

*James Jack*  
 RESEARCH ASSISTANT  
*Katherine Stratos*  
 SR. RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

In November 2013, the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) surveyed approximately 6,000 educators to gain feedback on the School District of Philadelphia's (SDP) 2012-2013 educator evaluation process. The 2012-2013 school year was the final year in which the teacher evaluation model was based solely on classroom observations. Starting with the 2013-2014 school year and rolled out over the subsequent two years, SDP will implement the Pennsylvania Department of Education's new educator effectiveness system, mandated by Act 82 of 2012. When fully implemented, teachers will be evaluated on a composite measure that incorporates classroom observation data, building level scores as measured by the School Performance Profile, and individual impact on student achievement. The findings from this brief can serve as a baseline to observe changes in perception as SDP implements Pennsylvania's new educator effectiveness system.

**Methods**

To gather educator feedback, ORE used a 4-point Likert scale that ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with ten statements regarding their 2012-2013 evaluation process. Additionally, educators were asked about what they perceived to be the focus of the feedback received during their 2012-2013 evaluation. Potential responses included whether they felt the feedback focused more on improving their practice, judging their performance, or equally on the two. Educators could also indicate that they received no formal feedback.

**Findings**

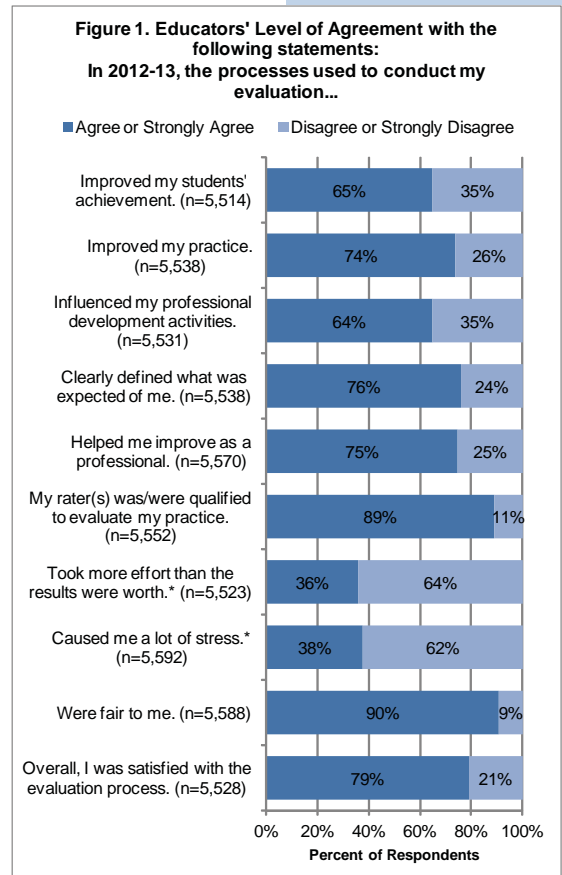
Overall, the majority of educators were satisfied with the 2012-2013 evaluation process (Figure 1). The two categories for which there was the highest percentage of positive feedback regarded whether teachers felt the evaluation process was fair to them (90% agreed or strongly agreed) and whether their rater(s) was qualified to evaluate their practice (89% agreed or strongly agreed). The two categories for which there was the lowest percentage of positive feedback regarded whether teachers felt the evaluation process improved their students' achievement (65 percent agreed or strongly agreed) and influenced their professional development activities (64 percent agreed or strongly agreed).

Educators were also asked to indicate whether they perceived the feedback they received from their 2012-2013 evaluation to be more focused on helping them to improve their practice, making a judgment about their performance, or equally focused on both. They could also indicate if they did not receive formal feedback from an evaluator in 2012-2013 (See Figure 2).

As shown in Figure 2, the plurality of respondents (40%) reported the feedback they received from their evaluator in 2012-2013 focused more on helping them improve their practice than making a judgment about their performance. Thirteen percent responded that the feedback focused more on making a judgment about their performance, while 27% reported an equal focus on improving practice and judging performance. Twenty-one percent reported that they did not receive formal feedback from their evaluator in 2012-13.

**Key Findings**

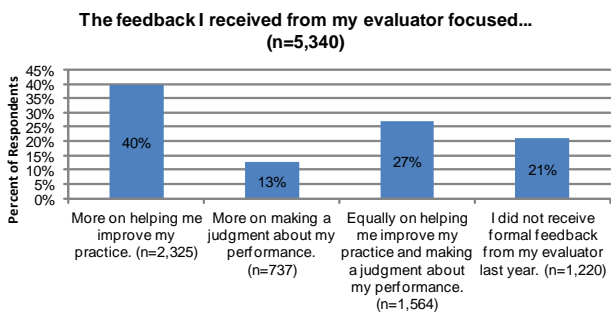
- Overall, the majority of educators surveyed reported positive feedback regarding their 2012-2013 evaluation and were satisfied with the evaluation process. However, this majority did not hold true at the individual school level.
- The plurality of respondents reported the formal feedback they received from their evaluator in 2012-2013 focused more on helping them improve their practice than making a judgment about their performance.
- Educators who felt that their 2012-2013 evaluation was more focused on improving their practice were more likely to report positive perceptions of several aspects of the teacher evaluation process and its goals.



# Teachers Provide Feedback on Evaluation System

## Results from November 2013 Teacher Evaluation Survey

**Figure 2. Overall Perception of the Focus of 2012-2013 Evaluation Feedback**

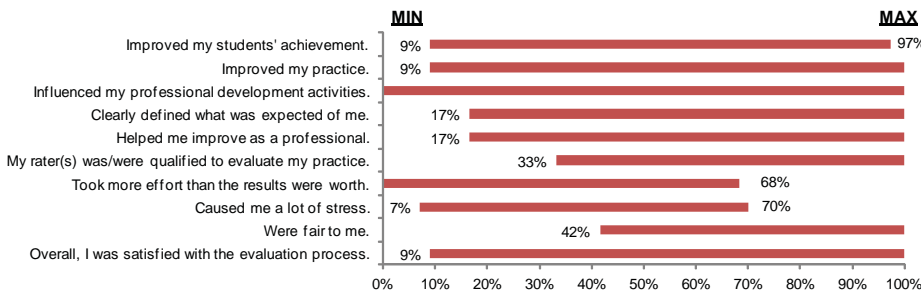


Interestingly, 35% of respondents who indicated they received no formal feedback in 2012-2013 were in a formal observation period during that time (educators in their 1st, 2nd, or 3rd year, tenured teachers in Peer Assistant and Review (PAR), or those in a formal observation period), while the remaining respondents (65%) were in a professional development plan year which does not require educators to receive a formal observation.

To gain further insight into the range of responses for schools in our sample, ORE found the minimum and maximum percentage of respondents that agreed (agree or strongly agree) for each of the 10 statements in Figure 1. As shown in Figure 3, there is variance across the ten statements when taking into account the

**Figure 3. Minimum and Maximum Percentage of Respondents By School Agreeing with the Following Statements:**

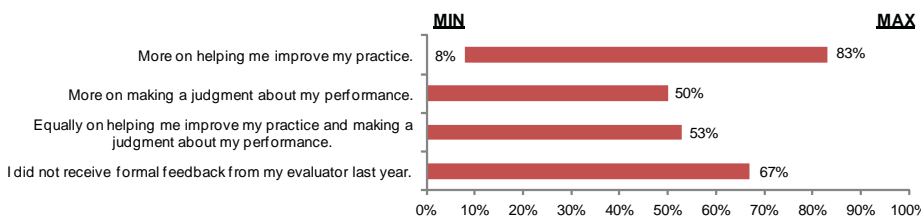
In 2012-2013, the process used to conduct my evaluation...



minimum and maximum percentage of respondents from the 197 schools included in this analysis. This shows that although the majority of respondents District-wide reported positive feedback regarding their 2012-2013 evaluations, this trend did not hold true for all schools individually. For example, in at least one school, none of the respondents agreed that their evaluation influenced their professional development activities, though at another school or schools, all of the respondents agreed that their evaluation influenced their professional development activities. Similarly, in at least one school, only nine percent of respondents agreed that their 2012-2013 evaluation helped improve their practice, whereas all of the respondents from at least one other school felt that their 2012-2013 evaluation improved their practice (See Figure 3).

**Figure 4. Minimum and Maximum Percent of Respondents Per School Agreeing with the Following Statements:**

In 2012-2013, the feedback I received from my evaluator focused...



Additionally, ORE found the minimum and maximum response rate for the four categories in Figure 2 based on the 197 schools included in the analysis. These results are shown in Figure 4. In this analysis, at least one school had 83% of its teachers respond that in 2012-2013, their evaluator's feedback was focused more on improving their practice, whereas

at another school, only eight percent of teachers felt that way. At one school, 67% of respondents reported that they received no formal feedback in 2012-2013, even though 46% of teachers at that school were in a formal observation year during that time.

Taking these findings into account, an additional analysis was conducted to look into whether any observable difference existed around level of agreement on the questions in Figure 1 dependent on the perceived focus of the 2012-2013 evaluation (Figure 2). The 5,340 respondents were aggregated based on their perception of feedback received during the 2012-2013 evaluation process (Figure 2). For the purpose of this analysis, ORE included the following five statements that focused on the goals of the evaluation process:

In 2012-13, the processes used to conduct my evaluation...

1. Helped me improve as a professional.
2. Clearly defined what was expected of me.
3. Influenced the professional development activities in which I participated.
4. Improved my practice.
5. Improved my students' achievement.

# Teachers Provide Feedback on Evaluation System

## Results from November 2013 Teacher Evaluation Survey

ORE found a significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) among the four response groups from Figure 2 across the five selected evaluation goals from Figure 1. When looking at differences between groups, the educators who indicated that their evaluation focused more on **helping them improve their practice** were more likely to report **positive** outcomes across all five evaluation goals associated with their 2012-2013 evaluation than those in the other three response groups. In other words, educators who felt that feedback they received from their evaluator was more focused on helping them to improve their practice were more likely to report that the evaluation process helped them improve as a professional, clearly defined their roles, influenced professional development activities, improved their practice, and improved their students' achievement.

Conversely, the educators who felt their 2012-2013 evaluation focused more on judging their performance were more likely to report negative outcomes across all five evaluation goals than educators who responded that their evaluation focused on improving their practice or was equally balanced. Interestingly, there was no significant difference across four of the five evaluation goals between educators who felt their 2012-2013 evaluation focused more on judging their performance and those who reported that they received no formal feedback. This may suggest that an evaluation focused primarily on judging an educator's performance is just as useful as no formal feedback at all.

Educators who reported their evaluation focused equally on improving their practice and judging their performance were more likely to report positive outcomes across all five evaluation goals than educators who responded that their evaluation focused on judging their performance. This also held true when compared to educators that reported receiving no formal feedback. However, they were less likely to report positive outcomes as compared to those that felt their evaluation focused more on improving their practice.

These findings suggest that the most beneficial feedback may be that which is focused on improving a teacher's practice, followed by feedback that is equally attentive to improving practice and judging performance. Feedback perceived as primarily judging an educator's performance is the least useful, and no more helpful than not having received feedback at all.

### Moving Forward

As shown, the focus of an evaluation can facilitate improved pedagogical practice and student improvement as perceived by the educator. Additionally, in a 2010 survey of 40,000 teachers nationwide, "supportive leadership" was the "top-ranked item" impacting retention (Protheroe, 2011). As reforms aim to keep and grow the best teachers, these survey findings and those of previous research stress the importance of creating a supportive environment by focusing on improving educator practice instead of passing judgment on their performance.

ORE will utilize these findings to inform future work to understand what practices during the 2012-2013 evaluation process led educators to report more positive outcomes across the five evaluation goals. Additionally, we will seek out what aspects of the formal feedback process caused educators to feel that it was a formative versus judgmental process. Furthermore, individual school leaders will be provided with building-level survey results. These findings and those of future research around this issue can help guide the implementation of Pennsylvania's new educator effectiveness model and serve as a baseline to track any changes in teacher perception resulting from the new model.

### Works Cited

Protheroe, N. (2011, January) Workplace conditions that matter to teachers. Principal's Research Review. National Association of Secondary School Principals. Retrieved from: [https://www.principals.org/Content/158/prr\\_jan11.pdf](https://www.principals.org/Content/158/prr_jan11.pdf)