

MEMORANDUM

December 18, 2015

TO: Board Members

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

SUBJECT: **2013–2014 ASPIRE Award Survey, Spring 2015**

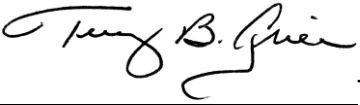
CONTACT: Carla Stevens, 713-556-6700

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 nine 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 18,364 Houston Independent School District (HISD) campus-based employees surveyed, there were 4,031 participants who responded to the survey (22.0 percent) administered in December 2014. **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 nine 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 49.7 percent in December 2014. When comparing January 2014 to December 2014, there has been a decrease in the respondents that indicated they were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of the concept of teacher performance pay by 3.5 percentage points.
- Based on survey data collected in December 2014, the largest percentage of respondents (74.7 percent) indicated that over the past several years, they always collaborated with their colleagues.
- 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 39.5 percent (December 2014 survey administration), down from 46.5 percent in January 2014.
- Based on December 2014 results, a higher percentage of respondents *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* that their maximum award amount was commensurate with their professional contribution, 48.1 percent, compared to 21.4 percent who were *neutral* and 30.5 percent who *agreed* or *strongly agreed*.
- Out of a total of 4,031 respondents on the December 2014 survey, 1,724 or 42.8 percent of the respondents provided at least one response for improving the 2013–2014 ASPIRE Award model. The six highest emergent categories based on the percentage of the responses centered on the following: make the model equitable, fair, transparent, and

inclusive with clear expectations (12.8 percent); unintended consequences (divisive, cheating, free-riding) (11.9 percent); how the money should be allocated/reallocated (11.4 percent); factors perceived as impacting growth or the calculation of growth (6.9 percent); same earning opportunity/award is not commensurate with professional duties (6.0 percent); discontinue the award (5.5 percent).

Should you have any questions or need further information, please contact my office or Carla Stevens in Research and Accountability at 713-556-6700.


_____ TBG

Attachment

cc: Superintendent's Direct Reports
Chief School Officers
School Office Directors
Audrey Gomez



RESEARCH

Educational Program Report

2013-2014 ASPIRE
AWARD SURVEY



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ASPIRE AWARD SURVEY RESULTS, Spring 2015

FINDINGS RELATED TO TEACHER PERCEPTIONS, KNOWLEDGE, AND INPUT, 2013–2014 Award Model Payout

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 eighth year of payout, occurring in February 2015 (the ninth payout for performance pay in the district).

This report provides the results of an annual survey administered on December 2014 designed to collect perceptions and input from HISD teachers and staff after nine 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*; *2010–2011 ASPIRE Award Survey, Spring 2012*; *2011–2012 ASPIRE Award Survey, Spring 2013*; *2012–2013 ASPIRE Award Survey, Spring 2014* 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;
- Percent of respondents that watched the learning modules on value-added;
- 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 2013–2014 ASPIRE Award suggested by respondents.

Highlights

- Of the 18,364 Houston Independent School District (HISD) campus-based employees invited to participate, 4,031 participants (22.0 percent) responded to the survey administered in December

2014. Of the 2,972 respondents who indicated an award category, 58.1 percent were core teachers (Groups 1–3), 12.0 percent were elective/ancillary teachers, 8.7 percent were instructional support staff, 7.9 percent were teaching assistants, 8.4 percent were operational support staff, and 4.9 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 nine 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 49.7 percent in December 2014. When comparing January 2014 to December 2014, there has been a decrease in the respondents that indicated they were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of the concept of teacher performance pay by 3.5 percentage points.
- Based on survey data collected in December 2014, the largest percentage of respondents (74.7 percent) indicated that over the past several years, *they always collaborated with their colleagues*.
- 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 39.5 percent (December 2014 survey administration), down from 46.5 percent in January 2014.
- When comparing survey results from January 2014 to December 2014, there was a decrease to 28.8 percent in the percentage of respondents that indicated their level of understanding of the ASPIRE Award Program was *very high* or *high* (7.8 percentage points), as well as an increase to 26.1 percent in the percentage of respondents that indicated their level of understanding of the ASPIRE Award Program was *low/very low* (6.8 percentage points).
- Based on the December 2014 survey results, the respondents who indicated they were Group 1 Core Teacher Grades 3–10 with EVAAS® and had watched the EVAAS® Learning Modules in the past twelve months indicated that they had a *high/very high* level of understanding of value-added analysis (35.5 percent) compared to those Group 1 Core Teacher Grades 3–10 with EVAAS® that had not watched any Learning Modules (23.2 percent) or who indicated they were unaware of the aforementioned resource (11.1 percent).
- Based on survey results from March 2010 and December 2014, 26.7 percent and 32.2 percent of respondents, respectively *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that the *ASPIRE Award is a fair way of acknowledging a teacher's impact on student growth*.
- Based on December 2014 results, a higher percentage of respondents *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* that their maximum award amount was commensurate with their professional contribution, 48.1 percent, compared to 21.4 percent who were *neutral* and 30.5 percent who *agreed* or *strongly agreed*.
- Although a majority of respondents indicated that communication was *moderately effective* or *very effective* for *providing clear explanations about the award model* (51.0 percent), *providing clear explanations about value-added calculations* (45.5 percent) and *providing clear explanations about comparative growth calculations* (46.4 percent), these items were noticeably lower than for other areas surveyed (57.6 percent to 69.2 percent).
- Out of a total of 4,031 respondents on the December 2014 survey, 1,724 or 42.8 percent of the respondents provided at least one response for improving the 2013–2014 ASPIRE Award model. The six highest emergent categories based on the percentage of the responses centered on the following: make the model equitable, fair, transparent, and inclusive with clear expectations (12.8

percent); unintended consequences (divisive, cheating, free-riding) (11.9 percent); how the money should be allocated/reallocated (11.4 percent); factors perceived as impacting growth or the calculation of growth (6.9 percent); same earning opportunity/award is not commensurate with professional duties (6.0 percent); discontinue the award (5.5 percent).

Administrative Response

The district continues to use the information from the ASPIRE Award program evaluation and the ASPIRE Award survey to make annual improvements to the ASPIRE Award model.

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 indicators of academic performance: Indicator I—Individual Performance: (value-added core teacher progress); Indicator II—Group Performance: Teachers (department value-added or comparative growth); and Indicator III—Group Performance: Campus-Wide (campus value-added and campus growth or achievement). Indicator III is based on the EVAAS campus composite cumulative gain index and 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. Under the model, every HISD teacher has the opportunity to participate in at least Indicator 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 with input from the Department of Human Resources and Professional Educator Compensation and Support (PECAS) Committee. The 2013–2014 ASPIRE Award Survey was administered on-line from Wednesday, December 3, 2014 to Friday, December 19, 2014, with follow-up reminders on Thursday, December 11, 2014 and Thursday, December 18, 2014. 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. The text analysis tool was used to identify emergent categories for the open-ended questions. To improve the response rate, respondents who completed the survey had the opportunity to be drawn for one of 9 \$50.00 gift cards and one \$150.00 gift card donated by the HISD Foundation.

Data Limitations

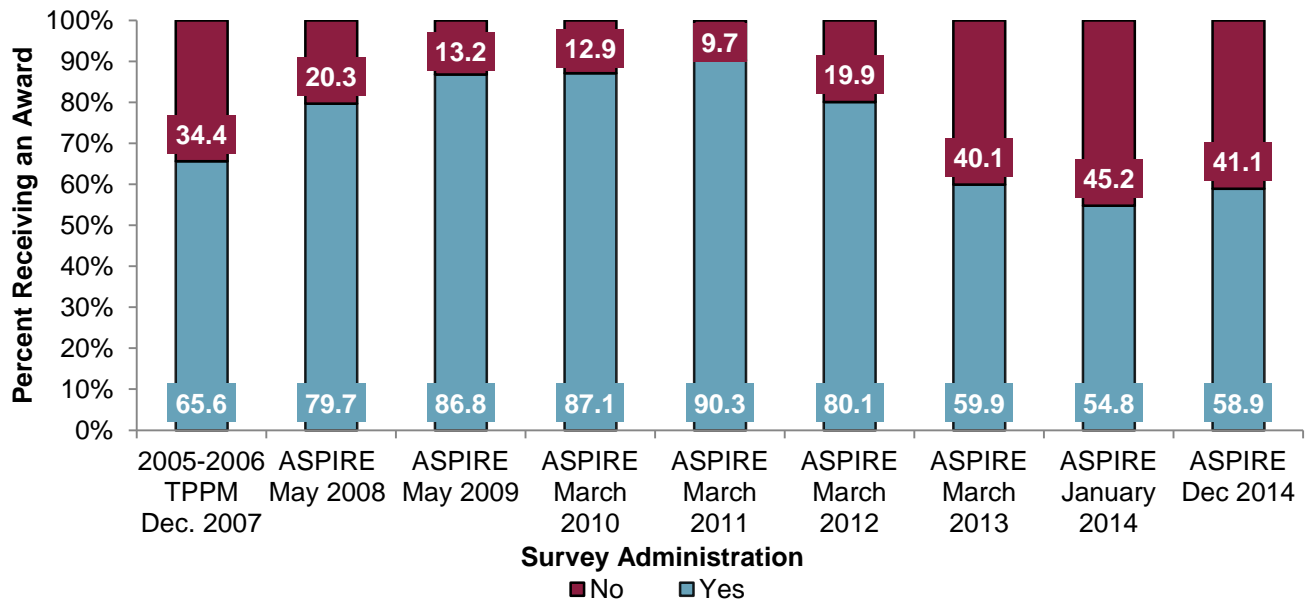
- Changes in the structure of the survey and coding practices limited comparisons to the results of previously developed survey instruments. For the December 2014 survey administration, data quality checks were conducted and corrections made regarding skip patterns and building level. Any conclusions 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 18,364 Houston Independent School District (HISD) campus-based employees invited to complete the survey, there were 4,031 participants who responded to the survey (22.0 percent) administered in December 2014. Any conclusions drawn from this survey should be made with caution given the low response rate (**Table 1**, p. 26).
- Of the 4,031 respondents, 2,972 indicated their ASPIRE Award categorization for the 2013–2014 school year. Core teachers (Group 1, 2, and 3) represented the highest percentage of respondents with 58.1 percent, followed by elective/ancillary teachers with 12.0 percent (**Table 2**, p. 26).
- The majority of respondents reported holding either a Bachelor's Degree (36.4 percent) or a Master's Degree (32.6 percent). The average experience in HISD was 10.3 years with the average experience at the current campus being 6.8 years (**Table 3**, p. 26).
- Approximately 83 percent of the respondents were employed in HISD for the 2013–2014 school year, and approximately 80.7 percent were eligible to receive an award. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents indicated that they will receive an ASPIRE Award, and 66.1 percent of core foundation teachers who responded received an individual performance award, an award based on teacher progress for the 2013–2014 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 March 2011 to March 2012, with a 25.3 percentage point decline from March 2012 to January 2014, followed by an increase of 4.1 percentage points in December 2014 (**Figure 1**, p. 6).

Figure 1. Percent of respondents receiving an award based on results of nine survey administrations

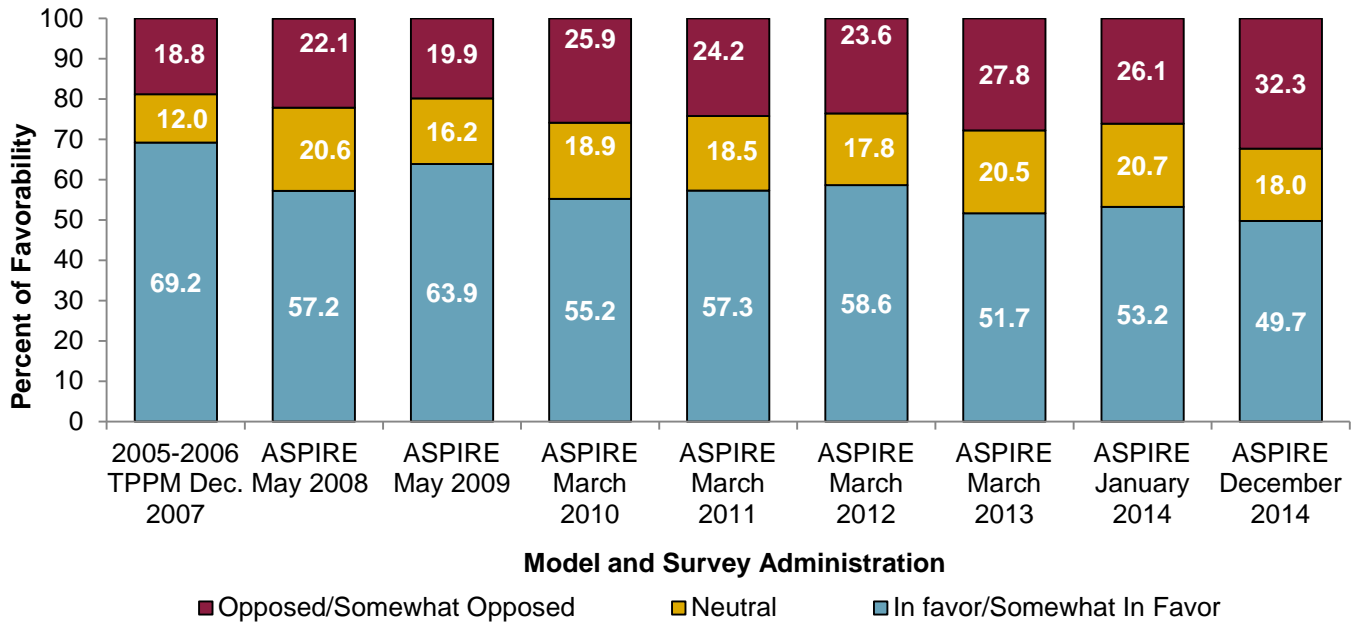


- Over the past nine years, the percentage of survey respondents who reported receiving an award increased from 65.6 percent in 2007 to 90.3 in 2011, but declined by 31.4 percentage points from March 2011 to December 2014 (Figure 1). This may be due in large part to changes in the award model criteria.
- On the December 2014 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 3,244 responses, 11.8 percent indicated Special Education, 10.4 percent indicated Bilingual Education, 10.4 percent indicated English as a Second Language (ESL), 7.0 percent indicated secondary mathematics, 5.4 percent indicated secondary science, 1.2 percent indicated secondary Spanish, and 53.8 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 and the teacher appraisal system?

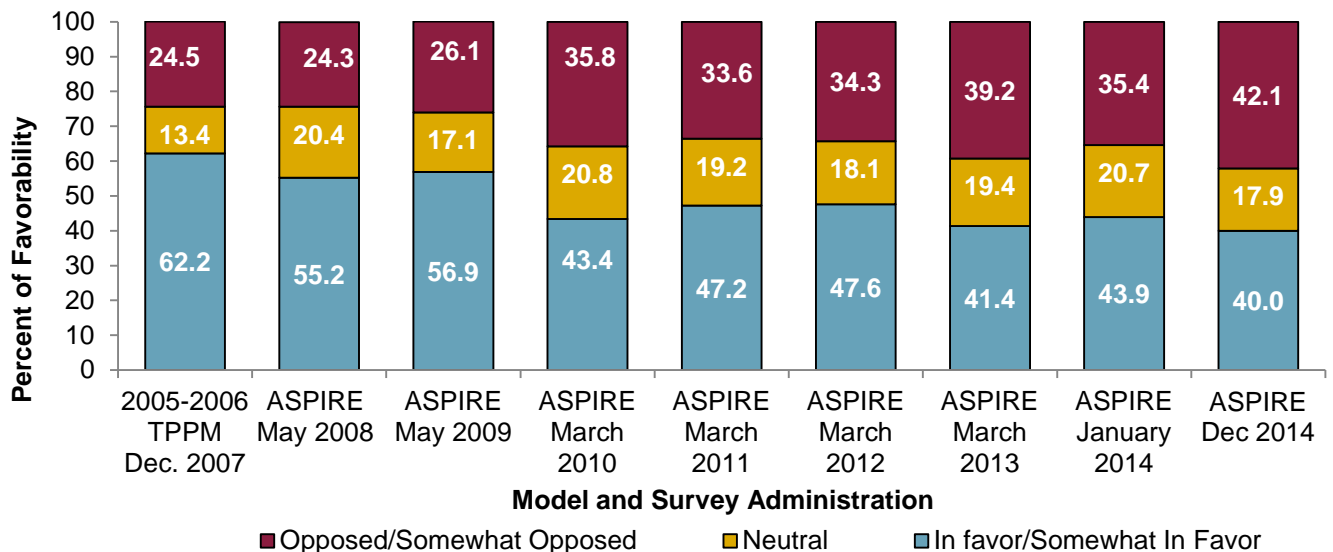
- When comparing survey results over the last nine years, there was an overall decrease in the percent of respondents who were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of the concept of teacher performance pay from 69.2 percent in December 2007 to 49.7 percent in December 2014 (Figure 2).
- When comparing survey results over the last nine 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 32.3 percent in December 2014 (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, decreased to 51.7 percent after the 2013 payout, increased to 53.2 percent with the January 2014 payout, and decreased to 49.7 percent prior to the February 2015 payout (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percent of respondents indicating favorability toward the concept of performance pay over nine years



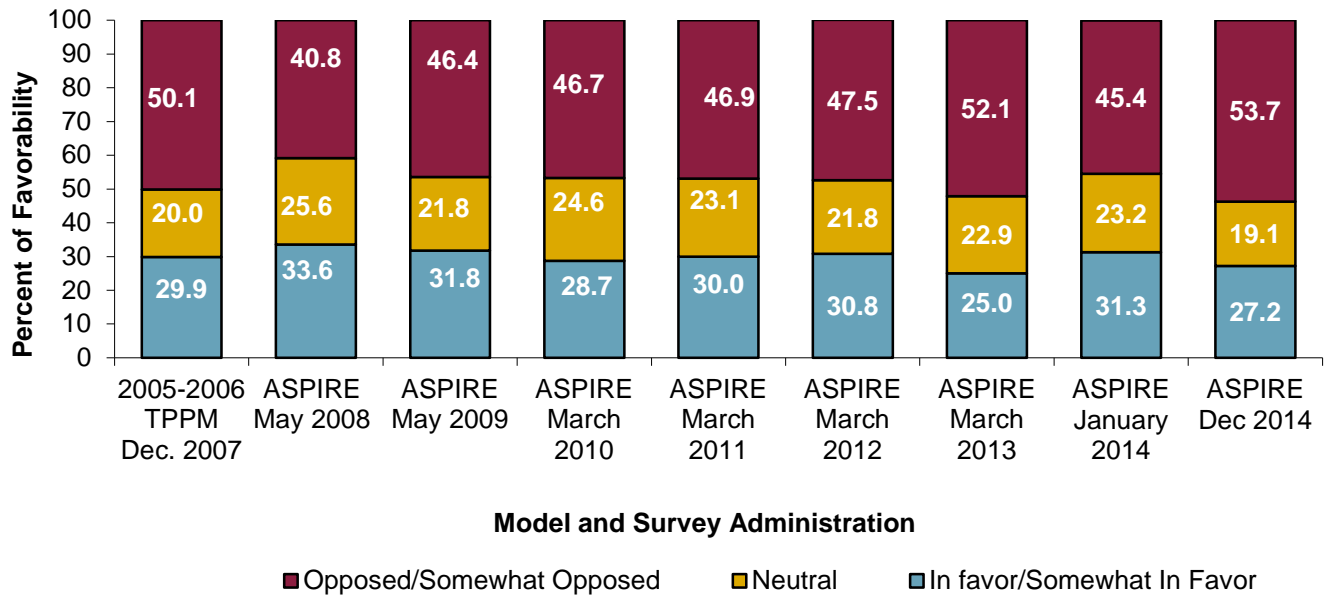
- When respondents on the December 2007 survey administration were asked how favorable they were toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on individual student growth, 62.2 percent indicated they were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor*, compared to 40.0 percent of respondents in December 2014, reflecting the lowest level of agreement in nine years (**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 9-year period from 24.5 percent in 2007 to 42.1 percent in 2014 (Figure 3).

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



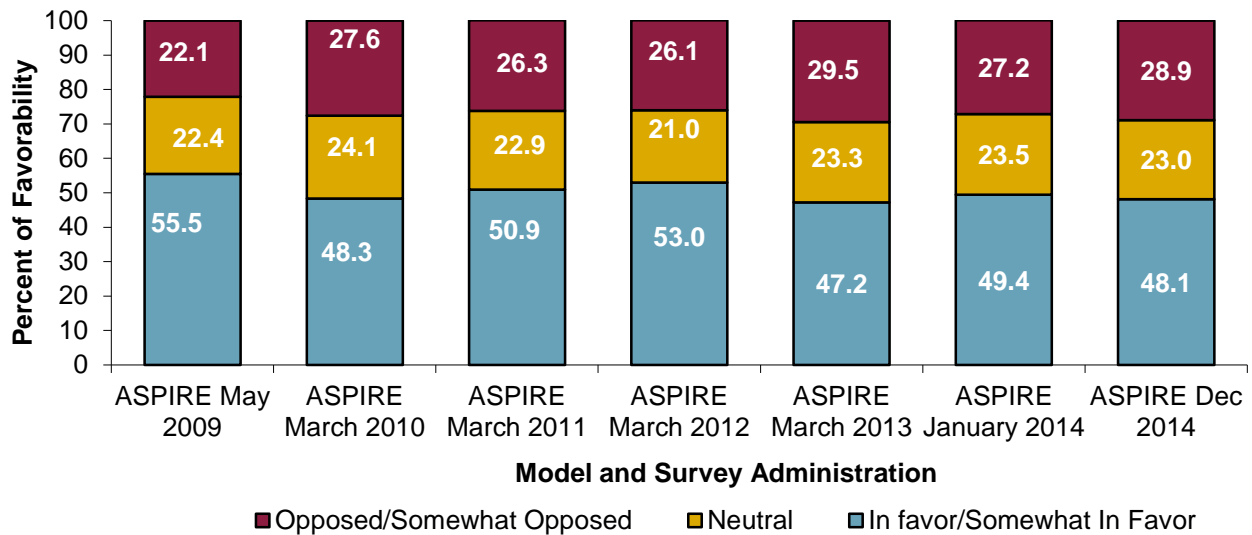
- Over the past nine years, survey respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions about the concept of performance pay based on passing rates. When comparing overall survey results from December 2007 to December 2014, there was an increase in the percent of respondents indicating that they were *somewhat opposed* or *opposed* to teacher performance pay based on passing rates by 3.6 percentage points, and the largest percentage of respondents still remains opposed to using passing rates for performance pay (Figure 4).

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



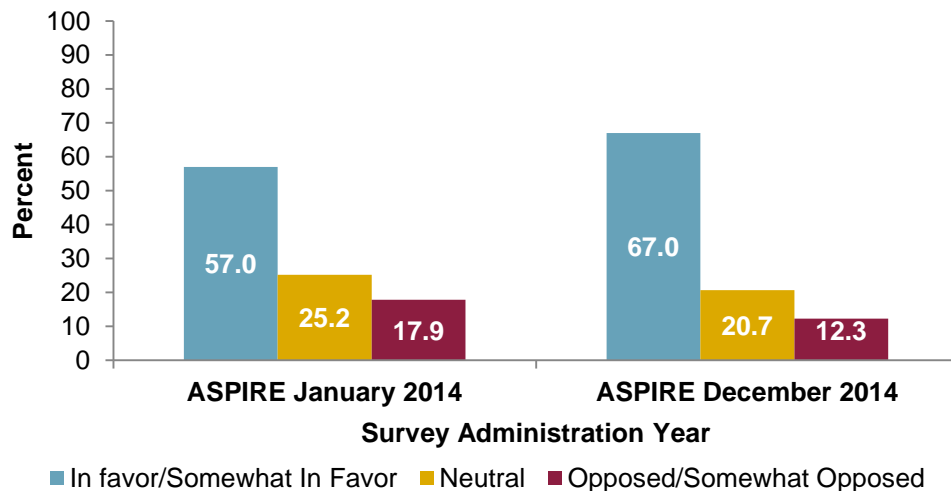
- Over the past seven years, survey respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions about the concept of receiving differentiated pay as seen in Figure 5. The percentage of campus-based staff *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of the concept of differentiated pay decreased overall from 55.5 percent after the 2009 payout to 48.1 percent in December 2014, prior to the 2015 payout.
- Over the past seven years, the percent of respondents indicating that they were *opposed* or *somewhat opposed* to differentiated pay increased from 22.1 percent in 2009 to 28.9 percent in December 2014 (Figure 5).

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



- When comparing survey results from January 2014 to December 2014, data were collected on the favorability of respondents towards the concept of an award for educators in hard-to-staff buildings. The majority of respondents (57.0 percent and 67.0 percent) indicated that they were *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* of awarding an incentive to educators in hard-to-staff buildings, with 25.2 percent and 20.7 percent who were *neutral*, and 17.9 percent and 12.3 percent who were *somewhat opposed* or *opposed*. Over the past two years, this item has increased in favorability by 10.0 percentage points, from 57.0 percent in January 2014 to 67.0 percent in December 2014 (Figure 6).

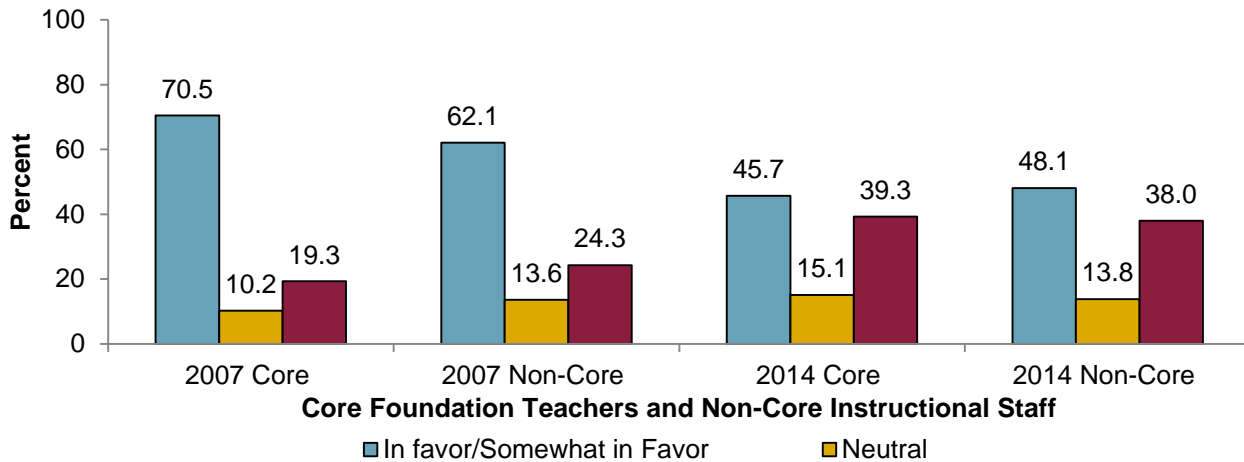
Figure 6. Percent of respondents indicating favorability toward the concept of an award for educators in hard-to-staff building



- 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 December 2014) as summarized in Figure 7 (p. 10) 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, December 2014 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 2.4 percentage points. Favorable responses have decreased overall for both groups over the last nine years.

Figure 7. Percent of respondents indicating favorability toward the concept of teacher performance pay overall by core foundation and non-core instructional staff, December 2007 and December 2014



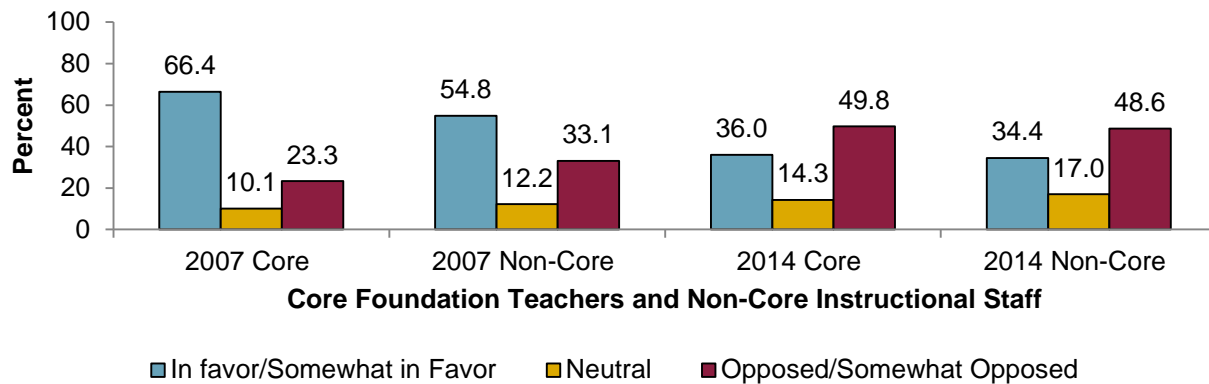
Note: To make 2014 comparable to the 2007 survey administration data, non-instructional employees (ASPIRE Award Group 6 and 7) (N=485) and principals (ASPIRE Award Group 1L) (N=74) were not included in this analysis.

- **Appendix A** (p. 32) compares differences in perceptions toward the concept of teacher performance pay overall by eligibility category (December 2014). Of the respondents that indicated that they were eligible to receive an award and who indicated a particular eligibility category, 69.6 percent of principals 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 assistant principals/deans at 65.2 percent, operational support staff at 59.0 percent, and teaching assistants at 54.4 percent.
- Of the respondents that indicated that they were eligible to receive an award and who indicated a particular eligibility category, 45.1 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, 40.7 percent were *somewhat in favor* or *in favor* and 41.1 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 December 2014). **Figure 8** 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 1.6 percentage points based on December 2014 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 the percentage of core teachers that exceeded non-core instructional staff by 1.2 percentage points based on December 2014 results.

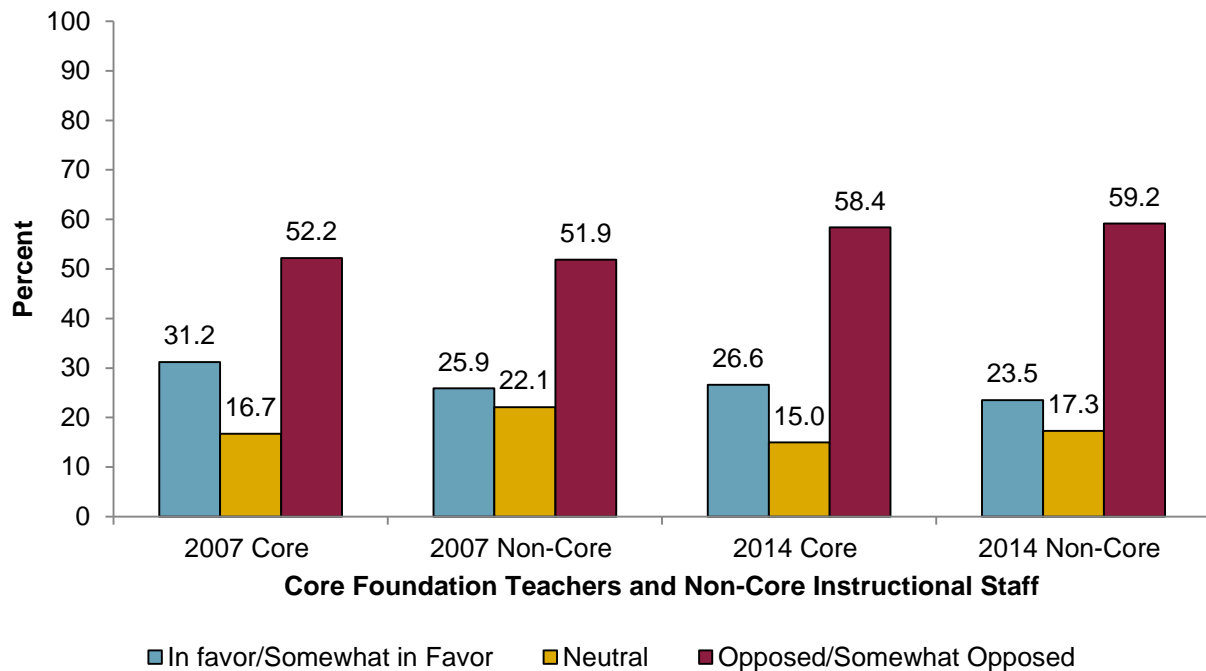
Figure 8. Percent of respondents indicating favorability toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on individual student growth by core foundation and non-core instructional staff, December 2007 and December 2014



Note: To make 2014 comparable to the 2007 survey administration data, non-instructional employees (ASPIRE Award Groups 6 and 7) (N=485) and principals (ASPIRE Award Group 1L) (N=74) 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 December 2014 survey administration. **Figure 9** (p. 12) 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 3.1 percentage points in December 2014.
- 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 58.4 percent of core foundation teachers and 59.2 percent of non-core instructional staff based on survey results from the December 2014 administration (Figure 9).

Figure 9. 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 December 2014



Note: To make 2014 comparable to the 2007 survey administration data, non-instructional employees (ASPIRE Award Groups 6 and 7) (N=485) and Principals (ASPIRE Award Group 1L) (N=74) were not included in this analysis.

- **Appendix B** (p. 33) summarizes the results by eligibility category regarding perceptions towards the concept of teacher performance pay based on individual student growth, **Appendix C** (p. 34) summarizes the results by eligibility category regarding perceptions towards the concept of teacher performance pay based on passing rates only, and **Appendix D** (p. 35) summarizes the results by eligibility category regarding perceptions towards the concept of differentiated pay based on the December 2014 survey administration.
- Of the respondents that indicated that they were eligible to receive an award and who indicated a particular eligibility category, 75.4 percent of principals and 59.1 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. 33).
- Of the respondents that indicated that they were eligible to receive an award and who indicated a particular eligibility category, 59.9 percent of elective/ancillary teachers and 50.2 percent of core teachers, grades 3–12 w/o EVAAS®, indicated that they were *opposed* or *somewhat opposed* toward the concept of teacher performance pay based on individual student growth (Appendix B, p. 33).
- Of the respondents that indicated that they were eligible to receive an award and who indicated a particular eligibility category, 39.1 percent of principals and 21.6 percent of elective/ancillary teachers 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, respectively, of all the eligibility categories based on December 2014 results (Appendix C, p. 34).

- Of the respondents that indicated that they were eligible to receive an award and who indicated a particular eligibility category, 63.5 percent of elective/ancillary teachers and 25.6 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, respectively, of all of the eligibility categories (Appendix C, p. 34).
- Of the respondents that indicated that they were eligible to receive an award and who indicated a particular eligibility category, 68.7 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 63.1 percent. Elective/ancillary and Group 2: Core Teacher PK–2 teachers had the lowest levels of agreement with only 40.6 percent *in favor* or *somewhat in favor* (Appendix D, p. 35).
- Of the respondents that indicated that they were eligible to receive an award and who indicated a particular eligibility category, 43.3 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. 35).
- On the teacher appraisal system, participants were asked to rate the rigor of the system on a scale of 1 (not rigorous) to 5 (very rigorous) and fair on a scale of 1 (not fair) to 5 (very fair). A majority (56.0 percent) of respondents rated the system as rigorous while 22.1 percent rated the system as fair, with a rating of 4 (Agree) or 5 (Strongly Agree).

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 six years, respondents were asked whether the ASPIRE Award encouraged specific behaviors. **Table 6** (p. 27) compares the responses of respondents for four 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 37.3 percent, 39.2 percent, and 38.3 percent, respectively in December 2014 survey data.
- Based on survey data collected in December 2014, the largest percentage of respondents indicated that over the past several years, they *collaborated with my colleagues* (74.7 percent) *always* (**Table 7**, p. 28).
- Based on survey data collected in December 2014, 6.6 percent of respondents indicated that they *never used value-added data to make instructional decisions*, compared to 41.5 percent who *always used value-added data to make instructional decisions* (Table 7, p. 28).

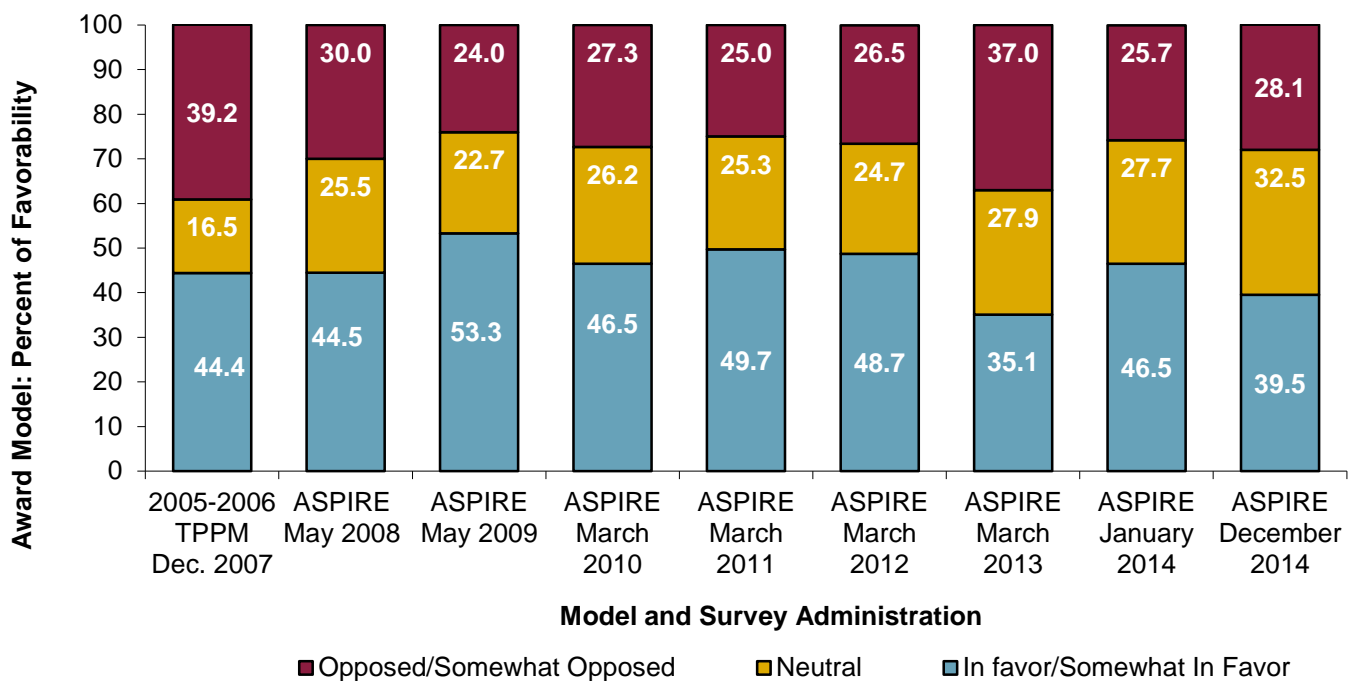
What were the perceptions and level of understanding of respondents regarding the Teacher Performance-Pay Model (TPPM) and ASPIRE Award program?

- **Figure 10** (p. 14) 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 53.3 percent in 2009, and was most recently reported at 46.5 percent (December 2014 survey administration). This is an 4.4 percent point increase from March 2013. These results were after the payout, or in the most recent survey administration, prior to the payout of each model.

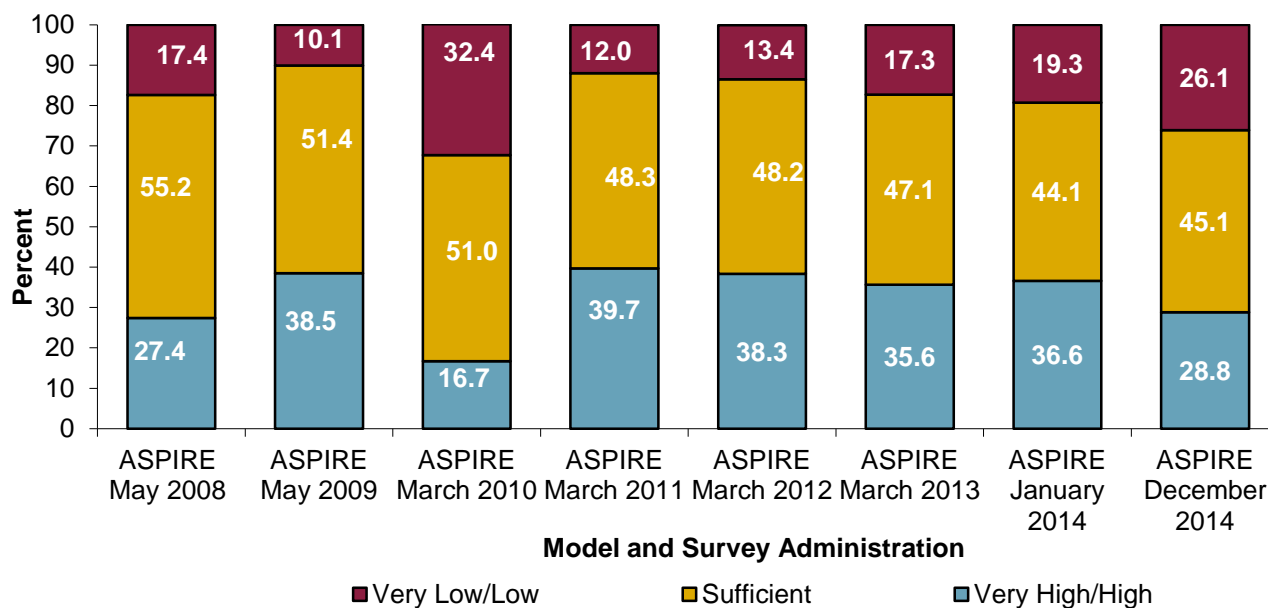
- When comparing survey results after or just prior to each payout, the percentage of respondents that indicated they were *somewhat opposed* or *opposed* toward the 2005–2006 Teacher Performance-Pay Model and to the 2013–2014 ASPIRE Award program decreased by 11.1 percentage points over a nine-year period, with the low being in 2009 at 24.0 percent (Figure 10).

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



- **Figure 11** (p. 15) summarizes the results regarding the level of understanding respondents indicated toward the ASPIRE award models for each of the last eight years.
- When comparing survey results from May 2008 to December 2014, the percentage of respondents that indicated their level of understanding of the ASPIRE Award program was *very low* or *low*, increased by 8.7 percentage points, and there was a decrease in the percentage of respondents that indicated their level of understanding of the ASPIRE Award program was *sufficient* (10.1 percentage points) (Figure 11, p. 15).
- When comparing survey results from January 2014 to December 2014, 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* (7.8 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* (6.8 percentage points) (Figure 11, p. 15).

Figure 11. Percent of survey respondents' level of understanding of the performance-pay model paid out that year

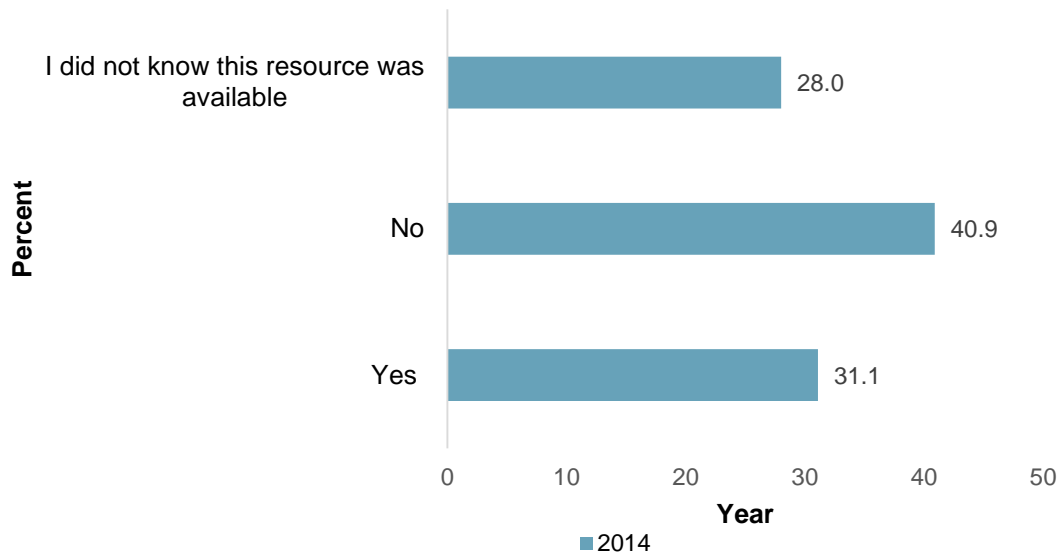


- To determine whether there were differences in perceptions regarding the level of understanding toward ASPIRE, comparisons by eligibility category for ASPIRE December 2014 respondents are summarized in **Appendix E** (p. 36). Based on respondent data from the nine eligibility categories, principals and assistant principals indicated having a very high/high level of understanding (60.6 percent and 56.9 percent, respectively) compared to core 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 26.2 percent for Operational Support Staff to 36.8 percent for Instructional Support Staff).
- On the December 2014 survey, 26.8 percent of respondents that indicated they were Group 3: Core Teachers Grades 3–12 without EVAAS® as well as respondents that indicated they were Not Eligible to receive an award 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. 36).

What percentage of respondents watched Value-Added/EVAAS learning modules, and what was the level of understanding?

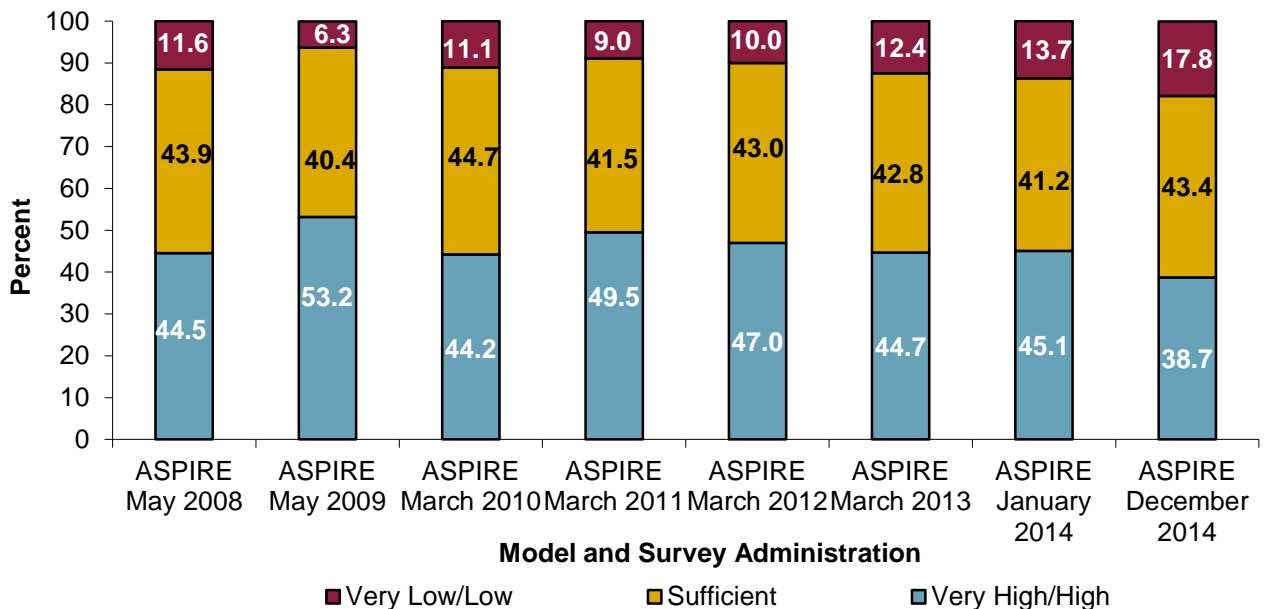
- **Figure 12** provides a comparison of the percent of respondents who watched at least one Value-Added/EVAAS Learning Module in the past 12 months. Out of 3,197 respondents, 31.1 indicated *Yes*, 40.9 percent responded *No*, and 28.0 percent indicated that *they did not know this resource was available*.

Figure 12. Percent of survey respondents watching value-added learning modules



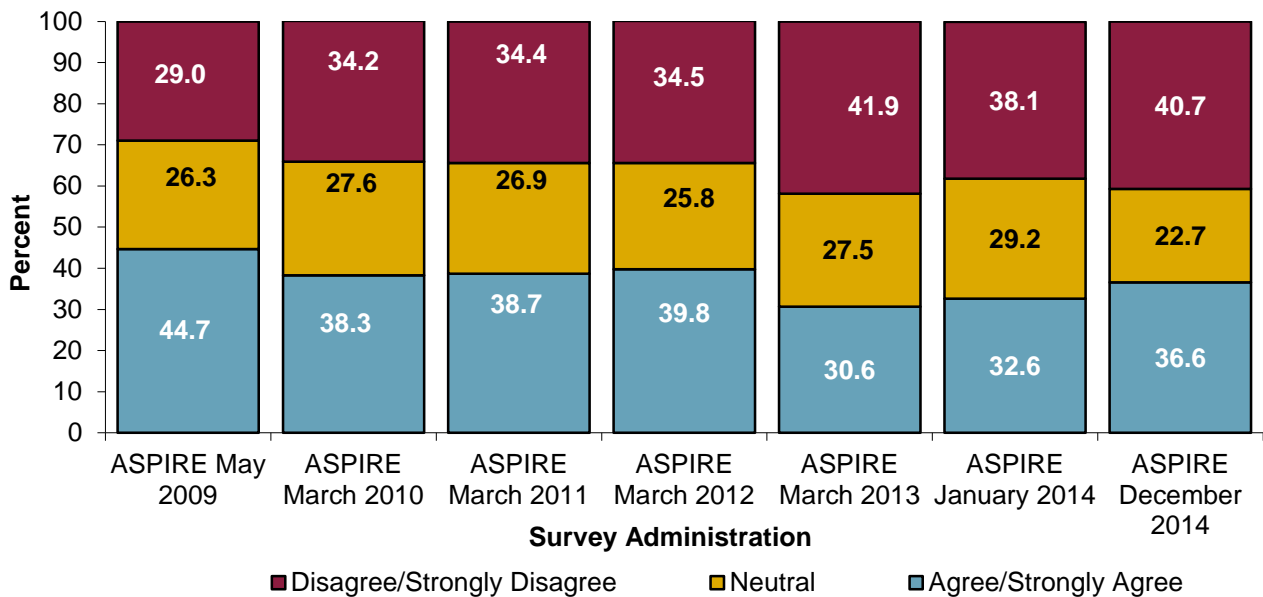
- When comparing the perceptions of respondents from May 2008 to December 2014, there was a 5.8 percentage point decrease regarding respondents that rated their level of understanding of the difference between student achievement and academic progress as *very high* or *high* (**Figure 13**).
- Over the past eight 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 6.2 percentage points, although there was an overall decrease of 1.6 percentage points from 2008 to 2012 (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Percent of respondents indicating their level of understanding of the difference between student achievement and academic progress over eight years



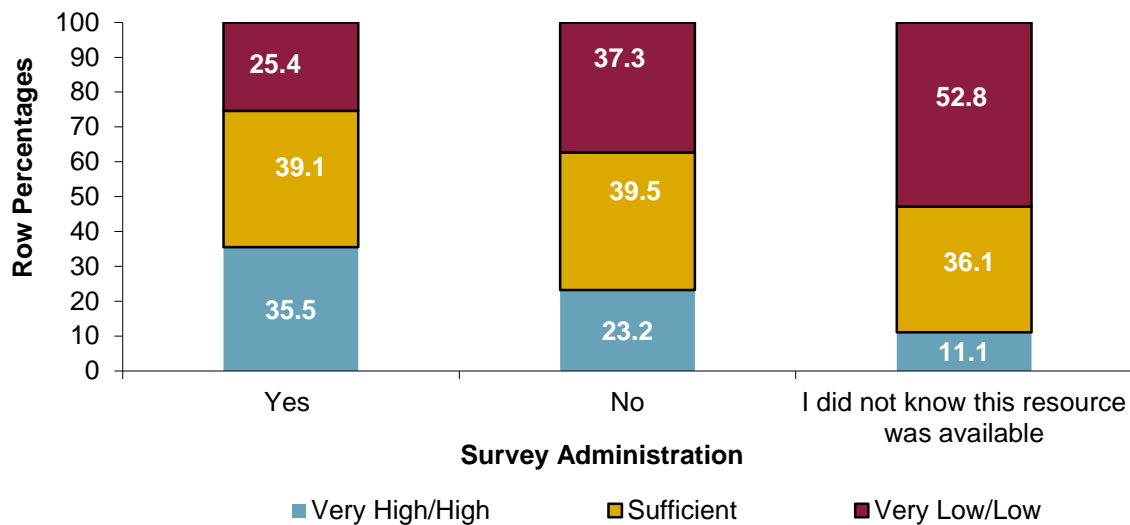
- On the May 2008 ASPIRE Award survey, there were seven items that were designed to determine the level of understanding for different training components related to the ASPIRE Award. **Table 8** (p. 28) depicts the comparison of the baseline data collected in May 2008 with data collected in December 2014.
- The percentage of respondents indicating a *high/very high* level of understanding decreased for six of the seven components. However, December 2014 had a lower number of respondents compared to 2008 (Table 8, p. 28).
- Based on survey data collected in May 2008 and December 2014, the training component for which the largest percentage of respondents indicated, in both years, a *very high* or *high* level of understanding centered on *my understanding of the difference between student achievement and academic progress* (44.5 and 38.7 percent, respectively) (Table 8, p. 28).
- Based on survey data collected in May 2008 and December 2014, 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 44.1 percent, respectively) (Table 8, p. 28).
- One question asked respondents whether they perceived a connection between classroom instruction and performance-pay results. **Figure 14** compares the percent of respondents from the past seven years' surveys. Based on the May 2009 and December 2014 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 36.6 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 40.7 percent on the December 2014 survey (Figure 14). Nevertheless, these results showed slight improvements from the March 2013 responses.

Figure 14. Percent of respondents indicating a connection between classroom instruction and ASPIRE Award results over seven years



- A cross tabulation was conducted to determine whether there were differences in the level of understanding of value-added analysis who reported they were Group 1: Core Teacher Grades 3–10 with EVAAS® who reported watching value-added analysis learning modules and those that reported not watching or not aware of the resource. **Figure 15** summarizes the results.
- For the December 2014 survey administration, a higher percentage of respondents who watched the value-added analysis learning modules training reported a *high* or *very high* understanding of value-added analysis compared to those who did not watch the value-added learning moduels or who were unaware of the resource (35.5 percent, 23.2 percent, and 11.1, respectively) (Figure 15).
- For December 2014 administration, 74.6 percent of respondents who watched the value-added analysis learning modules reported a *sufficient* or higher understanding of value-added analysis compared to those who did not watch the value-added training at 62.7 or who were unaware of the resource at 47.2 percent (Figure 15).

Figure 15. 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 seven items that were designed to examine the perceptions of respondents regarding the amount of money awarded and the ASPIRE model. The results from 2010 (three years ago) and 2014 (most recent) are summarized in **Table 9** (p. 29).
- On the 2010 and 2014 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 54.2 percent, respectively) (Table 9, p. 29).

- For the December 2014 administration, a higher percentage of respondents *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* that their maximum award amount was commensurate with their professional contribution (48.1 percent) compared to 21.4 percent who were *neutral* and 30.5 percent who *agreed* or *strongly agreed* (Table 9, p. 29).
- Perceptions from 2010 to 2014 became more positive and less negative on six of the seven items (Table 9, p. 29).
- 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. 37).
- For December 2014, the percentage of teaching assistants who *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that there was a connection between classroom instruction and the ASPIRE Award results (64.6 percent) exceeded core teachers (Groups 1–3), elective/ancillary teachers, instructional support staff, operational support staff, principals, assistant principals/deans, and those respondents that indicated they were not eligible to receive an award (Appendix F, p. 37).
- 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 teachers, grades 3–12 w/o EVAAS® (56.9 percent) (Appendix F, p. 37).
- 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.38).
- For December 2014, 39.9 percent of core teachers grades 3–10 and 59.8 percent of teaching assistants, *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. 38).
- For December 2014, 63.4 percent of elective/ancillary teachers, 62.4 percent of instructional support staff, and at least 54.0 percent of core teachers, grades 3–12 without EVAAS, core teachers PK–2, or respondents that indicated they were not eligible to receive an award indicated that they *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* that their maximum ASPIRE Award adequately recognized their efforts to increase student progress (Appendix G, p. 38).
- 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. 39) summarizes the results.
- For December 2014, 55.6 percent of teaching assistants *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. 39).
- On the December 2014 survey administration, 66.1 percent of elective/ancillary teachers, 64.5 percent of assistant principals and deans, and 63.0 percent of instructional support staff indicated

that they *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* that their maximum ASPIRE Award was commensurate with their professional contribution (Appendix H, p. 39).

- To determine whether there were differences in perceptions indicating favorability toward the concept of an award for educators in hard-to-staff buildings, comparisons were made by eligibility category and respondents who indicated they were not eligible as summarized in **Appendix I** (p.40).
- On the December 2014 survey administration, the majority of all eligibility categories as well as those that indicated they were not eligible to receive an award indicated that they *strongly agreed* or *agreed* toward the concept of an award for educators in hard-to-staff buildings. Principals and assistant principals/deans had the highest percentages with 74.6 percent and 73.8 percent, respectively (Appendix I, 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 ten items for which respondents rated the level of effectiveness regarding communication about the ASPIRE Award. Two of the ten 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 10** (p. 30) using the item development as the baseline year.
- When comparing results from baseline to December 2014, nine of the ten areas of communication showed decreases. *Knowing when specific information about my ASPIRE Award was available* reflected the area of communication for which respondents indicated the highest increase for effectiveness (0.8 percentage point) (Table 10, p. 30).
- Based on the results of the May 2009 and 2014 surveys, 70.1 percent and 68.5 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 2014, respectively (Table 10, p. 30).
- Based on the December 2014 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 comparative growth calculations* (53.6 percent), *providing clear explanations about value-added calculations* (54.5 percent) and *providing clear explanations about the award model* (49.0 percent) (Table 10, p. 30).
- On the January 2014 survey, five questions were designed to determine how the respondents received specific types of communication. The results are summarized in **Table 11** (p. 30).
- Based on the results of the December 2014 survey, 86.7 percent of respondents reported the *ASPIRE e-mail* as reflecting the highest percentage when compared to the other four methods used to communicate information about the ASPIRE Award program. This was followed by the *ASPIRE eNEWS* (69.9 percent) (Table 11, p. 30).
- When comparing whether respondents received/used any of the five different methods for communicating information about the ASPIRE Award program, 18.6 percent of respondents indicated *Not Sure* regarding *Academic Services Memos*, the highest percentage for this category.

What were the recommendations for changing the 2013–2014 ASPIRE Award suggested by respondents?

- Out of a total of 4,031 respondents on the December 2014 survey, 1,724 or 42.8 percent of the respondents provided at least one response for recommending changes to the 2013–2014 ASPIRE Award, whereas 57.2 percent of respondents did not provide any responses. **Table 12** (p. 31) summarizes the frequency and percent of responses.
- A total of 3.1 percent and 4.4 percent of the 1,724 responses reflected that no changes were needed to the model or the response was simply, *No Comment*. The top six emergent categories reflected 54.5 percent of the responses (Table 12, p. 31).
- The predominant suggestion centered on making the model equitable, fair, transparent, inclusive, with clear expectations 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 (12.8 percent). 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 with an EVAAS report. 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 12, p. 31).
- Unintended consequences (divisive, cheating, free-riding) comprised about 12.0 percent of responses. Respondents felt that some teachers would benefit from the award program but did not contribute significantly to student growth (free-riding). Another respondent indicated that “cheating is widespread in the HISD district...”, while another indicated that “The ASPIRE Award Program, as is, is not a fair way to compensate and reward those teachers who are effective in non-tested subjects.” Another respondent stated, “The very best teachers are leaving HISD for more competitive salaries and stipends.” Others have stated that it is “divisive”, and breeds frustration and confusion (Table 12, p. 31).”
- Approximately 11.0 percent of the responses focused on the allocation of money. Respondents indicated that the money should be reallocated for student scholarships, smaller classes, better equipment, more tutors, school materials for students, clothes for students, attendance incentives for students, and to increase the base pay. Some respondents indicated that STAAR teachers or teachers in tested grade levels, teachers working in hard-to-staff schools and teachers providing instruction to low-income students and/or at-risk students 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 (Group 2) 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, “Making it more fair school wide for teachers. Central Office admin[istration] (including superintendent) should not be a part of ASPIRE” (Table 12, p. 31).
- A total of 174 responses or 6.9 percent of respondents were concerned about external factors that they perceived as impacting growth or the calculation of growth. These were factors that teachers perceived as being out of their immediate control such as the classroom composition (high numbers of behavior problems, English, Language Learners, at-risk, high performing, etc.). Another factor

centered on the time scheduled for a course. If students had more hours for reading and mathematics and less for science or art, how can they be compared? A third factor included those teachers who had tutors for their classes. Is it fair to calculate value-added scores for teachers with tutors and teachers who had no tutors. Student apathy and absenteeism were also factors that were out of a teacher's control (Table 12, p.31).

- Six percent of the respondents wanted to have the same earning opportunity as a core teacher with EVAAS®, or stated that their maximum award wasn't commensurate with their professional contribution.
- A total of 140 responses, or 5.5 percent of respondents to this question indicated that the ASPIRE Award be discontinued. One respondent cited, "Discontinue the program and use the ASPIRE money for scholarships for high achieving students to go to college." Another respondent stated, "Eliminate the program to restore true collaboration and teamwork" (Table 12, p. 31).

Discussion

The purpose of the 2013–2014 ASPIRE Award Survey was to gain insight regarding the level of knowledge and perceptions of Houston Independent School District (HISD) teachers and staff after eight 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 survey administrations followed the January payout with the exception of the 2014 survey administration when it was concurrent with the inquiry period, 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 eight years. First, when comparing the survey response rate for December 2007 to the response rate for December 2014, there was an overall increase from 11.4 percent to 22.0 percent, but a decrease of 28.8 percentage points from May 2009, 15.7 percentage points from March 2010, and 8.3 percentage points from March 2011. There was a decrease of 3.7 percentage points from January 2014. The response rate is low and caution is warranted in interpreting the data.

Another key area, support for the program, showed mixed results over the eight-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 49.7 percent with the December 2014 survey administration. 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 five 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, increased to 49.4 percent in January 2014, and was followed by a decrease to 48.1 percent in December 2014.

The final key area centered on training sessions for value-added analysis. 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. For the 2013–2014 school year, 31.1 percent of respondents indicated that they watched at least one of the Learning Modules on the SAS EVAAS® site in the last twelve months.

Collecting feedback about effective communications was undertaken over the past six years to identify areas for improvement as well as areas that were effective. Based on survey results from 2009 to 2014, there was a decrease in effectiveness in nine of the ten areas for which data were available, including 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*. Based on December 2014 survey data, 53.6 percent of respondents indicated that communication was *not effective* or *somewhat effective* for *providing clear explanations about comparative growth*, 54.5 percent of respondents indicated that communications were *not effective* or *somewhat effective* for *providing clear explanations about value-added calculations*, and 49.0 percent of respondents indicated that *providing clear explanations about the award model* 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, with the following exceptions: connection between classroom instruction and performance pay results, maximum ASPIRE award amount adequately recognized my efforts to increase student progress, and maximum ASPIRE award amount was commensurate with my professional

contribution. Core teachers have more positive perceptions than elective/ancillary teachers with one exception. Elective/ancillary teachers indicated that they had higher levels of knowledge regarding the ASPIRE Award program than core teachers (Groups 1–3). 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 31.3 percent of principals *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that their maximum ASPIRE Award amount (\$15,000) was commensurate with their professional contribution. Teaching assistants indicated the highest percent for any category at 55.6 percent. Of the nine 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 \$3,000) at 14.3 percent and 17.5 percent, respectively. For those respondents that indicated they were not eligible to receive an award, only 24.8 percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that their maximum ASPIRE Award amount was commensurate with their professional contribution. On the 2014 survey, allocation of funding was the largest emergent category regarding recommended changes to the ASPIRE Award model, which included responses about increasing the award amount.

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. Input varied from comments such as: “Too many changes to keep up with. Not enough people to explain how it actually works;” “We need a clearer understanding of how EVAAS® Scores are calculated. There are too many misconceptions about the process;” “Divide the ASPIRE Award amount equally among all teachers at a school. We all teach the same students. It should not be an award based on a subject area. It should be comprehensive for all on the same campus;” and, “I would not change it.”

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Table 1. Nine 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
2012–2013 ASPIRE Award	January 2014	18,269	-	4,689	25.7
2013–2014 ASPIRE Award	December 2014	18,364	-	4,031	22.0

Table 2. Number and Percent of Survey Respondents by Categorization, 2013–2014 ASPIRE Award, December 2014 Survey Administrations

Category	2012–2013		2013–2014	
	N	%	N	%
Group 1, Core Teacher Grades 3–10 w/EVAAS	1,062	31.2	881	29.6
Group 2, Core Teacher PK–2	702	20.6	535	18.0
Group 3, Core Teacher Grades 3–12 w/o EVAAS	283	8.3	312	10.5
Group 4, Elective/Ancillary Teacher	375	11.0	356	12.0
Group 5, Instructional Support	253	7.4	259	8.7
Group 6, Teaching Assistant	252	7.4	236	7.9
Group 7, Operational Support	282	8.3	249	8.4
Group 1L, Principals	104	3.1	74	2.5
Group 2L, Assistant Principals/Deans of Instruction	90	2.6	70	2.4
Total	3,403	100.0	2,972	100.0

Table 3. Background Characteristics of 2013–2014 ASPIRE Award Survey Respondents

	N	%
Highest Degree Held		
High School	133	3.4
Some College	293	7.5
Associate's Degree	141	3.6
Bachelor's Degree	1,420	36.4
Some Graduate School	527	13.5
Master's Degree	1,272	32.6
Doctoral Degree	111	2.8
Total	3,897	100.0
Average experience in HISD		10.3
Average experience at current campus		6.8

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 2013–2014 school year?	83.3	16.7	3,917
Were you eligible to receive an ASPIRE Award for the 2013–2014 school year?	80.7	19.3	2,772
Will you receive an ASPIRE Award for the 2013–2014 school year (to be paid out in February 2015)?	58.9	41.1	2,889
If you were a core teacher with an EVAAS® report, will you receive an individual performance ASPIRE Award?	66.1	33.9	814

Table 5. Teaching in a Critical Shortage Area: Response Count and Response Percentage, December 2014

Critical Shortage Area	N	%
Special Education	384	11.8
Bilingual Education	336	10.4
English as a Second Language (ESL)	337	10.4
Mathematics (Grades 6–12)	227	7.0
Science (Grades 6–12)	176	5.4
Spanish (Grades 6–12)	40	1.2
N/A	1,744	53.8
Total	3,244	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 December 2014

			Strongly Disagree/Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree/Agree	
	N		%		%		%	
The ASPIRE Award encourages me to:	Base-line*	2014	Base-line*	2014	Base-line*	2014	Base-line*	2014
Continue teaching in the classroom	2,750	2,777	26.3	39.2	25.7	23.5	47.9	37.3
Remain working in HISD	1,829	3,178	31.7	37.7	24.2	23.1	44.0	39.2
Come to work on a daily basis	3,222	3,146	27.3	39.2	25.7	22.4	47.0	38.3
Innovate in the classroom		2,846		39.2		22.8		37.9

*Baseline year for the items *Innovate in the classroom* was 2014 and *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, December 2014

Over the past several years, I have	N	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
		%	%	%	%	%
Collaborated with my colleagues	2,484	0.1	0.7	3.7	20.8	74.7
Used teacher-made assessments to make instructional decisions	2,460	0.4	1.6	10.0	32.2	55.8
Used data from district formative assessments (e.g. Snapshots or District Level Assessments) to make instructional decisions	2,361	3.4	5.3	11.4	25.5	54.3
Used standardized testing data to make instructional decisions	2,351	2.8	5.5	13.6	26.9	51.2
Used value-added data to make instructional decisions	2,248	6.6	8.4	16.5	27.1	41.5

Table 8. Number and Percent of Survey Respondents Indicating Their Level of Understanding for the ASPIRE Award Program and Its Components for the 2006–2007 and 2013–2014 ASPIRE Award, May 2008 and December 2014 Survey Administrations

Please rate your level of understanding to the following items:	N		Very Low/Low		Sufficient		Very High/High	
			%		%		%	
	2008	2014	2008	2014	2008	2014	2008	2014
My understanding of ASPIRE is:	5,882	3,182	17.4	26.1	55.2	45.1	27.4	28.8
My understanding of value-added analysis is:	5,844	3,137	21.3	33.5	50.0	40.9	28.7	25.6
My understanding of the difference between student achievement and academic progress is:	5,848	3,145	11.6	17.8	43.9	43.4	44.5	38.7
My understanding of how value-added information can help me as an educator is:	5,832	3,026	18.3	28.6	45.1	42.3	36.6	29.2
My understanding of how to read/interpret value-added reports is:	5,817	3,073	23.7	29.8	47.0	42.6	29.3	27.6
My understanding of the different components of the 2013–2014 ASPIRE Award Program was:	5,835	3,117	23.2	33.8	48.7	42.5	28.1	23.6
My understanding of how the ASPIRE Awards were calculated/determined is:	5,852	3,096	33.9	44.1	43.9	37.5	22.2	18.4

Table 9. Number and Percent of Survey Respondents Indicating Their Perceptions About Award Amounts and the ASPIRE Award Model, March 2010 and December 2014

	N		Strongly Disagree/ Disagree		Neutral		Agree/ Strongly Agree	
			%		%		%	
	2010	2014	2010	2014	2010	2014	2010	2014
There is a connection between classroom instruction and ASPIRE Award results.	5,428	2,927	34.2	40.7	27.6	22.7	38.3	36.6
The maximum award amount for my ASPIRE Award category adequately recognizes my efforts to increase student progress.	5,274	2,864	44.4	46.1	26.5	20.2	29.1	33.7
The maximum award amount for my ASPIRE Award category encourages me to remain in a campus-based position.	5,319	2,899	37.2	42.6	32.4	24.4	30.3	33.0
The maximum award amount for my ASPIRE Award category is commensurate with my professional contribution.	5,325	2,886	44.9	48.1	28.5	21.4	26.6	30.5
The ASPIRE Award is a fair way of acknowledging a teacher's impact on student growth.	5,417	2,977	46.6	46.1	26.6	21.7	26.7	32.2
The formal inquiry process allowed me the opportunity to question the accuracy of my award.	4,812	2,519	22.8	23.3	39.7	31.6	37.5	45.1
The ASPIRE Award should be continued with modifications incorporated on an annual basis.	5,367	2,925	18.9	23.9	32.4	21.8	48.7	54.2

Table 10. Number and Percent of Survey Respondents Indicating Their Perceptions About Communicating Effectively, May 2009 and December 2014

	N		Not Effective/ Somewhat Effective		Moderately Effective/ Very Effective	
	Baseline	2014	Baseline	2014	Baseline	2014
Knowing where to find information about the ASPIRE Award in general.	3,383	3,154	32.6	33.4	67.4	66.6
Knowing when specific information about my ASPIRE Award was available.	3,371	3,144	31.5	30.8	68.4	69.2
Knowing where to find information about my specific ASPIRE Award.	3,367	3,122	30.0	31.5	70.1	68.5
Knowing how to interpret and understand my specific ASPIRE Award Notice.	3,368	3,128	38.6	42.4	61.4	57.6
Understanding the difference between submitting a question by e-mail versus submitting a formal inquiry about your final award.	3,362	3,124	38.6	42.1	61.4	57.9
Understanding where to find information about the inquiry process on the portal.	3,364	3,126	36.4	39.4	63.7	60.6
Understanding that formal inquiries were required to be submitted by a specific deadline.	3,352	3,129	34.7	35.1	65.4	64.9
Providing clear explanations about the award model.*	2,828	3,120	40.7	49.0	59.2	51.0
Providing clear explanations about value-added calculations.*	2,807	3,097	45.4	54.5	54.7	45.5
Providing clear explanations about comparative growth calculations**	3,011	3,121	51.9	53.6	48.1	46.4

*Baseline year for the items *asterisked* was 2012, and **Baseline year was 2013; it was 2009 for all other items.

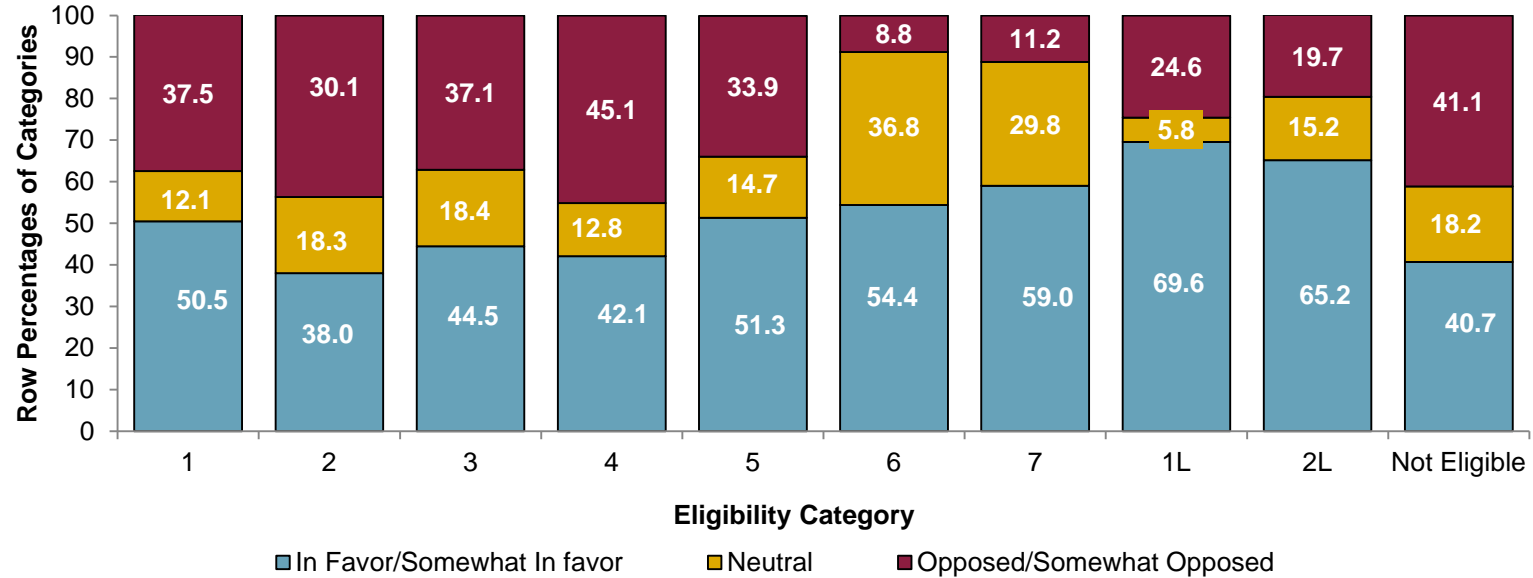
Table 11. Number and Percent of Survey Respondents Indicating Their Receipt for Different Types of Communication December 2014

	N	Yes	No	Not Sure
School Messenger (automated phone system)	3,097	60.5	28.6	10.9
ASPIRE eNews	3,052	69.9	18.1	12.1
Academic Services Memos (electronic format)	3,006	55.8	25.5	18.6
ASPIRE e-mail	3,152	86.7	7.2	6.1
ASPIRE portal	2,942	64.8	21.0	14.2

Table 12. Number and Percent of Responses for Recommended Changes and Educational Impact to the 2013–2014 ASPIRE Award, December 2014		
	N	%
Make the model fair, transparent, equitable, inclusive, with clear expectations	323	12.8
Unintended Consequences (divisive, cheating, free-riding, highly effective/effective teachers leaving the district, negative culture)	301	11.9
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/allocate funds to buying resources, scholarships for students, smaller classes, more tutors, clothes for students, attendance incentives for students	287	11.4
Factors perceived as impacting growth or the calculation of growth	174	6.9
Same earning opportunity as highest award category/award not commensurate with professional contribution	151	6.0
Discontinue the award	140	5.5
Measuring growth/achievement (BOY/EOY/student growth/passing rates/campus, department, grade, subject, and/or individual award)	250	10.7
Change the Eligibility and Categorization Rules and make plant operators, janitors, food service, hourly employees, and tutors eligible/Attendance Rule (more days/eliminate)/Attendance bonus (reinstitute the bonus)/Don't include Appraisal Ratings (Biased in some cases) especially Student Performance Measures		
N/A or No Comment	110	4.4
Training	105	4.2
Performance measures or criteria (e.g. position in hard-to-staff school, number of highly effective teachers and retention of them, college readiness and college acceptance, parent's role, working with students new to the district)	99	3.9
Don't Know/Not Sure	87	3.4
Calculation/Formula	85	3.4
No Changes/Satisfied	79	3.1
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/teacher input	69	2.7
Pay Raise	62	2.5
Appraisal	54	2.1
Miscellaneous	45	1.8
Payout Timeline/Value-Added Timeline	32	1.3
Create a different model for non-core teachers/special education teachers	28	1.1
Years of Experience & Advanced Degrees	16	0.6
Linkage	10	0.4
Inquiry Process	6	0.2
Missing	2	0.1
Total	2,524	100.0

APPENDIX A

CROSS TABULATION SUMMARIZING THE PERCENT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS INDICATING THE MAXIMUM FAVORABILITY TOWARD THE CONCEPT OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE PAY BY ELIGIBILITY CATEGORY, DECEMBER 2014



Key:

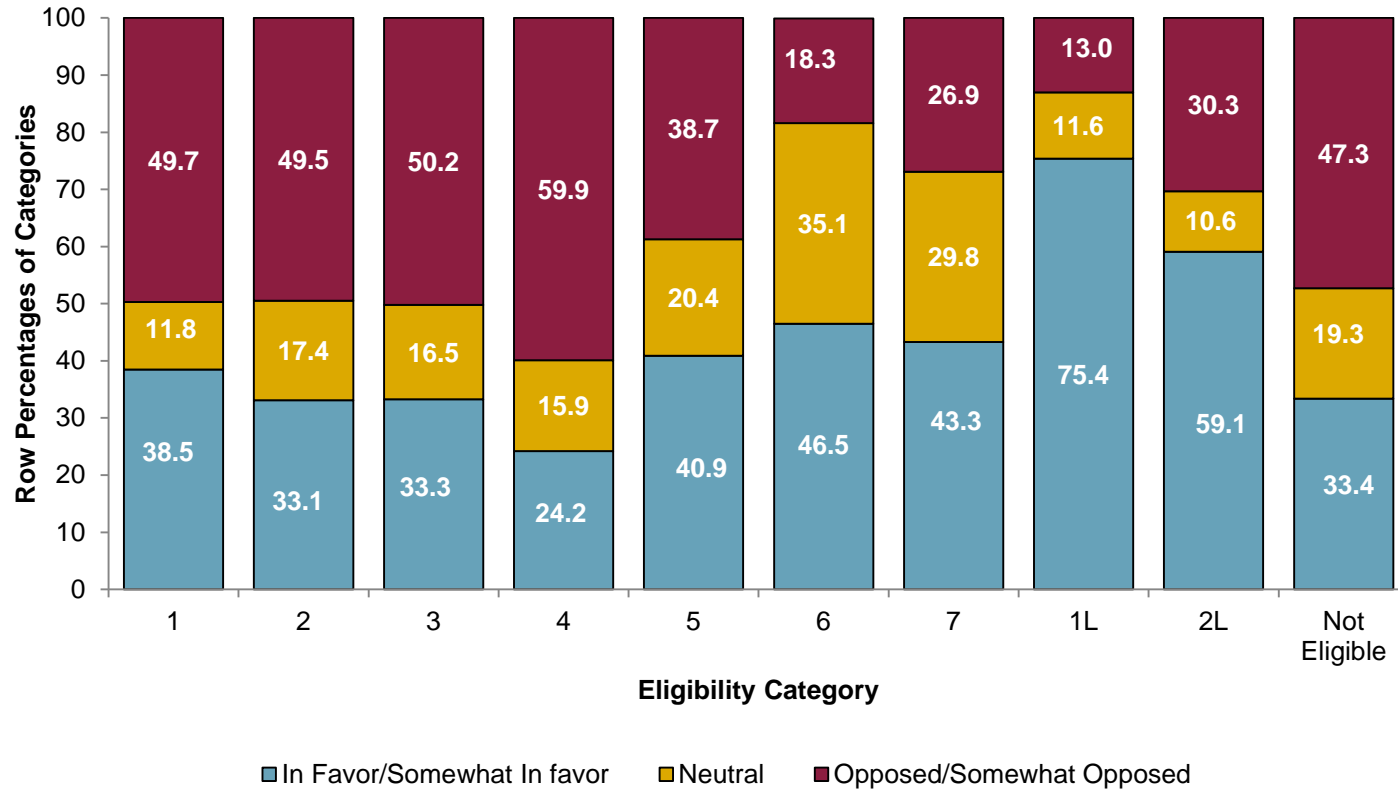
- Group 1: Core Teacher Grades 3–10 w/EVAAS®
- Group 2: Core Teacher PK–2
- Group 3: Core Teacher Grades 3–12 w/o EVAAS®
- Group 4: Elective/Ancillary Teacher
- Group 5: Instructional Support Staff

- Group 6: Teaching Assistant
- Group 7: Operational Support Staff
- Group 1L: Principal
- Group 2L: Assistant Principal/Deans
- Not Eligible

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

APPENDIX B

CROSS TABULATION SUMMARIZING THE PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS INDICATING FAVORABILITY TOWARD THE CONCEPT OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE PAY BASED ON INDIVIDUAL STUDENT GROWTH BY ELIGIBILITY CATEGORY, DECEMBER 2014



Key:

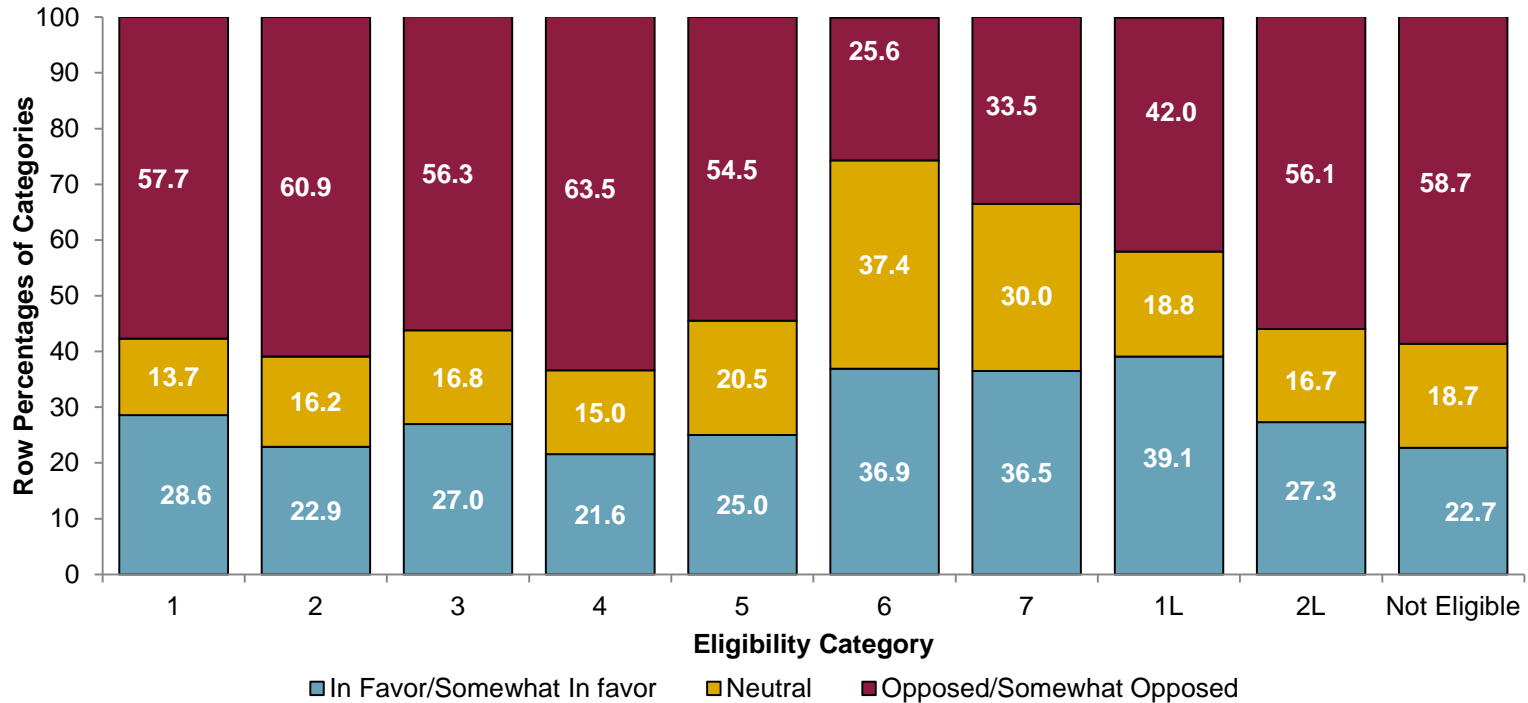
Group 1: Core Teacher Grades 3–10 w/EVAAS®
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 Group 3: Core Teacher Grades 3–12 w/o EVAAS®
 Group 4: Elective/Ancillary Teacher
 Group 5: Instructional Support Staff

Group 6: Teaching Assistant
 Group 7: Operational Support Staff
 Group 1L: Principal
 Group 2L: Assistant Principal/Deans
 Not Eligible

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

APPENDIX C

CROSS TABULATION SUMMARIZING THE PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS INDICATING FAVORABILITY TOWARD THE CONCEPT OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE PAY BASED ON PASSING RATES ONLY BY ELIGIBILITY CATEGORY, DECEMBER 2014



Key:

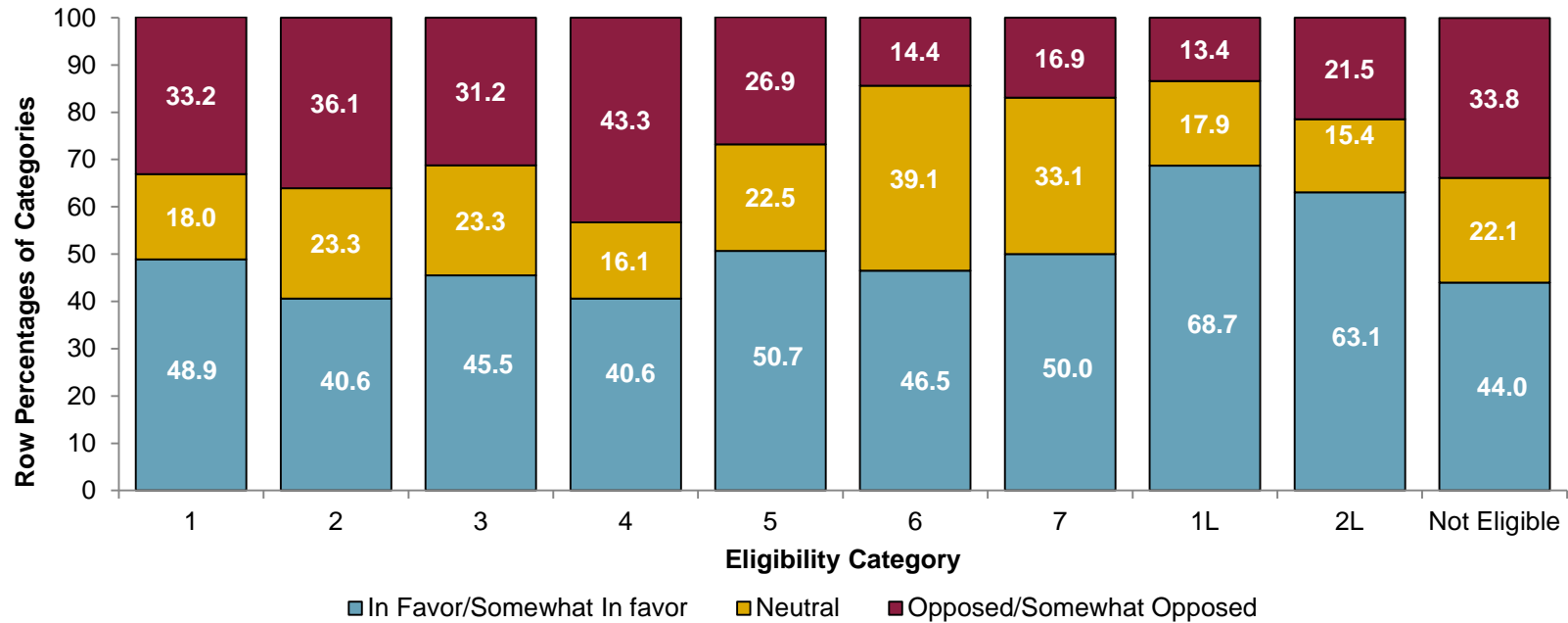
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- Group 3: Core Teacher Grades 3–12 w/o EVAAS®
- Group 4: Elective/Ancillary Teacher
- Group 5: Instructional Support Staff

- Group 6: Teaching Assistant
- Group 7: Operational Support Staff
- Group 1L: Principal
- Group 2L: Assistant Principal/Deans
- Not Eligible

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

APPENDIX D

CROSS TABULATION SUMMARIZING THE PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS INDICATING FAVORABILITY TOWARD THE CONCEPT OF DIFFERENTIATED PAY BY ELIGIBILITY CATEGORY, DECEMBER 2014



Key:

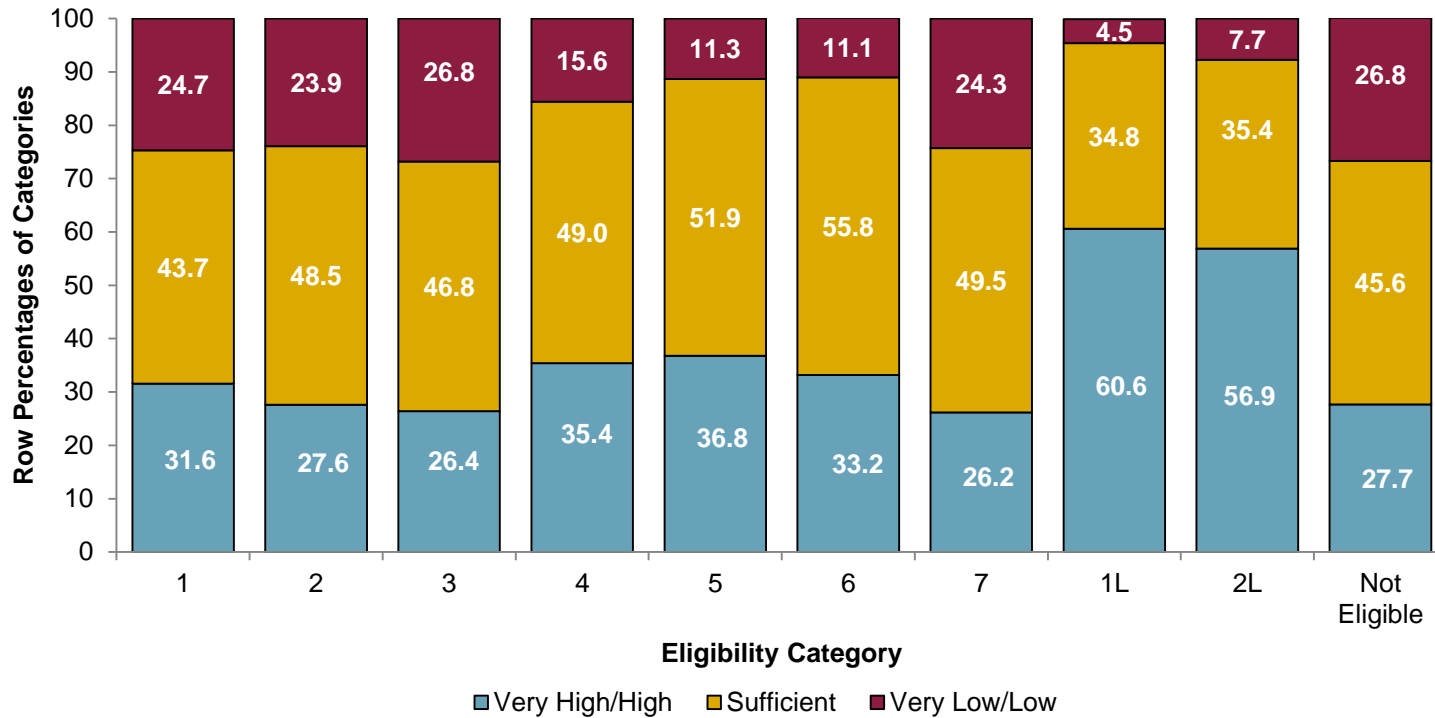
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- Group 3: Core Teacher Grades 3–12 w/o EVAAS®
- Group 4: Elective/Ancillary Teacher
- Group 5: Instructional Support Staff

- Group 6: Teaching Assistant
- Group 7: Operational Support Staff
- Group 1L: Principal
- Group 2L: Assistant Principal/Deans
- Not Eligible

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

APPENDIX E

CROSS TABULATION SUMMARIZING THE PERCENT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS' LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE 2013–2014 ASPIRE AWARD PROGRAM, DECEMBER 2014



Key:

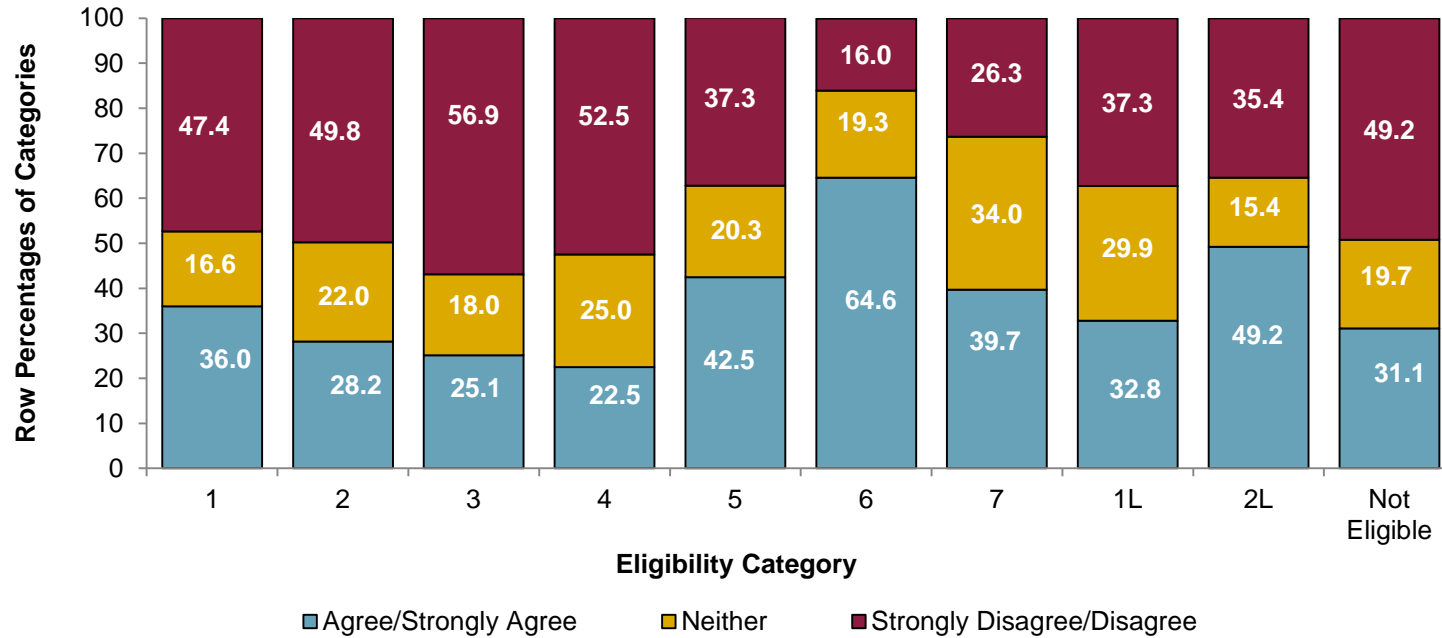
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- Group 3: Core Teacher Grades 3–12 w/o EVAAS®
- Group 4: Elective/Ancillary Teacher
- Group 5: Instructional Support Staff

- Group 6: Teaching Assistant
- Group 7: Operational Support Staff
- Group 1L: Principal
- Group 2L: Assistant Principal/Deans
- Not Eligible

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

APPENDIX F

CROSS TABULATION SUMMARIZING THE PERCENT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS' INDICATING A CONNECTION BETWEEN CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION AND PERFORMANCE PAY RESULTS BY ELIGIBILITY CATEGORY FOR THE 2013–2014 ASPIRE AWARD PROGRAM, DECEMBER 2014



Key:

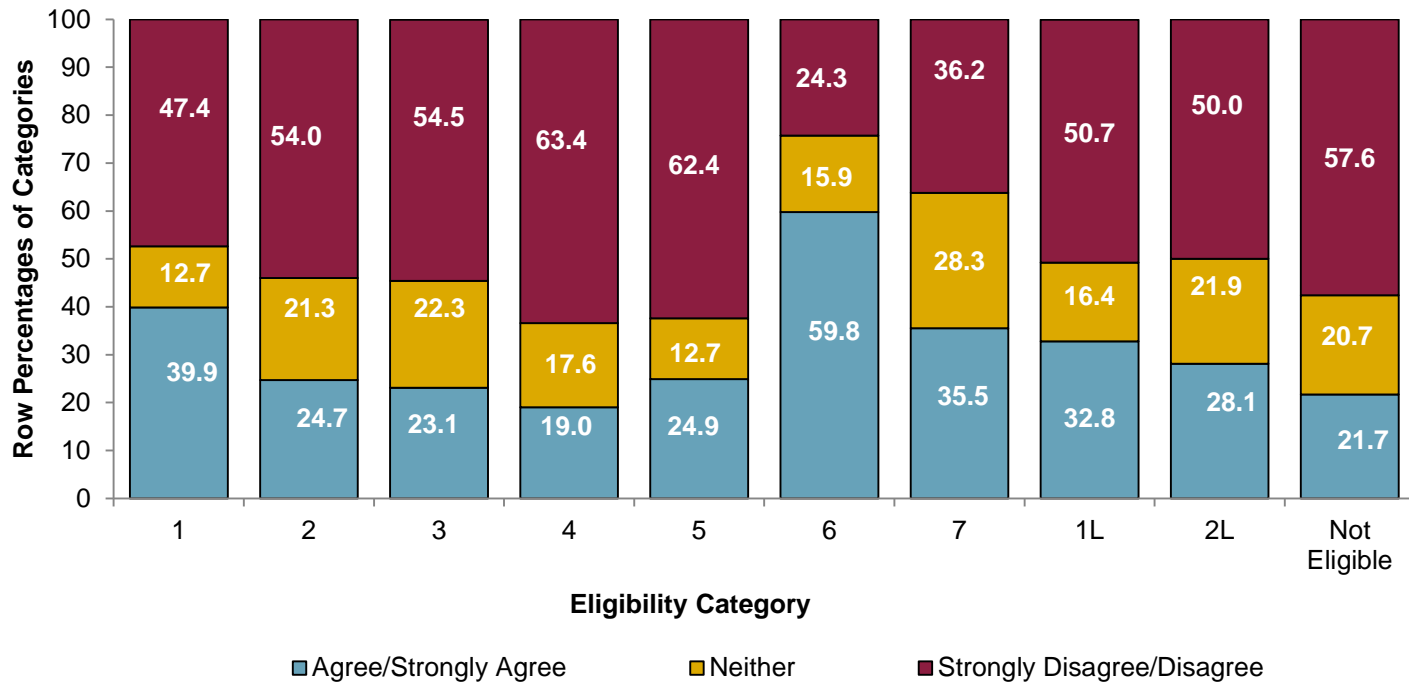
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 Group 2: Core Teacher PK–2
 Group 3: Core Teacher Grades 3–12 w/o EVAAS®
 Group 4: Elective/Ancillary Teacher
 Group 5: Instructional Support Staff

Group 6: Teaching Assistant
 Group 7: Operational Support Staff
 Group 1L: Principal
 Group 2L: Assistant Principal/Deans
 Not Eligible

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

APPENDIX G

CROSS TABULATION SUMMARIZING THE PERCENT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS INDICATING THE MAXIMUM ASPIRE AWARD AMOUNT ADEQUATELY RECOGNIZED THEIR EFFORTS TO INCREASE STUDENT PROGRESS, DECEMBER 2014



Key:

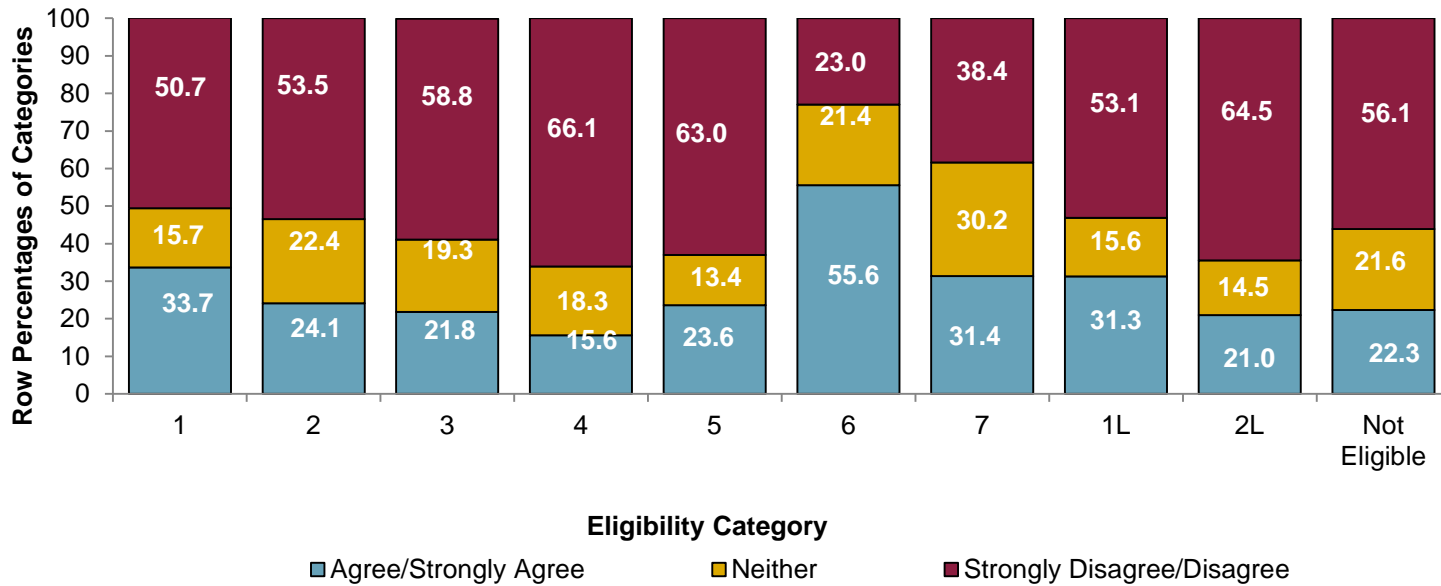
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- Group 4: Elective/Ancillary Teacher
- Group 5: Instructional Support Staff

- Group 6: Teaching Assistant
- Group 7: Operational Support Staff
- Group 1L: Principal
- Group 2L: Assistant Principal/Deans
- Not Eligible

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

APPENDIX H

CROSS TABULATION SUMMARIZING THE PERCENT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS INDICATING THE MAXIMUM ASPIRE AWARD AMOUNT WAS COMMENSURATE WITH THEIR PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTION, DECEMBER 2014



Key:

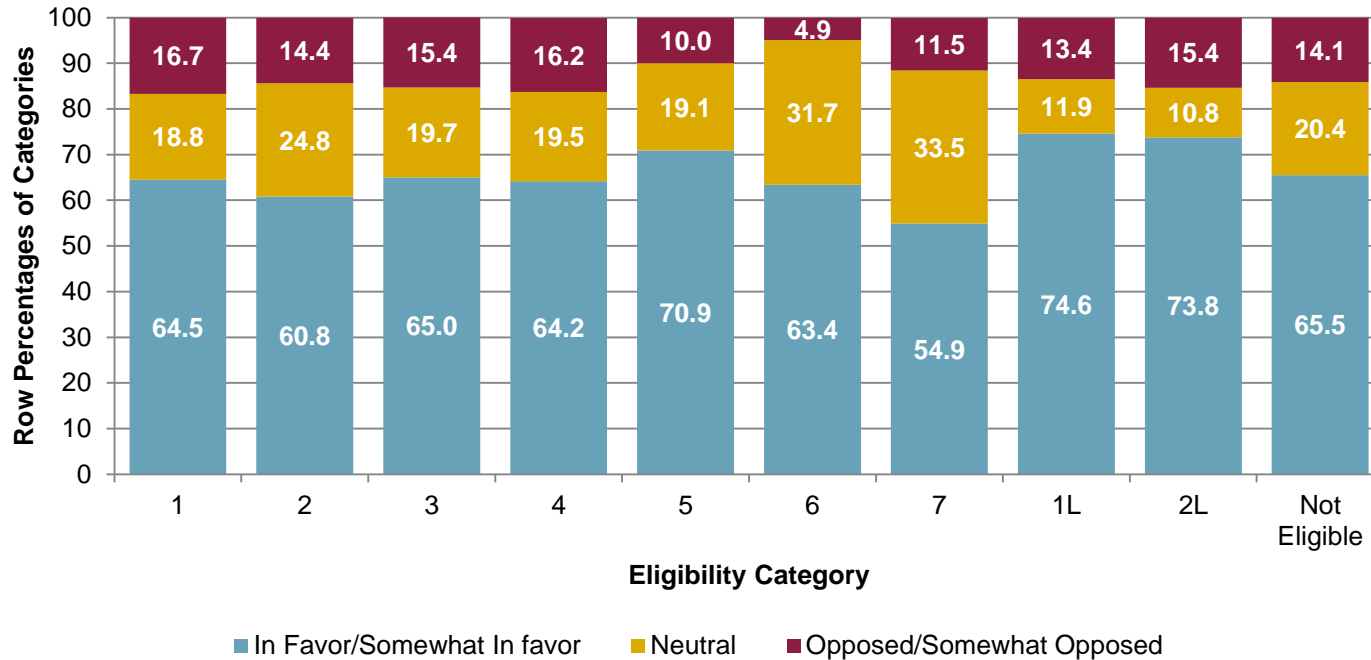
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 Group 4: Elective/Ancillary Teacher
 Group 5: Instructional Support Staff

Group 6: Teaching Assistant
 Group 7: Operational Support Staff
 Group 1L: Principal
 Group 2L: Assistant Principal/Deans
 Not Eligible

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

APPENDIX I

CROSS TABULATION SUMMARIZING THE PERCENT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS INDICATING FAVORABILITY TOWARD THE CONCEPT OF AN AWARD FOR EDUCATORS IN HARD-TO-STAFF BUILDINGS, DECEMBER 2014



Key:

Group 1: Core Teacher Grades 3–10 w/EVAAS®
 Group 2: Core Teacher PK–2
 Group 3: Core Teacher Grades 3–12 w/o EVAAS®
 Group 4: Elective/Ancillary Teacher
 Group 5: Instructional Support Staff

Group 6: Teaching Assistant
 Group 7: Operational Support Staff
 Group 1L: Principal
 Group 2L: Assistant Principal/Deans
 Not Eligible

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