

# Evaluation of Cognia's Diagnostic Reviews: Questionnaire Key Findings

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# EVALUATION OF COGNIA'S DIAGNOSTIC REVIEWS: QUESTIONNAIRE KEY FINDINGS

The Center for Research and Reform in Education conducted a survey of stakeholders across four cohorts (2018-2021) who had participated in the Cognia Diagnostic Review process to explore participant perceptions and perceived impacts of the Diagnostic Review.

This brief provides an overview of our findings. For more details, please reference the full technical report, available from Cognia.

## METHOD

This present study consisted of survey research. Stakeholders from schools across four cohorts (2018-2021) who had participated in the Cognia Diagnostic Review process were recruited to complete an online questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 22 Likert-type rating items, two experience-related questions, and three open-ended items to ascertain stakeholder experiences and perceptions. The survey was designed to address such topics as: (a) Diagnostic Review effectiveness, (b) Review impacts on school climate and culture, (c) post-Review school improvement efforts, (d) Review impacts on key improvement focuses, and (e) strengths, weaknesses, and stakeholder recommendations.

Participants included 42 principals, school administrators, interventionists and coaches, and other district leaders (27.0% response rate) from 32 schools or districts.

## RESULTS

*Participants generally felt the Diagnostic Review was an effective improvement tool for their schools.* Almost all participants agreed that the purpose of conducting a Diagnostic Review of their schools was clear. Participants found the Review identified improvement priorities that were both relevant and practical for their schools to solve, and following the Review, participants felt confident in what changes their schools should make to begin addressing their improvement goals. Additionally, nearly three-quarters of participants agreed that Cognia identified areas of strength for their schools along with improvement goals, an important practice for school morale.

*The Cognia Diagnostic Review had a positive impact on school climate.*

Nearly three-quarters of participants noticed improvements in their schools' climates, especially in areas of continuous growth, mutual accountability, and individual student leadership growth. Additionally, the questionnaire asked participants to provide perceptions of the Diagnostic Review's impacts on seven outcomes: progress monitoring, high expectations, equitable learning, supportive learning, active learning, well-managed learning, and digital learning. At least two-thirds of participants agreed that the Diagnostic Review was at least somewhat helpful for all seven outcomes, with progress monitoring and high expectations scoring highest at 83%

*As a result of the Diagnostic Review, most participants saw evidence of school improvement.*

Since receiving the results of their Review, nearly all participants felt their schools had completed work on at least one improvement goal, with nearly half indicating completion of more than one goal. Regardless of how many goals their schools had completed, participants generally felt that work would continue toward their improvement priorities until all had been addressed. In working toward their identified improvement goals, the vast majority of participants felt that not only were they themselves making an effort to better their schools, but school administrators around them were doing the same. Even more importantly, most participants felt their schools' administrations were more actively engaged in improvement work after the Diagnostic Review than they had been before receiving their results.

*Participants shared their opinions of the Diagnostic Review's most and least beneficial aspects, as well as recommendations for improving the tool.*

In addition to appreciating the identification of helpful improvement priorities and Cognia's outsider perspective, participants highlighted Cognia's written reports as particularly helpful. Additionally, participants appreciated the process of preparing for and undergoing the Review, explaining that gathering evidence and talking through their schools' strengths and weaknesses in interviews helped their own understanding of what their schools might need to move forward. Although the majority of feedback was indeed positive, some participants did feel the Diagnostic Review process was not yet as successful for improving virtual schools or schools with unique educational models, and several wished for more follow-up support from Cognia, especially as the Review process required a major time commitment from schools and had the potential to reveal discouraging results.

The results from participants in the stakeholder questionnaire reveal overall positive reactions to the Cognia Diagnostic Review process, especially with regard to the helpfulness of the identified improvement priorities. Given the fairly small sample size, results should be interpreted with caution, and further research is recommended. Nevertheless, these findings show strong indications that the Cognia Diagnostic Review can be a successful improvement tool for schools and districts.