

wea



***2015 Smarter Balanced Assessment  
Member Survey***

The Washington state's Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA), first administered in 2014-15, measures state learning standards. It replaces:

- Math, reading and writing portions of the MSP in grades 3-8
- 10<sup>th</sup> grade math, reading and writing HSPE (replaced by 11<sup>th</sup> grade SBA)

Starting with the Class of 2019, 11<sup>th</sup> graders must achieve a cut score set by the state as a graduation requirement.

# Survey Purposes



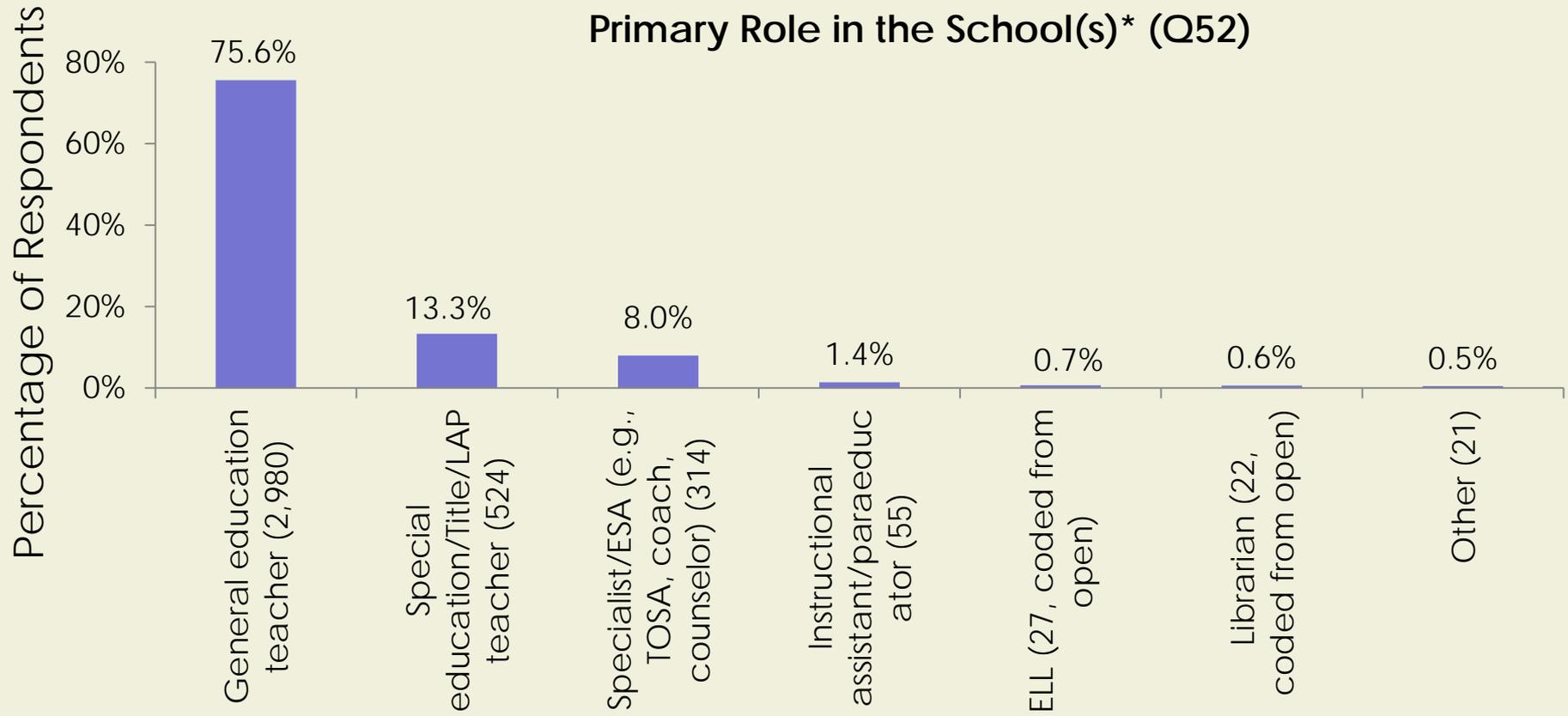
- Learn members' opinions on and issues with the SBA
- Identify how WEA can support members with this new statewide standardized test
- Share survey data with WEA members, policy makers and other stakeholders

- Administered online
- Open during June 2015
- Invitation email sent to all 56,447 certificated and pareducator members
- Email reminder sent June 15<sup>th</sup>
- 5,409 respondents (9.6% participation rate\*)

\* The participation rate is actually higher because not all members who received the email administered the SBA.

# About the Respondents

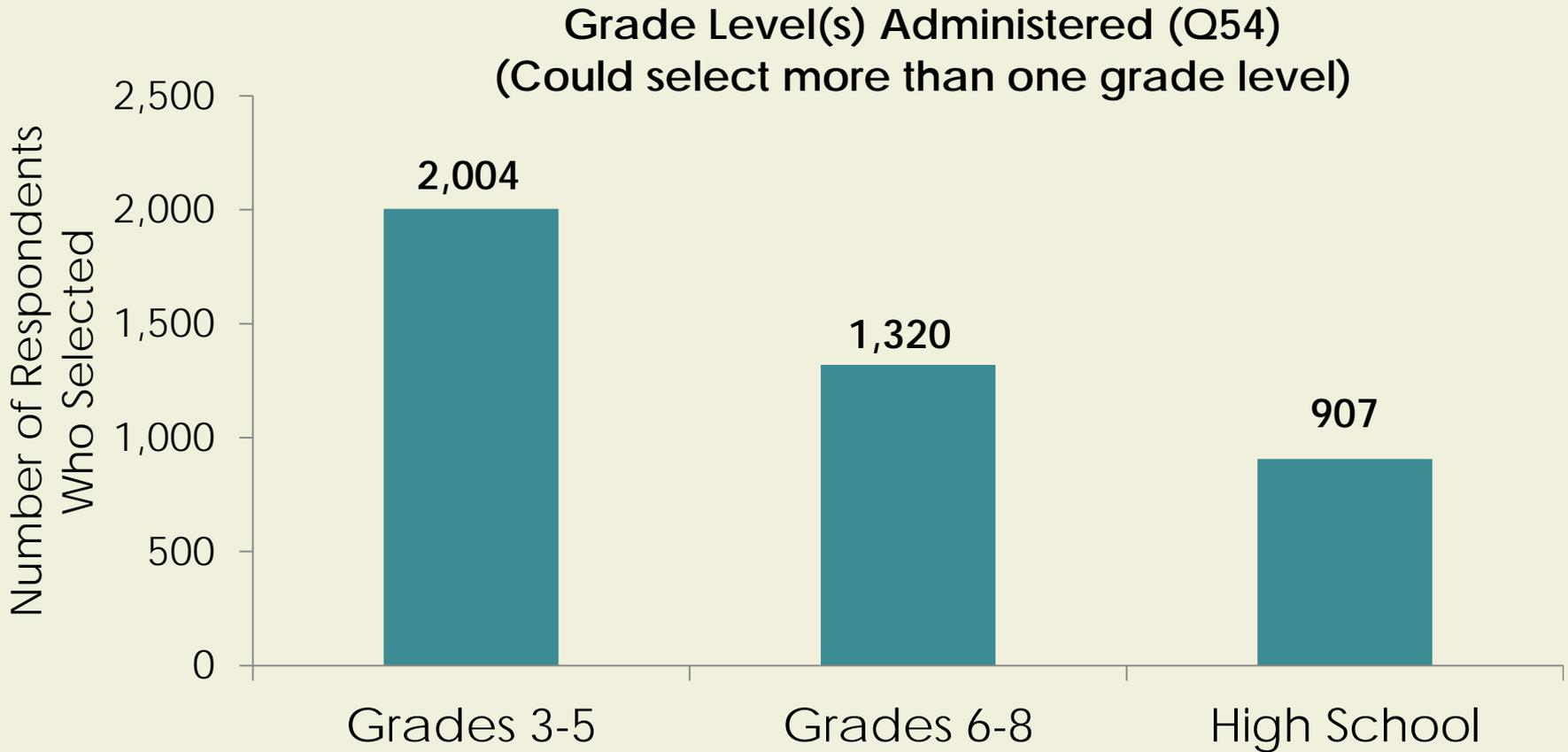
76% of respondents indicated that their primary role in the workplace is general education teacher.



\* 317 respondents of the above respondents (8%) served as the School Test Coordinator for their building's 2015 SBA administration (Q53).

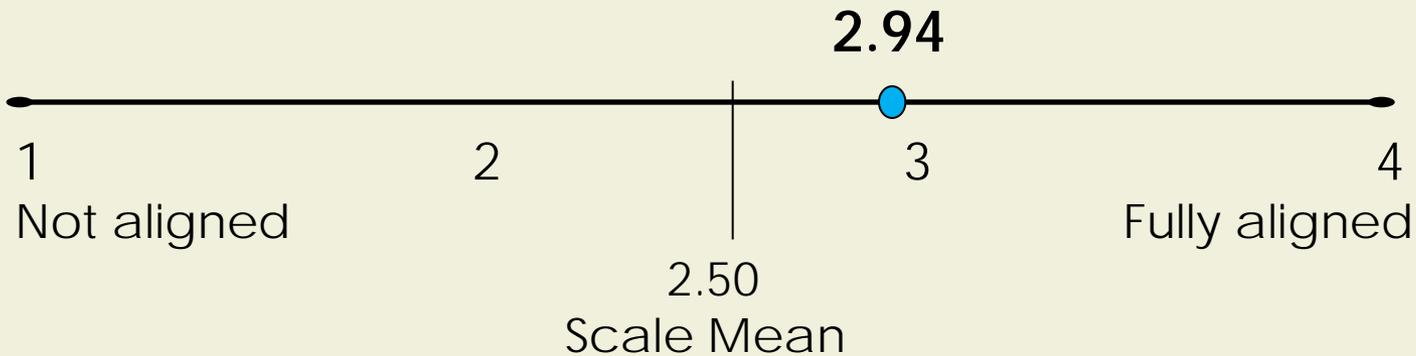
# About the Respondents

2,004 respondents administered the SBA to grades 3-5, 1,320 respondents to grades 6-8 and 907 respondents to high school students.

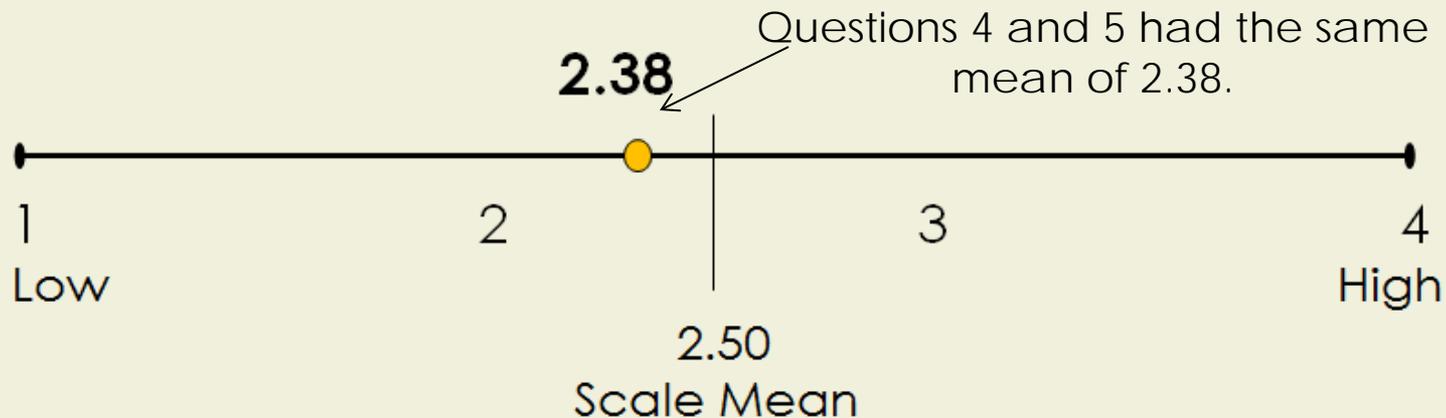


# Common Core Curriculum and PD

## Level of Common Core Curriculum Alignment (Q3)

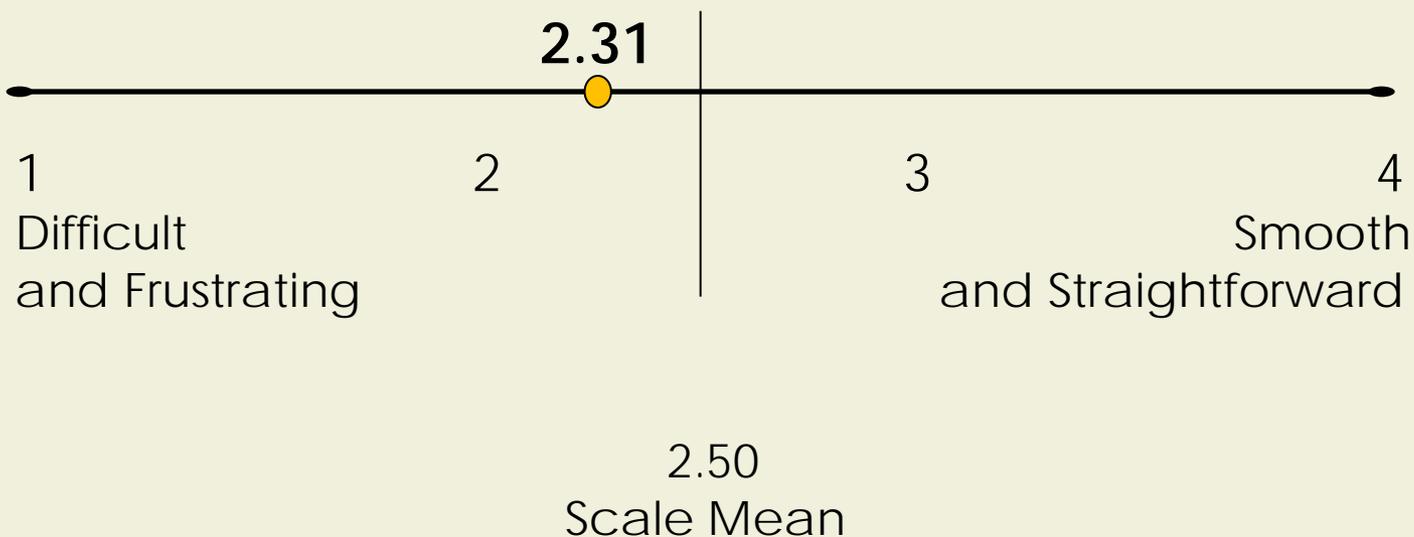


## Level of Curriculum Support (Q4) and Level of Professional Development Support (Q5) To Implement CCSS



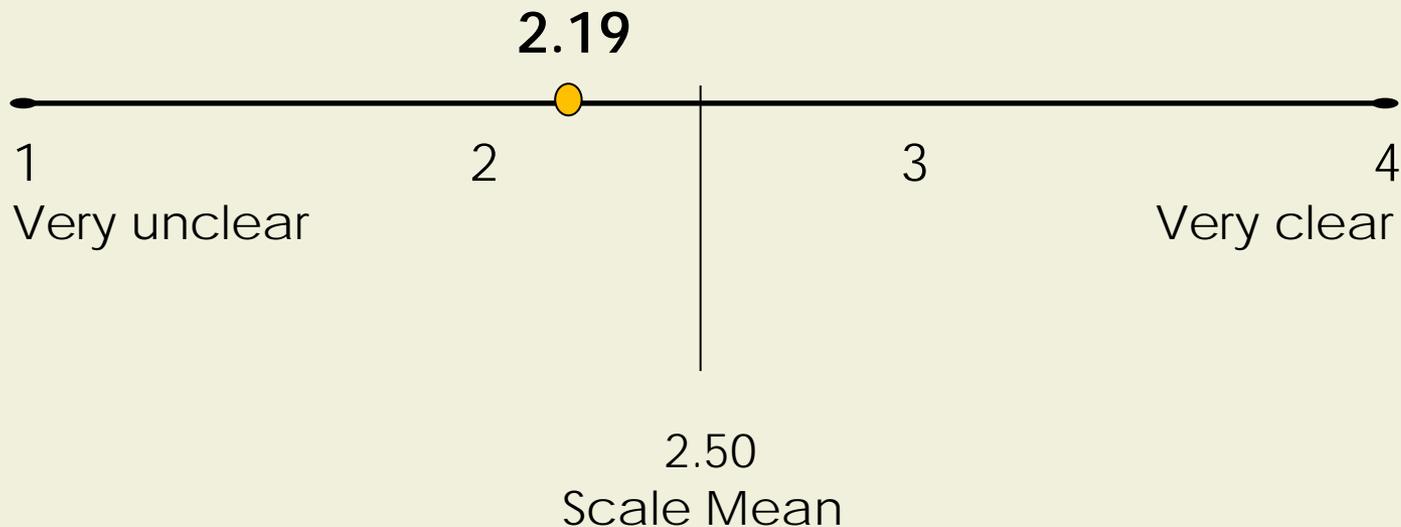
Respondents rated their overall experience administering the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) as slightly difficult and frustrating.

## Overall Experience Administering SBA (Q6)



Respondents rated the overall clarity of the Smarter Balanced Assessment student instructions as somewhat unclear.

## Overall Clarity of SBA Student Instructions (Q8)



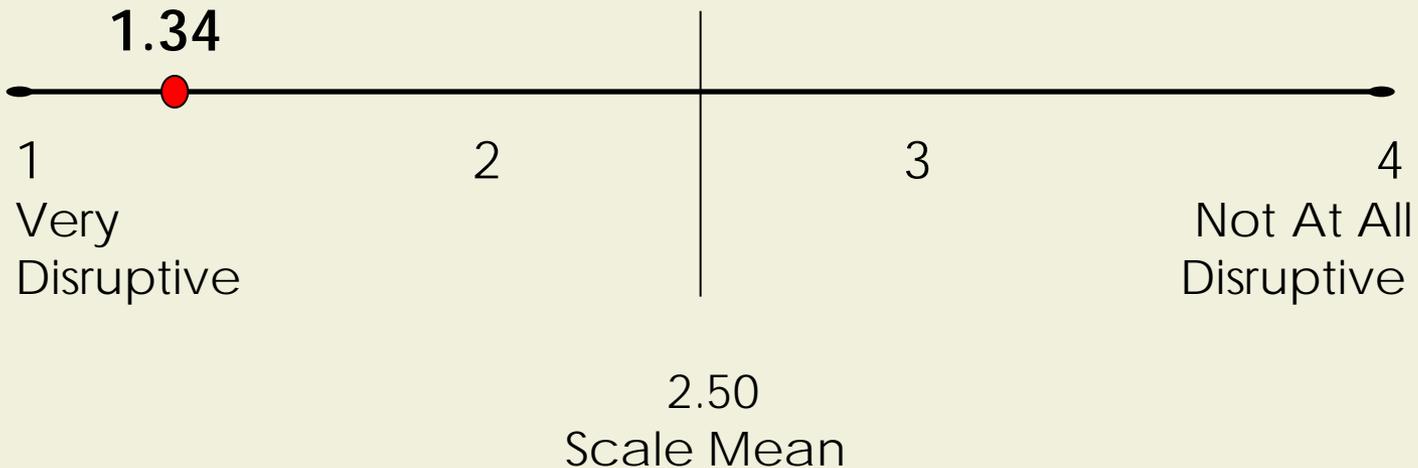
Note: The mean for ELL teachers was 1.84.

From open comments:

- *Students had the most difficulty in understanding the Performance Task. Font size too small, not enough bolded words, needed spacing between what was being asked. Students had difficulty following directions because they were confusing and not simply stated!*
- *The instructions for students prior to the ELA PT were horribly inadequate. Students were confused as to the task and many finished the assessment without realizing that they were being asked to produce a significant piece of writing.*
- *The Part 1 and Part 2 of the performance task was very confusing. Kids were not sure when the first part ended and where the second part began. All of their screens told them different messages and as administrators we were unable to look at their screens so we could not give them feedback as to whether or not they were proceeding correctly. It created a lot of anxiety for the kids.*
- *Too many instructions and tasks in one problem. Needs to be broken down further. (referencing math instructions)*

Respondents rated the overall impact of the SBA administration on their buildings and facilities as very disruptive.

## Overall Impact of SBA Administration on Building and Facilities (Q9)

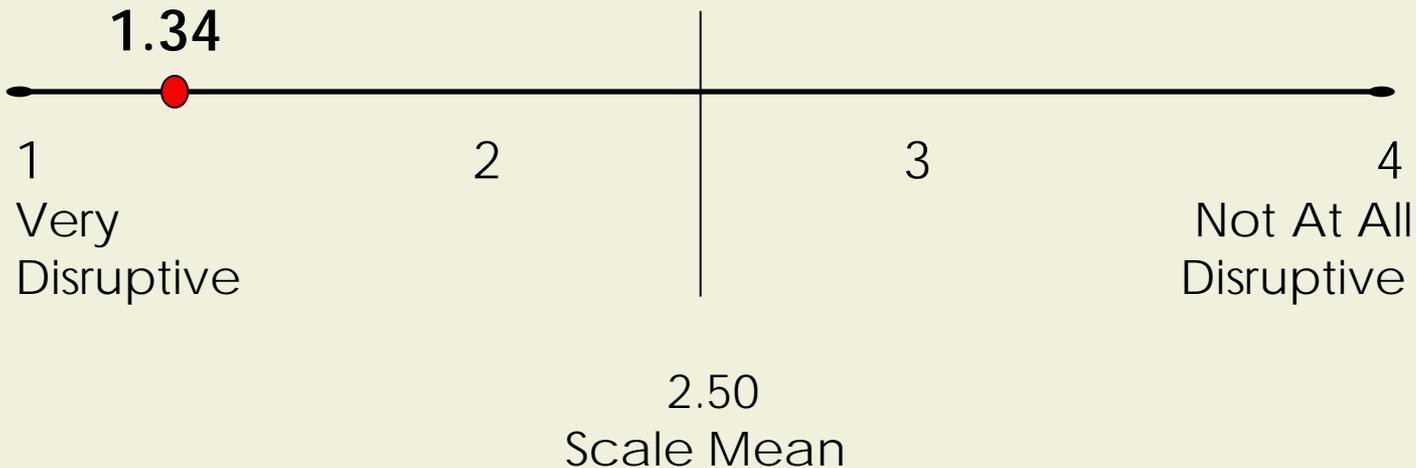


From open comments:

- *We had to make sure no one else in the building was on the internet when any given grade level was testing or else several students would get kicked out. Hard for those still teaching!*
- *. . .our "common core" aligned curriculum for 3rd graders had not yet reached the unit on fractions and much of the 3rd grade math test seemed to deal with fractions. Taking the SBA tests earlier in the year because of the new state law around the 3rd grade ELA results was unfair to our 3rd grade students.*
- *We had over 108 testing sessions which either stopped other academic activities or it dampened them. The computer labs were off limits for K-2 students and even the library curriculum had to adapt as the library had a "testing" schedule. It should also be noted that several reading intervention/special ed groups were cancelled to help provide the man power to administer these tests. Many hours of quality instruction were lost.*

Respondents rated the overall impact of the Smarter Balanced Assessment administration on the school day as very disruptive.

## Overall Impact of SBA Administration on the School Day (Q10)

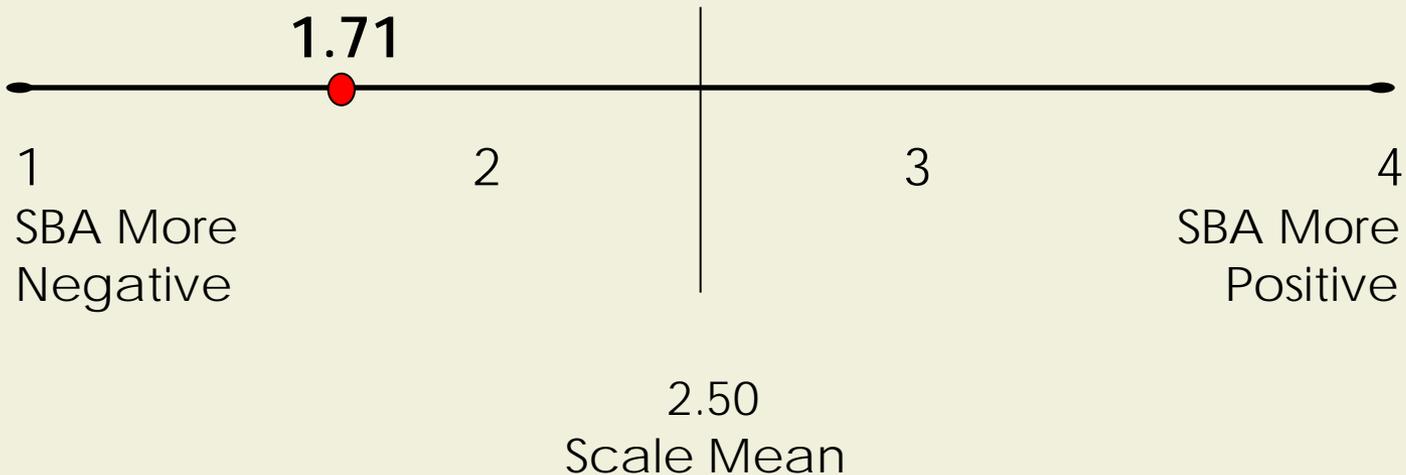


From open comments:

- *The schedule for testing takes away computer access for classroom teachers to bring their students to the lab for other tasks/research. ELA standards expect research to be happening.*
- *I basically was unable to service my special education students for the entire six weeks it took to give the test. . . When services resumed it was like they regressed at least two months. It is imperative that these students receive specially designed instruction everyday if they are ever going to catch up!!!*
- *There are so few devices available for our students that the whole SBAC for grades 3-5 in my building took nearly 3 months to complete.*

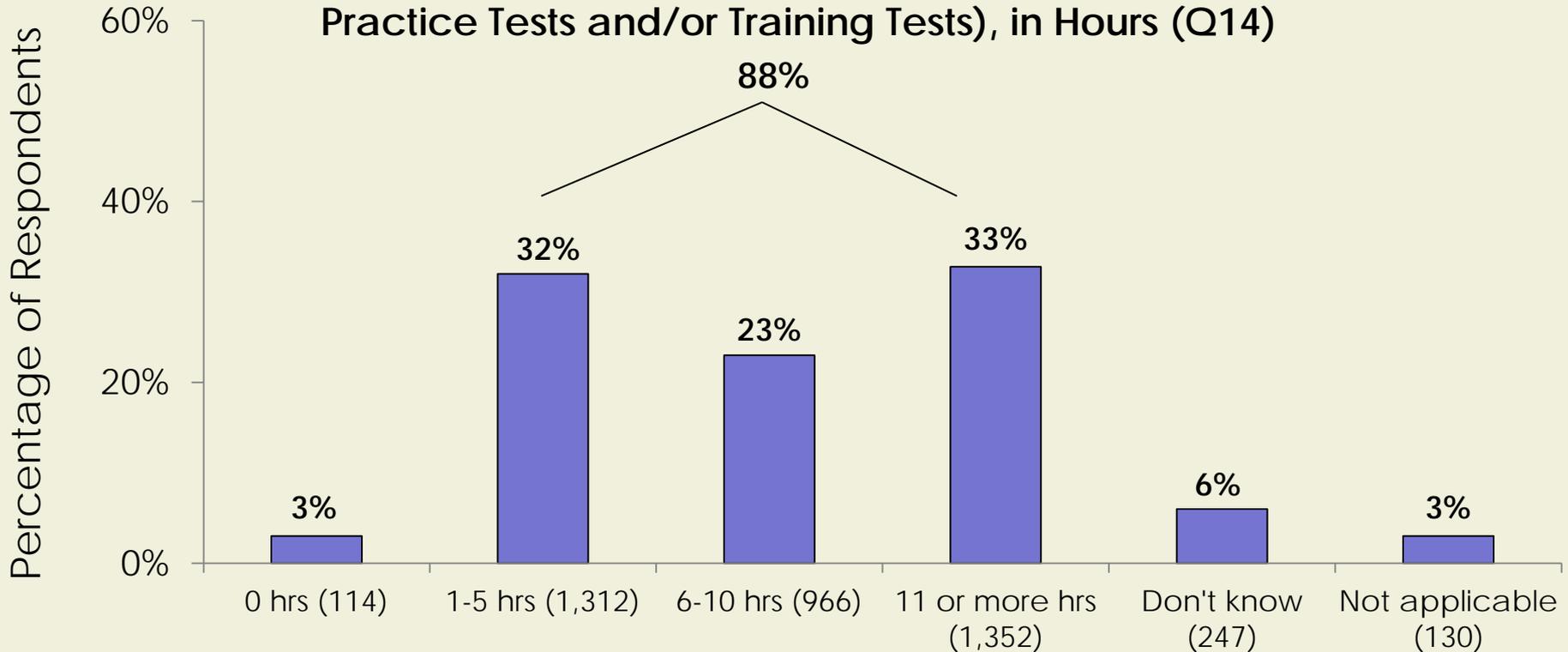
Respondents rated their overall SBA experience, as compared to their previous state standardized test experience(s), as more negative.

## Overall SBA Experience Compared to Previous State Standardized Test Experience(s) (Q11)



88% of respondents used 1 or more instructional hours to practice for the SBA. Of these respondents, 33% used 11 or more hours to practice.

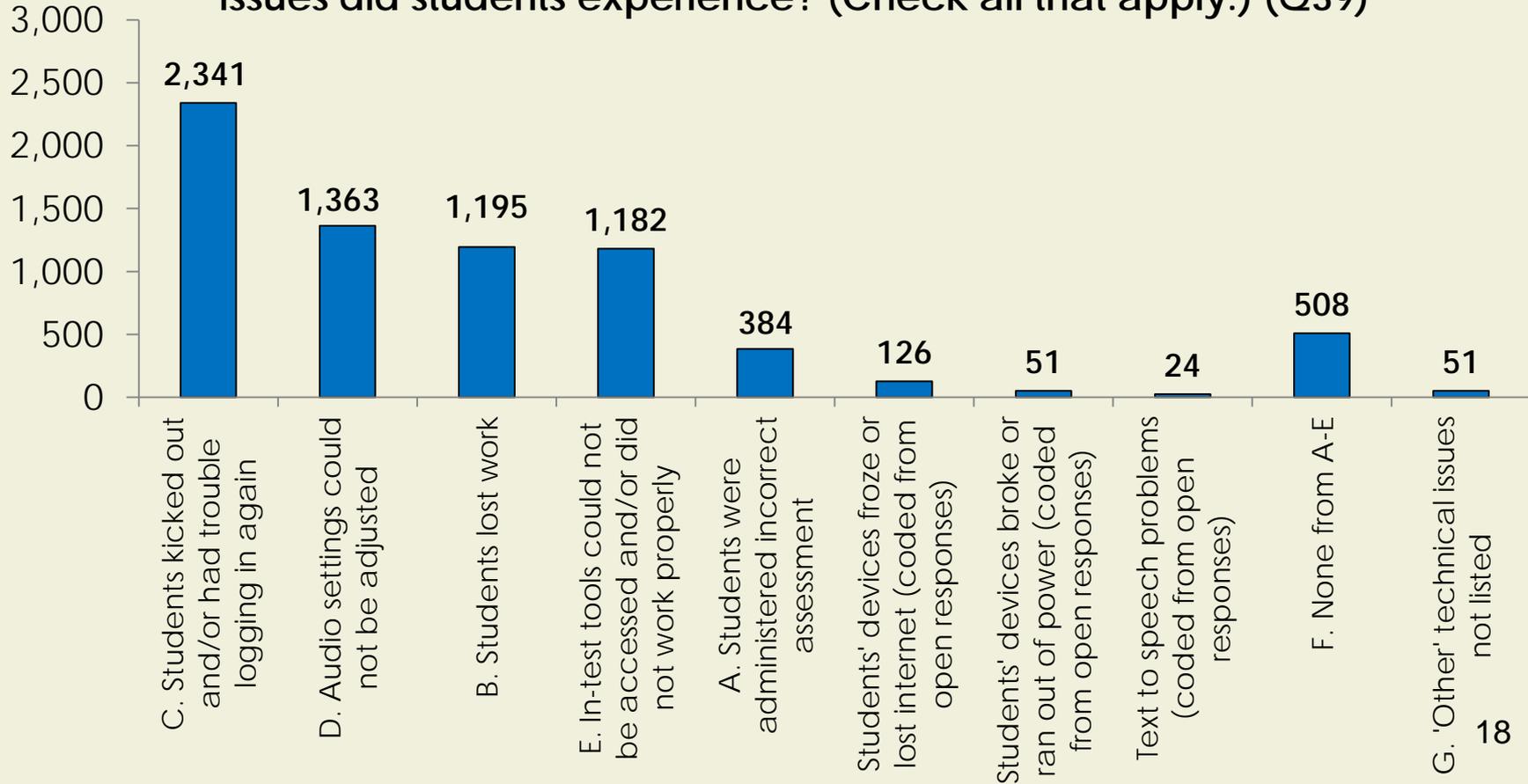
**Amount of Instructional Time Used For Students To Practice for the SBA (may include Interim Assessments, Practice Tests and/or Training Tests), in Hours (Q14)**



89% of respondents reported students experiencing technical issues.

Number of Respondents Who Selected

When taking the SBA, which—if any—of the following technical issues did students experience? (Check all that apply.) (Q39)

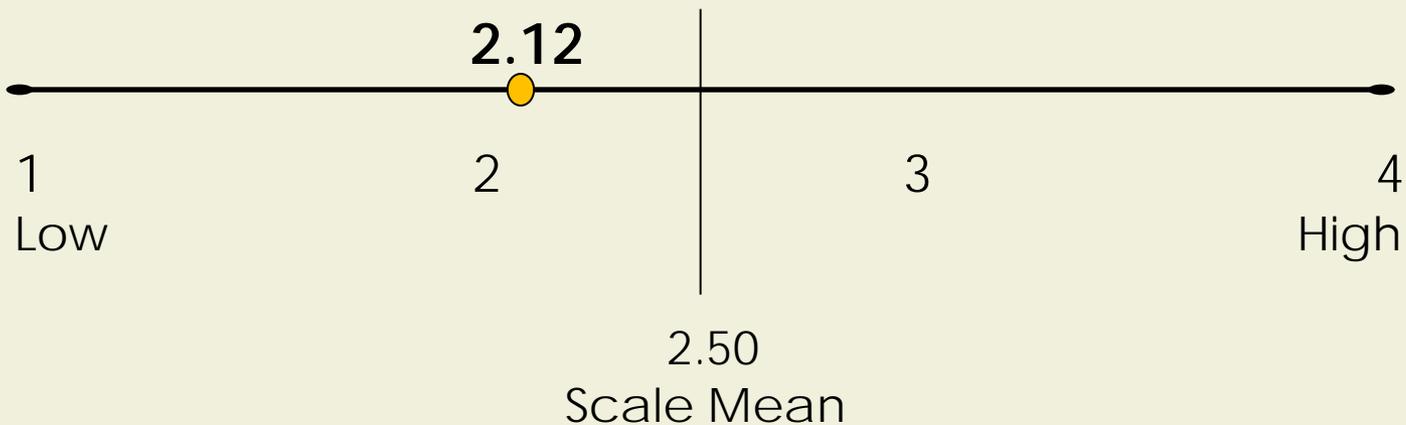


Open comments based on top concerns:

- *We had to piece together donated equipment. Our current equipment was not adequate for testing.*
- *Students could not get the cursor to drop down for them to type in the denominator on the fractions.*
- *When they would highlight or click on the word they thought was the best choice, it would not allow them to proceed. So, I saw many students clicking on every word in the passage. I thought it to be a guessing game and/or process of elimination for many.*
- *. . . students must learn touch typing and demonstrate the ability to type 20 words per minute with over 95% accuracy before typing directly to a keyboard device. . . This is because the act of typing slows the student's thinking down until they can type at 20 words per minute.*

Respondents who administered the SBA to students requiring accommodations rated the SBA as having a somewhat low ability to meet the required accommodations of students' IEPs and/or 504 plans.

## **SBA's Ability To Meet Required Accommodations (Q43)**

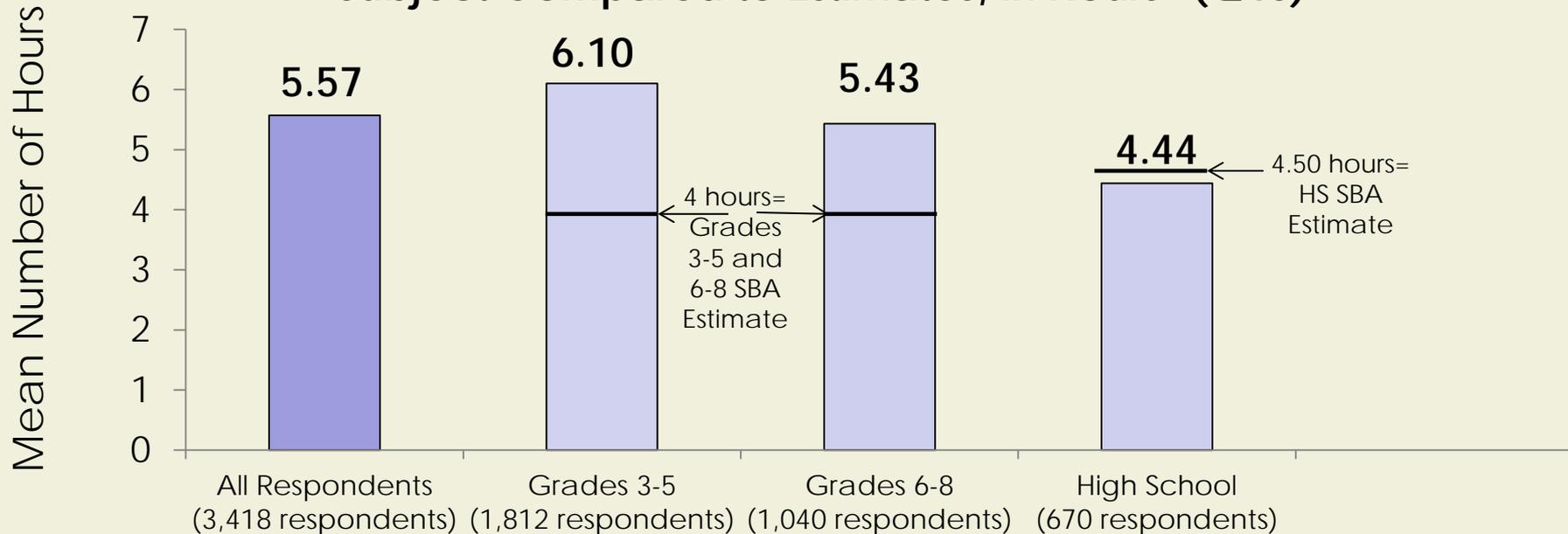


From open comments:

- *So sad to see some of these kids so far below grade level be expected to complete this test, even with accommodations. They need something that shows growth, not just grade level standards that we know they are not at.*
- *Text-to-speech. I had 60 students have access to this option, and ALL struggled with the computerized voice. Needs to be modified to have a human read and articulate for them.*
- *I was not provided the list of accommodations to use for the IEP/504 students that tested in my proctoring room, and accordingly, I don't know how well they matched the accommodations they were to receive.*
- *Students did not know how to use their accommodations, and they didn't always work. Case managers did not always understand what the accommodations were, and may have added accommodations that they didn't mean to, or ones they thought their students had according to their IEPs, but were not always necessarily provided for the students.*

The mean completion time for students in Grades 3-5 was approximately **2 hours more** than the SBA estimate. The mean completion time for students in Grades 6-8 was approximately **1.5 hours more** than the SBA estimate. Only the mean amount of time for High School students was close to the SBA estimate.

**Mean Amount of Time for Most Students To Complete ELA Subject Compared to Estimates, in Hours\* (Q46)**

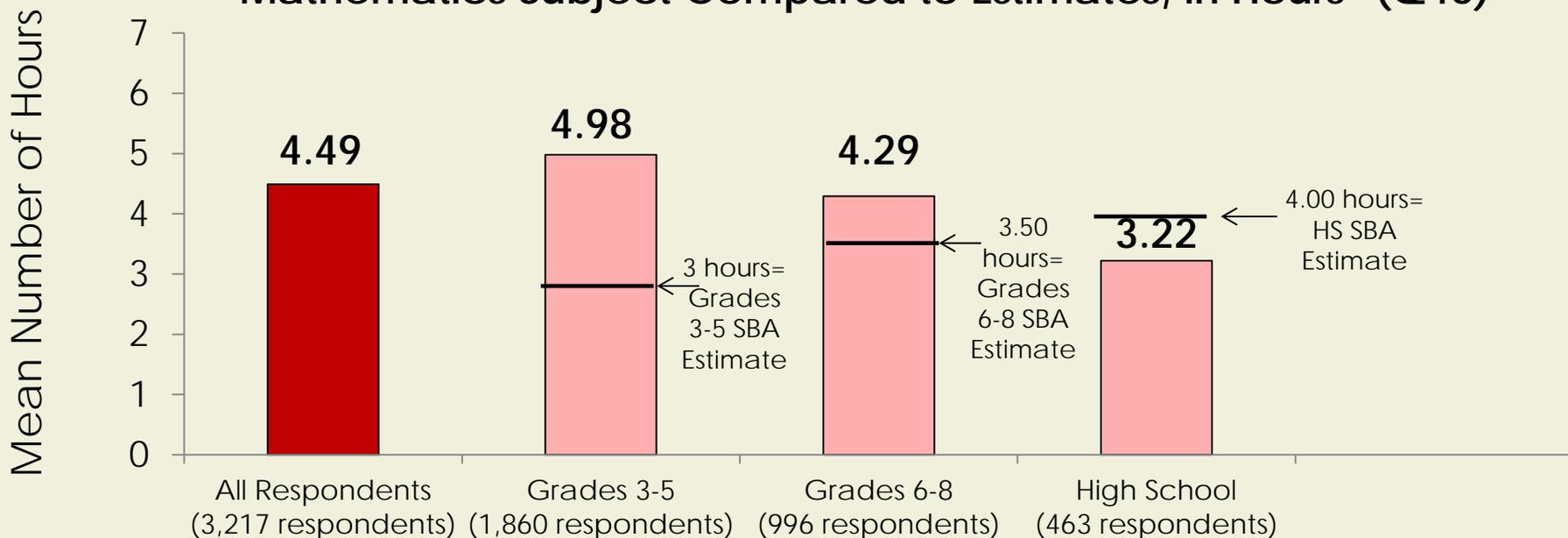


\* Multiple choice question showed time range options. Mean calculated using the midpoint for each response option.

# Mathematics Completion Time

The mean amount of time for Grades 3-5 was approximately **2 hours more** than the SBA estimate. The mean amount of time for Grades 6-8 was approximately **45 minutes more** than the SBA estimate. Only the mean amount of time for High School was under the SBA estimate.

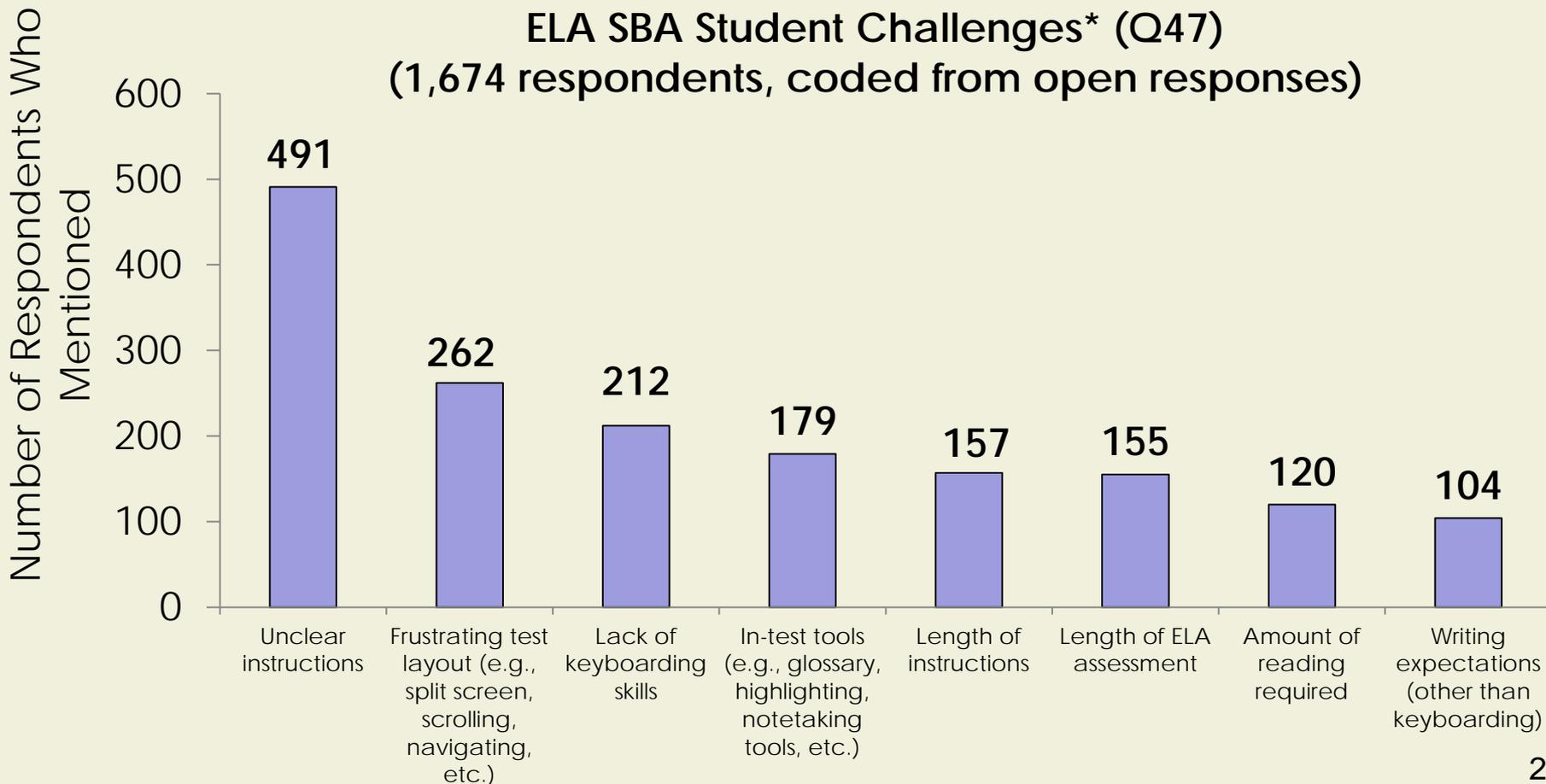
**Mean Amount of Time for Most Students To Complete Mathematics Subject Compared to Estimates, in Hours\* (Q46)**



\* Multiple choice question showed time range options. Mean calculated using the midpoint for each response option.

# ELA Student Challenges

The most frequently reported ELA student challenge was unclear instructions, followed by the frustrating test layout (e.g., split screen, scrolling and difficulties navigating, etc.).

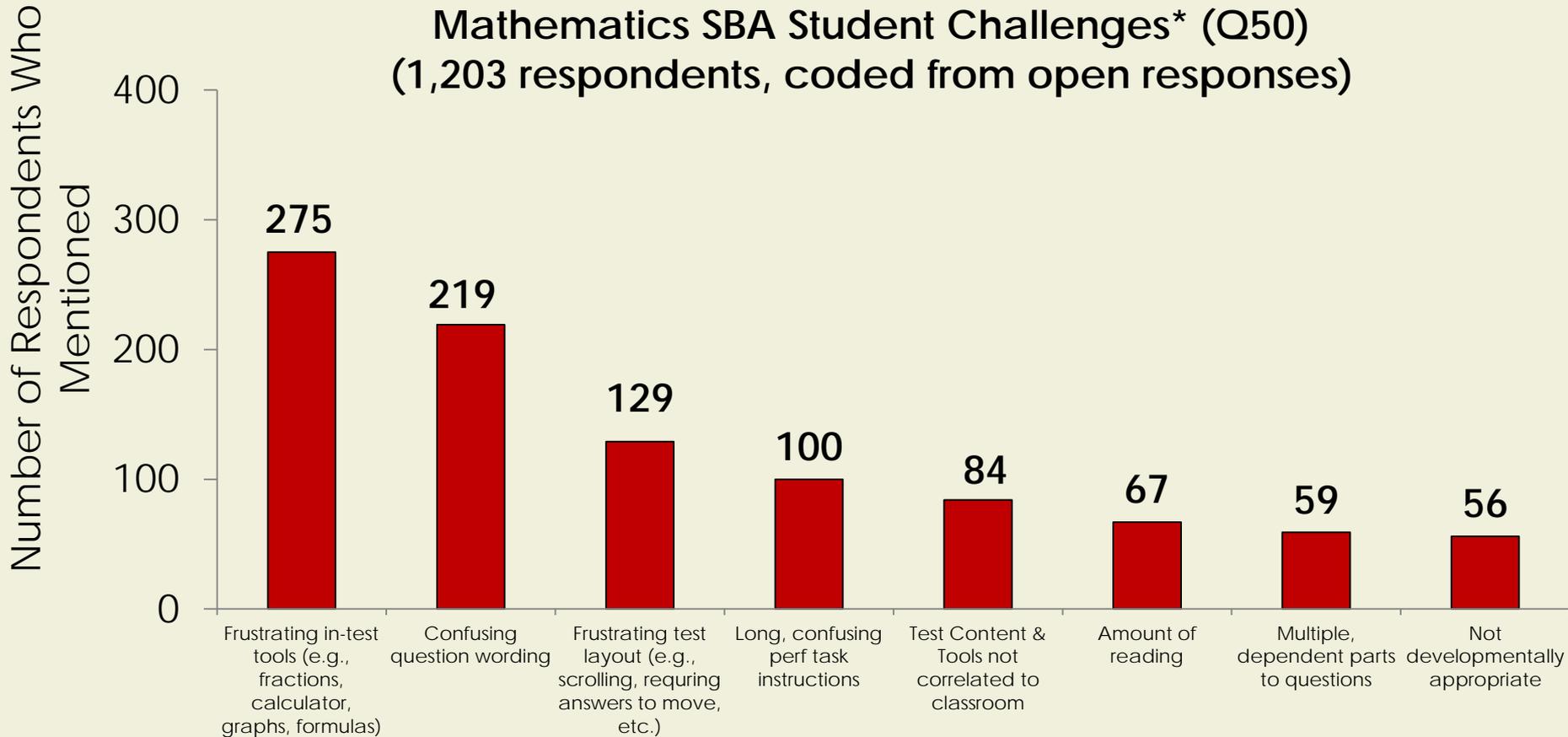


\* Open response question; responses were coded with up to three topics.

From open comments:

- *Regardless of screen size, amount of information to be processed on one screen is developmentally and physically inappropriate. Any adult would have at least two monitors provided to process text, prompt, and answer. To require scrolling both horizontally and vertically to work on one or worse, multiple texts, impacts students' ability to show mastery DRAMATICALLY. It also is not equitable because it is a disadvantage to students with less exposure to technology.*
- *The students could not pause the test for a restroom break, in fear that they would get locked out and not be able to go back into a section. They are used to being able to go back and look at their work, and/or look at questions before reading a passage. This wasn't always available.*
- *The kids eyes were bloodshot after testing. The amount of screen time required to complete one section, for most kids, exceeded the amount of screen time kids should have in one day.*
- *The 3rd grade ELA writing standards state that students are supposed to be able to complete their writing "with support" in Opinion, Narrative, Informative writing. There are NO supports in the PT task. Students struggled with self-directing the writing process.*
- *There was no collaboration in writing, and the writing process was condensed into a day.*

The most frequently reported Mathematics student challenge was using the in-test tools (e.g., fractions, calculator, etc.), followed by confusing question wording.



\* Open response question; responses were coded with up to three topics.

From open comments:

- *Students had not covered all of the content at the time of the test. Students were confused by the wording of the test questions and by the layout of entering their answers.*
- *Students who were high readers did better than struggling readers. Did the test assess reading or math?*
- *Way too much reading. Some questions seemed designed to trick students, not test their math knowledge.*
- *Couldn't label units in math problems...my students thought they would get it wrong.*
- *The content assessed was focused on a limited range of skills and so the assessment does not truly allow students to demonstrate the breadth of their knowledge.*

- **Summative assessments** administered at the end of the school year.\*
- **Interim assessments** allow schools to check in on student progress and designed to help teachers plan and improve instruction. Two forms of interim assessments were available beginning winter 2014-15, Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs) and Interim Block Assessments (IBAs).
- **The Digital Library** includes hundreds of resources to help teachers improve classroom-based assessment practices. Teachers provide feedback on the resources and the interface.

\* States in the SBA consortium may purchase the EOY summative assessment only (estimated cost \$22.50 per student) or the full SBAC suite with three components (estimated cost \$27.30 per student).

- Only one-third (33%) of respondents accessed the Digital Library. Another 29% did not know what the Digital Library was.
- Respondents who accessed the Digital Library rated its resources as not very helpful in informing their instruction.
- The most frequently reported Digital Library comment was that the Digital Library was difficult to navigate, followed by its having inadequate available resources.
- Only 27% of respondents administered Interim Comprehensive Assessments and/or Interim Assessment Blocks to their students to prepare for the SBA.
- Those who administered the Interim Assessments rated them as not very helpful in informing instruction.

From open comments:

- *Found it to be awkward when first set up, but did improve over time. Found things in the library, went back later and could not find the same source. This was frustrating and took too much search time. Teachers are busy and when something is a chore we have a tendency to not use it.*
- *I teach 8th grade math and Algebra - the digital library did not have useful materials for the standards that I needed it in most. The material for operations in scientific notation did not seem very good or useful in addition to properties of exponents. The lessons did not seem engaging or there were not lessons at all available while I was teaching those lessons.*

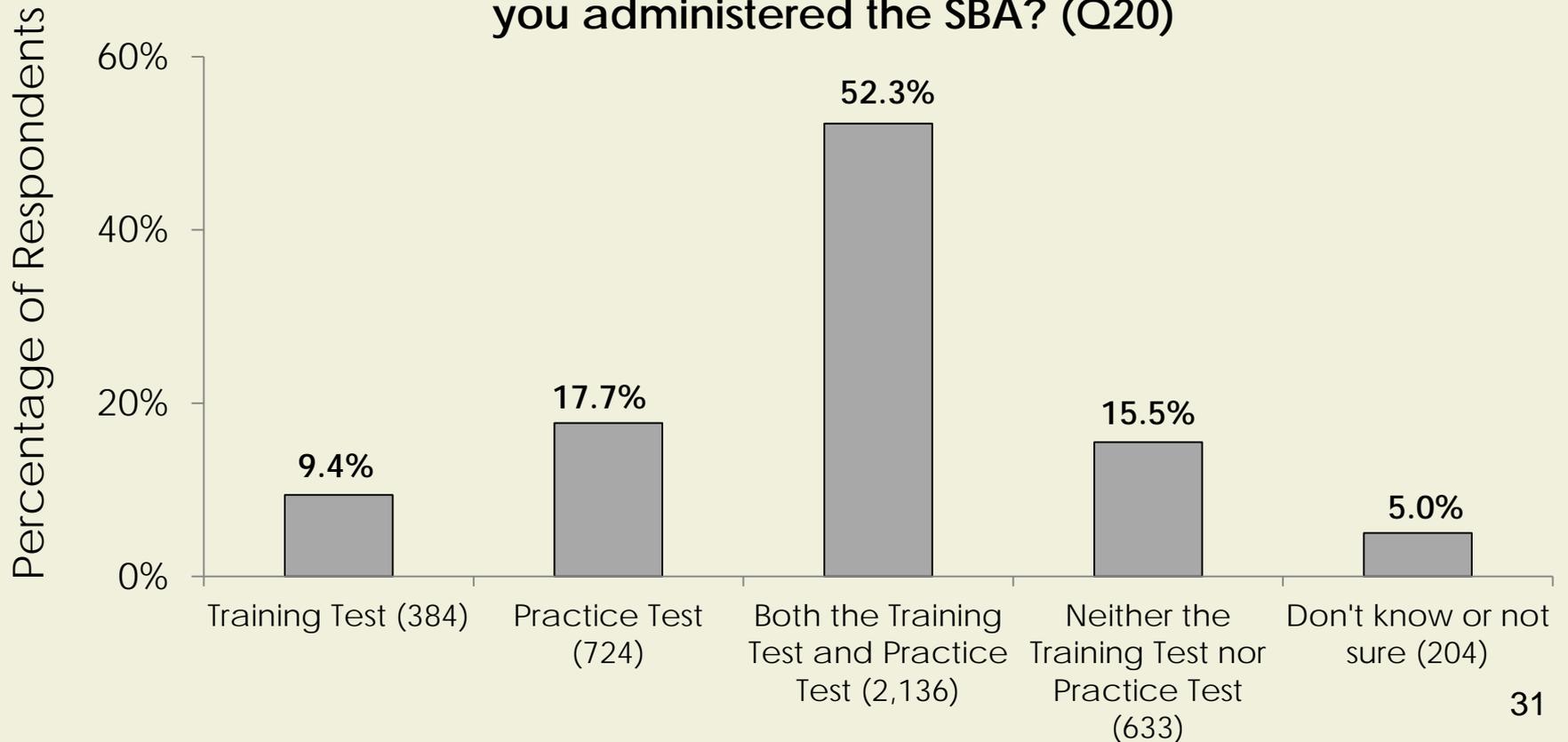
# Training and Practice Tests

52% of respondents administered **both** the Training Test and Practice Test before administering the SBA.

Training Tests – familiarize students with test software and navigation tools

Practice Tests – designed to give students a full grade-level experience and mirror the summative tests

**Which of the following, if any, did you administer before you administered the SBA? (Q20)**



From open comments:

- *On the practice tests not all the tools that could be used on the SBAC test were available for students. It would be nice for them to practice all the tools before hand and not when it comes to the final assessment. They are at a disadvantage because they have to figure out how to use the tool when they are testing. If they had prior practice with all the tools it would save time.*
- *. . .the practice tests were too short -- they gave the students a false sense of what they would be like, so they were completely caught off guard by the length and complexity of the interim and summative assessments.*

- Respondents report a need for more curriculum support and professional development support to implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).
- Respondents indicate the need for work to align curriculum to the CCSS to continue. ELL teachers were the least likely to feel they received curriculum support from their district to align to the new standards.
- Both the ELA and math assessments were criticized for not allowing students to use tools and strategies they use regularly in the classroom. For example, organizing ideas, writing and editing drafts, working through problems in steps, or correctly labeling answers were not supported by the test.

- The most frequent SBA comment was about the loss of instructional time and schedule disruptions. This included not only time students missed due to taking the test but also teachers/staff, facilities and resources such as computers being unavailable for regular instruction.
- The SBA's estimated completion times are very different from the completion times reported by respondents. Grades 3-5 and Grades 6-8 took far longer than the SBA estimates.
- Many students were administered Training Tests, Practice Tests and/or Interim Assessments, also resulting in a loss of additional instructional time.
- Respondents who administered the SBA in grades 3-5 and 6-8 spent significantly more time preparing and practicing with students than those who administered at the high school level.

- Open comments suggest that student instructions and test questions be clearer and more succinct. ELA questions/writing prompts, in particular, could be reformatted and/or reworded so students can more easily determine what they were being asked to do.
- Lack of clear instructions disproportionately impacted special education and ELL students.
- Administrator instructions need to be more streamlined and user friendly. Instructions, especially for administering accommodations, were not timely or clear, resulting in inconsistent application across buildings, districts and the state.
- Students who tested in March/April were at a disadvantage because many were tested on content they hadn't yet been taught that school year.
- Schools with a poor technology infrastructure reported longer testing windows causing school-wide schedule disruptions for several months. More computer devices, more modern equipment and up to date networks would help alleviate this.

- Many respondents felt the SBA was more of a technology proficiency test than a test on ELA and Mathematics.
- Respondents were concerned about cultural bias embedded into questions that assumed student familiarity with topics such as zip lines, Earth Day, zoos (California Condor), heat waves, or animal shelters.
- The in-test tools were unfamiliar to many students and often did not work properly or students did not know to access them. For example, the calculator tool that used a "\*" instead of "x" or "/" instead of "÷" to show mathematical operations, symbols students were unfamiliar with.
- The test layout (e.g., scrolling, split screen, forced to answer before moving to next question, etc.) frustrated many students.
- Some classroom Based Activities did not match the Performance Task. For example, a classroom activity was on space, but the PT was on marine animals for some of the students.

- The on-line test interface often confused students. For example, students did not realize a small text box would expand as they typed resulting in students answering with a few sentences or a short paragraph instead of a more developed response.
- Many respondents reported students unintentionally ending their test session before they had completed due to unclear directions, being involuntarily logged off or taking breaks and not being allowed to return to unfinished questions.
- Some students had to take the test multiple times including when the wrong test was administered, student work was lost, or special education students were administered two different grade level tests.

- Many respondents pointed out socioeconomic bias due to the SBA's online administration. Less affluent communities and districts have less access to technology at home, are more likely to have older equipment and fewer computers per student.
- Respondents noted a lack of test alignment with developmentally appropriate keyboarding skills. Students with limited typing skills should not be asked to type written responses.
- More technology integration within classroom instruction, especially in early grades, came up as a need. In schools with limited technology, this is a challenge when computers are only used for test preparation and administration.
- Students who were administered the test on a desktop computer reported the fewest technological problems, compared to other devices. Respondents who administered the SBA on tablets reported various technical issues at a higher rate than all respondents.

- Minimum standards for screen sizes, keyboards and sound are needed for SBA devices. Respondents rated the screen size on netbooks and tablets as significantly more inadequate than those who used other devices. Since the ELA SBA has a split screen, this puts students with smaller screens at a disadvantage. Minimum screen size standards are critical for students with reading or visual disabilities.
- Adding the capability to adjust sound without logging in and out of the SBA is needed.
- English Language Learner (ELL) teacher respondents rated their students' keyboarding proficiency and their students' familiarity with their devices significantly lower than all respondents.

- The State and districts need to provide clearer, more timely communication about the legal obligations to students entitled to accommodations.
- School districts need to provide more support for student-specific testing accommodations.
- The SBA needs a greater ability to meet required accommodations of students' IEPs and/or 504 plans.
- Students with accommodations were often cited as rushing through the test and/or giving up quickly.
- English Language Learner (ELL) teacher respondents rated district support to provide testing accommodations as significantly lower than all respondents. They also rated the SBA's ability to meet required accommodations significantly lower than all respondents.
- Students should not lose legally mandated IEP services because of test administration.