



CENTER FOR APPLIED RESEARCH
AND EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

MINNESOTA'S STATE POLICY PILOT PROGRAM:
NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINAL REPORT

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Executive Summary

In 2014, Minnesota was one of ten states selected to participate in the State Policy Pilot Program (SP3) established by Americans for the Arts. The Minnesota team (MN-SP3) contracted with the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) at the University of Minnesota in 2015 to conduct a needs assessment that would inform the MN-SP3 plan. The purpose of the needs assessment was to describe current practice in the state regarding arts educator evaluation and to identify the kinds of resources that would be most useful to teachers and principals as they implemented the state's new policy for teacher development and evaluation.

This report summarizes the results of a fall 2015 survey of Minnesota principals that was conducted by CAREI. In addition, we draw on earlier data from CAREI's survey of Minnesota arts teachers in early 2015 to synthesize the perspectives of teachers and principals on current practices in arts teacher evaluation and resources that would be helpful to teachers and principals as they continue to implement the new policy.

Of the 1,577 principals for whom we had an active email address, 121 completed the survey. This resulted in a completion rate of 7.6%. Due to this low response rate, we need to interpret the survey data cautiously because the data may not adequately represent the experiences and perspectives of all Minnesota principals. A review of the characteristics of the principals who completed the survey suggests, however, that despite the small number of principals who completed the survey, the group of respondents reflect a range of the characteristics of Minnesota principals, such as the size of their school district, their geographic location in the state, and the grade levels of the school(s) in which they work.

Results

The principal survey data indicated the following:

- Over four-fifths (83.02%) of the principals use the same rubric to define performance levels for all teachers, regardless of discipline. Almost half of the respondents (47.90%) act as the summative evaluator for 26-50 teachers, including arts educators.
- Almost 60% of the principals *always* meet individually with their arts teachers before an observation occurs.
- Of the principals that meet with their arts teachers before at least some of their observations, half of the principals said that they always ask the teacher what aspect of the artistic processes in the arts standards the students are working on for the lesson they will be observing.
- Over two-thirds of the respondents (69.05%) said most or all teachers are very clear in telling them what the students are working on in the artistic processes in the arts standards.

- Over two-thirds of the principals (70.48%) indicated that it would be helpful for administrators to receive professional development on how to provide more targeted feedback to arts educators that is directly related to instruction in the arts.
- Many of the respondents offered suggestions for tools that administrators might find useful for providing more instructional feedback to arts educators. The two dominant themes in their suggestions were 1) rubrics or frameworks that are specific to the arts and which would help principals understand what to look for when observing arts instruction, and 2) information about the arts standards, artistic processes, and terminology in the arts.
- Although 60% of the principals reported that they felt comfortable in their knowledge of how to assist their teachers as they develop measurable outcomes of student growth in the arts, almost three-fourths of the principals (73.33%) indicated that it would be helpful for administrators to receive professional development in this area.
- When the survey offered the respondents an opportunity to provide comments on their needs, experiences, challenges, and suggestions for evaluating arts educators, 48 of the 121 principals provided a response. The major topic they addressed in their remarks was whether a summative evaluator needed to have knowledge of the arts to evaluate arts educators, with their opinions nearly evenly divided.

Due to the low rate of survey completion (7.6%) among the 1,577 Minnesota principals whom we invited to participate in the survey, we recommend caution in any attempt to generalize these findings beyond the group of principals who responded to the survey. However, despite the low rate of survey response, a review of the characteristics of the principals who did complete the survey showed that the respondents reflect the range of the characteristics of Minnesota principals, such as the size of their school district, the geographic location of their district, and the grade levels of the school(s) in which they work.

Recommendations

In this section of the report, we present recommendations for the MN-SP3 team that are based on findings from the principal survey, as well as findings from our earlier interviews and survey with arts educators throughout Minnesota.

Professional Development and Resources for Principals

1. Identify and/or develop rubrics or frameworks that will provide principals with information that is specific to the arts disciplines and offer professional development to support principals in using these tools.
2. Offer professional development for principals in the following areas: 1) state and national arts standards, artistic processes, and arts terminology, 2) how to provide more targeted and constructive *instructional* feedback to arts educators that is directly related to

instruction in the arts, and 3) how to support arts educators as they identify measurable student learning outcomes in the arts, and then develop and implement assessments aligned to these outcomes.

3. Provide professional development and tools for principals in order to increase the proportion of principals who meet individually with art teachers before an observation *and* ask their arts teachers to tell them about the aspects of the artistic processes in the arts standards that the students will be working on when the principal comes to observe instruction. The study data showed that over two-thirds of the principals who ask for this information indicated that most or all of their arts teachers are very clear when they provide this information in a pre-observation meeting. This suggests that other principals may also find it valuable to request this information prior to their observation visits.
4. Provide an opportunity for discussion and offer guidance around the question of how important it is for principals to have background knowledge in the arts in order to effectively evaluate arts educators. In addition, provide guidance around the related issue of the extent to which specialized tools (e.g., discipline specific rubrics) are needed to effectively evaluate arts educators.

Professional Development and Resources for Arts Educators

5. Provide professional development to address arts educators' concerns about the subjectivity and authenticity of assessment in the arts and help them develop assessments that can be used to measure student growth over time, such as having baseline and post-production measures.
6. Encourage and support arts educators to take an active role in educating principals/summative evaluators about what quality instruction looks like in each arts discipline.

Professional Development and Resources for Both Arts Educators and Principals

7. Assist arts educators and administrators to identify funding and develop strategies that:
 - 1) allow arts educators to meet in PLCs with other arts educators. Teacher survey results revealed that some arts educators must meet in their PLC outside of their contracted day.
 - 2) provide opportunities for arts educators to observe and be observed by other arts educators in their discipline. This will generate targeted feedback that is typically only available when being observed by a fellow arts educator.
8. Help arts educators and administrators strategize about the time needed to administer assessments. Data from arts educators indicated that the assessment process often takes time away from instructional time. Yet, if educators don't use instructional time for the assessments, then they often need to use their prep time to assess individual students.

Introduction

In 2014, Minnesota was one of ten states selected to participate in the State Policy Pilot Program (SP3) established by Americans for the Arts (AFTA). The purpose of the three-year program is to strengthen arts education in the United States by advancing state policy. As described on the AFTA website, states that choose to participate in the program must be willing to collaborate across agencies and commit to developing and implementing a policy strategy during the program. State teams receive customized coaching and technical assistance throughout the three-year pilot and a direct grant of \$10,000 per year to support the goals they identify in their written plan for action.

The Minnesota team (MN-SP3) contracted with the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) at the University of Minnesota in 2015 to conduct a needs assessment that would inform the MN-SP3 plan. The purpose of the needs assessment was to describe current practice in the state regarding arts educator evaluation and to identify the kinds of resources that would be most useful to teachers and principals as they implemented the state's new policy for teacher development and evaluation.

In this report we summarize the results of a fall 2015 survey of Minnesota principals that was conducted by CAREI. In addition, we draw on earlier data from CAREI's survey of Minnesota arts teachers to synthesize the perspectives of teachers and principals on current practices in arts teacher evaluation and resources that would be helpful to teachers and principals as they continue to implement the new Minnesota policy.

We designed the needs assessment to collect information the MN-SP3 team could use to develop resources to support arts educators and principals in Minnesota as they continue to implement the new policy for teacher development and evaluation. It was beyond the scope of this study to provide a comprehensive picture of arts teacher evaluation in Minnesota, or to evaluate the effectiveness of the new processes being used to evaluate arts educators. The data presented in this report are based on the self-reports of arts educators and principals and thus are subject to the limitations that exist in any self-reported data. Future studies on the development and evaluation of arts educators in Minnesota could be strengthened by incorporating other data collection methods, such as document review and observation.

Focus of the Study

The purpose of this needs assessment study was to provide information to the MN-SP3 for its use in working to assist school districts across Minnesota with developing local policies and practices to support arts teachers and principals as they implement the new Teacher Development and Evaluation statute. The MN-SP3 team is led by Pam Paulson, Ph.D., Senior Director of Policy at the Perpich Center for Arts Education. As explained on the project website, "The Minnesota SP3 Leadership Team unites members of professional arts education organizations and the Minnesota Department of Education with the Perpich Center to study the landscape for teacher evaluation and provide assistance to

teachers and principals to implement this policy in ways that are meaningful and useful. In addition to Dr. Paulson, the team members include:

Greg Keith, Director, School Support, Minnesota Department of Education

Kathy Brynaert, Former Representative, Minnesota Legislature

Mary Schaeffle, Executive Director, Minnesota Music Educators

Kris Holsen, Past President, Art Educators of Minnesota

Mary Jo Thompson, Arts Consultant

RoAnne Elliott, Educational Consultant

Betsy Maloney, Outreach Director and Instructor, Perpich Center

Jeremy Holien, Visual and Media Arts Coordinator, Perpich Center

We worked collaboratively with the MN-SP3 team to collect data on the following guiding questions for the needs assessment study:

1. What policies and processes are school districts implementing, specifically with regards to arts educators, in order to meet the requirements of the new Teacher Development and Evaluation statute?
2. What challenges and successes specific to arts educator evaluation are school districts encountering as they implement the statute?
3. What resources would be useful to arts teachers and principals as they continue to implement the statute?

Methods

We developed the principal survey to gather information from Minnesota principals about a) their experiences in evaluating arts educators under the new statute, and b) the types of resources that would be useful to principals in strengthening their knowledge and skills in this area of practice. To create the survey, we worked closely with the MN-SP3 team to ensure that the survey content was an accurate reflection of the Teacher Development and Evaluation statute and the data would be useful to the team in developing and implementing their policy project. The content of the principal survey was also informed by the results of the teacher interviews and survey that we had conducted earlier in the year.

The online survey contains 19 questions and all but two of the questions are fixed-response items in order to minimize the time needed for principals to complete the survey. On October 21, 2015, we downloaded a current list of Minnesota principals from the Minnesota Department of Education website. We reviewed the list and reduced the original list of 2,053 principals to a list of 1,632 by eliminating duplicate listings for the principals who work in more than one school. On October 27,

2015, we sent an email to the principals that invited them to participate in the survey and provided a web link for them to access the survey. For 55 of the principals, we received an automated response that indicated the email address was not valid.

Given the fact that principals are extremely busy and likely receive numerous requests to participate in surveys associated with various studies, we worked with the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals and the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association to call attention to the survey and encourage their participation. Both organizations published two notices about the survey in their email newsletters. The first notice, which appeared in the newsletters a couple of weeks before the survey began, alerted principals that the survey would be coming and explained the importance of their participation. The second notice appeared in the newsletters a couple of days after we had emailed the principals to invite them to participate in the survey.

Data Analysis. For the fixed-response questions on the survey we analyzed the data by calculating the number and percent of respondents that selected each answer choice. We analyzed the responses to the two open-ended items on the survey by reading the responses multiple times in order to create categories that reflected common themes in the responses for each item. Once we had created an initial set of categories, we reviewed each of the responses again and then placed each response in the category that best reflected the content of the response. During this process, we made adjustments to some of the categories based on new insights that emerged. In some cases, when the content of a response included information that addressed more than one category, the response was broken into two or more parts and each part was assigned to the appropriate category.

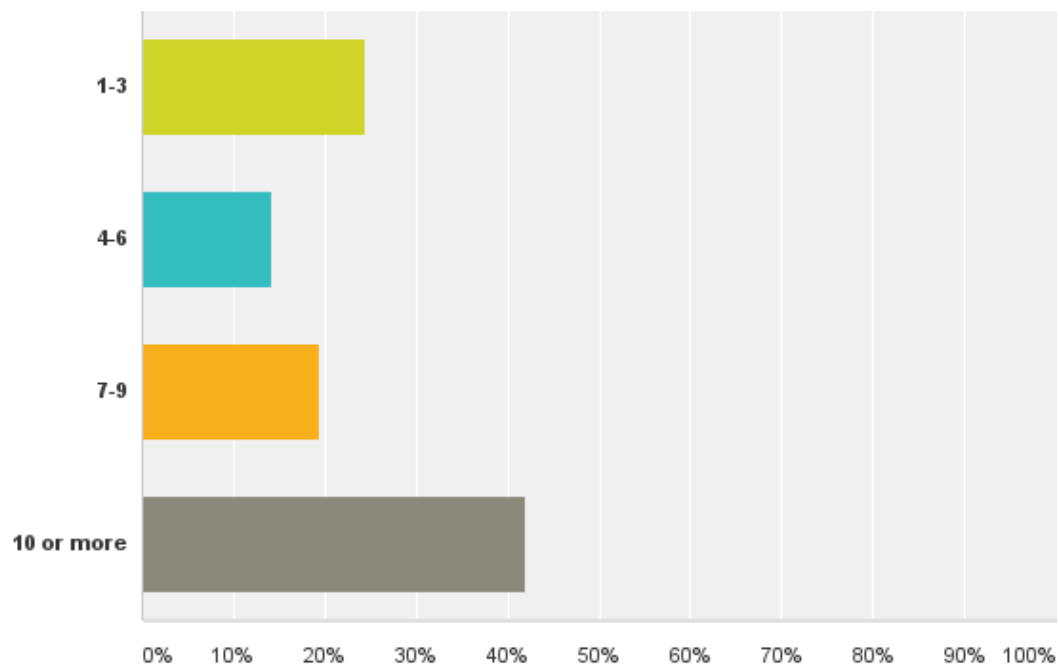
Results

This section of the report summarizes the results of the principal survey. In the sections that follow, we review the results of the earlier interviews and survey with arts educators and then explore the implications of the combined perspectives of Minnesota principals and teachers for the work of the MN-SP3 team.

Of the 1,577 principals for whom we had an active email address, 121 completed the survey. This results in a completion rate of 7.6%. Due to this low response rate, we need to interpret the survey data cautiously because the data may not adequately represent the experiences and perspectives of all Minnesota principals. A review of the characteristics of the principals who completed the survey suggests, however, that despite the small number of principals who completed the survey, the group of respondents reflect a range of the characteristics of Minnesota principals, such as the size of their school district, their geographic location in the state, and the grade levels of the school(s) in which they work. The figures and text on the next seven pages provide details about the background characteristics of the principals who completed the survey.

Figure 1

Including this current year, how many years have you been a principal?

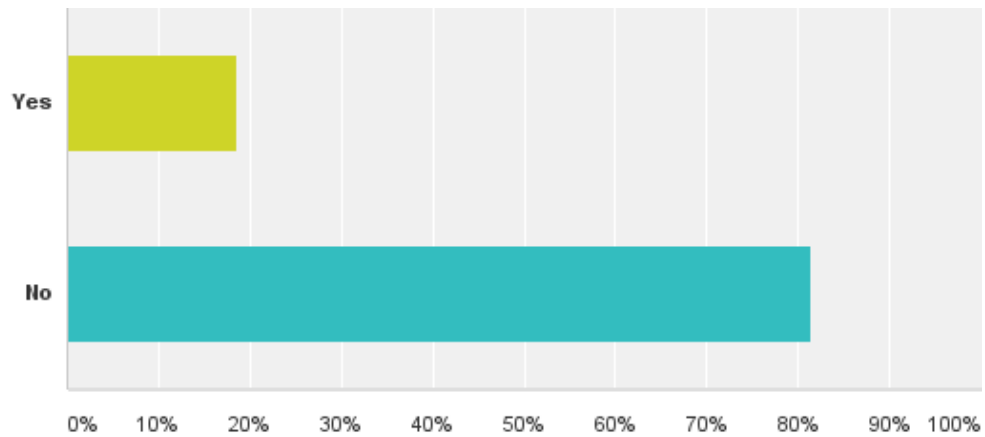


Answer Choices	Responses
1-3	24.37% 29
4-6	14.29% 17
7-9	19.33% 23
10 or more	42.02% 50
Total	119

The respondents had a range of years of experience as a principal, but the largest group (42.02%) had been a principal for ten or more years.

Figure 2

Do you have a background in arts education?

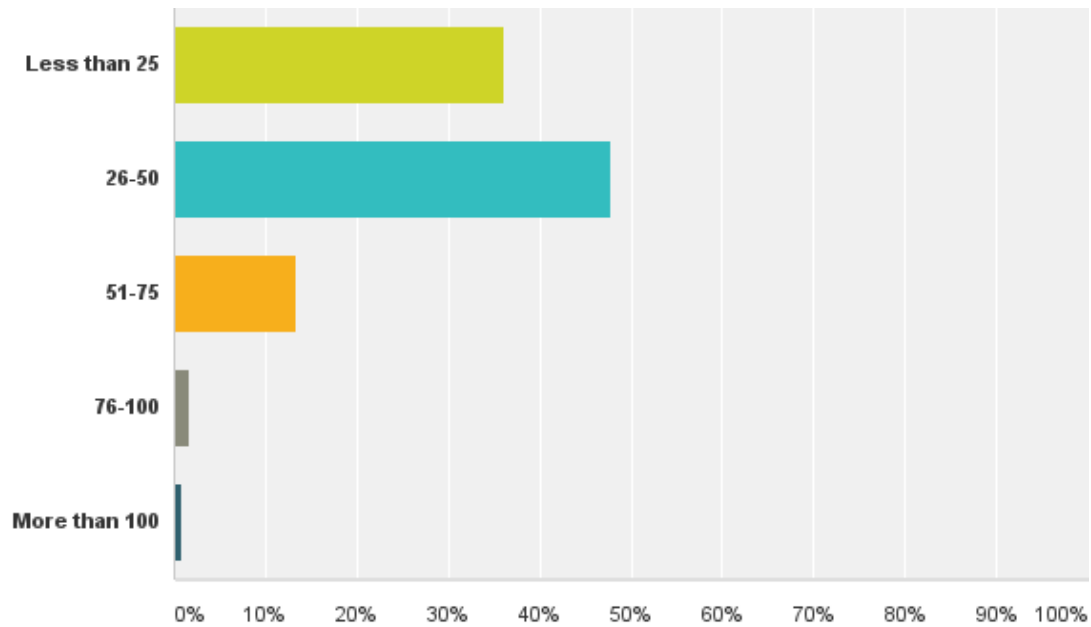


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	18.49%	22
No	81.51%	97
Total		119

Eighteen percent (18.49%) of the respondents indicated that they have a background in arts education.

Figure 3

For how many teachers total (including arts educators) do you act as summative evaluator?

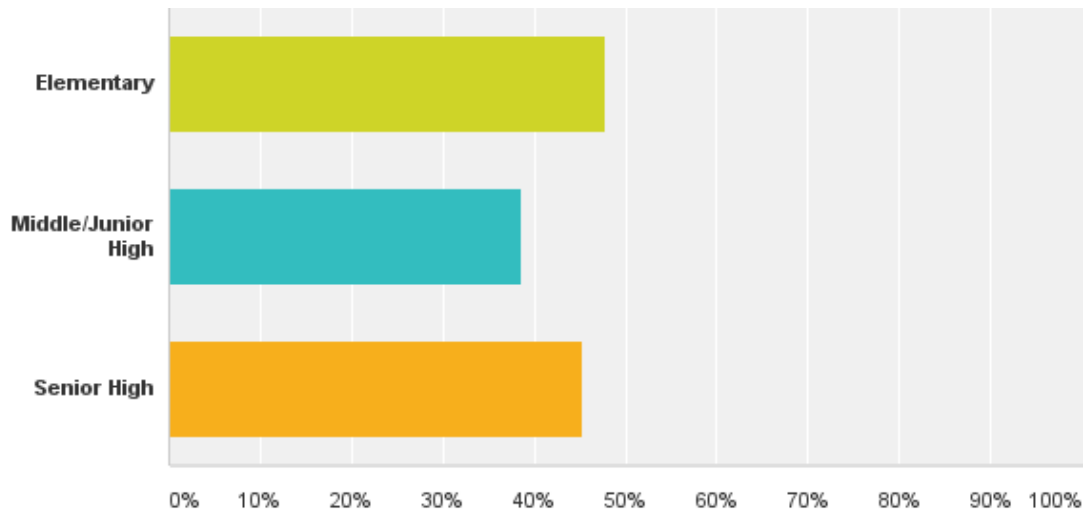


Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than 25	36.13%	43
26-50	47.90%	57
51-75	13.45%	16
76-100	1.68%	2
More than 100	0.84%	1
Total		119

Almost half of the respondents (47.90%) act as the summative evaluator for 26-50 teachers. Just over a third of the respondents (36.13%) serve as the summative evaluator for less than 25 teachers.

Figure 4

What is the grade level of the school(s) in which you are a principal? (Check all that apply):

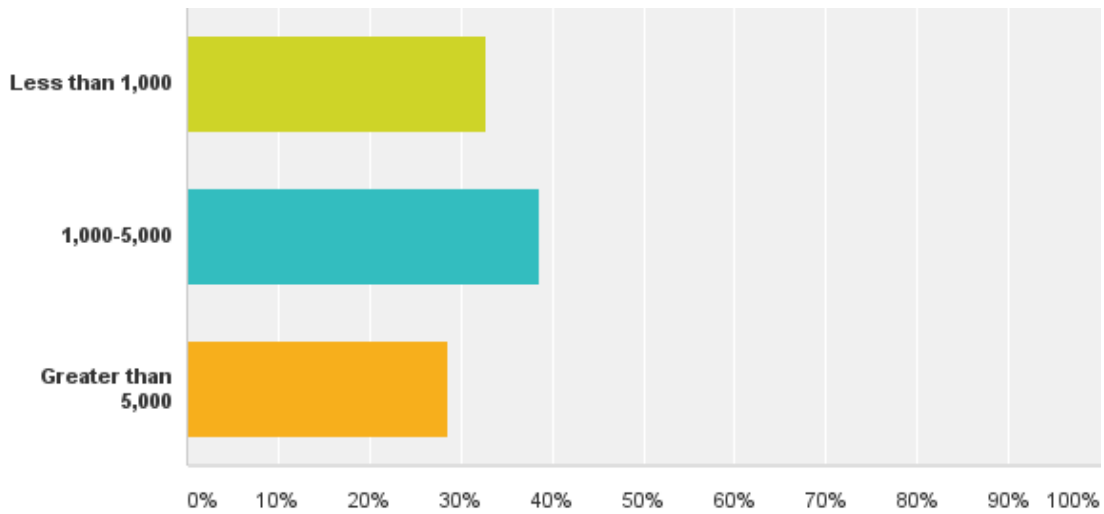


Answer Choices	Responses
Elementary	47.90% 57
Middle/Junior High	38.66% 46
Senior High	45.38% 54
Total Respondents: 119	

The respondents were fairly evenly distributed in terms of the grade level of the school(s) in which they are a principal. Just under half are the principal of an elementary (47.90%) school and slightly fewer are the principal of a senior high school (45.38%). The percentages in the table above total to more than 100% because the principals were asked to check all the answer choices that applied to them. In many small school districts, principals may be responsible for more than one school and the schools they supervise may serve different grade levels.

Figure 5

Approximately what is your district's total student enrollment?

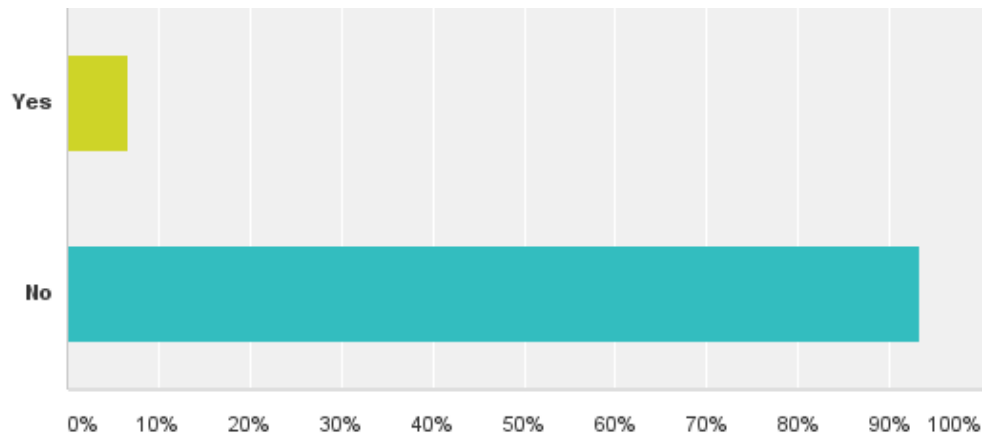


Answer Choices	Responses
Less than 1,000	32.77% 39
1,000-5,000	38.66% 46
Greater than 5,000	28.57% 34
Total	119

The respondents were also fairly evenly distributed with respect to the total K-12 student enrollment in their district. The largest group of the principal respondents (38.66%) work in a district that enrolls 1,000-5,000 students. And nearly one-third (32.77%) indicated that their district enrolls less than 1,000 students.

Figure 6

My school is a charter or private school.

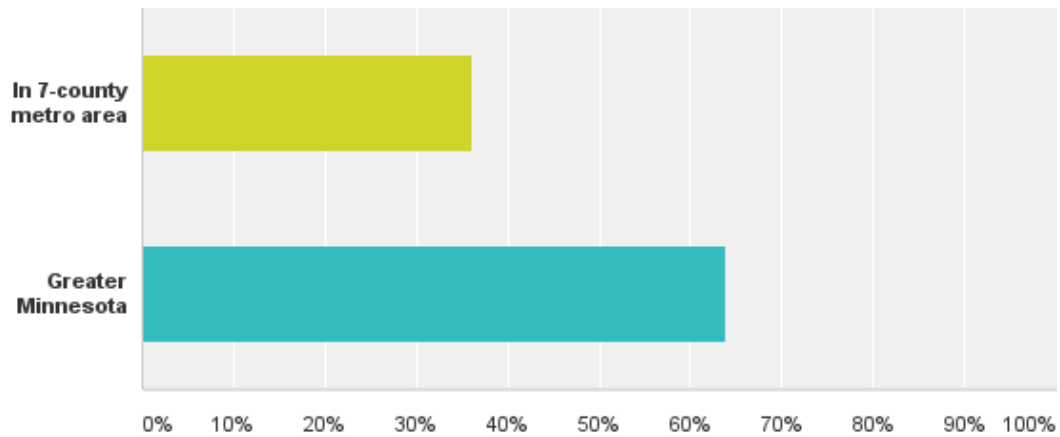


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	6.72% 8
No	93.28% 111
Total	119

Nearly 7% (6.72%) of the respondents were principals of a charter or private school, which is about on par with the overall percentage of charter and private schools in the state.

Figure 7

District/location:



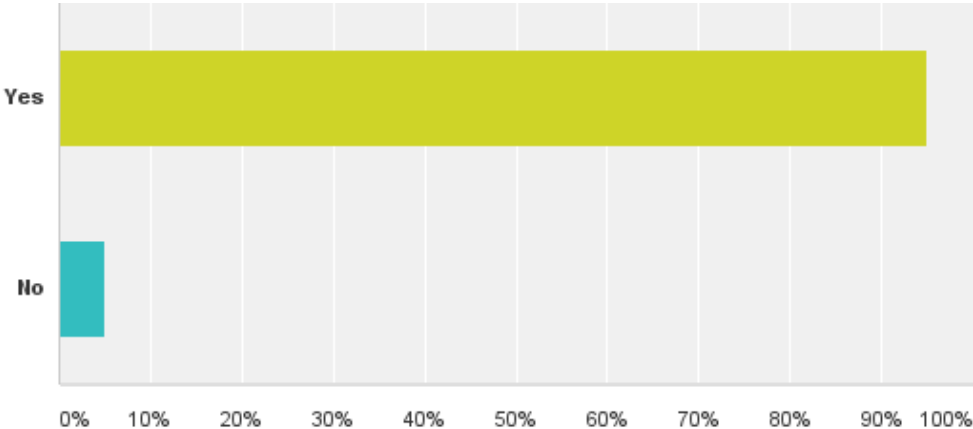
Answer Choices	Responses
In 7-county metro area	36.13% 43
Greater Minnesota	63.87% 76
Total	119

Just under two-thirds of the principals (63.87%) work in schools that are located in Greater Minnesota, which is consistent with the fact that a majority of the schools in Minnesota are located in rural areas of the state.

Due to the newness of the Teacher Development and Evaluation (TDE) statute and the likelihood that districts will vary in the amount of time needed to implement the requirements in the statute, we wanted to screen out any principals who had not had any experience yet with the TDE process. The question shown below in Figure 8 asked the respondents to indicate whether or not they had had any experience with the TDE process.

Figure 8

All of the questions below assume that you and your district have begun to use the Teacher Development and Evaluation (TDE) process, which includes measuring student growth, teachers' developing professional learning goals, peer review and support, and review by the summative evaluator of those goals and targets. Have you begun to use these processes?

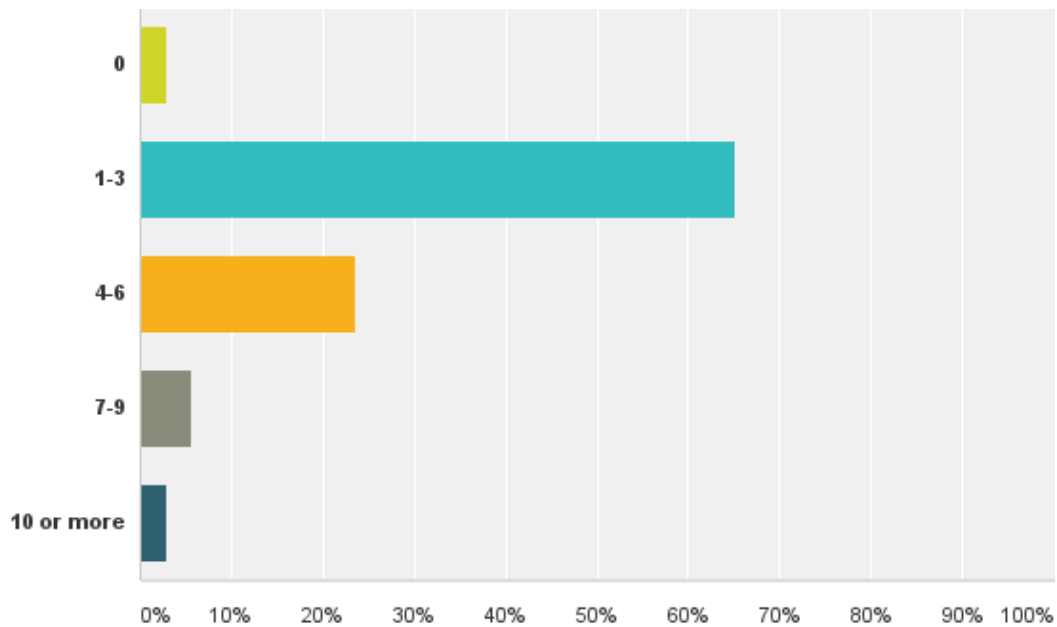


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	95.04% 115
No	4.96% 6
Total	121

Ninety-five percent (95.04%) of the respondents said they had begun to use the TDE process. Six respondents (4.96%) answered “No” to this item and, upon the selection of this choice, the survey software skipped them ahead to the final question on the survey. As a result, 115 principals had an opportunity to answer the intervening questions.

Figure 9

For how many arts educators (Visual Arts, Instrumental and Vocal Music, Theater, Dance, and Media Arts) are you their summative evaluator?

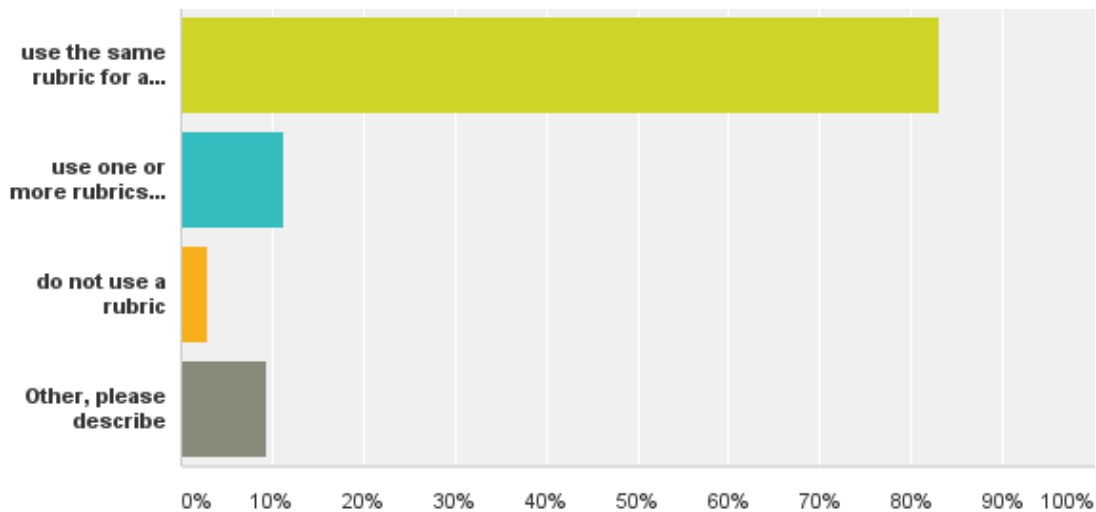


Answer Choices	Responses
0	2.83% 3
1-3	65.09% 69
4-6	23.58% 25
7-9	5.66% 6
10 or more	2.83% 3
Total	106

Almost two-thirds (65.09%) of the principals said they are the summative evaluator for 1-3 arts educators. Another 23.58% of the principals are the summative evaluator for a slightly larger group of 4-6 arts educators.

Figure 10

How do you define performance levels for observing and evaluating arts educators? (Check all that apply):



Answer Choices	Responses
use the same rubric for all teachers, regardless of discipline	83.02% 88
use one or more rubrics that are specific to the arts disciplines	11.32% 12
do not use a rubric	2.83% 3
Other, please describe	9.43% 10
Total Respondents: 106	

When asked how they define performance levels for observing and evaluating arts educators, 83% (83.02%) said they use the same rubric for all teachers, regardless of discipline. A much smaller group (11.32%) indicated that they use one or more rubrics that are specific to the arts disciplines. Four of the principals marked more than one answer choice. The combined responses for each of them were as follows:

- One principal indicated that she/he “uses the same rubric for all teachers, regardless of discipline” and also “uses one or more rubrics that are specific to the arts disciplines.”
- One principal marked the choice of “use the same rubric for all teachers, regardless of discipline” and the choice of “other” where she/he commented that she/he uses the Danielson rubric.
- One principal said she/he does not use a rubric and also marked the answer choice of “other” and provided this description: “I evaluated based on concerts, participation, relationships with students, leading their classes.”

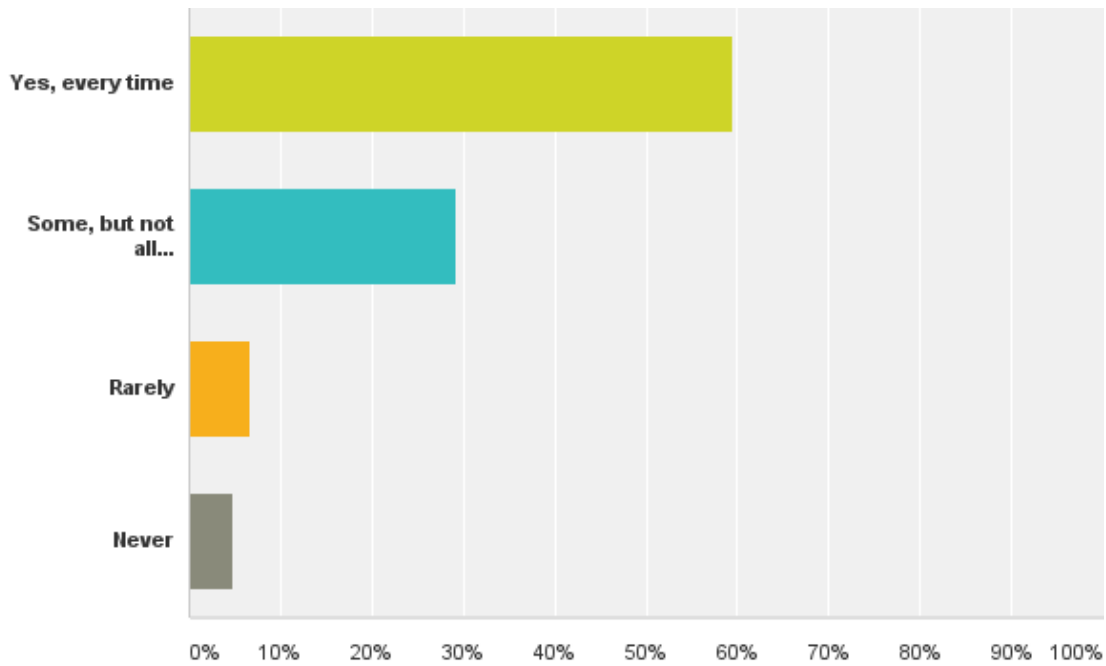
- One principal marked both the answer choice of “use the same rubric for all teachers, regardless of discipline” and the choice of “do not use a rubric.” Due to the contradictory meaning of these two choices, it is likely the respondent made an error in completing this item.

Of the 10 principals who marked the answer of “other,” the remaining 8 principalsⁱ provided these details about how they define performance levels for observing and evaluating arts teachers:

- I use the rubric that is designed for all teachers and use the appropriate arts terminology with the reports.
- Use a different rubric. Art education is about process. The academic rubric absolutely does not translate to the arts.
- We use Authentic Intellectual Work for all teachers.
- We use Marzano's Model Teacher Evaluation Learning Map
- Use the rubric based on the Art and Science of Teaching and adapt it to the teacher being observed. The “look fors” are on high quality instructional practices.
- We are using the Danielson Framework
- Use rubric, other teacher groups do have their own (i.e., Media Center, Dean of Students)
- District developed by Q Comp / Teacher evaluation committee

Figure 11

Do you meet individually with your arts teachers each time before the observation occurs?

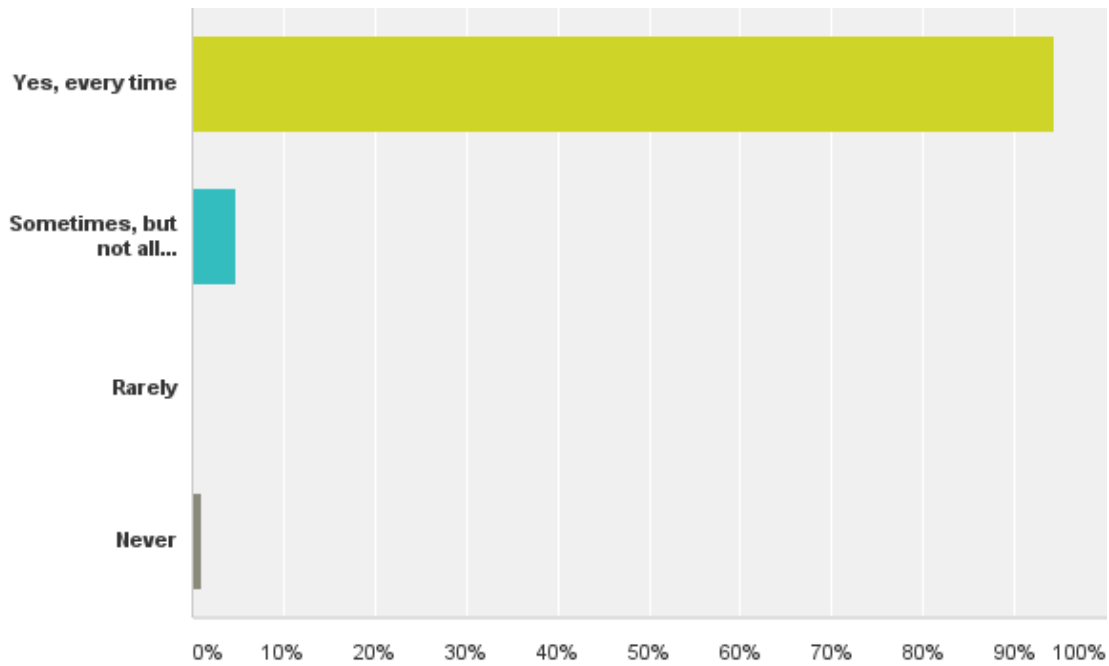


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes, every time	59.43% 63
Some, but not all observations	29.25% 31
Rarely	6.60% 7
Never	4.72% 5
Total	106

Almost 60% of the respondents (59.43%) reported that they always meet individually with their arts teachers before an observation occurs. Almost 30% (29.25%) said they meet with their arts teachers before the observation occurs for some, but not for all of the observations. Less than 5% (4.72%) of the principals indicated that they never meet individually with their arts teachers before an observation occurs.

Figure 12

Do you meet individually with your arts teachers each time after the observation occurs?

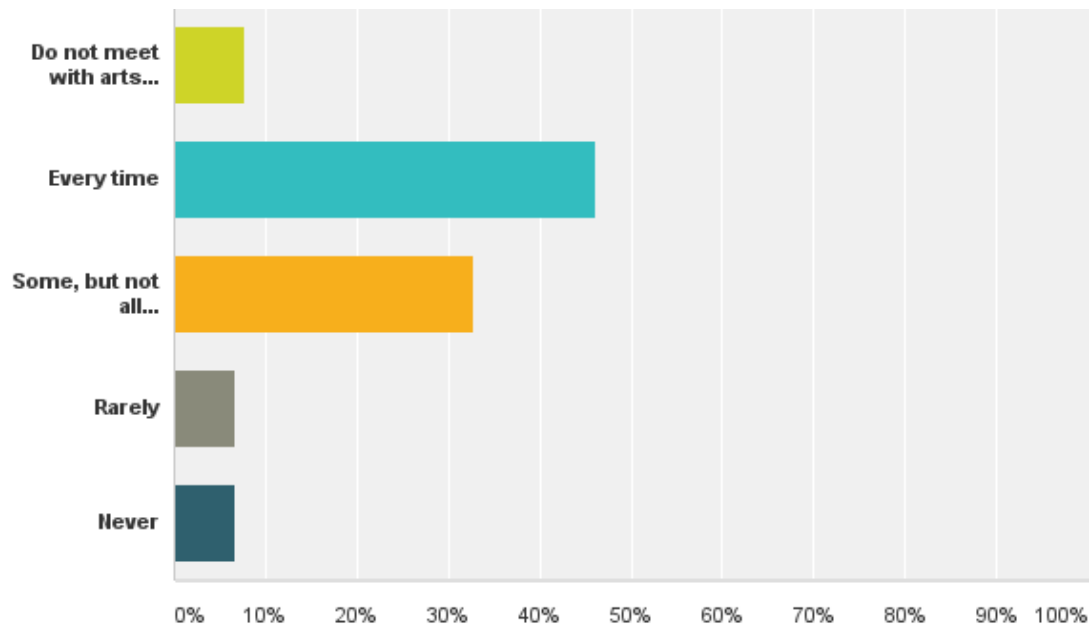


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes, every time	94.34% 100
Sometimes, but not all observations	4.72% 5
Rarely	0.00% 0
Never	0.94% 1
Total	106

The principals’ responses indicate that it is far more typical for principals to meet individually with their arts teachers *after* an observation occurs. Nearly 94% (94.34%) said they meet after every observation. Only one principal (<1%) reported that she/he never meets with her/his arts teachers after an observation.

Figure 13

If you and your arts teacher meet before the lesson, how often do you ask the teacher what aspect of the artistic processes in the arts standards the students are working on for the lesson observed?



Answer Choices	Responses
Do not meet with arts teachers before the lesson	7.69% 8
Every time	46.15% 48
Some, but not all observations	32.69% 34
Rarely	6.73% 7
Never	6.73% 7
Total	104

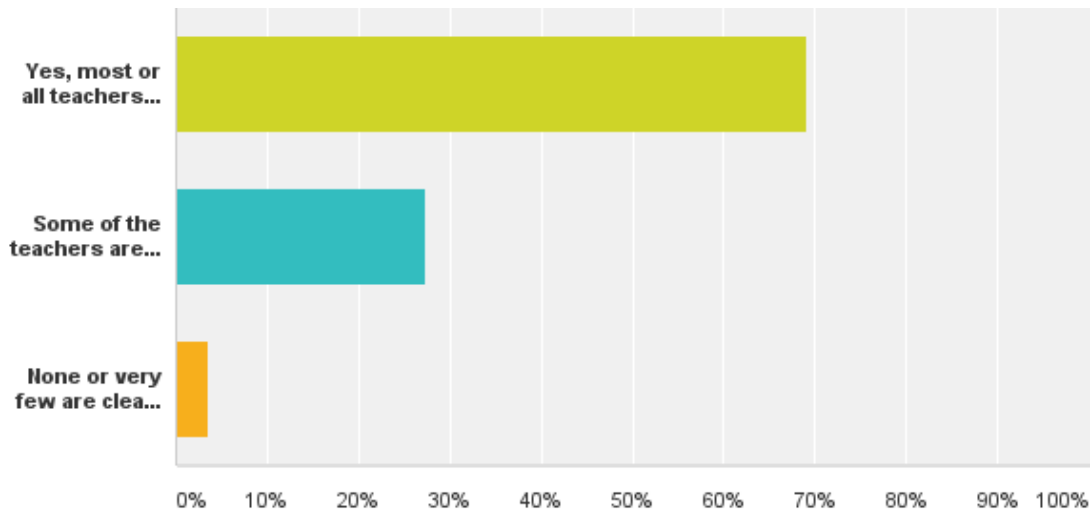
Eight of the 104 principals that answered this question indicated that they don't meet with arts teachers before the lesson the principal will be observingⁱⁱ. If we exclude these respondents from the data for this question, then the percentage of principals (out of 96 principals) that marked each of the remaining answer choices is as follows:

- Half (50%) marked “every time” to indicate how often they ask the teacher what aspect of the artistic processes in the arts standards the students are working on for the lesson to be observed.
- Another third of the principals (35.42%) said they ask the teachers for this information for some, but not all observations.

- Just over 7% (7.29%) of the principals reported that they rarely ask the arts teachers for this information and another group of principals of equal size said that they never ask the arts teachers for this information.

Figure 14

If yes, which statement best describes the teacher's explanation:



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes, most or all teachers are generally very clear in telling me what the students are working on in the artistic processes in the arts standards.	69.05% 58
Some of the teachers are clear in telling me what the students are working on in the artistic processes in the arts standards.	27.38% 23
None or very few are clear in telling me what the students are working on in the artistic processes in the arts standards.	3.57% 3
Total	84

This question asked principals to indicate the clarity of arts teachers' explanations about the aspect of the arts processes in the arts standards the students will be working on in a lesson the principal plans to observe. Over two-thirds (69.05%) of the principals said most or all of the teachers are generally very clear in their explanation before the observation and another 27.38% said some of the teachers are clearⁱⁱⁱ.

The next item on the survey was an open-ended question that invited the principals to suggest tools that they and other principals might find useful for providing more instructional feedback to arts educators. The question was prefaced with the following statement to provide a context for their responses: *A majority of arts educators report that principals don't often give instructional feedback and instead often focus their feedback on classroom management, transitions during an arts lesson, and the grouping of students.* This statement is based on data from our earlier interviews and survey with arts teachers across the state.

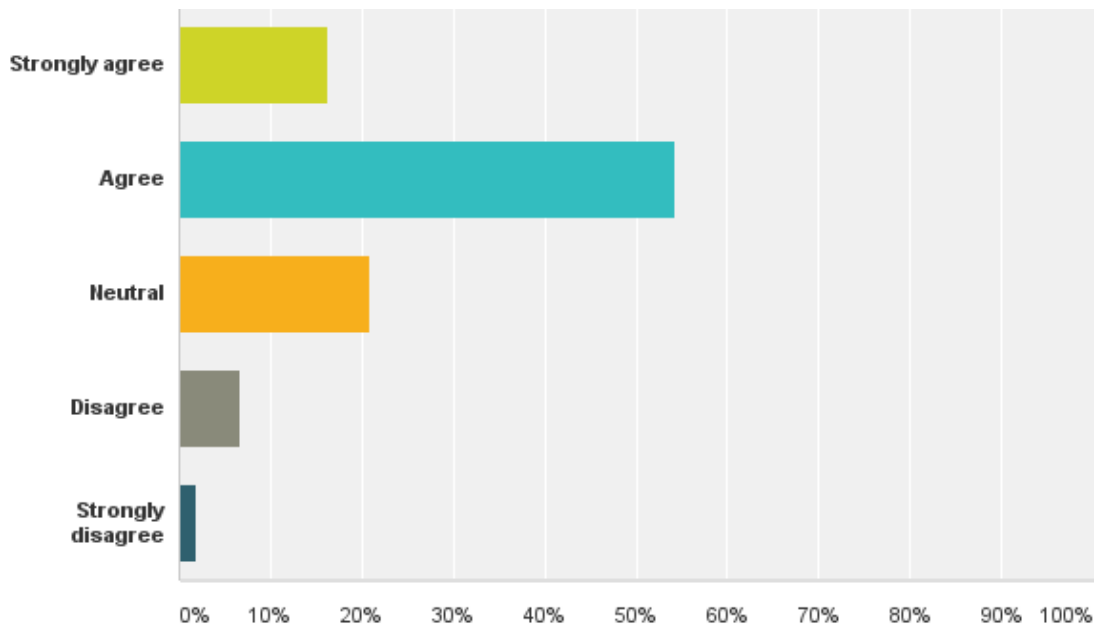
Seventy-three of the principals responded to this question and over half (55%) of the comments^{iv} described the kinds of information that would help them and other principals to provide more instructional feedback to arts teachers. In contrast, comments from another sizable group of principals (37%) indicated that they did not need additional information in order to provide instructional feedback to arts educators, most often because they already have a tool or process that they find sufficient for this purpose. We elaborate on each of these major themes below.

- The principals who responded to this question most often (55%) offered suggestions for the kinds of information or tools that they thought would be useful for themselves and other principals. Two themes were dominant in their suggestions:
 - rubrics or frameworks that are specific to the arts and can help principals understand what to look for when observing arts instruction (39%), and
 - information about the arts standards, artistic processes, and terminology (18%).
- A smaller number of comments suggested that principals would find it useful to learn more about how to provide authentic feedback to arts educators or to have examples of formative and summative assessments in the arts disciplines available.
- In addition, several of the principals requested information—whether it was a rubric, a standard, or an exemplar—that is specific to the many individual art forms present in their schools.

Of the principals whose responses indicated that they did not need any additional information in order to offer instructional feedback to arts educators (37%), the largest proportion (70%) described a tool or process that they are already using. Of the 70% who described an existing tool or process, about one-third named a tool that will already be known to many principals, such as: iObservation, the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching, or rubrics and frameworks developed by Marzano. The remaining principals (about two-thirds) described a tool or process that did not have a specific name. Their descriptions typically mentioned using the arts standards, teacher developed learning objectives for a specific lesson, or classroom goals aligned with standards and Q Comp rubrics.

Figure 15

Professional development for administrators on how to provide more targeted feedback to arts educators that is directly related to instruction in the arts would be helpful.

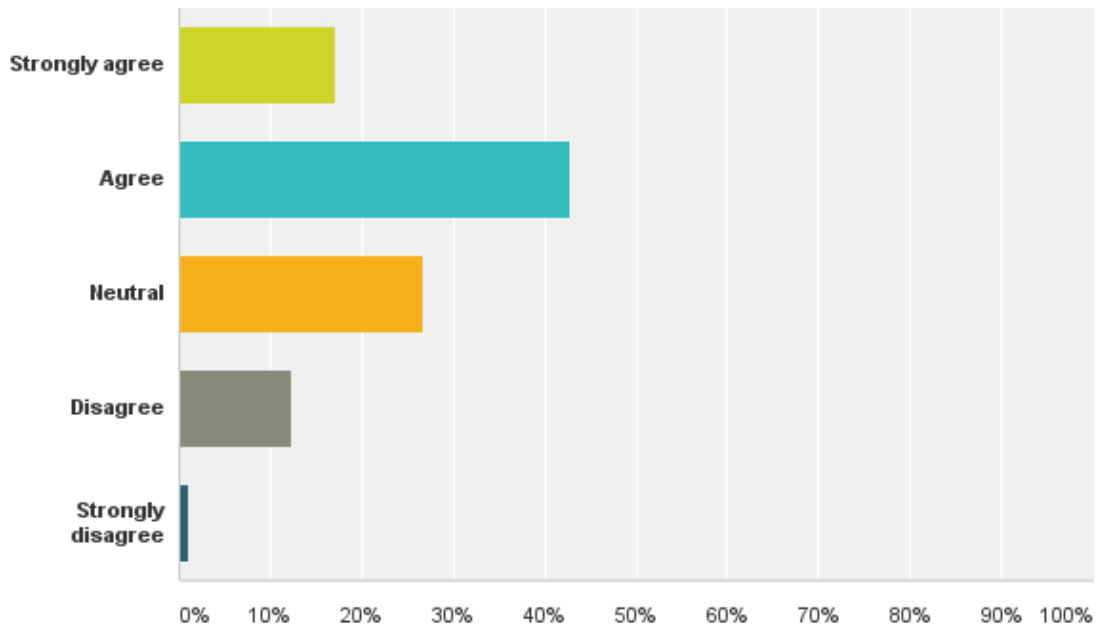


Answer Choices	Responses
Strongly agree	16.19% 17
Agree	54.29% 57
Neutral	20.95% 22
Disagree	6.67% 7
Strongly disagree	1.90% 2
Total	105

Over two-thirds of the principal respondents (70.48%) indicated that they agree or strongly agree that professional development for administrators on how to provide more targeted feedback to arts educators that is directly related to instruction in the arts would be helpful. Of this group, 16.19% chose the answer of “strongly agree.” It is notable that almost 21% (20.95%) of the principals chose an answer of “neutral.”

Figure 16

Determining measurable student growth targets in the arts can be difficult. Please indicate your response to the following: I am comfortable in my knowledge of how to assist teachers as they develop measurable outcomes of student growth in the arts.

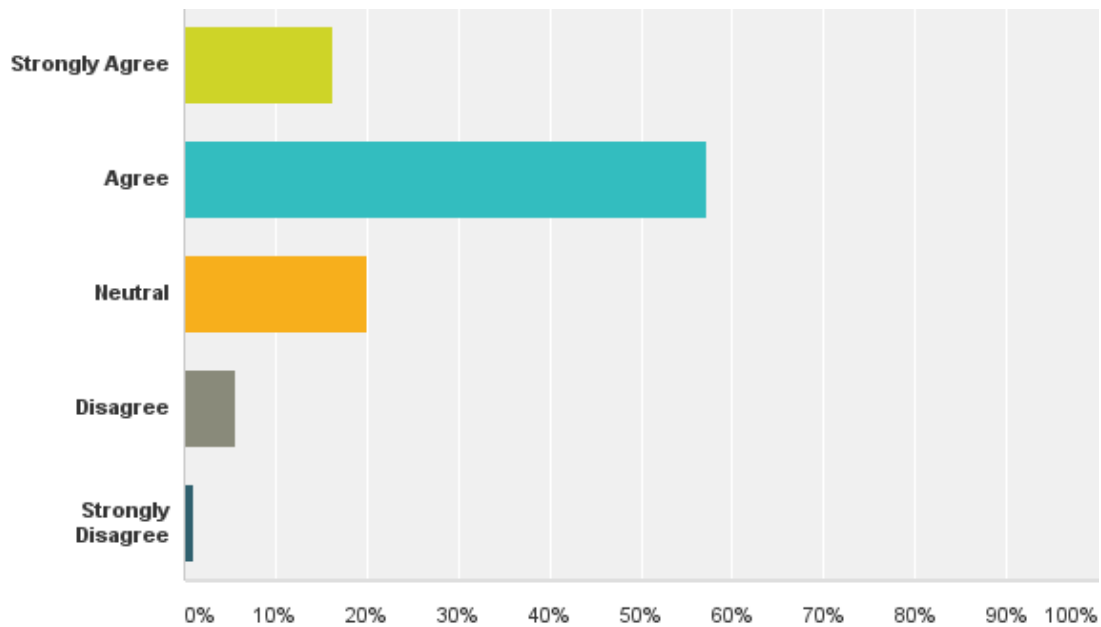


Answer Choices	Responses
Strongly agree	17.14% 18
Agree	42.86% 45
Neutral	26.67% 28
Disagree	12.38% 13
Strongly disagree	0.95% 1
Total	105

This question asked the principals about their comfort in their level of knowledge of how to assist arts teachers as they are developing measurable outcomes of student growth in the arts. Sixty-percent (60%) indicated that they agree or strongly agree with the statement that they are comfortable in their knowledge in this area and 17.14% of them chose strongly agree as their answer. Just over one-fourth of the principals (26.67%) indicated that they were neutral about the statement.

Figure 17

Professional development for administrators on how to assist teachers as they develop measurable outcomes of student growth in the arts would be helpful.



Answer Choices	Responses
Strongly Agree	16.19% 17
Agree	57.14% 60
Neutral	20.00% 21
Disagree	5.71% 6
Strongly Disagree	0.95% 1
Total	105

In contrast to the previous question, this item asked principals about how helpful they thought it would be for administrators in general to participate in professional development on how to assist teachers as they develop measurable outcomes of student growth in the arts. Almost three-fourths of the principals (73.33%) agreed that professional development for administrators on how to assist teachers as they develop measurable outcomes of student growth in the arts would be helpful, with over half (57.14%) of them choosing the answer of “agree.” Twenty-percent (20%) of the principals marked “neutral” to indicate that their neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

The final item on the survey invited principals to comment on their needs, experiences, challenges, and suggestions for conducting evaluations for arts educators. Forty-eight of the principals replied. The common themes present in the respondents' comments were opinions on the following:

- Whether a summative evaluator should have knowledge of the arts (48%),
- Suggestions for evaluating arts educators (17%),
- Professional development topics (17%),
- Subjectivity in the evaluation process (12%),
- Challenges in evaluating arts educators (6%), and
- Efficient use of time (4%).

Evaluator knowledge of the arts. The most dominant theme in the comments (48%) was whether it is important for a summative evaluator to have knowledge of the arts. The respondents were nearly evenly divided on whether or not it was necessary for evaluators to have a background in the arts. Thirteen of 48 responses featured content indicating a belief that such a background was important, while 10 of 48 responses featured content indicating such a background was not necessary. Some of those who felt an arts background was important had been arts teachers themselves, while others had not.

Of the respondents who felt it was unnecessary for an evaluator to possess an arts background, most felt that current evaluation methods were adequate, even if evaluators were unable to assess aspects of teaching in the arts that are specific to the arts disciplines. These respondents emphasized that best practice, reflective questioning, and good coaching cut across disciplines. One principal reported that within their system, rubrics were drawn up by a multidisciplinary team annually and that such rubrics had thus far been satisfactory to arts teachers.

Respondents who felt that an arts background was beneficial expressed several different rationales. One respondent reported being able to use her/his experience as a music teacher to provide more comfortable evaluations. A few respondents cited the inability of evaluators without an arts background to give content-specific feedback, which the respondent felt undermined the quality of evaluation. Another respondent explained that it was difficult for evaluators without an arts background to comment on the strengths of arts educators. Yet another respondent said that evaluators with arts content knowledge were better able to understand and evaluate the assessments arts educators use to measure growth in students' arts learning.

Suggestions for evaluating arts educators. A smaller group of comments (17%) described practices that the principals had found helpful in evaluating arts educators. One principal recommended asking teachers to share their growth goals during a post-observation meeting so the principal could then assist the teacher in achieving that growth. Another evaluator reported use of a pre-observation paper brief. One administrator mentioned the value of the instructors' ability to communicate their processes to evaluators in the pre-observation conference, a second administrator corroborated that value, and two other administrators championed helping teachers via self-reflection. One other evaluator emphasized the usefulness of peer observations. One additional administrator highlighted other parts of the development and evaluation process in which they assist arts teachers, including setting goals and giving feedback about areas of instruction on which to focus.

Professional development topics. Interest in professional development was another common theme among responses, featured in 8 of 48 comments (17%). Topics of interest included knowledge of arts standards; communication with arts teachers; training for observation of specialists including special education teachers, physical education teachers, and foreign language teachers; and knowledge of artistic processes. One respondent felt that providing arts-specific professional development to administrators did not represent the needs of other specialty staff.

Subjectivity in the evaluation process. Several respondents addressed the subjectivity of arts evaluation (12%). One evaluator noted that some arts assessments could be paper and pencil while others required performance. Two evaluators expressed their belief that arts education was overburdened by testing, and another, who disagreed, nonetheless reported that their arts teachers also disliked testing. In contrast, a different evaluator said that their arts teachers had been innovative in their grading process and had found some success with objective evaluation. Two other evaluators felt that the arts teacher evaluation process needed reform, with one stressing a preference for a less formal and systematic process and the other emphasizing a desire for more fitting evaluation tools and rubrics.

Challenges in evaluating arts educators. Three principals described a challenge they had experienced in evaluating arts educators. Two evaluators thought it was unfair that arts education received special attention at the perceived expense of math, science, physical education, special education, speech, and occupational therapy. Another said that their arts teachers often bristled at the prospect of creating quantifiable goals for a subjective discipline.

Efficient use of time. Two administrators stressed that time was an issue as well. One, noting their belief that pre-meetings were not necessary unless a particular problem had arisen, said that finding time to observe and meet afterward was already a challenge. The other felt developing a tool that saves time would be helpful.

Summary of the Findings

In this report we presented the results of a survey of Minnesota principals about their current practice in the evaluation of arts educators and the types of information and resources that they would find helpful in strengthening their practice. The survey data indicated the following:

- Over four-fifths (83.02%) of the principals use the same rubric to define performance levels for all teachers, regardless of discipline. Almost half of the respondents (47.90%) act as the summative evaluator for 26-50 teachers, including arts educators.
- Almost 60% of the principals *always* meet individually with their arts teachers before an observation occurs.
- Of the principals that meet with their arts teachers before at least some of their observations, half of the principals said that they always ask the teacher what aspect of the artistic processes in the arts standards the students are working on for the lesson they will be observing.
- Over two-thirds of the respondents (69.05%) said most or all teachers are very clear in telling them what the students are working on in the artistic processes in the arts standards.
- Over two-thirds of the principals (70.48%) indicated that it would be helpful for administrators to receive professional development on how to provide more targeted feedback to arts educators that is directly related to instruction in the arts.
- Many of the respondents offered suggestions for tools that administrators might find useful for providing more instructional feedback to arts educators. The two dominant themes in their suggestions were 1) rubrics or frameworks that are specific to the arts and which would help principals understand what to look for when observing arts instruction, and 2) information about the arts standards, artistic processes, and terminology in the arts.
- Although 60% of the principals reported that they felt comfortable in their knowledge of how to assist their teachers as they develop measureable outcomes of student growth in the arts, almost three-fourths of the principals (73.33%) indicated that it would be helpful for administrators to receive professional development in this area.
- When the survey offered the respondents an opportunity to provide comments on their needs, experiences, challenges, and suggestions for evaluating arts educators, 48 of the 121 principals provided a response. The major topic they addressed in their remarks was whether a summative evaluator needed to have knowledge of the arts to evaluate arts educators, with their opinions nearly evenly divided.

Due to the low rate of survey completion (7.6%) among the 1,577 Minnesota principals whom we invited to participate in the survey, we recommend caution in any attempt to generalize these findings

beyond the group of principals who responded to the survey. However, despite the low rate of survey response, a review of the characteristics of the principals who did complete the survey showed that the respondents reflect the range of the characteristics of Minnesota principals, such as the size of their school district, the geographic location of their district, and the grade levels of the school(s) in which they work.

Recommendations

In this section of the report, we present recommendations for the MN-SP3 team that are based on findings from the principal survey, as well as findings from our earlier interviews and survey with arts educators throughout Minnesota.

Professional Development and Resources for Principals

9. Identify and/or develop rubrics or frameworks that will provide principals with information that is specific to the arts disciplines and offer professional development to support principals in using these tools.
10. Offer professional development for principals in the following areas: 1) state and national arts standards, artistic processes, and arts terminology, 2) how to provide more targeted and constructive *instructional* feedback to arts educators that is directly related to instruction in the arts, and 3) how to support arts educators as they identify measurable student learning outcomes in the arts, and then develop and implement assessments aligned to these outcomes.
11. Provide professional development and tools for principals in order to increase the proportion of principals who meet individually with art teachers before an observation *and* ask their arts teachers to tell them about the aspects of the artistic processes in the arts standards that the students will be working on when the principal comes to observe instruction. The study data showed that over two-thirds of the principals who ask for this information indicated that most or all of their arts teachers are very clear when they provide this information in a pre-observation meeting. This suggests that other principals may also find it valuable to request this information prior to their observation visits.
12. Provide an opportunity for discussion and offer guidance around the question of how important it is for principals to have background knowledge in the arts in order to effectively evaluate arts educators. In addition, provide guidance around the related issue of the extent to which specialized tools (e.g., discipline specific rubrics) are needed to effectively evaluate arts educators.

Professional Development and Resources for Arts Educators

13. Provide professional development to address arts educators' concerns about the subjectivity and authenticity of assessment in the arts and help them develop assessments that can be used to measure student growth over time, such as having baseline and post-production

measures.

14. Encourage and support arts educators to take an active role in educating principals/summative evaluators about what quality instruction looks like in each arts discipline.

Professional Development and Resources for Both Arts Educators and Principals

15. Assist arts educators and administrators to identify funding and develop strategies that:
 - 3) allow arts educators to meet in PLCs with other arts educators. Teacher survey results revealed that some arts educators must meet in their PLC outside of their contracted day.
 - 4) provide opportunities for arts educators to observe and be observed by other arts educators in their discipline. This will generate targeted feedback that is typically only available when being observed by a fellow arts educator.
16. Help arts educators and administrators strategize about the time needed to administer assessments. Data from arts educators indicated that the assessment process often takes time away from instructional time. Yet, if educators don't use instructional time for the assessments, then they often need to use their prep time to assess individual students.

ⁱ Two of the ten principals' responses are explained in the paragraph above because they marked more than one answer choice.

ⁱⁱ The percentage of respondents who indicated that they do not meet with their art teacher before a lesson is higher here (7.69%) than the percentage (4.72%) on an earlier question for which the wording is almost identical (See Figure 11). Although the number of respondents was reduced by two on the question reflected in Figure 13, this difference alone cannot account for the increased percentage of principals who reported that they never meet with arts teachers before a lesson.

ⁱⁱⁱ Five of the respondents in the previous figure who indicated that they ask the teacher what aspect of the artistic processes in the arts standards the students are working on for the lessons observed did not respond to this follow-up question.

^{iv} Because some of the principals' answers contained information that corresponded to more than one theme, we sorted a total of 80 comments or portions of comments into the themes reported here.