

wea



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

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

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

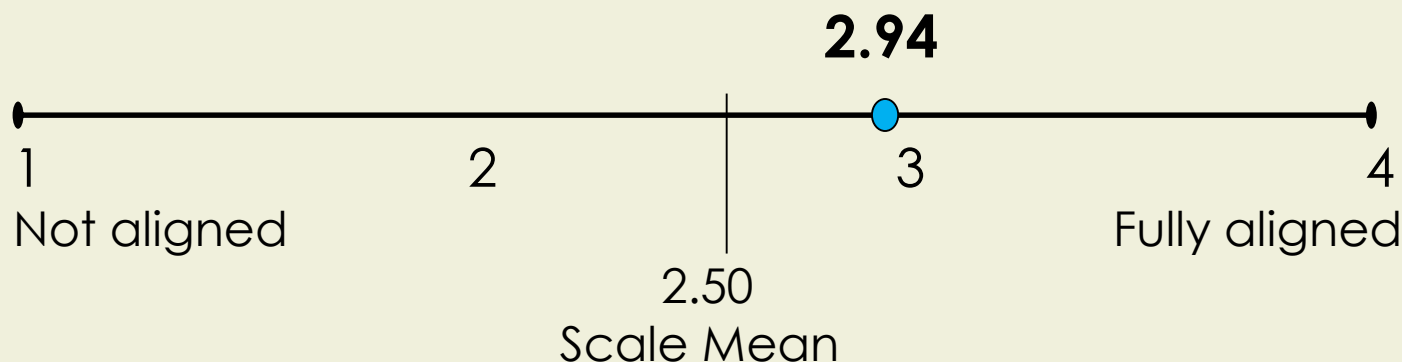
Starting with the Class of 2019, 11<sup>th</sup> graders must achieve a cut score set by the state as a graduation requirement.

# Survey Purposes

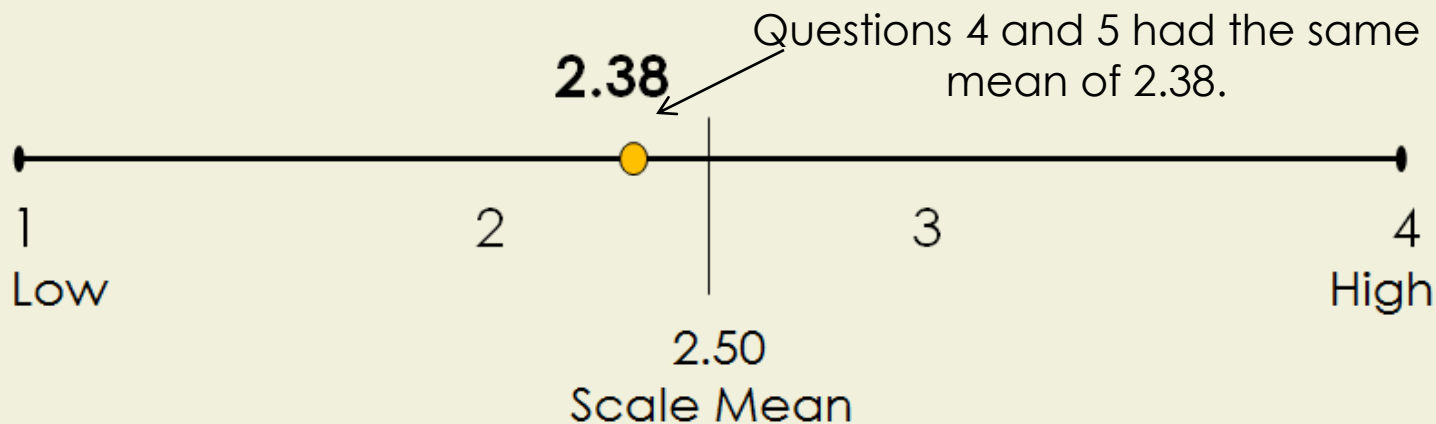


- Learn members' opinions on and issues with the SBA
- Identify how WEA can support members with this new statewide standardized test
- Share survey data with WEA members, policy makers and other stakeholders

Level of Common Core Curriculum Alignment in your classroom/district



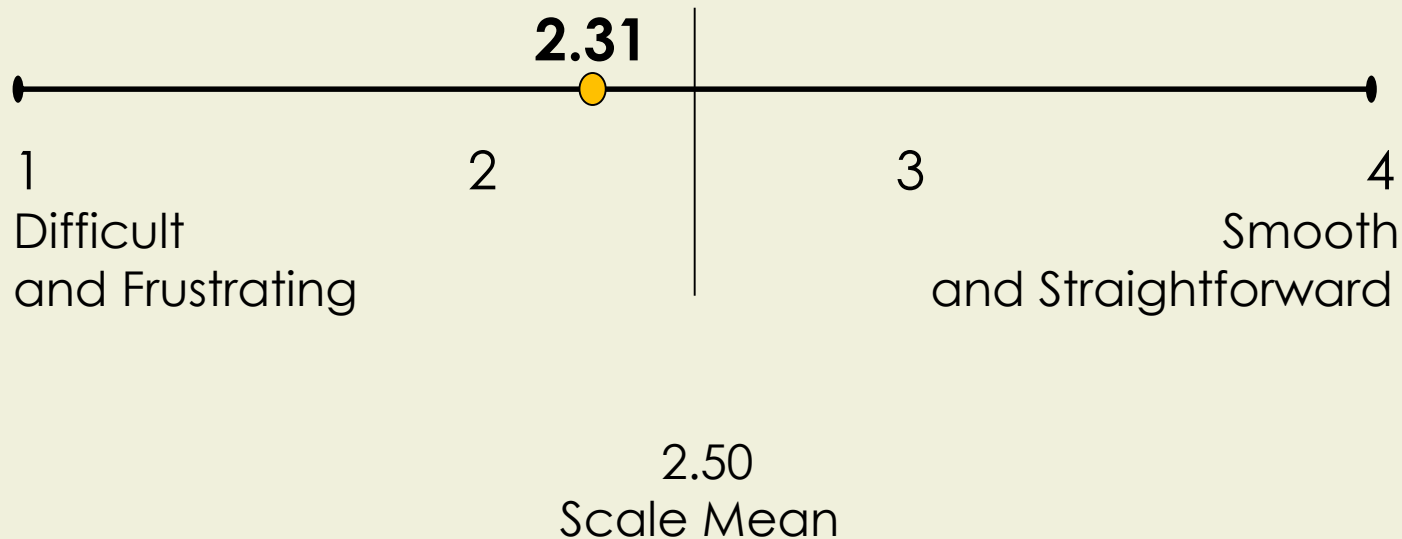
Level of Curriculum Support (Q4) and Professional Development Support (Q5) To Implement CCSS in your school/district



1. A vast majority of respondents found Smarter Balanced testing to be very disruptive to teaching and learning.
2. Students' experiences with the test varied greatly from school to school, often due to inequitable resources to administer the new on-line assessment.
3. Accommodations for students with IEPs and 504 plans weren't always provided as required by law.
4. Student directions were unnecessarily complicated and created confusion for many students.
5. The on-line delivery of the test made it difficult to determine if this was a test of ELA and math skills, or one of technology proficiency.

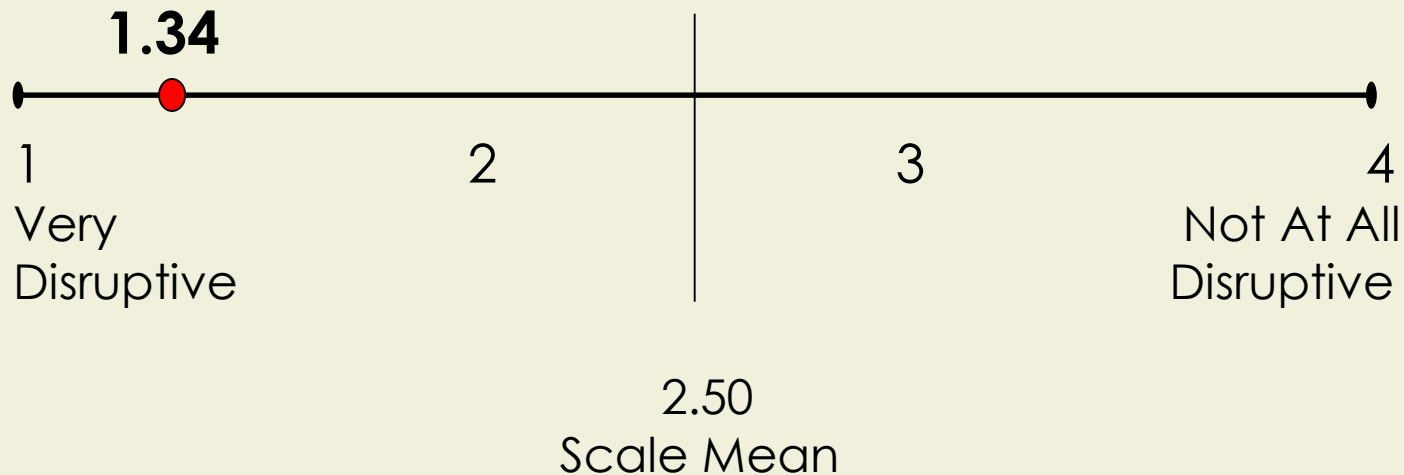
Respondents rated their overall experience administering the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) as slightly difficult and frustrating.

## Overall Experience Administering SBA (Q6)



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

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



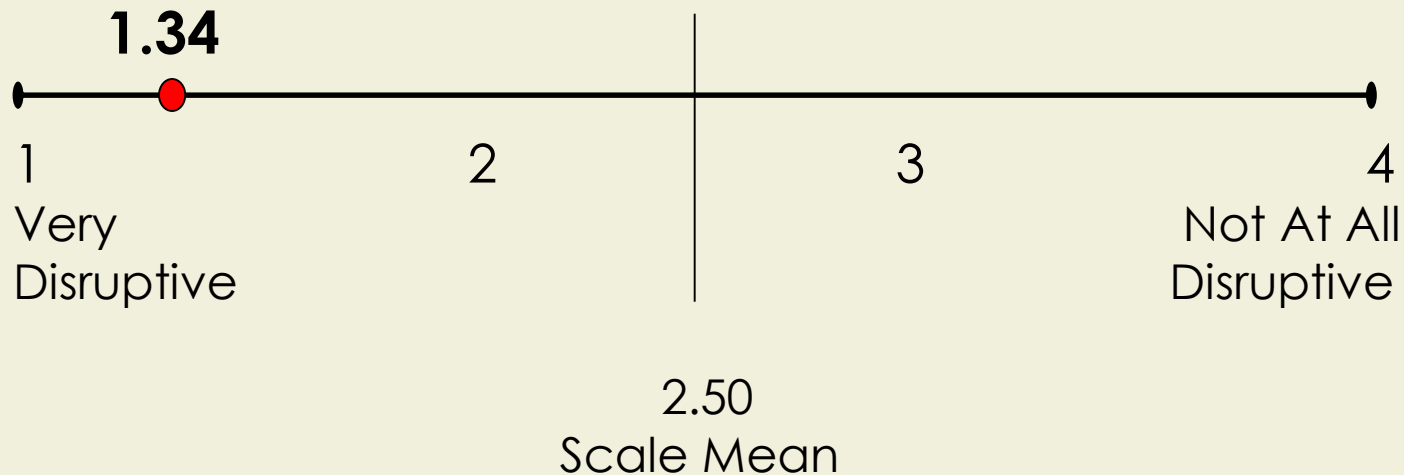
From open comments:

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



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

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

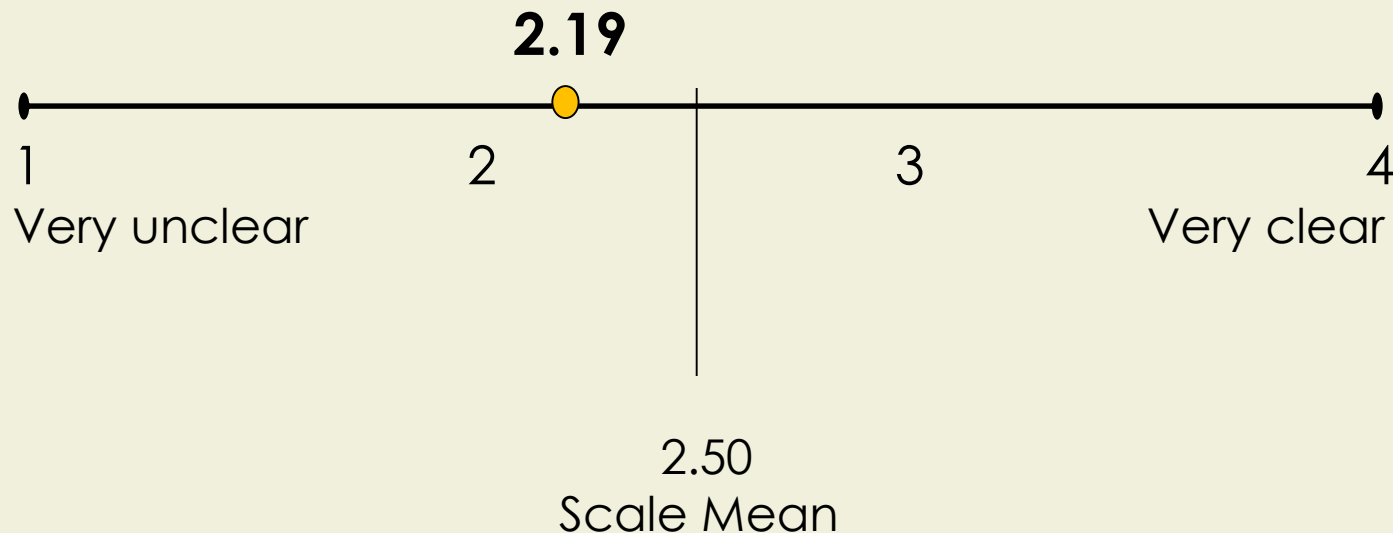


From open comments:

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

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

## Overall Clarity of SBA Student Instructions (Q8)



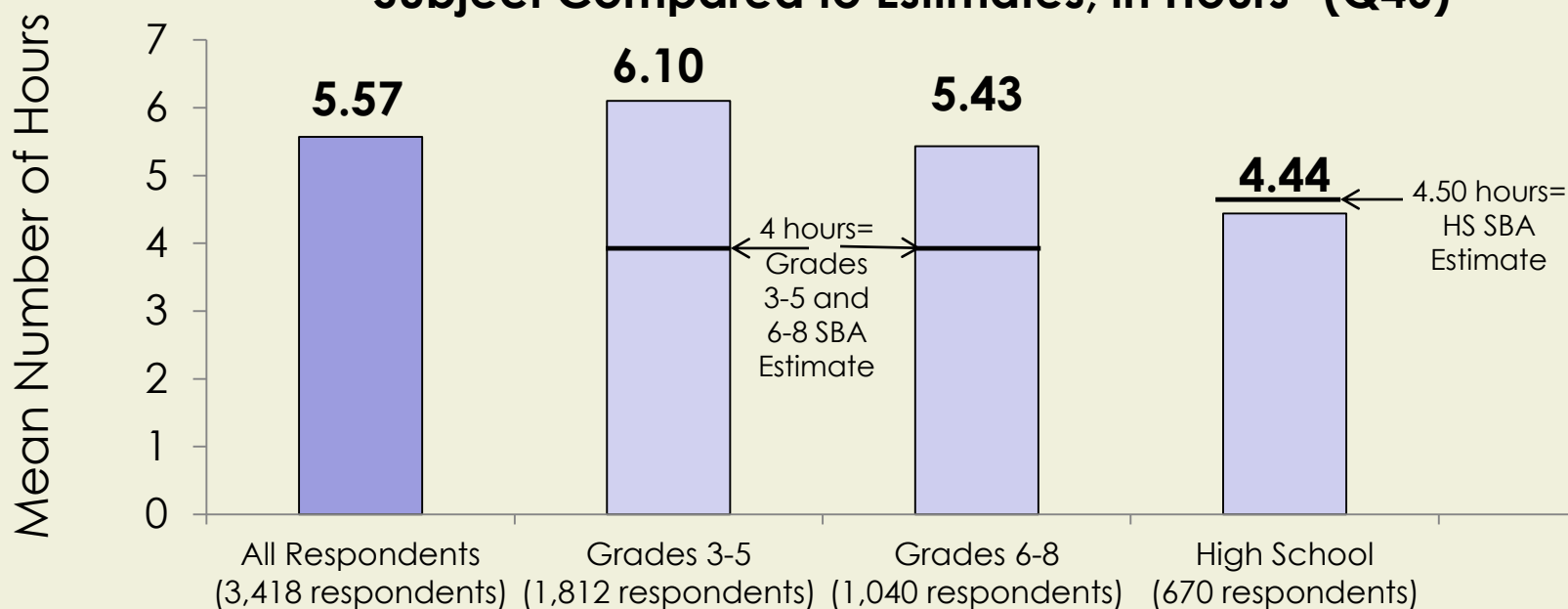
*Note: The mean for ELL teachers was 1.84*

From open comments:

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

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

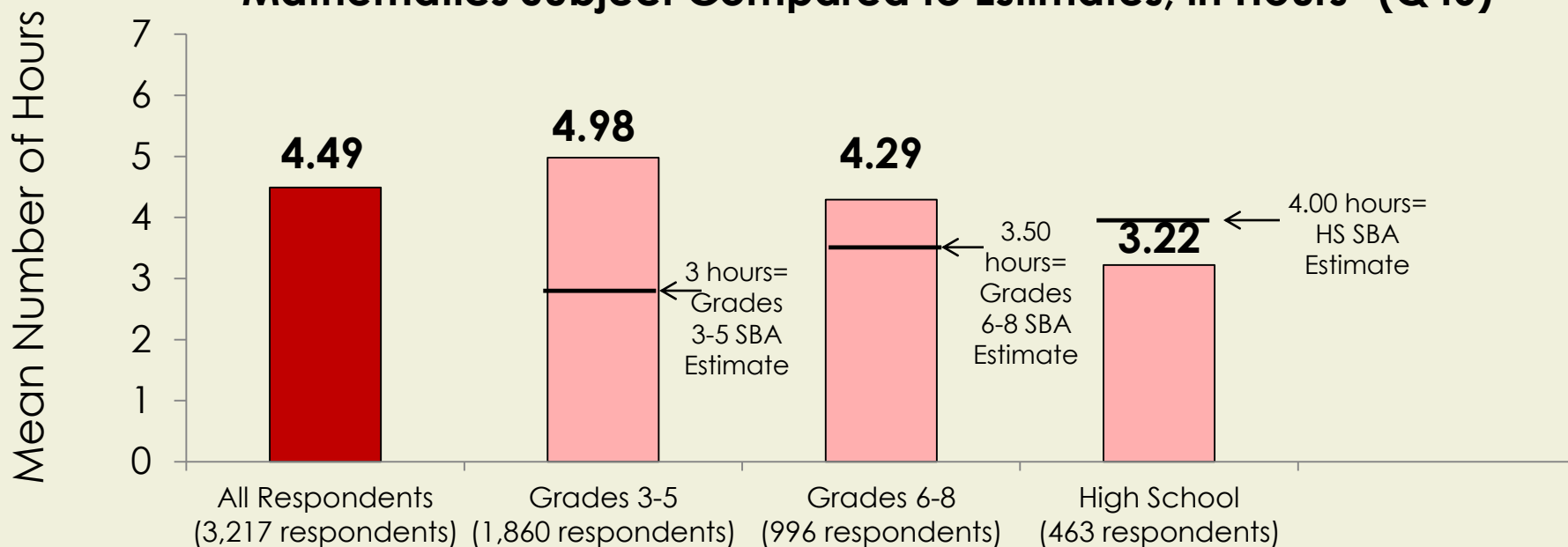
## Mean Amount of Time for Most Students To Complete ELA Subject Compared to Estimates, in Hours\* (Q46)



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

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

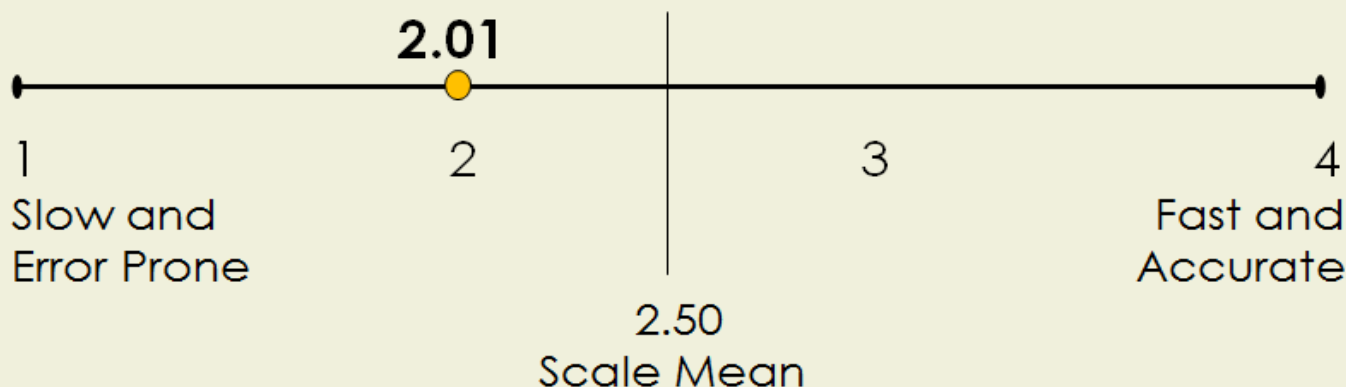
**Mean Amount of Time for Most Students To Complete Mathematics Subject Compared to Estimates, in Hours\* (Q46)**



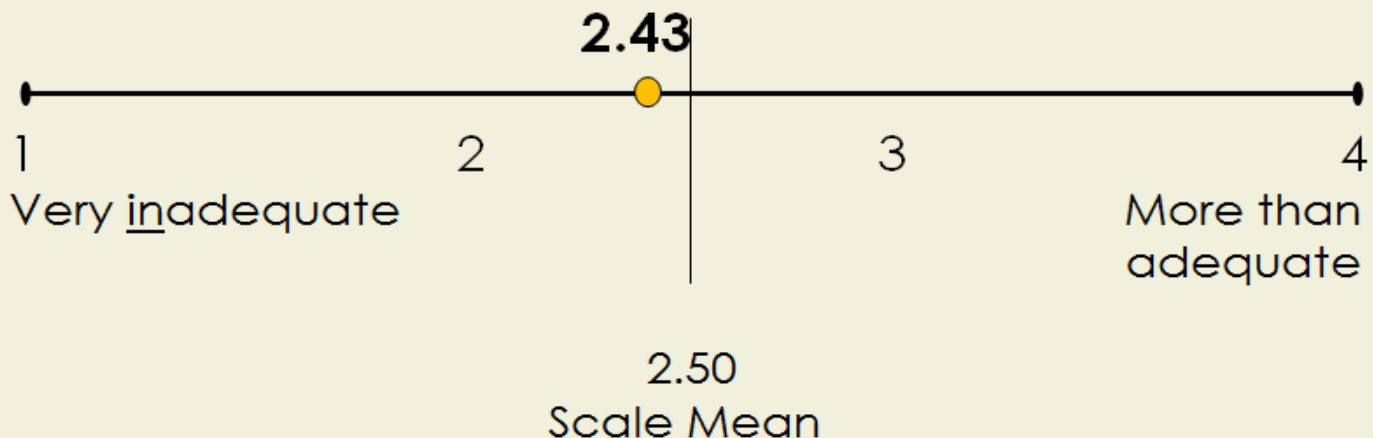
\* Multiple choice question showed time range options. Mean calculated using the midpoint for each response option.

# Keyboarding Proficiency and Screen Size

## Students' Keyboarding Proficiency (Q32)



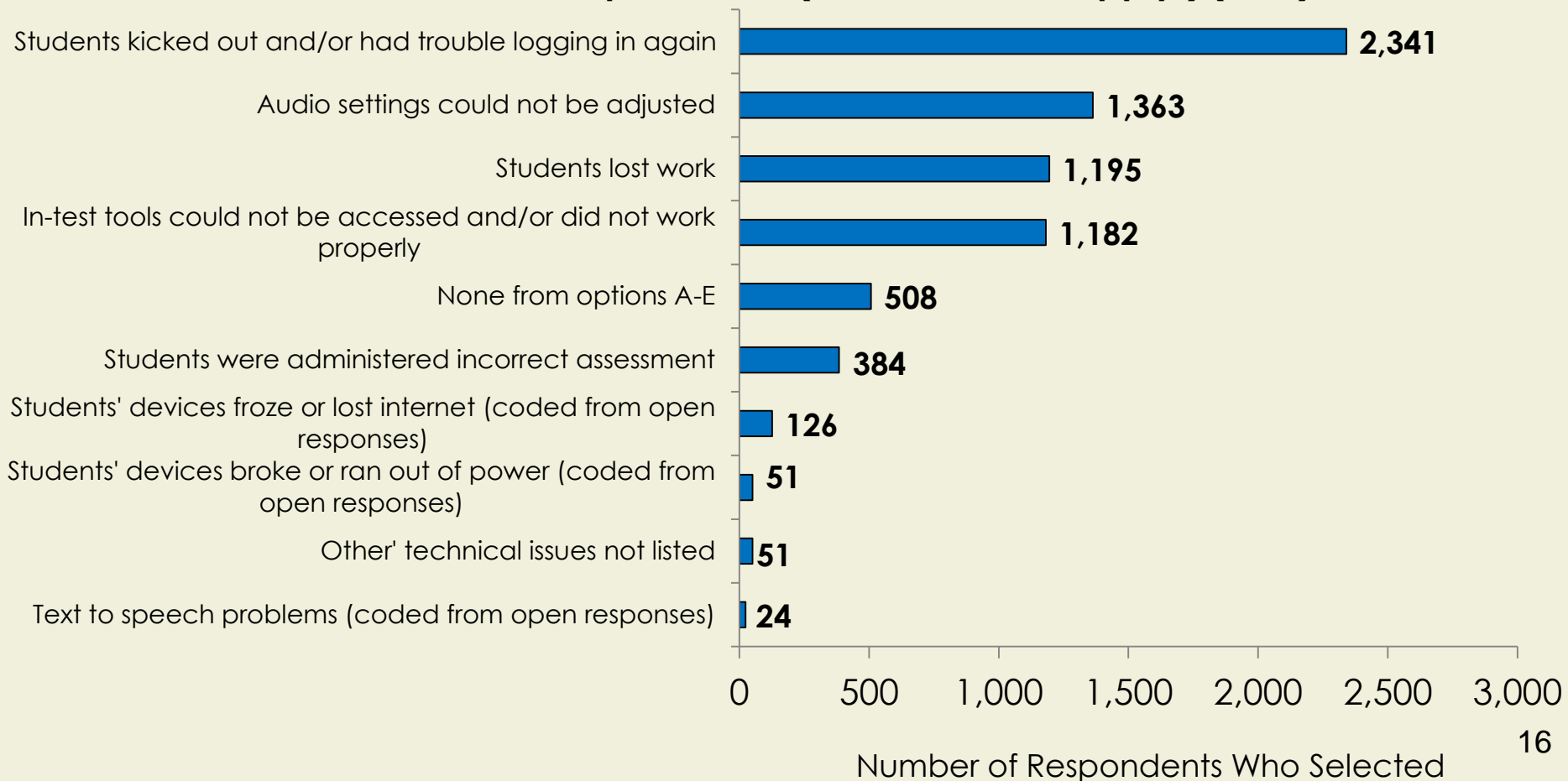
## Screen Size\* (Q35)



\*Keep in mind that a variety of devices with varying screen sizes were used to administer the SBA.

89% of respondents reported students experiencing technical issues.

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





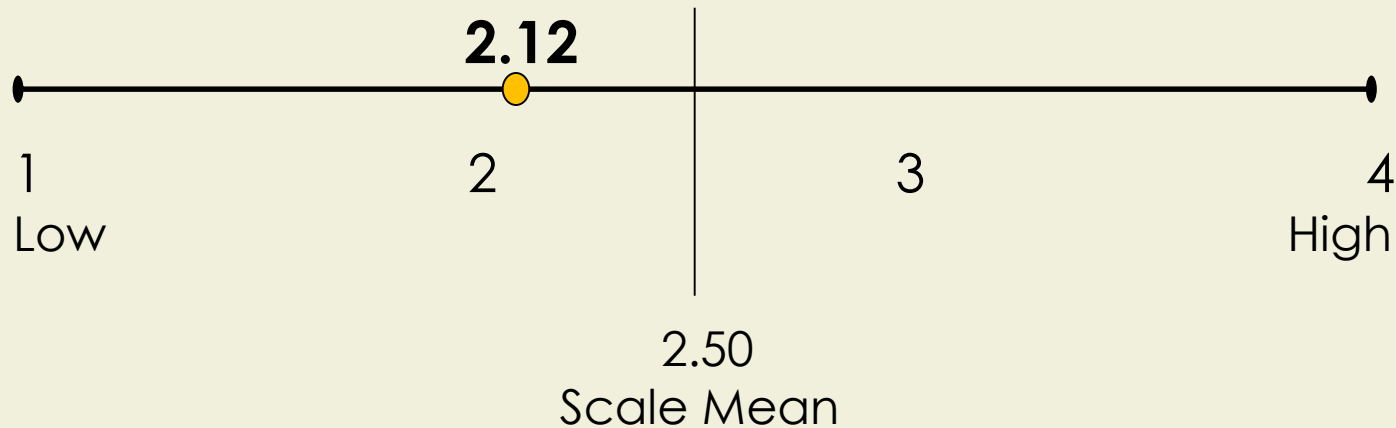
- Many respondents pointed out socioeconomic bias due to the SBA's online administration. Less affluent communities and districts have less access to technology at home, are more likely to have older equipment and fewer computers per student.
- Respondents noted a lack of test alignment with developmentally appropriate keyboarding skills. Students with limited typing skills should not be asked to type written responses.
- English Language Learner (ELL) teacher respondents rated their students' keyboarding proficiency and their students' familiarity with their devices significantly lower than all respondents.
- Students who were administered the test on a desktop computer reported the fewest technological problems, compared to other devices. Respondents who administered the SBA on tablets reported various technical issues at a higher rate than all respondents.

Open comments based on top concerns:

- *We had to piece together donated equipment. Our current equipment was not adequate for testing.*
- *We had extension cords strung across the class to keep laptop batteries charged. Student anxiety was very high when their laptop battery died and the laptop shut down.*
- *When they would highlight or click on the word they thought was the best choice, it would not allow them to proceed. So, I saw many students clicking on every word in the passage. I thought it to be a guessing game and/or process of elimination for many.*
- *. . . students must learn touch typing and demonstrate the ability to type 20 words per minute with over 95% accuracy before typing directly to a keyboard device. . . This is because the act of typing slows the student's thinking down until they can type at 20 words per minute.*

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

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



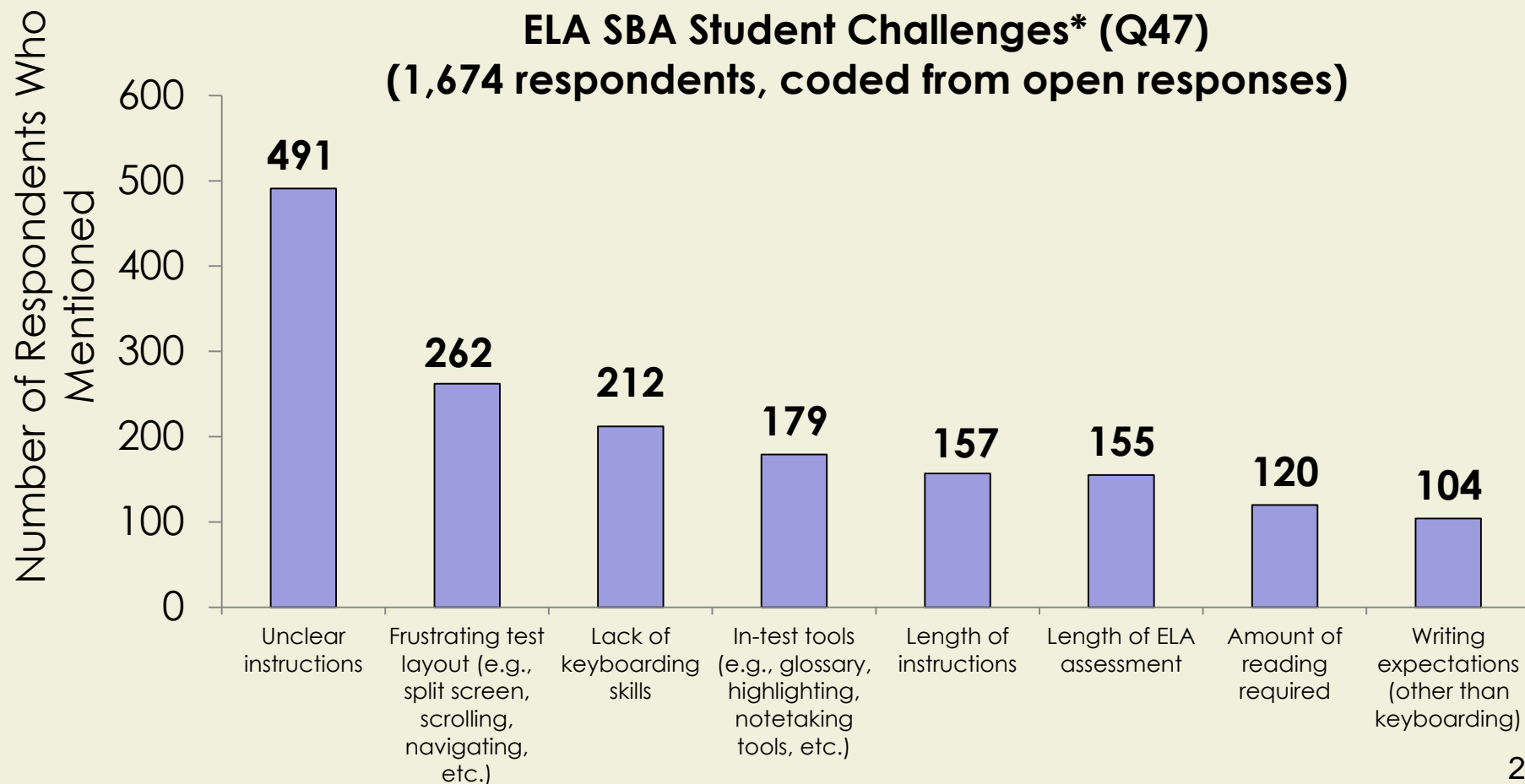
- The State and districts need to provide clearer more timely communication about the legal obligations to students entitled to accommodations.
- School districts need to provide more support for student-specific testing accommodations.
- The SBA needs a greater ability to meet required accommodations of students' IEPs and/or 504 plans.
- Students should not lose legally mandated IEP services because of test administration.
- Respondents expressed great concern at developmentally inappropriate grade-level testing inconsistent with a student's IEP.
- English Language Learner (ELL) teacher respondents rated district support to provide testing accommodations as significantly lower than all other respondents. They rated the SBA's ability to meet required accommodations significantly lower than all respondents.

From open comments:

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

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

**ELA SBA Student Challenges\* (Q47)**  
**(1,674 respondents, coded from open responses)**



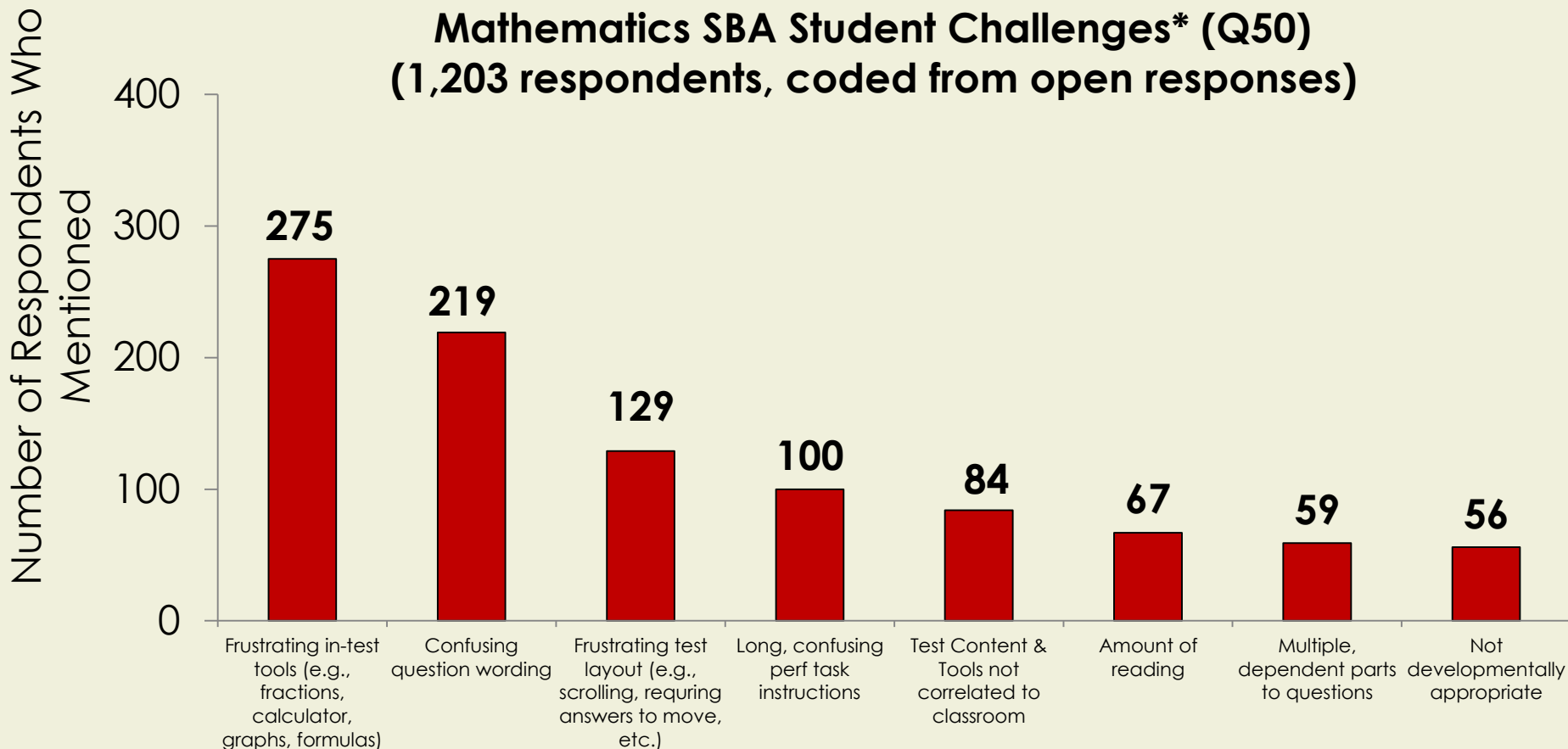
\* Open response question; responses were coded with up to three topics.

From open comments:

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

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

**Mathematics SBA Student Challenges\* (Q50)**  
(1,203 respondents, coded from open responses)



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

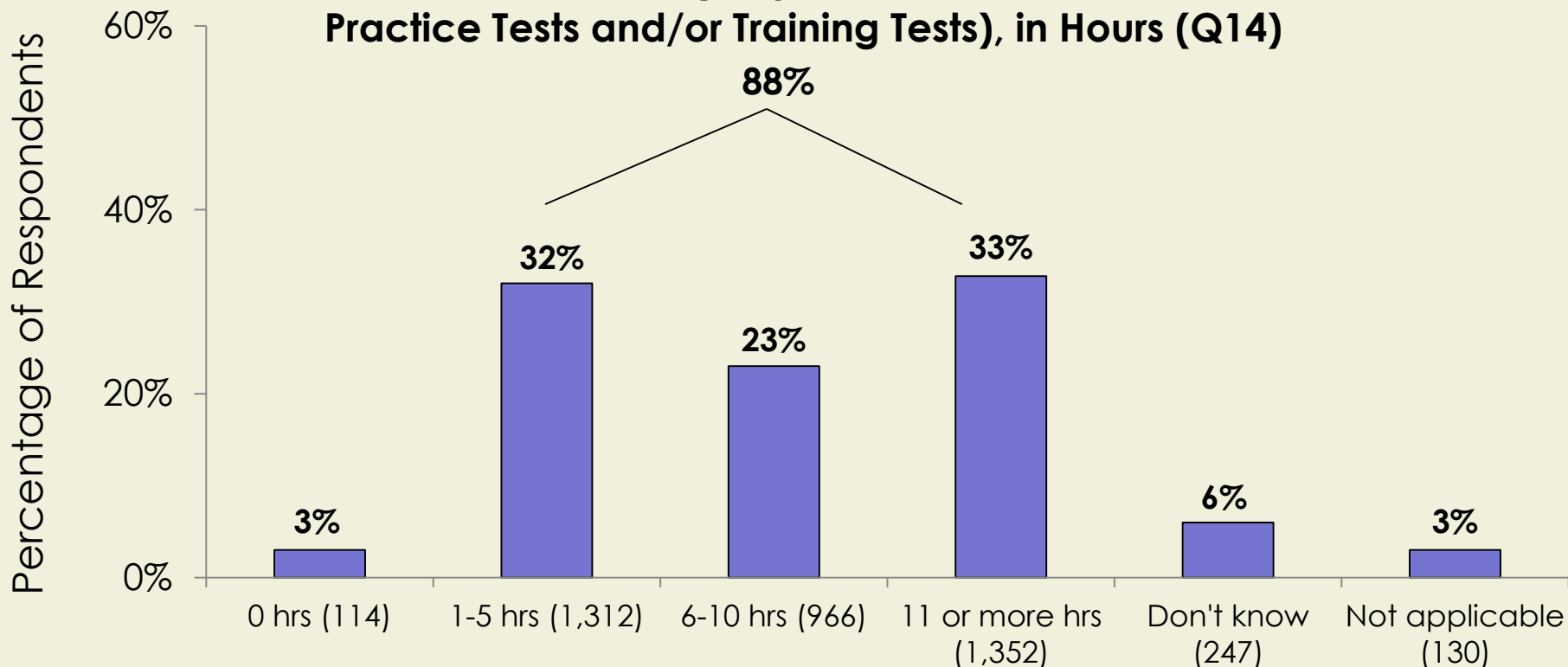


From open comments:

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

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

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



*Respondents who administered the SBA in grades 3-5 and 6-8 spent significantly more time preparing and practicing with students than those who administered at the high school level.*

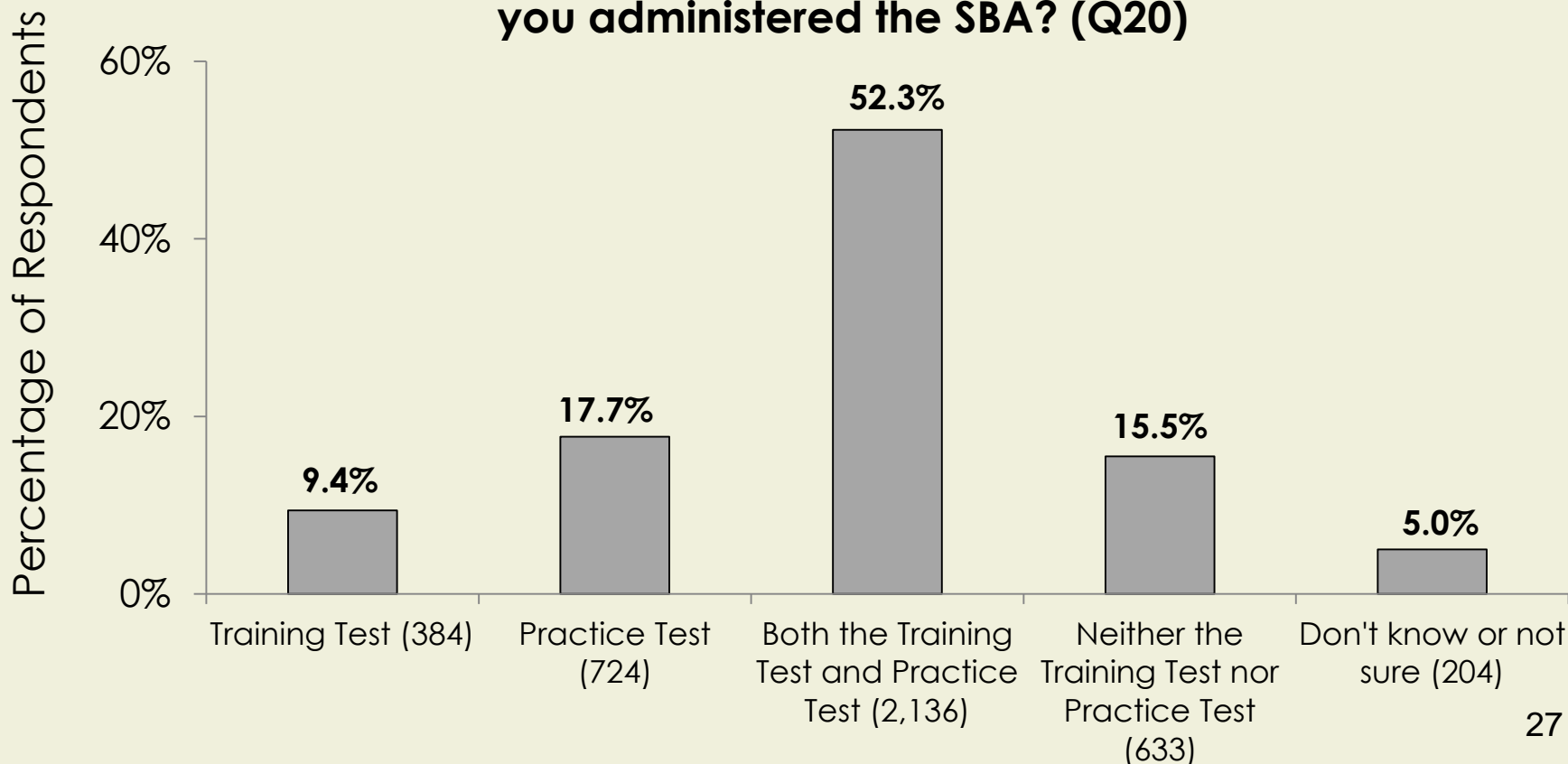
# Training and Practice Tests

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

Training Tests – familiarize students with test software and navigation tools

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

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



From open comments:

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

# Three Components of the SBA System

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

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

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

**For questions about the SBA, please contact:**

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