Maine Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI) Project

Final Report

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Overview

Purpose of the KEI Project

The Maine Department of Education (DOE) Early Learning team, as part of Maine's three-year Preschool Development Grant (PDG), launched the Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI) project to work toward the Maine Children's Cabinet's goal: all children will enter kindergarten prepared to succeed. Currently, Maine does not utilize standardized measures to assess students upon entry to kindergarten. Using PDG funds, the Maine DOE partnered with a statewide Advisory Group, kindergarten educators serving on an implementation team, and WestEd to evaluate existing kindergarten entry instruments for possible future implementation. WestEd provided technical assistance to help the Early Learning team to evaluate and pilot several existing KEI instruments. The KEI project began in March 2024 and concluded in December 2025.

Executive Summary

Project Activities

The KEI project included three main components: Advisory Group meetings, small-scale pilots during the 2024/25 school year, and a larger pilot during fall 2025. The Advisory Group—composed of Maine DOE staff, representatives from other state agencies and higher education institutions, school leaders, and kindergarten teachers—met monthly to determine key purposes for a KEI, identify constructs to assess, and inform pilot design. During the 2024/25 school year, the Implementation Team (kindergarten teachers from numerous Maine school administrative units [SAUs]) piloted three instruments: Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG), the Ready for Kindergarten: Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), and the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP). Based on feedback from these initial pilots, the fall 2025 pilot focused on two instruments (the KRA and TSG, including TSG with Finch) and initially involved 95 teachers from numerous Maine SAUs. Following the pilot, 81 teachers completed a detailed survey and 25 participated in focus groups to provide feedback on training sufficiency, feasibility, usability, and instructional usefulness.

Key Findings

Strong Support for Whole-Child Assessment: Teachers consistently valued the KEI's whole-child, strengths-based approach that captures development across multiple domains. Social-emotional learning was identified as the most valuable and meaningful domain—an area currently under-measured in Maine kindergarten classrooms. Teachers appreciated that the instruments emphasized developmental progressions and student strengths and found the family-friendly reports valuable for conferences and communicating with other educators.

Implementation Challenges: Despite strong support for the goals of a KEI, teachers identified some challenges. Time demands were the most cited concern, with teachers reporting difficulty integrating KEI administration into busy fall schedules, often at the expense of instructional time and relationship-building. Assessment overload emerged as an issue, with teachers emphasizing that a KEI should replace existing beginning-of-year assessments.

Instrument Design: Teachers reported that the instruments were well-aligned with beginning-of-year expectations and classroom practices. They also reported that the combination of direct and observation-based assessment was most feasible for KEI administration due to its balanced approach.

Importance of Support Systems: Teachers who participated in multiple pilots and those who benefited from informal mentoring by experienced colleagues reported smoother implementation. Participants emphasized that successful statewide implementation would require comprehensive training (extending beyond teachers to include administrators and school leadership), ongoing support mechanisms, adequate technology infrastructure, and administration within the first 6–8 weeks of school.

Recommendations

Based on pilot outcomes, potential statewide implementation of a KEI would benefit from the following:

- Aligning the implementation and framework with Maine's KEI purpose statement
- Addressing timing and reducing assessment burden
- Providing comprehensive training and support
- Ensuring technology infrastructure and support
- Selecting instruments that align with goals and maintain whole-child focus
- Building stakeholder support and system capacity
- Securing adequate and sustained funding
- Planning for phased implementation and continuous improvement

Conclusion

The KEI project demonstrated that Maine educators strongly value a whole-child, strengths-based approach to a KEI. Successful statewide implementation would require comprehensive planning, adequate resources, stakeholder engagement, robust training and support systems, and careful attention to assessment burden. With thoughtful implementation that addresses the challenges identified through the pilot process, Maine can adopt a KEI that provides meaningful information to educators and families while supporting the goal that all children enter kindergarten prepared to succeed.

KEI Project Activities

Overview of Key Project Activities

The key project activities included Advisory Group meetings, small-scale pilots of three KEI instruments during the 2024/25 school year, and a pilot of two KEI instruments during the fall of the 2025/26 school year. Table 1 provides a summary and timeline of the key KEI project activities.

Table 1. KEI Project Activities and Timeline

Activity	Timeline
Conduct statewide survey of current kindergarten assessment use in Maine	Spring 2024
Formation of the KEI Advisory Group and Implementation Team	Spring 2024
Advisory Group Meeting (In-Person)	July 2024
Advisory Group Meeting (Virtual)	August 2024
Advisory Group Meeting (Virtual)	September 2024
Advisory Group Meeting (Virtual)	October 2024
Pilot of Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG)	October–November 2024
Advisory Group Meeting (Virtual)	November 2024
Advisory Group Meeting (Virtual)	January 2025
Advisory Group Meeting (Virtual)	February 2025
Pilot of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)	March–April 2025

Activity	Timeline
Advisory Group Meeting (Virtual)	March 2025
Advisory Group Meeting (Virtual)	April 2025
Pilot of the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)	April–May 2025
Advisory Group Meeting (In-Person)	May 2025
Fall 2025 Pilot Kickoff Meeting	August 2025
Fall 2025 Pilot Administration (KRA, TSG, TSG with Finch)	September–November 2025
Advisory Group Meeting (Virtual)	October 2025
Fall 2025 Pilot Survey	November 2025
Advisory Group Meeting (Virtual)	November 2025
Fall 2025 Pilot Focus Groups	November–December 2025
Advisory Group Meeting (Virtual)	December 2025

Advisory Group

The goals of the Advisory Group were to assist the Maine DOE staff to determine the key purposes of a KEI for Maine, to identify constructs to assess within the developmental domains of school readiness, and to inform the design of a KEI pilot. The Advisory Group comprised Maine DOE staff, representatives from other state agencies and higher education institutions, school leaders, and kindergarten teachers from numerous SAUs across Maine. The members of the Advisory Group are included in Appendix A.

The Advisory Group met monthly (via Zoom) and in person on July 9, 2024, and May 29, 2025. The meetings and agendas included a systematic, collaborative approach spanning nearly two years, moving from exploration and learning from other states through multiple pilot phases to final recommendations and conclusions. Agenda topics included refining Maine's KEI purpose

statement, evaluating the qualities of various KEI instruments, learning from other states' experiences through guest speakers, and evaluating pilot implementation through the review of results from the pilot surveys and focus groups.

Implementation Team and Pilots in the 2024/25 School Year

The Implementation Team comprised Maine kindergarten teachers from numerous SAUs in Maine. During the 2024/25 school year, the Implementation Team participated in small-scale pilots using three instruments: Teaching Strategies GOLD, the Ready for Kindergarten: Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), and the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP). The purpose of these small-scale pilots was to evaluate the instruments and understand the implementation process, including training requirements for administration. After each pilot administration, the Implementation Team completed a survey about their experience with the KEI instrument.

The members of the Implementation Team are included in Appendix B.

Pilot in Fall 2025

The fall 2025 pilot built upon the pilots from the 2024/25 school year, with the purpose to assist the Maine DOE and Advisory Group to evaluate how well KEI instruments aligned with Maine's objectives and to inform potential KEI adoption policies and/or procurement requirements. The goals of the fall 2025 pilot were to collect feedback from Maine kindergarten teachers to compare and contrast potential KEI instruments. This included evaluating training requirements, data collection processes, and the feasibility of administration. Essentially, the fall 2025 pilot was designed to mimic an operational administration during the beginning weeks of kindergarten.

Based on the experiences and feedback from the Implementation Team and the pilots during the 2024/25 school year, the Maine DOE staff, the Advisory Group, and WestEd focused the pilot during fall 2025 on two instruments: Teaching Strategies GOLD (including GOLDFinch) and the Ready for Kindergarten: KRA. These instruments were selected because they included direct and observation-based assessment components as well as the opportunity to access asynchronous training modules.

There were 95 teachers from numerous Maine SAUs who initially participated in the fall 2025 pilot. Of the 95 teachers, 27 were members of the Implementation Team during the 2024/25 school year. Each participant was assigned to one of three groups: Ready for Kindergarten: KRA (35 teachers), Teaching Strategies GOLD (24 teachers), or Teaching Strategies GOLD with Finch (36 teachers). As feasibility of administration was the central goal of the fall 2025 pilot, each teacher was asked to administer the assigned KEI instrument to all students in her classroom.

Returning Implementation Team teachers participated in an orientation meeting on August 7, 2025. Teachers new to the pilot participated in a separate orientation on August 11, 2025. These orientations included an overview of the pilot, details about the KEI instruments, the pilot timeline, and the tasks to complete during the pilot. Due to some delays in contracting with the KEI instrument providers, teachers began administration of one KEI instrument in late September 2025 and the other KEI instrument in October 2025. The pilot administration window ended on November 14, 2025. Teachers were supported throughout this process with regular office hours held by the Maine DOE staff and with resources from the assessment providers.

Upon completion of the pilot administration, teachers were asked to complete a detailed survey. The survey was designed to collect information related to sufficiency of training, usability and usefulness of the instrument and its online platform, and feasibility of administration.

Lastly, WestEd conducted focus groups in late November and early December. One focus group included school administrators, and three focus groups included pilot participants. One teacher focus group included only teachers who were part of the Implementation Team throughout 2024 and 2025, as they experienced administration of each instrument multiple times (i.e., once during the 2024/25 school year and once during the fall 2025 pilot).

The SAUs with participants in the fall 2025 pilot are listed in Appendix C.

KEI Project Outcomes

Advisory Group Outcomes

Throughout the project, the Advisory Group played an integral role in shaping all project activities, which included providing ongoing feedback to the Maine DOE, learning from guest speakers from other states that implemented KEIs (Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island), reviewing survey results after each pilot, and providing feedback and advice to guide project activities and long-term planning.

In collaboration with the Maine DOE staff, the Advisory Team developed the following purpose statement for a potential KEI in Maine.

Maine's KEI Purpose Statement

By utilizing a manageable KEI tool aligned to Maine's Preschool Early Learning and Development Standards (P-MELDS), data will be collected at the beginning of the kindergarten year to:

- provide educators and families information about whole-child development (multiple domains of school readiness) at the start of kindergarten;
- inform instructional decision-making at the beginning of kindergarten; and
- provide information about the potential strengths and areas of growth in Maine's early care and education system (birth through entry to kindergarten).

Outcomes of the Pilots in the 2024/25 School Year

Feedback from the Implementation Team during the 2024/25 school year provided information regarding their experiences using three different assessment instruments: Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG), the Ready for Kindergarten: Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), and the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP). The Implementation Team responded to a survey focused on sufficiency of training, feasibility of implementation, alignment with classroom practice, and perceived usefulness as a beginning-of-year kindergarten assessment.

Across all three instruments, teachers indicated strong alignment to beginning-of-year expectations, but expressed concern about the feasibility of implementation, particularly related to time demands and system usability. However, experiences varied by instrument. While teachers generally supported the idea of a KEI, they were clear that not all instruments function equally well as a potential beginning-of-year tool. Overall, the teachers reported that the KRA, which utilizes a combination of direct and observation-based assessment, was most feasible due to the balance of the administration process. Teachers' views of TSG and DRDP, which are observation-based instruments, were mixed. While teachers confirmed the content was aligned to beginning-of-year expectations, many teachers viewed them as less manageable, due to the more time-intensive process to collect information and evidence to support ratings on individual skills and measures.

These findings suggested that simplicity, usability, and alignment with classroom routines are important for successful KEI implementation.

Outcomes of the Pilot in Fall 2025

The fall 2025 pilot survey and focus groups were designed to gather feedback from the kindergarten teachers. The fall 2025 pilot survey focused on understanding the perceived value, feasibility, training sufficiency, and instructional usefulness of the KEI instruments to inform future decisions about potential statewide adoption. Four focus groups were conducted after the conclusion of the fall 2025 pilot administration window—one focus group with administrators and three focus groups with teachers.

Of the 95 teachers who participated in the pilot, 81 completed the survey and 25 participated in one of the three focus groups. There were four administrators who participated in a focus group, and one of the focus groups included only teachers who participated in both the fall 2025 pilot and the pilots conducted during the 2024/25 school year.

Fall 2025 Pilot Survey

Survey results show strong support for the purpose and instructional value of a KEI. Teachers consistently valued the KEI's whole-child, strengths-based approach—particularly its attention to social-emotional development and its usefulness for communicating with families. At the same time, they emphasized that implementation was time-intensive and challenging without substantial training and changes to existing assessment demands at the beginning of the school year. Moreover, the survey results are clear that successful statewide implementation would require early and timely administration, streamlined expectations, strong and ongoing training, and reliable technology infrastructure.

The strengths and challenges that were identified via the fall 2025 pilot survey are summarized in the subsequent paragraphs. A summary of the fall 2025 pilot survey results is provided in Appendix D.

Strengths Identified via the Fall 2025 Pilot Survey

Whole-Child Focus and Strengths-Based Perspective: Across all three tools, teachers strongly valued the KEI's ability to capture a broader picture of student readiness beyond academic skills. Social-emotional learning, motor development, and cognitive skills were consistently identified as the most important and meaningful domains. Many teachers noted that this information is largely missing from other assessments currently used at the beginning of the year. Teachers also appreciated that the KEIs emphasized developmental progressions and student strengths rather than deficits.

> *"I LOVED the approach of looking at the child as a 'whole child,' addressing many developmentally appropriate targets. I also love the positive approach of being able to say, 'This is what your child can do . . . this is what we are working towards.'"*
>
> *Teacher via Fall 2025 Pilot Survey*

Instructional Usefulness: KEI results were generally perceived as aligning with classroom practice, while providing additional structure and evidence to guide decision-making and instructional planning. Teachers specifically reported using KEI data to inform small-group instruction and differentiation; to support planning for students with IEPs; and to support conversations about student needs with academic teams and administrators.

> *"The most helpful aspect of the KEI for my classroom instruction was the way it highlighted each student's developmental strengths and needs early in the year. This clear picture allowed me to be more intentional with my small-group instruction, plan centers that matched student readiness, and provide appropriate support for my multilingual learners."*
>
> *Teacher via Fall 2025 Pilot Survey*

Clear, Parent-Friendly Reports: Across all three tools, reports were widely viewed as one of the strongest features. Teachers described them as clear, accessible, and easy for families to understand. Many teachers indicated that KEI reports were (or can be) especially helpful during parent conferences and for communicating student needs with other educators.

> *"I liked the reports; they were easy to get to and create and they are easy to explain to other adults in my school. I even used the reports in my fall parent teacher conferences and parents were excited to see where their student was."*
>
> *Teacher via Fall 2025 Pilot Survey*

Challenges Identified via the Fall 2025 Pilot Survey

Time and Feasibility: Time demands were the most significant concern across all tools. Teachers reported difficulty fitting KEI administration into already crowded fall schedules, often at the expense of instructional time, intervention services, and play-based learning. When KEI administration extended into October or later, teachers felt it no longer functioned as a true "entry" snapshot.

> *"I did have to alter my instructional and assessment routines to collect the documentation needed for the KEI. I already collect data, but I needed to find ways to observe, assess, and document information for most of the standards."*
>
> *Teacher via Fall 2025 Pilot Survey*

Training Gaps: Training experiences varied widely. While some teachers found training materials helpful, others reported confusion related to timing, lack of hands-on practice, and insufficient guidance for supporting diverse learners. Teachers emphasized the need for ongoing training and clearer expectations, rather than one-time sessions.

> *"It felt like additional PD or having a co-teacher would be great ideas when choosing assessment activities."*
>
> *Teacher via Fall 2025 Pilot Survey*

Technology and Access Issues: Technology both supported and hindered implementation. While digital components increased student engagement for some teachers, others experienced platform glitches, navigation issues, device compatibility issues, need for digital documentation and photo capture, delayed access to materials, and limited technical support in real time. These challenges contributed to frustration and inefficiencies across all three tools.

> *"Navigating between various screens and having to cut and paste documentation that was relevant to several students was time consuming. There were a few times when data was lost uploading, I also had struggles trying to edit the student's personal data."*
>
> *Teacher via Fall 2025 Pilot Survey*

Assessment Overload: Some teachers raised concerns about duplication with existing assessments. Many emphasized that the KEI should not be added on top of current requirements and that existing assessments would need to be reduced or better aligned for KEI implementation to be feasible.

> *"If this were a requirement, we would need to be given time; and requirements for other assessments and instruction would need to be adjusted. The time commitment would need to be supported through the district and possibly with other staff in the building assisting."*
>
> *Teacher via Fall 2025 Pilot Survey*

Fall 2025 Pilot Focus Groups

The focus groups confirmed most of the themes that emerged from the fall 2025 pilot survey. Overall, teachers and administrators viewed the KEI instruments as appropriate for kindergarten entry. Many teachers expressed interest in having a single statewide KEI to support consistency and shared understanding of kindergarten readiness. While some teachers initially felt overwhelmed by the learning curve and limited training, most ultimately described the KEI instruments as more useful than expected. Teacher and administrator feedback indicated that a successful KEI implementation would closely correlate with familiarity from repeated administration and sustained support. Participants emphasized that training must extend beyond teachers to include administrators and SAU leadership, supporting broader system readiness.

The strengths and challenges that were identified via the fall 2025 focus groups are summarized in the subsequent paragraphs.

Strengths Identified via the Fall 2025 Pilot Focus Groups

Whole-Child Focus: Across administrators and teachers in both cohorts, there was strong agreement that the KEI instruments support a whole-child approach by capturing social-emotional learning and multiple developmental domains. These domains were consistently identified as the most valuable aspect of the KEI. Teachers emphasized that social-emotional development is currently under-supported and under-measured, and that the KEI provided meaningful language and data to support conversations about children's development with families.

Asset-Based: Teachers and administrators valued the KEI's asset-based approach, noting its usefulness in identifying student strengths and abilities rather than focusing solely on gaps. Teachers specifically reported using KEI data to inform instructional planning, small-group instruction, and intervention supports, and to gain a meaningful snapshot of student readiness at the beginning of the year.

Reports as a Major Strength: All groups identified KEI reports as a significant asset. Reports were consistently described as clear, accessible, and family friendly. Teachers found reports particularly valuable for conferences, as well as for communication with other educators. Reports also supported analysis of both individual student needs and whole-class trends.

Challenges Identified via the Fall 2025 Focus Groups

Time Required for Implementation: The most consistent challenge that surfaced across all groups was the time required to administer the KEI. Teachers reported difficulty integrating KEI administration into existing assessment schedules while managing full classrooms. Teachers often relied on "pockets of time" to assess students individually in ways that reduced instructional time, play-based learning, intervention services, and opportunities for relationship-building.

Benefit of Shared Participation and Repeated Experience: Teachers noted that implementation was more manageable when multiple educators within a school participated together, particularly when experienced teachers (from the Implementation Team) were available to support. While both cohorts experienced significant time pressure, teachers who participated in both pilots described smoother implementation.

Timing of Administration: Timing of administration strongly influenced perceptions of usefulness. Teachers consistently reported that the late start of the pilot reduced the KEI's value as a true entry assessment. Participants emphasized that administering the KEI at the start of the school year would significantly increase its relevance and instructional impact.

Competing Assessment Demands: Across all groups, participants expressed concern about assessment overload. Teachers and administrators emphasized that adding a KEI on top of existing school-mandated assessments increased workload. Many stressed that if the KEI becomes a requirement, other assessments would need to be reduced or streamlined to avoid duplication.

Training Needs: Teachers and administrators emphasized the need for clear and comprehensive training prior to implementation, hands-on practice after gaining access to the tools, and ongoing supports such as office hours. Administrators emphasized the need to be included in training so they could better support teachers and interpret reports.

Mentoring and Support: The teachers who were part of the Implementation Team reported smoother implementation due to familiarity and experience with the KEI instruments. Some pilot teachers benefited from informal mentoring by colleagues who were part of the Implementation Team, suggesting a potentially scalable support model. However, the Implementation Team teachers also cautioned that formal mentoring roles would add to already heavy workloads, underscoring the need for system-level support rather than reliance on individual teachers.

Recommendations for Future KEI Implementation

Future KEI Implementation

The KEI project has demonstrated that Maine educators value a whole-child, strengths-based approach to kindergarten entry assessment, particularly the emphasis on social-emotional development. With thoughtful planning, adequate resources, and attention to the lessons learned through the pilot process, Maine can implement a KEI that supports all Maine children as they enter kindergarten. Successful statewide implementation requires addressing the challenges related to time demands, training needs, technology infrastructure, and potential assessment overload.

The following recommendations emphasize that effective KEI implementation demands more than selecting an instrument—it requires comprehensive policy development and stakeholder engagement, well-defined goals and framework, extensive training and support, and commitment to continuous improvement.

Align Implementation and Framework with Maine's KEI Purpose Statement

Align implementation with the established purpose statement and ensure all components directly support the goals set forth by the Advisory Group to provide holistic information to educators and families, inform instructional decision-making, offer system-level insights, and align with the Preschool Maine Early Learning and Development Standards (P-MELDS).

Create a foundation and framework that clearly defines the KEI's role, requirements, and intended uses. Policy should explicitly state that the KEI is not a high-stakes assessment and will not be used for teacher evaluation or school accountability. Clarify data use requirements at state, SAU, school, and classroom levels, including approaches to aggregation and public reporting.

Address Timing and Reduce Assessment Burden

Require administration of the KEI within the first 6–8 weeks of school (September–October). Pilot feedback consistently emphasized that late administration significantly reduced the KEI's value as a true entry inventory and its usefulness for instructional planning.

Conduct a comprehensive audit of existing kindergarten assessments and eliminate redundant measures before implementing the KEI, if possible. Teachers and administrators emphasized that the KEI might overlap existing beginning-of-year assessments, and assessment overload was the one implementation challenge identified during the pilot.

Provide Comprehensive Training and Support

Ensure adequate professional development and training for teachers, administrators, and SAU leadership. Provide early access to assessment platform(s), with hands-on practice opportunities before the school year begins.

Establish ongoing support mechanisms such as regular office hours, online resource libraries with video tutorials, peer learning communities, and technical assistance during administration windows.

Create a mentoring network leveraging experienced educators, including initial Implementation Team members. Ensure these roles are adequately resourced, and consider establishing regional mentors who can provide in-person support during initial implementation.

Provide clear guidance on accommodations for diverse learners, including students with IEPs, English learners, and students with developmental delays to ensure equitable implementation.

Ensure Technology Infrastructure and Support

Conduct a technology readiness assessment of SAU and school capacity, including device availability, internet reliability, and availability of technical support staff.

Establish platform requirements, including compatibility with multiple device types, intuitive navigation, seamless evidence (photo, video) capture, responsive technical support during administration windows, and strong data security protections.

Negotiate vendor support agreements with explicit requirements for technical support, guaranteed response times, regular platform updates, and accountability measures for platform performance.

Select Instruments that Align with Goals and Maintain Whole-Child Focus

Select instrument(s) based on Maine's context, early learning standards, and pilot feedback. Pilot outcomes indicated the combination of direct and observation-based assessment was most balanced for beginning-of-year administration.

Ensure comprehensive measurement of all the essential domains of school readiness: social-emotional development, language and literacy, cognition and general knowledge, approaches to learning, and physical development. Pilot feedback strongly confirmed the value of social-emotional development, which seems to be under-measured in kindergarten classrooms currently.

Prioritize instruments with strong reporting capabilities. Clear, accessible, parent-friendly reports were identified as a major strength across the pilot instruments.

Allocate time and resources for validation if adapting or customizing an existing instrument to ensure reliability and alignment with P-MELDS and kindergarten standards.

Build Stakeholder Support and System Capacity

Conduct broad stakeholder engagement with early childhood providers, school and SAU leadership, school boards, teacher unions, policymakers, and families through focus groups, surveys, and public forums. Develop clear and consistent messaging about the KEI's purpose, benefits, and appropriate uses.

Engage the early childhood education community (pre-K providers, childcare centers, Head Start programs) to support continuity between pre-K and kindergarten.

Build partnerships with universities, foundations, and research organizations to support data analysis, evaluation, and technical assistance, following the models from other states that successfully implemented KEIs.

Establish secure data systems that comply with student privacy laws and integrate with existing systems and build state capacity for data analysis. This includes protocols for state-level data collection, quality review, and demographic analysis, as well as processes for linking KEI data to early childhood outcomes.

Secure Adequate and Sustained Funding

Develop comprehensive cost estimates for assessment procurement, technology infrastructure, training and professional development, technical support, data systems, implementation support staffing, and ongoing evaluation. Plan for both initial and ongoing operational expenses.

Identify diverse funding sources such as state appropriations, grants, and philanthropic partnerships, if possible. Allocate resources to support KEI infrastructure, including state-level coordination staff, regional coaches, SAU and school data managers, and help-desk support during administration.

Plan for Phased Implementation and Continuous Improvement

Consider a phased rollout rather than immediate statewide implementation. Options include voluntary participation during the initial implementation or several pilot implementations before statewide implementation. Experienced schools and SAUs can then provide mentoring to others.

Build in adequate planning and preparation time of at least 8–12 months between the selection of the instrument(s) and expected implementation to allow for contracting, professional development and training sessions, technology setup, and stakeholder engagement.

Leverage the experience of the Advisory Group and Implementation Team, who gained valuable expertise and reported smoother implementation, and consider how these educators can serve as mentors or coaches.

Plan for continuous improvement. Establish processes for collecting ongoing feedback, monitoring implementation fidelity, analyzing data quality, and making iterative refinements.

Appendix A
Advisory Group Members

Appendix A Table 1. Advisory Group Members

Name	Affiliation
Anne-Marie Adamson	Maine DOE, Inclusive Education Specialist/SPDG Coordinator
Julia Alley	RSU 63, Kindergarten Teacher
Jane Armstrong	Maine DOE, State ESOL Specialist
Amy Bragg	CDS, Site Director
Lane Clarke	Associate Professor, University of New England
Katy Eberhardt	RSU 25, Special Education Teacher
Kim Fadrigon	Gorham Schools, Pre-K–8 Instructional Leader
Mechelle Ganglfinger	Maine DOE, Alternate and English Language Proficiency Assessment Coordinator
Hannah Gundersdorf	Westbrook School Department, Kindergarten Teacher
Jacquelyn Hersom	Maine DOE, Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator
Ana Hicks	Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, Policy Director, Human Services
Erin Ireland	Bangor School Department, Principal
Kimberly Jordan	Brunswick School Department, ESOL Teacher
Lee Anne Larsen	Maine DOE, Director of Early Learning
Nicole Madore	Maine DOE, Early Childhood Specialist

Name	Affiliation
Karen Mathieu	Maine DOE, Kindergarten Entry Inventory Specialist (until May 2025)
Monica Miller	Lewiston Public Schools, Pre-K Coordinator & Coach
Julie Nichols	Lisbon Schools, Curriculum Director
Chlorissa Plaisted	RSU 9, Kindergarten Teacher
Renee Reilly	Maine DOE, Preschool Development Grant Manager
Ashley Stanley	MDI Schools, Kindergarten Teacher
Megan Swanson	Office of Child and Family Services, Early Care & Education Program Manager
Selina Warren	Community Regional Charter Schools, Outdoor Learning Facilitator and School Garden Coordinator
Barbara Welch	RSU 54, Academic Coach
Tara Williams	Office of Child and Family Services, Associate Director of Early Care & Education
Matt Brunetti	WestEd, Senior Program Associate/Project Director
Joanne Jensen	WestEd, Director of Assessment Design and Development
Priya Kannan	WestEd, Senior Research Manager

Appendix B
Implementation Team Members

Appendix B Table 1. Implementation Team Members

Name	Affiliation
Arenda LeBourdais	Community Regional Charter School
Ashley O'Brien	RSU 14
Ashley Stanley	Westbrook
Barbra Childress	Scarborough
Bekki Cummings	AOS 96
Bridget Shea	MSAD 28
Elizabeth Ann Cousins	Winthrop
Gracie Foss	RSU 16
Hannah Gundersdorf	RSU 16
Jenna LaRock	RSU 14
Jennifer Farrin	MSAD 46
Jennifer Poitras	Winthrop
Jessica McMichael	Scarborough
Julia Alley	MSAD 54
Kaitlan Cavanaugh	RSU 18

Name	Affiliation
Kelsey Douglass	MSAD 54
Lauri Blais	Lewiston
Leslie Gallant	Scarborough
Linda Fisher	Lewiston
Mackenzie Fittswood	RSU 16
Molly Jack	Scarborough
Nicole Ball	Hancock
Rebecca Sanborn	MSAD 52
Renelle Pollard	Westbrook
Sarah DeCesere	St. George Municipal School Unit
Selina Greene Warren	RSU 14
Sherri Everett	Scarborough

Appendix C
Fall 2025 Pilot Participant SAUs

Appendix C Table 1. Fall 2025 Pilot Participant SAUs

SAU	Number of Participants
AOS 96	2
Auburn	2
Community Regional Charter School	1
EUT	1
Falmouth	1
Hancock	1
Lewiston	5
Mount Desert Island	2
MSAD 6	1
MSAD 11	1
MSAD 28	1
MSAD 46	3
MSAD 51	1
MSAD 52	2
MSAD 54	3

SAU	Number of Participants
MSAD 60	3
MSAD 61	5
MSAD 75	2
RSU 1	3
RSU 2	5
RSU 9	2
RSU 10	1
RSU 13	2
RSU 14	4
RSU 16	3
RSU 18	2
RSU 19	1
RSU 21	1
RSU 25	1
RSU 35/MSAD 35	5
RSU 38	1
RSU 39	1
RSU 40	2
RSU 57	1

SAU	Number of Participants
RSU 63	1
RSU 71	1
RSU 73	3
RSU 74	1
Scarborough	5
School Union 76	1
School Union 93	2
School Union 103	1
South Portland	3
St. George Municipal School Unit	1
Westbrook	2
Winthrop	2

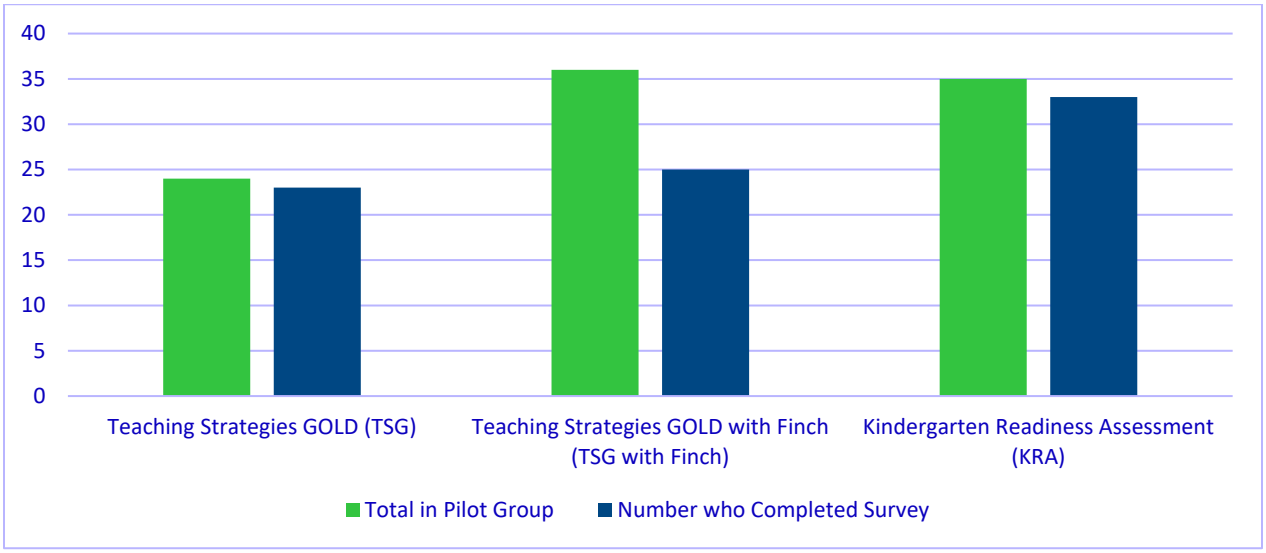
Appendix D
Fall 2025 Pilot Survey Results Summary

The purpose of the fall 2025 pilot survey was to gather teachers' feedback on their experiences with the KEI instruments. Although responses varied by each pilot instrument (TSG, TSG with Finch, or KRA), the survey's purpose was to evaluate the feasibility of implementing a KEI in Maine and not to evaluate the instruments themselves. Accordingly, the pilot survey results summarized in this appendix are aggregated across all three KEI pilot instruments.

Overview

Ninety-five teachers from numerous Maine SAUs participated in the fall 2025 pilot. Each pilot participant administered one of three instruments: KRA (35 teachers), TSG (24 teachers), or TSG with Finch (36 teachers). Of the 95 teachers who started the fall 2025 pilot, 81 teachers completed the pilot and the survey, including 33 teachers who piloted the KRA, 23 teachers who piloted TSG, and 25 teachers who piloted TSG with Finch, as shown in Figure 1.

Appendix D Figure 1. Number of Teachers from Each Pilot Group Completing the Survey



Classroom Information

Teachers were asked to provide information about the students in their classrooms to give some context for the diversity of students in the pilot classrooms. Table 1 summarizes the classroom information provided by the pilot teachers, including overall classroom size, the number of students that were assessed, and other student background information.

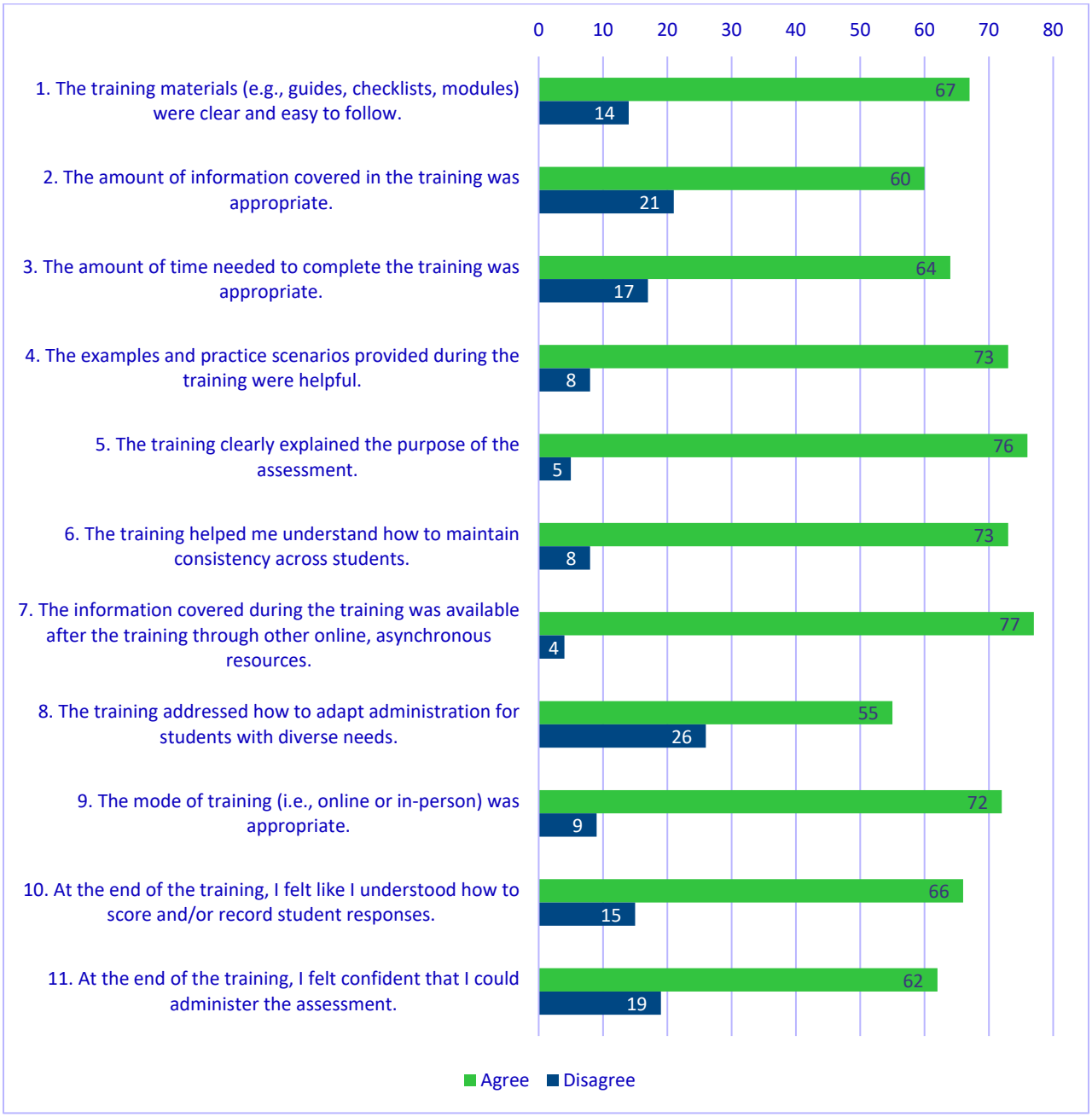
Appendix D Table 1. Classroom Information for Teachers Participating in the Fall 2025 Pilot

Classroom Information	Number of Teachers Reporting
Number of Students: 0–10 Students	10
Number of Students: 11–15 Students	51
Number of Students: 16–20 Students	20
Assessed All Students: Yes	67
Assessed All Students: No	14
Number of Students Who Attended a Pre-K/Preschool Program: 0–4 Students	7
Number of Students Who Attended a Pre-K/Preschool Program: 5–9 Students	42
Number of Students Who Attended a Pre-K/Preschool Program: 10 or More Students	32
Number of Students with an IEP: 0–4 Students	66
Number of Students with an IEP: 5–9 Students	15

Effectiveness and Adequacy of Training

Teachers responded to a series of questions evaluating the effectiveness and adequacy of the training provided to implement the KEI. Figure 2 summarizes teachers' levels of agreement and disagreement across key aspects of the training.

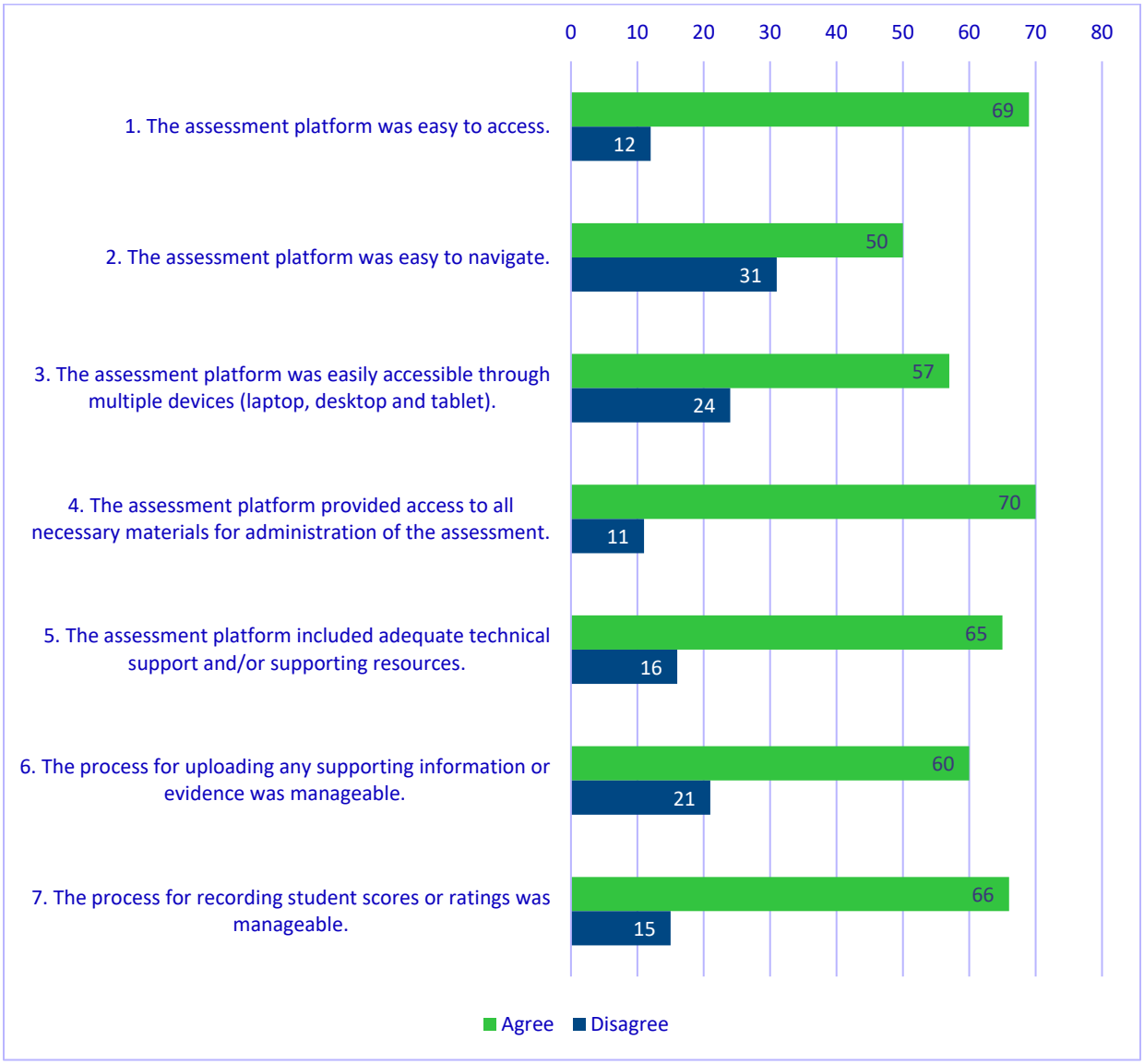
Appendix D Figure 2. Number of Teachers Who Agreed or Disagreed with Each Statement About the Effectiveness and Adequacy of Training



Experience with Assessment Platform

Teachers responded to a series of questions evaluating their experiences with the assessment platform including ease of access and navigation, technical support provided, and the process of recording and uploading student scores and supporting information. Figure 3 summarizes teachers' levels of agreement and disagreement across key aspects of their experiences with the assessment platform.

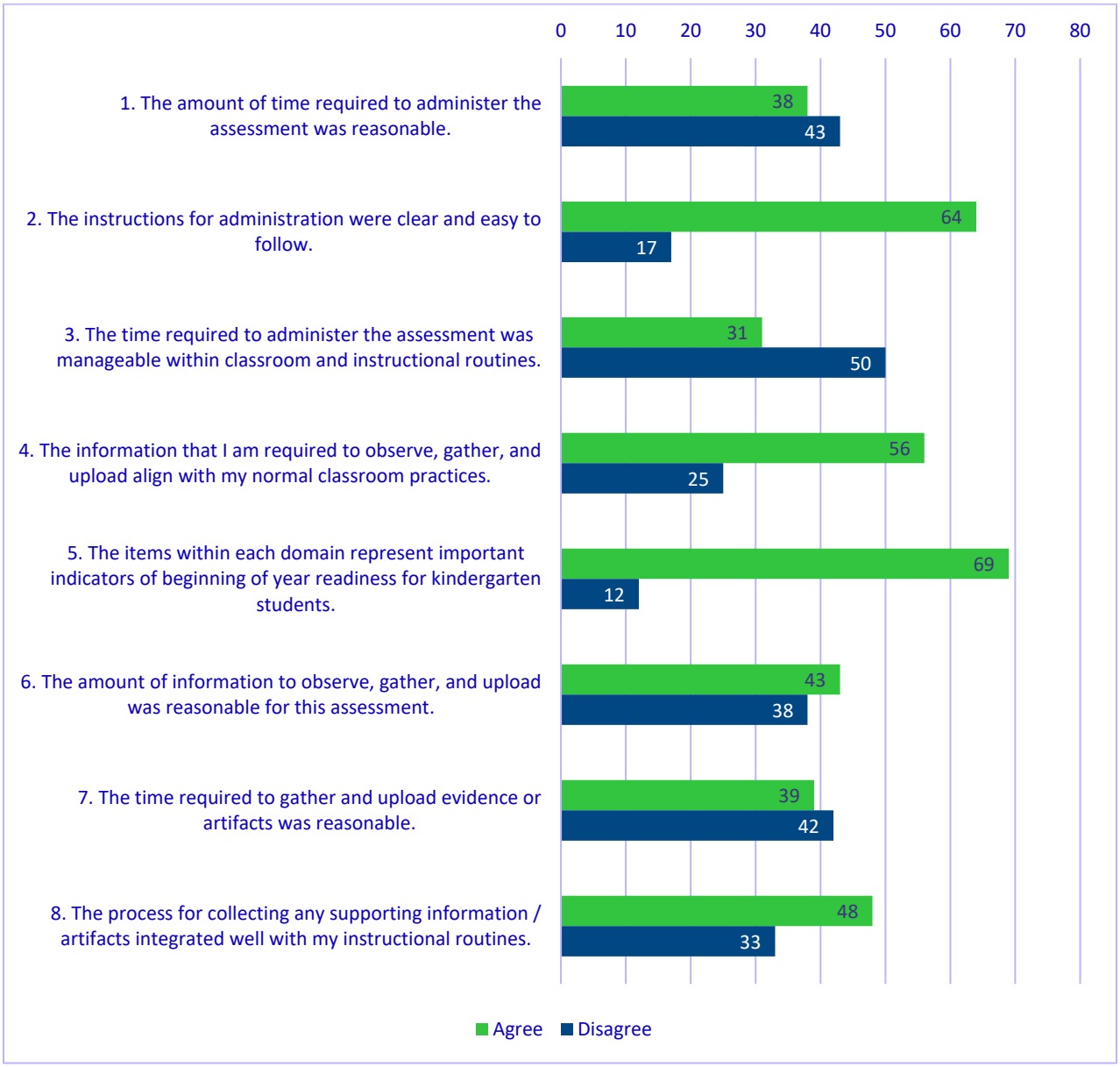
Appendix D Figure 3. Number of Teachers Who Agreed or Disagreed with Each Statement About Their Experiences with the Assessment Platform



Feasibility of Administration

Teachers responded to a series of questions evaluating the feasibility of administration of the KEI instrument including the amount of time required to administer, clarity of instructions, and the amount of information that they were required to observe, gather, and upload. Figure 4 summarizes teachers' levels of agreement and disagreement across key aspects of their perceived feasibility of administration of their specific KEI instrument.

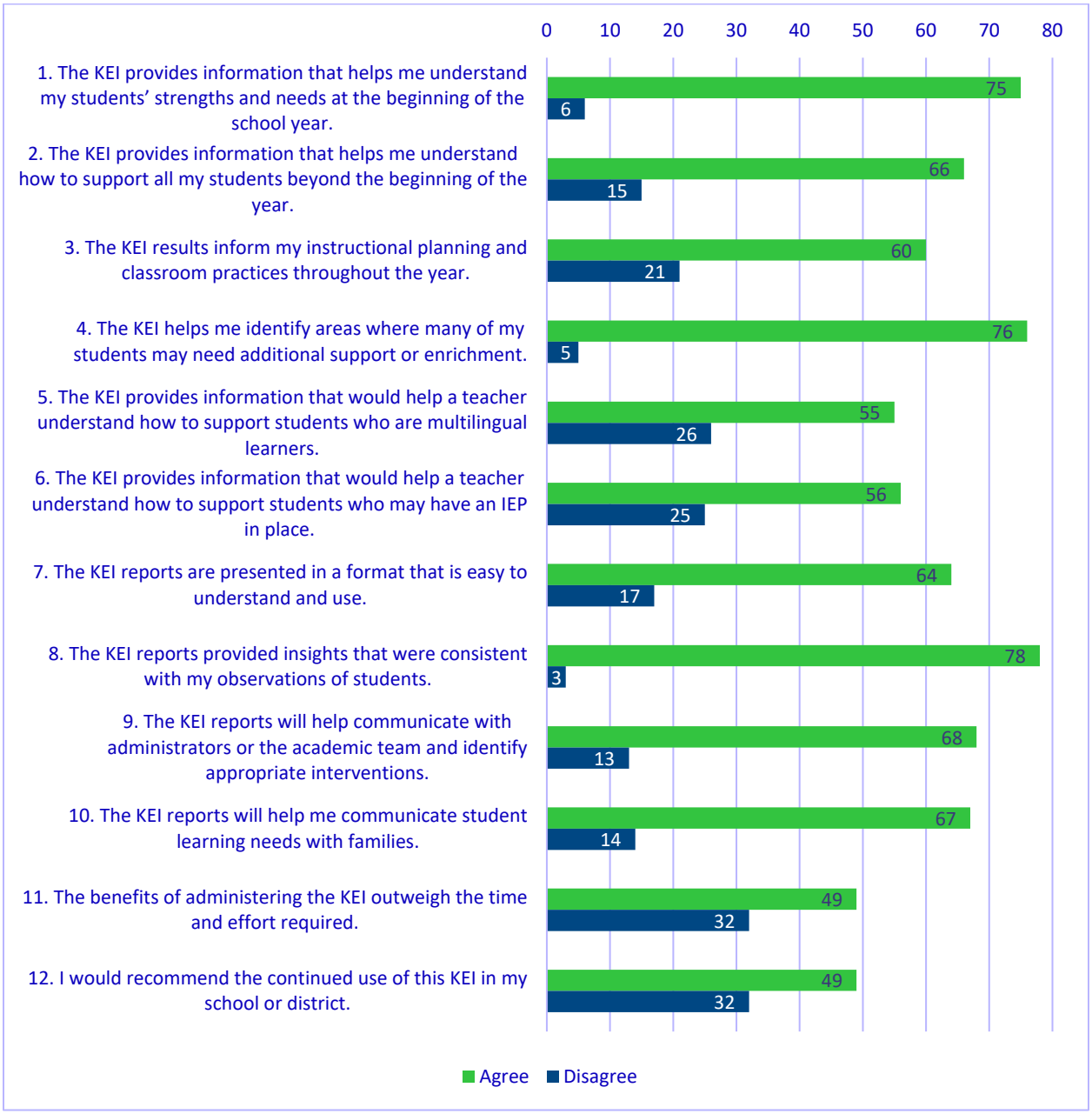
Appendix D Figure 4. Number of Teachers Who Agreed or Disagreed with Each Statement About the Feasibility of Administration



Usefulness of the KEI Instrument

Teachers responded to a series of questions evaluating the usefulness of the KEI in informing their instructional planning and classroom practices. Figure 5 summarizes teachers' levels of agreement and disagreement across key aspects of their perceived usefulness of the information they received from the KEI.

Appendix D Figure 5. Number of Teachers Who Agreed or Disagreed with Each Statement About the Usefulness of the KEI in Informing Instructional Practice



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