

Distance Learning Strategies in California Schools

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Introduction

- The pandemic has disrupted K–12 education
- Students experienced learning loss in math and English Language Arts
- Black, Latino, low-income students, English Learners, and students without internet fell behind
- Students also faced mental health issues
- More schools re-opened, but many families are staying online

- PPIC survey of school districts
 - mid-November 2020 to mid-January 2021
 - 205 districts responded, serving half of K–12 student population
 - Respondents are more likely to be large, unified, urban districts
 - No difference in share of high-need students
- Learning Continuity Plans (LCPs)
 - 166 LCPs from respondent districts
- US Census Household Pulse Survey
 - April 2020 to December 2020

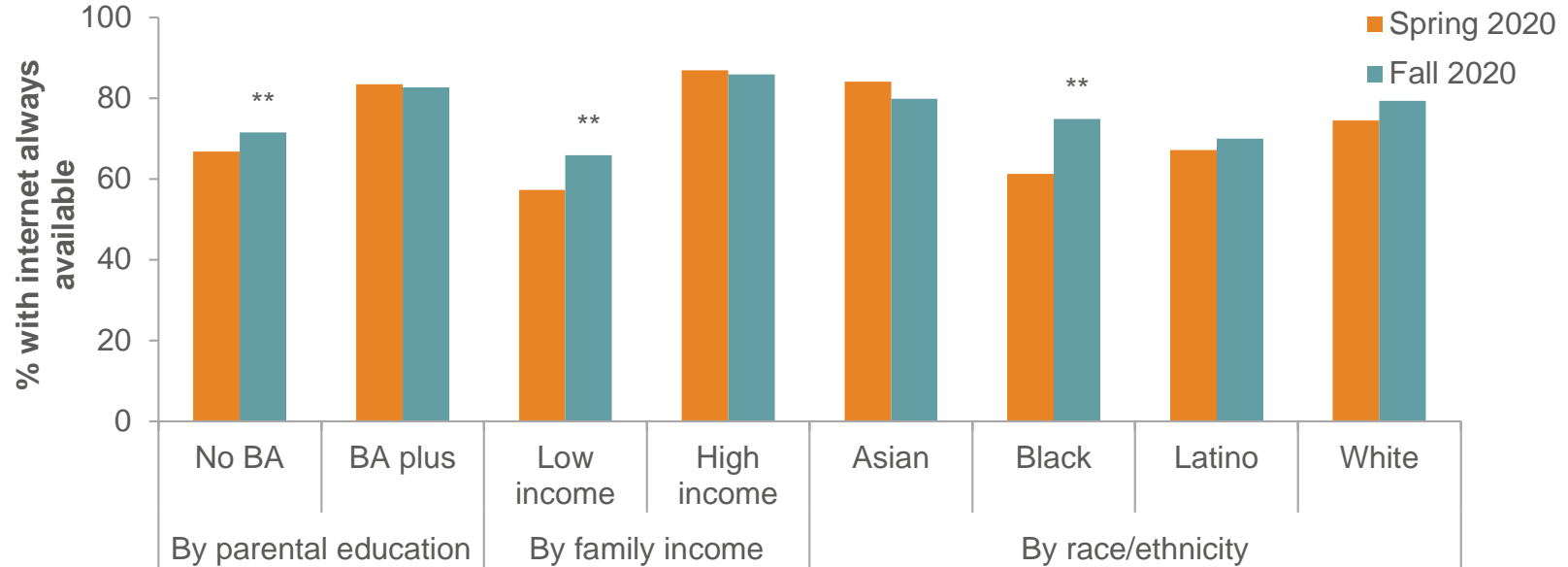
Motivation

In this report we hope to understand:

- Districts' distance learning experiences in spring 2020
- How districts managed instruction in the 2020–21 school year
- How districts addressed potential learning losses
- Financial constraints and priorities

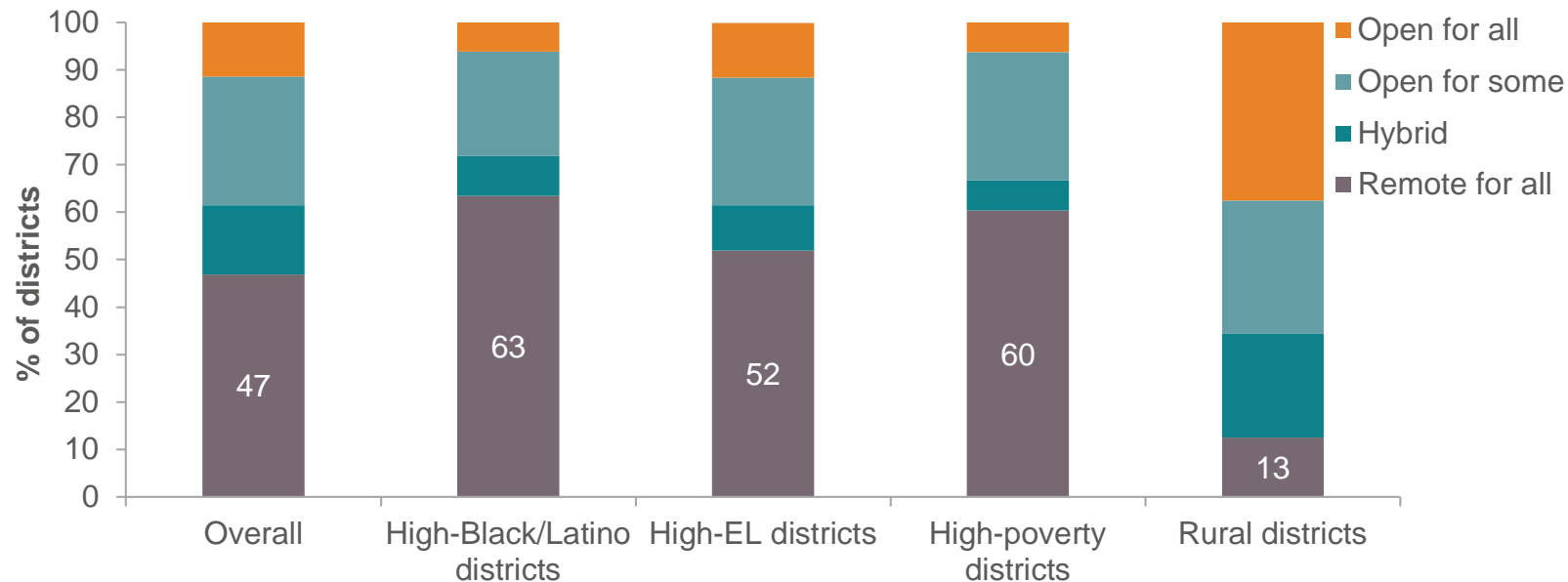
The digital divide persists

Percent of students with internet always available, spring 2020–fall 2020



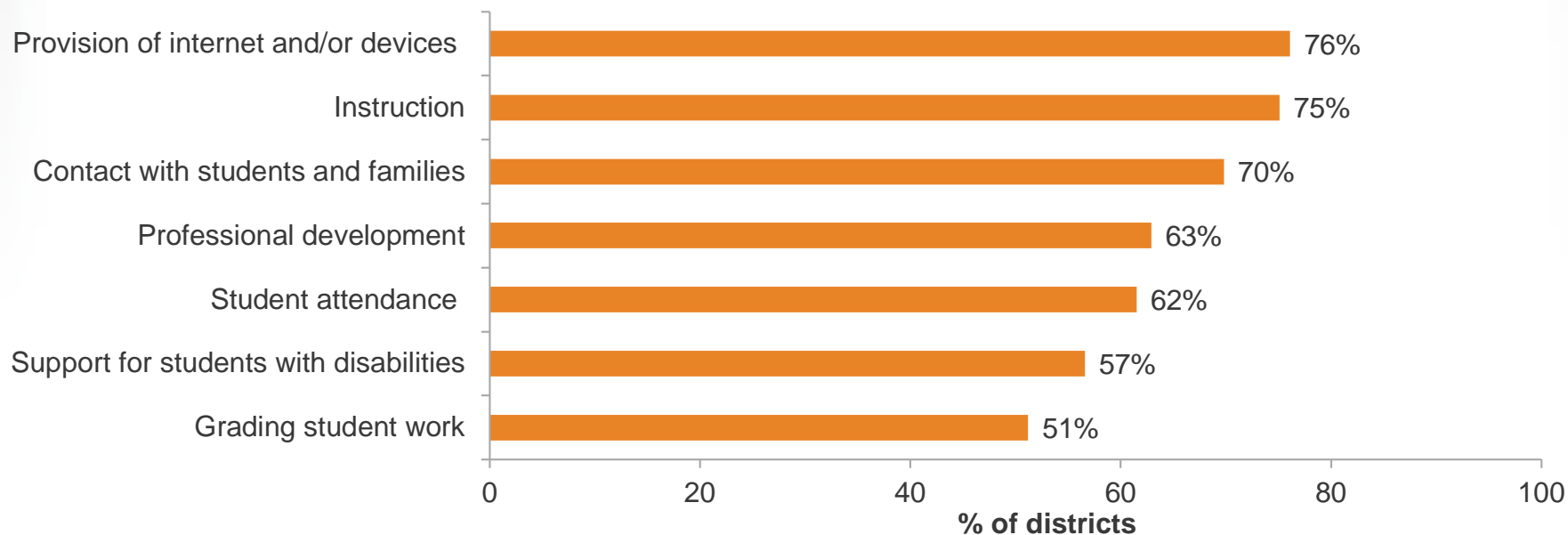
In-person instruction is not equitably distributed

Instructional models in fall 2020



Most districts reported improvements since spring 2020

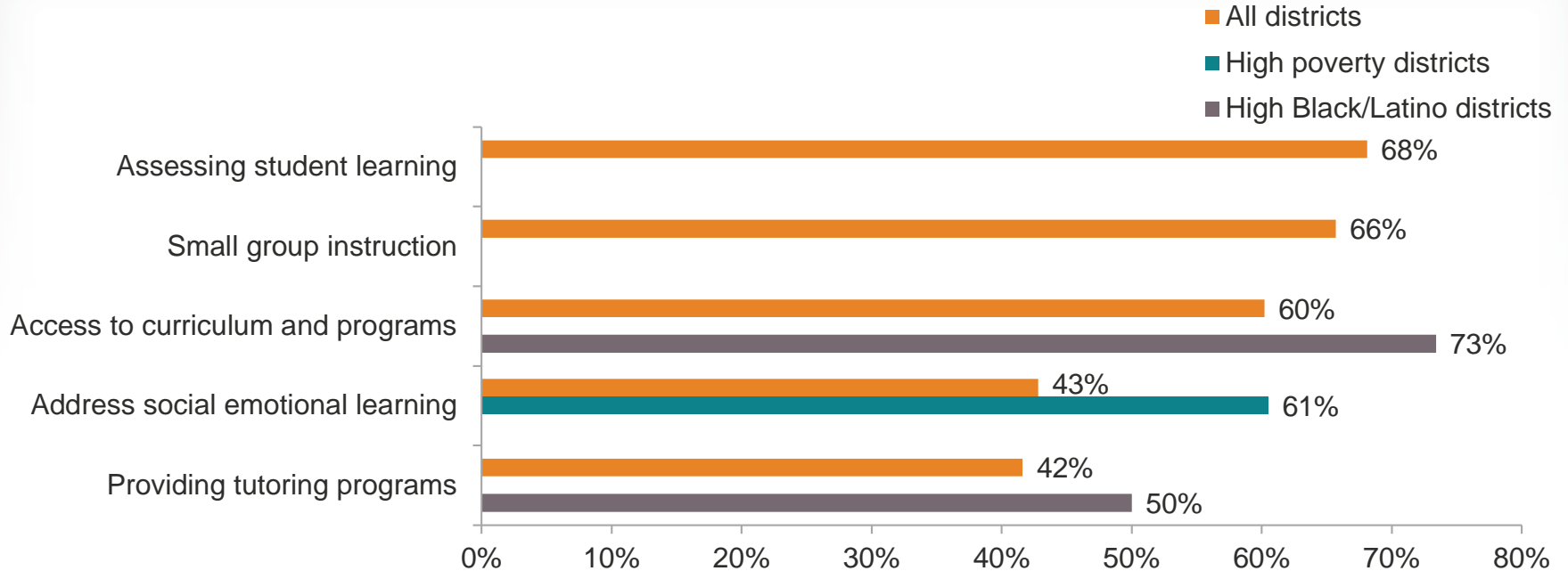
Compared to spring 2020, my district has improved in the following areas



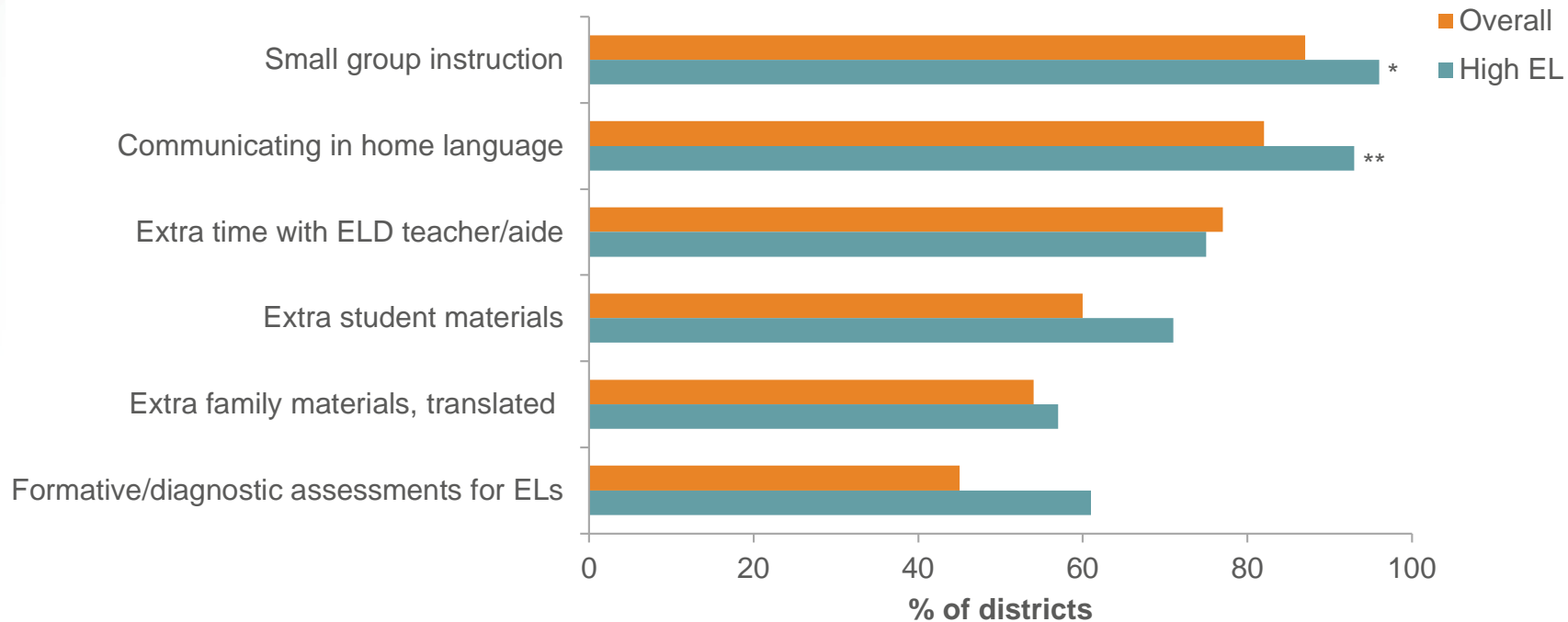
Most districts improved instruction in fall 2020

- Most students in grades 1–12 received at least 3 hours of instructional activities
 - At 15% of districts, middle school students received 6+ hours
 - At 22% of districts, high school students received 6+ hours
 - 2020–21 budget acts require 6 hours for grades 4–12
- Most instruction was live
- Most districts (59%) focused on new material
- More efforts to align with ELA and math standards than science or ELD

Learning loss strategies varied by district

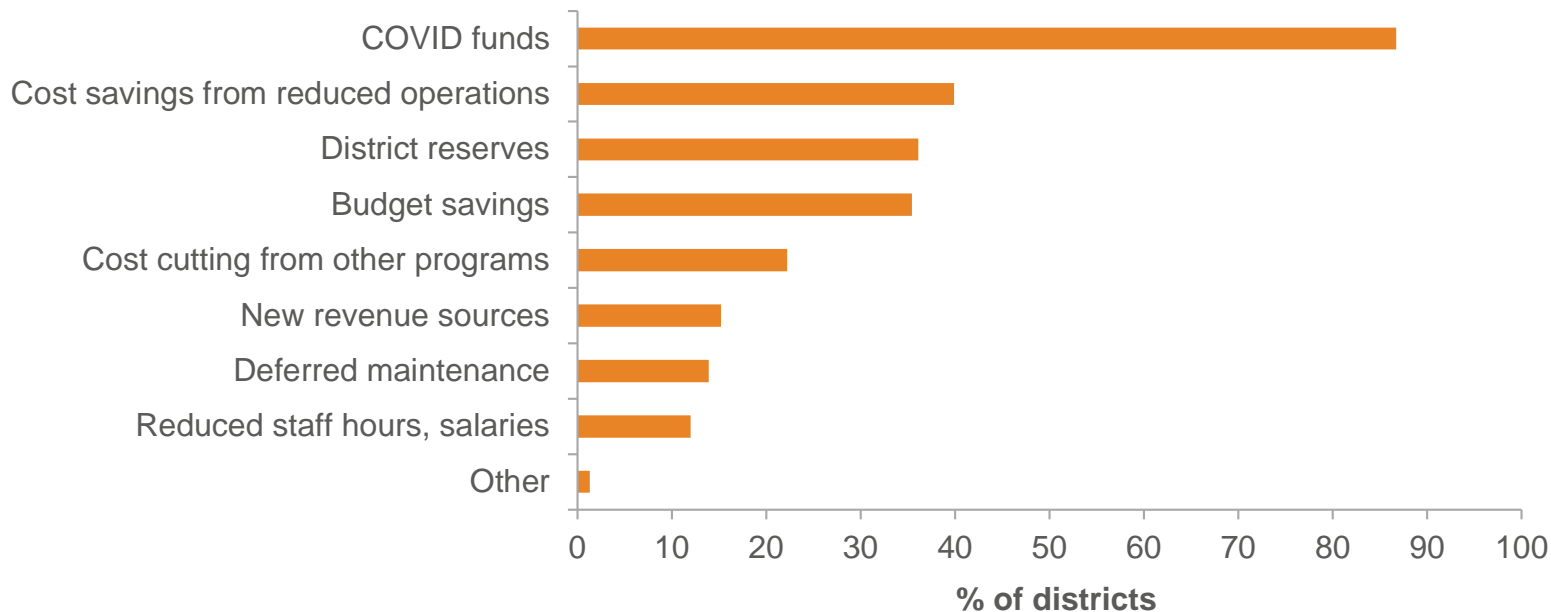


Most districts provided extra resources to English Learners



Federal support was critical to finance higher expenses

How were COVID related expenditures financed?



Policy Recommendations

- Sustain additional state and federal support
- Continue investments to close the digital divide
- Prioritize in-person instruction for English Learners, students with disabilities, and foster children
- Ensure funding and services to address mental health and enhance social-emotional learning
- Expand extended learning opportunities, particularly students in underserved communities

Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.