

their system's needs. However, schools and families in some regions of the state cry for economic growth but will continue to suffer until that growth is realized. It is clear that regions of the state without access to high speed internet cannot compete economically or educationally with the rest of the state. We are grateful for the progress that has been made and is being made in the area of technology for our schools and communities. You have an enormous challenge ahead of you to find the complex solutions to funding this moving target. However, providing the resources necessary for technology, not only in the areas of equipment, but also infrastructure, staffing and professional development will make an enormous difference in the opportunities for the schools, the success of the students and, as importantly, in the quality of life for the families in these areas.

- **Local Control**

We talk a lot about the need and value of local control. It is the "C" in the ABCs. We give Charter Schools all kinds of flexibility in hopes that this will pave the way for great success with students. NCASA supports the concept of local control and flexibility in the ABC's Plan as a means for fostering innovation in the public schools. Whenever it is feasible we support the use of suggested standards, criteria or processes in State Board guidelines rather than in laws or formally adopted rules.

- **Time on Task**

We provide children the shortest school year in the industrial world while asking them to reach world-class standards. NCASA supports efforts to expand the school day and school year for students and teachers with extended student time for those who need it. .

While we ask you to Stay the Course on the ABCs, we are not closing our eyes to the need for change to the accountability system. Stay the Course, does not mean Keep Status Quo. It means to continue working to adjust, refine and to address all the issues related to the Accountability Plan as we work to improve it. Administrators statewide tell us that there needs to be a good hard look at the incentive structure to reevaluate how the funds are distributed as well as its effect on staff. Questions arise about the writing tests as well as the length of the reading tests and the exact timing of other tests. Paperwork, lack of testing coordinators and need for more time to conference with parents are issues of concern. The high school exit exams and portfolios are being examined. Issues related to focusing on the students at Level III and IV need to be addressed. Suggestions have been made to

examine what has happened to groups of schools since the ABC program began in order to see if certain patterns would emerge. Further, the mobility of students can affect school accountability calculations.

Many of the requests for change are in the implementation of the program and options that need to be explored. Some of the issues raised relate directly to the larger issues I raised earlier. As you explore this topic further, we simply ask to continue to be part of the process. We do ask that in the meantime, please avoid throwing the baby out with the bathwater. To echo our State Board Chairman Phil Kirk, "we are confident that with the additional resources from the legislature and increased parental and community involvement, student proficiency will continue to improve. Let's take a moment to celebrate the progress our schools and students are making."

And thank you for giving us this opportunity to suggest that you Stay the Course as you deal with this and the many other complex issues you face as you prepare for the 2001 session.

End

Getting It Right: Improving the ABCs of North Carolina







The North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE), as instructed by its 1999 Representative Assembly, conducted a "School-based Accountability" survey to gather input from educators concerning the ABC School Improvement Plan.

The Association and its membership wanted the thoughts, concerns and ideas of educators about North Carolina's ABC program to be heard by policy makers, parents, members of the education community and the general public.

NCAE considers the ABCs, and the general issue of measuring student achievement, to be a "work in progress," open to improvement and revision.

The goals of this survey were to gather accurate data and use that data to shape recommendations on how North Carolina should change the ABCs.

The ultimate goals:

-  Foster more productive learning environments for all children.
-  Improve teacher morale.
-  Enhance North Carolina's ability to attract and maintain a high-quality teacher workforce.
-  Get resources to schools whose needs are great without stigmatizing those particular schools.

The ABC program needs the support of educators, particularly the classroom teacher, to succeed. By offering every educator a forum to share information confidentially, and having more than 22,000 respond, NCAE believes this survey is an authoritative picture of educators' views on the ABCs.

The survey will be shared with the Governor, General Assembly and the State Board of Education.

The North Carolina Association of Educators mailed 100,000 surveys in March 2000 to schools across the state. Completed surveys totaling 22,038 were returned to NCAE.

Survey respondents included 14,657 classroom teachers; 549 administrators; 4,198 teacher assistants; and 634 additional instructional and certified school personnel (non-classroom teachers).

Twenty-seven (27) percent of the classroom teachers who responded to the survey have 5 or less years experience; 42.1 percent have between 6 and 20 years of experience; and 29.5 percent have 21 years or more experience.

Slightly over sixty percent (60.5) of school personnel who responded are employed in elementary schools; 13.7 percent are employed in middle schools; and 14.6 percent are employed in high schools.

The section "Survey Comments" is representative of the types of comments respondents included on their completed survey.

The Results

1. Fifty-seven (57) percent of teachers, 46 percent of administrators and 43 percent of teacher assistants said that North Carolina should get rid of the ABC program, even if it means losing bonus money.

2. Only 42 percent of teachers, 57 percent of administrators and 55 percent of teacher assistants believe parents support the testing components of the ABC program.

3. When asked if student achievement has improved under the ABCs, 64 percent of teachers believe student achievement has improved, while 89 percent and 74 percent of adminis-

trators and teacher assistants, respectively, believe student achievement has improved.

4. While 79 percent of teachers support the elimination of social promotion, they believe that students should be placed in bridge/transition programs until skills needed are mastered rather than retaining them.

5. Educators overall indicated, in survey responses and comments, that science and social studies were receiving less emphasis since the implementation of the ABC program.

6. Eighty percent of teachers indicated their level of stress has increased and morale has declined.

7. More than 70 percent of teachers acknowledge that individuals who teach in a designated low-performing school should receive higher salaries.

8. While only 29 percent of teachers are willing to volunteer to teach in a low-performing school, survey respondents indicated that they could be enticed to work in such a school if it offered the following (listed in rank order):

- #1 - smaller class size
- #2 - strong support from administrators
- #3 - planning time
- #4 - additional instructional support personnel
- #5 - signing bonus
- #6 - duty-free lunch
- #7 - clerical assistance
- #8 - technology
- #9 - six months free rent/mortgage
- #10 - professional development

9. All groups overwhelmingly indicated that after school programs are available to their students.

10. Overall, respondents felt that parents supported their children and their children's teachers.

The Recommendations

NCAE offers recommendations in three categories: (1) low performing schools, (2) test administration and (3) local control.

A. Create Priority Schools in North Carolina

1. Declare as a Priority School any school in North Carolina that has over half of the students below grade level in tested areas. Provide direct, targeted assistance to these schools in the form of additional teaching positions to reduce class size, resources to implement after school tutorial programs, funds to enhance the library/media center, and technical assistance from the Department of Public Instruction.

2. Assign only licensed teachers to Priority Schools and limit beginning teachers to no more than ten percent of the total faculty.

3. Provide teachers in a Priority School with both planning time and duty free lunch.

4. Establish in each Priority School a home/school/community partnership to improve parent communication and to ensure additional support for students in the form of community mentors and tutors.

B. Ensure that the testing program supports student success.

1. Limit testing time to no more than ninety minutes per sitting for middle and high school students and no more than sixty minutes for elementary students.

2. Allow teachers and test proctors to tell students about technical errors, such as mismatching questions and answers when filling in "bubble sheets" during testing. Ensure that students' scores are determined on the basis of knowledge rather than technicalities.

3. Test students who are identified as Limited English Proficient in their native language.

4. Provide additional testing time to all students who are identified by the appropriate school committee as needing that time.

C. Accentuate the "C" (Local Control) in the ABCs Model.

1. Allow schools to be released from the annual testing requirement if 80 percent or more of the students have achieved at or above grade level in the areas tested by the current accountability program. Allow these schools to develop their own school accountability plans and appropriate bonuses based on parameters established by the State Board of Education. Ensure continued accountability through ABC test sampling at least once every three years.

2. Use multiple indicators for student promotion that include, but are not limited to, teacher assessment and standardized testing. Allow the use of these indicators following the second testing of any student not achieving proficiency on the ABC test.

3. Create and add bridge/transitional programs in every school for students who are retained and who have the potential to achieve appropriate grade placement.

4. Strengthen the teaching of science and social studies by providing teachers with skills to integrate curriculum. Fund a cadre of teacher trainers from the NC Teacher Academy to be on loan to school systems for the purpose of providing professional development in curriculum integration.

ABCs Accountability Issues

Lou Fabrizio

Director of Accountability Services
NC Department of Public Instruction

ABCs Accountability Issues

Four major headings:

- What have we learned over the last four years?
- Unintended Consequences
- Remaining Challenges
- Other Issues

What have we learned over the last four years?

- Teachers are focusing on the Standard Course of Study
- More students are scoring at or above grade level
- Students scoring below grade level are getting more assistance
- Schools needing assistance are getting more attention from the central offices

What have we learned over the last four years?

- Schools are using multiple strategies to make students successful
- Not all strategies work the same in all places
- Schools with high-risk populations can do well
- There are some unintended consequences to high-stakes testing and accountability

Unintended Consequences

- Increasing negative anecdotes from parents and educators
 - Some schools/teachers focus on tested subjects at the expense of others
 - Some rote teaching to the test; reliance on drill and practice at the expense of "inquiry" methodology

Unintended Consequences

- Organized opposition to high-stakes testing and accountability
- Focus on students below grade level *may* reduce efforts for other students
- Loss of momentum in development of more formative kinds of assessment

Remaining Challenges

- Reducing achievement gap
- Attracting teachers in low-performing schools
- Refining and maintaining the ABCs model (also revising tests)
- Accountability issues for students with disabilities and limited English proficiency

Remaining Challenges

- Changes to writing assessments?
 - Writing Assessment Task Force to meet September 1, 2000
- Charter Schools
 - Use of Alternative Schools model for ABCs
- Implementation of Prediction Formulas for 10 EOC tests
- Demands on staff

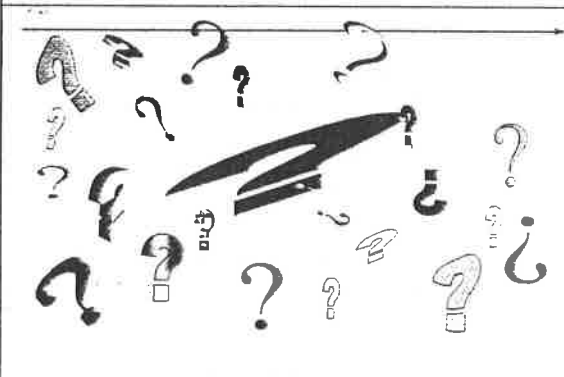
Remaining Challenges

- Improving achievement at middle schools
- Implementation of Student Accountability Standards
 - Communication is a big issue
 - Many parents seem unaware of the retesting opportunities or the review process. These are safeguards for the students.
 - Exit Exam

Other Issues

- Testing time
 - Less testing time lowers reliability
 - Day of state testing is a lost day of instruction (we hear)
 - Reducing testing time per day by increasing the testing days will have its problems too.

Questions ?



DRAFT
Position Paper
Carolina TESOL

In the United States, English as a Second Language (ESL) as a field of study was developed during the 1960s. Research into effective language instruction has continued to be a major educational concern since that time, and ESL has become a recognized and validated method of teaching English to new English language learners. In the late 1970s, the sudden arrival of the Asian boat people in NC created an urgent need to develop ESL classes in this state to ease the transition into American society for these new arrivals. The need for ESL instruction in NC has continued to grow every year. Current North Carolina Department of Public Instruction statistics show the annual rate of increase for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students in NC schools as 28.99%. Because of the recent influx of Spanish speaking immigrants to NC, Carolina TESOL has been prompted to review the major types of language programs available for language instruction.

In the early days of ESL instruction, teachers focused on teaching basic communication and survival language skills. Today, very early on in ESL programs, teachers focus on developing critical thinking skills, building academic language and writing skills and increasing communicative skills. In much the same way as a child learns his or her first language, ESL instruction uses the medium of the English language to build language competence by progressing from simple to complex ideas and from concrete to abstract concepts. ESL is an effective method to use in teaching students who enter the school system with limited or no prior school experience, an increasingly common occurrence. The success of students who learn English by this method has been well-documented in large metropolitan school districts who typically have diverse student bodies that include students who speak multiple languages and who come from every part of the globe. LEP students in public schools are not a homogeneous group. They differ in language, cultural background, amount of prior schooling, degree of English proficiency, exposure to English outside of the school setting, and the length of time they have been resident in the United States.

ESL programs offer more exposure to English than do either two-way/dual bilingual programs or transitional bilingual programs, two other methods of teaching English. Two way/dual language programs, in which a student receives instruction part of the day in a selected language and part of the day in his native language, can be very successful in those cases where the student population consists of only two language groups. This method of instruction is generally one of voluntary participation, such as a magnet school program, and requires regular education teachers who are fluent in two languages. This method has merits, but it is not appropriate when multiple language groups make up the student body. In NC, a plurality of languages is most often the case, particularly in urban areas. Some states have experimented with transitional bilingual education, another method of teaching English in which a student receives instruction in the native language in the early grades and then gradually transitions to English as he rises through the grades. Transitional bilingual programs would be difficult for school systems to offer if the school population consists of multiple language groups. At last count, NC was serving over 150 distinct language groups in its schools. To best serve the population of students who are learning English, effective instruction must be tailored to meet the composition of the student body in each school district.

Given the diversity that exists in NC schools, it is clear that the efforts of the entire school staff need to be marshaled in order to assure the success of students learning English. Not only must administrators and staff support the work of ESL teachers, but also each teacher must take ownership of each student in his/her classroom by making efforts to assure that every student is fully integrated into the academic and social fabric of the classroom. ESL methodology is a viable method that assures this integration as students learn content material at the same time they are learning English, both in the ESL classroom and in the mainstream classroom. The NC Standard Course of Study must be the focus of instruction for the mainstream teacher and for the ESL teachers when collaboration takes place between regular education teachers and ESL teachers. There is a continuing critical need for regular teachers to be given training that will help them meet the needs of the linguistically diverse students in their classrooms. As the new NC promotion standards apply to all students, there is an expectation that students learning English will, over time, succeed academically and on a par with English speaking students. Explicit language instruction from certified ESL teachers will need to be in place over an extended period of time to meet these expectations.

It is evident that ESL programs are expected to do more than simply teach a student to speak English. If overall student achievement rates are to continue improving in NC, it is imperative that financial and material support be allocated to strengthen current ESL programs. Without this support and continued efforts on the part of the state to increase the pool of qualified ESL teachers, it will be difficult to provide the type of instruction that assists students learning English to meet course and grade requirements. At a time of scarce resources, the initiation of a two-way/dual program or a transitional bilingual program before adequate support for ESL programs has been addressed, might dilute current efforts across the state to improve the performance of linguistically diverse students. Substantial additional state resources would need to be diverted from the education budget to put such programs into place. *Currently, testing in NC measures knowledge and ability in English.* Funding needs for testing students would escalate as tests would need to be administered in languages other than English for an extended period of time as students in a transitional bilingual program or a two-way/dual program develop their native and second language skills. Research indicates these types of language programs are best suited to school populations that are stable and where it is possible to have small numbers in a classroom. In North Carolina, students learning English are highly mobile and frequently move not only within cities or within the state, but also they move back and forth to and from their country of origin. Small class size is a goal rather than a reality for most schools in NC.

It is the position of Carolina TESOL that the state and every school district needs to take into consideration the linguistic and academic needs of students who are learning English when programs are put into place to develop competency in English. Based on this analysis, effective language instruction programs should be supported that will assist students to meet or exceed standards established by the state of North Carolina

North Carolina Academically or Intellectually Gifted Programs

August 28, 2000

I. Prior to July 1996

- A. Definition: Academically gifted students are defined as those who demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate outstanding intellectual aptitude and specific academic ability. In order to develop their abilities, these students may require differentiated educational services beyond those ordinarily provided by the regular school program (Section .1501, *Procedures Governing Programs and Services for Children with Special Needs*).
- B. Identification Process
 - 1. Screening
 - 2. Assessments (98 Points)
 - a. Aptitude (I.Q.)
 - b. Achievement
 - c. Grades

II. After July 1996 (SB 1207)

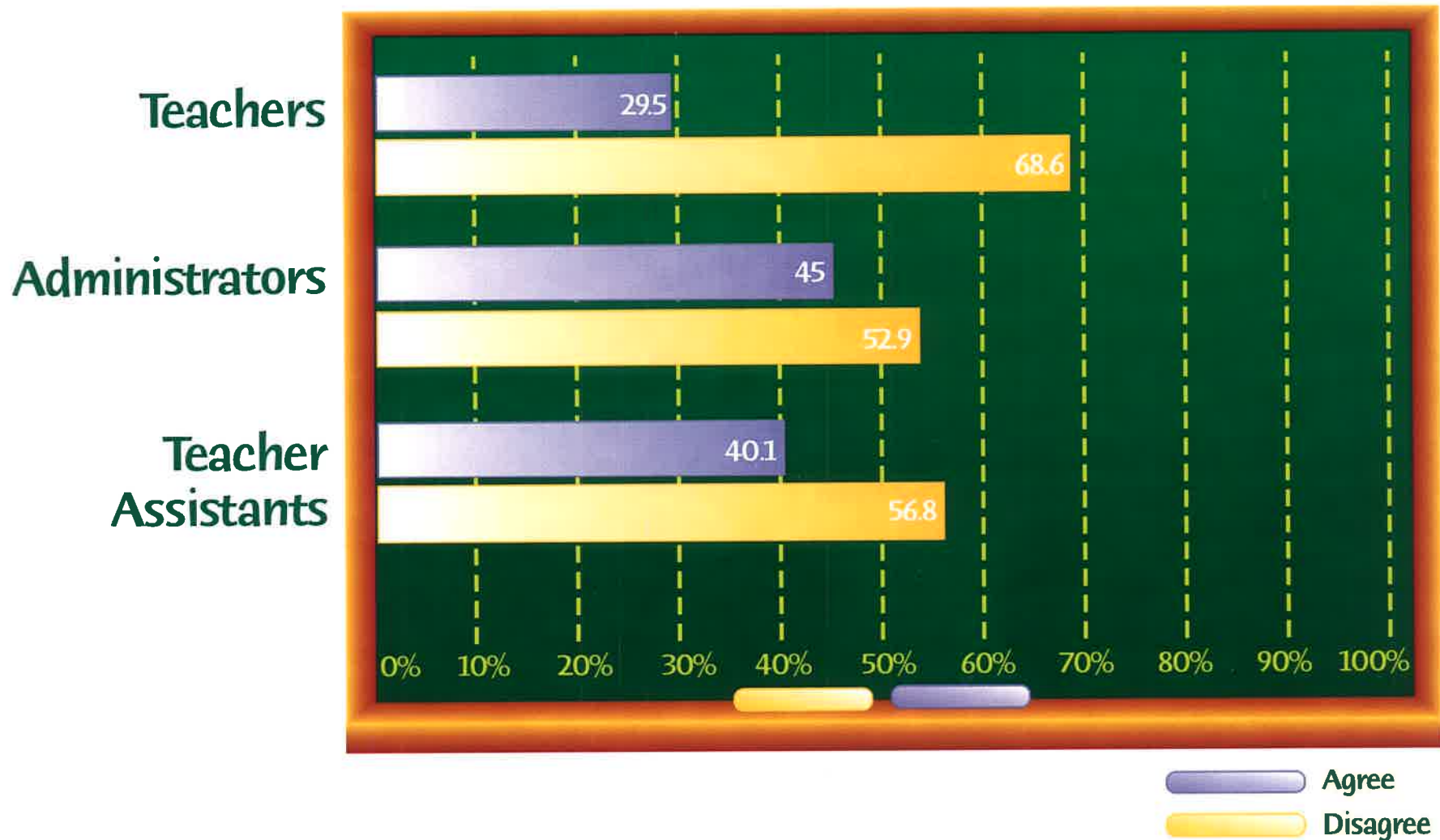
- A. Article 9 (*Special Education*) amended to create Article 9B (*Academically or Intellectually Gifted Students*)
- B. Definition: Academically or intellectually gifted students perform or show the potential to perform at substantially high levels of accomplishments when compared with others their age, experience, or environment. Academically or intellectually gifted students exhibit high performance capability in intellectual areas, specific academic fields, or in both intellectual areas and specific academic fields. Academically or intellectually gifted students require differentiated education services beyond those ordinarily provided by the regular educational program. Outstanding abilities are present in students from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human behavior.
- C. Major Components of Article 9B
 - 1. Directs State Board of Education to develop and disseminate guidelines to use in developing plans
 - 2. Allows local systems greater control and flexibility for identification and services
 - 3. Requires local boards of education to develop local gifted plans
 - a. Screening, identification, and placement

Getting It Right:

Improving the ABCs
of North Carolina

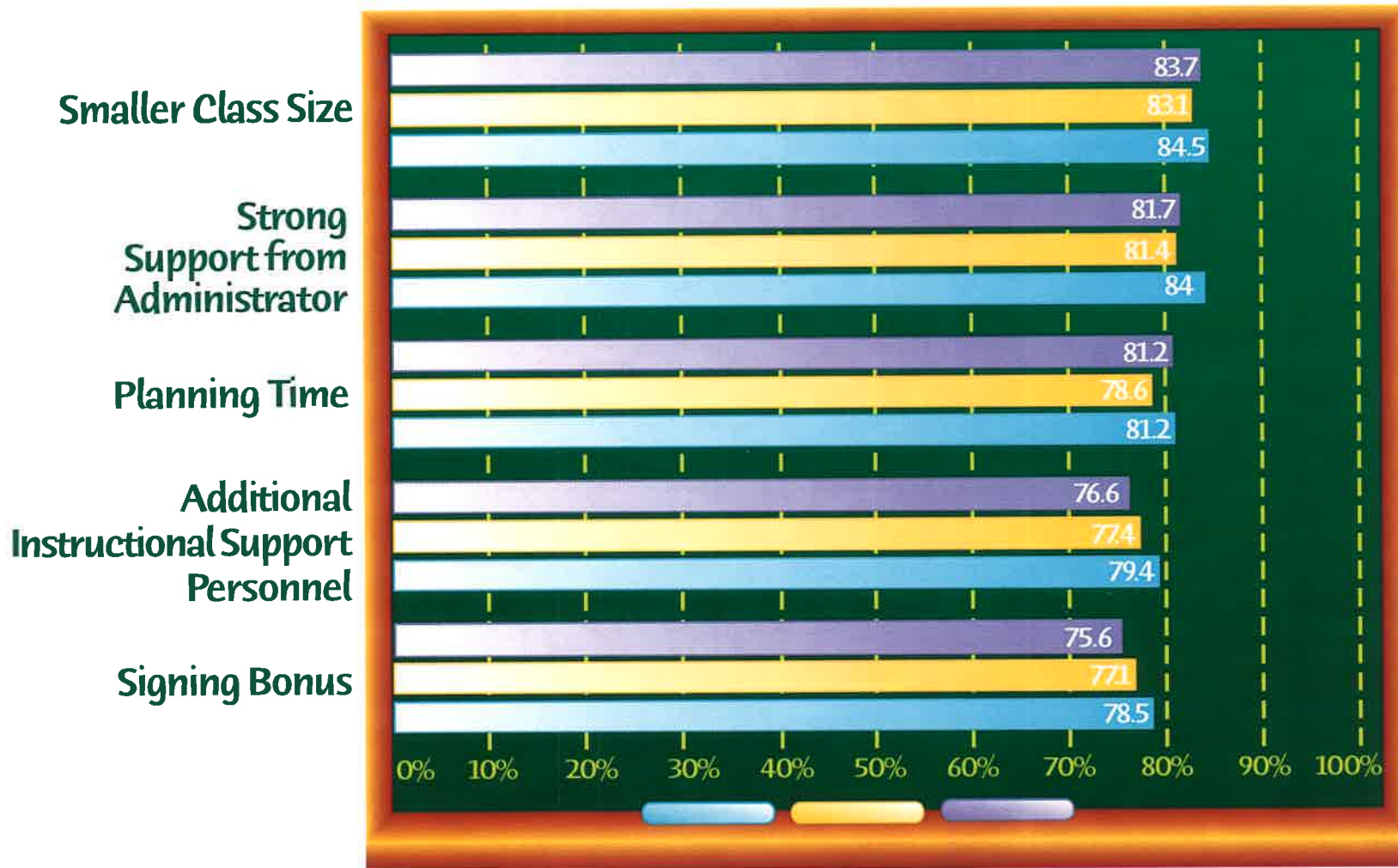
NCAE

Would volunteer to work in a low-performing school.

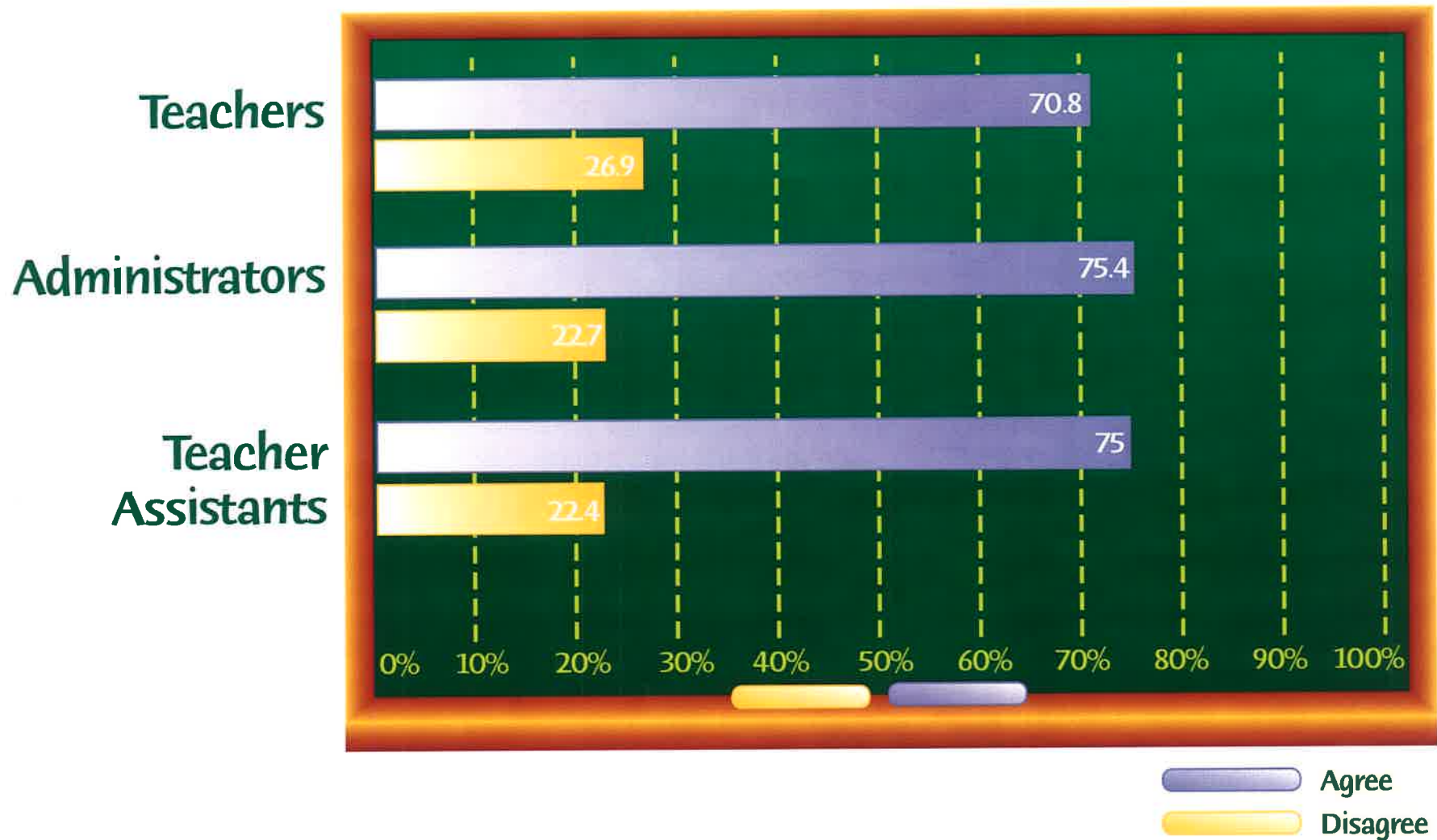


These incentives would attract me to work in a low-performing school:

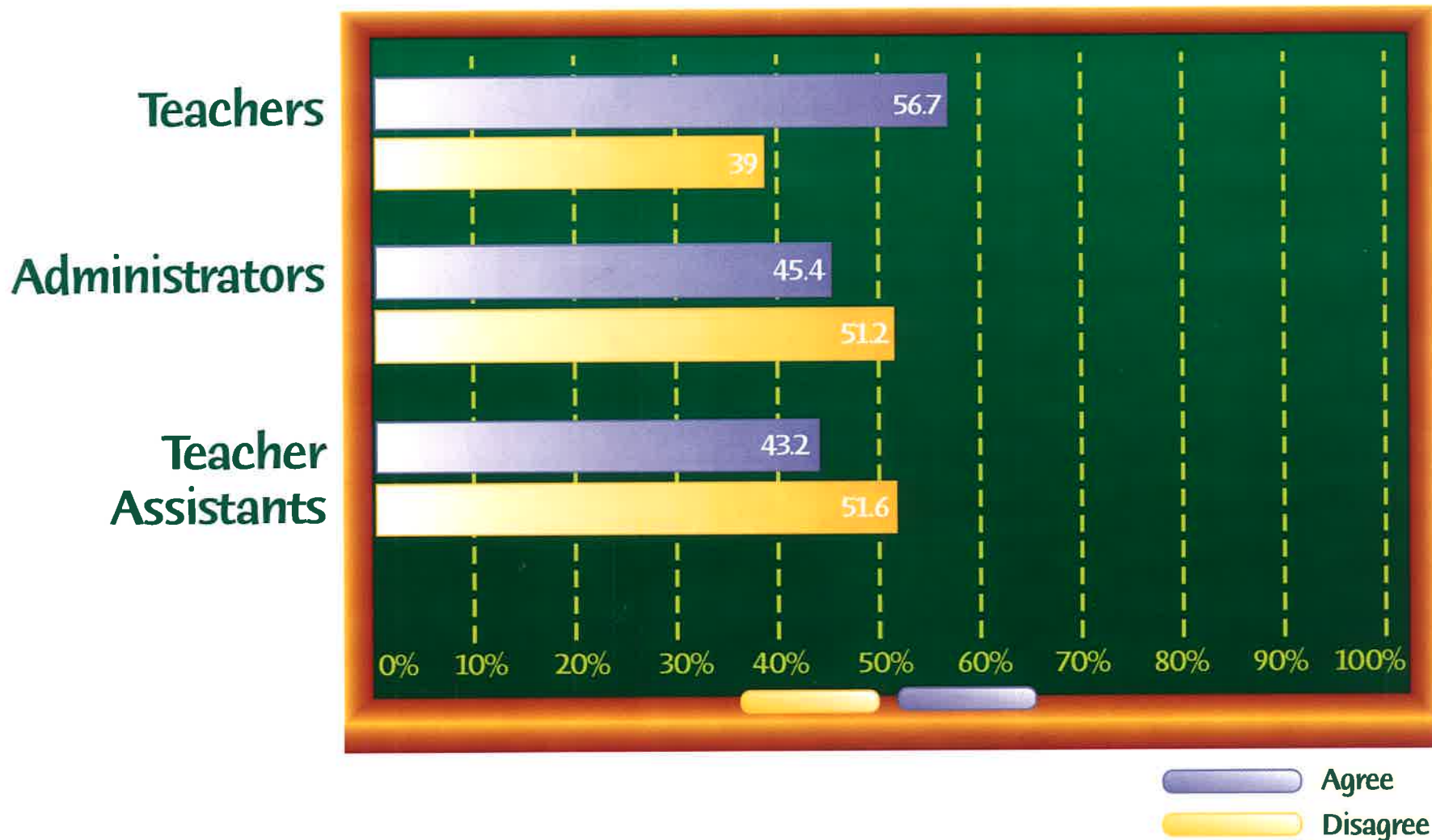
Teachers
Administrators
Teacher Assistants



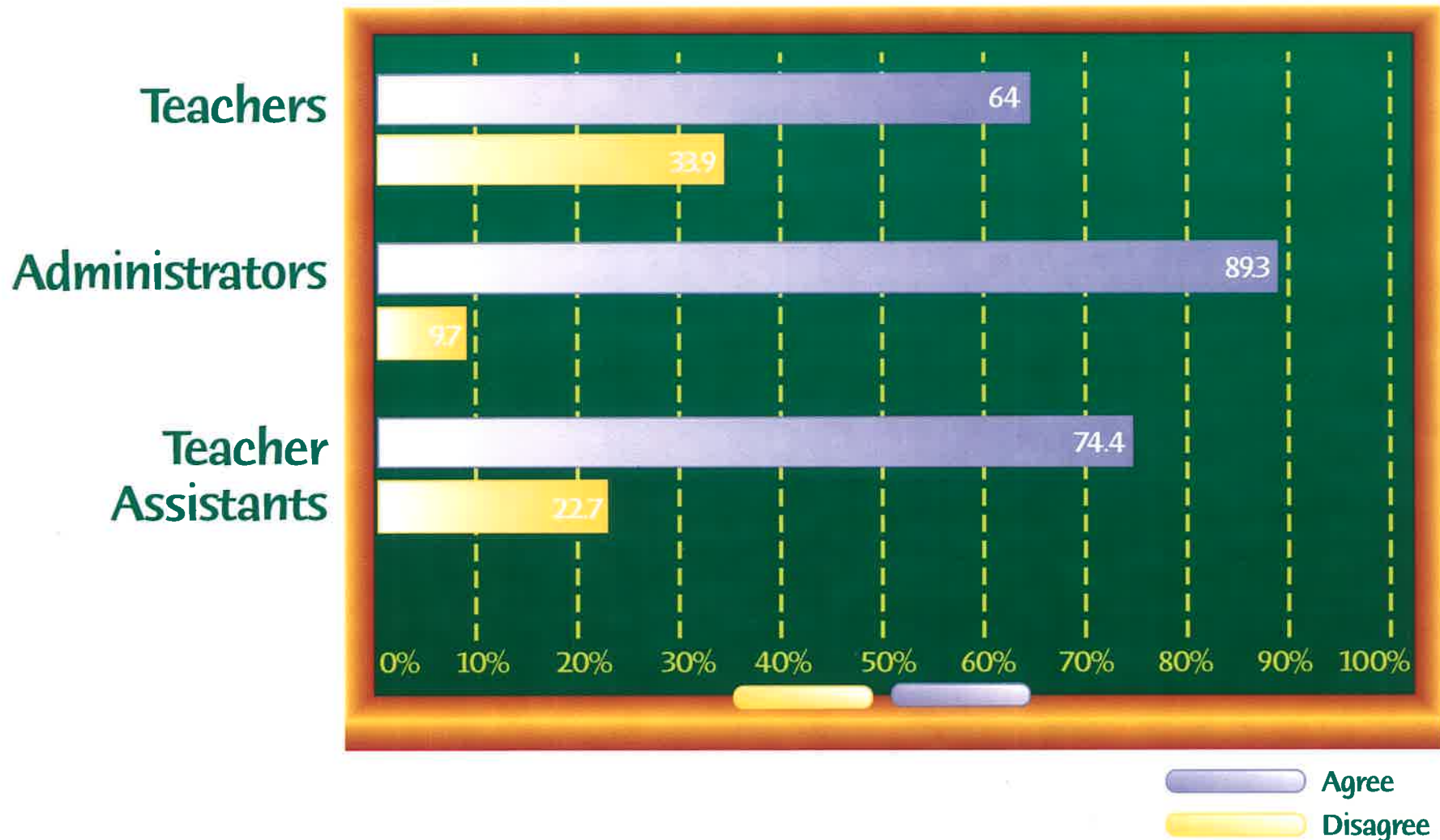
A salary supplement should be paid to all staff while employed at “initially identified” low-performing schools.



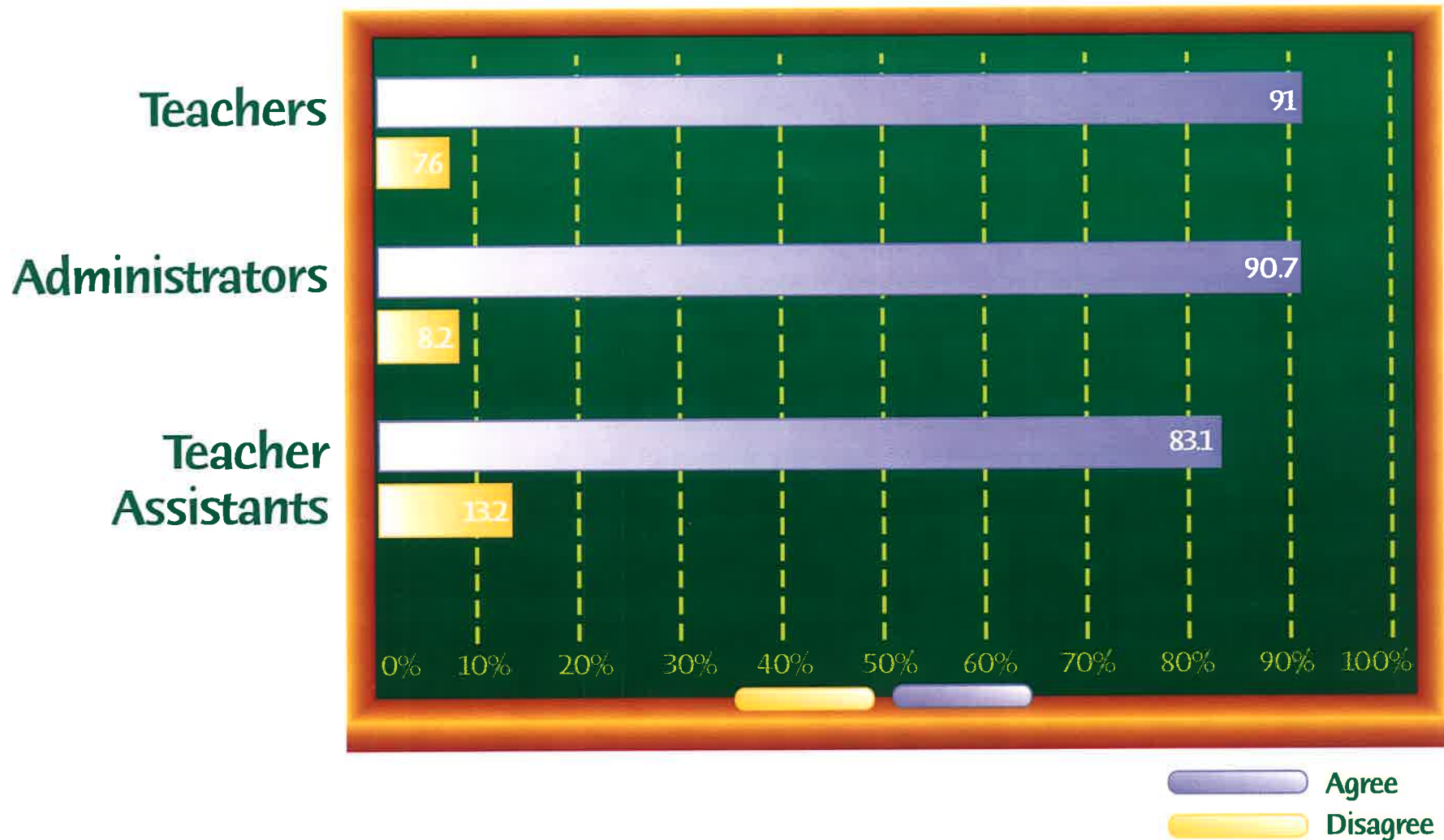
*Favor ending current ABC Program even with
elimination of future ABC incentive money.*



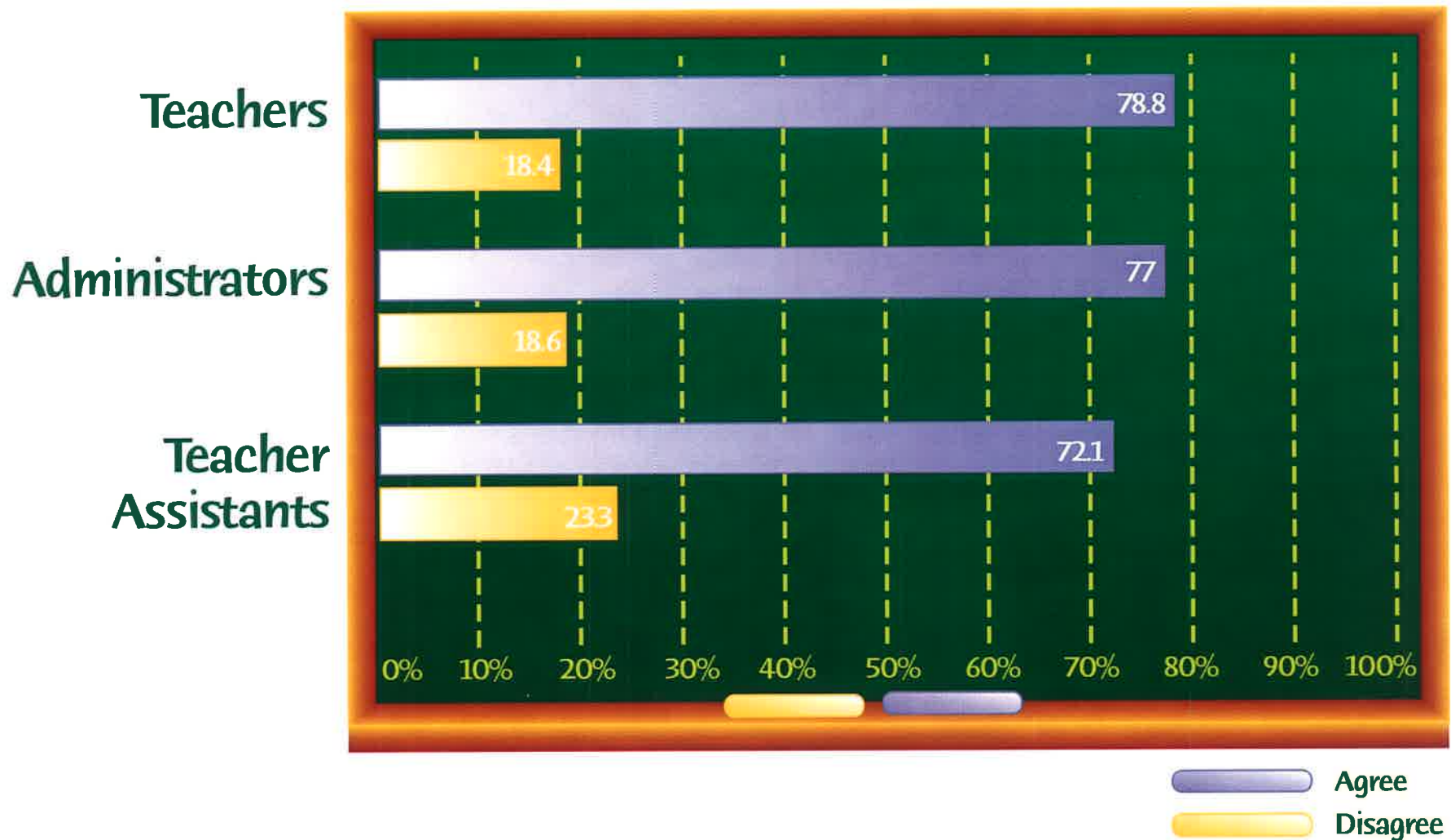
Student achievement has improved under the ABC Program.



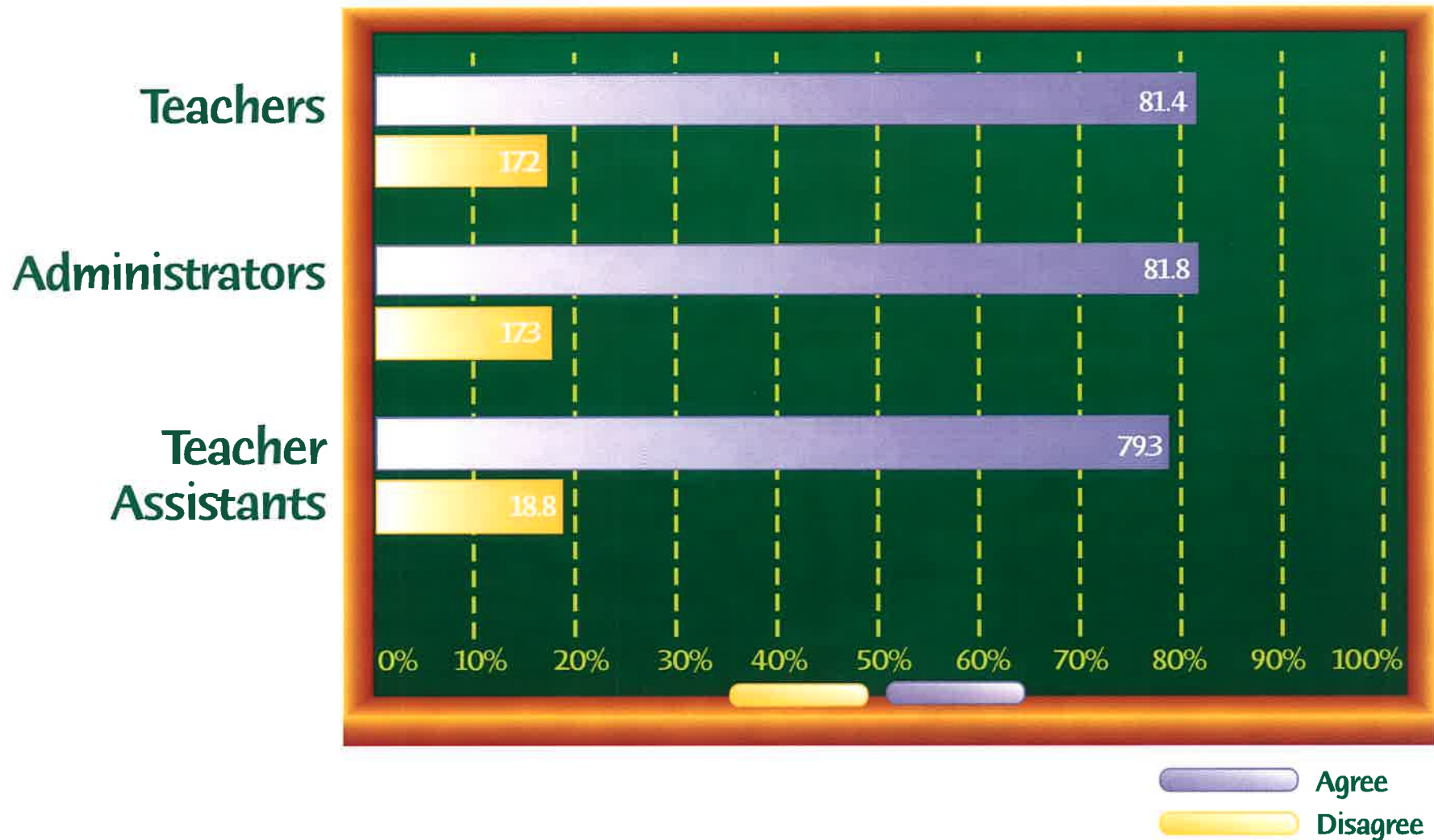
Multiple indicators should determine student promotion instead of current ABC Testing Program.



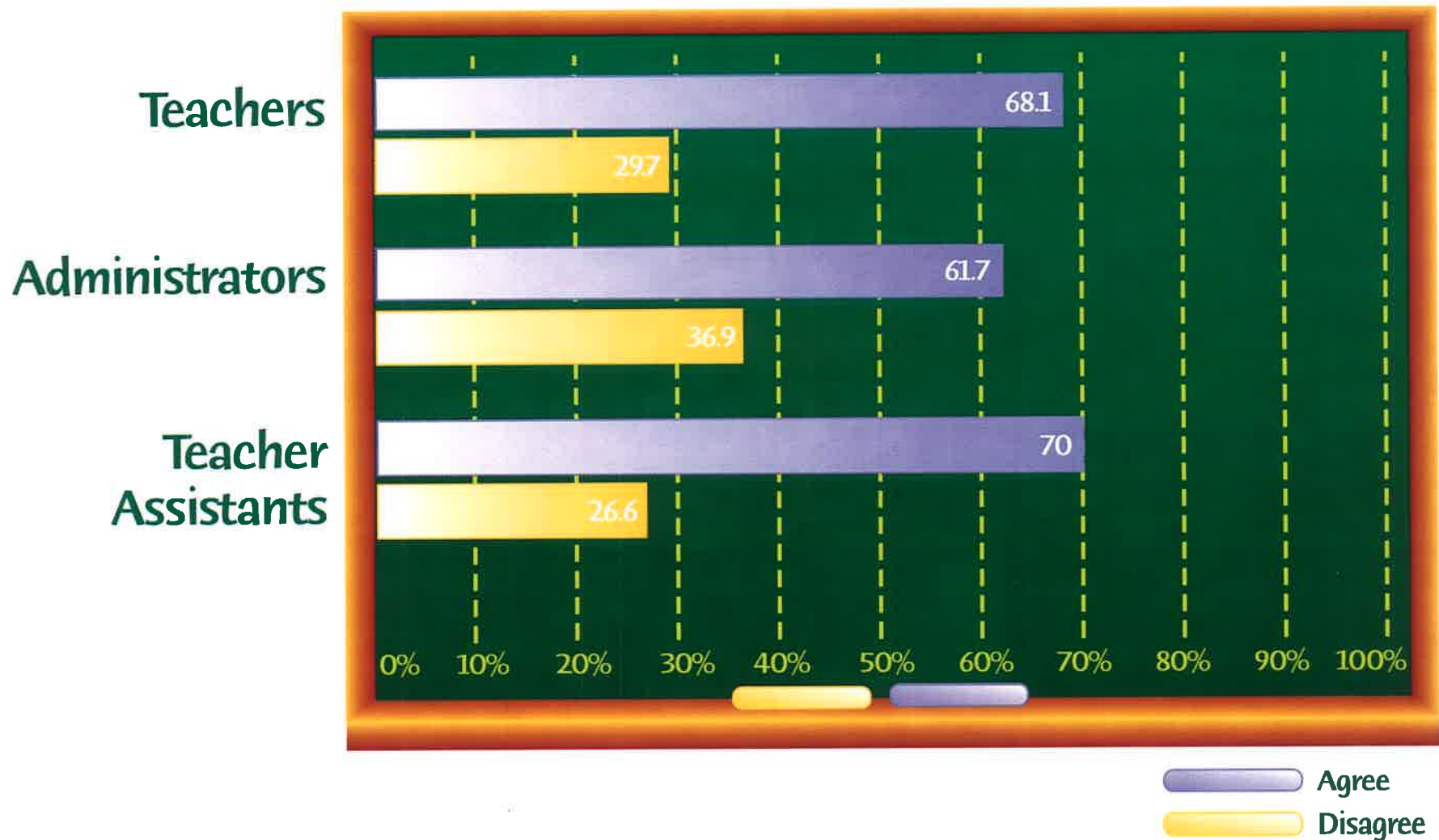
Support the elimination of social promotion.



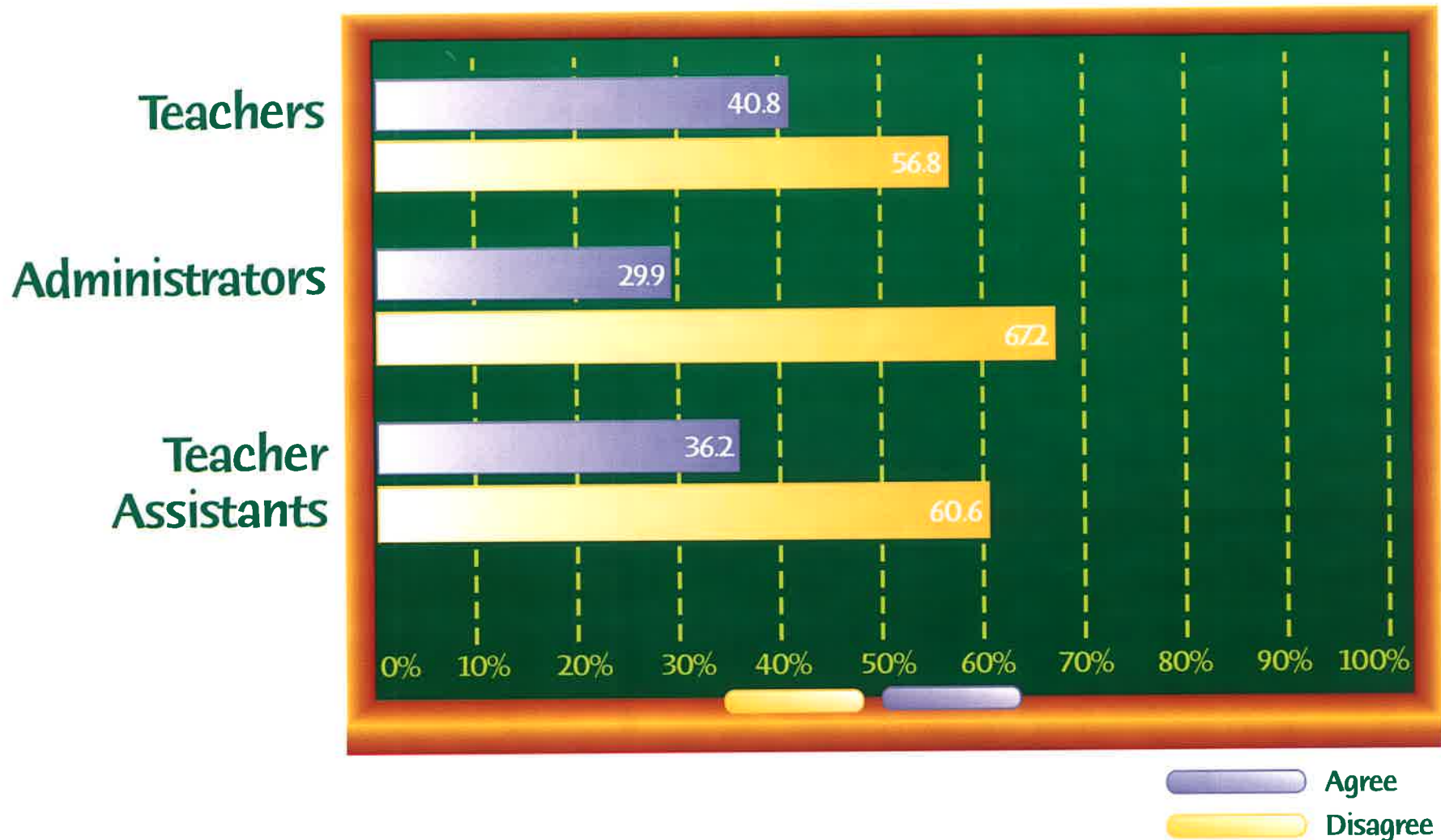
Instead of retention, place students not achieving level 3 or 4 in bridge/transition programs until skills needed are mastered.



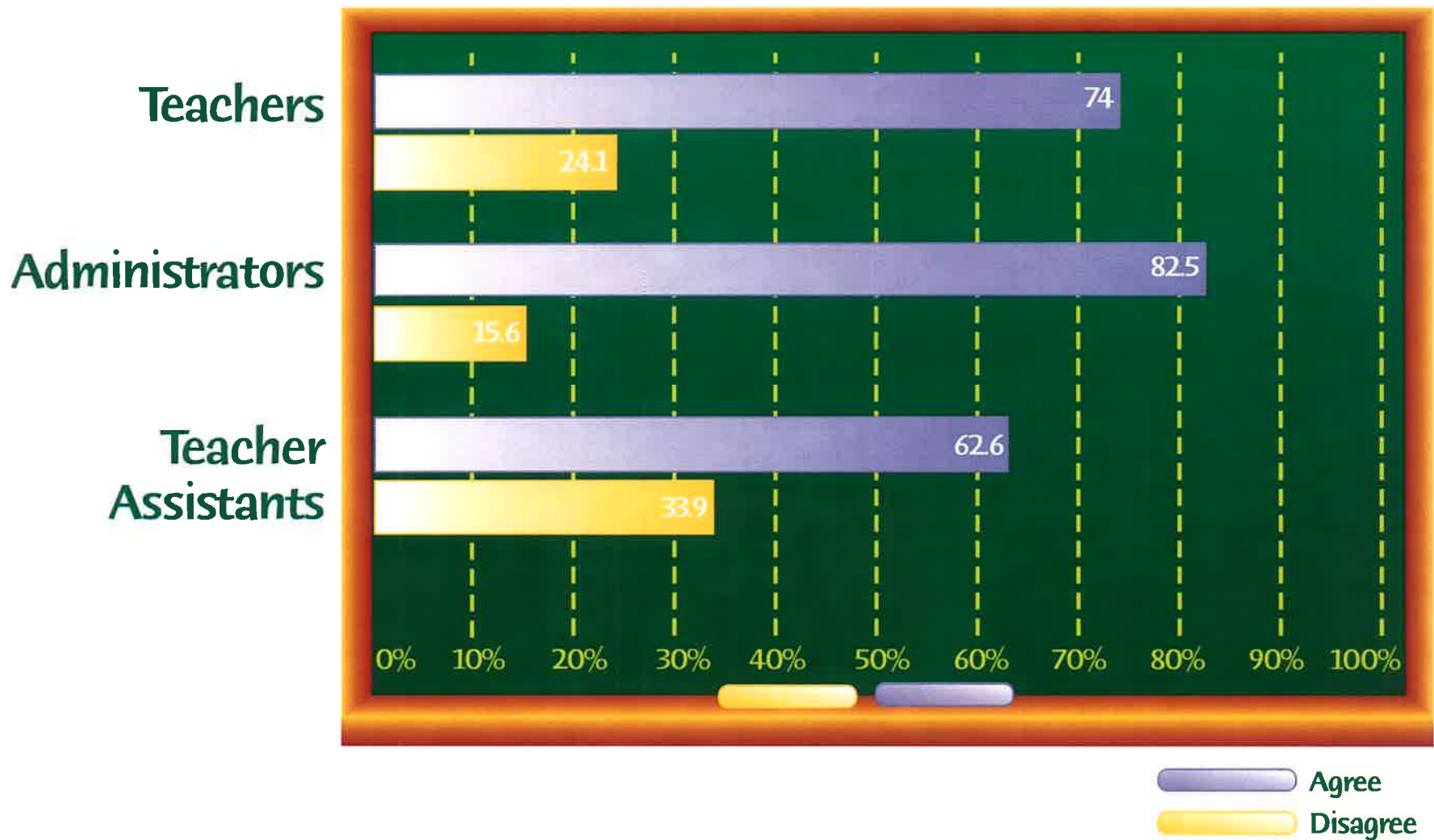
Science and Social Studies receive less emphasis since the implementation of the ABC Program.



Time for physical education and the arts has been reduced.



The ABC Program has increased the stress level for students.



Morale has improved with ABC Program.

