

Stargate Governance Board
March 8, 2018
HR Systems Audit
Shelly Landgraf

Background:

The Stargate employees completed a survey (SurveyMonkey) in January 2018. The survey included 26 questions and focus topics were Communication, Programming, Leadership, Retaliation, School Climate, Work Environment, and Adroit. Employees were provided the opportunity to add individual comments to each section. Overall, the rate of response was fairly high with a total of 105 responses. A majority of the employees responded to all the questions. The results from survey did not disaggregate between Classified, Primary, and Secondary. While reviewing the survey, I found it important to disaggregate between the three groups as there were considerable variations between the groups.

In addition to reviewing and disaggregating the survey, twelve (12) employees were interviewed individually. All those interviewed were deemed "leaders" of the school. Questions asked of the employees focused on the leadership ability of Executive Director, Josh Cochran and his influence on decisions, work environment, and culture that potentially impact the school campus.

The information in this report is intended to provide themes derived from the survey and interviews as well as key findings of both strengths and potential areas of focus for the Stargate Governance Board. Through the review of the survey and interviews, other items were brought forward beyond the scope of work agreed upon, but is recommended to address in a timely manner if the matters have not been investigated.

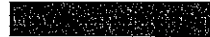
Disaggregation of Survey:

SurveyMonkey provided information as to the number of responses, a breakdown of responses according to 4-point Likert-scale, including N/A as an option. Below is information derived from disaggregating the survey results into three classifications - Classified Employees, Primary Employees, and Secondary Employees. Although the overall survey results are in general positive, it is important for the Stargate Governance Board to understand the scoring as it relates to the breakdown within the staff.

Likert-scales can be viewed to determine "High Satisfaction" and "Low Satisfaction." High Satisfaction is determined to be scores of 80% or greater that respond to either Strongly Agree or Agree. Low Satisfaction is determined by scores 50% or lower to either Disagree or Strongly Disagree. The following table provides specific information as to results within the entire staff responses as well as results within the three employee groups. The table is organized by

highest to lowest overall satisfaction score. The last column identifies the satisfaction score for each employee group.

Highly Satisfaction



XX Inadequate Response Numbers

	Question	Overall Satisfaction Score	Employee Group	Satisfaction Rate
22	I have an adequate number of parent volunteers to assist when needed.	90.6	<i>Classified</i>	XX
			<i>Primary</i>	81.8
			<i>Secondary</i>	97.0
19	I have influence in the decisions that affect my work.	89.7	<i>Classified</i>	76.1
			<i>Primary</i>	88.2
			<i>Secondary</i>	97.6
8	The Stargate Governance Board makes decisions based on what's best for Stargate students and staff.	89.3	<i>Classified</i>	76.1
			<i>Primary</i>	90.9
			<i>Secondary</i>	95.0
18	I feel trusted and respected.	88.1	<i>Classified</i>	70.0
			<i>Primary</i>	90.9
			<i>Secondary</i>	95.0
1	I receive appropriate and timely communication from the administration.	86.3	<i>Classified</i>	80.9
			<i>Primary</i>	75.7
			<i>Secondary</i>	90.9
23	The team lead/department head system is effective.	85.1	<i>Classified</i>	XX
			<i>Primary</i>	81.8

			<i>Secondary</i>	94.6
25	I believe the Adroit program is a positive addition to Stargate's curriculum.	84.3	<i>Classified</i>	87.9
			<i>Primary</i>	81.6
			<i>Secondary</i>	89.5
7	The administration makes decisions based on what's best for Stargate students and staff.	83.8	<i>Classified</i>	61.9
			<i>Primary</i>	84.4
			<i>Secondary</i>	95.0
4	I am familiar with the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP), and I participate in the implementation of its outlined goals.	82.4	<i>Classified</i>	XX
			<i>Primary</i>	78.8
			<i>Secondary</i>	80.5
11	I am comfortable voicing my ideas, suggestions, and concerns.	81.7	<i>Classified</i>	71.4
			<i>Primary</i>	77.4
			<i>Secondary</i>	90.2
12	I feel that the hiring and retention policies are consistently and fairly applied.	81.5	<i>Classified</i>	66.7
			<i>Primary</i>	80.6
			<i>Secondary</i>	90.0
16	I would recommend Stargate to a friend seeking employment	81.0	<i>Classified</i>	95.1
			<i>Primary</i>	80.9
			<i>Secondary</i>	95.1
15	Considering everything, I am satisfied working at Stargate.	80.2	<i>Classified</i>	77.2
			<i>Primary</i>	63.6

			<i>Secondary</i>	95.1
24	The benefits/compensation provided for team lead/department head positions are fair.	78.7	<i>Classified</i>	XX
			<i>Primary</i>	78.2
			<i>Secondary</i>	86.2
20	I feel the amount of work required of me is reasonable.	78.5	<i>Classified</i>	95.0
			<i>Primary</i>	60.6
			<i>Secondary</i>	85.0
26	I understand the purpose and vision of the Adroit program at Stargate.	75.6	<i>Classified</i>	89.5
			<i>Primary</i>	69.7
			<i>Secondary</i>	73.7
3	Stargate has an effective school improvement and long-range planning process.	75.3	<i>Classified</i>	72.7
			<i>Primary</i>	84.3
			<i>Secondary</i>	62.5
2	I have adequate opportunity to collaborate with my peers regarding curriculum and instructional best practices.	75.2	<i>Classified</i>	XX
			<i>Primary</i>	77.1
			<i>Secondary</i>	70.0
10	The administration clearly defines expectations and applies them fairly.	75.0	<i>Classified</i>	61.9
			<i>Primary</i>	67.6
			<i>Secondary</i>	87.8
17	I would recommend Stargate to a family member seeking a school for their gifted children.	75.0	<i>Classified</i>	72.7
			<i>Primary</i>	55.8

			<i>Secondary</i>	92.5
6	I feel the social / emotional curriculum and programs meet the needs of students.	73.3	<i>Classified</i>	64.7
			<i>Primary</i>	66.7
			<i>Secondary</i>	82.5
5	The professional development opportunities offered onsite are an effective use of my time.	68.2	<i>Classified</i>	XX
			<i>Primary</i>	54.8
			<i>Secondary</i>	74.3
9	I feel comfortable with the way Stargate manages and communicates its finances.	67.0	<i>Classified</i>	54.5
			<i>Primary</i>	
			<i>Secondary</i>	92.3
21	I have adequate technological support and access to necessary materials and services to perform my job.	65.9	<i>Classified</i>	95.2
			<i>Primary</i>	
			<i>Secondary</i>	80.0

*Outside of Likert Scale			
13	Do you perceive there to be an environment of retaliation at Stargate?	<i>Classified</i>	No: 75.8
		<i>Primary</i>	No: 90.6
		<i>Secondary</i>	No: 87.1

14	Have you been retaliated against, or witnessed retaliation against others, by any of the following: administrator, colleague, or other?	<i>Classified</i>	No: 76.1
		<i>Primary</i>	No: 87.5
		<i>Secondary</i>	No: 82.5

Summary of Findings:

- Out of 26 questions, staff found 57.7% Highly Satisfied
- Classified defined 23.1% as Highly Satisfied
- Primary defined 38.5% as Highly Satisfied
- Secondary defined 84.6% as Highly Satisfied

The strongest correlation of high satisfaction between all three employee groups were:

#16	I would recommend Stargate to a friend seeking employment
#8	The Stargate Governance Board makes decisions based on what's best for Stargate students and staff.
#19	I have influence in the decisions that affect my work.
#25	I believe the Adroit program is a positive addition to Stargate's curriculum.
#18	I feel trusted and respected.

The largest discrepancies found between employee groups were:

#9	I feel comfortable with the way Stargate manages and communicates its finances.
#17	I would recommend Stargate to a family member seeking a school for their gifted children.
#20	I feel the amount of work required of me is reasonable.
#7	The administration makes decisions based on what's best for Stargate students and staff.
#15	Considering everything, I am satisfied working at Stargate.

#10	The administration clearly defines expectations and applies them fairly.
#18	I feel trusted and respected.

Individual Interviews:

Those employees interviewed responded to questions focused on the following areas, not in priority order - input to decisions being made, day-to-day interaction with Josh Cochran, description of Josh Cochran's leadership style, level of functionality of working environment, how fiscal decisions are made, fidelity of human resource policies and practices, best aspect of Stargate, and areas that need to be addressed. The interviews were based on the premise of focusing on the non-instructional side of the campus.

Key Findings - Strengths:

1. Employees were asked various items as to their sense of Josh having best interests in Stargates success. Such prompts included, "heart in the right place," Josh has been the vision of the school for a long time," "Josh wants Stargate to always be successful."
2. Those interviewed were in agreement with employees surveyed as to the support of the Governance Board. Interviewed employees discussed the struggles of previous and past boards, believing that the current board is in general, making the right decisions.
3. Those that support Josh, believe in his passion for Stargate and believe that the K-12 campus or Adroit Program would not have come to fruition without his vision and leadership. Sentiments towards Josh's leadership is also echoed in the survey comments.
4. All but three individuals acknowledged the internal struggle between employees (i.e., Josh/some staff, "inner circle," veterans/new employees, and "friends of Josh." With the acknowledgement of the conflict, most were hopeful solutions could be found.
5. Rob Cable is supported by classified and certified employees. Prompts such as, "...even though people believe Rob got his job because of his friendship with Josh, they still believe he is doing a good job," "I respect the leadership Rob demonstrates." The support of Rob is also echoed in comments provided in the survey.
6. All those interviewed maintained that the students of Stargate were the primary reason for their satisfaction working at the school. Many have a personal connection to the school prior to being employed by Stargate and believe in the vision and mission of the school.

Key Findings - Area of Improvements:

1. Josh Cochran was asked to describe his leadership style and he used the term, "distributive." The same question was asked of those interviewed and terms such as, "shoot off the hip," "immature," "immediate decisions," "makes decisions by the seat of his pants," "will always default to Josh," "Josh is very dynamic, great presentation, fun to

be around, but has instilled fear in the office," were used. Even those that support Josh, in one respect or another, at times struggle with exactly what his role is in the school setting.

2. Those interviewed as well as various responses from the employees through the survey, question the validity of the "Leadership Pipeline." Many view the pipeline as Josh Cochran handpicking his "inner circle." Through the interviews as well as responses in the survey, it appears that employees believed the concept was a good idea, but it was not implemented appropriately. From the interviews as well as the comments in the survey, Missy Hischke appears to be the one in question most frequently. Stephanie Blamires also is mentioned as to the validity of the concept. One could make a correlation between the lower satisfaction rate of Missy and Stephanie (predominately lower professional development scores in elementary compared to high school) throughout the survey attributed to the question as to their hiring from the Leadership Pipeline.
3. Those on the operational side of the school, question Josh's ability to manage the campus beyond the principal role. Again, all believe Josh is very passionate about Stargate, but see weakness and lack of learning a new role as Executive Director. With the exception of one, the operational staff struggles with their internal conflict of "loving Josh as a human being," but believing and seeing actions that question his ability to run Stargate in a productive manner.
4. The tension between Josh Cochran and Deirdre Carlile is greatly impacting the operations of the school. The decision and/or actions of Josh and Deirdre not to interact is not healthy and the discomfort in the administrative offices is quite intense. In any business, it is vital to the success of an organization that human resources in an integral part of the leadership team. It is more credible than not, that Josh is making decisions that do not adhere to compliance and/or best practices of human resources.
5. Those that are not in support of Josh and his ability to be successful expressed terms of "bully," "fear," "don't feel heard," "hard to disagree with," "am not included in decisions that impact my program," and "observed Josh yelling."
6. There is a belief among school leadership that "only a few veteran teachers," and a "small group of parents" are causing the tension as it pertains to Josh's success. When I asked Josh about his observation of an internal division of support with his leadership, he believes there is "no rift" and that the main conflict is the teacher salary step increase. He also believes that adding assistant principals to the elementary and secondary schools next year will help support the teachers. The disconnect of understanding the dynamics of the internal strife within the school is a concern.

Recommendations:

1. A job description for Executive Director should be created and shared with the Stargate staff. It is advised that the Board take the lead of the job description and the role they expect the Executive Director to take as it pertains to day to day responsibilities within the schools.

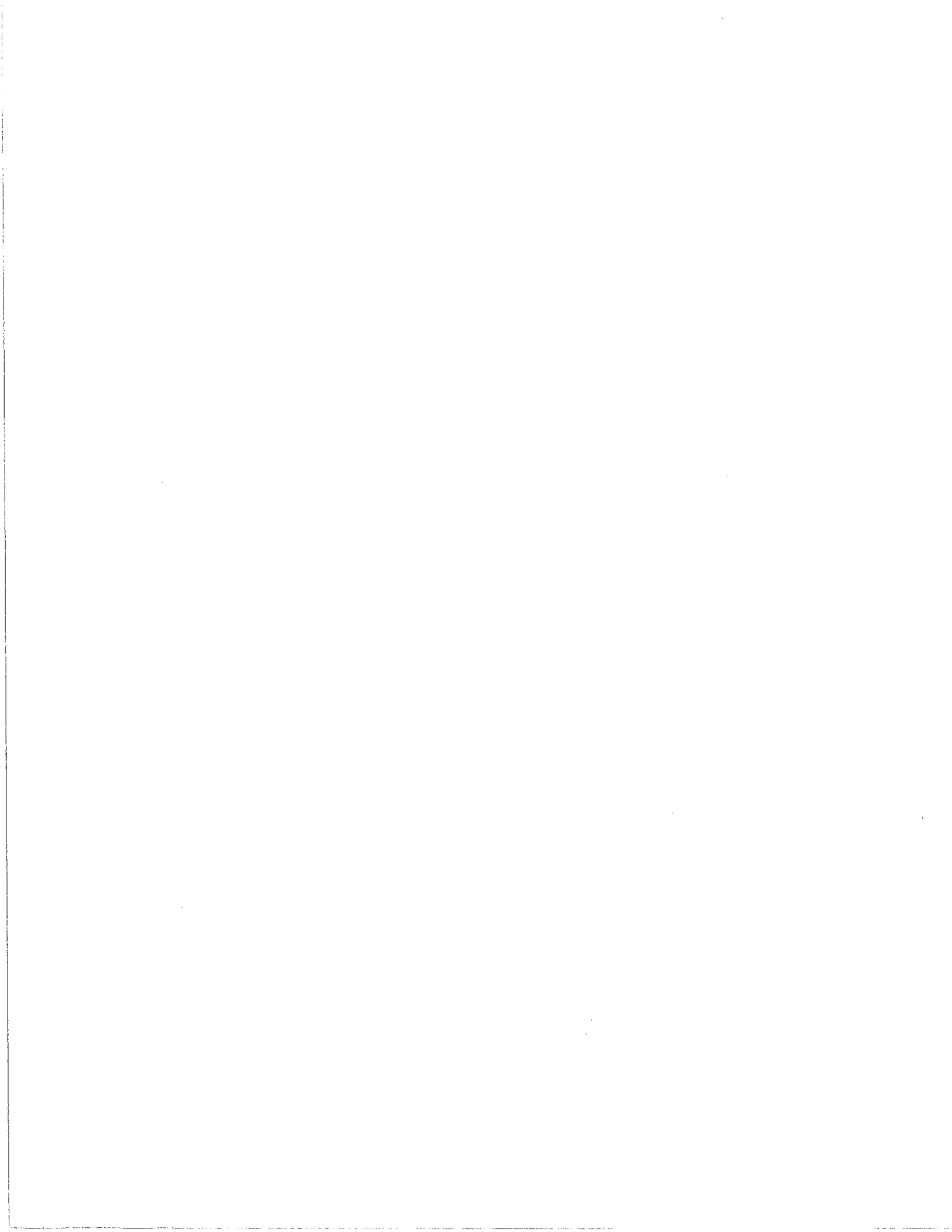
2. The non-instructional/central office of Stargate needs support in the creation of a healthy working environment.
3. Conflict resolution/mediation is recommended between Josh Cochran and Deirdre Carlile.
4. The campus has grown extremely fast over the past few years. Comments in the survey and interviews suggest that the staff needs support in understanding and adapting to the the change/feel of Stargate.

Recommendations Out of the Scope of Work: Specific concerns brought to my attention during interviews are presented below. Concerns were not addressed or investigated as they were outside of the scope of the work agreed upon. However, the potential seriousness of the allegations, warrant notice and recommendation to the Stargate Governance Board to determine their credibility and potential action to be taken.

1. Allegation: Josh Cochran directed Alex King to "get rid of documentation (student behavior logs) for all 2016-17 in light of OCR investigation.
2. Allegation: Potential inappropriate hiring practices. Individuals hired outside of the salary schedule as well as additional compensation added to particular employees.
3. Allegation: Falsifying CDE Submission information to Adams 12 Human Resource Department in regards to certified staff member being deemed as "in-field" qualified in accordance to ESSA requirements.
4. Allegation: Sexual harassment complaint filed by employee. It is unclear as to if there was conclusion and communication to the employee of the findings.

I am happy to discuss the report and conclusions with the Stargate Governance Board.

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STARGATE SCHOOL

Staff Satisfaction Survey

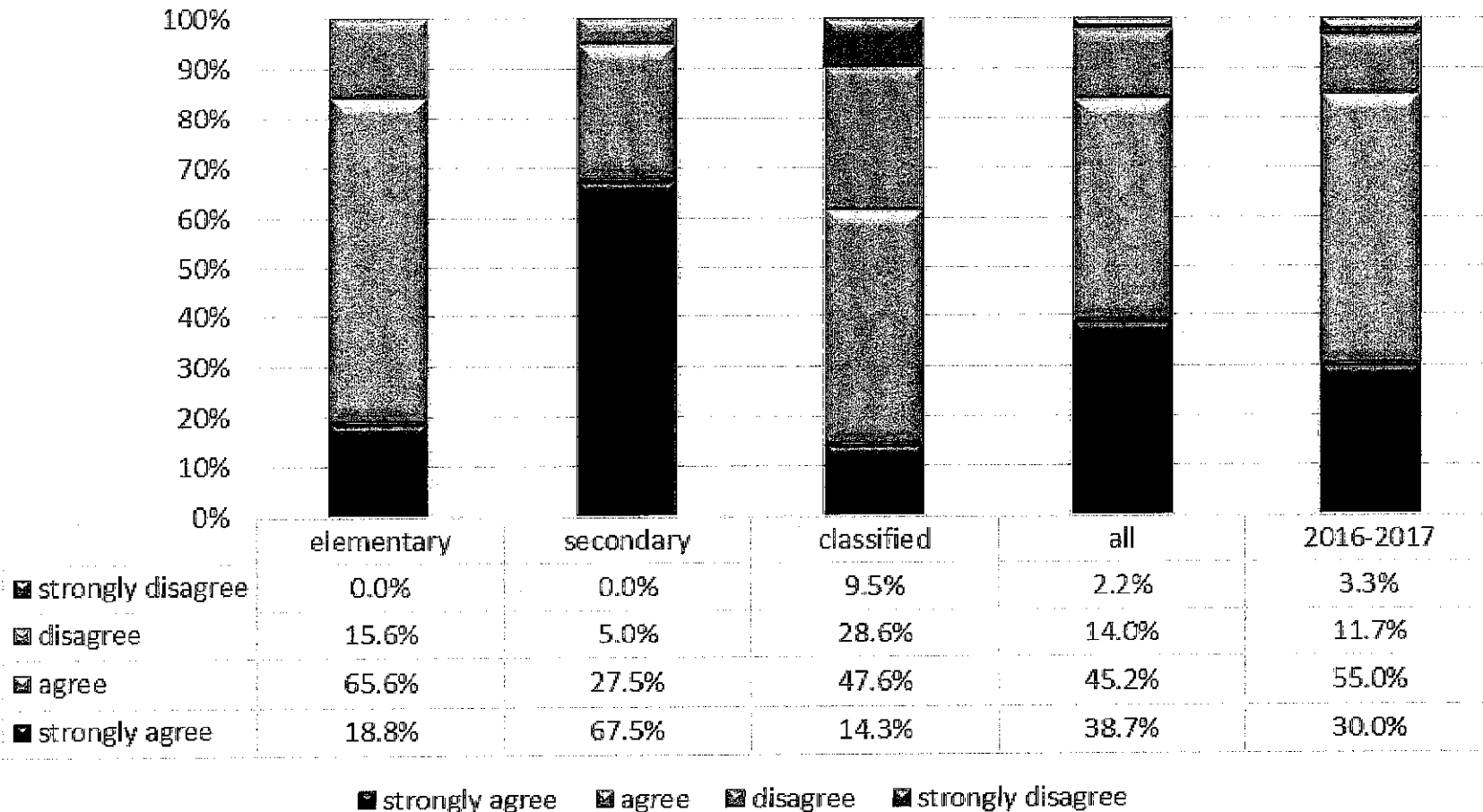
2017-2018 school year

Numerical results from 105* respondents

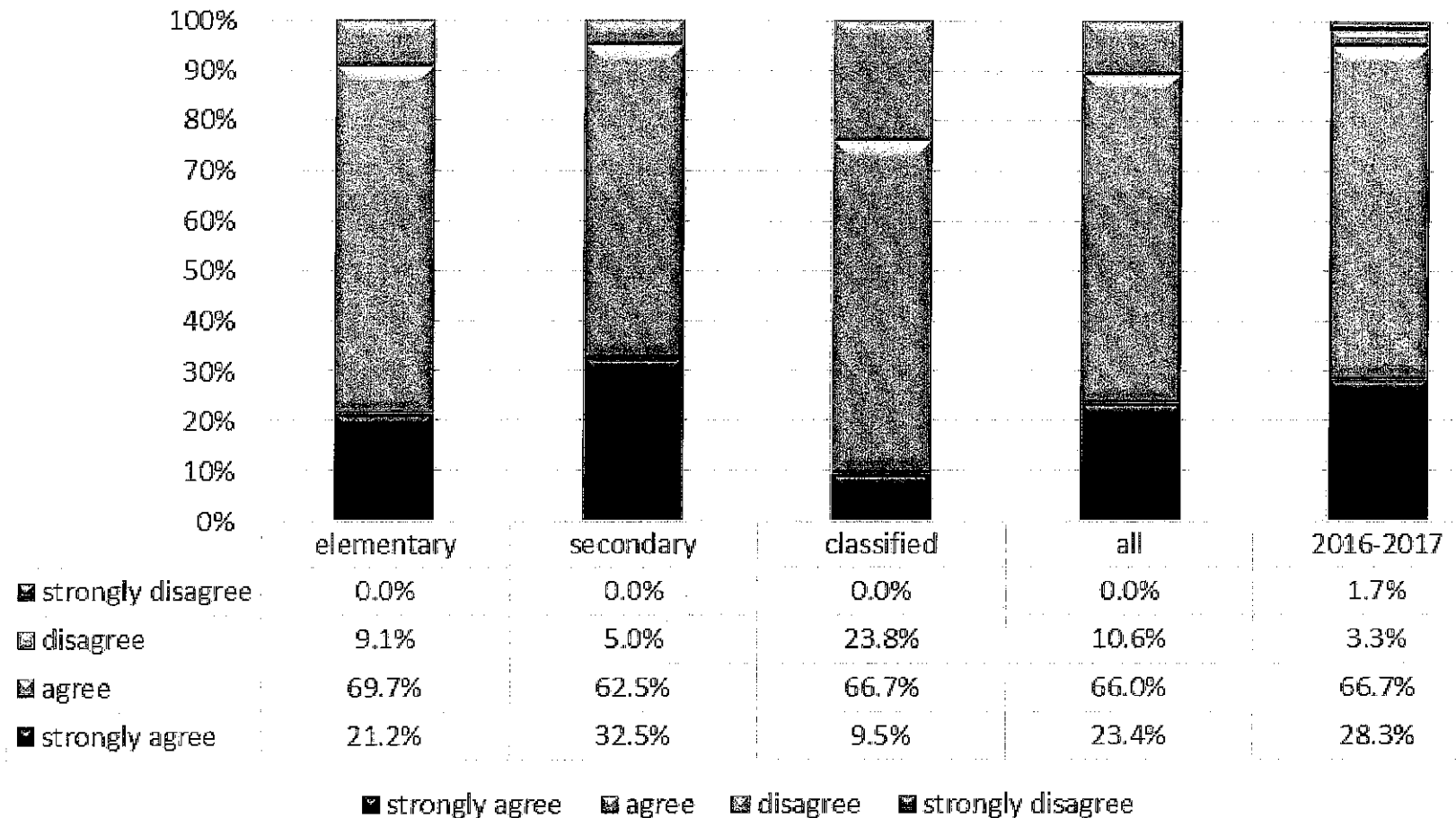
Written results are compiled separately

*40 primary certified staff, 43 secondary certified staff, 22 classified staff

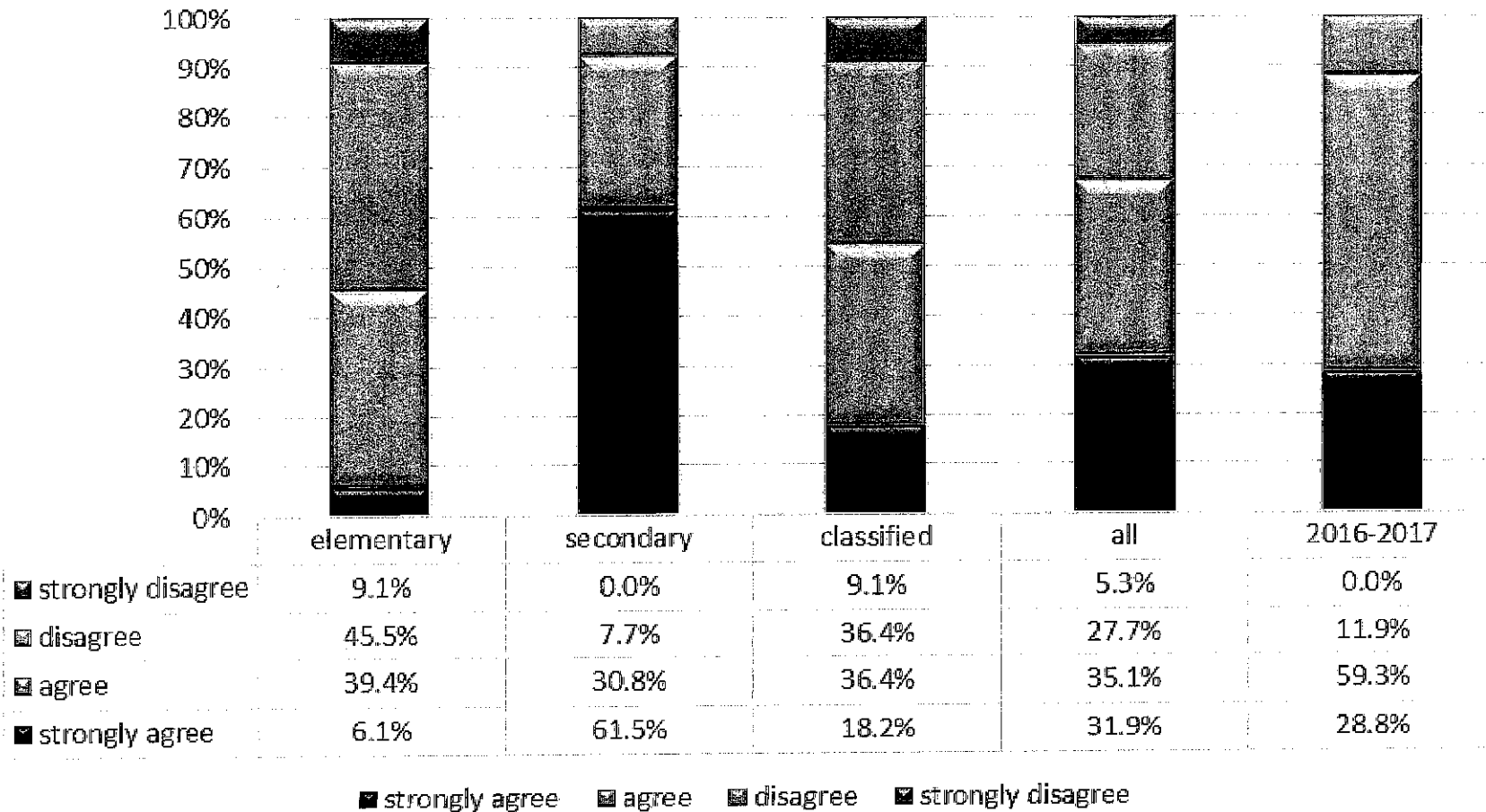
The administration makes decisions based on what's best for Stargate students and staff



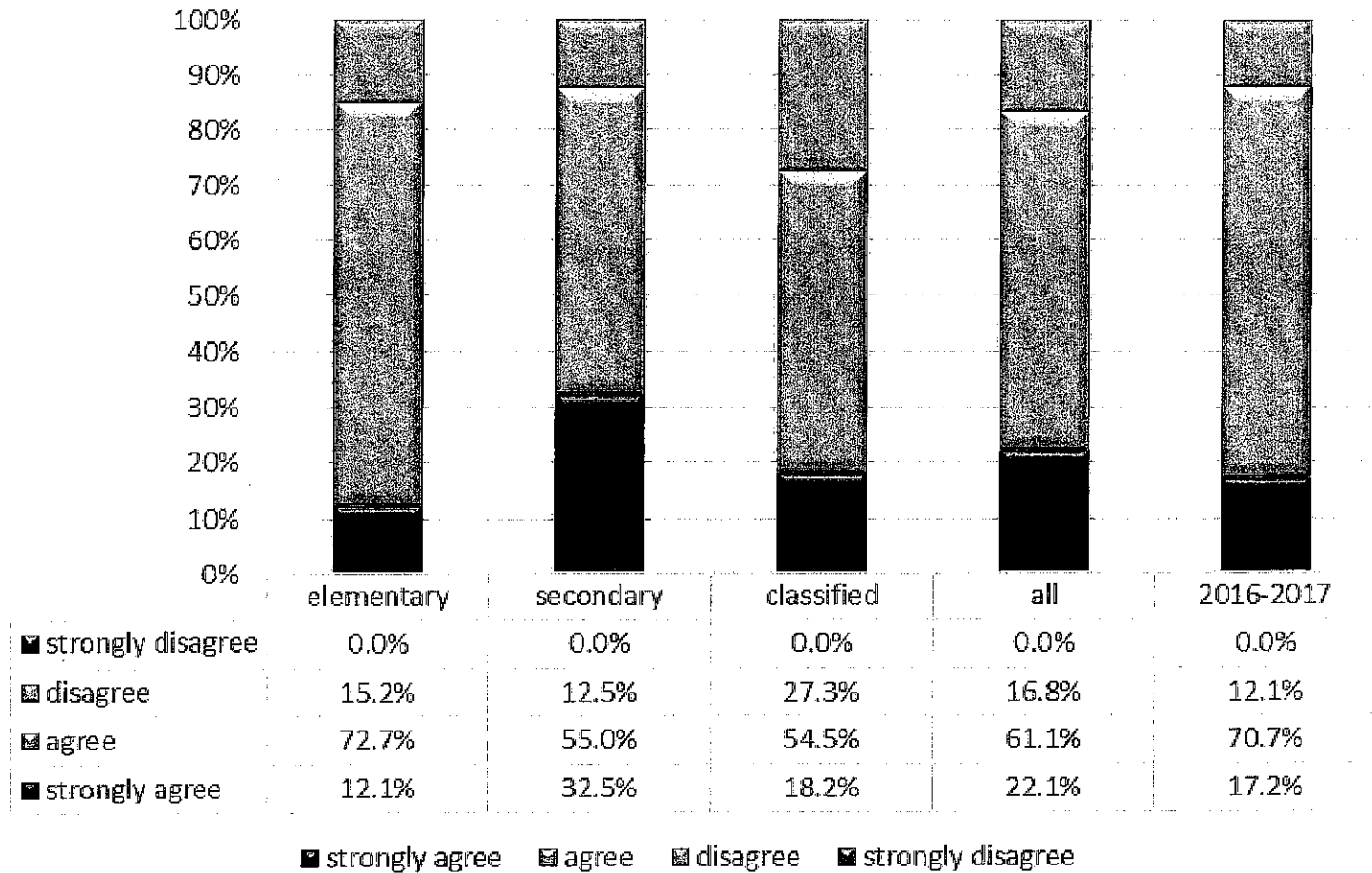
The Governance Board makes decisions based on what's best for Stargate students and staff



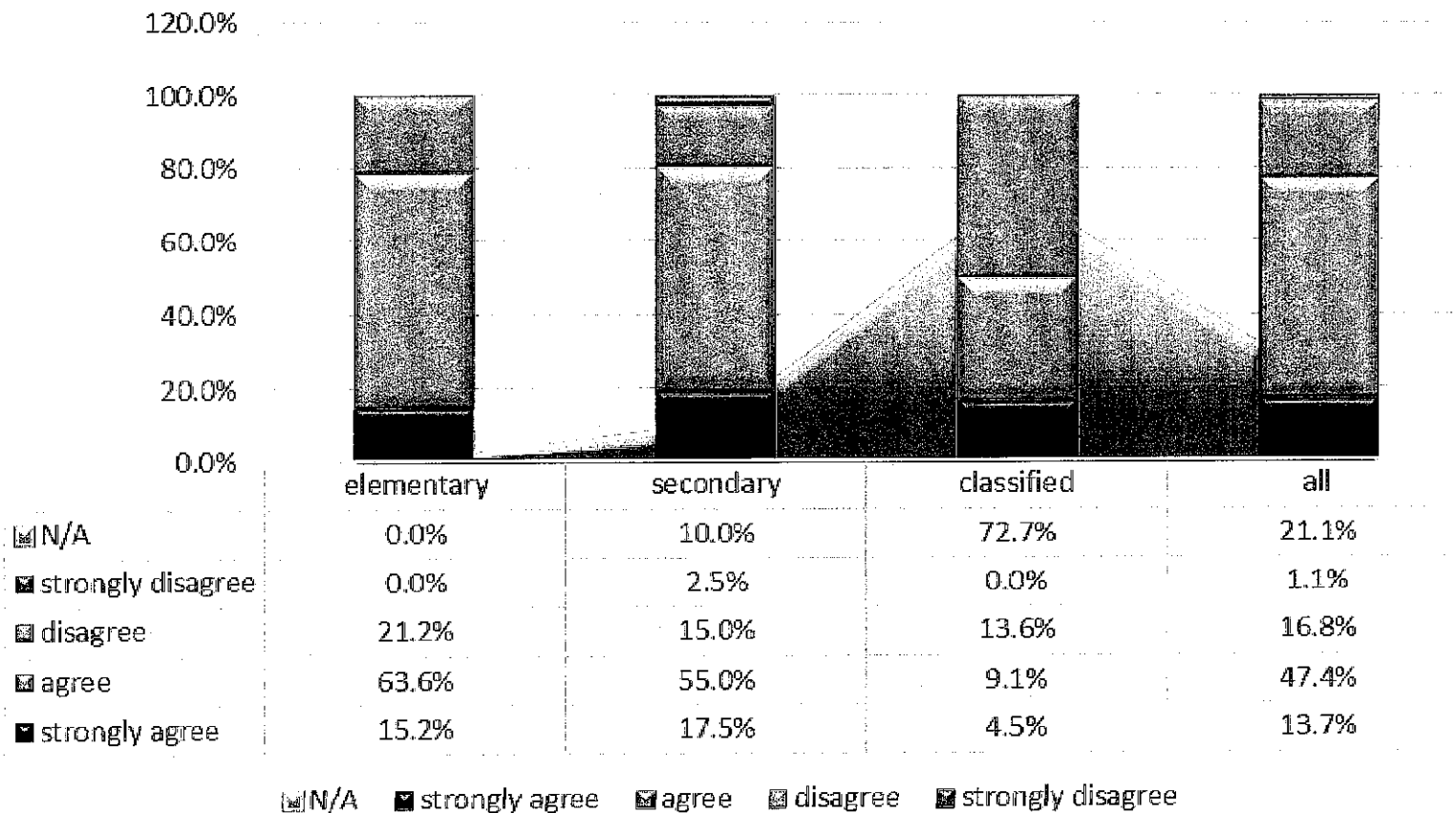
I feel comfortable with the way Stargate manages and communicates its finances



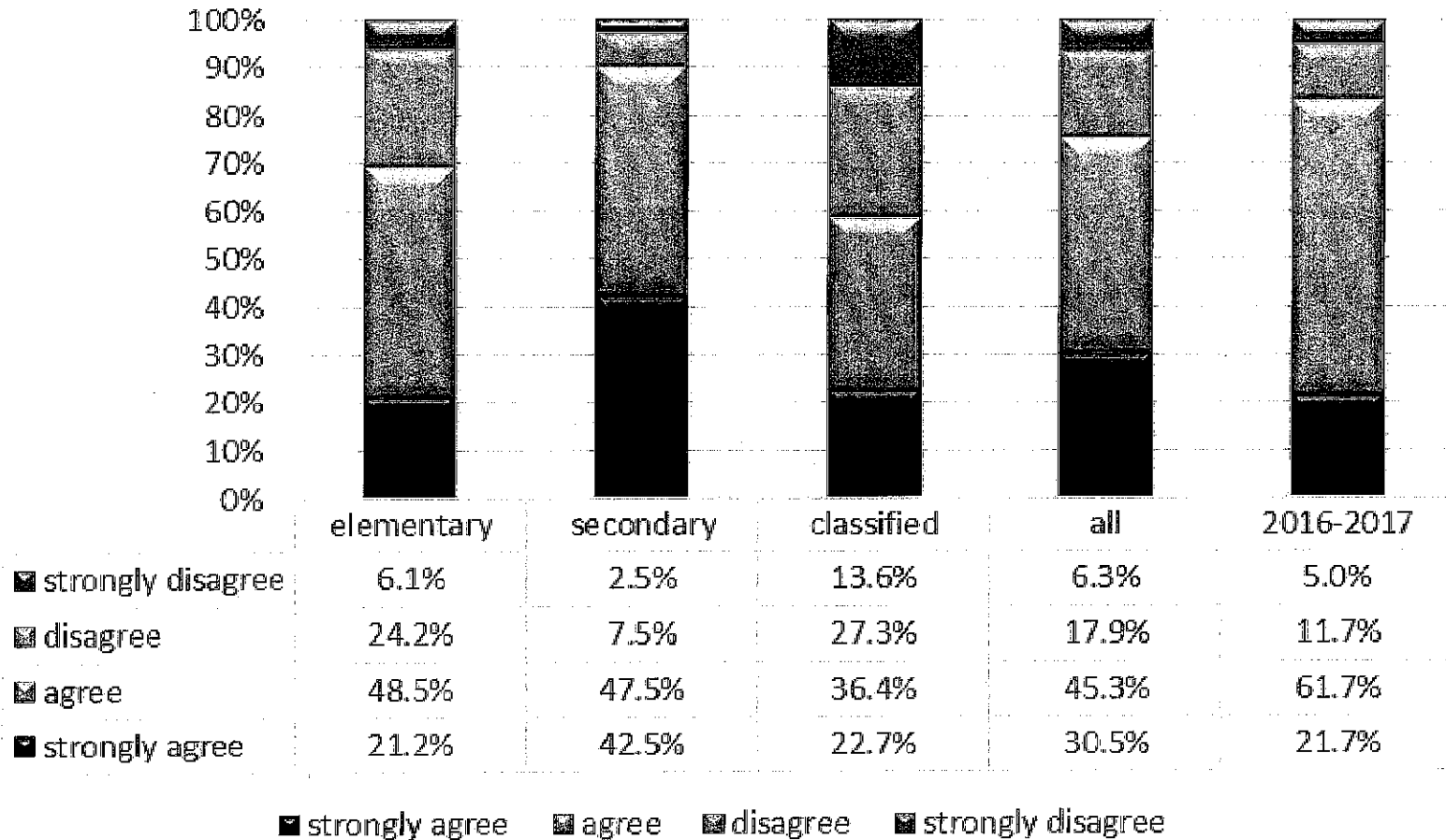
Stargate has an effective school improvement and long-range planning process



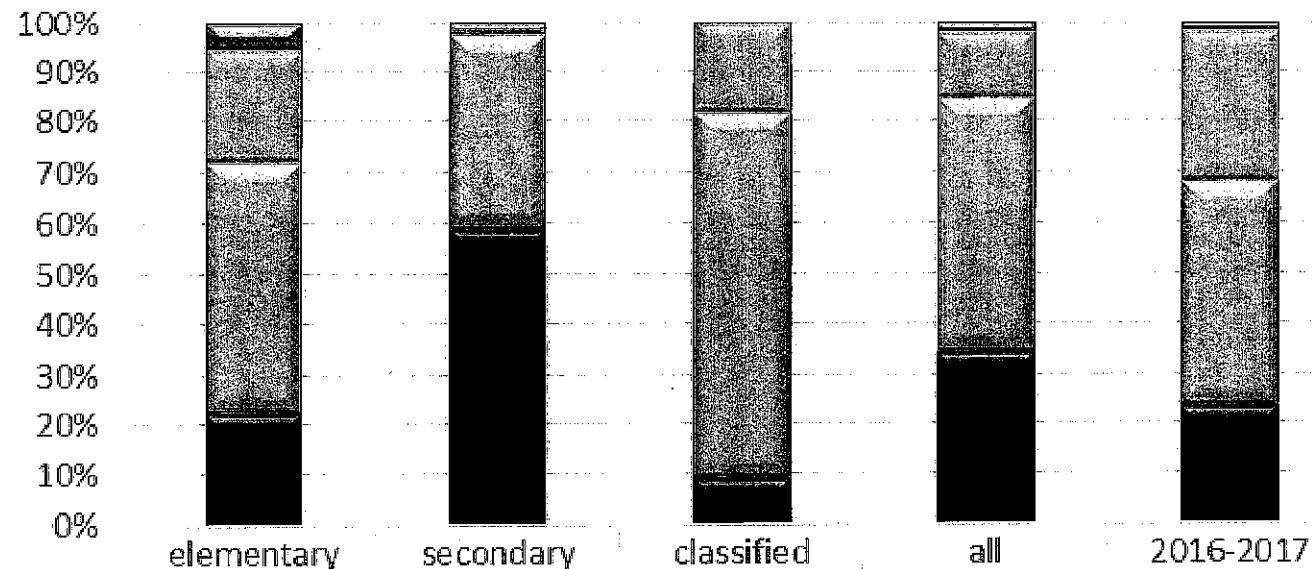
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The administration clearly defines expectations and applies them fairly



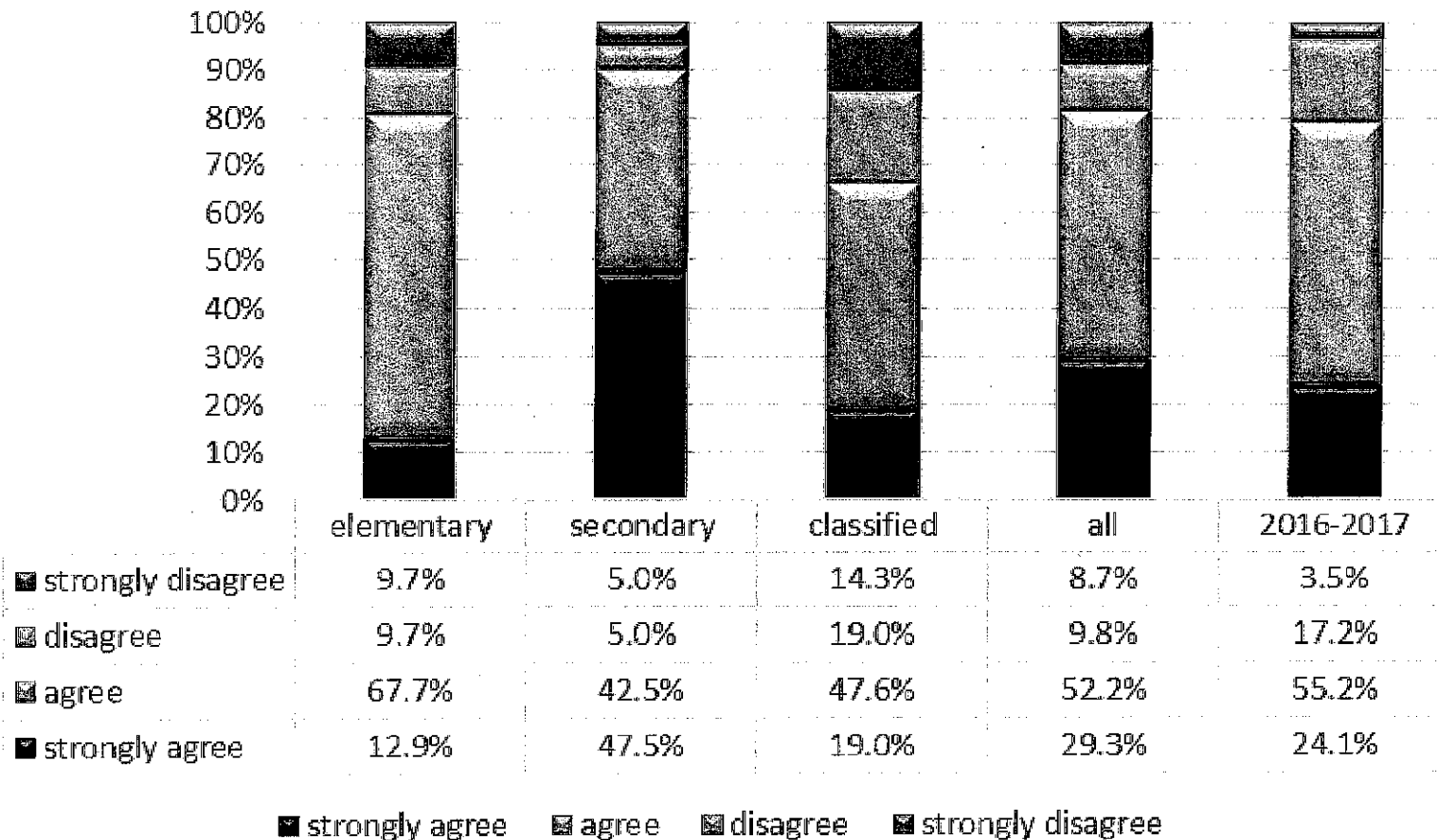
I receive appropriate and timely communication from the administration



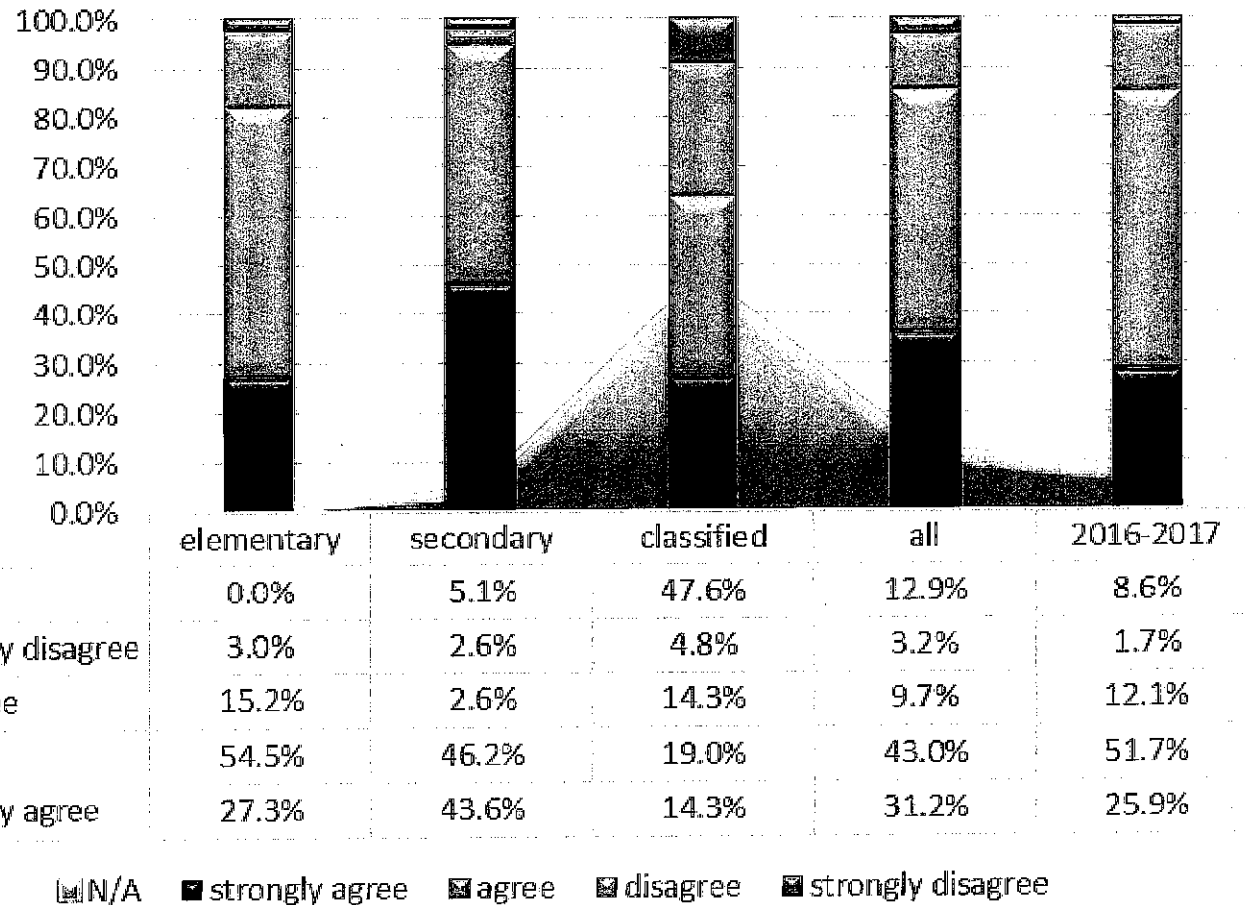
- strongly disagree
- disagree
- agree
- strongly agree

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

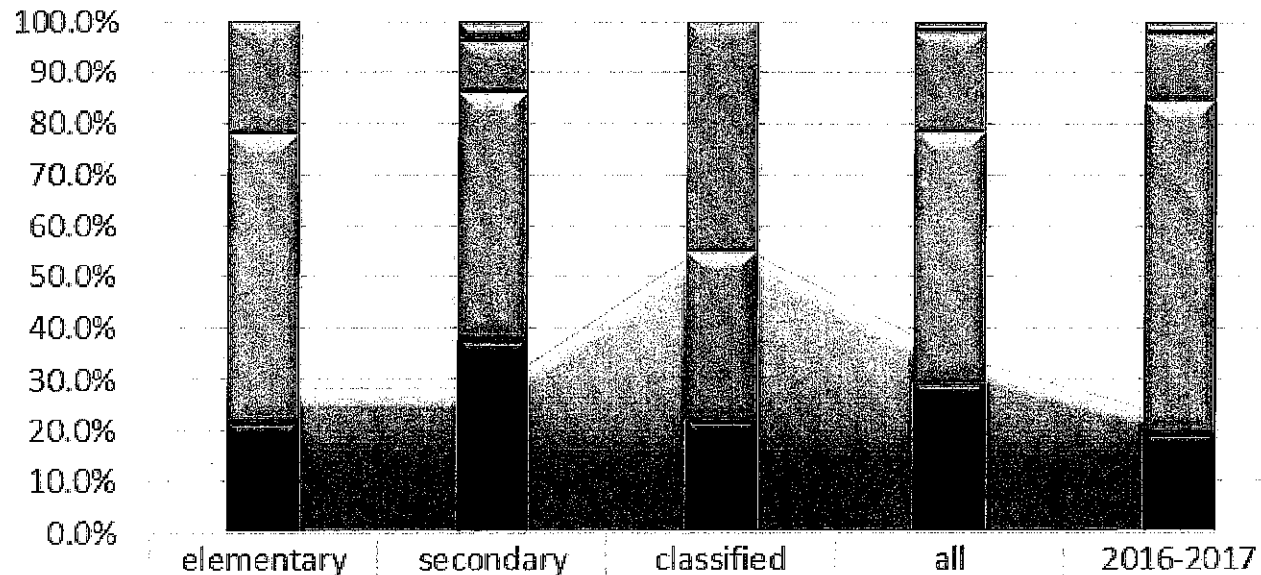
I feel the hiring and retention policies are consistently and fairly applied



The team lead/department head system is effective



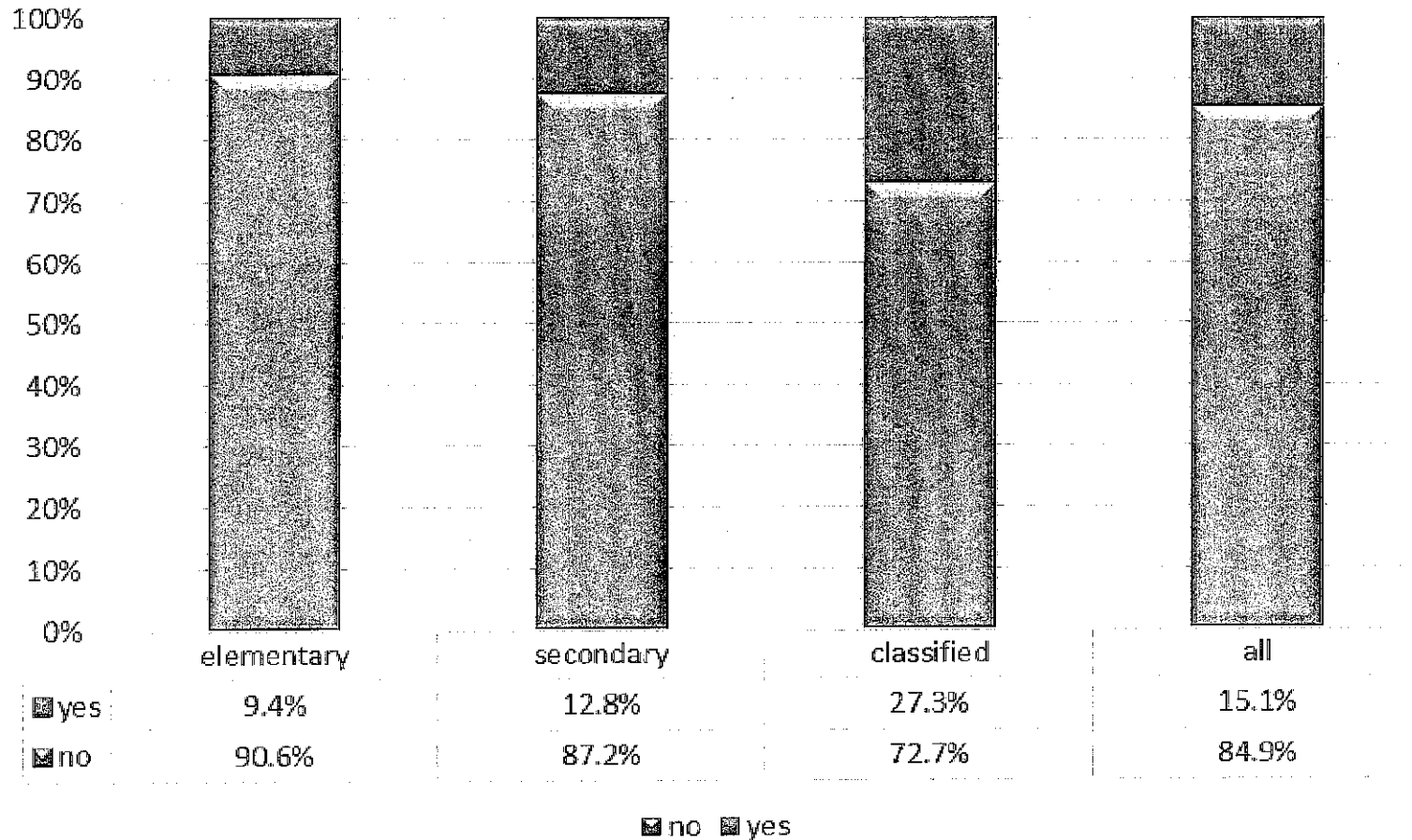
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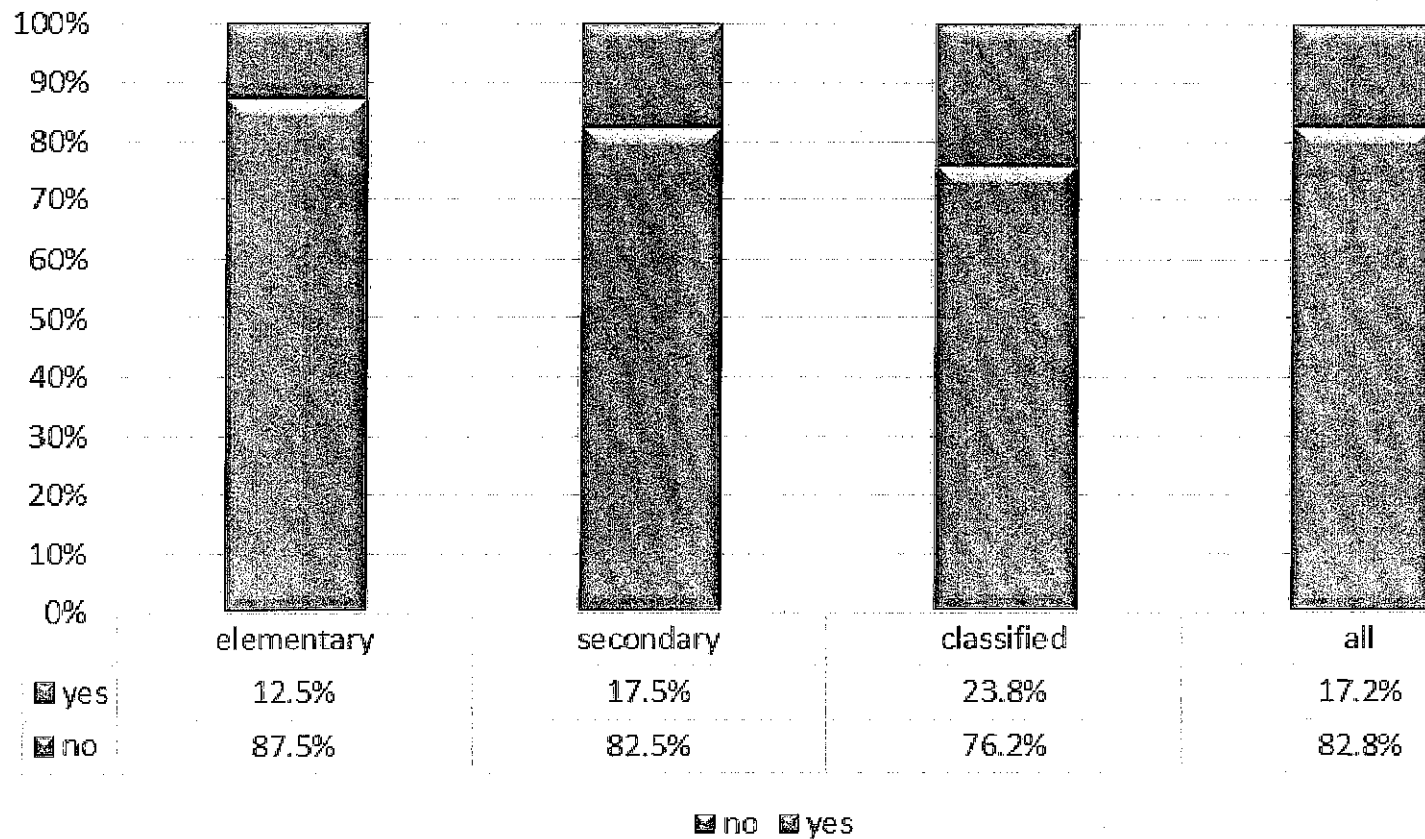
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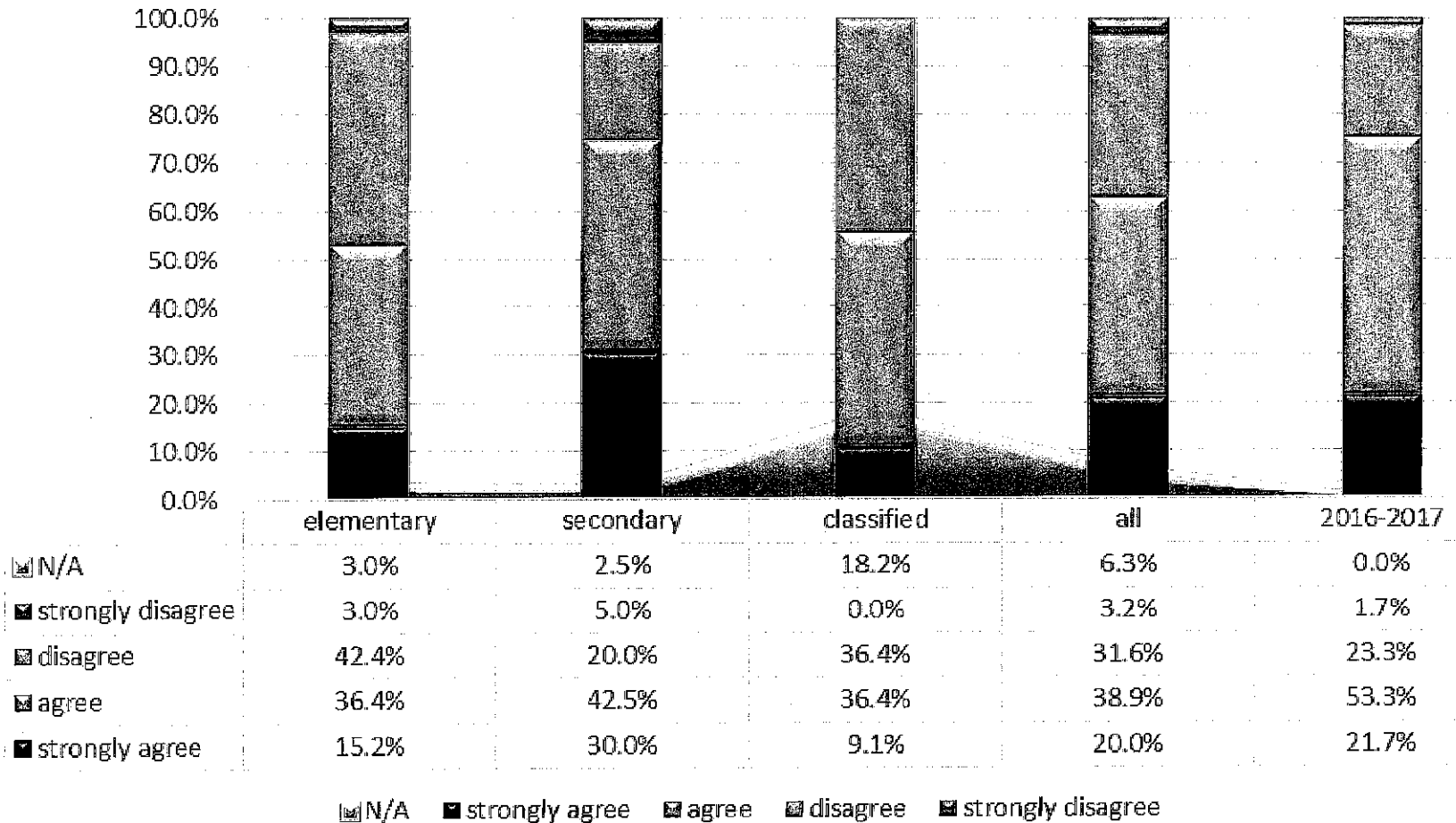
Do you perceive there to be an environment of retaliation at Stargate?



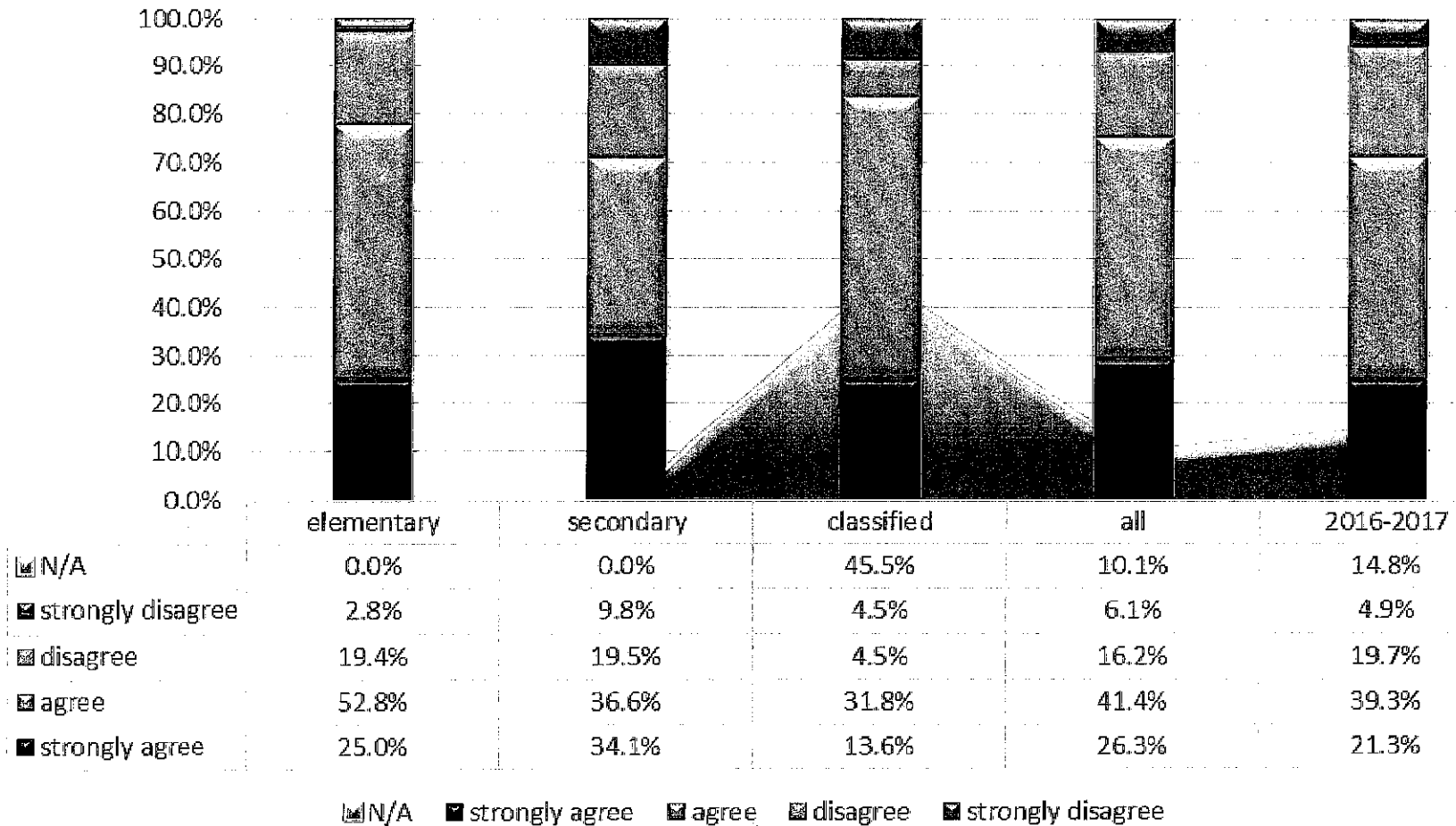
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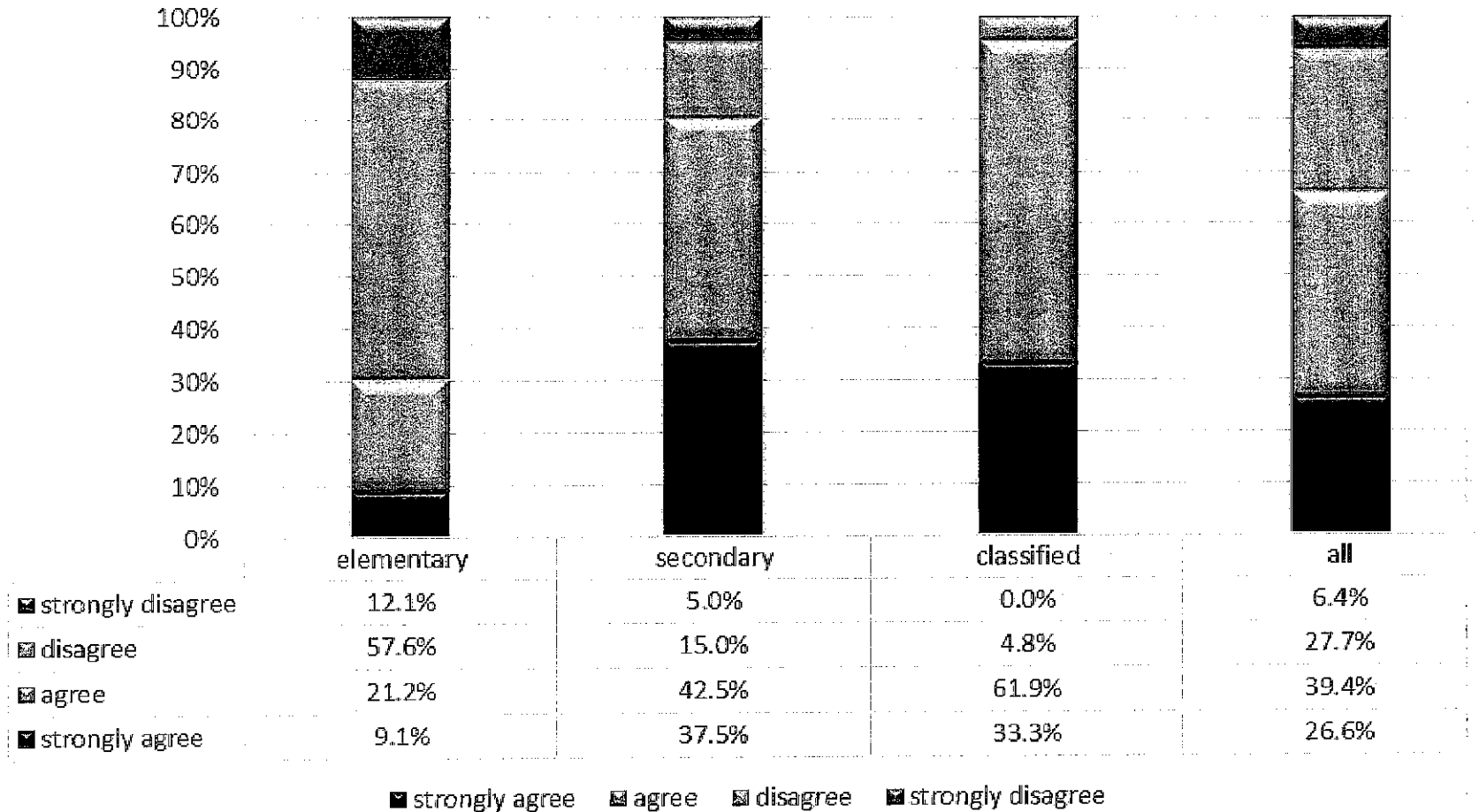
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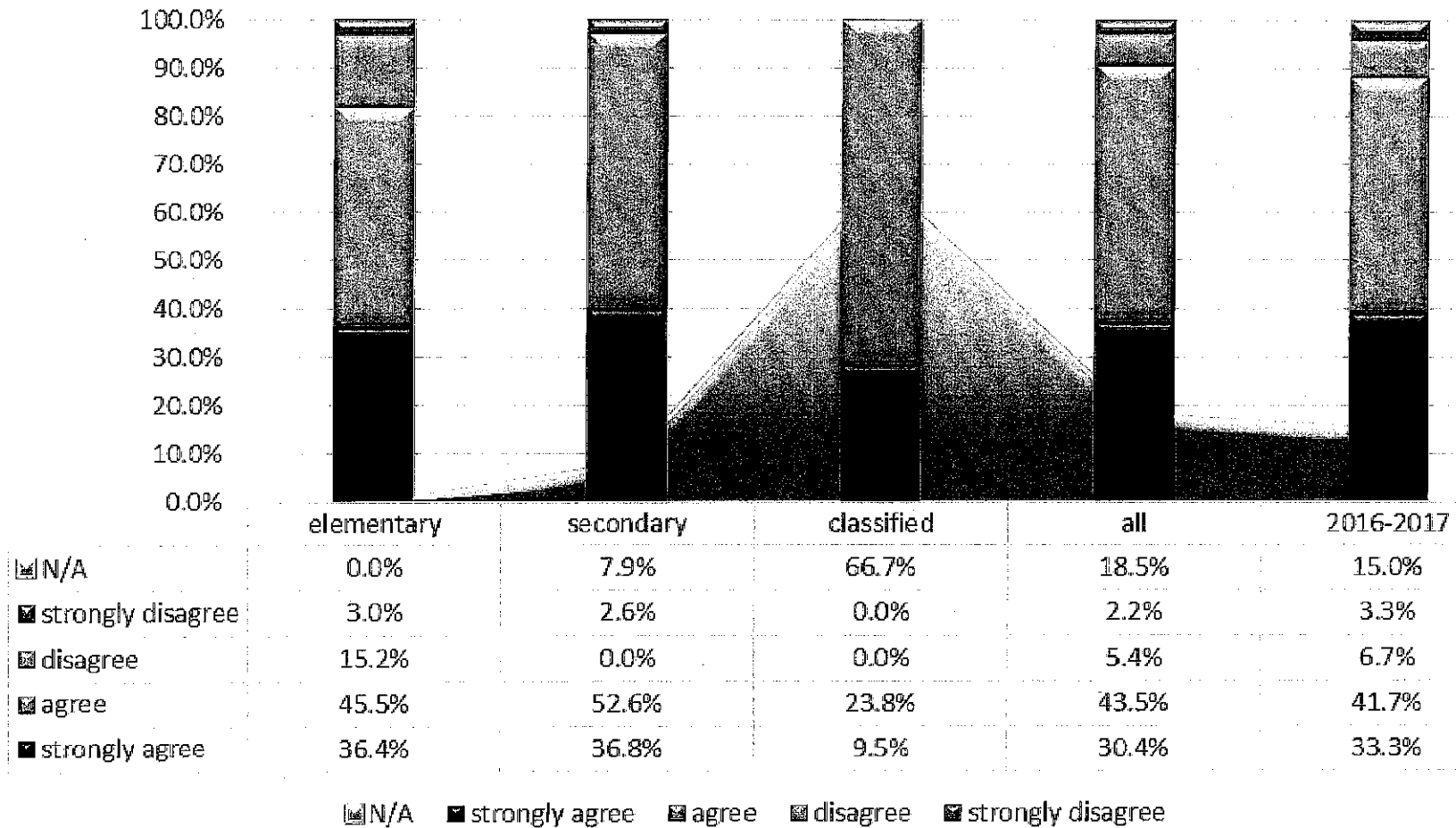
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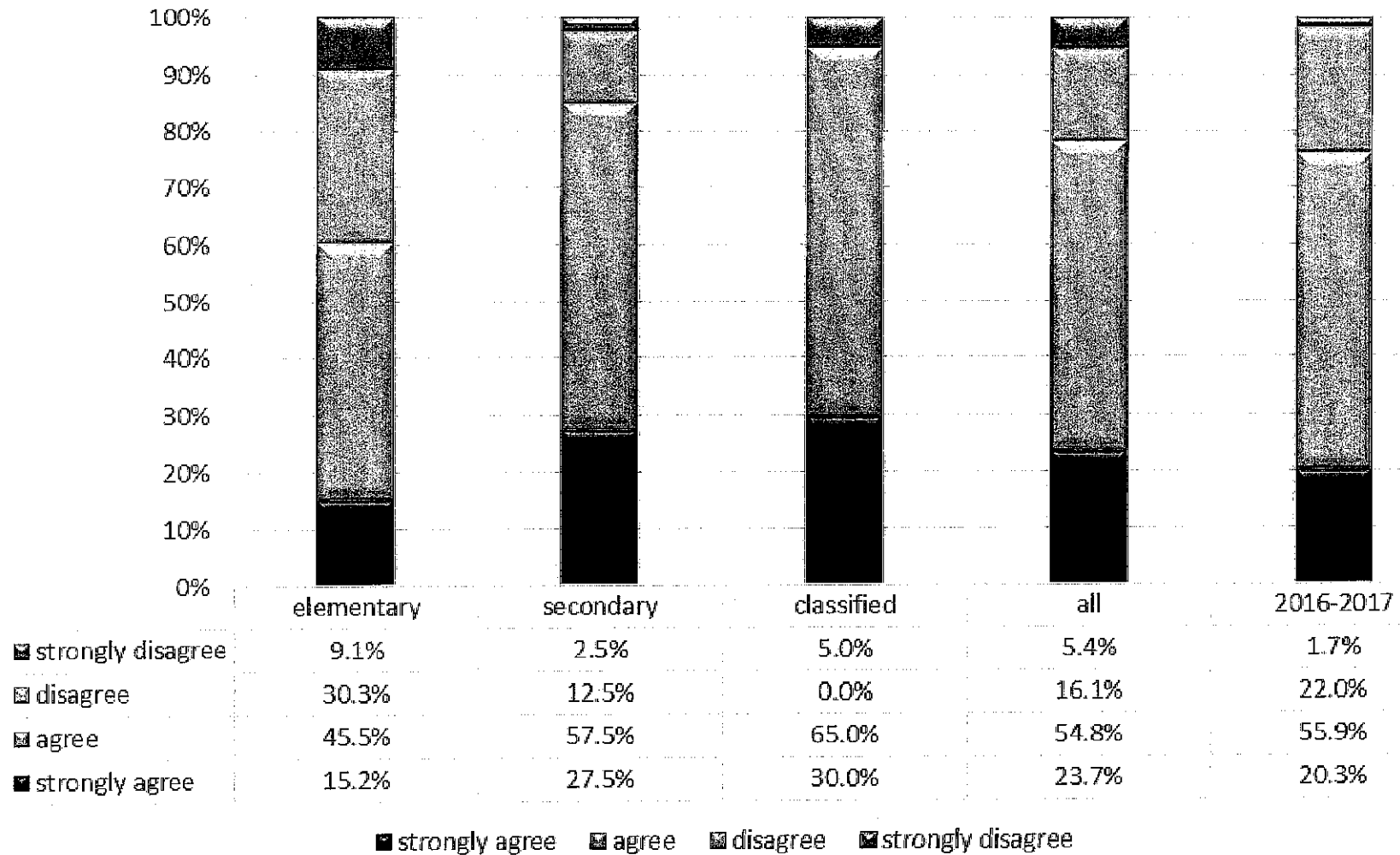
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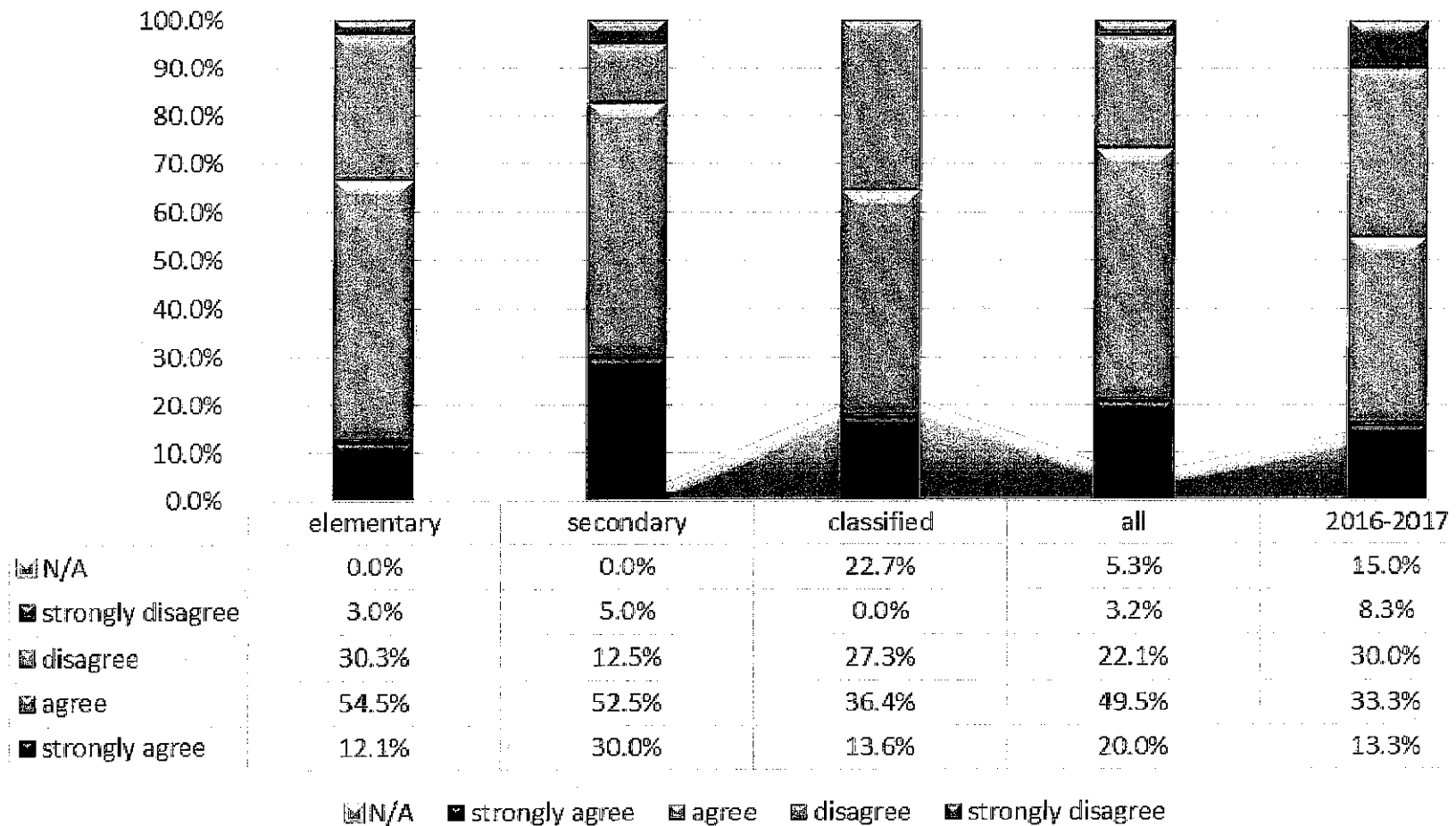
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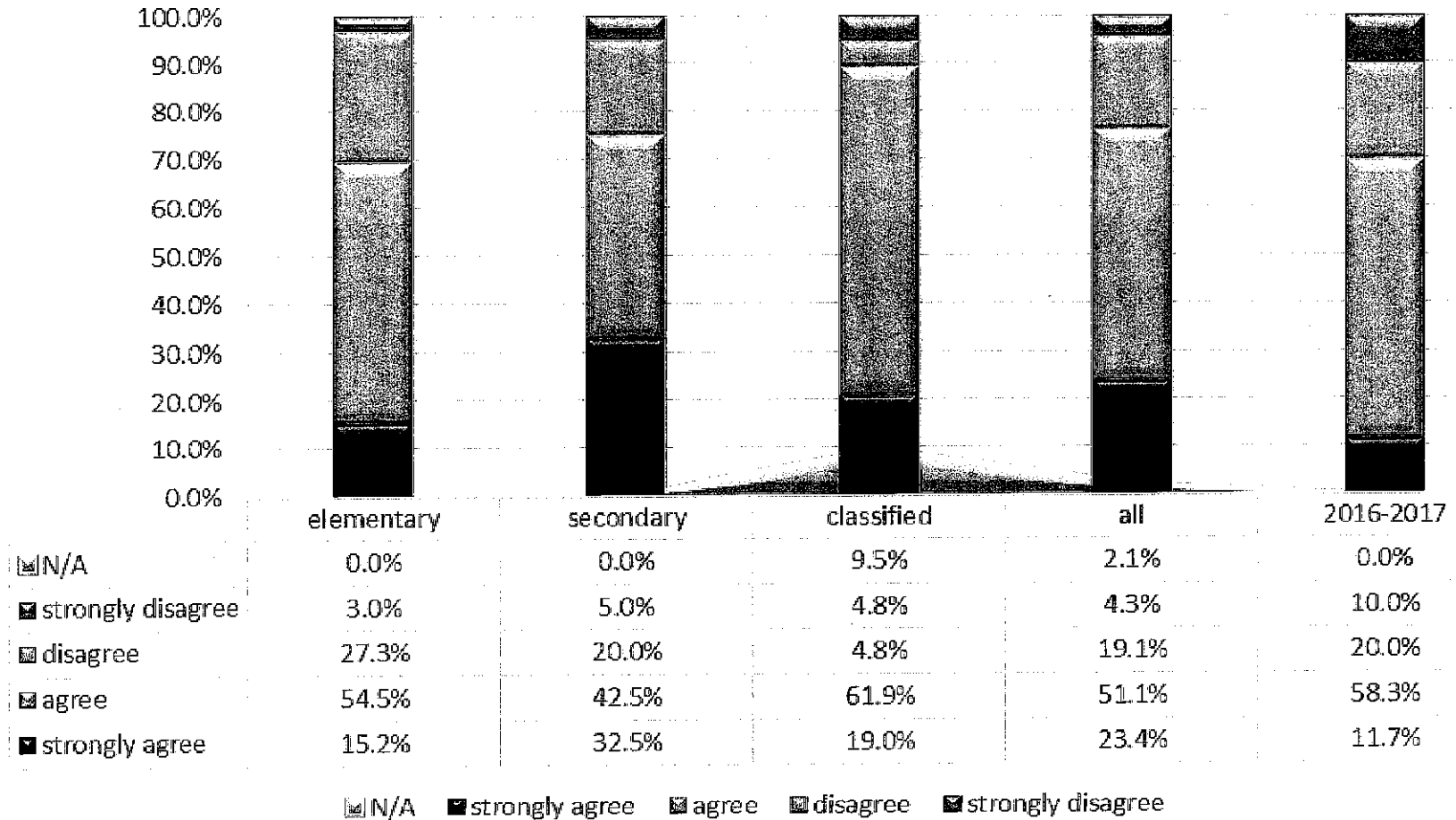
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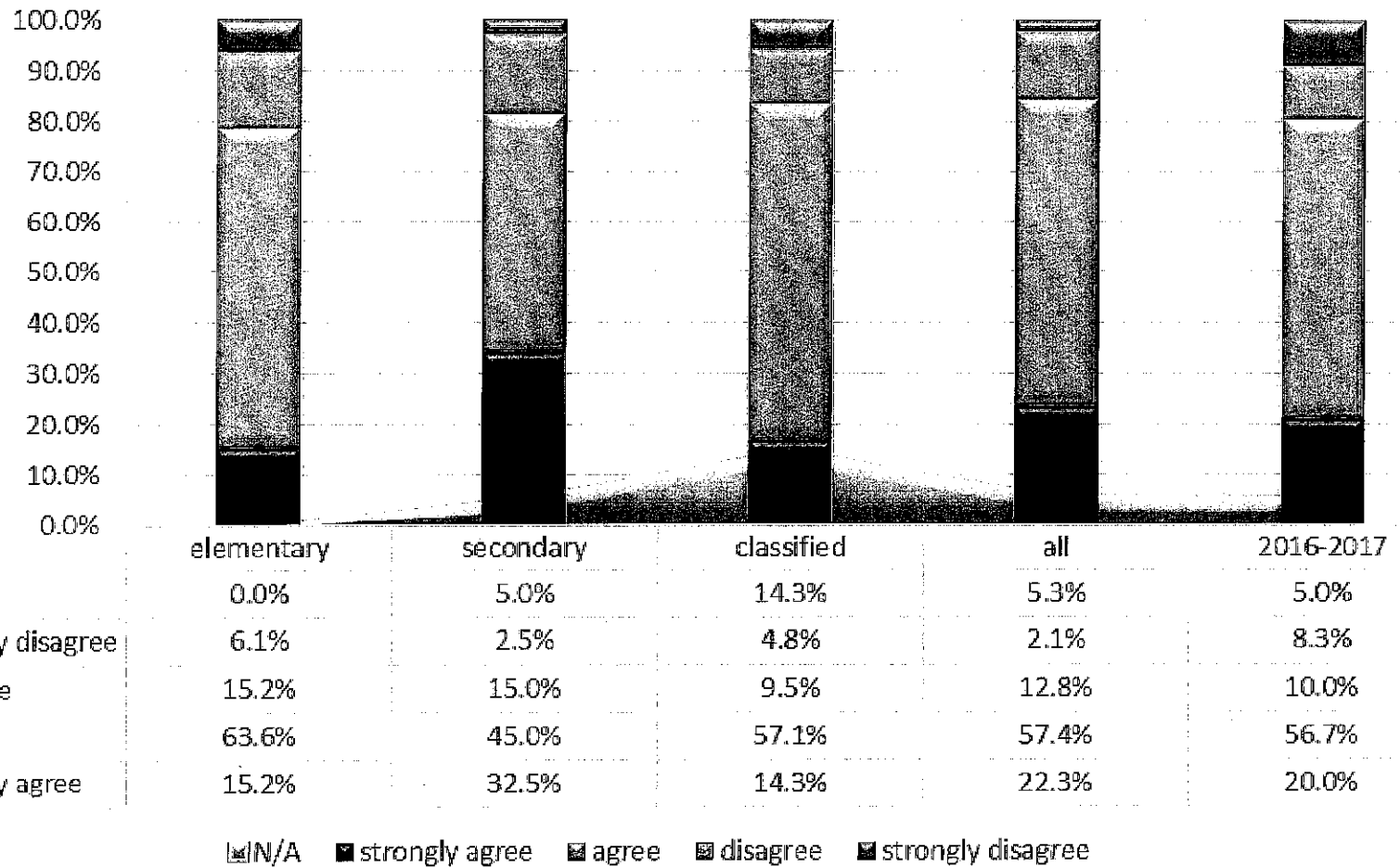
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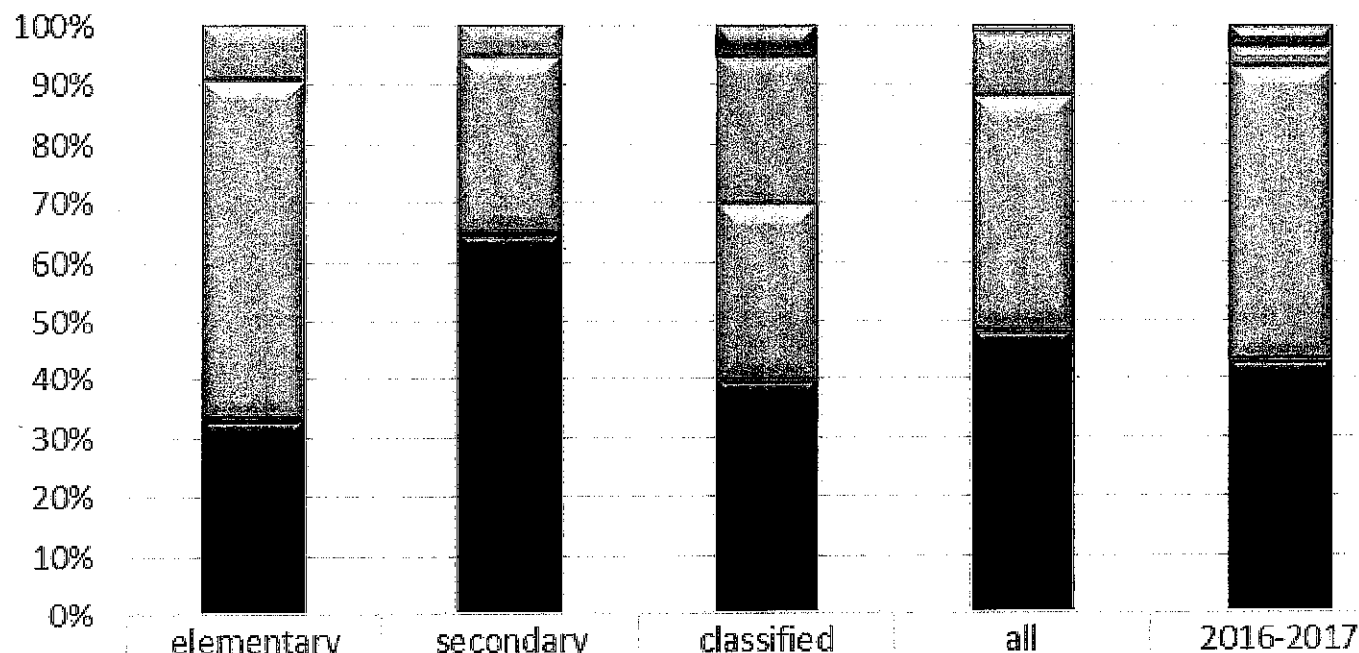
I understand the purpose and vision of the Adroit program at Stargate



I believe the Adroit program is a positive addition to Stargate's curriculum



I feel trusted and respected



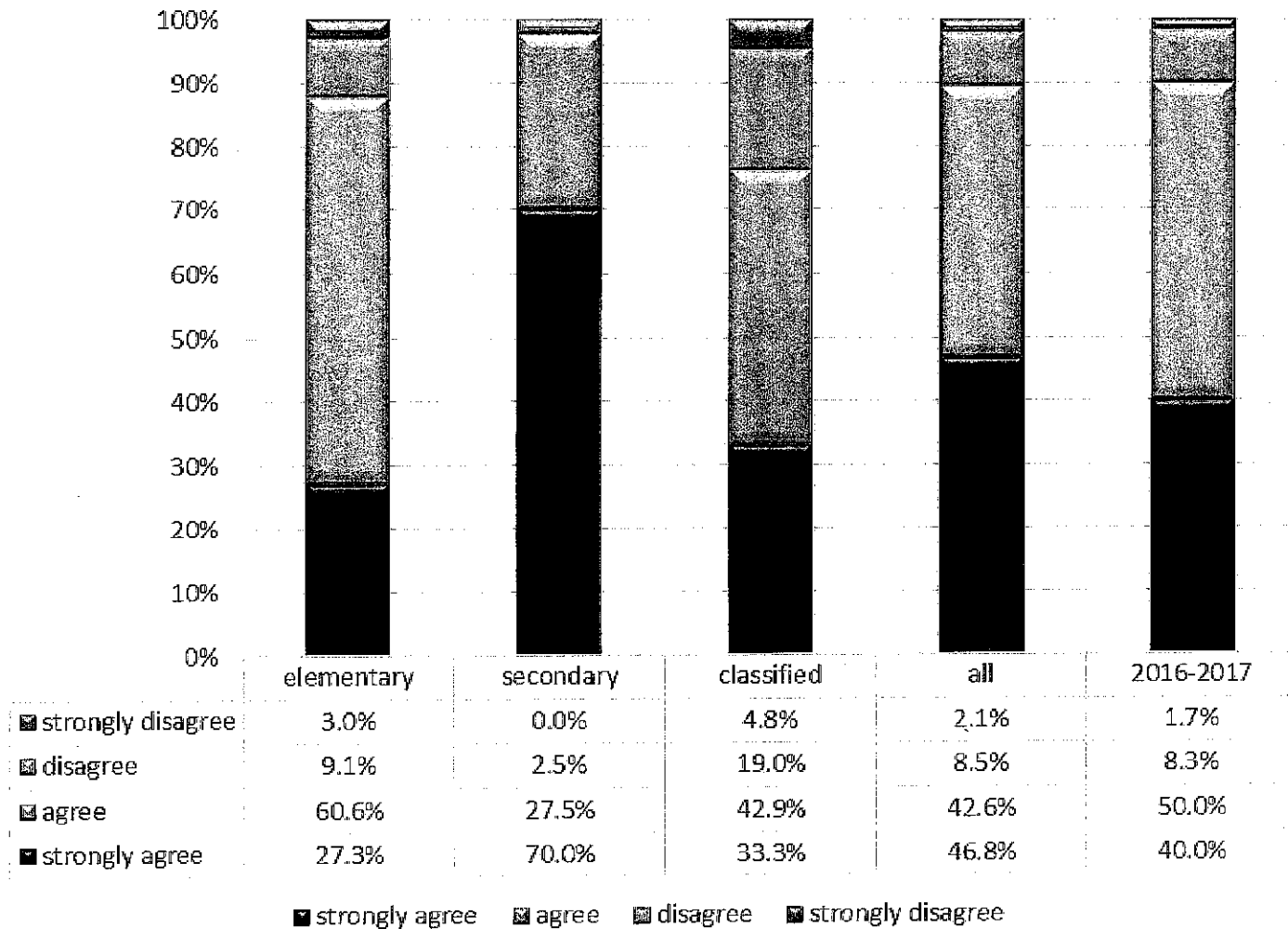
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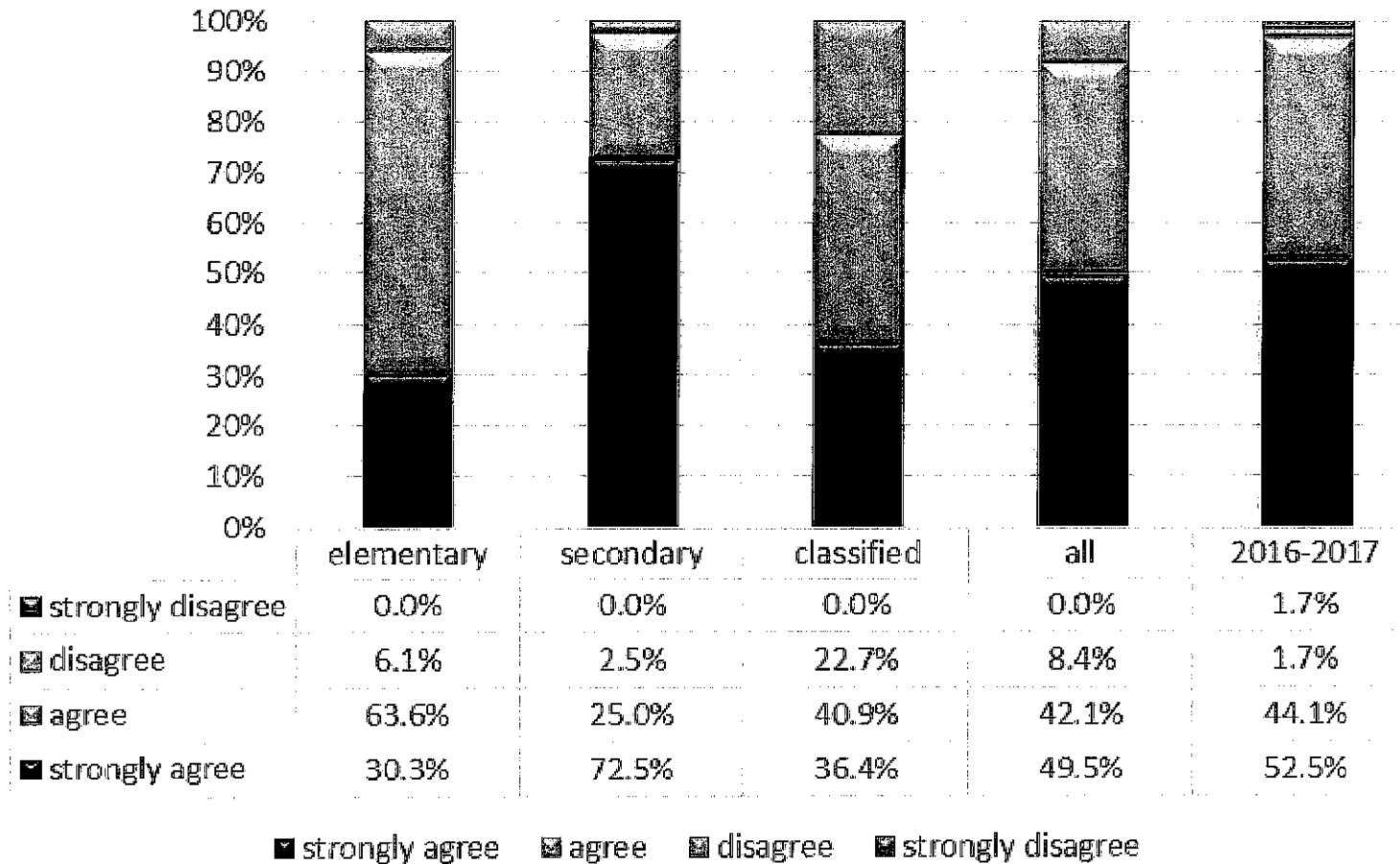
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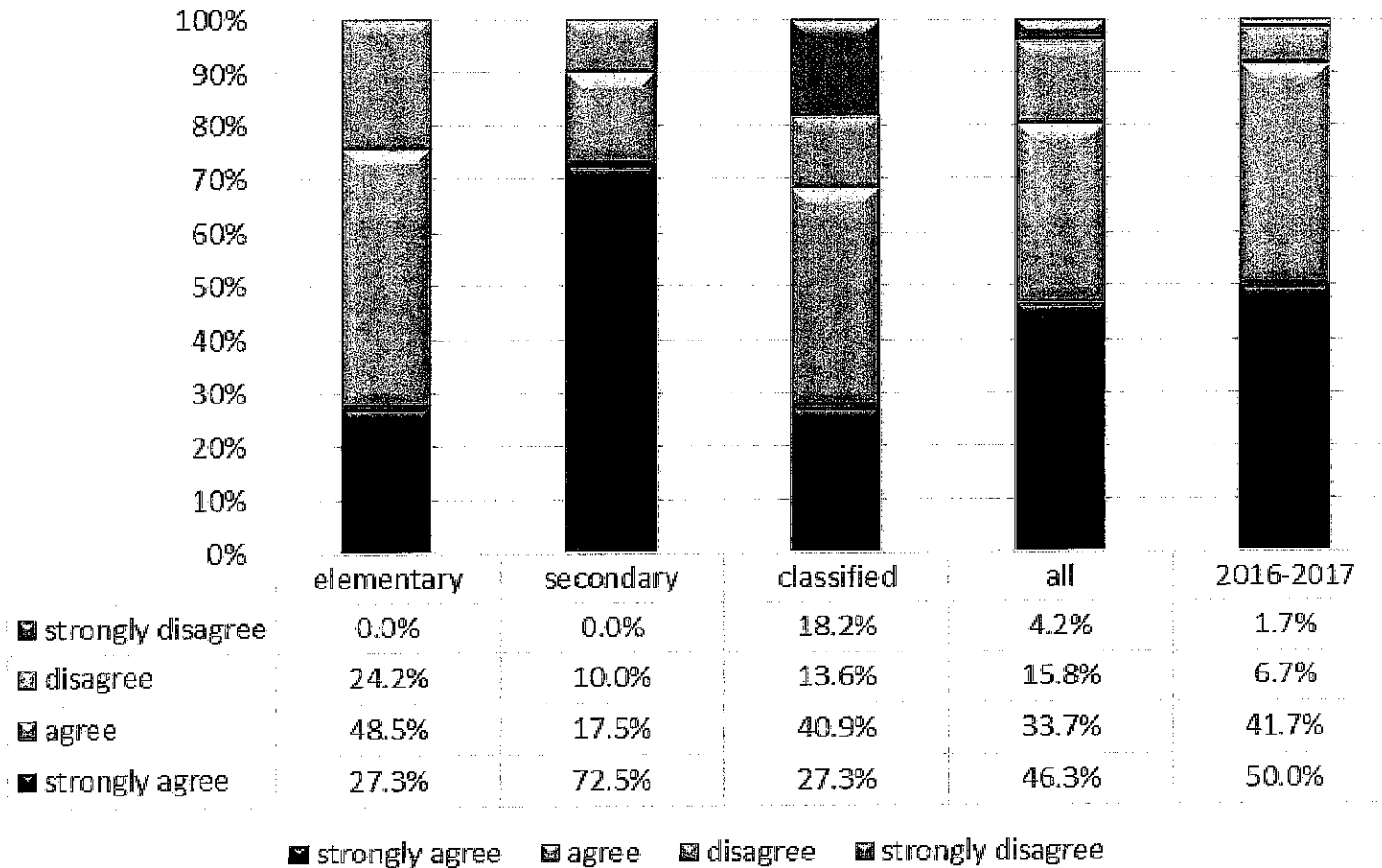
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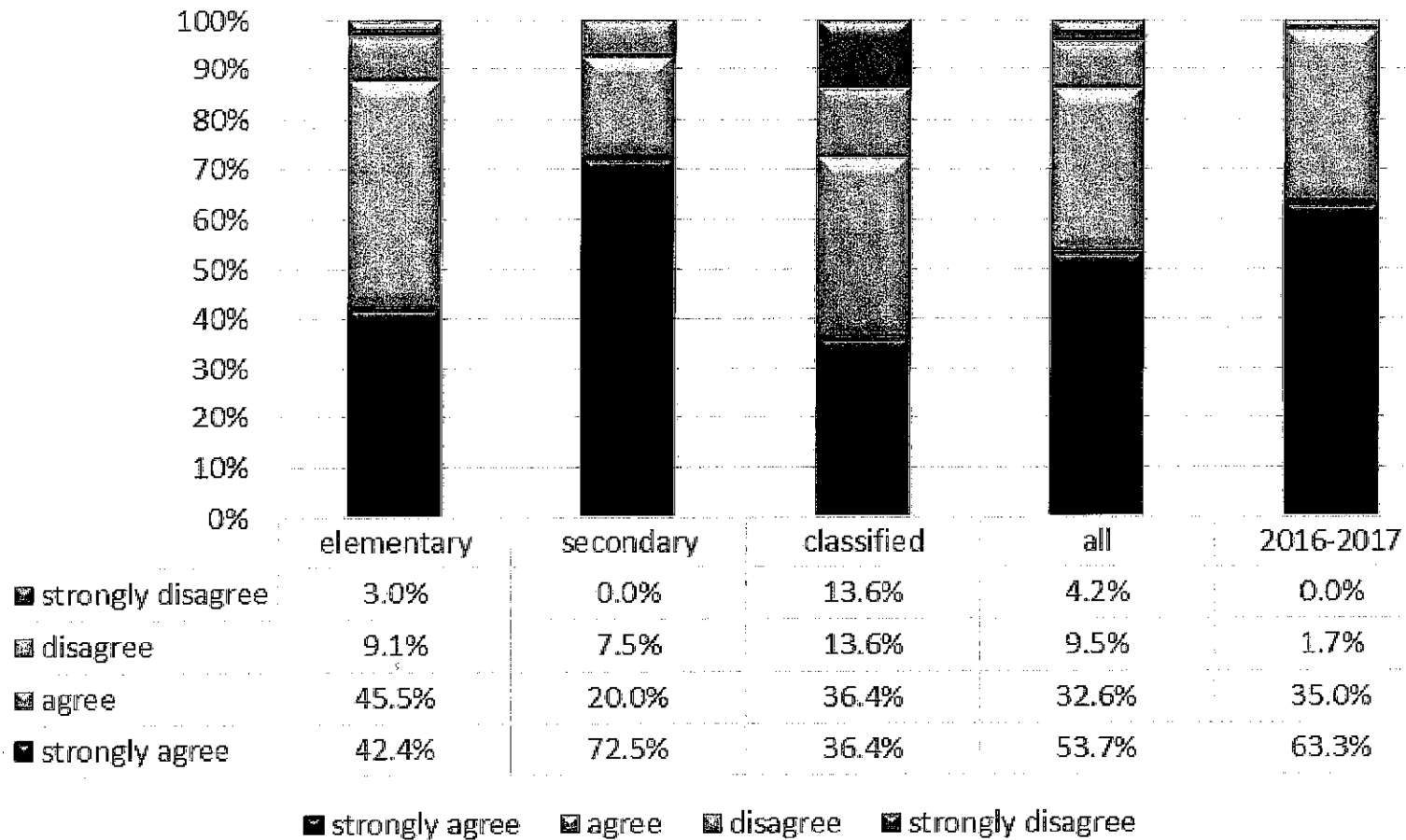
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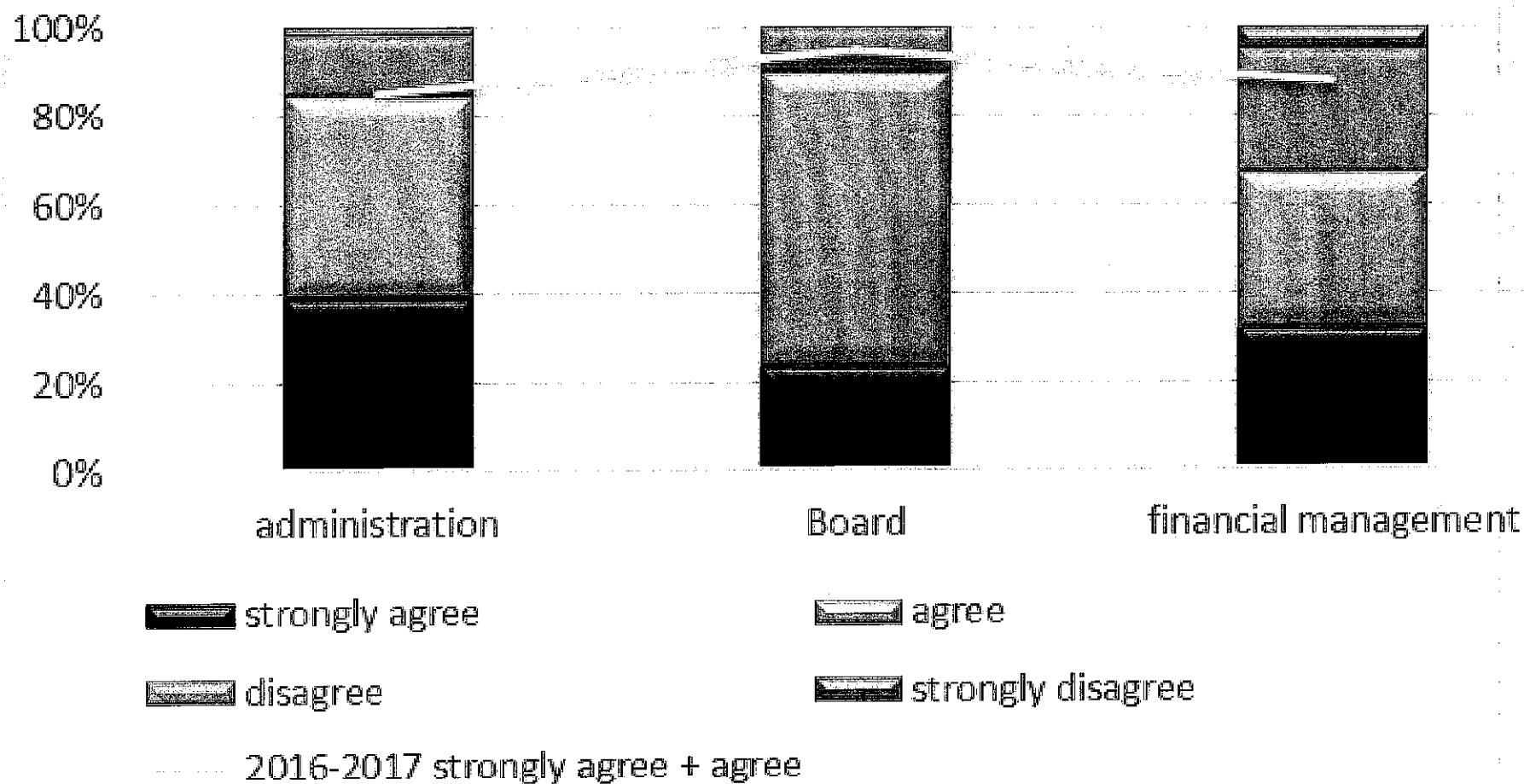
I would recommend Stargate to a friend seeking employment



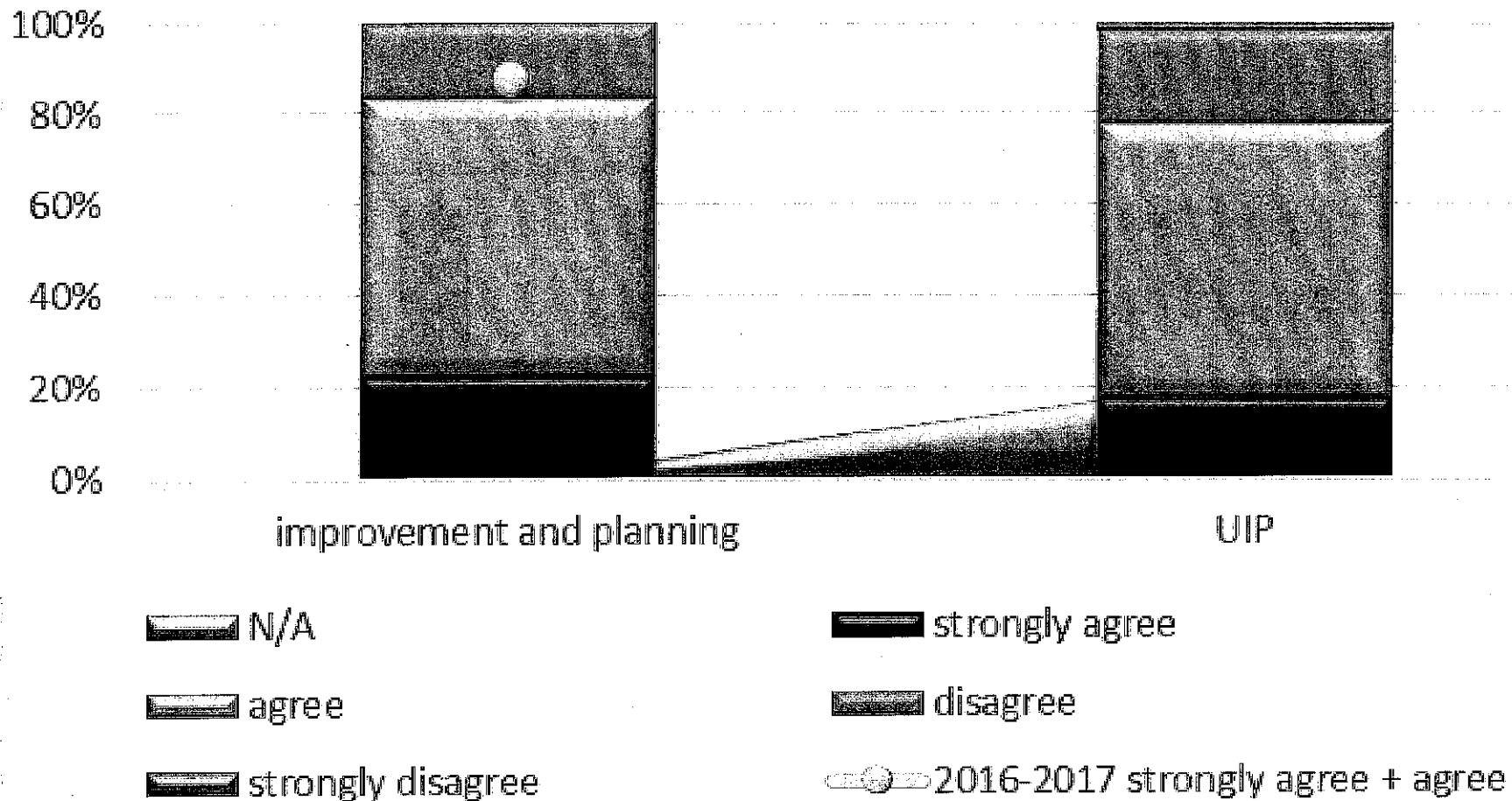
I would recommend Stargate to a friend seeking a school for their gifted child



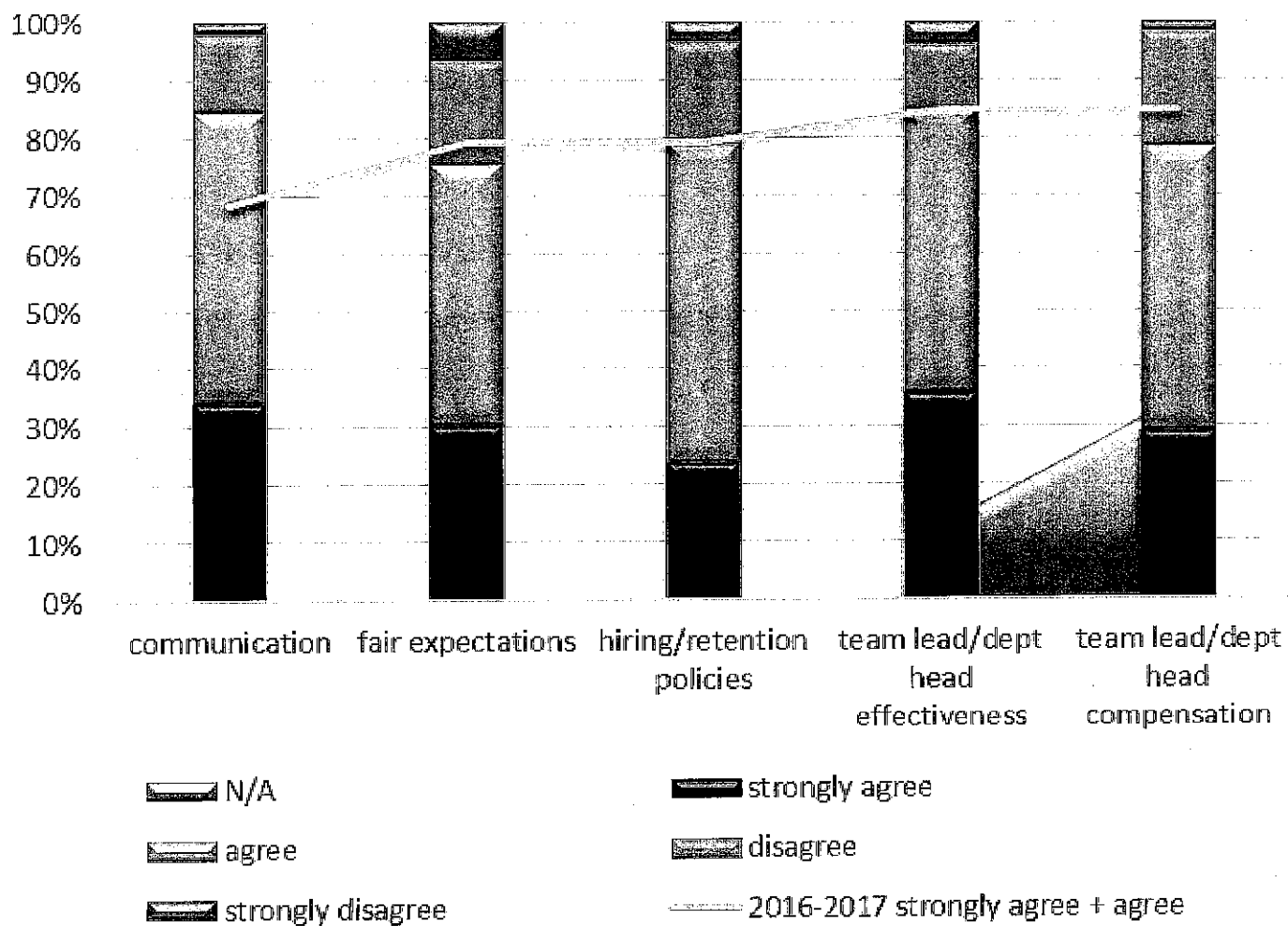
Summary: Leadership and Governance



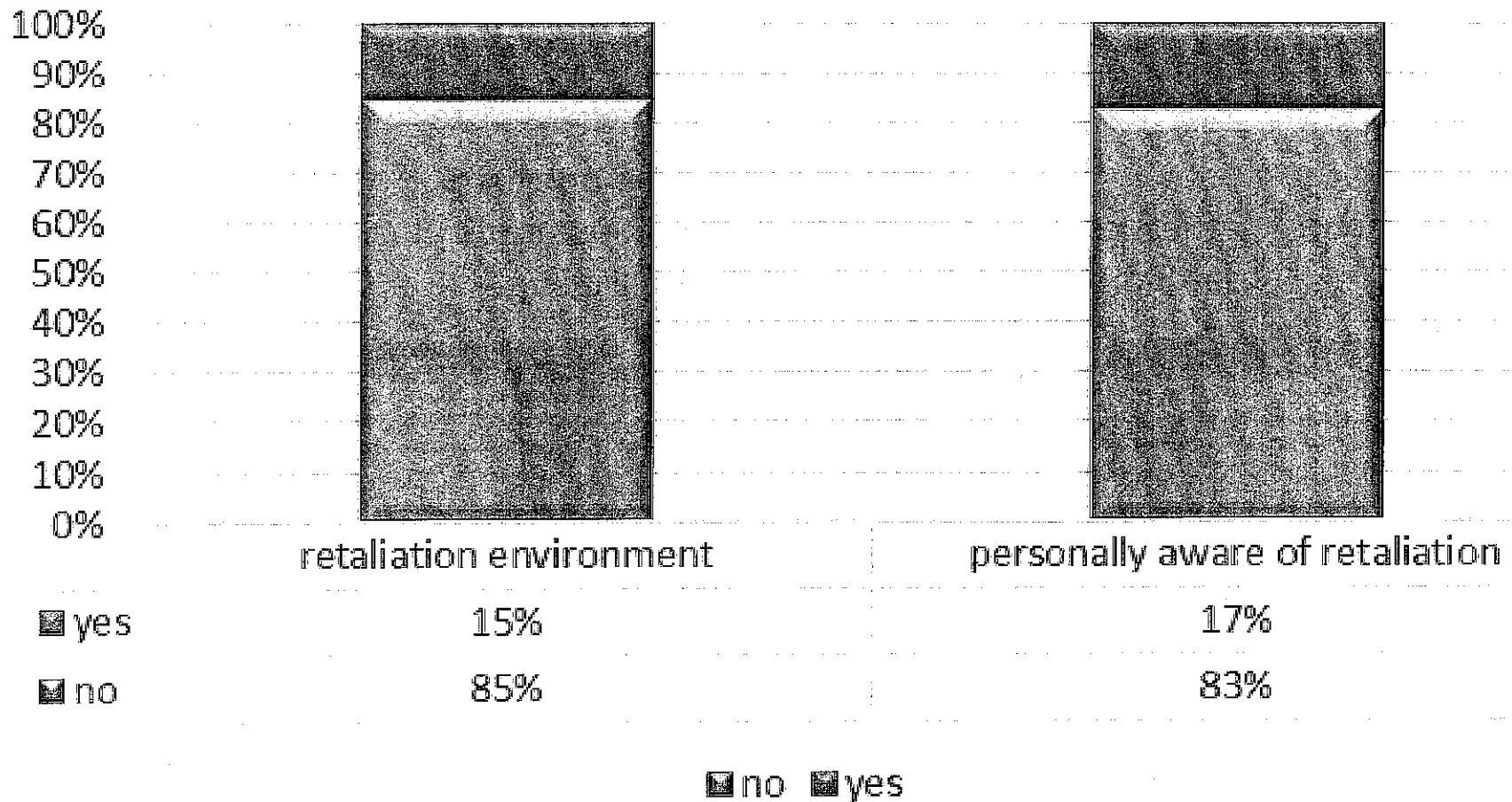
Summary: Goals & Vision



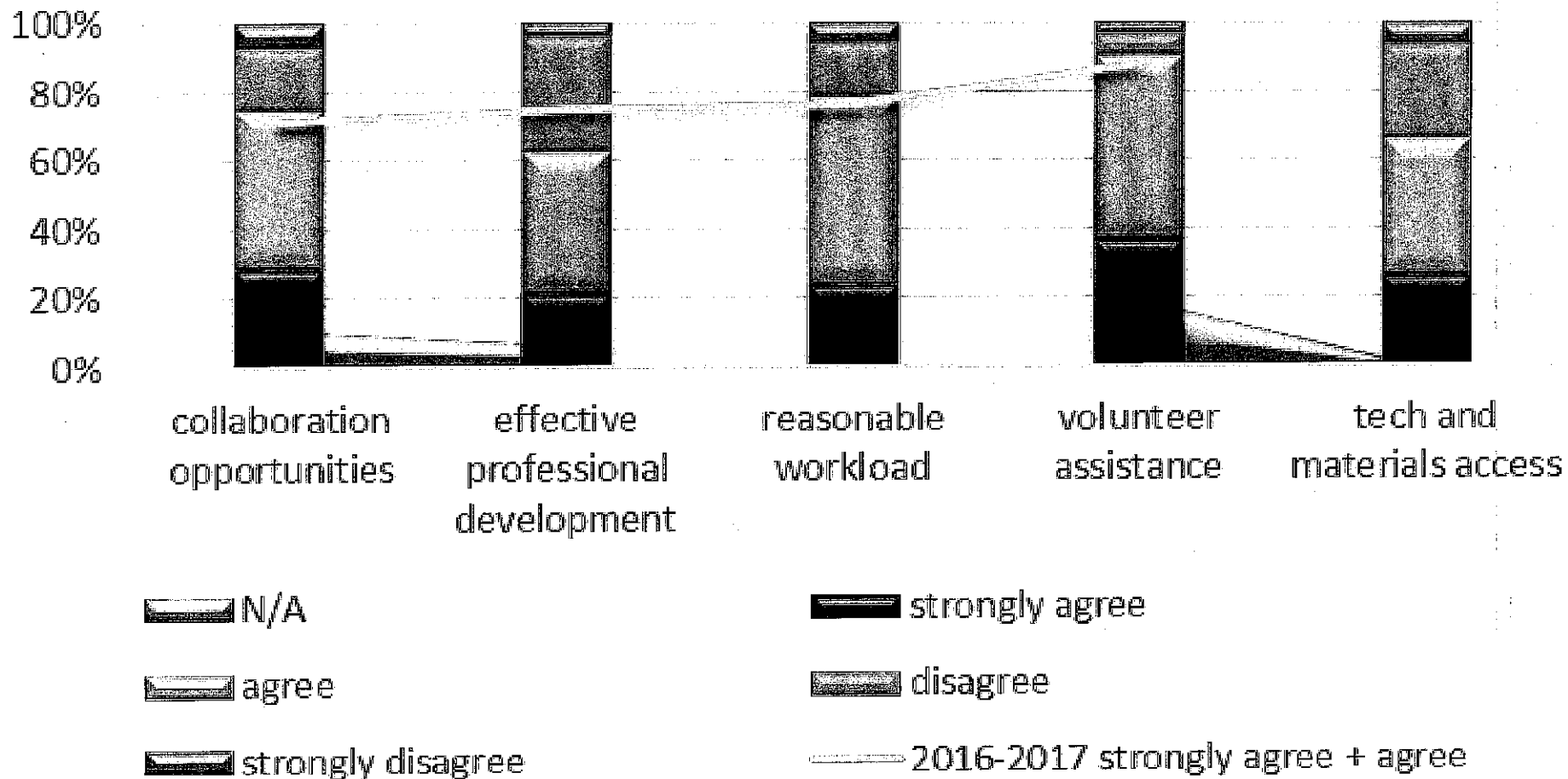
Summary: Leadership Culture



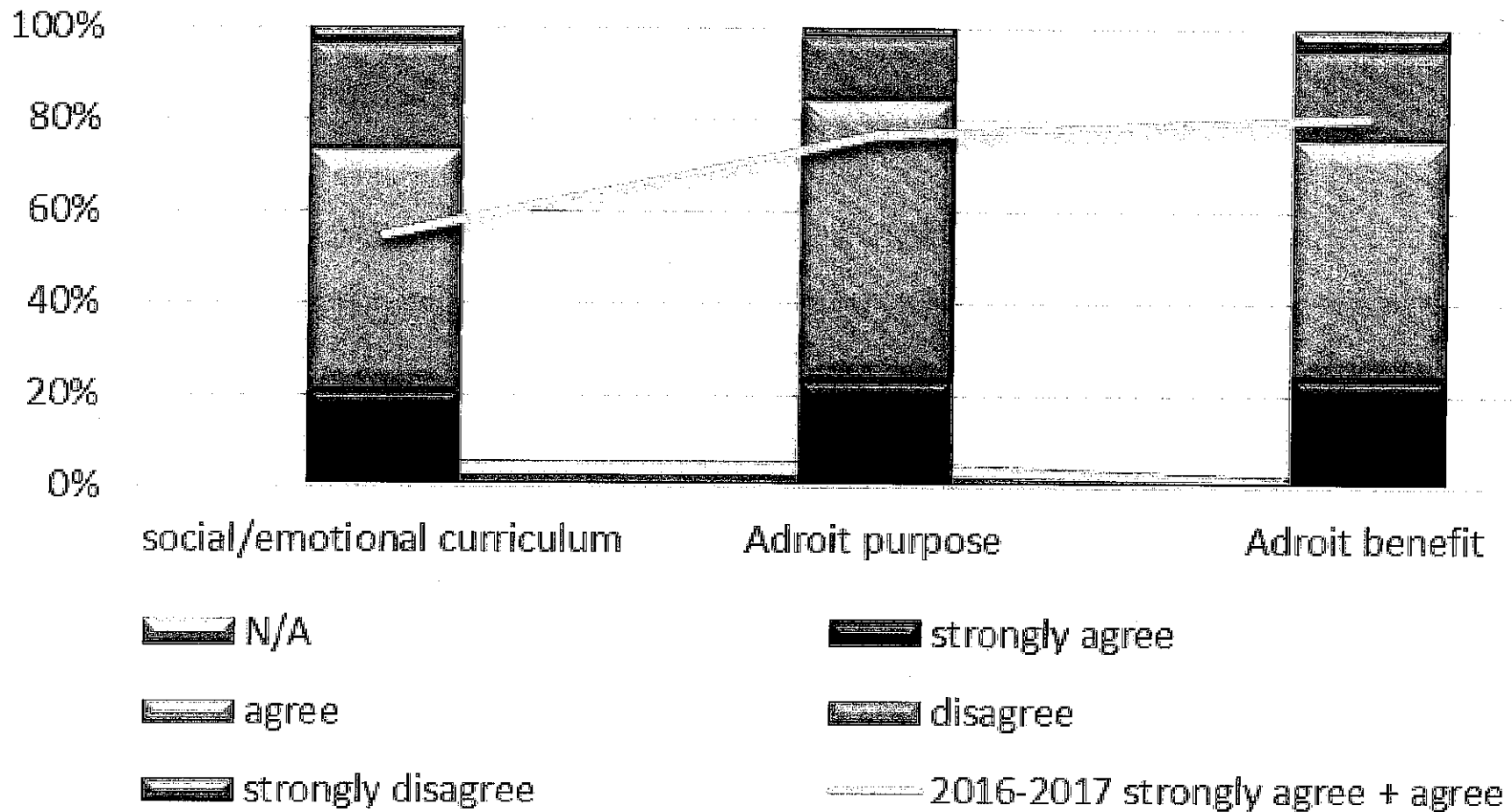
Summary: Retaliation



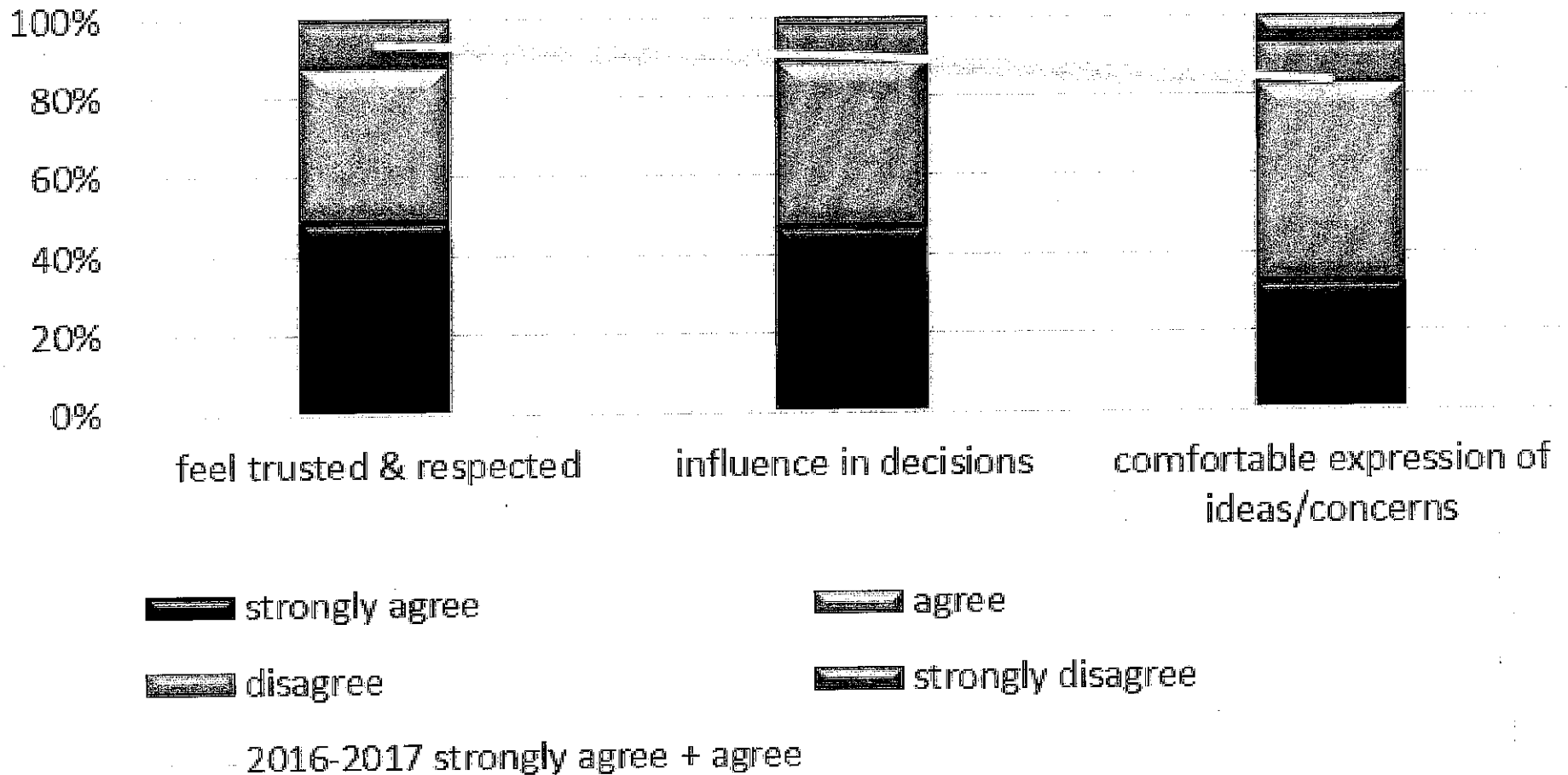
Summary: Job Support



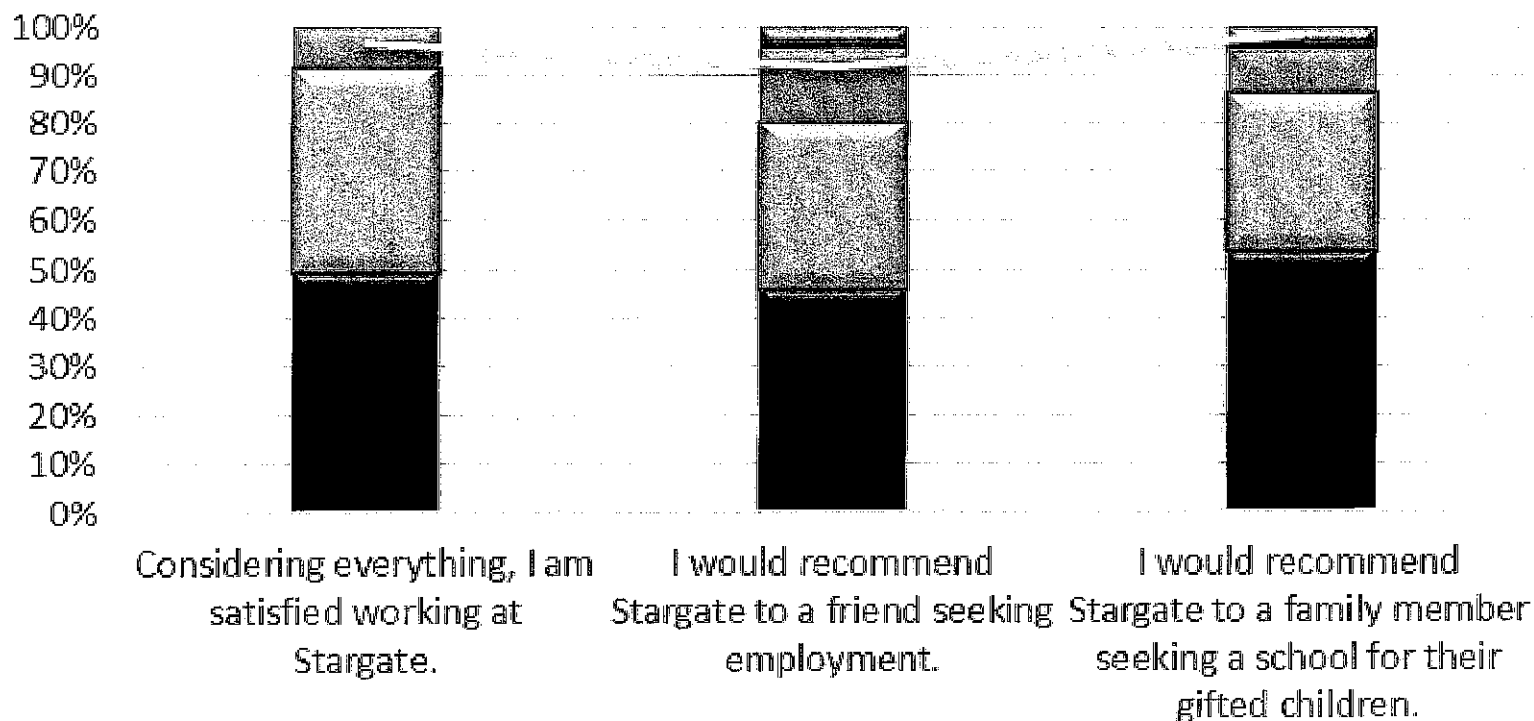
Summary: Curriculum



Summary: Employee Sentiment



Summary: Overall Satisfaction



strongly agree

agree

disagree

strongly disagree

2016-2017 strongly agree + agree

