TO: Board Members

FROM: Terry B. Grier, Ed.D.
             Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: **2011–2012 ASPIRE Award Survey**

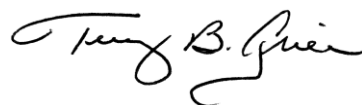CONTACT: Carla Stevens (713) 556-6700

The purpose of the ASPIRE Award Survey was to gain insight regarding the level of knowledge and perceptions of Houston Independent School District (HISD) teachers and staff after seven years of implementation of growth-based performance pay in HISD, as well as their perceptions regarding the overall concept of teacher performance pay. Additionally, participants had the opportunity to provide recommendations to improve the ASPIRE Award program.

- Of the 19,072 Houston Independent School District (HISD) campus-based employees surveyed, there were 3,603 participants who responded to the survey (18.9 percent) administered in March 2013. **The response rate is fairly low and the results, while informative, may not be generalized to the population**.

- When comparing survey results over the last seven years, there was a decrease in the percent of respondents who were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of the concept of teacher performance pay from 69.2 percent in December 2007 to 51.7 percent in March 2013.

- Based on survey data collected in 2013, the largest percentage of respondents indicated that over the past several years they *used standardized data to make instructional decisions* (52.6 percent) *to a great extent*.

- When comparing the percentage of respondents that indicated they were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* toward the concept of the Teacher-Performance Pay Model and to the ASPIRE Award Program for that year, it was first reported at 44.4 percent (December 2007) survey administration), reached a peak of 53.3 percent in 2009, and was most recently reported at 35.1 percent (March 2013 survey administration).

- Based on March 2013 results, a higher percentage of respondents *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* that their maximum award amount was commensurate with their professional contribution, 52.2 percent, compared to 28.6 percent who were *neutral* and 19.1 percent who *agreed* or *strongly agreed*.

- Out of a total of 3,603 respondents on the March 2013 survey, 1,654 or 45.9 percent of the respondents provided at least one response for improving the 2011-2012 ASPIRE Award model. The four highest emergent categories based on the percentage of the responses centered on the following: commentary describing how the money should be allocated (18.6 percent); Discontinue the award (10.5 percent); Other performance measures (9.8 percent); and Eligibility Rules (make plant operators, janitors, food service, and hourly employees

eligible)/Attendance Rule (more days/eliminate)/Categorization (use job duties rather than job title)/Attendance Bonus (reinstitute it)(6.0 percent).

Administrative Response
The small percentage of campus-based personnel (18.2%) who respond to the survey makes it difficult to draw conclusions regarding the true perceptions of all participants in the ASPIRE Award Program. In an effort to increase the number of respondents, the survey will be made available from November 2013 to February 2014.

_____TBG

Attachment

cc: Superintendent's Direct Reports
        Chief Schools Officers
        School Improvement Officers
        School Office Accountability Managers
        Rodney Watson
        Audrey Gomez
        Julie Hill

RESEARCH
Educational Program Report

2011-2012 ASPIRE
Award Survey

2013 BOARD OF EDUCATION

Houston Independent School District
Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center
4400 West 18th Street
Houston, Texas 77092-8501

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ASPIRE AWARD SURVEY RESULTS
FINDINGS RELATED TO TEACHER PERCEPTIONS, KNOWLEDGE, AND INPUT, 2011–2012

Executive Summary

Program Description

On January 12, 2006, the Houston Independent School District (HISD) Board of Education approved the Teacher Performance-Pay Program (TPPM) awarding teachers financial incentives based on three strands of performance pay. These strands involved campus-level performance on the state accountability rating and individual teacher performance on the basis of student progress on state and district assessment programs. The awards were paid out in January, 2007. The experience gained in the first year and consultations with national experts and teachers provided the impetus for recommending the improvement and enhancement of the model which then became the award program for the district's school improvement framework, "Accelerating Student Progress: Increasing Results and Expectations" (ASPIRE). The ASPIRE Award program has completed its sixth year of payout, occurring in January 2013 (the seventh payout for performance pay in the district).

This report provides the results of an annual survey administered on March 2013 designed to collect perceptions and input from HISD teachers and staff after seven years of implementation of growth-based performance pay (see the *2005–2006 Teacher Performance-Pay and 2006–2007 ASPIRE Award Survey*; *2007–2008 ASPIRE Award Survey, Spring 2009*; *2008–2009 ASPIRE Award Survey, Spring, 2010; 2009–2010 ASPIRE Award Survey, Spring 2011; and, 2010–2011 ASPIRE Award Survey, Spring 2012* for previous results). This report addresses the district's strategic plan of providing an effective teacher in every classroom. Survey data focused on eight areas of interest that include:

- Background characteristics of survey respondents;

- Perceptions of respondents regarding the concept of teacher performance pay and the teacher appraisal system;

- Perceptions of respondents regarding their level of agreement to specific instructional practices or behaviors encouraged by the ASPIRE Award program;

- Perceptions of respondents and level of understanding of respondents regarding the Teacher Performance-Pay Model (TPPM) and the ASPIRE Award program;

- Number of respondents that attended value-added or comparative growth training during the 2011–2012 school year and level of understanding;

- Effectiveness of communicating information about the ASPIRE Award;

- Perceptions of respondents regarding their level of compensation and the ASPIRE Award model; and,

- Recommendations for changing the 2011–2012 ASPIRE Award suggested by respondents.

Highlights

- Of the 19,072 Houston Independent School District (HISD) campus-based employees invited to participate, 3,603 participants (18.9 percent) responded to the survey administered in March

2013. Of the 2,968 respondents who indicated an award category, 58.9 percent were core foundation teachers (Categories A–E), 12.4 percent were elective/ancillary teachers, 7.4 percent were instructional support staff, 5.7 percent were teaching assistants, 8.8 percent were operational support staff, and 6.6 percent were either principals or assistant principals/deans of instruction. Any conclusions drawn from this survey should be made with caution given the low response rate.

- When comparing survey results over the last seven years, there was a decrease in the percent of respondents who were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of the concept of teacher performance pay from 69.2 percent in December 2007 to 51.7 percent in March 2013. There was also a decrease over last year from 58.6 percent in March 2012 to 51.7 percent in March 2013.

- Based on survey data collected in 2013, the largest percentage of respondents (52.6 percent) indicated that over the past several years, they *used standardized data to make instructional decisions to a great extent*.

- When comparing the percentage of respondents that indicated they were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* toward the 2005–2006 Teacher-Performance Pay Model or to the specific ASPIRE Award program for that year, it was first reported at 44.4 percent (December 2007 survey administration), reached a peak of 53.3 percent in 2009, and was most recently reported at 35.1 percent (March 2013 survey administration).

- When comparing survey results from March 2012 to March 2013, there was a decrease to 35.6 percent in the percentage of respondents that indicated their level of understanding of the ASPIRE Award Program was *very high* or *high* (2.7 percentage points), as well as an increase to 17.3 percent in the percentage of respondents that indicated their level of understanding of the ASPIRE Award Program was *low/very low* (3.9 percentage points).

- Based on March 2013 results, the majority of respondents indicated that they attended value-added (60.4 percent) and/or comparative growth (57.9 percent) training.

- Based on March 2013 results, a higher percentage of respondents *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* that their maximum award amount was commensurate with their professional contribution, 52.2 percent, compared to 28.6 percent who were *neutral* and 19.1 percent who *agreed* or *strongly agreed*.

- Based on survey results from March 2010 and March 2013, 46.6 percent and 50.1 percent of respondents *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* that the ASPIRE Award is a fair way of acknowledging a teacher's impact on student growth compared to 26.7 percent and 22.8 percent of respondents who *agreed* or *strongly agreed* and 26.6 percent and 27.1 percent who were *neutral*, respectively.

- For 2013, 33.0 percent of principals, 31.5 percent of teaching assistants, and 23.4 percent of assistant principals/deans of instruction, *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that their maximum ASPIRE Award was commensurate with their professional contribution, reflecting the highest levels of agreement compared to the remaining eligibility categories and for those respondents indicating they were not eligible to receive an award who generally indicated the highest levels of *disagree* or *strongly disagree*.

- Although a majority of respondents indicated that communication was *moderately effective* or *very effective* for *providing clear explanations about the award model* (52.1 percent), less than half reported the same levels for *providing clear explanations about value-added calculations*

(47.3 percent) and *providing clear explanations about comparative growth calculations* (48.1 percent). This is noticeably lower than for other areas surveyed (59.7 percent to 69.6 percent).

- When comparing results from May 2009 to March 2013, five of the seven areas of communication showed decreases. *Knowing when specific information about my ASPIRE Award was available* reflected the area of communication for which respondents indicated an increase for effectiveness (0.7 percentage point), and there was no change from 2009 to 2013 for *understanding that formal inquiries were required to be submitted by a specific deadline* (65.4 percent).

- Based on the results of the March 2013 survey, 44.3 percent of respondents reported the *ASPIRE e-mail* as being *very effective*, reflecting the highest percentage for effectiveness when compared to the other four venues used to communicate information about the ASPIRE Award program. This was followed by the *ASPIRE website* (37.7 percent).

- Out of a total of 3,603 respondents on the March 2013 survey, 1,654 or 45.9 percent of the respondents provided at least one response for improving the 2011–2012 ASPIRE Award model. The four highest emergent categories based on the percentage of the responses centered on the following; commentary describing how the money should be allocated (18.6 percent); discontinue the award (10.5 percent); other performance measures (9.8 percent); and eligibility rules (make plant operators, janitors, food service, and hourly employees eligible)/attendance rule (more days/eliminate)/categorization (use job duties rather than job title)/attendance bonus (reinstitute it) (6.0 percent).

Administrative Response

The small percentage of campus-based personnel (18.2%) who respond to the survey makes it difficult to draw conclusions regarding the true perceptions of all participants in the ASPIRE Award Program. In an effort to increase the number of respondents, the survey will be made available from November 2013 to February 2014.

Introduction

The purpose of the ASPIRE Award Model is to reward teachers for their efforts in improving the academic growth of their students. ASPIRE Award employs a value-added methodology that provides teachers with the information that they need to facilitate and measure student progress at the student, classroom, and campus levels. The ASPIRE Award is dedicated to achieving the following goals:

- Encourage cooperation in Professional Learning Communities;
- Be aligned with the district's other school-improvement initiatives;
- Use value-added data based on a national expert's methodology to reward teachers reliably and consistently for student progress; and
- Include core teachers at all grade levels, early childhood through grade 12.

The ASPIRE Award is based on the following principles:

- Performance pay drives academic performance;
- Good teaching occurs in all schools;
- Teamwork is valuable;
- Performance pay does not replace a competitive base salary, and
- Performance pay systems are dynamic and evolve over time.

Given these goals and principles, the ASPIRE Award involves three different strands of academic performance: Strand I–Value-added Campus Progress (Campus-Level Growth); Strand II–Value-added or Comparative Growth Core Teacher Progress (individual teacher or department growth); and Strand III–Campus Improvement and Achievement based on the Stanford and Aprenda reading and mathematics performance (percent of all students at/above 50th national percentile rank, across all grades) for middle and elementary schools and Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB) participation and performance for high schools as well as the four-year longitudinal dropout rate. Under the model, every HISD teacher has the opportunity to participate in at least two strands of the ASPIRE Awards (Strands I and III).

Methods

Data Collection and Analysis

- The ASPIRE award survey items were developed from previous surveys, reviewed, and approved by members of the ASPIRE Award Executive Committee. The 2011–2012 ASPIRE Award Survey was administered on-line from Tuesday, February 19, 2013 to Monday, March 18, 2013, with a follow-up reminder on Monday, March 4, 2013. The survey responses were completely anonymous through SurveyMonkey with no IP addresses collected. The survey instructions with the embedded link to access the survey were sent directly to campus-based employees by HISD partner Battelle for Kids. The data obtained from the completed surveys were downloaded from SurveyMonkey and analyzed using SPSS and Microsoft Access. Items that were skipped or for which respondents answered "N/A" were coded as missing data and not included in the analysis.

Data Limitations

- Changes in the structure of the survey and coding practices limited comparisons to the results of previously developed survey instruments. For the March 2013 survey administration, data quality checks were conducted and corrections made regarding skip patterns and questions pertaining to years of experience. Any conclusions from these results should be made with caution due to the
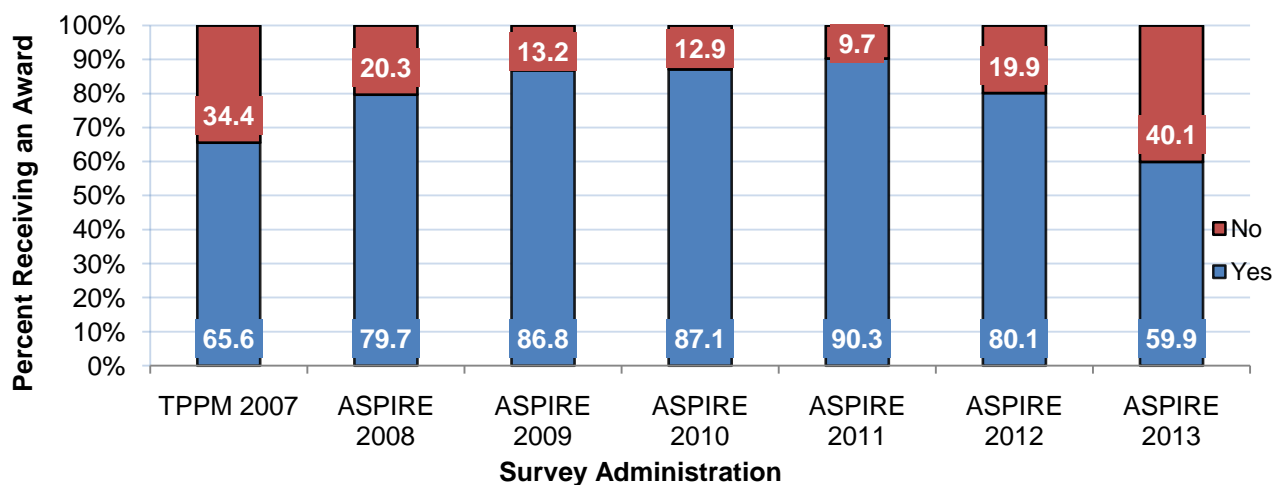
low response rate. The responses may not be generalizable to the population of campus-based staff who were initially invited to participate.

Results

What were the background characteristics of survey respondents?

- Of the 19,072 Houston Independent School District (HISD) campus-based employees invited to complete the survey, there were 3,603 participants who responded to the survey (18.9 percent) administered in March 2013. Any conclusions drawn from this survey should be made with caution given the low response rate (Table 1, p. 26).

- Of the 3,603 respondents, 2,968 indicated their ASPIRE Award categorization for the 2011–2012 school year. When comparing percentages of respondents by Eligibility Category from the previous year, there were increases in Categories A–E (core foundation teachers), J (principals), and K (assistant principals and deans of instruction) (Table 2, p. 26).

- The majority of respondents reported holding either a Bachelor's Degree (32.1 percent) or a Master's Degree (35.9 percent). The average experience in HISD was 12.8 years with the average experience at the current campus being 8.2 years, and the average experience in the current assignment being 7.2 years (Table 3, p. 26).

- Approximately 91 percent of the respondents were employed in HISD for the 2011–2012 school year, and approximately 83 percent were eligible to receive an award. Sixty percent of the respondents indicated that they received an ASPIRE Award, and 64.2 percent of core foundation teachers who responded received an ASPIRE Award under Strand II, an award based on teacher progress for the 2011–2012 school year (Table 4, p. 27).

- Of the 1,513 December 2007 survey respondents, 65.6 percent indicated that they received an award. The percentage continued to increase through the March 2011 survey, where 90.3 percent of respondents received an award. There was a decline of 10.2 percentage points from 2011 to 2012, with a 20.2 percentage point decline from 2012 to 2013. (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Percent of respondents receiving an award based on results of seven survey administrations
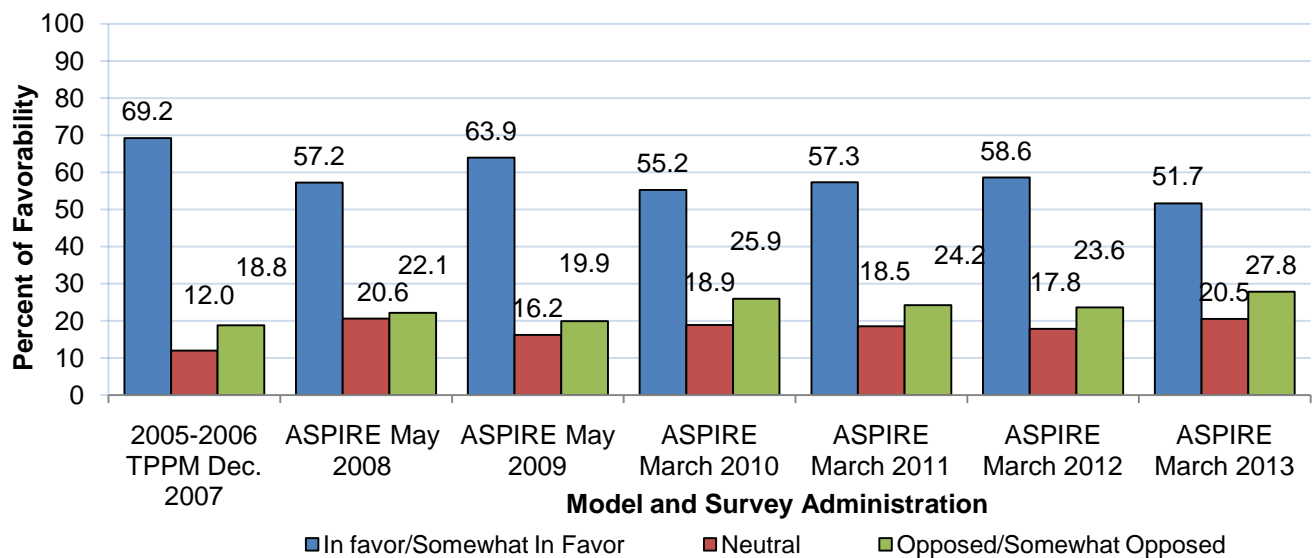
- Over the past six years, the percentage of survey respondents who reported receiving an award increased from 65.6 percent in 2007 to 90.3 in 2011, but declined by 30.4 percentage points from 2011 to 2013 (Figure 1). This may be due in large part to changes in the award model criteria.

- On the March 2013 survey, respondents were asked to indicate if they taught in a critical shortage area. Since respondents may have taught in more than one critical shortage area, percentages are based on the total number of responses. Of the 3,336 responses, 11.3 percent indicated Special Education, 11.7 percent indicated Bilingual Education, 12.1 percent indicated English as a Second Language (ESL), 4.9 percent indicated mathematics, 4.9 percent indicated science, 1.3 percent indicated Spanish, and 53.9 percent did not teach in a critical shortage area (N/A)(Table 5, p. 27).

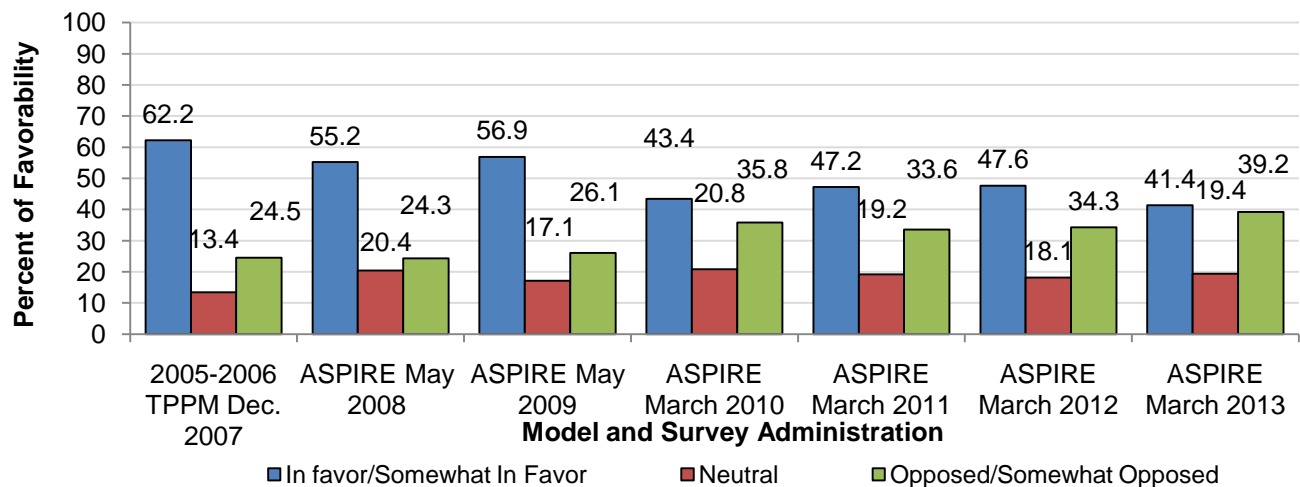### What were the perceptions of respondents regarding the concept of teacher performance pay overall?

- When comparing survey results over the last seven years, there was an overall decrease in the percent of respondents who were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of the concept of teacher performance pay from 69.2 percent in December 2007 to 51.7 percent in March 2013 (Figure 2).

- When comparing survey results over the last seven years, there was an overall increase in the percent of respondents who were *somewhat opposed* or *opposed* to the concept of teacher performance pay from 18.8 percent in December 2007 to 27.8 percent in March 2013 (Figure 2).

- The percentage of campus-based staff *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of the concept of teacher performance-pay increased to 58.6 percent after the 2012 payout and then decreased to 51.7 percent after the 2013 payout (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percent of respondents indicating favorability toward the concept of performance pay over seven years
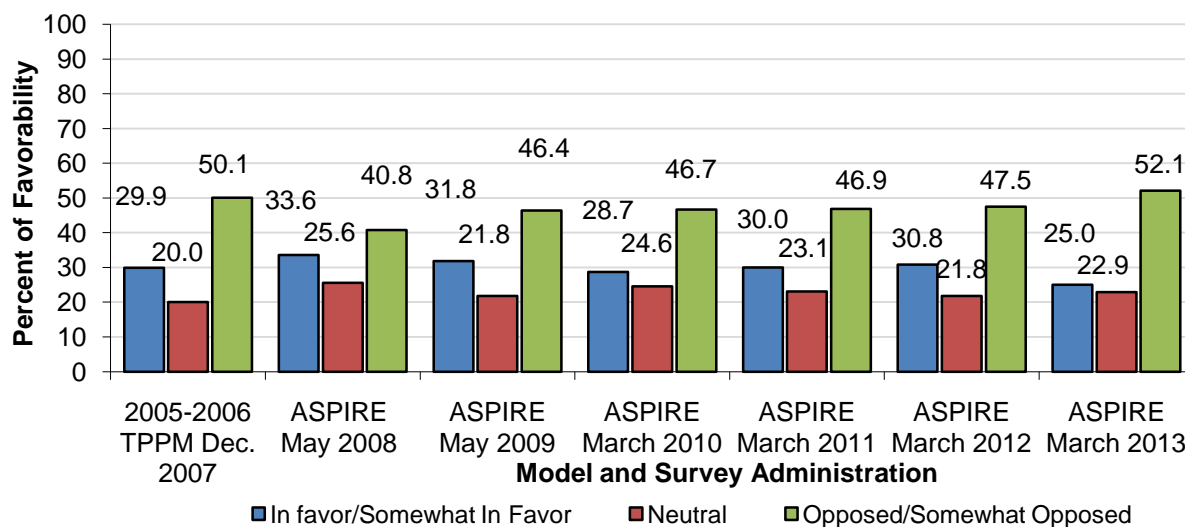
- When respondents on the December 2007 survey administration were asked how favorable they were toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on individual student growth, 62.2 percent indicated they were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor*, compared to 41.4 percent of respondents in March 2013 (Figure 3).

- The percentage of survey respondents indicating that they were *somewhat opposed* or *opposed* toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on individual student growth increased over the 7-year period from 24.5 percent in 2007 to 39.2 percent in 2013 (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Percent of respondents indicating favorability toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on individual student growth over seven years

- Over the past seven years, survey respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions about the concept of performance pay based on passing rates. When comparing overall survey results from 2007 to 2013, there was an increase in the percent of respondents indicating that they were *somewhat opposed* or *opposed* to teacher performance pay based on passing rates by 2.0 percentage points, and the largest percentage of respondents still remains opposed to using passing rates for performance pay (Figure 4, p. 8).

- When comparing overall survey results from 2007 to 2013, the percent of respondents that indicated they were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on passing rates varied from year to year, but decreased overall by 4.9 percentage points (29.9 percent in 2007 to 25.0 percent in 2013) (Figure 4, p. 8).

Figure 4. Percent of respondents indicating favorability toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on passing rates over seven years
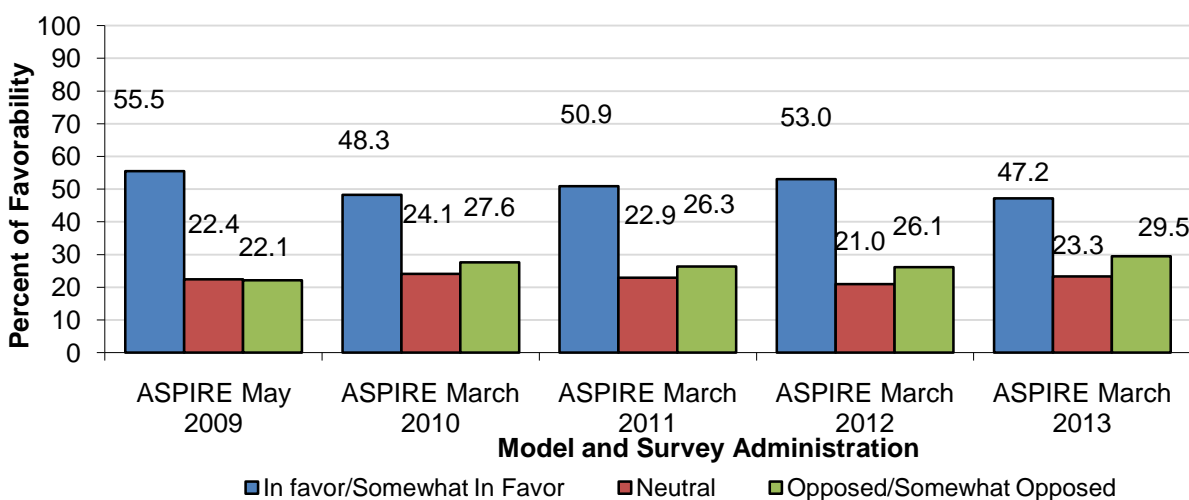

- Over the past five years, survey respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions about the concept of receiving differentiated pay as seen in Figure 5. The percentage of campus-based staff *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of the concept of differentiated pay decreased from 55.5 percent after the 2009 payout to 47.2 percent after the 2013 payout.

- Over the past five years, the percent of respondents indicating that they were *opposed* or *somewhat opposed* to differentiated pay increased from 22.1 percent in 2009 to 29.5 percent in 2013 (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Percent of respondents indicating favorability toward the concept of differentiated pay for the past five years

- To determine whether there were differences in perceptions toward the concept of performance pay overall, comparisons were made between core foundation teachers and non-core instructional staff (December 2007 and March 2013) as summarized in Figure 6. Based on results of the December 2007 survey administration, the percentage of core foundation teachers who were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of teacher performance pay exceeded that of non-core instructional staff by 8.4 percentage points; whereas, March 2013 survey results indicated that the percentage of core foundation teachers who were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of teacher performance pay was less than that of non-core instructional staff by 0.9 percentage point. Favorable responses have decreased overall for both groups over the last seven years.

Figure 6. Percent of respondents indicating favorability toward the concept of teacher performance pay overall by core foundation and non-core instructional staff, December 2007 and March 2013
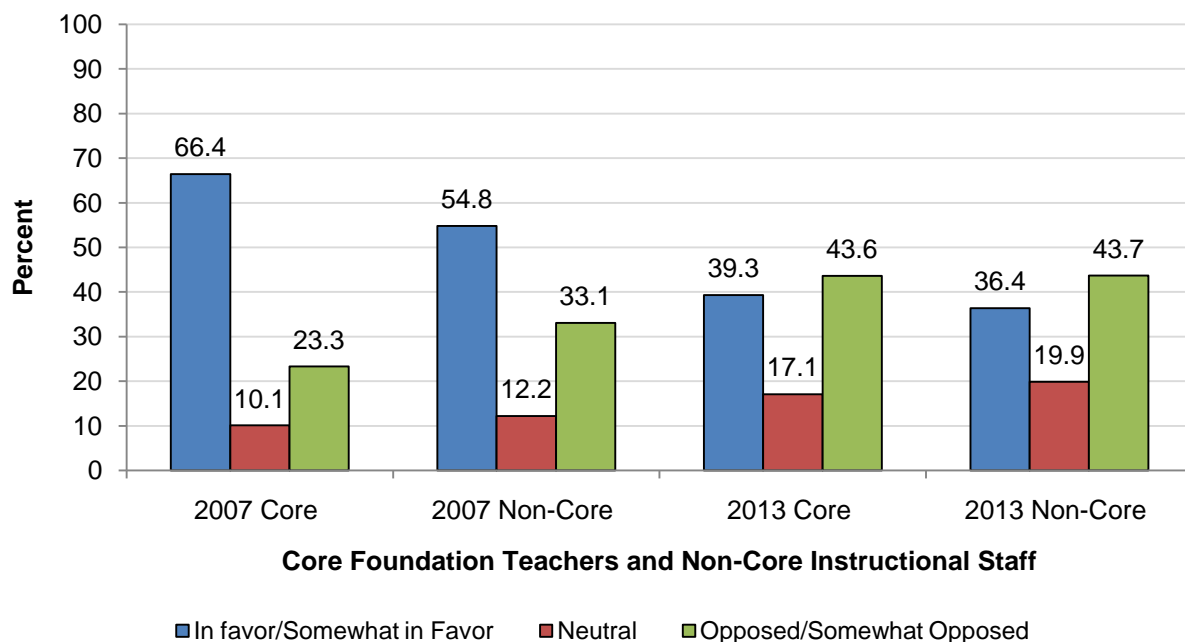

Note: To make 2013 comparable to the 2007 survey administration data, non-instructional employees (ASPIRE Award Categories H and I) (N=325) and principals (ASPIREAward Category J) (N=111) were not included in this analysis.

- Appendix A (p.33) compares differences in perceptions toward the concept of teacher performance pay overall by eligibility category (March 2013). Of the respondents that indicated that they were eligible to receive an award and who indicated a particular eligibility category, 79.2 percent of assistant principals/deans of instruction indicated they were *somewhat in favor* or *in favor* toward the concept of teacher performance pay, reflecting the highest level of agreement of all the eligibility categories. This was followed by principals at 76.6 percent, operational support staff at 57.1 percent, and core foundation teachers, grades 9–12 at 54.6 percent.

- Of the respondents that indicated that they were eligible to receive an award and who indicated a particular eligibility category, 36.5 percent of elective/ancillary teachers indicated that they were *somewhat opposed* or *opposed* toward the concept of teacher performance pay, reflecting the highest level of disagreement to the statement.

- For those respondents that reported they were Not Eligible to receive an ASPIRE award, 47.1 percent were *somewhat in favor* or *in favor* and 32.1 percent were *somewhat opposed* or

opposed toward the concept of teacher performance pay, not notably different from eligible teachers.

- To determine whether there were differences in perceptions toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on individual student growth, comparisons were made between core foundation teachers and non-core instructional staff through time (December 2007 and March 2013). Figure 7 summarizes the results. The percentage of core foundation teachers who were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of teacher performance pay based on individual student growth exceeded that of non-core instructional staff by 11.6 percentage points based on December 2007 results and only 2.9 percentage points based on March 2013 results.

- The percentage of non-core instructional staff that indicated they were *somewhat opposed* or *opposed* toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on individual student growth exceeded that of core foundation teachers by 9.8 percentage points in December 2007 compared to less than one percentage point based on March 2013 results.

Figure 7. Percent of respondents indicating favorability toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on individual student growth by core foundation and non-core instructional staff, December 2007 and March 2013

Core Foundation Teachers and Non-Core Instructional Staff

■ In favor/Somewhat in Favor　■ Neutral　■ Opposed/Somewhat Opposed

Note: To make 2013 comparable to the 2007 survey administration data, non-instructional employees (ASPIRE Award Categories H and I) (N=320) and principals (ASPIREAward Category J) (N=106) were not included in this analysis.

- To determine whether there were differences in perceptions between core foundation teachers and non-core instructional staff over time regarding favorability toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on passing rates, comparisons were made using results from the

December 2007 survey administration and the March 2013 survey administration. Figure 8 summarizes the results. The percent of core foundation teachers who were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of teacher performance pay based on passing rates only exceeded that of non-core instructional staff by 5.3 percentage points in December 2007 and by just 4.4 percentage points in March 2013.

- Approximately 52 percent of core foundation teachers and non-core instructional staff indicated that they were *somewhat opposed* or *opposed* toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on passing rates for the December 2007 survey administration which increased to 54.1 percent of core foundation teachers and 58.0 percent of non-core instructional staff based on survey results from the March 2013 administration (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Percent of respondents indicating favorability toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on passing rates by core foundation and non-core instructional staff, December 2007 and March 2013
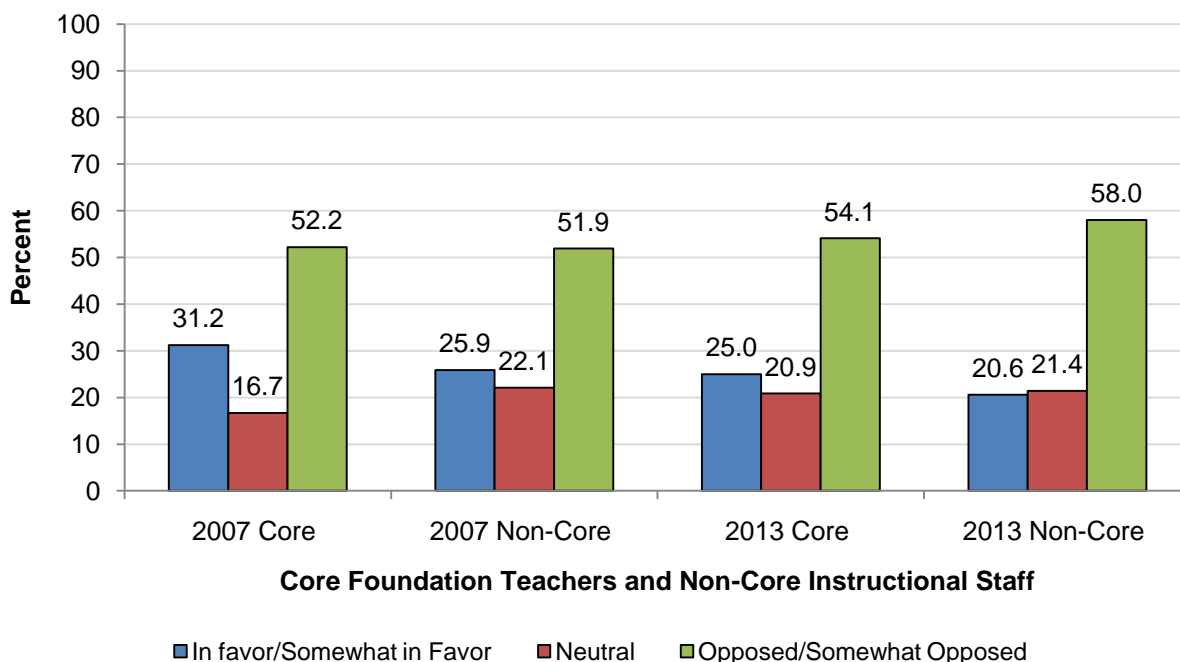

Note: To make 2013 comparable to the 2007 survey administration data, non-instructional employees (ASPIRE Award Categories H and I) (N=319) and Principals (ASPIREAward Category J) (N=110) were not included in this analysis.

- Appendix B (p. 34) summarizes the results by eligibility category regarding perceptions towards the concept of teacher performance pay based on individual student growth, Appendix C (p. 35) summarizes the results by eligibility category regarding perceptions towards the concept of teacher performance pay based on passing rates only, and Appendix D (p. 36) summarizes the results by eligibility category regarding perceptions towards the concept of differentiated pay based on the March 2013 survey administration.

- Of the respondents that indicated that they were eligible to receive an award and who indicated a particular eligibility category, 75.5 percent of principals and 71.4 percent of assistant

principals/deans of instruction indicated they were *somewhat in favor* or *in favor* toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on individual student growth, reflecting the highest levels of agreement of all the eligibility categories (Appendix B, p. 34).

- Of the respondents that indicated that they were eligible to receive an award and who indicated a particular eligibility category, 50.8 percent of elective/ancillary teachers and 47.5 percent of core foundation teachers, grades 9–12 indicated that they were *opposed* or *somewhat opposed* toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on individual student growth (Appendix B, p. 34).

- Of the respondents that indicated that they were eligible to receive an award and who indicated a particular eligibility category, 36.4 percent of principals and 17.7 percent of instructional support staff indicated they were *somewhat in favor* or *in favor* toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on individual passing rates, reflecting the highest and lowest levels of agreement of all the eligibility categories based on March 2013 results (Appendix C, p. 35).

- Of the respondents that indicated that they were eligible to receive an award and who indicated a particular eligibility category, 61.5 percent of instructional support staff and 34.1 percent of teaching assistants indicated that they were *opposed* or *somewhat opposed* toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on passing rates, reflecting the highest and lowest levels of disagreement of all of the eligibility categories (Appendix C, p. 35).

- Of the respondents that indicated that they were eligible to receive an award and who indicated a particular eligibility category, 75.2 percent of principals indicated they were *somewhat in favor* or *in favor* toward the concept of differentiated pay, reflecting the highest level of agreement of all the eligibility categories. This was followed by assistant principals/deans of instruction at 75.0 percent. Elective/ancillary teachers had the lowest levels of agreement with only 34.3 percent *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* (Appendix D, p. 36).

- Of the respondents that indicated that they were eligible to receive an award and who indicated a particular eligibility category, 40.9 percent of elective/ancillary teachers indicated that they were *somewhat opposed* or *opposed* toward the concept of differentiated pay, reflecting the highest level of disagreement to the statement (Appendix D, p. 36).

What were the perceptions of respondents regarding their level of agreement to specific instructional practices or behaviors encouraged by the ASPIRE Award program or practiced over the past several years?

- Over the past five years, respondents were asked whether the ASPIRE Award encouraged specific behaviors. Table 6 (p. 27) compares the responses of respondents for three items to the baseline year. The largest percentage of respondents in 2009 indicated that they *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the ASPIRE Award encouraged them to *continue teaching in the classroom* (47.9 percent), *remain working in HISD* (44.0 percent) (baseline year is 2012), and that the ASPIRE Award encouraged them to *come to work on a daily basis* (47.0 percent). These percentages decreased to 29.2 percent, 29.8 percent, and 30.2 percent, respectively in 2013 survey data.

- Based on survey data collected in 2013, the largest percentage of respondents indicated that over the past several years, they *used standardized data to make instructional decisions* (52.6 percent*) to a great extent* (Table 7, p. 28).

- Based on survey data collected in 2013, 20.4 percent of respondents indicated that did not use value-added data as a diagnostic tool for my classroom, reflecting the largest percentage of respondents (Table 7, p. 28).

- When comparing 2009 to 2013 survey results, respondents indicated that they increased their frequency to a great extent for the six items for which data were available for both years, with differences ranging from 1.9 percentage points (team teaching) to 17.8 percentage points (more frequent use of data) (Table 8, p. 28).

What were the perceptions and level of understanding of respondents regarding the Teacher Performance-Pay Model (TPPM) and ASPIRE Award program?

- Figure 9 summarizes the perceptions of respondents towards the respective performance-pay models through time. When comparing the percentage of respondents that indicated they were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* toward the 2005–2006 Teacher-Performance Pay Model and to the specific ASPIRE Award program for that year, it was first reported at 44.4 percent (December 2007 survey administration), reached a peak of 53.5 percent in 2009, and was most recently reported at 35.1 percent (March 2013 survey administration). These results were after the payout of each model.

- When comparing survey results after each payout, the percentage of respondents that indicated they were *somewhat opposed* or *opposed* toward the 2005–2006 Teacher Performance-Pay Model and to the ASPIRE Award program decreased by 2.2 percentage points over a seven-year period, with the low being in 2009 at 24.0 percent (Figure 9).

- When comparing the percentage of respondents indicating that they were *neutral* toward the model implemented that year, the ASPIRE March 2013 percent was 11.4 percentage points higher than in 2007 (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Percent of survey respondents' favorability toward the performance-pay model paid out that year
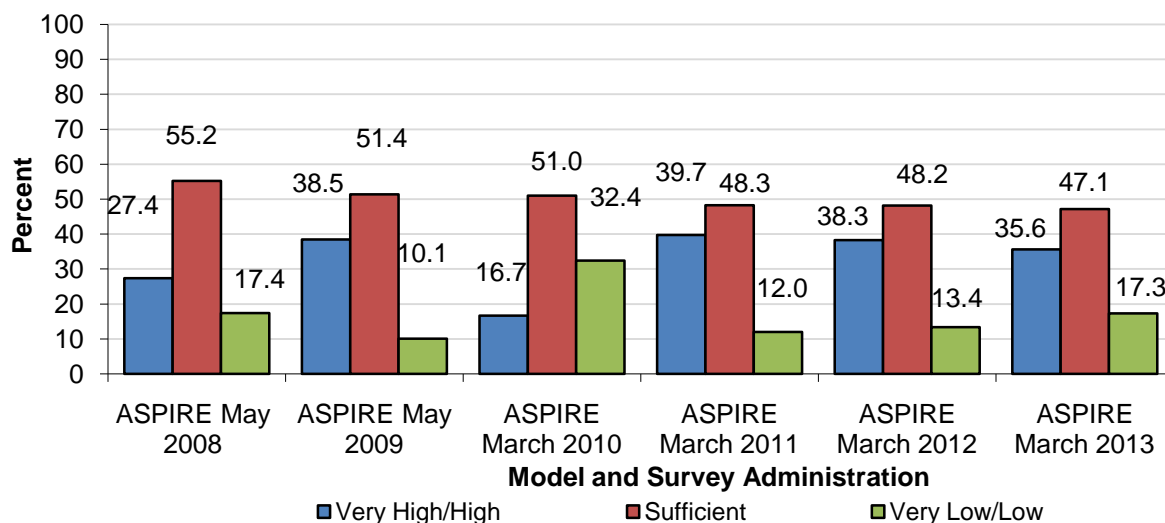

- Figure 10 (p. 14) summarizes the results regarding the level of understanding respondents indicated toward the ASPIRE award models for each of the last six years. When comparing

ASPIRE May 2008 to March 2013 results, there was a difference in the percentage of respondents that indicated their level of understanding of the ASPIRE Award program was *high* or *very high* by 8.2 percentage points.

- When comparing survey results from May 2008 to March 2013, the percentage of respondents that indicated their level of understanding of the ASPIRE Award program was *very low* or *low*, only decreased by 0.1 percentage point, and there was a decrease in the percentage of respondents that indicated their level of understanding of the ASPIRE Award program was *sufficient* (8.1 percentage points) (Figure 10).

- When comparing survey results from March 2012 to March 2013, there was a decrease in the percentage of respondents that indicated their level of understanding of the ASPIRE Award program was *very high* or *high* (2.7 percentage points), as well as an increase in the percentage of respondents that indicated their level of understanding of the ASPIRE Award program was *low/very low* (3.9 percentage points) (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Percent of survey respondents' level of understanding of the the performance-pay model paid out that year

- To determine whether there were differences in perceptions regarding the level of understanding toward ASPIRE, comparisons by eligibility category for ASPIRE March 2013 respondents are summarized in Appendix E (p. 37). Based on respondent data from the eleven eligibility categories, principals and assistant principals indicated a greater level of understanding (74.1 and 56.6, respectively) than core foundation teachers, elective/ancillary teachers, instructional support staff, teaching assistants, operational support staff, and those indicating that they were Not Eligible to receive an ASPIRE award (ranging from 26.9 percent to 38.2 percent).

- On the March 2013 survey, 21.1 percent of respondents indicating that they were Not Eligible, 20.7 percent of the respondents that indicated that they were Category H: Teaching Assistants, and 20.6 percent of Category C: Core Foundation Teachers Grades 9–12, perceived their level of understanding of the ASPIRE Award program as *very low* or *low*, reflecting the greatest lack of understanding for ASPIRE survey respondents (Appendix E, p. 37).

- On the March 2013 survey, at least 30.9 percent of core foundation teachers, elective/ancillary teachers, instructional support staff, and teaching assistants reported a *very high* or *high* level of understanding regarding the ASPIRE Award program (Appendix E, p. 37).

- At least 50.1 percent of early childhood through grade 2, elective/ancillary teachers, instructional support staff, and operational support staff indicated a *sufficient* level of understanding regarding the ASPIRE Award program (Appendix E, p. 37).

What percentage of respondents attended Value-Added/EVAAS training sessions and/or Comparative Growth training sessions, and what was the level of understanding?

- Figure 11 provides a comparison of the percent of respondents receiving training in Value-Added/EVAAS and or Comparative Growth. The majority of respondents reported receiving training in Value-Added/EVAAS (60.4 percent) and Comparative Growth (57.9 percent).

Figure 11. Percent of survey respondents receiving training

- When comparing the perceptions of respondents from May 2009 to March 2013, there was an 8.5 percentage point decrease regarding respondents that rated their level of understanding of the difference between student achievement and academic progress as *very high* or *high* (Figure 12, p. 16).

- Over the past six years, the percent of respondents who rated their level of understanding of the difference between student achievement and academic progress as *very low* or *low* increased overall by 0.8 of a percentage point, although there was an overall decrease of 1.6 percentage points from 2008 to 2012 (Figure 12, p. 16).

Figure 12. Percent of respondents indicating their level of understanding of the difference between student achievement and academic progress over six years

- On the May 2008 ASPIRE Award survey, there were seven items that were designed to determine the level of understanding for different training components related to the ASPIRE Award. Table 9 (p. 29) depicts the comparison of the baseline data collected in May 2008 with data collected in March 2013.

- The percentage of respondents indicating a *high/very high* level of understanding increased for five of the seven components. However, 2013 had roughly half the number of respondents as 2008 (Table 9, p. 29).

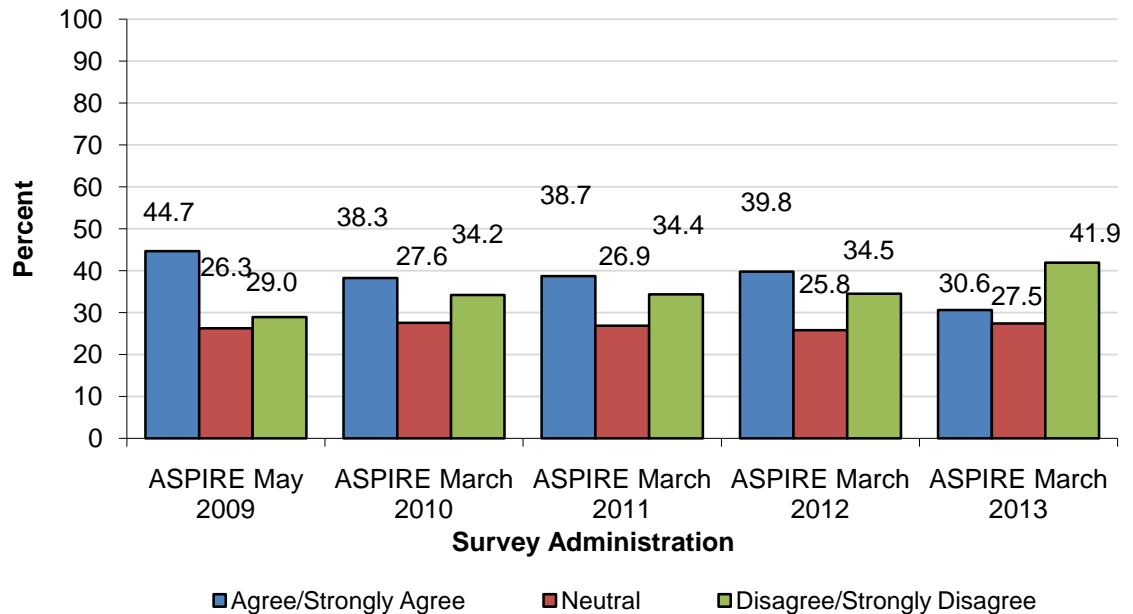- Based on survey data collected in 2008 and 2013, the training component for which the largest percentage of respondents indicated in 2008 and 2013 a *very high* or *high* level of understanding centered on *my understanding of the difference between student achievement and academic progress* (44.5 and 44.7 percent) (Table 9, p. 29).

- Based on survey data collected in 2008 and 2013, the training component for which the largest percentage of respondents indicated in both years a *very low* or *low* level of understanding focused on *how the ASPIRE Awards were calculated/determined* (33.9 percent and 39.6 percent, respectively) (Table 9, p. 29).

- One question asked respondents whether they perceived a connection between classroom instruction and performance-pay results. Figure 13 (p. 17) compares the percent of respondents from the past five years' surveys. Based on the May 2009 and March 2013 survey results, there was a decrease in the percentage of survey respondents who *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that there was a connection between classroom instruction and ASPIRE Award results (44.7 percent and 30.6 percent, respectively).

- For the 2009 survey, 29.0 percent of the respondents *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with the statement that there was a connection between classroom instruction and ASPIRE Award results; however, this increased to 41.9 percent on the March 2013 survey (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Percent of respondents indicating a connection between classroom instruction and ASPIRE Award results over five years

- A cross tabulation was conducted to determine whether there were differences in the level of understanding of value-added analysis regarding respondents who reported receiving value-added analysis training and those that reported receiving no training. Figure 14 (p. 18) summarizes the results.

- For 2013, a higher percentage of respondents who attended value-added analysis training reported a *high* or *very high* understanding of value-added analysis compared to those who did not attend value-added training (42.5 percent and 37.2 percent, respectively) (Figure 14, p. 18).

- For 2013, 87.7 percent of respondents who attended value-added analysis training reported a *sufficient* or higher understanding of value-added analysis compared to those who did not attend value-added training at 84.7 percent (Figure 14, p. 18).

Figure 14. Cross tabulation summarizing the percent of respondents indicating their level of understanding of value-added analysis and attending value-added training

Note: Items that were skipped were coded as missing data and not included in the analysis.

What were the perceptions of respondents regarding their level of compensation and the ASPIRE Award Model?

- There were eight items that were designed to examine the perceptions of respondents regarding the amount of money awarded and the ASPIRE model. Baseline data for five of the items were collected during the May 2009 survey administration, and the results 2010 (three years ago) and 2013 (most recent) are summarized in Table 10 (p. 30).

- On the 2010 and 2013 survey administrations, the statement for which the largest percentage of respondents indicated *strongly agree* or *agree* centered on *continuing the ASPIRE Award and modifying the model on an annual basis* (48.7 percent and 43.7 percent, respectively) (Table 10, p. 30).

- In both administrations, a higher percentage of respondents *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* that their maximum award amount was commensurate with their professional contribution (44.9 percent and 52.2 percent) compared to 28.5 percent and 28.6 percent who were *neutral* and 26.6 percent and 19.1 percent who *agreed* or *strongly agreed* (Table 10, p. 30).

- Perceptions from 2010 to 2013 became less positive and more negative on all eight items (Table 10, p. 30).

- To determine whether there were differences in perceptions about the connection between classroom instruction and performance pay results, comparisons were made by eligibility category and respondents who indicated they were not eligible as summarized in Appendix F (p. 38).

- For 2013, the percentage of principals, and assistant principals/deans of instruction who *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that there was a connection between classroom instruction and the ASPIRE Award re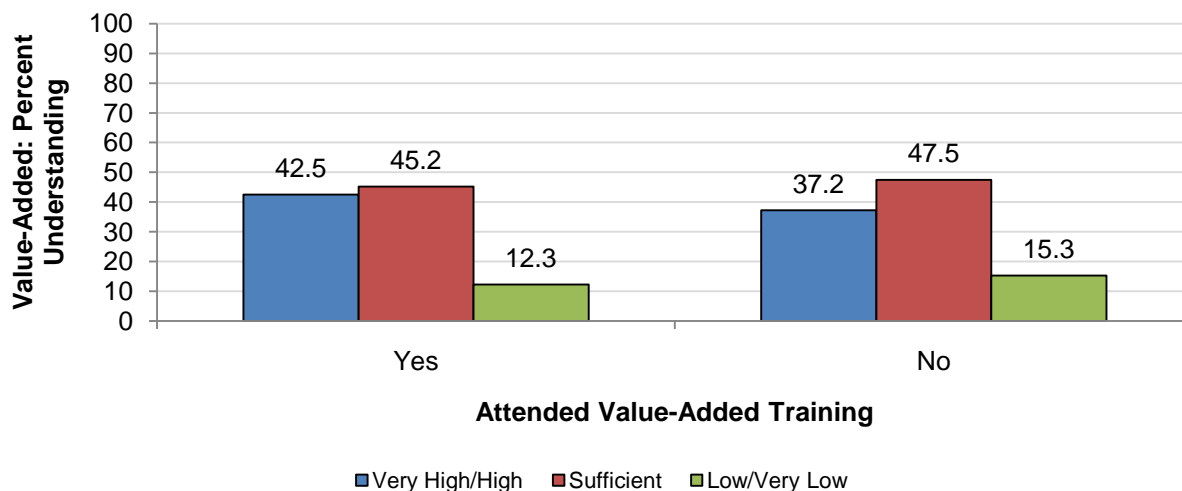sults (47.7 percent and 51.3 percent, respectively) exceeded core foundation teachers (Categories A to E), elective/ancillary teachers, instructional support staff, teaching assistants,

- operational support staff, and those respondents that indicated they were not eligible to receive an award (Appendix F, p. 38).

- The highest percentage of respondents that *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that there was a connection between classroom instruction and the ASPIRE Award results was from core foundation teachers, grades 9–12 (59.0 percent) (Appendix F, p. 38).

- To determine whether there were differences in perceptions regarding the maximum award amount reflecting adequate recognition for efforts to increase student progress, comparisons were made by eligibility category and respondents who indicated they were not eligible as summarized in Appendix G (p.39).

- For 2013, 39.0 percent of principals, 31.5 percent of teaching assistants, and 26.9 percent of assistant principals/deans of instruction *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that their maximum ASPIRE Award adequately recognized their efforts to increase student progress, reflecting the highest levels of agreement compared to the remaining eligibility categories and for those respondents indicating they were not eligible to receive an award (Appendix G, p. 39).

- For 2013, 64.5 percent of elective/ancillary teachers, 60.5 percent of instructional support staff, and 57.1 percent of core foundation teachers, grades 9–12 indicated that they *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* that their maximum ASPIRE Award adequately recognized their efforts to increase student progress (Appendix G, p. 39).

- To determine whether differences existed with regard to the statement, *the maximum award amount for my ASPIRE Award category is commensurate with my professional contribution*, comparisons were made by eligibility category and for those respondents that indicated they were not eligible to receive an award. Appendix H (p. 40) summarizes the results.

- For 2013, 33.0 percent of principals *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that their maximum ASPIRE Award was commensurate with their professional contribution, reflecting the highest levels of agreement compared to the remaining eligibility categories and those respondents indicating they were not eligible to receive an award (Appendix H, p. 40).

- On the 2013 survey administration, 67.0 percent of instructional support staff and 63.0 percent of elective/ancillary teachers indicated that they *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* that their maximum ASPIRE Award was commensurate with their professional contribution (Appendix H, p. 40).

What was the level of effectiveness for communicating information about the ASPIRE Award?

- For the May 2009 and subsequent survey administrations, there were seven items for which respondents rated the level of effectiveness regarding communication about the ASPIRE Award. Two items were added to the 2012 survey, and one item was added to the 2013 survey regarding effective communication. The responses are summarized in Table 11 (p. 31) using May 2009 as the baseline year.

- When comparing results from May 2009 to March 2013, five of the seven areas of communication showed decreases. *Knowing when specific information about my ASPIRE Award was available* reflected the area of communication for which respondents indicated an increase for effectiveness (0.7 percentage point), and there was no change from 2009 to 2013 for *understanding that formal inquiries were required to be submitted by a specific deadline* (65.4 percent) (Table 11, p. 31).

- Based on the results of the May 2009 and 2013 surveys, 70.1 percent and 69.6 percent of respondents indicated that communication was *moderately effective* or *very effective* for *knowing where to find information about my specific ASPIRE Award*, reflecting the highest percentages for effectiveness for 2009 and 2013, respectively (Table 11, p. 31).

- Based on the March 2013 surveys, the areas for which the highest percentage of respondents perceived communications to be *not effective* or *somewhat effective* focused on *providing clear explanations about value-added calculations* (52.7 percent) and *providing clear explanations about comparative growth calcuations* (51.9 percent) (Table 11, p. 31).

- On the March 2013 survey, five questions were designed to rate the effectiveness of specific types of communication. The results are summarized in Table 12 (p. 31).

- Based on the results of the March 2013 survey, 44.3 percent of respondents reported the *ASPIRE e-mail* as being *very effective*, reflecting the highest percentage for effectiveness when compared to the other four venues used to communicate information about the ASPIRE Award program. This was followed by the *ASPIRE website* (37.7 percent) (Table 12, p. 31).

- When comparing the five different venues for communicating information about the ASPIRE Award program, 11.6 percent of respondents (employees) perceived *Connect-Ed/School Messenger* as being *not effective*, and 10.5 percent of respondents indicated *don't know* regarding their perceptions of *Connect-Ed/School Messenger* (Table 12, p. 31).

What were the recommendations for changing the 2011–2012 ASPIRE Award suggested by respondents?

- Out of a total of 3,603 respondents on the March 2013 survey, 1,654 or 45.9 percent of the respondents provided at least one response for recommending changes to the 2011–2012 ASPIRE Award, whereas 54.1 percent of respondents did not provide any recommendations for changing the model. Table 13 (p. 32) summarizes the frequency and percent of responses.

- A total of 2.9 percent and 2.3 percent of the 2,229 responses reflected that no changes were needed to the model or the response was simply, *No Comment*. The top seven emergent categories reflected approximately 61.0 percent of the responses.

- The predominant suggestion centered on the allocation of money (18.6 percent). Some respondents indicated that STAAR teachers or teachers in tested grade levels, teachers providing instruction to low-income students and/or at-risk students, and teachers providing instruction at low-performing schools should receive more money. Alternatively, respondents indicated that elective/ancillary teachers, special education teachers, Career and Technology teachers, librarians, nurses, early childhood teachers to grade 2 teachers (ASPIRE Award Category D) should receive more money. Some respondents indicated that administrators should not receive any performance-pay money, their performance pay should be capped, or indicated that payouts for administrators were disproportionate in comparison to payouts for teachers. One respondent stated, "Limit the award to teachers only. They are the ones on the front lines having an umbrella of students, parents, and administrators to keep satisfied and their pay has historically been one of the worst in America compared to what they do every day for students, parents, and administrators…" (Table 13, p. 32).

- A total of 234 responses, or 10.5 percent indicated that the ASPIRE Award be discontinued. One respondent cited, "I would get rid of it. The ASPIRE Award Model is causing the opposite effect of

what you are hoping for-it is discouraging teachers to remain in the classrooms. There are many other factors that affect student performance that teachers have no control of, such as home environment. The district continues to implement something new every year, before we even get a chance to see what works and what does not work. The district continues to spend large amounts of money on resources and training that are very unnecessary and ineffective. The morale amongst teachers is the lowest I have seen since I started to work for this district [sic]." Another respondent stated, "Eliminate the award model and give teachers pay increases commensurate with their years of experience and dedication as well as student growth. Having a revolving TFA door every two to four years negates building a community with the school culture [sic]" (Table 13, p. 32).

- Approximately 10 percent of the responses centered on suggestions for performance measures or criteria for the model. Elective/ancillary teachers, special education teachers, early childhood through grade 2 teachers, instructional support staff (i.e. counselors, librarians, nurses) teaching assistants, teacher aids, and career and technology teachers indicated that they wanted performance measures developed that reflected their direct impact on the students or measures that showed how their job performance impacted campus performance. Other performance measures that were suggested included parent input, principal input, student input, observations of sustainable teaching strategies and best practices, basing performance on achievement not growth, and using beginning of the year assessments and end of the year assessments. Other suggestions included having less emphasis on standardized testing, use final products for fine arts courses, professional development hours, classroom observations, and number of preps (Table 13, p. 32).

- Six percent of responses centered on eligibility rules/categorization and reinstituting the attendance bonus. Respondents indicated that plant operators, janitors, food service, and hourly employees should be eligible for an award. With regard to eligibility rules, respondents indicated that the attendance rule should allow for more days absent or eliminate the requirement. Regarding categorization, respondents indicated they would like to be categorized based on their job duties as opposed to their job title (Table 13, p. 32).

- Approximately 6 percent of respondents identified factors impacting growth or the calculation of growth. Although a small percentage of respondents (6 percent) made statements about factors they felt impacted student growth, their statements reflect their misunderstandings and or misconceptions. For example, transitioning from Spanish to English was cited as a factor that could impact growth. For transitioning students, one respondent cited, "I would like consideration to be taken for the kids who transition from the Spanish to the English. They need time to grow and one year is not enough. The transition teacher's scores may not be as high as the regular classes, but these kids make big leaps after being in an English classroom 2 years. Like I said, one year is not going to show tremendous growth." SAS EVAAS adjusts the student scores and adjusts the teacher gain index after analysis to ensure that no teacher is disadvantaged. Although the supporting document is available on the ASPIRE portal, this information clearly needs to be communicated in a more effective manner. Regarding special education students, one respondent indicated the following, "Personally, I would change the way special education students are factored into a teacher's scores. There are too many variables when it comes to special education children. Some may never get past a certain level, others it may take several years. It is not fair to teachers to have all of these in the mix. We have a student who is blind and has a degenerative brain disease. She will be fortunate to live to her 20th birthday. Her memory is poor and unreliable. If she maintains, we are doing great. With her diagnosis, why should her

scores count for her teacher? The playing field is in no way even or fair." The special education student described above would have taken STAAR-M or STAAR-Alt. These scores are not included in EVAAS calculations (Table 13, p. 32).

- Approximately five percent of the responses centered on statements that indicated their award was not commensurate with their professional contribution. Comments provided by respondents indicated the following: "There must be a way for someone that has brought their seniors to internships and industry certifications to receive the ASPIRE Award monies;" "For elementary schools, I believe the science lab teachers should be considered in another category besides ancillary. The amount of time planning with 5th grade teachers and preparing students for the Science STAAR test is much greater than that of music teachers and art teachers. I feel science lab teachers are team teaching with the 5th grade classroom teachers in the subject of science. To receive the same payout as the rest of the ancillary staff is not fair and does not motivate an educator to stay in that position." This reflects another misconception. Elementary school lab teachers of core foundation courses can and should be linked to students if the following conditions apply: 1) The lab teacher is responsible for at least 20% of the curriculum instruction (e.g. one class period a week); 2) The lab teacher provides content grades (e.g. a percentage score to be used in the overall letter grade; and 3) The lab teacher plans and conducts lessons with the students. (Table 13, p. 32).

- Approximately 5 percent centered on making the model equitable, transparent, and inclusive so that all employees were treated equally, compensated equally, and/or had the opportunity to receive the same amount of award as the top dollar earners. Elective/ancillary teachers, special education teachers, early childhood through grade 2, instructional support (i.e. counselors, librarians, and literacy coach), teaching assistants, and operational support staff (i.e. registrars, computer network specialists, and attendance specialists) were not eligible to receive the same level of compensation as core teachers. They felt "de-valued" by the way the model was designed. Some respondents indicated that the differences in eligibility and compensation were divisive for campuses. Moreover, respondents indicated that student success was a team effort, but the contribution of the team was not being equally valued for all members (Table 13, p. 32).

Discussion

The purpose of the 2011–2012 ASPIRE Award Survey was to gain insight regarding the level of knowledge and perceptions of Houston Independent School District (HISD) teachers and staff after seven years of implementation of growth-based performance pay in HISD, as well as their perceptions regarding the overall concept of performance pay. Additionally, participants had the opportunity to provide recommendations for making changes to the current model and for helping the district develop new teacher career pathways and a differentiated compensation system that rewards, recognizes, and retains effective teachers. This annual survey serves as a mechanism to gather valuable feedback from program participants.

External factors, such as policy decisions, roll-out of a new model, or roll-out of any new model component may have influenced perceptions of growth-based performance pay since its inception. Although all survey administrations followed the January payout, it is important to understand that eleven months had elapsed from the time of payout until the first survey administration (December 2007). Changes were instituted in the pay for performance model, communication about the model was enhanced, and training on the new model had commenced. Therefore, perceptions about the 2005–2006 Teacher Performance-Pay Model (TPPM) may have been influenced by anticipating these positive changes.

On February 12, 2010 the Board of Education approved using value-added data as the 34th criterion to evaluate teacher effectiveness. Questions and uncertainties arose regarding the impact of this policy for teachers. When the 2008–2009 ASPIRE Award Survey was launched on February 23, 2010 amid this policy change, sufficient time had not elapsed to fully address questions or correct misconceptions. It is highly likely that the climate of concern that was evident among teachers during that time impacted their responses to the survey items. This is apparent in the decreases across the board in almost all items from 2009 to 2010.

During the spring of 2011, budgetary shortfalls at the state level may have impacted perceptions and response rates during survey administration. Campuses were required to develop different budgetary plans, depending on the estimated shortfall in state funding, that would result in the reduction in campus staff. Although final announcements were not made until April, an environment of speculation and uncertainty developed throughout all levels of the district.

There were several factors that may have impacted the response rates for the 2012 survey. These included: multiple surveys targeting campus-based staff, including the ASPIRE Award and Career Pathways and Compensation Survey, administration of the new state assessment, State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), and rolling out the new teacher appraisal and development system. Teachers and other campus-based personnel were more focused and concerned about the new state assessment and the new teacher appraisal system. The 2012–2013 school year marked the first year of inclusion of value-added and comparative growth measures formally introduced into the new teacher appraisal and development system.

There have been four key areas that have shown mixed results over the past four to seven years. First, when comparing the survey response rate for December 2007 to the response rate for March 2013, there was an overall increase from 11.4 percent to 18.9 percent, but a decrease of 31.9 percentage points from May 2009, 18.8 percentage points from March 2010, and 11.4 percentage points from March 2011. By capturing a higher percentage of respondents, perceptions and feedback can be generalized to a greater degree.

Another key area, support for the program, showed mixed results over the seven-year period. Although the percentage of campus-based staff *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of the concept of teacher performance pay decreased from 69.2 percent after the 2007 payout to 55.2 percent after the 2010 payout, this increased to 58.6 after the 2012 payout, but then decreased to 51.7 percent after the 2013 payout. When respondents were asked about their perceptions of the award model for that year, 44.4 percent of respondents were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of the 2005–2006 Teacher Performance-Pay Model (December 2007) compared to the peak of 53.3 percent who were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of the ASPIRE Award program in May 2009. Alternatively, the majority of respondents have not been *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of the ASPIRE Award program over the past four years.

A related measure, support for the concept of differentiated pay, showed mixed results. Baseline data were collected during the May 2009 survey administration. Approximately 56.0 percent of respondents indicated they were in favor or somewhat in favor of differentiated pay in 2009, and this decreased to 48.3 percent in March 2010, but increased to 50.9 percent in March 2011, followed by an increase to 53.0 percent in March 2012, but then decreased to 47.2 percent in March 2013.

The final key area centered on training sessions for value-added analysis and/or comparative growth. Historically, training courses have been offered on-line so that staff could complete the modules at their own pace. In addition, face-to-face training sessions were held around the district, and live webinars were offered to help teachers avoid travel and to be archived for future use. The majority of respondents attended value-added training (60.4 percent) and/or comparative growth training (57.9 percent) in 2012–2013.

Collecting feedback about effective communications was undertaken over the past five years to identify areas for improvement as well as areas that were effective. Based on survey results from 2009 to 2013, there was a decrease in effectiveness in five of the seven areas for which data were available, and there was no change for *Understanding that formal inquiries were required to be submitted by a specific deadline*. However, the newly added items, *providing clear explanations about the award model*, *providing clear explanations about value-added calculations*, and *providing clear explanations about comparative growth calculations* further indicate challenging areas for effective communication. Baseline data indicate that 47.9 percent of respondents felt that communication was *not effective* or *somewhat effective* for *providing clear explanations about the award model*, 52.7 percent of respondents indicated that communications were *not effective* or *somewhat effective* for *providing clear explanations about value-added calculations*, and 51.9 percent of respondents indicated that providing clear explanations about comparative growth calculations was *not effective* or *somewhat effective*. As value-added data and comparative growth data will now factor into all core teachers' appraisals, clear communication as well as effective training concerning them is a priority.

When looking at the respondents by eligibility category, differences exist regarding how the ASPIRE Award program is perceived and the level of knowledge concerning the program. Administrators, such as principals and assistant principals/deans of instruction, indicate favorable perceptions concerning performance pay and their level of knowledge. Core teachers have more positive perceptions than elective/ancillary teachers. The differences in perceptions between core foundation teachers and non-core instructional staff have declined through time when looking at favorability in performance pay, student growth, and passing rates.

For a performance pay system to be sustainable, the incentive amount has to be meaningful to all participants. Only 33 percent of principals *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that their maximum ASPIRE Award amount ($13,500) was commensurate with their professional contribution, the highest percent for any category. Of the eleven eligibility categories, instructional support staff and elective/ancillary teachers had the lowest level of agreement with regard to their maximum award amounts ($1,350 and $2,000) at 12.2 percent and 12.4 percent, respectively. For those respondents that indicated they were not eligible to receive an award, only 15.1 percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that their maximum ASPIRE Award amount was commensurate with their professional contribution. On the 2013 survey, allocation of funding was the largest emergent category, which included responses about increasing the award amount. Moreover, respondents indicated that core special education teachers–no value-added report ($5,500), elective/ancillary teachers ($2,000), instructional support staff ($1,350), teaching assistants ($1,150), and operational support staff ($500) did not receive an award commensurate with their professional contribution.

The survey administered after each payout has served as a vehicle for respondents to recommend changes to the current model. Feedback is particularly valued to improve the ASPIRE Award program. As one respondent stated, "I like the program. I like being rewarded for my hard work as a teacher. My students are growing at tremendous rates."

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Table 1. Six Year Summary of Survey Response Rates by Pay for Performance Model

Model and Year	Date of Survey Administration	Population	Sample	# of Respondents	Response Rate
2005–2006 TPPM	December 2007	16,296	-	1,851	11.4
2006–2007 ASPIRE Award	May 2008	16,504	-	6,383	38.7
2007–2008 ASPIRE Award	May 2009	16,907	8,073	4,102	50.8
2008–2009 ASPIRE Award	March 2010	19,312	-	7,284	37.7
2009–2010 ASPIRE Award	March 2011	20,048	-	6,083	30.3
2010-2011 ASPIRE Award	March 2012	18,747	-	3,441	18.4
2011–2012 ASPIRE Award	March 2013	19,072	-	3,603	18.9

Table 2. Number and Percent of Survey Respondents by Categorization, 2010–2011 and 2011–20112 ASPIRE Award, March 2011 and March 2012 Survey Administrations

	2010–2011		2011–2012	
Category	N	%	N	%
A. Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–6, Self-Contained	235	8.1	264	8.9
B. Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–8, Departmentalized	437	15.0	490	16.5
C. Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 9–12	276	9.5	316	10.6
D. Core Foundation Teachers, Early Childhood Through Grade 2	464	15.9	494	16.6
E. Core Special Education Teachers-No Value-Added Report	170	5.8	186	6.3
F. Elective/Ancillary Teachers	363	12.5	368	12.4
G. Instructional Support Staff	278	9.5	221	7.4
H. Teaching Assistants	203	7.0	170	5.7
I. Operational Support Staff	318	10.9	262	8.8
J. Principal	93	3.2	117	3.9
K. Assistant Principals/Deans of Instruction	74	2.5	80	2.7
Total	**2,911**	**100.0**	**2,968**	**100.0**

Table 3. Background Characteristics of 2010–20111 ASPIRE Award Survey Respondents

	N	%
Highest Degree Held		
High School	158	4.4
Some College	246	6.8
Associate's Degree	103	2.9
Bachelor's Degree	1,154	32.1
Some Graduate School	534	14.9
Master's Degree	1,292	35.9
Doctoral Degree	107	3.0
Average experience in HISD	12.8	
Average experience at current campus	8.2	
Average experience in current assignment	7.2	

Table 4. Number and Percent of Respondents Employed in HISD, Eligibility Status, Award Status, and Strand II Award Status

Item	Yes	No	N
Were you employed in the Houston Independent School District during the 2011–2012 school year?	91.0	9.0	3,524
Were you eligible to receive an ASPIRE Award for the 2011–2012 school year?	83.3	16.7	3,134
Did you receive an ASPIRE Award for the 2011–2012 school year (paid out in January 2013)?	59.9	40.1	3,084
If you were in Category A–E, did you receive an ASPIRE Award under Strand II?	64.2	35.8	1,102

Table 5. Teaching in a Critical Shortage Area: Response Count and Response Percentage, 2011–2012

Critical Shortage Area	N	%
Special Education	378	11.3
Bilingual Education	389	11.7
English as a Second Language (ESL)	403	12.1
Mathematics (Grades 6–12)	164	4.9
Science (Grades 6–12)	162	4.9
Spanish (Grades 6–12)	42	1.3
N/A	1,798	53.9
Total	**3,336**	**100.0**

Table 6. Number and Percent of Survey Respondents Indicating Their Level of Agreement for which the ASPIRE Award Encouraged Specific Behaviors, May 2009 and March 2013

	N		Strongly Disagree/ Disagree %		Neutral %		Strongly Agree/Agree %	
The ASPIRE Award encourages me to:	Base-line*	2013	Base-line*	2013	Base-line*	2013	Base-line*	2013
Continue teaching in the classroom	2,750	2,001	26.3	44.4	25.7	26.3	47.9	29.2
Remain working in HISD	1,829	2,028	31.7	44.2	24.2	26.0	44.0	29.8
Come to work on a daily basis	3,222	2,034	27.3	44.0	25.7	25.8	47.0	30.2

*Baseline year for the item *Remain working in HISD* was 2012; it was 2009 for all other items.

Table 7. Number and Percent of Survey Respondents Indicating the Frequency of Selected Instructional Practices, March 2013

Over the past several years, I have	N	Not At All %	Somewhat %	Moderately %	To A Great Extent %
Increase the amount of time I spend collaborating with my colleagues	2,032	10.4	14.2	29.9	45.4
Use standardized data to make instructional decisions	1,939	6.5	13.7	27.2	52.6
Use value-added data to make instructional decisions	1,862	15.7	15.4	29.7	39.2
Use TAKS-STAAR data as a diagnostic tool for my classroom	1,732	12.8	15.3	26.3	45.7
Use Stanford data as a diagnostic tool for my classroom	1,783	17.9	16.2	25.9	40.0
Use value-added data as a diagnostic tool for my classroom	1,817	20.4	16.7	29.2	33.7
Increase the amount of time spent in professional development	1,998	13.8	15.5	32.2	38.5

Table 8. Number and Percent of Survey Respondents Indicating Increased Participation in Specific Areas of Teacher/Staff Collaboration over the Past Several Years, May 2009 and March 2013

To what extent have you increased your participation in the following areas of teacher/staff collaboration as a result of the ASPIRE Award?	N		Not At All %		Somewhat %		Moderately %		To a Great Extent %	
	2009	2013	2009	2013	2009	2013	2009	2013	2009	2013
More frequent use of data	2,954	1,991	19.3	6.8	17.6	14.6	32.2	29.8	31.0	48.8
Incorporation of core-area topics/TEKS in non-core courses	2,653	1,754	22.2	10.8	15.0	14.0	33.9	31.2	28.9	44.0
Vertical team meetings/planning	2,793	1,939	23.3	15.5	16.1	18.9	30.1	31.1	30.4	34.5
Subject level meetings/planning	2,806	1,945	21.4	9.5	13.7	13.9	28.3	28.4	36.6	48.1
Grade level meetings/planning	2,803	1,946	21.6	11.3	14.2	13.6	27.0	27.2	37.2	47.9
Team teaching	2,599	1,760	29.2	28.7	15.3	16.2	26.9	24.7	28.6	30.5

Table 9. Number and Percent of Survey Respondents Indicating Their Level of Understanding for the ASPIRE Award Program and Its Components for the 2006–2007 and 2011–2012 ASPIRE Award, May 2008 and March 2013 Survey Administrations

Please rate your level of understanding to the following items:			Very Low/Low		Sufficient		Very High/High	
	N		%		%		%	
	2008	2013	2008	2013	2008	2013	2008	2013
My understanding of ASPIRE is:	5,882	3,046	17.4	17.3	55.2	47.1	27.4	35.6
My understanding of value-added analysis is:	5,844	2,997	21.3	21.8	50.0	45.2	28.7	33.0
My understanding of the difference between student achievement and academic progress is:	5,848	3,005	11.6	12.4	43.9	42.8	44.5	44.7
My understanding of how value-added information can help me as an educator is:	5,832	2,912	18.3	21.1	45.1	44.2	36.6	34.6
My understanding of how to read/interpret value-added reports is:	5,817	2,938	23.7	22.2	47.0	45.1	29.3	32.7
My understanding of the different strands of the ASPIRE Award Program was:	5,835	2,979	23.2	25.7	48.7	44.9	28.1	29.3
My understanding of how the ASPIRE Awards were calculated/determined is:	5,852	2,971	33.9	39.6	43.9	38.7	22.2	21.7

Table 10. Number and Percent of Survey Respondents Indicating Their Perceptions About Award Amounts and the ASPIRE Award Model, March 2010 and March 2013								
			Strongly Disagree/ Disagree		Neutral		Agree/ Strongly Agree	
	N		%		%		%	
	2010	2013	2010	2013	2010	2013	2010	2013
There is a connection between classroom instruction and ASPIRE Award results.	5,428	2,928	34.2	41.9	27.6	27.5	38.3	30.6
The maximum award amount for my ASPIRE Award category adequately recognizes my efforts to increase student progress.	5,274	2,852	44.4	50.1	26.5	28.6	29.1	21.3
The maximum award amount for my ASPIRE Award category encourages me to remain in a campus-based position.	5,319	2,869	37.2	46.8	32.4	31.2	30.3	21.9
The maximum award amount for my ASPIRE Award category is commensurate with my professional contribution.	5,325	2,888	44.9	52.2	28.5	28.6	26.6	19.1
The ASPIRE Award is a fair way of acknowledging a teacher's impact on student growth.	5,417	2,952	46.6	50.1	26.6	27.1	26.7	22.8
The formal inquiry process allowed me the opportunity to question the accuracy of my award.	4,812	2,527	22.8	27.9	39.7	41.0	37.5	31.2
The ASPIRE Award should be continued in its current form.	5,408	2,928	45.2	43.6	31.5	31.8	23.3	24.6
The ASPIRE Award should be continued with modifications incorporated on an annual basis.	5,367	2,916	18.9	24.2	32.4	32.1	48.7	43.7

Table 11. Number and Percent of Survey Respondents Indicating Their Perceptions About Communicating Effectively, May 2009 and March 2013						
	N		Not Effective/ Somewhat Effective		Moderately Effective/ Very Effective	
	2009	2013	2009	2013	2009	2013
Knowing where to find information about the ASPIRE Award in general.	3,383	3,047	32.6	35.1	67.4	64.9
Knowing when specific information about my ASPIRE Award was available.	3,371	3,041	31.5	30.9	68.4	69.1
Knowing where to find information about my specific ASPIRE Award.	3,367	3,021	30.0	30.4	70.1	69.6
Knowing how to interpret and understand my specific ASPIRE Award Notice.	3,368	3,024	38.6	40.3	61.4	59.7
Understanding the difference between submitting a question by e-mail versus submitting a formal inquiry about your final award.	3,362	3,024	38.6	39.2	61.4	60.8
Understanding where to find information about the inquiry process on the portal.	3,364	3,021	36.4	37.7	63.7	62.3
Understanding that formal inquiries were required to be submitted by a specific deadline.	3,352	3,021	34.7	34.6	65.4	65.4
Providing clear explanations about the award model.	-	3,028	-	47.9	-	52.1
Providing clear explanations about value-added calculations.	-	2,998	-	52.7	-	47.3
Providing clear explanations about comparative growth calculations	-	3,011	-	51.9	-	48.1

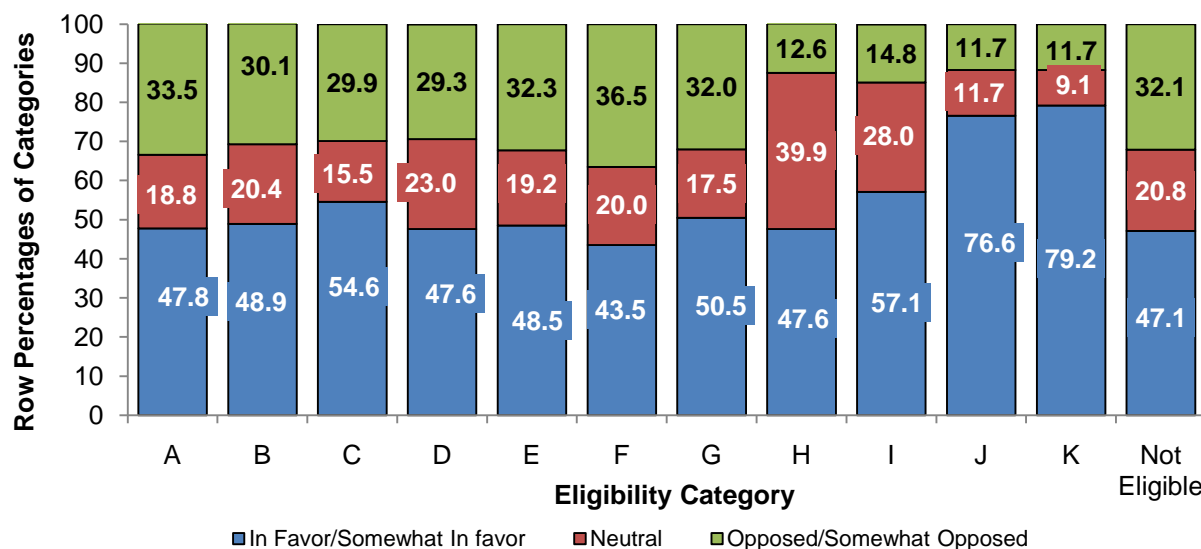| Table 12. Number and Percent of Survey Respondents Indicating Their Perceptions About the Level of Effectiveness for Different Types of Communication, March 2013						
	N	Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Moderately Effective	Very Effective	Don't Know
Connect-Ed/School Messenger	3,032	11.6	19.5	26.6	31.8	10.5
ASPIRE Newsletter	3,031	9.5	21.8	30.1	31.5	7.1
Memos (electronic format)	3,004	10.1	21.2	29.1	29.1	10.6
ASPIRE e-mail	3,025	5.8	17.6	27.9	44.3	4.4
ASPIRE website	3,015	7.9	19.4	29.2	37.7	5.8

Table 13. Number and Percent of Responses for Recommended Changes to the 2011–2012 ASPIRE Award, March 2013	N	%
Allocate more money for awards/allocate money for specified group(s)/reallocate money so that particular groups benefit and designated groups receive no award or their award is capped/when money is allocated	414	18.6
Discontinue the Award	234	10.5
Performances measures or criteria	219	9.8
Eligibility Rules (make plant operators, janitors, food service, and hourly employees eligible/Attendance Rule (more days/eliminate)/Attendance Bonus (reinstitute the bonus)	133	6.0
Factors impacting growth or the calculation of growth	131	5.9
Award is not commensurate with professional contribution	113	5.1
Make the model equitable, transparent, inclusive, and fair	113	5.1
Improve communications about the award/provide clearer explanations about the model and value added calculations/ provide feedback for teachers based on their data/more timely communications about changes in the award model	107	4.8
Unintended consequences (divisive, cheating, free riding)	102	4.6
Individual Performance/Grade/Team/Dept./Campus Award	81	3.6
Reward All Teachers/Staff	71	3.2
Calculate/Formula (change how award is calculated/revise the formula)	68	3.1
Equally Distributed	67	3.0
Pay Raise	66	3.0
No changes	64	2.9
N/A	51	2.3
Student Growth/Passing & Student Growth	51	2.3
Don't Know/Not Sure	45	2.0
Miscellaneous	40	1.8
Training	24.	1.1
Expectations	17	0.8
Payout Timeline	11	0.5
All of it	7	0.3
Total Responses	**2,229**	**100.0**

CROSS TABULATION SUMMARIZING THE PERCENT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS INDICATING THE MAXIMUM FAVORABILITY TOWARD THE CONCEPT OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE PAY BY ELIGIBILITY CATEGORY, MARCH 2013
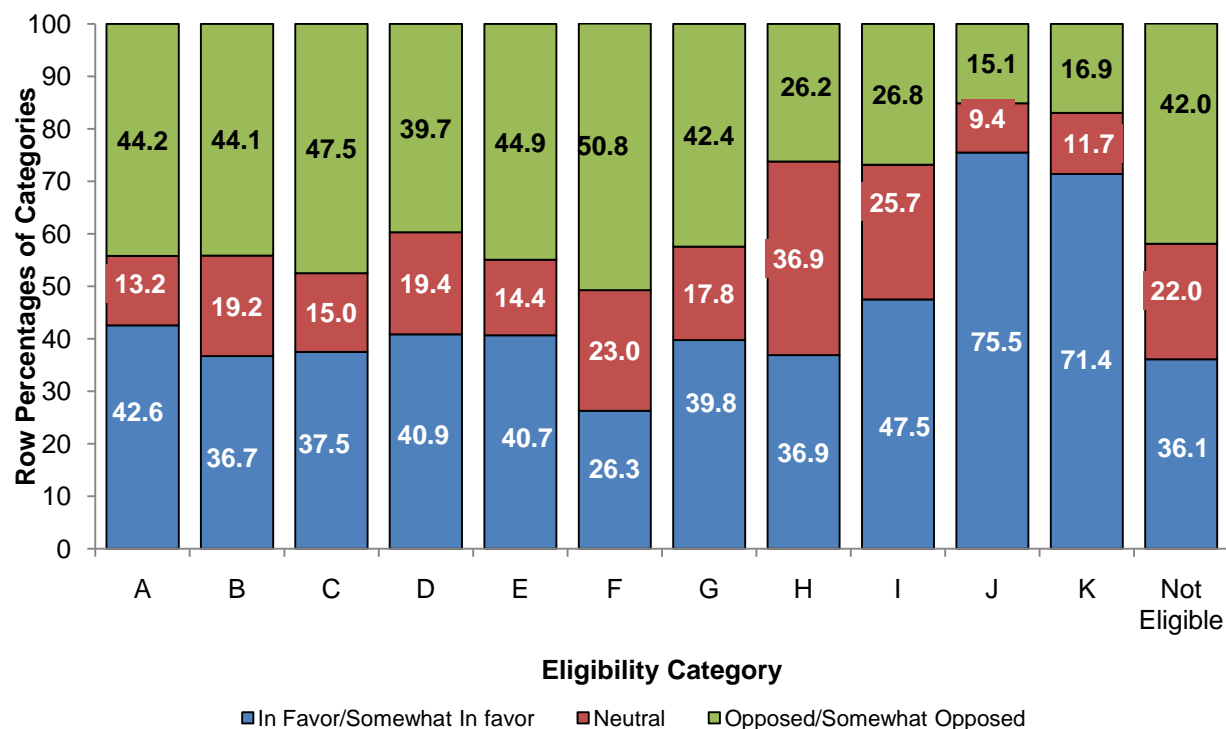

Key:

Category A: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–6, Self Contained

Category B: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–8, Departmentalized

Category C: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 9–12

Category D: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades Early Childhood through Grade 2

Category E: Core Special Education Teachers–No Value-Added Report

Category F: Elective/Ancillary Teachers

Category G: Instructional Support Staff

Category H: Teaching Assistants

Category I: Operational Support Staff

Category J: Principal

Category K: Assistant Principal/Deans of Instruction

Not Eligible

Note: Items that were skipped were coded as missing data and not included in the analysis.

CROSS TABULATION SUMMARIZING THE PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS INDICATING FAVORABILITY TOWARD THE CONCEPT OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE PAY BASED ON INDIVIDUAL STUDENT GROWTH BY ELIGIBILITY CATEGORY, MARCH 2013
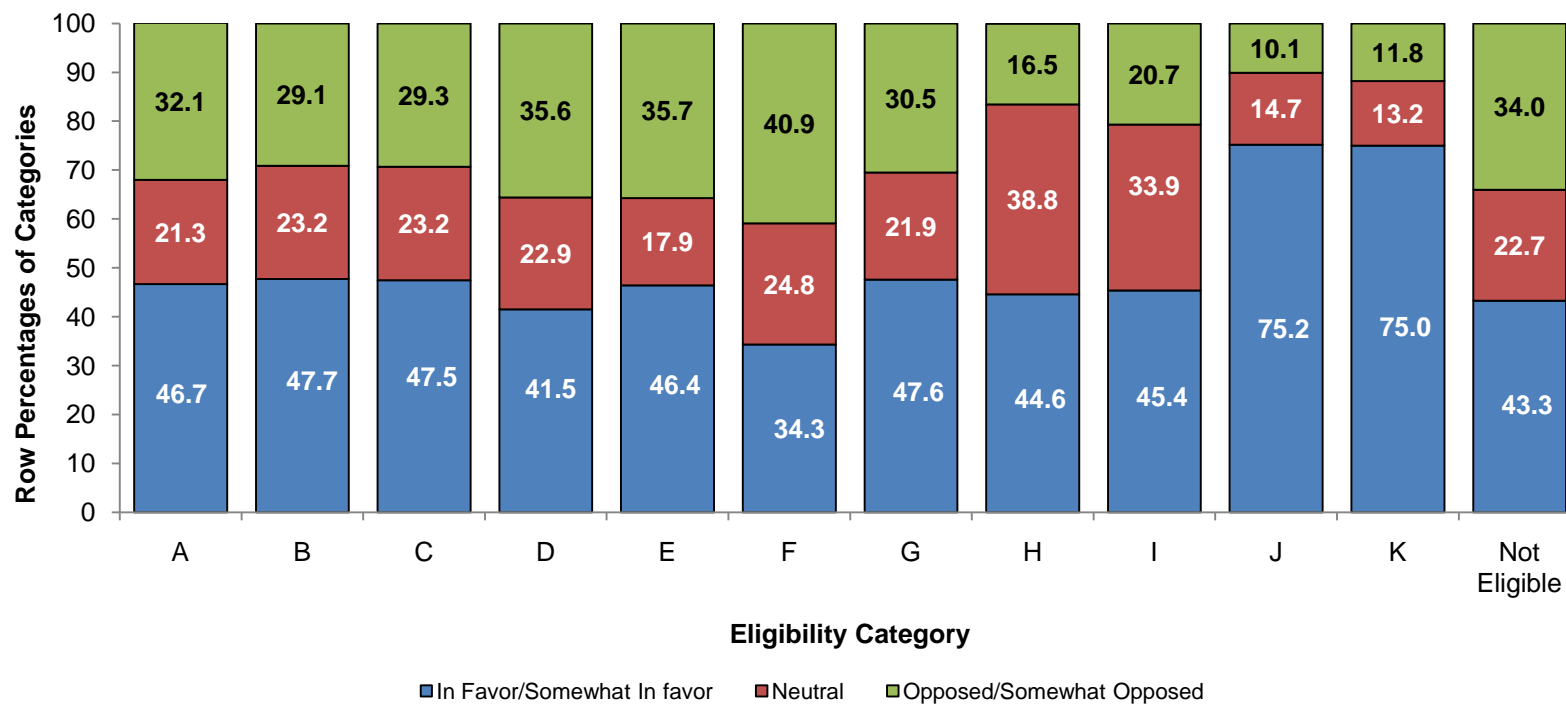

Key:
Category A: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–6, Self Contained
Category B: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–8, Departmentalized
Category C: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 9–12
Category D: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades Early Childhood through Grade 2
Category E: Core Special Education Teachers–No Value-Added Report
Category F: Elective/Ancillary Teachers

Category G: Instructional Support Staff
Category H: Teaching Assistants
Category I: Operational Support Staff
Category J: Principal
Category K: Assistant Principal/Deans of Instruction
Not Eligible

Note: Items that were skipped were coded as missing data and not included in the analysis.

CROSS TABULATION SUMMARIZING THE PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS INDICATING FAVORABILITY
TOWARD THE CONCEPT OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE PAY BASED ON PASSING RATES ONLY BY
ELIGIBILITY CATEGORY, MARCH 2013

Key:

Category A: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–6, Self Contained
Category B: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–8, Departmentalized
Category C: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 9–12
Category D: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades Early Childhood through Grade 2
Category E: Core Special Education Teachers–No Value-Added Report
Category F: Elective/Ancillary Teachers

Category G: Instructional Support Staff
Category H: Teaching Assistants
Category I: Operational Support Staff
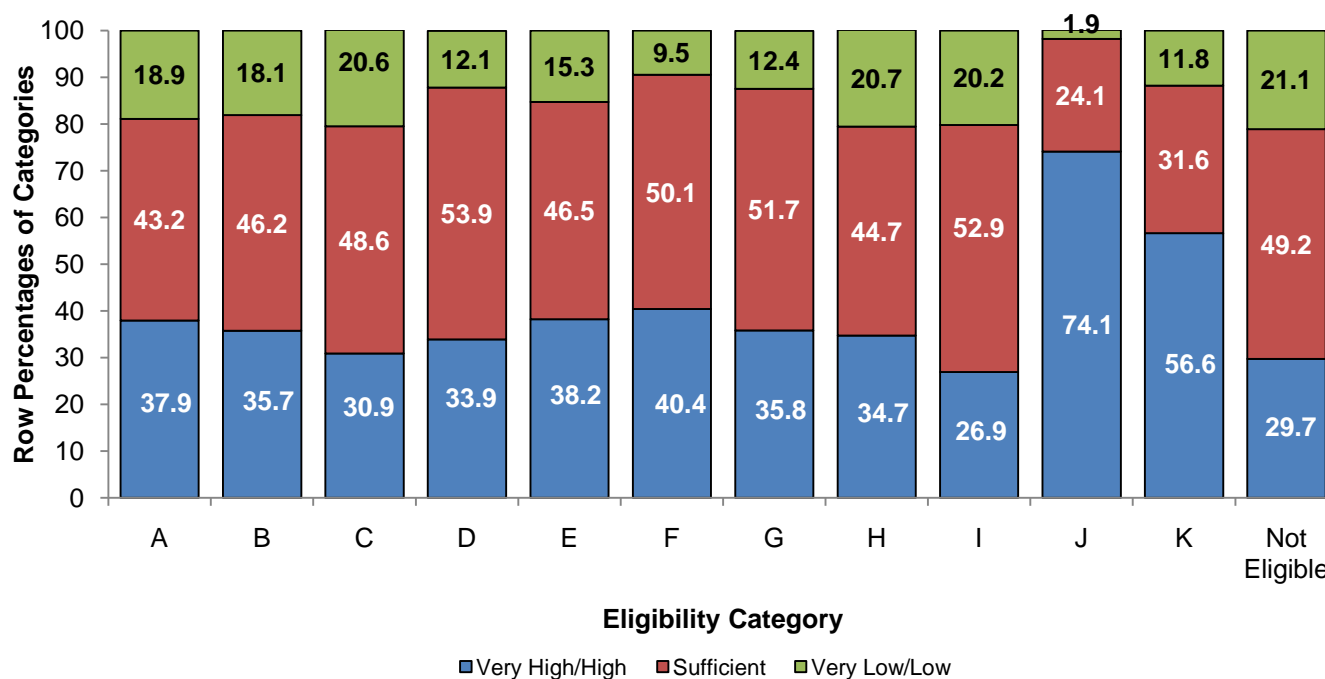Category J: Principal
Category K: Assistant Principal/Deans of Instruction
Not Eligible

Note: Items that were skipped were coded as missing data and not included in the analysis.

CROSS TABULATION SUMMARIZING THE PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS INDICATING FAVORABILITY TOWARD THE CONCEPT OF DIFFERENTIATED PAY BY ELIGIBILITY CATEGORY, MARCH 2013

Eligibility Category

■ In Favor/Somewhat In favor ■ Neutral □ Opposed/Somewhat Opposed

Key:

Category A: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–6, Self Contained
Category B: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–8, Departmentalized
Category C: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 9–12
Category D: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades Early Childhood through Grade 2
Category E: Core Special Education Teachers–No Value-Added Report
Category F: Elective/Ancillary Teachers

Category G: Instructional Support Staff
Category H: Teaching Assistants
Category I: Operational Support Staff
Category J: Principal
Category K: Assistant Principal/Deans of Instruction
Not Eligible

Note: Items that were skipped were coded as missing data and not included in the analysis.

CROSS TABULATION SUMMARIZING THE PERCENT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS' LEVEL OF
UNDERSTANDING OF THE 2011–2012 ASPIRE AWARD PROGRAM, MARCH 2013

Key:
Category A: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–6, Self Contained
Category B: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–8, Departmentalized
Category C: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 9–12
Category D: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades Early Childhood through Grade 2
Category E: Core Special Education Teachers–No Value-Added Report
Category F: Elective/Ancillary Teachers

Category G: Instructional Support Staff
Category H: Teaching Assistants
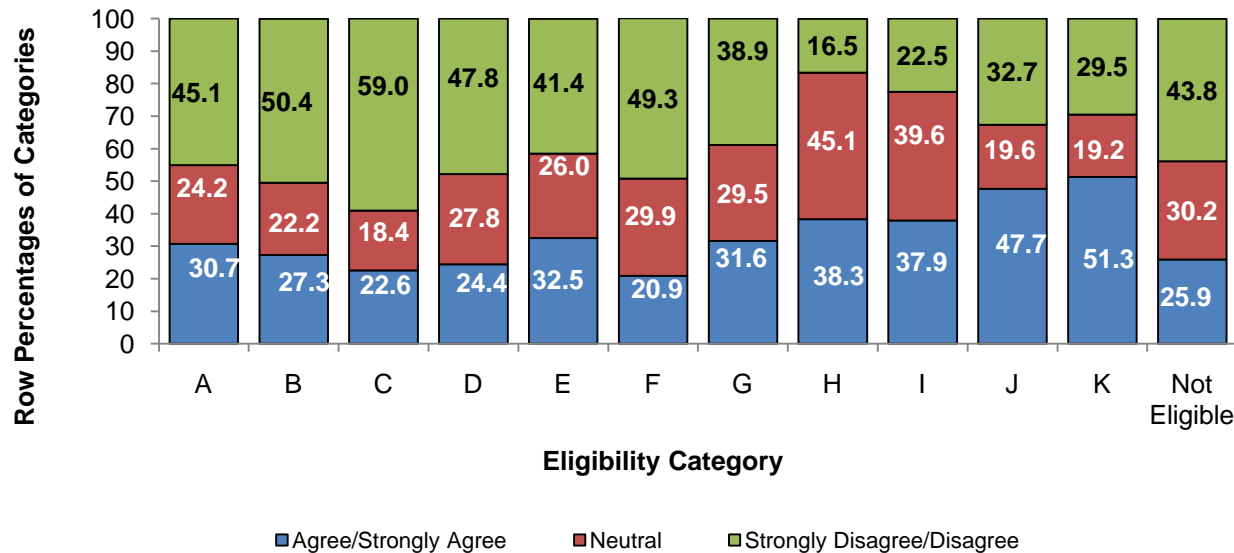Category I: Operational Support Staff
Category J: Principal
Category K: Assistant Principal/Deans of Instruction
Not Eligible

Note: Items that were skipped were coded as missing data and not included in the analysis.

CROSS TABULATION SUMMARIZING THE PERCENT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS' INDICATING A CONNECTION BETWEEN CLASSROOM
INSTRUCTION AND PERFORMANCE PAY RESULTS BY
ELIGIBILITY CATEGORY FOR THE 2010–2011 ASPIRE AWARD PROGRAM, MARCH 2013

Key:

Category A: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–6, Self Contained
Category B: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–8, Departmentalized
Category C: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 9–12
Category D: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades Early Childhood through Grade 2
Category E: Core Special Education Teachers–No Value-Added Report
Category F: Elective/Ancillary Teachers

Category G: Instructional Support Staff
Category H: Teaching Assistants
Category I: Operational Support Staff
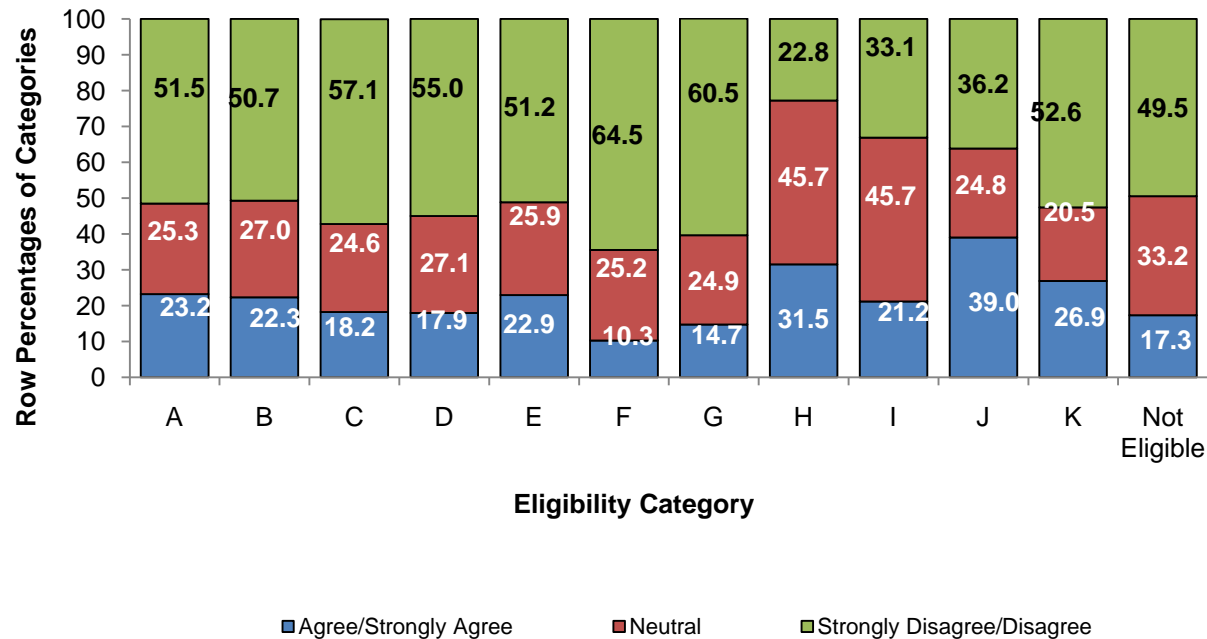Category J: Principal
Category K: Assistant Principal/Deans of Instruction
Not Eligible

Note: Items that were skipped were coded as missing data and not included in the analysis.

CROSS TABULATION SUMMARIZING THE PERCENT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS INDICATING THE MAXIMUM ASPIRE AWARD AMOUNT ADEQUATELY RECOGNIZED THEIR EFFORTS TO INCREASE STUDENT PROGRESS, MARCH 2013

Eligibility Category

Legend: ■ Agree/Strongly Agree ■ Neutral ■ Strongly Disagree/Disagree

Key:
Category A: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–6, Self Contained
Category B: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–8, Departmentalized
Category C: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 9–12
Category D: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades Early Childhood through Grade 2
Category E: Core Special Education Teachers–No Value-Added Report
Category F: Elective/Ancillary Teachers
Category G: Instructional Support Staff
Category H: Teaching Assistants
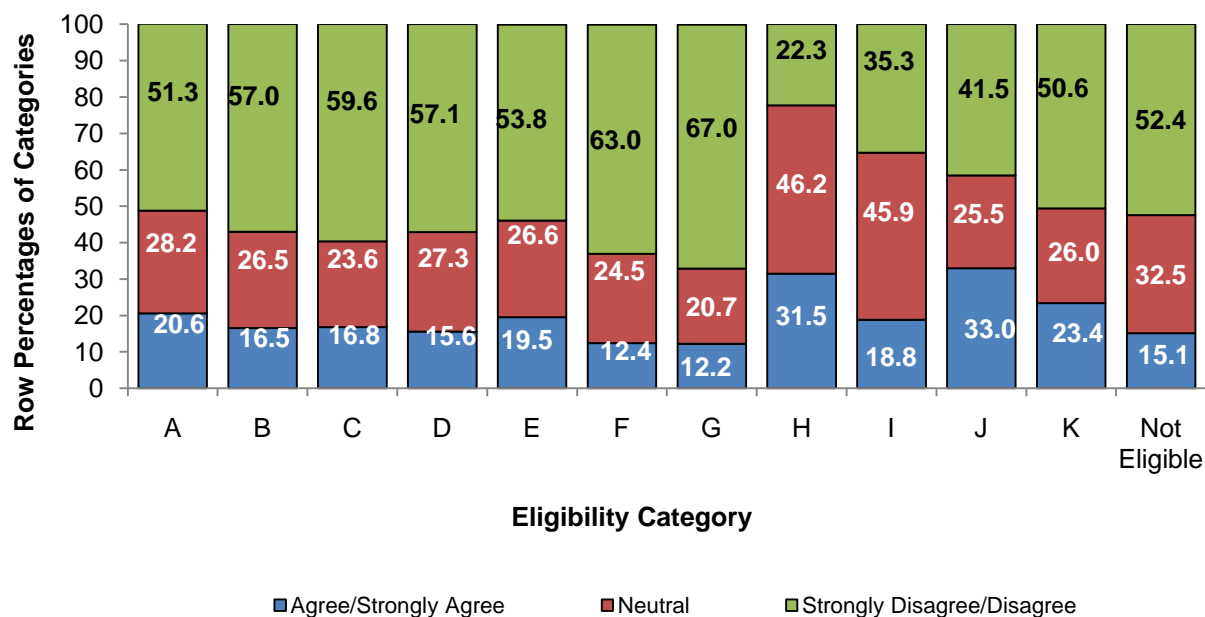Category I: Operational Support Staff
Category J: Principal
Category K: Assistant Principal/Deans of Instruction
Not Eligible
Note: Items that were skipped were coded as missing data and not included in the analysis.

CROSS TABULATION SUMMARIZING THE PERCENT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS INDICATING THE MAXIMUM ASPIRE AWARD AMOUNT WAS COMMENSURATE WITH THEIR PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTION, MARCH 2013

Key:

Category A: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–6, Self Contained

Category B: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 3–8, Departmentalized

Category C: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades 9–12

Category D: Core Foundation Teachers, Grades Early Childhood through Grade 2

Category E: Core Special Education Teachers–No Value-Added Report

Category F: Elective/Ancillary Teachers

Category G: Instructional Support Staff

Category H: Teaching Assistants

Category I: Operational Support Staff

Category J: Principal

Category K: Assistant Principal/Deans of Instruction

Not Eligible

Note: Items that were skipped were coded as missing data and not included in the analysis.