

A network diagram with a grey background. It features several clusters of nodes. Each cluster has a central yellow circular hub with many smaller blue circular nodes connected to it by thin blue lines. The clusters are distributed across the frame, with a large one on the left and several smaller ones on the right.

# Do education systems trust decentralization?

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with Uttam Sharma, Maya Sherpa, Unika Shrestha, Laxman Timilsina, & Vatsal Nahata

Decentralization is  
**important** to study

Decentralization is  
**hard** to study

**Trust** is a good proxy





# 2018 The year of Nepal's big-bang decentralization

- 753 local government units were created
- Local governments given the responsibility for managing school education



Dec 2017- Dec 2018

1. Surveys & survey experiments

Local leaders (196)

Head-teachers (286)

Teachers (540)

2. Focus group discussions

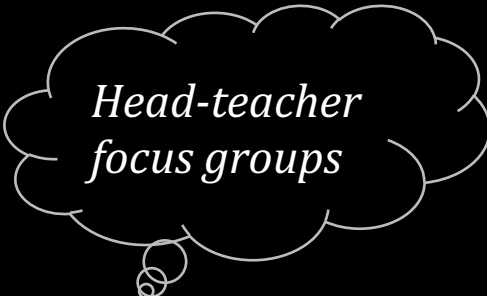
130 head-teachers

1

Schools welcome decentralization

# Voice | *“Now things will be easier ... our concerns will be heard”*

*The chances of us getting neglected or our concerns getting bypassed will be minimized. They will be compelled to listen to our concerns.*



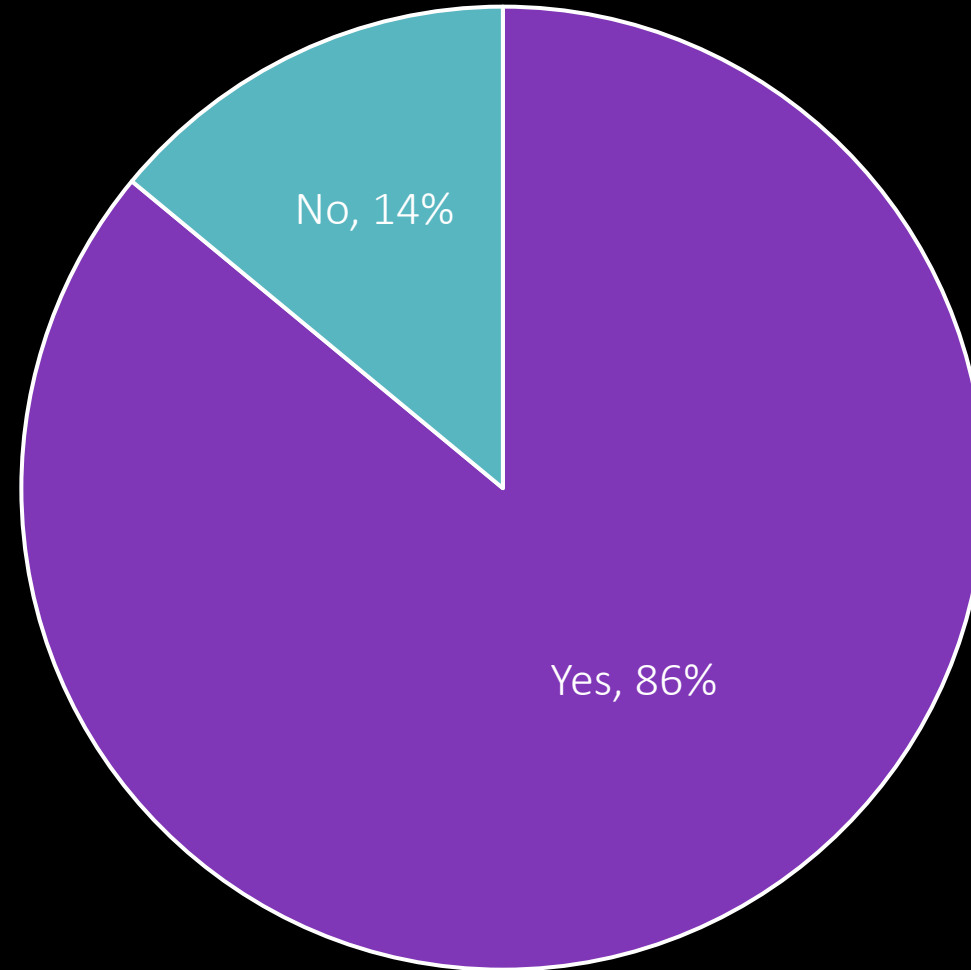
*Head-teacher  
focus groups*

*Having competent authorities closer is more useful than  
having highly qualified ones afar*

*We will know the gaupalika (local govt) representative- so,  
our concerns will be heard.*

*We had to go to up to the Regional education office  
... now things will be easier.*

# Voice | LGs will be more accountable than the center

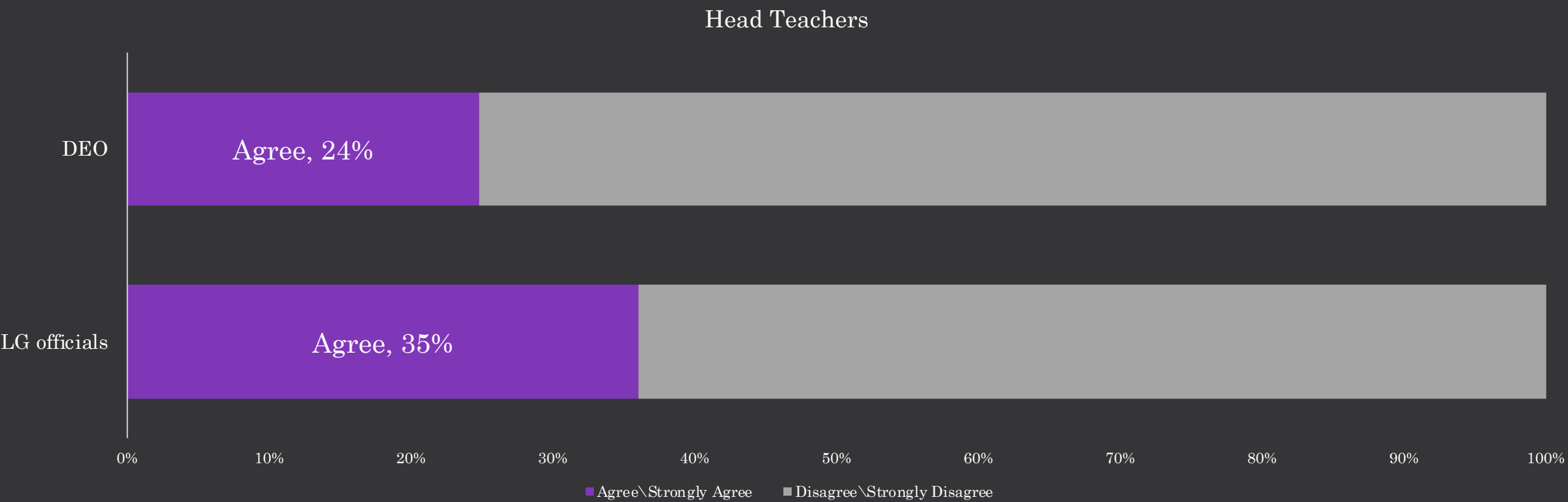


*Head-teachers  
& Teachers*

# Trust | Schools more likely to ascribe positive motives to LGs than Center

- Survey experiment: same hypothetical situation was described. One random group was asked about the intentions of: (i) an official from Center (DEO); and other about (ii) an LG official

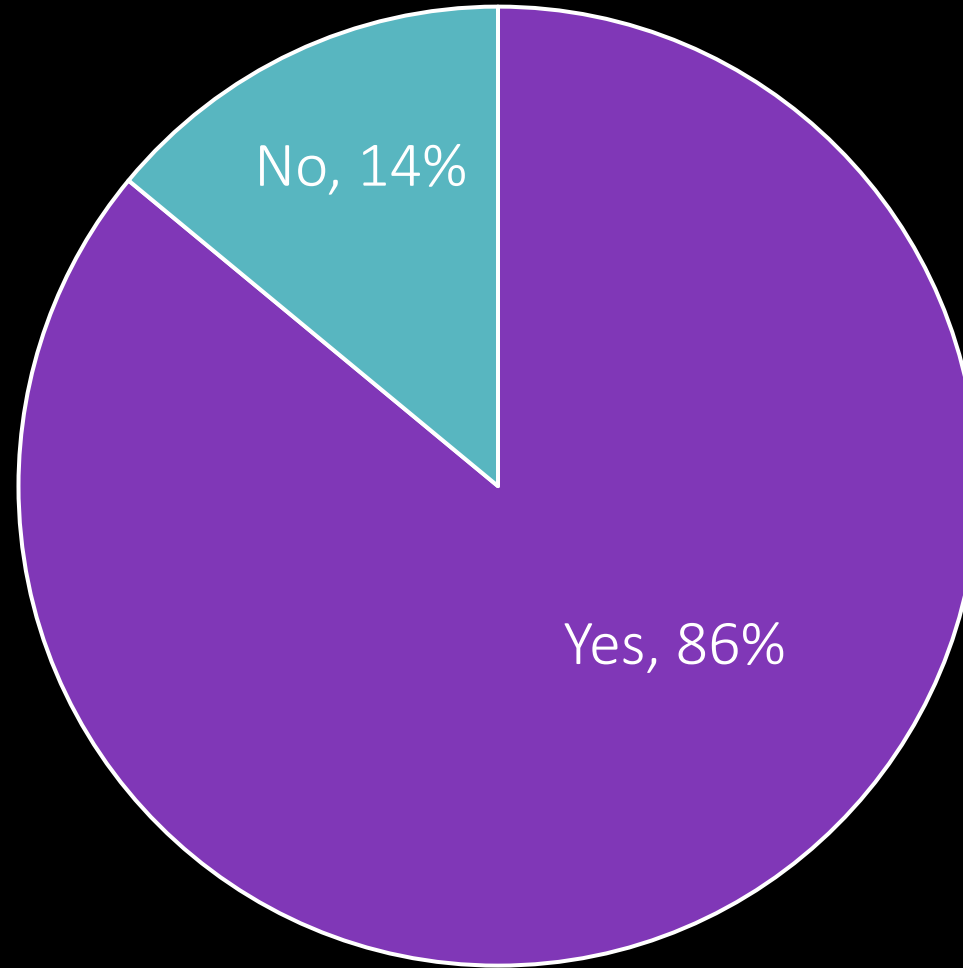
“Are Officials trying to improve education quality”



Note: Difference in share who agree/strongly agree LG officials are trying to improve education quality vs DEOs is statistically significant at the 95% level among HTs.



# Autonomy | LGs will provide support to improve quality



*Head-teachers  
& Teachers*

# Autonomy

Are they afraid to sanction poor performing teachers?

Central govt is afraid: 67% of headteachers agree

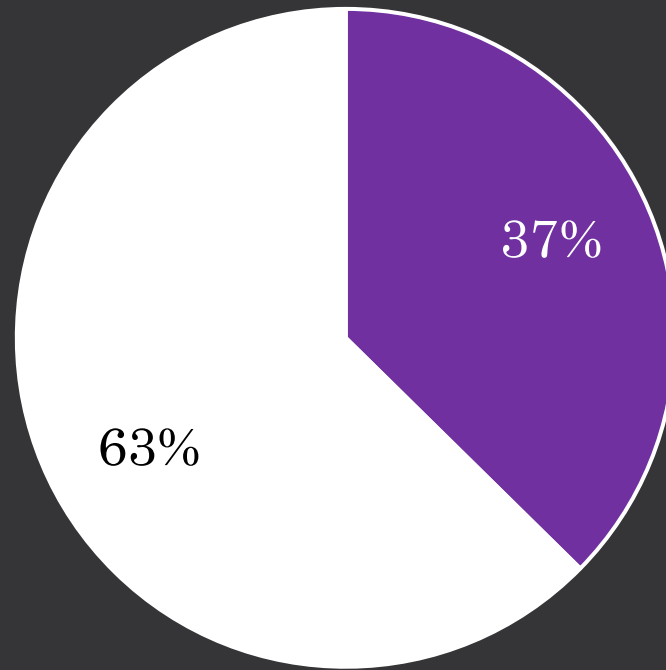
Local govt is afraid: 49% of headteachers agree



But some of their faith could be  
misplaced

# Only 1 in 3 local leaders are actually willing to sanction under-performing teachers

How would you reduce teacher absenteeism?




- Take disciplinary action against teachers with over 50% absenteeism
- Give management training so schools can handle it



*Local Leaders*

In survey experiment(s), we test whether local leaders support sanctioning teachers for high absenteeism if Center does it vs. if they have to do it.

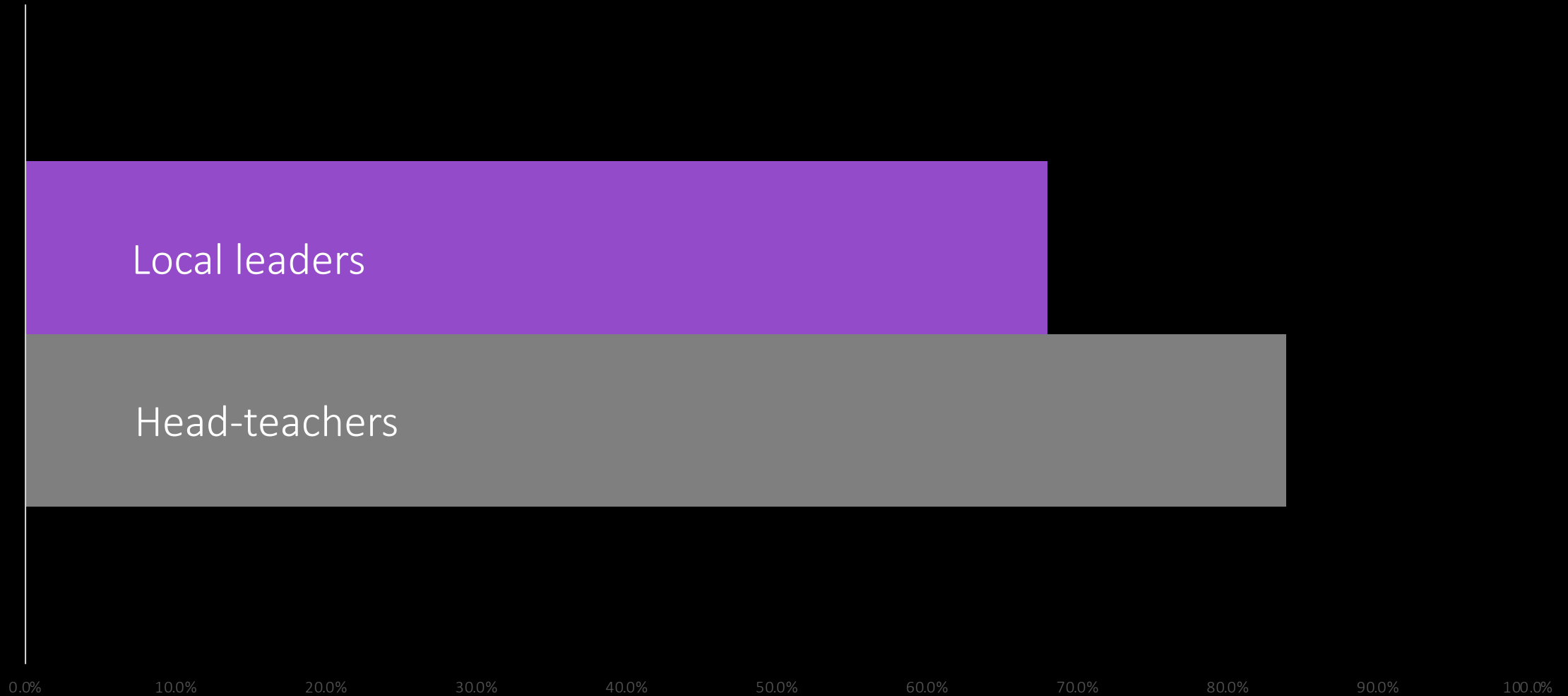
Elected local leaders are more likely to support the sanctioning of teachers if Center has to do it vs. when they have to do it.



Responsibility without  
accountability



*“Agree that Center should be responsible for hiring teachers”*



*“Agree that Center should be responsible for hiring teachers”*

*Local Leaders*

LGs – Bureaucrats

LGs- Elected

0%

20%

40%

60%

80%

100%

*“Agree that center should be responsible for teacher promotion?”*

Head-teachers



A horizontal bar chart with two bars. The top bar is blue and represents 'Head-teachers' with a value of approximately 65%. The bottom bar is gray and represents 'Local leaders' with a value of approximately 45%. The x-axis is at the bottom, ranging from 0% to 100% in 20% increments.

Group	Agreement Level (%)
Head-teachers	65%
Local leaders	45%

Local leaders

0%

20%

40%

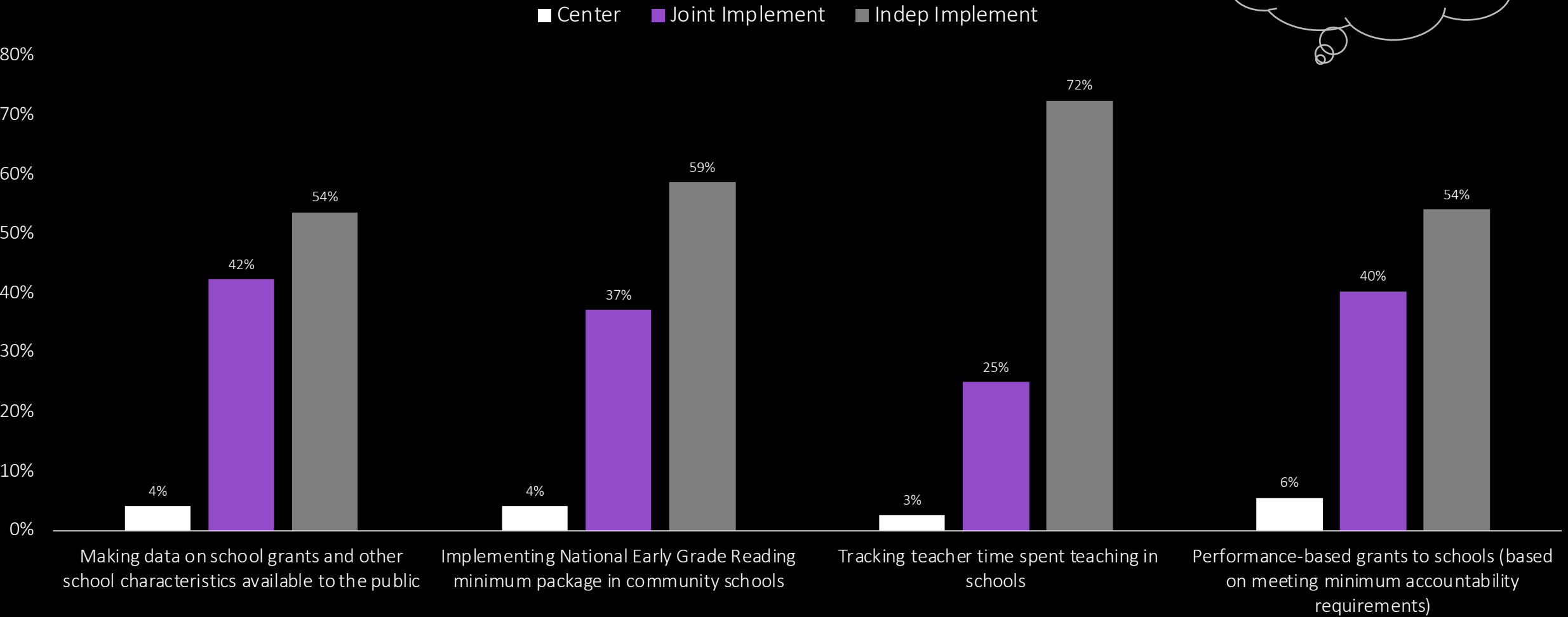
60%

80%

100%

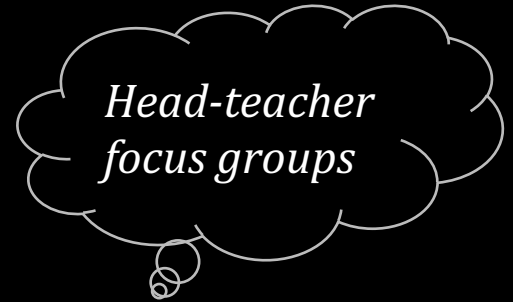
# Most LG officials prefer independence in key education tasks; especially teacher supervision

*Who should implement the following ...*



# Teacher Politics

*"new elected representative will have an attitude of... "this person didn't vote for me, so I'll transfer him or her out."*



*"Teachers may be even closer to politicians now."*

*if the leader wants to be re-elected, he/she cannot take strict action against teachers..this is a big problem."*

*"We used to only have to talk to the SMC about appointing teachers. Now we have to talk to the winning party and try to appease other parties as well."*

The thorniest  
question of  
decentralization

Is how to align  
teacher management  
& accountability?