

# ACADEMIC STANDARDS STAKEHOLDER SURVEY ANALYSIS

Prepared for Colorado Department of Education

December 2016



In the following brief, Hanover Research presents the results of the Academic Standards Stakeholder Survey administered on behalf of Colorado Department of Education.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

## INTRODUCTION

In this brief, Hanover Research presents the results of the Academic Standards Stakeholder Survey administered on behalf of Colorado Department of Education. The survey aims to gather information on stakeholder perceptions of the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS). In total, the survey received 2,833 responses, from all 64 counties except Custer County, Dolores County, and Hinsdale County, and 146 out of 186 school districts.

The report consists of three sections: **Section I: General Perceptions of the CAS; Section II: CAS Revisions; and Section III: Respondent Characteristics.** We primarily present results for fixed-response questions, highlighting notable differences in responses across sub-groups for a select number of questions. Results are typically presented with the top two answer options together (e.g., “very high” and “high” together), unless noted otherwise.

In addition to this brief, an accompanying data supplement contains a complete distribution of overall survey results and results segmented by the following categories:

- Role
- Familiarity with the CAS
- Overall impression of the CAS
- School type (K-12 educators only)
- Role in school/district (K-12 educators only)
- Grade level (K-12 educators only)
- Subject (K-12 teachers only)
- Level of training received to teach the CAS (K-12 teachers only)
- Level of support received to teach the CAS (K-12 teachers only)

The data supplement also includes all open-ended comments verbatim and a description of the various subgroups included in the analysis. Finally, all responses of “not sure” were excluded from both the report and the data supplement.

## KEY FINDINGS

- **Overall, around half of all survey respondents view the CAS positively (49%).** Education policy advocates (71%) and K-12 educators (53%) – especially those who work at a traditional public school (i.e., non-charter/magnet/innovation) – are more supportive of the CAS than other respondent groups. In addition, K-12 teachers who receive higher levels of training and support have more favorable opinions of the CAS than those with less training or support.

- **Respondents state that the CAS are most effective in promoting the development of students' information literacy, critical thinking and reasoning, and readiness for college (65 to 69%).**<sup>1</sup> Most respondents also believe that the CAS promote the acquisition of essential knowledge in all subject areas (60%), as well as higher student performance and improved student outcomes (56%).
- **Respondents note that the CAS in most content areas need at least a moderate level of revision, with English Language Proficiency, Mathematics, and Science as the top three areas.** When these results are examined according to the subject area of expertise, respondents still note English Language Proficiency as needing at least a moderate level of revision, followed by Science and Social Studies.
- **The CAS revision process should be inclusive, transparent, and well-paced.** Further, a majority of K-12 school administrators favor a revision cycle of six years (41%) or longer (44%), preferably focusing on one or two content areas at a time (56%).

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<sup>1</sup> Percentages in this paragraph include responses of “moderately effective,” “very effective,” and “extremely effective.”

## SECTION I: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE CAS

This section examines respondents' overall attitudes about the CAS and trends across select segments (e.g., role, grade level, familiarity with the CAS).

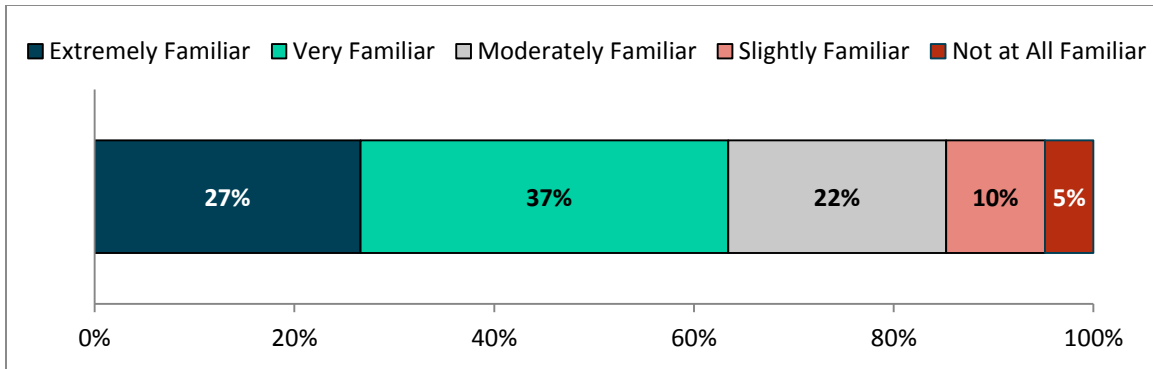
- **Approximately half of respondents hold a positive or very positive impression of the CAS (49 percent).** Further, a majority of respondents (63 percent) indicate that they are either extremely or very familiar with the current CAS, and another 22 percent report being moderately familiar with the CAS (Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2).
- **Education policy advocates and K-12 educators – especially those who work at a traditional public school (i.e., non-charter/magnet/innovation school) – express more favorable opinions of the CAS than other respondents.** In addition, respondents who are more familiar with the CAS and those who receive higher levels of support and training tend to report more positive perceptions about the CAS, compared to those who are less familiar with the CAS or those who receive less support and training regarding the CAS (Figure 1.3 to Figure 1.5).
- **Over half of respondents state that all 10 content areas in the CAS contain the knowledge and skills students need to be successful upon graduation from a Colorado public school (57 percent), while less than half report that the CAS are effective (47 percent), and clearly and concisely written (45 percent)** (Figure 1.6).
- **While 42 percent of respondents believe the CAS are grade-level appropriate, the same share of respondents' report that the standards are beyond the intended grade level (42 percent). About half of respondents also report that the CAS are high or too high in rigor (47 percent), compared to 32 percent who feel that the CAS are just right.** A much smaller portion of respondents feel that the CAS are below grade level, and that the rigor of the CAS are low or too low (Figure 1.7 and Figure 1.8).
- **Respondents state that the CAS are most effective in promoting the development of students' information literacy, critical thinking and reasoning, and readiness for college (65 to 69 percent).**<sup>2</sup> Most respondents also believe that the CAS promote the acquisition of essential knowledge in all subject areas (60 percent), as well as higher student performance and improved student outcomes (56 percent) (Figure 1.9 and Figure 1.10). Interestingly, the majority of education policy advocates feel that the CAS are effective in promoting improvement in student outcomes (86 percent), while elected officials/policymakers overwhelmingly feel that the CAS are only slightly or not at all effective in this area (80 percent), although the sample sizes of both groups are quite small (n=14 and n=5, respectively) (Figure 1.11). Responses in this area also vary depending on degree of familiarity, level of support, and level of training (Figure 1.12).
- **In terms of serving special population students, 62 percent of respondents report that the CAS are effective in meeting the needs of academically advanced students,**

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<sup>2</sup> Percentages in this paragraph include responses of "moderately effective," "very effective," and "extremely effective."

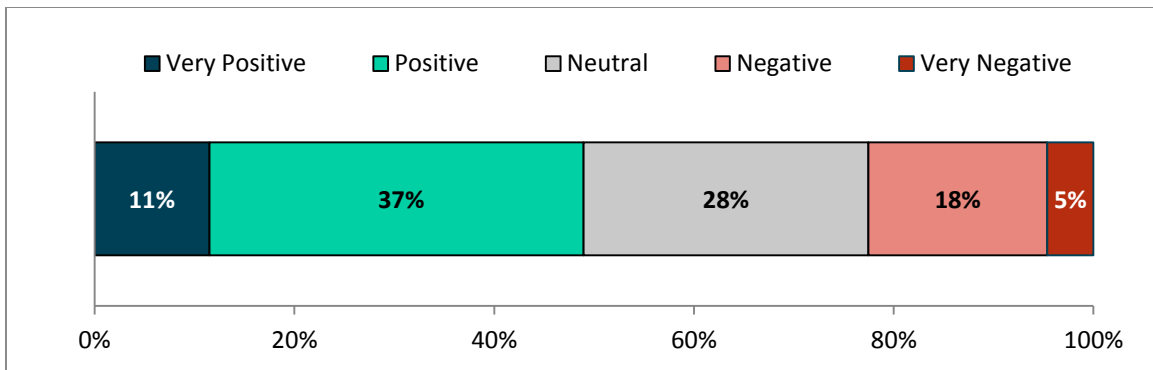
but fewer respondents report that the CAS are effective in meeting the needs of English learners (37 percent) or students with disabilities (30 percent) (Figure 1.13).<sup>3</sup> As one educator comments, “I would like the standards to include specific language related to options for differentiation for sub-populations (e.g., emerging bilingual students, IEP/504 students, and gifted students).”<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 1.1: Level of Familiarity with the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS)**



n=2,832

**Figure 1.2: Overall Impression of the Current Colorado Academic Standards (CAS)**

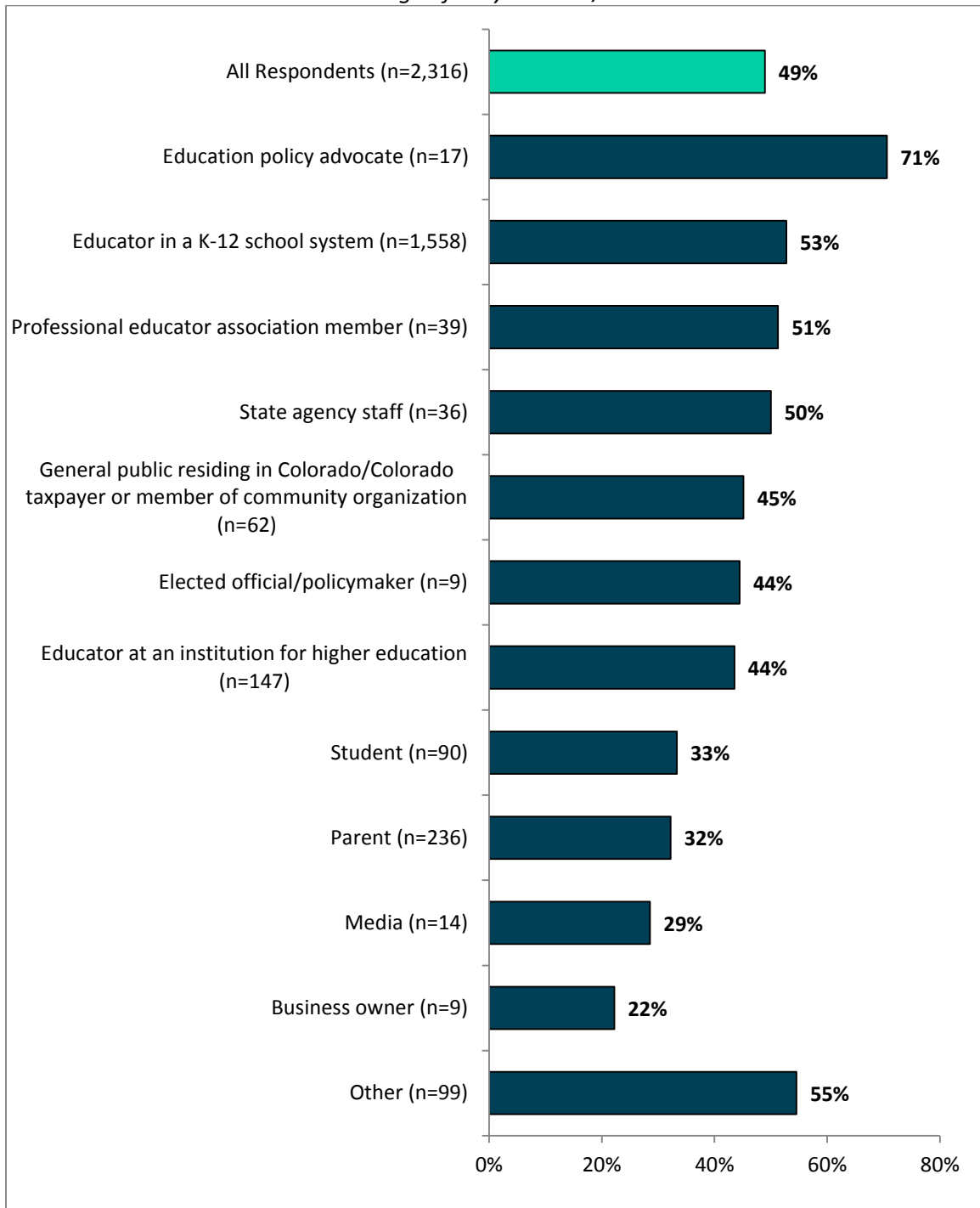


n=2,316

<sup>3</sup> Percentages include responses of “moderately effective,” “very effective,” and “extremely effective.”

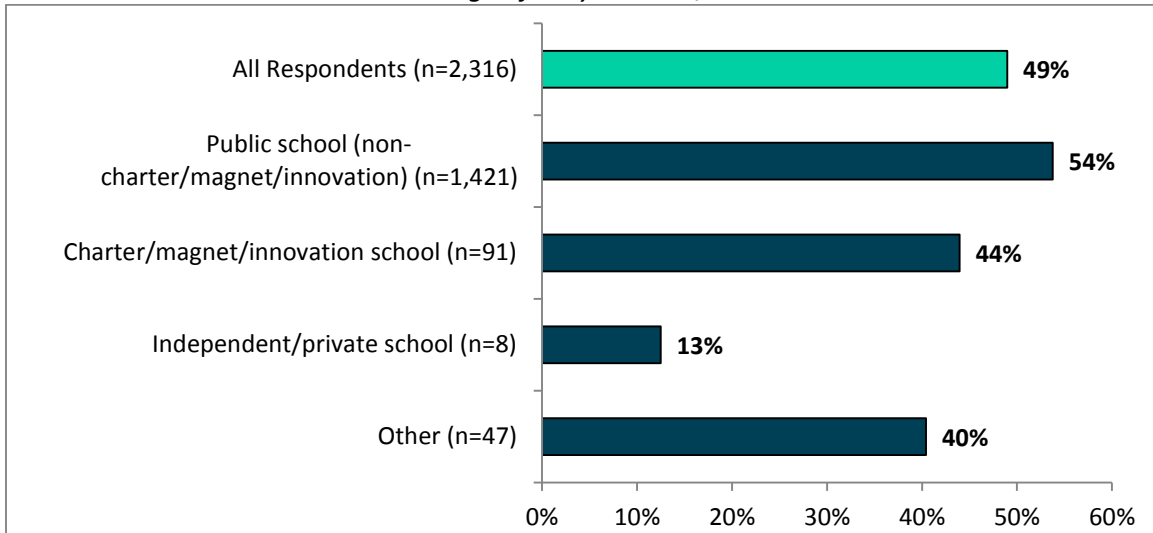
<sup>4</sup> All open-ended comments are included in the accompanying data supplement.

**Figure 1.3: Positive Impression of the Current Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) By Role**  
*Percentage of Very Positive/Positive*



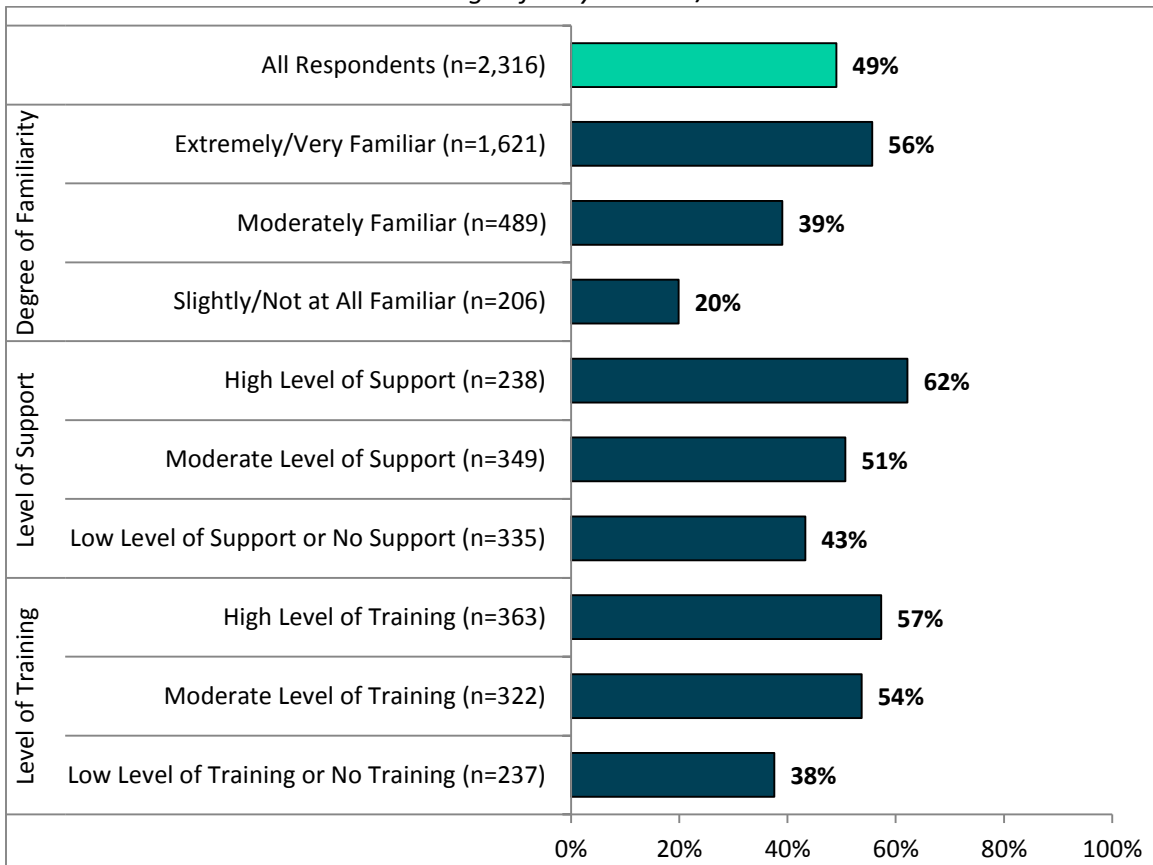
**Figure 1.4: Positive Impression of the Current Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) By Type of K-12 School**

*Percentage of Very Positive/Positive*



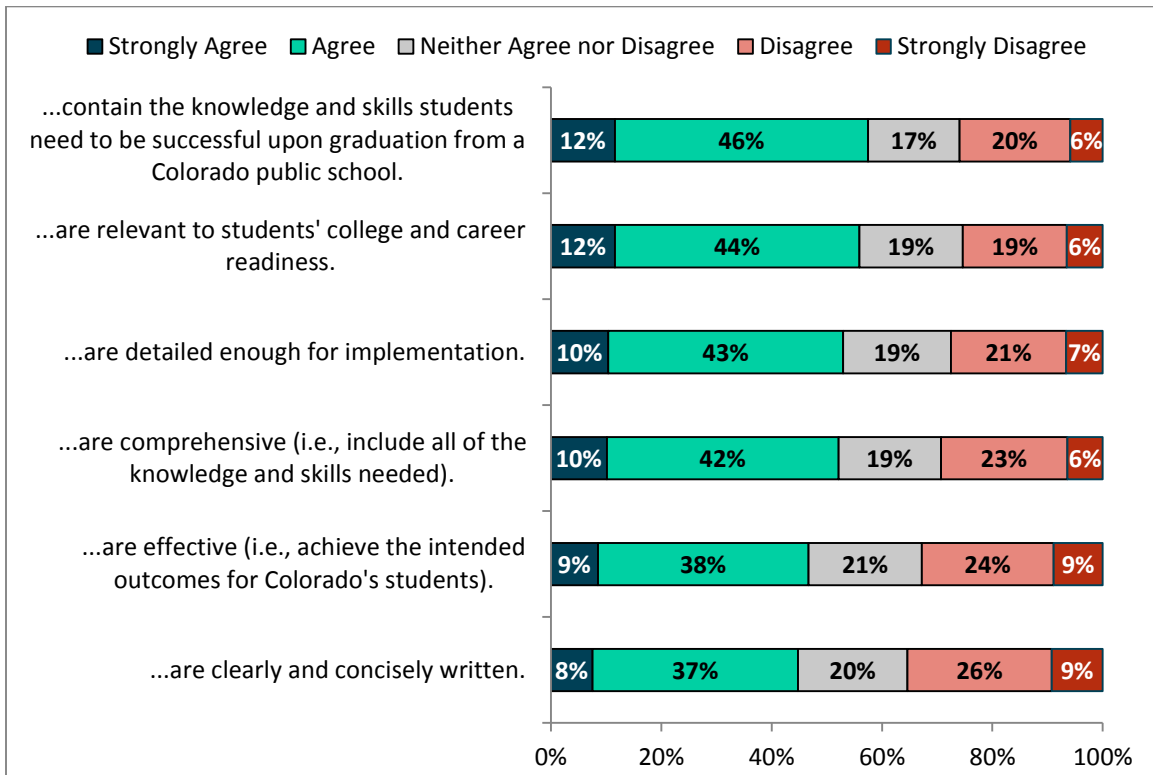
**Figure 1.5: Positive Impression of the Current Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) By Familiarity, Training, and Support**

*Percentage of Very Positive/Positive*



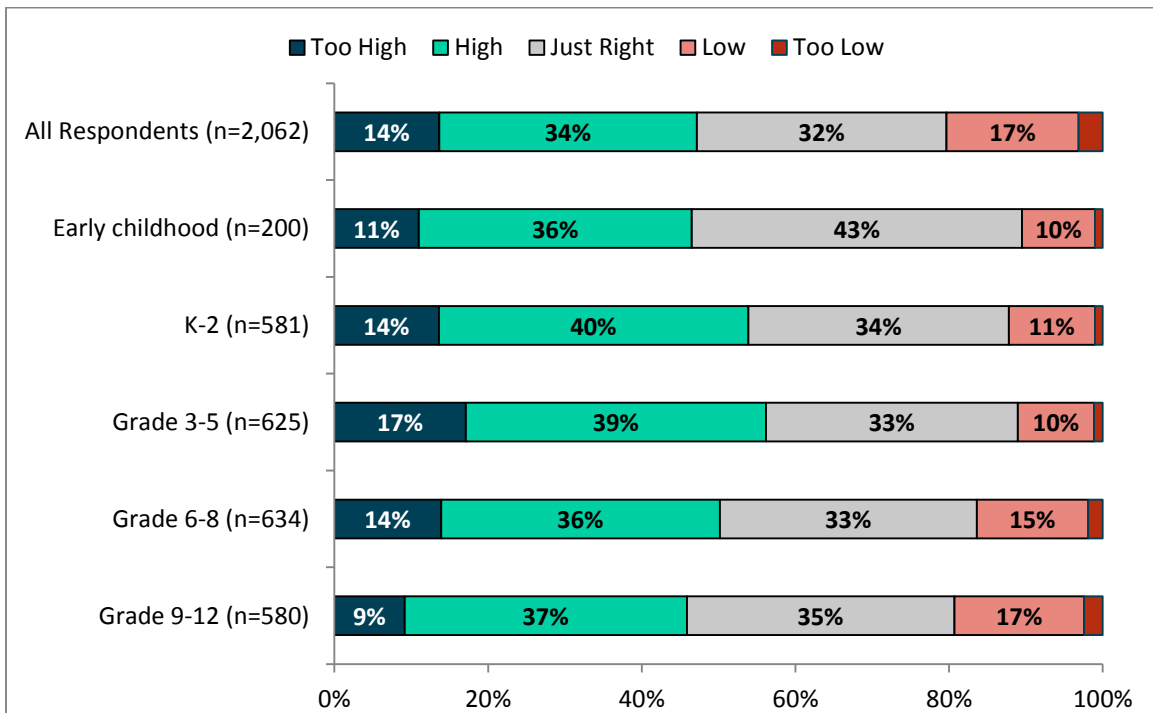


**Figure 1.6: The CAS in all ten content areas...**

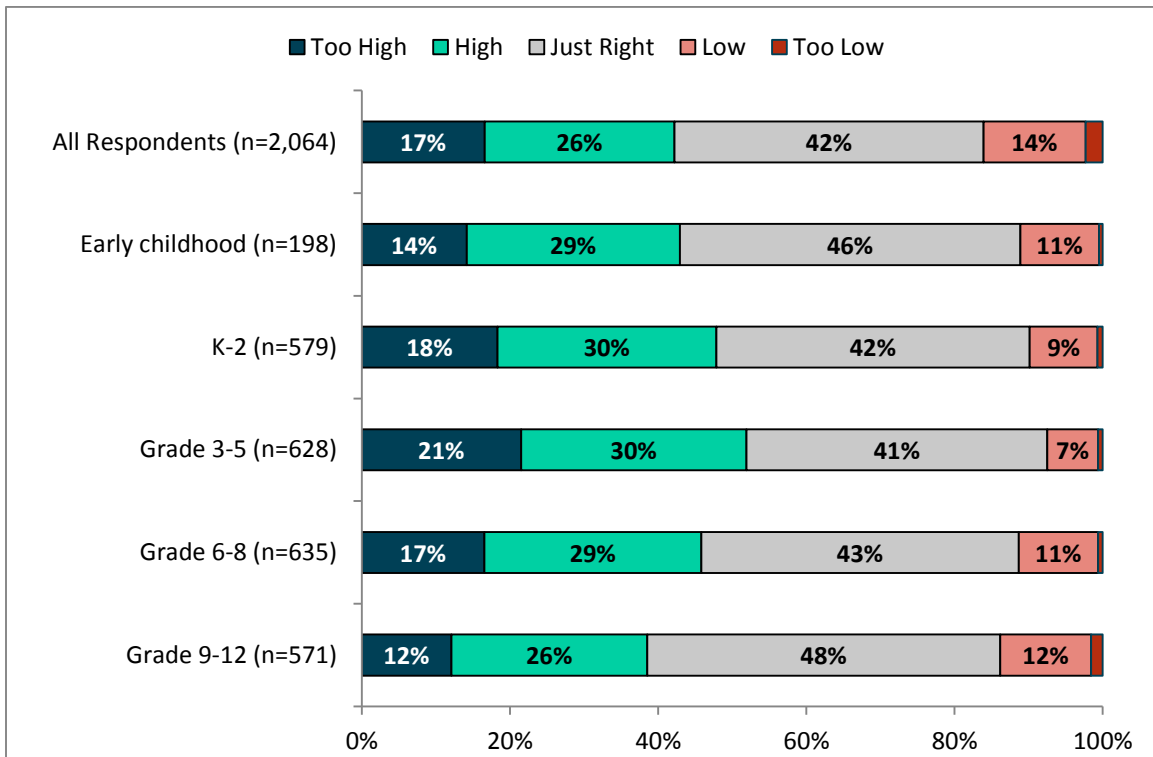


n=2,267-2,307

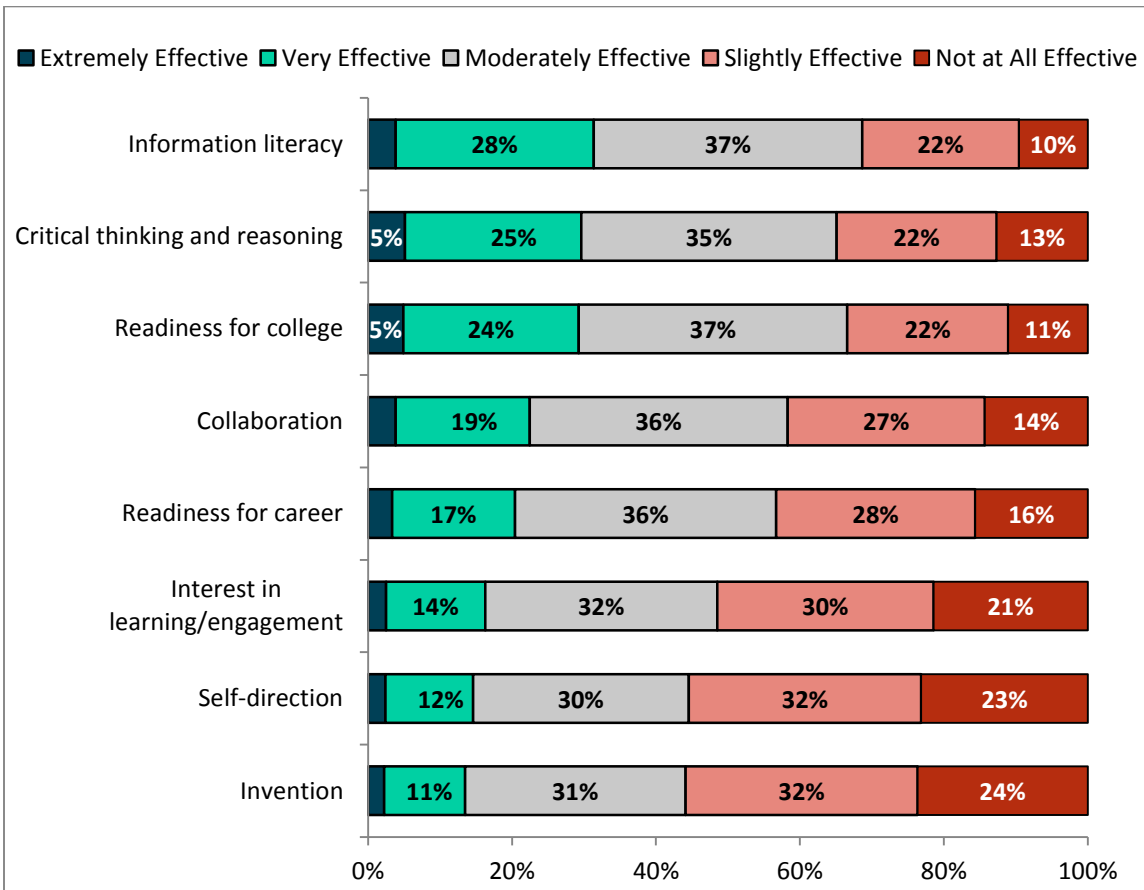
**Figure 1.7: How rigorous are the CAS? By School Level**



**Figure 1.8: How grade-level appropriate are the CAS? By School Level**

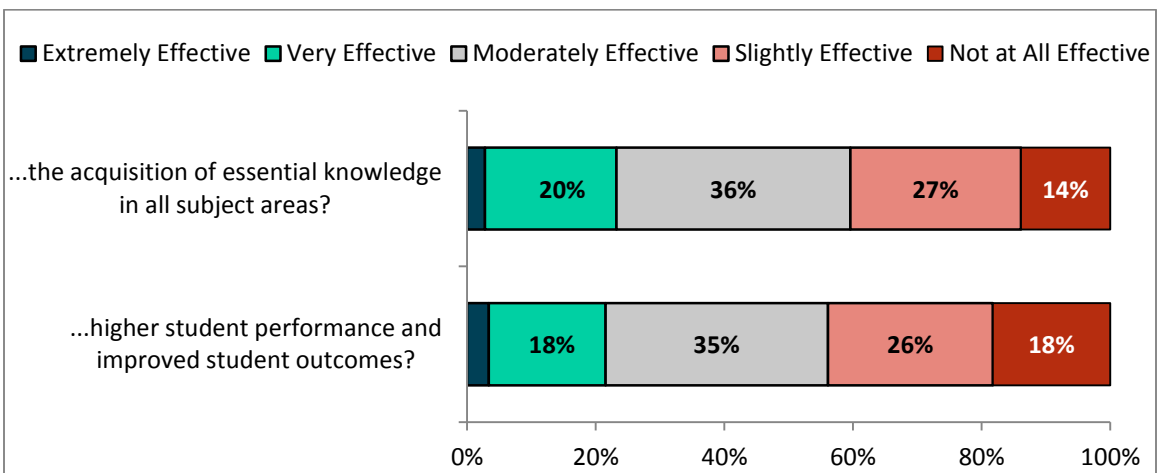


**Figure 1.9: How effective are the CAS in developing the following skills for Colorado public school students?**



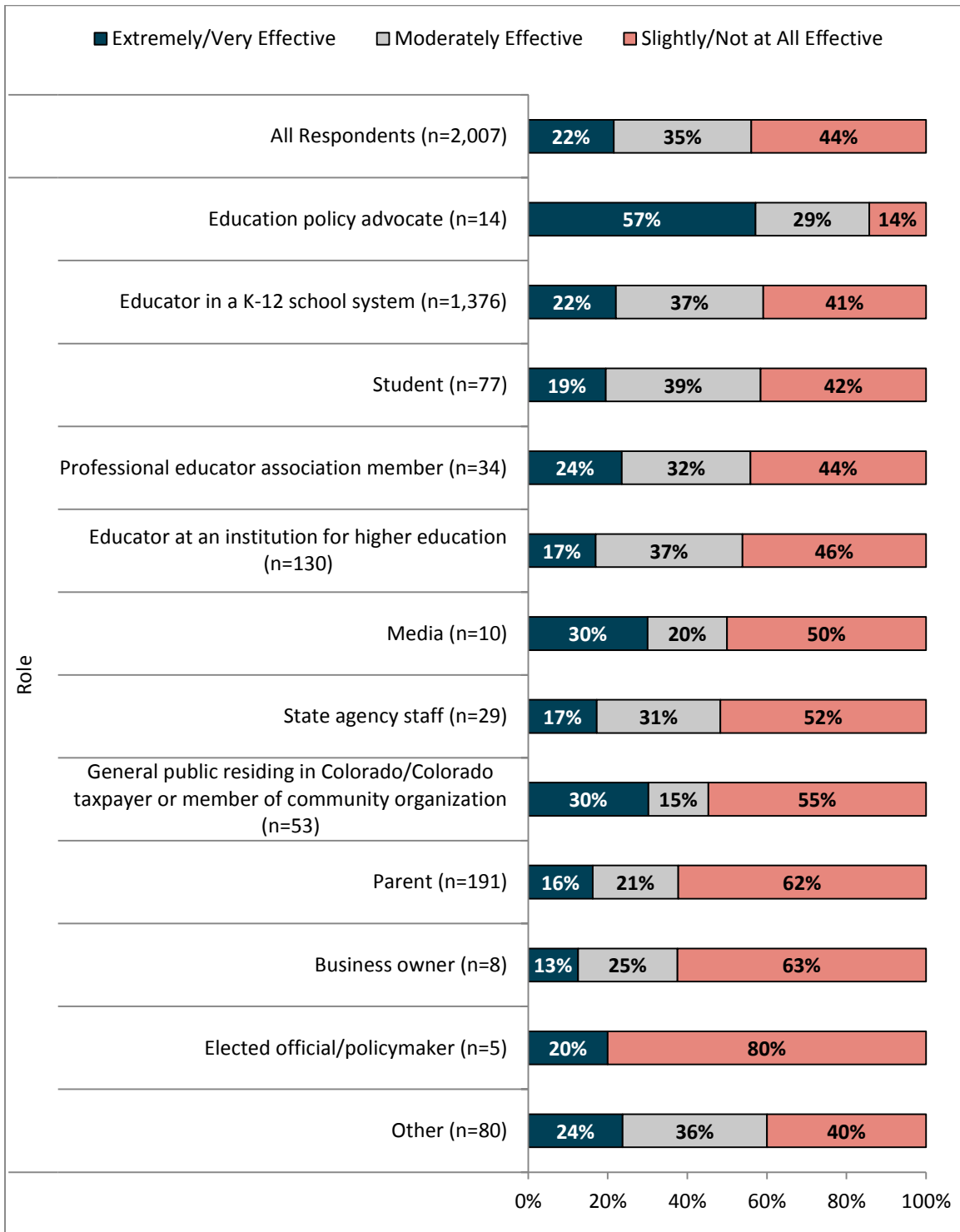
n=1,976-2,100

**Figure 1.10: How effective are the CAS in promoting...**

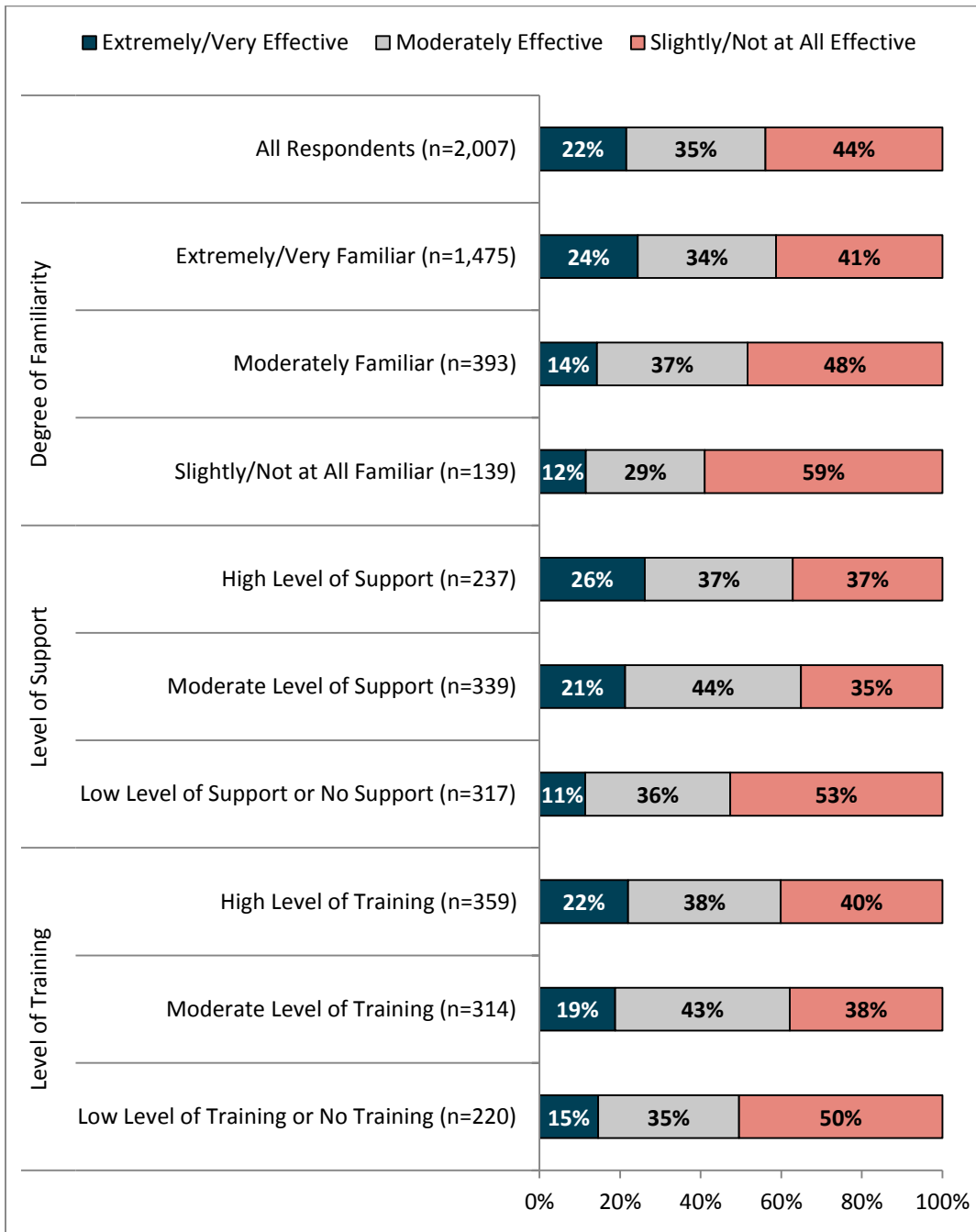


n=2,007-2,019

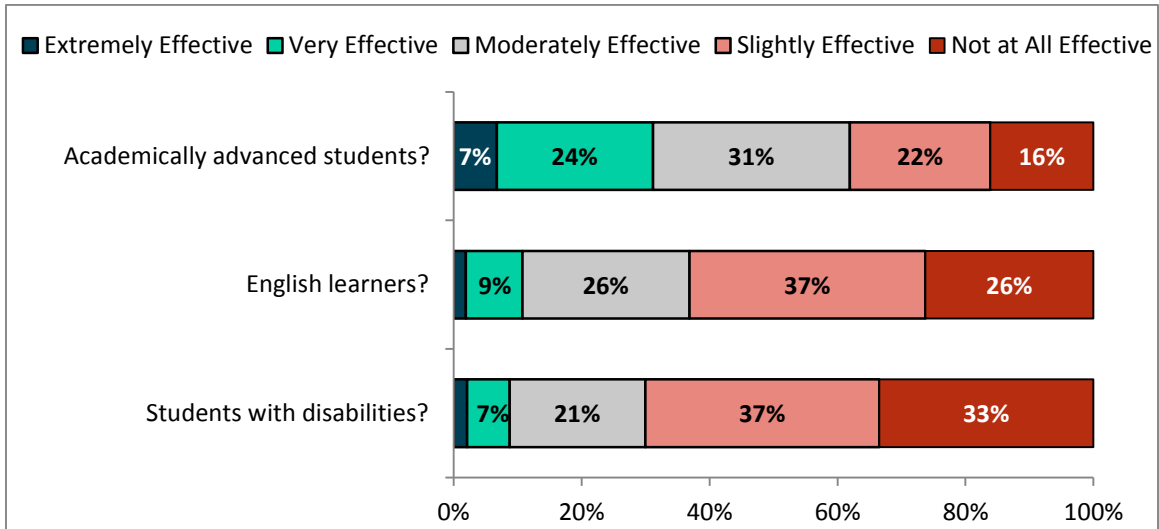
**Figure 1.11: How effective are the CAS in promoting higher student performance and improved student outcomes? By Role**



**Figure 1.12: How effective are the CAS in promoting higher student performance and improved student outcomes? By Familiarity, Training, and Support**



**Figure 1.13: How effective are the CAS in addressing the needs of:**



n=1,815-1,962

## SECTION II: CAS REVISIONS

This section discusses respondents' feedback about the processes and priorities for the CAS revision.

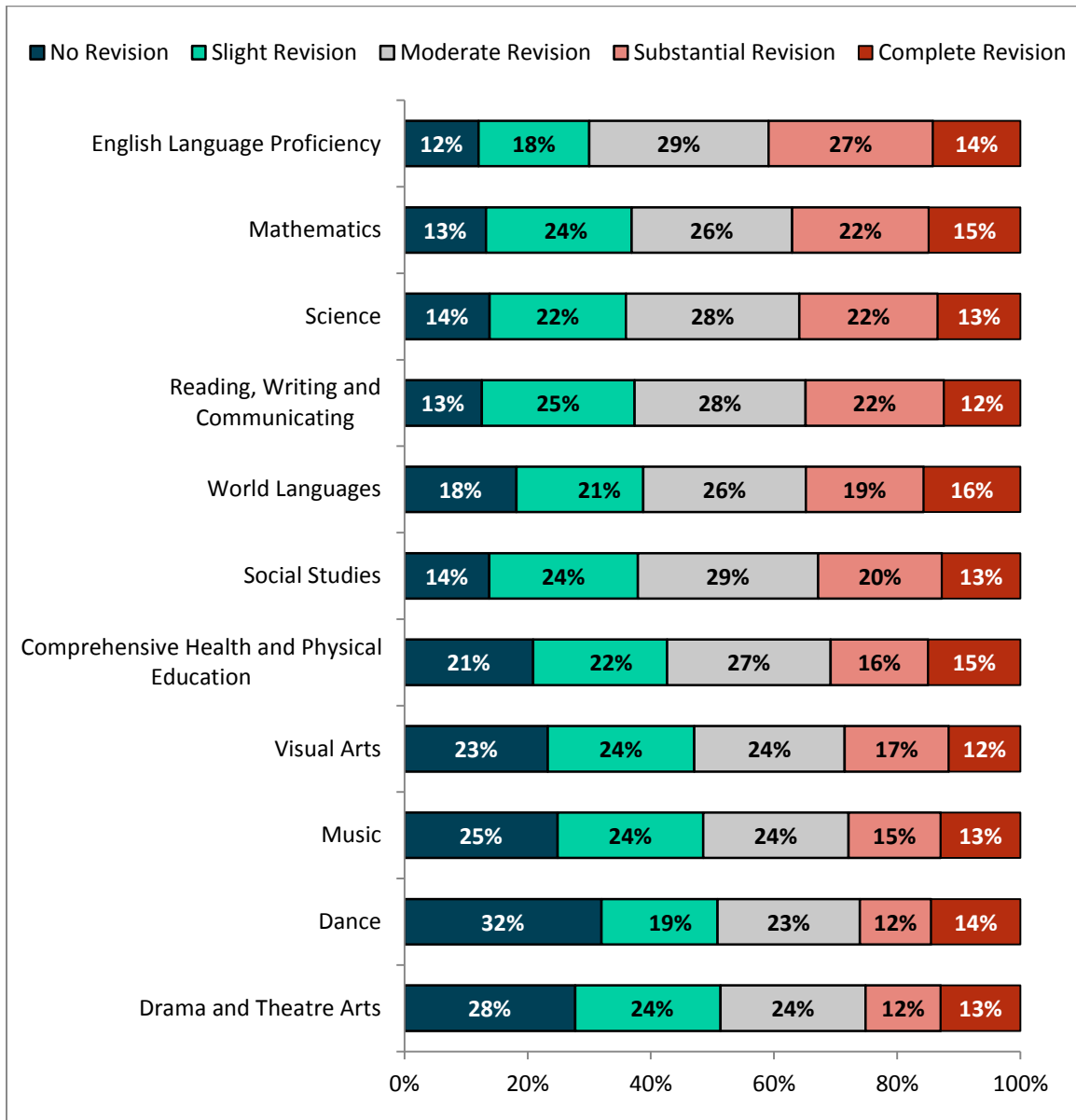
- **Respondents note that the CAS in most content areas need at least a moderate level of revision, with English Language Proficiency, Mathematics, and Science as the top three areas.** When these results are examined according to the subject area of expertise, respondents still note English Language Proficiency as needing at least a moderate level of revision, followed by Science and Social Studies. Conversely, teachers in Music, World Languages, and Drama and Theatre Arts are least likely to feel that their subject areas need substantial or complete revisions (Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2).
- **Respondents report that the revision of the CAS should incorporate educator's input (90 percent) and the process should be open and transparent (84 percent)** (Figure 2.3).<sup>5</sup> More than half of respondents would like to be informed of the revision process via the CDE website and CDE newsletters (Figure 2.4).
- **A plurality of respondents state that it is extremely or very important to have consistent academic standards for students in Colorado (75 percent), or across states in the US (60 percent).** More respondents favor using national standards as a reference for reviewing the CAS (32 percent), than adopting all or part of the national standards (14 to 20 percent) (Figure 2.5 and Figure 2.6). In the open-ended comments, several respondents noted their confusion with navigating the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the CAS due to the overlap between the two sets of standards.
- **The majority of respondents also state that it is extremely or very important to have both a consistent content structure (64 percent) and style template (60 percent) for all subjects in the CAS** (Figure 2.7).
- **Responding K-12 teachers generally feel that they have at least a moderate amount of training (74 percent) and support (63 percent) to understand and effectively teach the CAS.**<sup>6</sup> Thirty-nine percent of teachers indicate that they received very high or high levels of training, while 26 percent received very high or high levels of support (Figure 2.8 and Figure 2.9).
- **K-12 school administrators prefer a revision cycle of six years (41 percent) or longer (44 percent), and most would like to focus on one or two content areas at a time during each cycle (56 percent)** (Figure 2.10 and Figure 2.11).

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<sup>5</sup> Percentages include responses of "extremely important" and "very important."

<sup>6</sup> Percentages include responses of "very high," "high," or "moderate" level of training/support.

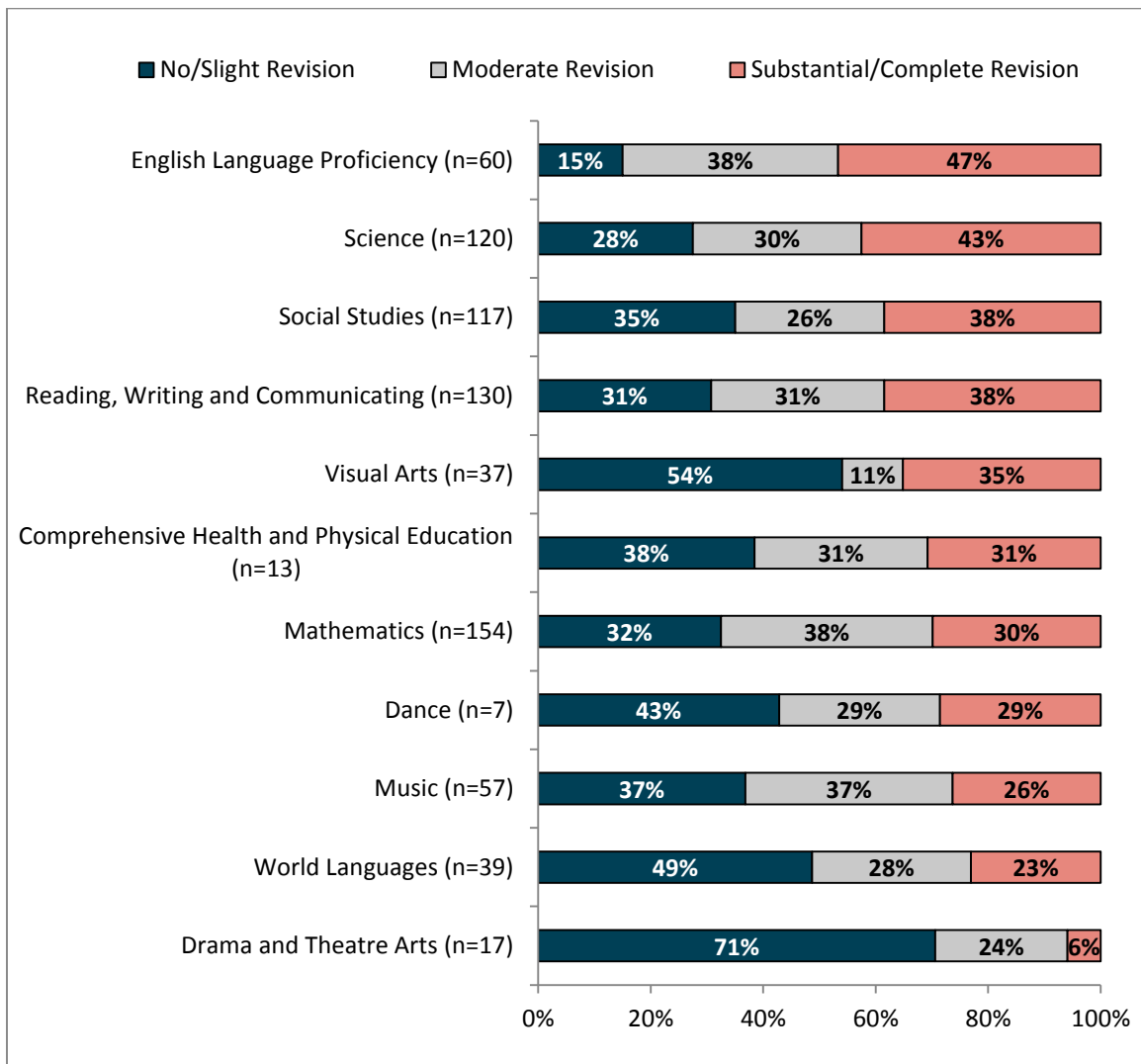
**Figure 2.1: What level of revision to the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) is needed for each of the following areas?**



n=663-1,633

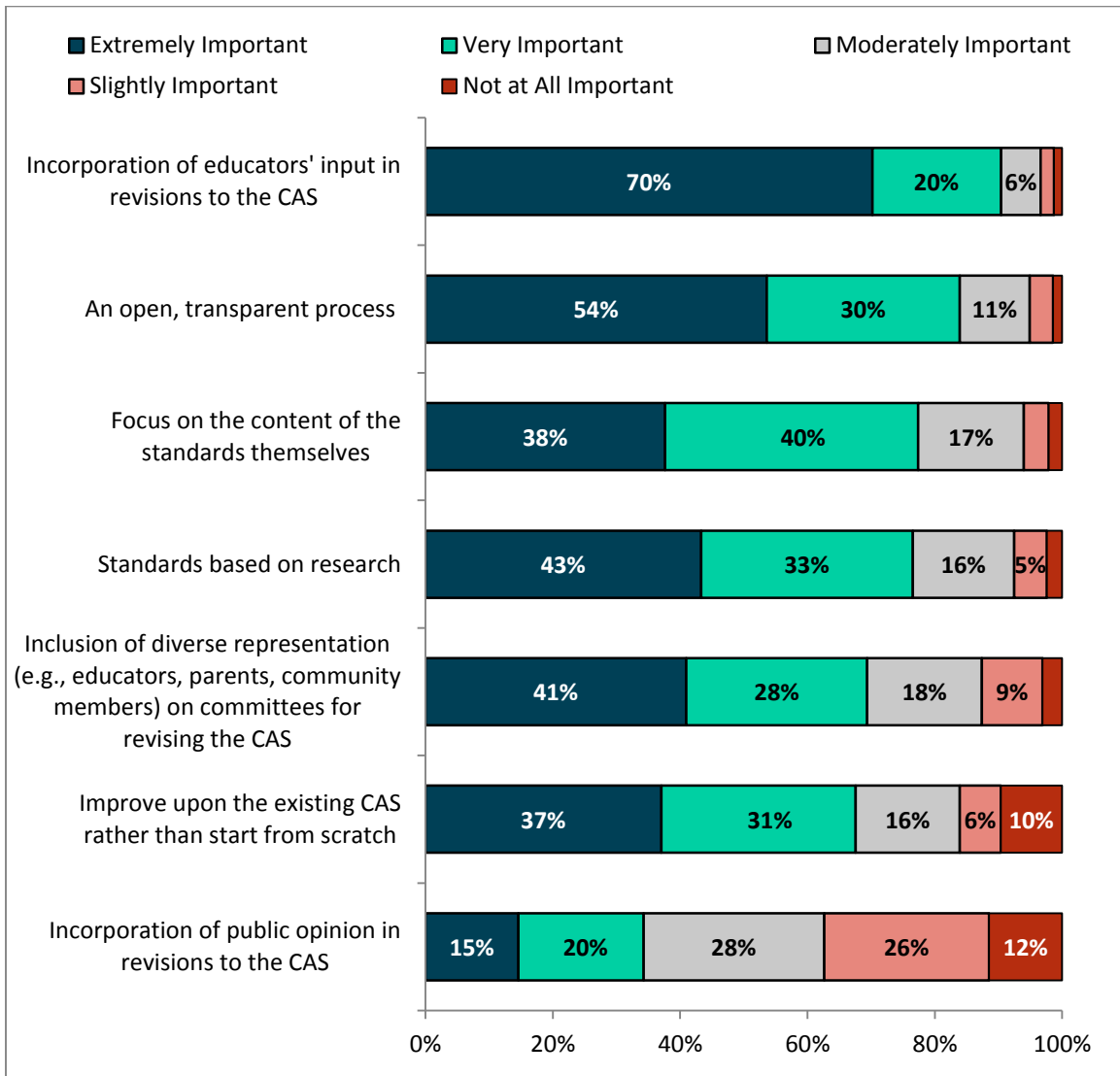


**Figure 2.2: What level of revision to the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) is needed?  
By Teachers of Subject Areas**



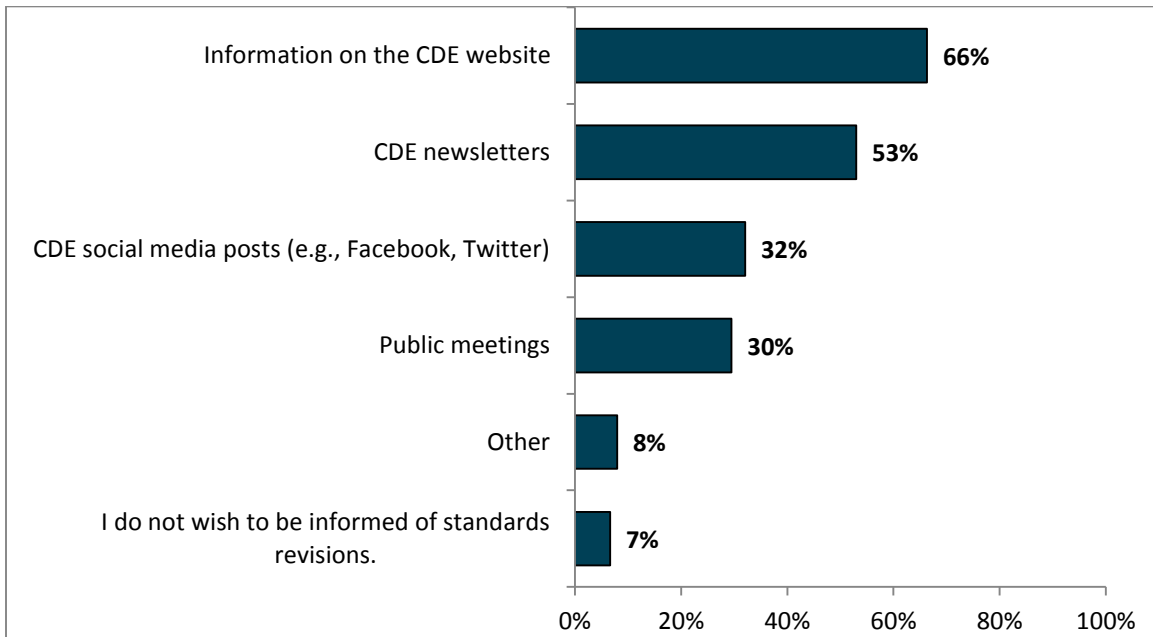
Note: This figure presents teachers' ratings of the subject areas that they teach. For example, among 60 responding teachers of English language development, 15 percent report that the CAS for English Language Proficiency need no/slight revision.

**Figure 2.3: How important should each of the following factors be during a revision of the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS)?**



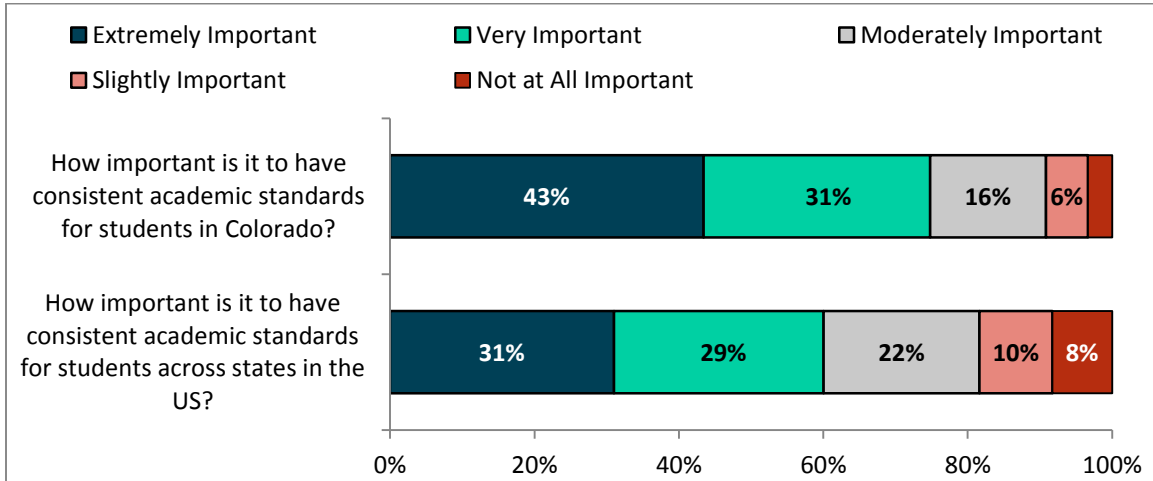
n=1,909-1,961

**Figure 2.4: In which way(s) would you like to be kept informed of the standards revision process by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE)?**



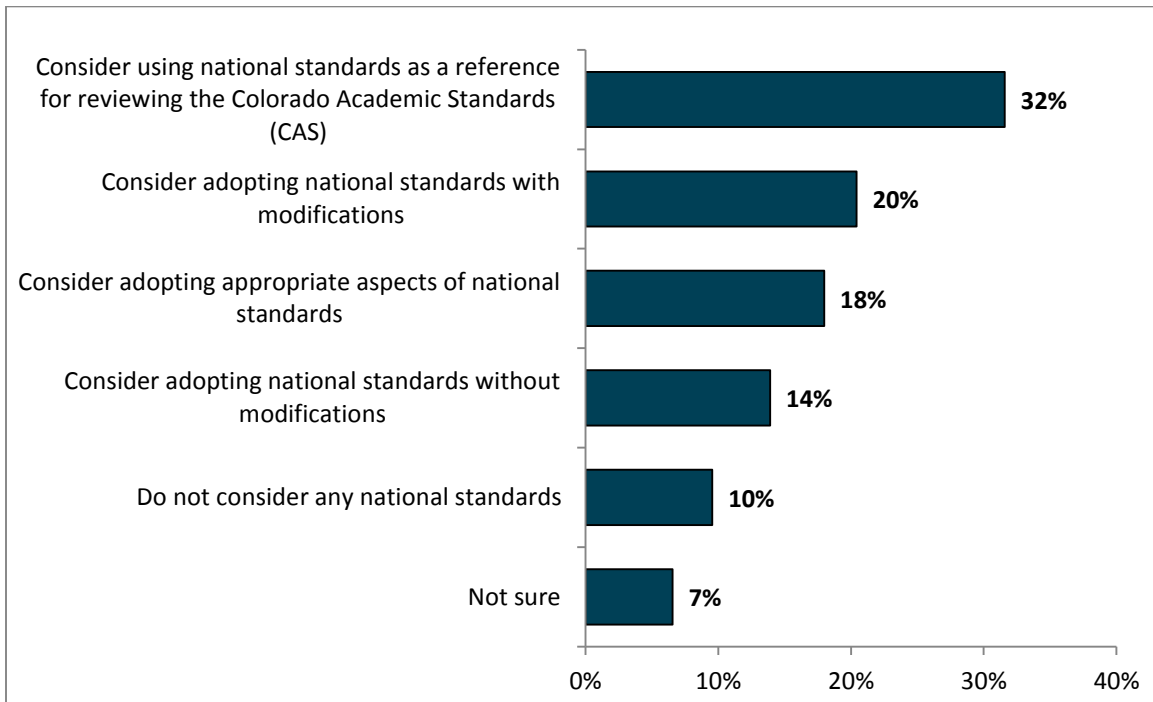
n=2,037

**Figure 2.5: Importance of Consistent Standards**



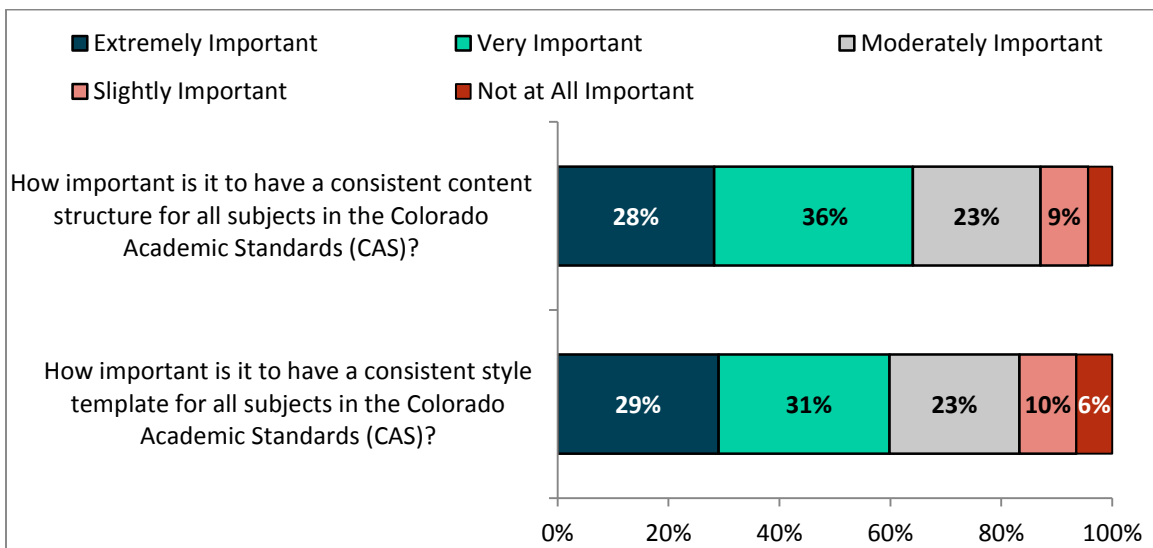
n=2,020-2,027

**Figure 2.6: How should Colorado use national standards during the upcoming standards review and revision process?**



n=2,042

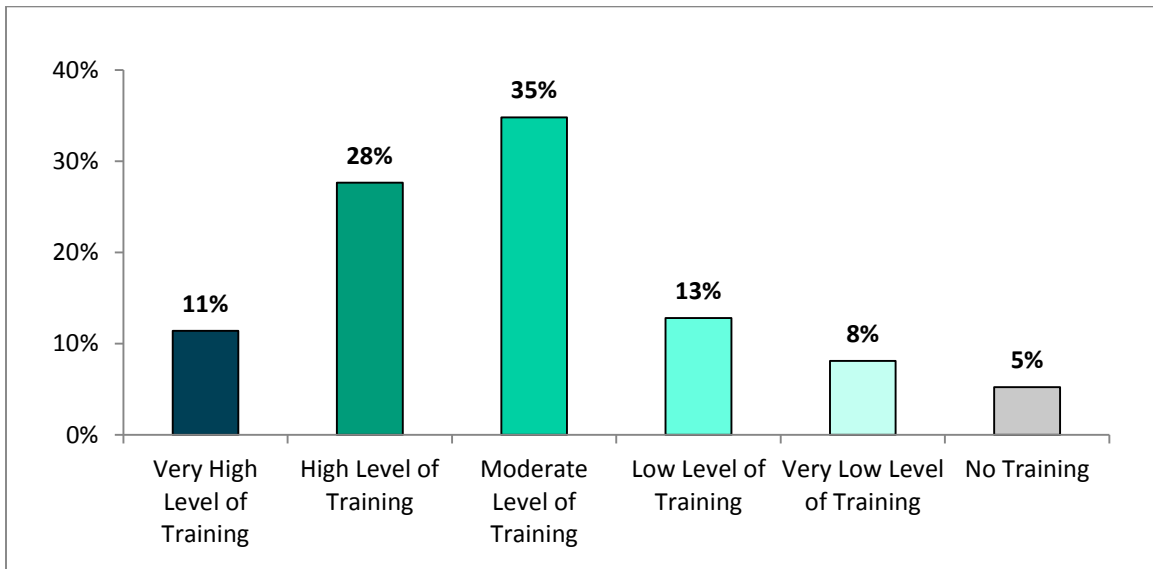
**Figure 2.7: Importance of Consistent Structure and Template**



n=1,247-1,256

Note: These questions were only asked to K-12 educators at public schools, Colorado Department of Education staff, Colorado Department of Higher Education staff, Colorado Association of School Executives members, Colorado Education Association members, and Colorado Boards of Cooperative Educational Services members.

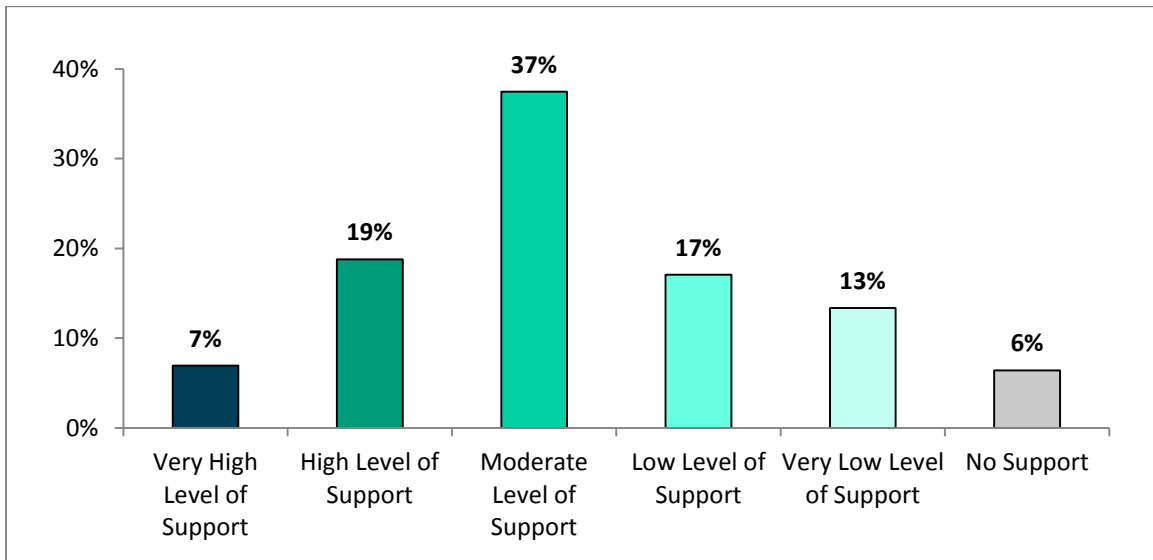
**Figure 2.8: Degree of Training Received to Understand and Effectively Teach the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS)**



n=937

Note: This question was only asked to K-12 teachers.

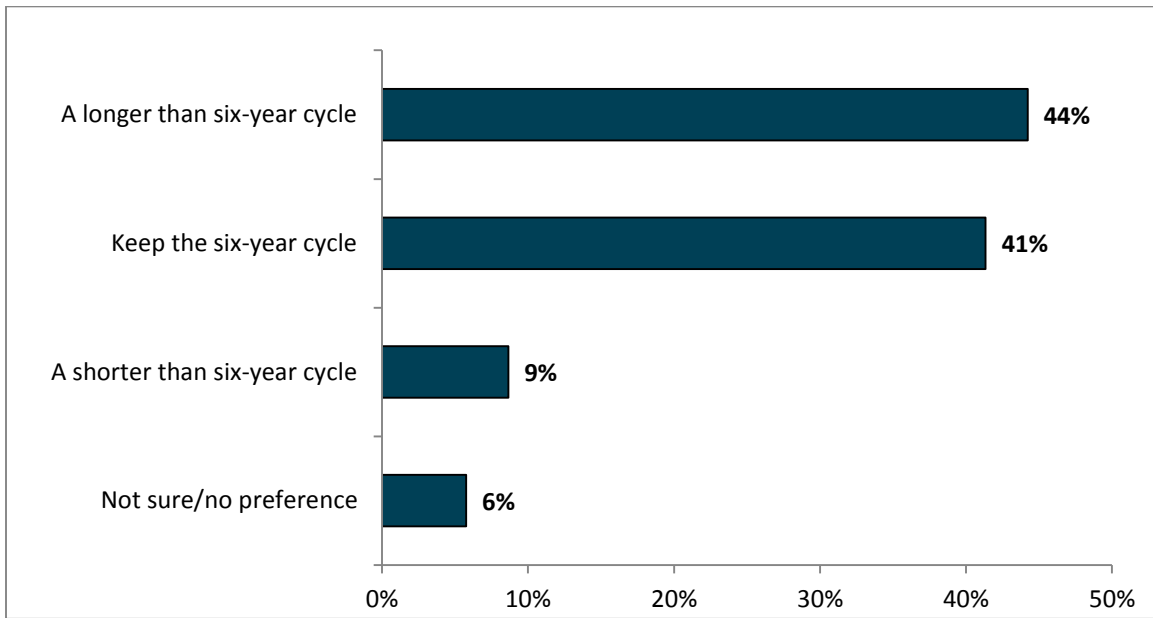
**Figure 2.9: Degree of Support Received to Understand and Effectively Teach the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS)**



n=937

Note: This question was only asked to K-12 teachers.

**Figure 2.10: If the state were to consider a different review cycle, which of the following would work best for your district?**

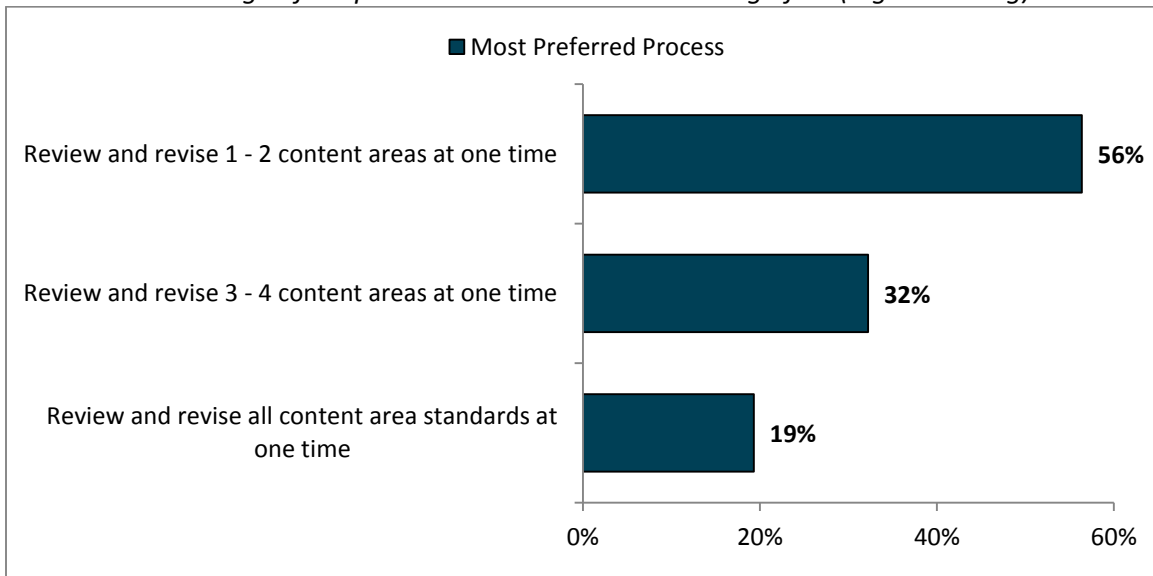


n=104

Note: This question was only asked to district administrators at K-12 public schools.

**Figure 2.11: If the state were to consider staggering the review of the content areas, which of the following processes would work best for your district?**

*Percentage of Respondents Who Provided a Rating of #1 (highest rating)*



n=88-94

Note: This question was only asked to district administrators at K-12 public schools.

## SECTION III: RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

This section presents respondents’ background information and demographics.

**Figure 3.1: Respondent Role**

ROLE	COUNT	%
<b>Educator in a K-12 school system</b>	1,845	65%
<b>Parent</b>	290	10%
<b>Educator at an institution for higher education</b>	191	7%
<b>Student currently enrolled in an elementary, middle or high school</b>	128	5%
<b>General public residing in Colorado/Colorado taxpayer</b>	61	2%
<b>Colorado Department of Education staff</b>	38	1%
<b>Professional educator organization not listed above</b>	32	1%
<b>Member of community organization</b>	28	1%
<b>Colorado Association of School Boards member/local school board member</b>	22	1%
<b>Media</b>	21	1%
<b>Education policy advocate</b>	20	1%
<b>Student currently enrolled in a postsecondary institution</b>	13	0%
<b>Business owner</b>	11	0%
<b>Elected official/policymaker</b>	11	0%
<b>Colorado Association of School Executives member</b>	8	0%
<b>Colorado Department of Higher Education staff</b>	8	0%
<b>Colorado Education Association member</b>	8	0%
<b>Colorado Boards of Cooperative Educational Services member</b>	7	0%
<b>Out-of-state interested party</b>	2	0%
<b>Other</b>	81	3%

n=2,825

**Figure 3.2: K-12 Educators**

TYPE OF SCHOOL		N=1,778
	Public school (non-charter/magnet/innovation)	90%
	Charter/magnet/innovation school	7%
	Independent/private school	1%
	Other	3%
ROLE IN THE SCHOOL/DISTRICT		N= 1,762
	Teacher	67%
	School administrator	8%
	District administrator	7%
	Specialized service professional (e.g., counselor, social worker, nurse, psychologist, speech/language pathologist, librarian)	7%
	District-level non-administrator staff	5%
	School-level non-instructional staff (non-administrator)	3%
	Paraprofessional	2%
SCHOOL LEVEL		N=1,755
	Early childhood	14%
	K-2	40%
	Grade 3-5	43%
	Grade 6-8	44%
	Grade 9-12	41%

**Figure 3.3: Higher Education Educators**

PROGRAM/INSTITUTION	N=188
College/university: Content area professor/instructor	43%
College/university: Educator preparation program	34%
Colorado community college system	24%
Certificate program	13%
Career and Technical Education	12%
None of the above	22%

**Figure 3.4: Parents and Students**

TYPES OF SCHOOL	PARENT (N=286)	STUDENT (N=126)
Public school (non-charter/magnet/innovation)	82%	29%
Charter/magnet/innovation school	26%	68%
Independent/private school	13%	1%
Institution for higher education	6%	-
Other	6%	2%



**Figure 3.5: Demographics**

<b>GENDER</b>		<b>N=2,002</b>
	<b>Female</b>	70%
	<b>Male</b>	24%
	<b>Other</b>	0%
	<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	6%
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>		<b>N=2,020</b>
	<b>Less than a high school diploma</b>	2%
	<b>High school diploma/GED</b>	1%
	<b>Some college, no degree</b>	3%
	<b>Associate's degree</b>	2%
	<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	21%
	<b>Master's degree</b>	56%
	<b>Professional degree</b>	5%
	<b>Doctoral degree</b>	7%
	<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	3%
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>		<b>N=2,013</b>
	<b>White</b>	75%
	<b>Hispanic/Latino(a)</b>	7%
	<b>Black or African American</b>	4%
	<b>Asian</b>	2%
	<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	2%
	<b>Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander</b>	1%
	<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	15%

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