

Horace Mann Educator Advisory Panel Survey*

Horace Mann Market Intelligence August 2021

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*The Horace Mann Educator Advisory Panel has been in place since 2004 and consists of educators from across the country. Educators that sign up for the advisory panel are asked to complete 4 to 5 online surveys each year. Survey topics include a mix of educational-related topics and topics related to insurance and retirement. Currently, around 1,700 educators belong to the panel and are mostly Public K-12 teachers. Less than 15% of the panel members are Horace Mann customers.



Key Highlights

TEACHER EVALUATIONS AND ONLINE INSTRUCTION DURING COVID-19

Fall 2020 / Spring 2021 School Year

Teacher Evaluations

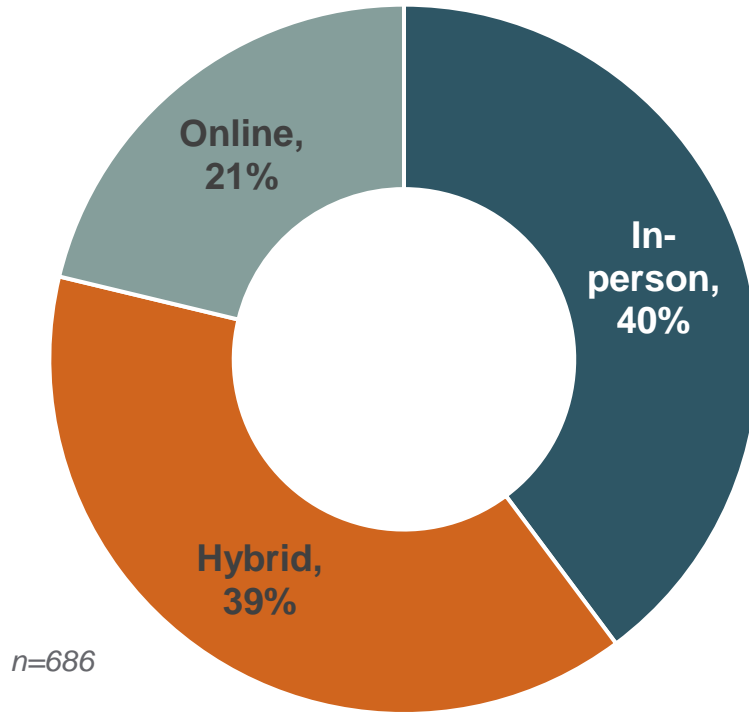
- Nearly half of those responding, 47%, reported there were changes made to their performance evaluation in the '20/'21 school year. A large majority of those teachers, 83%, had very little or no input to those changes. Additionally, 11% said teacher evaluations were suspended.
- Changes cited most frequently were:
 - Test scores and student learning goals were eliminated
 - Fewer classroom observations
 - Proficiency ratings were modified to account for online teaching

Online Instruction

- The difficulties of online teaching combined with less feedback created less confidence in teacher evaluations. Of those who felt unprepared to teach online (n=311), only 34% thought teacher evaluations were fair and accurate. Of those who felt prepared to teach online (n=156), 48% felt teacher evaluations were fair and accurate.
- Since online instruction was more prevalent in urban schools than in rural, urban teachers were least likely to think their evaluations were fair and accurate.
- However, urban teachers were most likely to see the advantages of online learning. 76% of urban teachers thought some students excelled with online instruction during the pandemic and 42% believe online instruction offers advantages to in-person learning.
- 81% reported that either no training was provided for online teaching or that some training was provided but it was less than adequate.

Teaching environment – fully remote, hybrid, or in-person

How did you primarily teach this past school year?



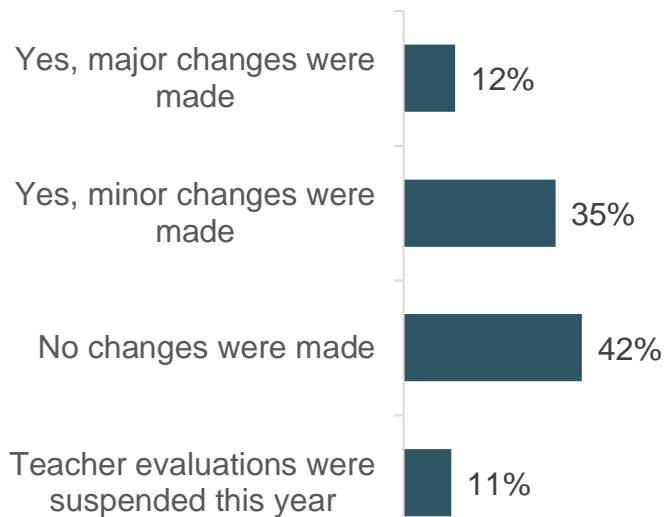
In-person learning was dominant in rural schools while urban and suburban districts were more likely to rely on hybrid or online models.

Grade Level / Learning Type	Elementary	Middle School	High School
In-person	41%	40%	34%
Hybrid	34%	38%	46%
Online	25%	21%	20%

District Type / Learning Type	Urban	Suburban	Rural
In-person	18%	32%	66%
Hybrid	47%	45%	25%
Online	35%	24%	8%

Teachers had little input regarding changes to performance measurement

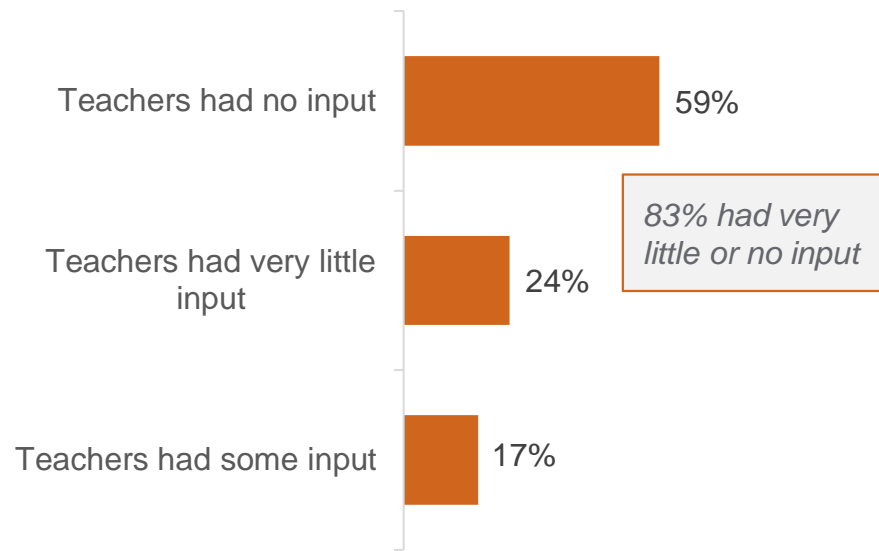
Was teacher performance measured differently in the 2020/2021 school year due to COVID-19?



n=631

District Type / Changes	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Yes, major changes were made	18%	11%	10%
Yes, minor changes were made	34%	38%	32%
No changes were made	38%	40%	46%
Teacher evaluations were suspended this year	10%	11%	12%

Did you have any input into the evaluation process or any changes that were made this year?



n=367

Only includes responses if changes were made to teacher evaluations.

Grade Level / Learning Type	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Teachers had some input	16%	15%	21%
Teachers had very little input	24%	25%	24%
Teachers had no input	60%	60%	55%

Less emphasis was placed on test scores and classroom observations

If changes were made to teacher evaluations, what were those changes?

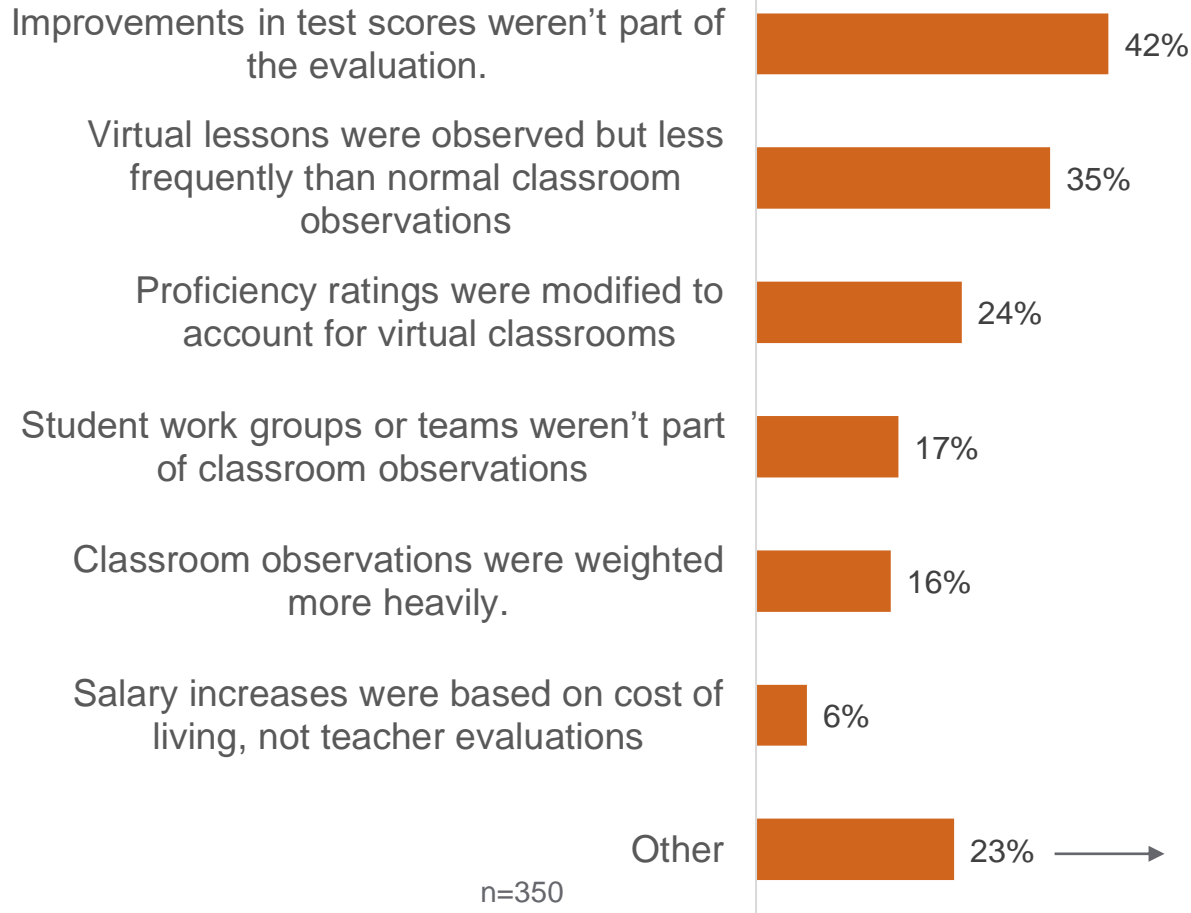


Chart only includes responses if changes were made to teacher evaluations. 42% indicated no changes were made.

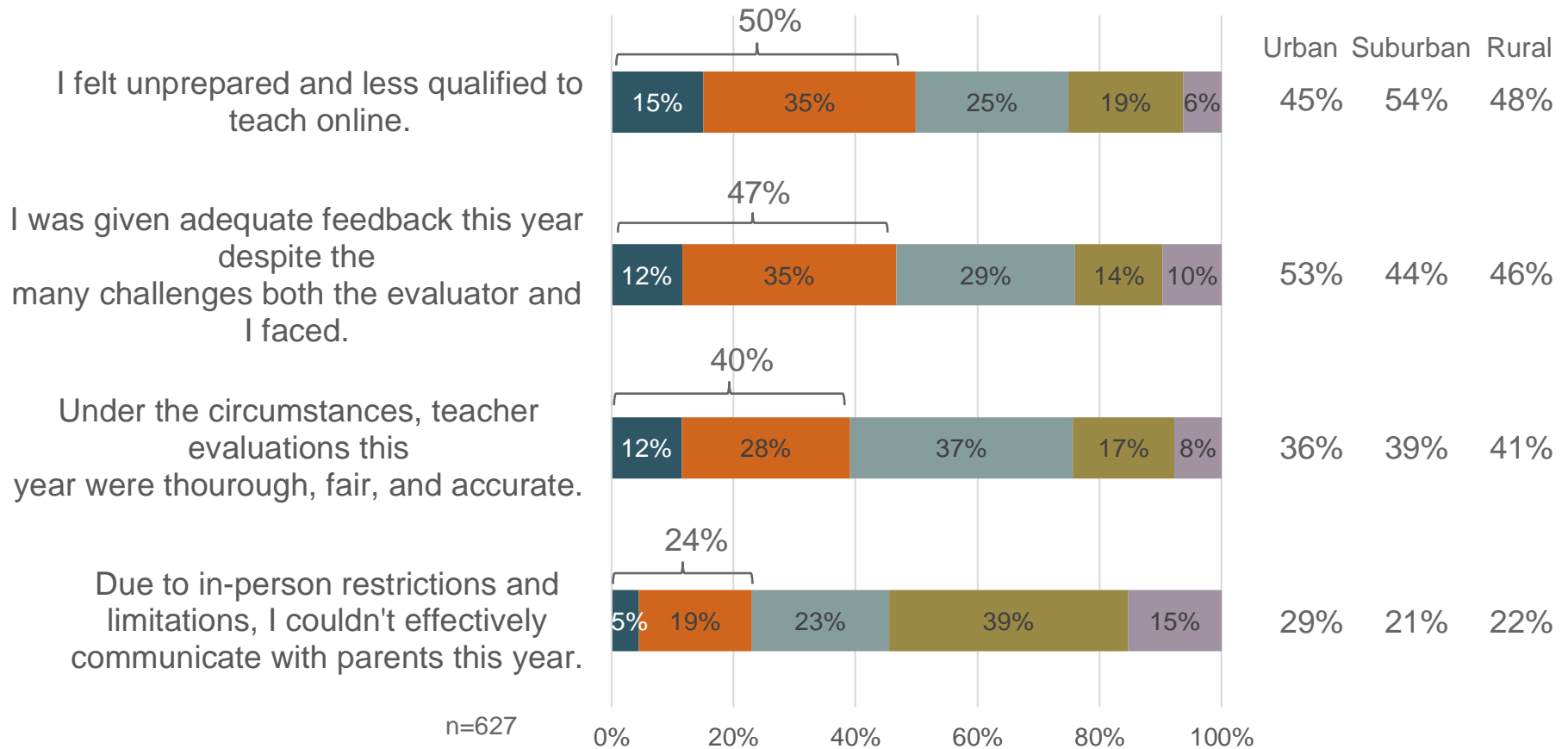
Other Changes

- Educators reiterated that either evaluations were suspended, standards were more lenient, or they weren't punitive.
- In some schools, tenured teachers weren't evaluated.
- There were fewer formal observations with some conducted virtually.
- Student learning goals weren't included in evaluations.
 - State testing wasn't included but school testing was.
- A greater emphasis was placed on social and emotional learning.

Challenges of online teaching

The difficulties of online teaching combined with less formal feedback created less confidence in teacher evaluations

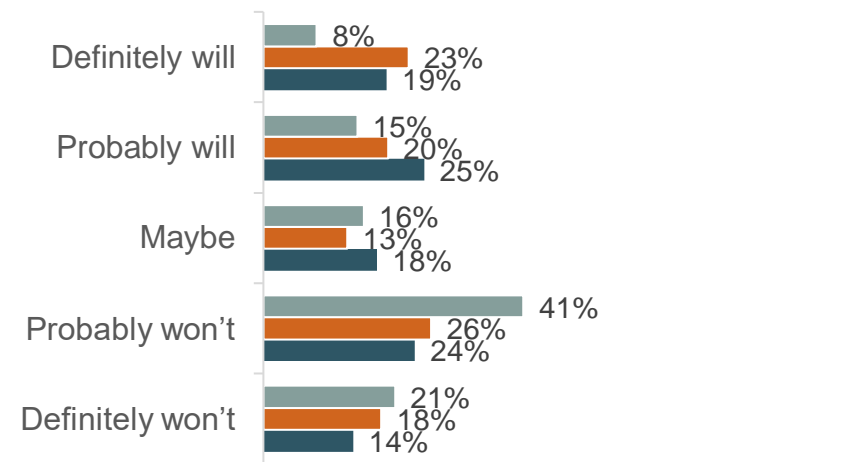
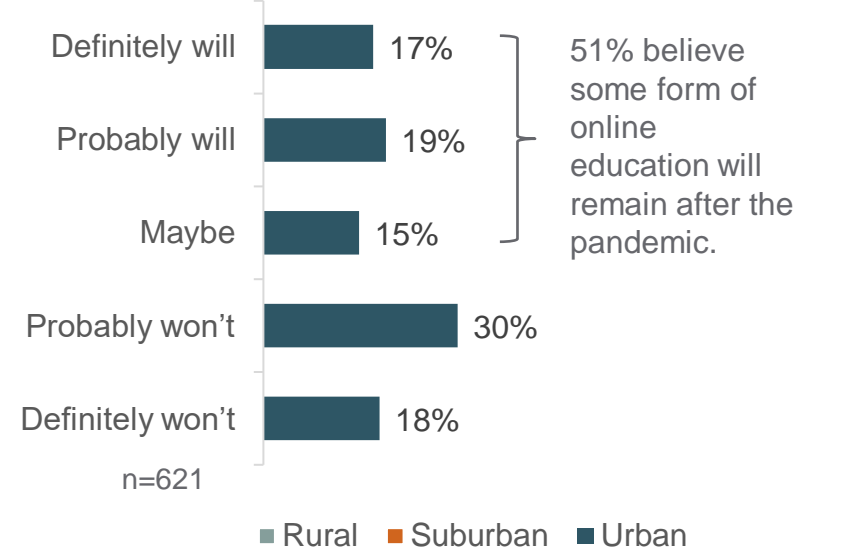
■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree



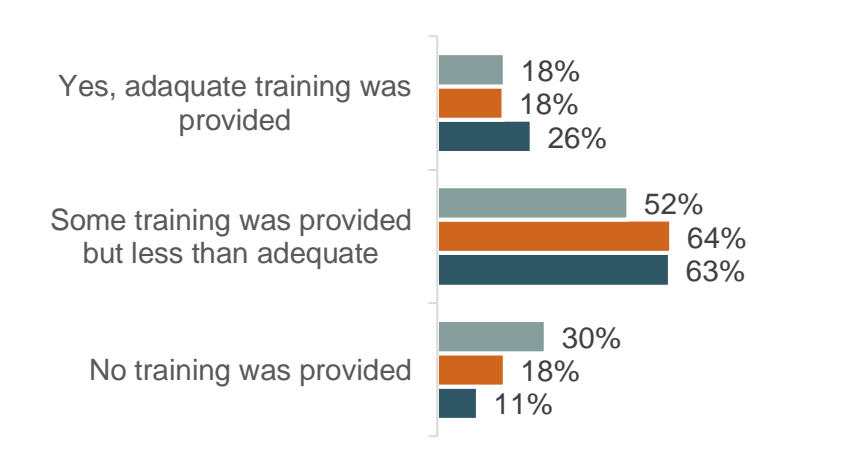
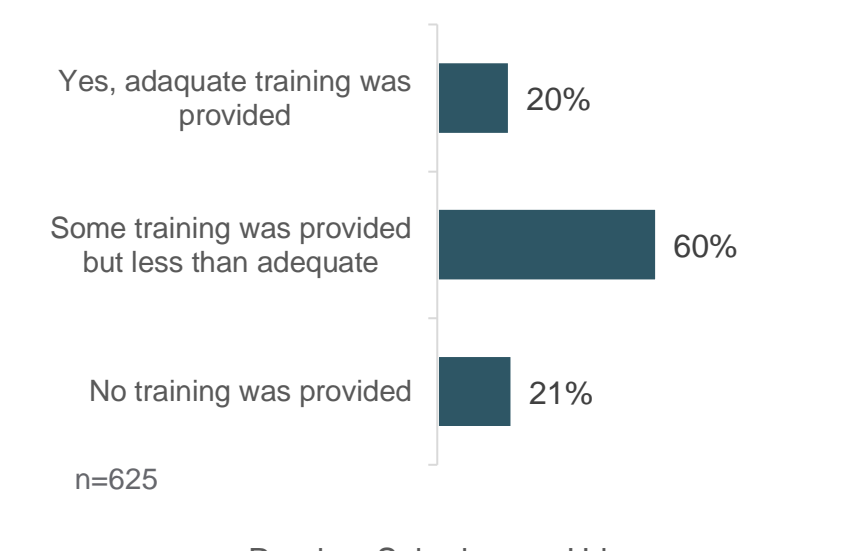
Of those who felt unprepared to teach online (n=311), only 34% thought teacher evaluations were fair and accurate. Of those who felt prepared to teach online (n=156), 48% felt teacher evaluations were fair and accurate.

Some form of online education will likely remain after the pandemic

Do you anticipate your school or district offering hybrid or online education on an ongoing basis after the pandemic?



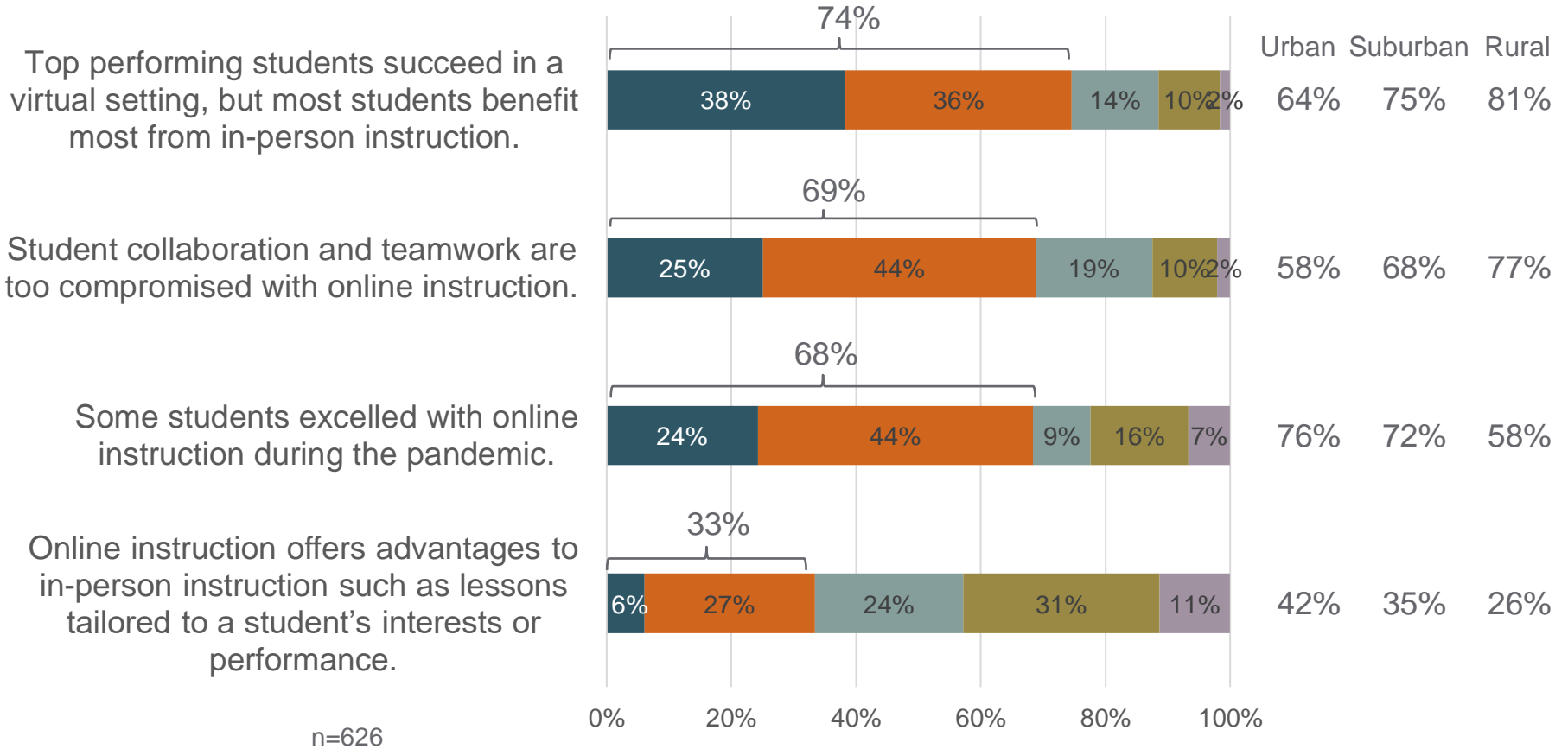
Has your school or district provided training or "best practices" for teaching online?



Advantages and drawbacks of online instruction

Since urban schools were more likely to utilize online learning, urban teachers were more likely to see its advantages.

■ Strongly agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree



Suggestions to improve the evaluation process

What could have been done differently at your school to improve the performance evaluation process? (n=294 comments)

Under the circumstances, performance evaluations were well done

More timely feedback, more flexibility in performance measures

More support from administrators

Better training and guidance for online teaching / Different performance measures for online teachers

Performance evaluations should have been eliminated during the pandemic

Clearer expectations at the start of the year with better communication

Eliminate test scores from the evaluation process

Students should have been held more accountable

“Our school was very proactive. Evaluators made adjustments and considerations as needed based on our circumstances.”

“The old eval system leaves no room for adjustments, but our teaching demanded it. Mastering new learning platforms, adjusting instruction, building in more SEL and personal time were more important than meeting arbitrary goals.”

“Our principal didn’t have a discussion before or after our observations or even ask what I was doing as a virtual teacher that was different from my teammates.”

“Things were overwhelming due to Covid Safety measures. Groups were frequently quarantined which led to communication problems and compartmentalization. It was a difficult year.”

“The district could have had a more concrete system in place that gave teachers guidelines on how to teach virtually.”