

**BRIEFBACK**

# USER RESEARCH: ISBE ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORTS

## OUR GOALS

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) publishes the Annual Program Reports (APR) to support institutions of higher education (IHEs) as they plan and execute continuous improvements. The goal of this research was to understand IHE satisfaction, user experience, and engagement with the APR system. Towards this end, ISBE contracted an independent consulting firm, North Third, to conduct research, anonymize and analyze feedback, and provide a summary report to ISBE.

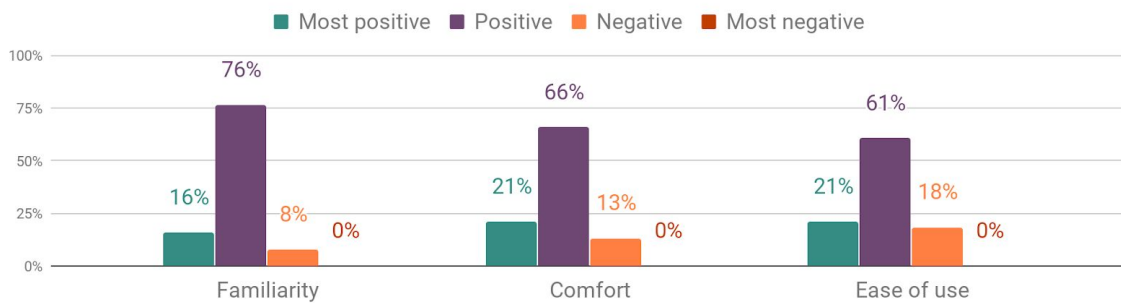
## WHO PARTICIPATED?

Thirty-six institutions participated through an online survey, focus group discussions, and 1-on-1 conversations. Participants represented all institution sizes (66% small, 24% medium, and 11% large), types (26% public, 74% private), and regions (53% north, 29% central, and 18% south).

## WHAT WAS THE FEEDBACK?

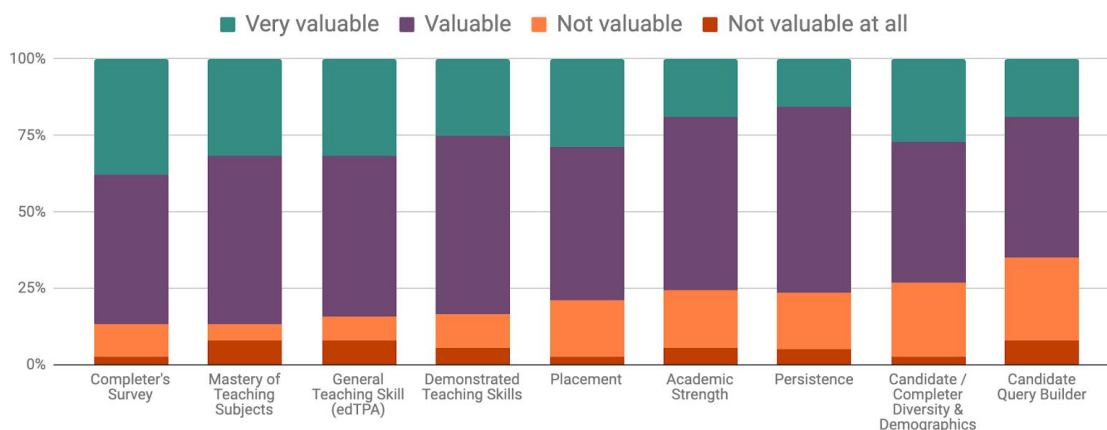
Users reported high levels of familiarity and comfort with the reports, and generally found them easy to use. In discussions, users emphasized that they appreciated the high-quality visuals and interactive charts.

**SURVEY |** How familiar and comfortable are you with the reports? How easy are they to use?



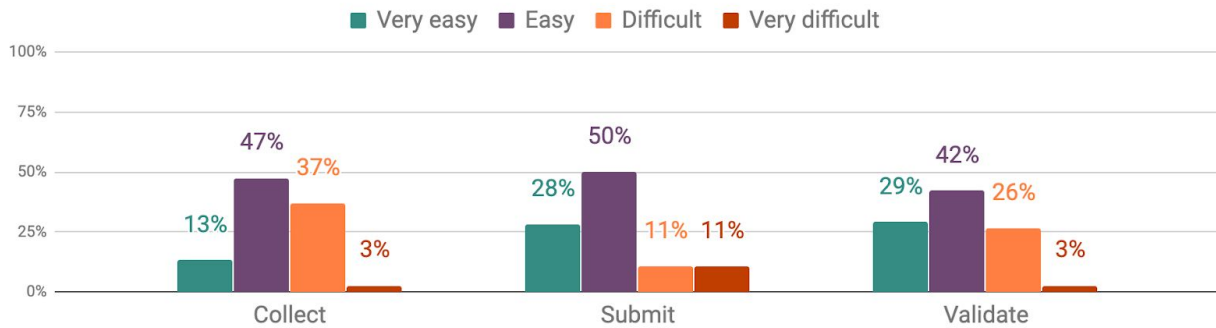
Participants indicated that the reports are valuable when making decisions and planning improvements at their institutions. The majority of institutions consult each report at least once a year; reports are most commonly used on an annual basis.

**SURVEY |** How valuable is each report when making decisions and planning improvements?



The majority of survey participants reported that data collection, submission, and validation are “easy” or “very easy”. During interviews, participants reiterated that the process can require significant time and effort, but has largely been improving year over year.

**SURVEY |** How easy is it for you to collect, submit, and validate the requested data for the APR system?



**WHAT DID WE HEAR, AND WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS?**

Analysis of the survey data suggests that participants roughly fell into one of three groups: frequent users who find the reports mostly valuable (63% of participants), infrequent users who find the reports mostly valuable (26%), and infrequent users who do not find the reports as valuable (11%). Individuals from each of these groups not only provided substantive feedback in the surveys, but also participated in focus groups and 1-on-1 conversations. These conversations provided a great deal of detailed feedback. We highlight a portion of this feedback, and some of the report’s recommendations, here.

FEEDBACK	POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS
I want to share data from the tool, but it is difficult.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make changes to better support screen sharing, like larger text size and more consistent filter/button behavior.</li> <li>2. Explore ways that users might share limited data views with other internal audiences.</li> <li>3. Provide additional training on helpful features like exporting data, building your own queries, and drilling down to candidate-level information.</li> </ol>
I’m not always sure how the filters behave.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Standardize the design and behavior of user inputs, the ‘year’ filter for example, across views.</li> <li>2. Where standardization is not possible, provide additional support to frame the data for users.</li> </ol>
I need more instruction on how to use the reports.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide more in-depth training resources targeted for specific users and use cases.</li> <li>2. Ensure that training resources can be easily referenced when users want to learn about a particular report, feature, etc.</li> </ol>
I have questions about the data and its accuracy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Include n-sizes for all reported data.</li> <li>2. Add additional detail on data collection methodology (e.g. numerator/denominator, time period when data was collected).</li> </ol>
I want to ensure that any public reports about my institution are accurate.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that there are opportunities for IHEs to contribute to communications and roll-out plans for public reporting.</li> <li>2. Provide opportunities for IHEs to validate data and contextualize their results.</li> </ol>

