School Accountability Research

Teach Plus Colorado

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Intended outcomes

1. What do stakeholders (students, parents/ guardians, and teachers) see as the purpose of education and the responsibilities of schools and educators?
2. What role do stakeholders believe schools and teachers should play in helping them achieve success?
3. What skills do stakeholders see as most important for schools to teach?
4. Findings and recommendations.
5. How do other states measure their education systems?

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Principles of High Quality Schools Survey (2022)

After Colorado completed the audit of the current school accountability system in 2022, Teach Plus fellows wanted to know what teachers thought the purpose of public schools should be.

We surveyed teachers across the state and asked them to rank a set of ten principles from most to least important.

Top 3 Rated Principles

A high-quality school provides all students with:

1. The opportunity to develop their character, talents, and interests, while receiving support to address individual learning needs.

2. Opportunities that prepare them to succeed in the future of work including community partnerships, mentorships, and career exploration opportunities.

3. Opportunities that prepare them to fully participate in American democracy.

4. A safe and healthy environment that is conducive to academic learning.

5. Access to caring adults with expertise in creating quality learning environments and experiences.

6. Instruction and tasks that are worthy of their effort, aligned to state standards, and relevant to the skills they will need to succeed in life.

7. Tools and support to discover their purpose.

8. Prepares students to contribute meaningfully to the world economy

9. Helps students understand that people can see things differently–and that those differences merit respect rather than persecution.

10. Supports student emotional regulation and mental wellbeing.

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Focus Group Methodology (2023-2024)

One of the recommendations from last year's survey was to create opportunities for further conversations with educators and other stakeholders to better understand the priorities of quality schools using the principles as guidance.

+ Teach Plus fellows conducted a series of focus groups with families, students, and educators from October- December.
+ Fellows asked a total of twenty-one questions to participants.
+ Participants responded in a survey then discussed questions with the group.
+ We then looked at qualitative and quantitative data to develop common themes.
+ **We created findings and recommendations based on stakeholder feedback.**

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1. What do stakeholders see as the purpose of education and the responsibilities of schools and educators?

Finding

Engaging students by preparing them for the future and contributing to society are the primary purposes of education.

Recommendation

Conduct more research to answer the following questions:

+ What life readiness skills should schools teach to students?
+ How can schools best prepare students to better contribute to their communities?
+ How can the system evaluate the answers to the above questions?

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Supporting Data
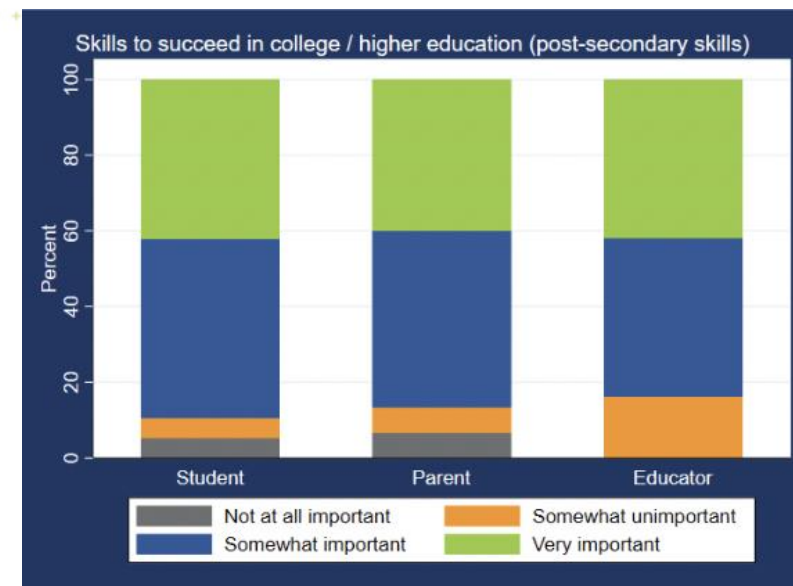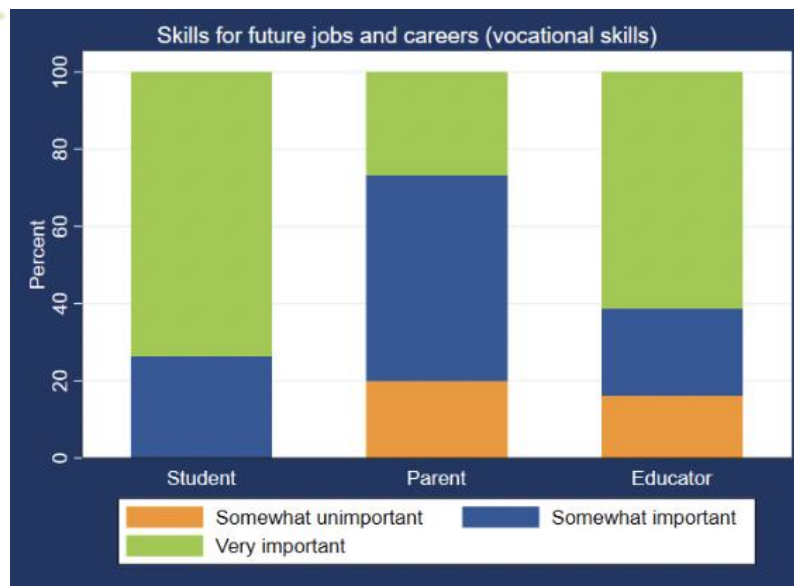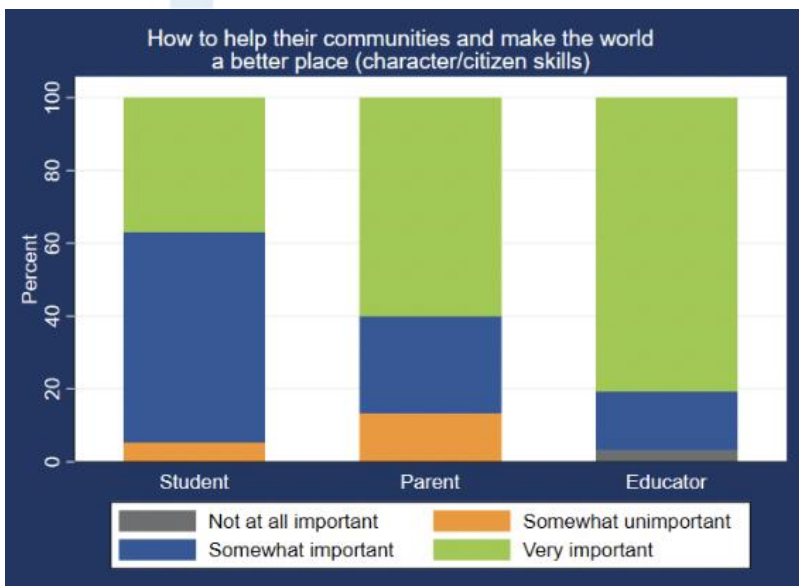
Parent:
"The role of education and schools is not only to teach the base academic knowledge needed to allow diverse opportunities for future learning, but also to create well rounded and accountable kids with the social and emotional skill sets to advocate for themselves and others."

Teacher:
Students "will need opportunities to practice these skills, chances to connect with the broader community by exposing them to jobs and skills and different kinds of people…"

Student:
"The purpose of education is to help you find what you are passionate in, and use that interest to change the world."

2. What role do stakeholders believe schools and teachers should play in helping them achieve success?
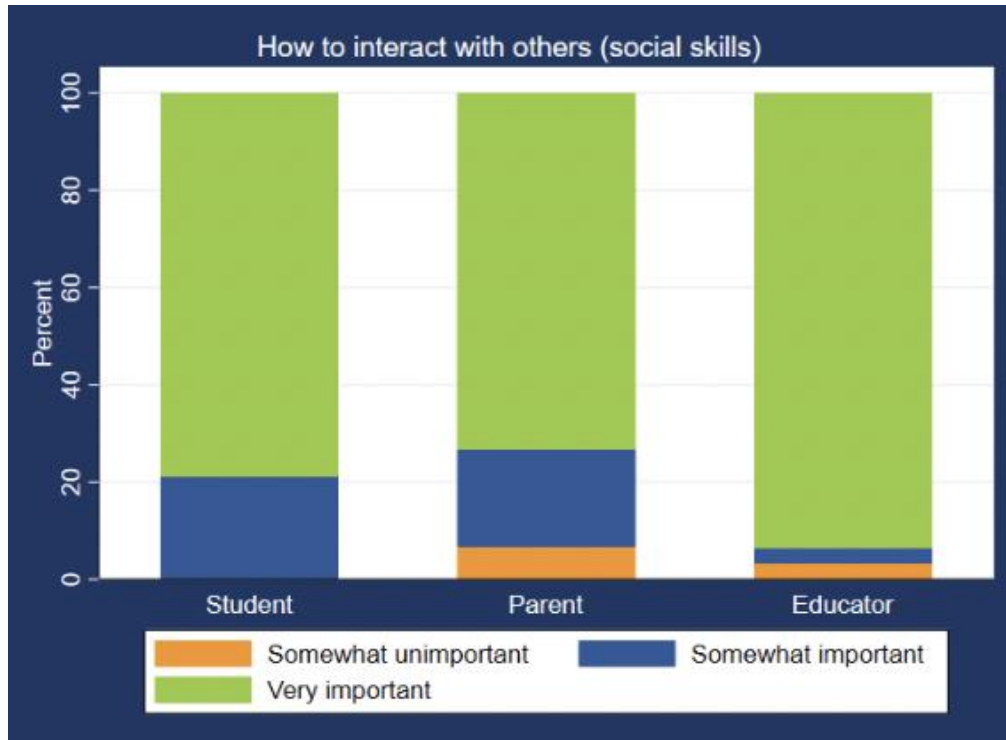
Finding

Cultivating the holistic development of the child, building a safe environment, fostering student development, and creating effective student supports and structures are the most essential roles and responsibilities of schools and teachers.

Recommendation

Consider changing Colorado's 5th indicator or add an additional indicator focused on measuring whole-child development.

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Supporting Data

How to interact with others (social skills)

Legend: Somewhat unimportant | Somewhat important | Very important

Categories: Student | Parent | Educator

Parent:

"I think the most important skills are social-emotional skills, academic skills, and critical thinking skills because if students can master these foundational skills, they can build the other skills on top of these three."

Teacher:

"I want my students to be thoughtful, productive, and happy members of our society. I want them to be resilient, persistent, and tenacious with anything that comes their way, and have the skills to attack any problem they encounter."

Student:

"Students need to be able to interact with others. I think emotional skills are important because people need to know themselves in order to do a lot of the other skills."

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How do other states measure School Quality/Student Success?

+ **Indiana**

  + Created a "*Graduates Prepared to Succeed*" Framework that prioritizes the following characteristics:
    + Academic Mastery
    + Career and Postsecondary Readiness
    + Communication and Collaboration
    + Work Ethics
    + Civil, Financial, and Digital Literacy

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How do other states measure SQ/SS?

+ Indiana Continued

Grade Levels	Focus Skills
Pre K- Grade 2	Expanding quality, affordable, and accessible learning
Grades 3- 8	Delivering educational fundamentals: emphasis on STEM and reading
Grades 9- 12	Providing seamless transitions for Indiana students
Graduation and Beyond	Supporting Indiana students for a brighter future

Click [here](#) to see how they display these measures for school accountability on their new dashboard
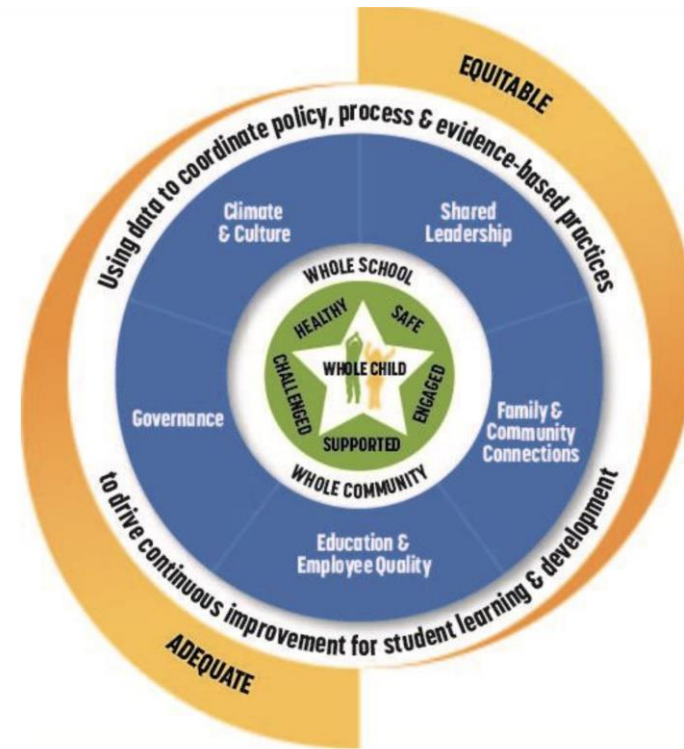
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How do other states measure SQ/SS?

+ **Illinois**

  + Climate Surveys
    + Parent
    + Student
    + Teacher

  + Fine Arts Indicator

  + Grades K-5 – participation in acceleration/enrichment

Click [here](#) to learn more about how they weight each SQSS indicator

How do other states measure SQ/SS?

+ **South Carolina**

  + AdvancED Student Engagement Survey

    + Administered to grades 3-12
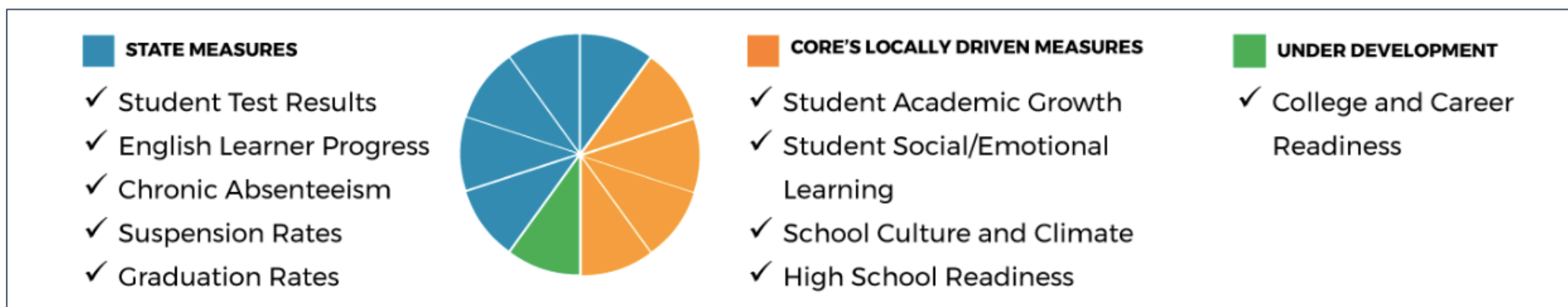
      + Behavioral engagement
      + Cognitive engagement
      + Emotional engagement

Click here to see how these results are displayed on SC School Report Cards

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How do other states measure SQ/SS?

+ California - CORE Districts

- + Multiple Measures Dashboard - no summative score
- + Incorporate SEL and school climate surveys
- + Results reported to district-level, school-level, and families
- + Surveys account for <10% of overall evaluation

STATE MEASURES
- ✓ Student Test Results
- ✓ English Learner Progress
- ✓ Chronic Absenteeism
- ✓ Suspension Rates
- ✓ Graduation Rates

CORE'S LOCALLY DRIVEN MEASURES
- ✓ Student Academic Growth
- ✓ Student Social/Emotional Learning
- ✓ School Culture and Climate
- ✓ High School Readiness

UNDER DEVELOPMENT
- ✓ College and Career Readiness

Click here to learn more about CORE districts

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Colorado's Current Performance Frameworks

Based on Colorado statutory requirements

+ A common evaluation framework
+ Focus on improvement efforts
+ Establishes minimum expectations for resources and/or support from the state
+ Provided at the district and school level
+ Currently no measure of student development beyond assessment scores and growth

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3. What skills do students, parents/guardians, and teachers see as most important for schools to teach?
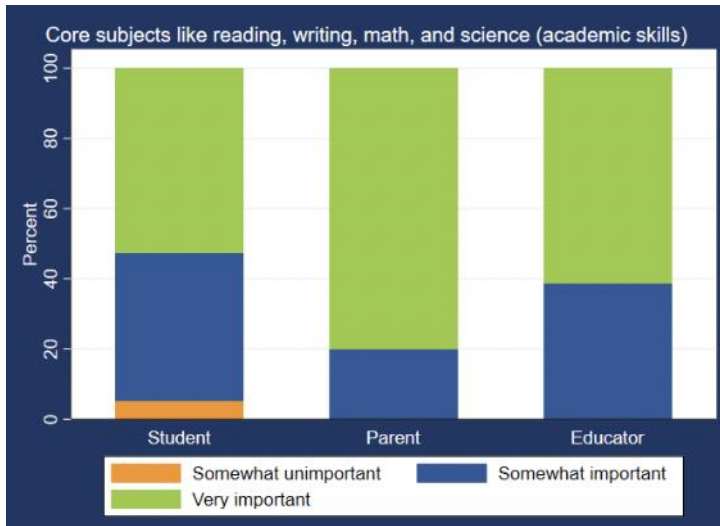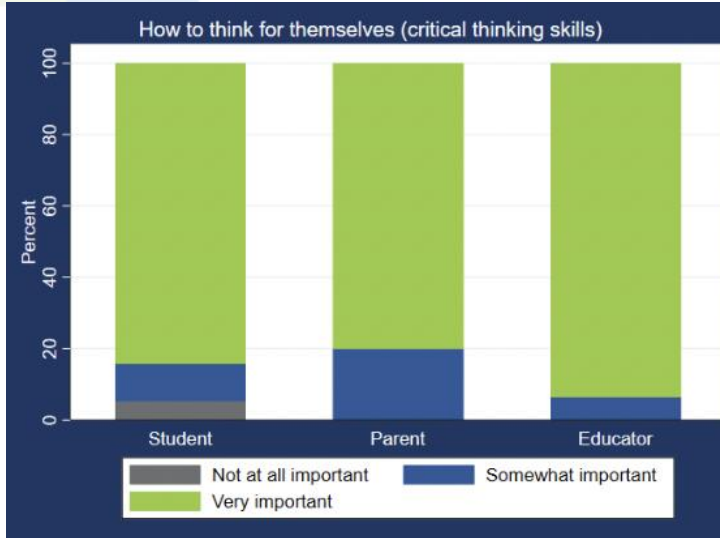
Finding

Critical thinking, SEL, core subjects, and cultural competency are the important skills participants want schools to prioritize.

Recommendation

Schools should diversify their models of curriculum instruction to better integrate critical thinking, SEL, core subjects, and cultural competencies. Districts should empower decision making that is responsive to the needs of the school community.

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Supporting Data

How to think for themselves (critical thinking skills)
(bar chart showing Student, Parent, Educator with legend: Not at all important, Somewhat important, Very important)

Core subjects like reading, writing, math, and science (academic skills)
(bar chart showing Student, Parent, Educator with legend: Somewhat unimportant, Somewhat important, Very important)

Teacher:

I "do think core subjects are very important because students will need to transfer their skills in reading, writing, math, and science to their daily lives."

Student:

"I think critical thinking skills are the most important because school is a safe space to fail."

Family:

School "is the place your child wants to be and feels comfortable with all the adults there in any situation so they can be honest and open…The parts of the school that have been most useful have been the social/emotional learning sides and learning about different cultures."

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Conclusion

+ **More research!**
+ **Measuring Whole-Child Development**
+ **Critically exploring new curriculum/ school structures**

Teacher/Parent:

"I want them to be creative problem solvers, to be compassionate, curious, and to believe in themselves. I want them to be brave, to have a community focus, and to stand up for what they believe is right."

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