



Dudley-Charlton Resource Use Review

Summary of Findings

June 2024

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Background on Report




Objectives for ERS and DCRSD Partnership

Context and Goals

- **Dudley-Charlton Mission:** Advance the knowledge and well-being of our children and our community
- **The Challenge:** Making this vision a reality for all students and school community members, while recognizing and working within existing resource constraints

What is Needed

- Aligning use of resources – people, time and money – to highest-priority (and highest-potential) strategies for supporting students, teachers, and the broader school/district community
- Making targeted, judicious trade-offs to support these strategic investments



By the end of these two weeks, we will identify a subset of **resource allocation insights** and **high-potential resource shifts** to support Dudley-Charlton in strengthening alignment between resource use and strategy

ERS Approach

ERS Process

- **Level-set** on student demographics, achievement, and district funding levels
- **Test hypotheses** on staffing, central office spending, school spending, and school design
- **Identify potential opportunities to shift resources** – considering both *how much DCRSD* invests in different functions and *how well DCRSD* deploys these resources

Data Utilized

- Interviewed DCRSD staff and stakeholders
- Analyzed DCRSD data
- Compiled and analyzed publicly available DESE data
- Assessed DCRSD resource use across key areas
- Utilized ERS comparative district database and expertise on resource use

Executive Summary



ERS reviewed DCRSD data across four broad areas



**Human
Capital**



**School Funding
& Resource
Sharing Across
Schools**



**School
Design**



**Central Office
and School
Support**

ERS identified some initial resource allocation insights across these four areas

	Current State
Human Capital	Educator Workforce: Overall, DCRSD has a large population of experienced teachers, which corresponds to higher average teacher salaries than most peer districts. In contrast, many principals are new to their roles, as are most paraprofessionals.
	Professional Learning: Teacher leader roles and teacher collaboration time, which can be key ways to support teachers, are utilized differently across and within schools.
Funding & Resource Sharing Across Schools	Funding: While the district spends in line with comparisons on most areas, it spends more than comparison districts on instruction and less on administration.
	Resource Sharing: While there is some resource centralization and sharing across schools, geography and school structures may limit additional opportunities for resource sharing.
School Design	Personalized Time & Attention: There is little standardization for multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) across the district, and all principals shared noted that refining MTSS is a priority.
	Special Education: SWD identification rates are different across schools and disability types; special education staffing is lower in some areas than others, both across schools and when compared to peer districts.
Central Office and School Support	Management Capacity: DCRSD spends less on administration than its peer districts, which corresponds to less formal and consistent protocols, procedures and support structures.
	Transparency: Across departments and levels, staff report a lack of clarity in how dollars are allocated to schools on an annual basis, outside of staffing changes driven by enrollment.

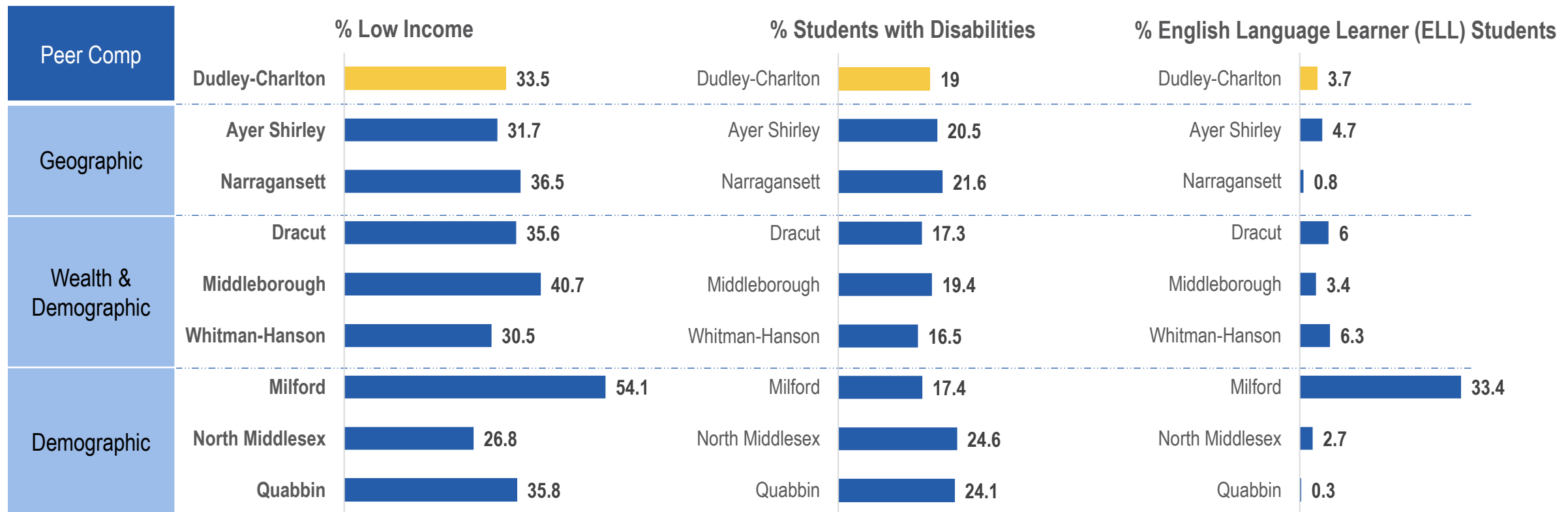
Context Building

ERS reviewed DCRSD overall student enrollment and achievement data, as well as funding and staffing context overtime



As part of this analysis, ERS reviewed Dudley-Charlton (DCRSD) data compared to peer districts*

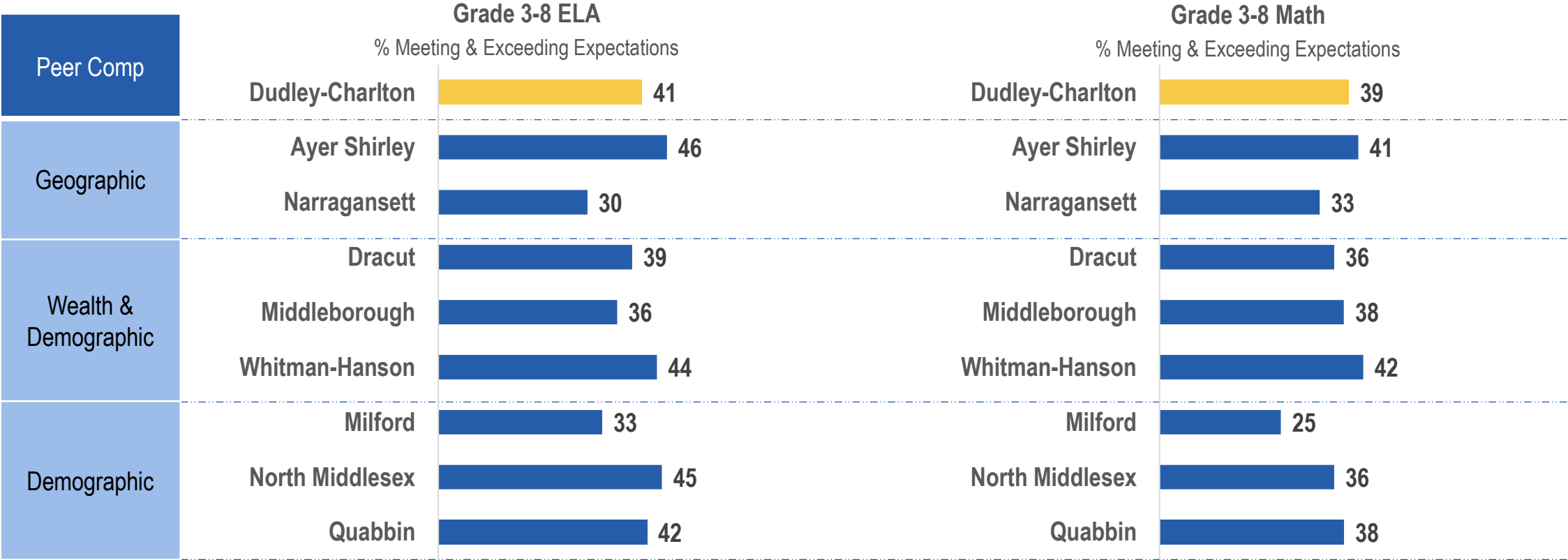
% Student Enrollment, Dudley-Charlton vs. MA Peer Districts, '23-24



*Peer districts were chosen based on DCRSD recommendations for geography/size and DESE RADAR recommendations for wealth and demographic comparability

MCAS results in DCRSD are generally on par with peer districts in early grades

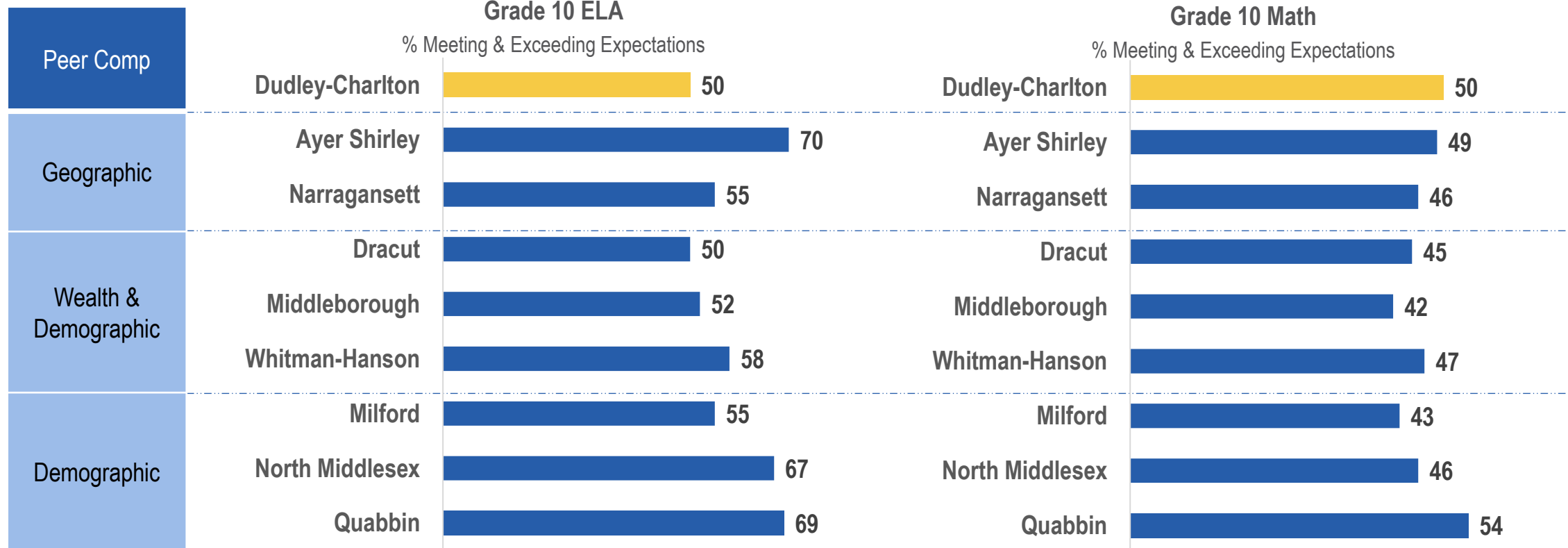
Grade 3-8 MCAS Results, Dudley-Charlton vs. MA Peer Districts, '23-24



Source: ERS Analysis; [DESE Statewide Next Generation MCAS Achievement Results, 23-24](#)

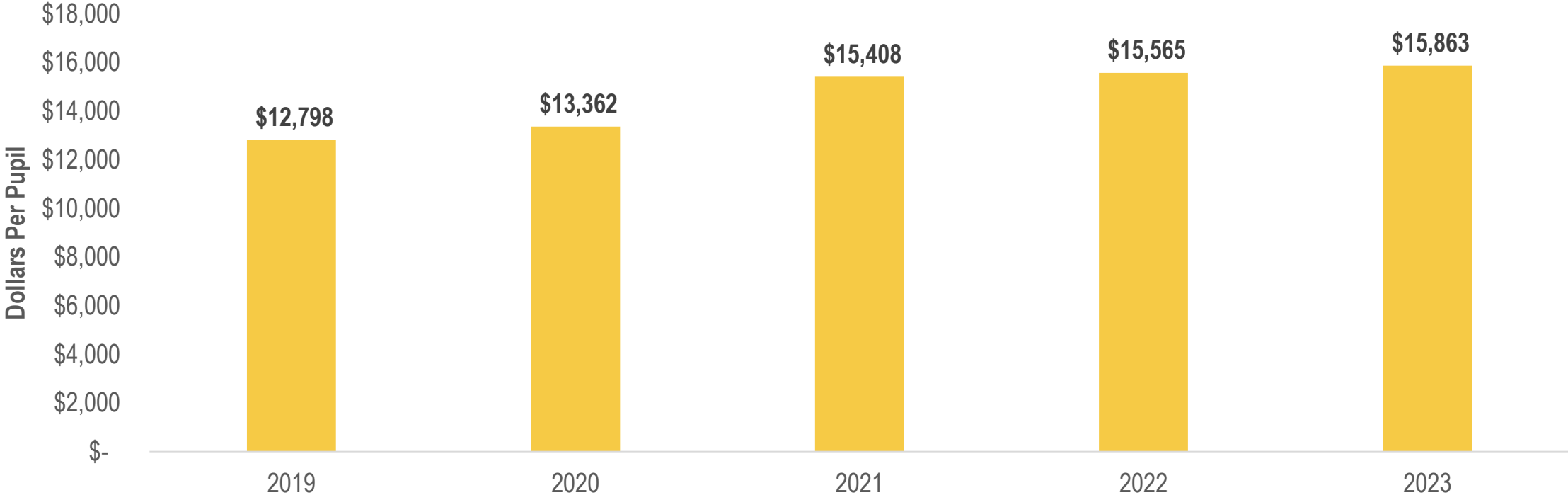
Although ELA results are lower for 10th Graders

Grade 10 MCAS Results, Dudley-Charlton vs. MA Peer Districts, '23-24



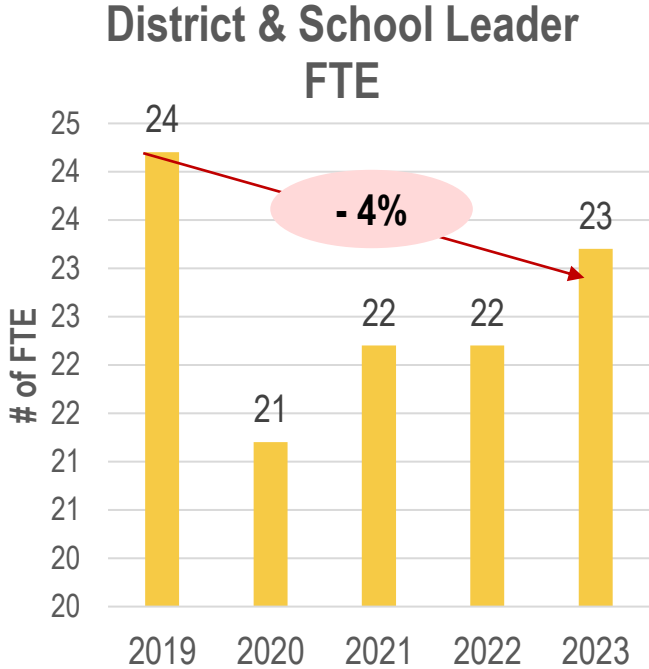
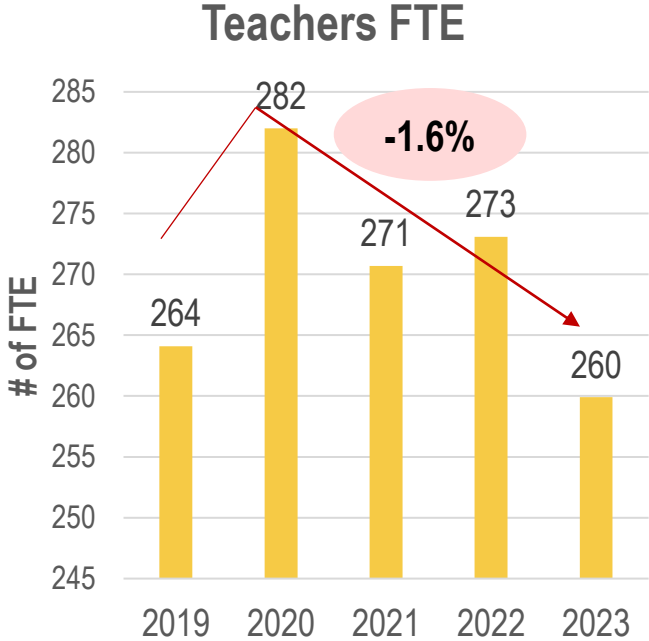
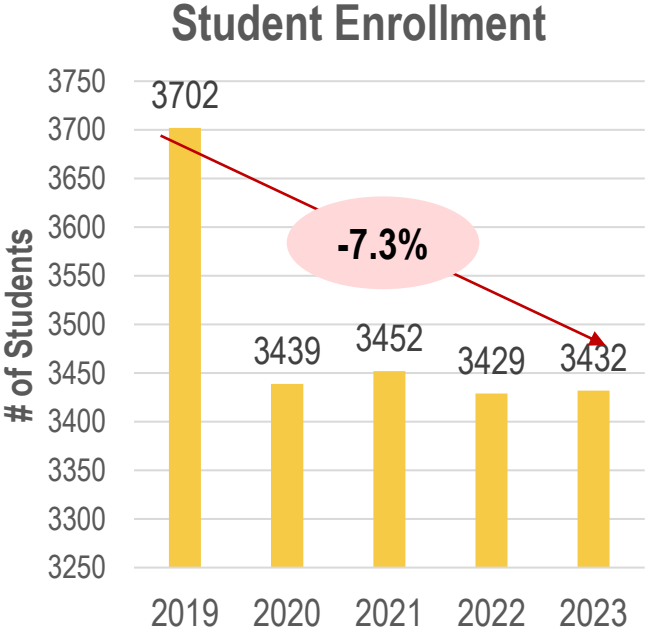
Per-pupil funding in DCRSD has increased over time...

DCRSD Dollar Per Pupil Funding, 2019-2023



Source: ERS Analysis; [DESE Statewide All Funds Per Pupil Expenditures Report, 19-23](#)

...but 2023 DCRSD student enrollment and FTE totals are lower than they were in 2019



Analytic Findings

ERS interviewed DCRSD staff and stakeholders, and analyzed DCRSD data and publicly available DESE data, to assess resource use across key areas



We reviewed DCRSD data across four broad areas



**Human
Capital**



**School Funding
& Resource
Sharing Across
Schools**

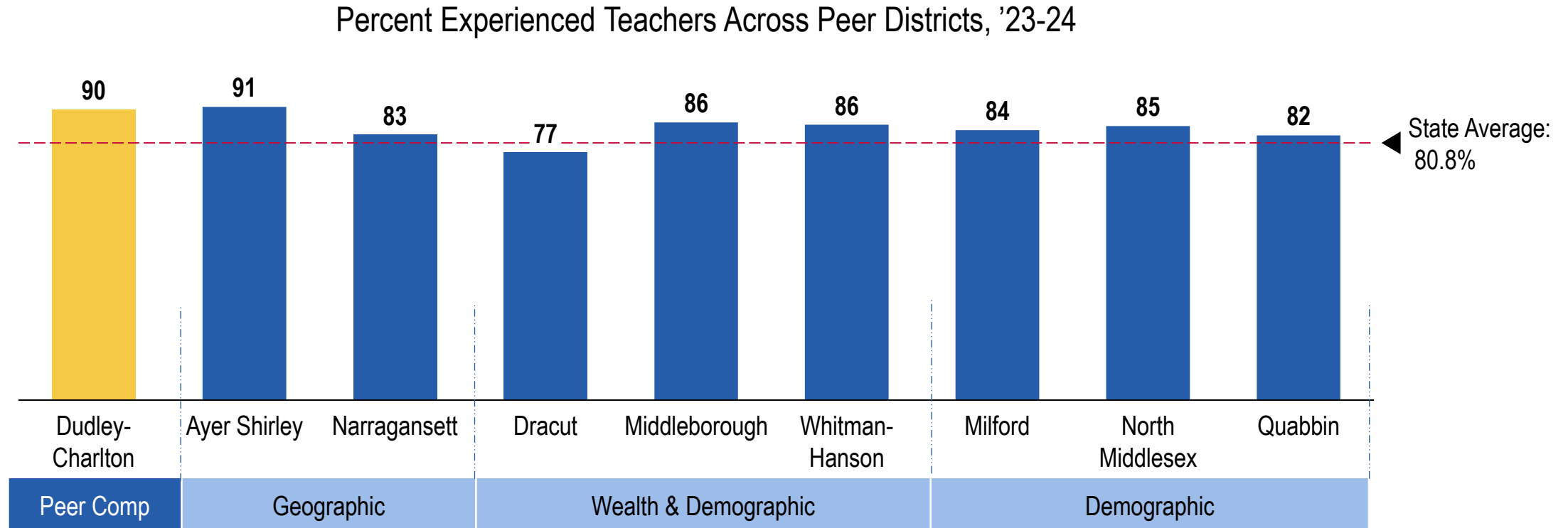


**School
Design**



**Central Office
and School
Support**

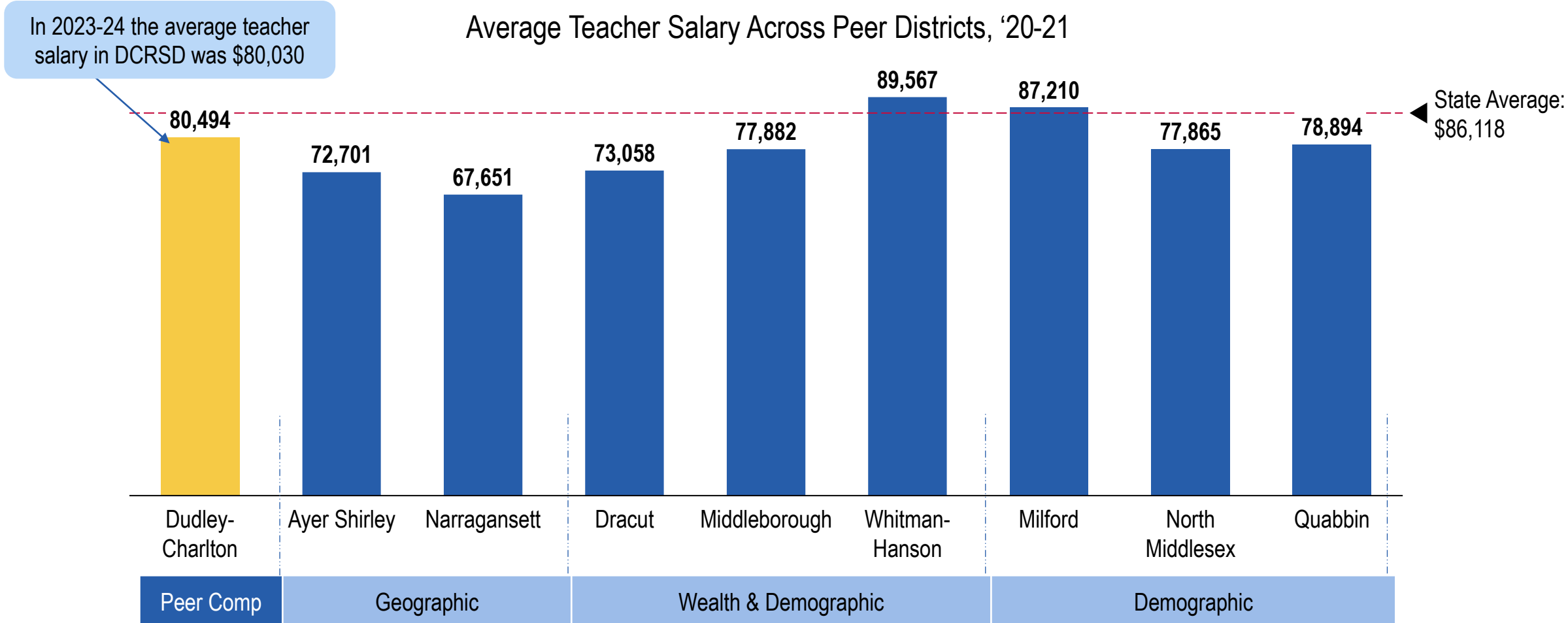
Among peer districts, DCRSD has one of the highest percentages of experienced teachers



What we've heard...

- Teacher retention is seen as a strength in DCRSD by both school and district leaders

Which contributes to average teacher salaries historically being higher than peer districts



Source: ERS Analysis; [DESE Statewide Teacher Salaries Report, 20-21](#); DCRSD Payroll Data, 23-24

DCRSD also has higher starting teaching salaries than many peer districts

DCRSD Starting Teacher Salaries for '23-24

District Name	Step 1 Range	Step 2 Range	Step 3 Range	Step 4 Range	Step 5 Range
Dudley Charlton	\$54.3-65.4	\$56.4-67.5	\$58.7-69.7	\$60.8-71.7	\$63.0-74.0
Ayer Shirley	\$49.6-62.8	\$51.4-64.8	\$53.2-66.6	\$55.0-68.7	\$57.7-72.9
Narragansett	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available
Dracut*	\$50.1-63.9	\$52.7-66.5	\$55.3-69.1	\$57.9-71.6	\$60.9-74.8
Middleborough	\$51.8-60.7	\$53.5-63.3	\$55.3-66.0	\$58.7-69.3	\$61.6-72.3
Whitman-Hanson	\$51.5-64.0	\$54.5-68.9	\$57.7-72.1	\$61.1-75.5	\$64.4-78.8

Geographic

Wealth & Demographics

*Using information for teachers hired after 7/1/2015

While salaries for experienced teachers are in line with peer districts

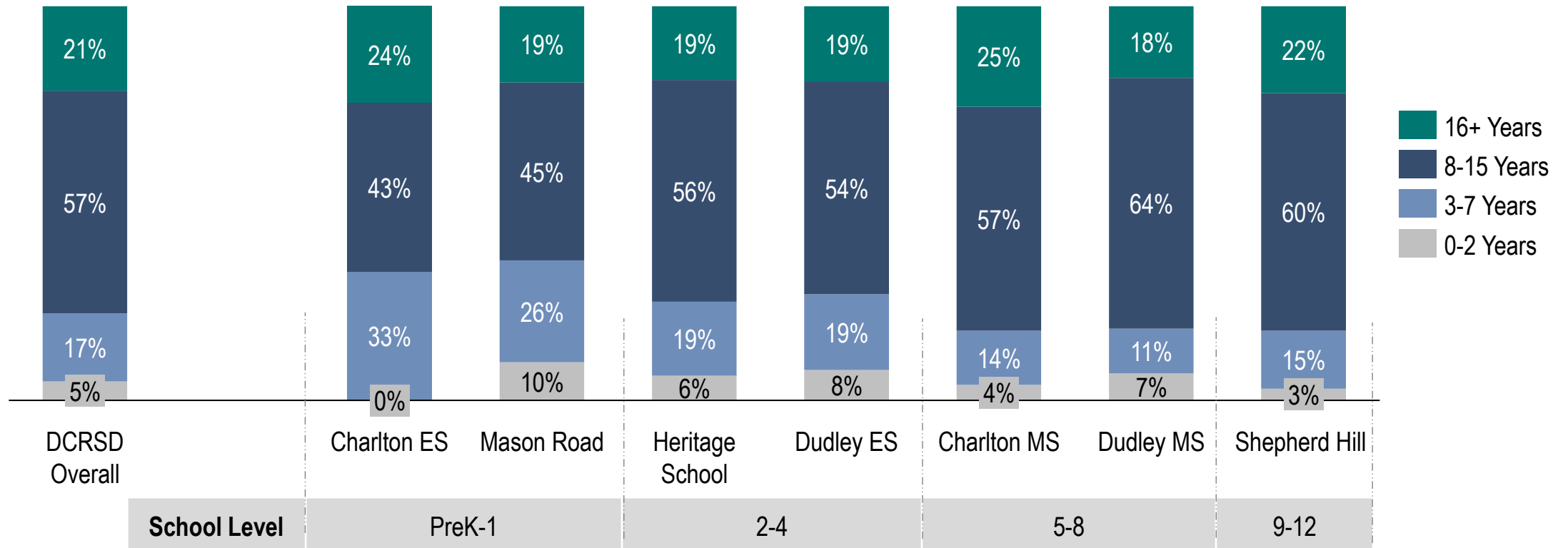
DCRSD Experienced Teacher Salaries for '23-24

	District Name	Step 6 Range	Step 7 Range	Step 8 Range	Step 9 Range	Step 10 Range
	Dudley Charlton	\$65.1-76.2	\$67.3-78.3	\$69.7-80.6	\$72.3-83.2	\$75.0-85.9
Geographic	Ayer Shirley	\$57.7-72.9	\$58.6-75.8	\$59.5-78.3	\$60.4-81.2	\$61.3-85.2
	Narragansett	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available
Wealth & Demographics	Dracut*	\$63.9-77.9	\$66.9-80.9	\$70.3-84.8	\$74.0-88.5	\$77.8-92.8
	Middleborough	\$64.7-75.3	\$67.9-78.6	\$71.2-81.9	\$75.3-85.9	\$79.7-90.4
	Whitman-Hanson	\$68.1-82.4	\$71.7-86.1	\$75.1-89.4	\$76.2-92.8	\$78.1-97.4

*Using information for teachers hired after 7/1/2015

The majority of teachers in DCRSD have more than 8 years of experience

Teacher Years of Experience* Across Schools, '23-24



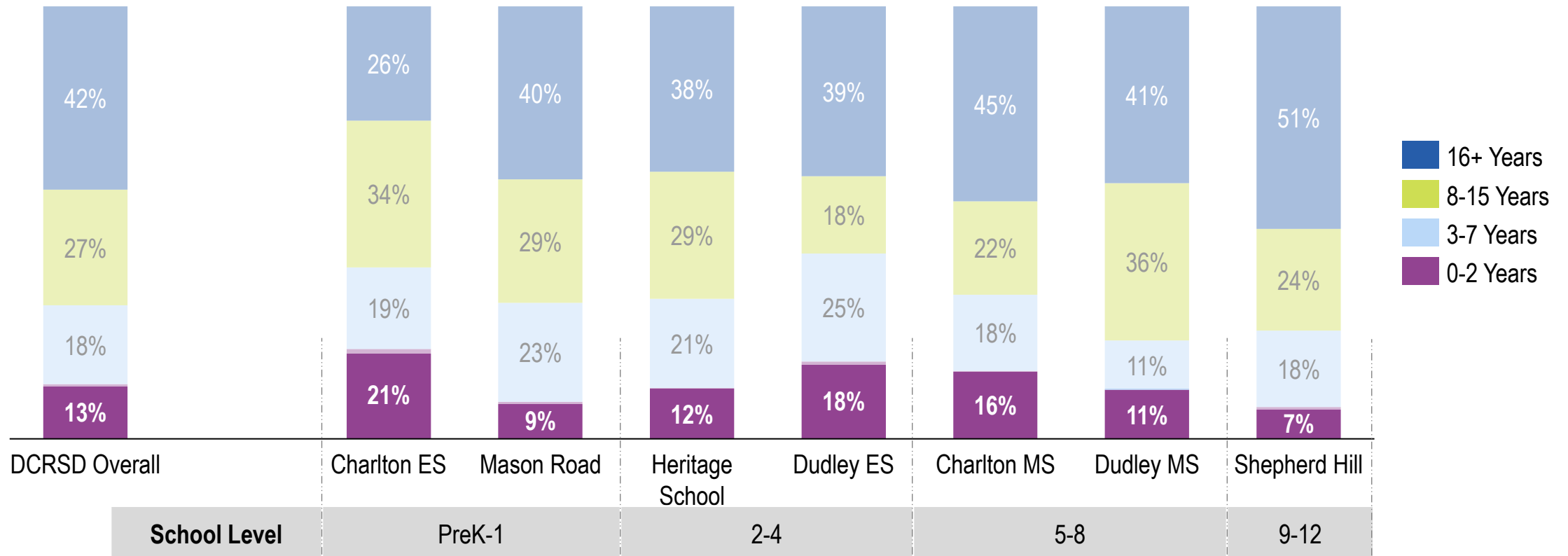
*This analysis converts step and lane data to teacher years of experience, see appendix for details

Source: ERS Analysis; DCRSD Payroll Data, 23-34

Data note: Title 1 teachers excluded; years of experience based on district pay step data, see appendix for conversion

But some schools have teachers that are new to working in that school and thus might need support

Teacher Years in Position* Across Schools, '23-24

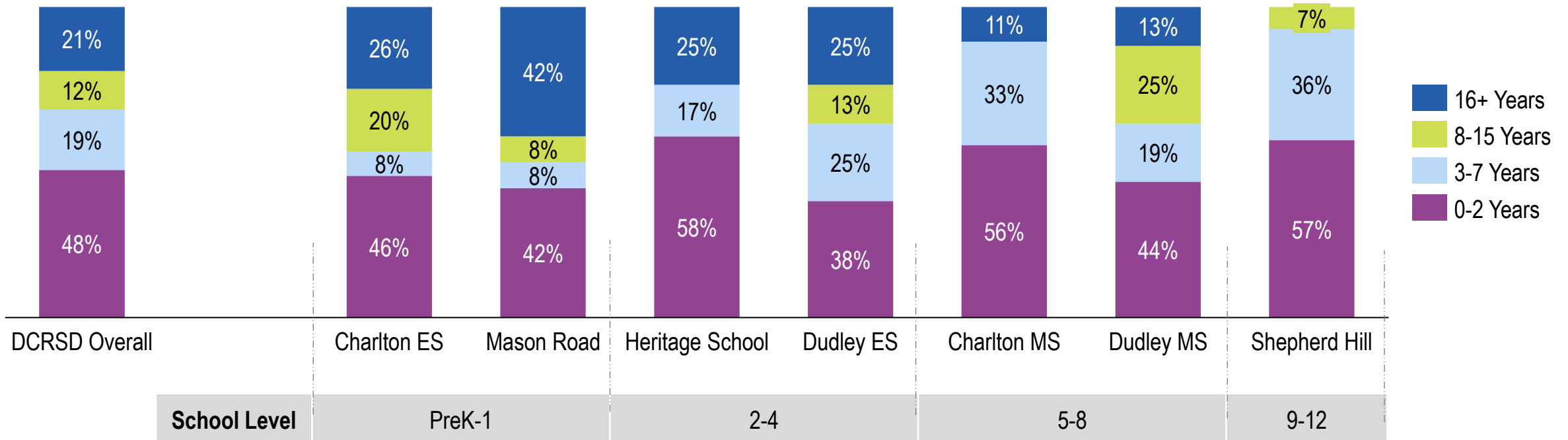


*Years in position represents the number of years they have worked in the district based on their hire date

Source: ERS Analysis; DCRSD Payroll Data, 23-34

Almost half of paraprofessionals are new to DCRSD in the 2023-24 school year

Paraprofessional Years in Position* Across Schools, '23-24



What we've heard...






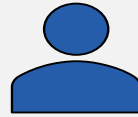





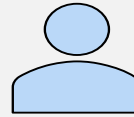
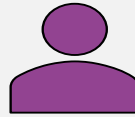
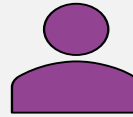

- There is little training or support for new paraprofessionals, especially those who work in specialty programs

*Years in position represents the number of years they have worked in the district based on their hire date

Source: ERS Analysis; DCRSD Payroll Data, 23-34

Although school administration is experienced, 4/7 principals have been in that role for less than 3 years

School Leadership Years In Position* Across Schools

School Level	PreK-1		Grade 2-4		Grade 5-8		Grade 9-12
	Charlton ES	Mason Road	Heritage	Dudley ES	Charlton MS	Dudley MS	Shepard Hill
Assist. Principal	 No AP	 No AP	 No AP	 No AP	 16+	 16+	 8-15  16+
Principal	 0-2	 16+	 16+	 3-7	 0-2	 0-2	 0-2

* = Assistant Principal








What we've heard...

- Some principals who have APs still feel that their administration capacity is tight
- Many principals are using school-based student services roles to supplement administration duties

*Years in position represents the number of years they have worked in the district based on their hire date

Source: ERS Analysis; ERS Interviews with DCRSD staff















Educator collaboration structures look different across the district

School Level	PreK-1		Grade 2-4		Grade 5-8		Grade 9-12
	Charlton ES	Mason Road	Heritage	Dudley ES	Charlton MS	Dudley MS	Shepard Hill
School with daily teacher collaboration time during the school day							
Principal collaboration structures	Try to meet weekly to discuss best practices and collaboration opportunities				Communicate with one another regularly to discuss alignment		---

- Teachers have PLCs after school once a month for common planning but generally do not have common planning during the school day/week
- Data could be used more effectively to drive instruction if teachers had common planning time with specialists and SPED teachers

- Each MS teacher has one preparation period and one collaboration period daily with grade level teams
- HS teachers have one preparation period and one duty period per day, lead HS teachers have an additional non-teaching period that could be utilized for collaboration

All schools have teacher lead roles that could serve as areas of opportunity

School Level	PreK-1		Grade 2-4		Grade 5-8		Grade 9-12
	Charlton ES	Mason Road	Heritage	Dudley ES	Charlton MS	Dudley MS	Shepard Hill
School with teacher leader roles							
School with principals who think those teacher leader roles could be better utilized							

What we've heard...

- Most teacher leaders are serving as curriculum facilitators for their grades but expectations for, and implementation of, that role are inconsistent
- Teacher leaders are not formally utilized as trainers or coaches for other teachers
- In middle schools, having grade-level teacher leaders may not be as strategic as having content-specific teacher leaders, particularly as it relates to curriculum development and alignment

We reviewed DCRSD data across four broad areas



Human
Capital



School Funding
& Resource
Sharing Across
Schools



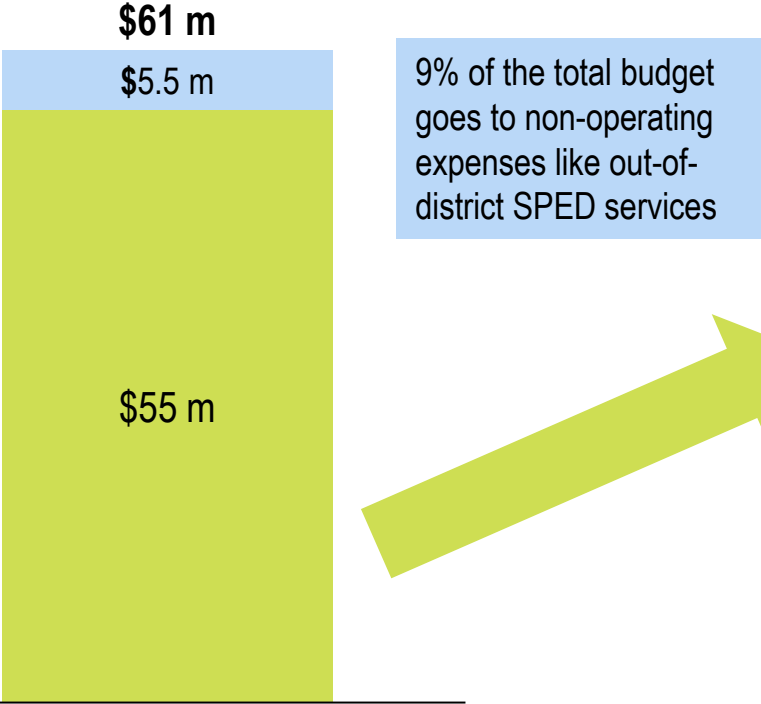
School
Design



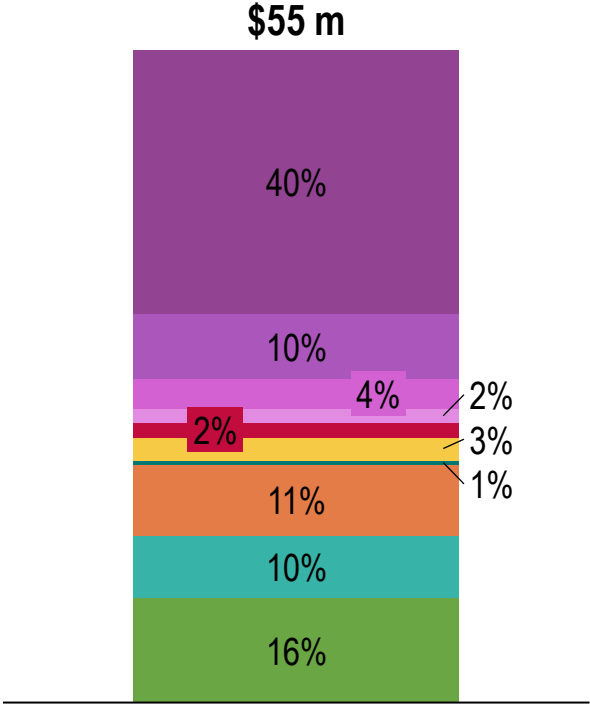
Central Office
and School
Support

DCRSD spends most of its PK-12 operating budget on instruction and the least on PD and administration

DCRSD Total Budget, '23-24



PreK-12 Operating Budget by Use, '23-24



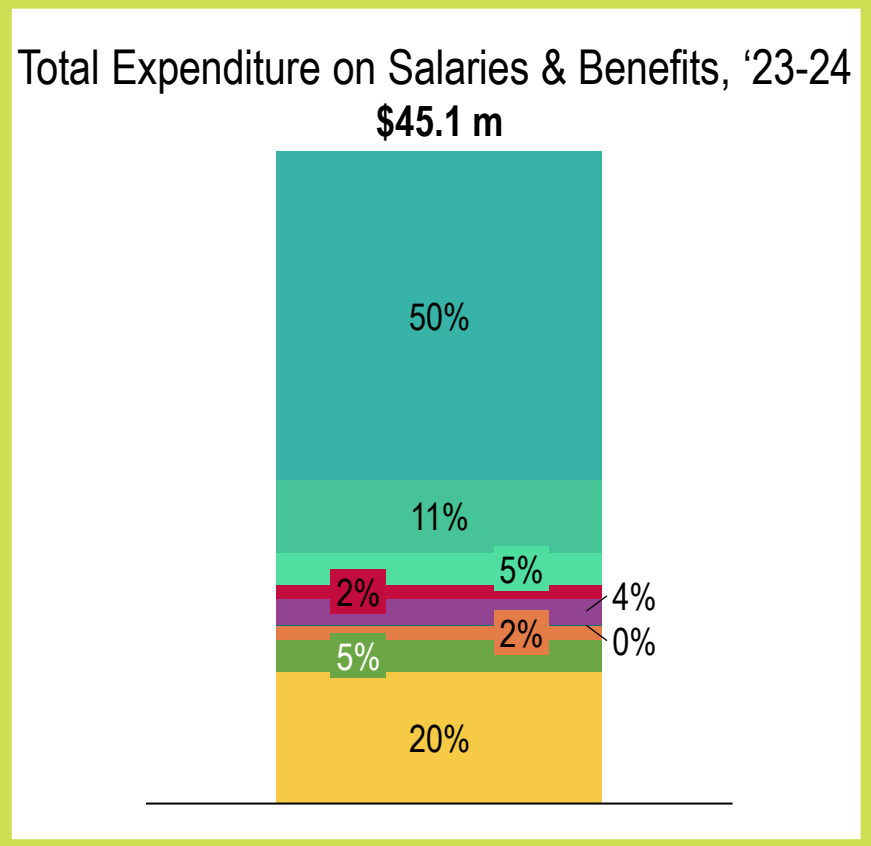
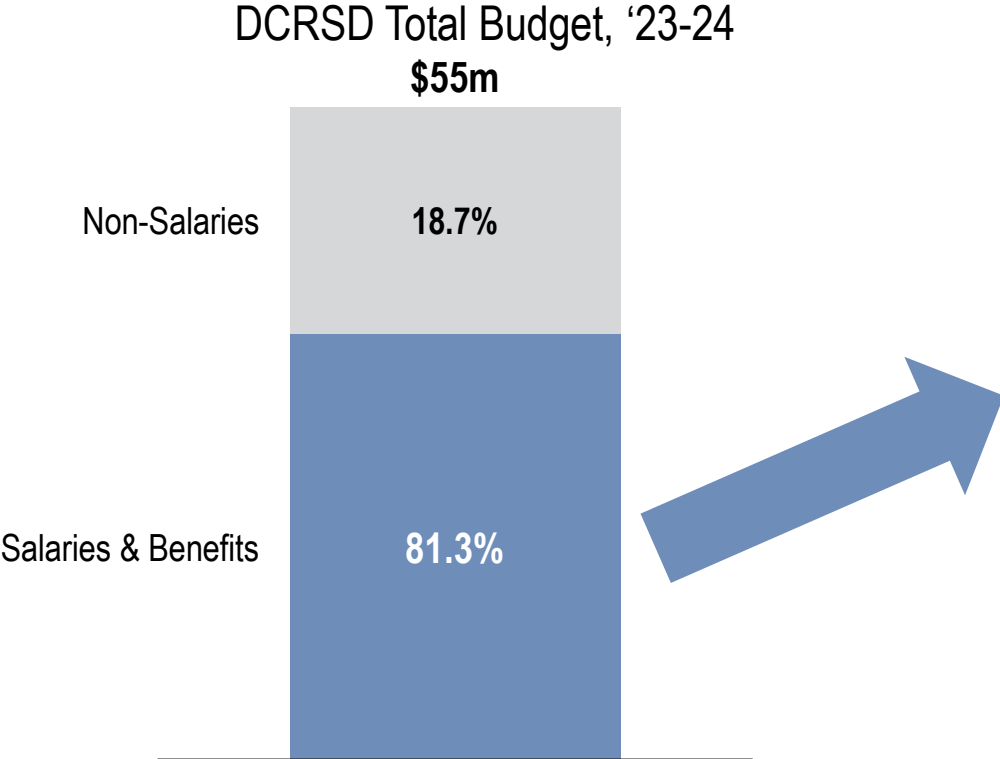
Key Takeaways

- 56% of the budget is spent on instruction (teachers, other teaching services, instructional leadership & materials)
- 2% of the budget is spent on administration
- 1% is spent on professional development

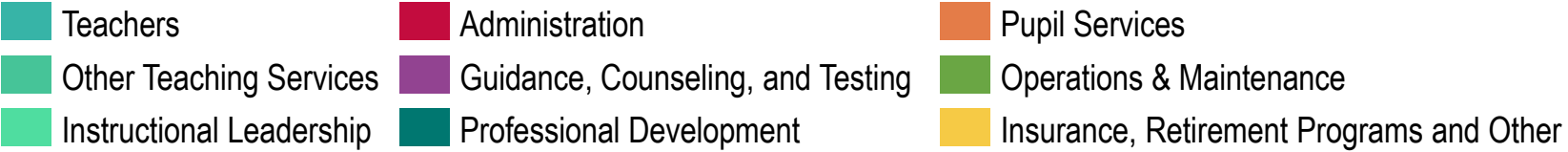
- Teachers
- Instructional Materials, Equipment & Technology
- Professional Development
- Insurance, Retirement Programs and Other
- Other Teaching Services
- Administration
- Pupil Services
- Operations & Maintenance
- Instructional Leadership
- Guidance, Counseling, and Testing

Source: ERS Analysis; DCRSD Budget & Expenditures Data, 23-24

DCRSD spends 81.3% of its PK-12 operating budget on salaries & benefits



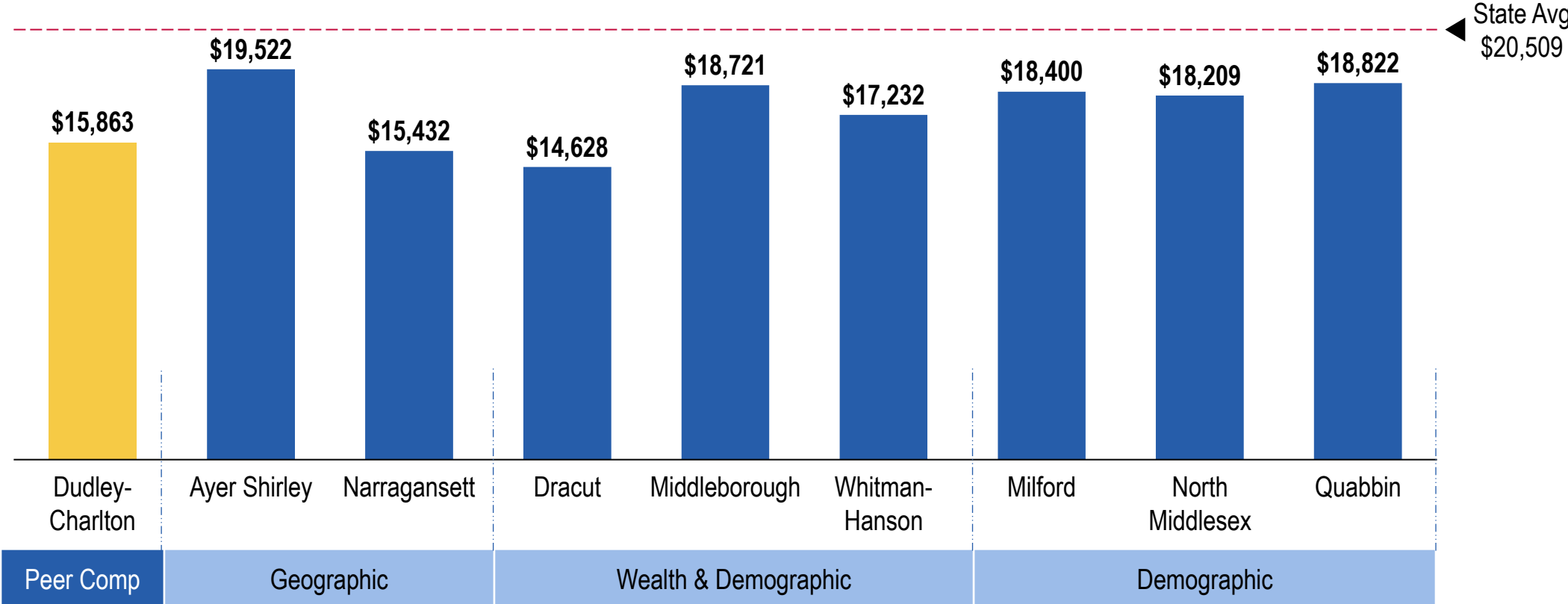
- Key Takeaways**
- 81.3% of the budget is spent on salaries and benefits across functions, 50% of which is for teacher salaries
 - Only 2% of the total salaries is spent on administration FTE
 - 20% of the salaries & benefits budget is spent on insurance and retirement programs



Source: ERS Analysis; DCRSD Budget & Expenditures Data, 23-24

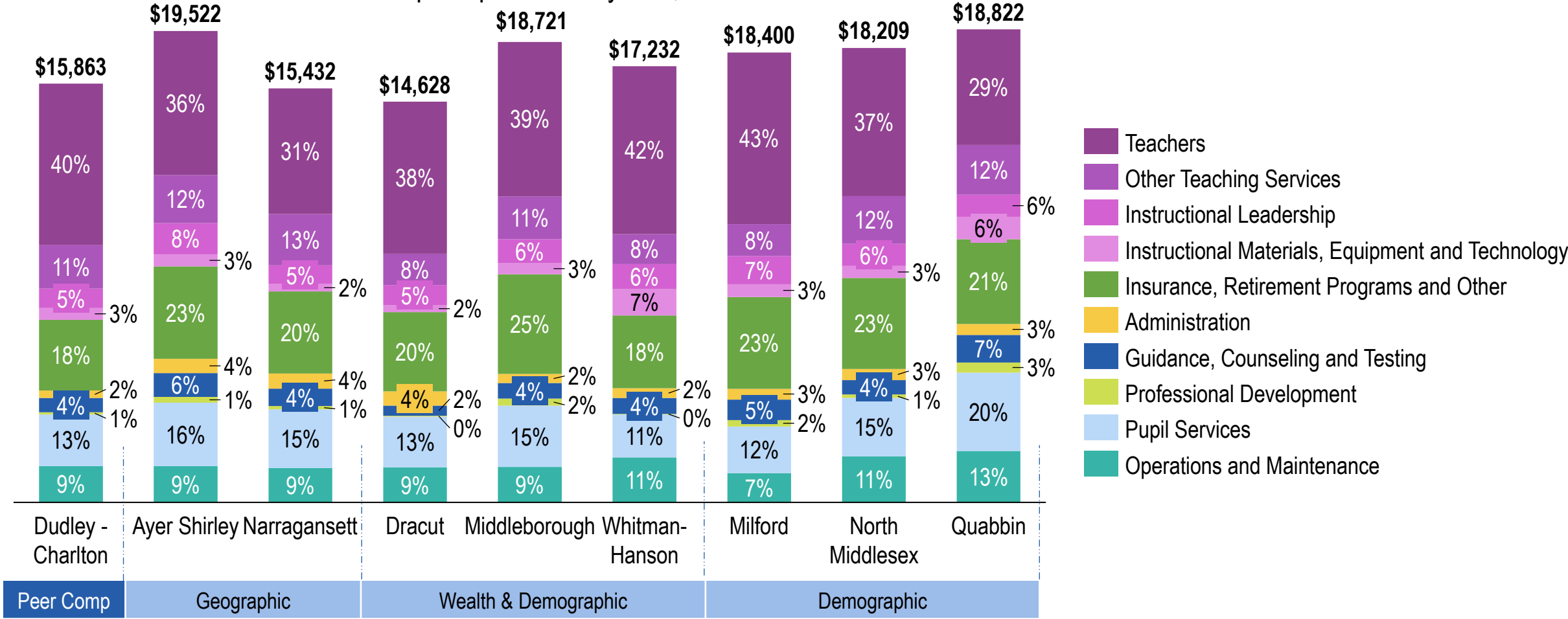
DCRSD's per pupil expenditure is lower than most of its peer districts

Per Pupil Expenditure Across Peer Districts, '22-23



Generally, DCRSD spends funding in similar ways to peer districts

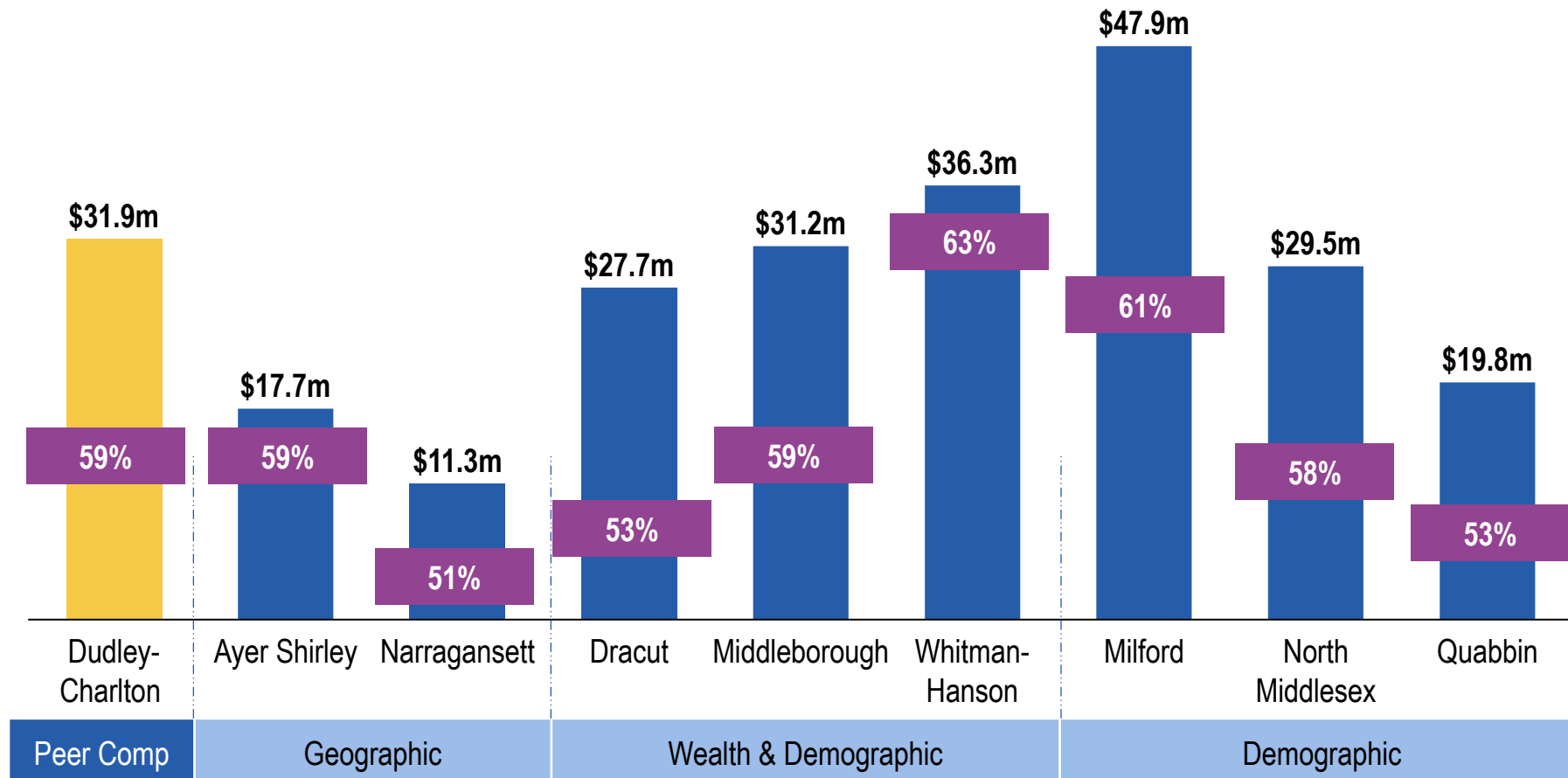
Per Pupil Expenditure by Use, 2023



Source: ERS Analysis; [DESE Statewide All Funds Per Pupil Expenditures Report, 19-23](#)

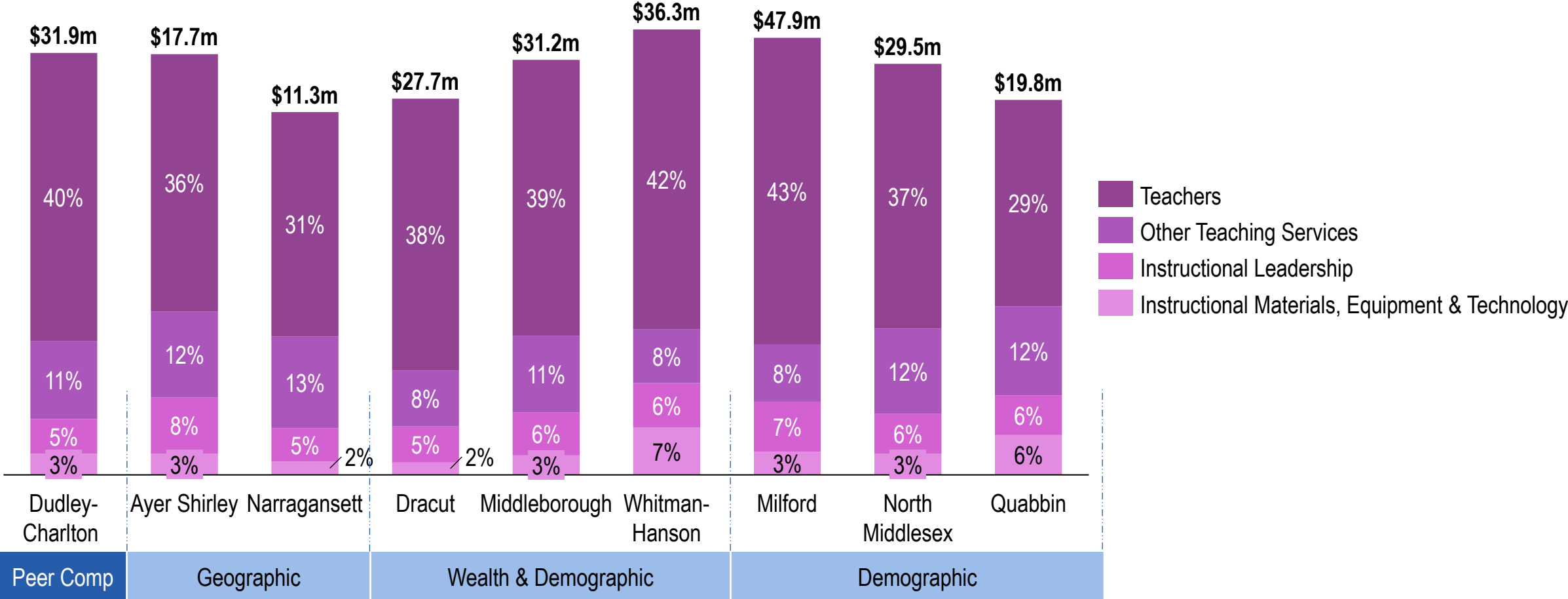
DCRSD's overall total instructional spending is similar to its peers

Total Instructional Staff & Materials Expenditure Across Peer Districts, '22-23



But within instruction, DCRSD spends less on instructional leadership than many of its peers

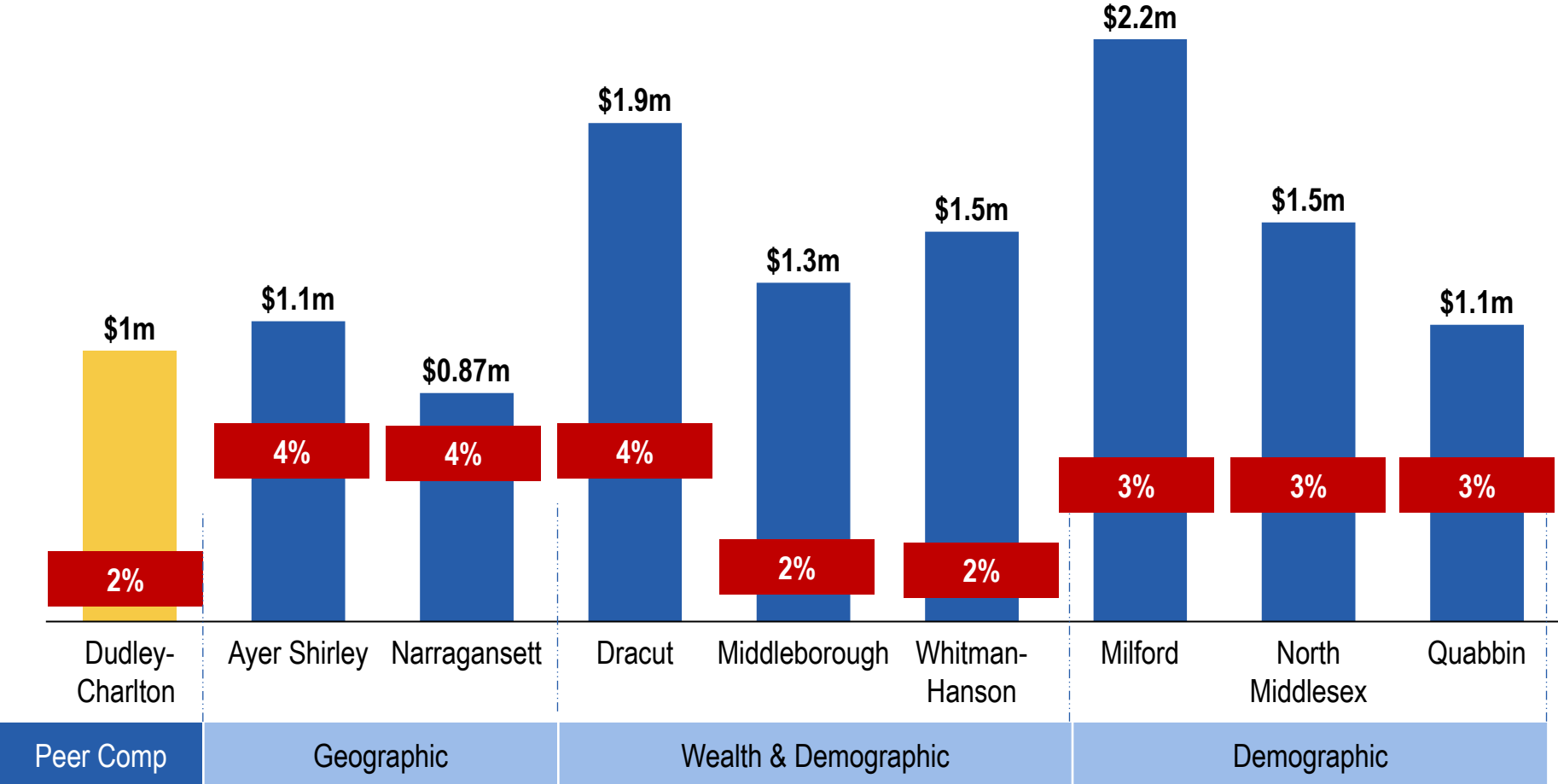
Total Instructional Staff & Materials Expenditure Across Peer Districts, '22-23



Source: ERS Analysis; [DESE Statewide All Funds Per Pupil Expenditures Report, 19-23](#)

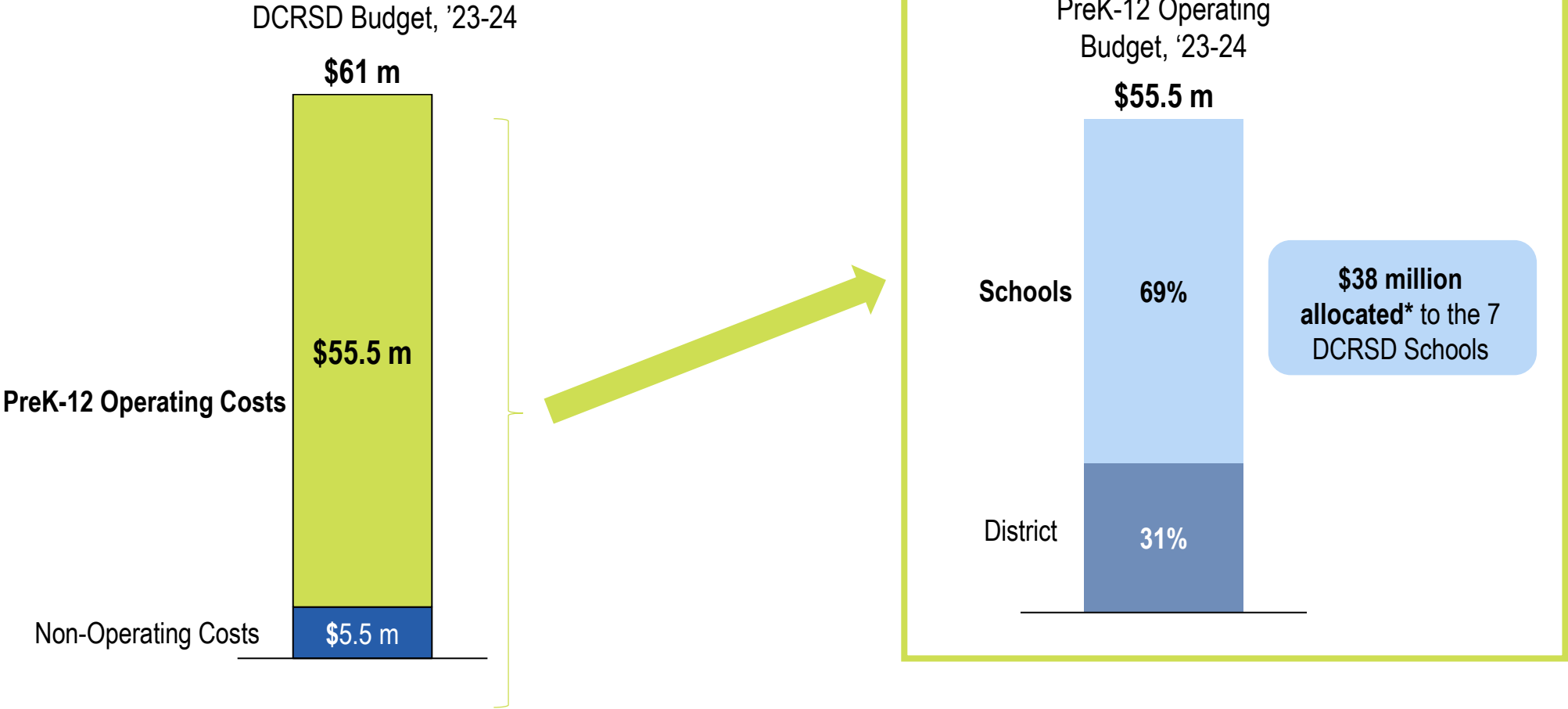
DCRSD spends less on administration than peer districts

Total Central Office Expenditure across Peer Districts, '22-23



Source: [DESE Statewide All Funds Per Pupil Expenditures Report, 19-23](#)

ERS school-level funding analyses are focused only on dollars allocated to schools in the DCRSD budget

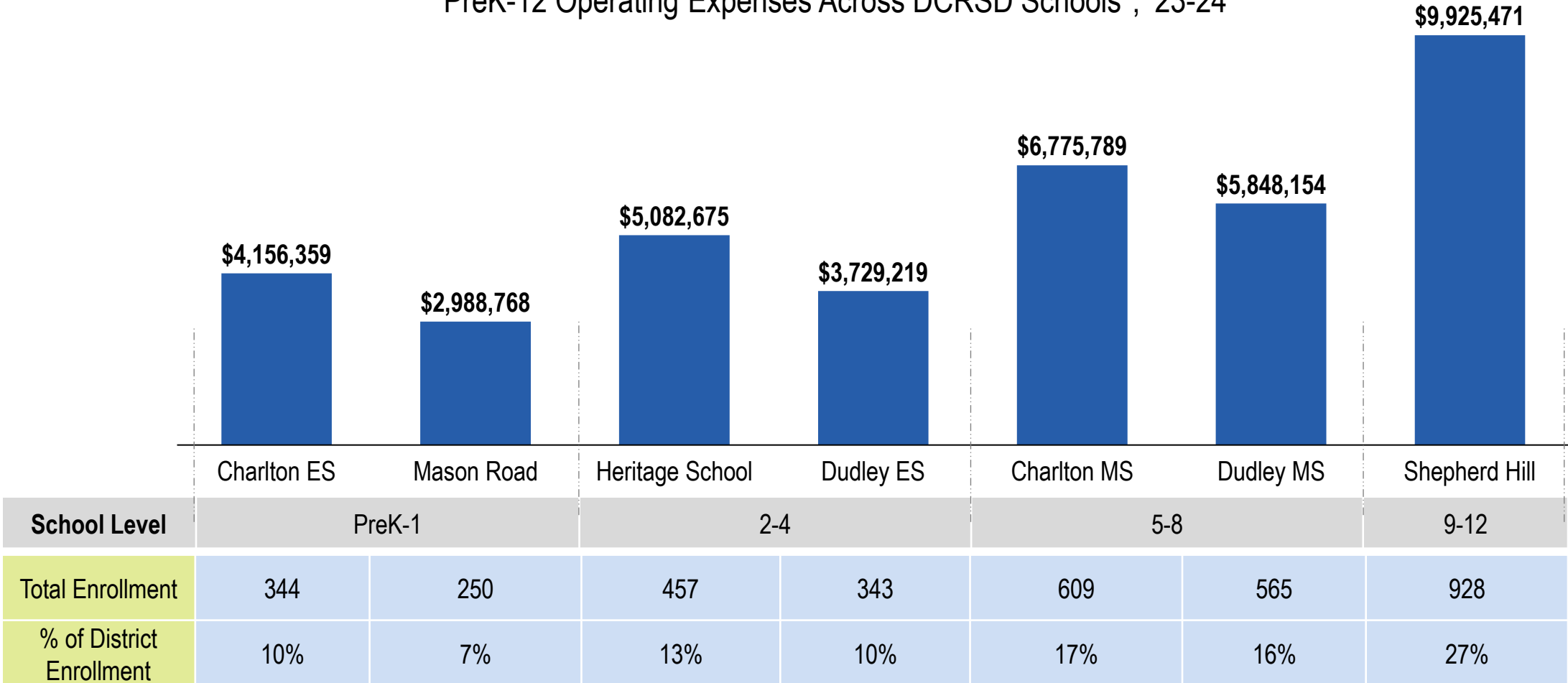


*Note: This does not represent all school funding; expenditures that support schools but are allocated to the district are not included in this analysis.

Source: ERS Analysis; DCRSD Budget & Expenditures Data, 23-24

Generally larger schools in DCRSD have higher operating expenses

PreK-12 Operating Expenses Across DCRSD Schools*, '23-24

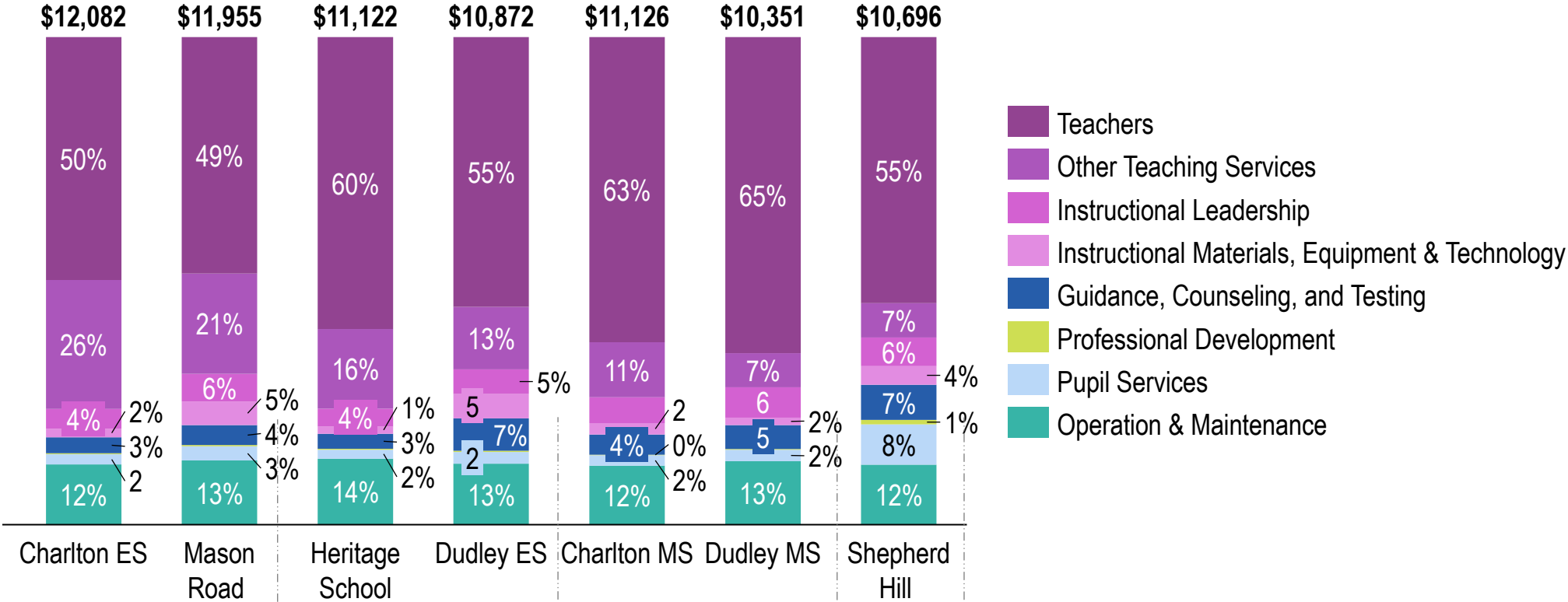


*Note: Schools have different SPED service offerings which may contribute to differences

Schools generally use funding in similar ways, but there is more variation with instructional spending

Per Pupil Expenditure across DCRSD Schools, '23-24

Note: The purple bars (teachers, other teaching services, instructional leadership, and instructional materials, equipment & technology) represent instructional spending



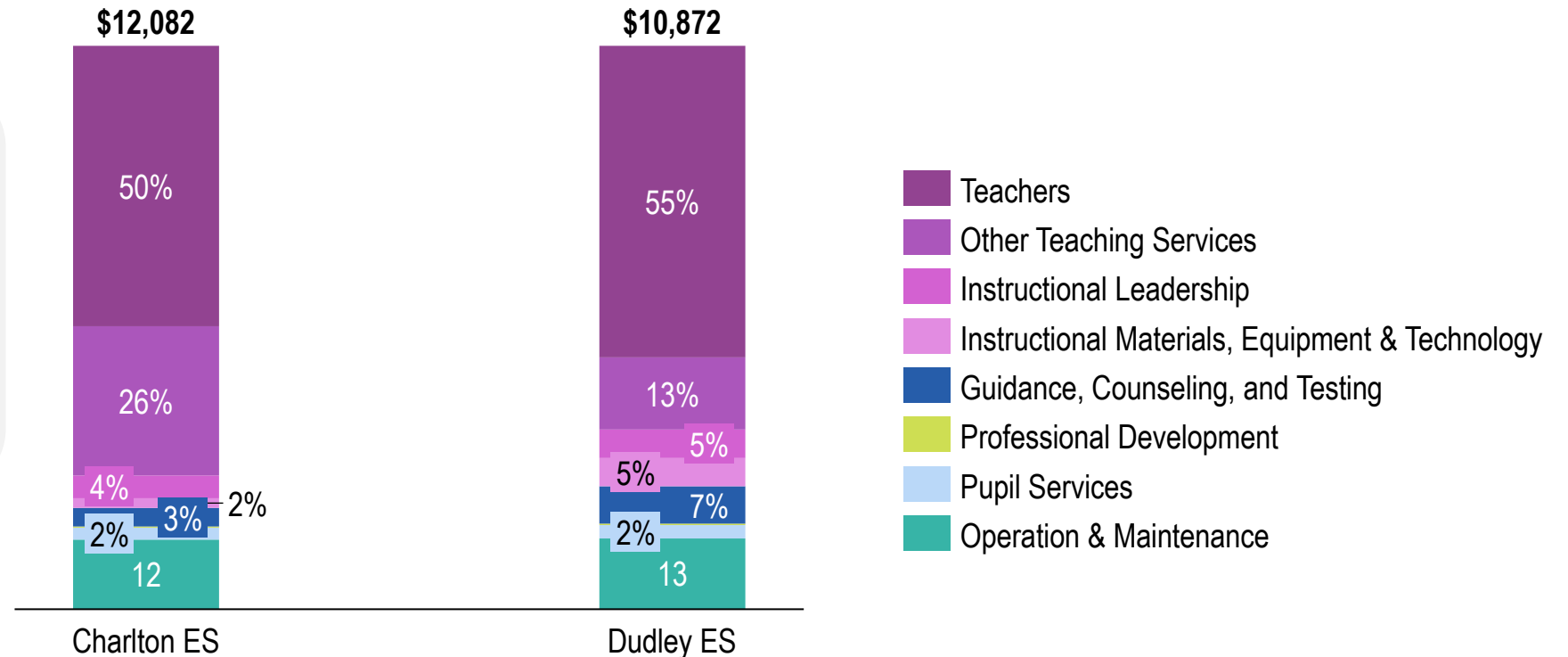
School Level	PreK-1		2-4		5-8		9-12
Total Enrollment	344	250	457	343	609	565	928
% of District Enrollment	10%	7%	13%	10%	17%	16%	27%

Source: ERS Analysis; DCRSD Budget & Expenditures Data, 23-24

For example, elementary schools with similar enrollment have different instructional spending patterns

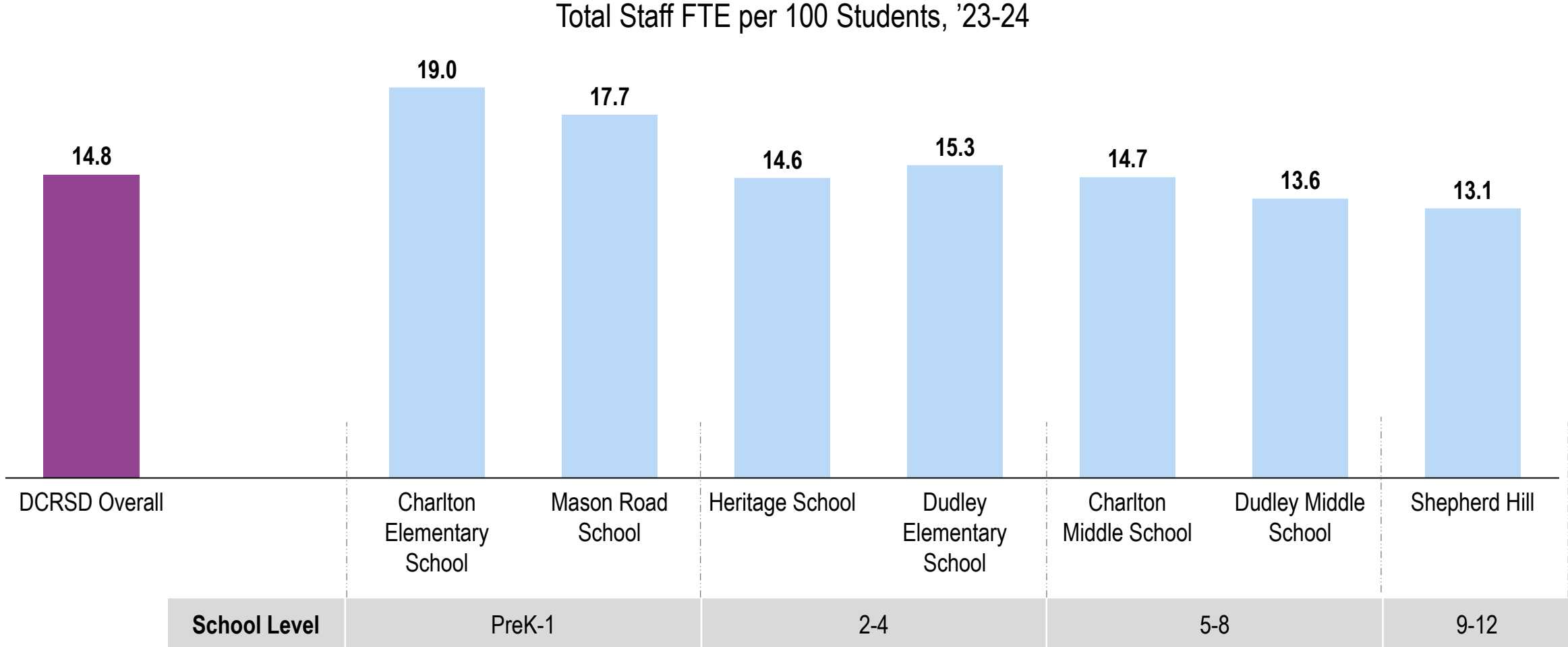
Per Pupil Expenditure across DCRSD Schools, '23-24

Key Takeaway
Charlton ES spends more on other teaching services and less on teachers than Dudley ES—this may be strategic due to different programming at the two schools



School Level	PreK-1	2-4
Total Enrollment	344	343
% of District Enrollment	10%	10%

Schools across DCRSD have a range of ~6 staff per 100 students with PreK – 1 schools having the most staff



Source: ERS Analysis; DCRSD Payroll Data, 23-34; DCRSD Student Data, 23-24

Schools in the district currently have limited cross-school resource sharing

Most schools operate independently of one another although there is some resource sharing across schools

- Primarily enrollment for ES/MS is based on town residence, with Dudley students attending Dudley schools and Charlton students attending Charlton schools
- Some positions, including some SPED coordinators, paraprofessionals, and specials teachers are shared across elementary schools, but this sometimes presents challenges with schedules and staffing capacity

Some resources are targeted to certain areas

- The ILC (Intensive Learning Center) is in Charlton and is focused on more intensive cognitive impairments; the therapeutic programs focused on emotional and behavioral challenges are located in Dudley
- The district is starting to enroll students with disabilities based on those program offerings rather than solely on town residence

We reviewed DCRSD data across four broad areas



**Human
Capital**



**School Funding
& Resource
Sharing Across
Schools**

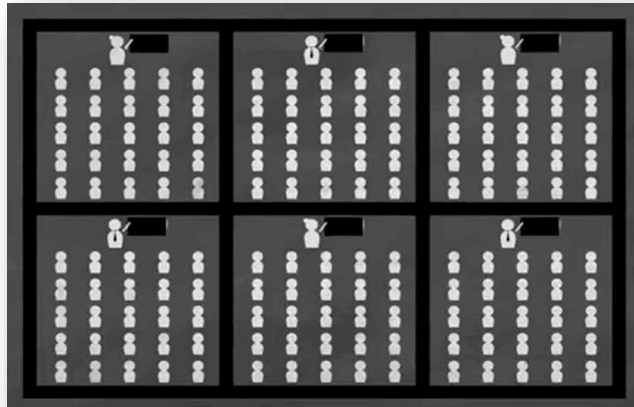


**School
Design**



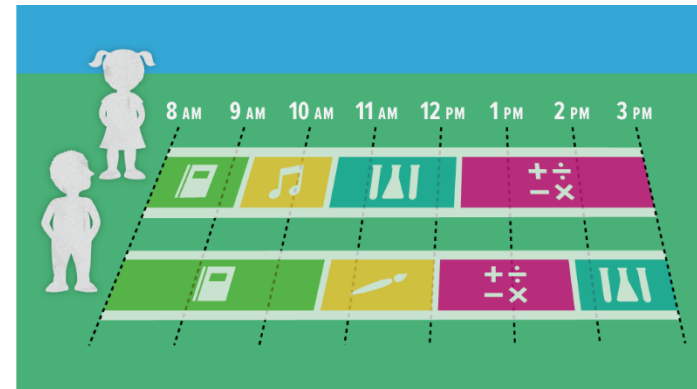
**Central Office
and School
Support**

Personalized time and attention is key to ensuring success of all students



Typical:

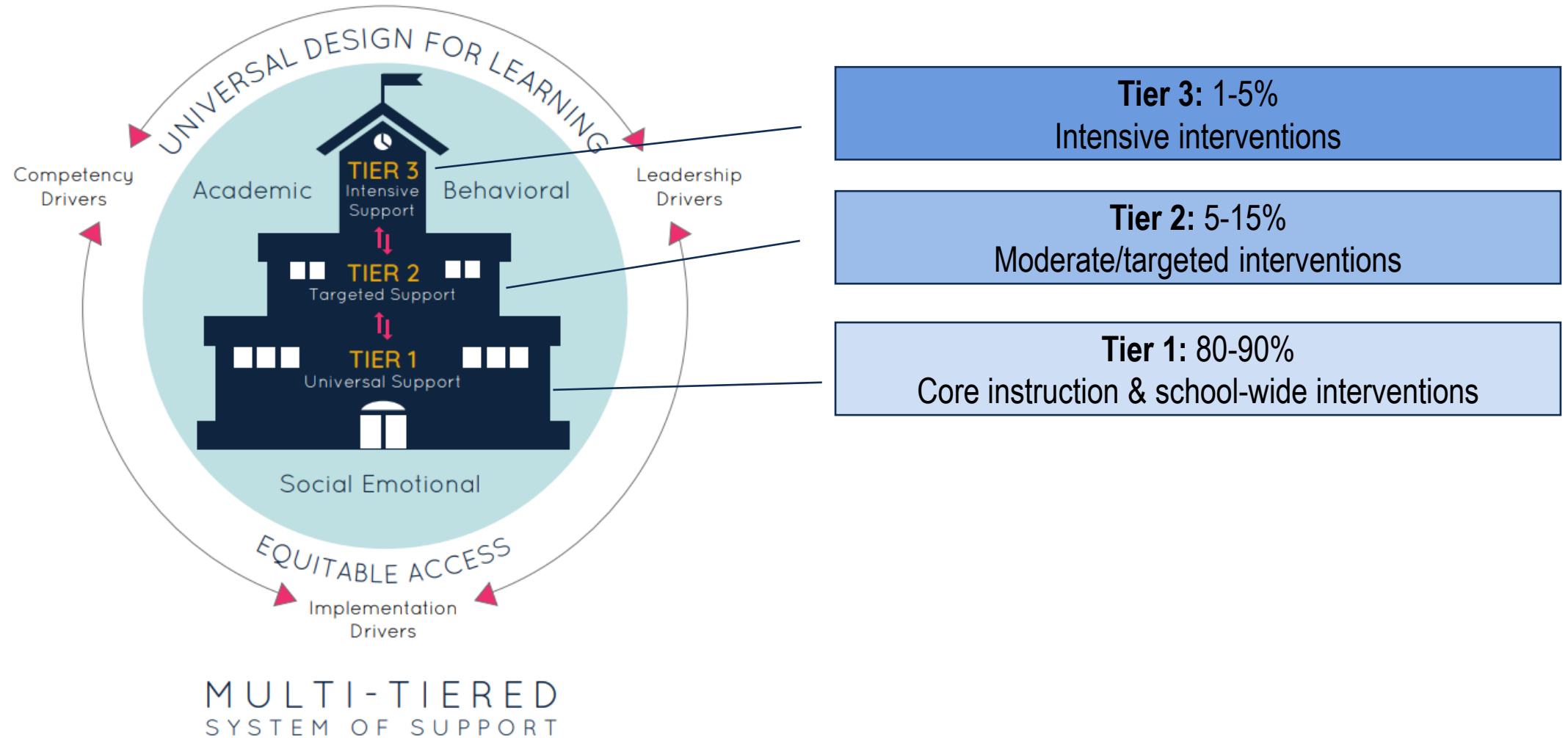
A one-size-fits-all instructional approach that meets the learning needs of some but not all students. Standardized and rigid class size, teacher loads, and time.



Strategic:

Rigorous and differentiated instruction for all students that supports meeting grade-level expectations, enabled through student groupings and schedules that match resources to student needs and that are adjusted during the school year as needs change.

Personalized time and attention relies on a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS)



DCRSD has some areas of opportunity for better supporting all students

What makes for strong MTSS efforts:

1

High-quality classroom instruction in the general education classroom

- Incoming assistant superintendent has developed a focus on universally-designed curriculum, and has started to lead new curriculum adoption across schools
- The district does not employ any instructional or curricular leadership FTEs to support teachers in delivering high-quality instruction
- There is limited district-wide standardization or expectations on what MTSS should look like

2

Ongoing student assessment to provide information about a student's learning rate and level of achievement, that is then used to determine each student's instructional needs

- Elementary schools are using assessments on some cadence to drive grouping and support offerings for intervention
- Middle and high schools do not have the same structures to use assessment to guide academic supports for general education students

3

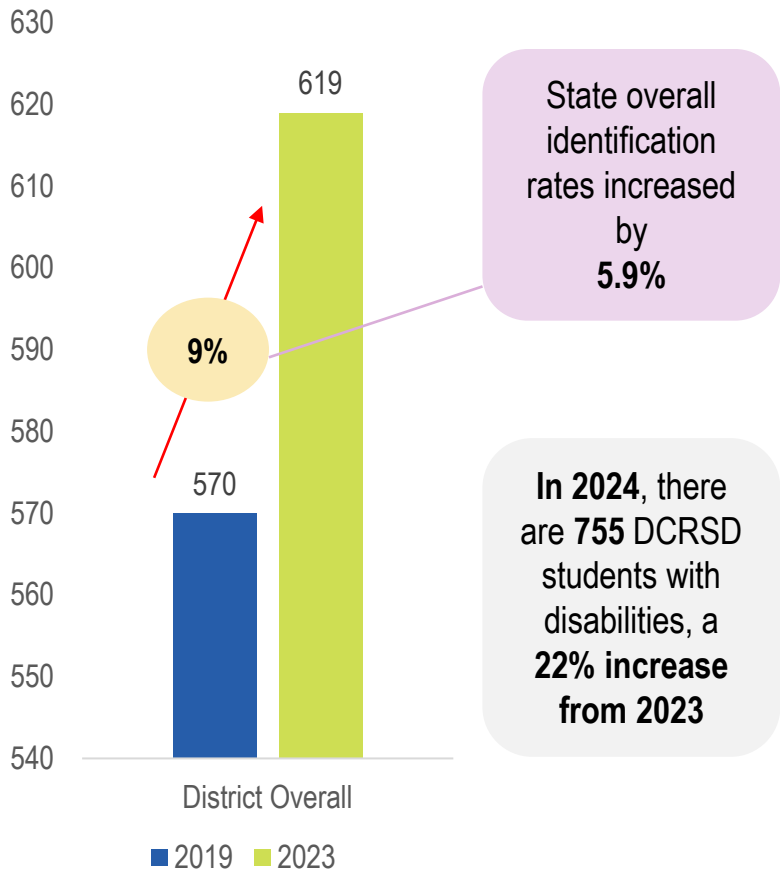
Tiered instruction by knowledgeable instructors aligned to core curriculum, with opportunities for small group instruction targeted at individual learning needs

- DCRSD currently provides a higher percentage of its SWD services in pull-out structures than peer districts or state guidelines
- Elementary schools have daily intervention blocks that provide targeted instruction
- Daily exploratory blocks in middle and high schools could be an area of opportunity for implementing more targeted academic support

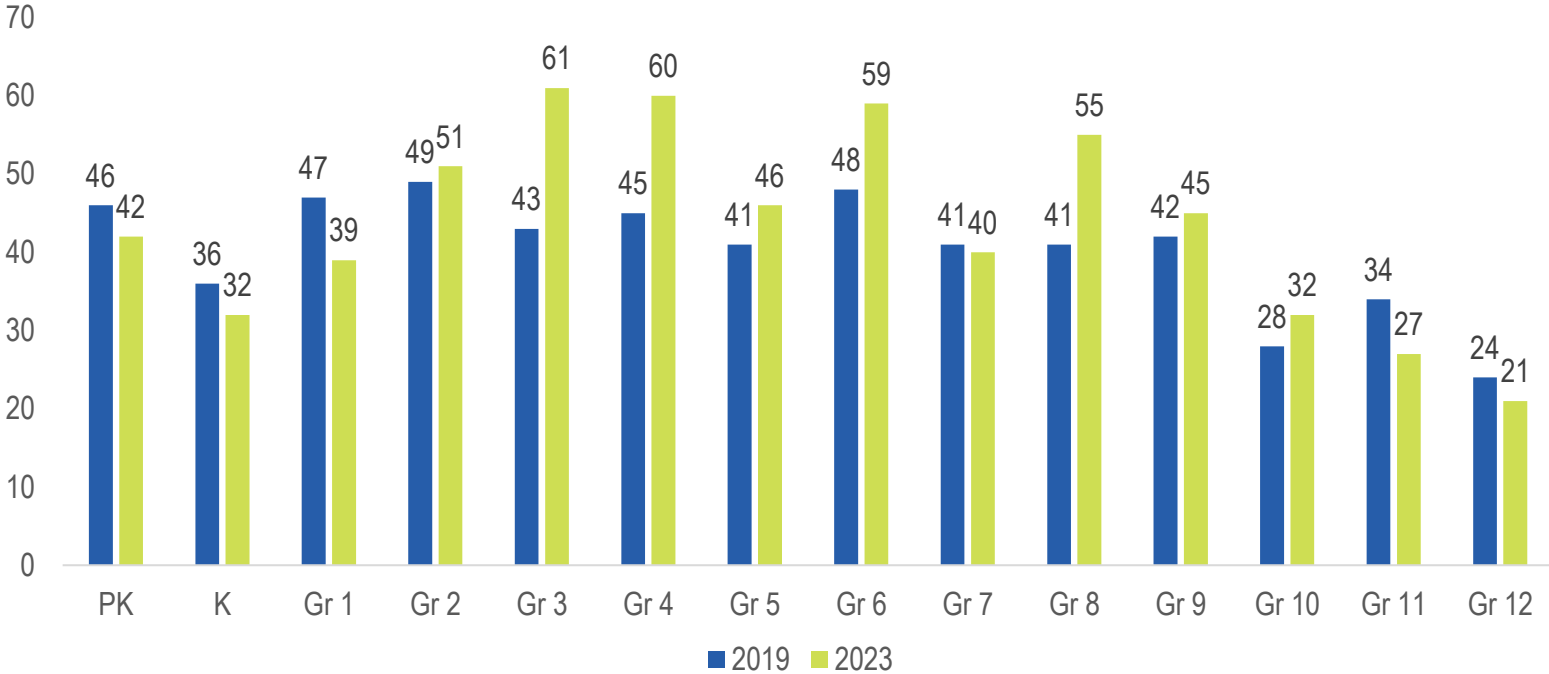
DCRSD
Current State
Insights:

The percentage of SWD students in DCRSD increased overall from 2019 to 2023, especially in certain grades

DCRSD Identification Rates from '19 & '23



Grade-wise DCRSD Identification Rates from '19 & '23

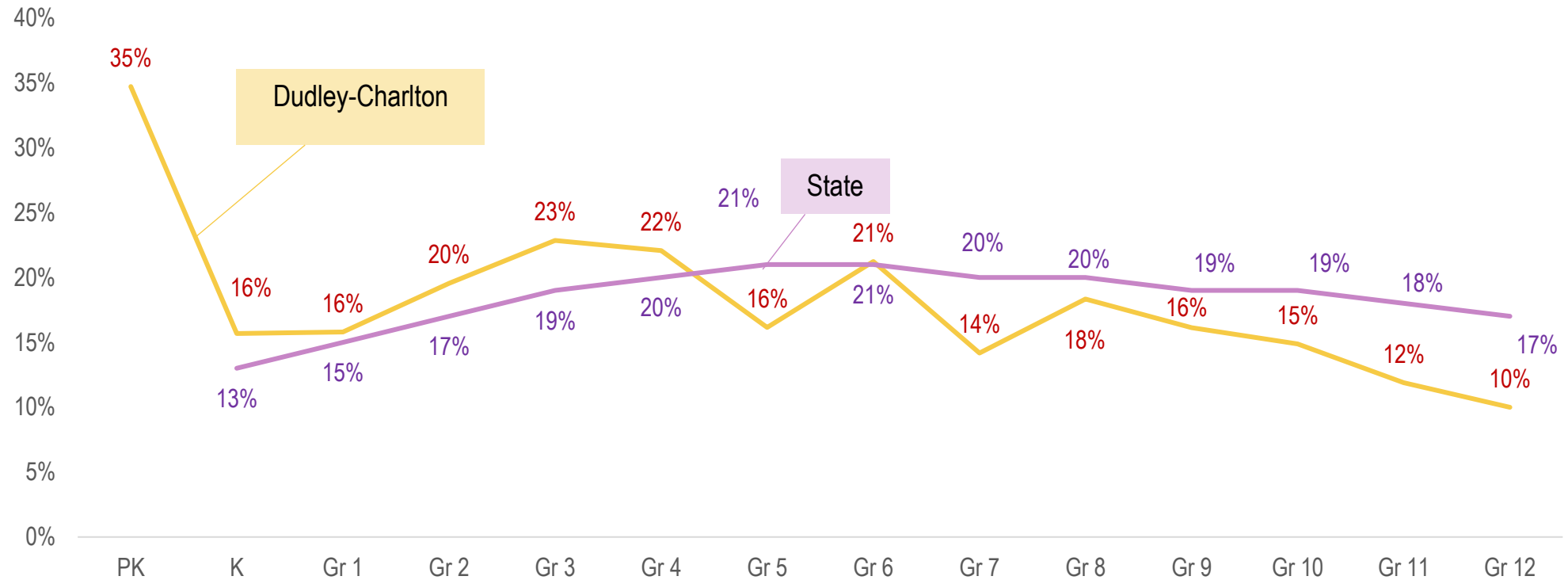


What we've heard...

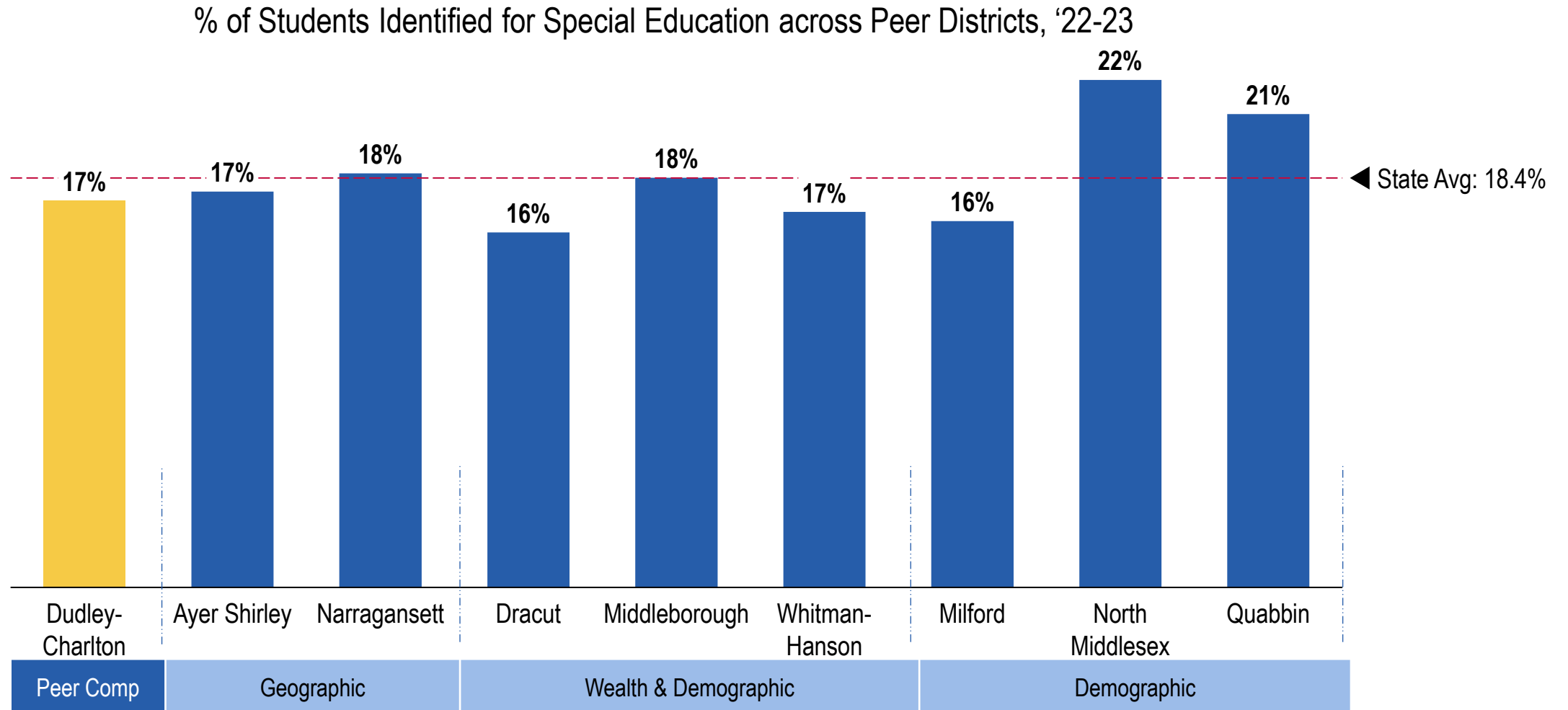
- The Therapeutic Classroom program at Dudley MS and ES has doubled in the 23-24 school year
- DCRSD reputation for having a great special ed program may be a draw for families

DCRSD's identification rates are higher in the earlier grades and lower than the state average in the higher grades

Special Education Identification Rates across Grades across Peer Districts, '22-23

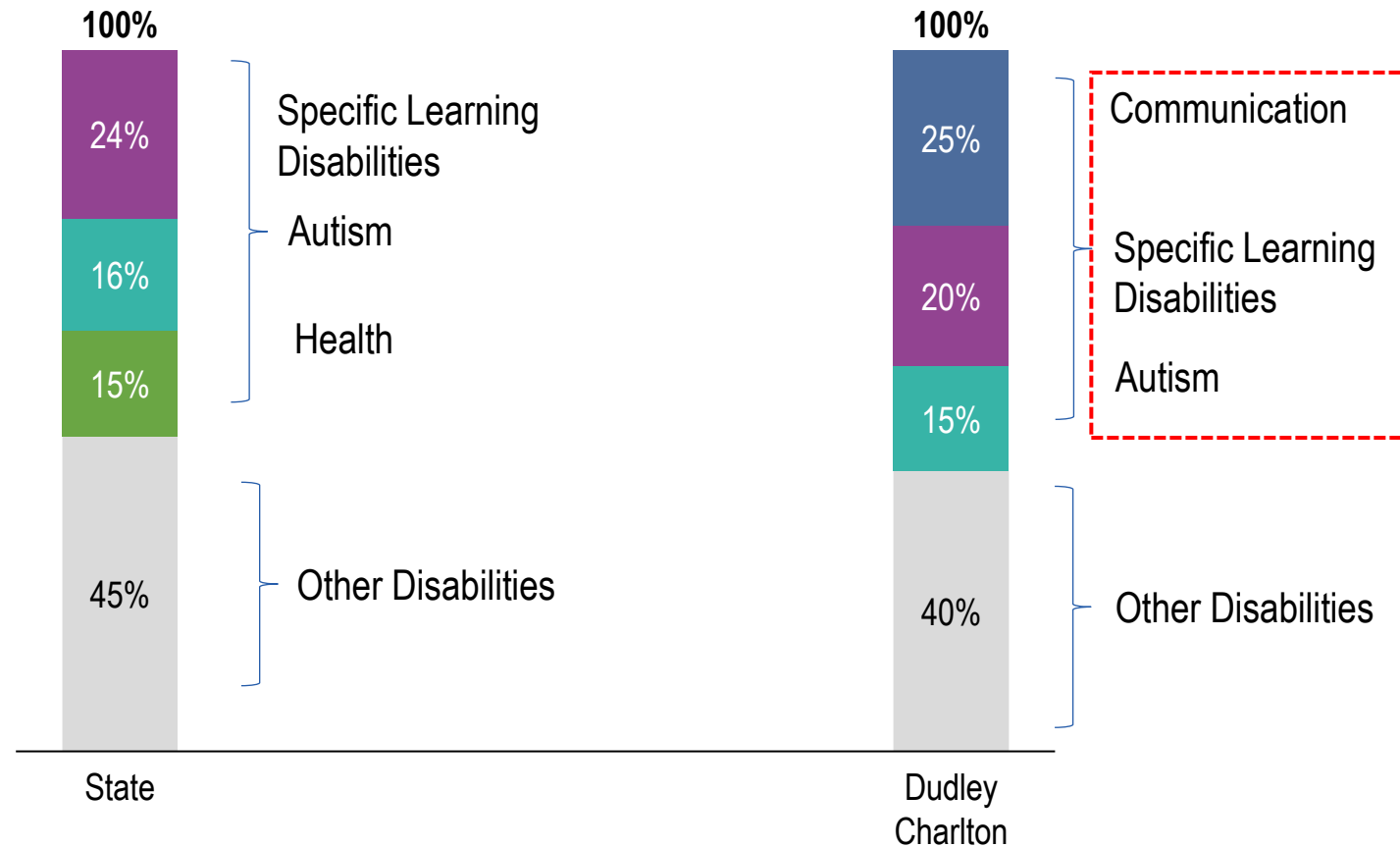


DCRSD identifies students with disabilities (SWD) at rates consistent with peer districts of similar geography and wealth



DCRSD has a larger population of students identified with communication disabilities than the state average

Top 3 Common Disabilities Identified Across the State & in DCRSD, '22-23



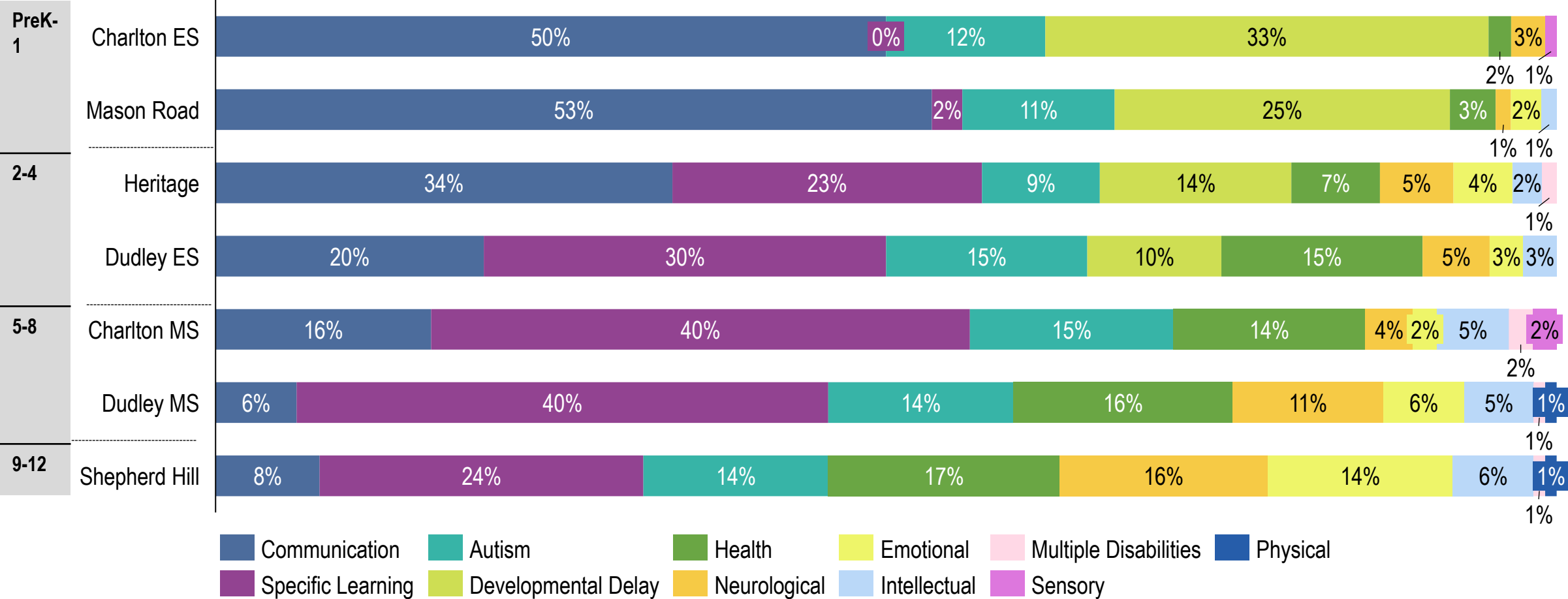
And DCRSD has different disability identification patterns than peer districts

Top 3 Common Disabilities Identified Across the State and in DCRSD, '22-23

		Communication	Learning Difficulties	Autism	Developmental Delay	Health
	State	-	24%	16%	-	15%
	Dudley-Charlton	25%	20%	15%	-	-
Geographic	Ayer Shirley	-	28%	17%	-	14%
	Narragansett	15%	18%	18%	-	-
Wealth & Demographics	Dracut	17%	-	20%	-	20%
	Middleborough	-	29%	13%	15%	-
	Whitman-Hanson	20%	25%	-	18%	-
Wealth	Milford	25%	-	18%	-	16%
	North Middlesex	-	30%	18%	13%	-
	Quabbin	20%	20%	-	-	18%

Within DCRSD, student disability types vary both across and within school levels

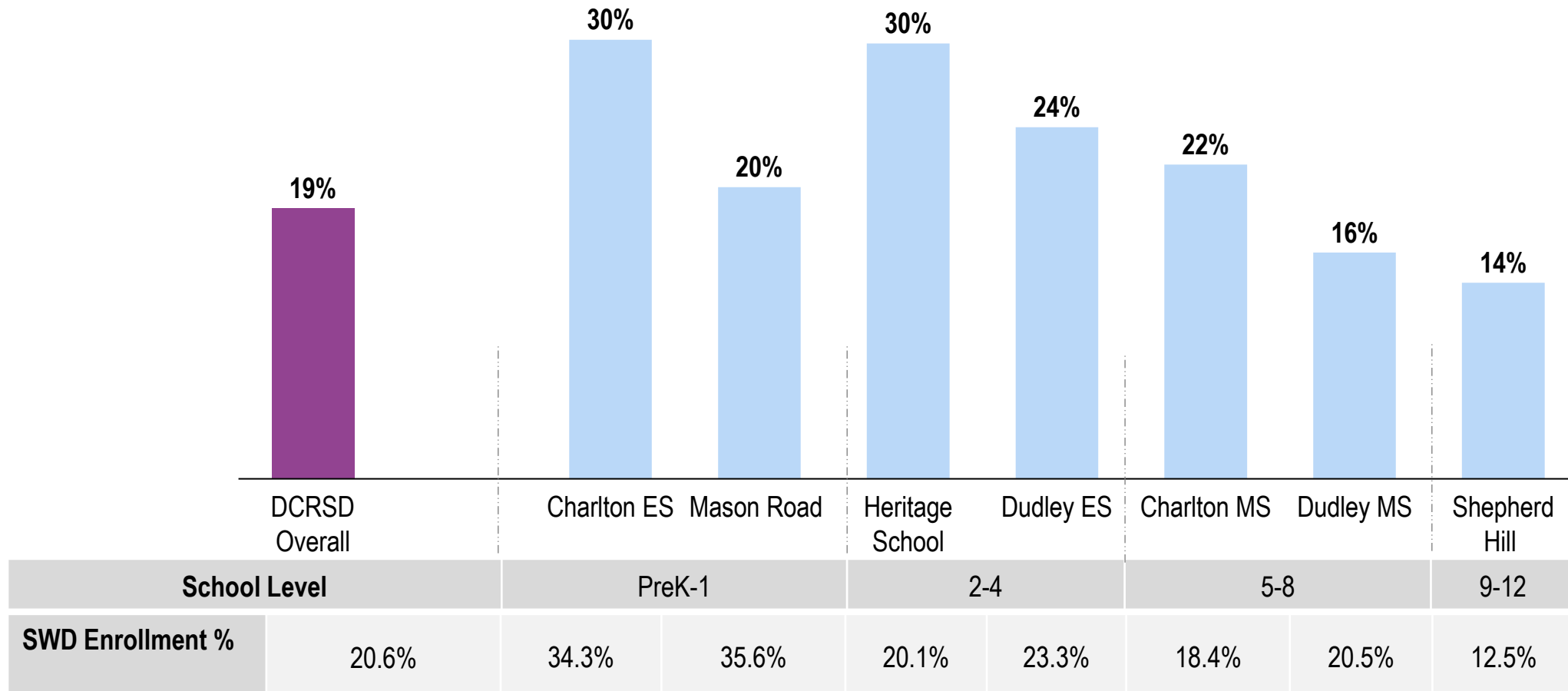
% of Disability Types across DCRSD Schools, '23-24



Source: ERS Analysis; DCRSD SPED Students Data, 23-24

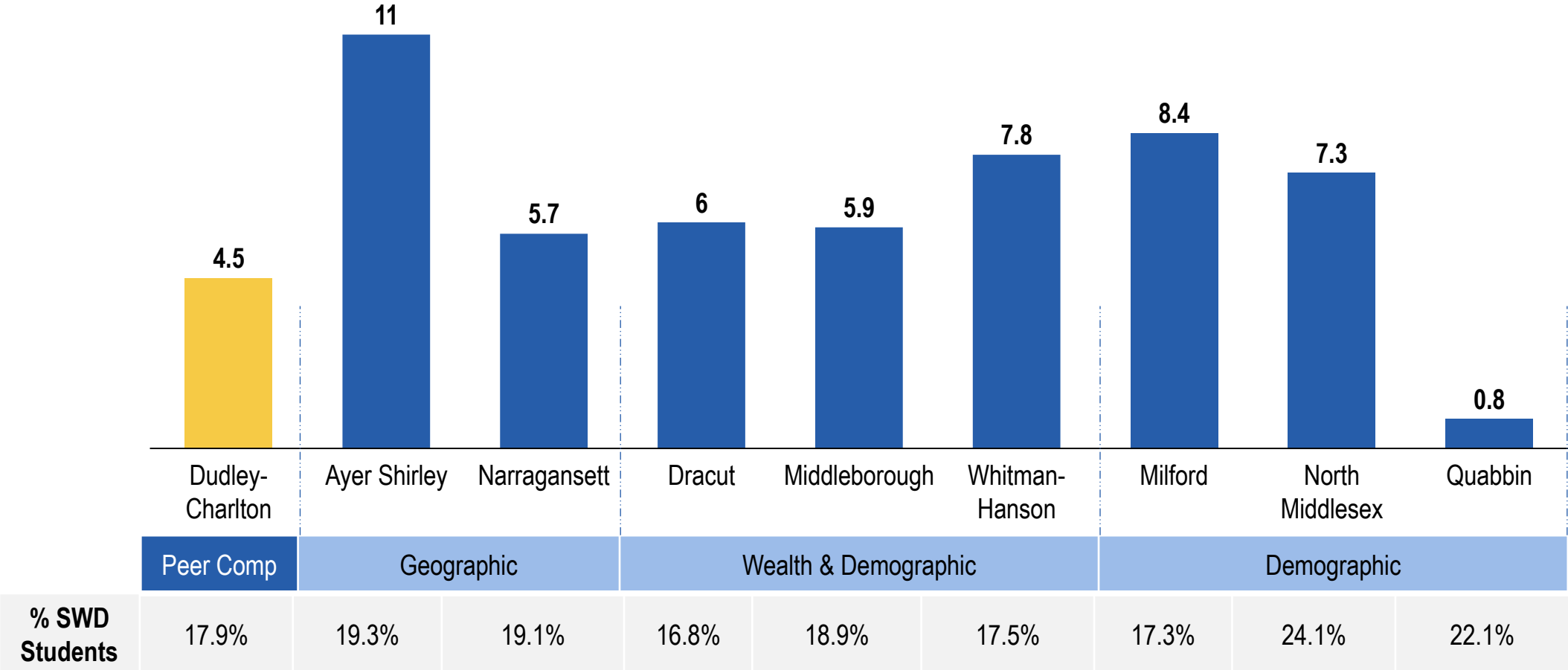
DCRSD overall spends ~19% of its budget on SPED, with variation in spending across schools with similar enrollment

% of SPED Expenditure across DCRSD Schools, '23-24



DCRSD's SWD model utilizes fewer special education (SPED) teachers than peer districts

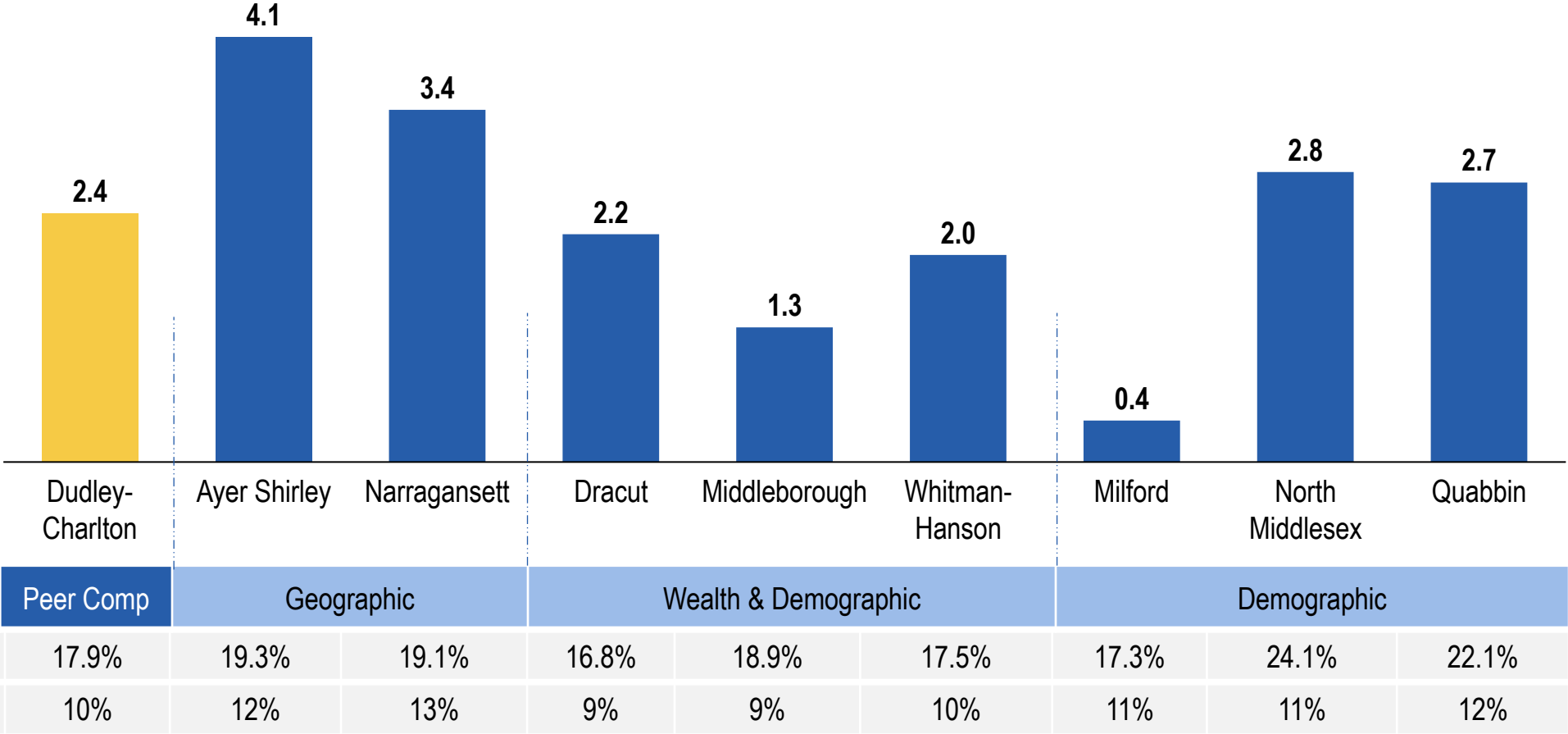
SPED Teacher FTE per 100 SWD Students Across Peer Districts, '22-23



Source: ERS Analysis; [DESE RADAR Special Education Report, 22-23](#)

Paraprofessional staffing ranges across DCRSD and peer districts

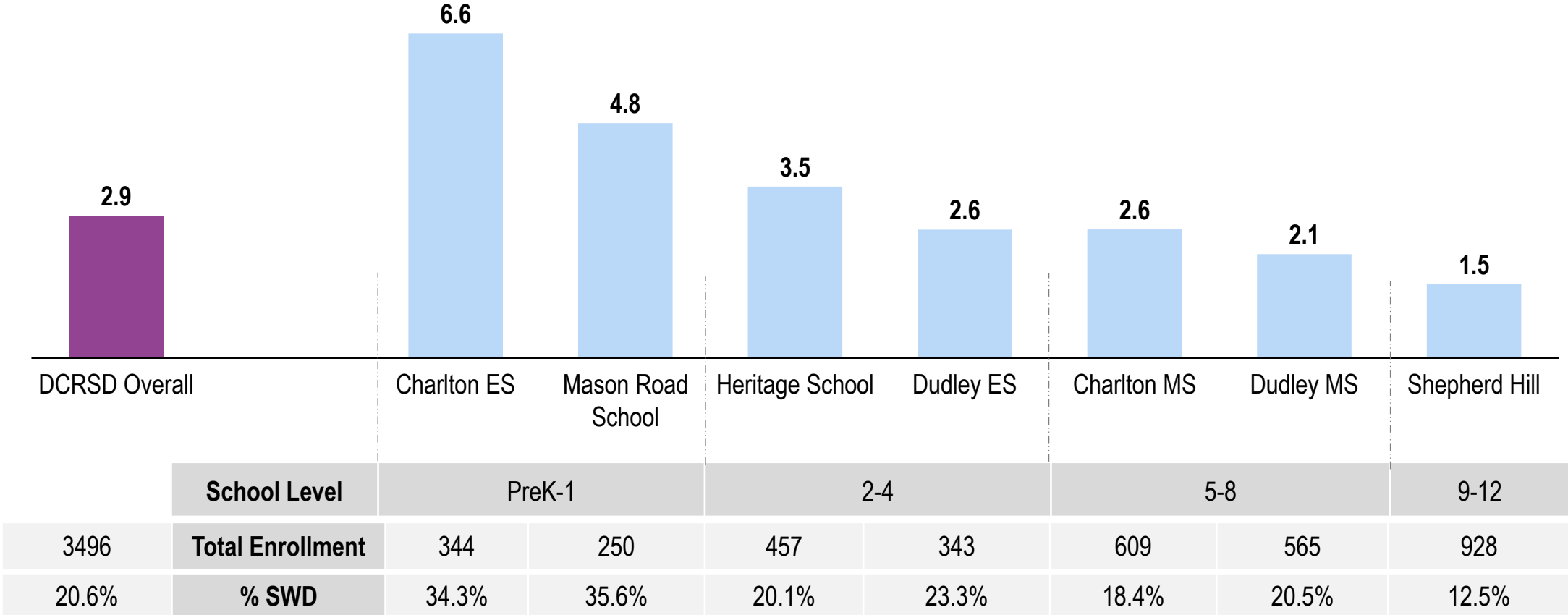
Paraprofessional FTE per 100 Students Across Peer Districts, '23-24



Source: ERS Analysis; [DESE RADAR Dashboard, 23-24](#); [DESE Enrollment by Grade Statewide Report 23-24](#); [DESE Selected Populations Statewide Report 23-24](#)

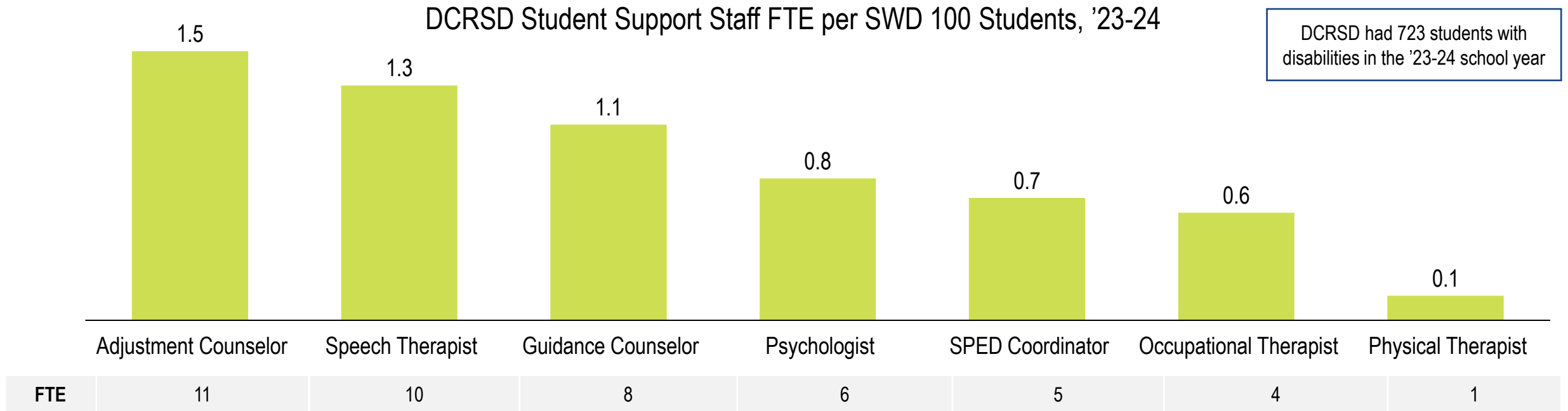
Paraprofessional staff ratios also differ across schools, and is not fully explained by school level or % SWD

DCRSD Paraprofessional Staff per 100 Students Across Schools, '23-24



Source: ERS Analysis; DCRSD Payroll Data, 23-34; DCRSD Student Data, 23-24; [DCRSD Guide to Special Education Programs, 20-21](#)
 Data notes: SWD enrollment defined by students on IEP's

DCRSD staffing for other positions that support special education services ranges by position type

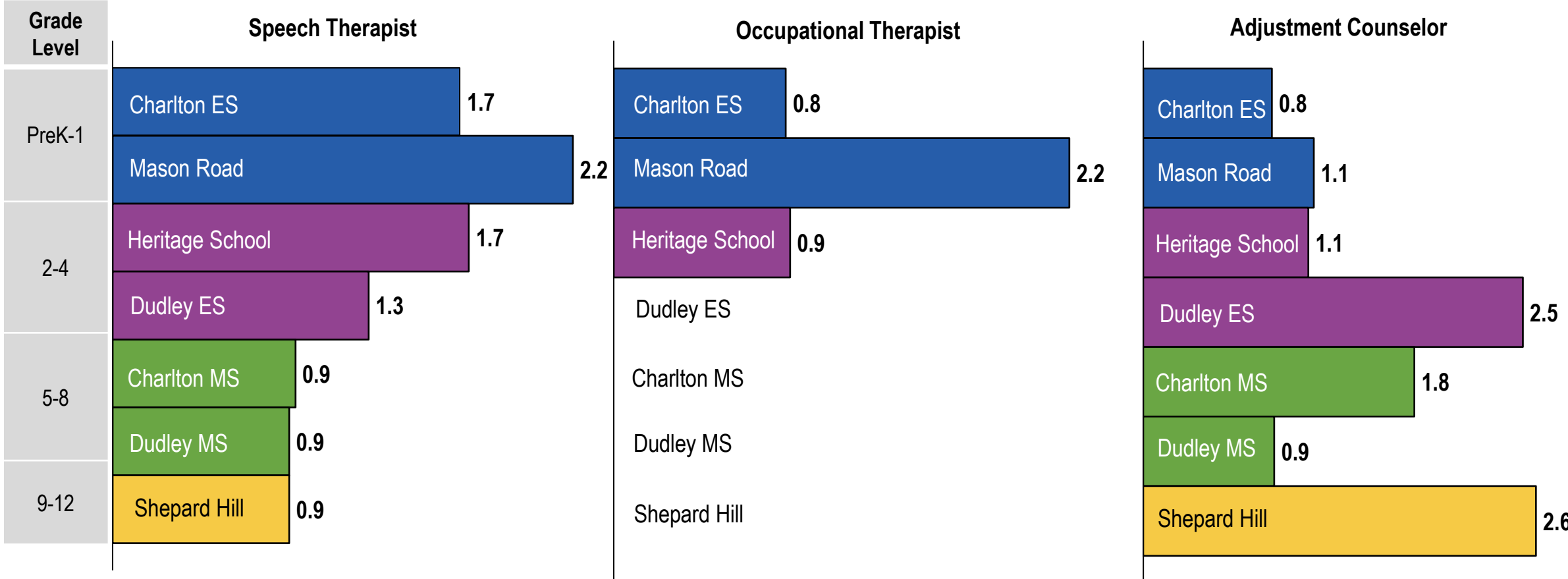


What we've heard...

- SPED Coordinators have high caseloads of ~150 students and are not consistently utilized
- Interest in differentiating responsibilities of school-based support roles, especially psychologists and adjustment counselors

And the staffing ratios for some of these positions range across schools, even within the same grade level

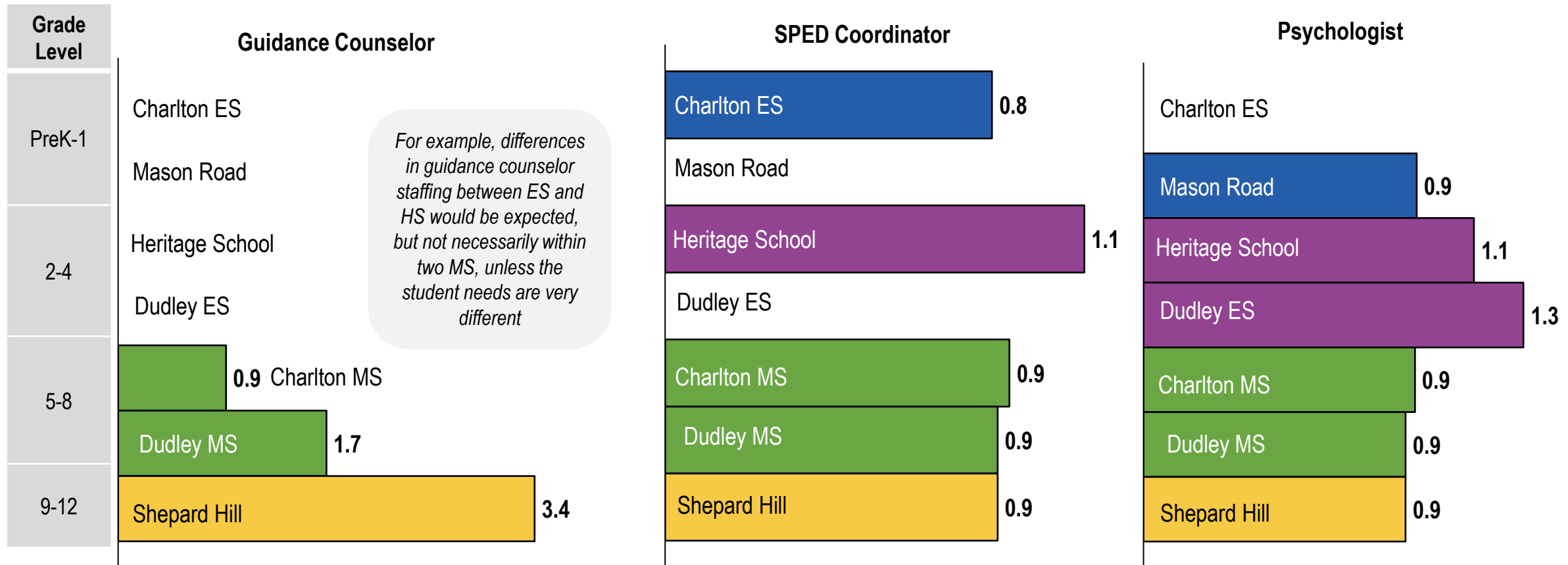
Student Support Staff FTE per SWD 100 Students, by School '23-24



Source: ERS Analysis; DCRSD Payroll Data, 23-34; DCRSD Student Data, 23-24

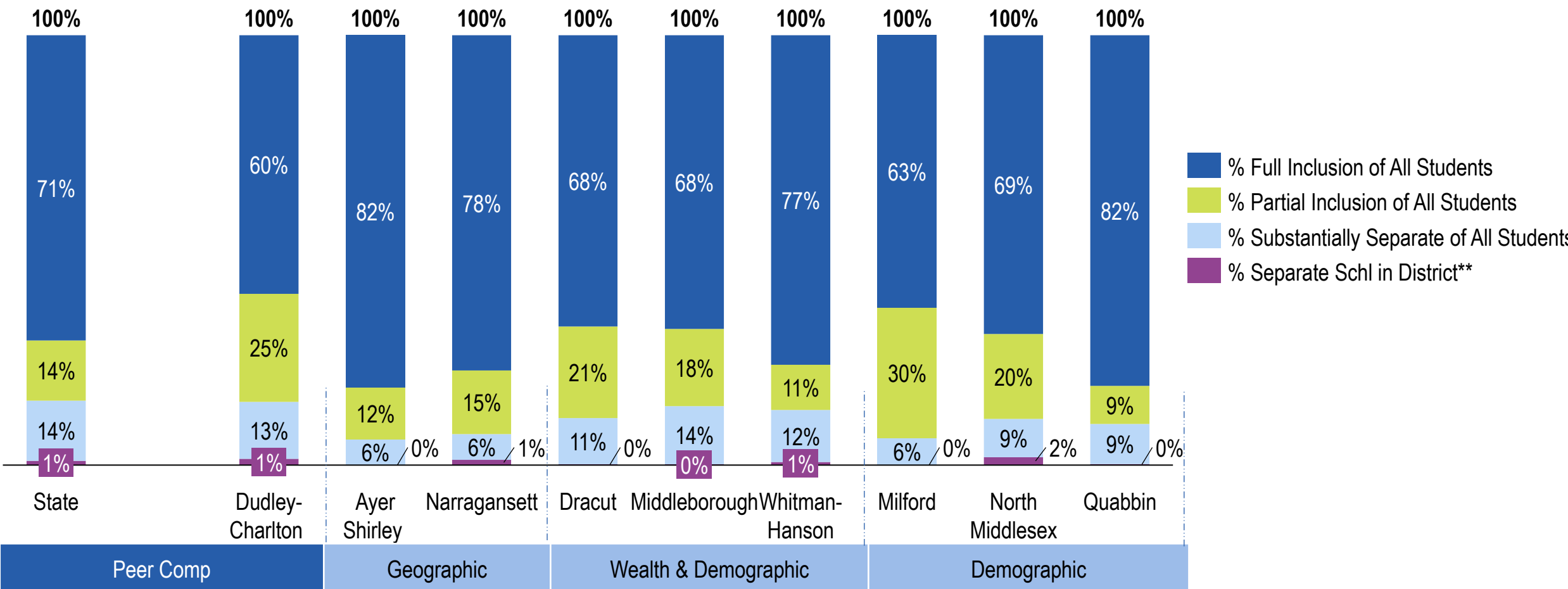
And the staffing ratios for some of these positions range across schools, even within the same grade level

Student Support Staff FTE per 100 Students, by School '23-24



These differences in staffing may be related to DCRSD fully including less of its SWD students than peer districts

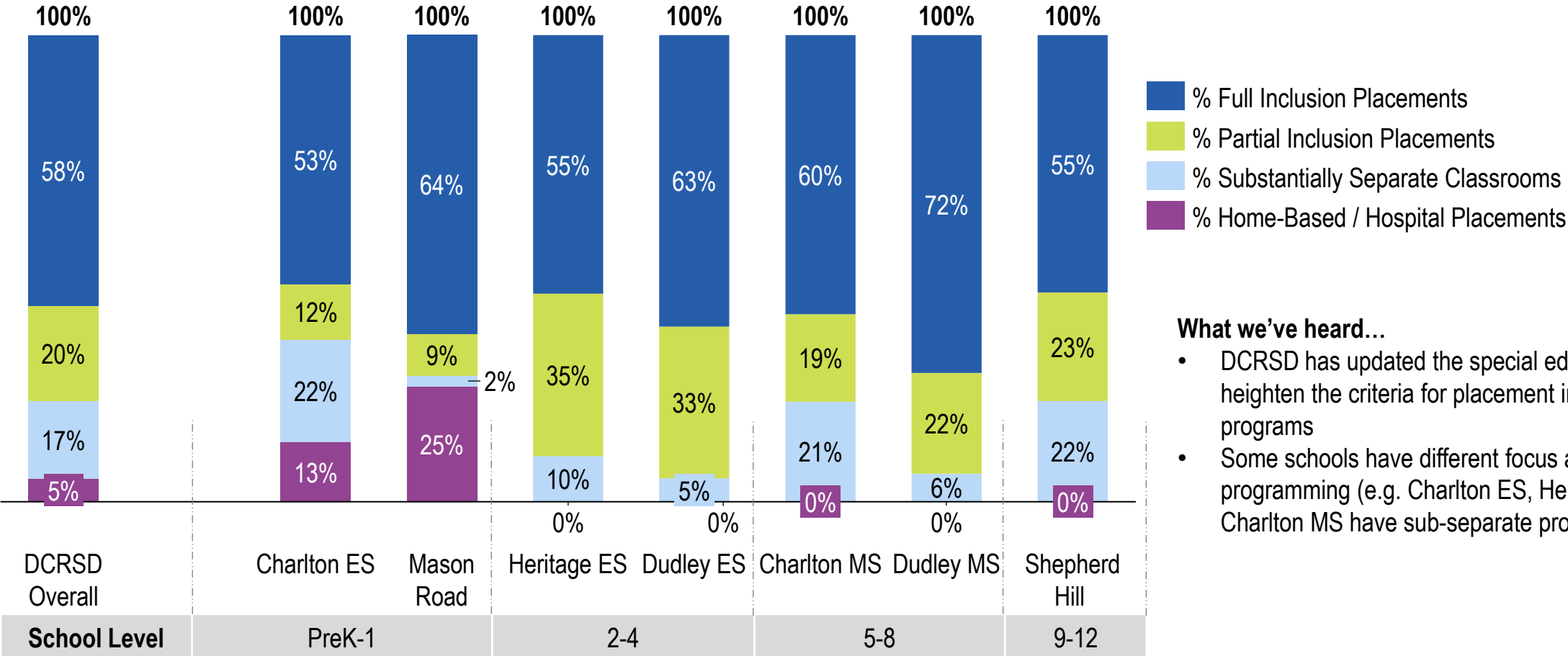
Placement % of SWD Students Across Peer Districts, '22-23



Source: ERS Analysis; [DESE RADAR Special Education Report, 22-23](#)

Inclusion rates differ across DCRSD schools indicating student need or service models may also vary

Placement % of SWD Students Across DCRSD Schools, '23-24



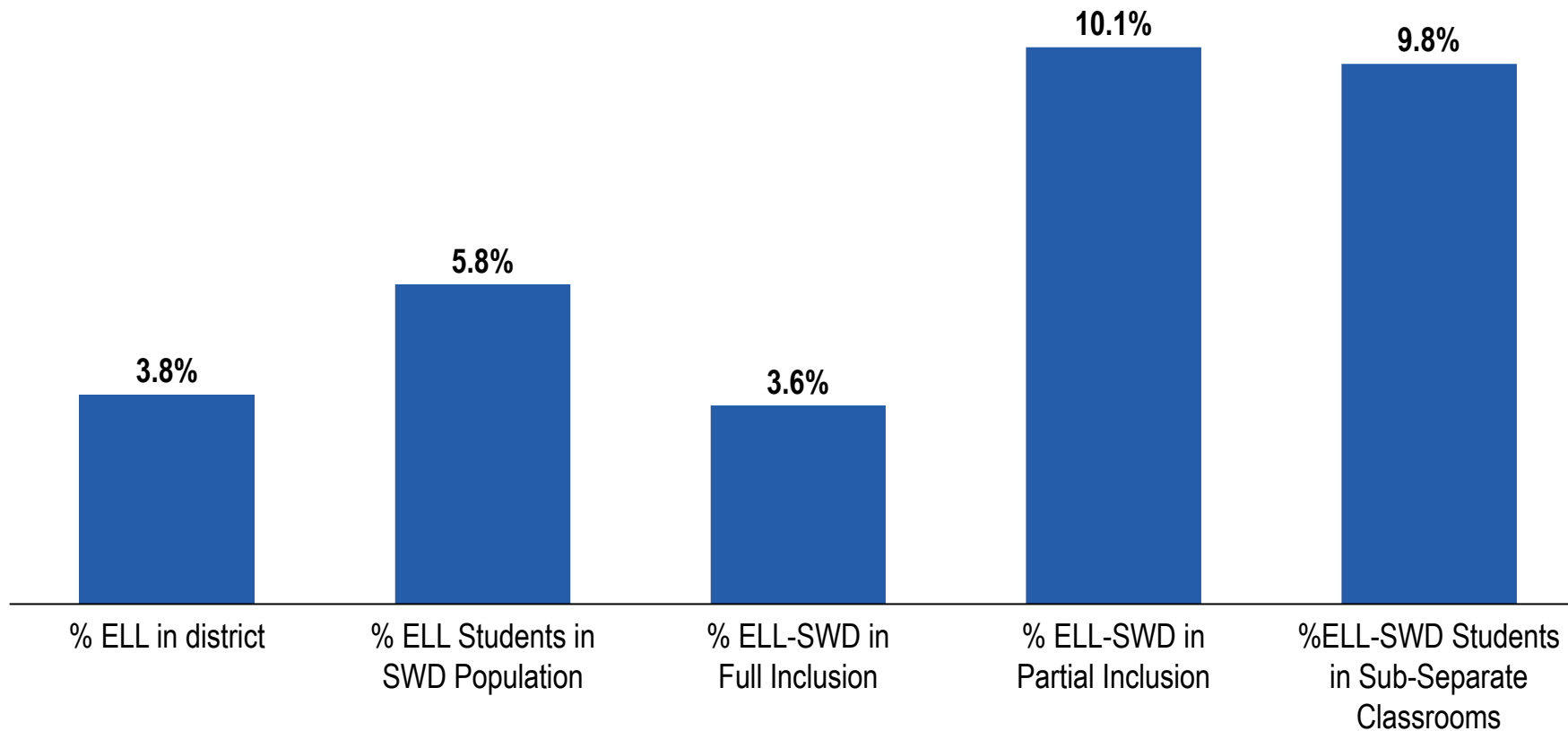
What we've heard...

- DCRSD has updated the special ed manual to heighten the criteria for placement in sub-separate programs
- Some schools have different focus areas for SPED programming (e.g. Charlton ES, Heritage, and Charlton MS have sub-separate programs)

Source: ERS Analysis; DCRSD SPED Students Data, 23-24

DCRSD ELLs may also be overly represented in partial and sub-separate models

Placement of DCRSD ELL-SWD Students, '23-24



Key Takeaways

- English language learners (ELLs) appear over-represented within the student with disability (SWD) population since they represent 3.8% of district enrollment but 5.8% of SWDs
- ELLs with disabilities (ELL-SWD) appear under-represented in full inclusion and over-represented in partial inclusion and sub-separate classrooms

We reviewed DCRSD data across four broad areas



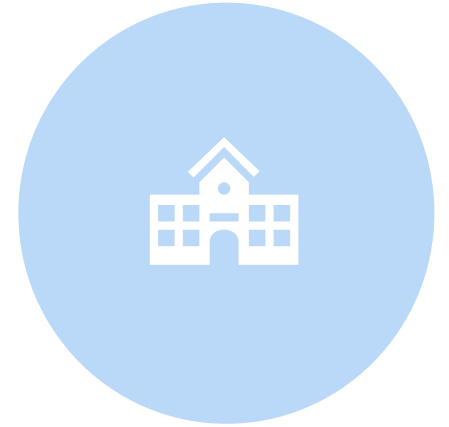
Human
Capital



School Funding
& Resource
Sharing Across
Schools

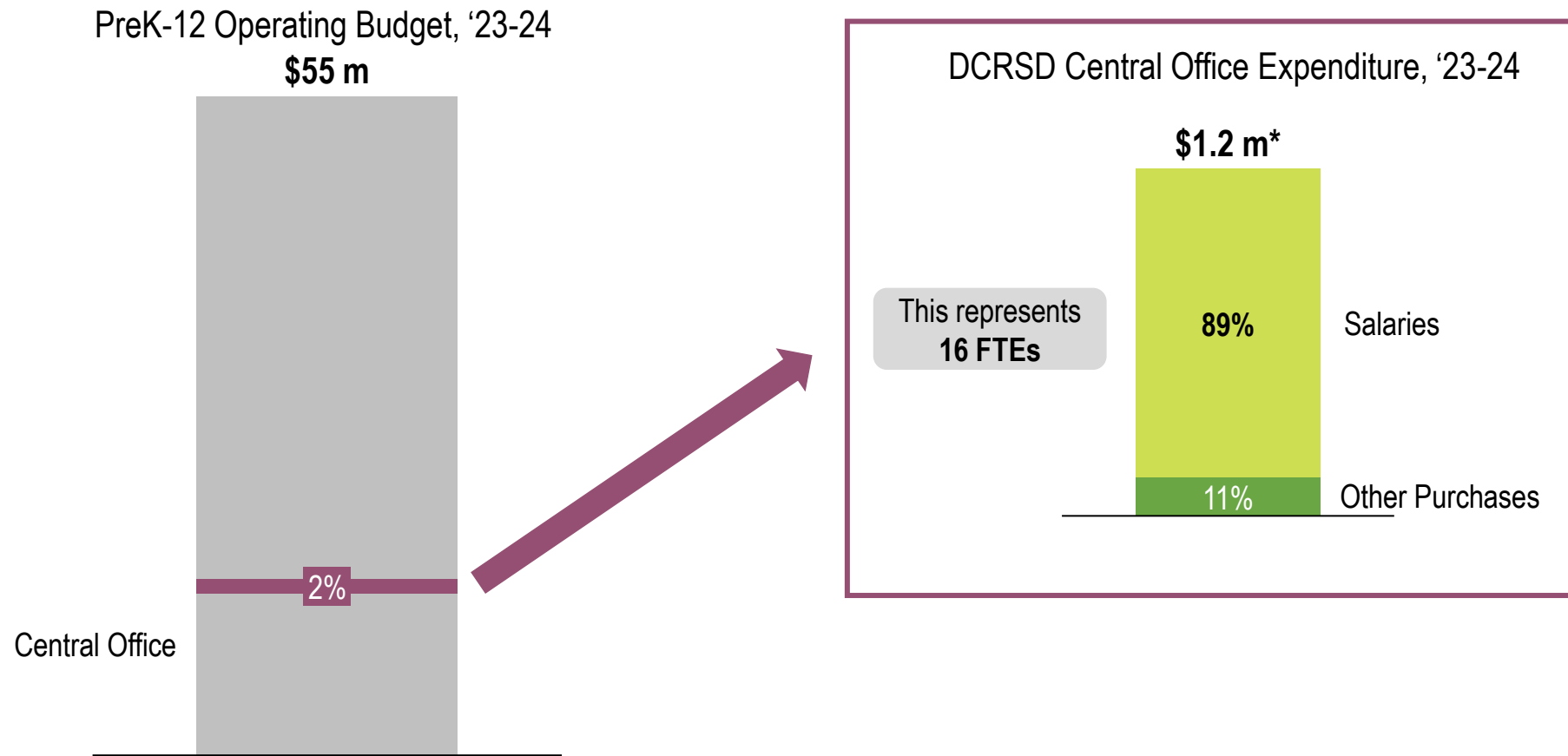


School
Design



Central Office
and School
Support

DCRSD's central office spending represents 2% of the total budget, and is largely used for salaries



Note: The central office expenditure amount differs from slide 33 as this is for '23-24, while that was for '22-23.

Source: ERS Analysis; DCRSD Budget & Expenditures Data, 23-24, [DCRSD District Staff Office Directory](#); ERS Interviews with DCRSD staff

Providing clear and transparent structures is critical for efficient operating, and requires district staff capacity



Transparency requires **clearly documented rules** for how staff are allocated to schools...

Rules can be

- In terms of a ratio or threshold (e.g. 1 FTE for every X students)
- Vary by school type, level, size, etc.
- Consider school poverty or other indicators of student need

...and should

- Be clearly defined and publicly available
- Be replaced by exceptions that are documented



...as well as **transparent communication** of staffing decisions with school leaders

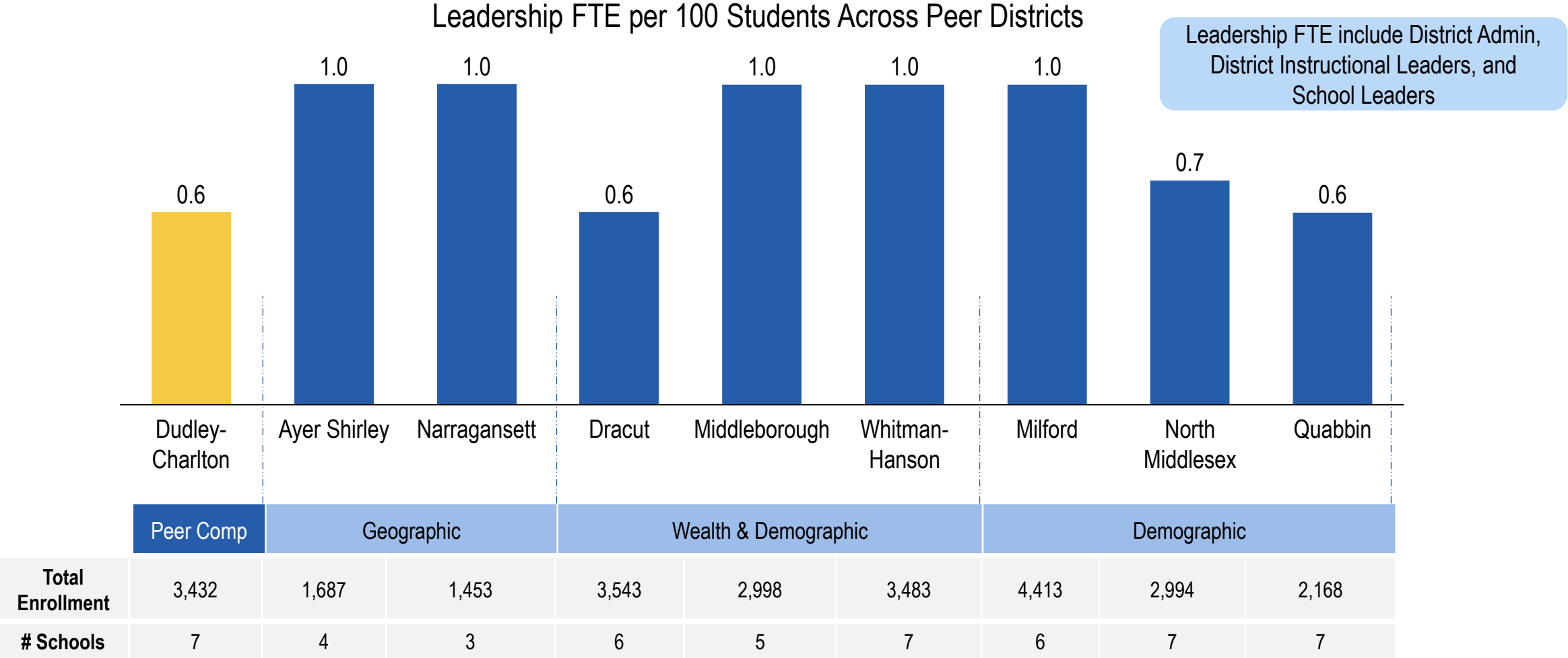
Central office should

- Prioritize thorough communication of staffing allocation decisions with principals, including formulas driving final numbers and reasons for any exceptions
- Articulate flexibilities available to principals
- Provide a standard process for principals to petition staffing decisions

...so that school leaders

- Understand exactly how staff is allocated to their schools
- Understand why exceptions are made, if they are made

But Dudley-Charlton has fewer leadership FTE than most peer districts



Source: ERS Analysis, [DESE RADAR Dashboard, 23-24](#); [Mass DOE School and District Profiles](#)

Limited staffing constrains district ability to create clear structures, which impacts principal experience

Area	Interview Findings
Constrained capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff reported a lack of management layers to support implementation of initiatives at the district level • Staff also reported limited support and staff at central office, particularly in certain areas like HR and Finance • “Everyone wears many hats at the central office to make things work”
Clarity on roles and structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff named the annual budgeting and staffing processes as specific examples of areas where requirements and processes have not always been clear • “We need a standard operating procedure with clear roles and responsibilities” • “There aren’t always clearly documented rules and regulations, we rely a lot on past precedent”
Principal role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple principals played more than one role in the ‘23-24 schools year, e.g. serving as Title III and IV administrator, interim assistant superintendent, and/or interim SPED coordinator on top of their principal duties • Most principals named an inability to find time to focus on strategy, and that more of their time was spent on day-to-day operations; this was most common in elementary schools where principals are often the only full-time administrator
Principal support structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals noted that Ed Counsel meetings with school principals and the superintendent are very helpful for logistical discussions and tasks, but that there is not always enough time for discussing strategy and alignment • “I am always able to call someone for support at the district, but I do feel I have to ask for [support]; there are no formal support structures” • “A more robust induction and mentoring program is needed for both principals and teachers”

ERS recommends potential areas of exploration for strengthening strategic resource use in DCRSD



Potential resource shifts to explore

- Implement **more integrated professional learning for educators** by expanding collaboration time in elementary schools, and restructuring teacher leader roles across the district
- Develop more **formal supports for paraprofessionals and principals**, both of which tend to have less experience on average than teachers
- **Review budget and staffing allocations** to ensure current patterns are strategic
- **Support** middle and high school principals in **implementing more structured MTSS models**, including exploring opportunities for implementing interventions or other student supports into the school day
- **Review staffing and service model for students with disabilities** to ensure that they are best aligned to student needs
- **Invest in documentation of district procedures and protocols** to create more transparency and consistency around district practices and to increase staff capacity in the long-term

Opportunities for expanding collaboration time

To find dedicated time to embed professional learning and collaboration within the school day...districts can

Option	Description
<p>Utilize early release or community partner enrichment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a half-day calendar so that teachers have extended time for professional learning and collaboration after students go home one day per week. • Can also collaborate with external partners to provide student programming during early release or during the school day so that teachers are free to meet for professional learning and collaboration. • Also increases individual planning time for teachers.
<p>Stack planning time with small group instruction or non-instructional blocks; cover regularly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule daily planning time next to non-instructional blocks that can be covered by support staff once per week, such as small group instruction, lunch/recess, community circle, and/or arrival/dismissal to create time for an extended block once per week. • Can be temporary or part-time staff (see Appendix for note on part-time staff in this moment).
<p>Extend enrichment time on one day</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase enrichment time for coverage or redistribute existing individual planning time to create an extended block once per week for professional learning and collaboration.
<p>Hire a floating teacher</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire a multi-grade floating science or social studies teacher who provides coverage for professional learning and collaboration time; stack with enrichment block to create an extended-release block for teachers. • Also increases individual planning time for teachers.

Opportunities for expanding teacher leader roles



Teacher-leader roles should be designed to include...

Time built into schedules for

- Leading weekly planning meetings for core subject teachers*
**in shared-course teams or in one-on-one meetings where only one teacher teaches a course.*
- Planning for collaborative planning meetings*
**At least as much time for planning as is spent attending meetings*
- Observing and providing feedback to all teachers in their caseload at least once every two weeks
- Weekly leadership team meetings (including meetings with other teacher leaders and the principal)

See [Leap Leader](#) at DC Public Schools for an example

There are different options for providing flexible supports in secondary schools

	Create a Flexible “What I Need” Block	Double-Dose Courses
	Create a schoolwide Flex Block when all students can receive support in the areas needed most	Offer small group instruction or structured tutoring as an elective-type option in place of study hall or other electives for some students
Scheduling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic support happens outside of existing periods Requires shortening or reducing number of periods and transition times Length and frequency of supports can vary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic support happens during existing periods Requires repurposing an existing period for some students Length and frequency of supports are the same as other courses
Staffing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typically all-hands-on-deck May impact teacher utilization and number of preps defined in teacher contract Can leverage external partners to staff supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May require more staff if intending to reduce group size May impact teacher utilization and number of preps defined in teacher contract Can leverage external partners to staff supports

Providing flexible supports in secondary schools can be challenging but there are strategies that can help

Common Challenges	How Flex Blocks and Double-Dose May Overcome These Challenges
There is limited flexibility for supports in my current schedule - how do I build flexibility to support students within the school day?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flex blocks generally take place outside the current schedule's constraints (with a tradeoff in minutes from current periods)• Double-dose courses are scheduled into an existing period of a student's day
It's tough to navigate staff assignments not clearly defined in the teacher contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Depending on how flex blocks are structured and framed, adding them may require special staff agreement• Double-dose courses are assigned within the normal schedule and do not represent additional duties (though it may require staffing shifts, e.g., additional math sections in place of electives)
There is a limited supply of external partners for academic supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using an "all-hands-on-deck" approach allows for implementing flex blocks without relying on external partners• Double-dose courses do not generally rely on external partners for delivery• Support blocks could be staggered throughout the day to leverage tutors across many students/classes
My students need to receive sufficient instructional hours to earn credits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flex blocks can usually be added while preserving required minutes• Double-dose courses often award elective credits to students to support credit accumulation• Schedule types with more periods (e.g., 8 vs. 7 periods) can make more space for delivering supports like double-dosing while also prioritizing time for students to earn required credits

District Example: At this high school, students get additional support & enrichment during a twice-weekly Flex Block

- **Who:** All students and all staff
- **What:** Flex Block when students have agency in which activities they participate in, like academic intervention and/or SEL support. Students choose one Flex Block activity on Tuesday and another on Thursdays
- **When:** 40 minutes, twice per week
- **How:** Students take all 7 courses on Mondays; on Wednesdays/Fridays students take 4 courses on a block schedule; on Tuesdays/Thursdays, students take the remaining 3 courses on a block schedule and have time for Flex Blocks and Community Time; Students are scheduled into Flex Blocks using [Responsive Scheduling](#) in Infinite Campus
- **Staffing:** As an innovation school, teachers have expanded duties which cover participation in Flex Block, in addition to other instructional duties

Monday	Tuesday/Thursday	Wednesday/Friday
Staff Arrival	Staff Arrival	Staff Arrival
Transition Period	Transition Period	Transition Period
Course 1	Course 5	Course 1
Transition Period		
Course 2	Transition Period	Transition Period
Transition Period	FLEX BLOCK	Course 2
Course 3	Transition Period	
Transition Period	Course 6	Lunch
Course 4		
Lunch	Lunch	Transition Period
Transition Period		
Course 5	Transition Period	Course 3
Transition Period	Community Time	
Course 6	Course 7	Transition Period
Transition Period		
Course 7	Course 4	Course 4
Dismissal		
Staff Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
	Staff Dismissal	Staff Dismissal

“After having the Flex Block for a few years, teachers really see its value and utilize the time for intervention for students who need more support. They don't see it as a separate prep.” – Stacy Parrish, Principal of Northeast Early College

Appendix

Pay step to years of experience conversion

Years of experience buckets	DCRSD Pay Steps
0-2	Step 1, 2, 3
3-7	Step 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
8-15	Step 9, 10, 11, 12, 15
16+	Step 20

Links to teacher contract sources

- [Dudley-Charlton](#)
- [Ayer Shirley](#)
- [Dracut](#)
- [Middleborough](#)
- [Whitman-Hanson](#)