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A Guide for Using Student Perception Survey Results to Set Goals for Teacher Professional Growth

Results from Colorado's Student Perception Survey (SPS) can be a powerful tool to inform and improve teacher practice. The tools in this guide will help teachers use SPS results to set goals or inform a professional growth plan. The steps outlined in this guide can be followed in chronological order, used individually, or used in combination with the professional growth process in your district.

Review results to identify areas of strength and improvement.

- Teachers can review results on their own with [A Teacher's Guide to Using Student Perception Surveys](#) and the [Student Perception Survey Reflection Tool](#).
- Teachers can use the [Student Perception Survey Coaching Conversations Guide](#) to review results with a peer, administrator, coach, or evaluator.
- Results can also be compared and aligned with other sources of data such as observation data from an evaluator or coach, a self-assessment of professional practice, and data about students' learning outcomes.

Create goals around results or use results to refine existing goals.

- After teachers analyze their data, they can use the [Student Perception Survey Goal Worksheet](#) to build goals and determine initial action steps to move toward those goals.
- Teachers can also incorporate SPS data into existing professional growth plans.

Gather feedback from evaluators, coaches, and/or peers.

- Evaluators, coaches, and peers can observe teacher practice to gather evidence about SPS goals. See the sample [Student Perception Survey Observation Form](#).
- At the end of the year, teachers can review their progress toward their goals, and choose to build new goals based on the evidence and SPS results gathered throughout the year.

Use new results to reflect and build new goals.

- After receiving the next round of SPS results, teachers can use the data to reflect and build new goals for continuous improvement.

A Teacher's Guide to Using Student Perception Survey Results

Your Student Perception Survey (SPS) results will give you a powerful tool for understanding your students' experience in your classroom. These results will likely confirm information that you knew about your classroom, surprise you with details that you didn't know, and open up new questions about areas you want to explore further.

This data is a unique source of actionable feedback on your instructional practice that you can apply to build upon your strengths and accelerate your professional development. The survey is aligned to Colorado's Teacher Quality Standards and includes items¹ that research has found to be strongly correlated with student learning outcomes.

HOW YOUR DISTRICT MAY USE THE RESULTS

- As a formative tool:
 - Teachers can use results as a formative tool to reflect on their practice, complete their self-assessment, and create goals.
 - Principals can use results to pair teachers who need growth in an area with teachers who have demonstrated strength in that same area.
 - Schools and districts can use results to identify and create strategies to address trends.
- As part of a teacher evaluation:
 - Survey results at the question level could be used as an artifact for determining ratings for professional practices (Teacher Quality Standards I-III).
 - Survey results could also be considered as one of the multiple measures.
 - Teachers could be evaluated on the plan they create independent of the results themselves (Teacher Quality Standard IV only).
- This is not a mutually exclusive choice; teachers could use their results formatively to inform their practice during the year and also include the results as a part of their formal evaluation.

HOW YOU CAN USE YOUR RESULTS

- Set aside sufficient time to review and reflect on the results. With 34 items, the survey provides a lot of information to process. This review could take anywhere from a few hours to a couple of days, depending on the approach you take.
- Collaborate with a trusted colleague to help you think about how to use the results. You might consider consulting with a team teacher, instructional coach, administrator, master/mentor teacher, or friend.

¹A number of items on the Colorado SPS were adapted from items made available for noncommercial use through the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

- When reflecting on your results individually or as a group, ask the following questions²:
 - What are your initial thoughts about these results?
 - Does anything surprise you?
 - What are you most proud of?
 - What can you learn from the results?
 - How can you improve on this data next year?
 - Are you making progress on your vision for your students/school?
 - What interventions or support do you need in order to improve?
- Use the data to reflect on your strengths as a teacher and your greatest opportunities for growth. To do this, gather survey data and other data points available to you, such as observation data from an evaluator or coach, the self-assessment of your professional practice, and data about your students' learning outcomes.
- Identify two or three immediate next steps that you can take to improve in your development areas. Infuse what you learn from the survey into other activities in which you reflect on your performance and how to improve.
- Use team or professional development time to explore schoolwide summary results and identify trends, strengths, and opportunities for all-staff professional development.
- Use SPS results to inform your self-assessment and reflection, goal setting, and feedback conversations.

²Kanold, T.D. *The Five Disciplines of PLC Leaders*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press, 2011.

Student Perception Survey Reflection Tool

Areas of Strength

- What are your initial thoughts about these results?
- Does anything surprise you?
 - How do your results compare to your perceptions of your classroom from your self-assessment (see CEI’s website for self-assessment tools grades [3-5](#) and [6-12](#))?
- What are you most proud of?
- What can you learn from the results? Consider the factors that would lead students to answer in the way they did:
 - Which items have scores that are higher than the school/district average?
 - Which items have the most “always” responses?
 - If data are available about different content, periods, or grades that you teach, how do they help you understand your practice?
 - If data are available about student subgroups, such as gender, English Language Learners (ELL), or free and reduced lunch (FRL), how do they help you understand your practice?

Student Perception Survey (SPS) Question(s)	SPS Element (student learning, classroom community, student-centered environment, or classroom management)	Notes

Areas of Focus

- What are your initial thoughts about these results?
- Does anything confuse you?
- Does anything surprise you?
 - How do your results compare to your perceptions of your classroom from your self-assessment (see CEI’s website for self-assessment tools grades [3-5](#) and [6-12](#))?
- What can you learn from the results? Consider the factors that would lead students to answer in the way they did:
 - Which items have scores that are lower than the school/district average?
 - Which items have the most “never” responses?
 - If data are available about different content, periods, or grades that you teach, how do they help you understand your practice?
 - If data are available about student subgroups (e.g., gender, ELL, FRL), how do they help you understand your practice?

SPS Question(s)	SPS Element (student learning, classroom community, student-centered environment, or classroom management)	Notes

Student Perception Survey Coaching Conversations Guide

Student Perception Survey (SPS) results can be difficult to interpret due to the unique nature of the data. Items on Colorado's SPS are designed to have varying levels of difficulty, so it is not as easy as simply looking at the highest and lowest items to identify strengths and areas of improvement. Teachers and coaches should think carefully about the priorities of their school, classroom, and discipline, and then identify relative strengths and weaknesses in comparison to school, district, and statewide norming data.

Throughout this conversation, teachers may be dismissive of the data or have a hard time interpreting the results. When orienting teachers to the data:

- **Always consider comparison groups.** Teachers may identify an area of strength that may actually be much lower than the school average or an area of growth that is actually much higher. Use comparison groups to help them think through their results in relation to aggregate data.
- **Look at the distribution of responses.** Two questions may have the same percent favorable score but one could have many more "never" responses than "most of the time." To prioritize questions where a majority of students are answering "never," ask teachers to look at the distribution of responses.
- **Reinforce the quality of the survey instrument.** Many teachers will be dismissive of survey results because they do not think students understood the items or took the survey seriously. Colorado's SPS has gone through a rigorous development process, and [The Colorado Education Initiative has many resources](#) to inform teachers about the survey's reliability, validity, and fairness. See the [Overview of Student Feedback on Instruction](#) in particular to help teachers understand how students interact with the survey.
- **Reassure teachers that the survey was implemented with fidelity.** By itself, a reliable and valid instrument does not ensure that teachers will receive good feedback. The instrument must be implemented with careful planning and thorough communication. Be prepared to address survey implementation concerns such as how students were assigned to teachers, how the survey was proctored, accommodations for ELL students and students with disabilities, etc.

Information from this conversation can be used to (1) build goals based on SPS results, (2) incorporate SPS data into existing professional growth plans, (3) use data as an artifact for meeting teacher standards as outlined in your district's rubric, or (4) pair teachers with complementary areas of strength and areas of growth. This document includes guidelines for coaches who have access to teacher-level results as well as guidelines for those who don't have access.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR COACHES WHO HAVE ACCESS TO TEACHER-LEVEL RESULTS

Before engaging in a conversation with a teacher, review the teacher's results on your own using the following questions and sentence stems so that you can compare your findings to the teacher's findings. You may also wish to consider additional sources of data, such as observation ratings or notes, student achievement data, or a professional growth plan. When facilitating this conversation with a teacher, let the teacher discuss his or her feelings and reflections about the survey.

Facilitate an initial reflective conversation:

- How are you feeling about the results?
 - How did you feel when you first looked at them?
 - Have your feelings changed since then?
- What do you want to share about the results?
 - What surprises you?
 - What are you most proud of?
 - One area of strength I see is:
 - What are you concerned about?
 - One area of growth I see is:
 - What are you still wondering about?
 - What are you confused about?

Dig in to the data:

- How do your results compare to your perceptions of your classroom from your self-assessment (see CEI's website for self-assessment tools grades [3-5](#) and [6-12](#))?
 - One area I saw that aligned with your self-assessment was:
 - One area that was different from your self-assessment was:
- What can you learn from the results? Consider the factors that would lead students to answer in the way they did:
 - Which items have scores that are higher than the school/district average?
 - Which items have scores that are lower than the school/district average?
 - Which items have the most "always" responses?
 - Which items have the most "never" responses?
 - If data are available about different content, periods, or grades that you teach, how does this information help you understand your practice?
 - If data are available about student subgroups (e.g., gender, ELL, FRL), how does this information help you understand your practice?
- How does this data align with other data you have about your practice?
 - How do your SPS results align with or reinforce your professional growth goals?
 - When I compared these results to the goals from your professional growth plan, I noticed:
 - How do your SPS results align with the rubric we use in this district?
 - How does this help you demonstrate proficiency on various standards and elements?
 - Your results reinforce what I have seen in classroom observations because:
 - How do these results help you understand your students' learning outcomes?
 - When I compared these results to your students' growth data, I noticed:

- What do you think are the next steps for our school/district as a whole based on your results and school/district results?
 - Some of the next steps I see for our school are:

Draw conclusions and create next steps:

- Here are the areas of strength we have identified:
 - Let's review the teacher rubric together and see if there are areas where we can provide evidence to a professional practice.
 - Would you be willing to mentor another teacher who needs help on [insert an area of strength]?
- Here are the areas of growth we have identified:
 - What are some action steps you can take to address this area?
 - Here are some action steps I would suggest:
 - [Another teacher] is really strong in this area; let's set up a time for you to observe her.
 - Let's get together in [period of time] and review the effectiveness of these action steps.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR COACHES WHO DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO TEACHER-LEVEL RESULTS

Before engaging in this conversation with a teacher, ask the teacher to choose two or three areas to discuss. Some suggestions might include:

- One area of strength and one area of growth.
- One question where the teacher’s score was higher than the school average and one where it was lower.
- One item that was consistent with the teacher’s self-assessment (see CEI’s website for self-assessment tools grades [3-5](#) and [6-12](#)) and one item that surprised the teacher.
- One item that has a lot of “always” responses and one item that has a lot of “never” responses.
- Data about specific content, periods, or grades, if available.
- Data about student subgroups (e.g., gender, ELL, FRL), if available.

Even though you do not have access to teachers’ SPS results, you can come prepared to talk about school-level results in relation to the data teachers share. You may also wish to consider additional sources of data to compare such as observation ratings or notes, student achievement data, or a professional growth plan. When facilitating this conversation with a teacher, let the teacher discuss his or her feelings and reflections about the survey.

Facilitate an initial reflective conversation:

- How are you feeling about the results?
 - How did you feel when you first looked at them?
 - Have your feelings changed since then?
- What do you want to share about the results?
 - What surprises you?
 - What are you most proud of?
 - What are you concerned about?
 - What are you still wondering about?
 - What are you confused about?

Dig in to the data:

- These questions can be used for the specific data you asked the teacher to bring:
 - What can you learn from the results? Consider the factors that would lead students to answer in the way they did:
 - Which items have scores that are higher than the school/district average?
 - Which items have scores that are lower than the school/district average?
 - Which item(s) have the most “always” responses?
 - Which item(s) have the most “never” responses?
 - If data are available about different periods or grades that you teach, how does this information help you understand your practice?
 - If data are available about student subgroups (e.g., gender, ELL, FRL), how does this information help you understand your practice?
 - I agree/disagree with your findings because:
- These questions can be used to discuss the data more generally:
 - How do these results align with other data you have about your practice?
 - How do your SPS results align with or reinforce your professional growth goals?

- When I compared these results to the goals from your professional growth plan, I noticed:
 - How do your SPS results align with the rubric we use in our district?
 - How does this help you demonstrate proficiency on various standards and elements?
 - Your results reinforce what I have seen in classroom observations because:
 - How do these results help you understand your students' learning outcomes?
 - When I compared these results to your students' growth data, I noticed:
- What do you think are the next steps for our school/district as a whole based on your results and school/district results?
 - Some of the next steps I see for our school are:

Draw conclusions and create next steps:

- Here are the areas of strength we have identified:
 - Let's review the teacher rubric together and see if there are areas where we can provide evidence to a professional practice.
- Here are the areas of growth we have identified:
 - What are some action steps you can take to address this area?
 - Here are some action steps I would suggest:
 - Let's get together in [period of time] and review the effectiveness of these action steps.

Student Perception Survey Goal Worksheet

Goal #1	<p>Create a SMART goal based on your data:</p> <p>Specific: How will you know you have reached your goal?</p> <p>Measurable: What data will you use to measure progress?</p> <p>Attainable: How difficult will this goal be for you to complete?</p> <p>Relevant: How is this goal relevant to you and your students?</p> <p>Timely: When will you complete this goal?</p>
Student Perception Survey (SPS) question(s) and element	
Alignment to Teacher Quality Standard and element	
Initial action steps	
Progress monitoring	<p>Action steps can be reviewed and revised following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midyear review. • Evaluator observations. • Coach/peer observations. • End-of-year review.

Goal #2	<p>Create a SMART goal based on your data:</p> <p>Specific: How will you know you have reached your goal?</p> <p>Measurable: What data will you use to measure progress?</p> <p>Attainable: How difficult will this goal be for you to complete?</p> <p>Relevant: How is this goal relevant to you and your students?</p> <p>Timely: When will you complete this goal?</p>
SPS question(s) and element	
Alignment to Teacher Quality Standard and element	
Initial action steps	
Progress monitoring	<p>Action steps can be reviewed and revised following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midyear review. • Evaluator observations. • Coach/peer observations. • End-of-year review.

Student Perception Survey Observation Form

A teacher can use the [Student Perception Survey Goal Worksheet](#) to complete this section so the peer, administrator, coach, or evaluator who is observing can look for evidence of practices aligned to the Student Perception Survey (SPS) goal identified.

Goal	SPS Item	Colorado Standard and Element	Initial Action Steps Identified

Observers, please complete this section for the goal outlined above.

Evidence	Actionable Feedback	Questions I Have

Following the observation, the peer, coach, or evaluator can use these post-observation guiding questions to provide feedback and allow the teacher to monitor and revise his or her action steps:

- What went well with [insert action step here] in the lesson observed?
 - One thing I saw that went well was:
- What would you change about [insert action step here] in the lesson observed?
 - One thing I would change is:
- What was missing in the lesson observed?
- What would happen if:
- What resources would be most helpful as you implement your action steps?
- How will you refine and revise on your action steps?
 - I agree/disagree because:
- What evidence or artifacts of professional practices have emerged as a result of the lesson?
 - Some professional practices I noticed were: