



# Elementary ELA Curriculum

## Findings from Year 3 of a Three-Year Study of the K-5 ELA Curriculum, Center for the Collaborative Classroom ("CCC")

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For questions and more information about this document, please contact the following:

Jessica K. Beaver, PhD  
Senior Research Associate II, Research & Evaluation  
[jkbeaver@seattleschools.org](mailto:jkbeaver@seattleschools.org)

### Abstract:

In spring 2017, the School Board approved a \$5.6 million investment in the districtwide implementation of a new K-5 English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum, Center for the Collaborative Classroom (CCC). Research & Evaluation (R&E) has partnered with Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction (CAI) in a three-year review of the curriculum. These findings are from 2019-20, which is the third and final year of the study.

Importantly, this report does not reflect comprehensive findings across the three years of the curriculum study. That report, which will contain broad findings and recommendations that extend to both this and other curriculum adoptions, will be released later this year. The findings in this year-end report therefore present data gathered during the 2019-20 school year and are exclusive to the February 2020 survey of K-5 teachers of English Language Arts. Similar to the data collection and analysis

strategy in Year 1, we surveyed all classroom teachers of elementary grades. Because this survey was administered in February 2020, it reflects teacher perceptions prior to the COVID-related Spring 2020 school closures. With three consecutive years of data, we can track trends in teacher perceptions of curriculum implementation.

**Key findings from the February 2020 Teacher Survey:**

- Response Rates: We received responses from 43% of all K-5 ELA teachers (n=508). Response rates for teachers in the district's identified 13 "Priority Schools" for the Seattle Excellence 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading Goal had a response rate of 69% (n=151).
- Science of Reading: Given the district's emphasis in 2019-20 on foundational skills in early literacy that adhere to the evidence on the "science of reading," we asked teachers about their beliefs in this area. We found that teachers overwhelmingly agree (86%, n=508) with the statement that "systematic and explicit phonics instruction in the early grades is critical to meet 3rd grade ELA proficiency."
- Implementation Fidelity: Over the course of the three years, implementation fidelity held steady this past year, with teachers reporting they teach the curriculum 68% "as intended" (measured as reported frequency of use of materials, as well reports of leadership expectations for curriculum implementation). When looking at individual curriculum components and grade bands, teachers report greater uptake for grades K-3 in the "Being a Reader" materials, which are focused on foundational skills in early literacy.
- Assessments: Teachers' reported use of CCC embedded assessments increased from 2018-19 to 2019-20, with even greater rates up uptake reported in the 13 "priority schools." Deeper dives into how teachers use individual assessments – including standardized assessments and embedded formative assessments – reveal that teachers use the Fountas & Pinnell assessments for a variety of purposes, including ones for which the assessment is designed (e.g. assigning independent reading levels) and not (e.g. assigning small reading groups).
- Gap Closing Strategies: Teachers, particularly those in the 13 "priority schools," do not believe that the CCC texts are sufficiently culturally relevant, and this agreement rate has declined over time. Teachers hold higher opinions of the instructional moves in the curriculum that align with culturally responsive pedagogy, but they note areas for improvement (e.g. holding students to high expectations, using students' cultural knowledge and experiences to explain ideas).
- Professional Learning Opportunities: Over two-thirds of respondent teachers report they receive dedicated PD support for CCC implementation, including in their Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), through specific learning sessions, and/or classroom walkthroughs and visits. Teachers still report infrequent opportunities to visit others' classrooms, however.
- Student Outcomes: Perceptions of student engagement rose to 64% in 2019-20, a 9-point increase from 2018-19, but not as high as the 2017-18 rate of 73%. Perceptions of student academic achievement for student groups (e.g. students of color furthest from educational justice, students with disabilities, English Language Learners) stayed flat from last year.

Plans to conduct an impact analysis of curriculum impact on student academic achievement were not realized due to the COVID-related Spring 2020 school closures and associated lack of student academic achievement data. Although this marks the end of the three-year CCC study, Research & Evaluation's support to the CAI department on K-5 ELA curriculum implementation will continue under the banner of the district's 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading Goal support. As noted earlier, Research & Evaluation will report on

cumulative findings from this study so that the district might learn from general best practices in curriculum implementation, for example instructional leadership models, implementation rollout and communication strategies, professional development models, and student achievement patterns.

# **K-5 ELA Curriculum Adoption and Implementation Study**

Results from the 2019-20 Curriculum & Instruction Teacher Survey

Seattle Public Schools  
Research & Evaluation Department  
November 2020



# What is the 2020 Teacher Survey?

The 2020 Teacher Survey was administered in February 2020. It probed on teacher practices in curriculum implementation (K-5 ELA, Middle School Math, and K-5 science) and the Superintendent's 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Early Literacy Goal. The goal of the survey is to better understand teachers' classroom practices so that the district can design better supports and learn from schools' implementation efforts.

In keeping with the Seattle Excellence plan, the questions are focused on practices for Students of Color Furthest from Educational Justice, in particular African American boys. Where appropriate, survey findings are disaggregated for schools overall and the 13 priority schools that are the focus of the Seattle Excellence 3<sup>rd</sup> grade goal efforts.

**It is important to keep in mind that teacher self-report data are not intended to stand on their own as "outcome data." Instead, they should be viewed as an important indicator that can help influence future efforts on behalf of students.**

# Research Questions

1. What can we learn from the implementation of CCC that informs both this and future district curriculum adoptions?
2. To what extent is the CCC curriculum adoption causing educators to shift practices in service of student achievement and eliminating opportunity gaps?

# Evaluation Plan

## Year 1 (2017-18)

Study of CCC implementation in all K-5 schools, including case studies in select schools to examine conditions for early literacy success

Preliminary descriptive analyses of available assessment data and climate survey data

## Year 2 (2018-19)

Continuation, with focus on Year 2 shifts

Preliminary identification of best practices for leveraging CCC to close gaps (i.e., “high leverage moves”)

Assessment alignment analysis

## Year 3 (2019-20)

Planned impact analysis of the curriculum on student academic ELA achievement and eliminating gaps for students of color furthest from educational justice – NOT FEASIBLE DUE TO SCHOOL CLOSURES

Continuing identification of best practices for leveraging CCC to close gaps (i.e., “high leverage moves”)

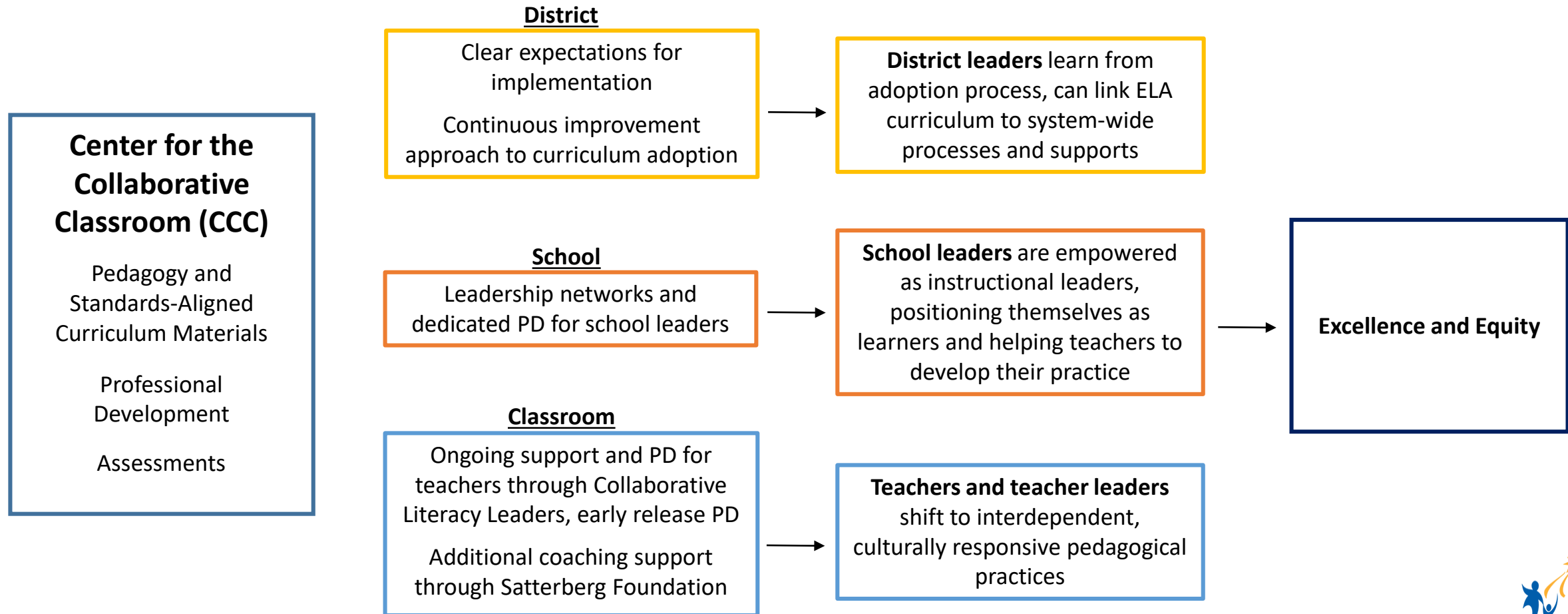
# K-5 ELA Curriculum Adoption Study

If we provide all K-5 students access to high quality Tier 1 literacy instruction that is grounded in the district's **Balanced Literacy Framework...**

**...And provide clear expectations and supports for implementation at all levels of our system...**

**Then educators and leaders will shift practices in service of student achievement and eliminating opportunity gaps...**

**...So that all students demonstrate high levels of ELA achievement.**

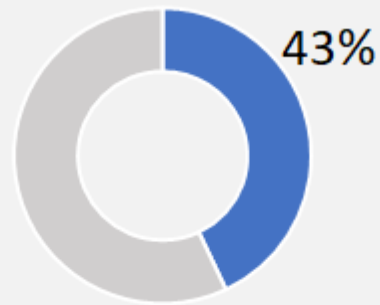




# Response Rates

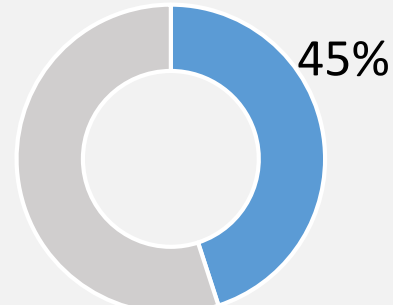
## Overall K-5 Response Rates

508 **K-5 ELA teachers** responded, for a response rate of 43%



## Responses by Grade Level

22 **PreK teachers** responded, for a response rate of 45%

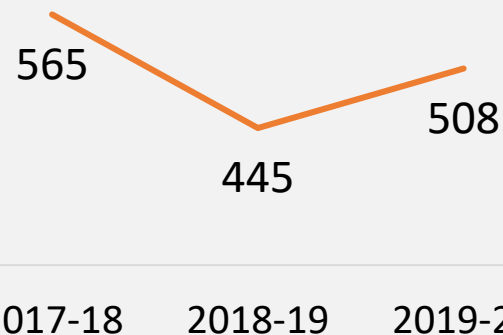


## Responses in 13 Priority Schools

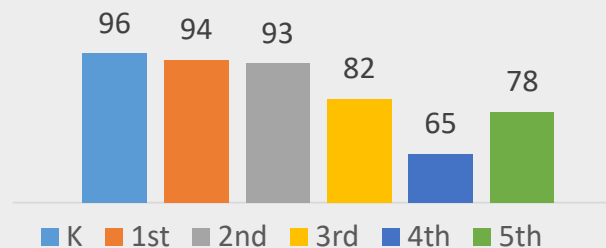
The response rate for K-5 teachers from our **13 priority schools** is 69%

|                   | Responses  | Rate       |
|-------------------|------------|------------|
| Bailey Gatzert    | 14         | 117%*      |
| Broadview-Thomson | 5          | 24%        |
| Emerson           | 12         | 80%        |
| John Muir         | 15         | 94%        |
| Leschi            | 10         | 59%        |
| MLK               | 6          | 46%        |
| Olympic Hills     | 16         | 73%        |
| Rainier View      | 9          | 75%        |
| Rising Star       | 9          | 47%        |
| South Shore       | 14         | 78%        |
| Thurgood Marshall | 17         | 81%        |
| West Seattle      | 15         | 79%        |
| Wing Luke         | 9          | 60%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>151</b> | <b>69%</b> |

### Three-year response trend



### Number of Responses by Grade



Note: split classrooms counted as higher-level grade

\*Wherever possible, analysis was restricted to classroom teachers. A response rate over 100% indicates that some specialists/interventionist may have responded, or some teachers may have taken the survey more than once.

# “Taught as Intended”

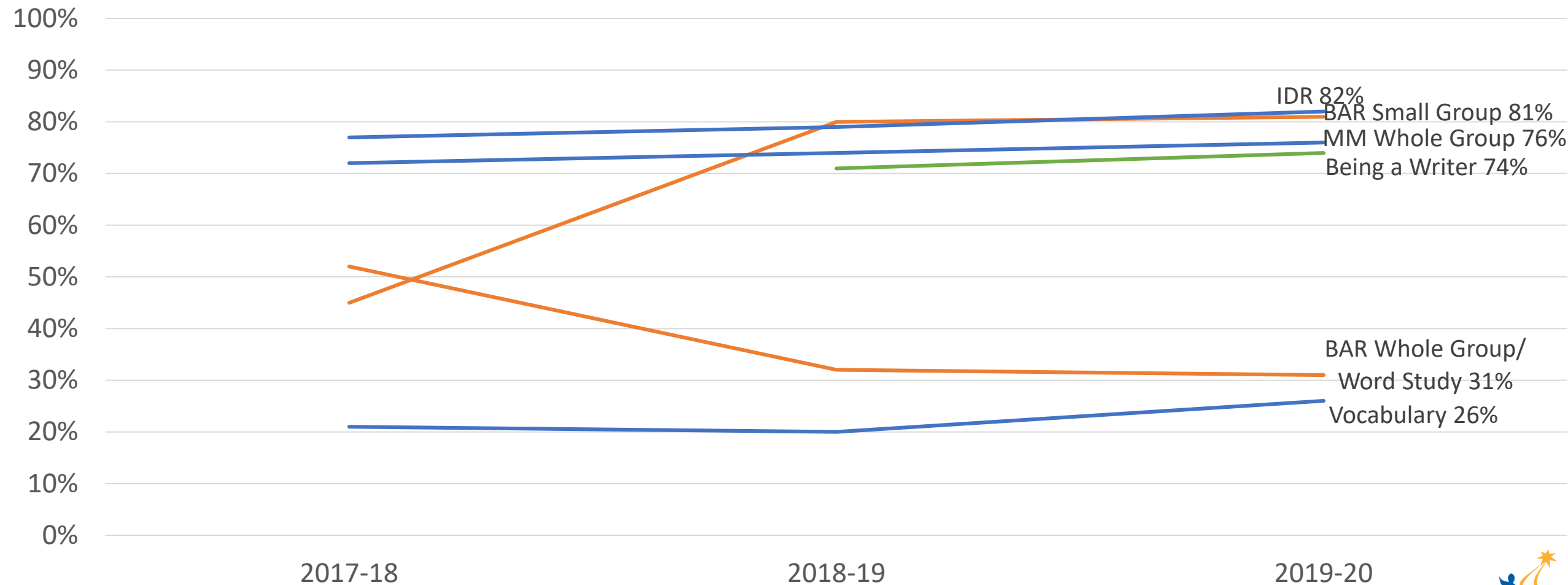
- Definition and methodology
- Overall implementation fidelity (including trend data)
- Implementation by curriculum component
- Implementation fidelity by 13 Schools, Satterberg Schools

# “Taught as Intended” Frequency Definitions

| Component                             | Taught as Intended                     |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Whole Group Shared Reading/Word Study | All: 4+ days per week                  |
| Small Group Reading                   | All: 3+ days per week                  |
| Whole Group Instruction               | All: 3+ days/week                      |
| Individualized Daily Reading (IDR)    | All: 4+ days/week                      |
| Vocabulary                            | K-2: 3+ days/week<br>3-5: 5 days/week  |
| Being a Writer                        | K-2: 3+ days/week<br>3-5: 4+ days/week |

# Frequency of Use: Year over Year Trends

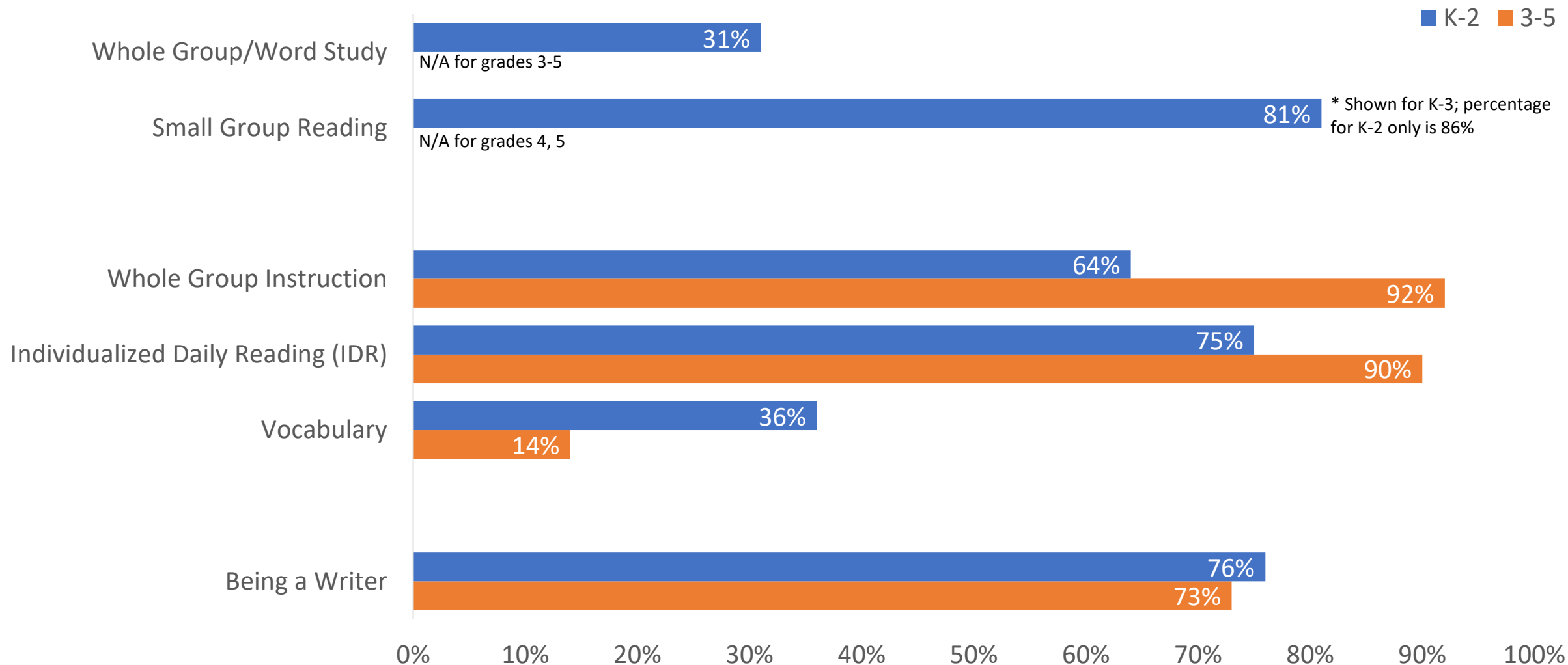
Percent of respondents that report using the materials as frequently “as intended”



*Note: Being a Reader small group data for 2017-18 and 18-19 reflects implementation in grades K-2; 2019-20 data reflects grades K-3*

# 2019-2020 Frequency of Use by Grade Band

Percent of respondents that report using the materials as frequently “as intended”



# “Taught as Intended” Index Methodology

**Goal:** To measure how the district as a whole is doing on a multi-faceted measure of CCC implementation and track that measure year after year to gauge our implementation progress.

## Process:

### Step 1

Evaluate CCC components against established “taught as intended” thresholds

- BEING A READER (K-2, but includes 3<sup>rd</sup> grade for Small Group in 19-20)
- MAKING MEANING (K-5)
- LEADERSHIP EXPECTATIONS (K-5)

### Step 2

Average the three ratings above to find the individual “TAI” score for each respondent

### Step 3

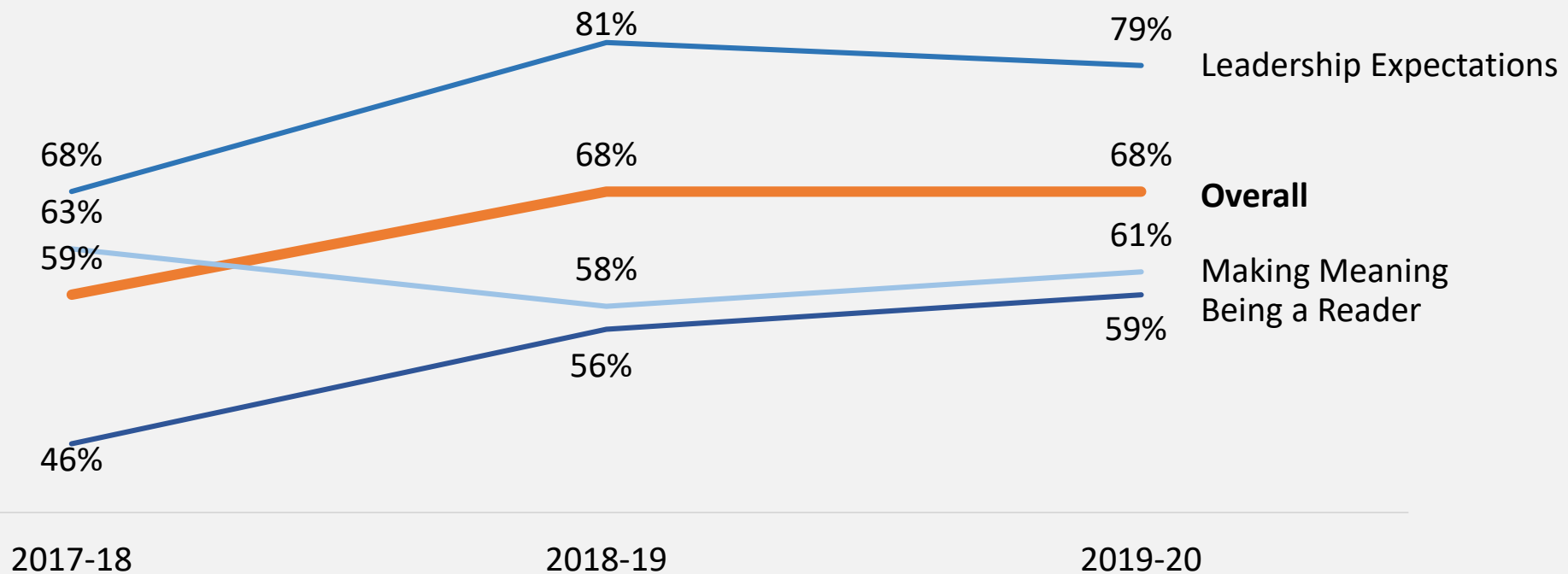
Aggregate to the school and district levels

**Caveats:** The index tells us approximately how well we are doing as a district on using the materials as frequently as intended and whether leaders expect teachers to teach as intended. *It does not indicate quality of implementation.* Also, Being a Writer is not included in year-to-year trends due to inconsistencies with survey questions. Some adjustments were made to prior year scores to account for changes in expectations so that comparisons are “apples to apples”

# Taught as Intended

Example of how to read this graph:

“Averaged across all schools, **teachers are teaching the curriculum 68% ‘as intended.’** This is the same score as last year.”



Note: Year-to-year calculations do not include Being a Writer, due to changes in survey questions year over year

# Assessment Questions

- Assessment administration expectations
- Administration “as intended” by assessment
- Assessment uses
- Spotlight on Performance Tasks

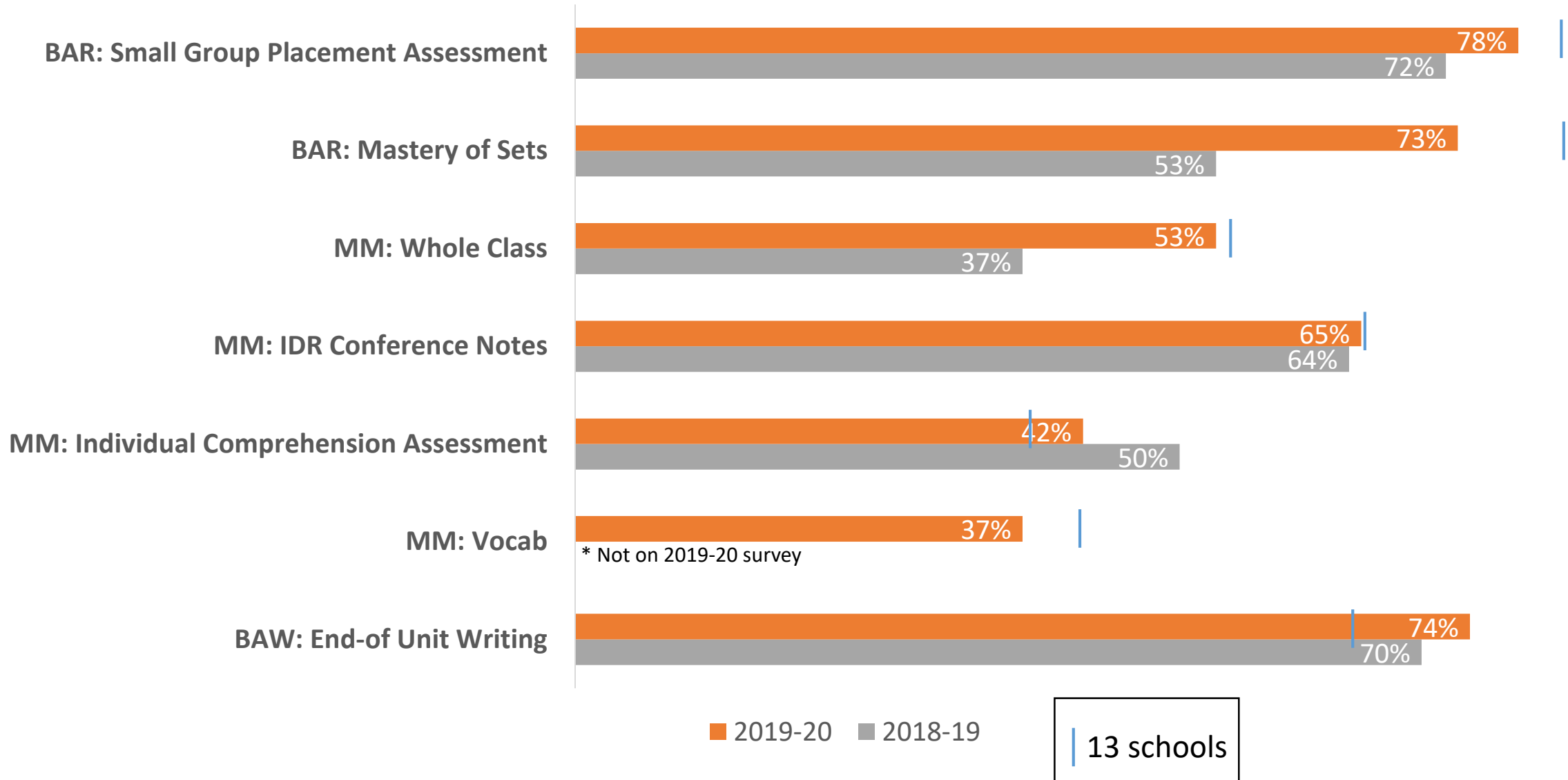


# Assessment Expectations

| Component                               | Taught as Intended     |
|---|------------------------|
| BAR: Small Group Placement Assessment   | Reported use           |
| BAR: Mastery of Sets                    | Reported use           |
| MM: Whole Class                         | At least twice a month |
| MM: IDR Conference Notes                | At least once per unit |
| MM: Individual Comprehension Assessment | At least once per unit |
| BAW: End-of Unit Writing                | At least once per unit |

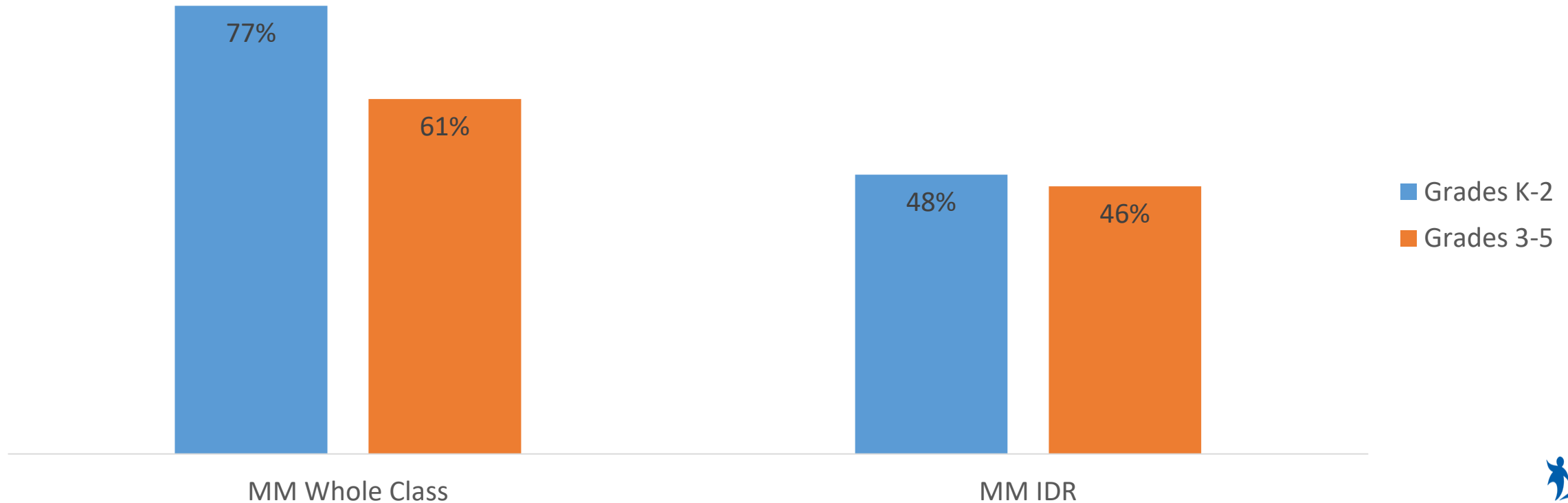
# Using the Embedded Assessments “As Intended”

Percent of respondents who report using the embedded assessments “as intended”



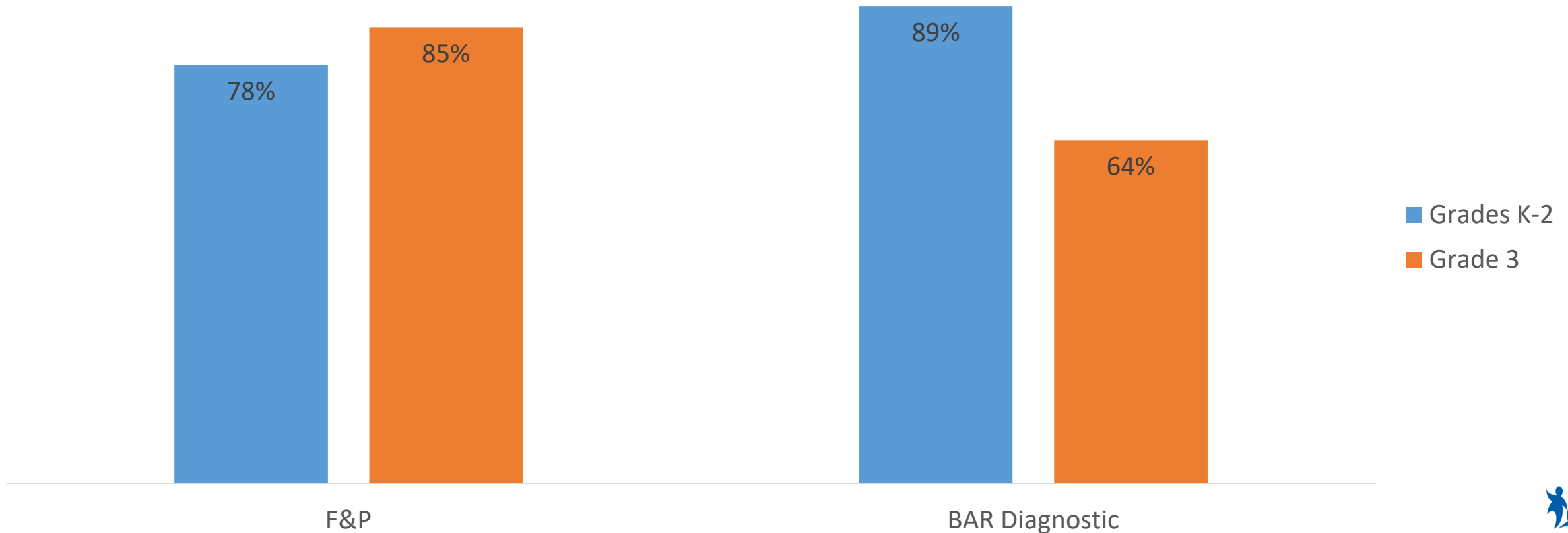
## Which assessments teachers use to... Check for Understanding (Grades K-2; 3-5)

The Making Meaning Whole Class assessment is more used by K-2 teachers than by 3-5 teachers. The IDR Conferencing assessment is used by a little fewer than half of reporting teachers, with no significant differences by grade level.



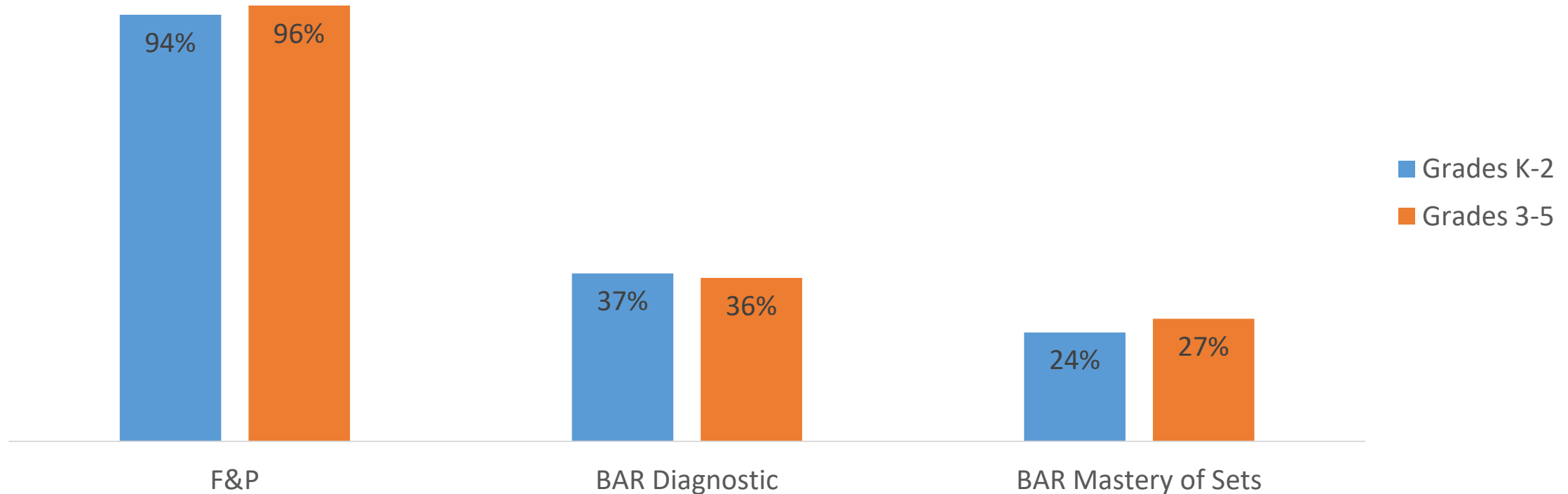
## Which assessments teachers use to... Establish Small Reader Groups (Grades K-2; 3)

The BAR Diagnostic Assessment is intended to establish small reader groups in K-2, while F&P is intended for Grade 3. However, it seems that teachers are using both F&P *and* the BAR Diagnostic for this purpose across the grade levels.



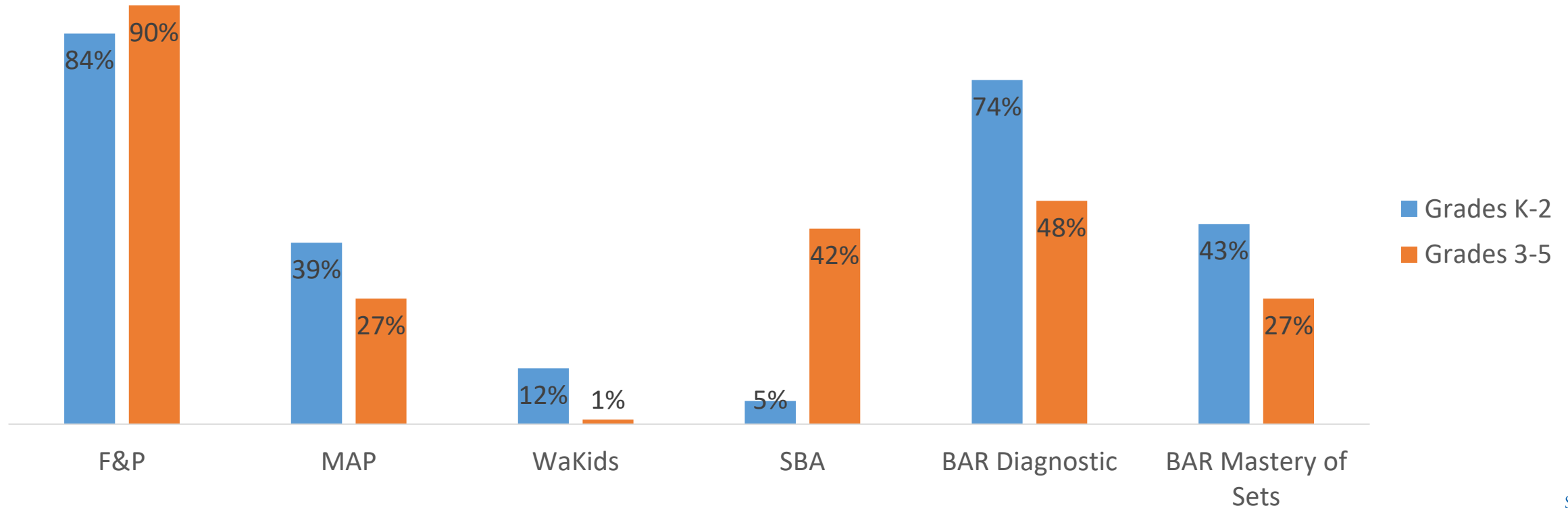
## Which assessments teachers use to... Identify Independent Reader Levels (Grades K-2; 3-5)

F&P is the primary assessment used to identify students' independent reader levels. However, about a third of teachers appear to use the Being a Reader tools in conjunction with F&P for this purpose. Patterns are consistent across grades.



## Which assessments teachers use to... Identify Students for Interventions (Grades K-2; 3-5)

F&P is the most commonly used assessment to identify students for interventions, and is used far more than is MAP for this purpose. However, teachers also rely on BAR assessments and SBA (for grades 3-5).

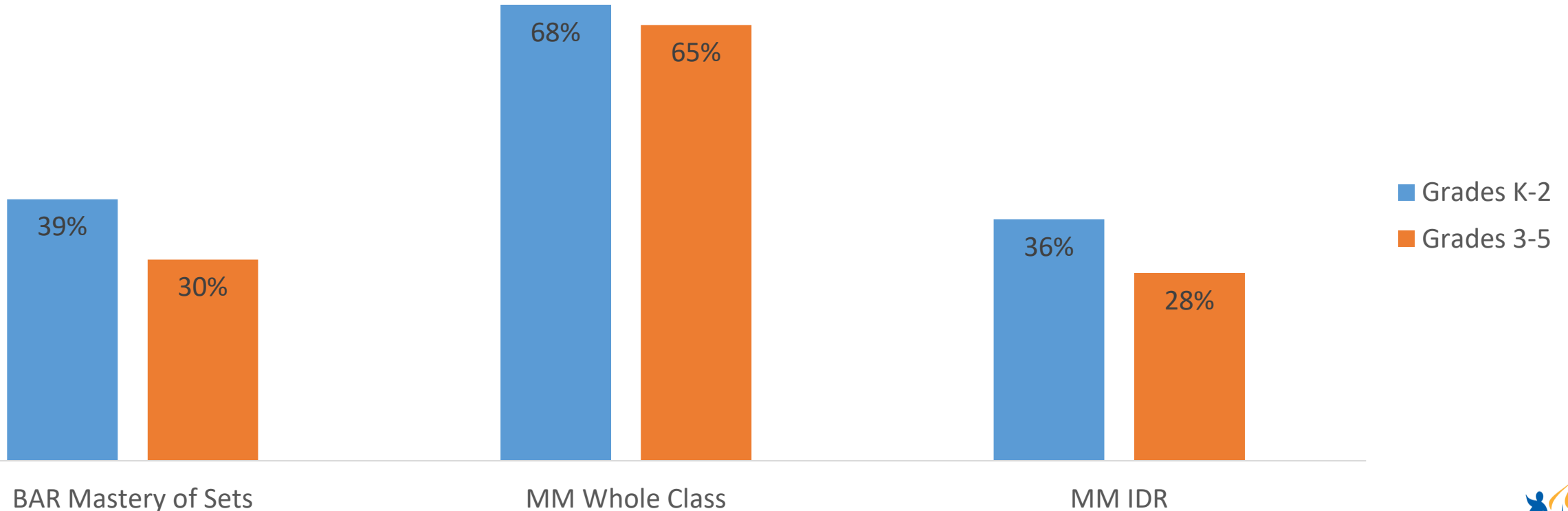


# Which assessments teachers use to...

## Inform Day-to-Day Instruction

(Grades K-2; 3-5)

About two-thirds of teachers report using Making Meaning Whole Class assessments to inform day-to-day instruction. BAR Mastery of Sets and Making Meaning IDR Conferencing Notes are also used, but to a lesser degree.

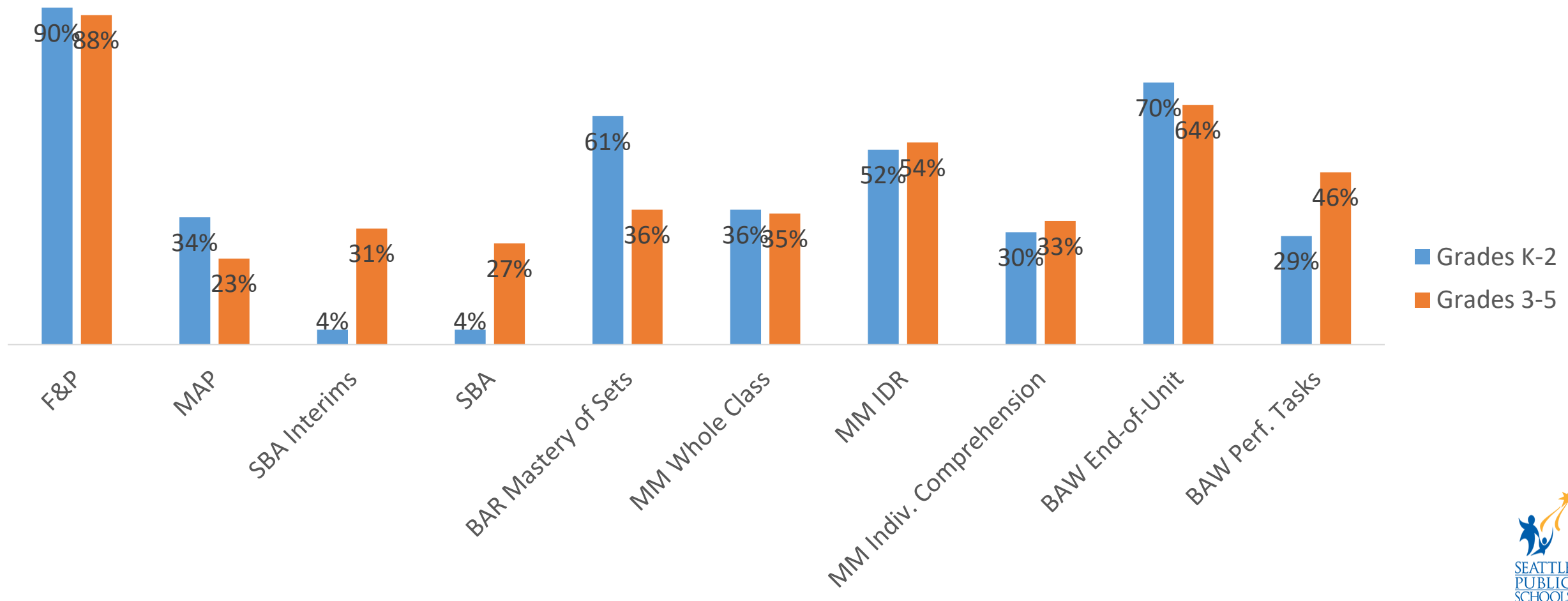


# Which assessments teachers use to...

## Monitor Student Progress

(Grades K-2; 3-5)

Teachers use many different assessments to monitor student progress. Strategies do not vary much by grade level, with the exception of assessments that are specifically designed for different levels (e.g. SBAs, BAR, BAW Performance Tasks)





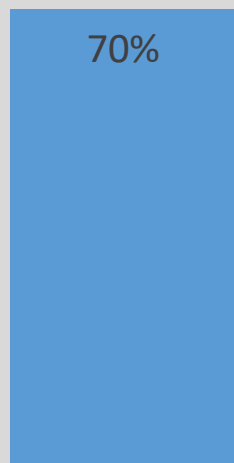
# Which assessments teachers use to...

## Prepare Students for End-of-Year Assessments

(Grades K-2; 3-5)

70% of teachers in grades 3-5 report using BAW Performance Tasks to prepare students for end-of-year assessments. Probing a bit more deeply, responding teachers say that Performance Tasks help their students to perform better on the SBA and, to a lesser degree, develop college and career readiness.

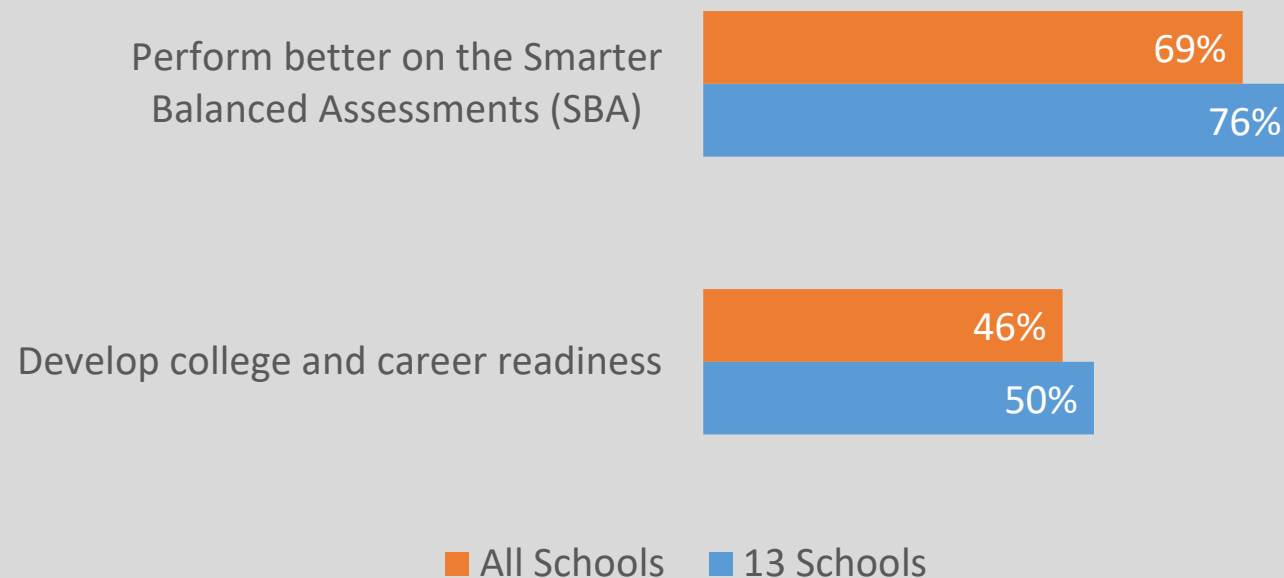
Percent of teachers reporting using Performance Tasks to prepare students for end-of-year assessments



■ Grades 3-5

BAW Performance Tasks

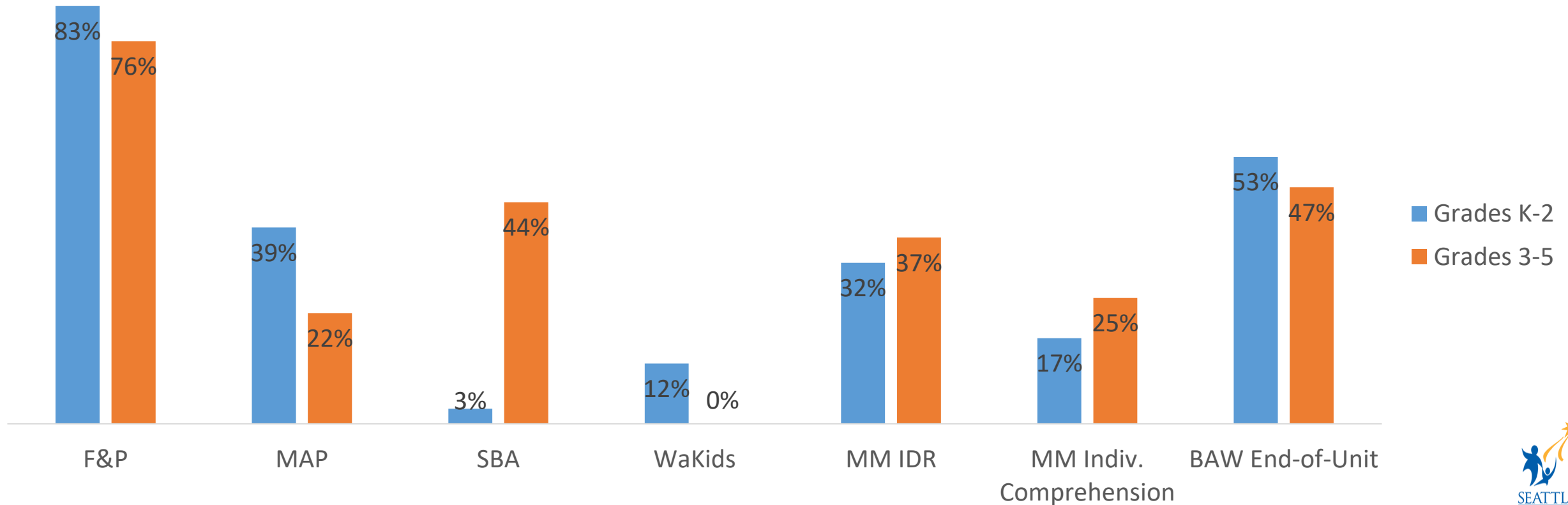
Percent of teachers that “agree” or “strongly agree” that the Performance Tasks help students in the following ways:



■ All Schools ■ 13 Schools

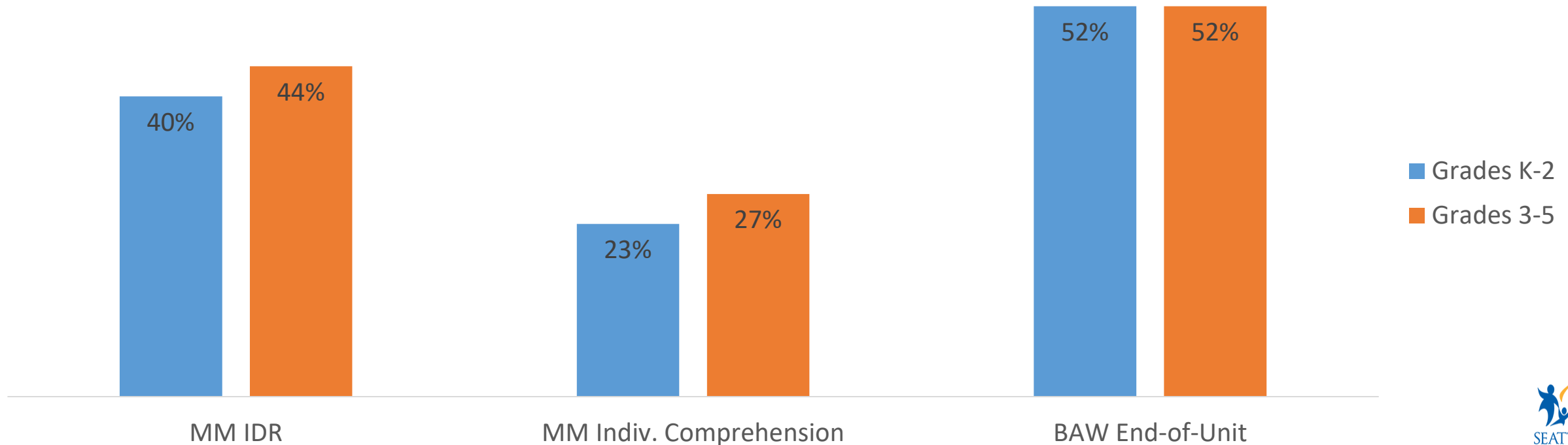
## Which assessments teachers use to... Report Achievement to Families (Grades K-2; 3-5)

F&P is the assessment that teachers most widely use to report achievement to families. However, a number of other assessments are used, many of which are grade-level dependent. One note is that MAP data is shared more widely in grades K-2 than in grades 3-5.



## Which assessments teachers use to... Set Student Growth Goals (Grades K-2; 3-5)

The Making Meaning and Being a Writer tools are being used to set student growth goals, though only a quarter to a half of teachers are using these tools for this purpose. No significant differences were shown by grade level.



# Gap Closing Strategies

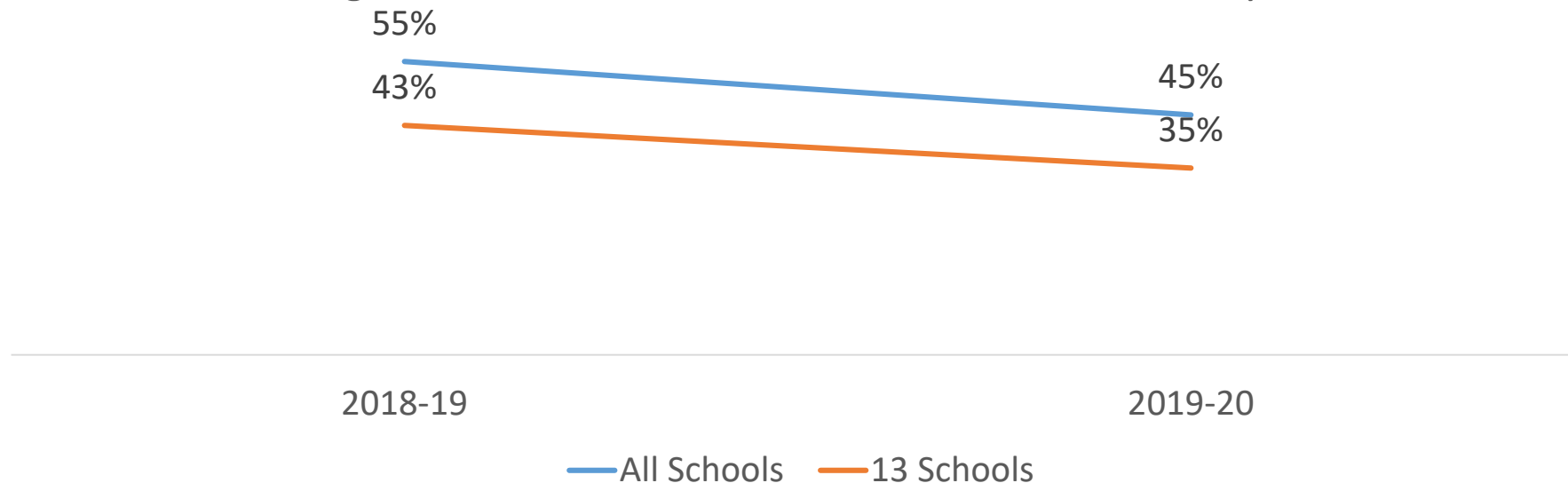
- Culturally relevant texts
- Culturally responsive teaching moves
- Foundational skills beliefs
- Perceptions of gap closing strategies within the curriculum

# Culturally Relevant Texts

## Definition

CCC textual materials represent the diversity of students and contribute to the development of understanding identity with distinct cultures and issues of gender, ethnic, cultural, occupational and religious groups.

Percent agreement that CCC textual materials are culturally relevant



## Comments

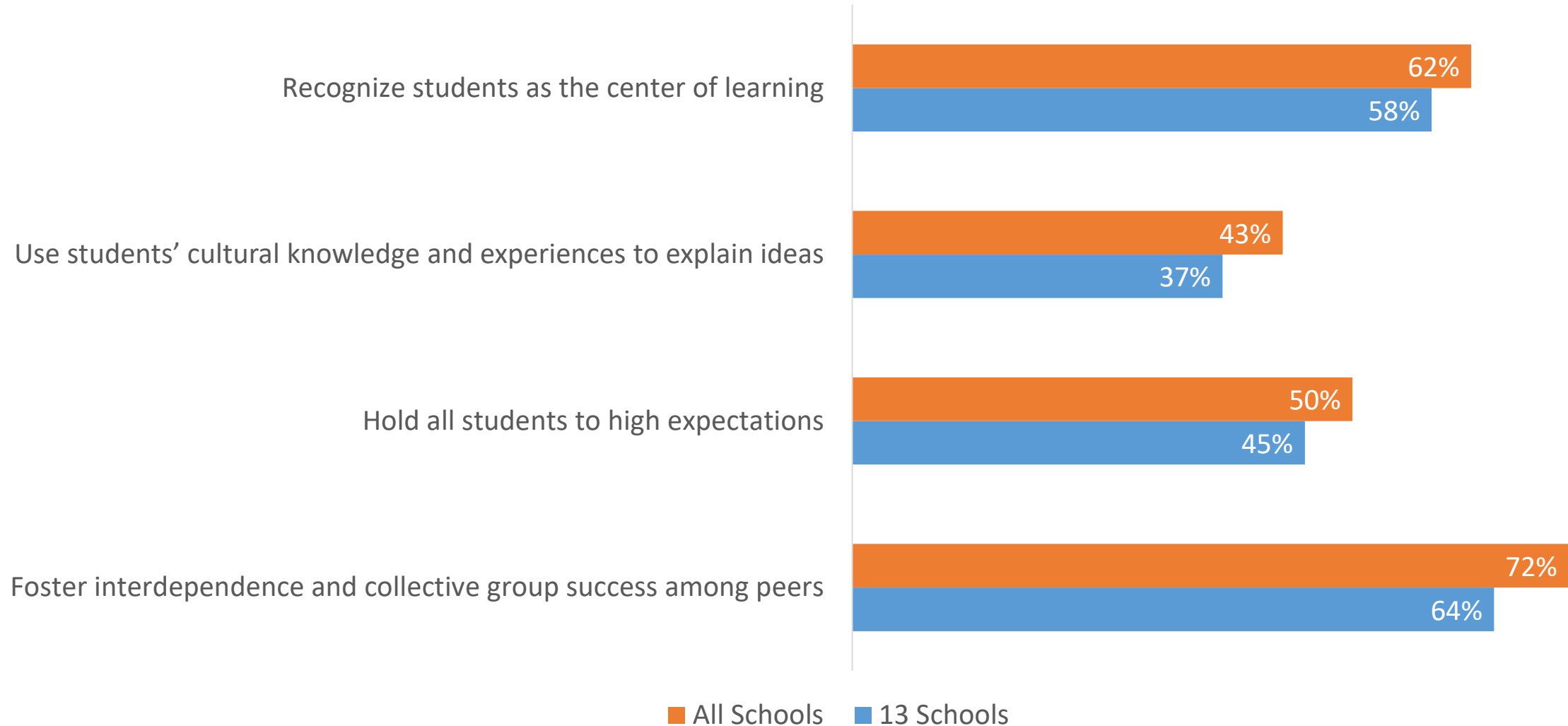
"The book choices are not culturally reflective of our student population...We need read aloud books that reflect our student population so visualization and making connections can be more accessible for our students."

"BAR and MM books are not interesting and lack diversity. Kids love when we get to take a break from the sterile MM and BAR whole group books and read something with bite that applies to the real world in a meaningful way."

# Culturally Responsive Teaching Moves

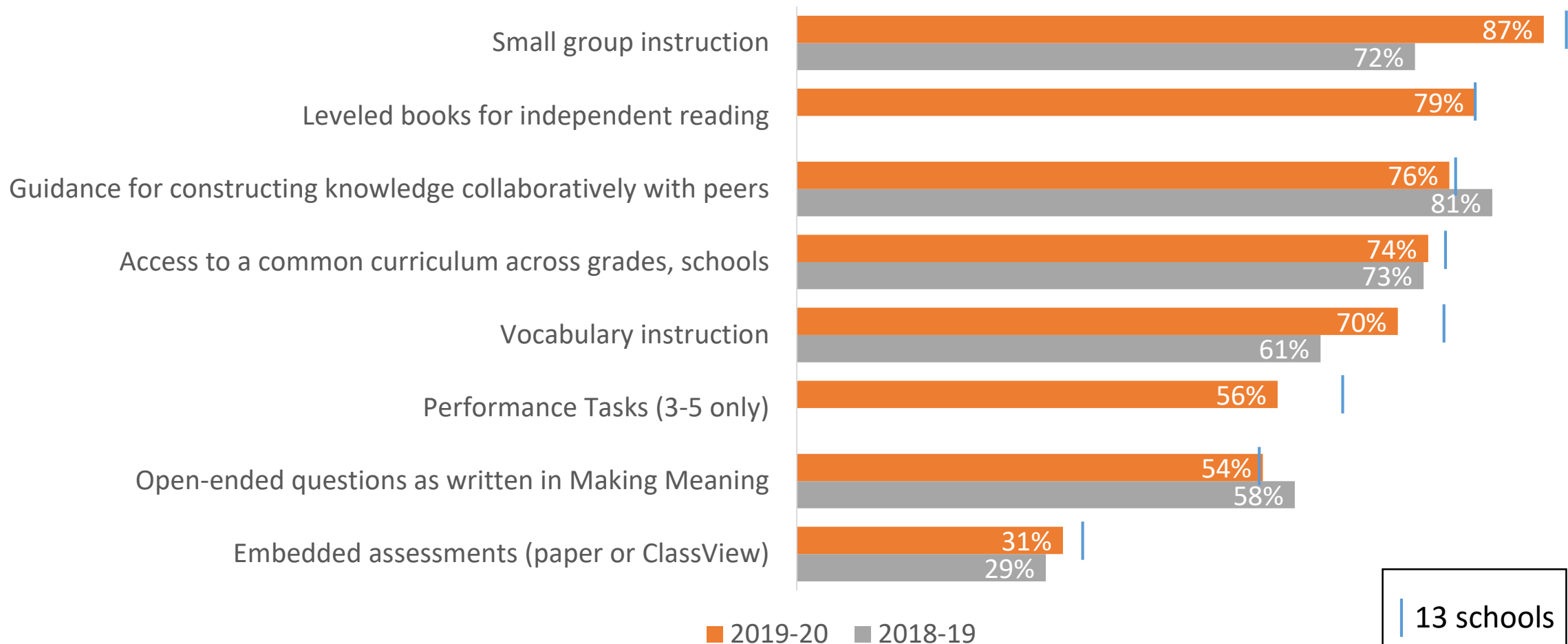
The CCC curriculum helps me to...

\*New survey question



# Gap Closing Strategies

**Percent of K-2 teacher respondents who believe that the following elements are “extremely” or “very” important in eliminating gaps in literacy for historically underserved students of color**



# Foundational Skills Beliefs

**"I believe that systematic and explicit phonics instruction in the early grades is critical to meet 3rd grade ELA proficiency"**



## Comments

"As we know, teaching students to read solely on phonics, like CCC, can be a barrier between our students and enjoying reading. F&P comes from a more holistic approach to reading, pulling information from books in more places than just phonics; such as picture clues, story context, etc."

"BAR lessons teach decoding skills but there's really not enough time to teach phonological awareness and phonemic awareness."

"I would like to see more systematic phonological awareness instruction included in the Being a Reader whole class lessons. I have had to supplement in that area and it is challenging to fit it into the schedule. I feel that for Kindergarten, there should be a heavier focus on phonological awareness and phonics (balanced with comprehension learning)."

### Professional Learning Opportunities

- PD received, desired for the future
- Peer learning opportunities
- Classroom observations

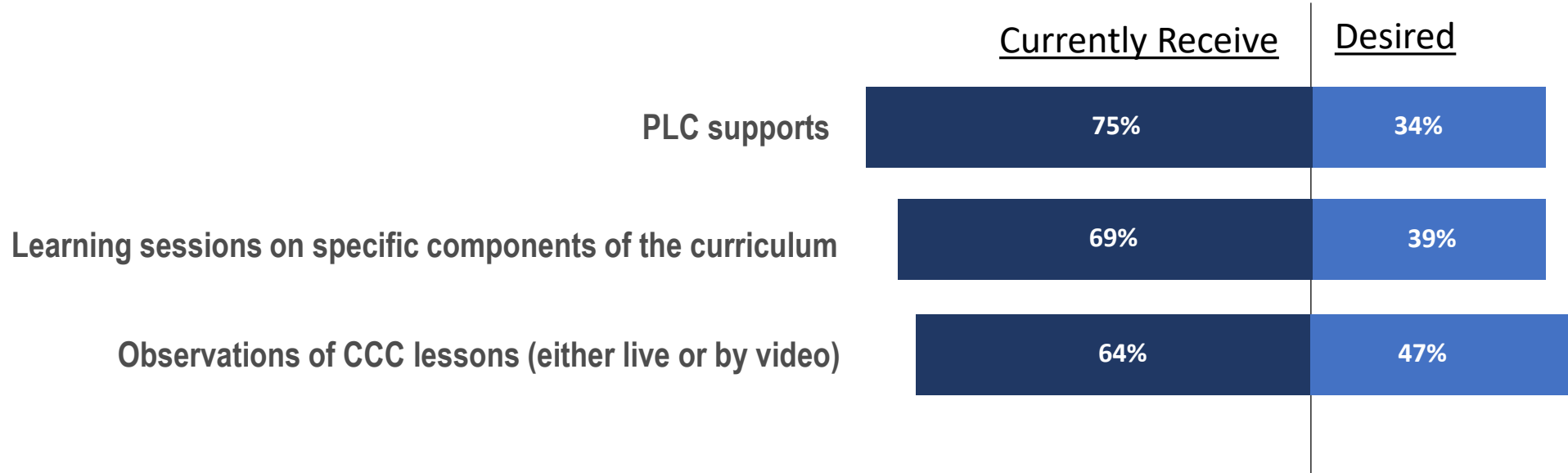


# Professional Learning Opportunities

- PD received, desired for the future
- Peer learning opportunities
- Classroom observations

# Professional Learning Opportunities

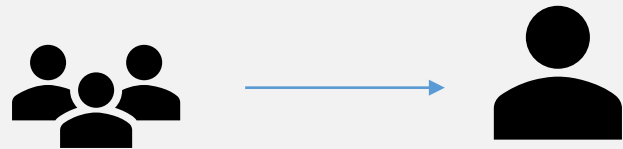
Supports that teachers have received, want in the future



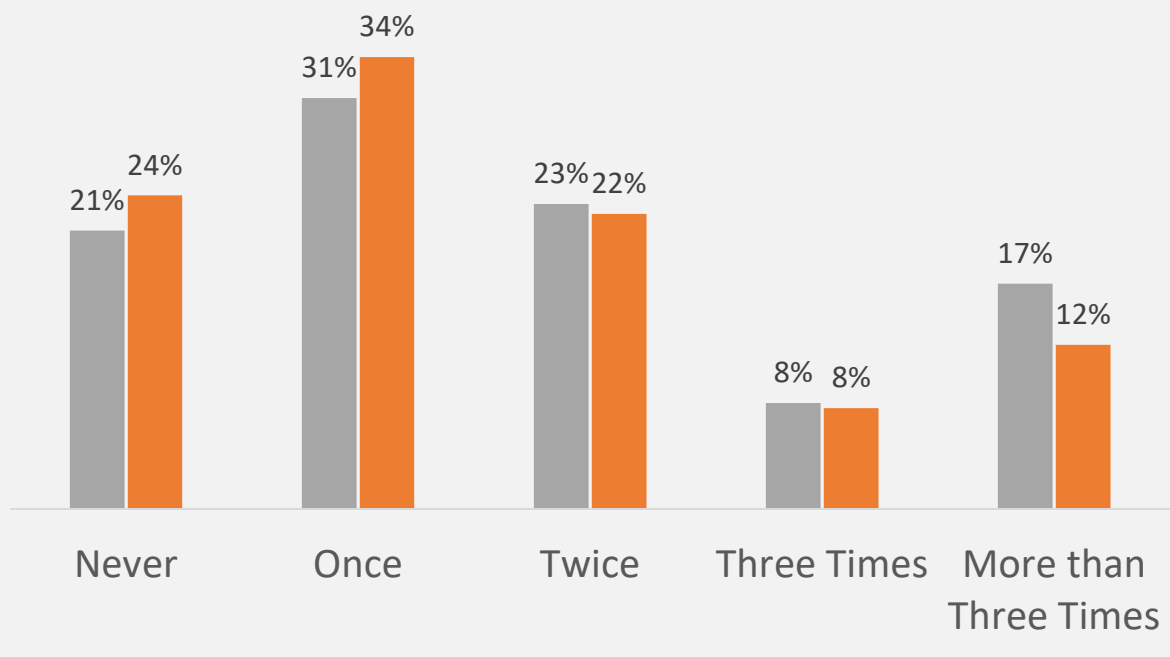
## “Other” Responses (46 total)

- Provide **explicit CCC training** for teachers (21) – including training from CCC instructors (instead of peer teachers) and training on CCC curriculum such as BAR (Being a Reader), SIPPS, small group placement, and word study. Adopt a **different curriculum** (6)
- Provide **greater alignment** between curriculums or across grade levels and training in order to ensure this alignment. (5)
- Allow for **classroom observations** (by admin, a coach, or their peers) as well as **PLC time** for training. (4)

# Classroom Observations



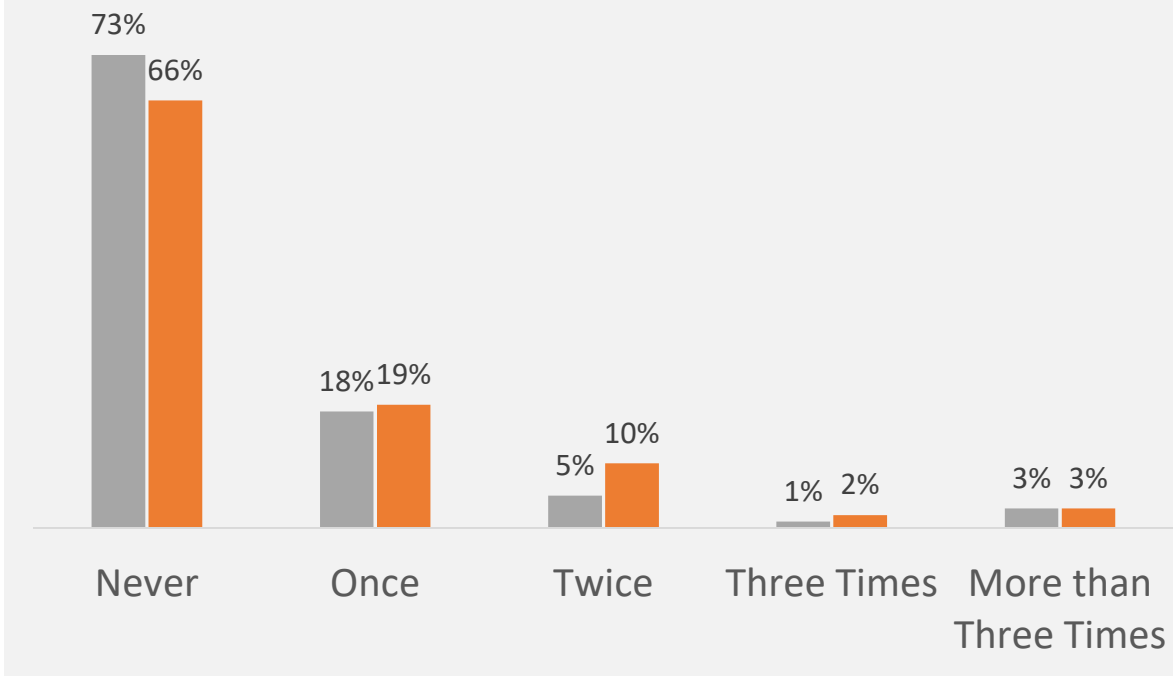
Visits to My Classroom



■ 2019-20 ■ 2018-19



Visits to Others' Classrooms



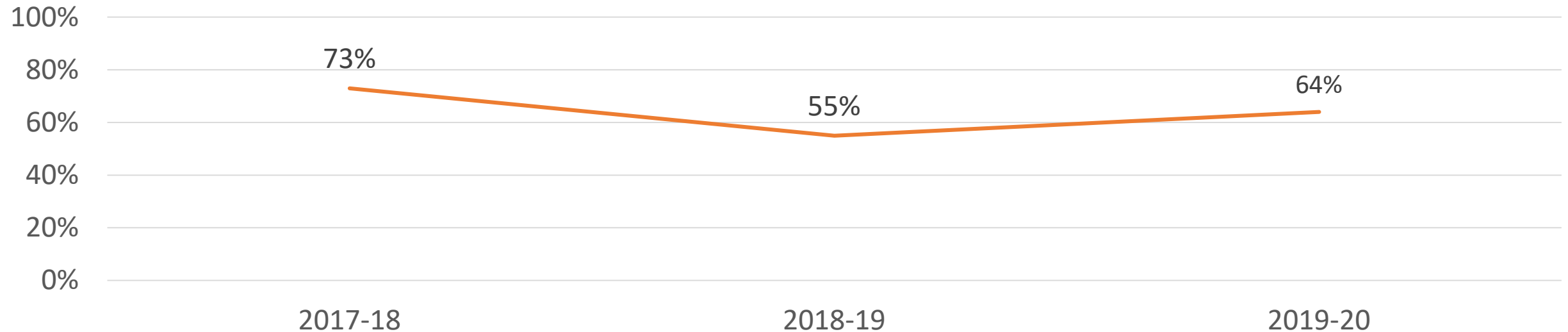
13 schools

# Perceptions of Student Outcomes

- Student Engagement
- Student Outcomes

# Student Engagement

**“When I use the CCC curriculum, my students are engaged and enthusiastic about literacy learning”**



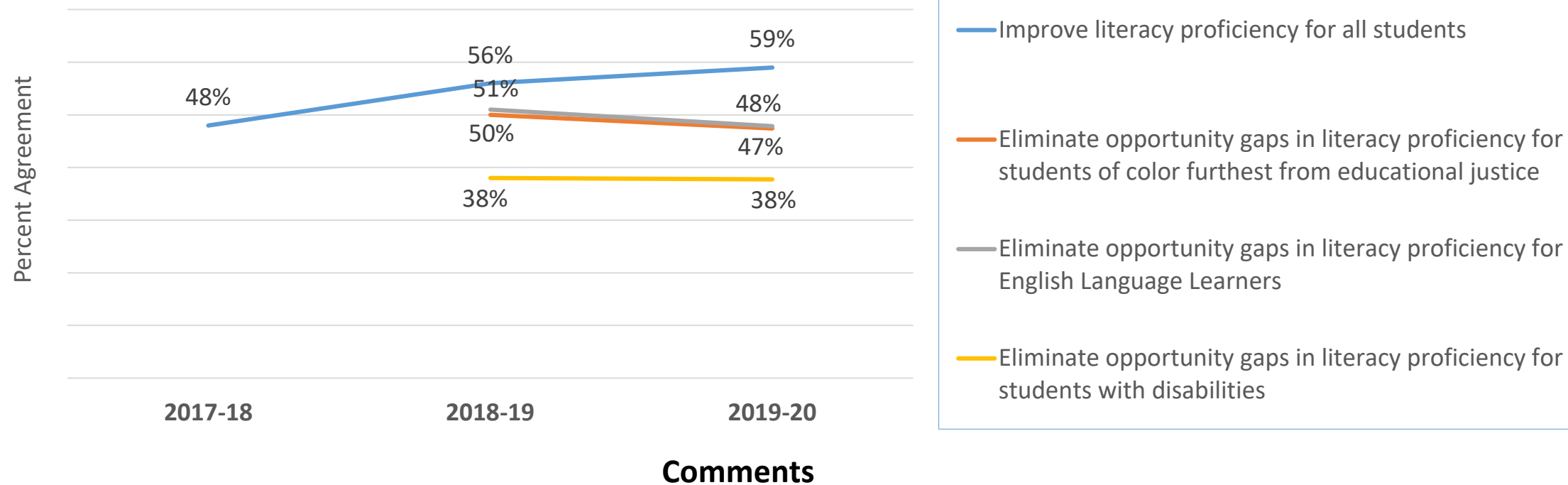
## Comments

"CCC is an incredibly repetitive and redundant curriculum that the kids tire of very quickly...When you have the same kind of repetition in lessons, kids tune out and lose interest and get frustrated that things are much the same every day."

"Many of the nonfiction read aloud texts, particularly the ones about animals, are engaging and high interest. I also find that the social skills strategies, such as "turn to the speaker," "turn to your partner," and respectful disagreement are important and useful for students."

# Student Outcomes

**"I believe that implementing CCC "as intended" (i.e. as per the CCC Implementation Guide) will help to..."**



"The ccc is a strong curriculum for most students. Alone, the curriculum can not close the academic gap for EL students or students furthest from education. However, I have seen the students who participate with SIPPS will close that gap."

"CCC being implemented "with fidelity" means that teachers are unable to differentiate for their students, which is the exact opposite as being able to meet the needs of struggling learners, especially those from historically under-served groups."

"If I didn't supplement this curriculum, my students would be unchallenged, under-instructed, and bored...So, yes, I do follow the CCC curriculum, but it is not responsible for my students' progress. They learn to read and write in spite of it."

# Student Outcomes

How have teacher predictions aligned to actual test results in the past? (using 2018-19 data)

## Overall

Teachers' predictions were **about right**. A little over half of teachers in 18-19 predicted that scores would increase. Scores overall did increase by three percentage points.

## Students of Color Furthest from Educational Justice

Teachers' predictions were **slightly pessimistic**. About half of teachers predicted that scores for this group of students would increase. Overall, elementary ELA Smarter Balanced scores were up slightly over 2017-18 (Grades 3-5 Combined), with a larger increase for African American Males.

## ELL

Teachers' predictions were **slightly pessimistic**. About half of teachers predicted that scores for this group of students would increase. Overall, elementary ELA Smarter Balanced scores were up three percentage points over 2017-18 (Grades 3-5 Combined) for students receiving ELL services.

## Students with disabilities

Teachers' predictions were **pessimistic**. Only 38% of teachers predicted that scores for this group of students would increase. Overall, elementary ELA Smarter Balanced scores were up three percentage points over 2017-18 (Grades 3-5 Combined) for students receiving SPED services.

# Open-Ended Response Analysis

- Overview of key topics
- Quotations by theme



# Thoughts from 154 K-5 SPS Teachers

Question: Is there anything else you'd like to add about CCC implementation in your school or classroom this year?

## Most Common Topics:

- Lack of time (35 responses)
- General responses about CCC (34 responses)
- Lack of rigor (31 responses)
- Alignment with other curriculum, standards, or between grade levels (28 responses)
- Foundational skills (27 responses)
- Flexibility (26 responses)
- Assessments (25 responses)

# Time Constraints

The most common response (35 teachers) was a reference to time and difficulty finding the time to implement all aspects of the CCC curriculum.

“The curriculum has too many components...The literacy department should determine what essential skills be taught and not expect teachers to teach all aspects of the curriculum.”

“There is so much I never feel able to cover more than half of it.”

“We don't have enough time to teach other subjects now that we're all doing CCC as intended... we don't even have enough time to teach all of CCC at times. We never get to do science or social studies, and have to cut other things often too.”

# Concerns about Rigor

Thirty-one teachers referenced the curriculum not being rigorous enough, including 11 references to a lack of rigor in Being a Writer in particular.

“Some of the mentor texts are far too simple for use in the 5th grade curriculum. We have subbed in alternative texts in these cases. The writing curriculum across the board in Being a Writer does not ask them to do work that is challenging enough, or ask them to complete enough writing tasks. The best thing in the writing curriculum are the performance tasks, which are consistently fabulous. More of THAT level of depth and engagement would be wonderful, but it is lacking in the bulk of the curriculum.”

“This curriculum [is] missing basic reading skills. It assumes way too much. So many skills like basic cause and effect, literary skills in figurative language are missing. It is just too broad and weak.”

“It is not rigorous enough and does not push our students to where they need to go.”

# Alignment Issues

Twenty-eight teachers referenced alignment between:

- CCC and common core, SBA, or F&P
- schools implementing CCC (i.e. across grade levels)
- various parts of CCC

“The curriculum is too scattered to use all the components comprehensively. The Being a Reader literature and the Making Meaning literature are not related, it feels very scattered to do both along with all of the other literature and themes we teach. It is hard to fit it all in when the two curricula are not written to be taught together.”

“All of the book sets should be leveled and aligned to F&P, since we are required to use this assessment. The fact that the 2 are not aligned is maddening.”

“In our school, our principal expects K-3 classrooms to teach the CCC as intended however the 4th-5th classrooms are able to use an alternate curriculum and not use CCC.”

# Other Topics

## Other common topics in teacher responses:

### General Responses

"I am getting better with it every year and adding more components every year. This isn't something even the most veteran classroom teachers can just hit the ground running with...I think language arts department should express that to all the schools they come and visit."

### Professional Development

"I would love more training...I do not feel that the online training was enough, it was confusing and did not prepare me for teaching CCC."

### Flexibility

"This program has been more supportive and differentiated for all learners so that they can access all areas of the curriculum."

### Foundational Skills

"CCC is not a structured literacy program. I call it "drive by" phonics instruction. It is highly inefficient in teaching the dyslexic child how to read, and is somewhat inefficient for the child who needs systematic instruction."