

# Blended Learning in Texas Public Schools

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# What is Blended Learning

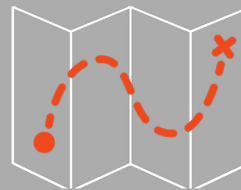
Blended learning takes place when students learn at least in part online, with some element of student control over the time, place, path, and/or pace of their learning, while also enjoying the benefits that come with education at a brick-and-mortar school ([Christensen Institute](#)).



TIME



PLACE



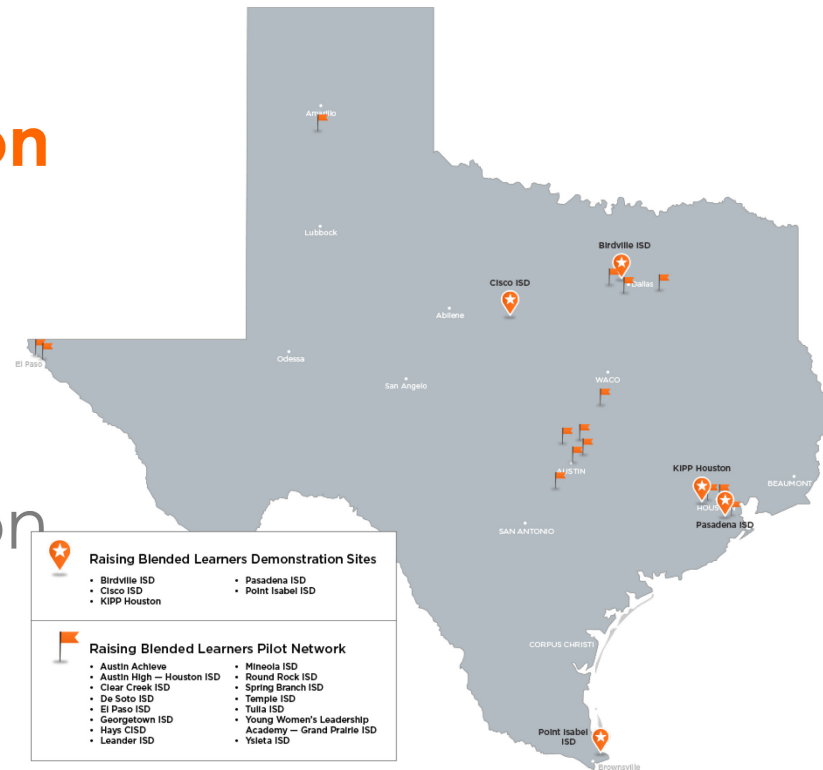
PATH



PACE

# Raising Blended Learners

Raising Blended Learners is a **blended learning demonstration initiative** to pilot and scale student-centered learning through the incorporation of face-to-face teacher instruction with online technology.



## Who are we?

- Cisco has approximately 940 students K-12
- 63% free and reduced lunch
- 18% Hispanic, 80% Caucasian
- High achieving STAAR district historically
- Close-knit, tight rural community
- Our kids are our kids
- Very traditional classroom model prior to RBL

## Problem Cisco is Solving with Blended Learning

- Elevate, Cisco ISD's blended learning initiative, is designed to raise the academic achievement of students with a focus on increasing that are below grade level, or advanced, academic achievement in mathematics and science.
- Elevate is an ambitious move to allow for more student agency, increase rigor, and enhance student engagement with his/her teacher with the goal of increasing student performance to the highest possible levels.

## Blended Learning Student Experience Design Pillars

- **Data-Driven Instruction:** *Teachers utilize standards level data analysis to inform flexible instructional grouping and create personalized pathways for students.*
- **Student Agency/Engagement:** *Based on student learning data, teachers and students each play a part in personalizing work.*
- **Personalized Learning Experiences:** *Students will be offered instructional approaches and learning experiences based on their individual learning needs, interests and passions.*
- **Rigor/Competency Progression:** *Students will be challenged intellectually and have high academic expectations for themselves. Students will have the opportunity to advance through standards as mastery is achieved.*

## Leading Indicators and Outcomes

- We are seeing great growth in just one year of implementation!
  - MAP is allowing teachers to identify specific student needs so they can personalize their approach; we are attacking student learning gaps proactively and in time to make a difference
  - Mid-year science data from this first year is outstanding; science classes at all grade levels can only be described as dynamic
  - After year 1, six students, out of 68 in the grade, who failed the STAAR exam the previous year passed their exam in 2017, even with a higher passing standard. Four of these students had never passed any STAAR test before.
  - Growth is inspiring even struggling students; they can see a way out to their struggles and teachers know how to aid them
  - Goal setting and ownership are tools being used to empower students in the blended rooms
  - Engagement of students has skyrocketed while an increase in attendance has been seen along with a decline in classroom discipline issues
  - Teacher satisfaction has risen and blended has enhanced teacher evaluations on the new TTESS system

## Plans for Scale

- CISD will be almost completely blended in 1st-8th grades by '18-'19 and have begun work to capture Kindergarten and move forward into high school
- What started out with Math/Science has spread across disciplines including to reading, language arts, and social studies because teachers see the changes and the student response to a blended approach
- RBL grant aided start-up costs particularly in terms of hardware and software, but plans are in place to sustain the work through various methods like use of IMA monies and a deep dig into current spending to identify “better use” areas
- District re-allocated existing monies to facilitate the rapid spread of blended adding software and technology where needed, committed personnel resources to ensure teachers had the time they needed to consider data and to train, while e-rate funding aided in an upgrade in infrastructure prior to kick-off
- Significant aid came in regard to support from the RBL initiative: clearly articulating our vision, creating a transformed student experience, training/supporting teachers (BL/PL certificate for teacher training through Texas Tech), focusing on sustainability, and an “at the ready” encouragement team to guide us through the challenges of a blended transition



## Why This Matters

- “This is what my heart always said was right...”
  - Students had lost their thinking skills and their curious nature, blended has given those back
  - “I always knew they had holes; now I can prove it and pinpoint it!” Teachers want to teach and to feel that they are doing that effectively
- Online education is not the answer. Magic does not happen between a student and a keyboard. Teachers must be given the tools and support that technology can offer, but they (teachers) are the piece that creates magic! Blended education truly combines great teaching with the best tools of today to reach students.
- A growing rural cohort- CISD is working with several other districts to foster blended in their schools and continues to field inquiries from many more because schools want to be successful. Success of schools is the success of students. Rural schools are particularly mindful of this fact because as our schools go, so goes our communities. We need students to attain, to achieve, and to give back to our local areas. The willingness to change and to strike out to new areas of education is there if the support and funding can be found.
- The success of public schools is an imperative for all Texans. We cannot be divided by geography or size or demographic. We need an educated citizenry; educated to the highest potential of each individual. Blended gives us the best chance...a very real chance to meet students where they are and to guide them to the heights attainable to them.
- Committed teachers are powerful change-makers. Technology is a tool. Just as a hammer cannot build a beautiful home without the hand of a master craftsman, students need the guidance of a professional teacher by their side to grow into what they can become.
- Texas is beginning to make a national impact via RBL schools. Cisco Junior High School has been featured by The Learning Accelerator as a [national model for blended learning](#). Texas can lead the way in education as we lead the way in other fields, if we commit to it and open ourselves to change.

## Problem Pasadena is Solving with Blended Learning

- While 90% of Pasadena ISD students are graduating from high school the majority are not graduating ready for postsecondary education. Only 54% of PISD graduating seniors are entering college in the fall immediately after high school and a mere 27% of the students are completing a degree from a postsecondary institution within six years.
- Pasadena students have the academic skills necessary to graduate from high school but may not have the perseverance, self-management, and decision making skills to complete college.
- The Pasadena Connect program values teaching students how to learn more than what to learn by focusing 70% of our efforts on skills that the brain uses to think, read, learn, remember, reason, and pay attention.  
**We value teaching each student how to learn more than what to learn so that they will be successful in college and beyond.**

## Pasadena Demographics

Enrollment	54,647
Race/Ethnicity	
Hispanic	83%
African American	7%
Caucasian	6%
Asian	3%
GT	5%
ELL	27%
Special Ed	10%
Economically Disadvantaged	77%

## Blended Learning Student Experience Design Pillars



### **1:1 Mentorship (Mentor Time)**

Through regular one-on-one meetings with mentors, students get support to align their daily actions with individual long-term goals.



### **Real-World Projects (Project Time)**

Students spend most of their time working with teachers and classmates on rich, real-world projects.



### **Individualized Pathways (Personalized Learning Time)**

Students set goals and progress through content via individualized playlists, consuming content in ways they learn best.

## HABITS OF SUCCESS



### 1:1 Mentorship (Mentor Time)

Through regular one-on-one meetings with mentors, students get support to align their daily actions with individual long-term goals.

### What is it?

- Mindsets and behaviors that support well-being
- 16 social-emotional learning skills
- Developed from Turnaround for Kids' *Building Blocks for Learning*

### Why is it important?

- Align to development of a learner in an educational setting
- Impact college and career success

## HABITS OF SUCCESS

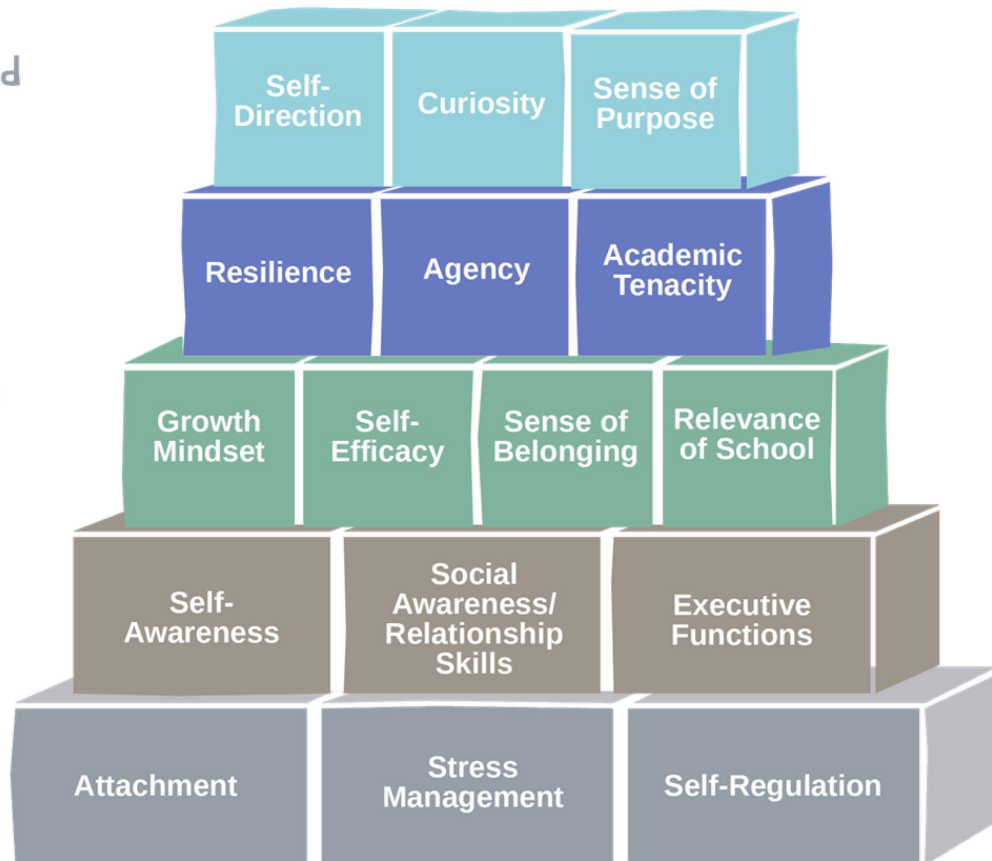
INDEPENDENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

PERSEVERANCE

MINDSETS FOR SELF AND SCHOOL

SCHOOL READINESS

HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT



## COGNITIVE SKILLS



### **Real-World Projects (Project Time)**

Students spend most of their time working with teachers and classmates on rich, real-world projects.

## What is it?

- Essential and transferable lifelong skills
- Assessed on Cognitive Skills Rubric, developed with the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE)

## Why is it important?

- Skills students need beyond high school to navigate college and careers
- Include creative and critical approaches to problem-solving and decision-making

## 36 Cognitive Skills

All projects in all subjects are assessed on the following Cognitive Skills:

Textual Analysis	Products & Presentations	Inquiry	Analysis & Synthesis	Speaking/ Listening	Composing/ Writing	Using Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme/Central Idea</li> <li>Point of View/Purpose</li> <li>Development</li> <li>Structure</li> <li>Word Choice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Style and Language (Tone, Academic Language, Syntax)</li> <li>Oral Presentation</li> <li>Multimedia in Written Production</li> <li>Multimedia in Oral Presentation</li> <li>Conventions</li> <li>Precision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asking Questions</li> <li>Hypothesizing</li> <li>Designing Processes and Procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying Patterns and Relationships</li> <li>Comparing/ Contrasting</li> <li>Modeling</li> <li>Interpreting Data/Info</li> <li>Making Connections &amp; Inferences</li> <li>Critiquing the Reasoning of Others</li> <li>Justifying / Constructing an Explanation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion / Contribution</li> <li>Preparation</li> <li>Norms / Active Listening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Argumentative Claim</li> <li>Informational/ Explanatory Thesis</li> <li>Narrative</li> <li>Counterclaims</li> <li>Selection of Evidence</li> <li>Explanation of Evidence</li> <li>Integration of Evidence</li> <li>Organization (Transitions, Cohesion, Structure)</li> <li>Introduction and Conclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selecting Relevant Sources</li> <li>Contextualizing Sources</li> <li>Synthesizing Multiple Sources</li> </ul>



# CONTENT KNOWLEDGE



## Individualized Pathways (Personalized Learning Time)

Students set goals and progress through content via individualized playlists, consuming content in ways they learn best.

## What is it?

- The understanding and application of fundamental content

## Why is it important?

- Foundational to the development of cognitive skills
- Supports and enables critical thinking
- Students develop a broad knowledge base

## PERSONALIZED LEARNING TIME

### INDIVIDUALIZED PATHWAYS

Students set goals and progress through content via individualized playlists, consuming content in ways they learn best.



LEARNING HOW  
TO LEARN



PEER-TO-PEER  
MENTORING



ON-DEMAND  
ASSESSMENTS



CONTENT PLAYLISTS



## Changing role of the teacher

- The role of the **teacher** in Connect classrooms is being transformed. PISD is developing a new teacher culture and community of practice among the Connect teachers. Teachers report and exhibit very high levels of collaboration, a shared responsibility for all students, requiring the skills to teach across subject areas (becoming more of a generalist) and remaining flexible at all times.
- The focus and time of the teacher has moved from what and how to teach to how to intervene, motivate, and guide students through learning. Much of their time is working in small groups utilizing daily data showing which students are struggling and which students can go deeper in a subject area. Teachers provide just in time direct instruction in small groups in every subject area based on the information on the teacher dashboard.
- Teachers utilize a rubric to assess cognitive skill based on the project work rather than grading skills and content that are assessed electronically on the platform.
- The most important role of the teacher is mentoring each student every week. They guide students on setting both academic and personal short and long term goals.

## Why This Matters

- Teachers no longer have to decide what to teach, how to teach or how to assess their teaching. Teachers roles change to identifying student strengths and weaknesses in more depth than in the traditional classroom.
- Teachers are empowered with individualized data which allows real time interventions that are personalized for every student. Teachers see how successful their differentiated intervention is with students.
- Teachers frequently say they will never go back to teaching without this powerful daily data to lead their instruction. Their energy is now focused on exactly what a student needs when they need it! This is extremely powerful for our teachers.

## Changing role of the student

- **Students** continue to thrive in this model. They are self directed learners who have agency over their own learning. The features of choice and self-pacing empowers students to own their work. When interviewed, students routinely rank self-pace as their favorite element of the model. Students love that they control the pace of learning.
- As the year progresses, habits of success are developed in students through mentor time and the relationships built with their teachers. Students set weekly obtainable goals supported by viable strategies. Students value the mentor relationship that they develop with their mentor throughout the year. Some recent quotes from students are: “My teachers care about me”, “My teachers are my friend, and they know everything about me.”
- Summit Learning and PISD have created interesting, real world projects for students. The projects allow student to apply the content they are learning to real life, bringing relevance to what they are learning. Projects such as.... Students collaborate on the projects but are graded independently based on the cognitive skills rubric. Tremendous growth in confidence, presentation skills, and cognitive thinking and learning is evident by all who observe these classrooms.
- The most exciting part of walking into a Connect classroom is 100% student engagement!

## Finances for Connect

- Technology and Infrastructure needed
  - Student computers for 7,500 4th - 12th grade students at \$350 per computer for \$2.7 million every 4 years. (\$12M if all 4-12 students participate in the future) Funding sources: Bonds, IMA, CZI
  - A 1:1 technician at each school to service student computers \$1 million each year
  - Utilized bond and Erate funds to have appropriate connectivity within the school and electrical capacity for the amount of technology needed.
  - Home internet access is important
    - Have been working on building towers in our community to provide internet access to our students through bond funds

## Finances for Connect continued

- Training is essential for teachers and administrators
  - Summer onboarding training is provided to all new teachers and administrators for 1 week the summer prior to beginning Connect provided by Summit Public Schools
  - (2) 2 day Convenings are held during the year to provide training and time for collaboration. The first 2 years other districts took part, but because of the number of teachers involved this year it is only Pasadena staff. Summit Public Schools have led these trainings at no charge and are now training our leaders to be the facilitators in the future.
- Coaching has led us to success. Because of the complete transformation of the role of the teacher, the first months of teaching has been hard on teachers. Long time veteran teachers say that it is like having a first year all over again. Many expressed the desire to go back to traditional during the first months. Through the guidance of coaches and much hard work teachers found their stride during the second semester and begin saying they will never go back.
  - During year one Summit Public provided coaching for all three campuses, including ongoing phone support and monthly on-site observations and feedback for our pioneers.
  - The second and third year, a grant from Raise Your Hand Texas provided professional development and financed the hiring of a coordinator to oversee coaching on all of our Connect campuses. Current district Instructional Technology Specialists began to be trained and converted to Connect Coaches.



## Finances for Connect continued

- Curriculum and Assessment Writing is on-going
  - Summit Public Schools provided free access to their curriculum. However, this curriculum was based on Common Core. Our district specialists and teachers have spent hundreds of hours writing and rewriting curriculum which includes the playlists and projects to move from supporting the Common Core used in California to Texas Standards. Local and Raise Your Hand Texas grant funds were utilized.
  - ELL and Special Education Supports are being written and incorporated using local and Raise Your Hand Texas grant funds.
  - Facebook engineers designed the LMS specifically for Summit schools. The Summit Learning Platform houses all curriculum and provides the means to monitor student mastery data. This LMS would cost well over \$250,00 each year in the current market.

## A leader in blended learning

- Over 100 school administrators have come to visit and tour the Connect program. At the end of the month the Commissioner of Education of Kansas State is bringing a team to see this model with plans to potentially scale this state wide.
- Pasadena ISD is currently providing professional development for several districts that are piloting this model: Port Isabel, Spring Branch, New Orleans
- Pasadena ISD is sharing the Texas Connect curriculum with other Texas schools.

## Student Outcomes on STAAR

Results on the STAAR ELA tests have been phenomenal.

Results on the math test have also been very good.

The vast majority of our campuses that have adopted Connect have shown academic gains.

This is not a silver bullet. Strong leadership and teachers are a must for student success just like in the traditional classrooms. Campuses where we have had a change in leadership or weak leadership have experienced struggles as seen below.

ELL and Special Education students are doing well, but we are still working on how to best meet their needs and intervene appropriately within the model. We have 2 schools that went school wide this year and we are working closely with these campuses to determine best practices with these populations.

# Pasadena ISD

## How We Are Scaling

2015-16  
3 campuses

250

2016-17  
10 campuses

2,000

2017-18  
23 campuses

4,500

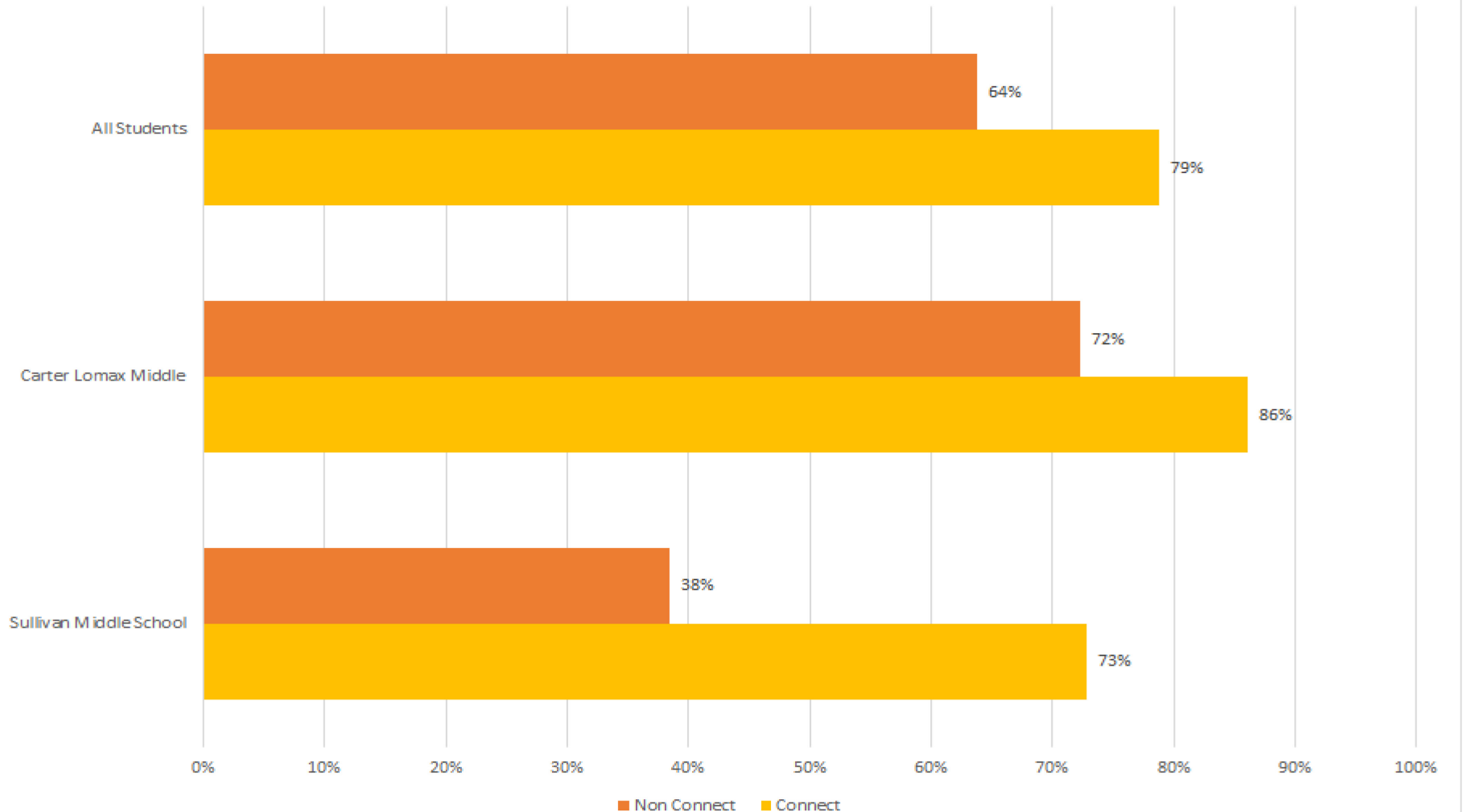
7,500

2018-19  
34 campuses

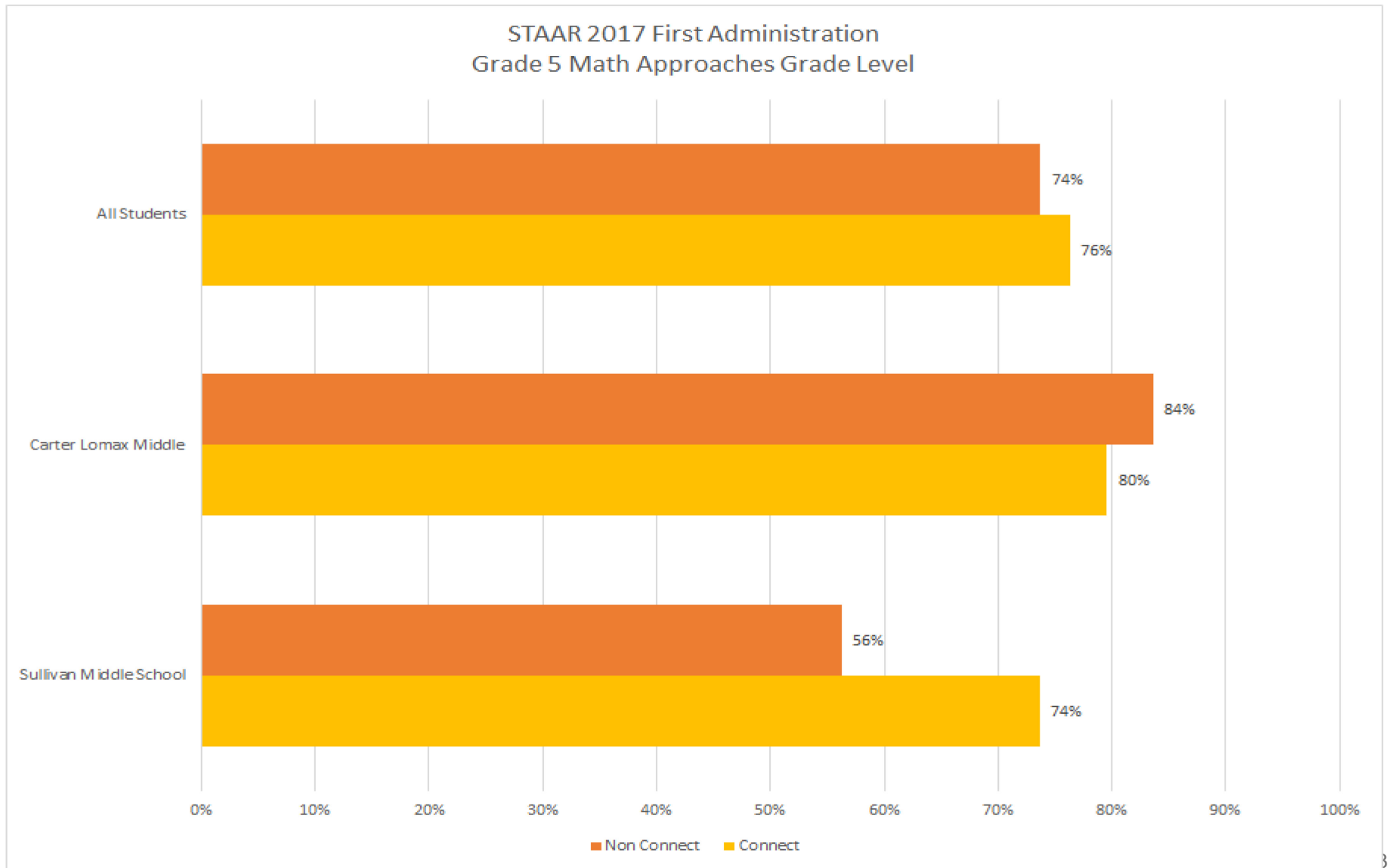


# Student Outcomes on STAAR

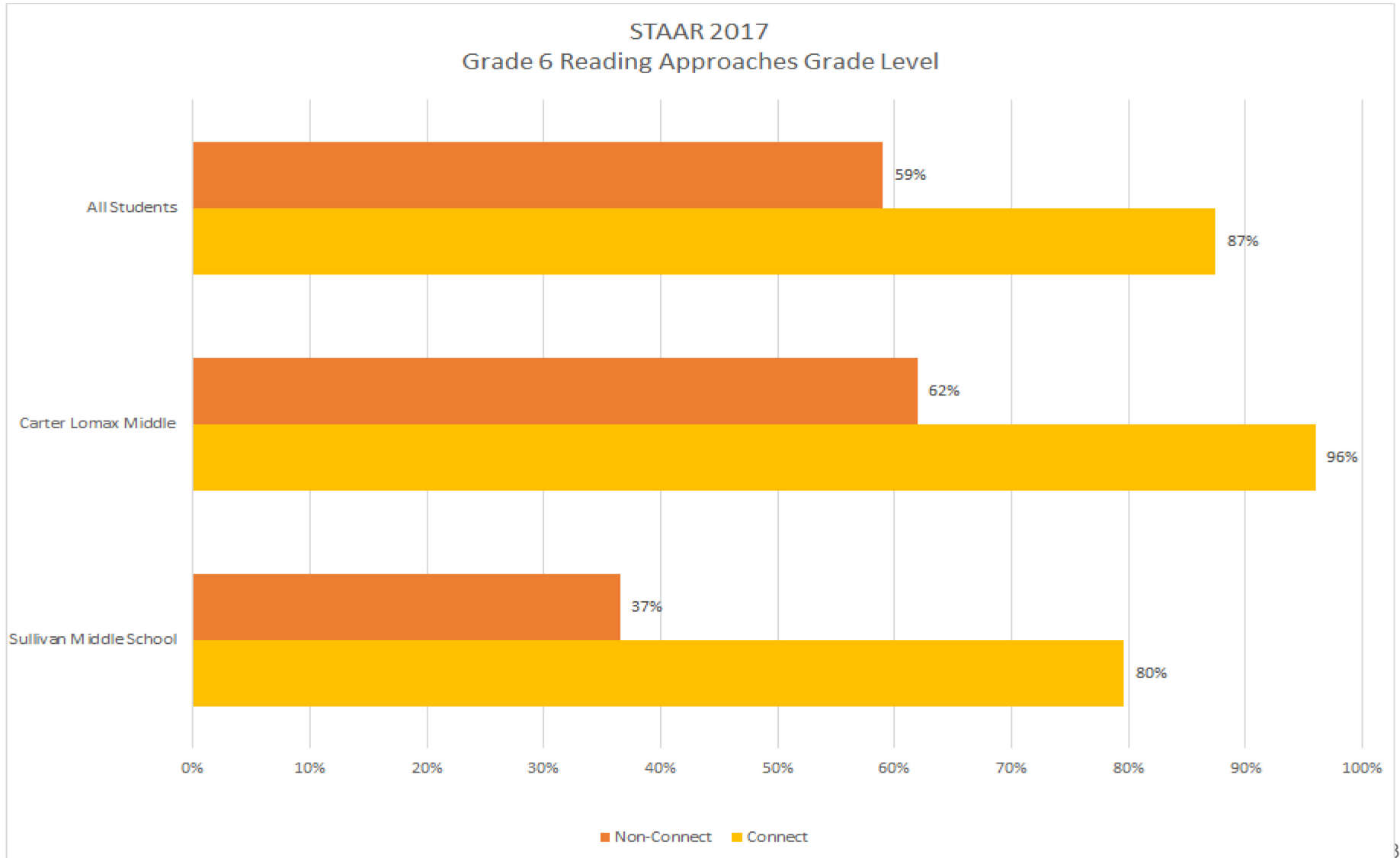
STAAR 2017 First Administration  
Grade 5 Reading Approaches Grade Level



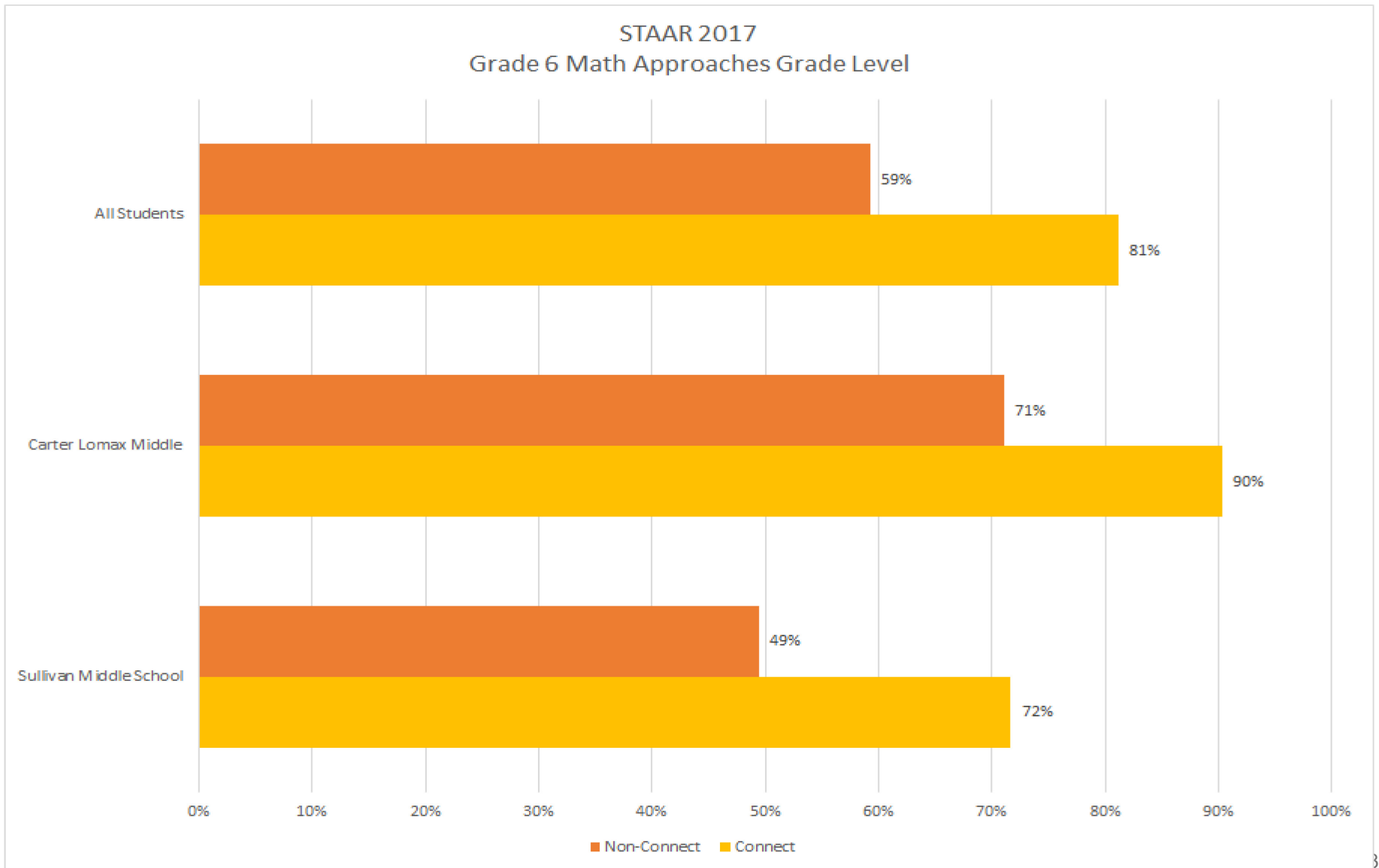
# Student Outcomes on STAAR



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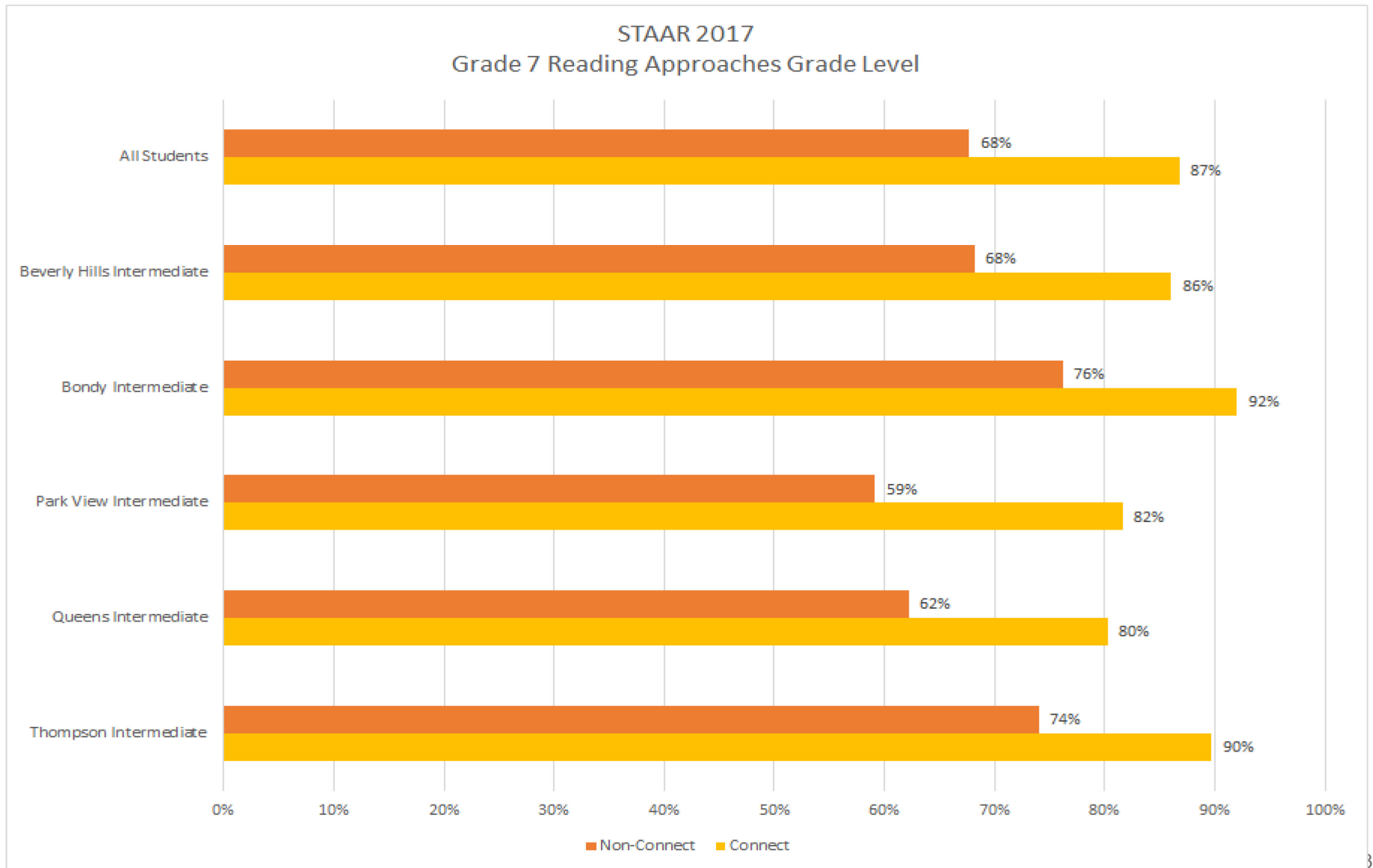


# Student Outcomes on STAAR

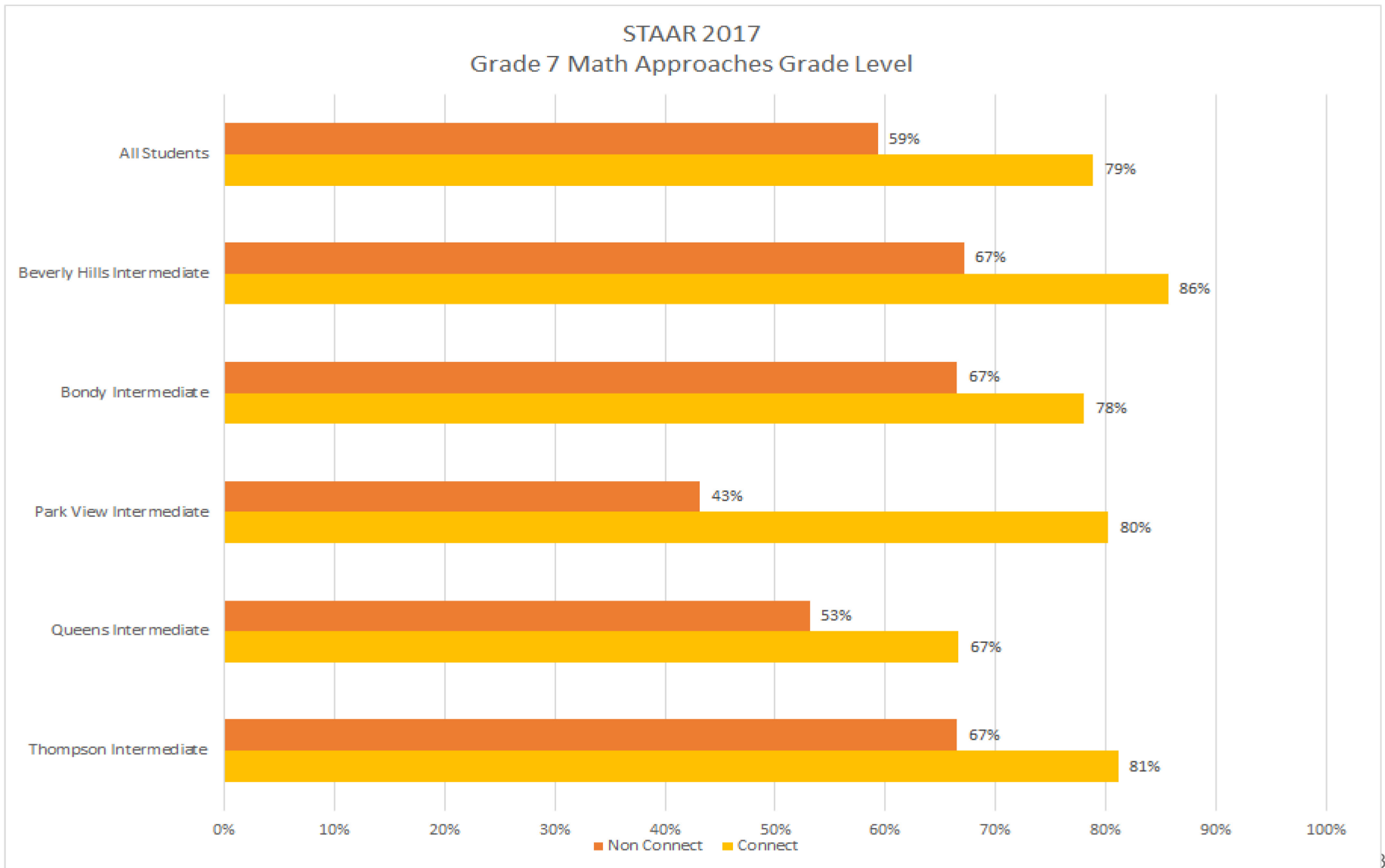




# Student Outcomes on STAAR

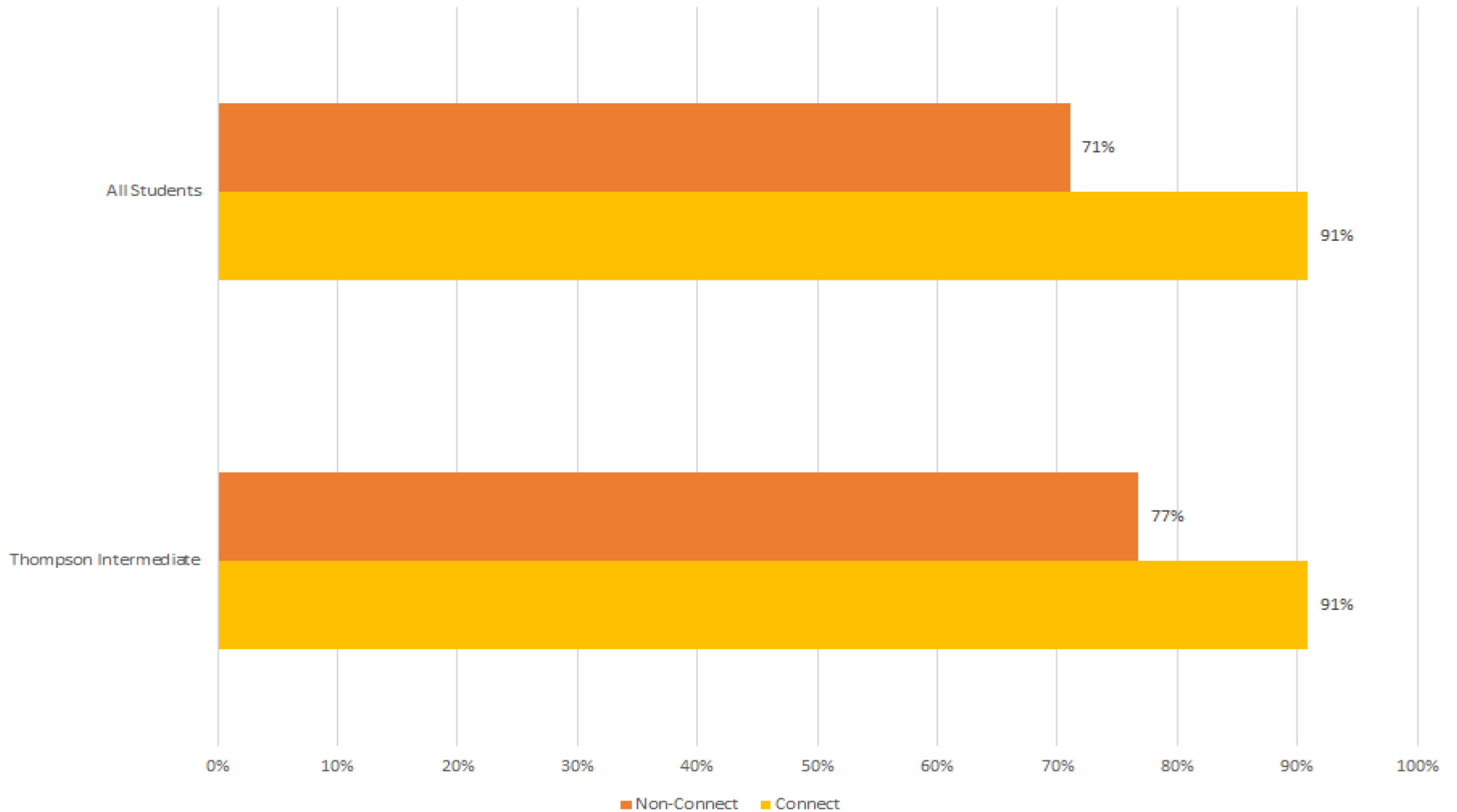


# Student Outcomes on STAAR

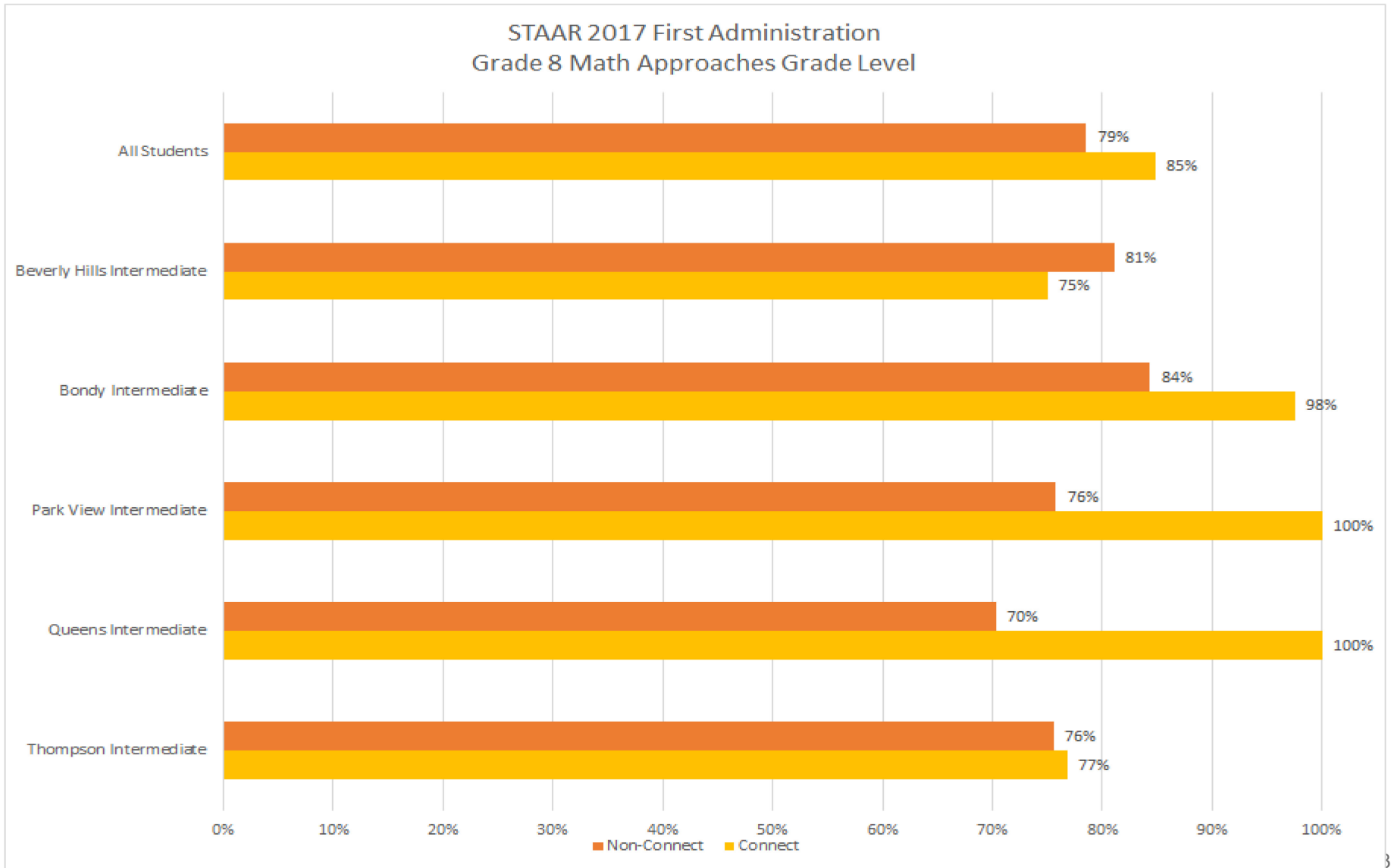


# Student Outcomes on STAAR

STAAR 2017 First Administration  
Grade 8 Reading Approaches Grade Level

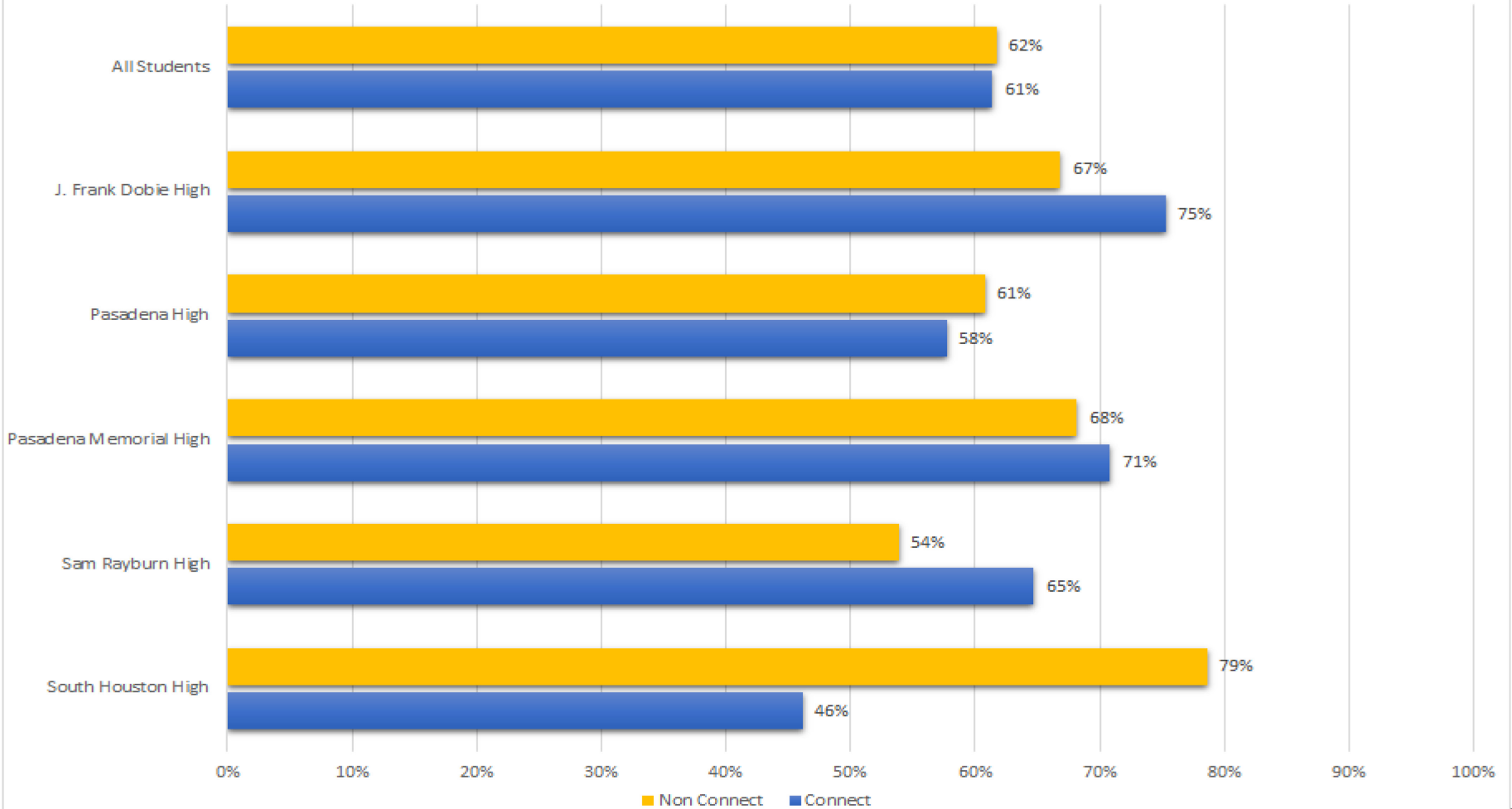


# Student Outcomes on STAAR



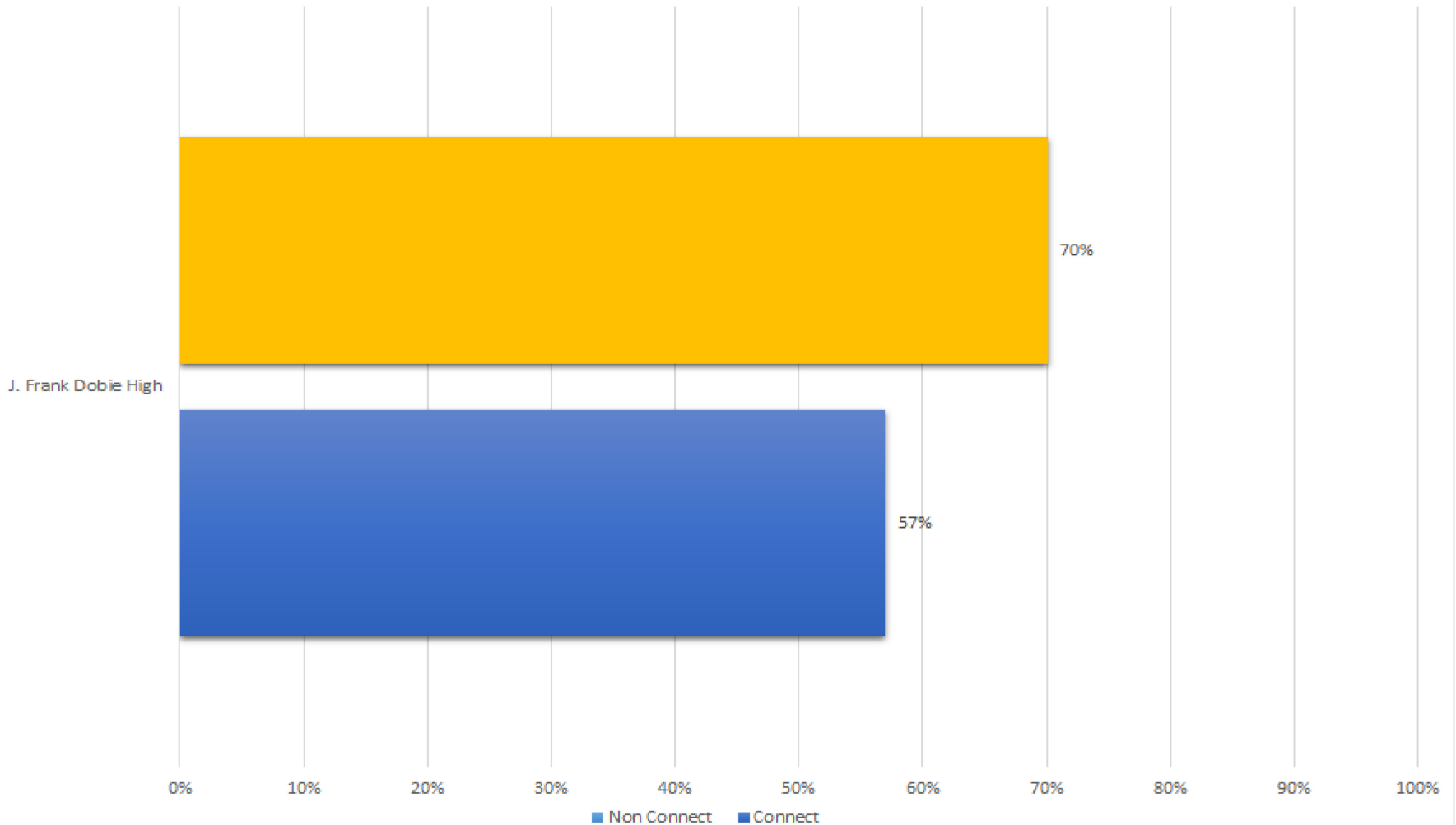
# Student Outcomes on STAAR

2017 English I STAAR EOC  
% Approaches Grade Level: Non-Connect vs Connect

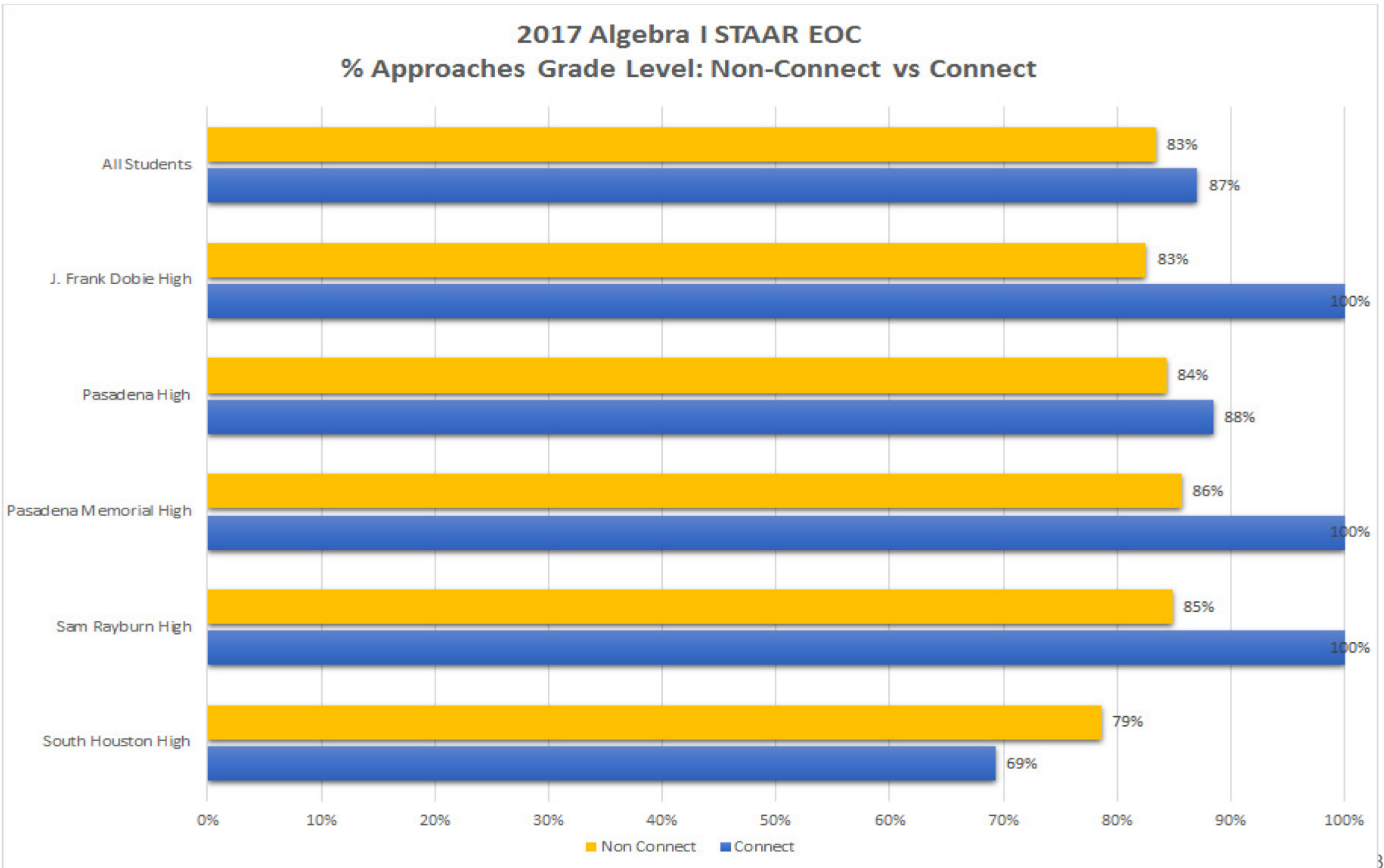


# Student Outcomes on STAAR

2017 English II STAAR EOC  
% Approaches Grade Level: Non-Connect vs Connect



# Student Outcomes on STAAR



# Get to Know Cisco & Pasadena



Cisco ISD



Pasadena ISD



**Thank you!**

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