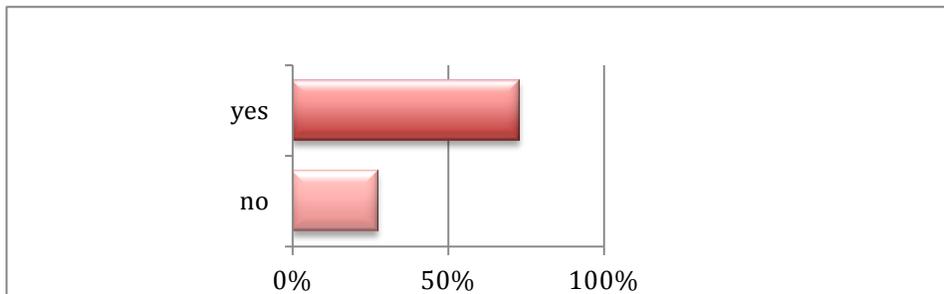


ON TEACHER EVALUATION – SOUNDING BOARD SAYS...

This is a summary of data collected from Sounding Board teacher-participants who responded to a quick survey about components of teacher evaluation that were outlined in the original language of House Bill 3035 and Senate Bill 6696.

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Question 1: *If passed the bill would require that teachers be evaluated using a 4 level rating system determined by districts, instead of the state's current minimum of two. Do you think this is a positive change?*



Well over half of Sounding Board responded yes (73%) – they feel 4 ratings is a positive change, while less than a third (27%) responded no.

What else did they say?

Teachers highlighted several potential benefits and some potential issues for supporting a 4 level rating system.

CSTP created Sounding Board as an avenue to amplify the voices of accomplished teachers. It is comprised of National Board Certified teachers who are interested in regularly giving the teacher's perspective on relevant and critical education issues or policy implementation questions.

Sounding Board teachers respond to quick surveys. Their responses are thematically organized, summarized and communicated to decision-makers, posted on CSTP's website and used in other materials.

Potential Benefit: Provides teachers with better feedback.

- "There would be more information gained from your evaluation besides meeting standard or not."
- "If done well, it will allow a teacher to "pass" and yet still have room to grow."
- "Four levels give the assessor more room to give meaningful feedback."
- "If accompanied with an appropriate, thorough, and clear rubric defining the levels then I think that more levels would mean additional information being communicated within the evaluation process to those involved."

Potential Benefit: Recognizes top-notch teaching.

- "With 2 levels it seems like all teachers, even mediocre, ineffective teachers, end up in one category, and almost no one is in the other. There is no recognition of higher levels of competence."

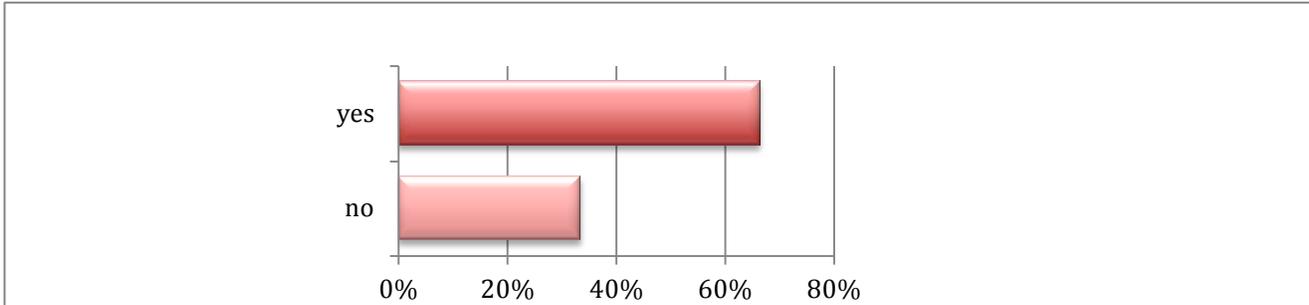
Potential Benefit: Paints a more realistic picture of the complex job of teaching.

- "There are many "shades" of teacher effectiveness...more levels would allow for more of the nuances of teacher quality to be addressed."
- "I believe that teachers have many aspects of their job and a 4-level rating system gives a better picture of the teacher's strengths/weaknesses."

Potential Issues – Inconsistencies with evaluators, standards and criteria.

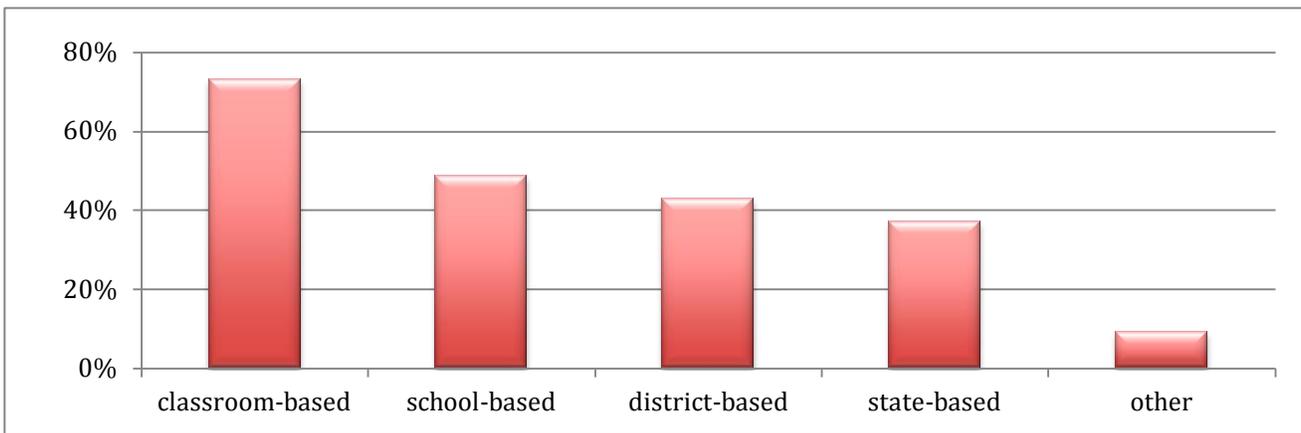
- "A four-level system is potentially more subjective than a two-level system. Although principals might be required to have minimal training in evaluating using the new system, the potential for bias is greater."
- "I would prefer a standard measure developed at the state level. Leaving the rating system to individual districts may create a gap in rigor between district rating systems."
- "All districts should use a uniform evaluation."
- "To me, the rating system state wide would be better because then all teachers would be evaluated on the same criteria."

Question 2: *If passed, the bill would allow the use of student growth data in evaluation, if available and appropriate, that is based on multiple measures that can include classroom-based, school-based, district-based and state-based tools. Student growth is defined as a change in student achievement between two points in time. Do you think that the option of using multiple measures of student growth data in evaluation is a positive change?*



About 66% of Sounding Board responded yes – they feel using multiple measures of student growth is a positive change, as compared to about 34% of Sounding Board who responded no –it isn’t a positive change.

Question 3a: *Of those who answered ‘yes’ to the previous question (175 people, 66.5%), they were asked the following – Which of these tools do you think would be most appropriate measures of student growth?*



Of this group, about 73% responded that classroom-based tools are most appropriate gauges of student growth. Less than half of the respondents feel school (49%), district (43%) and state (37%) tools are appropriate measures of student growth.

What else did they say?

These teachers argued for a multiple measures approach, a more localized approach with classroom/building/district tools and a state approach to gauge student growth.

Arguments for multiple measures

- “To provide an overall view of the student's growth, it would require more than one assessment tool to view the trend in student success and need.”
- “The state assessments help guide schools, and help teachers “set the bar.” District assessments have a big role in the community, school and class based assessments help teachers focus on individual students. All these assessments have a role in teaching.”
- “The goal of measurement should be at the state level. However, because of so many local variations, classroom and school [measures] must be taken into consideration.”

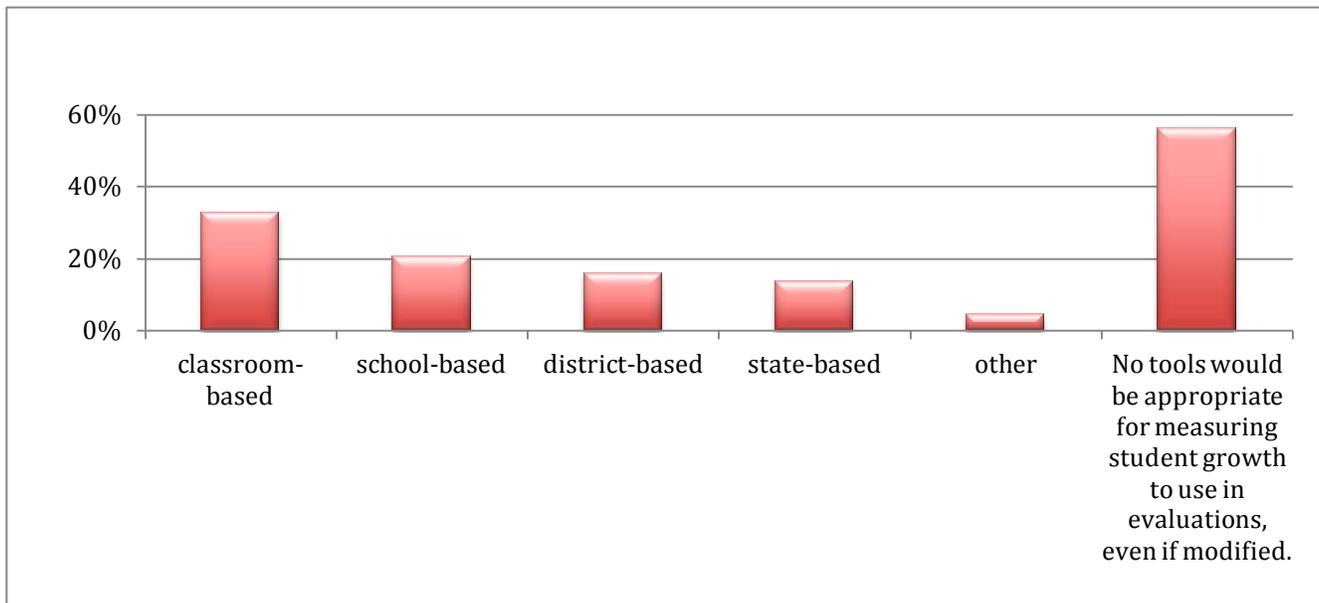
Arguments for localized approaches – classroom, building and/or district

- “Classroom and district based [measures] are most appropriate as they can look at the actual students - no matter where they start”.
- “Formative and summative assessments in the classroom could be used appropriately to measure student growth. These assessments could be common assessments used throughout the district that have been developed in collaboration by teachers, building-level and district office. State based tests are generally less valuable in measuring student growth.”
- “District based and state based assessments are generally too broad. A classroom assessment may be developed only by one teacher and therefore may have flaws. A school-based assessment, hopefully, would be designed by a team of teachers targeting a few skills and would be the most appropriate.”

Arguments for a state approach

- “I think the state assessment is the standard for all students.”
- “State based would be more “fair” as everyone in the state would have the same criteria/test.”
- “A classroom based measure is too open to subjectivity... State based and standards based seem the most objective way to assess kids.”

Question 3b: Of those who answered ‘no’ to the previous question (88 people, 33.5%) they were asked the following question – *Would any of these tools be appropriate measures of student growth if modified/changed?*



What else did they say?

These teachers explained issues with using student data in their evaluation, as well as some modifications/changes they feel would make for more appropriate measures.

Issue - too many variables, including non-academic factors

- “There are so many variables out of our control as teachers that to begin to evaluate on the basis of student growth is a slippery slope.”
- “Even the best of teachers who work hard trying to accommodate these variables should not be held accountable for student performance under conditions out of the teacher’s control.”

Issue - negative effects on teacher distribution

- “Using data might drive educators to the suburbs, away from urban and poor areas, creating the exact opposite effect desired.”
- “If student academic growth is ever used as an evaluation tool, there would be a vacuum pulling teachers away from challenging schools where their incredible dedication is needed most.”

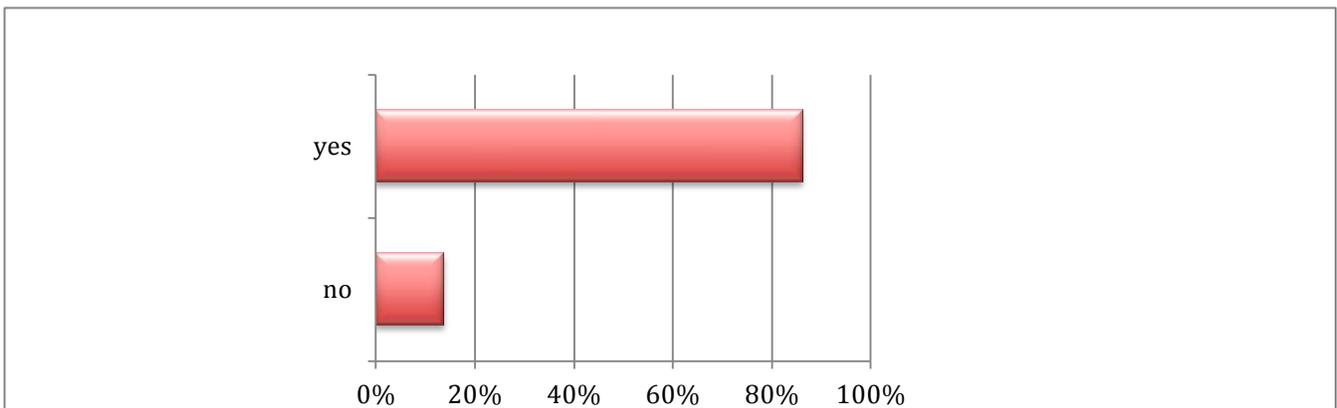
Issue - teaching to the test

- “We may start teaching only to the test and narrowing the vision of integrated learning.”
- “If teacher evaluations are based on district or state tests I fear that teachers would feel even more pressure to “teach to the test” and students would only suffer.”

Modifications/changes that could make for more appropriate measures

- “If teachers are given the opportunity to create (or work with their department to create) assessments then they are appropriate measures of what was taught... Teachers should be involved in all aspects - otherwise it becomes an arbitrary measure and potentially undermines demonstration of true growth of student learning - it should be a celebration of student learning.”
- “I am a big, big fan of the New York Regents Exams. As a social studies teacher, I love the idea of a state World History exam at the end of 10th grade that would test all students in the state. That type of option might be an appropriate measure.”
- “School-based evidence would encourage conversations focused on formative assessments, effective instructional strategies, common classroom practices, school-wide support mechanisms, etc. to take place on a school-wide level.”

Question 4: Sounding Board teachers reviewed the criteria proposed in legislation and then were asked - *Do you think these criteria are reasonable?*



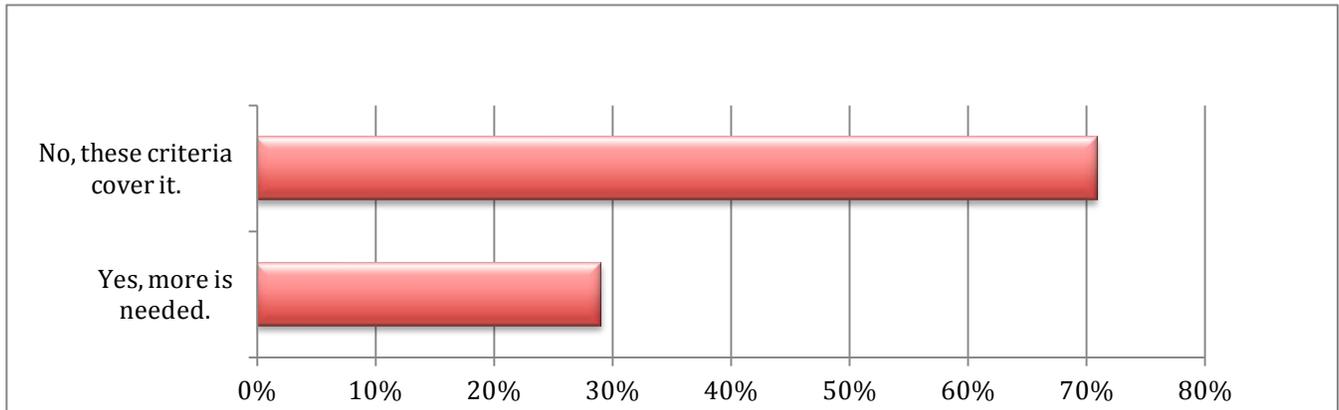
Sounding Board respondents overwhelmingly feel the criteria referenced in the bills are reasonable (86%), while a much smaller portion feel the criteria are unreasonable (14%).

What else did they say?

Teachers explained their agreement with the criteria listed in the bill.

- “These criteria outline what a professional should do.”
- “Many teachers already demonstrate proficiency in the areas mentioned. Also, teachers should be able to demonstrate competent skills and wide knowledge base in the specific criteria.”
- “These are the criteria that I personally strive to meet or exceed as a professional educator. Anything less than meeting those standards means I am not doing the job I was hired to do and children may not get the education they deserve.”
- “If I were assessed on these criteria, I can see that I would be a better teacher. Let's do this!”
- “That's what good teachers do: differentiate, communicate and advocate for students.”
- “I think that teachers should be evaluated on student learning and everything that is tied to that. The above elements are directly tied to student learning.”

Question 5: *Are there other important aspects of teaching that are missing and should also be included?*



About 71% of Sounding Board respondents feel the criteria outlined in the bills sufficiently covers the important aspects of teaching as compared to about 29% that feel more is needed.

What else did they say?

Teachers explained why they feel the criterion proposed in the bill sufficiently covers the important aspects of their job.

- “These are criteria that I currently use in my classroom as do many of my colleagues and when used consistently they are producing more effective successful learning by students.”
- “These seem to be comprehensive enough to do a quality evaluation of an effective teacher.”
- “More criteria simply dilute the focus on these more essential criteria.”
- “This criteria reflects the most recent research in the educational field. Great!”