



# LEA Data Utilization Survey Results: Living, Learning, Leading for Life Evaluation (L4GA) 2019

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## Executive Summary

The Literacy for Learning, Living and Leading in Georgia (L4GA) Grant Data Utilization Survey was designed to explore educators' attitudes towards data, professional support and resources provided to facilitate data use, and how data is used and the frequency of data use to support instructional practices across the L4GA Grant Program.

Across 37 local education agencies (LEAs), 1,061 school staff and community members involved with L4GA completed the survey. Teachers accounted for over two-thirds of respondents (67.5 percent), while administrators, including data analysts, superintendents, principals and assistant principals, accounted for 16.8 percent of respondents, and support staff, including instructional coaches and curriculum or literacy specialists accounted for 11.6 percent of respondents. The survey was also provided to community partners and other district and school staff involved with the grant, these included paraprofessionals, early learning center directors, and other support staff, these respondents accounted for 4.1 percent.

### Findings

Generally, staff have positive attitudes regarding the use of data and data's role in supporting pedagogical practices. Respondents were more skeptical of the quality of L4GA assessment data. Below are the key findings from this analysis:

- Staff perceptions of the usefulness of data vary across role; generally, administrators and support staff had higher perceptions of data's usefulness compared to teachers.
- Among teachers, those working with older students report less confidence in the usefulness of data; generally, early childhood and elementary teachers have a more positive perception of data and data's role in influencing student outcomes.
- While most teachers reported receiving organizational support on L4GA assessment data, teachers did not find the support or professional development to be useful.
- Respondents suggest that a culture of collaboration on data use exists within their team, however, administrators were more likely than teachers to report such collaboration exists.
- Among teachers, those working at schools that previously participated in the Striving Readers Grant had higher perceptions of data's usefulness when compared to teachers at schools that did not participate in the grant.

## Study Overview

The Literacy for Learning, Living and Leading in Georgia (L4GA) Grant Data Utilization Survey was designed to explore educators' attitudes towards data, professional support and resources provided to facilitate data use, and how data is used and the frequency of data use to support instructional practices across the L4GA Grant Program.

Since passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and more recently, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) teachers, administrators, and other instructional support staff have had to become “data literate” as policymakers stress the importance of using data, particularly assessment data, in informing instructional practice and supporting student achievement (Datnow & Hubbard, 2015; Mandinach & Gummer, 2016). According to Mandinach & Gummer (2016), “The expectation is that teachers skilled in data use will develop more effective classroom and instructional practices, which ultimately will lead to improved student performance.”

The L4GA Data Utilization Survey is an adapted version of the Teacher Data Use Survey from the Appalachia Regional Educational Laboratory Program (REL)<sup>1</sup> and focuses on four themes or concepts on how data is used across educational settings:

- Educators' attitudes towards data
- Educators' actions with data
- Educators' collaboration around data
- Organizational supports available to teachers

### Method

The evaluation team adapted the survey and modified survey items to reflect the specific needs of the grant (i.e., adding specific assessments and data for respondents to reflect on) and to align with one of these five components. In addition, the survey was modified to include district central-office staff, school administrators and school support staff, in addition to teachers. The survey assessed the frequency of certain data-related activities, the degree to which respondents found organizational support useful, and the degree to which respondents agreed with statements related to components of the framework.

The evaluation team designed and administered the survey using Qualtrics, an online survey platform. The team provided an anonymous survey link to the L4GA coordinators at the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), with the expectation that the L4GA coordinators would distribute the link, via email, to LEA coordinators in each participating district. The district LEA coordinators were asked to distribute the survey link, via email, to administrators, teachers, district support staff, and community partners connected to L4GA. While a portion of these addresses are public records, there exists no single list of email addresses across the 37 participating districts that included the full list of intended survey targets. The evaluation team was not provided with a list of email addresses to whom the survey link was delivered.

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<sup>1</sup> Wayman, J. C., Wilkerson, S. B., Cho, V., Wested, E. B. M., & Supovitz, J. A. (2016). Guide to using the Teacher Data Use Survey. Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia. Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia.

## Respondents

Across 37 local education agencies (LEAs), 1,061 school staff and community members involved with L4GA completed the survey. While it is possible to use publicly available data on the number of teachers or employees in the participating LEAs to generate a denominator for calculating response rates, we cannot know what number of teachers, staff, and community members would be expected to be participating in the implementation of the L4GA intervention. Teachers accounted for over two-thirds of respondents (67.5 percent), while administrators, including data analysts, superintendents, principals and assistant principals, accounted for 16.8 percent of respondents, and support staff, including instructional coaches and curriculum or literacy specialists accounted for 11.6 percent of respondents. The survey was also provided to community partners and other district and school staff involved with the grant, these included paraprofessionals, early learning center directors, and other support staff, these respondents accounted for 4.1 percent.

A majority of teachers, administrators and support staff who responded to the survey (51.5 percent) support students in elementary grades (Kindergarten through Grade 5); 20.8 percent of respondents support high-school students (Grades 9 -12), 17.1 percent support middle grade students (Grades 6-8), and 5.2 percent support students in early-childcare settings (birth through Pre-K).

**Table 1:** Respondents by grade and role

Grade Level	Teachers		Administrators		Support Specialist/Staff		School-wide Support		Grand Total	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
Birth - PK	33	4.6%	15	8.4%	7	5.7%			55	5.2%
Elementary	375	52.4%	94	52.8%	77	62.6%			546	51.5%
Middle	126	17.6%	34	19.1%	21	17.1%			181	17.1%
High	168	23.5%	35	19.7%	18	14.6%			221	20.8%
School-wide or unknown	14	2.0%					44	100.0%	58	5.5%
Grand Total	716	100.0%	178	100.0%	123	100.0%	44	100.0%	1,061	100.0%

Across the participating LEAs, 12 were prior Striving Readers Grantees. Respondents from these districts represent 49.1 percent of all survey respondents.

## Findings

Generally, staff have positive attitudes regarding the use of data and data's role in supporting pedagogical practices. Respondents were more skeptical of the quality of L4GA assessment data. Below are the key findings from this analysis:

- Staff perceptions of the usefulness of data vary across role; generally, administrators and support staff had higher perceptions of data's usefulness compared to teachers.
- Among teachers, those working with older students report less confidence in the usefulness of data; generally, early childhood and elementary teachers have a more positive perception of data and data's role in influencing student outcomes.
- While most teachers reported receiving organizational support on L4GA assessment data, teachers did not find the support or professional development to be useful.
- Respondents suggest that a culture of collaboration on data use exists within their team, however, administrators were more likely than teachers to report such collaboration exists.

- Among teachers, those working at schools that previously participated in the Striving Readers Grant had higher perceptions of data’s usefulness when compared to teachers at schools that did not participate in the grant.

Following this introduction, the report is organized into four sections based on the survey components:

1. Respondents’ attitudes towards data
2. Respondents’ attitudes and actions related to L4GA assessment data
3. Teachers’ collaboration around data
4. Organizational supports available to teachers
5. Attitudes towards data between prior and new grantees

## Respondents’ Attitudes Towards Data

Generally, respondents have positive attitudes about the role of data in supporting pedagogical practices. However, respondents were less likely to believe data could offer them information about students that was not already known. While respondents generally had high perceptions of the value of data, differences exist by staffing role and by grade level.

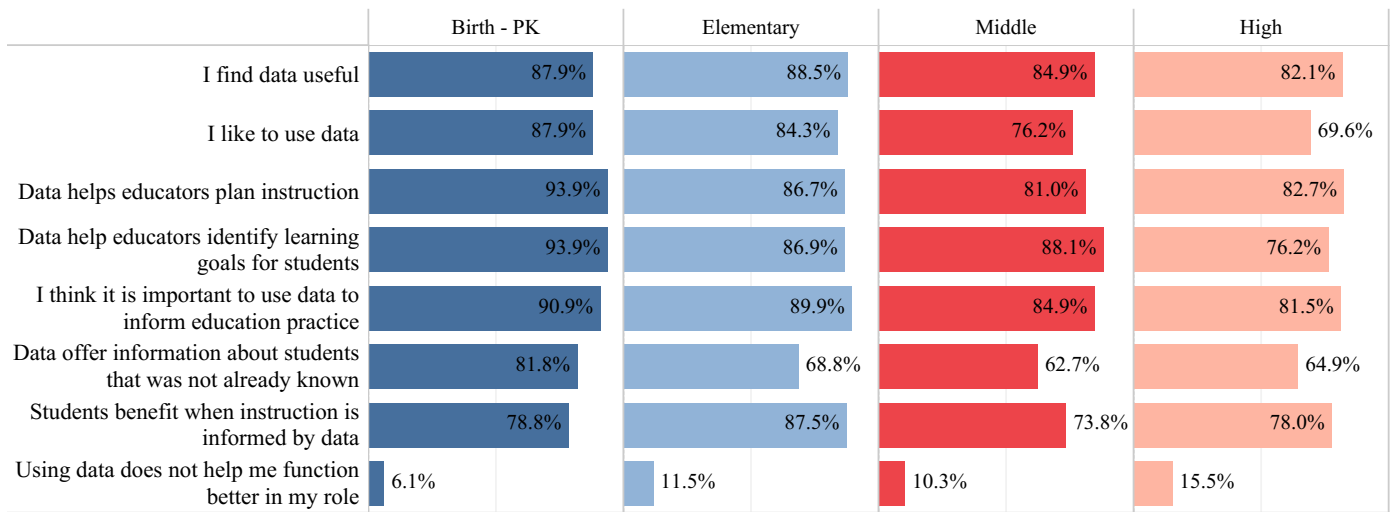
**Administrators and support staff had higher perceptions of data’s usefulness compared to teachers; 95.5 percent of administrators believe data help educators identify learning goals for students, while 84.9 percent of teachers hold this view.** Similarly, while administrators generally find data useful (94.9 percent) and report that they like to use data (95.5 percent), fewer teachers hold that view, 86.2 percent and 79.6 percent respectively. About 86 percent of administrators agreed that data offers information about students that was not already known, while only 68 percent of teachers agreed with this statement. About 12 percent more administrators than teachers agreed that students benefit when instruction is informed by data (94.9 percent vs 82.4 percent respectively).

**Figure 1.** Attitudes towards data by role  
*Percent of respondents who strongly agree or moderately agree with the statement*

	Teachers	Administrators	Support Specialist/Staff
I find data useful	86.2%	94.9%	93.5%
I like to use data	79.6%	95.5%	91.1%
Data helps educators plan instruction	85.2%	94.9%	91.9%
Data help educators identify learning goals for students	84.9%	95.5%	95.1%
I think it is important to use data to inform education practice	87.2%	94.9%	94.3%
Data offer information about students that was not already known	67.6%	86.5%	82.1%
Students benefit when instruction is informed by data	82.4%	94.9%	91.1%
Using data does not help me function better in my role	11.9%	11.2%	13.0%

Generally, high school teachers were less likely to have positive perceptions of data use when compared to teachers in earlier grades, especially early-childhood and elementary teachers. While early childhood and elementary teachers report finding data useful and liking to use data, a notable difference exists among middle and high-school teachers. Specifically, 82.1 percent of high school teachers report finding data useful, however only 69.6 percent report liking to use data. This “hesitancy” or dislike of using data likely influences frequency of use, and general perceptions of the usefulness of data. Teachers of students aged birth – PK were much more likely to agree that data offered information about students that was not previously known (81.8 percent) and less likely than teachers of older students to agree that data does not help teachers to function better in their roles (6.1 percent). Views regarding the perceived benefits of instruction informed by data were more consistent across grade level.

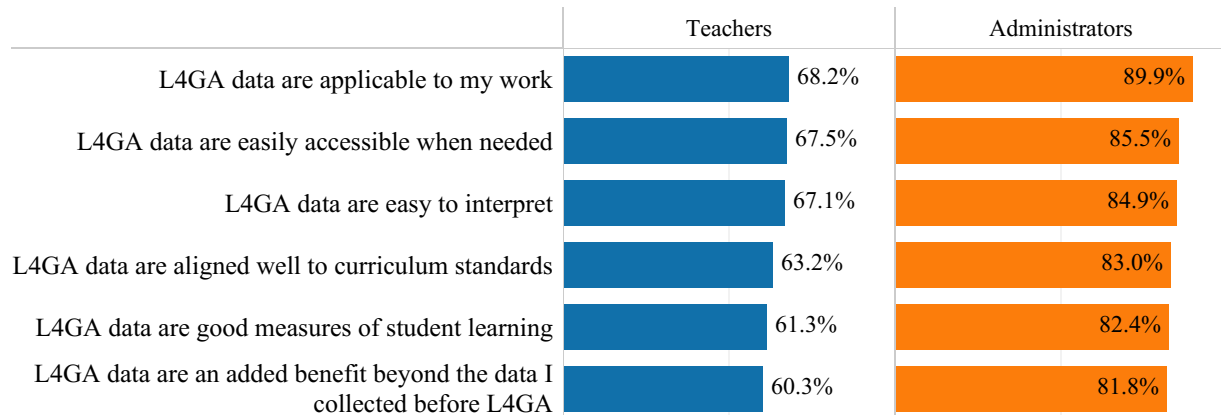
**Figure 2.** Teachers' attitudes towards data by grade level  
*Percent of respondents who strongly agree or moderately agree with the statement*



## Respondents’ Attitudes and Actions Related to L4GA Assessment Data

There exists wide variation between teachers and administrators’ perceptions on the quality of L4GA assessment data. **Administrators were more likely to have positive views on the quality of L4GA assessment data and find data relevant and applicable to their work. Administrators were also more likely to view L4GA assessment data as aligned to curriculum standards and as good measures of student learning.** While administrators generally believe L4GA data are applicable to their work (89.9 percent), only 68.2 percent of teachers hold that view. Additionally, administrators were more likely to report that L4GA data are easily accessible when needed (85.5 percent) and easy to interpret (84.9%), fewer teachers hold that view, 67.5 percent and 67.1 percent respectively. Notably, both teachers and administrators were less likely to view L4GA data as an added benefit beyond data already collected.

**Figure 3.** Perceptions of the quality of L4GA assessment data by role  
*Percent of respondents who strongly agree or moderately agree with the statement*



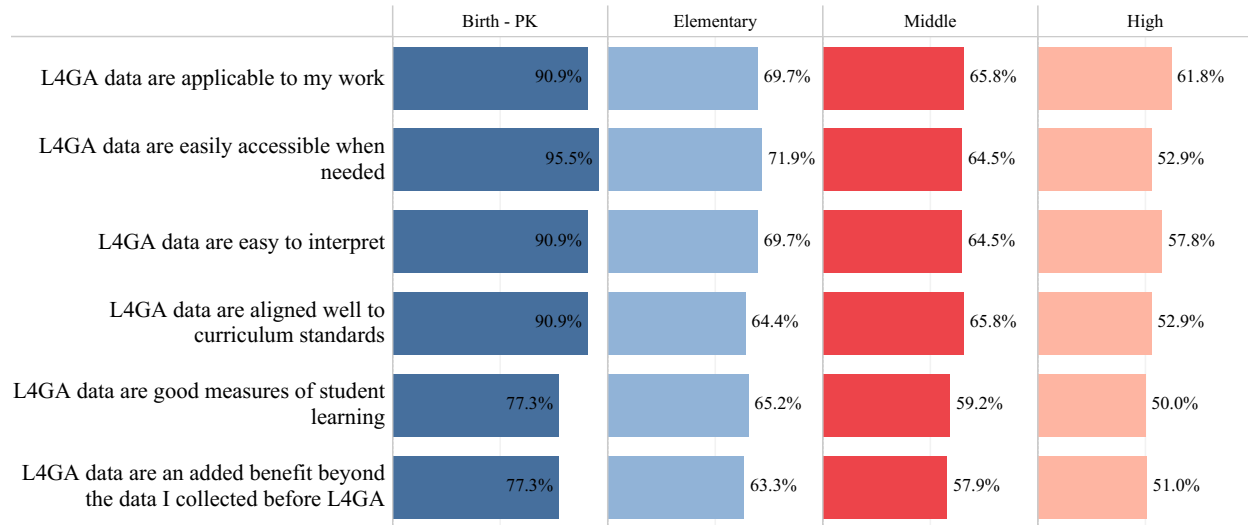
While administrators report relatively higher perceptions of the quality of L4GA assessment data, their reported usage of these data for specific tasks is relatively low. Fewer than 50 percent of administrators report using L4GA assessment data at least once a month to evaluate curricular programs, while slightly more than half report using these data, at least once a month, to develop recommendations for academic support and to determine the efficacy of specific programs.

**Figure 4.** Frequency of L4GA data use among administrators  
*Percent of respondents who report doing each activity at least once a month*



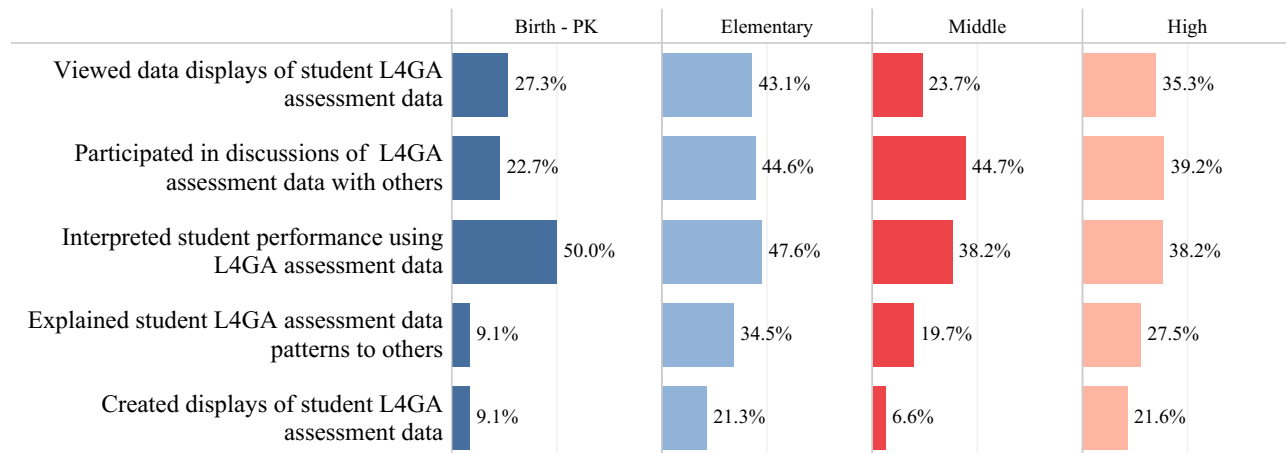
Teachers of students aged birth – PK have higher perceptions of L4GA assessment data than teachers in higher grades. Notably, 90.9 percent believe the data are applicable to their work and 95.5 percent find L4GA data easily accessible. The gaps between teachers of very young and older students is consistently larger compared to more general views of data use previously presented.

**Figure 5.** Perceptions on quality of L4GA assessment data by grade  
*Percent of respondents who strongly agree or moderately agree with the statement*



While early-childhood teachers report relatively high perceptions of the quality of L4GA assessment data, they were less likely to report frequently using that data. Also, while high-school teachers were less likely to report high perceptions of the quality of L4GA assessment data, they were more likely than middle school teachers to report frequently using the data.

**Figure 6.** Frequency of L4GA Data Use in the Past Year  
*Percent of respondents who report doing each activity at least once a month*





## Collaboration around Data Among Teams

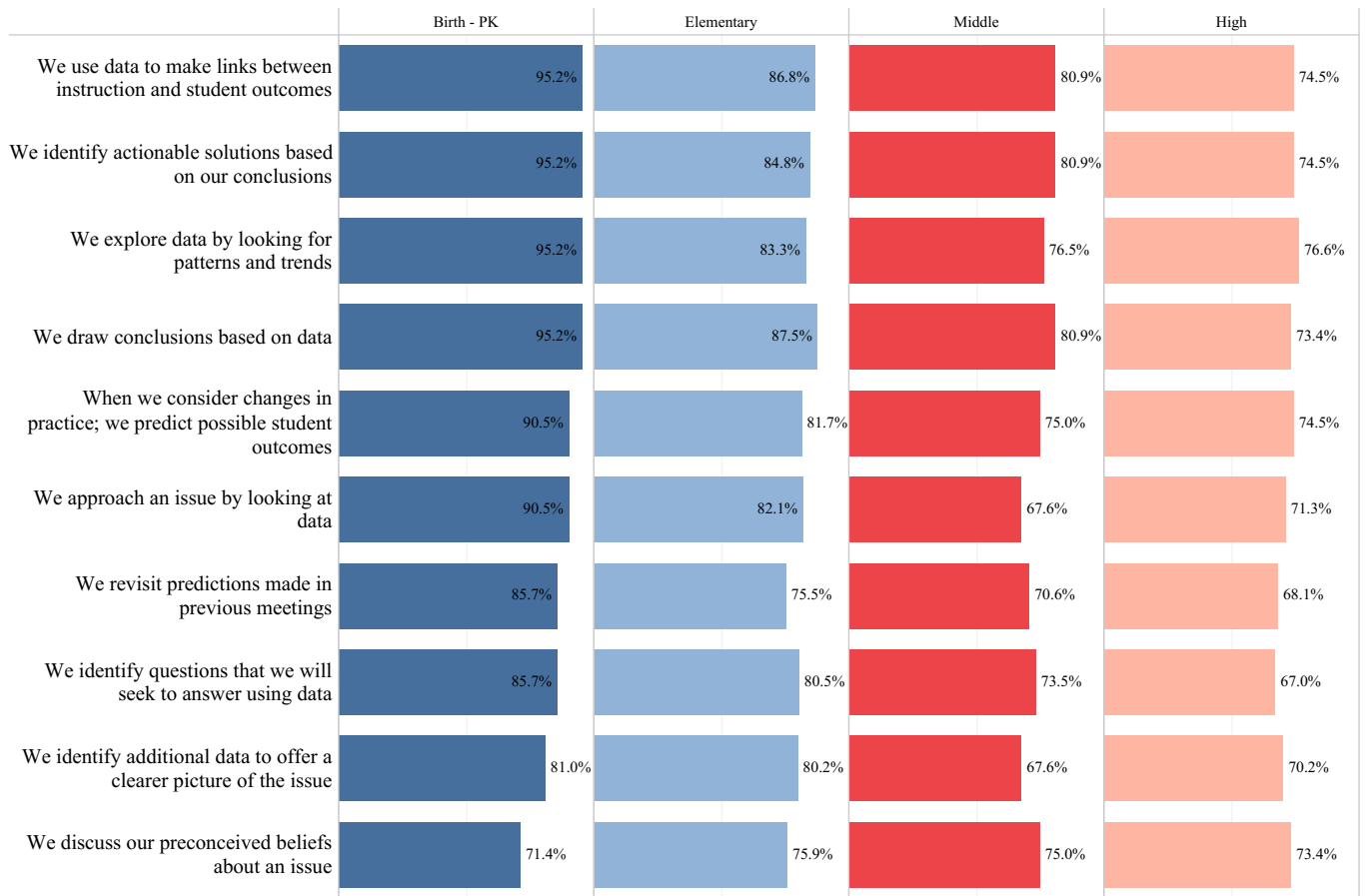
Respondents were also asked about the culture of collaboration around data within their team and the frequency of collaborative data activities. **While most respondents suggest that a culture of collaboration on data use exists within their team, administrators were more likely than teachers to report a culture of collaboration exists within their team.**

**Figure 7.** Perceptions on collaboration among team  
*Percent of respondents who strongly agree or moderately agree with the statement*

	Teachers	Administrators
Members of my team trust each other	88.2%	94.0%
My principal/AP(s) fosters a trusting environment for discussing data in teams	86.8%	97.4%
Members of my team respect those colleagues who are experts in their craft	86.4%	94.7%
Members of my team respect colleagues who lead school improvement efforts	85.2%	93.4%
It's okay to discuss feelings and worries with other members of my team	85.0%	91.4%

In terms of the frequency of collaboration, among teachers, high-school teachers were least likely to report regularly collaborating with their team on data use, while early childhood teachers were most likely to report regularly collaborating with their team on data use. Across all grade levels, teachers did not report regularly discussing their pre-conceived notions on data.

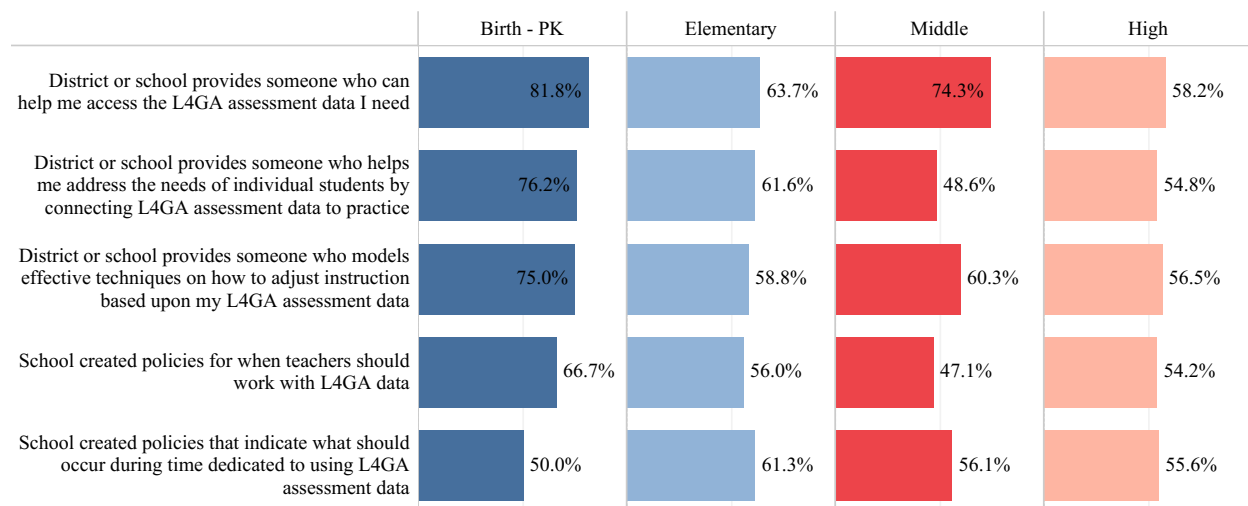
**Figure 8.** Frequency of collaboration among teachers  
*Percent of respondents who report doing each activity often or a-lot*



## Organizational Supports Available to Teachers

Across all grade levels, the majority of teachers reported that their schools or districts created policies for when teachers should use L4GA data and how. Additionally, teachers indicated that their schools or districts identified specific staff to provide support around accessing and using L4GA assessment data. While this type of support was provided, the usefulness of that support varied by grade level, with high school and middle school teachers less likely to find the support provided to be useful. Across all grade levels, teachers were less likely to find policies specifying “what should occur during time dedicated to using L4GA assessment data” to be useful.

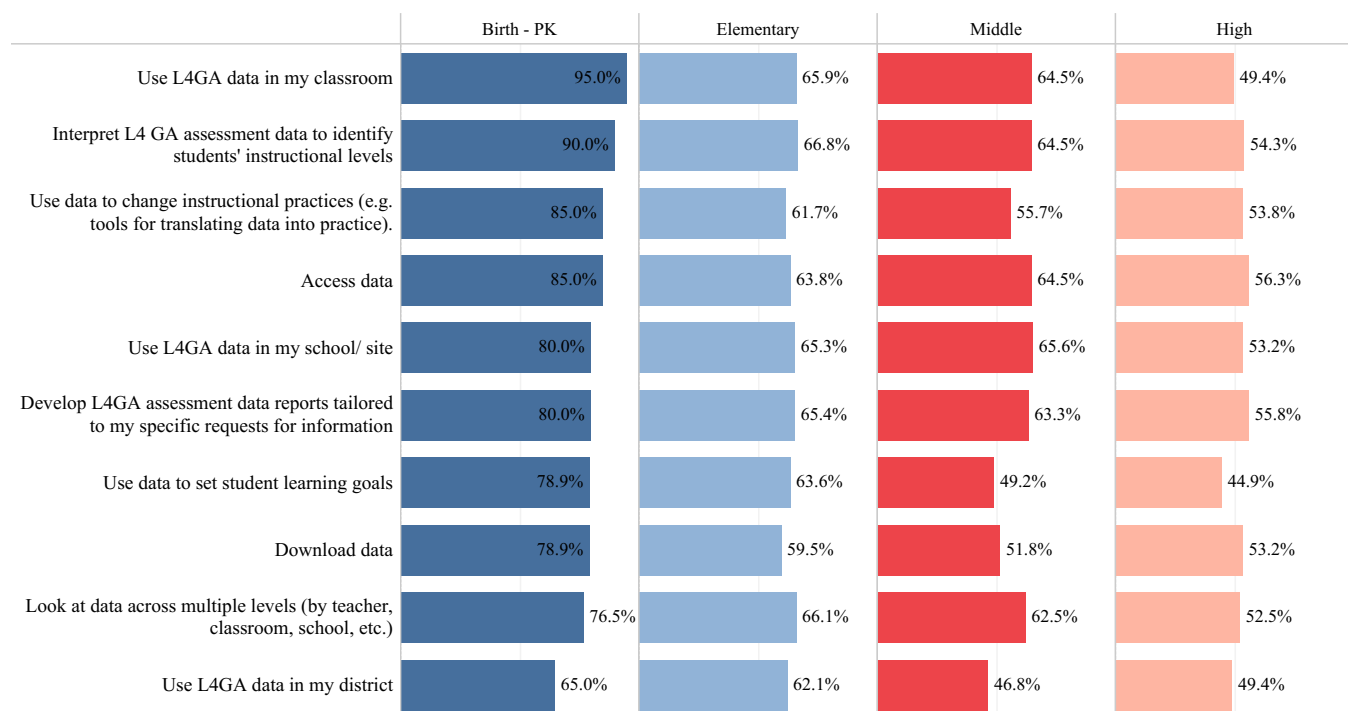
**Figure 9.** Usefulness of support provided by district or school by grade  
*Percent of respondents who find support extremely useful or very useful*



## Professional Development

Most teachers, across all grade levels, reported being provided with professional development across multiple data topics including accessing L4GA assessment data, using L4GA assessment data to support instructional practices, and using L4GA data to support student growth. The usefulness of professional development provided varied across grade levels, with high-school teachers being less likely to view the professional development as useful.

**Figure 10.** Usefulness of Professional Development  
*Percent of respondents who participated in professional development found content to be extremely or very useful*

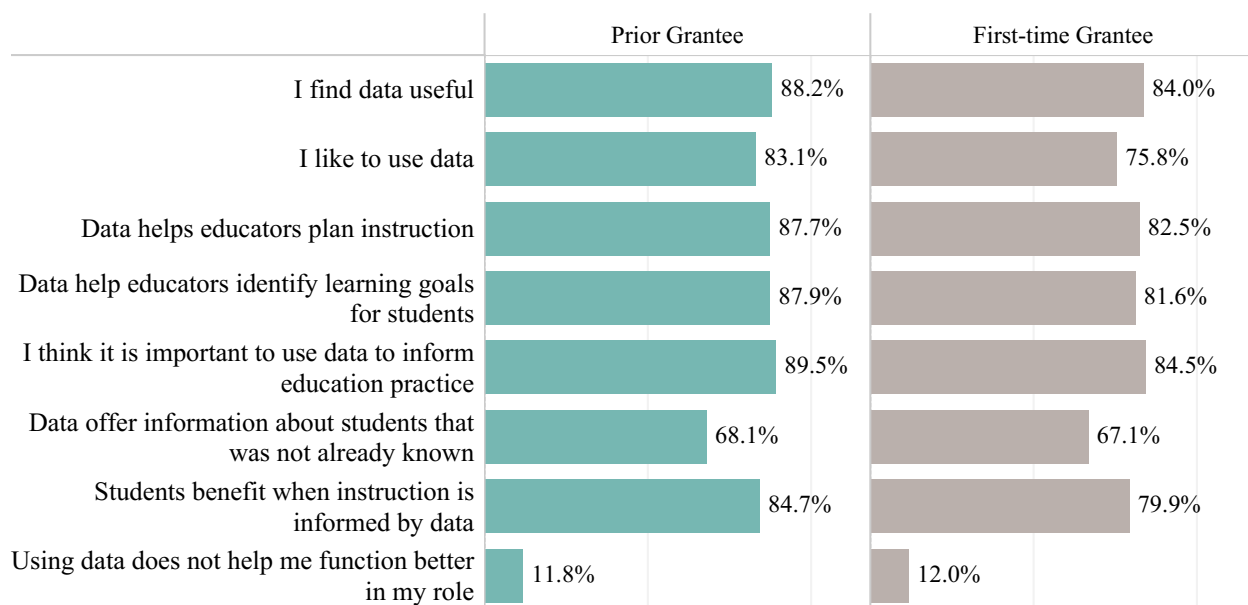


## Variation in experience among prior grantees

As previously mentioned, 12 LEAs were prior Striving Readers Grantees. Among teachers, respondents from these districts represent 52 percent of all teachers who responded to the survey. Approximately 63 percent of teachers from these districts support students in elementary grades, compared to 41.1 percent of teachers from LEAs that were not prior grantees.

**Respondents from LEAs that were prior grantees were more likely to have positive attitudes towards data than respondents from LEAs that were first-time grantees.**

**Figure 11.** Attitudes towards data by prior grantee status  
*Percent of respondents who strongly agree or moderately agree with the statement*



## Summary and Conclusions

An initial look at L4GA grantees reveals positive views of data and general agreement about the usefulness of L4GA assessments, particularly at the early childhood and elementary levels. Some differences across grade bands were evident, which likely related to the nature of classroom based instruction. Early childhood and elementary teachers reported higher levels of collaboration with data and were more likely to report using data for goal setting and instructional purposes than middle and high school teachers. However, findings also indicated that respondents, regardless of grade band, were less likely to report that policies, support, and time dedicated for using L4GA data to be useful. Responses were somewhat mixed on experiences with professional development focused on data utilization, suggesting the need for districts to offer teachers more support. Clear patterns of more positive attitudes around data usefulness emerged between prior grantees and new grantees. Prior grantees were more likely to endorse statements related to the purposes, use, and value of data to support instruction. Taken together, results demonstrate that L4GA teachers value data but may require some additional supports for using data in a manner that aligns with L4GA goals and outcomes.

## References

- Datnow, A., & Hubbard, L. (2015). Teachers' use of assessment data to inform instruction: Lessons from the past and prospects for the future. *Teachers College Record*, 117(4), 1–26.
- Mandinach, E. B., & Gummer, E. S. (2016). Every teacher should succeed with data literacy. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 97(8), 43–46. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721716647018>