



Arlington
Public
Schools

English Language Arts Program Evaluation

May 2019



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Appendices, including a detailed program description and evaluation methodology, are available at www.apsva.us/evaluationreports.

SECTION 1: FINDINGS

Evaluation Question #1: How effectively was the English language arts program implemented?

To address this question, the evaluation focused on several areas: quality of instruction, student access and participation, professional learning, and use of resources.

Quality of Instruction

Classroom Assessment Scoring System

Arlington Public Schools uses the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observation tool to assess the quality of interactions between teachers and students for all program evaluation areas. It was developed by the University of Virginia’s Curry School of Education as an early childhood observation tool, and later expanded to include other grade levels. CLASS is now managed by Teachstone, a company in Charlottesville, Virginia.

The CLASS tool organizes teacher-student interactions into three broad domains: **Emotional Support**, **Classroom Organization**, and **Instructional Support**. The upper elementary (grades 4–5) and secondary tool include a fourth domain: **Student Engagement**. Dimensions are scored on a 7-point scale consisting of Low (1, 2), Mid (3, 4, 5), and High (6, 7) ranges.

CLASS observations were conducted in English language arts classes (including ESOL/HILT and special education) throughout the 2017-18 school year at all grade levels. Observers conducted one 30-minute observation for each observed teacher. **Table 1** shows the percentage of teachers observed by level.

Table 1: Number of CLASS Observations by Level

Teacher Group	Total Number of Teachers	Number of Teachers Observed	Percentage of Teachers Observed	Margin of Error (95% Confidence Level)
Elementary Teachers	982	365	37%	4.1%
Middle School Teachers	143	113	79%	4.2%
High School Teachers	122	90	74%	5.3%

When interpreting CLASS results, Teachstone advises that typically, half a point to a point difference is considered to be **educationally significant**; in other words, a difference that would impact outcomes for students¹.

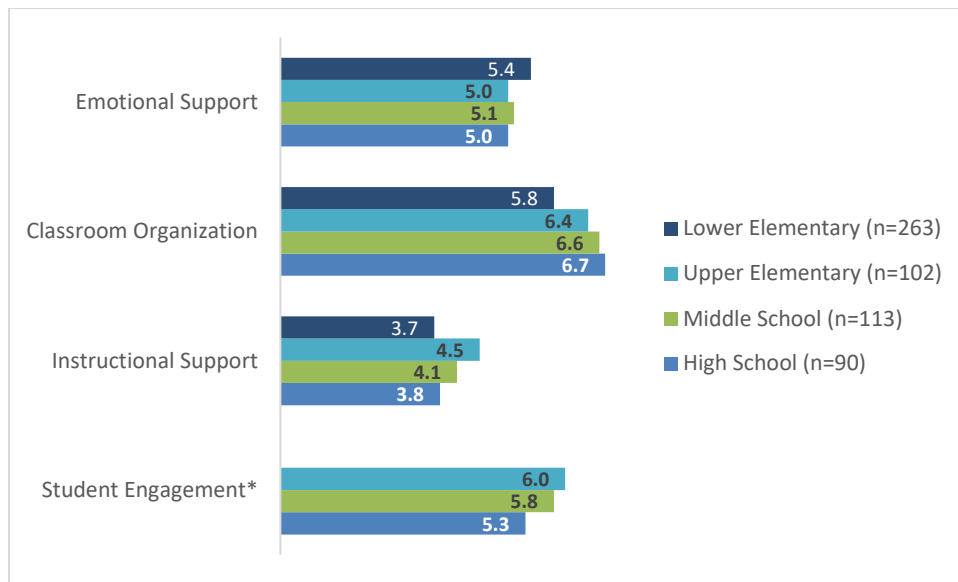
Average ELA CLASS domain scores (figure 1) fall into the high-mid or high range for **emotional support**, **classroom organization**, and **student engagement**. Similar to national and APS districtwide trends, the average **instructional support** scores were relatively lower and fell into the mid range.

¹ Teachstone, personal communication, June 13, 2014 and January 5, 2016

While average **emotional support** scores were fairly even across grade levels, there were *educationally significant differences* in the other domain areas.

- **Student engagement** scores decrease as the grade level increases, with the highest score, 6.0, at the upper elementary level, followed by 5.8 for middle school and 5.3 for high school. (There is no student engagement domain in the lower elementary CLASS tool.)
- Conversely, **classroom organization** scores increase as the grade level increases, ranging from 5.8 at the lower elementary level to 6.7 at the high school level.
- **Instructional support** scores were the highest in the middle grades – upper elementary (4.5) and middle school (4.1) – and lower in lower elementary (3.7) and high school (3.8).

Figure 1: Average CLASS Domain Scores



*The Student Engagement domain is not included in the lower elementary CLASS tool.

Within the **instructional support** domain, there were consistent patterns across levels and disciplines.

- The lowest-rated dimension within instructional support at the **lower elementary** level was **concept development**, with an average score of 3.3, falling about half a point lower than other dimensions within instructional support.
- At each of the higher grade levels, **analysis and inquiry** stood out as the lowest-rated dimension within Instructional Support, though the average scores varied across levels (3.6 upper elementary, 2.8 middle school, 2.4 high school). Within each grade level, the average score for analysis and inquiry was consistently lower than other dimensions within Instructional Support by anywhere from half a point to two points.

Concept development is a dimension limited to the lower elementary tool, which does not include an analysis and inquiry dimension. These two dimensions include many overlapping behavioral markers, as shown in tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Indicators and Behavioral Markers Associated with Concept Development

	Analysis and Reasoning	Creating	Integration	Connections to the Real World
Behavioral Markers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why and/or how questions • Problems solving • Prediction/experimentation • Classification/comparison • Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming • Planning • Producing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connects concepts • Integrates with previous knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real-world applications • Related to students' lives

Table 3: Indicators and Behavioral Markers Associated with Analysis and Inquiry

	Facilitation of higher-order thinking	Opportunities for novel application	Metacognition
Behavioral Markers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students identify and investigate problems/questions • Students examine, analyze, and/or interpret data, information, approaches, etc. • Students construct alternatives, predict, hypothesize, or brainstorm • Students develop arguments, provide explanations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-ended tasks • Presents cognitive challenges • Students apply previous knowledge/skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students explain their own cognitive processes • Students self-evaluate • Students reflect • Students plan • Teacher models thinking about thinking

Further information about the CLASS observation tool, including its domains and dimensions, can be found in **Appendices B1 and B2**. The full report on ELA CLASS observations is in **Appendix B3**.

ELA Observation Tools

For purposes of this evaluation, the ELA Office and the Department of Planning & Evaluation, with input from the evaluation planning committee, developed a set of three observation tools designed to assess the occurrence and effectiveness of instructional practices aligned with best practices in ELA instruction at each grade level (elementary, middle school, high school). Observers were retired teachers who participated in training and inter-rater reliability exercises.

Observations were conducted in English language arts classes (including ESOL/HILT and special education) throughout the 2017-18 school year at all grade levels. Observers conducted one 30-minute observation for each observed teacher. **Table 4** shows the percentage of teachers observed by level.

Table 4: Number of ELA Observations by Level

Teacher Group	Total Number of Teachers	Number of Teachers Observed	Percentage of Teachers Observed	Margin of Error (95% Confidence Level)
Elementary Teachers	982	342	35%	4.3
Middle School Teachers	143	102	71%	5.2
High School Teachers	122	100	82%	4.2

Elementary Observations

Figure 2 shows ratings from the elementary ELA observations. Observers noted whether a particular instructional practice occurred, and if so, how effectively it was implemented. While there was not an expectation that all listed instructional practices would be observed in every classroom, one aim of the observations was to get a sense of how prevalent certain instructional practices are.

Occurrence of Instructional Practices

Observers were most likely to see practices within the overarching categories of **independent reading and conferring, oral language, small group reading, reading mini lessons, and writing**, and least likely to see practices within the categories of **read aloud, shared reading, word study, and vocabulary**.

Five instructional practices were observed in **at least half of all observed classes**:

- There is a clear learning objective for the lesson. (88%)
- Oral Language: Teachers provide multiple opportunities to engage students in discourse through the use of specific strategies. (66%)
- Writing: Students are provided with writing time. (55%)
- Independent Reading and Conferring: Students are engaged in independent reading with self-selected texts. (54%)
- Independent Reading and Conferring: Evidence of self-selection, multi-leveled, diverse genre, and/or interests in text. (50%)

Five instructional practices were observed in **10% of observations or fewer**:

- Read Aloud: Teacher engages in a read aloud to demonstrate a writer’s technique. (10%)
- Shared Reading: Teachers engage young children in shared reading to develop Concepts About Print, Concept of Word as evidenced by teacher prompts (PreK - Grade 1) (10%)
- Oral Language: Teachers provide opportunities for performances, oral reports, and presentations. (9%)
- Read Aloud: Teacher engages in a read aloud to teach content knowledge. (8%)
- Vocabulary: Teachers use a variety of concrete strategies to develop generative vocabulary (6%)

Effectiveness of Instructional Practices

Generally, if an instructional practice occurred, it was rated effective in 90% or more of the observations. The only exceptions are:

Independent Reading and Confering:

- Teachers confer with individual students with a specific teaching point (occurred in 32% of observed classes, rated effective in 69% of observed occurrences)
- Students have opportunities to share their reading with partners, small groups, or whole class. (occurred in 50% of observed classes, rated effective in 86% of observed occurrences)

Writing:

- Teachers and other adults confer with individual students as evidenced by anecdotal notes, checklists. (occurred in 33% of observed classes, rated effective in 61% of observed occurrences)
- Writer’s workshop closes with a brief share and a restatement of the mini-lesson. (occurred in 16% of observed classes, rated effective in 89% of observed occurrences)

Figure 2: Elementary ELA Observation Tool: Occurrence and Effectiveness of Instructional Practices

Observation Item	% of Observations Where Item Was Observed	% of Observed Occurrences Rated Effective
There is a clear learning objective for the lesson.	88%	95%
Oral language		
Teachers provide multiple opportunities to engage students in discourse through the use of specific strategies	66%	93%
Teachers explicitly teach social and academic vocabulary	35%	99%
Teachers build background knowledge through the use of visuals, conversations, artifacts, films, books, and interactive experiences	44%	97%
Teachers provide opportunities for performances, oral reports, and presentations.	9%	97%
Read Aloud		
Teacher conducts a read aloud with three phases of engagement (all three must be present)*	21%	90%
Teacher engages in a read aloud to demonstrate a writer’s technique.	10%	97%
Teacher engages in a read aloud to demonstrate reading strategy.	15%	96%

*Sets a purpose for reading and build background knowledge, Provides support during reading aloud in the form of strategic questions and vocabulary discussion, Extends students’ thinking

Observation Item	% of Observations Where Item Was Observed	% of Observed Occurrences Rated Effective
Read Aloud - Continued		
Teacher engages in a read aloud to promote enjoyment.	18%	97%
Teacher engages in a read aloud to teach content knowledge.	8%	100%
Shared Reading		
Teachers engage young children in shared reading to develop Concepts About Print, Concept of Word as evidenced by teacher prompts (PreK - Grade 1)	10%	97%
Students engage in shared reading to develop fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and/or performance skills	15%	90%
Reading mini lesson		
Teacher conducts a mini-lesson that is between 12-15 minutes.	33%	91%
Teacher explicitly models a new strategy with a short piece of text (i.e., visualizing, predicting, questioning, summarizing)	29%	97%
Teacher uses the following architecture: Connects to previous learning/instruction	33%	99%
Teacher uses the following architecture: Demonstrates with text	31%	95%
Teacher uses the following architecture: Actively engage students	35%	92%
Teacher uses the following architecture: Restate objective	34%	96%
Teacher uses the following architecture: Send students to apply	33%	94%
Small Group Reading		
Teachers have formed small groups for a specific purpose based on data	47%	100%
Evidence of differentiated materials	42%	100%
Teacher uses the following architecture in small group: State objective/learning target	38%	93%

Observation Item	% of Observations Where Item Was Observed	% of Observed Occurrences Rated Effective
Small Group Reading - Continued		
Teacher uses the following architecture in small group: Demonstrate with text	30%	96%
Teacher uses the following architecture in small group: Students read independently with teacher coaching	35%	95%
Teacher uses the following architecture in small group: Discussion of text	42%	92%
Independent Reading and Confering		
Students are engaged in independent reading with self-selected texts.	54%	94%
Teachers confer with individual students with a specific teaching point	32%	69%
Students have opportunities to share their reading with partners, small groups, or whole class.	29%	86%
Evidence of self-selection, multi-leveled, diverse genre, and/or interests in text.	50%	97%
Word Study		
Teachers have formed small groups based on spelling data	22%	99%
Teachers provide explicit instruction with modeling on how spelling features work in words	17%	98%
Teachers and students reflect and discuss the underlying generalization about spelling features under study.	13%	100%
Vocabulary		
Teachers use a variety of concrete strategies to develop specific vocabulary	25%	93%
Teachers use a variety of concrete strategies to develop generative vocabulary	6%	100%
Writing		
Teacher conducts a mini-lesson that is between 12-15 minutes.	29%	93%
Teacher explicitly models a teaching point in one of the following ways: mentor text, demonstration, guided inquiry	30%	94%

Observation Item	% of Observations Where Item Was Observed	% of Observed Occurrences Rated Effective
Writing - Continued		
Teacher uses the following architecture: State objective/learning target	37%	97%
Teacher uses the following architecture: Demonstrate with text	29%	98%
Teacher uses the following architecture: Actively engage students	38%	90%
Teacher uses the following architecture: Restate objective	32%	97%
Teacher uses the following architecture: Send students to apply	39%	94%
Students are provided with writing time	55%	95%
Teachers and other adults confer with individual students as evidenced by anecdotal notes, checklists.	33%	61%
Teachers are engaged in small group writing conferences with a specific teaching point.	13%	91%
Writer's workshop closes with a brief share and a restatement of the mini-lesson.	16%	89%

Middle School Observations

Figure 3 shows ratings from the middle school ELA observations.

Occurrence of Instructional Practices

Observers were most likely to see practices within the overarching category of **oral language**, followed by **reading or writing workshop, independent reading and conferring**, and **vocabulary**. Observers were least likely to see practices within the categories of **read aloud, shared reading**, and **small group reading**.

Four instructional practices were observed in **at least 45% of all observed classes**:

- There is a clear learning objective for the lesson. (90%)
- Oral Language: Teachers build background knowledge through the use of visuals, conversations, artifacts, films, books, and interactive experiences. (66%)
- Oral Language: Teachers provide multiple opportunities to engage students in discourse through the use of specific strategies. (59%)
- Oral Language: Teachers explicitly teach social and academic vocabulary. (45%)

Six instructional practices were observed in **15% of observations or fewer**:

- Small Group Reading: Teachers have formed small groups for a specific purpose based on data. (15%)
- Small Group Reading: Students engage in book clubs or thematic novel study. (14%)
- Read Aloud: Teacher conducts a read aloud with three phrases of engagement (all three must be present). (11%)
- Read Aloud: Teacher engages in a read aloud to demonstrate a writer’s technique. (10%)
- Read Aloud: Teacher engages in a read aloud to demonstrate reading strategy. (10%)
- Shared Reading: Students engage in shared reading to develop fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and/or performance skills. (10%)

Effectiveness of Instructional Practices

Similar to elementary observations, practices observed in middle school ELA instruction tended to be rated effective. Practices that were rated effective less than 90% of the time are:





Read Aloud:

- Teacher conducts a read aloud with three phases of engagement (all three must be present: Sets a purpose for reading and build background knowledge, provides support during reading aloud in the form of strategic questions and vocabulary discussion, extends students’ thinking) (occurred in 11% of observations, rated effective in 82% of observed occurrences)
- Teacher engages in a read aloud to demonstrate reading strategy. (occurred in 10% of observations, rated effective in 80% of observed occurrences)

Reading or Writing Workshop:

- Teacher conducts an explicit mini-lesson on reading/writing that is between 12-20 minutes. (occurred in 32% of observations, rated effective in 82% of observed occurrences)
- Teacher uses the following architecture: State objective/learning target. (occurred in 29% of observations, rated effective in 87% of observed occurrences)
- Teacher uses the following architecture: Actively engage students in a shared component. (occurred in 29% of observations, rated effective in 87% of observed occurrences)

Figure 3: Middle School ELA Observation Tool: Occurrence and Effectiveness of Instructional Practices

Observation Item	% of Observations Where Item Was Observed		% of Observed Occurrences Rated Effective	
There is a clear learning objective for the lesson.		90%		90%
Oral language				
Teachers provide multiple opportunities to engage students in discourse through the use of specific strategies		59%		93%

Observation Item	% of Observations Where Item Was Observed	% of Observed Occurrences Rated Effective
Oral language - Continued		
Teachers explicitly teach social and academic vocabulary	45%	99%
Teachers build background knowledge through the use of visuals, conversations, artifacts, films, books, and interactive experiences	66%	94%
Teachers provide opportunities for performances, oral reports, and presentations.	17%	100%
Read Aloud		
Teacher conducts a read aloud with three phases of engagement (all three must be present).*	11%	82%
Teacher engages in a read aloud to demonstrate a writer's technique.	10%	100%
Teacher engages in a read aloud to demonstrate reading strategy.	10%	80%
Shared Reading		
Students engage in shared reading to develop fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and/or performance skills	10%	90%
Reading or Writing Workshop		
Teacher conducts an explicit mini-lesson on reading/writing that is between 12-20 minutes.	32%	82%
Teacher explicitly models new skill/strategy with short text (author's purpose, developing effective lead, structural organization, symbolism, theme)	25%	92%
Teacher uses the following architecture: State objective/learning target	29%	87%
Teacher uses the following architecture: Demonstrate with text	25%	92%
Teacher uses the following architecture: Actively engage students in a shared component	29%	87%
Teacher uses the following architecture: Restate objective	31%	91%

*Sets a purpose for reading and build background knowledge, Provides support during reading aloud in the form of strategic questions and vocabulary discussion, Extends students' thinking

Observation Item	% of Observations Where Item Was Observed	% of Observed Occurrences Rated Effective
Reading or Writing Workshop - Continued		
Teacher uses the following architecture: Send students to apply	37%	92%
Teachers/adults confer with individual students as evidenced by anecdotal notes, checklists.	27%	96%
Teachers are engaged in small group reading or writing conferences with a specific teaching point.	19%	100%
Workshop closes with a brief share and a restatement of the teaching point.	28%	93%
Instruction focuses on reading through the perspective of a writer or writing with the perspective of a reader.	20%	90%
Small Group Reading		
Teachers have formed small groups for a specific purpose based on data	15%	93%
Evidence of differentiated materials	22%	95%
Students engage in book clubs or thematic novel study	14%	100%
Independent Reading and Confering		
Students are engaged in independent reading with self-selected texts.	30%	97%
Teachers confer with individual students with a specific teaching point	34%	100%
Students have opportunities to share their reading with partners, small groups, or whole class.	25%	100%
Vocabulary		
Teachers use a variety of concrete strategies to develop specific vocabulary	33%	97%
Teachers use a variety of concrete strategies to develop generative vocabulary	18%	94%
Teachers use a variety of strategies to develop in-text vocabulary understanding.	31%	97%

High School Observations

Figure 4 shows ratings from the high school ELA observations.

Occurrence of Instructional Practices

Observers were most likely to see practices within the overarching categories of **oral language**, **reading or writing workshop**, and **vocabulary**, and least likely to see practices in the category of **independent reading and conferring**.

Four instructional practices were observed in **at least three-quarters of all observed classes**:

- There is a clear learning objective for the lesson. (95%)
- Oral Language: Teachers build background knowledge through the use of visuals, conversations, artifacts, films, books, and interactive experiences. (76%)
- Small Group Instruction: Teachers have formed small groups for a specific purpose based on data. (75%)
- Reading or Writing Workshop: Teacher uses the following architecture: State objective/learning target. (74%)







Four instructional practices were observed in **a quarter of observations or fewer**:

- Independent Reading and Conferring: Students are engaged in independent reading with self-selected texts. (26%)
- Independent Reading and Conferring: Students have opportunities to share their reading with partners, small groups, or whole class. (23%)
- Small Group Instruction: Evidence of differentiated materials. (19%)
- Small Group Instruction: Students engage in book clubs or thematic novel study. (14%)

Effectiveness of Instructional Practices

To an even greater extent than at the elementary or middle school levels, practices observed in high school ELA instruction tended to be rated effective. All practices were rated effective at least 97% of the time, when they occurred.

Figure 4: High School ELA Observation Tool: Occurrence and Effectiveness of Instructional Practices

Observation Item	% of Observations Where Item Was Observed		% of Observed Occurrences Rated Effective	
There is a clear learning objective for the lesson.		95%		99%
Oral language				
Teachers provide multiple opportunities to engage students in discourse through the use of specific strategies		66%		100%
Teachers explicitly teach social and academic vocabulary		71%		100%

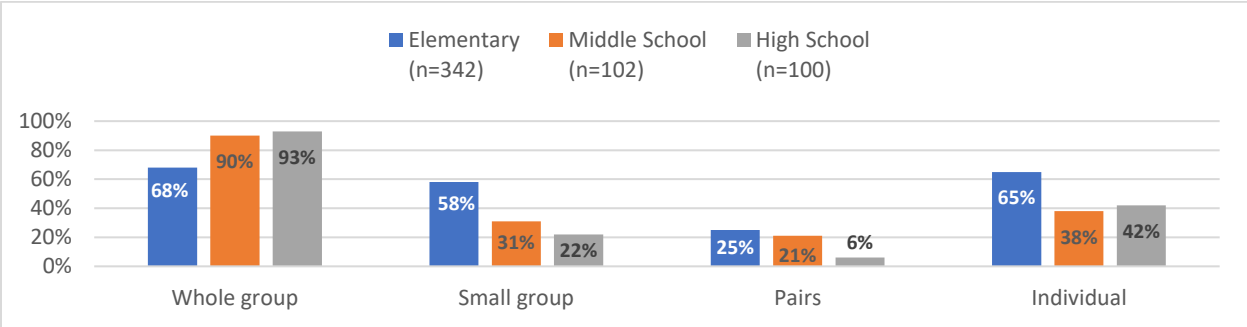
Observation Item	% of Observations Where Item Was Observed	% of Observed Occurrences Rated Effective
Oral language - Continued		
Teachers build background knowledge through the use of visuals, conversations, artifacts, films, books, and interactive experiences	76%	100%
Teachers provide opportunities for performances, oral reports, and presentations.	28%	100%
Shared Reading		
Students engage in shared reading to develop fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and/or performance skills	38%	97%
Focus on anchor piece of literature to explore complex content and language	35%	97%
Reading or Writing Workshop		
Teacher conducts an explicit lesson on reading/writing that is no longer than 20 minutes	56%	98%
Teacher explicitly models a new skill or strategy with an excerpt or text	50%	100%
Teacher uses the following architecture: State objective/learning target	74%	100%
Teacher uses the following architecture: Demonstrate with text	63%	100%
Teacher uses the following architecture: Actively engage students in a shared component	72%	100%
Teacher uses the following architecture: Restate objective	66%	100%
Teacher uses the following architecture: Send students to apply	68%	99%
Teachers/adults confer with individual students as evidenced by anecdotal notes, checklists, rubrics.	45%	100%
Teachers are engaged in small group reading or writing conferences with a specific teaching point.	29%	100%
Teaching instruction focuses on reading through the perspective of a writer or writing with the perspective of a reader.	40%	100%
Students are engaged in writing for a variety of specific purposes and audiences	39%	100%

Observation Item	% of Observations Where Item Was Observed	% of Observed Occurrences Rated Effective
Small Group Instruction		
Teachers have formed small groups for a specific purpose based on data	75%	100%
Evidence of differentiated materials	19%	100%
Students engage in book clubs or thematic novel study	14%	100%
Independent Reading and Confering		
Students are engaged in independent reading with self-selected texts.	26%	100%
Teachers confer with individual students with a specific teaching point	31%	100%
Students have opportunities to share their reading with partners, small groups, or whole class.	23%	100%
Vocabulary		
Teachers use a variety of concrete strategies to develop generative vocabulary	32%	97%
Teachers use a variety of strategies to develop in-text vocabulary understanding.	60%	100%

Instructional Delivery

Observers noted the various delivery models that occurred in each observed class. While the percentage of observations that included each type of delivery model varied greatly by level, **whole group** was consistently the most commonly observed delivery model, followed by **individual instruction**. At the elementary level, individual instruction (65%) and small group instruction (58%) occurred almost as frequently as whole group (68%), while at the secondary level, whole group instruction was much more common than any other model (90%-93% of all middle and high school observations).

Figure 5: Percentage of Observed ELA Classes that Included Specified Delivery Models



Observed Instructional Formats

Figures 6 through 8 show the percentage of observations that included various instructional formats at each level. At the elementary level, **independent reading, writing, and conferring** was by far the most commonly observed instructional format (72% of observations). Unsurprisingly, there was more of a balance of independent reading/writing and **whole group reading/writing – discussion** at the middle and high school levels. These were both observed between 30% to 51% of the time, depending on the level.

This balance of independent and whole group work aligns with the developmental structures and expectations unique to elementary, middle, and high school. Elementary classrooms focus on a variety of small group instructional opportunities based on the teaching of reading skills and strategies, whereas high school classrooms have a focus on English content and developing subject area knowledge and understanding, making whole group instruction a common grouping option.

Figure 6: Percentage of Observed Elementary ELA Classes that Included Specified Instructional Formats

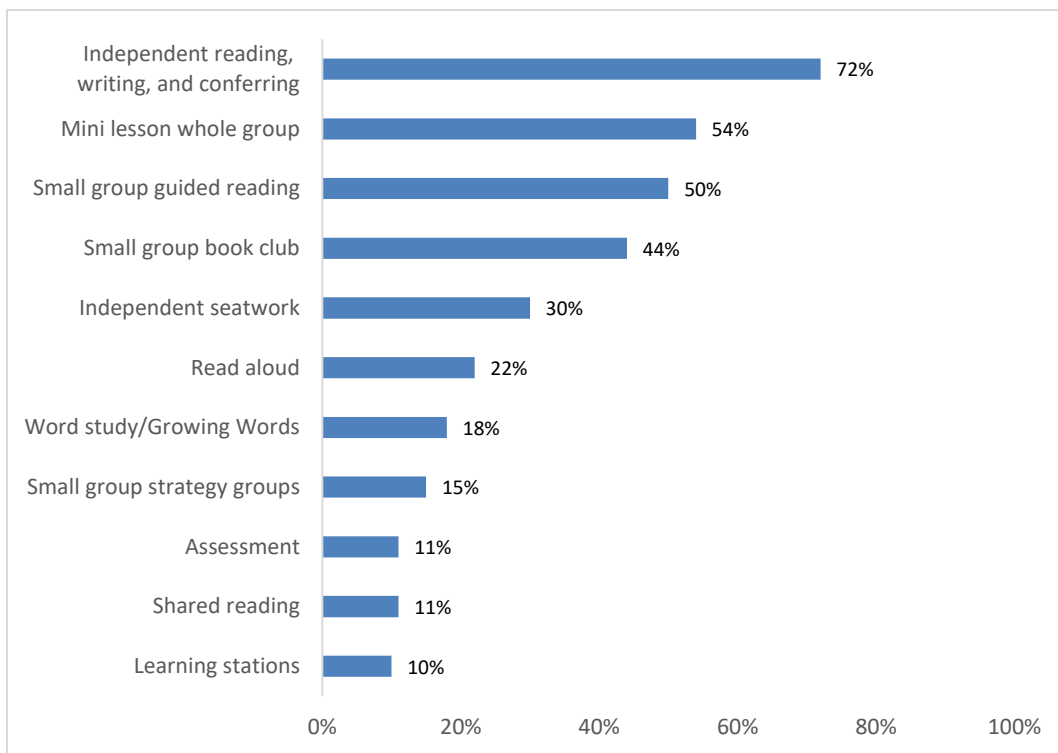


Figure 7: Percentage of Observed Middle School ELA Classes that Included Specified Instructional Formats

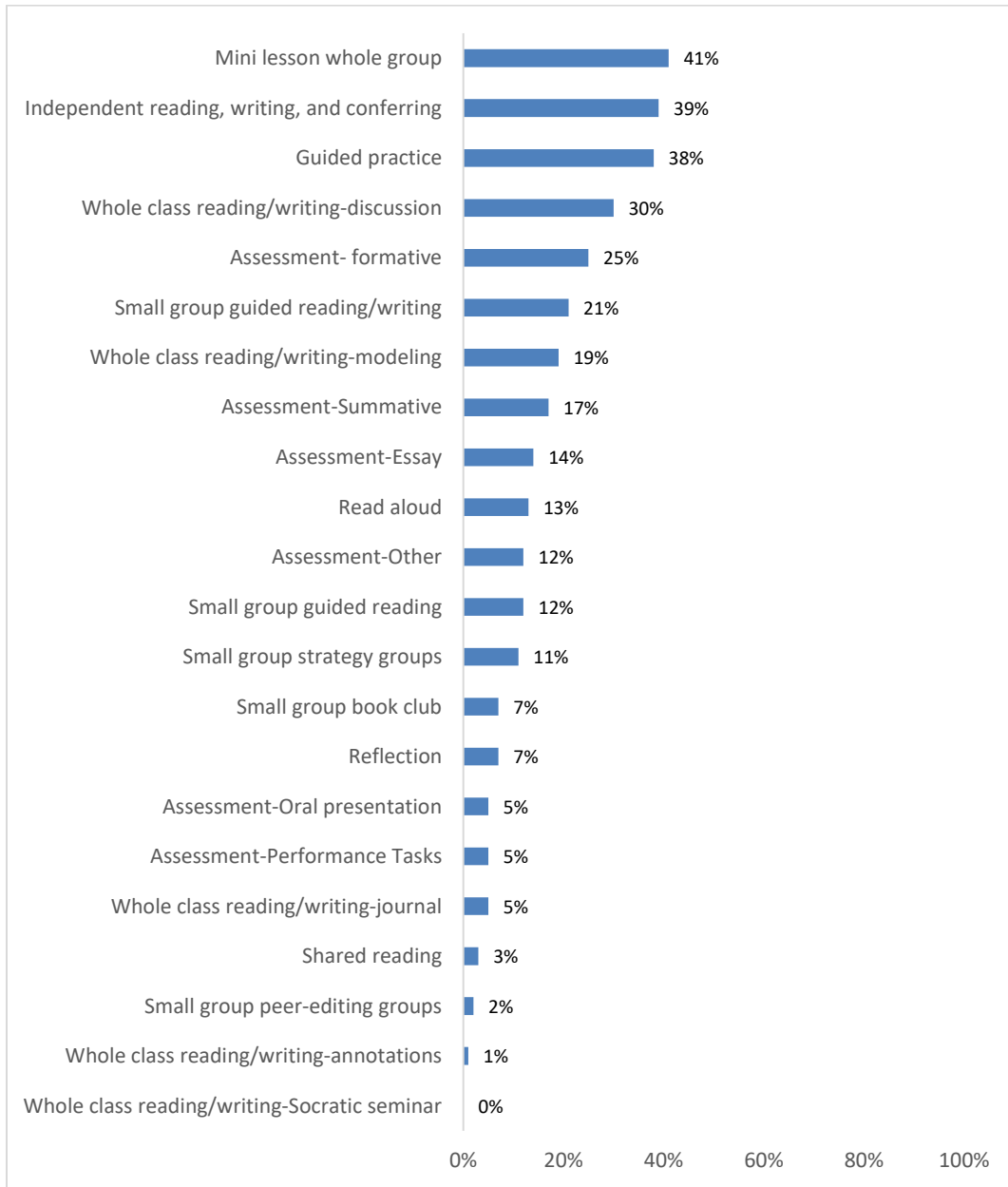
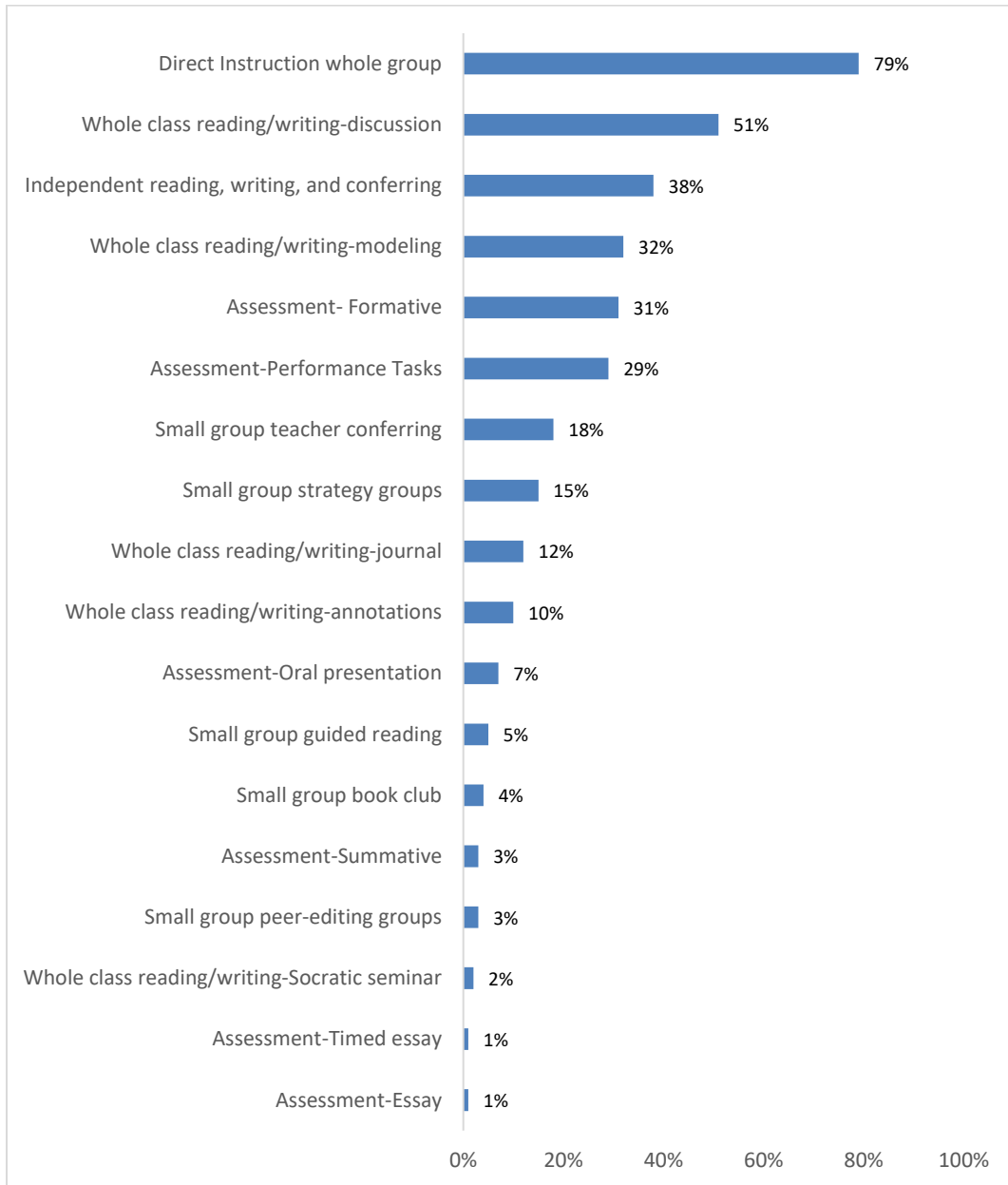


Figure 8: Percentage of Observed High School ELA Classes that Included Specified Instructional Formats



Observed Instructional Topics

Figures 9 through 11 show the percentage of observations that included various instructional topics at each level. Across levels, **oral language** and **reading comprehension** were two of the most commonly observed topics – these were the top two at the elementary and middle school level, and followed **media/multimodal literacy** at the high school level.

Topics least likely to be observed include **handwriting**, **grammar**, and **word study-morphology** at the elementary level; **research** at the middle school level; and **critical lens theory**, **argumentation**, and **historical literary movements** at the high school level.

Figure 9: Percentage of Observed Elementary ELA Classes that Included Specified Instructional Topics

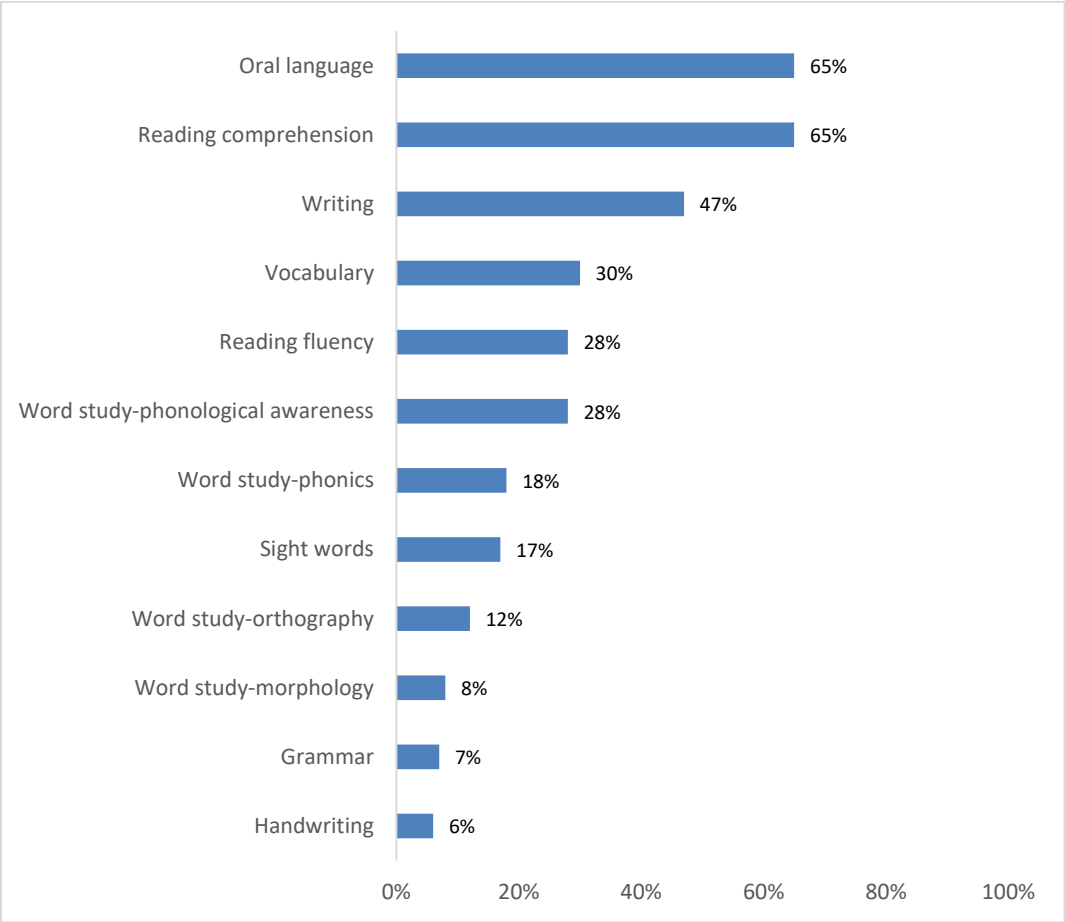


Figure 10: Percentage of Observed Middle School ELA Classes that Included Specified Instructional Topics

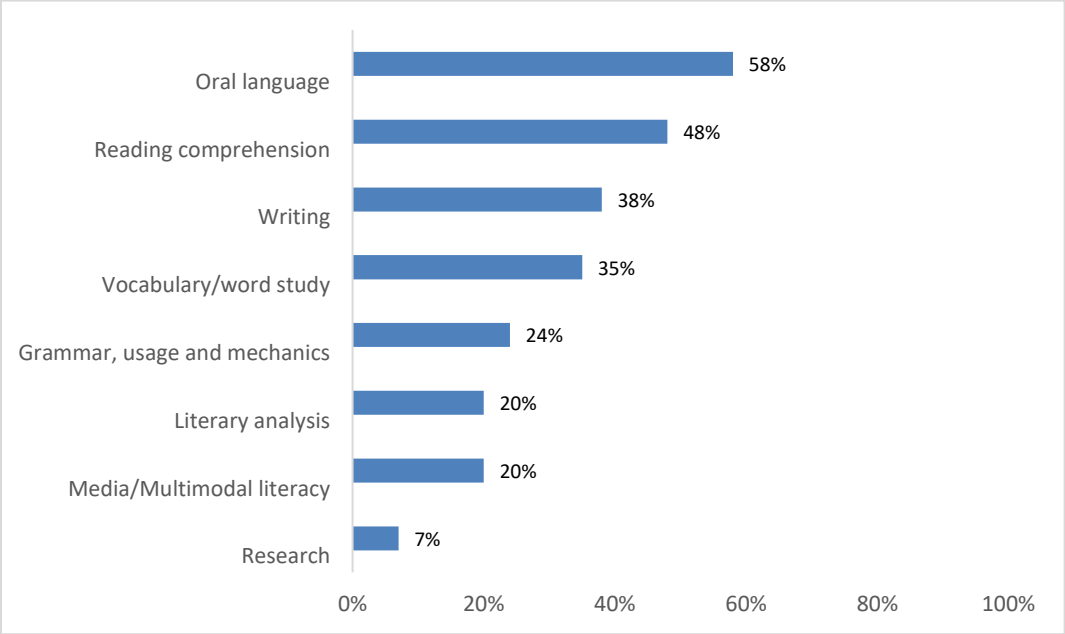
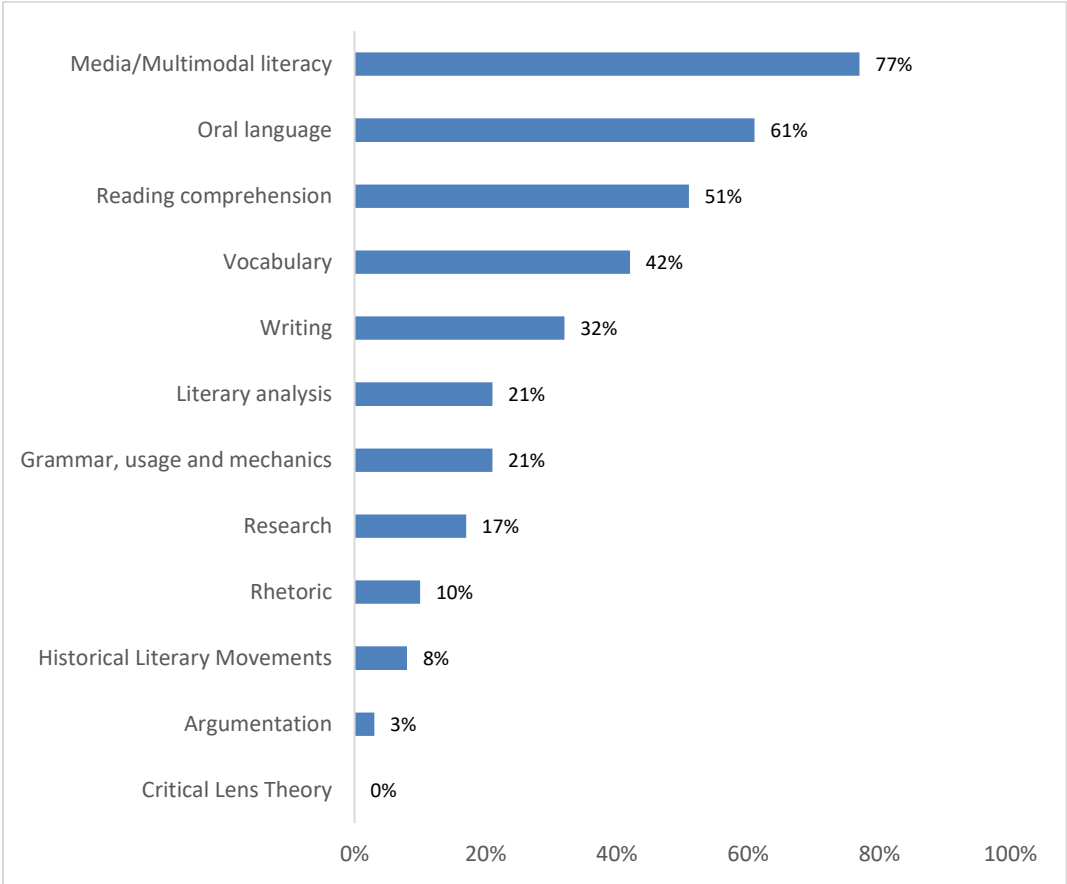


Figure 11: Percentage of Observed High School ELA Classes that Included Specified Instructional Topics



High School ELA Course Types and Delivery Models

High school ELA courses are offered through a variety of course types and delivery models, outlined below. Classes that are co-taught are general education classes taught by both an ELA teacher and a special education teacher.

Regular

- Regular
- Integrated/co-taught

Advanced

- Intensified
- Intensified/co-taught
- Advanced Placement
- International Baccalaureate
- Dual Enrollment (students earn high school and college credit for course taken at their high school)
- Dual Enrollment/co-taught

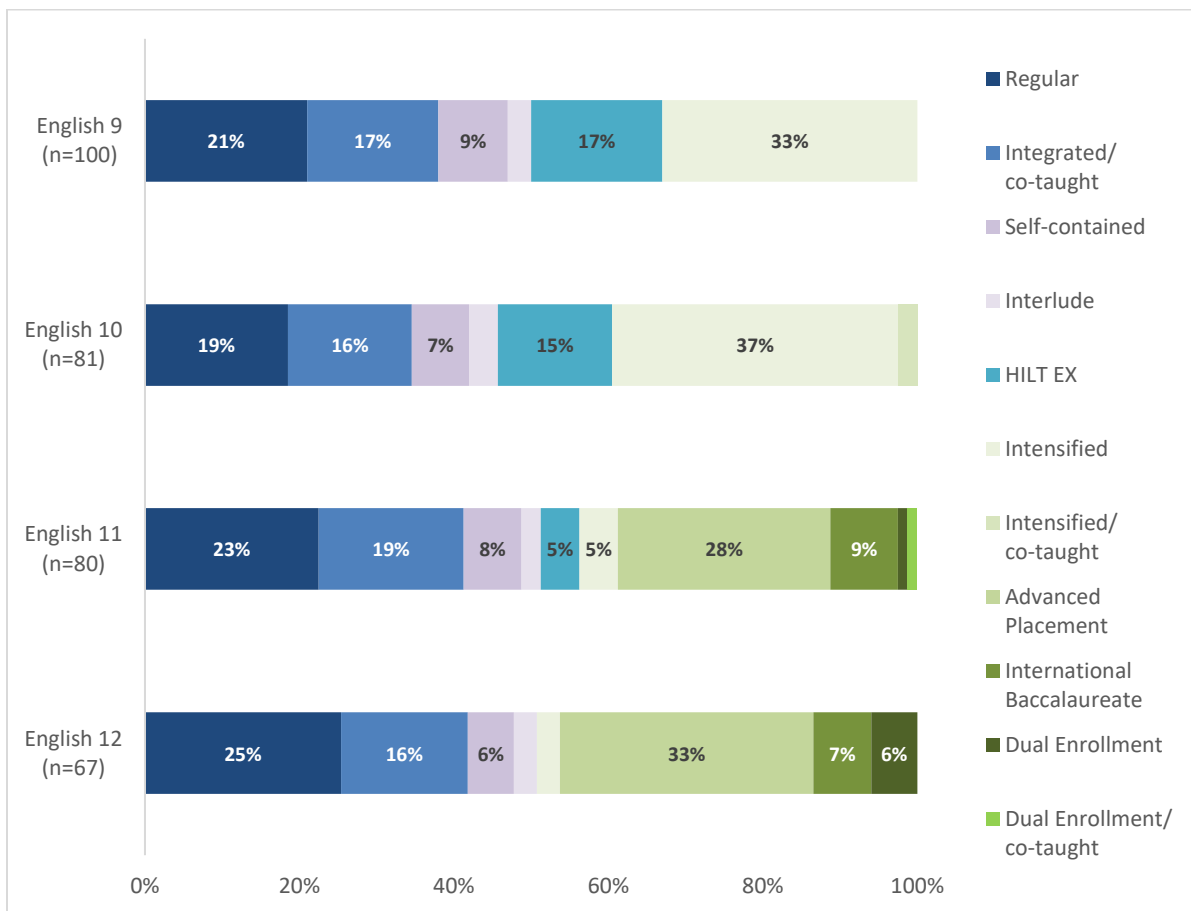
Other

- HILTEX (for English learners)
- Self-contained (for students with IEPs)
- Interlude (for students with IEPs)

Each year, the ELA Office collects information from high schools about how many ELA class sections fall into each category. In 2017-18, the proportion of high school ELA class sections offered that were **regular** or **advanced** was similar from 9th through 12th grade, with a slightly higher percentage of 9th grade sections at the regular level, and a slightly higher percentage of sections in grades 10-12 at the advanced level. Between 9%-12% of class sections were self-contained special education classes at each grade level. Between 16%-20% of class sections were co-taught with a special education teacher; this was almost exclusively in regular classes.

The percentage of class sections that are HILTEX classes decreases by grade level.

Figure 12: Course Types as Percentage of High School ELA Class Sections, 2017-18



Elementary Time of Instruction

Secondary ELA classes are scheduled during class periods and therefore are consistent across schools and grades in terms of allotted minutes of instruction. At the elementary level, each school develops a master schedule, and time of instruction varies. The APS ELA Office provides guidelines on the daily time of instruction for ELA at elementary schools. These guidelines are displayed in table 5 (grades K-2) and 6 (grades 3-5).

Table 5: ELA Office Recommended ELA Schedule (Grades K-2)

Time	Description	What the teacher is doing:	What the student is doing:
10-15 min	Whole group lesson: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read aloud • Vocabulary • Mini-lesson (reading or writing) • Shared reading 	Reading aloud; Discussing vocabulary; Conducting a mini-lesson; Facilitating shared reading	Completing activities or assignments that are focused on reading expectations (based upon grade level and students’ reading level). Will lead to small group and independent instruction/activities.
60-75 min	Reading Instruction (workshop components) Shared Reading Guided Reading Small group instruction (strategy groups) Conferencing with students	Small group lessons (fluency, comprehension, word study, and writing); Conferring with students as they read	Participating in small groups for reading; Reading independently; Writing and reflecting upon reading
30-45 min	Writing Instruction (workshop components)	Mini-lesson; Independent writing; Conferring; Sharing	Participating in mini-lesson: Planning, writing, conferring, sharing
15-30 min	Word Study (following a daily schedule) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons may be conducted as separate lessons (rotations) or as part of a whole class lesson on a spelling feature • May include modeling of phonemic or phonological awareness 	Conducting small group lessons based upon assessments and observations of students Growing Words	Daily sorting; Demonstrating knowledge of spelling patterns and sounds (or concept sorts); Games/activities

Table 6: ELA Office Recommended ELA Schedule (Grades 3-5)

Time	Description	What the teacher is doing:	What the student is doing:
10-15 min	Whole group lesson: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read aloud • Vocabulary • Mini-lesson (for reading or writing) • Shared reading 	Reading aloud; Discussing vocabulary; Conducting a mini-lesson; Facilitating shared reading	Completing activities or assignments that are focused on reading expectations (based upon grade level and students’ reading level). Will lead to small group and independent instruction/activities.
45-60 min	Reading Instruction (workshop components) Shared Reading Small group instruction (strategy groups) Conferencing with students	Small group lessons (fluency, comprehension, word study, and writing); Conferring with students as they read	Participating in small groups for reading; Reading independently; Writing and reflecting upon reading
30-45 min	Writing Instruction (workshop components)	Mini-lesson; Independent writing; Conferring; Sharing	Participating in mini-lesson: Planning, writing, conferring, sharing
15-30 min	Word Study (following a daily schedule) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons may be conducted as separate lessons (rotations) or as part of a whole class lesson on a spelling feature • May include modeling of phonemic or phonological awareness 	Conducting small group lessons based upon assessments and observations of students	Daily sorting; Demonstrating knowledge of spelling patterns and sounds (or concept sorts); Games/activities

The teacher survey administered for this evaluation included a question for **elementary classroom teachers** about the average number of minutes per week allocated for their **reading, writing, word study, and oral language** instruction at each grade level. Responses are displayed in figures 13 through 16, and are summarized to align with the above guidelines. Within each graph, light blue aligns with ELA Office guidelines and dark blue represents a range higher than the recommended range. Green aligns with average times that are lower than the recommended range.

Generally, teachers’ reported allotted time for instruction for each area falls below the ELA Office guidelines. The only topics taught within ELA Office time guidelines by more than 50% of teachers are **writing** in grades K-3 and 5; and **word study** in kindergarten and grade 1. Topics taught within ELA Office time guidelines by 20% of teachers or fewer include **reading** in grades K-2, **word study** in grade 5, and **oral language** in grades 1-5. (Note: Oral language is not included in the above guidelines; these guidelines were provided by the ELA Office for purposes of this analysis).

Figure 13: What is the average number of minutes per week allocated for your reading instruction in [grade]? (Elementary Classroom Teachers)

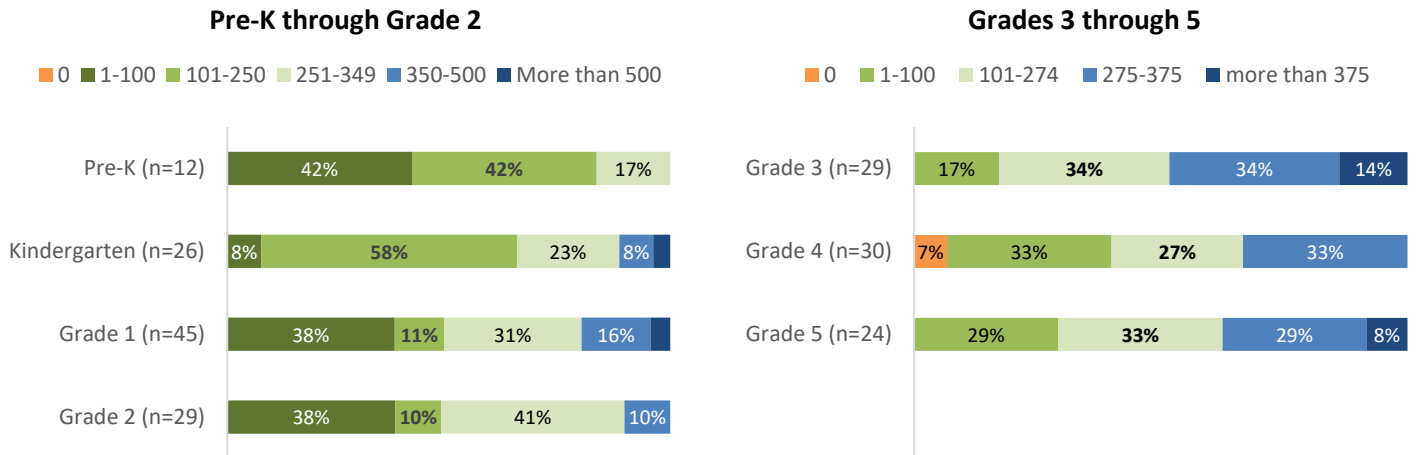


Figure 14: What is the average number of minutes per week allocated for your writing instruction in [grade]? (Elementary Classroom Teachers)

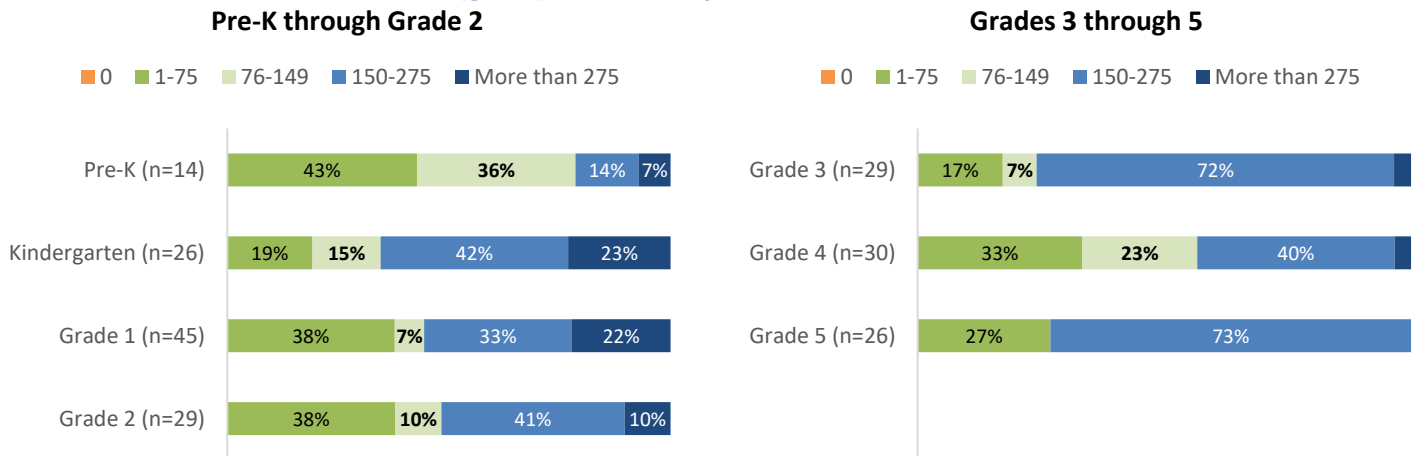


Figure 15: What is the average number of minutes per week allocated for your word study instruction in [grade]? (Elementary Classroom Teachers)

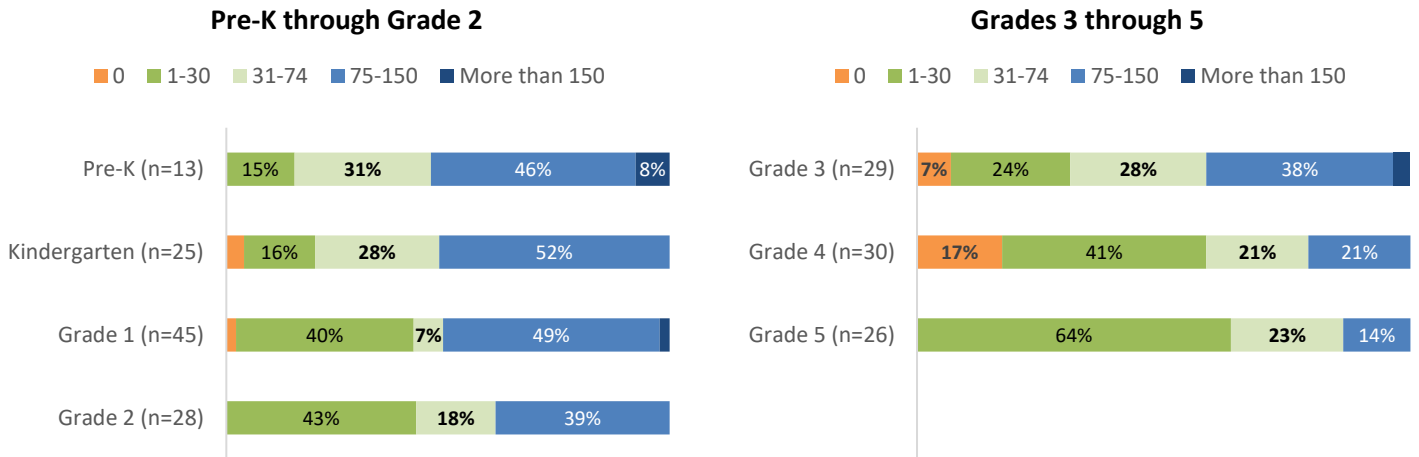
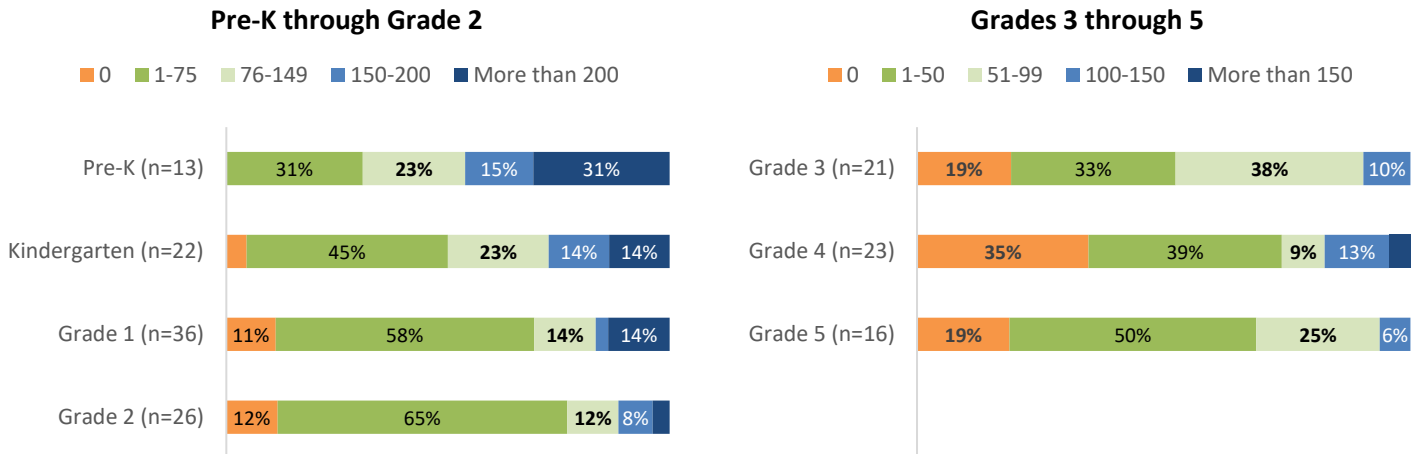


Figure 16: What is the average number of minutes per week allocated for your oral language instruction in [grade]? (Elementary Classroom Teachers)



Diversity in Literature and Relevance to Students' Lives

The teacher and student surveys both included questions about the diversity of authors and characters in literature used in ELA instruction, as well as the relevance of the literature to students' lives.

Responses were generally positive across levels and student groups, though secondary student responses were more aligned to teacher responses in the area of diversity, and less so in the area of relevance to their lives.

Diversity of Authors and Characters

The teacher and student surveys included the following questions:

- **Teachers:** The literature I teach in my English class is written by authors or has characters from different cultures, races, genders, sexual orientations, and/or religions.

- **Elementary students:** At school, we read stories about different cultures, races, and/or religions.
- **Secondary students:** The literature we read in my English and/or Reading class is written by authors or has characters from different cultures, races, genders, sexual orientations, and/or religions.

Overall responses for teachers and students at each level are displayed in figure 17 and student responses by student group are displayed in figures 18 through 20. More than three-quarters of respondents in each respondent group reported that they *strongly* or *somewhat agree* that literature used in ELA instruction reflects diverse characters or authors, and this high level of agreement remains consistent when comparing results across different student groups, with a few exceptions:

- **Black** students in middle school are the racial group least likely to agree that literature is diverse (72%, in comparison to 78%-80% among other racial/ethnic groups at that level).
- **English learners** in middle school are less likely than **non-English learners** to agree that literature is diverse (73% in comparison to 79%)
- Students who fall into the **other race/ethnicity** category in high school were less likely to agree that literature is diverse than students in other racial/ethnic groups (78% in comparison to 82%-86%)

Figure 17: Survey Responses: Diversity Reflected in Literature

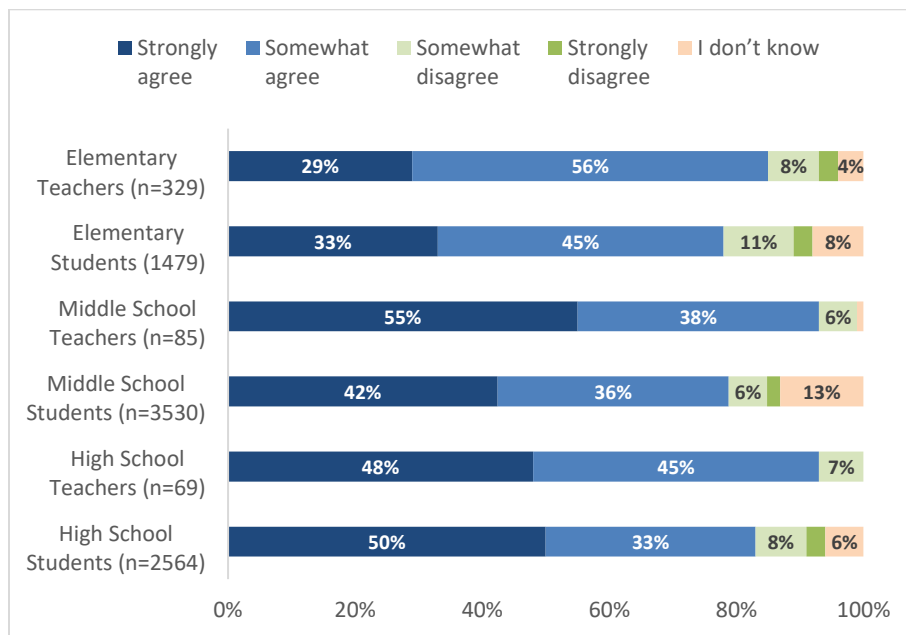


Figure 18: Survey Responses by Student Groups: Diversity Reflected in Literature (Elementary Students)

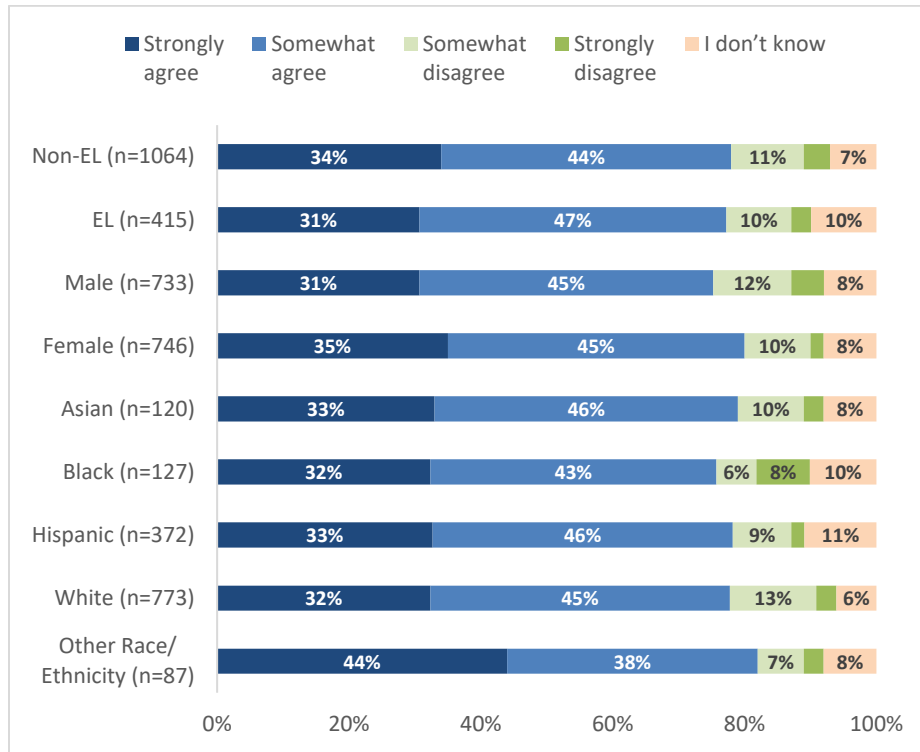


Figure 19: Survey Responses by Student Groups: Diversity Reflected in Literature (Middle School Students)

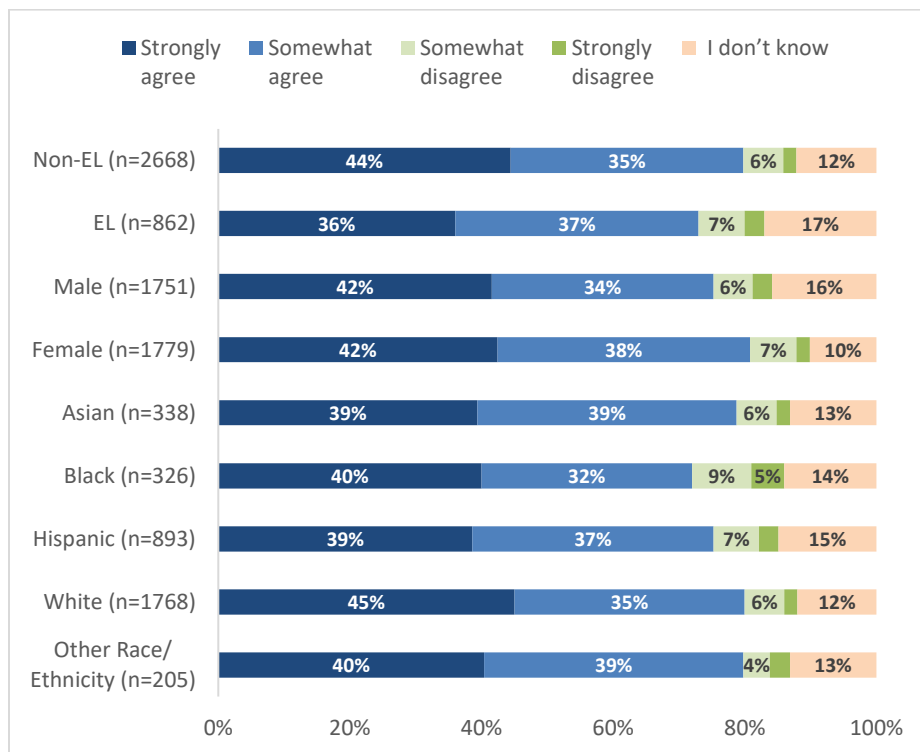
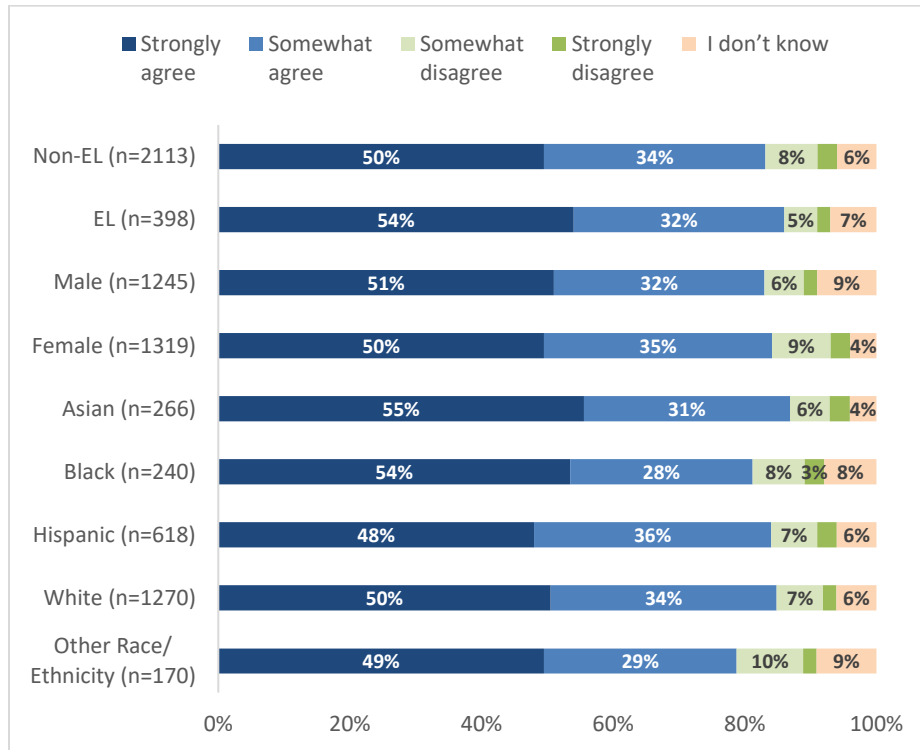


Figure 20: Survey Responses by Student Groups: Diversity Reflected in Literature (High School Students)



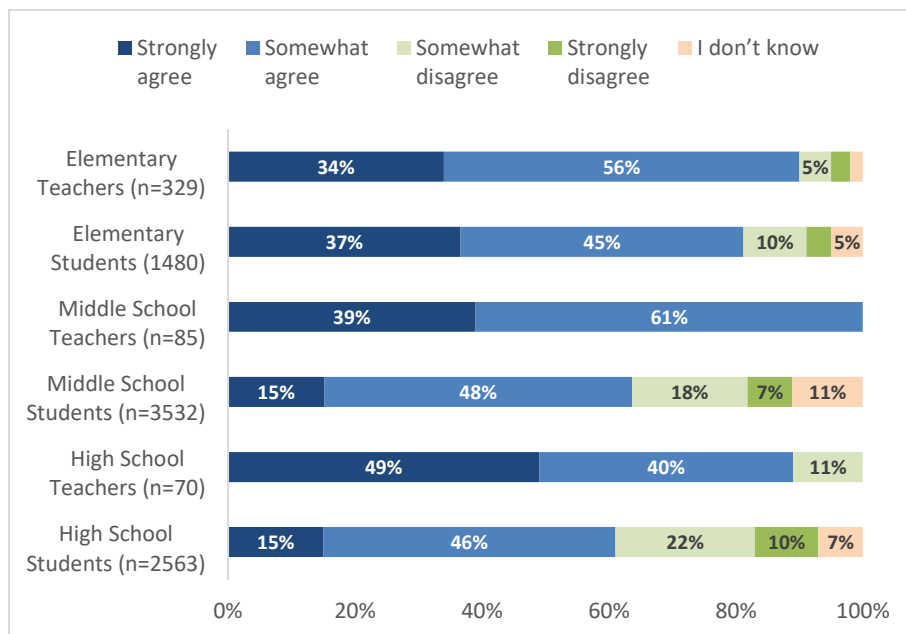
Relevance of Literature to Students' Lives

The teacher and student surveys included the following questions:

- **Elementary Teachers:** Students in my English classes can relate the literature used in class to their own lives.
- **Secondary Teachers:** Students in my English/reading classes can relate the literature used in class to their own lives.
- **Elementary Students:** At school, we read stories that have characters, events, and places that are like my own life or experiences.
- **Secondary Students:** We read literature in my English and/or Reading class that is relevant to my own life.

Overall responses for teachers and students at each level are displayed in figure 21 and student responses by student group are displayed in figures 22 through 24. Between 60%-100% of respondents reported that they *strongly* or *somewhat agree* with these statements. Secondary students were considerably less likely to express agreement than teachers. While 100% of middle school teachers agreed with this statement, just 63% of middle school students did. At the high school level, 89% of teachers agreed while 61% of students did.

Figure 21: Survey Responses: Relevance of Literature to Students' Lives



As with the diversity question, comparing results across different student groups reveals a level of consistency across groups, though there are some differences:

- **Girls** at all levels are more likely than **boys** to agree that literature reflects their own life or experiences. The difference ranges from five percentage points at the high school level to eight at the elementary and middle school levels.
- At the elementary level, **black** students and students who fall into the **other race/ethnicity** category are less likely than other racial/ethnic groups to agree (78% and 77% in comparison to 82%-83%)
- At the middle school level, **white** and **Asian** students are the racial/ethnic groups most likely to agree that literature reflects their own life (65%, 66%, in comparison to 57%-60%), while at the high school level, white students are the least likely to agree (58% in comparison to 62%-67%)
- While **English learners** in middle school (59%) are less likely than **non-English learners** (65%) to agree that literature reflects their own life, they are more likely than non-English learners to feel this way at the high school level (71% in comparison to 60%).

Figure 22: Survey Responses by Student Groups: Relevance of Literature to Students' Lives (Elementary Students)

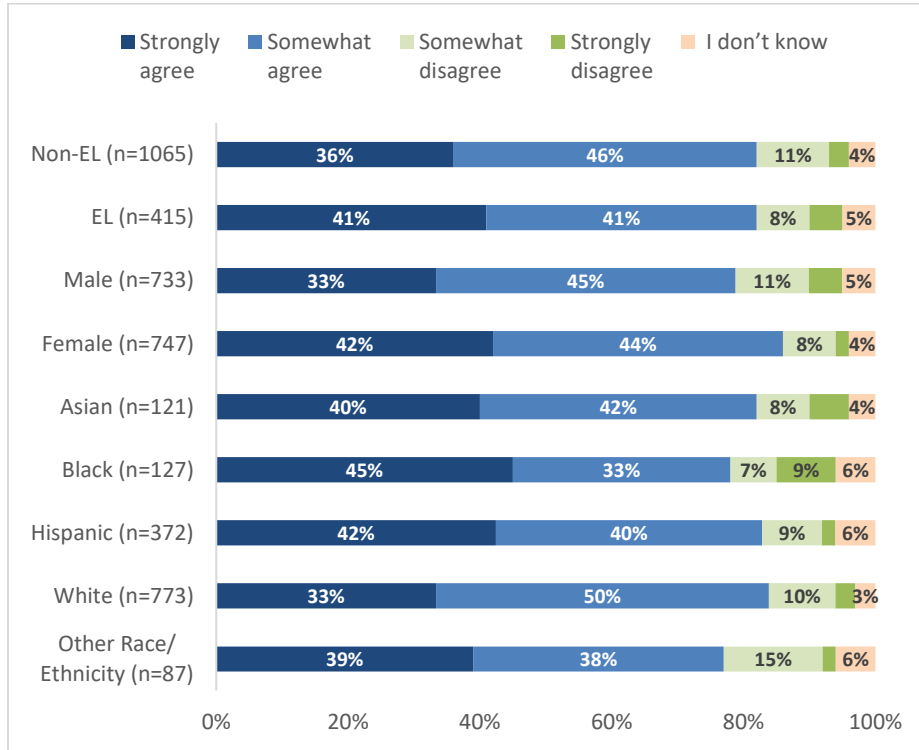


Figure 23: Survey Responses by Student Groups: Relevance of Literature to Students' Lives (Middle School Students)

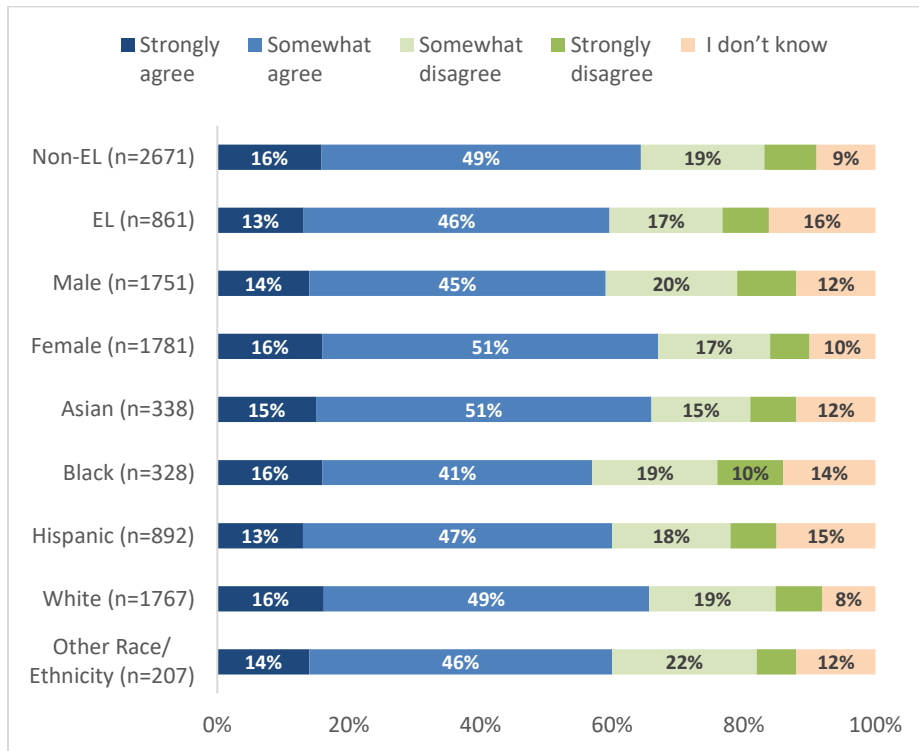
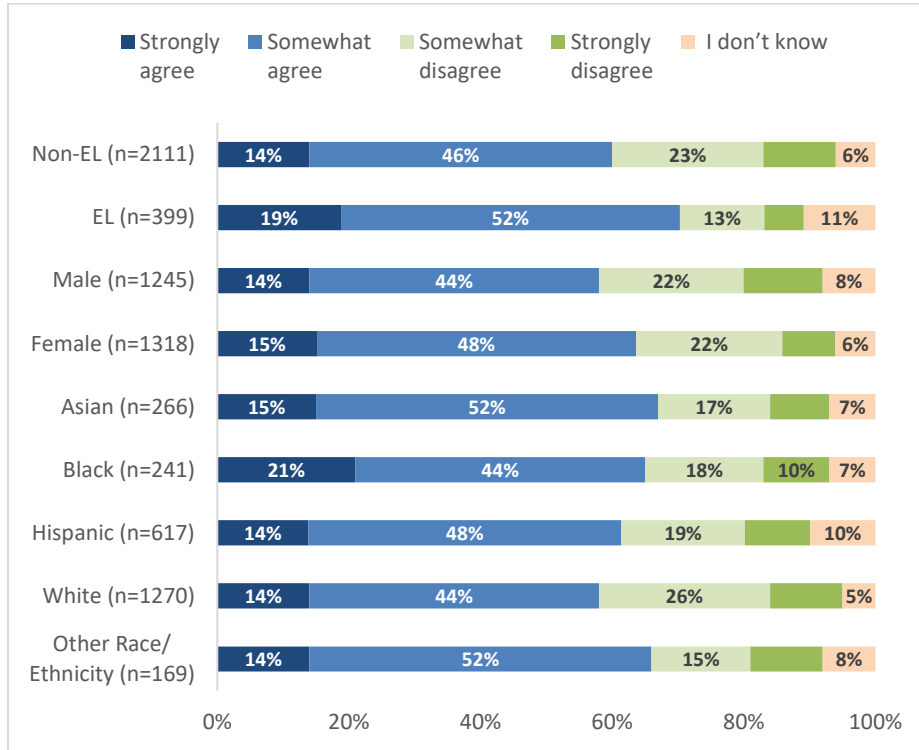


Figure 24: Survey Responses by Student Groups: Relevance of Literature to Students' Lives (High School Students)



Use of Data in Teacher Planning

Unsurprisingly, teachers at all levels refer most frequently to **student work** and **formative assessments other than Power School** to plan their ELA instruction to target the needs of diverse learners (figures 25 through 27). These activities occur at all grade levels and occur more frequently than **summative assessments, formative assessments from Power school, and universal screeners**. They are also the activities most directly under teachers' own control.

Formative assessments from Power School are administered quarterly in grades 3-5 in quarters 1-3, with students being tested using the Standards of Learning during the 4th quarter. At the middle school level, the only required administration is during the third quarter, and at the high school level, the only grade level to participate is 11th grade (the end of course SOL year).

Figure 25: How frequently do you refer to the following types of data to plan your ELA instruction to target the needs of diverse learners? (Elementary Teachers, n=311)

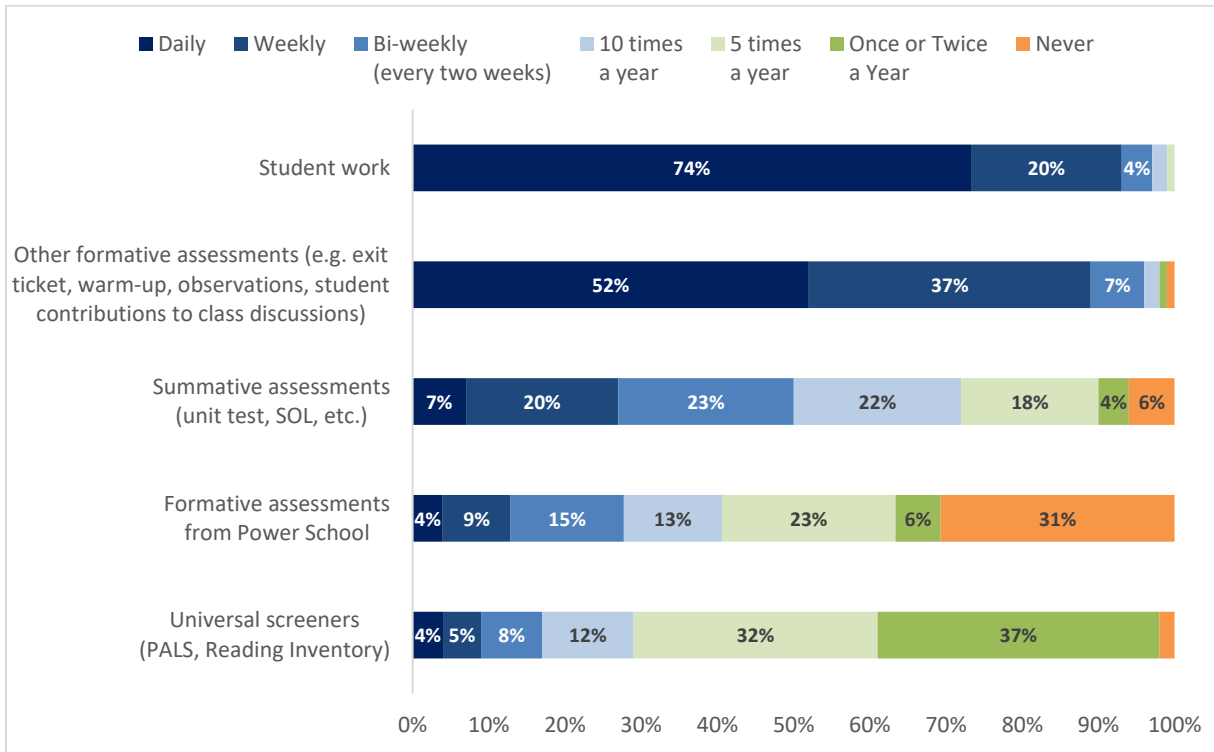


Figure 26: How frequently do you refer to the following types of data to plan your ELA instruction to target the needs of diverse learners? (Middle School Teachers, n=82)

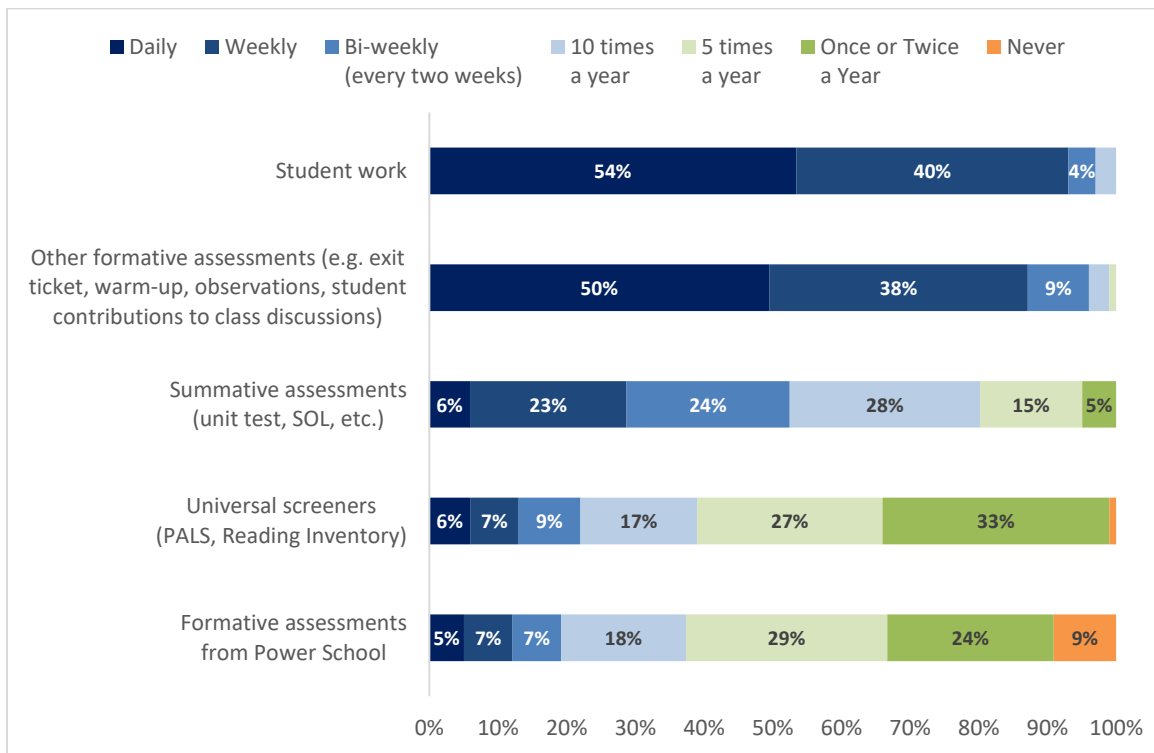
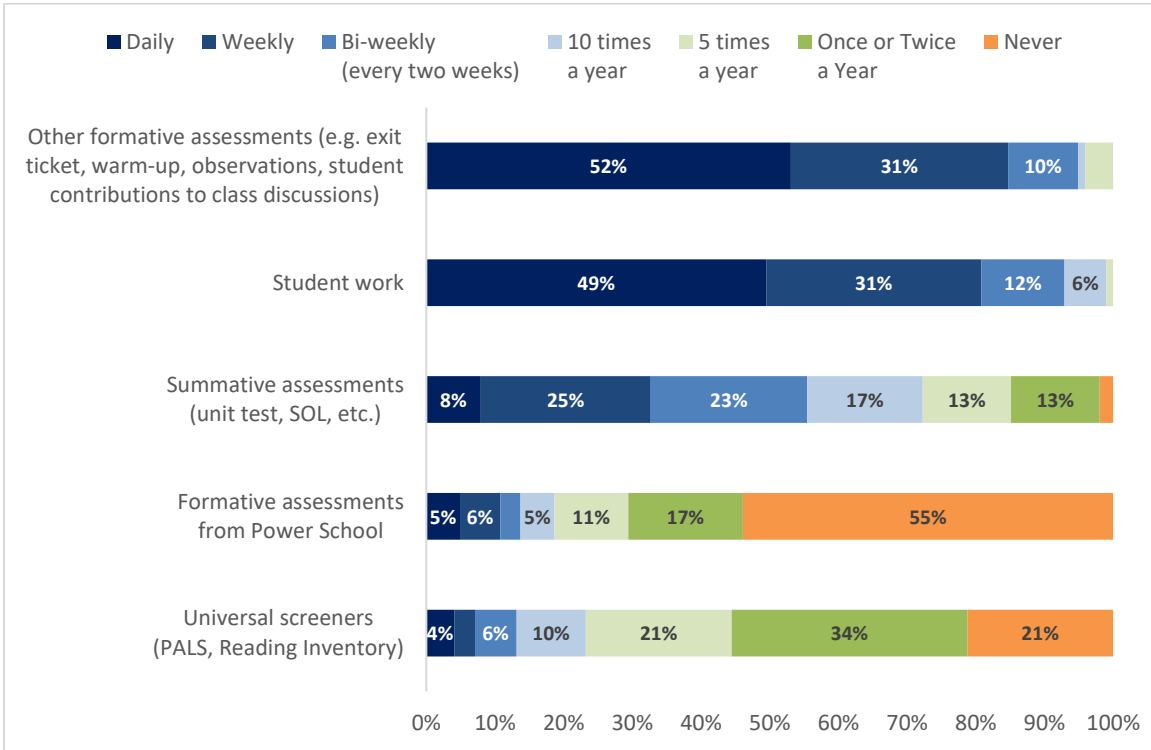


Figure 27: How frequently do you refer to the following types of data to plan your ELA instruction to target the needs of diverse learners? (High School Teachers, n=67)



Teachers who reported referring to a specific type of data with any frequency other than *never* were also asked what actions they were likely to take based on their review of that data. Their responses are displayed in figures 28 through 30. Across levels, more than three-quarters of teachers reported using most of the data sources to **adjust instruction** and to **arrange interventions for students**. Smaller percentages of teachers reported taking these actions based on **universal screeners**, and a smaller percentage of high school teachers reported taking these actions based on **formative assessments from Power School**.

Teachers at the elementary level were generally the most likely to report using any data source to **put students into groups based on needs**. The action least likely to be taken at any level was to **arrange an extension for a student**. Between 53%-75% of elementary teachers reported doing this with various data sources, along with 35%-78% of middle school teachers, and 38%-77% of high school teachers.

Figure 28: What actions are you likely to take based on your review of...? Select all that apply. (Elementary teachers who use data type more than never)

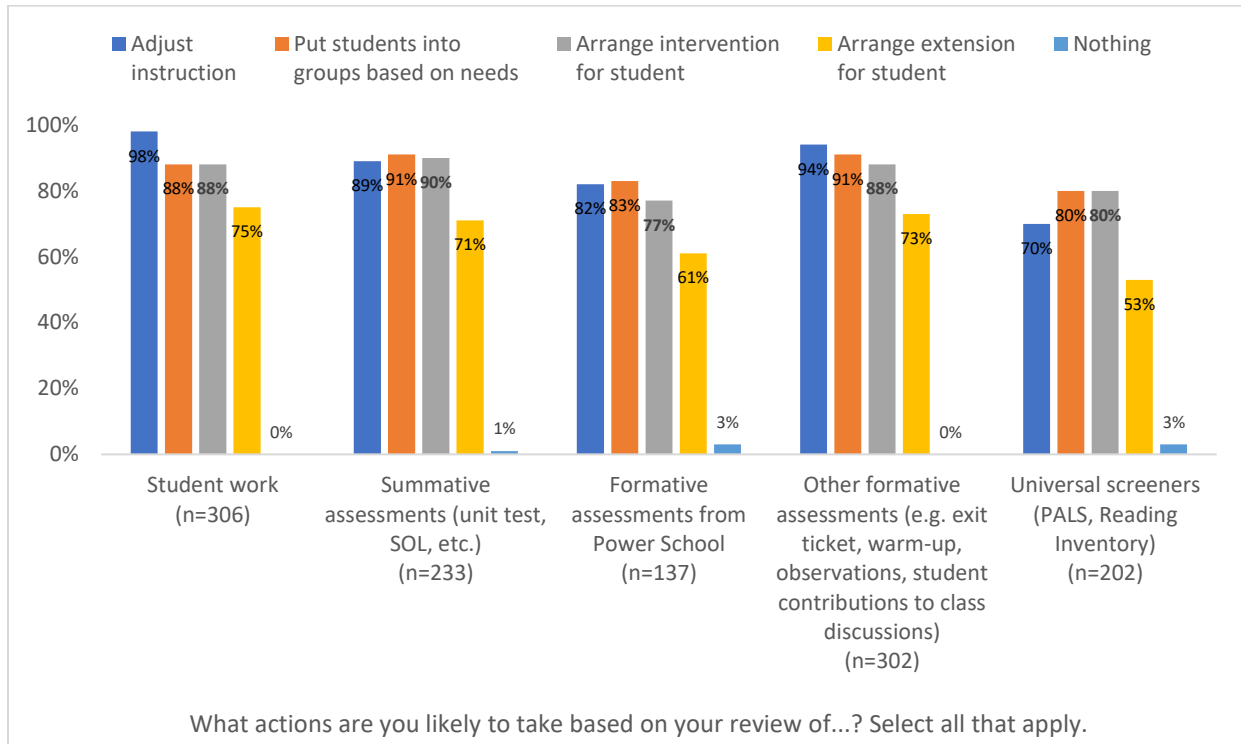


Figure 29: What actions are you likely to take based on your review of...? Select all that apply. (Middle school teachers who use data type more than never)

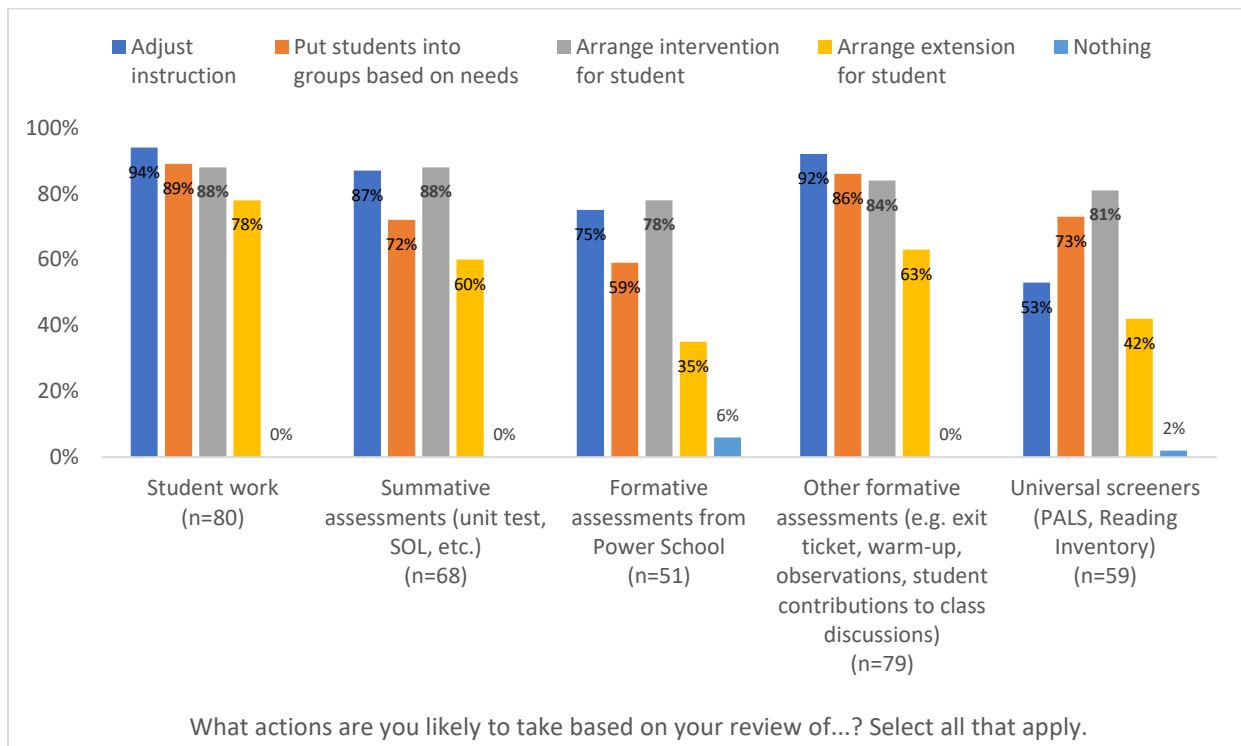
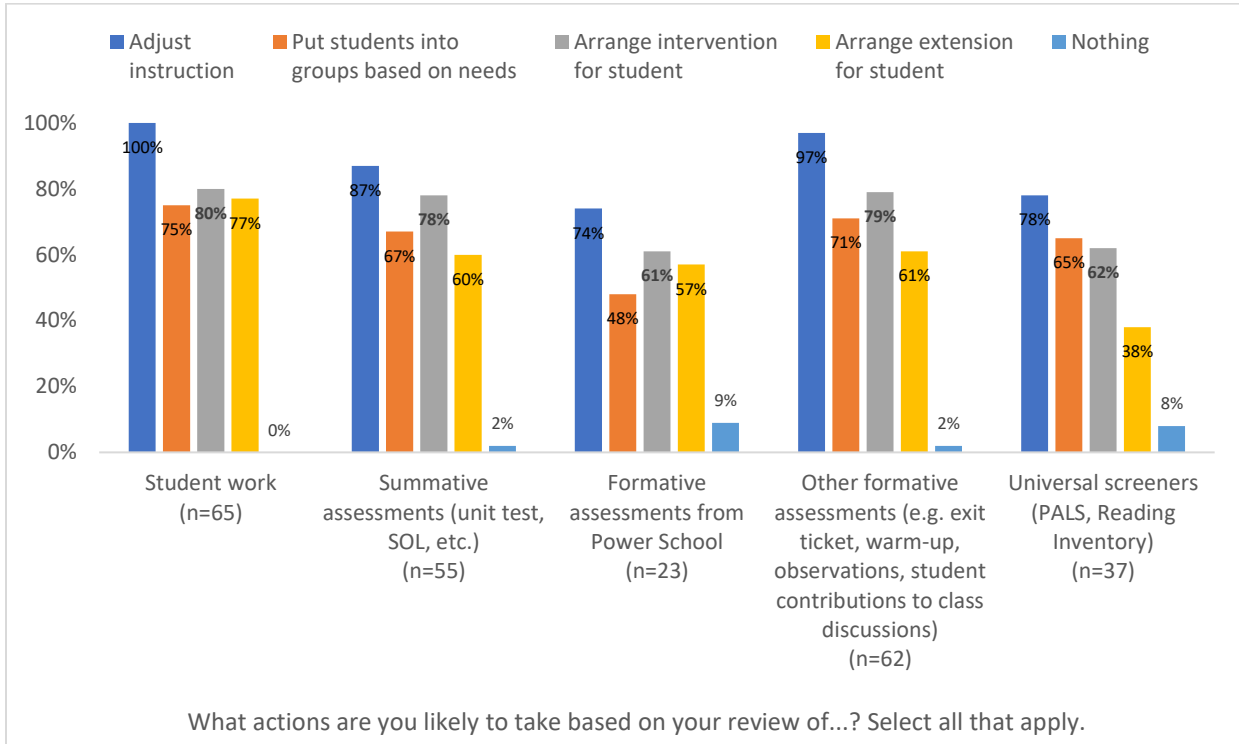


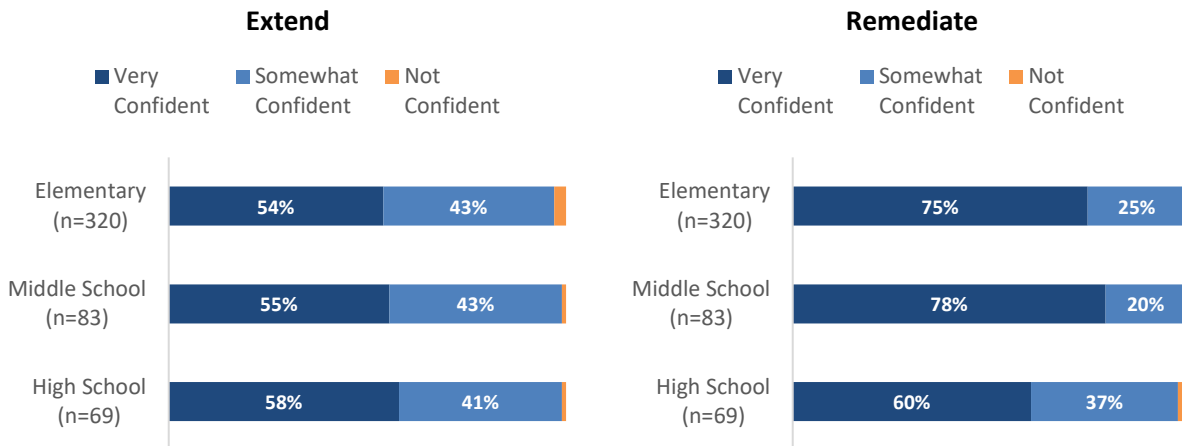
Figure 30: What actions are you likely to take based on your review of...? Select all that apply. (High school teachers who use data type more than never)



Differentiation

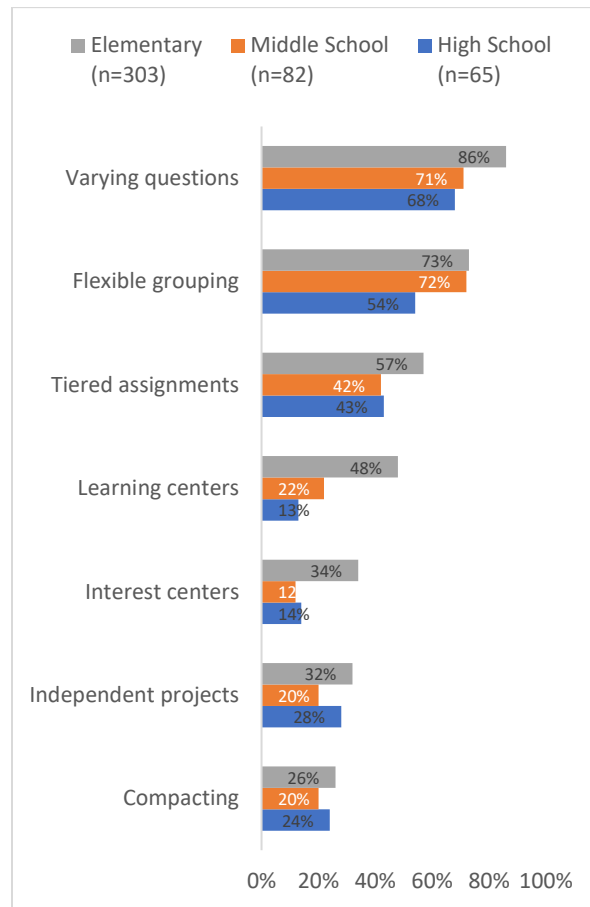
At the elementary and middle school levels, ELA teachers are more confident about their ability to **remediate** ELA/reading content than their ability to **extend** it (figure 31). While very few teachers at any level reported that they were not confident at all, around three-quarters of elementary and middle school teachers indicated that they are *very confident* when it comes to remediation, in comparison to just over half who selected *very confident* for extension. At the high school level, teacher responses break down similarly for both types of differentiation – around 60% selecting *very confident*.

Figure 31: How confident are you in your ability to effectively...ELA/reading content if needed? (Teachers)



Teachers at all levels were most likely to report that they frequently use **varying questions** and **flexible grouping** to differentiate instruction for students who need **extra challenge**. **Compacting** was both one of the most rarely employed strategies as well as the strategy teachers were most likely to be unfamiliar with. Almost half of elementary teachers and around a third of middle and high school teachers indicated that they were not familiar with this strategy.

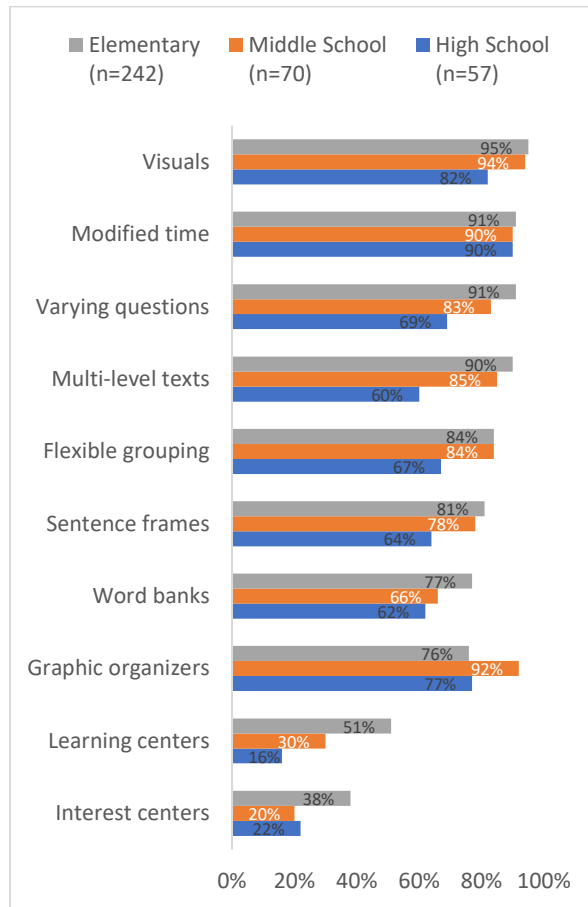
Figure 32: Percentage Responding Daily or Weekly: How often do you use the following strategies to differentiate instruction for students in your classroom who need extra challenge? (Teachers)



English Learners

Teachers who indicated that they have English learners in their ELA classes were asked a follow-up question about how frequently they use specified strategies to support ELA instruction for English learners. Across levels, teachers were highly likely to report that they use **visuals** and **modified time** either *daily* or *weekly*. Elementary and middle school teachers also reported frequent use of **sentence frames**, **flexible grouping**, **multi-level texts**, and **varying questions**. Generally, high school teachers were less likely than elementary or middle school teachers to report frequent use of any strategy.

Figure 33: Percentage Responding Daily or Weekly: How frequently do you use the following tools to support ELA instruction for English learners? (Teachers who have English learners in their English/reading classes)



The student survey also addressed support for English learners. Elementary English learners, and secondary English learners who were enrolled in a general education ELA class, were asked if their teacher helped them with English proficiency. Responses for elementary and middle school students are displayed in figures 34 and 35. High school responses are not included due to unclear data on WIDA levels.

At both the elementary and middle school levels, a majority of students selected some combination of *always*, *most of the time*, or *I don't need help*, and as expected, the proportion of students indicating they don't need help is higher at higher WIDA levels.

Figure 34: Does your teacher help you with English proficiency during your Reading/Writing time? English proficiency means understanding what English words mean, or how to say or write something in English. (Elementary English Learners)

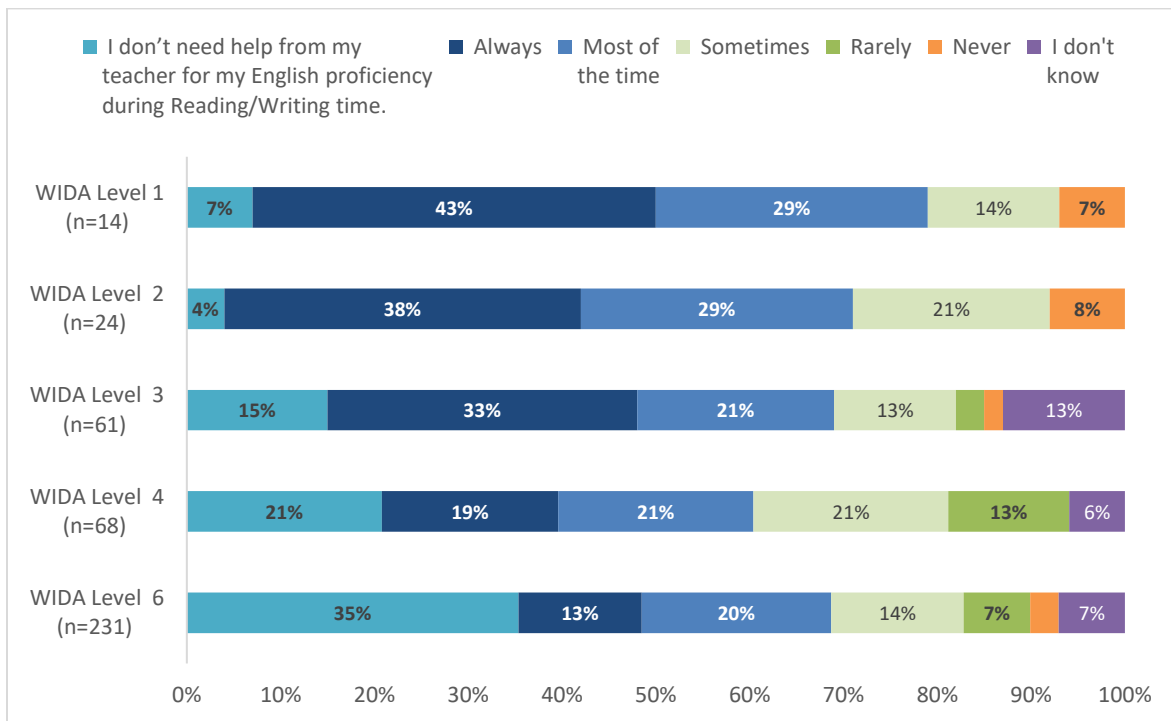
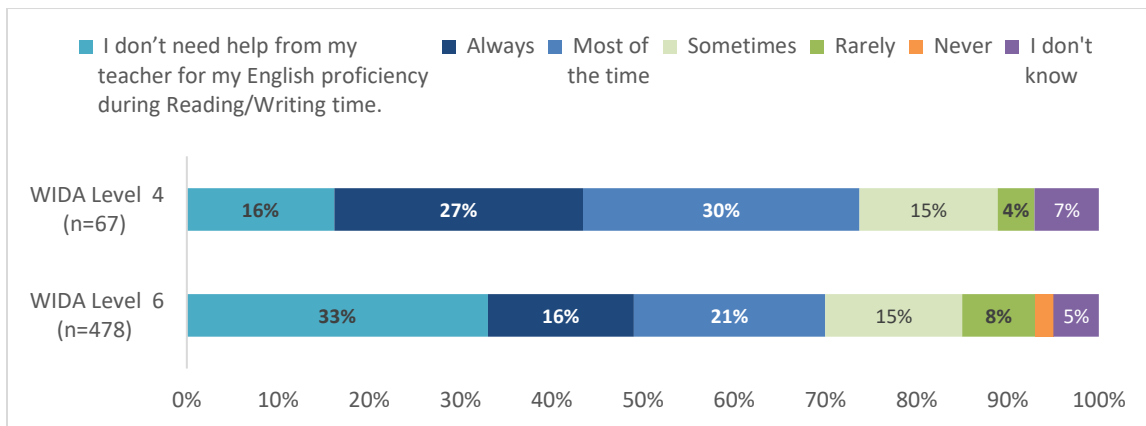


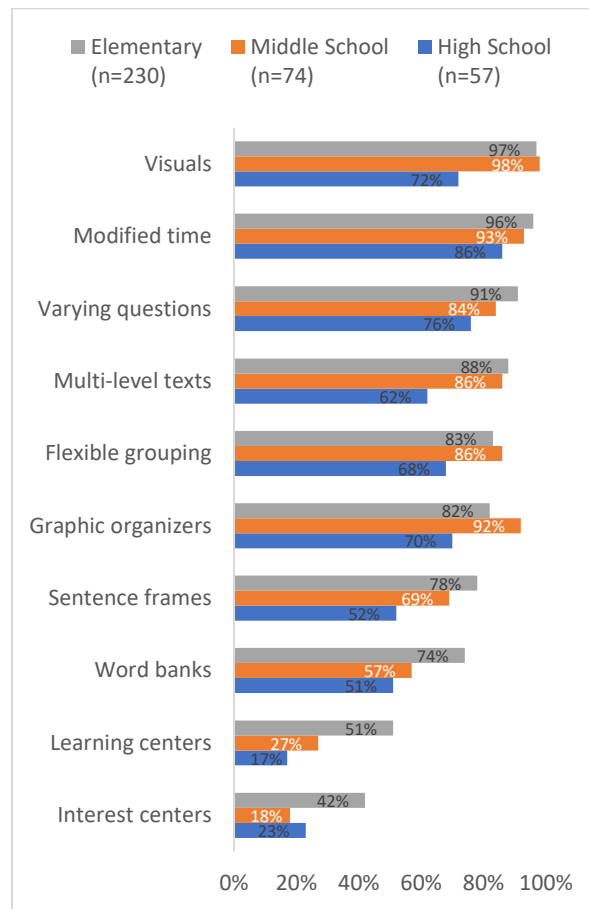
Figure 35: Does your English and/or Reading teacher help you with English proficiency? English proficiency means understanding what English words mean, or how to say or write something in English. (Middle School English Learners Enrolled in General Education ELA Class)



Students with Disabilities

Teachers who indicated that they have students with disabilities in their ELA classes were asked a follow-up question about how frequently they use specified strategies to support ELA instruction for students with disabilities. Responses were similar to responses about English learners, with **visuals**, **modified time**, and **varying questions** cited as three of the most frequently used strategies across levels. As with English learners, high school teachers were generally the least likely to report frequent use of any strategy.

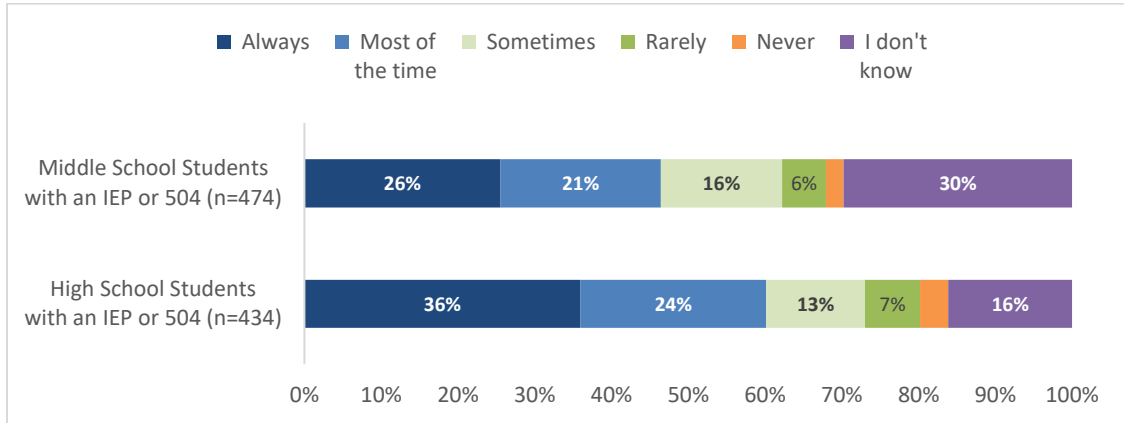
Figure 36: Percentage Responding Daily or Weekly: How frequently do you use the following tools to support ELA instruction for students with disabilities? (Teachers who have students with disabilities in their English/reading classes)



The student survey also addressed support for students with disabilities at the secondary level. Similar to the survey question for English learners, students with disabilities were given the answer option, “I don’t need support from my English and/or Reading teacher for my IEP or 504 plan needs.” Because the range of disabilities students may have included disabilities unrelated to a student’s performance in an ELA class, students who selected this response were removed from this analysis.

In comparison to English learners, a smaller proportion of students with disabilities indicated their English or Reading teacher supports their IEP or 504 plan needs *always* or *most of the time*, and a larger proportion selected *I don’t know*.

Figure 37: Does your English and/or Reading teacher support your IEP or 504 plan needs? (Secondary Students with Disabilities)



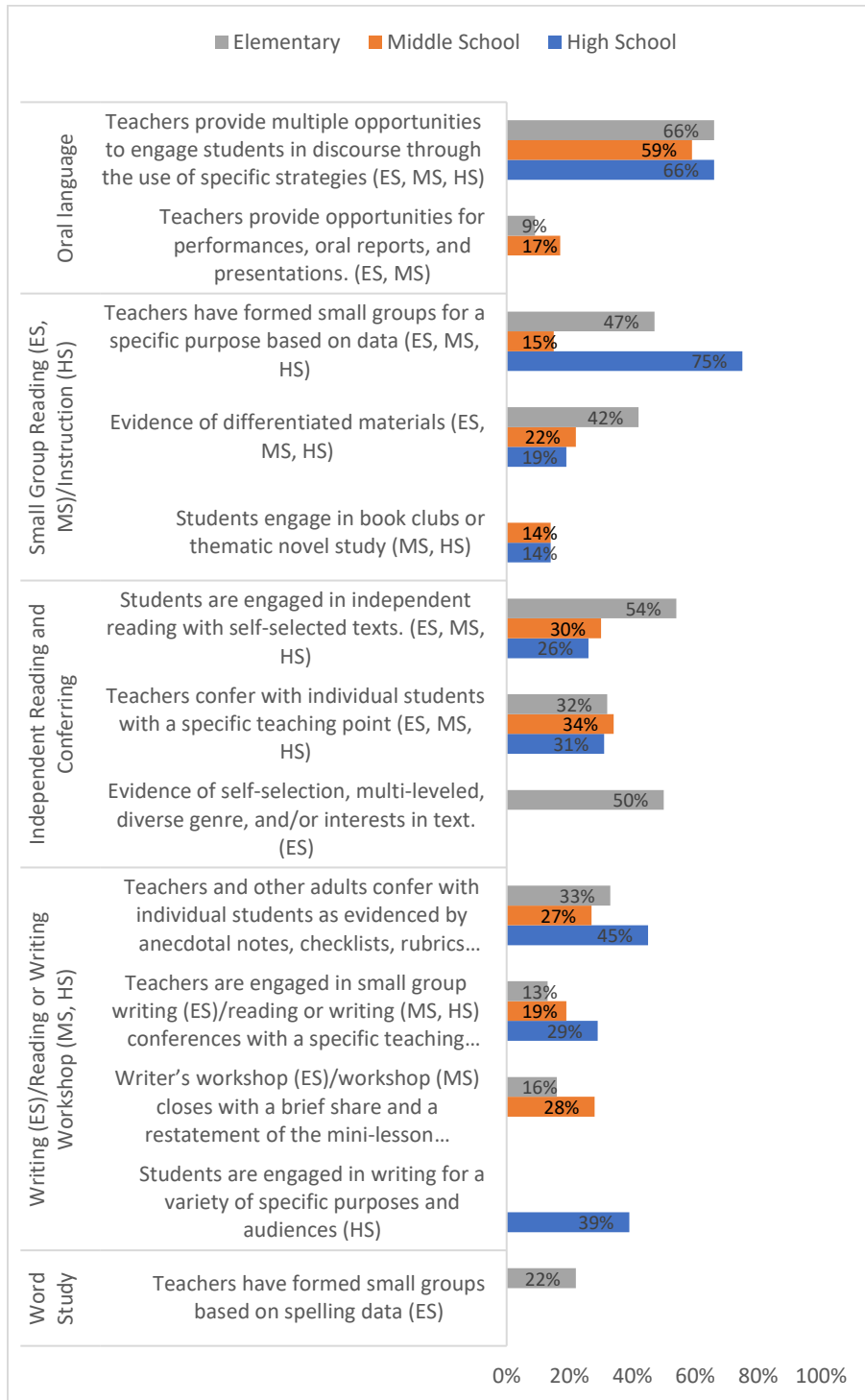
Observed Differentiation Practices

Classroom observations provide a glimpse into the extent to which differentiation is occurring in ELA classrooms. Observations are explored fully above in the ELA Observation Tools section on page 3. In this section, practices specific to differentiation are highlighted.

Across levels, more than half of observations noted that **teachers provide multiple opportunities to engage students in discourse through the use of specific strategies** (oral language). Other differentiation strategies that were observed in at least half of observed classrooms include:

- **Independent Reading and Confering:** Evidence of self-selection, multi-leveled, diverse genre, and/or interests in text. (50% of elementary observations)
- **Independent Reading and Confering:** Students are engaged in independent reading with self-selected texts. (54% of elementary observations)
- **Small Group Instruction:** Teachers have formed small groups for a specific purpose based on data (75% of high school observations)

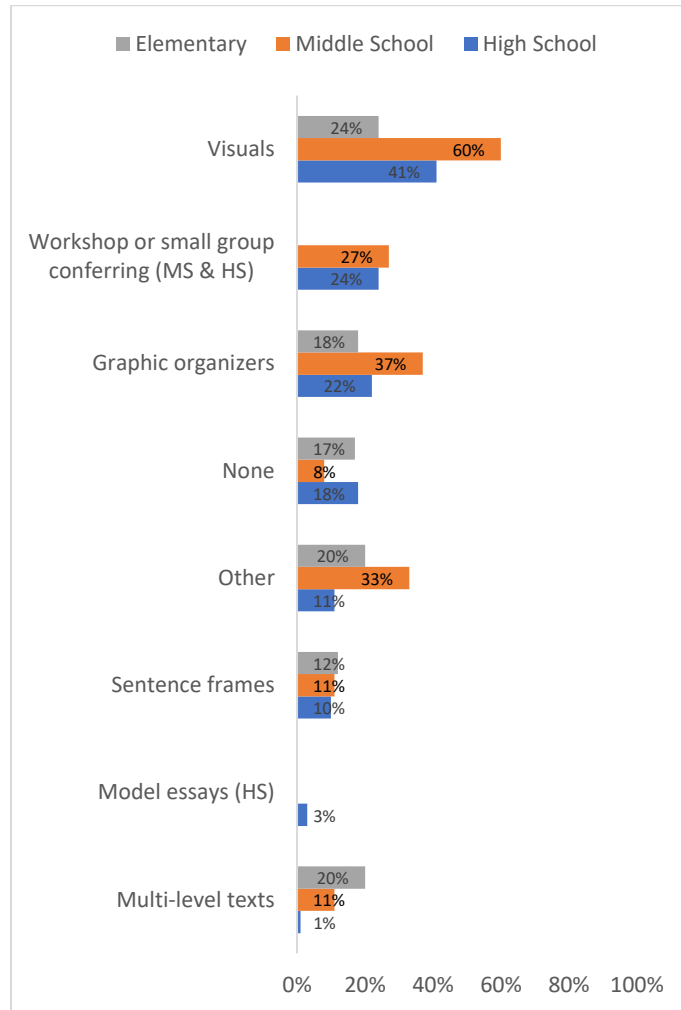
Figure 38: Percentage of Observations that Noted Practices Related to Differentiation



Observers noted any scaffolds for English learners, students with disabilities, and/or struggling students in the classes they observed. **Visuals** were the most observed scaffold at each level, though the percentage of observations varied substantially across levels and was least common at the elementary level (24% of observations). While **multi-level texts** were observed in 20% of elementary observations,

they were seen in just 11% of middle school observations and 1% of high school observations. Generally, observers at the **middle school** level were the most likely to note the use of scaffolds.

Figure 39: ELA Classrooms Observed to Have Specific Scaffolds to support English learners, Students with Disabilities, and/or Struggling Students



Student Engagement

Student survey responses indicate high levels of student engagement in ELA courses. More than 90% of elementary students said that they were *really* or *sort of excited* to read and write in class, while around three-quarters of middle and high school students said that they talk about ideas from their English and/or reading class *frequently, sometimes, or once in while* when they are not in school.

Figure 40: How excited are you to read and write in class? (Elementary Students)

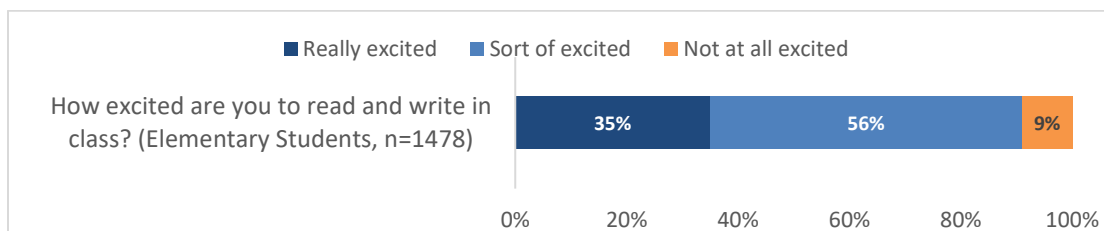
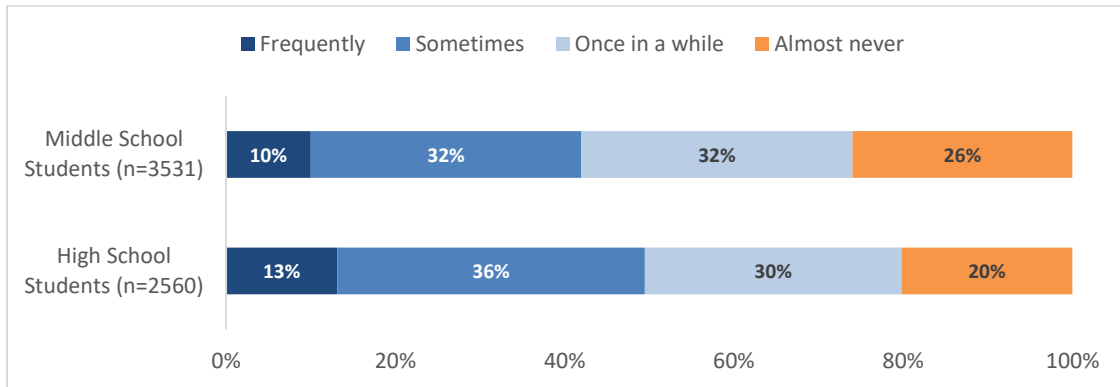


Figure 41: When you are not in school, how often do you talk about ideas from your English and/or Reading class? (Secondary Students)

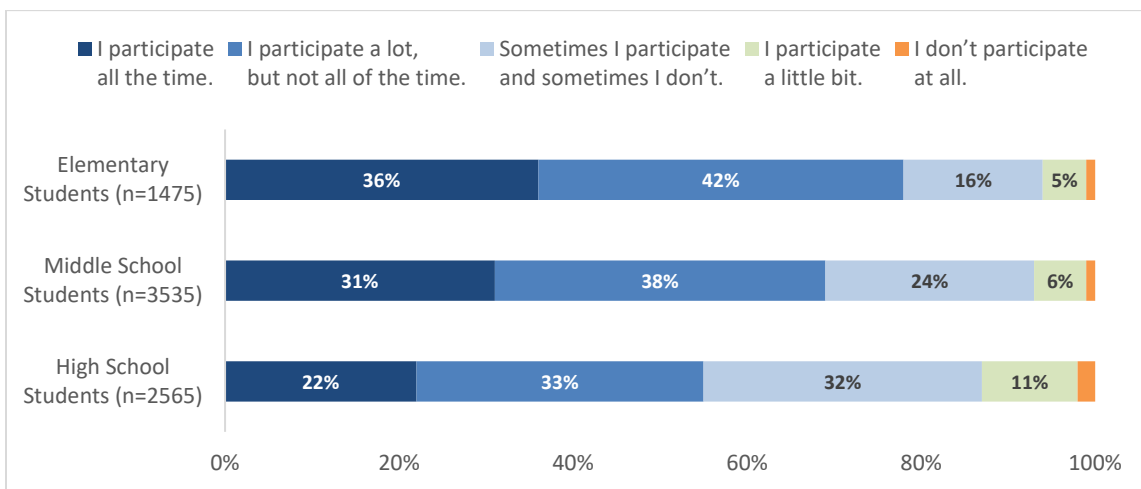


Students at each level were asked parallel questions about how frequently they participate in ELA instruction:

- **Elementary Students:** When you are reading and writing, how much do you participate in class?
- **Secondary Students:** In your English and/or Reading class, how much do you participate in class?

While the percentage of students reporting that they participate *all the time* or *a lot* declines by grade level, the overall percentage of students reporting high rates of participation (all the time, a lot, or sometimes) remains high from elementary to high school (figure 42).

Figure 42: Student Participation in ELA Instruction (Students, All Levels)

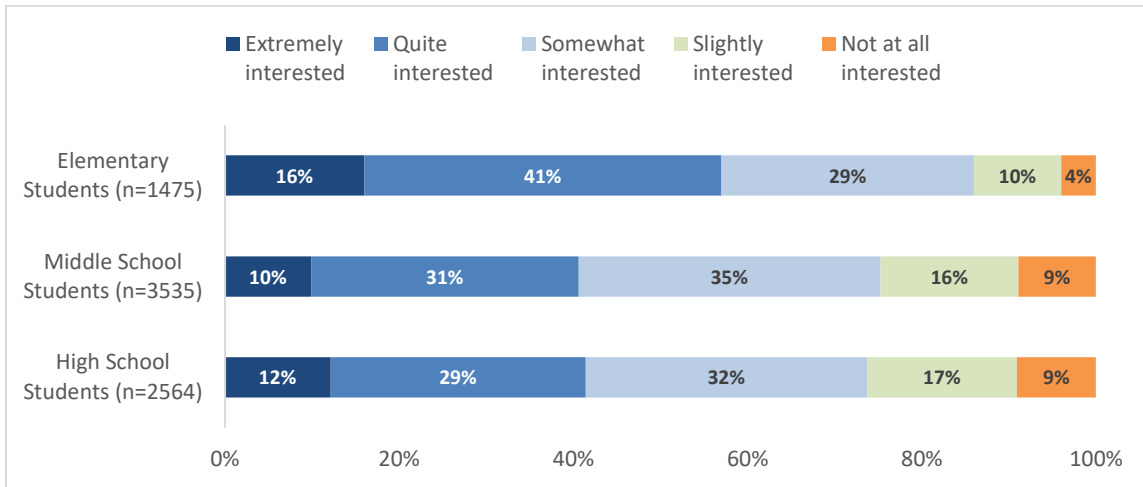


Students were asked parallel questions about how interested they were in their ELA classes:

- **Elementary Students:** Overall, how interested are you in language arts, and reading and writing?
- **Secondary Students:** Overall, how interested are you in your English and/or Reading class?

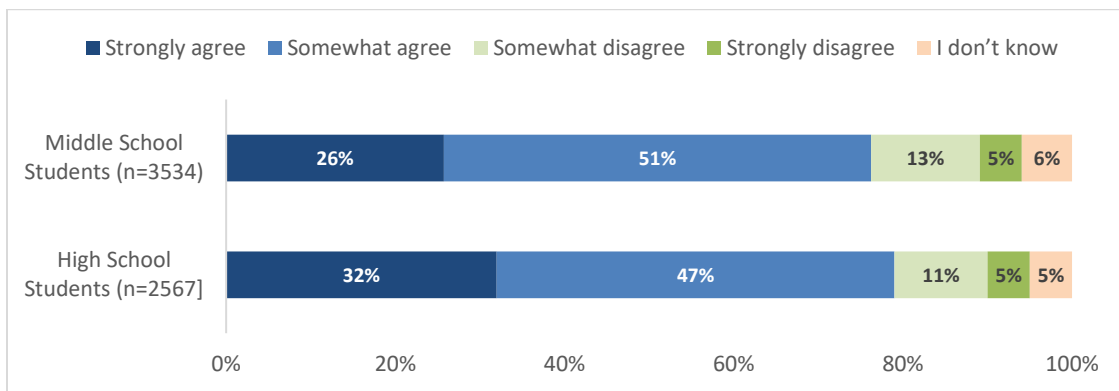
Again, there is a decline from elementary to secondary, but the percentage of students reporting they are *extremely, quite, or somewhat interested* is high across levels (figure 43).

Figure 43: Student Interest in ELA Instruction (Students, All Levels)



Most secondary students expressed agreement with the statement, “**My English and/or Reading class challenges me to think at a higher level or solve problems creatively.**”

Figure 44: My English and/or Reading class challenges me to think at a higher level or solve problems creatively. (Secondary Students)



Student Access and Participation

Enrollment in Advanced ELA Coursework

Representation of student groups in advanced high school ELA coursework has seen little change between 2015-16 and 2017-18. During that time period, the following student groups were underrepresented in advanced coursework:

- Male students, by 11-12 percentage points
- Economically disadvantaged students, by 16-18 percentage points
- Students with disabilities, by 12-13 percentage points
- Hispanic students, by 17-18 percentage points

Black students were underrepresented at a lower rate, between 3 to 4 percentage points over the past three years. Asian student enrollment in advanced coursework matched the overall high school student enrollment for Asian students. Figures 45 and 46 show representation of student groups in advanced ELA coursework in 2017-18. Enrollment for 2015-16 and 2016-17 are included in **Appendix C2**.

Figure 45: Representation of Student Demographic Groups in Advanced High School ELA Coursework, 2017-18

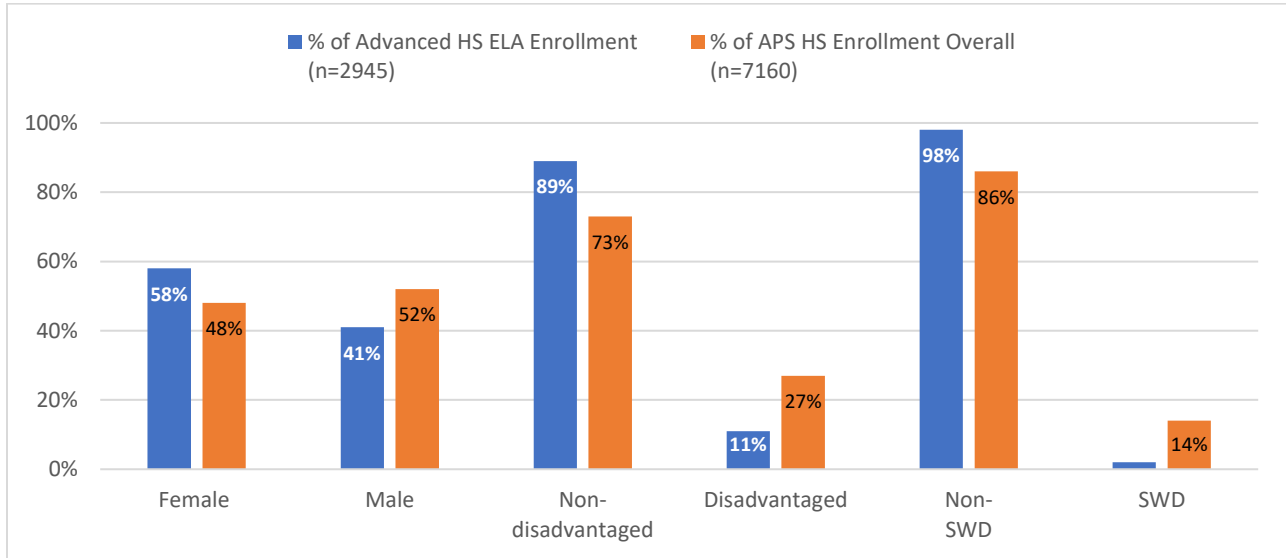
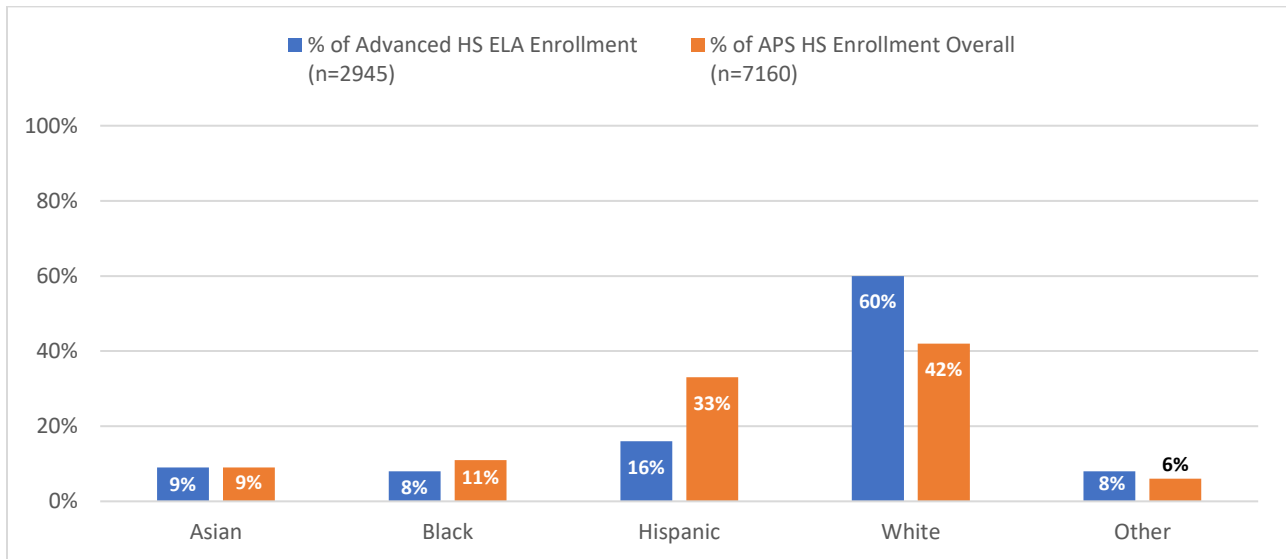


Figure 46: Representation of Student Racial/Ethnic Groups in Advanced High School ELA Coursework, 2017-18



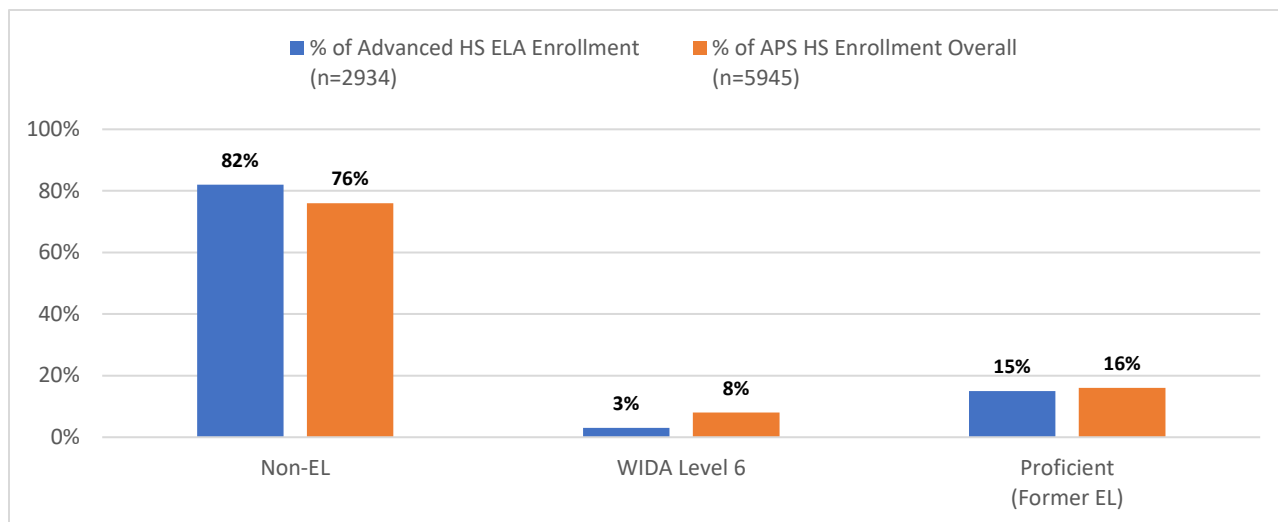
Enrollment of English Learners in Advanced ELA Coursework

A separate analysis examined representation of English learners in advanced ELA coursework. Because English learners take sheltered English classes when they are at beginning and intermediate levels of proficiency (HILT and HILTEX classes), they have the opportunity to participate in advanced ELA coursework only after they have reached WIDA level 5 (prior to 2017-18) or 6 (starting in 2017-18)².

² English learners who have opted out of services typically enroll in general education ELA courses and may enroll in advanced coursework.

This analysis includes enrollment data for English learners at these high ELP levels, as well as former English learners, classified as proficient. Over the past three years, former English learners have been enrolled in advanced ELA coursework at rates very similar to their overall high school enrollment; in 2017-18, they represented 16% of the total high school population and 15% of the population of students enrolled in advanced ELA coursework. Students at level 6 (and level 5 prior to 2017-18) were underrepresented in these classes by 4-5 percentage points all three years.

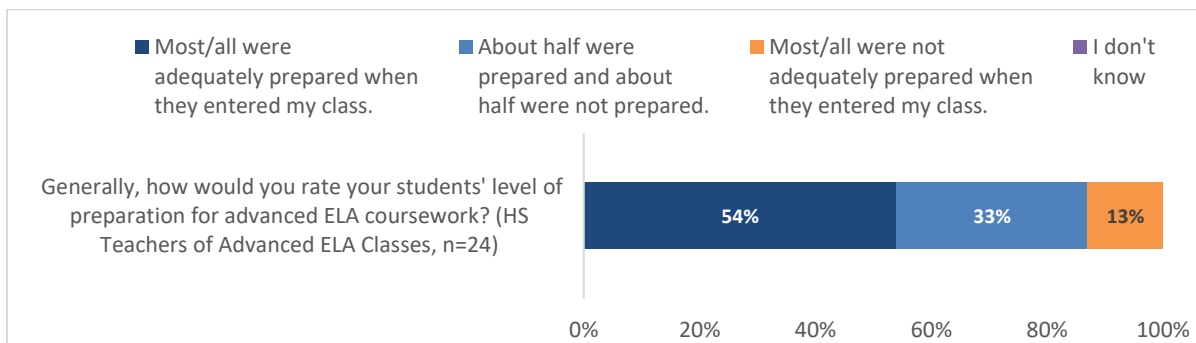
Figure 47: Representation of English Learners in Advanced High School ELA Coursework, 2017-18



Preparation for ELA Coursework – Regular and Advanced

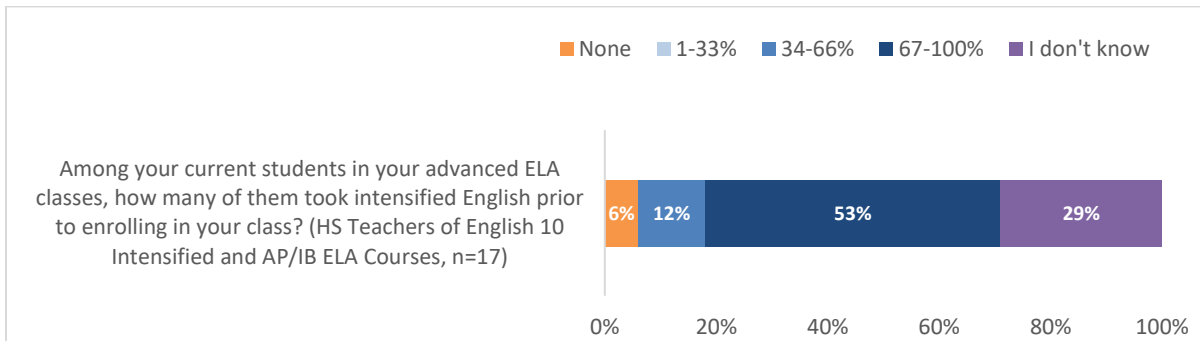
High school teachers who indicated that they teach advanced ELA coursework answered a series of questions about their students’ level of preparation. Just over half felt that all or most of their students were adequately prepared for advanced coursework, and around a third indicated that around half of their students were prepared (figure 48).

Figure 48: Generally, how would you rate your students' level of preparation for advanced ELA coursework? (HS Teachers of Advanced ELA Classes, n=24)



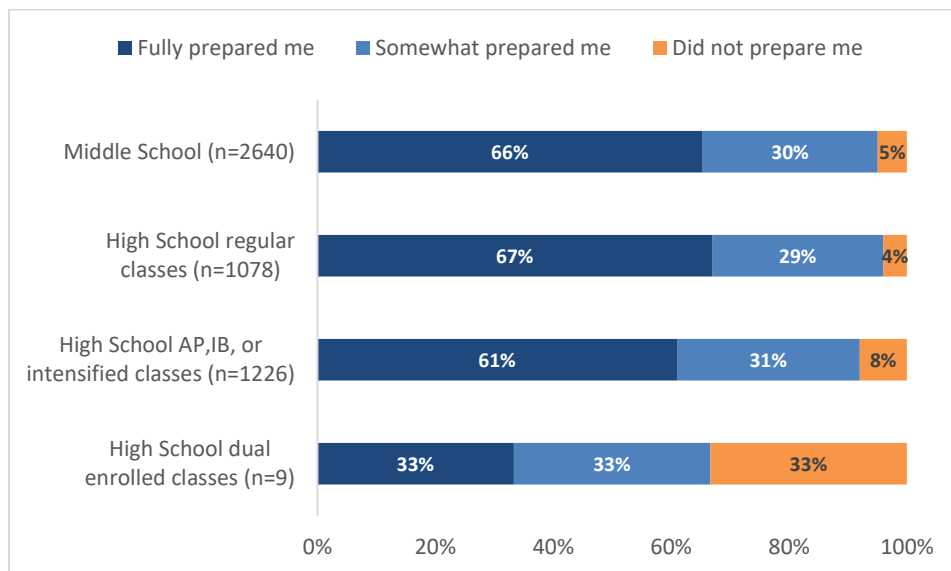
Just over half of teachers who teach advanced ELA coursework at higher levels reported that most of their students had taken intensified English prior to enrolling in their current class (figure 49).

Figure 49: Among your current students in your advanced ELA classes, how many of them took intensified English prior to enrolling in your class? (HS Teachers of English 10 Intensified, AP, or IB ELA Courses, n=17)



Generally, secondary students were positive about how well their previous English/Reading class had prepared them for their current class. This was true for students enrolled in regular classes and advanced classes (figure 50).

Figure 50: How well did your previous English/Reading classes prepare you for the English and/or Reading class you are taking now (Students)?



Teachers of advanced coursework also responded to an open-ended question about students' preparation for advanced ELA coursework: **Please share your thoughts about the patterns you see in how students may be unprepared for advanced ELA coursework and your suggestions for systemically addressing these issues.** Most responses centered around two themes:

Skills: Students are unprepared in the areas of

- Using the language of literature
- Time management
- The volume of reading required

Students' work ethic or motivation: Teachers noted the following behaviors or attitudes:

- Plagiarism
- Lack of intrinsic motivation aside from grades

Professional Learning Opportunities

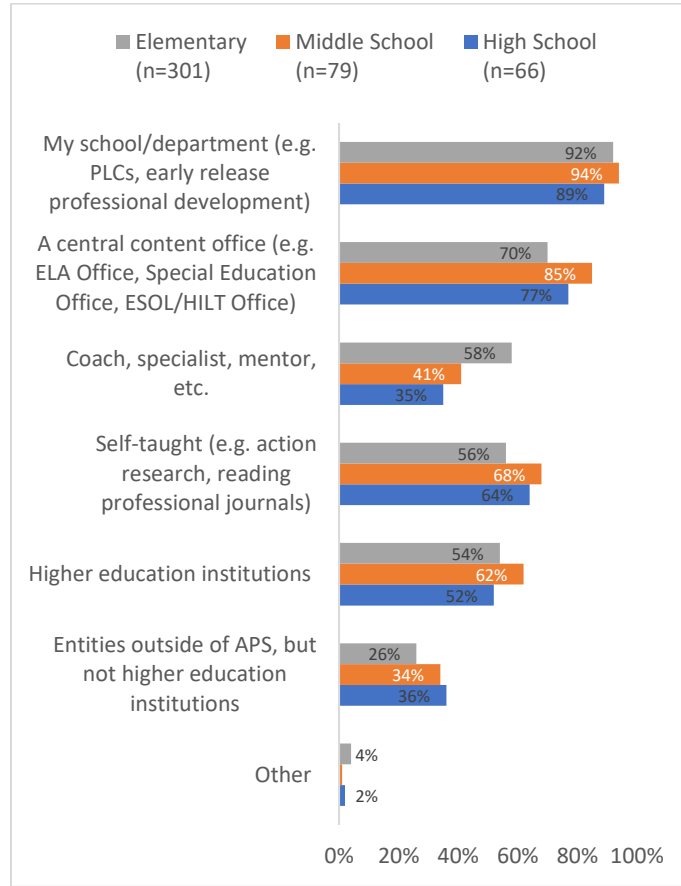
Every school year, the ELA Office offers professional learning opportunities that cover a variety of topics. As shown in table 7, one of the most common professional learning focuses from year to year is **content area instructional best practices**. In 2017-18, there was a heavy focus on **curriculum** due to new standards of learning mandated by VDOE that year.

Table 7: Professional Learning Opportunities Offered by the ELA Office, 2015-16 through 2017-18

Professional Learning Topic	Number of Distinct Courses (May Include Multiple Session Dates)		
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Curriculum	0	0	11
Content Area Instructional Best Practices	12	9	11
Assessment	3	2	6
Resources	1	8	4
Leadership Meetings	3	2	3
Intervention	1	2	3
Dyslexia	1	1	2
English Learners	4	3	1
Content Development for non-ELA teachers	1	0	1
Content Development for Teaching Assistants	2	1	0

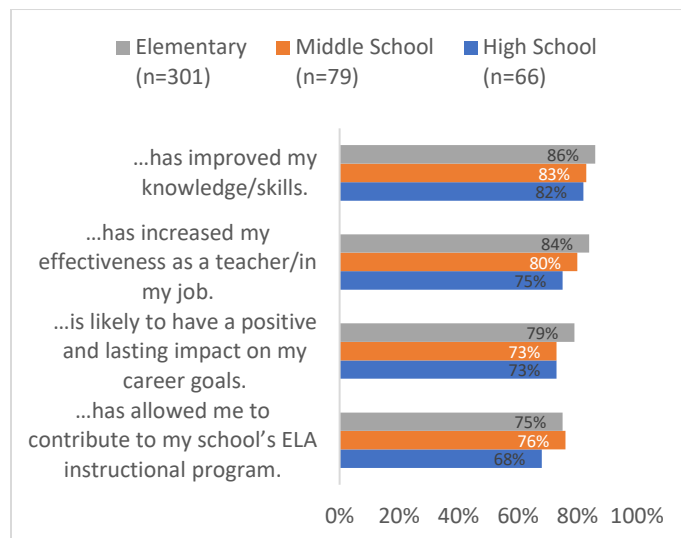
According to the teacher survey, teachers are most likely to have participated in professional learning opportunities for ELA offered by their **school/department**, or by a **central content office** (figure 51). **Coaching** is most prevalent at the elementary level and decreases at each subsequent level.

Figure 51: In the last five years, have you participated in professional learning in ELA offered by the following entities? Select all that apply. (Teachers)



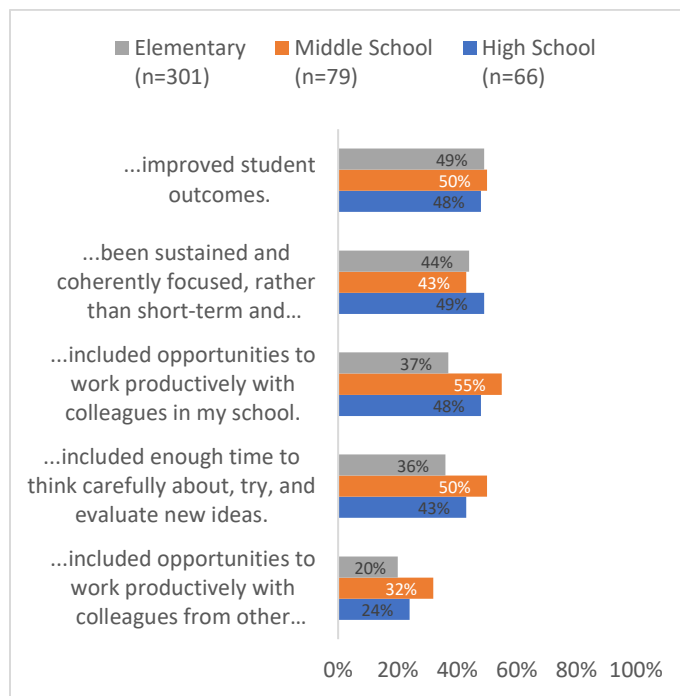
Across levels, most teachers were positive about impact that their ELA professional learning has had on them (figure 52).

Figure 52: Percentage responding strongly or somewhat agree: In the last five years, the ELA professional learning I have participated in...(Teachers)



Teachers were less positive when asked about characteristics of their ELA professional learning opportunities such as cohesiveness, time to think carefully, and opportunities to work with colleagues (figure 53).

Figure 53: Percentage responding always or often: Overall, my ELA professional learning experiences in the last five years have... (Teachers)



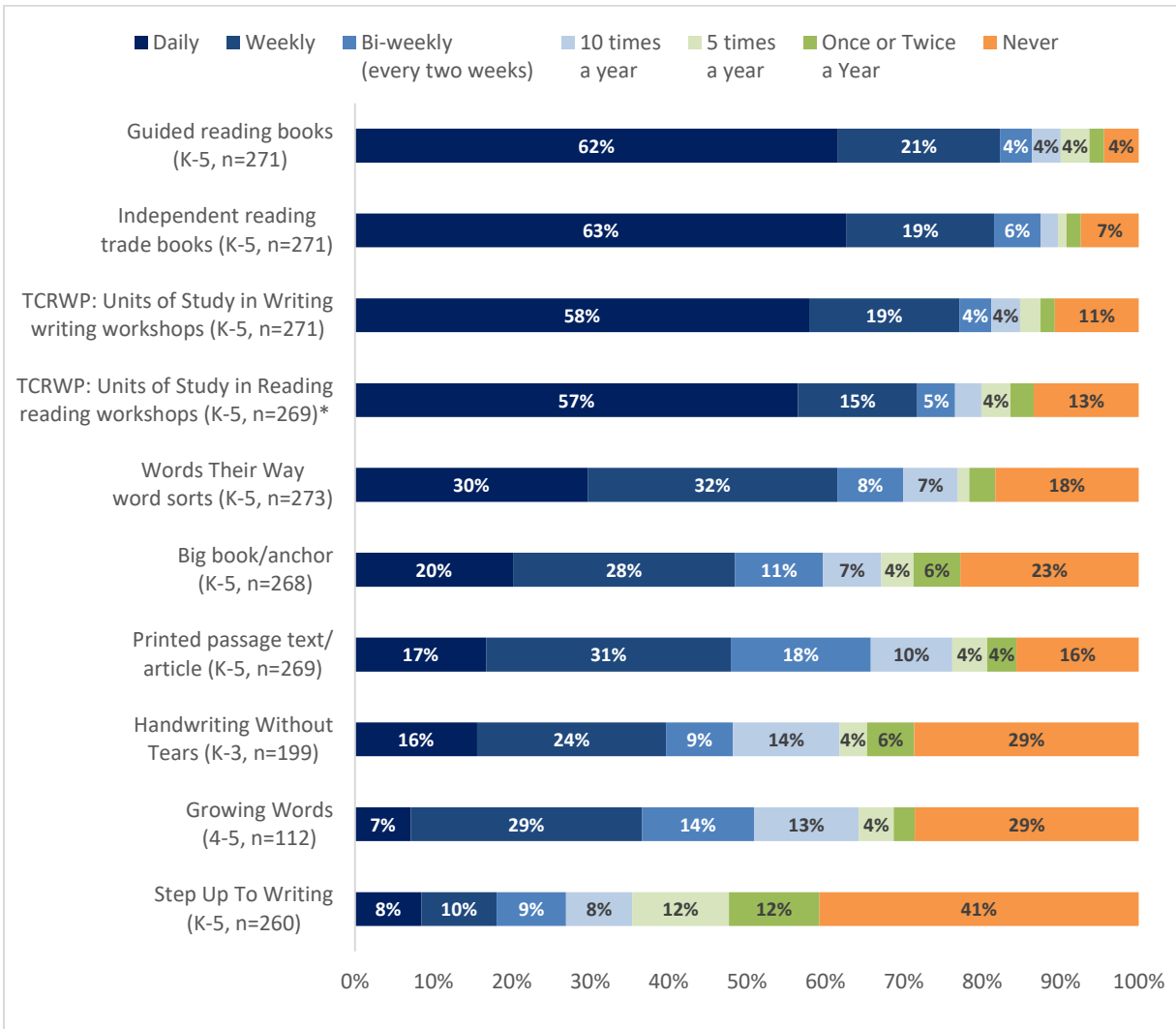
Use of Resources

Use of Curriculum Resources

Figure 54 shows elementary teacher survey responses about how frequently they use specified **core curriculum** resources. Responses are limited to teachers who teach grade levels in which each resource is expected to be used. For example, guided reading books are used in grades K-5, while Handwriting Without Tears is used in grades K-3.

More than half of all surveyed **elementary teachers** reported using the following resources either *daily* or *weekly*: **Words Their Way** word sorts, **TCRWP: Units of Study in Reading** reading workshops, **TCRWP: Units of Study in Writing** workshops, **independent reading trade books**, and **guided reading books**. On the other end of the spectrum, around a third of teachers reported *never* using the following resources: **Growing Words**, **Handwriting Without Tears**, and **Step Up To Writing**.

Figure 54: How frequently do you use the following curriculum resources? (Elementary Teachers)



*This resource was introduced for the first time in 2017-18, the year that the survey was administered.

Figures 55 and 56 show elementary teacher survey responses about how frequently they use specified **intervention** resources (**Orton Gillingham** and **Leveled Literacy Instruction**). Responses are disaggregated by different teaching settings. As expected, interventionists and teachers who teach in self-contained, sheltered, or co-taught settings were the most likely to use the resources, while classroom teachers were the least likely.

Figure 55: How frequently do you use the following curriculum resources: Orton Gillingham? (Elementary Teachers, K-5)

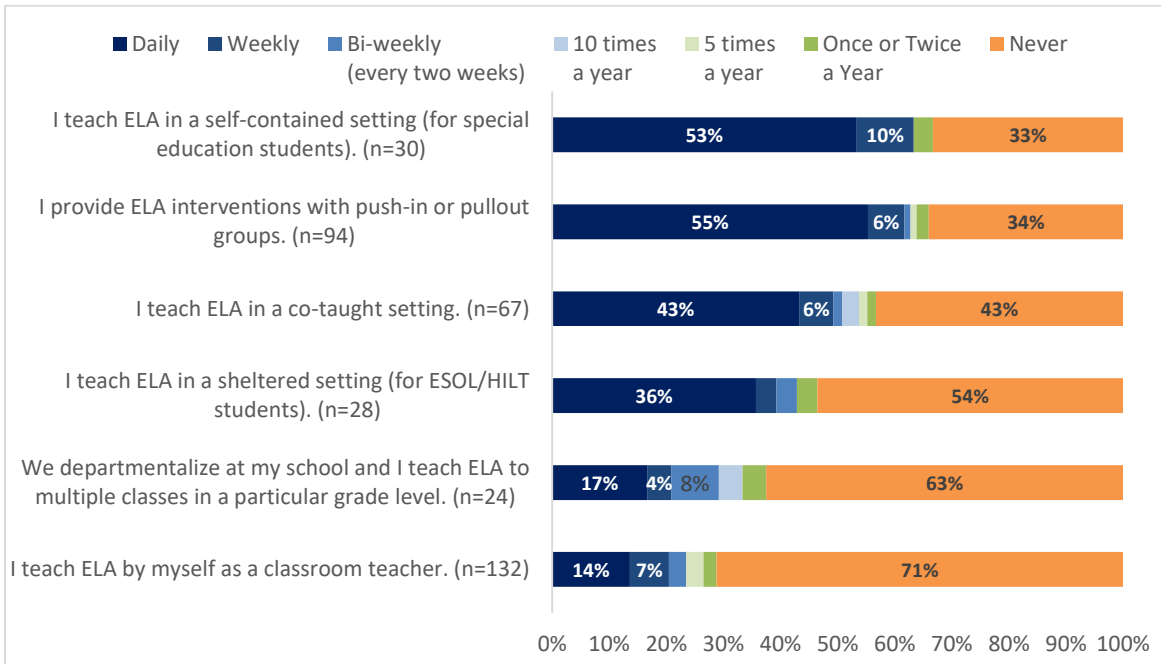
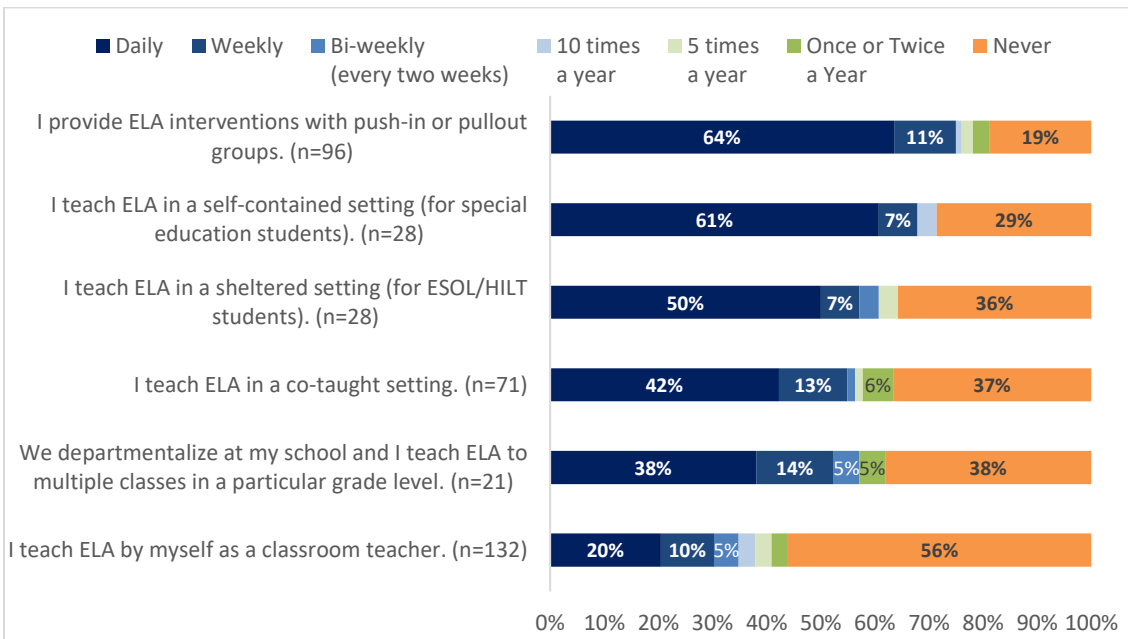


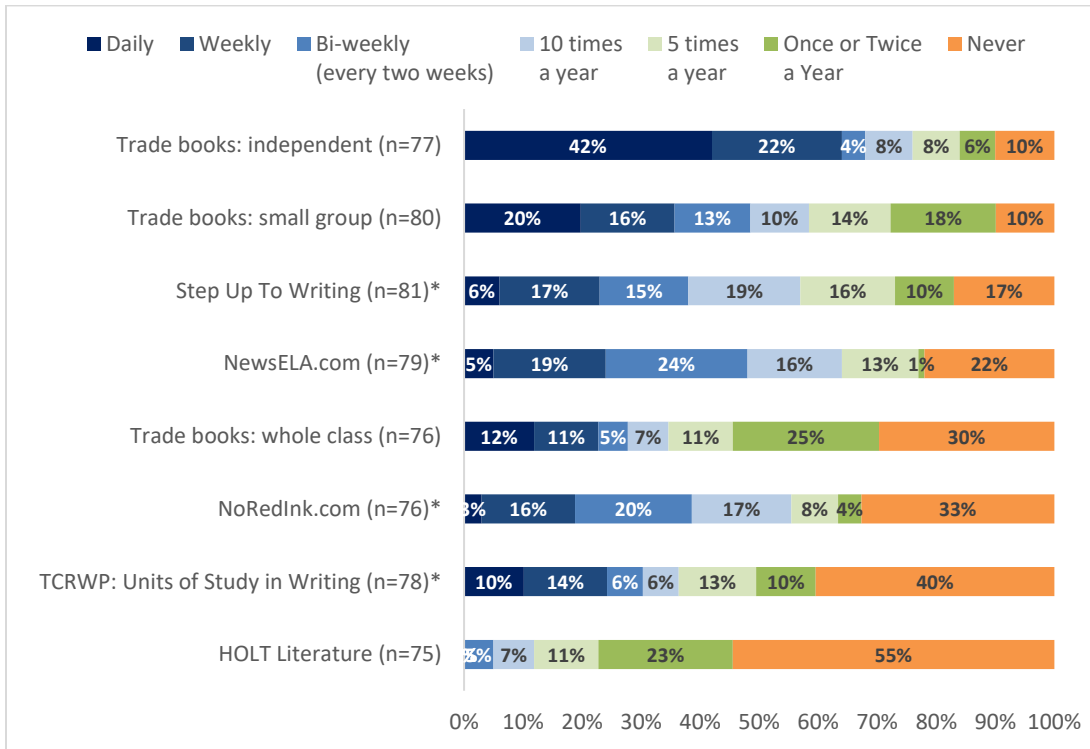
Figure 56: How frequently do you use the following curriculum resources: Leveled Literacy Instruction? (Elementary Teachers, K-5)



The most frequently used **core curriculum** resource at the **middle school** level is **independent trade books**, with 64% of teachers reporting that they use this resource either *daily* or *weekly* (figure 57). This is followed by **small group trade books**, which are used *daily* or *weekly* by a third of middle school teachers. On the other hand, over half of middle school teachers report that they *never* use **HOLT Literature**. Several of the resources asked about in the survey were introduced for the first time that

school year, and the expectation is that use will increase over time. These resources are starred in the graph below.

Figure 57: How frequently do you use the following curriculum resources? (Middle School Teachers)



*These resources were introduced for the first time in 2017-18, the year that the survey was administered.

Figures 58 through 60 show middle school teacher survey responses about how frequently they use specified **intervention** resources (**Orton Gillingham**, **Leveled Literacy Instruction**, and **My Virtual Reading Coach**). Responses are disaggregated by different teaching settings. Similar to elementary teachers, middle school reading teachers, interventionists, and those who teach in self-contained or sheltered settings are the most likely to use either resource, while ELA classroom teachers are the least likely.

Figure 58: How frequently do you use the following curriculum resources: Orton Gillingham? (Middle School Teachers)

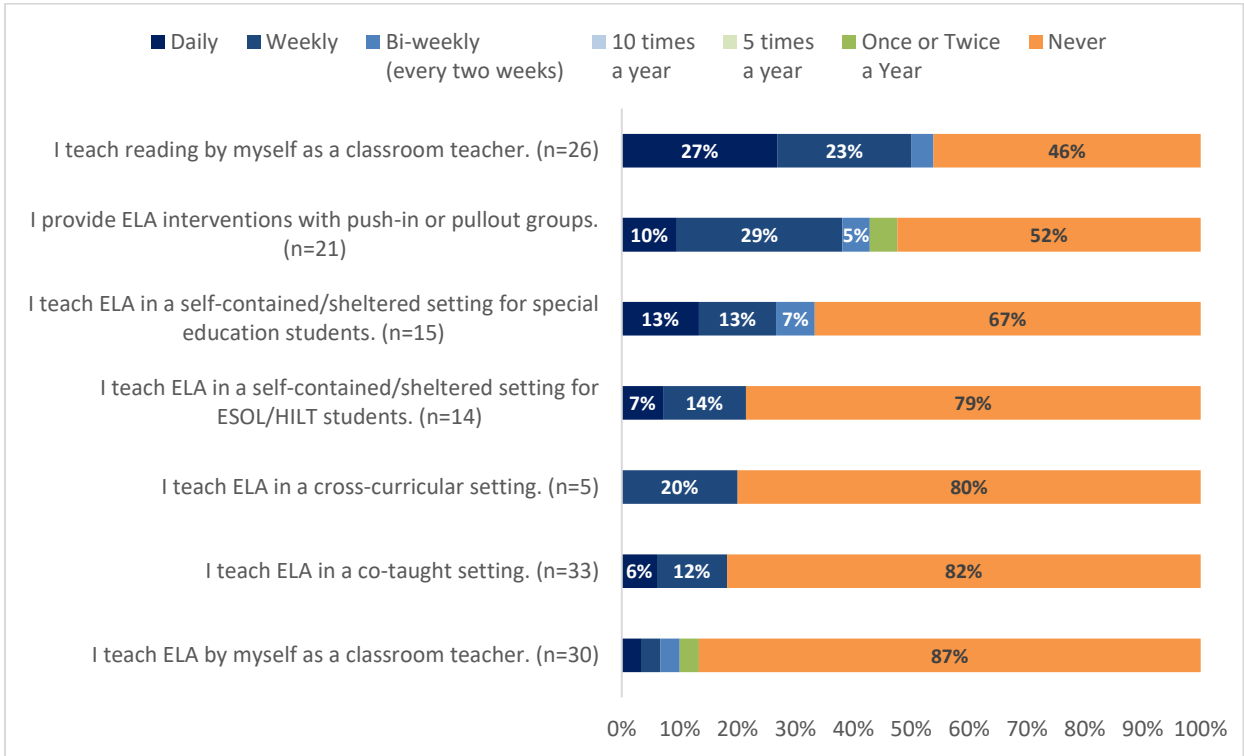


Figure 59: How frequently do you use the following curriculum resources: Levelled Literacy Instruction? (Middle School Teachers)

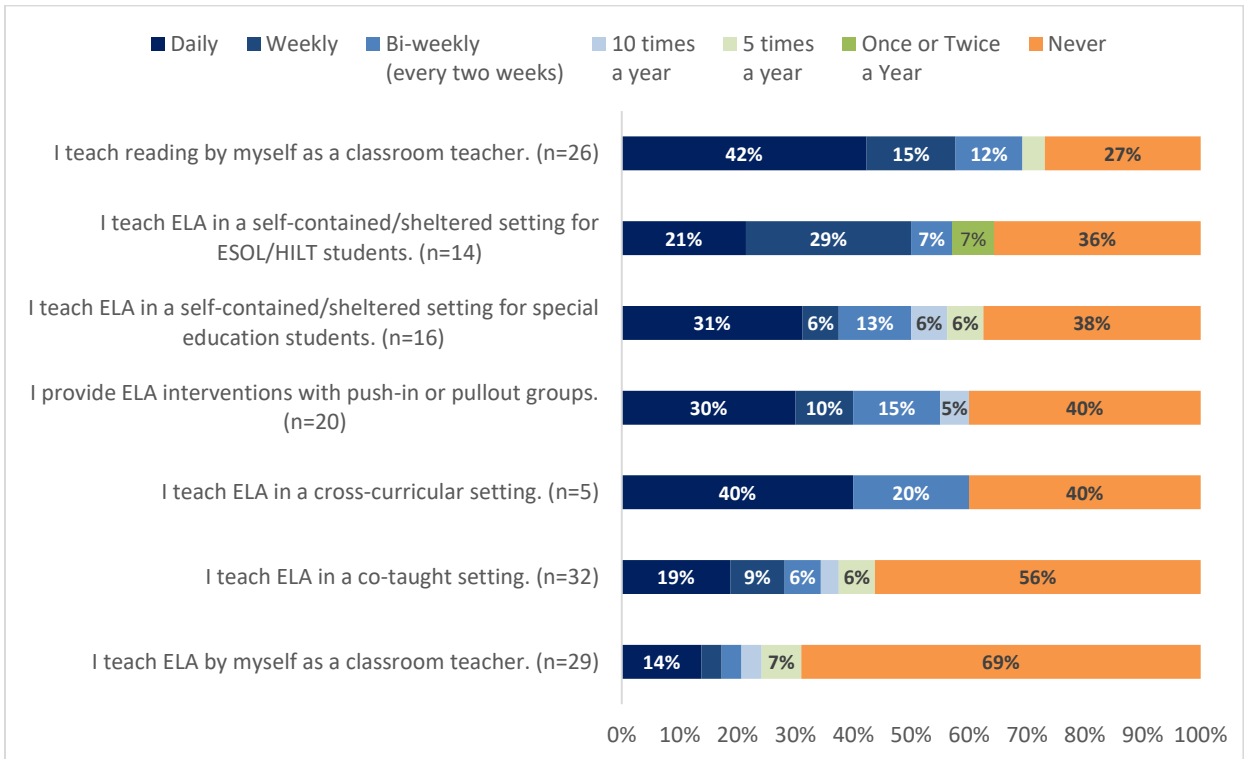
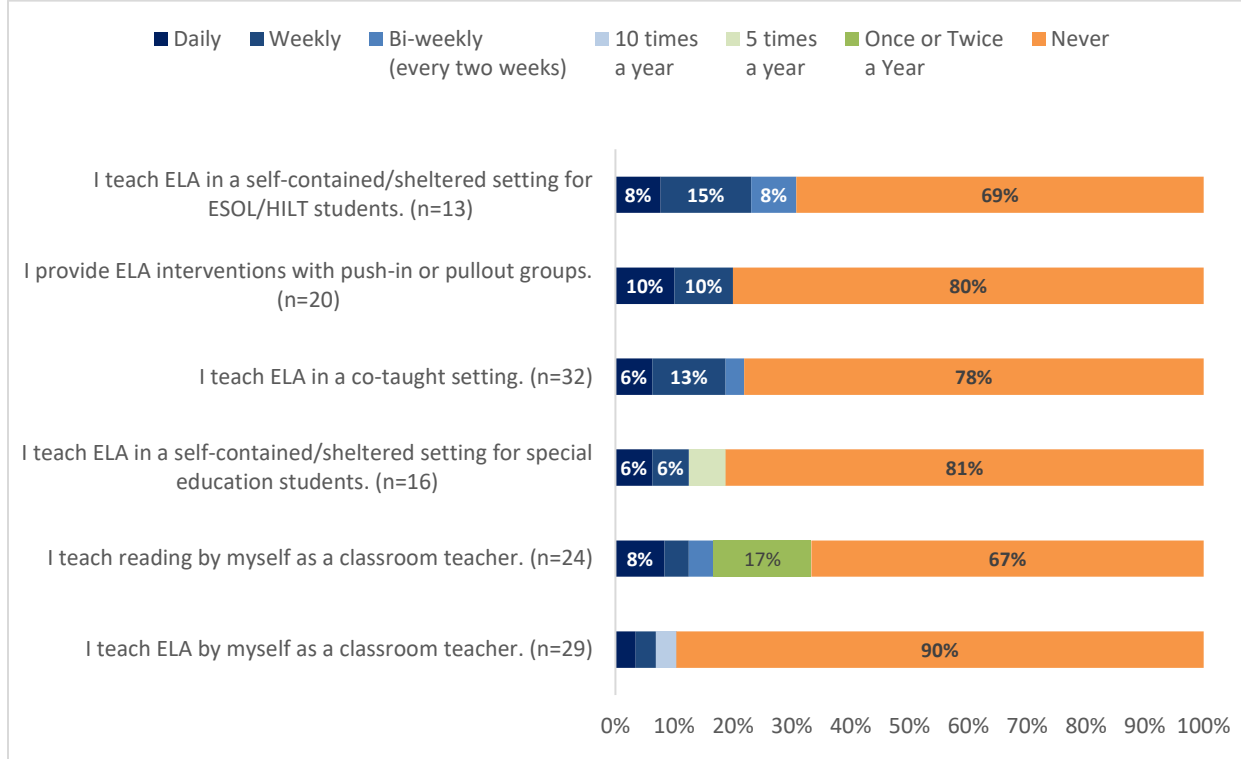
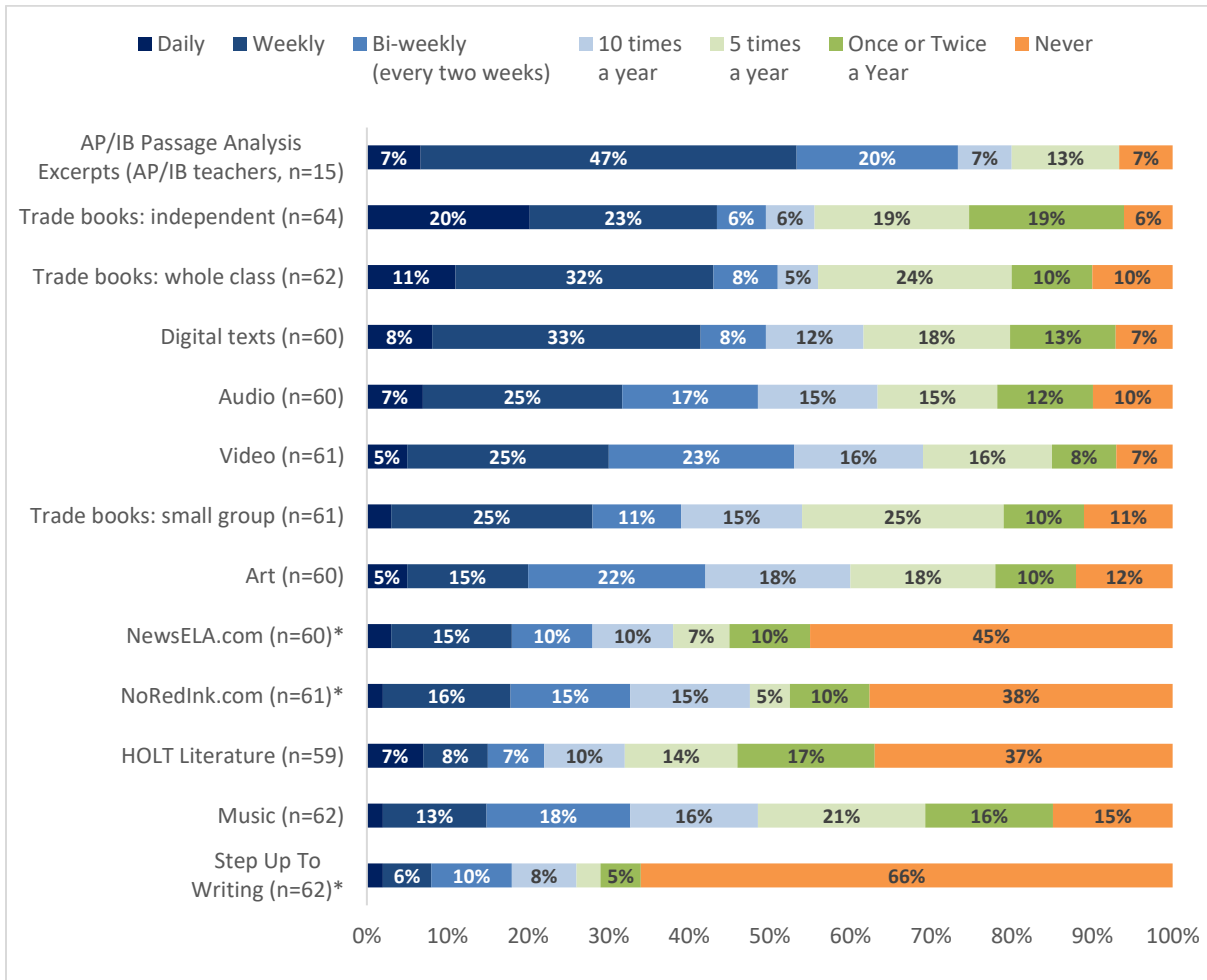


Figure 60: How frequently do you use the following curriculum resources: My Virtual Reading Coach? (Middle School Teachers)



Around 40% of **high school** teachers report using **independent trade books, whole class trade books, and digital texts** *daily* or *weekly*, and more than half of the AP/IB teachers who took the survey reported using **AP/IB passage analysis excerpts** *daily* or *weekly* (figure 61). Several of the resources asked about in the survey were introduced for the first time that school year, and the expectation is that use will increase over time. These resources are starred in the graph below.

Figure 61: How frequently do you use the following curriculum resources? (High School Teachers)



*These resources were introduced for the first time in 2017-18, the year that the survey was administered.

Like teachers at lower grade levels, high school teachers are most likely to use intervention resources if they are reading teachers or teach in pullout, self-contained, sheltered, or co-taught settings, though fewer teachers at this level identified as interventionists (figures 62-64). Few high school teachers reported using My Virtual Reading Coach.

Figure 62: How frequently do you use the following curriculum resources: Orton Gillingham? (High School Teachers)

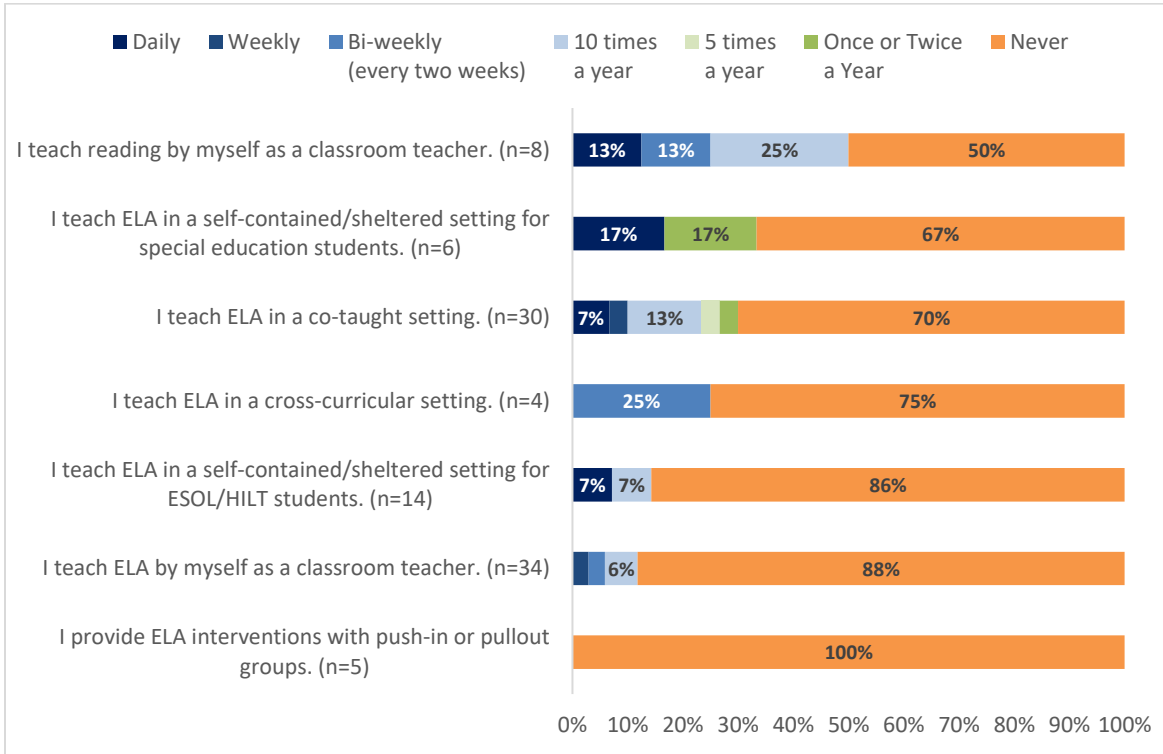


Figure 63: How frequently do you use the following curriculum resources: Levelled Literacy Instruction? (High School Teachers)

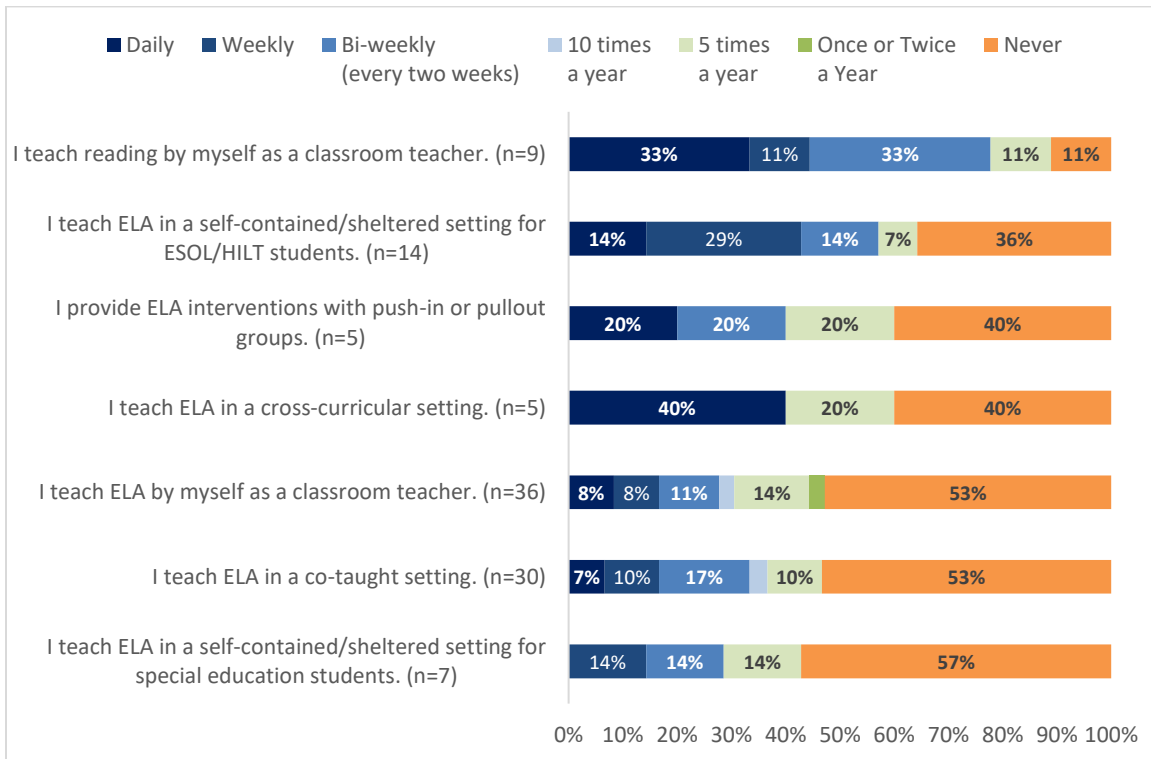
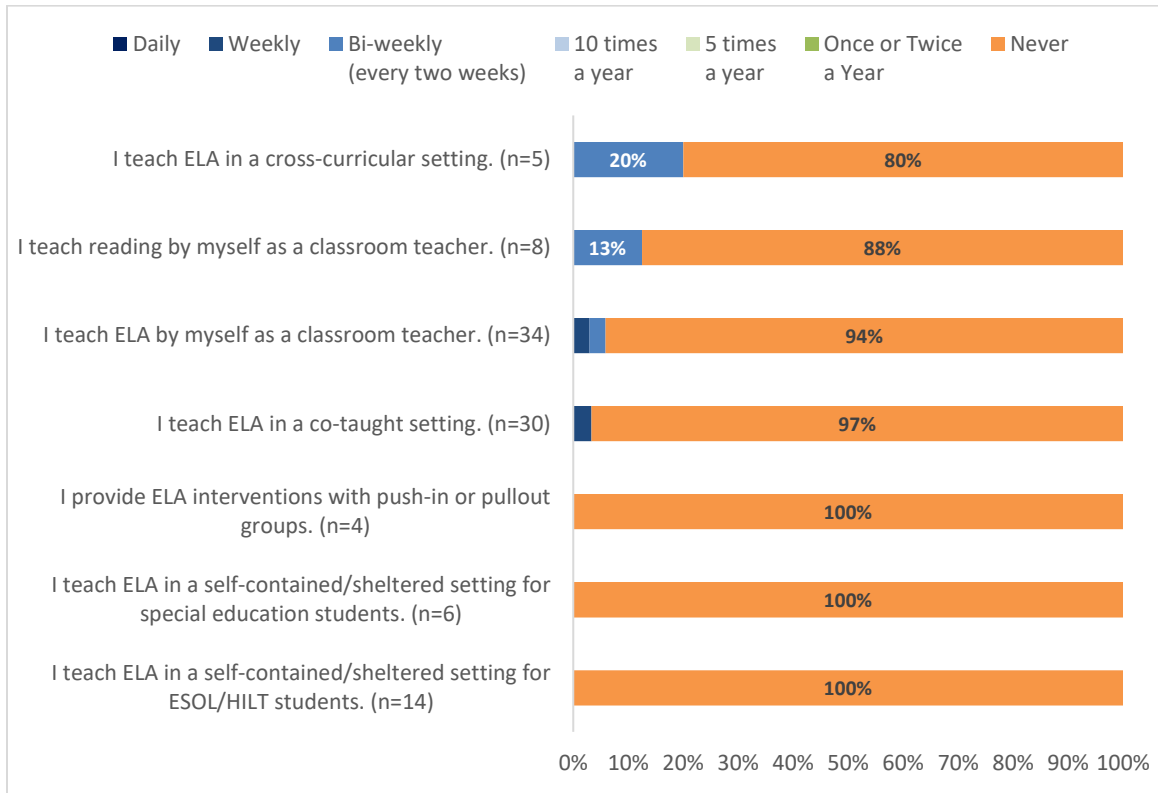


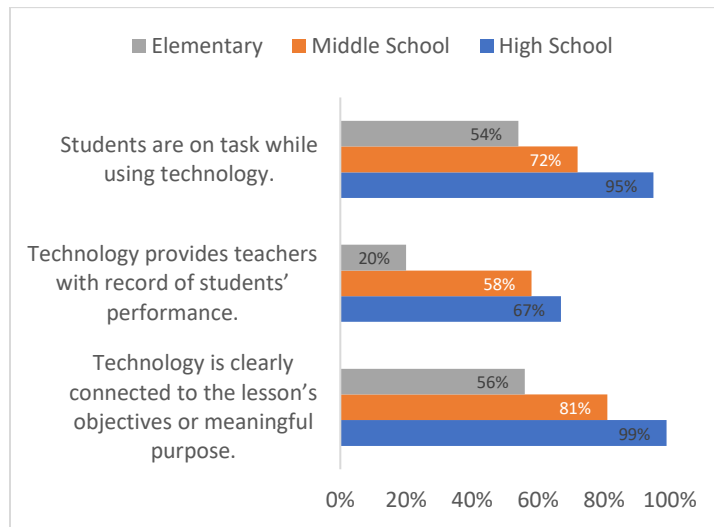
Figure 64: How frequently do you use the following curriculum resources: My Virtual Reading Coach? (High School Teachers)



Integration of Technology into ELA Instruction

In observations, use of technology was more likely to be rated positively the higher the grade level (figure 65). Elementary observers were least likely to note that **students were on task while using technology** or that **technology was clearly connected to the lesson’s objectives or meaningful purpose**, while high school observers were the most likely to observe these traits.

Figure 65: Use of Technology in Observed ELA Instruction

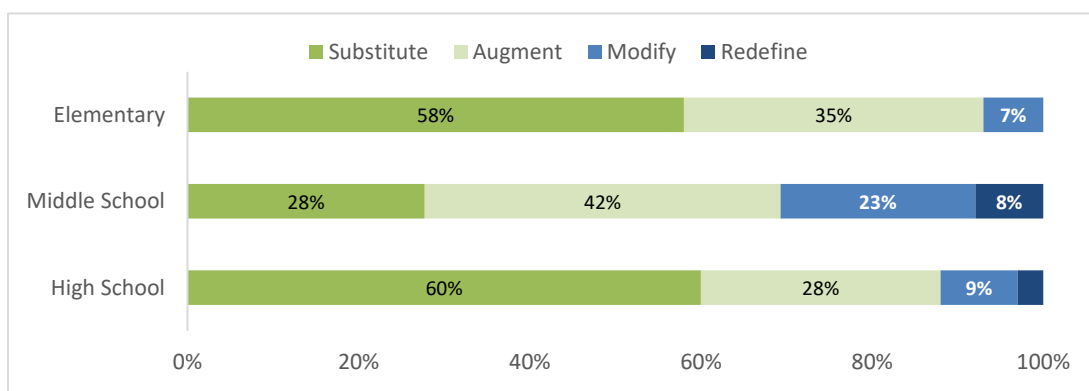


Observers also noted the highest level of technology use that they observed in each class where technology was used. This was based on the SAMR model³, which organizes use of technology into a hierarchy:

- **Substitute:** Technology is used to perform the same task as was done before the use of computers.
- **Augment:** Technology offers an effective tool to perform common tasks
- **Modify:** Common classroom tasks are being accomplished through the use of technology
- **Redefine:** Technology allows learning to take place that would not be possible with other media.

Most of the technology use observed served to **substitute** or **augment**. Middle school observations were the most likely to include technology use that reached the **modify** or **redefine** levels.

Figure 66: Highest Level Technology Use Observed

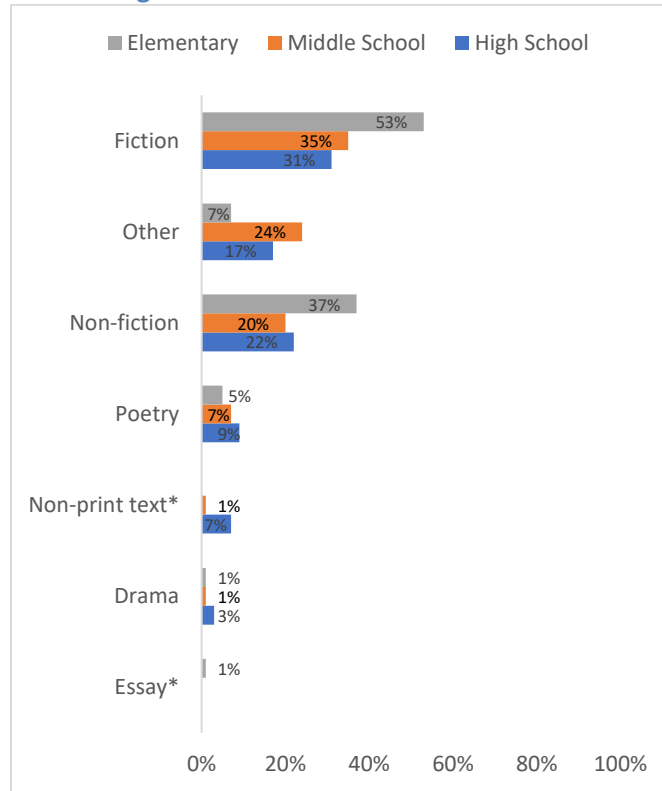


Use of Fiction and Non-Fiction Texts

Observers noted a variety of genres in the reading selections used in the classes they observed. Fiction and non-fiction were the most commonly observed, with fiction observed more frequently at each level.

³ <https://sites.google.com/a/msad60.org/technology-is-learning/samr-model>

Figure 67: Reading Selection Used for Instruction in Observed Classes



***Essay** was included only on the elementary observation tool. **Non-print text** was included only on the middle and high school observation tools.

Classroom Libraries (Elementary and Middle School)

A classroom library is a defined space that students may use to independently browse books. According to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)⁴, classroom libraries serve to:

- motivate students by encouraging voluntary and recreational reading
- help students develop an extensive array of literacy strategies and skills
- provide access to a wide range of reading materials that reflect abilities and interests
- enhance opportunities for both assigned and casual reading
- provide choice in self-selecting reading materials for self-engagement
- strengthen and encourage authentic literate exchanges among young people and adolescents
- provide access to digitized reading materials that may help to foster the development of technological literacy skills
- facilitate opportunities to validate and promote the acceptance and inclusion of diverse students' identities and experiences

⁴ <http://www2.ncte.org/statement/classroom-libraries/>

- create opportunities to cultivate an informed citizenry

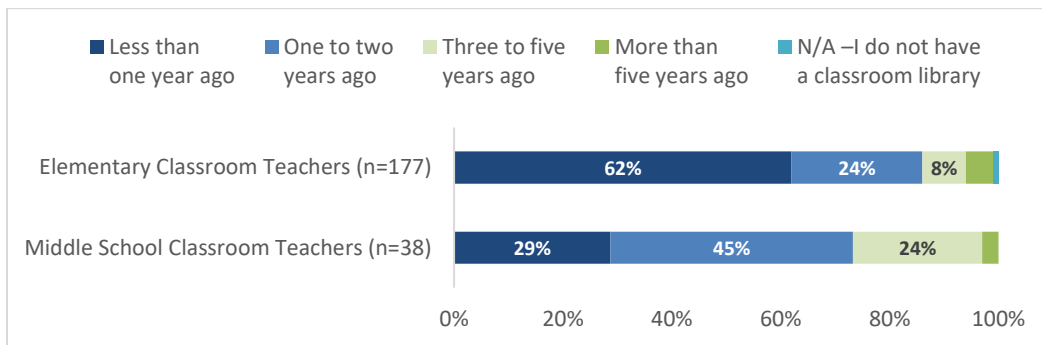
Classroom libraries are present at the elementary, middle, and high school levels in APS; however, they are more commonly found in elementary and middle school classrooms, where students are still spanning the boundaries of learning to read, reading to learn, and developing as discerning readers. High school classroom libraries may consist of text sets based on different genres and topics, books for independent reading, and/or reference materials.

The contents of classroom libraries should be periodically updated to reflect both student and classroom needs. The ELA Office suggests the following guidelines taken from Scholastic⁵:

1. 30% of the books in the classroom library should have been published in the last 3–5 years
2. 50–70% of the classroom library should consist of nonfiction books.
3. 25% of the classroom library should consists of multicultural books (at a minimum).
4. The reading level of the classroom library expands to cover two to three years above and below grade level.
5. Genres that should be included: realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy and science fiction, biography and autobiography, stories, classics, myths and legends, picture books, reference, poetry, comic books and graphic novels, and more.

While most elementary and middle school classroom teachers reported that their classroom library was last updated either **one to two years ago** or **less than one year ago**, elementary teachers were far more likely to select less than one year ago, and middle school teachers were more likely to select **three to five years ago** (figure 68).

Figure 68: When was the last time your classroom library was updated? (Elementary and Middle School Classroom Teachers)



At both levels, the most commonly cited source of funding for classroom libraries was **personal funds**, followed by **school funds**. Middle school teachers were far more likely than elementary teachers to cite **ELA Office funds**; this is likely due to one-time funding that was provided in 2014-15 when the ELA Office promoted the shift to the workshop model at the middle school level.

⁵ <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/scholasticcom-editors/2018-2019/the-11-essentials-for-an-effective-classroom-library>

Figure 69: What are the sources of funding that support your classroom library? Select all that apply. (Elementary and Middle School Classroom Teachers)

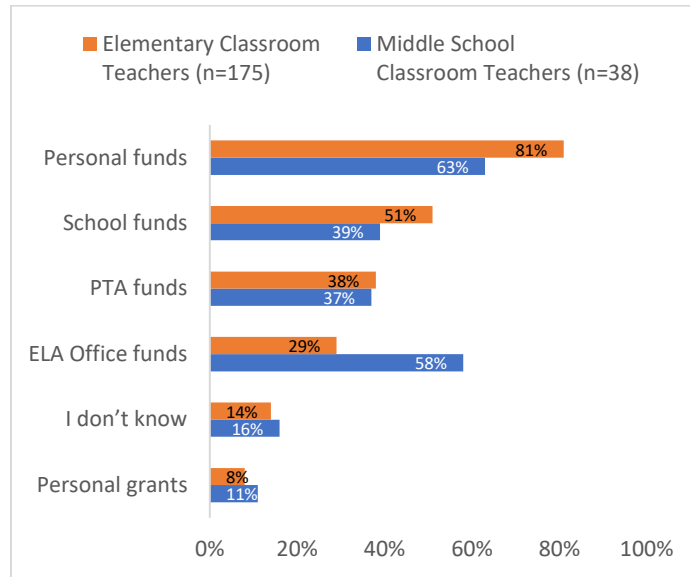
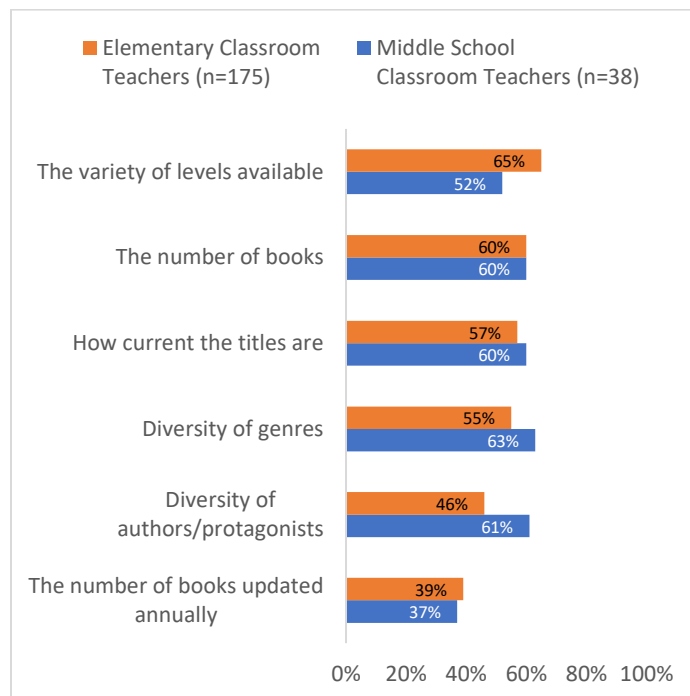


Figure 70 shows the percentage of teachers rating their classroom libraries as either *excellent* or *good* in a variety of areas. Over half of teachers selected these ratings to describe the **variety of levels**, the **number of books**, **how current the titles are**, and the **diversity of genres**. Middle school teachers were more likely than elementary teachers to describe the **diversity of authors/protagonists** as *excellent/good*. Teachers at both levels were least likely to rate the **number of books updated annually** positively.

Figure 70: Percentage Responding Excellent or Good: How would you rate your school's book room in terms of the following? (Elementary and Middle School Classroom Teachers)



Evaluation Question #2: What were the outcomes for students?

Reading Proficiency

Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening

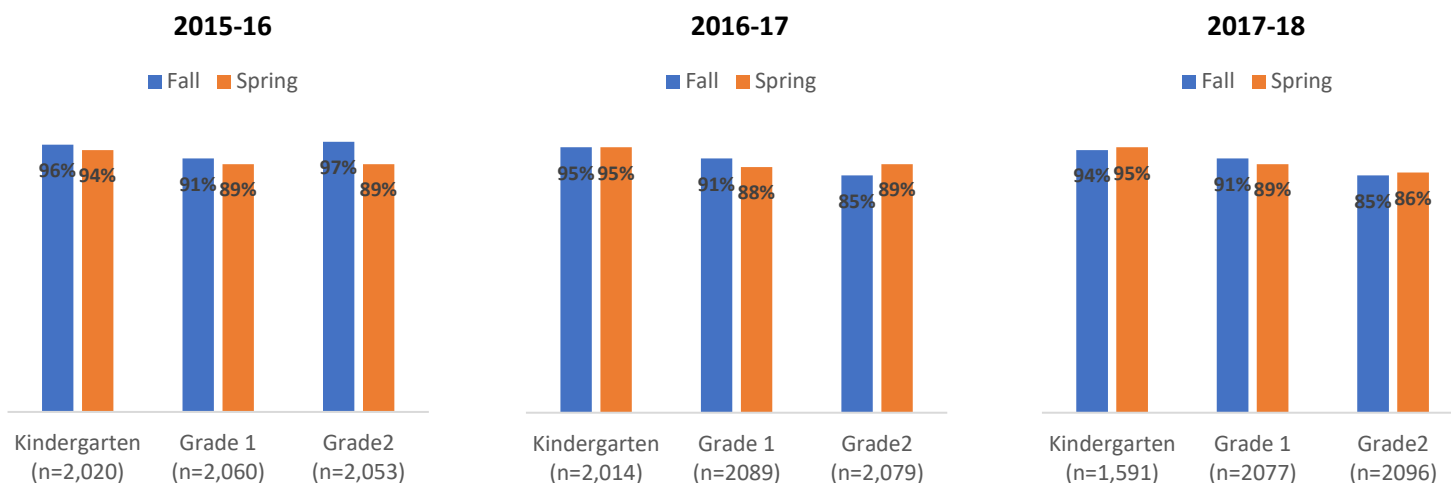
The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) provides a comprehensive assessment of young children's knowledge of the important literacy fundamentals that are predictive of future reading success. PALS is the state-provided screening tool for Virginia's Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI) and is used by 99% of school divisions in Virginia on a voluntary basis.

PALS assessments are designed to identify students in need of additional reading instruction beyond that provided to typically developing readers. PALS also informs teachers' instruction by providing them with explicit information about their students' knowledge of literacy fundamentals.

All students in kindergarten through 2nd grade take the PALS assessment in the fall and spring.

Data from the last three school years show that almost all students in grades K-2 meet the PALS benchmark for their grade level, and typically the percentage of students meeting the benchmark is similar in both the fall and spring (figure 71). These rates have remained stable over three years, with the exception of the grade 2 PALS, which showed a decrease in the percentage of students meeting the fall benchmark from 97% in 2015-16 to 85% in 2016-17 and 2017-18.

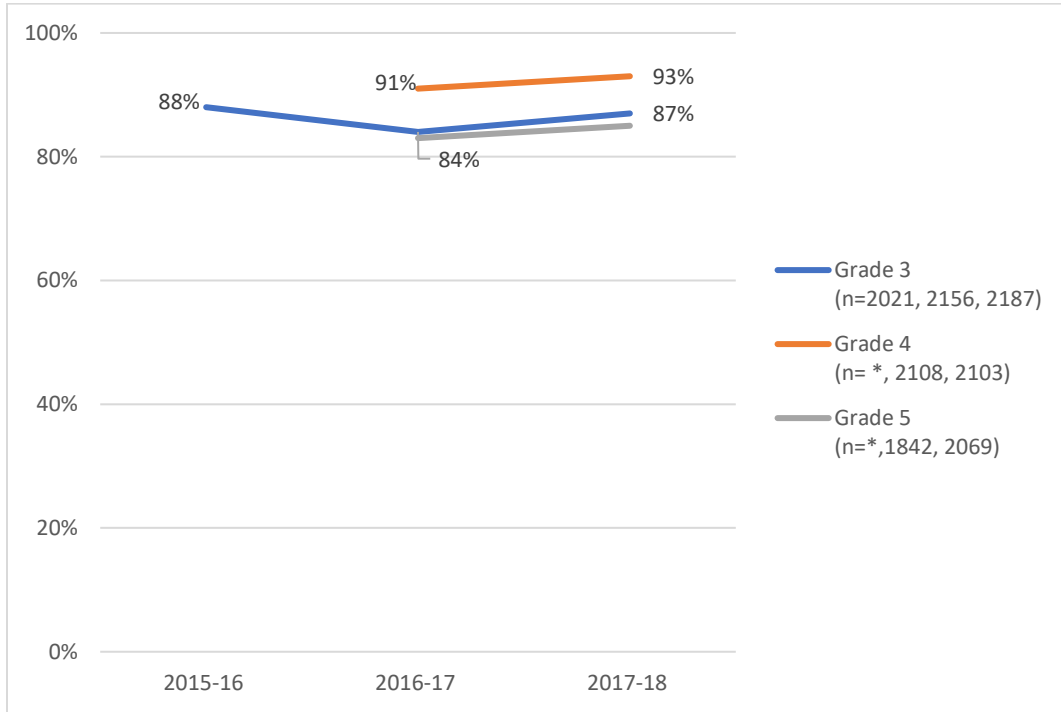
Figure 71: Percentage of Students Meeting PALS Benchmark in Grades K-2, 2015-16 through 2017-18



Prior to 2016-17, 3rd graders took the PALS assessment in the fall, and took it again in the spring if they did not meet the fall benchmark. Starting in 2016-17, this is true for grades 4 and 5 as well. Figure 72 shows the percentage of students in grades 3-5 who met the fall benchmark, while figure 73 shows the percentage of students meeting the spring benchmark, among those who did not meet the fall benchmark.

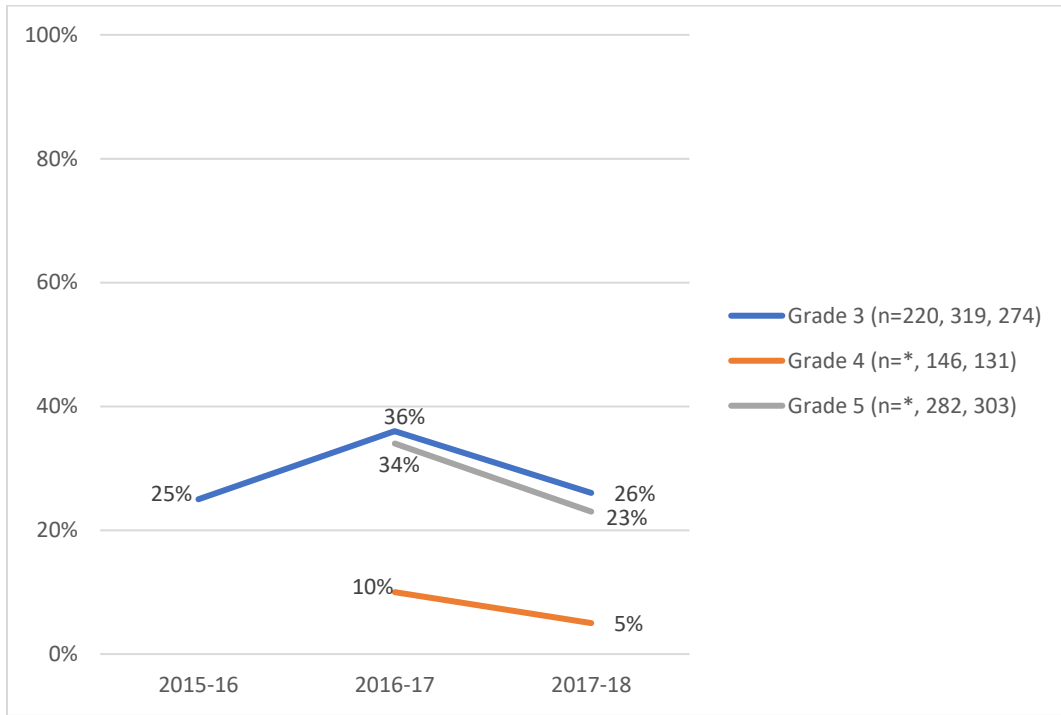
While almost all students meet the benchmark in the fall, those who do not meet the benchmark are not likely to meet the spring benchmark either. In addition, the percentage of students meeting the spring benchmark has decreased in the last year. In 2017-18, 26% of 3rd graders met the spring benchmark, along with 5% of 4th graders and 23% of 5th graders.

Figure 72: Percentage of Students Meeting Fall PALS Benchmark in Grades 3-5, 2015-16 through 2017-18



*PALS was not administered in grades 4 and 5 in 2015-16

Figure 73: Percentage of Students below the PALS Benchmark in the Fall who Met the Benchmark in the Spring, Grades 3-5, 2015-16 through 2017-18



*PALS was not administered in grades 4 and 5 in 2015-16

Variation in PALS Performance

Performance on the PALS varies for different student groups, and gaps in performance increase as the grade level increases. In the past three years, the following patterns are evident:

- **English learners, economically disadvantaged students, and Hispanic** students meet the benchmark at a rate around 12 percentage points lower than their non-English learner, non-disadvantaged, and white peers in kindergarten. By 5th grade, this gap is around 25 percentage points.
- In kindergarten, the gap between **students with disabilities** and students without disabilities meeting the benchmark increased from fall to spring – from 5-10 percentage points to around 15 percentage points - in each of the past three years. This pattern does not hold true in higher grades, though the gap generally increases with each grade level. In 5th grade, there was a gap of 38-40 points over the past two years.
- With one exception (spring 2017) **black** students performed similarly to white students on the fall and spring kindergarten PALS over the past three years. A gap emerges in higher grade levels, ranging from 4-12 percentage points in grades 1-4. For 5th graders, the gap decreased from 26 points to 14 points between 2016-17 and 2017-18.

Reading Standards of Learning Assessments

Students in Virginia take the Reading Standards of Learning (SOL) exam each year between 3rd and 8th grade, and as an end of course assessment in high school, typically in 11th grade. This evaluation explores trends in SOL pass rates over the last five years.

Impact of Changes to Testing Requirements in 2017-18

Prior to 2017-18, English learners (ELs) at beginning levels of English proficiency, as well as a small number of students with disabilities (SWD), were able to take a portfolio assessment, the Virginia Grade Level Alternative Assessment (VGLA), in lieu of the SOL reading test in grades 3-8. This option was used more prevalently at the elementary level than middle school, in large part because students who had participated in the VGLA more than three years prior were not eligible to take it again.

The VGLA option was eliminated in 2017-18, which appears to have had an impact on elementary SOL pass rates both locally and statewide. Comparing pass rates for English learners in 2016-17 and 2017-18 shows that pass rates for these students declined in grades 3-5, in APS as well as across Virginia (figure 74). At the same time, APS pass rates for English learners in grades 6-8 increased.

Figure 74: Grade 3-8 Reading SOL Pass Rates for English Learners, 2016-17 and 2017-18

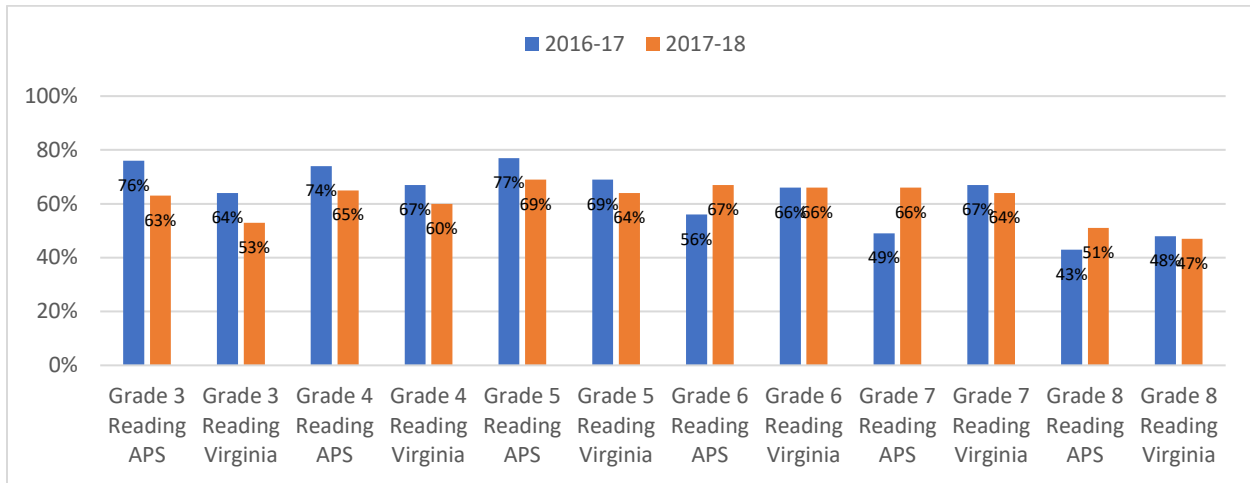
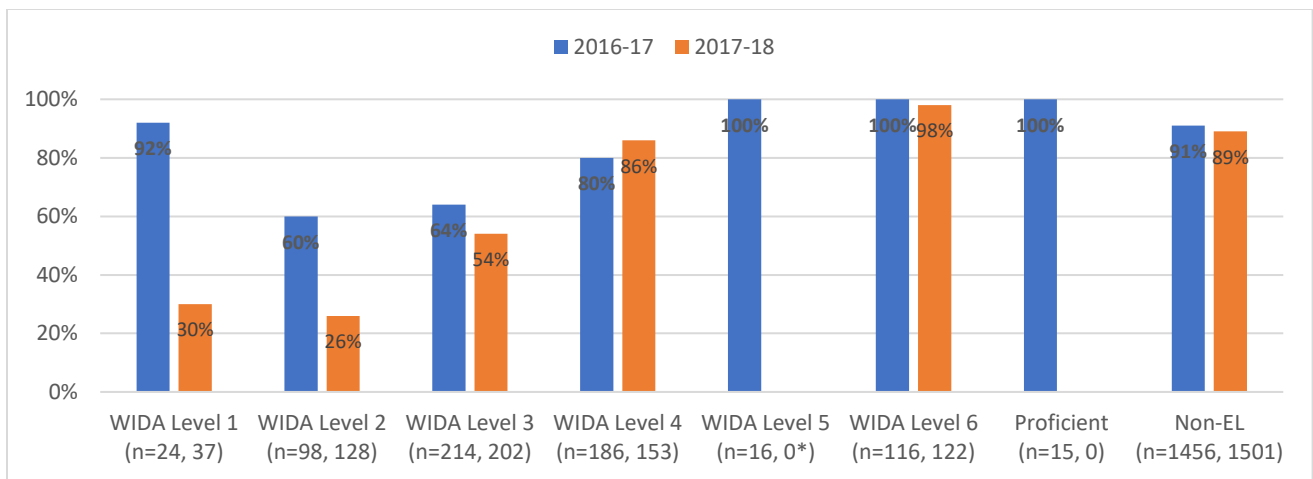


Figure 75 explores the impact of the elimination of the VGLA in more detail. This graph shows APS pass rates for the grade 3 reading SOL test, disaggregated by WIDA level. Prior to 2017-18, students at levels 1 and 2, and some students at level 3, were eligible to participate in the VGLA. Comparing results for these students before and after the elimination of the VLGA shows the largest drop in pass rates at these levels. Trends were similar for the grade 4 and 5 SOL test. These results are available in **Appendix E4**.

Figure 75: Grade 3 Reading SOL Pass Rates by English Language Proficiency Level, 2016-17 and 2017-18

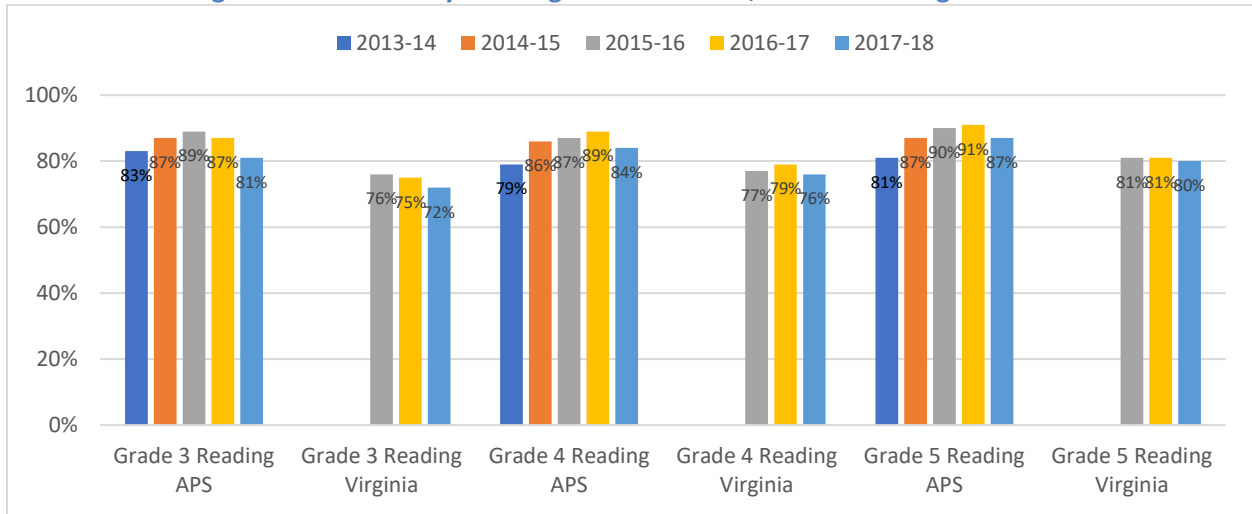


*WIDA Level 5 is no longer used by VDOE starting in 2017-18

Overall SOL Pass Rates

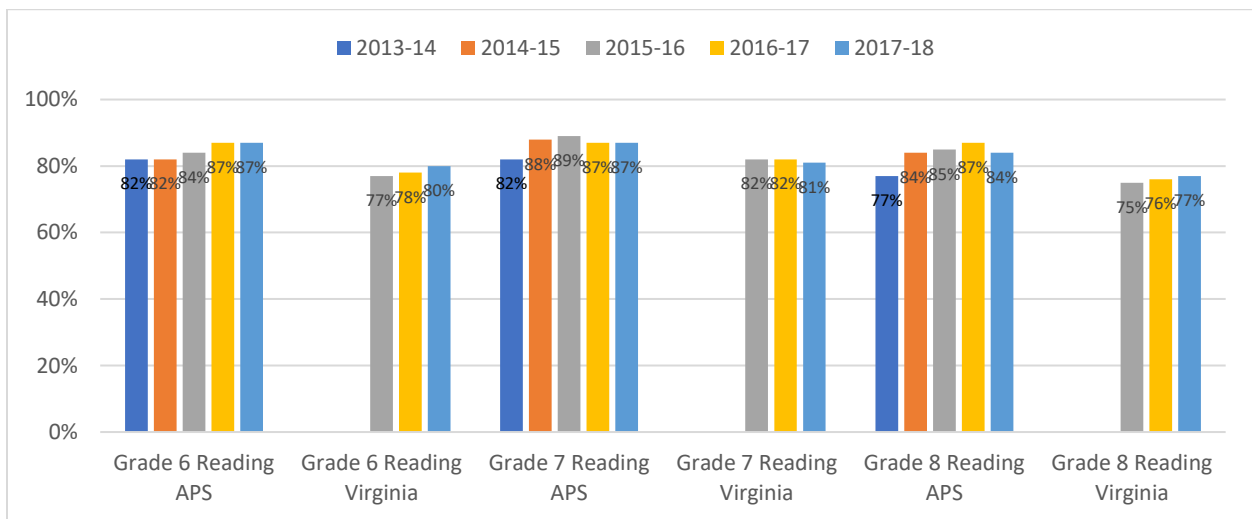
After a steady increase over several years, elementary reading SOL pass rates declined slightly in 2017-18 as a result of the elimination of the VGLA, mirroring statewide trends (figure 76).

Figure 76: Elementary Reading SOL Pass Rates, 2013-14 through 2017-18



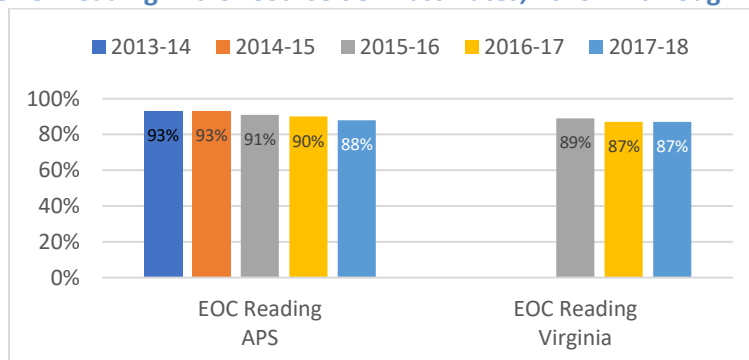
Middle school reading pass rates tended to increase each year from 2013-14 through 2015-16 (figure 77). This was followed by a decline in the grade 7 pass rate in 2016-17 and a decline in the grade 8 pass rate in 2017-18. Grade 6 pass rates remained steady from 2016-17 to 2017-18.

Figure 77: Middle School Reading SOL Pass Rates, 2013-14 through 2017-18



High school end of course reading pass rates have declined slightly from 2013-14 to 2017-18 (figure 78).

Figure 78: Reading End of Course SOL Pass Rates, 2013-14 through 2017-18



Variation in Performance

From 2013-14 through 2016-17, progress was made in reducing gaps in the pass rate between student groups on many of the Reading SOL tests. With some notable exceptions at the middle school level, this trend reversed in 2017-18 and APS saw several gaps increase in comparison to prior years.

Tables 8 through 10 show 2017-18 Reading SOL pass rates for different student groups, including comparisons by gender, English learner status, economic status, disability status, and race/ethnicity. Pass rates by student groups for all years included in this evaluation are available in **Appendix E4**.

There is a small but persistent gap between **female** and **male** students, with female students passing at rates up to seven percentage points higher than male students.

The variation in pass rates for **English learners** and **non-English learners** has trended differently by level, and the gap increases by grade level from elementary to high school.

- On the **elementary** SOL tests, APS saw a steady reduction in the gap from 2013-14 to 2016-17, followed by an increase to around 25 percentage points in 2017-18. This is likely due to the elimination of the VGLA portfolio assessment as an alternative for English learners at levels 1 and 2 of English language proficiency.
- The elimination of the VGLA does not seem to have had an impact on **middle school** pass rates for English learners. APS has seen a steady decrease in the gap between English learners and non-English learners at this level, and that trend continued in 2017-18. Gaps in the pass rate have decreased from 40 to 28 percentage points on the 6th grade test, from 52 to 28 percentage points on the 7th grade test, and from 46 to 41 percentage points on the 8th grade test.
- Unlike both elementary and middle school pass rates, the gap between pass rates for English learners and non-English learners on the **high school end of course** test increased from 2014-15 (16 percentage points) through 2017-18 (38 percentage points).

The trends for **economically disadvantaged** students are closely aligned with those for English learners.

Across levels, **students with disabilities** passed the reading SOL test at rates around 30 to 35 percentage points below **students without disabilities** in 2017-18. This represented an increase in the gap at the **elementary** and **high school** levels, and a small decrease in the gap at the **middle school** level.

The gap in pass rates for **black** and **Hispanic** students increased in 2017-18 on all Reading SOL tests except for grade 6, where the gap continued to decrease. Gaps for these students ranged from 16 to 29 percentage points at the **elementary** level, 18 to 27 percentage points at the **middle school** level, and 18 to 24 percentage points at the **high school** level.

At the **elementary** level, **Asian** students tend to pass the Reading SOL at rates similar to their white peers, though there was a small gap in 2017-18 ranging from four to six percentage points. At the **middle** and **high school** levels, there has persistently been a gap of between four to 11 percentage points from 2014-15 through 2017-18.

Table 8: Elementary Reading SOL Pass Rates by Student Groups, 2017-18

Test	Group	Number Tested	Percent Passed
Grade 3 Reading	Female	1,053	84%
	Male	1,090	79%
	Non-EL	1,501	89%
	EL	642	63%
	Non-disadvantaged	1,477	92%
	Disadvantaged	666	58%
	Non-SWD	1,850	86%
	SWD	293	51%
	Asian	201	87%
	Black	206	68%
	Hispanic	568	63%
	White	1,018	92%
	Other	150	89%
	Grade 4 Reading	Female	1,042
Male		1,087	82%
Non-EL		1,473	92%
EL		656	65%
Non-disadvantaged		1,458	93%
Disadvantaged		671	63%
Non-SWD		1,776	90%
SWD		353	54%
Asian		200	89%
Black		184	76%
Hispanic		574	65%
White		1,009	93%
Other		162	94%
Grade 5 Reading		Female	1,047
	Male	1,080	86%
	Non-EL	1,483	94%
	EL	644	69%
	Non-disadvantaged	1,463	95%
	Disadvantaged	664	68%
	Non-SWD	1,808	92%
	SWD	319	56%
	Asian	166	90%
	Black	199	80%
	Hispanic	575	69%
	White	1,068	96%
	Other	119	92%

Table 9: Middle School Reading SOL Pass Rates by Student Groups, 2017-18

Test	Group	Number Tested	Percent Passed
Grade 6 Reading	Female	939	88%
	Male	893	87%
	Non-EL	1,293	95%
	EL	539	67%
	Non-disadvantaged	1,273	96%
	Disadvantaged	559	68%
	Non-SWD	1,538	93%
	SWD	294	58%
	Asian	161	86%
	Black	192	79%
	Hispanic	512	72%
	White	857	97%
	Other	110	98%
	Grade 7 Reading	Female	899
Male		1,023	84%
Non-EL		1,444	94%
EL		478	66%
Non-disadvantaged		1,395	94%
Disadvantaged		527	68%
Non-SWD		1,612	92%
SWD		310	58%
Asian		174	90%
Black		161	71%
Hispanic		479	72%
White		996	95%
Other		112	91%
Grade 8 Reading		Female	895
	Male	890	82%
	Non-EL	1,447	92%
	EL	338	51%
	Non-disadvantaged	1,178	92%
	Disadvantaged	505	65%
	Non-SWD	1,478	91%
	SWD	307	54%
	Asian	140	87%
	Black	187	72%
	Hispanic	473	67%
	White	874	94%
	Other	111	96%

Table 10: High School End of Course Reading SOL Pass Rates by Student Groups, 2017-18

Group	Number Tested	Percent Passed
Female	765	90%
Male	845	87%
Non-EL	1,336	95%
EL	274	57%
Non-disadvantaged	1,158	95%
Disadvantaged	452	72%
Non-SWD	1,370	93%
SWD	240	65%
Asian	159	88%
Black	178	80%
Hispanic	417	74%
White	757	98%
Other	99	96%

Growth in Reading Level

The Reading Inventory is a computer-adaptive reading assessment that measures reading comprehension using Lexile measures. Lexile measures indicate a student's reading level and can be used to match readers with appropriately leveled text⁶. The Reading Inventory is administered in grades six through nine in the fall and spring to measure students' growth during the school year. The expected growth within a school year is 75 Lexiles.

Figures 79 through 81 show the percentage of students gaining 75 Lexiles on the spring Reading Inventory assessment, by their fall proficiency level (below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced), from 2015-16 through 2017-18. Generally, students are more likely to make a full year's worth of growth in reading if their fall Lexile is in the below basic or basic band; this ranges from around 45%-65% across grade levels and years.

One consistent exception to this is grade 6 students who test at the proficient level in the fall. Over three years, these students were more likely to gain 75 Lexiles than grade 6 students whose fall proficiency level was basic or below basic. The percentage of grade 6 students who tested at the proficient level in the fall and gained 75 Lexiles in the spring ranged from 60% in 2015-16 to 70% in 2017-18.

The percentage of students gaining 75 Lexiles has generally increased over the past three years in grades 6 and 7 across all fall proficiency levels. This pattern does not hold true for grades 8 and 9.

⁶ <https://lexile.com>

Figure 79: Percentage of Students Gaining 75 Lexiles from Fall to Spring, by Fall Proficiency Level, 2015-16

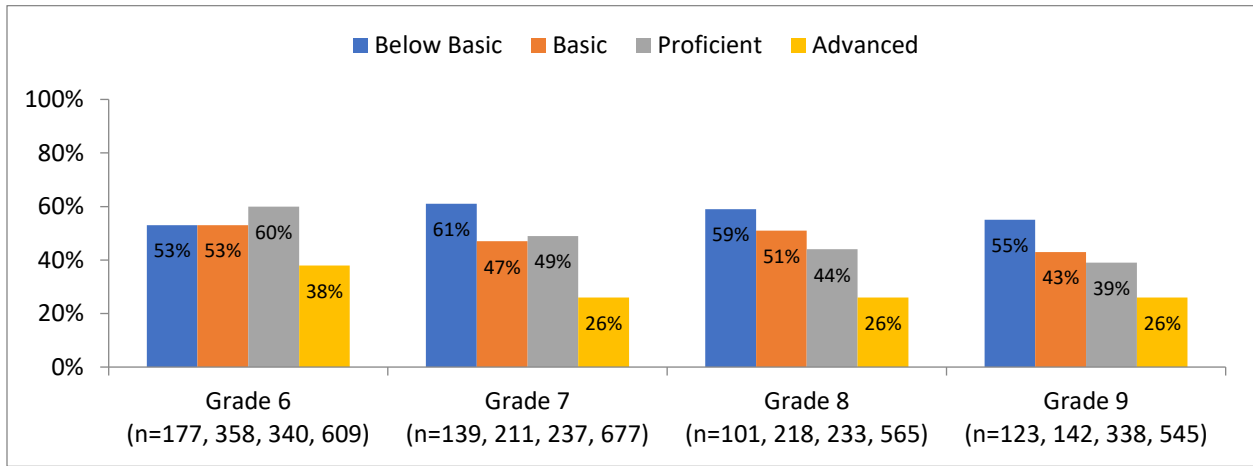


Figure 80: Percentage of Students Gaining 75 Lexiles from Fall to Spring, by Fall Proficiency Level, 2016-17

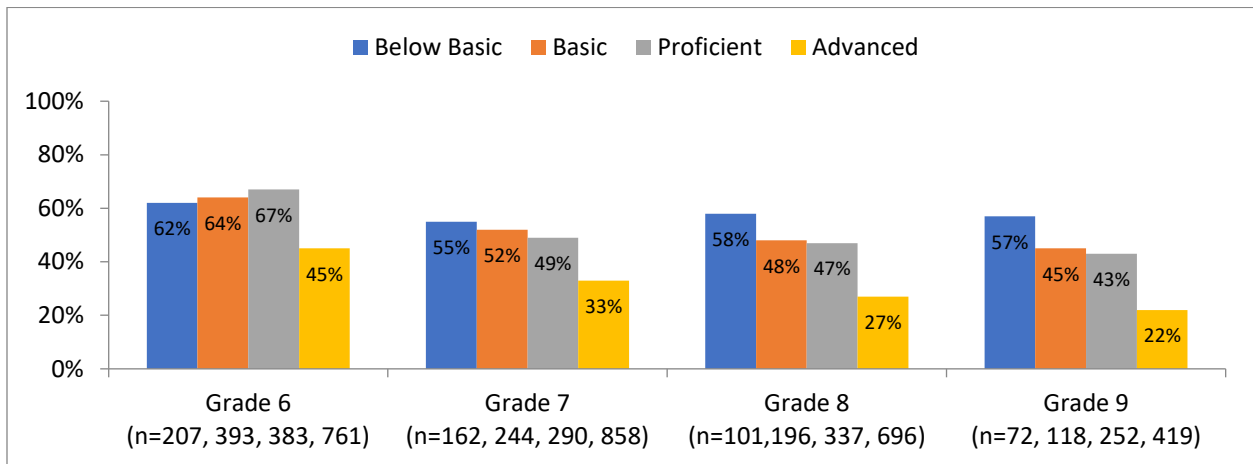
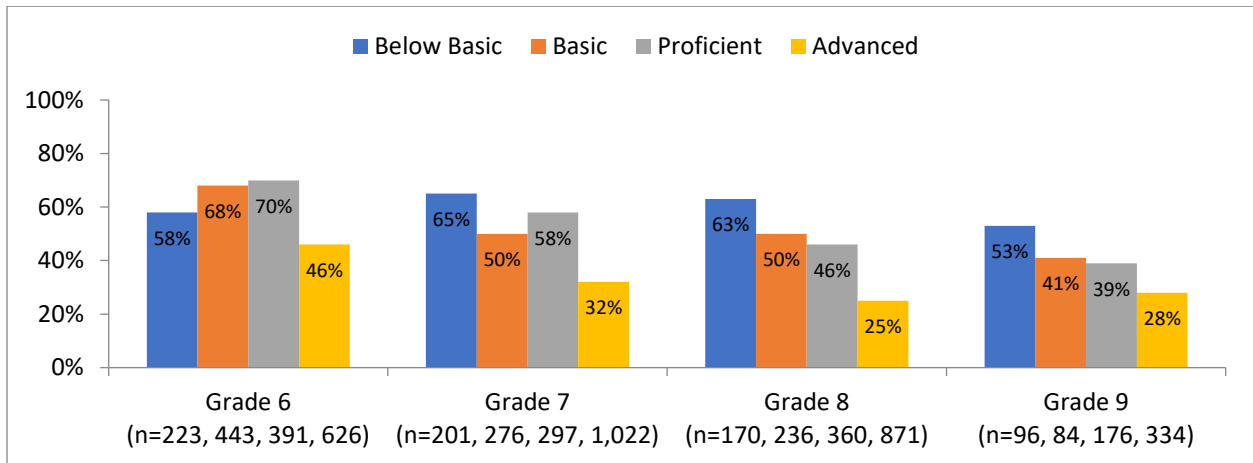


Figure 81: Percentage of Students Gaining 75 Lexiles from Fall to Spring, by Fall Proficiency Level, 2017-18



Variation in Reading Inventory Performance

Comparing rates of progress across student groups, there is variation in the percentage of students gaining 75 Lexiles from fall to spring. With some exceptions across all student groups, grade levels, and fall proficiency bands, the following patterns emerge:

- Non-English learners are more likely to gain 75 Lexiles than English learners.
- Non-economically disadvantaged students are more likely to gain 75 Lexiles than economically disadvantaged students.
- Students without disabilities are more likely to gain 75 Lexiles than students with disabilities.
- White students are more likely to gain 75 Lexiles than non-white students.

Complete information about Reading Inventory performance by student groups is available in **Appendix E2**.

Writing Proficiency

Students in Virginia participate in state-mandated writing assessments three times (5th, 8th, and 11th grades).

In 2016-2017, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) discontinued the 5th grade Writing SOL test. In its place, VDOE now requires each school division to administer a 5th grade Alternative Writing Assessment. 5th graders complete a local performance assessment task consisting of an open-ended writing prompt.

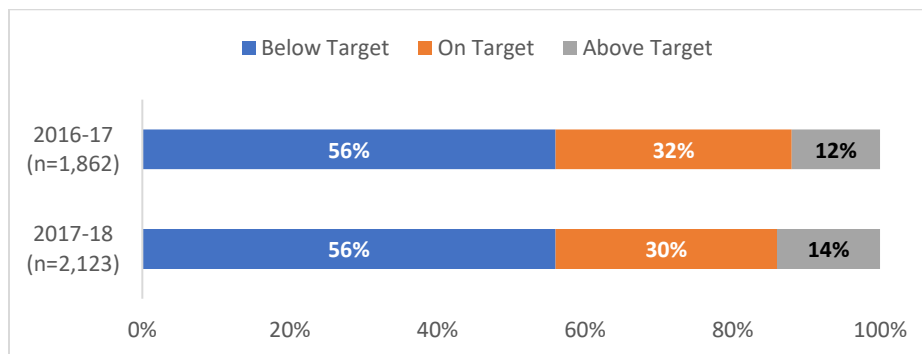
Writing tasks are scored by teams of teachers at each school site and teachers do not score their own students' work. Through 2017-18, writing tasks were scored using an APS-approved rubric. Starting in spring 2019, all Virginia school divisions will use a common rubric provided by VDOE.

Secondary students take the statewide Writing Standards of Learning (SOL) exam in 8th grade and as an end of course exam in high school, typically in 11th grade.

Grade 5 Writing Assessment

In the first two years APS has used the local writing task, 44% of students scored on or above target (figure 82).

Figure 82: 5th Grade Writing Assessment Results, 2016-17 through 2017-18



Variation in Performance

Table 11 shows 2017-18 outcomes on the 5th grade writing assessment for different student groups, including comparisons by gender, English learner status, economic status, disability status, and race/ethnicity.

- **Female** students scored on or above target at a rate 14 percentage points higher than male students.
- There was a gap of 31-35 percentage points for **English learners, economically disadvantaged** students, **students with disabilities**, and **black** and **Hispanic** students, in comparison to their peers who scored on or above target.
- **Asian** students scored on or above at a rate 10 percentage points lower than white students.

Pass rates by student groups for both years included in this evaluation are available in **Appendix E3**. Trends were similar in 2016-17.

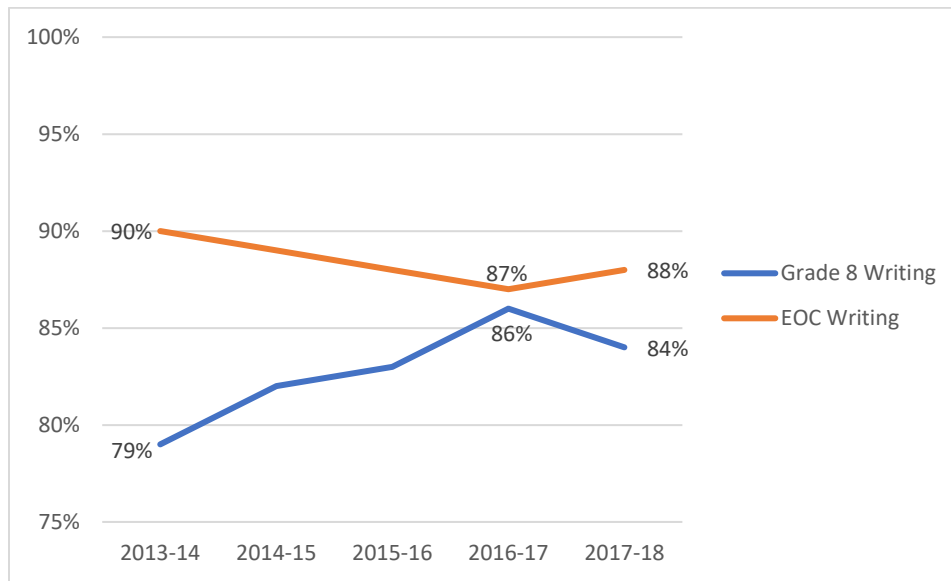
Table 11: Grade 5 Writing Assessment Performance by Student Groups, 2017-18

Group	Below target	On target	Above target
Female (n=1,044)	49%	33%	17%
Male (n=1,079)	63%	26%	10%
Non-EL (n= 1,459)	46%	36%	18%
EL (n=668)	79%	17%	4%
Non-disadvantaged (n=1,451)	47%	35%	18%
Disadvantaged (n=672)	78%	18%	4%
Non-SWD (n=1,826)	52%	33%	16%
SWD (n=297)	86%	13%	1%
Asian (n=170)	53%	31%	16%
Black (n=202)	75%	18%	7%
Hispanic (n=581)	77%	18%	5%
White (n=1,053)	43%	38%	19%
Other (n=117)	50%	35%	15%

Writing SOL Exams

This evaluation includes Writing SOL pass rates for the last five years (figure 83). Trends for both tests reversed in 2017-18 as the pass rate on the 8th grade test dipped for the first time in five years and the pass rate on the end of course test increased slightly after years of small declines.

Figure 83: Writing SOL Pass Rates, 2013-14 through 2017-18



Variation in Performance

Tables 12 and 13 show 2017-18 Writing SOL pass rates for different student groups, including comparisons by gender, English learner status, economic status, disability status, and race/ethnicity. Pass rates by student groups for all years included in this evaluation are available in **Appendix E4**.

There is a small but persistent gap between **female** and **male** students, with female students passing at rates up to seven percentage points higher than male students in the last two years.

The gap in pass rates between **English learners** and **non-English learners** has decreased over time on the **grade 8** test and increased over time on the **high school end of course** test. In 2017-18, the gap was 31 percentage points for both tests.

There has been a similar trend with **economically disadvantaged** students, though with a smaller gap for each test – 21 percentage points on the **grade 8** test and 18 percentage points on the **high school end of course** test.

The gap in pass rates for **students with disabilities** and **students without disabilities** has increased over time on both tests, to 48 percentage points on the **grade 8** test in 2017-18, and 34 percentage points on the **high school end of course** test.

Over the past five years, APS has seen a steady decrease in the gap in pass rates between **white** students and students of other races/ethnicities on the **grade 8** Writing SOL test. In 2017-18, the gap was four percentage points for **Asian** students and about 20 percentage points for both **black** and **Hispanic** students. There were gaps of similar sizes for the 2017-18 **high school end of course** test. For Hispanic students, this represents an increase in the gap, which was 16 percentage points in 2013-14.

Table 12: Grade 8 Writing SOL Pass Rates by Student Groups, 2017-18

Group	Number Tested	Percent Passed
Female	858	88%
Male	843	81%
Non-EL	1,433	89%
EL	268	58%
Non-disadvantaged	1,262	90%
Disadvantaged	439	69%
Non-SWD	1,417	92%
SWD	284	44%
Asian	133	88%
Black	183	72%
Hispanic	413	71%
White	862	92%
Other	110	89%

Table 13: High School End of Course Writing SOL Pass Rates by Student Groups, 2017-18

Group	Number Tested	Percent Passed
Female	781	91%
Male	887	86%
Non-EL	1,371	94%
EL	297	63%
Non-disadvantaged	1,209	93%
Disadvantaged	459	75%
Non-SWD	1,394	94%
SWD	274	60%
Asian	163	93%
Black	189	76%
Hispanic	447	75%
White	766	97%
Other	103	95%

Student Achievement in Higher Level ELA Courses

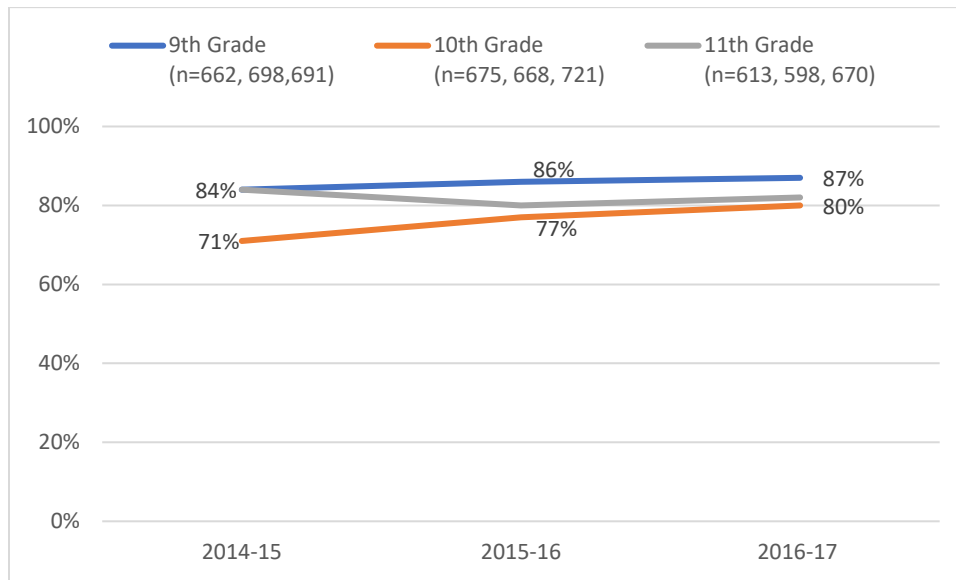
In an effort to determine the extent to which high school students are successful in higher level ELA coursework, this evaluation examines three questions:

- What percentage of students enrolled in advanced ELA coursework continue on an advanced pathway and enroll in an advanced ELA class the following school year?
- What grades do students get in advanced ELA classes?
- What percentage of students enrolled in AP and IB ELA courses pass the corresponding exams?

Continuation on Advanced Pathway

Most students who are enrolled in advanced ELA coursework continue on an advanced pathway the following year, and this has generally been on an upward trend between 2014-15 and 2017-18 (figure 84). The students least likely to continue on an advanced pathway are 10th graders, though the gap between these students and those in 9th and 11th grade has narrowed over the past three years.

Figure 84: Percentage of Students Enrolled in Advanced ELA Coursework who Continued to Take Advanced ELA Coursework the Following Year, 2014-15 through 2016-17



While the percentage of students continuing on an advanced pathway is high, this rate varies for different student groups. **Male** students, **English learners**, **economically disadvantaged**, **black**, and **Hispanic** students continue on an advanced pathway at rates lower than their peers. The gap is greatest for **English learners**, who continued on an advanced pathway at a rate about 25 percentage points lower than non-English learners in each of the last three years, and **students with disabilities**, with gaps of 16, 26, and 18 percentage points in 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17.

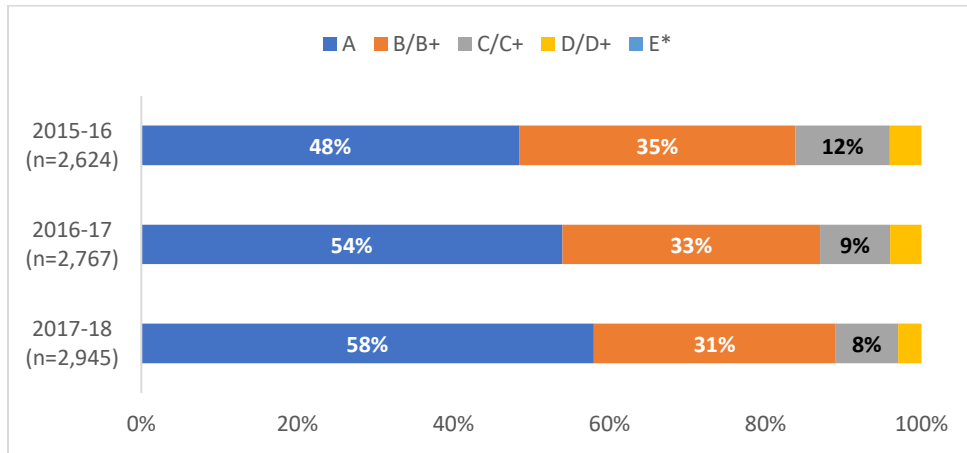
Table 14: Continuation on Advanced ELA Pathway by Student Groups, 2014-15 through 2016-17

Student Group	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Female	1,134	83%	1,144	85%	1,211	88%
Male	816	75%	818	75%	871	76%
Non-EL	1,868	81%	1,903	82%	2,039	84%
EL	82	56%	59	61%	43	58%
Non-disadvantaged	1,646	82%	1,673	83%	1,777	85%
Disadvantaged	304	65%	289	71%	305	73%
Non-SWD	1,884	80%	1,898	82%	2,027	84%
SWD	66	64%	64	56%	55	66%
Asian	187	79%	187	84%	199	80%
Black	182	73%	160	71%	170	78%
Hispanic	317	69%	292	67%	304	76%
White	1,153	83%	1,194	85%	1,261	85%
Other	111	78%	129	85%	148	88%

Grades in Advanced Coursework

The percentage of students earning a final grade of A in advanced ELA coursework has increased from 48% to 58% over the past three years, aligning with small decreases in the percentage of students earning Bs, Cs, and Ds over the same time period.

Figure 85: Grades Received in Advanced ELA Coursework, 2015-16 through 2017-18



*Less than 1% of students received an E each school year.

Table 15 shows the percentage of students within different student groups earning As and Bs in 2017-18, as well as the gap in the percentage of students earning As, and the gap in the percentage of students earning either an A or a B. Students most likely to lag behind their peers are **English learners**, **economically disadvantaged** students, **students with disabilities**, and **black** and **Hispanic** students. These gaps are as large as 30 percentage points when looking at the percentage of students earning As, and decrease to between 15-20 percentage points when looking at the percentage of students earning either an A or a B.

Table 15: As and Bs in Advanced ELA Coursework by Student Groups, 2017-18

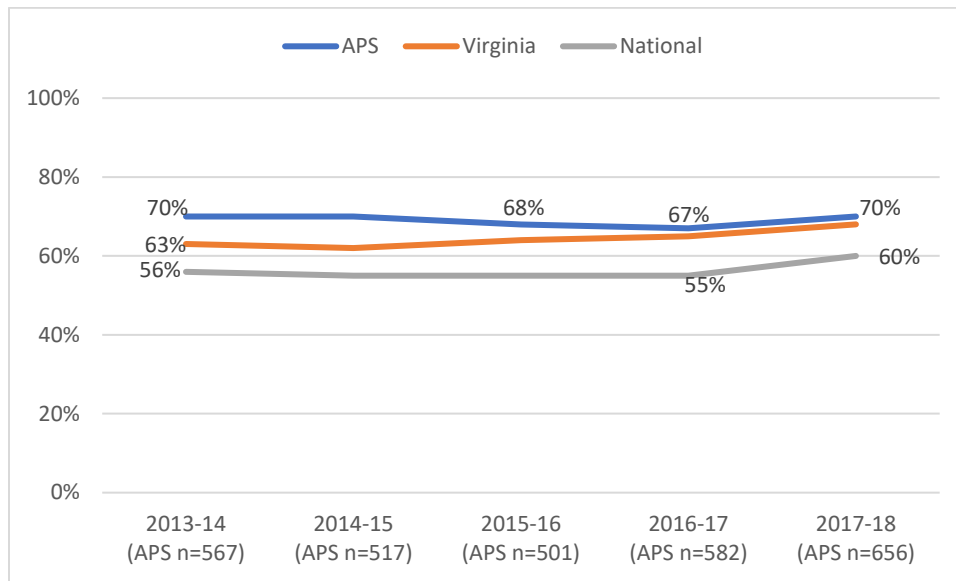
Group	A	B/B+	Total A & B	A Gap	A & B Gap
Female (n=1,733)	65%	25%	90%	18	4
Male (n=1,212)	47%	39%	86%		
Non-EL (n=2,846)	59%	30%	89%	29	15
EL (n=99)	30%	44%	74%		
Non-disadvantaged (n=2,606)	61%	29%	90%	26	13
Disadvantaged (n=339)	35%	42%	77%		
Non-SWD (n=2,874)	59%	31%	90%	32	21
SWD (n=71)	27%	42%	69%		
Asian (n=256)	56%	34%	90%	8	2
Black (n=238)	38%	40%	78%	26	14
Hispanic (n=472)	41%	36%	77%	23	15
White (1,752)	64%	28%	92%		
Other (n=227)	67%	24%	91%		

AP Exam Results

The **Advanced Placement (AP) program** is an intensive program developed by the College Board that offers students an opportunity to develop their academic strengths through rigorous college-level curricula and challenging national exams. AP classes are available at all APS comprehensive high schools. AP exams are scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with 3 or above considered a passing score. In the area of English language arts, APS students may take **English Language & Composition** and **English Literature & Composition**.

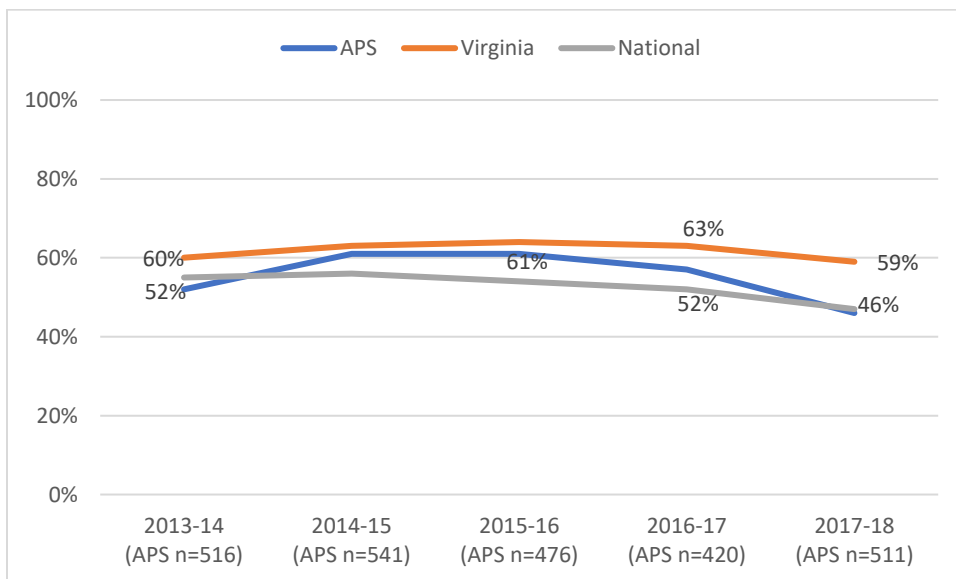
While the number of APS students participating in the AP English Language & Composition exam increased in the last couple of years, the pass rate has remained relatively stable at around 70% each year from 2013-14 through 2017-18 (figure 86). This pass rate surpassed state and national pass rates.

Figure 86: AP English Language & Composition Pass Rate, 2013–14 through 2017–18



Results on the AP English Literature & Composition exam have fluctuated over the past five years and dropped to their lowest point in 2017-18 (46%), a decrease reflected in state and national pass rates as well (figure 87). The 2017-18 pass rate puts APS on par with the national pass rate and 13 percentage points below the Virginia pass rate.

Figure 87: AP English Literature & Composition Pass Rate, 2013–14 through 2017–18



Both participation in the AP exams and performance vary by student group, as shown in tables 16 (Language & Composition) and 17 (Literature & Composition). While it can be hard to draw conclusions about gaps in the pass rate for some groups due to low numbers of participants, there large differences in the pass rate for **English learners**, **economically disadvantaged** students, and **black** and **Hispanic** students.

Table 16: AP English Language & Composition Pass Rate by Student Groups, 2013-14 through 2017-18

Group	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
Females	316	71%	297	71%	294	70%	348	66%	372	70%
Males	251	69%	220	70%	207	67%	234	68%	284	70%
Non-EL	539	73%	490	73%	483	71%	570	68%	633	72%
EL	28	25%	27	22%	18	6%	12	17%	23	17%
Non-Disadvantaged	475	77%	442	76%	423	74%	492	72%	574	75%
Disadvantaged	92	37%	75	37%	78	36%	90	37%	82	38%
Non-SWD	546	71%	499	71%	484	69%	563	68%	636	70%
SWD	21	52%	18	61%	17	41%	19	37%	20	65%
Asian	51	55%	48	63%	49	69%	67	54%	61	64%
Black	36	33%	50	36%	44	32%	51	49%	49	45%
Hispanic	109	55%	75	47%	71	47%	89	40%	81	44%
White	342	82%	324	81%	306	79%	341	77%	415	79%
Other	29	62%	20	90%	31	65%	34	77%	50	70%

Table 17: AP English Literature & Composition Pass Rate by Student Groups, 2013-14 through 2017-18

Group	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
Females	290	53%	290	63%	279	61%	244	60%	319	46%
Males	226	51%	251	59%	197	61%	176	53%	192	45%
Non-EL	506	53%	537	62%	472	61%	415	58%	497	47%
EL	10	30%	*	*	*	*	5	0%	14	7%
Non-Disadvantaged	448	57%	475	66%	421	65%	366	63%	511	46%
Disadvantaged	68	22%	66	30%	55	29%	54	20%	*	*
Non-SWD	504	52%	521	62%	460	61%	413	57%	511	46%
SWD	12	58%	20	45%	16	69%	7	71%	48	33%
Asian	48	33%	42	45%	41	44%	35	63%	58	29%
Black	46	33%	32	31%	37	41%	28	21%	42	17%
Hispanic	86	31%	95	46%	59	36%	59	27%	79	29%
White	311	64%	336	70%	324	69%	274	69%	306	56%
Other	25	56%	36	67%	15	80%	24	54%	26	58%

*Fewer than 5 students; data omitted.

IB Exam Results

International Baccalaureate (IB) is an academic program licensed by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) that, upon successful completion, results in the awarding of a high school degree. This program is offered at Washington-Lee High School. The curriculum emphasizes the importance of international awareness and responsible citizenship. At the completion of certain courses, students take a test scored on a scale of 1 to 7; a score of 4 or above is considered passing.

Between 78-106 students at Washington-Lee participated in the IB Higher Level (HL) Literature in each of the past five years. Each year, the pass rate was between 98%-100%.

SECTION 2: RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Connections with Systemic APS Processes and Initiatives

In addition to the specific recommendations described below, APS should carefully consider this report's findings and recommendations in light of the 2018-24 Strategic Plan and the overarching processes, initiatives, and resources that must be considered when implementing the plan. Fundamental and systematic coordination is needed so that we can share, learn from, and build upon both our challenges and successes in a concerted manner.

In the fall of 2018, the School Board adopted performance objectives for the 2018-24 Strategic Plan. The ELA Office is particularly focused on the goal of **Multiple Pathways to Success for All Students: *Ensure that every student is challenged and engaged while providing multiple pathways for student success by broadening opportunities, building support systems and eliminating barriers. APS will eliminate opportunity gaps so all students achieve excellence.***

The ELA Office's response to the evaluation focuses on the performance objectives aligned with this goal:

- Increased achievement for all reporting groups on district and state assessments shows progress toward eliminating the opportunity gap.
- All students will make at least one year's worth of growth as measured by federal, state, and/or district assessments.
- Historically over-represented and under-represented groups accessing services will be aligned with student need and proportionate with demographics.
- All graduates will have engaged in at least one experience that demonstrates productive workplace skills, qualities, and behaviors and may include a work-based experience (internships, externships, formal job shadowing, etc.).
- At least 80% of students with disabilities will spend 80% or more of their school day in a general education setting.

Strategies to achieve these performance objectives will include:

- Embedding global competencies, critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship into curriculum and instruction.
- Adapting curriculum and instruction to the needs of each student. Increasing meaningful inclusive learning environments for students.
- Providing learning opportunities in a variety of settings, times, and formats that include opportunities for students to align knowledge, skills, and personal interests with career and higher educational opportunities including internships and externships.
- Increasing high-quality options for PreK-12 instructional models within and beyond neighborhood schools.
- Ensuring equity of access and opportunity across all school programs.

- Addressing unconscious racial bias throughout APS.

Additionally, the ELA’s Office response to the findings are aligned to the strategic plan goal focused on an **Engaged Workforce** in which APS is committed to *recruiting, hiring, and investing in a high-quality and diverse workforce*. Specifically, the recommendations will strengthen professional learning by providing growth and leadership opportunities for all staff by providing meaningful, high-quality, and relevant professional learning opportunities.

Recommendations and Staff Action Plan

Recommendation #1: Provide growth and leadership opportunities for all staff by providing meaningful, high-quality, and relevant professional learning opportunities in order to support retaining and advancing high-quality employees (Strategic Plan Engaged Workforce Goal, Implementation Strategy). This includes developing focused and sustained professional learning with an eye to the PreK-12 literacy progression:

- Increasing the level of teachers’ content knowledge as it applies to the area of foundational reading development.
- Creating a universal professional learning plan for new hires to APS.
- Creating a focused and sustained professional learning plan for teachers in the area of literacy.
- Increasing the level of teachers’ content knowledge as it applies to the area of best practices and personalized reading instruction.
- Increasing the level of teachers’ content knowledge as it applies to differentiation of ELA strands.

Action Plan for Recommendation #1			
Goals	Measures of Success	Action Steps	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve general literacy awareness for teachers in grades K-8 (with regards to phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension) • Improve general literacy awareness for ESOL/HILT and special education teachers (with regards to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent instructional approach across schools (division-wide training and support for literacy coaches based on established model) • Consistency in use of curricular materials and resources, particularly for struggling students (fidelity should be expected) 	Redefine the position description of the K-8 reading specialist to serve as a literacy coach to support teacher development and the consistent implementation of ELA instruction, curriculum, and assessment. This position will not constitute new staffing, but rather a	SY 2019-20

<p>phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a teacher leadership pathway for teachers that does not currently exist in APS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve instruction and use of resources • Consistency in the time being spent on ELA instruction across schools and grade levels (dedicated, daily activities regarding both phonological and phonemic awareness) • At least 95% of teacher will respond favorably that opportunities for professional learning meet their needs, as indicated on the Your Voice Matters survey. (Performance Objective XX) 	<p>redefinition of the current reading specialist position across schools. The position will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicate the majority of time to embedded professional learning with the goal of improving teachers' pedagogy and content knowledge in literacy best practices • Provide direct student support (administer or coordinate assessments, teach small groups, etc.) • Monitor use of resources • Utilize APS resources to provide professional learning opportunities for literacy coaches <p>Create an ELA content academy for administrators</p> <p>Create a Literacy Academy for all teachers (K-12). Content will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on early literacy development and teaching students to read • Interventions for struggling readers • Content-specific courses for secondary teachers involving 	<p>Summer 2019</p> <p>SY 2019-20</p>
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		<p>English content and instructional strategies</p> <p>Collaborate with offices and ESOL/HILT, special education, gifted services and ATSS regarding professional learning on co-teaching models and collaboration</p> <p>Collaborate with content area offices in DTL to provide professional learning in content area literacy and disciplinary literacy</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p>Increase the level of teachers' content knowledge as it applies to the area of foundational reading development, specifically for primary elementary teachers as well as secondary ESOL/HILT and special education teachers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of early literacy training for members of DTL cohort (to become Trainers of Teachers) to include ATSS, ESOL/HILT, Special Education, and Office of Equity and Excellence staff • Targeted training for teachers that reflects a professional learning plan 	<p>Create a professional learning plan for teachers regarding an increase of content knowledge in the area of reading.</p> <p>Engage in coaching and monitoring cycles with teachers</p>	<p>SY 2019-20</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p>Create a universal professional learning plan for new hires to APS focusing on content knowledge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A long-term professional learning plan for new hires that outlines a sequencing of courses and training (online, face to face, and blended) regarding literacy and English content knowledge as applicable. • Increased achievement for all reporting groups on district and state 	<p>Continue to offer a variety of learning opportunities in professional learning and expand the catalog of choices offered by ELA based upon need and feedback from DTL, teachers, principals, and parent advisory committees. Opportunities will align with the APS</p>	<p>On-going</p>

	<p>assessments shows progress toward eliminating the opportunity gap (Performance Objective 1).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students will make at least one year’s worth of growth as measured by federal, state, and/or district assessments (Performance Objective 2). At least 95% of teacher will respond favorably that opportunities for professional learning meet their needs, as indicated on the Your Voice Matters survey. (Performance Objective XX) 	<p>Teaching and Learning Framework.</p> <p>Train new hires in the use of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> APS curriculum as it aligns to the 2017 Standards of Learning APS assessments and screeners as they relate to ELA, and how the results of screeners may be used to plan, modify, monitor, and/or structure instruction. The use of resources (for core and intervention) to meet the needs of students. Pedagogy of ELA 	<p>August 2019 and on-going</p>
<p>Increase the level of teachers’ content knowledge as it applies to the area of best practices and personalized reading instruction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and walkthroughs (observations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align the work of the ELA Office to the APS Teaching and Learning Framework Continue and create professional learning opportunities regarding personalized reading instruction 	<p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p>Increase the level of teachers’ content knowledge as it applies to differentiation of ELA strands.</p>	<p>Observations of differentiation in content, process, product, and learning environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of implementation of gifted resources 	<p>Expand ELA professional learning opportunities to include a focus on differentiation of ELA strands.</p> <p>Revise and expand curriculum documents to</p>	<p>On-going</p>

		include a focus on extension. Work in collaboration with gifted office regarding teachers' content knowledge and instructional practice with regards to differentiation.	June-August 2019 and on-going On-going
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Recommendation #2: Adapt curriculum and instruction to the needs of each student through an increase in access to reading specialists for high school students (Strategic Plan Student Success Goal, Implementation Strategy)

Action Plan for Recommendation #2			
Goals	Measures of Success	Action Steps	Timeline
To improve reading skills of students who need additional support (with regards to phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension) through an extra class period for students to develop and refine foundational literacy skills with a reading specialist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased achievement for all reporting groups on district and state assessments shows progress toward eliminating the opportunity gap (Performance Objective 1). All students will make at least one year's worth of growth as measured by federal, state, and or district assessments (Performance Objective 2). 	Allocate staffing for a dedicated Reading Specialist position in grades 9-12 for the general student population to access.	SY 2019-20
		Utilize APS resources to provide professional learning opportunities for secondary reading specialists	SY 2020-21
		Work with school leadership teams regarding the role and positions of reading specialists to meet the specific needs of schools	SY 2020-21

Recommendation #3: Manage resources to ensure consistency in students’ access to high quality texts within ELA classrooms.

Action Plan for Recommendation #3			
Goal	Measures of Success	Action Steps	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a budget line item for the purchase of authentic texts as part of yearly updates to K-12 classroom libraries. This would allow teachers to differentiate texts for students based upon the full spectrum of reading developmental continuums, levels, and interests within one classroom and for students to see themselves within the texts. This is outside of the instructional resource allocation process, which provides funding for the purchase of teacher resources every 7-10 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equitable access to texts across grade levels and schools Feedback and information collected from members of DTL, school administrators, specialists, and teachers 	<p>Update elementary and middle school classroom libraries regularly in order that they maintain relevance. (Previously, they have been updated on an every seven year adoption cycle.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update by purchasing books every year to meet the needs of students. Consultation with Library Services with regards to purchasing and recommendations. 	SY 2019-2020