

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE
LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Office of Data and Accountability

INFORMATIVE

DATE: April 30, 2018

TO: Members, Board of Education
Vivian Ekchian, Interim Superintendent

FROM: Oscar Lafarga, ^{OL} Executive Director

SUBJECT: RESULTS OF THE 2017-18 SCHOOL EXPERIENCE SURVEY: “ACADEMIC SUPPORT” QUESTIONS

This informative presents the results of the annual LAUSD School Experience Survey *Academic Support* questions administered to students, parents, and school staff during the fall semester of the 2017-18 school year. Surveys were completed online by school staff and students in grades 4¹ through 12 at elementary, middle, and high schools, primary centers, special education centers, and continuation schools. Parents had the choice of completing the survey either online or on paper.

Most of the Academic Support questions on the staff, parent and student surveys were newly added in 2016-17 and further refined in 2017-18.² Within the broad category of Academic Support, five sub-categories were assigned to survey items based on how well those items “fit” together. Determination of fit was guided by statistical analysis. As outlined in this informative, the Academic Support sub-categories comprised the following:

- ❖ **Academic Focus** (*students, staff*) – Describes the degree to which students feel they receive educational support and personal attention from their teachers, as well as from the school. For staff, this sub-category describes the degree to which students are challenged by coursework and expected to perform to high academic standards.
- ❖ **Cognitive Engagement** (*students*) – Measures how engaged students perceive themselves in relation to their learning experience in the classroom.
- ❖ **Instructional Improvement** (*staff*) – Describes the degree to which teachers interact with each other and receive feedback from school leadership to improve their students’ learning experience in the classroom.
- ❖ **High Quality Schooling** (*parents*) – Describes the degree to which parents agree with the statement “this school provides high quality instruction to my child.”
- ❖ **Focus on English Learners** (*parents, staff*) – Describes the frequency of communication of English learners’ progress to parents from the school; also, the degree to which teachers feel they are able to identify and support English learner students in their classes.

Highlights

- Student agreement with Academic Focus-related questions remained the highest among elementary school students compared to middle and high school students.
- Middle and high school students increased their agreement with Cognitive Engagement statements in 2017-18. Generally, the response rates at all school levels has remained high from 2016-17. This implies that critical thinking skills and expression through writing continue to be emphasized in the classroom.
- On the staff survey, teachers indicated they perceived a decrease in school leadership visiting classrooms to observe teaching at least twice a month or more. The rate for all school levels was at or below 40% in 2017-18.
- There were slight decreases in teachers’ agreement to statements regarding English learners in their classes. In 2017-18, middle and high school teachers indicated they were not as confident in determining progress towards reclassification for their English learner students, in providing targeted instruction for

¹ In past years, surveys were administered to students in grades 3 through 12. Grade 3 no longer participates.

² Where possible we included the first year the question was included on the survey and the most recent two years to present a 3-year comparison. However, if the question and/or scale were changed, we only reported 2017-18 results.

English learners, or in identifying their Long-Term English Learner (LTEL) students. However, elementary school teachers were slightly more confident in identifying their LTEL students.

Response Rates

Exhibit 1 shows the participation rates on the School Experience Surveys among parents, students, teachers, and all school staff from the first year the surveys were administered (baseline year 2008-09) compared to the 2016-17 and 2017-18 administrations of the surveys. While response rates for all stakeholder groups grew from 2008-09 to 2017-18, response rates decreased in 2017-18 compared to 2016-17. The change in the Survey administration window from spring (as was the norm for previous administrations) to fall likely explains this variance. As schools learn to adjust to the new timeframe for the annual Survey, participation rates will increase.

Exhibit 1. Comparisons of SES Participation Rate Percentages by Stakeholder Group: 2008-09, 2016-17 and 2017-18.

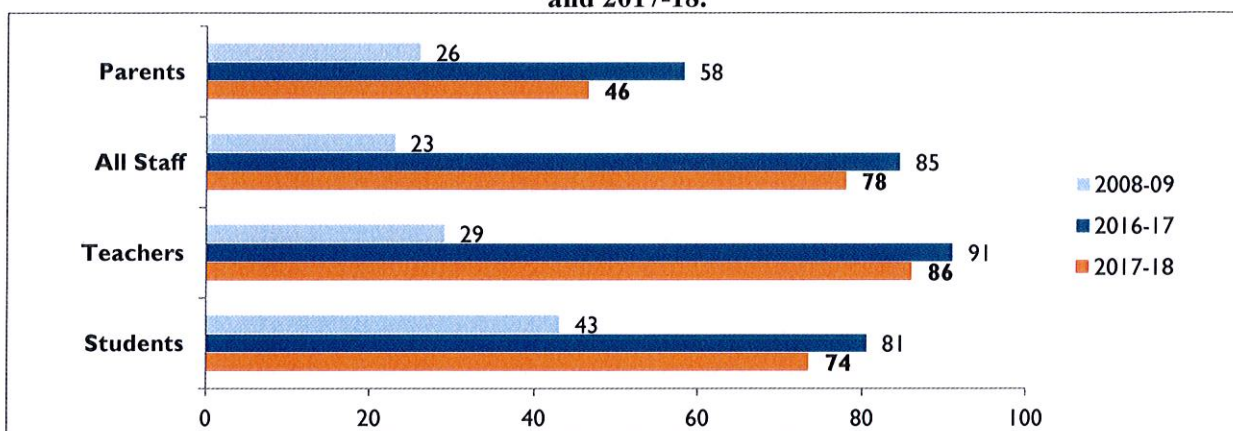


Exhibit 2 presents the number of Survey participants.³

Exhibit 2. Number of Survey Participants: 2008-09, 2016-17, and 2017-18.

| Group | 2008-09 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|
| Students | 230,983 | 298,927 | 239,202 |
| Teachers | 7,754 | 26,308 | 23,895 |
| All Staff | 12,136 | 49,958 | 44,167 |
| Parents | 75,949 | 246,179 | 198,064 |

The survey was administered to students in grades 4 through 12 at traditional public schools and affiliated charter schools,⁴ with students in elementary schools taking the Elementary Student Survey and students in middle and high schools taking the Secondary Student Survey.⁵ Comparisons across school levels in this report are intended to highlight differences in students’ perceptions of their school experiences. Student demographic data is displayed in Exhibit 3.

³ The lower number of students in 2017-18 can be attributed to a number of factors including 3rd graders no longer participating in the Survey, schools adjusting to the new fall administration window, and to a decline in enrollment.

⁴ The Survey was not administered at adult schools and was optional at independent charter schools.

⁵ Elementary schools with K-6 configurations administered elementary surveys to all students. Sixth grade students at middle schools or at span schools (i.e. having a K-12 or 6-12 configuration) took the secondary survey.

Exhibit 3. Student Demographics for the 2017-18 School Experience Survey.⁶

| Grade | # of Participating Students | % of ALL Participants | Student Group ⁷ | # of Participating Students | % of ALL Participants |
|----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Grade 4 | 35,519 | 15% | African American | 17,386 | 7% |
| Grade 5 | 35,864 | 15% | Asian | 9,277 | 4% |
| Grade 6 | 28,996 | 12% | Latino | 180,691 | 76% |
| Grade 7 | 26,874 | 11% | White | 22,220 | 9% |
| Grade 8 | 26,460 | 11% | Other | 9,628 | 4% |
| Grade 9 | 24,292 | 10% | English learners | 36,146 | 15% |
| Grade 10 | 22,192 | 9% | Socio-economically disadvantaged | 198,157 | 83% |
| Grade 11 | 19,875 | 8% | Students with disabilities | 26,738 | 11% |
| Grade 12 | 19,130 | 8% | Foster youth | 2,300 | 1% |

Academic Focus

Academic- (as well as social- and informational-) focused support has been shown to have a positive effect on student learning. This section provides responses from items relating to academic-focused items in the SES. Results are reported separately for student and school staff surveys.

Overall, there was not much change from 2016-17 in the response rates from students at all school levels regarding Academic Focus statements, as shown in Exhibit 4. In 2017-18, elementary and middle school students expressed a four-percentage point increase in the amount they agreed with the statement, “*My teachers tell me how I can make my work better.*” High school students demonstrated a three-percentage point decrease in 2017-18 in how much they agreed with the statement, “*Teachers at my school grade me fairly.*”

In both 2016-17 and 2017-18, elementary students generally tended to agree at higher rates with all Academic Focus statements, compared to middle and high school students. This likely reflects the greater amount of individual interaction elementary students may have with their teachers, as opposed to middle and high school students who change classrooms and teachers throughout the school day.

Exhibit 4. Percentage of Students Who Agreed with Academic Focus Statements.

| Survey Item | Elementary Sch. Students ⁸ | | Middle School Students | | High School Students | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------|------------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|
| | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 |
| In my classes, my teachers tell me how I can make my work better. | 88 | 92 | 70 | 74 | 64 | 67 |
| The teachers at my school grade me fairly. | 89 | 89 | 67 | 69 | 63 | 60 |
| My school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn. | 90 | 90 | 73 | 74 | 69 | 68 |
| My teachers work hard to help me with my schoolwork when I need it. | 89 | 90 | 69 | 72 | 64 | 63 |

Note: Response options “often” and “almost all of the time” were combined from the secondary student survey, and response options “yes, most of the time” and “yes, all of the time” were combined from the elementary student survey.

Responses on the staff survey regarding Academic Focus statements have been consistent between 2016-17 and 2017-18 (see **Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.**). This indicates that staff at schools has maintained high levels of agreement that their schools emphasize helping and teaching students in ways that are relevant, while promoting academic success and

⁶ All percentages in this report have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

⁷ Students may be included in more than one student group.

⁸ For the elementary student survey, these items were phrased as a question. For example, “*Do teachers at this school grade you fairly?*”

high standards for all students. There was more than 80% agreement from staff at middle and high schools with the statement, *“This school encourages all students to enroll in rigorous courses (such as honors and AP)”*.

Exhibit 5. Percentage of Staff Who Agreed with Academic Focus Statements.

| Survey Item | Elementary School Staff | | Middle School Staff | | High School Staff | |
|---|-------------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|-------------------|---------|
| | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 |
| This school sets high standards for academic performance for all students. | 96 | 95 | 91 | 91 | 89 | 89 |
| This school promotes academic success for all students. | 96 | 95 | 93 | 93 | 93 | 92 |
| This school emphasizes helping students academically when they need it. | 96 | 95 | 94 | 94 | 95 | 95 |
| This school emphasizes teaching lessons in ways relevant to students. | 95 | 95 | 93 | 93 | 93 | 93 |
| This school encourages all students to enroll in rigorous courses (such as honors and AP). <i>For grades 6-12 only.</i> | -- | -- | 80 | 81 | 86 | 87 |

Note: Response options “agree” and “strongly agree” were combined.

Cognitive Engagement

In addition to school academic support, opportunity for students’ cognitive engagement is an essential element in promoting academic success. To measure cognitive engagement, students were asked about their learning experience in the classroom. The questions presented in were asked for the first time in 2016-17 and again in 2017-18.

Between 2016-17 and 2017-18, elementary students’ responses remained relatively flat regarding their agreement with Cognitive Engagement statements. There was a two percentage-point decrease in elementary students that agreed with the statement, *“When learning new information, I try to put the ideas into my own words.”* For middle and high school students, there was a four-percentage point increase in students that agreed with the same statement in 2017-18. Since these items were added to the student survey in 2016-17, elementary students have tended to agree at higher rates with Cognitive Engagement statements than have students at secondary schools.

For both levels of secondary students, there was a seven-percentage point increase in agreement with the statement, *“For my assignments, I explain my thinking in writing.”* There was a seven-percentage point increase among middle school’s students, and a ten-percentage point increase for high school students, who agreed with the statement, *“In my class, I use evidence or collect data to come to my own conclusions.”*

High school students showed a five-percentage point increase in how much they agreed with the statement, *“In my class, I work on projects with other students.”* Regarding middle school student responses to this statement, the increase was three-percentage points. Finally, there was a five- and four-percentage point increase in agreement with the statement, *“In my class, I think about how to solve problems in new ways”* among middle and high school students, respectively.

Exhibit 6. Percentage of Students Who Agreed with Cognitive Engagement Statements.

| Survey Item | Elementary School Students | | Middle School Students | | High School Students | |
|--|----------------------------|---------|------------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|
| | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 |
| When learning new information, I try to put the ideas into my own words. | 80 | 78 | 65 | 69 | 67 | 71 |
| For my assignments, I explain my thinking in writing. | 73 | 74 | 54 | 61 | 54 | 61 |
| In my class, I use evidence or collect data to come to my own conclusions. | 73 | 74 | 59 | 66 | 57 | 67 |
| In my class, I work on projects or assignments with other students. | 72 | 73 | 62 | 65 | 61 | 66 |
| In my class, I think about how to solve problems in new ways. | 73 | 72 | 50 | 55 | 51 | 55 |

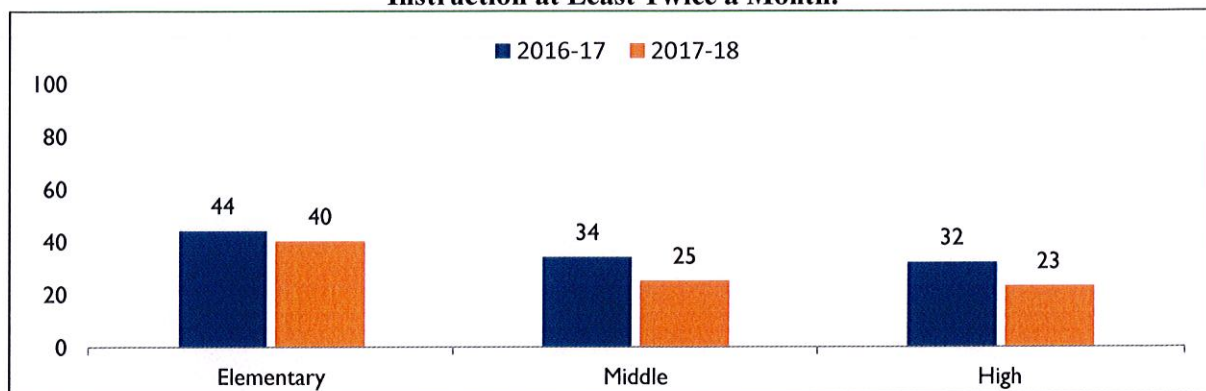
Note: Response options “often” and “almost all of the time” were combined.

Instructional Improvement

Staff were asked various items on the 2017-18 survey about how often school leadership observes classrooms and provides feedback to instructors (see Exhibit 7). They were also asked if they agreed they had perceived teachers changing their instructional practice due to State testing results, meeting with other teachers, and to collaborating with other departments to improve their own instruction. These questions were also on the 2016-17 staff survey and there was little to no change in the response rates in 2017-18 for most items. However, there was a decrease in the percentage of staff at all school levels who indicated that school leadership visits classrooms to observe teachers at least twice a month (see Exhibit 7).

There was a nine-percentage point decrease from 2016-17 among middle and high school teachers who indicated school leadership observed in-class instruction at least twice a month. For elementary teachers, there was a four-percentage point decrease for the same item.

Exhibit 7. Percentage of Teachers Who Indicated School Leadership Visits Classrooms to Observe Instruction at Least Twice a Month.



Note: Response options “weekly” and “twice a month” were combined.

High Quality Schooling

Parents were asked how often they feel like they agreed with the statement “*This school provides high quality instruction to my child*” on the 2017-18 SES. Although the response scales differed between 2016-17 and 2017-18, almost all parents continue to report that their child’s school provides high quality instruction (see Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8. Percentage of Parents Who Indicated That Their Child’s School “Provides High Quality Instruction.”

| School Level | 2016-17 | 2017-18 |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|
| Elementary School Parents | 95 | 96 |
| Middle School Parents | 94 | 95 |
| High School Parents | 94 | 94 |

Note: Response options “most of the time” and “yes, always” were combined from the 2017-18 parent survey, and response options “agree” and “strongly agree” were combined from the 2016-17 parent survey.

Focus on English Learners

As a sub-category of Academic Support, *Focus on English Learners* measures the frequency of interaction staff has with English learner (EL) students’ parents. On the staff surveys, teachers were asked questions about their awareness of, and instructional support of, EL students. Generally, staff responses remained consistent between 2016-17 and 2017-18.

Parents were asked how often they have received information about their child's progress as an English learner. Parents of elementary students (94%) reported the highest frequency of receiving information about their EL student’s progress. Middle and high school parents reported slightly lower rates (91% and 85% respectively). Exhibit 9 shows the response rates from parents to this question.

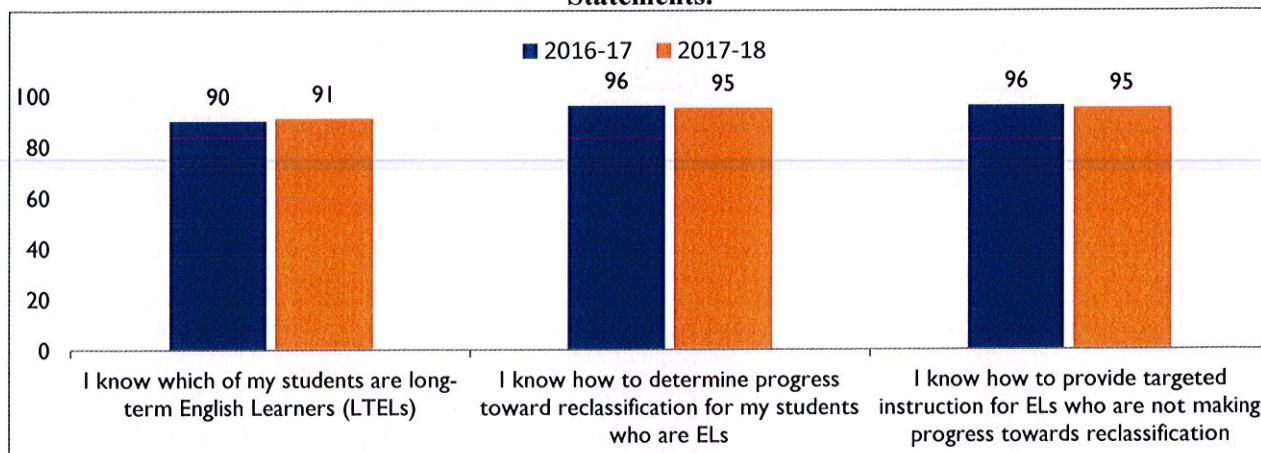
Exhibit 9. Percentage of Parents Who Indicated They “Received Information about English Learners’ Progress.”

| School Level | 2017-18 |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Elementary School Parents | 94 |
| Middle School Parents | 91 |
| High School Parents | 85 |

Note 1: This question was not asked in previous administrations of the parent survey.
 Note 2: Response options “most of the time” and “yes, always” were combined.

On the staff survey, teachers who had EL students in their classrooms were asked if they knew which of their students were LTELs; if they knew how to determine progress toward reclassification of ELs; and if they knew how to provide targeted instruction to ELs. For each of these questions at every school level, teachers demonstrated consistent response rates from 2016-17 in how much they agreed. Exhibit 10 gives the response rates for elementary school teachers.

Exhibit 10. Percentage of Elementary Teachers Who Agree with the Following “Focus on English Learner” Statements.

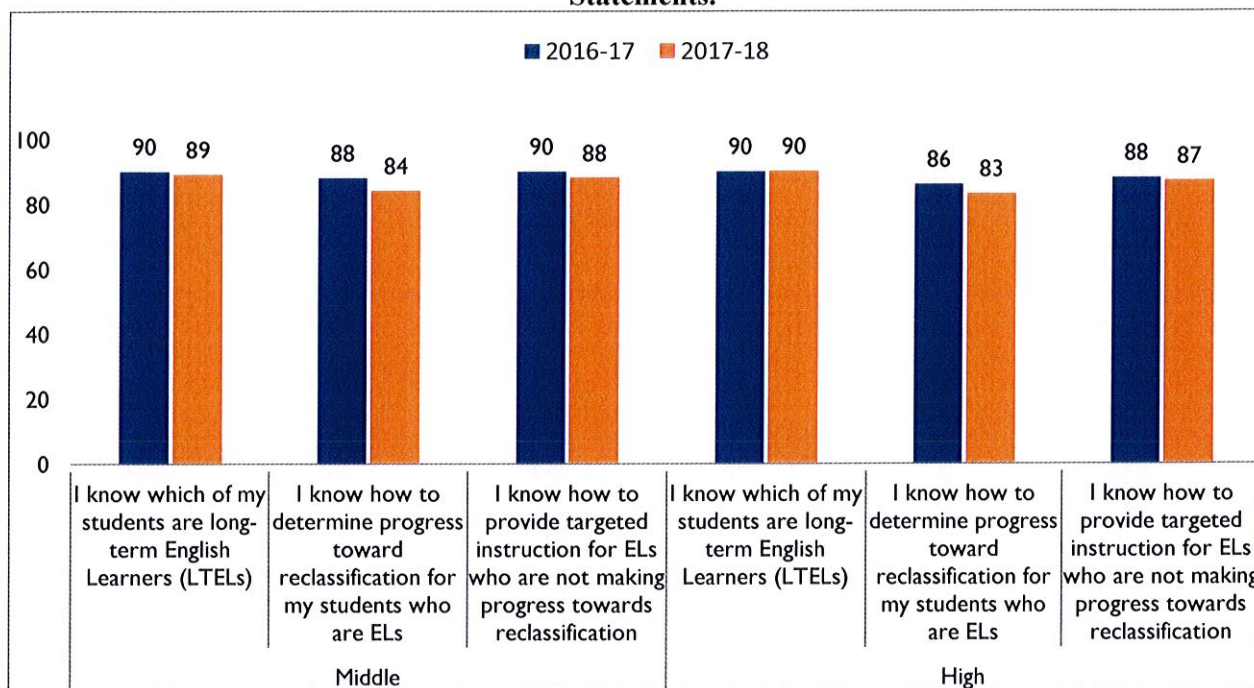


Note: Response options “agree” and “strongly agree” were combined.

Since 2016-17, there has been a one-percentage point increase in elementary teachers who agree that they can identify which of their students are LTELs but a one-percentage point decrease in the margin by which they agreed that they knew how to determine progress towards reclassification for their EL students. There was also a one-percentage point decrease from the prior year in teachers who agreed that they knew how to provide targeted instruction to ELs who are not making satisfactory progress towards reclassification.

There was slight decrease in how many middle and high school teachers agreed with the survey items regarding their EL students. Exhibit 11 gives the rates from middle and high school teachers from the 2017-18 staff survey.

Exhibit 11. Percentage of Secondary Teachers Who Agree with the Following “Focus on English Learner” Statements.



Note: Response options “agree” and “strongly agree” were combined.

For middle school teachers, there was a one-percentage point decrease in teachers who agreed that they knew which of their students were LTELs; for high school teachers, the rate remained the same from 2016-17. Teachers at middle schools demonstrated a four-percentage point decrease in how much they agreed that they knew how to determine progress towards reclassification, and for high school teachers, there was a three-percentage point decrease. Middle school teachers demonstrated a two-point decrease in agreement that they knew how to provide targeted instruction to ELs that were not making progress towards reclassification. On the same survey item for high school teachers, the decrease in 2017-18 was one-percentage point.

For more information about this Board Informative, please contact the Research & Reporting Branch in the Office of Data and Accountability at (213) 241-5600.

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