

WEST BRANCH
NEEDS ASSESSMENT
JANUARY 2014



School Improvement Needs Assessment

Conducted by the Iowa Association of School Boards

(IASB)



NEEDS ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS

CHARACTERISTICS COMMON TO HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOLS

- Clear shared vision, purpose, and goals
- High expectations for student learning
- Leadership and teamwork at all levels
- Rigorous content standards and a comprehensive assessment system



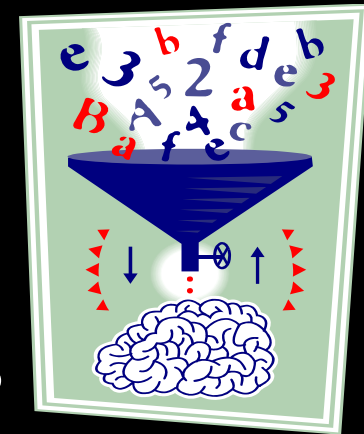
NEEDS ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS (CONT'D) CHARACTERISTICS COMMON TO HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOLS

- High quality instruction
- Professional development focused on improvement
- Access to and use of data
- Family and community connections
- Sound finances



SURVEY RESPONDENTS

- 2 Board Members
- 6 Administrators
- 29 Teachers
- 71 Parents/Community Members
- 4 Other Certified Staff



ROLES OF THE BOARD/LEADERSHIP TEAMS

- Set clear expectations.
- Create conditions for success.
- Hold the system accountable to the expectations.
- Build public will.
- Learn together as a team.



FINDINGS

The results of the Needs Assessment are displayed graphically in the next sets of slides. Results are compared for district board members and staff, district parents and community members, and students.

CAUTION

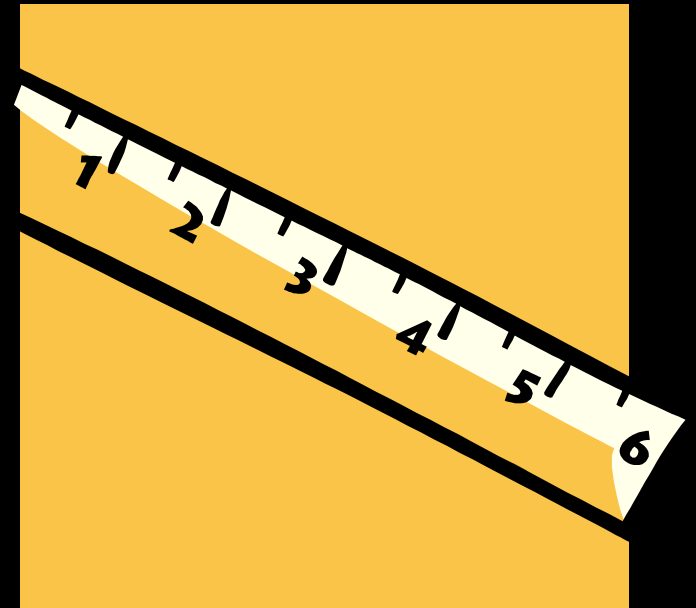
The survey results represent peoples perceptions/opinions about the current district status. It is not uncommon for perceptions to be different than reality.

GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

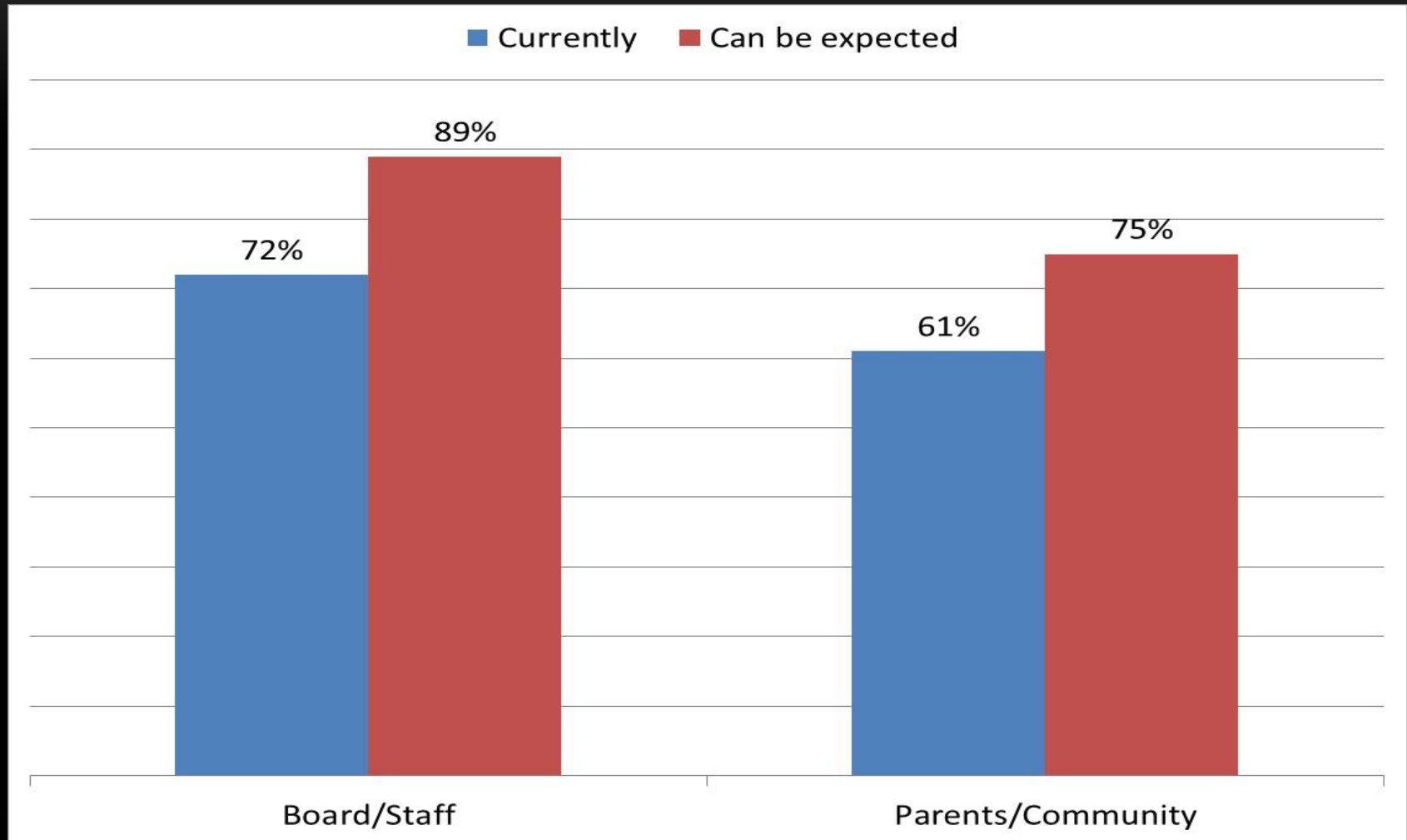


INDICATORS OF HIGH EXPECTATIONS

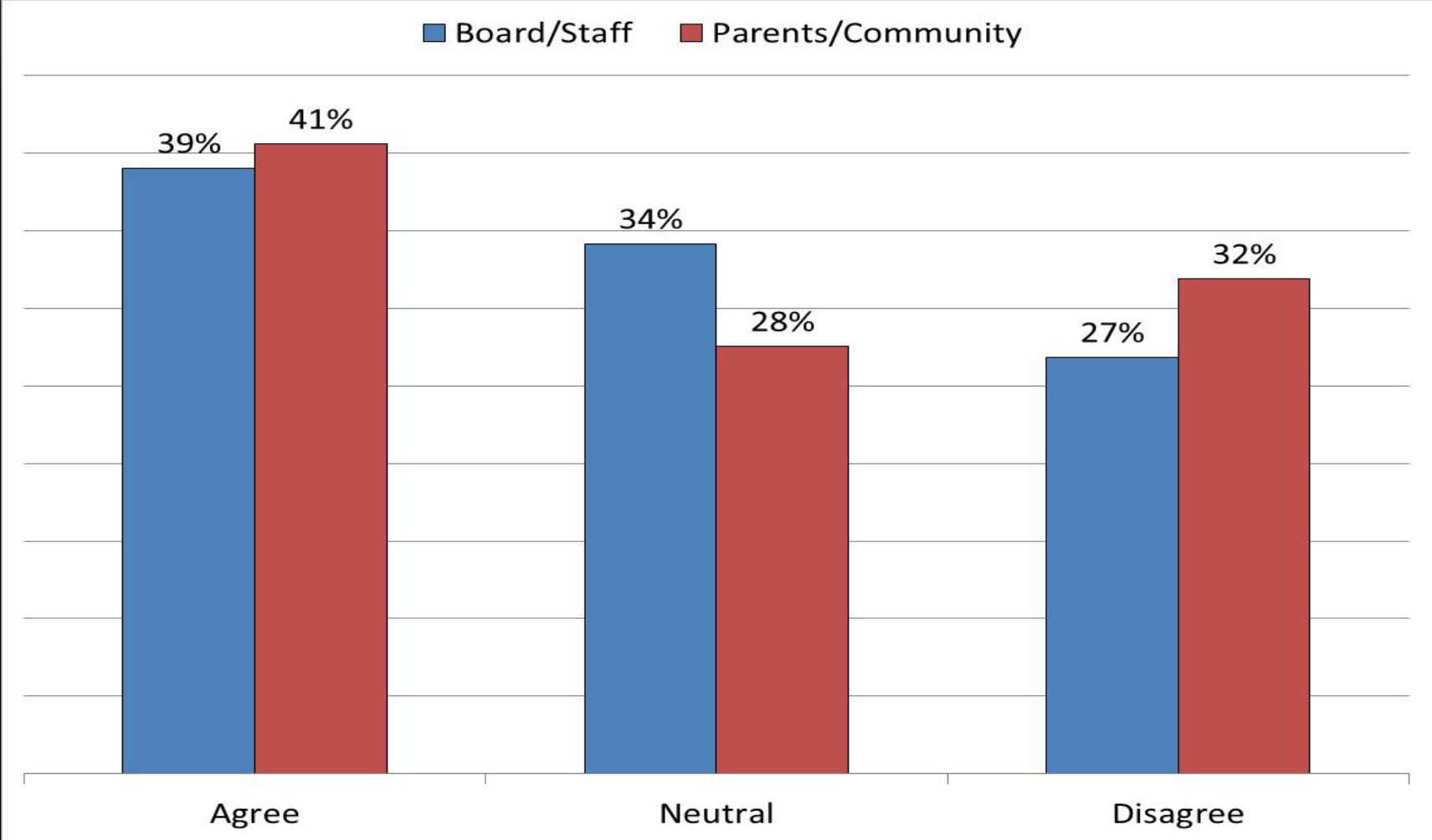
1. People indicate that they can get better.
2. There are ambitious/stretch goals.
3. There is a lack of excuses.



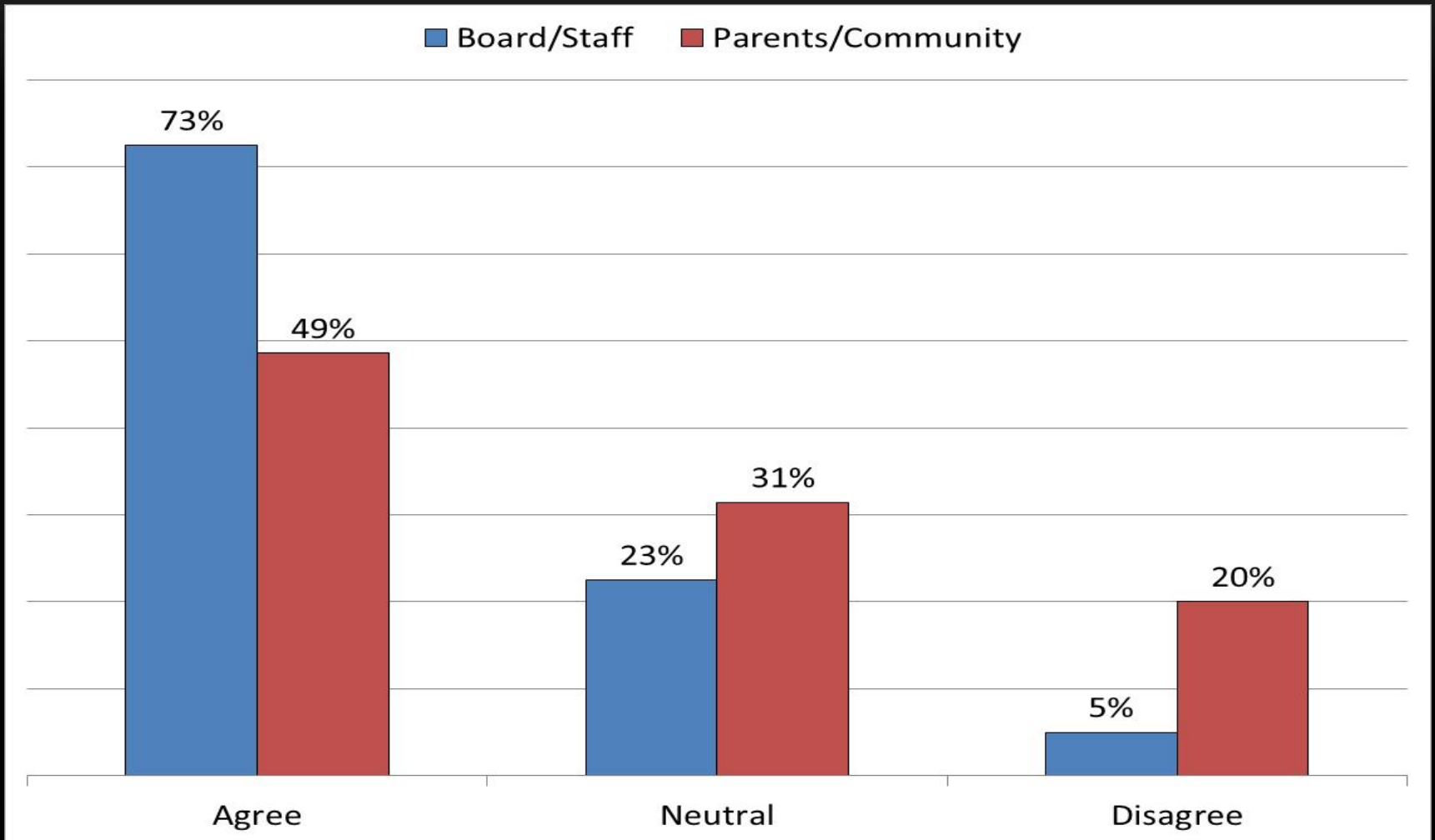
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS BELIEVED TO BE AT GRADE-LEVEL



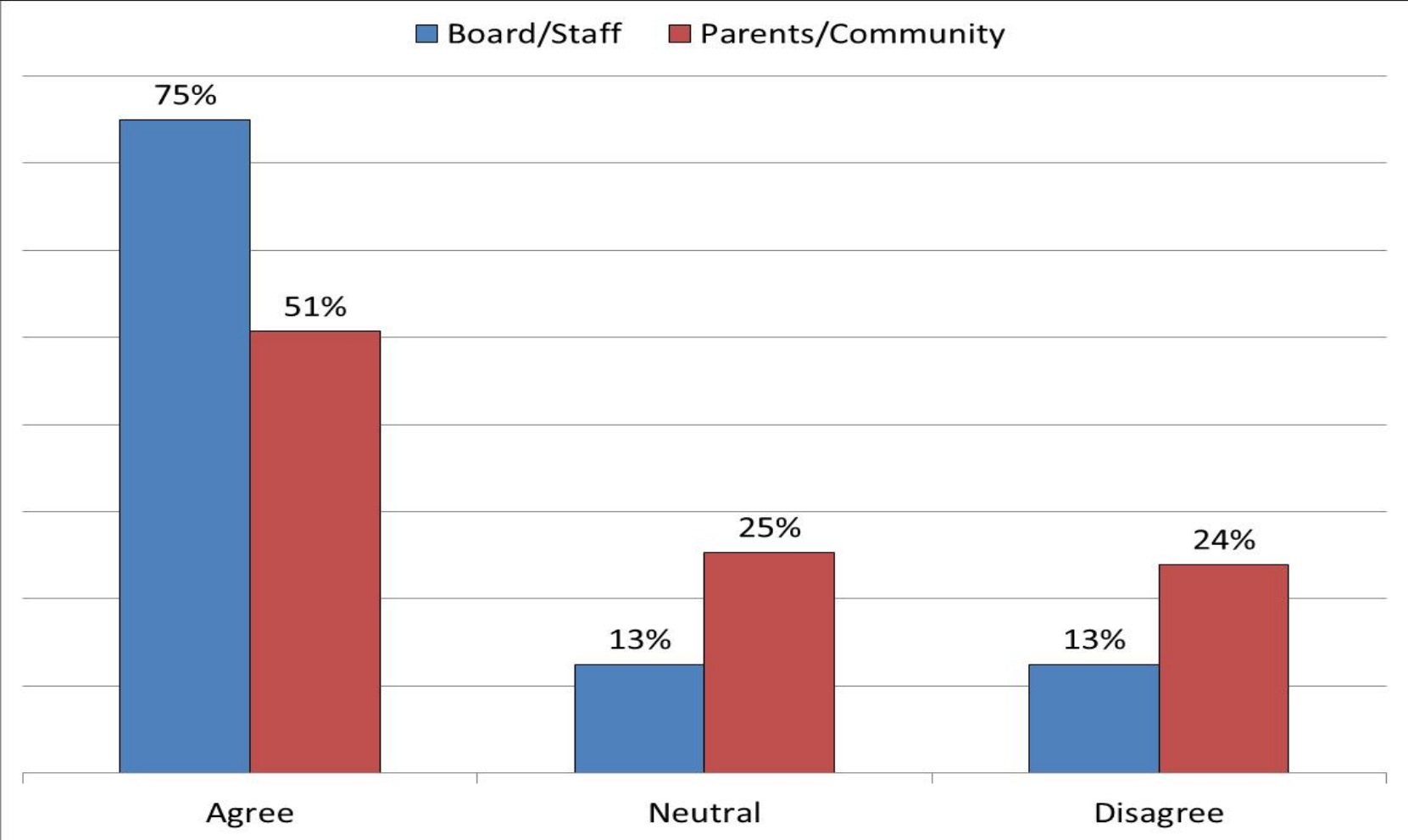
SURVEY ITEM#1 - "THE CURRENT LEVEL OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IS ABOUT WHAT WE CAN EXPECT."



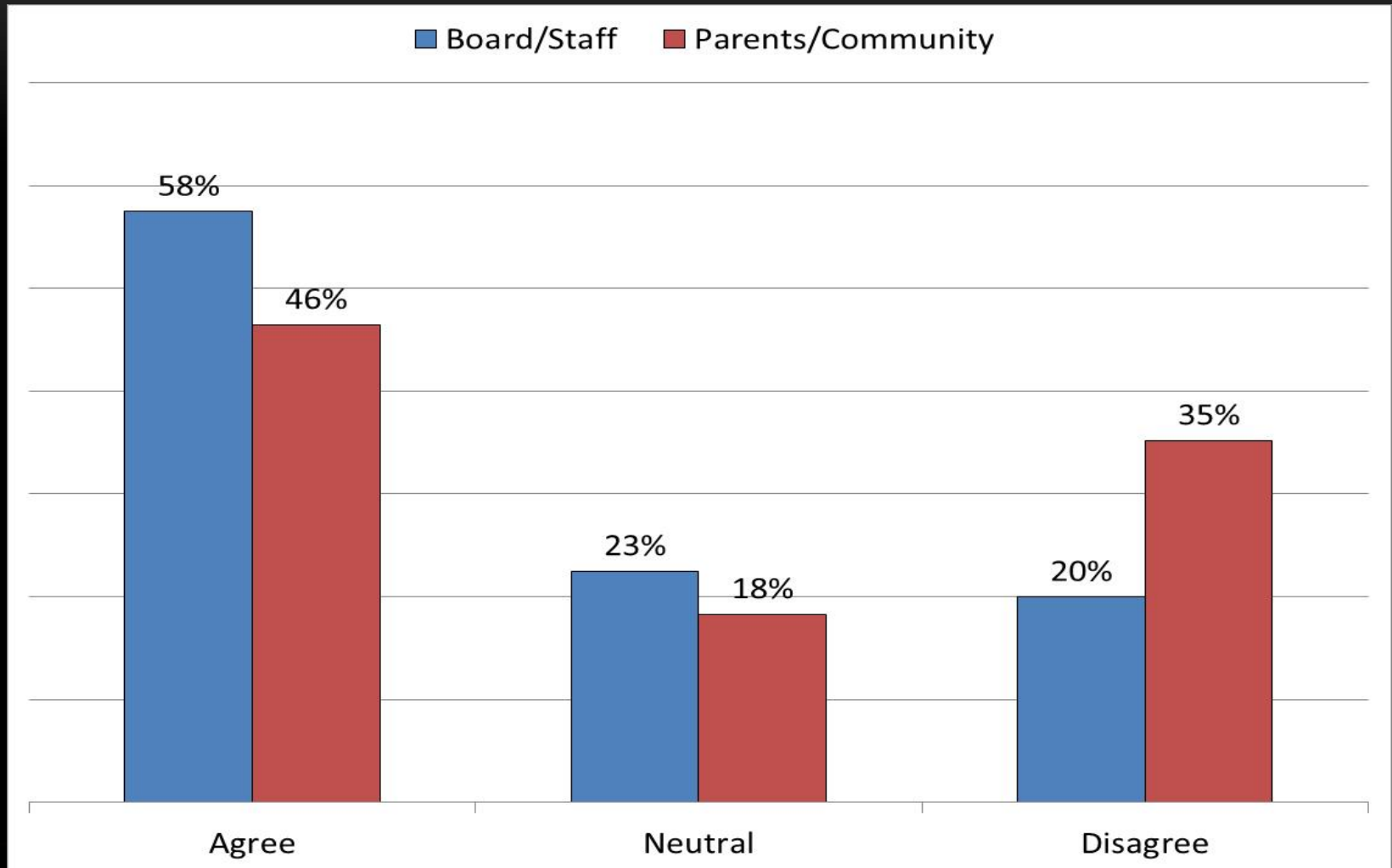
SURVEY ITEM#2 - "THIS DISTRICT DOES NOT MAKE OR ACCEPT EXCUSES FOR THE CURRENT LEVEL OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT."



SURVEY ITEM#6 - "VIRTUALLY ALL CHILDREN CAN LEARN AT HIGH LEVELS."

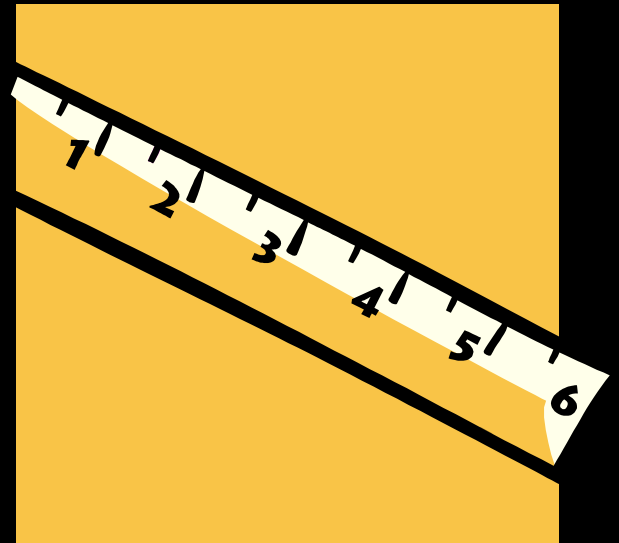


SURVEY ITEM#11 - "STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT BARRIERS, SUCH AS POVERTY AND LACK OF FAMILY SUPPORT, CAN BE OVERCOME BY QUALITY TEACHING & LEARNING."

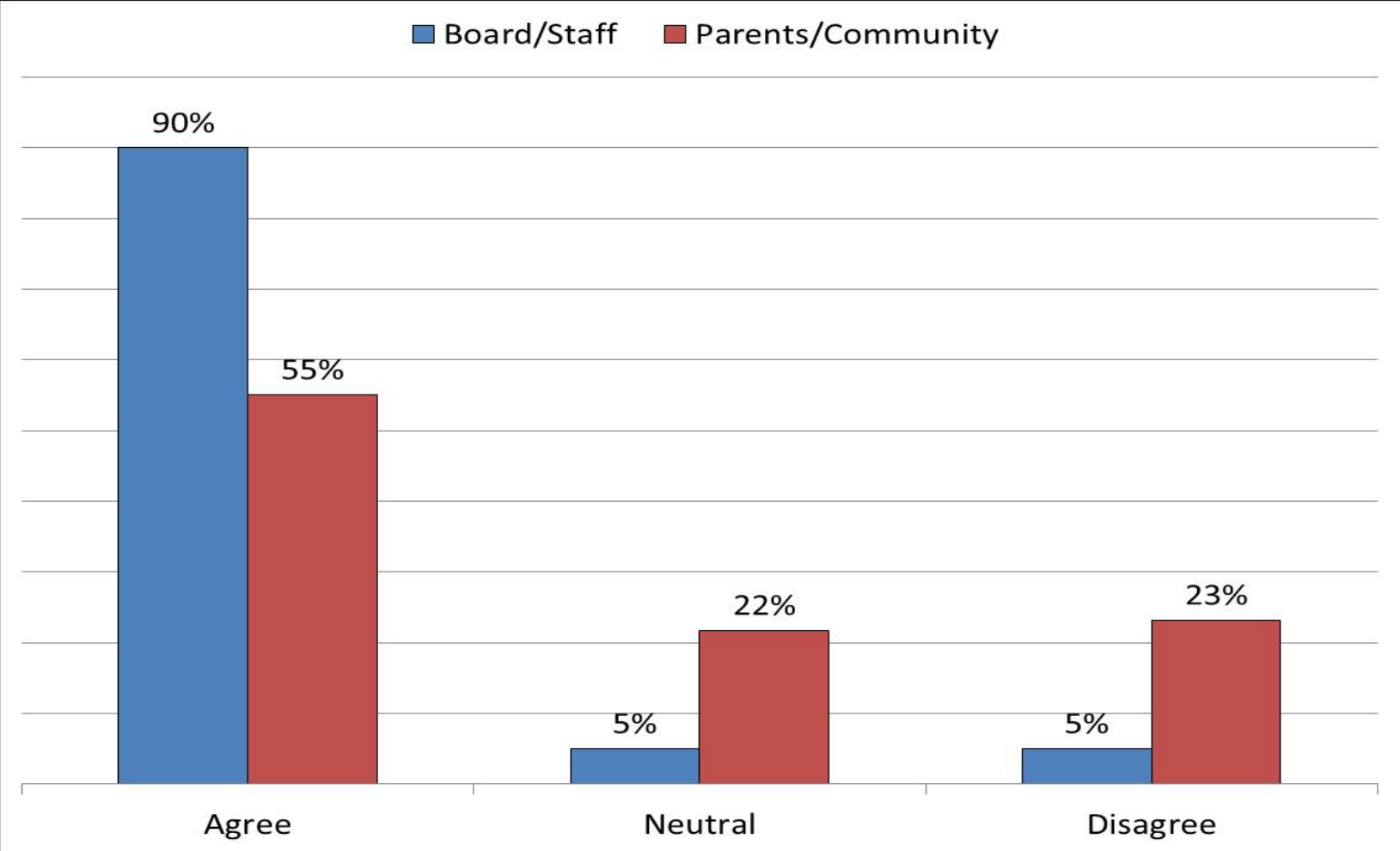


INDICATORS OF GOALS & PRIORITIES

1. There are clear goals with measurable targets.
2. At least one goal identified as highest priority.
3. There is a shared understanding of what the district is trying to improve.



SURVEY ITEM#3 - "THERE IS A SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO IMPROVE IN THIS DISTRICT."



GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS STRENGTHS:

1. Both staff and parents believe that many more students can be expected to achieve at grade level.
2. Three quarters of staff believe that virtually all students can achieve at high levels and that the district does not make excuses.
3. Most staff and parents believe there is a shared understanding of what the district is trying to improve.



GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Create urgency around the belief that virtually all students can learn at high levels, that barriers can be overcome, and that major improvements can and will be made in student achievement.
2. Identify one or two top priorities based on student achievement data and ensure that all publics know and are in support.

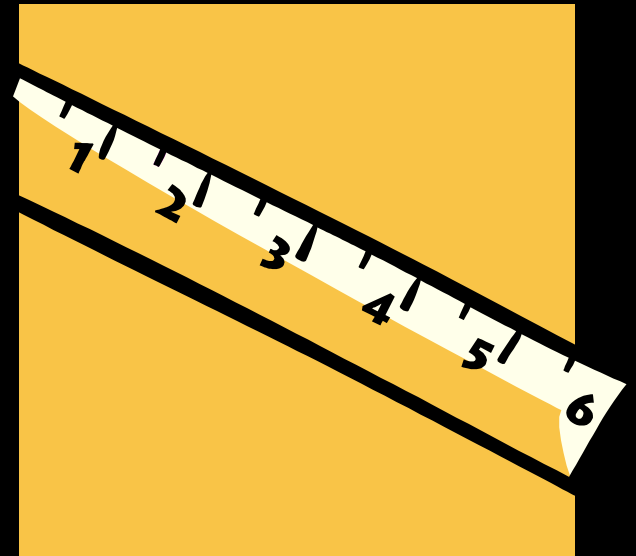


LEADERSHIP AND TEAMWORK

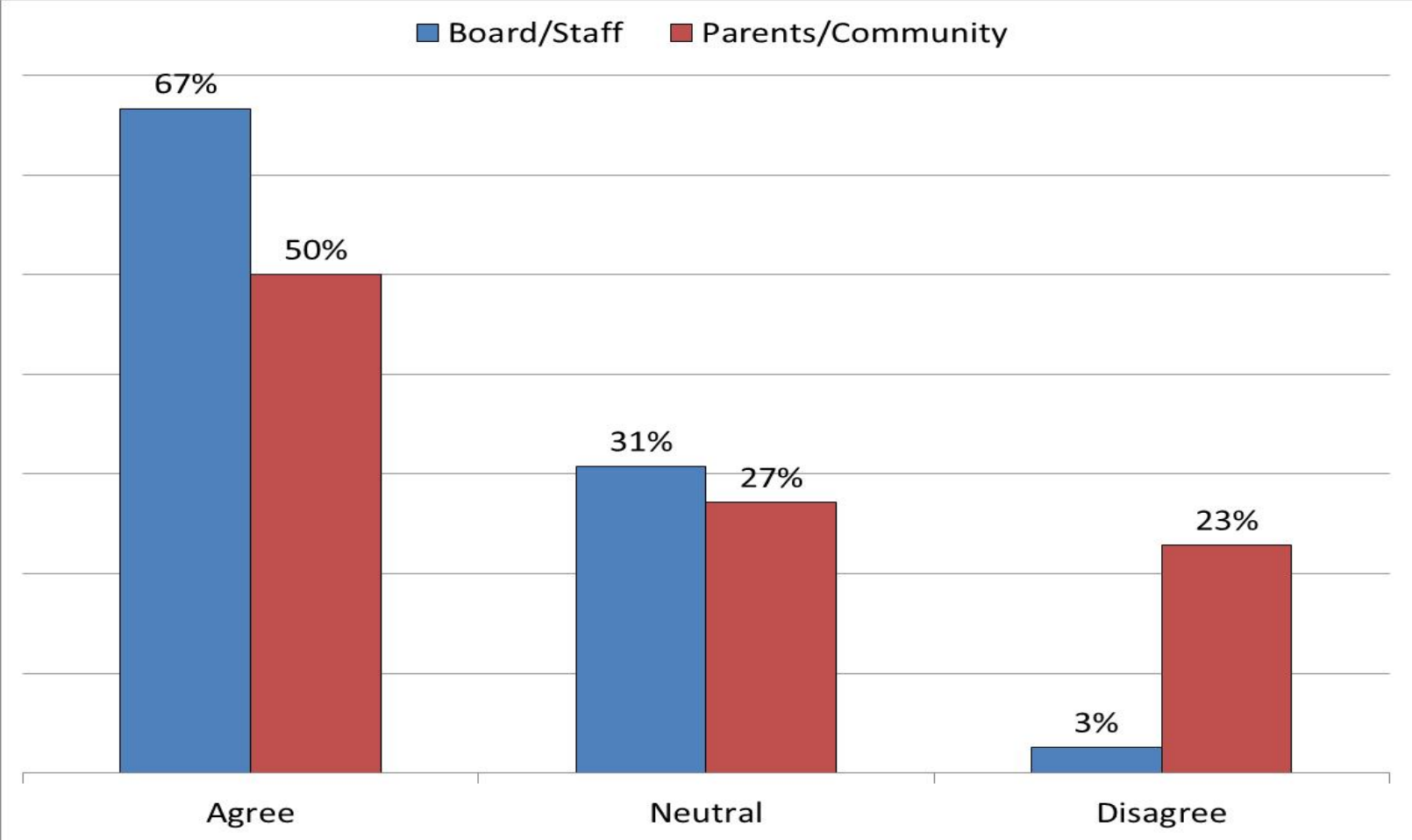


INDICATORS OF LEADERSHIP AND TEAMWORK

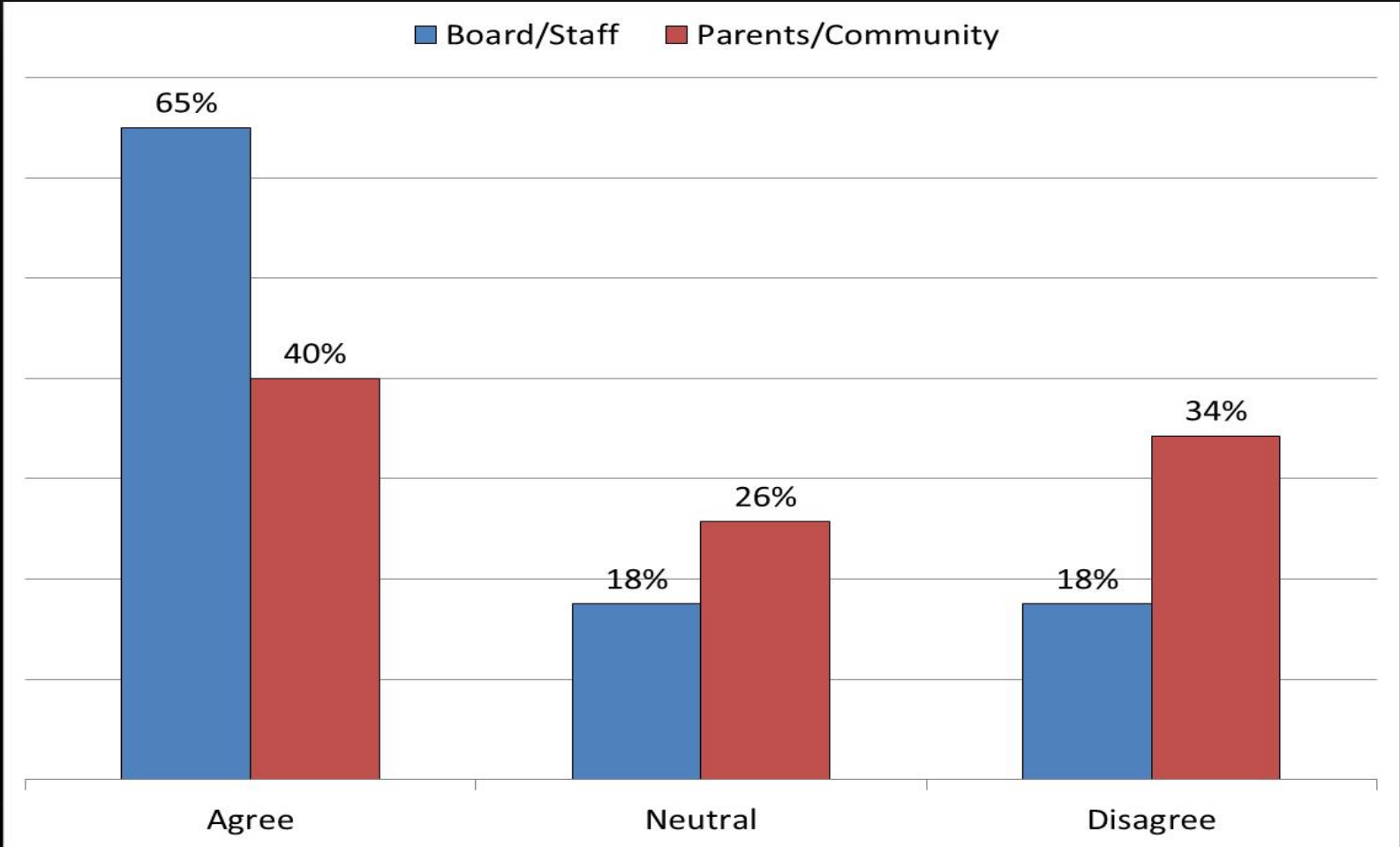
1. District leadership teams are established.
2. People can identify how they have a voice.
3. Everyone is clear on roles and responsibilities.
4. Leaders protect the focus and ensure goals are met.



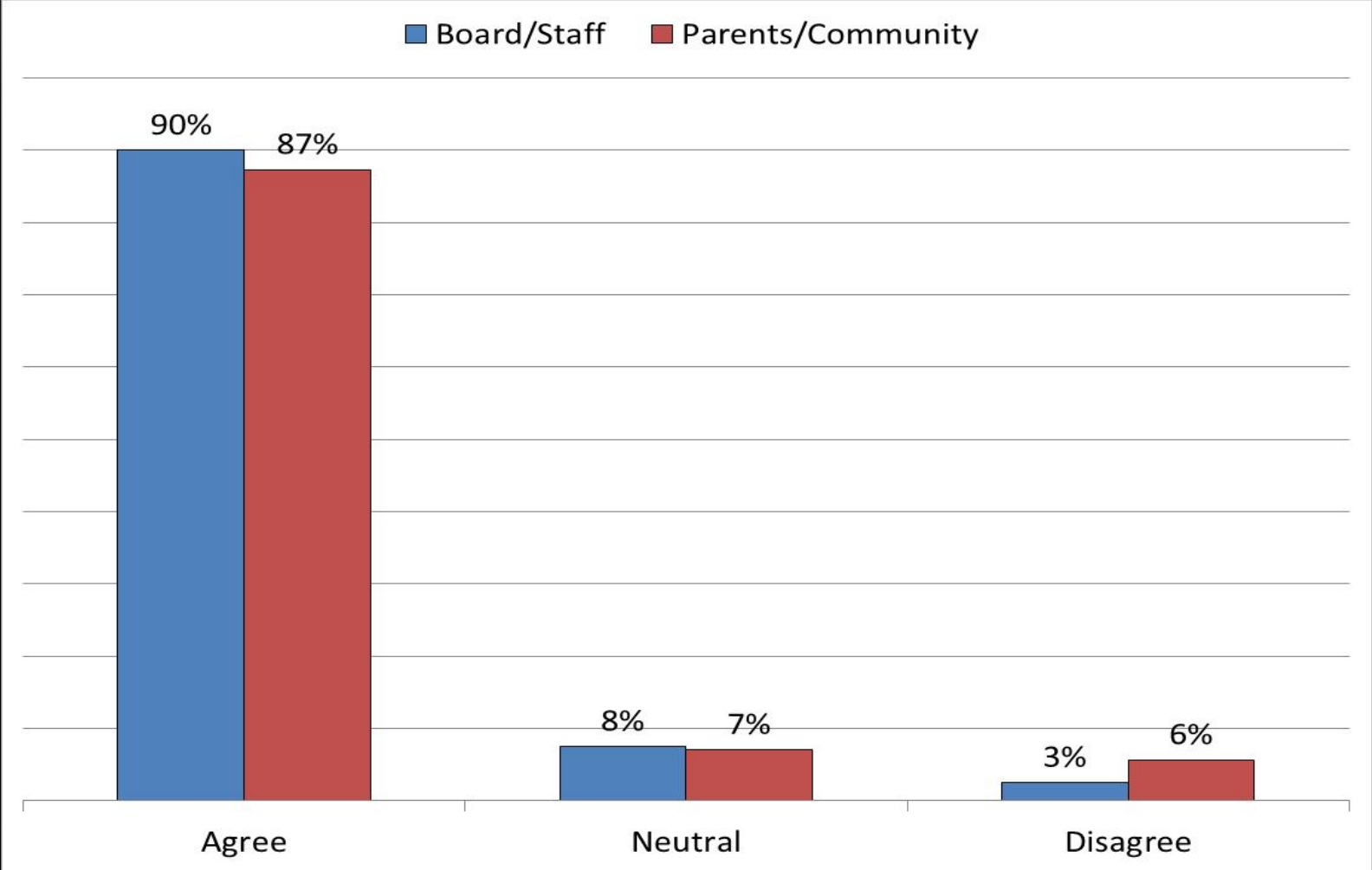
SURVEY ITEM#16 - "WE HAVE EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAMS IN THIS DISTRICT."



SURVEY ITEM#4 - "I HAVE A VOICE IN DECISION MAKING."



SURVEY ITEM#14 - "LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS CAN IMPACT THEIR SCHOOL SYSTEM IN WAYS THAT IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT."



LEADERSHIP AND TEAMWORK STRENGTHS:

- Staff and parents strongly believe that the school board can make a positive difference on student achievement.
- Two-thirds of staff and half of parents believe that the district has strong leadership teams.
- Two-thirds of staff believe that they have a voice in decision making.



LEADERSHIP AND TEAMWORK RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. It should be made clear how all have a voice in decision making and can participate on leadership teams.
2. All stakeholders should help to determine priorities, based on data.

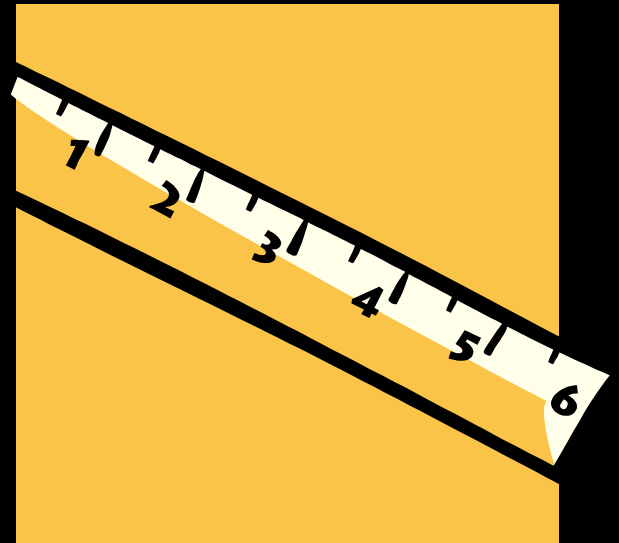


STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT



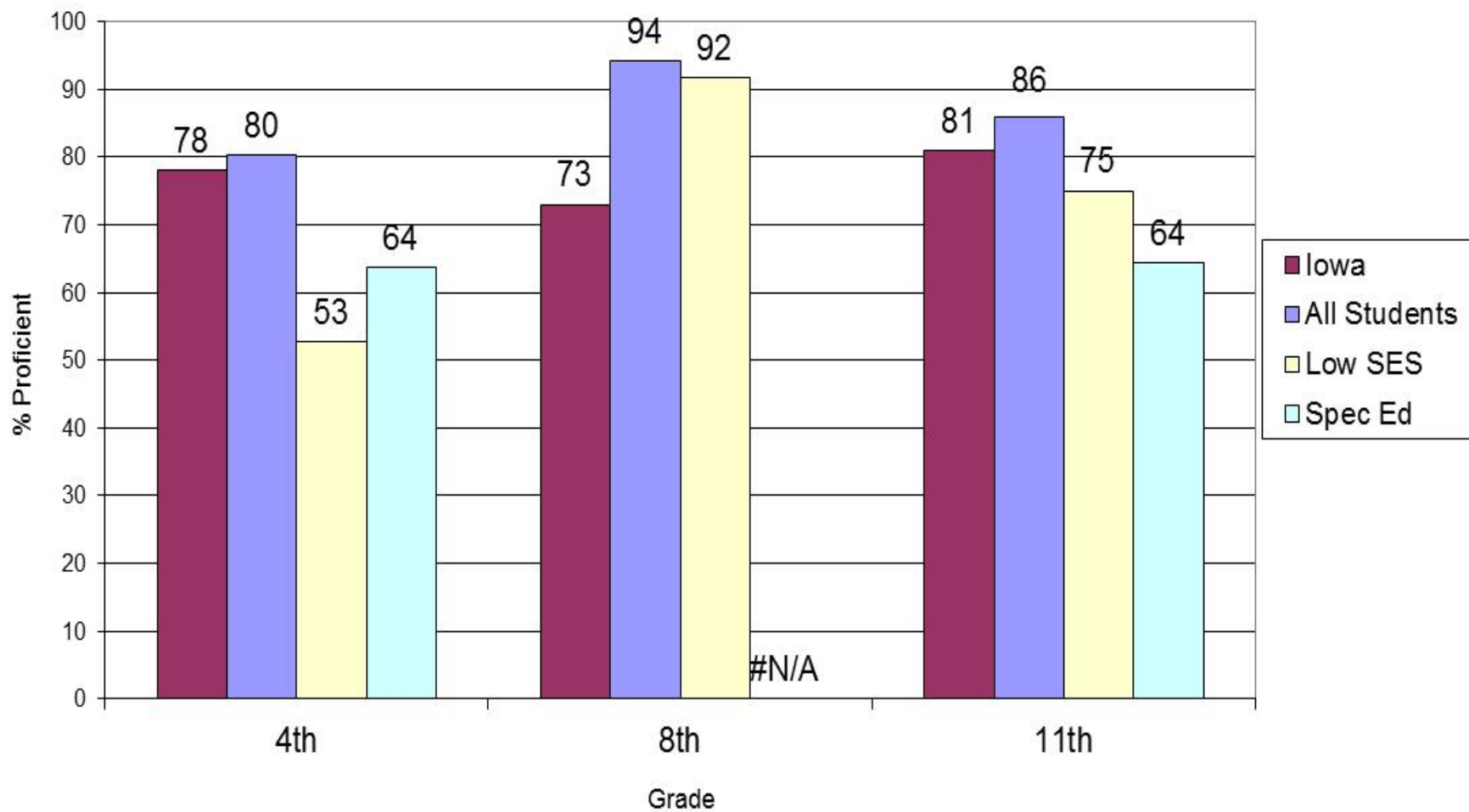
INDICATORS OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

1. The percentage of students meeting standards is high
2. There are improvement trends over time
3. Achievement gaps closing

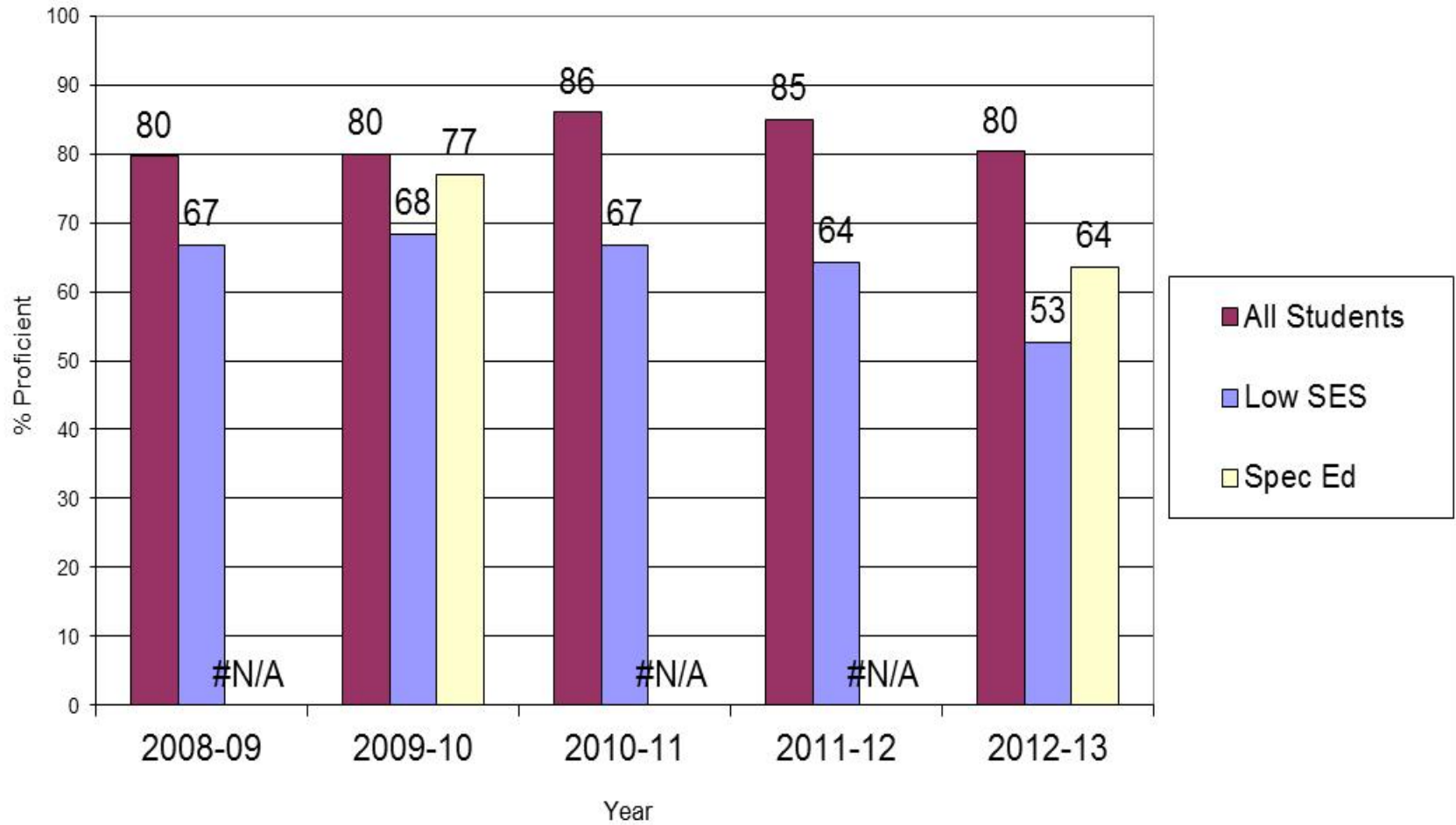


2012-13 ITBS/ITED Math (% of Students Proficient)

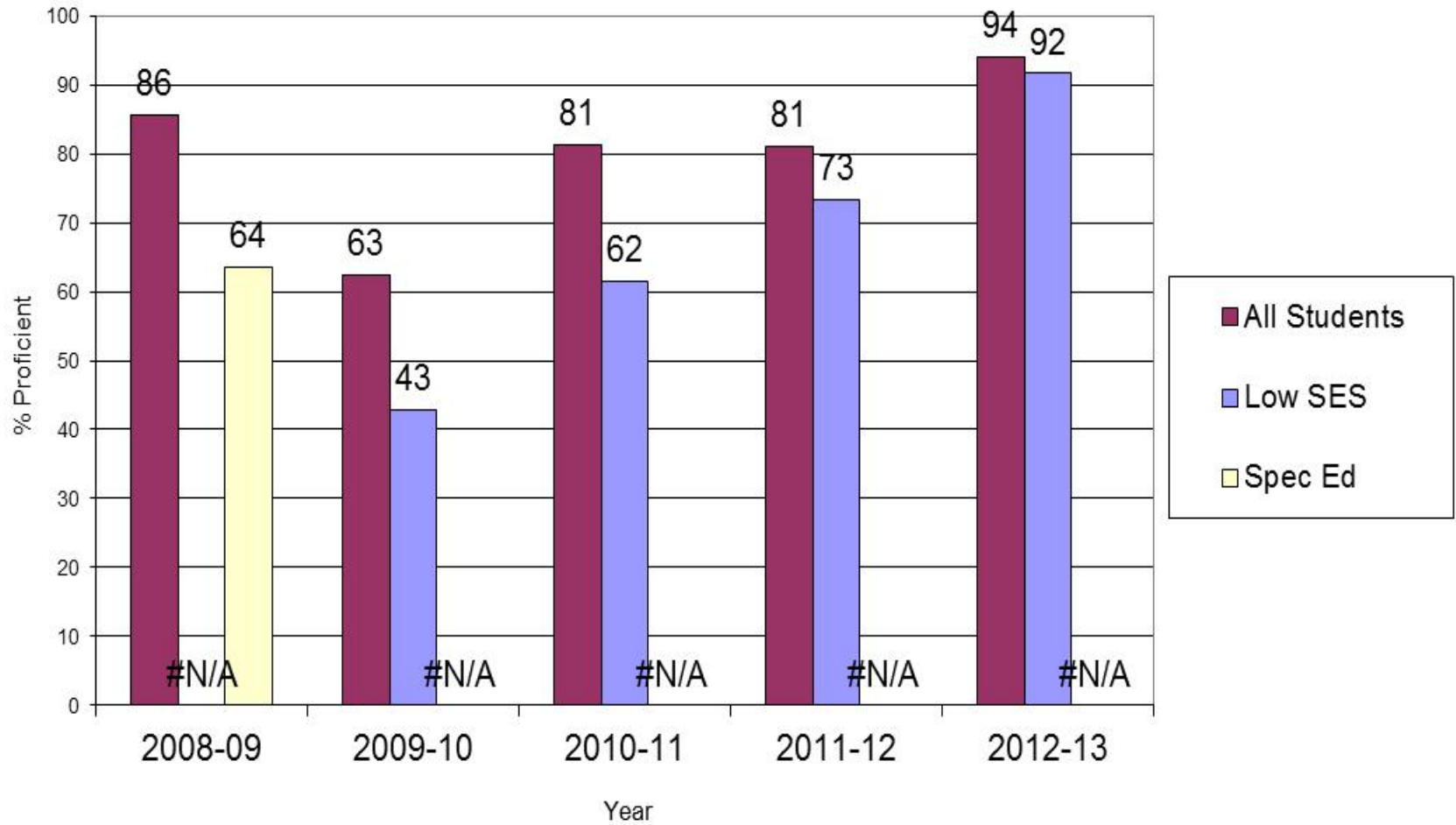
"#NA" Indicates subgroups < 10



ITBS 4th Math 5-Year History (% of Students Proficient)
#NA - Subgroups < 10

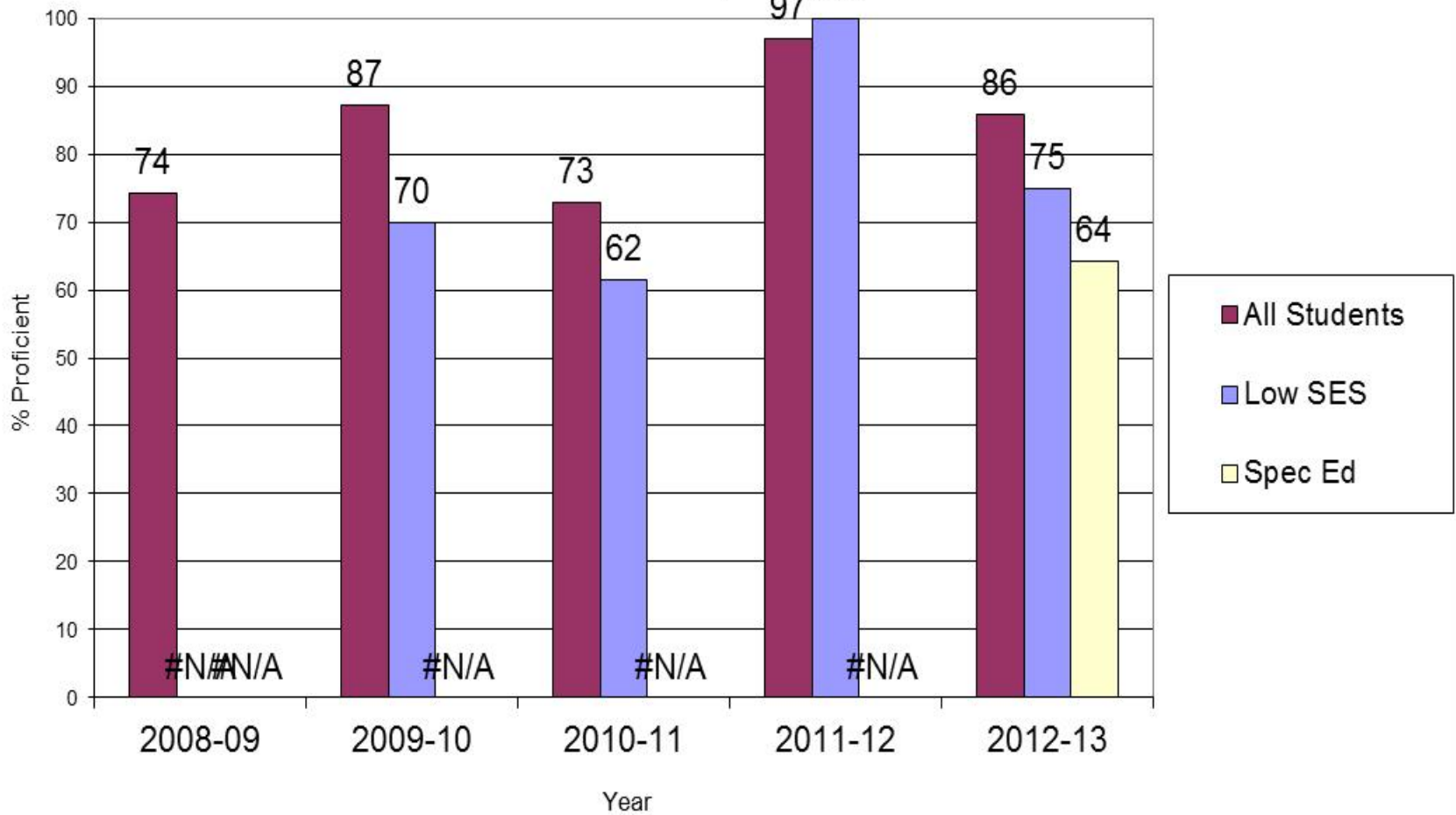


ITBS 8th Math 5-Year History (% of Students Proficient)
 #NA - Subgroups < 10

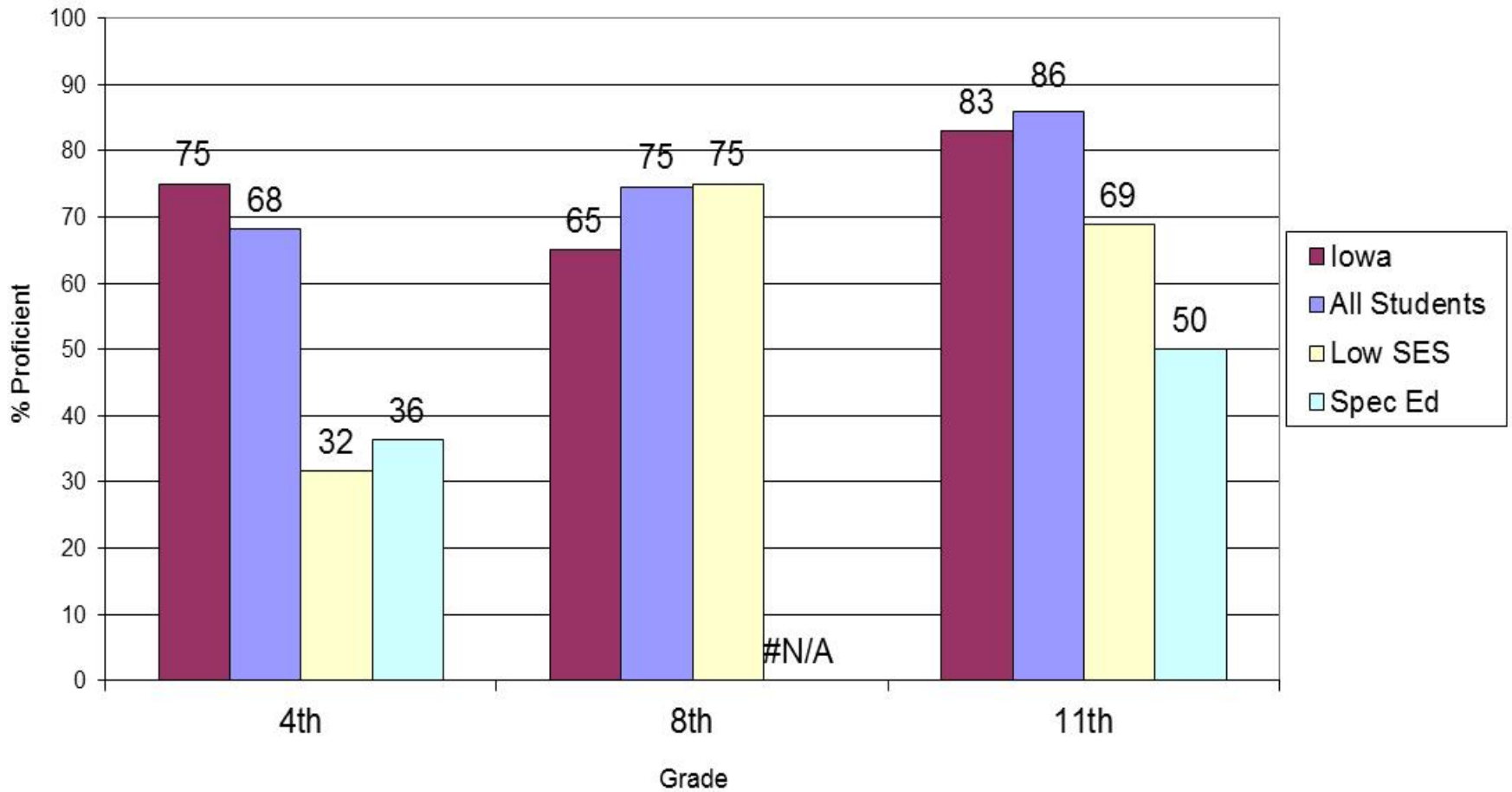


ITED 11th Math 5-Year History (% of Students Proficient)

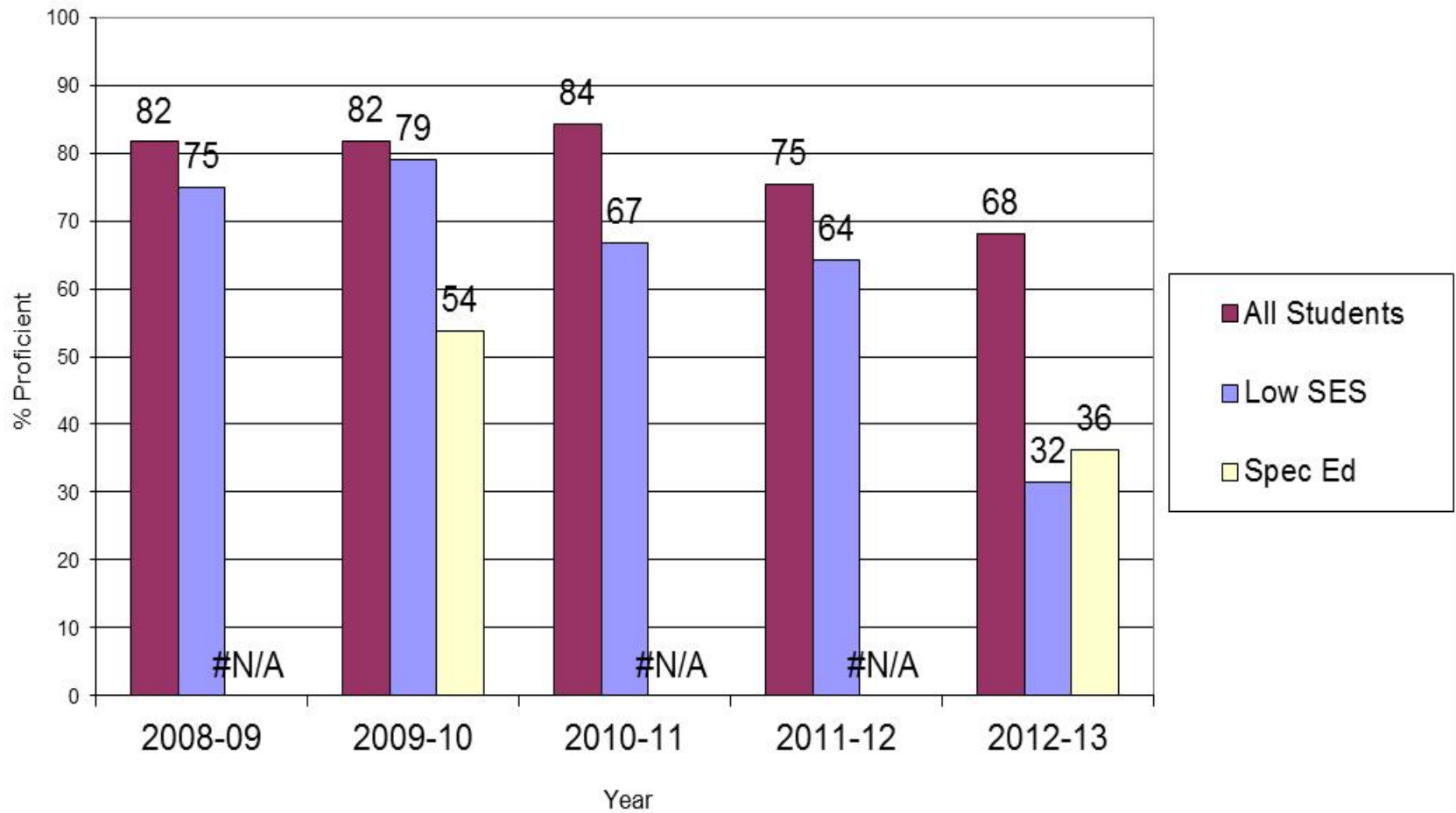
#NA - Subgroups < 10



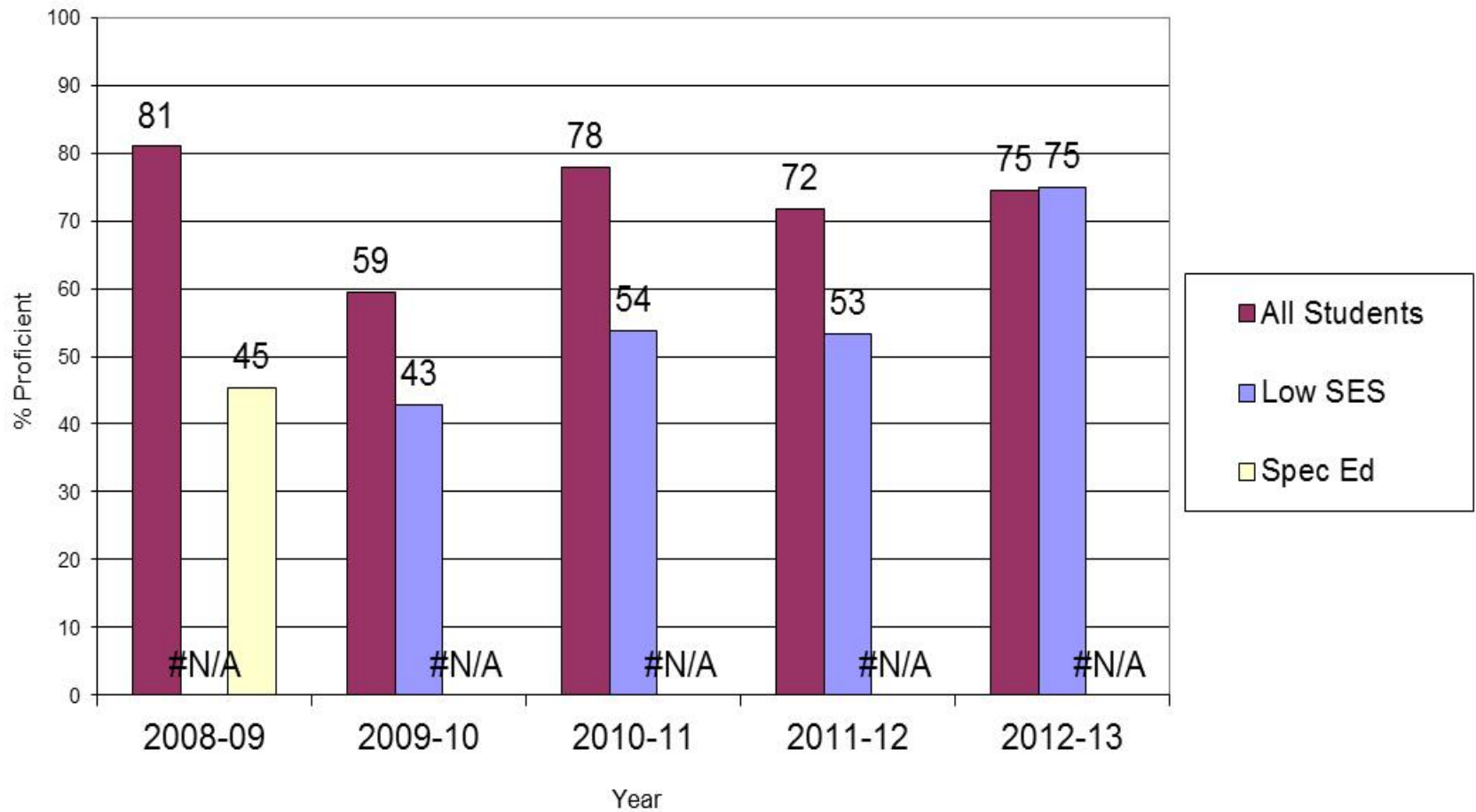
2012-13 ITBS/ITED Reading (% of Students Proficient)
"#NA" Indicates subgroups < 10



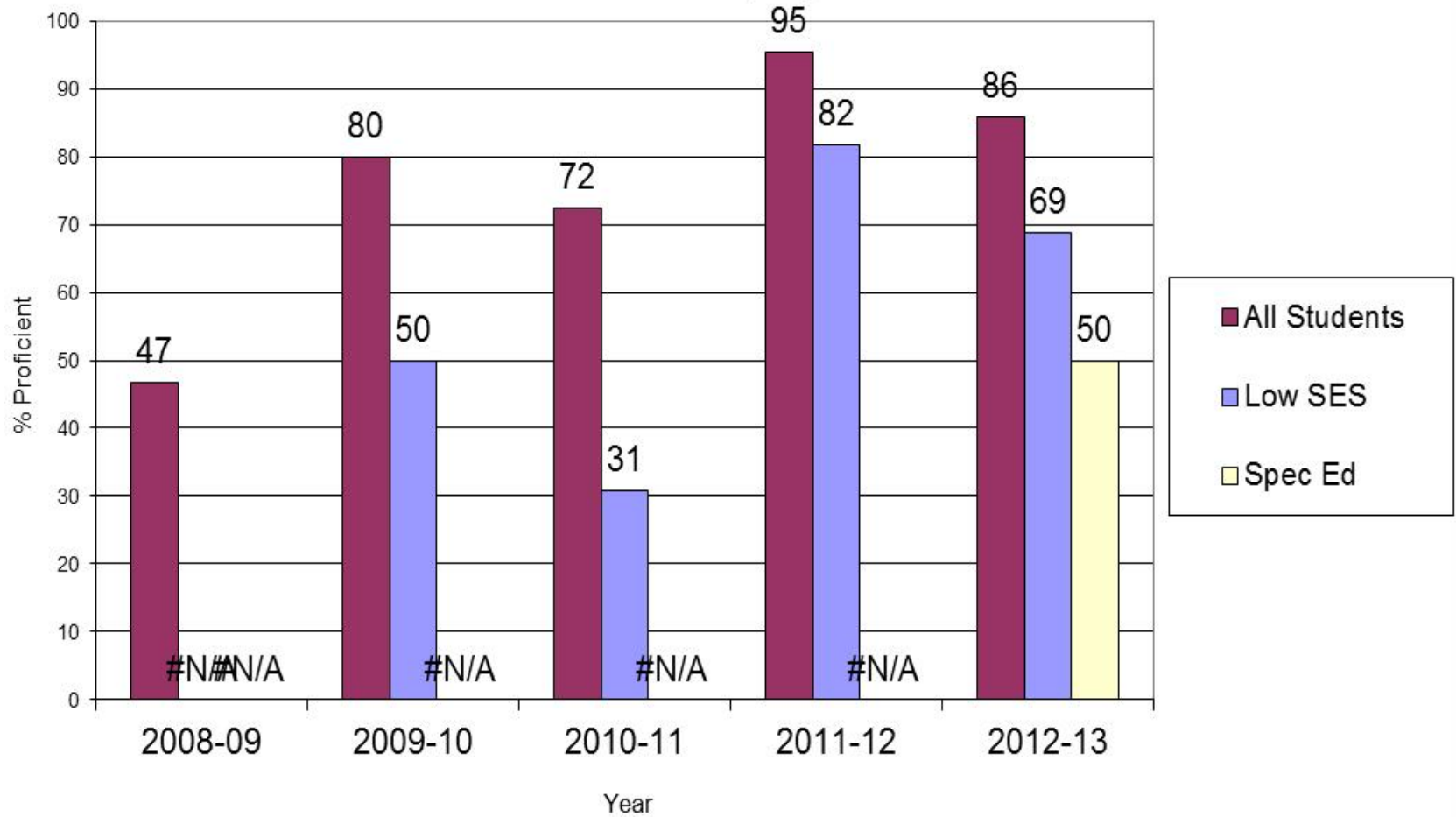
ITBS 4th Reading 5-Year History (% of Students Proficient)
 #NA - Subgroups < 10



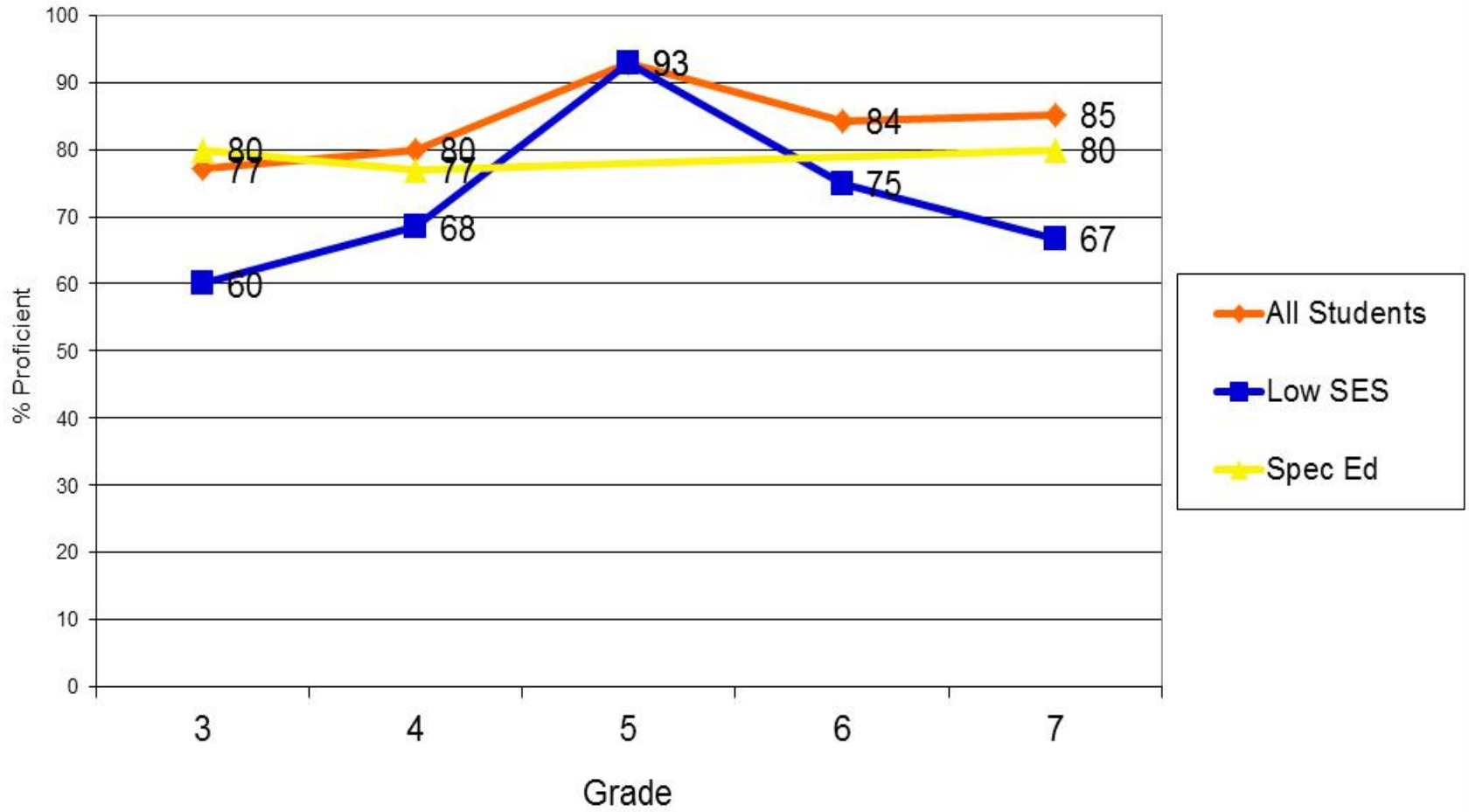
ITBS 8th Reading 5-Year History (% of Students Proficient)
 #NA - Subgroups < 10



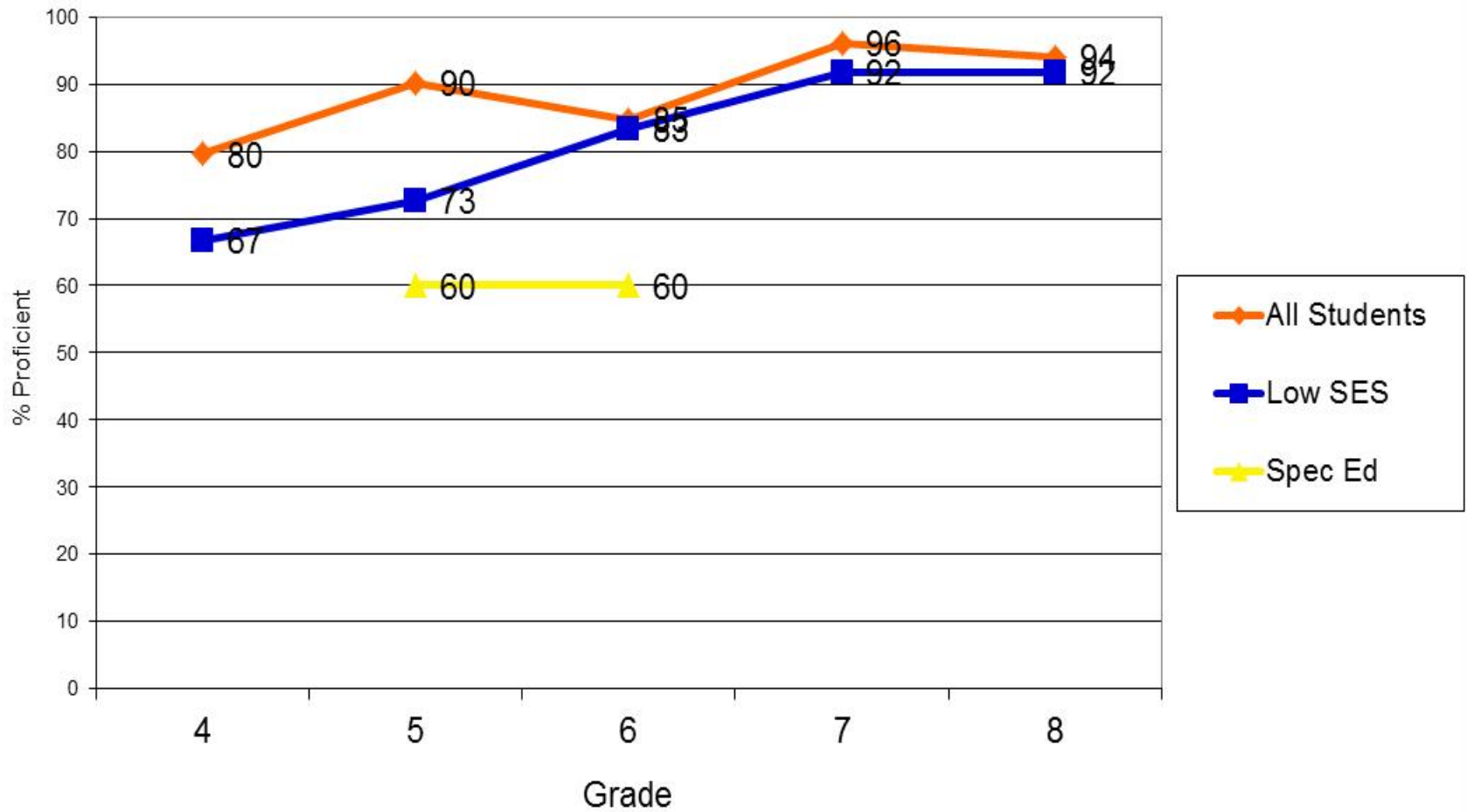
ITED 11th Reading 5-Year History (% of Students Proficient)
 #NA - Subgroups < 10



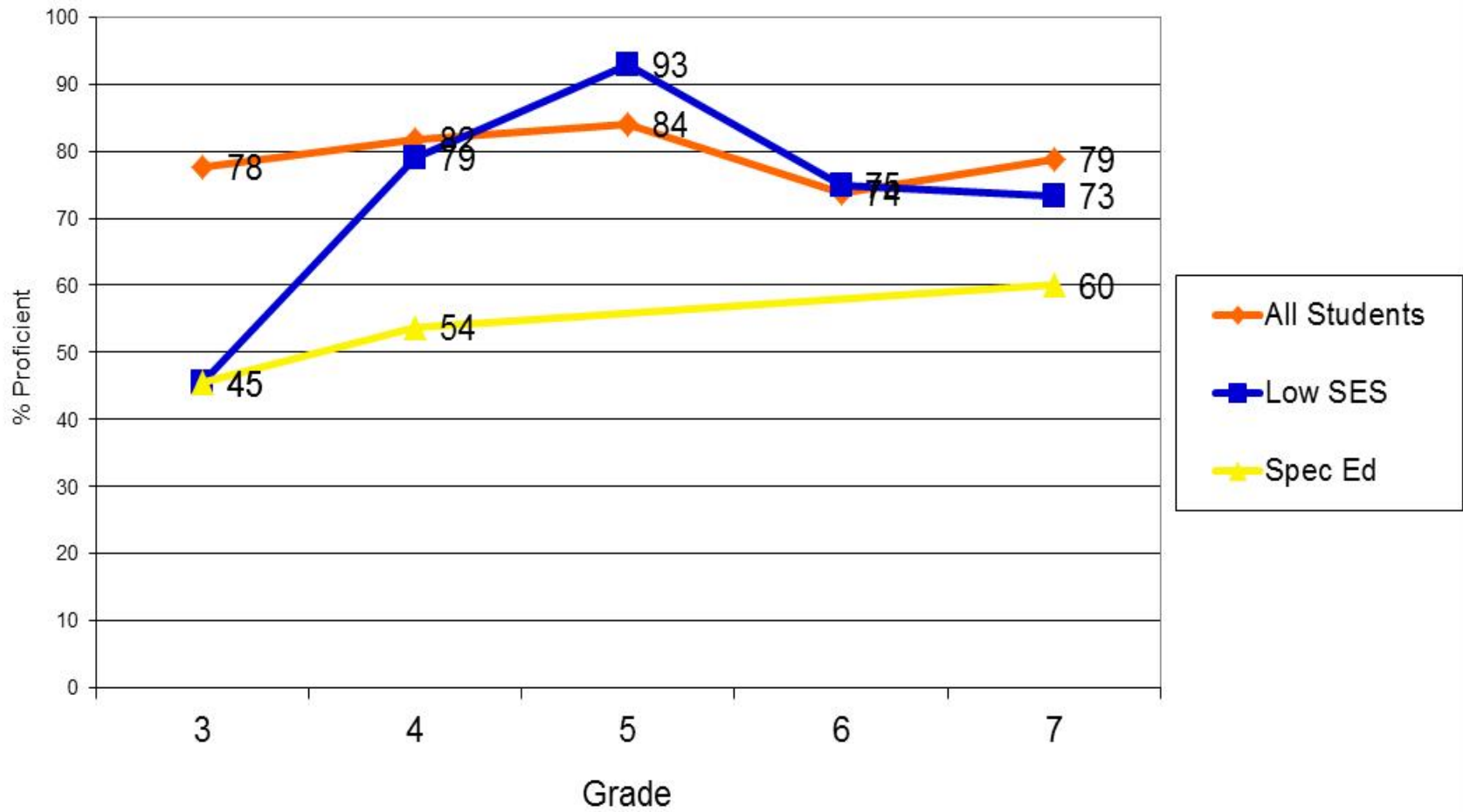
Cohort ITBS Math History (% of Students Proficient)



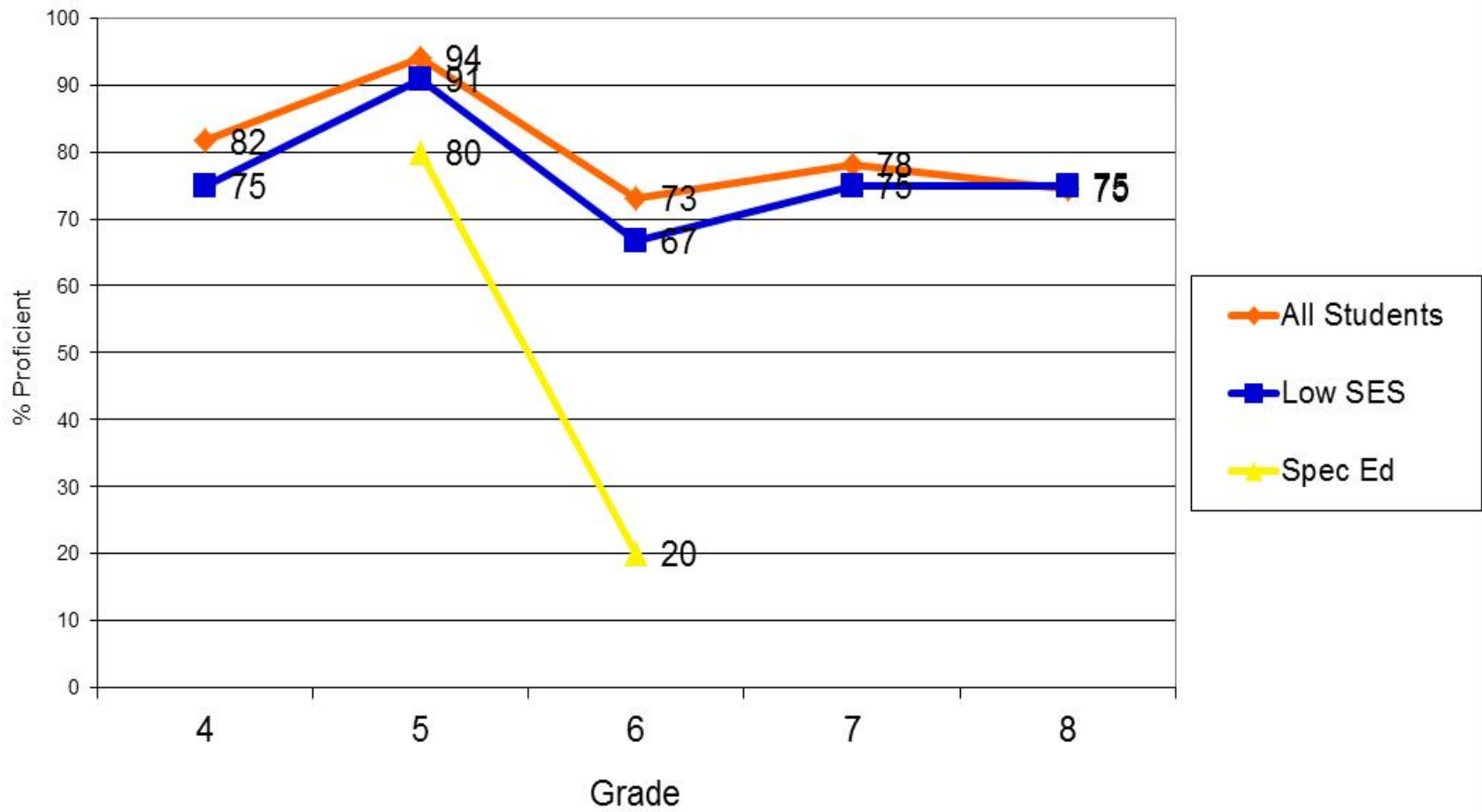
Cohort ITBS Math History (% of Students Proficient)



Cohort ITBS Reading History (% of Students Proficient)

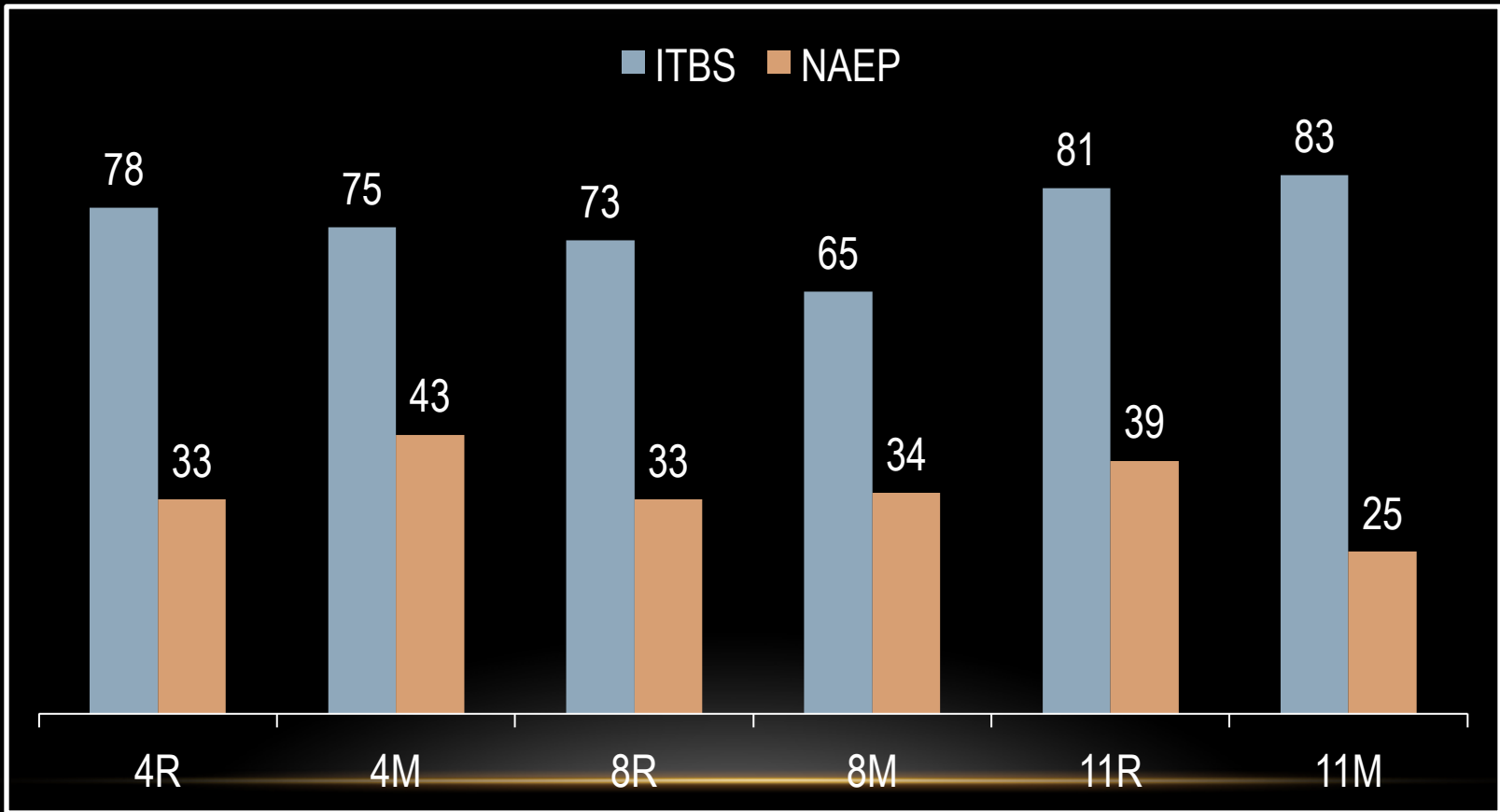


Cohort ITBS Reading History (% of Students Proficient)

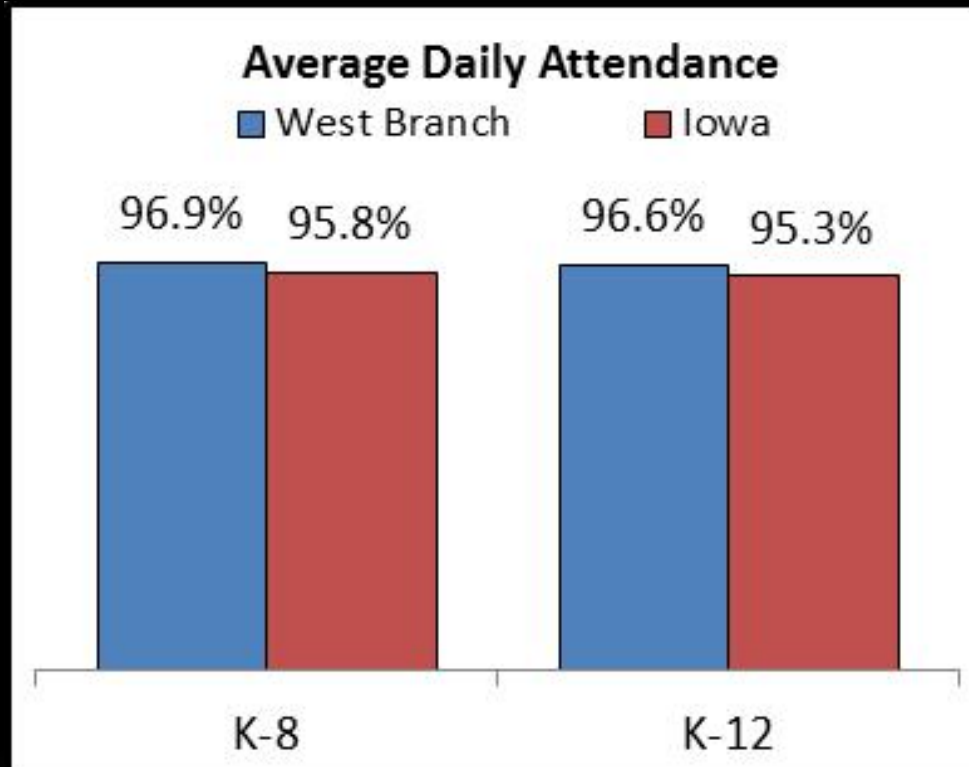


IOWA STUDENT PROFICIENCY

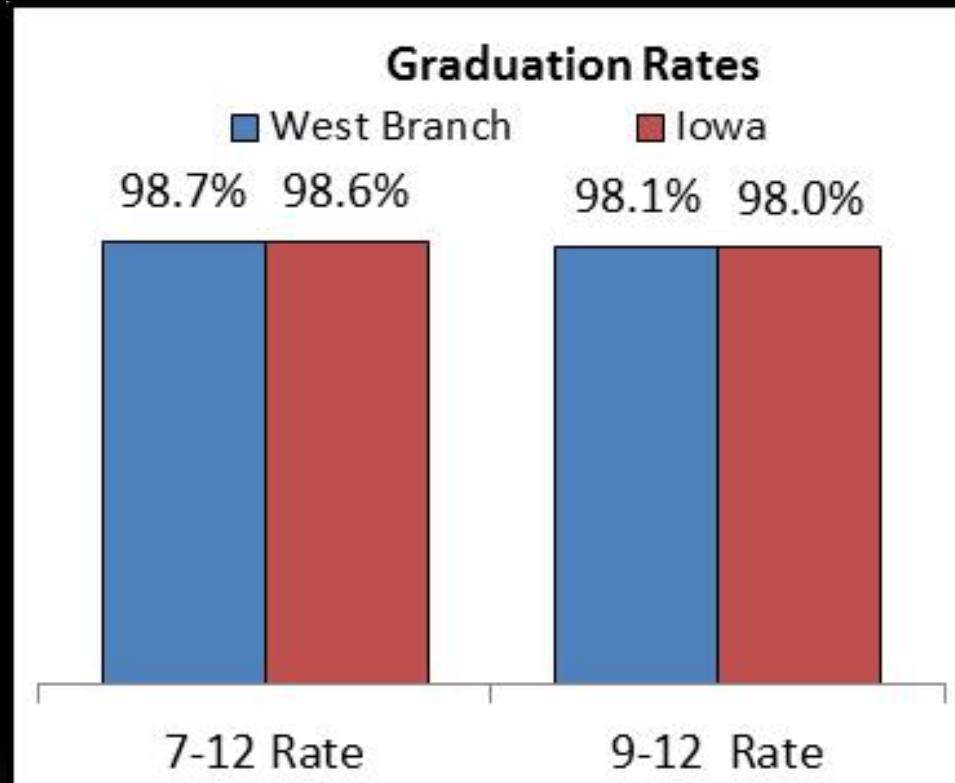
IOWA ASSESSMENT VS NATIONAL ASSESSMENT



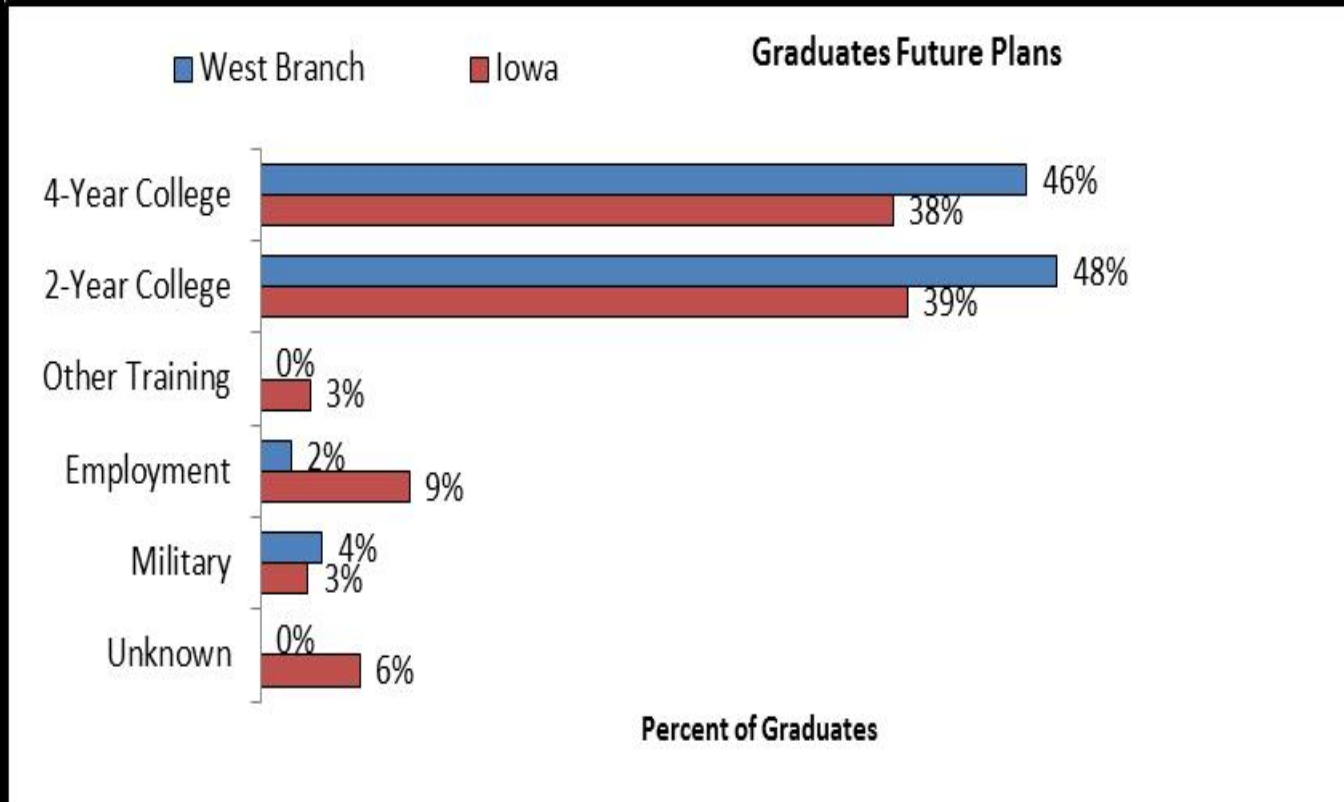
Average Daily Attendance



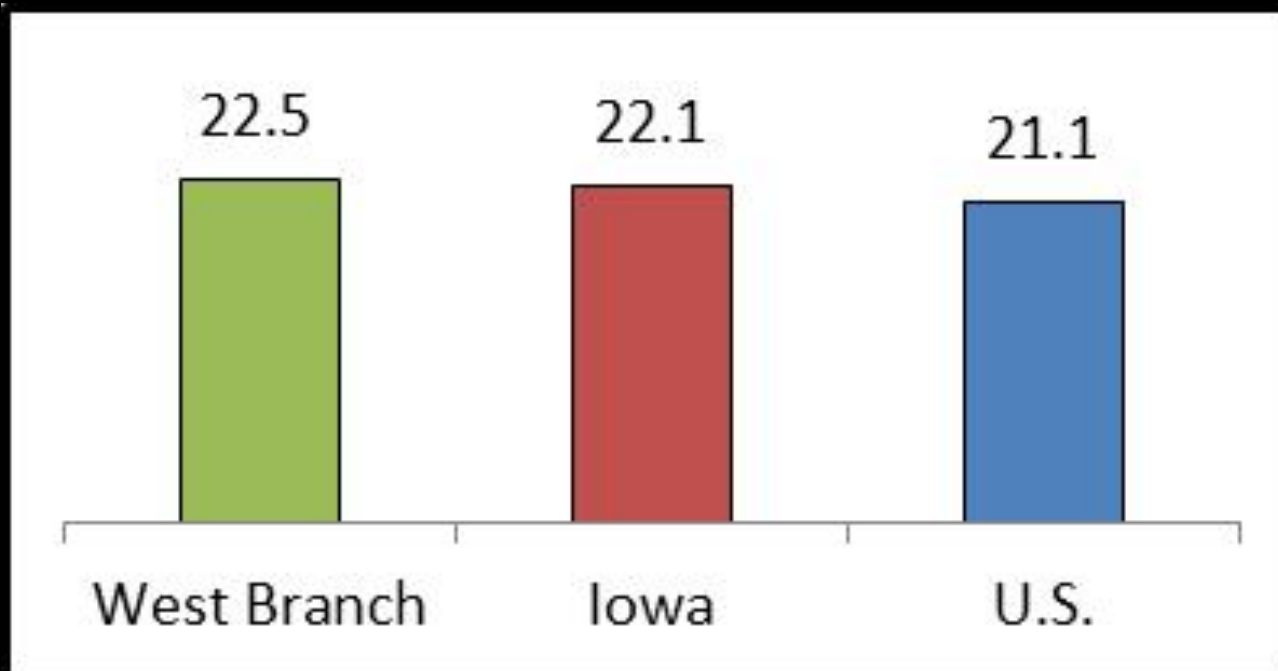
Graduation Rate



Graduates' Future Plans



ACT Scores



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT STRENGTHS:

1. District students generally outperform the state average on the Iowa Assessments.
2. Average daily attendance and graduation rates are high.
3. The district ACT average exceeds the state and national averages.



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS:

1. Many five-year achievement trends are flat or declining.
2. Many students are not meeting the relatively low state proficiency standard.



THREE CURRICULA

1. Written Curriculum – Standards and Grade-level Expectations
2. Assessed Curriculum – Tests and Other Achievement Measures
3. Taught Curriculum – Teaching and Learning

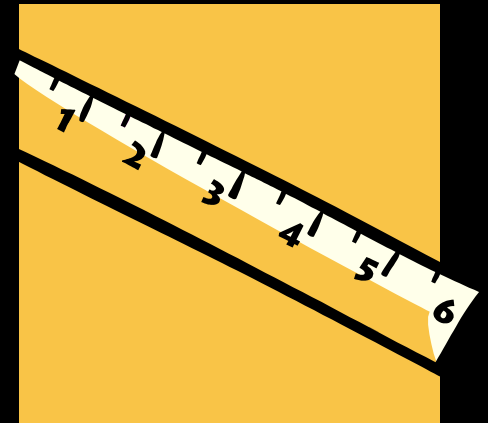


STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS

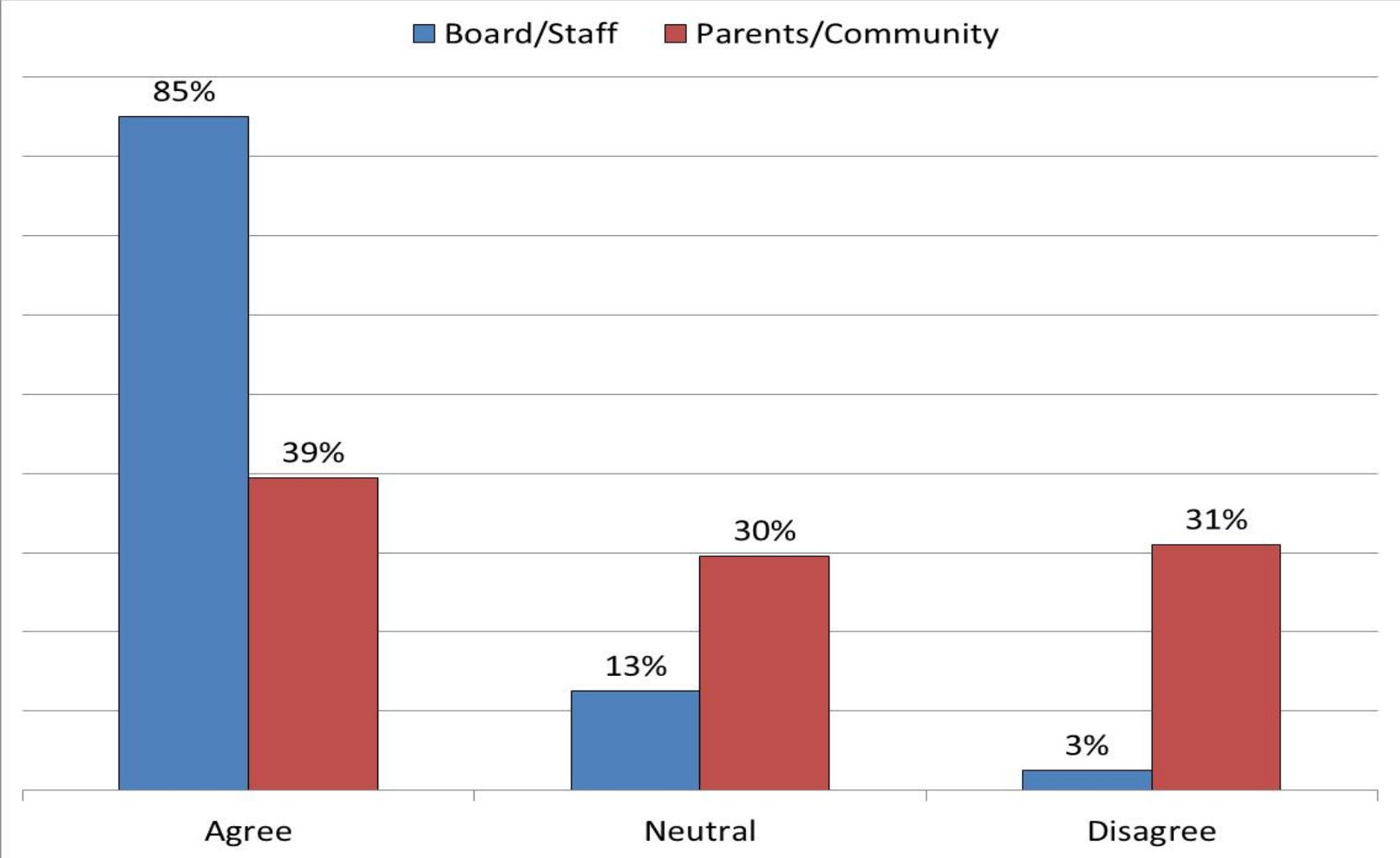


INDICATORS OF STANDARDS/BENCHMARKS

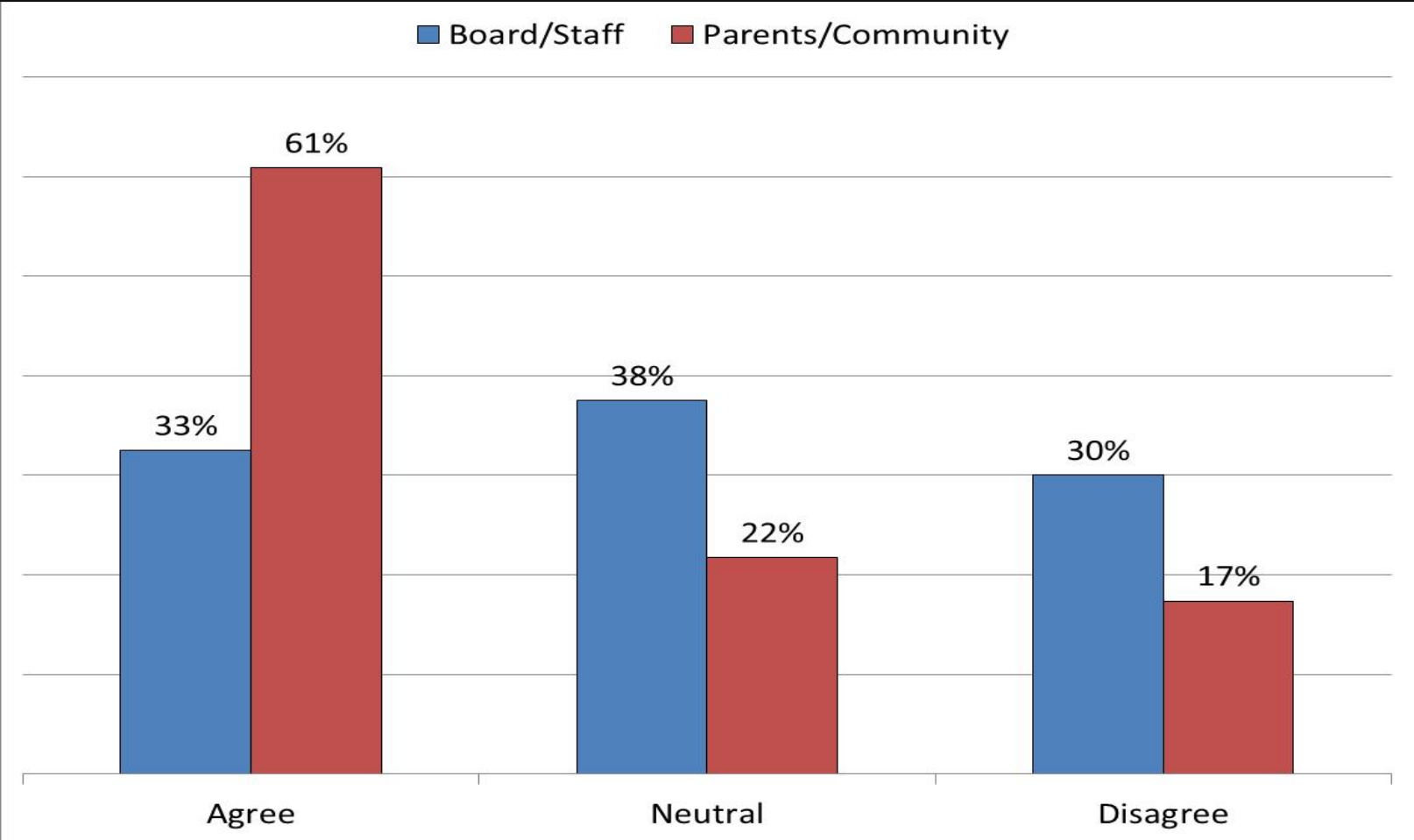
1. Attainable? - The number and content of expectations must be such that learners and teachers have enough time to ensure mastery.
2. Comprehensive? – All major content of the Iowa Core must be included.
3. Rigorous? – There must be a good distribution across the levels of cognitive demand (Bloom's Taxonomy, revised 2001).



SURVEY ITEM#5 - "OUR DISTRICT STANDARDS ARE CLEAR AND RIGOROUS."



SURVEY ITEM#7 - "IMPORTANT AREAS OF STUDENT LEARNING ARE MISSING IN OUR CURRENT CURRICULUM."



STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS STRENGTH:

Eighty-five percent of staff believe that the district standards are clear and rigorous. This is an indication that the clear and rigorous Iowa Core Curriculum standards are being embraced in the district.



STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Align to both the content and rigor of the Iowa Core Standards (Common Core).
2. Prominently display the standards expectations in classrooms, on the website, and in parent documents.
3. Use the standards to drive classroom instruction at the secondary level.

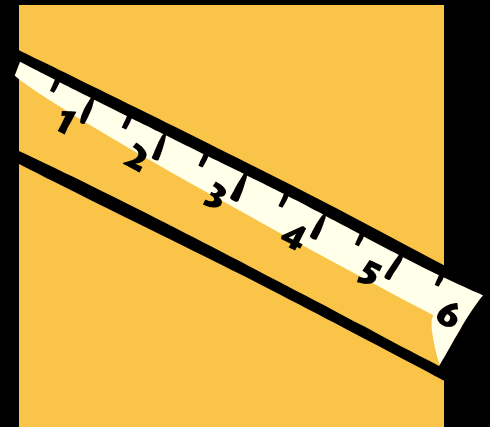


ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

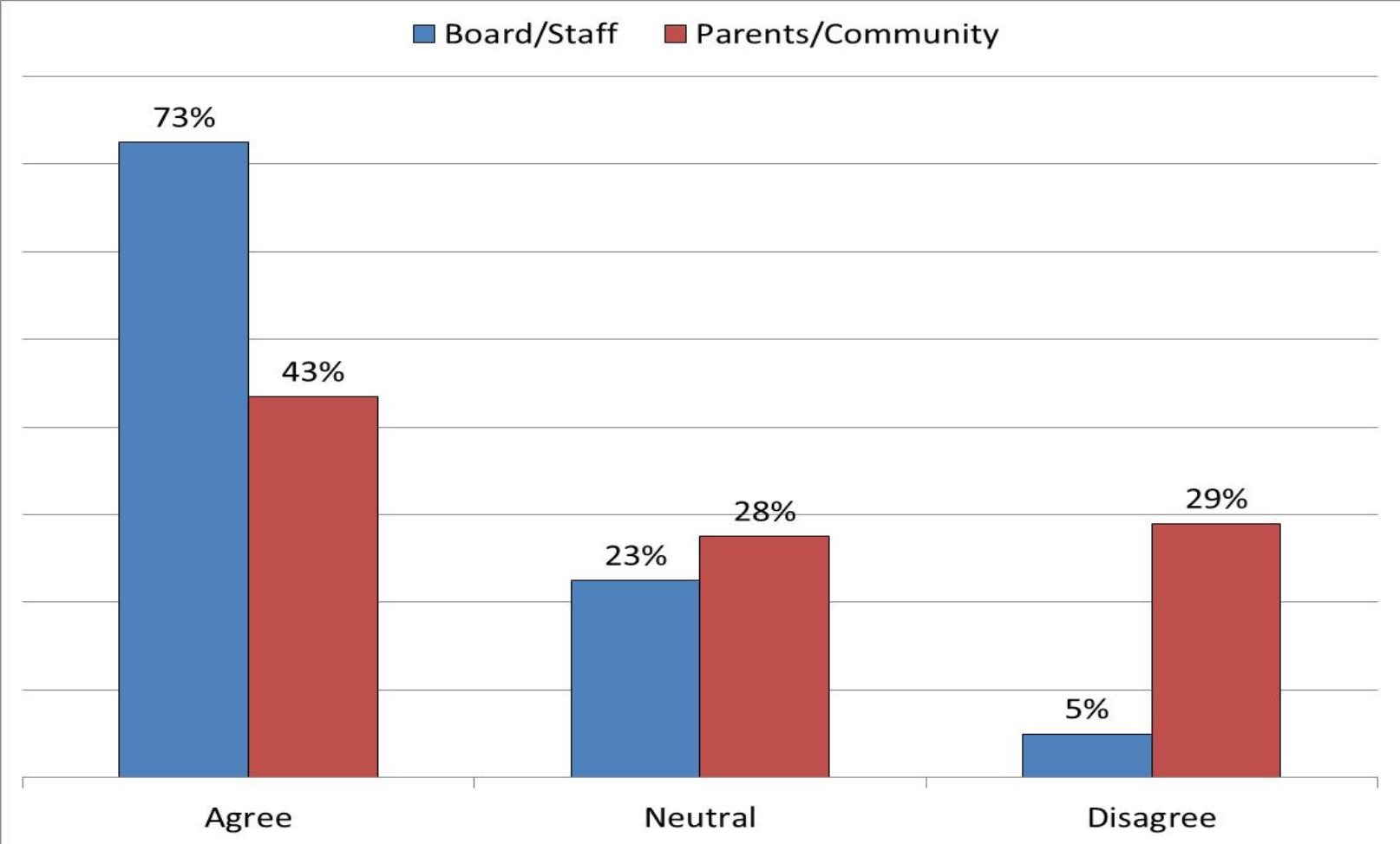


INDICATORS OF ASSESSMENTS

1. Aligned to standards? – The assessment system must measure the student expectations in the ICC.
2. Rigorous? – The assessment items must have a blend of cognitive demand to match the ICC.
3. Balanced? – There must be multiple formats (e.g. multiple-choice and performance tasks) and criterion-referenced items.



SURVEY ITEM#17 - "OUR DISTRICT'S ASSESSMENTS DO A GOOD JOB OF MEASURING IMPORTANT STUDENT LEARNING."



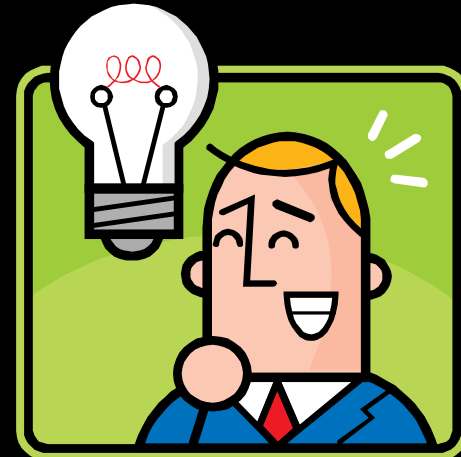
ASSESSMENT SYSTEM STRENGTH

Most staff members believe that the district assessments do a good job of measuring student learning.



ASSESSMENT SYSTEM RECOMMENDATION:

Carefully design a comprehensive assessment system, of multiple formats, aligned to the content and rigor of the ICC.





Iowa School Boards Foundation

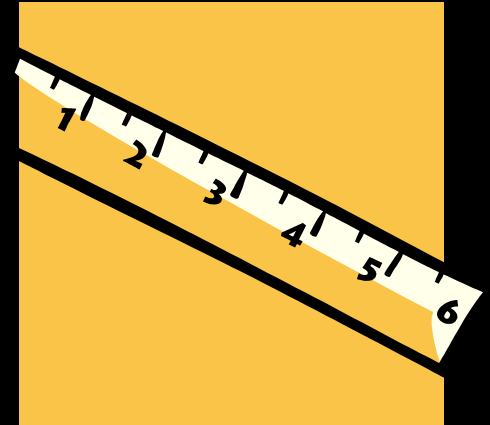
A Guide to Districtwide Assessment

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

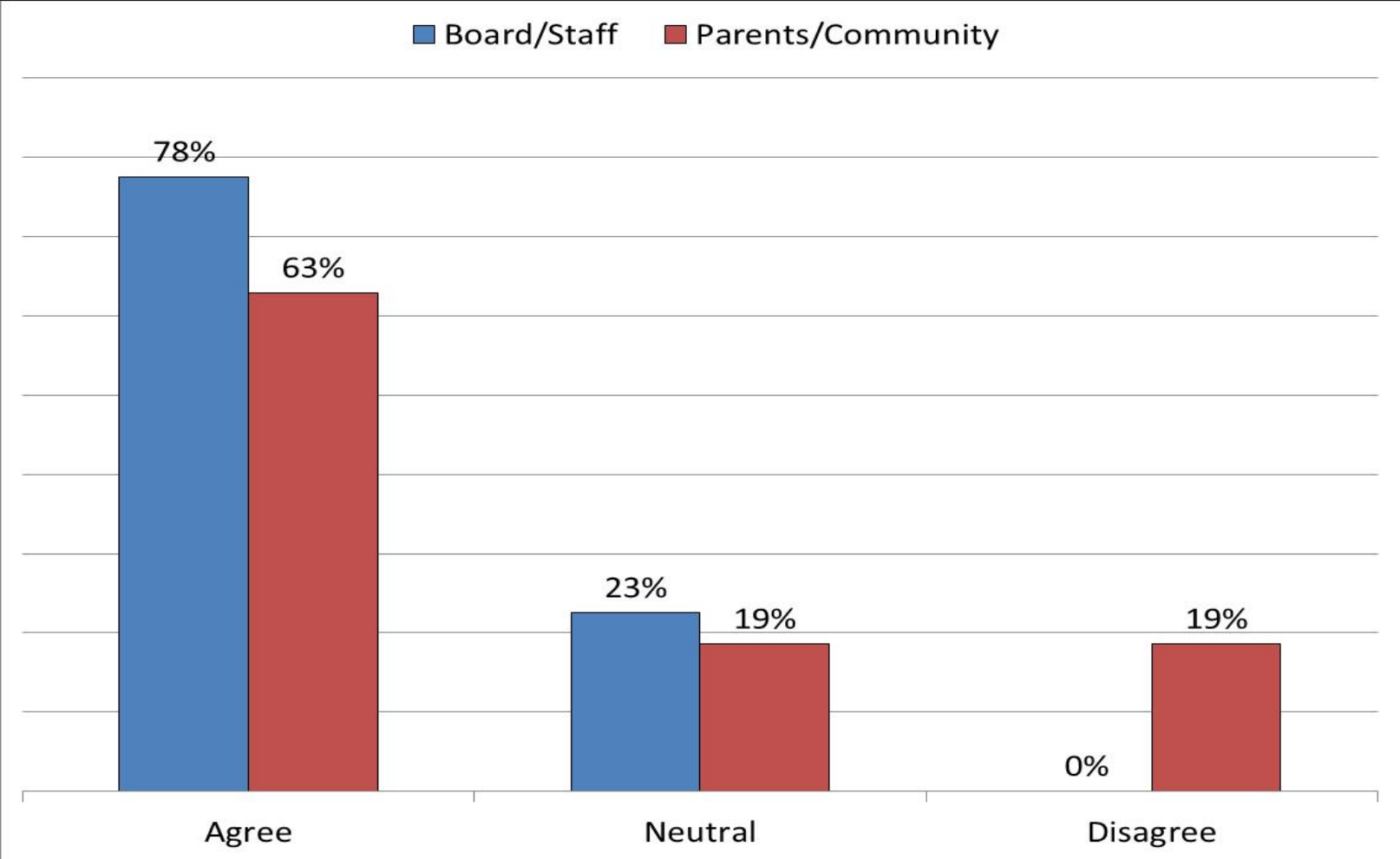


INDICATORS OF CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

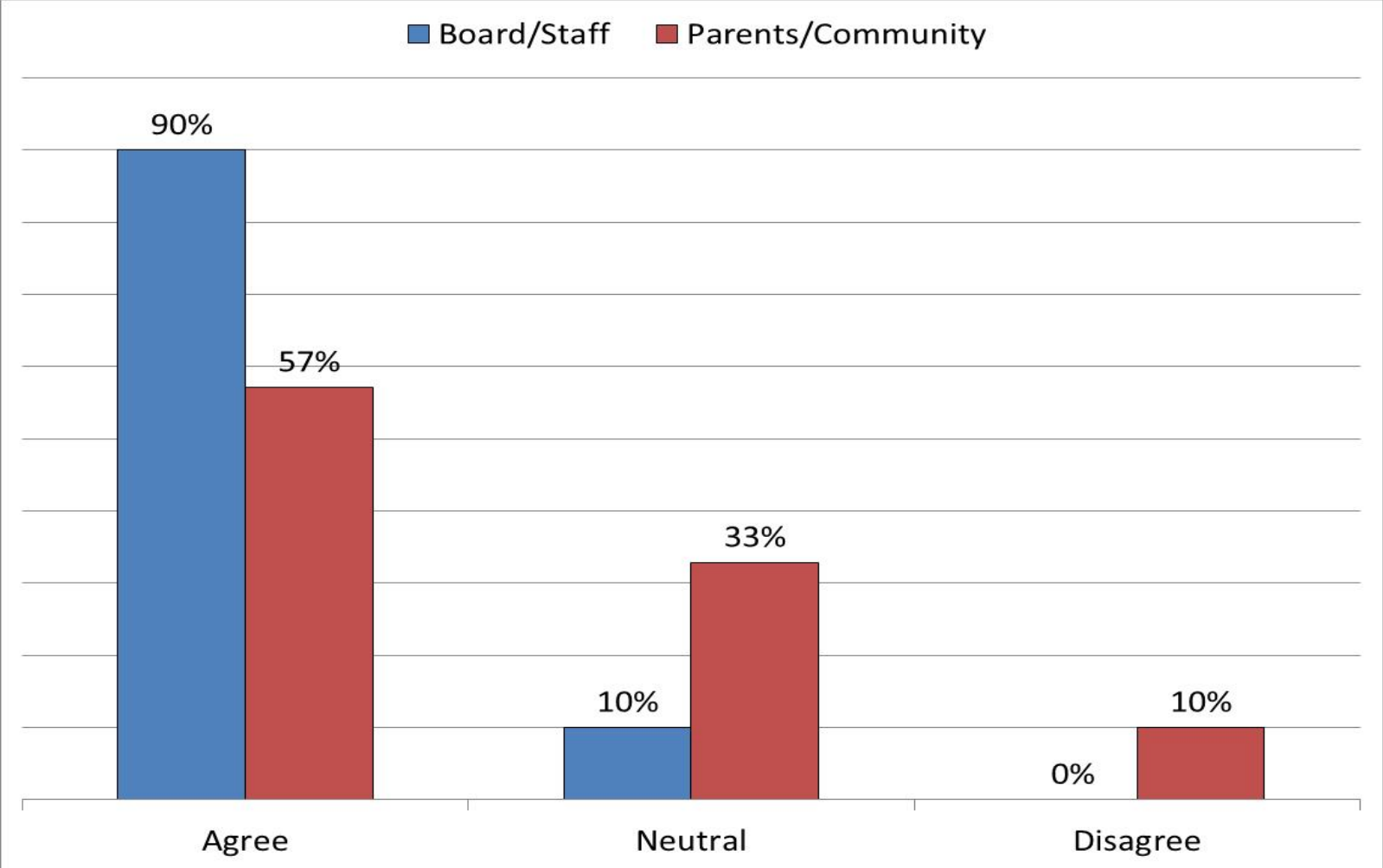
1. Instruction actively engages the students.
2. There is evidence of research-based instructional practices.
3. Instructional tasks include a blend of cognitive demand/rigor.



SURVEY ITEM#9 - "OUR STUDENTS ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN CLASSROOM LEARNING TASKS."

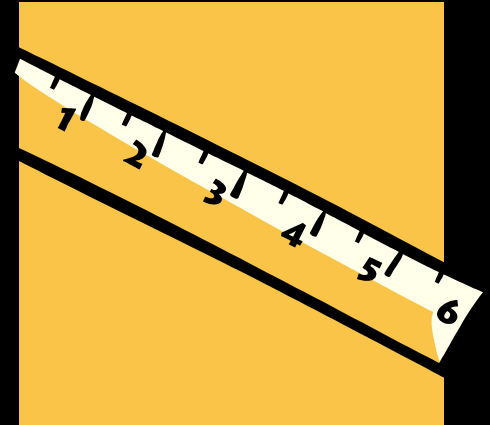


SURVEY ITEM#15 - "WE USE RESEARCH-BASED INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES IN THIS DISTRICT."

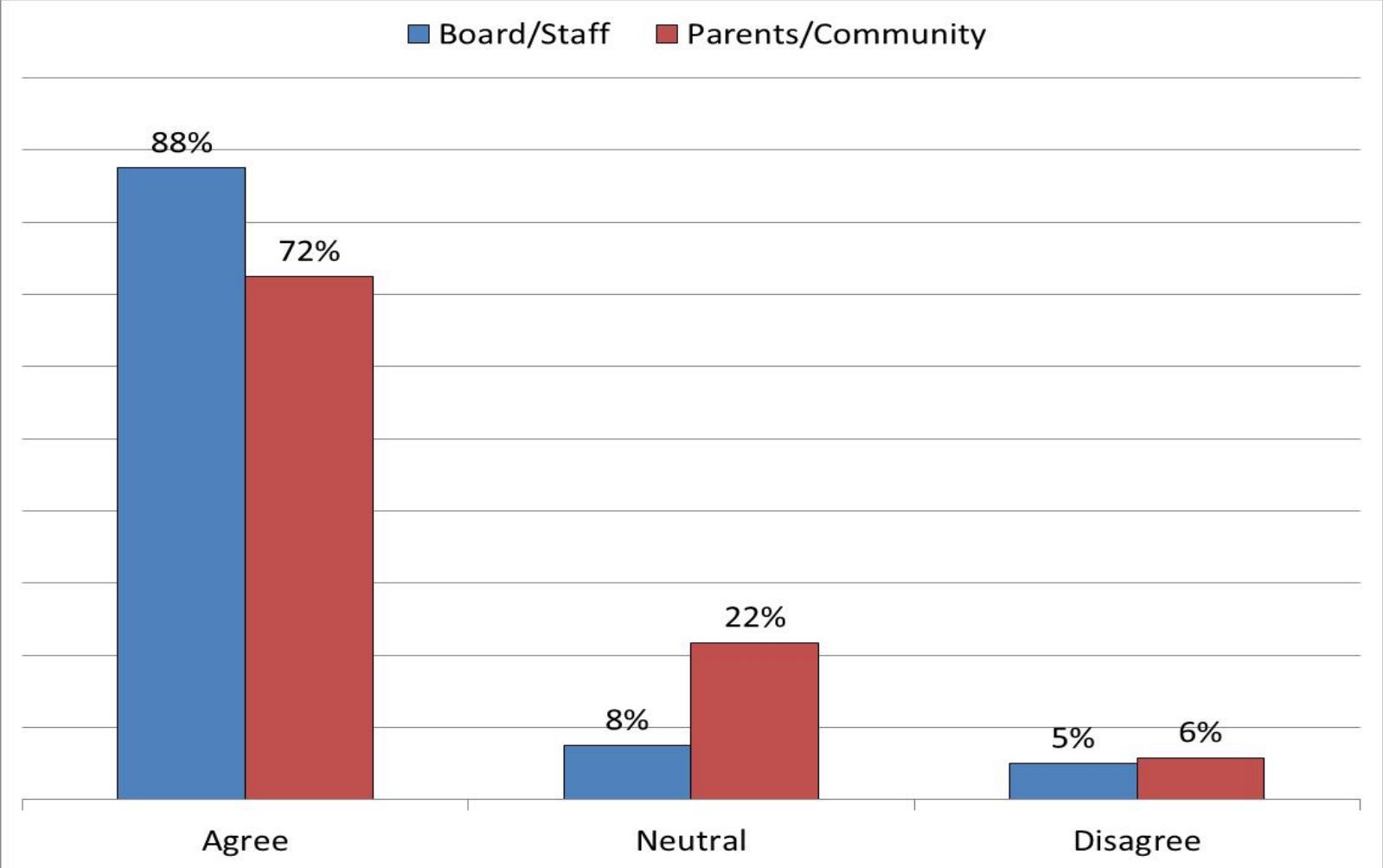


INDICATORS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

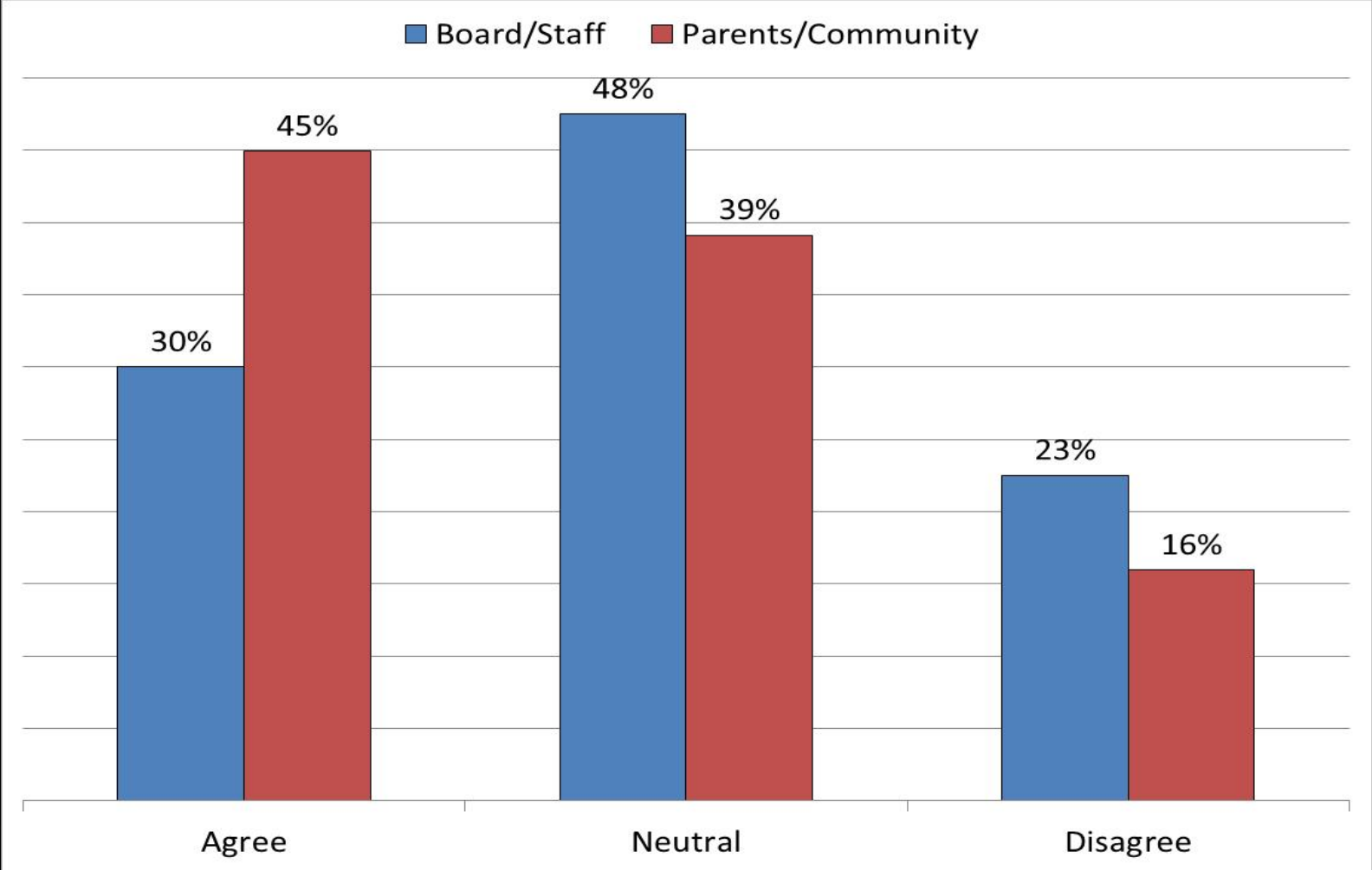
1. Student learning needs drive the professional development.
2. Adequate time is allocated for collaboration.
3. Professional development is focused on improving instruction.



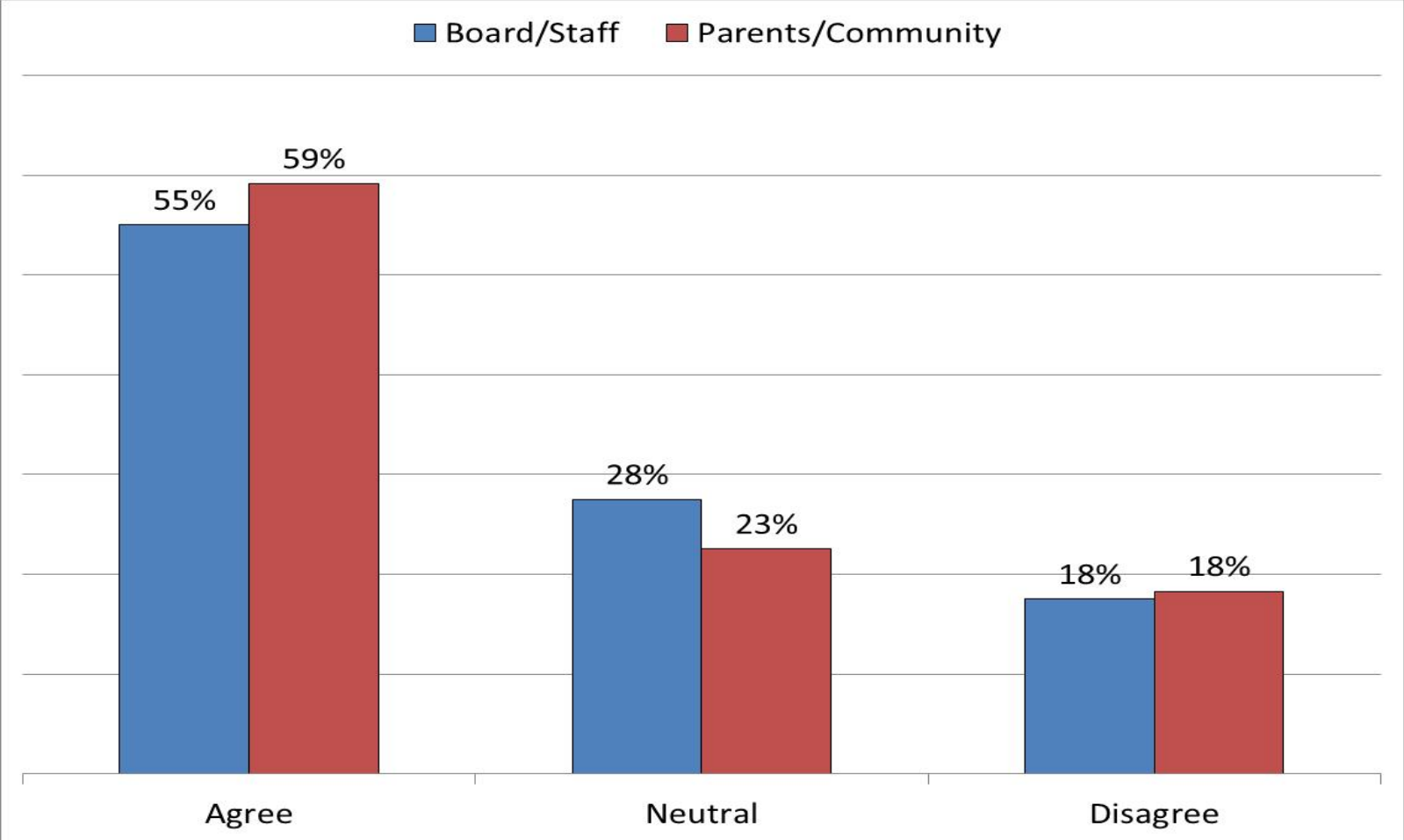
SURVEY ITEM#8 - "STUDENT LEARNING NEEDS DRIVE OUR TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT."



SURVEY ITEM#10 - "WE HAVE ADEQUATE TIME FOR TEACHER COLLABORATION."



SURVEY ITEM#12 - "WE NEED TO FOCUS MAJOR ATTENTION ON IMPROVING PROFESSIONAL TEACHING PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM."



INSTRUCTION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRENGTHS:

1. Most respondents believe that student learning needs drive the teachers' professional development.
2. Strong majorities believe that the students are actively engaged and that teachers use research-based instructional practices.



INSTRUCTION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS

- Efforts should continue to improve instructional rigor and relevance and student engagement.
- More time should be provided for teacher collaboration, as supported by both staff and parents.

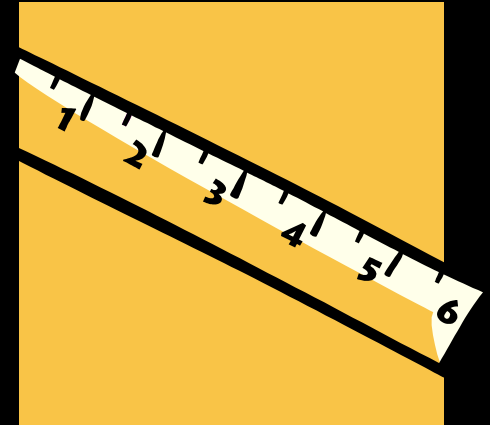


BOARD AND STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND SATISFACTION

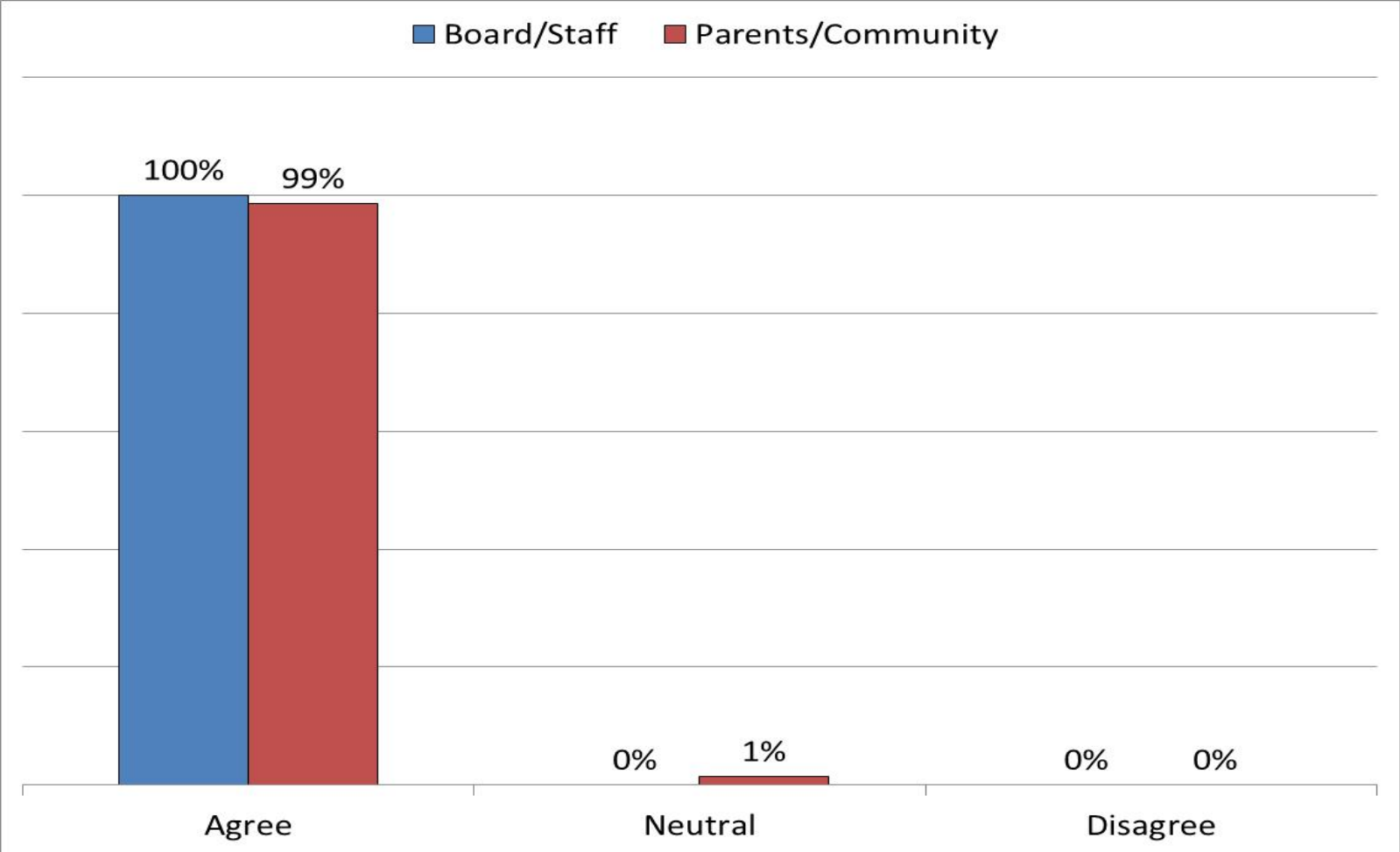


INDICATORS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT/ SATISFACTION

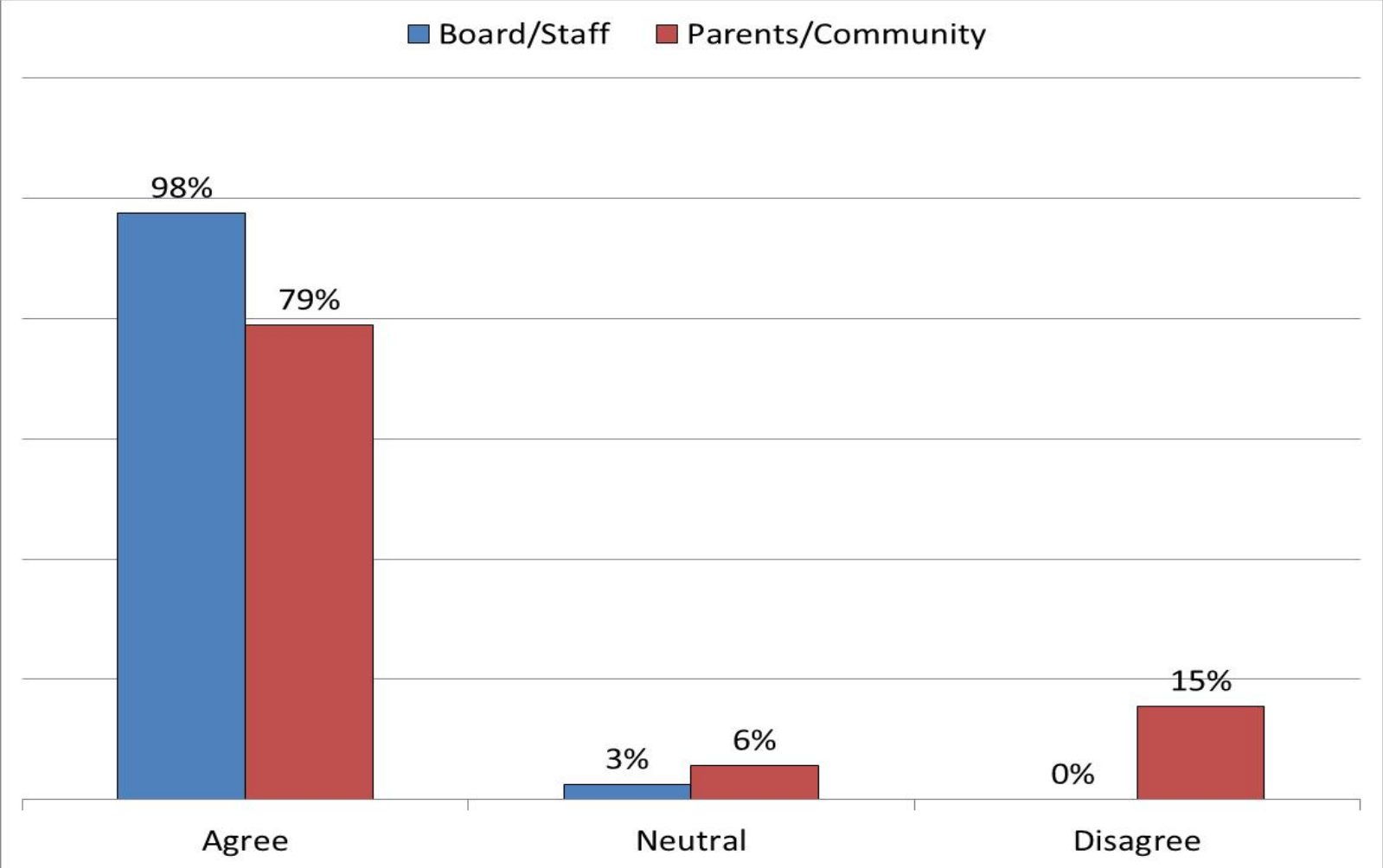
1. Parents are satisfied with the school.
2. Parents report being involved in their child's education.
3. Parents report being informed of their student's progress.



SURVEY ITEM#13 - "PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MUST BE PARTNERS WITH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT IN ORDER TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING."



SURVEY ITEM#18 - "OUR PARENTS ARE INFORMED OF THEIR STUDENT'S PROGRESS."



PARENT/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT STRENGTHS (AS PERCEIVED BY PARENTS & STAFF):

- Staff and parents overwhelmingly believe that parents must be partners in improving student learning.
- Virtually all staff and nearly eighty percent of parents believe that parents are well informed of their students' progress.



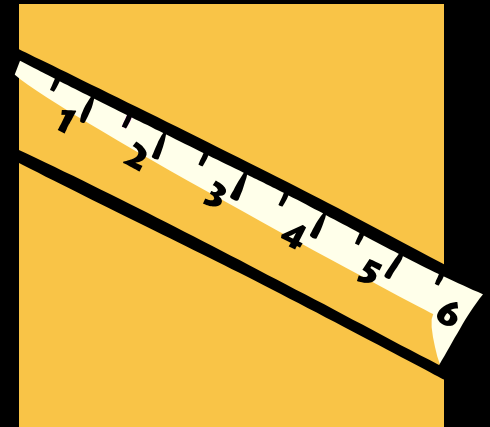
PARENT/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS

School leaders and teachers should continue their efforts to communicate with parents and elicit their support.



INDICATORS OF SOUND DISTRICT FINANCES

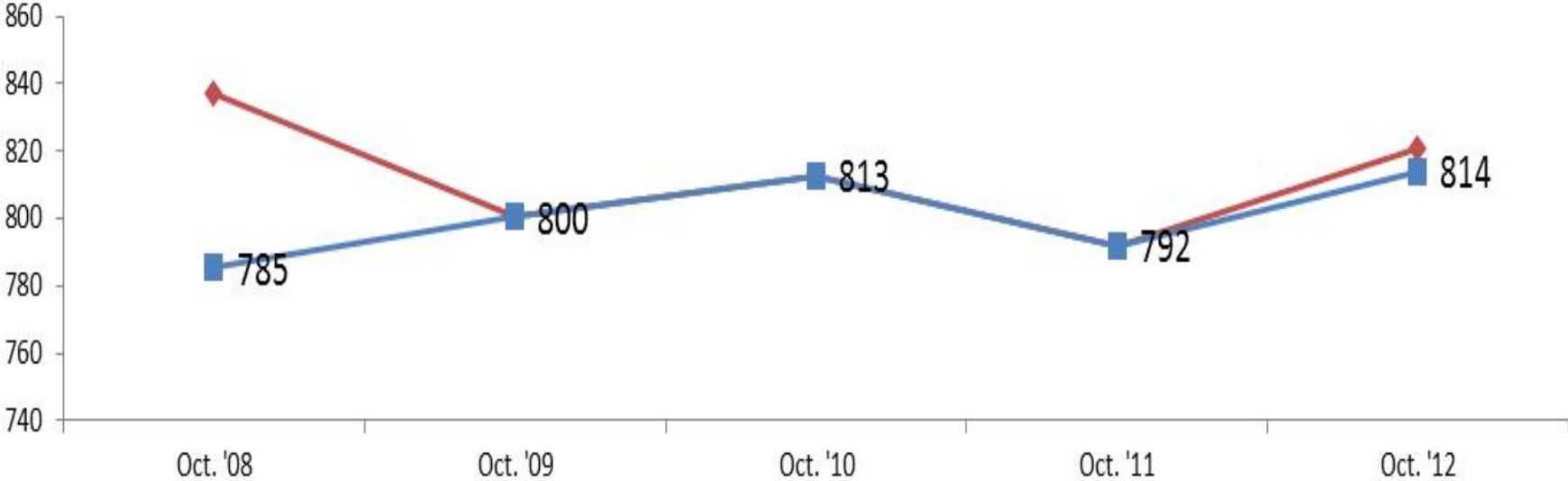
1. Viable enrollment trends
2. Ability to meet short and long-term cash demands
3. Competitive and sustainable salaries and benefits
4. Appropriate unspent budget balance



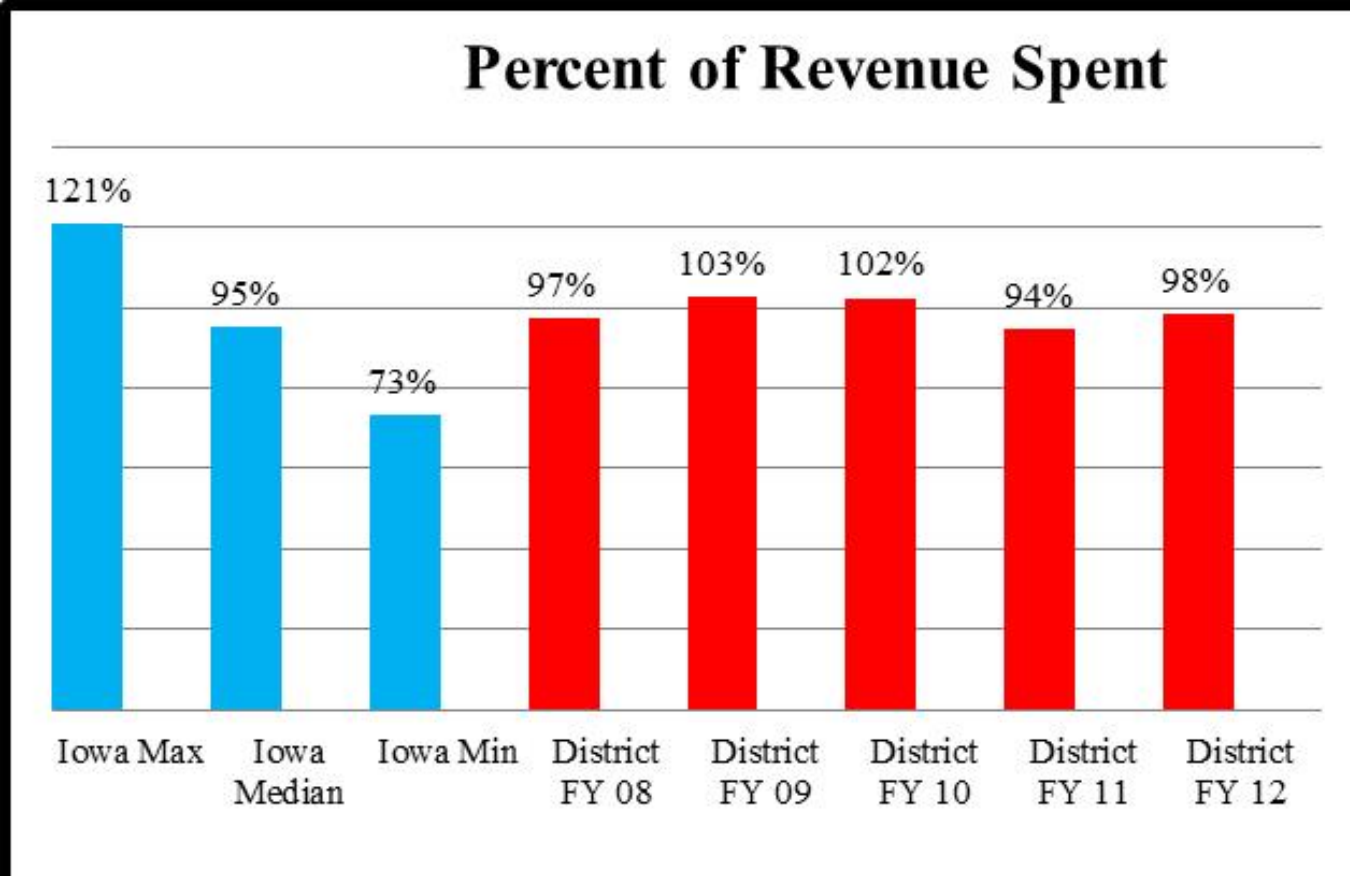
DOES THE DISTRICT ENROLLMENT TREND SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL AND FINANCIAL VIABILITY?

Five-Year Certified Enrollment Trend

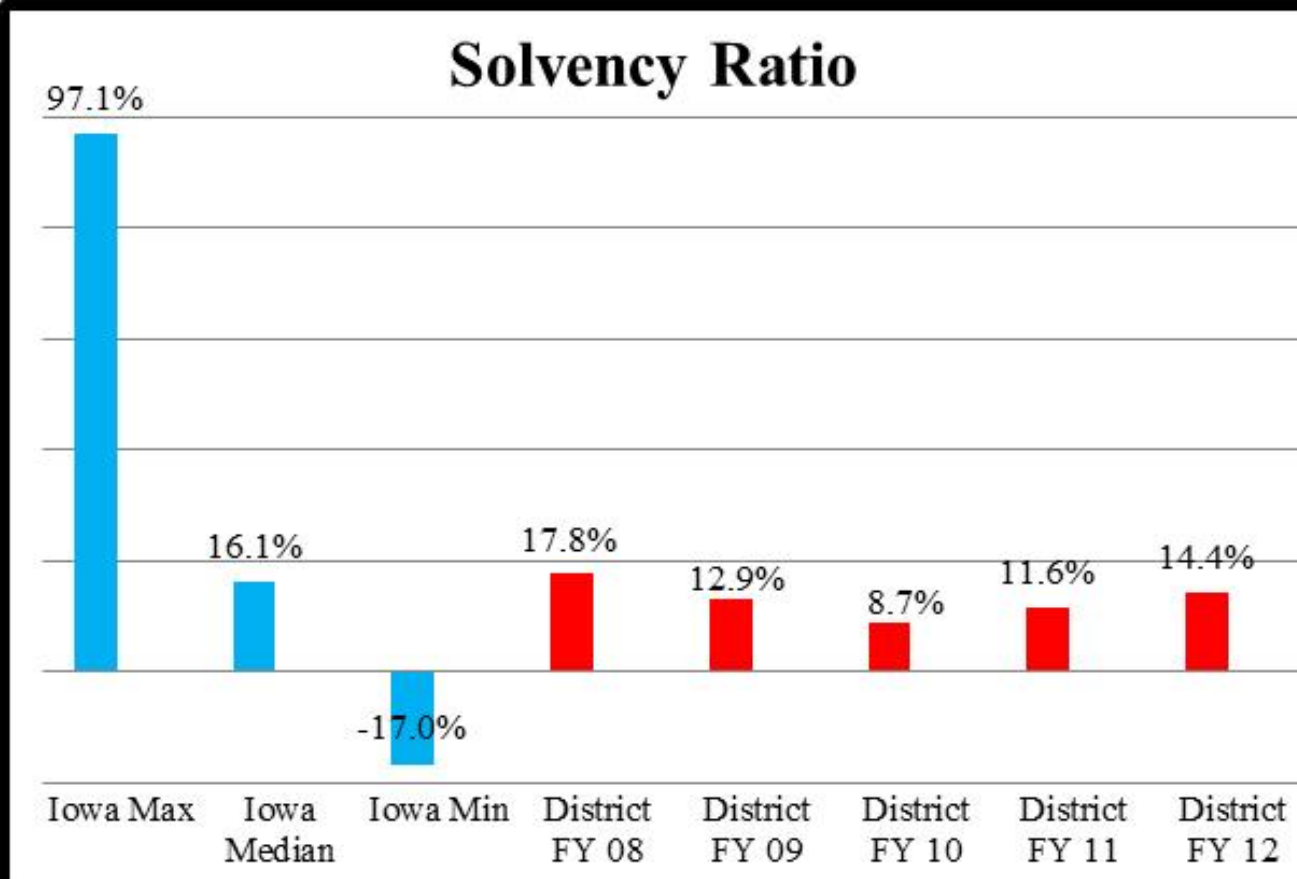
—◆— MEDIAN —■— WEST BRANCH



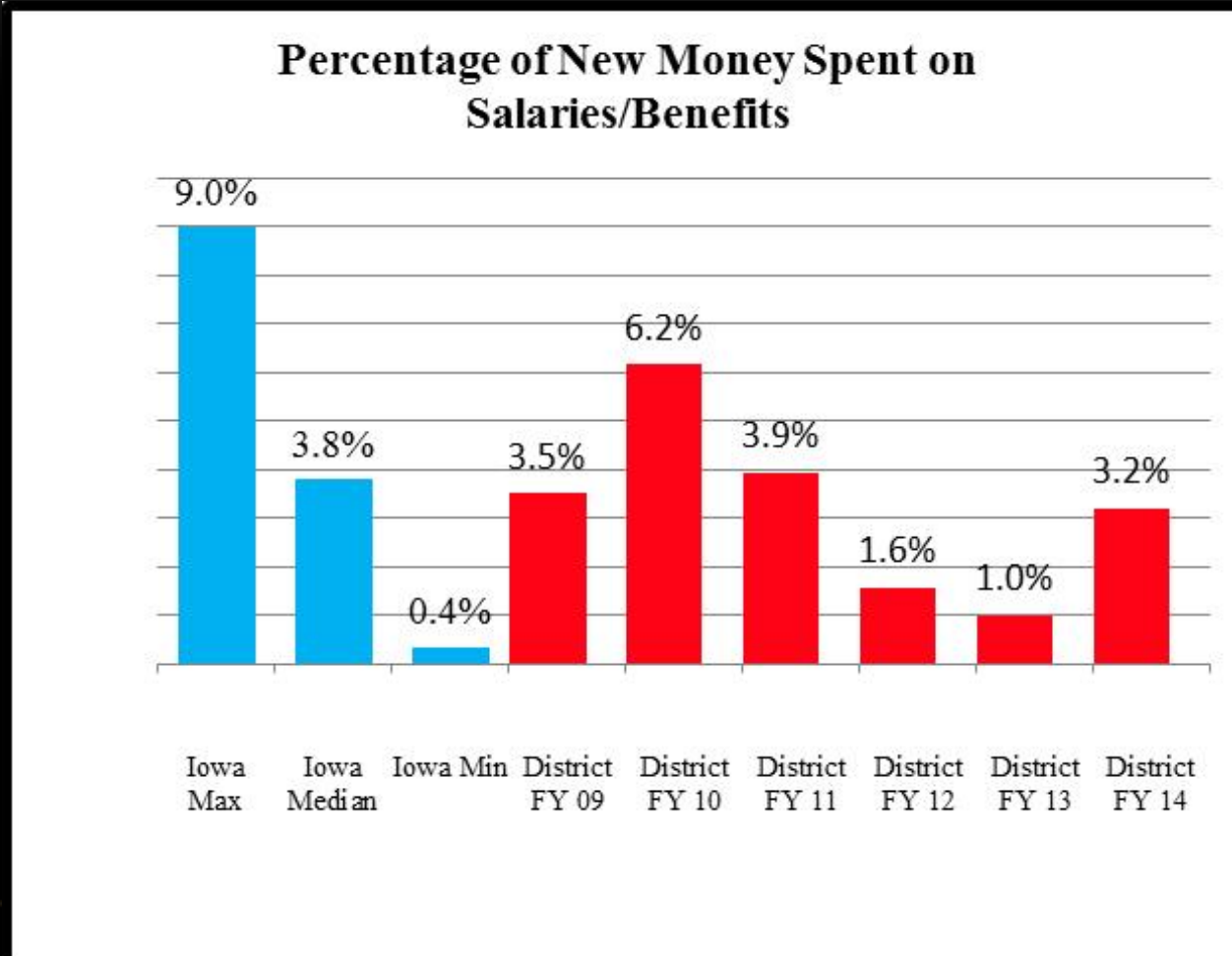
IS THE DISTRICT USING AN APPROPRIATE PERCENTAGE OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES EACH YEAR?



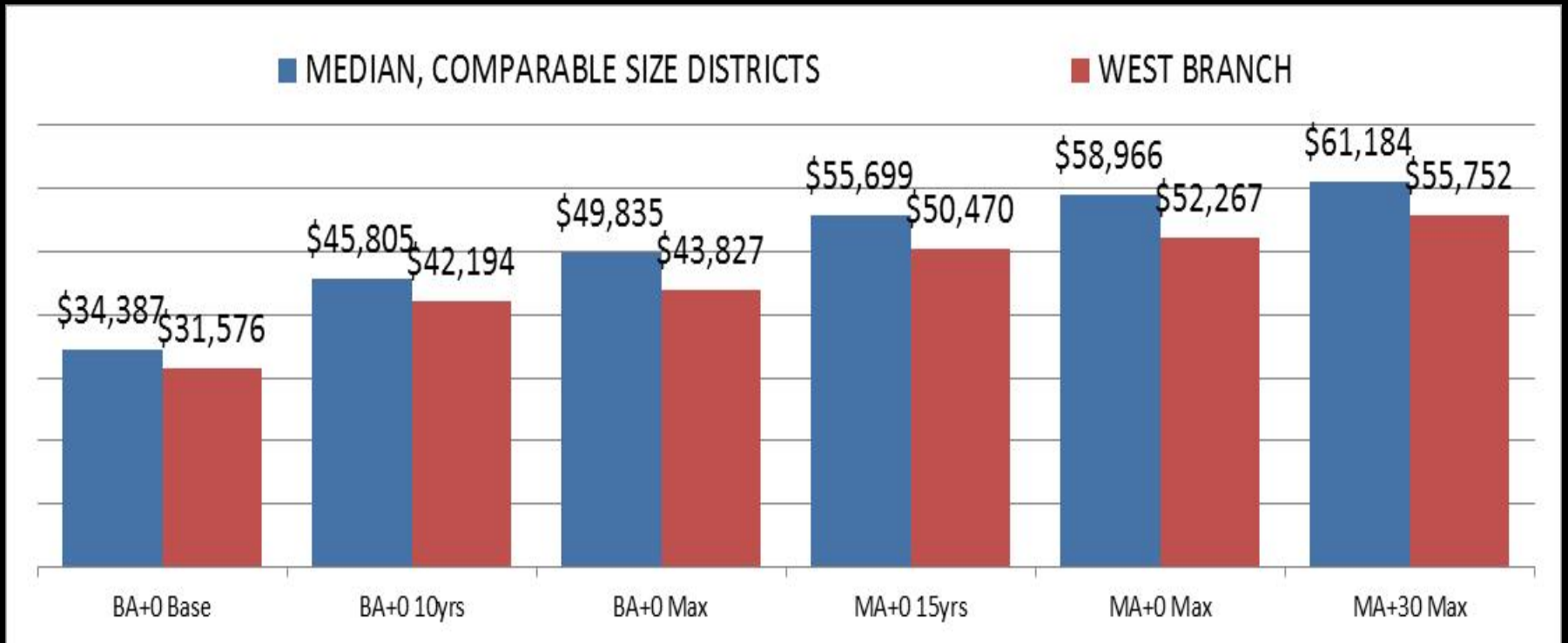
IS THE DISTRICT FINANCIAL SOLVENCY RATIO AT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL?



IS THE DISTRICT SPENDING AN APPROPRIATE PERCENTAGE OF NEW MONEY ON SALARIES AND BENEFITS?



HOW DO DISTRICT TEACHER SALARIES COMPARE TO COMPARABLE IOWA DISTRICTS?



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT



MAJOR STRENGTHS:

- Staff and parents strongly believe that the school board can make a positive difference on student achievement.
- Most respondents believe that improvement is needed and that the district does not make excuses.
- District students outperform the state average on the Iowa Assessments and on the ACT.

MAJOR STRENGTHS (CONT'D):

- Average daily attendance and graduation rates are high.
- Staff and parents overwhelmingly believe that parents must be partners in improving student learning and that parents are well informed of students' progress.
- Most staff and parents believe that parents are well informed of their students' progress.

MAJOR IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Create urgency around the need for improvement and identify one or two top priorities based on student achievement data.
2. Focus attention and resources on improvement of instruction, rigor and relevance, and student engagement.
3. Continue to improve the assessment system to align to the content and rigor of the ICC.

MAJOR IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

4. Continue to incorporate the content and rigor of the Iowa Core/Common Core Standards.
5. Focus professional development on instructional practices that use student work and assessment data to ensure student mastery of benchmarks.
6. Inform and enlist students and parents to help ensure all students master the standards.

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