# Survey Design and Methodology

The Views on Instruction, State Standards, Teaching, and Assessment (VISTA) survey is an annual survey sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE). VISTA gives educators a voice directly with the state on issues specific to education in Massachusetts. ESE will use educator feedback to improve statewide implementation, inform current and future policies, and better target state resources and supports.

In the 2017 administration, data collection began in mid-January and closed in mid-March. All Massachusetts principals were invited to participate. Principals from 52% of the state’s schools participated in the survey, an increase from last year’s response rate of 37% of schools. Superintendents also participated in the 2017 VISTA survey; see the VISTA webpage (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/vista>) for a summary of key findings from the superintendent survey. Survey findings are weighted to represent all Massachusetts districts and schools.

# Curriculum Frameworks

Nearly all principals expressed favorable views of the ELA, math, and science frameworks. Smaller majorities agreed that state assessments provide useful information about their students’ mastery of state standards in these subjects.

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|  | **ELA** | **Math** | **STE** |
| The curriculum frameworks set appropriate expectations for learning. | 97% | 93% | 93% |
| The curriculum frameworks positively affect preparedness for college and career. | 97% | 95% | 94% |
| The curriculum frameworks stimulate instructional shifts so students meet expectations. | 96% | 95% | 79% |
| State assessments provide useful information about students’ mastery of state standards. | 76% | 82% | 67% |
| Agree strongly + agree somewhat from survey questions A1.1a-d (ELA), A2.1a-d (Math), and A3.1a-d (STE) | | | |

Nearly all principals reported at least a general understanding of the ELA, math, and science frameworks (99%, 98%, and 90%, respectively). While the principals from a majority of schools reported having a detailed understanding of the math (56%) and ELA (60%) frameworks, principals from fewer than a quarter of Massachusetts schools (23%) have a detailed understanding of the newer STE framework.

# Educator Growth and Development

Principals report that teachers often collaborate during the school day (81% report teachers do so at least once per week) and participate in professional learning communities (45%), but that fewer teachers have weekly opportunities to observe each other (16%). Principals agreed that teachers could benefit from multiple types of support to help disadvantaged students.

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| **To help students master the Massachusetts’ state standards, teachers would benefit from support to …** | **To a large extent** |
| implement inclusive practices to support the needs of all learners. | 50% |
| provide additional supports for students with varying intensity of academic need. | 46% |
| implement students’ Individualized Education Plans. | 42% |
| address instructional needs of English language learners. | 34% |
| From survey questions B3a-d | |

# Educator Evaluation

Principals expressed favorable views of their districts’ principal/teacher evaluation systems, though the responses were notably less favorable in describing the extent to which they improve student social and emotional learning.

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|  | **Principal evaluation** | **Teacher evaluation** |
| Evaluation system generates fair results | 78% | 94% |
| Evaluation system is effective for identifying outstanding school leaders/teachers | 66% | 91% |
| Evaluation system is effective for identifying struggling school leaders/teachers | 68% | 92% |
| Helps the districts identify specific areas where they can improve social and emotional learning/helps teachers to further develop students’ social and emotional competencies | 59% | 68% |
| Helps district identify specific areas to improve school leadership/helps teachers identify specific areas to improve practice | 77% | 94% |
| Helps district identify specific areas to improve academic learning/helps teachers identify specific areas to improve student learning. | 75% | 93% |
| Agree strongly + agree somewhat from survey questions C1f, C1a, C1b, C1e, C1d, C1c, (principal evaluation system); C6g, C6b, C6c, C3d, C3b, C3a (teacher evaluation system) | | |

Nearly 90% of principals receive observational feedback from a district administrator, and almost 80% receive feedback from their peers. Most principals valued the feedback from their district administrators (64% of those who received feedback reported it valuable or very valuable) and from their peers (75%).

# Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

In a majority of schools, principals reported that school staff are proficient in providing tiered SEL instructional supports to students, and schools employ systems and human supports to build students’ SEL competencies.

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|  | **Agree** |
| Staff are proficient in providing core SEL instruction to all students. | 66% |
| Staff are proficient in providing supplemental SEL supports to students in need. | 65% |
| Staff are proficient in providing and/or connecting intensive SEL supports to students in need. | 51% |
| The student support team uses data to develop students' SEL support plans. | 70% |
| The student support team uses data to monitor students' SEL support plans. | 67% |
| Teachers consult/work with other personnel to provide SEL supports for all students. | 87% |
| School has systems in place to engage and collaborate with families to develop students' SEL competencies. | 60% |
| Agree strongly + agree somewhat from survey questions D1a-g | |

# ESE Overall Support

Principals from the majority of the state’s schools agreed that ESE is effective in its efforts to improve the overall quality of public K-12 education (73%) and ESE is coherent and well-coordinated in providing services (63%) and in its communication (69%).