



STEP Satisfaction and Experience Survey

Key Findings and Trends



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Introduction

The past two school years have been unlike any other. Prolonged school closures and adaptive learning models resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic required educators to reimagine teaching and learning. Their already stretched time was spread even thinner and the divide between work and home was blurred for many teachers who found themselves working tirelessly day and night to deliver high-quality remote instruction. At STEP, we witnessed this firsthand as our team supported teachers in adapting their literacy instruction and assessment cycles to fit remote learning models. To effectively support our partners during this time, we designed and developed new tools and professional learning specific to virtual instruction, including virtual administration of the STEP Assessment and complimentary access to online progress monitoring and corresponding professional learning webinars. The STEP team also provided our partners with the tools and support needed to differentiate literacy instruction in a virtual capacity.

In the spring of 2021, our team curated and distributed a client satisfaction survey and received over 170 responses, the highest response rate of any STEP survey in the past five years. This survey prompted STEP users to reflect on how STEP has supported their practice—particularly throughout remote instruction during the pandemic. This report will outline the key highlights and trends of the 2020-21 STEP Satisfaction and Experience Survey.

2020-21 Snapshot

During the COVID-19 pandemic, STEP has:

Facilitated **over 3,000 hours of virtual professional learning.**

Supported **more than 3,000 leaders, teachers, and staff across over 200 schools nationwide** with targeted formative assessment data.

Offered a series of free webinars focused on collecting and using data to support remote literacy instruction that **reached over 200 practitioners.**

Developed **two new complete assessment platforms**, the Virtual STEP Assessment and STEP Online Progress Monitoring, that enabled teachers to continue collecting valuable formative reading data in a virtual capacity for both English and Spanish-speaking students.

Curated **a dozen literacy resources for educators and parents** designed to support virtual literacy instruction and at-home learning, including “A Guide to Reading With Your Child: At-Home Activities for Strengthening Your Child’s Reading Skills.”

Participated in The University of Chicago’s Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice’s 2020 summer webinar series to support parents with recommendations on how to provide literacy support at home during the height of the pandemic.

Since Using STEP,

71% of teachers said there has been **an increase in their capacity to tailor literacy instruction to meet students’ individual and small group needs.**

66% of school leaders said their school **has developed a stronger culture around using data to drive instruction.**

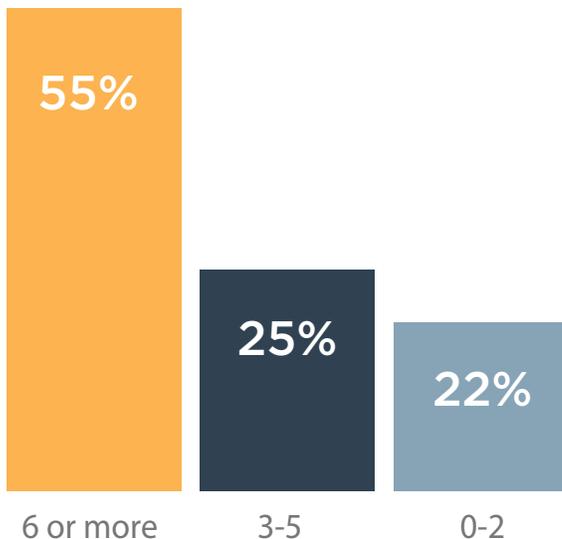
Key Survey Findings

Respondent Background Information

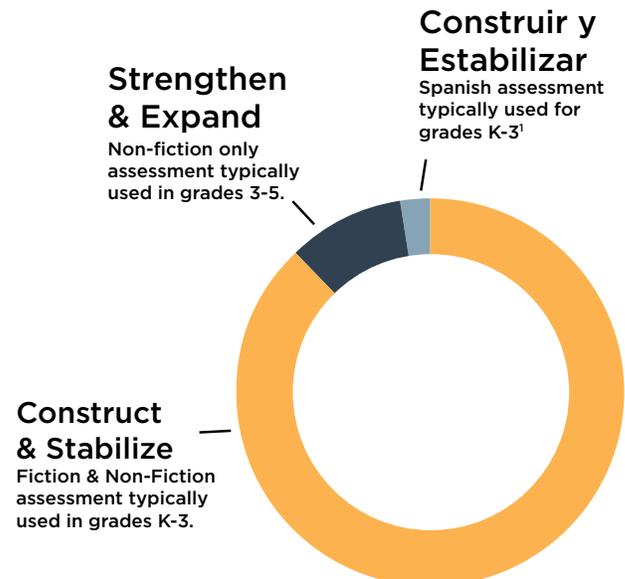
Respondents' Role at Their School



Number of Years Using STEP



The STEP Assessment Series Being Used



1. Construir y Estabilizar is a component of the STEP Español series that is currently being piloted in select elementary schools.

Virtual Administration of the STEP Assessment

Ideally, formative assessments such as STEP are administered in-person rather than virtually. However, once it was apparent that remote learning would be the dominant model of learning for the 2020-21 school year, STEP quickly made adaptations that allowed for virtual administration of the assessment. The virtual version of the assessment included unique virtual protocols, online access to assessment books, and a student viewer for remote participation.

67% of surveyed partners reported using the virtual administration version of STEP to capture data for students in a remote setting.



88%

of surveyed partners reported having a neutral to positive experience administering the virtual STEP Assessment.

83%

of surveyed teachers agreed the virtual version of the STEP Assessment enabled them to capture valuable reading data for students in a remote setting when they would otherwise be unable to do so.

86%

of surveyed teachers agreed the virtual version of the STEP Assessment has been a valuable asset in informing and refining their remote literacy instruction.

88%

of surveyed school leaders agreed the virtual version of the STEP Assessment has been a valuable asset in informing and refining their remote literacy instruction.

STEP Online Progress Monitoring

In the fall of 2020, STEP launched an online version of progress monitoring that was expressly designed with distance learning and data collection in mind. STEP Online Progress Monitoring (STEP OPM) allows teachers to isolate and monitor a singular reading skill or set of skills aligned to each student’s assessed needs. This new system enabled teachers to continue virtually collecting and using formative reading data to differentiate their instructional practices just as they would when teaching in the classroom. STEP OPM supports teachers in virtually monitoring reading progress for both English and Spanish-speaking students in grades K-5.

STEP OPM offers over 70 original texts authored by STEP’s team of literacy experts—allowing for students to be assessed multiple times with access to unique content at the same reading level. STEP provided current partners access to the STEP OPM system for no additional cost throughout the 2020-21 school year. The STEP team also created a series of free training videos and webinars on using the new system.

61%

of surveyed partners reported using STEP Online Progress Monitoring.

60% of teachers surveyed received training on STEP OPM from their STEP Trainer. 5% joined a STEP webinar, 30% reported they did not receive training at all, and 10% received training from an “other” source—most commonly a colleague.

This insight, combined with the graph below, “How Partners Heard About STEP OPM,” reinforces the importance of a strong relationship between STEP Trainers and school teams in promoting the reliable application of STEP features.

How Partners Heard About STEP OPM



“

It has been a tough year for educators everywhere but our load felt much easier with [STEP] Online Progress Monitoring. We were able to support remote and onsite scholars. Our teachers were able to use the data gathered through the STEP Progress Monitoring tool to guide Instruction. STEP has been a major part of [Springfield Prep Charter School's] literacy program and we plan on continuing our journey together.”

Shawna Mitchell,
Elementary School Assistant Principal
Springfield Prep Charter School

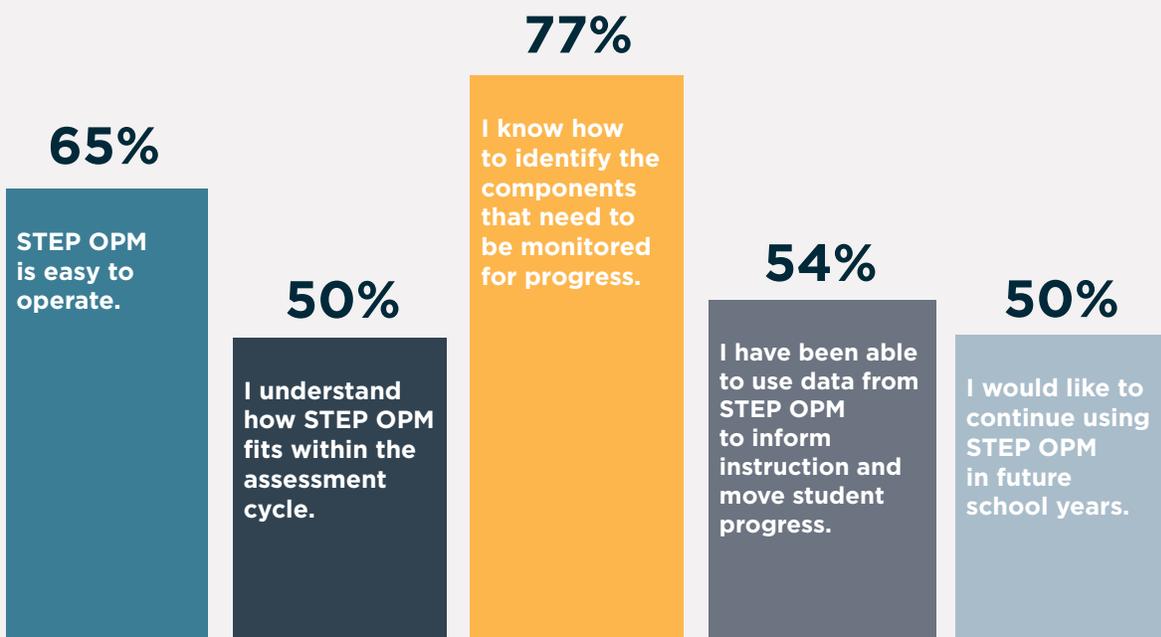
95%

of surveyed partners reported having a neutral to positive experience using STEP Online Progress Monitoring.

63%

of surveyed school leaders are interested in having their schools use STEP Online Progress Monitoring in the coming academic year.

When Asked About Their Experience Using STEP OPM, Survey Respondents Said:²



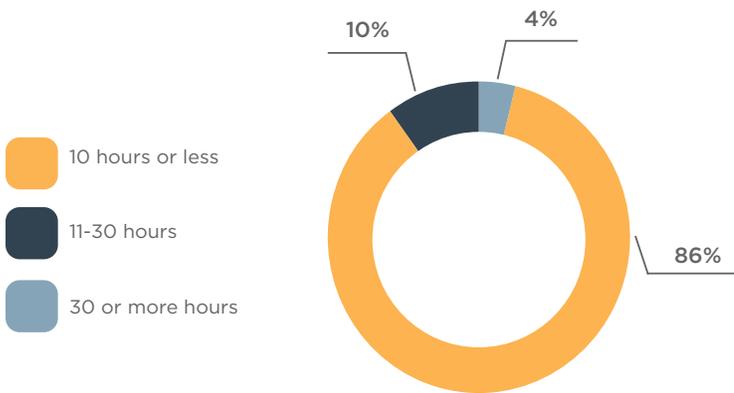
2. This feedback is based on six months of using STEP OPM during remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

STEP Professional Learning

Throughout the pandemic, STEP trainers have continued to support schools across the country in a virtual capacity. They have worked closely with school teachers and staff in adapting literacy instruction and data-driven practices to fit remote and hybrid learning models. STEP trainers have provided over 3,000 hours of virtual professional learning—supporting more than 3,000 leaders, teachers, and staff across more than 200 schools with targeted formative assessment data.

Number of STEP Professional Learning Hours Received

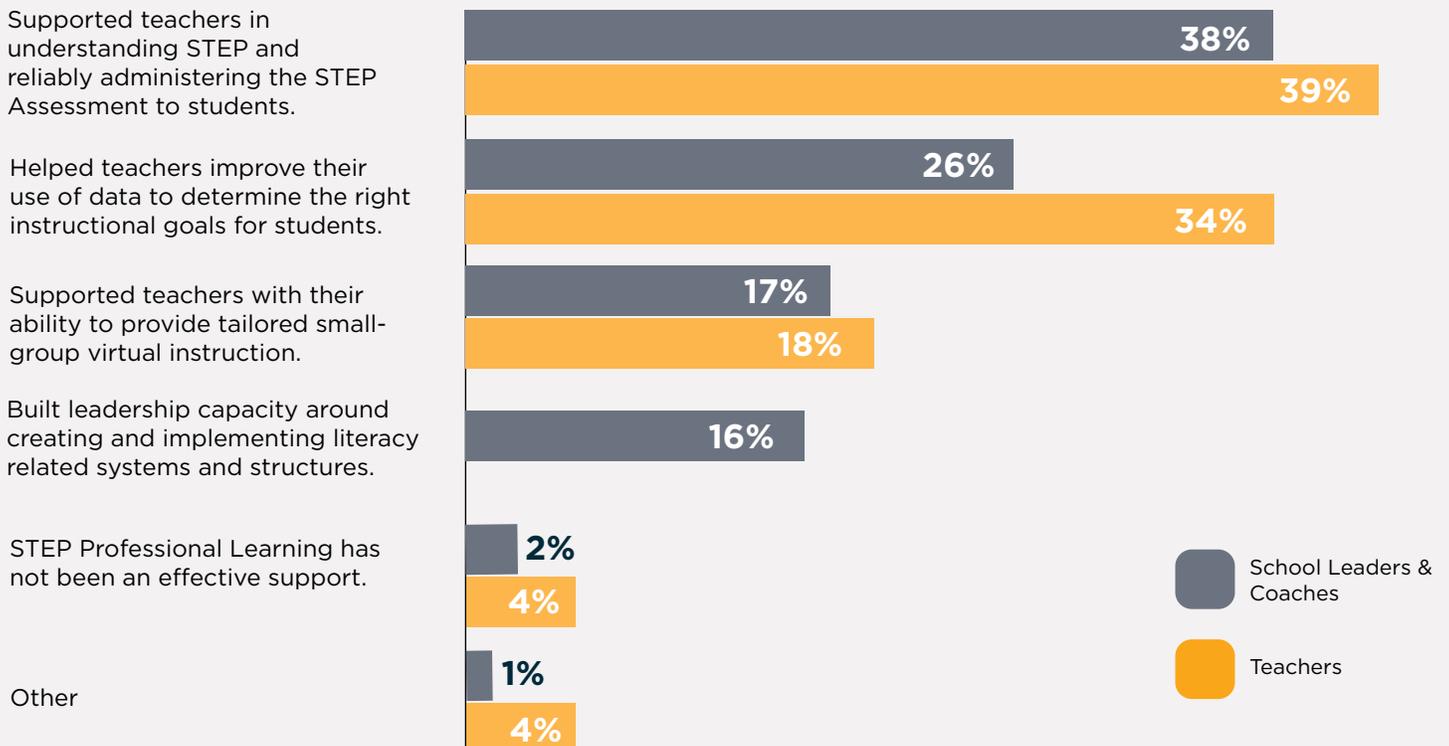
While most respondents report receiving 10 hours or less of STEP Professional Learning, this is below the average amount of hours received in a typical school year. Many schools reduced 2020-21 professional learning hours due to limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic.



82%

of surveyed partners agree **STEP Trainer support is an important part of strengthening and aligning our school's approach to teaching literacy.**

When Asked How STEP Professional Learning Has Supported Their Schools and Teachers, Survey Respondents Said:



Trends and Observations

While reviewing responses from the 2020-21 STEP Satisfaction and Experience Survey, we observed a few trends and patterns across survey text entries. The following themes were identified.

Professional Learning Topics

To inform content creation for new STEP Professional Learning sessions, we sought to identify trends across client's topics of interest related to literacy. During the survey, respondents were asked to choose from a list of literacy and instructional topics that they would be interested in learning more about. The following topics received the most selections.

- 1. Understanding Connections Between the Science of Reading and STEP**
- 2. Targeting Instruction to Decrease the Learning Loss for Fully Remote or Hybrid Students**
- 3. How Use of Online Progress Monitoring Data Can Inform Instruction**

Respondents also had the opportunity to write in a response if the suggested topics did not reflect their needs. After reviewing those suggestions, we identified the following themes:



Empowering Students in their Literacy Development

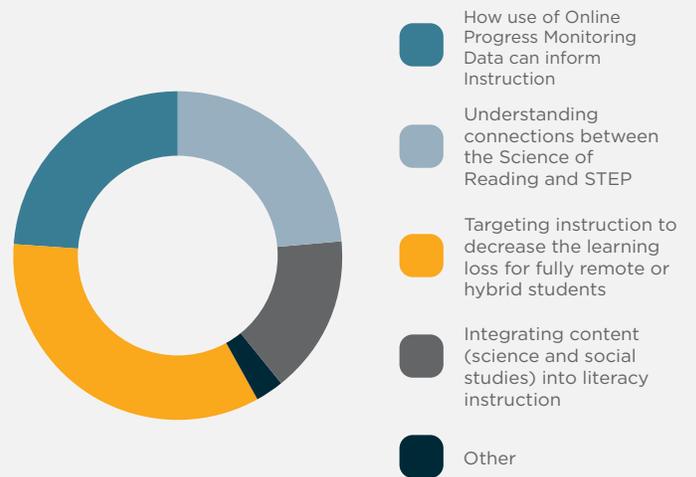


Engaging Families in their Child's Learning



Q&As with STEP

Professional Learning Topics That are Relevant to Respondents' Teaching Practice



STEP and the Science of Reading

With renewed media attention on the “Science of Reading” and accompanied critics of certain literacy practices, the connection between STEP and the theoretical framework of the Science of Reading was top of mind for multiple survey respondents. Several text entries criticized what they perceived to be a misalignment between the STEP Assessment and the Science of Reading. Those entries predominantly indicated that the respondent lacked a complete understanding of both STEP and the Science of Reading.