

*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.

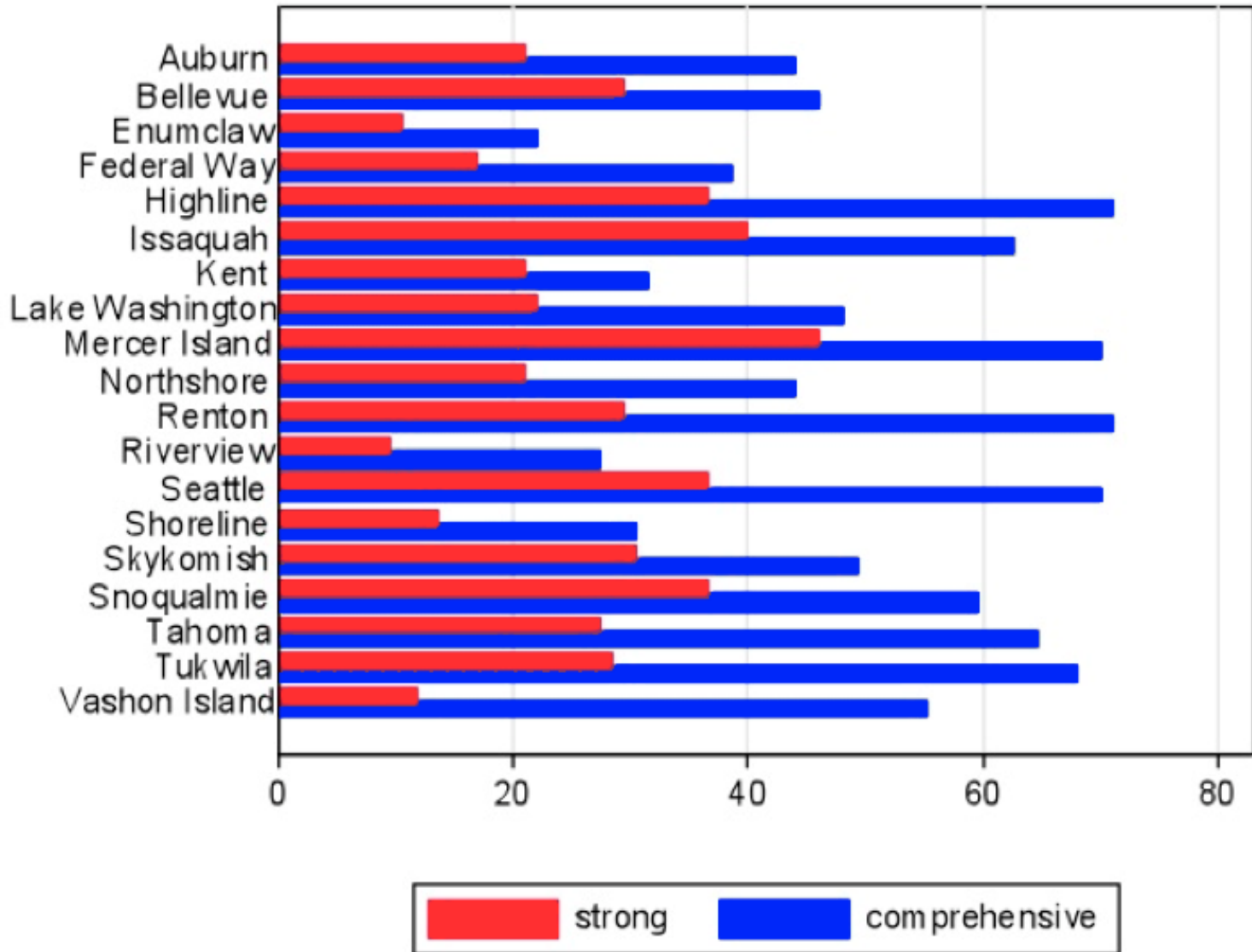
Section 1. Nutrition Education		Rating
NE1	Federal Requirement: Includes goals for nutrition education that are designed to promote student wellness in a manner that the local education agency determines is appropriate.	2
NE2	Nutrition curriculum provided for each grade level.	0
NE3	Coordinates nutrition 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> <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> <i>Count the number of items rated as "2" and divide this number by 9. Multiply by 100.</i>	44



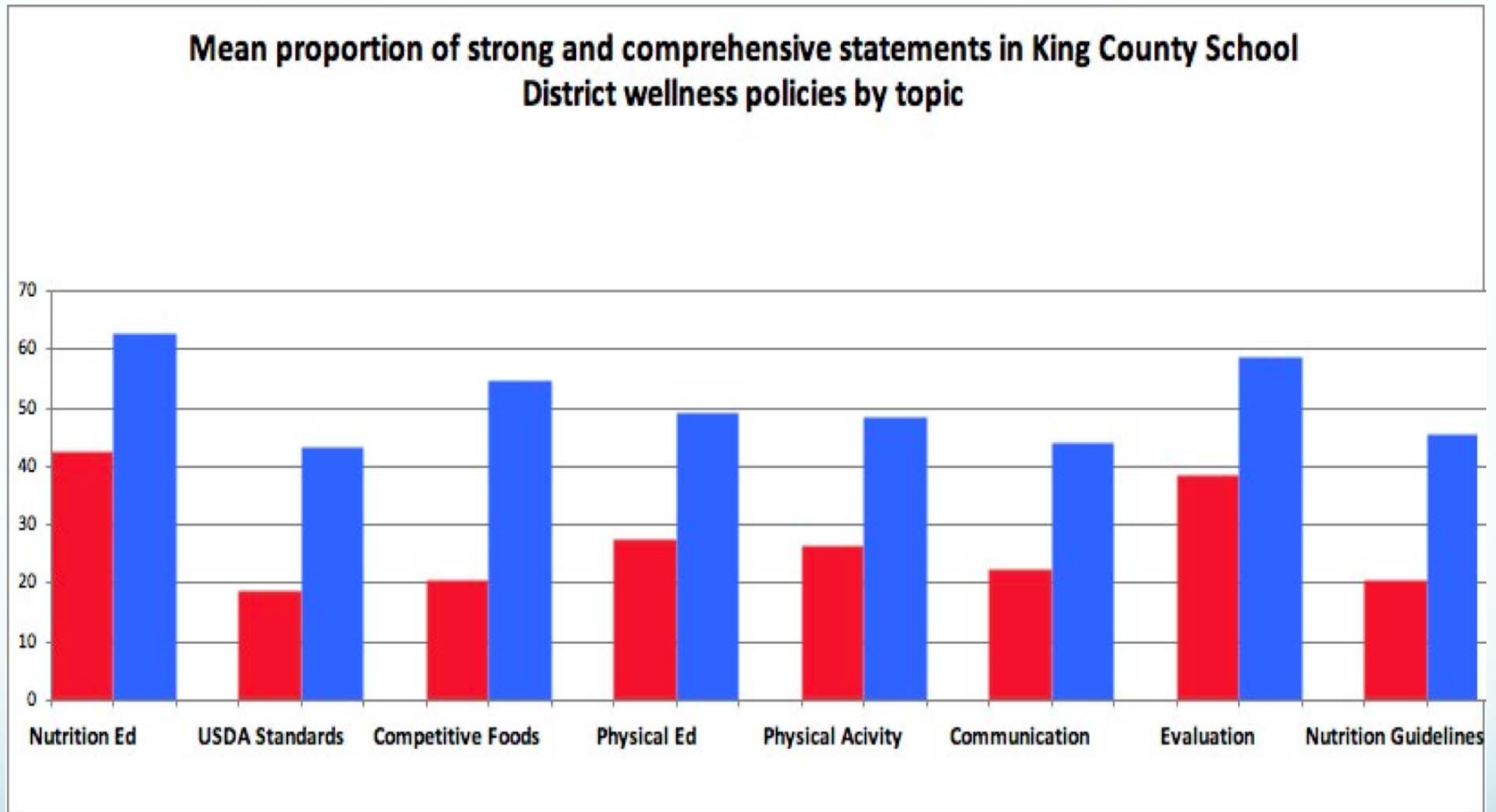
# RESULTS

# Results

Overall Strong and Comprehensive Statements

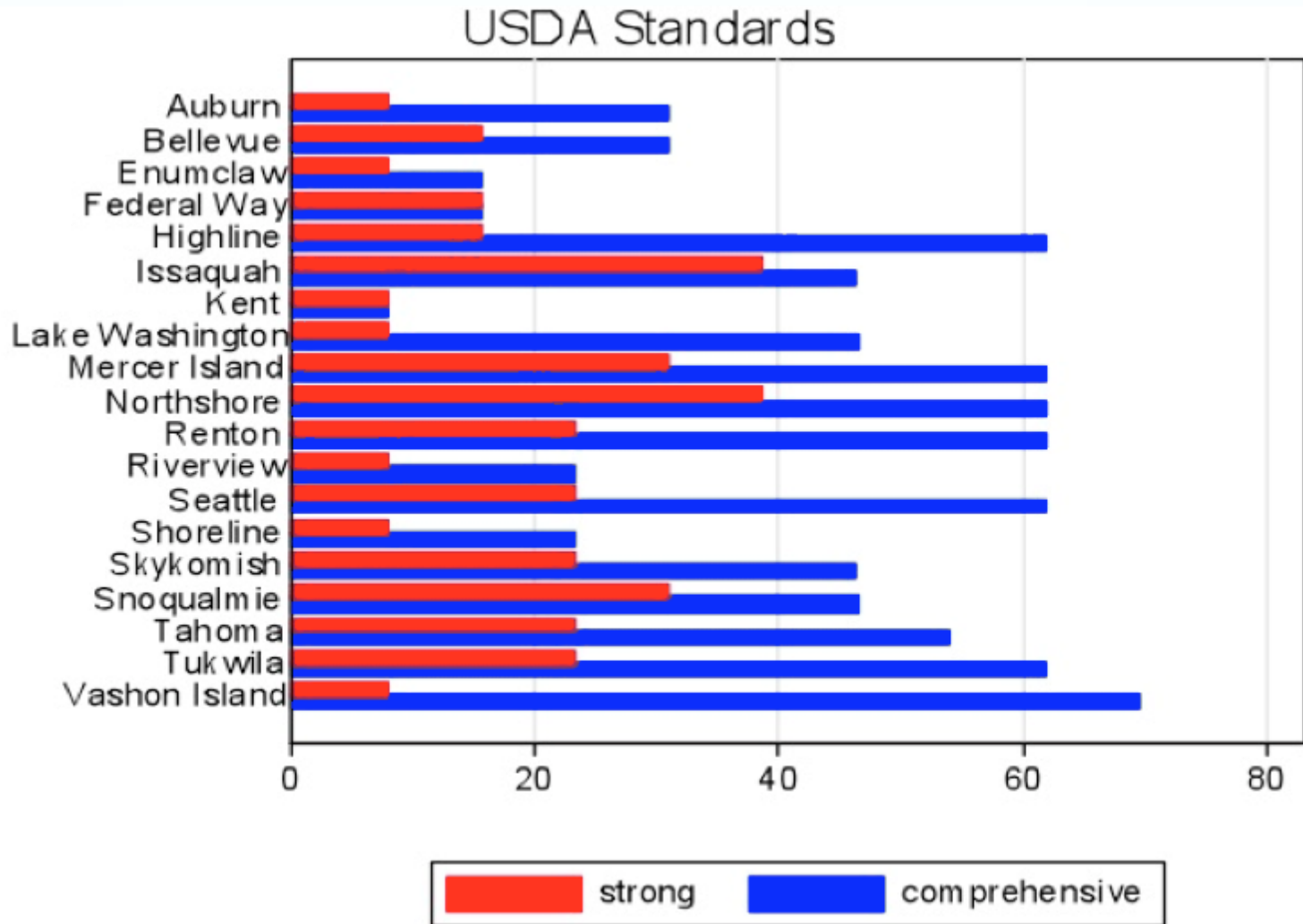


# Results



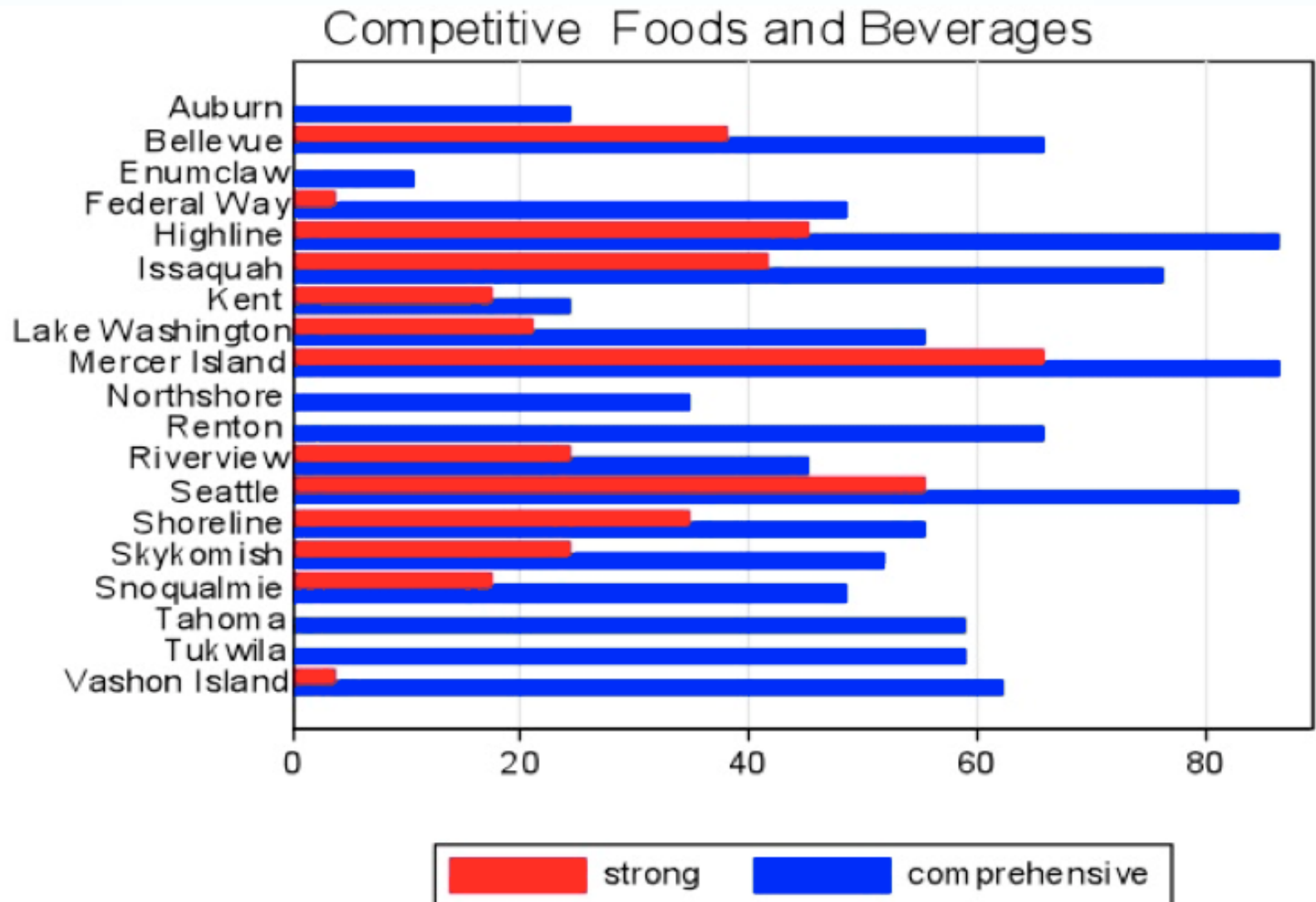
# Results

## School food environment



# Results

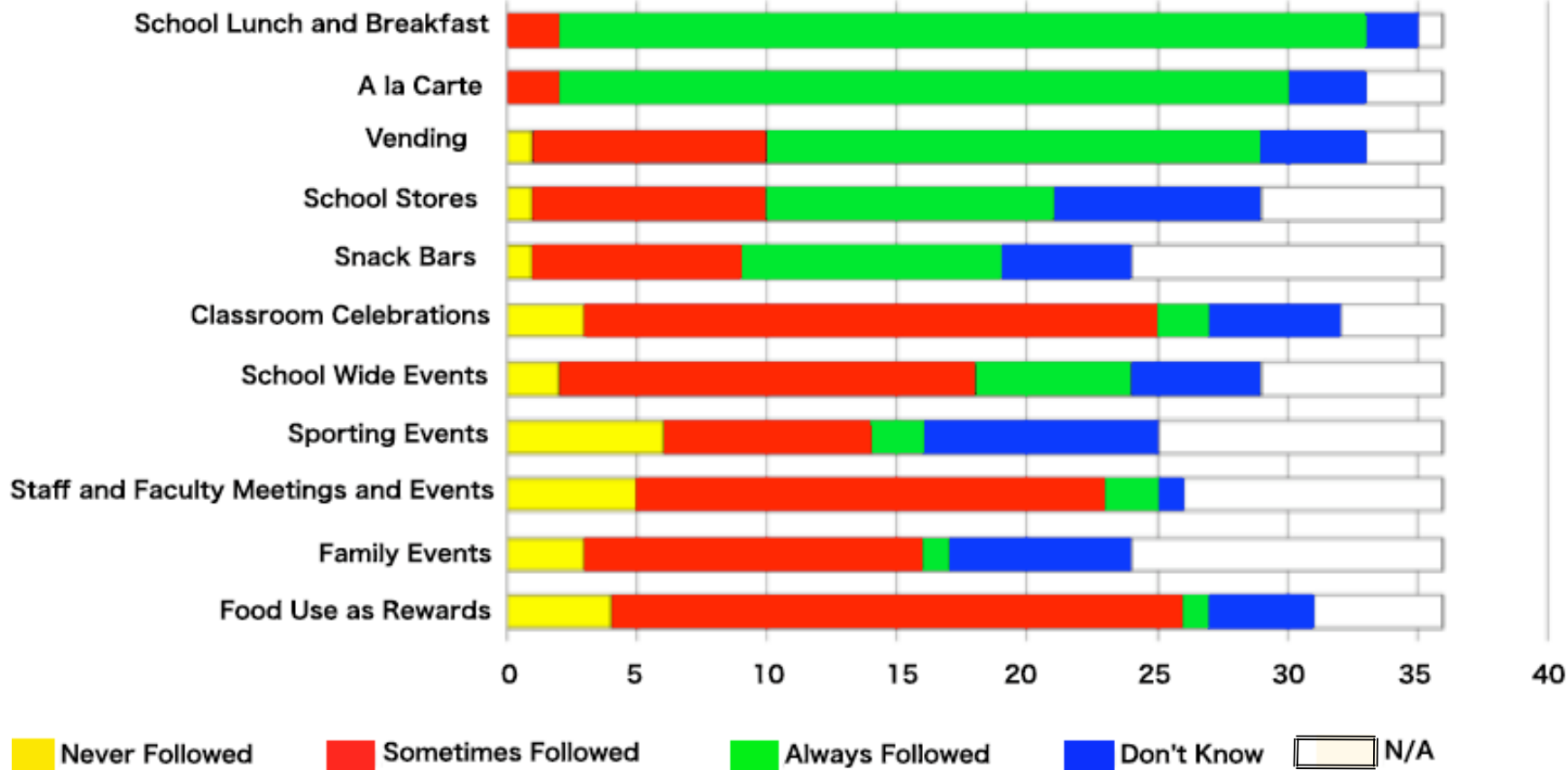
## School food environment



# Results

## School food environment

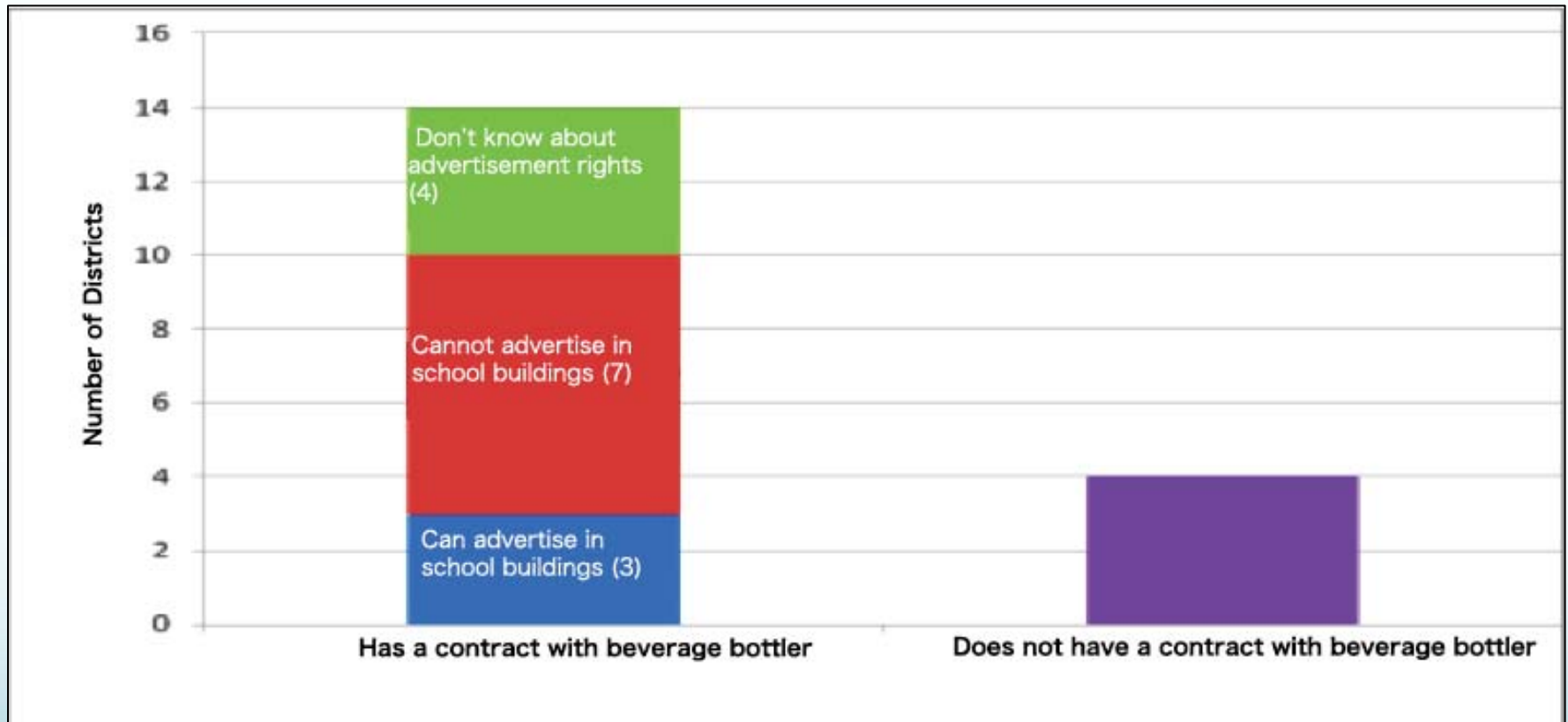
To what extent are food policy standards being met in the following settings? (S, N)



# 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

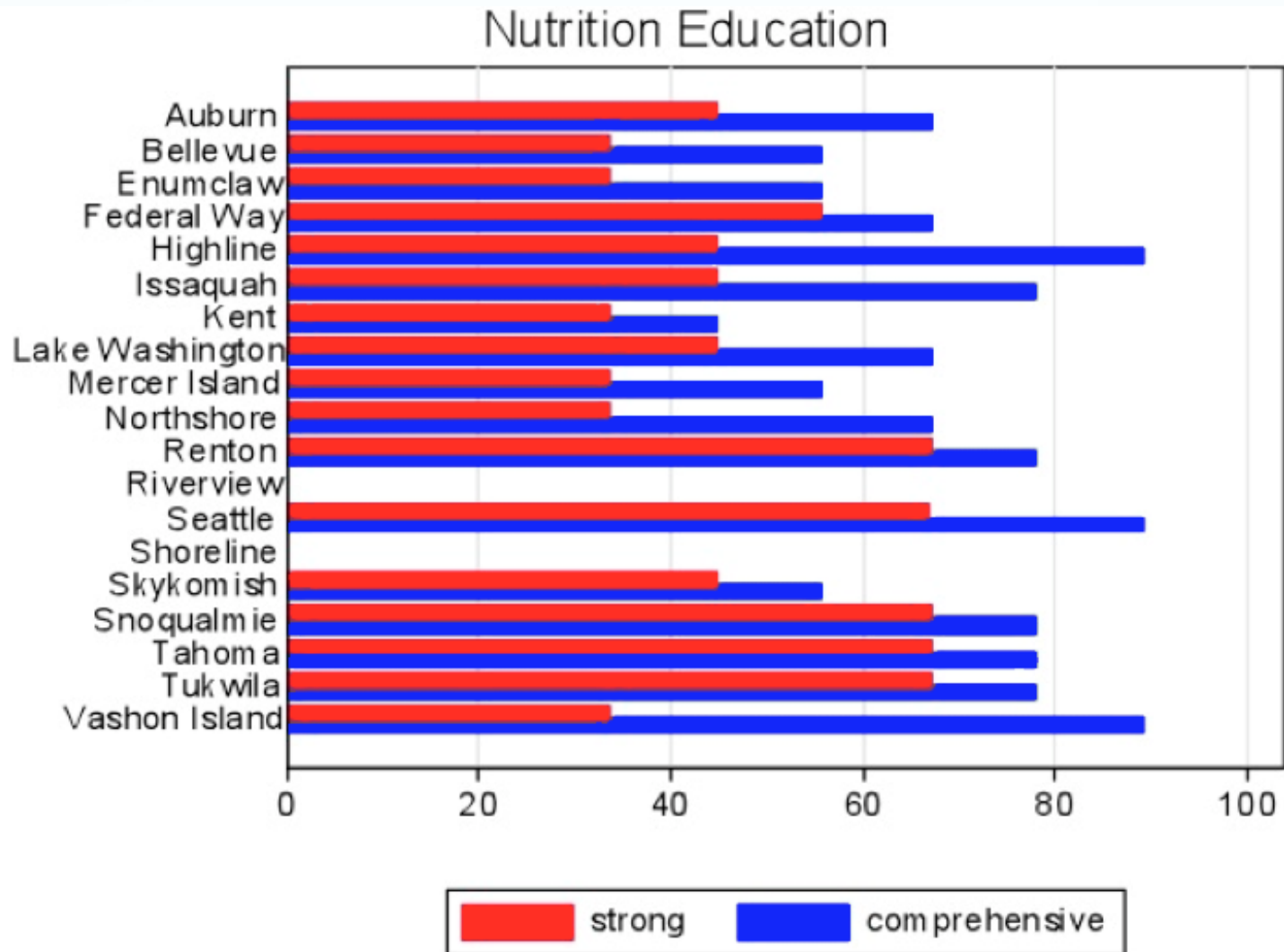
- No district-wide formal adoption of Recess Before Lunch policies
- Mixed success rates in individual schools
- Barriers:
  - Staffing/scheduling
  - Hand-washing
  - Use of recess as a reward for completing lunch





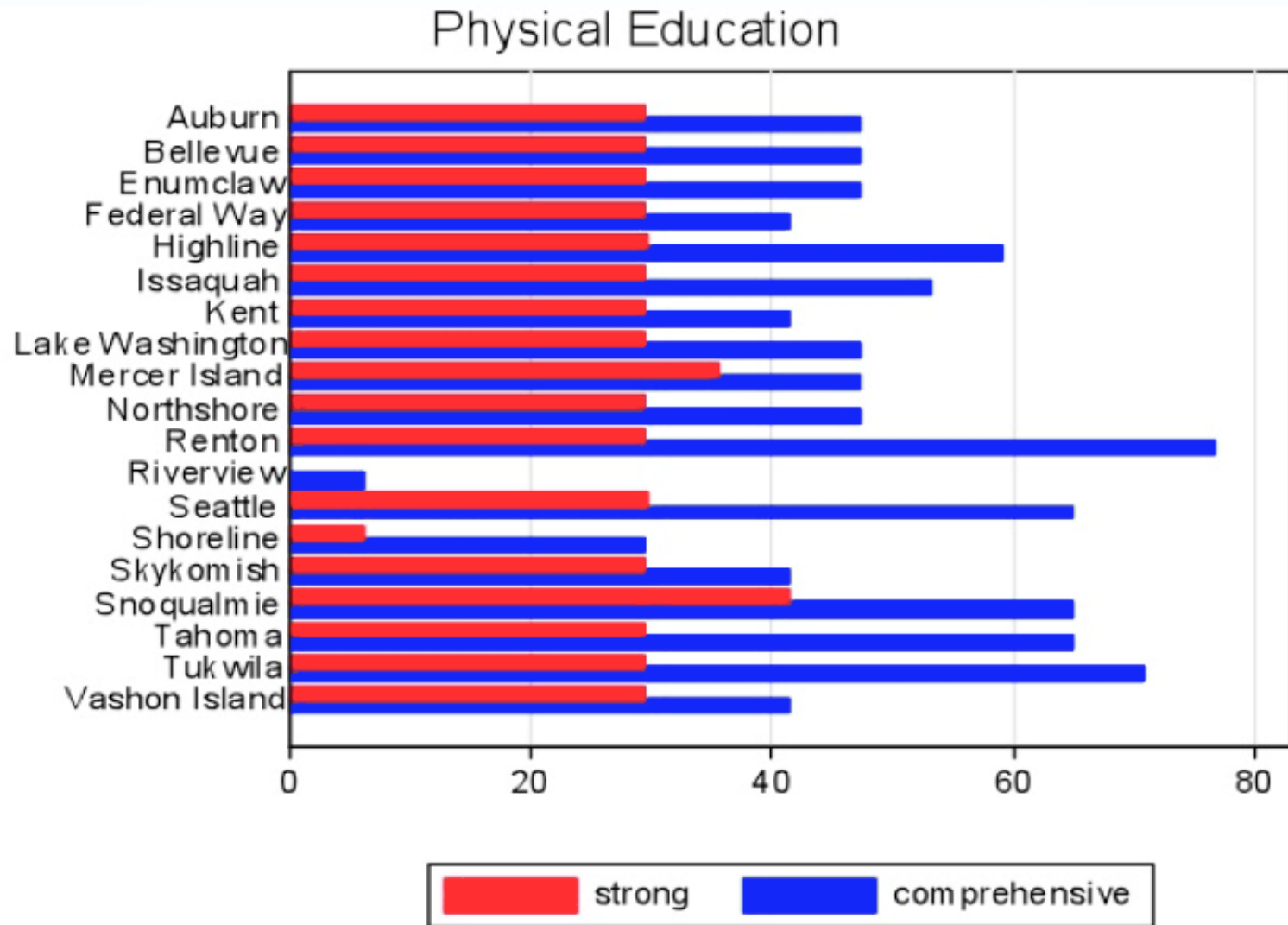
# Results

## Curriculum



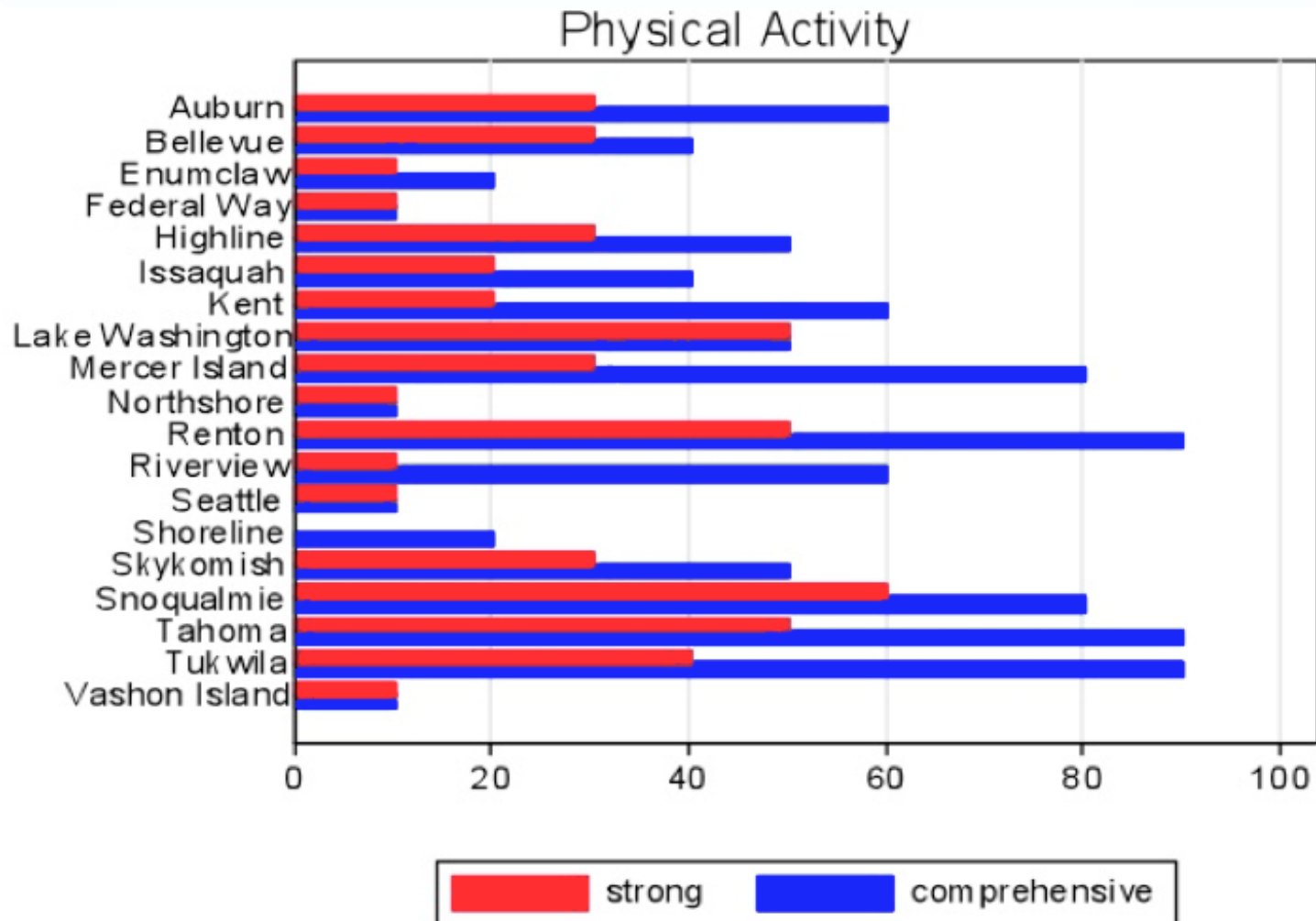
# Results

## 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

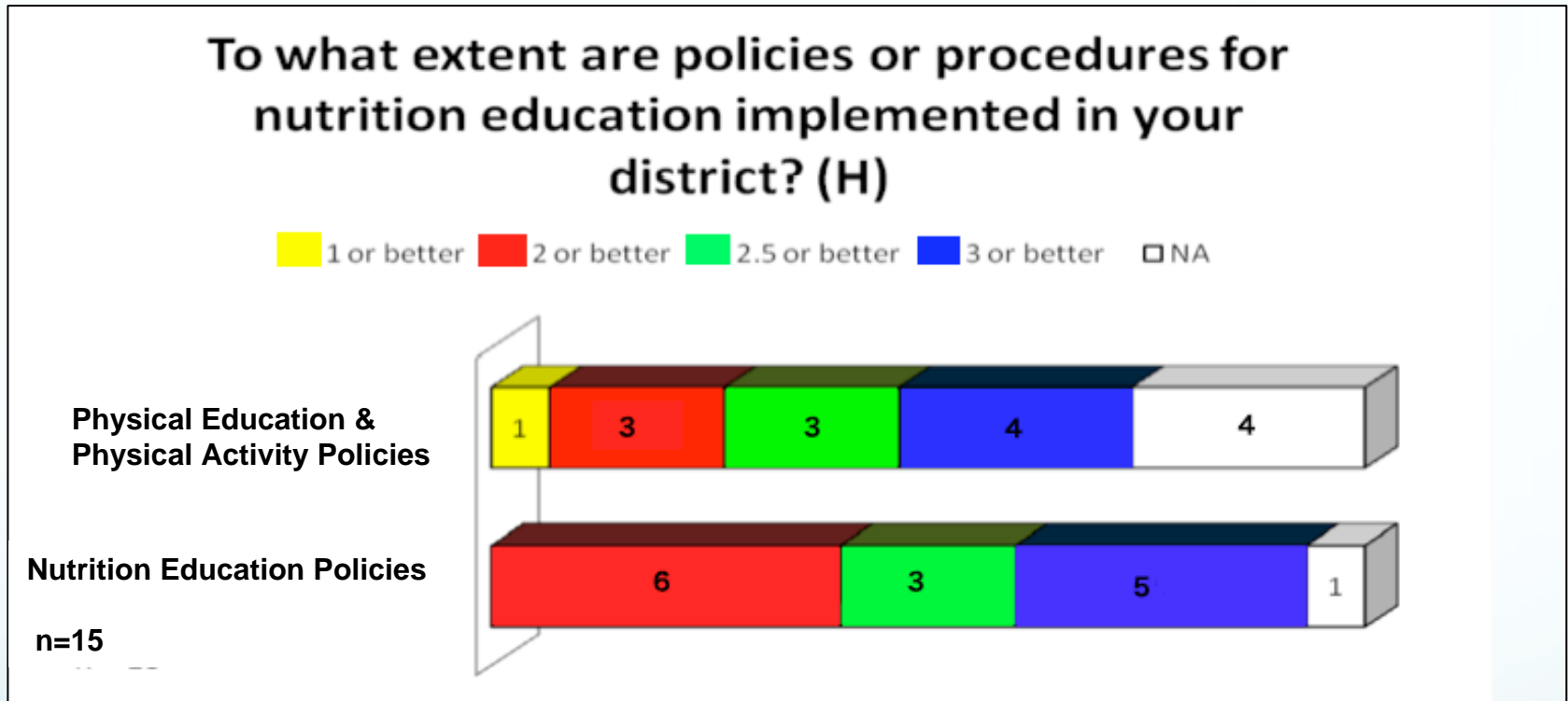
(n=14 curriculum coordinators)

- 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:

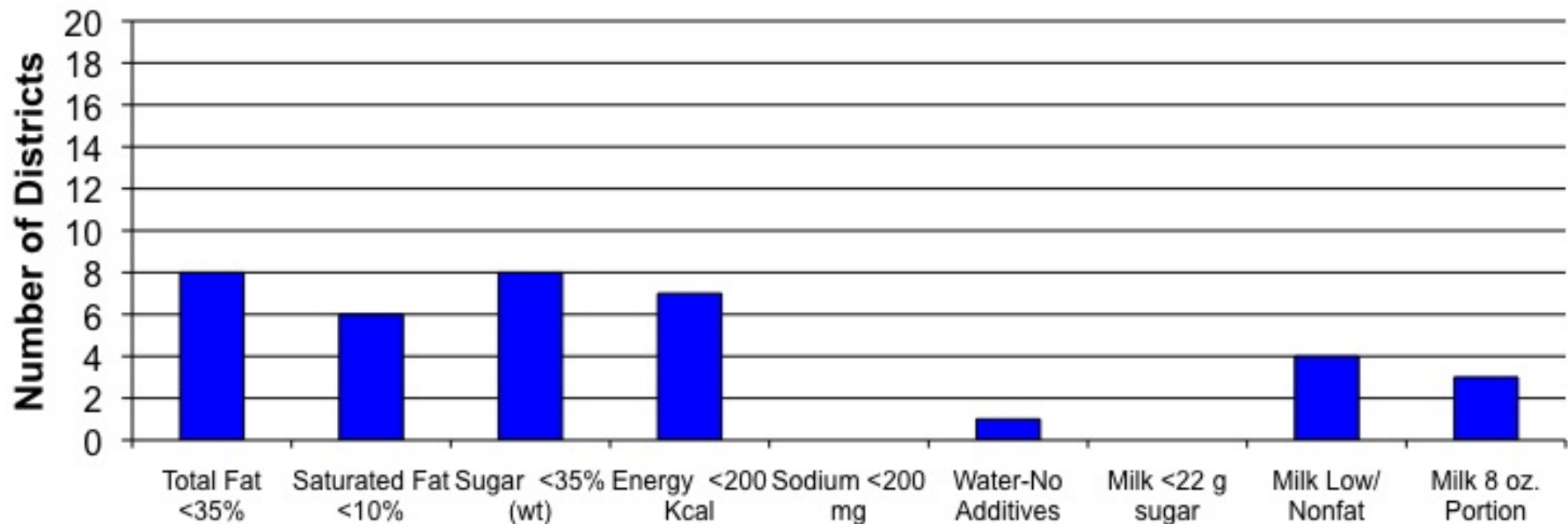
- Wellness fairs
- After school organized physical activities
- Activities organized during school hours
- Staff-wellness programs
- Challenges or friendly competitions
- Partnerships
- Assemblies/presentations

***“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**

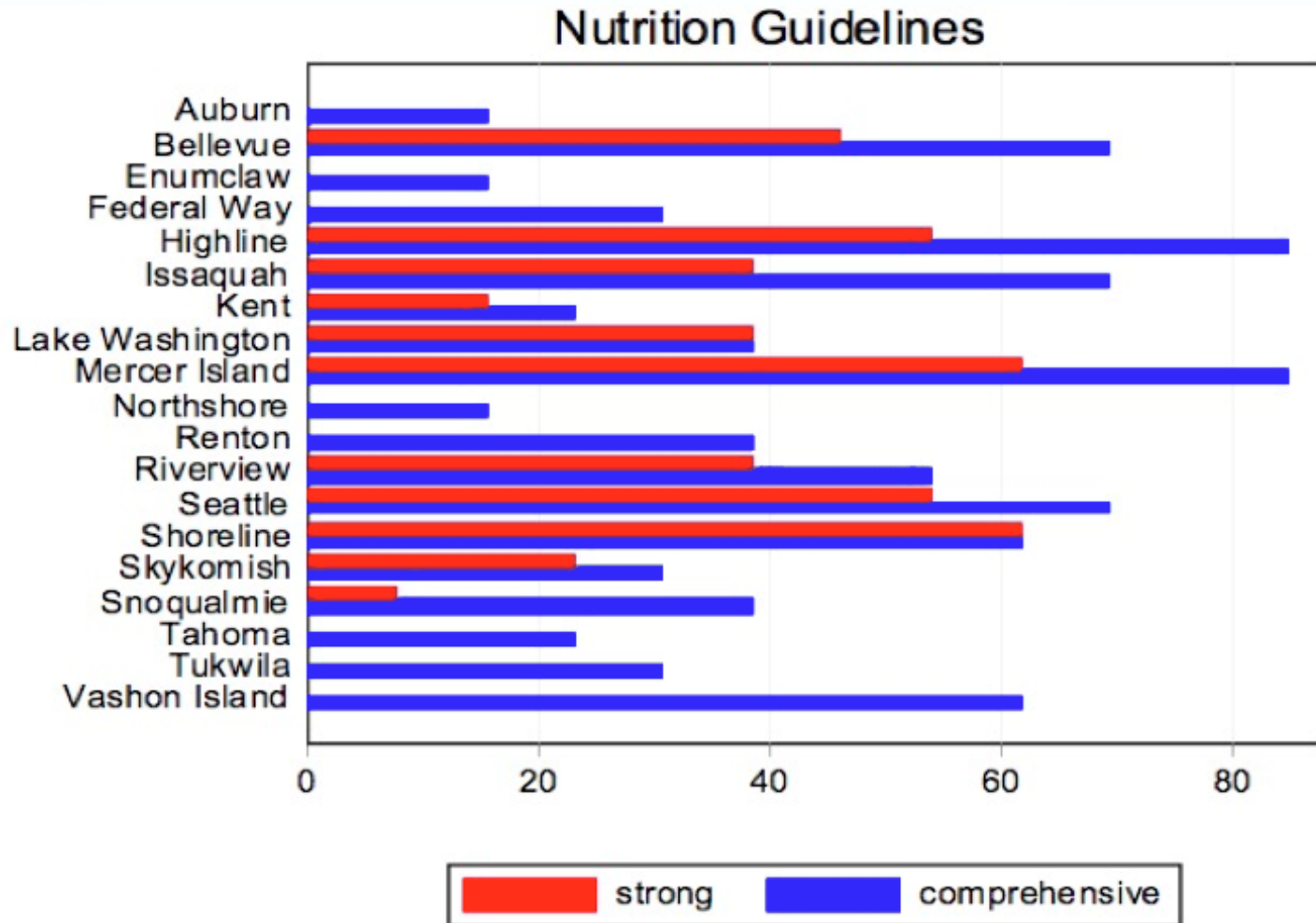


**Standards in Washington State Senate Bill 5093**



# Results

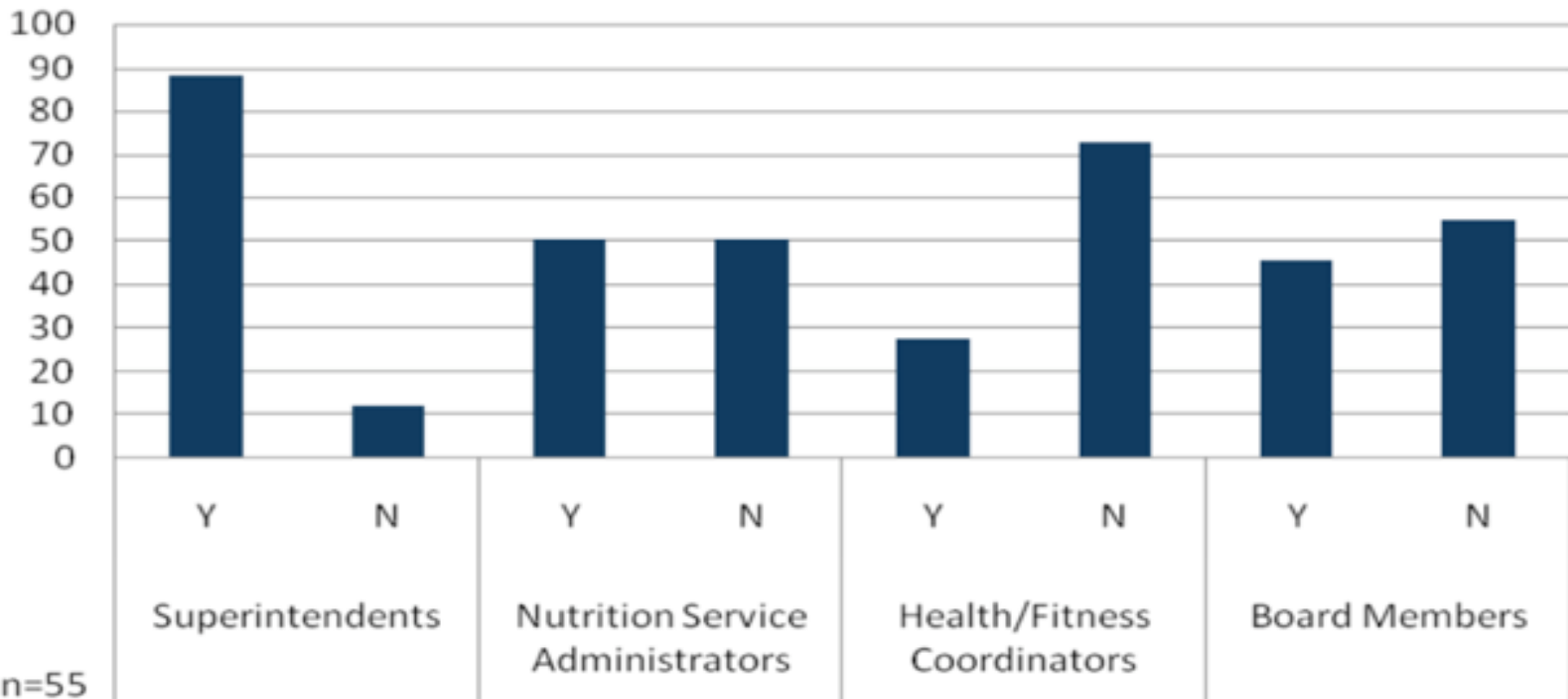
## WA State Senate Bill 5093



# Results

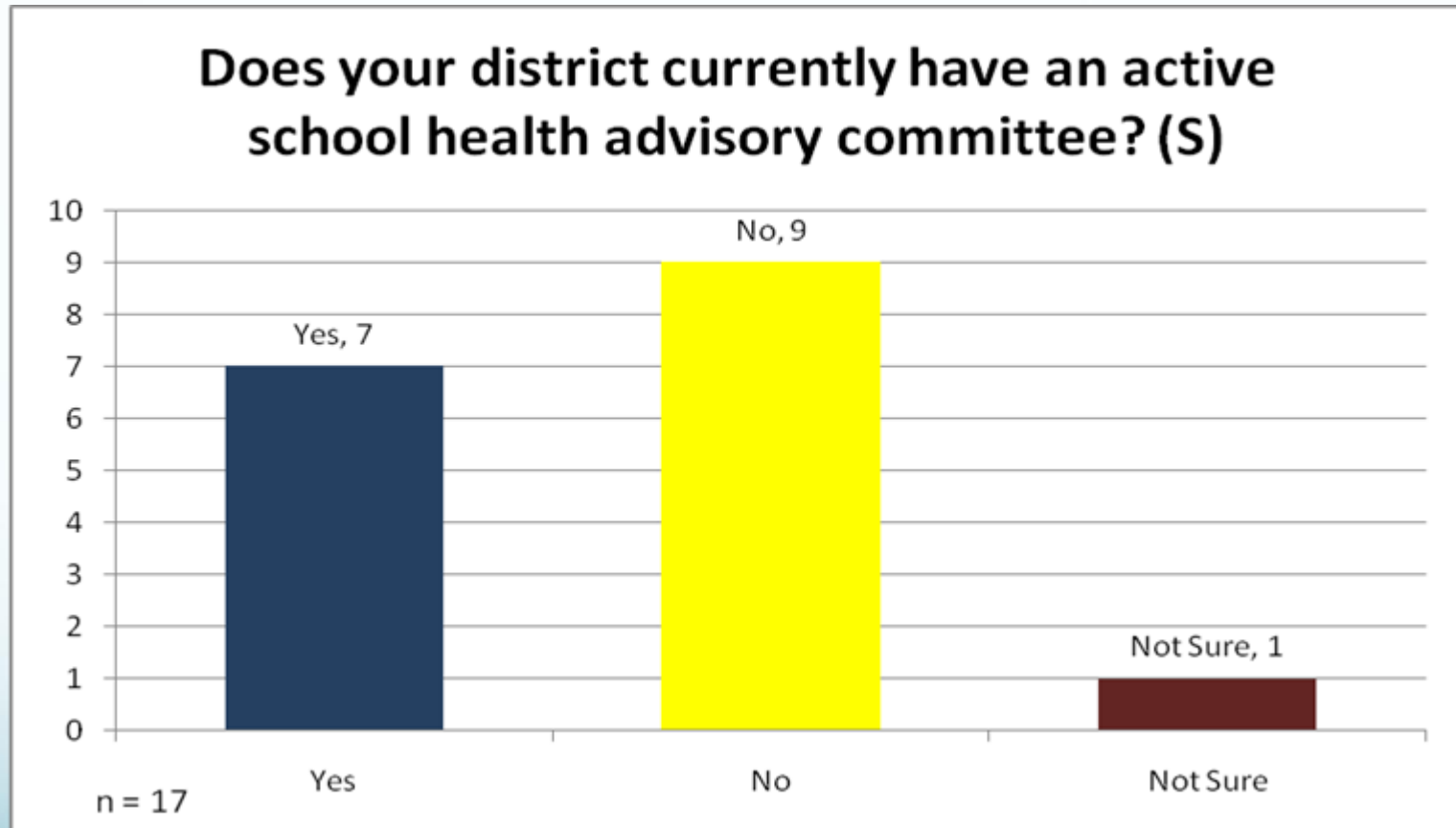
## WA State Senate Bill 5093

**Respondents expressing knowledge about Senate Bill 5093**



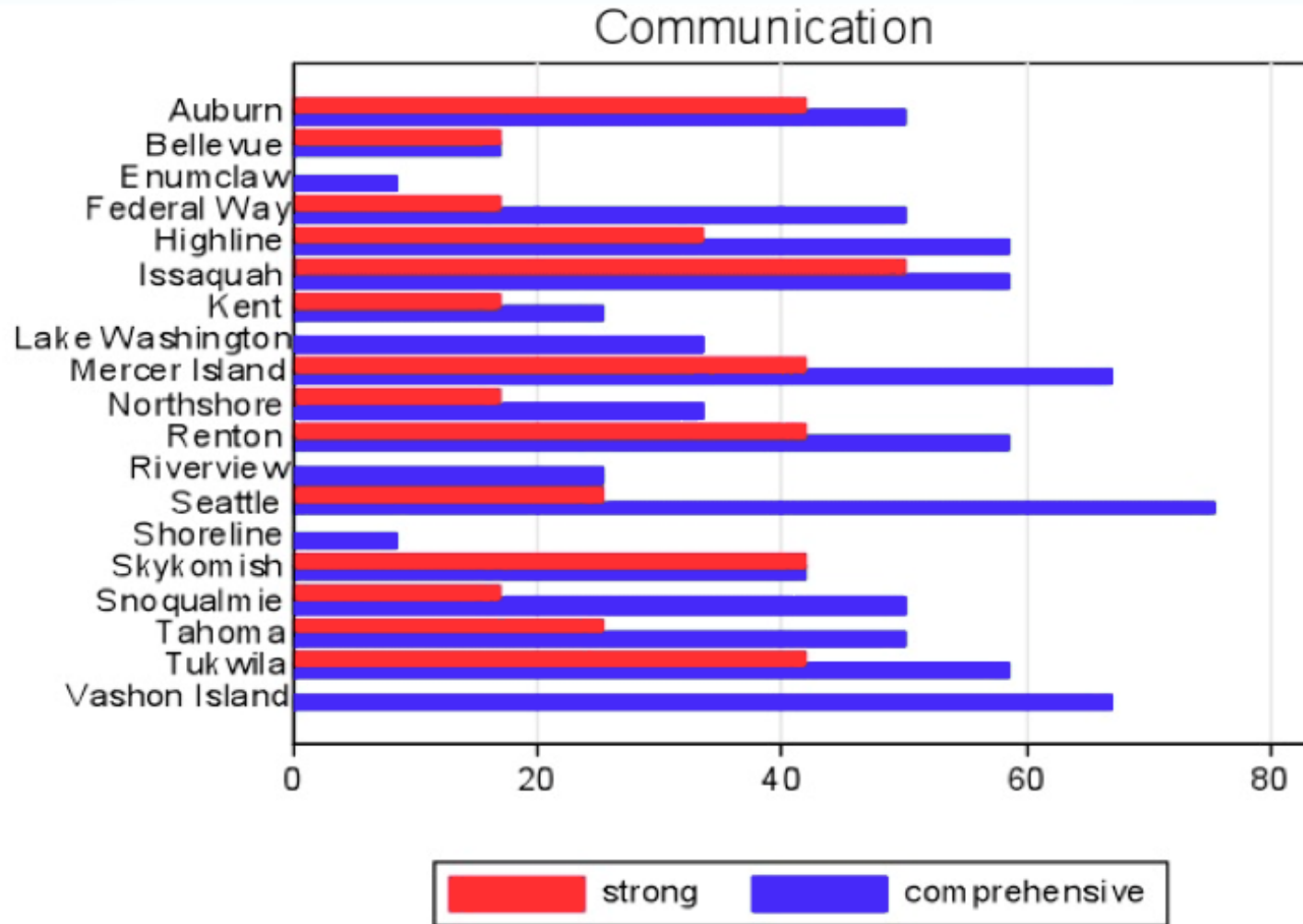
# Results

## WA State Senate Bill 5093



# Results

## Communication



# Results

## Communication

School districts communicate about wellness policies using:

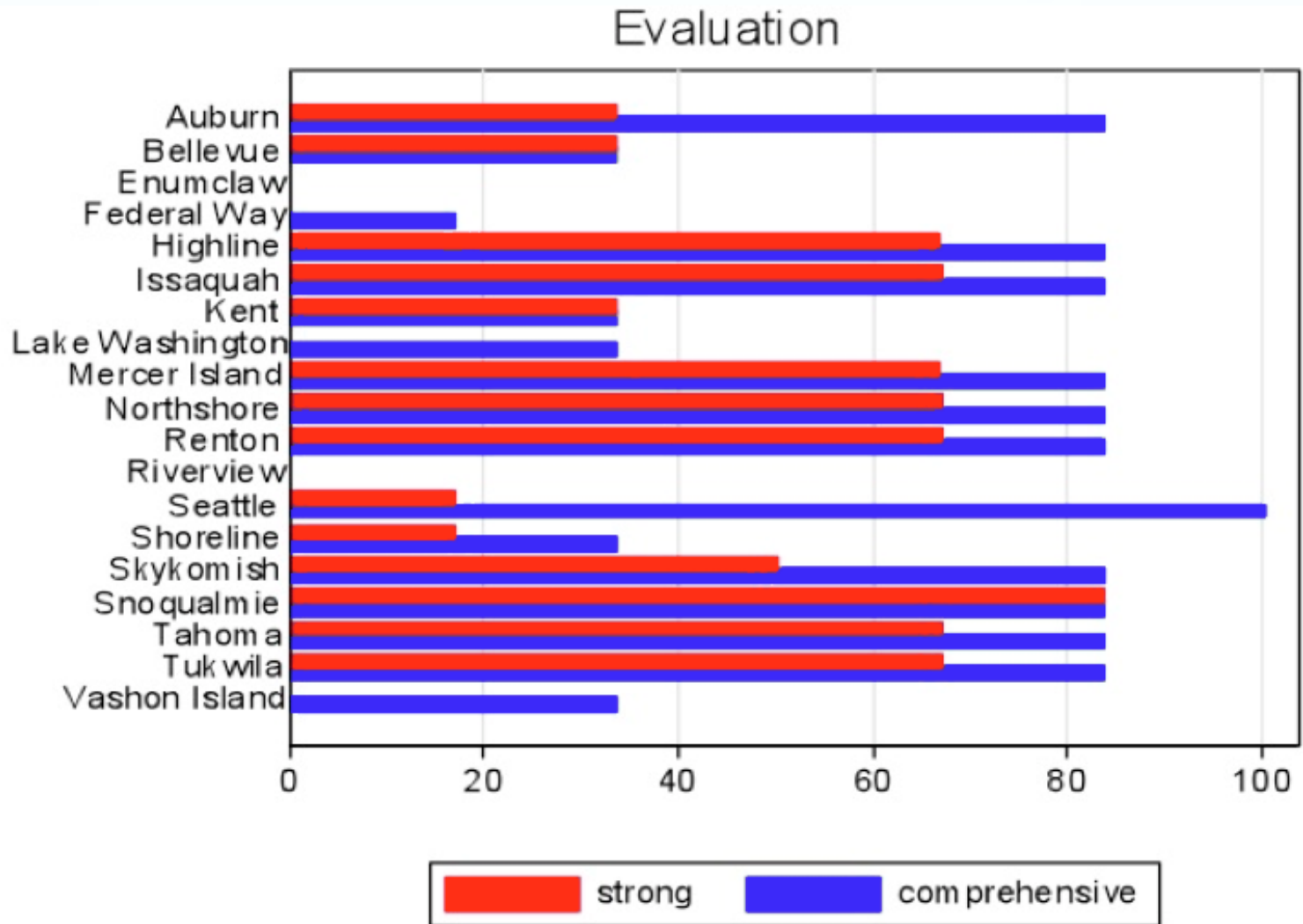
- Meetings and trainings
- Newsletters
- Websites and E-news



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:

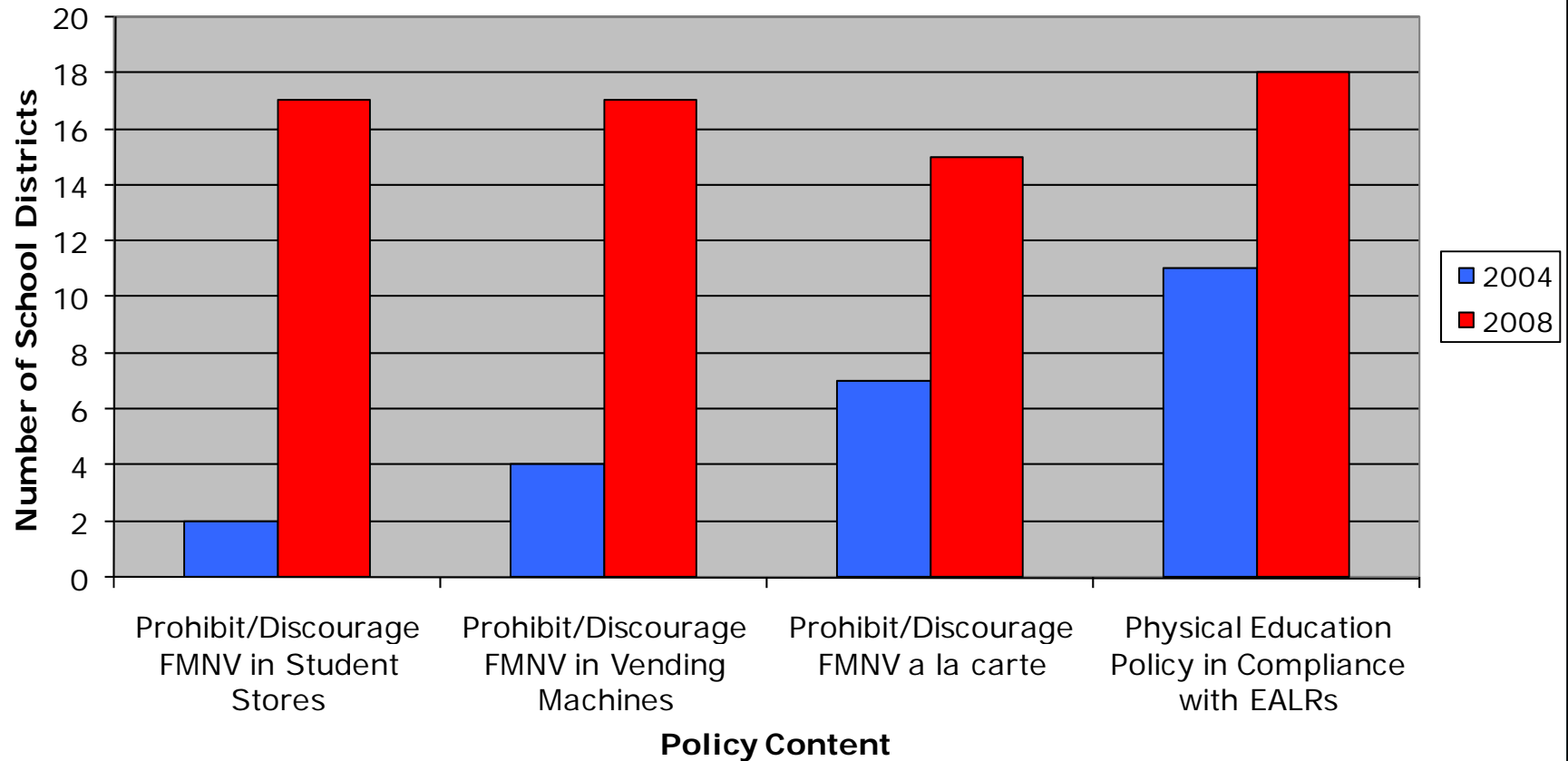
- Unfunded
- Resource and time variations between schools
- Overstretched staff already struggling to meet academic requirements

#### **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

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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)