



Introduction

Senate Bill 10-191, passed in 2010, restructured the way all licensed personnel in schools are supported and evaluated in Colorado. The ultimate goal is ensuring college and career readiness for all students, which is greatly impacted by the effectiveness of the educators in schools. To support this effort, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) developed several model systems as an option for districts to use in implementing the new evaluation requirements for educators.

The Colorado State Model Evaluation System was developed to provide consistent and relevant feedback to all educators throughout Colorado. Model systems of evaluation are currently in place for teachers, principals, and educators known collectively as specialized service professionals (SSPs). Currently, there are nine categories of specialized service professionals which use specific rubrics for their annual evaluations:

- Audiologists
- Occupational therapists
- Physical therapists
- School counselors
- School nurses
- School orientation and mobility specialists
- School psychologists
- School social workers
- Speech language pathologists

The Colorado State Model Evaluation System aligns with all requirements set forth in Senate Bill 10-191. By providing a new statewide model of evaluation for all licensed educators, SSPs are able to receive consistent, timely, and actionable feedback to improve their professional practices. This report provides insight on the implementation of the Colorado State Model Evaluation System and initial evaluation scores reported by SSPs and is intended to complement teacher and principal pilot reports developed by CDE. For more information on teacher and principal pilot reports, please visit:

www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/smes-pilot

This report provides several analyses related to the evaluation of school nurses in Colorado. The two major areas pertain to school nurse perceptions of their former systems of evaluation compared to the Colorado State Model Evaluation System, and the professional practice ratings resulting from the use of the Colorado State Model Evaluation System. Professional practice ratings contribute to 50 percent of an SSP's overall evaluation rating. Measures of student outcomes comprise the remaining 50 percent, as established by SB 10-191.

This report provides an *initial* look at the use of the Colorado State Model Evaluation System by school nurses, and caution should be exercised when interpreting the results. Specifically, school nurses represent a much smaller population than that of teachers and principals. Generalizing results to the entire school nurse population based on the results of this small sample of school nurses is not advisable both because of the small sample size as well as it being the first

Key Findings

Many of the school nurses had **positive perceptions** of the State Model Evaluation System and noted the use of student outcomes to inform the final evaluation rating.

More than 93 percent of school nurses were deemed proficient or higher for the overall professional practice rating, representing the three areas of proficiency on the five-point scale (basic, partially proficient, proficient, accomplished, and exemplary).

Approximately 93 to 94 percent of all school nurses were rated **proficient or higher** on each of the standards.

There is evidence that the standards are **reliable measurements** of school nurses' practice. The standards are **strongly correlated** with one another and the overall professional practice rating, suggesting that the rubric captures multiple related measures of effectiveness.



year of implementation. These systems take time to adjust to and implement with fidelity. Additionally, the implementation of the Colorado State Model Evaluation System may have been conducted differently across districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) sites. Thus, school nurses may have been evaluated very differently during the initial implementation, depending on where they were located and how they were employed.

Specialized Service Professionals, School Nurses and SB 10-191

SSPs are educational professionals who ensure that diverse student populations have equitable access to academic instruction and participation in school-related activities. In the 2013-14 academic year, 5,295 SSPs were employed in the state of Colorado. In accordance with the requirements set forth in SB 10-191, all educators should receive sufficient feedback, support and opportunities for professional growth, to ensure each child has access to great educators.

In their recommendations to implement Senate Bill 10-191, the State Council for Educator Effectiveness identified the nine categories of specialized service professionals, and with help from nine working groups of these professionals, outlined high quality standards and elements that guided the creation of the State Model Evaluation System. All nine groups of specialized service professionals work from a common set of standards and elements approved by the State Board of Education, but each category has unique professional practices outlining the specific role and duties of each professional group. Recommendations from the State Council for Educator Effectiveness on the evaluation of SSPs can be found in the following report: www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/sceesspreportmay2013

School nurses typically fall into two categories. Some nurses are employed at the school level and provide direct services to students. Others are district staff members who manage all health services while health assistances in each school provide direct services to students. Nurses make up approximately 10 percent of the SSP population, with 528 employed throughout the state. This report contains 29 professional practice ratings from school nurses.

The following definition is intended to give an overview of what an effective school nurse does to meet the Colorado educator quality standards and their related elements. Definitions for all SSPs have been drawn from the Colorado State Model Educator Evaluation System User's Guide: www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/usersguide

Definition of an Effective School Nurse

Effective school nurses are vital members of the education team. They are properly credentialed and have knowledge, skills and commitments necessary to advance the well-being, academic success, life-long achievement and health of students. Effective school nurses strive to support growth and development in the least restrictive environment, close achievement gaps and prepare diverse student populations for postsecondary and workforce success. Effective school nurses employ evidence-based strategies to promote health and safety; intervene with actual or potential health problems; provide case management services to nurture student and family capacity for adaptation, self-management, self-advocacy and learning. Effective school nurses communicate high expectations to students, staff and administrators and promote diverse strategies to engage them in a supportive learning environment. They have a deep understanding of the interconnectedness of the home, school and community and collaborate with all members of the education team to strengthen those connections. Through reflection, advocacy and leadership, school nurses enhance the academic achievement and personal/social development of their students.



Analyses Background

The research presented in this report uses two datasets to produce the overall findings. The first dataset consists of responses to baseline and feedback surveys issued to the pilot districts and BOCES that were in the process of transitioning to the Colorado State Model Evaluation System. The second dataset consists of 29 finalized professional practice ratings from the 2013-14 academic year.

Baseline and Feedback Surveys

Nineteen districts piloted the SSP Colorado State Model Evaluation System. From these 19 districts, eight piloted the SSP rubric for school nurses. School nurses at these districts were sent an e-mail containing a link to complete the perception surveys. Many of the questions were likert style and asked to what degree the respondent agreed with statements pertaining to their previous and current evaluation systems. Other questions consisted of multiple choice and open ended responses.

The baseline survey data was collected between October 2013 and January 2014. The follow-up feedback survey data was collected between May 2014 and June 2014. All data was collected via online survey. The surveys asked the respondents questions pertaining to their perceptions of their former evaluation system and their initial impressions of the Colorado State Model Evaluation System. The survey was issued anonymously; perception data cannot be linked to district information, any type of demographic feature, or the professional practice ratings.

Professional Practices

This dataset consists of finalized professional practices data from the 2013-14 academic year. Twenty-nine school nurses from eight district sites provided final professional practice ratings. Each was evaluated according to a specific school nurse rubric and a professional practice rating was developed. The primary goal of these analyses was to draw out overall, standard, and element level professional practice ratings and to describe the reliability and correlations associated with each.

Percent of Positive Responses Given by SSPs in Baseline and Feedback Surveys

Before reviewing school nurse-specific perceptions, this report introduces a brief analysis of the overall perceptions of all SSPs. Figure 1 displays aggregated SSP perception data. This table displays the percent of positive responses on each survey item. The percent positive responses on each item is higher on the feedback survey than the baseline survey, suggesting that the Colorado State Model Evaluation System is perceived as an improved tool to guide professional growth and improve performance (note that responses of “agree” and “strongly agree” are coded as positive responses; in contrast to “neutral”, “disagree”, and “strongly disagree”).

Across all SSPs, the area with the largest gain between the baseline and feedback surveys pertained to the evaluation system’s use of student outcomes to inform the final rating. This is highlighted as many of the former SSP evaluation systems did not formally consider student outcomes in the evaluation process. The feedback survey item with the most positive responses was regarding the evaluation system’s ability to identify areas of strength. The areas with the least positive responses pertain to the confidence that development of the Colorado State Model Evaluation System was based on current scientifically sound research and the ability of the new system to provide an accurate assessment of performance. However, these areas still had more positive responses on the feedback survey than on the baseline survey.

In the overall population of SSPs, the survey item with the greatest variance in the amount of change of positive responses pertained to the fairness of the evaluation system (standard deviation = 0.27), suggesting that this item had the largest range in perceptions across the nine different types of SSPs.



It is important to note the distinct differences associated with the specific groups of SSPs and what their unique perceptions are of their former and current evaluation systems. The specifics regarding these differences can be found in each individual SSP report at www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/smes-pilot. The unique differences between groups of SSPs can be identified in each of these reports.

When comparing school nurses to the larger group of SSPs, several differences are apparent. For example, the percent of positive responses from SSPs as a whole did not decrease between the baseline and feedback surveys on any items. However, as seen in figure 2, there were seven areas in which the percent of positive responses declined between surveys. Additional information specific to school nurses' perceptions are found on the following page.

Figure 1. SSP perceptions of their former evaluation system and the Colorado State Model Evaluation System

Survey Question	Baseline Fall 2013 (N = 268) The former evaluation system...	Feedback Spring 2014 (N = 202) The State Model Evaluation System...	Change in Percent Positive Response
Identifies areas that need improvement.	55.5%	78.7%	+23.2%
Identifies areas of strength.	67.3%	79.6%	+12.3%
Designed to guide professional growth.	46.3%	77.7%	+31.4%
Sets high standards for the person being evaluated.	34.1%	69.7%	+35.6%
Serves as a basis for improving service delivery and planning.	27.3%	60.4%	+33.1%
Provides actionable feedback to the person being evaluated.	31.8%	57.4%	+25.6%
Documents changes in professional practice over time.	16.8%	55.9%	+39.1%
Supports the improvement of service delivery and program development.	27.0%	57.9%	+31.0%
Is based on current scientifically sound research.	10.9%	34.3%	+23.5%
Results in improved student outcomes.	20.4%	40.1%	+19.7%
Provides an accurate assessment of my performance.	31.8%	37.3%	+5.5%
Encompassed all aspects of quality service delivery.	21.7%	40.1%	+18.4%
Provided a fair assessment of professional practices.	30.6%	45.3%	+14.7%
Provided timely feedback to the person being evaluated.	36.3%	51.5%	+15.2%
Used student outcomes to inform my final rating.	11.9%	55.2%	+43.3%
Was useful to me in making decisions about service delivery.	25.0%	50.7%	+25.7%
Influenced my practice as a specialized service professional.	32.5%	63.7%	+31.2%
I understand what information was used in my evaluation.	58.6%	65.8%	+7.3%

Note. The heavy black line in the middle of the table is provided to distinguish items that appear in the 2012-13 Teacher System Pilot Report—Baseline and Feedback Survey Data. The items above this line can also be found on the teacher survey data report (for reference), while those below the line will not be found on that report, but are important to the SSP population. The 2012-13 Teacher System Pilot Report—Baseline and Feedback Survey Data can be found here: www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/teacherpilotsurveydata12-13



School Nurse

There are approximately 528 school nurses in the Colorado K-12 system. Since only eight districts and school sites participated in the evaluation system for school nurses, the sample size is rather small. Fourteen school nurses responded to the baseline survey and 11 responded to the feedback survey. As such, broader generalizations about the perceptions of school nurses should be avoided.

On several items, the responses provided by school nurses declined between the baseline and feedback surveys. This was seen in the following areas: the evaluation system’s ability to identify areas that need improvement, identify areas of strength, provide actionable feedback, result in improved student outcomes, provide an accurate assessment of performance, provide a fair assessment of professional practices, and the usefulness in making decisions about service delivery. However, some areas saw major gains – such as the Colorado State Model Evaluation System’s use of student outcomes to inform their final rating and in setting high standards.

The area with the most positive responses on the feedback survey pertained to the nurses’ understanding of what information was used in their evaluations. The two areas receiving the fewest positive responses on the feedback survey pertain to the improvement of student outcomes and providing an accurate assessment of performance.

Figure 2. School nurses perceptions of their former evaluation system and the Colorado State Model Evaluation System

Survey Question	Baseline Fall 2013 (N = 14) The former evaluation system...	Feedback Spring 2014 (N = 11) The State Model Evaluation System...	Change in Percent Positive Response
Identifies areas that need improvement.	78.6%	63.6%	-15.0%
Identifies areas of strength.	78.6%	54.5%	-24.1%
Designed to guide professional growth.	50.0%	63.6%	+13.6%
Sets high standards for the person being evaluated.	35.7%	72.7%	+37.0%
Serves as a basis for improving service delivery and planning.	35.7%	54.5%	+18.8%
Provides actionable feedback to the person being evaluated.	57.1%	54.5%	-2.6%
Documents changes in professional practice over time.	21.4%	54.5%	+33.1%
Supports the improvement of service delivery and program development.	35.7%	63.6%	+27.9%
Is based on current scientifically sound research.	14.3%	45.5%	+31.2%
Results in improved student outcomes.	28.6%	27.3%	-1.3%
Provides an accurate assessment of my performance.	35.7%	27.3%	-8.4%
Encompassed all aspects of quality service delivery.	21.4%	45.5%	+24.1%
Provided a fair assessment of professional practices.	50.0%	36.4%	-13.6%
Provided timely feedback to the person being evaluated.	57.1%	63.6%	+6.5%
Used student outcomes to inform my final rating.	14.3%	63.6%	+49.3%
Was useful to me in making decisions about service delivery.	42.9%	36.4%	-6.5%
Influenced my practice as a specialized service professional.	35.7%	45.5%	+9.8%
I understand what information was used in my evaluation.	71.4%	90.9%	+19.5%



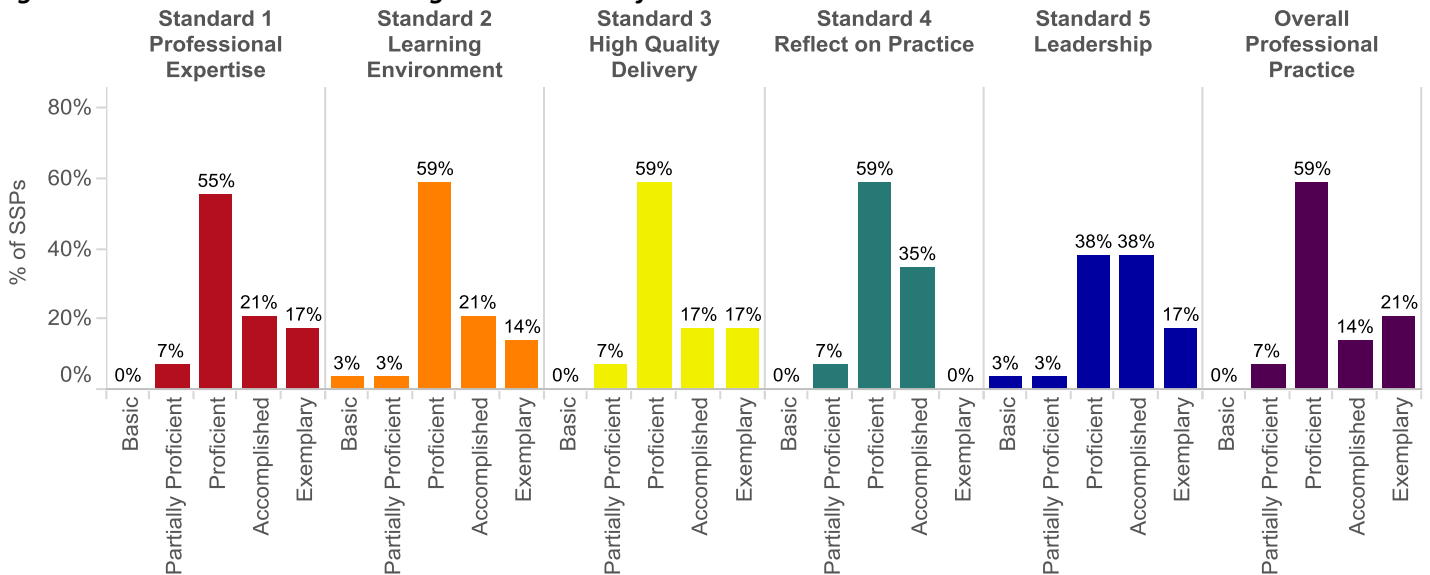
Professional Practices Distributions of School Nurses

Of the 29 school nurses in the eight districts that provided professional practice rating information, approximately 93 percent were evaluated as proficient or higher for the overall professional practice rating. Figure 3 depicts the professional practice ratings of school nurses on each of the standards. None of the standards stands out as having had the most or fewest proficient school nurses; on each of the standards, approximately six to seven percent of all school nurses were rated below proficient.

The following sections will also include descriptions of the correlations¹ and internal consistency² between and within the standards. A correlation is a measurement of how two variables, such as standards, change together. Internal consistency, on the other hand, is a measurement that describes how well multiple measures of related constructs score together. These two concepts, correlations and internal consistency, are important to this analysis since the Colorado State Model Evaluation System has been designed to measure related, but unique, aspects of educator effectiveness.

All standards are strongly correlated with one another ($0.75 < \rho < 0.99$) as well as with the overall proficiency rating ($0.81 < \rho < 0.99$). The reliability of the standard level ratings was high (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.96$), and the ratings within each standard range between an acceptable to high degree of internal consistency ($0.66 < \alpha < 0.96$).

Figure 3. Standard and overall ratings distributions of school nurses



Note. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

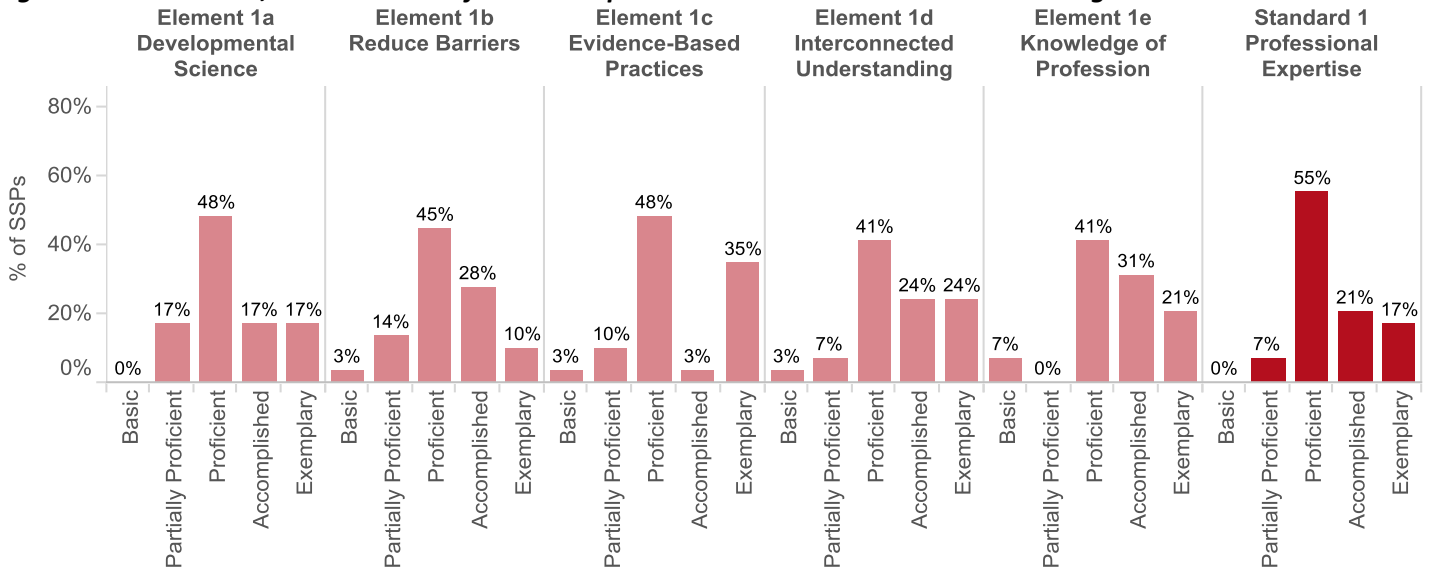
¹ Correlations indicate the strength of the relationship between two measures; a value of 0 indicates no relationship and a value of 1 indicates a perfect positive relationship (a value of -1 indicates a perfect negative relationship). General guidelines for interpreting this value are: a correlation under 0.30 indicates a weak relationship, 0.30-0.49 indicates a moderate relationship, and a 0.50 and above indicates a strong relationship.

² Internal consistency is a measure of reliability. This report uses Cronbach's alpha (α) as a measurement of internal consistency for professional practice ratings. Typically, an item with an α score less than 0.50 is considered to have poor internal consistency, an item with an α between 0.50 and 0.69 is said to be acceptably reliable, and an item with an α of 0.70 and above has a high degree of internal consistency.



When drilling down to Standard 1 (Professional Expertise), school nurses in the pilot displayed a high degree of internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.93$). The correlation between elements in Standard 1 were strong ($0.52 < \rho < 0.85$), while the elements were each strongly correlated with the overall standard ($0.80 < \rho < 0.93$).

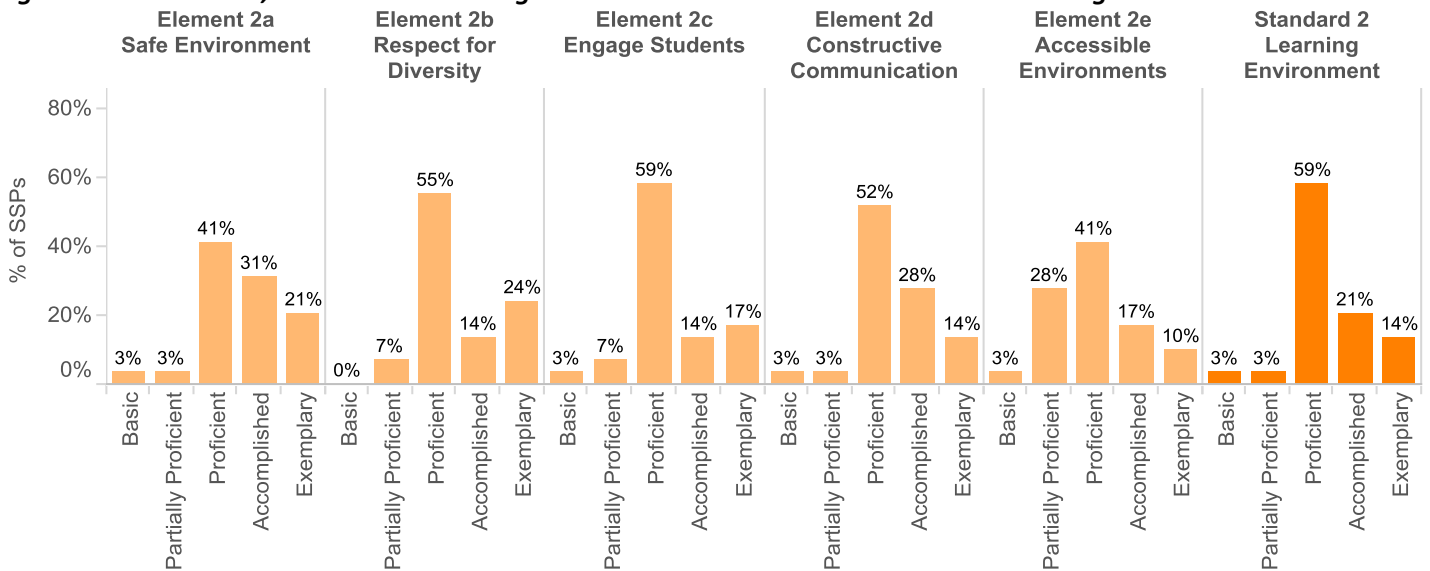
Figure 4. School nurse, Standard 1: Professional Expertise – elements and summative rating



Note. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

For school nurses in the pilot, Standard 2 (Learning Environment) displayed a high degree of internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.95$). The correlation between elements in Standard 2 were strong ($0.71 < \rho < 0.87$), while the elements were each strongly correlated with the overall standard ($0.79 < \rho < 0.93$).

Figure 5. School nurse, Standard 2: Learning Environment – elements and summative rating

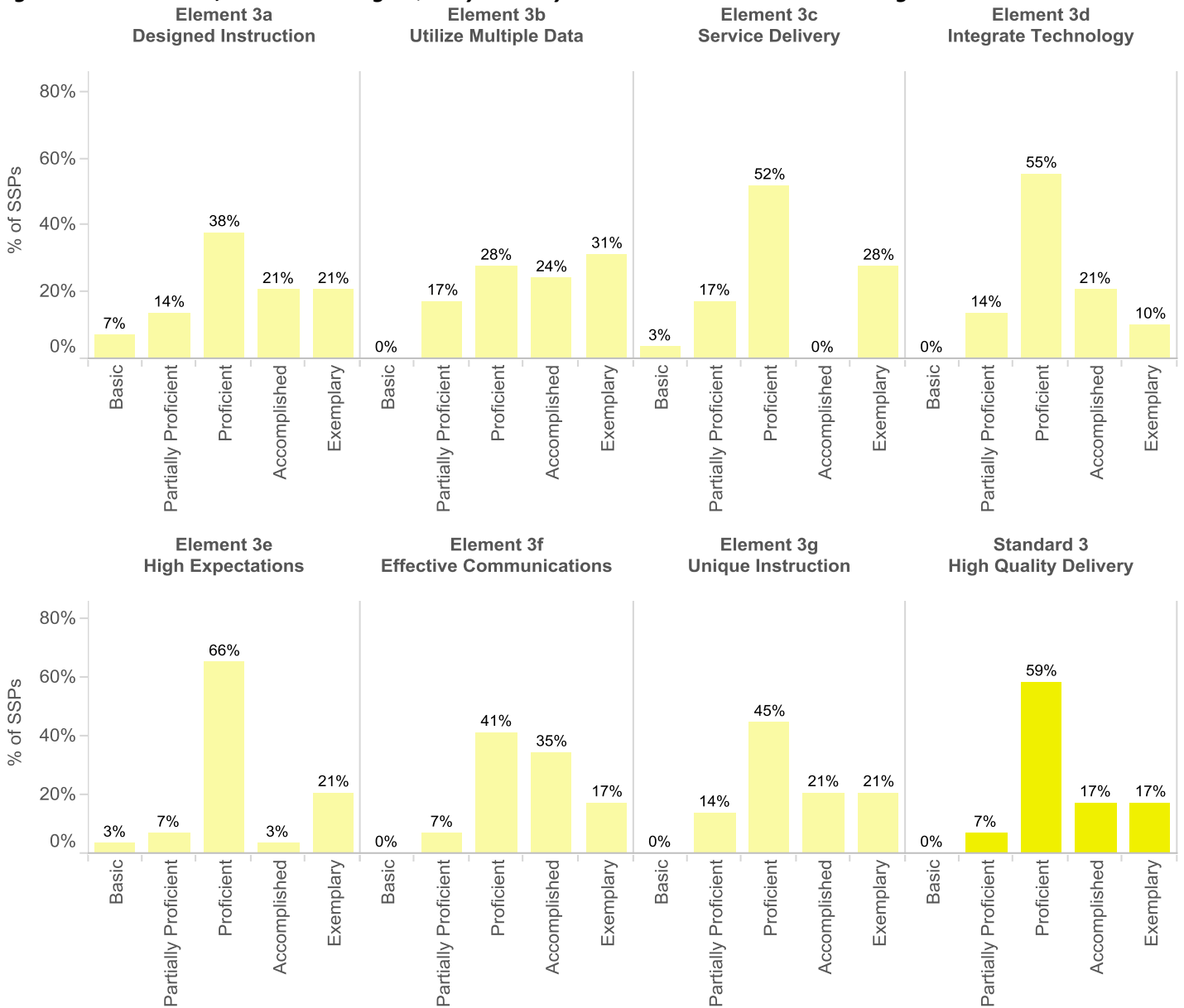


Note. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.



Standard 3 (High Quality Delivery) displayed a high degree of internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.94$). The correlation between elements in Standard 3 were strong ($0.55 < \rho < 0.81$), while the elements were each strongly correlated with the overall standard ($0.72 < \rho < 0.87$).

Figure 6. School nurse, Standard 3: High Quality Delivery – elements and summative rating

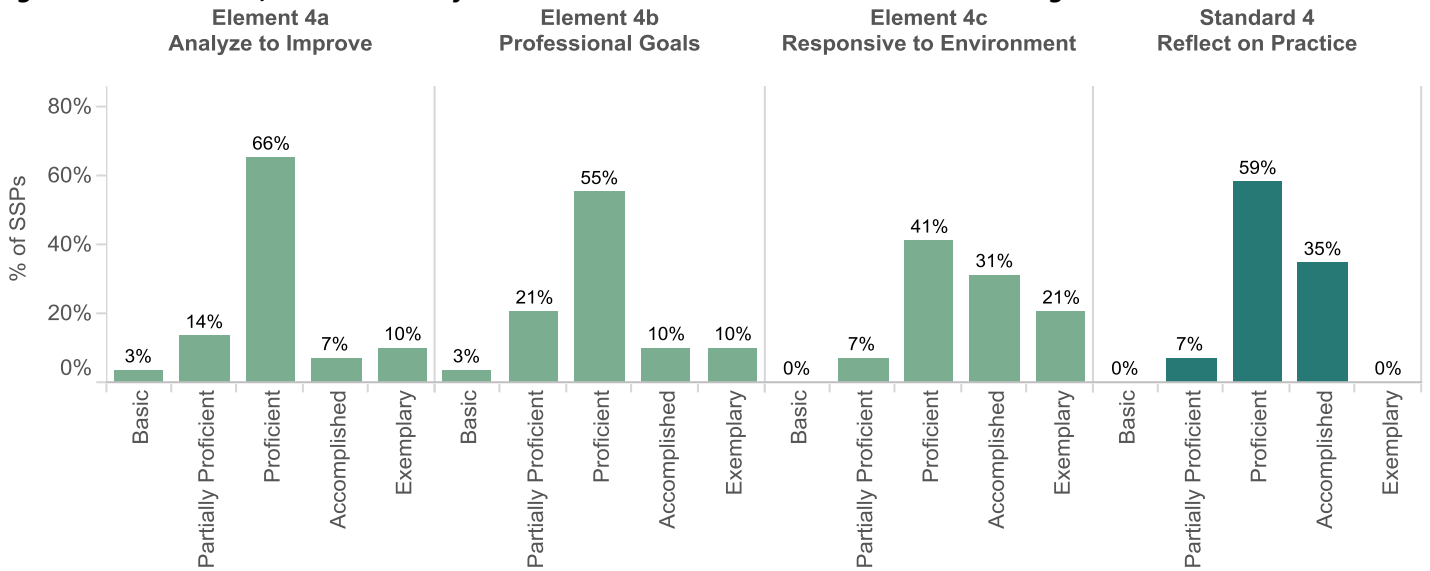


Note. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.



For school nurses in the pilot, Standard 4 (Reflect on Practice) displayed acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.66$). The correlation between elements in Standard 4 ranged between weak and strong ($0.16 < \rho < 0.62$), while the elements were each strongly correlated with the overall standard ($0.63 < \rho < 0.72$).

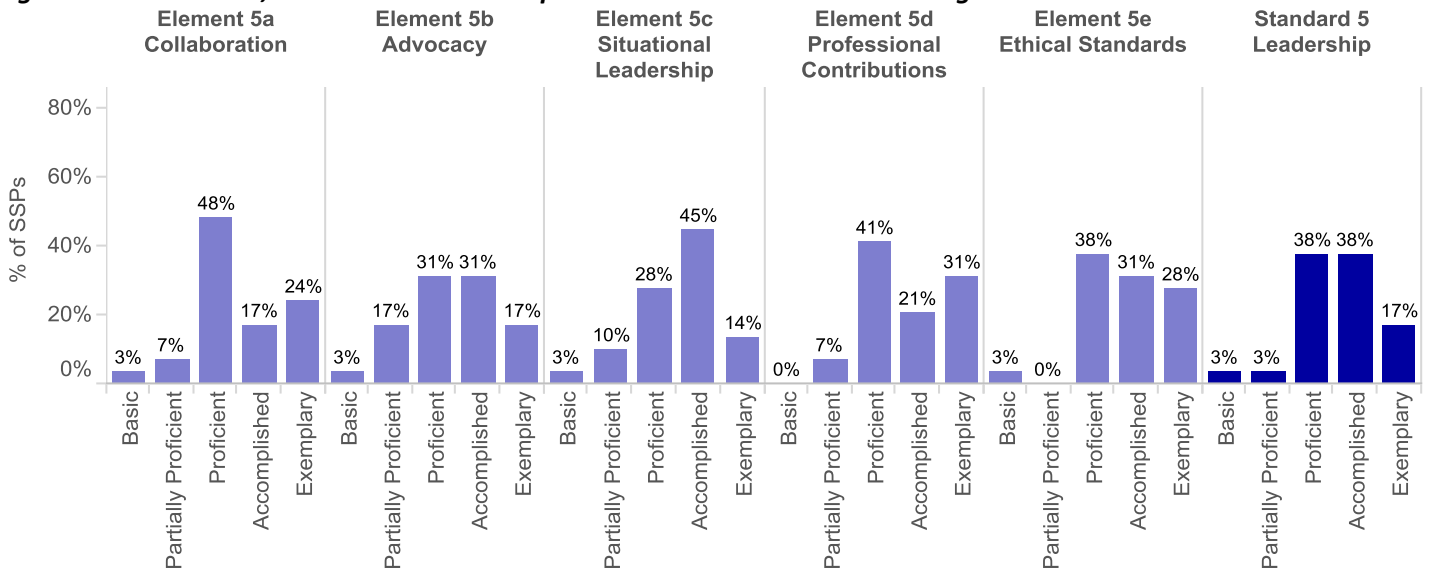
Figure 7. School nurse, Standard 4: Reflect on Practice – elements and summative rating



Note. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

For school nurses in the pilot, Standard 5 (Leadership) displayed a high degree of internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.89$). The correlation between elements in Standard 5 ranged between weak and strong ($0.24 < \rho < 0.73$), while the elements were each strongly correlated with the overall standard ($0.61 < \rho < 0.88$).

Figure 8. School nurse, Standard 5: Leadership – elements and summative rating



Note. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.



Conclusion

In developing and implementing the Colorado State Model Evaluation System, it has been noted that school nurses are unique educational professionals that have diverse perceptions of evaluation systems and have specific evaluation needs. The implementation of the Colorado State Model Evaluation System has largely been positively received by school nurses. As a whole, school nurses had the greatest change in the percent positive responses on the survey item pertaining to the use of student outcomes to inform the final rating. However, as indicated in the overall SSP pilot report, school nurses indicated that their prior evaluation system was more effective than the Colorado State Model Evaluation System. In addition, several of the items on the perception survey from piloted school nurses suggest that this group does not have as many positive views of the Colorado State Model Evaluation System compared to their prior system of evaluation. These areas include the identification of areas for improvement, areas of strength and the ability to provide an accurate and fair assessment of their practice. These are areas that CDE will track over time and, working with school nurses, determine how to improve the model to fit their unique contexts. Otherwise, 93 percent of school nurses in the pilot were rated proficient or higher for the overall professional practice rating. Each of the five standards, however, varied in the level of proficiency. This variation occurred across as well as within each of the standards.

This report suggests that there is a range of reliability associated with the standards and with overall professional practice ratings. For school nurses in the pilot, all overall and standard level reliability indicators displayed an acceptable to high degree of reliability. Ratings also correlated with one another across and within each standard, suggesting that the Colorado State Model Evaluation System does capture different but related aspects of professional practices of school nurses. Further research into these areas could yield additional insight on the use of the Colorado State Model Evaluation System by school nurses. The small sample sizes associated with this population implies that generalizable conclusions about the perceptions and reliability should not be drawn from this report. The preliminary results do suggest that the Colorado State Model Evaluation System can be validated as an effective measurement tool for improving professional practices. The validation process would produce greater insight on the use of the evaluation system as a reliable, valid, and fair instrument for educator evaluation. As the Colorado State Model Evaluation System continues to be implemented and additional data is collected, supplementary analyses may be performed to better understand the use of this system among school nurses.