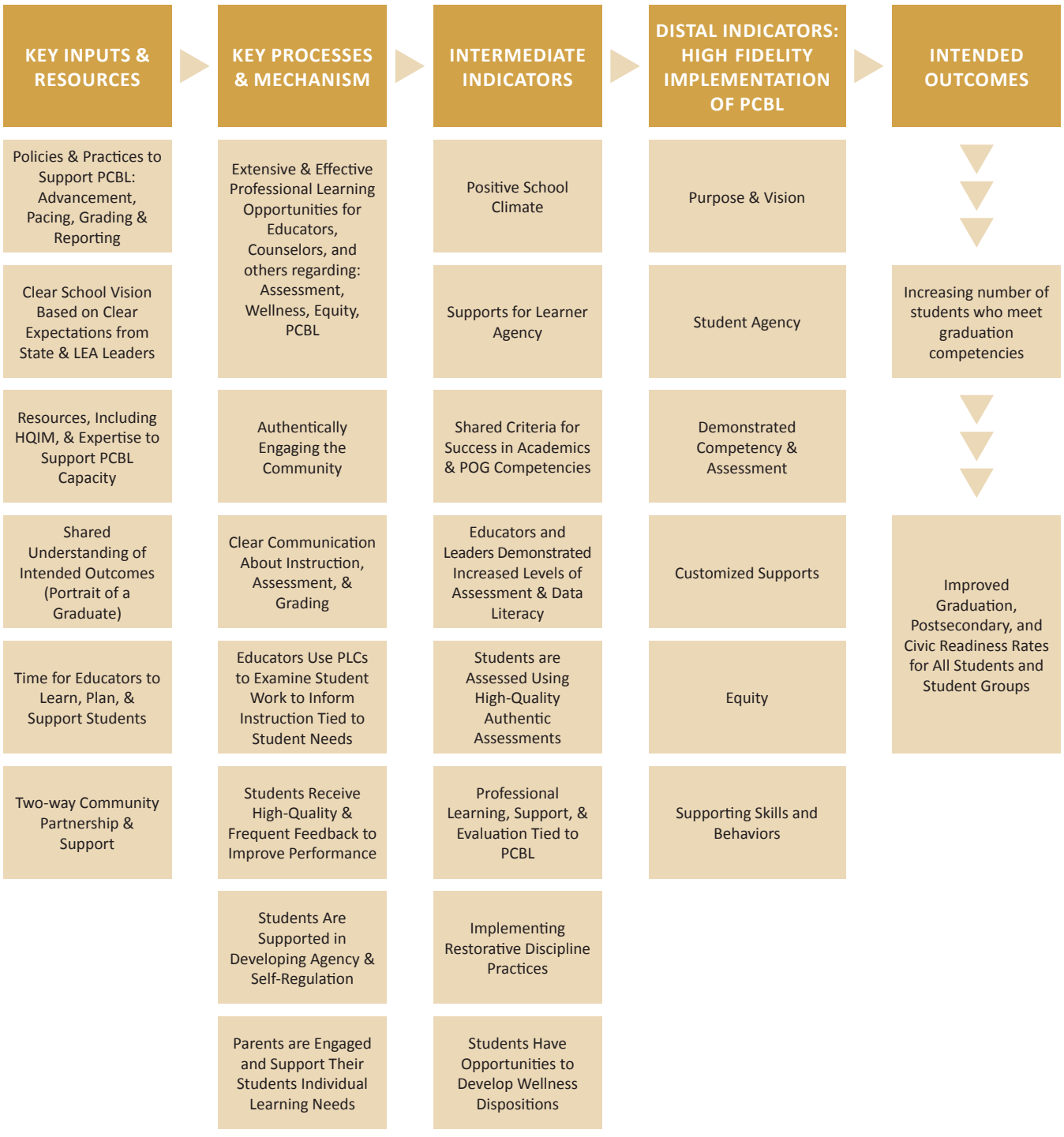
The Utah Accountability Theory of Action

The Advisory Committee started creating the theory of action depicted in Figure 1, below, by articulating the goals and long-term (distal) indicators of the proposed accountability system. The Committee worked through the various inputs and mechanisms necessary to increase the likelihood that the system would do what it wanted it to do.

Reading from left to right, the theory of action starts with the inputs and resources necessary to support the various processes and mechanisms that would lead to important conditions in schools that are referred to as intermediate indicators. The intermediate indicators represent features of schools that the Advisory Committee believes should be in place if schools are to fully support students in meeting the Portrait of a Graduate competencies. Following the logic of the theory of action, if the processes and mechanisms lead to the intermediate indicators, the distal indicators—which represent high-quality implementation of personalized and competency based education—should then lead to improved graduation, postsecondary, and civic-readiness[1] rates for all students and student groups. Critically, this theory of action serves as a guide to the design of the system, but as importantly, the theory of action serves as a framework for monitoring the effects of the system and supporting continuous improvement.

[1] Utah's Portrait of a Graduate Competencies document (2021) defines civic readiness as students being able to use "their knowledge of government and economic systems to defend civic choices and analyze and evaluate options" (p. 6).

Figure 1. Utah's Accountability Theory of Action



DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Stakeholders, policymakers, and technical leaders must make many decisions as they are developing an accountability system, and a well-designed theory of action can be their North Star. Likewise, having a well-articulated set of design principles can be an important touchstone as they choose the indicators and decision rules that will undergird the accountability system.

After the Center personnel introduced the concept of design principles to the Advisory Committee at the February meeting, the panel worked from a list of potential principles to produce a draft set of candidate design principles. Once that list was drafted, we asked Committee members to rank their 12 principles from highest to lowest priority. Although all their principles were important, we asked them to distinguish the "must-haves" from the "nice-to-haves" in their new system. After the prioritization exercise, the Advisory Committee identified equity, support and improvement, instructional core, and utility as its top-tier design principles. That said, the Committee made clear that the remaining eight principles were all important guideposts in designing the system.

1. **Equity:** The system has a clear focus on all students receiving the support and resources they need to learn and develop so they leave high school equipped to make productive life choices. Utah Code specifies that the educational system must provide opportunities for all students to learn, think, reason, and work effectively, both individually and in groups. Utah Code also requires that each student has a personalized education plan; that schools produce evidence of the degree to which all students, and identified student groups, are meeting the goals in their personalized education plans; and that schools monitor the needs of identified student groups as they work towards meeting competencies. The accountability system should promote understanding of the school/LEA conditions that support equity and excellence.

2. **Support and Improvement:** The system should be designed to support and improve schools' and educators' capacity to improve student outcomes, rather than focusing on punitive sanctions. Further, the system should promote a learning agenda that enables stakeholders at every level to innovate and strengthen PCBL designs and practices.

3. **Instructional Core:** An intense focus on student engagement, instructional quality, and meaningful content (and skills). This is a critical principle and is designed to challenge everyone to think hard about how best to honor these dynamics as they design a large-scale accountability system.

4. **Utility:** The system provides information to a variety of stakeholders in ways they can readily understand and can be used to improve student performance and school functioning.

5. **Measurable:** The indicators must rely on data that are observable and/or measurable at a specified level of comparability (e.g., within schools over time, across schools over time).

[2] Utah Code 53E-2-302

6. **Transparency:** The design of the system must be only as complicated as necessary to support the major goals and guiding principles. Even if it is internally complex, the workings of the accountability system should be externally transparent and understandable. The State must communicate the design and results of the system in ways that promote an accurate understanding for stakeholders.

7. **Coherence:** The accountability systems, particularly those at the school and LEA levels, must incentivize common and mutually supportive actions so that similar signals are sent to personnel and stakeholders at various levels of the system.

8. **Continuous Improvement:** The system is designed with clear and timely feedback loops and formative evaluation cycles to ensure that it continues to improve the quality and usefulness of the information provided to stakeholders.

9. **Shared Responsibility:** Improving educational opportunities in Utah is a shared responsibility among parents, students, educators, leaders, communities, and all policymakers. Therefore, the system should be designed to incorporate local expertise and capacity and should not serve only as a top-down state compliance mandate. Local context and expertise can provide an enhanced picture of school quality.

10. **Comprehensiveness:** Taken together, the indicators should support a robust understanding of system and school quality.

11. **Systematic:** The indicators reflect the interconnected nature of the organizational conditions that promote and sustain improvement and innovation.

12. **Research-based:** The indicators are grounded in a research-based theory improvement, and are coherently linked through a well-defined theory of action.

Some of the design principles, such as “research-based” and “measurable,” are useful for guiding the selection of specific indicators in the system. Others are useful in shaping the design of the full system, which includes not only which indicators are used, but how they are reported and used to make decisions. For example, the entire system should shed light on the degree to which students are provided equitable learning opportunities, and on its level of transparency and coherence. Collectively and individually, the design principles are intended to shape an accountability system that can support PCBL and student attainment of the Portrait of a Graduate competencies.

INDICATOR SELECTION

Introduction

Developing a theory of action and establishing design principles are key precursor steps to identifying indicators and eventually creating rules for how indicators are used to summarize school or LEA performance (e.g., decision rules). Before launching into the discussion of the process and the draft indicator selection, we spend a little time clarifying how we use the term "indicator" in this report.

Indicators are proxies for things we care about but have a hard time measuring directly. For example, postsecondary readiness is a popular indicator thought to provide information about students' likelihood of successfully transitioning from high school to college, career, military, training programs, or other options. Many factors relate to these sorts of transitions; some are measurable, and many are not. Therefore, postsecondary readiness indicators often include a variety of measures and other sources of information to serve as a broad-based proxy of students' readiness for this transition. States, for example, often include ACT or SAT test scores, certification exam results, course-taking patterns in high school, concurrent enrollment evidence, AP and IB results. State leaders recognize that none of these measures, on their own, are sufficient to provide stakeholders with a valid measurement, at the individual or aggregate levels, of readiness. Combining the various measures into an indicator, however, provides a more robust proxy for understanding individual and aggregate levels of readiness (i.e., at the school level) than would be the case for any single measure.

Indicator Selection Process

The Advisory Committee spent substantial time at a variety of meetings discussing and revising potential indicators. Rather than starting from scratch, the Committee worked from a small set of existing documents to inform its thinking. The National Academy of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) conducted an extensive research effort into measures and indicators useful for monitoring and evaluating students' educational opportunities. The work resulted in a consensus report called *Monitoring Educational Equity* (NASEM, 2019)[3]. To the Academy's credit, they produced a follow-up report tailored to state and LEA leaders to support them as they worked to implement measures of educational opportunities and equity in their systems. This *Guidebook for State and District Leaders* (NASEM, 2020)[4] served as an important foundation for the Committee's work.

In addition to the Guidebook, Advisory Committee members relied on examples from New Zealand and the Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment (MCIEA) to help ground the work of establishing indicators. Importantly, Committee members relied on Utah's Portrait of a Graduate and Personalized, Competency Based Learning (PCBL) Framework as a guide to indicator selection.

[3] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2019. *Monitoring Educational Equity*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/25389

[4] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2019. *Monitoring Educational Equity.* Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/25389

Advisory Committee members worked through a series of exercises to prioritize potential indicators. They worked in groups to address the different levels of the school system—high school and elementary/middle school—because of the different expectations and potential indicators at the two different levels. We asked the Advisory Committee members to recommend which indicators should be common across the state (i.e., state-level indicators) and which should be considered for local use. This distinction is important for the developing system because the local indicators are designed to be more relevant and supportive for schools and LEAs while the statewide indicators provide policymakers with a valid way to compare schools and LEAs across the state.

During the indicator selection meetings, several Advisory Committee members suggested focusing on Portrait of a Graduate competencies as the targeted student outcomes for the system. Several of the competencies are difficult to measure, particularly on a large-scale basis. However, given the importance of all the competencies for creating well-rounded, life-long learners, the Committee suggested finding ways to support local efforts to instruct and assess all competencies in the Portrait of a Graduate, even if some are challenging to measure at the present time. Nevertheless, the Committee suggested that many Portrait of a Graduate competencies should be considered candidate indicators in a revised accountability system.

Additionally, the Advisory Committee used the theory of action and the PCBL framework to identify potential indicators for an accountability system focused on enabling factors such as school climate, learner agency, and accreditation status.

We discuss in the next section the indicators recommended by the Advisory Committee for both high school and middle/elementary school.

PROPOSED SYSTEM DESIGN

The proposed accountability system design includes both state-required and local indicators, as described below. The Advisory Committee recognized that despite its desire to create an accountability system ideally suited to support the PCBL framework and the Portrait of a Graduate competencies, many stakeholders still would like a system with all indicators validly comparable across schools. However, as the state and local communities continue to implement educational approaches to facilitate students' demonstration of the Portrait of a Graduate characteristics, we expect to see more shared understanding across the state of the meaning of these characteristics than is currently the case. As the state and local LEAs develop measures and tools to evaluate student achievement of the various competencies, we can work toward some degree of comparable expectations for all students.

Shifting to an innovative accountability system could raise substantial capacity issues at both the local and state levels. Therefore, the Committee envisions a system that can progressively address the goals of supporting PCBL and student learning of the Portrait of a Graduate as the state and local capacity for doing this work increases. In other words, the Advisory Committee recognized that many LEAs and schools would need time and support to shift their systems to support student learning of the Portrait

of a Graduate characteristics. Therefore, the Committee recommended phasing in the redesigned system while the state supports schools for which PCBL and Portrait of a Graduate is still relatively new.

As seen in the theory of action, the Committee discussed a wide range of factors contributing to PCBL implementation and supporting students' achievement of the Portrait of a Graduate characteristics. These include important inputs such as, "Clear School Vision Based on Clear Expectations from State & District Leaders" and processes such as "Parents are Engaged and Support Their Students Individual Learning Needs." As important as these precursor components of a theory of action are to the overall success of the initiative, the Committee felt strongly that the accountability indicators should be based on the intended ultimate outcomes as well as some of the intermediate and distal indicators.

We first discuss the proposed local indicators, both to signal the importance of these types of indicators in the next-generation accountability system, and because a similar framework is imagined for the high school and elementary/middle school systems.

Proposed Local Indicators for Both High Schools and Elementary/Middle Schools

The Advisory Committee recognized that if organizations are to improve, they must have some control over their goals, processes, and evaluations. Therefore, the state should not mandate which Portrait of a Graduate characteristics local communities decide to incorporate in the accountability system. That said, the Committee encouraged the state to provide guidance and technical support to help communities with data collection.

The Committee also recognized that all attributes of the Portrait of a Graduate are critical to learner success, but they also noted that some Portrait of a Graduate characteristics are easier to measure than others, at least at this time, and therefore, not all should be included in the state's accountability system. Collecting evidence of how schools are supporting students to achieve mastery of **all** Portrait of a Graduate aligned competencies would be overly burdensome and stress limited local capacity

The Advisory Committee wrestled with requiring certain, specific indicators versus letting local education leaders and stakeholders select from a wide range of choices that best fit their local contexts. After significant deliberation, the Advisory Committee recommended identifying a limited number of potential local indicators while still vesting considerable control to local education agencies to develop a process for evaluating success. They thought that a positive school climate was instrumental in fostering a culture of learning that would support PCBL implementation. Further, at the high school level, school climate information is derived from the accreditation review, so it does not require any extra work by LEA personnel.

Similarly, ensuring that each Utah student and educator has access to personalized teaching and learning experiences is one of the four goals the Board outlined in its most recent Strategic Plan. USBE has worked to create strategies for supporting this goal across the state. Further, such personalized experiences are important in facilitating student attainment of the Portrait of a Graduate competencies. Therefore, the Advisory Committee thought it was important to require all schools to submit local evidence showing how the school is supporting the development of learner agency.

Finally, since facilitating student attainment of the Portrait of a Graduate competencies is the primary intended outcome of the accountability system redesign, the Advisory Committee strongly recommended that all schools hold themselves accountable for supporting students in meeting these competencies. The Committee recognized, however, that holding schools accountable for meeting all of the outcomes defined by the Portrait of a Graduate would be both overwhelming and ineffective. Therefore, the Committee recommended requiring each school to submit evidence for how they are supporting students in meeting up to three Portrait of a Graduate competencies. Ideally, each school will submit evidence for three Portrait of a Graduate competencies. The Committee noted that more time might be needed before all schools can address three or more Portrait of a Graduate competencies, but this should be a long-term goal for the evolution of the accountability system. As we discuss later in this report, specifics of implementation should be guided by an ongoing advisory committee.

1. **School Climate:** The Advisory Committee strongly favors including school climate as a local indicator because of the important role that a positive school climate plays in supporting PCBL implementation and attaining high levels of student achievement. The Committee noted that several dimensions of the accreditation process were related to the climate of the school and recommended that the *Culture of Learning* dimension (and perhaps others) of the accreditation reports be used as the school climate indicator for high schools. The Committee was aware that accreditation occurs once every five years and only for high schools, but thought it was still appropriate to use that information as the school climate indicator since climate does not change very quickly. Further, if the evaluation of school climate includes surveys of parents and perhaps community members, there can be a diminishing return when trying to survey the same people every year. The indicator score will simply remain the same for five years. However, if a school (or LEA) believes that the climate is rapidly improving due to new initiatives, the Committee supported having schools substitute (or supplement) a different research-based climate instrument in place of (or in addition to) the information derived from the accreditation data to update the school's indicator score. Therefore, the Committee recommended that USBE continue to support locals with the development of high-quality data collection instruments for school climate.

   The Advisory Committee recognized that elementary and middle schools do not have the advantage of relying on the school accreditation process to provide school climate information. Nevertheless, the committee thought creating an effective school climate is critical to facilitating students' capacity to meet Portrait of a Graduate competencies and, as noted below, the Committee recommends having USBE support the development and use of high-quality school climate tools and processes.

2. **Supporting Learner Agency:** Some Advisory Committee members suggested having LEAs submit evidence that they are supporting the development of learner agency by providing customized supports to all learners. Similar to the climate indicator, the Committee recognized that certain dimensions of the accreditation evaluation for high schools would apply to supporting learner agency, particularly the *Leadership for Learning and Engagement of Learning* dimensions. Supporting learner agency and school climate are two important intermediate indicators in the theory of action, so the Committee thought it was important to require all schools to gather data on the degree to which they are supporting students in developing the ability to guide and monitor their own learning.

Again, the Advisory Committee recognizes that elementary and middle schools will need additional support to gather and use data related to learner agency, but thought that this indicator was very important for supporting PCBL implementation and wanted it included in the system. For that reason, the Committee recommended that USBE support the development and use of high-quality learner agency tools and processes.

3. **Portrait of a Graduate:** The Advisory Committee felt strongly that LEAs should choose between one and three Portrait of Graduate characteristics as part of their local indicator system. We note that "LEAs" are the locus of control here since the Committee believed that such decisions should not be left to every school but would need to support of LEA leaders to make such decisions. As discussed above, Utah's Portrait of a Graduate describes 13 characteristics that Utah graduates should possess. The state convened educators to create a set of learning expectations across the K-16 spectrum for each of these characteristics to help communities clearly identify student mastery. These 13 characteristics are grouped into three categories: mastery, autonomy, and purpose. The Committee debated whether to require schools to select at least one characteristic from each of the three categories. The Advisory Committee members thought this would be an important way to structure the local indicator system to strengthen the implementation of PCBL and Portrait of a Graduate strategies. However, given the current stage of statewide implementation of PCBL and Portrait of a Graduate, the Committee thought a phased-in approach with fewer initial requirements would be prudent.

The Advisory Committee clearly supports the use of local indicators in the accountability system. But it also recognizes that it would be challenging for many of Utah's LEAs and schools to engage in this work meaningfully without considerable state support and guidance.

Such support would include the development of tools and processes for collecting high-quality data on these types of local indicators. Relying on local indicators provides important contextual information that will likely best support the high-fidelity implementation of PCBL, but that means that comparability across schools and LEAs will be compromised. One way to facilitate some level of comparability is for the state and/or a consortium of LEAs to produce general performance level descriptors (PLDs) for potential local indicators. Such PLDs could be similar to a generalized rubric or scoring guide for performance tasks. In fact, USBE and LEA partners have already produced the Utah Portrait of a Graduate Competencies, which includes brief descriptions of competent performance for each of the Portrait of a Graduate characteristics across the K-12 continuum. This document should be the starting point for subsequent work in this area. While such PLDs can guide the development of a local scoring system, they are not specific enough to guide the scoring of particular local tasks or other forms of evidence (e.g., surveys). However, common general rubrics and PLDs can help clarify and communicate expectations about expected levels of student/school performance and may help support comparability evaluations.

High School System

Proposed Statewide Indicators

The high school system should include the following indicators that would be common across all high schools in the state.

1. Academic mastery
    a. Academic achievement as measured by the state assessment system
    b. Academic growth for assessment with consecutive years of assessment
2. Postsecondary readiness
    a. College, career, and civic readiness
    b. Graduation rate
    c. Other potential measures as determined, given the need to re-consider and perhaps redesign this indicator
3. English language proficiency and progress
4. Leadership for Learning which includes indicators related to school climate and learner agency and will be drawn from the school accreditation process.

We grouped these indicators in four main buckets, but all of the indicators except "leadership for learning" are found in the current state accountability system.

This indicator grew out of a recognition of the value of the school accreditation indicators, process, and results, particularly in terms of gaining an understanding of school quality beyond typically used accountability indicators. USBE currently contracts with Cognia for school accreditation based on Cognia's Performance Standards for School Accreditation. The Committee thought that the current approach represented important processes and outcomes that would be hard to measure without an on-site accreditation visit. That said, panelists thought the current approach and processes are more important than a particular company that supports accreditation, in this case, Cognia. For the purposes of this report, we rely on the current accreditation process that focuses on four key characteristics of schools:

- **Culture of Learning:** The institution's focus on the challenges, joys, and opportunities of learning, and the coherence with its mission and vision
- **Leadership for Learning:** The responsibility of an institution's leaders to influence and impact all aspects of the institution in positive ways
- **Engagement of Learning:** The inclusion of all learners in the learning process, and their development of confidence and love of learning
- **Growth in Learning:** The growth of learners in the programs and curricula provided by the institution and their readiness to successfully transition to the next levels of learning.

While on-site visits occur once every five years or so, a school's accreditation status can change during that time span as it addresses shortcomings found during the initial visit. The advantage of including accreditation status is that it allows consideration of hard-to-measure indicators in ways that capitalize on existing systems and knowledge.

The Advisory Committee thought it was important to rely on more than simple pass/fail designations to report on accreditation. Instead, it recommended using either the scale scores or the performance

levels produced in the accreditation process to provide finer-grained information to users and stakeholders. The Advisory Committee recommended having USBE work closely with Cognia and LEA representatives to work out the details of how best to include accreditation as part of the overall evaluation of school quality.

Elementary/Middle School System

Proposed Statewide Indicators

The elementary school system should include the following indicators that would be common, also, across all schools with grades 3-8 in the state.

1. Academic mastery
    a. Academic achievement as measured by the state assessment system
    b. Academic growth on assessments across consecutive years
2. Targeted Growth—defined as the growth of the lowest performing students in the school
3. English language proficiency and progress.

The three sets of indicators are in the current system and have generally performed well. Stakeholders value the academic growth of students from year to year, and users of the current system appreciate the way that the equity indicator rewards schools for accelerating the growth of the school's lowest-performing 25% of students. Progress towards English language proficiency is a required indicator under the Every Student Succeeds Act and also provides important equity information.

AGGREGATION AND DETERMINATIONS

Having a set of indicators that signal what the state values is critical to accountability system design. The next step is to determine which schools need additional support so that all students have appropriate educational opportunities. Accountability systems do not need to produce a total score in order to identify which schools need support.

This is a point worth highlighting. Many states compute a total accountability score and convert these scores into performance levels and/or grades, but a significant number of states have been permitted to use the type of profile approach we propose below. The Advisory Committee argues that total scores could obscure important details about the quality of the school.

The Advisory Committee recommends using a "dashboard" or "profile" approach for displaying the results, like the two examples below (see Figures 2 and 3). The advantage of these options is the transparency that comes with prominently displaying every indicator rating, rather than obscuring such information in a total score and/or school grade. Many are familiar with the Consumer Reports rating scheme that offers a wealth of information about various products. For example, when evaluating automobiles, Consumer Reports generally includes information about predicted reliability and satisfaction, road test results, mileage, acceleration, braking distance, routine handling, emergency handling, and noise. While Consumer Reports produces a type of total score (e.g., "best buy"), they do

not feature in the same ways as these distinct indicator scores. Someone who's interested in acceleration and emergency handling is likely to focus on different indicators than someone who's interested in reliability and mileage. The advantage of the profile approach is that it allows each user to tailor the report to their preferences, while making all indicator ratings fully visible, not obscured by a complex score calculation.

Indicator Ratings

While the dashboard or profile approach does not rely on a total score to provide information to stakeholders, such an approach must have a clear and consistent way to evaluate each school's performance on each reported indicator. Typically, states report indicators using a 3, 4, or 5-point scale (or shaded parts of a circle, for Consumer Reports). The Advisory Committee recommended using a 4-point scale for each state and local indicator.

Such a rating system works well for common indicators collected at the state level. Level 3, for example, should mean the same thing from one school to another. While this approach can be used for local indicators, it will be a challenge, even when using common performance level descriptors or a general rubric (described above), to produce scores that can be validly compared across schools. The Advisory Committee understands this tradeoff and made clear that the advantages of having local indicators for supporting Portrait of a Graduate and PCBL implementation was worth giving up some cross-school comparability.

If the goal is to support Portrait of a Graduate and PCBL implementation, schools and LEAs need to be able to monitor their own progress on these local indicators over time. There are many well-known tools and processes used for scoring essays and performance tasks that can be applied to help ensure within-school or within-LEA consistency over time. Once schools are able to achieve some level of internal consistency, USBE and its advisors (e.g., the Assessment and Accountability Policy Advisory Committee) can create systems to build a degree of cross-school comparability into the system. *Note: This is not a required evolution; it will depend on the degree to which comparability and contextual flexibility are valued.*

Figure 2. Example of a High School Indicator Profile Report

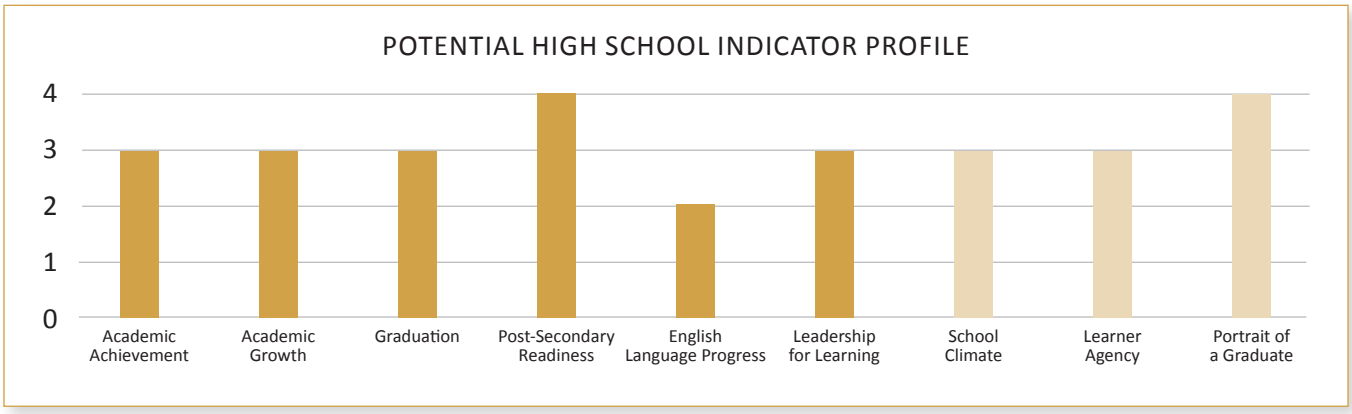
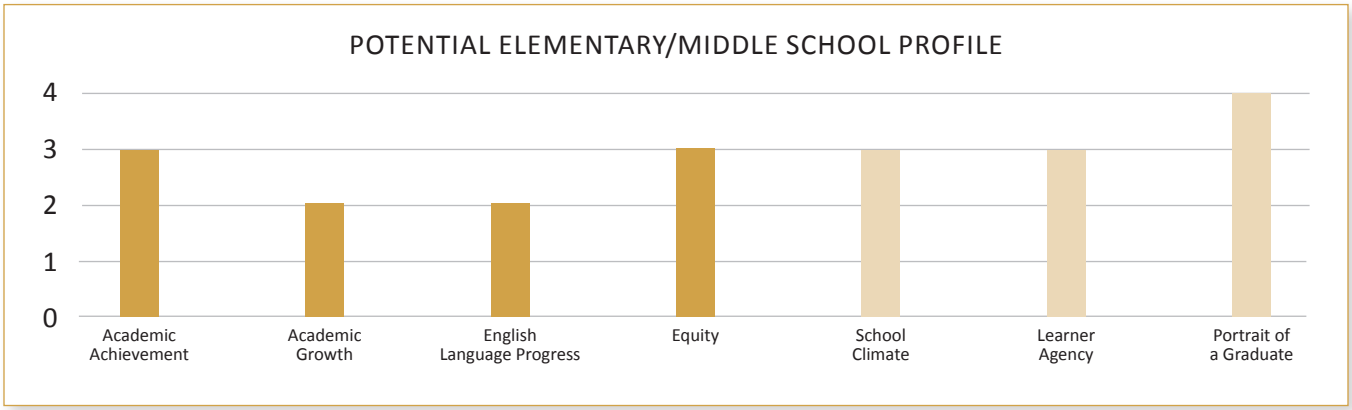


Figure 2. Example of an Elementary/Middle School Indicator Profile Report



Meeting Federal Designation Requirements

There is solid evidence that a profile/dashboard approach meets the requirements of the federal education law (ESSA) because it has already been approved for use in several states to identify the lowest 5% of Title I schools for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), as well as applying state-specific rules for identifying schools for Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI).

The Step Approach to Identification

The procedure for identifying schools for the various levels of support required under federal law follows what has been termed a "step approach." This approach begins by identifying the scores/ratings on each of the indicators that would trigger an identification. States often do this by working with an advisory committee (e.g., AAPAC). The simplest case, and the easiest one on which to get agreement, is that schools scoring at Level 1 on all indicators are clearly in need of additional support (see Table 1 below). Using the step approach depicted in the table above, such schools would be identified for CSI on Step 1. If 5% of the Title I schools were identified on Step 1, no further steps are necessary. If the 5% threshold was not reached, we would move to Step 2. This second step would identify more schools than Step 1, by definition, and the state office would then determine if the 5% target was met after Step 2. Note that the 5% threshold is the federal requirement; states can choose to identify more, but not less than 5% of the Title I schools for CSI. If the 5% target was not reached after Step 2, the state would continue with Step 3, and so on, until the 5% threshold was reached. A similar approach, depending on the state's rules, is used for TSI and ATSI.

Note that the steps following Step 1 show Level 2 scores for certain indicators in order to include more low-performing schools in the designated level of support. For example, Step 2 indicates that schools scoring Level 1 on all common/state indicators and scoring at Level 1 or Level 2 on the local indicators would be included in designations for additional support. However, keep in mind that this is simply an example. We could have selected any other indicators for this example. The important point is that the steps and indicator values like those shown in Table 1 must be determined by a deliberative process using a trusted advisory group and then evaluated empirically to answer questions such as the number and types of schools identified on each step. The beauty of such an approach is in its explicit and simple transparency. Once a school knows its indicator scores, it can easily determine why and if the state will designate it for additional support.

TABLE 1. EXAMPLE OF A STEP APPROACH TO IDENTIFY SCHOOLS FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOLS

	INDICATOR PERFORMANCE LEVELS						
Steps	Academic Achievement	Academic Growth	ELP	Equity	School Climate	Learner Agency	Portrait of a Graduate
Step 1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Step 2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
Step 3	1	1	2	1	2	2	2
Step 4	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Step 5	2	1	2	2	2	2	2
Step 6	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The Advisory Committee recognizes that it is proposing an ambitious revision to Utah's current accountability system. Further, the Committee acknowledges that the work around the Portrait of a Graduate and the PBCL Framework is quite variable across the state. Some schools and LEAs have been engaged in these practices for several years, while others are still quite new to the concepts, structures, and culture associated with these more student-centered practices.

Therefore, the Advisory Committee spent time discussing key implementation factors for the revised accountability system. The best design, if poorly implemented, can still yield a bad result. In the discussion that follows, we present considerations and recommendations for how the revised system might be implemented. We first discuss state-level implementation considerations, and then LEA and school implementation considerations.

State-level implementation considerations

The Advisory Committee identified several prominent issues that must be addressed when implementing a revised accountability system. While the Committee discussed a broad range of potential implementation issues, they emphasized the following:

- USBE capacity requirements
  - Internal USBE coordination
  - Reviewing and supporting school indicator selection
  - Supporting approaches to measuring local indicators
- Data systems and data quality
  - Designing data collection mechanisms for local indicators
  - Supporting local educators with data submission and quality control

USBE Capacity Requirements

The Advisory Committee emphasized that for a reform of this breadth to work, many offices within USBE will need to work together to support LEA and school efforts. Supporting schools in implementing PCBL learning systems in order to enable students to meet the Portrait of a Graduate competencies resides in more than the assessment and accountability offices. USBE has already been coordinating across offices to support PCBL, but this must become institutionalized as the state implements a reformed accountability system.

The Advisory Committee stressed the importance of USBE playing a leadership, yet supportive, role in ensuring that the local indicator system is both high-quality and useful to schools for improving their practice. First, the Advisory wanted USBE (and perhaps the legislature) to clarify which policy body has the authority and responsibility for reviewing and approving local indicator selection. That said, the Committee assumed the state board would have this authority.

The Advisory Committee wanted USBE to create tools and templates to help LEAs select and measure local indicators. They felt that without such tools, many of the smaller and/or less-resourced schools and LEAs would struggle to understand the expectations and create high-quality local indicators. Further, the Committee wanted USBE to support the development of performance level descriptors (PLDs) or generic scoring rubrics for the classes of local indicators to help clarify expectations for performance on uncommon indicators and work to create a shared understanding of excellence across the state. These model PLDs must be general enough to allow for local flexibility and autonomy yet defined enough to allow for at least some degree of comparability.

USBE currently employs many professionals across units capable of leading such work. However, all have full-time positions with varying degrees of overlap with the work called for above. Therefore, in order to fully support LEAs and USBE in addressing the leadership and capacity recommendations outlined in this report, USBE will likely need an additional 1-4 FTE, depending on if personnel are assigned to meet the needs of the innovative accountability system.

Data Systems and Data Quality

The main focus of the discussion around data systems and data quality centered on how the state and LEAs can best work together to make data collection and transfer as efficient as possible. The Advisory Committee recommended that USBE lead these efforts because there is no straightforward way for the LEAs to coordinate this effort among themselves.

These recommendations included things like collecting data from other entities, such as Cognia for accreditation data, to avoid having LEA personnel having to transfer data between Cognia and USBE, or worse, having LEA personnel having to hand-enter data that could have been easily transferred electronically. Further, the Committee recommended having USBE create clear guidelines for data collection, transmission, and storage, particularly in terms of specifications around granularity. For example, LEA leaders will need to know whether to maintain records at the individual item response level or individual student level. Finally, the Advisory Committee strongly recommended capitalizing on existing data collection systems already without having to create new and separate systems unless absolutely necessary.

LEA and School Implementation Considerations

As important as the state implementation considerations are, the needs of local education agencies might be even more substantial given the expectations for local educators to ensure that students have opportunities to meet the Portrait of a Graduate and to document these efforts via the use of local indicators. In the discussion of local implementation considerations, the Advisory Committee focused on:

- Capacity needs
- Professional learning
- Financial needs
- Ongoing advice

Capacity Needs

The Advisory Committee elaborated on several of the recommendations provided above under the section for state-level recommendations. The Committee stressed that local educators would value a resource bank, curated by USBE and LEA-level collaborators, with high-quality assessments for various Portrait of a Graduate competencies and instruments that can be used to measure and support important components of PCBL implementation (e.g., school climate, learner agency). The assessments and instruments used to populate the bank can be created by teams of local and state experts but should also be curated from LEAs that are well along the way to PBCL implementation.

The Committee also recommended having USBE, in collaboration with local LEAs, provide guidance for operationally defining the various competencies so they can be assessed. This should be part of an overall resource bank. In other words, it is critical that the curators of any such bank first clearly define the competencies and the constructs (e.g., school climate) to which the multiple assessments and instruments are aligned. In addition to being good measurement practice, this helps communicate to users that knowledge and skills expected to be developed among students and school personnel.

Finally, the Committee strongly recommended that for certain indicators, particularly school climate, there would be a considerable advantage to have a very limited number of high-quality tools and processes. Committee members hoped the state could arrive at a school climate survey that could garner widespread agreement and use. Having LEAs and schools continue to develop their own instruments is a drain on local capacity and is inefficient.

Professional Learning

The Advisory Committee engaged in considerable discussion regarding the professional learning needs associated with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to create the school structures, supports, and expertise necessary implement PCBL systems and enable students legitimate opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the Portrait of a Graduate competencies.

The Committee stressed that such professional learning required a multi-level and multi-year effort. For example, several Committee members noted that local boards of education, in addition to leaders and educators, must be offered professional learning opportunities regarding the rationale behind the Portrait of a Graduate and PCBL approaches as well as the policies and leadership requirements necessary to advance these learning goals in their LEAs.

The Committee stressed the importance of regular and ongoing professional learning opportunities for LEA and school leaders, but especially for teachers so they have the opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for implementing student-centered learning systems to ensure that all students can meet the challenging Portrait of a Graduate competencies.

Determining whether students have or have not met the Portrait of a Graduate competencies is ultimately a measurement issue. Even educators and leaders with strong classroom assessment skills will need considerable support to learn how to validly measure hard-to-assess competencies such as those that comprise Utah's Portrait of a Graduate. For example, knowing how much and what type of evidence is sufficient to declare a student competent can challenging even for educators with good assessment backgrounds. Thus, improving the assessment literacy knowledge and skills of educators and leaders will be a significant undertaking requiring creating sustainable structures for supporting educators' long-term assessment literacy needs.

The Committee also noted that schools will likely need to shift typical grading practices and policies to better align with the types of the culture of a school engaged in deeper learning approaches such as PCBL. Changing grading systems, especially at the high school level, is not for the faint of heart and will require the full involvement and support from the local board of education. Therefore, the Committee recognized that this is a long-term effort and rushing the transition of the grading system could cause significant backlash among parents and community members.

The types of professional learning described above are focused on what is necessary for educators and leaders to implement personalized and competency-based learner strategies to help students meet the Portrait of a Graduate competencies. Such skills are critical to the success of this initiative. The Advisory Committee recommended that USBE clarify the expected knowledge and skills necessary for educators and leaders to be considered assessment literate. Rather than starting from scratch, the Committee recommended starting from existing standards such as those produced by the Michigan Assessment Consortium or by the University of Colorado Boulder. To that end, USBE is releasing a series of assessment literacy professional learning modules this fall, utilizing the resources of the Michigan Assessment Consortium as well as the Center for Assessment.

The Advisory Committee's main focus in this report, however, is on offering recommendations for a revised accountability system than can incentivize and support deeper learning. The system proposed in this reports calls for LEA and school leaders to propose, measure, and evaluate students' and schools' progress in meeting important indicators related to PCBL implementation and meeting Portrait of a Graduate competencies. The sorts of skills necessary for education leaders to effectively identify and evaluate local accountability indicators generally fall more under the heading of data and evaluation literacy. For these domains, the Program Evaluation Standards authored by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation will provide guidance for the professional learning necessary to help school and LEA leaders develop the knowledge and skills necessary for supporting the creation and high-fidelity use of local accountability indicators.

Finally and despite the extensive set of professional learning needs outlined here, the Advisory Committee cautioned about trying to go too fast and overwhelm local leaders and educators. They noted that educators will need sufficient time to help shape and implement these new strategies and

those responsible for overseeing this new system must recognize that this new accountability system is not the only mandate or initiative coming from the state.

Financial Needs
The Advisory Committee did not offer many specific recommendations regarding the financial needs of LEAs when it comes to supporting the educational shifts necessary to implement deeper learning systems and document these efforts through the design and implementation of local accountability indicator systems. The Committee did note that they did not think there would be much of an appetite for spending on a school accountability system, but there very well could and should be support for schools and LEAs to facilitate student learning of the Portrait of a Graduate competencies.

Ongoing Advising
The Advisory Committee strongly recommended that they, or a group like them, be empaneled throughout the initial implementation years (and likely beyond) to provide advice to USBE and its partners regarding the implementation process. There are many decisions and recommendations that cannot be made until after legislation and regulations are finalized and the system is piloted. Therefore, the Committee recommended either expanding the existing USBE Assessment and Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (AAPAC) to include more members of this current Advisory Committee, perhaps creating a subcommittee of AAPAC to focus on the implementation of the revised accountability system, or creating an entirely new committee charged to provide advice regarding the revised accountability system.

School LAND Trust Program
The School LAND Trust program brings tens of millions of dollars annually to meet critical academic needs and enhance and improve academic excellence in Utah public schools. The funds are generated from the earnings on the permanent State School Fund, where revenue from school trust lands is invested. The funds are discretionary for academic instruction and play a vital role in student success.

Each LEA school in Utah elects a School Community Council (SCC) consisting of parents, teachers, and the principal. Charter Schools have Trust Lands Councils. All councils must have a two-parent member majority.

Each council identifies the focus of the School LAND Trust plan by carefully reviewing school-wide assessment data annually. Plans are developed to improve student academic performance in the identified areas with the annual School LAND Trust program funds. The plans are approved by the council, submitted electronically, and approved by the local school board or chartering entity. For more information about the program, see this website.

The Advisory Committee spent time at several meetings discussing the School LAND Trust and how the program could provide a structure for the development and implementation of the local indicator system. There was some concern that bringing a highly successful program into an accountability framework, but in the end, the Committee thought the LAND Trust program offered a powerful structure and considerable efficiencies for local schools and LEAs.

In particular, the Committee felt that the School Community Council (SCC), which consists of parents, teachers, and the principal, can facilitate the type of broad-based involvement in the selection and implementation of local indicators the Advisory Committee envisioned. Committee members reported that community councils offered a forum for parents and educators to have meaningful discussions and take necessary action regarding student competencies. Committee members noted an opportunity for connecting the LAND Trust goals to proposed school-level indicators in the accountability system to further empower community councils by representing them in both processes. On the other hand, Committee members indicated that Community Councils will need training and guidance for selecting indicators that could be meaningfully incorporated into the school accountability system.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Accountability

Indicators

Adoption of the Advisory Committee's recommended indicators for the state's elementary, middle, and high school indicators would require legislative amendments to sections 53E-5-205 and 53-E-206 of the state code. Specific amendments would be needed to address the following:

- Including accreditation status as an additional high school indicator
- Considering revising the postsecondary readiness indicator to explore improvements to the college, career, and civic readiness indicator. Committee members expressed interest in integrating opportunities for students to pursue personalized and competency-based pathways aligned to state competencies, for example.
- Adding a requirement for all LEAs to identify and report on a set of local indicators aligned to the state's Portrait of a Graduate and PCBL Framework. This is in contrast to current law, which permits a school to choose two self-reported indicators for inclusion on a local report card pending state board approval, but these indicators do not "count" in the accountability system.

School Performance Levels

Section 53E-5-204 of the state code on school rankings would need to be amended if the Advisory Committee's recommendation to replace overall school performance levels–or letter grades–with a dashboard is adopted. This change would require amendments to Utah Code, which currently requires the state board to assign an A-F letter grade to each school in the state. Utah's State Board would also need to revise state regulation R277-497-2 which details the performance thresholds for each letter grade. The legislature would need to replace the existing language with text directing the State Board to create a dashboard for each school that will detail performance on each of the indicators in the state's accountability system.

Calculation of Points

The adoption of a dashboard approach would also require a new approach for aggregating school determinations. Policymakers would need to strike the current language in section 53E-5-207 of Utah's state code that assigns a total number of points a school can receive for each indicator in the state's accountability system to determine the annual letter grade. Additionally, the state board would need to

strike language in R277-497-3 which describes the process for calculating points for the academic growth indicator, and relevant language in R277-497-4 detailing specific provisions for the calculation of points. New language for school identification can be found below in the school improvement section.

Reporting
The legislature and state board will need to mirror these changes in the state's reporting requirements for schools specified in 53E-5-211 of Utah's state code and state board regulation R277-497-4. Specifically, the language in 53E-5-211 directing the state board to publish an annual report card for each school on its website featuring an overall grade will need to be replaced with language directing the state board to publish an annual dashboard for each school providing performance information on each of the state's accountability indicators. The report card should provide clear and transparent information about each school's strengths and areas where growth is needed.

Additionally, the language in 53E-211 permitting a school to include up to two self-reported school quality indicators on its school report card would need to be updated to make clear that each school must select and report data on the local indicators aligned to the state's Profile of a Graduate and PCBL Framework as specified by the State Board in the process outlined above in the indicators recommendations. The language in the accompanying State Board regulation R277-497-4, specifically 3(a) through (d), detailing the State Board's responsibilities for approving and incorporating local indicators into the school report cards, would also need to be revised to align with the proposed process above.

School Improvement

Definitions for School Improvement and School Identification
As discussed above, the adoption of a dashboard approach to communicate school performance will require Utah policymakers to direct the state office to develop a new method for identifying schools for additional support. The Advisory Committee recommends using the "step approach" described above. The step approach has already been shown to satisfy federal requirements for identifying Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) schools. Amendments needed include the removal of the definition for "school grade" in section 53E-5-301 of state code, as well as the definitions for "baseline performance," "eligible school," and "low performing school" in state board regulation R277-920. Each of these definitions currently references the calculation of points for identification. A new policy would need to be developed describing the decision rules (e.g., the step approach) the state board would apply to the dashboard to identify the appropriate number of schools for each category.

As policymakers consider this recommendation, they may want to study dashboard approaches used in New York, New Hampshire, and California.

Needs Assessment for Springboard and Elevate Schools
Given the Advisory Committee's interest in elevating the role of the accreditation process to the state's accountability system, policymakers may want to explore closer alignment to the needs assessment processes for Springboard and Elevate schools detailed in sections 53E-5-302 and 53E-5-2.1 of Utah's code. Committee members felt strongly that schools are already collecting and reporting a lot of data

aimed at school improvement, and it recommended streamlining this for all schools, but especially those being asked to undergo more intensive interventions. Policymakers should consider ways to integrate data from the accreditation process into the current needs assessment for high schools, at least, so school personnel can focus on one, clear source of data for improvement.

Exit Criteria

The adoption of a dashboard approach in lieu of overall letter grades will also require further revision to the state's exit criteria for Springboard Schools. Current state board regulation R277-920 specifies that schools may exit improvement status by closing the gap of 1/3rd toward a B letter grade. The state board will need to develop different criteria tied to the decision rules developed for the dashboard. Again, this has been done successfully in many states and Utah can easily rely on these examples. The state board would not need further revisions to the exit criteria for Elevate schools as that was recently updated to state that a school exits after four years participating in a continuous improvement cycle.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The report presents recommendations for the redesign of Utah's School Accountability System. The overarching goal of the redesign process was to create a system that supports schools in implementing a Personalized and Competency Based learning system and facilitating student achievement of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions represented by Utah's Portrait of a Graduate. Another key goal was to make the system as simple and transparent as possible while recognizing that evaluating school quality is a complex endeavor.

The Advisory Committee engaged in almost a year-long deliberative process working through the development of a detailed theory of action, articulating clear principles to guide the selection of indicators and the system design, and offering policy recommendations to support the proposed system design.

The Advisory Committee struggled with the tension of creating a system that fosters local autonomy to best support students' capacity to meet Portrait of a Graduate competencies by the time they graduate from high school with the familiarity of a system based on common measures and indicators across the state. The Committee recognized that while common statewide indicators facilitate comparisons across schools and LEAs, they are, essentially by definition, less relevant to each local context. Indicators tied to the needs of each local community can best support improvement, but then they make it more challenging to determine if schools are meeting common thresholds.

We believe this report threads this needle as well as possible. The Advisory Committee is recommending a system with an appropriate mix of both statewide and locally selected indicators according to a common framework. The Advisory Committee recognized that including local indicators, especially those based on the Portrait of a Graduate characteristics, will require additional capacity at both the local and state levels. To that end, the Advisory Committee recommends utilizing existing structures such as the high school accreditation system and the School LAND Trust program to support efficiencies wherever possible.

The Advisory Committee also recognizes that this report represents a work in progress. The Committee recognizes that the Utah Legislature and the Utah State Board of Education make the ultimate determinations about school accountability in Utah. The Committee urges these two bodies to recognize the intense work and deliberations contained in this report and the grounded wisdom of those closest to the work of school improvement.

Finally, even if the report and proposed system is adopted as presented in this report, the Advisory Committee knows that many decisions will need to made in the context of implementation. Therefore, the Committee strongly recommended that an advisory committee, like the current Committee, be empaneled to support USBE as it works with LEAs to implement a next-generation accountability system in support of deeper learning in Utah.

APPENDIX A: COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Utah Accountability Redesign Advisory Committee Members

NAME	AFFILIATION
Brook Anderson	Jordan
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Frank Schofield	Logan
Selena Terry	Sevier
Logan Toone	Davis
McKell Withers	ULEAD Director
LeAnn Wood	PTA

USBE Ex-Officio Advisory Committee Members

Sydnee Dickson, Utah State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent, Student Learning
Sarah Young, Chief of Staff
Patty Norman, Deputy Superintendent of Student Achievement
Ann-Michelle Neal, Accountability Specialist
Tracy Vandeventer, Director of the Center for Continuous School Improvement

Center for Assessment and KnowledgeWorks Facilitators and Report Writers

Scott Marion, Executive Director, Center for Assessment
Lillian Pace, Vice-President of Policy and Advocacy
Julianna Charles Brown, Director of Systems Transformation
Leslie Keng, Senior Associate, Center for Assessment

*Utah Accountability Redesign Executive Committee Members**

NAME	AFFILIATION	TITLE
Stuart Adams	Senate	President of the Senate
Ann Millner	Senate	Majority Whip
Lincoln Fillmore	Senate	Senator
John Johnson	Senate	Senator
Kathleen Riebe	Senate	Senator
Mark Huntsman	USBE	USBE Board Chair
Molly Hart	USBE	USBE Board Member
Stacey Hutchings	USBE	USBE Board Member
Carol Lear	USBE	USBE Board Member
Lexi Cunningham	USSA/USBA	USSA Executive Director
McKay Jensen	USBA	USBA Past President
Cindy Phillips	SCSB	SCSB Board Member
Jefferson Moss	House	Executive Appropriations Vice - Chair
Brad Last	House	Executive Appropriations Chair
Lowry Snow	House	Representative
Susan Pulsipher	House	Representative
Brittney Cummins	Governor's Office	Senior Advisor for Education

*Committee co-chairs noted in **bold** font.

APPENDIX B: STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Utah Accountability Redesign Initiative Stakeholder Engagement Report

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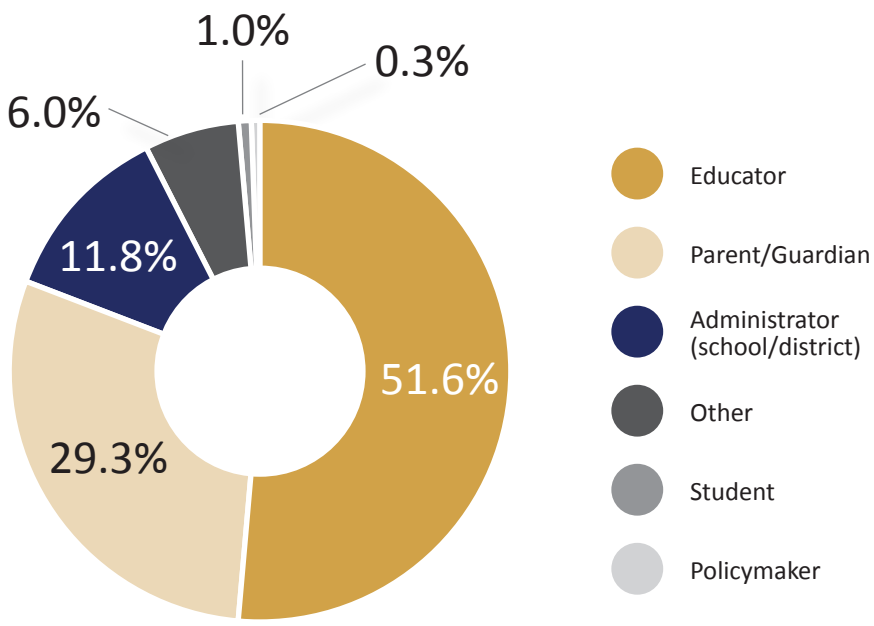
- School Quality Deep Dive Summary

IN-PERSON SESSION SUMMARY

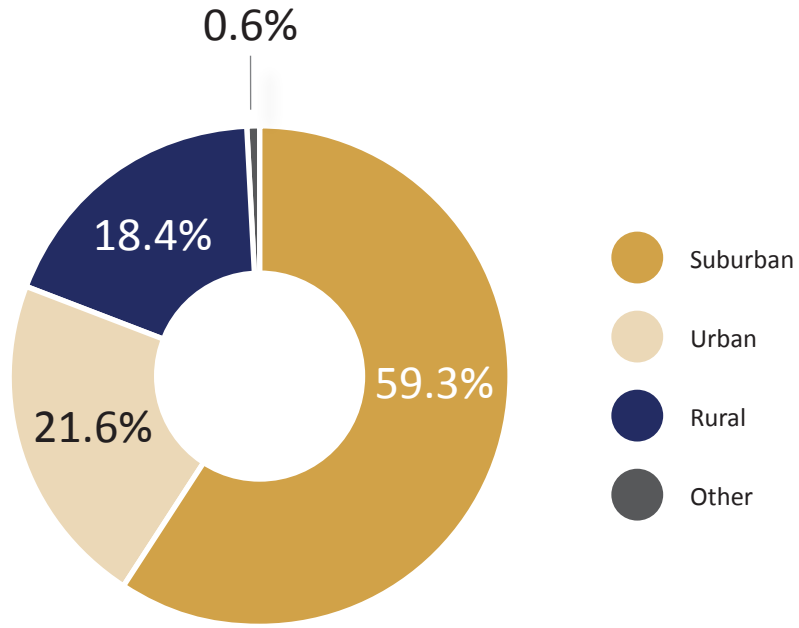
- Key Questions for Public Feedback
- Key Themes Related to Accountability

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

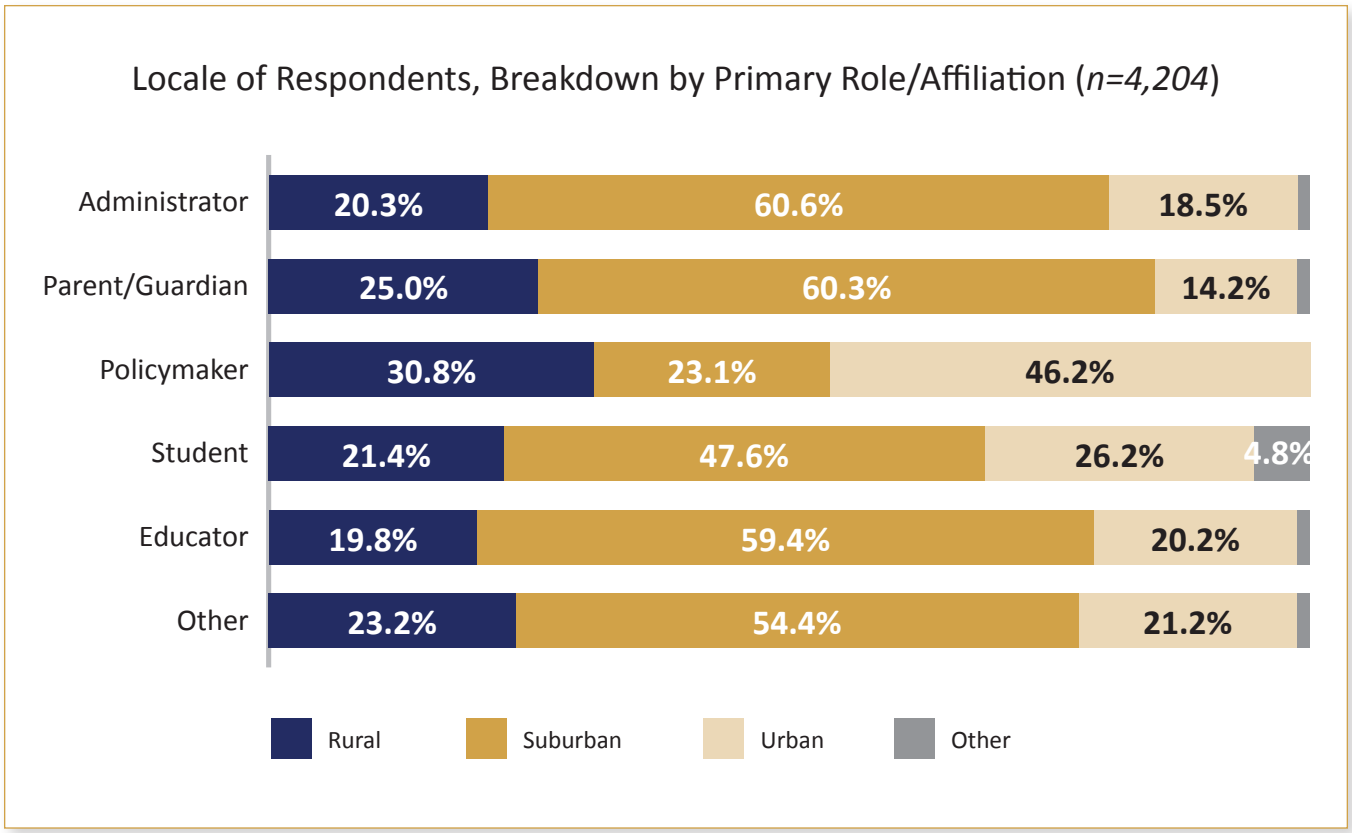
Breakdown of Total Survey Respondents, by Primary Role/ Affiliation (*n=4,218*)

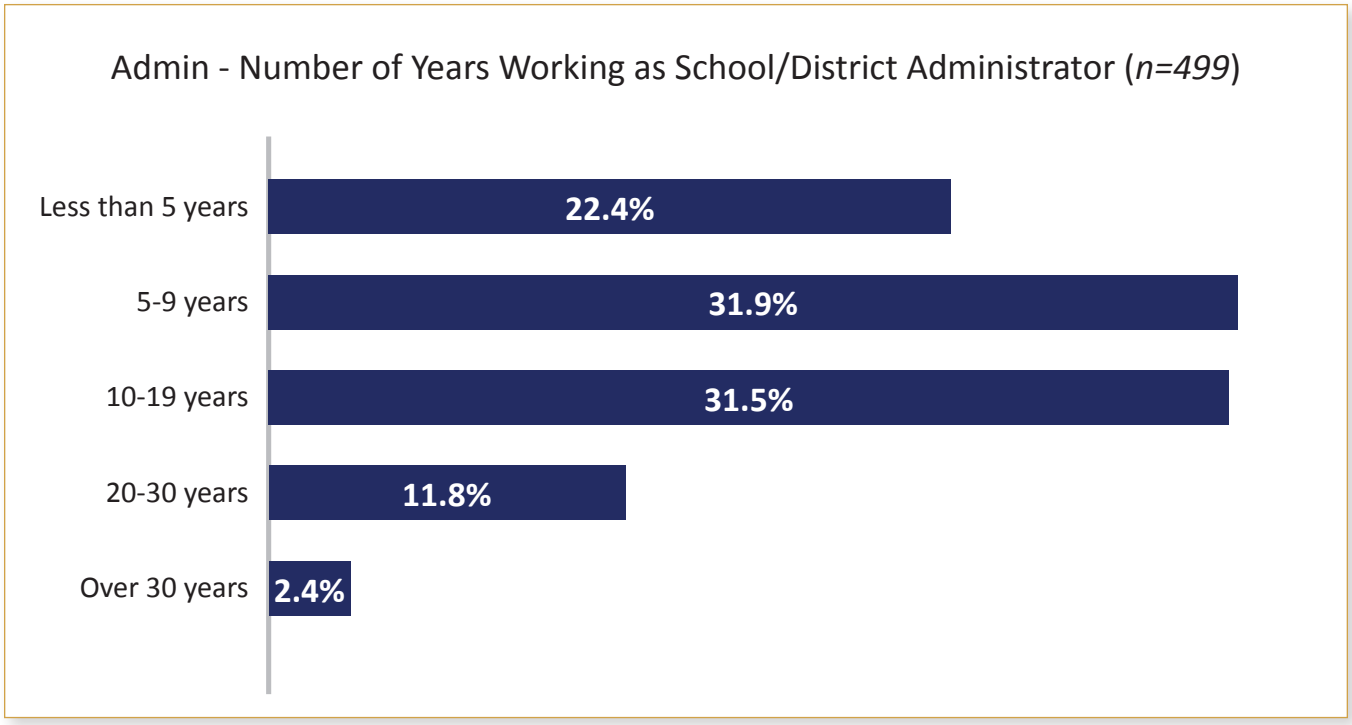


Breakdown of Total Survey Respondents, by Locale (*n=4,204*)

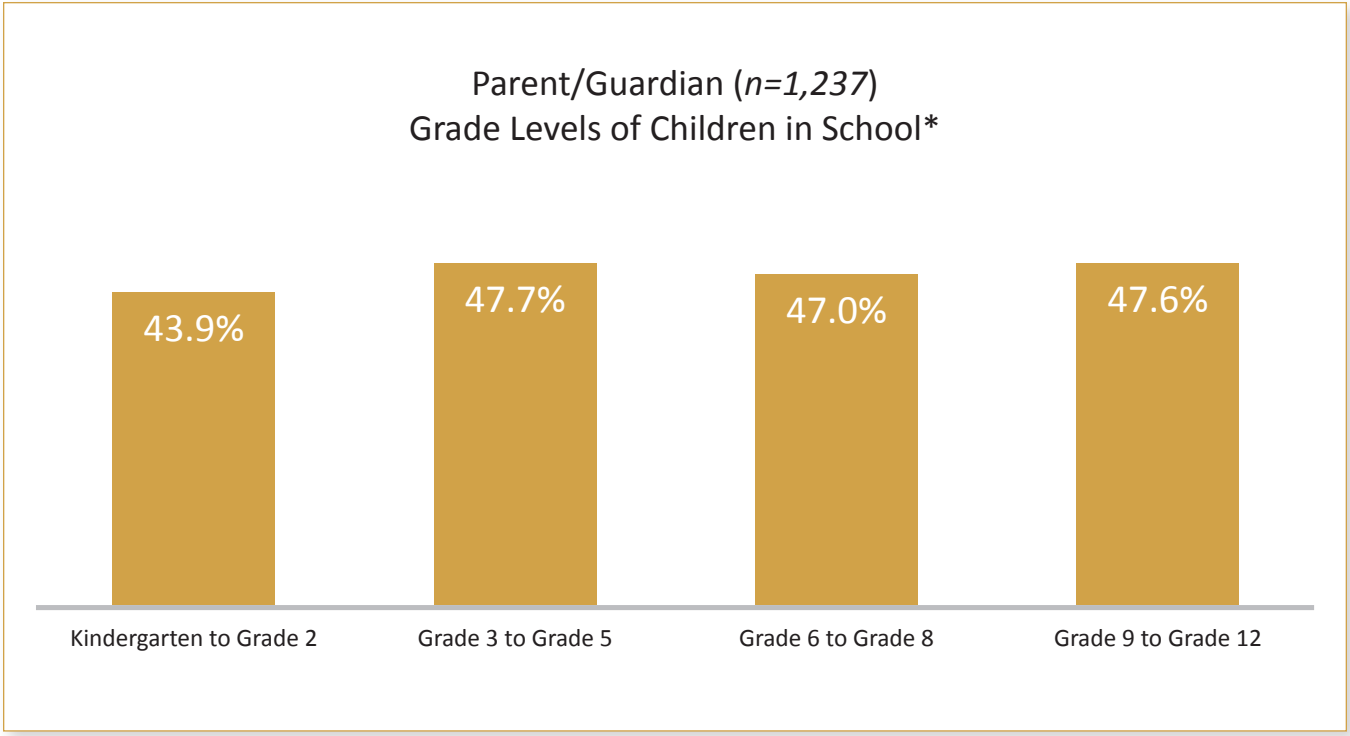


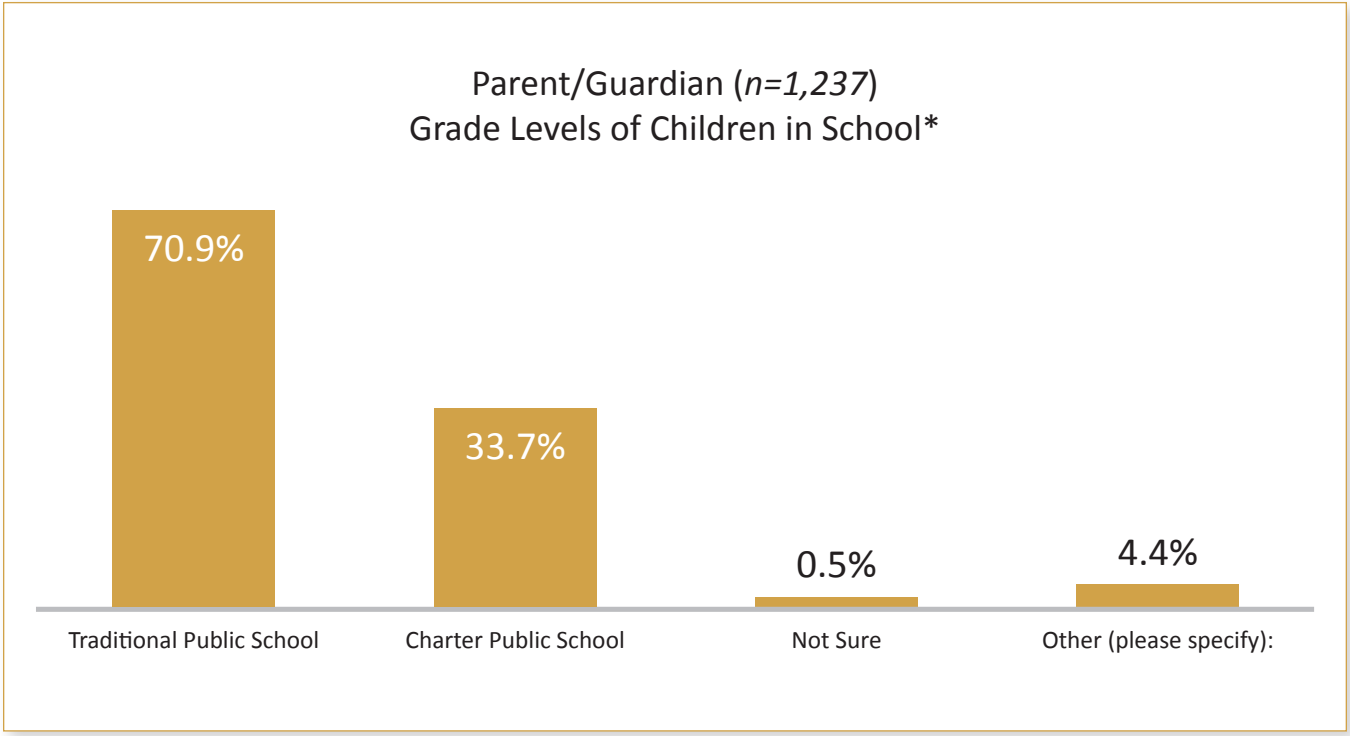
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS (CONTINUED)



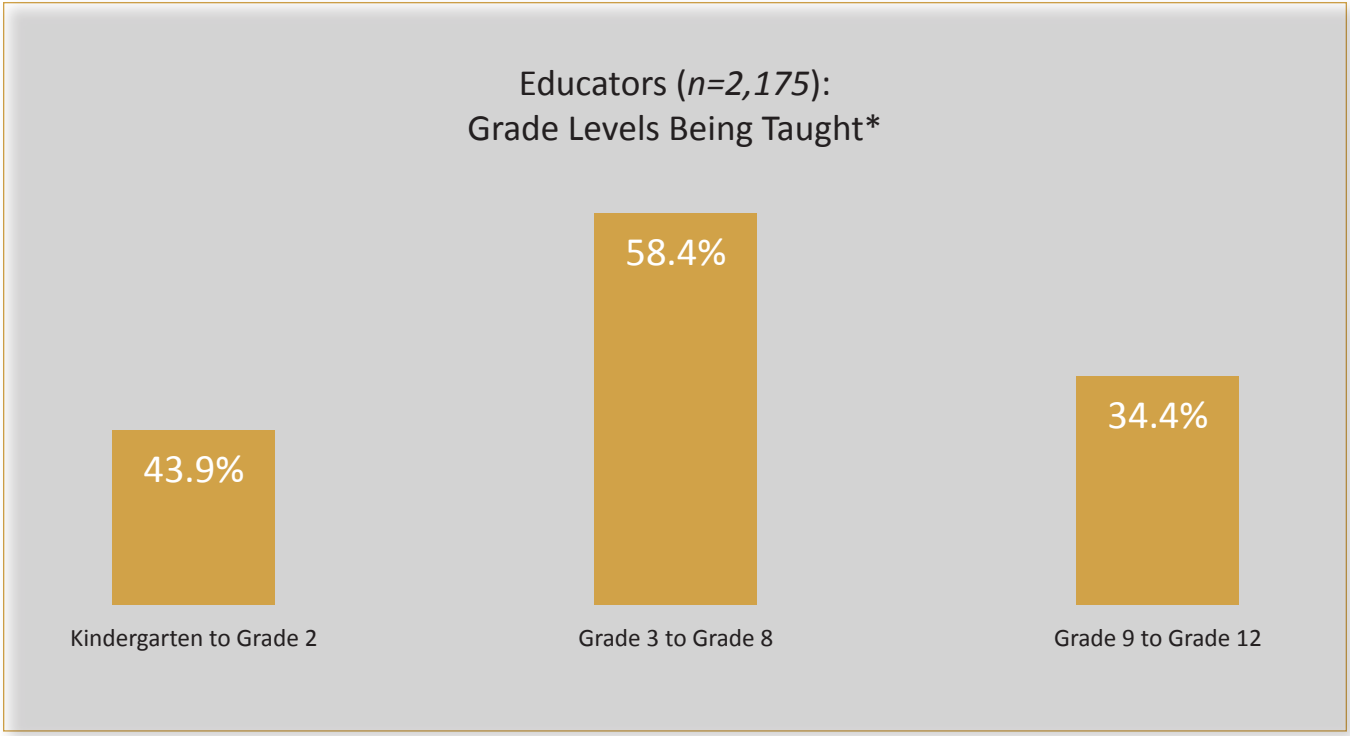


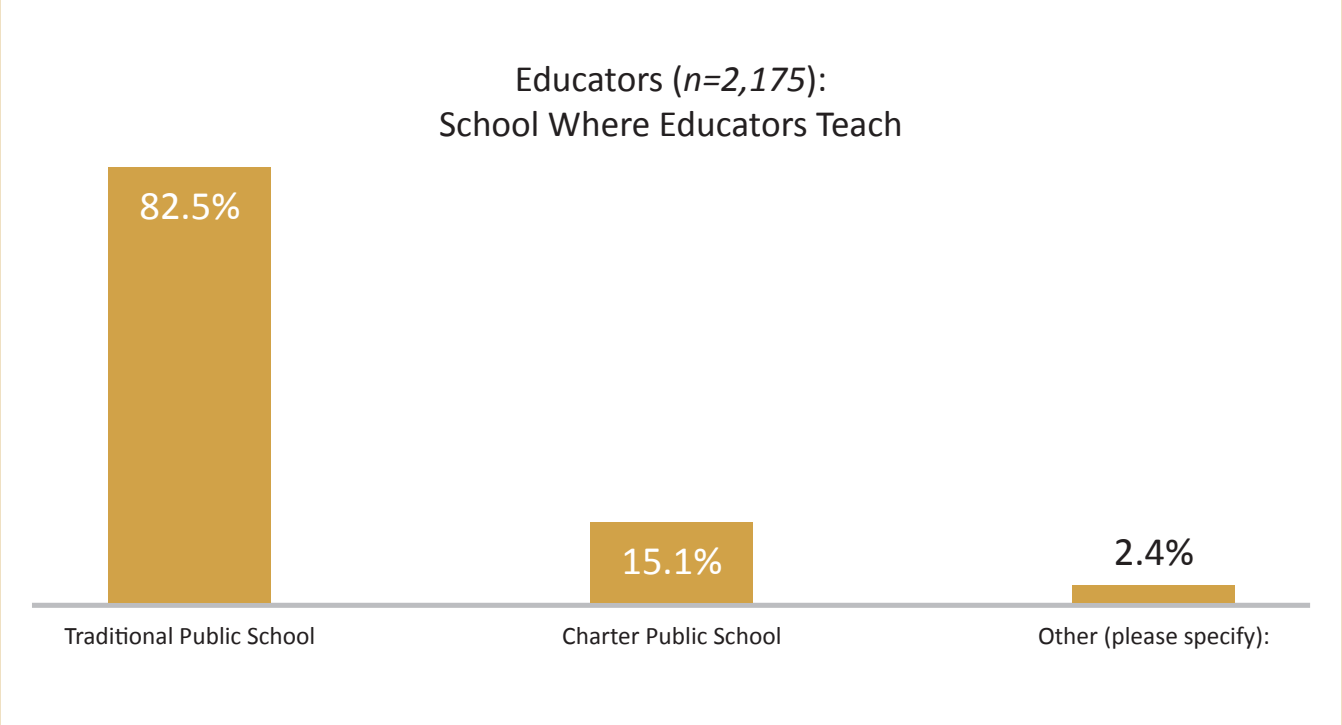
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS (CONTINUED)





SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS (CONTINUED)





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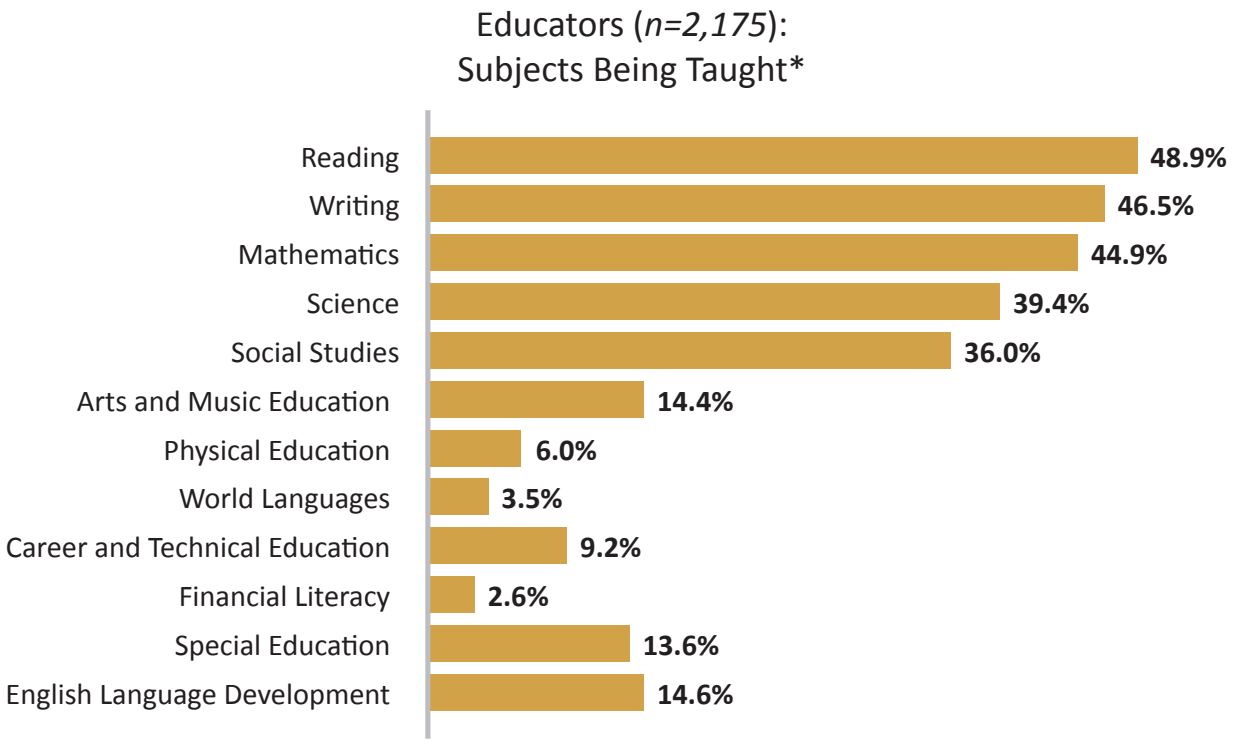
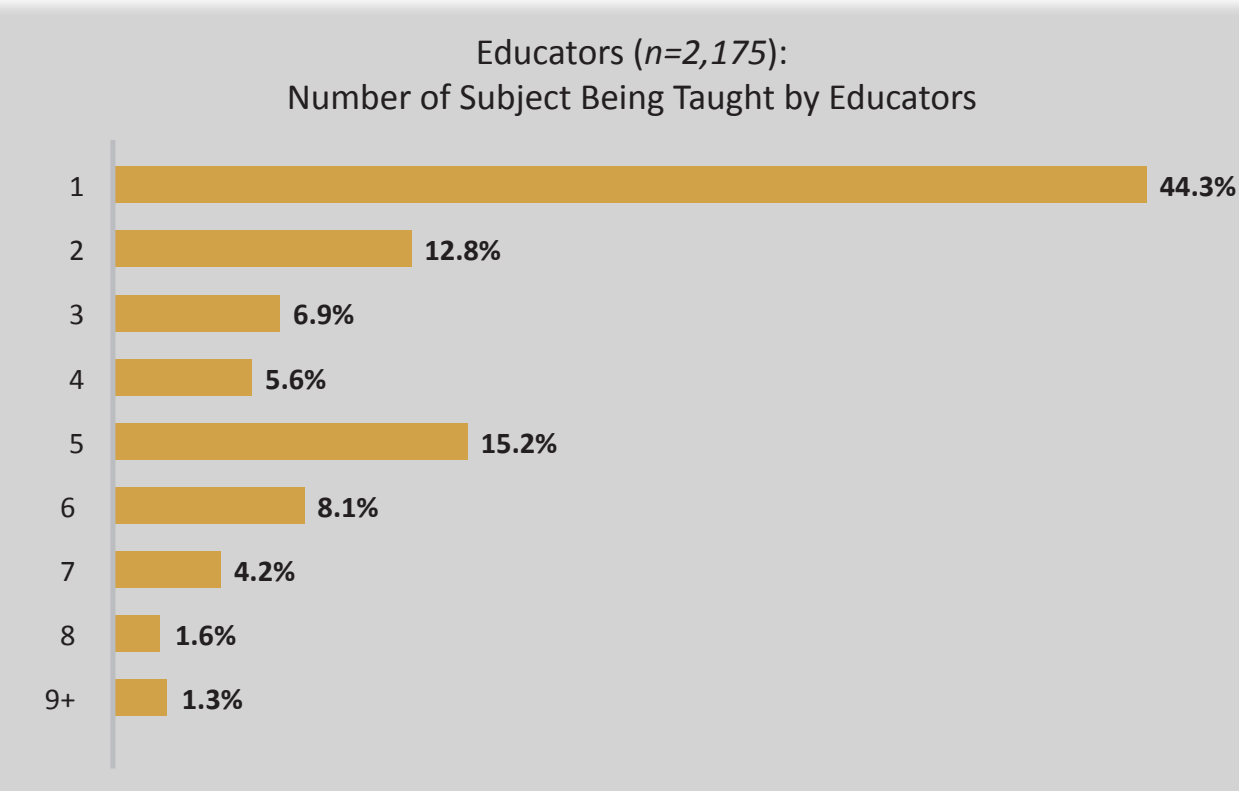
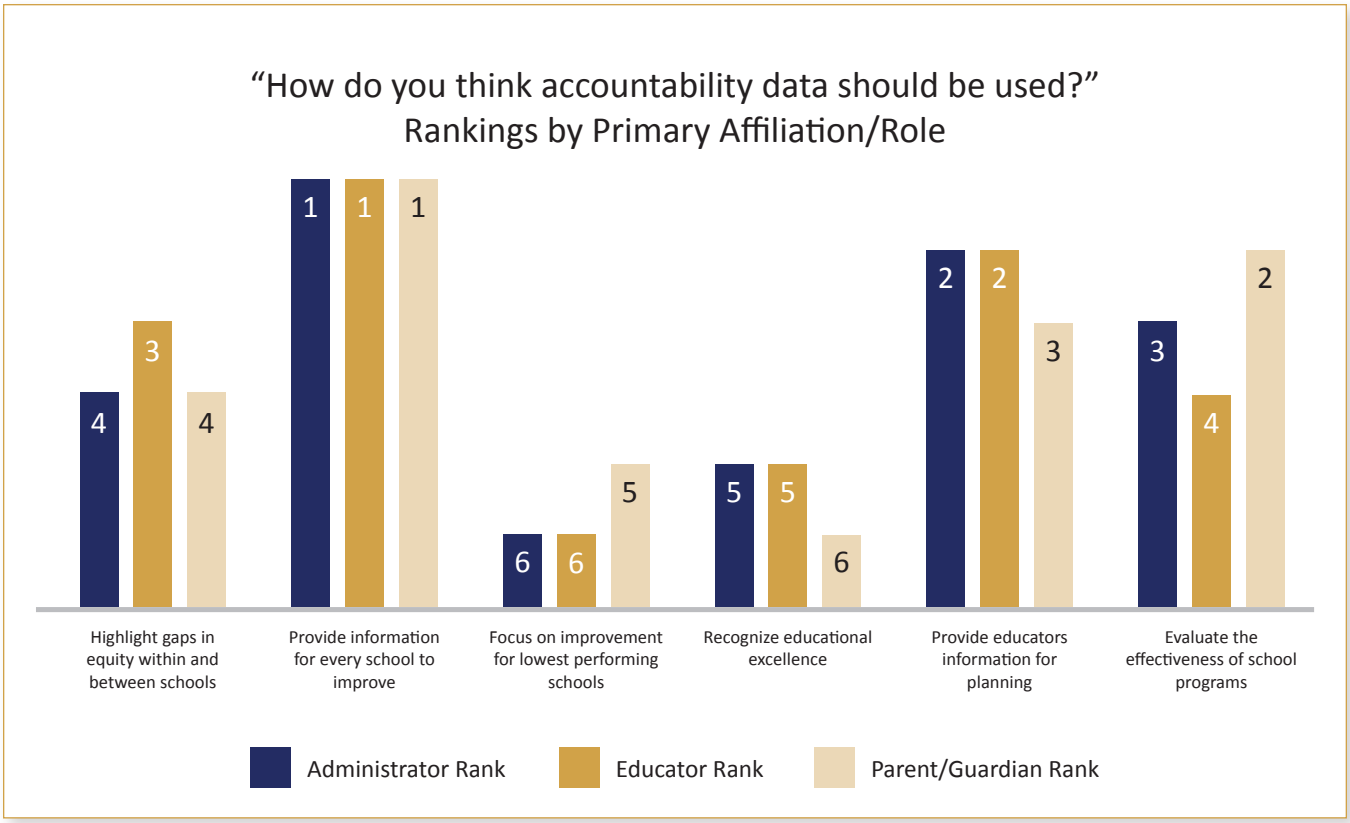


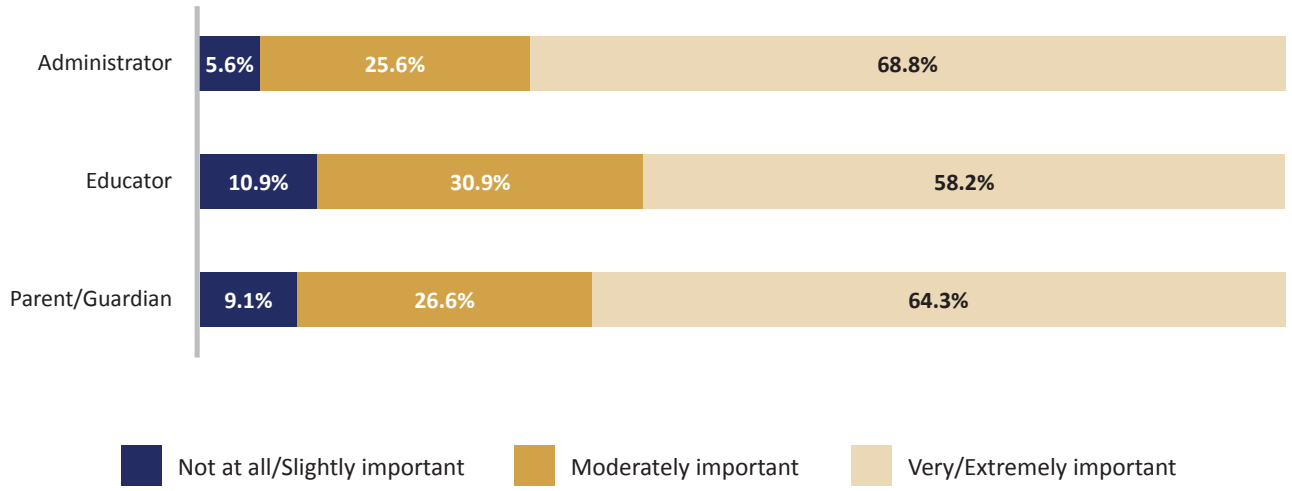


ACCOUNTABILITY DATA USE

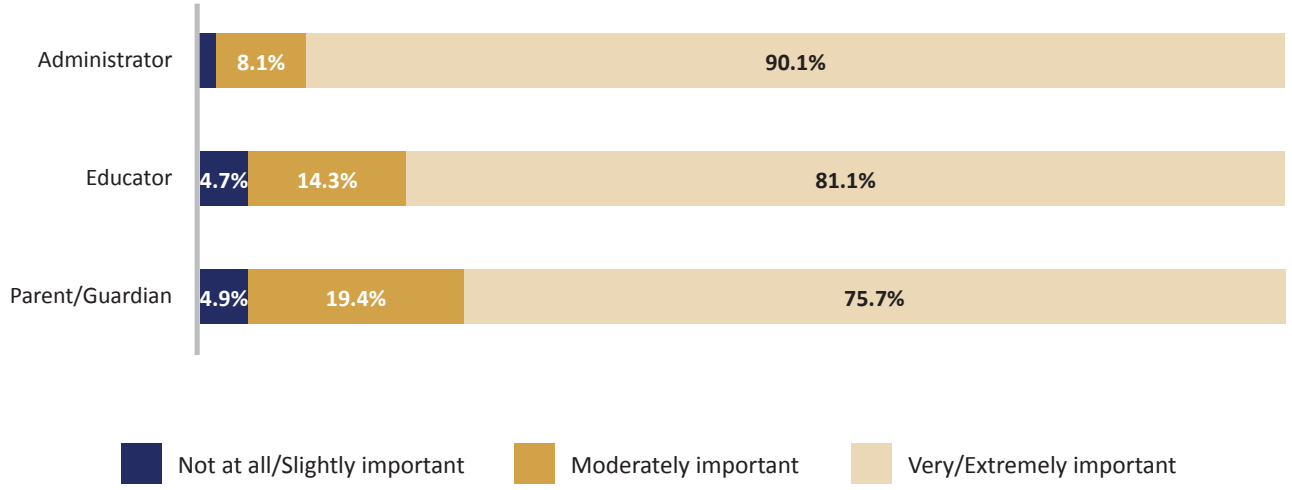


IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC INFORMATION

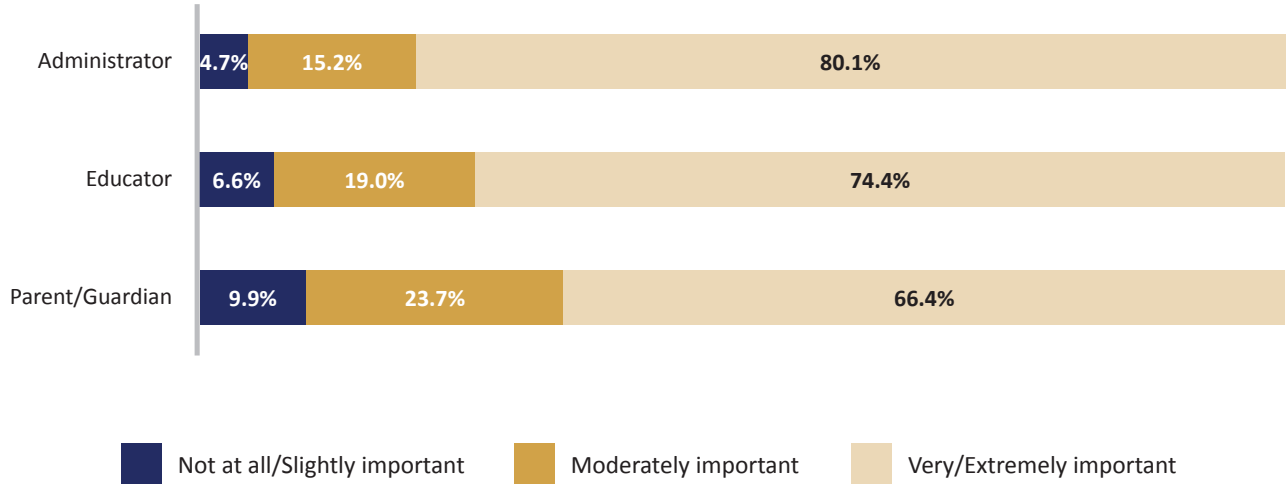
Importance of Specific Types of Academic Information that Characterize School Quality (from Utah's Current Accountability System):
Current Academic Achievement



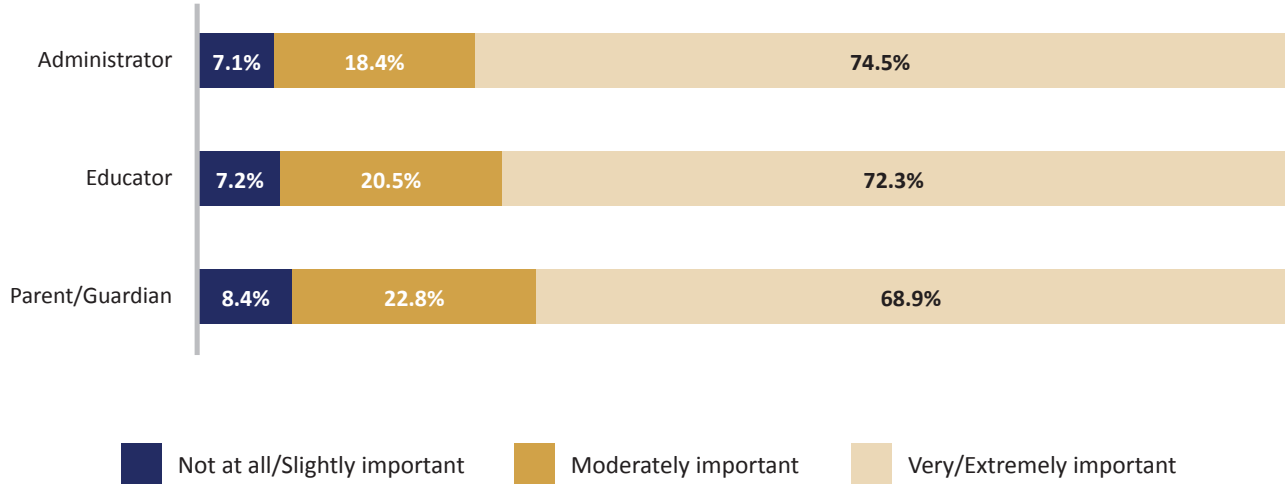
Importance of Specific Types of Academic Information that Characterize School Quality (from Utah's Current Accountability System):
Academic Growth Over Time



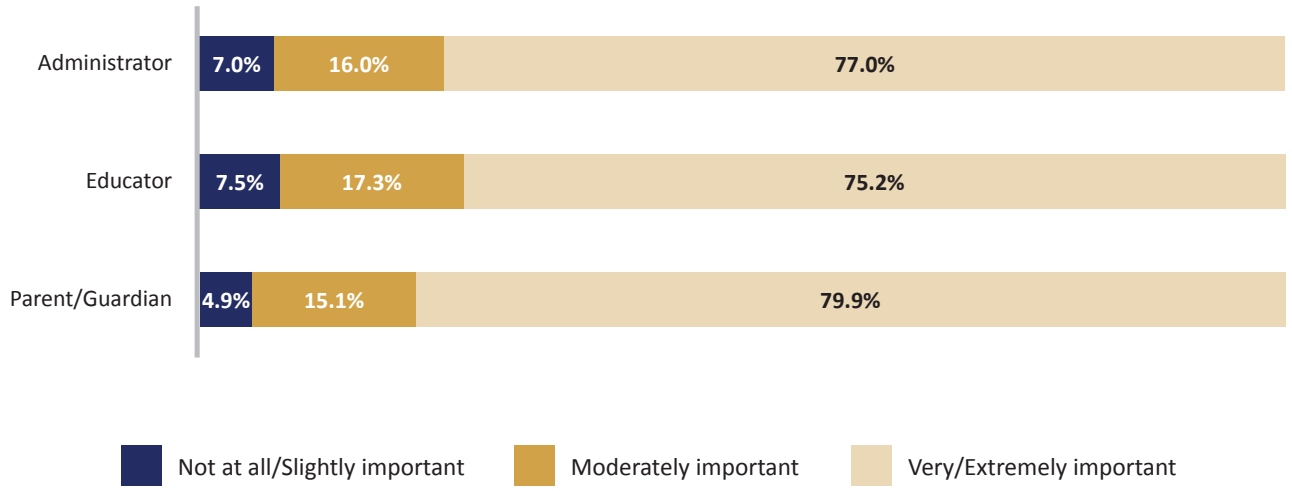
Importance of Specific Types of Academic Information that Characterize School Quality (from Utah's Current Accountability System):
Reducing Academic Achievement Gaps



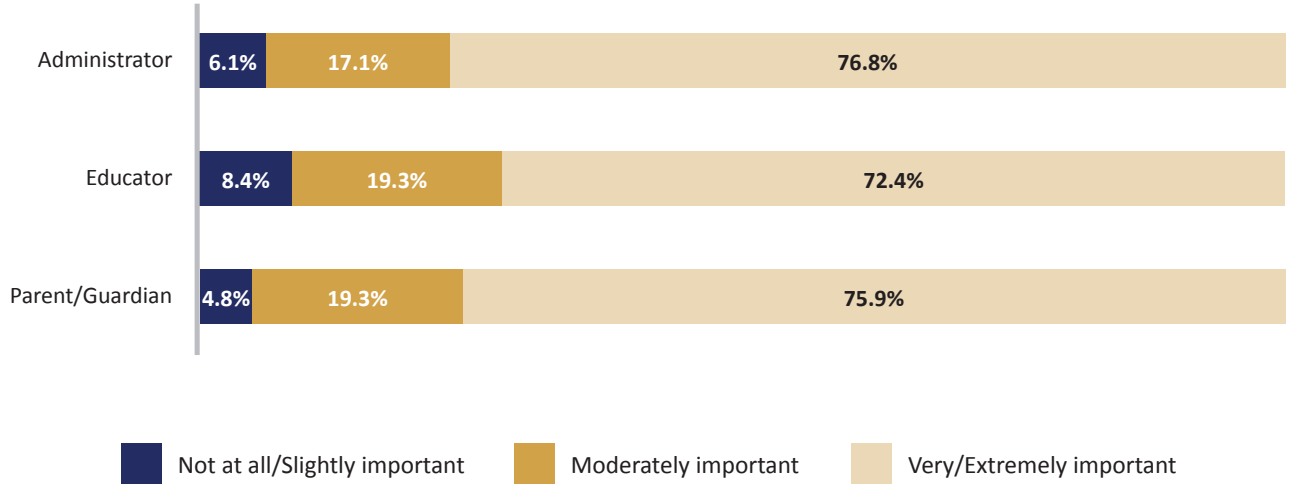
Importance of Specific Types of Academic Information that Characterize School Quality (from Utah's Current Accountability System):
Improving English Language Proficiency



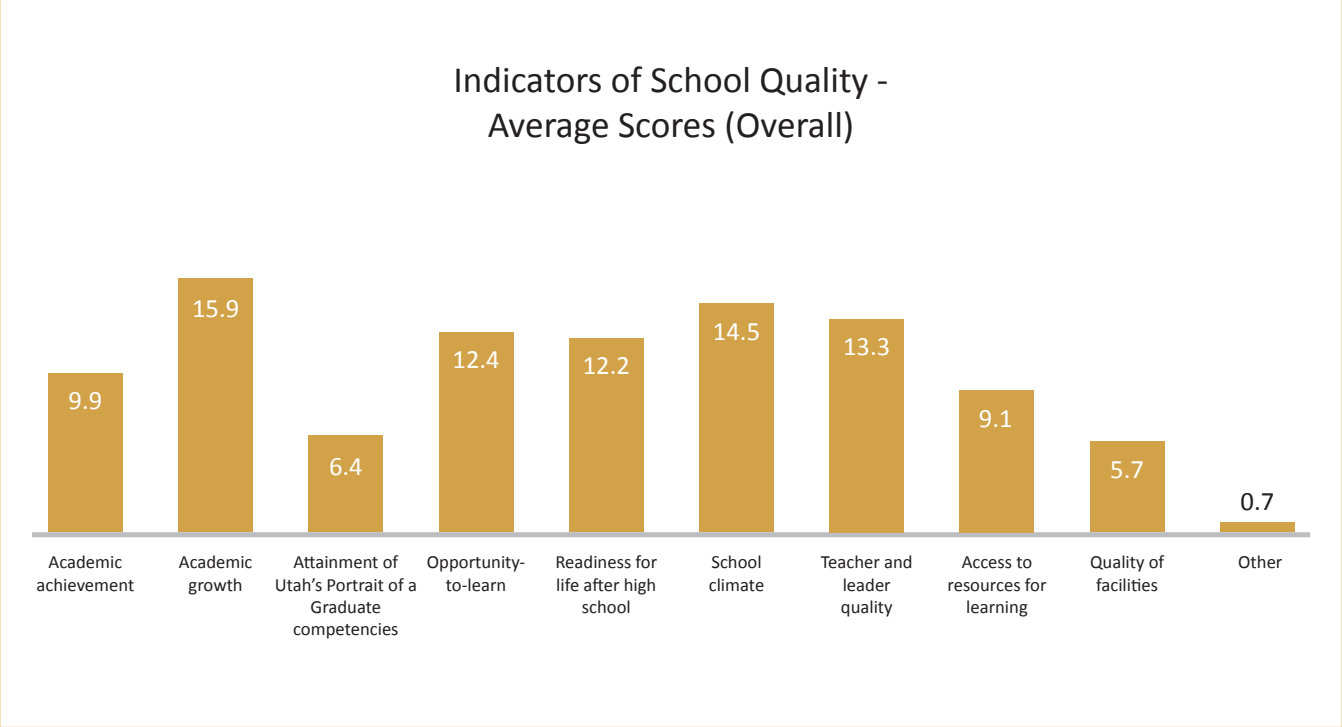
Importance of Specific Types of Academic Information that Characterize School Quality (from Utah's Current Accountability System):
Improving Graduation Rates

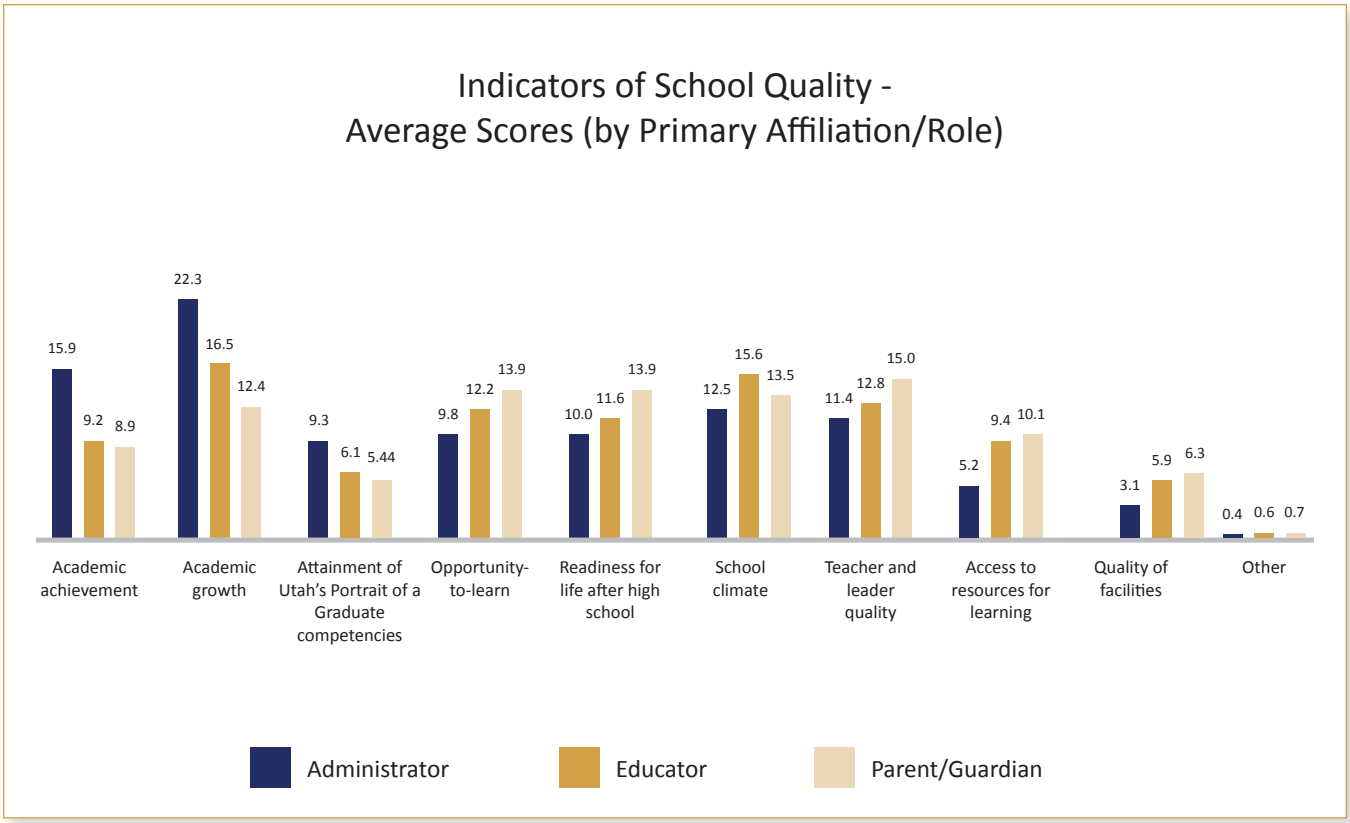


Importance of Specific Types of Academic Information that Characterize School Quality (from Utah's Current Accountability System):
Improving Postsecondary Readiness



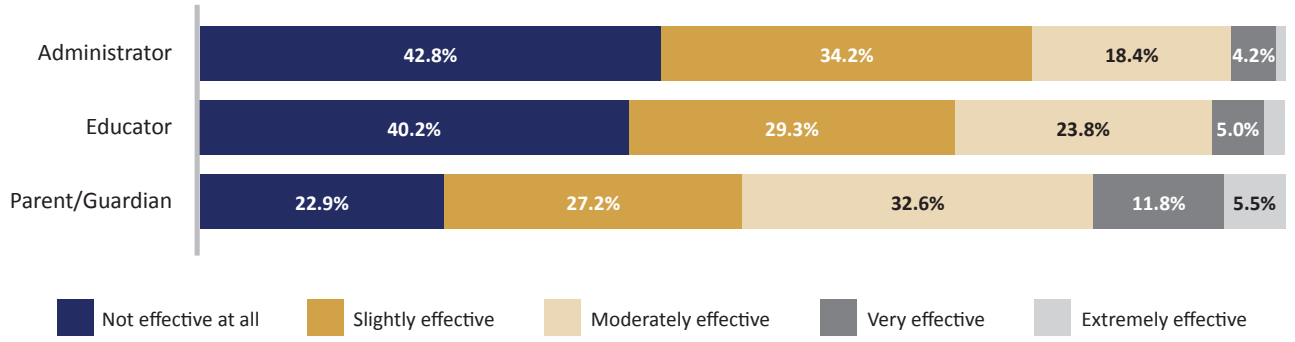
INDICATORS OF SCHOOL QUALITY



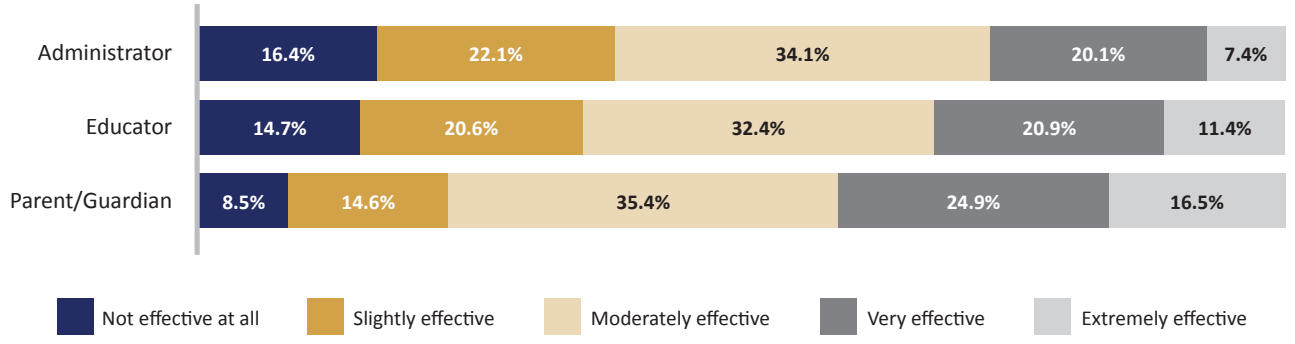


PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY INFORMATION

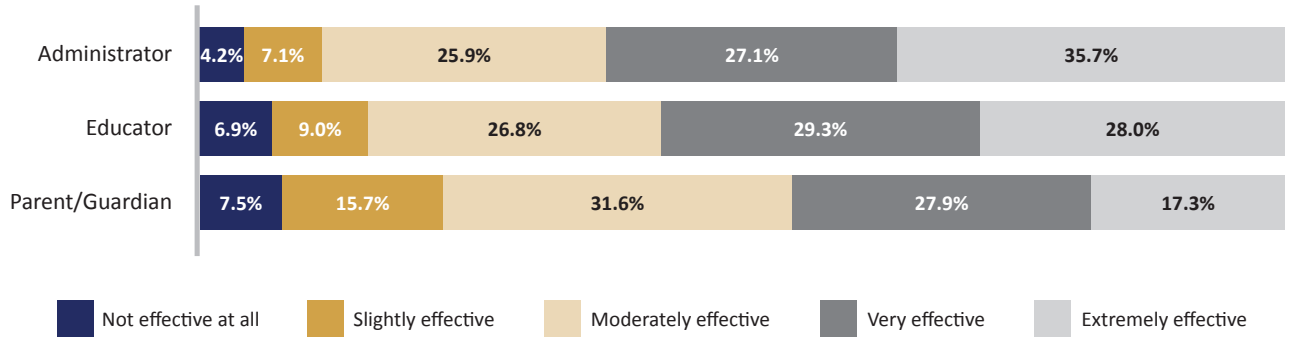
Presentation of Accountability System Results:
"Every school receives a single rating/ranking along on the 5-point scale"



Presentation of Accountability System Results:
"Every school receives a single rating/ranking along on the 5-point scale with an associated data dashboard that stakeholders can review to understand the rating"



Presentation of Accountability System Results:
"School quality measures are presented in a data dashboard format only that displays strengths and weakness for each school without overall ratings/rankings"



VIRTUAL SESSION SUMMARY

On March 1st and March 3rd of 2022, the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) convened virtual engagement sessions to gather feedback from the public on the redesign of Utah's school accountability system. Participants were presented with preliminary results from the February 2022 public survey and asked to discuss their reactions and implications.

You may review the materials for these meetings at the links below:

- March 1st Session
  - Meeting Recording
  - Meeting Jamboard
- March 3rd Session
  - Meeting Recording
  - Meeting Jamboard

Participant Observations of Survey Results

Key Themes

- Respondent roles
  - Teachers and suburban communities are highly represented on the survey
  - It will be important for design committee members to review the survey results disaggregated by role
- Value of academic growth
  - Academic growth was valued most highly by survey respondents (over academic achievement)
  - This should factor into the inclusion of testing data in the new system
  - Academic growth is nuanced and may be complex to measure
- Portrait of a Graduate
  - This indicator of quality was scored relatively lower than other areas
  - Participants thought this might be because of low name identification
  - Participants also thought this may be because the Portrait may be captured in other indicators (like readiness for life after graduation)
  - Participants suggested that there would need to be a public engagement process to familiarize the public with the Portrait if it is to ground the new accountability
- Range of indicators
  - Participants noted that a range of indicators were valued by the public and that the top 5 indicators were all valued with similar weight (academic growth, school climate, teacher & leader quality, opportunity-to-learn, readiness for life after high school)
  - This indicates a desire for school quality to be judged across a range of indicators
  - Additional areas surfaced for inclusion in the system:
    - Parent/family engagement
    - Student voice
    - Socio-economic status of students served

SCHOOL QUALITY DEEP DIVE SUMMARY

In the second half of the virtual engagement sessions, participants were asked to dig deeper into some of the most highly-rated key areas. Participants were asked to focus on areas on the survey that were rated just behind academic growth (the most highly rated area) and consider how they might be best included in the new accountability system.

Key Areas of School Quality

- School climate
  - Collaboration is present and valued across all levels of the school
  - All members of the school community feel safe, valued, and included
  - What could be measured:
    - Surveys
    - Walkthrough tools
    - Attendance
    - All data need to be disaggregated to look for disparate impact by subgroups
- Teacher & leader quality
  - The system should incentivize schools with teachers who are highly prepared
  - The system could look at the quality of student:teacher and parent:teacher relationships
  - This area is very complex to measure and what is easy to measure may not be the most important thing
  - What could be measured:
    - Surveys
    - Quality of teacher curriculum and instruction (including the degree to which the learning is personalized for students)
    - Opportunities for teacher collaboration and professional development
- Opportunity-to-learn
  - Students need to have a range of high quality options/pathways for learning
  - There should be effective mechanisms for communication of options to students and families
  - Student and family culture should be respected in the curriculum
  - This data need to be disaggregated by subgroup to ensure equal access
  - What could be measured:
    - Course offerings
    - Student/family engagement
    - CTE certificates/pathway credentials
- Readiness for life after high school
  - Students should be equipped for whatever life they choose
  - Students should be prepared to create and sustain healthy relationships
  - What could be measured:
    - Graduation rates
    - Participants did not feel the ACT was a good measure of college readiness
    - Post-graduation data - current measures are okay, but design committees may consider different weights/distribution
    - Portrait of a Graduate competencies

IN-PERSON SESSION SUMMARY

On April 19th and April 20th of 2022, the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) convened in-person engagement sessions to gather feedback from the public on the redesign of Utah's school accountability system. Participants were asked to discuss key questions constructed by the Advisory Committee.

Key Questions for Public Feedback

Designed by the Advisory Committee in April 2022.

- Utah's Portrait of a Graduate
  - What skills do you value most in a graduate?
  - After reviewing Utah's Portrait of a Graduate, how would you measure these competencies? Which competencies feel most important? Which are the best indicators of school quality?
- Quality of Educators and School Leaders
  - How do you determine the quality of a teacher?
  - How does the quality of a teacher affect the quality of a school?
  - How do you determine the quality of a school leader (superintendent/principal)?
- Time & Resource Investment in Collecting Data
  - How much time would you spend providing data (e.g. surveys)? How much time should learners spend? Teachers? School leaders?
  - How much time would you spend reviewing accountability data? How much time should learners spend? Teachers? School leaders?
  - What other thoughts do you have about data collection for the purposes of accountability?

Key Themes Related to Accountability

- There is a strong desire for the system to be more transparent
- Parent engagement is a key aspect of school quality
- There is value for many of the areas articulated in the PoG but the relationship between those skills and traditional, discipline specific content is not yet clear to the public
- The system should continue to assess academic success
- Teacher and leader quality is critical and should be measured both by quality of outcomes (academic success) and quality of relationships
- The system should include different types of data, but that collection of data should be streamlined
- Data should be presented in a clear and flexible format (so users can see the data that are most important to them)

Note: While the topic of these meetings was focused on the redesign of the Utah state school accountability system, key themes emerged in areas which are controlled by local policy (like curriculum decisions, technology implementation and resource selection). As a matter of public record and to support local policy conversations, a complete summary of comments collected can be found here (organized by topic) and here (in a searchable PDF).