# 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 superintendents were invited to participate. Superintendents from 57% of the state’s districts participated in the survey, an increase from last year’s response rate of 21% of districts. Principals also participated in the 2017 VISTA survey; see the VISTA webpage ([http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/vista](http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/vista/)) for a summary of key findings from the principal survey. Survey findings are weighted to represent all Massachusetts districts and schools.

# Curriculum Frameworks

Nearly all superintendents reported favorable views of the ELA, math, and science frameworks.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The curriculum frameworks…** | **ELA** | **Math** | **STE** |
| set appropriate expectations for learning. | 98% | 92% | 95% |
| positively affect preparedness for college and career. | 94% | 92% | 94% |
| stimulate instructional shifts so students meet expectations. | 97% | 94% | 86% |
| clearly indicate content teachers should teach. | 93% | 94% | n/a |
| Agree strongly + agree somewhat from survey questions A1a, A1b, A1c, A8a (ELA); A2a, A2b, A2c, A9a (Math); and A3a, A3b, A3c (STE) | | | |

# Educator Growth and Development

Nearly all districts reported that the professional development activities offered in the 2016-17 school year were effective in advancing teachers’ understanding of effective instructional strategies (99% agree somewhat or agree strongly) and had a lasting impact on teachers’ classroom instruction (92%).

When asked about needs for supports, superintendents agreed that teachers could benefit from multiple types of support to help disadvantaged students.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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. | 44% |
| implement students’ Individualized Education Plans. | 43% |
| provide additional supports for students with varying intensity of academic need. | 38% |
| address instructional needs of English language learners. | 29% |
| To a large extent from survey questions B4d,B4a, B4c and B4b |  |

# Educator Evaluation

Superintendents 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.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Principal evaluation** | **Teacher evaluation** |
| Evaluation system generates fair results | 92% | 95% |
| Evaluation system is effective for identifying outstanding school leaders/teachers | 83% | 85% |
| Evaluation system is effective for identifying struggling school leaders/teachers | 88% | 92% |
| Helps the districts identify specific areas where they can improve social and emotional learning /helps teachers to further develop student/social and emotional competencies | 60% | 59% |
| Helps district identify specific areas to improve school leadership/helps teachers identify specific areas to improve practice | 86% | 94% |
| Helps district identify specific areas to improve academic learning/helps teachers identify specific areas to improve student learning. | 79% | 93% |
| Agree strongly + agree somewhat from survey questions C1h, C1a, C1b, C1e, C1d, C1c, (principal evaluation system); C4g, C4c, C4d, C2d, C2b, C2a (teacher evaluation system) | | |

Districts use—and value—a variety of sources of evidence in educator evaluations.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Evidence resource** | **Districts using resource in more than 50% of educator evaluations** |
| Staff feedback (administrator evaluation) | 52% |
| Student feedback (teacher evaluation) | 54% |
| Common assessments (teacher evaluation) | 72% |
| 51-75% + 76-100% from survey questions C6.1c, C6.1a, C7.1 | |

# Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Agree** |
| Staff are proficient in providing core SEL instruction to all students. | 67% |
| Staff are proficient in providing supplemental SEL supports to students in need. | 74% |
| Staff are proficient in providing and/or connecting intensive SEL supports to students in need. | 57% |
| The student support team uses data to develop students' SEL support plans. | 80% |
| The student support team uses data to monitor students' SEL support plans. | 79% |
| Teachers consult/work with other personnel to provide SEL supports for all students. | 94% |
| District has systems in place to engage and collaborate with families to develop students' SEL competencies. | 67% |
| Agree strongly + agree somewhat from survey questions D1a-g | |

# ESE Overall Support

In most districts, superintendents agree that ESE is effective in its efforts to improve the overall quality of public K-12 education (72%) and ESE's instruction-focused programs and services promote a coherent set of instructional practices that help students meet the standards included in the current Massachusetts curriculum frameworks (72%). Fewer than half agree that ESE consolidates planning requirements to make it easier for districts to work from a single district-wide strategic plan (47%).