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ABSTRACT

This report describes the attitudes of school superintendents in Kentucky about the implementation of school reforms based on the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 (KERA); this survey also investigated changes in the perceptions of superintendents over the previous year related to the policies, programs, and practices of KERA. The study was conducted via a mail-out questionnaire sent to all 176 Kentucky school superintendents of whom 105 responded (60 percent). Specifically, the survey focused on the following issues: how the schools had changed since KERA; the most positive and the most negative effects; reliable measures for school improvement; how KERA-initiated programs were working; priorities for improving reform programs and practices; extent of superintendents' support for beliefs underlying KERA; perceived support for school reform; impact on the stress level of teachers, students, and school administrators; reactions to frequently recorded statements about the effects of KERA; and superintendents' positions on issues related to academic expectations, assessment options, accountability for student learning, and potential test options for the 1995-96 school year. Findings are reported on each of the focus questions. As a general evaluation, 80 percent of superintendents believed that schools had improved during the previous 5 years, and more than 90 percent did not want to return to pre-KERA policies and practices. The results are presented in 28 pages of tables. (NAV)

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## 1995 Statewide Education Reform Survey

### of School Superintendents

conducted by the

## Kentucky Institute for Education Research

146 Consumer Lane • Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

in collaboration with the

## Kentucky Association of School Superintendents

October 1995

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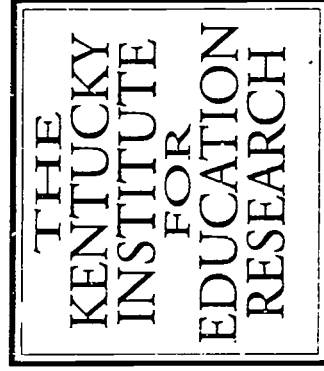
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**1995 STATEWIDE EDUCATION REFORM SURVEY**  
**The Judgements, Opinions and Perspectives of**  
**KENTUCKY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS**

**A Study Conducted by the**  
**Kentucky Institute for Education Research**  
**Roger Pankratz, Executive Director**

**in collaboration with the**  
**Kentucky Association of School Superintendents**  
**Roland C. Haun, Executive, Director**

**October 1995**

## **Acknowledgments**

This study was a collaborative effort between the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents (KASS) and the Kentucky Institute for Education Research. It was conducted with a limited budget and required the help of a number of professionals and their staff. To all who worked on this effort we owe a debt of gratitude. First of all, we want to thank the 105 school superintendents who took the time out of their busy schedules to respond to the eleven-page questionnaire. Also, we want to thank Brenda Blackbum and Toni Wilson, Secretaries at KASS, who helped with correspondence and collected the questionnaires as they were sent to the KASS office. And finally, we are most grateful to Nila Weddle, Executive Assistant of the Institute, who spent many hours entering and processing the data, creating the graphics for this report, and word processing the report document.

Roger S. Pankratz  
Roland C. Haun

### **The Purpose of the Study**

This study was one of several statewide surveys conducted in 1995 by the Kentucky Institute for Education Research to obtain the assessments and opinions of Kentucky school personnel, parents and the public regarding programs, practices and issues associated with the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 (KERA). This study focused on superintendents and was conducted via a mail-out questionnaire sent to all 176 Kentucky school superintendents. In addition, during July 1995, telephone surveys were conducted with approximately 200 school principals, 600 classroom teachers, 450 parents with school-age children and 850 general public.

Since this was the second year of surveys of stakeholder groups it was also a purpose of this study to determine any changes in the perceptions of superintendents over the past year related to the policies, programs and practices of KERA.

### **The Survey Questionnaire**

The survey instrument sent to all superintendents was an edited and adapted version of the script used in the statewide telephone poll of principals, teachers and council parents.

Specifically, the survey questionnaire asked for the school superintendent's perceptions, opinions and ideas about the following:

- How have schools changed since KERA was introduced?
- What are the most positive results of KERA?
- What are the negative effects of education reform?
- What are reliable measures for school improvement?
- To what extent are programs initiated by KERA working?

- What are the priorities for improving reform programs and practices?
- To what extent do superintendents support beliefs underlying KERA?
- What is the perceived support for school reform?
- What is the stress level of teachers, school administrators and students?
- What are the reactions to frequently recorded statements about the effects of KERA?
- What are the positions of superintendents on issues related to:
  - \* Academic expectations?      \* Accountability for student learning?
  - \* Assessment options?        \* Potential test options for the 1995-96 school year?

### The Study Sample

Study questionnaires were sent to all 176 school superintendents in Kentucky. One hundred and five completed questionnaires were returned, to exceed a 60 percent response rate.

### The Methodology

On July 11, 1995 an eleven-page questionnaire was mailed to all Kentucky school superintendents at their workplace. Cover letters from Roland Haun, Executive Director of the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents (KASS), and Roger Pankratz, Executive Director of the Kentucky Institute for Education Research (KIER), requesting their participation accompanied the questionnaire. All questionnaires were returned to the KASS office and delivered to the KIER office for processing. In late August a follow-up letter was sent to all superintendents requesting additional responses. All data were processed by Kentucky Institute for Education Research staff.

### Key findings of superintendent survey:

1. General Evaluation of KERA 1995
  - More than 80 percent of superintendents continue to believe that schools have improved over the past five years and more than 90 percent do **not** want to return schools to pre-KERA policies and practices.
  - Superintendents identified the most positive results of KERA as:
    - Extended School Services Programs.
    - Improved Teaching/Learning Strategies.
    - Family Resources and Youth Service Centers.
    - The Pre-School Program.
    - Improved Writing Skills.
    - Additional Funding for Education.
    - Increased Availability of Educational Technology.
    - The Primary Program.
    - More Resources for Professional Development.
  - On the other hand the most negative effects on schools as a result of reform efforts were perceived as:
    - Problems caused by school councils not working well.
    - Problems resulting from the state's school assessment and accountability system.
    - Teachers being overwhelmed and stressed by extra demands and lack of time to plan and teach.
    - Confusion caused by inconsistent or unclear directions from the Department of Education.
    - Poor instructional practices due to misunderstandings about the purpose and operation of the Primary Program.
    - Excessive paperwork associated with reform policies.



- Superintendents believe student scores on standardized tests and on college entrance examinations are the most reliable measure of student learning and school improvement. Superintendents also believe the percent of students finishing high school is a good indicator of school performance.
  - KIRIS was judged a reliable measure of school improvement by 36 percent and an unreliable measure by 42 percent of superintendents.
2. Evaluation of programs initiated by KERA
- More than 75 percent of superintendents surveyed judged the following KERA initiatives to be working very well or moderately well:
    - The Pre-School Program
    - The Primary Program
    - Education Technology
    - Professional Development
    - Extended School Services
    - Family Resources and Youth Services Centers
  - KERA initiatives that received somewhat lower marks by superintendents were:
    - Curriculum frameworks - working well 62%
    - School-Based Decision Making (SBDM) - working well 51%
    - Kentucky Instructional Results Information Systems (KIRIS) - working well 40%
  - A significantly higher proportion of superintendents judged the state's formula for equalizing finances for schools across the state (SEEK) to be working well than a year ago. (67% in 1994 vs. 79% in 1995)
  - The primary reason given for KIRIS and SBDM not working well was design; the primary reason given for curriculum frameworks not working was lack of training for teachers.

### 3. Priorities for improvement

- More than 80 percent of all superintendents responding to the survey rated the following as a very high or extremely high priority of attention to improve the benefits of education reform:
  - Establishing the validity of reliability of KIRIS.
  - Helping schools align their curricula with academic expectations.
  - Helping teachers understand what students should know and be able to do at different grade levels.
  - Reducing the paperwork associated with KERA.
  - Providing test information back to students on how to improve student performance.

### 4. Support for Education Reform

- More than 75 percent of superintendents surveyed agree with the following beliefs underlying KERA:
  - We should set high standards of achievement for all children (97% agree).
  - It is not enough to require students to show knowledge of facts - they must also demonstrate they can apply what they know in real-life situations (94% agree).
  - All children can learn and most at a high level (80% agree).
  - Decisions effecting instructions should be made at the local school level (75% agree).
- KERA beliefs that were supported by a majority but less than 75 percent were:
  - More learning resources should be focused on students who are not learning to their ability (64% agree).
  - In primary schools students should not be labeled as belonging to a specific grade level (59% agree).
- More than 90 percent of superintendents surveyed said they are "very supportive" or "supportive" of KERA programs and policies.
- A strong majority of superintendents rated teachers and school administrators as supportive of KERA programs and practices (71% rated teachers as supportive, 82% rated administrators as supportive).

- A majority of superintendents rated parents and the general public as neutral toward or not supportive of KERA reforms. (57% rated parents as neutral or not supportive, 75% rated the general public as neutral toward or not supportive of KERA).
5. Effects of Education Reform
- Only about half of superintendents rated the stress level of teachers and school administrators as major or extreme. The apparent stress level is significantly lower than a year ago when more than 70 percent of superintendents said stress levels of teachers and administrators were major or extreme.
  - Significantly fewer superintendents in 1995 rate their stress level as major or extreme compared to their 1994 self-report (32% in 1995; 49% in 1994).
  - A strong majority of superintendents agree that:
    - The new learning goals and strategies introduced in KERA have made learning fun for a lot more children (79% agree).
    - Performance assessments have changed the way teachers are teaching and students are learning (89% agree).
    - If multi-age grouping in the primary program were made optional other aspects of the primary program should be maintained and strengthened (92% agree).
    - School accountability of some type is critical to motivate teachers and students to do their best (89% agree).
    - If writing portfolios did not count as part of the school accountability index teachers would greatly reduce the emphasis on teaching writing (80% agree).
  - A slight majority of superintendents agree that:
    - Teachers, school administrators and parents often feel too intimidated by colleagues or superiors to speak their true feelings about KERA (65% agree).

- The heavy emphasis on communication and thinking skills short-changes students on the content they will need to be successful in life (53% agree).
  - A majority of superintendents disagree or were unsure regarding the following statements about the effects of KERA:
    - Kentucky's school accountability system of rewards and sanctions has taken the fun out of teaching and learning (27% unsure; 32% disagree).
    - KERA will enable students to do as well or better on college entrance exams such as ACT or SAT than a traditional curriculum (45% unsure; 26% disagree).
6. Superintendent's stance on assessment and accountability issues.

Academic Expectations:

- Superintendents largely agree that "the academic expectation needs to be better defined, expanded and clarified" (71% agree).
- Superintendents are evenly divided on "whether or not academic expectations are clear to most teachers and administrators" and "whether or not the academic expectations should be substantially revised" (44% agree, 45% disagree on the first; 34% agree, 35% disagree on the second).
- Superintendents disagree that the academic expectations need to be discarded and replaced with a new set of learning targets (57% disagree).

Assessment Options:

- Superintendents agree that:
  - KIRIS assessments would be more valid and reliable if they included multiple-choice items (67% agree).
  - KIRIS should include a variety of performance assessments (79% agree).

- total school performance and individual student performance should be measured by different tests (58% agree).
- A majority of superintendents disagree that KIRIS tests should be replaced by nationally normed commercial achievement tests (58% disagree).

Accountability Options:

- Superintendents are divided in their responses to most accountability options:
  - Both rewards and sanctions are necessary to hold teachers accountable for learning (39% agree, 49% disagree).
  - Public disclosure of school scores without rewards or sanctions would motivate teachers to do their best to improve learning (28% agree, 24% neutral, 48% disagree).
  - The school accountability index should include measures of the school's instructional practices as well as test scores. (50% agree, 34% neutral, 16% disagree).
  - Holding students and parents accountable for learning should be done at the local school rather than at the state level (49% agree, 18% neutral, 33% disagree).
- A majority of superintendents disagree that "school rewards for high performance but no sanctions for low performance would motivate teachers to do their best and improve learning" (60% disagree).
- Superintendents are somewhat divided on the issue of assigning a Distinguished Educator to a "school in decline" as an effective strategy to improve student performance (35% agree, 43% disagree).

Potential Testing Options for the 1995 School Year:

- Superintendents largely agree that in the 1995-96 school year Kentucky should administer a nationally normed, standardized test, not for accountability, but to determine the achievement level of students and also that the Department of Education should administer a variety of assessments to determine which should be used in future accountability tests (71% agree with the first; 73% agree with the second).
- A slight majority of superintendents agree that Kentucky should continue the portfolio program in 1995-96 but not for rewards and sanctions (52% agree).
- Superintendents are divided in their opinions about whether or not the Department of Education should continue the KIRIS testing in 1995-96 as scheduled (46% agree, 48% disagree).
- A majority of superintendents oppose the idea of suspending all student testing until the state has redesigned the assessment system (66% oppose).

## The Results

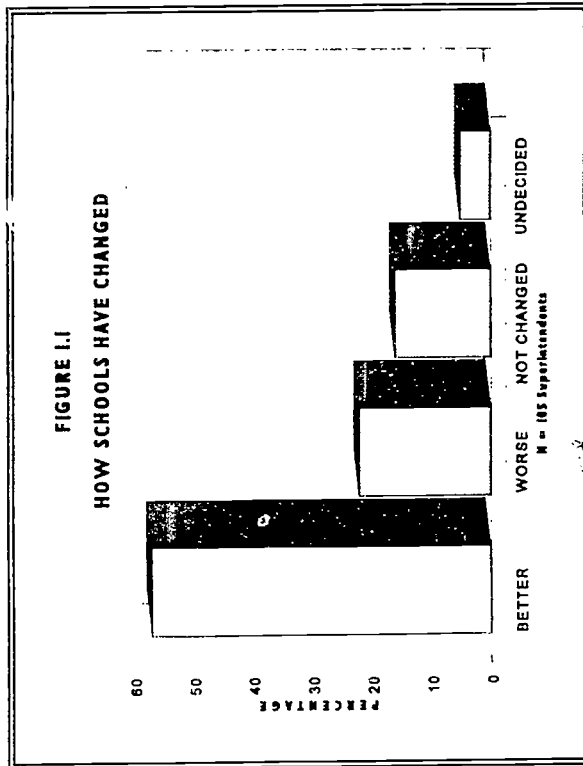
### 1.0 General Evaluation of KERA

#### 1.1 How Schools Have Changed

Question 1 - *Thinking back over the past five years, would you say that the local schools in your district have changed for better, changed for worse, not changed much, or undecided?*

Table 1.1 - How Schools Have Changed

| Better |                  | Worse |                  | Not Changed |                  | Undecided |                  |
|--------|------------------|-------|------------------|-------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|
| 1995   | change from 1994 | 1995  | change from 1994 | 1995        | change from 1994 | 1995      | change from 1995 |
| 84.2%  | + 0.9%           | 4.0%% | + 2.3%           | 7.9%%       | - 0.4%           | 4.0%      | - 2.7%           |

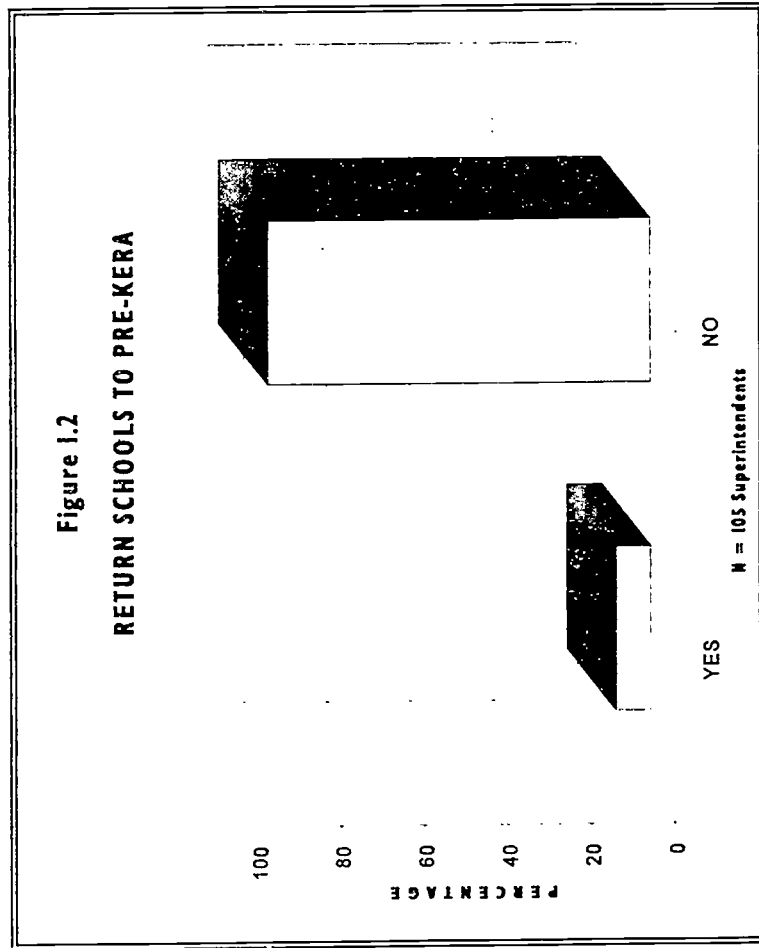


### 1.2 Willingness to return schools to pre-KERA

Question 2. *If you could return schools to 1989 and as they were before KERA, would you do so?*

**Table 1.2 - Return Schools to Pre-KERA**

| Yes    | No               |
|--------|------------------|
| 1995   | change from 1994 |
| 8.3%   | 91.8%            |
| - 3.2% | + 3.2%           |





### 1.3 Most Positive Results of Education Reform

Question 16. *What have been the most positive results effected by KERA in your schools?*

NOTE: Question 16 was an open-ended "write-in" question. Many superintendents did not provide a written response and fewer provided written responses in 1995 than in 1994.

| Frequent Positive Results Reported         | Frequency<br>1995 | Frequency<br>1994 |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| Extended School Services                   | 25                | 24                |
| Improved Teaching/Learning Strategies      | 24                | 21                |
| FR/YSC                                     | 21                | 15                |
| Pre-school Program                         | 21                | 28                |
| Improved Writing                           | 19                | 21                |
| Additional Funding/Equity Statewide        | 19                | 41                |
| Education Technology                       | 18                | 19                |
| Primary Program                            | 17                | 18                |
| Professional Development                   | 17                | 23                |
| New Vision Focus Attitude Toward Education | 10                | 17                |
| School-Based Decision Making               | 8                 | 12                |
| School Accountability                      | 6                 | 14                |
| Improved Student Performance               | 5                 | --                |
| Less Local Politics                        | 5                 | 4                 |

#### 1.4 Most Negative Effects of Education Reform

Question 17. *What have been the most negative effects on your schools resulting from KERA or its programs?*

| Frequent Negative Effects Reported                                       | Frequency<br>1995 |
|--|-------------------|
| Problems caused by dysfunctional school councils                         | 27                |
| Divisiveness caused by assessment and accountability                     | 24                |
| Being overwhelmed by stress and lack of time to plan and teach           | 21                |
| Confusion caused by inconsistent directions from KDE                     | 10                |
| Poor instructional practices due to misunderstanding the Primary Program | 9                 |
| Excessive paperwork  | 7                 |
| Narrowing of instruction due to pressure from KIRIS assessments          | 6                 |
| Political factions caused by taking sides on KERA                        | 5                 |
| The "fall out" from resistance to change                                 | 5                 |
| Confusion from not knowing what to teach                                 | 5                 |

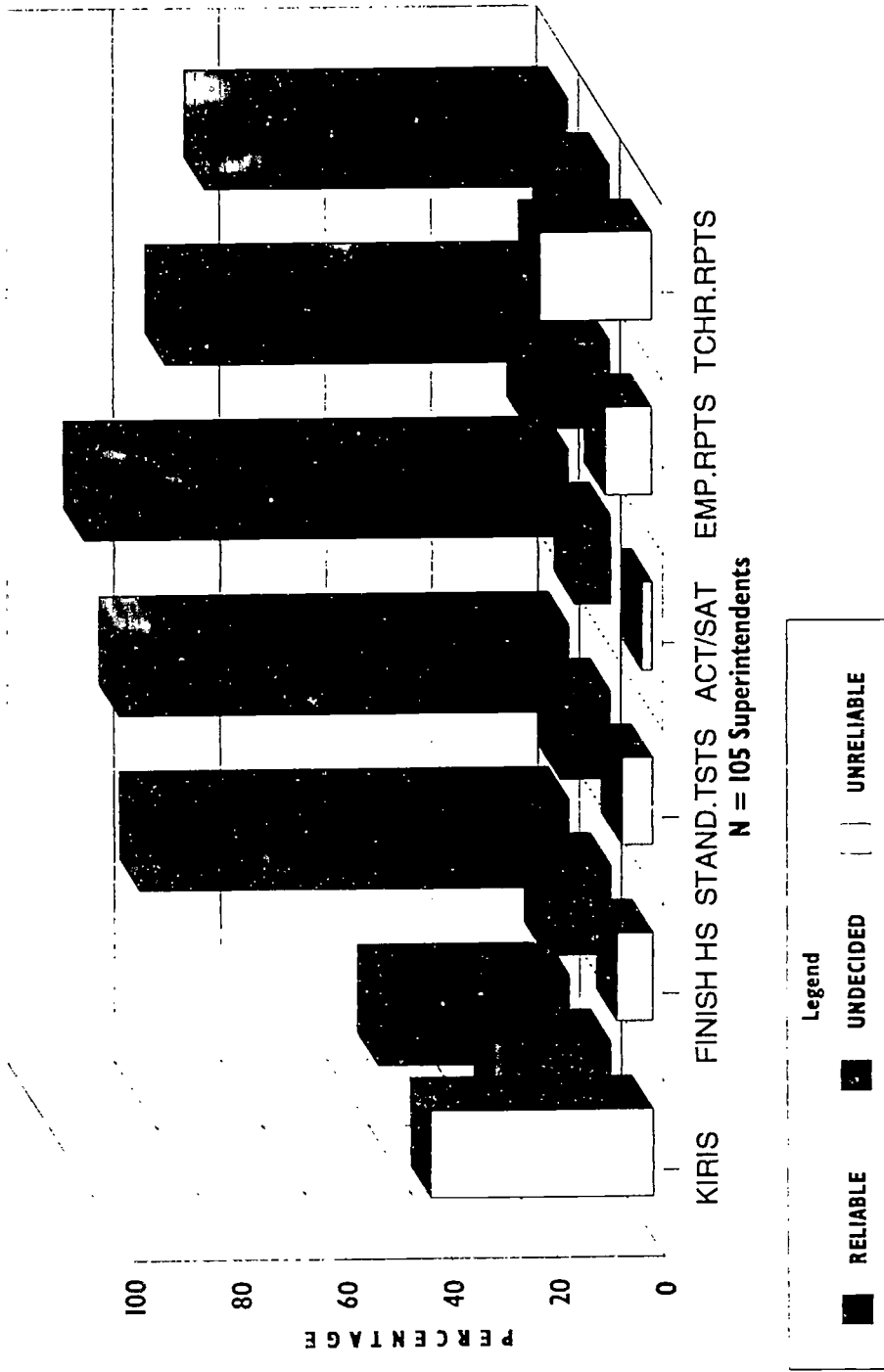
### 1.5 Reliable Measures of School Improvement

Question 3. *Below are six ways to measure whether students are learning and schools are improving. Please indicate your opinion on how **reliable** or **unreliable** you believe each one would be in determining how well students are learning and how much schools are improving.*

**Table 1.5 - The Reliability of Six Performance Measures**

| Item  | Reliable | Undecided | Unreliable |
|---|----------|-----------|------------|
| A. Student performance on the state's new testing program (KIRIS)   | 36.2     | 21.9      | 42.0       |
| B. The percentage of students who finish high school  | 81.0     | 12.4      | 6.7        |
| C. Student scores on standardized tests in mathematics, science, social studies, and reading given to students across the country | 84.8     | 9.5       | 5.7        |
| D. Scores on college entrance exams such as the ACT and SAT   | 91.4     | 6.7       | 1.9        |
| E. Employer reports on how well high school graduates of local schools are prepared for the world of work                         | 76.0     | 15.4      | 8.7        |
| F. Student grades or progress shown on report cards   | 68.6     | 10.5      | 21.0       |

**FIGURE I.5  
MEASURES OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**



## 2.0 Evaluation of KERA Initiatives

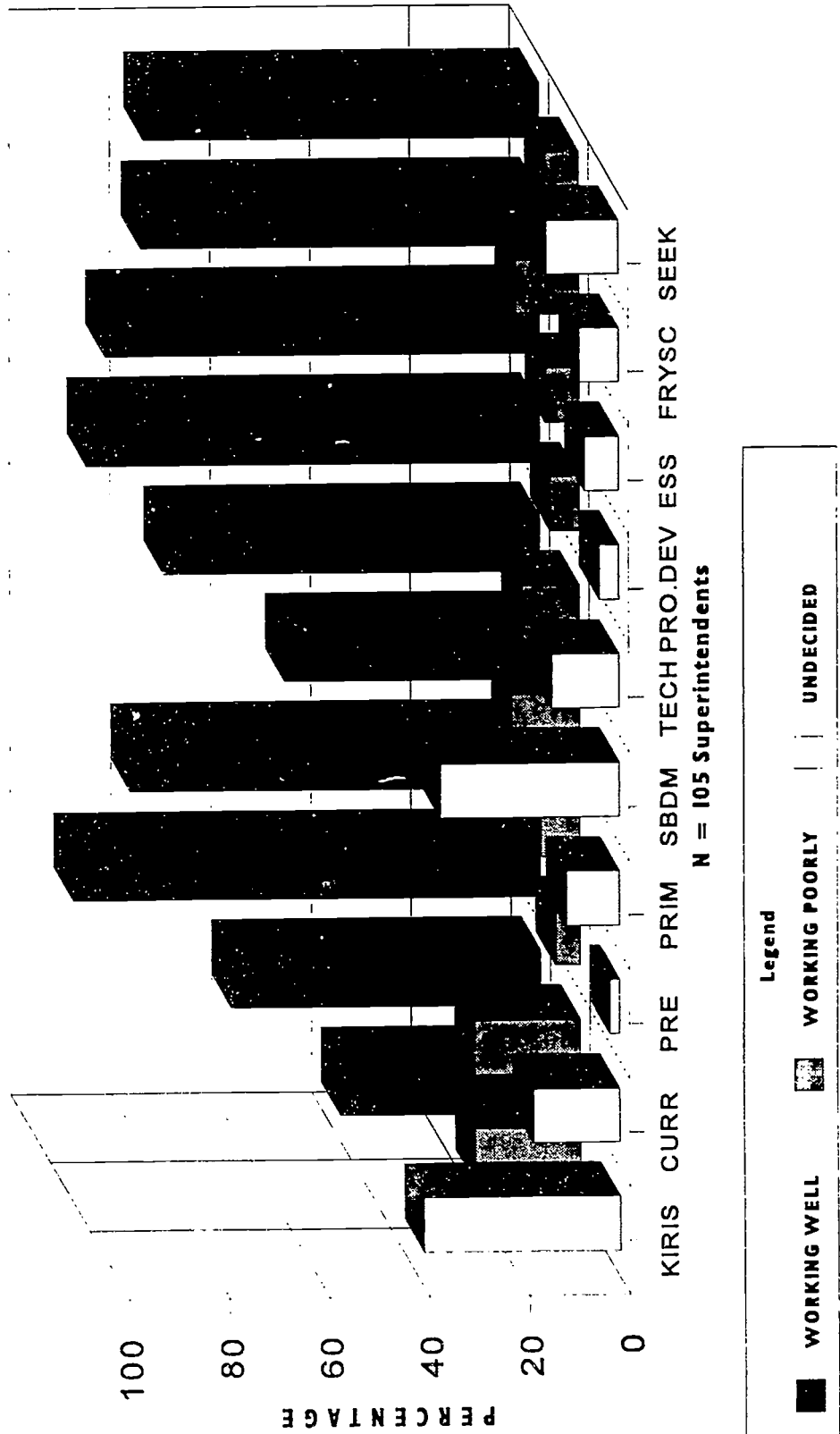
### 2.1 Extent to which KERA initiatives are working

Question 4 - Below are key programs introduced by KERA. Indicate your opinion on how each program is working in your local school system?

Table 2.1 - Evaluation of KERA Initiatives

| Program  | Working Well |                  | Undecided |                  | Working Poorly |                  |
|--|--------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|----------------|------------------|
|  | 1995         | Change from 1994 | 1995      | Change from 1994 | 1995           | Change from 1994 |
| A. Kentucky's new statewide testing program in grades 4, 8, and 11                         | 40.0         | - 6.8            | 21.0      | - 1.6            | 39.1           | + 8.4            |
| B. New curriculum frameworks for instruction   | 61.9         | + 2.2            | 21.0      | - 2.4            | 17.1           | + 0.2            |
| C. The Pre-School Program  | 93.3         | - 5.1            | 4.8       | + 3.2            | 1.9            | + 1.9            |
| D. The Primary Program in grades K to 3  | 81.9         | - 0.4            | 7.6       | - 4.5            | 10.5           | + 4.9            |
| E. School-Based Decision Making  | 51.0         | + 0.2            | 13.5      | - 9.6            | 35.6           | + 10.0           |
| F. Educational Technology  | 75.2         | - 4.6            | 11.4      | + 4.1            | 13.3           | + 0.4            |
| G. Professional Development and Training for Teachers, Administrators, Parents, and Others | 90.5         | + 0.2            | 5.7       | + 1.7            | 3.8            | - 1.9            |
| H. Extended School Services  | 86.7         | + 0.5            | 6.7       | - 0.6            | 6.7            | + 0.2            |
| I. Family Resource and Youth Service enters  | 79.6         | + 3.7            | 12.6      | - 1.7            | 7.8            | - 2.0            |
| J. The state formula for equalizing financing for schools across the state                 | 79.1         | + 12.2           | 6.7       | - 6.2            | 14.3           | - 5.9            |

**FIGURE 2.1**  
**EVALUATION OF KERA INITIATIVES**



## 2.2 Reasons Why Programs Are Not Working

Question 5. *In the last question (4 - above), if you judged a program(s) to be working poorly or moderately poorly, what factors would you say are the greatest reasons why the program is working poorly?*

**Table 2.2 - Reasons for Programs Not Working**

| Program  | Primary Reasons for not Working (%) |          |        |      |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------|--------|------|
|  | Not under-<br>stood                 | Training | Design | Time |
| A. Kentucky's new statewide testing program in grades 4, 8, and 11                         | 17.7                                | 11.4     | 58.2*  | 12.7 |
| B. New curriculum frameworks for instruction   | 31.9                                | 36.2     | 19.1   | 12.8 |
| C. The Pre-School Program  | 7.7                                 | 30.8     | 38.5   | 23.1 |
| D. The Ungraded Primary Program in grades K - 3  | 22.2                                | 18.5     | 37.0*  | 22.2 |
| E. School-Based Decision Making  | 17.5                                | 25.4     | 42.9*  | 14.3 |
| F. Educational Technology  | 25.0                                | 17.9     | 39.3   | 17.9 |
| G. Professional Development and Training for Teachers, Administrators, Parents, and Others | 15.8                                | 26.3     | 15.8   | 42.1 |
| H. Extended School Services  | 18.8                                | 31.3     | 37.5   | 12.5 |
| I. Family Resource and Youth Service Centers   | 15.0                                | 40.0     | 45.0   | 0    |
| J. The state formula for equalizing financing for schools across the state                 | 21.1                                | 15.8     | 57.9*  | 5.3  |

\* Significantly higher than in 1994

### 3.0 Priorities for Improvement

#### 3.1 Actions That Would Improve Programs, Teaching and Learning

Question 8. *The following items are often mentioned by Kentucky school administrators, teachers, and parents as areas of concern that, if addressed, would improve teaching and learning and make KERA programs work better. To what extent do you believe each item should be a priority for attention?*

**Table 3.1 - Priorities for Attention**

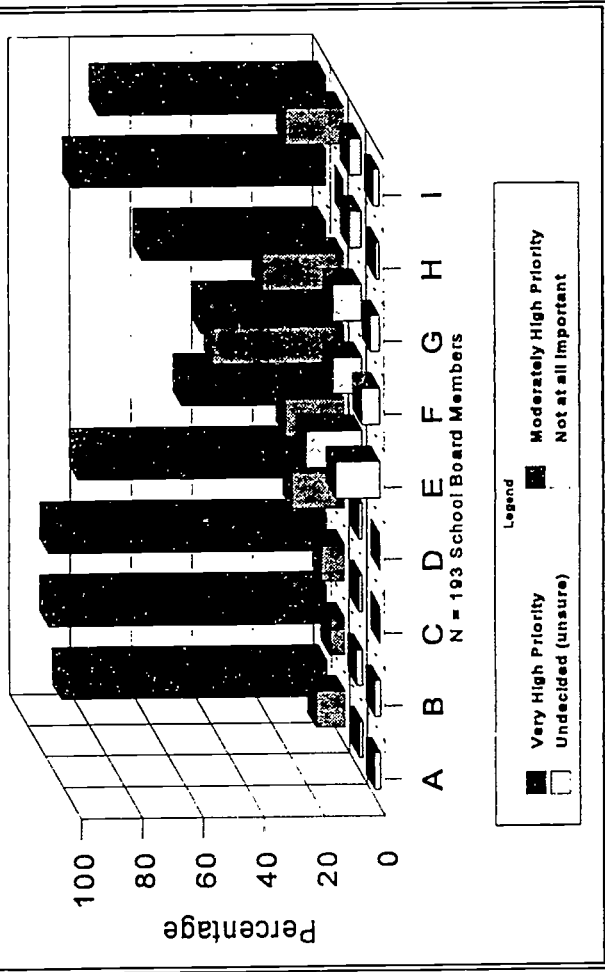
| Areas of Concern   | Priority Rating    |                  |                          |                  |           |                  |                      |                  |
|--|--------------------|------------------|--------------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|
|  | Very High Priority | Change from 1994 | Moderately High Priority | Change from 1994 | Undecided | Change from 1994 | Not at all Important | Change from 1994 |
| A. Helping teachers understand what students should know and be able to do at different grade levels | 87.5               | + 26.2           | 9.6                      | - 18.6           | 1.0       | - 5.5            | 1.9                  | - 2.1            |
| B. Establishing the validity and reliability of KIRIS  | 91.4               | + 0.3            | 4.9                      | - 2.5            | 1.9       | + 0.3            | 1.9                  | + 1.9            |
| C. Helping schools align their curriculum with the Academic Expectations*                            | 91.4               | --               | 7.7                      | --               | 1.0       | --               | --                   | --               |
| D. Providing test information back to schools on how to improve student performance                  | 81.7               | - 11.1           | 17.3                     | 10.9             | 1.1       | + 0.2            | --                   | --               |
| E. Reducing the threat of sanctions for teachers*  | 47.6               | --               | 19.4                     | --               | 18.5      | --               | 14.6                 | --               |
| F. Improving communications and distribution of information at the local district level*             | 41.3               | --               | 43.3                     | --               | 9.6       | --               | 5.8                  | --               |
| G. Improving two-way communication with the Department of Education                                  | 60.6               | - 6.3            | 26.9                     | + 1.1            | 9.6       | + 5.6            | 2.9                  | - 0.4            |
| H. Reducing the paperwork associated with KERA   | 83.7               | + 5.5            | 11.5                     | - 7.0            | 3.9       | + 1.4            | 1.0                  | + 0.2            |
| I. Providing teachers more time for design of curriculum and instruction*                            | 75.0               | --               | 19.2                     | --               | 3.9       | --               | 1.9                  | --               |

\* New on the 1995 survey



Figure 3.1

Priorities for Attention



- A. Helping teachers understand what students should know and be able to do at different grade levels
- B. Establishing the validity and reliability of KIRIS
- C. Helping schools align their curriculum with the Academic Expectations
- D. Providing test information back to schools on how to improve student performance
- E. Reducing the threat of sanctions for teachers
- F. Improving communications and distribution of information at the local district level
- G. Improving two-way communication with the Department of Education
- H. Reducing the paperwork associated with KERA
- I. Providing teachers more time for design of curriculum and instruction

#### 4.0 Support for Education Reform

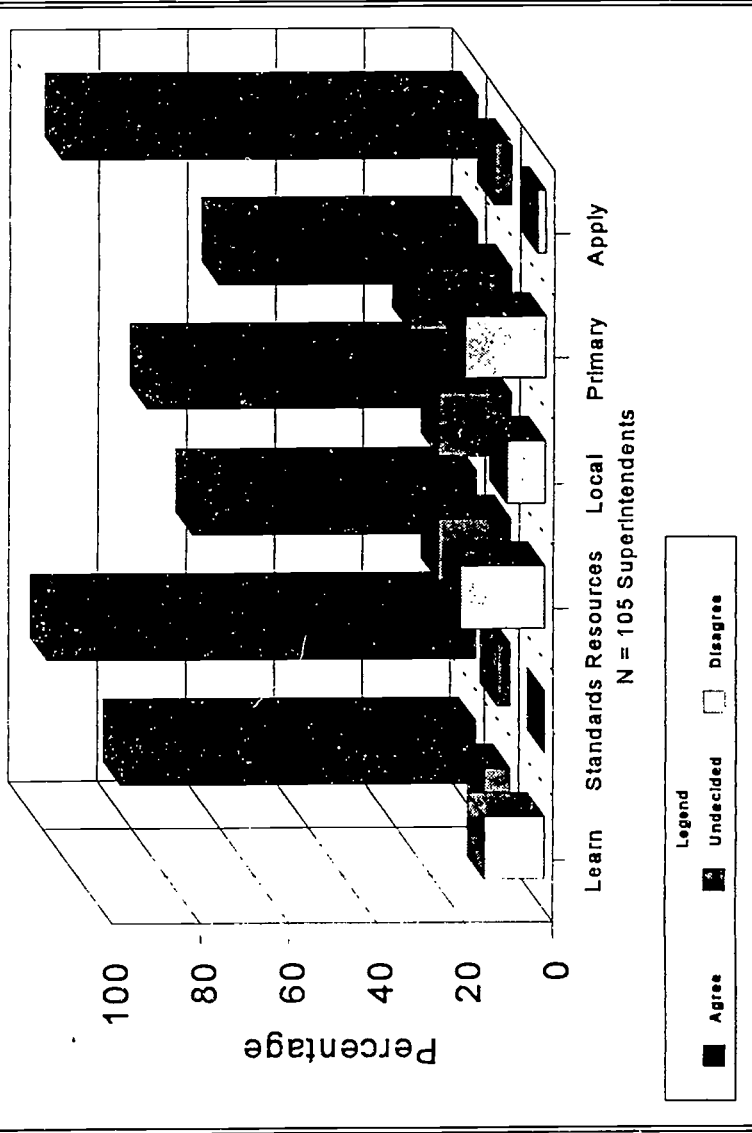
##### 4.1 Support for Beliefs Underlying KERA

Question 9. *The following are statements of belief held by the designers of KERA that undergird education reform programs and practices. For each of the items, please indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with each statement.*

**Table 4.1 - Support for Beliefs that Support KERA**

| Belief Statements  | Agree | Change from 1994 | Undecided | Disagree | Change from 1994 |
|--|-------|------------------|-----------|----------|------------------|
|  |       |                  |           |          |                  |
| A. All children can learn, and most at a high level.   | 80.6  | + 18.8           | 5.8       | 13.6     | - 9.2            |
| B. We should set high standards of achievement for all children.   | 97.1  | + 0.3            | 2.9       | 0.8      | - 0.8            |
| C. More learning resources should be focused on students who are not learning to their ability or are falling behind.  | 64.4  | - 9.0            | 16.4      | 19.2     | + 3.1            |
| D. Decisions affecting instruction should be made at the local school level.   | 74.8  | + 0.6            | 16.5      | 8.7      | - 4.2            |
| E. In the primary schools, students should not be labeled as belonging to a specific grade level.  | 58.7  | + 7.1            | 23.1      | 18.3     | + 1.1            |
| F. It is not enough to require that students show their knowledge of facts -- they must also demonstrate that they can apply what they know in real-life situations. | 94.2  | - 0.1            | 3.9       | 1.9      | + 0.3            |

Figure 4.1  
Support for KERA Beliefs



- A - All children can learn, and most at a high level.
- B - We should set high standards of achievement for all children.
- C - More learning resources should be focused on students who are not learning to their ability or are falling behind.
- D - Decisions affecting instruction should be made at the local school level.
- E - In the primary schools, students should not be labeled as belonging to a specific grade level.
- F - It is not enough to require that students show their knowledge of facts -- they must also demonstrate that they can apply what they know in real-life situations.

#### 4.2 Perceived Support for School Reform

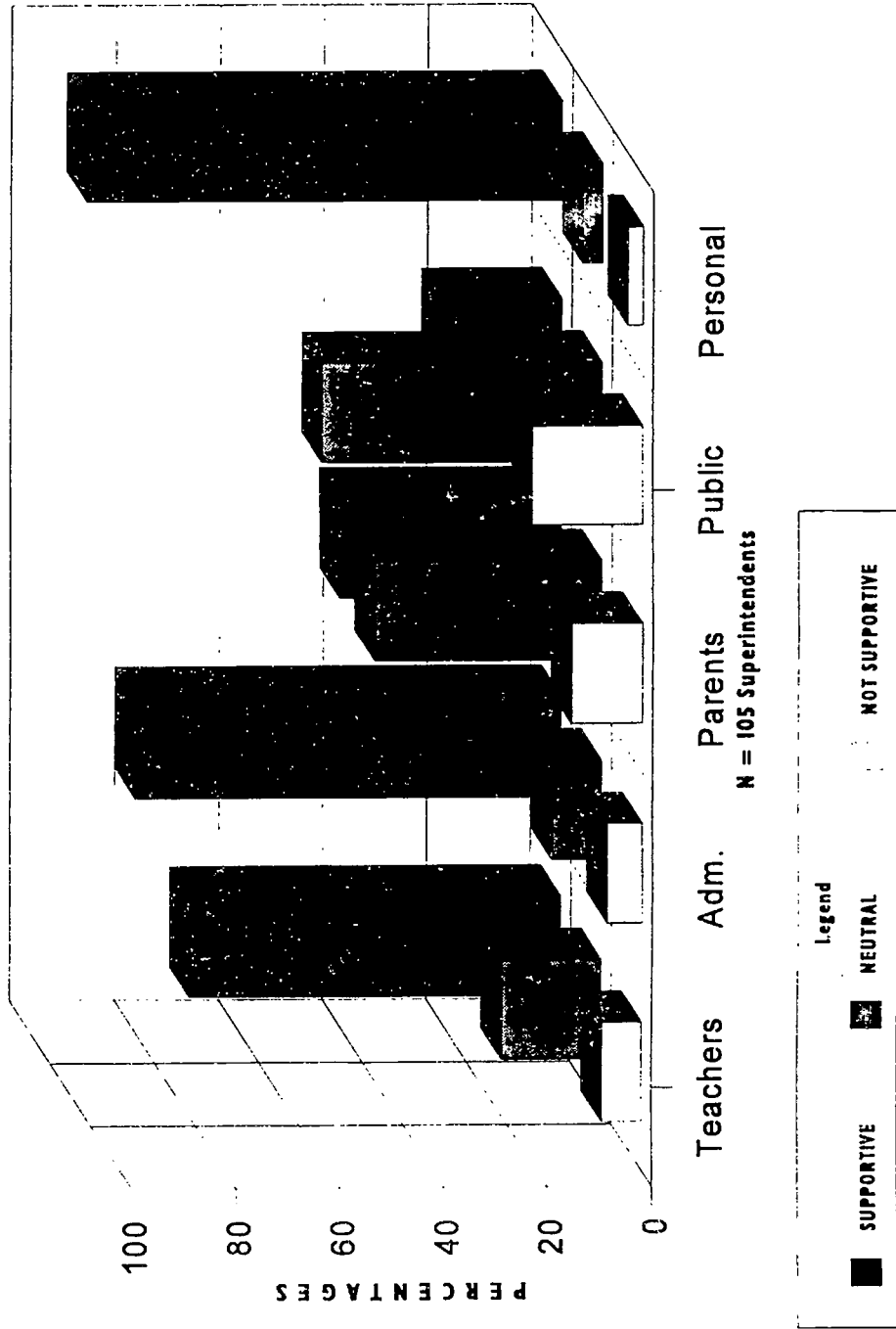
Question 7. *Over the past four years, there have been both public support and criticism of KERA. How would you characterize the level of support of the following groups?*

**Table 4.2 - Support for KERA**

| Groups  | Level of Support |                  |         |                  |                |                  |
|---|------------------|------------------|---------|------------------|----------------|------------------|
|   | Supportive       | Change from 1994 | Neutral | Change from 1994 | Not Supportive | Change from 1994 |
| A. The support level of teachers in your school         | 71.4             | +0.1             | 19.1    | +1.1             | 9.5            | -3.1             |
| B. The support level of administrators in your district | 81.9             | +4.0             | 9.5     | -5.3             | 8.6            | -0.7             |
| C. The support level of parents                         | 42.7             | *                | 43.7    | *                | 13.6           | *                |
| D. The support level of the general public              | 23.1             | *                | 53.9    | *                | 23.0           | *                |
| E. Your own personal support level                      | 91.4             | -4.5             | 3.9     | +0.5             | 4.7            | +2.1             |

\* New question in 1995

**Figure 4.2**  
**SUPPORT FOR KERA**



## 5.0 Effects of KERA

### 5.1 Stress Level of Teachers, Administrators, Students, and Superintendents

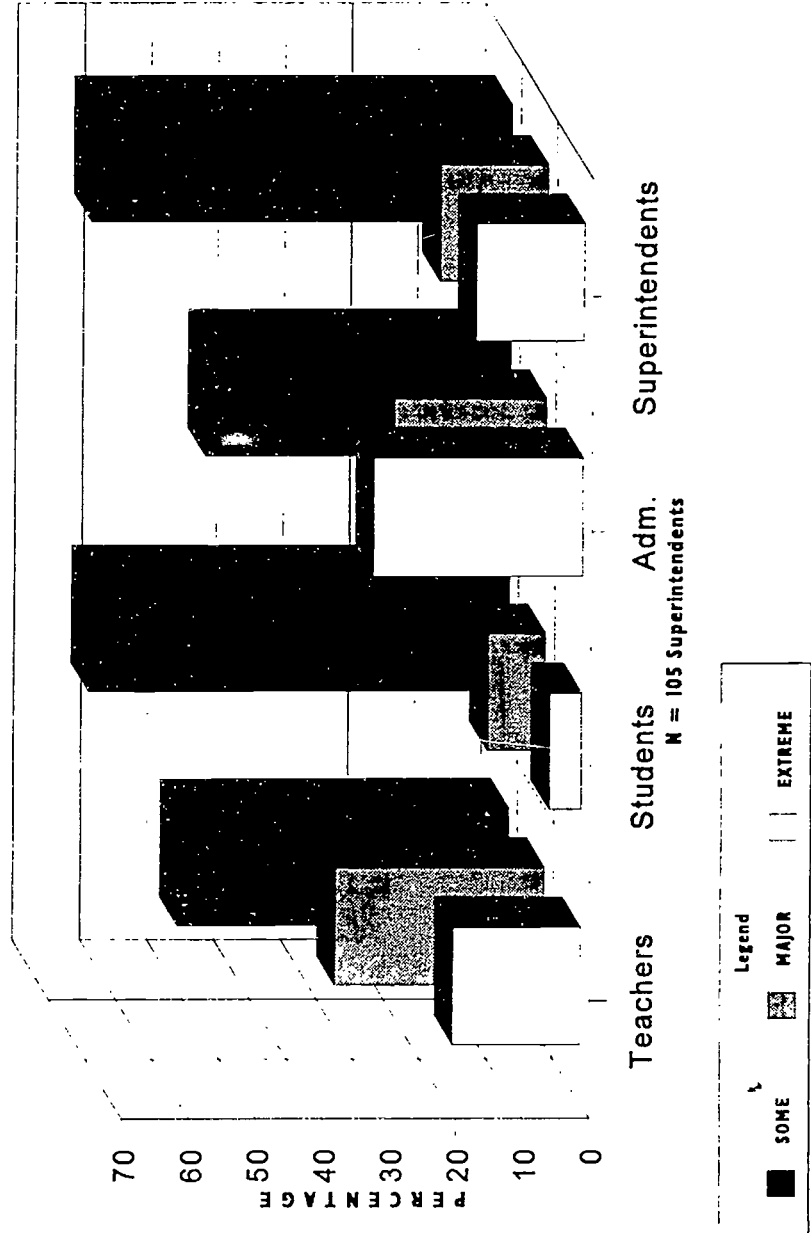
Question 6. *School personnel across the state report a lot of stress due to the extra work and the demands of KERA. How would you characterize the stress level of different groups you have contact with on a regular basis?*

**Table 5.1 - Stress Level of Teachers, Administrators, Students, and Superintendents**

| Groups                                       | Extreme Stress | Change from 1994 | Major Stress | Change from 1994 | Some Stress | Change from 1994 |
|--|----------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|
| A. The stress level of teachers              | 19.1           | - 22.3           | 31.4         | - 3.3            | 49.5        | + 25.8           |
| B. The stress level of school administrators | 31.4           | - 4.9            | 22.9         | - 14.3           | 45.7        | - 19.3           |
| C. The stress level of students              | 4.8            | *                | 8.6          | *                | 86.7        | *                |
| D. Your own personal level of stress         | 16.2           | - 5.5            | 16.2         | - 11.3           | 66.7        | + 12.0           |

\* New question in 1995

**Figure 5.1**  
**PERCEIVED STRESS LEVEL**



## 5.2 Effects Mentioned by School Administrators, Teachers and Parents

Question 10. *The following are statements about school reform that have been made by school administrators, teachers and parents. What are your feelings about these statements?*

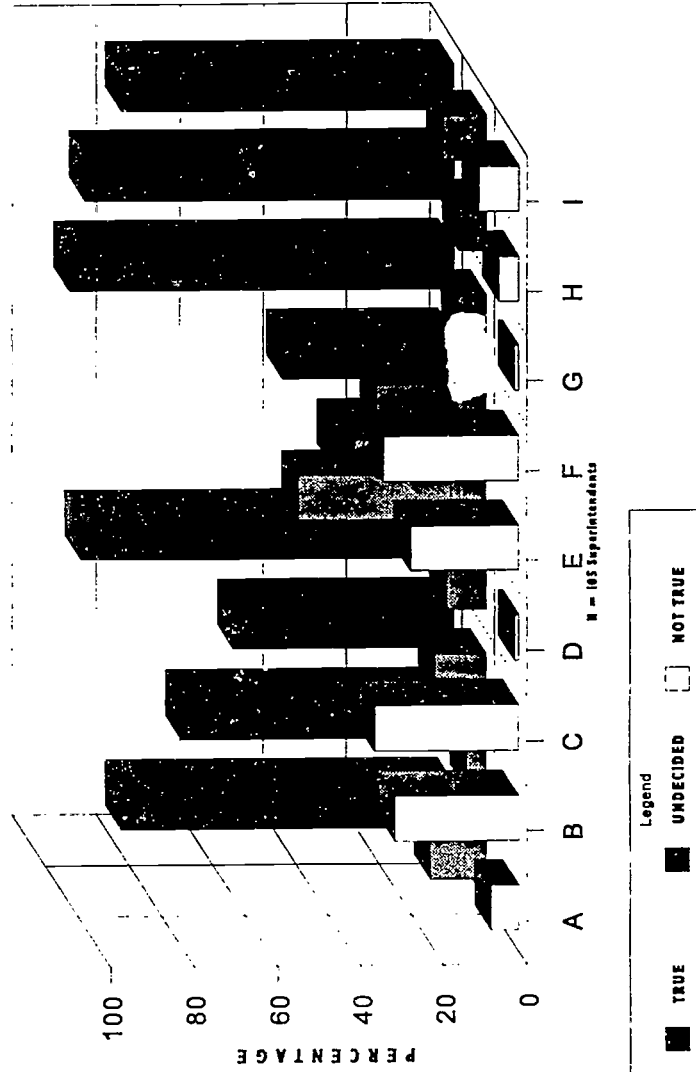
Table 5.2 -

| Statements   | Superintendents' Reactions |                  |                     |                  |          |                  |
|--|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------|------------------|
|  | True                       | Change from 1994 | Un-decided (Unsure) | Change from 1994 | Not True | Change from 1994 |
| A. The new learning goals and strategies introduced in KERA have made learning fun for a lot more children.  | 79.8                       | + 8.0            | 13.5                | - 6.7            | 6.7      | - 1.3            |
| B. Teachers, school administrators and parents often feel too intimidated by colleagues or superiors to speak their true feelings about KERA.  | 65.4                       | - 1.5            | 4.8                 | - 4.1            | 29.8     | + 5.6            |
| C. The heavy emphasis on communication and thinking processes in KERA short-changes students on content they need to be successful in life.  | 52.9                       | +25.8            | 12.5                | - 8.5            | 34.5     | - 17.0           |
| D. The performance assessments in KIRIS have changed the way teachers are teaching and students are learning.  | 89.4                       | + 24.1           | 9.6                 | - 6.5            | 1.0      | - 17.6           |
| E. KERA will enable students to do as well or better on college entrance exams such as the ACT or SAT than a traditional curriculum.   | 28.9                       | +2.1             | 45.2                | + 5.4            | 26.0     | - 7.4            |
| F. Kentucky's school accountability system of rewards and sanctions has taken the fun out of teaching and learning.  | 41.2                       | - 1.4            | 26.5                | + 1.9            | 32.4     | - 0.4            |
| G. If multi-age grouping in the primary program were made optional, other features of the program, such as developmentally appropriate practices, continuous progress, professional team work and authentic assessment should be maintained and strengthened.* | 92.2                       | •                | 6.9                 | •                | 1.0      | •                |
| H. School accountability of some type is critical to motivate teachers and students to do their best.*   | 88.5                       | •                | 6.7                 | •                | 4.8      | •                |
| I. If writing portfolios did not count as part of the school accountability index, teachers would greatly reduce their emphasis on teaching writing.*  | 79.8                       | •                | 10.6                | •                | 9.6      | •                |

\* New on the 1995 survey



**Figure 5.2**  
**Superintendents' Reactions**



- A. The new learning goals and strategies introduced in KERA have made learning fun for a lot more children.
- B. Teachers, school administrators and parents often feel too intimidated by colleagues or superiors to speak their true feelings about KERA.
- C. The heavy emphasis on communication and thinking processes in KERA short-changes students on content they need to be successful in life.
- D. The performance assessments in KIRIS have changed the way teachers are teaching and students are learning.
- E. KERA will enable students to do as well or better on college entrance exams such as the ACT or SAT than a traditional curriculum.
- F. Kentucky's school accountability system of rewards and sanctions has taken the fun out of teaching and learning.
- G. If multiage grouping in the primary program were made optional, other features of the program, such as developmentally appropriate practices, continuous progress, professional team work and authentic assessment should be maintained and strengthened.
- H. School accountability of some type is critical to motivate teachers and students to do their best.
- I. If writing portfolios did not count as part of the school accountability index, teachers would greatly reduce their emphasis on teaching writing.

## 6.0 Superintendent's Stance on Assessment and Accountability Issues

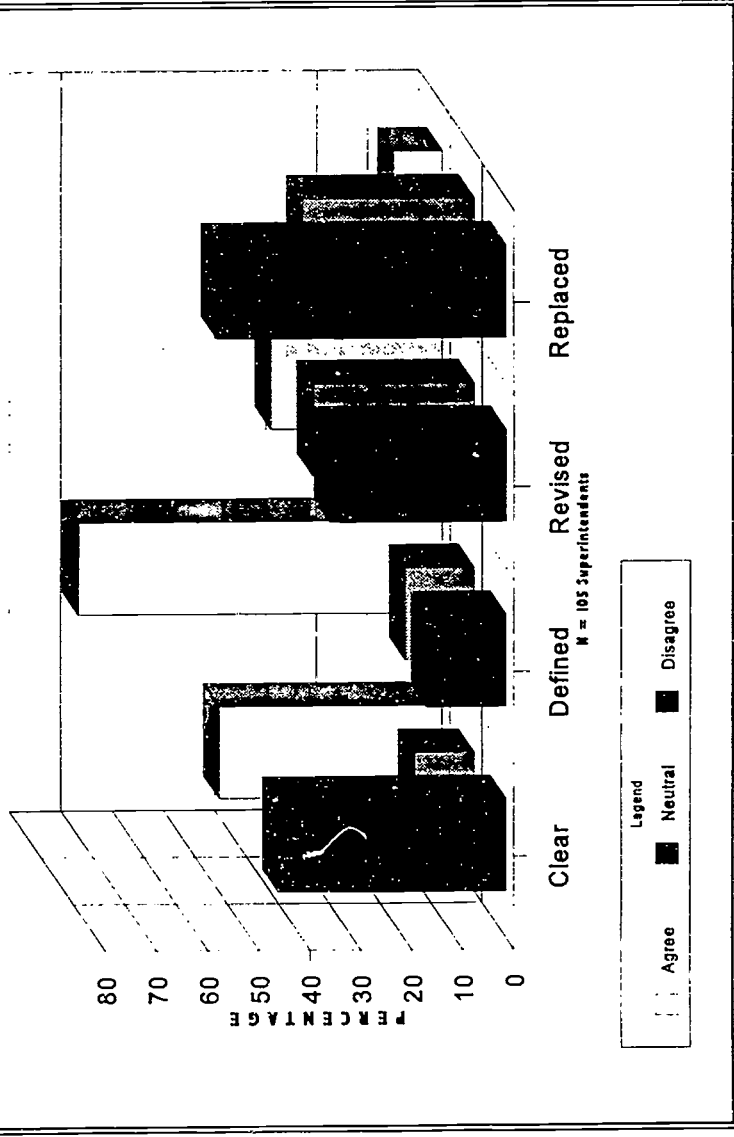
### 6.1 Issues Related to Academic Expectations

Question 11. *Kentucky's Learning Goals and Academic Expectations define the learning targets for students and what is to be tested in KIRIS. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with each.*

Table 6.1 - Agreement/Disagreement on Statements About Academic Expectations

| Statements   | Agree | Neutral | Disagree |
|--|-------|---------|----------|
| A. The Academic Expectations are clear to most teachers and administrators.                        | 43.7  | 11.7    | 44.7     |
| B. The Academic Expectations need to be better defined, expanded and clarified.                    | 71.2  | 13.5    | 15.4     |
| C. The Academic Expectations need to be substantially revised.                                     | 33.7  | 31.7    | 34.6     |
| D. The Academic Expectations need to be discarded and replaced with a new set of learning targets. | 9.6   | 33.7    | 56.7     |

**Figure 6.1**  
**Academic Expectations**



- A. The Academic Expectations are clear to most teachers and administrators.
- B. The Academic Expectations need to be better defined, expanded and clarified.
- C. The Academic Expectations need to be substantially revised.
- D. The Academic Expectations need to be discarded and replaced with a new set of learning targets.

## 6.2 Issues Related to Assessment Options

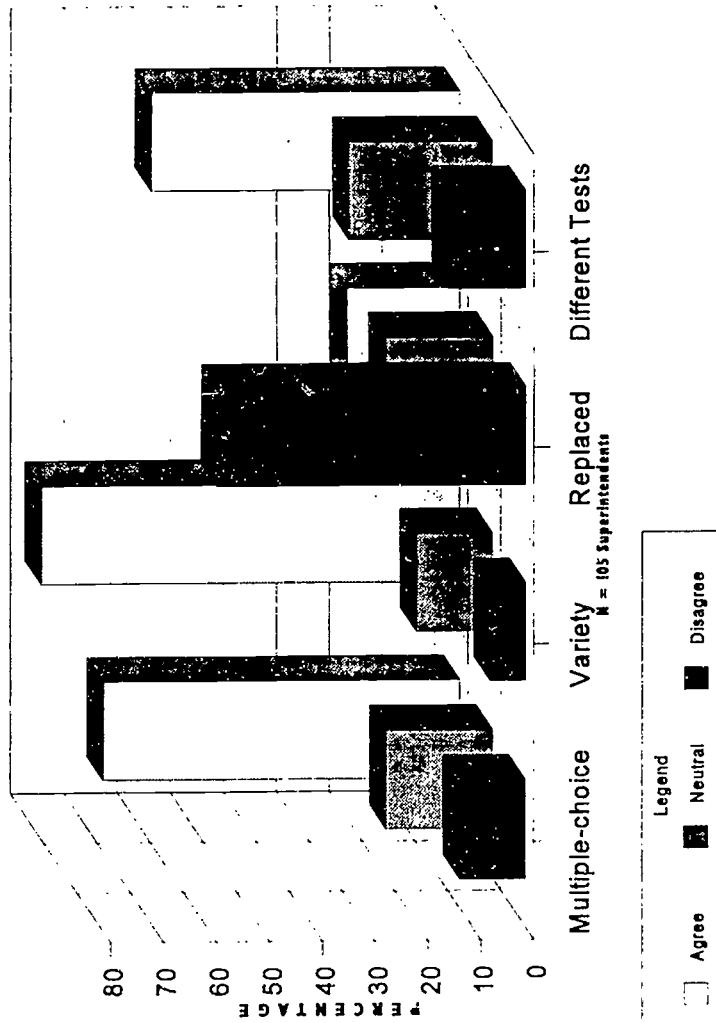
Question 12. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with each of the following assessment options.

**Table 6.2 - Agreement/Disagreement With Assessment Options**

| Statements   | Agree | Neutral | Disagree |
|--|-------|---------|----------|
| A. KIRIS assessments would be more valid and reliable if they included multiple-choice items.  | 67.3  | 20.2    | 12.5     |
| B. KIRIS should continue to include a variety of performance assessments such as writing assignments, open-ended questions, and on-demand performance tasks. | 78.9  | 14.4    | 6.7      |
| C. KIRIS tests should be replaced by nationally normed, commercial tests like the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills or the California Achievement Test.     | 21.4  | 20.4    | 58.3     |
| D. Total school performance and individual student performance should be measured by different tests.  | 58.3  | 27.2    | 14.6     |

Figure 6.2

Assessment Options



- A. KIRIS assessments would be more valid and reliable if they included multiple-choice items.
- B. KIRIS should continue to include a variety of performance assessments such as writing assignments, open-ended questions, and on-demand performance tasks.
- C. KIRIS tests should be replaced by nationally-normed, commercial tests like the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills or the California Achievement Test.
- D. Total school performance and individual student performance should be measured by different tests.

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### 6.3 Issues Related to Accountability Options

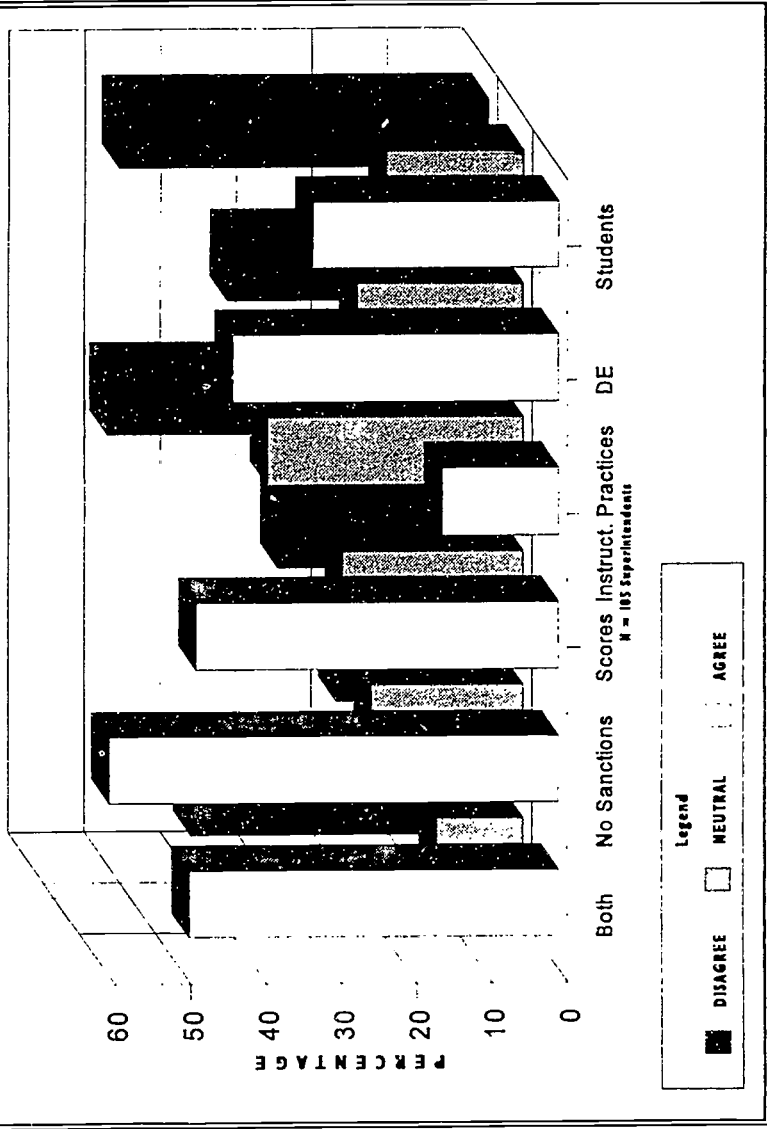
Question 13. *Following is a series of statements about accountability for student learning. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with each.*

**Table 6.3 - Accountability Options**

| Accountability  | Agree | Neutral | Disagree |
|---|-------|---------|----------|
| A. Both rewards and sanctions are essential to hold teachers and schools accountable for student learning.  | 39.4  | 11.5    | 49.0     |
| B. School rewards for high performance, but no sanctions for low performance, would motivate teachers to do their best and improve learning.      | 20.2  | 20.2    | 59.6     |
| C. Public disclosure of school scores without rewards or sanctions would motivate teachers to do their best and improve learning.                 | 27.9  | 24.0    | 48.1     |
| D. The School Accountability Index should include measures of the school's instructional practices as well as test scores.                        | 50.5  | 34.0    | 15.5     |
| E. Assigning a Distinguished Educator to a "school in decline" is an effective strategy for helping those schools to improve student performance. | 34.6  | 22.1    | 43.3     |
| F. Holding students and parents accountable for learning should be done at the local school rather than at state level.                           | 49.0  | 18.3    | 32.7     |

Figure 6.3

Accountability Options



- A. Both rewards and sanctions are essential to hold teachers and schools accountable for student learning.
- B. School rewards for high performance, but no sanctions for low performance, would motivate teachers to do their best and improve learning.
- C. Public disclosure of school scores without rewards or sanctions would motivate teachers to do their best and improve learning.
- D. The School Accountability Index should include measures of the school's instructional practices as well as test scores.
- E. Assigning a Distinguished Educator to a "school in decline" is an effective strategy for helping those schools to improve student performance.
- F. Holding students and parents accountable for learning should be done at the local school rather than at state level.

## 6.4 Issues Related to Potential Testing Options for 1995-96

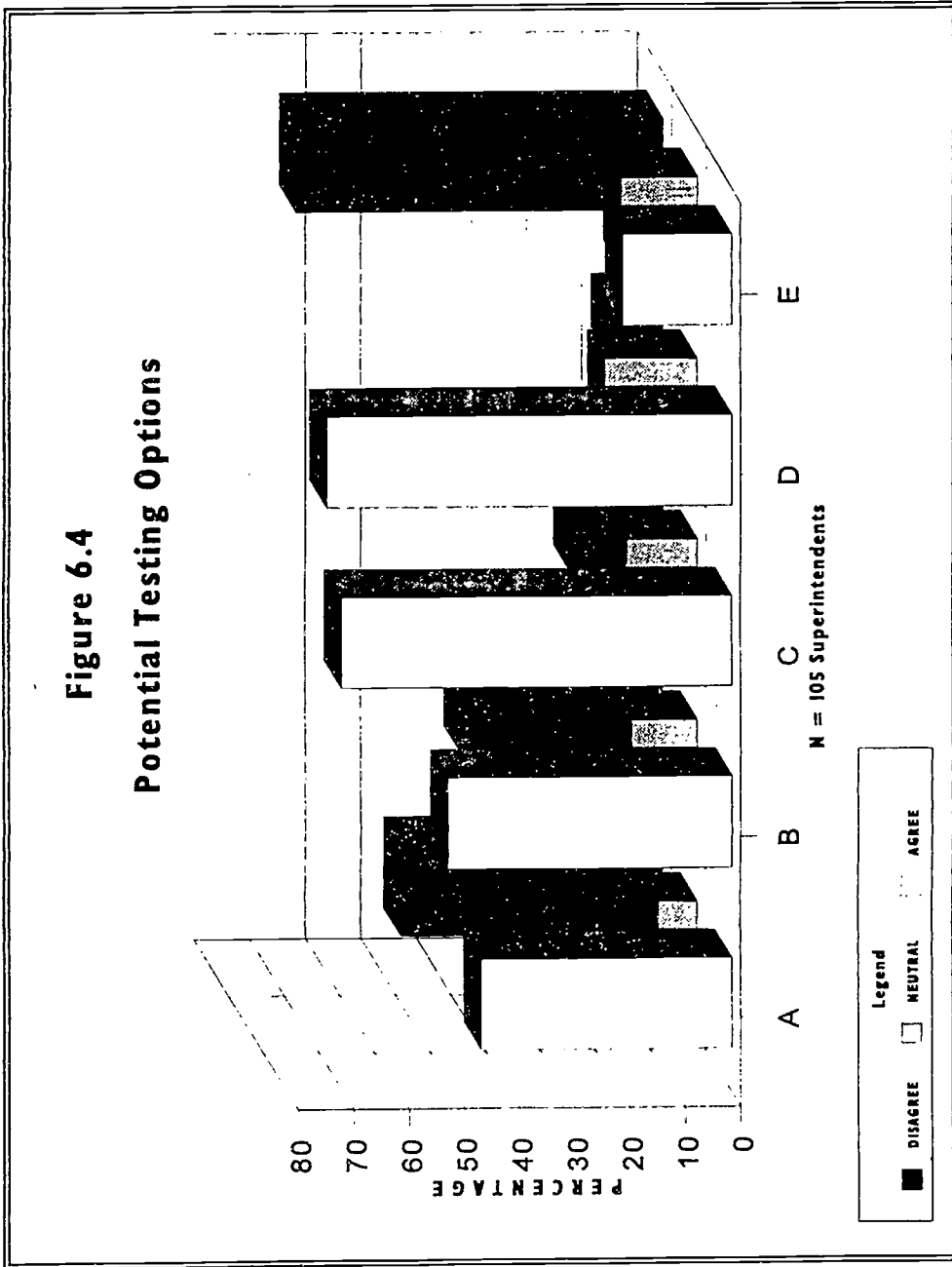
Question 15. *Based on a recent study, the Legislative Oversight Committee of the Office of Education Accountability has recommended that the Department of Education take the time to make appropriate and wise adjustments to the assessment and accountability system. Would you agree or disagree with each of the following options for the statewide testing system in the 1995-96 school year?*

**Table 6.4 - Potential Testing Options**

| Options  | Agree | Neutral | Disagree |
|--|-------|---------|----------|
| A. Continue the KIRIS testing as scheduled   | 45.5  | 7.1     | 47.5     |
| B. Continue the portfolio program and report scores, but not for rewards or sanctions  | 51.5  | 11.9    | 36.6     |
| C. Administer a nationally normed, standardized test, not for accountability, but to determine the achievement level of students           | 70.6  | 12.8    | 16.7     |
| D. Administer a variety of KIRIS performance assessments, including multiple-choice items, to determine which should be used in the future | 73.3  | 16.8    | 9.9      |
| E. Suspend all student testing until the state has redesigned the assessment system  | 19.8  | 13.9    | 66.3     |



**Figure 6.4**  
**Potential Testing Options**



- A. Continue the KIRIS testing as scheduled.
- B. Continue the portfolio program and report scores, but not for rewards or sanctions.
- C. Administer a nationally normed, standardized test, not for accountability, but to determine the achievement level of students.
- D. Administer a variety of KIRIS performance assessments, including multiple choice items, to determine which should be used in the future.
- E. Suspend all student testing until the state has redesigned the assessment system.

**7.0 Demographics**

7.1 The number of years of experience as a superintendent is:

|          |          |          |          |          |          |          |                  |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>8 or more</b> |
| 9.5      | 9.5      | 9.5      | 10.7     | 9.5      | 3.7      | 10.7     | 36.9             |

7.2 The primary subject area you taught when you were in the classroom was:

|                |                       |             |                         |                         |                      |                             |                           |
|----------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Science</b> | <b>Social Studies</b> | <b>Math</b> | <b>Arts/ Humanities</b> | <b>Practical Living</b> | <b>Language Arts</b> | <b>Vocational Education</b> | <b>Physical Education</b> |
| 25%            | 24%                   | 12%         | 3%                      | 0                       | 16%                  | 8%                          | 11%                       |

7.3 Your education level is:

|                     |   |   |
|---------------------|---|---|
| <b>Above Rank I</b> | <b>Rank I<br/>(30 hrs. above masters)</b> | <b>Rank II<br/>(Masters or 30 hrs. above Baccalaureate)</b> |
| 74%                 | 25.0%                                     | 1.0%  |

7.4 Your sex is:

|               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| <b>Female</b> | <b>Male</b> |
| 8.1%          | 91.9%       |

7.5 Your age category is:

| 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65 or older |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
| 0     | 8.0%  | 66.0% | 26.0% | 0           |

7.6 Your racial/ethnic heritage is:

| White | African American | Asian | Hispanic | American Indian | Some other racial group |
|-------|------------------|-------|----------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 99.0% | 0                | 0     | 0        | 1.0%            | 0                       |

7.7 The Educational Region to which your district belongs is:

| Region 1 - Murray area | Region 2 - B. Green area | Region 3 - Louisville area | Region 4 - Covington area | Region 5 - Lexington area | Region 6 - Corbin area | Region 7 - Morehead area | Region 8 - Prestonsburg area |
|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 18.1%                  | 22.2%                    | 2.0%                       | 13.1%                     | 12.1%                     | 17.2%                  | 12.2%                    | 3.0%                         |