Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council

March 21, 2018

DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION
Louisiana Believes

Update on 2018 Market Rate Survey

Update on the Market Rate Survey

The data collection for the Market Rate Survey is complete. This information will be used to evaluate our CCAP rates as well as inform improvement work.

- Market Rate Survey was conducted by LSU through a contract with the Department.
- Survey must be completed every three years before the new Child Care Development Fund state plan is submitted to the federal government.
- Survey is a study of the prices or fees that child care providers typically charge and parents typically pay as well as the costs of providing high quality child care.
- Data collection for 2018 survey is complete and the Department is working on report:
  - *Overall response rate for the survey is 65% including a response rate of 72% from Type III centers.*
  - *Survey report will include cost variations by geography, provider type, and ages of children.*
  - *Report will also include data on CCAP coverage and capacity, staff training, and costs of quality.*

The Department will share draft report in advance of the May Advisory Council meeting.

2016-2017 Performance Profile Results

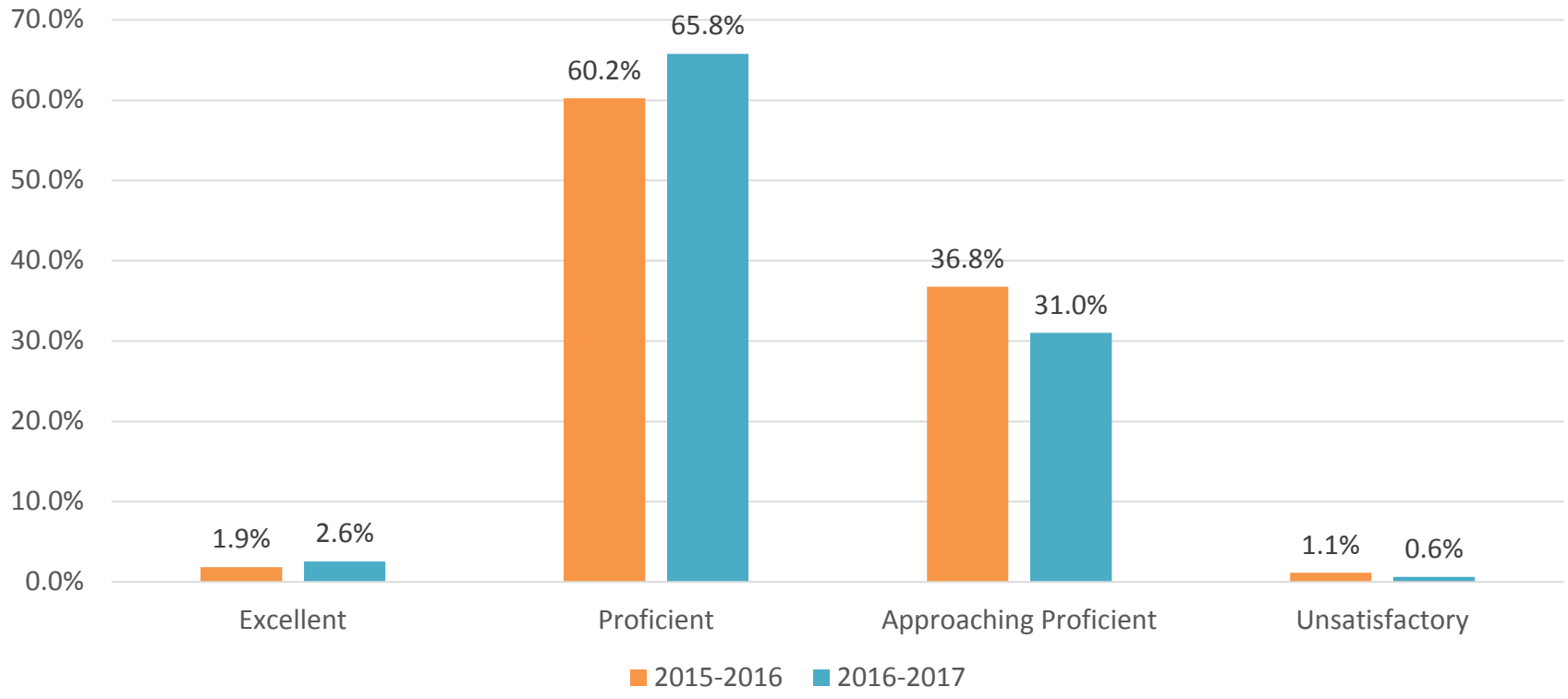
Key Takeaways
2016-2017

Louisiana communities and programs made significant strides in 2016-2017 to improve the quality of early childhood education, which is reflected in Performance Profiles.

- Overall, more than 14,000 *CLASS™* observations took place in 5,440 classrooms across 1,600 sites, representing over 1 million minutes of instruction observed.
- 1,200 trained Louisiana observers observed pre-K and toddler classrooms and provided valuable feedback to help teachers in child care centers, Head Starts, and schools improve.
- Louisiana's average score improved to 4.87 from 4.73 in the practice year. This difference is statistically significant.
- 77% of sites are using a Tier I curriculum in at least one of their classrooms, an increase of nearly 30% from 2015-2016.
- More than 3,000 individuals have received the Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate.
- Louisiana released 1,571 profiles on School and Center Finder, the nation's only unified online information source for families on quality of care and instruction across the state.

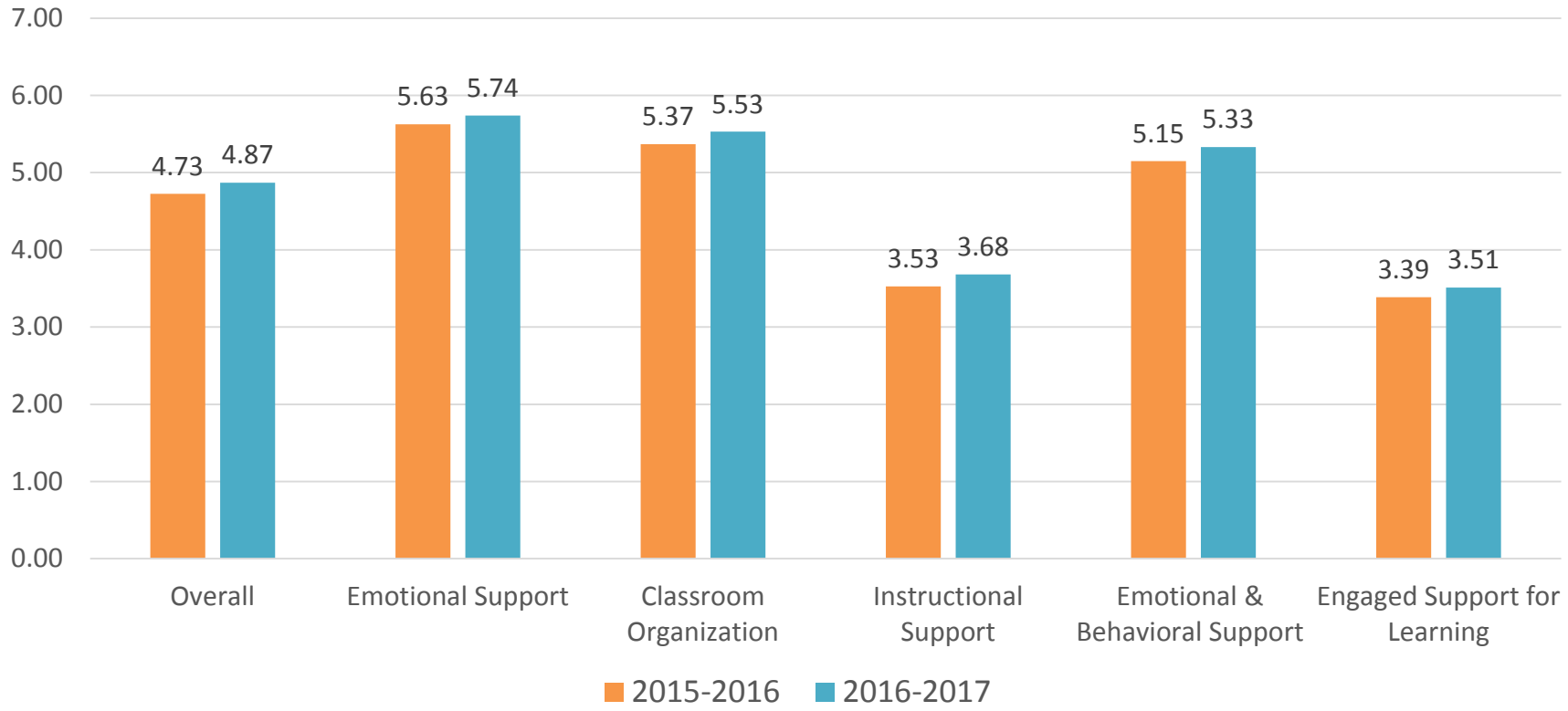
Site-level Improvement from the Practice Year

Nearly 70% of sites provided children with care and instruction at levels that research shows promote kindergarten readiness, an improvement from last year.



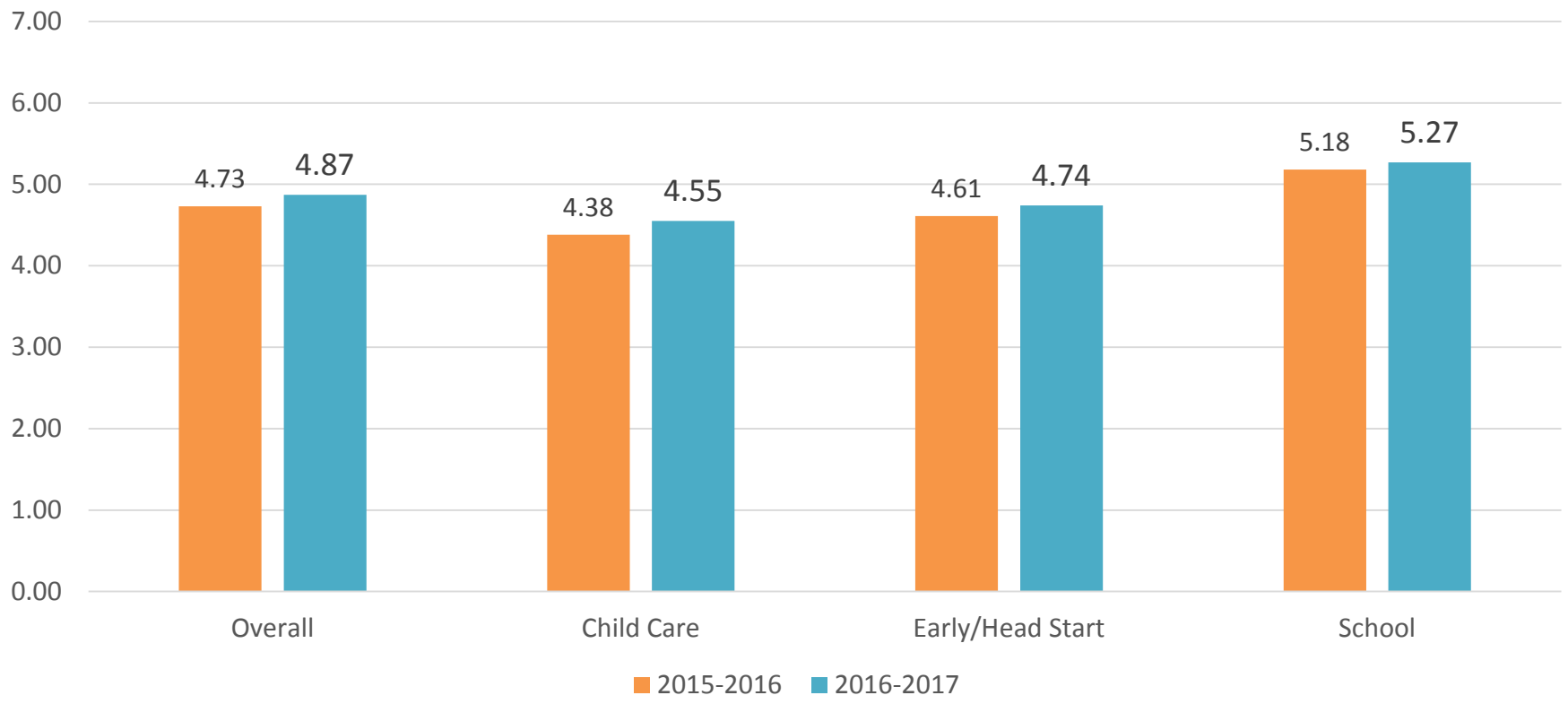
Improvement by Domain

Statewide average scores went up in each of the areas we measure – classroom climate, organization, and instruction, at both the pre-K and toddler level.



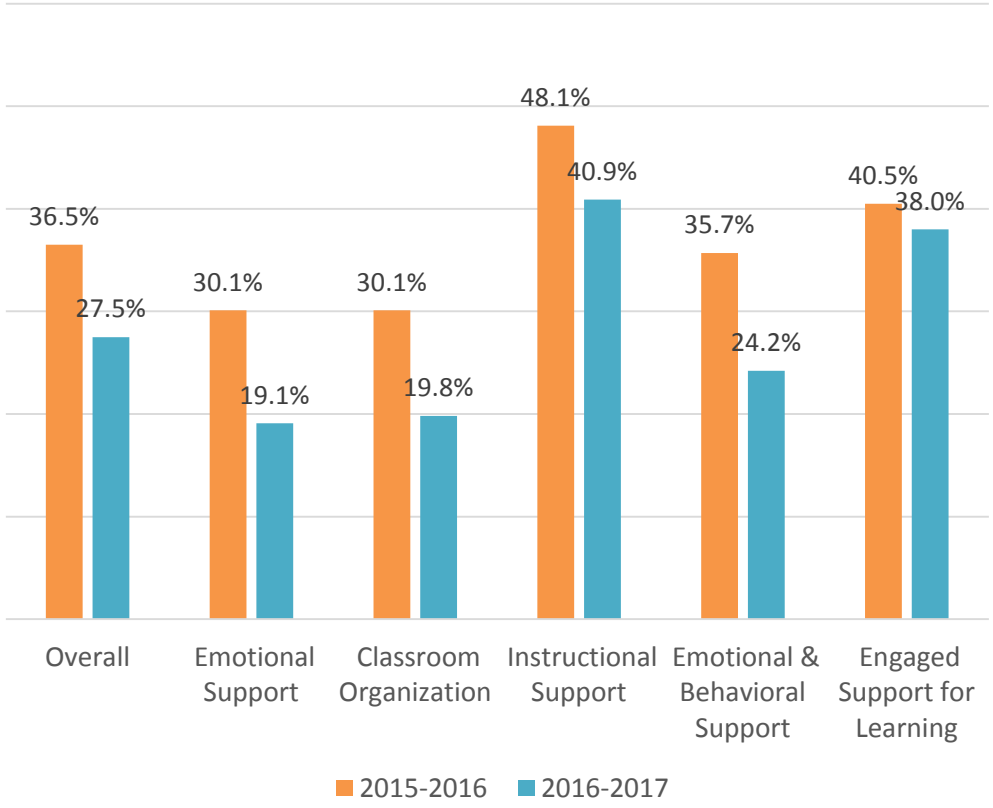
Improvement by Program Type

There was improvement for the average score for each program type from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017, with the most improvement in child care.



Accuracy Improvement by Domain

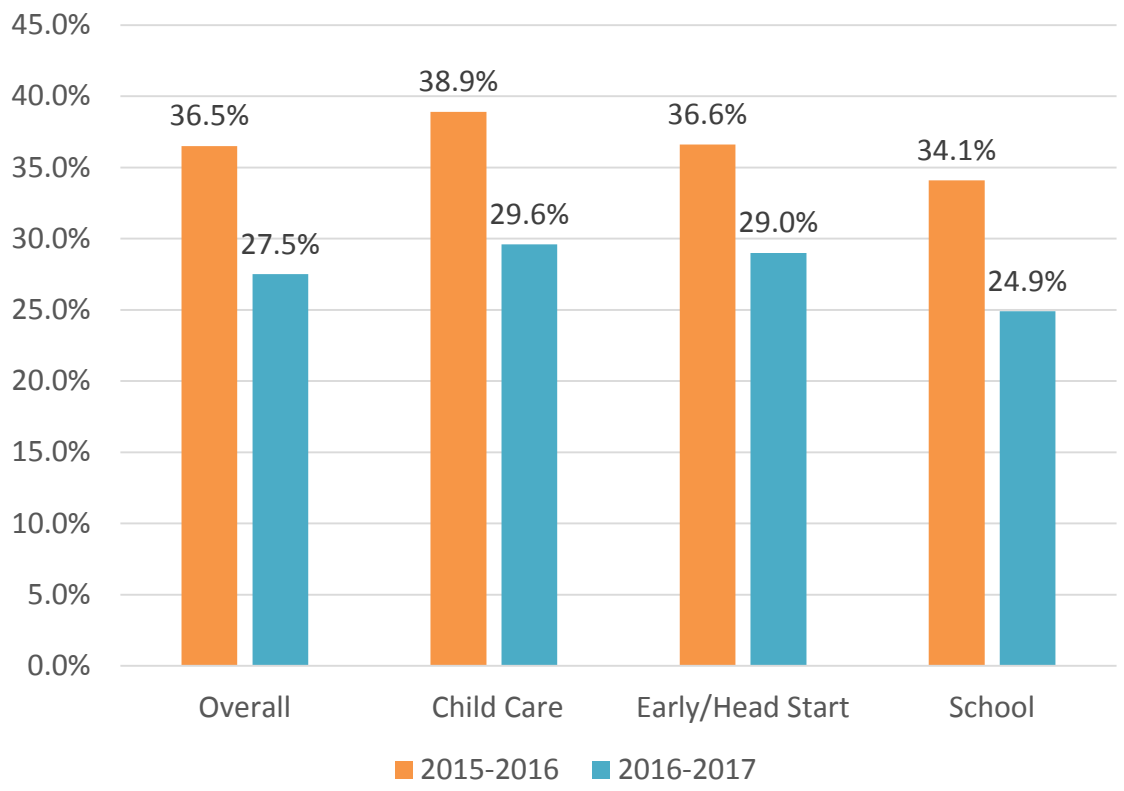
Louisiana observers increased the accuracy of their observations in every domain in 2016-2017, resulting in teachers receiving more accurate feedback and support to improve.



- There was an overall decrease in third party replacement of about 9% from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017.
- The third party replacement rate decreased for each domain.
- Of 1,079 local observers, only 24 observers or 2% were flagged as serious concerns.
- These results show that networks are using data to make key decisions and improve data

Accuracy Improvement by Program Type

The third party replacement rate decreased for every program type in 2016-2017, which indicates observers are becoming more accurate across program types.



- The third party replacement rate decreased across the board by program type.
- Child care centers had the greatest decrease in third party replacement rate of about 11%.
- The majority of observers flagged as having a replacement rate greater than 20% in the fall saw improvements in the spring, showing that communities took efforts to improve accuracy seriously and identified strategies that worked.

Strengthening Louisiana's Unified Rating System

Current Challenges and Proposed Solutions

Current Challenges

With two years of implementation, we have enough experience and data to identify the key challenges of our system, and propose solutions based on Louisiana data.

Challenges:

1. 67% of programs share the same rating, which does not differentiate the experiences children have and is not clear for families to understand.

2. Too many programs are scoring in the low approaching proficient range, suggesting there are too few incentives to achieve scores critical for children's learning and development.

3. There is inconsistency between early childhood and K-12 at-risk definitions, making data collection out of sync and outdated, and creating additional bureaucracy and validity concerns.

4. Infant classrooms are not evaluated under the current system, meaning teachers do not receive feedback to improve and families do not have any information about quality. This is especially concerning as infants tend to be served in lower quality sites.

Proposed Policy Solutions

By implementing these solutions, the state will ensure that the focus for our system is on improving the quality and access of care for Louisiana's most at-risk children, birth to five.

Solutions:

1. Implement a fifth level that differentiates higher performing Proficient sites.
2. Require low Proficient and Unsatisfactory sites to participate in improvement planning as a condition of receiving public funding or licensure.
3. Align eligibility for all pre-K programs to the K-12 definition of at-risk, which includes Medicaid eligibility, thus enabling more simple and streamlined processes.
4. Integrate infant classrooms into the unified rating and improvement system over the next three years.

Notes: These changes will not affect 2017-2018 ratings. There will be additional policy clean up to address implementation concerns.

After conducting extensive research, the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children is proposing similar recommendations as well as other shifts to support quality improvement.

Proposal 1:
Recognize High Proficient

Large Proficient Bucket Does Not Help Families

The large Proficient bucket makes it appear to families that 67% of programs are the same although research shows that there are key differences in experiences for children.

- Too many sites have the same label (Proficient) even though there are key differences in what children are experiencing. This makes it harder for families to make an informed choice.
- School Readiness Tax Credits already distinguish and reward the higher performing sites within the Proficient bucket as 4 star sites.
- Differentiating the rating encourages improvement within the Proficient bucket.
- Excellent is a high bar that programs may perceive as impossible to achieve. By recognizing and rewarding centers nearly to Excellent, we can incentivize step-by-step improvement across all program types.

Differentiating Large Proficient Bucket

The large Proficient category does not communicate quality to families nor does it incent providers to improve instruction.

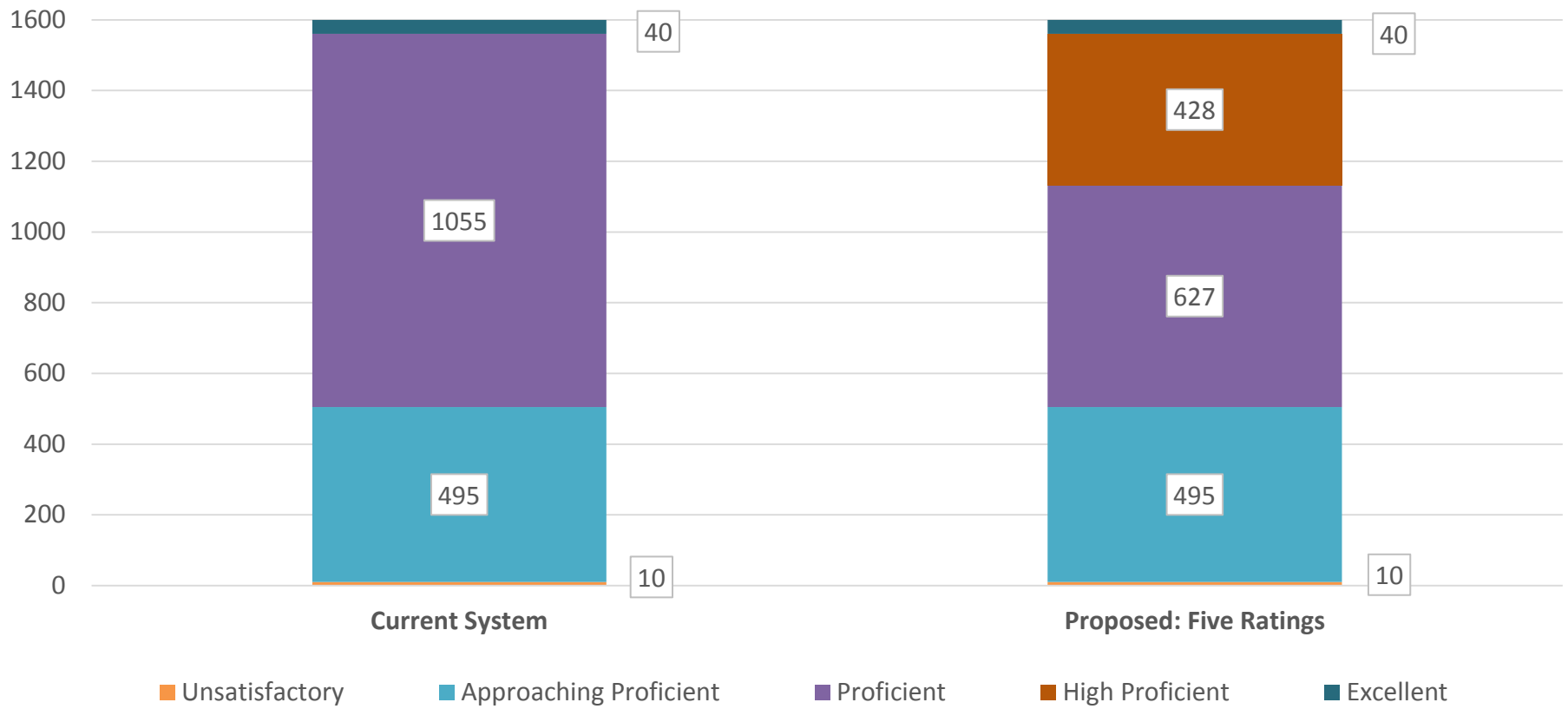
Star Level	*CLASS™* score	Current Rating	Proposed Rating
0 Star	0 – 2.99	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1 Star	3 – 3.74	Approaching Proficient	Approaching Proficient
2 Star	3.75 – 4.49	Approaching Proficient	Approaching Proficient
3 Star	4.5 – 5.24	Proficient	Proficient
4 Star	5.25 – 5.99	Proficient	**High Proficient**
5 Star	6 – 7	Excellent	Excellent

Key Points:

- With 67% of sites scoring Proficient, the overall ratings fail to meaningfully differentiate quality, especially as it relates to instruction.
- Kids learn more in higher proficient sites but the system does not necessarily incent improvement within the Proficient range.
- Centers are differentiated by stars, but not by rating, so financial incentives and information to families is not aligned.

Distribution of Performance Ratings with High Proficient

Distributing the ratings across five levels more clearly differentiates programs.



High Proficient Distribution by Program Type

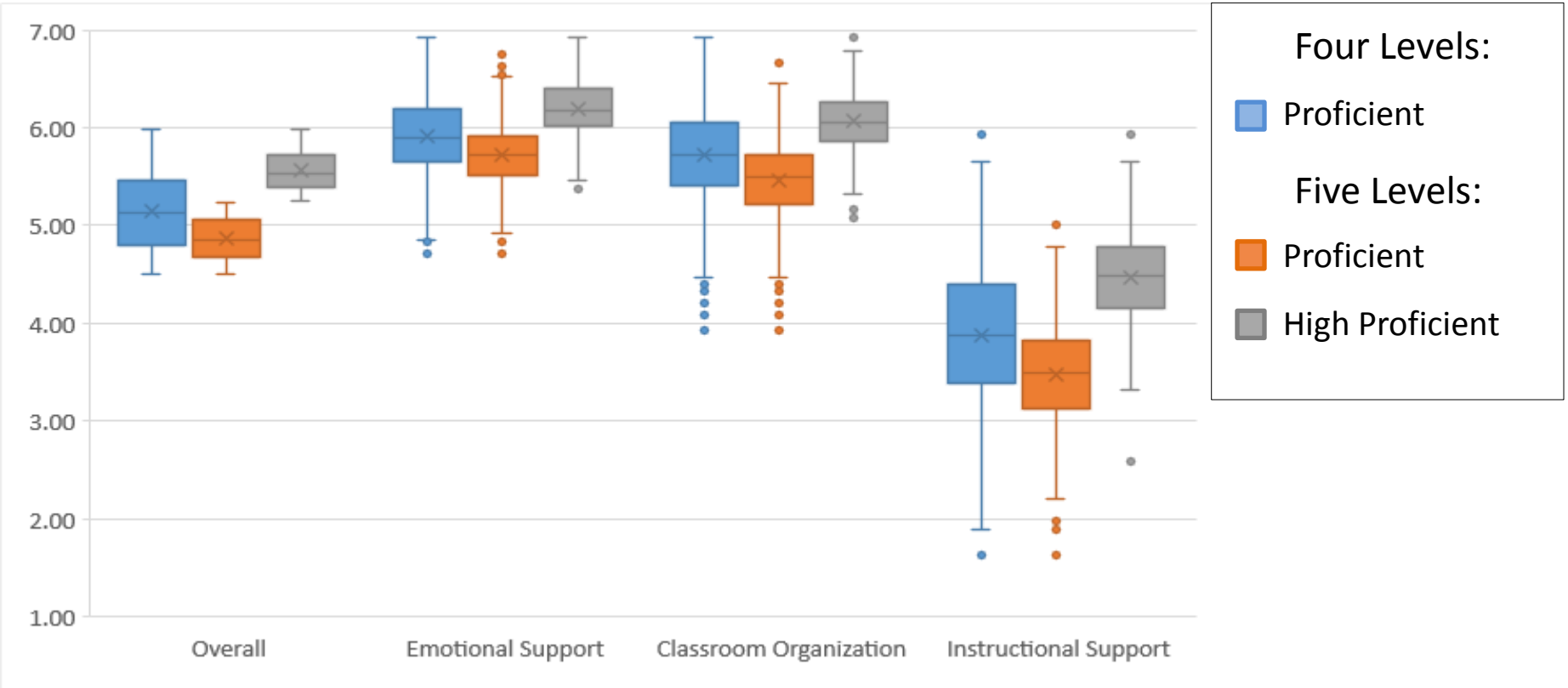
Creating a High Proficient rating recognizes higher performance by all program types, establishing exemplars across program types and helping families to better compare the options in their community.

	Child Care	Head Starts	Schools
Excellent	4	1	35
High Proficient	**83**	**31**	**314**
Proficient	266	106	255
Approaching Proficient	342	67	76
Unsatisfactory	9	1	0

**This chart represents the breakdown across sites and program types if these criteria were applied to 2016-2017 ratings, released in November 2017. Please note that these changes will not affect the 2017-2018 ratings that will be released in Fall 2018.*

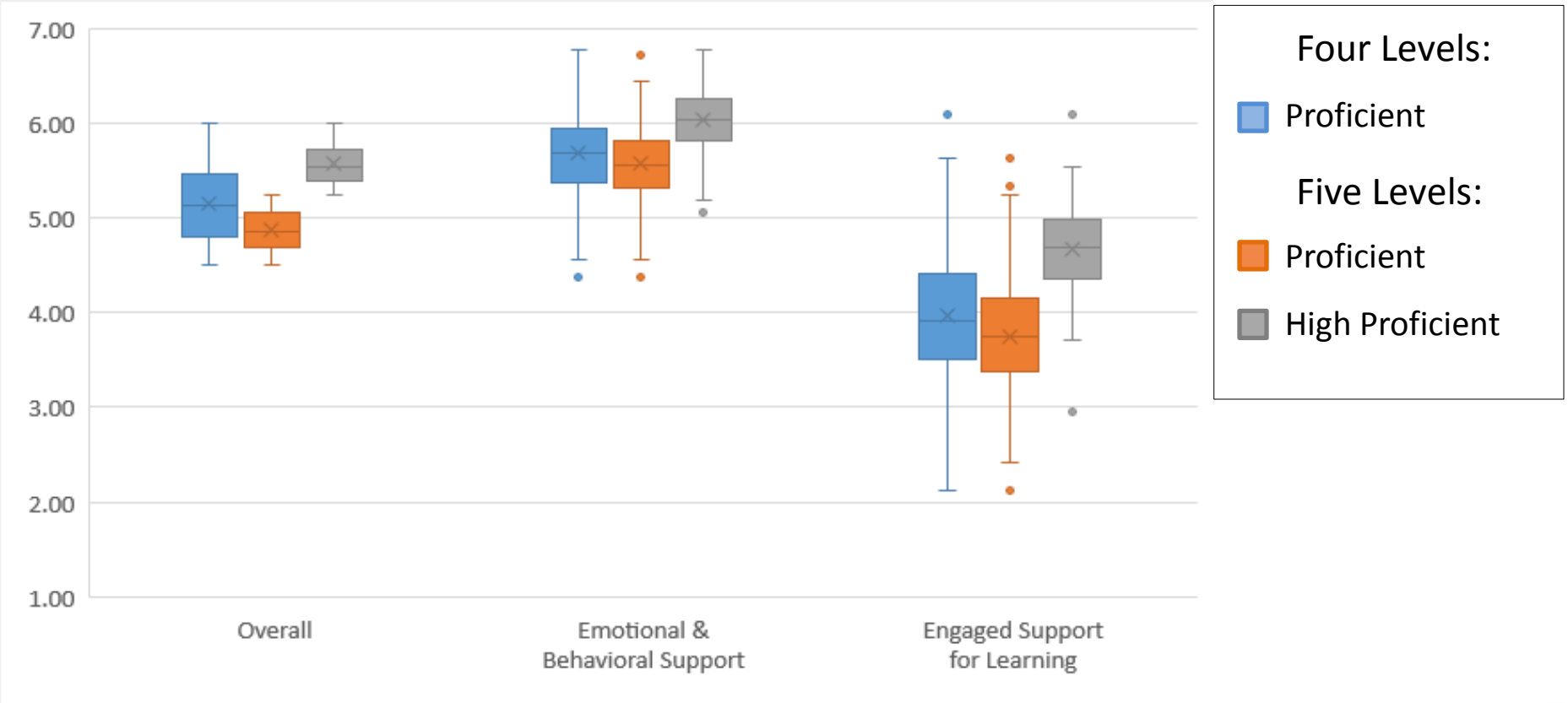
High Proficient and Pre-K Domain Analysis

High Proficient sites are consistently higher quality, especially in instruction.



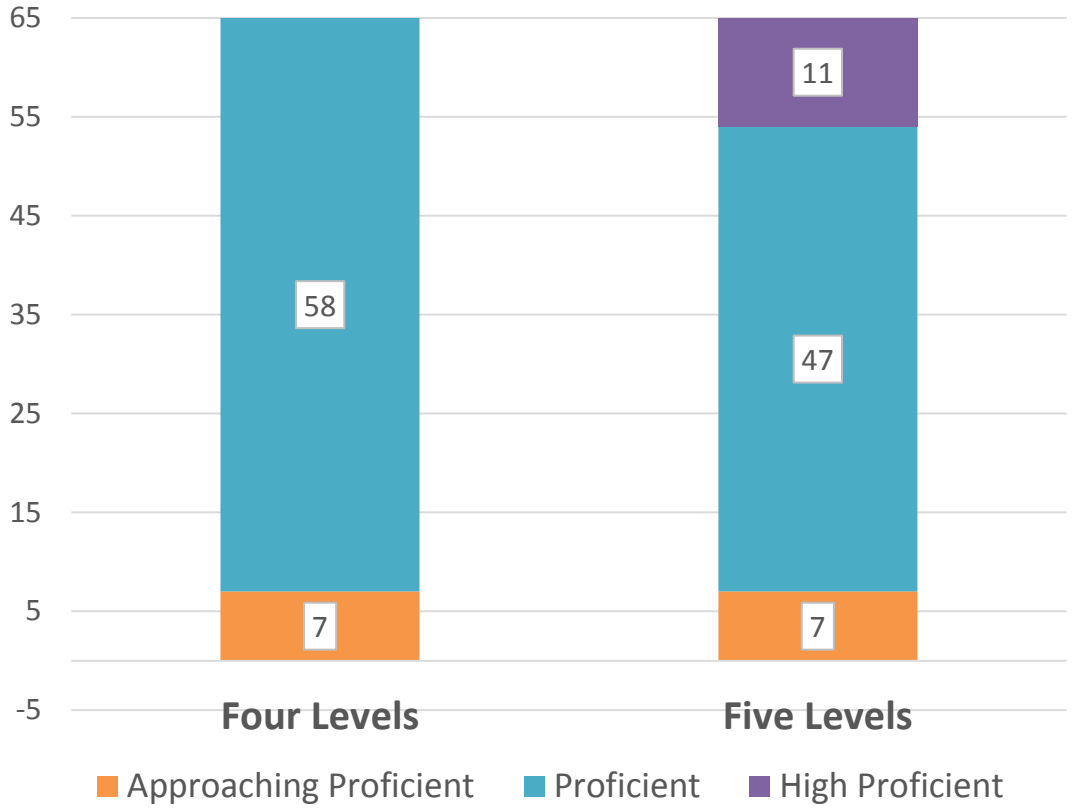
High Proficient and Toddler Domain Analysis

High Proficient sites are consistently higher quality, especially in instruction.



Impact of High Proficient Category on Network Ratings

Using 2016-2017 data, 11 Networks would score High Proficient, adding an incentive for network improvement as well.



Proposal 2:
Require Improvement Planning for Low Performing Sites

Targeting Low Performers to Improve Care and Instruction

By targeting sites scoring low Approaching Proficient, the Department is helping to create a pathway to proficiency for our state's lowest performers.

There is a set of persistently low-scoring Approaching Proficient sites that likely need a different approach.

- 452 sites scored Approaching Proficient in 2016-2017. Of these, 302 scored Approaching Proficient in the previous year.
- 105 sites scored in the lower half of the Approaching Proficient range. These sites were Approaching Proficient two years in a row, and do not seem incented to improve.
- 11 of 13 sites that scored Unsatisfactory in the practice year improved in 2016-2017, potentially as a result of intervention.

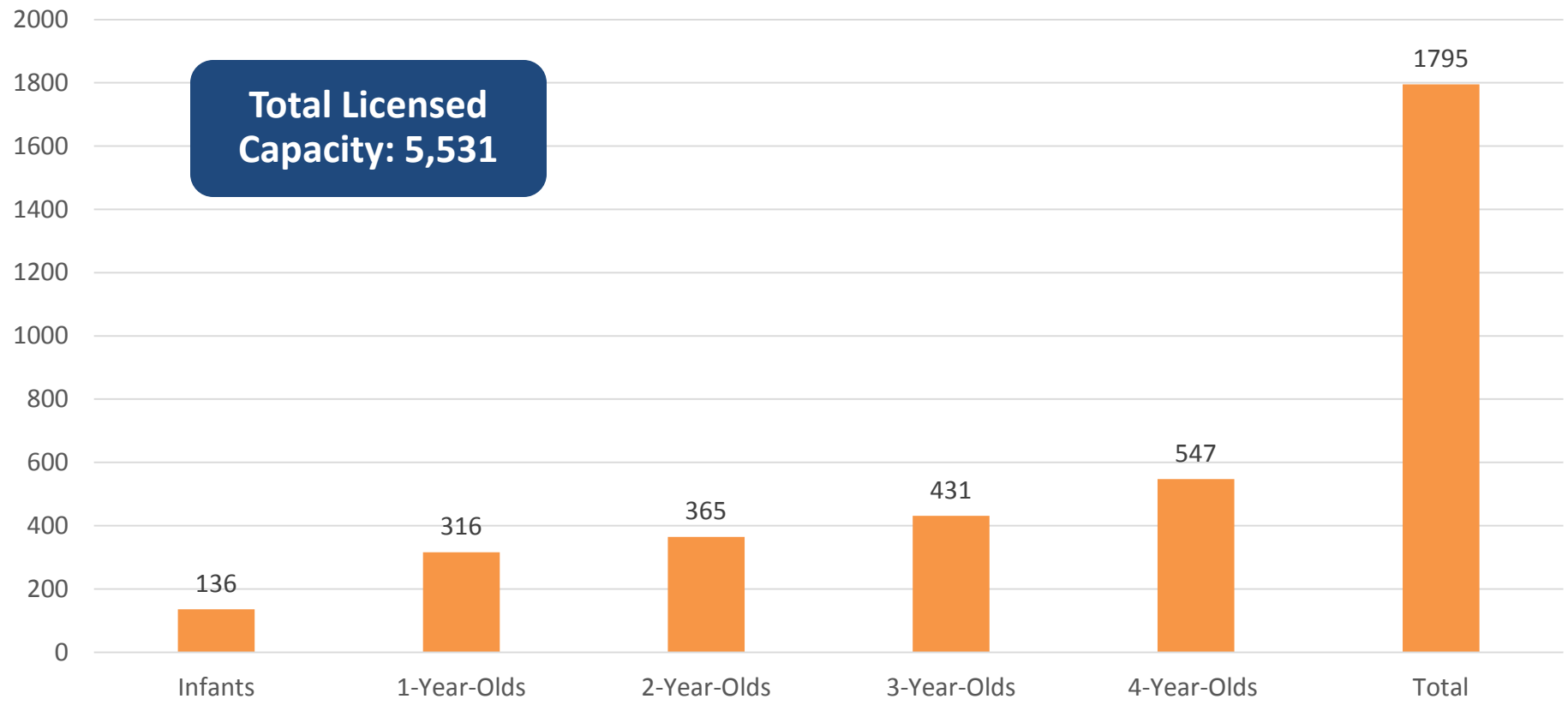
Understanding Experiences in Lower Quality Sites

On average, the 115 programs scoring below a 3.75 are not achieving proficiency in <u>any</u> domain and have very low instructional scores.

2016-2017 Overall Score	Count	Overall Score	Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support	Emotional & Behavioral Support	Engaged Support for Learning
Excellent (6.00-7.00)	40	6.17	6.59	6.56	5.37	6.71	5.49
High Proficient (5.25-5.99)	428	5.57	6.20	6.07	4.46	6.03	4.67
Proficient (4.50-5.24)	627	4.87	5.72	5.47	3.48	5.57	3.74
Approaching Proficient (3.75-4.49)	390	4.19	5.16	4.83	2.63	4.99	3.02
Approaching Proficient (3.00-3.74)	105	3.49	4.49	4.14	1.99	4.32	2.37
Unsatisfactory (1.00-2.99)	10	2.64	3.60	3.24	1.48	3.07	1.93

Impact on Children of Low Performing Sites

The 115 sites that scored below 3.75 in 2016-2017 had a total of 1,795 publicly funded children enrolled. This represents about $7.2 MM in public funds.



Low Performing Sites: Access Consideration

Sites scoring below a 3.75 are distributed across 27 networks, all of which (except DeSoto) had at least one other child care center operating in 2016-2017.

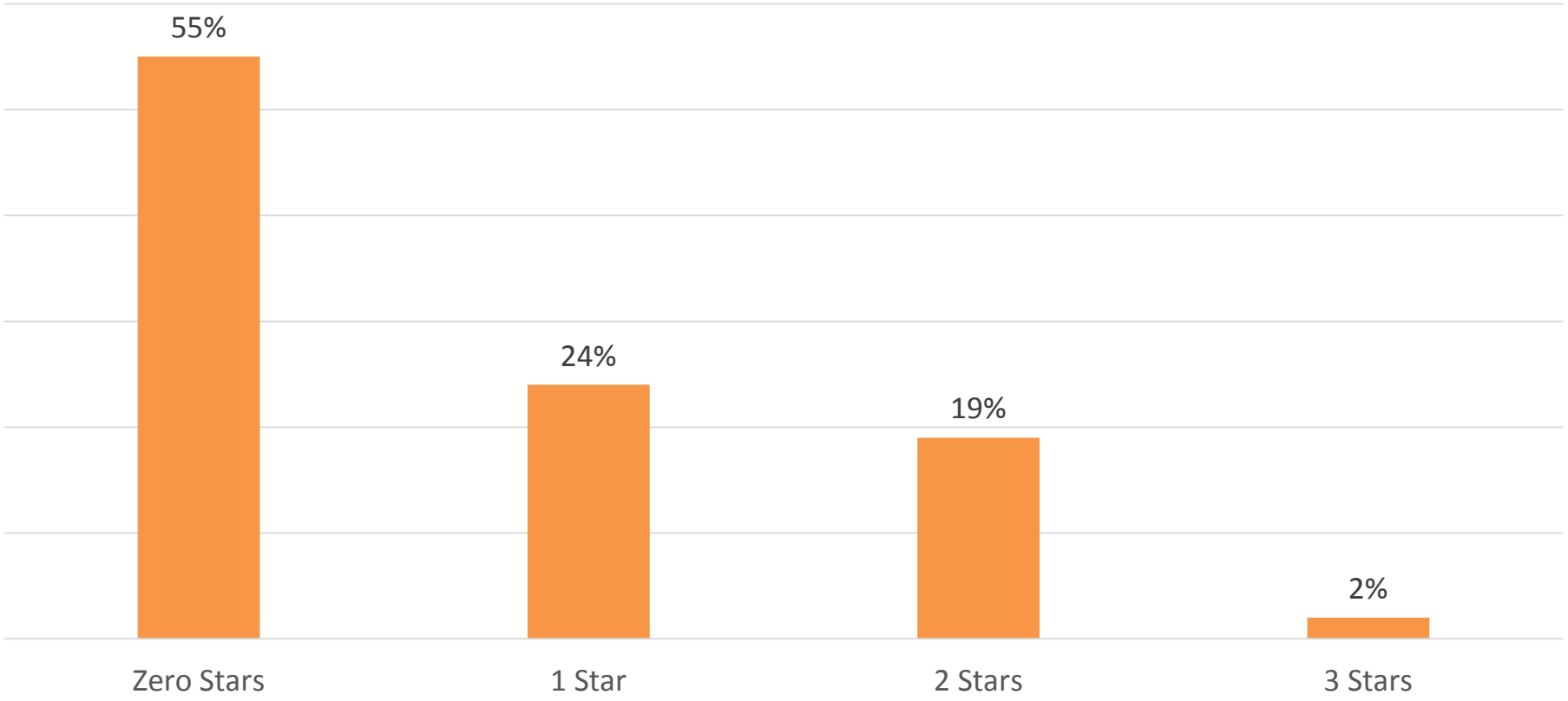
Network Name	Child Care Centers	Child Care Centers Below 3.75	Overall Sites	Overall Sites Below 3.75
EBR & City of Baker	81	12	146	12
DeSoto	2	2	7	2
Ascension	13	5	29	5
Avoyelles	8	1	22	3
Grant	2	1	8	1
Iberville	7	1	12	1
Jefferson	61	10	124	11
Lafayette	33	2	63	2
Lincoln	9	2	15	2
Morehouse	5	2	10	2
Caddo	44	6	90	8
Orleans	88	26	151	30
Ouachita & City of Monroe	30	6	60	6

Network Name	Child Care Centers	Child Care Centers Below 3.75	Overall Sites	Overall Sites Below 3.75
Rapides	33	9	73	9
St. Mary	6	1	27	1
Acadia	9	1	25	1
Bossier	9	1	25	1
Vernon	2	1	12	1
Calcasieu	38	5	74	6
Richland	3	0	11	1
Tangipahoa	23	1	44	1
Concordia	2	1	7	1
Franklin	9	2	16	2
Iberia	9	1	29	1
Jackson	2	1	8	1
Terrebonne	11	1	35	2
West Baton Rouge	5	2	8	2

Only 11 of 65 networks had more than 20% of child care centers in the low Approaching Proficient or Unsatisfactory range, including rural, suburban and urban networks.

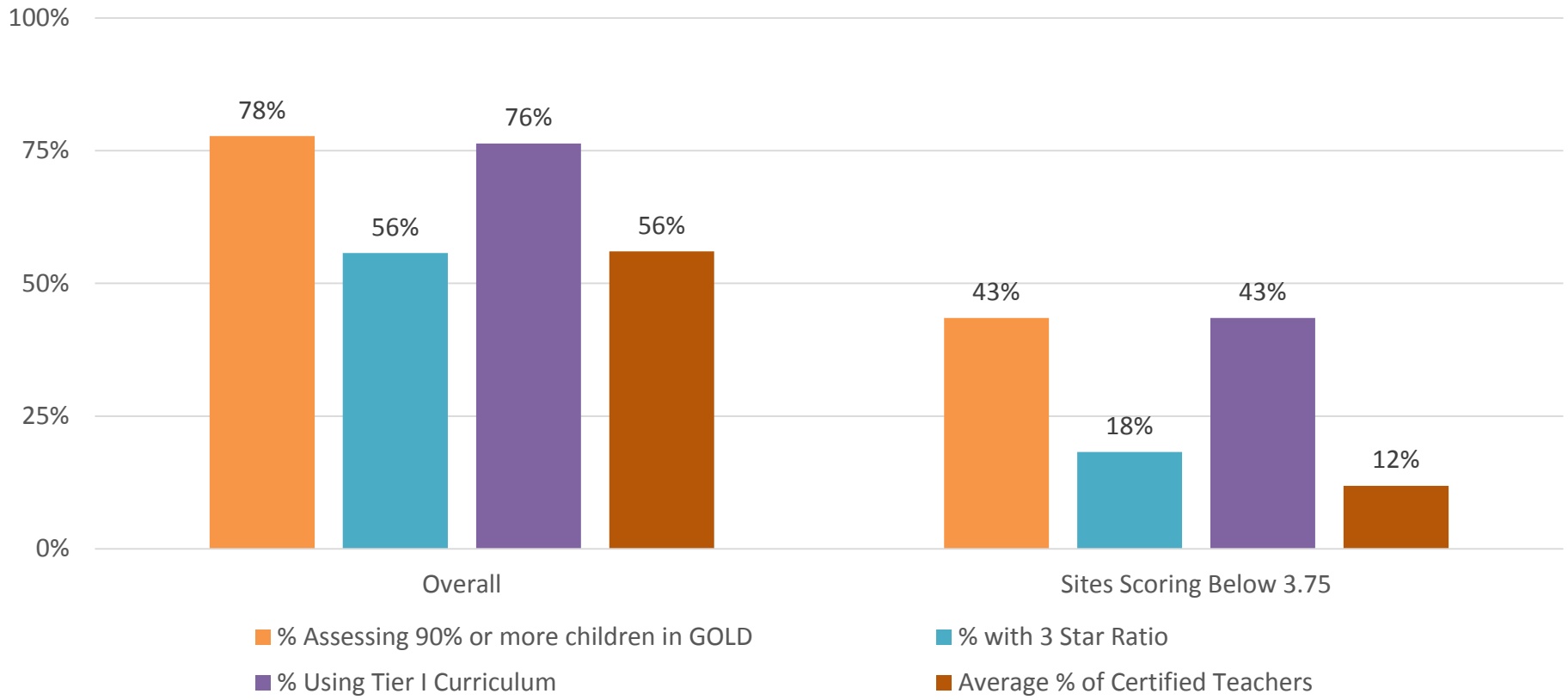
Low Performing Sites: Quality Start History

Of the sites that scored below 3.75 in 2016-2017, 84 had Quality Start data available from 2017 and more than half were not even participating in the prior rating system.



Sites Scoring Below 3.75: Use of Best Practices

In sites scoring below a 3.75, use of best practices is much lower than other sites, and in particular, use of a high-quality curriculum and percent of certified teachers is concerning.



Overview of Improvement Planning and Action

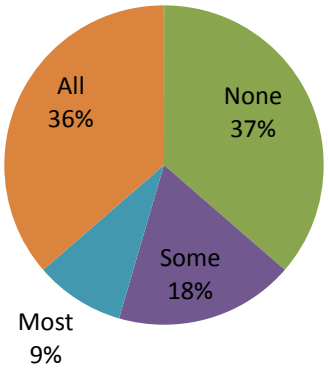
Sites that persistently score below a 3.75 are not providing quality for children and could benefit from increased support and intervention.

- There is a meaningful difference for children between the top and bottom of Approaching Proficient Range. In site scoring below a 3.75, the experiences that children are receiving are not conducive to readiness for kindergarten.
- While not labeled Unsatisfactory, these sites likely require a stronger intervention. These programs have been prioritized for resources such as coaching, training and curriculum but rarely use them.
- In 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, the Department intervened with Unsatisfactory sites, helping to drive improved ratings at 11 of 13 sites.
  - *Sites were sent a letter.*
  - *Field support consultants visited sites and helped directors complete a self-assessment.*
  - *Field support consultants assisted directors to complete an improvement plan based on self- assessment and periodically checked in on sites.*
  - *Sites were referred to existing professional development resources.*

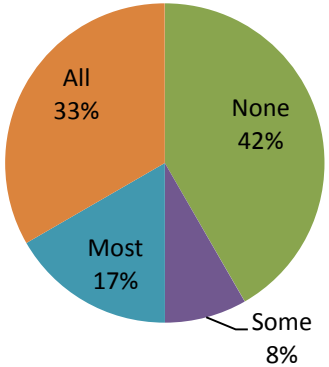
Requiring Improvement Planning and Action

2015-2016 Self-Assessment Results

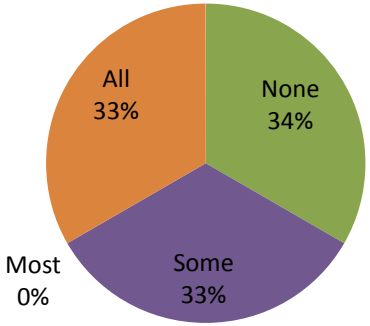
Centers that scored Unsatisfactory in 2015-2016 indicated that they were unaware of key tools and supports.



CLASS



GOLD



37% of unsatisfactory centers reported that none of their PreK teachers were <u>familiar</u> with *CLASS™*

42% of unsatisfactory centers reported that none of their Toddler teachers were <u>familiar</u> with *CLASS™*

34% of unsatisfactory centers reported that none of their teachers were <u>familiar</u> with GOLD®

The results from the Center Self-Assessments demonstrated a need for training and support. These sites were then prioritized for existing resources such as coaching, R and R training and technical assistance and the curriculum initiative.

Pathway to Proficiency: Requiring Improvement Planning

By requiring improvement planning for low performers, similar to processes used for K-12, sites will be supported to engage with improvement strategies and available supports.

The Department will:

- Provide warnings to sites that may potentially score below a 3.75 in August, and allow them to begin improvement planning early;
- Following release of profiles, require sites scoring below a 3.75 to participate in formal improvement planning activities with Department staff or contractors;
- Prioritize resources that are included as part of improvement plans (e.g., curriculum or mental health consultation);
- Follow up with sites on implementation of their improvement plan regularly over the course of the year;
- Review results from improvement planning and adjust supports as needed; and
- Terminate academic approval or funding for sites that fail to participate in any aspect of improvement planning and implementation.

The objective is to help sites struggling to identify available resources or make a concrete plan to achieve improvement and ultimately reach proficiency.

Using the Pre-K Expansion Grant to Target Improvement

Through the four year federal Pre-K Expansion Grant, the Department has awarded nearly $32MM to communities to expand access to high-quality care, with at least $7.5MM dedicated to improving the quality of care and education within the community.

- Through this grant, 18 community networks have expanded access to high-quality pre-K for at-risk children.
- Additionally, these networks have used grant funds to:
  - *Expand access to job-embedded coaching and high-quality professional development for teachers in birth-through-four classrooms in their community;*
  - *Support diverse delivery of seats through center-school partnerships; and*
  - *Purchase high-quality curriculum and other aligned resources and materials.*
- Through supplemental funding to the grant this year, 8 communities are specifically targeting supports to 63 Approaching Proficient sites, 17 of which are low Approaching Proficient, including Making the Most of Classroom Interactions, MyTeachingPartner, and Tier 1 curriculum and training.

Lessons learned from the work communities have done to drive improvement through this grant can help to inform supports for Approaching Proficient sites.

Proposal 3:
Align At-Risk Criteria with K-12

Eligibility Criteria for Pre-K Programs: Current Context

Bulletin 140 defines eligibility for pre-K programs at 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). This includes LA 4, NSECD, 8g, and the Pre-K Expansion Grant.

- Prior to 2015, the Department's at-risk definition for K-12 was aligned with eligibility for the Free/Reduced Lunch program (185% of FPL). Eligibility for publicly-funded pre-K programs was also aligned with eligibility for the Free/Reduced Lunch program.

- With Community Eligibility Program, K-12 at-risk determination is now based on Medicaid eligibility (~217% FPL).

- At-risk definitions and eligibility for the pre-K programs are no longer aligned with K-12. Thus, the at-risk information used by the Department and reported to the field for early childhood and for K-12 are not aligned, which is confusing for the field and for families. This jeopardizes network access ratings, since the data is now out-of-date.

- Now is the time to act as four year old seats across the state are going unfilled due to lack of demand, and communities are not requesting more seats or reporting wait lists.

Pre-K Eligibility Policy Proposal

The policy proposal would change eligibility to align with Medicaid, which is just over 200% FPL.

This proposed change would:

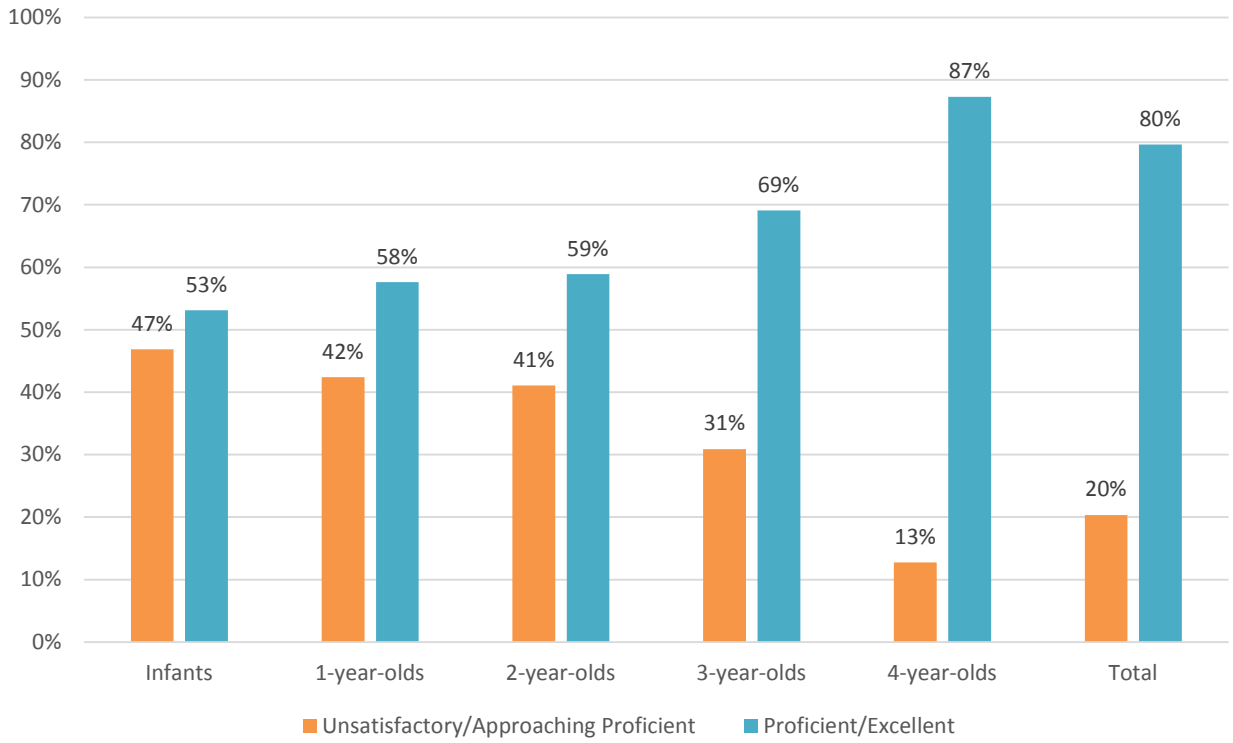
- Align the birth-to-age-five at-risk definition with the K-12 definition and ensure that the Department is measuring at-risk populations consistently across ages and programs.
- Ensure that all families who qualify for Medicaid also qualify for pre-K programs.
- Allow communities to use Medicaid eligibility forms to determine child eligibility for seats.

With the exception of the Pre-K Expansion Grant, funding for pre-K seats is expected to remain at current levels.

Proposal 4:
Phase Infants into Unified Rating System

Impact on Children

Based on the results of Toddler and Pre-K observations, only half of infants being served in Louisiana are in Proficient or Excellent sites.



- Because the ratings are based on Toddler and Pre-K *CLASS*™ observations only, these results do not fully reflect the quality of infant care in the state.
- These results are especially concerning considering how much brain development occurs in the first few years.

Adding Infant Classrooms to Louisiana's Rating and Improvement System

A baby's brain more than doubles in size in the first year of life, yet infant classroom are not currently evaluated for quality in Louisiana.

Challenges:

- The Department doesn't have information about the number or location of infant classrooms in the state.
- Infant teachers need information about how they are performing, and how to improve.
- To fully scale statewide will require additional local and third party capacity and funding.

Proposal:

Year	Action
2017-2018	The Department is conducting a small, volunteer pilot to test the tool.
2018-2019	Lead Agencies will count and locate all infant classrooms for 2018-2019, and begin adding capacity to observe.
2019-2020	All communities will observe infant classrooms using the infant tool as practice.
2020-2021	Infant observations will be fully included in the rating system.

External Research and Analysis

Louisiana Policy Institute for Children conducted extensive analysis of Louisiana data, interviewed stakeholders and solicited national research.

Recommendation	Response
Create a new category rating of "High Proficient"	✔ Included in current proposal.
Add infant classrooms to the rating system	✔ Included in current proposal.
Provide additional targeted support to providers with Approaching Proficient ratings	✔ These sites are the priority with proposal requiring planning for low Approaching Proficient.
Provide additional one-on-one, job-embedded coaching and ensure quality coaching based on best practices	✔ Department funds R and Rs, Mental Health Consultation (MHC) and Teachstone to provide coaching.
Increase training for center directors and principals on CLASS, including CLASS observer training	✔ Department will encourage Lead Agencies to use funds for *CLASS™* reliability training with principals/directors.
Increase access to low or no-cost child care teacher preparation programs for non-lead teachers	✔ Lead teachers should remain the priority but Department will allow other teachers if slots are available.
Incorporate classroom environment checklists to guide teachers in classroom set up and organization	✔ Department, R and R and MHC staff can more consistently use checklists to support leaders and teachers.
Increase uniformity of CLASS observation procedures across regions	✔ Lead Agencies use a protocol based on third party protocol. The Department will continue to audit local practices.

Additional Policy Revisions

Additional Bulletin 140 Revisions

With two and a half years of policy implementation, we have identified some adjustments that will strengthen implementation of Bulletin 140.

Proposals:

- When atypical practices are encountered during an observation, use 1's, reobserve, or take other steps to ensure typical experiences are observed.
- Update disaster considerations section to allow for use of one semester of scores in the event of a natural disaster.
- Clarify and strengthen rules for observing mixed age classrooms, including:
  - In mixed infant/toddler classrooms, use Toddler tool when the classroom is at least half toddler aged children;
  - In mixed toddler/pre-K classrooms, use PreK tool when the classroom is at least half pre-K aged children;
  - In mixed infant/toddler/pre-K classrooms, use Toddler tool when the classroom has no clear majority age; and
  - In pre-K/K classrooms, use PreK tool when the classroom is at least half pre-K or if the classroom receives early childhood funding.
- Allow for informational metrics to be collected as of February 1 for classrooms opened between October 1 and February 1, which are still observed for the profile.

Next Steps

Bulletin 140 Changes: Engagement Timeline

Timeframe	Engagement
March	Engage with local and national stakeholders, partners, and others to gather feedback on proposals and processes
	Use regional collaboratives to discuss proposals with lead agencies
	Present proposals to the Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council Workgroup and Council
April	Continued engagement with the field regarding proposals
	Present proposals to BESE for vote
	Develop next steps in partnership with child care support organizations
May / June	Statewide Webinar regarding changes
	Teacher Leader Summit