Arlington Public Schools

EVERY STUDENT COUNTS

APS Strategic Plan
2024–2030



Student Academic Growth and Success Advanced Academics Monitoring Report

Developing Talent. Deepening Learning. Expanding Opportunity.

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November 12, 2026

Presentation Outline



Student Academic Growth and Success

GUIDING QUESTION

How has APS expanded advanced learning opportunities, and what must happen next so those opportunities lead to rigorous experiences and successful pathways?

1. **Where We've Been**
   The evolution of Advanced Academics and Talent Development
2. **Expanding Opportunity**
   A K–12 continuum, Young Scholars, and open-enrollment intensified courses
3. **What the Data Show**
   Who is entering advanced coursework and how students are doing
4. **From Access to Success**
   Why opportunity alone isn't enough and how APS strengthens the conditions for student success
5. **The Next Chapter**
   Consistency, rigor, and accountability

Evolution of Advanced Academics and Talent Development (AATD)



Student Academic Growth and Success

2012 | SERVE

- Identified learners
- Weekly pull-out services in elementary and middle school
- Advanced course choices in high school

2015|DEVELOP

- Collaborative cluster model—inclusive services within classrooms
- Universal screening and holistic identification
- Young Scholars
- Growing Resource Teachers for the Gifted (RTGs) as teacher leaders and coaches

2022 | EXPAND

- AATD
- Aligned to the broader talent development mission
- Cross-office development of open-enrollment intensified courses
- Multiple pathways and on-demand professional learning for all teachers

TODAY | STRENGTHEN

- Advanced Academics Coaches (AACs) as instructional leaders
- Job-embedded coaching for teachers
- Cross-office rigor and implementation of extensions
- Advocacy and Access to middle school open-enrollment intensified courses; high school intensified/AP/IB/DE*

The mission has remained constant; the system for recognizing and developing talent has expanded.

*AP: Advanced Placement; IB: International Baccalaureate; DE: Dual Enrollment

A K–12 Continuum of Advanced Academics Services

Students can access advanced learning opportunities through multiple pathways and at different points.



Student Academic Growth and Success

DISCOVER

Elementary

- Cluster grouping
- Young Scholars High-Quality Tier 1 instruction
- Extensions in curriculum documents for all
- AAC coaching—planning, co-teaching, and ongoing support for teachers

DEVELOP

Middle

- Young Scholars
- High-Quality Tier 1 instruction
- Open-enrollment intensified courses
- AAC coaching—planning, co-teaching, and ongoing support for teachers

PURSUE

High

- Young Scholars
- Intensified coursework
- AP • IB • DE
- Career-focused pathways
- AAC coaching—planning, co-teaching, and ongoing support for teachers

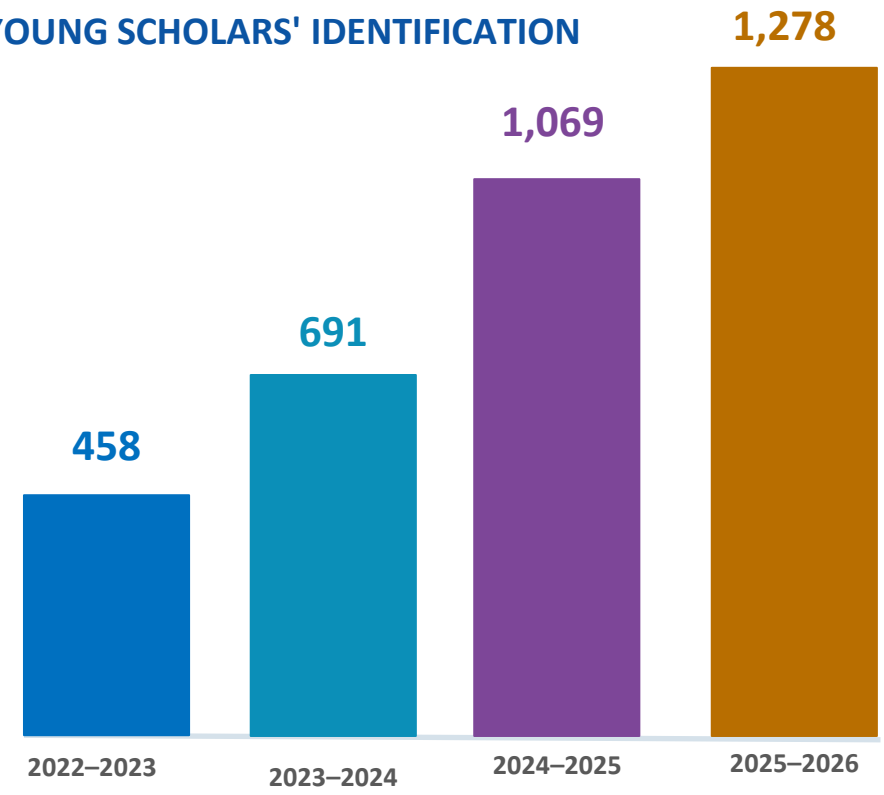
Advanced academics is not a single program or course; it is a continuum of challenge and support.

Young Scholars: Access, Affirmation, and Advocacy

APS is identifying and intentionally developing more students through the Young Scholars talent development pathway.

Student Academic Growth and Success

YOUNG SCHOLARS' IDENTIFICATION



THE YOUNG SCHOLARS MODEL

ACCESS

Students encounter rigorous learning, critical and creative thinking, and visible advanced pathways.

AFFIRMATION

Students' strengths, interests, academic identity, and capacity for growth are intentionally developed.

ADVOCACY

Educators, counselors, and families support students as they enter and continue increasingly challenging opportunities.

Young Scholars has expanded substantially, creating a stronger base for continued access, affirmation, and advocacy.

Open Enrollment Created Multiple Entry Points

Beginning in 2023–2024, students could access challenging coursework across the core curriculum, with no prerequisites and ~~can~~ starting at any grade level or content. area.



Student Academic Growth and Success

BEFORE

ACCELERATED MATHEMATICS

2023–2024 AND BEYOND

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)

SCIENCE

SOCIAL STUDIES

Multiple subject-specific pathways

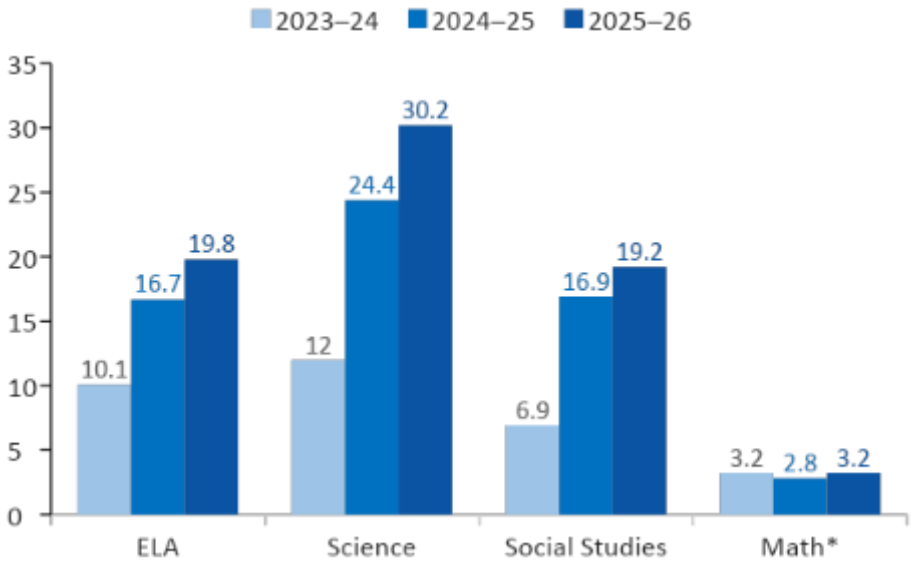
ACCELERATED MATHEMATICS

The policy widened the opportunity structure, allowing students to demonstrate readiness and strength in more than one academic domain.

More Students Are Accessing and Succeeding

ENTERING

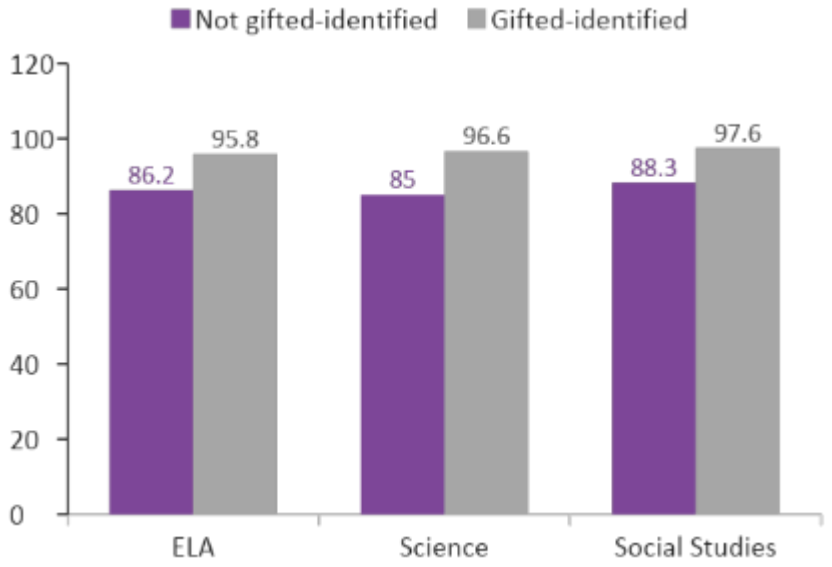
Share of course enrollments that were intensified



***Math intensified is an accelerated pathway, not open enrollment.**
Where prerequisites remained, participation did not change.

SUCCEEDING

Share of grades in intensified courses that were A or B



Fewer than 4% of grades earned by students who were not identified gifted were a D or E.

Opening access has not come at the cost of success. The next question is whether students persist.

Expanded Opportunities Reached More Students

OVERALL PARTICIPATION GREW

Percent of middle school students enrolled in an intensified course

ELA 20% → 33% +13 pts
2023–24 2025–26

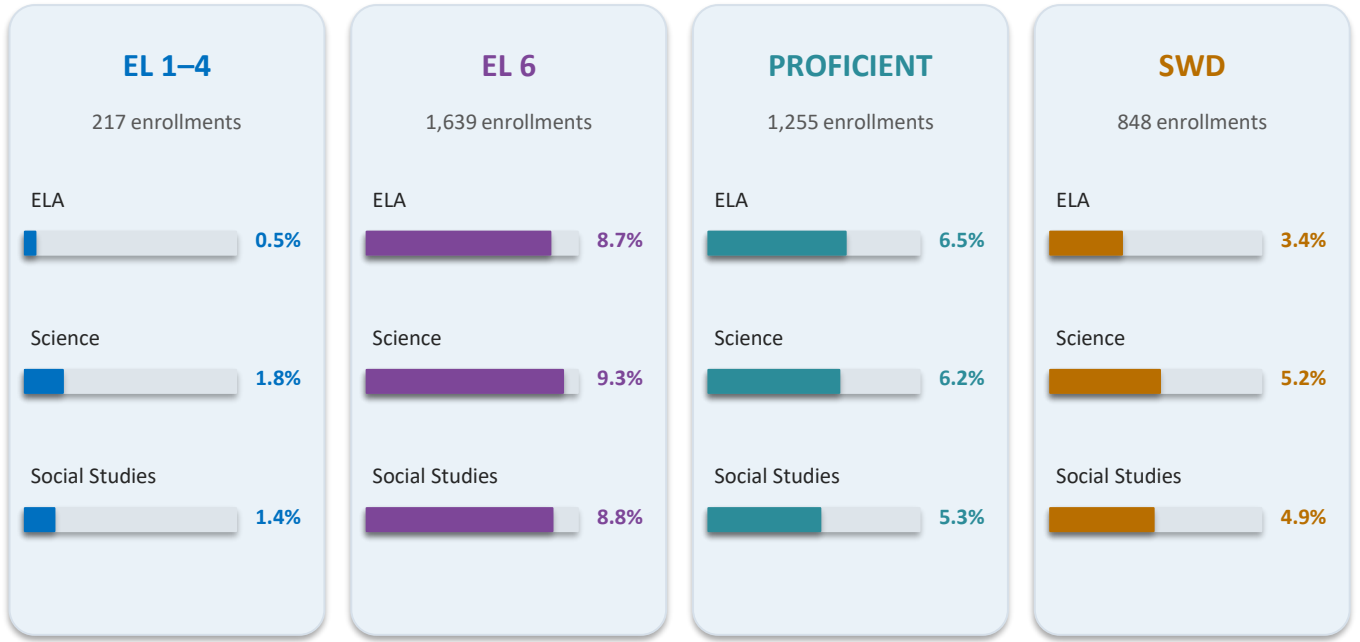
SCIENCE 25% → 46% +21 pts
2023–24 2025–26

SOCIAL STUDIES 12% → 29% +17 pts
2023–24 2025–26

Expanded access is visible across all three open-enrollment subjects.

EL AND SWD REPRESENTATION BY SUBJECT

Share of intensified-course enrollments, 2023–24 to 2025–26



Students with EL and SWD designations are represented across all three intensified subjects.
A student may appear in more than one course.

Young Scholars and Open Enrollment Strengthen the Same Pipeline

One develops emerging potential; the other expands the opportunity structure.



Student Academic Growth and Success

YOUNG SCHOLARS

- Recognize potential early.
- Affirm strengths and academic identity.
- Build readiness and advocacy.
- Support sustained participation.

ADVANCED LEARNING PATHWAYS

OPEN-ENROLLMENT INTENSIFIED COURSES

- Expand the opportunity structure.
- Create subject-specific entry points.
- Reduce dependence on one accelerated pathway.
- Offer additional ways to choose a challenge.

INTENSIFIED/AP/IB/DE

- Extend advanced pathways through high school.
- Offer a college-level challenge and credit.
- Provide multiple program options to fit student goals.
- Sustain participation from middle school to graduation.

Together, talent development and expanded course access create more ways for students to enter and continue advanced learning.

Access Is the Beginning, Not the Finish Line

Opportunity without support is not enough. The quality of the instructional experience becomes critical.



Student Academic Growth and Success

ACCESS
- Can students enter?

AFFIRMATION
- Do students believe they belong?

ADVOCACY
- Do students receive support to continue?

CHALLENGE
- Do students experience rigorous learning daily?

PATHWAYS
- Do students continue into increasingly challenging opportunities?

The next question is not only who accesses advanced learning opportunities, but who continues and succeeds.

The AAC Role: Multiple Layers of Support



Student-Centered Workforce

TALENT DEVELOPMENT
How do we recognize and develop potential?

INSTRUCTIONAL CAPACITY
How do we strengthen teaching and learning?

ACCESS AND PATHWAYS
How do we expand opportunity and support student growth?

MULTIPLE, CONNECTED LAYERS OF SUPPORT

STUDENT ADVOCACY TALENT DEVELOPMENT

- Advocate for advanced learners.
- Recognize and develop potential.
- Support challenge, persistence, and belonging.

EDUCATOR & TEAM SUPPORT

- Co-plan with teachers and Collaborative Learning Teams (CLTs).
- Model, co-teach, coach, and facilitate.
- Strengthen rigor in Tier 1 through depth and complexity.

SCHOOL-WIDE PROCESSES

- Lead screening and identification.
- Interpret evidence and plan services.
- Coordinate implementation and access.

FAMILY & PATHWAY SUPPORT

- Partner with teachers to communicate learning options.
- Partner with counselors and families.
- Support transitions across pathways.

Students are the purpose. Educator capacity and coherent systems make sustained opportunities possible.

AAC Support: Flexible Structures to Strengthen Tier 1

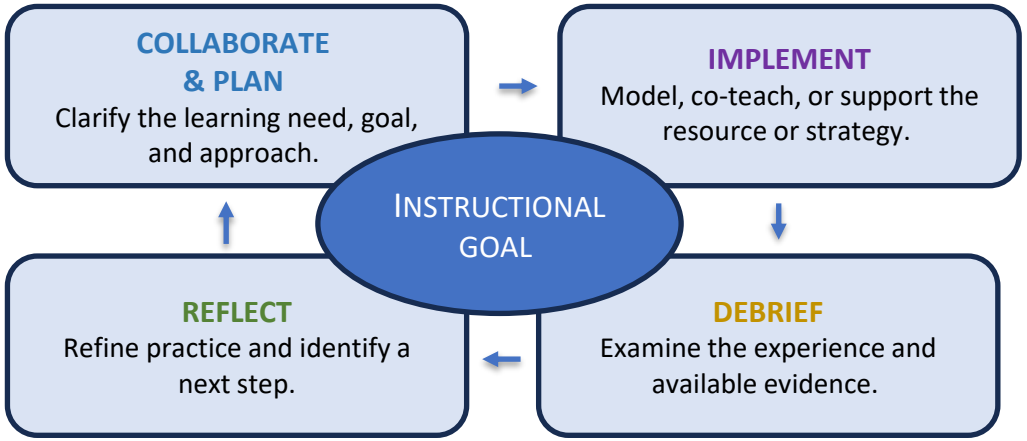


Student-Centered Workforce

Student Advocacy | Collaborative Planning | CLT Facilitation | Professional Learning | Co-teaching

Curriculum Support | Manage Screening & Identification Process | Family & Pathway Support

ONE SUPPORT STRUCTURE: APS COACHING CYCLE



AACs draw on coaching, planning, advocacy, professional learning, and system support to help make advanced academic services comprehensive and ongoing.

HOW THE STRUCTURE MAY BE USED

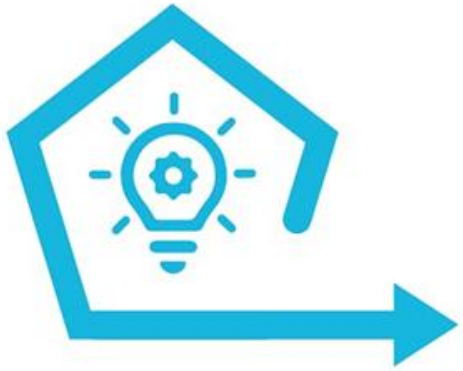
CLT PLANNING

Possible AAC role: Facilitate planning • *contribute resources* • *model or co-teach* • *examine student evidence* • *plan next steps*

INDIVIDUAL TEACHER GOAL SETTING

May be one planning conversation, in-the-moment coaching, and/or a formal coaching cycle

Examining Reach, Support, and Emerging Patterns



Operational Excellence

REACH

How broadly is the coaching support reaching teachers, specialists, teams, grade levels, and/or content areas?

What the data help us understand:

- Distribution
- Connections
- Opportunities

SUPPORT STRUCTURES

Are we using the right support structures to meet varying needs ?

What the data help us understand:

- Coaching
- Collaboration
- Learning

EXPERTISE & SUPPORT

Which coaching roles are schools drawing upon most, and what might that tell us about emerging needs?

What the data help us understand:

- Expertise
- Needs
- Priorities

EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS

What evidence suggests that support is influencing practice?

What the data help us understand:

- Learning
- Implementation
- Growth

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

What conditions may be helping or limiting the impact?

What the data help us understand:

- Opportunities
- Barriers
- Next steps

How AATD Supports Division-Wide Capacity

Student Academic Growth and Success

COLLABORATION ACROSS APS

EL | 2e/SWD | ELA | MATH | SCI | SS | ARTS | LIBRARY | PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

COUNSELING | DEISS | COACHES | INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT | ADMINISTRATORS

CURRICULUM WRITING & INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

What AATD develops with content partners

- Extensions & scaffolds
- Launch activities & higher-order thinking prompts
- Academic discourse structures

SHARED INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & CAPACITY BUILDING

What AATD facilitates across roles

- Coaching and leading AACs
- Young Scholars
- On-demand professional learning on talent development topics

SHARED LANGUAGE & PRACTICE

SYSTEM ALIGNMENT & IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

What AATD connects across APS

- Service standards, guidance, & collaboration
- Identification & pathway alignment
- Coaching framework & supports

GREATER COHERENCE ACROSS SCHOOLS





The Next Chapter: From Expanded Opportunity to Coherent Impact

The next phase connects adult learning, rigorous student thinking, and system accountability.



Student Academic Growth and Success

APS COACHING FRAMEWORK

CONSISTENCY

How APS supports educator learning across schools

- Shared purpose and language
- Consistent coaching cycle
- Clear roles and boundaries
- Evidence-based reflection

DEPTH & COMPLEXITY

RIGOR

How APS deepens student thinking

- Common language for rigor
- Content-specific applications
- Curriculum and professional learning alignment
- Evidence in student tasks

UPDATED LOCAL PLAN

ACCOUNTABILITY

How APS defines and monitors the system

- Continuum of services
- Talent development commitments
- Access and persistence measures
- Implementation and impact indicators

The goal is not another program; it is a coherent system in which expanded opportunity leads to rigorous experiences and successful pathways.

APS Strategic Plan
2024–2030



APPENDIX

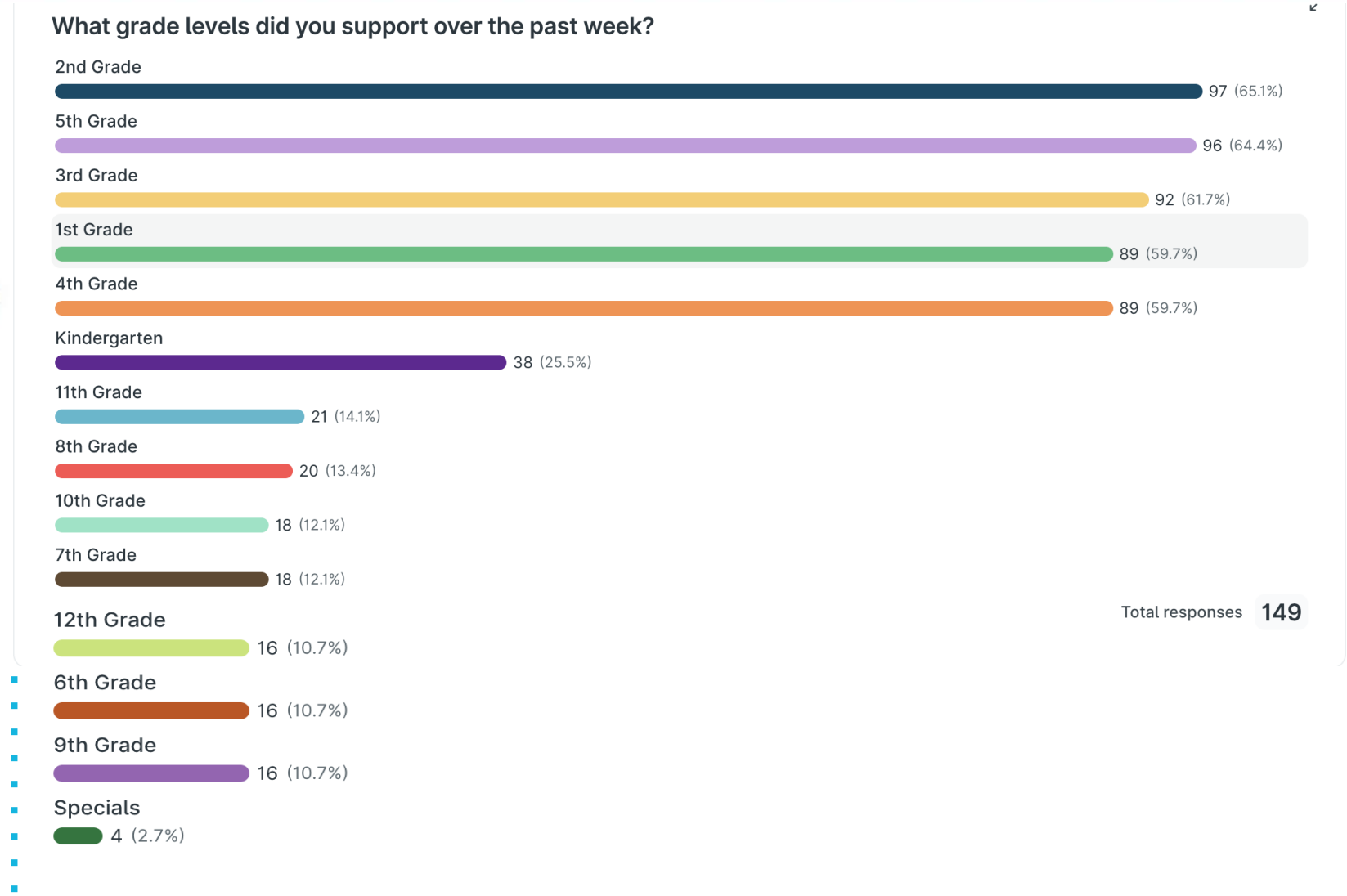
Supporting detail, methodology, and additional analyses

Week at a Glance: AAC Support Across Grade Levels

Operational Excellence

What the data tells administrators and AACs:

Grade levels being supported and grade levels not yet reached

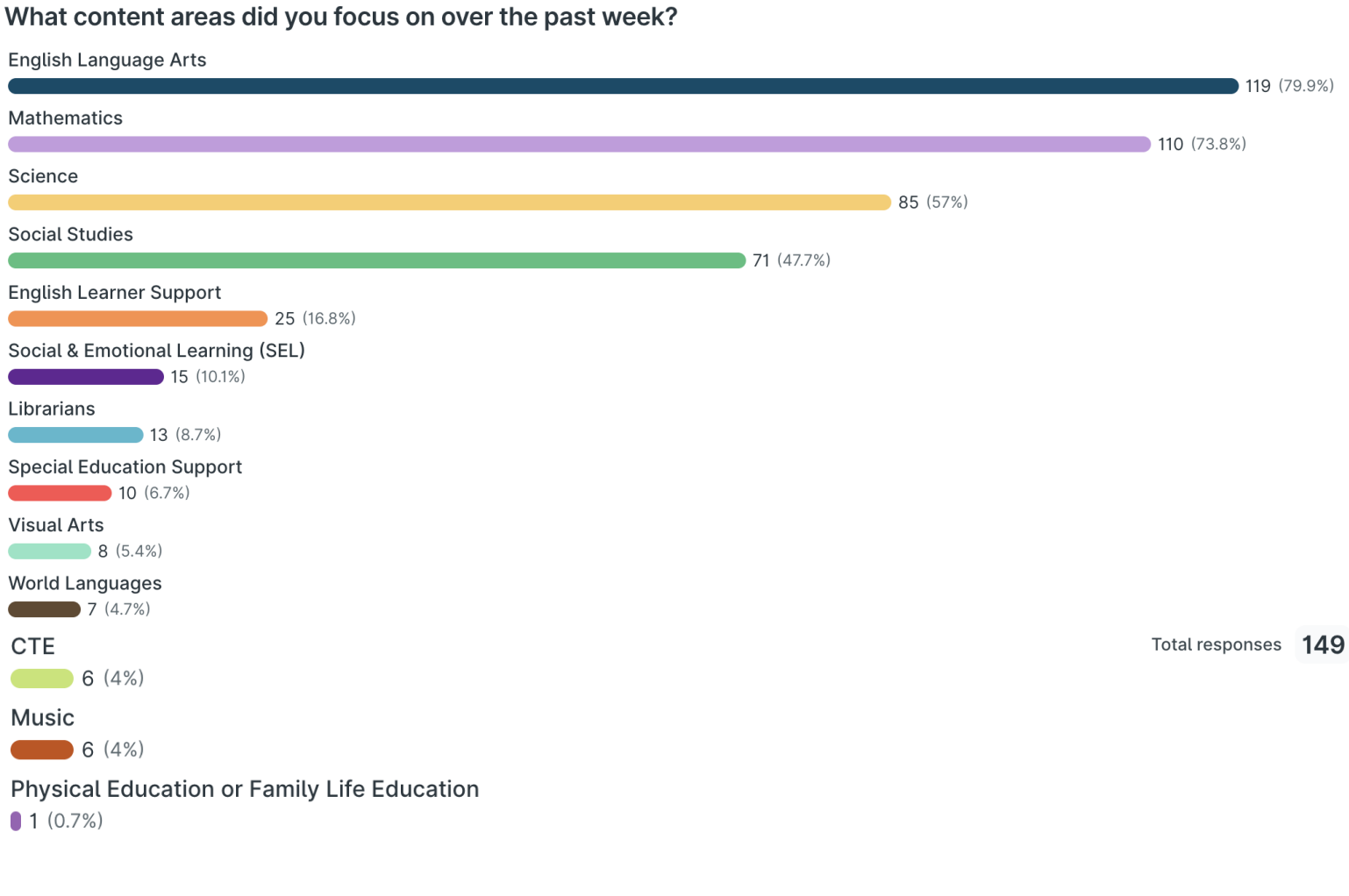


Week at a Glance: AAC Support by Content Area

Operational Excellence

What the data tells administrators and AACs:

Does the content support align with our school action plans?

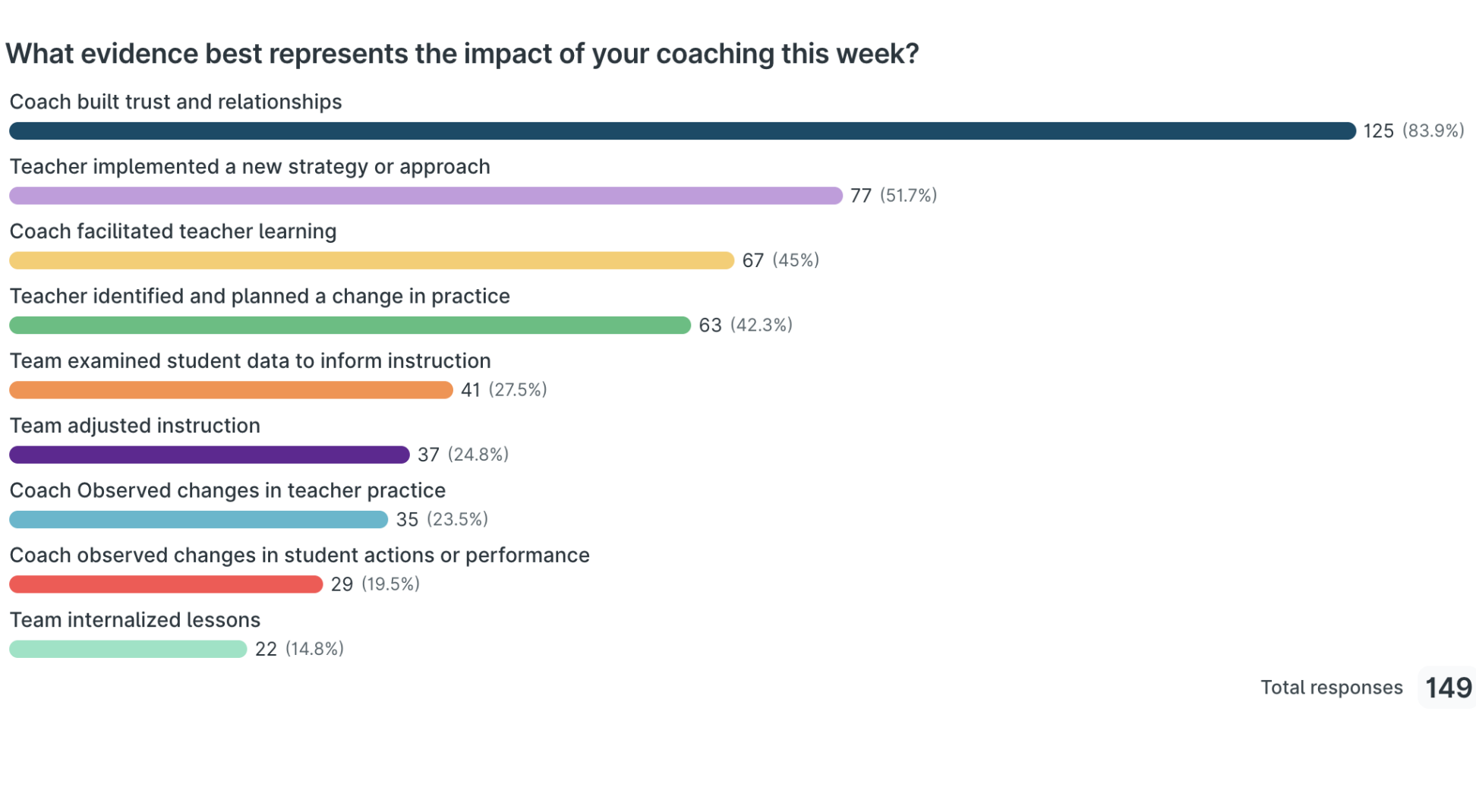


Week at a Glance: AAC Reported Evidence of Progress

Operational Excellence

What the data tells administrators and AACs:

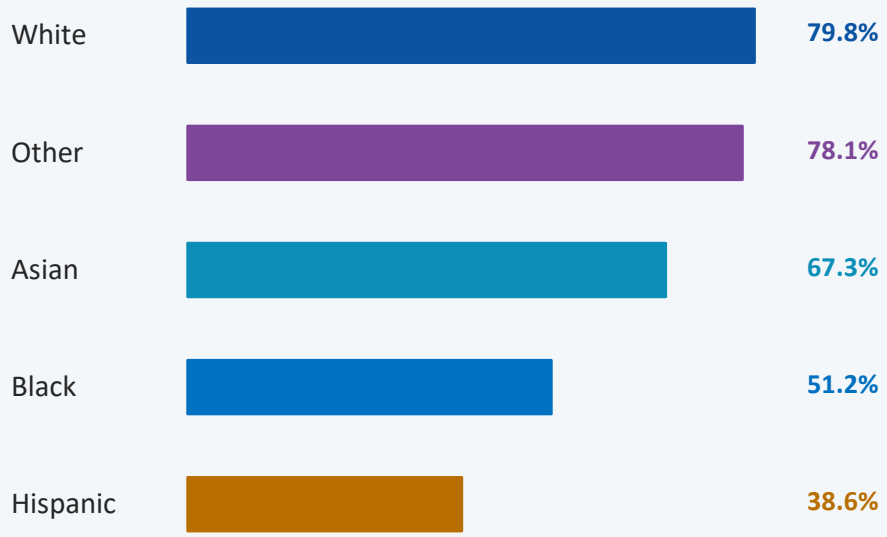
Trust opens the door. Follow-up shows the change in teachers and student outcomes.



Who Is Accessing Open-Enrollment Intensified Courses?

2026–2027 PARTICIPATION RATE WITHIN EACH GROUP

Percent of middle school students in each group enrolled in at least one intensified course



63.8% overall

2023–2024 TO 2025–2026 COURSE ENROLLMENT COMPOSITION

Share of enrollments in each subject, not unique students

Subject	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Other	White
ELA	9.6%	7.7%	14.7%	11.7%	56.4%
Math	11.9%	4.5%	9.6%	13.3%	60.7%
Science	10.1%	8.6%	13.7%	11.6%	56.0%
Social Studies	9.3%	7.4%	13.0%	11.5%	58.8%

What the data shows

All groups are represented across subjects. In 2026–2027, within-group participation was 51.2% for Black students and 38.6% for Hispanic students, compared with 63.8% overall.

Expanded pathways are reaching students from every racial/ethnic group; continued advocacy is needed to strengthen participation where access rates remain lower.

Data



Student Academic Growth and Success

- 2026–2027 Beginning-of-Year (BOY) Gifted Identification (Grade, Area of ID, Ethnicity, SWD, English Learner [EL] End of Year [EOY], EL Level), October 2026
- 2021–2026 Middle School Courses Standards of Learning (SOL) and Grades Tables, October 2026
- 2023–2026 Middle School Intensified Course Enrollments, October 2026
- 2022–2026 Middle School Young Scholars, October 2026
- 2021-2026 AP Exam Performance Tables, October 2026
- 2021-2026 IB Exam Performance Tables, October 2026
- 2021-2026 AP/DE/IB/Intensified Grade Performance, October 2026

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