



## Survey Overview

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) collected public feedback on the development of the state’s plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) through online surveys during January 2017. Assessment-related questions were asked in a “general” survey that did not require prior knowledge and covered multiple topics and a “specific” survey limited to one topic for those who had more background on the plans (i.e., viewed a video or attended a feedback forum). This report provides the results of both surveys, as analyzed by Public Policy Associates, Inc.<sup>1</sup>

For more information about the Action Teams and the feedback opportunities, please see [MDE’s ESSA web page](#).

## Respondents

People from across the state responded to the surveys, as shown in Figures 1 and 2.<sup>2</sup> All of the regions of the state were represented among the survey respondents. However, educators predominated in both surveys.

Note that the general survey had far more respondents and, therefore, those results should be considered more representative of public opinion. The fact that most respondents were educators should also be considered when applying the survey findings in decision-making.

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<sup>1</sup> MDE created and fielded the surveys.

<sup>2</sup> PPA coded the counties of respondents into the five regions used by the MDE Office of Field Services. Region 1 includes the Upper Peninsula and upper Lower Peninsula; Region 2 includes lower West Michigan; Region 3 includes the mid-section from the Thumb area to Mason and Oceana counties; Region 4 includes Ingham, Saginaw, Washtenaw, and other neighboring counties; and Region 5 is made up of Wayne, Macomb, and Oakland counties. The regional map can be found [here](#).

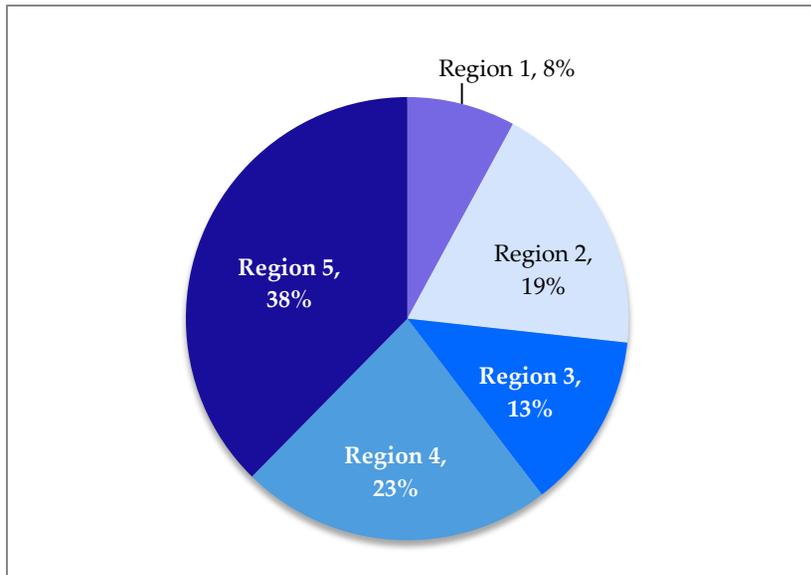


Figure 1. General Survey Respondents by Region (N=625)

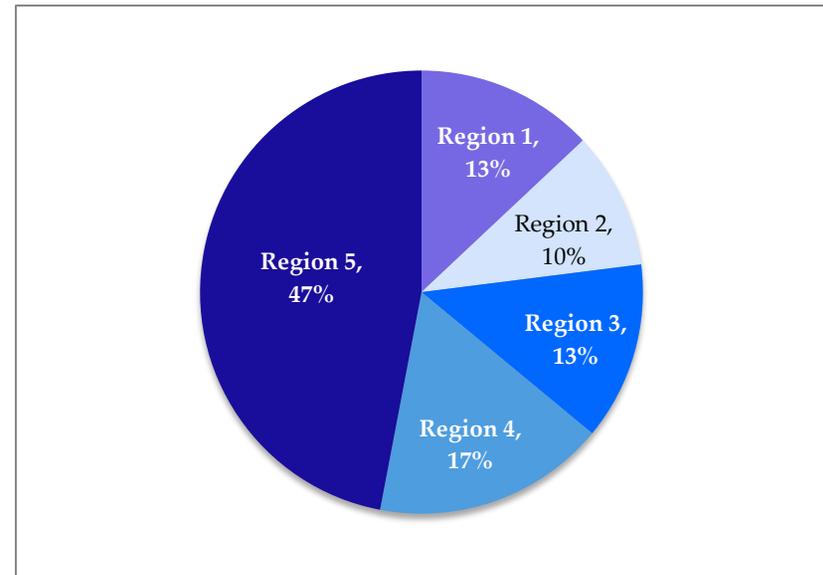


Figure 2. Assessment-Specific Survey Respondents by Region (N=30)

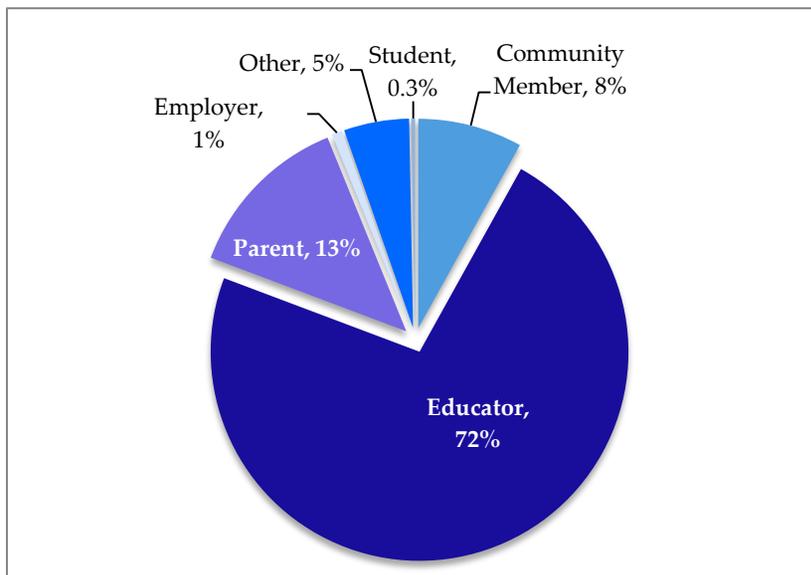


Figure 3. General Survey Respondents by Sector (N=625)

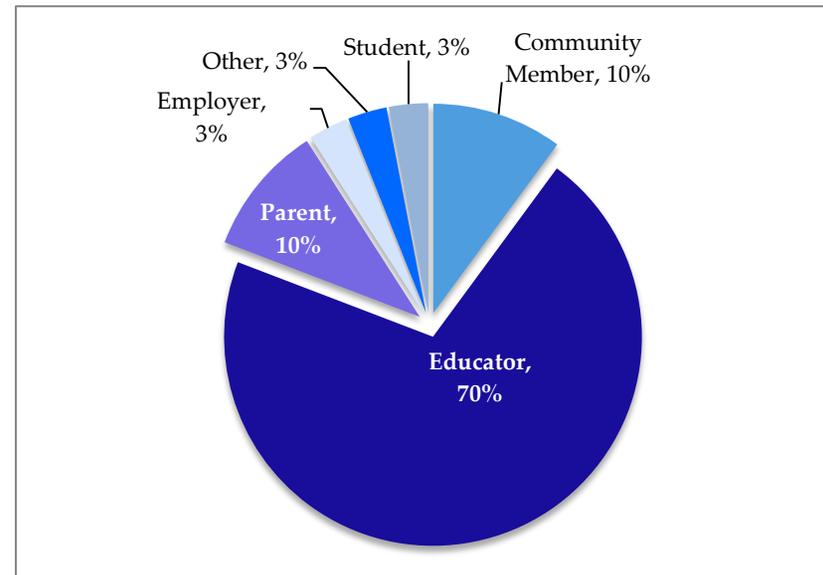


Figure 4. Assessment-Specific Survey Respondents by Sector (N=30)

## Results

The survey questions about assessment plans were focused on the proposal to introduce benchmarking, or periodic assessments, into the state testing program. A schedule for grades 3-11 was included in the general survey to convey what is required under ESSA. A draft schedule for testing by grade level (K-11) was included in the more detailed Assessment-specific survey to illustrate the additional requirements for kindergarten screening and grades 1-2 assessment in certain subjects under Michigan law.

### Benchmarking Student Growth

On the whole, respondents were not in favor of interim or benchmarking assessments at least twice a year, even if each were shorter than the current once-a-year assessment. Required benchmark assessments with procedures similar to M-STEP were not supported at all by 38% of general-survey respondents and 29% of specific-survey respondents. Another quarter to one-third were “somewhat supportive” of such an assessment plan.

When asked about keeping a comprehensive assessment in spring with optional fall and winter benchmarks, respondents were generally supportive, although the degree of support ranged from “somewhat supportive” to “very supportive” (66% general survey, 65% specific survey), with few in the “very supportive” group (9%, 17%).

Community members responding to the general survey were most supportive of adding one additional required assessment (50%) and of requiring interim assessments (69%). Teachers were less supportive (41%, 51%) of these than community members, but more supportive than parents (43% for each). For all benchmarking proposals, 11% – 13% of general-survey respondents wanted to know more before forming an opinion.

In their comments, Assessment specific-survey respondents wanted to see benchmarking remain at the district level, conveyed dislike for the M-STEP assessment, and expressed lack of confidence that interim assessment results would be reported from the state in a timely manner for use in schools. Some also noted a concern that students were already over-tested. General-survey comments echo this sentiment, with concerns that additional tests will further reduce classroom instruction time.

**Table 1: Michigan Benchmark Testing\***

<i>Survey Item</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>Very/Highly Supportive</i>	<i>Supportive</i>	<i>Somewhat Supportive</i>	<i>Not Supportive</i>	<i>I would need more information</i>
<b>Interim/benchmark assessments at least twice a year; new tests shorter than past summative assessments</b>						
General Survey (n=479)		6% (28)	14% (67)	23% (111)	44% (210)	13% (63)
Specific Survey (n=24)		21% (5)	17% (4)	25% (6)	37% (9)	-
<b>Required benchmark assessments with security procedures similar to M-STEP, possible additional content to align to state standards, etc.</b>						
General Survey (n=476)		6% (28)	16% (75)	30% (141)	38% (179)	11% (53)
Specific Survey (n=24)		17% (4)	21% (5)	21% (5)	29% (7)	12% (3)
<b>If possible, comprehensive assessment (M-STEP or different) each spring for grades 3-8 that could also serve as spring interim/benchmark assessment, allowing fall and winter benchmarks to remain optional</b>						
General Survey (n=475)		9% (42)	26% (123)	31% (146)	23% (110)	11% (54)
Specific Survey (n=23)		17% (4)	26% (6)	22% (5)	30% (7)	4% (1)

\*Note: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding. The overall graphics shown include all who indicated any level of support (very to somewhat supportive).

## Summary

Overall, respondents were opposed to required benchmark testing by the state, and the degree of support for optional benchmarking was moderate. The complexity of administering and reporting on a test like the M-STEP has discouraged support of additional state tests, and commonplace frustration with frequent testing in the schools showed in respondent comments. This presents a challenge for MDE if it is to monitor student growth within a school year.