

Strong Start Academy





Youth Development & Social Initiatives

The Department of Youth Development and Social Initiatives provides the full range of supports and services to ensure that all residents receive a strong start in life, cultivate the skills required to compete and can access support systems to help them thrive.

YDSI delivers a range of programs that strengthen the community, enhance education and promote innovation.





YDSI Areas of Focus

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

YDSI supports early learners through young adults with a range of services that help them thrive. Programs include innovative early education delivery models, unique school-based academic supports and engaging career pathways.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

YDSI works to increase economic mobility for low-income and/or less educated workers through employer partnerships and career pathways within targeted high demand sectors.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

YDSI amplifies the impact of community leaders who advocate for vulnerable residents, offering a beacon of hope by coordinating efforts across faith communities, engaging the growing Latino community and empowering at-risk young people who face adversity and experience trauma.

INNOVATION

YDSI provides a vehicle for corporate and philanthropic partners to support innovative programs that improve the quality of life for all Las Vegas residents, with a goal of making Las Vegas a national leader in Livability, Innovation, Future, and Education.





Why Education Matters to the City

- Education drives a healthy economy impacting all areas of our community.
- Citizen satisfaction of the overall quality of public schools in Las Vegas was 24% compared to the U.S. average of 54%.
- Only 31% of 3 & 4 year olds in Clark County are enrolled in any formal preschool.
- 1 in 3 kindergarteners don't have the language skills to learn how to read.
- 69% of Las Vegas elementary schools are 3-star or below.
- 52% of students in Las Vegas are eligible for free and reduced lunch, although some of the targeted schools have 100% of their students receiving free or reduced lunch.
- Some of the Las Vegas zip codes have almost 40% identified Emergent Bilinguals.





City of Las Vegas Partnership with Strong Start Academy Elementary School

- CLV purchased the Tony Hsieh Education Center for Strong Start Academy's use and leases it to them monthly
- SSAES receives regular transfers from CLV in the amount of \$250,000/ month for operating expenses
- CLV is funding multiple expansion projects at the Strong Start Academy facility to accommodate a planned increase in enrollment, with the school offering grades K-5 by 2025
- SSAES Board members are recommended and subject to election by the City of Las Vegas Mayor and select City Council members

Why High Quality Pre-K?

- 90% of a child's brain development happens by the age of five (5)
- For every \$1 invested in early education, society receives a return of up to \$17
- Children who participate in high quality Pre-K programs:
 - Are more likely to become healthy, contributing members of society
 - Are less likely to need remediation
 - Are more likely to avoid crime
 - Are more likely to graduate from high school
 - Have improved Social Skills

Post Covid - Investment in Early Education Makes Even More Sense for Nevada

- Widening student achievement gaps
- Dropping graduation rates
- Remediation rates rising in NSHE
- Investing in the future of the state means funding Pre-K, Special Ed, and Weights in the per pupil funding formula (**abandon single weight for equity adjustment**)

Nevada Early Childhood Education

- There are an estimated 39,241 4 year old children in Nevada
- 8,202 students are currently in state or federally funded Pre-K programs in Nevada
- Nevada lacks funding for 31,039 students

What Does Early Childhood Education Research Say?

Teachers should encourage children to use their **home language** in the classroom and to show what they know in any language, while maintaining high expectations and supporting their English development.

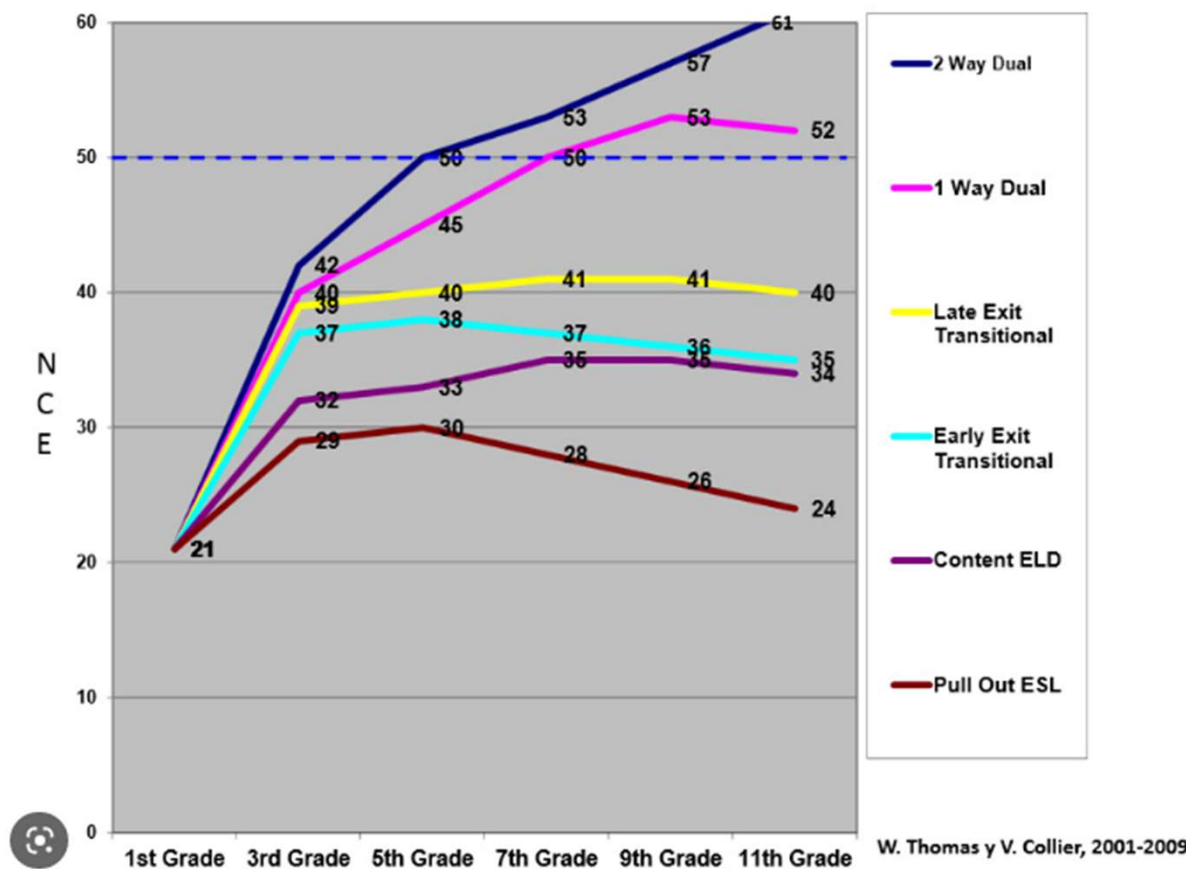
1. Targeted Hiring of Teaching Assistants to Facilitate Newcomers' Transition
2. Morning Messages in Children's Home Languages
3. Greeting Routines in Multiple Languages
4. Targeted Support During Story Time
5. Culturally Relevant Materials
6. Bilingual Education Starts in Pre-K and no Later Than 2nd Grade

ELL Children Who Have Access to Quality Early Education Have Better Success K-12

- High-quality teacher-child interactions in early learning environments have been regarded as a key contributor to children's early language and cognitive development in international scholarship.(Yang N, Shi J, Lu J and Huang Y (2021)
- The preschool years have been regarded as the most important time for children to develop their vocabulary competency before joining formal learning at schools (Blocker, 2017; Grøver, 2017).
- Children's early vocabulary development has a significant influence on their academic performance over the life span (Chall et al., 1990; Williford et al., 2013). For example, Christ and Wang (2010) pointed out a **potential gap of 600 words among 3-year old children with different family backgrounds** and noted that the gap may enlarge when the children are enrolled in school. Similar research results were found by Dickinson and Porche (2011) and Vandell et al. (2016), who claimed that the achievement gap established at this age seems to persist into school and later life because of the rank-order stability in children's development after they are 4 years old.

Language Acquisition Theory related to Emergent Bilinguals

English Learners' Long-Term Achievement by Program Model



Language Acquisition Theory: Emergent Bilinguals Pre-K students

- The second language is developed on the basis of an intact first language. Children who do not have an intact first language when they begin to learn the second language will have difficulties in acquiring the second language and that competence in the second language is dependent upon the level of development of the first language.
- Children absorb high expectations and perceive society's value for certain languages/cultures over others.
- Cognitive academic language proficiency is achieved when language is decontextualized and can be used in written form, thus permitting its application as a cognitive tool (Cummins 1984).

Vision



The vision of Strong Start Academy Elementary School is a culturally diverse learning community that prepares children to excel academically in two languages and have a positive impact on an increasingly evolving and global society.



Mission



The mission of Strong Start Academy Elementary School is to provide equitable, high-quality academics as we prepare our bilingual, civic-minded thinkers to maximize their potential in their community and the world. SSAES is committed to building a culture of high academic achievement for all students.

All children will engage in dual language education that supports and embraces the development of their home languages and cultures. SSAES will offer rich linguistic and cultural education that values and develops families' cultural heritages and home languages as assets.

Providing an enriched multilingual education combined with high expectations will help students attain their greatest potentials, and close the achievement gap while preparing them for success in the 21st century.

Strong Start Goals



- Build bilingualism and biliteracy in all students
- Ensure students are on or above grade level
- Promote positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors

SSAES Program Model

- Two-Way Dual Language 50/50 Model
 - Two languages are used for instruction (English/Spanish)
 - Two groups of students are involved
 - Native English speakers
 - Native speaker of other language (Spanish)
 - Simultaneous Bi-Literacy Development
 - Language Division by time and subject

Mirrored Classrooms

Introduce new themes/concepts in English

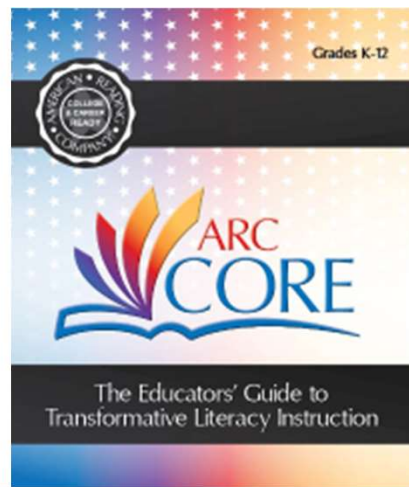
- Revisit in Spanish
- Develop academic vocabulary in both languages
- Thematic Units

Establish the same routines

- Classroom rules & procedures
- Rewards & consequences
- Grading policy

Work on the same unit/theme at the same time

Curriculum



Report Overview

Summary of Alignment & Usability: ARC (American Reading Company) Core | ELA

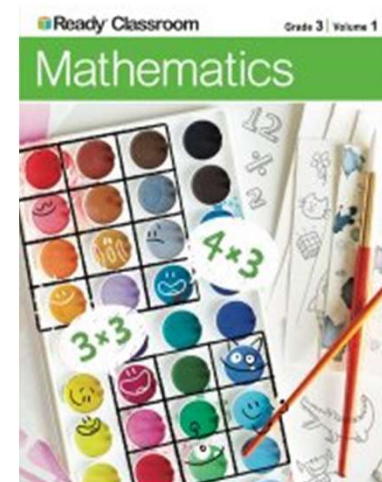
ELA K-2

ELA 3-5

ELA 6-8

ELA High School

Product ID



Report Overview

Summary of Alignment & Usability: i-Ready Classroom Mathematics | Math

Math K-2

Math 3-5



Staff Recruitment & Retention

Recruitment

- Starting pay 5% higher
- Extended day - paid at hourly rate
- Bilingual endorsed teachers
- Targeted teachers passionate about bilingual education

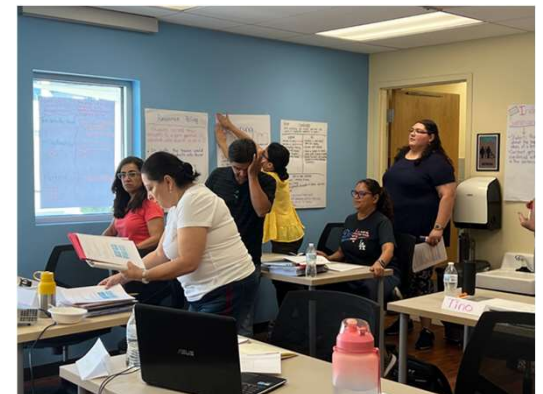
Retention

- 5% salary increase
- Retention stipend



Professional Development

- La Siembra Retreat (Dual Language 101)
- Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD)
- Math Curriculum
- Reading Curriculum PD and Coaching
- Teacher Onboarding and Induction
- Improving Literacy Instruction for Multilingual Learners
- MTSS/PBIS
- Trauma Based Learning
- Implicit and Explicit Bias/Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- NABE Conference
- Improving Writing Instruction for Multilingual Learners

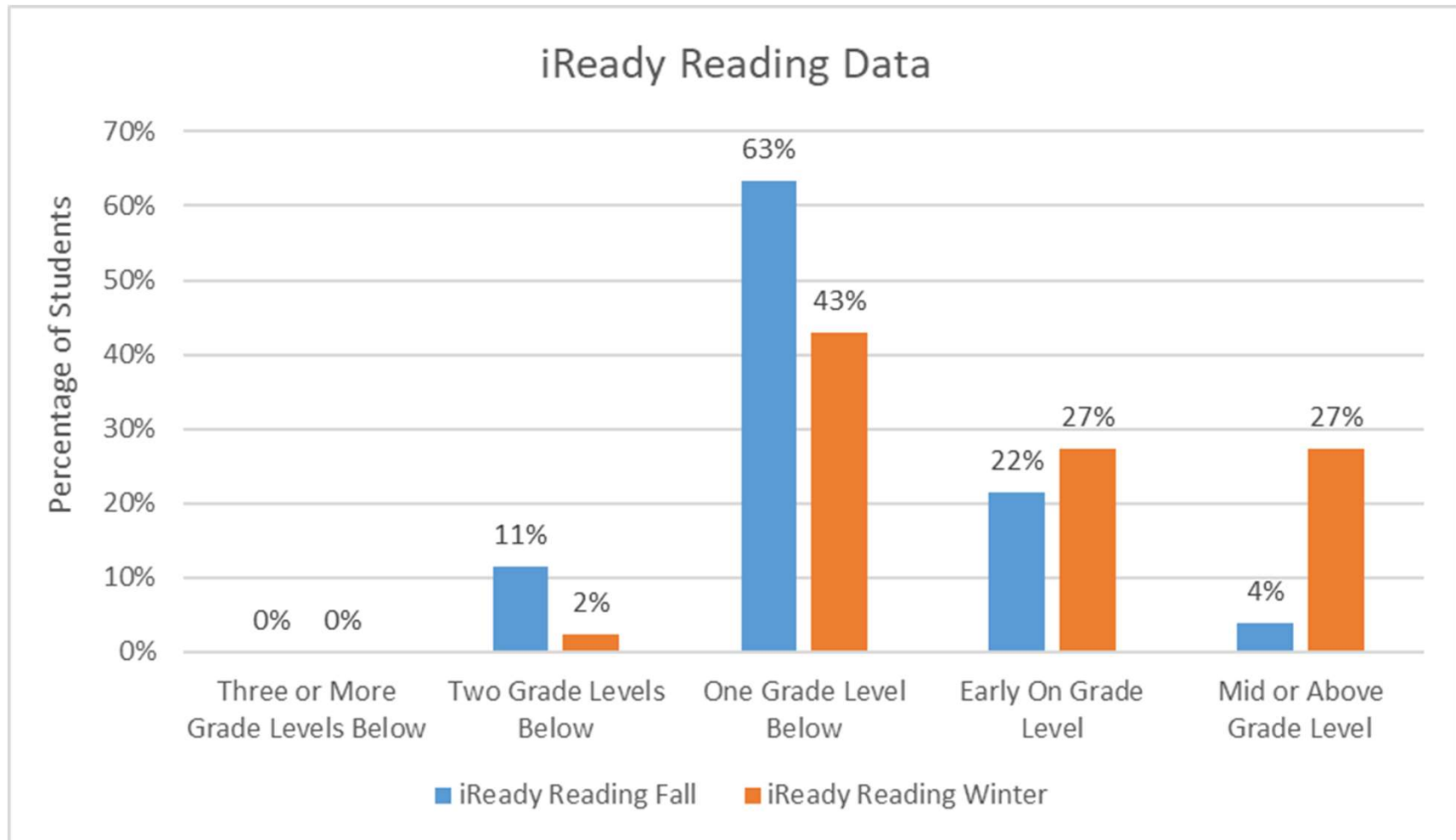


Family Engagement

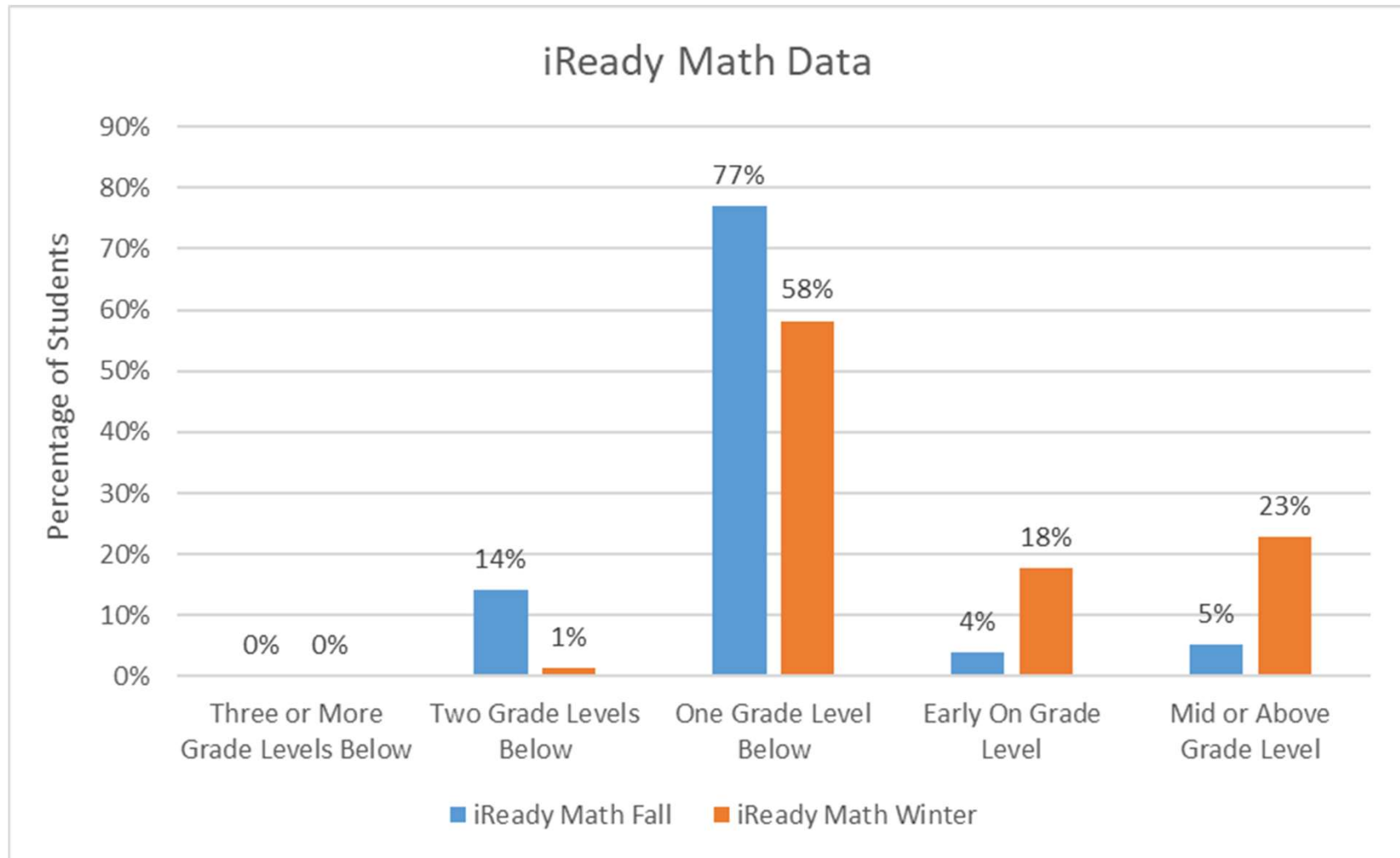
- Monthly Family Events offered in English & Spanish
 - How to support reading and math at home
 - Ways to support language learning at home
 - Information on why, when, and how students are assessed
 - Tips and strategies to support learning at home
 - Guidance on who to contact when they need help and support with learning
- Parent - Teacher Conferences 3 times a year



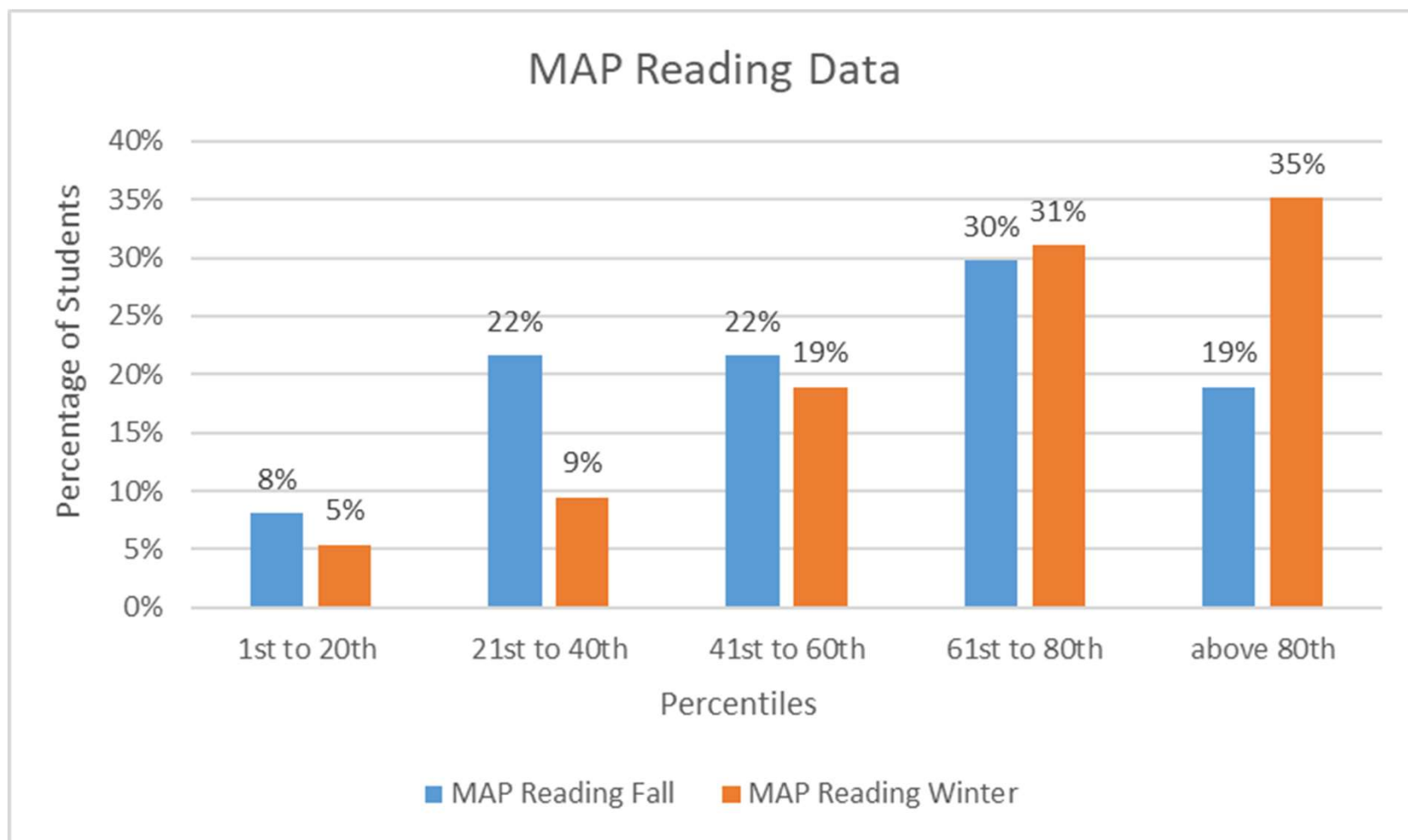
Summative Assessments



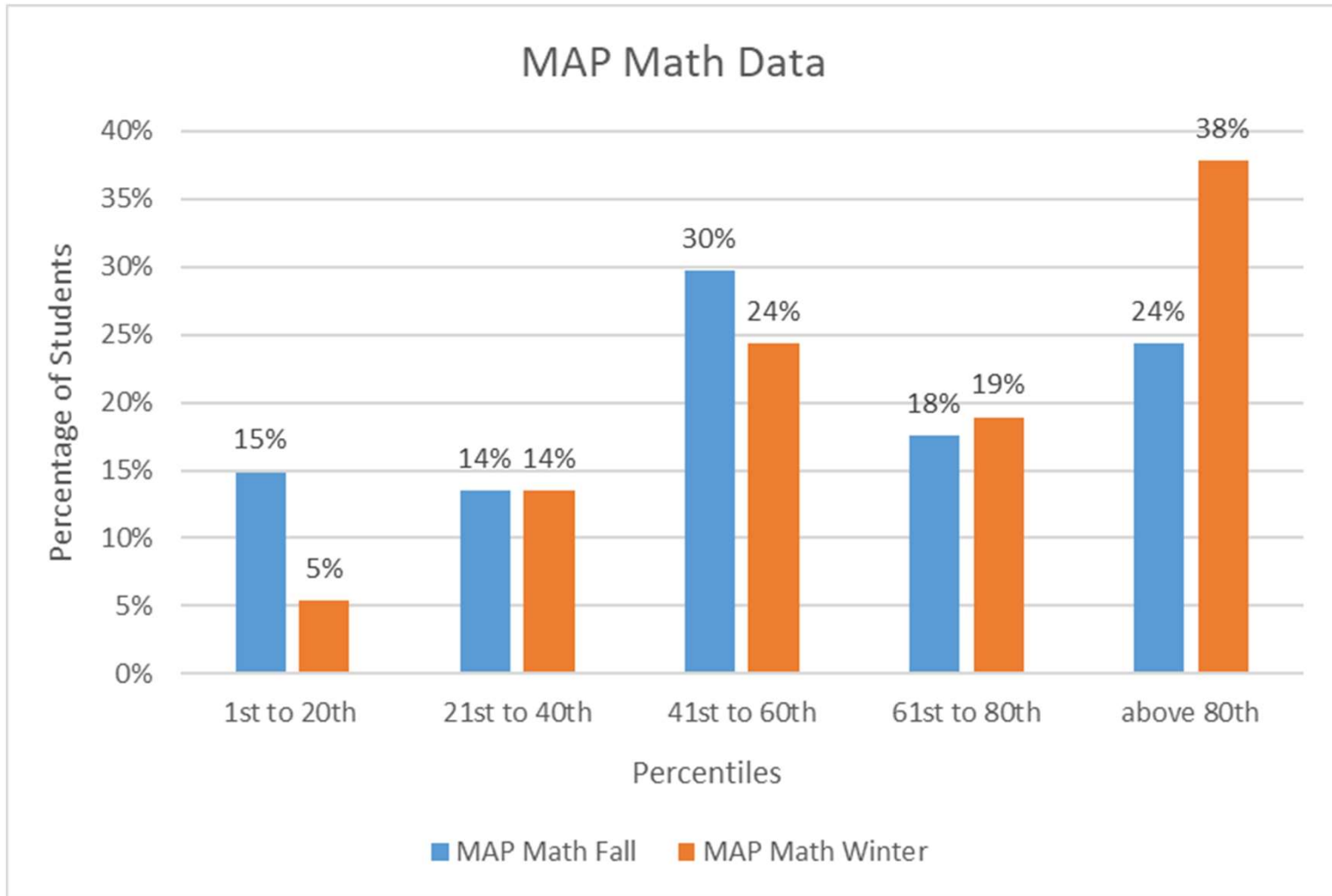
Summative Assessments



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Summative Assessments



Final Recommendations for Nevada's Future

- ❖ **Abandon single weighted funding** to equitably fund education for each student group (ELL, FRL, Special Education, and students in the lowest academic quartile)
- ❖ Invest in high-quality Pre-K education and learn from the lessons of Zoom Schools
- ❖ Expand high-quality dual language programs across Nevada
- ❖ Incorporate the recommendations of the English Mastery Council