

NEVADA PHASE I CAPSTONE REPORT

DISTRICT PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK RECOMMENDATIONS

*Prepared for the Nevada Department of Education
by the National Center for the Improvement of
Educational Assessment*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents the first phase of Nevada Department of Education's (NDE) work to develop the Nevada District Performance Framework (NDPF) and to identify implications for future refinement of the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF). This work was initiated in response to Senate Bill 460 (SB 460).

The preliminary NDPF was developed through a collaborative process involving the NDE, the Metrics Subcommittee on Accountability Redesign (SAR), and the Center for Assessment. The process drew on research, technical guidance, stakeholder input, and review of available state data. Surveys and interviews provided perspectives from educators and other constituents, while the SAR considered how district accountability could balance feasibility, comparability, technical quality, and usefulness for improvement.

The work was guided by a theory of action that recognizes districts influence the conditions in which schools operate, the quality and consistency of supports available to educators and students, and the capacity of schools to improve. At the same time, meaningful accountability must consider the performance of schools and the outcomes experienced by students. The preliminary framework therefore draws on multiple sources of evidence intended to provide a more complete and interpretable view of district performance.

The preliminary NDPF includes four related components: Effective District Practices, District Supports, School Outcomes, and Student Outcomes.

- **Effective District Practices** provide the foundation for the framework. They describe core organizational functions associated with effective district leadership and improvement, including supports for qualified educators, instruction, student pathways, student well-being, governance, continuous improvement, and resource stewardship. These practices are not scored as accountability indicators. Instead, they are intended to be addressed through a District Performance Plan or comparable annual report that communicates district priorities, implementation efforts, and progress. This approach also creates an opportunity to consolidate existing planning and reporting requirements and reduce unnecessary duplication.
- **District Supports** measure conditions that districts and charter sponsors can influence directly and that help create opportunities for students to learn and thrive. The Phase I framework includes indicators related to school staffing, equitable access to qualified educators in Title I

schools, implementation of high-quality instructional materials, access to college- and career-ready coursework, and financial stability.

- **School Outcomes** connect the NDPF directly to the NSPF by summarizing the performance of schools across elementary, middle, and high school levels. Rather than introducing a separate set of district academic measures, the framework uses district-level roll-ups of existing NSPF star ratings.
- **Student Outcomes** focus on selected measures of academic progress and attainment, including early literacy, middle school mathematics, graduation and advanced diploma outcomes, and a district-selected metric. During Phase I of the state's two-phase engagement with the Center for Assessment, these measures will be reported publicly but will not contribute to district ratings. Phase I will establish baseline results and support the development of statewide goals. In Phase II, the component is expected to reflect district progress toward those goals after the measures and associated business rules have been further evaluated.

Rated indicators and components are reported using three common performance levels. Level 1 indicates performance below established expectations and may signal a need for additional attention or support. Level 2 represents intermediate performance between the lower and upper thresholds. Level 3 indicates performance that exceeds the highest established standard. Although the specific thresholds differ by indicator, the shared three-level structure supports consistent interpretation across the framework.

The overall District Supports rating is determined by the pattern of indicator results. The overall Phase I NDPF rating then combines the District Supports and School Outcomes component ratings using a decision matrix. This approach considers performance across both areas and limits the extent to which strong performance in one component can fully compensate for substantially weaker performance in the other.

The preliminary NDPF is intentionally designed as the first phase of a longer-term development process. It establishes an initial statewide structure while allowing Nevada to learn from implementation, review the performance of indicators and decision rules, and refine the framework before expanding its consequential use.

The preliminary framework represents an important step toward a more coherent and balanced accountability system. It preserves a clear connection to school performance while expanding attention to the district-controlled conditions that support effective teaching, learning, and improvement. Just as importantly, it creates a structured foundation for continued refinement based on evidence, experience, and collaboration.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report documents the first phase of Nevada’s work to develop the Nevada District Performance Framework (NDPF) and to identify implications for future refinement of the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF). This work was initiated in response to Senate Bill 460 (SB 460). This legislation requires the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) to develop and implement the NDPF that produces annual ratings for school districts and charter sponsors based on district- or sponsor-wide achievement and performance targets. In doing so, SB 460 expands Nevada’s accountability system beyond school-level performance to include a broader evaluation of how districts and charter sponsors support student success.

SB 460 establishes district accountability as an annual process for evaluating school districts and charter sponsors based on the collective performance of their schools and progress toward district-wide achievement and performance targets.

To support this work, NDE partnered with the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (the Center) to facilitate the design of the NDPF and identify opportunities to strengthen alignment with the NSPF. Throughout Phase I of this two-phase project, the Center worked collaboratively with NDE staff and the Metrics Subcommittee on Accountability Redesign (SAR), a diverse group of education leaders and stakeholders charged with developing recommendations for Nevada’s accountability redesign. The Center’s role was to provide research, technical expertise, facilitation, and analytic support while helping the SAR evaluate policy options, consider technical tradeoffs, and develop recommendations. Final policy decisions remain the responsibility of the Nevada Department of Education.

This report documents the results of Phase I of that work. It describes the process used to develop the NDPF, the evidence and stakeholder input that informed the design, the recommendations developed by the SAR, and the remaining implementation decisions that will guide Phase II of Nevada’s accountability redesign. Together, these recommendations provide a blueprint for an initial NDPF while establishing a foundation for continued refinement of both the NDPF and the NSPF.

2. PROCESS

2.1 Metrics Subcommittee on Accountability Redesign (SAR)

The SAR served as the primary forum for developing the Phase I recommendations. Its membership brought together representatives from state and local education agencies, charter schools, school boards, educators, parents, students, business and community organizations, and the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education.

Through a series of meetings, the SAR reviewed research and technical analyses, considered policy tradeoffs, and progressively shaped the framework. Its work included helping inform a theory of action and design principles, evaluating candidate indicators, and considering alternative approaches to performance standards and aggregation. These deliberations culminated in recommendations for the initial NDPF.

Table 1. SAR membership

Member Name	Affiliation
Tim Hughes	State Board of Education & CIEE
Patricia Charlton	College of Southern Nevada & CIEE
Sean Parker	Community & CIEE
Sebastian Rios	Student
Adam Young	Superintendent & CIEE
Melissa Mackedon	Executive Director, State Sponsored Charter School
Irene Bustamante-Adams	President, Clark County School District Trustee
Rebecca Dirks-Garcia	Former Nevada PTA President & CIEE
Aida Perez	Educator
Desiree Veloz	Principal
Kathryn Witaker	Trustee, Churchill County School District
Yvonne Wagstaff	Trustee, Douglas County School District
Peter Zierhut	Business & CIEE
Ricky Medina	Technical/District Accountability Director
Joe Ernst	Superintendent, Washoe County School District
Victor Wakefield	State Superintendent

2.2 Phase I Design Sequence

The Phase I process followed a progression from establishing a conceptual foundation to developing a more refined framework. Rather than beginning with specific indicators or accountability calculations, the SAR first developed a shared understanding of the purpose of district accountability and the role the NDPF should play within Nevada's broader accountability system. This foundation helped ensure that subsequent technical and policy decisions were guided by a common vision rather than considered in isolation.

The initial meetings focused on the statutory requirements of SB 460, the goals of district accountability, and the relationship between the proposed NDPF and the existing NSPF. Building on this foundation, the SAR discussed elements of a theory of action and a set of guiding design principles to articulate how accountability should support continuous improvement and better outcomes for students.

Once these foundational elements were established, the work shifted to the design of the framework itself. The SAR identified priority indicator domains, considered alternative framework structures, reviewed constituent feedback, and evaluated candidate indicators for their policy relevance, technical quality, and implementation feasibility. As the framework evolved, discussions increasingly focused on performance expectations, reporting approaches, and methods for combining multiple sources of evidence into an overall district rating.

One of the defining features of the Phase I process was the distinction between measures that were ready for immediate accountability use and those better suited for reporting, continuous improvement, or future development. This distinction allowed the SAR to recommend a framework that reflects a broad conception of district performance while recognizing that some important measures require additional refinement before being incorporated into consequential ratings. Table 2 summarizes the major milestones in the Phase I design process.

Table 2. SAR Meetings

Meeting Date	Primary Focus
November 7, 2025	Project Overview, Vision, Landscape Review
December 1, 2025 (Remote)	Design Principles, Theory of Action, Survey Feedback
January 20-21, 2026	Theory of Action, Indicator Priorities, Model Features and Components
February 12, 2026	Initial Framework Draft, Review of Candidate Indicators
March 10, 2026	Review Survey Results, Refine Framework and Indicators, Reporting and Aggregation
April 28, 2026 (Remote)	Refine Framework, Discuss Performance Levels
May 28, 2026	Refine Framework, Set Initial Performance Expectations, Refine Aggregation Methods
June 30, 2026	Finalize Framework Recommendations, Performance Expectations, and Aggregation Methods

3. Constituent Input: Survey and Interviews

3.1 Purpose and Methods

The survey and interview activities were designed to broaden the evidence base for Phase I beyond the SAR. They helped NDE and the Center understand how respondents viewed district accountability, the NSPF, the Nevada Accountability Portal, high school measures, and potential improvements to accountability reporting and use.

The Nevada Accountability Redesign Constituent Survey was fielded from January 7 through February 5, 2026. Responses to selected-response questions generally ranged from about 1,100 to 1,500, while open-ended responses ranged from 73 to 539. The Center also conducted interviews with seven individuals representing key constituent groups (Clark County Education Association, Nevada State Education Association, Nevada Association of School Superintendents, Opportunity 180, and a local Parent Teacher Association). A full report of the survey and interview results is available as Appendix A to this report.

These findings should be interpreted cautiously. Survey respondents were not representative of all Nevada educators, families, students, or community members, and it is likely that the individuals who volunteered to participate in the survey differed in many ways from those who either chose not to take the survey or who did not know about it. Additionally, the interviews reflected the views of seven individuals, so those findings should be interpreted as descriptive input for design deliberations rather than as generalizable evidence of statewide opinion¹. The findings are nevertheless useful because they clarify the design pressures the NDPF must address: the need for understandable information, the desire for broader evidence of student success, concern about fairness and context, and the importance of connecting ratings to support.

3.2 Findings Relevant to the NDPF

The survey results support a balanced approach to district accountability. When respondents were asked how much emphasis should be placed on school accountability factors versus district-specific responsibilities, responses varied widely, but median responses tended to indicate support for including both types of evidence, with somewhat greater emphasis on district-specific factors. That pattern aligns with the Phase I framework: the NDPF includes School Outcomes, while District Supports capture district- and sponsor-level practices and evidence that are not visible in school ratings alone.

Respondents also supported a broad view of student performance. The survey gauged respondents' opinions about the inclusion of a variety of student performance indicators in a district accountability system, and most of these received support from large majorities of respondents. High school completion, career readiness, and academic growth received particularly strong support. At the same time, the survey did not ask respondents to consider the technical defensibility of specific measures, data sources, or thresholds. The appropriate interpretation is therefore that respondents valued broader outcomes, not that every valued outcome is ready for immediate rating use.

District practices also received strong support. More than 90 percent of respondents indicated that district accountability should take supports for high-quality instruction into account quite a bit or a great deal. Respondents also supported attention to student well-being, strategic resource use and financial stewardship, data systems and continuous improvement, governance and engagement, and talent management. These findings reinforce the value of including District Supports and Effective District Practices in the framework.

¹ Open-ended survey responses and interview transcripts were analyzed thematically using a Center-led process that included generative AI-assisted coding and human review of theme definitions and response assignments.

The open-ended survey responses and interviews added important context. Respondents wanted accountability to reflect factors within district and school influence, recognize growth, attend to multiple postsecondary pathways, provide clearer reporting, and support improvement rather than simply label schools or districts. They also raised concerns about structural differences across districts, charter sponsors, geographies, and student populations. Those concerns do not eliminate the need for statewide accountability, but they do argue for careful business rules, transparent reporting, and a cautious approach to indicators that are valued but not yet mature enough for consequential use.

3.3 Design Implications

Three design implications follow from the constituent input. First, the NDPF should combine outcome information with district-support evidence. A system based solely on aggregated school outcomes would not fully capture district or sponsor responsibilities, while a system based solely on district practices would not provide sufficient transparency into results for students and schools.

Second, the NDPF should distinguish rated indicators from information used for reporting, monitoring, support, or future development. This distinction helps Nevada remain comprehensive without making the initial rating model too complex or burdening districts with extensive data-collection requirements or underdeveloped measures.

Third, communication must be treated as part of implementation rather than an afterthought. Families, educators, district leaders, charter sponsors, policymakers, and community members will need clear explanations of what ratings mean, how they are calculated, which indicators contributed to the rating, which indicators are reported for context, and how results connect to support.

4. GUIDING THEORY OF ACTION

The theory of action provides the conceptual link between accountability design and improvement. It does not assume that a rating by itself improves student outcomes. Instead, it treats accountability as an indirect mechanism: the system signals priorities, organizes evidence, informs resource allocation, supports transparency, and triggers assistance. Districts and schools then respond to those signals through decisions about staffing, instructional materials, professional learning, school support, data use, and student opportunities.

The theory of action developed through the SAR begins with state-supported foundations. Nevada must establish a coherent accountability system, reliable data and reporting infrastructure, capacity-building supports, policy flexibility with appropriate guardrails, and stable communication structures. These foundations create the conditions under which districts and charter sponsors can respond productively to accountability information.

Districts and sponsors then translate accountability signals into action. They align strategy and resources, review school performance, deploy differentiated supports, adjust staffing and professional learning, and facilitate collaboration across schools. Those district-level actions are expected to create stronger instructional coherence, more strategic use of talent and resources, and better district-school collaboration.

At the school level, the theory of action emphasizes practices that shape students' daily experiences: instruction focused on mastery, use of data to identify needs, targeted interventions, a supportive

school culture that promotes students' sense of belonging, and access to learning experiences connected to postsecondary pathways. Over time, those practices are expected to support stronger academic foundations, durable skills, postsecondary readiness, career readiness, fair access to opportunity, and long-term success.

The theory of action has important implications for both the NDPF and Nevada's broader accountability system. The framework should neither rely exclusively on lagging measures of student performance nor reduce district accountability to evidence of procedural compliance. Instead, it should draw on information about the conditions districts create for effective teaching and learning, the performance of schools across the system, and the results experienced by students. These sources of evidence should be presented in ways that are understandable, technically defensible, and connected to improvement. Future refinements to both the NSPF and the DPF should also remain grounded in the broader goals and relationships articulated in Nevada's theory of action.

5. DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The Phase I process produced a set of design principles to help Nevada navigate the competing demands inherent in accountability system design. The NDPF must be coherent with the NSPF, feasible to implement, broad enough to reflect meaningful district responsibilities, and clear enough to communicate effectively. It must also support statewide comparability while recognizing important differences among districts and charter sponsors in size, geography, governance, staffing conditions, and program offerings. Five principles guided the development of the framework.

- 1. Coherence.** The NDPF and NSPF should function as complementary parts of a unified accountability system rather than send conflicting messages about school and district performance. Both frameworks should be grounded in a common theory of action and help users understand the relationships among district responsibilities, school performance, and student results.
- 2. Moderate change with continuity.** Nevada should preserve effective and well-understood features of the current NSPF, particularly where stability supports federal accountability requirements and public understanding. At the same time, targeted changes are warranted where existing structures do not adequately address the requirements of SB 460, the distinct responsibilities of districts and charter sponsors, **or changing priorities regarding student outcomes, including those related to readiness for college and career.**
- 3. Comparability with bounded flexibility.** Because NDPF ratings will be public and consequential, the framework must support consistent interpretation across the state. Limited flexibility may nevertheless be appropriate to account for small districts, charter sponsors, differing high school pathways, local priorities, and indicators that remain under development.
- 4. Comprehensiveness without unnecessary complexity.** District accountability should reflect more than traditional measures such as large-scale assessment results. However, each additional rated indicator introduces added burden, interpretive complexity, and technical risk. The framework should therefore distinguish clearly among indicators used for ratings, indicators reported for context, indicators used to guide supports, and indicators that require piloting or further study during Phase II.

- 5. Technical defensibility.** Indicators used in ratings should be valid for their intended purposes, sufficiently reliable to support decisions, available within the statutory timeline, and interpretable by intended users. Measures that are important but not yet sufficiently mature should be reported, monitored, or piloted before they are used consequentially.

Together, these principles translated the broader theory of action into practical criteria for framework design. They guided the SAR's consideration of system components, indicator selection, performance expectations, and aggregation methods.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY REQUIREMENTS

SB460 establishes the legal foundation for the NDPF. The law requires annual ratings for each school district and charter sponsor based on the collective performance of schools and progress toward district-wide or sponsor-wide achievement and performance targets. It also requires attention to specific student groups, public reporting, and supports or interventions tied to ratings.

The statutory timeline is a major design constraint. NDE must make determinations no later than the third Friday in August each year and publicly post final determinations and ratings no later than the third Friday in September. These timelines require a framework that can be calculated, reviewed, validated, and communicated on a compressed annual schedule.

Table 3. Selected SB460 requirements relevant to NDPF design

Requirement area	Implication for the NDPF
Annual district and sponsor ratings	The framework must produce ratings for districts and charter sponsors, not just school-level results.
Collective school performance	School Outcomes must remain connected to aggregated school-level performance and the NSPF.
District-wide and sponsor-wide targets	The framework must include performance targets beyond individual school ratings.
Required student groups	Targets and reporting must address economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, English learners, and major racial and ethnic groups.
Supports and interventions	Ratings should connect to technical assistance, improvement planning, and differentiated support.
Public reporting timelines	Data sources, validation windows, and business rules must be feasible for August and September reporting.

The NSPF remains Nevada's federal accountability system under ESSA. Any changes to the NSPF that affect federal accountability may require review through Nevada's ESSA state plan and approval by the U.S. Department of Education. For that reason, Phase I emphasizes NDPF implementation and NSPF alignment recommendations, while Phase II should conduct a deeper review of NSPF refinements and federal implications.

7. PHASE I DISTRICT PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

7.1 Framework Overview

The preliminary NDPF is organized around a coherent set of components that reflect how districts and charter sponsors contribute to improved outcomes for students.

Effective District Practices represent the core organizational practices associated with effective districts and charter sponsors. These practices establish expectations for planning, governance, instructional leadership, school staffing, resource stewardship, and continuous improvement. Because they describe essential organizational capacities rather than performance outcomes, they are communicated through district performance planning and are not included directly in accountability ratings.

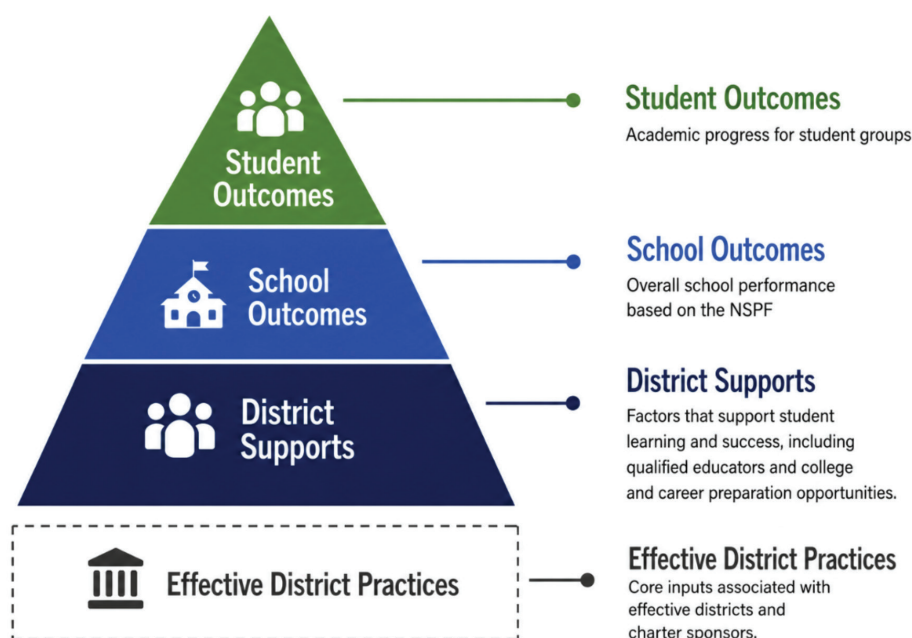
District Supports include measurable indicators of factors that districts and charter sponsors can influence to create opportunities for students to learn and thrive. These indicators extend beyond organizational inputs by examining evidence of implementation and progress in areas such as educator workforce, instructional resources, college and career opportunities, and financial stewardship.

School Outcomes connect the NDPF to Nevada's existing school accountability system by summarizing performance across schools within a district or charter sponsor. This component ensures that district accountability remains grounded in the educational outcomes achieved by schools while maintaining alignment with the NSPF.

Student Outcomes focus attention on whether student groups are making progress toward Nevada's academic goals. Phase I serves as a year to establish baseline performance, while Phase II will incorporate performance relative to established goals as the accountability system continues to mature.

Figure 1 illustrates the four components of the preliminary NDPF and the relationships among them.

Figure 1. NDPF Illustration



7.2 Effective District Practices

Effective District Practices represent the organizational conditions and leadership responsibilities that provide the foundation for strong district performance. These practices articulate the core functions that all districts and charter sponsors are expected to support in areas such as educator and leadership development, instruction and student support, college and career pathways, student well-being, governance and community engagement, continuous improvement, and resource stewardship.

This component of the NDPF is intended to be addressed through an annual District Performance Plan, or a comparable report, prepared by each district and charter sponsor. The plan would provide transparent information about how these core practices are being implemented, the strategies being used to support continuous improvement, and progress toward district priorities. The District Performance Plan should consolidate existing planning and reporting requirements into a single, coherent document that communicates district priorities, implementation efforts, and evidence of progress while reducing duplication and administrative burden.

Table 4. Effective District Practices

Domain	Description
Educators and Leaders	• Recruit, develop, evaluate, support, and retain qualified educators and leaders. • Align induction, mentoring, and professional learning to instructional priorities and student outcomes.
Instruction and Student Support	• Ensure effective, standards-aligned instruction with high-quality instructional materials and evidence-based programs. • Ensure access to timely, coherent academic, language, disability-related, and other student supports and interventions.
Pathways and Postsecondary Readiness	• Provide access to high-quality advanced coursework, dual credit, career and technical education, and work-based learning opportunities aligned to postsecondary and workforce opportunities. • Support students in developing graduation plans, exploring interests, and preparing for postsecondary success.
Student Well-Being	• Promote student attendance, safety, engagement, positive behavior, and a well-rounded student experience, including broad access to extracurricular and enrichment opportunities. • Provide access to behavioral, mental wellbeing, and other student support services.
Governance and Community Engagement	• Support effective governance and oversight through clear roles and responsibilities, training and ongoing development, and timely access to information and data. • Build strong partnerships with families, students, and community members to support student success.

Domain	Description
Systems and Continuous Improvement	• Utilize data systems for reporting, instructional improvement, strategic decision making, and engaging families. • Conduct regular cycles of school and district improvement planning, progress monitoring, and continuous improvement.
Resources and Financial Stewardship	• Maintain budgeting, auditing, financial oversight, and internal control systems that support effective stewardship of public resources. • Align financial planning, resource allocation, and transparent reporting to district priorities and student needs.

7.3 District Supports

District Support indicators measure key conditions that districts and charter sponsors can influence to create opportunities for students to learn and thrive. Unlike Effective District Practices, which describe the organizational functions expected of all districts and sponsors, these indicators provide measurable evidence that important systems and supports are in place. They focus on factors that research and practice suggest are associated with improved school performance and student success while remaining within the sphere of district influence.

For Phase I, the framework includes indicators addressing qualified educators, equitable educator staffing, high-quality instructional materials, college and career coursework, and financial stability (see Table 5). These indicators were selected because they are supported by available statewide data, can be implemented within the statutory timeline, and reflect priorities identified through the SAR process. The framework also includes a student survey focused on school climate and the student experience. Because additional development and validation are needed, this measure will be incorporated as a rated indicator in Phase II.

Table 5. District Supports

District Support Indicators
Phase I: • Qualified educators and equitable staffing: - Coverage rate (percent of classrooms taught by a licensed educator in endorsed area) meets target OR Increase in coverage rate (or decrease in vacant positions) meets target - Percentage of vacancies at Title I schools compared to non-Title I meets target • High Quality Instructional Materials: Evidence-based, high-quality reading and mathematics programs and primary instructional materials are used; all primary materials are on State-approved lists. • College and Career Coursework: Percent of high-school students who participate in qualifying coursework to include Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), dual enrollment, Career and Technical Education (CTE), work-based learning course, or world language course. • Financial stability: - The district's end fund balance as a percentage of expenditures is 4% or higher or improves end fund balance from the prior year. - AND - Any district with an end fund balance, expressed as a percentage of expenditures, below 10% did not experience a decline in its end fund balance as a percentage of expenditures for three or more consecutive years. To be included in Phase II: • Student survey addressing climate and student experience; Credit awarded separately for participation and percent meeting threshold

7.4 School Outcomes

School Outcomes provide the connection between the NDPF and the NSPF. This component recognizes that districts and charter sponsors are ultimately responsible for creating the conditions that enable schools to succeed. Accordingly, School Outcomes summarize performance across a district's schools rather than introducing a separate set of district-level academic indicators.

For Phase I, School Outcomes are based on a district-level roll-up of the current NSPF results, including academic achievement, academic growth, English learner progress, opportunity gaps, student engagement, college and career readiness indicators, and graduation outcomes (see Table 6). In addition to the district-level NSPF roll-up, the framework also considers year-to-year reductions in the number of schools receiving one- and two-star ratings. This recognizes districts and charter sponsors that are making meaningful progress in improving their lowest-performing schools.

Table 6. School Outcomes

School Outcomes - NSPF Indicators
• Academic Achievement: Proficiency in mathematics, ELA, and science • Academic Growth: Median Growth Percentile (MGP) in mathematics and ELA and percent meeting growth targets • Opportunity Gaps: percent prior non-proficient meeting growth targets • Progress toward English language proficiency • Student Engagement: Chronic absenteeism rates, percent of 8th grade students meeting high school readiness criteria, percent of 9th grade students earning sufficient credit, percent of MS students with academic learning plans • College Readiness: Participation and Completion of qualifying advanced coursework (i.e., AP, IB, dual enrollment) or approved CTE program; percent advanced diploma or college and career ready diploma • Graduation Rates: 4- and 5-year adjusted cohort graduation rates

7.5 Student Outcomes

Student Outcomes focuses progress toward statewide priorities for student success and encourages attention to long-term improvement. The proposed indicators include early literacy success, middle school mathematics success, high school graduation and advanced diploma attainment, and a district-selected measure aligned with local priorities as reflected in Table 7.

Table 7. Student Outcomes

Student Outcomes Proposed Indicators
• Early Literacy Success • Middle School Math Success • High School Grad Rate & Advanced Diploma Types Rate • District Choice Metric

Phase I will serve as a baseline year for this component. During this initial implementation, the proposed indicators will be publicly reported but will not contribute to district ratings. Instead, NDE will establish statewide performance goals using the baseline results. Beginning in Phase II, district performance will be evaluated relative to these established goals.

8. PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS AND AGGREGATION

8.1 Performance Level Descriptors

To support consistent interpretation across indicators, the preliminary NDPF uses a common three-level performance framework. Each rated indicator is classified into one of three performance levels based on established thresholds. This common structure simplifies interpretation, promotes consistency across divers

- **Level 1: Performance does not meet expectations.** Results indicate that performance falls below the established expectation and may warrant additional attention or support.

- **Level 2: Intermediate performance.** Results indicate performance between the lower and upper performance thresholds. This level recognizes progress beyond Level 1 but not at an exemplary level.
- **Level 3: Performance exceeds expectations.** Results indicate that performance meets the established standard and reflects exemplary performance on the indicator.

8.2 Performance Standards for District Supports

For three District Support indicators—educator coverage, use of high-quality instructional materials, and participation in college- and career-ready coursework—the SAR established standards for all three performance levels. The educator coverage indicator assigns districts the more favorable result based on either the current coverage rate or improvement in the coverage rate. For the comparison of educator coverage in Title I and non-Title I schools, the SAR established only Level 1 and Level 2 standards because the indicator is intended to identify whether an inequitable staffing pattern exists rather than distinguish exemplary performance. Similarly, financial stability includes Level 1 and Level 2 standards only, reflecting whether the district meets the established minimum expectation for fiscal stability.

The recommended thresholds were informed through a structured judgment process involving the SAR. Members reviewed statewide data distributions, considered existing state policies and performance targets where available, examined the practical implications of alternative cut points, and discussed the degree of performance that should reasonably distinguish intermediate from exemplary results. The objective was to establish standards that are meaningful, attainable, and sufficiently rigorous to encourage continuous improvement while remaining appropriate for statewide implementation.

Table 8. Performance Standards for District Supports

Indicator	Level 2 Cut	Level 3 Cut
Coverage Rate Combined	Assign the better of criterion 1 (rate) or 2 (change)	
1. Coverage Rate	80%	90%
2. Coverage Rate Change	2%	5%
Coverage Rate T1 vs Non T1	0 or greater	NA
HQIM	70%	90%
CCR Coursework	60%	80%
Financial Stability	Level 2 cut is achieved by meeting criterion 1 or 2 and meeting criterion 3	
1. End Fund Balance	4%	NA
2. End Fund Balance - One Year Improvement.	Current year end fund balance is greater than the previous year	NA
3. End Fund Balance Trend*	For districts with end fund balance below 10%, the end fund balance did not decline for three consecutive years prior	NA

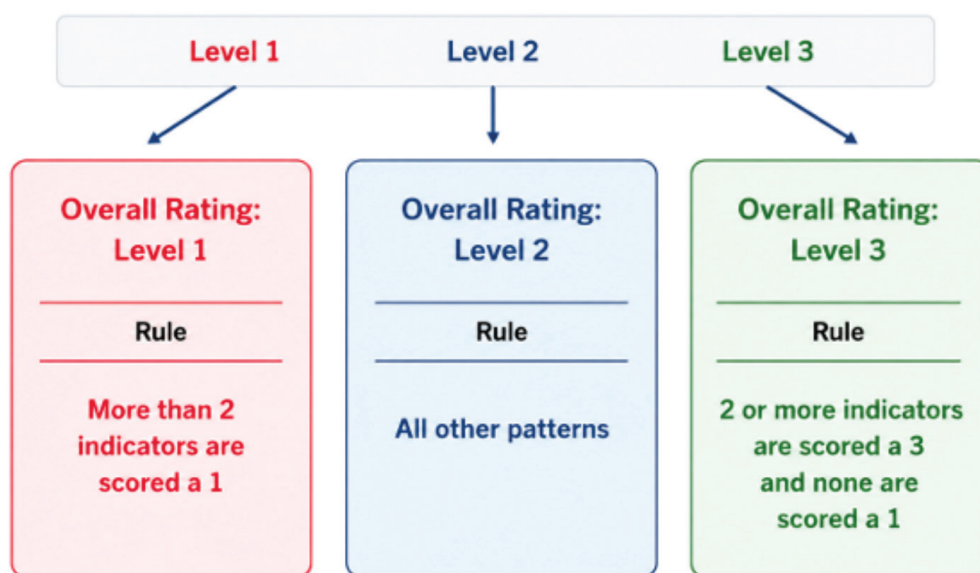
*The SAR discussed the importance of trend data as part of the financial stability indicator. However, the final performance standards were set by NDE after the June SAR meeting.

8.3 District Supports: Overall Rating

The individual District Support indicator results are combined using a decision rule to produce an overall District Supports rating. A district or charter sponsor is assigned Level 1 when more than two indicators are rated Level 1. It is assigned Level 3 when two or more indicators are rated Level 3, and none are rated Level 1. All other combinations result in an overall rating of Level 2.

This approach is designed to prevent strong performance on a small number of indicators from fully offsetting multiple areas of concern, while reserving Level 3 for districts and charter sponsors that demonstrate consistently strong performance across the component. Figure 2 summarizes the decision rules used to assign the overall District Supports rating.

Figure 2. Decision Rules for an Overall District Support Rating



8.3 Performance Standards for School Outcomes

School Outcomes are based on a district-level star rating roll-up from the NSPF. For each district and charter sponsor, separate star ratings from one star to five star are calculated for the elementary, middle, and high school grade spans. More information about the methodology for district star ratings are available in the *Nevada District Performance Framework Methodology and Business Rules Manual*, which is being developed as a supplement to this report.

8.4 School Outcomes: Overall Rating

The three school-level —elementary, middle, and high school— star ratings are combined using a set of decision rules to produce an overall School Outcomes rating.

A district or charter sponsor is assigned a Level 3 overall when at least two of the three school levels are classified as four or five stars and no school levels have a one or two star rating. For example, a minimum Level 3 pattern of star ratings for three school levels would be 3 star, 4 star, 4 star.

A district or charter sponsor is assigned Level 2 overall when at least two of the three school level results are classified as two star or higher and there are no one star school levels. For example, a minimum Level 2 pattern of star ratings for three school levels would be 2 star, 2 star, 3 star.

Districts and charter sponsors that do not meet the criteria for Level 2 are assigned Level 1. Figure 3 summarizes the decision rules used to determine the initial School Outcomes rating.

Figure 3. Decision Rules for an Overall School Outcomes Rating

Level	Criterion	Rule
2 Level 2	 Allowable 1 Star Ratings	0 Zero school levels may be rated 1 star.
	  Allowable 2 Star Ratings	2 Up to two school levels may be rated 2 stars.
3 Level 3	 or  Allowable 1 or 2 Star Ratings	0 Zero school levels may be rated 1 or 2 stars.
	    Required 4 or 5 Star Ratings	2 At least two school levels must be rated 4 or 5 stars.

Districts and charter sponsors that receive an initial Level 1 rating undergo a second review that recognizes improvement among their lowest-performing schools. Specifically, a district or charter sponsor is reclassified from Level 1 to Level 2 if it reduces the number of schools receiving one- or two-star ratings compared to the previous year.

8.5 Overall NDPF Rating

For Phase I, the overall NDPF rating is based on the combination of the District Supports and School Outcomes components.

The component ratings are combined through a decision matrix that considers the pattern of performance across both areas. The resulting overall rating reflects the joint contribution of District Supports and School Outcomes and limits the extent to which strong performance in one component can compensate for substantially weaker performance in the other. Figure 4 presents the decision rules used to determine the overall Phase I rating.

Figure 4. Decision Table for Overall NDPF Rating

SCHOOL OUTCOMES	DISTRICT SUPPORTS		
	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
LEVEL 3	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 3
LEVEL 2	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
LEVEL 1	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2

9. NEXT STEPS

The preliminary District Performance Framework represents the first phase of Nevada’s district accountability redesign rather than its final form. Phase I establishes an initial statewide framework while creating a foundation for continued development based on implementation experience, technical analysis, and ongoing constituent feedback.

During Phase II, the SAR, NDE, and the Center for Assessment will continue working together to evaluate, refine, and extend the NDPF. This work will include reviewing the first year of results, strengthening indicator definitions and business rules, reconsidering performance standards and aggregation methods where appropriate, and improving the clarity and usefulness of public reporting. Phase II will also support the incorporation of additional elements, including the student survey and the Student Outcomes component based on progress toward goals established from the Phase I baseline.

The Phase II process will also consider potential refinements to the Nevada School Performance Framework. Because the NDPF and NSPF are intended to operate as complementary parts of a coherent statewide accountability system, the continued development of both frameworks will be considered together. This collaborative work will seek to strengthen alignment among district practices and supports, school performance, and student results while ensuring that Nevada’s accountability system remains understandable, technically defensible, and focused on continuous improvement.

APPENDIX

Survey Report

NEVADA ACCOUNTABILITY REDESIGN CONSTITUENT SURVEY AND INTERVIEWS

SUMMARY REPORT

May 2026



INTRODUCTION

The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) is engaged in a wide-ranging effort to redesign its accountability system for schools and districts. One impetus for this redesign is Senate Bill 460 (SB460), which charges NDE to develop a District Performance Framework (DPF). The DPF must produce annual ratings with respect to district-wide performance targets, and it will be used to evaluate the performance of all Nevada public school districts and charter sponsors.

Designing – or redesigning – accountability systems requires addressing numerous technical, practical, and policy-related considerations. To create a system that aligns with the state’s objectives, addresses the needs of other groups who will use it, and avoids adverse consequences, it is valuable to engage representatives of a variety of constituencies in the redesign. NDE contracted with The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (the Center) to support NDE in gathering input and convening key constituencies in the DPF development process.

The primary mechanism for constituent engagement is the *Metrics Subcommittee on Accountability Redesign* (SAR). Its members represent leaders, experts, and key constituents from across the state. The Center facilitates regular convenings with the SAR. To obtain additional input on the DPF design, the Center team developed a survey and worked with NDE to encourage participation among key constituent groups including educators, families, policymakers, and members of the business community. The Center also conducted interviews with a small number of education policymakers and leaders across Nevada to help clarify policy priorities and constraints.

This report presents results from the survey and interviews. The purpose of this report is to provide a high-level overview of key findings from these two data sources, both to inform the SAR’s ongoing work and to help educators, parents, and other Nevadans who interact with the K-12 school system understand some of the input that guided decisions about the DPF and the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF).

Data and Methods

In this section, we describe our approaches to gathering and analyzing constituent input through surveys and interviews.

Survey

We fielded the Nevada Accountability Redesign Constituent Survey from January 7 through February 5, 2026 using Survey Monkey, a commonly used online survey platform. The survey captured perspectives from diverse constituencies including educators, parents, school and district leaders,

and community members across Nevada. The first question on the survey asked respondents to indicate their current role (e.g., district leader, teacher, caregiver, legislator). Respondents who reported serving as an educator or education leader were asked additional questions about their length of time in the role, whether they were affiliated with a charter school or sponsor, and the geographic location of their workplace. Respondents who selected other roles were asked a small number of questions about the geographic location of their residences.

The remainder of the survey comprised substantive questions about five topics:

- Perspectives on district accountability
- Perspectives on NSPF and star ratings
- Use of the Nevada Accountability Portal
- Priorities for evaluating high schools
- Other suggestions for improving accountability in Nevada

Most of these questions were closed-ended (e.g., single-option selected response, select all that apply). Eight questions invited open-ended responses. Although approximately 2000 individuals responded to at least one question on the survey, fewer respondents continued to the substantive questions. Responses to most selected-response questions ranged from approximately 1100 to 1500. Responses to open-ended questions ranged from 73 to 539.

We produced descriptive summaries for each of the closed-ended questions for the full set of respondents. Because the small set of questions focused on district accountability were especially relevant to the work of the SAR, we also created breakdowns by several respondent characteristics (details provided in the Key Findings section) to provide more nuanced information about those responses.

To analyze the open-ended responses, we conducted a separate thematic analysis for each of the eight open-ended questions. A Center team member reviewed all non-blank responses, and we iteratively identified common themes using a generative AI-assisted coding process. Responses were coded using a multi-label approach, meaning a single response could be assigned to one or more themes, or in some cases no theme. After the initial coding, we reviewed the theme definitions and response assignments to verify consistency and accuracy. For each theme, we selected a small number of verbatim quotes to illustrate common patterns in the data.

Interviews

To supplement the large-scale survey data, we conducted interviews with seven individuals who represented key constituent groups (Clark County Education Association, Nevada State Education Association, Nevada Association of School Superintendents, Opportunity 180, and a local Parent Teacher Association). Interview questions addressed participants' perspectives on the design of NDPF, their understanding and use of NSPF, and perceived challenges and opportunities related to accountability in Nevada.

We analyzed the interview data using a similar process as for the open-ended survey response data. A Center team member, supported by generative AI, identified themes across the seven interview transcripts. We also conducted a broader thematic analysis that combined the open-ended survey data with the interview transcripts. Given the significant overlap in content and themes across these data sources, our summary of findings draws primarily on this broader thematic analysis.

Purpose and Limitations

The analyses presented in this report provide a high-level overview of the major patterns reflected in the survey and interview data. It is important to acknowledge some limitations. First, the thematic analysis we conducted on the open-ended survey questions and interviews necessarily involves judgment in defining themes and assigning responses. Different analytic decisions (e.g., identifying more or fewer themes, collapsing or separating related ideas) could have resulted in somewhat different categorizations. Second, individuals who chose to respond to the survey—and especially those who provided open-ended responses—are unlikely to be representative of all educators, families, or other constituents across Nevada. Finally, the interviews reflect the perspectives of only seven individuals across a large state. As a result, these survey and interview findings should be interpreted as descriptive of respondents' perspectives rather than as generalizable to the broader population.

In the next section, we summarize key findings from the closed-ended survey results, including differences across specific groups of respondents for a small number of questions. We then present broad themes that emerged from the analysis of the open-ended survey questions and the interviews.

KEY FINDINGS FROM CLOSED-ENDED SURVEY QUESTIONS

We present two sets of findings from the closed-ended portions of the survey. The first comprises the small set of questions that address district accountability system design. The second set examines related topics including school accountability, the Nevada Accountability Portal, and priorities for evaluating high schools.

Key Findings from DFP-Relevant Questions

The questions with the most direct applicability to the DPF gauged respondents' preferences regarding several features of a potential district accountability system. For these questions, we present results for the full set of survey respondents, and we also display results for subgroups of respondents. Specifically, we break the results down according to the following categories.

- Primary role (question administered to all respondents)
 - Group 1: School/District (teacher or classroom educator, school leader, district leader, other school or district staff)
 - Group 2: Family/Community (all other roles)
- Community type (question administered to School/District respondents only)
 - Group 1: City
 - Group 2: Suburb
 - Group 3: Small town
 - Group 4: Rural area
- Charter status (question administered to School/District respondents only)
 - Group 1: Charter (works in a charter school or for a charter sponsor)
 - Group 2: Non-charter (all others)
- Years of experience (question administered to School/District respondents only)
 - Group 1: Less than 5 years
 - Group 2: 5-10 years
 - Group 3: 11-15 years
 - Group 4: 16-20 years
 - Group 5: More than 20 years

For tables showing two groups, differences in percentage points between groups are shown in the right-most column. Positive differences indicate that the percentage for Group 2 was higher than for Group 1. Negative differences indicate the reverse.

Preference for District-Specific Indicators

One critical decision related to designing accountability systems for districts is the extent to which the measures in such systems should be the same ones that are used to evaluate school performance. For example, districts could be evaluated based on a roll-up of test scores, graduation rates, and other indicators that are included in school accountability systems. Alternatively, a measure of district performance could consist of information about district conditions, programs, or practices, such as financial stewardship or the provision of professional learning opportunities to educators. Designing a district accountability system requires considering these different types of indicators and determining the extent to which the system should incorporate each of them. The first survey question after the background section was designed to gather input to inform this decision.

Survey question: We're interested in your views on whether districts and schools should be evaluated in the same way. Please move the slider to indicate how much emphasis you believe should be given to factors that are included in school accountability ratings (such as test scores and graduation rates) versus factors that are unique to district responsibilities (such as providing high-quality professional development or curriculum support).

We summarize responses to this question, broken down by the four dimensions described above, in Figures 1-4. High numbers indicate preference for factors unique to districts. These figures present box plots, which convey the following information:

- The line inside the box shows the **median**, or the **middle value** (half the observations are above it and half are below).
- The shaded box contains the **middle 50%** of the data.
- The lines extending from the box (sometimes called whiskers) show the **spread of the data** beyond the middle 50%.
- **Unusually high or low values** appear as individual dots.

Figure 1: Response Distribution by Primary Role (N=1112)

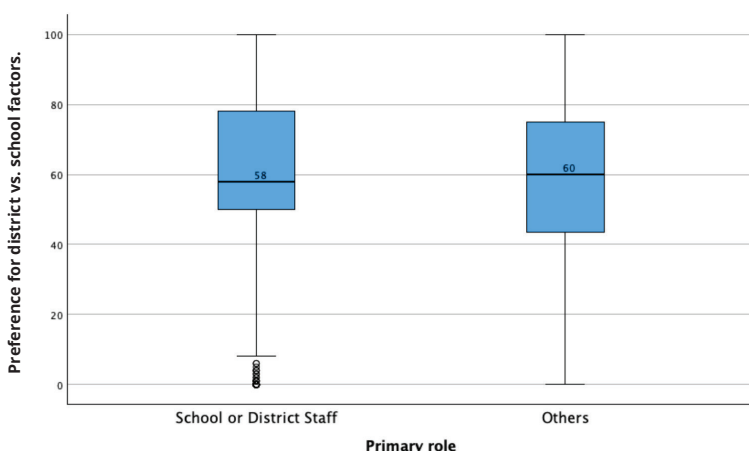


Figure 2: Response Distribution by Community Type (N=790)

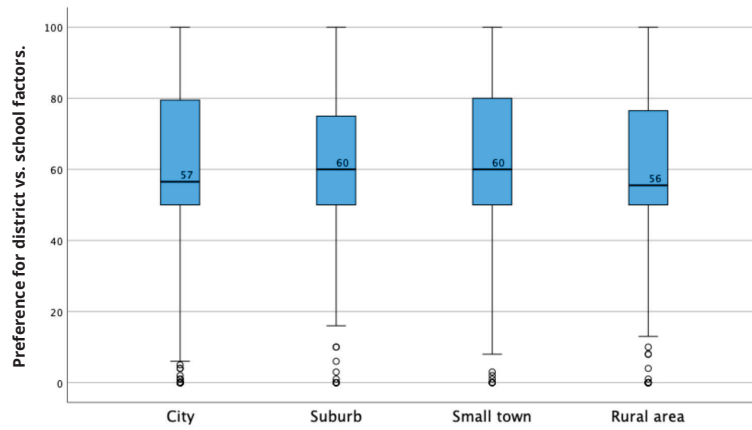


Figure 3: Response Distribution by Charter Status (N=790)

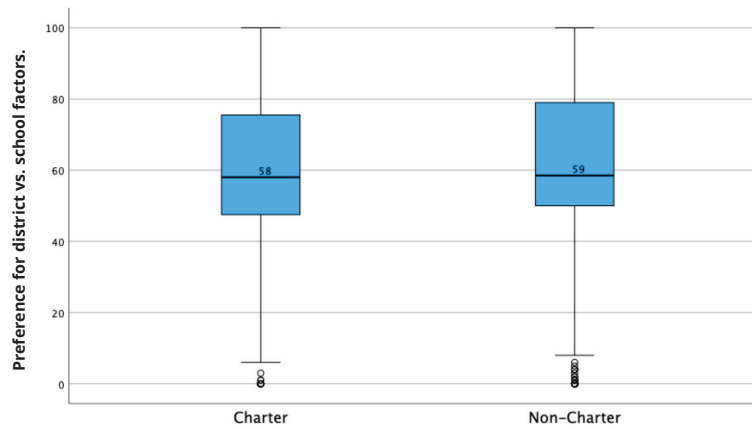
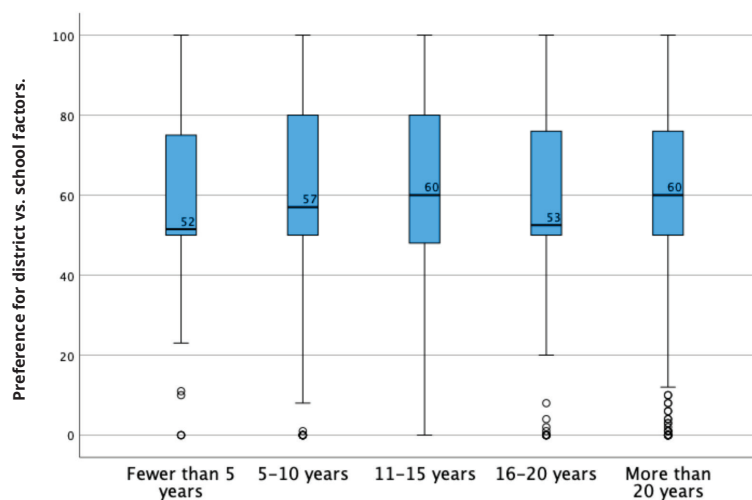


Figure 4: Response Distribution by Years of Experience (N=790)



The results displayed in Figures 1-4 indicate a wide range of opinions about how to balance these two types of indicators, as evidenced by the long “whiskers” in each figure. At the same time, the median, or middle, values across the various groups tended to converge at approximately 60. This value suggests a preference for a system that includes both district-specific and school-specific indicators, with the former weighted slightly more than the latter. The overlapping boxes in each figure indicate a high degree of consistency in responses across groups.

Indicators Related to Student Performance

District accountability systems can incorporate a variety of indicators that provide information about students’ performance, including academic as well as behavioral indicators such as attendance. To gauge respondents’ perspectives on these potential indicators, the survey included a question about the extent to which respondents would recommend holding districts accountable for various aspects of student performance. Figures 5 and 6 provide the distributions of responses to this question for the full respondent sample.

Survey Question: Would you recommend holding districts accountable for the following aspects of student performance? (select one option in each row)

Figure 5: Recommendations Regarding Inclusion of Student Performance Indicators in District Accountability, Part 1 (N=1419)

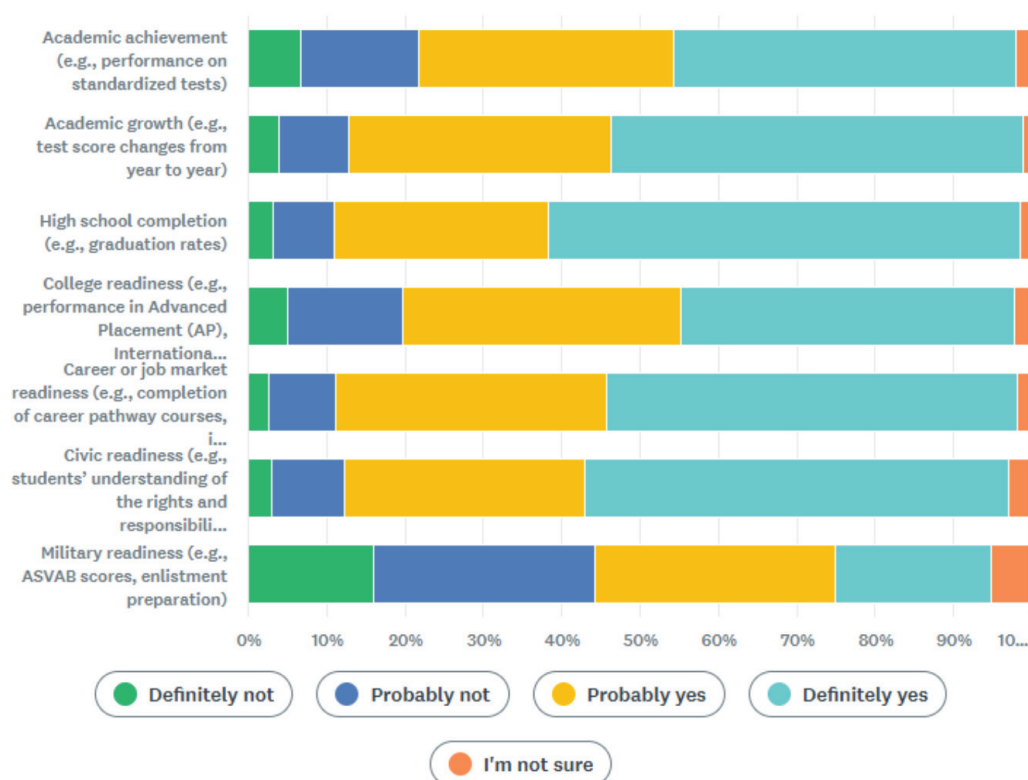
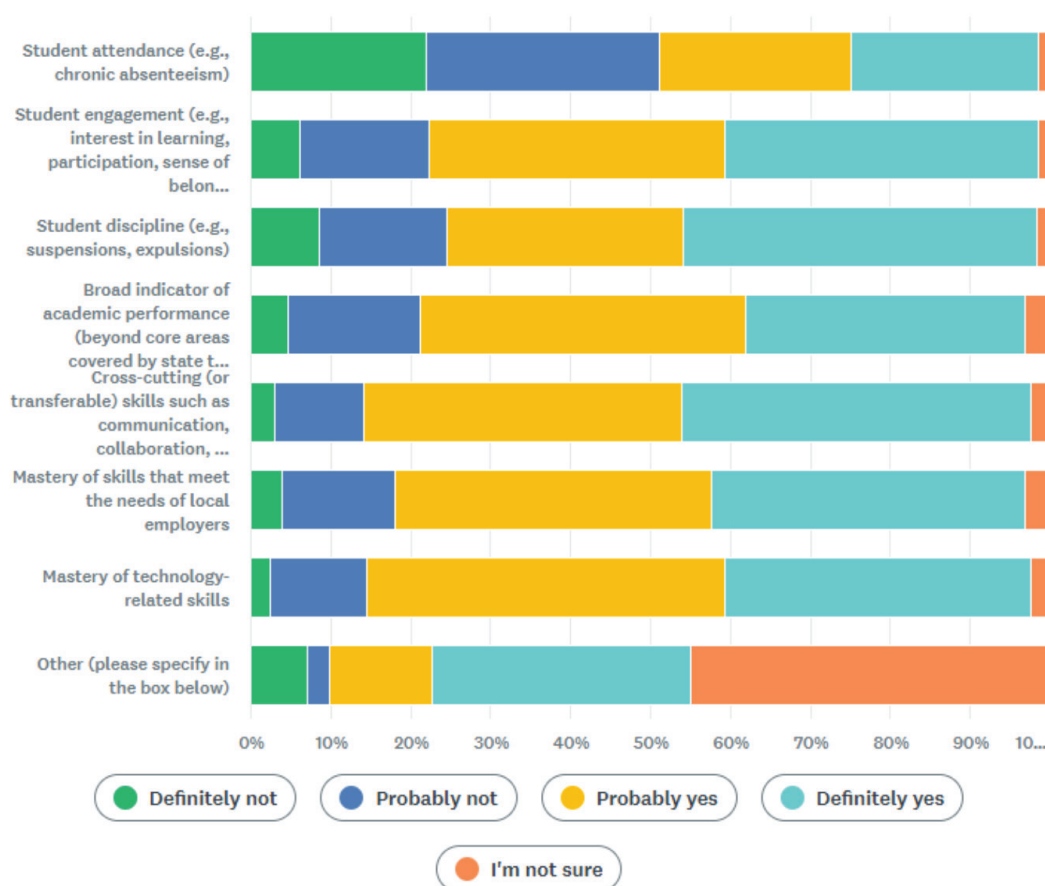


Figure 6: Recommendations Regarding Inclusion of Student Performance Indicators in District Accountability, Part 1 (N=1418)



One overarching conclusion based on these results is that large majorities of respondents across all groups expressed support for including most of these indicators in a district accountability system. Only one indicator - student attendance - received support from fewer than half of respondents. Responses were slightly more favorable for military readiness, with approximately 50% of respondents selecting probably or definitely yes. Percentages for other indicators ranged from the low 70's to the mid-80's, with high school completion and career readiness receiving the most support. Higher percentages of respondents selected probably or definitely yes for academic growth than for academic achievement.

The question provided an opportunity for respondents to select "Other" and describe it in an open-ended text box. These responses are incorporated into the findings described in "Themes from Qualitative Data" later in this report.

We also examined responses by group. Tables 1-4 show the percentages of respondents, overall and by group, who responded "probably yes" or "definitely yes" to this question.

Table 1: Recommendations Regarding Inclusion of Student Performance Indicators in District Accountability, Overall and by Role

Indicator	School/ District	Family/ Community	Family/ Community
Academic achievement (e.g., performance on standardized tests)	73.8%	82.7%	8.9
Academic growth (e.g., test score changes from year to year)	84.4%	90.1%	5.7
High school completion (e.g., graduation rates)	87.2%	88.5%	1.3
College readiness (e.g., performance in Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or dual enrollment courses; SAT/ACT scores)	76.2%	83.4%	7.2
Career or job market readiness (e.g., completion of career pathway courses, internships, certifications)	86.4%	88.8%	2.4
Civic readiness (e.g., students' understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship)	83.7%	87.4%	3.7
Military readiness (e.g., ASVAB scores, enlistment preparation)	51.0%	49.5%	-1.5
Student attendance (e.g., chronic absenteeism)	46.4%	50.9%	4.5
Student engagement (e.g., interest in learning, participation, sense of belonging)	73.9%	82.7%	8.8
Student discipline (e.g., suspensions, expulsions)	70.8%	82.1%	11.3
Broad indicator of academic performance (beyond core areas covered by state tests) (e.g., art, multiple languages)	74.5%	78.4%	3.9
Cross-cutting (or transferable) skills such as communication, collaboration, and critical thinking	82.1%	86.9%	4.8
Mastery of skills that meet the needs of local employers	78.8%	78.9%	0.1
Mastery of technology-related skills	82.2%	85.6%	3.4

Note:

The table shows the combined percentages of respondents selecting “probably yes” or “definitely yes.”

Table 2: Recommendations Regarding Inclusion of Student Performance Indicators in District Accountability, Overall and by Community Type (Question Administered to School/District Respondents Only)

Indicator	City	Suburb	Small Town	Rural Area
Academic achievement (e.g., performance on standardized tests)	76.2%	81.6%	69.0%	67.1%
Academic growth (e.g., test score changes from year to year)	86.4%	83.8%	84.2%	81.7%
High school completion (e.g., graduation rates)	85.8%	89.4%	88.9%	87.2%
College readiness (e.g., performance in Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or dual enrollment courses; SAT/ACT scores)	79.4%	82.1%	71.3%	68.5%
Career or job market readiness (e.g., completion of career pathway courses, internships, certifications)	86.0%	87.2%	84.8%	87.2%
Civic readiness (e.g., students' understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship)	82.7%	80.4%	87.1%	86.0%
Military readiness (e.g., ASVAB scores, enlistment preparation)	53.9%	46.9%	47.3%	51.5%
Student attendance (e.g., chronic absenteeism)	46.0%	44.1%	47.6%	46.8%
Student engagement (e.g., interest in learning, participation, sense of belonging)	75.0%	74.9%	74.3%	71.2%
Student discipline (e.g., suspensions, expulsions)	69.8%	62.9%	76.0%	75.3%
Broad indicator of academic performance (beyond core areas covered by state tests) (e.g., art, multiple languages)	78.4%	74.9%	71.9%	68.8%
Cross-cutting (or transferable) skills such as communication, collaboration, and critical thinking	82.2%	82.7%	85.9%	79.1%
Mastery of skills that meet the needs of local employers	79.0%	79.9%	79.3%	77.4%
Mastery of technology-related skills	84.3%	80.4%	80.1%	81.0%

Note:

The table shows the combined percentages of respondents selecting “probably yes” or “definitely yes.”

Table 3: Recommendations Regarding Inclusion of Student Performance Indicators in District Accountability, Overall and by Charter Status (Question Administered to School/District Respondents Only)

Indicator	Charter	Non-Charter	Difference
Academic achievement (e.g., performance on standardized tests)	80.0%	72.5%	-7.5
Academic growth (e.g., test score changes from year to year)	81.7%	85.0%	3.3
High school completion (e.g., graduation rates)	85.3%	87.7%	2.4
College readiness (e.g., performance in Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or dual enrollment courses; SAT/ACT scores)	81.6%	74.8%	-6.8
Career or job market readiness (e.g., completion of career pathway courses, internships, certifications)	87.8%	86.1%	-1.7
Civic readiness (e.g., students' understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship)	82.1%	83.9%	1.8
Military readiness (e.g., ASVAB scores, enlistment preparation)	51.6%	50.5%	-1.1
Student attendance (e.g., chronic absenteeism)	49.5%	45.6%	-3.9
Student engagement (e.g., interest in learning, participation, sense of belonging)	73.2%	74.1%	0.9
Student discipline (e.g., suspensions, expulsions)	68.3%	71.6%	3.3
Broad indicator of academic performance (beyond core areas covered by state tests) (e.g., art, multiple languages)	75.7%	74.1%	-1.6
Cross-cutting (or transferable) skills such as communication, collaboration, and critical thinking	81.4%	82.1%	0.7
Mastery of skills that meet the needs of local employers	80.7%	78.3%	-2.4
Mastery of technology-related skills	84.5%	81.6%	-2.9

Note:

The table shows the combined percentages of respondents selecting “probably yes” or “definitely yes.”

Table 4: Recommendations Regarding Inclusion of Student Performance Indicators in District Accountability, Overall and by Years of Experience (Question Administered to School/District Respondents Only)

Indicator	Less Than 5 Years	5-10 Years	11-15 Years	16-20 years	More Than 20 Years
Academic achievement (e.g., performance on standardized tests)	73.7%	68.6%	71.8%	76.4%	75.5%
Academic growth (e.g., test score changes from year to year)	82.1%	78.8%	81.2%	86.6%	87.4%
High school completion (e.g., graduation rates)	86.3%	84.6%	84.2%	92.2%	87.9%
College readiness (e.g., performance in Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or dual enrollment courses; SAT/ACT scores)	77.9%	78.2%	77.8%	74.9%	74.8%
Career or job market readiness (e.g., completion of career pathway courses, internships, certifications)	84.2%	87.2%	87.1%	85.4%	86.5%
Civic readiness (e.g., students' understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship)	86.3%	85.9%	86.0%	80.4%	82.8%
Military readiness (e.g., ASVAB scores, enlistment preparation)	52.6%	48.7%	53.8%	50.3%	50.6%
Student attendance (e.g., chronic absenteeism)	55.8%	52.2%	46.2%	49.7%	41.1%
Student engagement (e.g., interest in learning, participation, sense of belonging)	81.1%	77.6%	72.4%	75.4%	70.9%
Student discipline (e.g., suspensions, expulsions)	81.9%	80.8%	70.0%	70.9%	65.1%
Broad indicator of academic performance (beyond core areas covered by state tests) (e.g., art, multiple languages)	80.0%	76.1%	79.5%	79.3%	68.5%
Cross-cutting (or transferable) skills such as communication, collaboration, and critical thinking	87.4%	85.2%	85.2%	83.8%	77.9%
Mastery of skills that meet the needs of local employers	88.3%	80.8%	79.4%	80.3%	75.1%
Mastery of technology-related skills	84.2%	81.4%	85.2%	86.4%	79.0%

Note:

The table shows the combined percentages of respondents selecting “probably yes” or “definitely yes.”

For the most part, responses did not differ substantially across respondent groups. Table 1 shows that for five of the indicators, family and community respondents were at least five percentage points more likely to select probably or definitely yes compared with school and district respondents. The difference was approximately 9 percentage points for academic achievement and 11 for student discipline.

Across community types, support for both academic achievement and college readiness was highest for suburban respondents and lowest for rural and small town respondents (Table 2). Civic readiness showed the reverse pattern: highest for small town and rural, lowest for suburb. And support for military readiness was highest for respondents from cities and lowest for those from suburbs and small towns.

Percentages selecting probably or definitely yes were higher among charter school and charter sponsor staff than among other respondents for two indicators: academic achievement and college readiness (Table 3). Responses for all but two indicators (college readiness and career readiness) differed across levels of experience (Table 4). Support for including indicators in a district accountability system was lowest among the most experienced respondents for several indicators including those related to student behavior (attendance, engagement, discipline) and indicators of complex competencies (broad academic performance, cross-cutting skills, employability skills, technology skills).

Together, these responses suggest widespread support for a district accountability system that incorporates a variety of indicators of student performance. It is important to recognize that, with a few exceptions, the question did not ask about specific measures. It is possible that the degree of enthusiasm for indicators such as cross-cutting or employability skills would decline if respondents considered how those constructs could be measured and the challenges associated with that measurement.

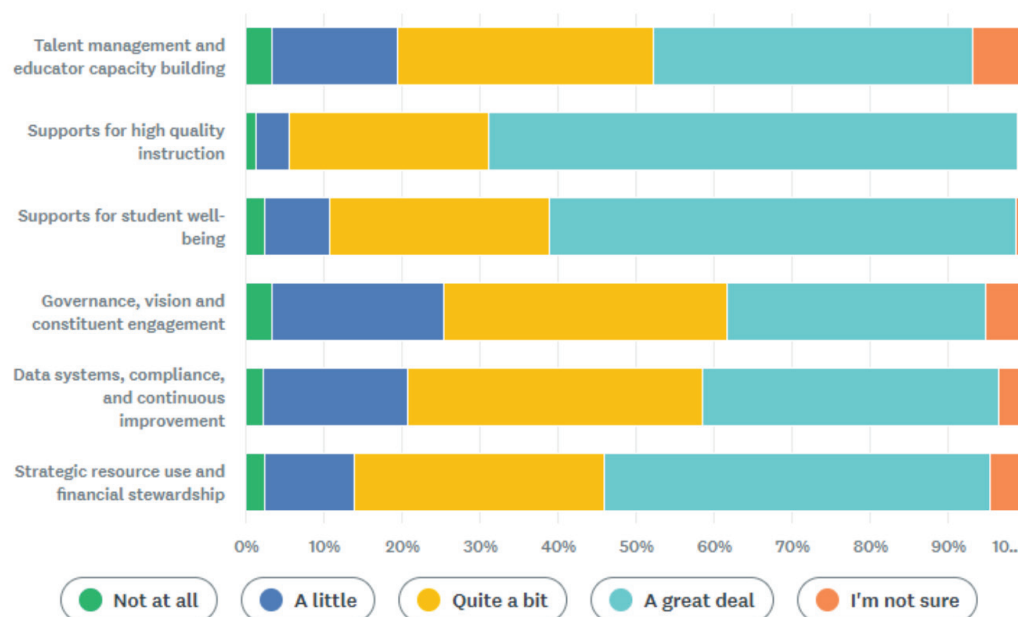
Indicators Related to District Practices

In Figure 7 and Tables 5-8 we display responses to a question gauging opinions on how much a district accountability system should take into account several broad sets of practices. We selected these practices based on a review of literature on school and district effectiveness and on multiple conversations with SAR members.

Question 16: Districts use a range of practices to support school and student success. For each practice below, how much do you think the district accountability system ought to take it into account? (select one option in each row)

Figure 7 shows the distribution of responses for the full sample of respondents. As with the question about student performance indicators, large majorities of respondents expressed support for incorporating each of the practices into district accountability systems. The percentages indicating that district accountability systems should take a practice into account quite a bit or a great deal ranged from about two thirds for “governance, vision and constituent engagement” to more than 90 percent for “supports for high-quality instruction.” The percentages selecting “not at all” were less than 4 for all six practices.

Figure 7: Extent to Which District Accountability Should Take into Account District Practices (N=1412)



Tables 5-6 provide the group breakdowns for this question. For each group, the tables indicate the percentages of respondents who selected “quite a bit” or “a great deal.”

Table 5: Extent to Which District Accountability Should Take into Account District Practices, Overall and by Role

Indicator	School/ District	Family/ Community	Difference
Talent management and educator capacity building	72.6%	77.3%	4.7
Supports for high-quality instruction	93.2%	93.6%	0.4
Supports for student well-being	86.9%	90.8%	3.9
Governance, vision and constituent engagement	67.3%	75.4%	8.1
Data systems, compliance, and continuous improvement	73.9%	80.7%	6.8
Strategic resource use and financial stewardship	79.7%	86.1%	6.4

Note:

The table shows the combined percentages of respondents selecting “quite a bit” or “a great deal.”

Table 6: Extent to Which District Accountability Should Take into Account District Practices, Overall and by Community Type (Question Administered to School/District Respondents Only)

Indicator	City	Suburb	Small Town	Rural Area
Talent management and educator capacity building	76.8%	72.2%	67.6%	69.1%
Supports for high-quality instruction	93.8%	92.8%	94.1%	92.3%
Supports for student well-being	87.4%	83.9%	88.2%	88.3%
Governance, vision and constituent engagement	70.5%	64.2%	67.6%	64.8%
Data systems, compliance, and continuous improvement	76.9%	74.4%	69.4%	72.1%
Strategic resource use and financial stewardship	82.9%	81.1%	75.1%	76.4%

Note:

The table shows the combined percentages of respondents selecting “quite a bit” or “a great deal.”

Table 7: Extent to Which District Accountability Should Take into Account District Practices, Overall and by Charter Status (Question Administered to School/District Respondents Only)

Indicator	Charter	Non-Charter	Difference
Talent management and educator capacity building	72.0%	72.5%	0.5%
Supports for high-quality instruction	89.9%	94.0%	4.1%
Supports for student well-being	82.9%	87.8%	4.9%
Governance, vision and constituent engagement	74.3%	65.6%	-8.7%
Data systems, compliance, and continuous improvement	76.1%	73.5%	-2.6%
Strategic resource use and financial stewardship	78.8%	79.9%	1.1%

Note:

The table shows the combined percentages of respondents selecting “quite a bit” or “a great deal.”

Table 8: Extent to Which District Accountability Should Take into Account District Practices, Overall and by Years of Experience (Question Administered to School/District Respondents Only)

Indicator	Less Than 5 Years	5-10 Years	11-15 Years	16-20 years	More Than 20 Years
Talent management and educator capacity building	70.2%	68.8%	75.4%	76.0%	71.6%
Supports for high quality instruction	90.4%	90.4%	92.9%	98.3%	92.8%
Supports for student well-being	80.4%	85.2%	89.4%	91.6%	85.9%
Governance, vision and constituent engagement	72.3%	64.7%	74.6%	72.1%	62.3%
Data systems, compliance, and continuous improvement	73.1%	70.5%	76.5%	78.8%	72.2%
Strategic resource use and financial stewardship	74.5%	75.8%	82.8%	84.9%	79.0%

Note:

The table shows the combined percentages of respondents selecting “probably yes” or “definitely yes.”

Family/community respondents were more likely than school/district respondents to report that accountability should take into account “governance, vision and constituent engagement,” “data systems, compliance, and continuous improvement,” and “strategic resource use and financial stewardship” (Table 5). We observed a few differences across community types including for “talent management and educator capacity building,” which received less support from rural and small town respondents than from city respondents (Table 6). Although it is impossible to determine the reasons for this difference, it could reflect the more challenging labor markets for educators in rural and small town communities. Charter school and charter sponsor staff were more likely than non-charter staff to express support for “Governance, vision and constituent engagement” (Table 7), and staff with 11 to 20 years of experience were more likely than others to recommend that accountability should take into account “strategic resource use and financial stewardship” and “supports for student well-being” (Table 8).

As we noted with regard to the student performance indicators, the survey did not ask respondents about how each of these practices would be measured. It is therefore hard to know whether the large majorities who expressed support for including these indicators would remain if respondents were presented with specific data sources or measures.

KEY FINDINGS FROM OTHER SURVEY QUESTIONS

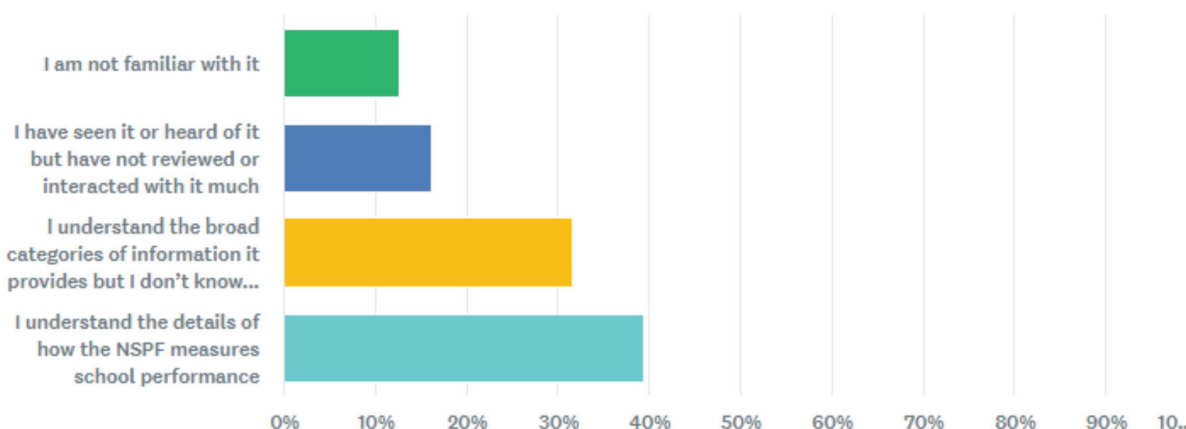
In this section, we discuss findings from several additional questions that did not directly address district accountability. These include questions about the NSPF, the Nevada Accountability Portal, and measurement of high school performance. Below, we summarize responses to these questions for the full respondent sample but do not include group-specific results.

Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF)

Below we present results from two questions about the NSPF. Figure 8 summarizes responses to a question that gauged respondents' familiarity with the NSPF. Approximately 13 percent of respondents indicated that they were not familiar with the NSPF, whereas 39 percent reported understanding its details.

Survey question: How familiar are you with the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF)? (select one option)

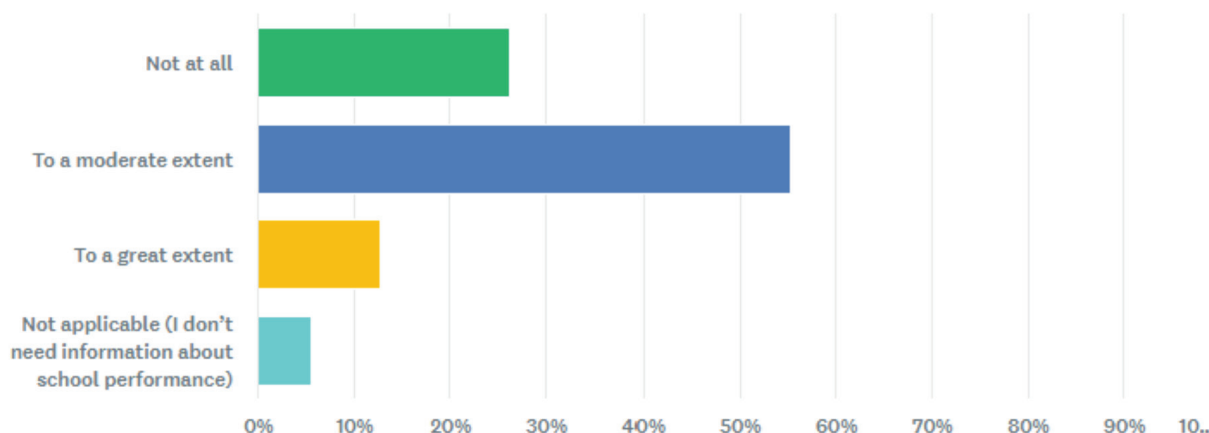
Figure 8: Familiarity with NSPF (N=1403)



Survey respondents who did not select “I am not familiar with it” were asked to indicate the extent to which the NSPF met their needs for information about school performance. Slightly more than a quarter selected “not at all,” and approximately 13% selected “to a great extent” as shown in Figure 9.

Survey Question: To what extent is the NSPF meeting your needs for information about school performance?

Figure 9: Extent to which NSPF Meets Information Needs (N=1143)



The survey also asked respondents whether the NSPF Star Ratings leave out important information. Approximately 58% responded “yes,” with 12% selecting “no” and the remaining 30% indicating they weren’t sure. Respondents who marked “yes” could provide an open-ended response to elaborate. Common responses included a need for more comprehensive/holistic outcomes, student well-being, and high-quality instruction. Respondents also expressed interest in incorporating information about resource constraints and other factors perceived as outside schools’ control. A few respondents mentioned that the ratings were potentially gamable (i.e., subject to manipulation) and lacked transparency. These responses are incorporated into the “Themes from Qualitative Data” section below.

Use of the Nevada Accountability Portal

One purpose of a school or district accountability system is to provide clear, accessible data to constituents. The survey included a small number of questions to examine how respondents have accessed information via the Nevada Accountability Portal (also called the Nevada Report Card). We first asked whether they had used this resource. Among the 1328 respondents, 65 percent selected “yes” and the remaining 35% selected “no.”

Respondents who indicated that they had accessed the portal were asked to rate the usefulness of several types of information in the portal. Table 9 shows the percentages of respondents selecting “moderately useful” or “very useful” for each type of information. These results suggest that most respondents find the information in the portal at least moderately useful, with “detailed school-level data” receiving the highest ratings of usefulness.

Survey Question: *Below we list some of the information provided on the current school report card through the Nevada Accountability Portal (Nevada Report Card). Please indicate the degree to which you find each type of information useful. (select one option in each row).*

Table 9: Usefulness of Information in the Nevada Accountability Portal (N=837)

Information	Percentage selecting moderately or very useful
Overall school star rating	66.6%
Detailed school-level data on achievement, graduation rates, or other measures	79.4%
“Compare schools” feature	63.3%
Districtwide data	71.5%
Statewide data	64.3%

A subsequent question, allowed respondents to select from a list of resources in response to the question, “What would help you to better use the school and district reports on the Nevada Accountability Portal?” The most prevalent responses were:

- Clearer explanations using everyday language (52.5%)
- Easier-to-find online information about schools (38.8%)
- A short video or visual overview (25.1%)
- Direct outreach from a school, district, or state education office (20.5%)

Approximately 22% reported not having a strong need to review school report cards in more detail. Together, the responses to questions about the Nevada Accountability Portal suggest that most users find the information helpful but would benefit from additional interpretive supports.

Priorities for Evaluating High School Performance

The final set of survey questions addressed high school performance. Because high schools play an especially crucial role in equipping graduates to navigate postsecondary life, we were interested in gauging survey respondents' perspectives on what information about student outcomes or learning conditions they would find helpful for understanding high school performance. Figures 10 and 11 show the distributions of responses to a question about high school indicators.

Survey question: High schools use many strategies to prepare students for life after graduation. How important is each of the following types of information for understanding how high schools are preparing students for college, careers, and community life? (select one option in each row)

Figure 10: Importance of Information for Understanding High School Performance (Part 1; N=1202)

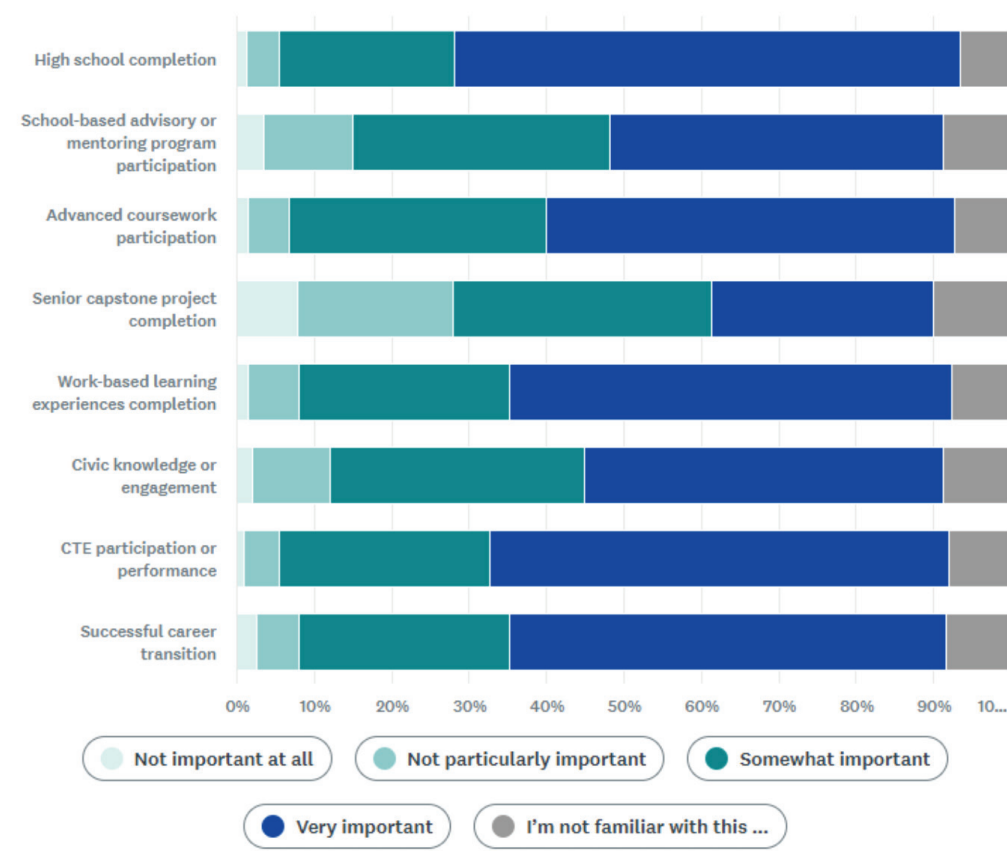
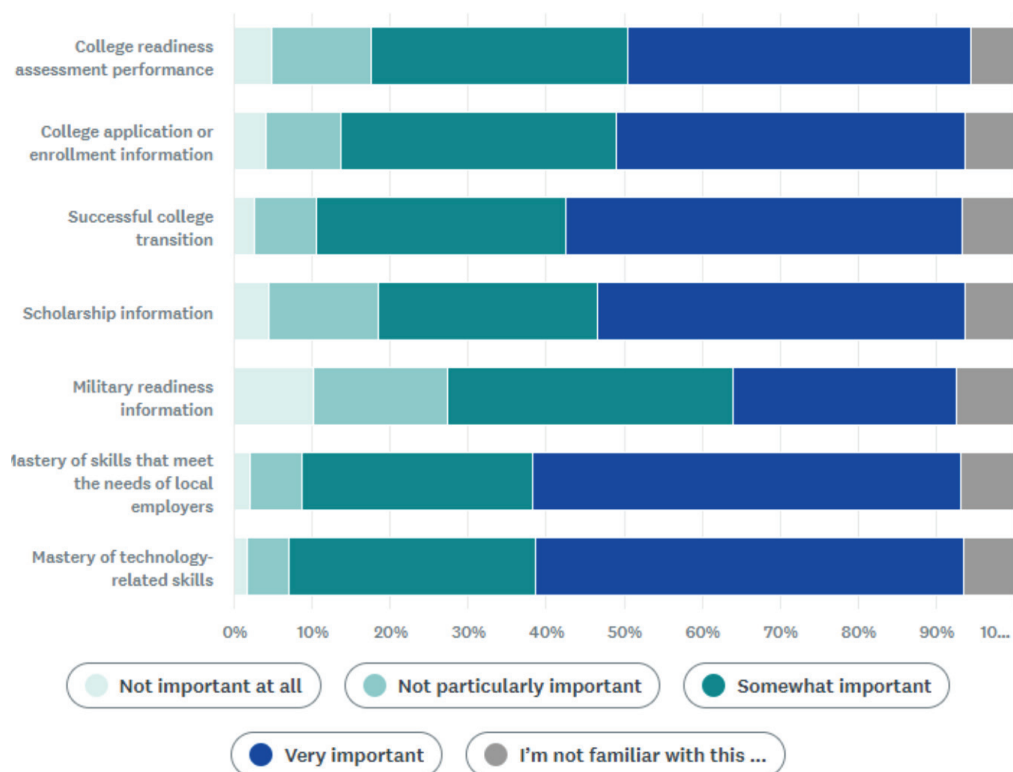


Figure 11: Importance of Information for Understanding High School Performance (Part 2; N=1202)



The results displayed in Figures 10 and 11 are consistent with findings presented earlier. Specifically, they suggest that large majorities of respondents support the use of a variety of indicators for measuring performance. The percentages of respondents who described an indicator as “very important” exceeded 50% for several indicators related to career preparation: completion of work-based learning experiences, career and technical education (CTE) participation or performance, successful career transition, and mastery of skills that meet the needs of local employers. Majorities also rated high school completion, advanced coursework participation, successful college transition, and mastery of technology-related skills as very important. Indicators that received the lowest ratings of importance were senior capstone project completion and military readiness information. As we noted in the discussion of indicators for district accountability, generic descriptions of categories of information mask any challenges or concerns related to specific approaches to measurement or data collection. It is likely that a question that included those specifics would result in somewhat lower levels of support for most indicators.

In the next section, we summarize findings from interviews and open-ended survey responses. These qualitative data complement the results above by adding nuance and illustrating respondents’ perspectives with concrete examples.

THEMES FROM QUALITATIVE DATA

Below, we summarize findings from the qualitative data, which consisted of interviews and written responses to the open-ended survey questions. We describe eight themes that were extracted from the full set of open-ended survey responses. We supplement the survey data summaries with relevant examples from the interviews. These themes are framed as recommendations, but they are based exclusively on the survey and interview responses and should not be interpreted as reflecting the Center for Assessment's views.

1. Accountability should reflect factors within district and school control.

A dominant pattern across survey responses was concern that districts and schools are evaluated based on outcomes substantially shaped by forces outside their influence. Examples of such factors included student attendance, student motivation, family engagement, poverty, mental health, and transiency. Survey respondents frequently argued that accountability systems should distinguish between school or district effectiveness on the one hand and community or family conditions on the other.

Multiple survey respondents also mentioned the importance of holding students accountable for their performance, especially in the secondary grades. They repeatedly emphasized student effort and engagement, attendance responsibility, behavioral expectations, and parental involvement. Many comments explicitly contrasted district, school, or teacher accountability with the absence of student or parent accountability.

Interviews reinforced this concern and added important contextual detail. Leaders described structural constraints such as limited staffing capacity, fiscal instability, subgroup size volatility, and restricted program offerings. Several noted that small student populations can prevent schools from earning points due to minimum n-size rules, regardless of actual performance trends. Others described attendance, mental health challenges, and economic pressures affecting families in ways that are not easily addressed through school-level interventions.

At the same time, one interviewee acknowledged the importance of maintaining outcome transparency while arguing that weighting and technical design features require refinement rather than elimination. Together, interviews suggest that concerns about factors outside educators' control reflect objections to attribution of performance exclusively to educators, rather than a rejection of accountability itself.

Although it is virtually impossible to create performance measures that are completely free of influence of factors outside educators' control, it is important to recognize that accountability systems can lose both utility and legitimacy when responsibility is assigned without corresponding control. Responses suggest a widespread perspective on educational outcomes as involving shared responsibility.

2. The system relies too heavily on a narrow set of academic achievement metrics.

Across nearly all survey questions, respondents questioned the central role of standardized assessments in determining ratings or accountability outcomes. Common concerns include tests as snapshots in time, incentives for teaching to the test, limited measurement of complex competencies such as critical thinking, validity threats stemming from low student motivation, and excessive instructional time devoted to testing. Many respondents advocated alternatives such as portfolios, performance tasks, multiple indicators, and qualitative evidence of learning.

Interviews provided concrete illustrations of this concern. Leaders described tensions between college-placement assessments and the needs of students pursuing career and technical education pathways. Some emphasized that universal ACT administration sends a college-centric signal that does not resonate with all students. Interviewees also pointed to the need for schools to cultivate a wide range of competencies to ensure college and career readiness, though one interviewee acknowledged the lack of existing measures of such competencies.

The underlying theme across these responses is that many constituents believe current measures such as ACT and Smarter Balanced scores are insufficient proxies for learning quality or school effectiveness.

3. Growth-oriented measures contribute to system fairness.

Closely related to testing concerns is strong support for evaluating student progress rather than absolute performance levels. Survey respondents repeatedly emphasized that starting points matter and improvement should be recognized even when proficiency remains low. This theme frequently intersected with equity discussions, particularly regarding Title I schools, rural districts, high-mobility populations, and special education and English learners. Respondents also noted the lack of growth measures for high school and recommended exploring whether such measures might be possible to incorporate into the system.

At the same time, a small number of respondents pointed to perceived drawbacks associated with growth measures, including their potential to underestimate effectiveness of schools serving large percentages of high-achieving students. Some respondents also noted that the methodology behind current growth measures was difficult to understand. The interviews reinforced both the general enthusiasm for growth measures and the recognition of their potential limitations including the opacity of the methods and the possibility of bias against high-performance students and schools.

Together, the responses addressing growth and unequal starting points point to a widespread view that fair accountability requires recognizing improvement within context rather than uniform comparisons. These results suggest potential benefits of clear communication about the strengths and limitations of these measures, along with constituent-friendly explanations of how they are calculated and what inferences they support.

4. The system should recognize a variety of postsecondary pathways.

Across questions related to outcomes and redesign, respondents consistently argued for expanding definitions of success beyond four-year college preparation. Recurring recommendations include stronger career and technical education (CTE) pathways, trade preparation, entrepreneurship skills, employability and communication skills, local labor-market alignment, and long-term employment outcomes. A few respondents also mentioned civic outcomes.

Interview data strongly reinforced this theme. Leaders described accountability metrics as disproportionately aligned with four-year college readiness, even though many students pursue technical training or direct workforce entry. Interview participants mentioned career endorsements, industry certifications, and employability skills as central to school missions but insufficiently reflected in ratings. As noted above, however, one interviewee cautioned that developing high-quality, scalable measures of broader competencies is complex and resource-intensive, and this interviewee expressed skepticism that such measures could be incorporated into accountability systems.

These responses indicate that the system is sometimes perceived as sending a message that college is the most (or only) valued postsecondary outcome and that constituents would value a system that reflects multiple pathways aligned with student interests and community needs.

5. Accountability should support improvement rather than penalizing schools.

Survey respondents frequently described current systems as punitive, compliance-driven, susceptible to gaming, and burdensome for educators. Many called for a more supportive approach to accountability. Respondents recommended building into the system targeted assistance, earlier intervention, recognition of positive practices, and reduced reporting burden.

Several interviewees offered relevant details. One described star ratings as stigmatizing labels that demoralize staff without providing actionable guidance. Others expressed frustration that accountability determinations are not consistently accompanied by resources or technical assistance. One interviewee highlighted funding cliffs tied to star ratings that may create instability, while another described perceptions that low ratings create openings for charter expansion without additional district support. An interviewee suggested a specific way in which the state could support districts in schools, recommending that Nevada identify high-quality instructional materials and best practices for implementing them.

The main implication of these responses is a need to ensure that, to the extent possible, accountability ratings are accompanied by guidance and resources to address areas of need. Doing so will help build constituent support for the system.

6. Transparency, clarity, and usability problems limit system value.

Across questions about the Accountability Portal, NSPF, and reporting, respondents emphasized difficulty understanding or using accountability information. Common concerns include unclear star calculations, overly complex dashboards, fragmented data systems, lack of plain-language explanations, and limited comparability tools.

Interviews reinforced these concerns. Participants reported that teachers and principals struggle to explain how ratings are calculated. Some indicated that families misinterpret star ratings as simple indicators of grade-level proficiency and that growth metrics were particularly difficult to communicate. In addition, families reportedly are not exposed to information about the accountability system in the district and school meetings that they typically attend. Leaders also described reporting burdens, especially in small districts with limited administrative capacity.

To support informed decision making, it is important that the systems used to report accountability data are designed in ways that ensure usability and interpretability for relevant constituent groups. The responses offer several promising ideas for creating and implementing a useful, accessible reporting system.

7. Structural differences, including those between districts and charter sponsors, complicate comparability.

Respondents repeatedly noted that Nevada districts differ substantially in geography, population mobility, funding access, staffing availability, and program offerings. Some suggested developing metrics that are tailored to rural or urban contexts, statistically adjusting measures to account for contextual factors, or reporting on peer-group comparisons. Respondents also pointed to differences between charter schools and traditional public schools, with some asserting that the NSPF assigned overly positive ratings to charter schools. Interviewees offered similar perspectives,

mentioning small-n subgroup issues, limited programmatic flexibility, and constrained staffing as barriers to comparability. The differences between rural and urban districts received particular attention in some of the interviews, with participants noting that rural districts often lack capacity to address students' needs and interests through a variety of courses and pathways.

Any district performance framework will need to account for differences in governance, size, and other conditions. The responses summarized here suggest potential benefits of providing opportunities for districts to supplement the common framework with customized indicators that reflect local contexts and areas of emphasis.

8. Redesign Should Address Coherence and Capacity.

Across survey responses, constituents urged the state to approach accountability redesign deliberately and incrementally rather than pursuing wholesale structural change. Respondents expressed concern about unfunded mandates, inconsistent or unclear data collection requirements, duplicative reporting burdens, and conflicting accountability signals. Others questioned the feasibility of incorporating new indicators without a standardized, state-supported data infrastructure to ensure consistency and comparability. Together, these comments reflect a desire for coherence and implementation feasibility.

At the same time, opinions diverged regarding the degree of change needed. Some respondents argued for modest refinements to existing frameworks rather than reinvention, emphasizing compliance requirements and federal acceptance. Others called for more substantial redesign, particularly of testing components, and advocated for inclusive processes such as task forces of educators and parents to guide changes. Interviews reinforced these ideas with leaders describing reporting fatigue, confusion over business rules and calculations, and limited administrative capacity to absorb additional frameworks or data collections. Several interviewees stressed that accountability redesign must be accompanied by practical tools, funding, and technical assistance, cautioning that new systems layered onto existing burdens risk further eroding trust and usability.

Adopting a new NDPF and, eventually, a revised NSPF, will inevitably involve some disruption and challenges. Thoughtful design, accompanied by a communication and engagement strategy that encourages continuous input and system improvement, should help mitigate these challenges.

Cross-Theme Synthesis

Taken together, responses suggest that constituents are not primarily debating whether accountability should exist, but rather what accountability is for and how it can be designed and deployed to support rather than detract from the provision of high-quality educational experiences. Across questions, respondents described a preferred system that is fairer in attribution of responsibility, broader in defining success, supportive rather than punitive, transparent and usable, attentive to local context, and aligned with real-world student outcomes. A consistent throughline is the desire to move from a system perceived as measuring compliance and test performance toward one that guides continuous improvement and prepares students for diverse and uncertain futures.

CONCLUSION

The survey and interview results presented in this report offer important constituent perspectives to inform the design and implementation of the DPF. Taken together, the findings suggest broad support for an accountability system that incorporates multiple measures of student outcomes and district practices, while also highlighting concerns that should be considered as the framework is refined. Both the surveys and interviews elicited a wide range of perspectives; although some trends are evident, we saw no evidence of a consensus view emerging from any of the questions.

The results underscore the importance of continued constituent engagement, transparent communication, and clear explanations of how DPF information will be used. At the same time, these data represent just one source of input into the SAR's decisions. Not every suggestion offered by survey and interview participants can or should be incorporated into the initial DPF, but the themes documented here can help ensure that implementation is responsive to the priorities, questions, and concerns raised by Nevada constituents.



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