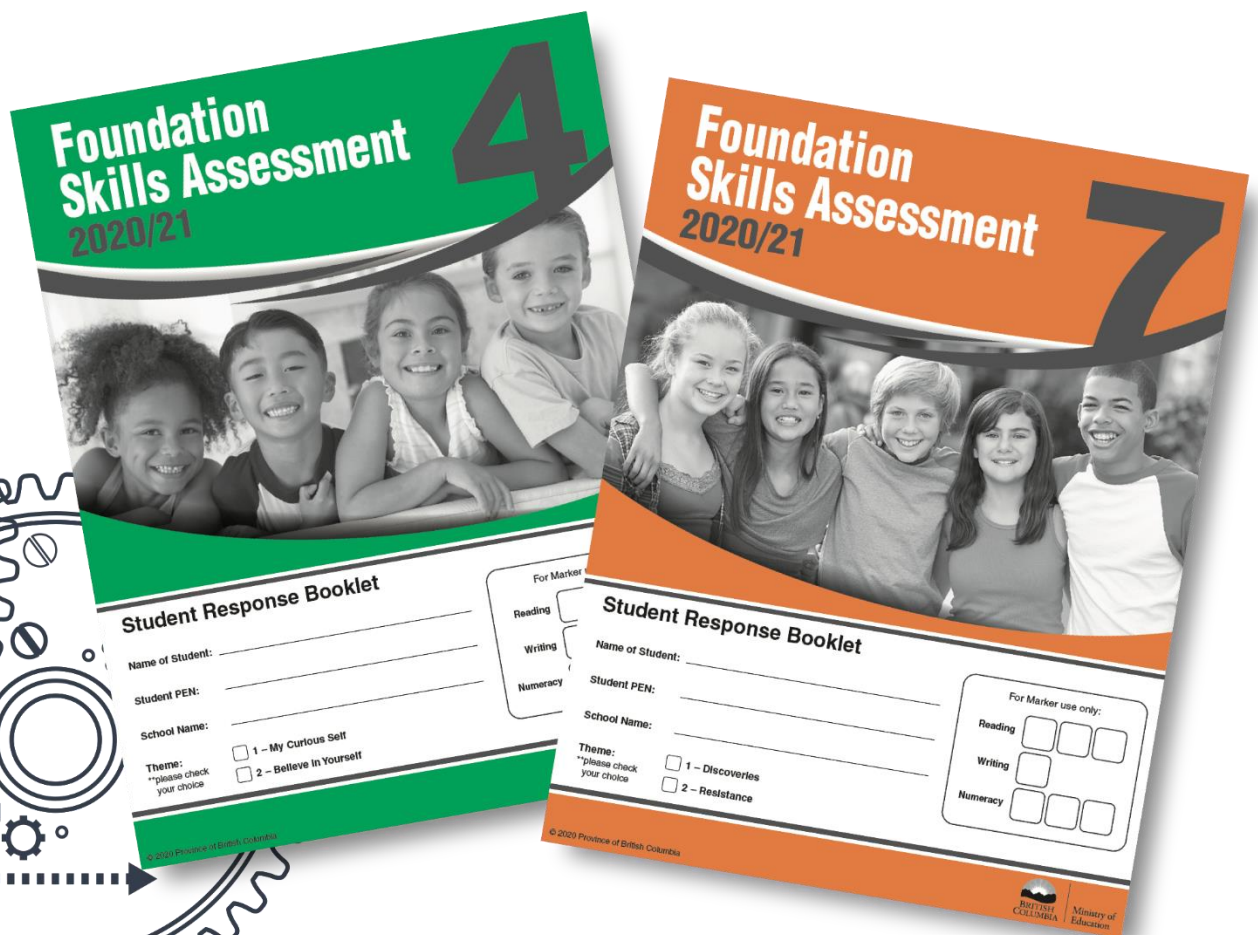




# Foundation Skills Assessment Provincial Marking Monitoring Report

# 2021



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

Ministry of  
Education

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## Foundation Skills Assessment: Marking Monitoring

Large-scale assessments in British Columbia, like the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA), are carefully developed and continuously evaluated based on evidence-based best practices as recommended by national and international assessment experts and psychometricians in the “Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing” (published collaboratively by the American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council of Measurement in Education (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014)<sup>i</sup>. This document, referred to as the “Standards”, provides guidance on all aspects of the assessment process from development, administration, scoring and reporting. According to *Standard 10.2: Monitoring Accuracy and Reliability of Scoring*, test developers have a responsibility to “monitor and document the accuracy and reliability of scoring, and correct sources of scoring errors” (AERA et al., 2014; p. 118). In adherence to this standard, the B.C. Ministry of Education monitors district and school-based scoring of the written-response sections of the FSA by re-scoring a sample of student response booklets from each district and a select number of independent schools.

The purpose of this report is to describe the degree of consistency between the score local or district markers assigned to their students' responses in district/school-based scoring sessions and scores assigned by the markers participating in the provincial monitoring session. The report also provides general comments regarding student performance based on the participants' observations during the monitoring session.

The scoring of the written-response questions for the FSA is based on scoring rubrics which were developed under guidance from *Standard 10.1: Developing Procedures for Human Scoring* (AERA et al., 2014), and adapted from the B.C. Performance Standards. Scoring rubrics and related scoring materials are available at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/training.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/training.htm).

## Scorers

Sixty scorers from public and independent schools participated in a virtual marking monitoring session. (Appendix 1: Monitoring Session Scorer Demographics)

## Scoring Process

The health and safety of students, staff, and their families is a top priority for government. For this reason, the 2021 FSA Marking Monitoring Session was held virtually.

Using the FSA Scoring Guide, scorers were familiarized with the FSA Scoring Rubrics and trained in holistic marking, including the scoring technique of ‘line of best fit’. The training they received is similar to the training markers should receive at their local marking sites.

Scorers used professional judgment, guided by the scoring materials, to give each student response a fair and reliable score. Differences of one scale point between the score assigned at the monitoring session and the score assigned at the district/school-based scoring session are considered to be reasonable. Based on advice from assessment experts an 80% or higher correlation (scores are within one scale point) between locally assigned scores and the scores assigned at the provincial monitoring session indicates that local scores are well aligned with the provincial scoring standards specific to each assessment.



Note: Percentage differences may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Over 3,600 student response booklets from grades 4 and 7 were remarked during the monitoring session.

## Scoring Feedback

During the scoring session, scorers' observations were compiled, based on student responses for each of the FSA items. A summary of observations for Reading, Writing, and Numeracy can be found at the end of each section of the report.

Scorers also provided general feedback on the marking support materials and the session.

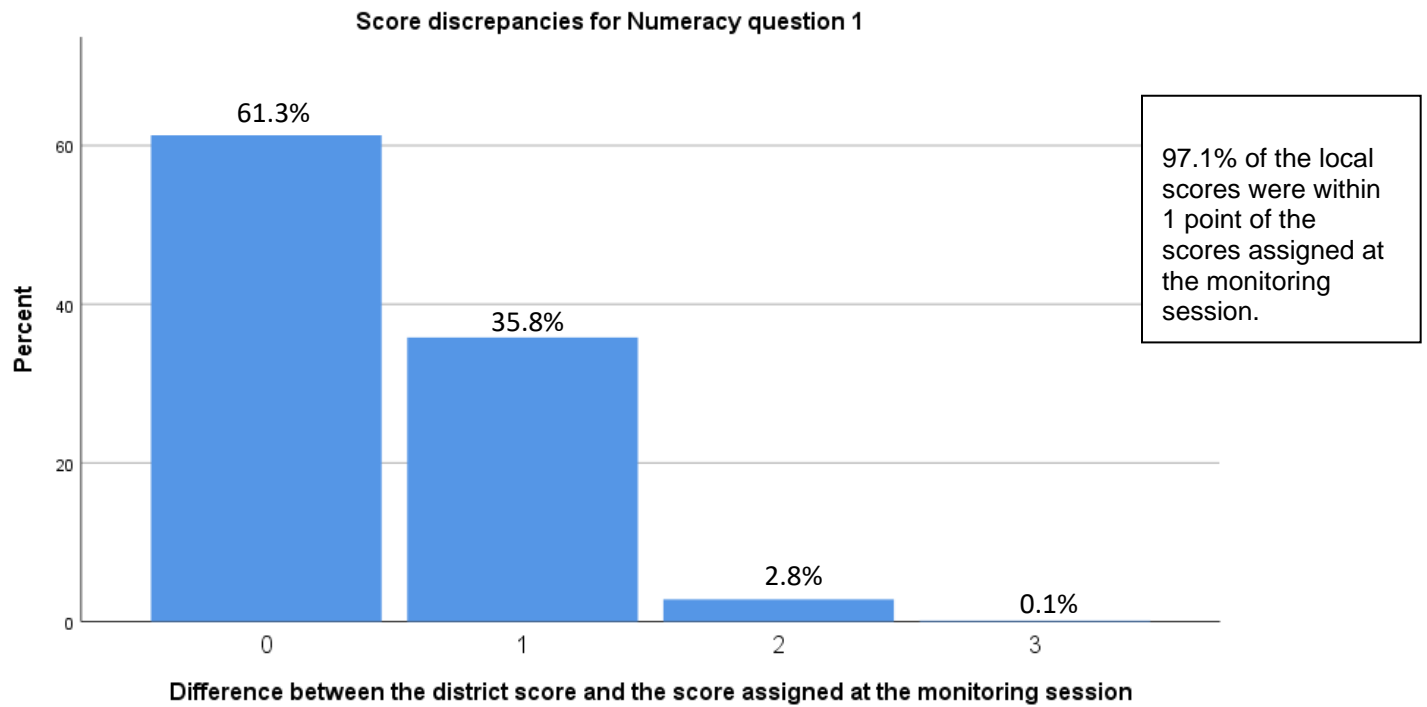
Overall, the feedback was extremely positive – all participants enjoyed the session, agreed that it was a valuable professional development experience, and suggested they learned useful information to improve their local scoring activities.

Information is summarized in Appendix 1.

## Grade 4 Numeracy

### Written-Response Question 1

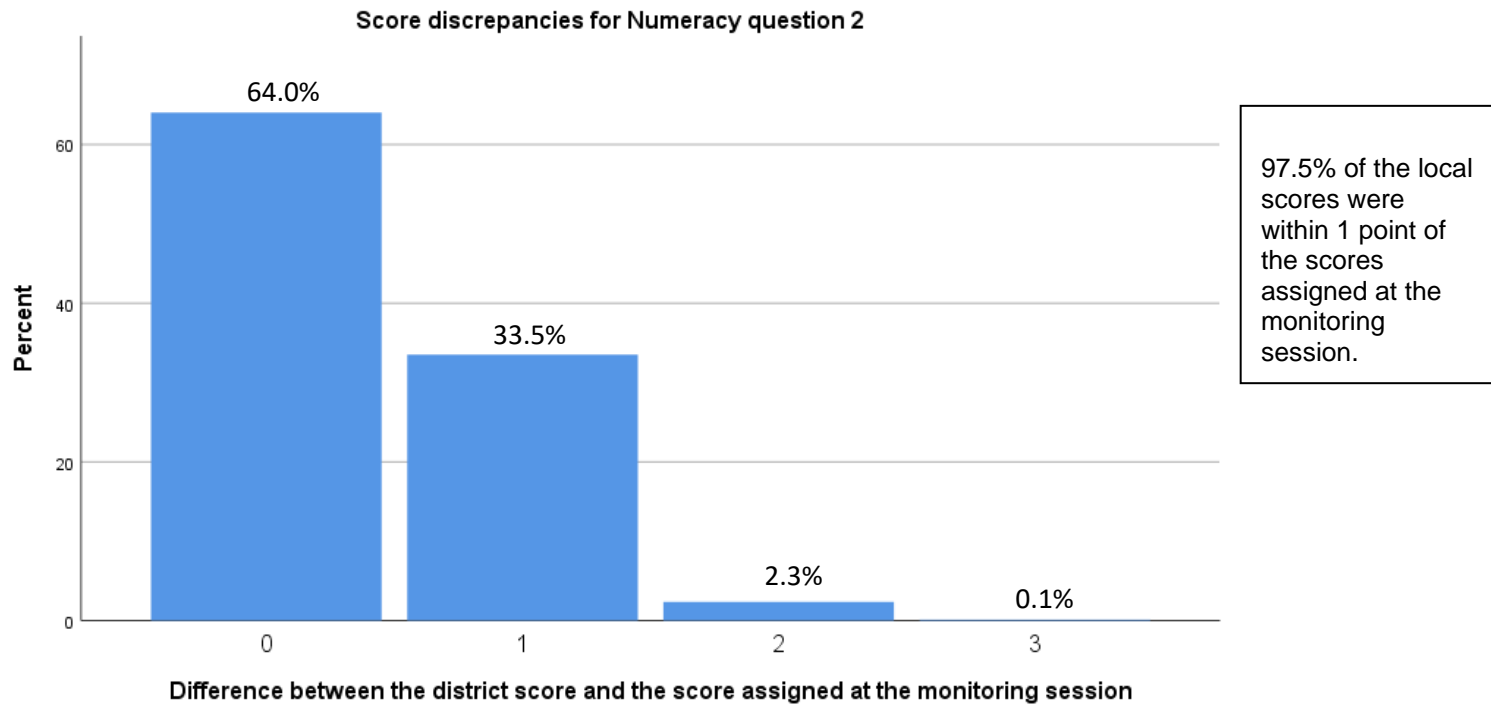
Curriculum Theme – Number and Computational Fluency



## Grade 4 Numeracy (continued)

### Written-Response Question 2

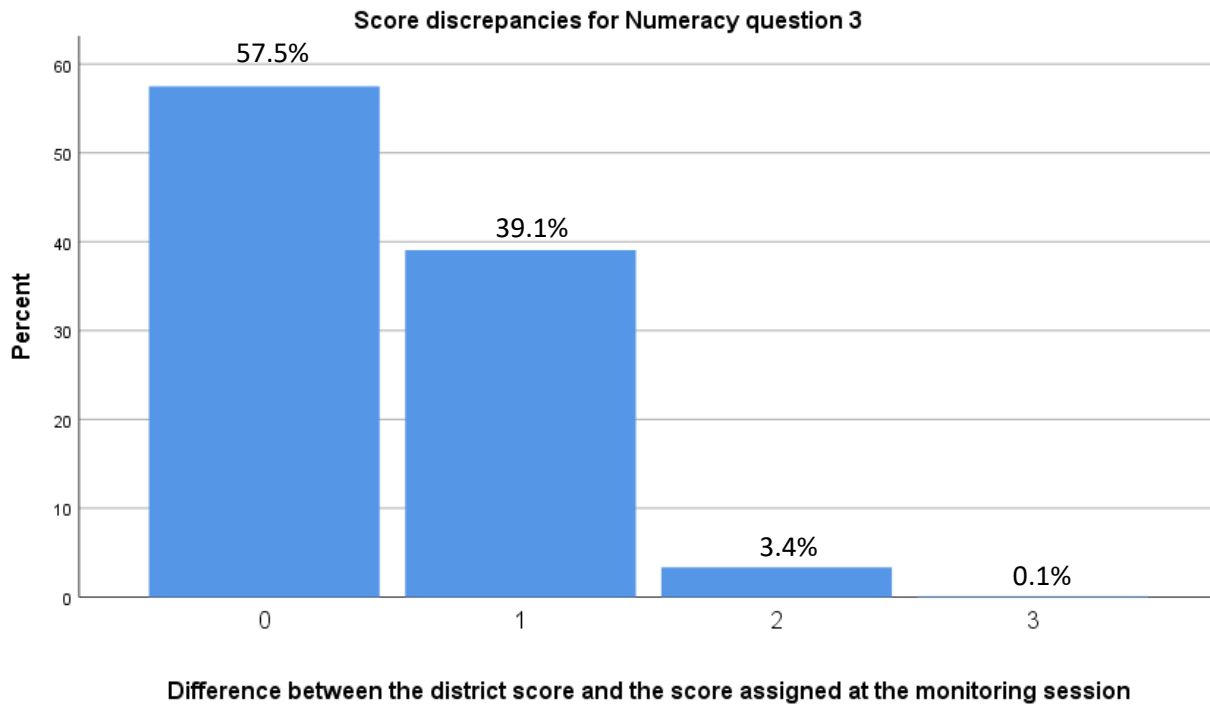
Curriculum Theme – Number and Computational Fluency, Patterns



## Grade 4 Numeracy (continued)

### Written-Response Question 3

#### Curriculum Theme – Number and Computational Fluency



96.6% of the local scores were within 1 point of the scores assigned at the monitoring session.



## Monitoring Comments: Grade 4 Numeracy

General comments regarding student performance on numeracy written response questions, according to the participants of the July 2021 monitoring session:

### Student Strengths

- Students were able to understand the question and use their reasoning to solve the problem.
- Students showed a variety of thinking methods.
- Students showed a good understanding of basic operations.
- Students were able to read graphs and analyze simple data.
- Students were able to demonstrate connection to real world.

### Areas Requiring Improvement

- Students need to read the question carefully.
- Students need to show their thinking clearly.
- Students need to explain how they got the correct answer.
- Students need more practice in organizing their ideas more efficiently.
- Students need more practice in estimation.

### Implications for Instruction

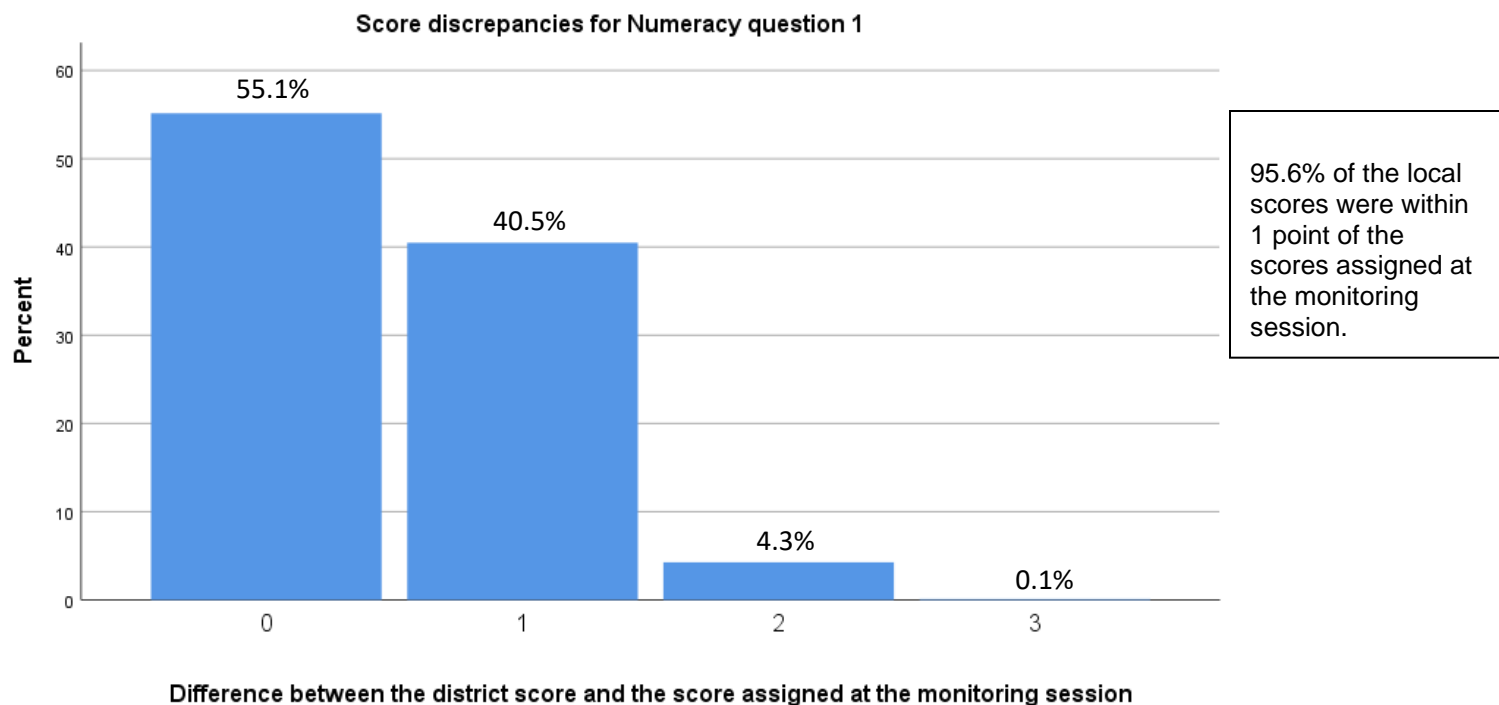
The marking team suggests that teachers could focus on the following:

- Competency-based thinking.
- Showing/practicing different math strategies.
- Unit conversions.
- Teaching literacy along with numeracy.
- Mathematical vocabulary.
- Questions involving multiple-step problem solving.
- Application problems.
- Using charts, diagrams or pictures to present solutions clearly.
- Estimation.
- Strategies for subtraction.
- Looking at their answer to see if it makes sense in the real world.

## Grade 7 Numeracy

### Written-Response Question 1

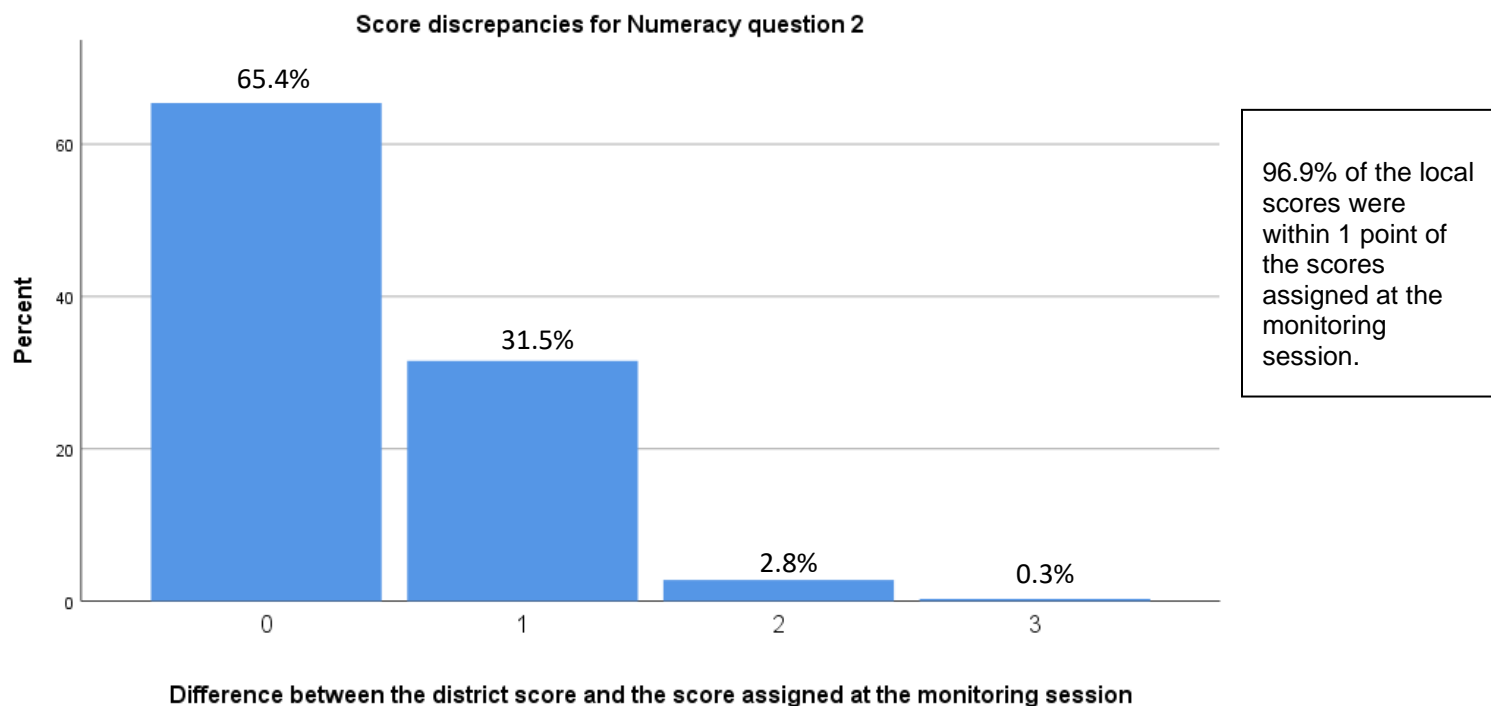
Curriculum Theme – Number and Computational Fluency



## Grade 7 Numeracy (continued)

### Written-Response Question 2

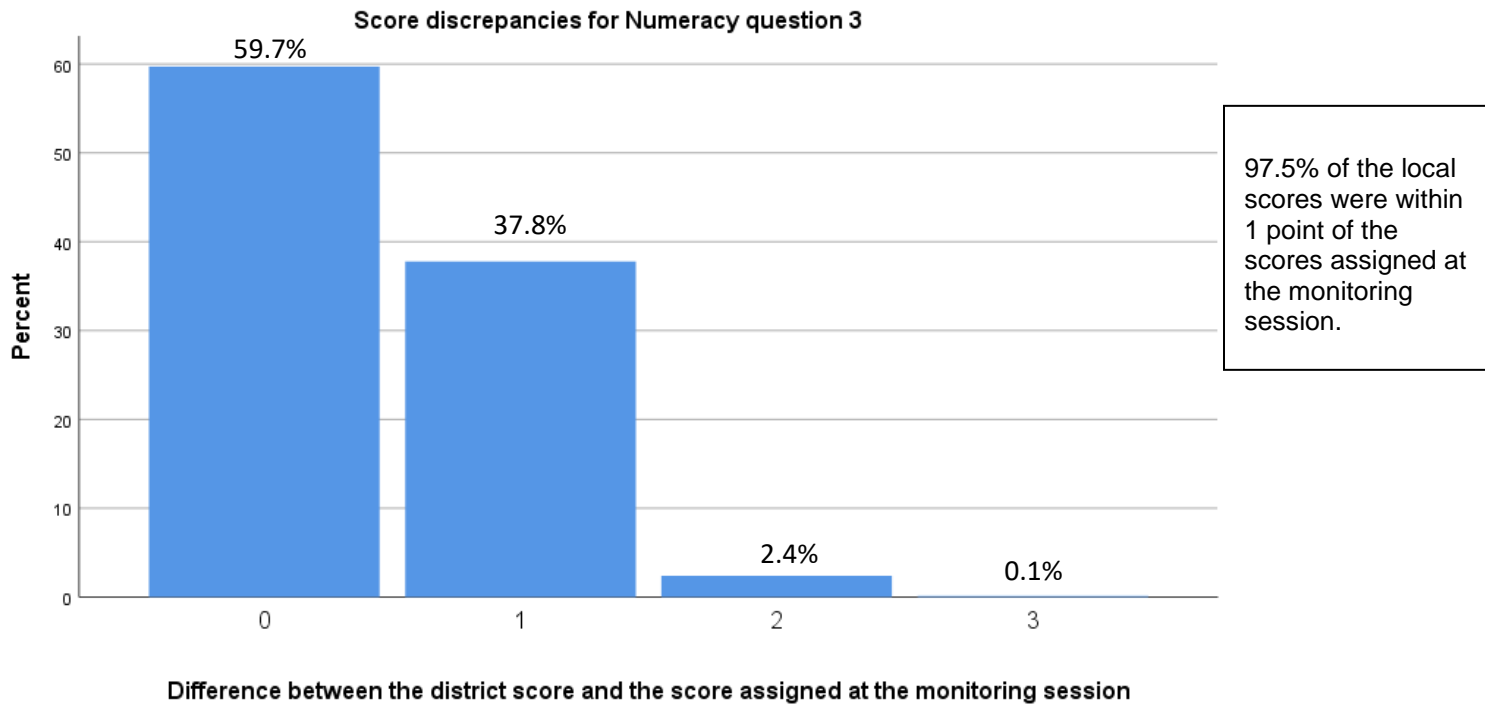
Curriculum Theme – Data and Probability



## Grade 7 Numeracy (continued)

### Written-Response Question 3

Curriculum Theme – Geometry and Measurement



## Monitoring Comments: Grade 7 Numeracy

General comments regarding student performance on numeracy written response questions, according to the participants of the July 2021 monitoring session:

### Student Strengths

- Students showed an ability to select and use an appropriate strategy.
- Students were able to organize their thinking.
- Students showed an understanding of the concept of percentages.
- Students demonstrated a good understanding of probability and converting fractions to decimals.
- Students can differentiate between area and perimeter.
- Students showed flexibility in their thinking.

### Areas Requiring Improvement

- Students need to read the question carefully and pay attention to details.
- Students need to double check for minor errors.
- Students need to practice showing their mathematical reasoning.
- Students need to make sure they understand what is being asked in the question.
- Students need to label their illustrations.

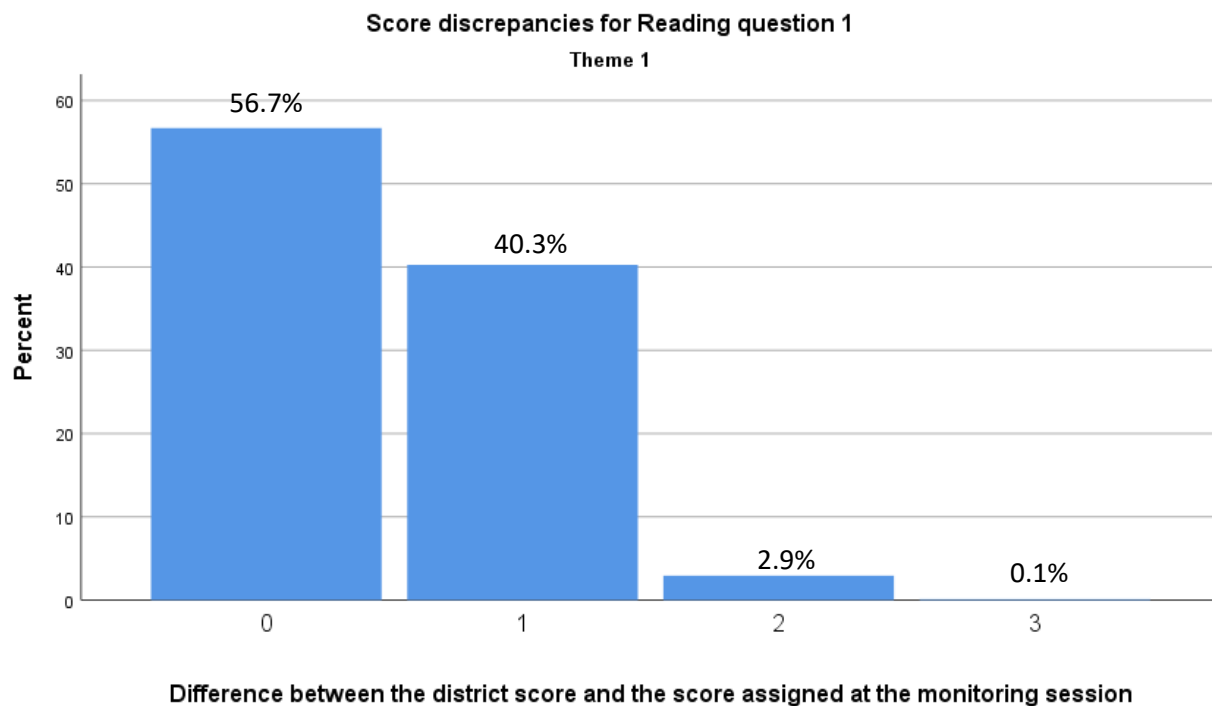
### Implications for Instruction

The marking team suggests that teachers could focus on the following:

- Finding the percent of a number.
- Reading for details and highlighting the key information.
- Showing how you reached an answer.
- Real-life applications and place-based math problems.
- More instruction on equivalent fractions and lowest common denominators.
- Problem-solving.
- More practice with factoring and connecting decimals, fractions and percent.
- Checking answers for accuracy.
- Using graphic organizers.
- Providing rationale or explanations when solving a problem.

## Grade 4 Reading

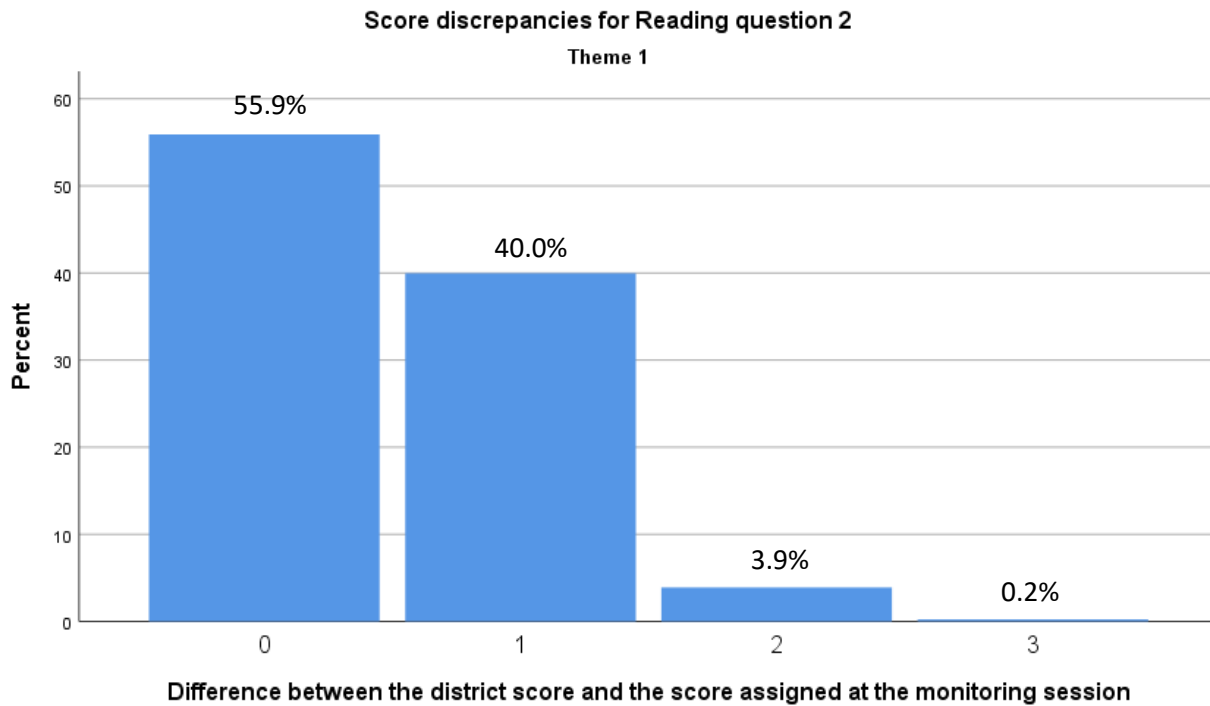
### Written-Response: Theme 1, Question 1



97.0% of the local scores were within 1 point of the scores assigned at the monitoring session.

## Grade 4 Reading (continued)

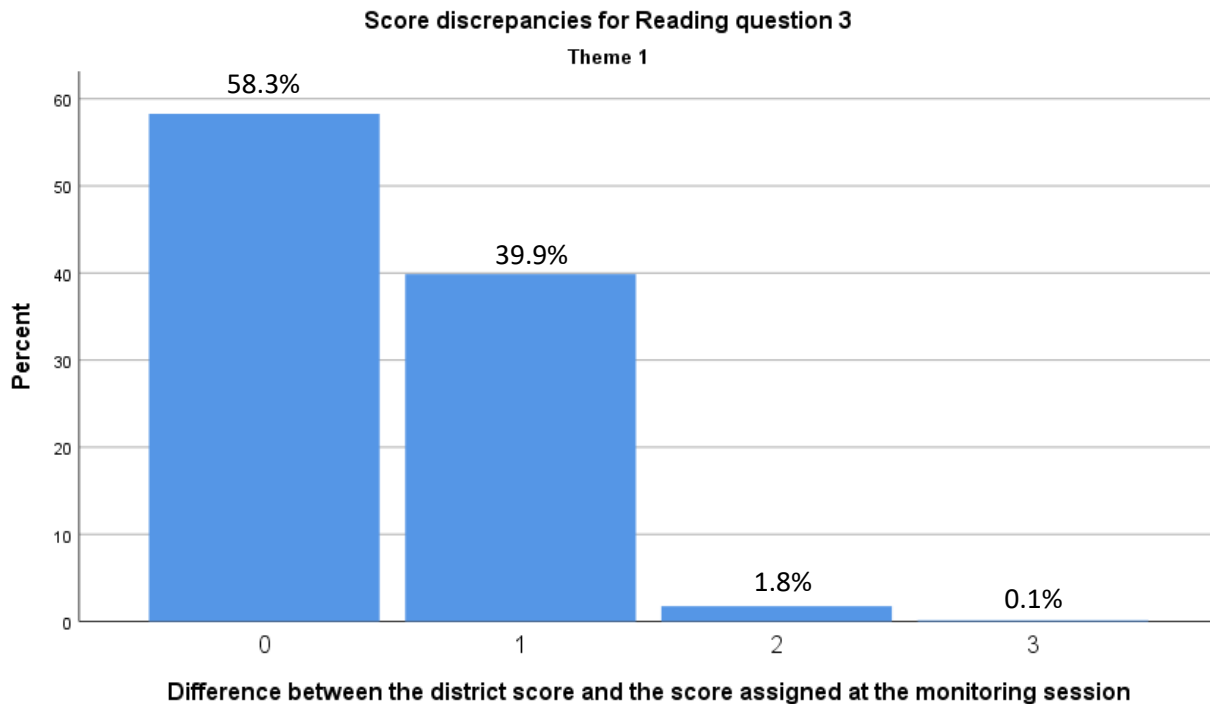
### Written-Response: Theme 1, Question 2



95.9% of the local scores were within 1 point of the scores assigned at the monitoring session.

## Grade 4 Reading (continued)

### Written-Response: Theme 1, Question 3

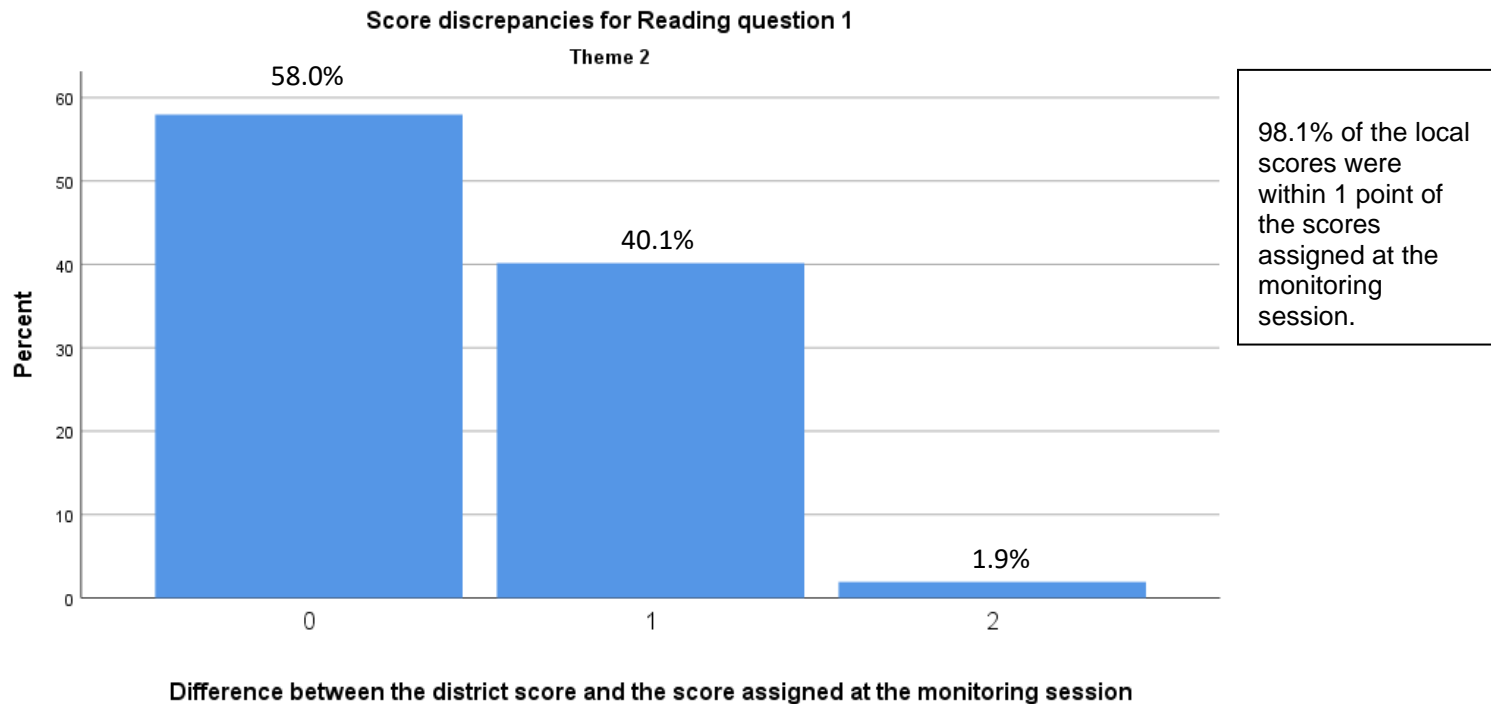


98.2% of the local scores were within 1 point of the scores assigned at the monitoring session.



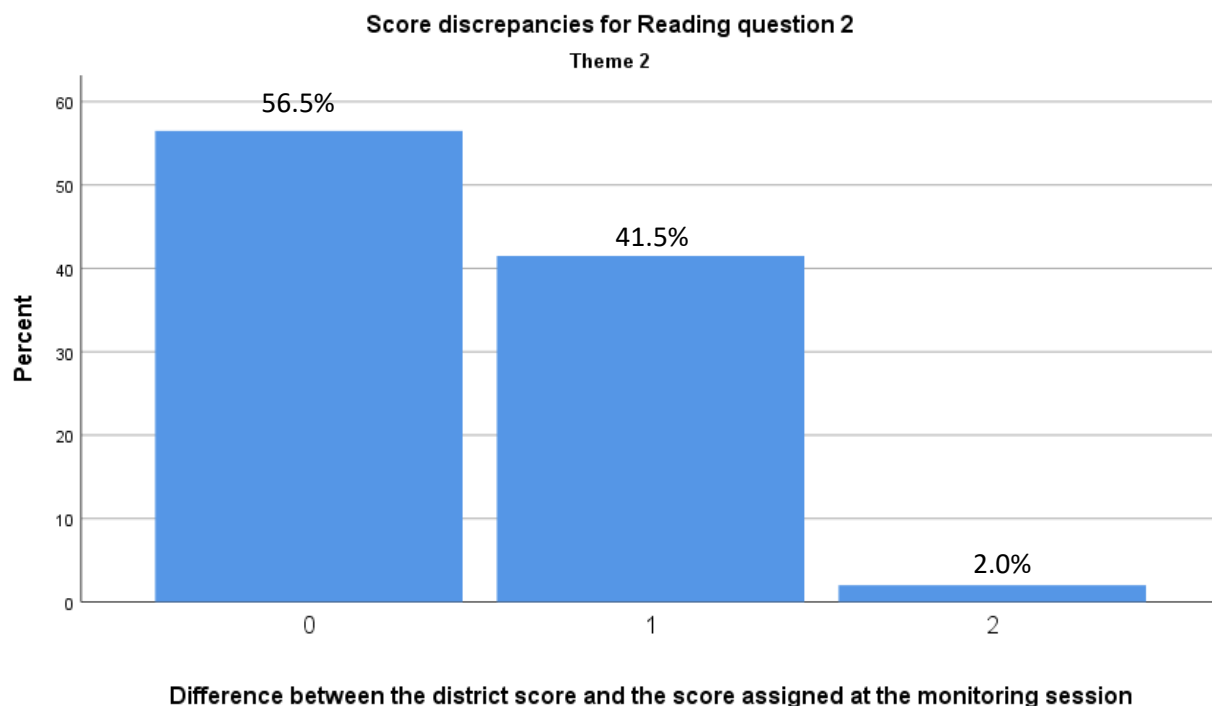
## Grade 4 Reading (continued)

### Written-Response: Theme 2, Question 1



## Grade 4 Reading (continued)

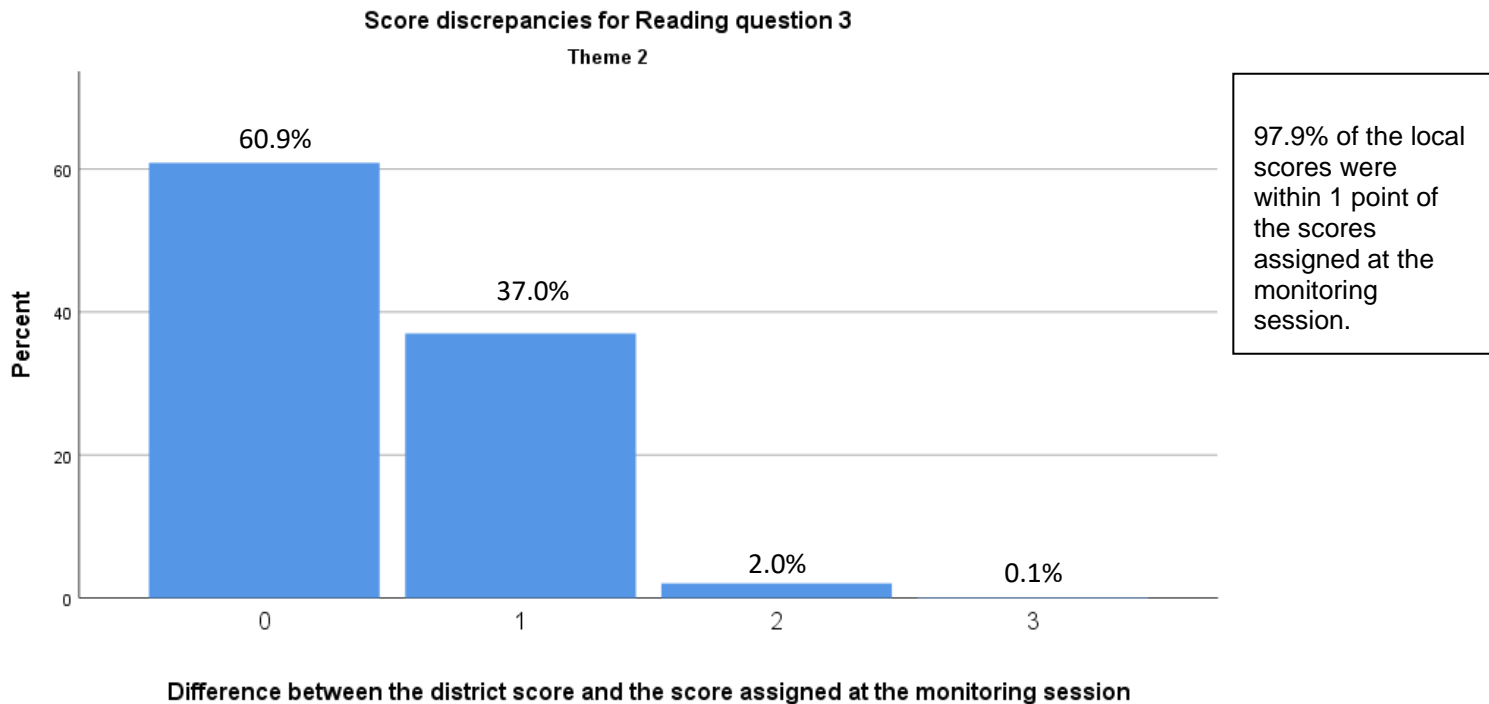
### Written-Response: Theme 2, Question 2



98.0% of the local scores were within 1 point of the scores assigned at the monitoring session.

## Grade 4 Reading (continued)

### Written-Response: Theme 2, Question 3



## Monitoring Comments: Grade 4 Reading

General comments regarding student performance on reading written response questions according to the participants of the July 2021 monitoring session:

### Student Strengths

- Students demonstrated a good understanding of the passages.
- Students are good at finding information in texts.
- Students showed an ability to make inferences.
- Students were able to identify main ideas from the story.

### Areas Requiring Improvement

- Students need to work on organization and detail.
- Students need to support their opinion.
- Students need to support their ideas by providing examples from the text.
- Students had difficulty comparing and contrasting.
- Students need to work on making personal connections to the story.

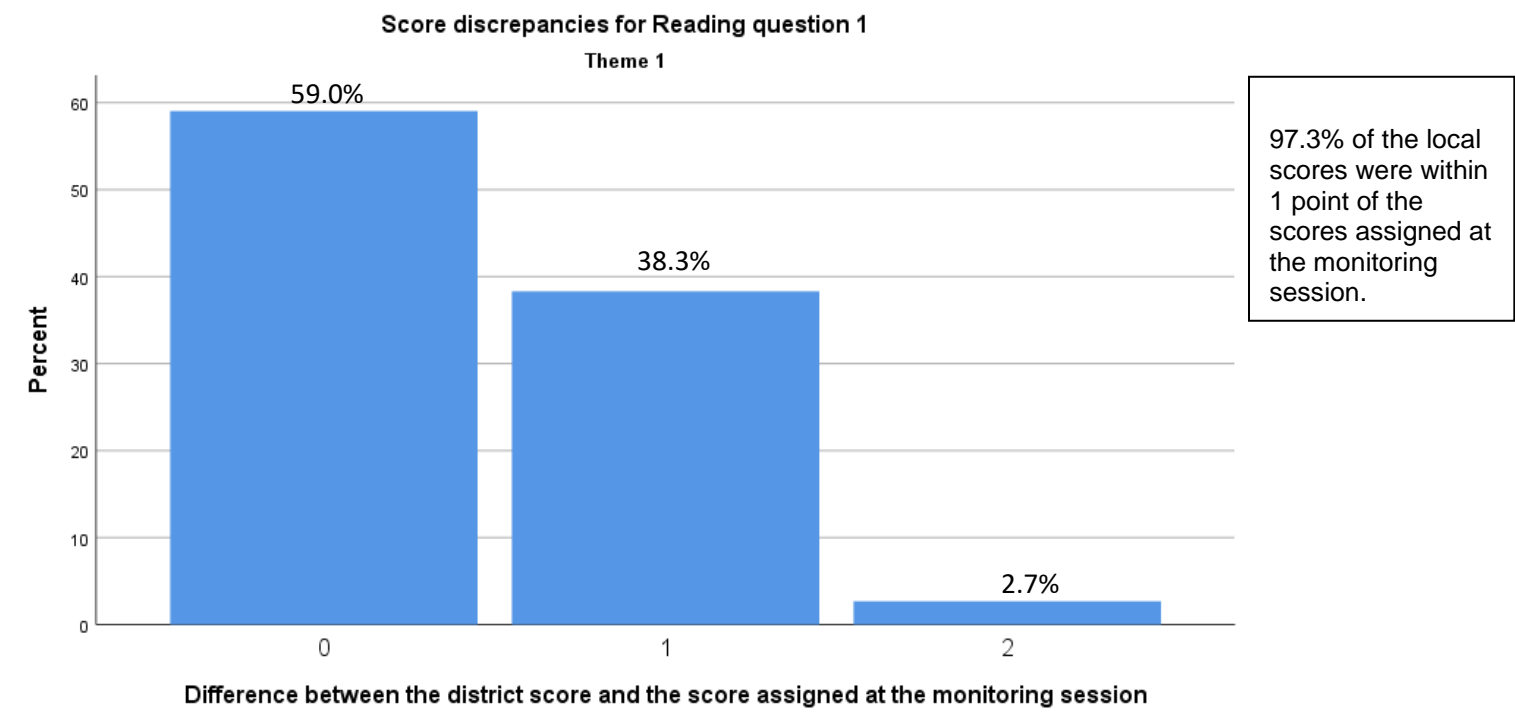
### Implications for Instruction

The marking team suggests that teachers could focus on the following:

- Mechanics of writing.
- Organization and adding details from the text.
- Reading the question before reading the text.
- Multi-step writing tasks.
- Early literacy (K-3), as some students had a greater understanding of the reading than they could effectively put in their response.
- Taking time to read and understand the question.
- Use of specific words rather than pronouns and non-specific language.
- Connecting main ideas with supporting details.
- More practice with comparing and contrasting.
- More time with texts.

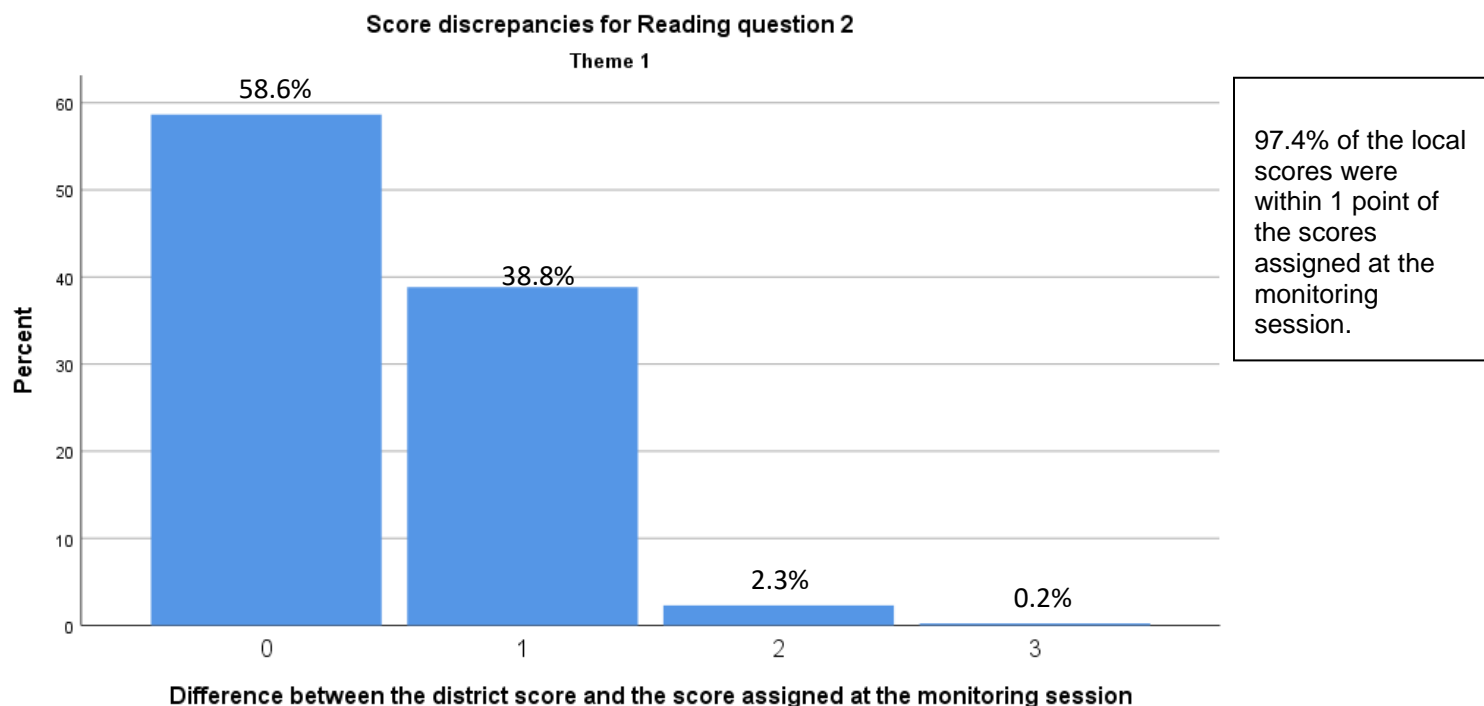
Grade 7 Reading

Written-Response: Theme 1, Question 1



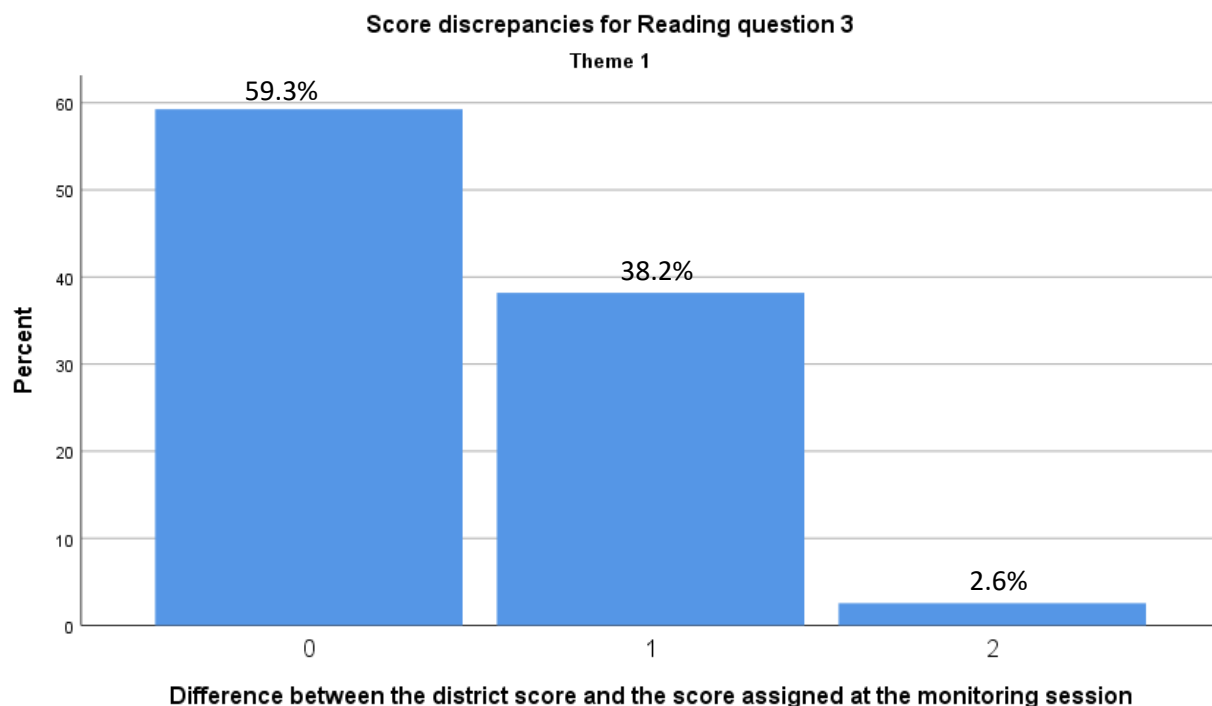
## Grade 7 Reading (continued)

### Written-Response: Theme 1, Question 2



## Grade 7 Reading (continued)

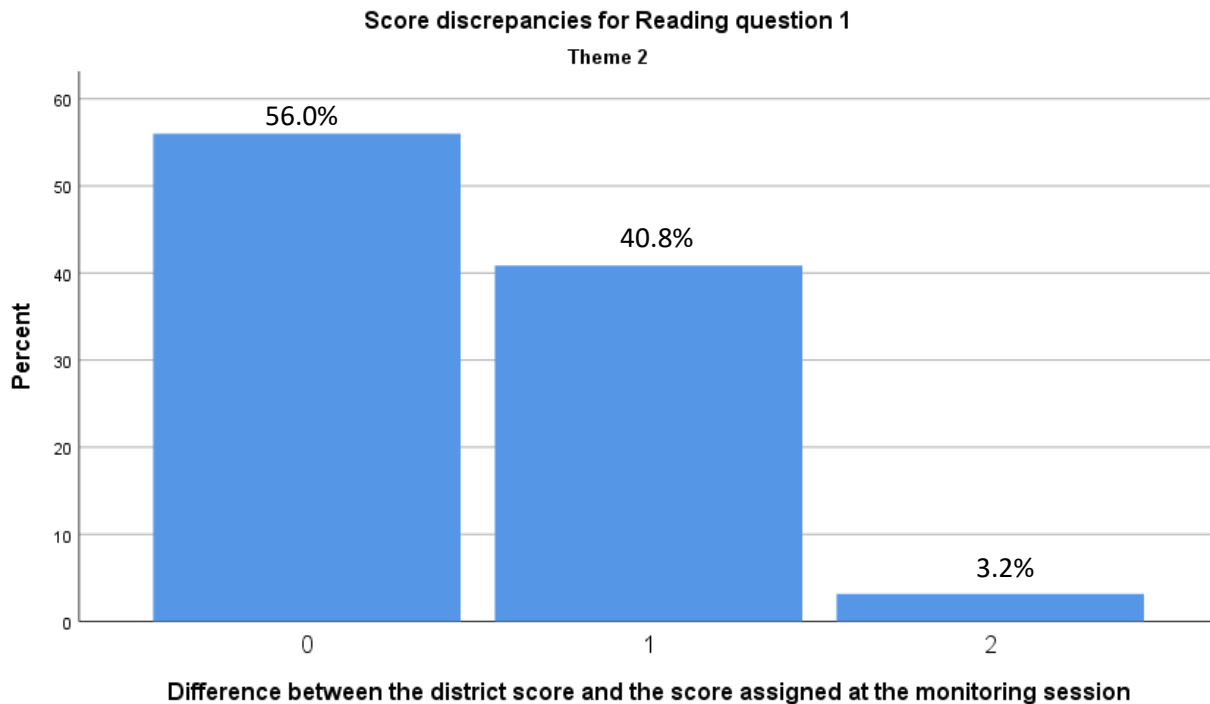
### Written-Response: Theme 1, Question 3



97.5% of the local scores were within 1 point of the scores assigned at the monitoring session.

## Grade 7 Reading (continued)

### Written-Response: Theme 2, Question 1

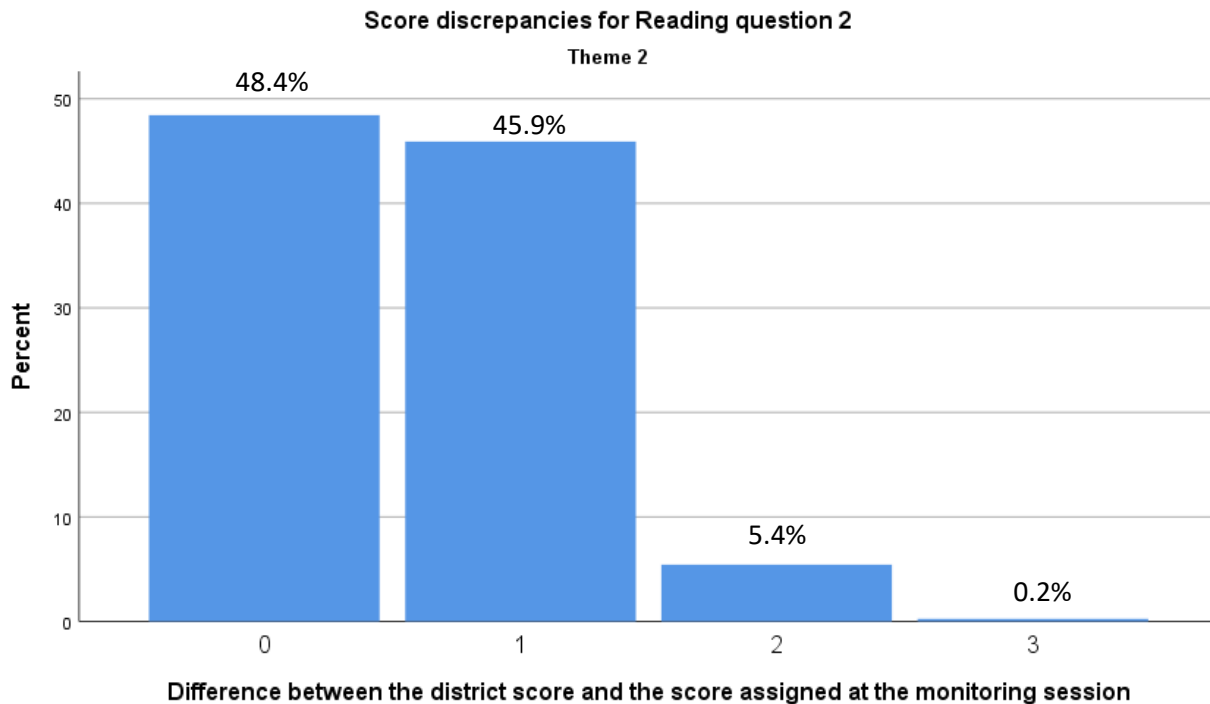


96.8% of the local scores were within 1 point of the scores assigned at the monitoring session.



## Grade 7 Reading (continued)

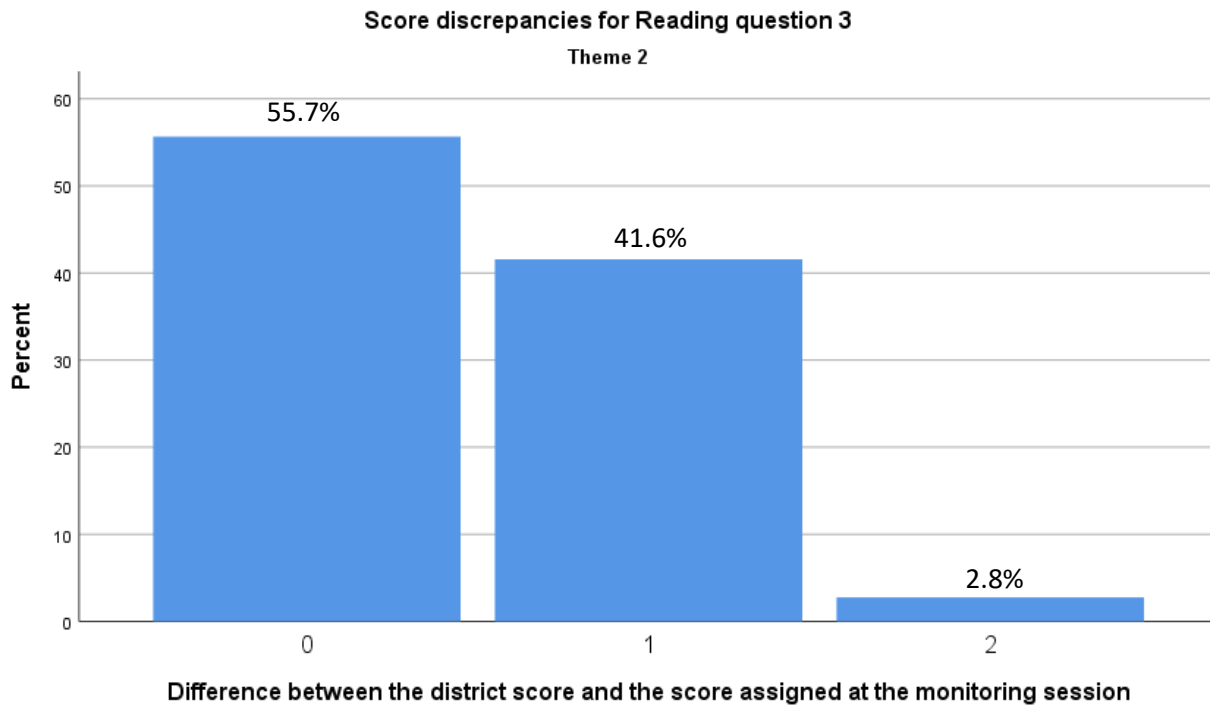
### Written-Response: Theme 2, Question 2



94.3% of the local scores were within 1 point of the scores assigned at the monitoring session.

## Grade 7 Reading (continued)

### Written-Response: Theme 2, Question 3



97.3% of the local scores were within 1 point of the scores assigned at the monitoring session.

## Monitoring Comments: Grade 7 Reading

General comments regarding student performance on reading written response questions according to the participants of the July 2021 monitoring session:

### Student Strengths

- Students demonstrated a strong reading comprehension.
- Student were able to identify the main ideas of the passages.
- Students showed an interest in both stories.
- Students made strong connections between the events in the stories and personal insights.
- Students were able to write comprehensive introductory sentences.
- Students were able to read the questions correctly and respond to what was asked.
- Student made connections to the characters and issues.

### Areas Requiring Improvement

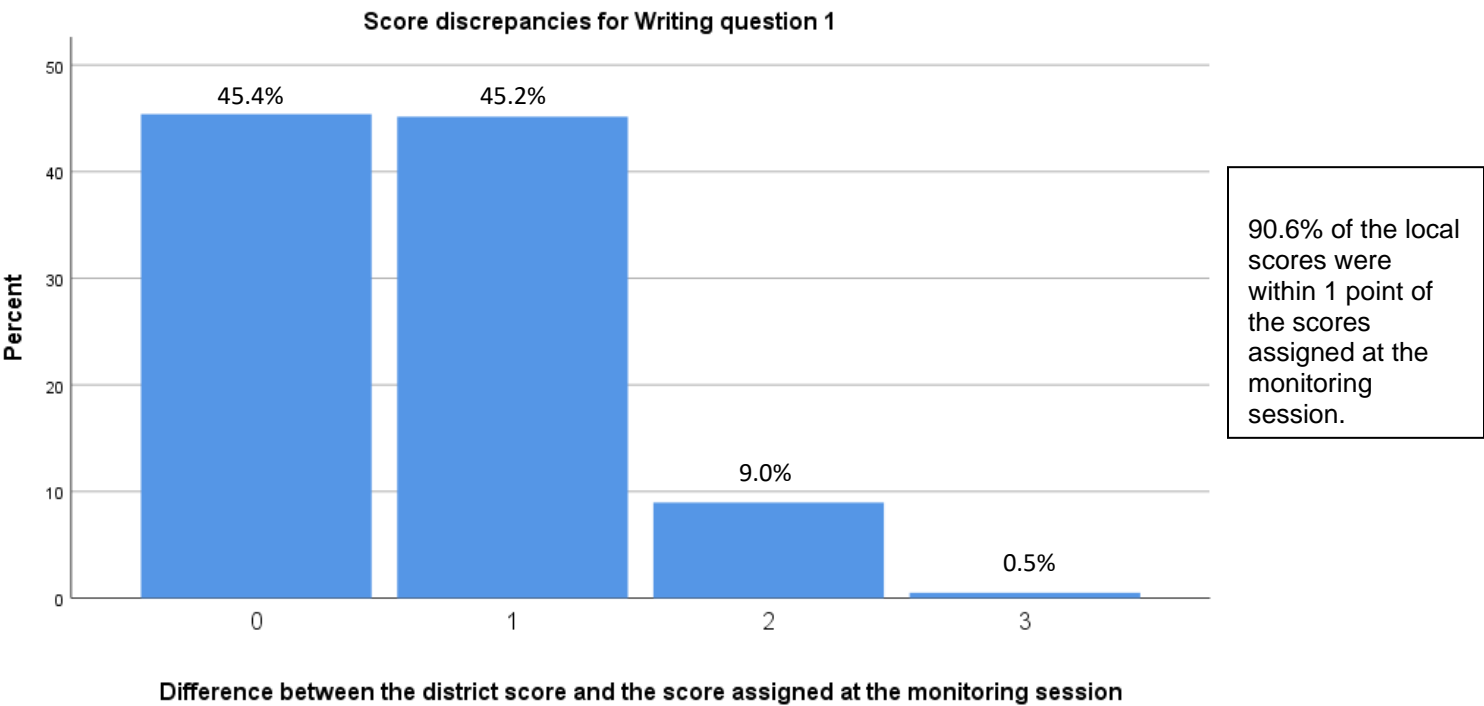
- Students need to work on organization and explaining their responses.
- Students need to work on inferencing, making connections and integration of ideas with evidence.
- Students need to give complete answers, instead of one quick point.
- Students need to be able to provide evidence from the text in their own words.
- Students found synthesis challenging.
- Students need to work on retelling the story in their own words.

### Implications for Instruction

The marking team suggests that teachers could focus on the following:

- Reading comprehension and synthesis.
- Inferencing, comparing and contrasting.
- Having students read questions before reading the passages.
- Having students highlight main ideas from the story before responding to the questions.
- Providing evidence from the text to support responses.
- Writing a balanced response that includes both comprehension and connections.
- Reminding students to end with a summary of insight that ties everything together.
- Encouraging students to answer more completely.
- Having students make connections to their own experiences.
- Everyday writing.
- Continue building student capacity with best practice strategies (e.g., accessing prior knowledge, making predictions, and text to world/text/self connections).

Grade 4 Writing



## Monitoring Comments: Grade 4 Writing

General comments regarding student performance on the writing written response question according to the participants of the July 2021 monitoring session:

### Student Strengths

- Students understood the question.
- Students were able to make personal connections in their responses.
- Students were able to write in chronological order.
- Students were able to use creativity, voice and humour.
- Students were able to write with a beginning, middle and end.
- Students were able to use interesting vocabulary and descriptive language.

### Areas Requiring Improvement

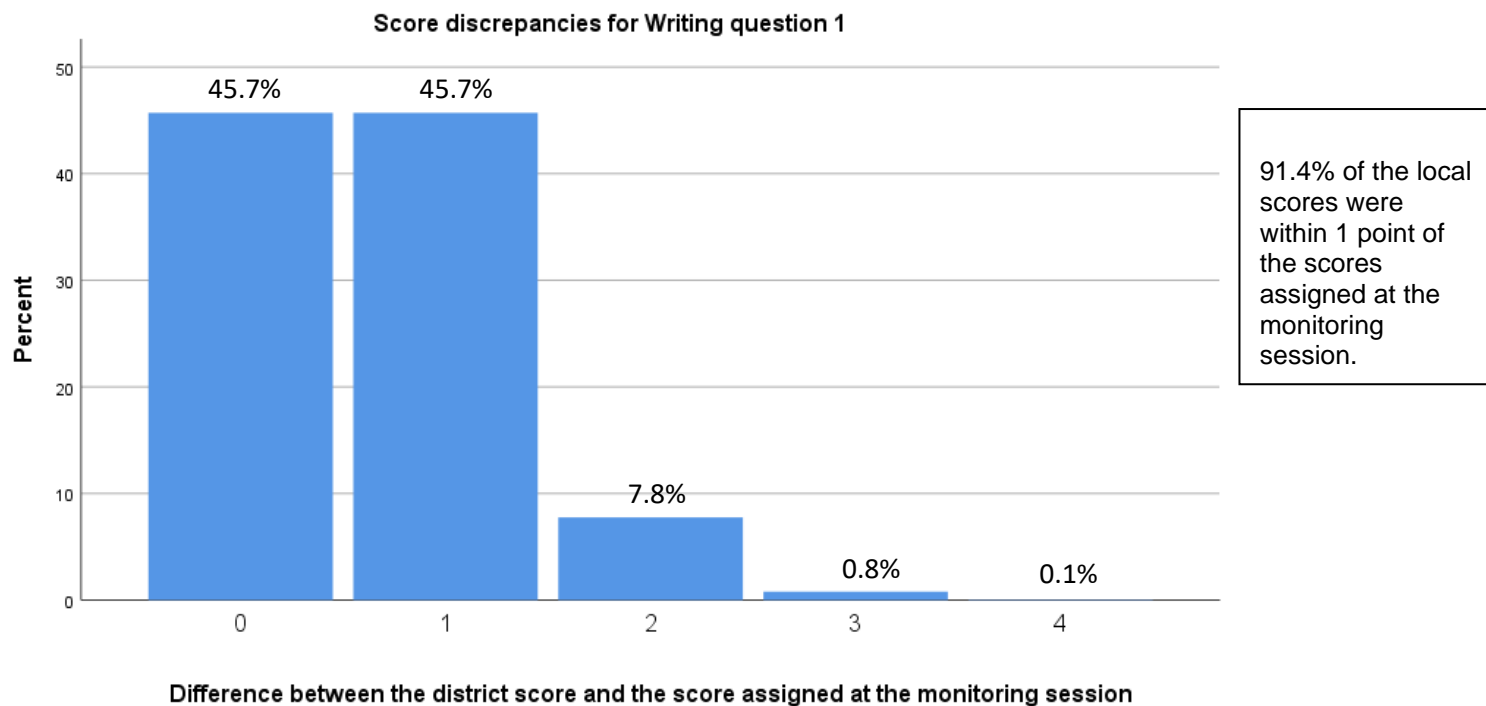
- Students need to stay on topic.
- Students need to work on spelling conventions and grammar.
- Students need to work on the paragraph structure.
- Students need to work on the endings, some endings were too abrupt.

### Implications for Instruction

The marking team suggests that teachers could focus on the following:

- More writing in the classroom.
- Constructing complete sentences.
- Vocabulary and sentence structures.
- Paragraph development.
- Transition words.
- Using literary examples to show how authors organize and expand on their ideas.

## Grade 7 Writing



## Monitoring Comments: Grade 7 Writing

General comments regarding student performance on the writing written response question according to the participants of the July 2021 monitoring session:

### Student Strengths

- Students were able to understand and relate to the topic.
- Students demonstrated originality and humour.
- Students were able to share personal stories in engaging ways.
- Students were able to follow a clear format.
- Students were able to address the purpose of the writing and generally developed their ideas.

### Areas Requiring Improvement

- Students need to work on organization of ideas.
- Students need to work on sentence fluency, variety and flow.
- Students need to group ideas using paragraphs.
- Students need to work on introductions and conclusions.
- Students need to work on elaborating main points.

### Implications for Instruction

The marking team suggests that teachers could focus on the following:

- Thesis statement, body paragraphs and a conclusion.
- Use of voice.
- Daily writing with criteria.
- Using graphic organizers to help students group ideas.
- Ensuring students are aware of their audience.
- Sentence structure.
- Punctuation.
- Variation in vocabulary.
- Adding insight and originality.

## Summary of Marking Reliability

Maintaining consistent FSA marking standards across the province helps to ensure that no matter where a student takes the FSA, his or her responses will be marked in a consistent manner. The purpose of the FSA marking monitoring session was to gather evidence for the reliability, validity, and fairness of the FSA marking process in accordance to the Standards<sup>1</sup>. Overall results show a high level of consistency; between 91 – 98% of the scores assigned at the monitoring session were within 1 point of the local or district scores. No significant difference in scoring consistency was found between the grades, although marking reliability for numeracy was slightly higher than for reading, which was higher than for writing in both grades.

The results from the FSA marking monitoring session provide evidence for the reliability, validity, and fairness of the FSA marking process at the provincial level. Specifically, the results allow the Ministry to assess the reliability of the marks assigned at district levels, provide useful information to markers about the FSA marking process in terms of how to effectively use the assessment rubric and knowing what to look for when marking student responses, etc. To provide feedback on how well local scorers performed, all districts are provided with summary reports unique to their own district. An overall independent school-level summary report is also provided to the superintendent of independent schools. It is expected that such reports will highlight the importance of ensuring high scoring standards are followed so that the scoring process is reliable, valid and fair.



## Considerations for Marking

**General comments regarding district/school marking according to the participants of the July 2021 monitoring session:**

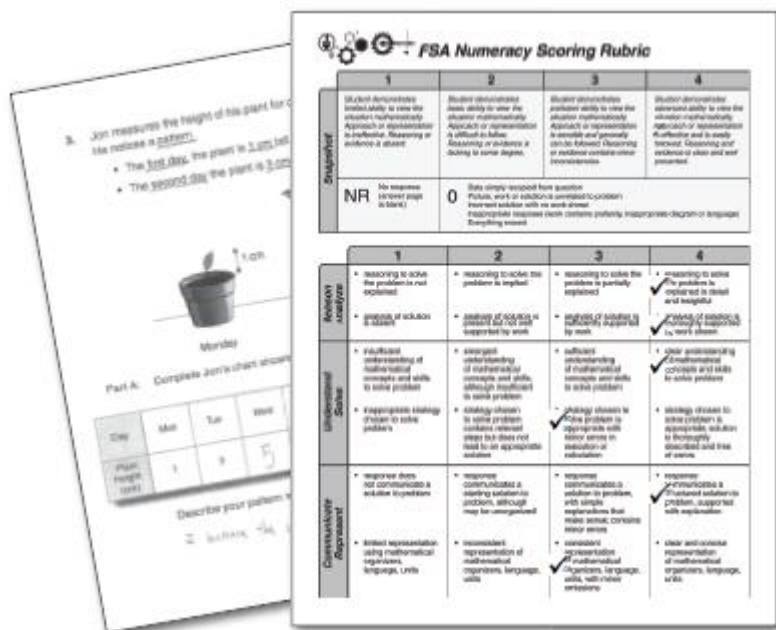
**Score holistically.** Holistic scoring gives an overall score for the student response. When scoring holistically, the focus is on what the student CAN do and the strengths demonstrated in the student's work. No one aspect of the student's work carries more importance or weight than another when scoring holistically.

Give the student response a complete and careful read for a general impression. Use professional experience, and based on the rubric, give each student paper a fair score. Be aware of personal biases when scoring and refer to the rubric and exemplars, especially when in doubt.

Based on the balance of strengths and weaknesses according to the rubric, arrive at an overall score for the response.

**Refer to the rubrics** regularly to stay focused. The scoring rubrics form the basis for assessment; refer to them often, especially if unsure what score to give the student's work. Markers should review the rubrics at the beginning of each scoring session, and continue to refer to them during scoring, adding notes and highlighting aspects of importance.

**Score for the 'best line of fit'.** Markers should give an overall score for the student response, based on the score of the rubric where most of their response falls. Often students will score across two or three score points on the rubric. The final score should reflect where most of a student's response lies.



When being scored, this student's work received the greatest number of checkmarks for descriptors in Score 4, therefore, 'best line of fit' would be a score of 4. (even though there is a calculation error in this numeracy example)

## Some noteworthy comments from participants

- *I am very grateful for the smooth work of this! The papers in the web-based portal were easy to read and navigate, and the convenience of working from home was very much appreciated. Thank you for this opportunity.*
- *Well organized. I actually prefer the online version of marking. Very easy to click through the papers.*
- *I loved having the opportunity to attend and soak in this Pro-D. I have lots of ideas for this school year as a result. Thank you team - this was amazing. Can't wait for next year.*
- *The session was really well run and informative. I very much look forward to the opportunity to do it again and possibly be part of the creation process.*
- *It was well paced. It was informative as well.*
- *I have thoroughly enjoyed being part of this monitoring session. It has given me confidence to see we are on the right track and I would be happy to join it again to solidify this. I can also share with my district (I am a district lead) that we are on the right track...*
- *This monitoring session for the most part was very efficient and time was used well. Reviewing all the results for each of the math questions I didn't personally feel was necessary.*
- *Really smooth and well done. Kudos to all the behind the scenes work and the time spent by the leaders preparing and supporting us.*
- *Thank you! This has been great. It's my first time doing something like this, but the process was smooth and everyone involved helpful and kind. It has helped me gain an insight into the FSA marking process, and sharpened my understanding of the criteria etc.*
- *This was a very worthwhile session. It provided a great guide for further understanding student thinking, and how to address areas of difficulty so that we can help students succeed. Great organization, thank you,*

## Appendix 1: Monitoring session Scorer demographics

60 participants completed the feedback form.

### Who were they?

- 28% classroom educators
- 49% administrators
- 23% other

### Years of experience:

- 25% had less than 15 years of experience
- 75% had more than 16 years of experience

### Where did they teach?

- 77% taught at English language schools
- 5% taught at French immersion schools
- 18% taught at Other (e.g., both, trilingual school, university)

### Experience with the FSA:

- 23% had experience with FSA standard setting
- 97% participated in the FSA district-level marking

## Summary of responses to Likert scale statements (sample):

100% agreed or strongly agreed that the training provided an opportunity to develop a common understanding of the scoring criteria.

100% agreed or strongly agreed that the exemplar papers were useful in explaining and supporting score allocation.

100% agreed or strongly agreed that the marking leaders were effective in guiding and coordinating the monitored marking process.

97% agreed or strongly agreed that the monitored marking process was efficient and well-coordinated.

97% agreed or strongly agreed that the online platform was suitable for training and marking.

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<sup>i</sup> American Educational Research Association., American Psychological Association., & National Council on Measurement in Education. (2014). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.