

*King County School  
Districts Wellness  
Policy Assessment*

**Nutrition 531, Winter 2009  
University of Washington**

# Outline

- Overview of wellness policies in King County school districts
- Methods for interview process and abstraction of policies
- Results
  - School food environment
  - Curriculum
  - WA State Senate Bill 5093
  - Communication
  - Evaluation
  - Comparison to 2004
  - Policy implementation successes/areas for improvement
- Limitations
- Recommendations

# Purpose



- Provide the King County Board of Health School Obesity Prevention Committee with up-to-date information about the school wellness policies of the **19** school districts in King County
- Investigate the challenges and successes associated with the implementation of these policies
- Enable the committee to make informed recommendations for action to the Board of Health

# Wellness Policies in King County

In 2004 the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act required that all school districts with federally-funded school meal programs develop and implement wellness policies. Policies are required to include:

- Goals for nutrition education and physical activity
- Guidelines for reimbursable meals that are not less restrictive than the USDA guidelines
- Nutritional guidelines for all foods available on school campus
- A plan for measuring implementation
- Community involvement in the development of the wellness policy

# Wellness Policies in King County

In 2007, Senate Bill 5093 established goals for Washington state schools to be achieved by 2010. The goals seek to:

- Ensure that only healthful foods meeting minimum nutritional standards are available in schools
- Provide at least 150 minutes of quality physical education per week to students in grades 1-8
- Establish school health advisory committees in all districts

# Methods

## Key Informant Interviews

Trained graduate students conducted 58 telephone interviews with:

- Superintendents
- Nutrition services administrators
- Health and fitness curriculum coordinators
- School board members
- Representatives of these positions

Interviews focused on:

- Experience with wellness policies
- Successes in implementation
- Barriers to implementation
- Suggestions for future King County Board of Health action

# Methods

## School Wellness Policy Evaluation Tool

### Scored 96 policy items in 7 sections

- USDA Standards
- Competitive Foods and Beverages
- Nutrition Education
- Physical Education
- Physical Activity
- Communication
- Evaluation

### Each policy item was scored

0= not mentioned

1= weak statement

2= specific and directive language



# Methods

## School Wellness Policy Evaluation Tool

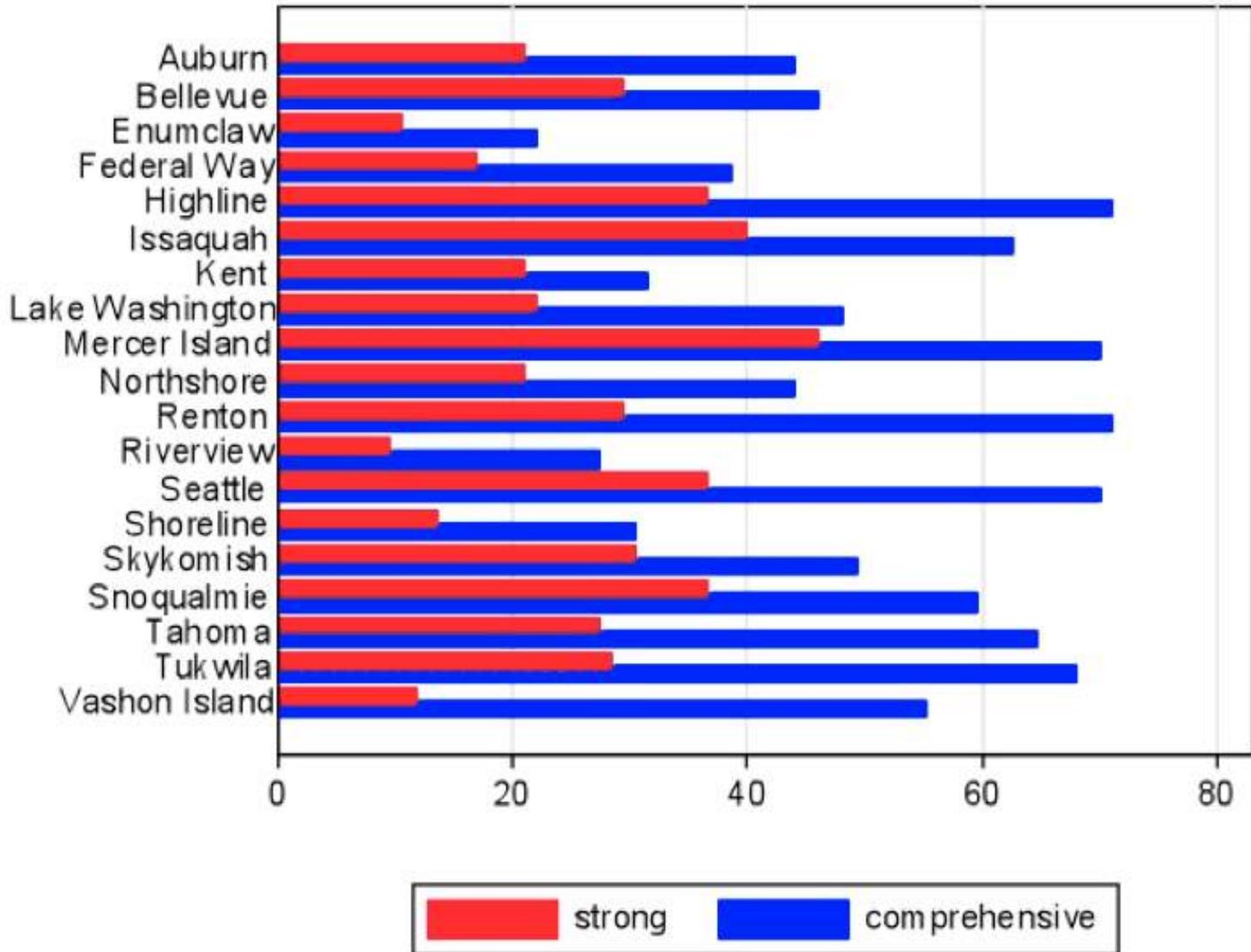
The example below shows the calculation of sample scores for Section 1.

| Section 1. Nutrition Education                    |  | Rating |
|---|--|--------|
| NE1   | Federal Requirement: Includes goals for nutrition education that are designed to promote student wellness in a manner that the local education agency determines is appropriate. | 2      |
| NE2   | Nutrition curriculum provided for each grade level.  | 0      |
| NE3   | Coordinates nutrition education with the larger school community.  | 2      |
| NE4   | Nutrition education extends beyond the school environment.   | 1      |
| NE5   | District provides nutrition education training for all teachers.   | 0      |
| NE6   | Nutrition education is integrated into other subjects beyond health education.   | 1      |
| NE7   | Nutrition education teaches skills that are behavior-focused, interactive, and/or participatory.   | 2      |
| NE8   | Specifies number of nutrition education courses or contact hours.  | 0      |
| NE9   | Nutrition education quality is addressed.  | 2      |
| <b>Subtotal for Section 1 Nutrition Education</b> | <b>Comprehensiveness Score</b><br><i>Count the number of items rated as "1" or "2" and divide this number by 9. Multiply by 100. Do not count an item if the rating is "0."</i>  | 67     |
|   | <b>Strength Score</b><br><i>Count the number of items rated as "2" and divide this number by 9. Multiply by 100.</i>   | 44     |

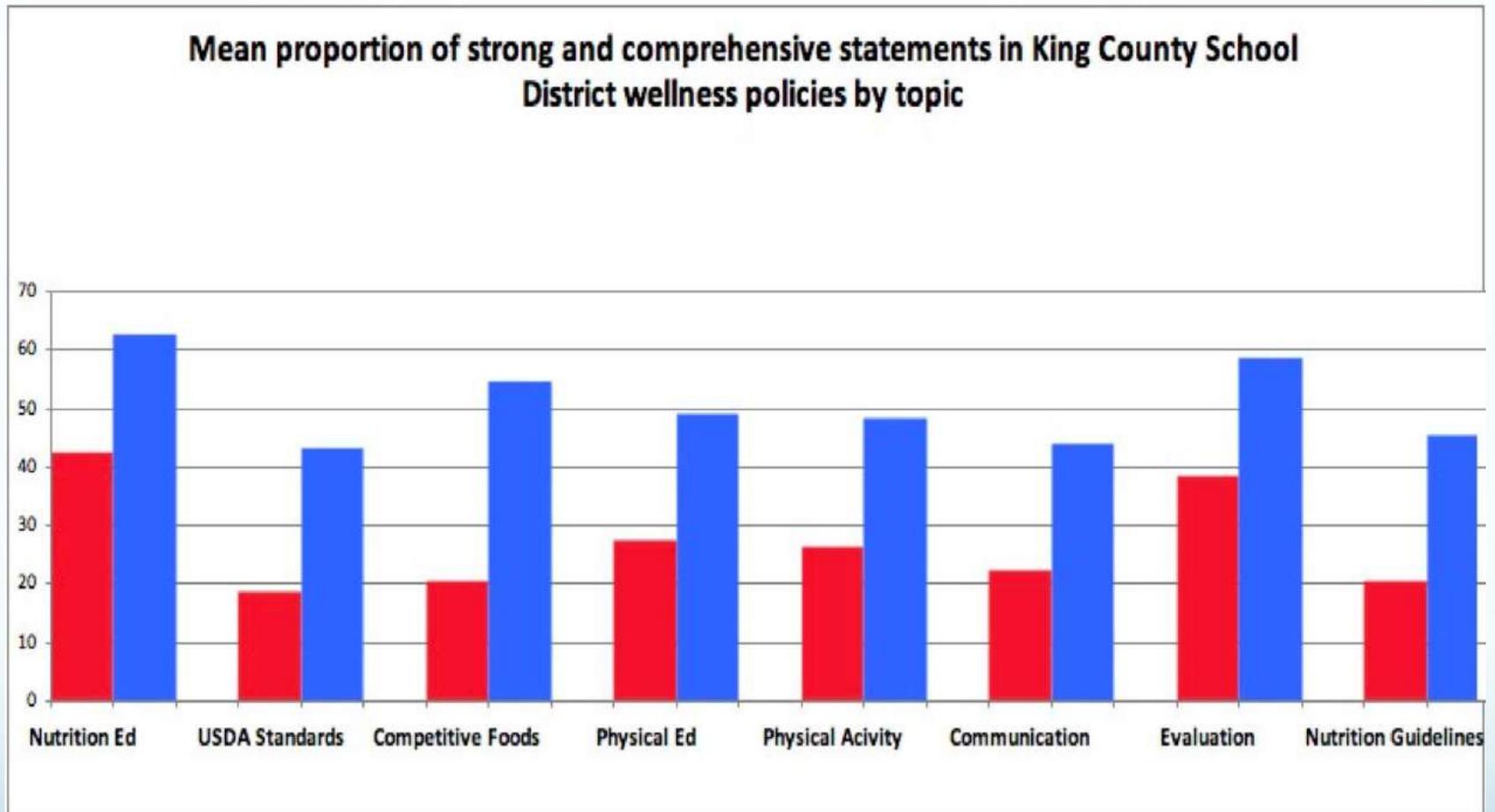
# RESULTS

# Results

## Overall Strong and Comprehensive Statements

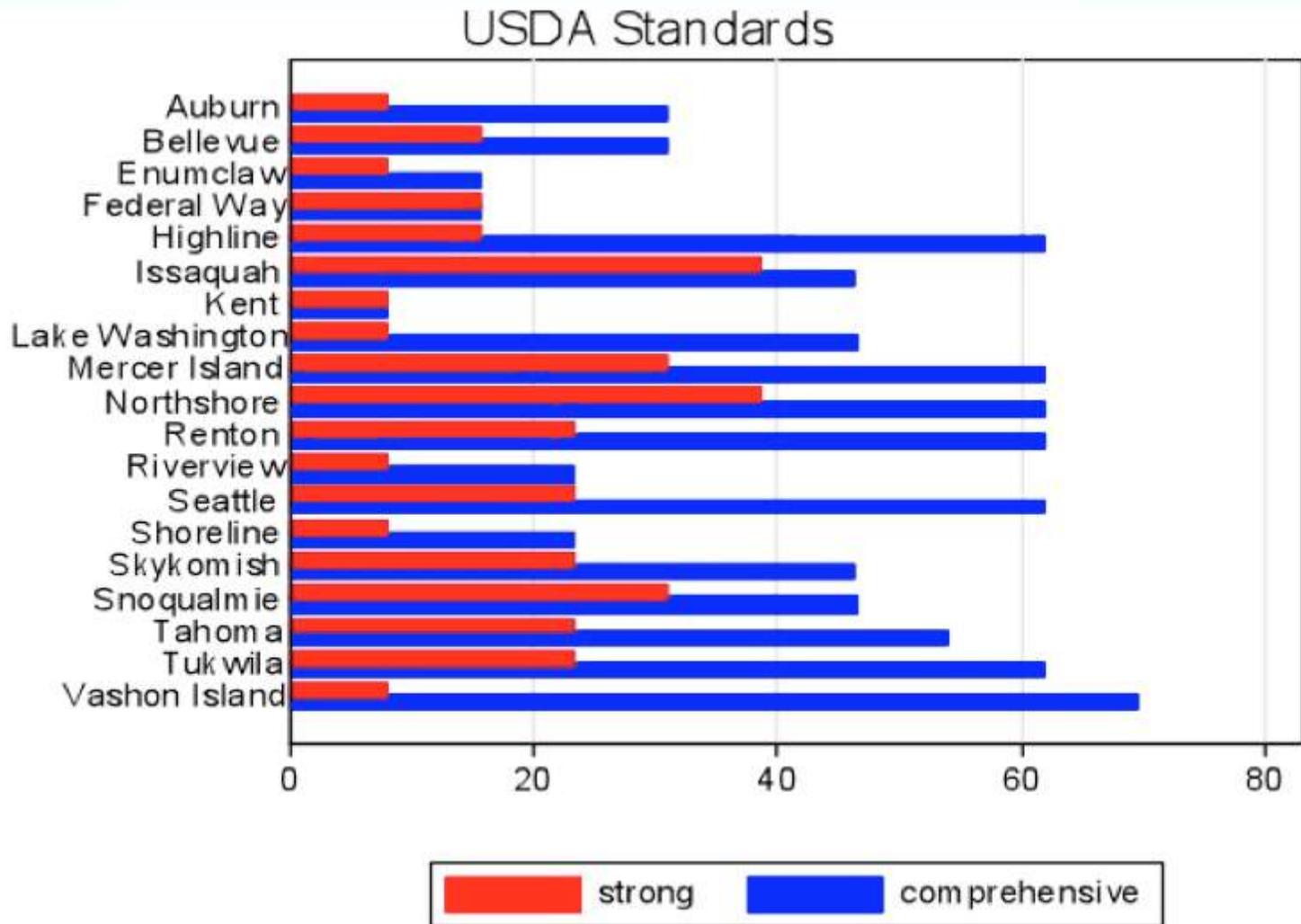


# Results



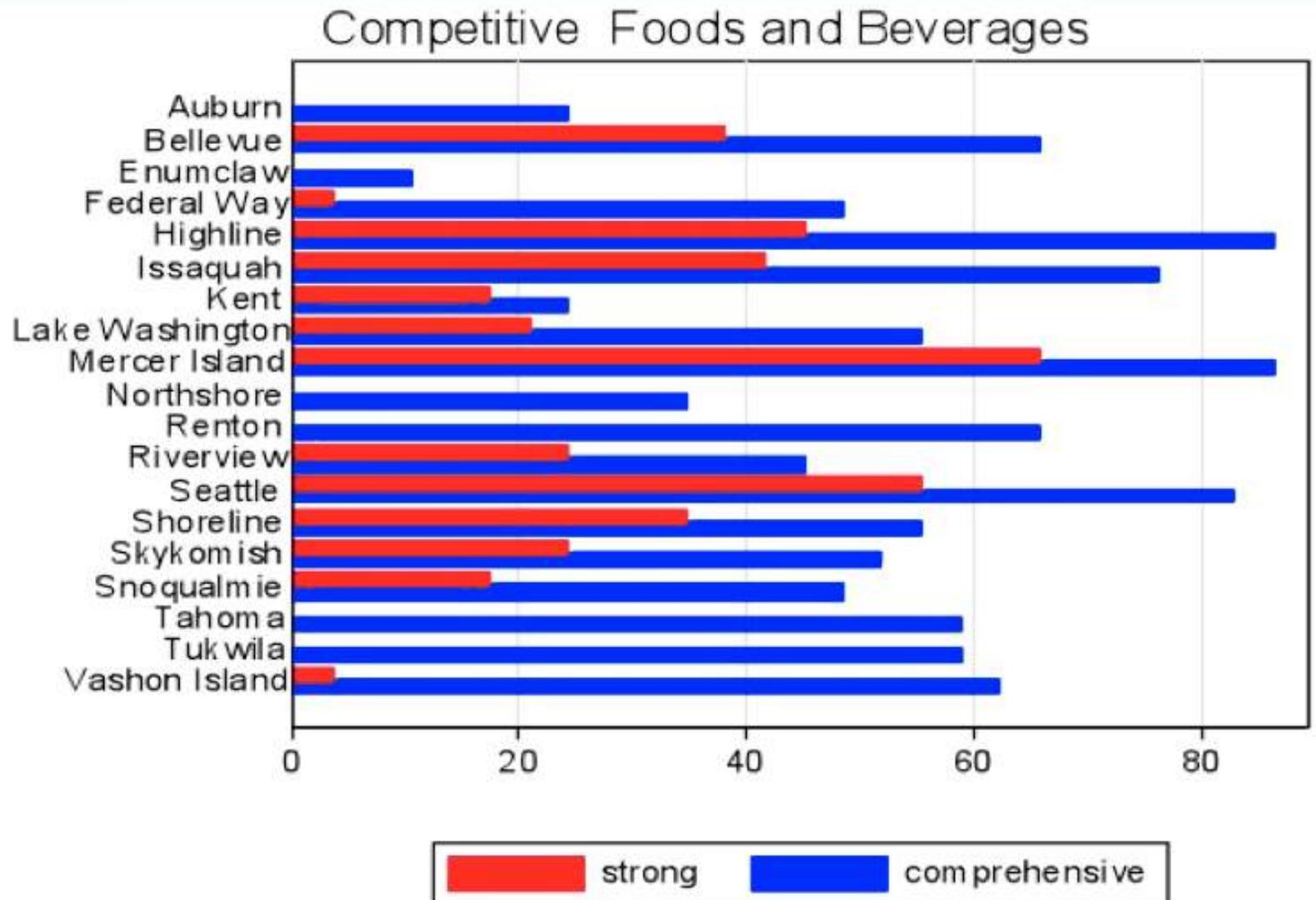
# Results

## School food environment



# Results

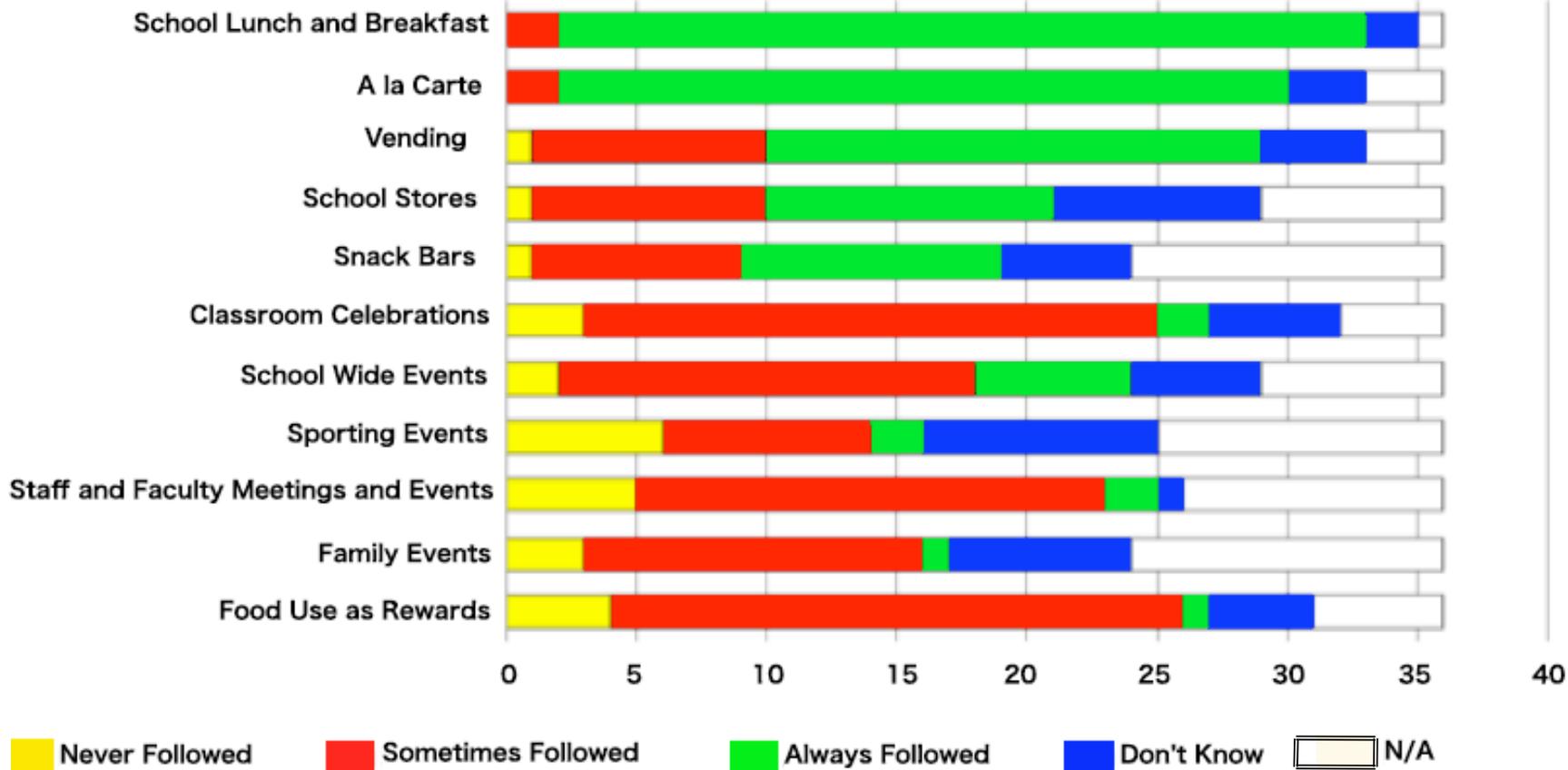
## School food environment



# Results

## School food environment

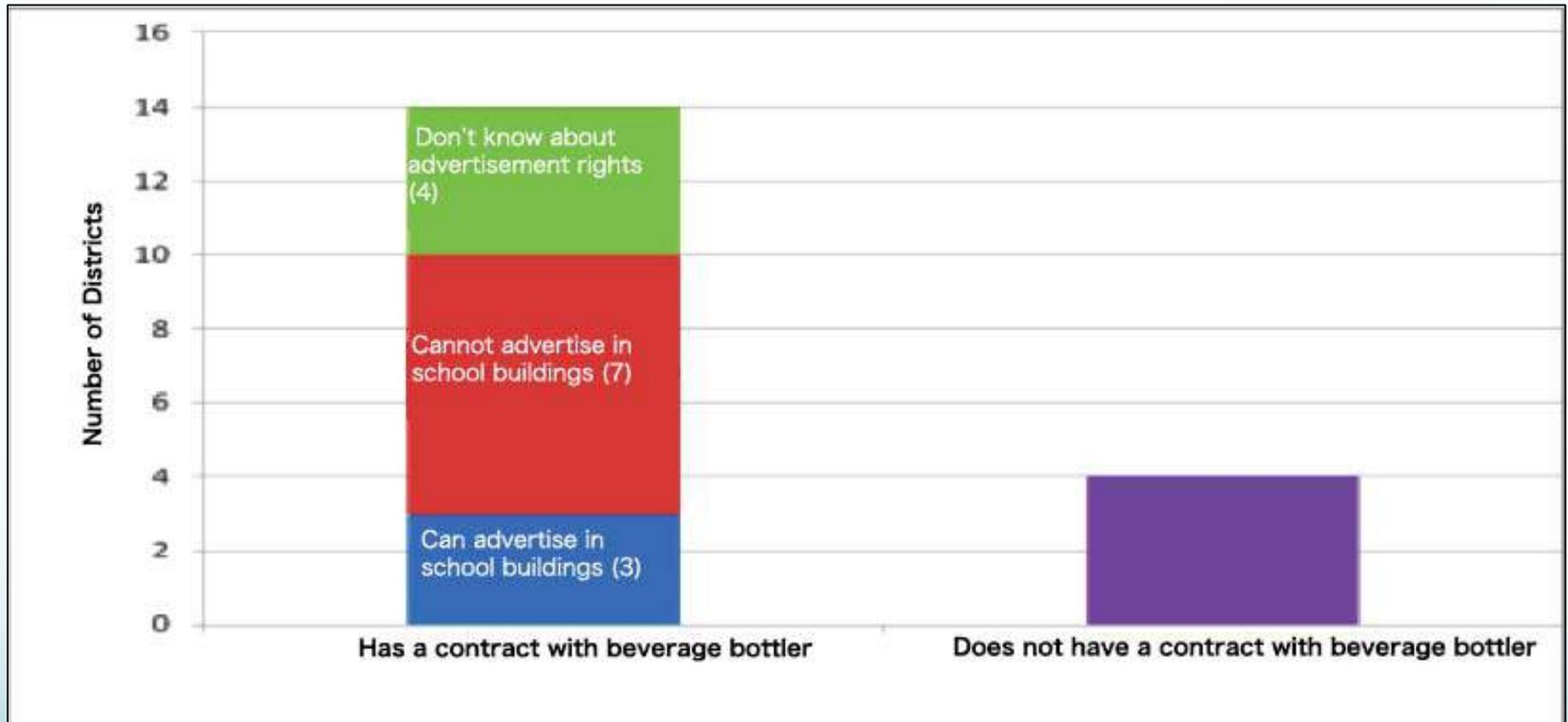
To what extent are food policy standards being met in the following settings? (S, N)



# Results

## School food environment

### District bottler contracts



Respondents were nutrition services personnel

- Soda phasing out of schools; waters, juices entering
- High Schools: soda sales restricted by time and place

# Results

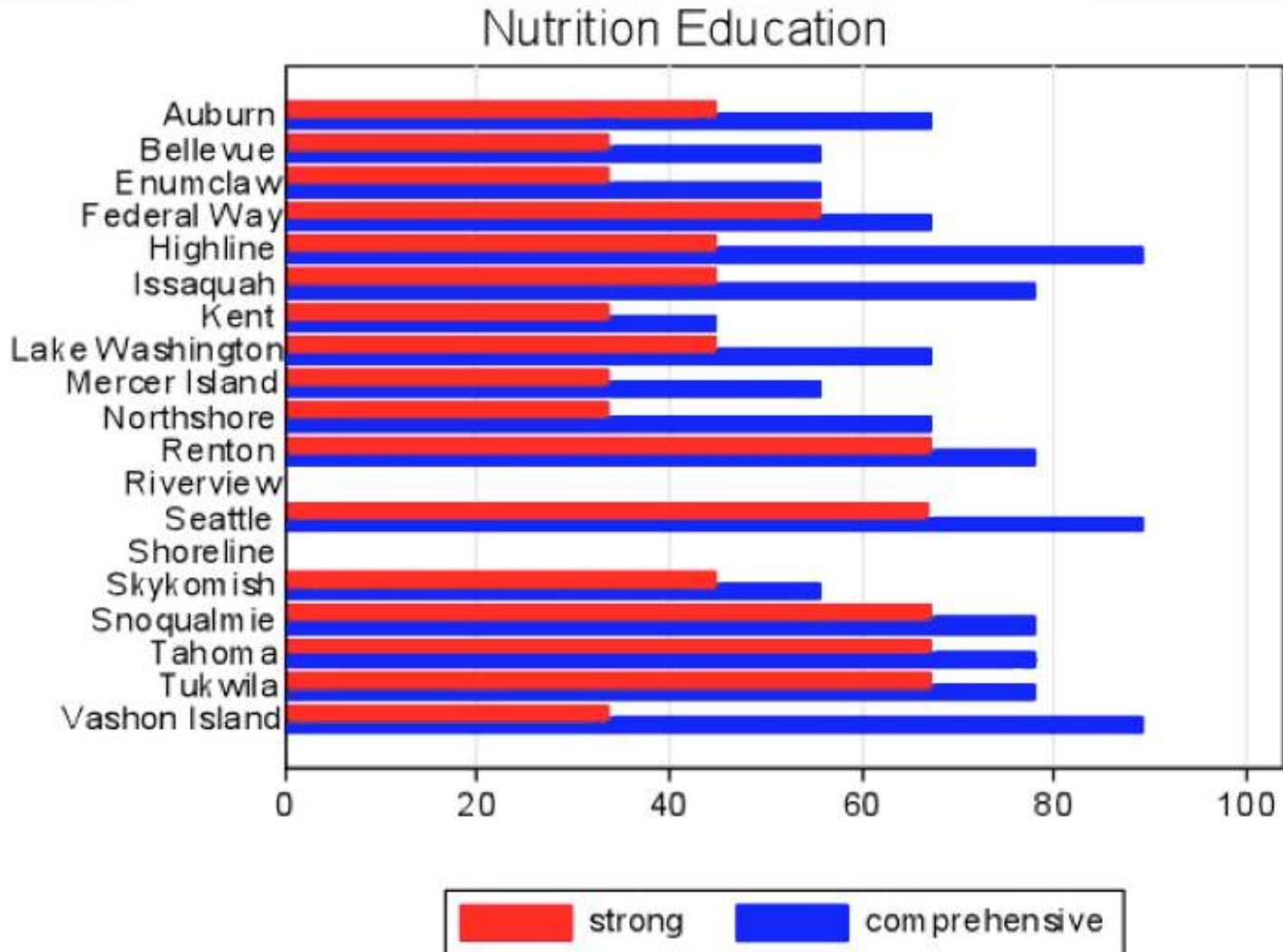
## School food environment - Recess Before Lunch

- No district-wide formal adoption of Recess Before Lunch policies
- Mixed success rates in individual schools
- Barriers:
  - Staffing/scheduling
  - Hand-washing
  - Use of recess as a reward for completing lunch



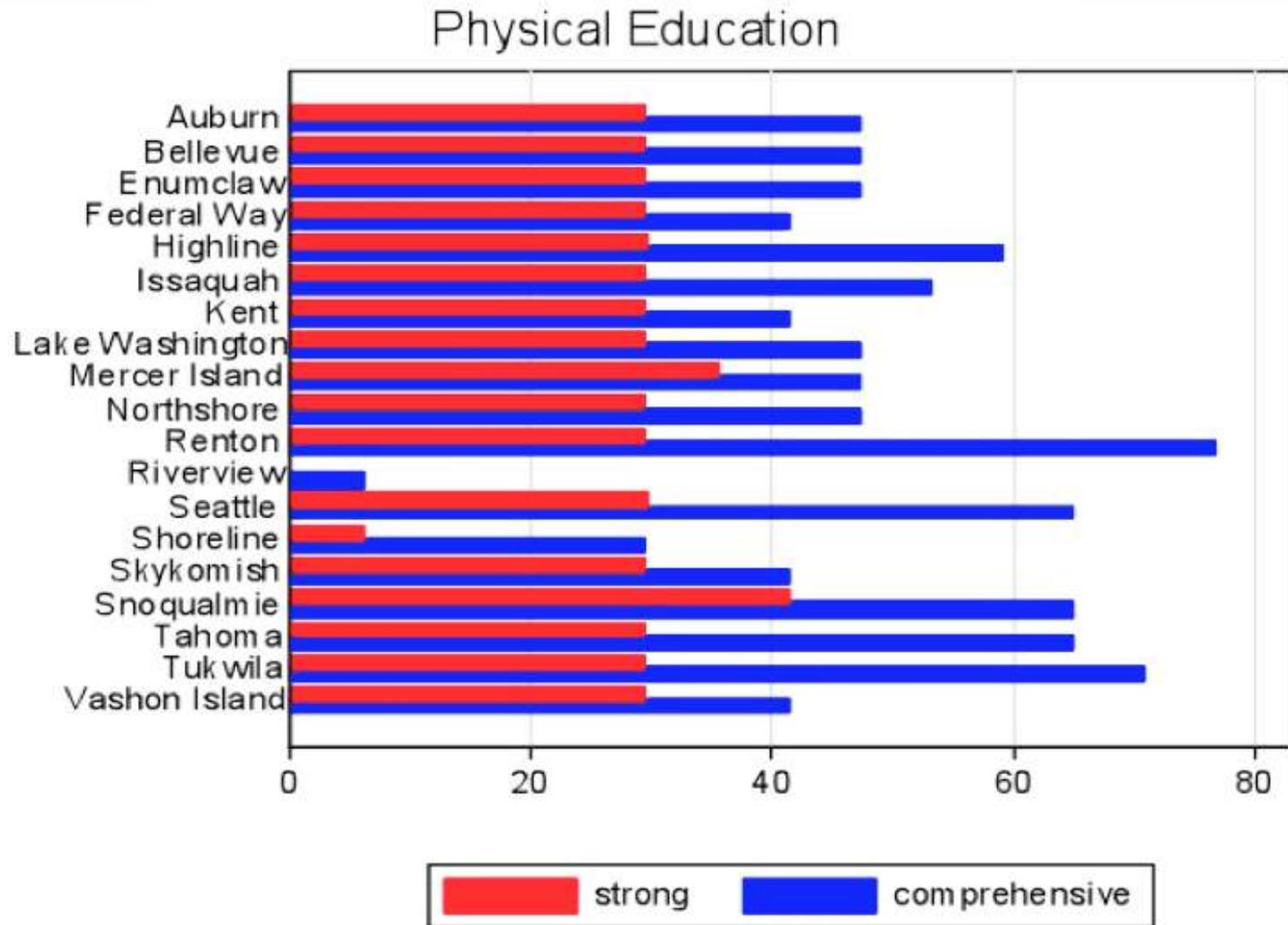
# Results

## Curriculum



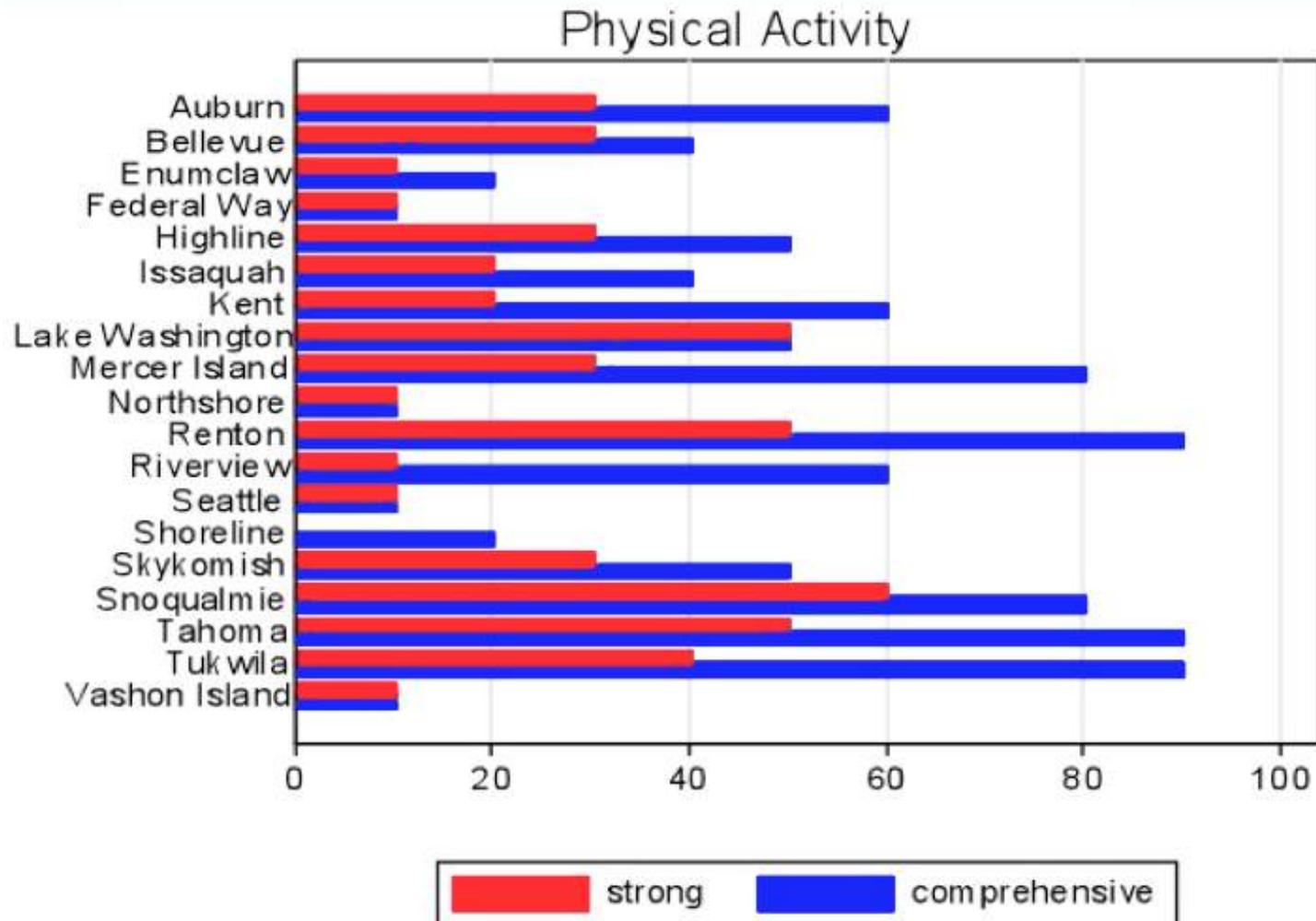
# Results

## Curriculum



# Results

## Curriculum



# Results

## Curriculum

Successes in implementing nutrition education curriculum  
(n=14 curriculum coordinators)

- Integration of curriculum in elementary classrooms or health and science courses
- Effort by staff to encourage healthy eating and activity among students
- Engagement and excitement among staff
- Staff accountability coming from administration or curriculum committee



# Results

## Curriculum

Barriers in implementing nutrition education curriculum

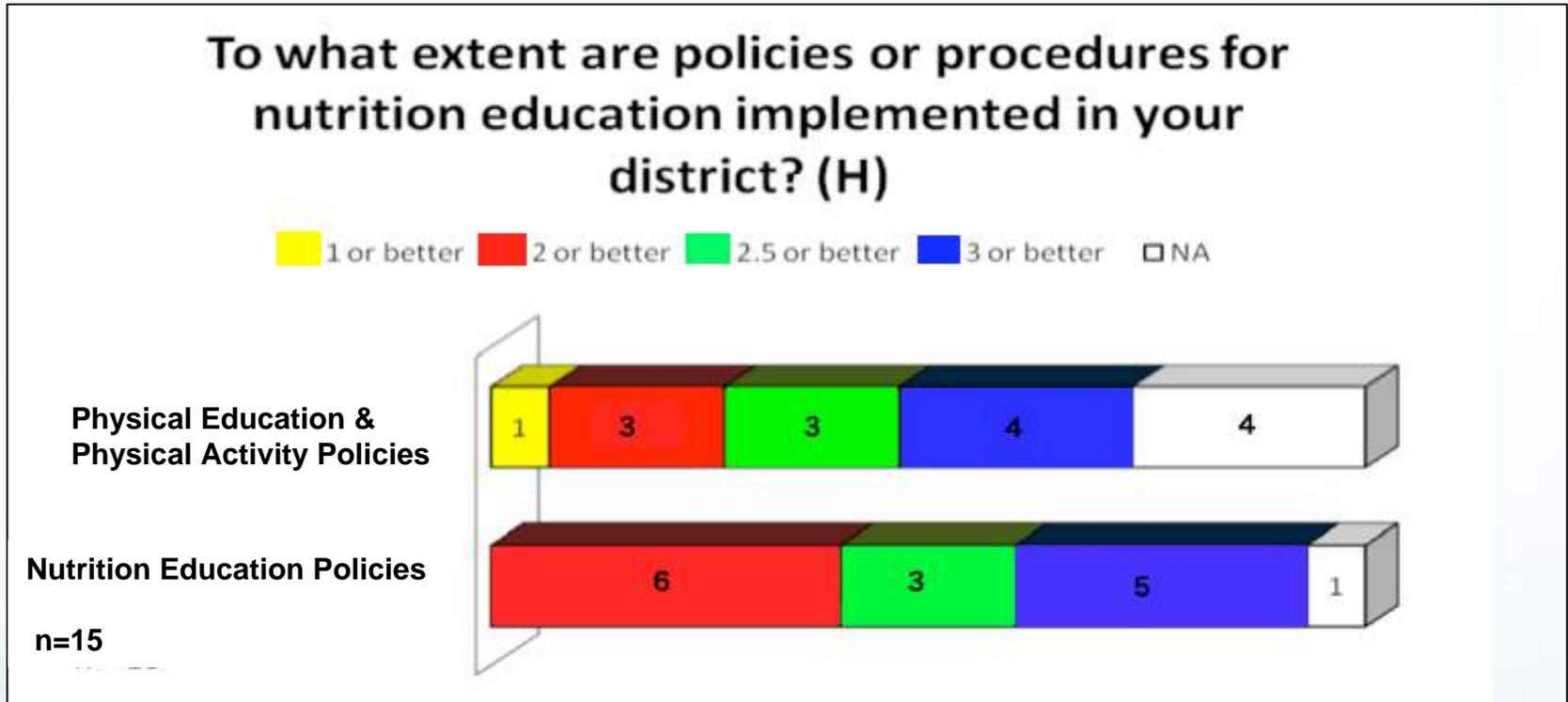
(n=14 curriculum coordinators)

- Finding time in the school day
- Funding for teaching materials and staff training
- Competition with other core learning requirements
- Scheduling PE requirements in elementary school day schedule
- Not having a standardized or proven curriculum
- Culture and language differences

*"Any time there are policies uncoupled with resources they are extremely hard to implement. We need flyers, handouts, resources in many languages." – Health Curriculum Representative*

# Results

## Curriculum



Statements on implementation of policies were rated on a scale from '1' to '3' with '1' representing that a policy or procedure is 'never followed' and '3' representing a policy or procedure that is 'always followed'. Districts were questioned about their specific policy statements, so ratings were averaged for comparison.

# Results

## Curriculum

Additional school-based activities designed to promote wellness

Activities most frequently reported:

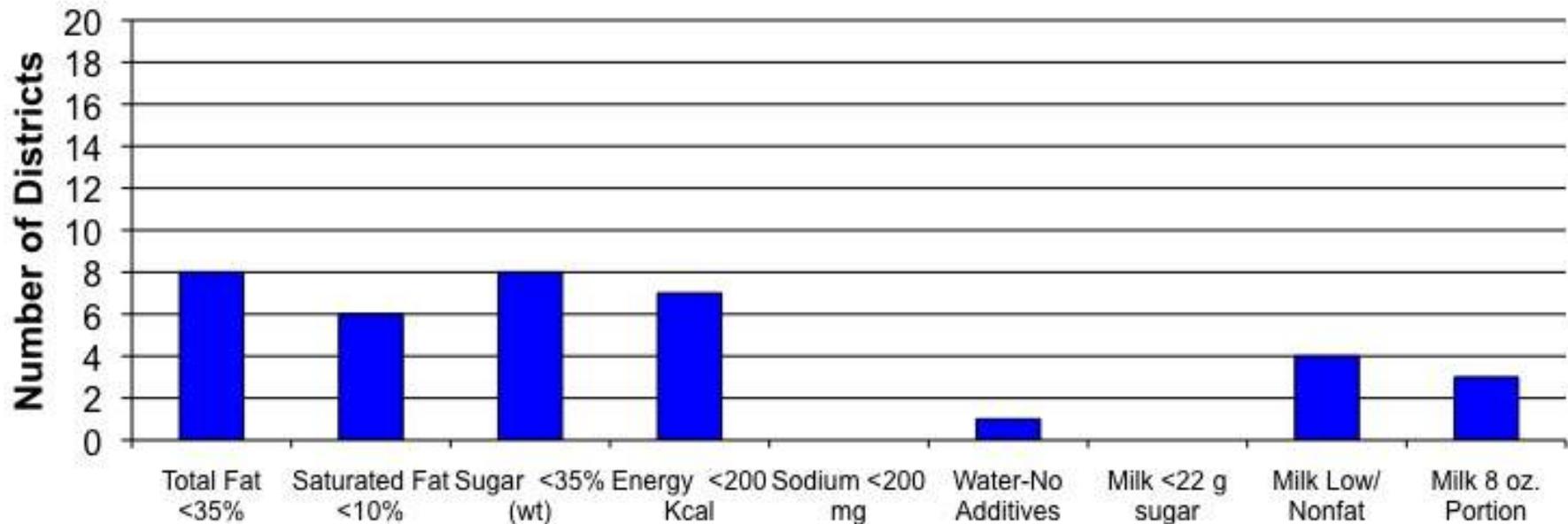
- Wellness fairs
- After school organized physical activities
- Activities organized during school hours
- Staff-wellness programs
- Challenges or friendly competitions
- Partnerships
- Assemblies/presentations

***“The more we can get parents to work with communities and schools, the better.”  
- Nutrition Services Administrator***

# Results

## WA State Senate Bill 5093

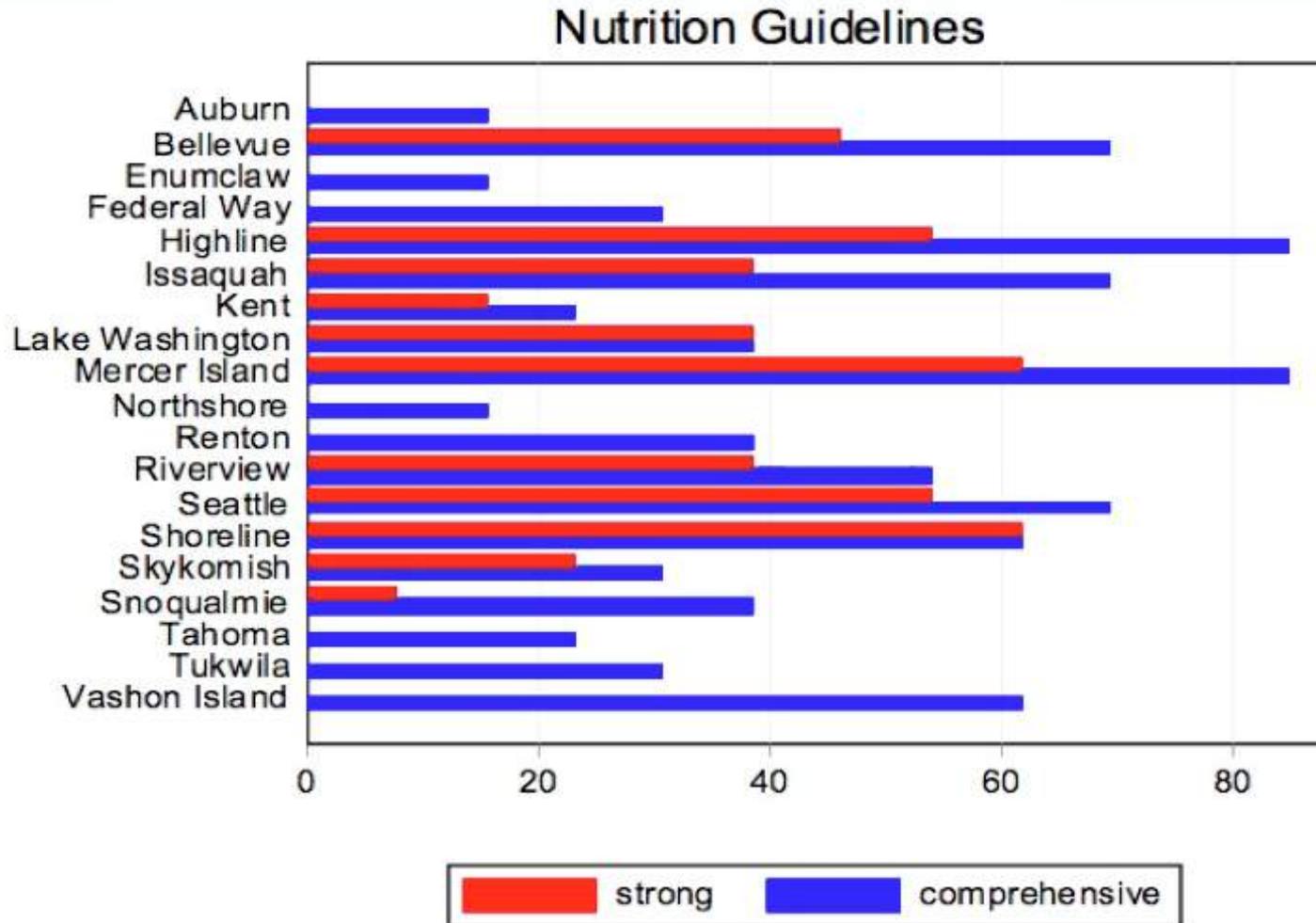
**Number of King County School Districts with current wellness policies that meet the competitive foods standards outlined in Washington State Senate Bill 5093**



**Standards in Washington State Senate Bill 5093**

# Results

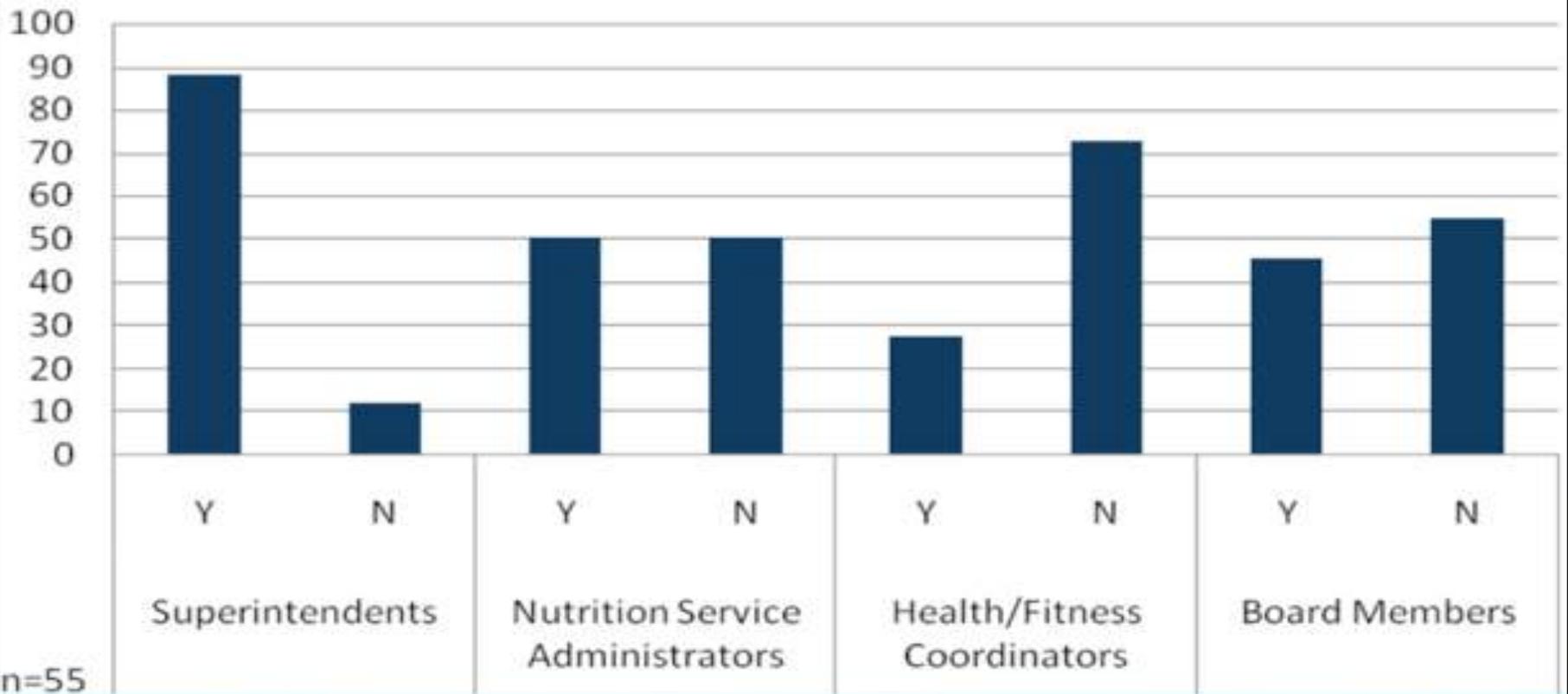
## WA State Senate Bill 5093



# Results

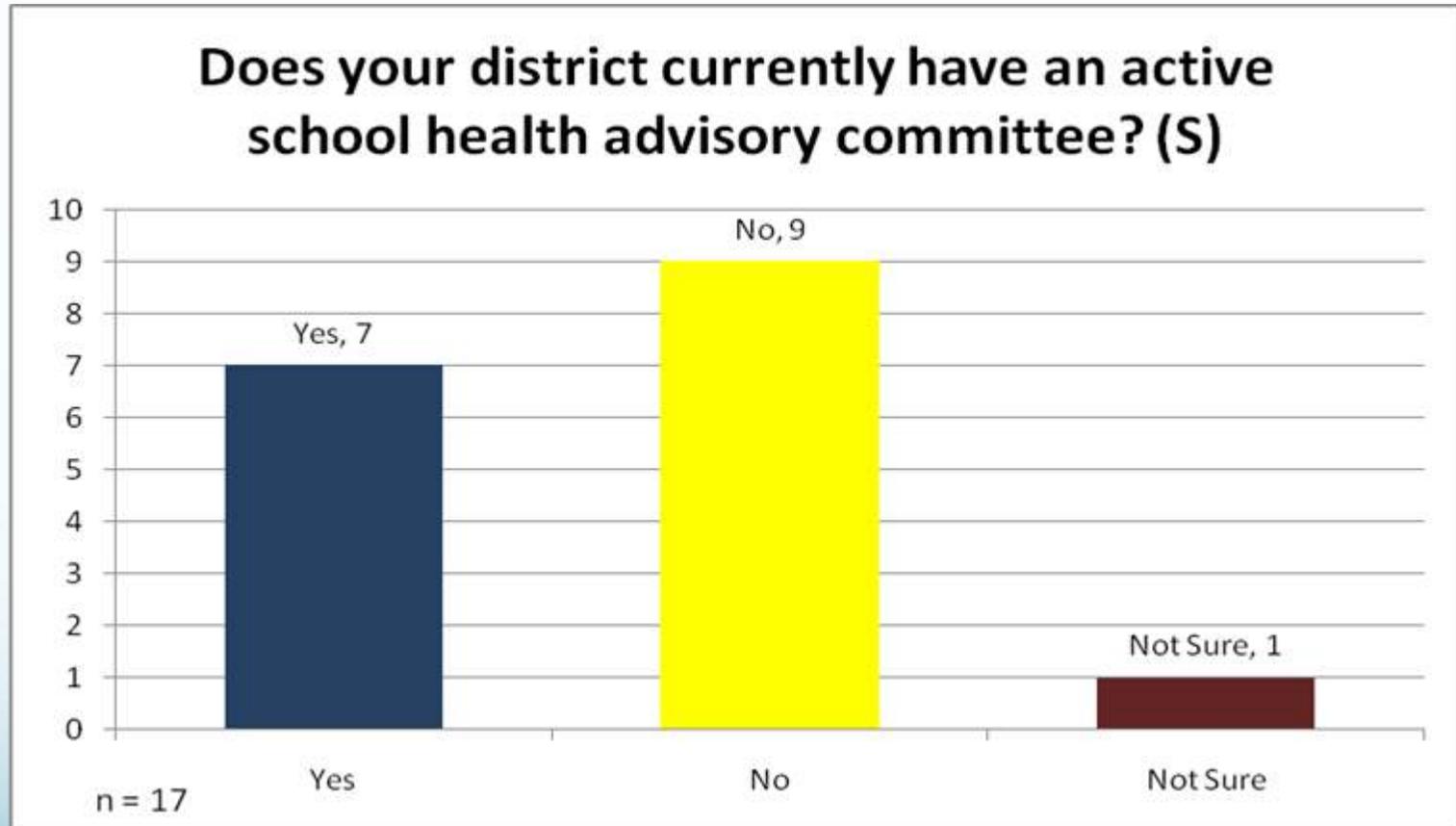
## WA State Senate Bill 5093

Respondents expressing knowledge about Senate Bill 5093



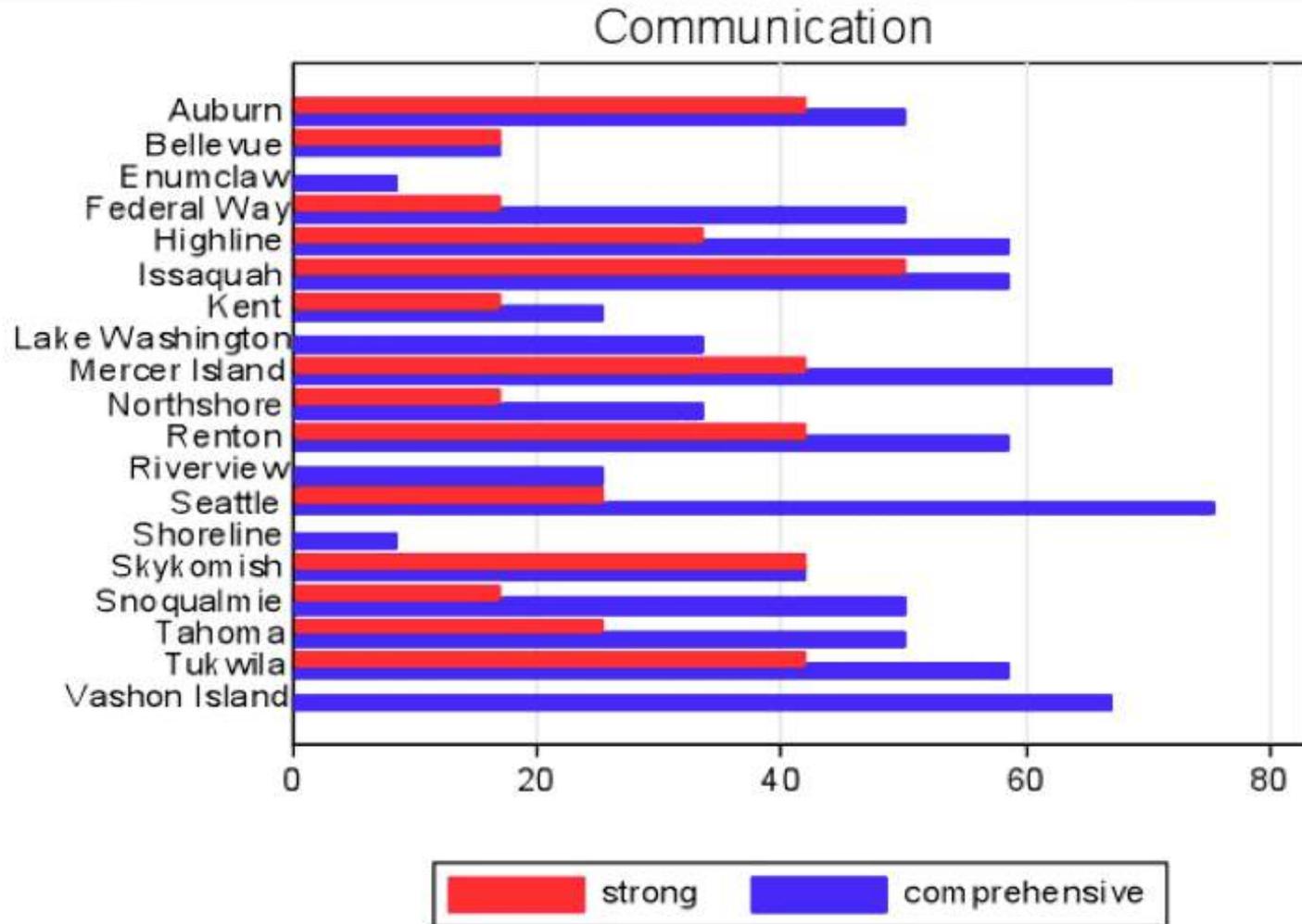
# Results

## WA State Senate Bill 5093



# Results

## Communication



# Results

## Communication

School districts communicate about wellness policies using:

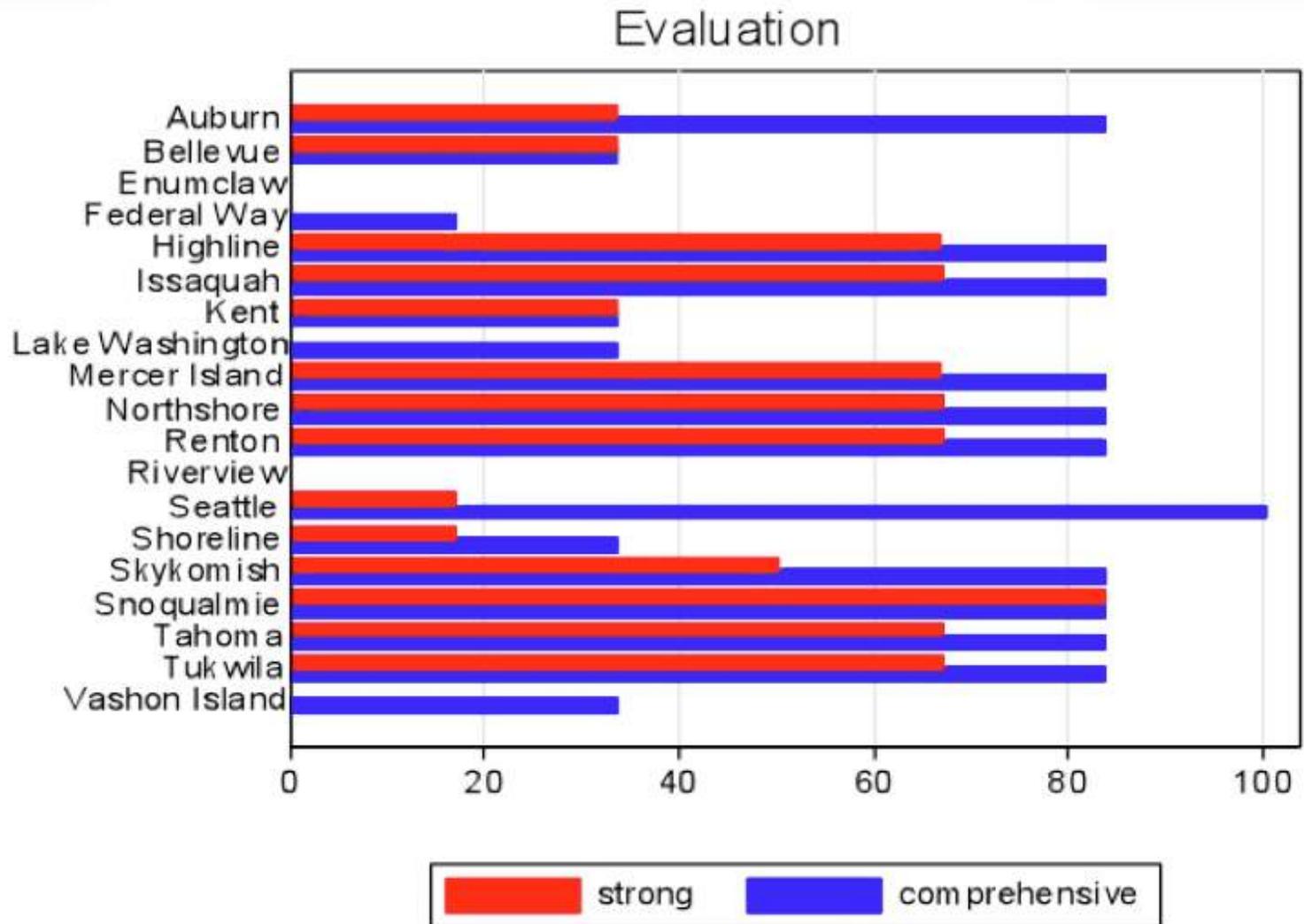
- Meetings and trainings
- Newsletters
- Websites and E-news



School  
Websites

# Results

## Evaluation



# Results

## Evaluation

Methods used by districts:

- Informal evaluations
- None
- Evaluation reports for the State and/or BOH
- Full reports with data
- Evaluation on school meals and food only



# Results

## Evaluation

### Role of School Board Members:

- Should be active in evaluation and assure implementation is taking place
- Play a visionary role and call attention to issues

### Yearly reporting system should include:

- A general program overview
- Budget information including vending data, specific measures of physical education activity, percent of obesity, high risk medical conditions, participation in nutrition programs
- Comparisons to other districts and states

Superintendents were identified most often as the ideal point of responsibility for evaluation

# Results

## Evaluation

### **Integration of wellness policy evaluation into annual school improvement planning**

#### Advantages:

- Keep the policy in the forefront
- Could facilitate integration of wellness policies into academic areas

#### Disadvantages:

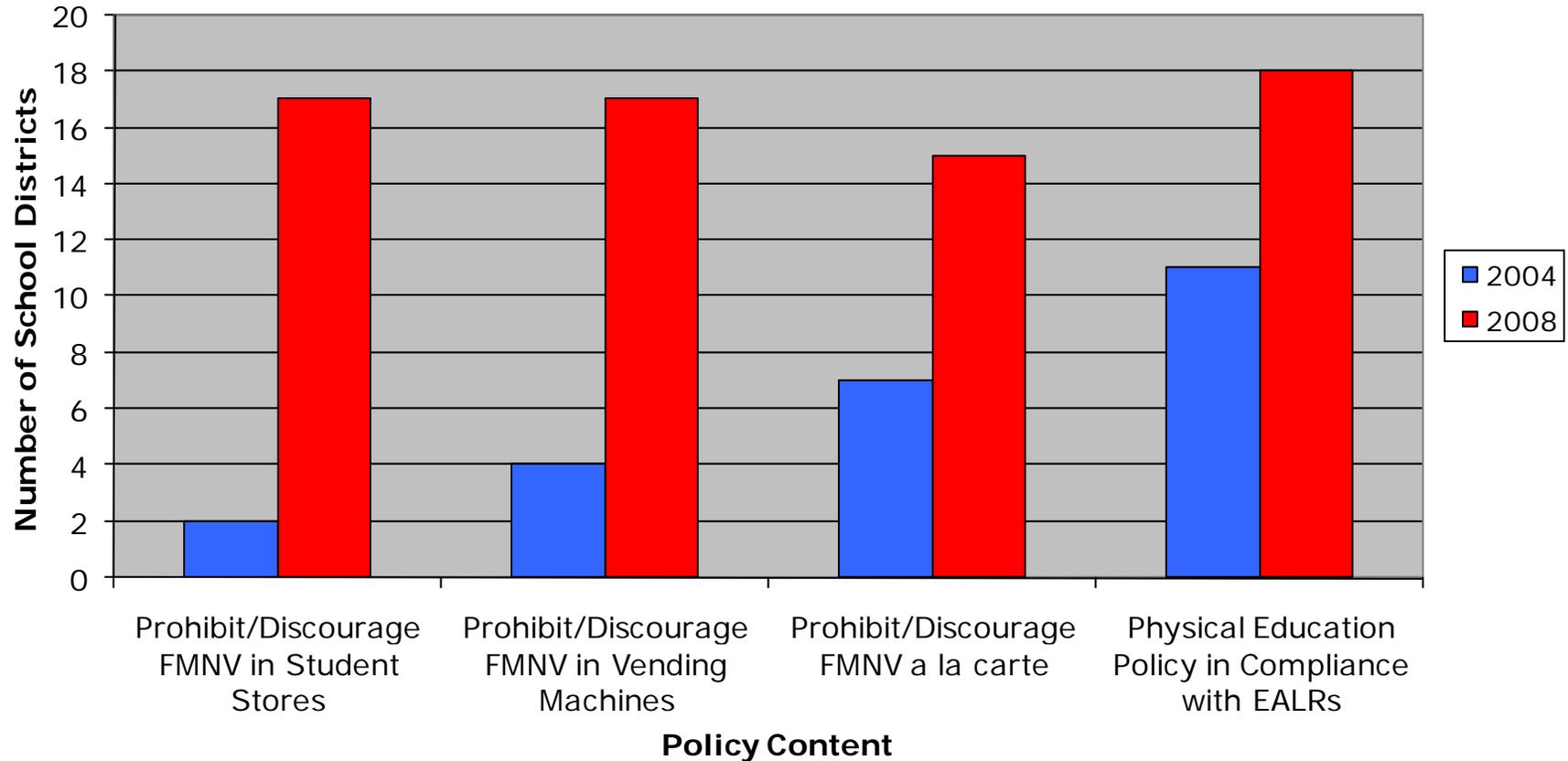
- Unfunded
- Resource and time variations between schools
- Overstretched staff already struggling to meet academic requirements

#### **School Board Member suggestions:**

- Use an outside evaluator
- Examine how all wellness variables work together to support education
- Use experts to develop a sustainable statewide system for evaluation

# Results

## Comparison of 2004 Nutrition and Physical Education Policies with 2008 Wellness Policies in King County



# Results

## Wellness policy implementation

### SUCSESSES

- Change in the types of food offered in lunchrooms (27 respondents, 17 districts)
- Vending machine changes/removal (16 respondents, 14 districts)
- Increased awareness of health and nutrition (8 respondents, 5 districts)
- Health and fitness curriculum development and/or assessment (6 respondents, 6 districts)

# Results

## Wellness policy implementation

### BARRIERS

- Time
- Student preferences/  
competitive foods
- Funding
- Lack of resources
- Breaking parent, student,  
teacher habits
- Cost
- Loss of revenue
- Lack of communication/coordination
- Staff shortages
- Accountability
- Lack of shared vision/commitment
- Focus on other subjects & testing
- Lack of space
- Cultural values
- Not a value

# Results

## Wellness policy implementation

### ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES:

- Wellness policy implementation is an unfunded mandate.
- Resources needed for new wellness curriculum and physical activity programs
- Language and cultural barriers
- Vending machines are still a large problem

*"We don't want the image of the food police, we want to emphasize the long term benefits of child health."  
-Nutrition Services Administrator*

# Results

## Districts' suggestions for BOH action

- Fiscal (21)
- Materials and resources (19)
- Best practices and evaluation (14)
- General guidance (9)
- Accountability (9)
- Marketing of knowledge (8)
- Advocacy (7)
- Coordination and facilitation (5)
- Miscellaneous (5)

*"If King County Board of Health could provide a forum for connections between teachers, administrators, and district-level policy makers, implementation, understanding, and accountability of wellness policies could be much more effective"*  
*- Health & Fitness Curriculum Coordinator*

# Results



## Recommendations for BOH action

- Partner with school districts and offer assistance in adapting to new regulations
- Provide guidance for districts to obtain funding and material resources
- Promote leadership at the district and principal level in order to increase effectiveness of the policies
- Spread knowledge about the policies and their benefits to King County parents
- Provide tools for monitoring and evaluating successes and failures
- Facilitate communication between districts so they may share information on effective strategies

# Limitations

## Quantitative Abstraction

- Scoring variability
- Generalizability

## Qualitative Interviews

- Open-ended questions
- Subjectivity
- Non-participation



# Acknowledgements

Special thank you to:

Donna Johnson, RD, PhD

Donna Oberg, MPH, RD, CD

Anne Lund, MPH, RD

Mary Podrabsky, MPH, RD

Mary Snodgrass, MPH

All participating King County school districts



The full King County School Districts Wellness Policy Assessment Report can be accessed online at:

[http://courses.washington.edu/nutr531/BOH2008/BOH\\_timeline.htm](http://courses.washington.edu/nutr531/BOH2008/BOH_timeline.htm)