

Measurement and Accountability in K-12 Education

Insights from Students, Caregivers, and Educators







Introduction

- Our Approach
- What We Asked
- Operation of School and Student Success
- New Approaches to Assessment
- Community-based Accountability
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Engaging diverse students, families and educators in effective education policymaking





The GovLab engaged a large, diverse population of stakeholders to better understand the focus, role, and process of measurement and accountability in our schools.

Through a series of rapid, online, public engagements in Spring 2021 we solicited perspectives from over 18,000 students, caregivers and educators on:

1. DEFINITION OF SCHOOL AND STUDENT SUCCESS

2. NEW APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

3. COMMUNITY-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY

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A National Engagement: Using Technology to Listen to Students, Educators and Caregivers

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS Recommendations for Policymakers, Funders, and Advocates

1. DEFINITION OF SCHOOL AND STUDENT SUCCESS

- Recommendation 1: Real World Relevance. Invest in more expansive measurement and assessment systems that track the quality of school learning environments and student growth around a broad range of non-academic skills that have real world relevance.
- Recommendation 2: Mental Health and Social Support. Provide more robust mental health services and social support systems.

2. NEW APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

• Recommendation 3: Innovations in Assessment. Decrease dependence on standardized tests and invest in innovative assessment approaches including early warning systems, career-oriented portfolio and certificate programs, and personalized, relationship-driven student feedback routines.

3. COMMUNITY-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY

- Recommendation 4: Community Trust and Engagement. Invest in efforts that build school capacity around community-based governance, increase trust between schools and communities, enable better access to participation in decision making, and demonstrate the results of that participation.
- Recommendation 5: Educator Empowerment. Formalize mechanisms that allow teachers to shape the direction of teaching and learning in their own classrooms and schools, as well as in education policy more broadly.

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RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1: Real World Relevance. Invest in more expansive measurement and assessment systems that track the quality of school learning environments and student growth around a broad range of non-academic skills that have real world relevance.

Recommendation 2: Mental Health and Social Support. Provide more robust mental health services and social support systems.

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Finding 1: Students, caregivers, and educators want to expand definitions of student success to include key nonacademic skills that have real world relevance.

Finding 2: Students, caregivers, and educators see civic engagement, persuasive communication skills and media literacy as important elements of student success.

Finding 3: Students, caregivers, and educators want measures to focus on learning conditions and opportunities in schools, not just student outcomes.

Finding 4: Students, caregivers, and educators want more mental health services and social support systems and resources in schools.

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RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3: Innovations in Assessment. Decrease dependence on standardized tests and invest in innovative assessment approaches including early warning systems, career-oriented portfolio and certificate programs, and personalized, relationship-driven student feedback routines.

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FINDING

Finding 5: Students, caregivers, and educators want to move beyond standardized tests and give students multiple opportunities to show growth and competency.

Finding 6: Students, caregivers, and educators want nonpunitive early warning systems to help them understand which students need support.

Finding 7: Students want rich, personalized feedback rooted in strong teacher-student relationships and routines.

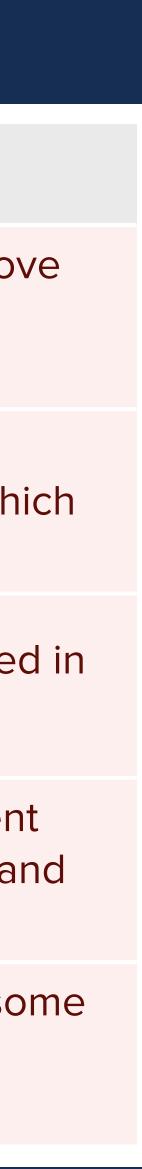
Finding 8: Students, caregivers, and educators want student accomplishments demonstrated through career portfolios and certifications that have real world application.

Finding 9: Students and caregivers have concerns about some alternative assessment models when it comes to student motivation and recognition by colleges and employers.

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RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4: Community Trust and Engagement.

Invest in efforts that build school capacity around communitybased governance, increase trust between schools and communities, enable better access to participation in decision making, and demonstrate the results of that participation.

Recommendation 5: Educator Empowerment. Formalize mechanisms that allow teachers to shape the direction of teaching and learning in their own classrooms and schools, as well as in education policy more broadly.

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Finding 10: Students, caregivers, and educators want schools to move away from punitive, high-stakes accountability.

Finding 11: Caregivers and students need trust, reciprocity and resources to participate in school governance.

Finding 12: Students and caregivers want to be actively involved in school governance and accountability systems.

Finding 13: Educators and caregivers want teachers to be empowered to shape the direction of teaching and learning in their classrooms and schools.

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The COVID-19 pandemic led to a pause in state-mandated testing at the end of the 2020 school year. This created space to step back and consider how the country might rethink the focus, role, and processes related to measurement and accountability in its schools.

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OUR APPROACH

Rapid and Thorough Engagement

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To provide communities, including traditionally underrepresented communities, an opportunity to inform education policymaking and philanthropic funding relating to assessment, we ran three online public engagements using new technologies:

- online every other week to codesign this research project. (December 2020-May 2021)
- problems and opportunities. (March 2021)
- 2021)

1. The Student Council - Two dozen high school and college students from across the United States met

2. All Your Ideas - In partnership with the New Jersey Department of Education and dozens of education stakeholders, the GovLab ran a three week online consultation with 18,000+ participants (students, caregivers and educators) using a "Wiki Survey" to understand what participants saw as the biggest

3. The Assembly - A representative sample of 440 caregivers and students during two, 90-minute online focus groups, using Al-enabled software to dynamically adjust questions based on feedback. (April

> **Definition of School** and Student Success

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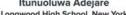




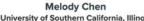


OUR APPROACH The Student Council











Eleanor Clemans-Cope d Montgomery High School



Gabbie Gonzáles

Piedra Vista High School, New Mexico



Malena Coa



Jocelynn Hunter Do

Darren Duni





New York University Abu Dhabi, Colorado

George Westinghouse College Prep, Illinois



Claire Gerson

New York University, California

Katrina Leslie



Sofia Novoa Boone High School, Florida



Depa Saha Bronx High School of Science, New York





Joshua Obas



Amina Salahou n Nottingham High school, New York



George Martinez



Isabella Ramiit Northeast Independent Preparatory United Nations International School, New



Camara Stevenso Burnsville High School, Minnesota



Our Approach

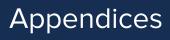
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An organizing committee of students advising on designing and running the program.

Two dozen high school and college students from across the United States, who hailed from 14 states, were recruited in a competitive, national selection process in December 2020. They met every other week during the first half of 2021 to help draft and refine the content of the national consultations and sought feedback on it from their own parents to ensure that topics and language were accessible and relevant.

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Engaging diverse students, families, and educators in education policy making.

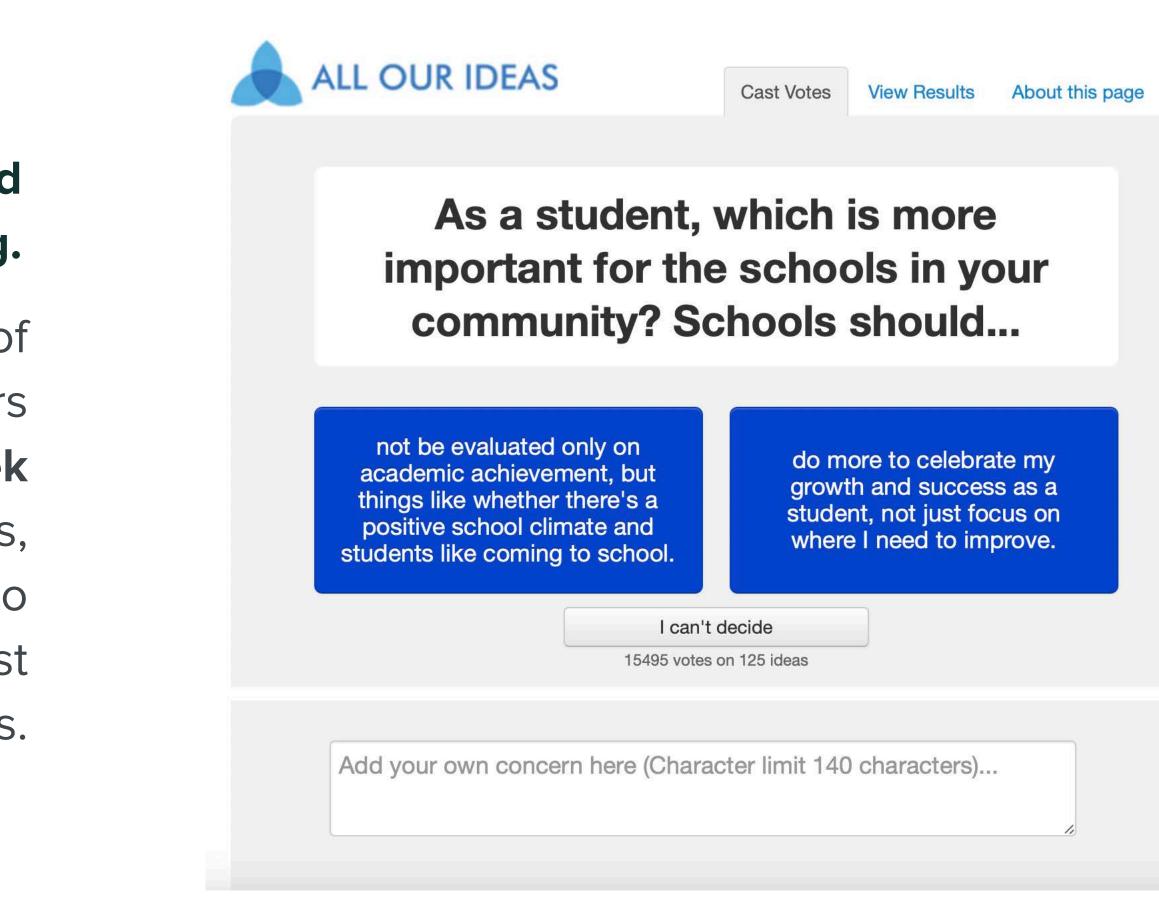
In partnership with the New Jersey Department of Education and dozens of education stakeholders across the United States, the GovLab ran a three week online consultation with 18,000+ participants (students, caregivers and educators) using a "Wiki Survey" to understand what participants saw as the biggest problems and opportunities in their schools.

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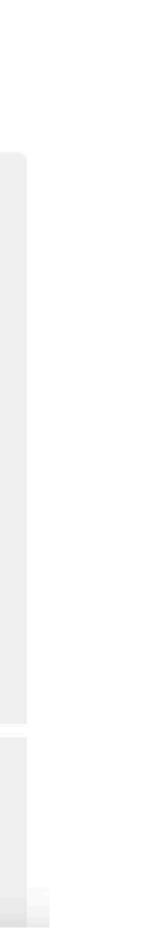


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L OUR IDEAS Home Create About Blog

Bringing survey research into the digital age.

Mix core ideas from survey research with new insights from crowdsourcing. Add a heavy dose of statistics. Stir in a bit of fresh thinking. Enjoy.

> Try a Wiki Survey Create a Wiki Survey

> > HOW A WIKI SURVEY WORKS

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Engaging diverse students, families, and educators in education policy making.

The survey employed a free, open-source software developed at Princeton University called All Our Ideas. Used in over 17,000 previous citizen engagement exercises, the software presents participants with the question and the choice between two responses (or "I can't decide" as a third one). The responses were randomly selected from a list of over 100 answer choices developed by the GovLab and the Student Council. Participants were also able to submit their own, original response.

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OUR APPROACH The Assembly

remesh

⑦ What kinds of ideas do you have about how schools can better inform students about how things are going at the school?

Highlights Common Topics		Ø	
Responses These responses are most likely to cover all opinions	Parti	cipants ()	
Honestly, I don't know. What I do know is NOT emails - no one (or very few) reads them and they just become spam. My uni does "town halls" every now and again, and I think that's a good way		51	
Daily announcements, text updates, a school app		28	
Social media would be the best way.		24	
I think they should have more detailed announcements during school and ma things more transparent to the students.	ake	21	
A funny website		18	
They should ask for students' input more so when students give input they		17	
		Analyze >	
	1	「hanks!	
	v ii	vant to be o	other things that you shared that you'd consulted on, or even be more directly lecision making, and we'd love to hear more
	ļ		consulted on, or even be more directly lecision making, and we'd love to hear more



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19-22

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Two large-scale online focus groups with students and families to discuss the challenges with measuring what matters.

The GovLab held two panels, one with students and one with caregivers. Using <u>Remesh</u>, The GovLab engaged a diverse sample of over 220 students and 220 parents and caregivers in two 90 minute "conversations" with the goals of validating and exploring underlying factors that drove responses to the the All Your Ideas consultation.

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- To promote participation, we made the All Your Ideas consultation anonymous and created a platform for students, caregivers and educators to respond.
- While anonymity increased participation (18,000+ participants), it did not allow us to gain deeper insight into specifically who said what. It did provide a 'pulse check' on the priorities of each group.
- The Assembly engaged a smaller sample of caregivers and students (440 participants) and oversampled for participants of color. It provided greater opportunities for participants to share qualitative reflections about their responses to quantitative items.

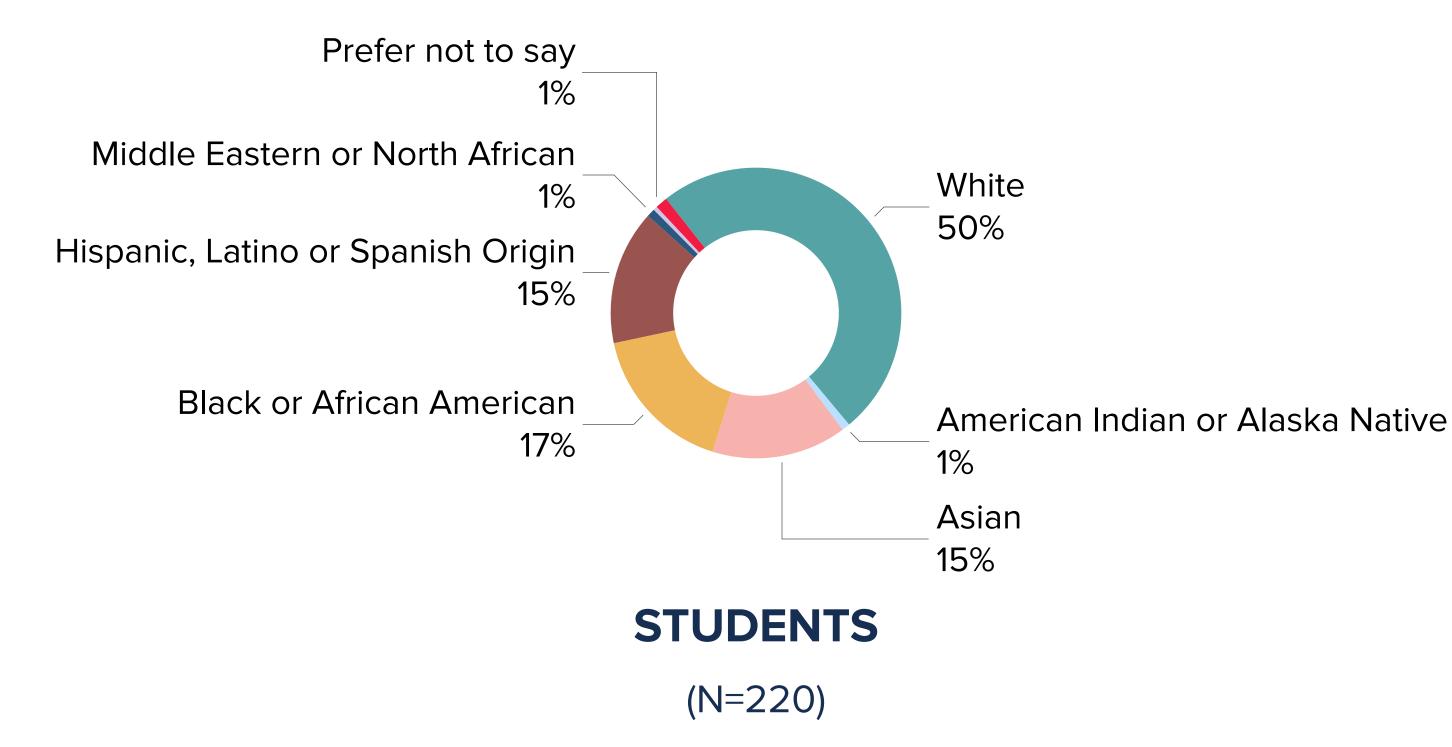
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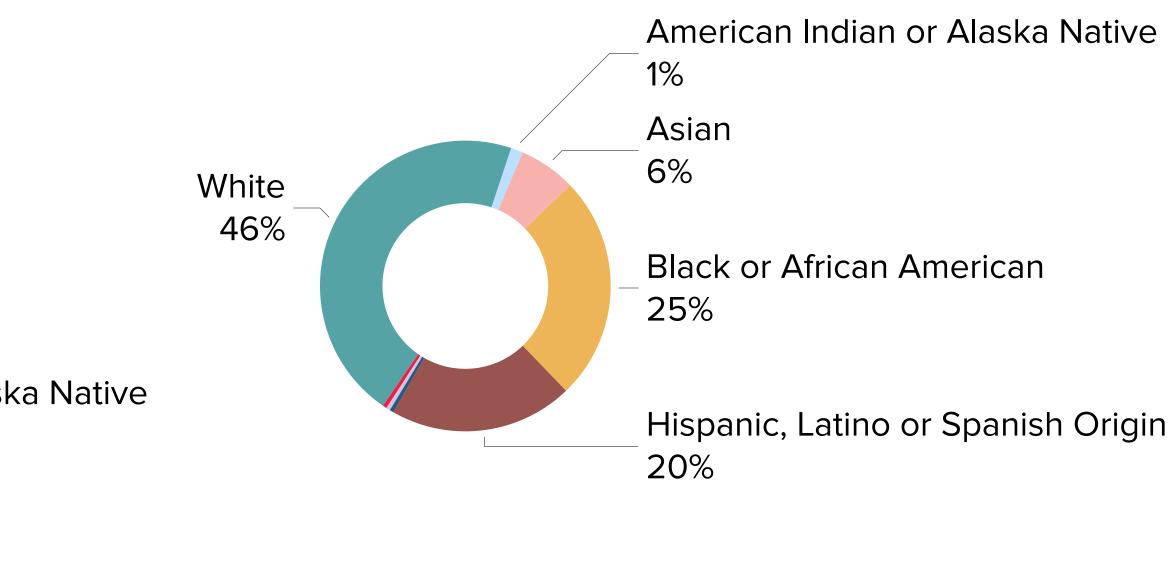
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THE ASSEMBLY



CAREGIVERS

(N=220)

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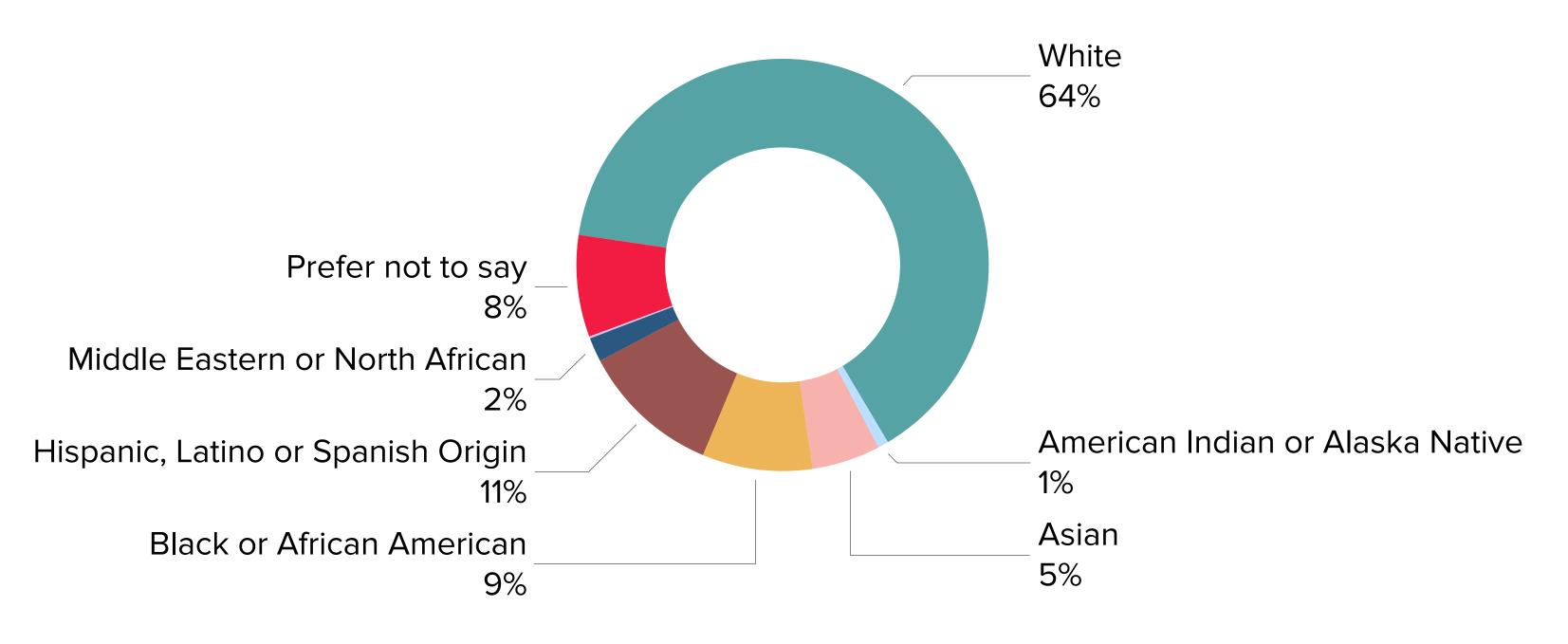




OUR APPROACH **Scale and Representation**

ALL YOUR IDEAS

**These numbers represent only the participants who responded to the optional demographic survey which accounts for about ~50% of the total participants



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(N=8,947)

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WHAT WE ASKED

How Might The American Education System Rethink Its Approach To Measurement And Accountability? 18



WHAT WE ASKED

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What do students, caregivers, and educators value most when it comes to the goals of education?

How do students, caregivers, and educators view alternative forms of assessment, measurement, and evaluation?

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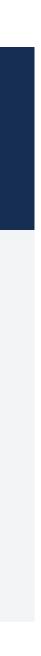
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How do students, caregivers, and educators want to be involved in education decision and policymaking?

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DEFINITION OF SCHOOL AND STUDENT SUCCESS

Going Beyond Proficiency in Literacy and Mathematics to Explore New Conceptions of School and Student Success 20



emotional skills).

Examples of question we asked include *whether* and *how* schools should:

- help students not only learn new things, but know how to use knowledge to solve problems
- make sure students have social and emotional skills, like self-awareness, empathy, and relationship-building
- help students figure out what is and isn't true as they come across information about what's happening in the world
- prioritize social and emotional support for students just as much as they prioritize academic outcomes or job readiness

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- We posed a broad range of questions to students, educators and caregivers about what students, caregivers, and educators value most when it comes to the goals of education. We asked the groups how they would define success in ways that go beyond academic achievement (e.g. problem solving skills, career exploration, social and

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DEFINITION OF SCHOOL AND STUDENT SUCCESS

What We Learned

FINDING 1

to include key non-academic skills that have real world relevance.

Students, families and educators strongly support expanding measures of student success to include:

- 1. problem solving skills
- 2. creativity and collaboration
- 3. interest and career exploration
- 4. social and emotional skills

But students, families and educators do not want to diminish the importance of core academic knowledge and skills.

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Definition of School and Student Success

Students, caregivers, and educators want to expand definitions of student success

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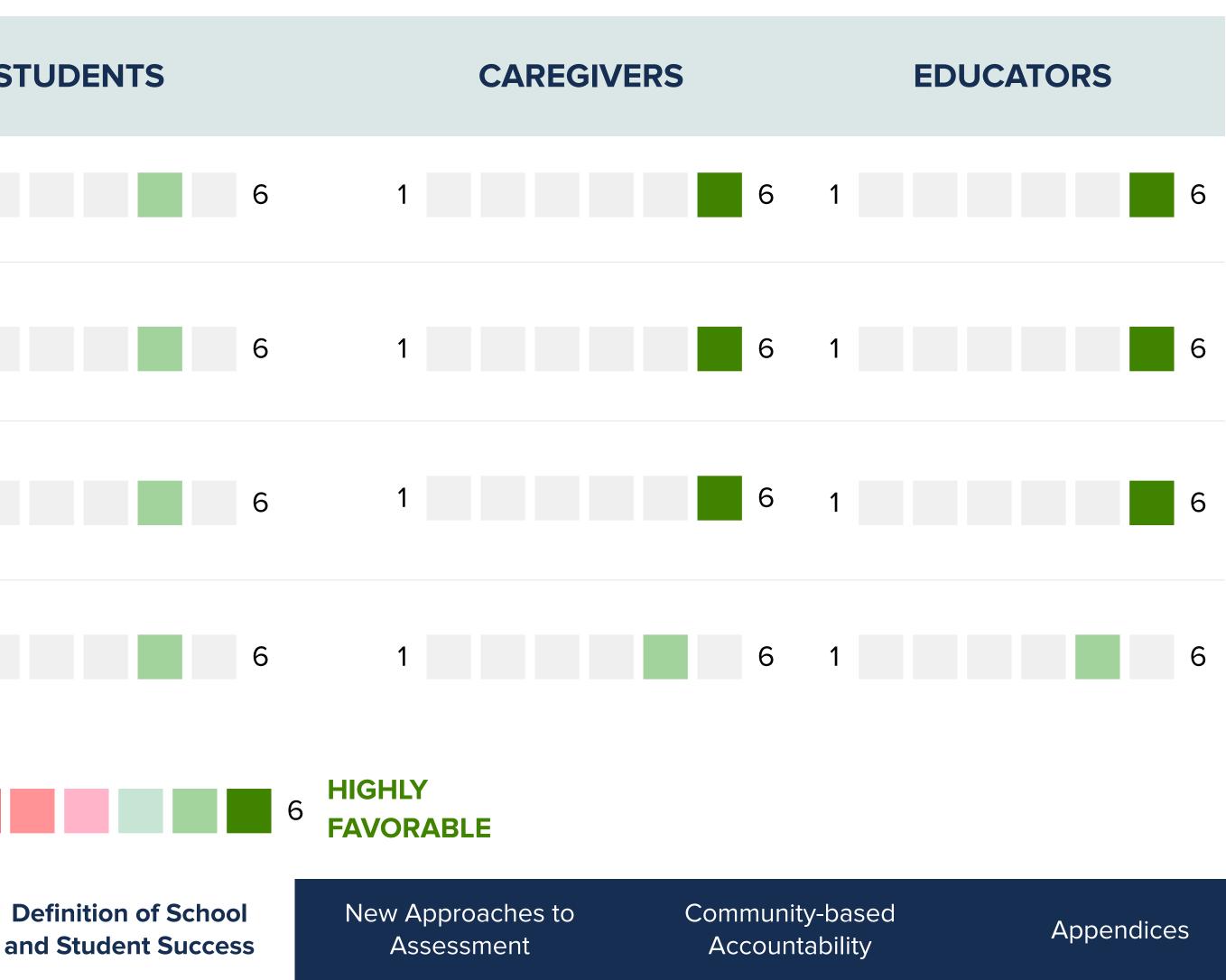


FINDING 1



Students, caregivers, and educators want to expand definitions of student success to include key non-academic skills that have real world relevance.

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DEFINITION OF SCHOOL AND STUDENT SUCCESS

What We Learned

FINDING 2

Students, caregivers, and educators see civic engagement, persuasive communication skills and media literacy as important elements of student success.

Educators, students and caregivers demonstrated strong support for:

- 1. Oral and written communication skills
- 2. Community and civic engagement practices
- 3. Advocacy skills

In addition, educators and caregivers were particularly supportive of:

- 1. Media fluency
- 2. Information literacy, including identifying credible sources and misinformation

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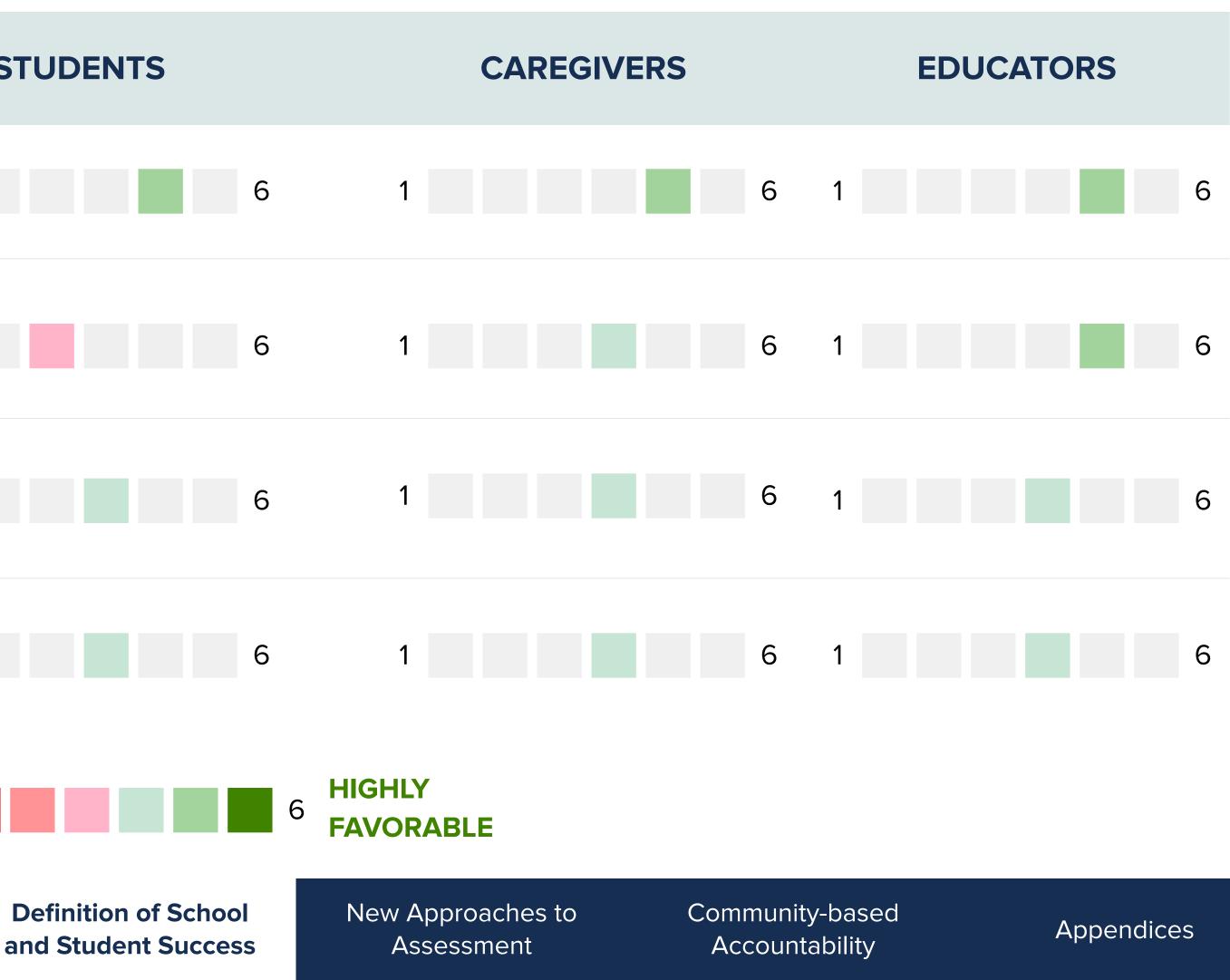


FINDING 2



Students, caregivers, and educators see civic engagement, persuasive communication skills and media literacy as important elements of student success.

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DEFINITION OF SCHOOL AND STUDENT SUCCESS

What We Learned

FINDING 3

Students, caregivers, and educators want measures to focus on learning conditions and opportunities in schools, not just student outcomes.

Educators, caregivers, and students all identified positive school environments as critical to student success and called for better measurement of school performance on:

- when needed
- 4. belonging student perception of comfort and welcomeness in their school
- 5. opportunity student perception that they're able to pursue positive futures

1. relevance - student perception that what they're learning will be relevant to their lives 2. support - student perception that adults in their schools care about them and provide help

3. engagement - student sense of engagement and desire to engage in school opportunities

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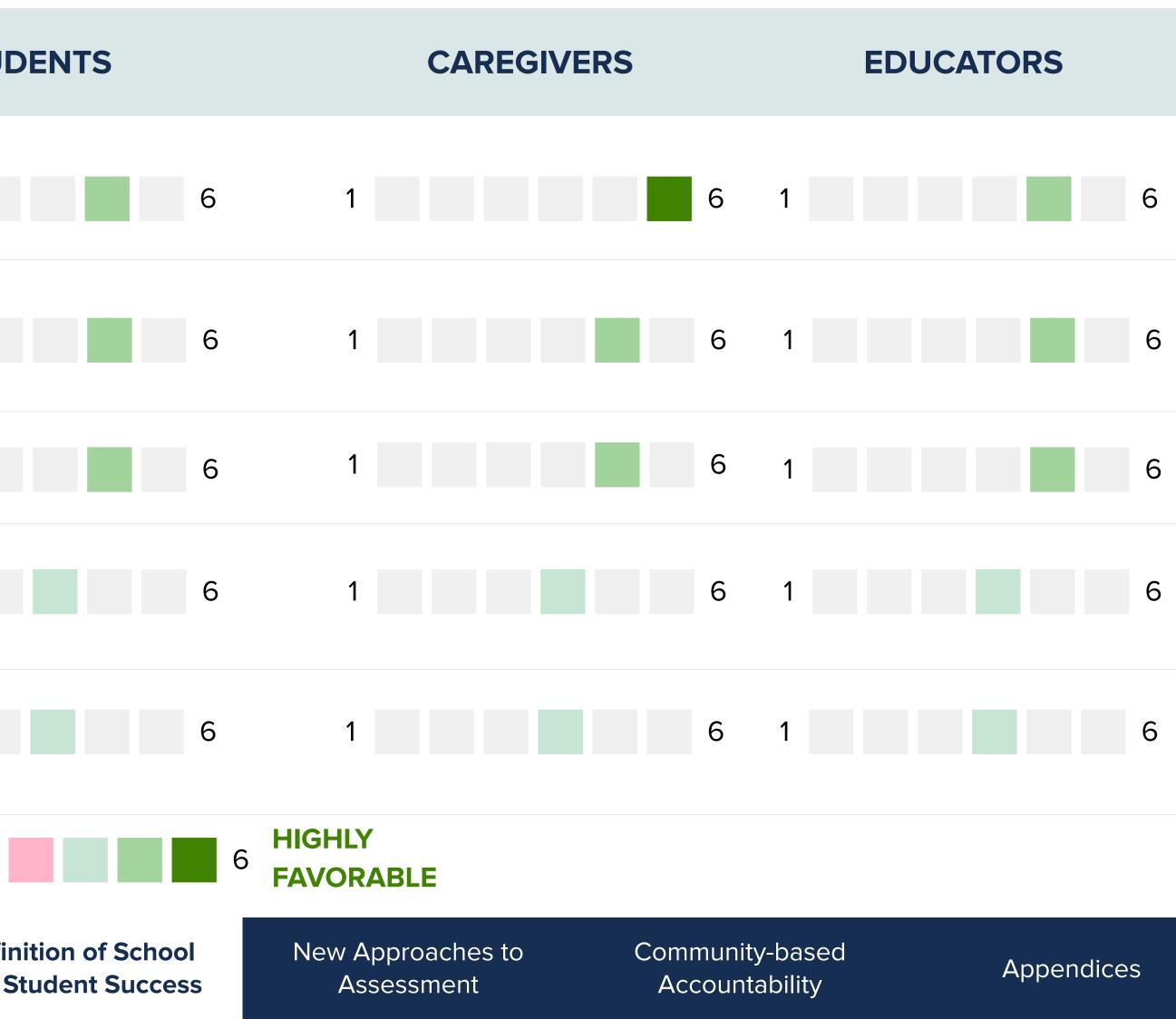


FINDING 3



Students, caregivers, and educators want measures to focus on learning conditions and opportunities in schools, not just student outcomes.

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DEFINITION OF SCHOOL AND STUDENT SUCCESS

What We Learned

FINDING 4

Students, caregivers, and educators want more mental health services and social support systems and resources in schools.

To support an expanded definition of student success, caregivers, educators and students were robust in their call for schools to provide critical social and mental health support. Teachers, in particular, expressed a strong need for:

- Increased numbers of nurses, social workers, and counseling services
- More direct accommodations for students with difficult home circumstances
- A broad range of interventions aimed at addressing basic needs for students from high poverty communities including health and mental health services

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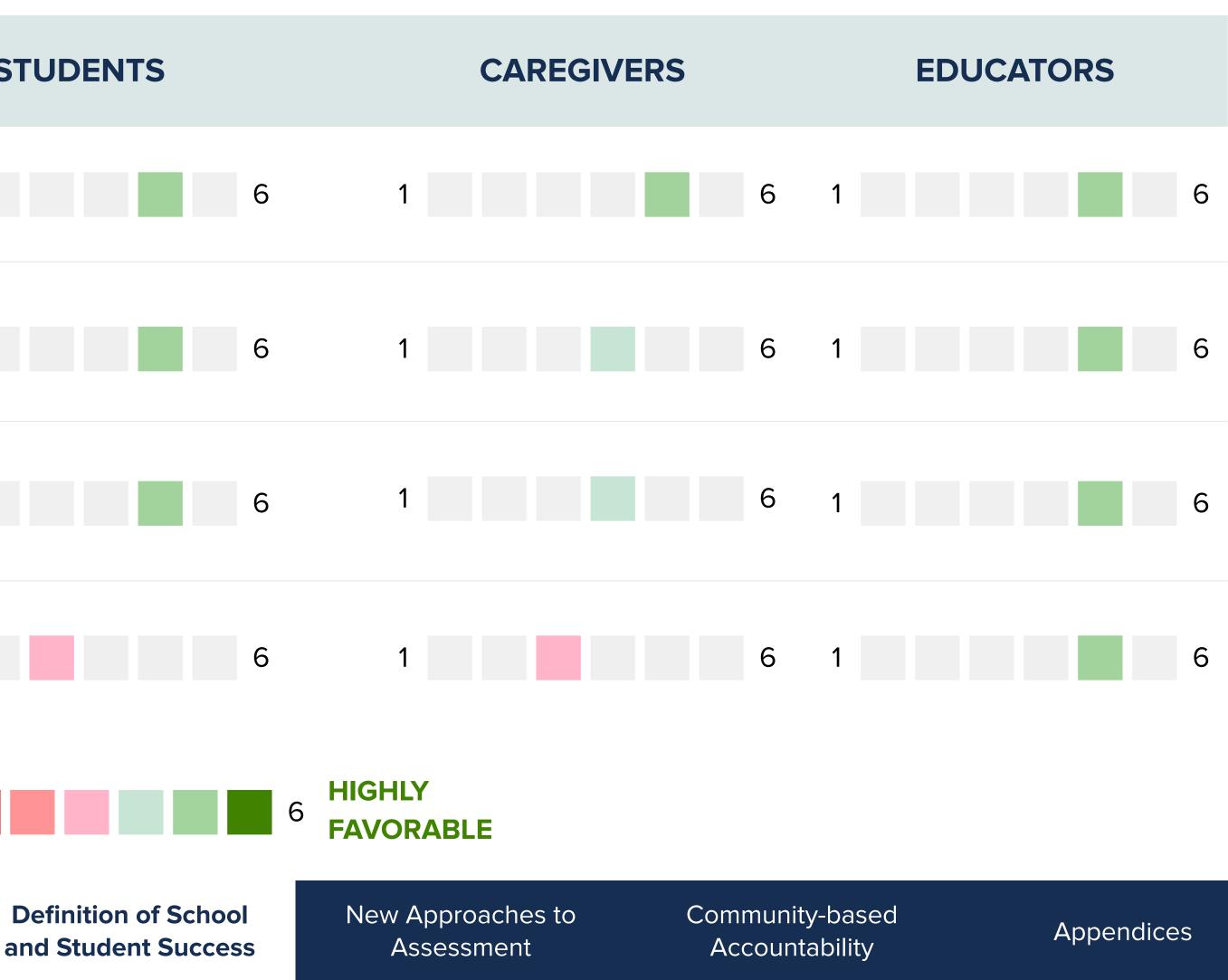


FINDING 4



Students, caregivers, and educators want more mental health services and social support systems and resources in schools.

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NEW APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

Going Beyond Traditional Assessments to Understand New Approaches to Student Evaluation and Support 30



Going Beyond Traditional Assessments to Understand New Approaches to Student **Evaluation and Support**

Central to issues of measurement and accountability are how to go about measuring success, and for what purposes. Summative models of assessment typically provide information on student outcomes in aggregate and can lag behind educational activities. We posed a range of questions to educators, students, and caregivers to surface their perspectives on a broad range of approaches (including both summative and formative) to assessing students, when and how to assess students and who should assess, including peers and community members.

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DEFINITION OF SCHOOL AND STUDENT SUCCESS

What We Learned

FINDING 5

Students, caregivers, and educators want to move beyond standardized tests and give students multiple opportunities to show growth and competency.

Stakeholders across all three groups were interested in:

- 1. Moving away from 'one time' tests
- 2. Giving students multiple opportunities to display competency
- **3.** Recognizing growth not currently measured by standardized tests

Caregivers in particular demonstrated a strong desire to have their children attend schools implementing these alternative approaches to assessment.

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DEFINITION OF SCHOOL AND STUDENT SUCCESS

What We Learned

FINDING 5

Students, caregivers, and educators want to move beyond standardized tests and give students multiple opportunities to show growth and competency.

While agreeing on the need for new approaches to assessment, caregivers and students gave different reasons for the change:

- Caregivers said change was likely to promote success later in life.
- Students said non-traditional assessments would benefit their mental health, decrease stress and increase the likelihood of successfully learning new skills.

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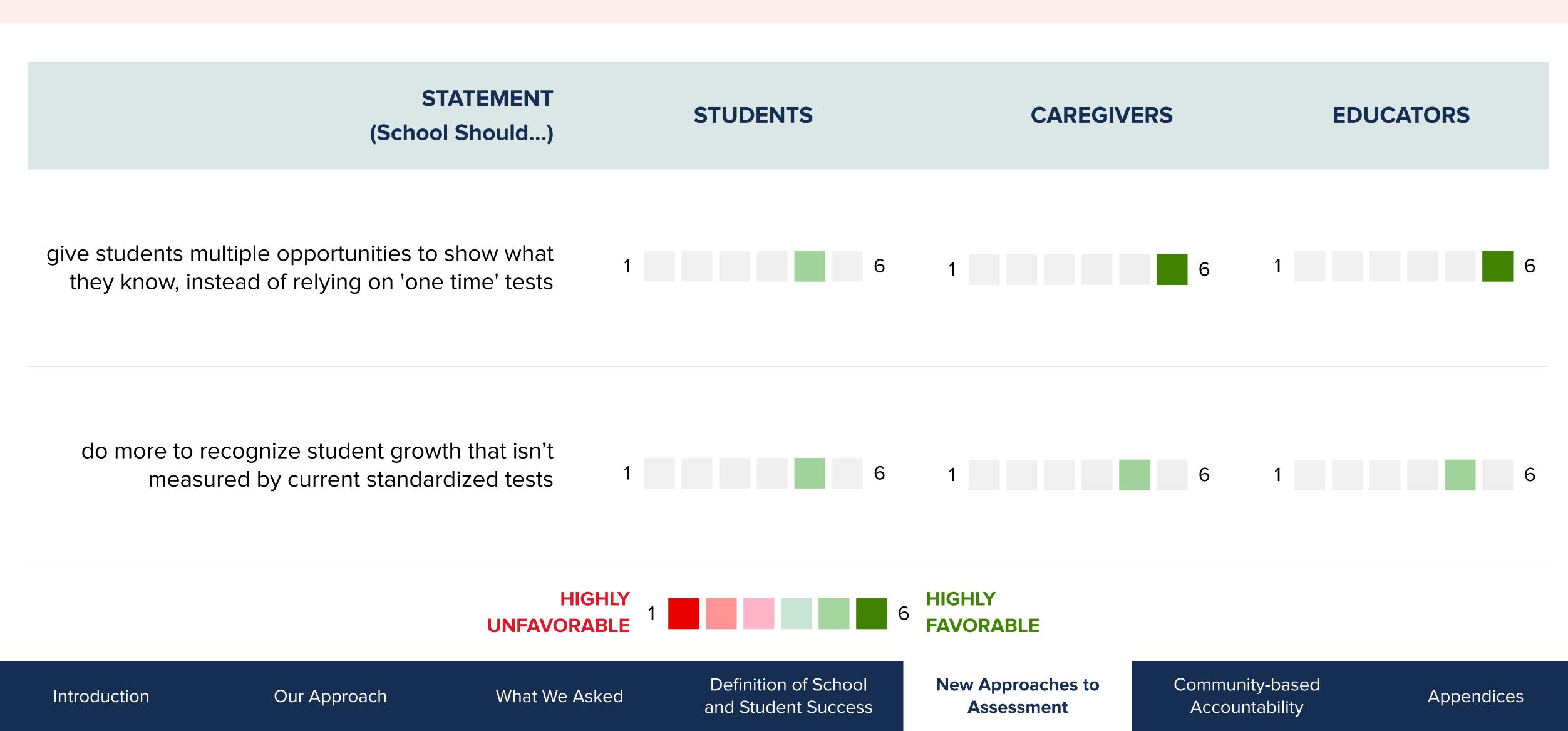




FINDING 5



Students, caregivers, and educators want to move beyond standardized tests and give students multiple opportunities to show growth and competency.







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What We Learned

FINDING 6

Students, caregivers, and educators want non-punitive early warning systems to help them understand which students need support.

Caregivers, teachers and students expressed preferences for "early warning systems" information and assessments that identify students who need support in specific areas. These kinds of systems look at indicators like attendance, course performance, behavior, homelessness and court-involvement that predict outcomes like high school graduation, and aim to provide services (e.g. tutoring, meetings with caregivers, individualized learning plans) ahead of time.

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FINDING 6

Students, caregivers, and educators want non-punitive early warning systems to help them understand which students need support.



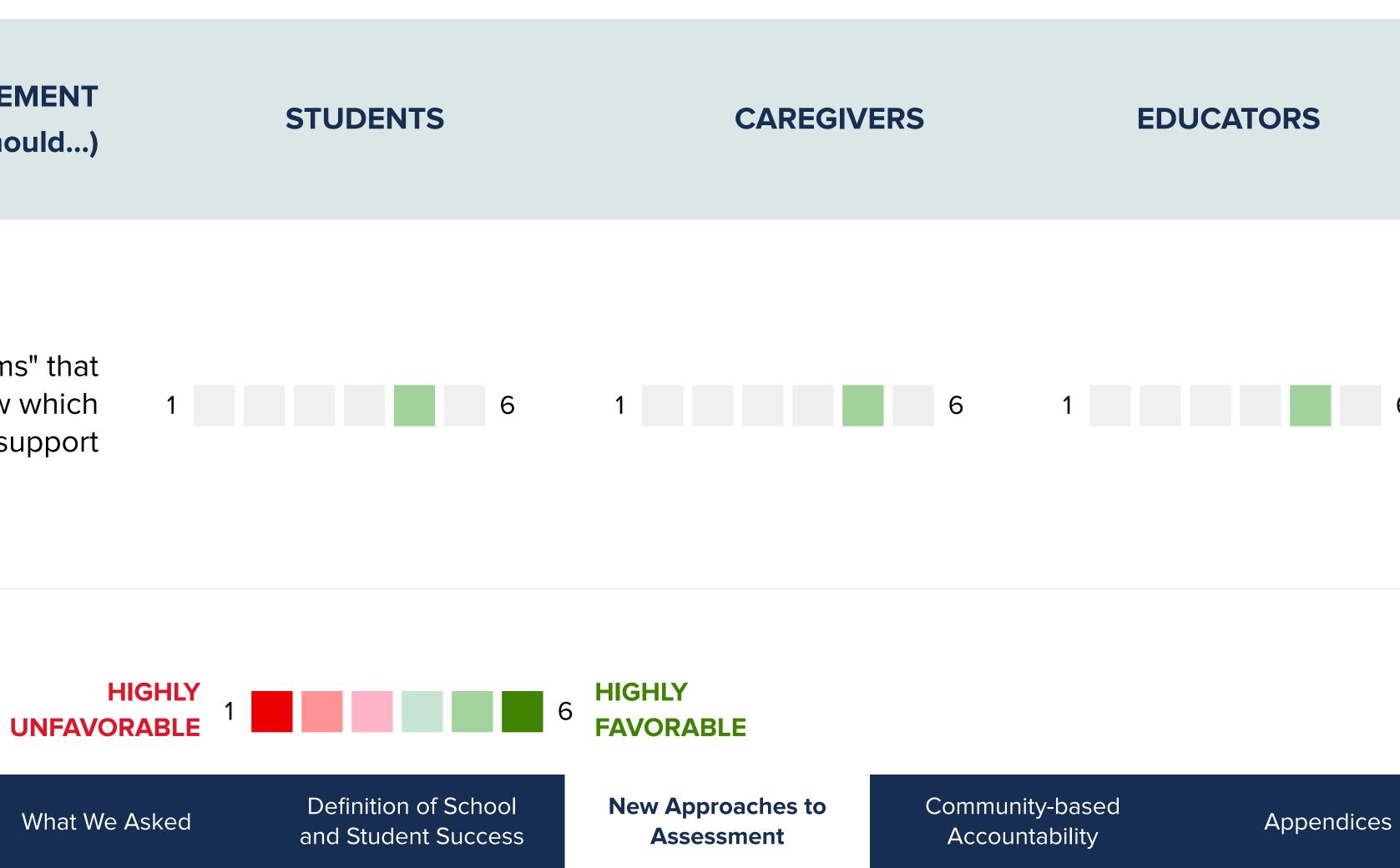
do better to create "early warning systems" that help all teachers and administrators know which students need the most support



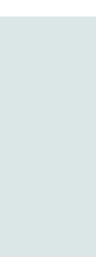
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What We Learned

FINDING 7

Students want rich, personalized feedback rooted in strong teacher-student relationships and routines.

In the context of strong and trusting relationships, data suggest that students, in particular, want these alternative forms of evaluation and measurement to result in personalized attention and interventions that prioritize constructive feedback and positive encouragement. This stands in contrast to algorithmic and technology-centric approaches to personalization currently promoted by advocates of personalized learning platforms.

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What We Learned

FINDING 7

Students want rich, personalized feedback rooted in strong teacher-student relationships and routines.

When asked to describe in their own words the things that help them perform better inside and outside of school, students did not mention tests or assessments.

- "Having mentors with similar interests and more knowledge and experience."
- "I've had teachers spend one on one time with me."
- "Have specific feedback from individual teachers who are invested in my work."
- "Honest feedback, support when I need it, and one-on-one teaching."

• "I have been supported by others in the same community as me to keep growing."

Definition of School and Student Success **New Approaches to** Assessment







What We Learned

FINDING 8

Students, caregivers, and educators want student accomplishments demonstrated through career portfolios and certifications that have real world application.

Students, educators and caregivers want assessments to yield real world relevance and career usefulness. As means to publicly demonstrate skills developed, they asserted strong interest in:

- job-oriented portfolios
- individualized learning plans, and
- certifications

In contrast, they indicated considerably less interest in peer-based evaluation and feedback, performance-based evaluation, and even less favorability towards community-based feedback and assessment.

Our Approach

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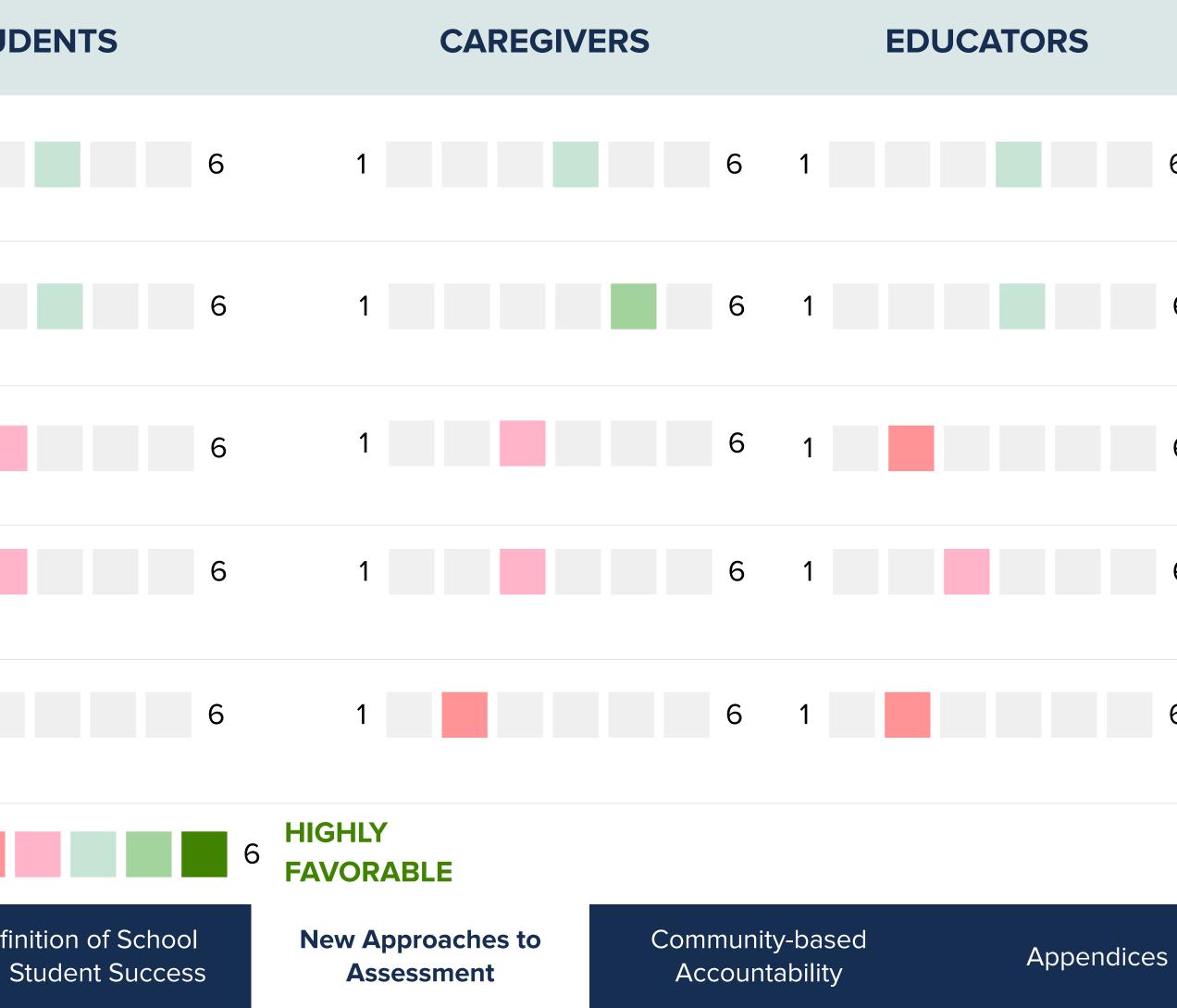






Students, caregivers, and educators want student accomplishments demonstrated through career portfolios and certifications that have real world application.

STATEMENT (School Should)		STU	J
give students more opportunities to earn certifications or develop portfolios that can help them on the job market	1		
do more to support teachers to create individualized learning plans that cater to the needs of specific students	1		
ve students more opportunities to give feedback to one another about things they're working on	1		
se more project and portfolio-based assessments	1		
give students opportunities to share and get feedback on projects from community members			
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What We Learned

FINDING 9

Students and caregivers have concerns about some alternative assessment models when it comes to student motivation and recognition by colleges and employers.

What will happen if schools move to alternative models of assessment?

- 70% of caregivers shared concerns that alternative systems might not be widely recognized by colleges and employers
- 68% of students were worried that removing traditional tests and grades might depress student motivation

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COMMUNITY-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY

Responsiveness to and engagement with students, families and communities could improve the quality of schools. 42



Responsiveness to and engagement with students, families and communities could improve the quality of schools.

We posed a broad range of questions to students, educators and caregivers about traditional accountability systems, and their desire to participate in community-based accountability.

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Students, caregivers, and educators want schools to move away from punitive, high-stakes accountability.

Students, caregivers, and educators are dissatisfied with forms of accountability that are perceived as punitive or high stakes. Teachers, in particular, view high stakes tests as limiting innovation and effective pedagogy.

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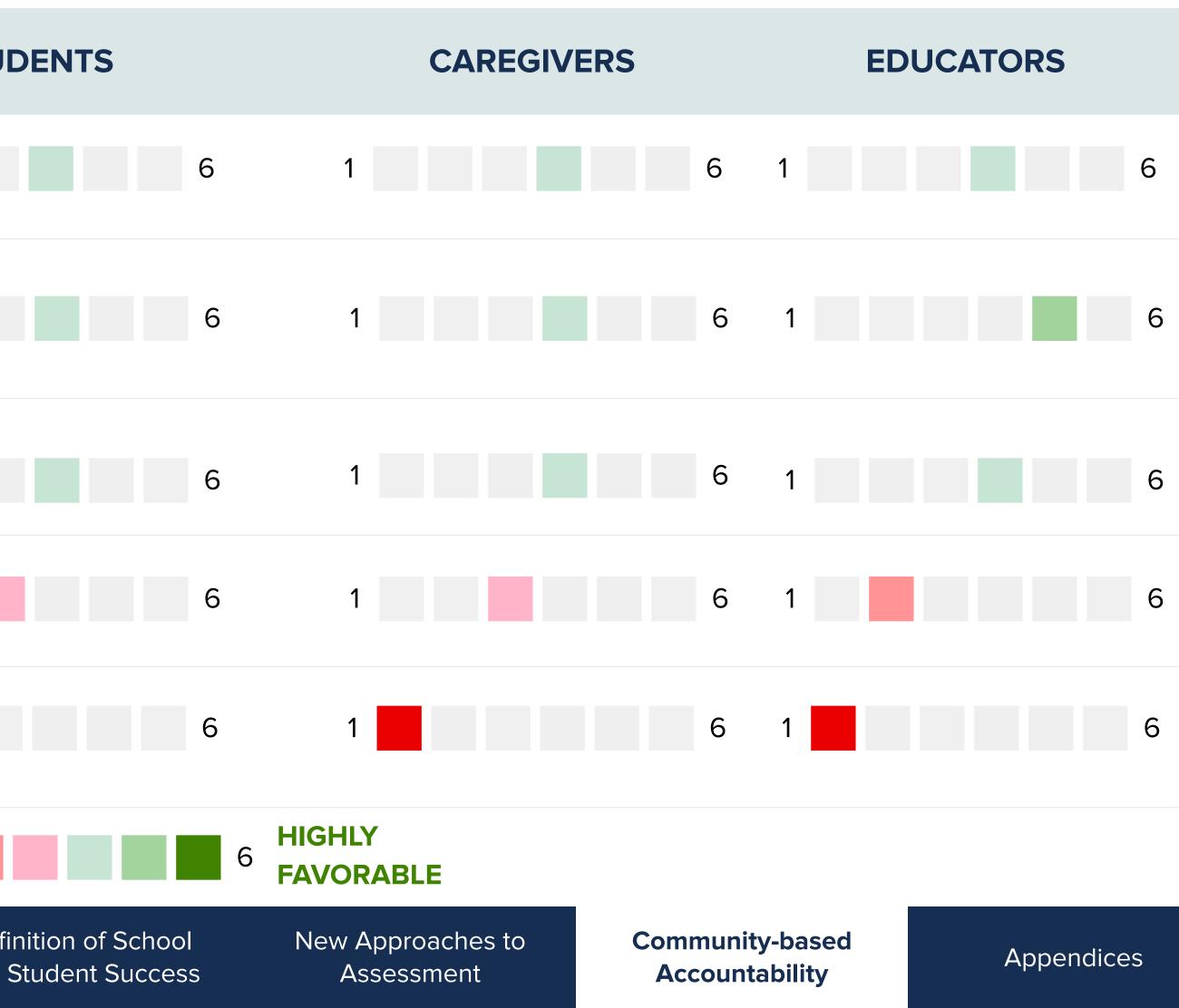






Students, caregivers, and educators want schools to move away from punitive, high-stakes accountability.

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Caregivers and students need trust, reciprocity and resources to participate in school governance.

Caregivers and students indicated that they value involvement in accountability and school governance, but lack the trust and confidence in school leaders needed to make it viable.

Evidence strongly suggests the need for more resources and capacity building for schools and districts around how to involve students and families effectively and equitably in decision-making.

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Caregivers and students need trust, reciprocity and resources to participate in school governance.

I was curious, but didn't feel comfortable participating.

I was interested in participating, but couldn't because the timing didn't work out.

I was interested in participating, but found out about the opportunity too late.

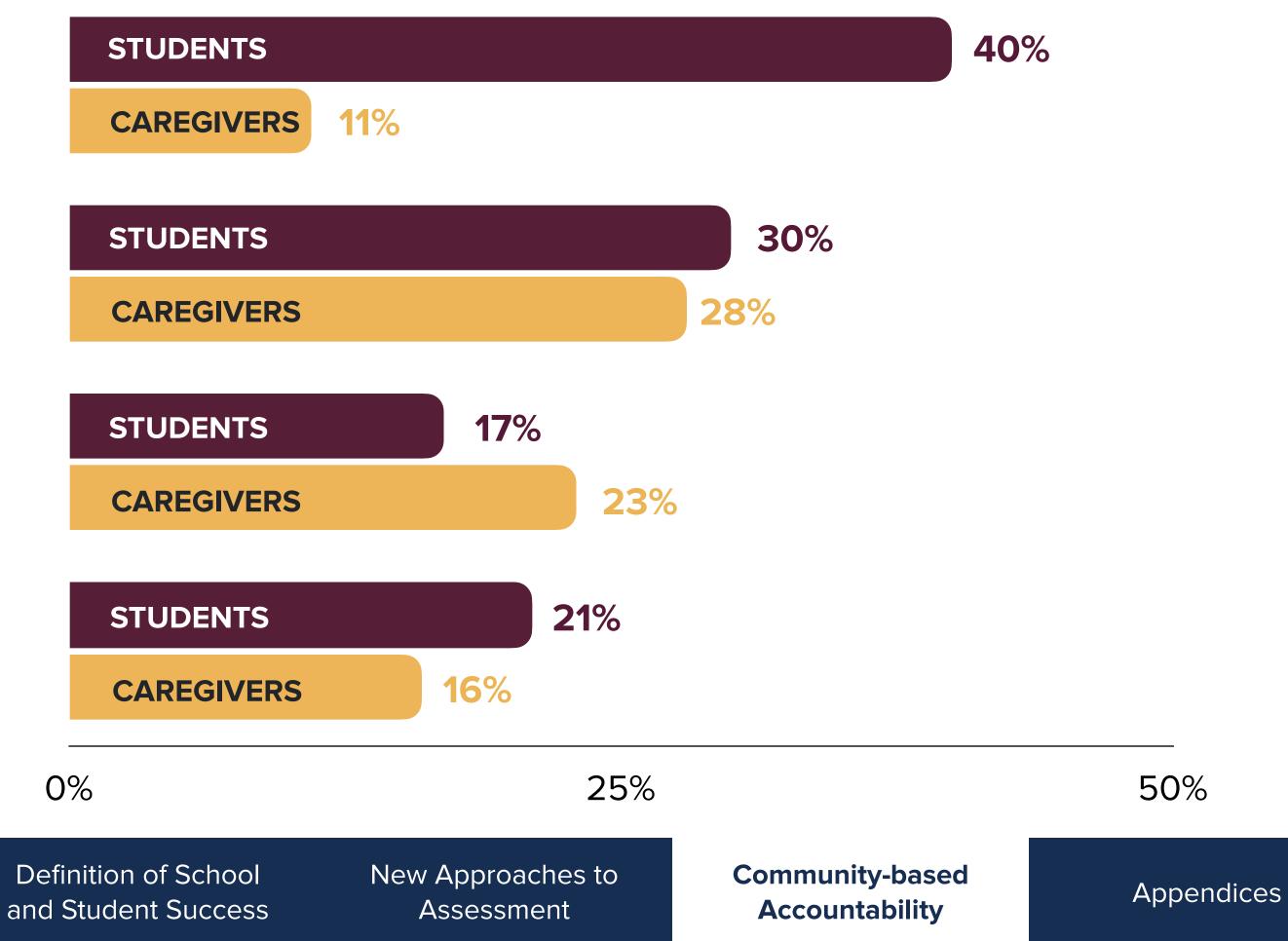
> I participated, but the school didn't listen to recommendations I/we made.

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Have any of the following ever happened to you in a situation where a school created an opportunity for you to be involved in decision-making? [Select all that apply]











Caregivers and students need trust, reciprocity and resources to participate in school governance.

I was interested in participating, but couldn't because only a small number of students could, and I wasn't selected.

I participated, but it wasn't a good experience because I didn't get enough information from teachers/school staff to do a good job.

I participated, but it wasn't a good experience because it wasn't facilitated well by teachers/school staff.

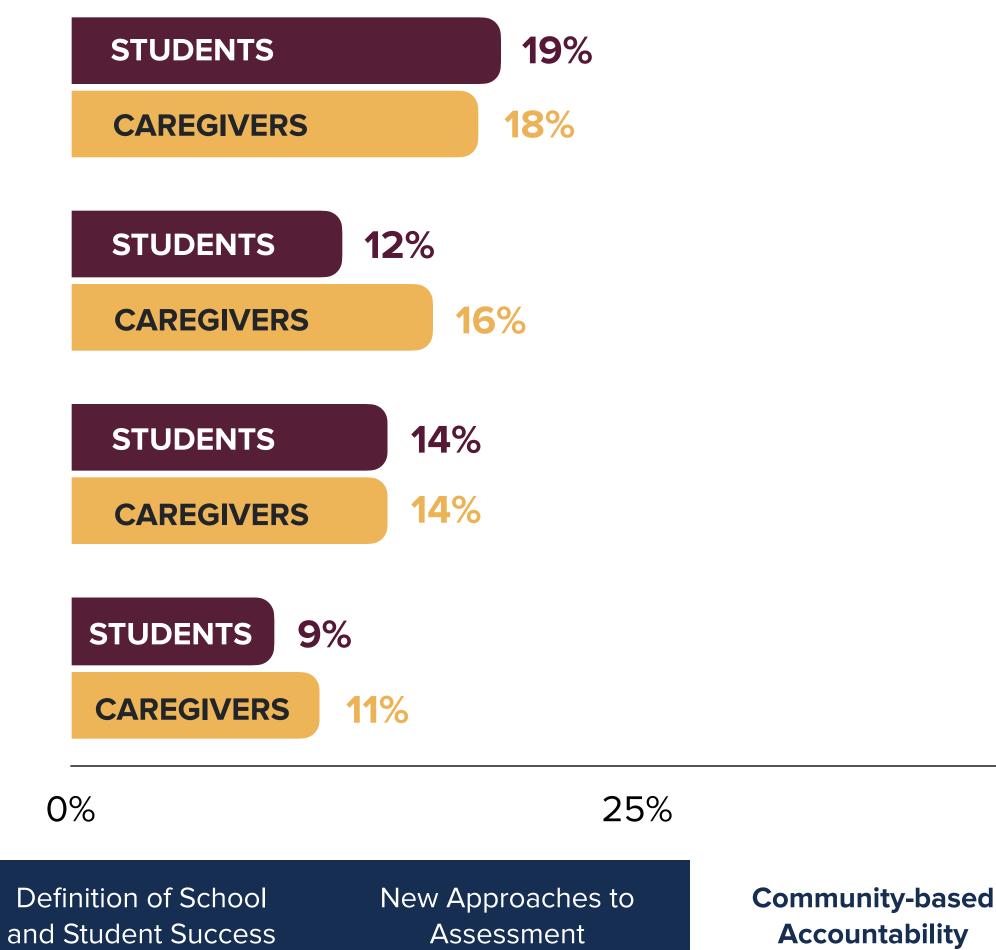
I participated, but the school only invited me to weigh in on issues that aren't important to me.

What We Asked

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Have any of the following ever happened to you in a situation where a school created an opportunity for you to be involved in decision-making? [Select all that apply]







50%



Students and caregivers want to be actively involved in school governance and accountability systems.

Our findings demonstrate that shifting to alternative measures of school and student success isn't enough. There also needs to be a shift in how measures and overall school priorities are decided, with the inclusion of students, educators, and caregivers.

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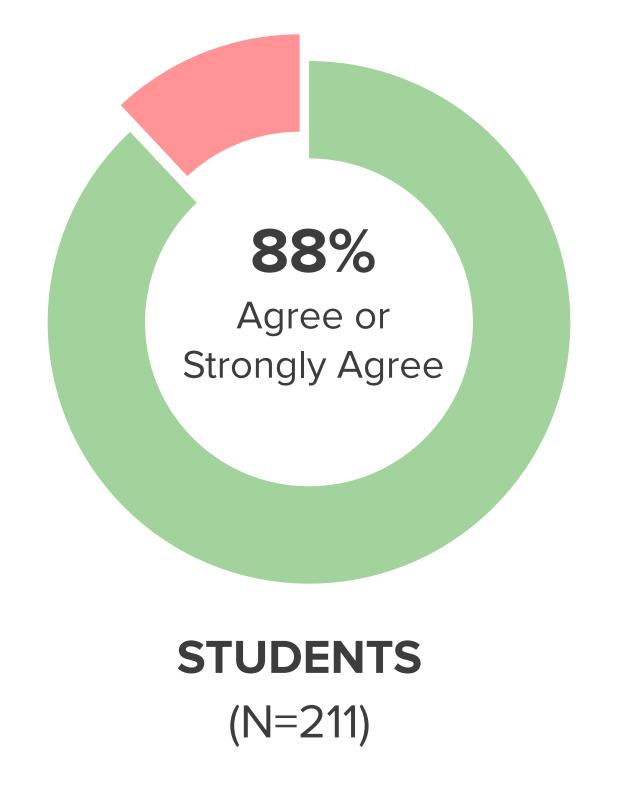








Students and caregivers want to be actively involved in school governance and accountability systems.



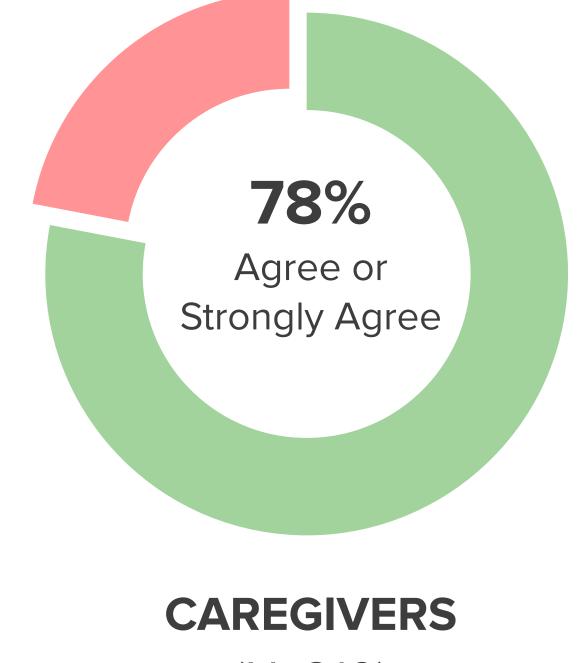
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"Schools should decide their priorities based on what students see as most relevant and important for their future success."



(N=210)

New Approaches to Assessment

Community-based Accountability

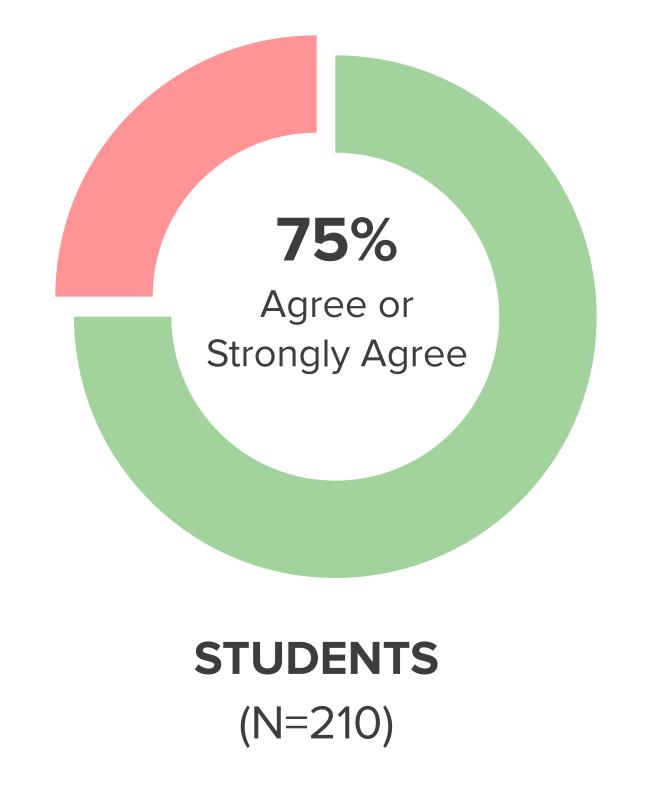








Students and caregivers want to be actively involved in school governance and accountability systems.



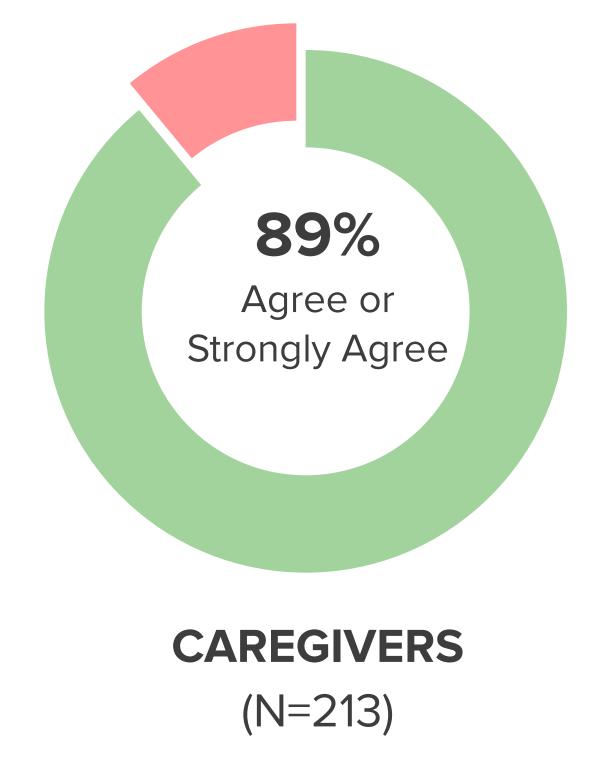
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"Schools should decide their priorities based on what parents, caregivers, and local communities think is most important."



New Approaches to Assessment

Community-based Accountability







Educators and caregivers want teachers to be empowered to shape the direction of teaching and learning in their classrooms and schools.

Our findings show that teachers feel disempowered by current accountability systems, and have a strong desire to have a more direct voice in shaping what teaching and learning look like in schools.

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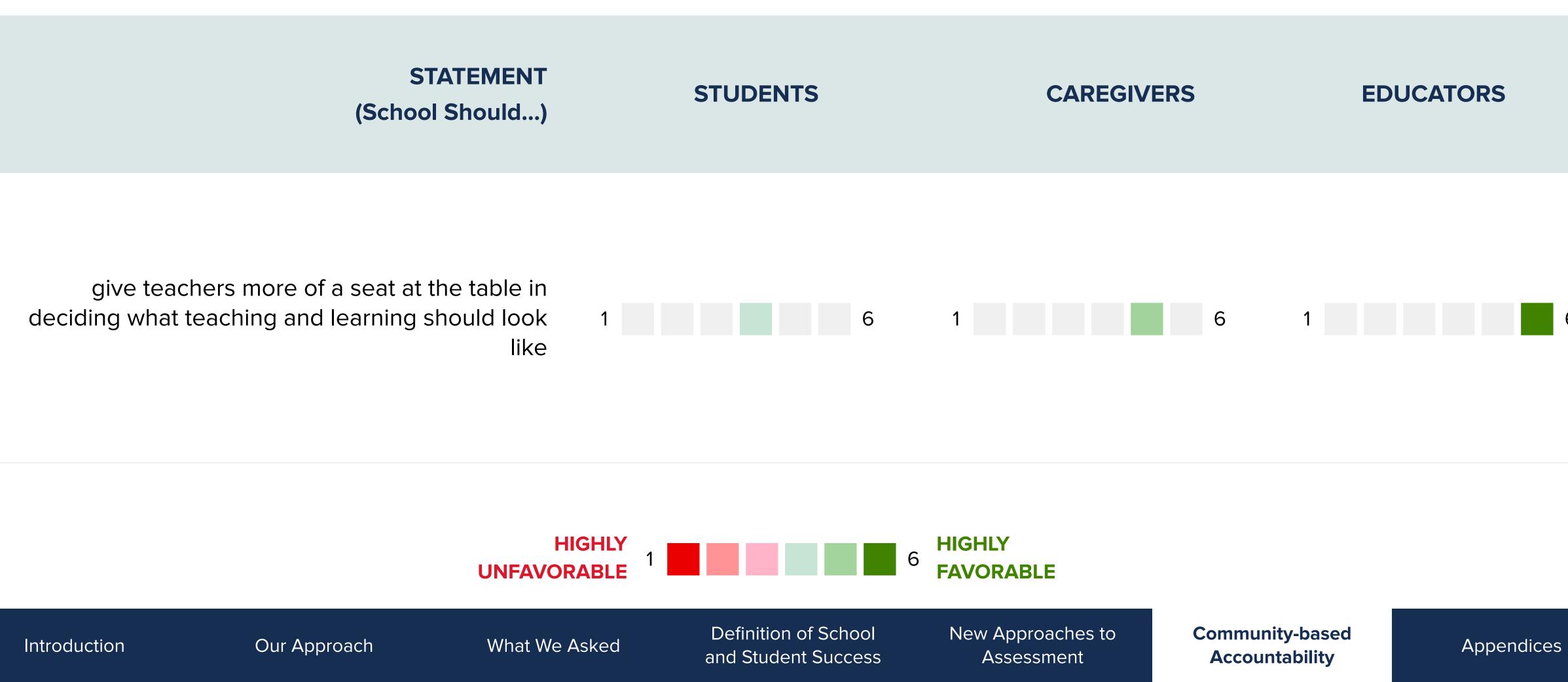
Community-based Accountability





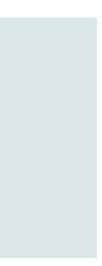


Educators and caregivers want teachers to be empowered to shape the direction of teaching and learning in their classrooms and schools.













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Appendices



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- Victoria Alsina Senior Fellow
- Anirudh Dinesh **Research Fellow**
- Harrison Haigood Associate Fellow
- Henri Hammond-paul **Research Fellow**
- Nelson James Research Intern

- Ed Paulino **Research Fellow**
- Rafi Santo **Consulting Fellow**
- Connie Yowell Senior Fellow

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Definition of School and Student Success

 Beth Simone Noveck **Professor And Director**

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New Approaches to Assessment









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Our Approach

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Definition of School and Student Success New Approaches to Assessment









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What We Asked

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Camara Stevenson

Definition of School and Student Success

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OVERVIEW: MOST AND LEAST POPULAR STATEMENTS: STUDENTS

STATEMENTS	SCORE*
focus on things like real-world problem- solving, creativity and collaboration, not just 'traditional' academic subjects.	69
support students to find their interests and passions.	67
give students multiple opportunities to show what they know, instead of relying on 'one time' tests.	66
do more to recognize student growth that isn't measured by current standardized tests.	65
make sure students have social and emotional skills, like self-awareness, empathy, and relationship-building.	65

*Score: The probability that a participant, when presented with two choices, would pick that statement.

	STATEMENTS	SC	ORE*
	ot really focus so much on job-readiness - it's up to employers to make sure they ave good training programs, not schools.	25	
be	held accountable to high standards, and if they can't reach them, there should be consequences.	28	
	e assessments that take into account our students' racial and cultural backgrounds and identtities.	29	
	reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions of students from historically marginalized groups.	31	
	create better ways for the public to be involved in evaluating them on how well they're doing	32	





OVERVIEW: MOST AND LEAST POPULAR STATEMENTS: CAREGIVERS

STATEMENTS	SCORE*
help students not only learn new things, but know how to use knowledge to solve problems.	79
focus on things like real-world problem- solving, creativity and collaboration, not just 'traditional' academic subjects.	75
give students multiple opportunities to show what they know, instead of relying on 'one time' tests.	73
focus more on critical thinking - helping students figure out how to look across lots of information, synthesize, and make new arguments.	73
do more to show students how what they're learning can help them and be relevant in the real world.	72

*Score: The probability that a participant, when presented with two choices, would pick that statement.

STATEMENTS	SC	ORE*
not really focus so much on job-readiness - it's up to employers to make sure they have good training programs, not schools.	16	
use assessments that take into account our students' racial and cultural backgrounds and identtities.	21	
decide their priorities based on what's been agreed across the country about the most important things to learn.	23	
reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions of students from historically marginalized groups.	24	
improve the quality of tests - I don't always trust the results from ones my school uses.	26	





OVERVIEW: MOST AND LEAST POPULAR STATEMENTS: EDUCATORS

STATEMENTS	SCORE*
give me and my fellow teachers more of a seat at the table in deciding what teaching and learning should look like.	75
help students not only learn new things, but know how to use knowledge to solve problems.	74
make sure students have social and emotional skills, like self-awareness, empathy, and relationship-building.	74
focus on things like real-world problem- solving, creativity and collaboration, not just 'traditional' academic subjects.	71
give students multiple opportunities to show what they know, instead of relying on 'one time' tests.	71

*Score: The probability that a participant, when presented with two choices, would pick that statement.

STATEMENTS	SC	CORE*
not really focus so much on job-readiness - it's up to employers to make sure they have good training programs, not schools.	16	
be held accountable to high standards, and if they can't reach them, there should be consequences.	17	
work directly with students and families to create the assessments (test, quizzes, etc.) that are used in their classrooms.	17	
create better ways for the public to be involved in evaluating them on how well they're doing	18	
decide their priorities based on what parents and local communities think is most important.	20	



