



# North Carolina Fall 2015 Data Collection

## Executive Summary

In the spring of 2014, Hope Street Group (HSG) and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) entered into an agreement to launch the North Carolina Teacher Voice Network (TVN), broadening its collaboration to include the North Carolina State Board of Education in spring 2015. The purpose of the TVN is to positively inform decisions made by education policymakers seeking input from educators throughout the state through surveys, focus groups, and Professional Learning Networks (PLN).

Thirty-one educators from across the state became the first group of Network Leaders for the North Carolina TVN. They moderated 74 focus groups on the topics selected for the fall 2015 data collection. Additionally, 2,347 teachers (2 percent of all North Carolina teachers) responded to survey questions.

The following is an overview of findings and associated recommendations organized by topic area.

### North Carolina Educator Evaluation System

Across surveys and focus groups, teachers expressed concerns about the structure of the current North Carolina Educator Evaluation System (NCEES), particularly about Standard 6, which measures student growth as determined by a value-added metric. Teachers felt that:

- Formative and summative assessments offer a clearer picture of student knowledge and growth than do standardized assessments;
- The emphasis on student academic achievement as part of the evaluation process should be reduced;
- Student surveys may be invalid or unreliable measures of teacher effectiveness; and
- Aspects of the evaluation process were too subjective.

Based on these findings, we recommend that NCDPI consider providing teachers with additional information on the use of student surveys in educator evaluations.

- North Carolina teachers may benefit from professional development that shows them how to use student survey results to individualize instruction.
- NCDPI should consider offering principals and teachers additional training on Standard 6 to provide information and clarity on the utility of the student achievement growth metric in evaluations and how it is calculated. Training would also help principals better respond to teachers' questions about the process.
- NCDPI and the North Carolina Board of Education should take steps to:
  - Increase the utility of the evaluation system by providing timely, actionable feedback and access to further support in areas of need; and
  - Reduce the perceived subjectivity of the Educator Evaluation System by establishing interrater agreement across principals who observe teachers.

### **North Carolina Standard Course of Study Resources and Professional Development**

Most teachers found North Carolina Standard Course of Study resources to be helpful, but approximately 10 percent of teachers were unaware of these resources. Only about 25 percent of teachers reported that professional development around the North Carolina Standard Course of Study has helped them to support their peers' understanding of the standards or their peers' ability to make changes to instructional practice.

Based on these findings, we recommend that NCDPI take steps to:

- Ensure that all teachers are aware of NCDPI instructional resources for the Standard Course of Study;
- Encourage districts to bring greater visibility to the instructional resources in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study through various dissemination platforms (e.g., e-mails, professional development sessions);
- Continue the ongoing development and dissemination of resources, including sample lesson plans, sample assessment items, pacing guides, and scope and sequence guides; and
- Offer all teachers opportunities to participate in small-group professional development in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study within local schools or districts, particularly in instructional strategies related to working with different student groups, integrating technology into instruction, integrating literacy across content areas, developing new curricular materials, and understanding the importance of collaboration.

### **Use of Resources**

Teachers expressed concerns about funding limitations and a resulting lack of available resources (e.g., textbooks, other classroom materials) and staffing. In focus groups, they shared concerns about educational equity. Specifically, teachers suggested:

- Providing greater equity in resource funding and distribution;
- Reducing class sizes and having smaller teacher-to-student ratios;
- Recognizing student demographic differences in testing situations;
- Utilizing student growth scores to a greater extent;
- Focusing on student performance outside of testing situations (e.g., informal learning); and
- Providing greater access to technology in schools and homes.

Teachers offered both positive and negative feedback on access to and availability of technology in their classrooms. Additionally, survey results indicated they were not using all of the available Home Base resources (e.g., accessing lesson plan templates, engaging and communicating with parents more deeply).

Based on these findings, we recommend that NCDPI:

- Offer strategies to districts on how to reallocate existing resources; and
- Share with educators how the 2016 state budget allocates additional funds in the areas of textbook availability and staffing and how that funding will impact districts and schools.

We recommend that NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education:

- Consider four key components when implementing new technology initiatives:
  - Evaluate the technological requirements and necessary infrastructure to adequately support the use of technology, including access in students' homes, professional development for educators, as well as ongoing support for educators;
  - Investigate the specific needs of classrooms related to technology infrastructure;
  - Seek teacher input in selecting grade and subject-specific technology resources; and
  - Explore the research evidence and evaluation results for particular technology curricula currently being used or being considered for future use.
- Provide more information to teachers about the value of different Home Base resources, including lesson plan templates, instructional planning guides, parent engagement tools, and resources related to understanding assessments.
- Approach educational equity as a multifaceted issue embedded within funding structures and evaluation systems.
  - NCDPI should consider how current funding is allocated to different schools and student groups when prioritizing funding or making funding decisions.
  - NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education should acknowledge the wide variance in student demographics across the state and the resulting importance of working to meet diverse needs and ability levels through testing and different types of remedial support.

## **Teacher Voice, Collaborations, and Leadership**

### *Leadership Capacity*

In order to build leadership capacity, teachers shared that they need more time and clearer instructional models in various professional development contexts.

To promote teacher leadership opportunities, we recommend that NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education consider how it might support districts in restructuring the school day or year to provide more time for teachers to:

- Collaborate;
- Participate in teacher-led professional development; and
- Receive one-on-one mentoring or coaching.

If restructuring is not possible, NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education could provide resources to district superintendents to examine current time use within schools to find opportunities for protected planning and professional development time

### *Charter Schools*

Teachers who participated in focus groups had negative perceptions of charter schools, believing that these schools:

- Often take resources and students from regular public schools;
- Have lower standards; and
- Work in isolation of local school districts.

To encourage positive perceptions and greater awareness of charter schools, we recommend that NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education provide and encourage effective collaboration opportunities between local education agencies and charter schools. Establishing more collaborative relationships might yield greater understanding by both parties, better comparability in course rigor, and more extensive sharing of resources.

### *Professionalism*

During focus groups, teachers shared that being treated as a professional means:

- Receiving fair compensation;
- Being trusted and valued for their judgments and ideas; and
- Being respected.

We recommend that NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education consider different ways to increase teachers' positive feelings regarding their value, voice, and input in the teaching profession as well as in the future direction of education in North Carolina. For example, NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education should share with teachers and instructional staff how its staff uses feedback from HSG focus groups and surveys and the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions ([2014](#)). Timely responsiveness to teacher input should be a priority.

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## Background

In the spring of 2014, Hope Street Group (HSG) and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) entered into an agreement to launch the North Carolina Teacher Voice Network (TVN). After working closely with NCDPI over the course of several months, HSG invited the North Carolina State Board of Education to join the partnership between HSG and NCDPI. During 2014, HSG also identified other state organizations, such as: Business for Educational Success and Transformation (BEST NC), the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE), the North Carolina Public School Forum, Professional Educators of North Carolina (PENC), and the North Carolina School Superintendents Association (NCSSA) that might benefit from the work of the TVN and met with them to secure their support and ask them to help recruit teachers to participate in the TVN. As part of the program's model, HSG hired a state director in March 2015 to run the program locally and serve as the primary point of contact for the organizations HSG works with in North Carolina.

During March 2015, HSG opened the application process for the North Carolina TVN. Applications were received from more than 500 teachers. After a rigorous review process, 31 educators from across the state were selected to become the first group of Network Leaders for the North Carolina TVN.<sup>1</sup> Network Leaders for North Carolina are listed below.

Joni	Allison	Henderson County Public Schools
Barry Richard	Barber	Asheboro City Schools
James (Jim)	Brooks	Wilkes County Schools
Bryan	Christopher	Durham Public Schools
Myra	Creech	Columbus County Schools
Yvonne	de St. Croix	Carteret County Public Schools
John	deVille	Macon County Schools
Akinyi	Edmonds	Wake County Public Schools
Melissa	Faetz	Macon County Schools
Trey	Ferguson	Wake County Public Schools
Pamela	Fitzpatrick	Orange County Schools
Mamie	Hall	Public Charter
Guy	Hill	Harnett County Schools
Rene	Lemons	North Carolina Charter
Elliot	Lunsford	Buncombe County Schools
Hilary	Marshall	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
Stacey	Mrazek	Newton-Conover City Schools
Christie	Murphy	Guilford County Schools
Kelly	Norton Pipes	Wilkes County Schools
Lucas	Pasley	Alleghany County Schools
Kayonna (Kay)	Pitchford	Cumberland County Schools
Brian	Randall	Asheville City Schools
Jennifer	Rosser	New Hanover County Schools

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<sup>1</sup> Since their selection, four teachers withdrew from the program for personal reasons.

Angela (Angie)	Scioli	Wake County Public Schools
Courtney	Sears	Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools
Amanda	Wallace	Watauga County Schools
Bridget	Wortman	Pender County Schools

Since their selection, the Network Leaders of the TVN have learned about education policy in North Carolina and the development of productive partnerships via their participation in individualized projects and initiatives designed to elevate teacher voice in North Carolina.

## TVN Activities to Date

Network Leaders attended an orientation training in Greensboro, North Carolina, that introduced the TVN program by emphasizing the role of developing a personal narrative. Network Leaders also heard from a panel of leaders of North Carolina policy organizations and began exploring ways to develop networks of peers, known in the program as Professional Learning Networks (PLNs).<sup>2</sup>

As a follow-up to the orientation, Network Leaders participated in a webinar-based training on building relationships with policymakers. Beforehand, Network Leaders “power-mapped” individuals with an influence on policy in their geographic area and reviewed the process of developing innovative solutions to solve the myriad of challenges teachers face in their classrooms and schools.

Several weeks later, Network Leaders convened again to spend two days planning for the fall 2015 data collection, producing action plans for their respective workgroups and undertaking training in social media use, as well as effective verbal and written communications. Network Leaders developed workgroups in the following areas: legislative engagement, teacher engagement, social media/communications, and editorial procedures. Each workgroup serves as a support structure for all of the Network Leaders as they pursue activities in each area.

The second training also provided Network Leaders with skills in facilitating focus groups of their colleagues, an essential component of the data collections HSG conducts twice annually in every state where the program operates.

Monthly group calls and individual check-ins grounded the program in personalized support from the State Director. As needed, the Director provided one-on-one and small-group mentoring to Network Leaders to help craft meeting agendas, draft e-mails, strategize accessing new contacts, and troubleshoot issues within the Network as they arose. Additionally, Network Leaders received a Purpose Engagement Workbook to encourage discussion about teacher engagement as well as to provide assistance about creative, focused ways to develop other educators into teacher voice champions.

After the orientation sessions, Network Leaders immediately began developing their individual Professional Learning Networks (PLNs) to solicit participation in the fall 2015 data collection

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<sup>2</sup> Professional Learning Networks (PLN) are groups of teachers who have agreed to be engaged at the most basic level (HSG and TVN staff can e-mail them). PLN members are tapped to respond to surveys and participate in TVN activities, and they are notified when NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education (and, in some cases, other state partners) act upon recommendations generated from the data.

and to create a community of two-way communication on education policy in North Carolina. At the time of the survey launch, Network Leaders' PLNs included 2 percent of all of North Carolina's teachers.

Network Leaders also engaged in activities to broaden their expertise on education policy. For example, in September and October 2015, several Network Leaders provided input to the North Carolina Academic Standards Review Commission, a body formed by the General Assembly to produce a report of recommendations on the future of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

Additionally, in October 2015, three Network Leaders were featured in a video on "Data Driven Instruction" produced by BEST NC and distributed with help from educational organizations throughout North Carolina.

Since the program's inception, Network Leaders have also:

- a) Developed relationships to position the TVN as an asset to North Carolina's Assessment Proof of Concept Study;
- b) Published writings in EdNC.org, the North Carolina New Schools Project blog, and local newspapers;
- c) Organized teachers in their individual PLNs to attend district school board meetings;
- d) Built relationships with education leaders by presenting to school boards on the value of teacher voice, asking for the active support of superintendents in collecting teacher feedback, and networking with peer organizations to engage more educators;
- e) Aligned their TVN work with professional development and advocacy organizations to expand their PLNs and amplify teacher voice through personal projects; and
- f) Held a statewide Twitter chat on professionalism in education, which reached over 20,000 accounts and made over 215,000 impressions.

During the next six months, Network Leaders will share the contents of this report with their PLNs, prepare and execute a follow-up spring data collection (to be launched in late January or early February 2016), and continue to develop relationships with policymakers and educators throughout the state. Network Leaders will: develop three-month plans that address the development of strategies to expand the size and level of engagement of PLN members, and implement personal projects related to amplifying teacher voice in North Carolina.

This report will provide the foundation for the Network Leaders' engagement with policymakers and state organizations in the coming months. Network Leaders are asked to review the data contained herein and present the data and findings to a variety of state stakeholders. They are also responsible for communicating the report and its contents to their PLNs. Network Leaders and the state director will jointly develop the communication strategies for disseminating the information in this report. Additionally, Network Leaders will evaluate the questions posed in this report to provide input on the spring 2016 survey topic.

Network Leaders will also spend time evaluating participation rates for this survey and developing strategies to increase future teacher participation. Given a current 11 percent click-through rate for teachers active within a Network Leader's PLN, a key engagement tool for the remaining 89 percent of members will be the communication of this report, the responsiveness of NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education to the data and recommendations in this report, and its subsequent impact on educational policy.



Among the 11 percent of active PLN members, there are educators with a further interest in shaping education policy in North Carolina via the TVN. Network Leaders will identify those educators, and offer opportunities for those teachers to have a greater role in the next data collection as well as in other TVN activities.

Network Leaders will continue to pursue projects individually and in conjunction with state partners. For example, several leaders will participate in the Public School Forum of North Carolina's study groups on educational equity. Network Leaders are also responsible for drafting two written publications over the course of the year.

In the first year, the North Carolina TVN has already surpassed its goal to reach at least 10 percent of North Carolina's teachers. However, Network Leaders will continue to work to increase their reach. They will also actively engage the leadership of North Carolina's 115 school districts. Moreover, they will continue to build relationships with local legislators by providing expertise on educational issues and securing other opportunities to work with them.

## Fall 2015 Survey

During the onboarding and initial training of the Network Leaders, the North Carolina state director was concurrently working with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and the State Board of Education office to develop the items for the fall 2015 survey. The survey opened October 2, 2015, and closed October 11, 2015. Ultimately, 2,347 teachers responded to the survey, which represents 2 percent of the teachers in North Carolina.

Network Leaders disseminated the survey to their PLN members as well as through the communication channels of the NCDPI, the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE), the Kenan Fellows program, the Professional Educators of North Carolina, and many individual school districts. During a five-day period of the survey window, unprecedented flooding affected eastern North Carolina, which closed schools for 2-2.5 days over a weekend period. This event may have affected survey participation in those areas.

Network Leaders moderated 74 focus groups from September 21, 2015, to October 2, 2015. HSG offered an online option for teachers who wished to respond to the focus group questions but could not appear in person, and 30 teachers responded via this option.

The following school districts had the greatest number of respondents to the fall 2015 survey: Wake (15 percent), Durham (9.2 percent), Chapel Hill-Carrboro (7.9 percent), Guilford (6.1 percent), Watauga (5.6 percent), Orange (5.4 percent), Henderson (4.1 percent), Wilkes (3.9 percent), Jackson (3 percent). Response rates for all school districts can be found in Appendix C.

## Teacher Engagement in North Carolina

HSG tracks the engagement of North Carolina teachers to determine our impact. We believe the collective voices of teachers can drive policy change and impact teaching and learning conditions. According to the NCDPI there are 94,566 teachers in North Carolina. There are 10,264 teachers in PLNs, representing 10.85 percent of the total teaching population in North Carolina.

Of the 10,264 teachers in a PLN, 2,599 teachers *responded* to an engagement opportunity in North Carolina through HSG's TVN. Responding to an engagement opportunity means that a teacher: a) completed the Fall 2015 survey, b) requested more information on the TVN program in North Carolina, or c) participated in a HSG sponsored Twitter chat.

Additionally, 426 teachers in PLNs actively *participated* in HSG's activities. Participating in an activity, means a teachers: a) attended a HSG focus group session, b) engaged in online conversation from a HSG post, or c) attended a HSG session at a state or local conference or meeting. This kind of participation represents the highest level of engagement and demonstrates deep connection between Network Leaders and their colleagues.

## Spring 2016 Survey

Work will begin in December 2015 with NCDPI and North Carolina State Board of Education leadership to identify a topic(s) for the spring 2016 data collection. Network Leaders have provided the state director with some ideas about a potential topic, which will be presented to NCDPI and North Carolina State Board of Education leadership for further consideration.

## External Evaluation

Education Policy Initiative at Carolina (EPIC) is conducting the year one external evaluation of the North Carolina Teacher Voice Network. Over the coming months, EPIC will attend TVN trainings and meetings as well as interview teachers and state partners to document and assess the extent to which the Network Leaders in the TVN impact policy in North Carolina. They will also examine how thoroughly TVN trainings meet the needs of the Network Leaders. EPIC will also make data-based recommendations to HSG on how to improve the program and the resources provided to Network Leaders.

## Report Layout and Design

In the spring of 2015, HSG secured the services of Magnolia Consulting, located in Charlottesville, Virginia, to conduct an analysis of the data. Magnolia Consulting independently analyzed survey and focus group data findings. HSG and Magnolia Consulting co-developed the recommendations in this report. All of the recommendations are based on the data collected from the survey and focus groups.

The layout of this report is consistent with the standard format of reports in states where this program is in operation.<sup>3</sup> The Recommendations, the Survey Data, Focus Group Data, and appendices follow this section. Appendix A includes the survey and focus group questions, Appendix B includes visualizations for the survey demographic data, and Appendix C includes text box responses from the surveys.<sup>4</sup> Appendix D lists the response rates in each district. Appendices E and F address the representativeness of the survey respondents and technical issues with interpreting the data.

HSG is committed to making changes to the design and organization of this report to help NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education better understand and act upon the

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<sup>3</sup> HSG operates the program in: Hawaii, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Tennessee.

<sup>4</sup> The content of Appendix C should be reviewed. HSG can, at the request of NCDPI or the North Carolina State Board of Education, conduct an analysis of those data.

data and recommendations. As such, HSG welcomes feedback on the report from NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education. The North Carolina state director and supporting staff in the national office will promptly attend to any feedback.

# Recommendations

The following is an overview of findings and associated recommendations organized by topic area.

## North Carolina Educator Evaluation System

Across surveys and focus groups, teachers expressed some concerns about the structure of the current North Carolina Educator Evaluation System (NCEES). For example, teachers noted that formative and summative assessments tend to offer a clearer picture of student knowledge and growth than standardized assessments. During focus groups, many teachers also expressed concerns about Standard 6 of the evaluation system, which measures student growth as determined by a value-added metric.

In the survey, teachers shared that student surveys may be invalid or unreliable measure of teacher effectiveness. Based on these findings, **we recommend that NCDPI consider providing teachers with additional information on the use of student surveys in educator evaluations.** For example, the MET project ([2012](#)) offers various resources on the utility of student surveys, including a two-page document on the benefits of student surveys and strategies for overcoming implementation issues. In terms of expanding utility, North Carolina teachers may benefit from professional development that shows them how to use student survey results to individualize instruction. This strategy may be effective in helping address the concerns teachers in focus groups raised about the use of student surveys and help them effectively use the results in other ways, which speaks to their interest in broadening the utility of the metrics used in the NCEES.

**Further, it is recommended that NCDPI take action to implement a recommendation made by Consortium for Educational Research and Evaluation—North Carolina (SERVECenter) ([2015](#)) in its report on the NCEES that principals and teachers receive training on Standard 6 as a means to provide additional information and clarity on the utility of the student achievement growth standard in evaluations.**<sup>5</sup> Consistent with the findings detailed in the SERVECenter report, teachers in focus groups expressed concerns that could potentially be addressed through information about how Standard 6 is calculated. Additional training for principals may help alleviate teachers' concerns if they are better equipped to respond to teachers' questions about both the utility and calculation of Standard 6.

During focus groups, teachers suggested reductions to the current emphasis on academic achievement in teacher evaluation practices and advocated decreasing the subjective nature of observations. Additionally, they suggested increasing the utility of evaluation findings for teachers. **Therefore, we recommend that NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education take steps to increase the utility and reduce the subjectivity of the Educator Evaluation System.** Increasing utility for teachers involves providing timely, actionable feedback and access to further support in areas of need (Hamilton et al., [2014](#); Mathers, Olivia, & Laine, [2008](#); MET Project, [2012](#)). As an example of utility, principals could provide new and experienced teachers with constructive feedback on areas for improvement based on evaluation results, using the Rubric for Evaluating North Carolina Teachers as a guide. If time allows, principals could also visit classrooms more often and provide teachers with more extensive,

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<sup>5</sup> Davis, C., Bangert, L., Comperatore, A, & Smalenberger, M. (2015). *Teacher and Principal Perceptions of the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System*. Consortium for Educational Research and Evaluation—North Carolina.

actionable feedback on their instruction. Because responding to this request would require additional time from principals, NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education should consider how it might use state policy to empower teacher leaders (and instructional coaches) to visit classrooms and offer constructive feedback. Recent initiatives offer successful examples of using this approach, such as when schools create regular opportunities for feedback, reflection and tailored support from other teachers (Bramschreiber, [2012](#); Grimm, Kaufman, & Doty, [2014](#)). Providing this additional support from peers and administrators could also promote teacher retention in schools and the profession (e.g., Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley [\[2006\]](#) provide a review of research on factors related to teacher recruitment and retention).

Teachers might also have more positive perceptions about observations if they believe they are appropriately and uniformly implemented (Hamilton et al., [2014](#)). For example, NCDPI could take steps to establish interrater agreement across principals who observe teachers, as one method of reducing the subjective nature of teacher evaluation (see Focus Group Question 5).

### **North Carolina Standard Course of Study Resources and Professional Development**

Most teachers found North Carolina Standard Course of Study resources to be helpful, but approximately 10% of teachers were unaware of these resources. Thus, **we recommend that NCDPI take steps to ensure that all teachers are aware of NCDPI instructional resources for the Standard Course of Study. Furthermore, NCDPI could encourage districts to bring greater visibility to their instructional resources in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study through various dissemination platforms (e.g., e-mails, professional development sessions).** Because teachers believed a variety of instructional resources would be helpful, **we recommend the ongoing development and dissemination of resources, including sample lesson plans, sample assessment items, pacing guides, and scope and sequence guides** (see Survey Questions 3, 4, and 5). **NCDPI should consider how to involve teachers in the process of developing such resources as teacher input may well increase the quality and utility of resources.**

Based on requests for continued support, **we recommend that NCDPI ensure all teachers receive opportunities to participate in small-group professional development in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study within local schools or districts.** More specifically, NCDPI should consider providing additional professional development in multiple content areas, particularly instructional strategies related to working with different student groups, integrating technology into instruction, integrating literacy across content areas, and developing new curricular materials.

NCDPI should pay close attention to the responses to question 10. Follow-up to professional development appears to be low. Teachers benefit from follow-up support after participating in professional development opportunities. A wealth of research suggests that opportunities for practice during professional development, as well as regular follow-up support afterwards, can encourage greater retention and potential knowledge transfer into the classroom (Hattie, 2009).<sup>6</sup> “Student Achievement through Staff Development” provides additional information and insight on knowledge retention and transfer following professional development opportunities (Joyce & Showers, 2002).<sup>7</sup> (see Survey Questions 7, 10, 11, and 12). NCDPI should consider further

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<sup>6</sup> Hattie, J. A. C. (2009). *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*. New York, NY: Routledge.

<sup>7</sup> Joyce, B. & Showers, B. (2002). *Student Achievement through Staff Development* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

investigating the extent to which follow-up to professional development does not occur and then determine if a strategy needs to be developed to address the lack of follow-up.

Approximately 24–29 percent of teachers reported that professional development around the North Carolina Standard Course of Study has helped them to support their peers’ understanding of the standards or their peers’ ability to make changes to instructional practice. If these areas are goals of professional development, **we recommend that NCDPI incorporate specific steps to ensure professional development attendees develop a solid understanding of the importance of collaboration** (see Survey Question 9).

### Use of Resources

Given teachers’ concerns about funding limitations and a resulting lack of available resources (e.g., textbooks, other classroom materials), **we recommend that NCDPI offer strategies to districts on how to reallocate existing resources.** NCDPI should consult the U.S. Department of Education website, which offers resources that provide additional guidance in this area (U.S. Department of Education, [2011](#)). Education Resource Strategies (ERS) offers a host of [resources](#) to districts on using available funding strategically. ERS also offers [tools for assessing](#) current spending to determine where cost savings can be achieved and how realigned funds can help districts better align their spending to efforts that improve student outcomes. Furthermore, because textbook availability and staffing were common concerns, **NCDPI should share with educators how the 2016 state budget allocates additional funds in these areas and how that funding will impact districts and schools** (see Survey Question 6 and Focus Group Question 1).

In focus groups, teachers offered positive and negative feedback on technology use in their classrooms. Therefore, **we recommend that NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education consider four key components when implementing new technology initiatives: a) evaluate the technological requirements and necessary infrastructure to adequately support the use of technology, including access in students’ homes, professional development for educators, as well as ongoing support for educators; b) investigate the specific needs of classrooms related to technology infrastructure; c) seek teacher input in selecting grade and subject-specific technology resources; and d) explore the research evidence and evaluation results for particular technology curricula currently being used or being considered for future use** (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, [2015](#); Noeth & Volkov, [2004](#)). For additional insight and guidance around teacher use and perceptions of educational technology, we recommend that NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education review, “Teachers Know Best: What Educators Want from Digital Instructional Tools 2.0” (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, [2015](#); see Focus Group Question 1).

Because teachers were not using all of the available Home Base resources (e.g., accessing lesson plan templates, engaging and communicating with parents more deeply), **we recommend that NCDPI provide more information to teachers about the value of different Home Base resources, including lesson plan templates, instructional planning guides, parent engagement tools, and resources related to understanding assessments** (see Survey Question 13).

In focus groups, teachers shared that multiple measures are important for achieving educational equity. Specifically, teachers suggested: a) providing greater equality in resource funding and distribution; b) reducing class sizes and having smaller teacher-to-student ratios (this suggestion is supported by North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions data [[2014](#)] that indicate that 60.2 percent of respondents agree that class sizes are “reasonable”); c) recognizing student



demographic differences in testing situations; d) utilizing student growth scores to a greater extent; e) focusing on student performance outside of testing situations (e.g., informal learning); and f) providing greater access to technology in schools and homes. Based on this feedback and available research, **we recommend that NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education approach educational equality as a multifaceted issue embedded within funding structures and evaluation systems.** First, NCDPI should consider how current funding is allocated to different schools and student groups when prioritizing funding or making funding decisions. For example, NCDPI could provide equitable funding for support staff, resources, and technology across schools and districts (U.S. Department of Education, [2013](#)). Because many funding decisions are made locally, NCDPI could share resources (such as the ones detailed here) with district superintendents. Second, NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education should acknowledge the wide variance in student demographics across the state and the resulting importance of working to meet diverse needs and ability levels through testing and different types of remedial support (U.S. Department of Education, [2013](#)). The U.S. Department of Education ([2013](#)) report, “For Each and Every Child: A Strategy for Education Equity and Excellence,” provides additional guidance, detailing five key actions for achieving educational equity (see Focus Group Question 4).

### **Teacher Voice, Collaborations, and Leadership**

To promote teacher leadership opportunities, **we recommend that NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education consider how it might support districts in restructuring the school day or year to provide more time for teachers to collaborate, participate in teacher-led professional development, and to receive one-on-one mentoring or coaching.** If restructuring is not possible, NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education could provide resources to district superintendents to examine current time use within schools to find opportunities for protected planning and professional development time (e.g., Kaplan, Chan, Farbman, & Novoryta, [2014](#)). For additional guidance related to extending teacher time, NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education should review the National Center on Time and Learning report, “Time for Teachers: Leveraging Expanded Time to Strengthen Instruction and Empower Teachers,” which explores 17 high-performing schools that restructured their schedules to provide more protected planning and professional development time for teachers (Kaplan et al., [2014](#)). [Education Resource Strategies](#) (ERS) also has a number of [resources](#) for districts on how to use time differently and how to assess current time usage as a means to restructuring available time to maximize educator collaboration.<sup>8</sup> (see Survey Questions 15 and 16).

**We also recommend that NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education examine the lessons learned from [Public Impact’s work](#) in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Cabbarus Counties to determine if the efforts there to provide teachers with opportunities to assume leadership responsibilities merit scaling via a statewide pilot** (see Survey Questions 15 and 16).

Teachers who participated in focus groups had negative perceptions of charter schools, believing that these schools often take resources and students from regular public schools, have lower standards, and work in isolation of local school districts. To encourage positive perceptions and greater awareness of charter schools, **we recommend that NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education provide and encourage effective collaboration opportunities between local education agencies and charter schools.** Establishing more collaborative relationships might yield greater understanding by both parties, better

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<sup>8</sup> See: [http://www.erstrategies.org/assessments/school\\_design](http://www.erstrategies.org/assessments/school_design) and [http://www.erstrategies.org/assessments/resource\\_check](http://www.erstrategies.org/assessments/resource_check)

comparability in course rigor, and more extensive sharing of resources. As examples of potential collaborations, NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education could review the Center on Reinventing Public Education ([2013](#)) report on LEA and charter collaborations across 16 cities (Yatsko, Nelson, & Lake, [2013](#)) and the American Institutes for Research National Charter School Resource Center ([2013](#)) website for stories of successful LEA and charter collaborations in Boston, MA; Hartford, CT; Atlanta, GA and other regions across the country (see Focus Group Question 2).

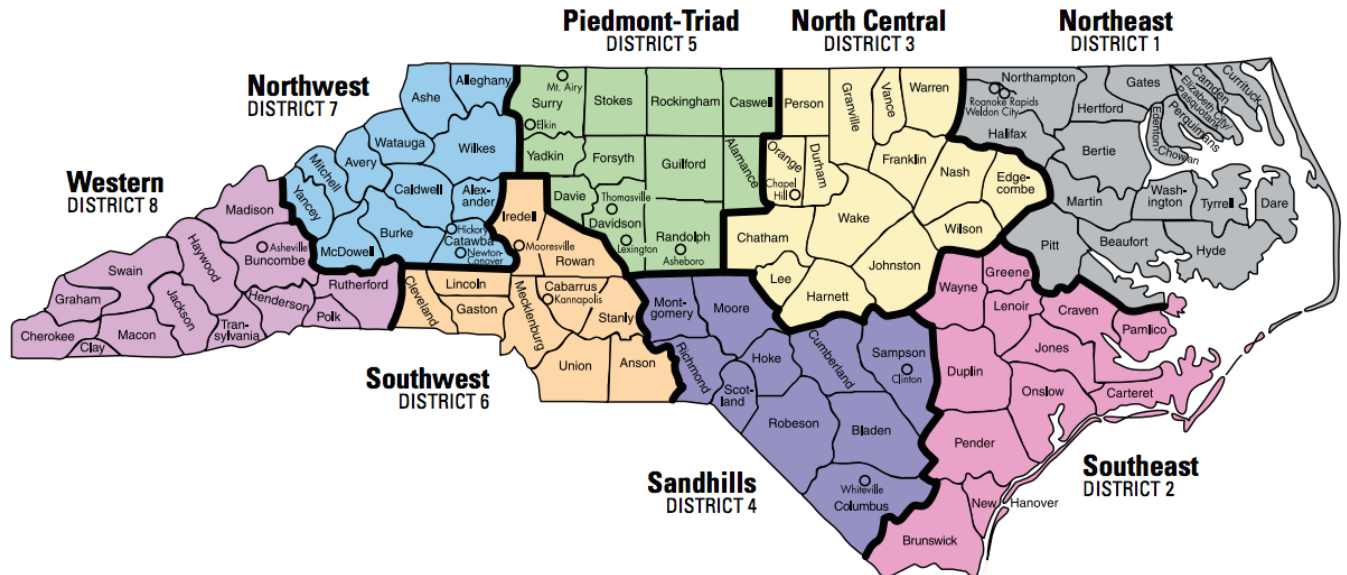
During focus groups, teachers shared that being treated as a professional means receiving fair compensation, being trusted and valued for their judgments and ideas, and being respected. Consequently, **we recommend that NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education consider different ways to increase teachers' positive feelings regarding their value, voice, and input in the teaching profession as well as in the future direction of education in North Carolina.** For example, NCDPI and the North Carolina State Board of Education should share with teachers and instructional staff how its staff uses feedback from HSG focus groups and surveys and the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions ([2014](#)). Timely responsiveness to teacher input should be a priority. (see Focus Group Question 3).



# Survey Data

Per NCDPI's request, Magnolia Consulting presents aggregated and disaggregated (i.e., by education district, see Figure 1) survey data in Figures 1-20.

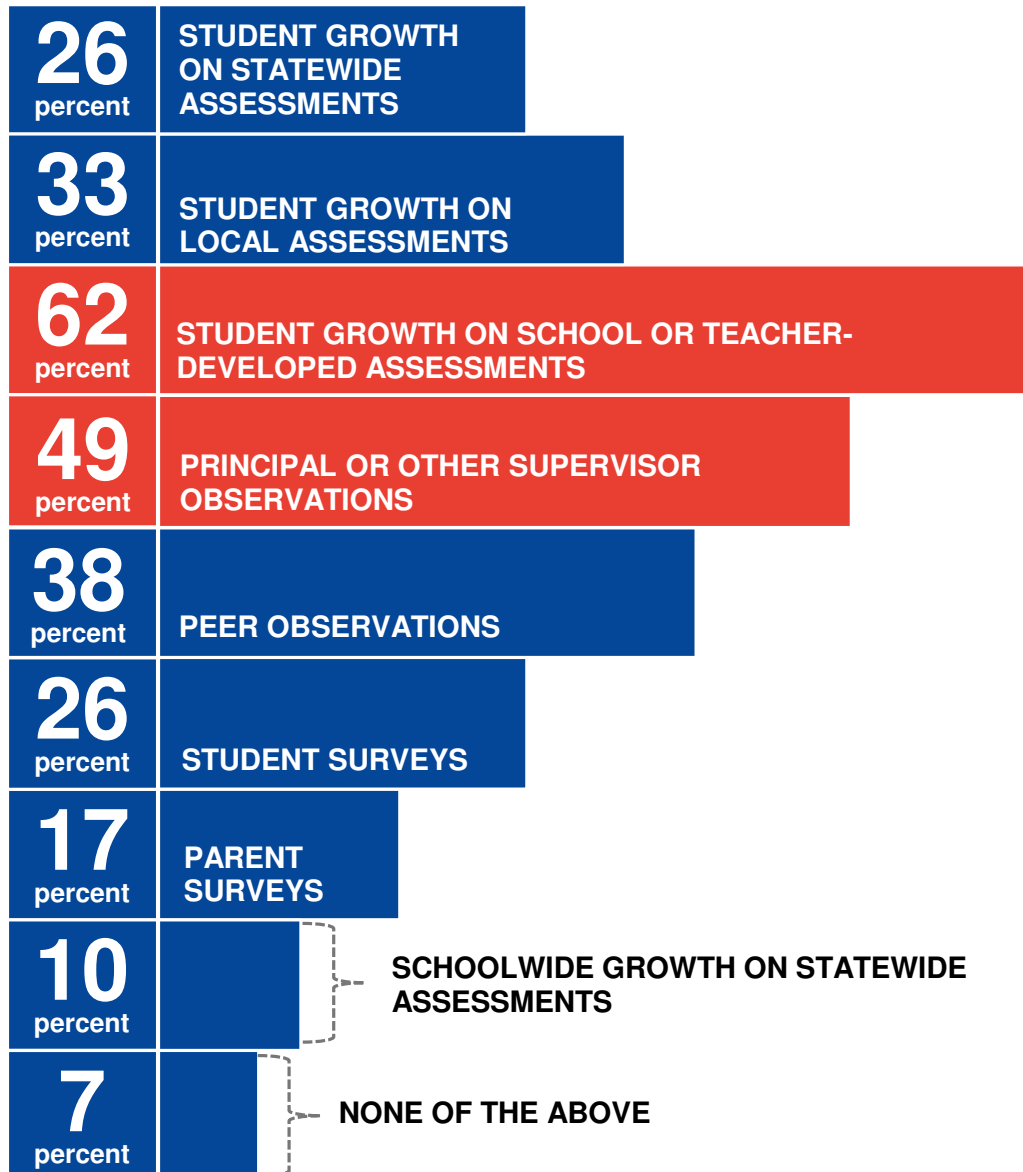
Figure Map 1



Source: [North Carolina State Board of Education \(2015\)](#).

**Q1. Which of the following possible evaluation components do you think most accurately measures a teacher's level of effectiveness? You may choose more than one.**

Figure 1.a



*Analysis*

*Overall, student growth on school or teacher-developed assessments was selected most often as an accurate measure of teacher effectiveness, followed by principal or other supervisor observations and peer observations. Student growth on local assessments was the next most frequently noted measure, followed by student growth on statewide assessments, student surveys, and parent surveys. Of the response options available, respondents were least likely to report that*

*schoolwide growth on statewide assessments accurately measures teacher effectiveness.*

Figure 1.b

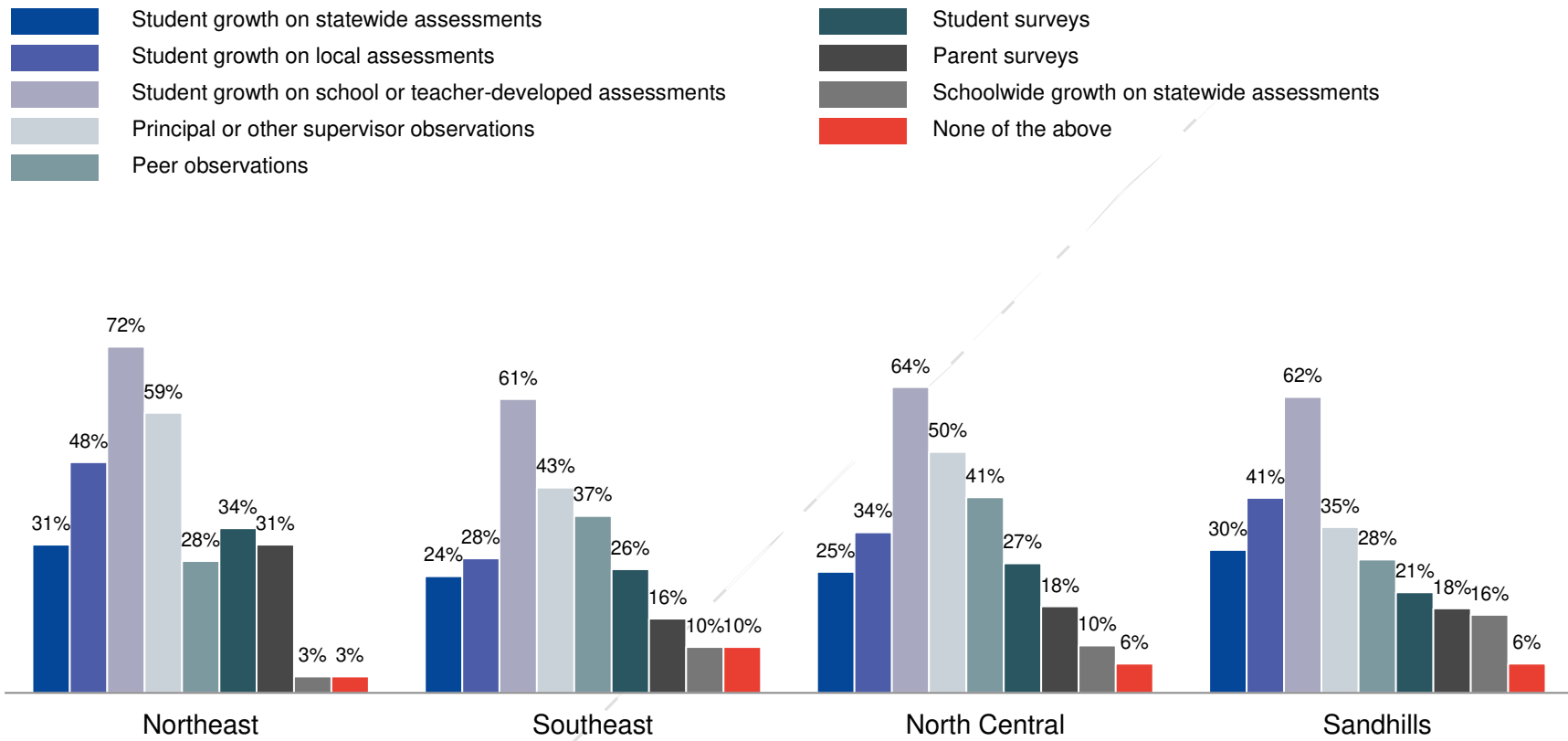
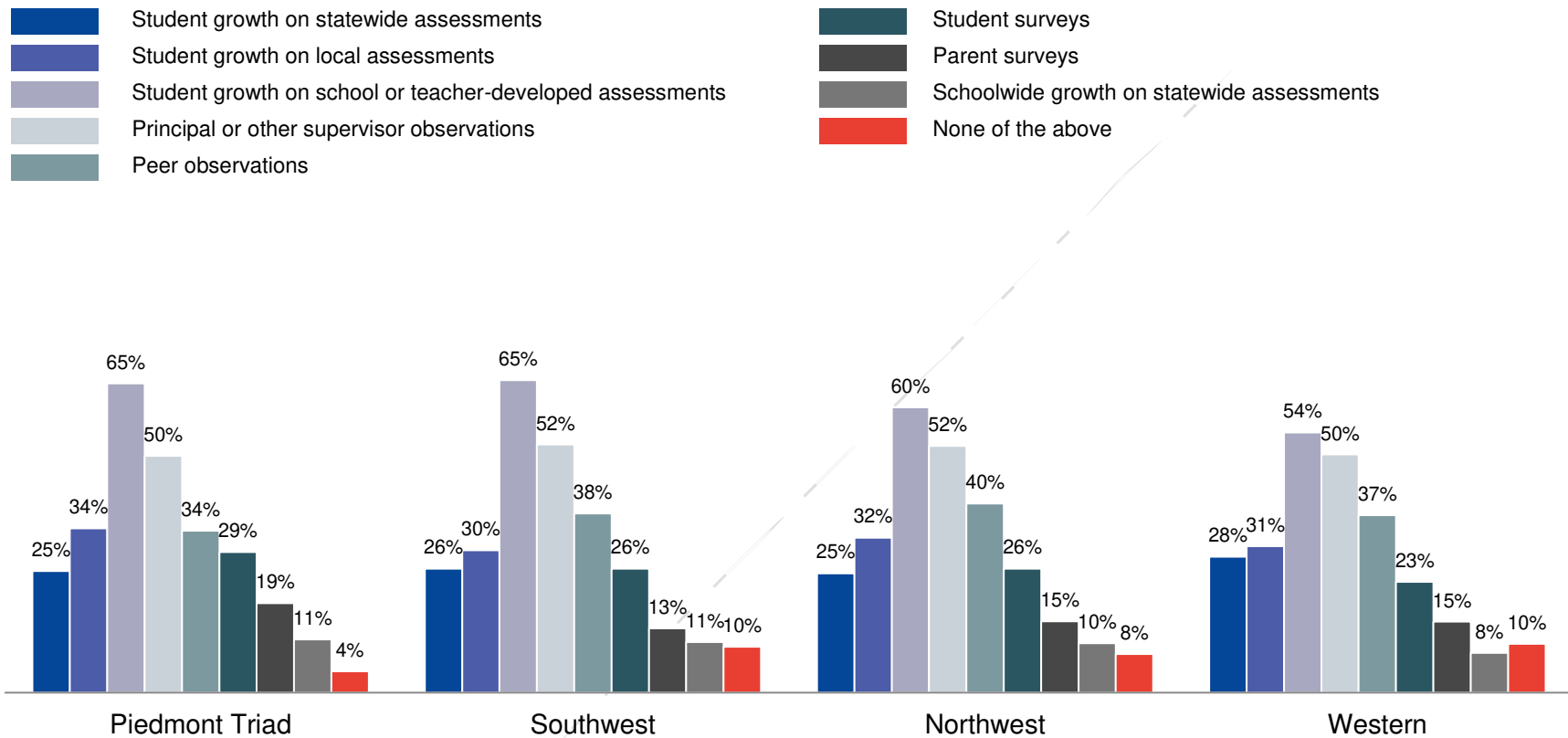


Figure 1.c

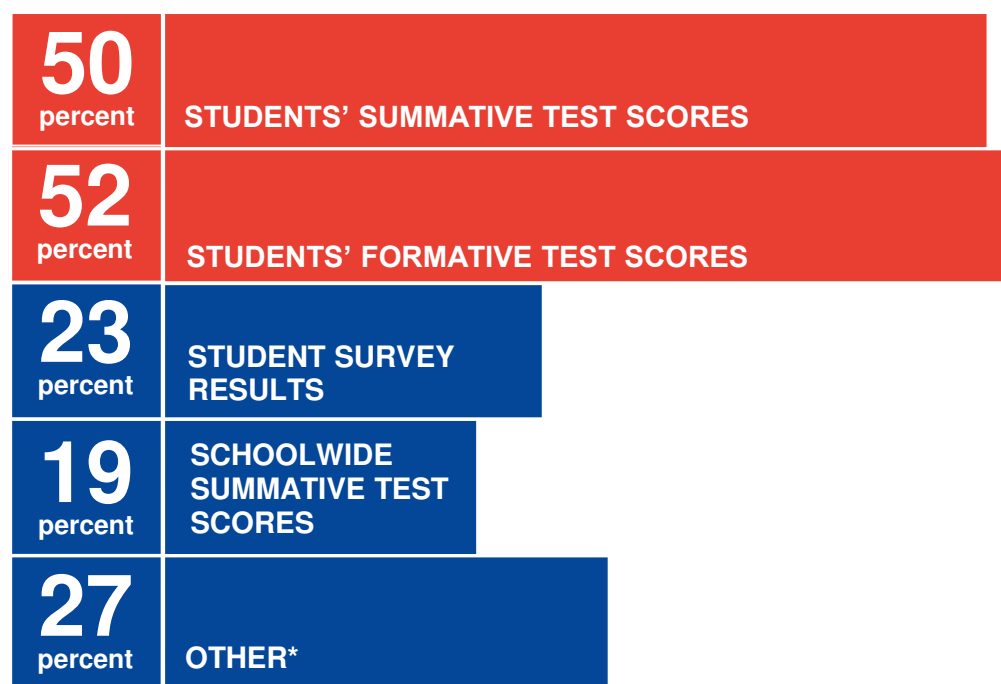


Analysis

*Teacher responses regarding accurate measures of teacher effectiveness were fairly consistent across regions, with teachers most frequently selecting student growth on school or teacher-developed assessments in each region. Teachers in all regions indicated that schoolwide growth on statewide assessments was the least accurate measure.*

**Q2. Which measures should be considered when evaluating teachers on Standard 6? You may choose more than one response.**

Figure 2.a



*Analysis*

*Half of teachers indicated that either students' formative or summative test scores, or both, should be considered when evaluating teachers on Standard 6. Fewer teachers selected student survey results or schoolwide summative tests as measures for consideration in the evaluation of Standard 6. More than a quarter of teachers noted that measures other than the available options were important for consideration (see Appendix C for write-in responses to this survey item).*

Figure 2.b

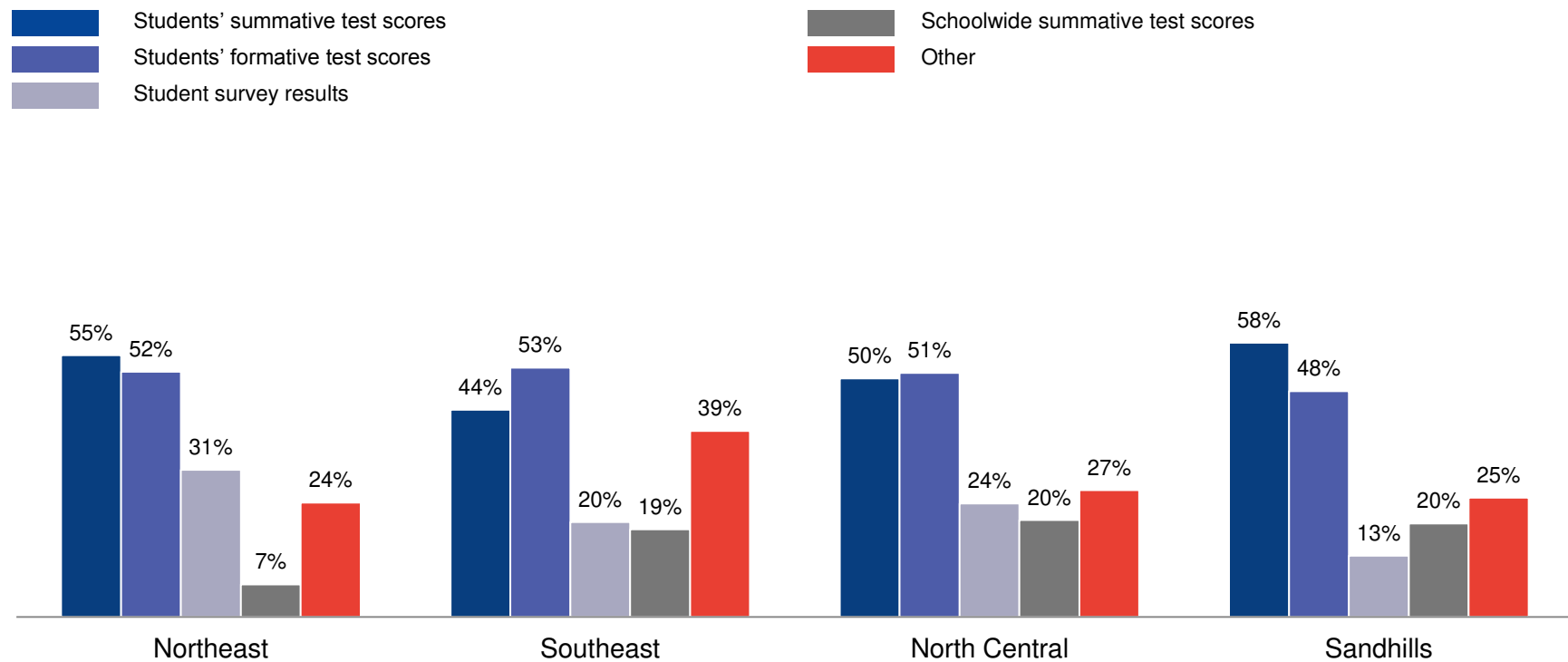
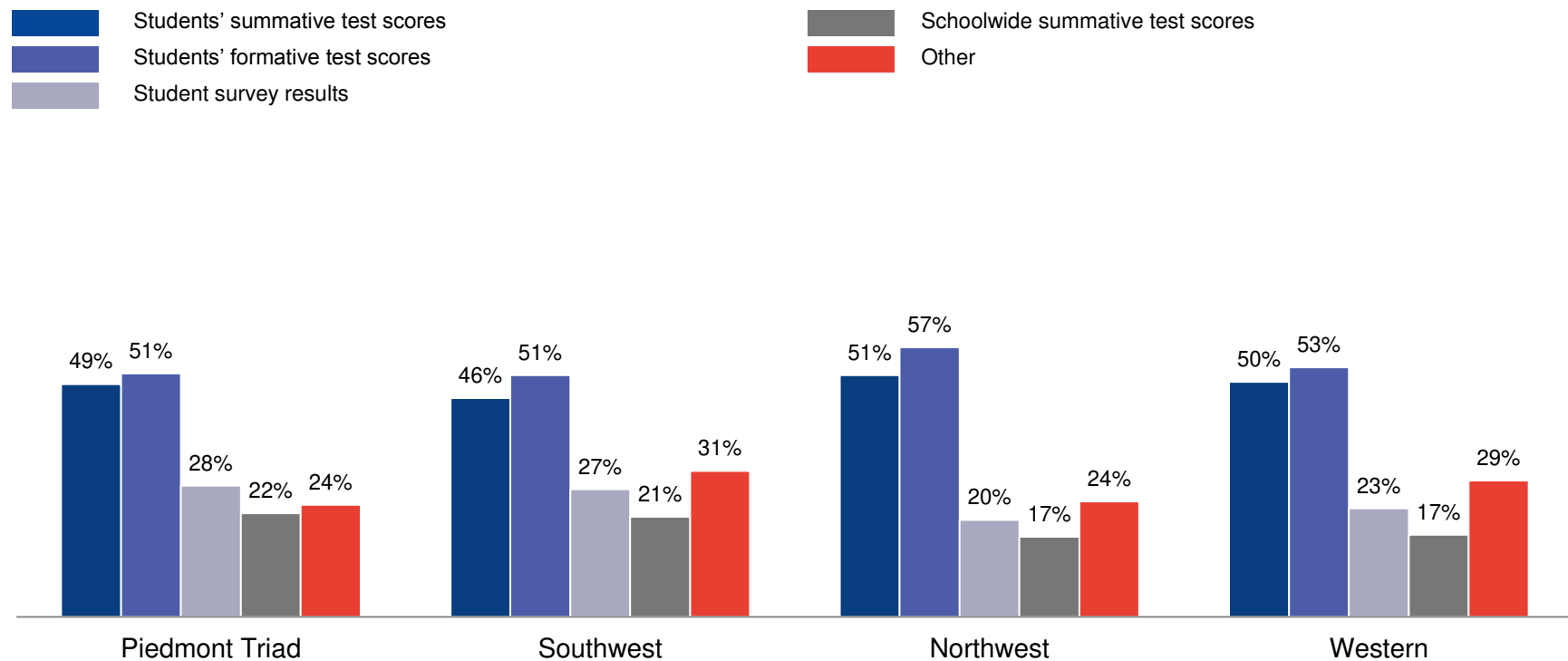


Figure 2.c



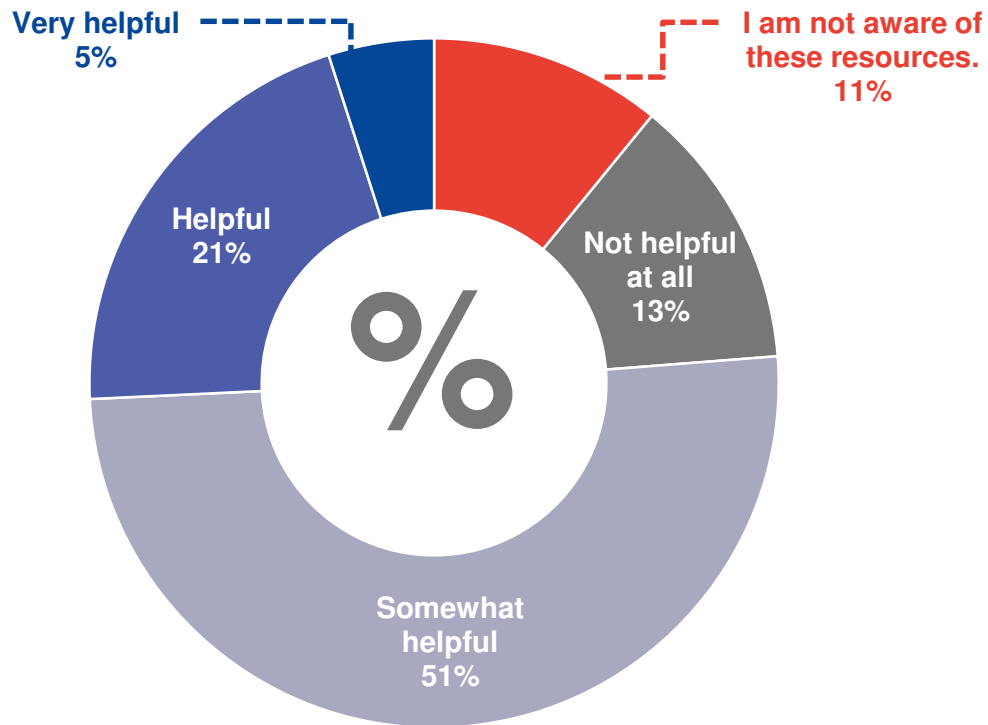
Analysis

Across the eight regions, teachers most frequently selected students' formative and summative test scores as the two measures that should be considered in the evaluation of teachers on Standard 6. The next two most frequently selected measures were student survey results and schoolwide summative test scores, with the exception of the Sandhills region, in which teachers selected schoolwide summative test scores more frequently than student survey results. Across regions, considerable percentages of teachers noted that other measures should be considered when evaluating Standard 6, especially in the Southeast and Southwest regions.



**Q3. How helpful are the instructional resources prepared by DPI for teaching the North Carolina Standard Course of Study?**

Figure 3.a

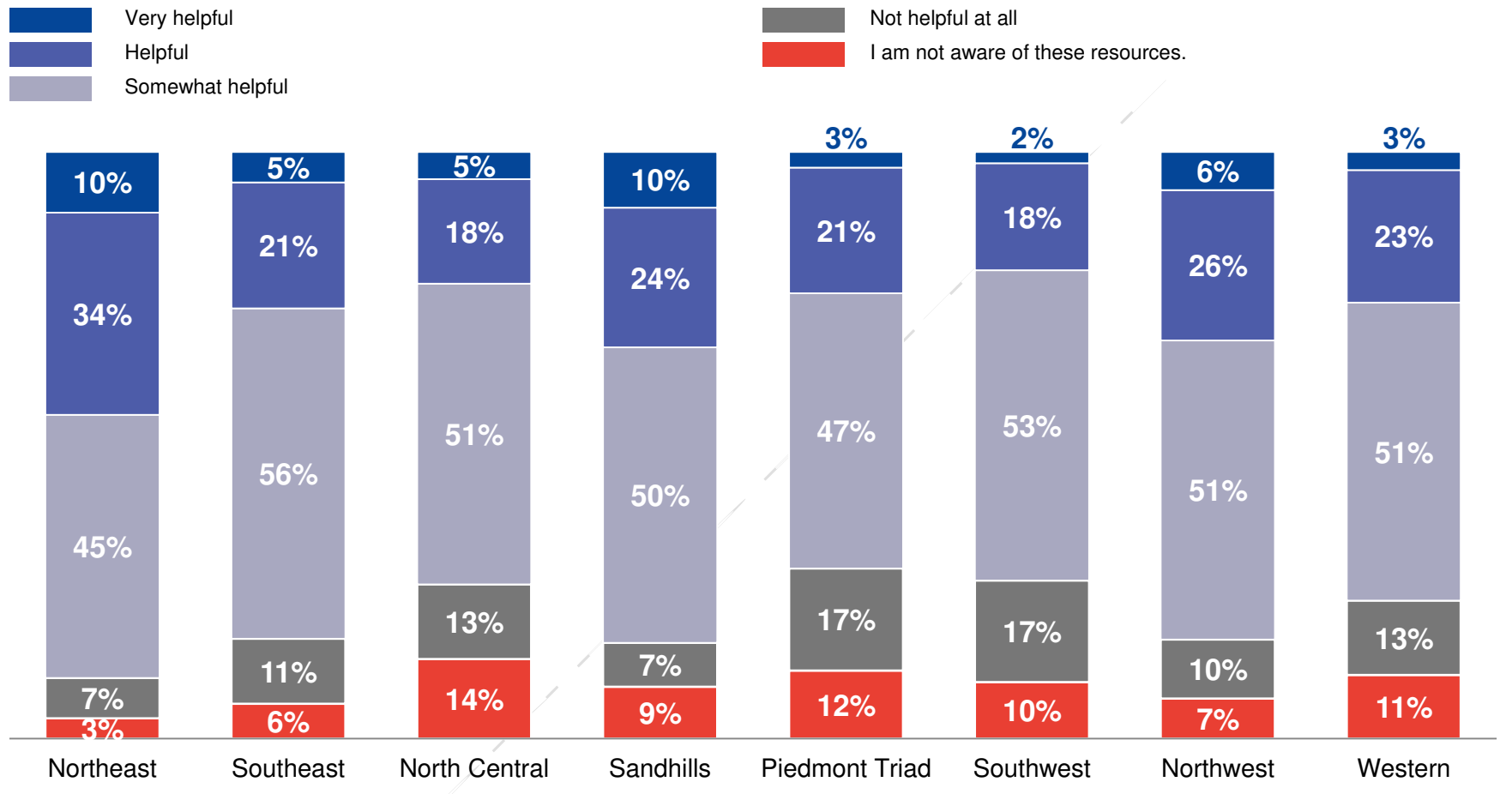


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*Analysis*

*Over 75% of teachers found the NCDPI's instructional resources to be at least somewhat helpful. Nearly a quarter of teachers were either not aware of the resources or did not find them helpful.*

Figure 3.b

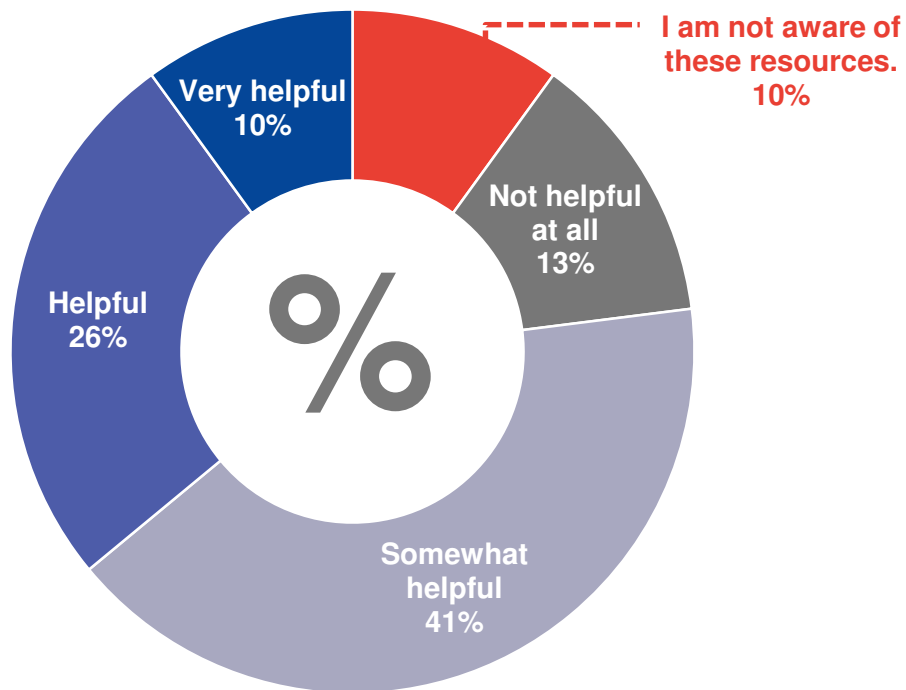


Analysis

Across all regions, a majority of teachers were aware of the NCDPI's instructional resources and found the resources to be at least somewhat useful. Notably, the Northeast region had the highest percentage of teachers who found the NCDPI resources helpful or very helpful. Of all regions, Piedmont Triad and Southwest had the highest percentage of teachers who found these resources unhelpful.

**Q4. How helpful are the instructional resources prepared by your district for teaching the North Carolina Standard Course of Study?**

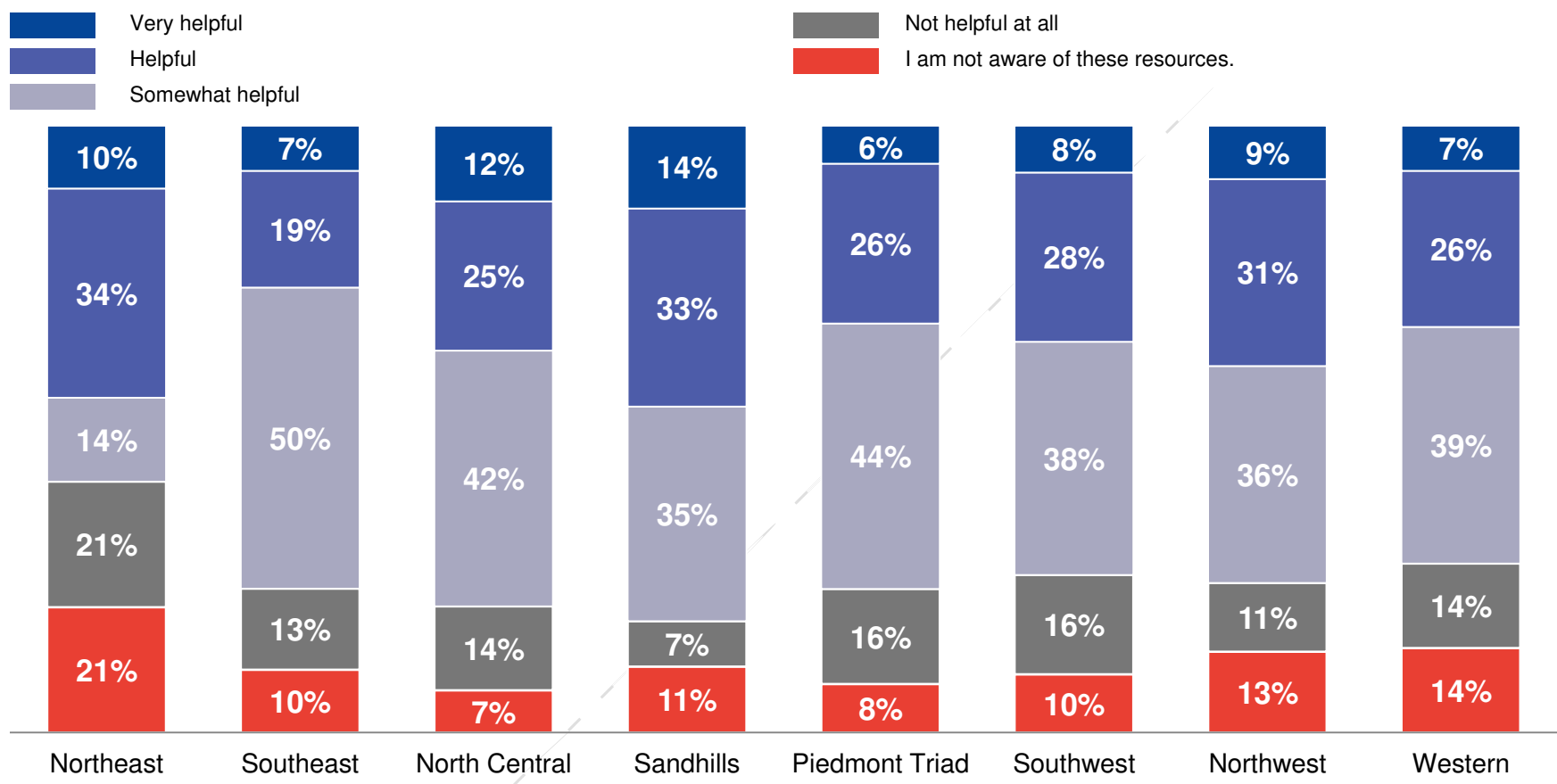
Figure 4.a



*Analysis*

*Over 75% of teachers found their district's instructional resources for teaching the North Carolina Standard Course of Study to be at least somewhat helpful. Nearly a quarter of teachers were either unaware of these resources or did not find them helpful.*

Figure 4.b

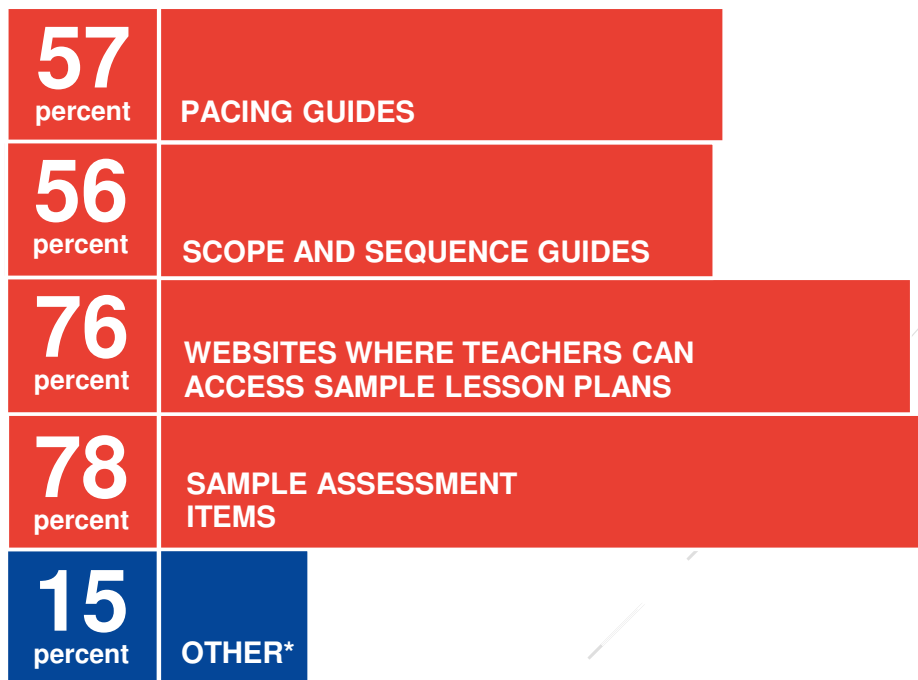


*Analysis*

*Across all districts, except for the Northeast, teachers were most likely to rate their district's instructional resources as somewhat helpful or helpful. In the Northeast region, teachers most often rated the instructional resources as helpful. However, compared to teachers in other regions, a larger percentage of teachers in the Northeast were either unaware of these resources or did not find them helpful.*

**Q5. Which instructional resources should DPI provide? You may choose more than one of the following.**

Figure 5.a



*Analysis*

*Teachers most frequently indicated that NCDPI should provide sample assessment items, followed closely by websites with sample lesson plans. Additionally, more than half of teachers selected either pacing guides or scope and sequence guides, or both, as instructional resources that NCDPI should provide.*

Figure 5.b

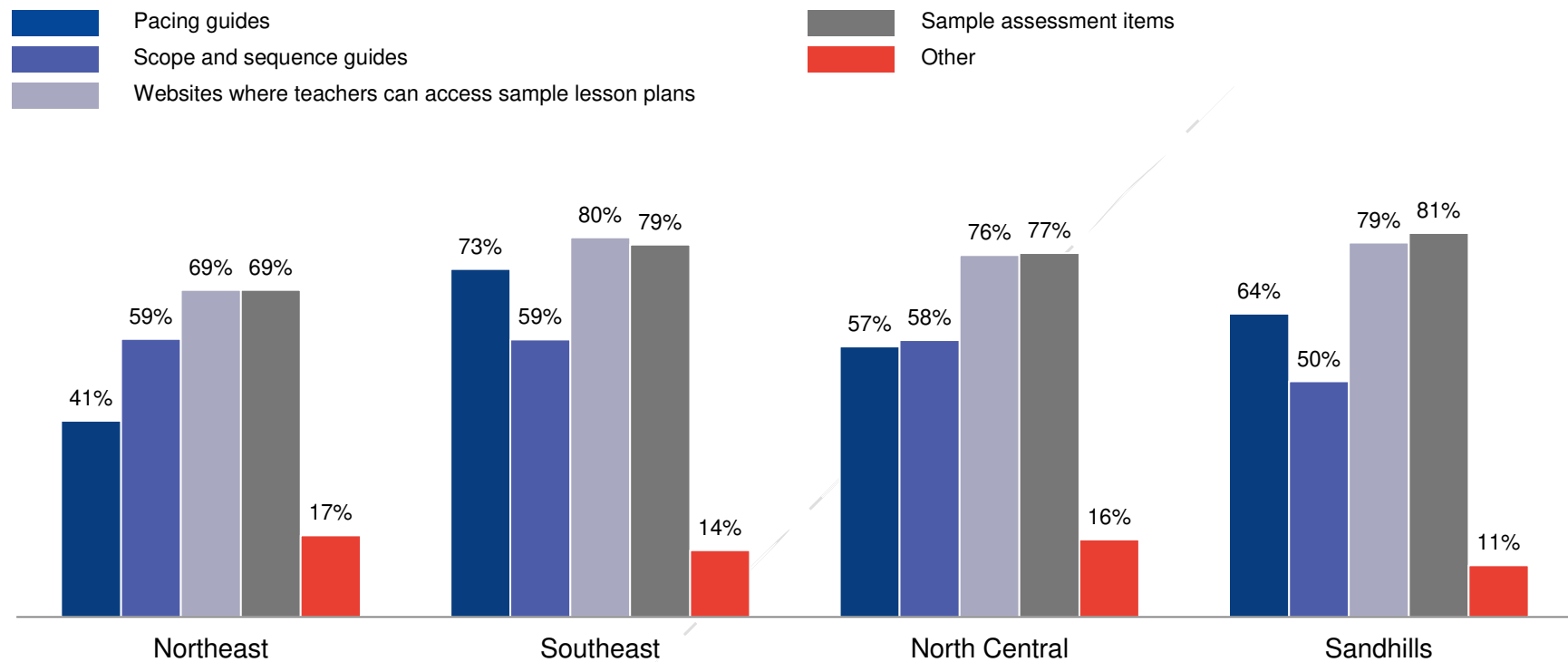
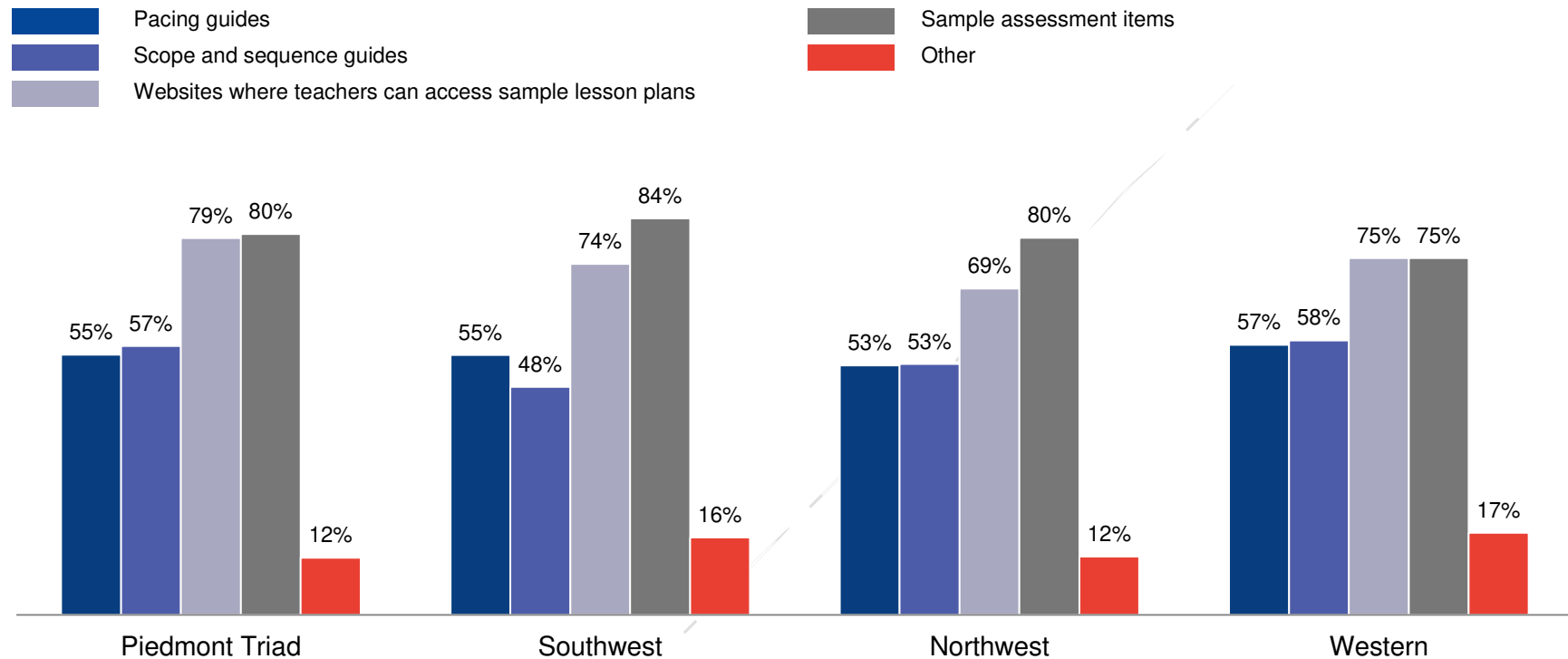


Figure 5.c

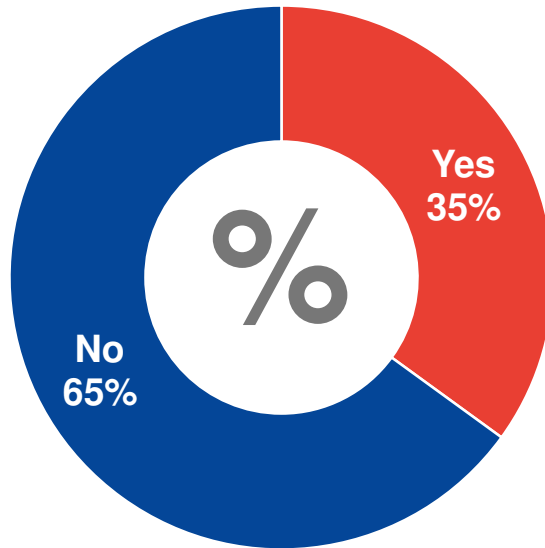


Analysis

Across all regions, teachers most often indicated that NCDPI should provide teachers with sample assessment items, websites containing sample lesson plans, or both. There was some minor variability in teachers' responses across the different regions, most notably with regard to pacing guides.

**Q6. Do you have the textbooks (digital or print) you need to teach your students?**

Figure 6.a

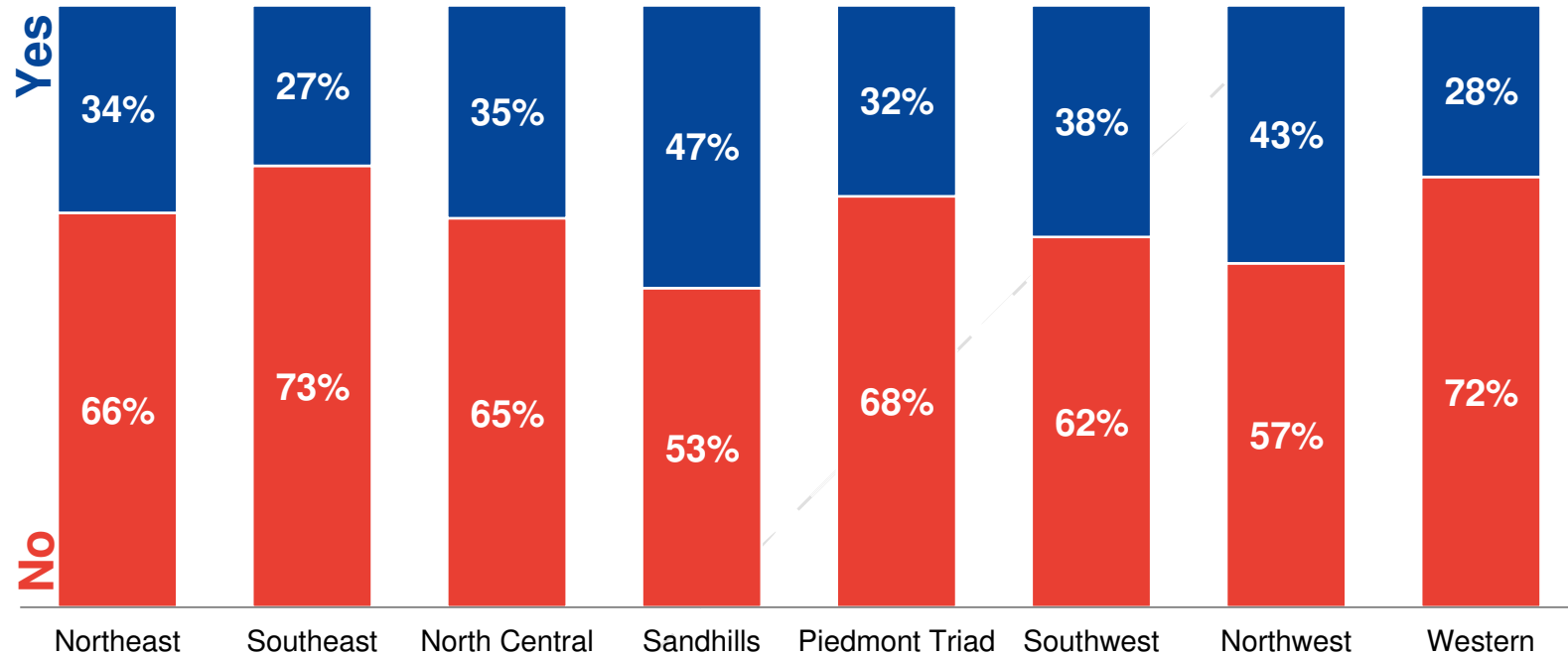


*Analysis*

*Sixty-five percent of teachers lacked the textbooks needed to teach students.*



Figure 6.b

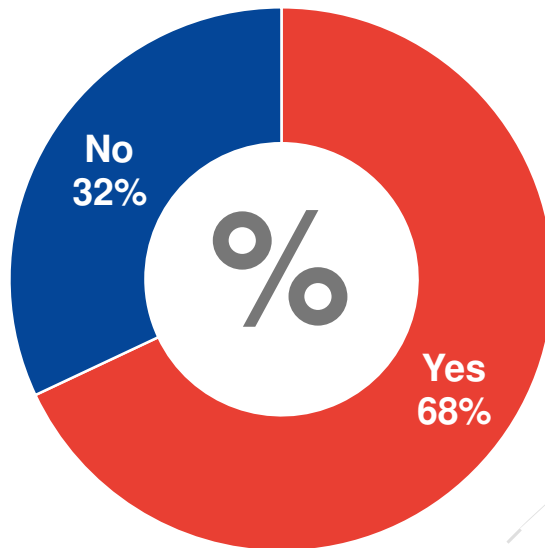


*Analysis*

*The Southeast and Western regions had the greatest shortage of textbooks with nearly three-quarters of the teachers in each region indicating that they did not have the textbooks needed to instruct students. Although the Sandhills region had the greatest percentage of teachers with the needed textbooks, this percentage was still less than half.*

**Q7. Have you ever received professional development about the North Carolina Standard Course of Study?**

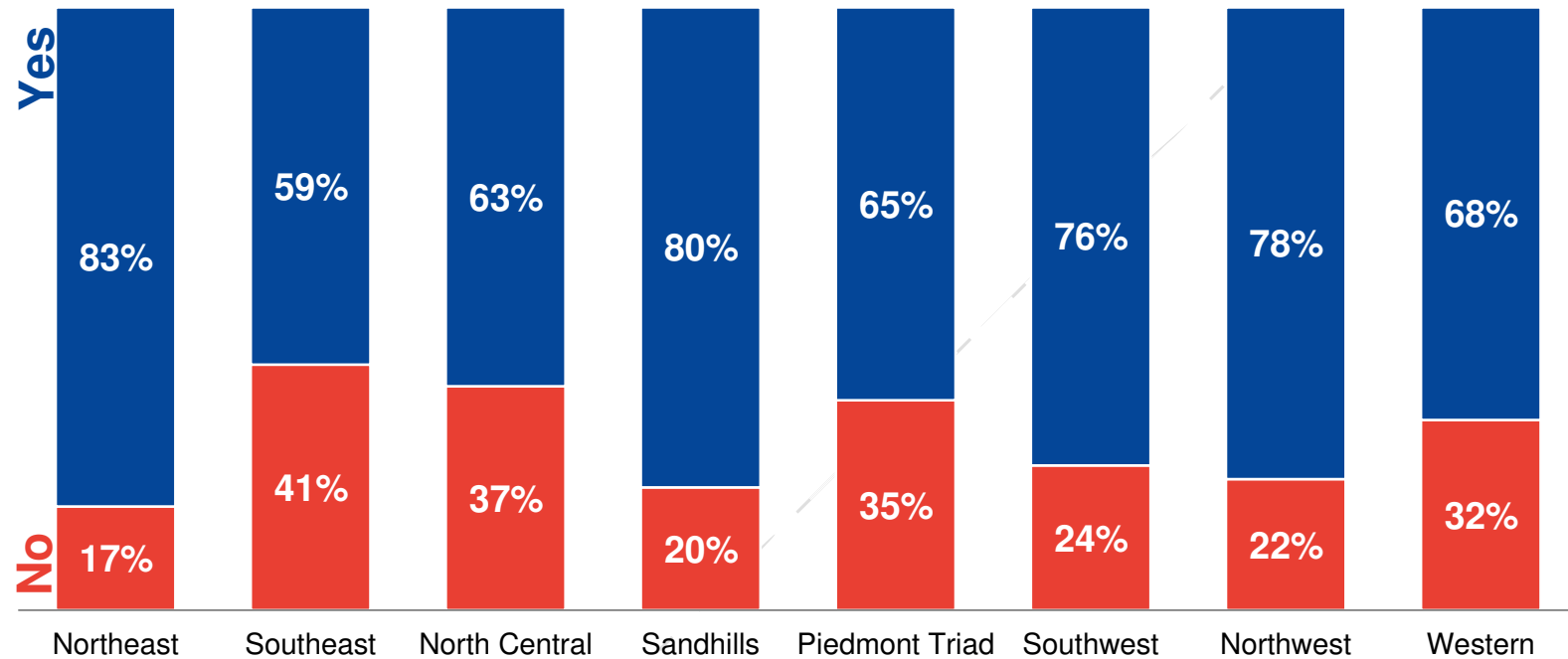
Figure 7.a



*Analysis*

*Most teachers received professional development on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. However, this professional development has not been provided to nearly a third of teachers.*

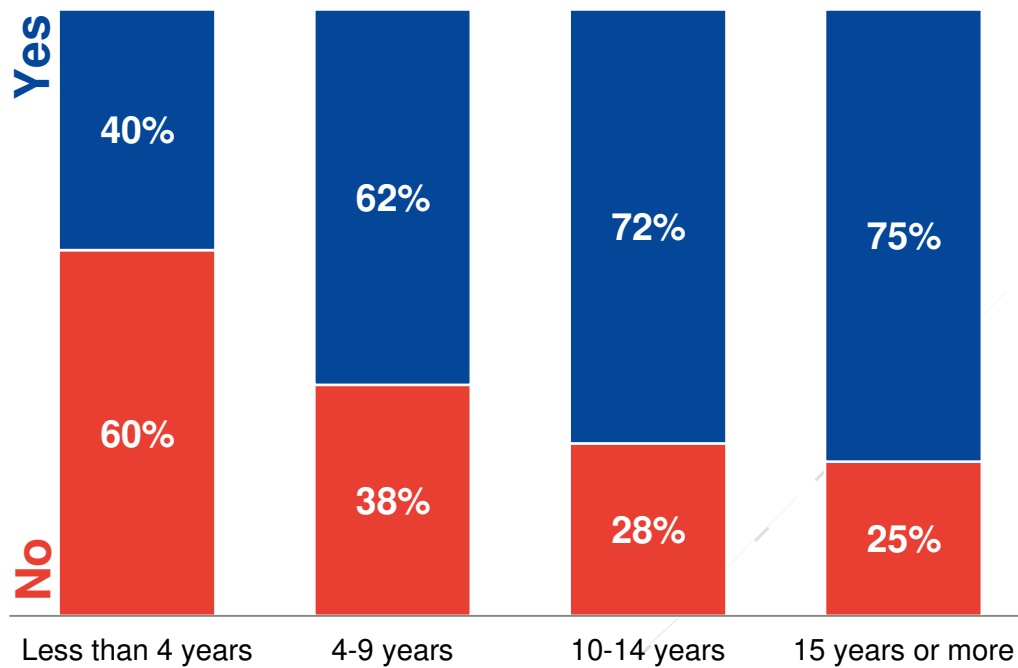
Figure 7.b



*Analysis*

*The majority of teachers in all regions received professional development on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. The Northeast region had the greatest percentage of teachers who received professional development in this area and the Southeast region had the least percentage.*

Figure 7.c

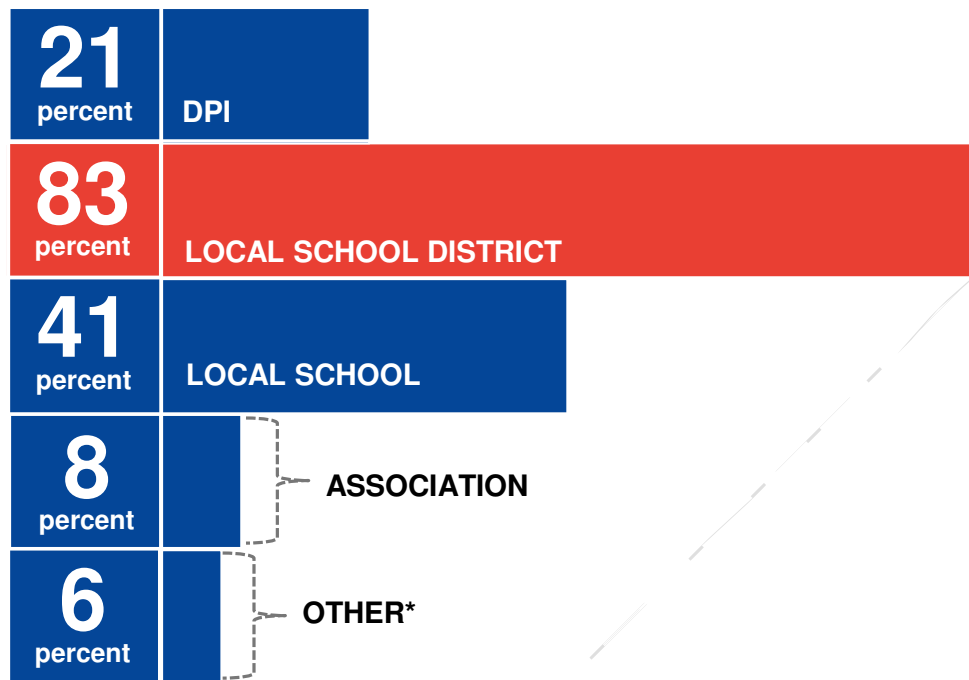


*Analysis*

*There was a positive relationship between teachers' receipt of professional development in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and their years of teaching experience. Experienced teachers were more likely to have received professional development in this area than relatively less experienced teachers.*

**Q8. Who provided the professional development? You may choose more than one of the following.**

Figure 48.e



*Analysis*

*The majority of teachers who had received professional development noted that local school districts had provided it to them. Local schools also provided a fair amount of professional development while NCDPI provided less. Associations and teachers' other response options were noted as providing the least amount of professional development.*

Figure 8.f

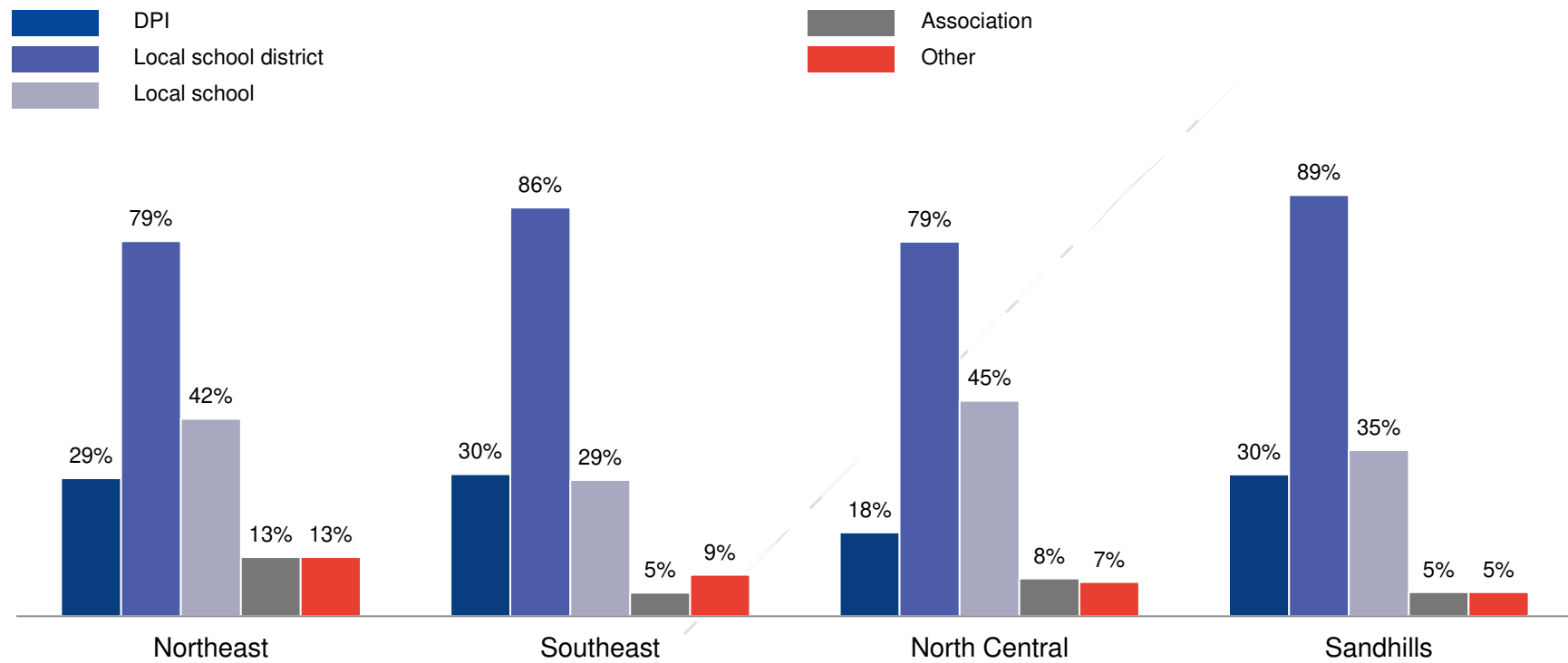
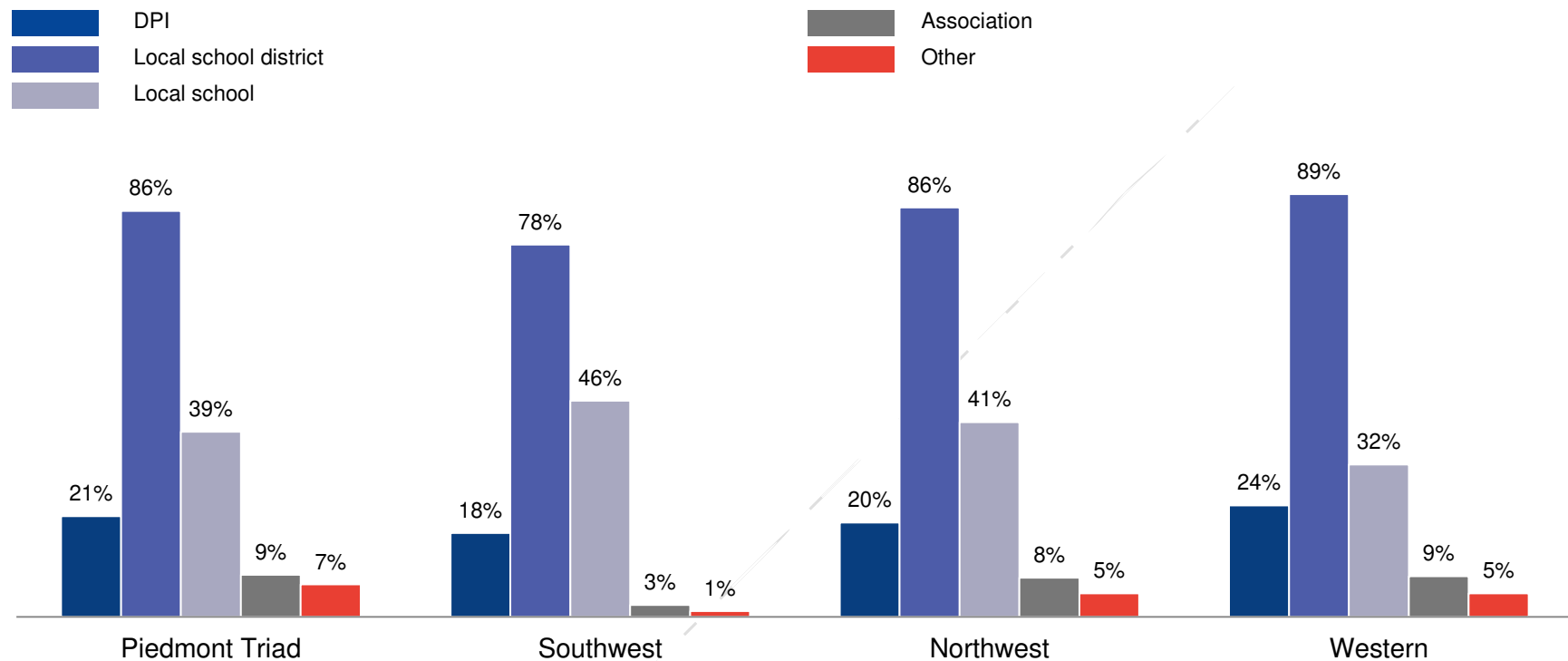


Figure 8.g

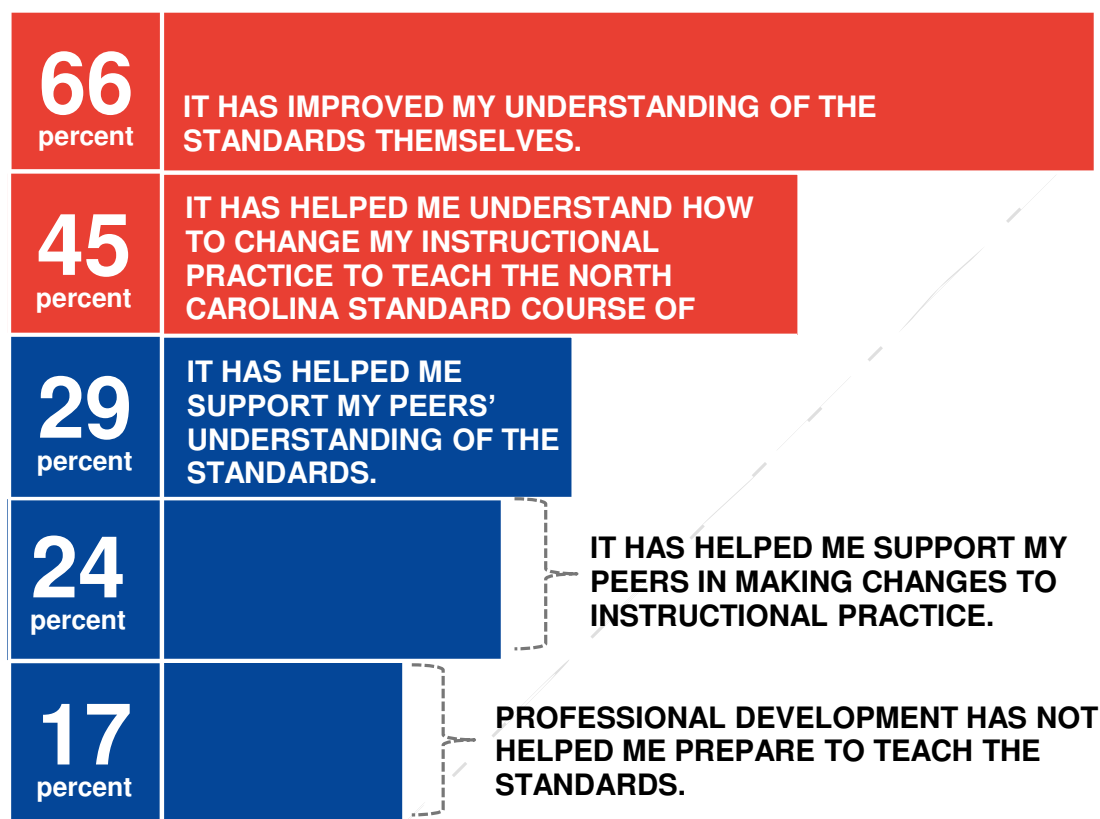


Analysis

*Across all regions, the teachers who received professional development reported that local school districts provided the greatest percentage of professional development activities, followed by local schools and the NCDPI. The only exception to this trend was in the Southeast region, where NCDPI provided slightly more teachers with professional development than local schools.*

**Q9. In which way(s) has the professional development you received prepared you to teach the North Carolina Standard Course of Study? You may choose more than one of the following.**

Figure 89.i



*Analysis*

*The teachers who received professional development on the standards found it had the greatest perceived impact on their understanding of the standards, followed by their understanding of how to change instructional practice to teach the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Less frequently noted was the impact of professional development on teachers' support of peers. Nearly a fifth of teachers indicated that the professional development did not help prepare them to teach the standards.*



Figure 9.i

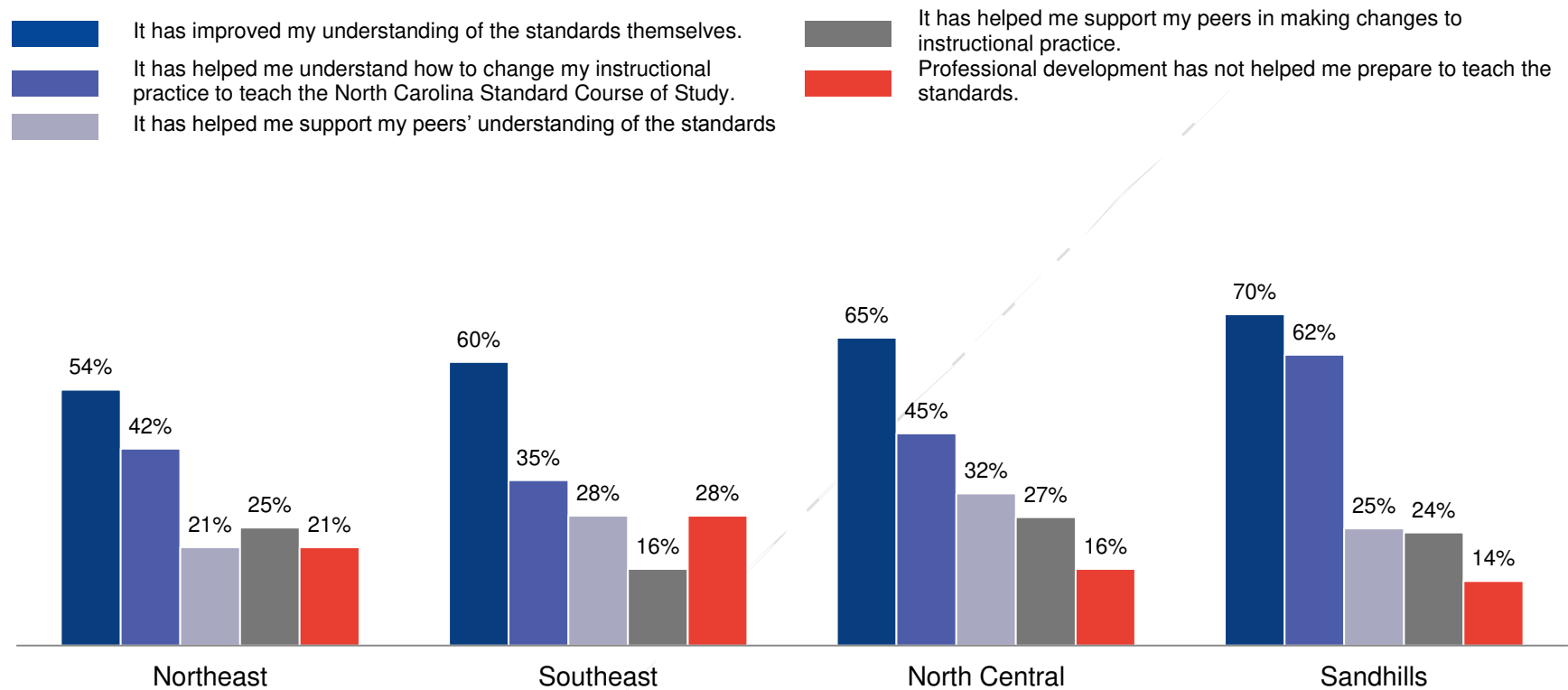
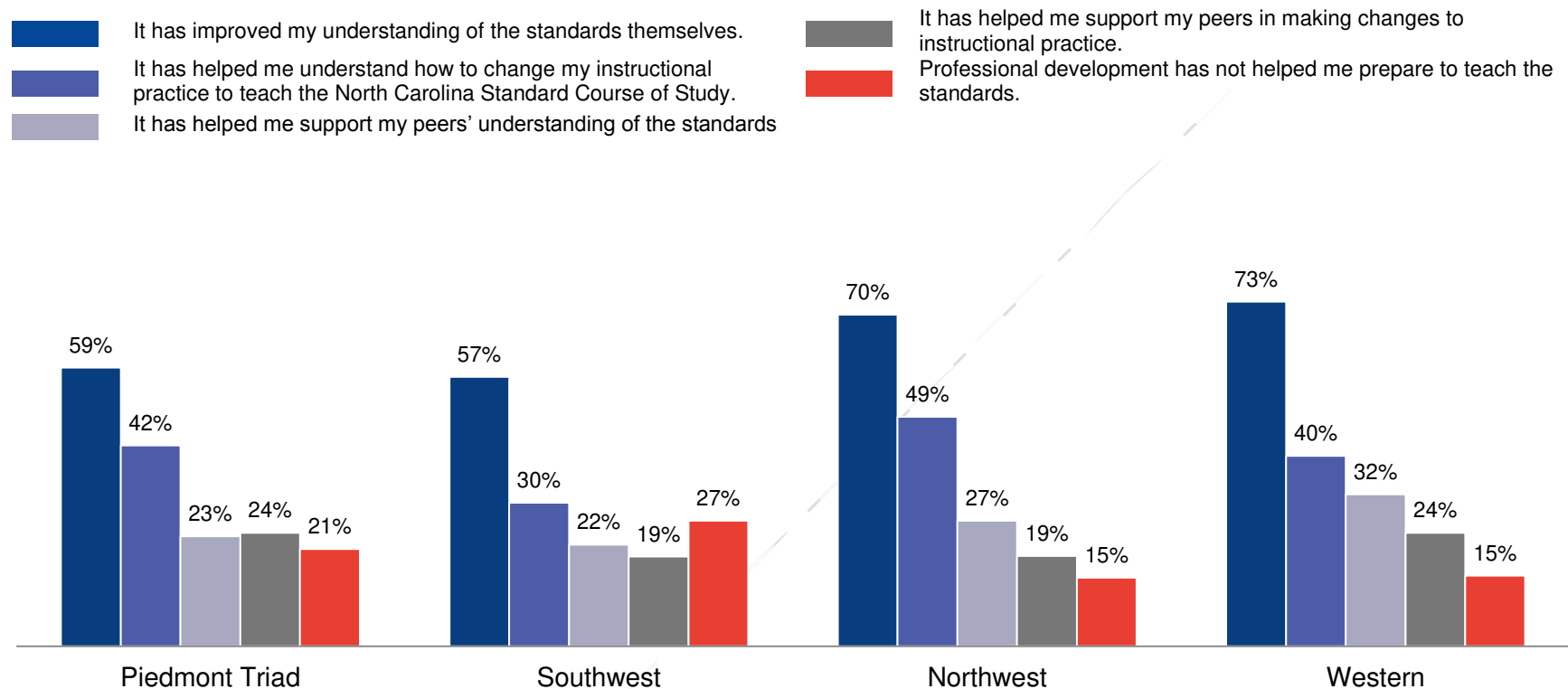


Figure 9.k



#### Analysis

*Across all regions, teachers who received professional development found it had the greatest perceived impact on their understanding of the standards and their understanding of how to change instructional practice to teach the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. The Southwest and Southeast regions had the highest percentage of teachers who indicated that professional development had not helped them prepare to teach the standards.*

**Q10. After receiving professional development related to teaching the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, which types of follow-up have you received? You may choose more than one of the following.**

Figure 10.a



*Analysis*

*Over a third of teachers who received professional development on teaching the North Carolina Standard Course of Study reported that they had not received any follow-up. When teachers received follow-up, it was most often in the form of coaching from a teacher leader, followed by online communities/Professional Learning Networks. Teachers received follow-up least often in the form of webinars, other online modules, or principal coaching.*

Figure 10.b

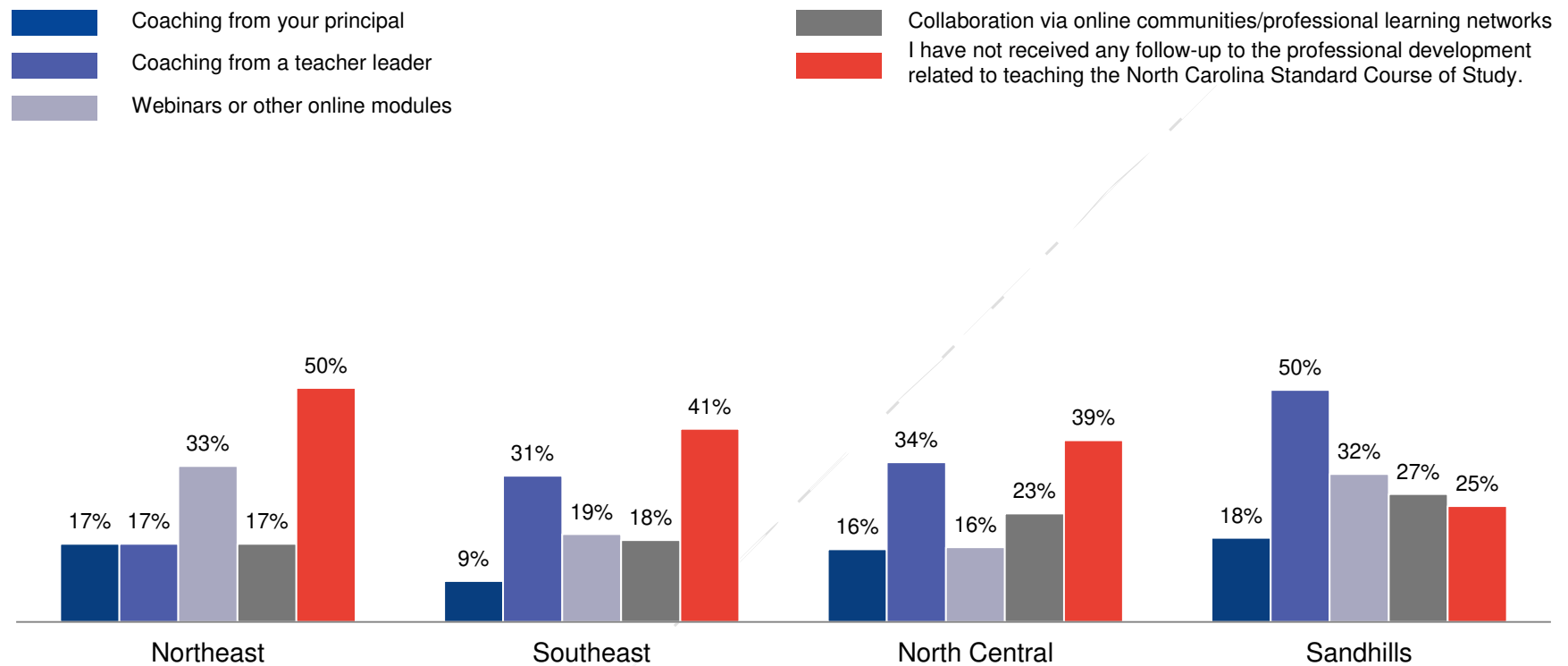
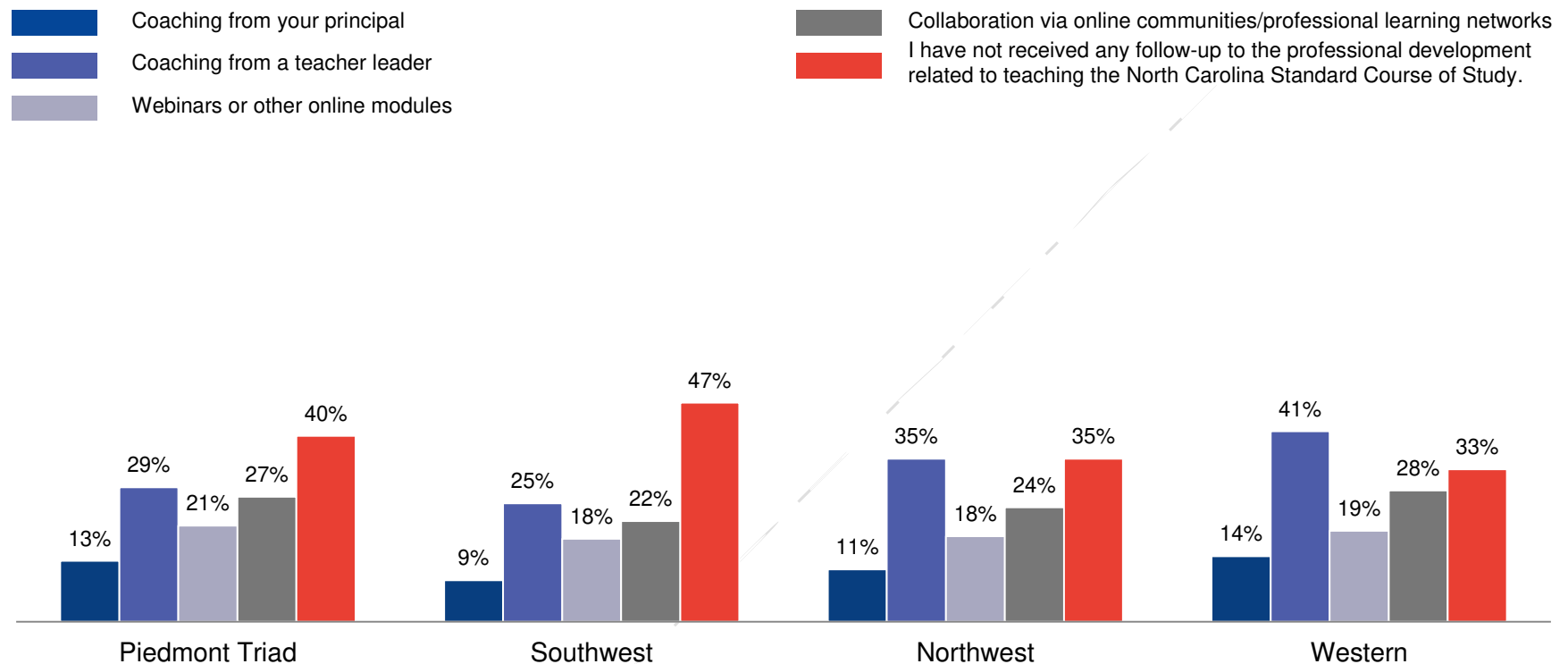


Figure 10.c



Analysis

Regions varied with regard to whether teachers received follow-up to their professional development on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Only a quarter of teachers in the Sandhills region did not receive follow-up, a percentage that nearly doubles for both the Northeast and Southwest regions. When teachers received follow-up, they indicated that it was most frequently through coaching from a teacher leader in each region, except for the Northeast region, where teachers more often selected webinars or other online modules.

**Q11. Which professional development setting would be most useful in supporting your teaching of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study? You may choose more than one of the following.**

Figure 11.a



*Analysis*

*In supporting the teaching of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, teachers most often indicated that professional development would be most useful in a small-group setting within their school or district.*

Figure 11.b

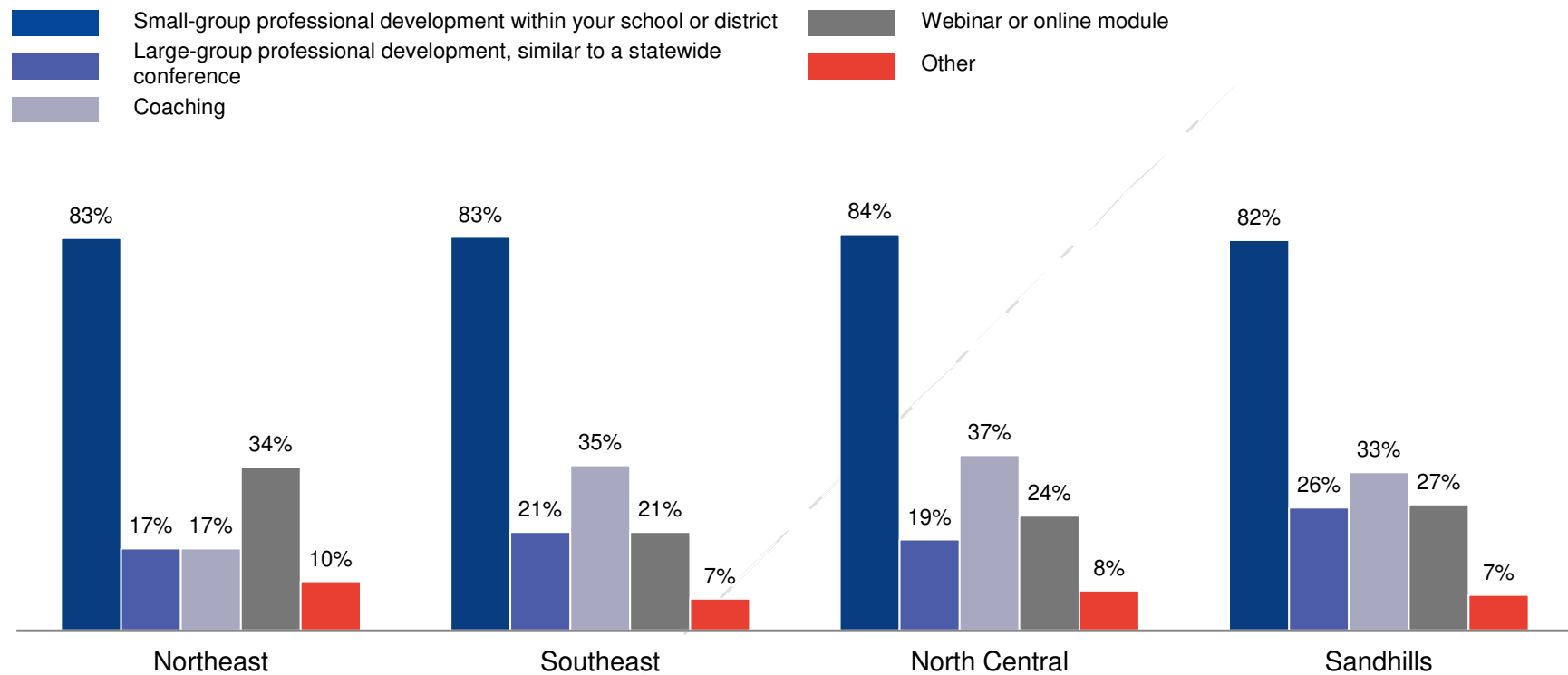
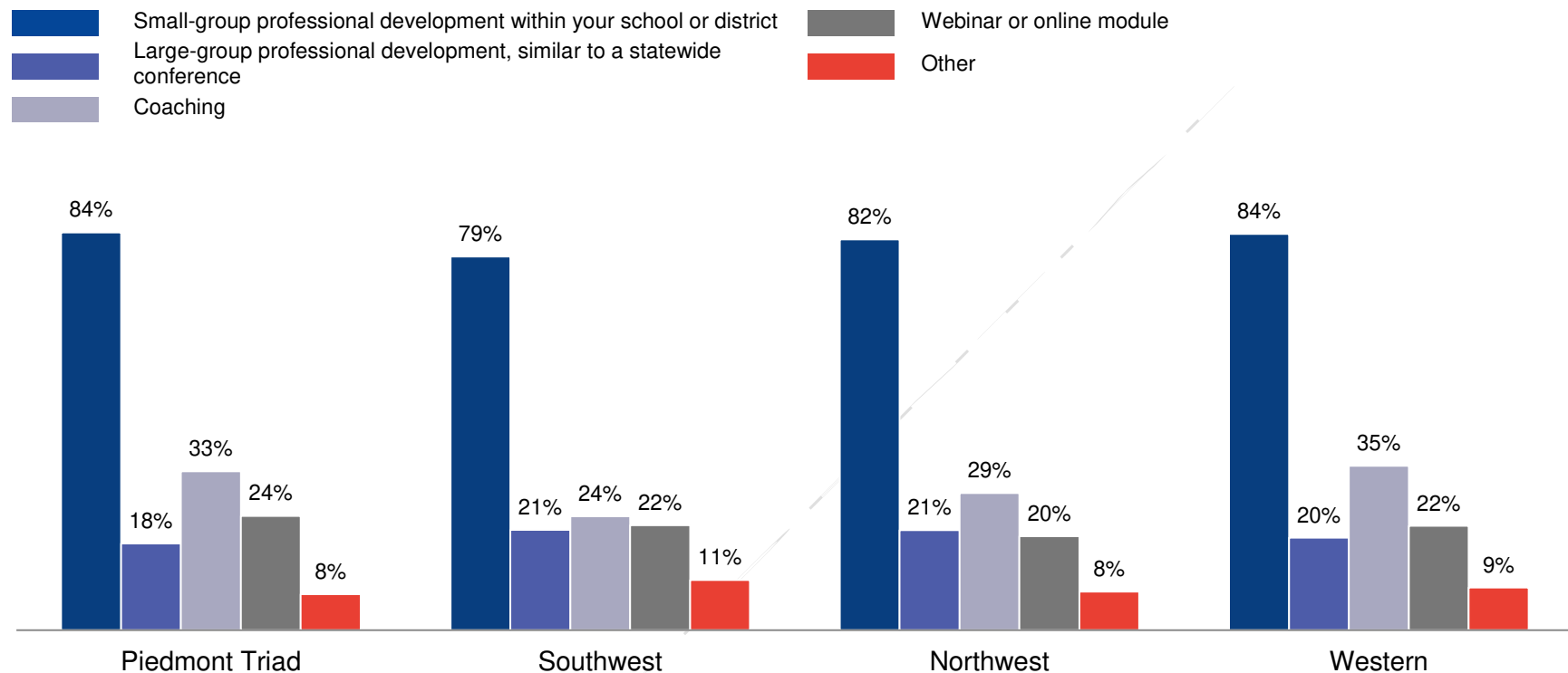


Figure 11.c



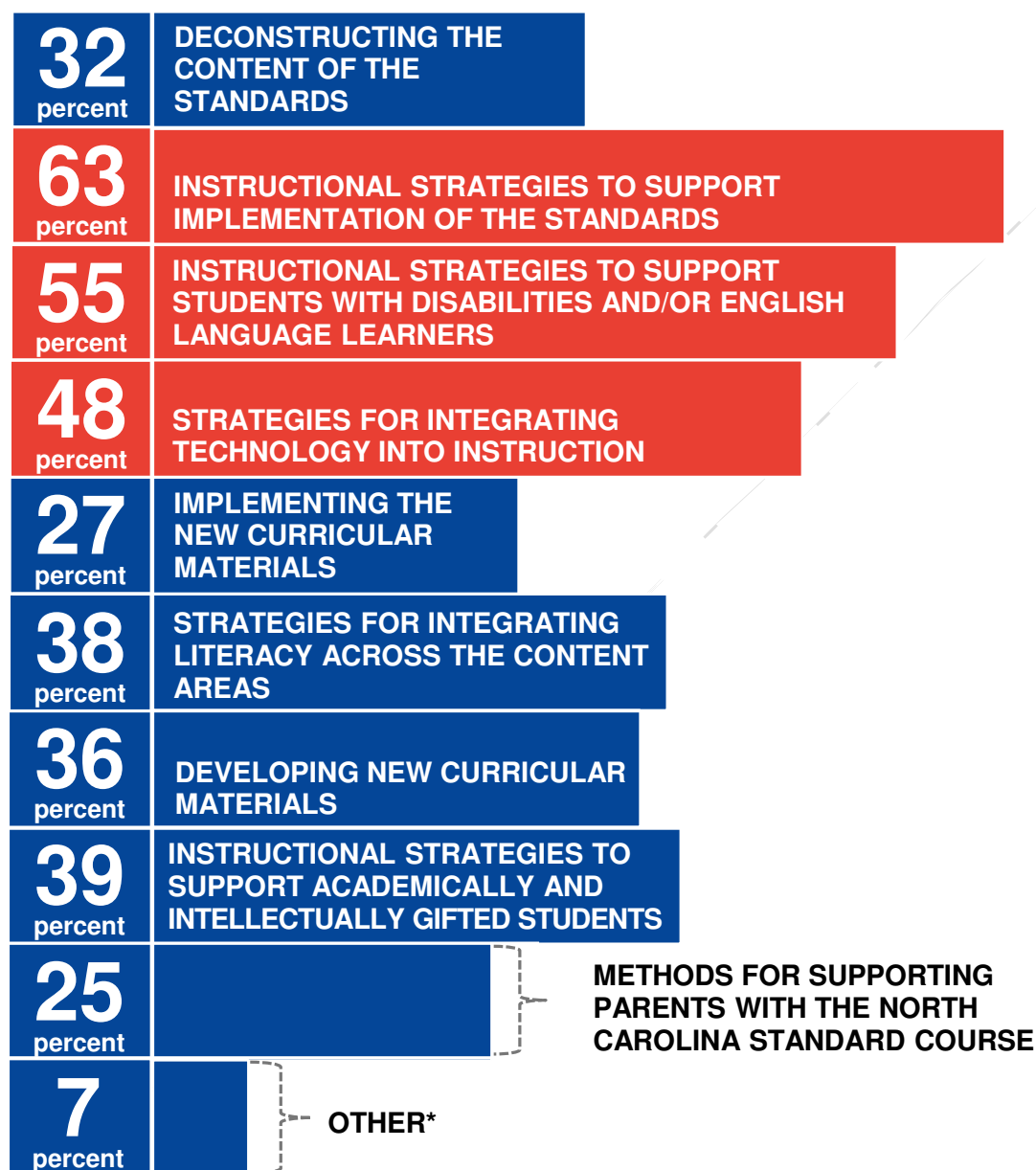
Analysis

*Teachers in all regions would most prefer professional development to occur in a small-group setting within their school or district. The next preferred setting in all regions was coaching, except for the Northeast region, in which teachers preferred webinars or online modules more than coaching.*



**Q12. Which professional development content would help support your implementation of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study? You may choose more than one of the following.**

Figure 12.a



**Analysis**

*Overall, a wide variety of professional development content areas would best support teachers. More specifically, teachers most frequently indicated that professional development related to instructional strategies would help support their implementation of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Instructional strategies to support students with disabilities and/or English Language Learners and strategies for*

*integrating technology into instruction were the next two most frequently chosen content areas for professional development.*

Figure 12.b

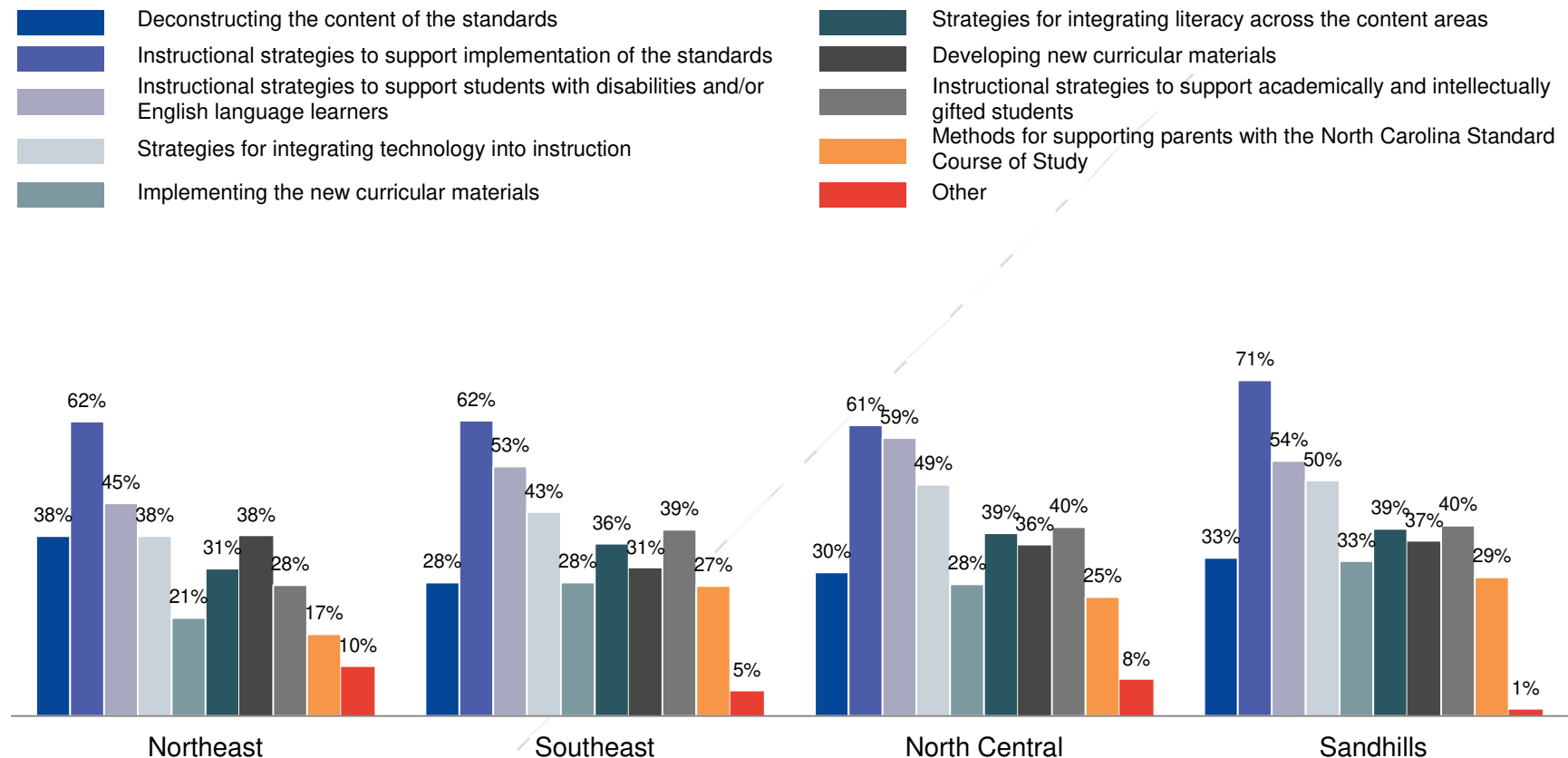
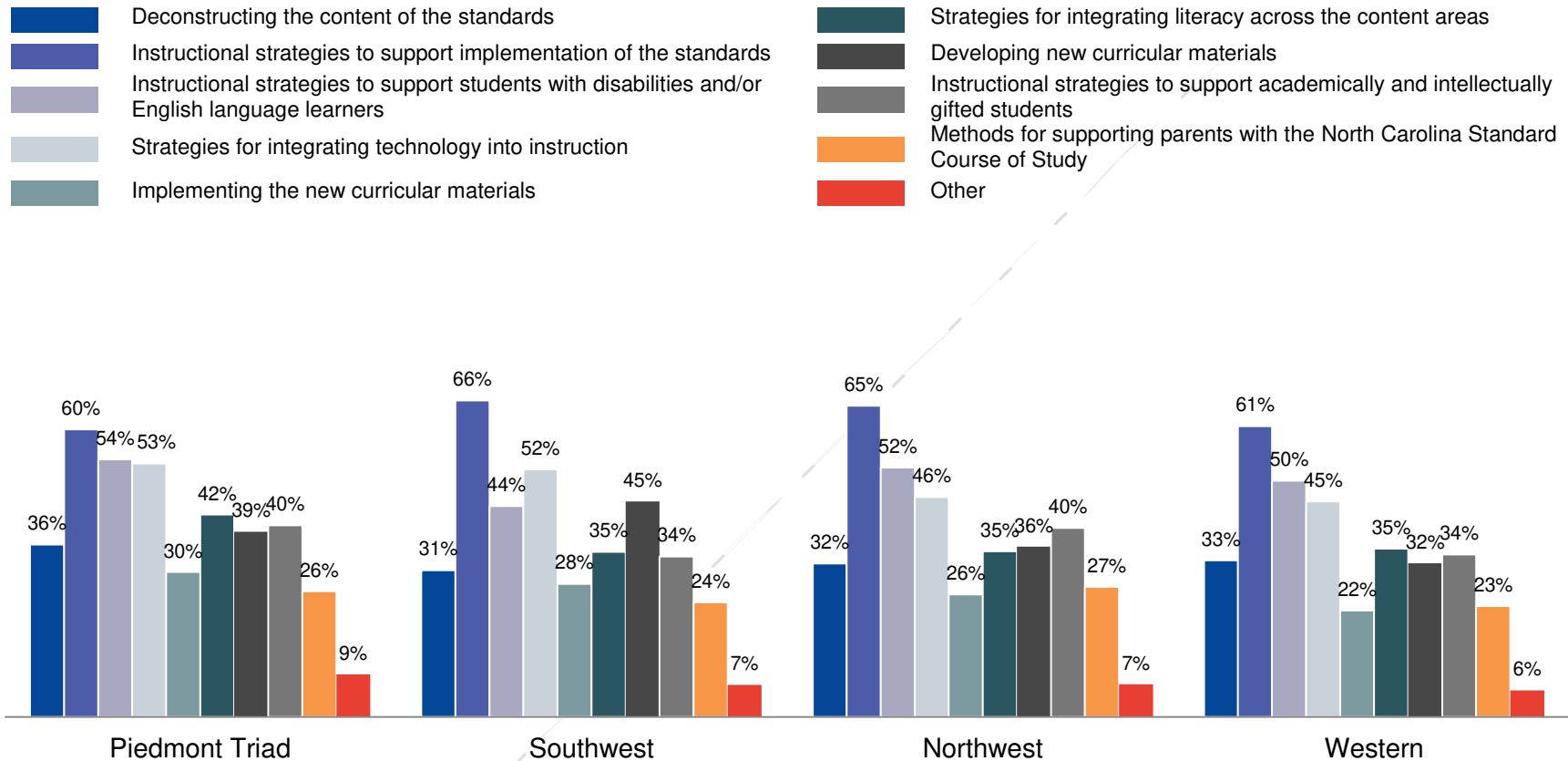


Figure 12.c

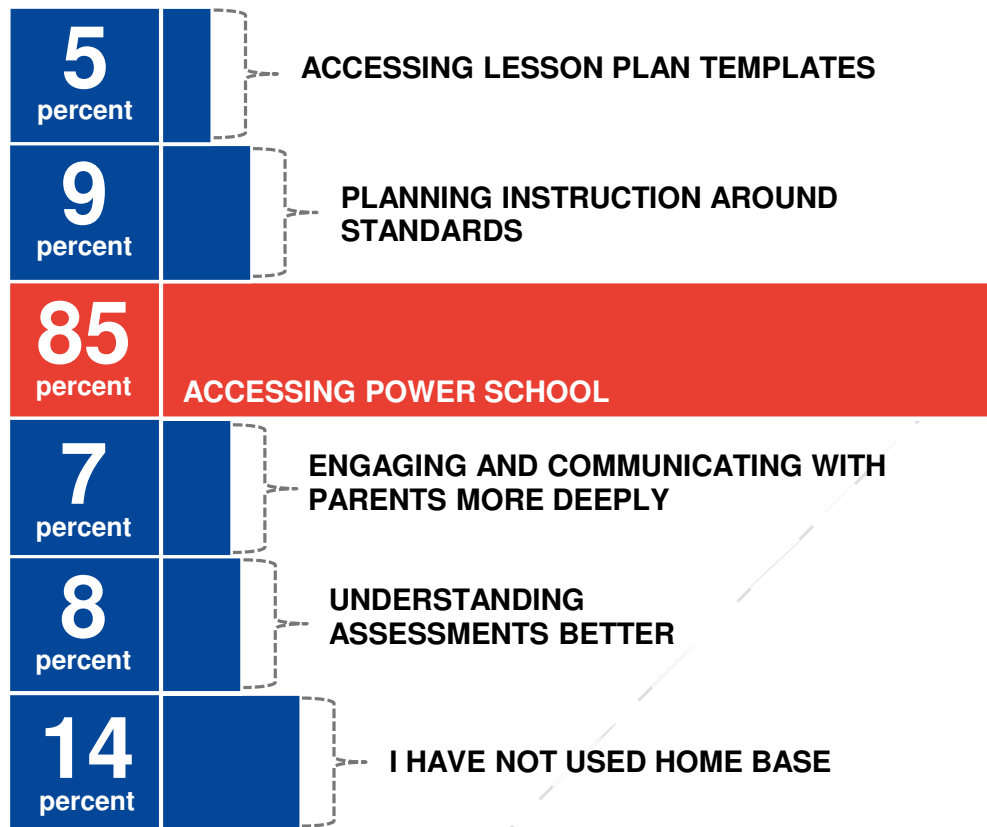


Analysis

*With regard to professional development content areas, teachers in all regions most often indicated that professional development in instructional strategies would support them in their implementation of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Although teachers were fairly consistent across the regions, there were some variations from this trend in four regions, most notably in the Northeast and Southeast.*

Q13. I use Home Base for the following: (You may choose more than one response)

Figure 13.a



*Analysis*

*Teachers most frequently noted using Home Base to access Power School. Given these available options, 14% of teachers did not use Home Base for any of the other purposes.*

Figure 13.b

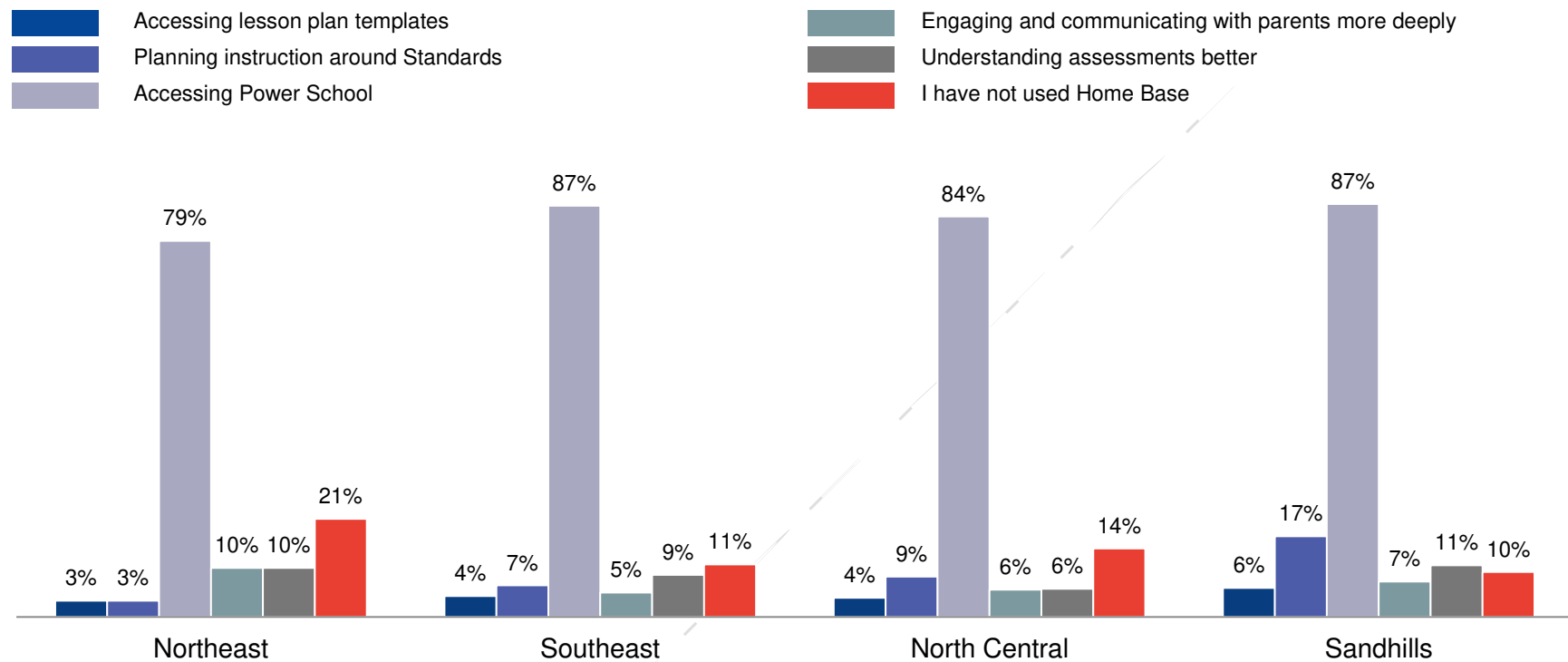
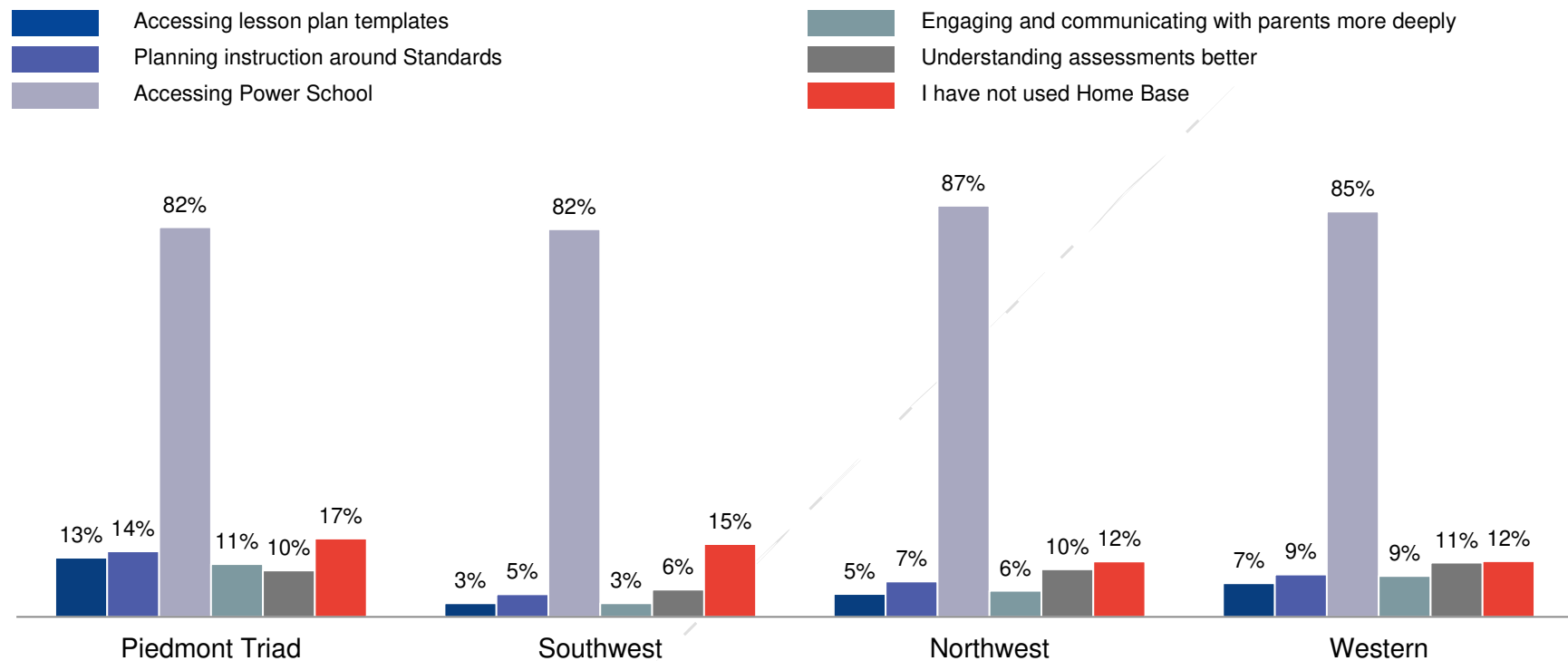


Figure 13.c

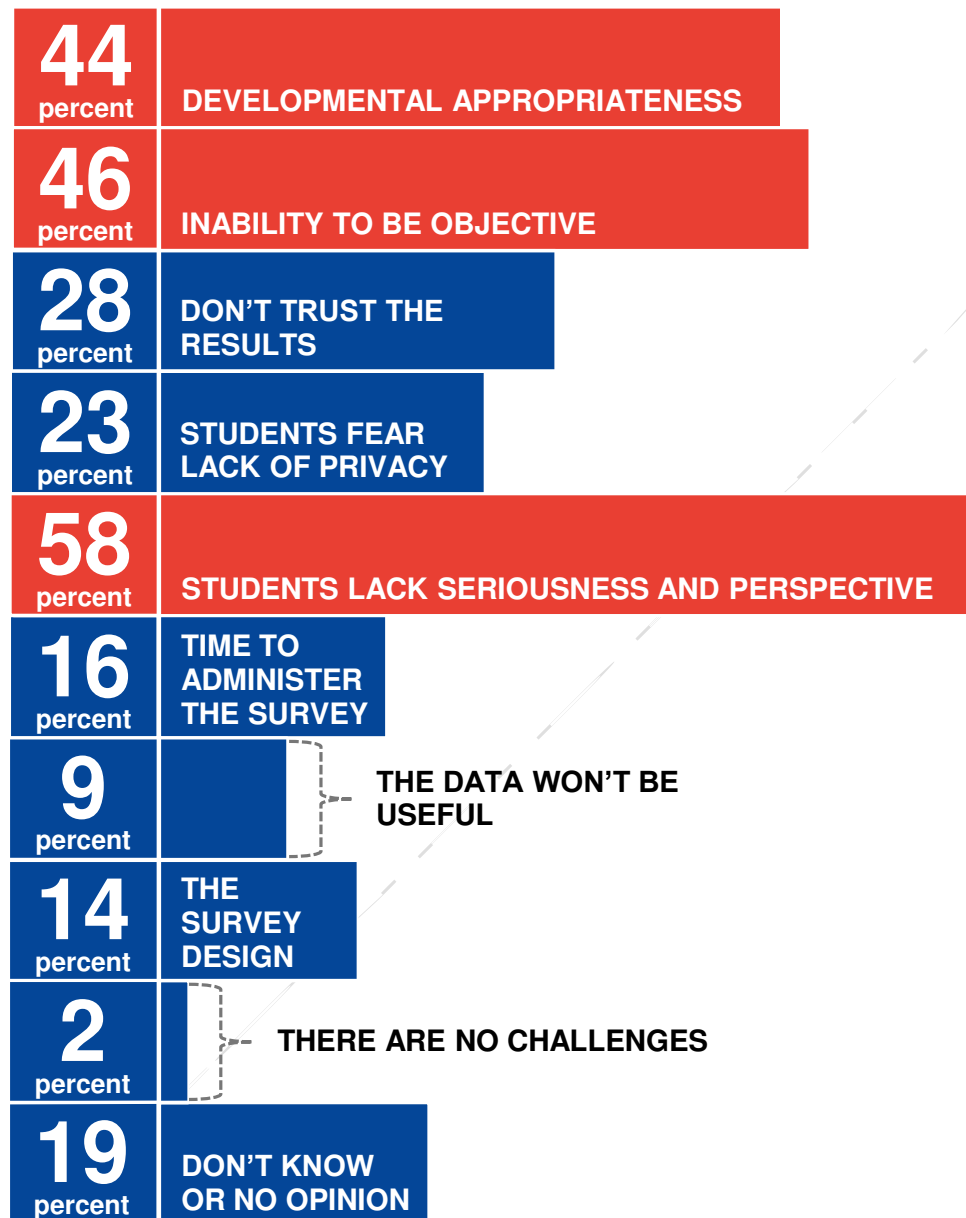


Analysis

Teachers in all regions primarily used Home Base to access Power School. Teachers rarely used Home Base for other listed purposes, but when teachers did use it, the frequency of these uses varied slightly depending on the region. The Northeast, Piedmont Triad, and Southwest regions had the highest percentage of teachers who had not used Home Base.

**Q14. What are the challenges, if any, associated with using student perception surveys? You may choose more than one of the following.**

Figure 14.a





## Analysis

*The majority of teachers saw challenges with the use of student participation surveys. The most frequently noted challenge was that teachers perceived students as lacking seriousness and perspective. The next most noted challenges regarded developmental appropriateness and an inability to be objective.*

**Figure 14.b**

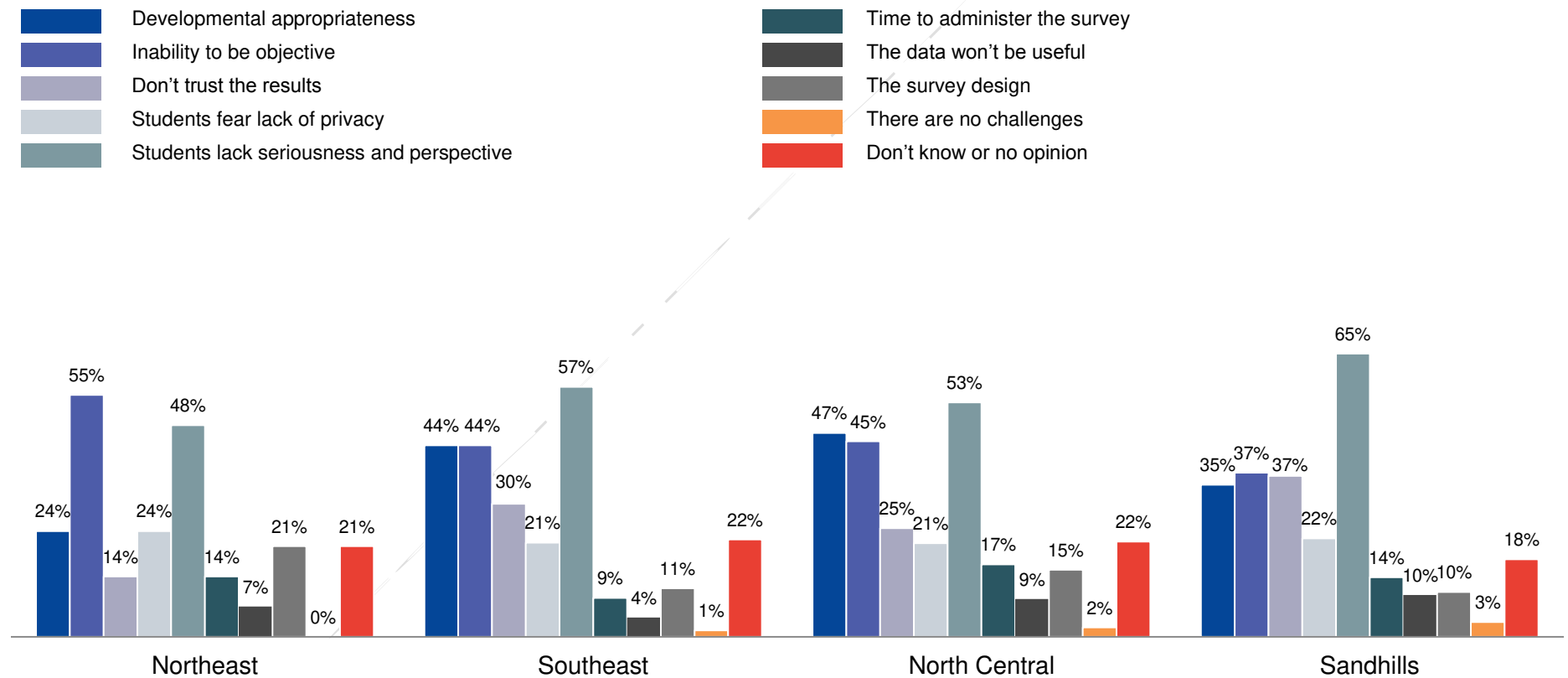
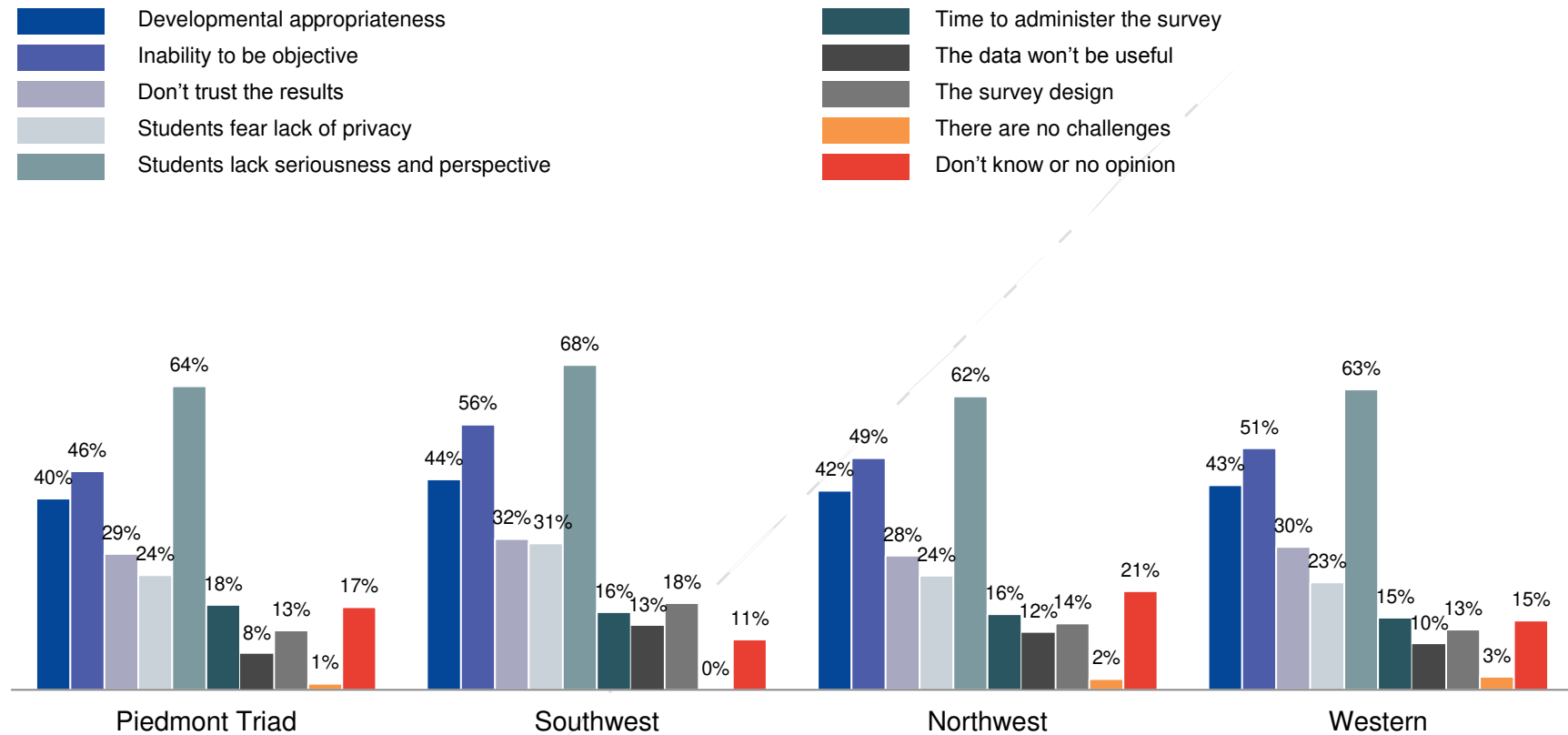


Figure 14.c

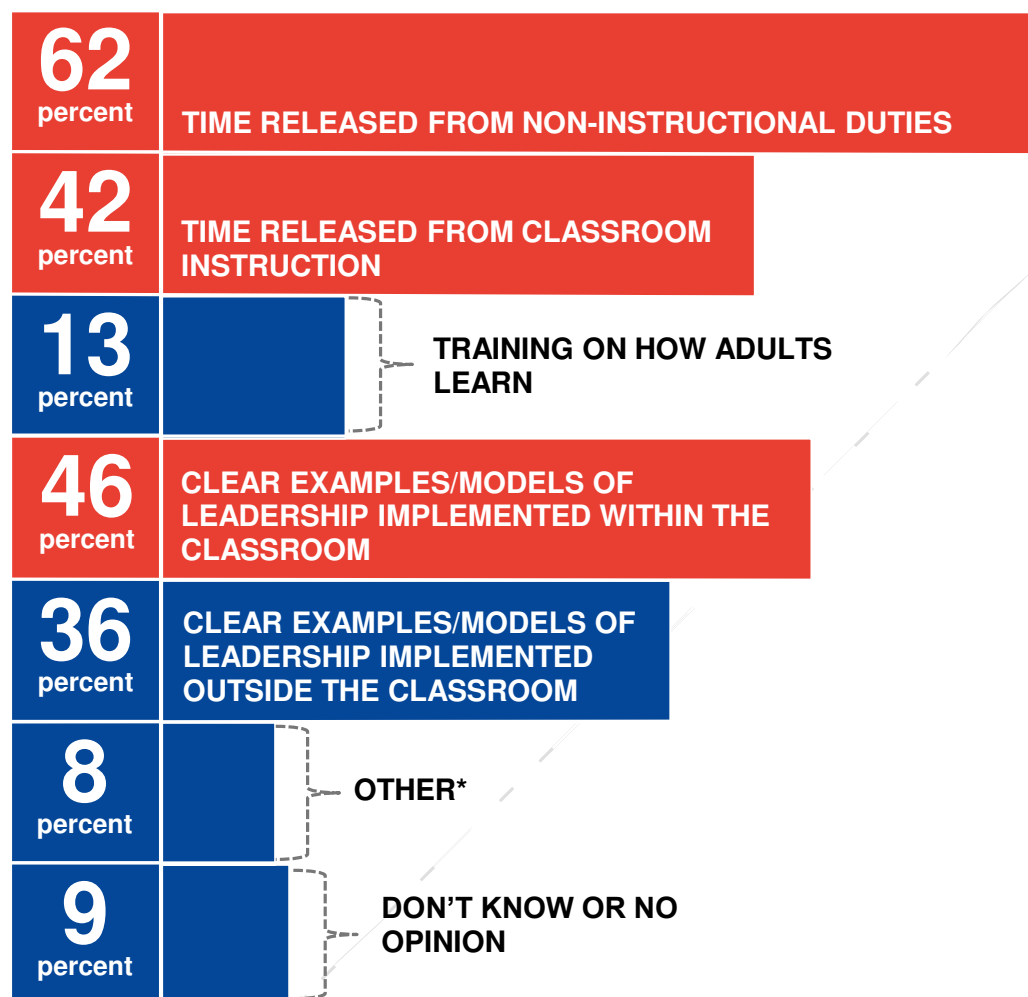


Analysis

*Teachers in all but one region most frequently expressed that students' lack of seriousness and perspective was a challenge in using student perception surveys. The Northeast region, however, was more frequently concerned with an inability of students to be objective.*

**Q15. Which support(s) would teachers need to build their leadership capacity within their school or district while staying in the classroom? You may choose more than one answer.**

Figure 15.a



*Analysis*

*In order to build classroom teachers' leadership capacity, teachers most frequently indicated that they would need time released from non-instructional duties. Next, nearly half of the teachers noted that they would require clear examples or models of leadership implemented within the classroom, followed by a need for time released from classroom instruction. In general, teachers did not indicate a strong need for training on how adults learn.*

Figure 15.b

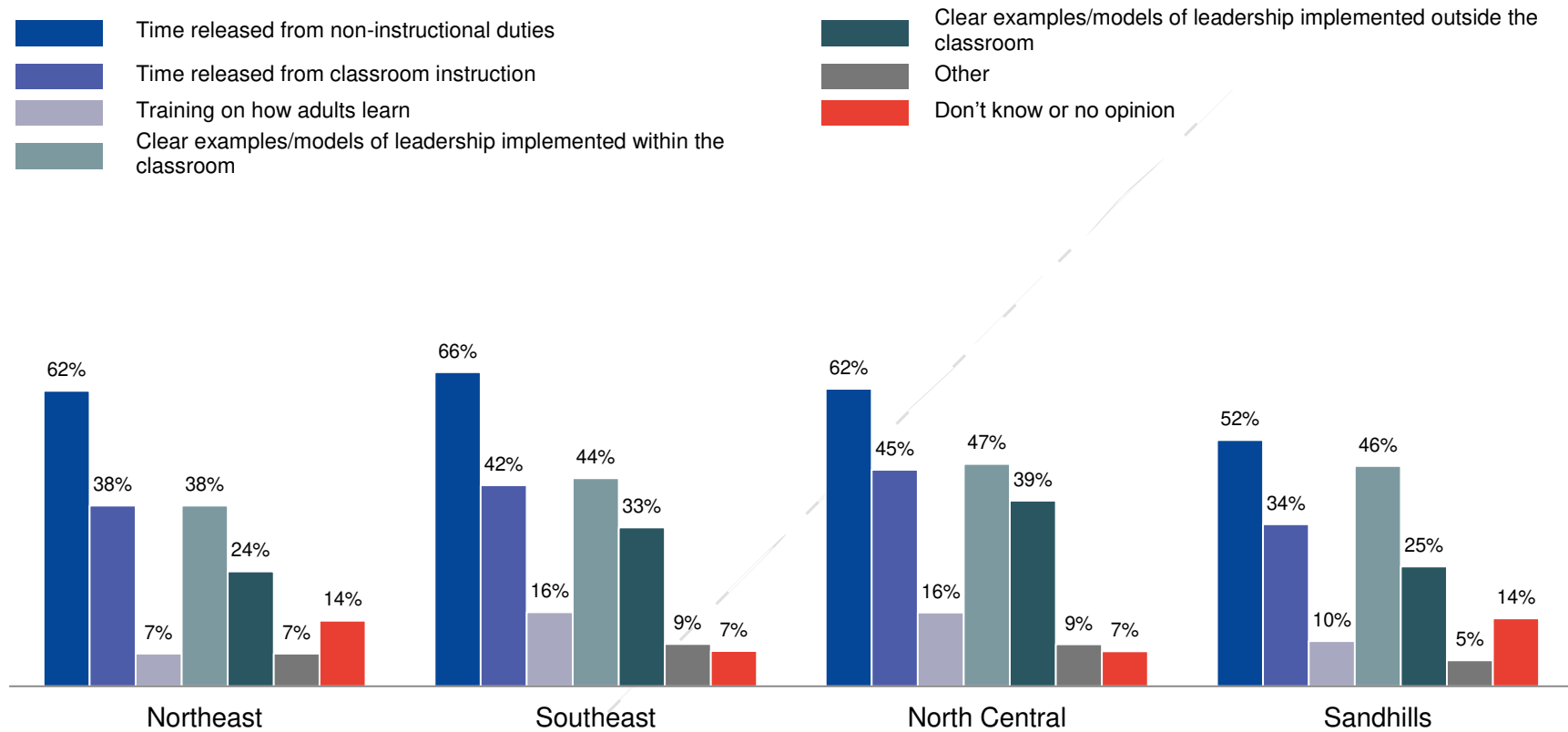
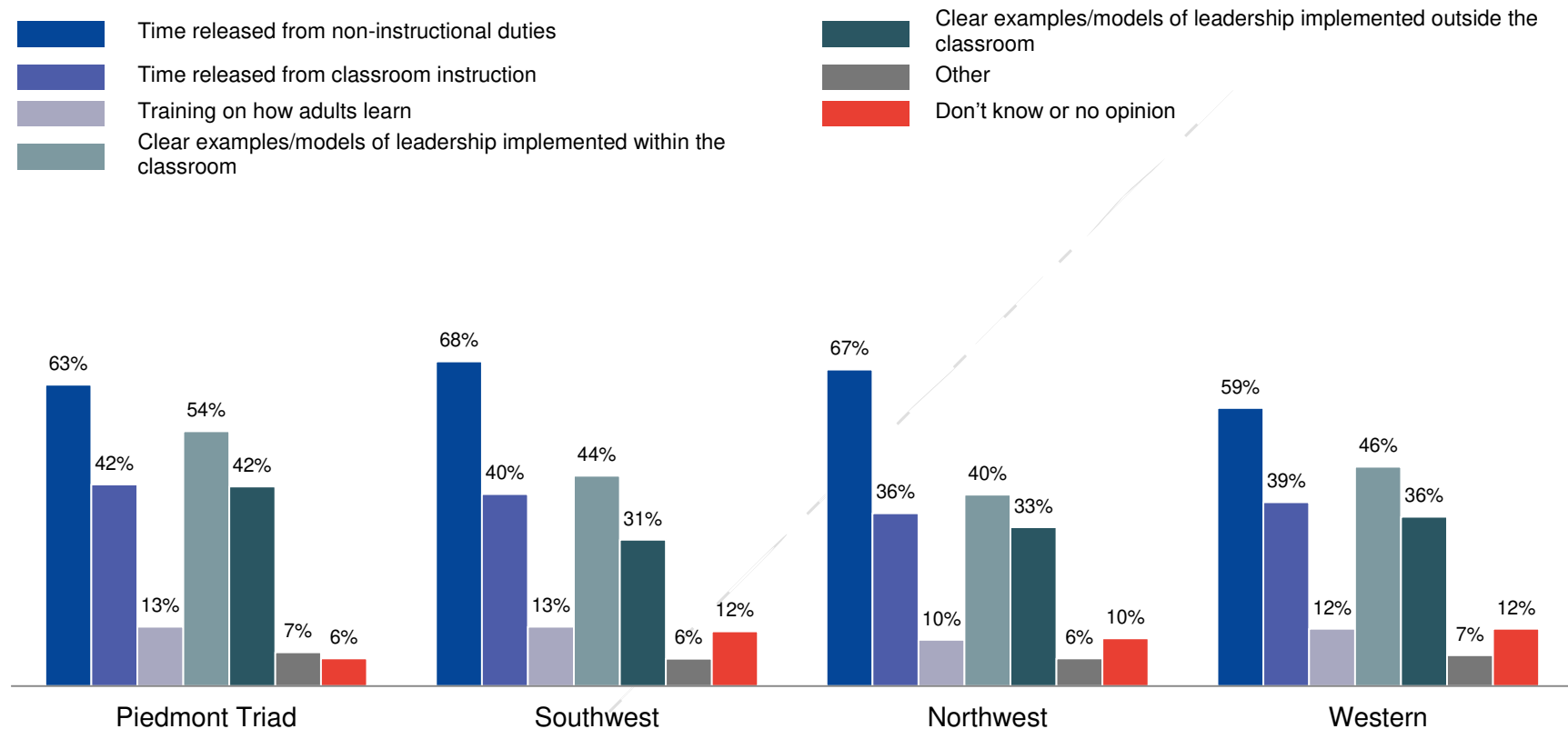


Figure 15.c

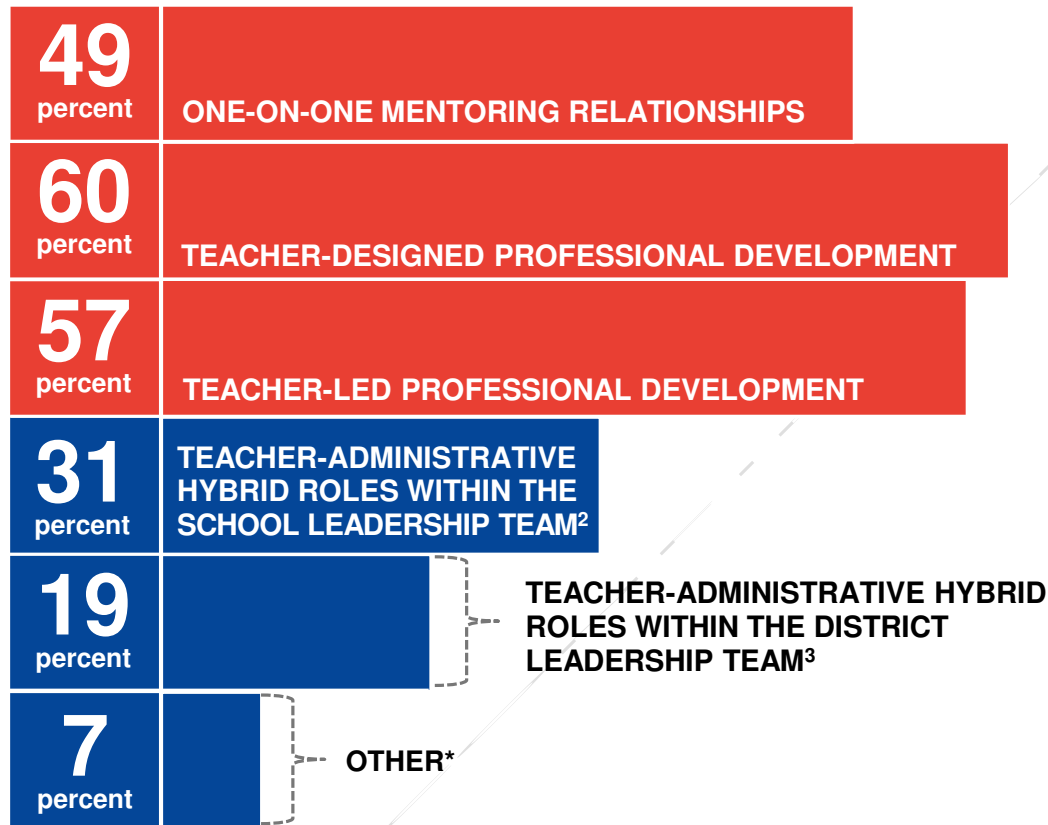


#### Analysis

*Teachers' responses with regard to their needs in building leadership capacity while remaining in the classroom were pretty consistent across regions. Teachers indicated a need for time in each region, most frequently time released from non-instructional duties. Across regions, clear examples or models of leadership being implemented within the classroom, more so than outside of the classroom, were also sought. Teachers did not demonstrate a strong need for training in how adults learn in any of the eight regions.*

**Q16. Which model of teacher leadership would have the greatest impact on the development of teachers as effective educators? You may choose more than one of the following.**

Figure 16.a



<sup>9</sup> Full Response Option: Teacher-administrative hybrid roles within the school leadership team (teachers take on school-based administrative duties but retain their primary role as a classroom teacher)

<sup>10</sup> Full Response Option: Teacher-administrative hybrid roles within the district leadership team (teachers take on district-based administrative duties but retain their primary role as a classroom teacher)

## *Analysis*

*Teacher-designed and teacher-led professional development were the two teacher leadership models that teachers indicated would have the greatest impact on developing effective educators, closely followed by a one-on-one mentoring model. Although teacher-administrative hybrid roles were less frequently noted, teachers indicated that these hybrid roles would have a greater impact within school leadership teams than within district leadership teams.*

Figure 16.b

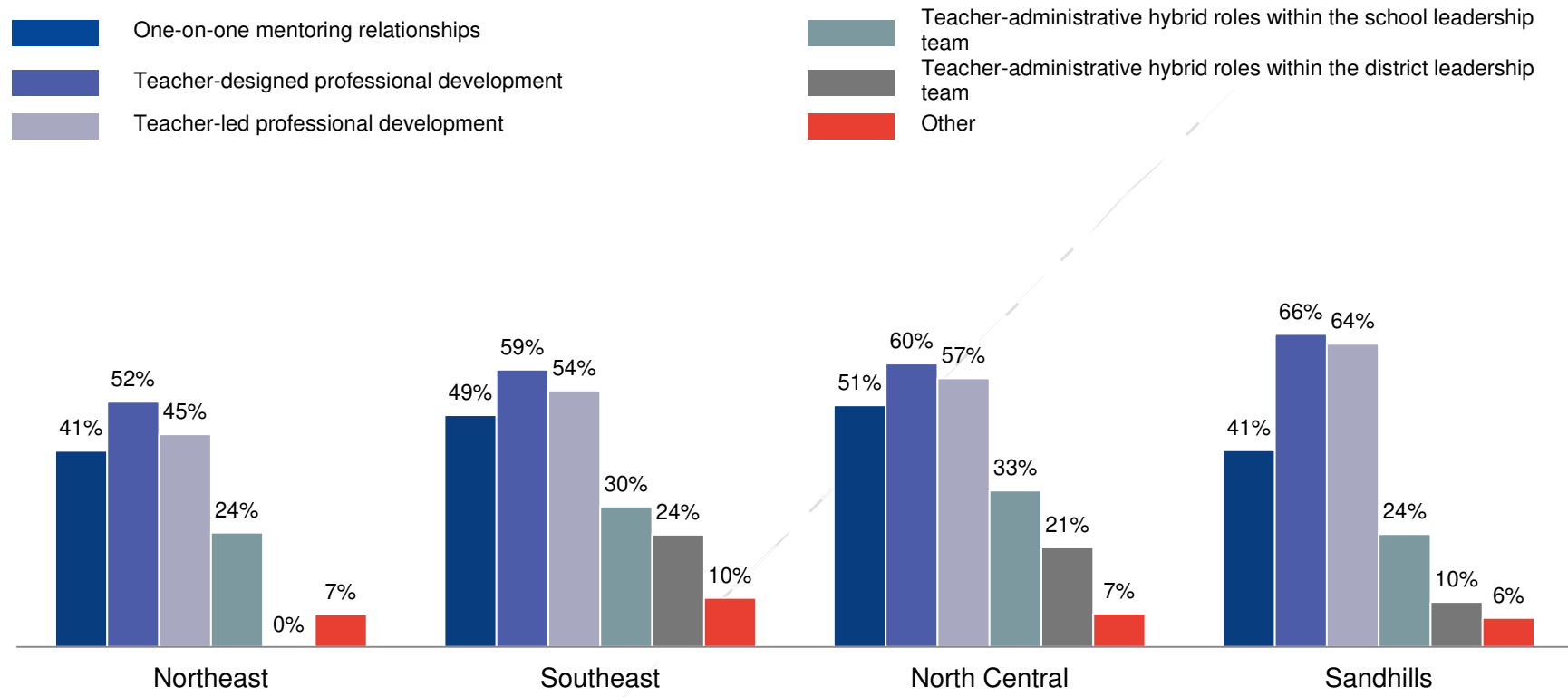
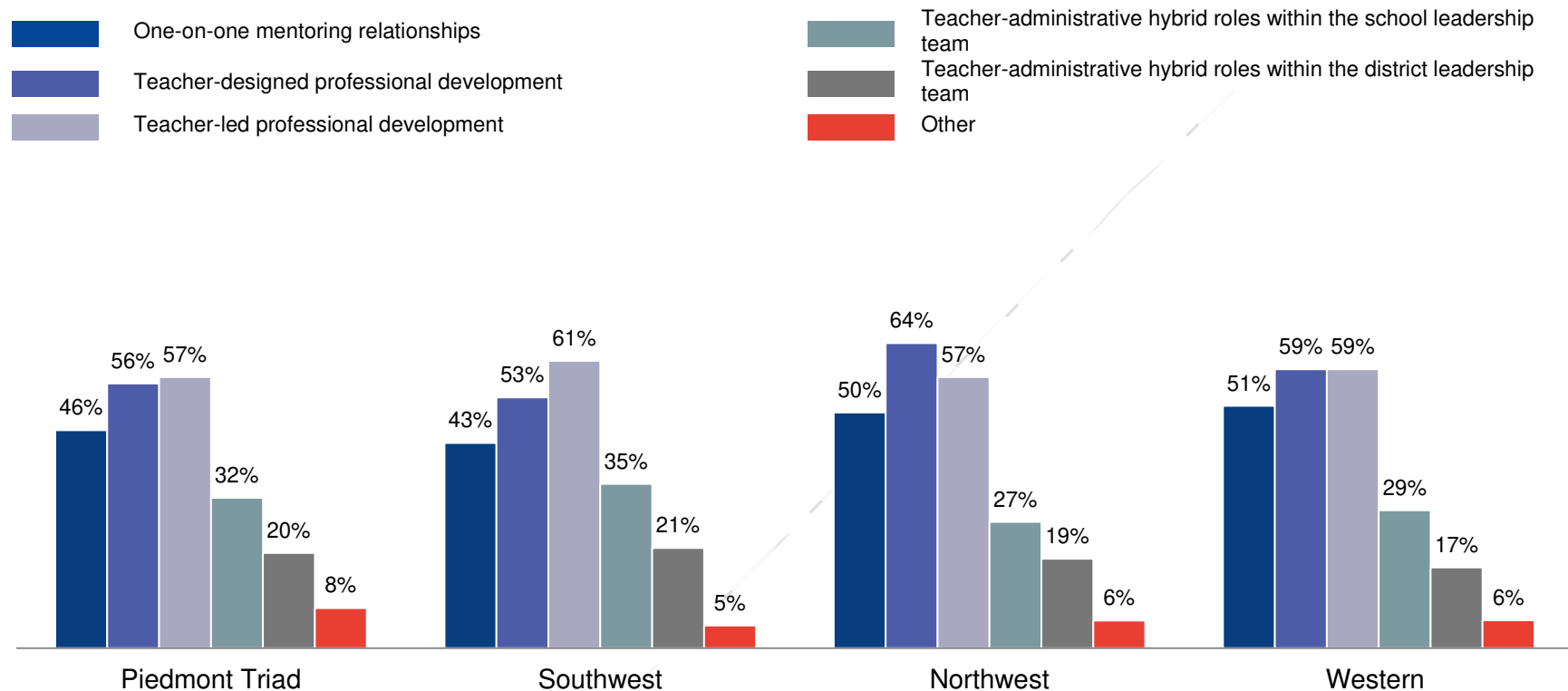




Figure 16.c



#### Analysis

*Across all regions, teachers indicated that teacher-designed or teacher-led professional development, or both, would have the greatest impact on the development of effective educators. Responses regarding the other models of teacher leadership were consistent across all regions except that no teachers in the Northeast region indicated that teacher-administrative hybrid roles within the district leadership team would have an impact.*

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# Focus Group Data

The fall 2015 focus groups included the following five open-ended questions:

1. **What recent changes in resources have had the biggest impact on your classroom?**
2. **What is the nature and extent of interaction between public and charter schools in your district? What impact has this had on your school community?**
3. **What does being treated as a professional mean to you?**
4. **Which district or state-level measures are most important for showing evidence of achieving educational equity for all students?**
5. **If given the opportunity, what would you change to improve the statewide teacher evaluation system?**

HSG collected responses from focus groups and SurveyGizmo (referred to throughout this portion of the report as “survey answers”) and sent the results to Magnolia Consulting for analysis. After receiving the focus group data, Magnolia Consulting cleaned and prepared it for coding in Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software. Atlas.ti allows users to divide data into segments, attach codes to the segments, and find and display all instances of similarly coded segments for analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994).<sup>11</sup> This enables efficient data organization and analysis. Next, Magnolia Consulting conducted a content analysis of the data, which involved identifying, organizing, and categorizing recurring themes in the survey answers (Patton, 2015).<sup>12</sup> Magnolia Consulting staff regularly met to review codes, to discuss emerging codes, and to establish interrater agreement on recurring themes.

For this report, categorized, recurring themes are presented in tables with associated text describing each theme. An analysis of survey data is located in Tables 1-5.

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<sup>11</sup> Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

<sup>12</sup> Patton, M. C. (2015). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

**Question 1: What recent changes in resources have had the biggest impact on your classroom?**

Table 1

**Impact of Changes in Resources on the Classroom**



**FUNDING FOR CLASSROOM RESOURCES (N = 140)**

Most teachers shared concerns surrounding a lack of available funds to support classroom resources such as supplies, materials, equipment, copies, and other teacher needs.

*"Lack of resources requires teachers to spend their own money or work over to write grants to get resources for their classrooms."*

*"Budget changes have impacted my classroom tremendously. Less money has led to fewer materials (technology included) being made available to my classroom and my students."*



**FUNDING FOR TEACHERS AND TEACHER ASSISTANTS (N = 110)**

Teachers were also concerned about decreased staff numbers, particularly for teacher assistants. Many stated that a lack of teacher assistants has had a negative impact on the classroom.

*"The decrease in staff TA support staff has really hurt public schools and teachers."*

*"We need more teachers and TA and support staff. We have way too big of classes to reach the individual needs of our students. Expected to do more with less and it's at a tipping point. Everyone here is spread too thin to be as effective as we should/could be."*



**LACK OF TECHNOLOGY AVAILABILITY AND ACCESS (N = 88)**

Teachers also shared that there have been varying negative impacts of technology. For example, not having enough devices for students and having outdated technology, lacking quality technological resources to support curriculum and professional development, and experiencing difficulties with online classroom management (e.g., progress monitoring, data tracking, and student engagement).

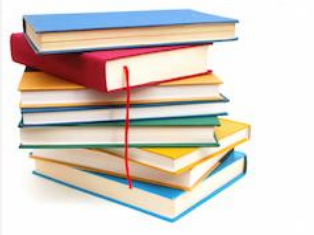
*"Technology availability and access to both teachers and students is limited and not where it should be."*

*"Updated technology doesn't work with older computers; they don't talk to each other...it isn't integrated."*

## Impact of Changes in Resources on the Classroom

### NEED FOR UPDATED TEXTBOOKS (N = 78)

Teachers referenced a need for updated textbooks to support Common Core state standards. Many teachers shared that the adoption of various technologies has not remedied the issue of a lack of textbooks.



*“One of the changes that has had a biggest impact on my classroom is the textbook reduction. I am sitting in classroom with textbooks that are over 14 years old and that are outdated and having to go outside of the classroom to find resources. The curriculum that I teach is not updated.”*

*“No textbooks is really hard. I feel that all students should have a textbook to take home and do work out of daily or to look at for assignments. I know that technology is big, but it can’t replace textbooks.”*

### POSITIVE IMPACTS OF TECHNOLOGY (N = 62)

Many teachers recognized several benefits of technology in classrooms, including improved accessibility of resources and data for students, increased student engagement, improved access to student data, and improved communication with students and parents.



*“Laptops have made information more accessible to students and changed the way we communicate with them.”*

*“Student laptops enhance learning.”*

**Question 2: What is the nature and extent of interaction between public and charter schools in your district? What impact has this had on your community?**

Table 2

### Public and Charter School Interactions



#### **CHARTER SCHOOLS TAKE RESOURCES (N = 62)**

Many teachers stated that charter schools take away resources, such as funding and teachers, to the detriment of the public school system.

*“Charter schools are taking our money, not providing rigorous instruction, and then when they return to public schools they are not at the same academic level.”*

*“Staff leaving to go to charter schools...because there is more creativity and seemingly less demands.”*



#### **NO INTERACTION (N = 42)**

Many teachers reported that they are not aware of any interaction between charter schools and public schools in their districts.

*“I haven't seen any interaction. I feel like we are adversaries to a certain degree, fighting over money and resources.”*

*“There's a lack of interaction.”*



#### **CHARTER SCHOOLS TAKE STUDENTS AWAY FROM PUBLIC SCHOOLS (N = 35)**

Teachers shared concerns that charter schools draw students away from public schools, including many high-performing students.

*“The most noticeable has been an increase in the number of students leaving the neighborhood school.”*

*“We have lost several students from our school who received scholarships to a charter school in a neighboring county. Each of the students we lost were very high achieving students.”*



#### **DIFFERENT STANDARDS AND CURRICULUMS (N = 33)**

Several teachers perceived a difference in charter school curricula and standards of learning. Teachers reported that students who transfer to public schools from charter schools are less prepared than their public school counterparts.

*“There is a noticeable difference in education, in terms of writing instruction and literacy, among students that go to charter middle schools and traditional public middle schools. There's less rigor at a charter school and kids are ill-prepared for English classes when they get to high school.”*

## Public and Charter School Interactions



### **NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS (N = 27)**





Some teachers expressed generally negative viewpoints of charter schools, mentioning an air of competition between public schools and charter schools.

*“It feels like the goal is to dismantle public schools.”*

*“There seems to be a dislike and a mistrust of one to the other (from both sides). It seems to take away from the community feel that is so important in smaller communities.”*

### Question 3: What does being treated as a professional mean to you?

Table 3

Teacher Professionalism	
	<p><b>FAIR COMPENSATION (N = 137)</b></p> <p>Most teachers stated that fair compensation is an indicator of being treated as a professional. Teachers indicated that graduate degrees and years of teaching experience should be reflected in determining fair compensation.</p> <p><i>“Comparative salaries as professionals in other fields with the same level of education.”</i></p> <p><i>“That our education and expertise is valued and appreciated financially.”</i></p>
	<p><b>TRUSTING TEACHER JUDGMENT (N = 100)</b></p> <p>Teachers want to be trusted to lead their classrooms and to make judgments about classroom management. Many teachers added that they do not want to feel micromanaged.</p> <p><i>“It means trusting me to lead in my classroom and not trying to micromanage every aspect of my job. Recognizing that there is more than one way to arrive at the same conclusion.”</i></p> <p><i>“Being trusted to make the right decisions for what’s best for my students and my classroom.”</i></p>
	<p><b>RESPECTING TEACHERS (N = 86)</b></p> <p>Teachers commented that being treated as a professional involves seeking respect from administrators and the public, especially for their expertise and educational background.</p> <p><i>“Being treated as a professional means being acknowledged and treated as a master of your content and your art with education and knowledge in your field.”</i></p> <p><i>“Respect, letting me do my job, allowing me to use my talents and skills.”</i></p>
	<p><b>RESPECTING TEACHER PLANNING TIME (N = 66)</b></p> <p>Teachers shared that being treated as a professional also means respecting their planning time. Many teachers feel that the demands on their time are too great and take away valuable planning time.</p> <p><i>“Impossible to do all that we are expected to do in the time allotted.”</i></p> <p><i>“Valuing my planning time to plan and not to be consumed by other things (i.e., filling in for teachers who are absent, attending too many meetings, etc.).”</i></p>



## Teacher Professionalism

### SEEKING TEACHER INPUT (N = 63)

Teachers would like policy makers and administrators to consider their input when making decisions that affect teachers at the classroom, school, district, and state level.



*“Our opinions and perspectives matter when decisions about educational practices and policy are made and we are no longer told what to do, but we are consulted about what is best to do.”*

*“Being consulted before major decisions are made that impact my daily routines and my students.”*

**Question 4: Which district or state-level measures are most important for showing evidence of achieving educational equality for all students?**

Table 4

**District and State-Level Measures and Educational Equity**



**EQUITABLE FUNDING FOR RESOURCES (N = 68)**

Many teachers mentioned equal funding for resources as a measure of educational equality. Teachers commented that until resources are distributed equally among schools, there would be no educational equality.

*“Funding has a direct impact on educational equity. The poorer the county, the less opportunities, the richer the county the more opportunities and more resources.”*

*“Hard to be equal when resources are not equal.”*



**TEACHERS AND SPECIALISTS TO REDUCE CLASS SIZE (N = 37)**

Teachers also requested that the state use funds to hire more teachers, specialists (for EC and ESL students), and support staff. Additional staff would help to reduce class sizes and improve teacher to student ratios.

*“Hiring support staff whose job is to communicate with minority communities. Awareness and construction of class sizes in relation to the population within said class. Hiring the correct amount of staff for the size population in regards to teachers, counselors, administrators, etc.”*

*“Provide funds for someone who is available to be one-on-one with those students who need extra behavioral or academic support.”*



**RECOGNIZE DIFFERENCES IN STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS (N = 29)**

Teachers stated that student demographic differences make it difficult to compare test scores. They emphasized how the different life circumstances of each child affect student performance.

*“At the state level, our exams target kids from poor homes that don't know how to read. It marginalizes anyone from a low socioeconomic status. There's no equity among the tests - parents, income, geographic location determine your success.”*

*“Students and their abilities/access to resources vary widely. A standardized test does not measure the array of students I teach.”*

## District and State-Level Measures and Educational Equity

### ASSESSING FOR EQUALITY (N = 24)

Teachers questioned whether assessments are the best way to measure equality. Several teachers noted that focusing on standardized test scores leaves out other important factors, such as informal measures of student learning and variations in student needs and ability levels.



*"Not test scores. We don't look at the whole child. Everyone is just a test number."*

*"There is an inequality in student testing. Tests need to be diversified to show learning and understanding of all students."*

### ASSESSING FOR STUDENT GROWTH (N = 24)

When teachers do look to assessments to measure equality, many suggested considering student growth as a more effective measure of success.



*"It's not about the graduation rate, it's about the growth piece. This is a more appropriate measure (takes some of the pressure off) and focuses on student learning and ability."*

*"I would like to see measurements of achievement be measures of growth... because that would promote equality."*

### ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY (N = 20)

Teachers stated that access to technology is an important aspect of achieving educational equality. Teachers shared that some districts have better technological resources than others. Student home internet access also continues to be unequal.



*"There are inequities in access to technology, the Internet, etc. that need to be remedied."*

*"All students, schools, and districts are different but they are not equal. Why do some schools have one to one with Chromebooks and others have nothing? That is not fair."*

**Question 5: If given the opportunity, what would you change to improve the statewide teacher evaluation system?**

Table 5

### Improving the Teacher Evaluation System

#### **REMOVE EMPHASIS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT FOR TEACHER EVALUATION (N = 88)**



Teachers commented that basing teacher evaluations on student assessment results is not an accurate measure of teacher performance. Many teachers had specific concerns about Standard 6, which measures student growth as determined by a value-added metric. Teachers frequently commented that the metric is not a fair assessment of teacher effectiveness.

*“Standard 6 needs to go. If they need more accountability, it's already in the evaluation process. I felt more empowered before Standard 6 when my principal asked me how I felt about being evaluated. Student growth came from my collections of data/work. Performance-based assessments and the lack of supports in place rob teachers of the chance to advocate for themselves.”*

*“Use more than test scores to evaluate teachers.”*

#### **INCREASE THE UTILITY OF THE EVALUATION SYSTEM (N = 54)**



Teachers shared that the teacher evaluation system does not serve as an accurate reflection of what is happening in the classroom. To increase evaluation system utility, teachers requested additional feedback on individual evaluation results.

*“Put value behind it. It has nothing to do what I do in my classroom.”*

*“Evaluations feels like you are doing them just because you have to on every level (teacher, administrator, etc.).”*

#### **ADDRESS THE SUBJECTIVE NATURE OF THE TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM (N = 41)**



Many teachers reported that the teacher evaluation system is too subjective and problematic. For example, some teachers noted that evaluation outcomes could change under different administrators.

*“I have a problem with the subjectivity of the evaluation. I am essentially the same teacher as I was last year under a different administrator. Last year I received proficient (average) marks. This year my ratings were much higher under a new-to-our-school principal. I would like*

## Improving the Teacher Evaluation System

*administrators to explain what each of the rating categories look like.”*

*“There is still too much subjectivity on the observers part. Administrator bias in completing the rubric.”*



### **GREATER ADMINISTRATOR INVOLVEMENT (N = 34)**

Teachers requested that principals and administrators become more involved in the classroom, allowing for a clearer understanding of teachers' needs and areas for improvement.

*“The principal has been here for three years and he's never been in my classroom. How can I trust and respect him and take his leadership seriously?”*

*“A lot of administrators have had very little time in the classroom so it makes the administrators a little less understanding of what the reality is of the classroom.”*

# Appendix A

## Survey and Focus Group Questions

The following is the North Carolina fall 2015 survey and focus group questions.

### **NC Fall 2015 Survey Questions**

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*Hope Street Group, as an independent nonprofit, is facilitating the collection of data from teachers in North Carolina to inform a number of decisions the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the North Carolina State Board of Education will make over the next six to 12 months. All responses are collected anonymously. Your willingness to respond to these questions is appreciated.*

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#### **Testing/Assessments/Evaluations**

1) Which of the following possible evaluation components do you think most accurately measures a teacher's level of effectiveness? You may choose more than one.\*

- ☐ Student growth on statewide assessments
- ☐ Student growth on local assessments
- ☐ Student growth on school or teacher-developed assessments
- ☐ Principal or other supervisor observations
- ☐ Peer observations
- ☐ Student surveys
- ☐ Parent surveys
- ☐ Schoolwide growth on statewide assessments
- ☐ None of the above

2) Which measures should be considered when evaluating teachers on Standard 6? You may choose more than one response.\*

- ☐ Students' summative test scores
- ☐ Students' formative test scores
- ☐ Student survey results
- ☐ Schoolwide summative test scores
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Instructional Resources**

3) How helpful are the instructional resources prepared by DPI for teaching the North Carolina Standard Course of Study?\*

- ☐ Not helpful at all
- ☐ Somewhat helpful
- ☐ Helpful
- ☐ Very helpful
- ☐ I am not aware of these resources.

4) How helpful are the instructional resources prepared by your district for teaching the NC Standard Course of Study?\*

- ☐ Not helpful at all
- ☐ Somewhat helpful

- ☐ Helpful
- ☐ Very helpful
- ☐ I am not aware of these resources.

5) Which instructional resources should DPI provide? You may choose more than one of the following.\*

- ☐ Pacing guides
- ☐ Scope and sequence guides
- ☐ Websites where teachers can access sample lesson plans
- ☐ Sample assessment items
- ☐ Other (please describe): \_\_\_\_\_

6) Do you have the textbooks (digital or print) you need to teach your students?\*

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO

### Professional Development

7) Have you ever received professional development about the North Carolina Standard Course of Study?\*

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO

8) Who provided the professional development? You may choose more than one of the following.\*

- ☐ DPI
- ☐ Local school district
- ☐ Local school
- ☐ Association
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

9) In which way(s) has the professional development you received prepared you to teach the North Carolina Standard Course of Study? You may choose more than one of the following.\*

- ☐ It has improved my understanding of the standards themselves.
- ☐ It has helped me understand how to change my instructional practice to teach the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.
- ☐ It has helped me support my peers' understanding of the standards
- ☐ It has helped me support my peers in making changes to instructional practice.
- ☐ Professional development has not helped me prepare to teach the standards.

10) After receiving professional development related to teaching the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, which types of follow-up have you received? You may choose more than one of the following\*

- ☐ Coaching from your principal
- ☐ Coaching from a teacher leader
- ☐ Webinars or other online modules
- ☐ Collaboration via online communities/professional learning networks
- ☐ I have not received any follow-up to the professional development related to teaching the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

11) Which professional development setting would be most useful in supporting your teaching of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study? You may choose more than one of the following.\*



- ☐ Small-group professional development within your school or district
- ☐ Large-group professional development, similar to a statewide conference
- ☐ Coaching
- ☐ Webinar or online module
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

12) Which professional development content would help support your implementation of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study? You may choose more than one of the following.\*

- ☐ Deconstructing the content of the standards
- ☐ Instructional strategies to support implementation of the standards
- ☐ Instructional strategies to support students with disabilities and/or English language learners
- ☐ Strategies for integrating technology into instruction
- ☐ Implementing the new curricular materials
- ☐ Strategies for integrating literacy across the content areas
- ☐ Developing new curricular materials
- ☐ Instructional strategies to support academically and intellectually gifted students
- ☐ Methods for supporting parents with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

### **Access to and Use of Technology**

13) I use Home Base for the following: (You may choose more than one response)\*

- ☐ Accessing lesson plan templates
- ☐ Planning instruction around Standards
- ☐ Accessing Power School
- ☐ Engaging and communicating with parents more deeply
- ☐ Understanding assessments better
- ☐ I have not used Home Base

### **Student Perception Surveys**

14) What are the challenges, if any, associated with using student perception surveys? You may choose more than one of the following.\*

- ☐ Developmental appropriateness
- ☐ Inability to be objective
- ☐ Don't trust the results
- ☐ Students fear lack of privacy
- ☐ Students lack seriousness and perspective
- ☐ Time to administer the survey
- ☐ The data won't be useful
- ☐ The survey design
- ☐ There are no challenges
- ☐ Don't know or no opinion

### **Teacher Leadership**

15) Which support(s) would teachers need to build their leadership capacity within their school or district while staying in the classroom? You may choose more than one answer.\*

- ☐ Time released from non-instructional duties
- ☐ Time released from classroom instruction
- ☐ Training on how adults learn
- ☐ Clear examples/models of leadership implemented within the classroom
- ☐ Clear examples/models of leadership implemented outside the classroom



- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Don't know or no opinion

16) Which model of teacher leadership would have the greatest impact on the development of teachers as effective educators? You may choose more than one of the following.\*

- ☐ One-on-one mentoring relationships
- ☐ Teacher-designed professional development
- ☐ Teacher-led professional development
- ☐ Teacher-administrative hybrid roles within the school leadership team (where teachers take on school-based administrative duties but retain their primary role as a classroom teacher)
- ☐ Teacher-administrative hybrid roles within the district leadership team (where teachers take on district-based administrative duties but retain their primary role as a classroom teacher)
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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17) What is your gender?\*

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

18) What is your age range?\*

- ☐ Younger than 30
- ☐ 30-49
- ☐ 50-54
- ☐ 55 or older

19) What is the highest degree you earned?\*

- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Higher than a Master's Degree

20) How many years have you been teaching?\*

- ☐ Less than 4 years
- ☐ 4-9 years
- ☐ 10-14 years
- ☐ 15 years or more

21) Which school district do you work in?\*

- ☐ Alamance-Burlington School System
- ☐ Alexander County Schools
- ☐ Alleghany County Schools
- ☐ Anson County Schools
- ☐ Ashe County Schools
- ☐ Asheboro City Schools
- ☐ Asheville City Schools
- ☐ Avery County Schools
- ☐ Beaufort County Schools
- ☐ Bertie County Schools
- ☐ Bladen County Schools
- ☐ Brunswick County Schools
- ☐ Buncombe County Schools System
- ☐ Burke County Public Schools

- ( ) Cabarrus County Schools
- ( ) Caldwell County Schools
- ( ) Camden County Schools
- ( ) Carteret County Public Schools
- ( ) Caswell County Schools
- ( ) Catawba County Schools
- ( ) Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools
- ( ) Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
- ( ) Chatham County Schools
- ( ) Cherokee County School District
- ( ) Clay County Schools
- ( ) Cleveland County Schools
- ( ) Clinton City Schools
- ( ) Columbus County Schools
- ( ) Craven County Schools
- ( ) Cumberland County Schools
- ( ) Currituck County Schools
- ( ) Dare County Schools
- ( ) Davidson County Schools
- ( ) Davie County Schools
- ( ) Duplin County Schools
- ( ) Durham Public Schools
- ( ) Edenton-Chowan Schools
- ( ) Edgecombe County Public Schools
- ( ) Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools
- ( ) Elkin City Schools
- ( ) Forsyth County Schools
- ( ) Franklin County Schools
- ( ) Gaston County Schools
- ( ) Gates County Schools
- ( ) Graham County Schools
- ( ) Granville County Schools
- ( ) Greene County Schools
- ( ) Guilford County Schools
- ( ) Halifax County Schools
- ( ) Harnett County Schools
- ( ) Haywood County Schools
- ( ) Henderson County Public Schools
- ( ) Hertford County Public Schools
- ( ) Hickory City Schools
- ( ) Hoke County Schools
- ( ) Hyde County Schools
- ( ) Iredell-Statesville Schools
- ( ) Jackson County Schools
- ( ) Johnston County Schools
- ( ) Jones County Schools
- ( ) Kannapolis City Schools
- ( ) Lee County Schools
- ( ) Lenoir County Schools
- ( ) Lexington City Schools
- ( ) Lincoln County Schools

- ( ) Macon County Schools
- ( ) Madison County Schools
- ( ) Martin County Schools
- ( ) McDowell County Schools
- ( ) Mitchell County Schools
- ( ) Montgomery County Schools
- ( ) Moore County Schools
- ( ) Mooresville Graded School District
- ( ) Mount Airy City Schools
- ( ) Nash-Rocky Mount Schools
- ( ) New Hanover County Schools
- ( ) Newton-Conover City Schools
- ( ) Northampton County Schools
- ( ) Onslow County Schools
- ( ) Orange County Schools
- ( ) Pamlico County Schools
- ( ) Pender County Schools
- ( ) Perquimans County Schools
- ( ) Person County Schools
- ( ) Pitt County Schools
- ( ) Polk County Schools
- ( ) Randolph County Schools
- ( ) Richmond County Schools
- ( ) Roanoke Rapids Graded School District
- ( ) Robeson County Schools
- ( ) Rockingham County Schools
- ( ) Rowan-Salisbury School System
- ( ) Rutherford County Schools
- ( ) Sampson County Schools
- ( ) Scotland County Schools
- ( ) Stanly County Schools
- ( ) Stokes County Schools
- ( ) Surry County Schools
- ( ) Swain County Schools
- ( ) Thomasville City Schools
- ( ) Transylvania County Schools
- ( ) Tyrrell County Schools
- ( ) Union County Public Schools
- ( ) Vance County Schools
- ( ) Wake County Public School System
- ( ) Warren County Schools
- ( ) Washington County Schools
- ( ) Watauga County Schools
- ( ) Wayne County Public Schools
- ( ) Weldon City Schools
- ( ) Whiteville City Schools
- ( ) Wilkes County Schools
- ( ) Wilson County Schools
- ( ) Yadkin County Schools
- ( ) Yancey County Schools

Thank you for completing this survey. Your input is valued. If you have questions about the Teacher Voice Network, please contact: [katharine@hopestreetgroup.org](mailto:katharine@hopestreetgroup.org). If you would like to be contacted about how you can contribute to the work of the Teacher Voice Network, visit: <http://hsq.270strategies.com/pln-signup.htm>.

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### **NC fall 2015 Focus Group Questions**

*Hope Street Group, as an independent nonprofit, is facilitating the collection of data from teachers in North Carolina to inform a number of decisions the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the North Carolina State Board of Education will make over the next six to 12 months. All responses are collected anonymously. Your willingness to respond to these questions is appreciated.*

- 1) What recent changes in resources have had the biggest impact on your classroom?\*
- 2) What is the nature and extent of interaction between public and charter schools in your district? What impact has this had on your school community?\*
- 3) What does being treated as a professional mean to you?\*
- 4) Which district or state-level measures are most important for showing evidence of achieving educational equity for all students?\*
- 5) If given the opportunity, what would you change to improve the statewide teacher evaluation system?\*

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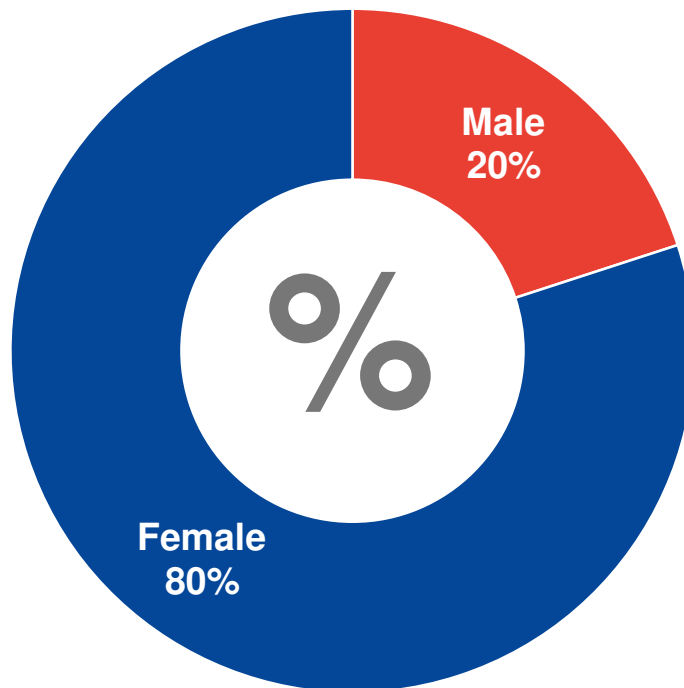
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# Appendix B

## Demographic Questions

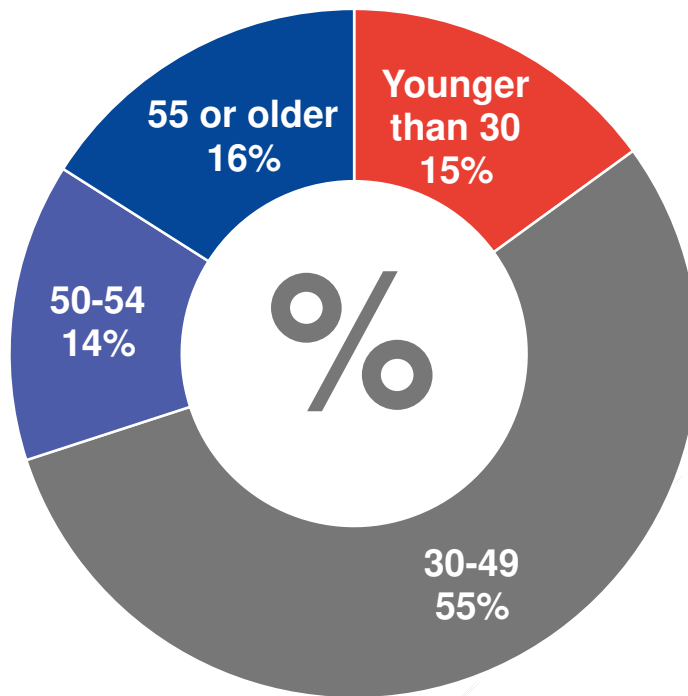
**What is your gender?**

Figure 0.a



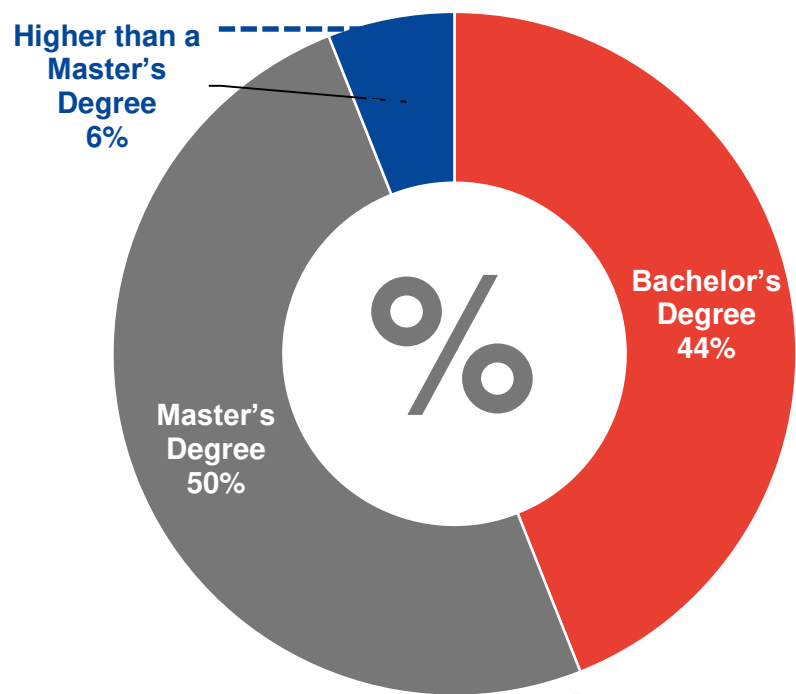
What is your age range?

Figure 0.a



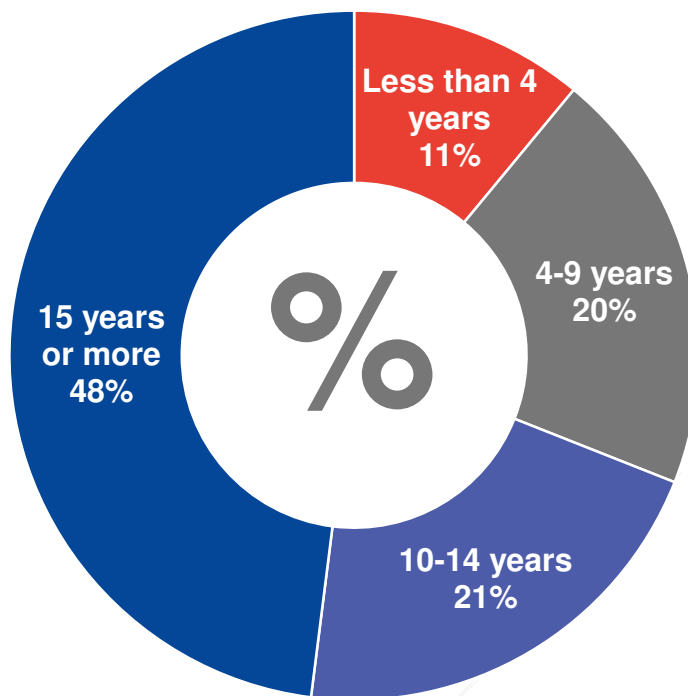
What is the highest degree you earned?

Figure 0.a



How many years have you been teaching?

Figure 0.a





# Appendix C

## Response Rates by School District

Alamance-Burlington School System 0.3%  
Alexander County Schools 0.6%  
Alleghany County Schools 0.3%  
Anson County Schools 0.0%  
Ashe County Schools 0.0%  
Asheboro City Schools 0.3%  
Asheville City Schools 0.6%  
Avery County Schools 0.0%  
Beaufort County Schools 0.1%  
Bertie County Schools 0.0%  
Bladen County Schools 0.1%  
Brunswick County Schools 0.7%  
Buncombe County Schools System 1.8%  
Burke County Public Schools 0.2%  
Cabarrus County Schools 0.4%  
Caldwell County Schools 0.9%  
Camden County Schools 0.1%  
Carteret County Public Schools 0.3%  
Caswell County Schools 0.5%  
Catawba County Schools 0.0%  
Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools 7.9%  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools 1.4%  
Chatham County Schools 0.3%  
Cherokee County School District 2.1%  
Clay County Schools 0.1%  
Cleveland County Schools 0.3%  
Clinton City Schools 0.1%  
Columbus County Schools 2.6%  
Craven County Schools 0.1%  
Cumberland County Schools 0.8%  
Currituck County Schools 0.0%  
Dare County Schools 0.0%  
Davidson County Schools 0.2%  
Davie County Schools 0.2%  
Duplin County Schools 0.7%  
Durham Public Schools 9.2%

Edenton-Chowan Schools 0.0%  
Edgecombe County Public Schools 0.0%  
Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools 0.2%  
Elkin City Schools 0.4%  
Forsyth County Schools 0.6%  
Franklin County Schools 2.7%  
Gaston County Schools 0.5%  
Gates County Schools 0.3%  
Graham County Schools 0.0%  
Granville County Schools 0.4%  
Greene County Schools 0.1%  
Guilford County Schools 6.1%  
Halifax County Schools 0.0%  
Harnett County Schools 0.7%  
Haywood County Schools 0.2%  
Henderson County Public Schools 4.1%  
Hertford County Public Schools 0.0%  
Hickory City Schools 0.0%  
Hoke County Schools 0.0%  
Hyde County Schools 0.0%  
Iredell-Statesville Schools 0.6%  
Jackson County Schools 3.0%  
Johnston County Schools 0.6%  
Jones County Schools 0.3%  
Kannapolis City Schools 0.0%  
Lee County Schools 0.2%  
Lenoir County Schools 0.2%  
Lexington City Schools 0.0%  
Lincoln County Schools 0.2%  
Macon County Schools 0.4%  
Madison County Schools 0.0%  
Martin County Schools 0.1%  
McDowell County Schools 0.0%  
Mitchell County Schools 0.0%  
Montgomery County Schools 0.1%  
Moore County Schools 0.1%  
Mooresville Graded School District 0.1%  
Mount Airy City Schools 0.0%  
Nash-Rocky Mount Schools 0.6%  
New Hanover County Schools 1.9%  
Newton-Conover City Schools 1.5%

Northampton County Schools 0.0%  
Onslow County Schools 0.5%  
Orange County Schools 5.4%  
Pamlico County Schools 0.0%  
Pender County Schools 0.6%  
Perquimans County Schools 0.0%  
Person County Schools 0.2%  
Pitt County Schools 0.1%  
Polk County Schools 0.0%  
Randolph County Schools 0.6%  
Richmond County Schools 0.1%  
Roanoke Rapids Graded School District 0.0%  
Robeson County Schools 0.4%  
Rockingham County Schools 0.1%  
Rowan-Salisbury School System 0.5%  
Rutherford County Schools 0.1%  
Sampson County Schools 0.0%  
Scotland County Schools 0.2%  
Stanly County Schools 0.1%  
Stokes County Schools 0.0%  
Surry County Schools 0.2%  
Swain County Schools 0.1%  
Thomasville City Schools 0.0%  
Transylvania County Schools 1.3%  
Tyrrell County Schools 0.1%  
Union County Public Schools 0.3%  
Vance County Schools 1.3%  
Wake County Public School System 15.0%  
Warren County Schools 1.6%  
Washington County Schools 0.1%  
Watauga County Schools 5.6%  
Wayne County Public Schools 0.3%  
Weldon City Schools 0.0%  
Whiteville City Schools 1.7%  
Wilkes County Schools 3.9%  
Wilson County Schools 0.1%  
Yadkin County Schools 0.0%  
Yancey County Schools 0.0%

# Appendix D

## Sample Representativeness

In an effort to determine how representative the respondents to this survey are, demographic information was collected (questions 17-20). This demographic information was collected to compare it to demographic data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The comparisons appear below and are based on NCES data from 2011-12.

Years of Experience	Survey Respondents	NCES
Less than 4 years	11	11.7
4-9 years	20	31.4
10-14 years	21	20.4
15 or more years	48	36.4

NCES data can be found at:

[http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass1112\\_2013314\\_t1s\\_003.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass1112_2013314_t1s_003.asp)

Highest Degree Completed	Survey Respondents	NCES
Bachelor's Degree	44	54.2
Master's Degree	50	33.8
Higher than a Master's	6	7.8

NCES data can be found at:

[http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass1112\\_2013314\\_t1s\\_004.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass1112_2013314_t1s_004.asp)

Age Range	Survey Respondents	NCES
Less than 30	15	19.3
30-49	55	52.2
50-54	14	11.4
55 or older	16	17

NCES data can be found at:

[http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass1112\\_2013314\\_t1s\\_002.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass1112_2013314_t1s_002.asp)

Gender	Survey Respondents	NCES
Male	20	21.1
Female	80	72.7

NCES data can be found at:

[http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass1112\\_2013314\\_t1s\\_002.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass1112_2013314_t1s_002.asp)

Given that the NCES data (which represents the entire teaching population in North Carolina), is similar to the demographic data collected from respondents, the respondents to the survey are representative of the teaching population in North Carolina; however, there are limitations to the ability to generalize the survey findings. Additional information about that matter can be found in Appendix F.

# Appendix E

## Interpreting the Data

### Minimizing Survey Error

Survey research is a commonly used research method to determine what people are thinking, feeling or doing.<sup>i</sup> A successful survey is based on sound research questions, accurate measures of the topics of interest, and a design that enables the generalization of research findings to the population of interest.<sup>ii</sup> Four types of survey error, however, can undermine the results of any given survey: measurement, coverage, sampling, and nonresponse.<sup>iii,iv</sup>

### Measurement Error

Measurement error, also referred to as an error of observation, occurs when respondents give inaccurate or imprecise answers to survey questions. This may happen as a result of poorly worded questions (e.g., lengthy or double barreled questions) or poorly designed surveys (e.g., unclear instructions or inadequate response options). By taking care in the design of survey items and the broader survey questionnaire, having key stakeholders review draft items and the draft questionnaire, and by testing out items with potential respondents, HSG sought to minimize measurement error.

### Exclusion Error

Exclusion error occurs when: 1) there are members of the population of interest who have no chance of being surveyed and 2) these excluded members of the population differ from included members of the population. For example, in an e-mail survey of teachers, coverage errors could occur if there were teachers whose email addresses were not active, teachers who do not check their listed email address, or teachers, such as those who were newly hired, who were not on the email list at all. To the extent that these teachers differed from others regarding the survey topic of interest, coverage error exists. Because all of the teachers in teacher fellows' PLNs have provided an email address, coverage error in this survey is minimal.

### Sampling Error

Sampling error involves random differences occurring between sample estimates and true population values. Sampling error is unavoidable in sample surveys because only some population members are surveyed. Sampling error is often quantified by standard errors or margins of error (also referred to as confidence intervals), which provide information on the probability that any finding from a sample is due to chance (i.e., sampling error). Holding all else equal, increasing sample sizes generally reduces sampling error. Because HSG attempted to survey all of the teachers in a state by emailing the survey link to all teachers in PLNs, inviting teachers in PLNs to send the link to colleagues who may or may not be in a PLN, having state partners also send the link to teachers for whom they have access via an active email address, and publicizing the availability of the survey via social media, sampling error does not apply. In other words, there is no statistical basis for calculating confidence intervals regarding the survey results.

## Nonresponse Error

Nonresponse error occurs when individuals do not respond to a survey or to particular questions on a survey, and when these individuals would have responded differently, on average, than those people who did respond. More specifically, nonresponse error is the product of:

1. **The non-response rate**, which is the percentage of the sample or population who do not respond to a survey (unit non-response rate) or an item on the survey (item non-response); and
2. **Non-response bias**, which is the difference between the average respondent's response and the average non-respondent's response for a given item.

Thus, a survey can have a low response rate with little or no non-response error. This can occur if there are little or no differences between respondents and non-respondents that are relevant to the survey's topics of study. In contrast, when there are large differences between respondents and non-respondents, it is possible for surveys to have high nonresponse bias even with high response rates.<sup>v</sup>

There are many reasons why responses of respondents might differ from those of non-respondents. Survey format matters. For example, younger teachers may be more likely to respond to an online survey than teachers nearing retirement age, given their greater technological literacy. If younger teachers differed from older teachers in their thoughts regarding a survey topic (for example, teacher pension reforms), then this difference could bias results if analyses did not take into account teacher age. Survey topics also matter. For example, in a survey of teacher compensation, teachers who feel strongly that they are underpaid might be more inclined to respond than would teachers who are comfortable with their current level of compensation. As a result, such a survey could overstate teacher dissatisfaction regarding pay. When seeking to minimize nonresponse bias, it is important to consider what affects both respondents' likelihoods of participating in a survey and how they might respond to specific survey questions.<sup>vi</sup>

Because surveys can have low response rates and still have little to no nonresponse bias, response rates are not a good measure to judge the quality of a survey in and of themselves.<sup>vii</sup> Recent empirical evidence has shown that the relationship between response rates and nonresponse bias is weak, at best:

- A comprehensive study using exit poll data found no statistically significant relationship between response rates and survey error.<sup>viii</sup>
- In a study of household surveys, response rates accounted for only about 11 percent of the variation in nonresponse bias estimates.<sup>ix</sup>
- Results from two identical national telephone surveys were similar, despite dramatically different response rates (61 versus 36 percent).<sup>x</sup>
- A national health survey that saw declining response rates over time also found declining nonresponse bias.<sup>xi</sup>

Because response rates are not a good indicator of nonresponse bias, investigations into the extent of possible nonresponse bias are important. There are a number of practical approaches that survey researchers can take to make such investigations. For example, researchers can compare demographics or other administrative data on survey respondents to those of non-respondents, contrast survey results for early responders with those for late responders, and

judge survey results against findings from an external data source.<sup>xii</sup> In each case, the more similar the results, the less substantial any nonresponse bias is likely to be.

## Conclusion

When assessing the quality of a survey it is important to consider the total survey error, comprised of measurement, sampling, coverage, and nonresponse errors. HSG has taken steps to reduce total survey error via a rigorous, multi-faceted approach to survey design and implementation.

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<sup>i</sup> Mitchell, M. L., & Jolley, J. M. (2010). *Research Design Explained* (7th ed.). Belmont CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

<sup>ii</sup> Mitchell, M. L., & Jolley, J. M. (2010). *Research Design Explained* (7th ed.). Belmont CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

<sup>iii</sup> Groves, R. M. (1989). *Survey Errors and Survey Costs*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

<sup>iv</sup> Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2008). *Internet, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

<sup>v</sup> Langer, G. (2003). About response rates: Some unresolved questions. *Public Perspective*, 16–18.

<sup>vi</sup> Groves, R. M., & Peytcheva, E. (2008). The impact of nonresponse rates on nonresponse bias: A meta-analysis. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 72(2), 167–189.

<sup>vii</sup> Gideon, L. (2012). *Handbook of Survey Methodology for the Social Sciences*. New York: Springer New York.

<sup>viii</sup> Merkle, D. & Edelman, M. (2002) "Nonresponse in Exit Polls: A Comprehensive Analysis." In *Survey Nonresponse*, ed. Robert M. Groves, Don A. Dillman, John L. Eltinge, and Roderick J. A. Little, pp. 343–58. New York: Wiley.

<sup>ix</sup> Groves, R. M. (2006). Nonresponse rates and nonresponse bias in household surveys. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 70(5), 646–675.

<sup>x</sup> Keeter, S., Miller, C., Kohut, A., Groves, R. M., & Presser, S. (2000). Consequences of reducing nonresponse in a national telephone survey. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 64(2).

<sup>xi</sup> Mokdad, A.H., Stroup, D.F., Giles, W.H., & Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Team. (2003). Public health surveillance for behavioral risk factors in a changing environment. Recommendations from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Team. *MMWR. Recommendations and Reports: Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. Recommendations and Reports / Centers for Disease Control*, 52(RR-9).

<sup>xii</sup> Montaquila, J. M., & Olson, K. M. (2012). Practical tools for nonresponse bias studies [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <http://www.amstat.org/sections/SRMS/webinarfiles/NRBiasWebinarApril2012.pdf>.