

# INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION PHASE FALL SEMESTER FEEDBACK



FEBRUARY 2012

## Introduction

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Over the last two years, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD, or the District) has worked with internal and external stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, labor partners, parents, and students, to develop multiple measure performance review systems that will allow the District to better differentiate between the performance levels of its educators, celebrate and recognize excellence, and provide targeted support to improve teaching and learning. The Initial Implementation Phase (IIP) of the Educator Growth and Development Cycle (EGDC) and the School Leader Growth and Development Cycle (SLGDC) will test out the multiple measure performance review and support system we seek to bring to a district-wide scale for our teachers and school leaders.<sup>1</sup>

In this phase, we are working with a set of representative schools throughout LAUSD, where participants will be providing critical feedback on the tools and process necessary to further develop and refine the components. Teachers, school leaders, central and local district office personnel who volunteered to participate in the no-stakes IIP became the first in the District to test out the draft tools and processes of the Educator and School Leader Growth and Development Cycles.

As we conclude Observation Cycle #1, this second feedback report is part of our commitment to collect, synthesize, and respond to feedback from participants. Data received from this survey will be used to make necessary refinements to the LAUSD Educator and School Leader Growth and Development Cycles and the tools associated with these processes.

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<sup>1</sup> The Initial Implementation Phase of the Educator Growth and Development Cycle is based on a multiple measure performance review system made up of objective classroom observations by trained professionals, including each teacher's supervising administrator and a second observer, along with stakeholder feedback, contributions to school community, and contributions to student outcomes. The support and development of our educators will be individualized for each employee, and will be based on the specific needs and opportunities for acceleration identified during an educator's performance review process. To that end, we are developing templates, training, and support for Individual Growth Planning for each teacher and school leader. These plans will include education (e.g., attending classes and workshops), exposure (e.g., watching someone else demonstrate excellence in the development area) and experience (e.g., targeted attempts at trying out new skills in one's role as a teacher or school leader).

## Summary Findings

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During the first semester of the Educator Growth and Development Cycle (Fall 2011), teachers participating in the Initial Implementation Phase completed a self-assessment, reviewed their Academic Growth over Time (AGT) results, created a lesson design, and conducted that lesson in a formal observation. Administrators serving as Observers conducted observations in pairs and held pre- and post-observation conferences with teachers. Some participating principals also completed a School Leader Self-Review and School Leader Growth Plans as part of the School Leader Growth and Development Cycle.

IIP participants were generally positive about the potential for the Teaching & Learning Framework and the EGDC classroom observation process to improve effective teaching in LAUSD. Teachers noted that participating helped them reflect on their practice, and Observers were impressed by the professional conversations they have had to date. However, some participants expressed concerns with the amount of time needed to complete the activities and recommended that they be streamlined in the future. IIP participants also requested more examples to better understand the Teaching & Learning Framework, improvements to trainings, and adjustments to the web platform (the technology used to complete most of the EGDC activities) to make it more user-friendly. Principals and directors also gave positive feedback about using the School Leader Growth and Development Cycle to improve school leadership practice, but many noted that they have focused on their responsibilities as Observers in the EGDC. Principals felt that their Self-Review and Growth Plan activities were beneficial and seemed less time-intensive than the teacher self-assessment that many teachers struggled with.

The second iteration of school-level Academic Growth over Time reports were released during the Fall semester, and included subject and grade-level breakdowns. In addition, for the first time, the District distributed teacher-level AGT results confidentially to some teachers and their school leaders. Participants had the opportunity during trainings to use either individual or school AGT reports as reference points. Participants felt like they have a strong understanding of what AGT measures, and most feel that AGT is a "somewhat" or "mostly" accurate measure of teacher or school leader performance. Although several noted that a better understanding of the actual formula or calculation of AGT would further help to alleviate concern with this measure, the majority of teacher respondents agreed that teacher-level AGT results can help shed light on effective teaching in LAUSD, and three-quarters of teacher respondents intended to use their AGT results to examine their own teaching practices. A majority of both teachers and Observers also supported the use of AGT to identify teachers who need additional support, and a majority "somewhat agreed" or "agreed" that AGT should be part of a multiple measure performance review system. Observers were more comfortable than teachers with using AGT results to better understand impact on student outcomes and improve instructional practice.

## Key Recommendations

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### **Educator Growth & Development Cycle**

- Streamline and refine the EGDC process and tools based on IIP participant feedback
- Review language in the Teaching & Learning Framework to address ambiguity and/or redundancy
- Use training time to reinforce familiarization with the Teaching & Learning Framework, to encourage peer dialogue, and to allow time for completing EGDC tasks
- Offer more examples, including videos, sample self-assessments and lesson designs
- Improve the technology platform to enhance the usability and readability of EGDC tools, and announce platform updates during trainings when modifications are made
- Build/identify professional development options that are aligned to Teaching & Learning Framework

### **School Leader Growth & Development Cycle**

- Ensure that training supports School Leaders and Directors in understanding the School Leadership Framework and completing the SLGDC
- Improve the technology platform to enhance the usability and readability of the School Leader Self-Review and Growth Plan tools

### **Academic Growth over Time (AGT)**

- Demystify the AGT calculation; make clear, to the extent possible, how each result is calculated
- Explore how to “unpack” AGT reports so that teachers have enough disaggregated data to make meaningful decisions
- Explore how to calculate AGT scores for other subjects and grade levels
- Use AGT results to identify teachers who need support, and provide resources for development
- Use AGT results to identify excellent teaching practice we can learn from

# Methodology & Limitations

## Survey Methods

### Methodology

The Fall Semester Initial Implementation Phase Feedback Survey was developed by District staff, with consultation by our program evaluation partners. The survey uses a combination of open and close-ended questions to ask for feedback on the Educator Growth and Development Cycle, the School Leader Growth and Development Cycle, and Academic Growth over Time. Since many IIP participants had not yet completed their first EGDC observation when the survey was issued in November, this survey only included questions on the first portions of the cycle (teacher self-assessment and lesson design template). Talent Management staff intends to request feedback on the formal observation and Individual Growth Planning in February 2012.

An e-mail containing a link to an online survey was sent out to all IIP participants on November 9, 2011, with several reminder e-mails following, before the survey was closed on December 12, 2011.<sup>2</sup> Participants received slightly different surveys depending on their role in the IIP. The overall response rate of the Fall Semester IIP Feedback Survey was 73%.<sup>3</sup>

**Exhibit 1**  
**Fall Semester IIP Feedback Survey Response Rate**

	Teachers	Principals	2 <sup>nd</sup> Observers	Directors	Total
Current IIP Participants	365	98	183	47	693
Survey respondents	292	69	114	28	503
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>73%</b>

Summary responses to the close-ended survey questions are presented in graphs throughout this report. We also conducted a themes analysis on the open-ended comments. Quotes included in this report help illustrate the major themes that emerged from the themes analysis.

### Internal Validity

Response rates were fairly high, making response bias unlikely.<sup>4</sup> The survey did not force respondents to complete the entire survey in order to submit answers, and not everyone that started the survey completed it in its entirety. It is possible, though unlikely, that there is bias due to survey attrition. A mistake in the wording of the Observer surveys forced us to eliminate responses to several questions, as the responses could not be analyzed validly.<sup>5</sup> The nature of self-reported data is another potential limitation, which may not capture participants' actual

<sup>2</sup> All Partnership for Los Angeles Schools (PLAS) sites are participating in the IIP. However, this feedback survey does not include PLAS responses because they started their Observation Cycle #1 during December 2011, after the majority of non-PLAS IIP participants had completed their Observation Cycle.

<sup>3</sup> The total number of *completed* survey responses was 343, making an adjusted response rate of 43%. However, all survey responses were used in the analysis, when available, so several of the questions do have a total sample size of 503.

<sup>4</sup> Questions about the School Leader Growth Plan did have lower response rates, since most principal respondents had not had opportunities to complete it. Equivalent questions about teacher Individual Growth Plans were removed for addition to a later feedback survey, and Talent Management staff plan to ask about School Leader Growth Plans again at that time.

<sup>5</sup> Exhibit 22 does not include principal survey responses (N=56) and Exhibits 15 and 16 do not include director survey responses (N=14) because the answer choices differ from the other Observer surveys and are not appropriate to the question asked.

mastery of concepts and skills precisely. Overall, the survey results should present a fairly accurate representation of participants’ opinions and experiences in the IIP.

External Validity

IIP participants have volunteered to be part of this no-stakes process and are experiencing the initial implementation of the Educator and School Leader Growth and Development Cycles. The opinions of IIP participants may differ from teachers, administrators, and instructional experts across the District more broadly, and the experiences of those participating in future iterations of the Educator and School Leader Growth and Development Cycles may differ as well.

**Survey Respondents**

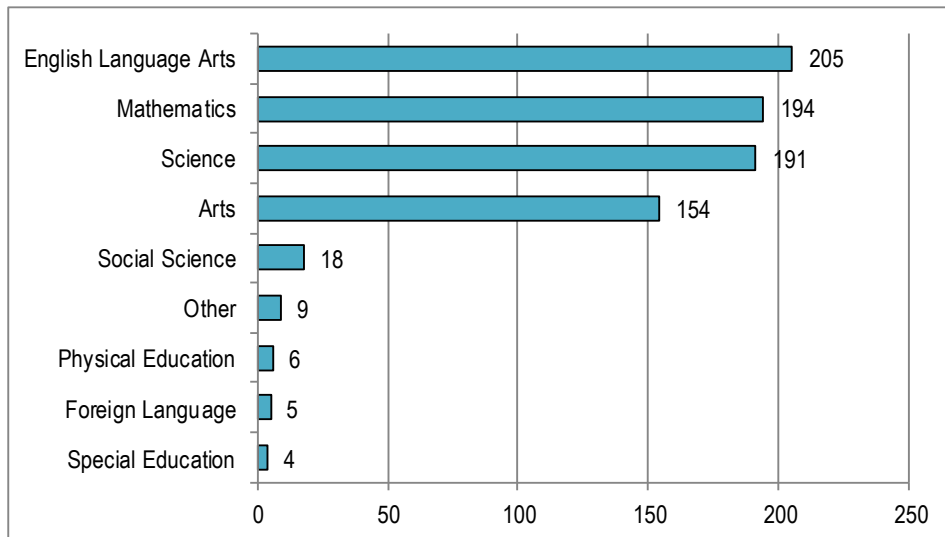
Teachers

The IIP teachers that responded to the feedback survey were nearly all veteran teachers, with 78% of respondents having 11 or more years of teaching experience and 76% of respondents with 11 or more years as an LAUSD employee. Elementary grade level teachers composed the largest group of teacher respondents, and the subjects taught most frequently by respondents were English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Art.

**Exhibit 2**  
**Teacher Grade Levels Taught in the Past Three Years**

<b>Grade levels taught</b> <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	<b>N=291</b>
<b>K-5 Elementary</b>	<b>320</b>
<b>6-8 Middle</b>	133
<b>9-12 High</b>	228

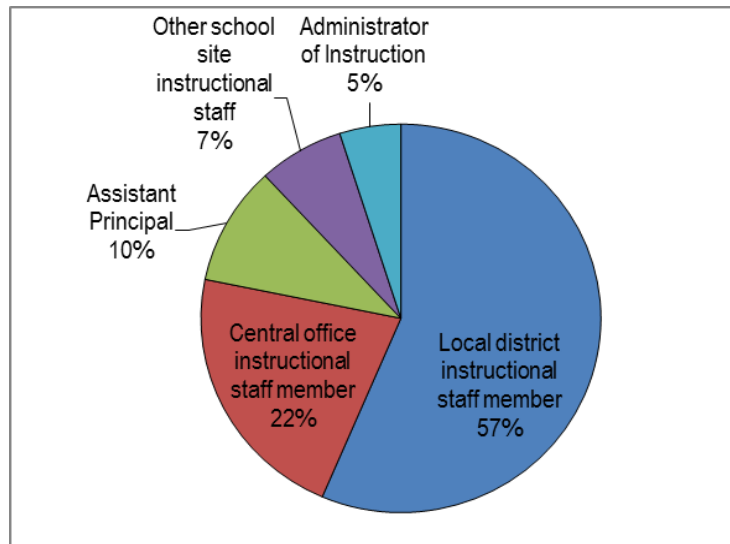
**Exhibit 3**  
**Teacher Subjects Taught in the Past Three Years** *(Check all that apply)*



Observers

Staff serving as Observers in the LAUSD Educator Growth and Development Cycle include principals, assistant principals, local district leaders, and local district and central office instructional experts. Principals and local district Directors received and completed separate surveys because they are also participating in the School Leader Growth and Development Cycle, and responded to questions specific to that cycle. Principals generally served as the school-based “primary” Observer, and Second Observers were mostly local district and central office instructional staff members (see Exhibit 4).

**Exhibit 4  
Second Observer Job Titles**



Most of the Observer respondents have been LAUSD employees for 21 or more years, and over 70% of principals and Second Observers have over 11 years of teaching experience. Fifty-six percent of current principals have over 6 years of experience as a principal or site administrator, while 41% of Second Observers and 62% of local district Directors do. Half of Directors have been supervising principals for 3 or more years. Elementary grade level principals composed the largest group of principal respondents, Directors were more likely to work with the elementary grades, and other administrators or specialists were fairly evenly distributed in the grade levels they work with (Exhibit 5).

**Exhibit 5  
Grade Levels that Observers Worked With in the Past Three Years**

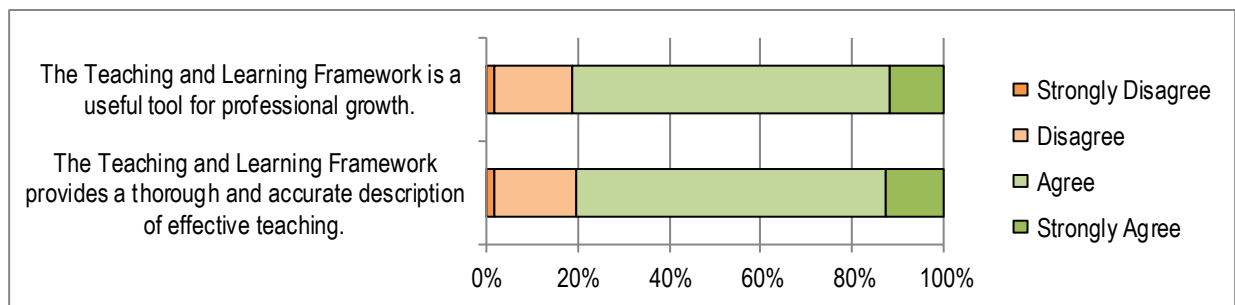
Grade levels you worked with (Check all that apply)	Principals N=69	Second Observers N=113	Directors N=28
<b>K-5</b> Elementary	46	89	21
<b>6</b> K-6/Middle	22	94	20
<b>7-8</b> Middle	10	80	13
<b>9-12</b> 9th Grade	9	73	12

# Educator Growth & Development Cycle

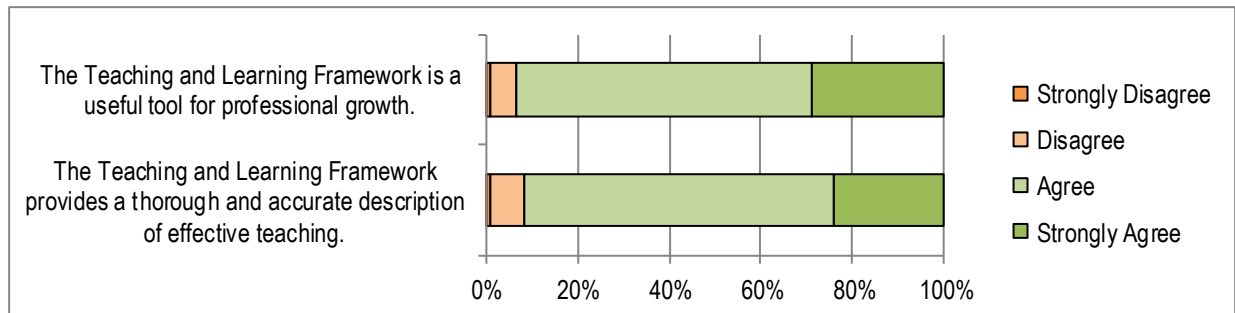
## Teaching & Learning Framework

Teachers and Observers participating in the Initial Implementation Phase primarily agreed that the Teaching & Learning Framework is a useful tool for professional growth and provides a thorough and accurate description of effective teaching. Observer respondents tended to agree with those statements more frequently than teachers did. For example, 81% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the Teaching & Learning Framework is both comprehensive and accurate, while 91% of Observers agreed or strongly agreed.

**Exhibit 6**  
**Teacher Opinions of the Teaching & Learning Framework**



**Exhibit 7**  
**Observer Opinions of the Teaching & Learning Framework**



Several Observers and teachers suggested more in-depth training for IIP participants and other educators to become more familiar with the Teaching & Learning Framework. For example, an Observer suggested, "I believe the Teaching & Learning Framework needs to be presented, fully discussed and understood by teachers especially and then their supervisors. I strongly believe that teachers need extensive training in the planning process as outlined in the Teaching & Learning Framework."

*"Most teachers at my school are not aware that the Teaching & Learning Framework exists. I think it would be a good idea for all teachers to become familiar with the Teaching & Learning Framework during this trial period, even if they are not participating in the IIP."*

*-Teacher*

Survey respondents also requested examples of elements in the Teaching & Learning Framework, such as videos, as well as clarification of ambiguous language within the Teaching & Learning Framework. An Observer commented, "Some parts of the rubric seem a little arbitrary, i.e., a key term determines the level. However, even with flaws it is so much better than the existing system." A teacher pointed out, "There are several cases of subjective terminology used in the Framework that are not evidence- or data-based." Several teachers also had concerns about how applicable specific elements of the Teaching & Learning Framework are to all grades, subjects, or student groups (e.g., special education classrooms), and some wanted to know how the Teaching & Learning Framework relates to the California Standards for the Teaching Profession.

*"I really think it helps not only to read but to see models of effective teaching. It would be nice to see videos of lessons so that we can collect evidence of teaching and learning, and debrief."*

*-Teacher*

Teachers' and Observers' comments about the Teaching & Learning Framework were generally positive. However, they also noted that the length and depth of the Framework can make its practical application unwieldy, and that narrowing down to focus on key elements or components would be helpful. One Observer reflected, "The Teaching & Learning Framework is a wonderful tool for us principals, and I believe for teachers also. What is lacking is the time to get everything done, but the modifications and reduction in focus areas have helped." A teacher commented, "I think it is an excellent tool that clearly lays out what we should be doing to be the most effective in our teaching."

*"It is a great tool for really zeroing in on teacher practice and providing laser-sharp feedback. It has helped me with my non-pilot observations in terms of identifying specific deficiencies in teacher practice."*

*-Observer*

*"This was the first time that all facets of the profession were accounted for. I was very surprised to see such a thorough picture painted."*

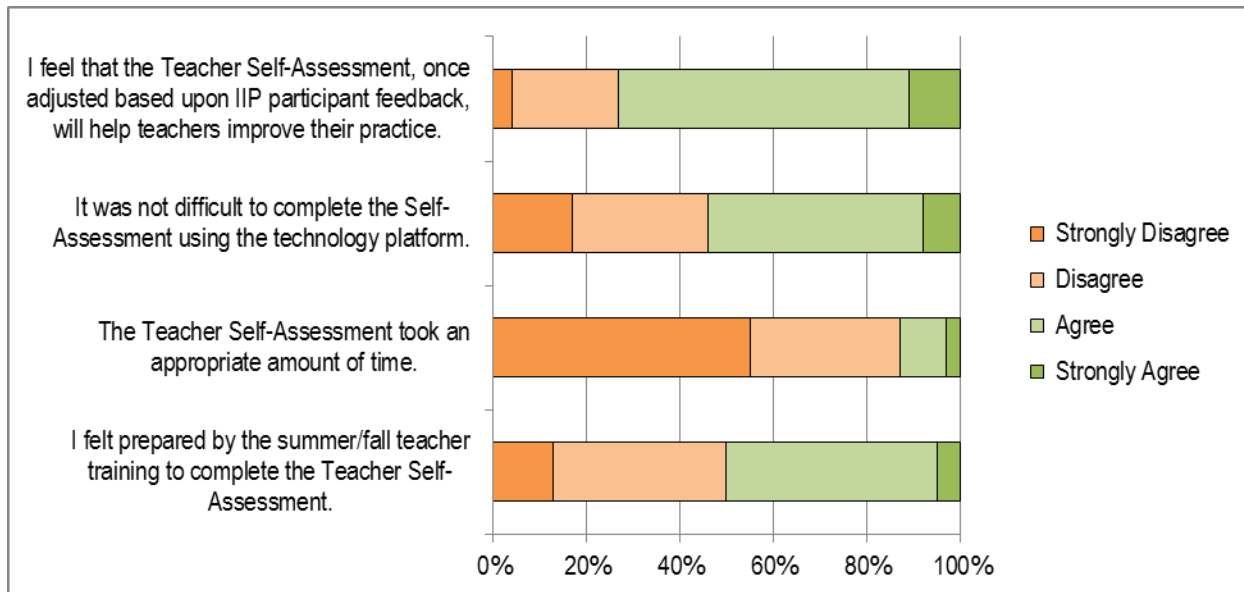
*-Teacher*

## **Teacher Self-Assessment**

The first step of the EGDC is a teacher self-assessment, which asks teachers to reflect on their practice, rate themselves on each focus element of the Teaching & Learning Framework, and provide evidence and justification for their ratings using the web-based technology platform, My Professional Growth System. Teachers currently have the option to share their self-assessment with their observers, if they wish.

Of the 292 teacher respondents to the survey, 224 reported that they had completed the self-assessment portion of the Educator Growth and Development Cycle (77%). Although 73% of teachers felt that the self-assessment can be a useful tool to help teachers improve their practice, many teachers felt that the self-assessment took too long to complete (87%), encountered difficulties using the technology platform to complete the task (46%), and did not feel adequately prepared by their trainings to complete the self-assessment (50%).

**Exhibit 8  
Teacher Opinions of the Teacher Self-Assessment**



Many teacher respondents expressed concern with the amount of time needed to complete the self-assessment thoughtfully; some noted that they spent hours working on the task. Teachers felt that the tool can be improved with less repetitiveness and by limiting the focus elements or components in the Teaching & Learning Framework that teachers need to address. Teachers did see that the self-assessment could be a useful tool for reflection and improvement of practice after adjustments are made. “My own opinion of my teaching, in isolation and based on evaluations over the years, changed through the process. Some areas that I felt were effective are still developing.”

*“Rating myself in each of the elements required a lot of reflection on my teaching practices, and it helped me envision what I would like my teaching/classroom to look like. It took an appropriate amount of time to rate myself, but writing the evidence and analysis for each of the elements took an excessive amount of time.”*

-Teacher

*“I have noticed that being painfully honest with oneself while looking at the rubrics, can sometimes be disconcerting, but at the same time, it is illuminating and challenging. It is good to look into the mirror.”*

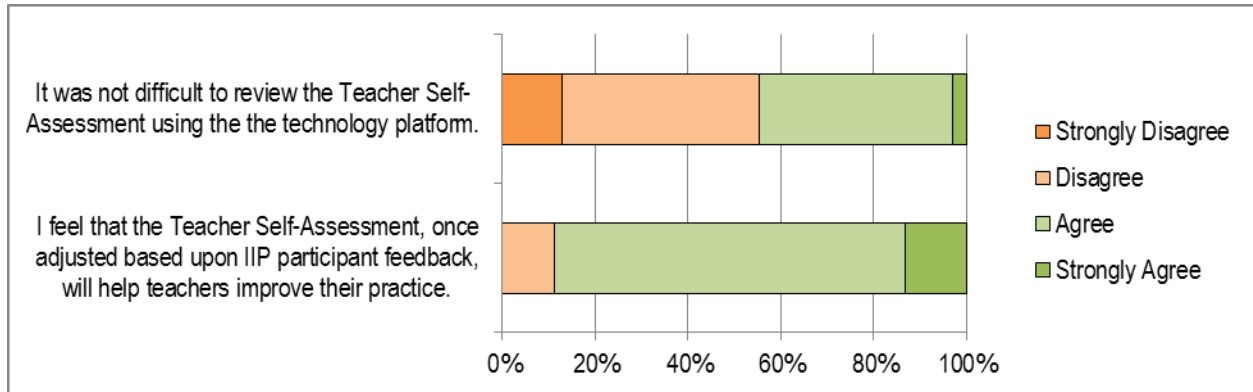
-Teacher

Other suggestions from teachers included providing more training to complete this task in the web platform, including time to complete the self-assessment during the training, making the web platform more user friendly, clarifying the difference between the evidence and justification written portions, and providing more examples (particularly of good evidence). One teacher noted, “The evidence and the analysis were a bit confusing. Consider combining the two, since it overlaps.”

Of the 211 Observer respondents to the survey (Principals, Directors, and Second Observers), 94 reported that their teachers had shared the self-assessment with them (45%). The vast majority of Observers who reviewed their teacher’s self-assessment felt that the tool can help

improve teacher practice (88%). However, 56% of Observers encountered some difficulty reviewing the self-assessment with the technology platform.

**Exhibit 9**  
**Observer Opinions of the Teacher Self-Assessment**



Observers echoed teachers’ concerns regarding the amount of time the self-assessment took teachers to complete. A number of Observers requested that sharing the self-assessment be a requisite rather than optional. Some Observers that had opportunities to look at their assigned teachers’ self-assessments commented that it was a valuable exercise that guided teacher reflection of their practice in a structure aligned to the Teaching & Learning Framework.

*“Teachers commented that they really reflected and thought through their areas of strength and weakness. They spent more time thinking about meeting student needs and what that looks like in the classroom. The concern is the length of the template.”*

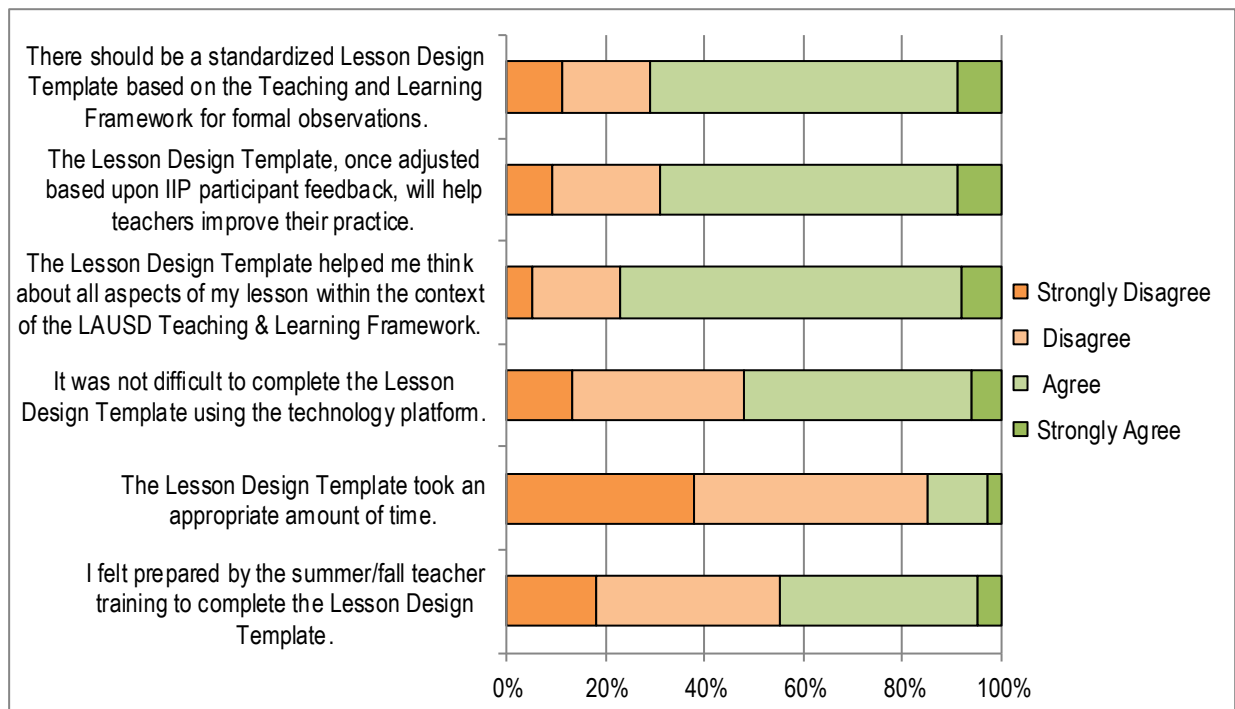
*-Observer*

## Lesson Design Template

The EGDC has two formal observation cycles, which include a formal, scheduled classroom observation based upon a pre-planned lesson, a pre-observation conference to discuss and clarify questions about the lesson design, and a post-observation conference. Teachers build a lesson plan using a guided template within the technology platform; they also have an option of uploading an attachment instead.

One-hundred seventy-nine of the teachers who responded to the survey reported having completed the lesson design template (61%). As with the self-assessment, teachers reported that completing the lesson design template took longer than anticipated (85%). Using the technology platform to fill out the lesson design template was difficult for roughly half of those responding (48%), and just over half of the respondents felt the training did not adequately prepare teachers to complete the task (55%). Despite these challenges, 77% of teacher respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the lesson design template helped them think about all aspects of their lesson within the District’s new Teaching & Learning Framework, and 69% felt that the lesson design template had the potential to help teachers improve their practice. 71% of teachers agreed that the EGDC should provide a lesson design template to teachers to facilitate formal observations.

**Exhibit 10**  
**Teacher Opinions of the Lesson Design Template**



Several teachers requested more examples of lesson designs and corresponding videos of those lessons. "I would like to see more examples with grade specific lessons and videos. I learn best by seeing someone in the process and the final product," a teacher said. Although most survey respondents endorsed the use of a standardized lesson design template, some teachers also suggested that it include some flexibility, so that teachers can personalize it to better fit their intended lesson. "I think that lesson design templates need to fit the type of lesson the teacher is teaching, not have the teacher try to fit his/her lesson in a standardized template. My lesson was a concept lesson and didn't follow the traditional lesson plan sequence so it was frustrating and time consuming for me to fill it out," said a teacher.

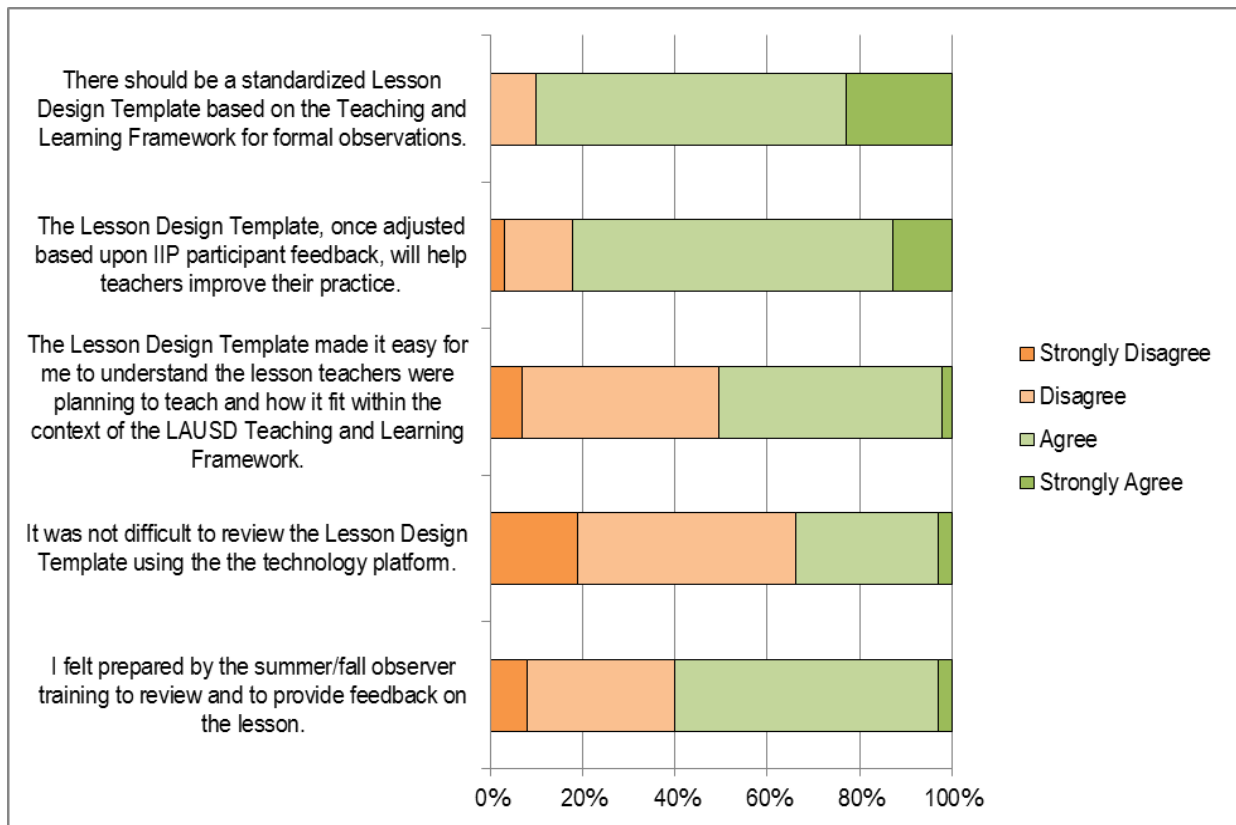
Similar to the self-assessment, teachers found that completing the lesson design template was time-consuming and felt somewhat repetitive. "The template was redundant in many areas. I felt like I kept repeating myself, and that my lesson was still not clear to my administrator. I needed to expand on several topics. I still typed out notes for my lesson to follow the day of the observation because I felt that even though I had a lot of information on the template, I could not pull my lesson directly from it," shared a teacher. Despite this, some teachers felt that they benefitted from the experience of putting added focus towards a thoughtful lesson plan for their formal observation. "With the understanding that the lesson design template is not a daily lesson planner, it was very useful. Having to focus on a section of a larger instructional unit that would be observed caused me to re-think the observation phase of the IIP."

*"The lesson design is something that we all know about but do not follow on a daily basis, step by step. Practicing this will definitely help to improve our teaching practices because it gets us back to thinking about the design of a lesson."*

-Teacher

One-hundred twenty-one observer respondents reported that their assigned teachers had completed the Lesson Design Template (57%). The Observers that had reviewed completed lesson designs encountered some difficulty going through the template using the technology platform (67%). Observers were also mixed regarding whether the template helped connect the teacher’s lesson to the Teaching & Learning Framework and makes the lesson plan easily understandable (50% found it helpful), as well as how well their trainings prepared them to review the lesson design (60% felt prepared). Nearly all Observers supported the use of a standardized lesson design template for the formal observation process (91%), and 83% agreed that a refined version of the template could help teachers improve their practice.

**Exhibit 11**  
**Observer Opinions of the Lesson Design Template**



Several Observers suggested that the template show a more direct connection to the Teaching & Learning Framework. Others requested formatting changes to the template so that reviewing the lesson design on the technology platform would be more intuitive. Many Observers strongly favored the use of a standardized template – one that would allow the automatic evidence tagging from the template that is currently available on the platform. An Observer requested, “I would prefer a standardized form—I like the auto-tagging. Having a lesson plan from the teacher not on the platform would require more work on the principal's part.” They also recommended that the template be pared down to make it easier for teachers to fill out, and include some flexibility within the template for minor personalization based on the nature of the lesson.

## General Feedback on the Educator Growth and Development Cycle

The survey asked teacher and Observer respondents to leave general comments and suggestions regarding the EGDC. The themes that emerged from respondents' open-ended comments include: large demands on time; difficulty using the technology platform to complete tasks; suggestions regarding training and additional support; and comments on how the observation cycle is linked to growth and development.

### Demands on Time

Both teachers and Observers noted that the biggest challenge with the EGDC has been the amount of time IIP participation has taken. IIP participants reported feeling overwhelmed by the process, multiple steps in each task, and mastering a new web platform. Many recommended changing activities and tools in the EGDC process so that it is more manageable. A teacher requested, "Please find a way to streamline the entire process for all involved. As it stands, it takes too long for administrators and teachers to complete each part." An Observer shared, "Overall, I believe that this is the right direction. The standards are explicit...but the process is overwhelming."

*"The biggest concern is time. When will they find the time to do this process right, and have enough Second Observers and others to support the process? If the process is not implemented with integrity, the strength of the project may be lost. This project is too important to and so potentially valuable that we want to take the time to build capacity properly."*

-Observer

Respondents shared that scheduling observations has been challenging generally, and the addition of a Second Observer further complicates this. A principal shared, "Having a co-observer is a great idea but very hard to do in the real world. My two co-observers were fabulous but both were local district people and getting our schedules in sync, along with the teachers, was a problem. Maybe if we had full time assistant principals in the elementary schools, we could better meet all of our needs." A teacher commented, "The idea of a Second Observer is good to be sure things are unbiased, but already I've heard of many problems with Second Observers not showing up. That part needs to be fine-tuned."

### Platform

Some IIP participants experienced difficulty using the My Professional Growth System to complete each step of the EGDC. Feedback from IIP participants is being used to continue to refine and build out this new technology platform, but survey respondents stated that further enhancements are needed to improve the interface so that it is more intuitive and user-friendly, and to eliminate freezing that causes participants to lose their work. Survey respondents shared, "There a far too many steps on the platform. Complete, View, Check...It needs to be simplified. Teachers and Observers were not even sure we completed the process," and, "Please make the platform user-friendly. It is very disconcerting when you spend so much time working on the platform and things get lost."

### Training & Support

Survey respondents also made specific requests to modify the ongoing trainings. Some asked for space for peer dialogue with colleagues, ongoing practical training to complete each step within the technology platform, and sufficient time during the teacher trainings to complete

their self-assessments and lesson designs. Some respondents suggested a longer training for teachers prior to the school year to give a more in-depth understanding of the Teaching & Learning Framework and the EGDC process. Several respondents also wondered who to contact with questions about the IIP.

*“Overall, my teachers and I have had some of the best conversations before and after the first observation. For us, this has been the most rewarding and reflective piece.”*

*-Observer*

### Growth and Development

Beyond the extensive time that participants have contributed to the IIP, survey respondents were generally positive about the opportunities for growth and development through the EGDC. One teacher shared, “I like the self-evaluation part, and I'm looking forward to creating and implementing my self-improvement plan. I like the idea of talking openly with my principal to discuss what I can do to be a better teacher for my school and my students.” However, respondents pointed out that a large body of work remains ahead in order to make the link between identifying current practice with high quality professional development that is aligned to the Teaching & Learning Framework. “The system as it now exists will not help us develop a cadre of highly qualified teachers. To do that, we need intensive and strategic professional development tied to classroom practice,” said an Observer.

*“I was impressed with the thorough nature of the cycle. It required me to look carefully at some factors I am aware of, but hadn't fully addressed in my classroom.”*

*-Teacher*

## **Recommendations**

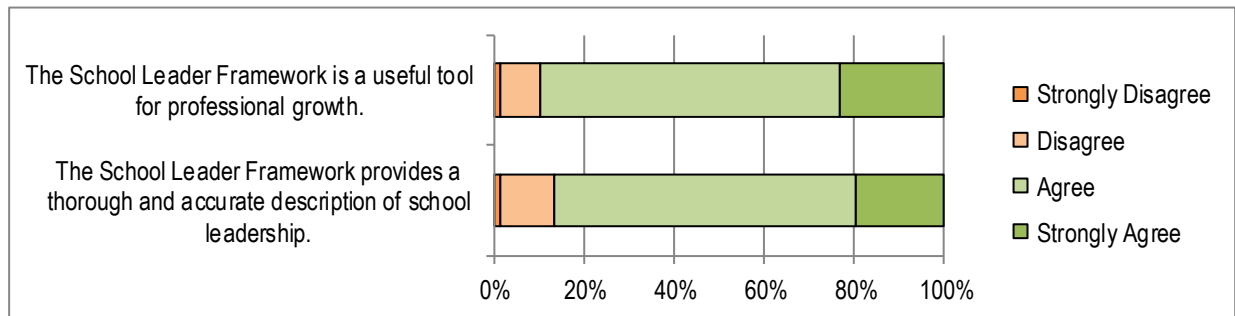
- Streamline and refine the EGDC process and tools based on IIP participant feedback
- Clarify and communicate the expectations, steps and timeline of the EGDC process
- Review language in the Teaching & Learning Framework to eliminate ambiguity and/or redundancy, and clarify its application to all subjects and student groups (e.g., special education)
- Offer more examples, including videos and sample self-assessments and lesson designs
- Reinforce the alignment between the Teaching & Learning Framework and the California Standards for the Teaching Profession
- Support IIP school sites in scheduling observations with Second Observers
- Familiarize teachers with the Teaching & Learning Framework at both IIP and non-IIP schools
- Build in time during IIP teacher trainings for peer dialogue and completing EGDC tasks
- Improve the technology platform to enhance the usability and readability of EGDC tools, and announce platform updates during trainings when modifications are made
- Build/identify professional development options that are aligned to the Teaching & Learning Framework

# School Leader Growth & Development Cycle

## School Leadership Framework

Most of the principals and Directors that responded to the IIP feedback survey felt that the School Leadership Framework accurately captures the key elements of school leadership (87%), and that it can be useful for professional growth (91%).

**Exhibit 12**  
**Principal & Director Opinions of the School Leadership Framework**



School Leaders admitted that the EGDC has taken much of their time during the IIP, and that the SLGDC has not received the same level of focus. Few principals had the opportunity to complete their Growth Plan, and even fewer Directors had the opportunity read it at the time of the survey. (Seven principal respondents reported completion.) Those principals tended to view this tool positively and were able to complete the Growth Plan with relative ease. We will learn more about the tool from their perspective through additional surveys in the future. They also commented that they have not received sufficient training to fully internalize the School Leadership Framework and complete the associated activities.

Some School Leaders and Directors were concerned about the expectations the School Leadership Framework places on principals during a time when they are asked to take on more responsibilities with fewer resources. "While I believe that the School Leadership Framework provides an example of good leadership practices, it would be difficult [for many principals] to be effective due to declining budgets, resources, and support services." However, Principals and Directors generally felt that the School Leadership Framework was thorough and a valuable tool to improve school leadership practice. Survey respondents shared, "It's an excellent tool and provides a way to begin looking at how to benchmark practice, plan for professional development, and identify areas of concern, strength and future growth."

*"[The School Leadership Framework] is comprehensive and relevant to the growth and development of school leaders. It provides a pathway for these leaders to assess their competence and build essential skills."*

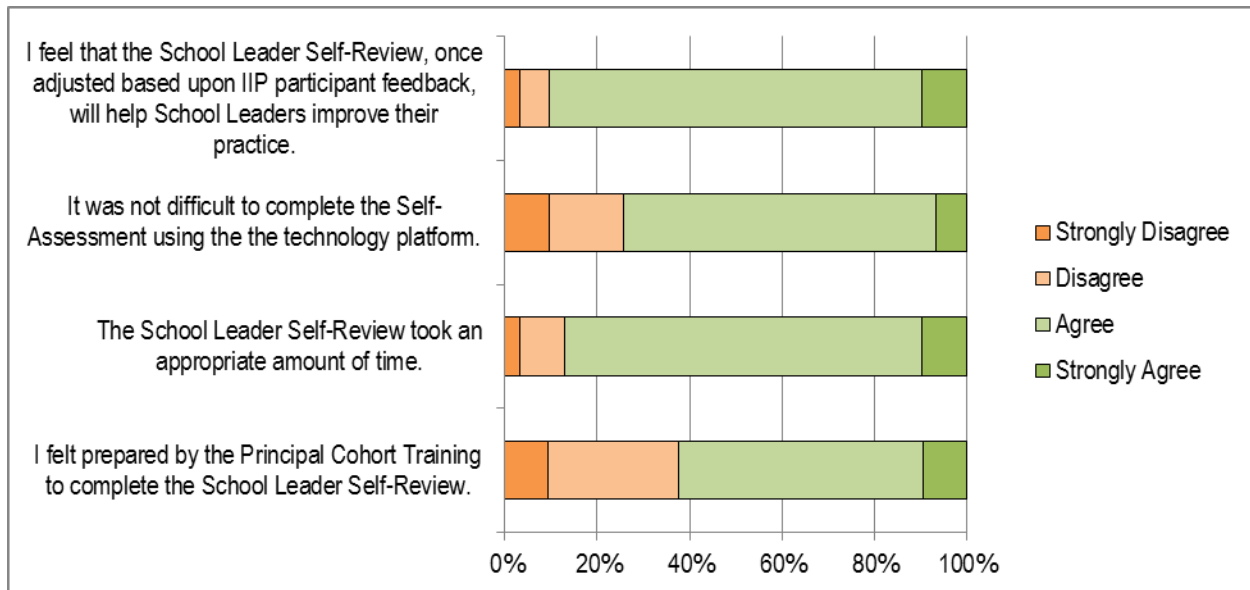
*-Observer*

## School Leader Self-Review

Thirty-one principals reported completion of their school leader self-review. These principals generally felt that the self-review was easy to complete (74%) in a reasonable amount of time

(87%), and can be helpful for a school leader’s improvement (91%). Thirty-nine percent of principal respondents did not feel that their trainings had sufficiently prepared them for this task.

**Exhibit 13**  
Principal Opinions of the School Leader Self-Review



Several principals noted that they experienced difficulty using the technology platform to complete the self-review. Principals also shared that the exercise helped them to reflect on their practice, and found the self-review to be refreshingly brief compared to the teacher self-assessment. A principal shared, “In light of the teacher’s self reflection, I was surprised the form itself was so to the point,” and another suggested, “The teacher’s [self-assessment] needs to be adjusted as the school leader’s has been.”

The Directors that had reviewed their assigned principals’ Self-Reviews felt that it was difficult to view using the technology platform and requested additional training in order to discuss the Self-Review with principals. They did agree that the School Leader Self-Review can be a useful tool to help improve school leadership practice.

## Recommendations

- Build sufficient training to support School Leaders and Directors in understanding the School Leadership Framework and completing the School Leader Growth & Development Cycle
- Adjust the My Professional Growth System platform to improve the usability and readability of the School Leader Self-Review
- Reexamine the School Leadership Framework to ensure that the District’s expectations are realistic, particularly during the current budget crisis

# Academic Growth over Time

LAUSD has moved toward a new and comprehensive system of analyzing student gains (Academic Growth over Time), which helps us know how much students have progressed on standardized tests from one year to the next. This provides a more complete picture of student learning because it compares a student's performance to his/her own expected performance (rather than comparing groups of students one year to different groups of students the following or preceding year). Academic Growth over Time (AGT) also allows us to examine the impact of schools and educators on student learning outcomes and uses a value-added method that controls for external factors which often influence student test results.

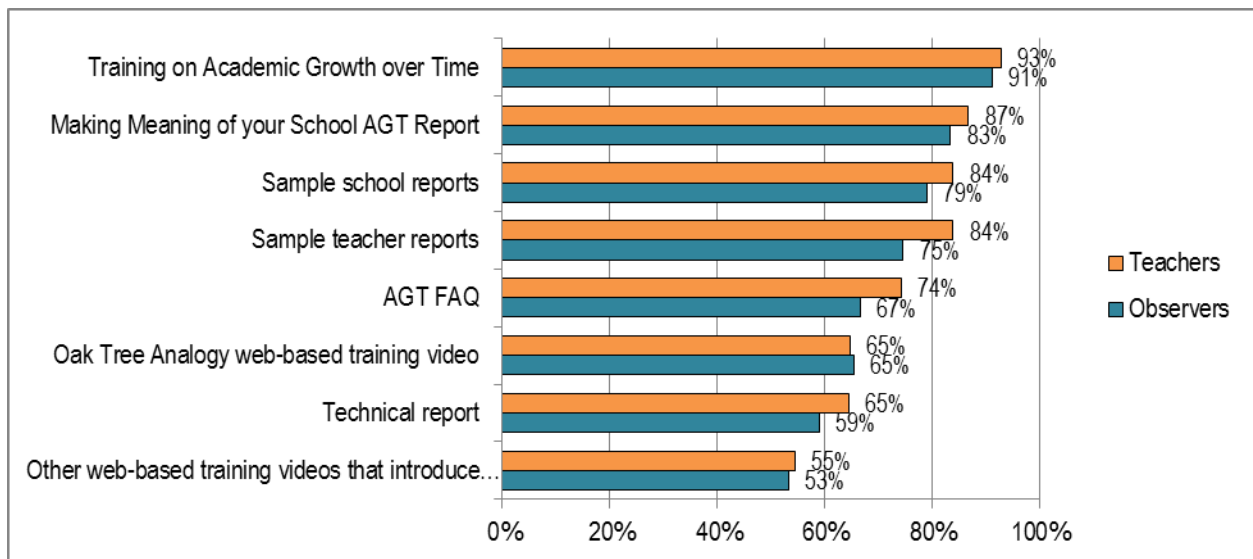
Review of one's teacher-level or school-level AGT results are steps within the Educator Growth and Development Cycle and the School Leader Growth and Development Cycle. The District intends for AGT results to help educators and School Leaders reflect on how their practice impacts student outcomes before developing growth plans. Participants were provided with training and resources in order to better understand and utilize their AGT results (where available) during this year's no-stakes IIP.

## Understanding AGT

### AGT Resources

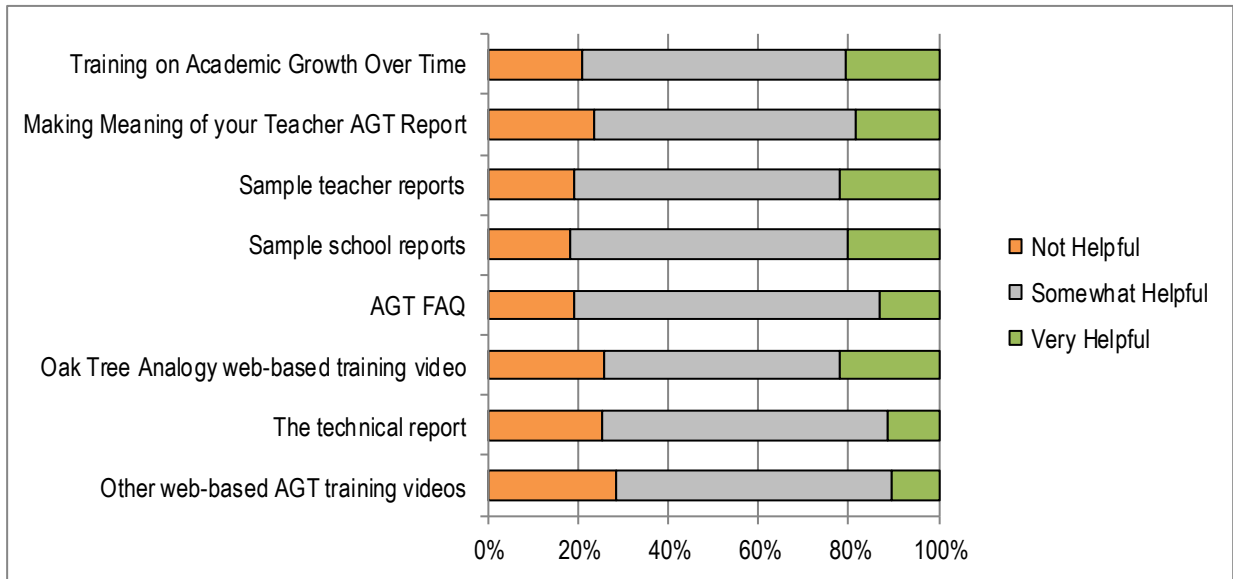
Exhibit 14 below shows the most common resources that IIP participants used to better understand what AGT measures, and how to interpret their results. Over 90% of survey respondents attended trainings, which included a session on AGT, where they were also provided with a "Making Meaning of your School AGT Report" guide. Many teachers and Observers also utilized sample school- and teacher-level AGT reports, and a Frequently Asked Questions sheet to better interpret their own data.

Exhibit 14  
IIP Participants' Use of AGT Resources

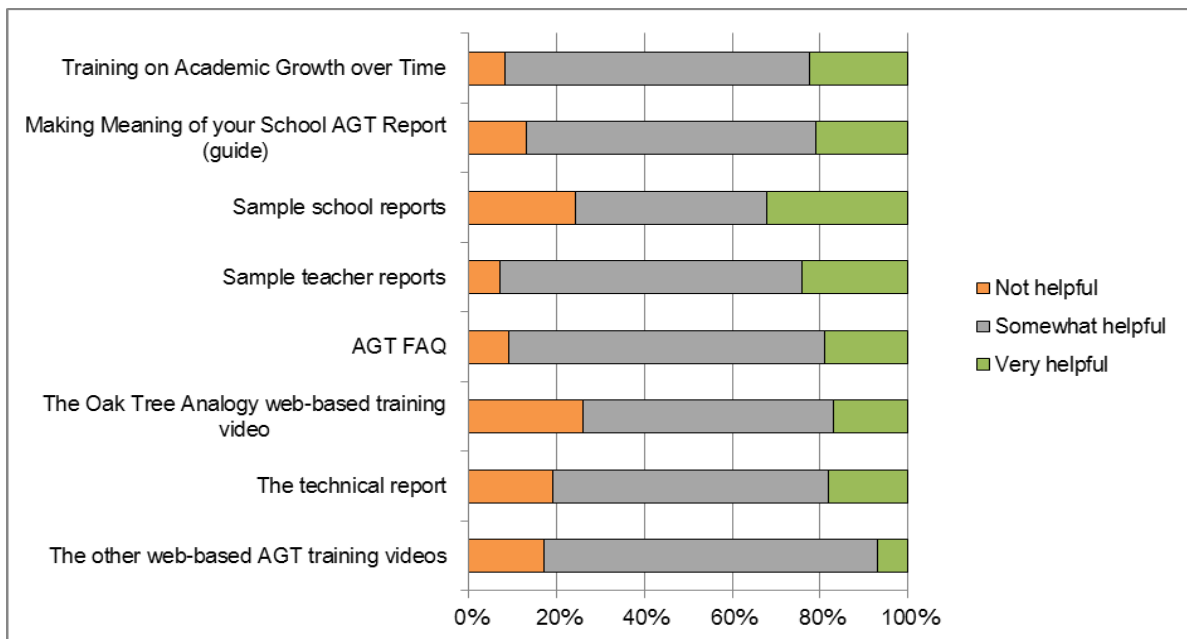


Survey respondents were asked how helpful these AGT resources were on a scale of 1 to 3, 1 meaning, "not helpful," and 3 meaning, "very helpful." As Exhibits 15 and 16 illustrate, most survey respondents found AGT resources to be at least somewhat helpful. Teachers felt that the "Making Meaning of Your AGT Report," the Oak Tree web video, the Technical Report, and other web-based training videos were slightly less helpful resources than the others. Observers felt that the Sample School Reports and the Oak Tree web video were slightly less helpful resources than the others.

**Exhibit 15**  
**Teacher Opinions on the Helpfulness of AGT Resources**



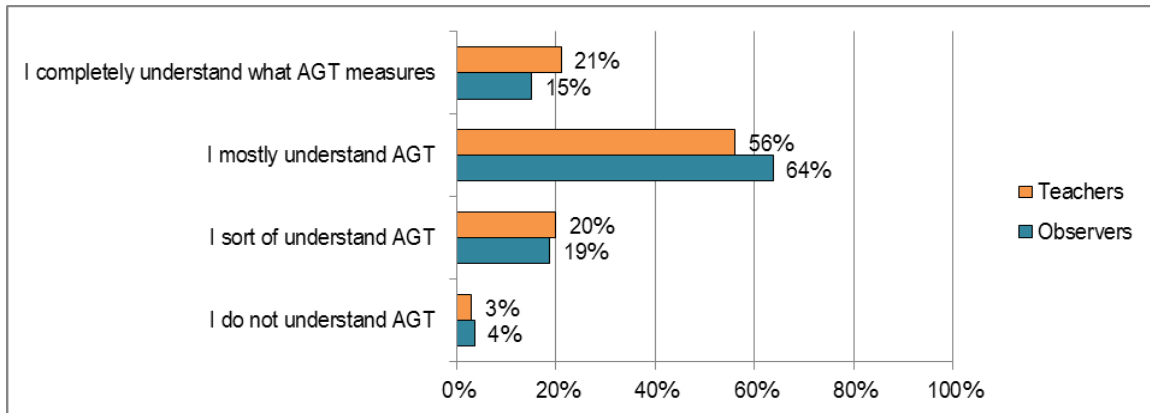
**Exhibit 16**  
**Observer Opinions on the Helpfulness of AGT Resources**



## Comprehension & Trust of the AGT Measure

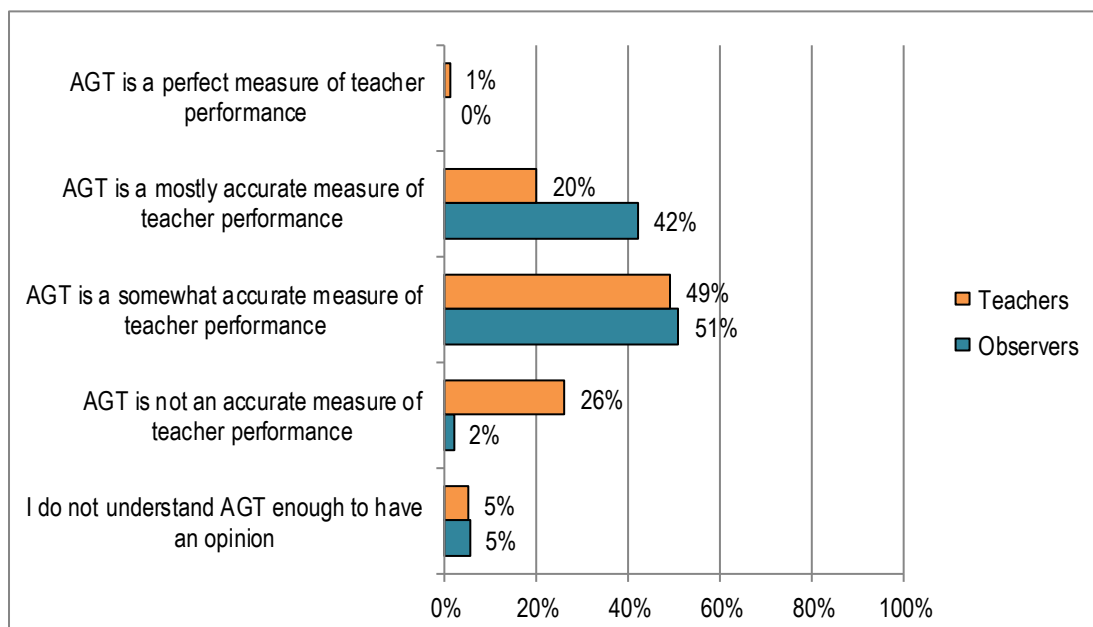
Teachers and Observers predominantly felt like they had a solid understanding of what AGT measures; seventy-seven percent of teachers and 79% of Observers stated that they “mostly” or “completely” understand what AGT measures.

**Exhibit 17**  
**IIP Participant Understanding of What AGT Measures**

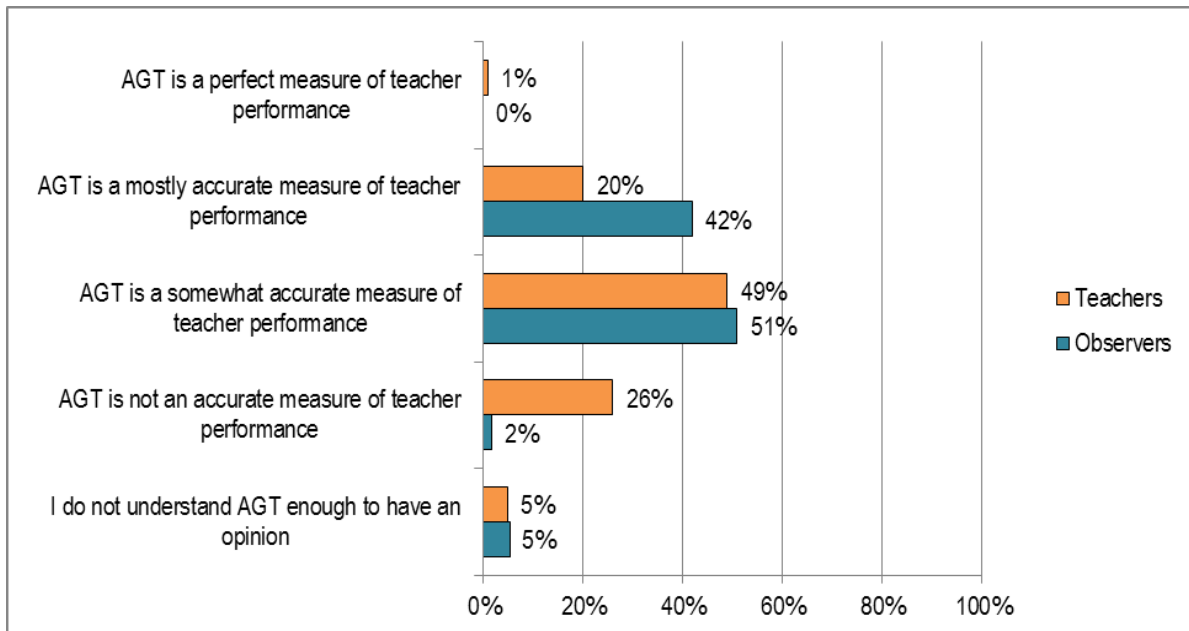


The majority of survey respondents felt that AGT can provide some helpful information on teacher performance. Observer respondents were more comfortable with the accuracy of AGT than teachers; 26% of teachers felt that AGT does not accurately measure *teacher* performance at all, while just 2% of Observers felt the same way. Ninety-three percent of Observers felt that AGT is a “mostly” or “somewhat” accurate measure of *school* performance.

**Exhibit 18**  
**IIP Participant Perception of AGT’s Accuracy Measuring Teacher Performance**



**Exhibit 19**  
**Principal & Director Perception of AGT's Accuracy Measuring School Performance**



Teachers’ written comments revealed the need to further demystify AGT concepts. Several teachers expressed doubt that the District’s AGT measure adequately controls for factors that are beyond a teacher’s control. Many teachers and several Observers revealed that they need to understand the calculation of AGT in order to begin trusting it as a valid measure of student growth that isolates the effect of a teacher on student outcomes.

*“I can't explain to a teacher the mathematical formula. If I can't do that, I don't feel comfortable using it.”*

-Observer

Interpreting AGT Results

Several teachers and Observers expressed disappointment when their AGT results could not be generated due to insufficient data. An Observer noted, “On some AGT reports, you'll find the term ‘insufficient data’ listed instead of AGT. On the last page of the AGT reports there are bullets that identify reasons...[but] there needs to be a detailed explanation on the specific reason...I don't want to guess.” Some respondents that had been looking forward to using their AGT results to better understand their teaching felt limited by the reports. For example an Observer expressed, “I was disappointed that there were so many sections of my teachers’ reports labeled ‘insufficient data.’ Without disaggregated data, teachers do not have enough information to reflect on ways to improve their practice.”

*“I would like to see how the AGT numbers are generated. I see a score but have no data embedded within the score to see where I need to improve. Instead, I have to go look at MyData and see where my students are exhibiting weakness. Why can you not give me specifics with this score?”*

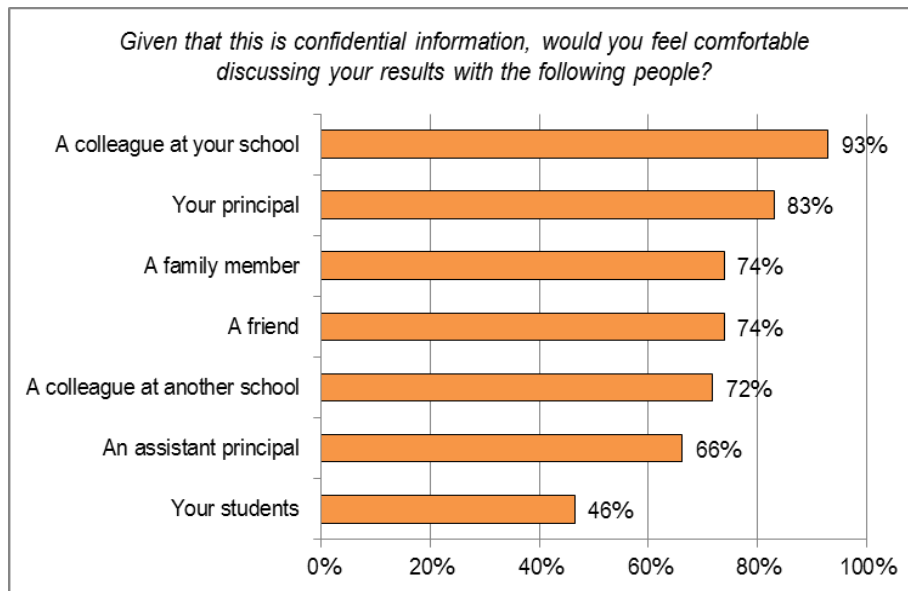
-Teacher

Survey respondents serving as Second Observers in the IIP were not automatically granted access to their assigned teachers’ AGT results. Some Second Observers expressed confusion

about expectations for viewing those results, and felt that access to this information would have been helpful to their role in the observation cycle. A Second Observer lamented, “I have to see the measures of teachers that I have personally supervised to see how they are being evaluated by this system before I can make a statement about this system. At this time, I cannot see any of the teachers' reports because I am a [Second Observer].”

When asked who they would be most willing to share their AGT results with, teacher respondents were most comfortable sharing with colleagues at their school (93%), their principal (83%), or family and friends (74%). Teachers felt the least comfortable sharing AGT results with their students (46%) or assistant principal (66%).

**Exhibit 20**  
**People Whom Teachers are Comfortable Sharing AGT Results With**



### Appropriate Uses for AGT

Observers generally embraced the use of AGT more than teachers did. However, the majority of survey respondents felt that AGT can provide helpful information that can be linked to improving teaching in the District.

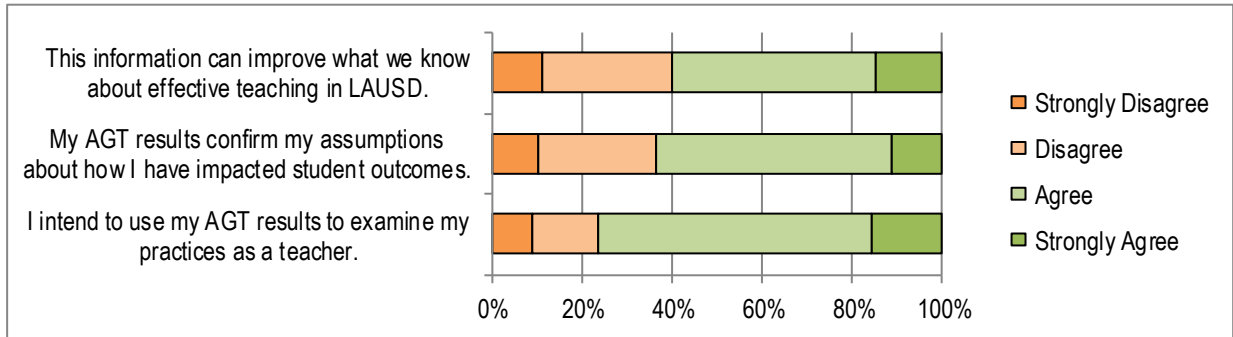
*“I think AGT is a great attempt at trying to use achievement data as a measure of teacher effectiveness by finally taking into account the starting place of students and looking at growth rather than pure achievement on a test that only gives at that moment information.”*

*-Teacher*

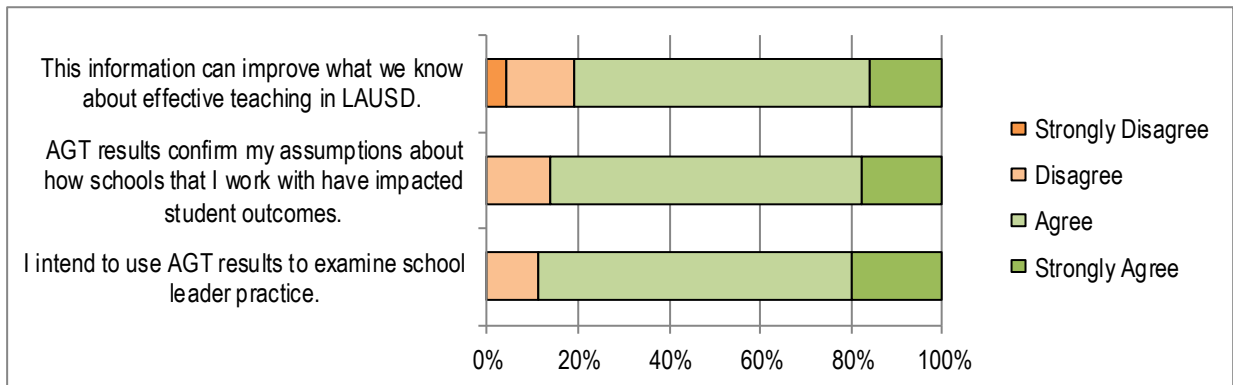
Sixty percent of teacher respondents agreed that teacher-level AGT results can help shed light on effective teaching in LAUSD, and 77% of teacher respondents intend to use their AGT results to examine their own teaching practices. Thirty-six percent of respondents did not feel that their AGT results matched their assumptions of how their teaching impacts their students’ outcomes.

Eighty-one percent of Observer respondents agreed that AGT results can help shed light on effective teaching in LAUSD, and 89% of Observer respondents intend to use their AGT results to examine their own school leadership practices. Seventy-seven percent of Observer respondents felt that the AGT results they reviewed confirm their assumptions of how the schools impact student outcomes.

**Exhibit 21**  
**Teacher Opinions of AGT**



**Exhibit 22**  
**Observer Opinions of AGT**



Both teachers and Observers were most comfortable using AGT to identify teachers for additional support (82% and 89%). Over one-third of teachers and Observers felt that it was appropriate to use AGT results to recognize excellent teaching practice (35% and 41%), and one-fifth of survey respondents would be comfortable using AGT results to recommend teachers for reassignment (21% and 22%).

**Exhibit 23**  
**IIP Participant Opinions on How to Use AGT**

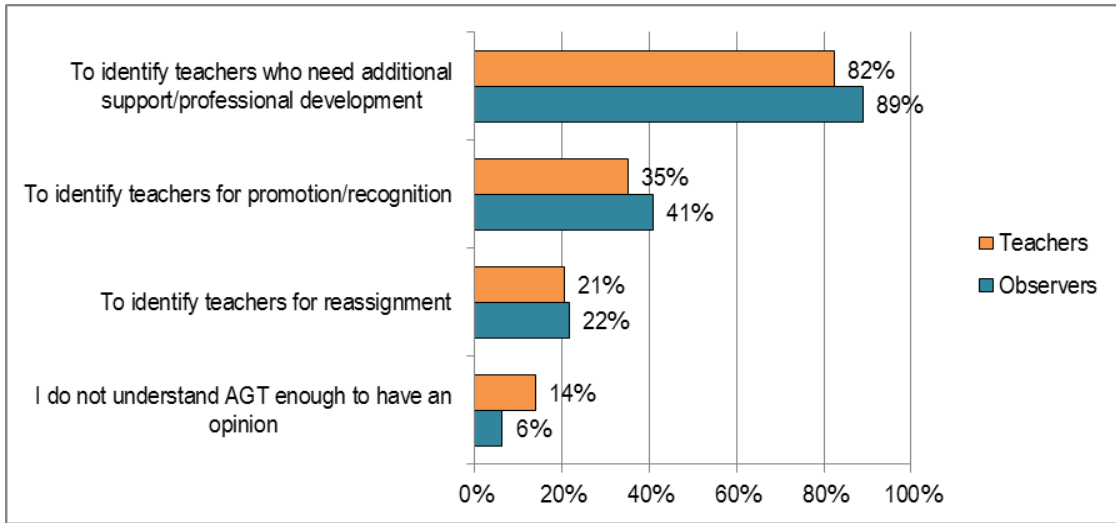
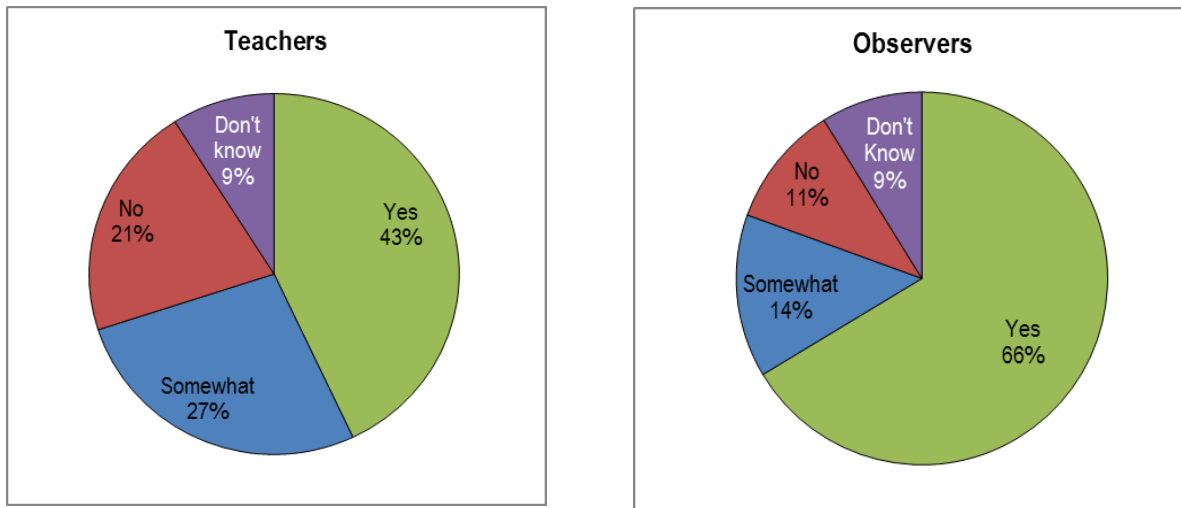


Exhibit 24 below shows that 70% of teachers believe or somewhat believe that AGT should be part of a multiple measure teacher evaluation system. Eighty percent of principals, Second Observers, and Directors believe or somewhat believe that it should be part of a multiple measure school leader evaluation system. A comparison of the two pie charts below shows the pattern that Observers indicated a greater degree of comfort with AGT than teachers.

**Exhibit 24**  
**Should AGT be used in conjunction with other metrics to measure teacher/school leader performance?**



*“The use of AGT should not only be the sole factor for evaluating teacher’s performance. This could be a tool to somewhat assess strengths and weaknesses of the students in a particular field so that teachers and administrators could plan effectively to improve instruction and thus achieve success in the classroom.”*

*-Teacher*

*“I would like to use multiple measures in evaluating teacher effectiveness and my own effectiveness as a School Leader. Teachers need to understand the importance of their students’ achievement, and that they are a direct effect on student achievement. I believe that, as teachers connect their AGT scores with their classroom practice, it will strengthen their ability to adjust instruction to meet the needs of their students. Additionally, they will hopefully reflect on their teaching and look towards growth and raising the classroom rigor.”*

*-Observer*

Teachers’ comments revealed a higher level of comfort using AGT results to get a better picture of a teacher’s impact and identify areas for support and development, and less comfort using AGT results for evaluative purposes. “I do not feel that [AGT] is perfect to assess the full story of whether a teacher is positively impacting students, but I think it can be a great tool to start investigating the reasons behind lack of growth in students,” asserted a teacher. Observer comments tended to be more favorable toward using AGT as one metric in a multiple measure performance review system. “There should be multiple measures to determine the effectiveness of a teacher’s instruction. I am a strong supporter of using AGT, as I know that with multiple measures we will get a clearer picture of a teacher, administrator, and school,” said an Observer.

Several teachers and Observers were concerned that using AGT in an evaluation would not be a fair comparison, because there are subjects that do not have available AGT results. “Unless we have something that all teachers are judged against, this really isn’t a good measure,” said an Observer. A teacher commented, “It is difficult to support the use of AGT when not all subjects and grades are tested. How can AGT be fairly incorporated into the evaluation of teachers when it does not apply to all teachers? Evaluation must be uniform.”

Survey respondents gave several suggestions regarding appropriate uses for AGT results. An Observer emphasized the need to constantly tie the information to practical ways to grow and develop, saying, “For a system like this to be of any value at all to the District, it must be tied to a strong support system. Of what value is it to identify troubled teachers if we’re not going to help them improve their practice?” A teacher recommended that AGT results be used to identify and celebrate excellence, saying, “We need to closely examine the practices of the teachers who are better able to advance students to learn from them. I read books about improving teacher practice and get ideas from them, but it would be even nicer to learn from an expert in my own environment with similar students.”

*“[AGT] should be used to identify teachers that need help and then provide specific training as appropriate. Teachers that are highly effective should be used to mentor teachers that need help.”*

*-Teacher*

## Recommendations

- Improve AGT resources that were utilized less or rated as “not helpful”
- Continue to clarify what AGT measures, what it controls for, and under what circumstances there may be insufficient data
- Demystify the AGT calculation; make clear, to the extent possible, how each result is calculated
- Explore how to calculate AGT scores for other subjects and grade levels
- Explore how to “unpack” AGT reports so that teachers have enough disaggregated data to make meaningful decisions
- Create resources for teachers to have professional conversations with colleagues and their principal around their AGT results
- Use AGT results to identify teachers for support and provide resources for development
- Use AGT results to identify excellent teaching practice we can learn from

## Conclusion

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This second feedback survey is part of a series of instruments used to gather ongoing input related to both the tools and the process from participants in the Initial Implementation Phase of the Educator Growth and Development Cycle. The focus on the self-assessment process, lesson design template, and use of data gathered through the Academic Growth over Time reports allowed us to evaluate the success of these artifacts in informing the Observation of Practice by the teacher's administrator and Second Observer. Progress in the School Leadership Growth and Development Cycle has not evolved as quickly as the Educator Growth and Development Cycle; however, the initial feedback from this survey will help to inform our ongoing efforts to improve this work. Collecting data on these tools, at this particular time in the cycles, permits us to make adjustments, as necessary, before the start of Observation Cycle #2.

Since the release of the first feedback report in November 2011, project teams have been formed with members from both the central and local offices to make adjustments to the tools using input from IIP participants to inform changes. As it relates to this report, the teams are focused on addressing improvements to the My Professional Growth System online technology platform, Teaching & Learning Framework, lesson design template, and teacher self-assessment template. Our field-based Local District Strategic Support Team (LDSST) will take these revised tools to participants during the second half of the IIP for supplementary feedback.

It has always been our intention to use this Initial Implementation Phase year to work closely with educators participating in the IIP in order to gather information from their experience in the process. The reactions from participants on the Educator and School Leadership Growth and Development Cycles, to date, have confirmed the need for a focused effort on collaborating with our educators to improve and support deep instructional practice. The effort to incorporate feedback from the field will continue to be at the heart of this work. It is in that exchange of ideas that we will create a meaningful, effective process to improve student achievement in LAUSD.