

ADVANCED LEARNING TASK FORCE **FAMILY SURVEY FINDINGS**

February 16, 2012

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Background & Methodology

Goal

- Understand experiences, attitudes, beliefs and values of families whose students participate in the districts advanced learning programs, as well as those who are eligible for advanced learning programs, but are not currently participating.

Research Applications

- In conjunction with planning for future facilities and program placement decisions, the Advanced Learning Task Force seeks to improve program consistency, capacity, representation by racially/ethnically diverse students, communications with the community, and educator supports.

Approach

- On-line survey emailed to Advanced Learning families who gained eligibility from 2009 until 2011. Survey data for this report came from questionnaires completed between January 29, 2012 and February 7, 2012.

Respondent Profile

- Total Responses: 2221
(35% response rate)

- Program Eligibility

- APP 50%
- Spectrum 50%

- Program Attendance

- APP 39%
- Spectrum 33%
- ALO 14%
- None (SPS) 10%
- None (non-SPS) 5%

- Grade Level

- Elementary School 60%
- Middle School 30%
- High School 10%

- Location

- Central 17%
- North East 29%
- North West 35%
- South East 6%
- West Seattle 12%

Definitions

The following table provides a definition of the full characteristic statements used in the study questionnaire and the abbreviations used for reporting purposes.

Characteristic Statement from questionnaire	Abbreviation used in report
Delivered consistently at schools across the district	Consistent Delivery
Has clear pathways for students as they move up in grade levels (elementary, middle, high)	Clear Pathways
Is at a school near our home	Nearby School
Operates with guidelines that are monitored and enforced by the district's Advanced Learning office	Monitored/Enforced Guidelines
Provides guaranteed placement in an Advanced Learning program for eligible students	Guaranteed Placement
Provides on-site support for English Language Learners (ELL) and students with special educational needs	ELL/SpEd Support
Provides specialized Advanced Learning curriculum reflecting district standards but with greater depth, complexity, and faster pace	Specialized Curriculum
Supports the social and emotional needs of advanced learners	Social/Emotional Support

Abbreviations

- The following abbreviations are used throughout this report:
 - AG – Academically Gifted
 - AHG – Academically Highly Gifted
 - AL – Advanced Learning
 - SPS – Seattle Public Schools

Highlights

Satisfaction

- At least 63% of current AL families surveyed are somewhat or very satisfied with the Advanced Learning program their child attends, with APP families reporting 90% satisfaction, Spectrum 76% and ALO 63%.
- Three-quarters of families rate the current curriculum material appropriate for their advanced learning students.
- 80% of families agree that the AL program keeps their student intellectually engaged and motivated and more than 75% agree that their school is staffed with educators who enjoy working with advanced learners and that the current classroom configuration is well suited to their child's learning style.

Program Choice

- 77% of AHG families enroll their student in the APP program, while 58% of AG families enroll in a Spectrum program.
- Most APP and Spectrum families choose the program based on an accelerated curriculum, academic rigor, the social/emotional needs of their student, and a cohort of peers. Many APP families also choose the program for the guaranteed pathway from grades 1 – 8.
- Most ALO families select their program based on location, the friends at the school, and to maintain their Middle School AL eligibility. Many also chose for the curriculum, the teachers and blended classrooms.
- Most AHG and AG families attending school in SPS who do not choose the program they are eligible for do so because of satisfaction with teachers, friends and the AL services at their current school.

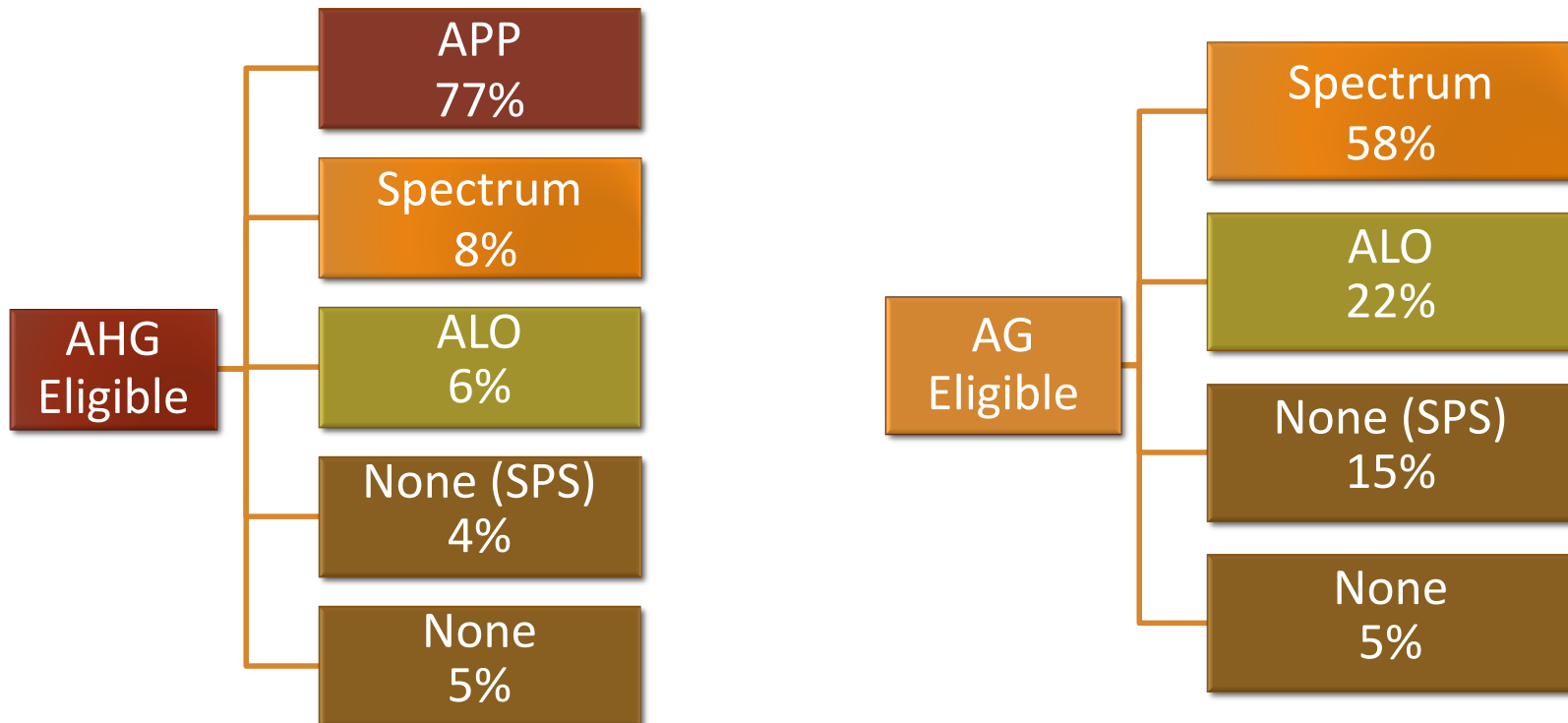
Characteristics

- Specialized curriculum is the most important characteristic for families in selecting an AL program. APP and Spectrum families indicate that social/emotional support for their students is the second most important characteristic, while having a school nearby is the second most important characteristic for ALO families.
- Characteristic ratings vary by enrolled program. APP families rate SPS highest on guaranteed placement and specialized curriculum. Spectrum and ALO families rate SPS highest on having the school nearby. The lowest ratings were for program consistency and support for ELL/Special Education services.

STUDY FINDINGS

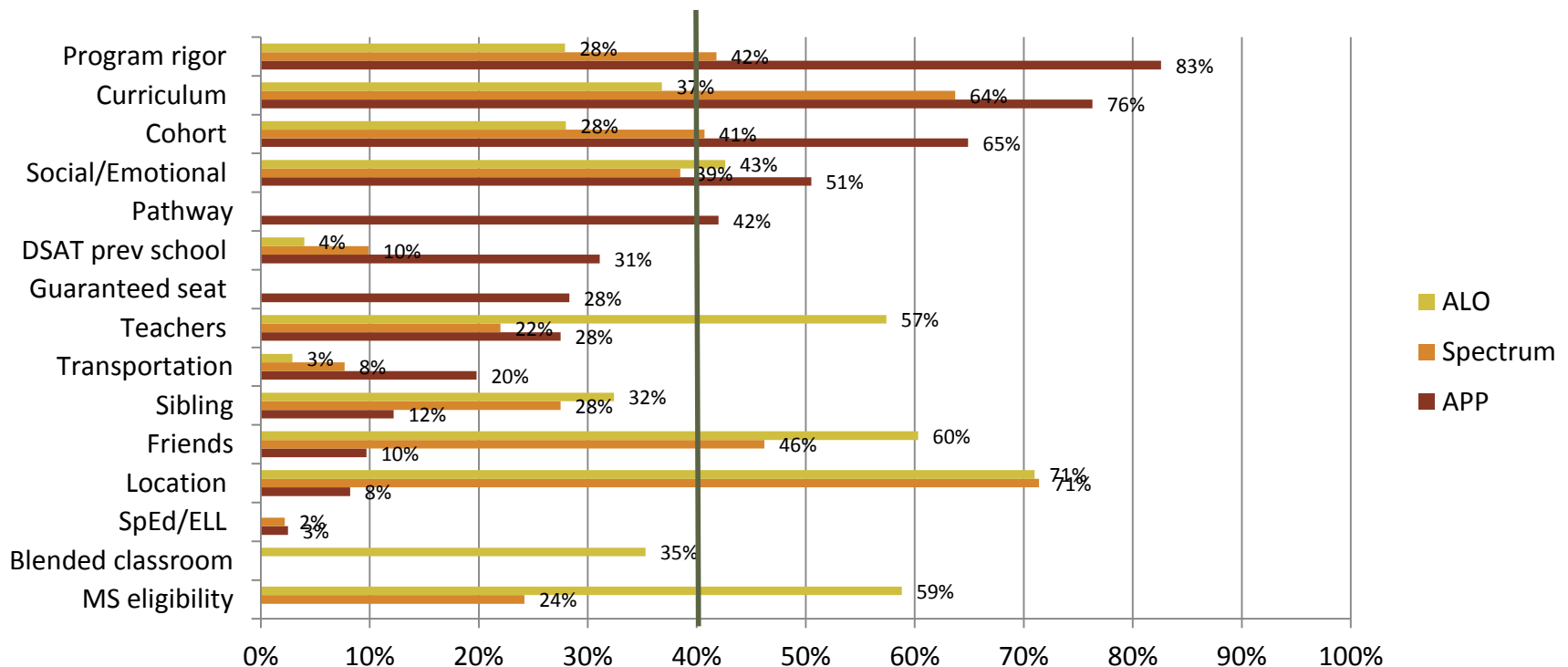
AL Eligible Students

- 77% of Academically Highly Gifted (AHG) eligible respondents are enrolled in APP programs. 58% of Academically Gifted (AG) eligible respondents are enrolled in a Spectrum program. More AG eligible respondents than AHG eligible respondents are enrolled in either an ALO program or a Seattle Public School without an AL program.



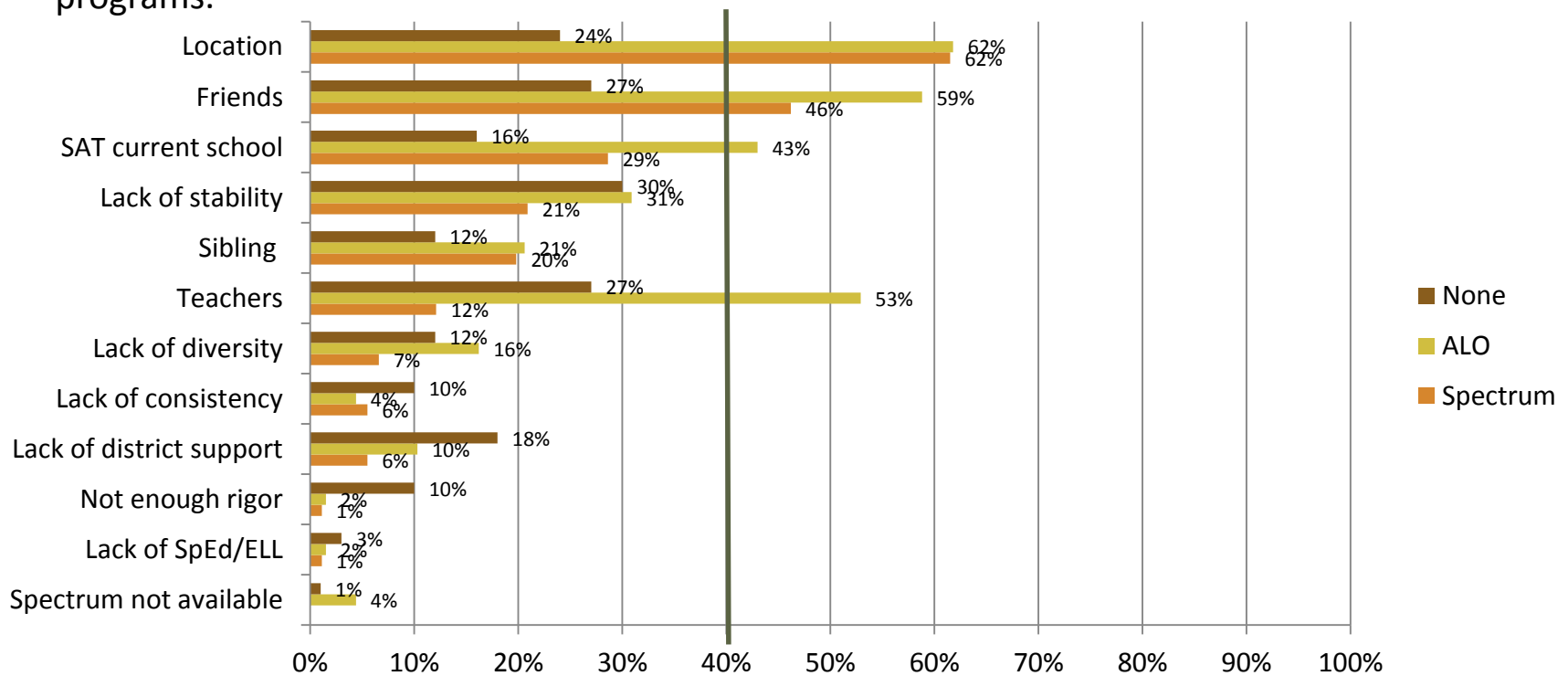
AHG Program Choice

- A large proportion of AHG families reported choosing the APP program for program rigor, curriculum, cohort, meeting their child's social/emotional needs and the guaranteed pathway.
- For those families that don't choose APP, a high proportion reported selecting Spectrum or ALO primarily for the location, with Spectrum families also citing curriculum as a top reason.
- More than half of families also choose ALO for the teachers, friends and to retain their APP eligibility in Middle School.



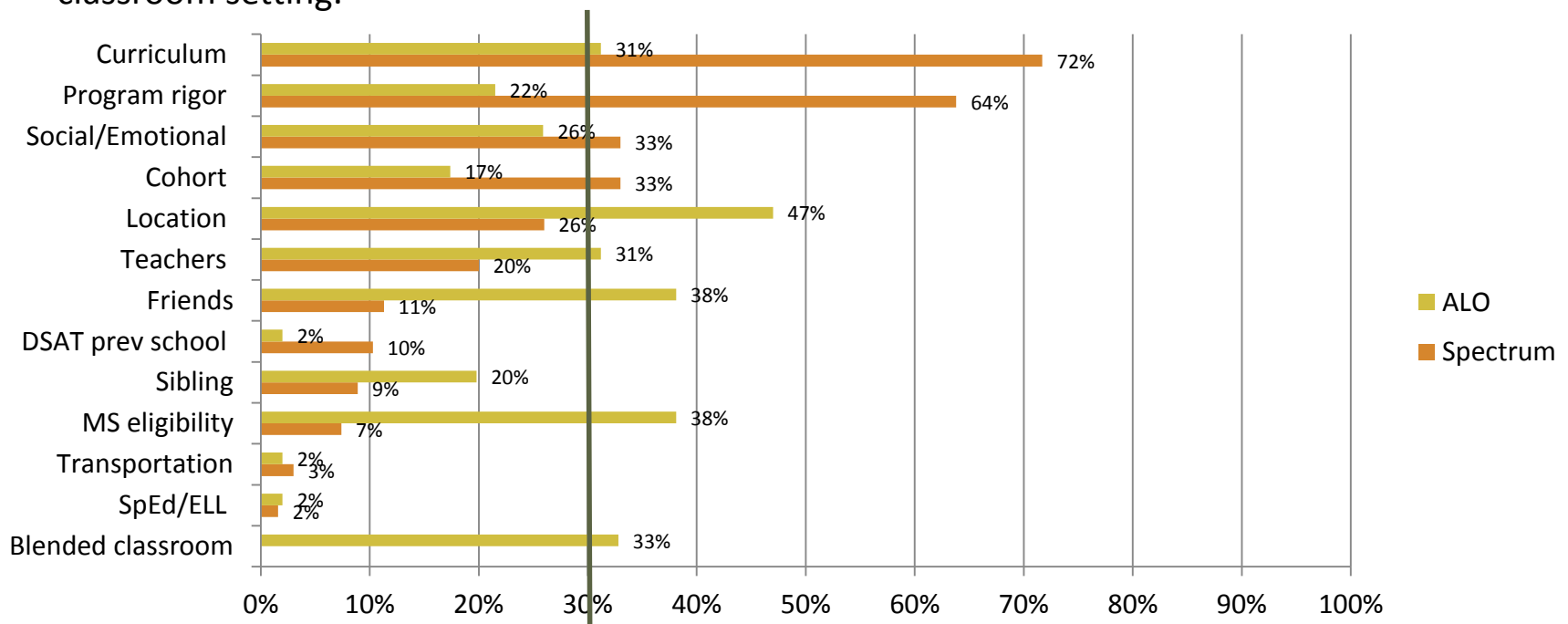
AHG “Non APP Choice”

- The largest proportions of AHG families who do not opt into the APP program reported doing so because of location, friends, teachers and satisfaction with their current school.
- For those families who do not opt into any AL program, the largest proportion reported doing so for many of the above reasons, but also due to perceived lack of stability with the AL programs.



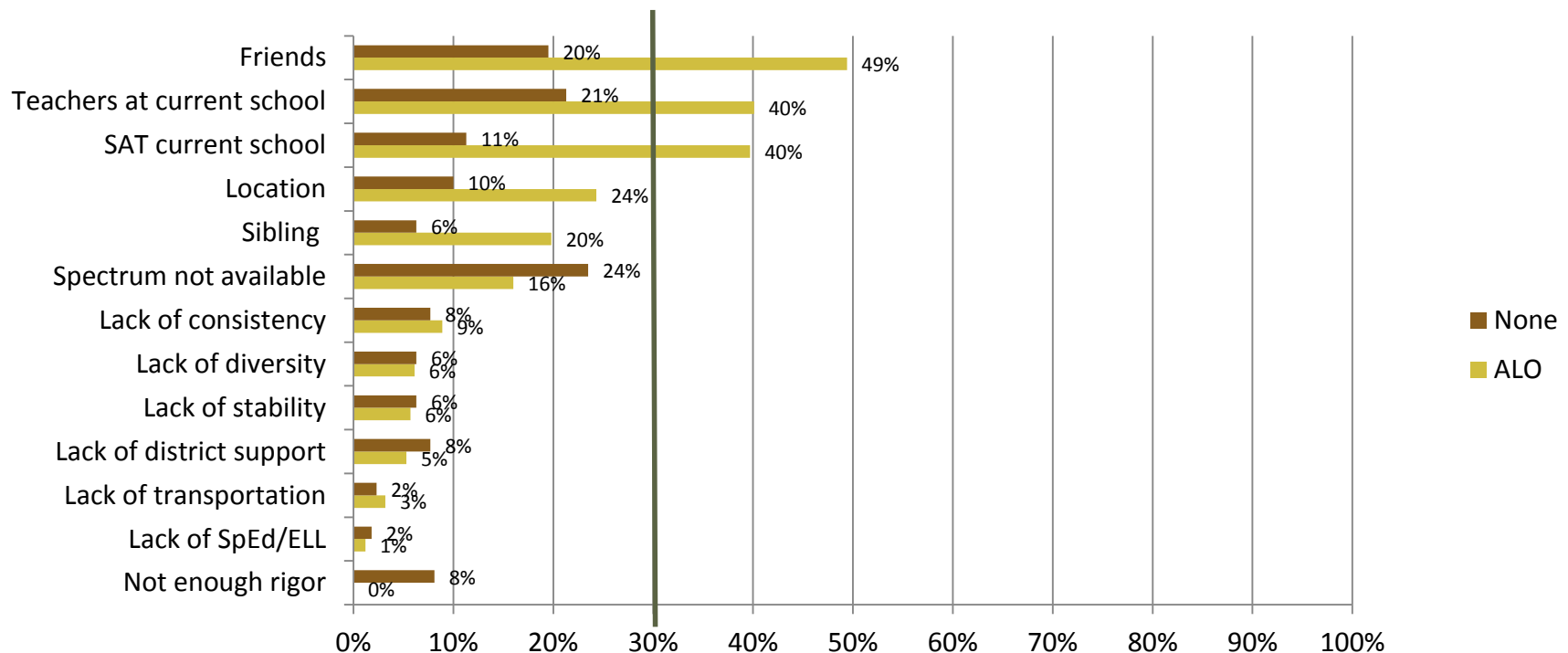
AG Program Choice

- A large proportion of AG families reported choosing the Spectrum program primarily for the curriculum and the program rigor and to a lesser extent, meeting their child's social/emotional needs and the cohort.
- Among those AG families currently enrolled in an ALO program, the largest proportion reported doing so for the location, friends, retain their Middle School eligibility and for the blended classroom setting.



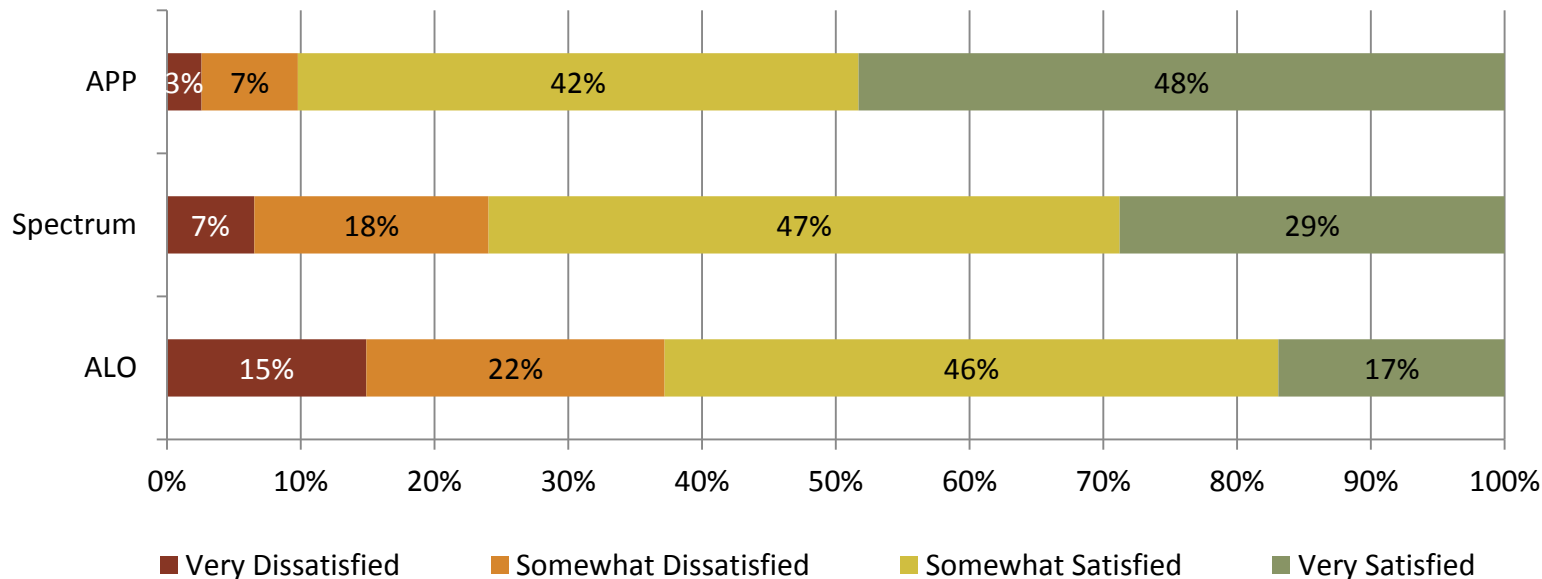
AG “Non Spectrum Choice”

- Among AG families who do not opt into the Spectrum program, at least 40% reported doing so because of friends, teachers, satisfaction with their current school and location.
- Those families who do not opt into any AL program, at least one-fifth reported doing so for the teachers and friends, but also due to the lack of Spectrum availability.



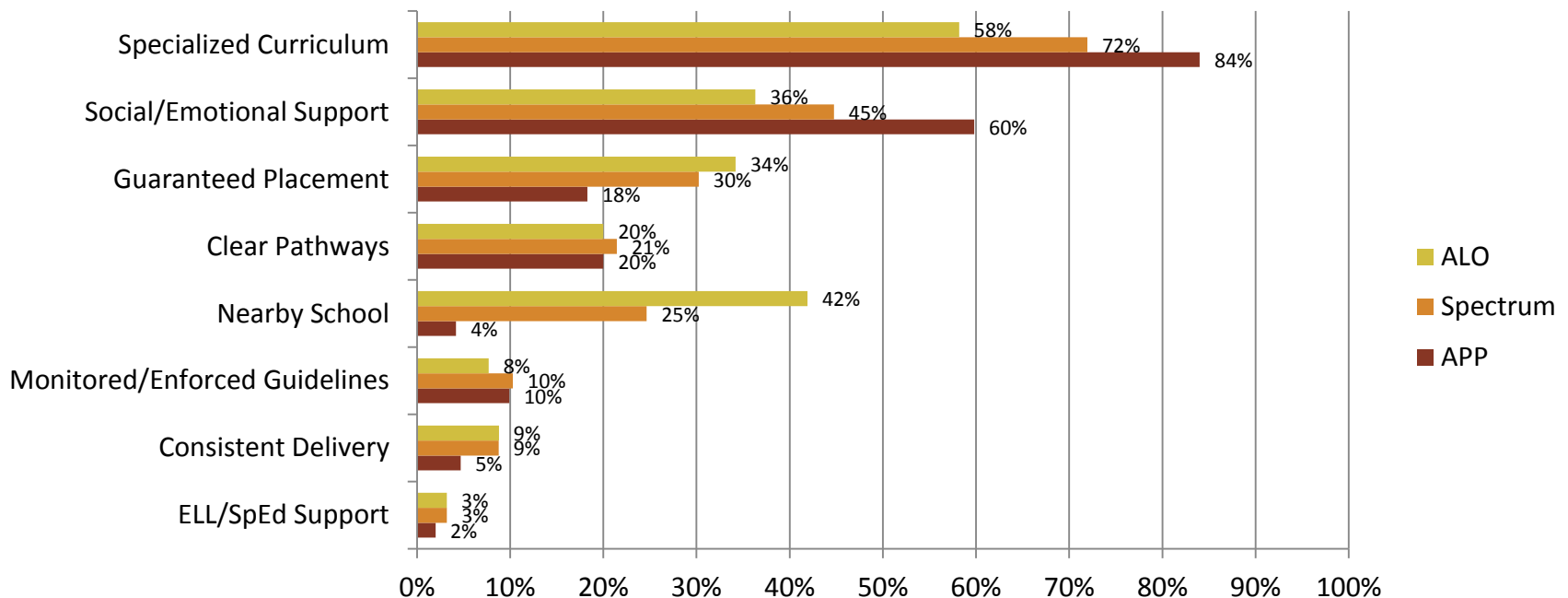
Advanced Learning Satisfaction

- Overall, almost two-thirds of all families indicate they are Very or Somewhat Satisfied with their AL program.
- APP families report the highest level of satisfaction with 90% of families Very or Somewhat Satisfied with the APP program as do 76% of Spectrum families.
- ALO families have the lowest level of satisfaction with 63% Very or Somewhat Satisfied with the program.



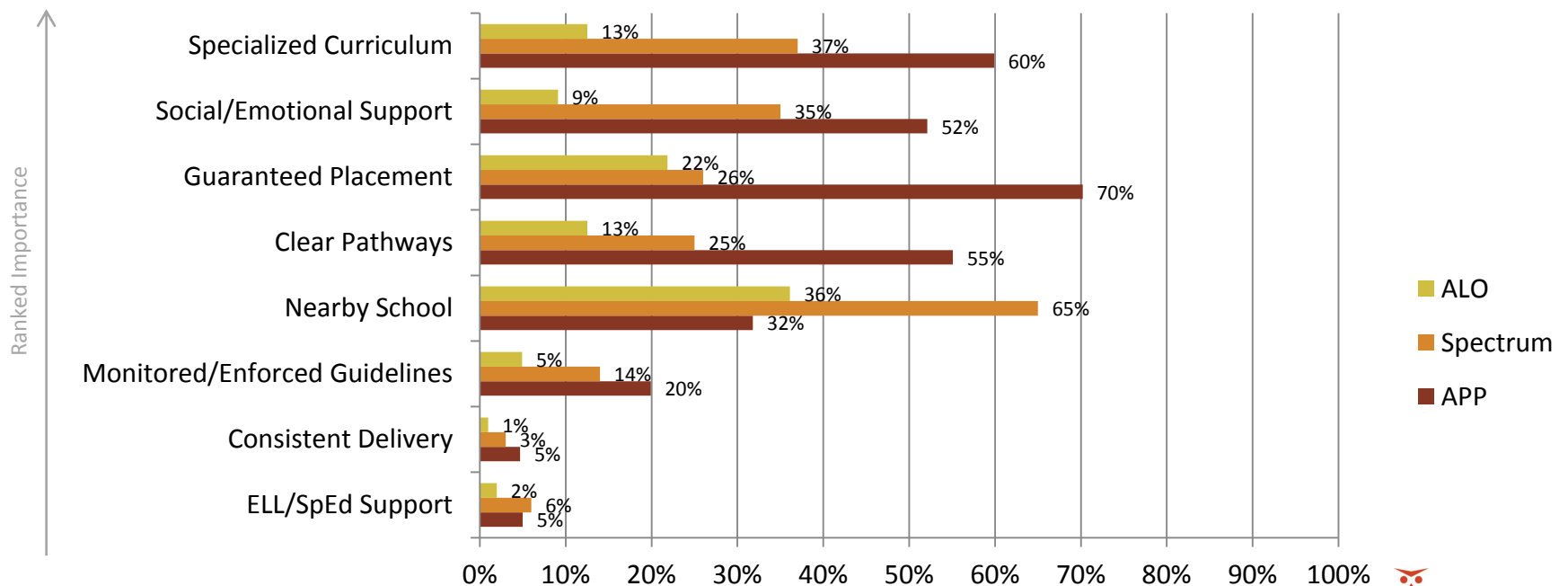
Importance Rankings - % Ranking 7 or 8

- Specialized Curriculum was ranked highest among families in all three programs. For APP and Spectrum families, social and emotional support for their students is the next most important characteristic. For ALO families, having a school nearby is the second most important characteristic in an AL program. Guaranteed placement was rated more important by Spectrum and ALO families than APP families.



Characteristic Ratings - % Rating 6 or 7

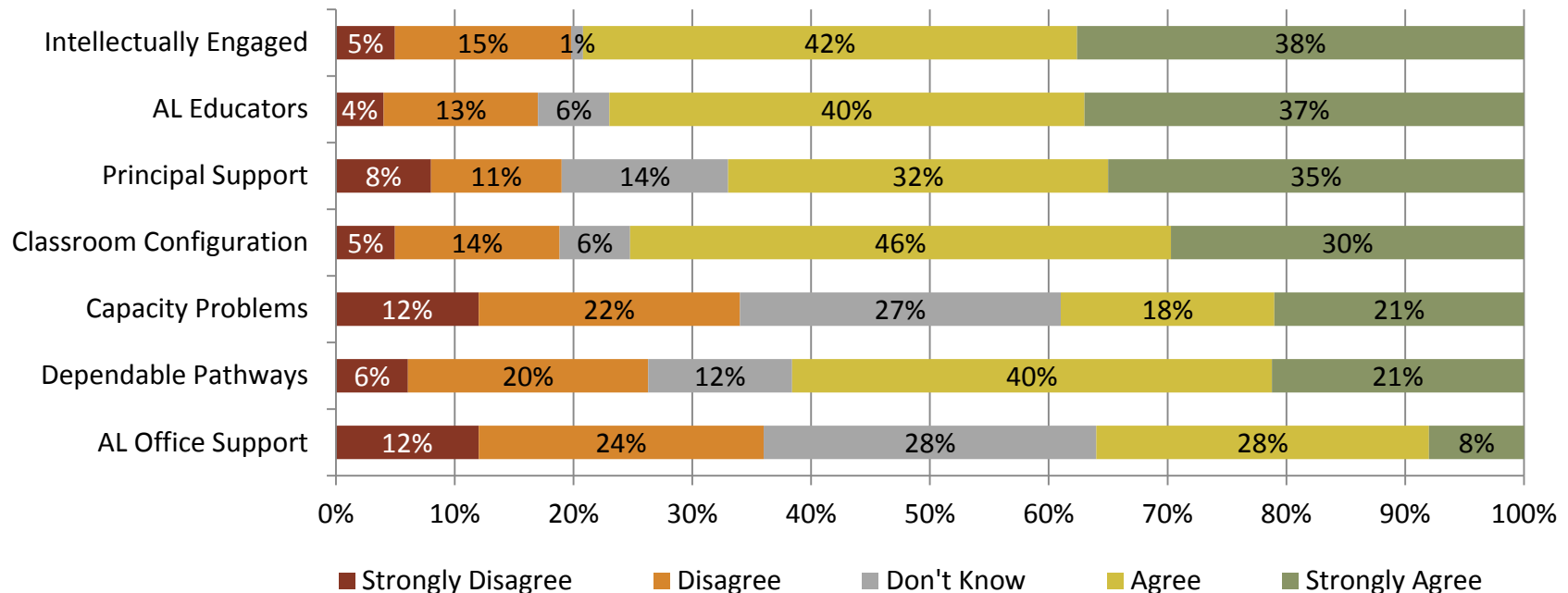
- When rating how SPS is doing on AL program characteristics, answers vary widely by enrolled program. APP families rated SPS higher for guaranteeing a seat for their students along with having a specialized curriculum, clear pathways for advancement and supporting their students' social/emotional well-being.
- Spectrum and ALO families rated SPS highest on having the school nearby.
- Few families rated SPS high on program consistency and support for ELL/Special Education students.



N=1900

Current SPS AL Programs

- 80% of families surveyed agree that the AL program keeps their student intellectually engaged and motivated, and almost as many agree that their school is staffed by educators who understand/enjoy working with advanced learners and that the current classroom configuration is well suited to their child's learning style. In addition, two-thirds of families also agree that their principal supports gifted education.
- There is almost equal agreement/disagreement about co-housing capacity problems and the district's AL office support for strong, consistent programs, as well as many that reported 'don't know' about these two topics.



Current SPS AL Programs

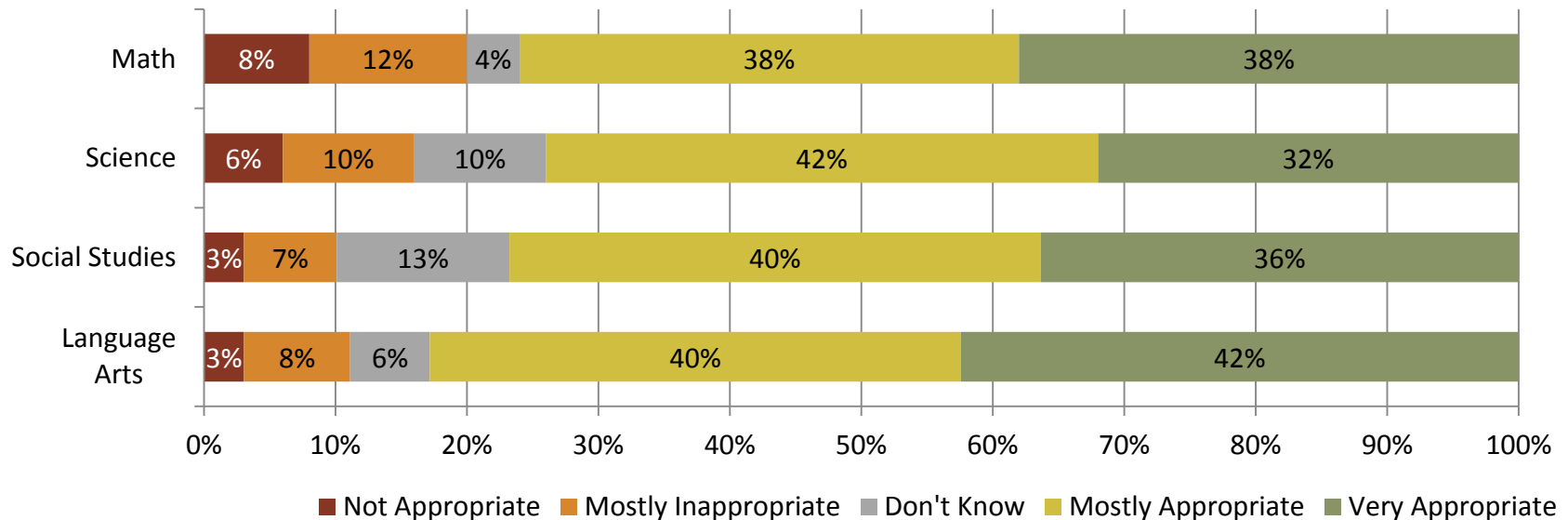
- Viewpoints differ by program about the current AL programs with APP families reporting the highest level of agreement on all topics.
- Spectrum families report the least amount of agreement for principal support, while ALO families have lower levels of agreement that their students are intellectually engaged, have dependable pathways and have a classroom configuration well suited to their child's learning.
- In comparison to APP, both Spectrum and ALO families do not agree that co-housing AL programs causes capacity problems, although they both have a high proportion who report “don’t know”. In addition, many in these two groups do not agree that there are clear, dependable pathways for students.

	Intellectually Engaged				Principal Support				Capacity Problems				AL Office Support			
	Total	APP	Spectrum	ALO	Total	APP	Spectrum	ALO	Total	APP	Spectrum	ALO	Total	APP	Spectrum	ALO
	1739	796	656	287	1741	797	655	289	1732	790	650	292	1740	795	654	291
Strongly Agree	38%	52%	30%	15%	35%	48%	22%	27%	21%	36%	8%	9%	8%	13%	6%	2%
Agree	42%	37%	45%	48%	32%	28%	33%	38%	18%	23%	14%	13%	28%	36%	25%	13%
Don't know	1%	1%	1%	3%	14%	10%	20%	12%	27%	20%	30%	41%	28%	20%	32%	40%
Disagree	15%	7%	19%	26%	11%	8%	13%	15%	22%	15%	28%	24%	24%	23%	24%	28%
Strongly Disagree	5%	3%	6%	8%	8%	6%	11%	8%	12%	5%	20%	13%	12%	8%	14%	17%

	AL Educators				Classroom Configuration				Dependable Pathways			
	Total	APP	Spectrum	ALO	Total	APP	Spectrum	ALO	Total	APP	Spectrum	ALO
	1739	795	654	290	1725	791	648	286	1737	794	654	289
Strongly Agree	37%	45%	31%	26%	30%	36%	26%	19%	21%	34%	11%	8%
Agree	40%	38%	41%	43%	46%	45%	47%	47%	40%	43%	41%	33%
Don't know	6%	2%	8%	9%	6%	6%	5%	7%	12%	7%	16%	18%
Disagree	13%	11%	15%	17%	14%	10%	15%	20%	20%	13%	23%	33%
Strongly Disagree	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%	2%	6%	8%	6%	3%	9%	8%

Curriculum Materials

- Three-quarters of all families surveyed rate the current curriculum materials appropriate for their advanced learning students.
- Math and science have the highest proportion of families that rate the materials as not appropriate.



Curriculum Materials

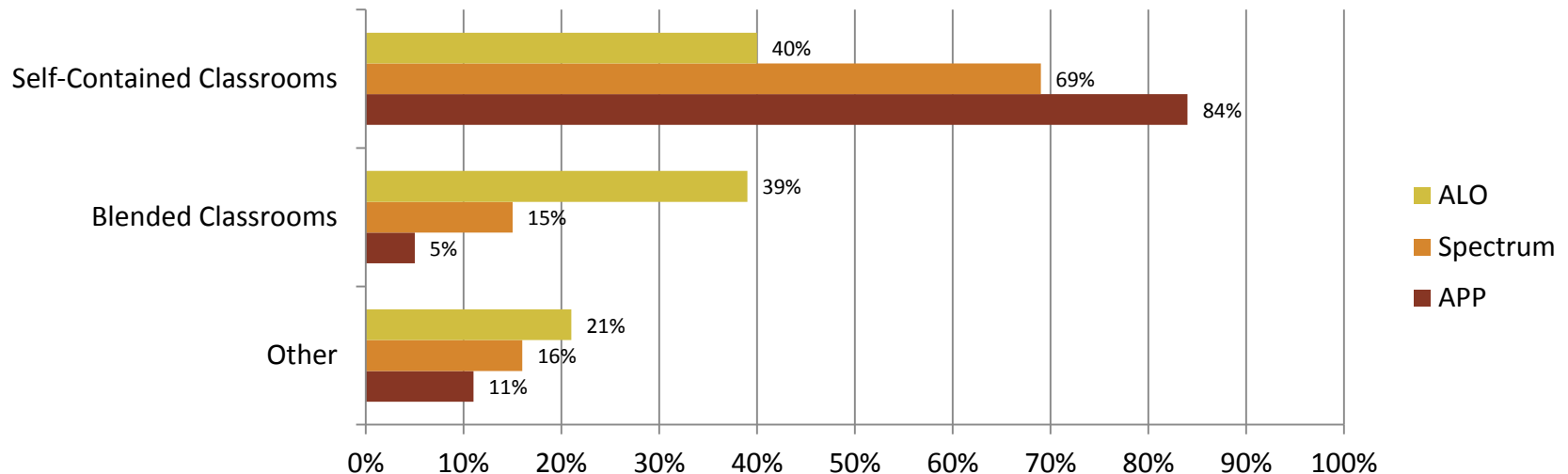
- Similar to the AL program agreement ratings, perceptions of curriculum appropriateness vary by program and subject.
- APP and ALO families have higher proportions of negative perceptions of the Math curriculum.
- High proportions of ALO families report 'don't know' about the science and social studies curriculum materials. They also have slightly higher negative perceptions of the language arts curriculum than other groups.
- APP has the most favorable view of the curriculum materials with at least 75% indicating the materials are mostly or very appropriate in all four subject areas.

	Math				Science			
	Total	APP	Spectrum	ALO	Total	APP	Spectrum	ALO
	1743	798	656	289	1735	797	653	285
Very Appropriate	38%	39%	41%	29%	32%	45%	24%	18%
Mostly Appropriate	38%	36%	41%	38%	42%	42%	43%	36%
Don't Know	4%	3%	3%	7%	10%	5%	12%	30%
Mostly Inappropriate	12%	12%	10%	16%	10%	6%	13%	11%
Not Appropriate	8%	11%	5%	10%	6%	3%	8%	4%

	Social Studies				Language Arts			
	Total	APP	Spectrum	ALO	Total	APP	Spectrum	ALO
	1735	797	654	284	1739	797	656	286
Very Appropriate	36%	48%	29%	18%	42%	52%	38%	25%
Mostly Appropriate	40%	39%	45%	36%	40%	36%	43%	46%
Don't Know	13%	7%	13%	30%	6%	5%	5%	12%
Mostly Inappropriate	7%	5%	9%	11%	8%	5%	9%	13%
Not Appropriate	3%	2%	4%	4%	3%	2%	5%	4%

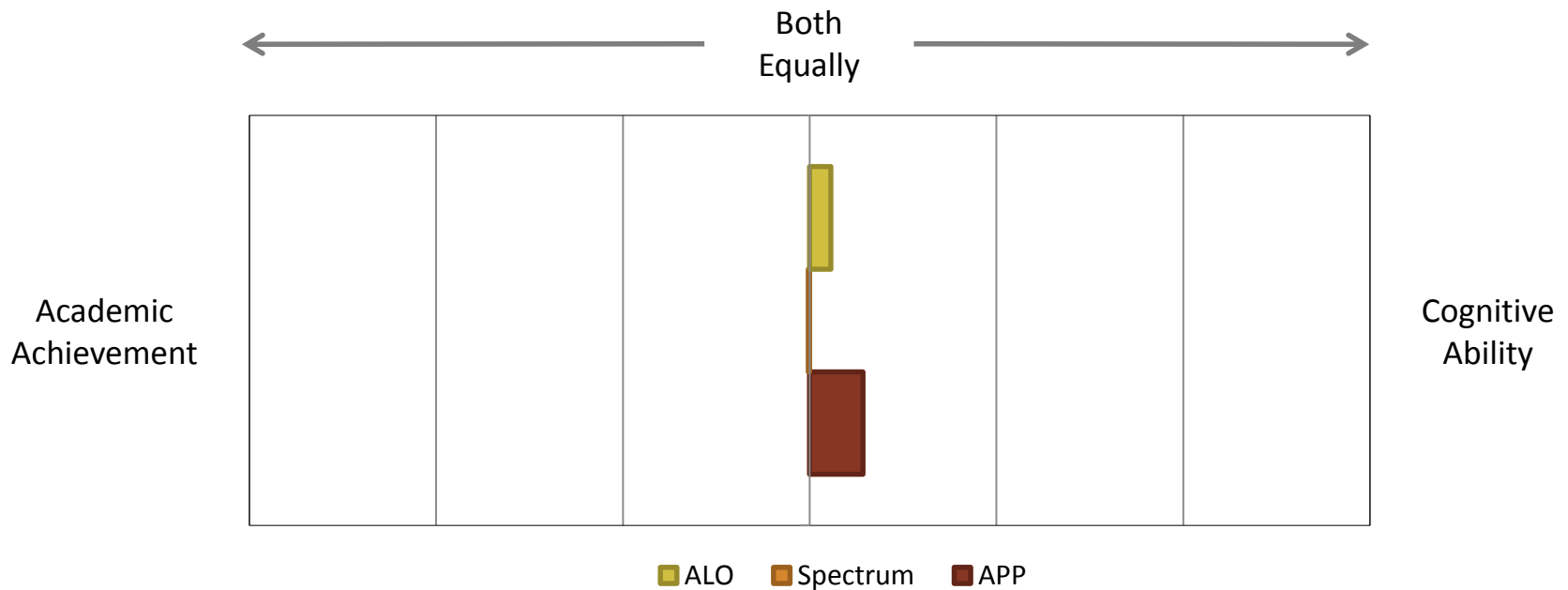
Classroom Configuration

- Both APP and Spectrum families overwhelmingly prefer self-contained classrooms for their advanced learners.
- Interestingly, ALO families are almost split between preferring self-contained classrooms and blended classrooms for their students.



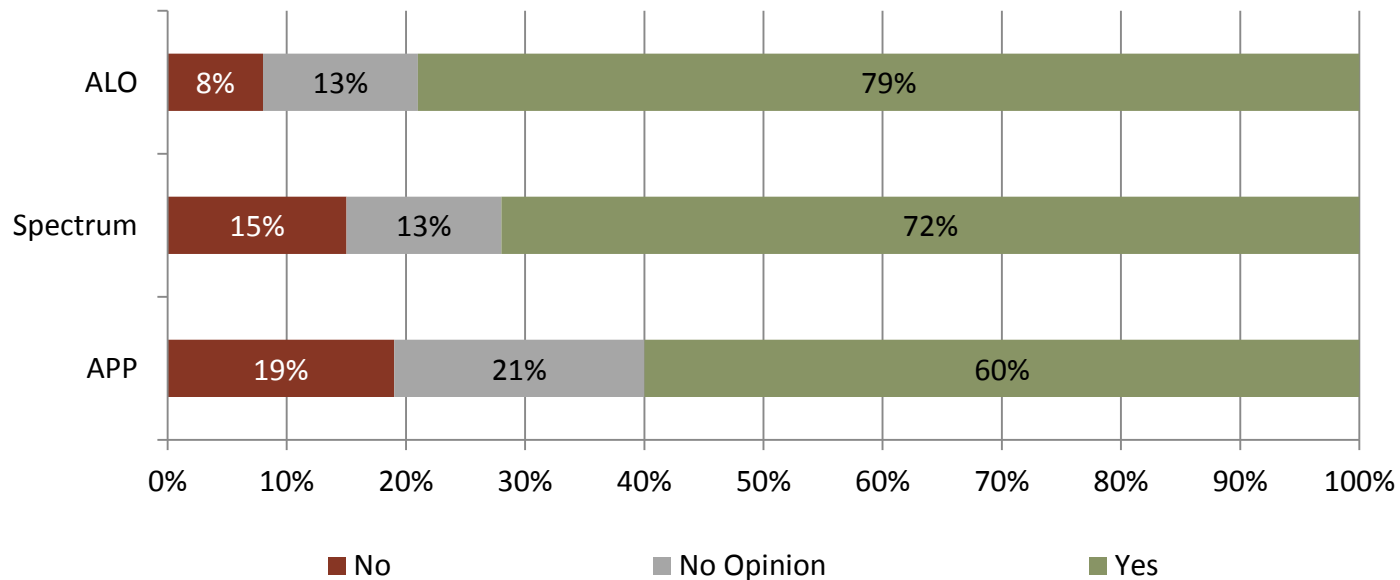
Entrance Criteria

- When considering AL program eligibility, most families feel academic achievement and cognitive ability should be equally weighted.



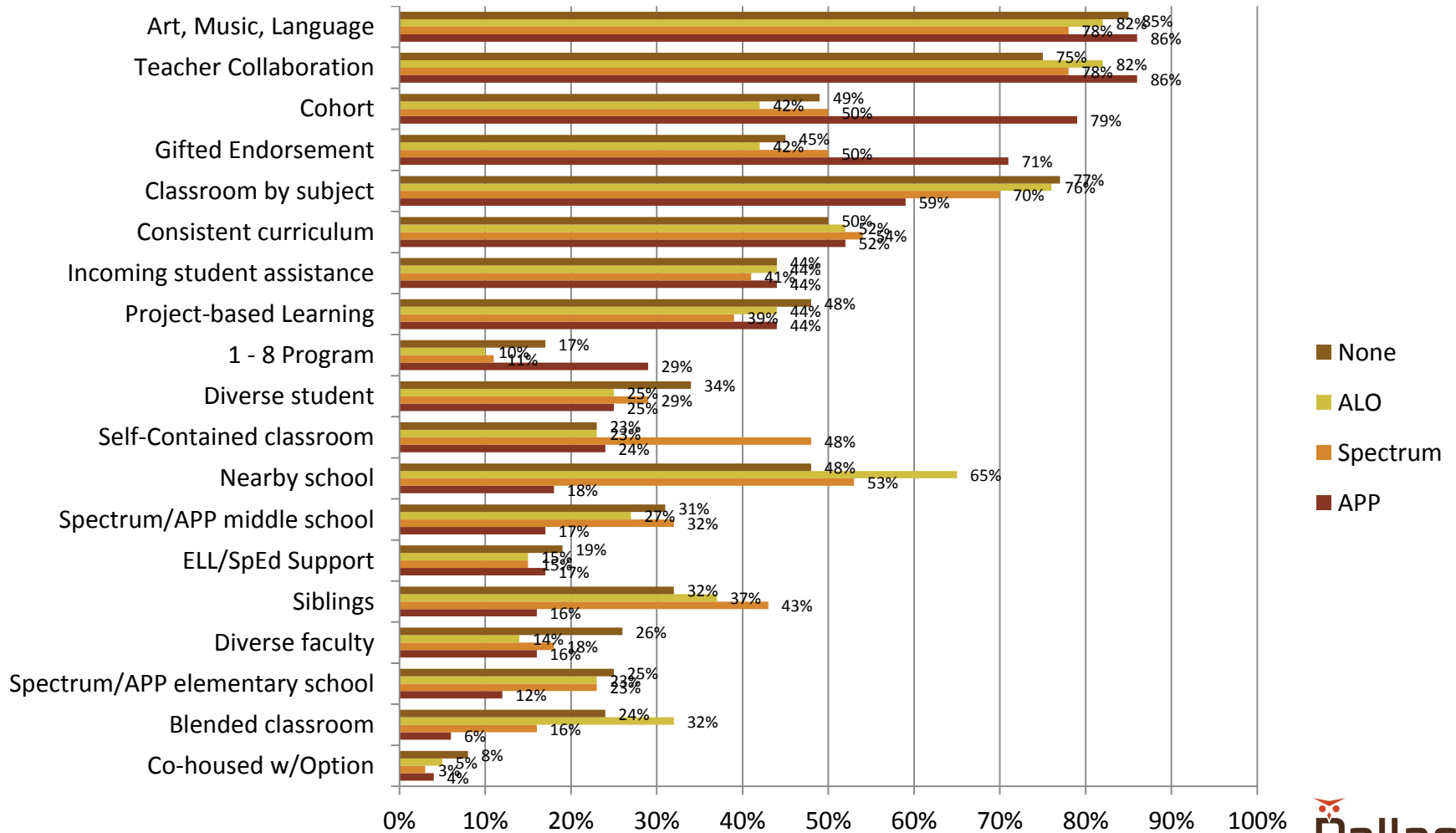
Single Subject Advanced Learning

- The majority of families surveyed feel that AL programs should serve students who are advanced in only one subject.
- APP and Spectrum families had higher proportions of 'No' responses.



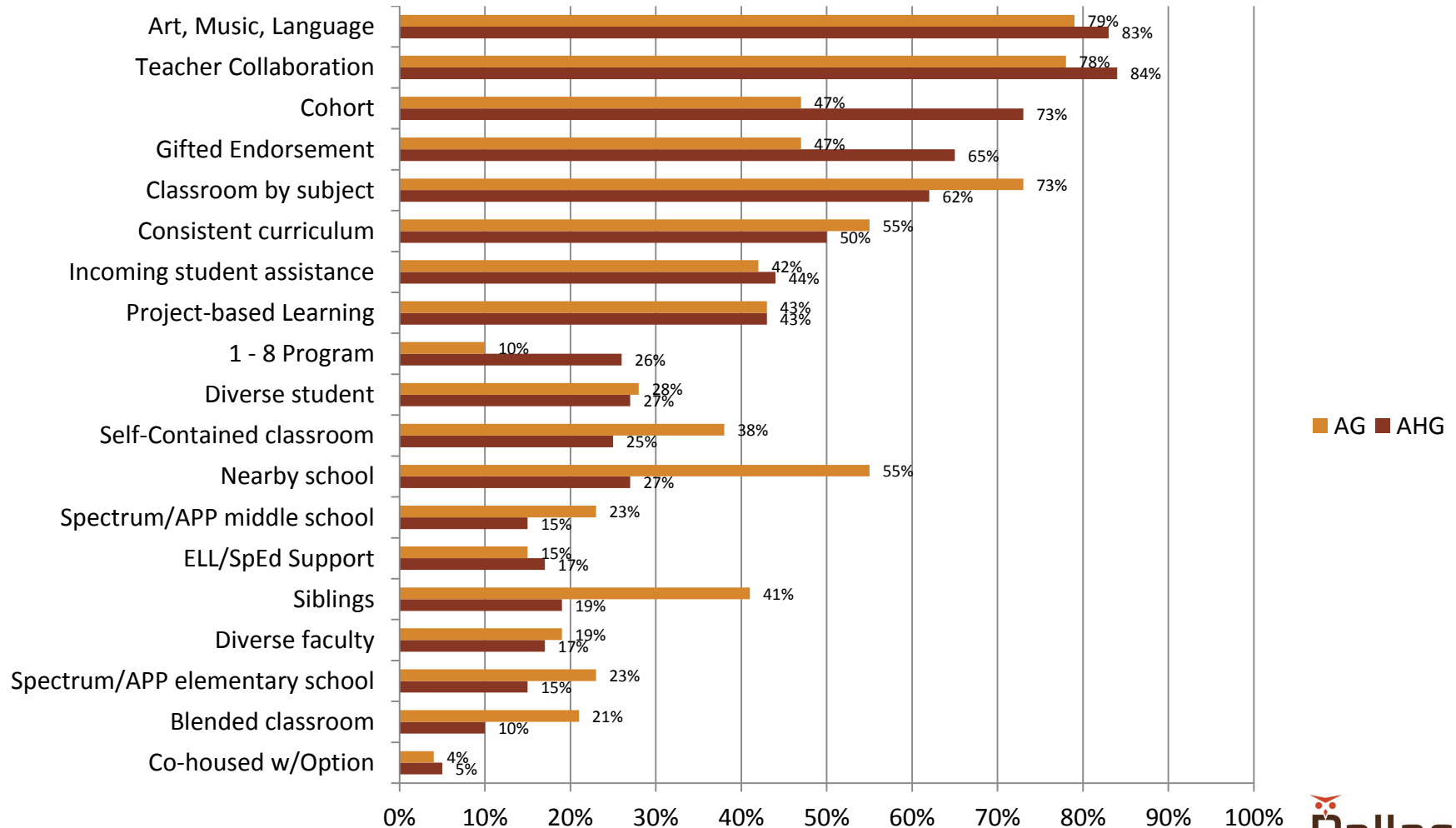
Ideal Advanced Learning Program

% indicating "Highly Important:"



Ideal Advanced Learning Program

% indicating "Highly Important"



Changes to Advanced Learning

- When asked what one thing families would change about the Advanced Learning program, the responses fell into the following categories--which largely mirrored issues that had already been tested in other questions in the survey:
 - AL Office
 - Capacity
 - Curriculum & Instruction
 - Eligibility & Testing
 - Family Communications*
 - Homework
 - Diversity
 - Location
 - Perception
 - Resources
 - Stability
 - Student support
 - Teacher/Principal

*ALO families in particular, would like more communication about AL

Summary of Findings by Program

ALO

- Most ALO families choose the program based on location, the teachers and friends at the school, to keep their Middle School AL eligibility, as well as the curriculum.
- More ALO families reported lower overall levels of satisfaction compared to Spectrum or APP students. Areas of the survey where ALO families have lower levels of agreement include intellectual engagement and motivation, having dependable pathways, appropriate math curriculum and support from the Advanced Learning office.

Spectrum

- Most Spectrum families choose the program based on the curriculum offered, program rigor, the social/emotional needs of their student as well as the cohort of peers. Conversely, many AG families do not choose this program either because they are satisfied with the location, teachers and services at their current school or because Spectrum was unavailable to them.
- Approximately three-quarters of Spectrum families are satisfied with the program. Areas of the survey where Spectrum families provided lower ratings or levels of agreement include clear/dependable pathways, guaranteed placement, principal support, specialized curriculum and meeting their child's social/emotional needs.

APP

- Most APP families choose the program based on curriculum, program rigor, social/emotional needs of their student, cohort of peers in addition to the guaranteed pathway from grades 1 - 8. When AHG families do not choose APP it is often because of the teachers, friends and satisfaction with the AL services at their local school.
- APP families are the most satisfied with their program and rate the district highest on curriculum and meeting their child's social/emotional needs—the two most important characteristics for them when selecting an advanced learning program.
- APP also has high proportions of families reporting that co-housing AL programs in neighborhood schools causes capacity problems whereas Spectrum and ALO do not.