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Executive Summary

Kindergarten Assessment – A Snapshot of Early Learning

Every child in Oregon deserves a bright future. Investing in our children early is essential to set them on a path to success in school and beyond. Oregon's Kindergarten Assessment was designed to provide a snapshot of the skills that children have when they enter kindergarten. The assessment also provides insight into how effectively Oregon's early learning system is preparing children to successfully transition into kindergarten.

This snapshot of our children's skills is not a typical assessment. There is no pass or fail, no blanks or bubbles to fill out, and does not determine a child's placement in classrooms. It is important for our teachers and parents to be aware of how their students are doing along the way. The Kindergarten Assessment provides schools and teachers with baseline information about children as they enter school, and helps early learning providers to have a clear picture of some of the skills that children will need for a successful transition into kindergarten.

Oregon has a strong vision and clear goals for ensuring every child is successful through high quality, developmentally appropriate, and culturally responsive early learning experiences. By using this snapshot of students' progress coming into kindergarten, we have already begun to invest in ways that better support children and their families.

What 2015-2016's Data Shows:

Children enter kindergarten having had a wide variety of early childhood experiences. Children may have attended private preschool, have been cared for at home with trusted family members or parents, participated in church programs, or attended a Head Start program. These differences in early childhood experiences are reflected in the results that we see in the kindergarten assessments scores of our children as they start out in elementary school.

To develop interpretive guidance for the initial three years of data, the Oregon Department of Education and the Early Learning Division convened a panel of stakeholders in the fall of 2015. The assembled group included early learning providers and coordinators, kindergarten teachers, K-12 administrators, researchers, and various specialists. The panel provided input to create a developmental continuum describing the social-emotional and self-regulation skills that children demonstrate upon entry into kindergarten. The developmental continuum outlines three benchmark levels: *Developing, Approaching, Demonstrating and Above.*

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Benchmark level expectations in self-regulation and interpersonal skills are based upon a range of scores that will help identify targeted areas for support. **The results of the Kindergarten Assessment should not be used for student placement purposes.**

Oregon's kindergarten data has remained relatively stable over the past three years. This year, the state average for both self-regulation and interpersonal skills was in the higher end of the *Approaching* range. Students' average scores in Early Literacy and Early Math showed slight increases from the previous year. This data is encouraging because Oregon's youngest students are on the path toward demonstrating foundational skills when they enter kindergarten.

These patterns of differences are consistent with national data and research also shows that the opportunity gaps reflected in the Kindergarten Assessment tend to persist. We do see glimmers of positivity with the Kindergarten assessment scores. The current numbers reflect the work we have to do to close the opportunity gaps in early learning settings.

The results from the Approaches to Learning portion – including self-regulation and interpersonal skills – have been relatively consistent over the last three years. There has been a slight increase this school year in the average number answered correctly in early mathematics and in early literacy.

The Oregon Department of Education and the Early Learning Division, in an effort to respond to and reflect stakeholder feedback, will continue to refine and add to the current guidance over the next two years.

Overall assessment goals:

- To provide local and statewide information to state-level policymakers, teachers and educators, early learning hubs, and families about the literacy, math, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills of entering kindergarteners;
- To provide essential information on Oregon's entering kindergartners' strengths and to identify gaps in key developmental and academic skills to inform early learning and K-12 decisions and to target instruction, professional development, resources and supports on the areas of greatest need;
- To provide a consistent tool to be used across the state to identify opportunity gaps in order to inform school, districts, early learning hubs, communities and policymakers about how to allocate resources to the communities with the greatest need and to measure progress in the years to come.

The goals for children:

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The Kindergarten Assessment provides a snapshot of children’s early literacy, early math, interpersonal and approaches to learning skills. This snapshot allows state leaders to identify the success of early learning systems in preparing children for kindergarten and to target resources to ensure each child has a high quality early learning experience. Educators can use this information to support student growth and development. We have a responsibility to ensure each Oregon child – especially those children who have historically been furthest from opportunity – have access to a high quality education.

The goals for teachers and educators:

Starting in the 2016-17 school year, data from Oregon’s Kindergarten Assessment will be immediately ready for analysis and feedback so that educators can use the information to better inform their practice. In previous years, some communities have been able to utilize the snapshot to guide future instruction for students and provide a springboard for communication with families around shared education goals. Moving forward, with the data ready immediately after the assessment, we will work with early learning and K-12 partners to systematize the use of the data across districts such that the results from the assessment inform professional development for educators and allow for the creation of supplemental resources for teachers. In addition, the information can be used to monitor patterns in district and school level data over time and identify opportunity gaps.

The goals for early learning providers:

The snapshot will highlight the brain building work done with 3 and 4 year olds that prepares them for kindergarten. Early learning providers are partners in early education and this data will strengthen the work across disciplines to support children.

The goals for Early Learning Hubs:

The results help Hubs better understand the children they serve by identifying the strengths and gaps in learning in selected domains of development. These results can be used to help hubs target resources, supports and cross-sector, community-based strategies that support early learning.

The goals for policymakers:

Policymakers use assessment results to verify the return on early learning investments and to direct future investment in Oregon’s children. The data is also used to identify opportunity gaps. Resources will be allocated to communities with the greatest need and we will be able to measure statewide progress in coming years.



2015-16 Group Interpretive Guidance Overview for the Kindergarten Assessment

The 2015-16 school year marks the third operational year of Oregon's Kindergarten Assessment. The Kindergarten Assessment provides:

- Local and statewide information for state-level policy makers, communities, schools, and families about the interpersonal, math, and literacy skills of incoming kindergartners;
- Information about the strengths and identification of opportunity gaps in the development and academic skills of Oregon's youngest students and early learning/K-12 systems about the allocation of resources, professional development, and other support to students with the greatest needs; and
- A consistent, statewide tool that will provide a snapshot about the identification of systemic opportunity gaps and will measure Oregon's progress over time.

Oregon's incoming kindergartners are assessed during the first six weeks of school in the areas of Early Literacy, Early Math, and Approaches to Learning. The data collected from the assessment allows the Oregon Department of Education and the Early Learning Division to more effectively target resources where they are most needed within Oregon's Early Learning system. The data also helps kindergarten teachers establish a baseline for children's learning and development at the onset of each kindergarten year.



Students develop at different rates; therefore, variance is to be expected in the skills that students demonstrate upon entry into kindergarten.

Cautions in interpreting the Results of the Kindergarten Assessment:

Although the results of the Kindergarten Assessment are useful for learning about specified knowledge and skills of incoming kindergartners, it also has limitations. First and foremost, students cannot pass or fail the Kindergarten Assessment. The Kindergarten Assessment provides a snapshot of a few important areas of children's learning and development at a particular moment in time.



The Kindergarten Assessment is not intended to be a comprehensive assessment of children's readiness for school and should not be used for placement purposes. The Kindergarten Assessment should not be used to exclude or prevent children from starting kindergarten.

Students enter kindergarten with a wide range of skills that teachers build upon to ensure growth throughout the year and beyond, and the Kindergarten Assessment provides one part of a larger picture of students' strengths and areas in need of improvement. To provide a more rounded perspective, educators are strongly encouraged to evaluate Kindergarten Assessment results in conjunction with multiple additional points of data such as results from DIBELS, DRA, and other districtwide assessments. While teachers may choose to share students' Kindergarten Assessment results with parents in the context of a parent-teacher conference as *part* of the conversation around their child's **growth and**

development throughout the school year, the results of the Kindergarten Assessment alone are not intended to be used as individual student reports to be shared with parents without additional context.

The following information can guide interpretation of data gathered from the Approaches to Learning, Early Literacy, and Early math measures during the 2015-16 administration.

Approaches to Learning:

The Approaches to Learning measure is administered within the first six weeks of school. Classroom teachers observe the students during regular activities and routines to complete the fifteen-item Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS), which measures teacher perceptions of students' self-regulation behaviors and interpersonal skills. This measure has been used around the world and has been found to predict academic achievement (Cameron Ponitz et al., 2009; McClelland et al., 2007; Matthews et al., 2009; von Suchodoletz et al., 2013; Wanless, McClelland et al., 2011, 2013).

Self-Regulation:

The Self-Regulation portion looks at how often students exhibit behaviors such as persisting at difficult tasks and using organizational tools. The Self-Regulation score for each student is the average of the teacher's ratings for that student on the ten Self-Regulation items included in the CBRS.

Average scores range from 1.0 to 5.0. Items for which behaviors are not observed are excluded from the average.

Interpersonal Skills:

The Interpersonal Skills portion looks at how often students exhibit skills such as sharing with their fellow students and following adult directions. The Interpersonal Skills score for each student is the average of teachers' ratings for that student on the five Interpersonal Skill items included in the CBRS.

Average scores range from 1.0 to 5.0. Items for which behaviors are not observed are excluded from the average.

For each Approaches to Learning item, students are rated on the following scale:

- 1 = the child *never* exhibits the behavior described by the item
- 2 = the child *rarely* exhibits the behavior described by the item
- 3 = the child *sometimes* exhibits the behavior described by the item
- 4 = the child *frequently/usually* exhibits the behavior described by the item
- 5 = the child *always* exhibits the behavior described by the item

Total Approaches to Learning scores range from 1.0 to 5.0, which is an average of the teacher's ratings across all fifteen items of the CBRS, including both Self-Regulation and Interpersonal Skills.

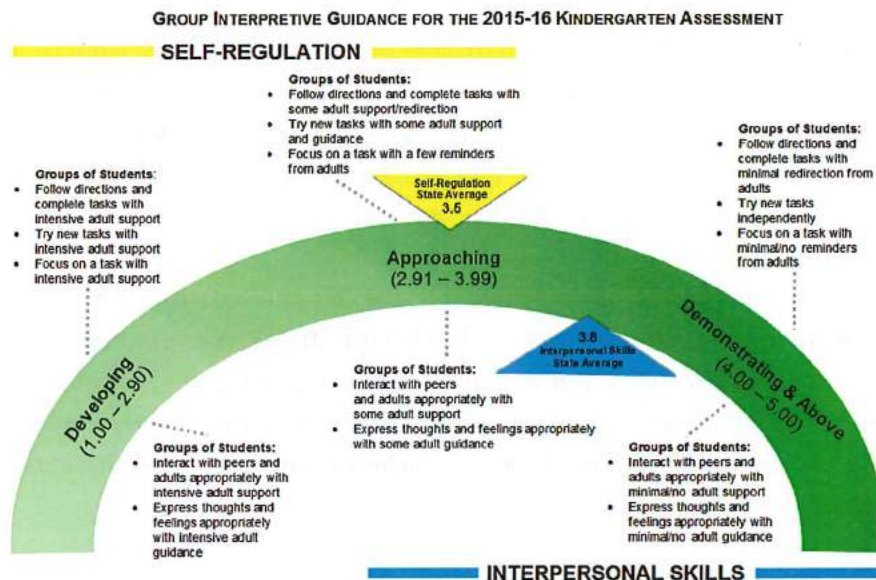
There is a large body of evidence that supports our understanding that a student's ability to self-regulate and provide sustained attention to a task are predictive of academic success (Howse, Lange et al., 2003). Results from these studies suggest that there are specific benchmark goals that are more predictive of

later outcomes. The Oregon Department of Education, in conjunction with stakeholder feedback, synthesized the results from these studies to provide guidance for Approaches to Learning.

Recognizing that, as a normal part of development, children will enter Kindergarten with a wide range of skills, scores from the Approaches to Learning measure are depicted along a developmental continuum that describes the skills that typical students should be able to demonstrate upon entry into kindergarten. This continuum, which applies to *groups* of students, is illustrated in the diagram below. Benchmark level expectations are assigned based upon a range of scores and will help provide a baseline for student growth in subsequent years, as well as enable teachers to identify targeted areas for supporting the social-emotional and interpersonal development of groups of children.

The benchmark levels for the Approaches to Learning measure are as follows:

- **Developing (An average score of 1.0-2.90)**
- **Approaching (An average score of 2.91-3.99)**
- **Demonstrating and Above (An average score of 4.0-5.0)**



These benchmark levels provide a description of the key behaviors that students exhibit at each level along the continuum from **Developing** through **Demonstrating and Above**. The scores serve as a baseline for student growth in subsequent years, and enable teachers to provide targeted instruction and act as a means for leveraging additional support for groups of students. A given group of students, or even individual students, may demonstrate behaviors that fall across all three levels, and professional judgment should be used when determining benchmark levels.



Scores falling in the lower end of the *Approaching* range and in the *Developing* range of the continuum may signal the need for further exploration.

Scores in the lower range do not indicate that students are not “ready” to start kindergarten.

Students in all three ranges greatly benefit from teachers and students modeling and scaffolding the desired behaviors during regular classroom activity. Additional scaffolding and modeling may also be needed by the teacher to engage and support students who have a different racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural background. Analysis from Oregon State University demonstrates that self-regulation is strongly related to academic outcomes. (Duncan & McClelland, 2014). Average scores of 4.0 in Self-Regulation and Approaches to Learning can contribute to later academic success.

Early Literacy and Early Math

Specific interpretive guidance around the Early Literacy and Early Math measures cannot be provided at this time, in part, because the measures were developed before the adoption of the new Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and the kindergarten Common Core State Standards. A work group has been engaged in aligning both sets of standards to represent a continuum of development and learning from age three to the end of kindergarten that will be available later this year. This work will result in a document that provides a foundation for establishing benchmark levels in the areas of early literacy and math for entering kindergarteners. Also, as 2015-16 marks only the third year of administering these measures, the Oregon Department of Education does not yet have longitudinal data to link the results from these measures to future outcomes. As student cohorts who participated in these measures enter 3rd grade and participate in Oregon's statewide assessments in English language arts and math, ODE anticipates conducting further analysis evaluating the correlation between results on the Kindergarten Assessment and future outcomes.

In order to support alignment with our new standards, the Oregon Department of Education will remove the timing component to the Early Literacy measures for the 2016-17 Kindergarten Assessment. The new untimed measures will examine letter and sound recognition instead of fluency. In addition, extensive research is being conducted as to the best practices in assessing early Spanish Literacy. The Oregon Department of Education's future plans also include refining and replacing current math items to increase alignment with the standards.

Early Literacy:

The Early Literacy measure of the Kindergarten Assessment is administered within the first three weeks of school. This measure, adapted from EasyCBM, is a timed fluency measure that provides information about how quickly and accurately entering kindergartners can produce letter names and letter sounds.

English Letter Names:

The Letter Names assessment measures how quickly and accurately students name upper and lower case letters while looking at a chart. Letter name scores represent the total number of letters a student is able to correctly identify in one minute.

English Letter Sounds:

The Letter Sounds Assessment measures how quickly and accurately students produce the sounds of upper and lowercase letters and some letter blends while looking at a chart. Letter Sound scores represent the number of English Letter sounds a student is able to correctly identify in one minute.

Spanish Letter Sounds:

The Spanish Letter Sounds assessment is for students who are officially identified as Spanish-speaking English Learners. The Spanish Letter Sounds assessment measures how quickly and accurately a student is able to identify Spanish letter sounds while looking at a chart. Spanish Letter Sound scores represent the number of Spanish letter sounds a student is able to correctly identify in one minute. Students who are bilingual or trilingual may require additional time to process and adjust to being asked to produce sounds in their native language in an environment where English is the dominant language.

Early Mathematics:

The Early Mathematics measure, adapted from EasyCBM, is administered within the first three weeks of school. The Early Mathematics segment is an untimed direct assessment in numbers and operations including counting, simple addition, simple subtraction, and recognizing number patterns. Students are given oral directions and are asked to respond to sixteen multiple choice items by either pointing to or verbalizing the correct answer. Students who have been officially identified as Spanish-speaking English Learners are given the choice to receive oral directions in either English or Spanish and may respond in either English or Spanish. Early Mathematics scores range from zero to sixteen and represent the number of items the student answers correctly.

Kindergarten Assessment Reports:

The following table shows the levels of Kindergarten Assessment reports and the appropriate uses of the results at each level. At all levels, the results of the Kindergarten Assessment can be used for early identification of opportunity gaps; to determine how to equitably allocate resources in early childhood through third grade; and to communicate with policymakers, families, and communities about the importance of high-quality education from early childhood through grade three.

Statewide reports are posted on the Kindergarten Assessment Resources webpage. These results display the average scores of students statewide and in each district and school, overall, and by student group.

School District and school level results are sent to school districts and Early Learning Hubs, and displayed in the publicly available statewide report. District and school-level results display the average scores of students in each school, overall and by student subgroup.

Student-level results display individual students' scores for each segment of the Kindergarten Assessment. In order to protect student confidentiality, student-level results are included in the

district and school level results of the students' attending districts and schools, but are not released to the public in the statewide reports.

Hub-level results are sent to Early Learning Hubs and display the average scores of students in the districts and schools within each hub, overall and by student subgroup.

Reporting Level	Uses of the Results
<p>Statewide Statewide reports are posted on the Kindergarten Assessment Resources webpage. These results display the average scores of students statewide and in each district and school, overall and by student subgroup.</p>	<p>Statewide results are used to identify opportunity gaps in order to inform decision-making in allocating resources to the communities with the greatest need and to measure statewide progress in the years to come.</p>
<p>District and School School District and school level results are sent to school districts and hubs, and displayed in the publicly available statewide report. District and school-level results display the average scores of students in each school, overall and by student subgroup.</p> <p>Student-level results display individual students' scores for each segment of the Kindergarten Assessment. In order to protect student confidentiality, student-level results are included in the district and school level results of the students' attending districts and schools, but are not released to the public in the statewide reports.</p>	<p>District and school level results help districts and schools, in partnership with local providers of early learning services, better understand the strengths and gaps in selected domains of development for Oregon's entering kindergarteners overall and by student subgroups. These results can be used to monitor patterns in district- and school-level data over time and identify opportunity gaps among student subgroups. This information can inform instructional strategies in the classroom and be used to target professional development, resources, and supports on the areas of greatest need.</p> <p>Student-level results provide a snapshot of the skills in early literacy, early math, and approaches to learning each entering kindergartener can demonstrate on the Kindergarten Assessment. These results can be used to initiate outreach to families and, when used in conjunction with other sources of information, inform instructional decisions.</p>
<p>Early Learning Hub Hub-level results are sent to Hubs and display the average scores of students in the districts and schools within each hub, overall and by student subgroup.</p>	<p>The Early Learning Hub results help Hubs better understand the strengths and opportunity gaps in selected domains of development of the population of children in the Hub's service area. These results can be used to help Hubs target resources supports, and cross-sector community-based strategies that support early learning.</p>

GROUP INTERPRETIVE GUIDANCE FOR THE 2015-16 KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT

SELF-REGULATION

Groups of Students:

- Follow directions and complete tasks with some adult support/redirection
- Try new tasks with some adult support and guidance
- Focus on a task with a few reminders from adults

- Follow directions and complete tasks with intensive adult support
- Try new tasks with intensive adult support
- Focus on a task with intensive adult support

- Follow directions and complete tasks with minimal redirection from adults
- Try new tasks independently
- Focus on a task with minimal/no reminders from adults

Self-Regulation
State Average
3.5

Approaching
(2.91 – 3.99)

3.8
Interpersonal Skills
State Average

Groups of Students:

- Interact with peers and adults appropriately with some adult support
- Express thoughts and feelings appropriately with some adult guidance

Groups of Students:

- Interact with peers and adults appropriately with intensive adult support
- Express thoughts and feelings appropriately with intensive adult guidance

Groups of Students:

- Interact with peers and adults appropriately with minimal/no adult support
- Express thoughts and feelings appropriately with minimal/no adult guidance

Demonstrating & Above
(4.00 – 5.00)

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

*The Oregon Department of Education is in the process of developing interpretive guidance in the areas of Early Literacy and Early Math. In the fall of 2012, approximately 1,200 students participated in the pilot of the Kindergarten Assessment; results from the third grade summative assessment for this cohort will not be available until the summer of 2016. The Kindergarten Assessment was implemented statewide in 2013; complete cohort data will not be available until the summer of 2017. The Spanish Literacy measure has undergone revisions for the past three years, which means that no trend data is currently available. Third grade cohort data for the current version of this measure will not be available until the summer of 2019.

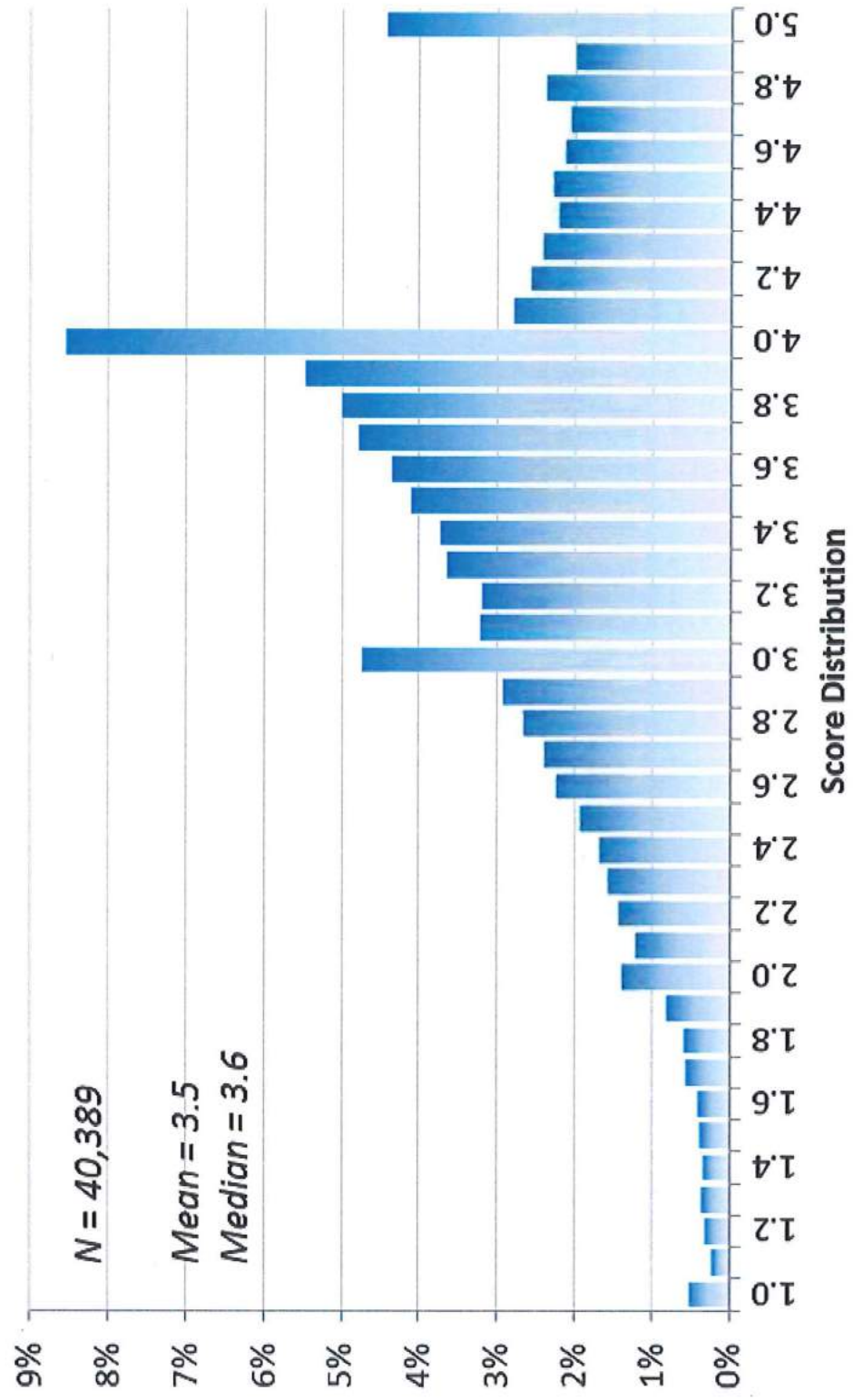
Oregon's Kindergarten Assessment

2015-2016

Charts for

- Approaches To Learning : Self-Regulation
- Approaches To Learning : Interpersonal Skills
- Early Literacy : English Letter Names
- Early Literacy : English Letter Sounds
- Early Literacy : Spanish Letter Sounds
- Early Math : Numbers and Operations

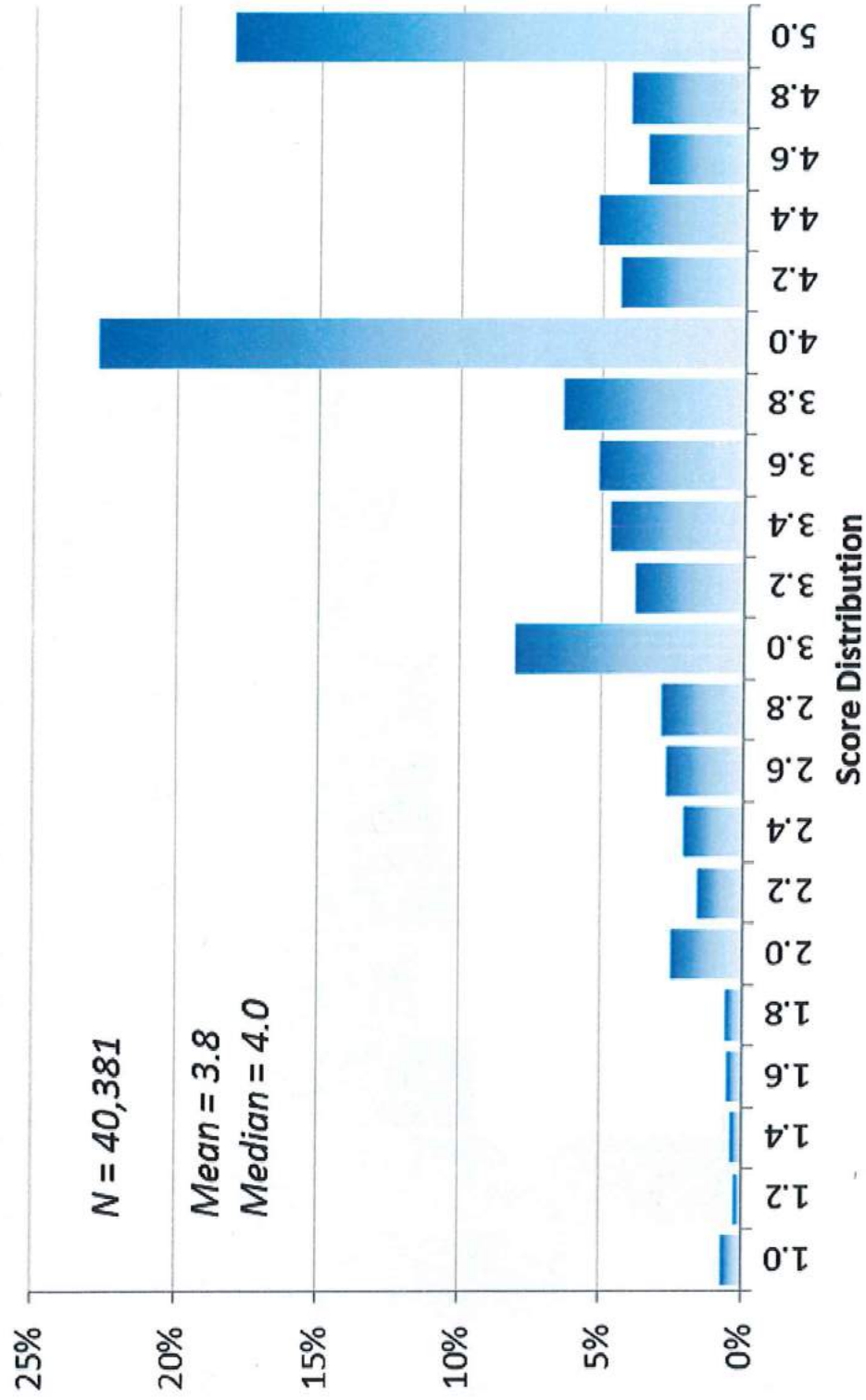
Approaches To Learning : Self-Regulation



Source: Oregon Department of Education. 2015-16 Kindergarten Assessment

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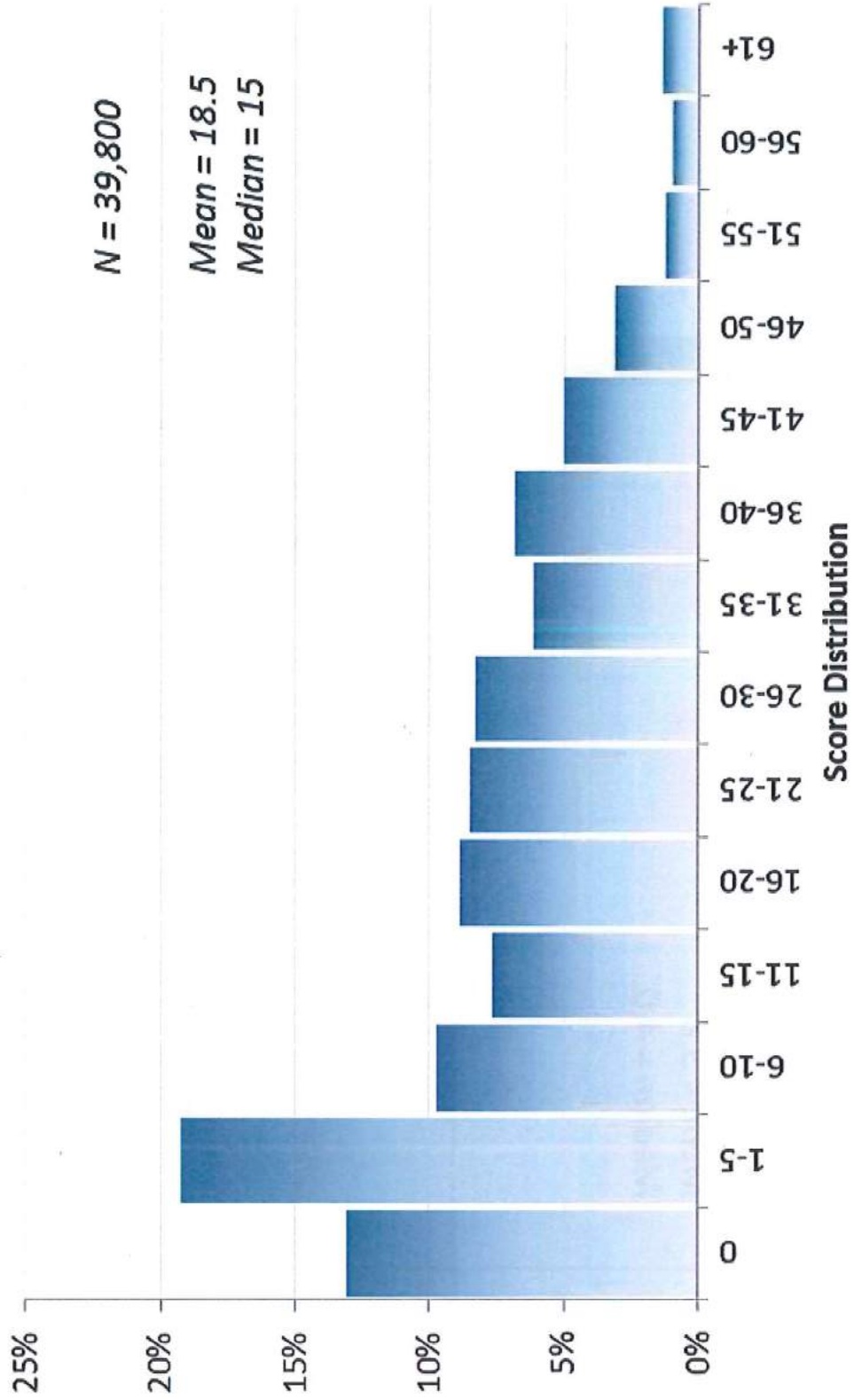
Approaches To Learning : Interpersonal Skills



Source: Oregon Department of Education. 2015-16 Kindergarten Assessment

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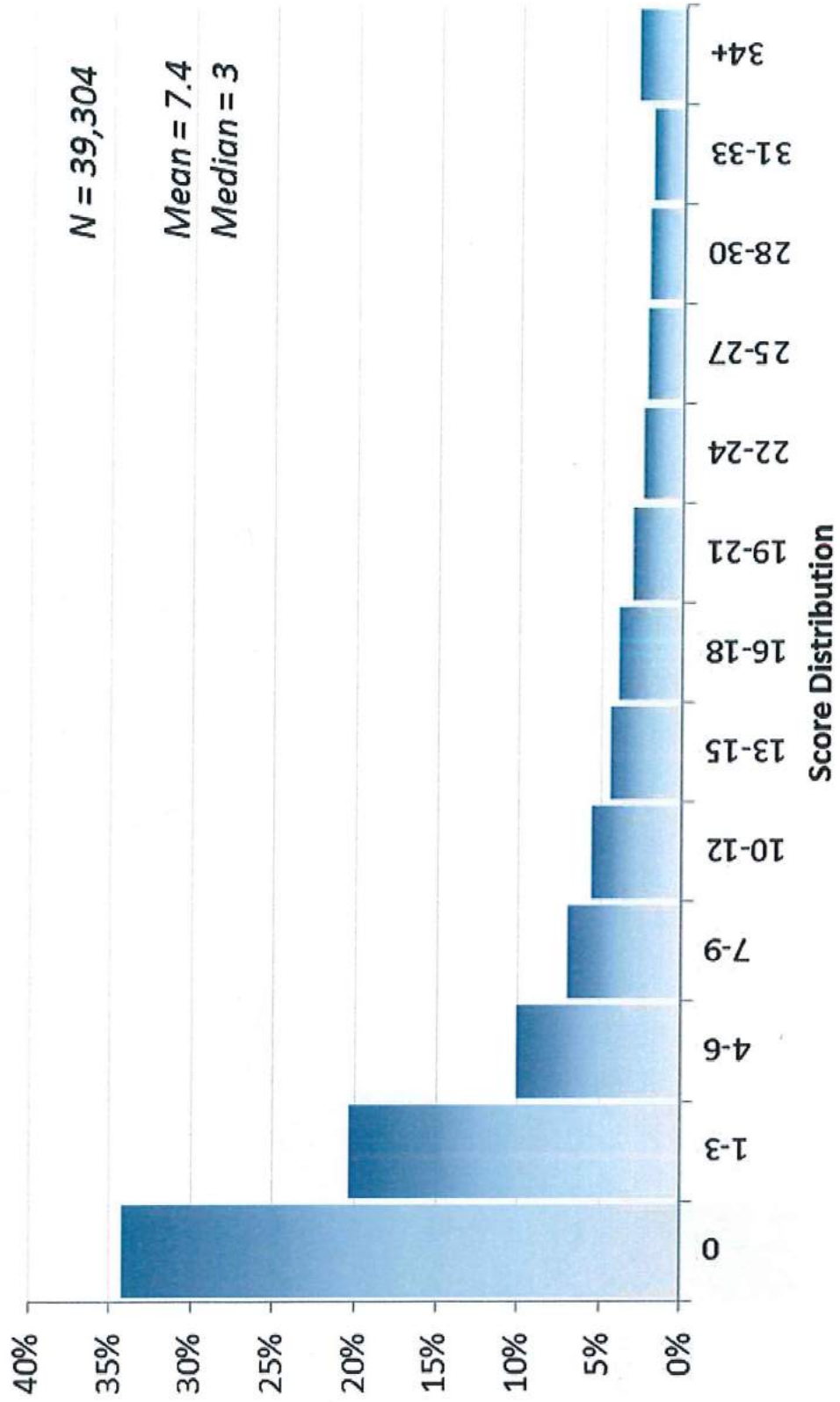
English Letter Names



Source: Oregon Department of Education. 2015-16 Kindergarten Assessment

February 2016

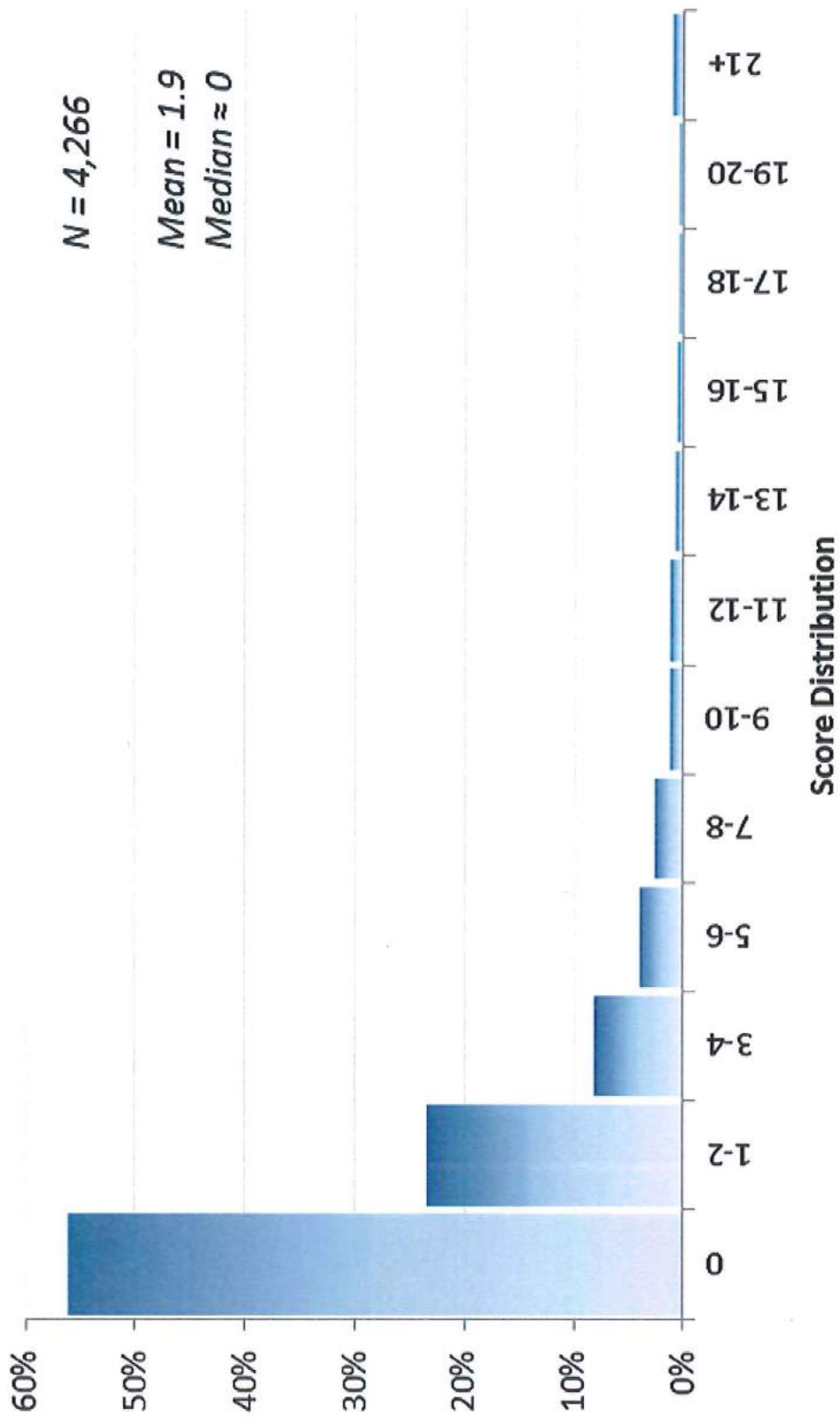
English Letter Sounds



Source: Oregon Department of Education. 2015-16 Kindergarten Assessment

February 2016

Spanish Letter Sounds



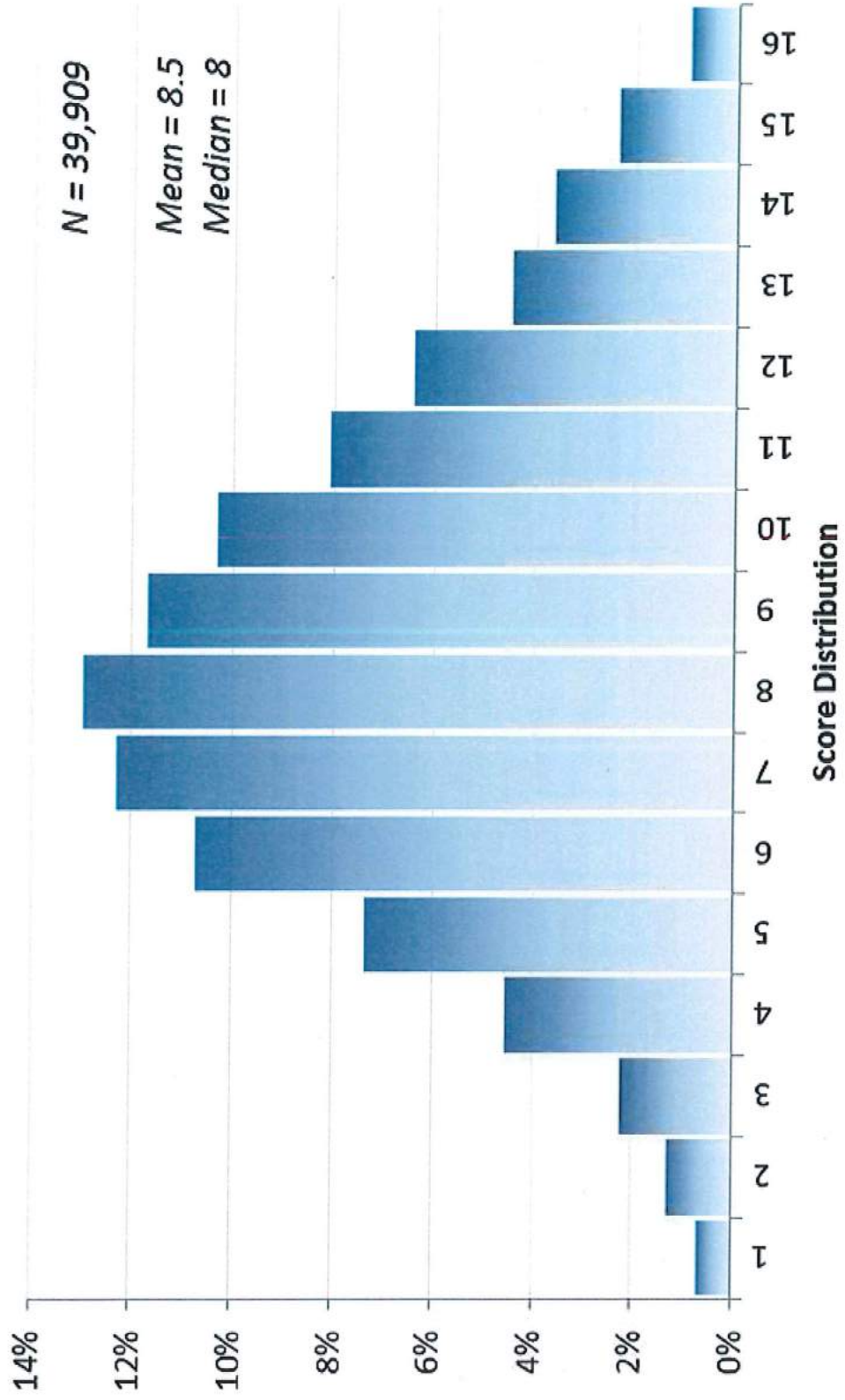
N = 4,266

Mean = 1.9

Median ≈ 0

Score Distribution

Numbers and Operations



Source: Oregon Department of Education. 2015-16 Kindergarten Assessment

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