Texas Performance Standards Project: Needs Assessment and Data Collection

Prepared for
The Texas Education Agency
and Region 13 Education Service Center

Prepared by
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the findings from an evaluation consisting of a Needs Assessment and Data Collection for the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and Education Service Center Region 13 (Region 13) in fall 2014. TEA and Region 13 sought to gather data about the use and usefulness of the components of the Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) and their relation to provision of services for students identified as gifted and talented (G/T). These components include instructional and implementation tools for educators, including student tasks, assessment tools, and resources, all of which are displayed on the TPSP website.

The evaluation focuses on the following questions:

- To what extent are G/T educators (i.e., district personnel, teachers, and ESC specialists) using the tasks and resources on the TPSP website?
- To what extent are the TPSP website and the associated tasks and resources meeting the needs of district G/T personnel (e.g., district coordinators, superintendents, and instructional leaders), G/T teachers, and ESC G/T specialists?
- What types of training are being provided for the TPSP?
- What do Texas G/T educators perceive that they and their students have gained from the TPSP?

Based on contact information provided by Region 13, Resources for Learning (RFL) surveyed education service center G/T specialists, district G/T personnel, and G/T teachers. Survey links were sent to 30 G/T specialists in the 20 ESCs, and 1,351 district G/T personnel. District G/T personnel were asked to forward a separate survey link appropriate to all G/T teachers in their district.

Respondents indicated that use of the TPSP made a difference for students. They reported that the TPSP helped teachers better meet their students' needs and that the TPSP helped teachers bring together standards, assessment, and curriculum for G/T students.

All groups surveyed were more likely than not to have heard of the TPSP. Of those who had heard of the TPSP, large numbers were using TPSP components with varying frequency. Around

one-quarter of teachers report using the TPSP components (i.e., website, tasks, and resources) annually, one-third every semester, and one-third every six weeks. When all respondents were asked how frequently they used each of the TPSP resources, ESC specialists were more likely to use the resources monthly, while teacher use varied depending on the focus of the resource. Teachers were more likely to report use of some resources (Guides for Student Projects and Instructional Strategies) more frequently than other resources, likely because of the applicability of those resources to classroom use.

Respondents were also asked about the usefulness of the TPSP tasks, resources, and website. Teachers were more likely than district personnel and ESC specialists to agree that TPSP tasks need updating. This is likely related to the more frequent use of tasks by teachers in classrooms and could also be related to teachers reporting more years of service.

Teachers and district personnel were more likely to have been offered, and attended, TPSP training than ESC specialists. This may be related to the shorter tenure of ESC specialists in the sample. However, those ESC specialists who have attended training reported attending more training sessions overall, longer hours of training, and more recent sessions. ESC specialists are the main source of training sessions, and district personnel are most likely to follow up with attendees after a training session.

ESC specialists and district personnel reported significant changes in teachers based on TPSP work, and teachers reported significant changes in students based on TPSP work. Categories of changes in teachers include the following:

- Greater understanding of G/T students' needs
- Increased opportunities for student challenges/risk taking
- More differentiated instruction
- Increased opportunities for student research

Reported changes in students are categorized as related to the following:

- Student engagement
- Time management
- Creativity

- Research skills

- Critical thinking

- Communication skills

- Risk taking

Based upon data summarized in this report, evaluators offer the following recommendations:

1. Increase the number of students participating in the TPSP.

2. Conduct market research to determine the most effective ways to inform educators and parents about the benefits of TPSP participation.

3. Implement findings from market research (e.g., rebranding, sharing positive results, update the TPSP website, new trainings for ESCs, presentations at state conferences).

4. Increase the number and variety of tasks by updating all tasks including adaptation to 7-E model, increasing the emphasis on technology, and adding tasks that have a science/technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) focus.

5. Provide and publicize (based on market research) short webinars for school and district administrators on TPSP tasks, website, and resources.

TEXAS PERFORMANCE STANDARDS PROJECT: NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND DATA COLLECTION

Introduction

The Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) adopted the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students (State Plan) in 1996 and a revised State Plan in 2009. The State Plan outlines guidelines for provision of services to students who have been identified as gifted and talented (G/T).

The State plan includes the State Goal for Services for Gifted Students:

> *Students who participate in services designed for gifted/talented students will demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity and are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience, or environment. High school graduates who have participated in services for gifted/talented students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services.*

Given the rigor of the State Goal, many schools and districts have struggled to find ways to differentiate curriculum for G/T students and to provide a continuum of services for G/T students across grade levels. As a result, the 76th Texas Legislature introduced Rider 69, which was funded in the two following legislative sessions, directing the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to develop an assessment system and statewide standards for G/T students.

Specifically, Rider 69 in the General Appropriations Act for 2000-01 biennium states the following:

> *It is the intent of the Legislature that the Texas Education Agency develop an assessment system and statewide standards for gifted and talented students at all grade levels…the Texas Education Agency shall expend $277,250 in each year of the 2000-01 biennium to begin development of such a system, and shall pilot high school exit-level standards for the performance of gifted and talented students in the areas of mathematics, science, social studies and language arts…*

Out of this mandate, the Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) was born. The TPSP is a strategy for meeting the guidelines of the State Plan as it provides a set of standards and a means of assessing the work of G/T students through a system of challenging projects and independent research. Initially tasks were developed for fourth grade, eighth grade, and exit-level high school students. The TPSP has now been expanded to include tasks at every grade level. All tasks are aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and are periodically updated. Resources, instructional tools, and implementation tools are available on the TPSP website. Since the project's inception, teachers have been able to attain professional development and technical assistance on the TPSP from regional education service centers.

In spring 2006, TEA provided every district and campus in the state with *Guides to Success*, accompanied by videos appropriate for use with school boards, parents, and teachers.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this needs assessment and data collection related to the TPSP is to understand how G/T educators (i.e., G/T teachers, district G/T personnel and ESC G/T specialists) are utilizing the TPSP and what additional support they might need. This evaluation focuses on assessing the perceptions of G/T educators with respect to the TPSP, which includes questions about the website, the tasks and resources, training, and potential outcomes associated with the TPSP. The evaluation was designed to inform Region 13 and TEA about the next steps in designing updates appropriate to the TPSP.

The evaluation focuses on the following questions:

- To what extent are G/T educators (i.e., district personnel, teachers, and specialists) using the tasks and resources on the TPSP website?
- To what extent are the TPSP website and the associated tasks and resources meeting the needs of district G/T personnel, G/T teachers, and ESC G/T specialists?
- What types of training are being provided for the TPSP?
- What do Texas G/T educators perceive that they and their students have gained from the TPSP?

METHODS

Sample Selection. To obtain the survey sample, Region 13 provided the RFL evaluation team with a list of the names and contact information for 30 ESC G/T specialists in the 20 ESCs, and 1,351 district G/T personnel[1]. District G/T personnel were asked to forward a separate survey link appropriate to all G/T teachers in their district.

Surveys. The RFL evaluation team developed three surveys, based on the research questions, for ESC G/T specialists, district G/T personnel, and G/T teachers. Region 13 and TEA staff reviewed multiple iterations of the surveys. The final surveys incorporated all of the suggested revisions. Online surveys were administered to ESC G/T specialists, district G/T personnel, and G/T teachers. ESC G/T specialists and district G/T personnel received essentially the same survey, with some questions specific to their positions. See **Appendix A** for the ESC G/T specialist & district G/T personnel surveys with responses and **Appendix B** for the G/T teacher survey with responses. Emailed reminders were sent three times to participants. Response rates are provided in **Exhibit 1**. Please note that there is no response rate calculated for teachers because district personnel forwarded the survey link to them and were not asked to provide information on the number of teachers to whom they forwarded the link.

Exhibit 1.   Survey Response Rates

	Number Responding to Survey[2]	Total Number Surveyed	Response Rate
ESC Specialists	25	30	89%
District Personnel	500[3]	1,304	38%
Teachers	2,002	N/A	N/A

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[1] Region 13 originally hoped to survey G/T district coordinators. When Region 13 provided the contact information for district coordinators, the list included a variety of district-level staff (e.g., superintendent, instructional leader).

[2] This represents the total number of people who responded to the survey, but the number of people who responded to each question varies depending on the question.

[3] The survey was originally sent to 1,343 district personnel, but 36 participants' emails bounced back, and three participants never received the survey invitation; the response rate was calculated by omitting those 39 participants.

Responses from each of the surveys were cleaned and analyzed according to frequencies based on individual items. Percentages were calculated for item responses, with differences by educator group. Results are presented by evaluation question in the Findings section. All responses to all questions by educator group are included in **Appendices A and B.**

Description of Respondents

As shown in **Exhibit 2**, the majority of ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers who completed the survey reported that they had worked in their position between 0-10 years, with at least 60% having 0-6 years of experience. For all survey respondents, 0-2 years was the most frequent response; however, ESC specialists were the most likely to be very new in their job (56% reported 0-2 years) compared to district personnel (44%) and teachers (36%). For teachers, the second most common response was more than 10 years, while for the other respondents, 3-6 years was the second most common response. This indicates an average number of years of experience that is higher for teachers than for ESC specialists and district personnel.

Exhibit 2.   **Number of Years in Position**

	ESC Specialists	District Personnel	Teachers
0-2 years	14 (56%)	218 (44%)	518 (36%)
3-6 years	6 (25%)	157 (32%)	342 (24%)
7-10 years	1 (4%)	62 (13%)	202 (14%)
More than 10 years	3 (12%)	57 (12%)	362 (25%)
Number of Respondents (N)	24	494	1,424

Most of the teachers in the sample indicated in the survey that they taught kindergarten-grade 5 as shown in **Exhibit 3**.

Exhibit 3.   **Grade Level Taught by Teacher Respondents**

Grade Level Taught	N (%)
Kindergarten	247 (17%)
1	356 (25%)
2	378 (27%)
3	410 (29%)
4	435 (31%)
5	422 (30%)
6	186 (13%)
7	149 (10%)
8	167 (12%)
9	91 (6%)
10	107 (8%)
11	115 (8%)
12	108 (8%)

* Percentages may not equal 100 because teachers may have selected multiple grade levels.

District personnel and teachers were asked to identify the type of district/school in which they work. As shown in **Exhibit 4**, the majority of district personnel (69%) identified "rural" in comparison to teachers who identified their school as urban, or suburban. ESC specialists were not asked this question because they work with schools in multiple areas.

Exhibit 4.   **Reported District/School Type**
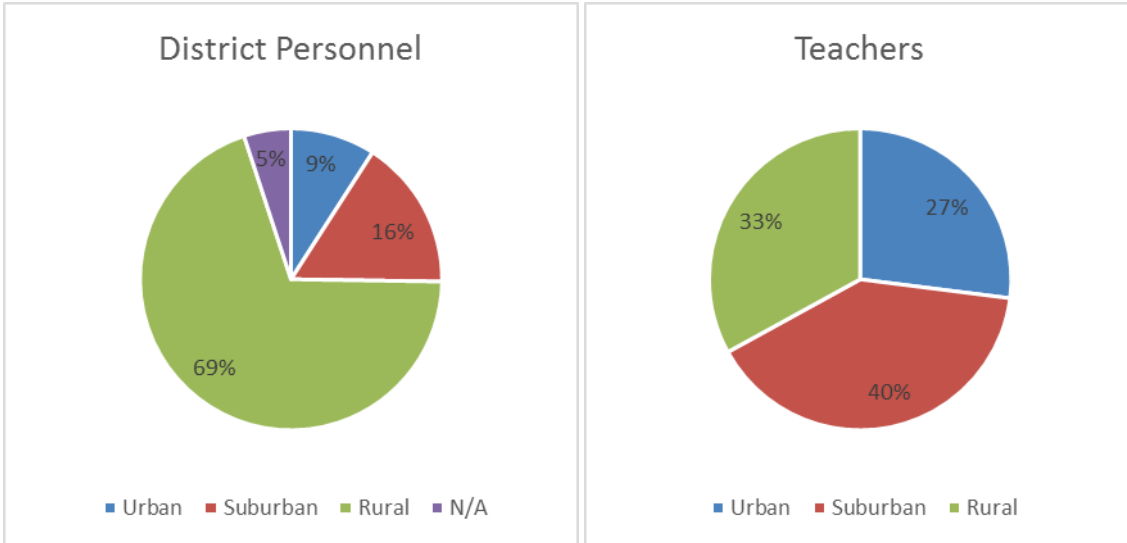
District Personnel (N= 476): Urban = 43, Suburban = 77, Rural = 330, N/A = 26.
Teachers (N = 1424): Urban = 384, Suburban = 575, Rural = 465.

District personnel and teachers represented all of the 20 ESC regions. Ten percent of the district personnel were from Region 7 ESC, and 16 percent of the teachers were from Region 19 ESC. As shown in **Exhibit 5**, seventy-two percent of teachers and 69 percent of district personnel reported that 50 percent or more of students in their school or district received free or reduced-price lunch.

Exhibit 5.   **Percentage of Students Receiving Free or Reduced-Price Lunch**

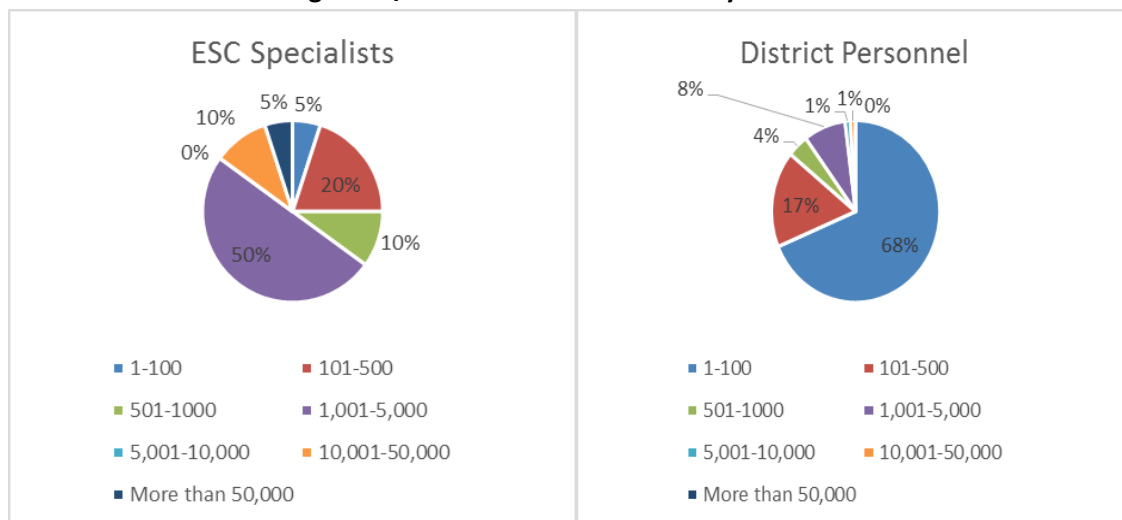|	Teachers	District Personnel
None	6 (0%)	0 (0%)
1-25%	214 (15%)	32 (7%)
26-49%	177 (12%)	82 (18%)
50-75%	313 (22%)	172 (38%)
76-100%	714 (50%)	140 (31%)
NA-does not apply	N/A	31 (7%)
Number of Respondents (N)	1424	457

Forty percent of district personnel reported that G/T students were served in their district through pull-out programs. ESC specialists were also asked about how G/T students were served in their region. Over 80 percent of ESC specialists indicated "other" and in comments stated that G/T students were served through a combination of pull-out programs, cluster programs, and in-class support from the G/T teacher. These data are displayed in **Exhibit 6**.

Exhibit 6.   **Ways G/T Students Are Served**

	ESC Specialists	District Personnel
Pull-out program	0	195 (40%)
Cluster grouping	0	37 (8%)
In-class support by G/T teacher	3 (14%)	120 (24%)
Other	19 (86%)	140 (28%)
Number of Respondents (N)	22	492

As shown in **Exhibit 7**, sixty-eight percent of district personnel reported that their district served 1-100 G/T students annually, and fifty percent of ESC specialists reported that they served 1,001-5,000 G/T students annually.

Exhibit 7.   **Percentage of G/T students Served Annually**

ESC Specialists (N= 20): 1-100 =1, 101-500= 4, 501-1,000 = 2, 1,001-5,000= 10, 5,001-10,000= 0, 10,001-50,000= 2, More than 50,000= 1
District Personnel (N= 460): 1-100 = 314, 101-500 = 80, 501-1000 = 20, 1001-5000 = 37, 5,001-10,000= 4, 10,001-50,000= 4, More than 50,000= 1

ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers reported that teachers work with G/T students across mathematics, science, English/language arts, social studies, and other content areas. These data are displayed in **Exhibit 8**.

Exhibit 8.   **Subject Areas Teachers Work With G/T Students**

	ESC Specialists	District Personnel	Teachers
Mathematics	20 (100%)	440 (91%)	813 (57%)
Science	20 (100%)	436 (90%)	806 (57%)
English/Language Arts	20 (100%)	455 (94%)	923 (65%)
Social Studies	19 (95%)	409 (84%)	797 (56%)
Other	7 (35%)	82 (17%)	194 (14%)

*Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding.*

FINDINGS

In this section, survey responses are summarized and displayed by evaluation question. After providing demographic information, survey respondents who reported not having heard of the TPSP were exited from the survey, and only respondents who had heard of the TPSP were presented with subsequent questions. See **Exhibit 9** for the number of teachers, district personnel, and ESC specialists who reported having heard of the TPSP. When respondents were asked a related series of questions about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements regarding the TPSP components, responses are displayed in one chart; however, statements in which answers differed among respondent groups are presented and examined separately.

Evaluation Question 1. To what extent are G/T educators (i.e., ESC specialists, teachers, and district personnel) using the tasks and resources on the Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) website?

Respondents in all groups were more likely than not to have heard of the TPSP. As shown in **Exhibit 9,** 96 percent of ESC specialists have heard of the TPSP, as have 76 percent of district personnel and 57 percent of teachers.

Exhibit 9.   Responder Familiarity with TPSP
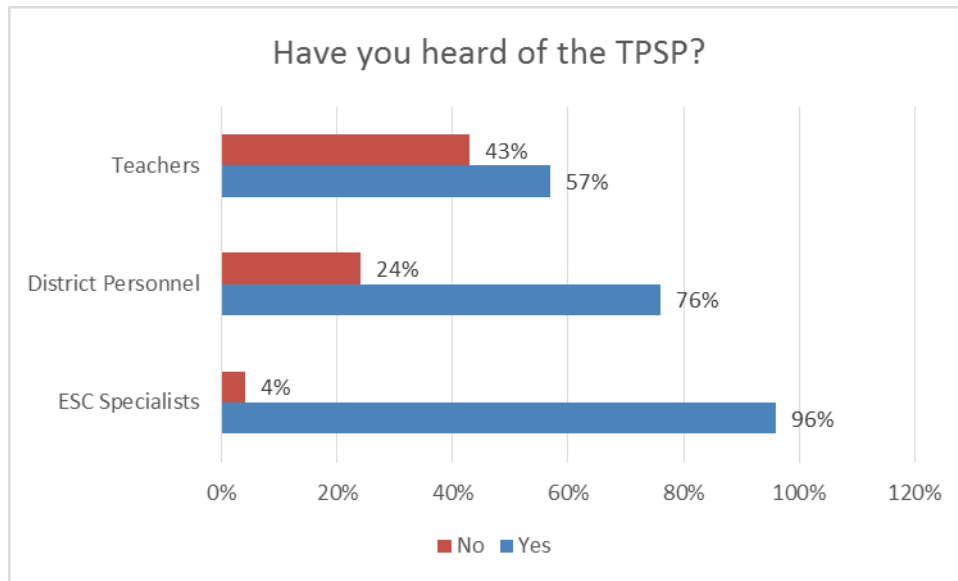
Teachers (N=1582): No = 902, Yes = 680; District Personnel (N=500): No = 121, Yes = 379; ESC Specialists (N =25): No = 1, Yes = 24

Of respondents who had heard of the TPSP, ESC specialists and district personnel agree that schools are using the TPSP, but they differ on the percentage of schools using the TPSP. Exhibit 10 shows that 46 percent of ESC specialists reported that 1-25 percent of schools were using the TPSP compared to 23 percent of district personnel. A similar percentage of ESC specialists (25 percent) and district personnel (29 percent) also indicated that they did not know how many schools were using the TPSP.

Exhibit 10.   **Percentage of Schools Using the TPSP**

Percentage of schools using the TPSP
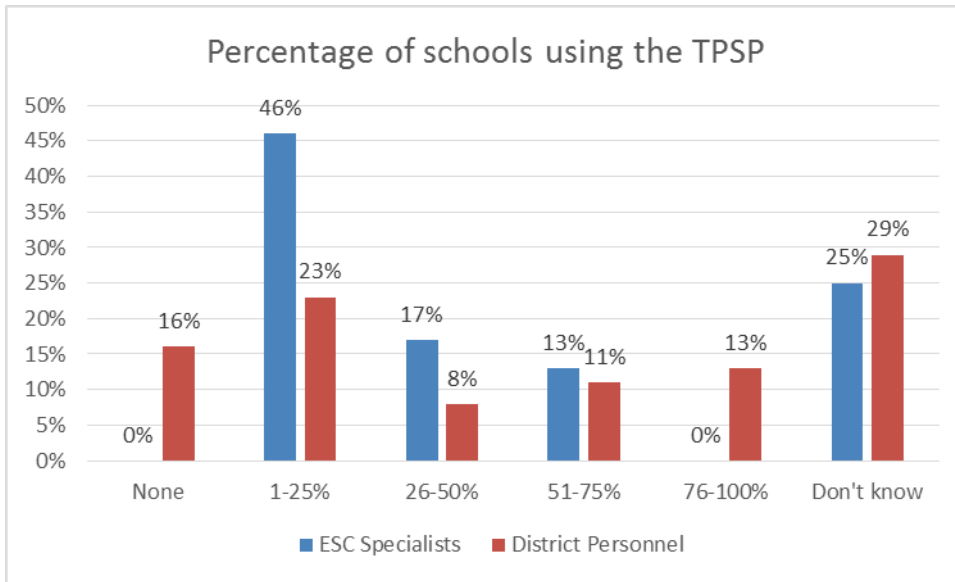
ESC Specialists (N= 24): None: 0, 1-25%: 11, 26-50%: 4, 51-75%: 3, 76-100%: 0
District Personnel (N= 489): None: 76, 1-25%: 11, 26-50%: 38, 51-75%: 56, 76-100%: 64

Of teachers who had heard of the TPSP, they vary in how often they are using the various TPSP components, but most teachers are using the components every six weeks or every semester, with about one-quarter using them annually. For example, as shown in **Exhibit 11**, 27 percent of teachers reported that they used the website every six weeks and 35 percent of teachers reported that they used the website every semester. These findings are similar for teachers' reported use of the TPSP tasks and resources.

Exhibit 11.   **Teacher Use of TPSP Components**

	Never used it	Every couple of years	Once a year	At least every semester	Every 6 weeks	N
Website	55 (9%)	33 (5%)	140 (23%)	210 (35%)	163 (27%)	601
Tasks	33 (5%)	30 (5%)	160 (26%)	192 (32%)	193 (32%)	608
Resources	38 (6%)	30 (5%)	147 (24%)	198 (33%)	192 (32%)	605

ESC specialists are most frequently using all TPSP resources while teachers most frequently use resources related to classroom instruction and implementation. When asked to indicate how often they used each of the TPSP resources (Administrative Considerations, Guides to Success, Walkthroughs for Administrators, Continuum of Learning Experiences Framework (COLEF) charts, Guides for Student Projects, Instructional Strategies, Promotional Materials, Evaluation Materials, and the Glossary), most ESC specialists reported that they are using the resources on a monthly basis. Frequency of use of each of the resources is displayed in **Exhibits 12-19.**

Administrative Considerations. As shown in **Exhibit 12**, Administrative Considerations are commonly used by ESC specialists, as 53 percent reported monthly use. Thirty-seven percent of district personnel and 24 percent of teachers used this resource once a year.
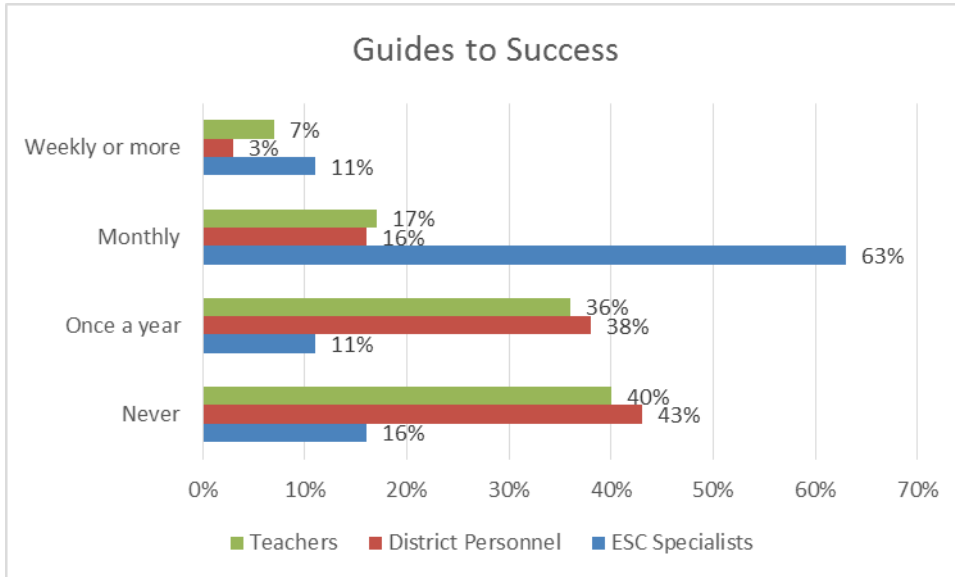
Exhibit 12.   **Frequency of Use of Administrative Considerations**
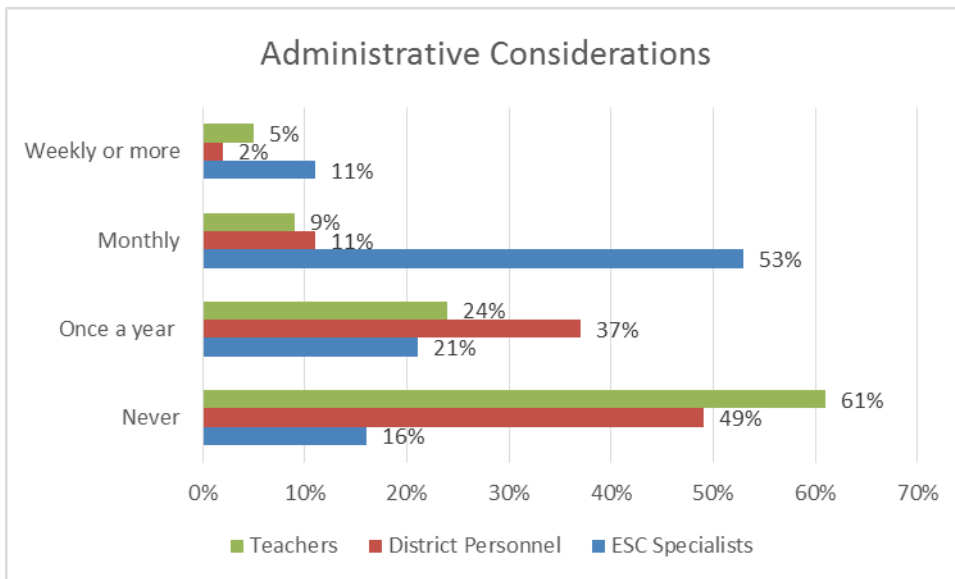
ESC Specialists (N= 19): Never = 3, Once a year = 4, Monthly = 10, Weekly or more= 2
District Personnel (N=346): Never = 170; Once a year = 129, Monthly = 39, Weekly or more = 8
Teachers (N= 601): Never = 368; Once a year = 147, Monthly = 56, Weekly or more = 30

Guides to Success. As shown in **Exhibit 13**, 63 percent of ESC specialists reported using the Guides to Success on a monthly basis. Thirty-eight percent of district personnel and 36 percent of teachers used them once a year.
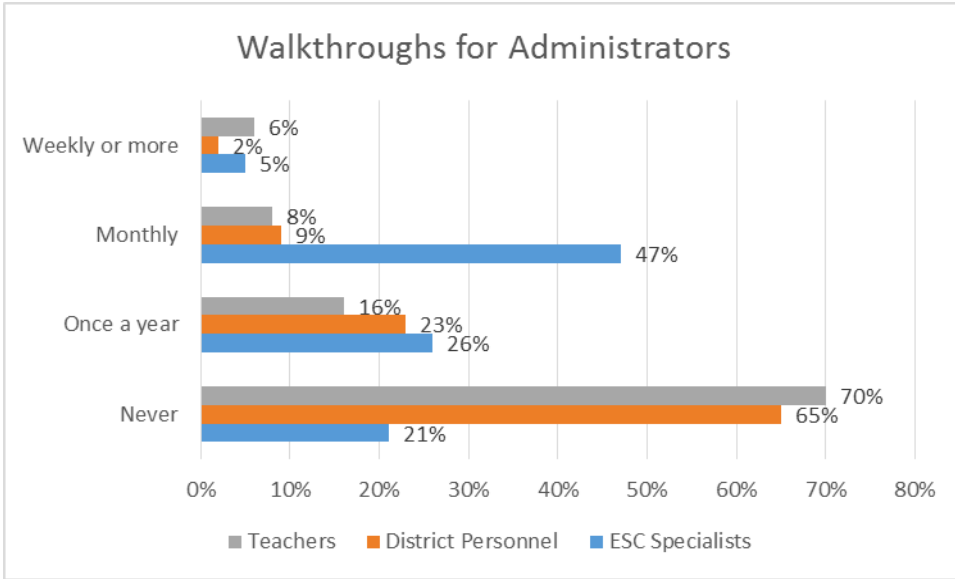
Exhibit 13.   Frequency of Use of Guides to Success

ESC Specialists (N=19): Never = 3, Once a year = 2, Monthly = 12, Weekly or more = 2
District Personnel (N=346): Never = 150; Once a year = 131, Monthly = 56, Weekly or more = 9
Teachers (N=601): Never = 237; Once a year = 210, Monthly = 102, Weekly or more = 42

Walkthroughs for Administrators. As shown in **Exhibit 14**, 47 percent of ESC specialists used this resource on a monthly basis. Twenty-three percent of district personnel and 16 percent of teachers used this resource once a year.
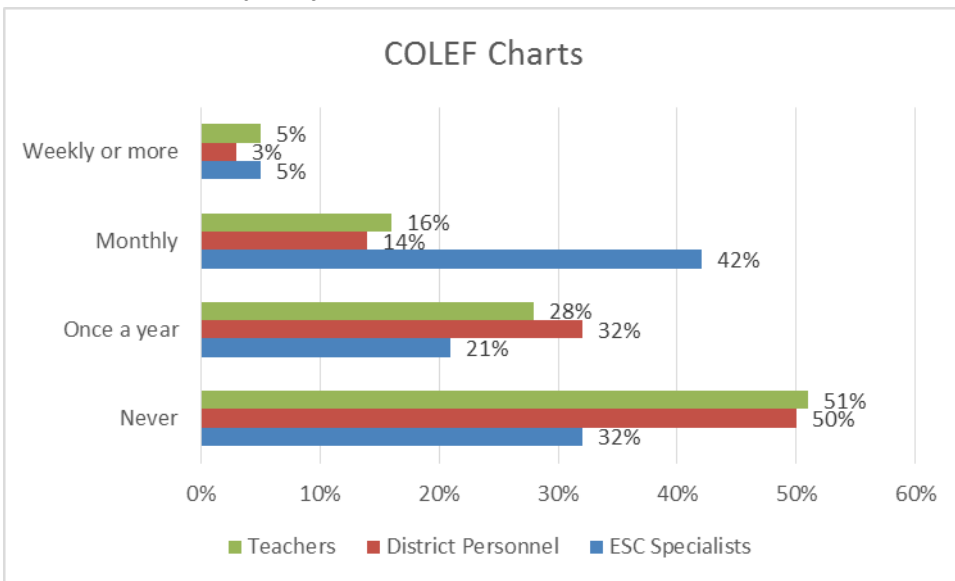
Exhibit 14.   **Frequency of Use of Walkthroughs for Administrators**

Walkthroughs for Administrators

- Weekly or more: Teachers 6%, District Personnel 2%, ESC Specialists 5%
- Monthly: Teachers 8%, District Personnel 9%, ESC Specialists 47%
- Once a year: Teachers 16%, District Personnel 23%, ESC Specialists 26%
- Never: Teachers 70%, District Personnel 65%, ESC Specialists 21%

ESC Specialists (N= *19*): Never = 4, Once a year = 5, Monthly = 9, Weekly or more = 1
District Personnel (N=339): Never = 222; Once a year = 79, Monthly = 32, Weekly or more = 6
Teachers (N=595): Never = 416; Once a year = 95, Monthly = 48, Weekly or more= 36

COLEF charts. As shown in **Exhibit 15**, 42 percent of ESC specialists are using the COLEF charts on a monthly basis. Thirty-two percent of teachers and 28 percent of district personnel reported that they used this resource once a year.

Exhibit 15.   **Frequency of Use of COLEF Charts**

COLEF Charts

- Weekly or more: Teachers 5%, District Personnel 3%, ESC Specialists 5%
- Monthly: Teachers 16%, District Personnel 14%, ESC Specialists 42%
- Once a year: Teachers 28%, District Personnel 32%, ESC Specialists 21%
- Never: Teachers 51%, District Personnel 50%, ESC Specialists 32%

ESC Specialists (N= 19): Never = 6, Once a year = 4, Monthly =8, Weekly or more = 1
District Personnel (N= 340): Never = 170; Once a year = 110, Monthly = 49, Weekly or more = 11
Teachers (N= 596): Never = 301; Once a year = 168, Monthly = 95, Weekly or more= 32

Guides for Student Projects. While ESC specialists are still more likely to use this resource more frequently than district personnel or teachers, the percentages of teachers using Guides for Student Projects weekly or monthly is higher than previously-listed resources. Fifteen percent of teachers report weekly use, and 30 percent report monthly use. These data are displayed in **Exhibit 16**.
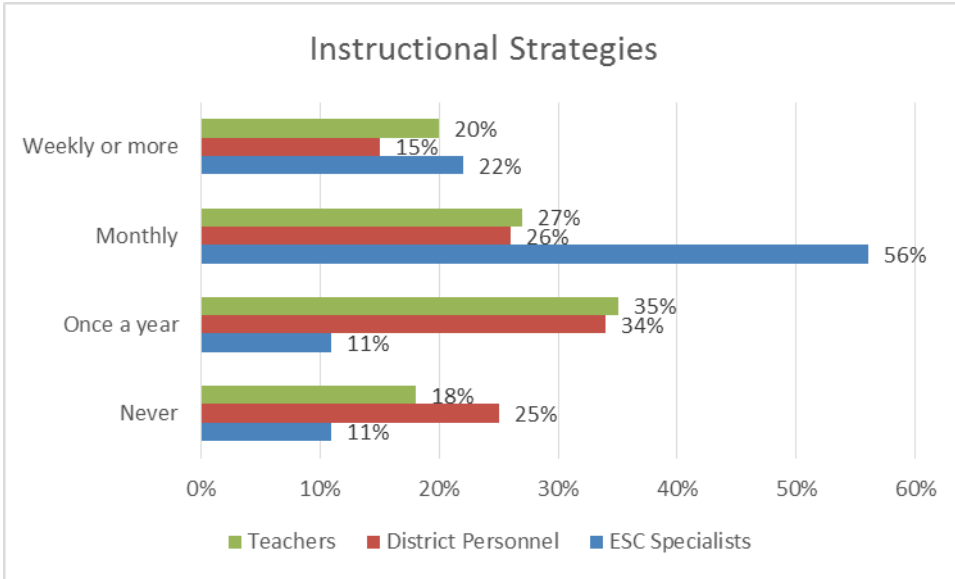
Exhibit 16.   **Frequency of Use of Guides for Student Projects**
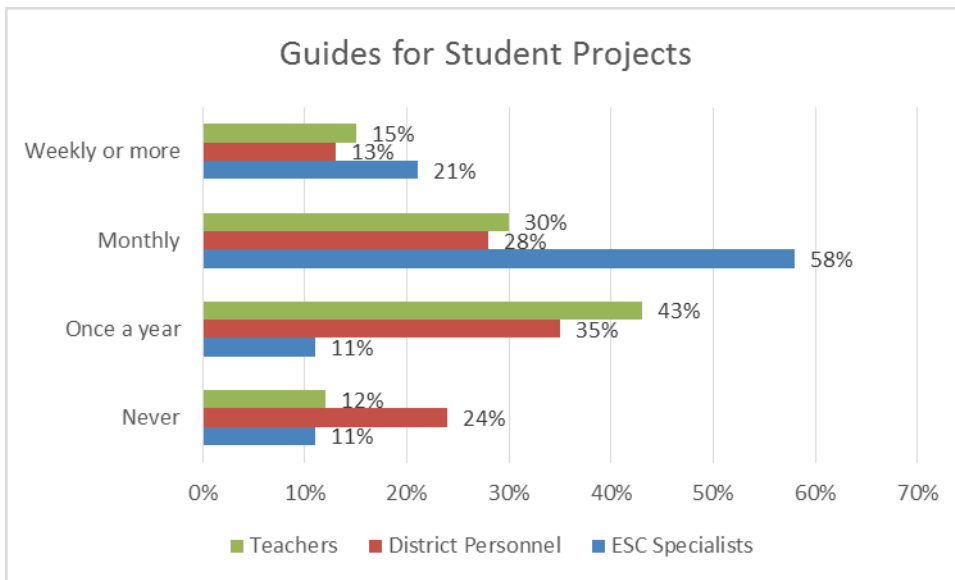
ESC Specialists (N= 19): Never = 2, Once a year = 2, Monthly =11, Weekly or more = 4
District Personnel (N= 348): Never = 82; Once a year = 123, Monthly = 97, Weekly or more = 46
Teachers (N= 615): Never = 73; Once a year = 263, Monthly = 186, Weekly or more = 93

Instructional Strategies. As shown in **Exhibit 17**, 56 percent of ESC specialists reported that they used the Instructional Strategies on a monthly basis. Teachers report using Instructional Strategies more frequently than other resources, with 20 percent reporting weekly or more and 27 percent reporting monthly or more use.

Exhibit 17.   **Frequency of Use of Instructional Strategies**

ESC Specialists (N= 19): Never = 2, Once a year = 2, Monthly =10, Weekly or more= 4
District Personnel (N= 345): Never = 85; Once a year = 117, Monthly = 91, Weekly or more = 52
Teachers (N= 605): Never = 111; Once a year = 210, Monthly = 163, Weekly or more = 121

Promotional Materials. Fifty percent of ESC specialists used Promotional Materials on a monthly basis. Thirty-two percent of district personnel and 26 percent of teachers indicated that they used these resources once a year. These data are displayed in **Exhibit 18**.

Exhibit 18.   **Frequency of Use of Promotional Materials**
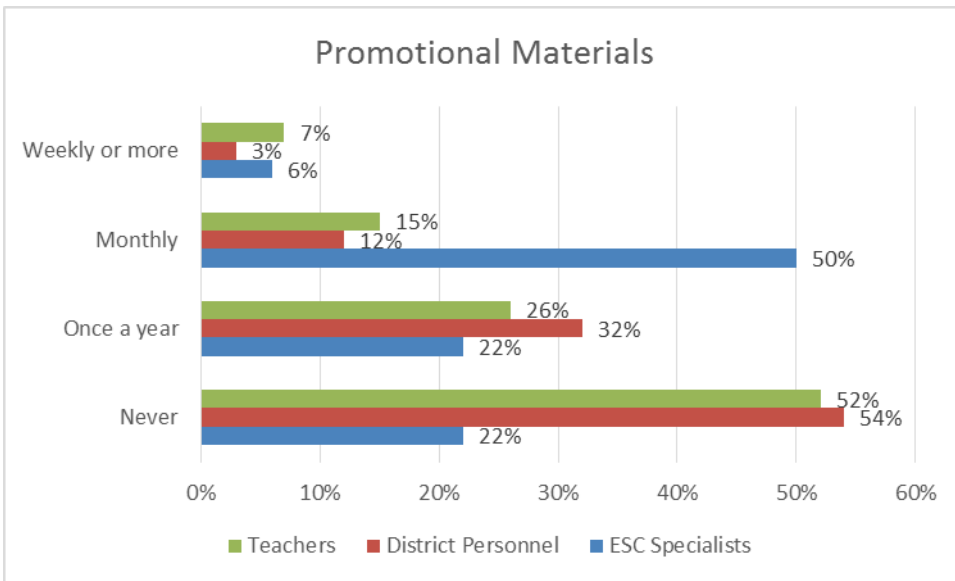
ESC Specialists (N= 18): Never =4, Once a year = 4, Monthly =9, Weekly or more = 1
District Personnel (N= 341): Never = 184; Once a year = 107, Monthly = 41, Weekly or more =9
Teachers (N= 602): Never = 315; Once a year = 156, Monthly = 91, Weekly or more= 40

Evaluation Materials. As shown in **Exhibit 19**, 41 percent of ESC specialists used the Evaluation Materials on a monthly basis. At least 22 percent of each group indicated that they used this resource once a year.
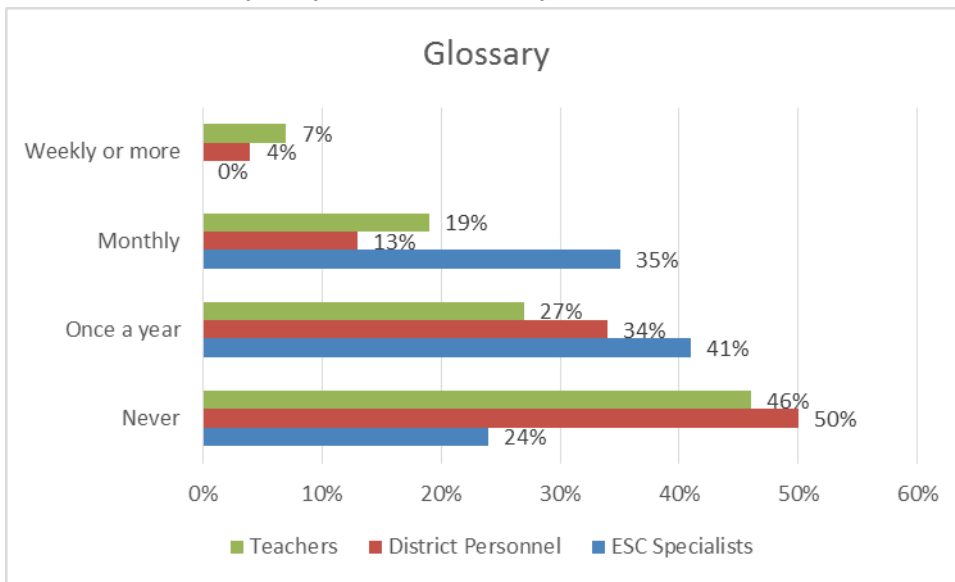
Exhibit 19.   **Frequency of Use of Evaluation Materials**
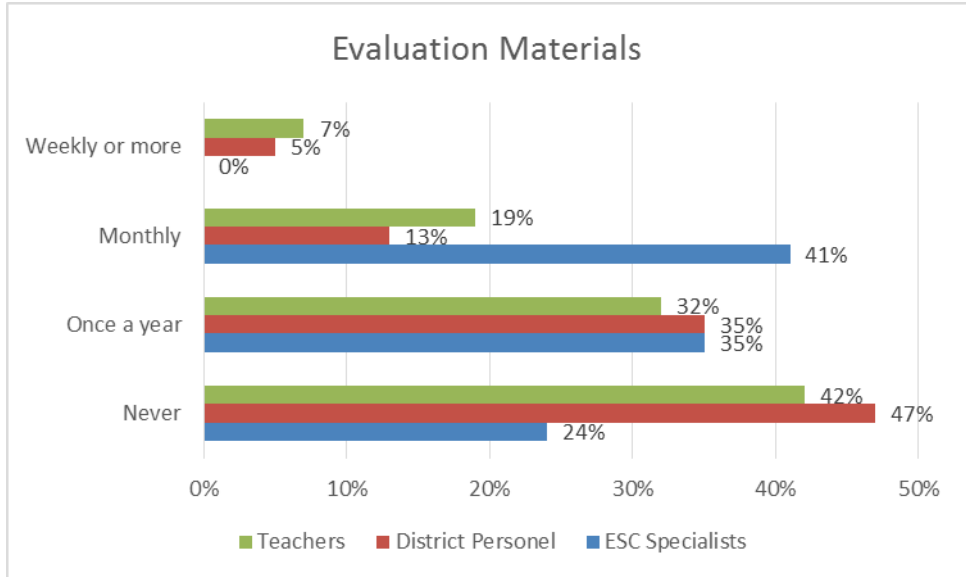
ESC Specialists (N= 17): Never =4, Once a year = 6, Monthly =7, Weekly or more= 0
District Personnel (N= 342): Never = 162; Once a year = 118, Monthly = 46, Weekly or more =16
Teachers (N= 602): Never = 255; Once a year = 192, Monthly = 114, Weekly or more = 41

Glossary. Thirty-five percent of ESC specialists used the Glossary on a monthly basis. Forty-one percent of ESC specialists, 34 percent of district personnel, and 27 percent of teachers relied on the Glossary once a year. These data are displayed in **Exhibit 20**.

Exhibit 20.   **Frequency of Use of Glossary**

Glossary

Weekly or more	7% (Teachers) / 4% (District Personnel) / 0% (ESC Specialists)
Monthly	19% (Teachers) / 13% (District Personnel) / 35% (ESC Specialists)
Once a year	27% (Teachers) / 34% (District Personnel) / 41% (ESC Specialists)
Never	46% (Teachers) / 50% (District Personnel) / 24% (ESC Specialists)

Legend: ■ Teachers ■ District Personnel ■ ESC Specialists

ESC Specialists (N= 17): Never =4, Once a year = 7, Monthly =6, Weekly or more= 0
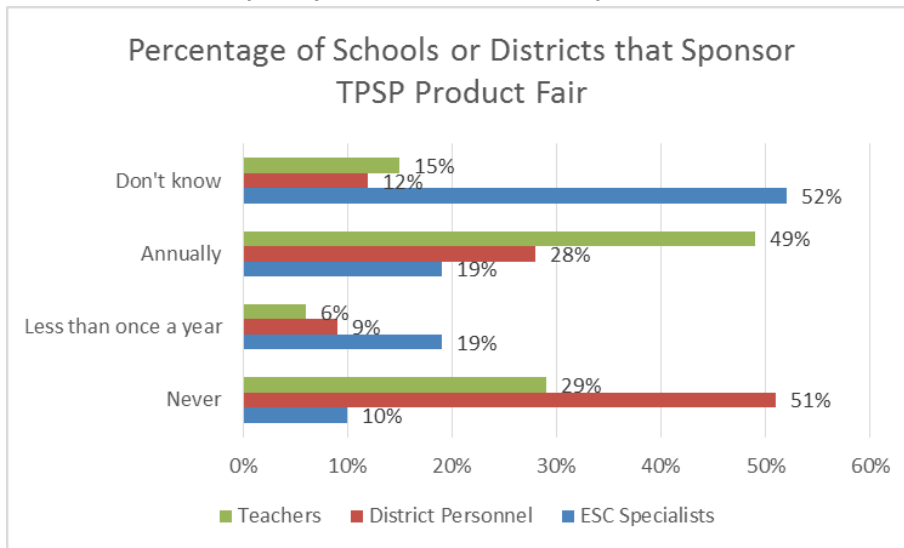District Personnel (N= 341): Never = 170; Once a year = 115, Monthly = 44, Weekly or more =12
Teachers (N= 599): Never = 275; Once a year = 166, Monthly = 116, Weekly or more = 42

Close to 50 percent of teachers report that their schools sponsor an annual TPSP product fair.
ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers responded differently to the survey question,
"How often do the schools or districts you work with sponsor a TPSP product fair?" As shown in
Exhibit 21, while 51 percent of district personnel reported "Never," 49 percent of teachers
reported "Annually," and 52 percent of ESC specialists indicated they did not know how often
schools or districts sponsored a TPSP product fair.

Exhibit 21. Frequency of School or District-Sponsored TPSP Product Fair

Percentage of Schools or Districts that Sponsor TPSP Product Fair

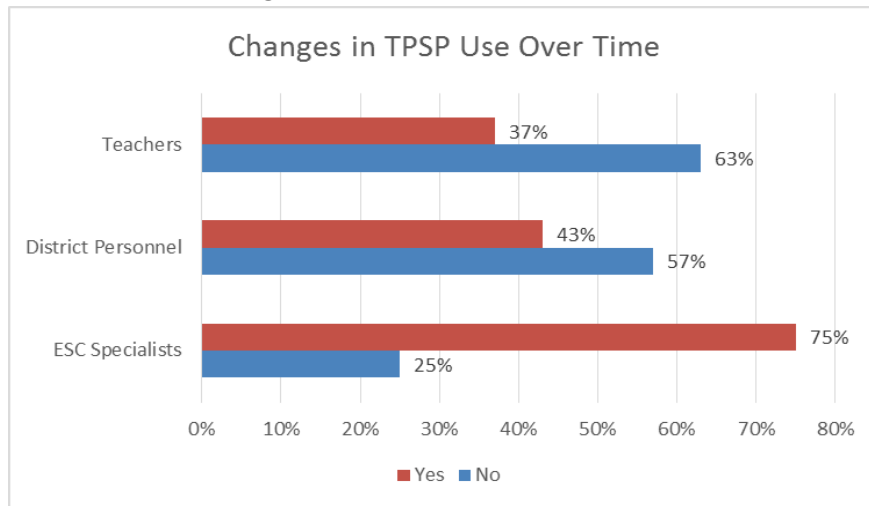|	Teachers	District Personnel	ESC Specialists
Don't know	15%	12%	52%
Annually	49%	28%	19%
Less than once a year	6%	9%	19%
Never	29%	51%	10%

ESC Specialists (N=21): Never = 2, Less than once a year = 4, Annually = 4, Don't know = 11
District Personnel (N= 364): Never = 184, Less than once a year = 33, Annually = 103, Don't know = 44
Teachers (N=617): Never = 179, Less than once a year =39, Annually = 305, Don't know = 94

ESC specialists report that their region has changed how they use TPSP resources over time. Seventy-five percent of ESC specialists reported that their region's use of TPSP resources have changed over time. In comparison, this was true for 43 percent of district personnel and 37 percent of teachers. ESC specialists provided comments that accounted for their changes, which included that more schools in the region are using the TPSP, there is greater awareness of the TPSP, and changes in the website have led to greater use. These data can be viewed in **Exhibit 22**.

Exhibit 22.   **Changes in TPSP Use Over Time**

Changes in TPSP Use Over Time

- Teachers: Yes 37%, No 63%
- District Personnel: Yes 43%, No 57%
- ESC Specialists: Yes 75%, No 25%

Teachers (N =616): No = 390, Yes = 226; District Personnel (N= 380): No = 215, Yes = 165; ESC Specialists (N= 24): No = 6, Yes = 18

Summary

All groups surveyed were more likely than not to have heard of the TPSP. Of those who had heard of the TPSP, large numbers were using TPSP components with varying frequency. Around one-quarter of teachers report using the TPSP components (website, tasks, and resources) annually, one-third every semester, and one-third every six weeks. When all respondents were asked how frequently they used each of the TPSP resources, ESC Specialists were more likely to use resources monthly, while teacher use varied depending on the focus of the resource. Teachers were more likely to report use of some resources (Guides for Student Projects and Instructional Strategies) more frequently than other groups, likely because of the applicability of those resources to classroom use. Teachers were also more likely to have been in their position for a longer time, which may result in more familiarity with resources and therefore less need to rely on those not specifically used in the classroom.

Evaluation Question 2. To what extent are the TPSP website and its associated tasks and resources meeting the needs of district G/T personnel, G/T teachers, and ESC G/T specialists?

ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers agreed that the TPSP resources are well aligned to the TEKS and the Texas G/T plan and facilitate teachers' use of the TPSP tasks and other G/T resources. Respondents were asked about the extent to which resources included on the TPSP website met their needs. As shown in **Exhibit 23**, 86 percent of ESC specialists, 83 percent of teachers, and 76 percent of district personnel agreed or strongly agreed that the TPSP resources are well aligned to the TEKS.

Exhibit 23.   Educators' Perceptions of the TPSP Resources

I agree or strongly agree….	*ESC Specialists*	*District Personnel*	*Teachers*
1. The TPSP resources are well aligned to the TEKS	**86%**	**76%**	**83%**
ESC Specialists (N= 21): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 0, Agree = 38%, Strongly Agree = 48%, Don't Know/N.A.= 14% District Personnel (N= 364): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 1%, Agree = 55%, Strongly Agree =21%, Don't Know/N.A.= 23% Teachers (N= 613): Strongly Disagree= 1%, Disagree = 6%, Agree = 63%, Strongly Agree = 20%, Don't Know/N.A.= 10%			
2. The TPSP resources are aligned to the Texas G/T plan.	**81%**	**77%**	**82%**
ESC Specialists (N= 21): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 0, Agree = 29%, Strongly Agree = 52%, Don't Know/N.A.= 19% District Personnel (N= 361): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 0%, Agree = 56%, Strongly Agree =21%, Don't Know/N.A.= 23% Teachers (N= 609): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 2%, Agree = 67%, Strongly Agree = 15%, Don't Know/N.A.= 15%			
3. The TPSP resources facilitate teachers' use of the TPSP tasks.	**68%**	**65%**	**78%**
ESC Specialists (N= 22): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 5%, Agree = 50%, Strongly Agree = 18%, Don't Know/N.A.= 27% District Personnel (N= 361): Strongly Disagree= 0%, Disagree =7%, Agree = 53%, Strongly Agree =12%, Don't Know/N.A.= 27% Teachers (N= 604): Strongly Disagree= 1%, Disagree = 8%, Agree = 65%, Strongly Agree = 13%, Don't Know/N.A.= 13%			
4. Teachers use the TPSP resources in conjunction with other G/T resources.	**54%**	**63%**	**83%**
ESC Specialists (N= 22): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree =18%, Agree =45%, Strongly Agree = 9%, Don't Know/N.A.= 27% District Personnel (N= 361): Strongly Disagree= 1%, Disagree = 7%, Agree = 50%, Strongly Agree =13%, Don't Know/N.A.= 29% Teachers (N= 606): Strongly Disagree= 1%, Disagree = 6%, Agree = 65%, Strongly Agree = 18%, Don't Know/N.A.= 10%			

ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers were asked to provide suggestions for improving TPSP resources. While some educators noted that they did not use the TPSP resources, other educators discussed the need to update the resources. Presented below are sample comments. Note, the comments provided here and throughout the report are examples of comments only.

Also, ESC specialists and district personnel comments are combined. All comments can be read in **Appendices A and B.**

Don't use/unaware of resources

- I was unaware of the resources available. I have not really looked at those since a few years back… -Teacher
- Honestly I need to use them more. I am so [used] to going to the tasks… -Teacher
- I have not used the resources enough to make a suggestion. -ESC specialist/district personnel

Updating needed

- Maybe begin to include a focused STEM component. -Teacher
- Update and add more resources. -Teacher
- Offer more variety, especially for high schools. -ESC specialist/district personnel
- Add video how-to's of actual use in gen[eral] education classrooms; time is the issue – how to use instead of other less complex activities for TEK [S]-driven instruction. -ESC specialist/district personnel

ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers provided additional comments when responding to a question in the survey about how the TPSP resources can better meet their needs. Educators' comments were consistent with the suggestions they made for improving the resources, but also included more "Don't know/N.A." responses and additional comments focused on students' needs and the types of resources. Presented below are example comments.

Focused on students' needs
- Give me more resources that my students can easily use. -Teacher
- The resources need to be available for our non-English speaking students. -Teacher

Types of resources
- Offer kits with resources specific to each task. -ESC specialist/district personnel
- They have too many pages. Make them more concise. -ESC specialist/district personnel

ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers agreed that the TPSP tasks are well aligned to the TEKS, challenging and interesting for students, aligned to the State Plan, and can be used to support other G/T projects/student objectives. Respondents were asked to respond to questions regarding how well the TPSP tasks met their needs. As shown in **Exhibit 24**, 85 percent of teachers, 82 percent of ESC specialists, and 81 percent of district personnel agreed or strongly agreed that the TPSP tasks are aligned to the Texas state G/T plan.

Exhibit 24. **Educators' Perceptions of the TPSP Tasks**

I agree or strongly agree….	ESC Specialists	District Personnel	Teachers
1. The TPSP tasks are well aligned to the TEKS	**87%**	**80%**	**89%**
ESC Specialists (N= 23): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 0, Agree = 26%, Strongly Agree = 61%, Don't Know/N.A.= 13% District Personnel (N= 367): Strongly Disagree=0, Disagree = 1%, Agree = 53%, Strongly Agree =27%, Don't Know/N.A.= 18% Teachers (N= 616): Strongly Disagree= 1%, Disagree = 5%, Agree = 61%, Strongly Agree = 28%, Don't Know/N.A.= 6%			
2. The TPSP tasks are challenging for students.	**86%**	**79%**	**90%**
ESC Specialists (N= 23): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 0, Agree = 43%, Strongly Agree = 43%, Don't Know/N.A.= 13% District Personnel (N= 367): Strongly Disagree=0, Disagree = 3%, Agree = 49%, Strongly Agree =30%, Don't Know/N.A.= 18% Teachers (N= 614): Strongly Disagree= 1%, Disagree = 6%, Agree = 65%, Strongly Agree = 25%, Don't Know/N.A.= 4%			
3. The TPSP tasks are interesting for students.	**82%**	**77%**	**N/A**
ESC Specialists (N= 23): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 0, Agree = 43%, Strongly Agree = 39%, Don't Know/N.A.= 17% District Personnel (N= 365): Strongly Disagree= 1%, Disagree =5%, Agree = 57%, Strongly Agree =20%, Don't Know/N.A.= 18%			
4. The TPSP tasks are aligned to the Texas State G/T plan.	**82%**	**81%**	**85%**
ESC Specialists (N= 23): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 0, Agree =17%, Strongly Agree = 65%, Don't Know/N.A.= 17% District Personnel (N= 365): Strongly Disagree=0, Disagree = 1%, Agree = 54%, Strongly Agree =27%, Don't Know/N.A.= 18% Teachers (N= 613): Strongly Disagree= 0%, Disagree = 13%, Agree = 65%, Strongly Agree = 20%, Don't Know/N.A.= 12%			
5. The TPSP tasks can be used to support other G/T projects.(Teachers only –specific learning objectives for G/T students)	**78%**	**79%**	**82%**
ESC Specialists (N= 23): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 0, Agree = 39%, Strongly Agree = 39%, Don't Know/N.A.= 22% District Personnel (N= 364): Strongly Disagree=0, Disagree = 2%, Agree = 59%, Strongly Agree =20%, Don't Know/N.A.= 20% Teachers (N= 616): Strongly Disagree= 1%, Disagree = 10%, Agree = 64%, Strongly Agree = 18%, Don't Know/N.A.= 8%			

Teachers are more likely to agree with the statement, "The TPSP tasks need updating" than ESC specialists and district personnel. When asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, "The TPSP tasks need updating," as shown in **Exhibit 24**, 50 percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with this statements compared to 43 percent of district personnel and 35 percent of ESC specialists.

Exhibit 25.   Responses to TPSP Tasks Need Updating
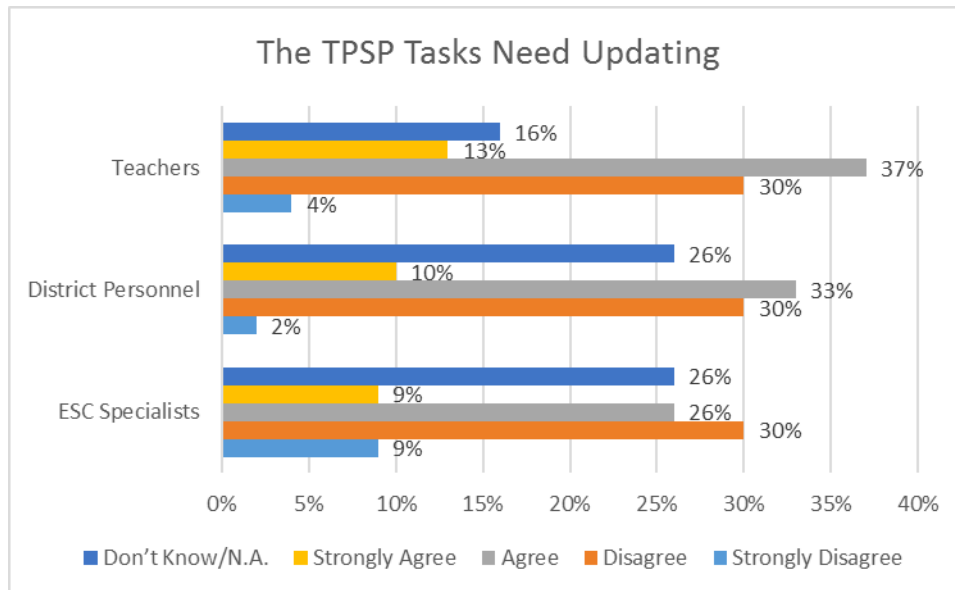
Teachers (N=613): Strongly Disagree = 24, Disagree = 185, Agree = 227, Strongly Agree = 79, Don't Know/N.A. = 98.
District Personnel (N= 367): Strongly Disagree = 6, Disagree = 109, Agree = 120, Strongly Agree = 35, Don't Know/N.A. = 97.
ESC Specialists (N= 23): Strongly Disagree = 2, Disagree = 7, Agree = 6, Strongly Agree = 2, Don't Know/N.A. = 6.

When asked to provide suggestions for improving TPSP tasks, ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers described how tasks can better meet students' needs, as well as improvements to the types of tasks and guides/resources related to the tasks. Consistent with the survey findings, some teachers provided comments related to updating the tasks, especially with respect to technology. In addition, ESC specialists and district personnel discussed the need for additional training. Sample comments are presented here.

How tasks can better meet students' needs:
- Updated with technology TEKS and technology resources -Teacher
- Put student directions, worksheets, parent info and rubrics in Spanish. -ESC specialist/district personnel

Types of tasks
- Include STEAM. -Teacher
- We are especially concerned with new math alignment. -ESC specialist/district personnel

Guides/resources
- I find the TPSP tasks very confusing. I don't understand how to guide the activities. Maybe including actual lesson plans or ideas on how to break up the tasks into actual daily activities would be helpful. -Teacher
- Include an implementation guide. -ESC specialist/district personnel

Additional training
- More teacher training so teachers will know what G/T students will be working on in the classroom. -ESC specialist/district personnel
- The tasks are good. It's getting staff trained to use them appropriately. -ESC specialist/district personnel

ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers provided additional comments when responding to a question in the survey about how the TPSP tasks can better meet their needs. The example comments presented here represent suggestions in categories such as implementation and time constraints.

Implementation
- All Tasks include 7E format. -Teacher
- Shorter, more manageable tasks that are conducive to smaller districts with little G/T time. -ESC specialist/district personnel
- Show how teachers can integrate these into [the] current curriculum -ESC specialist/district personnel

Time constraints
- It isn't the tasks that are problematic. I need more planning time to prepare and more support in the classroom while implementing the tasks…I do not have extra help and do not have a regular prep time daily. -Teacher

- It is difficult to manage TPSP tasks when [there is] so much emphasis on testing…There is no time to teach the curriculum, subject my students to the required testing, and be able to extend their learning through projects such as TPSP. –Teacher

As shown in Exhibit 25, ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers agree that the TPSP website is easy to use, has critical G/T resources, is visually appealing, and is well organized.

Exhibit 26. Educators' Perceptions of the TPSP Website

I agree or strongly agree….	ESC Specialists	District Personnel	Teachers
1. The TPSP website is easy to use.	**73%**	**82%**	**81%**
ESC Specialists (N= 22): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 9%, Agree = 32%, Strongly Agree = 41%, Don't Know/N.A.= 18% District Personnel (N= 366): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 4%, Agree = 59%, Strongly Agree =23%, Don't Know/N.A.= 14% Teachers (N= 613): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 6%, Agree = 61%, Strongly Agree = 20%, Don't Know/N.A.= 13%			
2. The TPSP website has critical G/T resources.	**81%**	**77%**	**74%**
ESC Specialists (N= 21): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 0, Agree = 38%, Strongly Agree = 43%, Don't Know/N.A.= 19% District Personnel (N= 367): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 3%, Agree = 60%, Strongly Agree =17%, Don't Know/N.A.= 19% Teachers (N= 611): Strongly Disagree= 1%, Disagree = 10%, Agree = 59%, Strongly Agree = 15%, Don't Know/N.A.= 16%			
3. The TPSP website is visually appealing.	**73%**	**80%**	**78%**
ESC Specialists (N= 22): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 9%, Agree = 32%, Strongly Agree = 41%, Don't Know/N.A.= 18% District Personnel (N= 365): Strongly Disagree= 1%, Disagree = 4%, Agree = 63%, Strongly Agree =17%, Don't Know/N.A.= 15% Teachers (N= 607): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 8%, Agree = 63%, Strongly Agree = 15%, Don't Know/N.A.= 14%			
4. The TPSP website is well organized	**72%**	**80%**	**81%**
ESC Specialists (N= 22): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree =9%, Agree = 45%, Strongly Agree = 27%, Don't Know/N.A.= 18% District Personnel (N= 363): Strongly Disagree= 1%, Disagree =4%, Agree = 66%, Strongly Agree =14%, Don't Know/N.A.= 15% Teachers (N= 610): Strongly Disagree= 0%, Disagree = 6%, Agree = 65%, Strongly Agree = 16%, Don't Know/N.A.= 13%			

When asked how the website can better meet their needs, educators provided some comments about website navigation and ease of use, as well as suggestions that are consistent with previous comments concerning improving the tasks and resources, providing lesson plans, step-by-step instructions/implementation guides, and more instructional strategies.

ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers were also asked to provide their suggestions for improving the TPSP website. Some educators admitted that they did not use the website or they were unaware of the website. One teacher commented, "I only access [the TPSP website] once per year in order to see the TPSP projects…"

Consistent with the previous comments regarding the tasks and resources, most educators discussed the need to update the website, which included adding additional components. Example comments are presented here.

Update the TPSP website/Add additional components
- Some of the links don't work. -Teacher
- New videos every year…from around the state…Have a variety to look at so any school in the state of Texas can view it… -ESC specialist/district personnel
- Give examples from each grade level. -Teacher
- Add videos to explain the steps to teachers. -ESC specialist/district personnel
- Make the website more interactive with links for research and scope and sequence for teachers. -ESC specialist/district personnel

Summary

Most respondents responded favorably to questions about the usefulness of the TPSP tasks, resources, and website. Teachers were more likely than district personnel and ESC specialists to agree that TPSP tasks need updating. This is likely related to the more frequent use of tasks by teachers in classrooms and could also be related to teachers reporting more years of service.

Evaluation Question 3. What types of training are being provided for the TPSP program?
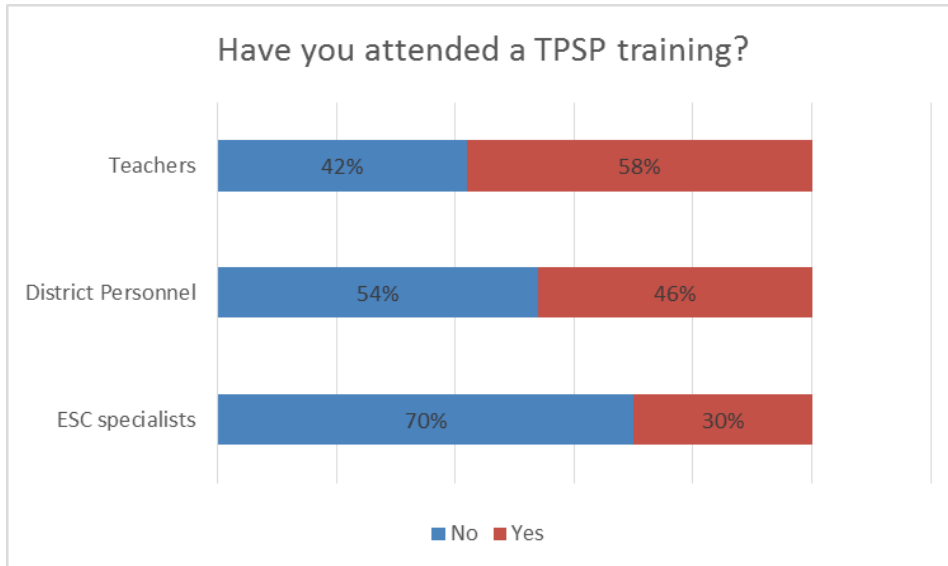
District personnel and teachers report having been offered more TPSP-related training than ESC specialists. As shown in **Exhibit 27**, 26 percent of ESC specialists reported that they have been offered a TPSP training compared to 57 percent of district personnel and 58 percent of teachers.

Exhibit 27.   Offered TPSP Training

	ESC Specialist	District Personnel	Teacher
No	17 (74%)	160 (43%)	260 (42%)
Yes	6 (26%)	216 (57%)	355 (58%)
N	23	376	615

Exhibit 28 shows that ESC specialists are also less likely to have attended TPSP training. Thirty percent of ESC specialists have attended a TPSP-related training, compared to 46 percent of district personnel and 58 percent of teachers.
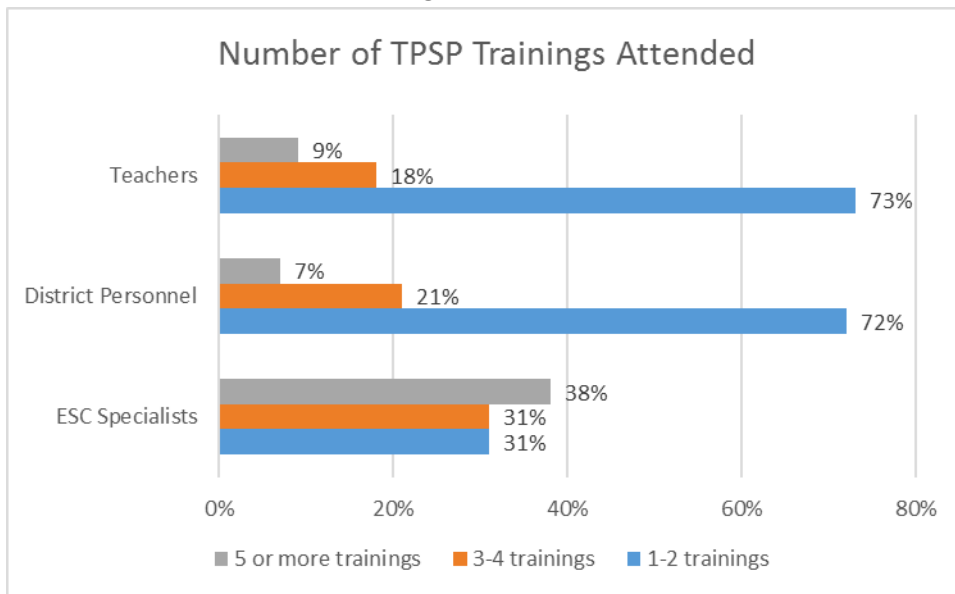
Exhibit 28.   Attended TPSP Training

Teachers (N= 615): No = 260, Yes = 355.
District Personnel (N = 376): No = 203, Yes = 173.
ESC Specialists (N= 23): No = 16, Yes = 7.

District personnel and teachers have attended 1-2 trainings compared to ESC specialists who have attended larger numbers of training sessions. As shown in **Exhibit 29**, for the respondents who have attended TPSP-related trainings, 72 percent of district personnel and 73 percent of teachers have attended 1-2 trainings whereas ESC specialists have attended various numbers of trainings, which ranged from 1-2, 3-4, or 5 or more.

Exhibit 29.   Number of Trainings Attended

Number of TPSP Trainings Attended

Teachers (N =355): 1-2 = 259, 3-4= 63, 5 or more = 33.
District Personnel (N = 170): 1-2 = 123, 3-4 = 35%, 5 or more = 12.
ESC Specialists (N = 13): 1-2 = 4, 3-4 = 4, 5 or more = 5

ESC specialists and teachers have attended TPSP training more recently than district personnel. As shown in **Exhibit 30**, over 70 percent of ESC specialists and teachers attended a TPSP training in 2014 or 2013 compared to 49 percent of district personnel.

Exhibit 30.   Timing of Last TPSP Training Attended

Last TPSP Training Attended			
	ESC Specialists	Teachers	District Personnel
2013-2014	77%	72%	49%
Prior to 2013	23%	27%	49%

ESC Specialists (N =13): 2013-2014 = 10, Prior to 2013 = 3.
Teachers (N =355): 2013-2014= 255, Prior to 2013 = 100.
District Personnel (N = 172): 2013-2014 =87, Prior to 2013 =85

ESC specialists have attended more hours of TPSP training than district personnel and teachers. Ninety-two percent of ESC specialists reported that the last TPSP training they attended was 5-8 hours compared to 55 percent of district personnel and 42 percent of teachers. These data are reported in **Exhibit 31**.

Exhibit 31.   Length of Training

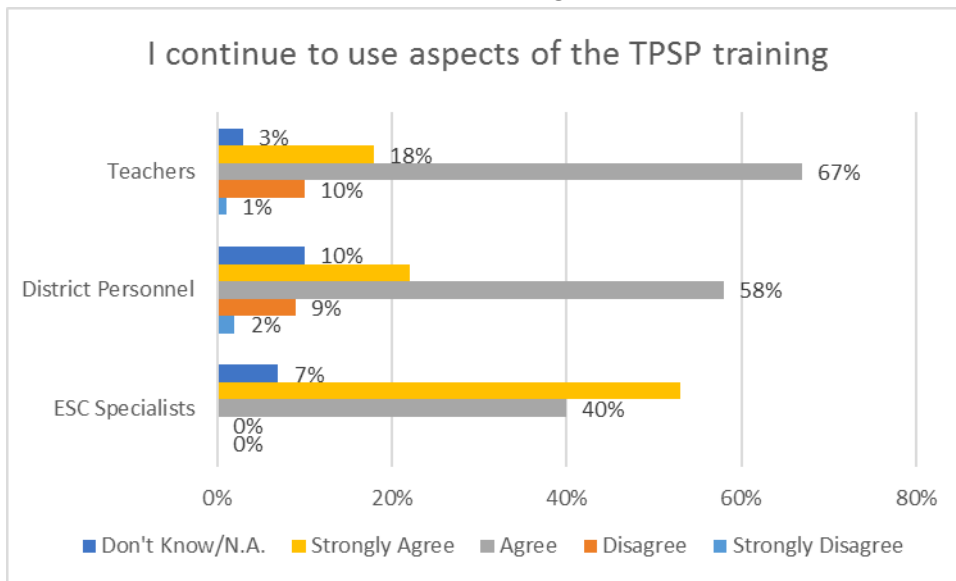|	ESC Specialists	Teachers	District Personnel
Hours of last TPSP training attended			
1-4 hours	8%	54%	43%
5-8 hours	92%	42%	55%
9+ hours	0%	5%	2%

ESC Specialists (N = 13): 1-4 hours = 1, 5-8 hours = 12, 9+ hours = 0.
Teachers (N =355): 1-4 hours = 188, 5-8 hours = 149, 9+ hours = 18.
District Personnel (N = 172): 1-4 hours = 74, 5-8 hours = 95, 9+ hours = 3.

ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers agree that they continue to use aspects of the TPSP training in their work, either in supporting TPSP teachers or in their work with G/T students. As shown in **Exhibit 32**, 93 percent of ESC specialists strongly agreed/agreed that they continue to use the TPSP training compared to 85 percent of teachers and 80 percent of district personnel.

Exhibit 32.   Continue to Use TPSP Training

ESC Specialists (N= 15): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 0, Agree = 40%, Strongly Agree = 53%, Don't Know/N.A.= 7%
District Personnel (N= 172): Strongly Disagree= 2%, Disagree = 9%, Agree = 58%, Strongly Agree =22%, Don't Know/N.A.= 10%
Teachers (N= 354): Strongly Disagree= 1%, Disagree = 10%, Agree = 67%, Strongly Agree = 18%, Don't Know/N.A.= 3%

In the survey, ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers were asked to provide suggestions for improving the TPSP training. Comments pertained to refreshers or online reviews, trainings

based on grade level taught, and examples of TPSP use. Presented are sample examples of comments.

Need a refresher/review

- Conduct through online recording so it can be repeated. -ESC specialist/district personnel
- Place some training online. -Teacher
- [Training] should be offered yearly. -Teacher

Training based on grade level taught

- I would like to see a secondary training. Most secondary teachers have little patience with sitting through a training with elementary samples. -ESC specialist/district personnel
- Separate elementary from secondary teachers. The G/T program is very different… -Teacher

Examples of TPSP use

- I would like to see more example[s] of student work. -Teacher
- Examples of ways to modify the tasks, including planning, resources required to produce [a] product, and [the] amount of time required to complete a task. -Teacher

In response to the question concerning what they would like the TPSP training to focus on next, educators provided comments which concerned the use of TPSP, grading and completing TPSP projects, grade-level implementation, examples of TPSP, and encouraging student engagement. Sample comments are presented below.

- Meeting the needs of teachers and guiding them on using TPSP in the classroom on a daily basis to meet the needs of their G/T students. -ESC specialist/district personnel
- How to grade and encourage students to complete TPSP projects. -ESC specialist/district personnel
- Implementing the TPSP: Ideas for elementary, middle, and high school. -ESC specialist/district personnel

- Practical concerns for implementation. -ESC specialist/district personnel
- Ideas for how to better manage and implement various TPSP activities. -Teacher
- Different projects and examples from our own district. -Teacher
- How to get the students to participate and not just rush…a project and be done with it. -Teacher

ESC specialists are primarily presenting TPSP-related training which is focused on the use of TPSP tasks. Eighty-one percent of district personnel and 64 percent of ESC specialists agreed that ESC specialists presented the last TPSP training they attended. ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers also agree that the use of tasks was the primary purpose of the TPSP training they attended.

ESC specialists are conducting more TPSP-related training than district personnel. As shown in **Exhibit 33**, 87 percent of ESC specialists indicated that they have conducted TPSP training compared to 25 percent of district personnel.

Exhibit 33.　　　**Conducted TPSP Training**
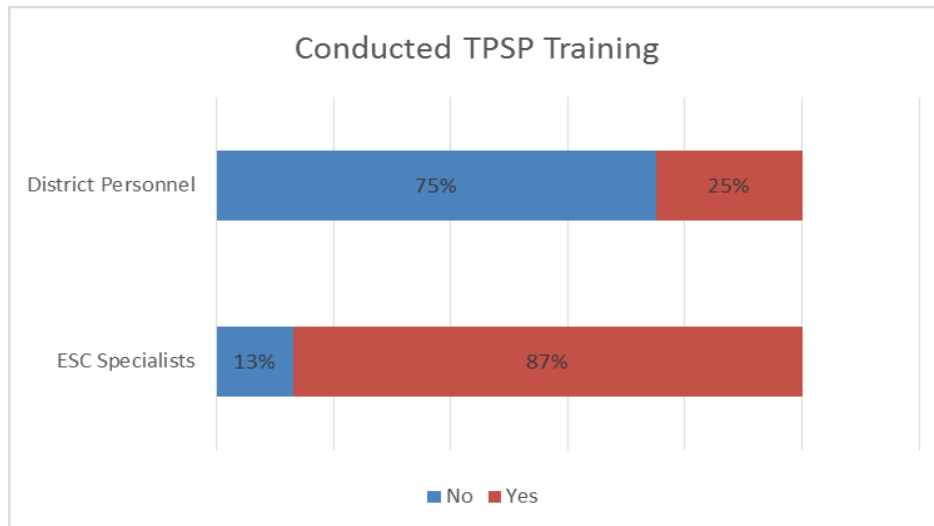

District Personnel (N = 166): No= 124, Yes = 42.
ESC Specialists (N = 15): No = 2, Yes = 13.

District personnel are following up with TPSP training participants more than ESC specialists. As shown in **Exhibit 34**, 78 percent of district personnel reported that they have followed up

with training participants compared to 50 percent of ESC specialists. Sixty-one percent of teachers reported that they have not received any follow up from their last TPSP training.

Exhibit 34. **Follow Up to TPSP Training**
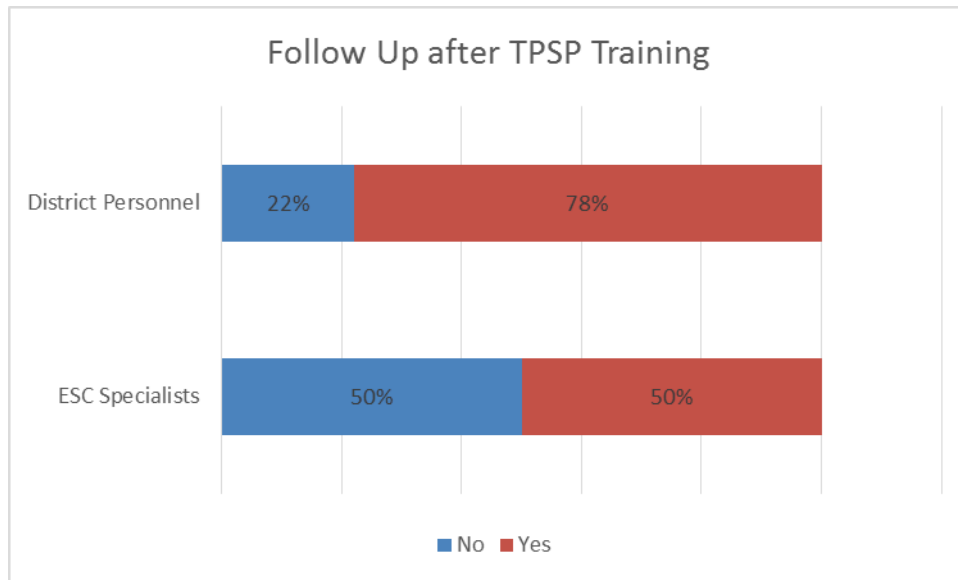
District Personnel (N =46): No = 10, Yes = 36.
ESC Specialists (N = 14): No = 7, Yes = 7.

Summary

Teachers and district personnel are more likely than ESC specialists to have been offered, and attended, TPSP training. This may be related to the shorter tenure of ESC specialists. However, those ESC specialists who have attended training reported attending more training sessions overall, longer hours of training, and more recent sessions. ESC specialists are the main source of training sessions, and district personnel are most likely to follow up with attendees after a training session.

Evaluation Question 4. What do Texas G/T educators perceive that they and their students have gained from TPSP program?

Teachers, district personnel, and ESC specialists reported that the TPSP helped teachers better meet their students' needs. As shown in **Exhibit 35**, 87 percent of ESC specialists strongly agreed/agreed that TPSP has helped teachers better meet their students' needs compared to 77 percent of teachers and district personnel.

**Exhibit 35.   Meeting the Needs of G/T Students**
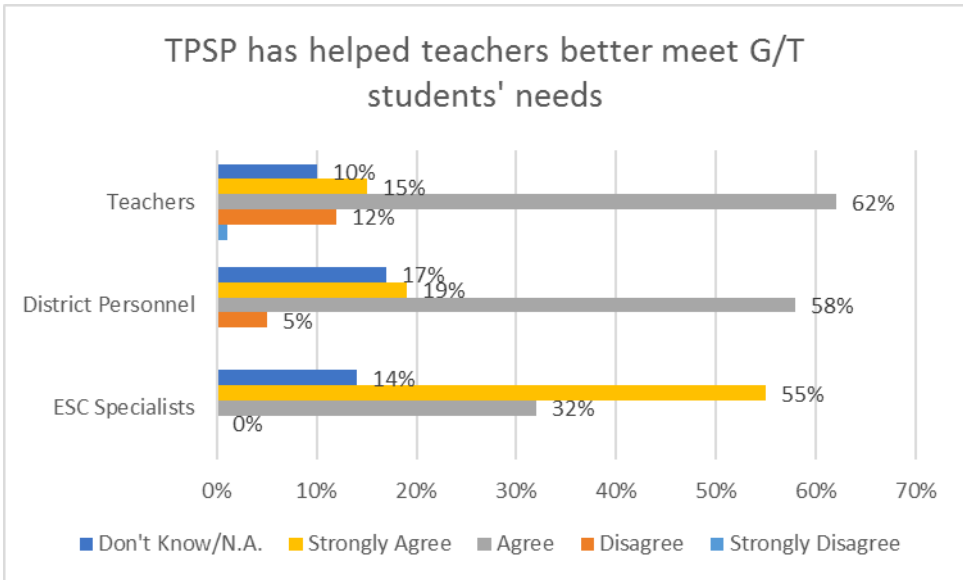
Teachers (N= 612): Strongly Disagree= 1%, Disagree = 12%, Agree = 62%, Strongly Agree = 15%, Don't Know/N.A.= 10%
District Personnel (N= 366): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 5%, Agree = 58%, Strongly Agree =19%, Don't Know/N.A.= 17%
ESC Specialists (N= 22): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 0, Agree = 32%, Strongly Agree = 55%, Don't Know/N.A.= 14%

Teachers, district personnel, and ESC specialists also reported that the TPSP helped teachers bring together standards, assessment, and curriculum for G/T students. Eighty-seven percent of ESC specialists strongly agreed/agreed that TPSP had helped teachers bring together standards, assessment, and curriculum compared to 75 percent of teachers and district personnel. These data are reported in **Exhibit 36**.

Exhibit 36.   **Bring Together Standards, Assessment, and Curriculum**

The TPSP has helped teachers bring together standards, assessment, and curriculum for G/T students
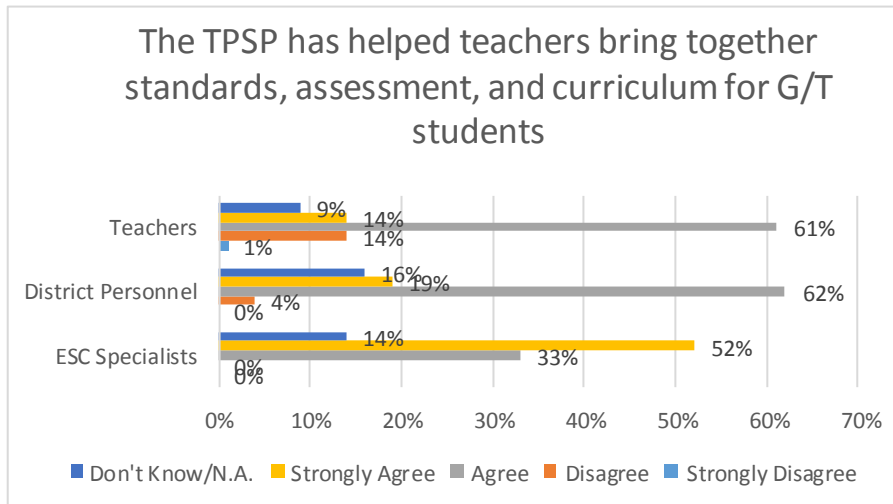
Teachers (N= 619): Strongly Disagree= 1%, Disagree = 14%, Agree = 61%, Strongly Agree = 14%, Don't Know/N.A.= 9%
District Personnel (N= 360): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 4%, Agree = 62%, Strongly Agree =19%, Don't Know/N.A.= 16%
ESC Specialists (N= 21): Strongly Disagree= 0, Disagree = 0, Agree = 33%, Strongly Agree = 52%, Don't Know/N.A.= 14%

Consistent with the survey findings, comments were provided by ESC specialists and district personnel concerning the most significant changes in teachers based on their work with the TPSP. These comments represented the following categories: greater understanding of G/T students' needs, increased opportunities for student challenges/risk taking, differentiated instruction, and increased opportunities for student research. Presented in **Exhibit 37** are examples for each of the categories.

Exhibit 37.   **Significant Changes in Teachers Based on TPSP Work**

Examples of the Most Significant Changes in Teachers Based on TPSP Work	
-ESC Specialists and District Personnel	
Greater understanding of G/T students' needs	• Better understanding of what G/T students are capable of • Understand the difference[s] in the type of activities G/T students need
Providing more opportunities for student challenges/risk taking	• Help[s] [teachers] think outside the box and challenge students to think • Having the teacher present the tasks to all students and challenging the G/T students to take the tasks to a higher degree of learning
More differentiated instruction	• Teachers are better able to differentiate for their students. • [Teachers] gain understanding and provide better opportunities for differentiation for students.
Increased opportunities for student research	• Better understanding of the research process • Better understanding of exploring a concept with depth and complexity.

Teachers reported that the TPSP helped students gain new research skills, helped students with time management, and to a lesser extent, improved students' presentation skills. As shown in **Exhibit 38**, 78 percent of teachers indicated that the TPSP had facilitated students' research skills compared to 72 percent who indicated that TPSP facilitated students' time management skills and 63 percent for presentation skills.

Exhibit 38.   **TPSP and Student Outcomes**
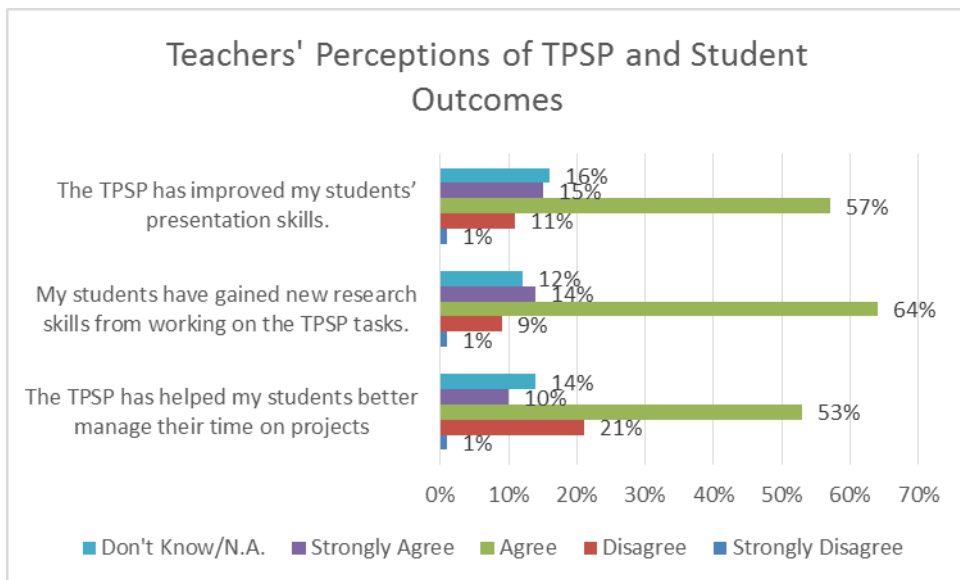
Teachers' comments on the survey confirm these findings. When asked to discuss the most significant changes in students based on their work with the TPSP, teachers' comments represented the following categories: student engagement, time management, creativity, research skills, critical thinking, communication skills, and independence/risk tasking. Presented in **Exhibit 39** are examples for each of the categories.

Exhibit 39.   Changes in Students Based on TPSP Work

Examples of the Most Significant Changes in Students Based on TPSP Work -Teachers	
Student Engagement	• TPSP provides interesting topics for G/T students [which help] keep them interested in the G/T class. • [There is] excitement generated [for students] in seeing a project through from beginning to end.
Time Management	• They have to manage their time more wisely to complete all the projects. • Prioritizing [and] understanding the need to create their own timeline
Creativity	• [They are] using their creativity and amazing themselves with what they can do. • [The TPSP] provided [students] with a way to be more creative.
Research Skills	• They learn how to do research in first grade… • They have gained a better understanding of what research is and how to effectively search for "good" information.
Critical Thinking	• The students are using more higher-order thinking skills to complete tasks. • Thinking outside the box instead of having one right answer for everything!
Communication Skills	• Better oral presentation skills • Their ability to talk and present to a group
Risk Taking	• They are learning how to do more on their own rather than [the teacher] give step by step instructions. • They are more confident and have become risk takers.

In addition to the positive comments provided by teachers regarding the TPSP and changes in their students, teachers also included less positive comments regarding comments in the categories above as well as other categories. Presented below are examples:

- [Students] are less excited about research because the subject matter [was] given to them. They did not get to choose [it]. -Teacher
- [Students] hate the TPSP. Many of them opt out of it when at all possible. Some even get out of AP classes -Teacher
- [Students] are frustrated because they don't like the topics. -Teacher

- Students are very confused and not sure what to say in video presentations. -Teacher
- Because there was [no] training for the TPSP and the G/T teachers are allowed little or no time to collaborate…my instruction has suffered. My students tend to be less engaged in these projects… -Teacher

When asked to provide comments concerning the biggest challenges they face in educating G/T students, ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers shared information about a variety of topics. Comments provided by ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers similarly represented the following categories: resources, differentiation, student engagement, support, and time. Presented in **Exhibit 40** are examples for each of the categories by educator group.

Exhibit 40.   **Biggest Challenges in Educating G/T Students**

Examples of the Biggest Challenges Faced in Educating G/T Students	
Resources	• Lack of technology resources. A budget of $200.00 for 60 students. - Teacher • Lack of resources and teacher preparation. –ESC specialist/district personnel
Differentiation	• Knowing how to differentiate instruction for G/T students. –Teacher • Providing on going true differentiation. Teachers are concerned that students may not do well on State testing and…do not differentiate as much as they can [or] should. –ESC specialist/district personnel
Student engagement	• Making sure that I challenge them enough so that they are never bored with their learning but are consistently engaged in deep thinking that they actually enjoy. –Teacher • Getting them interested in topics and motivating them to want to work on a project. They see the G/T curriculum as extra work at times. –ESC specialist or district personnel
Support	• Lack of administrative support. –Teacher • Counselors and administrators seeing the TPSP independent study class as a dumping ground rather than a classroom to truly serve the G/T kids. –ESC specialist/district personnel
Time	• Lack of time and inclusion. G/T students need as much attention as other special program students. –Teacher • Finding the time to meet the needs of the G/T students because now we have to challenge them in the regular classroom. –ESC specialist/district personnel
Multiple categories	• Time and resources are limited. G/T students are not the district priority so any assistance with curriculum, assessment, and growth is useful. -Teacher • I quit as [a] G/T coordinator because the school did not provide adequate resources or support for the program. [The] program['s] guidelines were twenty years old. – ESC specialist/district personnel

As shown in **Exhibit 41**, ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers also offered suggestions for resources the state could provide to improve the education of G/T students. Suggestions provided by the educator groups including the following categories: funding/time, training, and program support. While ESC specialists, district personnel, and teachers suggested instructional materials/resources, teachers provided specific suggestions, which included projects, technology, and books.

Exhibit 41.   **Resources Needed to Improve Education of G/T Students**

Examples of Resources Needed to Improve the Education of G/T Students	
Funding/Time	• Additional funding to provide additional technology for students to do research, independent study, etc… - ESC specialist/district personnel • Money to provide stimulating field trips and opportunities outside the campus. –Teacher
Training	• Online training opportunities in G/T and on TPSP. - ESC specialist/district personnel Regular training for teachers in TPSP at least every 2-3 years. Requiring the training for all new G/T teachers. –Teacher
Program Support	• A collaboration blog or posting spot for teachers to share ideas and resources. – ESC specialist/district personnel • Implementation information. How does it work in the mixed ability classroom? – ESC specialist/district personnel • Examples of strategies/implementation. –Teacher
Instructional Materials	• Materials consistent with curriculum units. If teachers could select their grade level, subject area, and then browse through unit options, it would be a selling point… - ESC specialist/district personnel • Video clips of differentiated activities. – ESC specialist/district personnel
Projects	• Real world, modern projects such as coding, STEM, creating with technology –Teacher
Technology	• Technology based activities with the devices need[ed] to complete them. – Teacher
Lessons	• More day to day lesson plans. –Teacher
Books	• Books that go along with the units. –Teacher
Activities	• More concrete activities to incorporate with their research. -Teacher
Tasks	• More tasks on the TPSP website. –Teacher

Summary

Most respondents reported that TPSP helped teachers better meet their students' needs and that the TPSP helped teachers bring together standards, assessment, and curriculum for G/T students. ESC specialists and district personnel reported the significant changes in teachers based on TPSP work and teachers reported significant changes in students based on TPSP work.

PARENT SURVEY

A link to a survey for parents was made available on the TPSP website. There were 12 responses to the parent survey, which will continue to be made available to parents at the request of TEA and Region 13. Parents reported being largely unaware of the TPSP, although five of the 12 respondents reported using Guides to Success and Guides for Student Projects. One parent reported using 3-4 tasks while four parents reported using 1-2 tasks.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings reported in this evaluation provide information regarding the use of the TPSP, the extent to which the TPSP website, tasks, and resources are meeting the needs of educators, the types of training provided for the TPSP, and perceived benefits of the TPSP for teachers and students. Presented here are the primary conclusions and questions for considerations.

Educators agree that the TPSP has helped teachers better meet their G/T students' needs and bring together standards, curriculum, and assessment for G/T students. Teachers reported that the TPSP helped students gain new research skills, helped students with time management, and to a lesser extent, improved students' presentation skills. Survey comments are consistent with these findings. Based on survey comments, some of the biggest challenges facing G/T educators involve resources, differentiation, student engagement, support, and time.

Questions for considerations:
- How can the TPSP continue to support teachers and their students?
- What can be done to address the challenges facing G/T educators?

Respondents in all groups were more likely than not to have heard of the TPSP. An important goal of the TPSP is to provide teachers with an assessment system and standards for G/T students. Survey data in this evaluation indicate that majorities of all groups surveyed have heard of the TPSP.

Questions for consideration:

- What can be done to increase teacher awareness and use of the TPSP?

- Considering that more ESC specialists have heard of the TPSP than district personnel, and more district personnel than teachers, where might information best be directed to increase knowledge and use of the TPSP?

Teachers report using the TPSP components (e.g., website, tasks, and resources) at least every semester or annually. ESC specialists are using all of the TPSP resources more frequently than teachers and district personnel. Teachers are more likely to use resources related to classroom instruction.

Questions for consideration:

- What can be done to increase the use of TPSP resources for teachers and district personnel?

- What additional resources related to classroom instruction might be most helpful for teachers?

Educators positively view the TPSP resources, tasks, and website. Educators reported that the TPSP resources are well aligned to the TEKS and the State Plan, facilitate teachers' use of the TPSP tasks, and are used in conjunction with other G/T resources. Educator groups also agree that the TPSP tasks are well aligned to the TEKS and to the State Plan, are challenging and interesting for students, and can be used to support other G/T projects/student objectives. Similarly, educators agree that the TPSP website is easy to use, has critical G/T resources, is visually appealing, and is well organized. Consistent with survey findings, educators indicated in their comments that they would appreciate updates to the TPSP resources, tasks, and websites. For example, educators mentioned more focus on technology in the tasks as well as updating of tasks based on the 7E model.

Questions for consideration

- How might TPSP resources, tasks, and websites be updated on a regular basis?

ESC specialists and teachers have attended more recent TPSP training than district personnel. ESC specialists have also conducted more TPSP training than district personnel, but district personnel are following up with TPSP training participants more than ESC specialists.

Questions for consideration:

- What can be done to ensure that district personnel attend more recent TPSP training?
- How can more district personnel be trained on TPSP?

Parents are in large part unaware of the TPSP. Twelve parents accessed the survey posted on the TPSP website. Five of the parents reported using tasks and/or resources.

Questions for consideration:

- What can be done to increase parent awareness and use of the TPSP components?

LIMITATIONS

The survey is based on a sample of educators and may not be representative of the total population of educators using the TPSP. In our sample, 56 percent of ESC specialists were in their position 0-2 years compared to 44 percent of district personnel and 36 percent of teachers. Also, 69 percent of district personnel represented rural districts compared to 33 percent of teachers.

There are common limitations associated with survey research, which could be present in this evaluation. For example, sometimes survey respondents respond in more favorable ways because they do not want to present negative views. Also, at times, survey respondents have different interpretations of questions. In this survey, it is possible that the combined "Don't Know/N.A'" answer choice confused survey respondents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increase the number of students participating in the TPSP
2. Conduct market research to determine the most effective ways to inform educators and parents about the benefits of TPSP participation.

3. Implement findings from market research (e.g., rebranding, sharing positive results, update the TPSP website, new trainings for ESCs, presentations at state conferences).

4. Increase the number and variety of tasks by updating all tasks including adaptation to 7-E model, increasing the emphasis on technology, and adding tasks that have a science/technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) focus.

5. Provide and publicize (based on market research) short webinars for school and district administrators on TPSP tasks, website, and resources.