

Delaware Performance Appraisal System Second Edition (DPAS-II):

Evaluation Report

Prepared for the **Delaware Department of Education**
by **Research for Action** • November 2015

Daniel A. Long, Ph.D. • Jessica K. Beaver, Ph.D.



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Executive Summary

Delaware Performance Appraisal System Second Edition (DPAS-II): Evaluation Report

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Evaluation Overview

Since 2007, the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) has engaged external evaluators to conduct annual studies of the design, implementation, and outcomes of the Delaware Performance Appraisal System (DPAS-II). Research for Action (RFA), along with two partner organizations,¹ served as the external evaluator for the 2014-15 school year.

This report contains analyses of the following data sources:

- I. A **statewide survey** of teachers, specialists, and administrators;
- II. **Interviews and focus groups from site visits to two districts** that have exhibited promising practices in DPAS-II implementation; and
- III. **Artifacts and evidence from teachers** within the site visit locations.

This report presents a mixed-methods, research-based view of DPAS-II, and points to potential areas for improvement and refinement.

Organization of the Report

The report is divided into two briefs. Brief I presents findings for DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists, which includes responses from teachers and specialists concerning their perceptions of the system, as well as feedback from school and district administrators who use DPAS-II to evaluate staff. Brief II presents findings for DPAS-II for Administrators. Both briefs are structured around three primary evaluation goals as depicted in Figure ES1:

¹ The National Center for the Improvement of Education Assessment, Inc. (NCIEA) and Operation Public Education (OPE).

Figure ES1. Organizing framework for DPAS-II evaluation findings



Key Findings for Brief I: DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists

Our goal was to determine not just how practitioners perceived the evaluation system, but to uncover some of the underlying drivers for these views. Our mixed-methods analysis suggests four key drivers for overall perceptions of DPAS-II.

In general, **teachers and specialists were more likely to view DPAS-II in a favorable light if they:**

1. Felt that the purpose of DPAS-II was to improve instructional practices and inform professional development;
2. Believed that DPAS-II has had a positive effect on school culture;
3. Understood DPAS-II; and
4. Held relatively positive views about the student improvement component (Component V).

The four drivers are ordered by magnitude of effect. For example, the strength of the first driver (beliefs about the purpose of the system) was about four times that of the last driver (views of Component V).

Detailed findings, organized by evaluation goals, are presented in Table ES1.

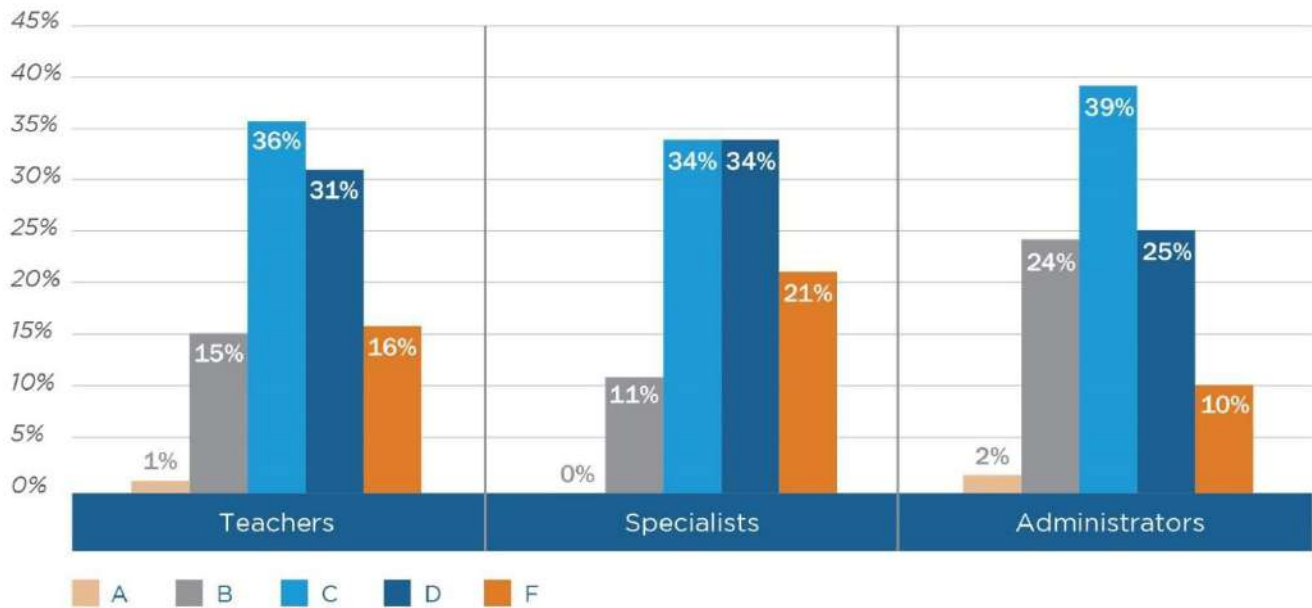
Table ES1. Research questions and key findings for DPAS-11 for Teachers and Specialists

Goal 1	Research Question	Key Findings
	Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong majority of teachers and specialists reported that they generally understood how they are evaluated by the DPAS-II system. Understanding levels declined with respect to specific aspects of the system. Respondents expressed a notable lack of understanding of Component V compared to other aspects of the system.
	Perceptions of Utility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, about half of teachers and specialists reported that the DPAS-II system as a whole is unfair. Feelings about utility and fairness varied by specific DPAS-II components. Teachers and specialists generally found Components I-III to be useful and fair. They expressed particular concern about Component V.
Goal 2	Research Question	Key Findings
	Fidelity of Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A majority of survey respondents stated that DPAS-II was implemented appropriately in their school. Teachers and specialists experienced, on average, over two-thirds of the indicators of implementation, which included items such as having classroom observations and receiving specific and actionable feedback. Fidelity of implementation varied by district, but did not vary by school poverty level or by school type (elementary vs. middle and high schools). Teachers and specialists in districts with high fidelity of implementation were more likely to report more positive views of DPAS-II. Teachers and specialists who believed that DPAS-II informed instruction and professional development experienced higher fidelity of implementation.
	Promising Practices	<p>Qualitative analysis of best practice districts found common strategies to support “high quality” implementation of DPAS-II:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> District and school leaders set clear expectations about DPAS-II goals and objectives, particularly that DPAS-II is intended as a support for professional growth. Evaluators provided detailed and actionable feedback—both written and oral—to teachers and specialists. Evaluators conducted additional observations of teachers and specialists (i.e., beyond what is required by the DPAS-II regulations). District leaders provided a series of trainings on DPAS-II, including technical explanations of the policy for all individuals and specific training for evaluators. District leaders linked DPAS-II tools and processes to professional development.
Goal 3	Research Question	Key Findings
	Influence on Teaching Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both specialists and teachers reported changing their practices as a result of DPAS-II—34% of specialists and 57% of teachers reported changing their practice at least once a year. Increased fidelity of implementation was associated with increased reports of changes in teacher and specialist practice. More positive views of DPAS-II were not associated with changes in practice for teachers nor for specialists. Site visit data suggest that teachers and specialists were more likely to change practices when feedback was actionable.
	Influence on School Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 77% of teachers and 83% of specialists felt that their school was a good place to work. For teachers, both higher fidelity of implementation and more positive views of DPAS-II were associated with more positive views of the workplace. For specialists, only positive views of DPAS-II were associated with more positive views of the workplace. 81% of teachers and 81% of specialists would like to continue working as educators as long as they are able. There was an association of more positive views of DPAS-II with teachers’ desire to continue teaching. There was no such association with specialists. Site visit data suggest that teachers did not perceive DPAS-II as impacting teacher retention.

Ratings of DPAS-II

For the past five years, Delaware teachers, specialists, and administrators have been asked to assign an overall “grade” for DPAS-II,² ranging from A to F. The distribution of grades for DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists for the 2014-15 school year is shown in Figure ES2.

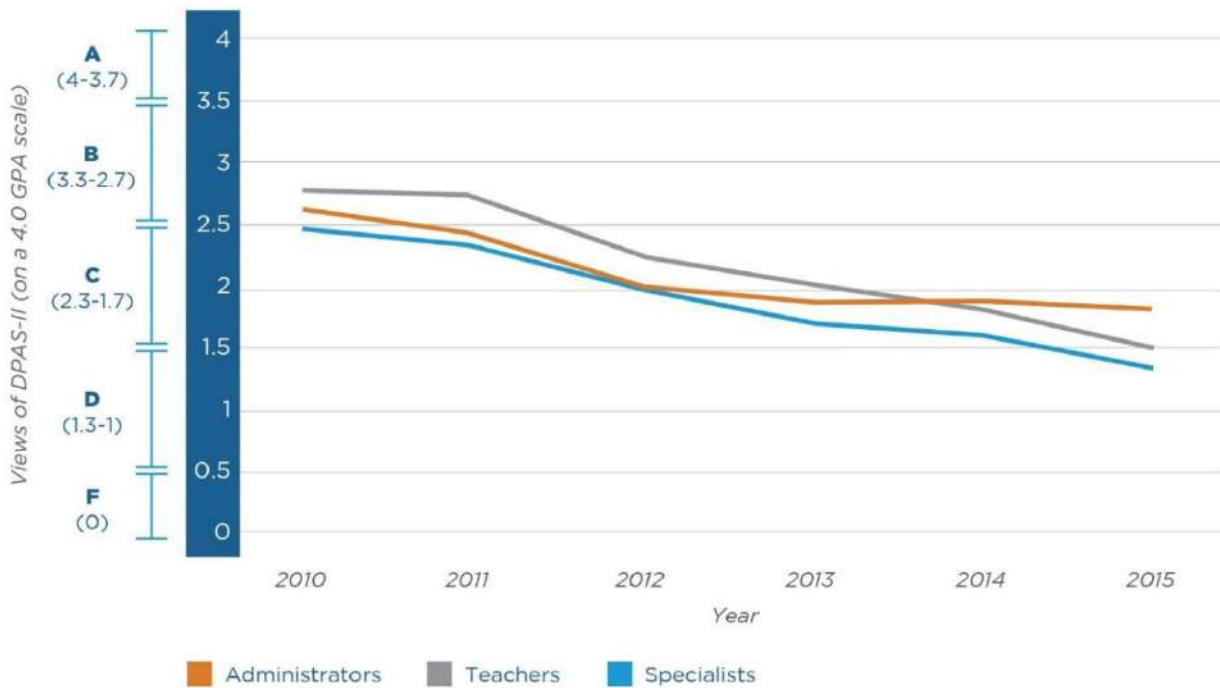
Figure ES2. Distribution of 2014-15 DPAS-II grades from teachers, specialists, and administrators



To compare grades of DPAS-II over time, we calculated the average grades for each group of respondents—teachers, specialists, and administrators – for each school year, using a 4.0 GPA scale corresponding to the College Board standard. We found that grades assigned to DPAS-II declined over time for all three groups. However, we caution that the DPAS-II evaluation system itself has undergone numerous revisions over that time period, most notably with the full adoption and implementation of the revised student improvement component (Component V) for the 2012-13 school year. Administrators’ grades have not declined as sharply, and remained generally stable over the past four years (see Figure ES3).

² The key findings present responses from teachers, specialists, and administrators concerning DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists. Findings related to DPAS-II for Administrators are presented separately in the second brief. For the purposes of clarity, “DPAS-II” refers only to DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists.

Figure ES3. Teachers' and specialists' grades of DPAS-II from 2010-15



Recommendations for DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists

Our study yielded a rich set of suggestions from teachers, specialists, and administrators about the improvements they would like to see in the DPAS-II system. Table ES2 aligns those suggestions to our findings on the four underlying drivers of overall DPAS-II perceptions. In the full report, where applicable, we note past and ongoing efforts at the state level to address these suggestions.

Table ES2. Recommendations related to DPAS-11 for Teachers and Specialists

Driver	Recommendations
<p>Driver #1: Views about the Purpose of DPAS-II</p>	<p>Conduct more frequent observations of educators. In open-ended survey responses, teachers and specialists statewide suggested that their evaluators conduct more observations of their practices, and in some cases, specifically mentioned that more frequent observations would help give them the tools they needed to improve their practices.</p> <p>Communicate the purpose of DPAS-II as a tool for practice improvement. Consistent messaging about the purpose of DPAS-II is important. At the state level, this communication can occur through written guidelines and training about DPAS-II. At the district and school levels, this communication may take the form of formal trainings or one-on-one feedback sessions with educators.</p>
<p>Driver #2: School Culture</p>	<p>Train evaluators to provide objective, positive, formative feedback to educators. To ensure a fair evaluation process that enhances school culture, trainings for evaluators can focus on providing objective, formative feedback that encourages teachers and specialists to build upon their existing instructional practices.</p> <p>Assign evaluators based on specific areas of educator expertise. A key theme from open-ended survey respondents that could speak to improving school culture was to assign evaluators to teachers and specialists based on their content, grade-level, and/or job descriptions.</p>
<p>Driver #3: Understanding of DPAS-II</p>	<p>Provide trainings on DPAS-II as a series. In best practice sites, teachers, specialists, and administrators all noted that they preferred trainings delivered as a series, as opposed to a one-time information session.</p> <p>Provide training on DPAS-II in specific requested areas. Teachers and specialists across the data sources noted they would like more training on, among other areas, the alignment of DPAS-II to Common Core State Standards, goal-setting for Component V, and achieving a “highly effective” rating. Administrators said they would like training on writing improvement plans, providing actionable feedback, and providing consistent feedback.</p>
<p>Driver #4: Opinions about Component V</p>	<p>Provide targeted training on Component V goal-setting process. Teachers, specialists, and administrators in best practice districts worried that Component V failed to reward, and in many cases actually punished, teachers who set high, rigorous standards for students. State and districts could provide additional training on how to set goals that are both rigorous and realistic for both teachers and specialists.</p> <p>Improve quality of Component V assessments. To address concerns about Component V, the state and districts could consider reexamining the assessments used to satisfy Component V, specifically the applicability and quality of assessment items, the timing of the pre- and post-tests to measure student growth, and the grading of the assessments.</p>

Key Findings for Brief II: DPAS-II for Administrators

In general, **administrators were more like to view their evaluation system in a favorable light if they:**

1. Believed that the purpose of DPAS-II for Administrators was to improve leadership practices and inform professional development, as opposed to an accountability lever.
2. Reported that DPAS-II had a positive effect on school or district culture.³

Table ES3 provides findings for DPAS-II for Administrators that are organized along the same evaluation goals as those for Teachers and Specialists.

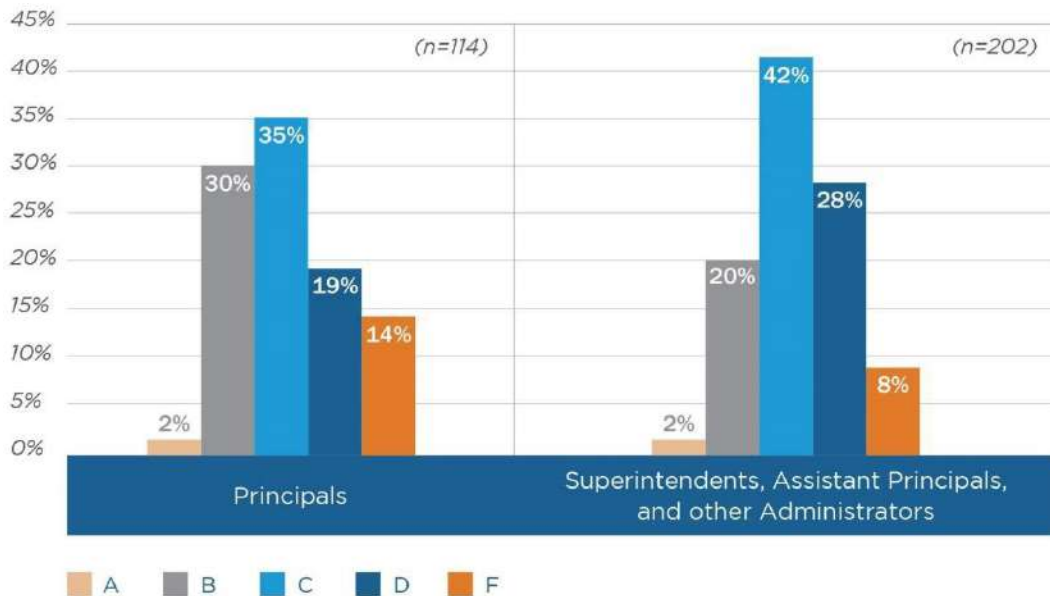
³ We look at three measures of school culture: (1) a question that asks if DPAS-II have a positive or negative effect on school culture, (2) a workplace satisfaction question, and (3) a question that asks administrators if they wish to stay in their job as long as possible. These findings are based on the first measure.

Table ES3. Research questions and key findings for DPAS-11 for Administrators

Goal 1	Research Question	Key Findings
	Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrators expressed a strong understanding of their evaluation system.
	Perceptions of Utility and Fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All administrator groups had more positive views of Components I-III than they did of Components IV or V. Principals had higher views of Components I-IV than other administrators. District administrators in best practice sites found DPAS-II for principals to be useful as a coaching model. Administrators reported more positive views on the fairness of DPAS-II for Administrators than did teachers and specialists about their evaluation system.
Goal 2	Research Question	Key Findings
	Fidelity of Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fidelity of implementation, as reported by principals and other administrators, varied across districts. Eleven districts reported higher, three reported medium, and five reported lower fidelity of implementation. Principals reported higher fidelity of implementation in their districts than did other administrators (including district administrators and assistant principals). This is likely due to the fact that principals have more defined expectations in the DPAS-II for Administrators process than do their peers due to the tiered roll-out of the DPAS-II for Administrators system. Administrators who reported higher fidelity of implementation also tended to have more positive views of DPAS-II. (Higher fidelity of implementation was correlated with more positive views of DPAS-II for Administrators.) Administrators who believed that DPAS-II improves leadership practices and informs professional development experienced higher fidelity of implementation, which was associated with more positive views of DPAS-II for Administrators. A majority of administrators (75% of principals and 62% of other administrators) reported that they received specific and actionable feedback as part of their evaluation
	Promising Practices	<p>Promising practices in implementation of DPAS-II for Administrators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was constant communication between school administrators and district leaders/supervisors about expectations, progress toward goals. Administrators appreciated specific and frequent feedback about performance. Professional development for principals and other school administrators varied between the site visit districts; both Colonial and Indian River noted that professional development was only somewhat linked to DPAS-II for Administrators.
Goal 3	Research Question	Key Findings
	Influence on Leadership Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nearly half of principals and 36% of other administrators reported changing their practices as a result of DPAS-II. Administrators who had higher fidelity of implementation were more likely to report changes in practice. Moreover, differences in fidelity of implementation accounted for the differences in reported changes in practice between principals and other administrators.
	Influence on School Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrators who experienced higher levels of fidelity of implementation reported that they felt positively about their LEA/district even if they had negative perceptions of DPAS-II for Administrators overall. For both principals and other administrators, positive perceptions of DPAS-II for Administrators had a slight, positive association with administrator reports that they would like to continue working as administrators.

As with teachers and specialists, we asked administrators to grade their evaluation system on an A-F grading scale. The distribution of DPAS-II for Administrators grades for the 2014-15 school year is shown in Figure ES4. In the figure below, we also break out grades for principals—the only administrators with a fully implemented DPAS-II system for the 2014-15 school year—from all other types of administrators.

Figure ES4. Administrators' overall views of DPAS-II for Administrators



Recommendations for DPAS-II for Administrators

Table ES4 aligns our recommendations for DPAS-II for Administrators to the identified underlying drivers of overall perceptions of the evaluation system. In the full report, where applicable, we note past and ongoing efforts at the state level to address these suggestions.

Table ES4. Recommendations related to DPAS-II for Administrators

Driver	Recommendations
<p>Driver #1: Views about the Purpose of DPAS-II for Administrators</p>	<p>Have consistent, open communication with administrators about the DPAS-II for Administrators system. In best practice districts, administrators spoke of the importance of making clear the expectations of the evaluation system, and providing frequent progress reports. In open-ended survey responses, administrators statewide also suggested that their evaluators conduct more observations of their leadership practices. These observations might take the form of formal observations of practice or could be more informal check-in meetings.</p> <p>Continue to develop criteria-level ratings and rubrics for non-principal administrators. Principals in best practice districts generally reported that they appreciated the criteria-level ratings and the Leadership Priority Areas. Open-ended survey responses likewise supported the roll-out of similar rubrics for other administrator types. (Assistant Principal and District Leader Rubrics and Guides will be full implementation beginning in the 2015-2016 school year.)</p>
<p>Driver #2: School Culture</p>	<p>Consider including peer and/or teacher feedback in school-level administrator ratings. A common suggestion in both open-ended survey responses and in site visit interviews was to incorporate elements of peer (i.e., other administrators) or subordinate (i.e., teachers or other school staff) ratings of performance into the evaluation system. District leaders mentioned they would appreciate ratings from their peers and/or the principals they supervise.</p> <p>Provide additional leadership training for all administrators. Administrators at both the district and the school levels articulated in open-ended survey responses the specific types of training they would like to receive. Although some of this training was about processes and components of DPAS-II for Administrators, there were also numerous requests for general leadership training, such as mentorship, time management, and data analysis. One specific area of leadership training requested was in how to build a positive, productive, achievement-oriented school/district culture.</p>



Delaware Performance Appraisal System Second Edition (DPAS-II) Brief I: DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists

I. Introduction

Evaluation Overview

Since 2007, the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) has engaged external evaluators to conduct annual studies of the design, implementation, and outcomes of the Delaware Performance Appraisal System (DPAS-II). Research for Action (RFA), along with two partner organizations, was selected as the external evaluator for the 2014-15 school year.⁴

This report contains analyses of the following data sources: A statewide survey of teachers, specialists, and administrators; interviews and focus groups from site visits to two districts that have exhibited promising practices in DPAS-II implementation; and artifacts and evidence from teachers in the site visit locations. This report presents a mixed-methods, research-based view of DPAS-II, and points to potential areas for improvement and refinement.

The report is divided into two main sections – findings focused on DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists, which includes responses from Teachers, Specialists, and School and District Administrators; and findings focused on DPAS-II for Administrators. Both sections are structured around three primary evaluation goals:

- **Evaluation Goal 1:** Understanding of DPAS-II and perceived utility, value, and fairness of DPAS-II;
- **Evaluation Goal 2:** Fidelity and quality of local implementation of DPAS-II; and
- **Evaluation Goal 3:** Interim school-level outcomes resulting from DPAS-II (e.g., reported changes in practice and school culture)

DPAS-II History and Context

The Delaware Performance Appraisal System was first implemented in 1987 and has undergone numerous revisions since. The most notable change occurred in 2010, when the state passed Senate Bill 263 and added specific measures of student growth and achievement to the student achievement portion of the policy (Component V).⁵

⁴ Our partners are the National Center for the Improvement of Education Assessment, Inc. (NCIEA), and Operation Public Education (OPE).

⁵ Component V measures depend on the educator group, but include Measure A and B assessments, as well as Measure C growth goals. See glossary for more detailed information on Component V measures.

Table 1 details the five components of the current DPAS-II system for teachers, specialists, and administrators. For a full explanation of the components, criteria, ratings, and rubrics related to each evaluated group, please see DDOE’s website.⁶

Table 1. DPAS-II components for teachers, specialists, and administrators

	Teachers	Specialists	Administrators
Component I	Planning and Preparation	Planning and Preparation	Vision and Goals
Component II	Classroom Environment	Professional Practice and Delivery of Service	Teaching and Learning
Component III	Instruction	Professional Consultation and Collaboration	People, Systems and Operations
Component IV	Professional Responsibilities	Professional Responsibilities	Professional Responsibilities
Component V	Student Improvement	Student Improvement	Student Improvement

The 2014-15 school year marked the third year that teachers, specialists, and administrators have been evaluated based on the five components of the latest iteration of DPAS-II. 2014-2015 also marked an important transition year, with the implementation of the Common Core-aligned Smarter Balanced assessment system.⁷ The U.S. Department of Education granted the state a one-year deferral of Smarter Balanced testing implementation for Component V for educators in tested subjects and grades; this deferral has since been extended through the 2015-16 school year.

Delaware is far from alone in its efforts to establish—and frequently revise—a comprehensive educator evaluation system. Analysis conducted by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders⁸ shows that as many as 10 states and the District of Columbia have adopted evaluation systems that involve high levels of state control, defined as:

- *State provides strict interpretation of federal and state legislation.*
- *State prescribes the requirements for the evaluation model(s).*
- *State determines components, measures, frequency, and types of evaluators.*
- *All districts must implement the state-designed model with little flexibility.*

Summary of Findings

Our mixed-methods analysis suggests four key drivers of teachers’ and specialists’ overall perceptions of DPAS-II. In general, **teachers and specialists were more likely to view DPAS-II in a favorable light if they:**

1. Felt that the purpose of DPAS-II was to improve instructional practices and inform professional development;
2. Believed that DPAS-II has had a positive effect on school culture;
3. Understood DPAS-II; and
4. Held relatively positive views about the student improvement component (Component V).

⁶ <http://www.doe.k12.de.us/domain/186>

⁷ Smarter Balanced tests replaced the previous state standardized tests, the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS), which had been in place since the 2010-11 school year. Prior to that system, Delaware used the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP) for testing student abilities.

⁸ American Institutes for Research, 2015. See: <http://www.gtlcenter.org/>

The four drivers are ordered by magnitude of effect. For example, the strength of the first driver (beliefs about the purpose of the system) was about four times that of the last driver (views of Component V). Detailed findings, organized along the three main evaluation goals, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Research Questions and Key Findings for DPAS-11 for Teachers and Specialists

Goal 1	Research Question	Key Findings
	Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong majority of teachers and specialists reported that they generally understood how they are evaluated by the DPAS-II system. Understanding levels declined with respect to specific aspects of the system. Respondents expressed a notable lack of understanding of Component V compared to other aspects of the system.
	Perceptions of Utility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, about half of teachers and specialists reported that the DPAS-II system as a whole is unfair. Feelings about utility and fairness varied by specific DPAS-II components. Teachers and specialists generally found Components I-III to be useful and fair. They expressed particular concern about Component V.
Goal 2	Research Question	Key Findings
	Fidelity of Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A majority of survey respondents stated that DPAS-II was implemented appropriately in their school. Teachers and specialists experienced, on average, over two-thirds of the indicators of implementation, which included items such as having classroom observations and receiving specific and actionable feedback. Fidelity of implementation varied by district, but did not vary by school poverty level or by school type (elementary vs. middle and high schools). Teachers and specialists in districts with high fidelity of implementation were more likely to report more positive views of DPAS-II. Teachers and specialists who believed that DPAS-II informed instruction and professional development experienced higher fidelity of implementation.
	Promising Practices	<p>Qualitative analysis of best practice districts found common strategies to support “high quality” implementation of DPAS-II:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> District and school leaders set clear expectations about DPAS-II goals and objectives, particularly that DPAS-II is intended as a support for professional growth. Evaluators provided detailed and actionable feedback—both written and oral—to teachers and specialists. Evaluators conducted additional observations of teachers and specialists (i.e., beyond what is required by the DPAS-II regulations). District leaders provided a series of trainings on DPAS-II, including technical explanations of the policy for all individuals and specific training for evaluators. District leaders linked DPAS-II tools and processes to professional development.
Goal 3	Research Question	Key Findings
	Influence on Teaching Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both specialists and teachers reported changing their practices as a result of DPAS-II—34% of specialists and 57% of teachers reported changing their practice at least once a year. Increased fidelity of implementation was associated with increased reports of changes in teacher and specialist practice. More positive views of DPAS-II were not associated with changes in practice for teachers nor for specialists. Site visit data suggest that teachers and specialists were more likely to change practices when feedback was actionable.
	Influence on School Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 77% of teachers and 83% of specialists felt that their school was a good place to work. For teachers, both higher fidelity of implementation and more positive views of DPAS-II were associated with more positive views of the workplace. For specialists, only positive views of DPAS-II were associated with more positive views of the workplace. 81% of teachers and 81% of specialists would like to continue working as educators as long as they are able. There was an association of more positive views of DPAS-II with teachers’ desire to continue teaching. There was no such association with specialists. Site visit data suggest that teachers did not perceive DPAS-II as impacting teacher retention.

II. Data and Methods

RFA employed a mixed-method data collection and analysis approach that incorporated responses from a broad swath of teachers, specialists, school and district administrators,⁹ and other stakeholders across the First State. Our data sources are detailed below.

Policy Scan and Stakeholder Interviews

To ensure the strongest possible foundation for the research effort, RFA staff conducted a scan of DPAS-II policies, including analysis of statutes, regulations, state-developed training resources, and implementation guidelines. Additionally, researchers conducted in-depth interviews with various education stakeholders such as Delaware Department of Education staff, external professional development providers and consultants, and representatives of the Delaware State Education Association and other membership-based organizations. Interviews were semi-structured and designed to help researchers create informed study instruments, specifically regarding survey questions and site visit protocols.



Statewide Survey

The research team developed separate survey instruments for teachers, specialists, and administrators based on a review of research on teacher evaluation systems nationwide, a review of previous evaluations and surveys of DPAS-II, feedback from stakeholders, and input from Department of Education staff. Our survey instruments were designed to probe teachers', specialists', and administrators' views of DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists, as well as administrators' views of their own evaluation system. Surveys consisted of questions regarding:

- Understanding of DPAS-II;
- Perceived utility/value and fairness of DPAS-II, including the utility of the review process and the quality of feedback;
- Underlying goals of DPAS-II;
- Fidelity of implementation of DPAS-II components and processes at the local (school and district) level;
- Outcomes for teachers, specialists, and administrators (for example, changes in instructional or leadership practices, educator efficacy); and
- Teacher, specialist, and school characteristics.

RFA piloted the survey with a group of teachers, specialists, and administrators, and revised the instrument based on their feedback. Surveys for teachers and specialists opened on May 5 and closed on June 5; the survey for administrators opened on May 5 and closed on June 15. Regular, weekly reminder emails were sent to improve response rates. Response rates were approximately 60% for each group of respondents including both complete and partial responses (see Table 3).^{10,11} However, response rates varied by districts and schools.¹²

⁹ Data collection and research methodology applies to RFA's study of DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists and DPAS-II for Administrators. Findings and Recommendations about DPAS-II for Administrators are reported in Brief 2.

¹⁰ Partial responses consist of any respondent who began the survey and did not complete the last question. This includes individuals who completed most of the survey but not the last question, and those who answered only a few questions.

¹¹ Due to a technical issue with our survey software, the first three days of survey data were not available. To address this issue, we re-launched the survey and extended the survey window by one week for teachers and specialists, and by two weeks for administrators.

¹² While the average teacher response rate was 59%, response rates varied by school. Ten percent of schools had response rates of 36% or lower, while 10% of schools had response rates of 81% or higher. Compared to teachers, specialists and administrators had higher levels of variation in response rates by school. The standard deviation for average school level response rates for teachers was 18%, compared to 27% for specialists and 38% for administrators.

Table 3. Sample size and response rates for the 2014-15 DPAS-II evaluation survey

	Completes	Partials	Total Responses	Total Educators	Response Rate
Teachers	4,080	1,291	5,371	9,160	59%
Specialists	659	266	925	1,560	59%
Administrators	288	145	433	692	63%



Best Practice Site Visits

Researchers conducted two site visits with the goal of generating a set of best practices from districts that have exhibited strong implementation of DPAS-II, as defined by high levels of fidelity to DPAS-II goals and innovative and effective practices. We also collected recommendations for improvement during these visits. Sites were selected based on three main criteria:

1. **Survey Data:** Researchers examined survey data from the 2013-14 school year along key indicators of interest (for example, teachers who provided higher-than-average overall ratings for DPAS-II implementation) to identify districts—and, later, schools within those districts.
2. **Monitoring Visit Data:** Researchers triangulated the above survey data with data from Department monitoring visits of districts and schools.
3. **Department Recommendations:** Finally, researchers asked for recommendations from Department staff who have had extensive experience working with district- and school-level administrators on DPAS-II implementation.

Prior to selection of the final two sites, researchers disaggregated the top five potential site visit locations along demographic, geographic, and other indicators (for example, district size) in an effort to provide a basis for comparison with the state as a whole. The final sites selected were **Indian River School District (IRSD)** and **Colonial School District (CSD)**.

For both sites, researchers interviewed key district- and school-level administrators and conducted teacher focus groups. At each district, researchers visited two schools. Schools included one elementary school, two middle schools, and one high school. Table 4 details the respondent frame for site visit data collection.

Table 4. Site visit respondents

Respondent Group	Format	Indian River	Colonial	Total Respondents
District/LEA Administrators	Interview	3	3	6
School Administrators	Interview	4	4	8
Group 1 Educators <i>(Measure A assessed math and ELA teachers in grades 3-10)</i>	Focus group	8	10	18
Group 2 Educators <i>(Measure B assessed teachers, e.g. science and social studies)</i>	Focus group	8	6	14
Group 3 Educators <i>(Educators who do not report student grades and cannot otherwise be categorized into Groups 1 or 2)</i>	Focus group	6	7	13
Total Respondents		29	30	59

Spotlight: Indian River School District

Indian River School District is a Sussex County district of nearly 10,000 students. Relative to the rest of the state, Indian River has higher numbers of ELL (11.7%) and low-income students (41.7%). There are seven elementary schools, three middle schools, and two high schools. The district has been led for the past nine years by a superintendent who believes that her district should be the vanguard in DPAS-II implementation. She and her staff participate every year in the DDOE “boot camp” for DPAS-II, she has been trained as an “expert evaluator” along with several members of her staff, and she has taken advantage of the DASL Development Coaches to improve principals’ evaluation skills. In several instances, the superintendent has asked her staff to take part in what she calls “required opportunities” to implement state regulations around DPAS-II ahead of formal adoption. For example, Indian River is currently applying the principal rubric to the evaluation of assistant principals, even though the rubric is not yet a statewide mandate.

Spotlight: Colonial School District

Colonial School District is a suburban district of about 10,000 students outside Wilmington. Relative to Delaware as a whole, Colonial has higher numbers of African-American (43.2%) and ELL students (8.7%). The percentage of low-income students is 40%. Administrators at both the district and school levels believe that DPAS-II is a valuable tool for educators because it allows them to get a sense of where they are strong and identify areas for improvement. However, administrators universally agreed that it does not go far enough as a formative feedback tool. The district has applied for a waiver from DPAS-II for the 2015-16 school year in an effort to reorient the evaluation system to formative feedback on instructional and leadership practices (see call-out box on page 23 for more information on Colonial’s proposed waiver).



Artifact Analysis

Researchers also collected artifacts from educators at our two sites; these artifacts were then used to refine and strengthen findings related to implementation strategies, promising practices, and teacher outcomes. The overall artifact sample was gleaned from 42 Group 1 and Group 2 teachers, although there was considerable missing data within the sample. Given the small sample size of complete data, artifact analyses can be considered exploratory for this year, and all findings preliminary in nature. Table 5 details the three types of artifacts collected, as well as responses by artifact type.

Table 5. Response rates by artifact type

Artifact	Description	Responses
Formative Feedback from Principals	Includes any written communication received from principals associated with the observation process, evaluated systematically for elements considered to help facilitate teacher improvement	37
Teachers’ Professional Responsibilities Forms	Forms required for Component IV	41
Teacher Assignments and Corresponding Student Work	Includes teacher assignments, a high-performing student work example, and a low-performing student work example, as well as a research-based form that teachers completed describing assignment goals and strategies	23
Number of Complete Samples Containing All Three Types of Artifacts		18

Mixed-Methods Analysis Strategy

Researchers conducted quantitative analyses of survey and artifact data, and qualitative analyses of open-ended survey, interview, and focus group data:

Quantitative Analyses: RFA first examined the descriptive statistics of the teacher, specialist, and administrator surveys. We also developed an index of implementation to describe fidelity of implementation of DPAS by district and school characteristics. Next, we conducted a series of multivariate statistical analyses to examine the following outcomes: educators' overall views of DPAS-II; educators' views of the utility and fairness of DPAS-II; the fidelity of implementation of DPAS-II; and the proportion of educators who reported changing their practice due to feedback from DPAS-II. Our multivariate analysis controlled for 18 teacher and school-level factors.¹³ We also examined potential non-response bias by examining responses for those who took the survey during the first two weeks of the survey, compared with responses for those who took the survey during the last weeks the survey was open. There was no statistically significant difference in average responses among early and late survey responses. See Appendix C for a detailed discussion of the statistical models, independent and dependent variables.

The artifact analysis examined the relationships between three types of artifacts: 1) written administrator feedback to teachers; 2) teacher professional growth plans, and 3) teachers' assignments and corresponding examples of student work. Researchers developed a rubric to evaluate the quality¹⁴ of each of these artifacts based on the literature on high-quality principal feedback. Researchers then estimated the relationship between principal feedback, teacher plans, and quality of student assignments. See Appendix D for a detailed discussion of artifact methods, data, and findings.

Qualitative Analyses: Interview, focus group, and open-ended survey questions along with policy scans and key statewide stakeholder interviews informed the definition of district/LEA best practices in DPAS-II implementation. The analysis frame for the site visits was highly aligned to Evaluation Goal 1 (understanding, utility/value, and fairness) and Evaluation Goal 2 (implementation). Specifically, we created a set of qualitative codes that applied to site visit interviews, focus groups, and—where appropriate—open-ended survey questions. We used a qualitative analysis software package, Atlas.Ti7, to analyze emerging trends in site visit and artifact data. All qualitative analyses held confidential the names of respondents and schools; no identifiers are provided in this report.

For qualitative analysis of open-ended survey responses, researchers systematically analyzed responses of teachers, specialists, and administrators, using spreadsheets to categorize responses using mutually agreed-upon codes. Within these codes, researchers were able to analyze response trends. For one open-ended question (on perceived fairness of DPAS-II), in-depth analysis was conducted with inter-rater reliability checks at 95% so that frequencies of responses could be reported.

¹³ These factors consist of the following: two measures of the purpose of DPAS-II (views of DPAS-II as a tool to improve instruction or inform professional development); three measures of teacher understanding of DPAS-II (overall understanding and understanding of two different aspects of Component V); views of components I-V, two measures of school culture (is the school a good place to work and the impact of DPAS-II on school culture); two measures of teacher efficacy (view of the relative importance of family background versus school on student achievement and educators' views that she/or he can raise student performance), and one measure each of school poverty, instructional time, subject taught by the teacher, whether the respondent was male or female, and whether the teacher or specialist worked in an elementary vs. middle or high school.

¹⁴ We used the literature on artifact quality to develop rubrics to measure principal feedback, teachers' professional growth goals, and student assignments. For principal feedback, we used indicators of quality such as feedback was directed at the task/practice/goal and not the teacher, whether the feedback aligns with rating, and whether the feedback refers to specific events in the classroom and provides concrete recommendations for improvement. See Appendix D for the full list of 10 items used to score the quality of principal feedback. To evaluate the quality of teachers' professional growth goals, we examined factors such as did the goals articulate skill areas to improve upon, were the professional goals clear, did they identify steps to reach the goal, benchmarks, and potential obstacles. For the full list of criteria used to evaluate the quality of teacher goals, refer to Appendix D.

Ratings of DPAS-II

For the past five years, Delaware teachers, specialists, and administrators have been asked to assign an overall “grade” for DPAS-II,¹⁵ ranging from A to F. The distribution of grades for DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists for the 2014-15 school year is shown in Figure 1.

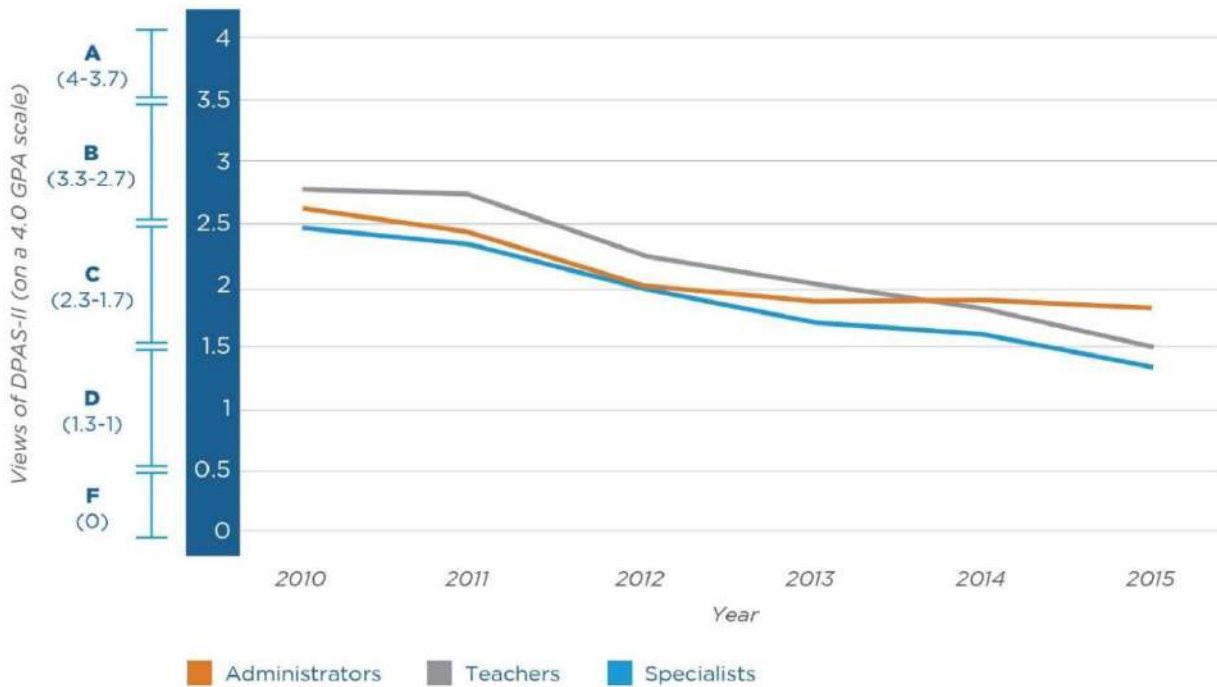
Figure 1. Distribution of 2014-15 DPAS-II grades from teachers, specialists, and administrators



To compare grades of DPAS-II over time, we calculated the average grades for each group of respondents—teachers, specialists, and administrators—for each school year, using a 4.0 GPA scale corresponding to the College Board standard. We found that grades assigned to DPAS-II declined over time for all three groups. However, we caution that DPAS-II has undergone numerous revisions over that time period, most notably with the full adoption and implementation of the revised student improvement component (Component V) for the 2012-13 school year. Administrators’ grades have not declined as sharply and remained generally stable over the past four years (see Figure 2).

¹⁵ The key findings present responses from teachers, specialists, and administrators concerning DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists. Findings related to DPAS-II for Administrators are presented separately in the second portion of our full report. For the purposes of clarity, “DPAS-II” refers only to DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists.

Figure 2. Teachers' and specialists' grades of DPAS-II from 2010-15



III. Evaluation Goal 1: Understanding and Perceptions of DPAS-II Utility and Fairness

How have respondents' perceptions of DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists changed over time? To what degree is DPAS-II understood by teachers, specialists, and administrators? How do they rate DPAS-II in terms of utility and fairness? What suggestions do teachers, specialists, and administrators have for improving the design of DPAS-II including processes, tools, and measures?



→ Direction of Influence

In this section, we begin by presenting findings related to teachers' and specialists' level of understanding of the DPAS-II system. We then present respondents' views of the system as a whole, as well as specific findings related to perceived utility and fairness. The majority of our quantitative findings are analyses of teacher survey data. In most cases, these findings held true for specialists' and administrators' views as well; however, we note any instances where findings differed in a meaningful way by respondent group.

Understanding of DPAS-II

DPAS-II contains five components, the first four of which are aligned to the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching and build on criterion-level rubrics and ratings; the fifth component measures student growth and improvement. Additionally, there are a set of activities that educators and their evaluators must participate in throughout the year, beginning with the pre-conference in the fall and culminating in the summative conference in the spring. In this subsection, we explore teacher, specialist, and administrator levels of understanding of DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists. We first present descriptive survey information that provides cross-sectional statewide findings regarding understanding. We then provide information from the best practice site visits, which parses out understanding levels by components (Components I-IV versus Component V).

RECENT AND PROPOSED CHANGES TO DPAS-II FOR TEACHERS AND SPECIALISTS

Changes for 2014-15 school year:

- **Changes to Components II and III.** Evaluators may use short observations, which must be at least 10 minutes, after at least one full observation has occurred; applicable to Components II and III only.
- **Changes to Component IV.** Districts/charters can opt to strengthen Component IV, for example by substituting a collaboratively-developed (i.e., between district and Department personnel) Component.
- **Credentialed Observers.** Districts can credential additional observers to assist with the DPAS-II process.
- **Criterion-Level Ratings.** All educators are required to receive ratings on each of the criteria in the DPAS-II for teachers and specialists rubric.

Approved future changes:

- **Changes in Weighting.** Components I through IV would receive greater emphasis, as evaluators would have more discretion in using Component V scores when Components I through IV are strong.
- **Increasing the Number of Rating Categories for Components I through IV.** Components I through IV would be scored along a four-point scale rather than a binary ("Satisfactory"/"Unsatisfactory") scale.
- **Annual Appraisals.** Beginning in 2017-18, Annual Summative Appraisals would be required of all teachers.



Teachers and specialists reported that they generally understood DPAS-II, but were confused about recent policy refinements to the system and also about Component V.

On the statewide survey, 91% of teachers (n=4,471) and 85% of specialists (n=748) stated that they understood how they were evaluated on DPAS-II. But when asked about recent and proposed changes to the system, approximately 25 to 40% of teachers and specialists stated that they were unaware of the refinements (see call-out box and Appendix E for details).

Additionally, across both survey and site visit data, respondents expressed a notable lack of understanding of Component V as compared to other aspects of the system. For example, when asked about their levels of understanding related to Component V assessments, only about half of teacher survey respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that Component V assessments were understandable. (See Appendix B for details.)



Similar results emerged even in site visit districts. Teachers in both best practice districts felt Components I through IV were modeled on universal teaching practices, and that they therefore understood these requirements very well. One teacher said:

I feel like I can have an intellectual conversation about it. ... I think the more you talk about it, the more you look at it, the more you understand it.

Teachers in both districts strengthened their understanding of Components I through IV by talking with other teachers and administrators, attending trainings, and reviewing criteria each time they were evaluated. Administrators received an extended training on DPAS-II at the beginning of the year and attended multiple, shorter trainings throughout the year.

However, consistent with the survey findings, teachers, specialists, and administrators in both Colonial and Indian River reported relatively weak understanding of Component V. For instance, teachers and specialists expressed general understanding that Component V involves ratings based on students meeting target scores on state assessments, but more technical aspects (e.g., the goal-setting process, how different teachers were rated, whether there was a limit on how many teachers could be rated “distinguished”) were not well understood. One teacher from Indian River referred to Component V as a “black box,” and said neither teachers nor administrators truly understood how it linked teacher effectiveness to student improvement.



Teachers and specialists who reported high levels of understanding of DPAS-II were more likely to provide higher grades of DPAS-II. In our multivariate analysis, we found

understanding was positively associated with more favorable views about DPAS-II. For example, teachers¹⁶ who reported that they “very much” or “somewhat” understood how they were evaluated were likely to give DPAS-II a rating about a quarter of a grade higher than teachers who reported that they did not understand DPAS-II. There is a similar positive association between perceptions of Component V as a good measure of practice and overall views of DPAS-II.

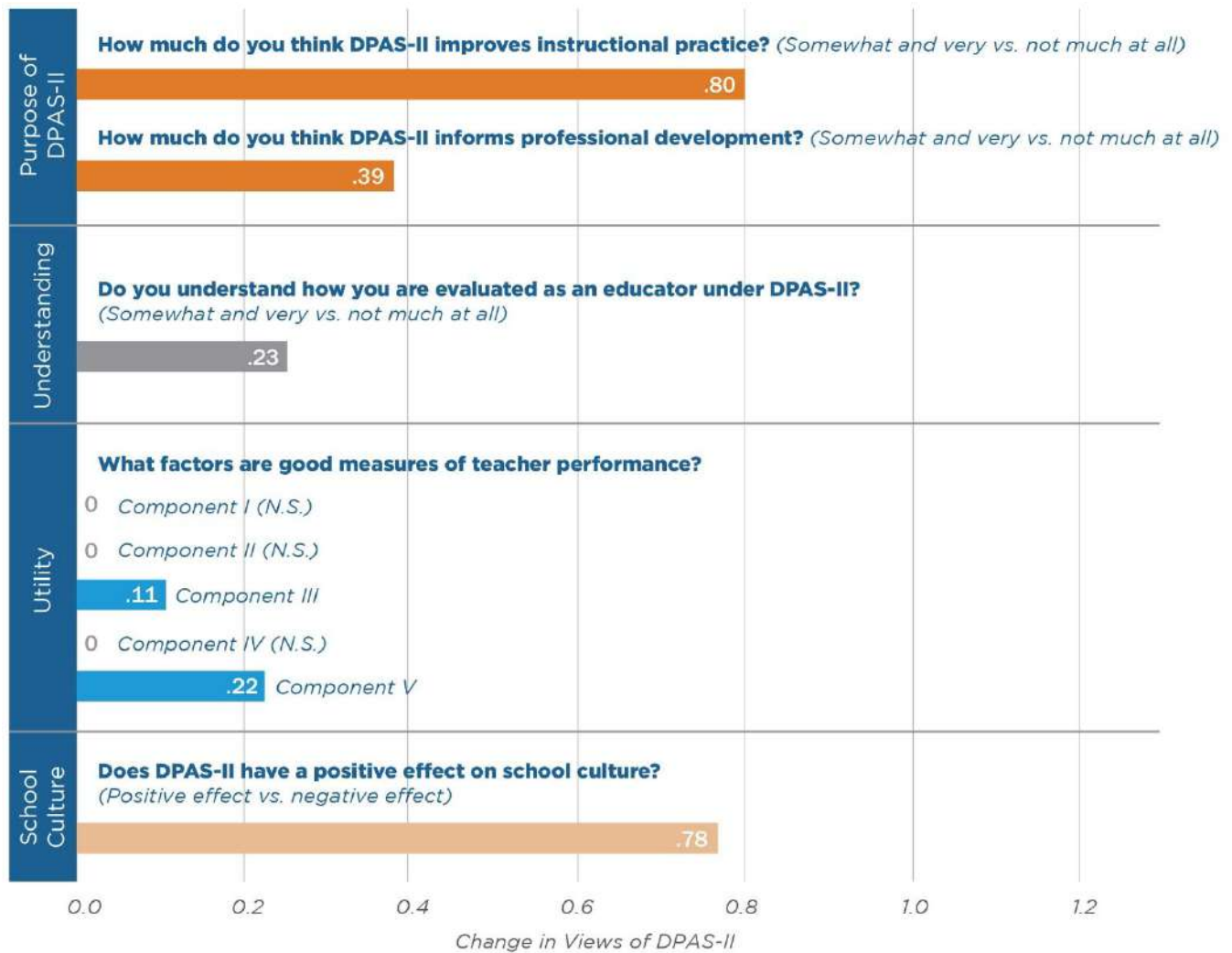
Factors Associated with How Teachers and Specialists Graded DPAS-II

We also explored the degree to which certain underlying respondent characteristics or feelings were associated with one’s grading of DPAS-II. Here and throughout this report we provide multivariate analyses to explain these relationships in more detail, which helps provide a sense of what might be driving certain descriptive findings from the survey.

Figure 3 identifies factors that influenced DPAS-II grades given by teachers.

¹⁶ We found similar results for specialists. See Appendix C for details.

Figure 3. Factors that influence teacher views of DPAS-II (on a 4.0 GPA scale)



Notable findings illustrated in Figure 3 are as follows:



Teachers and specialists who viewed the purpose of DPAS-II as informing instructional practices and professional development were more likely to give DPAS-II a higher grade. Figure 3 also illustrates the relative influence of different factors on these views in terms of grade points (on a 4.0 scale), controlling for a range of school, teacher, and student characteristics.¹⁷ For instance, as shown in the first bar in Figure 3, teachers¹⁸ who responded that DPAS-II informed instructional practice either “somewhat” or very much” graded DPAS-II 0.80 grade points – almost a full letter grade – higher than did teachers who stated that DPAS-II “does not” inform instructional practice. The factor with the next-largest effect on teacher’s grading was whether a teacher felt DPAS-II had a positive effect on school culture; teachers who held positive assessments in this regard gave DPAS-II a rating that was 0.78 grade points higher than teachers who felt that DPAS-II had a negative effect on school culture.

¹⁷ See Appendix C for a full list of controls.

¹⁸ Although findings here highlight teacher responses, there were similar findings for specialists. See Appendix C2 for details.

In addition, teachers who responded that DPAS-II informed professional development either somewhat or very much gave the system an average grade about 0.39 points higher than teachers who responded that DPAS-II did not inform professional development. And teachers who stated that they very much or somewhat understood DPAS-II gave the system a 0.23 higher grade than teachers who did not understand DPAS-II.

Additionally, we found that overall views of DPAS-II were influenced, albeit to a more modest extent, by views of Components III and V. For example, a teacher who stated that Component V (student growth) was an accurate indicator of performance over time was more likely to give DPAS-II an overall higher grade (by approximately 0.2 grade points) than did a teacher who stated that DPAS-II was not an accurate indicator of performance. A teacher who viewed Component III (instruction) as an accurate indicator of performance was also more likely to give DPAS-II a slightly higher grade, approximately 0.1 grade points higher than a teacher who responded that Component III was not an accurate indicator of performance.

In comparison to the other factors that influenced teacher grading of DPAS-II, viewing DPAS-II as a tool to improve practice had the largest effect on views. For example, viewing DPAS-II as a tool to improve practice had an effect on ratings that was approximately four times larger than the effect of viewing of Component V as an accurate measure of teaching performance (0.80 vs. 0.22).

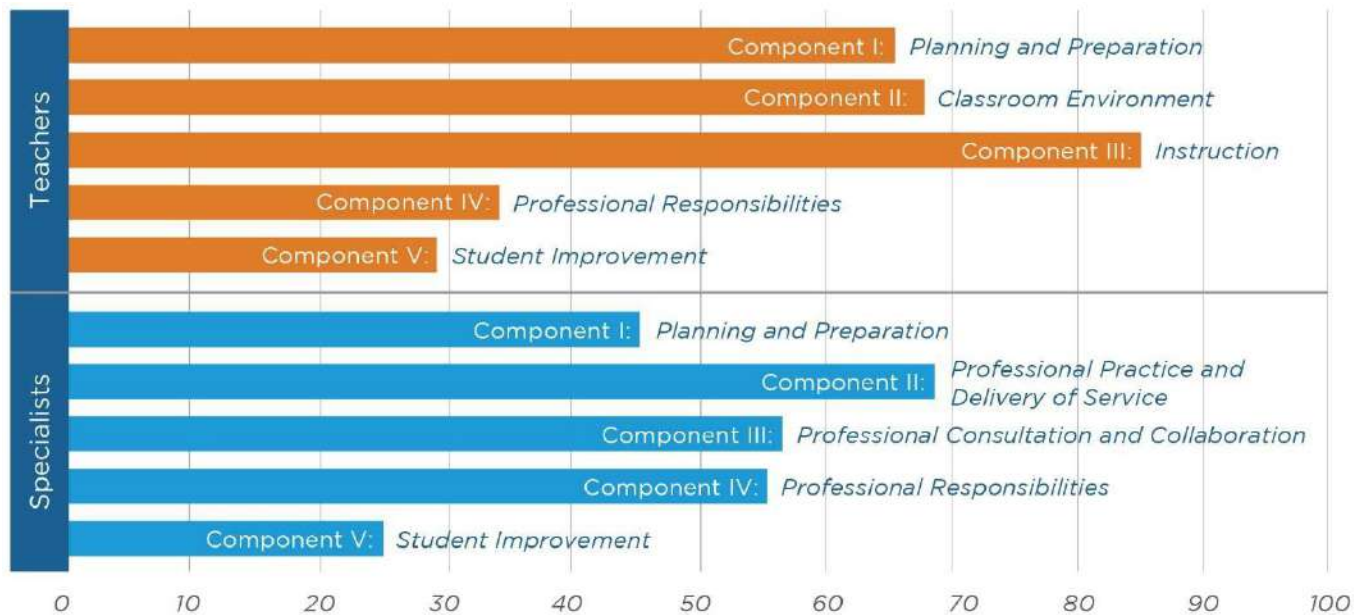
Perceptions of DPAS-II Utility

Next, we present findings on the degree to which teachers, specialists, and administrators reported that aspects of DPAS-II were useful to them. We define utility as the accuracy, usefulness, and applicability of the DPAS-II tools and measures. On the statewide survey, we focused on one aspect of utility—whether the evaluation tools were viewed as accurate measures of instructional practice—but we also present qualitative data regarding the perceived usefulness of DPAS-II components.

Looking first at accuracy, **teachers generally believed Components I through III to be accurate measures of performance, but had negative views of Components IV and (especially) V.**¹⁹ The findings from the 2014-15 school year (Figure 4) show that more than two thirds of teachers felt that Components I through III were accurate measures of their performance, but only about a third of teachers viewed Components IV and V as accurate. Specialists held more positive views of the accuracy of Component IV, but more negative views of Component V.

¹⁹ The survey asked “Of the five major components (as defined in the DPAS-II Guide) used in teacher evaluations, which do you believe are accurate indicators of teacher performance?”

Figure 4. Percentage of teachers and specialists reporting that each component of DPAS-II is accurate in 2015



For teachers, n=4,304. For specialists, n=689.

Changes in Perceptions of Component Accuracy Over Time

When we examined teachers' and specialists' perceptions over time on the accuracy of DPAS-II components, we found declines in all but Component III, which remained constant. Both teachers and specialists provided particularly low accuracy ratings for Component V. Results are presented in Figure 5 (teachers) and Figure 6 (specialists).

Figure 5. Percentage of teachers reporting that each DPAS-II component is an accurate indicator of performance (2010-15²⁰)

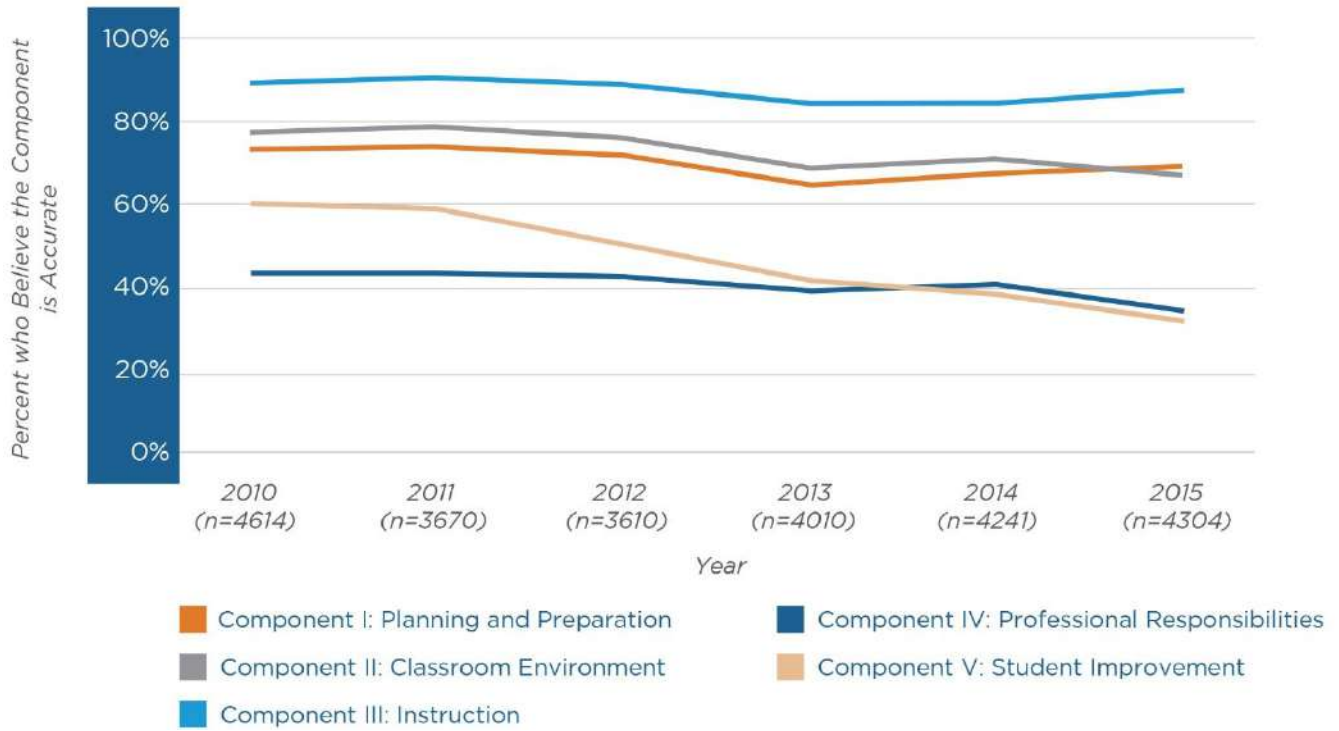


Figure 5 shows that teachers most frequently give Component III (Instruction) the highest accuracy rating of the five components; Components IV and V have received consistently low accuracy ratings for the past three years.

²⁰ Note: Codes for “none of the above” and “don’t know” were added in the 2015 DPAS-II Teacher and Specialist surveys. The phrasing of the question was changed in 2015 from “good” indicators to “accurate” indicators of performance. In 2012, Component V: Student Improvement was not listed as an option.

Figure 6. Percentage of specialists reporting that each DPAS-II component is an accurate indicator of performance (2010-15²¹)

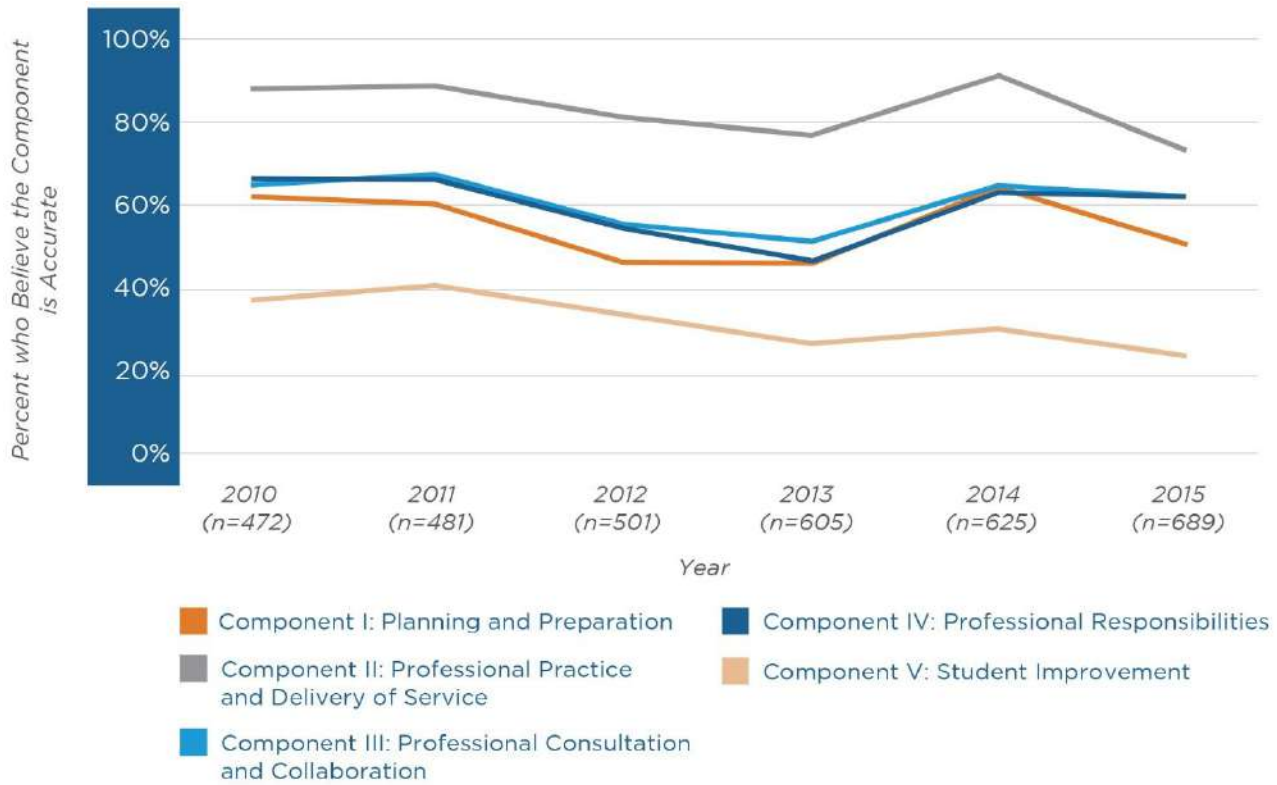


Figure 6 shows that specialists gave Component II (Professional Practice and Delivery of Service) the highest accuracy ratings, although this rating has declined from near 90% in 2010 to 74% in 2015. Component V never garnered a majority of specialist support and its rating has declined from 2010 levels.



Our investigation of the utility of DPAS-II also included interviews with educators in best practice districts concerning the most useful elements of the system. **Teachers, specialists, and administrators in both Colonial and Indian River reported that DPAS-II observation feedback was most valuable.** More specifically, both school administrators and teachers felt that oral and written feedback was useful for encouraging teachers to improve their classroom practices by providing a clear set of suggested strategies. Specialists also generally appreciated feedback, although some specialists across the four schools did express concerns about the applicability of feedback to their unique job responsibilities.

The same theme emerged from open-ended responses to the statewide survey. When asked specifically which aspects of DPAS-II were most useful in improving instructional practices, teachers and specialists listed written and oral feedback as by far the most important.²² Said one respondent: “I love having my administrator observe me and feel the classroom feedback is helpful and applicable.”

The second-most popular response was the value of observations, including evaluators’ formal announced or unannounced observations, as well as informal walk-throughs or “shorts.” Said one respondent: “The small walkthroughs are the most useful because then the evaluator sees [me] more frequently.”

²¹ Note: Codes for none of the above and don’t know were added in the 2015 DPAS-II Teacher Survey. Question was revised in 2015 from good indicators to accurate indicators of performance. In 2012, Component V: Student Improvement was not listed as an option.

²² Note: Responses were roughly the same among teachers (Groups 1 and 2) and specialists (Group 3). A portion of survey respondents across the teacher and specialists surveys also noted that they did not find any aspects of DPAS-II to be useful for improving their instructional practice. Specialists were more likely than teachers to submit this type of response.

Perceptions of DPAS-II Fairness

Our next analysis of perceptions of DPAS-II concerned fairness. The call-out box below shows that educators defined “fairness” in different ways, for example as equity in the application of rubrics and ratings, transparency of evaluation objectives, or the perceived accuracy of summative ratings. In this sub-section, we present general findings from the survey about perceived fairness, and then support those findings with site visit best practice data and data from open-ended survey responses.

VARYING DEFINITIONS OF FAIRNESS

Analysis of open-ended survey responses and site visit responses suggested that teachers and specialists defined “fairness” in the context of DPAS-II along four main dimensions:

1. **Alignment of DPAS-II to educators’ job responsibilities** (including the degree to which components assessed a teacher or specialist’s day-to-day responsibilities and instructional objectives).
2. **Transparency in the DPAS-II process** (including clarity of overall objectives, knowledge of the observation process, the ease of paperwork and technology systems, and adequate training).
3. **Consistency of expectations** (including teachers and specialists who stated they either wanted a greater degree of equity, or wanted flexibility and understanding for special cases).
4. **Accuracy of assessments and/or ratings** (including Component V goals and assessments, the degree to which these assessments measured areas within teachers’ and specialists’ control, criterion or component ratings, or summative ratings).



About half of teachers and specialists reported that DPAS-II as a whole is unfair, and perceptions of fairness have declined over time. About half of both teachers and specialists said DPAS-II was unfair (Figure 7). By contrast, a quarter of administrator respondents felt that DPAS-II was unfair.²³

²³ Note: Administrator findings pertain to views on the fairness of DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists. For findings related to administrators’ view of the fairness of their own evaluation system, see Brief II.

Figure 7. Teachers' and specialists' overall views of DPAS-II fairness



Factors Affecting Views of DPAS-II Fairness



Teacher’s views of DPAS-II fairness were influenced by their views on other factors.

To examine these factors, we performed a multivariate analysis of 18 factors²⁴ that might influence whether a respondent “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the following statement: “DPAS-II is fair and equitable.” See Appendix C for the full list and definitions of these factors.

Table 6 presents the five factors that had the strongest effect on views of DPAS-II fairness.²⁵

Notably, the factor with the strongest effect on views of fairness is the belief that DPAS-II was a tool to improve instruction.

²⁴ These 18 factors consist of the following: two measures of the purpose of DPAS-II, three measures of teacher understanding of DPAS-II, the views of components I-V, two measures of school culture, two measures of teacher efficacy, and one measure each of school poverty, instructional time, subject taught by the teacher, sex, and elementary vs. middle and high school.

²⁵ To identify the five strongest influences, we estimated a multivariate statistical model including the 18 factors and first identified which factors were statistically significant. Among the statistically significant factors, we identified the five with the strongest effect. Given that the outcome is a 0 or 1, we use a logistic regression; to make interpretation easier, Table 3.5 converts the results from the logistic regression into predicted probabilities (see Appendix C for details).

Table 6. Factors that most strongly influence teacher views of the fairness of DPAS-II

Strongest Factors	How Much Does Fairness Increase/ Decrease with Each Factor	Interpretation
Teachers' Beliefs about DPAS-II		
<p>1. Belief that DPAS-II Improves Practice <i>Effect of belief that DPAS-II does not improve practice versus very much/somewhat improves practice</i></p>	+15%	Teachers are more likely to view DPAS-II as fair if they believe that DPAS-II improves practice. 21% of average teachers who believe that DPAS-II improves practice view DPAS-II as fair. In contrast, 6% of average teachers who believe that DPAS-II does not improve practice view DPAS-II as fair.
<p>2. Belief that DPAS-II Informs PD <i>Effect of belief that DPAS-II does not inform PD versus very much/somewhat informs PD</i></p>	+8%	Teachers are more likely to view DPAS-II as fair if they believe that DPAS-II informs professional development. 15% of average teachers who believe that DPAS-II informs professional development view DPAS-II as fair. In contrast, 7% of average teachers who believe that DPAS-II does not inform professional development view DPAS-II as fair.
<p>3. View Component V as an Accurate Measure <i>Effect of belief that Component V is not a good measure versus Component V is a good measure</i></p>	+4%	Teachers are more likely to view DPAS-II as fair if they believe that Component V is an accurate measure of teacher practice. 12% of average teachers who believe that Component V is an accurate measure of teacher practice view DPAS-II as fair. In contrast, 8% of average teachers who believe that Component V is not an accurate measure of teacher practice view DPAS-II as fair.
<p>4. Belief that School is a Good Place to Work <i>Effect of belief that one's school is not a good place to work versus the school is a good place to work</i></p>	+2%	Teachers are more likely to view DPAS-II as fair if they believe their school is a good place to work. 10% of average teachers who believe their school is a good place to work view DPAS-II as fair. In contrast, 8% of teachers who view that their school is not a good place to work view DPAS-II as fair.
Teacher Characteristics		
<p>5. Total Years of Experience <i>Effect of 1 versus 10 years of experience</i></p>	-2%	Teachers with more years of experience are slightly less likely to view DPAS-II as fair. For example, 10% of average teachers who have 10 years of experience view DPAS-II as fair. In contrast, 12% of average teachers with one year of experience view DPAS-II as fair.

Our multivariate analysis found that specialists had similar views of fairness, and that these views were also primarily influenced by seeing DPAS-II as a tool for instruction or professional development (see Appendix C for details).

The next set of findings relate to assessments of fairness of specific components of DPAS-II. Our analysis is drawn from qualitative data, including best practice site visit data and open-ended survey response data. Although one might expect variation in findings by site visit district or perhaps respondent group (i.e., teachers versus specialists versus administrators), our findings suggest that opinions on the relative fairness of the various components of DPAS-II were, for the most part, consistent. As noted in the findings below, differences mainly appear between data sources, with site visit respondents being generally more

positive about the fairness of Components I through IV than were survey respondents; all respondents were equally negative about Component V fairness.



Teachers, specialists, and administrators felt that Components I through IV were generally fair but wanted to see greater consistency in how they were applied.

Interviewees and focus group participants in the best practice sites, as well as respondents to an open-ended survey question about fairness,²⁶ said that Components I through IV were generally fair because they were aligned to job responsibilities and were therefore intuitive and accurate. However, some respondents did have concerns about fairness within these components, most of which pertained to perceived inconsistencies in how they were observed by their evaluators. The top three concerns²⁷ raised about fairness in Components I through IV were:

1. Inconsistent, poorly informed evaluators: 24% of respondents (n=3,301) stated that their evaluators were poorly trained, lacked content expertise to evaluate specific lessons, and/or exhibited bias in their evaluations of certain types of teachers. Notably, this finding did not come through in the best practice districts.
2. Timing of observations: Teachers, specialists, and administrators in two of the four site visit schools, and across 3% of open-ended survey responses (n=3,301), said the timing of their observations was problematic, occurring either too early or too late in the year to provide meaningful, formative feedback.
3. Infrequent observations: In open-ended responses, 3% of respondents (n=3,301) said that their evaluators had not conducted a sufficient number of classroom observations or walk-throughs to gain a full picture of their abilities. Some teachers in best practice districts, particularly Group 1 and 2 teachers, mentioned that it was frustrating when evaluators caught only a small portion of a lesson.



Teachers, specialists, and administrators shared the view that Component V was an unfair characterization of teachers' and specialists' effectiveness.

All categories of respondents, both in the best practice districts and in open-ended survey responses, said it was unfair that performance ratings were based in part on student test scores. The top cited reasons were:

1. Student achievement tests do not account for factors beyond teachers' and specialists' control. Teachers and specialists stated that Component V assumes they are solely responsible for students' test scores, and does not take into account the fact that student attendance, poverty, parental involvement, ability levels and students' attitudes all contribute to performance on a standardized test. A highly skilled teacher, respondents said, could end up with an unsatisfactory rating because of lack of student effort, not lack of teacher effort. Further, because students (or their parents) are not held accountable for their test scores, teachers have a difficult time motivating students to take the tests seriously.
2. Goal-setting process may unfairly punish ambitious teachers and specialists. Teachers, specialists, and administrators in best practice districts worried that Component V failed to reward, and in many cases actually punished, teachers who set high standards for students. One teacher from Indian River explained, "I felt like I was punished for setting high goals and was put on an improvement plan because of that." In open-ended survey responses, some respondents noted that the goal-setting process was out of their control altogether.

²⁶ Across the teacher, specialist, and administrator surveys, there were 3,301 total responses to an open-ended question that asked respondents to explain whether they felt DPAS-II was "fair and equitable."

²⁷ Overall percentages responses may appear low; however, they represent the most salient responses from among the coded categories of responses.

Suggestions for Design Changes to DPAS-II

Teachers, specialists, and administrators had numerous suggestions for improving the design of DPAS-II. However, recommendations were somewhat inconsistent. For example, in open-ended survey responses, teachers, specialists, and administrators wrote that they would like the Delaware Department of Education to reduce the number of small changes it makes to DPAS-II every year. On the other hand, a sizable portion of respondents across the three data sources suggested specific changes to DPAS-II, and recommended that the Department actively involve teachers, specialists, and administrators in the decision-making process around these refinements. This discrepancy is likely two sides of the same coin: Respondents want a clearer evaluation system that is both consistently applied and reflective of their suggestions for change. Table 7 details these suggestions.

Table 7. Teacher, specialist, and administrator suggestions for improvement to DPAS-II

Goal 1	Suggestion	Source				
		Survey	Open-Ended	Site Visit		
<p>Supportive Quotation: We need to have observers who are experts in our content area to make the evaluation system more effective. I personally feel that outside observers who have several years of classroom experience with the content area you teach would help the process be effective.</p> <p>Supportive Quotation: Institute a target level that students need to grow by each year. Make it clear that students must make a minimum amount of progress each year. Institute a consequence if students are not able to learn what they need to make a minimum amount of growth. Students need to be held accountable before teachers are held accountable for growth students make.</p>	Streamline the system to make DPAS-II paperwork less burdensome		✓	✓	Note: The Department has provided districts flexibility in areas such as permitting shorter observations and seeking waivers from certain criteria.	
	Provide access to reliable technology and data systems		✓	✓	Note: The state required all districts to use a state-approved online platform, and partnered with a provider to make such a tool available to districts. At least 11 districts are using this tool during 2015-16.	
	Allow for DPAS-II flexibility/exemptions for specialized cases (e.g., certain specialists, experienced teachers, etc.)		✓	✓	Note: 2013 regulatory changes permit districts to credential educators' peers to serve as classroom observers.	
	Diversify the pool of certified evaluators (e.g., to allow for multiple evaluators, independent evaluators, evaluator teams, etc.)			✓	✓	
	Weight Components I-IV more heavily than Component V	✓	✓	✓	Note: 2015 regulatory changes increased the weight of Components I through IV relative to Component V.	
	Eliminate or change Components IV and/or V	✓	✓	✓	Note: Delaware received flexibility from USDE for an additional, one-year (2015-16) delay in incorporating Smarter Balanced results in evaluations. Additionally, 2014 regulatory changes allowed districts to submit alternative proposals for Component IV.	
	Introduce parent and/or student accountability elements into statewide testing requirements		✓	✓		

IV. Evaluation Goal 2: Local Implementation of DPAS-II

How does DPAS-II implementation vary by district and school characteristics? What promising practices are emerging?



In this section, we provide findings from site visit participants, survey respondents, and teacher artifacts regarding on-the-ground implementation of DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists. We first provide general perceptions of implementation from the statewide survey. Then, using survey data, we construct an index of “fidelity of implementation” (FOI) of DPAS-II. Finally, we highlight best practices in DPAS-II implementation at Indian River and Colonial school districts, including providing formative feedback, clarifying expectations for teachers and specialists, and providing regular trainings on DPAS-II implementation and professional practices. Included here are also exemplars of detailed feedback, as well as analysis of variation in feedback, both of which are drawn from our artifact analyses.

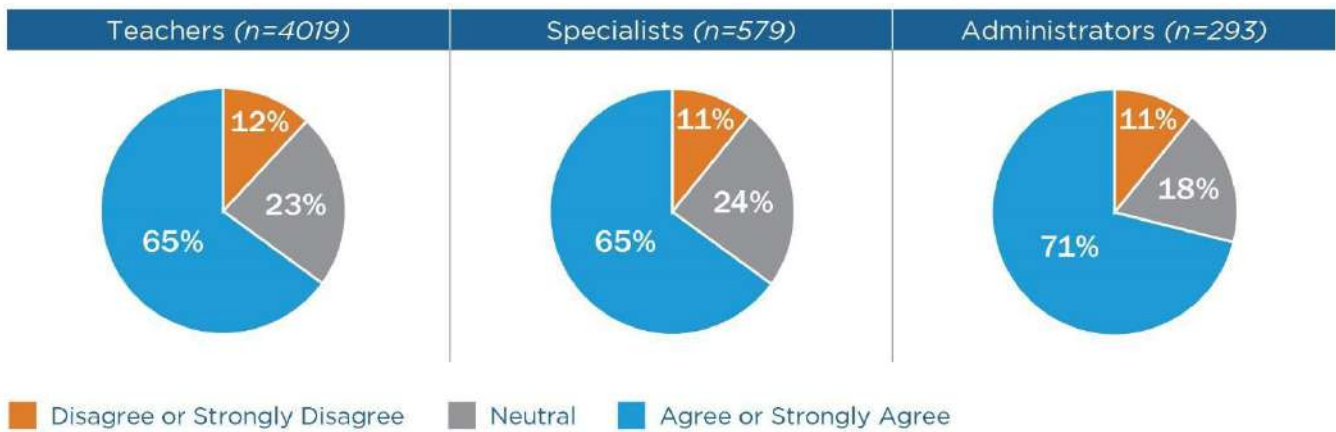
General Perceptions of DPAS-II Implementation



A majority of survey respondents stated that DPAS-II was implemented “appropriately” in their school. Using a question from both current²⁸ and past DPAS-II statewide surveys, we examined trends in survey respondents’ views on the implementation of DPAS-II at the school level. For the 2014-15 school year, we found that approximately two thirds of each group of school employees—teachers (n=4,019), specialists (n=579), and administrators (n=293)—agreed or strongly agreed that DPAS-II was implemented appropriately at their school (see Figure 8).

²⁸ The question asked: “Thinking about the 2014-15 school year, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about DPAS-II: DPAS-II is being implemented appropriately at my school.”

Figure 8. Percent of teachers, specialists, and administrators who agree that DPAS-II is appropriately implemented in their school



Moreover, when it comes to subjective reports of details of the evaluation process, over half of teachers and specialists say they agreed with their evaluator on what a good classroom looks like and over half felt that their evaluator helped them set ambitious goals. Seventy-six percent of teachers and 61% of specialists agreed or strongly agreed that they and their evaluator agreed on what a good classroom looks like. However, fewer teachers and specialists believe that their evaluator helped them set ambitious goals: 62% of teachers and 50% of specialists believe that their evaluator helped them set ambitious goals (see Appendix B for details).



Fidelity of DPAS-II Implementation

To examine implementation in more detail, we constructed an index of fidelity of implementation (FOI)—essentially a list of activities that teachers and specialists would experience if each required aspect of DPAS-II were deployed successfully. We identified nine yes/no objective measures of implementation for teachers, and nine yes/no objective measures of implementation for specialists (see Figure 9).²⁹

²⁹ We also created a separate construct for the fidelity of implementation of DPAS-II for Administrators, which is detailed in Section II of this report.

Figure 9. Fidelity of implementation measures for teachers and specialists

Nine Measures of High Quality Implementation for Teachers Checklist	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1) Did the teacher have at least one full observation?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2) Did the teacher have a goal-setting conference?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3) Did the teacher always or often receive specific and actionable feedback?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4) Did the teacher and evaluator determine how student growth measures would be used in evaluating instructional practice?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5) Were goals mutually established by teacher and evaluator?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6) Were professional growth activities established during the professional responsibility conference?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7) Did the evaluator share his or her overall impression of instructional practice?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8) Did the evaluator provide recommendations designed to improve instructional practice?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9) Did the evaluator provide expectations designed to improve specific aspects of instructional practice?
Nine Measures of High Quality Implementation for Specialists Checklist	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1) Did the specialist and evaluator determine how student growth measures would be used in evaluating practice?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2) Were goals mutually established with the evaluator?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3) Were professional growth activities established during the professional responsibility conference?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4) Did the evaluator share his or her overall impression to improve practice?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5) Did the evaluator provide recommendations designed to improve practice?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6) Did the evaluator provide expectations designed to improve specific aspects of practice?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7) Did the specialist have at least one full observation?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8) Did the specialist always or often receive specific and actionable feedback?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9) Did the specialist have a goal-setting conference?

Survey respondents were asked whether they experienced each measure of high quality implementation; we averaged these yes/no responses to produce levels of implementation for the state, by respondent group, and at the district and school levels. We describe these levels on a scale of higher, medium, and lower fidelity, as detailed below (see Table 8).

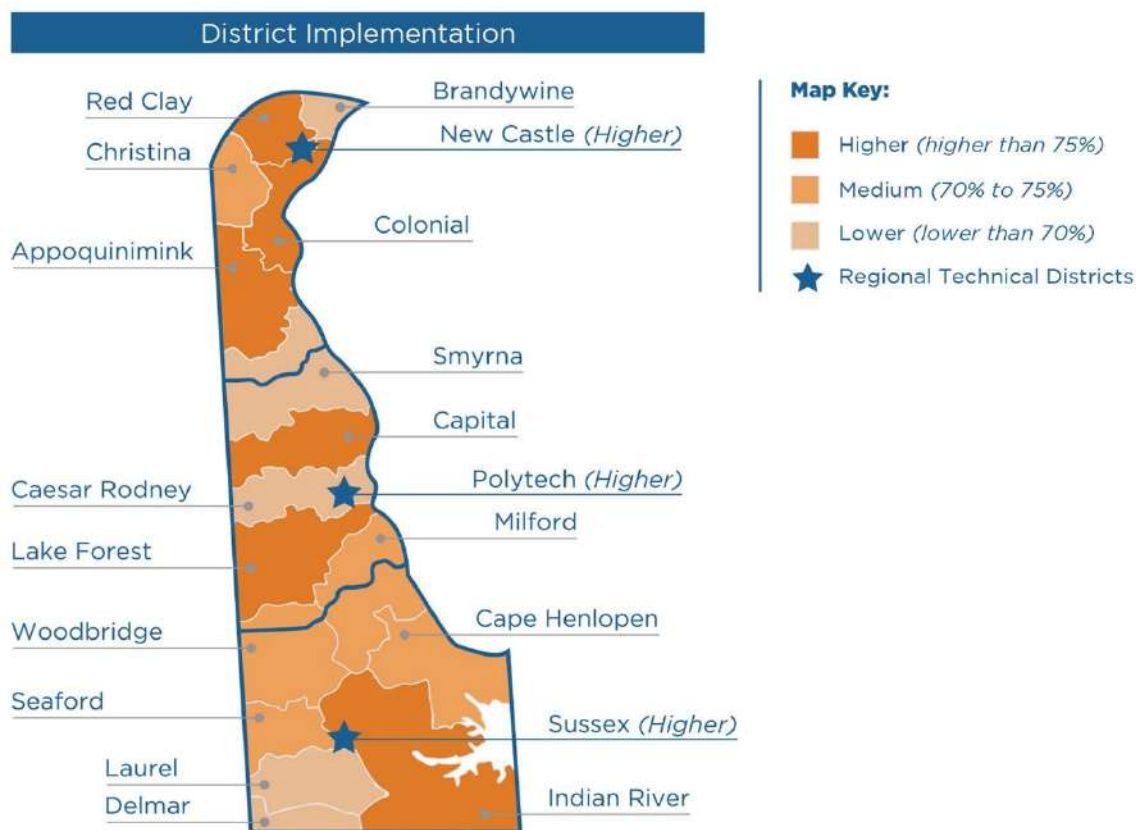
Table 8. Definition of higher, medium, and lower fidelity of implementation

Levels of Implementation	
■	Higher: Implementation of more than 75% of the measures in the index
■	Medium: Implementation of 70-75% of the measures in the index
■	Lower: Implementation of less than 70% of the measures in the index

Key findings with respect to fidelity of implementation include:

- **Statewide, both teachers and specialists reported moderate to high levels of fidelity of implementation.** On average, teachers reported experiencing 74% of the measures of high quality implementation. Specialists on average reported experiencing 71% of the indicators.
- **Fidelity of implementation varied slightly by district.**³⁰ As can be seen in Figure 10, teachers in nine districts (Appoquinimink, Capital, Colonial, Indian River, Lake Forest, Red Clay; and New Castle, Polytech, and Sussex Technical) with the highest levels of fidelity of implementation reported experiencing an average of over 75% of the measures of high quality implementation. Teachers in five districts (Brandywine, Caesar Rodney, Delmar, Laurel, and Smyrna) with lower levels of fidelity of implementation reported experiencing an average of less than 70% of the measures of high quality implementation. Even the lowest-fidelity districts reported over 65% of the measures of high-quality implementation.

Figure 10. Fidelity of implementation by district, as reported by teachers



We also examined fidelity of implementation at the school level. Notable findings include:

1. **Fidelity of implementation did not vary by school type or poverty level.** Despite slight variation by district, we found no variation in fidelity of implementation between elementary versus middle and secondary schools. We also found no variation in fidelity of implementation by school poverty level as measured by percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch. See Appendix C for details.

³⁰ This map depicts fidelity of implementation responses from our statewide teacher survey. We found similar results for specialists.

2. **Teachers and specialists who reported experiencing higher fidelity of implementation were more likely to provide slightly more positive assessments of DPAS-II.** An increase of 0.25 points in the fidelity of implementation level is correlated with an increase of about 0.22 in the grade (on a 4.0 GPA scale) teachers give DPAS-II.
3. **When DPAS-II was seen as a tool that informs instruction and professional development, fidelity of implementation was higher.** Teachers and specialists who perceived that the underlying purpose of DPAS-II is to inform instruction and professional development, as opposed to driving personnel or accountability decisions, were likely to report higher levels of fidelity of implementation (see Appendix C for details).³¹



Promising Practices in DPAS-II Implementation

In this subsection, we provide implementation findings from Indian River and Colonial school districts, both of which exhibited high levels of fidelity of implementation (see Figure 10).

Although these districts were selected for intensive study before the index was created (see the Data and Methods section for the complete selection criteria), an examination of implementation at these sites provides useful insights concerning:

- Communicating DPAS-II goals and objectives
- Providing feedback to educators
- Providing DPAS-II training and aligned professional development

The findings below demonstrate that perceptions of implementation did vary somewhat by respondent type (most notably between teachers and specialists), but that implementation approaches, broadly speaking, were relatively similar across the two best practice districts. Differences in both implementation approaches and respondent types are noted where applicable.

Communicating DPAS-II Goals and Objectives

Evaluators at best practice sites reported that DPAS-II was a support for professional growth.

Consistent with the survey findings about the importance of beliefs in the underlying purpose of the evaluation system, evidence from the best practice districts suggests that communication about the rationale for DPAS-II is key. School and district administrators in both best practice districts agreed that DPAS-II's primary purpose should be to develop teacher and specialist instructional practices, rather than to hold educators accountable, and that communicating this message would help teachers and specialists be more open to feedback. As one assistant principal noted:

I see [DPAS-II] as a feedback tool and not as much of an accountability tool, because I'm a coach at heart. I'm not out to get anybody. I think that if you asked every teacher [who] I evaluate here, that I err on the side of positive with them...There are times that I've had to give a handful of "expectations"³² on small things, but I think that small things turn into big things. I'm definitely a feedback and coaching person more than anything.

³¹ This correlation is from our regression model of the factors that influence fidelity of implementation and views of DPAS-II. Although the figures display findings for teachers, the results were similar for specialists. See Appendix C for details.

³² According to the DPAS-II Guide Revised for Teachers (2014), "expectations" are specific performances that must be carried out. If expectations for improvement are included at any point in the appraisal cycle, they must be clear and specific and include a description of the evidence the teacher must exhibit/provide. There must also be clear timelines for when the teacher must show evidence of meeting the expectation.

Teachers in the Colonial School District in particular noted that when school and district administrators discussed the overarching goal of professional growth, concerns around the evaluation system eased, making them feel like DPAS-II was not a “gotcha” system.

School and district administrators in best practice sites set clear expectations about DPAS-II at the beginning of the year. While all principals reported using state trainings to build their understanding of DPAS-II, three of the four principals we spoke with extended that training by developing their own communications materials to share with staff. Teachers, in turn, shared that these materials helped them understand what would be expected during observations, and eased concerns around the evaluation system. School and district administrators also made themselves available to teachers to answer any questions about the system; this, too, improved comfort levels among teachers. As one teacher noted,

[The evaluators are] very up-front. They're saying, 'Hey guys, here's what we're looking for and here's what we want to see when we come in your classrooms. This is what we want to see, you guys doing this.' So, and they are very good about letting us know what they want.

Innovative Practice: Creating a School-Wide Report on DPAS-II Strengths and Weaknesses

The principal of one school in Indian River communicated DPAS-II goals and objectives to her teachers at the beginning of the year by pulling together a school-wide report of educators' areas of strengths and weaknesses, based on the prior year's data.

I go through all of the recommendations and expectations and I categorize them...So then I can identify the top three strengths of the school as instructors and then we focus on one thing that is really necessary. And for us it was using assessment in instruction. It was formative assessment.

Creating this birds-eye view, she said, helped her to see trends within the school, focus professional development sessions for her staff, and also communicate the importance of DPAS-II as a formative feedback tool for improving instructional practices.

Providing DPAS-II Feedback to Teachers and Specialists

Teachers and specialists in best practice sites valued detailed, written feedback and conversations with school administrators that could lead to changes in practice. The primary form of communication between evaluators and educators in DPAS-II is the conferencing process, which includes direct observation (either announced or unannounced, formal or informal), written post-observation feedback conferences, and summative conferences at the end of the school year. Teachers and specialists across all focus groups in both best practice sites reported that they valued detailed and actionable feedback because it provided them with a clear picture of what was happening in their classroom and allowed them to make necessary adjustments. Teachers particularly valued when principals linked feedback—both written and oral—to specific next steps so they had explicit strategies to implement in the classroom. Specialists valued feedback as well, although they noted that sometimes their evaluator struggled to provide specific feedback about suggested practice changes in areas unrelated to instruction (for example, feedback for school nurses or school counselors).

Key findings by type of feedback include:

- ***Written Feedback:*** In focus groups, teachers noted that school administrators provided very detailed feedback through written observation notes. Teachers appreciated these specific quotes because it helped them reflect in more depth on specific aspects of the lesson. One principal described her process for providing written feedback as:

I'm very detailed in the process. Rather than saying to a teacher that it's recommended that you use formative assessment in your instruction, I will pull out the one piece of a lesson, and

then tell them exactly what they did in that piece and recommend another way or A, B, or C. I will give them specific ways to implement the formative assessment in their instruction.

- **Oral Feedback:** After providing written feedback, school administrators were able to clarify feedback during conferences. Teachers and specialists, as well as school and district administrators across both best practice districts, believed that conversations during conferences provided educators with an opportunity to reflect on instructional practice, which empowered them as professionals.

Innovative Practice: Conducting Frequent Walk-Throughs Allowed for Immediate, Specific, and Continuous Feedback

In both Colonial and Indian River, administrators conducted a large number of walk-throughs and observations (both formal and informal), although increasing the number of walk-throughs was a particular focus area in Colonial. Since evaluators were in classrooms more often, they could offer feedback on specific changes and then return in a few weeks to follow up and see how effectively that feedback had been implemented. Teachers and specialists valued this approach because they said it held them accountable to making adjustments in instructional practice. As a teacher from Colonial reported:

They're very consistent with it. They see it and they say, "Hey, you need to buck up on this." Then they come back and check on that. And you know they're going to come back and check on that. But you as a teacher, you know when you didn't do it right and you need to fix it.

Training and Professional Development³³

Teachers, specialists, and school and district administrators in best practice sites preferred DPAS-II trainings delivered as a series. A common refrain across all respondent groups in both best practice sites was that they appreciated training sessions that came as a series spaced out over several months, as opposed to a one-time information session. Both in delivering and receiving trainings, teachers, specialists and administrators all said that a series approach allowed them to focus on specific topics, scaffold complicated themes over the course of the year, and avoid becoming overwhelmed by new information. Within respondent groups, novice teachers in particular noted the importance of spacing out trainings to ensure greater understanding of DPAS-II expectations and requirements. For example, a new teacher in the Colonial School District reported that her principal held mandatory trainings on DPAS-II for all new teachers over the summer, and then followed up with trainings throughout the school year to build on that knowledge base.

School and district administrators mentioned that they found DDOE trainings and videos helpful places to start for information on DPAS-II changes and implementation tips. They specifically liked that they could return to these resources whenever a question arose. Several school and district administrators in both Colonial and Indian River also mentioned that they had established relationships with trainers from the Delaware Academy of School Leadership (DASL), including formal training pairings (for example, through the state-funded Development Coaches program) and informal mentorship from experienced master educators. This consistent interaction between coaches and school and district administrators helped to increase understanding of DPAS-II tools and measures, and also guided the creation of district-led training series.

School and district administrators in best practice sites valued district-led trainings on rating and feedback calibration. School and district administrators alike noted that it could be difficult to ensure that DPAS-II written and oral feedback was delivered consistently across all evaluated teachers and specialists in the school or district. They defined consistency as both common expectations around performance

³³ Here, training refers to technical explanations of how DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists works; for example, instruction related to filling out forms, using technology systems, or setting goals for Component V. Professional development, on the other hand, refers to training sessions, coaching, or other contact that educators receive that is specifically aligned to improving instructional practices.

ratings (e.g., what constitutes a “distinguished” rating versus a “proficient” rating), as well as the specificity and style of the feedback. Administrators noted that trainings that set common expectations – or “calibration trainings” as they often called them – greatly helped in this regard. Although calibration trainings took place at both the district and state levels, respondents noted that district-led trainings, both formal and informal, were the most useful when working to calibrate expectations around DPAS-II performance ratings and feedback. Administrators noted that state trainings—such as the DDOE-led summer boot camps—were mainly helpful for informing their own district trainings on calibration.

District-led approaches to calibrations played out differently in Colonial and Indian River, but district administrators in both mentioned that these calibration sessions were extremely important in setting common expectations around DPAS-II. In Colonial, for example, district administrators would conduct classroom walk-throughs or “shorts” alongside principals, and then spend time with principals one-on-one afterwards to talk about what they saw, how to best convey feedback to educators, and which rubric-based rating would be most appropriate. In Indian River, district administrators presented a wealth of examples during principal trainings that helped principals set common expectations around feedback. Then, the district superintendent made it a priority to personally read 20 percent of educator evaluations to ensure consistency across schools and teacher groups.

Innovative Practice: Using Peer-to-Peer Learning to Help Teachers Implement DPAS-II Instructional Feedback

Teachers and school-level administrators in the two best practice districts reported that they looked internally for sources of professional development, including:

- **Peer-to-peer walk-throughs.** Especially in Indian River, teachers and specialists were encouraged to observe peers who had been identified by DPAS-II as strong in areas where they had been rated as weaker. Teachers and specialists—both the observer and the observed—generally appreciated the opportunity to do peer-to-peer walk-throughs. However, teachers said that it was important to check with their peers ahead of time to ensure they would see the most pertinent parts of their peers’ lessons.
- **PLCs and Other Teacher Meetings.** Teachers in both districts also identified professional learning communities and peer meetings as a venue for collaborating around DPAS-II aligned professional development. Explained one teacher, “If you have an idea, if something worked well in your classroom, [our principal] will say over and over again, did you share that with your team?” Specialists in one Indian River school also mentioned that they used monthly meetings to work on the goal-setting aspects of DPAS-II.
- **Lead Teacher Coaching.** Administrators in Colonial described a professional development strategy wherein lead teachers and/or instructional coaches were identified for each grade level, and then would work either individually or in groups with teachers on areas of weakness identified in DPAS-II feedback sessions.

Written Feedback Analysis

As demonstrated in Best Practice site visit findings, teachers and specialists highly valued detailed, actionable feedback from their evaluators. To delve more deeply into what actionable feedback might look like in practice, we examined open-ended survey response data and conducted analyses of teacher artifacts.



Areas of Feedback

Teachers and specialists received feedback on both instructional practices and classroom management. In open-ended survey items, teachers and specialists were asked to provide two topical examples of feedback they received that was both “detailed and actionable.” Their responses fell into two categories:

- **Instructional Practices:** Over half of respondents to this question (n=2,633) reported that evaluators’ feedback addressed teaching strategies or instructional practices. While some of these

respondents shared general feedback they received in areas such as differentiation, technology, assessments, Common Core State Standards alignment, and questioning, others provided specific examples of the feedback they received, such as questioning techniques for students, strategies to encourage critical thinking, and other specific frameworks for encouraging classroom discussion and understanding. One example of a specific, detailed piece of feedback was to “write questions using a ‘Depth of Knowledge’ tool to make sure that questions are higher level.”³⁴

- *Classroom Management*: Additional examples of feedback reported in open-ended survey responses included suggestions about classroom and behavior management. Feedback ranged from more generalized comments such as “[incorporate] more small-group discussions” to the actionable and specific, such as “use sticks with student names to call on students.”

Quality of Feedback

In this section, we present findings from separate analyses of a small sample of written artifacts: principal feedback, teacher professional growth goals, and student assignments. Among the artifacts we collected from Group 1 and Group 2 teachers³⁵ were formative feedback forms that teachers received following formal observations of their classroom practices, including both announced and unannounced observations. Although the analysis of written feedback can point to general trends, we caution that the sample size was small (feedback forms from just 37 teachers), that all feedback forms came from the four best practice site visit schools, and that analysis is preliminary in nature.



The quality of feedback provided to teachers varied by feedback area, school, and teacher experience.

- *General Feedback Quality*: Using literature-based rubrics to rate the area and quality of feedback,³⁶ we found that feedback tended to fall along two dimensions: 1) communication and human resource related issues; and 2) instructional practices. Instructional practices relate to specific observed classroom practices, areas for improvement, and specific recommendations for improvement; human resources focuses on communication – the feedback language is aligned to the rating, comments are directed at teachers, and feedback clearly delineates strengths from weaknesses. 80% of principal feedback reflected a focus on human resource management issues and 55% of principal feedback focused on instructional practices.³⁷ On this first dimension, we found that evaluators generally were able to provide specific and actionable feedback to teachers that was written in a clear and objective manner. With regard to instructional practices, despite a number of good examples of high quality feedback, we found that evaluators in best practice sites sometimes struggled to highlight teachers’ strengths and weaknesses and develop concrete recommendations for improvement as well as strategies that could lead to such improvement.

³⁴ Depth of Knowledge tool generally refers to the tool developed by Webb, N. (2005). See: http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/M1-Slide_19_DOK_Wheel_Slide.pdf

³⁵ Note: We did not collect artifacts from specialists. See Appendix D for detailed analysis of artifacts.

³⁶ We used the literature on artifact quality to develop rubrics to measure the quality of principal feedback, teachers’ professional growth goals, and the quality of student assignments. Principal feedback quality was rated based on the following ten factors: 1) Directed at the task/practice/goal and not the teacher, 2) Language aligns with rating, 3) Based solely on observation, 4) Refers to specific events in classroom, 5) Focuses on actions and not justifications for actions, 6) Addresses actionable behavior and provides concrete recommendation for improvement, 7) Separates good from bad, 8) Compares/connects between actual and desired outcome, 9) Is corrective – i.e., issues are brought up with corrections, and 10) Provides constructive criticism rather than affirmations and encouragement. Teachers’ professional growth goals were evaluated based on the following nine criteria: 1) Articulates skill areas to improve upon, 2) Professional goals are clear, 3) Evaluates current knowledge and skill levels, 4) Identifies steps for reaching goal, 5) Specifies required actions, 6) Identifies obstacles, 7) Identifies measurable benchmarks, 8) Provides time line for each action step, and 9) Has general PD request.

³⁷ These two percentages add up to more than 100% because principal feedback artifacts may include both human resource components and instructional components.

- *Variation in Feedback Quality*: Overall, our analyses noted differences in feedback quality, with some evidence suggesting that the quality of feedback varies by school and type of teacher. More effective teachers³⁸ tended to get poorer feedback; novice teachers also received poorer overall instructional feedback.



Exemplars of high quality feedback demonstrate best practices in providing detailed, actionable feedback to teachers. Our analyses of feedback quality enabled us to identify a number of examples that illustrate detailed and actionable feedback. Two examples from Group 1 and Group 2 teachers are provided below.³⁹

Feedback Example 1: Detailed and Specific Accounting of Classroom Practices

Background: Formal feedback following an unannounced observation of a 3rd grade novice reading teacher. Observation was conducted early in the year.

Sample Text: At times Ms. X would pause to assess to see if she had 100% in. She would then chime in reading again and at times the students were in different places, which resulted in some students pausing, finding the place where Ms. X was reading and then chiming in. After reading a portion of the book the students watched a video showing how immigrants arrive in Ellis Island. While the students watched the video Ms. X narrated what she noticed. There was no closure to this portion of the lesson. Students were called to the carpet to transition into pairs. In pairs, students utilize 6 Minute Solution to practice oral reading fluency. All of the students had the same passage. One student read aloud and the other student tracked the reader. Many students struggled reading the passage. After one minute, the students placed a double line, counted the words read per minute and subtracted the errors. The pair then swapped roles. To close this lesson Ms. X asked, "What is our purpose for doing this?" The students were transitioned into groups for centers. Ms. X orally communicated each student group. While in centers, students completed the same activity, reading a passage and answering questions. The questions were not directly connected to the LEQ nor did Ms. X orally connect the activity to the LEQ.

Feedback Example 2: Linking Actionable Feedback to Specific DPAS-II Criteria

Background: Written feedback following an announced formal observation of a novice middle school science teacher.

Sample Text: As evidenced in 3a. "Engaging Students in Learning." and 3d. "Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques" it is recommended that you use instructional strategies that require higher order thinking skills. As we discussed in the post-conference, you not only gave students recall questions to answer as they read, but you told them exactly where to find the answers. When giving students an important text to read, determine your purpose first and then provide an appropriate graphic organizer and/or require the use of an effective reading strategy that promotes deeper understanding of the text. If there are only a few things you need students to recall from a text, then maybe reconsider making it the main learning activity and use a strategy where they read for the gist, share out, and move on.

Suggestions for Improved Implementation of DPAS-II

Teachers, specialists, and administrators had many suggestions for improving the implementation of DPAS- II for Teachers and Specialists. In Table 9, we detail the most commonly mentioned suggestions across our three data sources. As shown below, suggestions focused on requested training for both educators and their evaluators, as well as specific suggestions around ways to make the evaluation process more reflective of teachers' and specialists' instructional practices and job responsibilities.

³⁸ Based on principal assessments of effectiveness.

³⁹ Note: All teacher names have been redacted from reports in formative feedback forms. Additionally, in several areas, we have redacted information that could lead to identification of teachers in order to protect teacher confidentiality.

Table 9. Educator and administrator suggestions for improved implementation of DPAS-11 for Teachers and Specialists

	Suggestion	Source			
		Survey	Open-Ended	Site Visit	
	Allow/encourage higher ratings for teachers at the criterion and/or component level		✓		Note: While DPAS-II provides rating guidelines and rubrics, the ratings themselves are at the discretion of the evaluator.
Supportive Quotation: <i>Train the administrators on how to provide feedback, good or bad. I'm so tired of hearing 'good, keep doing what you're doing.' I know I'm not perfect, but I need someone who can OBSERVE what's happening to provide me with concrete ways that I can improve my teaching.</i>	Provide more training for teachers and specialists on the alignment of DPAS-II to Common Core State Standards, goal-setting, components of DPAS-II	✓	✓	✓	Note: The Department trained 300+ administrators on goal-setting during summer 2015. Additional goal-setting training for educators will be held throughout the 2015-16 school year.
	Provide more training for evaluators on writing improvement plans, providing actionable feedback, providing consistent feedback	✓	✓	✓	
Supportive Quotation: <i>Short quick observations repeated on a random basis are the best way for evaluators to see the real teaching that is happening. No chance of a dog and pony show.</i>	Conduct more walk-throughs and/or observations of teachers and specialists		✓	✓	Note: Districts have the flexibility to conduct more frequent (more than the required number) observations. Also, districts may apply for a DPAS-II waiver that would expressly allow for additional observations.
	Assign evaluators based on teacher/specialist content expertise and/or job descriptions		✓		Note: While such assignments are permitted under the DPAS-II system, survey responses indicated that this practice is not uniformly followed.
	Allow teachers and specialists to set goals using subject, grade, or industry standards	✓	✓	✓	

IV. Evaluation Goal 3: Influence of DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists on Practice

How has DPAS-II influenced teacher and specialist practice changes and school culture?



→ Direction of Influence

In this section, we refer to two sources of data that examine the influence of DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists on changes in teacher and specialist practice and school culture: our statewide survey and qualitative interviews and focus groups from best practice site visit districts. We first provide findings related to reported changes in teacher and specialist practices as a result of DPAS-II (for example, changes in instructional techniques or time spent on instruction in relation to other activities). We then provide findings related to school culture, which we define as respondents’ views of the quality of their workplace and teacher and specialist retention.

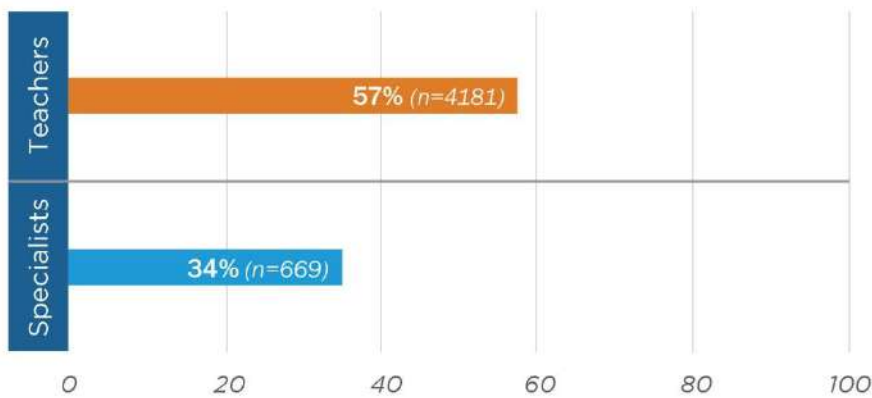
The Influence of DPAS-II on Teacher and Specialist Practices

Below, we examine the influence of DPAS-II on changes in teachers’ and specialists’ professional practice. Because we do not have indicators of the type of changes in practice, reported changes due to feedback from DPAS-II could be viewed as either positive or negative. For example, open-ended survey responses suggest that some teachers improved their practice due to DPAS-II; others indicated that DPAS-II requirements served as a distraction from their instructional responsibilities.



Nearly 60% of teachers responding to the survey reported that they changed their practices based on feedback from DPAS-II on at least one occasion during the past year; the percentage is far lower for specialists (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Percentage of teachers and specialists who reported changes in practice in response to DPAS-II



This divergence in reported changes in practice might be partially explained by the following finding from qualitative site visit data: When asked specifically about improvements to their instructional practices, both teachers and specialists overwhelmingly reported that they were more likely to improve when they received feedback that could be easily applied to their daily instructional activities; however, specialists in particular noted that general misalignment of DPAS-II with their job responsibilities made it difficult for them to consistently apply feedback resulting from DPAS-II. Said one specialist:

DPAS-II with their job responsibilities made it difficult for them to consistently apply feedback resulting from DPAS-II. Said one specialist:

I almost feel like we set the goals down, and that's very nice, but you're going to go off and do your job. It doesn't help me to reflect on my ability and what I need to do to improve. These documents don't do that at all.



Reported practice changes were related to higher levels of fidelity of implementation.

To examine the relationship between high levels of fidelity of implementation of DPAS-II (described in the index in Section 2) on reported changes in practice, we estimated a multivariate regression that controlled for a variety of measures⁴⁰ (see Appendix C for a full list of controls and discussion of the methods). We found that increased fidelity of implementation was associated with increased reports of changes in teacher and specialist practice during the 2014-15 school year. When we ran the same test of the relationship between teachers' and specialists' overall views of DPAS-II (i.e., the grade they gave the system), we found that these views were not associated with reported changes in practice.

Table 10 includes the five factors with the strongest effect on changes in practice.

⁴⁰ Teacher's views of DPAS-II as a tool that improved instruction and informed professional development, views of DPAS-II as an effective tool to measure instruction, positive views of teacher efficacy, school culture, teaching experience, and other controls.

Table 10. Factors that influence the probability that teachers change practice based on DPAS-11 input

Strongest Factors	How Much Does Describing Changes Increase/ Decrease with Each Factor	Interpretation
Teachers' Beliefs about DPAS-II		
<p>1. Belief that DPAS-II Improves Practice <i>Effect of belief that DPAS-II does not improve practice versus very much/somewhat improves practice</i></p>	+22%	Teachers are more likely to change practice if they believe that DPAS-II improves practice. 72% of average teachers who believe that DPAS-II improves practice also report changing their practice at least once a year based on DPAS-II input. In contrast, 50% of teachers who believe that DPAS-II does not improve practice report changing their practice at least once a year based on DPAS-II input.
<p>2. Belief that DPAS-II Informs PD <i>Effect of belief that DPAS-II does not inform PD versus very much/somewhat informs PD</i></p>	+16%	Teachers are more likely to change practice if they believe that DPAS-II informs professional development. 69% of average teachers who believe that DPAS-II informs professional development also report changing their practice at least once a year based on DPAS-II input. In contrast, 53% of average teachers who believe that DPAS-II does not inform professional development report changing their practice at least once a year based on DPAS-II input.
<p>3. Belief that School is a Good Place to Work <i>Effect of belief that one's school is not a good place to work versus the school is a good place to work</i></p>	+11%	Teachers are more likely to change practice if they believe their school is a good place to work. 64% of average teachers who believe their school is a good place to work report changing their practice at least once a year based on DPAS-II input. In contrast, 53% of teachers who believe their school is not a good place to work report changing their practice at least once a year based on DPAS-II input.
Implementation of DPAS-II for Teachers		
<p>4. Fidelity of Implementation <i>Effect of a lower FOI versus a higher FOI</i></p>	+4%	Teachers are more likely to change practice if they experience higher fidelity of implementation (FOI). 62% of average teachers who experience higher FOI (.75) report changing their practice at least once a year based on DPAS-II input. In contrast, 58% of teachers who experience lower FOI (.65) report changing their practice at least once a year based on DPAS-II input.
Teacher Characteristics		
<p>5. Total Years of Experience <i>Effect of 1 versus 10 years of experience</i></p>	-8%	More experienced teachers are less likely to change practice based on DPAS-II input. For example, 65% of average teachers with 10 years of experience report changing their practice at least once a year based on DPAS-II input. In contrast, 73% of average teachers with one year of experience report changing their practice at least once a year based on DPAS-II input.

Notably, fidelity of implementation had a higher effect for specialists than teachers. For example, if a group of teachers changed their FOI from lower to higher, the percentage reporting changes in practice would rise from 58% to 62%. If a group of specialists changed their FOI from lower to higher, the percentage who would change their practice would rise from 24% to 31%. All other factors had a similar effect for both teachers and specialists (see Appendix C).

Last, we examined which components of higher ratings on the FOI index for teachers were correlated with changes in instructional practice based on feedback from DPAS-II. We found that having mutually established goals, providing expectations designed to improve specific aspects of instruction, and providing specific and actionable feedback all had positive effects on reported changes in practice. Details of this additional analysis can be found in Appendix C.



Best practice data show that the DPAS-II observation process led teachers and specialists to prepare more carefully for lessons. Qualitative site visit data can help explain, in part, the FOI analyses above. Teachers and administrators both reported that DPAS-II observation requirements – specifically the unannounced observations and short walk-throughs – motivated teachers to plan lessons more carefully so they could ensure better evaluation scores. A teacher in a non-tested subject said:

You never know when they're coming for a short or unannounced, so it kind of keeps you on your 'Ps and Qs' because you have to be ready at any time for them to see what you're doing, so I'll say that's how it's helped me. I'm more aware that I have to be ready. Even when I'm [making copies], I'm making sure I have every single thing that I need and everything's ready.

One veteran teacher used the same metaphor when describing how high fidelity to DPAS-II requirements kept her from becoming complacent about her position:

It's real easy to get complacent. I even found myself in a nice, little rut. I had been teaching the same thing for long enough, I could just pull it out; didn't take a whole lot of effort. You have to stay on your toes. The time of the teacher that just kind of gets complacent and lives out their life and "my 30 years is up, out I go," you can't do that anymore. And so, I think this process does keep that from happening.

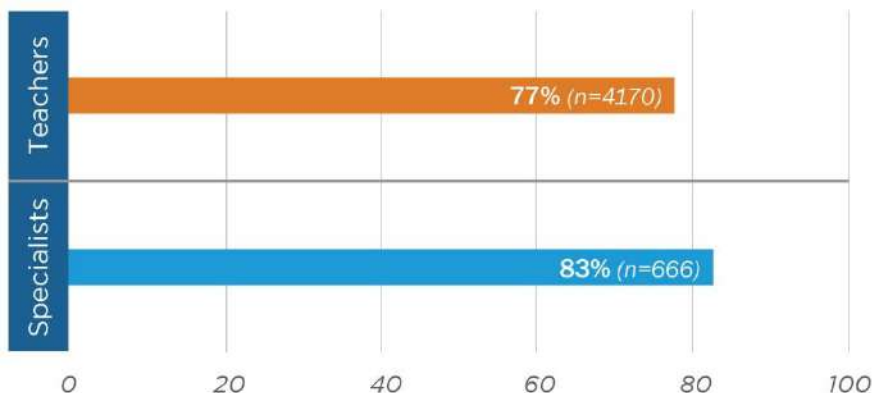
School Culture

In this section, we analyze outcomes at the school level, particularly how DPAS-II might be associated with survey respondents' views about school culture. For the purposes of this study, we define school culture as both workplace satisfaction and likelihood to remain in one's position as a teacher or specialist.



Large majorities of both teachers and specialists believe that their school is a good place to work. In the statewide survey of teachers and specialists, 77% of teachers (n=4,170) and 83% of specialists (n=666) agreed or strongly agreed that, overall, their school was a good place to work (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Percentage of teachers and specialists who view their school as a good place to work





For teachers, high levels of DPAS-II FOI and positive views of DPAS-II were associated with more positive views of the workplace.

In Table 11, we describe the three factors that have the strongest effect on views of the workplace for teachers: DPAS-II GPA grade, fidelity of implementation, and percentage of low income students.

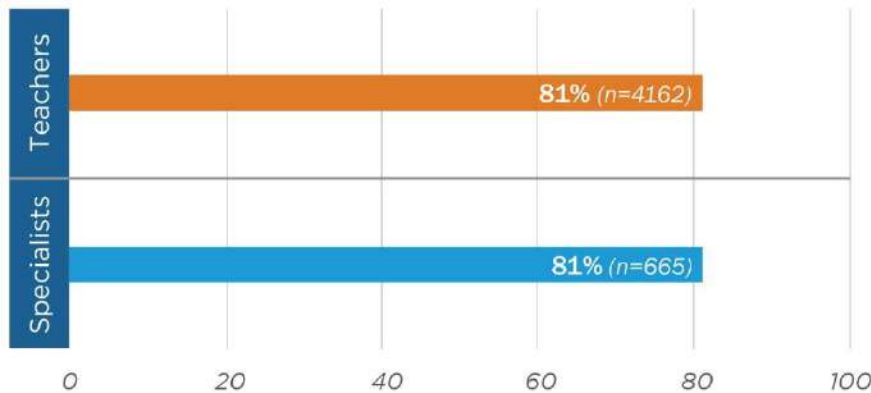
Table 11. Strongest factors that influence teachers' views of school being a good place to work

Strongest Factors	How Much Do Views of the Workplace Increase/ Decrease with Each Factor	Interpretation
Implementation of DPAS-II for Teachers		
<p>1. Fidelity of Implementation Effect of a lower FOI versus a higher FOI</p>	+8%	Teachers are more likely to have a positive view of the workplace if they experience high levels of FOI. 87% of average teachers who experience high FOI (.75) report positive views of the work place. In contrast, 79% of average teachers who experience low FOI(.65) report positive views of the workplace.
Teachers' Beliefs about DPAS-II		
<p>2. Graded GPA of DPAS-II Effect of a GPA of C versus B</p>	+4%	Teachers are more likely to have a positive view of their work place if they have a positive view of DPAS-II. 88% of average teachers who gives a DPAS-II a grade of a C are likely to report a positive view of the workplace. In contrast, 92% of average teachers who give a DPAS-II a grade of a B are likely to report a positive view of the workplace.
School Characteristics		
<p>3. Effect of the Percent of FRL Students at a School Effect of 25% of students eligible for FRL versus 75%</p>	-6%	Teachers are more likely to have a negative view of the workplace if they work in schools with higher levels of student poverty. 85% of teachers who work in schools where 75% of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch report that their school is a good place to work. In contrast, 91% of teachers who work in schools where only 25% of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch report that their school is a good place to work.



Over 80% of teachers and specialists plan to continue working as teachers or specialists as long as they are able. In the survey of teachers and specialists, about 81% of teachers and 81% of specialists agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to continue working as educators as long as they are able (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Percentage of teachers and specialists who would like to continue working as long as they are able



For teachers and specialists, more positive views of DPAS-II were associated with a desire to continue working in education as long as possible. However the magnitude of this association is small.



Teachers and specialists at best practice sites did not believe that DPAS-II impacted teacher retention; administrators noted a potential weak connection between Component V and teacher attrition. Although the survey analysis found a slight association between views of DPAS-II and interest in continuing to work as an educator, data from the best practice sites did not support this finding. Teachers and specialists did not feel that the ratings they received through the system motivated them to either remain in their positions or leave their particular school or the profession as a whole. These educators generally felt that other factors, such as school culture, more directly impacted teacher retention. As one teacher noted:

I think that the culture itself keeps people here...very few people ask to be transferred elsewhere, and...when they do, there's usually a good reason for it. But I really haven't seen a lot of turnover since I've been here.

Two of the four principals we interviewed did suggest, however, that one or two teachers in their schools may have left because of general frustrations around increased paperwork related to their profession, which could include DPAS-II requirements. At the district level, one official observed a general trend of teachers leaving the profession and retiring early, which was attributed to a multitude of factors, DPAS-II possibly among them:

We've had more retirees than in any other year this year. I have people leaving the teaching profession, which isn't always a bad thing. Some turnover is good. But some teachers are just tired of seeing the changes. I think it's everything—sometimes the cumbersome evaluation process, the state testing, the Common Core.

The discrepancy between the survey analyses and best practice district data may be due to potential higher levels of satisfaction in best practice sites.

V. Summary of Recommendations

Our study yielded a rich set of suggestions for improvement of the DPAS-II system. In this section, we align those suggestions to our findings on the four underlying drivers of overall DPAS-II perceptions. For each area, we provide practical recommendations that might make those suggestions actionable for the Delaware Department of Education, districts, and schools.

Driver #1: Views about the Purpose of DPAS-II

Evidence: Our survey revealed that viewing DPAS-II as a tool for improving practice or informing professional development had the strongest association with favorable views of the policy, and were also associated with a range of other promising results, including greater fidelity of implementation and more frequent reports of changes in instructional practice. In best practice districts, teachers and specialists highlighted the importance of communicating that DPAS-II was a support for professional growth.

Perceptions that DPAS-II is a tool for improving practice and informing professional development could be increased by the following:

Recommendation: Conduct more frequent observations of educators. In open-ended survey responses, teachers and specialists statewide suggested that their evaluators conduct more observations of their practices, and in some cases, specifically mentioned that more frequent observations would help give them the tools they needed to improve their practices.

Note: Districts have the flexibility to conduct more frequent (more than the required number) observations. Also, districts may apply for a DPAS-II waiver that would expressly allow for additional observations.

Recommendation: Communicate the purpose of DPAS-II as a tool for instructional practice improvement. Consistent messaging about the purpose of DPAS-II is important. At the state level, this communication can occur through written guidelines and training documents about DPAS-II, or could be communicated explicitly by statewide coaches, for example the DASL Development Coaches. At the district and school levels, this communication may take the form of formal trainings, or it could be communicated in one-on-one feedback sessions with educators.

Driver #2: School Culture

Evidence: Teachers and specialists were highly likely to perceive their schools as good places to work, regardless of their ratings of DPAS-II. However, the higher teachers and specialists rated DPAS-II, the more likely they were to perceive their schools as good places to work. Additionally, survey results showed a strong majority of teachers and specialists said that they would like to continue working as educators as long as they are able; this view was in turn associated with more positive views of DPAS-II overall (see Figure 11).

Although we recognize that school culture is multi-faceted, we provide two recommendations that could help foster trust and understanding among educators and their evaluators in the context of DPAS-II.

Recommendation: Provide training to evaluators on importance of objective, positive, formative feedback to educators. Educators at best practice schools generally expressed high levels of trust in their evaluators, as well as high levels of school culture overall. However, some open-ended survey respondents suggested evaluator bias during the rating process, which led to the suggestion that the pool of evaluators be diversified (see Table 9). To ensure a fair evaluation process that enhances school culture, trainings for evaluators can focus on providing objective, formative feedback that encourages teachers and specialists to build upon their existing instructional practices.

Recommendation: Assign evaluators based on specific areas of educator expertise.

One suggestion from open-ended survey respondents that could speak to improving school culture was to assign evaluators to teachers and specialists based on their content, grade-level, and/or job descriptions. Doing so, they suggested, would help make teachers and specialists—but especially specialists—feel as though their expertise was truly understood and valued during the evaluation process. At the state level, aligning evaluators to areas of instructional or job expertise might involve a policy change to allow for content-specific evaluators for key specialist areas (e.g., school counseling, nursing, etc.). At the school level, it could be as simple as ensuring that evaluators receive explicit training in evaluating specific grade levels, subject areas, or specialist positions that are outside of their own areas of expertise.

Note: While such assignments are permitted, survey responses indicated that this practice is not uniformly followed.

2013 regulatory changes permit districts to credential educators' peers to serve as classroom observers.

Driver #3: Understanding of DPAS-II

Evidence: Through the statewide survey, teachers and specialists reported that they generally understood DPAS-II, but were confused about recent policy refinements and especially Component V. In our multivariate analysis, we found understanding was positively associated with more favorable views about DPAS-II. Below, we provide some recommendations designed to increase understanding.

Recommendation: Provide trainings on DPAS-II as a series. In best practice sites, teachers, specialists, and administrators all noted that they preferred trainings delivered as a series, as opposed to a one-time information session. In response, state “boot camp” and district-led trainings could be sequenced more evenly, to ensure teachers, specialists, and administrators receive consistent, ongoing information about the evaluation system.

Recommendation: Provide training on DPAS-II in specific requested areas. Teachers and specialists across the data sources noted they would like more training on, among other areas, the alignment of DPAS-II to the Common Core State Standards, goal-setting for Component V, and achieving a “highly effective” rating. Administrators said they would like training on writing improvement plans, providing actionable feedback, and providing consistent feedback. State and district support for targeted professional development in these areas could further improve levels of understanding.

Driver #4: Opinions about Component V

Evidence: The fourth major determinant of respondents’ overall views about DPAS-II were related to negative views of Component V. Respondents across the data sources lamented the many aspects of Component V that they felt were difficult to understand, unfair, or poorly implemented. Although many teachers, specialists, and administrators across the various data sources suggested eliminating or overhauling Component V, we provide recommendations that could be accomplished without major statutory or regulatory changes.

Recommendation: Provide targeted training on Component V goal-setting process. Teachers, specialists, and administrators in best practice districts worried that Component V failed to reward and in many cases, actually punished, teachers who set high, rigorous standards for students (see Perception Finding on fairness). Echoing a

Note: The Department trained 300+ administrators on goal-setting during summer 2015.

Additional goal-setting training for educators will be held throughout the 2015-16 school year.

portion of the recommendation above, the state and districts could provide additional training on how to set goals that are both rigorous and realistic for both teachers and specialists. These trainings might

be enhanced by providing exemplars of high quality goals in specific subject areas, grade levels, and/or specialty areas.

Recommendation: Improve quality of Component V assessments. In best practice site visits, respondents expressed concerns that Measure B assessments were not of sufficiently high quality. In open-ended responses, many respondents suggested that Component V be eliminated (see Table 9), with some of those responses due to frustration over the quality of the assessments themselves. To address these concerns, the state and districts could consider reexamining the assessments used to satisfy Component V, specifically the applicability and quality of assessment items, the timing of the pre- and post-tests to measure student growth, and the grading of the assessments.

Discussion

The recommendations above range from the broad (e.g., messaging around the purpose of DPAS-II) to the specific (e.g., providing training for administrators on writing improvement plans). They likewise span practices that could be implemented in short order, without enabling policy, and actions requiring longer-term reforms. The common thread through all of them, however, is that teachers, specialists, and administrators alike understand that DPAS-II is continuously evolving, and they actively want to be a part of this process. One frequent request in open-ended survey responses was that the Department open their doors to educators and administrators in a more concerted way. The Department already has a number of structures in place to collaborate with Delaware practitioners; our research makes clear that practitioners actively want to use these channels, and establish new ones, to further engage on DPAS-II improvements.

At the same time, respondents do caution that they are often confused by what they perceive as constant tweaks to the system. Coupled with the request that educators be involved in conversations about DPAS-II refinements is a desire for more explicit explanations of these refinements. These explanations, be they delivered through trainings, coaching, written documents, and/or other mechanisms, are essential to practitioners as they continue the work of DPAS-II implementation.



Delaware Performance Appraisal System Second Edition (DPAS-II)

Brief II: DPAS-II for Administrators

Prepared by Research for Action
November 2015

I. Introduction

In addition to DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists, the Delaware Department of Education created a DPAS-II for Administrators.⁴¹ In 2011, Regulation 108A created four separate systems for superintendents, other district-level leaders, principals, and assistant principals. Although all administrators are required to have a summative annual evaluation, the details vary. Table 1 outlines the components and status of each evaluation.

Table 1. Evaluation system details of DPAS-II for Administrators

Administrator Group	Evaluation Details	Status
School Principal	Ratings for five main components, criteria level ratings with rubric for aggregation to summative rating	Fully operational for 2014-15 school year
School Assistant Principal	Component level ratings only. Principals may opt to use some of the criteria from principal evaluations to guide their evaluations of assistant principals.	Criteria-level ratings and rubric expected for 2015-16 school year
District Leader/ Administrator	Component level ratings only	Criteria-level ratings and rubric expected for 2015-16 school year
District Superintendent	Component level ratings only	Date TBD for criteria-level ratings and rubric

As shown in Table 1, DPAS-II for Administrators remains a work in progress, with new tools and rubrics planned over the next few years. We therefore caution that the findings in this brief may reflect the fact that many administrators are still learning about the specific ways in which they are evaluated, and that evaluations for non-principal administrators, in particular, likely vary widely across districts.

⁴¹ Administrators evaluated under DPAS-II for Administrators include all licensed and certified administrators who oversee instruction. The system does apply to those who supervise non-instructional aspects of school and district operations including, but not limited to, transportation, maintenance, finance, nutrition, discipline, and personnel.

Data and Methods

Our findings build on data from the statewide survey of administrators of all four types as detailed in Table 1 as well as findings from best practice site visit interviews with district and school administrators. Table 2 details the data collected for this analysis.

Table 2. Data collection by administrator group⁴²

Administrator Group	Survey Response Rate	Total Qualitative Interviews Conducted
School Principal	69% (141/205)	4
School Assistant Principal	72% (186/260)	4
District Leader/ Administrator	48% (97/203)	5
Superintendent	39% (9/23)	1
Total	63% (433/691)	14

The analysis strategy for evaluating DPAS-II for Administrators was the same as for DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists: Researchers conducted in-depth, mixed methods analyses.

Quantitative Analyses: We ran descriptive statistics of the administrator survey and employed an index of fidelity of implementation to describe DPAS-II implementation by district and school characteristics. Additionally, we conducted multivariate analyses to examine administrators' overall understanding and views of DPAS-II for Administrators, views on utility/fairness, implementation, and reported practice changes.

The principal evaluation system was fully functional in 2014-15 while the system for other administrators is still under development. Because of this, we hypothesized that views of DPAS-II, fidelity of implementation, and outcomes might differ notably between principals and other administrators. To test this, we examined differences between principal and other administrator responses, noting statistically significant differences where applicable.⁴³

Qualitative Analyses: To analyze interview data from school and district administrators, we created a set of qualitative codes and used Atlas.ti7 to analyze emerging trends in the data. Additionally, we coded open-ended responses from the statewide survey of administrators. All qualitative analyses held confidential the names of respondents and schools; no identifiers are provided in this report.

No artifact analyses were conducted related to DPAS-II for Administrators.

Findings Summary

Administrators' overall perceptions of DPAS-II for Administrators varied significantly. Our analysis suggests two underlying drivers for this variation, both of which are notably similar to those for DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists.

⁴² The administrator survey asked respondents to input their own titles. The "District Leader" category here represents a conglomeration of various district leadership positions, and includes all respondents who did not list themselves as a principal, assistant principal, or superintendent.

⁴³ We found no statistically significant difference between principals and other administrators in overall views of DPAS-II for Administrators, level of understanding of DPAS-II for Administrators, views of fairness of DPAS-II for Administrators, views of the district as a good place to work, or in their desire to continue working as administrators. We did find statistically significant differences in the index of implementation, the percentage who received specific and actionable feedback, and in the percentage who changed their practice due to feedback from DPAS-II for Administrators (see Appendix G for details).

In general, administrators were more likely to view their evaluation system in a favorable light if they:

1. Believed that the purpose of DPAS-II for Administrators is to improve leadership practices and inform professional development as opposed to administrators who believed that DPAS-II is an accountability lever.
2. Reported that DPAS-II for Administrators had a positive effect on school or district culture.⁴⁴

Beyond these similarities to the findings for teachers and specialists, key differences emerged. For example, administrators' level of understanding of their evaluation system, fidelity of its implementation, and opinions about Component V were not drivers of administrators' overall perceptions of DPAS-II for Administrators.

Below, we provide findings for DPAS-II for Administrators that are organized along the same evaluation goals as those for Teachers and Specialists.

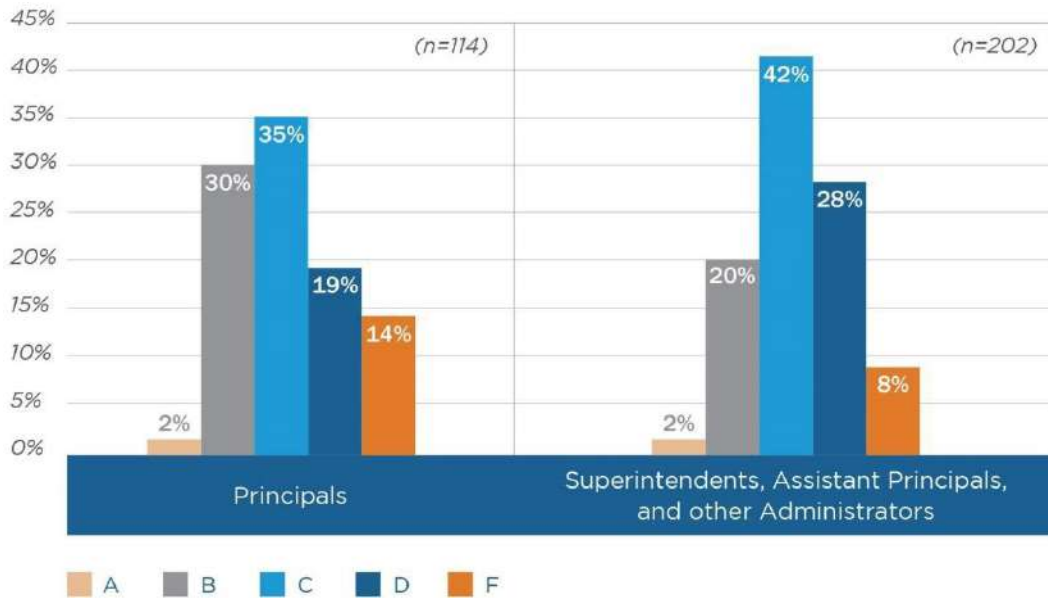
⁴⁴ We look at three measures of school culture: (1) a question that asks if DPAS-II for Administrators had a positive or negative effect on school culture; (2) a workplace satisfaction question; and (3) a question that asks administrators if they wish to stay in their job as long as possible. These findings pertain to the first measure.

Table 3. Research questions and key findings for DPAS-11 for Administrators

Goal 1	Research Question	Key Findings
	Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrators expressed a strong understanding of their evaluation system.
	Perceptions of Utility and Fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All administrator groups had more positive views of Components I-III than they did of Components IV or V. Principals had higher views of Components I-IV than other administrators. District administrators in best practice sites found DPAS-II for principals to be useful as a coaching model. Administrators reported more positive views on the fairness of DPAS-II for Administrators than did teachers and specialists about their evaluation system.
Goal 2	Research Question	Key Findings
	Fidelity of Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fidelity of implementation, as reported by principals and other administrators, varied across districts. Eleven districts reported higher, three reported medium, and five reported lower fidelity of implementation. Principals reported higher fidelity of implementation in their districts than did other administrators (including district administrators and assistant principals). This is likely due to the fact that principals have more defined expectations in the DPAS-II for Administrators process than do their peers due to the tiered roll-out of the DPAS-II for Administrators system. Administrators who reported higher fidelity of implementation also tended to have more positive views of DPAS-II. (Higher fidelity of implementation was correlated with more positive views of DPAS-II for Administrators.) Administrators who believed that DPAS-II improves leadership practices and informs professional development experienced higher fidelity of implementation, which was associated with more positive views of DPAS-II for Administrators. A majority of administrators (75% of principals and 62% of other administrators) reported that they received specific and actionable feedback as part of their evaluation
	Promising Practices	<p>Promising practices in implementation of DPAS-II for Administrators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was constant communication between school administrators and district leaders/supervisors about expectations, progress toward goals. Administrators appreciated specific and frequent feedback about performance. Professional development for principals and other school administrators varied between the site visit districts; both Colonial and Indian River noted that professional development was only somewhat linked to DPAS-II for Administrators.
Goal 3	Research Question	Key Findings
	Influence on Leadership Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nearly half of principals and 36% of other administrators reported changing their practices as a result of DPAS-II. Administrators who had higher fidelity of implementation were more likely to report changes in practice. Moreover, differences in fidelity of implementation accounted for the differences in reported changes in practice between principals and other administrators.
	Influence on School Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrators who experienced higher levels of fidelity of implementation reported that they felt positively about their LEA/district even if they had negative perceptions of DPAS-II for Administrators overall. For both principals and other administrators, positive perceptions of DPAS-II for Administrators had a slight, positive association with administrator reports that they would like to continue working as administrators.

As with teachers and specialists, we asked administrators to grade their evaluation system on an A-F grading scale. The distribution of these grades for the 2014-15 school year is shown in Figure 1, below. In the figure, we also break out grades for principals – the only administrators with a fully implemented DPAS-II system for the 2014-15 school year – from all other types of administrators.

Figure 1. Administrators’ overall views of DPAS-II for Administrators



Below, we provide findings for DPAS-II for Administrators organized along the same three evaluation goals as those for Teachers and Specialists. Unless otherwise noted, findings at the administrator level were applicable to all four types of administrators detailed in Table 1, with no statistically significant differences of note among administrator type.

II. Evaluation Goal 1: Understanding of DPAS-II for Administrators and Perceptions of Utility and Fairness

Below, we provide evidence from the statewide survey of administrators and best practice site visits on the degree to which administrators reported that they understood their evaluation system. We also report on general perceptions of DPAS-II for Administrators and specific views with respect to utility and fairness.

Understanding of DPAS-II for Administrators



Overall, administrators expressed a strong understanding of their evaluation system.

Nearly all administrators (96%, n=336) reported understanding DPAS-II for Administrators, with over half (55%, n=336) indicating they “very much” understood how they were evaluated, 8% higher than the corresponding figure for teachers and their evaluation system. There were no statistically significant differences in levels of understanding of DPAS-II for Administrators among different types of administrators. Perhaps due to their heightened understanding of DPAS-II, administrators were more aware of the five recent and proposed changes to DPAS-II (see Appendix B). Ninety-seven percent of administrators knew of at least one of these changes and 56% knew of all five changes (n=301). This is notably higher than corresponding teacher and specialist responses.



These survey findings were buttressed by examples of training sessions in both best practice districts designed to enhance understanding of DPAS-II for Administrators:

- **Indian River:** Spent an entire year of dedicated professional development time (using Professional Learning Communities) to explaining the DPAS-II evaluation system, including both DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists and DPAS-II for Administrators.
- **Colonial:** Principals reported that they held weekly one-on-one meetings with their supervisors throughout the school year to help them better understand their evaluation system and attendant expectations.

General Changes in Perceptions of DPAS-II for Administrators



Administrators on the whole had more positive perceptions of their evaluation system if they held certain views about the purpose of the system and school/district culture.

We used multivariate regression to examine the relative influence of different factors on views of DPAS-II for Administrators. Figure 2 illustrates these views in terms of grade points (on a 4.0 scale), controlling for a range of school, teacher, and student characteristics. For instance, as shown in the first bar in Figure 2, administrators who responded that DPAS-II for Administrators improved leadership practices either “somewhat” or “very much” graded their evaluation system 0.8 grade points—almost a full letter grade—higher than did administrators who stated that DPAS-II “does not” improve leadership practice.

Figure 2. Multivariate analysis of relative effects of factors on overall perceptions of DPAS-II for Administrators



(Refer to Appendix C for a description of the statistical model used to generate this table and the full set of results.)

Other key findings include:

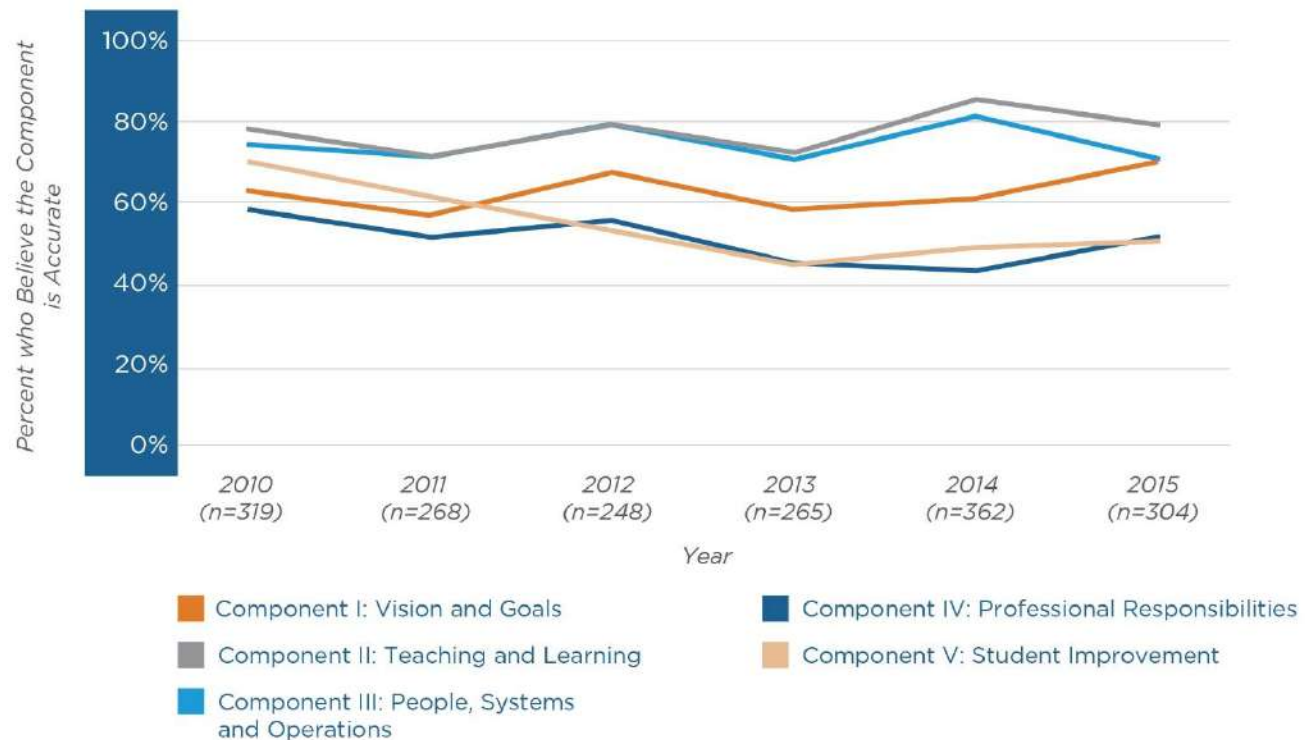
- Respondents who saw DPAS-II for Administrators as a tool to inform professional development gave their evaluation system a higher grade (0.4 higher rating of the system on a 4.0 GPA scale).
- Views that DPAS-II for Administrators has had a positive influence on school/district culture (defined as workplace satisfaction) were correlated with higher ratings of the evaluation system.

Unlike teachers and specialists, administrators’ ratings of Component V had no significant effect on their overall grade of DPAS-II for Administrators. This finding was consistent across all four types of administrators.

Perceptions of DPAS-II Utility

Administrators valued Components I, II, and III over Components IV and V. Over the past six years, administrators have been asked to indicate which specific components of their evaluation system are accurate measures of performance. Figure 3 presents these results for administrators as a whole, as there were no statistically significant differences among administrator types.

Figure 3. Reported accuracy of components of DPAS-II for Administrators



The following patterns are particularly notable:

- At least 70% of administrators reported that Components II and III were accurate indicators of performance in all years.⁴⁵ Accuracy assessments for Component I reached the 70% mark in 2015.
- Assessments are lower for Components IV and V, though accuracy assessments have increased slightly from 2013 levels.

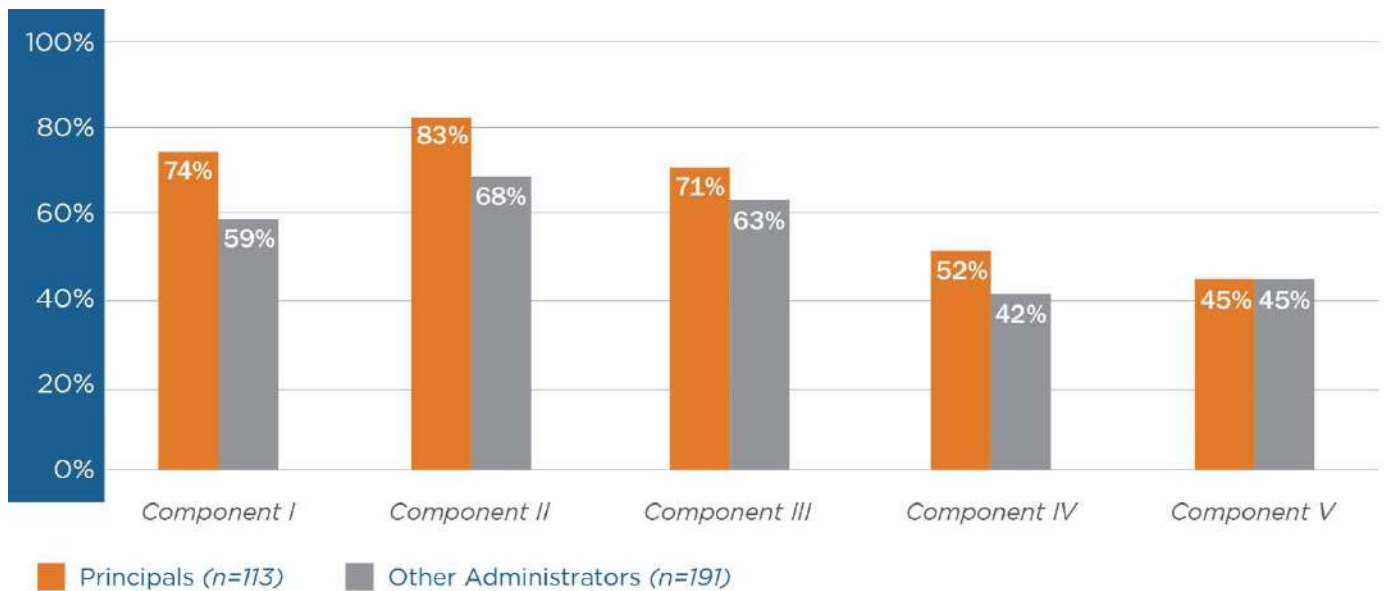
Additionally, an open-ended response question on the statewide survey asked administrators which of the components and/or criteria in DPAS-II for Administrators were most helpful for evaluating administrators. Although the number of respondents for this particular question was small (n=60), those who did respond highly valued Components I, II, and III. In a separate question, administrators were asked which components and/or criteria they found most problematic. Again, the response rate overall was low (n=58), but more than half of the respondents found Component V to be most problematic. Component IV (Professional Responsibilities) was second-most problematic.

As can be seen in Figure 4, building principals provided higher ratings of accuracy for Components I through IV than did other administrators (we separate out principal responses from the other three types

⁴⁵ The one exception is administrators' views of Component I (Vision and Goals) in 2014.

of administrators because principals were the only administrator group with a fully implemented evaluation system in 2014-15). However, both groups rated Component V similarly.

Figure 4. Principal ratings versus other administrators' ratings of DPAS-II for Administrators components



District administrators and principals generally found the principal evaluation system – and the Principal “Leadership Priorities” in particular – to be useful as a coaching model.

Data from the best practice site visits can help explain why a majority of principals derived value from Components I through IV in particular. District administrators cited that the fully implemented principal evaluation system allowed them to establish a coaching model for the principals they supervised, wherein Components I through IV were fodder for constructive conversations about leadership practices. For example, a district leader from Colonial described how he conducted conferences with principals that were guided by component-specific principal responsibilities and required supports. And a district leader from Indian River described the process of evidence collection for Components I through IV of the principal evaluation as a “partnership,” in which principals provided evidence as part as their DPAS-II evaluations rather than district administrators “creating” the evidence themselves.

Additionally, nearly all district- and school-level administrators across both best practice sites said they found the principal Leadership Priorities rubric, new to the 2014-15 evaluation, to be very useful because it helped to focus their conversations with principals, and to provide more objective feedback than was possible in the past. Said one district administrator:

To me, that’s actually been one of the most impactful pieces of it because we looked at the recommendations from last year, the areas they needed to grow. We discussed what those goals should be, they identified paths and behaviors that they needed to do to improve in those areas, and we focused on them all year long. You know when you can focus on one or two things, then you can really show growth and get really good at those things.

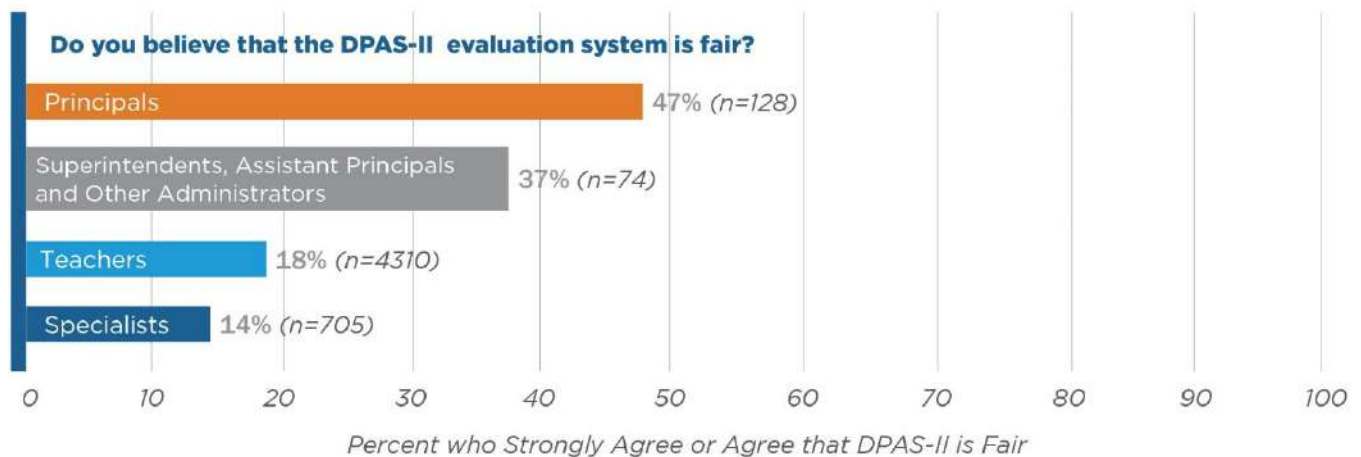
However, of the 14 administrators we spoke with, two individuals—one in each best practice district—shared critiques of the rubric. One district administrator said that the rubric, while facilitating discussion,

failed to capture the day-to-day role of principals, and one principal found the rubric unnecessary and cumbersome.

Perceptions of DPAS-II Fairness

Administrators reported more positive views of the fairness of DPAS-II for Administrators than did teachers and specialists about their evaluation system. As can be seen in Figure 5, administrators of all types perceived their evaluation system to be fairer than did teachers and specialists with respect to their own system.

Figure 5. Perceived fairness by respondent group



When we analyzed the factors that influenced views of fairness, we found that when administrators viewed DPAS-II for Administrators as a tool for improving leadership practices, they were more likely to rate the system as fair (see Appendix C for details). This finding mirrors the key finding above: that overall perceptions of DPAS-II for Administrators are driven by views its purpose.



Administrators across both best practice districts believed DPAS-II for Administrators to be a fair system, but had differing definitions of fairness.

District administrators in both Colonial and Indian River were more likely than their counterparts statewide to consider DPAS-II for Administrators to be fair. Administrators in Colonial pointed to rubrics and a clear set of guidelines by which all evaluators could evaluate school administrators as indicators of fairness. They said that the current DPAS-II system for principals, which has detailed rubrics, helps limit subjectivity. This approach enables evaluators to give specific and useful feedback that will lead to growth and improvement. In Indian River, district leaders similarly framed fairness as consistency. One district administrator there described the system as “very fair...we look at the same evidence for everybody,” she said. “It’s very consistent.”

School level administrators defined fairness differently. A school administrator from Colonial, for example, thought opportunities for self-evaluation during conferences with the evaluator made the evaluation process fair. And a principal from Indian River perceived fairness as exercising discretion, particularly in cases where administrators had set overly lofty growth goals for Component V. This principal hoped that the district-level evaluators would focus on general progress toward these ambitious goals.

Suggestions for Improvement of DPAS-II for Administrators

Table 4 summarizes administrators' suggestions for improving DPAS-II for Administrators, and indicates the data sources for each suggestion.

Table 4. Administrators' suggested changes to DPAS-II for Administrators

	Suggestion	Source		
		Survey	Open-Ended	Site Visit
 <p>Supportive Quotation: It would be great if our Component V measure could be based on various programs, PD initiatives, etc. that I've implemented for the year.</p>	Reduce overall paperwork required, for example by changing the format of paperwork from narrative to a "checklist"		✓	
	Differentiate requirements for experienced vs. novice administrators		✓	
	Provide a more specific, criteria-level rating process for assistant principals, district leaders, and/or superintendents		✓	✓
	Weight Components I-IV higher than Component V	✓	✓	✓
	Modify or remove Component IV	✓	✓	✓
	Create better measures of student growth		✓	✓

Note: Beginning in the 2015-16 school year, criteria-level ratings and rubrics will be provided for both assistant principals and for district leaders.

Although there were some responses to open-ended items in the administrator survey that suggested the Department “start over” with regard to DPAS-II for Administrators, teachers and specialists expressed this sentiment far more frequently with respect to their own evaluation system.

III. Evaluation Goal 2: Implementation of DPAS-II for Administrators

For this section, we provide findings related to the implementation of DPAS-II for Administrators, including general descriptive findings from the statewide survey of administrators, as well as findings from best practice site visits related to administrators' communication about evaluation expectations, feedback, and training and professional development.

Perceptions of Implementation of DPAS-II for Administrators



Statewide, more than 70% of administrators reported that DPAS-II for Administrators was implemented appropriately at their school/district. Relatedly, a majority of administrators (75% (n=108) of principals and 62% (n=174) of other administrators reported that they received specific and actionable feedback as part of their evaluation.

Fidelity of Implementation: DPAS-II for Administrators

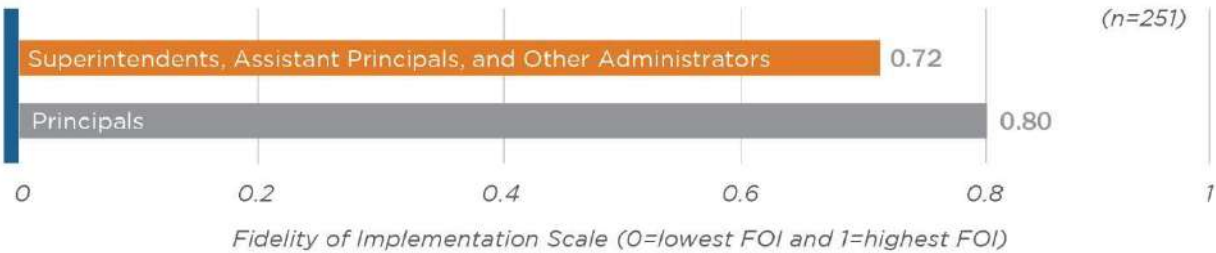
In order to examine fidelity of implementation in more detail, we again created an index of fidelity of implementation.

Figure 6. Fidelity of implementation index for DPAS-II for Administrators

Eight Measures of High Quality Implementation for Administrators Checklist	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1) In completing the Student Performance Goal-Setting Form, did you and your evaluator set targets on student academic achievement measures?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2) Were the goals mutually established between you and your evaluator? [During Student Performance Goal-Setting Form]
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3) In completing the Priority Leadership Area Form, did you and your evaluator identify areas to contribute to your growth as a leader?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4) My evaluator shared his or her overall impression of my leadership performance [during your summative evaluation conference]
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5) My evaluator provided recommendations designed to improve my leadership performance [during your summative evaluation conference]
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6) My evaluator provided expectations designed to improve specific aspects of my leadership performance [during your summative evaluation conference]
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7) Was the mid-year conference helpful in making mid-year course corrections?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8) Was the mid-year conference productive for your leadership growth?

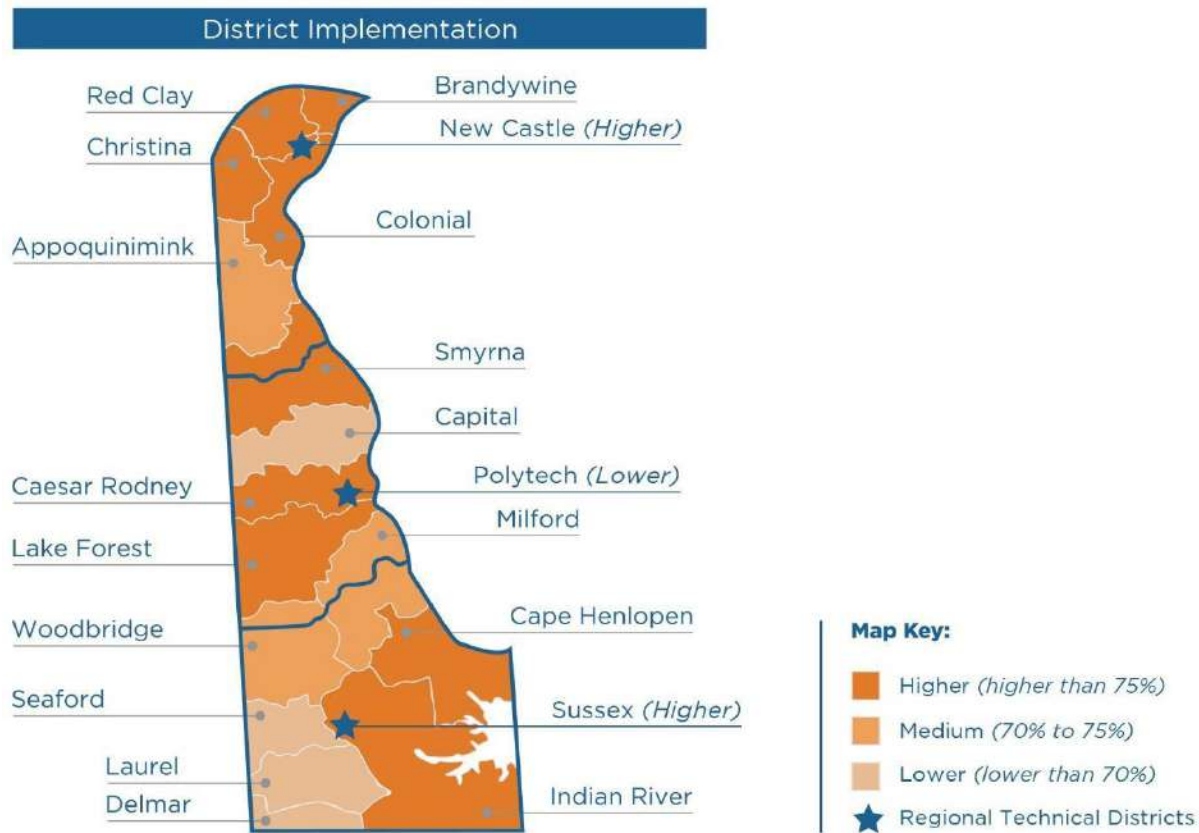
When assessed using this index, we found that principals reported higher levels of fidelity of implementation (.80) than did other administrators (.72) (see Figure 7). This finding is not surprising, since the evaluation process was more specific in 2014-15 for principals than it was for other administrator groups (see Table 1).

Figure 7. Fidelity of implementation by type of administrator



We also found that fidelity of implementation varied by district. Figure 8 displays administrator-reported fidelity of implementation, by district.

Figure 8. Fidelity of implementation by district, as reported by principals and other administrators



- Eleven districts (Brandywine, Caesar Rodney, Cape Henlopen, Christina, Colonial, Indian River, Lake Forest, Red Clay, and Smyrna plus New Castle Technical and Sussex Technical) reported higher levels of fidelity of implementation (FOI = .90 to over .75), three reported medium levels (.75 to .70), and five reported lower levels of fidelity of implementation (less than .70 and greater than .55).
- The number of districts exhibiting higher administrator-reported FOI exceeded the corresponding number for teacher-reported FOI.

There is a positive relationship between fidelity of implementation and administrators' overall views of DPAS-II for Administrators. For both principals and other administrators, those in districts with higher measures of fidelity of implementation were more likely to report more positive views of DPAS-II for Administrators. Specifically, administrators who felt DPAS-II for Administrators improved leadership practices and informed professional development experienced higher fidelity of implementation, which in turn was associated with more positive views of the evaluation system overall. In this way, the fidelity of implementation finding for administrators operates in much the same way as it did for teachers and specialists regarding their views of their own evaluation system.



Promising Practices in DPAS-II for Administrators Implementation

Colonial and Indian River exhibited promising practices in the implementation of DPAS-II for Administrators in the following areas:

- Communicating DPAS-II for Administrators expectations and progress toward goals;
- Providing specific and frequent feedback to administrators about their performance; and,
- Providing intensive training on DPAS-II for Administrators.

District-level administrators at both best practice sites were in constant communication with school administrators about evaluation requirements. Leaders in both districts noted the connection between communication and strong trusting relationships. In both districts, district leaders divided responsibility for overseeing administrators among various staff (e.g., Superintendent, Director of Curriculum), and then established systems to check in on progress as a central office team. School administrators in both districts had a clear understanding of their primary point of contact at the central office, which helped to streamline communication. This regular communication in turn allowed district leaders to have a good grasp of administrators' overall performance, as well as what was happening on a day-to-day basis at each school. District administrators in both districts reported that transparent communication helped to ensure that school administrators felt comfortable coming to them with concerns about issues that arose on their campuses.

The form of communication did vary somewhat by district, however. In Indian River, district leaders used email as the primary form of communication for one-on-one check-ins, and then provided opportunities for administrators district-wide to meet as a group on a regular basis (for example, through Professional Learning Community time). In Colonial, district leaders conducted in-depth weekly one-on-one meetings with school principals to discuss issues using a coaching or mentorship approach. These district leaders believed it was important for them to consistently communicate with administrators, so they could understand their perspectives and use this understanding to help support changes in practice. One district leader explained this coaching approach:

We expect our administrators to coach and move the needle of the teachers by being in the classroom, and the same thing should be expected of me with my principals. If I'm expecting my principals to be the best, then there needs to be an element of coaching with that, and that comes from being there with them and walking in their shoes and seeing what they're saying and trying to help them both grow as leaders.

Innovative Practice: Piloting New Tools and Rubrics for District Administrators and Assistant Principals

For the 2014-15 school year, criterion-level ratings and rubrics were limited to principals only. However, in Indian River, the district superintendent voluntarily piloted a system wherein district administrators applied the existing DPAS-II tools (for example, the Leadership Priorities Rubric) to district leaders and school assistant principals. To aid in this process, the superintendent recruited some principals to help guide trainings district-wide for rating assistant principals. The superintendent said that her primary challenge was communicating to administrators the process of collecting supportive evidence and documentation throughout the year.

Administrators in best practice sites appreciated specific and frequent feedback and conversations about their performance. Similar to teachers and specialists, administrators at both the district and school levels reported that they valued frequent, specific feedback on their performance as leaders. Administrators—and principals in particular—reported that conferencing was by far the most useful approach to build effective leadership practices. Principals said that frequent and targeted conversational feedback provided meaningful information that helped them to improve their leadership approaches.

In Indian River, school administrators shared that district leadership would often “pop in” to observe them and provide specific feedback. School administrators appreciated the specific feedback, and used it to improve their interactions and conversations with their teachers. Said one principal:

My assistant superintendent doesn't evaluate me but he will just pop in here sometimes and if he knows that if I have to take disciplinary action on a staff member, he'll sit in on it from the back and watch me interact, and at the end of it, he'll tell me his feelings about how the whole meeting went. That's the most valuable feedback I can get. It's an in-the-moment sort of thing.

In Colonial, district leaders met weekly with administrators to monitor progress and ensure that school administrators were receiving the help and support they needed. School administrators appreciated that district leaders used tools, including the Leadership Priorities for Principals rubric and color-coded spreadsheets, to keep their feedback targeted, objective, and organized.

However, superintendents and other district leaders also noted that it could sometimes be a challenge to do thorough written evaluations of district and school administrators given the numerous constraints on their time. In Indian River, one district administrator said she was looking forward to using the new rubrics for district leaders and other administrators because it would lessen the burden of writing original narrative for individual evaluations.

Professional development for school administrators aligned with DPAS-II was a priority in both best practice districts, although specific approaches to professional development varied. District leaders in both best practice districts explained that they used DPAS-II for Administrators to guide their professional development on leadership approaches for administrators, particularly school administrators. Approaches to providing that professional development, however, varied by district.

- In Indian River, district and school administrators took advantage of dedicated Professional Learning Community time to address identified administrator areas of weakness, which were aligned in some part to the evaluation system but also probed general areas where school administrators would like more help. The superintendent, for example, asked principals to email her a list of areas where they would like additional support or training.
- In Colonial, district leaders embedded professional development on leadership practices or approaches into their regular one-on-one meetings with school administrators.



Administrators would like additional training, both specifically on DPAS-II for Administrators and generally on leadership practices. Open-ended survey responses from administrators help to shed light on which areas administrators would like specific additional training.

- **General:** Administrators requested additional training on using technology platforms for DPAS-II for Administrators, how to reduce the paperwork burden associated with evaluations, and how to apply for a waiver from DPAS-II for all educators and administrators.
- **Ratings and Rubrics:** Administrators would like training on writing improvement plans, how to write evaluations for assistant principals, and would also like more exemplars about what “highly effective” or “distinguished” ratings look like in practice.
- **Components I through IV:** Administrators would like training on collecting evidence, using the leadership priorities rubric, and generalized training on Components III and IV.
- **Component V:** Administrators asked for more training on goal-setting at the school level.

Additionally, we asked administrators in which areas they would like to see general improvement or growth as administrators. The most popular responses were:

- Access to a mentor or coach (especially for new administrators);
- Ability to collaborate with administrative peers (including job shadowing, participation in administrators PLC meetings);
- Professional development on time management, data analysis, and budget creation; and
- More emphasis on how to build a positive, productive, achievement oriented school culture.

Suggestions for Changes to DPAS-II for Administrators

Administrators had several suggestions for improving DPAS-II for Administrators. Table 5 details these suggestions and supporting data sources.

Table 5. Administrators’ suggested changes to DPAS-II for Administrators

Goal 2	Suggestion	Source			
		Survey	Open-Ended	Site Visit	
	Include peer and/or teacher feedback in principal and assistant principal evaluations		✓	✓	<i>Note: Although this type of feedback is not prescribed under DPAS-II for Administrators, districts have the flexibility to include peer and/or teacher feedback in administrator evaluations.</i>
	Provide additional generalized training (for example, on writing improvement plans, Component V goal-setting, technology platforms, leadership)		✓	✓	<i>Note: In partnership with New Leaders for New Schools and Delaware Academy for School Leadership, the Department has instituted a community of practice for principal supervisors, and will replicate this model in the 2015-16 school year for evaluators of assistant principals.</i>
	Conduct more observations of and/or meetings with administrators		✓		
	Ensure alignment of administrators’ leadership goals to school and/or district goals		✓		

Supportive Quotation:
The greatest influence would be to have those conversations at various points throughout the year and discussion after visits. Feedback and suggestions for growth are valuable, not just checking off evidence of each Component.

IV. Evaluation Goal 3: Administrator-Level Outcomes and School/District Culture

For this section, we provide findings related to administrator-level outcomes as a result of DPAS-II for Administrators, as well as indicators of school and/or district culture. The following findings are from the statewide survey of administrators.

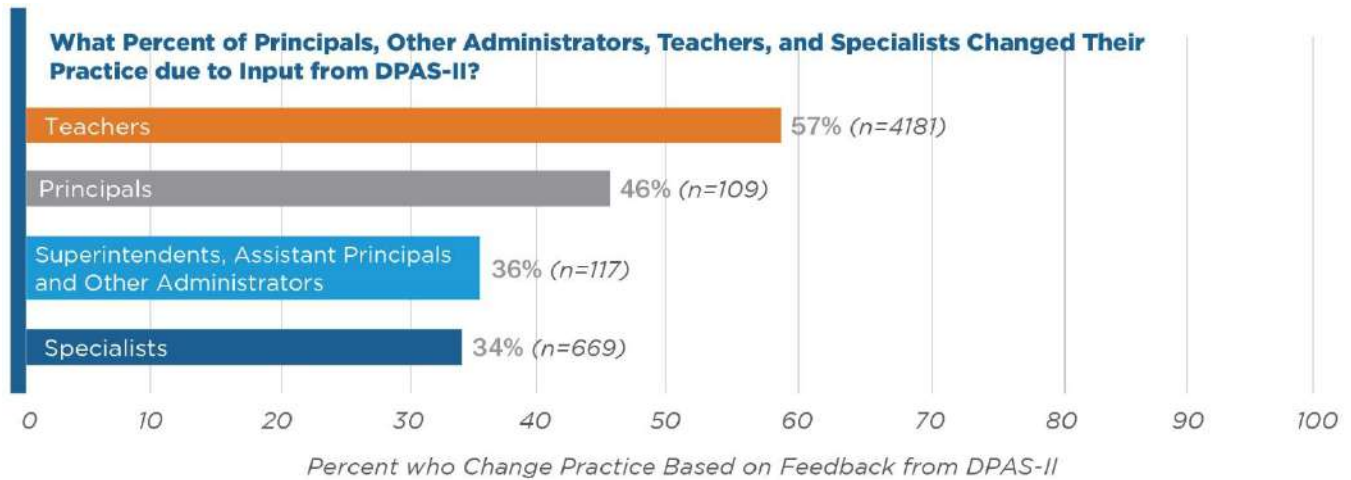


DPAS-II for Administrators’ Influence on Administrator Practices

About half of principals reported changing their practices based on feedback from DPAS-II for Administrators; only about a third of other administrators reported similar

changes in practice.⁴⁶ As can be seen in Figure 9, principals were second-most likely (after teachers) to adjust practice; the reported change in practice for specialists was similar to the rate for non-principal administrators but lower than the rate for principals.

Figure 9. Reported changes in practice by respondent type



In our statistical analysis, we found that differences in reported change in practice between principals and other administrators can be completely accounted for by differences in fidelity of implementation⁴⁷. These findings suggest that, once the principal and other administrator DPAS-II systems are fully developed, the different levels of change in practice due to DPAS-II between principals and other administrators may disappear.

Views of the purpose of DPAS-II had the strongest effect on changes in practice for both principals and administrators.⁴⁸ We found that 49% of administrators who view DPAS-II as a tool to improve practice also reported changing their practice at least once a year based on feedback from DPAS-II. In contrast, only 36% of administrators who did not believe that DPAS-II was a tool to improve practice reported changing practice. Fidelity of implementation also had a statistically significant effect, but it was much lower than the effect of views of the purpose of DPAS-II (see Table 6). Increasing fidelity of implementation from lower to higher increased the percent of respondents who reported changing their practice by 8% for all types of administrators. In contrast, administrator experience,⁴⁹ overall views of DPAS-II for Administrators (measured on a 4.0 GPA scale) and views of school culture had inconsistent effects on changing practice. Due to a lack of correlation or the small sample size, none of the other variables examined⁵⁰ had an effect on changes in practice.

⁴⁶ Note: As with findings in this area for Brief I, our survey data do not indicate the directionality of this reported change. Unlike with the teachers and specialists, however, open-ended survey responses for administrators do not indicate a possibility that the trend could be negative.

⁴⁷ In our simplest statistical model comparing the effects on principals versus other administrators, there was a difference of about 10 percentage points in the percent who reported a change in practice. However when we controlled for implementation, this effect became statistically insignificant.

⁴⁸ In this model, we controlled for understanding of DPAS-II, overall views of DPAS-II, views of Components I-V, views of school culture, administrator experience, administrator's gender and views of the role of the school or family as the most important factor influencing student achievement

⁴⁹ Experienced administrators were defined as those having at least 10 years of experience as administrators.

⁵⁰ These variables included: understanding of DPAS-II for Administrators, views of DPAS-II for Administrators as a tool to inform professional development, views of the different components of the DPAS-II evaluation, and views of school versus family as the largest factor influencing student achievement.

Table 6. Strongest factors that influence the probability that administrators change practices based on DPAS-II for Administrators

Strongest Factors	How Much Does Reported Change in Practice Increase/ Decrease with Each Factor	Interpretation
Administrators' Beliefs about DPAS-II for Administrators		
<p>1. Belief that DPAS-II for Administrators Improves Practice</p> <p><i>Effect of belief that DPAS-II for administrators does not improve practice versus very much/somewhat improves practice</i></p>	+13%	Administrators are more likely to change practice when they believe that DPAS-II is a tool to improve practice. 49% of average administrators who hold this view are likely to report a change in practice. In contrast, 36% of average administrators who do not share these views are likely to report a change in practice.
Implementation of DPAS-II for Administrators		
<p>2. Fidelity of Implementation</p> <p><i>Effect of a lower FOI versus a higher FOI</i></p>	+8%	Administrators are more likely to change practice when they experience higher levels of FOI. 40% of average administrators who experience higher FOI (.75) report a change in practice. In contrast, 32% of administrators who experience lower FOI (.32) report a change in practice.

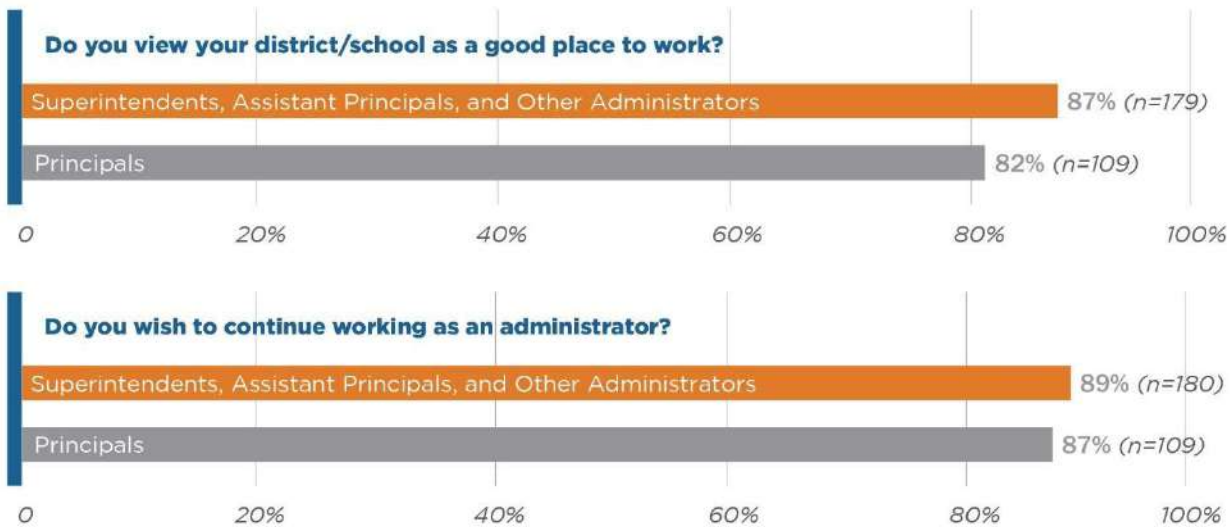


School/District Culture

Views of school/district culture were generally positive for all types of administrators.

As shown in Figure 10, both principals and other administrators generally had positive views of their school/district culture, which was defined by their views of whether the school/district is a good place to work and their desire to continue working as an administrator.

Figure 10. Administrator views of district culture by administrator type



- Principals and other administrators had very positive views of the workplace as a good place to work. No statistically significant differences were found between principals and other administrators.
- A strong majority of principals and other administrators were interested in working as administrators as long as possible. Again, no statistically significant differences between principals and other administrators emerged.

In multivariate statistical analyses,⁵¹ we found that fidelity of implementation was statistically significant and positively correlated with views of the school as a good place to work for both principals and other administrators. Additionally, administrators’ overall views of DPAS-II for Administrators were positively and significantly correlated with a desire to continue working as an administrator for both principals and other administrators (see Appendix C for details).

V. Summary of Recommendations

Similar to our recommendations for the first brief on DPAS-II for Teachers and Specialists, we align our recommendations for DPAS-II for Administrators to the two identified underlying drivers of overall perceptions of the administrator evaluation system. For each area, we provide evidence from our findings, as well as practical recommendations based on those findings for the Delaware Department of Education, districts, and schools.

Driver #1: Views about the Purpose of DPAS-II for Administrators

Evidence: The biggest driver of administrators’ overall ratings of their evaluation system was whether they perceived it to be a tool for improving leadership practices and informing professional development. Those who did were more likely to give DPAS-II for Administrators a higher grade. In contrast, those who believed that DPAS-II is an accountability lever were likely to give lower grades.

Perceptions that DPAS-II for Administrators can be a tool for improving practice and informing professional development could be increased by the following:

Recommendation: Have consistent, open communication with administrators about the DPAS-II for Administrators system. In best practice districts, administrators spoke of the importance of holding regular meetings (either in groups or one-on-one) to make clear the expectations of the evaluation system, and provide frequent progress reports. In open-ended survey responses, administrators statewide also suggested that their evaluators conduct more observations of their leadership practices. As exemplified in the best practice site visits, these observations might take the form of formal observations of practice (for example, joining administrators on their classroom walk-throughs as they did in Colonial) or could be more informal check-in meetings (as district administrators did in both best practice districts).

Recommendation: Continue to develop criteria-level ratings and rubrics for non-principal administrators. Principals in best practice districts generally reported that they appreciated the criteria-level ratings and the Leadership

Note: Beginning in the 2015-16 school year, criteria-level ratings and rubrics will be provided for both assistant principals and for district leaders.

⁵¹ We also controlled for teacher experience, administrator’s gender, school poverty, and views of the role of the school or family as the most important factor influencing student achievement.

Priorities Rubric. Open-ended survey responses similarly support the roll-out of similar rubrics for other types of administrators.

Driver #2: School Culture

Evidence: Principals and other administrators who reported that DPAS-II had a positive effect on school or district culture gave DPAS-II for Administrators a higher grade than those who reported that it had a negative effect on school or district culture.

Although we recognize that school/district culture is multi-faceted, we provide two recommendations that could help foster trust and understanding among educators and their evaluators in the context of DPAS-II for Administrators.

Recommendation: Consider including peer and/or teacher feedback in school-level administrator ratings.

In the statewide survey, a strong majority of administrators of all types reported that they generally liked where they worked, and planned to stay in their positions as

administrators. One common suggestion in both open-ended survey responses and in site visit interviews was that the relationships they foster with their colleagues is not reflected in their evaluation system. Principals and assistant principals alike suggested incorporating elements of peer (i.e., other administrators) or subordinate (i.e., teachers or other school staff) ratings of performance into their evaluation system. At the district level, district leaders mentioned they would appreciate ratings from their peers and/or the principals they supervise.

Note: Although this type of feedback is not prescribed under DPAS-II for Administrators, districts have the flexibility to include peer and/or teacher feedback in administrator evaluations.

Recommendation: Provide additional leadership training for all administrators. Administrators at both the district and school levels articulated in open-ended survey response the specific types of training they would like to receive. Although some of this training was about DPAS-II for Administrators processes and components, there were also numerous requests for general leadership training, for example mentorship, time management, and data analysis. One specific area of leadership training requested was in how to build a positive, productive, achievement-oriented school/district culture.

Discussion

Although the recommendations above focus on the two underlying drivers of administrators' opinions of DPAS-II for Administrators, we also note that administrators, like teachers and specialists, had generally negative opinions of Component V. They would like to see changes to the weighting of the various components in their rating system (to de-emphasize Component V), and would also appreciate additional training on Component V goal-setting.

Looking at the DPAS-II for Administrators system as a whole, however, the finding that principals generally like the rubrics available to them, coupled with the recommendation from non-principal administrators that they would like more specificity in their evaluation system, signal that full implementation of the evaluation system for all four administrator types would be helpful to district and school administrators alike.



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