

IMPLEMENTING THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: YEAR TWO PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS



Results from 2012-13 School Year

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About the Council of the Great City Schools

The Council of the Great City Schools is a coalition of 67 of the nation's largest urban public school systems. Its board of directors is composed of the superintendent of schools and one school board member from each member city. An executive committee of 24 individuals, equally divided in number between superintendents, and school board members, provides regular oversight of the 501(c)(3) organization. The mission of the Council is to advocate for urban public education and assist its members in their improvement. The Council provides services to its members in the areas of legislation, research, communications, curriculum and instruction, and management. The group convenes two major conferences each year; conducts studies on urban school conditions and trends; and operates ongoing networks of senior school district managers with responsibilities in such areas as federal programs, operations, finance, personnel, communications, research, and technology. The Council was founded in 1956 and incorporated in 1961, and has its headquarters in Washington, DC.

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Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Introduction.....	2
Part I. Implementing the Common Core State Standards.....	5
Part II. Professional Development and the Common Core State Standards.....	10
Part III. Ensuring Access to the Common Core State Standards for ELLs.....	18
Part IV. Ensuring Access to the Common Core State Standards for Students with Special Needs.....	23
Part V. Measuring Implementation of the Common Core State Standards.....	27
Part VI. Communicating with Stakeholders.....	31
Discussion.....	33
Appendix A. Views on Implementation Progress.....	35
Appendix B. Responses to Open-ended Questions.....	37
Appendix C. Districts Responding to the Survey.....	49

Figures

Figure 1. Percentage of curriculum directors indicating what school year their districts will fully implement the CCSS, 2012 and 2013.....	6
Figure 2. Percentage of respondents rating the strength of their district’s CCSS implementation progress in specified areas, 2013.....	6
Figure 3. Extent to which respondents indicate specified stakeholders are involved in or informed of their district’s CCSS implementation strategies 2013.....	7
Figure 4. Percentage of respondents using specified resources to align instructional materials to the CCSS, 2013.....	7
Figure 5. Percentage of respondents who report being familiar with the Next Generation Science Standards, 2013.....	8
Figure 6. Percentage of respondents who plan to adopt the Next Generation Science Standards, 2013.....	8

Figure 7. Percentage of curriculum directors reporting that their districts have curriculum aligned to the CCSS as of the 2012-13 school year, by grade, 2013.....	9
Figure 8. Percentage of curriculum directors indicating central office and school staff levels of preparation to implement the CCSS, 2013.....	12
Figure 9. Percentage of curriculum directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district’s professional development, 2013.....	12
Figure 10. Percentage of curriculum directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district’s professional development for ELA, 2013.....	13
Figure 11. Percentage of curriculum directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district’s professional development for math, 2013.....	14
Figure 12. Percentage of curriculum directors reporting that specified topics related to special populations are evident in their district’s CCSS professional development for ELA and math, 2013.....	15
Figure 13. Percentage of curriculum directors reporting that specified topics related to technology are evident in their district’s CCSS professional development, 2013.....	15
Figure 14. Percentage of curriculum directors reporting how often district and school staff participate in specified CCSS implementation support activities, 2013.....	16
Figure 15. Percentage of curriculum directors reporting the extent to which their district’s formal and informal observation protocols in specified areas are aligned with the CCSS, 2013.....	17
Figure 16. Percentage of ELL directors who agree or disagree with specified statements about their district’s readiness to implement the CCSS with ELLs, 2013.....	19
Figure 17. Percentage of ELL directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district’s professional development, 2013.....	19
Figure 18. Percentage of ELL directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district’s professional development for ELA, 2013.....	20
Figure 19. Percentage of ELL directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district’s professional development for math, 2013.....	21
Figure 20. Percentage of ELL directors rating the alignment of their district’s instructional materials for ELLs to the CCSS, 2013.....	22

Figure 21. Percentage of special education directors who agree or disagree with specified statements about their district’s readiness to implement the CCSS for students with special needs, 2013.....	24
Figure 22. Percentage of special education directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district’s professional development, 2013.....	24
Figure 23. Percentage of special education directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district’s professional development for ELA, 2013.....	25
Figure 24. Percentage of special education directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district’s professional development for math, 2013.....	26
Figure 25. Percentage of research directors indicating the strength of their district's progress in specified areas of CCSS implementation, 2013.....	28
Figure 26. Percentage of research directors who agree or disagree with specified statements about their district’s readiness to implement the CCSS, 2013.....	28
Figure 27. Percentage of research directors reporting their district’s use of specified data to measure implementation of the CCSS, 2013.....	29
Figure 28. Percentage of research directors reporting their district’s use of specified outcome data to measure implementation of the CCSS, 2013.....	29
Figure 29. Percentage of ELL directors reporting their district’s use of specified data to measure implementation of the CCSS, 2013.....	30
Figure 30. Percentage of special education directors reporting their district’s use of specified data to measure implementation of the CCSS, 2013.....	30
Figure 31. Percentage of communications directors who agree or disagree with specified statements about their district’s readiness to implement the CCSS, 2013.....	32

Executive Summary

Part I. Implementing the Common Core State Standards

- Nearly all curriculum directors responding to the 2013 survey reported that their districts plan to have the CCSS fully implemented by the 2014-15 school year. Some 34.1 percent indicated that they expect to fully implement the CCSS in the 2013-14 school year – a nine percentage point increase from survey responses in 2012. This suggests urban districts may be speeding up their implementation plans and timelines.
- The majority of all respondents indicated that their district’s progress in implementing the CCSS was either “good” or “excellent.”
- The areas where implementation was most likely to be rated as “poor” included addressing the needs of special populations, adopting computer-based/computer-adaptive assessments, and integrating technology into the classroom.
- The stakeholder groups most likely to be *involved* in shaping their school district’s CCSS implementation strategy, according to all respondents, were certified teachers, teacher unions, state departments of education, and local school boards. Conversely, the groups least likely to be *involved* were elected city officials, the parent community, business leaders, and faith-based and community-based organizations.
- When aligning their instructional materials to the CCSS, the most common resources that all respondents indicated using were PARCC/SBAC sample items, CCSS math progressions, and resources from the Council’s Basal Alignment Project.
- Over 70 percent of curriculum directors reported that their district’s curriculum was aligned to the ELA and math CCSS in kindergarten through grade two. In ELA, this number drops to between 55.8 percent and 62.8 percent in subsequent grades. And in math, respondents report a steep decline in curriculum alignment in grades nine through 12.

Part II. Professional Development and the Common Core State Standards

- Over half of the responding curriculum directors indicated that central office curriculum staff were “very prepared” to implement the CCSS, while estimating that other central office and school staff were somewhat less prepared.
- Topics meant to communicate the rationale for adopting the CCSS were often evident in district professional development activities, according to responding curriculum directors.
- Approximately three quarters of curriculum directors reported that building a shared understanding of the instructional shifts in ELA and math was “often evident” in their ELA and math professional development.
- Integrating technology into classroom instruction was identified as among the least evident topics in both ELA and math professional development.

- About 60 percent of curriculum directors indicated that their principals were scheduling daily or weekly common planning time for teachers to help them prepare for the CCSS.
- About three fourths of curriculum directors indicated that differentiating instruction for ELLs and students with special needs was “often evident” or “sometimes evident” in their ELA professional development. In comparison, a lower number of respondents— 60.5 percent—indicated that differentiating instruction for ELLs and students with special needs was “often evident” or “sometimes evident” in math professional development.

Part III. Ensuring Access to the Common Core State Standards for ELLs

- While a little over half of ELL directors “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement that their districts have aligned their English-proficiency standards with the CCSS, only about a third of responding ELL directors “agree” or “strongly agree” that their districts prioritize ELLs being able to meet the rigor of the CCSS.
- Only about a quarter of ELL directors “agree” or “strongly agree” that ESL teachers are prepared to ensure that ELLs meet the rigor of the CCSS, and none “agree” or “strongly agree” that general education teachers are prepared to support ELLs.
- ELL directors reported that instructional materials for ELLs varied in their quality and alignment with the CCSS.

Part IV. Ensuring Access to the Common Core State Standards for Students with Special Needs

- Roughly two thirds of responding special education directors “agree” or “strongly agree” that their districts prioritize students with special needs being able to meet the rigor of the CCSS (64.3 percent) and are successful at identifying students with special needs (71.4 percent), although only 14.3 percent agreed that general education teachers are prepared to help these students meet the rigor of the CCSS.
- In open-ended answers, special education directors reported the need for additional support on accommodations and instructional modifications for special needs students, as well as the need to align students’ IEPs to the CCSS.

Part V. Measuring Implementation of the Common Core State Standards

- Some 70 percent of research directors either “agree” or “strongly agree” that tracking implementation of the CCSS is a high priority for their district. Districts report using a variety of data to assess implementation.
- While a majority of research directors report that their districts have made “excellent” progress in providing timely data for school leaders and creating data systems to store and share information, their

Executive Summary

responses indicate the need for districts to work harder on creating formal feedback loops for gathering input on implementation efforts.

- Obtaining classroom-level information for thousands of teachers in large numbers of schools was among the most common challenges cited in measuring implementation of the CCSS.

Part VI. Communicating with Stakeholders

- A large majority of responding communications directors “agree” or “strongly agree” that their districts are actively engaged in informing stakeholders about and building public support for the CCSS.
- Two of the most common challenges cited in informing stakeholders about the CCSS were the complexity of the new standards and having to explain to parents how the CCSS is different from previous standards.

Last year, the Council of the Great City Schools embarked on a multi-year initiative to help its member school districts implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Part of this initiative involves annual surveys of the progress urban public school districts are making in implementing the CCSS. This report presents the results from the second-year survey.

This year, the Council broadened the scope of the CCSS implementation survey to include key curriculum, research, and communications leaders from the 67 Council member districts. The survey covered a wide range of implementation topics, including professional development activities in English language arts and math; strategies for measuring and collecting data on implementation; and communication strategies to inform stakeholders about the CCSS. Furthermore, this year's survey asked respondents about the inclusion of English language learners, students with special needs, and struggling students in CCSS implementation plans.

The survey was sent to curriculum directors, research directors, ELL directors, special education directors, and communication directors in June 2013, and closed in August 2013. A total of 122 district staff members from 48 districts responded to the survey, for a district response rate of about 72 percent. The second-year survey results indicate that, while urban school districts share common implementation challenges, they are making substantial headway in putting the CCSS into place. To be sure, much more remains to be done to ensure that all staff members and teachers are ready to implement the standards, but the findings of this report suggest that the nation's urban school districts are taking implementation seriously and have devoted significant time and energy to imbed these new expectations into all classrooms for the benefit of all students.

Interpreting the Data

The reader should note that the findings presented in this study are based on self-reports by survey respondents, so the data are inherently subjective. Moreover, in our effort to capture the perspectives of staff in different positions within each district's central office, we often received varying numbers of survey responses from each city. Therefore, in those sections that present data for all respondents, the analysis may reflect the fact that a large number of respondents were based in the same district or group of districts. In addition, the survey was not administered directly to teachers, but one will find that district estimates of teacher readiness to implement the CCSS are similar to what one sees in results from surveys of teachers conducted by other organizations.

Finally, we saw circumstances where people in the same district answered similar questions much differently. This could reflect either differing perspectives or some uncertainty about where implementation stands. This is not surprising, as we are catching school-district personnel in the middle of a very complicated implementation process. Still, readers should find this report one of the most detailed summaries to date of where common core implementation stands in the nation's major urban school systems, according to senior staff in those systems.

Part I. Implementing the Common Core State Standards

- Approximately 90.2 percent of all Great City School curriculum directors responding to the 2013 survey plan to have the CCSS fully implemented in their districts by the 2014-15 school year. Some 34.1 percent indicated that they expect to fully implement the CCSS in the 2013-14 school year – a nine percentage point increase from survey responses in 2012. Meanwhile, somewhat fewer respondents reported that their districts would wait until 2015-16 or beyond to implement the CCSS. This suggests urban districts may be speeding up their implementation plans and timelines (Figure 1).
- The majority of all respondents indicated that their district’s progress in implementing the CCSS was either good or excellent. More than half of all respondents rated the progress their district had made in providing professional development to teachers in English language arts and mathematics as “excellent” (59.5 percent and 55 percent, respectively) (Figure 2).
- The areas where implementation was most likely to be rated as “poor” included addressing the needs of special populations (39.6 percent), adopting computer-based/computer-adaptive assessments (37.8 percent), and integrating technology into the classroom (34.2 percent) (Figure 2).
- Key differences emerged between respondent groups rating their district’s progress in implementing various aspects of the CCSS. For instance, 45.2 percent of curriculum directors and 50 percent of research directors rated their district’s progress in implementing the CCSS math standards in their classrooms as “excellent;” while less than eight percent of superintendents rated the implementation as highly. However, some 69.2 percent of superintendents rated their district’s implementation of the math standards as “good.” The same pattern holds true for classroom implementation of the English language arts standards (Appendix A).
- The stakeholder groups most likely to be *involved* in and/or *informed* of their school district’s CCSS implementation strategy, according to all respondents, are certified teachers, teacher unions, state departments of education, and local school boards. Conversely, the groups least likely to be *involved* or *informed* are elected city officials, the parent community, business leaders, and faith-based and community-based organizations (Figure 3).
- When aligning their instructional materials to the CCSS, the most common resources that respondents reported using were PARCC/SBAC sample items (64.8 percent), math progressions in the CCSS (53.3 percent), and resources from the Council’s Basal Alignment Project (42.6 percent) (Figure 4). About 40 percent of all respondents indicated using Student Achievement Partners’ Publishers Criteria—about the same as last year.
- Roughly a third of all respondents (32.4 percent) were “very familiar” and 44.1 percent were “somewhat familiar” with the new Next Generation Science Standards. Approximately 62 percent reported that their districts plan to adopt the new science standards and 36.9 percent remain unsure (Figures 5 and 6).
- Over 70 percent of *curriculum directors* report that their district’s curriculum was aligned to the ELA and math CCSS in kindergarten through grade two in 2012-13. In ELA, this number drops to between 55.8 percent and 62.8 percent for subsequent grades. And in math, responding curriculum directors report a steep decline in curriculum alignment in grades nine through 12 (Figure 7).

Part I. Implementing the Common Core State Standards

Figure 1. Percentage of curriculum directors indicating what school year their districts will fully implement the CCSS, 2012 and 2013

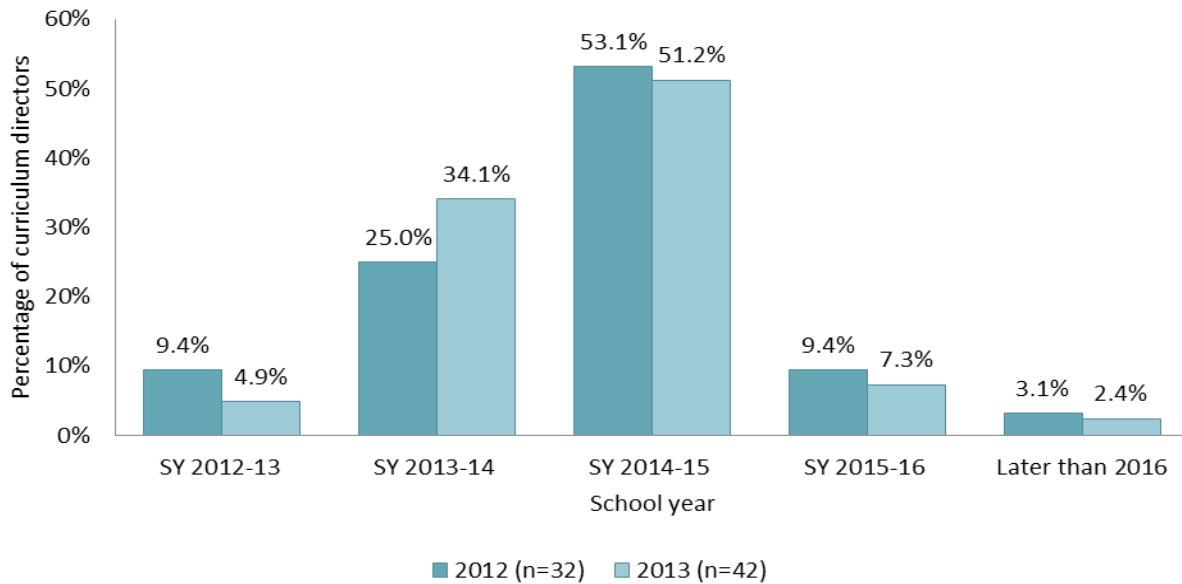
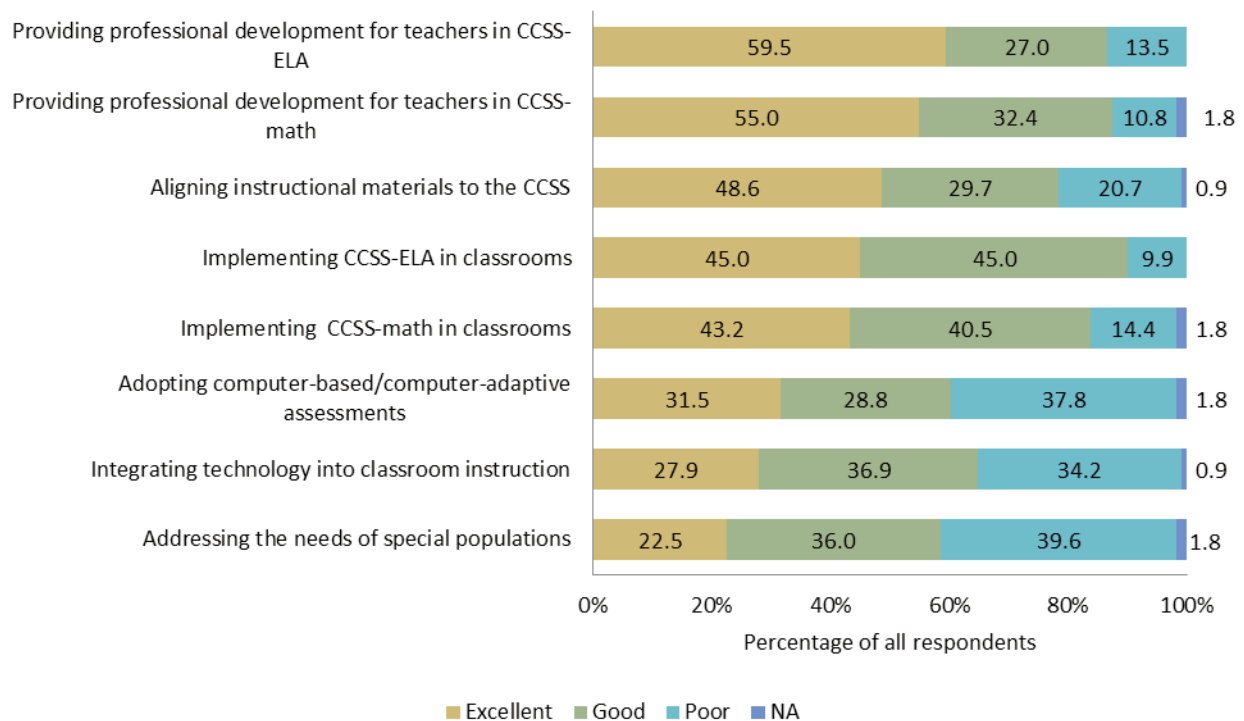


Figure 2. Percentage of respondents rating the strength of their district's CCSS implementation progress in specified areas, 2013 (n=111)



Part I. Implementing the Common Core State Standards

Figure 3. Extent to which respondents indicate specified stakeholders are involved in or informed of their district's CCSS implementation strategies, 2013 (n=110)

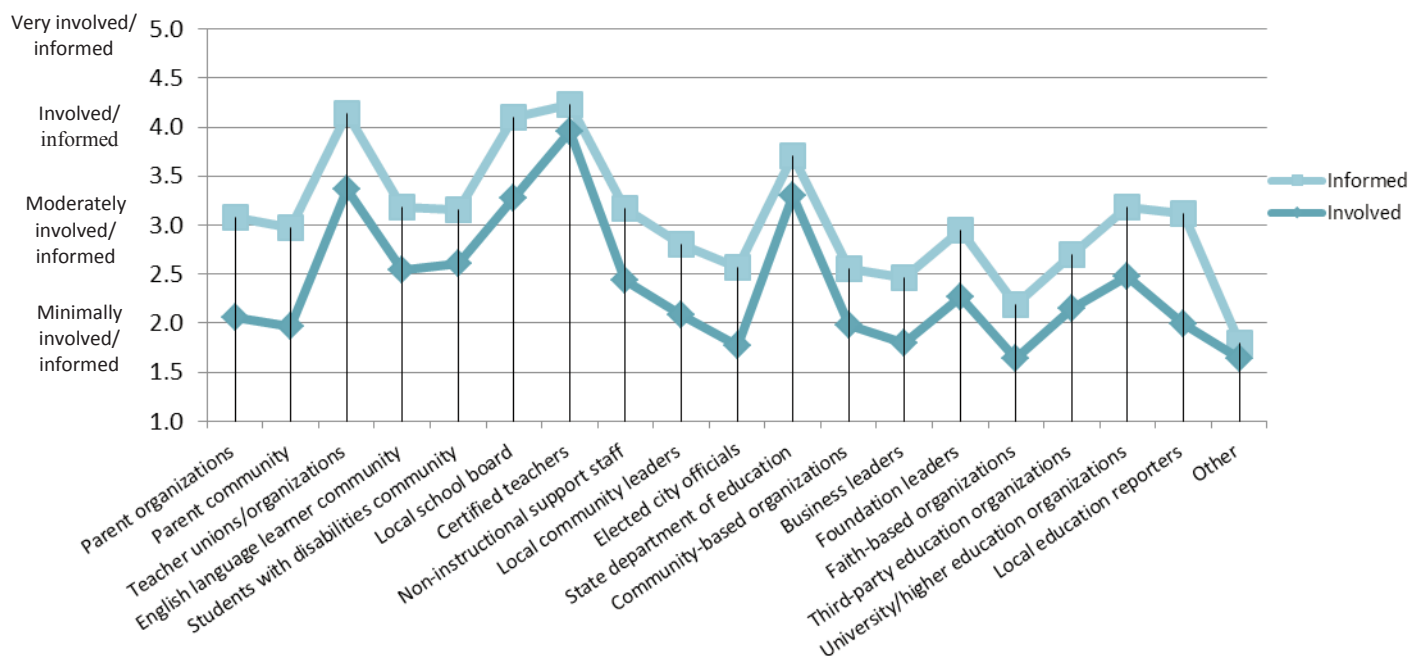
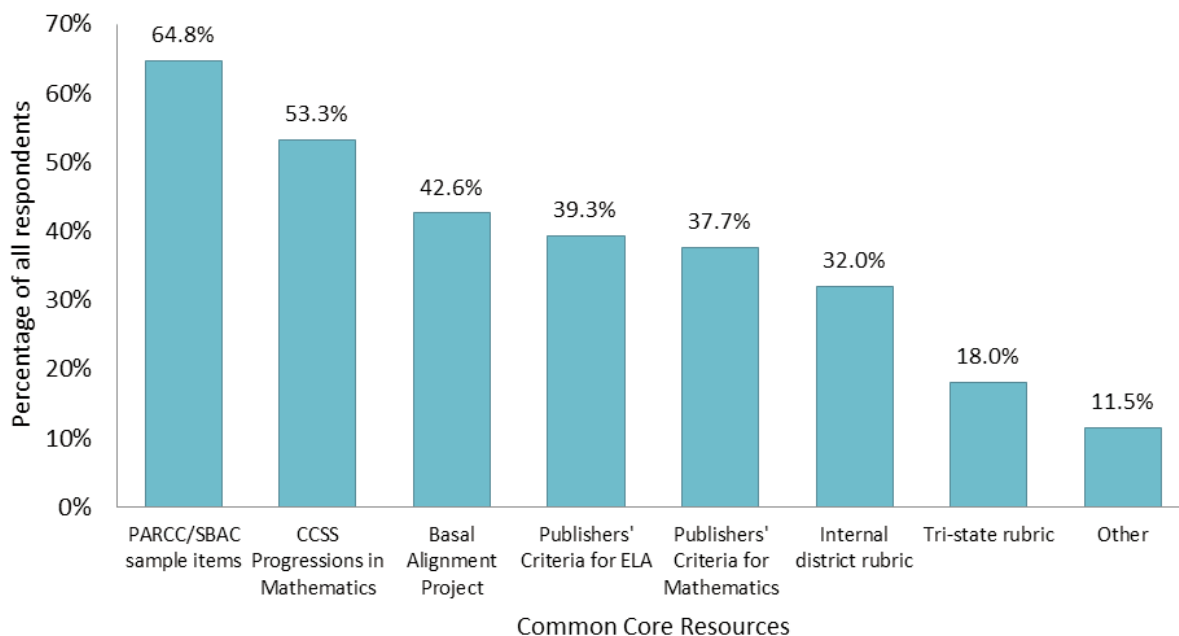


Figure 4. Percentage of respondents using specified resources to align instructional materials to the CCSS, 2013 (n=122)



Part I. Implementing the Common Core State Standards

Figure 5. Percentage of respondents who report being familiar with the Next Generation Science Standards, 2013 (n=111)

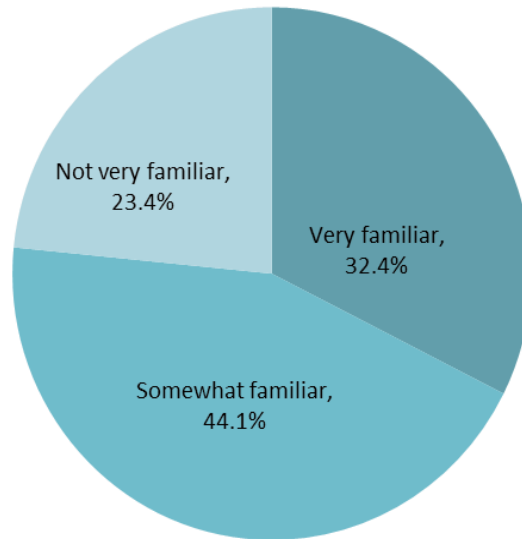
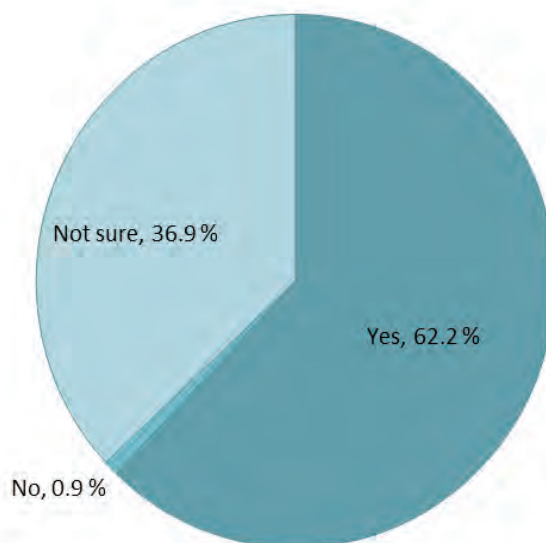
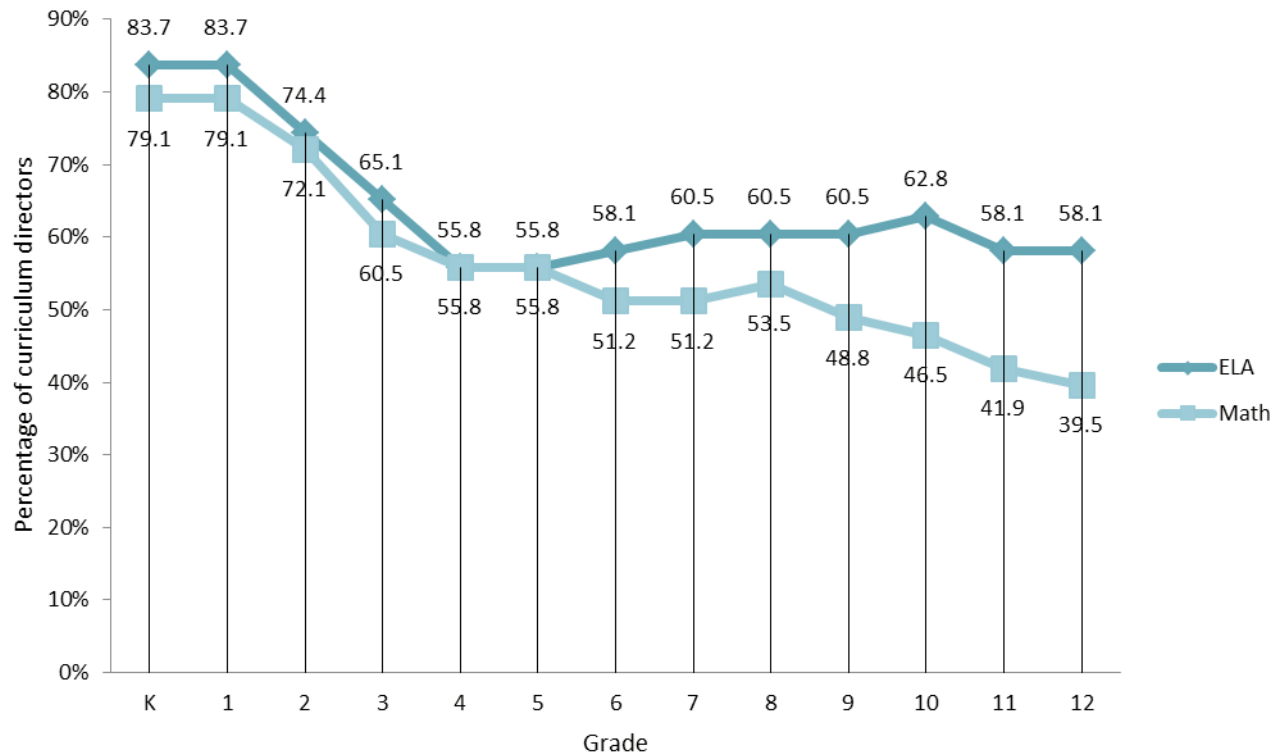


Figure 6. Percentage of respondents who plan to adopt the Next Generation Science Standards, 2013 (n=111)



Part I. Implementing the Common Core State Standards

Figure 7. Percentage of curriculum directors reporting that their districts have curriculum aligned to the CCSS as of the 2012-13 school year, by grade, 2013 (n=43)



Part II. Professional Development and the Common Core State Standards

- About 54 percent of curriculum directors indicated that central office curriculum staff were “very prepared” to implement the CCSS. Curriculum directors did not indicate that any groups outside the central office were “very prepared” to implement the standards, although about 30.2 percent said that certified teachers were “prepared” to implement the CCSS and 25.6 percent said that principals were “prepared” (Figure 8). Estimations of the readiness of school-level staff to implement the CCSS were lower in the 2013 survey than in the 2012 survey.
- In addition, less than 40 percent of responding curriculum directors indicated that central office research personnel and special education staff were “prepared” or “very prepared” to implement the CCSS (39.6 percent and 37.3 percent, respectively). A higher number—58.2 percent—indicated that ELL staff were “prepared” or “very prepared” to implement the CCSS (Figure 8).
- At the central-office level, special education staff members were most likely to be cited by curriculum directors as “not very prepared” to implement the CCSS, although a majority of curriculum directors (72.1 percent) rated special education staff as “prepared” or “somewhat prepared.” Certified non-instructional personnel were most likely to be seen by curriculum directors as “not very prepared” (Figure 8).
- Topics meant to communicate the rationale for adopting the CCSS were often evident in district professional development activities, according to responding curriculum directors. For example, some 67.4 percent of curriculum directors indicated that topics on the importance of using instructional resources aligned to the new standards were “often evident” in their professional development. Roughly 63 percent indicated that understanding the need for standards that are nationally benchmarked was “often evident” in their district’s professional development (Figure 9).
- Approximately 77 percent of curriculum directors reported that building a shared understanding of the instructional shifts in ELA was “often evident” in their ELA professional development. Conversely, only 25.6 percent reported that analyzing student work samples was “often evident” in their ELA professional development. Integrating technology into classroom instruction and developing benchmark tests aligned to CCSS were among the least evident topics in ELA professional development (Figure 10).
- About three quarters of curriculum directors (74.4 percent) indicated that building a shared understanding of the instructional shifts in math was “often evident” in their district’s math professional development, while 67.4 of curriculum directors indicated that building students’ deep understanding of math concepts and building math content knowledge were “often evident” in their math professional development. Integrating technology into classroom instruction was among the least evident topics in professional development offerings in math, according to curriculum directors (Figure 11).
- Over three fourths (79 percent) of curriculum directors indicated that differentiating instruction for ELLs and struggling readers was “often evident” or “sometimes evident” in their ELA professional development and 74.4 percent indicated that differentiation for students with special needs was “often evident” or “sometimes evident.” In comparison, a lower number of curriculum directors—60.5 percent—indicated that differentiating instruction for ELLs and students with special needs was “often evident” or “sometimes evident” in math professional development (Figure 12).

Part II. Professional Development and the Common Core State Standards

- Relatively few curriculum directors indicated that professional development on integrating technology into classroom instruction was available to a “large extent” in their district’s professional development (Figure 13).
- Curriculum directors indicated that teachers, principals, and district leadership participated in a variety of activities to support implementation of the CCSS. Approximately 61 percent of curriculum directors reported that principals were scheduling daily or weekly common planning time for teachers to help them prepare for the common core, while 41.9 percent indicated that teachers were meeting in professional learning communities on a daily or weekly basis to prepare for the common core (Figure 14).
- Responding curriculum directors also reported the degree to which their formal and informal teacher observation protocols were aligned with the CCSS. Only 27.9 percent of curriculum directors indicated that their district’s *formal* observation protocols examined shifts in teacher practice to a “large extent,” only 23.3 indicated that their *formal* protocols examined shifts in teacher content knowledge to a “large extent,” and only 18.6 percent indicated that their *formal* protocols examined shifts in the type and quality of student work to a “large extent.” In fact, between 40 and 54 percent of curriculum directors indicated that their *formal* observation protocols were only aligned with the CCSS to a “small extent” or “not at all” (Figure 15). However, the percentage of curriculum directors indicating that their observational protocols were aligned to the CCSS was higher in the 2013 survey results than in 2012.
- Curriculum directors reported that their *informal* teacher observation protocols were somewhat more aligned with CCSS than their formal observation protocols, with 41.9 percent reporting that their informal protocols looking specifically for shifts in teacher practice were aligned to the common core to a “large extent” (Figure 15).
- Curriculum directors also described a number of other challenges they face in implementing the CCSS in large districts. Common themes that emerged from open-ended responses included the lack of time and resources needed to provide professional development for large numbers of teachers and administrators, the need to build the capacity of teacher leaders to train others, and the challenge of implementing new standards while being evaluated on old standards (Appendix B).
- Similarly, open-ended responses to a question about measuring the implementation of the CCSS in large urban school districts prompted diverse responses. One need that was cited was ensuring that evaluators and observers at school sites have the same level of expertise in identifying classroom instruction aligned to the CCSS. Another issue was the need to identify effective measures of success while being accountable to current state assessments (Appendix B).

Part II. Professional Development and the Common Core State Standards

Figure 8. Percentage of curriculum directors indicating central office and school staff levels of preparation to implement the CCSS, 2013 (n=43)

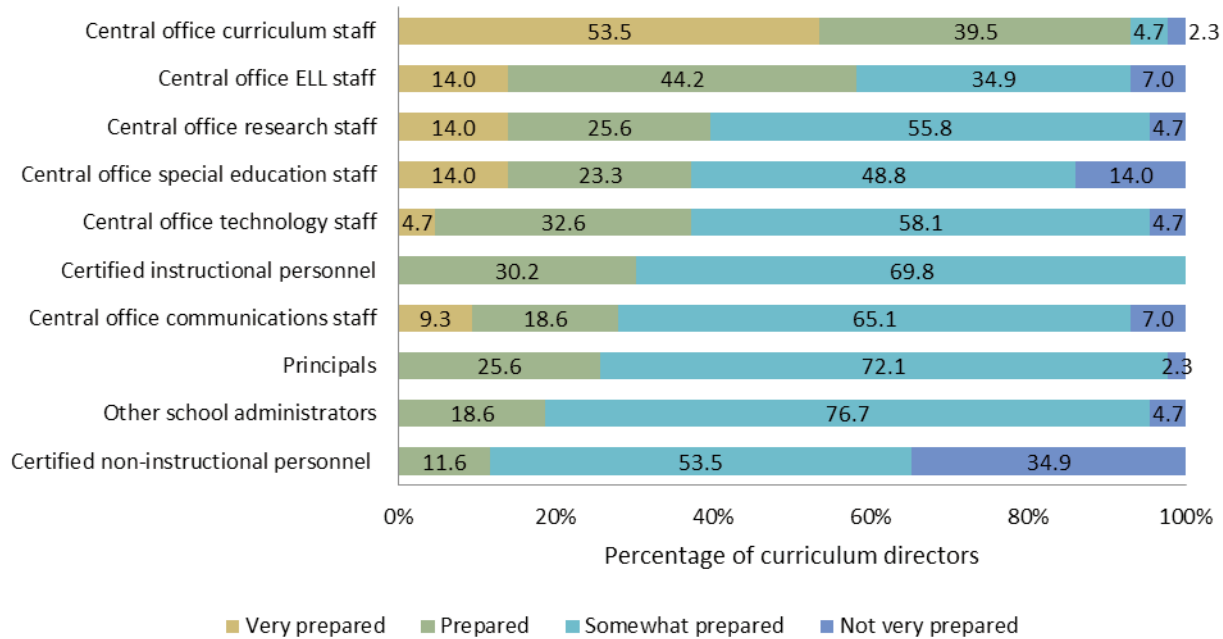
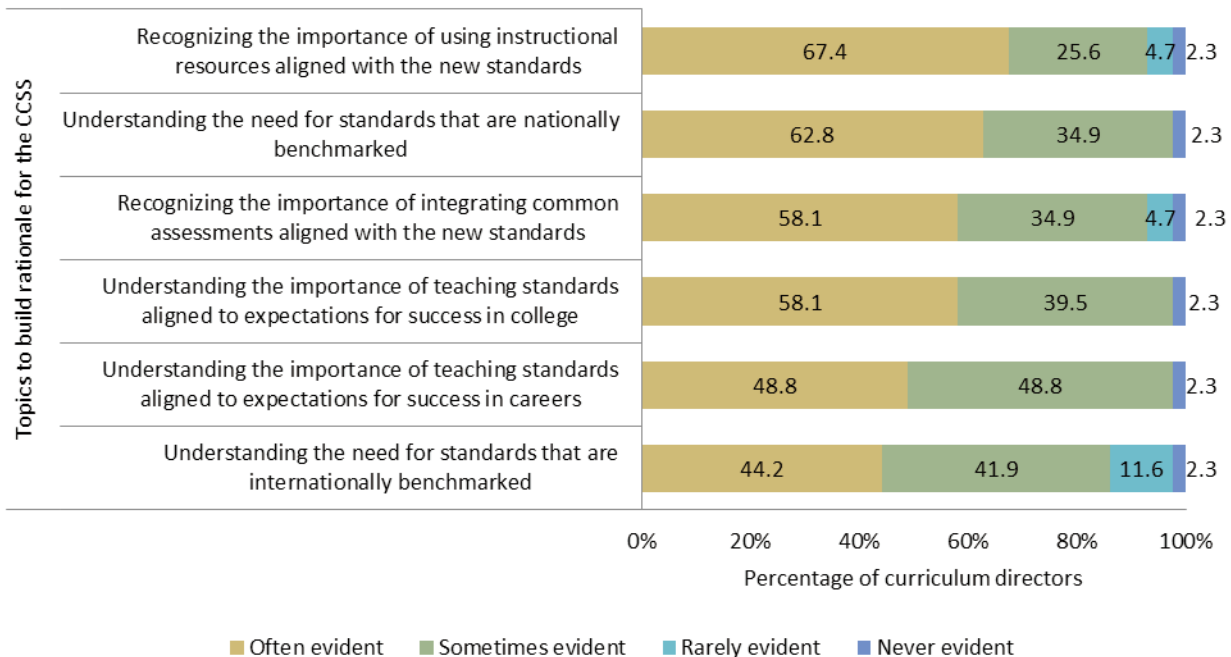
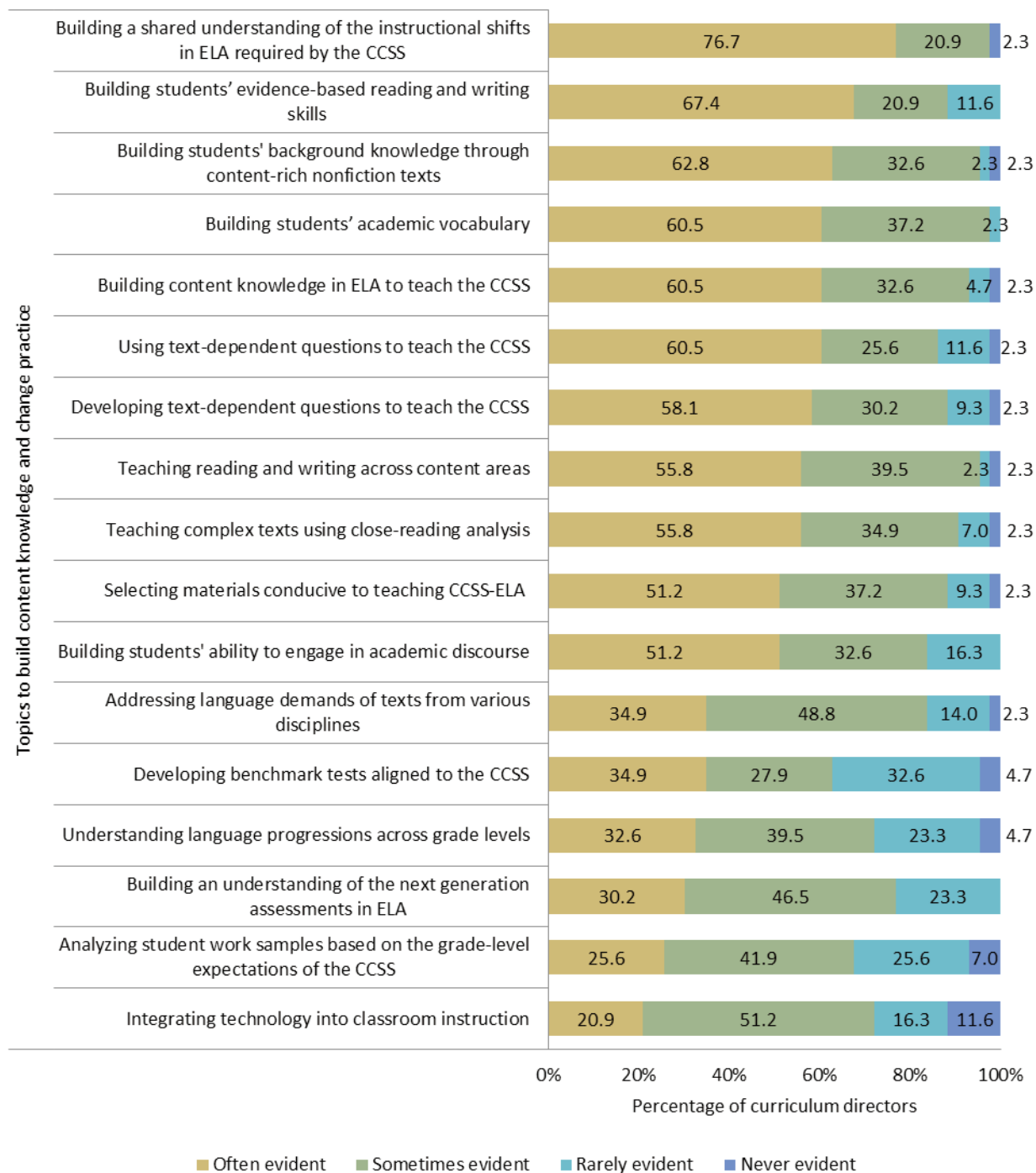


Figure 9. Percentage of curriculum directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district's professional development, 2013 (n=43)



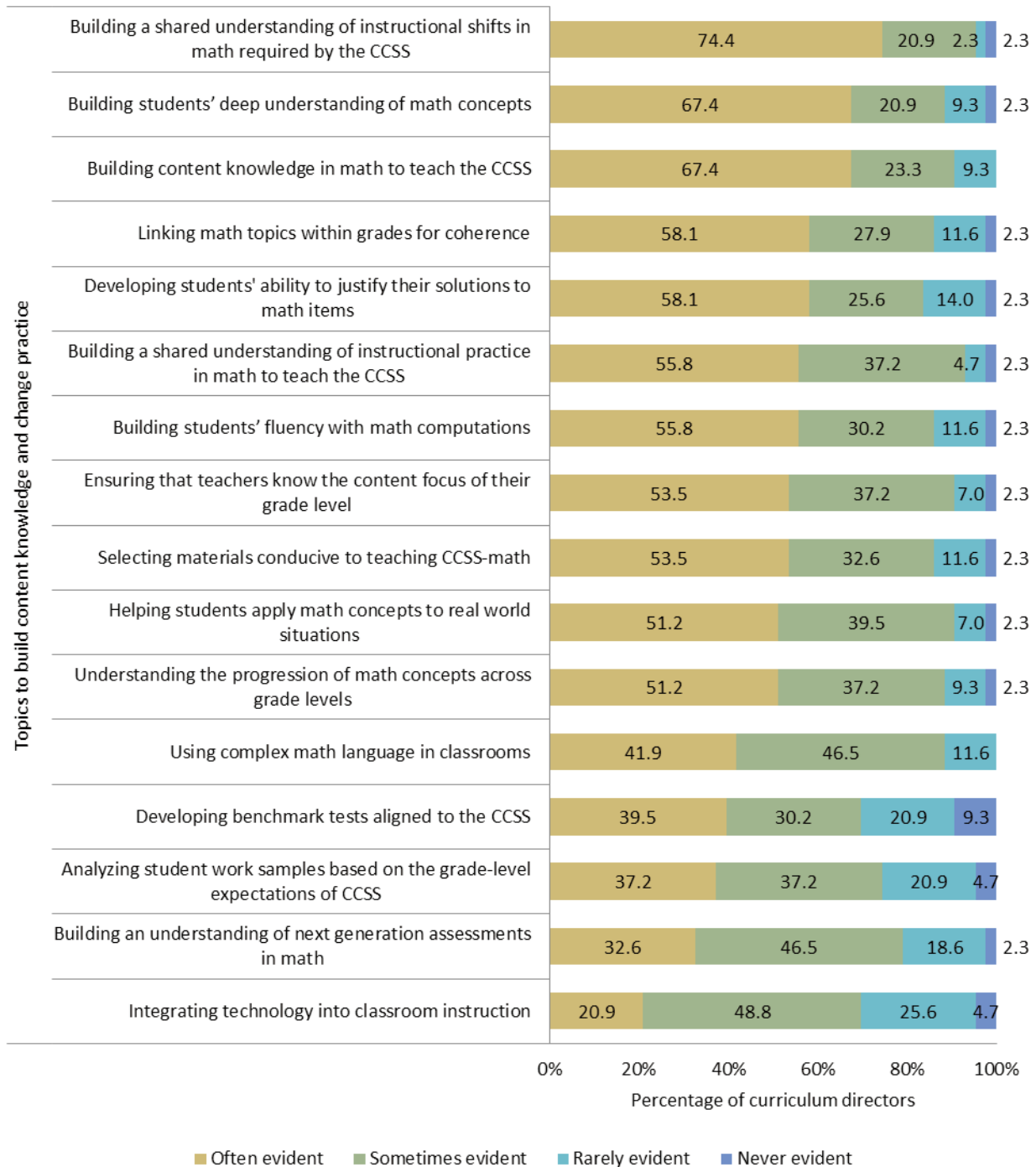
Part II. Professional Development and the Common Core State Standards

Figure 10. Percentage of curriculum directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district's professional development for ELA, 2013 (n=43)



Part II. Professional Development and the Common Core State Standards

Figure 11. Percentage of curriculum directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district's professional development for math, 2013 (n=43)



Part II. Professional Development and the Common Core State Standards

Figure 12. Percentage of curriculum directors reporting that specified topics related to special populations are evident in their district's CCSS professional development in ELA and math, 2013 (n=43)

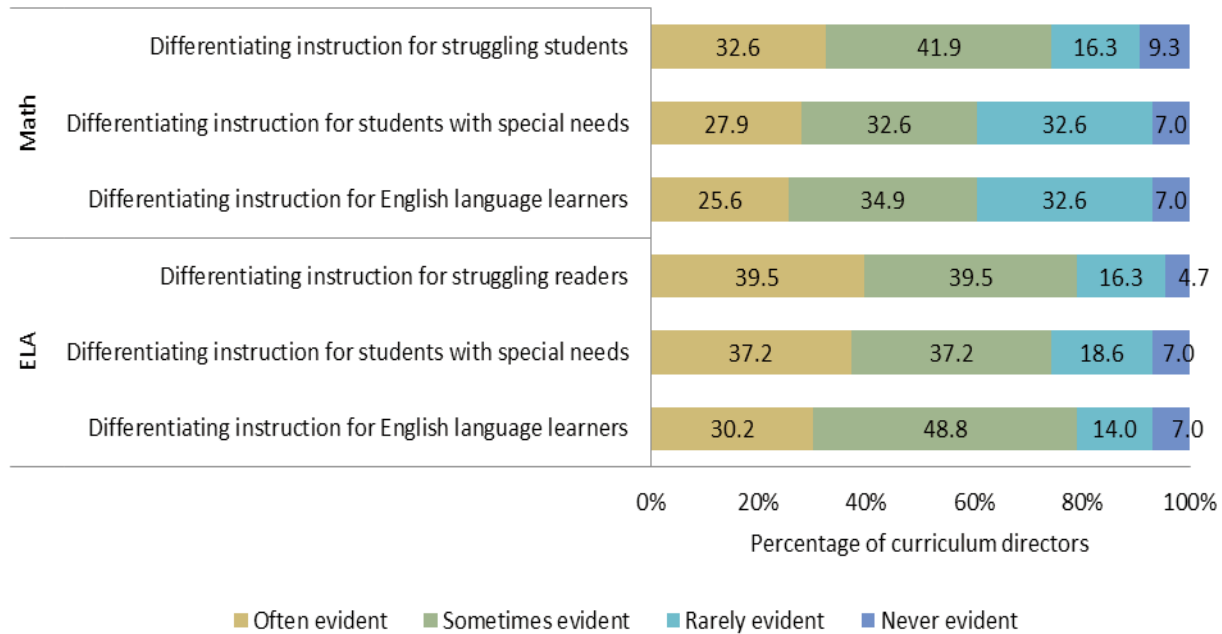
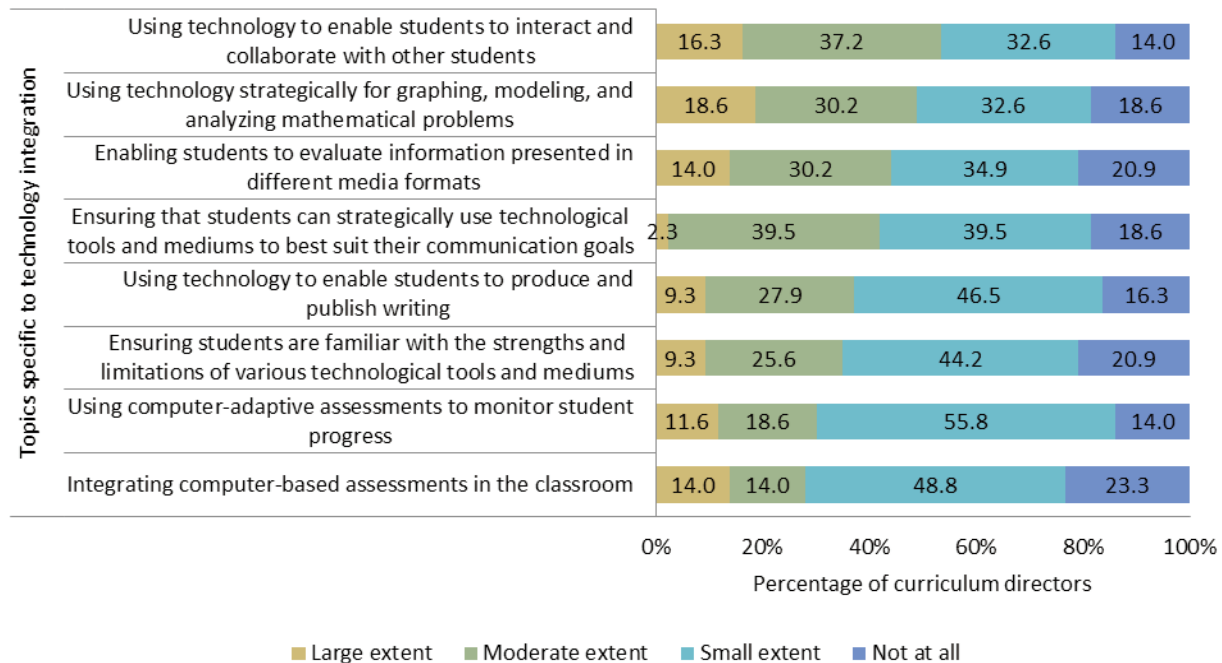
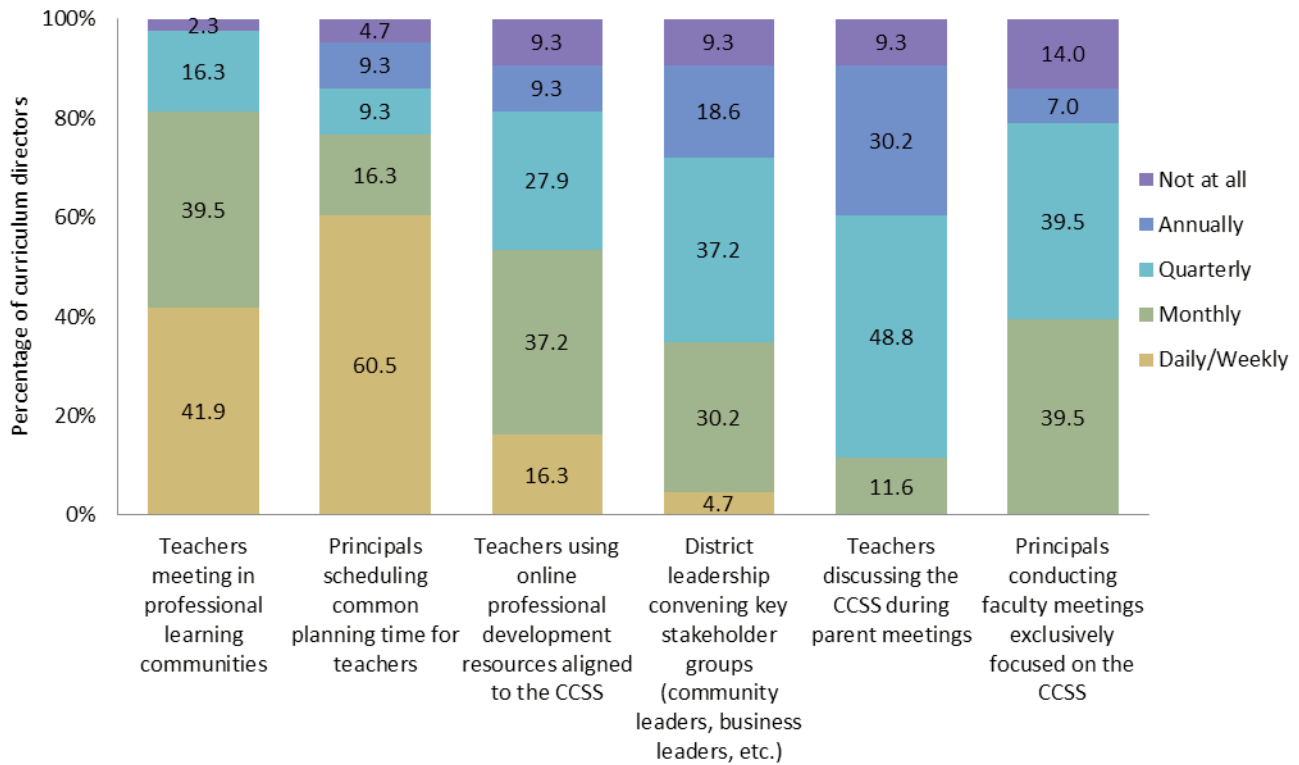


Figure 13. Percentage of curriculum directors reporting that specified topics related to technology are evident in their district's CCSS professional development, 2013 (n=43)



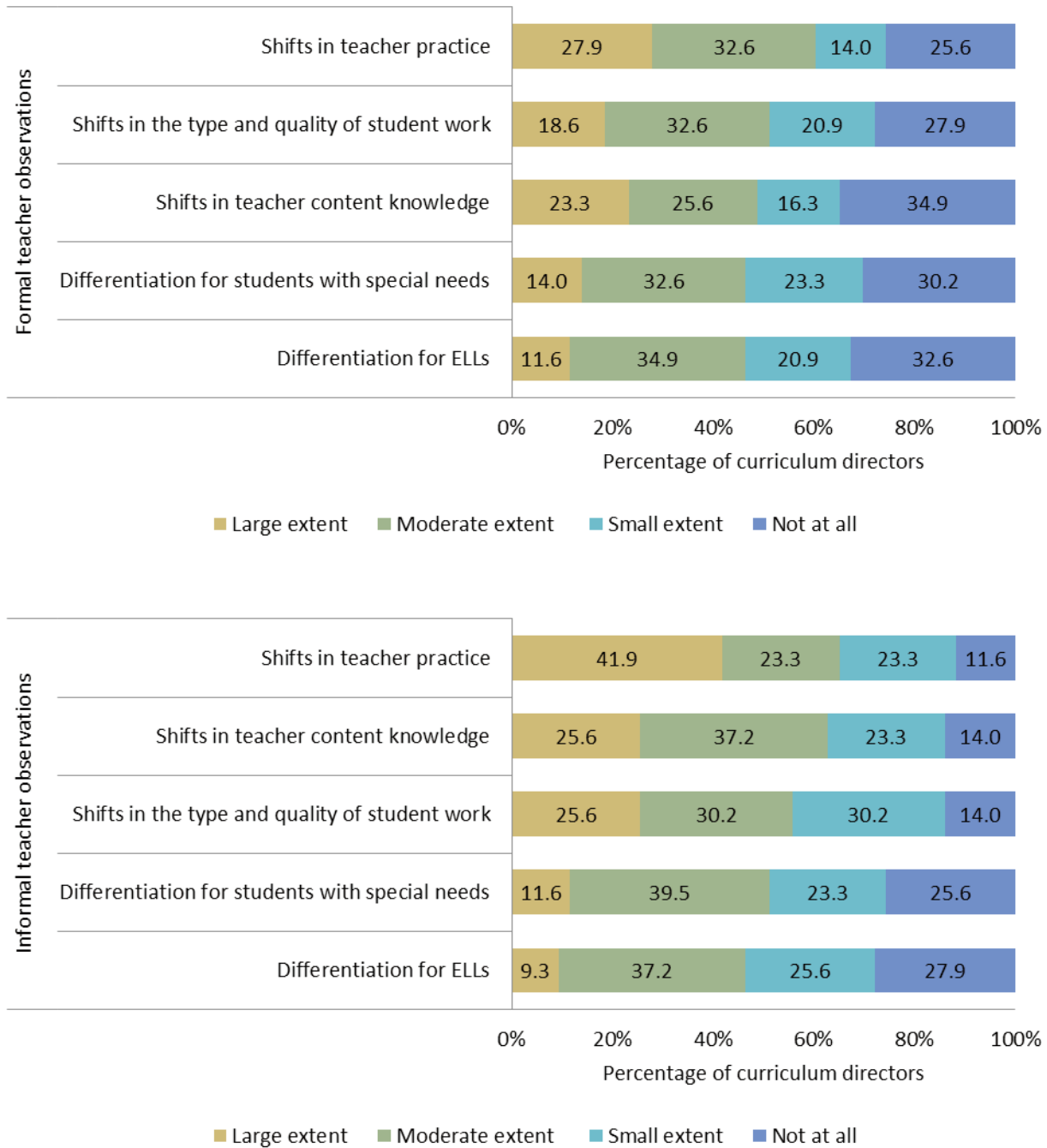
Part II. Professional Development and the Common Core State Standards

Figure 14. Percentage of curriculum directors reporting how often district and school staff participate in specified CCSS implementation support activities, 2013 (n=43)



Part II. Professional Development and the Common Core State Standards

Figure 15. Percentage of curriculum directors reporting the extent to which their district's formal and informal observation protocols in specified areas are aligned with the CCSS, 2013 (n=43)



Part III. Ensuring Access to the Common Core State Standards for ELLs

- Approximately 53 percent of ELL directors who responded to the survey reported that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement that their districts have aligned their English language proficiency standards to the CCSS. Only 31.6 percent “agree” or “strongly agree” that their districts highly prioritize ensuring that ELLs are able to meet the rigor of the CCSS, and only a little over a quarter (26.3 percent) “agree” that their district considers the needs of ELLs as a major factor when purchasing new instructional materials (Figure 16).
- While only 26.4 percent of ELL directors “agree” or “strongly agree” that ESL teachers are prepared to ensure that ELLs meet the rigor of the CCSS, none “agree” or “strongly agree” that general education teachers are prepared to support ELLs (Figure 16).
- Over 80 percent of ELL directors indicated that most topics meant to build a rationale for adopting the CCSS were “sometimes evident” or “often evident” in their district’s professional development. Some 90 percent of ELL directors indicated that the importance of integrating common assessments aligned with the new standards was “often evident” or “sometimes evident” in their district’s professional development (Figure 17).
- CCSS topics that responding ELL directors indicated were “often evident” in their district’s ELA professional development included building students’ academic vocabulary (52.6 percent), building students’ background knowledge through content-rich nonfiction texts (47.4 percent), and building teachers’ content knowledge in ELA to teach the CCSS (47.4 percent) (Figure 18).
- About 21.1 percent of ELL directors reported that strategies for bridging home language and the acquisition of a new language were “never evident” in district ELA professional development, and 15.8 percent reported that topics related to integrating technology into classroom instruction and analyzing student work samples were “never evident” (Figure 18).
- In mathematics, only 31.6 percent of ELL directors indicated that building students’ understanding of math concepts and helping students apply math concepts to real world situations were “often evident” in their district’s professional development. However, about 79 percent of ELL directors did report that building student fluency with math computations and building a shared understanding of instructional practice in math was at least “sometimes evident” in their district’s professional development (Figure 19).
- Instructional materials for ELLs varied in their alignment to the CCSS, according to ELL directors. For instance, 73.7 percent of ELL directors reported that the alignment of their district’s basal ESL programs with the CCSS was “poor,” while 57.9 percent of ELL directors reported that the alignment of supplemental materials packaged with basal programs was “poor.” Roughly 68 percent, on the other hand, rated the alignment of non-affiliated supplemental programs as either “excellent” or “good” (Figure 20).
- When ELL directors described in open-ended questions the major challenges their districts face in ensuring that ELLs have equal access to the CCSS, the most common challenges cited were increasing teachers’ understanding of the language demands embedded in the CCSS and strengthening their understanding of strategies for differentiating instruction for ELLs. Furthermore, ELL directors indicated that the quality of instructional materials for ELLs (in terms of alignment to the CCSS) poses a major obstacle to implementing the CCSS successfully (Appendix B).

Part III. Ensuring Access to the Common Core State Standards for ELLs

Figure 16. Percentage of ELL directors who agree or disagree with specified statements about their district's readiness to implement the CCSS with ELLs, 2013 (n=19)

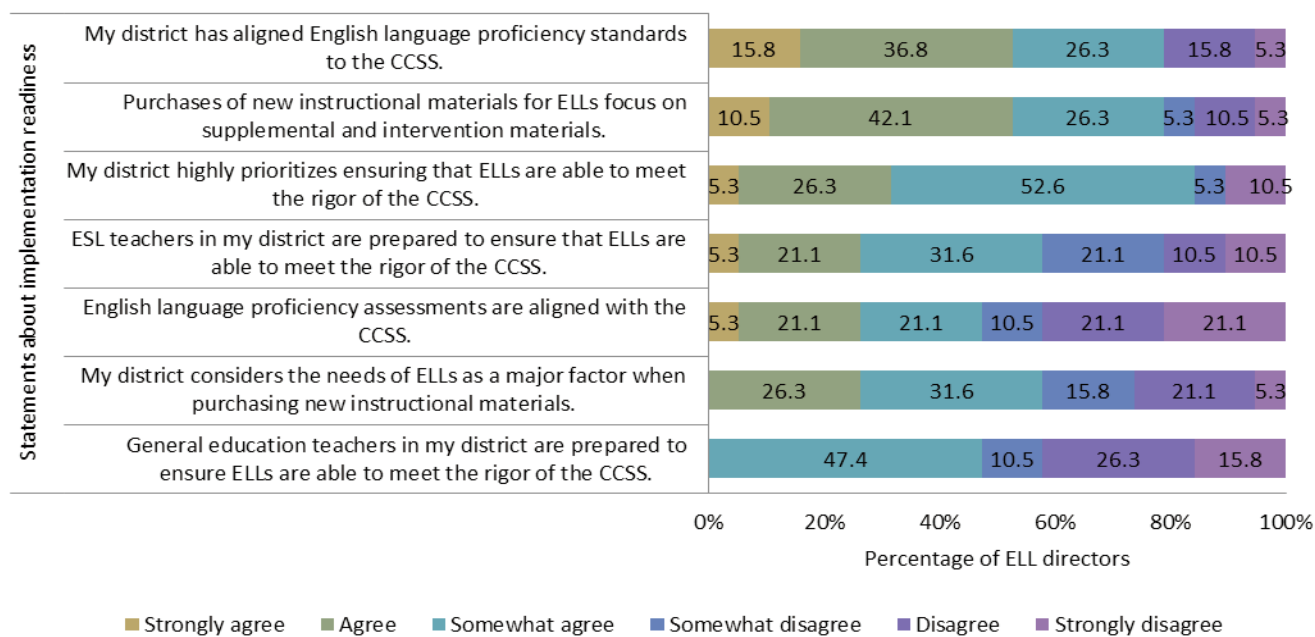
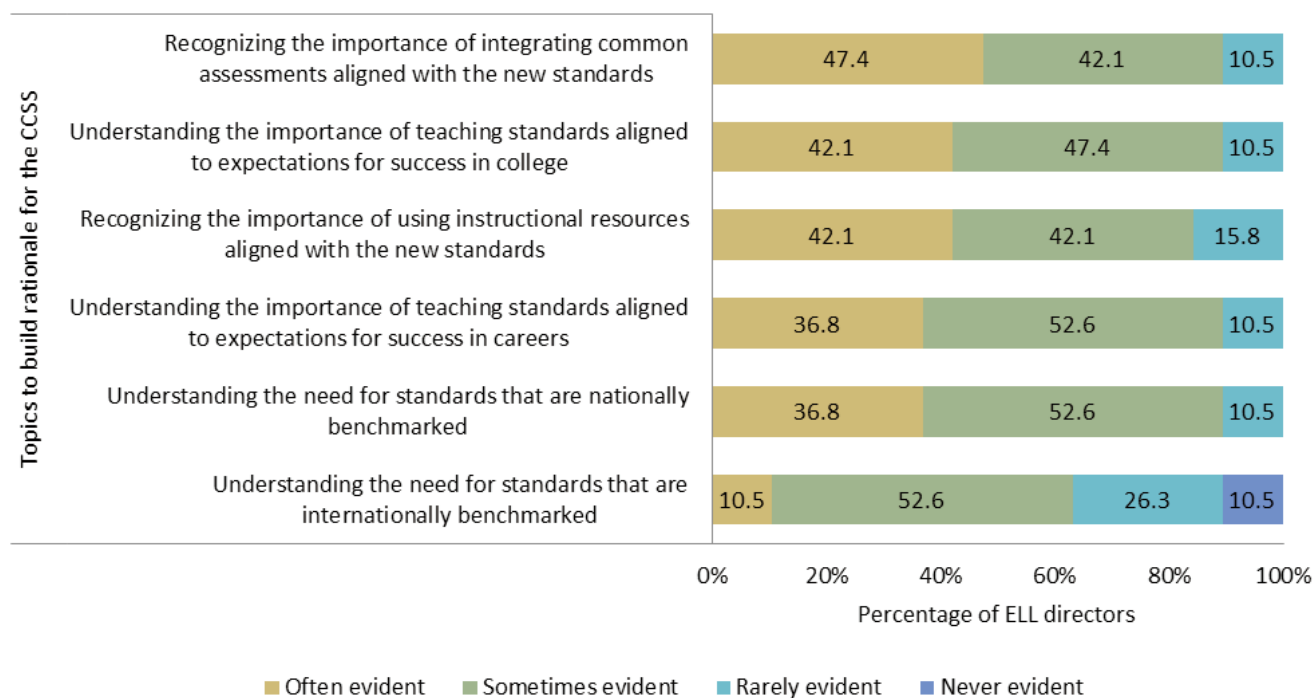
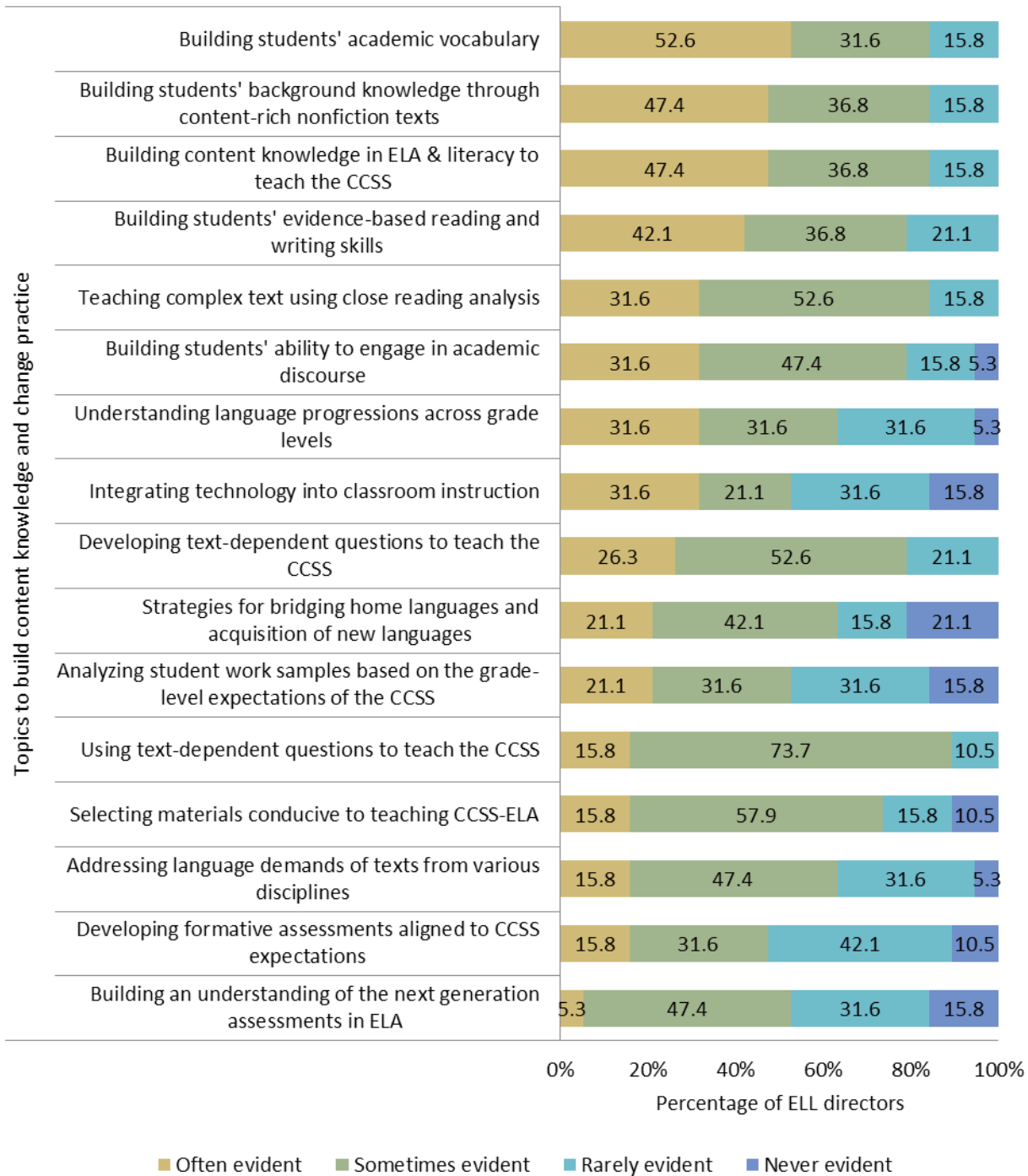


Figure 17. Percentage of ELL directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district's professional development, 2013 (n=19)



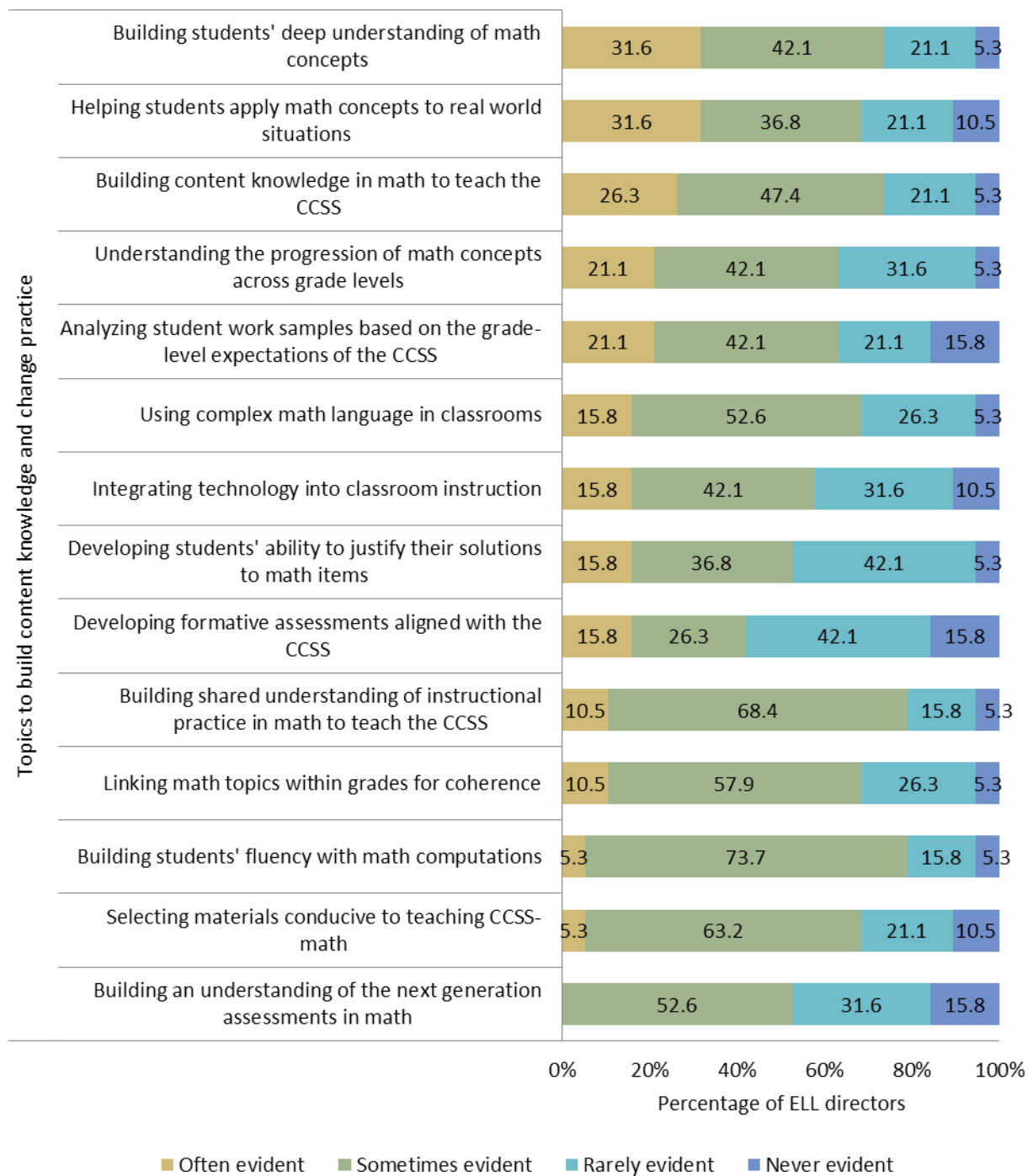
Part III. Ensuring Access to the Common Core State Standards for ELLs

Figure 18. Percentage of ELL directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district’s professional development for ELA, 2013 (n=19)



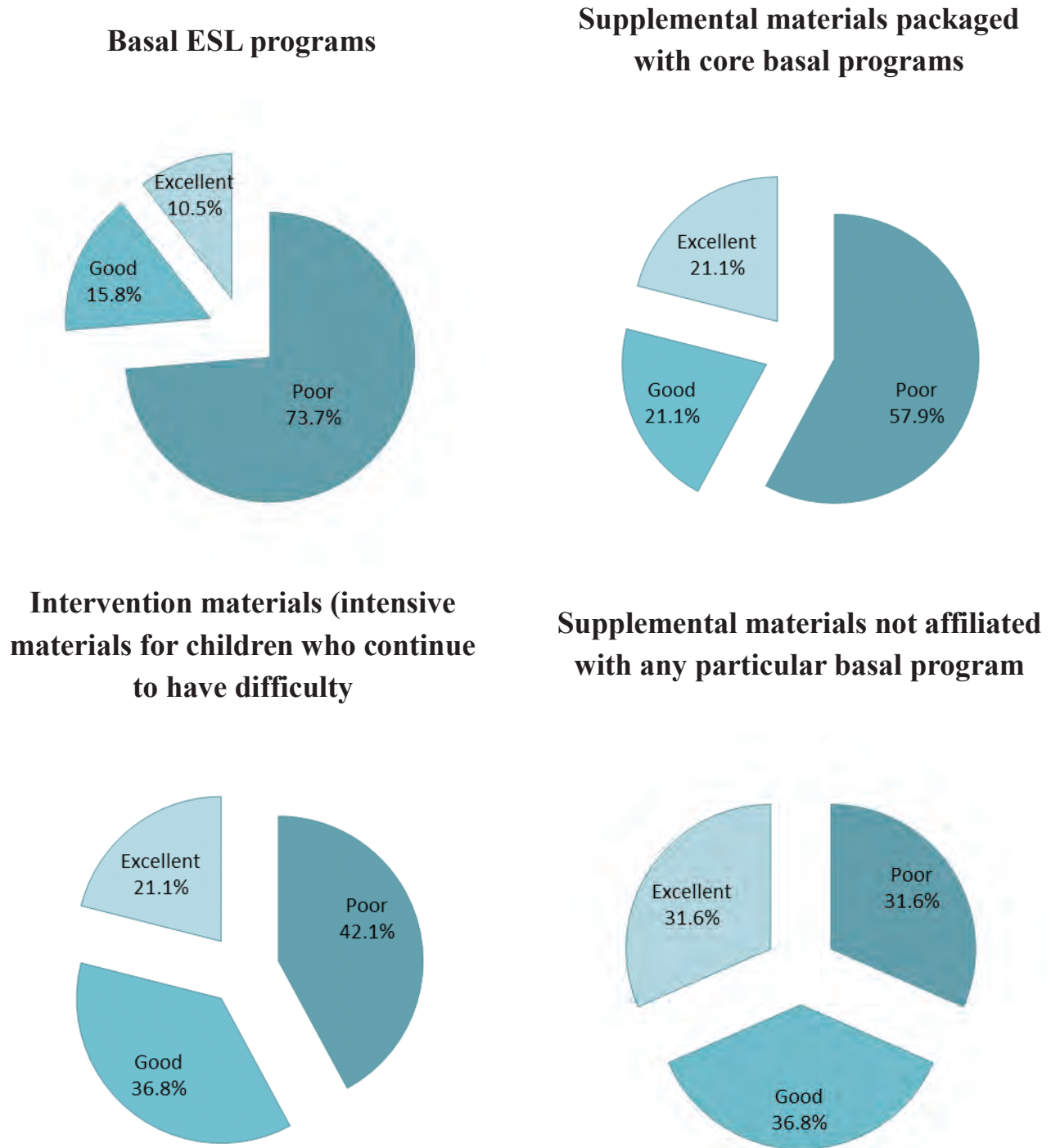
Part III. Ensuring Access to the Common Core State Standards for ELLs

Figure 19. Percentage of ELL directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district’s professional development for math, 2013 (n=19)



Part III. Ensuring Access to the Common Core State Standards for ELLs

Figure 20. Percentage of ELL directors rating the alignment of their district's instructional materials for ELLs to the CCSS, 2013 (n=19)



Part IV. Ensuring Access to the Common Core State Standards for Students with Special Needs

- Nearly two thirds of responding special education directors “agree” or “strongly agree” that their districts prioritize students with special needs being able to meet the rigor of the CCSS (64.3 percent) and are successful at identifying students with special needs (71.4 percent). Only 14.3 percent agreed that general education teachers were prepared to ensure that students with special needs were able to meet the rigor of the CCSS (Figure 21).
- All directors of special education responding to the survey indicated that the importance of integrating common assessments aligned with the new standards, the importance of using instructional resources aligned to the new standards, the need for standards that are nationally benchmarked, and understanding the importance of teaching standards aligned to expectations for success in careers are topics that are “sometimes evident” or “often evident” in their district’s professional development. However, 28.6 percent of special education directors reported that understanding the need for standards to be internationally benchmarked was “rarely evident” in their district’s professional development (Figure 22).
- Some 57.1 percent of responding special education directors indicated that building content knowledge in ELA was “often evident” in their district’s ELA professional development. About 43 percent indicated that developing text-dependent questions was “often evident” in their district’s professional development. And the same percentage reported that teaching complex texts using close-reading techniques and building students’ evidence-based reading and writing skills was “often evident” in their district’s ELA professional development. Conversely, developing formative assessments aligned to the CCSS and building an understanding of next generation assessments were cited by over 20 percent of special education directors as “rarely evident” in their district’s ELA professional development (Figure 23).
- In mathematics, half of responding special education directors indicated that building content knowledge was “often evident” in their district’s math professional development. Rated as “rarely evident” by over 20 percent of special education directors was math professional development on developing formative assessments aligned with the CCSS, selecting materials conducive to teaching the new math standards, analyzing student work samples, understanding math progressions across grade levels, integrating technology into classroom instruction, and understanding next generation assessments (Figure 24).
- In open-ended answers, special education directors reported that they would like additional support on accommodations and instructional modifications for special needs students, as well as support on next generation assessments. They also report wanting help with building students’ skills in math computation while teaching the language of math, and with integrating technology into ELA and math instruction (Appendix B).
- Among the major challenges special education directors identified in open-ended responses involved figuring out how districts should align students’ Individual Education Programs (IEPs) to the CCSS. Also, special education directors report the need for instructional materials that are age-appropriate and tailored for various stages of development among students with disabilities (Appendix B).

Part IV. Ensuring Access to the Common Core State Standards for Students with Special Needs

Figure 21. Percentage of special education directors who agree or disagree with specified statements about their district's readiness to implement the CCSS for students with special needs, 2013 (n= 14)

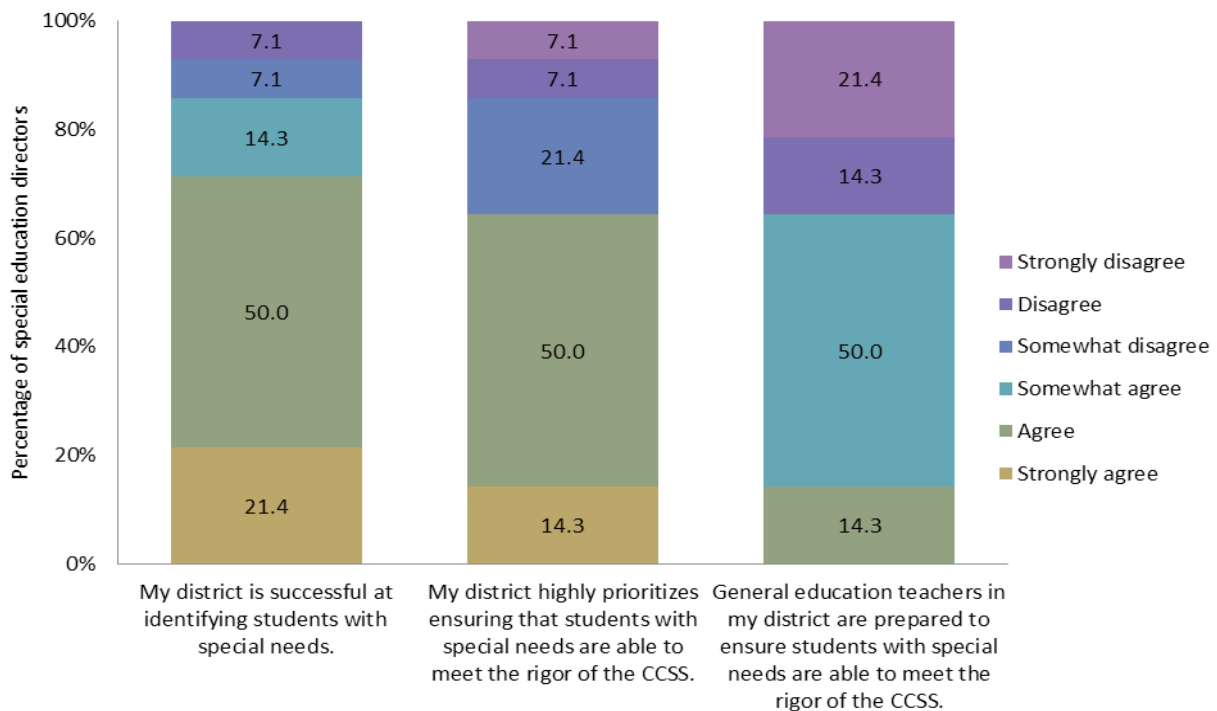
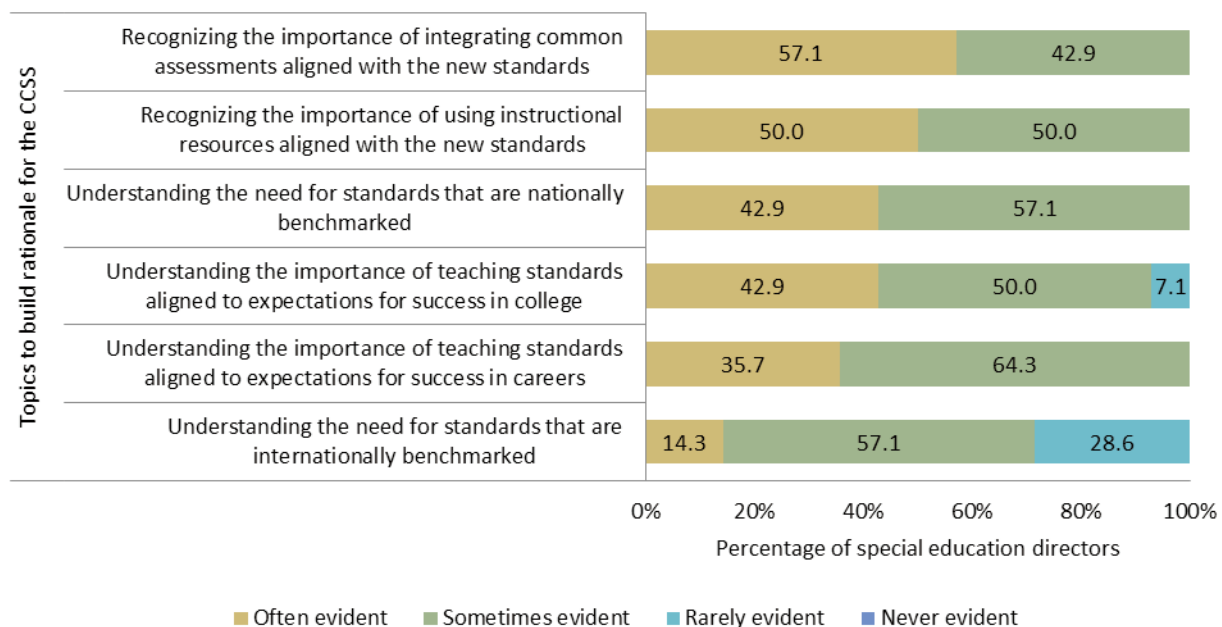
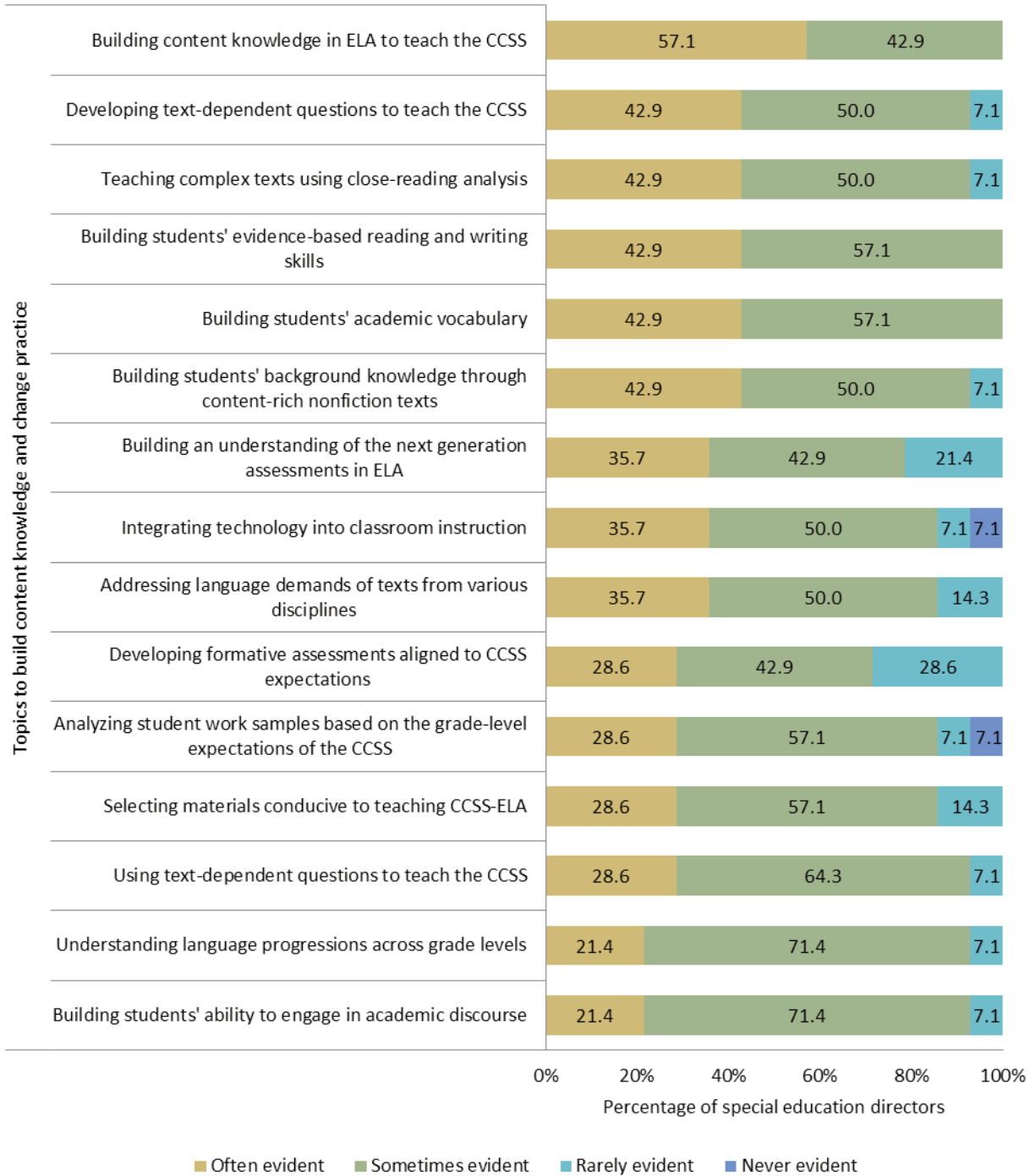


Figure 22. Percentage of special education directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district's professional development, 2013 (n=14)



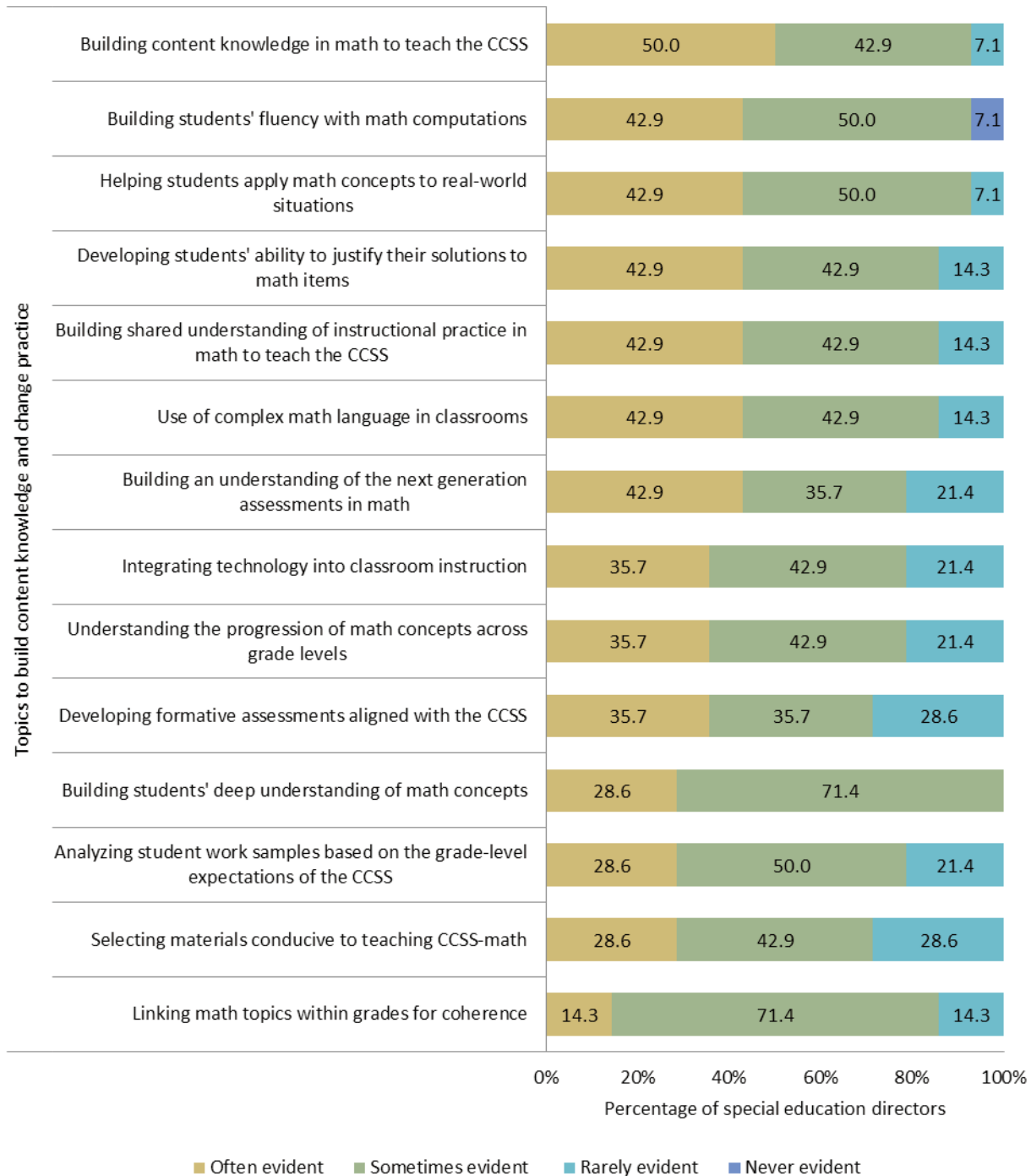
Part IV. Ensuring Access to the Common Core State Standards for Students with Special Needs

Figure 23. Percentage of special education directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district's professional development for ELA, 2013 (n=14)



Part IV. Ensuring Access to the Common Core State Standards for Students with Special Needs

Figure 24. Percentage of special education directors reporting that specified CCSS topics are evident in their district's professional development for math, 2013 (n=14)



Part V. Measuring Implementation of the Common Core State Standards

- Research directors responding to the survey generally reported that their districts had made “good” or “excellent” progress in implementing the CCSS. In particular, 75 percent of research directors indicated that their districts were making “excellent” progress in providing timely data for school leaders and 70 percent reported that they were making “excellent” progress in creating data systems to store and share information from multiple departments as part of the CCSS implementation process (Figure 25).
- Conversely, some 40 percent of research directors reported that their district’s progress was “poor” in creating formal feedback loops for input on implementation efforts (Figure 25).
- Some 70 percent of responding research directors either “agree” or “strongly agree” that tracking implementation of the CCSS is a high priority for their district. This level of agreement was lower in the 2013 survey than in 2012. In addition, only 15 percent of research directors “agree” that their districts use implementation data to tailor professional development on CCSS for school-level staff, and only 20 percent “agree” that their district’s implementation goals are understood among school-level staff (Figure 26).
- Fifty-five percent of research directors indicate that their districts “often use” scores on interim assessments to measure implementation of the CCSS. And while 40 percent report that their districts “often use” student behavior data to assess implementation of the CCSS, only 15 percent report the regular use of student work samples for this purpose. Teacher, principal, and parent surveys were the least used data source to measure understanding, awareness, or implementation of the CCSS (Figure 27).
- The majority of research directors report that their districts “often use” data such as high school graduation rates (75 percent), end-of-year achievement scores (75 percent), and enrollment and performance in advanced placement/IB courses (70 percent and 60 percent respectively) to measure implementation of the CCSS (Figure 28).
- Approximately a quarter of responding ELL directors report using classroom observations to a “large extent” (26.3 percent) in measuring implementation of the CCSS. ELL directors also report using movement in the percentages of ELLs into higher English proficiency levels (21.1 percent) and performance on interim assessments (21.1 percent) to a “large extent” to measure implementation. Student work samples and placement in advanced courses were the data least likely to be used extensively (Figure 29).
- About 57 percent of responding special education directors use state-mandated alternative assessment data to a “large extent” in measuring implementation of the CCSS, and 42.9 percent use student performance on interim assessments to a “large extent.” Meanwhile, classroom observations and placement in advanced courses were the data least likely to be used extensively (Figure 30).
- Obtaining classroom-level information for thousands of teachers in large numbers of schools was among the most common challenges reported by research directors in measuring CCSS implementation (Appendix B).
- Another common challenge reported by research directors in measuring implementation was balancing competing priorities such as state testing and accountability requirements that are not yet aligned to the CCSS. Also, the lack of information on reliable leading indicators makes it difficult for districts to know what successful implementation looks like in practice (Appendix B).

Part V. Measuring Implementation of the Common Core State Standards

Figure 25. Percentage of research directors indicating the strength of their district's progress in specified areas of CCSS implementation, 2013 (n=20)

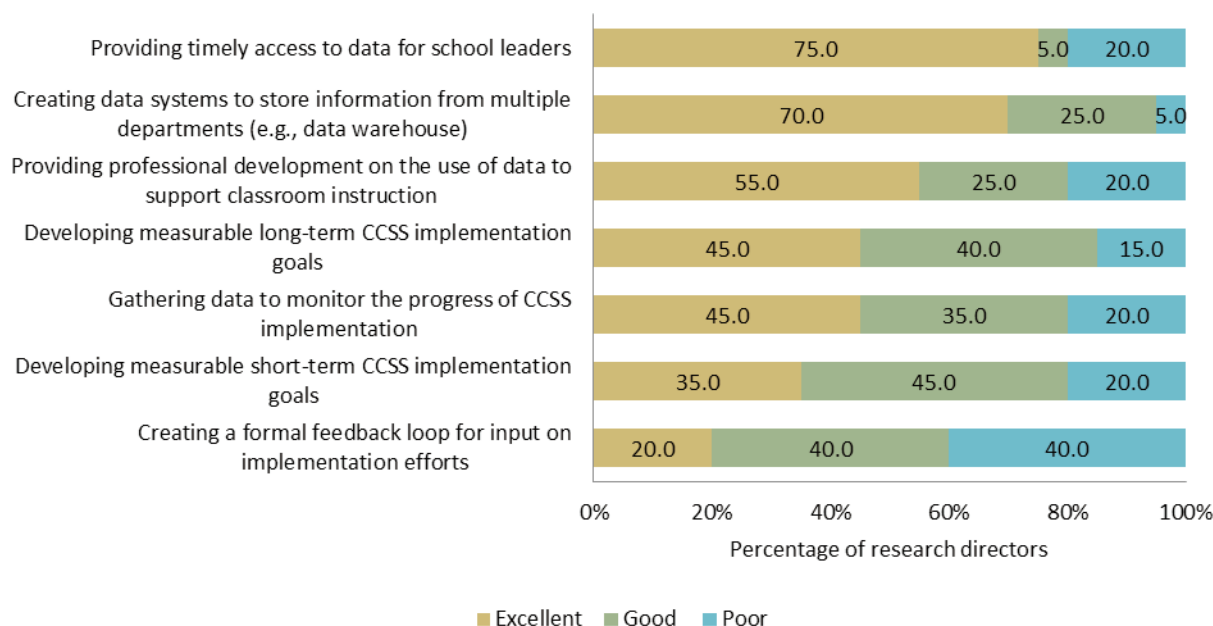
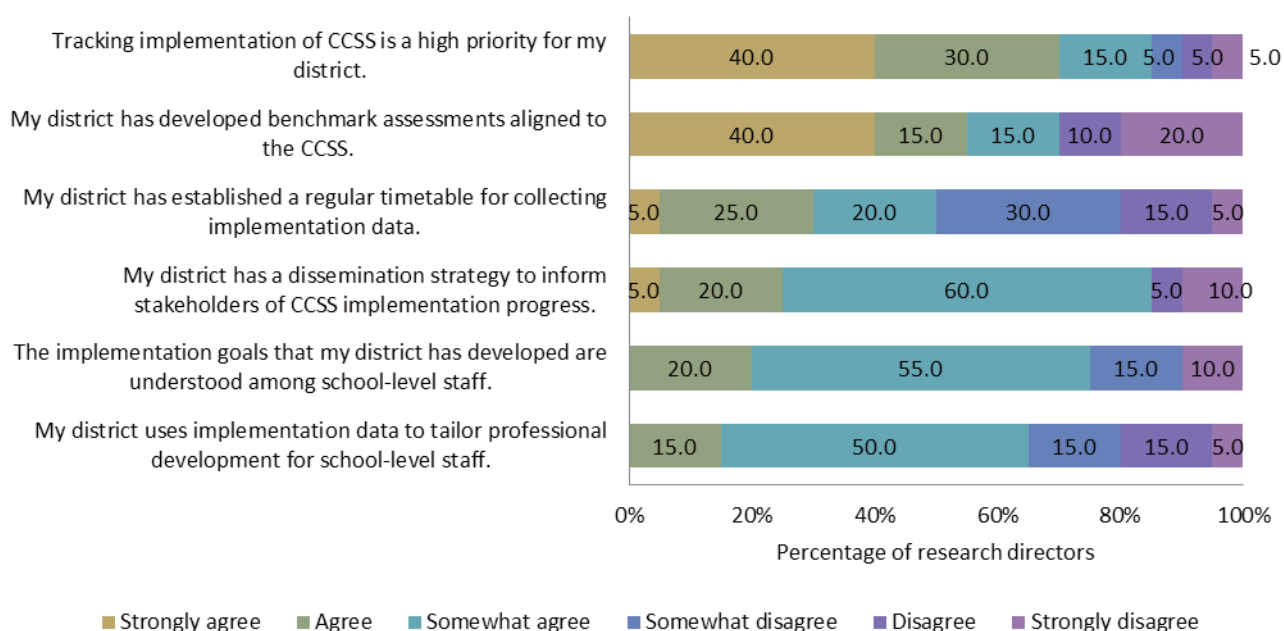


Figure 26. Percentage of research directors who agree or disagree with specified statements about their district's readiness to implement the CCSS, 2013 (n=20)



Part V. Measuring Implementation of the Common Core State Standards

Figure 27. Percentage of research directors reporting their district's use of specified data to measure implementation of the CCSS, 2013 (n=20)

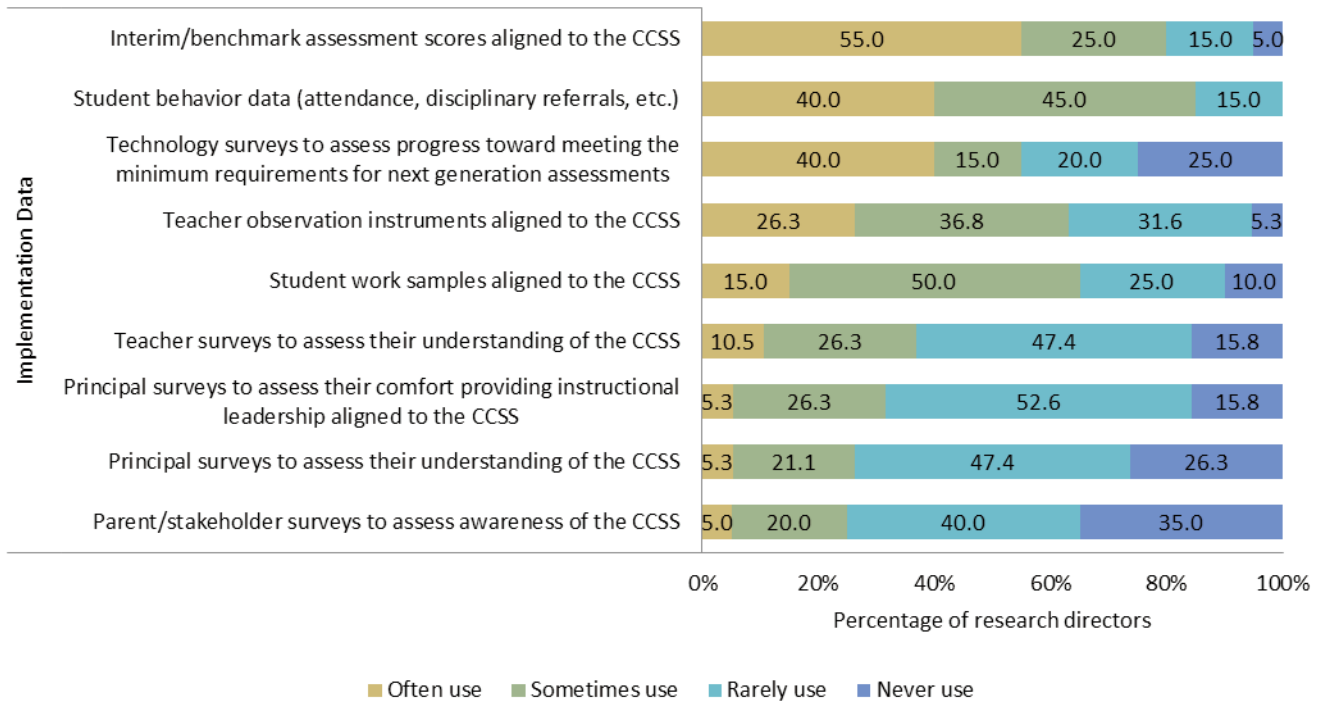
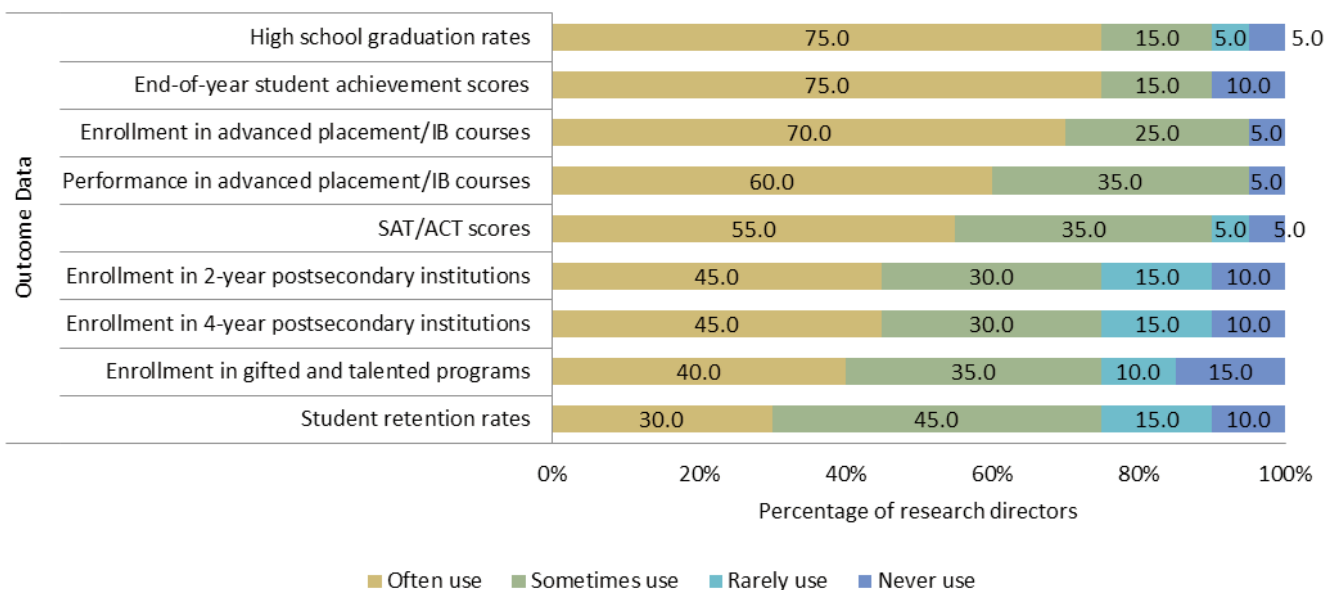


Figure 28. Percentage of research directors reporting their district's use of specified outcome data to measure implementation of the CCSS, 2013 (n=20)



Part V. Measuring Implementation of the Common Core State Standards

Figure 29. Percentage of ELL directors reporting their district's use of specified data to measure implementation of the CCSS, 2013 (n=19)

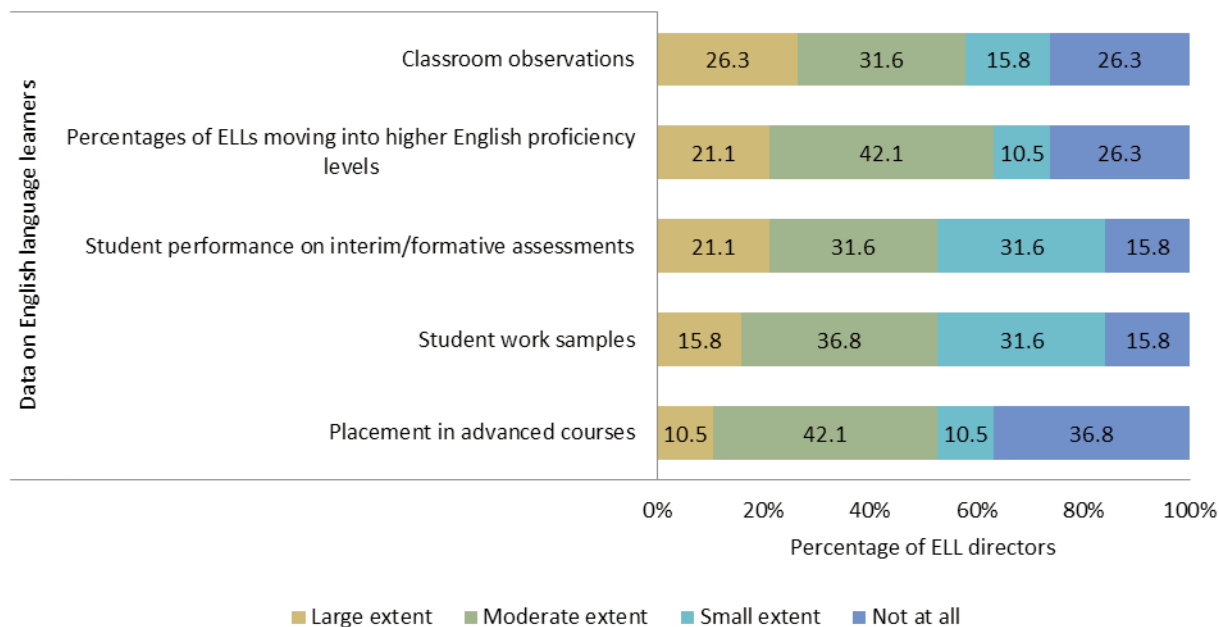
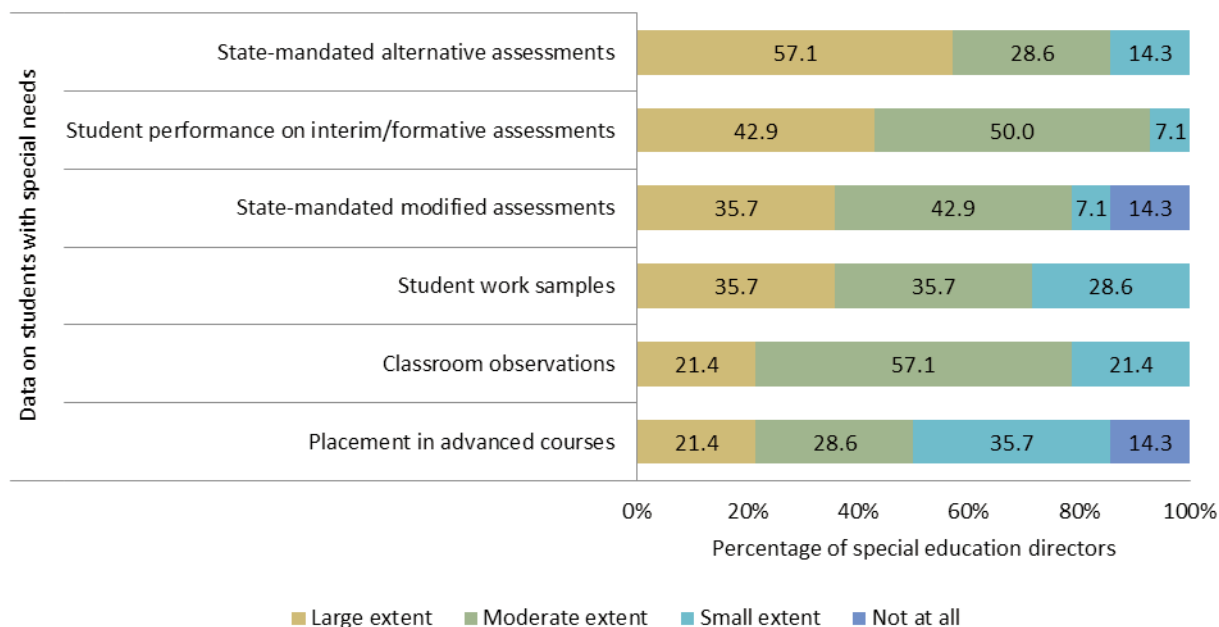


Figure 30. Percentage of special education directors reporting their district's use of specified data to measure implementation of the CCSS, 2013 (n=14)

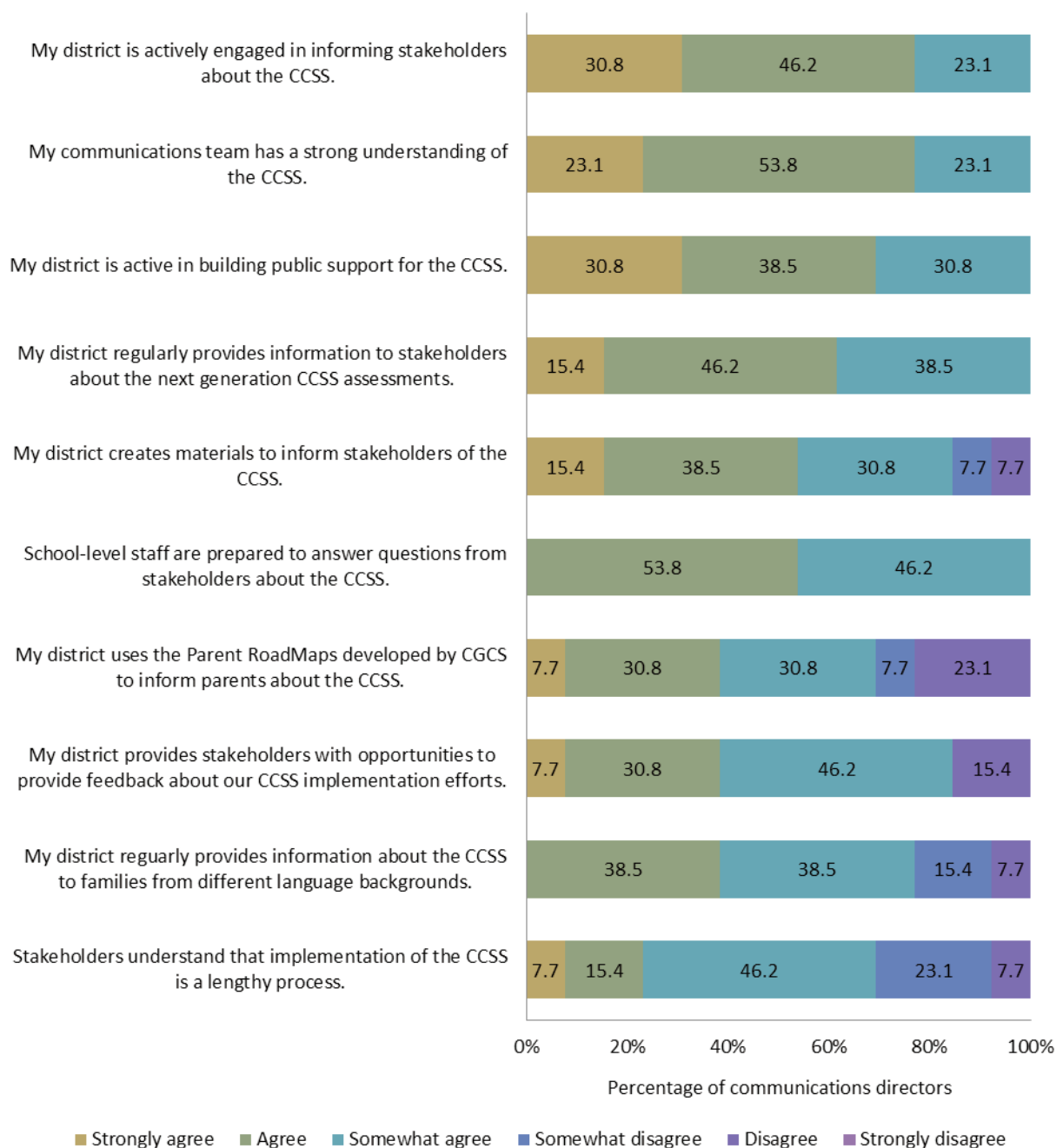


Part VI. Communicating with Stakeholders

- Seventy-seven percent of responding communications directors “agree” or “strongly agree” that their districts are actively engaged in informing stakeholders about the CCSS. Another 76.9 percent “agree” or “strongly agree” that their communications team has a strong understanding of the CCSS, and 69.3 percent “agree” or “strongly agree” that their districts are active in building public support for the CCSS (Figure 31).
- Over half of communications directors “agree” and all responding communications directors at least “somewhat agree” that school-level staff are prepared to answer questions from stakeholders about the CCSS (Figure 31).
- Responses also suggest areas of needed improvement in district communication and messaging strategies. For instance, only 15.4 percent of communications directors “agree” and 7.7 percent “strongly agree” that stakeholders understand that implementing the CCSS is a lengthy process. Similarly, 46.2 percent of communications directors only “somewhat agree” and another 15.4 percent “disagree” that their districts provide stakeholders with opportunities for feedback on CCSS implementation efforts (Figure 31).
- One of the most common challenges expressed by communication directors in informing stakeholders about the CCSS was explaining to parents how the CCSS is different from previous standards. Many communications directors also indicated that the complexity of the CCSS is difficult to explain, particularly in other languages. Furthermore, communications directors reported that communication departments are often called on to address the misinformation and controversy surrounding the CCSS (Appendix B).

Part VI. Communicating with Stakeholders

Figure 31. Percentage of communications directors who agree or disagree with specified statements about their district's readiness to implement the CCSS, 2013 (n=13)



Discussion

The results of the second year of the Council of the Great City School's common core implementation survey reveal that substantial work is underway in the nation's large urban school districts as they move to broadly implement the new Common Core State Standards. Virtually all respondents reported that their districts plan to fully implement the common core by the 2014-15 school year, and nearly half of respondents report that their districts will have fully implemented the common core by the end of this school year (2013-14). This is a substantial increase over implementation projections reported in the first year of the survey, suggesting that districts may be speeding up their implementation plans and timelines.

In addition, survey respondents generally reported that their district's professional development in ELA and math reflect the need to build a shared understanding of the instructional shifts required by the new standards, as well as the need to build students' understanding of math and evidence-based reading and writing skills. In the early grades, a majority of respondents report that their district's curriculum has been aligned to the common core standards. Survey respondents also report using a number of resources to align instructional materials to the CCSS, including PARCC/SBAC sample items, common core math progressions, and materials from the Council's Basil Alignment Project. And teachers, principals, and central office staff across districts report participating in a variety of daily, weekly, and monthly activities to support implementation of CCSS, including scheduling common planning time for teachers, participating in professional learning communities, making use of online professional development resources aligned to the common core, conducting faculty meetings focused exclusively on common core implementation, and convening key stakeholder groups.

Overall, the majority of respondents rate their district's progress in implementing the new ELA and math standards in classrooms as good or excellent, although this varies according to who you ask. However, the results also point to a few key areas of need. To start, it is clear that implementation in the middle grades and high school is lagging behind the progress districts are making in implementing the standards at the elementary school level. This is particularly evident in math. While about three quarters of curriculum directors report that their districts have curriculum aligned to the CCSS in kindergarten through grade two, this number falls steadily to below half in grades nine through 12.

Districts also appear to be struggling with addressing the needs of special populations. Roughly 40 percent of survey respondents rated their district's progress in this area as "poor." And while a majority of ELL and special education directors at least somewhat agree that their districts highly prioritize the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities, a third of special education directors and over half of ELL directors reported that general education teachers in their district are not prepared to help these students meet the rigorous new standards.

In fact, in open-ended answers survey respondents cited the need to help these teachers build strategies for differentiating instruction for ELLs and students with disabilities. Yet, according to curriculum directors who responded to the survey, differentiating instruction for ELLs and students with special needs was only

sometimes evident or rarely evident in district professional development. And instructional materials for ELLs also fell short in their quality and alignment to the CCSS, according to responding ELL directors.

Survey results also indicate that districts need considerably more support in preparing for online common core assessments and integrating technology into the classroom. Over a third of respondents rated their district's progress in these areas as "poor." Integrating technology into the classroom was cited as among the least evident topics in both ELA and math professional development offerings. And a majority of respondents reported that professional development for teachers on integrating computer-based assessments in the classroom and using computer-adaptive assessments to monitor student progress remains rare.

In addition, the results highlight the need to reassess the ways that common core implementation, awareness, and success are measured. For example, research directors are much more likely to report the use of interim assessment scores or even student behavior data than teacher observations or student work samples to measure implementation of the common core standards. In fact, obtaining classroom-level information for thousands of teachers across large numbers of schools was cited as a leading challenge in measuring implementation of CCSS in large districts. Moreover, formal teacher observation protocols do not yet sufficiently reflect the new standards. Respondents also cited the need for reliable leading indicators of what successful implementation looks like in practice.

Finally, the survey results suggest areas of needed improvement in district communication strategies around the common core. For instance, results suggest that districts need to better communicate to stakeholders that implementation of the common core is a long-term process. Districts should also work to create formal mechanisms for providing input on district implementation efforts for stakeholders—particularly for parents. In fact, parents were among the groups cited as the least likely to be informed or involved in a school district's implementation strategy, and research directors report that parent surveys to assess awareness of the common core standards are among the least utilized source of data to measure common core implementation and success.

In sum, districts are making strides toward meeting the challenge of implementing the Common Core State Standards, but the dimensions of this challenge are great. To continue the momentum, districts will need to redouble their efforts in a number of key areas, including aligning their curriculum with the common core across all grade levels, addressing the needs of students with special needs, helping schools integrate technology into classrooms and prepare for online assessments, measuring implementation success using classroom observations and student work, and more actively informing and engaging parents. Over the next few years districts should also begin integrating other major reform initiatives into their implementation efforts. For example, the lack of alignment between teacher observation protocols and the common core suggests that more should be done to ensure that policies and practices aimed to recruit and retain teaching talent reflect the new college and career-ready standards. In short, districts appear to be on the right path in their implementation of the common core, but they have much further to go before the promise of shared, rigorous academic standards is realized in our nation's big city schools.

Appendix A. Views on Implementation Progress

Percentage of district staff rating the strength of their district's CCSS implementation progress in specified areas, 2013

Topic Area	Respondent	Poor	Good	Excellent	NA
Implementing CCSS-ELA in classrooms	Superintendent	23.1	61.5	15.4	0.0
	Curriculum Director	14.3	45.2	40.5	0.0
	Research Director	12.5	31.3	56.3	0.0
	ELL Director	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
	Special Education Director	0.0	30.8	69.2	0.0
	Communications Director	0.0	22.2	77.8	0.0
Implementing CCSS-math in classrooms	Superintendent	23.1	69.2	7.7	0.0
	Curriculum Director	19.0	35.7	45.2	0.0
	Research Director	18.8	31.3	50.0	0.0
	ELL Director	5.6	50.0	33.3	11.1
	Special Education Director	7.7	38.5	53.8	0.0
	Communications Director	77.8	22.2	0.0	0.0
Aligning instructional materials to CCSS	Superintendent	23.1	38.5	38.5	0.0
	Curriculum Director	26.2	21.4	52.4	0.0
	Research Director	18.8	43.8	37.5	0.0
	ELL Director	22.2	33.3	38.9	5.6
	Special Education Director	7.7	46.2	46.2	0.0
	Communications Director	11.1	0.0	88.9	0.0
Providing professional development for teachers in CCSS-ELA	Superintendent	7.7	23.1	69.2	0.0
	Curriculum Director	16.7	21.4	61.9	0.0
	Research Director	37.5	25.0	37.5	0.0
	ELL Director	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0
	Special Education Director	7.7	30.8	61.5	0.0
	Communications Director	0.0	11.1	88.9	0.0

Topic Area	Respondent	Poor	Good	Excellent	NA
Providing professional development for teachers in the CCSS-math	Superintendent	7.7	23.1	69.2	0.0
	Curriculum Director	11.9	28.6	59.5	0.0
	Research Director	25.0	50.0	25.0	0.0
	ELL Director	0.0	44.4	44.4	11.1
	Special Education Director	15.4	30.8	53.8	0.0
	Communications Director	0.0	11.1	88.9	0.0
Addressing the needs of special populations	Superintendent	30.8	69.2	0.0	0.0
	Curriculum Director	40.5	38.1	21.4	0.0
	Research Director	56.3	25.0	18.8	0.0
	ELL Director	55.6	22.2	16.7	5.6
	Special Education Director	30.8	30.8	38.5	0.0
	Communications Director	0.0	33.3	55.6	11.1
Integrating technology into classroom instruction	Superintendent	38.5	38.5	23.1	0.0
	Curriculum Director	40.5	45.2	14.3	0.0
	Research Director	25.0	43.8	31.3	0.0
	ELL Director	44.4	16.7	38.9	0.0
	Special Education Director	23.1	38.5	30.8	7.7
	Communications Director	11.1	22.2	66.7	0.0
Adopting computer-based/computer-adaptive assessments	Superintendent	46.2	23.1	30.8	0.0
	Curriculum Director	38.1	33.3	26.2	2.4
	Research Director	31.3	25.0	43.8	0.0
	ELL Director	44.4	27.8	22.2	5.6
	Special Education Director	38.5	23.1	38.5	0.0
	Communications Director	22.2	33.3	44.4	0.0

Appendix B. Responses to Open-ended Questions

Responses to open-ended questions to curriculum directors about their major challenges in implementing the CCSS and major challenges in measuring implementation

What are the major challenges in implementing the CCSS in your district?	What are the major challenges in measuring the implementation of the CCSS in your district?
Having all teachers prepared for implementing the CCSS and getting administrators to understand the gravity of implementing the CCSS are major implementation challenges in our district.	There is a need to know before high stakes testing occurs that students are able to meet the CCSS.
Professional development and teacher collaboration time.	It is difficult to set expectations without time for professional development.
We do not currently have a districtwide literacy series. The district has undergone major changes in leadership in a short period of time. School level administrators and teachers are reluctant to admit what they still don't understand about how to develop actionable student tasks that build each week and lead to student success with the standards.	Sample populations polled are not representative of the make-up of the district. Key performance indicators often reflect on the number of participants, and stop short of measuring the extent to which participants' practices (and thus student learning) are impacted by the experience.
Building a deep understanding of the "shifts" in the new CCSS, modeling and implementing while still be assessed under old standards.	Developing a deeper understanding with administrators of the new Teacher Development Evaluation tool to see evidence and understanding of classroom instruction.
Balancing principal autonomy with fidelity of implementation across a large district.	Balancing principal autonomy with fidelity of implementation across a large district.
Ongoing professional development, and the number of students reading below grade level.	Access to an instrument to measure implementation of the CCSS.
Time! How to provide the appropriate level of training (differentiated based on teacher need) with consistent messages in a timely manner.	Monitoring tools, including rubrics and checklists. Common understanding and consistent reporting (including self-reporting).
Providing the PL that teachers and principals need; providing adequate and CCSS-aligned resources to schools.	Obtaining feedback through the surveys that we have developed.
Getting all teachers to acknowledge that this major shift in the way that teaching occurs in the classroom will not be done overnight. This is a process that we have to be dedicated to in order to see true results. The benefits of having students take more responsibility for their learning is enormous.	Making sure that common assessments from the district level reach all students and that the results from those assessments are measured to affect district curriculum planning.
Support for SWD with modifications and accommodations in implementing the CCSS.	Implementation of computer-assisted common assessments.

What are the major challenges in implementing the CCSS in your district? (Cont'd)	What are the major challenges in measuring the implementation of the CCSS in your district? (Cont'd)
Lack of state-level leadership in alignment and training. Conflicting information from the state level.	Lack of technology to deploy assessments and resources.
Providing professional development for all teachers.	
We need more mandatory PD that every staff person must attend.	Many concepts are similar to previous work, except for when there is a significant difference as in when the topics moved from grade to grade.
1) Reaching all teachers and administrators with a common message. We delivered some modules to site administrators who in turned shared with their staff, but we know the quality of the site training is dependent on the skills and knowledge level of the site administrators. Through the site training we focused on complex talk, and the instructional shifts in ELA/ literacy and mathematics. Time to train our administrators is so very limited. 2) Providing time to teachers to plan units of study. We understand the level of understanding that is developed when you plan a unit of study rather than having district office staff create them all for you, however, building in time for this to occur is difficult. 3) High school mathematics- building a transition plan to move from a traditional approach to an integrated approach.	Determining the high leverage strategies that should be monitored and measured. It has been difficult moving to Common Core when we are still accountable to our current state assessments that have not moved to the CCSS.
Our state adopted everything at the same time, which is a huge challenge. Additionally, the change in the assessments without knowing what they will look like is a major challenge as well.	Predictive vs. diagnostic assessments. Size of the district makes it very difficult to determine the effectiveness of implementation. Lack of options in rigorous question banks.
The continued updating of messaging to all district stakeholders is challenging. The district's size creates a capacity issue for professional development, and, to some degree, material acquisition.	The creation of a calibration process to ensure that evaluators, observers, and support personnel at every school site has the same level of expertise in identifying the implementation of CCSS instruction in ELA and mathematics.
Scaling implementation and moving quickly to implement awareness and instructional changes in the district at scale.	No tools designed as of yet.
Scale, especially around delivering professional development across 80,000 teachers. Finding strong materials. Order of operations (state test came before aligned materials).	Scale: being able to observe teacher practice.
Capacity for professional development. Access to principals and teachers. Budget.	Finances/budget. Human resources (not enough FTE).

Appendix B

What are the major challenges in implementing the CCSS in your district? (Cont'd)	What are the major challenges in measuring the implementation of the CCSS in your district? (Cont'd)
Time and funding for professional learning.	Lack of assessments.
Getting at the belief system that all students can learn and achieve at high levels. Continuing to align curriculum with a very small staff. High school math. Building deep content knowledge in math (for teachers).	Everyone is in a different place, so measuring something "common" is a challenge.
Provision of common planning time for elementary classroom teachers lacking. Funding for instructional resources to augment classroom instruction. Funding for more professional development on high quality instructional practices to ensure rigor.	We have built in a "wait" time period in order to allow teachers to begin the implementation and feel that they can be learners as they change the way they plan and deliver instruction.
Funding for professional development and instructional resources especially in ELA; release time for PD on content and instructional shifts.	Lack of common assessments used across the district; lack of use of common instructional materials across the district; building professional development needs that differ across the district; support for upper grades during the transition for students coming unprepared due to a change from WA standards to CCSS and the math content shifts that move up or down.
Inadequate time and resources for professional development, budget cuts, late adoption of CCSS, shortened timeline between adoption and upcoming Next Generation assessments.	Establishing effective metrics to measure our success, developing quality survey instruments to help measure implementation.
Teacher turnover. Time for mandatory talent development (PD). Fiscal restraints. Assessment of the quality of PD. Impact on student achievement. Capacity for delivery.	Teacher turnover. Time for mandatory talent development (PD). Fiscal restraints. Assessment of the quality of PD. Impact on student achievement. Capacity for delivery.
We have 7,000 teachers and limited funding for professional development. Time is also a factor.	Frequent changes to testing protocols. Walk-through processes were not aligned to the CCSS.
Large number of teachers and administrators. Diverse parent population with pockets of limited internet connectivity.	Gathering meaningful feedback from the school level to determine if professional learning is having the intended effect on teacher practice and student work.
Developing the content knowledge of teachers; consistency in formal/informal teacher observation protocols and classroom look-fors.	Consistency and volume of new teachers; changes in the assessments; providing detailed PD on the gaps; limited funds to provide PD; limited funding for CCSS resources
The major challenge is to ensure that teachers have adequate time to study, practice, and collaborate with their colleagues.	The actual challenge primarily is to ensure that principals have a true understanding of the instructional implications of the CCSS. Afterwards, they will be able to observe daily practice with an informed eye.
Training teachers due to the size of the district.	
Common planning time.	Assessment and finding time to discuss implementation with teachers.

What are the major challenges in implementing the CCSS in your district? (Cont'd)	What are the major challenges in measuring the implementation of the CCSS in your district? (Cont'd)
Ensuring teachers are implementing the PD they are attending. Ensuring teachers are changing practice to align with the CCSS.	Having a tool to measure and time to provide intervention when needed in a timely manner.
We have had focused professional development (10 days) over the last two years. We relied on principals as instructional leaders to ensure the district training occurred at the building level. The issue, then, is scale. We can't touch each teacher. We have to rely on train-the-trainer, which is not the optimum scenario for learning.	We have too few individuals that can accurately measure changes in practice. Our focus for the 2013-2014 school year is classroom observations to see the level of implementation after two years of training.
Internal capacity to provide on-going teacher training. We have identified teacher leaders to facilitate PLC sessions at the district level, but the challenge is building their capacity to lead those at the building level. We've also experienced alignment issues between curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The 2013-15 school years will include revisions to curriculum and assessment.	We have a plan in place to measure the alignment of the intended curriculum and the assessments. The challenge comes in measuring the enacted curriculum. We still need to create structured, common ways to fully measure implementation. Moving to a standards-referenced grading system will also exacerbate this challenge.
Lack of appropriate instructional materials, including technology.	Principals continue to build their knowledge of the CCSS in order to support teachers as the district transitions to new assessments and unit designs in ELA and math.
Roll out timeline.	Getting accurate data.
Resources, budget cuts, lack of technology, poor infrastructure.	Daily classroom instruction aligned to common assessments.
How to use the Common Core Block Grant effectively, so we use the money strategically since there are so many needs.	Changing the assessments to meet both CST and SBAC criteria.

Appendix B

Responses to open-ended questions to curriculum directors asking them to describe their district's strategies for addressing curriculum gaps (e.g., teaching content in 8th grade that builds on content that was not part of the 6th grade curriculum)

Please describe your district's strategy for addressing curriculum gaps.
That is an area the Department of Professional Development will have to work through.
Curriculum gaps were identified by the state. Our district then forwarded the link to all teachers and administrators. Teachers are reminded to identify where these skills best fit in their instructional plan.
Cohort professional development by grade level/content area, site based PD through instructional coaches as part of the extended teacher day/PLC.
New programs aligned to the CCSS.
Continue to align the curriculum and provide ongoing professional development.
Highlighting these gaps for teachers and including information and support through the instructional sequences provided.
Our curriculum developed units in math that included a deep understanding of the pre-requisite skills required for student success. Resources were also provided to teachers to support instruction of those requisite skills.
The Alabama State Department of Education has created several useful crosswalk tools for aligning the curriculum.
Using temporary supplemental materials and creating materials to address gaps.
We have transitional curricula that address the gap skills.
We have created crosswalk documents to assist our teachers.
[We] have been working to close gaps during the summer enrichment programs and throughout the school year.

Please describe your district's strategy for addressing curriculum gaps (Cont'd).

We have designed scope and sequence documents to address the transition from current pre-algebra to Common Core 7th and 8th grade mathematics.

Intentional pacing and curriculum mapping and explicit professional development in small group settings.

During the alignment process, a scope and sequence was created to identify gaps where curriculum specialists will provide instructional scaffolds in ELA and mathematics to address the identified gaps.

We are implementing a continuous improvement model.

We have not discussed this as of yet.

This is our biggest struggle. In ELA, we are encouraging schools to build more ELA time into the day so that students can have some time with grade level materials and some time with materials at their level. In math, we are building in some supports to help people find a path for struggling students.

CCSS leadership cadre (trained teacher leaders) working on curriculum alignment, training, and resources. Acquiring alignment resources. Basal alignment project. CGCS and Oregon Department of Education resources. Consultation with CCSS experts.

We are in the process of realigning curriculum in the grades indicated. We are replacing some units this year and some next year. We are in the process of changing to integrated math in high school. Teachers are struggling with "the gap" as we switch to CCSS. We are trying to focus on formative assessment to identify gaps.

By having a clearly delineated scope and sequence.

In math, gaps have been identified and units created to fill the gaps particularly in HS and MS; elementary K-2 math has been aligned by lesson with follow up with content; for MS specific domains have been created and implemented.

Providing extra time, pre-assessments, and supporting resources.

Providing PD on meeting needs with foundational skills while addressing skills required in CCSS. How do we accelerate student progress to get them closer to grade-level proficiency?

Appendix B

Responses to open-ended questions to ELL directors and directors of special education about how their districts communicate with families about the CCSS and their major challenges in ensuring that ELLs and students with special needs meet the rigor of the CCSS

How is your district communicating with families of ELL students about the CCSS?	What are the major challenges that your district faces in ensuring that ELLs are able to meet the rigor of the CCSS?
Through the district website, parent conferences, open houses, PTA.	The district units of study and scope and sequence for ELA by grade level. Some of our ESL classes are across grade levels. We are now in the process of working with our ESL teachers to be able to work effectively with ELLs while maintaining high rigor and providing appropriate scaffolds and supports for common core implementation.
1) Web site with various languages available, 2) At individual schools through the ESL personnel, and 3) at parental involvement meetings, etc.	Ensuring that classroom/content teachers implement differentiated instruction strategies to meet the needs of all students, especially ELs.
Parents in the bilingual and multilingual community have received information about CCSS and its implications for ELLs through the bilingual advisory and multilingual council meetings, parent workshops, and trainings.	Lack of understanding among key stakeholders about the unique knowledge and expertise teachers need to successfully develop the language and content knowledge and skills ELLs require to meet the demands of the CCSS.
We have parent meetings and workshops. We send home bilingual brochures	The major challenges are the growing number of newcomer students, the lack of ESL trained teachers available to fill all open positions, and the need to provide quality professional development for principals and coaches and all teachers on the principles and best practices of ELL and the CCSS.
We communicate through mailings, parent meetings, parent classes, television spots, district newspaper.	The greatest challenge is raising the expectations that teachers and administrators have regarding the learning capability of ELLs. A second challenge would be that EL services need time and space with teachers to ensure they have the right professional learning in a deep manner for them to feel equipped to meet the learning needs of ELLs.
Parent/community forums, site based meetings.	The enormity of the alignment and training of English language standards, assessments, instructional materials and breaking silos between and amongst district divisions
CGCS materials posted on website, distributed in parent meetings and discussed in televised community programs.	Developing practices that maintain the rigor for beginning language proficiency levels.
We provide parent workshops and brochures on the CCSS in multiple languages.	Materials are a big issue. The existing ELD materials are far less than adequate. There are no plans or funding to purchase new materials.

How is your district communicating with families of ELL students about the CCSS? (Cont'd)	What are the major challenges that your district faces in ensuring that ELLs are able to meet the rigor of the CCSS? (Cont'd)
<p>The district is still fine tuning the parent communication plan regarding CCSS. In the 2013-2014 school year we will begin communicating with families of ELLs through our site and district English Learner Advisory Committees.</p>	<p>1) Long Term English learners - gaps with academic language development; 2) Need for all teachers to understand the language demands embedded in the CCSS, and thus recognizing the need to attend to language across all disciplines; 3) Pedagogical shifts required of teachers to effectively address teaching to the CCSS; 4) lack of appropriate instructional materials that provide depth and breadth needed to address the need for increasing text complexity across all disciplines; and 5) CA has new ELD standards aligned to the CCSS, so it will be a challenge to design and coordinate PD that presents the ELD standards along with any work done with CCSS, so that the ELD standards are not an afterthought.</p>
<p>Some messages have been translated, and a survey is in the works for mathematics, but generally ELL parents are receiving communication that is targeted to parents generally.</p>	<p>First of all acknowledgement that ELLs have specific needs in meeting this rigor above and beyond that which is provided to all students. There have been discussions in terms of involving ELL resources in district initiatives regarding implementation of CCSS, but little in the way of discussion about the curricular or instructional adaptations that may be required.</p>
<p>Designated team to work with family involvement, helping parents be in the classroom as part of the district's GED support program, and family grants, including teaching English to parents.</p>	<p>Academic vocabulary. Helping remediate gaps in learning and minimal home language development from ages 0-5 that students must overcome each year to meet grade level success.</p>
<p>Through parent meetings and translated documents.</p>	<p>Shifting the expectations of the ESL and mainstream teachers to look positively at CCSS and ELLs' ability to perform well with difficult texts and expectations.</p>
<p>The communication is occurring through the Multilingual/Multicultural Education Department and the district's parent unit.</p>	<p>A lack of understanding of the linguistic needs of ELLs.</p>
<p>Website.</p>	<p>Training administrators and teachers to understand how they need to differentiate their approaches and interventions to support ELL.</p>
<p>School based.</p>	<p>Aligning the WIDA ELD standards with CCSS for general teacher use; training teachers in the language demands of CCSS; monitoring student language progress</p>
<p>The communication regarding the CCSS and the implications on students' learning has been shared with parents in several ways: meetings, letters, district website, etc. Additionally, there are resources designed for parents. All the documents are translated for parents in eight languages.</p>	<p>Due to the large size of the district, ensuring that all ESL teachers have a deep understanding of CCSS and the expertise to support their students continues to be a major challenge for us. Additionally, we continue to search for the materials that are fully aligned to CCSS and are appropriate for ELLs.</p>

Appendix B

How is your district communicating with families of students with special needs about the CCSS?	What are the major challenges that your district faces in ensuring that students with special needs are able to meet the rigor of the CCSS?
Postings on special education website. Memo sent home to parents explaining CCSS.	Getting regular education teachers to allow students with disabilities into their classes
Same information that is received by all parents.	Assuring collaboration among special and general teachers to enable differentiation in instruction in general education classes, allowing for full participation of special education students.
Through school level communications. Our goal is to push out information to families through the same channels that general education does.	Scheduling students with disabilities into higher level classes and ensure that they are challenged.
Communication with parents of special needs students is no different than other parents in the district (i.e., parent meetings, newsletters, board meetings, and parent symposiums).	
They are included in the general communication. There is not special communication to the special needs families about the CCSS.	Our teachers need help in cross walking the standards to the IEP goals. We are working with Goal Book to facilitate this movement and think it is starting to help our teachers significantly. The next step will be matching it to instructional materials that are age and developmentally appropriate.
Newsletters, email, messages home, website, IEP's.	Providing time for teams to collaborate on building accommodations and modifications based on district - developed scope and sequence documents as well as unit plans.
District newsletter, district website, student progress reports, progress monitoring data.	Sufficient planning time for special education teacher participation in professional learning communities with content teachers.
Our district has parent/community administrators in each of the five regional areas. In addition, we have staff devoted to parent/community involvement and education on issues affecting students with disabilities, and we are about to launch a new website for the Division of Special Education with resources in multiple languages and new resources for parents/families related to Common Core for students with disabilities as well as struggling learners/at-risk students.	Ensuring that our workforce, which includes teachers, administrators, para-educators, and support staff, has the requisite content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, skills, and strategies needed to ensure that students with complex learning needs, and cognitive, physical, and/or behavioral challenges are supported in accessing and being successful with the general education CCSS-aligned curriculum. Transforming our workforce into one that works and thinks digitally and virtually, both for their own learning and for their students' learning.

How is your district communicating with families of students with special needs about the CCSS? (Cont'd)	What are the major challenges that your district faces in ensuring that students with special needs are able to meet the rigor of the CCSS? (Cont'd)
Through our exceptional education family advisory council and meetings with various advocacy groups.	Changing teachers' philosophy about changing practices.
Website, podcasts, parent workshops, newsletter.	Current achievement gap between subgroup SWD and non- disabled. Effective implementation of strategies with fidelity when instructing SWDs on the CCSS. Capacity building and ongoing training of instructional personnel in instructional practices that support student performance on standards.
We have not had any communication with families of students with disabilities that is different from the communication with all families.	Our major challenge is ensuring that students with disabilities have access to core instruction rather than being removed to receive sped services. Ensuring that teachers are comfortable with their content knowledge so they can scaffold instruction to meet individual student needs.

Appendix B

Responses to open-ended questions to research directors asking them about major challenges in measuring the implementation of the CCSS in their districts

What are the major challenges in measuring the implementation of the CCSS in your district?
Competing priorities. Monitoring the entire district - we monitor have key schools regularly
Lack of coordinated, intentional effort to conduct measurement.
The major challenge is simply developing a CCSS-based curriculum, with associated interim (pre-post unit), benchmark, and final assessments, as well as other formative assessments. We have an excellent process to do this, but the very rigorous curriculum design process requires significant resources of staff and teacher time. Our teachers are used to using data for instructional decisions, but there will be much professional development for school-based professional learning communities.
Limited resources. As assessment director, I have limited information about the majority of these items.
Obtaining classroom-level information on over 5,000 teachers; survey (self-report) data do not provide a complete picture of implementation.
The vision of improved achievement scores, increased graduation rates and other outcomes mentioned above are readily available to leadership and school staff, but they are not seen as benchmarks of CCSS implementation. We have to set these as measurable goals for CCSS implementation, but these are the goals for our district. There is that subtle but important disconnect.
Having the time to collect the needed data while staff is implementing the CCSS.
I am noting at this time that the Commonwealth of Virginia does not participate in the common core. Instead, we have the Standards of Learning . It usually takes a couple of years to get adjusted to the change in standards prescribed by the state.
Being in Texas, we are not implementing CCSS. However, we are implementing career and college readiness standards and are aligning our curriculum to the state's standards and to national standards where possible. The district and state have raised our standards, and it is challenging to get every classroom teacher in this large district to raise their level of instruction to meet these higher standards. It is a communication and professional development challenge that we are aggressively undertaking.
Managing to scale with 600+ schools; concurrently implemented with other districtwide reforms, including teacher evaluations, student-based budgeting systems, a new administration; decentralized school autonomy in decision making - what does this mean in the context of the Common Core? The district has done really well at providing guidance and putting data and assessment structures in place, but how do we have the deep dialogue and reflection on practice needed to move a large urban district at scale?
Staggered implementation.
Requirements for implementation have been varied across the district, meaning that measuring the implementation has been challenging.
Professional development.
State testing and federal accountability are not aligned to CCSS.
We have fully replaced the [previous] standards with the CCSS and they are being implemented in every classroom and in every standardized assessment, so I assume the question means how do we know they are being taught well? Challenges: we do not have any tried and tested leading indicators. Nobody knows what success looks like. I am struggling even to understand your question.
1) Teacher commitment to the adoption and implementation of CCSS; 2) Change in pedagogy required; and 3) Ample curricular resources aligned to CCSS.
We do not have any major challenges in measuring the implementation of the CCSS in our district. We have worked hand in hand with the state department and stakeholders to provide training and evaluate professional development.

Responses to open-ended questions to communications directors asking them about major challenges their districts faced in communicating with stakeholders about the CCSS

Please describe the biggest challenges your district is facing in terms of communicating with stakeholders about the CCSS.

The growing controversy around common core and its advocates are making an already challenging topic even more challenging to communicate with fidelity.

Among the greatest challenges, the district finds it difficult to clearly and simply articulate to parents how CCSS is different from and better than current content taught to their children.

It takes a lot of time to explain—and the time often exceeds attention spans.

Haven't collected emails at district level until this year. Unreliable student information. Reaching all languages. Sharing our good news. KNOWING all the good things that are happening throughout the district.

Concerns about an implementation dip and a new state accountability system that is being implemented ahead of the CCSS under which most urban districts in the state will be rated as D's and F's on most measures.

Our largest challenge is articulating what will be different for parents and students.

Buy-in from just about all parties.

Explaining the academic advantages.

The diversity of our parent population.

Because of the complexity of the subject, it's already a communications challenge. Add to that the misunderstandings and misinformation that are already out there, and the challenges just got more challenging.

It's one of many things we're doing. How can we get them to pay attention to this? They're not involved in it and can't "see" it daily, so it poses a challenge to get them to want to understand it.

Appendix C. Districts Responding to the Survey

Albuquerque Public Schools	District of Columbia Public Schools	Oklahoma City Public Schools
Anchorage School District	Fresno Unified School District	Orange County Public Schools
Atlanta Public Schools	Guilford County Schools	The School District of Palm Beach County
Baltimore City Public Schools	Hillsborough County Public Schools	The School District of Philadelphia
Birmingham City Schools	Houston Independent School District	Portland Public Schools
Boston Public Schools	Jefferson County Public Schools	Providence Public School District
Broward County Public Schools	Kansas City Public Schools	Sacramento City Unified School District
Caddo Parish Public Schools	Long Beach Unified School District	San Diego Unified School District
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	Los Angeles Unified School District	San Francisco Unified School District
Chicago Public Schools	Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools	Santa Ana Unified School District
Cincinnati Public Schools	Miami-Dade County Public Schools	Seattle Public Schools
Clark County School District	Milwaukee Public Schools	Shelby County Schools
Cleveland Metropolitan School District	New York City Department of Education	St. Louis Public Schools
Dayton Public Schools	Newark Public Schools	St. Paul Public Schools
Des Moines Independent School District	Norfolk Public Schools	Toledo Public Schools
Detroit Public Schools	Oakland Unified School District	Wichita Public Schools



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