

Brief overview of the research foundation, reliability, and validity of the Educational Effectiveness Survey™ Suite.

Organizational effectiveness and the organizational transformation process have been the focus of a significant amount of research over the last five decades. In public education, school effectiveness and district effectiveness studies have dramatically accelerated since the 1983 publication of “A Nation at Risk.” In the area of school effectiveness, numerous quantitative and qualitative studies (and the subsequent meta-analyses consolidating these studies) have looked at the factors which appear to have an impact on student learning and achievement. For a sampling, see Cotton (1995), Marzano (2003), and Shannon & Bylsma (2007).

While each of these research reviews and meta-analyses are relatively thorough in their view of school effectiveness research, their analysis framework has been specific to school effectiveness research. As a result, they do not take into account the leading contemporary organizational effectiveness research. We believe research should bring these two areas together.

Effective Schools and Effective Organizations

From its inception, the Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE) has sought to bridge these two worlds, leveraging research-based findings from both school and organizational effectiveness research in the development and evolution of the Educational Effectiveness Survey™ (EES). While leveraging the research from organizational development is important, in order to be useful as a tool to assist school improvement, we must present information to schools in a way that is entirely relevant and meaningful (i.e. within the context of education—their vocabulary/terminology and aligned with effective schools research).

While differences exist in terminology between the private sector-based research in organizational effectiveness and the school effectiveness research, the commonalities in theme and concept are evident. The table on the following page shows this in detail.

One of the most thorough and long-reaching studies into organizational effectiveness is Buckingham and Coffman’s work at Gallup. This work featured over 1 million respondents and 80,000 managers and included organizations from all sectors—private and public—including public education and public educators.

Commonality/Differences in Terminology

The following table (see Shannon & Bylsma 2007 for additional details) summarizes the thematic and conceptual commonality **between organizations and public education** across several of the meta-analyses. As you can see, many items map directly (e.g. Clear and Shared Focus). Other items take slightly more analysis. For example, one of the critical items defined as the “*work* in schools” is the curriculum, instruction, and assessment aligned with standards. These are part of the “service” of public school systems. In the business world, they correlate to “quality products and services.”

The research basis for the EES is found in the following table. While the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools (a meta-analysis of 20 years of effective school research) encapsulates all attributes, the underlying educational and private-sector research both support and enrich the instrument.

Educational Effectiveness Survey™ Research Framework

Educational Effectiveness Survey™ (EES) Attributes	Clear and Shared Focus	High Standards and Expectations	Effective Leadership	High Levels of Collaboration and Communication	High Levels of Family and Community Involvement	Supportive Learning Environment	Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning	Focused Professional Development	High Quality Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Organizational Trust	District Support of Improvement Activities	Cultural Responsiveness	Practices of Instructional Effectiveness
Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools (Shannon & Bylsma-WA OSPI)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	I	I	2nd Ed.	2nd Ed.
Characteristics of Improving Districts (Shannon & Bylsma-WA OSPI)	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	P		I
Organizational Effectiveness													
First Break all the Rules (Buckingham and Coffman)	✓	✓	✓	I	I	I	I	✓	I				
The Human Equation (Pfeffer)	I	✓	✓	✓	I	I	I	✓	I				
Corporate Culture and Performance (Kotter and Heskitt)	✓	✓	✓	I	I	I	I	✓	I				
Supporting Effective Schools Research													
The Right to Learn: A Blueprint for Creating Schools That Work (L. Darling-Hammond)	✓	✓	✓	I	✓	✓	I	✓	I	✓	I	I	I
What Works in Schools (Marzano-ASCD)	✓	I	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	I	I		
Beat The Odds (Morrison Institute for Public Policy)	✓	I	✓	I	I	I	I	I	I	✓	✓	I	I
Turning Around Low Performing Schools (U.S. Dept. of Education)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	I	✓	I	I
Trust Matters (M. Tschannen-Moran & W. Hoy)	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	P			
Culturally Responsive Teaching (G. Gay)	I	I	I	I	I	✓	✓	✓	✓	I		P	I
Enhancing Professional Practice-Framework for Teaching (Danielson, 2nd Ed.)	✓	I	✓	I		I	✓	✓	✓	I	I	I	P
Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement (Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock, 2001)	✓	I	✓	I		I	✓	✓	✓	I	I	I	P
Leading for Instructional Improvement: How Successful Leaders Develop Teaching and Learning Expertise (S. Fink, A. Markolt, Josey-Bass 2011) Based on the research from the Center for Educational Leadership, University of Washington	✓	I	✓	I		I	✓	✓	✓	I	I	I	P
P = Primary ✓ = Directly Noted in Research I = Implied 2nd Ed. = Included in 2nd Edition													

OUTCOME DOMAINS		SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS
Motivation & Engagement	Future Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal management: Setting short- and long-term goals and monitoring progress toward their achievement • Hope and optimism: Positive beliefs regarding one's future potential, goals, and choices
	Self Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional regulation: Assessing and regulating one's feelings and emotions • Self-discipline: Ability to focus on task in spite of distractions
	Perseverance/Grit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perseverance: Tendency to persist in spite of obstacles or setbacks • Goal orientation: Commitment to the achievement of goals over time
	Self Efficacy & Mindsets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Efficacy: Belief in one's own capabilities and capacity to learn and succeed • Growth mindset: Belief that intelligence and ability can increase through effort • Mastery orientation: Enjoyment of learning and desire to master new skills; willingness to try new things • Relevance: Belief that work done in school is related to personal aspirations
	Belonging & Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging: Perception of acceptance and support in a learning community • Relationship building: Establishing and maintaining positive relationships with adults and peers in school setting • Personal identity: Understanding and valuing one's own culture and beliefs • Social capital: Recognizing and using family, school, and community resources; asking for help when needed
21st Century Skills	Interpersonal Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration: Negotiating and compromising when working in groups or pairs • Communication: Communicating effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences • Cultural competence: Ability to work effectively with people from different backgrounds; appreciation of diversity • Conflict resolution: Preventing, managing, and resolving interpersonal conflict • Compassion: Taking the perspective of and empathizing with others
	Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideation: Using a wide range of idea creation techniques • Imagination: Using intellectual inventiveness to generate, discover, and restructure ideas or imagine alternatives • Innovation implementation: Acting on creative ideas to make a new contribution
	Critical Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metacognition: Ability to reflect on one's assumptions and thinking for the purposes of deeper understanding and self-evaluation • Problem solving: Generating and selecting from alternatives based on desired outcomes • Analytical thinking: Separating problems or issues into their component parts

The Youth Development for Education Results workgroup of the Road Map Project in King County, Washington, developed the *Student Engagement, Motivation, and 21st Century Skills* survey items based on the workgroup's research about student motivation and engagement and the skills and dispositions that matter most to school success. CEE collaborated with the workgroup as the lead research partner in the development of the items as well as pilot testing, refinement, and implementation of the survey items. For details about the Road Map Project and this work: <http://ydekc.wordpress.com>.

Primary References Framework for EES Student with Student Engagement, Motivation, and 21st Century Skills

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Bringing the Conceptual Model to Reality

The journey to the current Educational Effectiveness Survey™ demonstrates that the EES is a dynamic research instrument—one that has been and will continue to be evolving over time.

The vision of the CEE is to develop, maintain, and enhance tools and services that are catalysts to improvement in the organizational effectiveness of schools. In 2000, CEE integrated organizational effectiveness and school effectiveness research into the development of three instruments designed to provide a school quantifiable data on its culture and effectiveness as a learning institution in order to assist in the school improvement process. The EES Staff is an internal instrument—a survey of building staff while the other two (EES Parent and EES Student versions) are external views of the organization from the viewpoint of those impacted by that organization or receiving the services provided by that organization. For purposes of this project, we will focus on the EES Staff and EES Student surveys.

Over the last 15 years, CEE has continued to research, evaluate, and respond to recent developments in school effectiveness research. Additionally, research and client (agency and district) feedback has also been consistently factored into each new version. Through strong relationships with leading educators and researchers, professional associations, and state education agencies, the EES has undergone five major revisions, each bringing the latest in research-based understandings into the instrument. CEE also refined the complimentary Parent and Student instruments designed to gather their perspectives on the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools.

Survey Development Methodology

Item Construction—Content and Construct Validity

The initial version of the EES Staff, developed in early 2000, utilized a collaborative expert team to operationalize the constructs of effective organizations and effective schools research. The panel included researchers, practitioners, and experts in organizational effectiveness and included:

- Dr. Bill Maynard, President of the Effectiveness Institute and associate professor in the College of Education, Washington State University
- Greg Lobdell, Director of Research for the Center for Educational Effectiveness and retired Microsoft executive
- Sue Mills, founder of the Center for Educational Effectiveness, 27-year educator and national Christa McAuliffe teaching fellow
- Tom Champoux, co-founder of the Effectiveness Institute
- Dr. Dave Darnell, Professor and Chairman of the Education Leadership program, Drake University
- Dr. Hank Gallina, adjunct professor, Cambridge College

This team worked to ensure construct validity—that each item created in each scale would accurately and consistently measure the theoretical foundation of the research. The team followed the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, published by the American Education Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education.

With this version, and each subsequent major enhancement to the survey, the steps included:

1. Item construction and expert review.
2. Pilot testing with real-world respondents.
3. Field-testing with diverse schools including by level-staff and students in elementary, middle, and high schools, urban and rural, small and large in systems serving ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse students. Post survey questionnaires and focus-groups were used to assess respondent views on the survey. Statistical measures were employed to analyze scale reliability, and both confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis were used to refine the instruments.
4. Broad administration. Because this instrument is not only designed to measure teacher and leadership practices but also to be predictive of student outcomes, periodic analysis were conducted to determine teacher and leadership practices and attitudes.

Enhancement

CEE has been doing this work for 16 years and has recognized that the research field is vibrant and our understanding of effective teaching and leadership practices is evolving rapidly. We constantly review research as it might apply to enhancements in the EES Staff and Student instruments. Similar to student achievement assessments in ELA and Mathematics, changing the instrument often invalidates historical data and makes measuring change or improvement difficult. The state and local education agencies using the EES Staff and Student rely on the instrument to provide evidence of progress in teacher and leadership practices. Therefore, we are extremely selective in changing the instrument due to the inherent value placed on the historical data by our clients. Thus CEE uses a three-to-four year revision cycle.

Over the life of the instrument, the major enhancements include:

- v 3.0:** Inclusion of readiness attributes including willingness to change, and openness to new ideas.

- v 4.0:** Refactoring the instrument and presenting the results report to schools in the framework of the ***Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*** including items on Parent & Community Involvement. Introduced companion surveys on math and reading instructional practices to assist staff in understanding their values, beliefs, and practices around Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Aligned with Standards.
- v5.0:** Integration of v4.0 and v4.0 Math/Reading and addition of a specific scale on Readiness to Benefit.
- v6.0:** Addition of limited District Characteristics and Cultural Responsiveness items.
- v7.0:** Increased coverage of District Characteristics and Cultural Responsiveness to increase scale reliability.
- v8.0:** Addition of Organizational Trust items and section, including a discussion on organizational trust, the components of trust, the resistance factor, and a preliminary “gap” analysis quantifying the difference between “I” and “They” on willingness to change and openness to new ideas.
- V9.0:** Increased depth on classroom instructional practices including observation of practice (peer observation for instructional improvement).
- V10.0:** Enhanced Effective Leadership with distributed leadership items and managing transformation and change management items.

By focusing on quantifying a strong research basis (the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*), the Education Effectiveness Survey™ is one of the most widely used school effectiveness instruments in the western United States.

Construct and Concurrent Validity

The Educational Effectiveness Survey™ (EES) Staff and Student surveys are designed to help schools, districts, and states measure and understand performance on characteristics or themes that research shows are commonly observed in successful schools. More than that, the survey data are designed to allow schools to identify strategies for improvement, identify required interventions, and drive positive behaviors and change, and subsequently, measure progress on these actions.

These research-based instruments are strongly aligned with the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). They integrate leading-edge research in Organizational Trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; and Galford & Seibold-Drapeau, 2002), Cultural Responsiveness (Gay, 2010), and Organizational Transformation and Change Management (Kotter, 2012; Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Hargreaves & Fullan, editors, 2009; and Buckingham & Coffman, 1999).

The Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools and the underlying items on the EES Staff and Student surveys align tightly with the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (TSDE) Tenets used in the school and district review process. The 9 sub-scales in the EES surveys demonstrate construct and concurrent validity vis-à-vis the ability to predict improved student performance in reading and mathematics.

The critical factor in measuring the validity of the instruments is whether the ultimate conclusions drawn from the results of the surveys represent sound findings. Further, the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing note: “The validation process involves gathering evidence to evaluate the soundness of the proposed interpretations for their intended use”¹.

¹ Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (2014). American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education. Washington, DC.

Validity Basis

When assessing organizational performance, culture and communication practices, and student-learning outcomes, researchers must determine what empirical indicators (or observable behaviors) will be most relevant to understanding the core of an organization. Practices that can be directly observed and measured will have meaning in an organization's analysis.

Studies of organization culture and climate have continually been proven to be more effective using factor analytic methods (Poole, 1985, pp. 79-108). In addition, Likert scaling has historically been used to gauge the level of commitment by respondents and to differentiate between categories or people (Smith, 1988). The research basis, development, and evolution of the EES have brought each of these techniques into practice.

External Validity and Reliability Analysis

As a core value, CEE provides access to researchers to the 1.5 million respondents in our survey response repository in order to further the collective knowledge on education practices and results. This access is controlled to ensure confidentiality of the respondents but enables research questions to be posed to the repository in order to increase the overall knowledge in the Pre K-12 educational field.

A side effect of this work is that external researchers investigate the reliability and validity of the EES Staff and Student instruments. While CEE will continue to perform internal reliability and validity analysis as part of our standard practices, two of the most rigorous works in this area that have included reliability and validity analysis on the EES Staff instrument include:

Ahart, T. (2014). A comparative analysis of teacher perceptions of school culture in high-performing and low-performing Iowa schools. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa.

Bylsma, P. (2008). Differences in staff perceptions of school quality. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Washington, Seattle.

Because it is both rigorous and recent, Ahart (2014) will be relied on extensively for his analysis of reliability and validity of the EES instruments.

Reliability

The reliability of an instrument typically measures the instrument's consistency or stability. An instrument's reliability is the measurement of whether or not respondents will have consistent and continuous responses even when there are changes which might modify beliefs or behaviors. Thus, change and flux have a significant impact on reliability. Reliability assures that answers between respondents are different; not because the survey is confusing or has multiple interpretations, but because respondents have different opinions.

Reliability can be tested in three ways. First a *test-retest* method is used when the instrument is given to the same group of people on two or more occasions separated by no less than one day and no more than one month and is tested for mutual consistency. Second, an *alternative forms* method requires two parallel versions of the same instrument to the same group of individuals but reversing the order of presentation.

The pilot testing on EES Staff version 9.0 and EES Staff version 10.0 both included the test-retest method and an alternative forms method. For version 10.0, the test-retest method resulted in 0.97 agreement between administrations (N=123 staff from a total pilot sample N=665). The alternative forms method used in testing indicated only slight scale degradation on one of the sub-scales so the form with these items in the front half of the instrument was selected for wide-spread administration.

Finally, the *internal consistency* method distributes the same instrument to one group of people at one time. The researcher breaks down the survey into several individual components and assesses if those components are consistent with one another. Considering that the *internal consistency* method is highly regarded and effective at determining reliability—this is the methodology we implemented with the field-test phase.

Cronbach’s alpha co-efficient method then randomly selects pairs from an instrument and creates a composite correlation as an index of reliability for that instrument. Cronbach’s alpha is based on the number of items in a survey and the ratio of inter-item co-variance to the average variance.

As can be seen in the following table, Cronbach’s alpha for all versions of the Educational Effectiveness Survey™ are quite strong. Accepted norms for research purposes utilize a threshold of 0.70 and above as acceptable alpha results (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000).

The table below shows the reliability statistics on the last 3 versions of the EES™ Staff survey instrument. As you can see, reliability has improved in each version as items and scales are refined and the repository of results increases in size. Ahart (2014), page 55 found similarly high alpha results.

Internal Factor Reliability: Cronbach's Alpha										
	Clear & Shared Focus	High Standards and Expectations	Effective School Leadership	Collaboration and Communication	Supportive Learning Environment	Parent & Community Involvement	Monitor Teaching and Learning	High Quality Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Focused Professional Development	Readiness to Benefit
EES-Staff v8.0 (N=40,982)	0.84	0.81	0.94	0.90	0.90	0.86	0.83	0.89	0.90	0.83
EES-Staff v9.0 (N=66,018)	0.84	0.85	0.90	0.88	0.90	0.81	0.85	0.90	0.89	0.85
EES-Staff v10.0 (N=92,158)	0.84	0.86	0.90	0.89	0.90	0.86	0.86	0.91	0.89	0.86

Validity

The most significant concern regarding validity is whether the instrument measures what it intends to measure (Babbie, 1992). The critical question is whether: *The survey instrument has sufficient validity evidence, such as construct validity or concurrent validity with assessments of student learning growth based on State or other nationally benchmarked student assessments.*

Several levels of validity in theoretical and methodological construction of this instrument were employed.

- **Content Validity**, also known as face validity, asks whether the empirical indicators are accepted as part of the construct being measured. Given the current research on organization performance, productivity, school effectiveness, and school system effectiveness, we know that organizations which engage in specific practices have a higher likelihood of high performance, smaller (or no) achievement gap, and sustainable performance.
- **Concurrent Validity** is a type of evidence that can be gathered to defend the use of an instrument for predicting other outcomes. The critical measure is whether the EES Staff and EES Student instruments predict student learning outcomes.
- **Construct Validity** asks specifically whether the instrument truly measures the construct in question. In other words, does the instrument accurately and consistently measure the theoretical foundations of organization culture? Expert review by leaders in organizational performance and school effectiveness were used to ensure construct validity.
- **Conclusion Validity** questions whether the statistics employed are used and implemented correctly. CEE employed several statistical tests, including Factor Analysis and descriptive statistics to confirm our assumptions and assessments of organizations.

Concurrent Validity

Ahart (2014) utilized a sequential hierarchical regression analysis to determine whether teacher and leadership survey data would be predictive of performance in reading and mathematics. When referring to the Ahart research, readers are encouraged to focus on pages 64-85.

In summary, Ahart found:

As evidenced by the results of this study, teacher perceptions of the Nine Characteristics of High-Performing schools have predictive value relative to school performance in reading and mathematics. Ahart (2014), page 85.

Ahart found a significant difference between high-performing and low-performing schools for five the Nine Characteristics: Effective School Leadership (DTSDE Tenet 2), High Levels of Collaboration and Communication (DTSDE Tenet 4), Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (DTSDE Tenet 3), Focused Professional Development (DTSDE Tenet 4), and Family and Community Involvement (DTSDE Tenet 6). Ahart (2014), page 85.

Further, when adjusting for socioeconomic status through a combination of variables, the significance in predicting student performance in reading and mathematics increased with the characteristics Clear and Shared Focus (DTSDE Tenet 2), High Standards and Expectations (DTSDE Tenet 2), and Supportive Learning Environment (DTSDE Tenet 5). Ahart (2014), page 84-85.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a technique which enables researchers to identify underlying dimensions (factors) that explain underlying relationships between variables. Computationally, the process is based on the correlation matrix between variables. There are two principle techniques used by researchers. *Confirmatory factor analysis* attempts to confirm the researcher's view of the relationship between variables. *Exploratory factor analysis* attempts to explore the variables and determine the best dimensions (factors) which explain the interrelationships between variables. Often referred to as "load", the values returned from factor analysis show how well a variable *loads* into a factor. Researchers look for stronger load values. For example, within the *Effective Leadership* factor on the EES-Staff survey, you want all variables to have positive inter-item correlations with the other variables within the *Effective Leadership* factor. Moreover, you want these variables to load most strongly into this factor and not another factor.

If the goal of a survey instrument is to provide a singular value which represents a positive (good) or negative (bad) score, then factor analysis allows the number of variables to be reduced while not impacting the strength of each factor. This reductionist view is often used when researchers are attempting to determine the minimal number of survey items required for a valid measure of the factor. However, the EES is not designed to produce a singular score of good or bad. Each item has been selected, validated, and used in order to provide formative data to stimulate conversations to assist the organization in improvement activities. As such, while CEE performs both confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis, we have not used this technique to reduce the number of items. Rather, the factor analysis has been used as part of the validity measures to ensure there are positive loadings of each variable into each factor.

The Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools presents a research base which presumes certain relationships between variables. These factors are based on the analysis of research the team performed in the creation of this framework. Experienced educators and educational leaders can see the relationships within these factors.

References & Resources

(Primary References are in **Bold**)

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