Geographic Distribution of Safe Routes to School Funds: Analysis & Innovative Institutional Models

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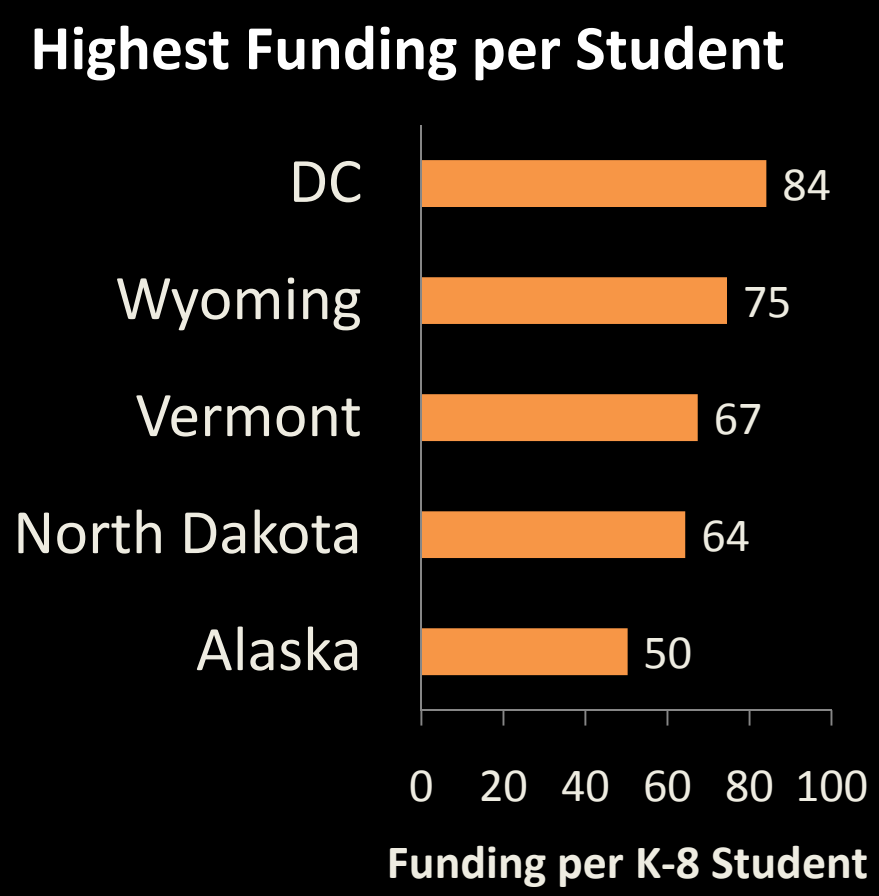
Research Questions

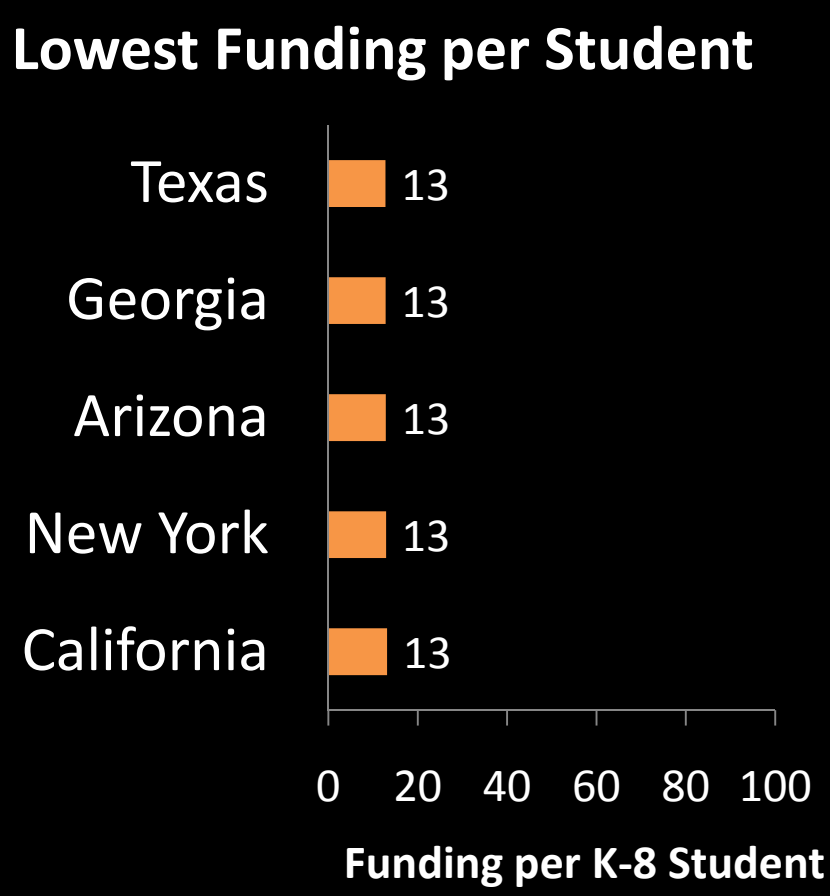
- How have states organized their SRTS programs?
- How equitable are SRTS funding decisions?
  - What schools and students have benefited from SRTS programs?

Background- Safe Routes to School

- $612 million, 5 years (2005-2009)
- Does not require local matching funds
- 70-90% infrastructure, 10-30% non-infrastructure
- Goals
  - "Enable and encourage" walking and biking to school
  - Make walking and biking safer

State Funding Levels





Research Design & Data

- Mixed Methods
- Interviews with state SRTS coordinators
  - N=49 (96% response rate)
- Analysis of Awarded SRTS projects
  - Database collected by the National Center for SRTS
  - Useable data for 25 states
    - 1,151 SRTS awards benefitting 2,639 schools
  - Current as of August 2009
- US Department of Education database on all public elementary and middle schools
  - N=38,333

SRTS Organizational Analysis

- Flexible guidance on program design
- States develop own programs
- Beneficiaries of Program
  - School Districts
  - Local, Regional, State or Tribal Governments
  - Not for profit organizations

Key Findings: Organizational Analysis

- Significant variation among states in how programs are organized
  - Level of fragmentation
    - locus of control in state DOT vs. at local level (local organization, district DOT office, or service providers
  - Unified vs. Fragmented
    - Project selection
    - Project administration
    - Infrastructure vs. Non-infrastructure

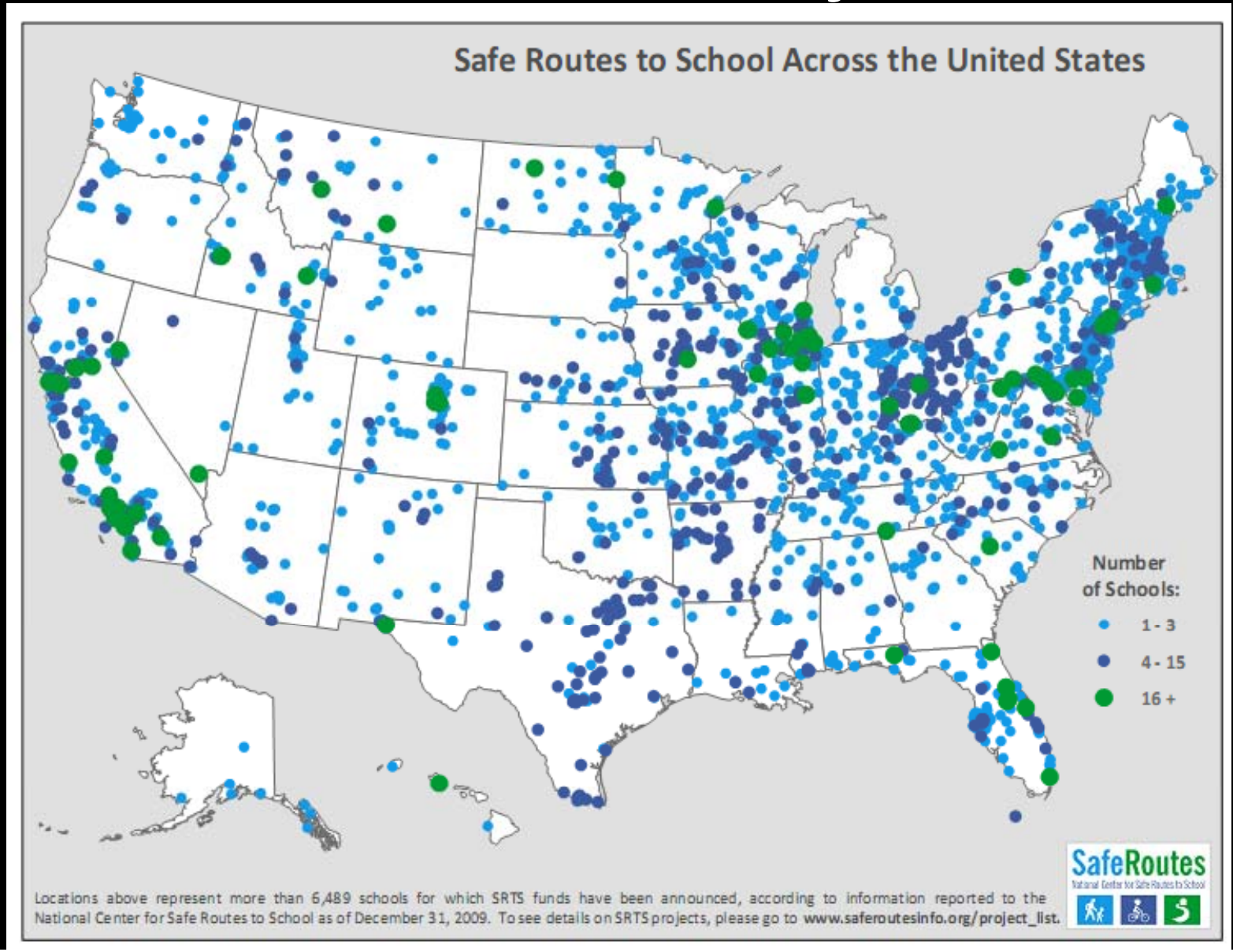
Key Findings: Organizational Analysis

		Infrastructure	
		Unified	Fragmented
Non-Infrastructure	Unified	Massachusetts/Pennsylvania (service provider) South Carolina/Maine (DOT)	Michigan Texas Virginia
	Fragmented	Utah	Florida/California

Other Organizational Findings

- Public actors vs. non-profits
- Diversity of beneficiaries
- Agency culture
  - Small program in an area that does not specialize in these types of expenditures
  - Barriers to participation
    - National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) Review
    - Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

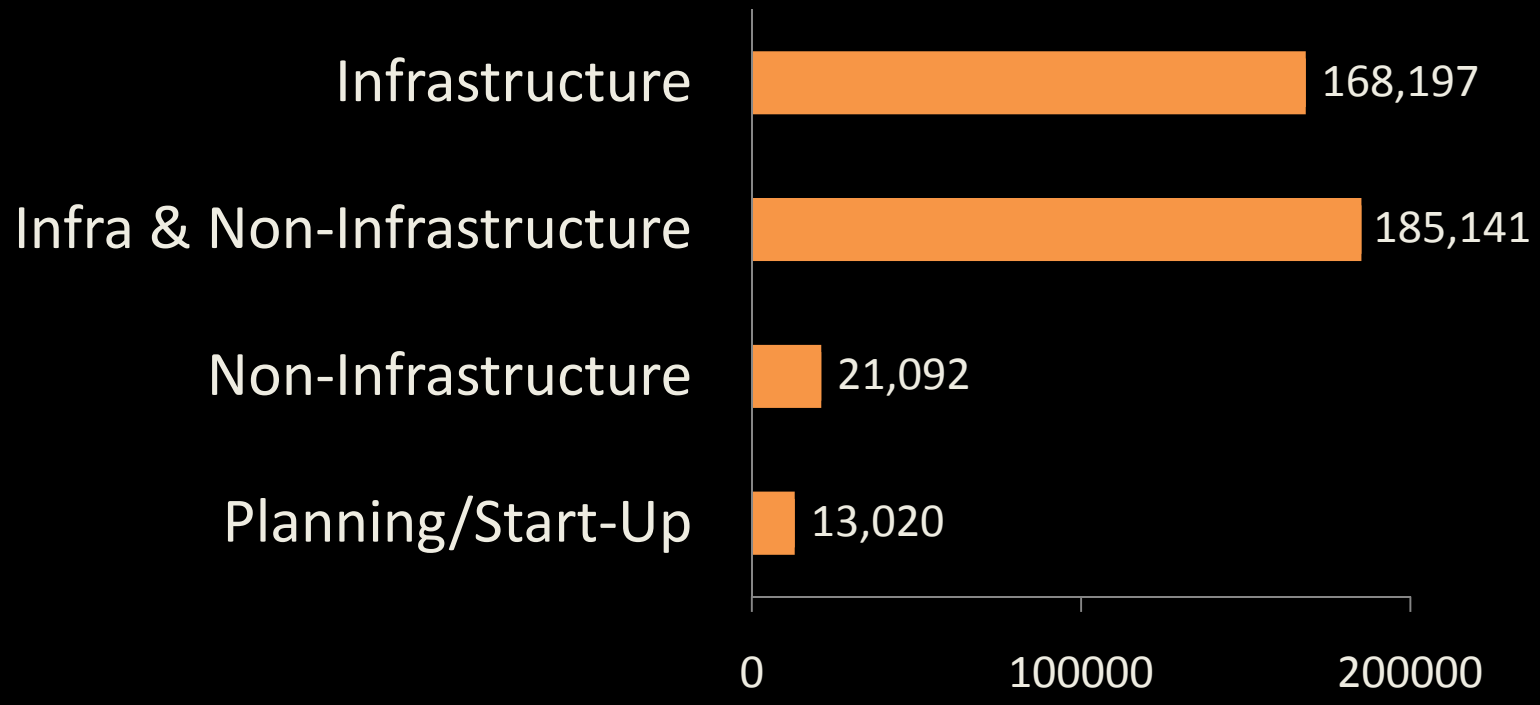
Distribution of SRTS Projects



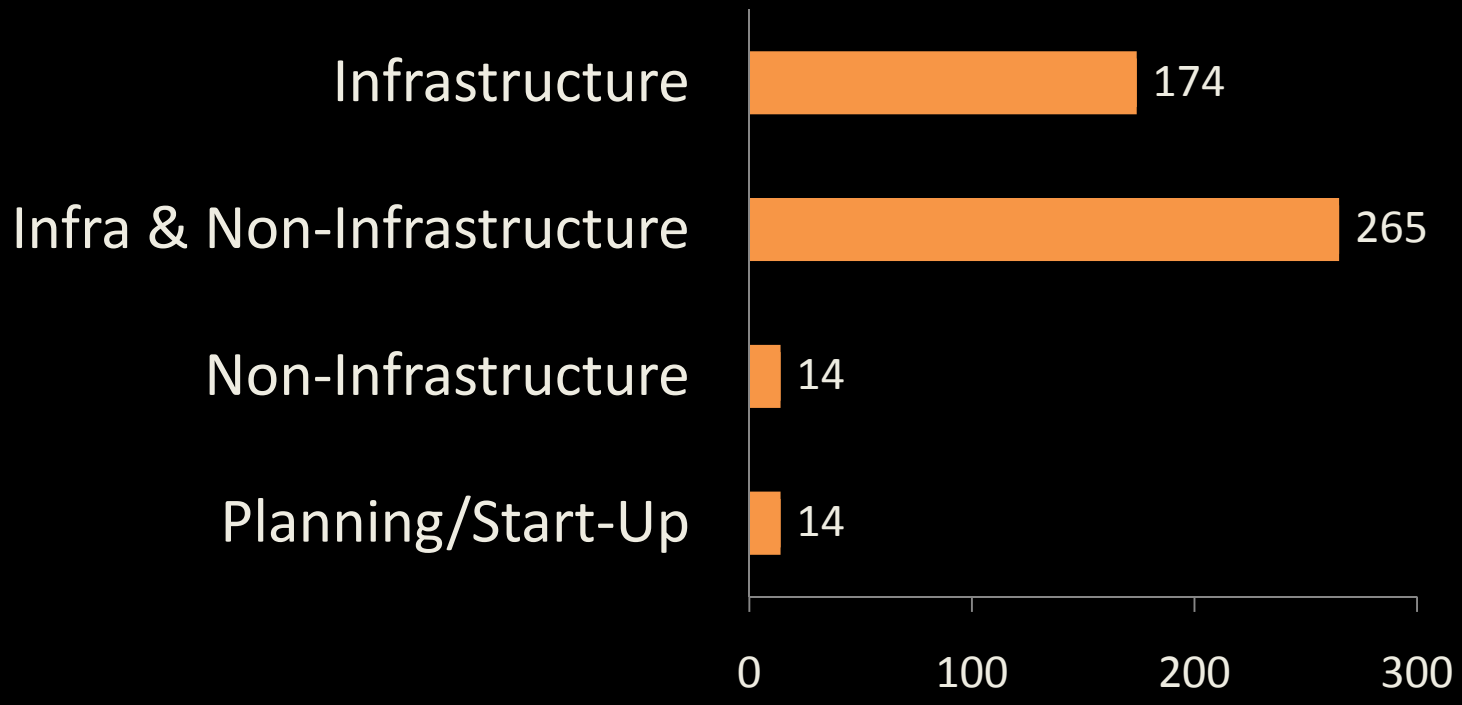
Data Availability

- As of Fall 2009, $417 million awarded in the 50 states + DC
- Our analysis focuses on $152 million awarded in 25 states with data on benefitting schools

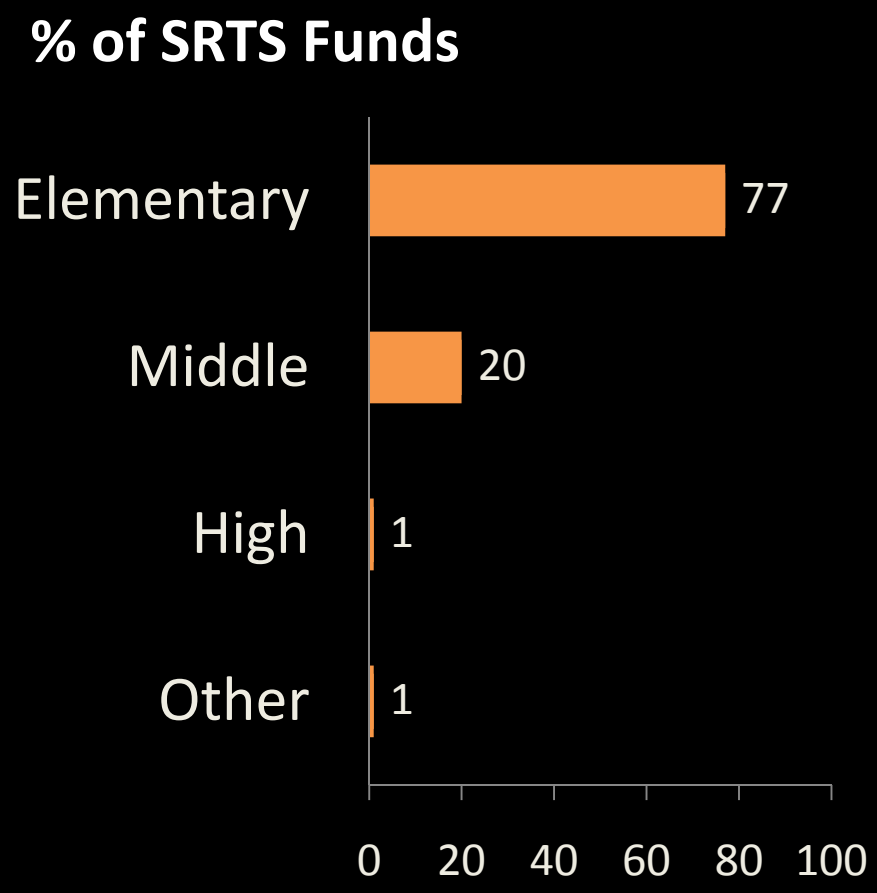
Average Project Amounts



Average Funding per Student

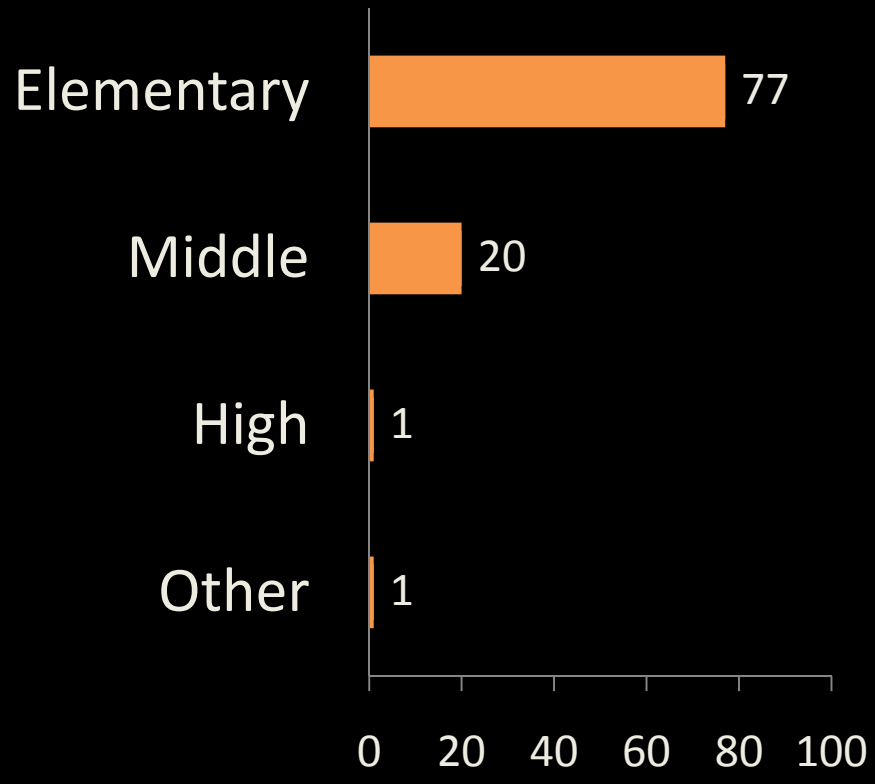


School Level

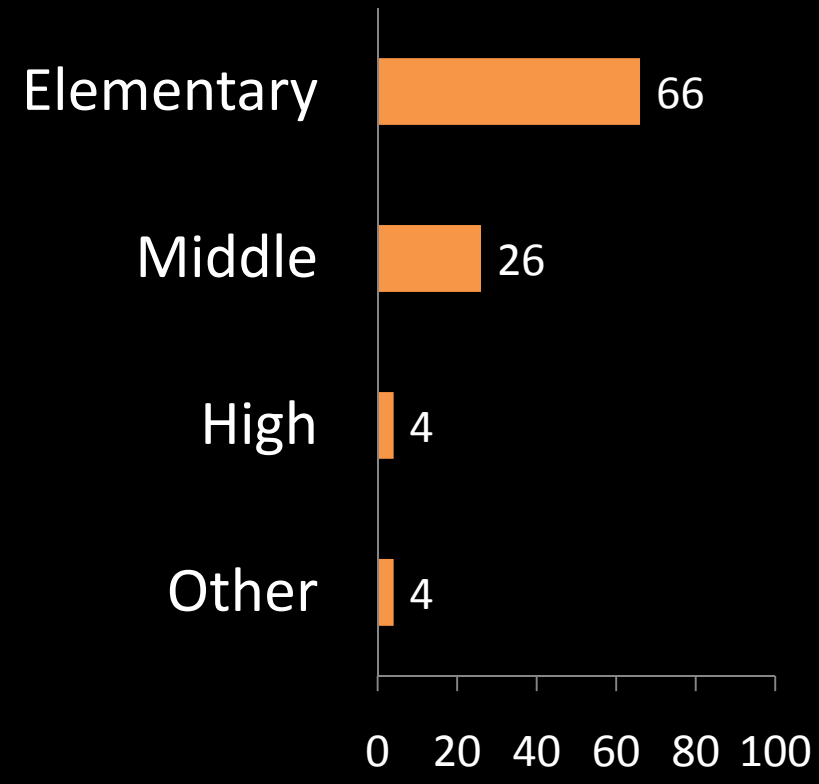


School Level

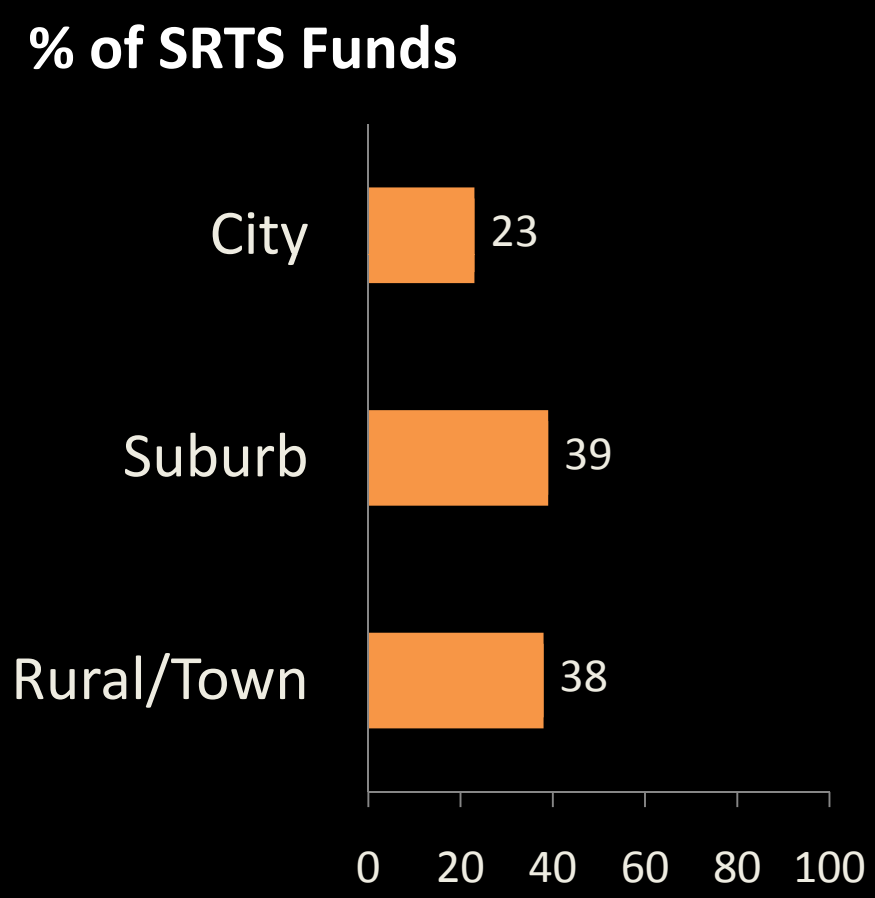
% of SRTS Funds



% of US Students

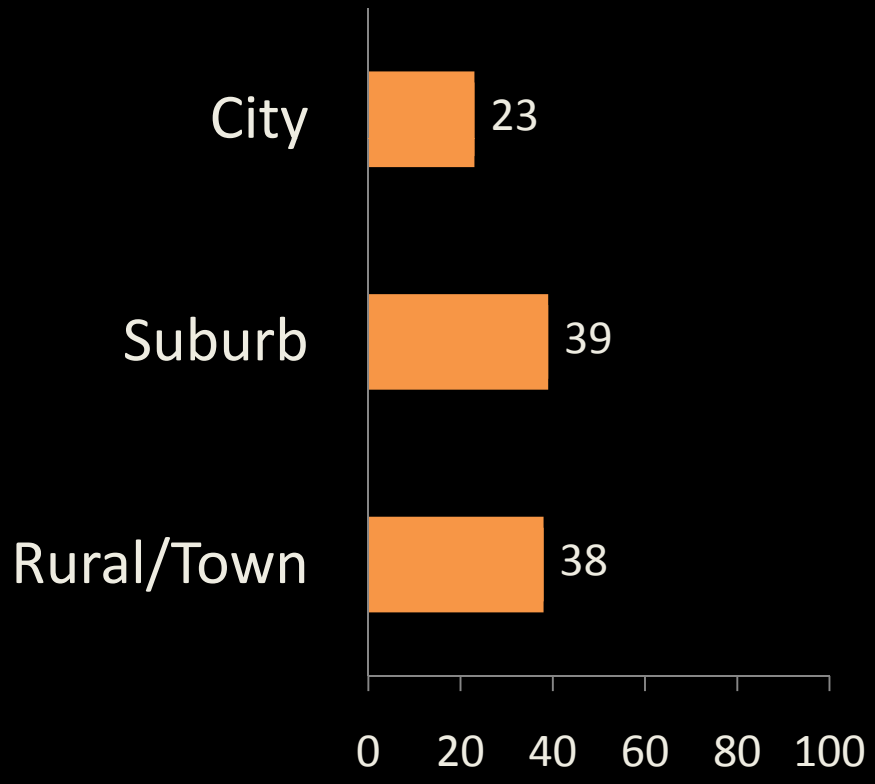


School Location



School Location

% of SRTS Funds



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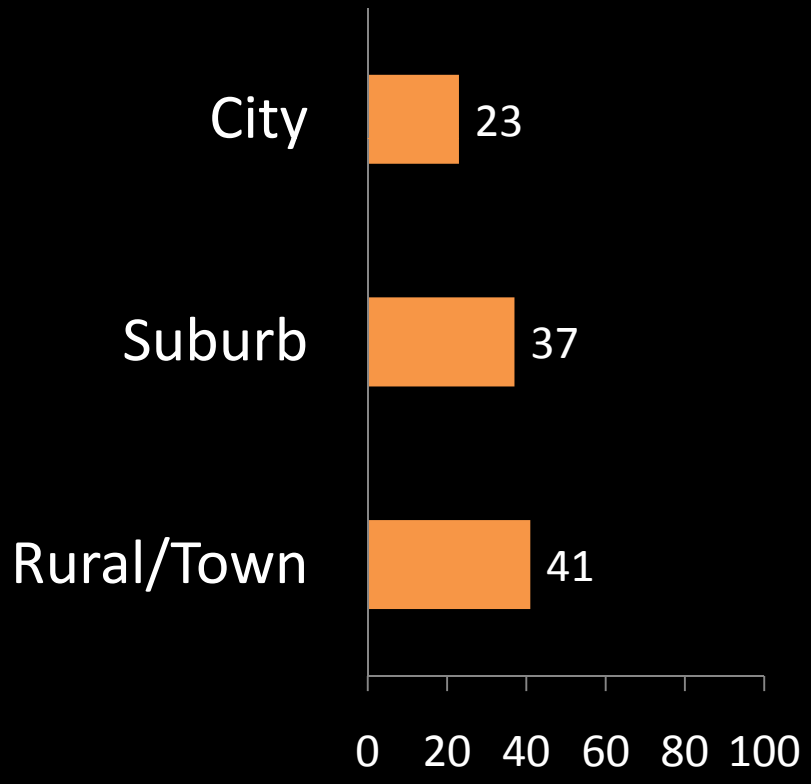
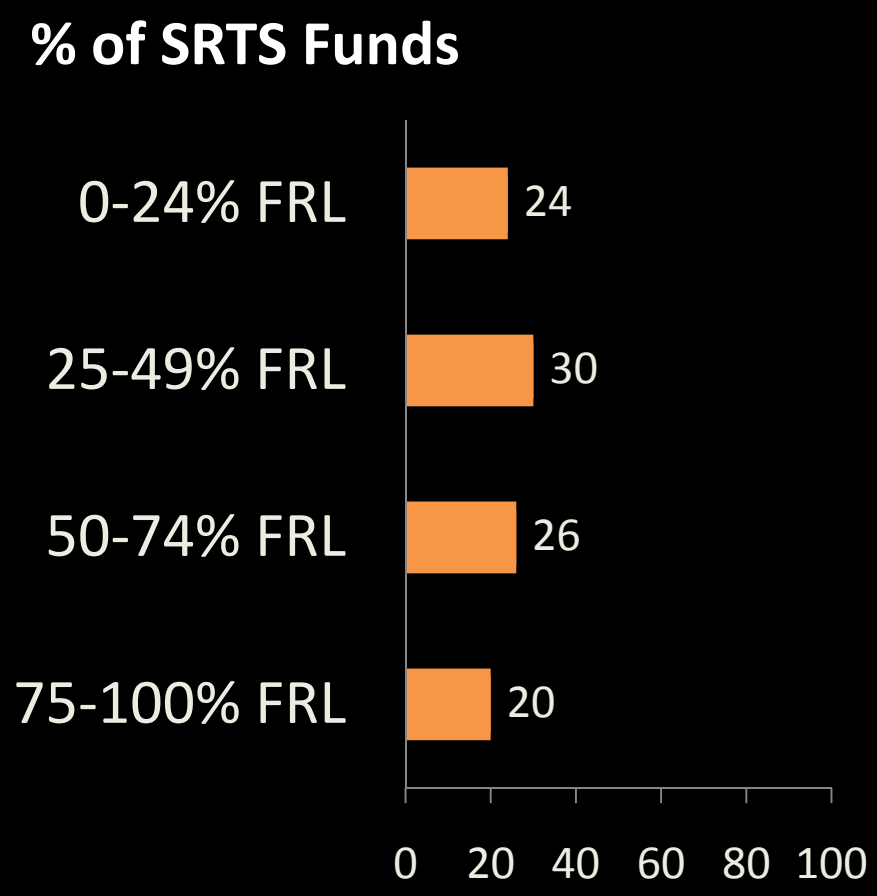


Free or Reduced Price Lunch



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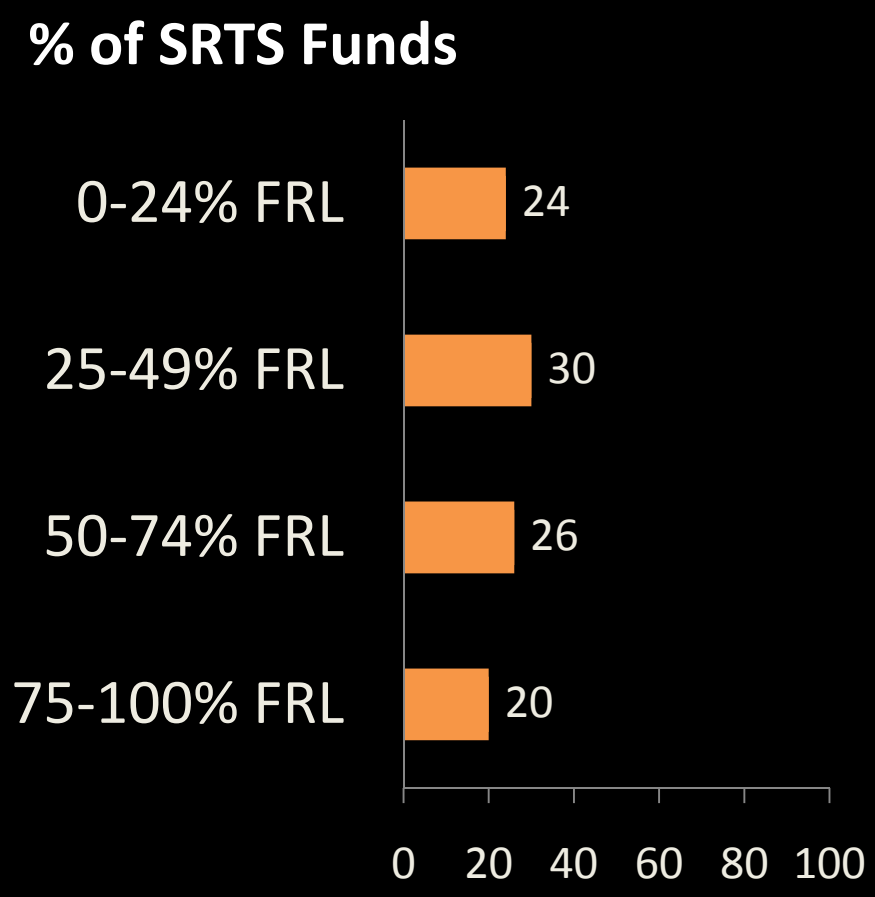

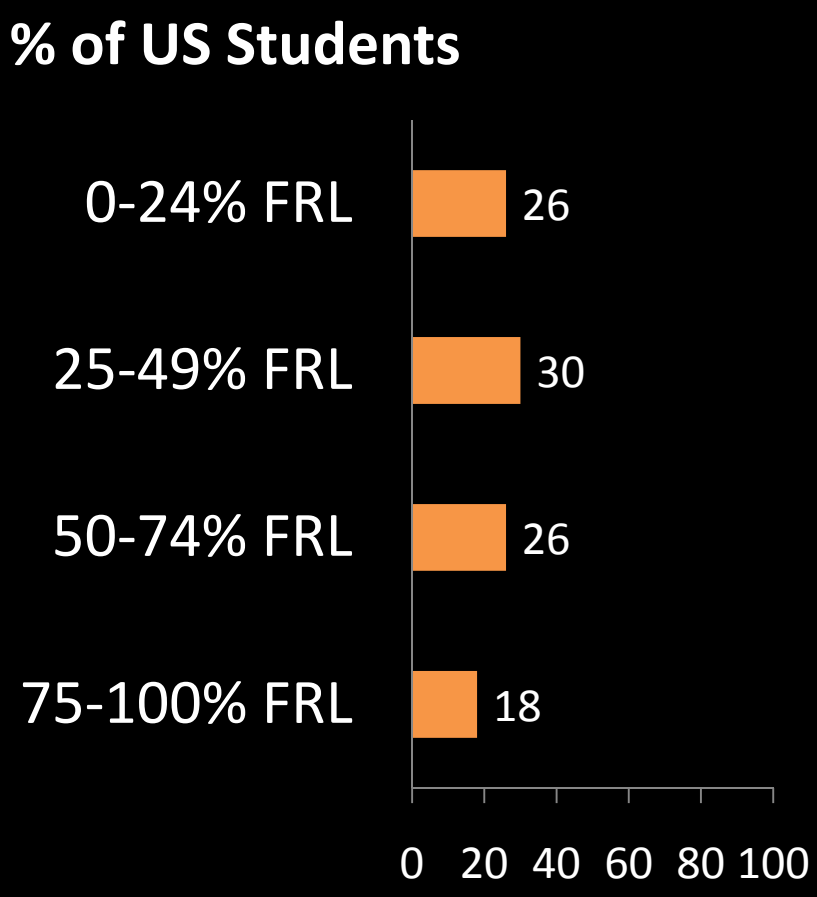

Geographic Distribution Summary

- Need for systematic data collection of schools benefitting from SRTS projects
- No large differences in demographics and neighborhood SES between schools with SRTS projects and those without

Organization Analysis Summary

- Diverse models
- Unified
  - Decisions controlled at state level
  - May not be connected to local needs
- Fragmented
  - Decision makers may not have view of overall expenditures
  - But, may ensure better geographic distribution of projects

Next Steps

- Link organizational and geographic analyses
- Larger evaluation and monitoring data collection needs