



Inspiring Vision, Disappointing
Results:
NCLB Meets School Realities

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No Child Left Behind Study

- Purpose of NCLB: “to close the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority and non-minority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers” within 12 years
- Purpose of CRP Study is to understand

How the law actually works at state & local levels



How the law impacts minority children and schools



Study Design

- Select states with quite different educational systems and policies but with large minority enrollments
 - AZ, CA, IL, NY, VA, GA
- Two Urban Districts within Each State Except IL (only Chicago)
- Qualitative Data Collection-Field Visits, Interviews, Document Collection
- Quantitative Data Collection-Demographic and Achievement for All Schools, 6 States



Goals of NCLB



(1) Bush Administration and Federalism

- Little deference to local priorities or local decision making
- Little consideration of state capacity
- Growing political resistance linked to lack of resources, state fiscal crisis, and unreasonable requirements



(2) NCLB and State Accountability

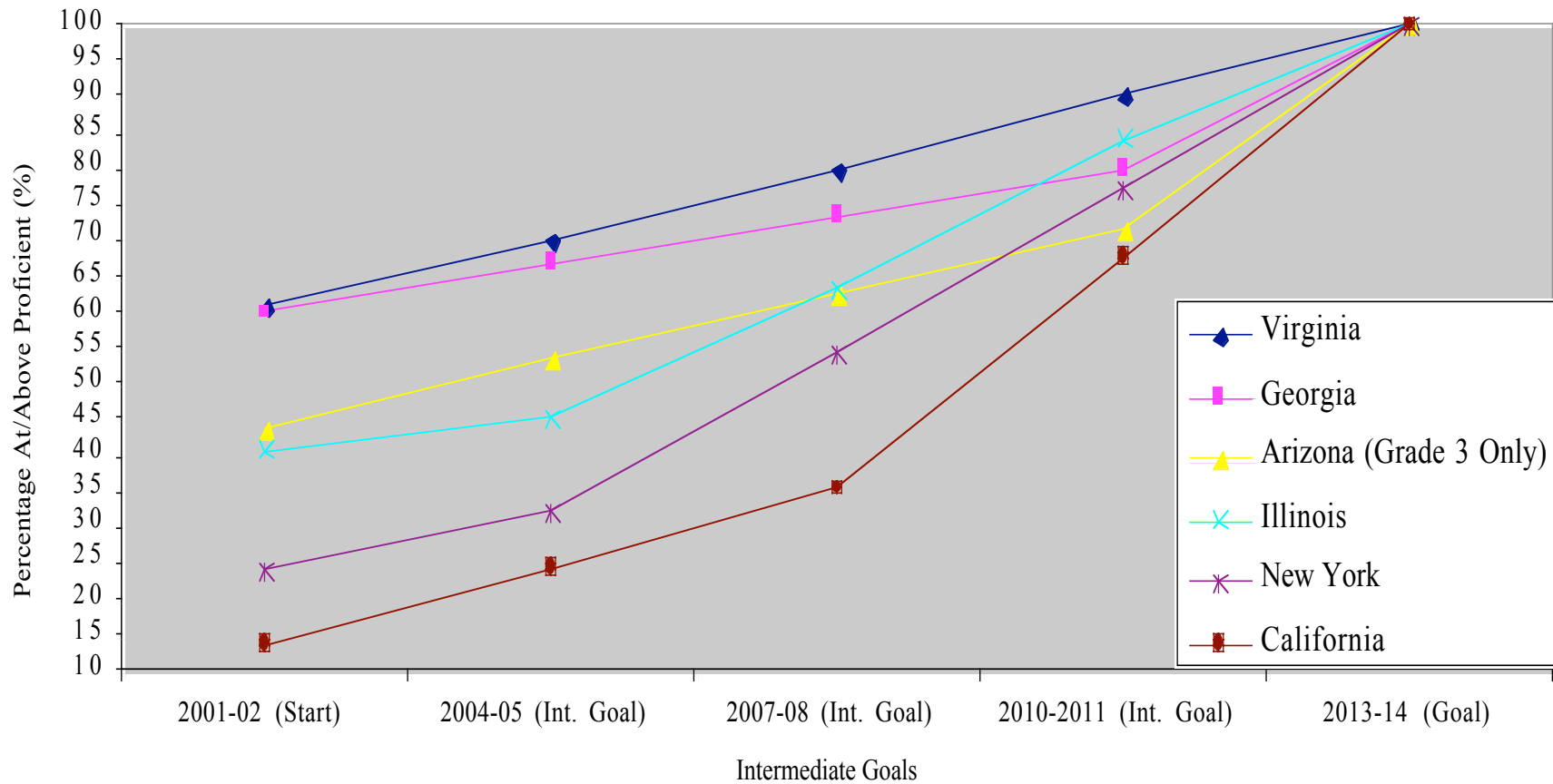
- Federal requirements impose “one size fits all” accountability model on states
- States layered the federal accountability requirements on top of pre-existing plans
- NCLB complicates state accountability
 - Dual system produces conflicting messages, and divergent definitions of proficiency
 - AYP has disparate impact on minority schools
 - Subgroup rules punish disadvantaged schools



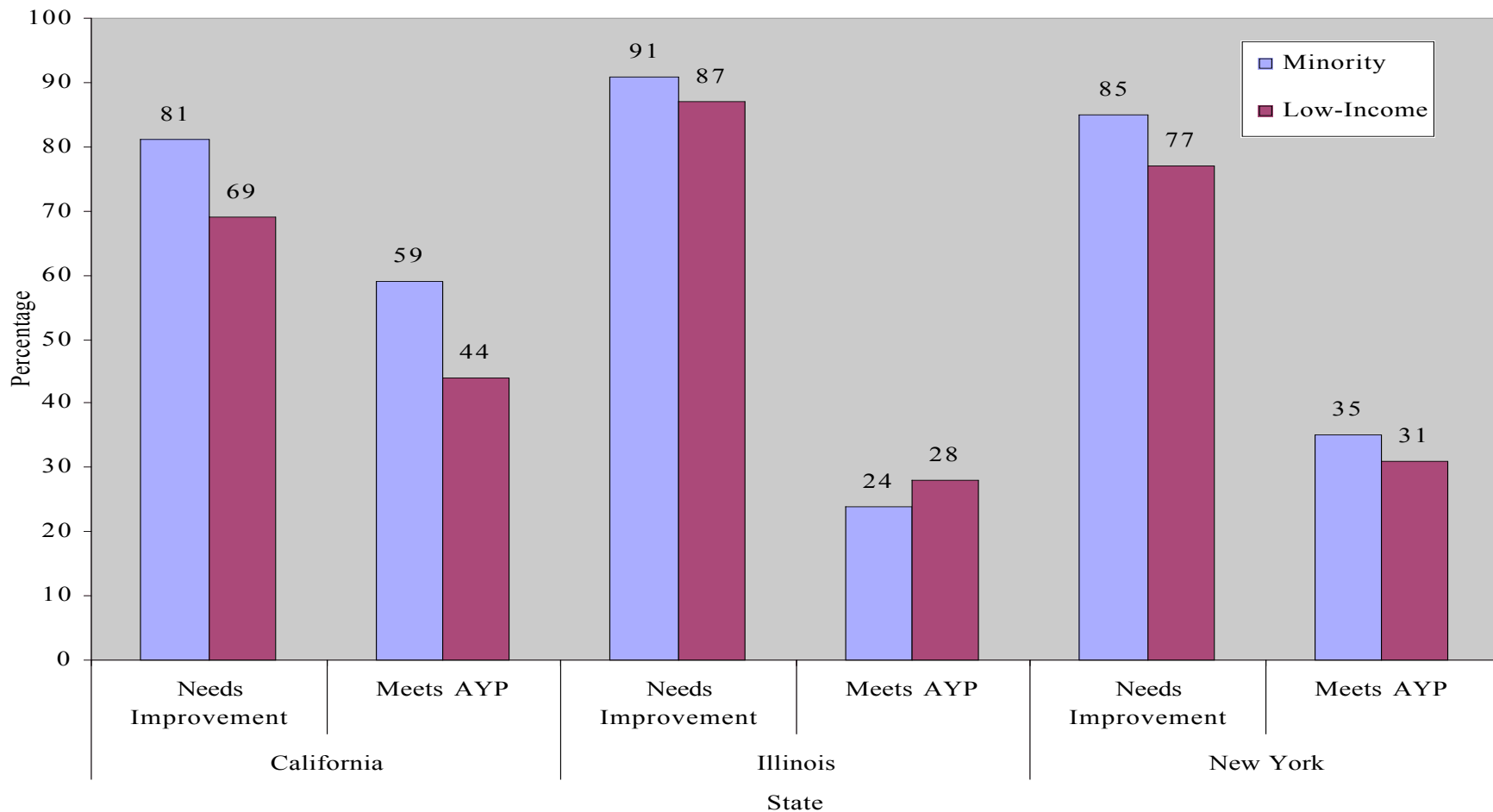
School Ratings Are Confusing

- Conflicting signals for schools
 - Arizona, 289 schools identified as “needing improvement,” but met the state’s performance targets and earned either a “performing” or “highly performing” label.
 - Virginia, 723 (40% of all schools) failed to make federal AYP goals while only 402 (22%) failed to meet state accreditation standards.

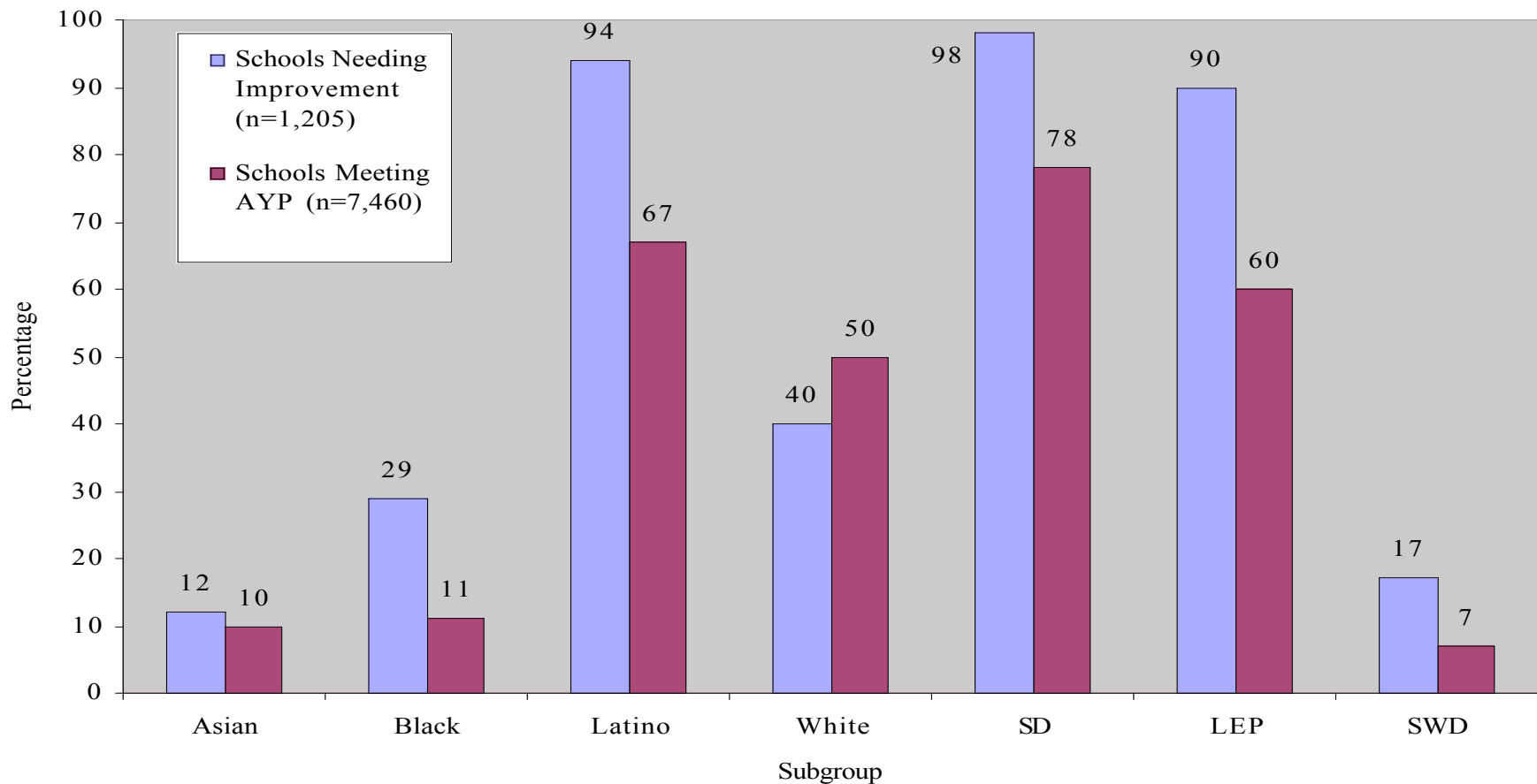
“Proficiency” Has No Common Meaning



AYP's Disparate Impact on High Poverty, High Minority Schools



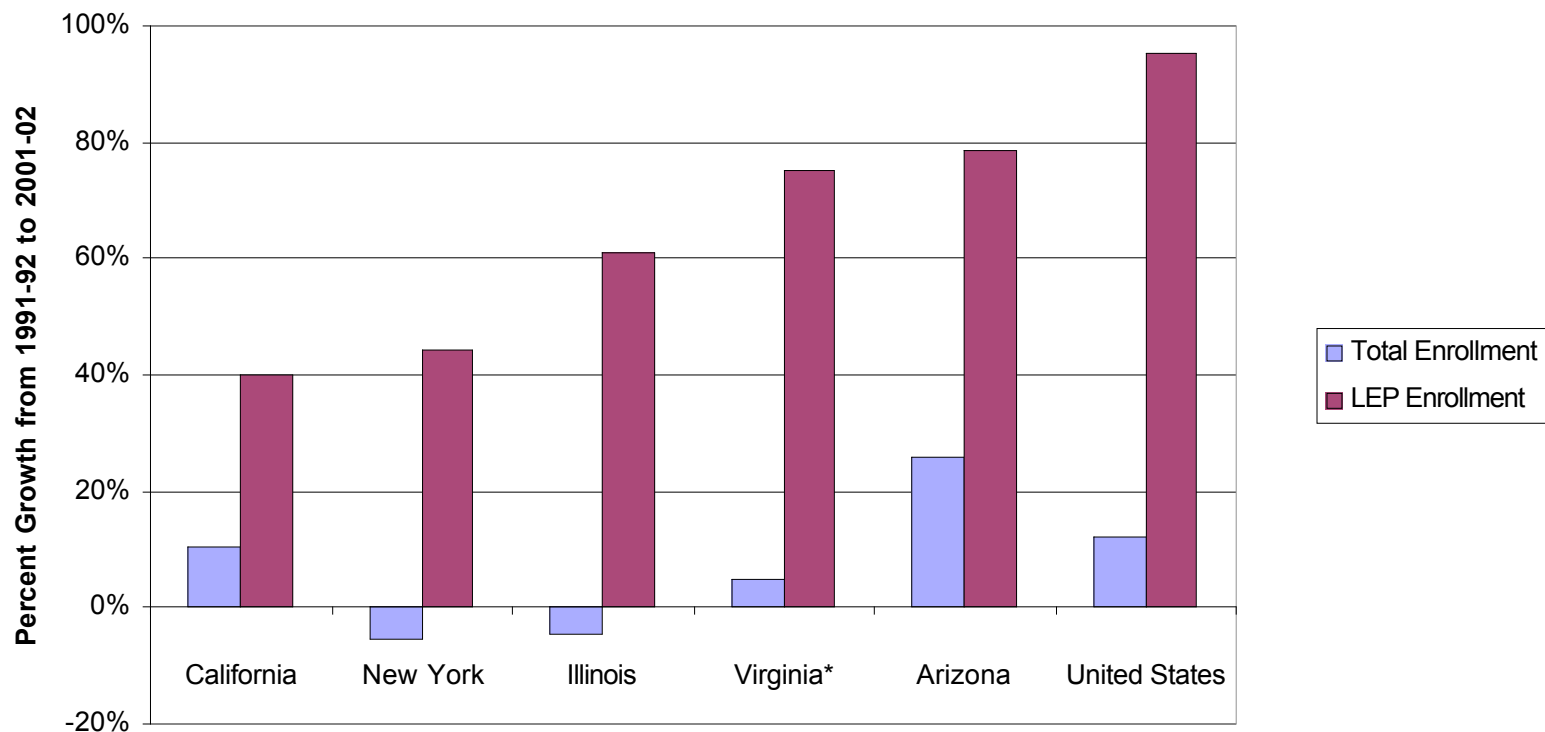
Subgroup Rules Punish Schools with Large Numbers of Minority, Low-Income, LEP, Spec. Ed. Students (CA)





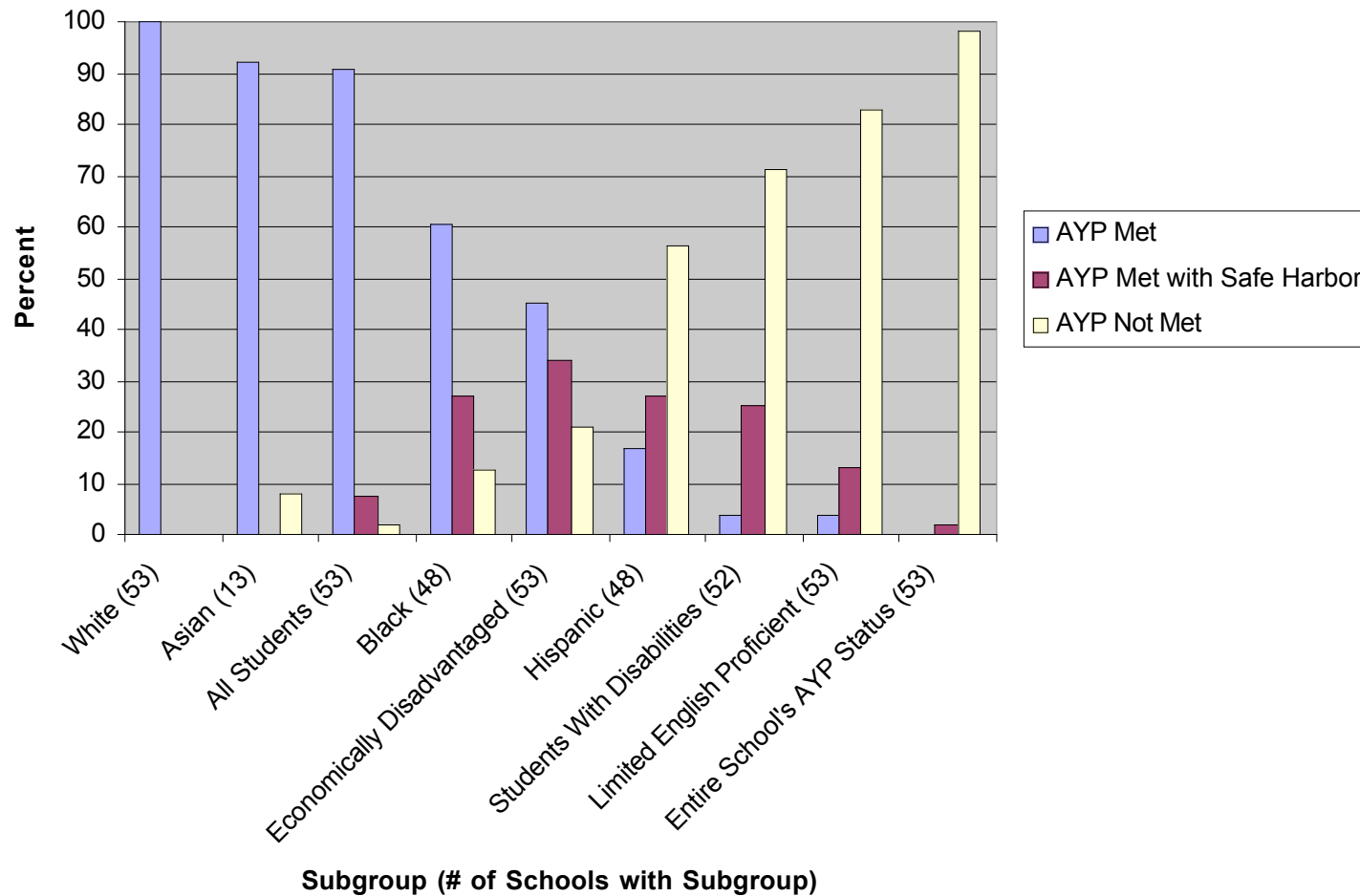
ELL/LEP Issues

Growth in LEP Enrollment and in Total K-12 Enrollment in Selected States, 1991-92 to 2001-02



Source: Padolsky, D. (2002). *How has the limited English proficient student population changed in recent years?* Retrieved May 30, 2004, from National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instruction Educational Programs Web site: <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/expert/faq/08leps.htm>

Percentage of NC Schools Meeting AYP Goals for Each Subgroup (In 53 Middle Schools w/ LEP Subgroup), 2002-03



Source: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2003a); calculations are our own. Data is based on 2002-03 North Carolina middle school End of Grade (EOG) reading test scores



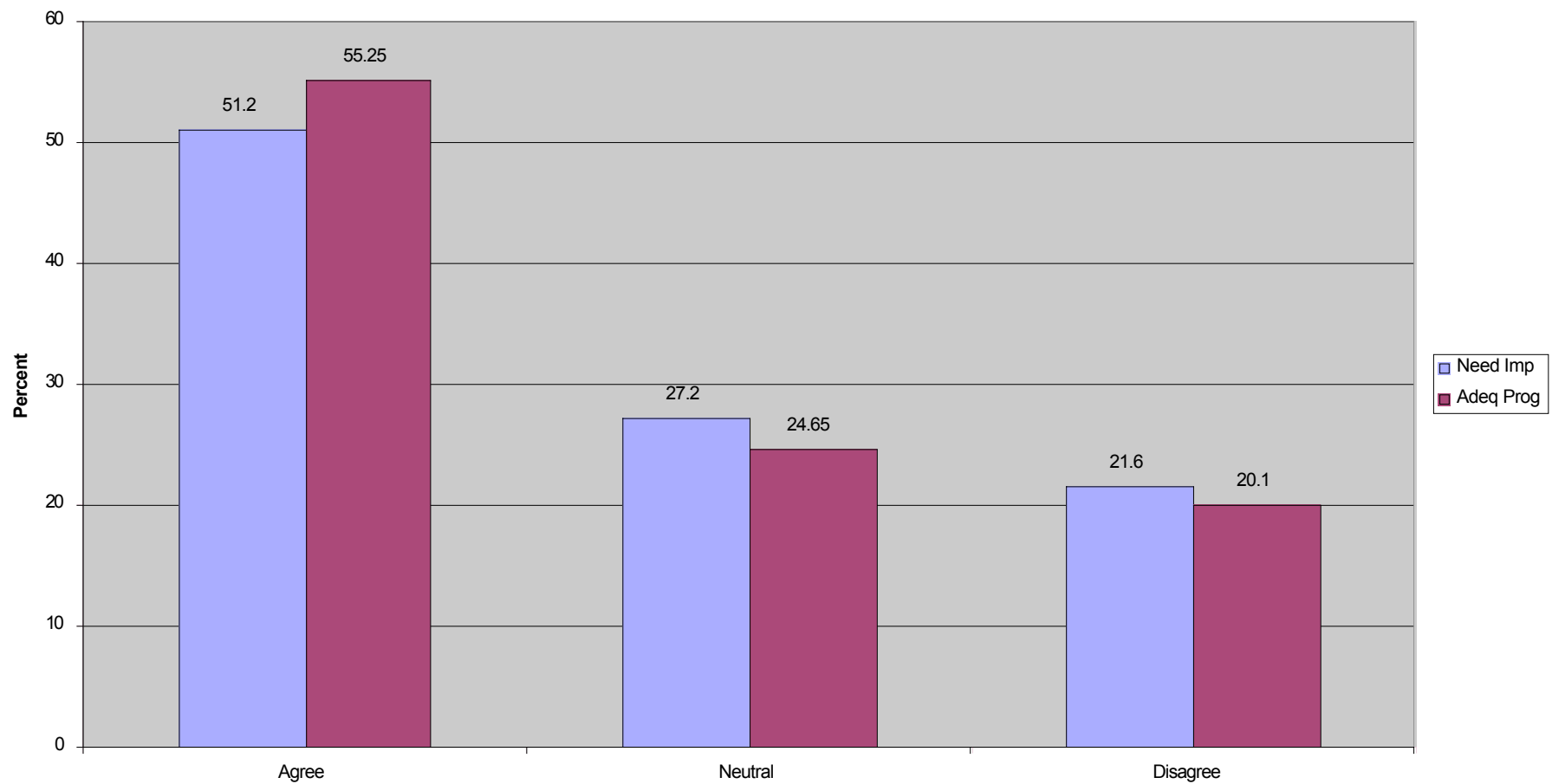
Teacher Survey Findings



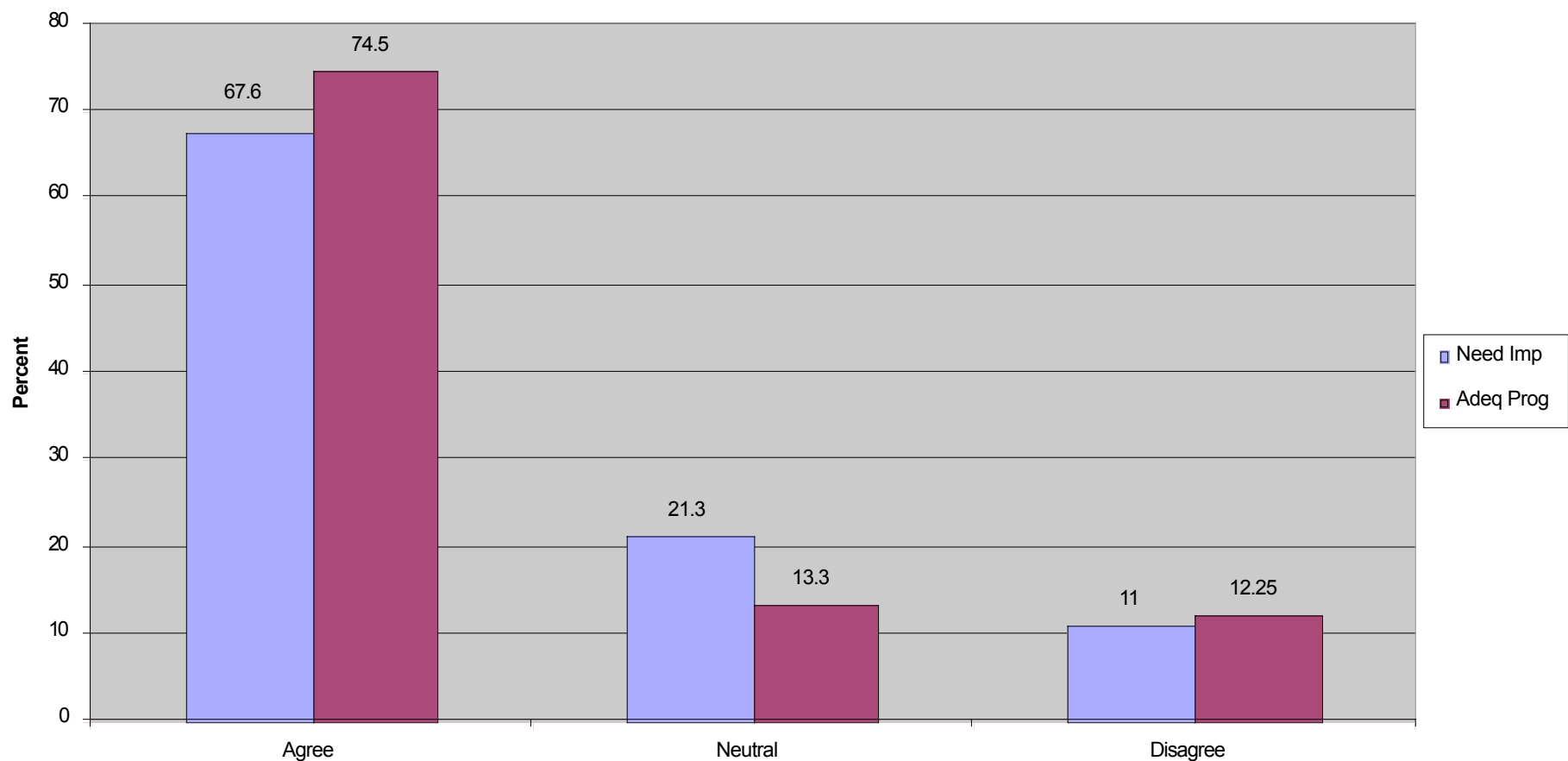
Nuanced Views of Accountability

- ❑ Questioned the efficacy of NCLB accountability reforms but did not oppose either accountability or sanctions
- ❑ Believed identifying schools for improvement will not lead to school improvement
- ❑ Viewed NCLB public school choice quite negatively but were more positive about supplemental services
- ❑ Rejected the notion that testing requirements would focus instruction or improve curriculum

NCLB sanctions will encourage teachers to transfer out of schools identified for improvement



The AYP requirements have caused some teachers to de-emphasize or neglect untested topics





Reform Underway Prior to NCLB

- ❑ Teachers believed that their schools have high standards and quality curriculum
- ❑ Schools working hard to provide quality instruction
- ❑ NCLB disruptive to ongoing reform efforts
- ❑ Evidence of “policy churn”

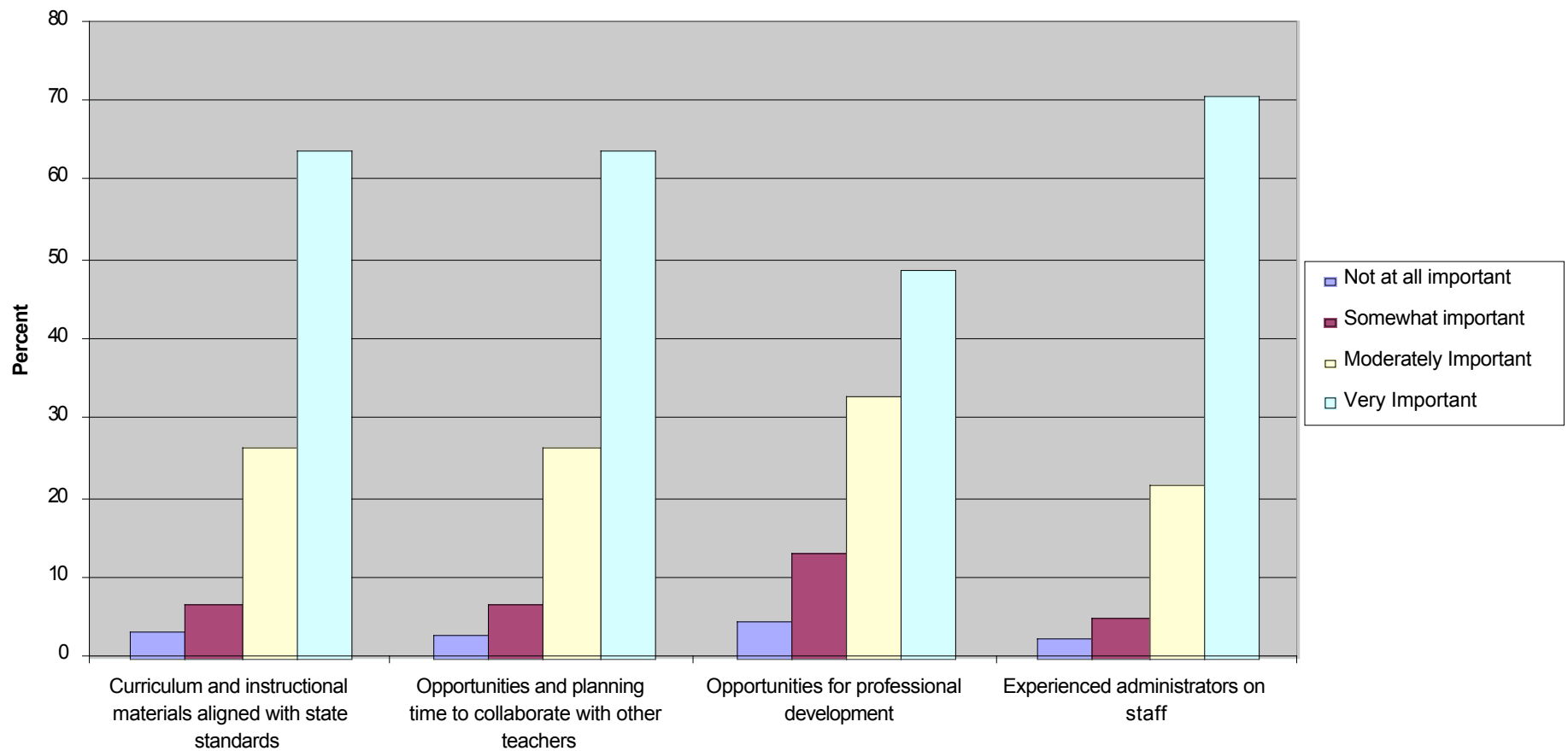


Resources

The teachers we surveyed:

- ❑ Wanted increased resources, but not just money
- ❑ Supported additional resources and experienced staff more than accountability reforms
- ❑ Were willing to work with difficult students, but desired increased parental involvement
- ❑ Were not opposed to removing ineffective teachers

To what extent are the following conditions important to you in deciding whether to stay and/or teach in a school identified as in need of improvement?





Graduation Rates

Graduation Rate of California School Districts with Enrollment Greater Than 60,000, 2002-2003

| | State | Graduation Rate | Percent on Free or Reduced Lunch | Percent of Racial Groups in 50- 100% Minority Schools | | |
|---------------------|-------|--------------------|---|--|----------|--------|
| | | | | % White | % Latino | %Black |
| Fresno Unified | CA | 59 | 76 | 73 | 96 | 94 |
| Long Beach Unified | CA | 72 | 65 | 85 | 98 | 98 |
| Los Angeles Unified | CA | 45 | 74 | 80 | 99 | 98 |
| San Diego Unified | CA | 64 | 57 | 61 | 92 | 93 |
| Santa Ana Unified | CA | 72 | 75 | 68 | 100 | 92 |

Source: NCES Common Core Data 2002-2003.



Recommendations

- Revise NCLB in collaboration with education professionals, recognizing the variation in conditions, and incorporating the best research on realistic time frames and rates of progress.
- Revise subgroup accountability rules especially for LEP and disability categories & end double counting.



Recommendations

- ❑ Encourage multiple models for measuring student learning and school accountability with an emphasis on progress.
- ❑ Emphasize narrowing learning gaps for minority and poor students.
- ❑ Enforce graduation rate accountability
- ❑ Create support systems and rewards for schools that make a difference



Lessons from Testing Research

- ❑ High stakes testing is related to even higher dropout rates
- ❑ Grade retention is common and increases dropouts without raising scores
- ❑ The best use of tests is for timely evaluation and targeted aid, not sanctions
- ❑ Excessive test pressure narrows curriculum and demoralizes highly qualified teachers



Lessons from Dropout Research

- ❑ The ninth grade transition is dangerous
- ❑ There are few resources or program
- ❑ State statistics greatly understate numbers
- ❑ State NCLB dropout plans are very weak
- ❑ Excessive test pressure without accountability for graduation rates creates a strong reward for pushing out low-scoring students