

# The Enhanced Focus of Community Colleges as “The Solution”

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# What is the Problem?

- International comparisons
- Skill needs of the contemporary economy
  - Some college is necessary for access to decent jobs
  - Employer needs
- Continued inequality in higher ed access and completion for low income and minority students

# Solution—Increase in Degrees and Certificates

- Obama Administration
  - An additional 5 million CC awards by 2010
- Gates Foundation
  - Double the percentage of low-income young people who earn a post-secondary credential by age 26 (from 30 percent to 60 percent)
  - Strong emphasis on community colleges
- Lumina Foundation
  - Increase share of population with high quality credentials from 40 to 60 percent by 2050
  - Community College initiatives but less exclusive focus

# Why Community Colleges

- Presumed lower cost
- Shorter time to degrees
- Many students enroll, but most do not graduate
- Concentration of underserved students
- Job growth in middle skill jobs
- Close connections to the local economy

# Recent Articles on Whether CCs Can Meet This Challenge

- How Community Colleges Can Reach Obama's Goals (Jenkins and Bailey) *Inside Higher Ed* (10/13/2009)

<http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2009/10/13/bailey>

- Can Community Colleges Rise to the Occasion? (Bailey and Jacobs) *The American Prospect* (10/26/09)

[http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=can\\_community\\_colleges\\_rise\\_to\\_the\\_occasion](http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=can_community_colleges_rise_to_the_occasion)

# Community College Degrees have Value in the Labor Market

- Benefits of an Associate Degree (compared to a high school degree)
  - Men earn 15 to 30 percent more
  - Women earn up to 50 percent more
- Certificates
  - Positive for women
  - Uncertain for men
- Varies by field
- Earnings benefit of an associate degree is at least half of the benefit of a B.A.

# How Can This Be Done?

- Obama—CCs produce about 855K awards a year—average of 500K
- Lumina—Compounded annual increase of 5% - 150K more than the year before
- Certainly can't be done by enrollment increases—unrealistic, inefficient, and impossible financially—must increase graduation rates

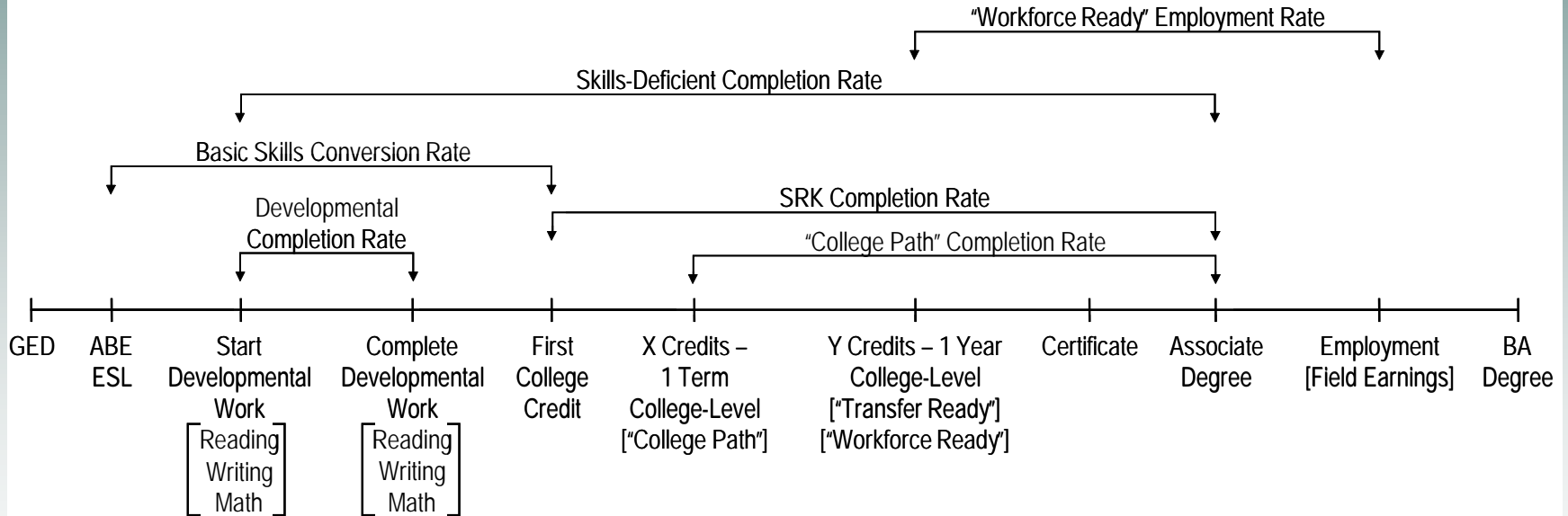
# Community College Graduation Rates

- No single definition of graduation rate or student outcomes
- Student Right to Know (SRK) most common
  - “Three” year rate for 1<sup>st</sup> time, full time degree seeking students
- Low rates—high cost per degree



# Many Alternative Outcome Measures

**“Milestone Events” in a Student Enrollment Pathway**



Source: Pete Ewell, NCHEMS, 2006.

# Three criticisms of SRK

- Only full time students
- The time period is too short
- Institutional graduation rates count transfers (without graduation) as “non-completers”

# Accuracy of the SRK Graduation Rate (National Data)

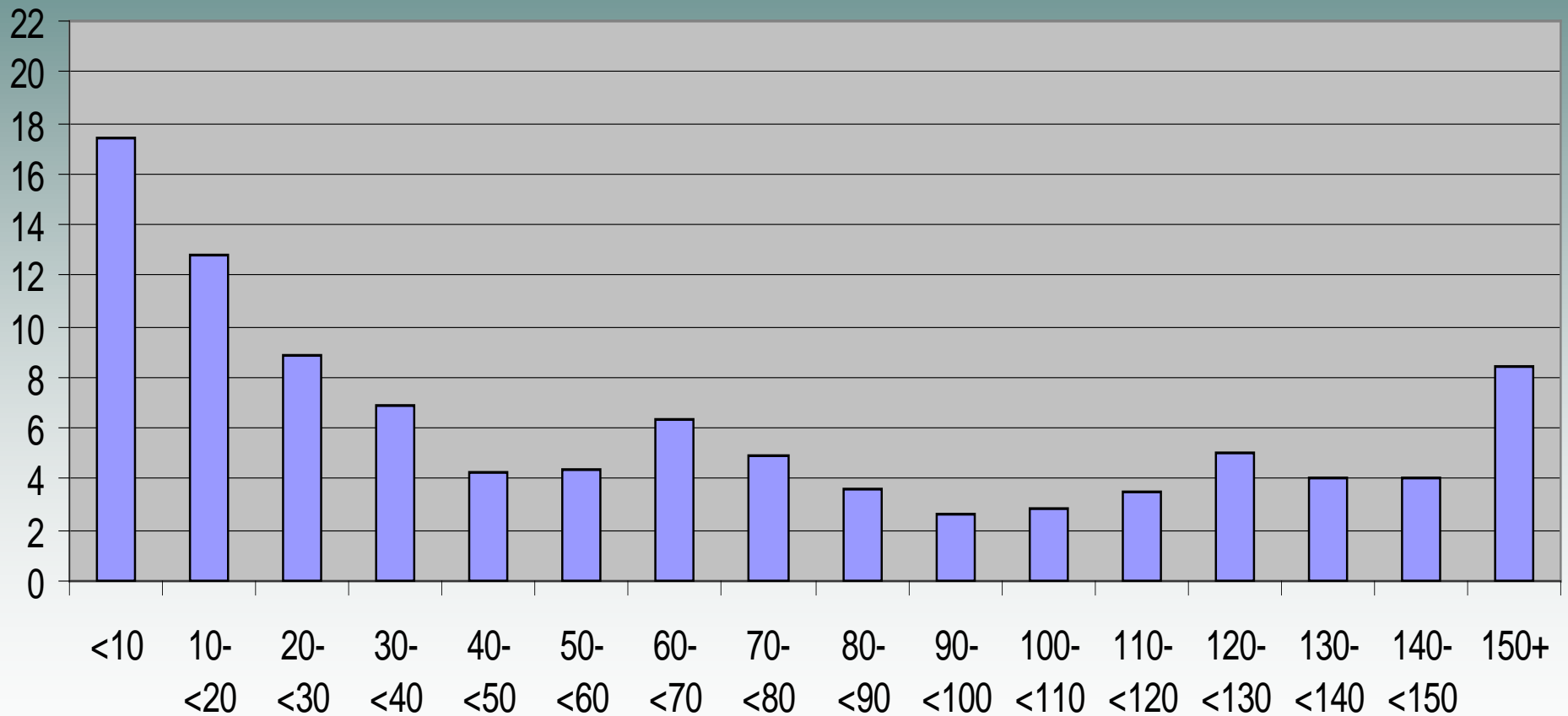
	Institutional Rate	Individual Rate
Three year	22.9 %	25.5%
Six year	28.3%	45.7%

Source: BPS 96/2001

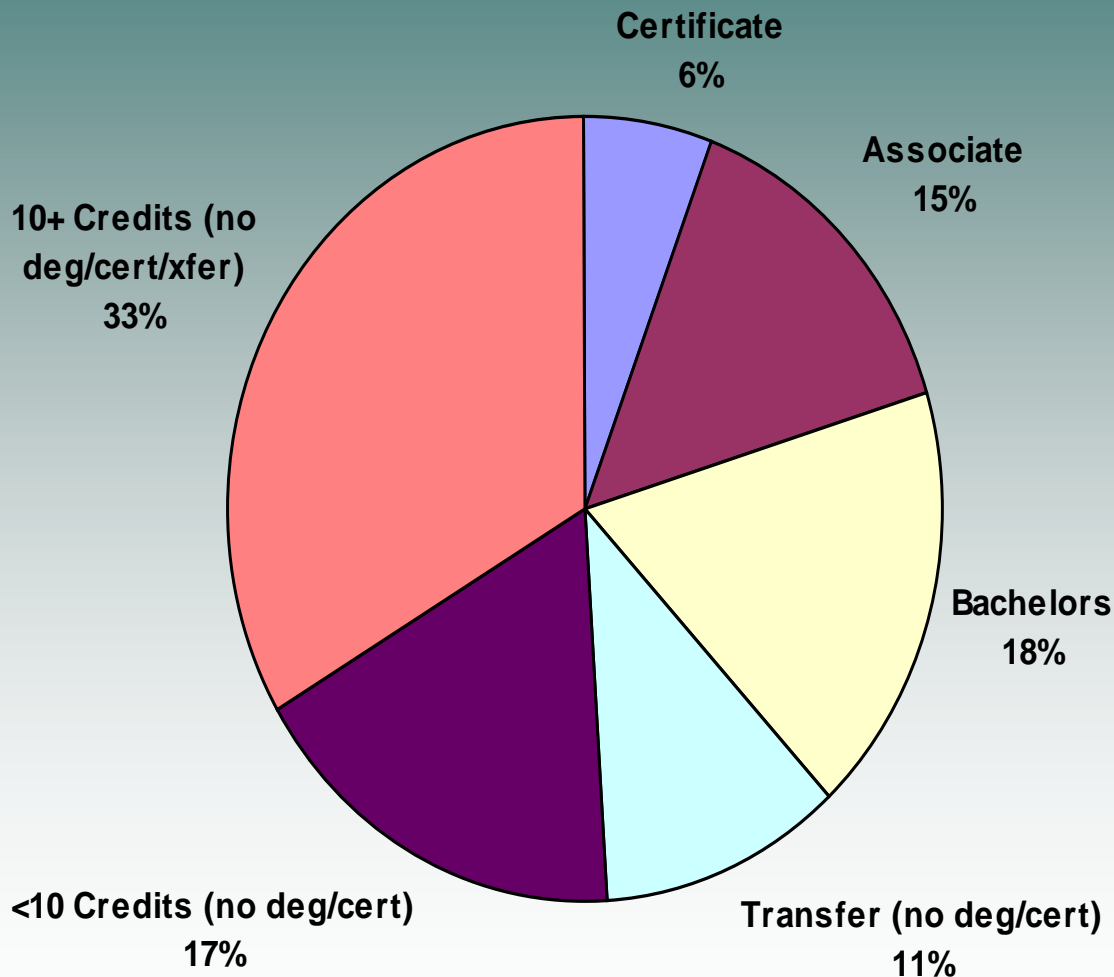
# “CC First” PSE Students

## Total Credits Earned in All PSE Within Eight Years

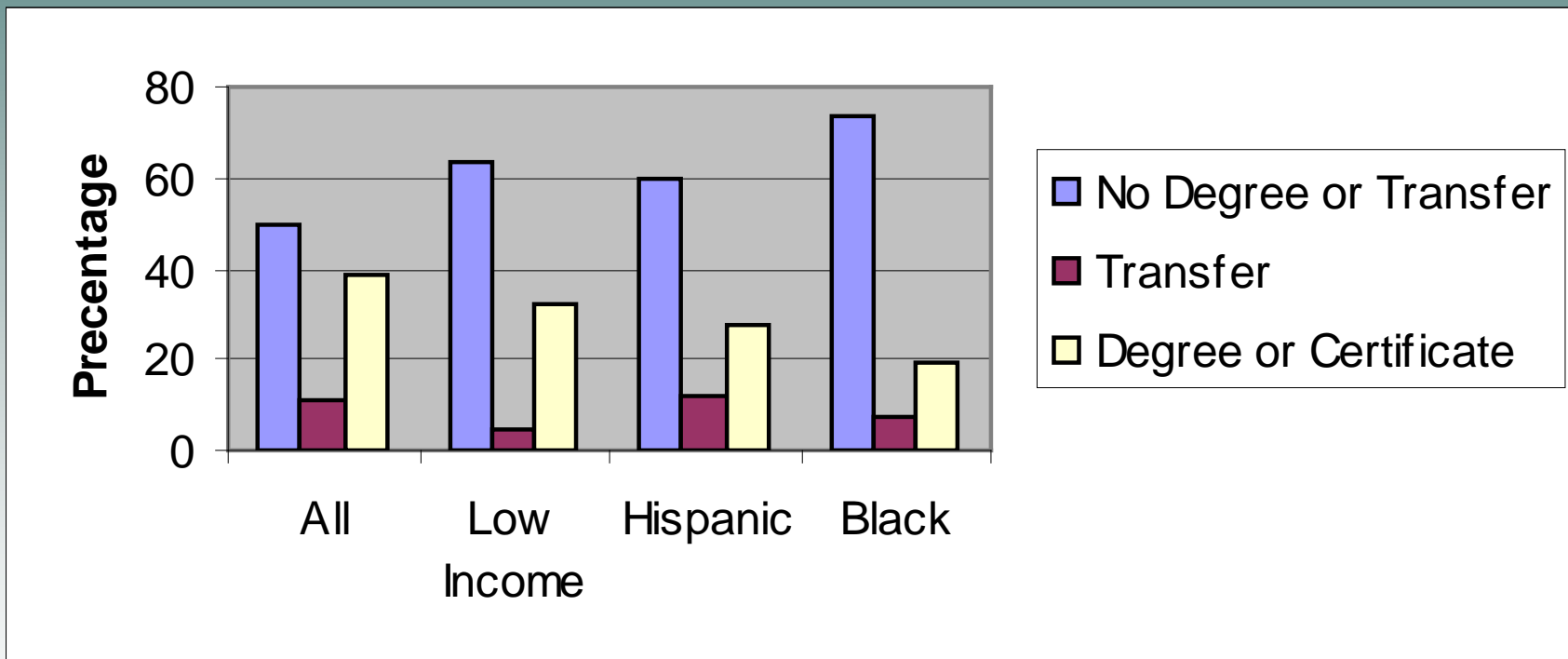
### NELS



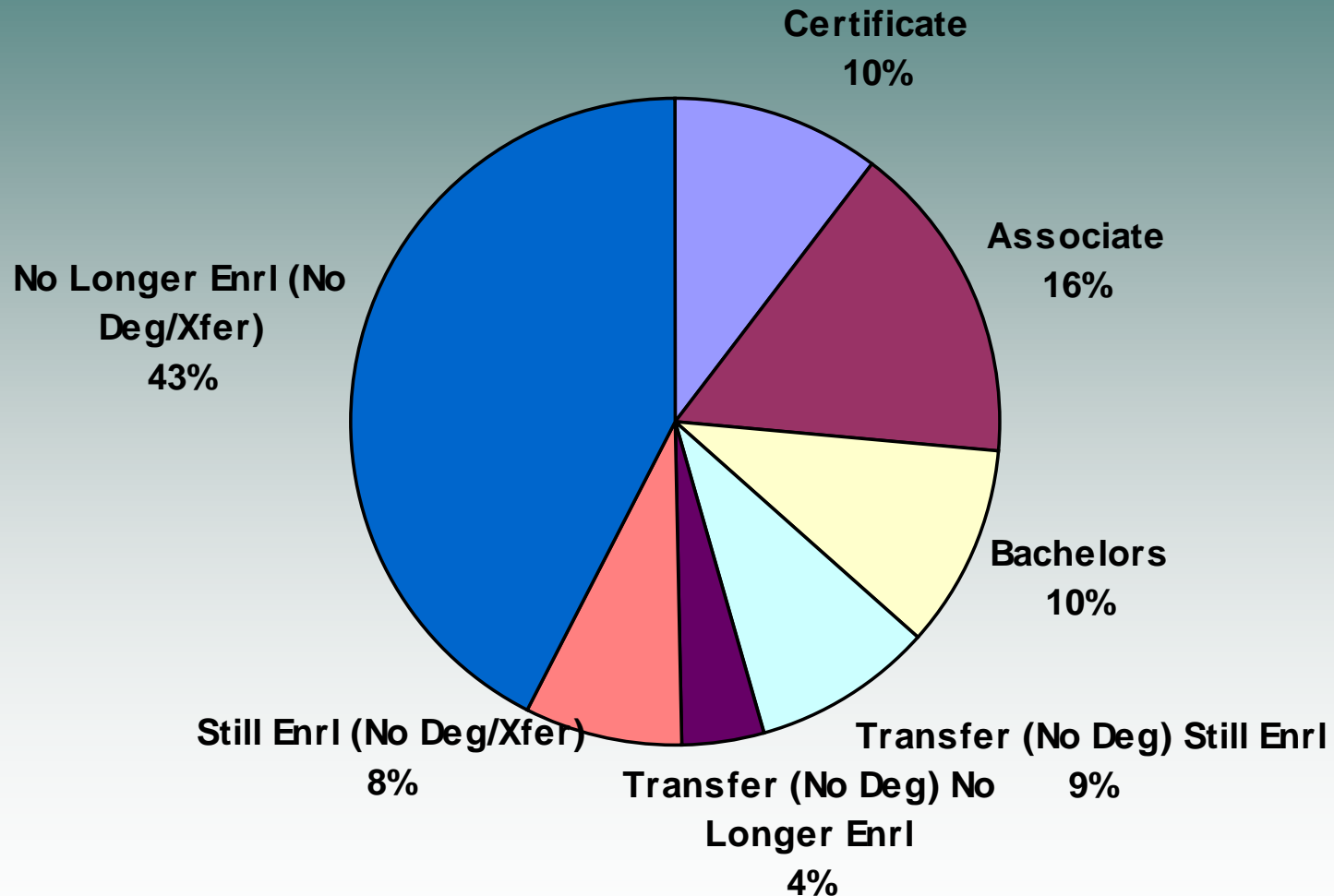
# “CC First” PSE Students Percent Distribution by Highest Outcome in All PSE Within Eight Years (NELS)



# “CC First” PSE Students in Various Groups Percent Distribution by Highest Outcome in All PSE Within Eight Years (NELS)



# “CC First” PSE Students Percent Distribution by Highest Outcome in All PSE Within Six Years (BPS96)



# How Do We Increase Graduation Rates?

- Many definitions of outcomes
- CC students face many social and economic barriers
- Weak academic skills are a particular barrier



## Community College Students Must Overcome Significant Social and Economic Barriers to Achieve their Educational Goals

	All Students		
	Community College (public 2-Year)	Public 4-Year	Private 4-Year (not-for-profit)
Income less than \$30,000	42.9 <sup>1</sup>	33.6	31.9
Age Under 25	47.0	71.0	66.9
Has Dependent Children	32.5	13.2	18.3
Part-Time Enrollment	66.1	30.2	26.7
Part-Year Enrollment	46.9	23.2	27.9

1. Parents' income for dependent students; student's (and spouse's) income for independent students.

Sources: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2004, and National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, Data Analysis System, 2004 (National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education). Author's calculations.

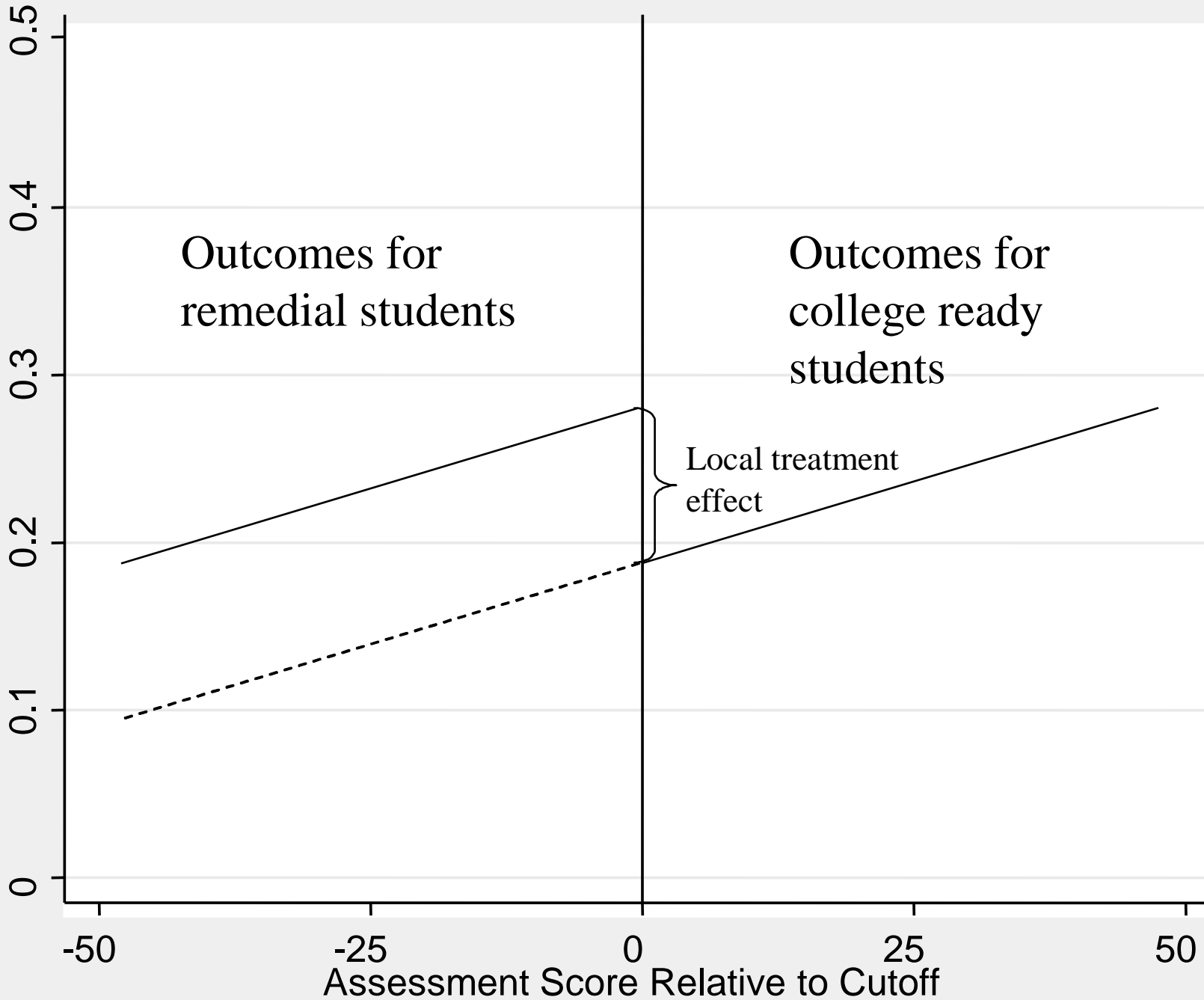
# Developmental Education

- Huge barrier to increased completion
- Evidence suggests that current practices do not work well
- Most students do not complete their developmental sequences

# Incidence of Remediation

- 58 percent—at least one course (NELS)
- 44 percent—1 to 3 courses (NELS)
- 14 percent—more than 3 courses (NELS)
  
- 59 percent—at least one course (ATD)

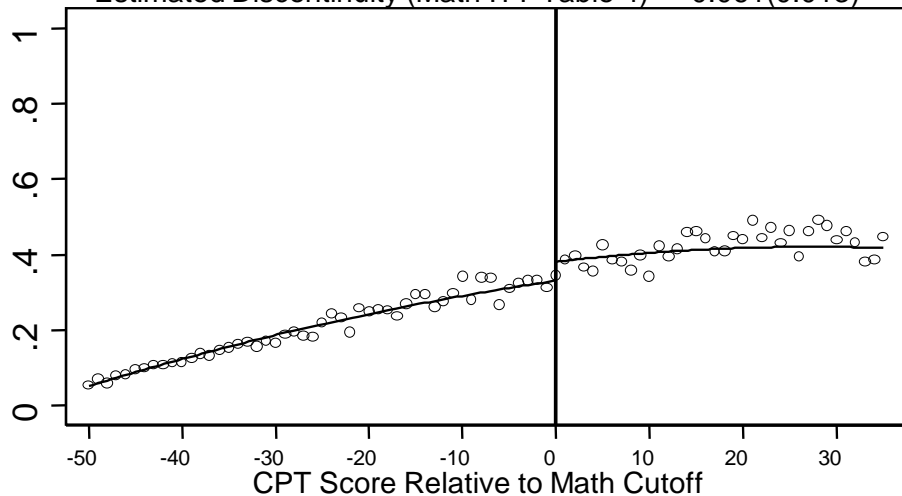
Student Outcome



# Completion of First College-Level Course and Retention by CPT Score and Subject

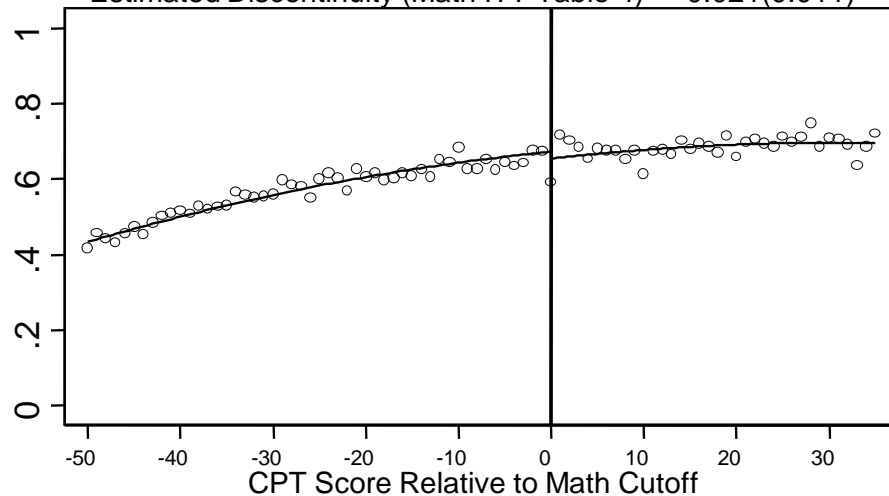
Outcome: Completion of First College-Level Course

Estimated Discontinuity (Math ITT Table 4) =  $-0.061(0.013)$

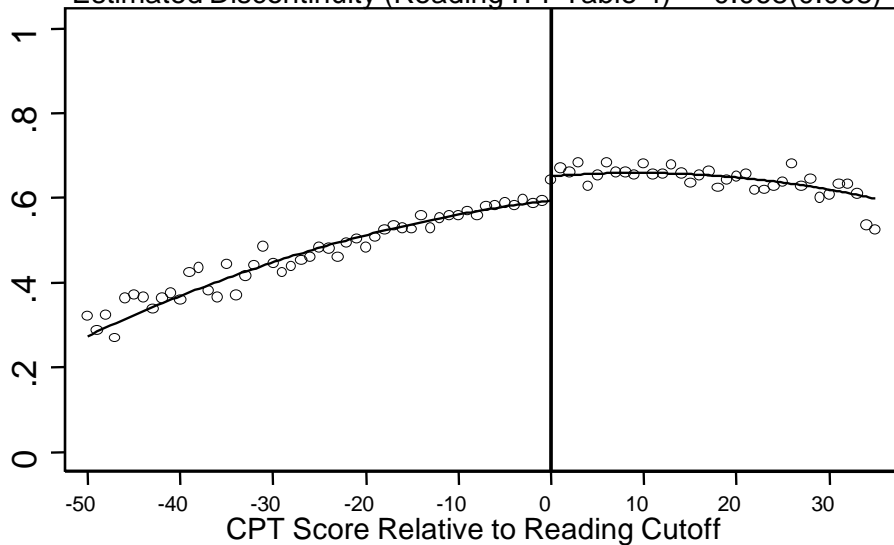


Outcome: Fall-to-Fall Retention

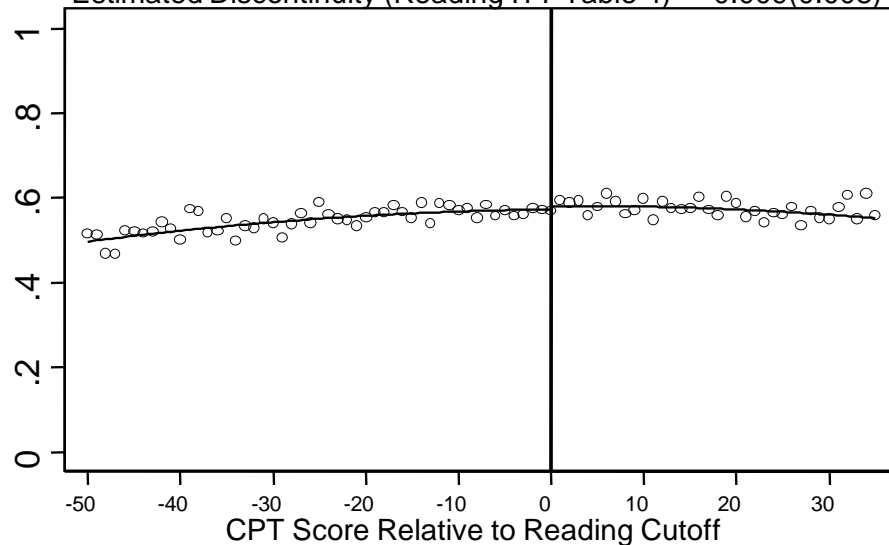
Estimated Discontinuity (Math ITT Table 4) =  $-0.021(0.011)$



Estimated Discontinuity (Reading ITT Table 4) =  $-0.068(0.008)$



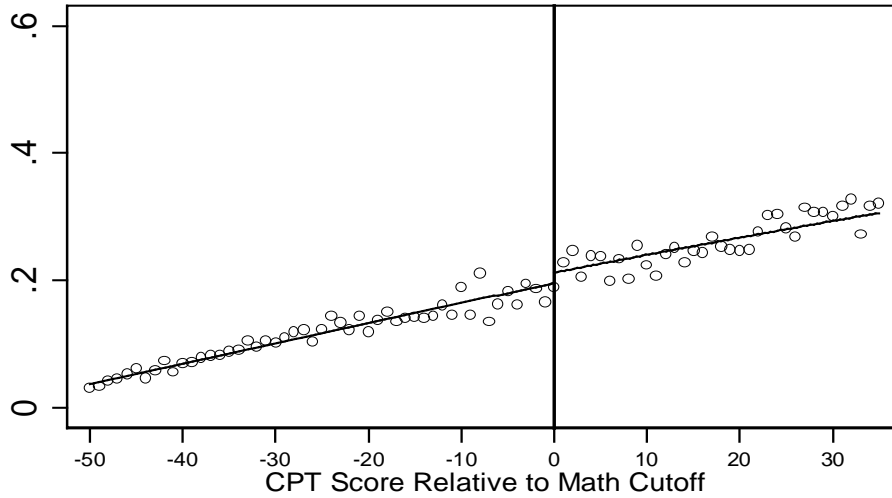
Estimated Discontinuity (Reading ITT Table 4) =  $-0.009(0.008)$



# Transfer to State University System and Degree Completion by CPT Score and Subject

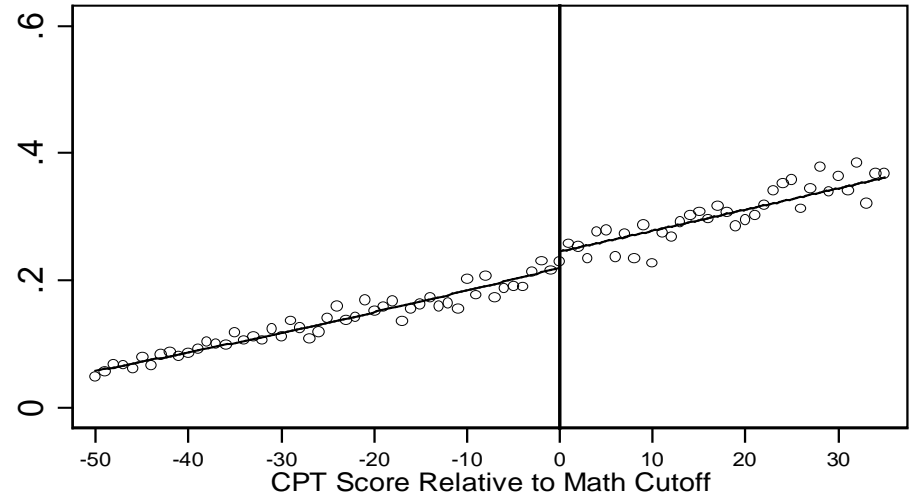
## Outcome: Transfer to SUS

Estimated Discontinuity (Math ITT Table 5) =  $-0.019(0.008)$

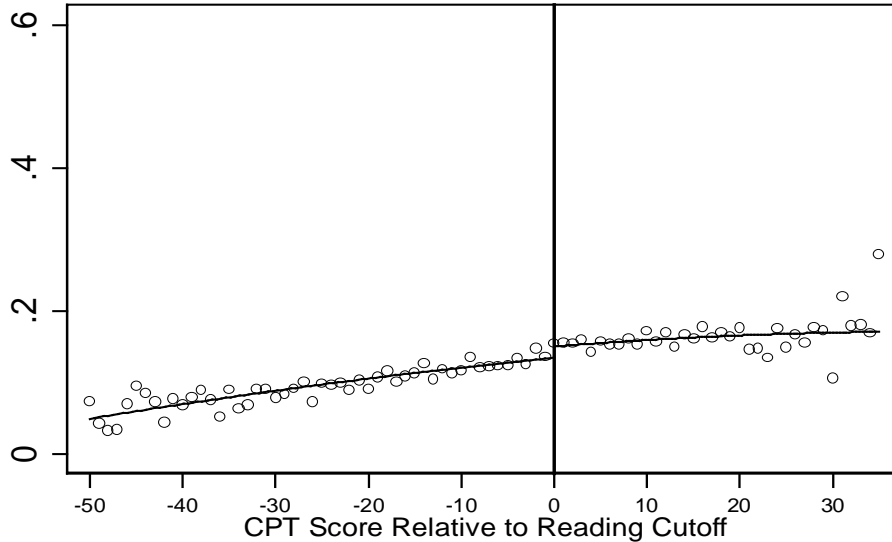


## Outcome: Degree Completion

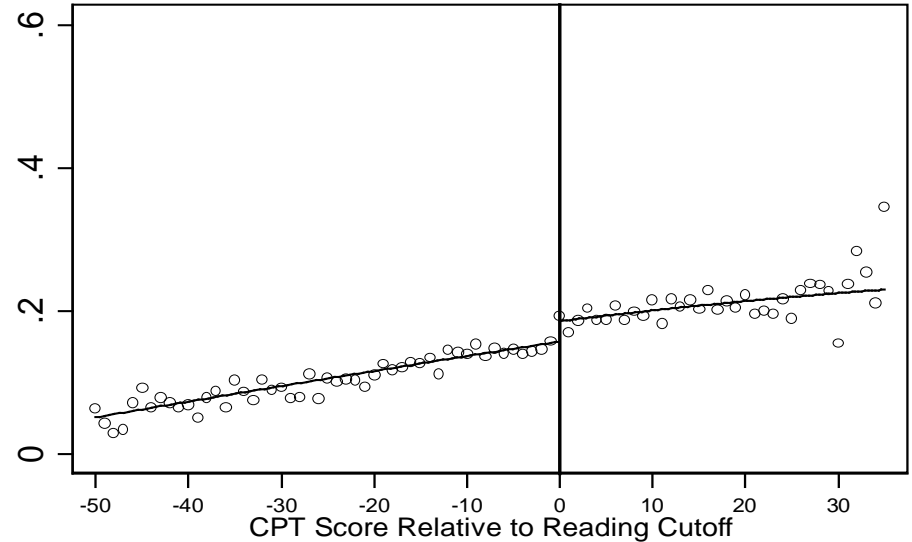
Estimated Discontinuity (Math ITT Table 5) =  $-0.030(0.008)$



Estimated Discontinuity (Reading ITT Table 5) =  $-0.019(0.004)$



Estimated Discontinuity (Reading ITT Table 5) =  $-0.029(0.004)$



# What Does This Say About Assessment?

- No obvious cutoff point
- Confusion about what it means to be “college ready”
- Assessments are not good predictors of future success in college
- Do they measure current skill levels?

# Implications for Effectiveness

- Current system neglects the academic needs of weaker “college level” students
- Applies primarily to upper level developmental ed students
- We know little about the effectiveness of services for students far from the cutoff scores
- We do know that few referred to multiple levels of remediation finish

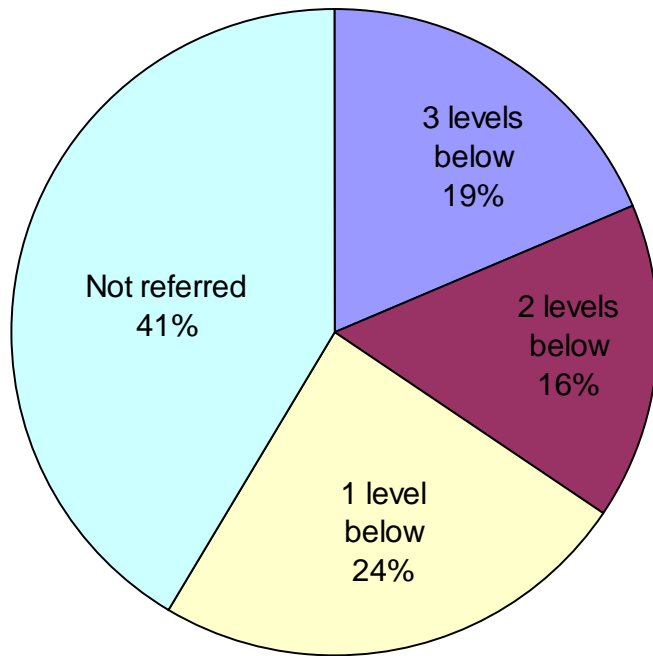


# Achieving the Dream Database

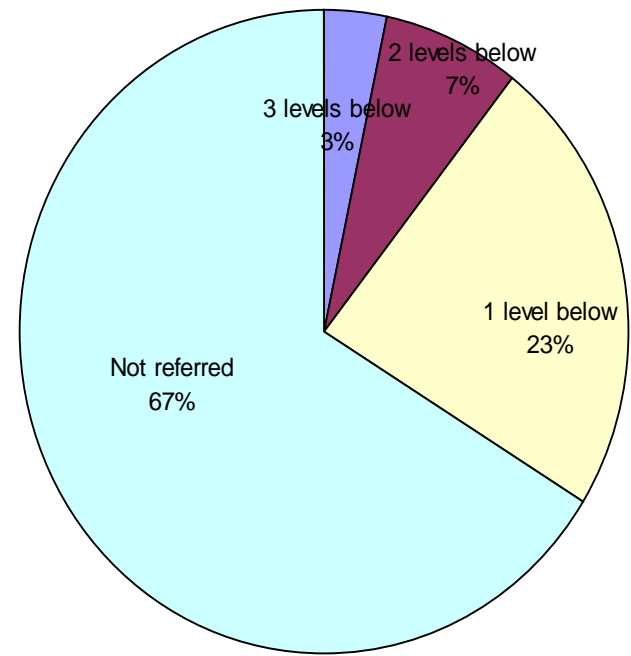
- 250,000 students
- All first time (in the college) degree seeking students (full or part time)
- 57 colleges in CT, FL, NC, NM, OH, PA, TX, VA, WA
- Not representative of all CCs—similar to large, urban institutions with lower funding per student

# Referrals to Levels of Dev. Ed.

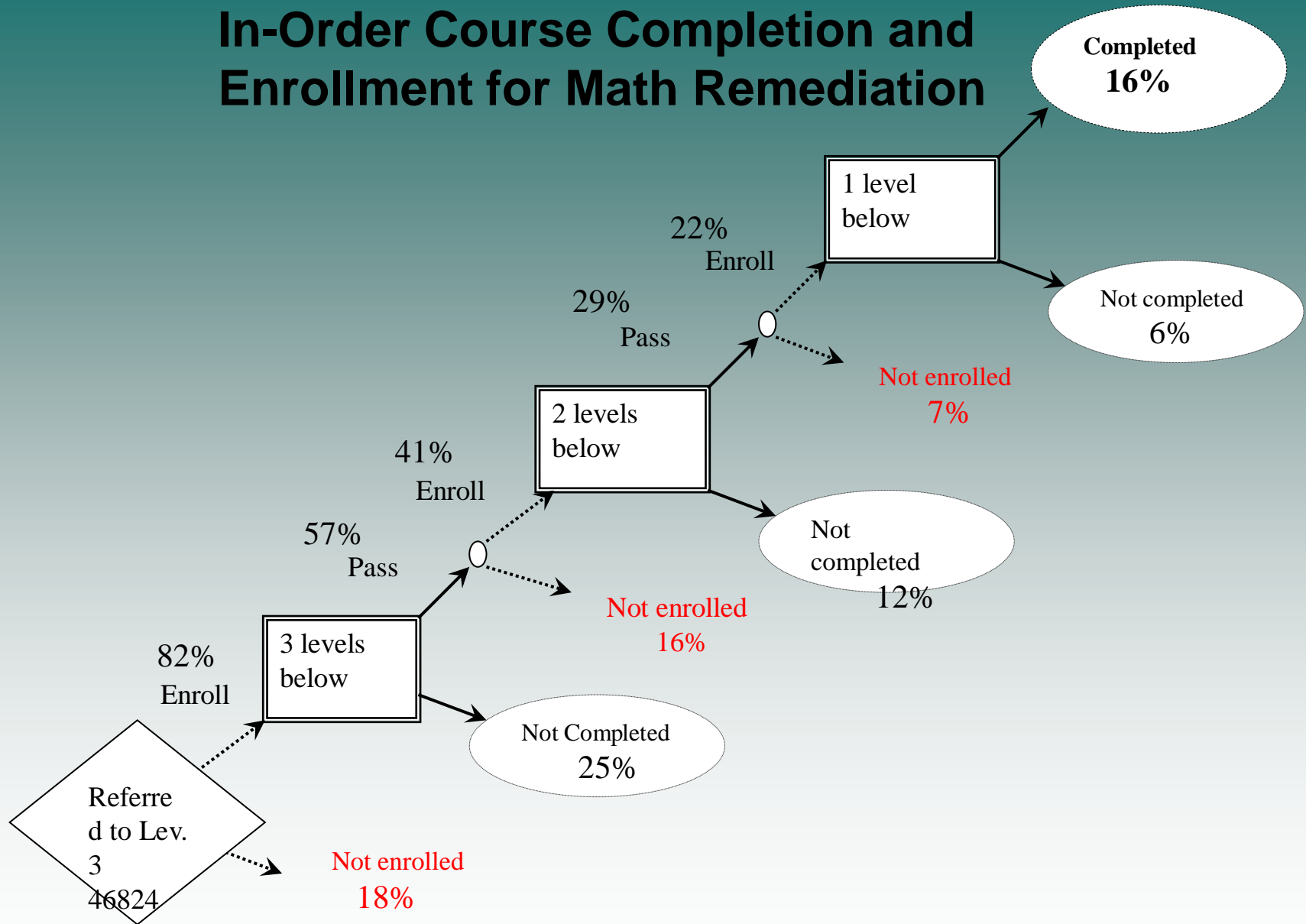
Math - Full Sample



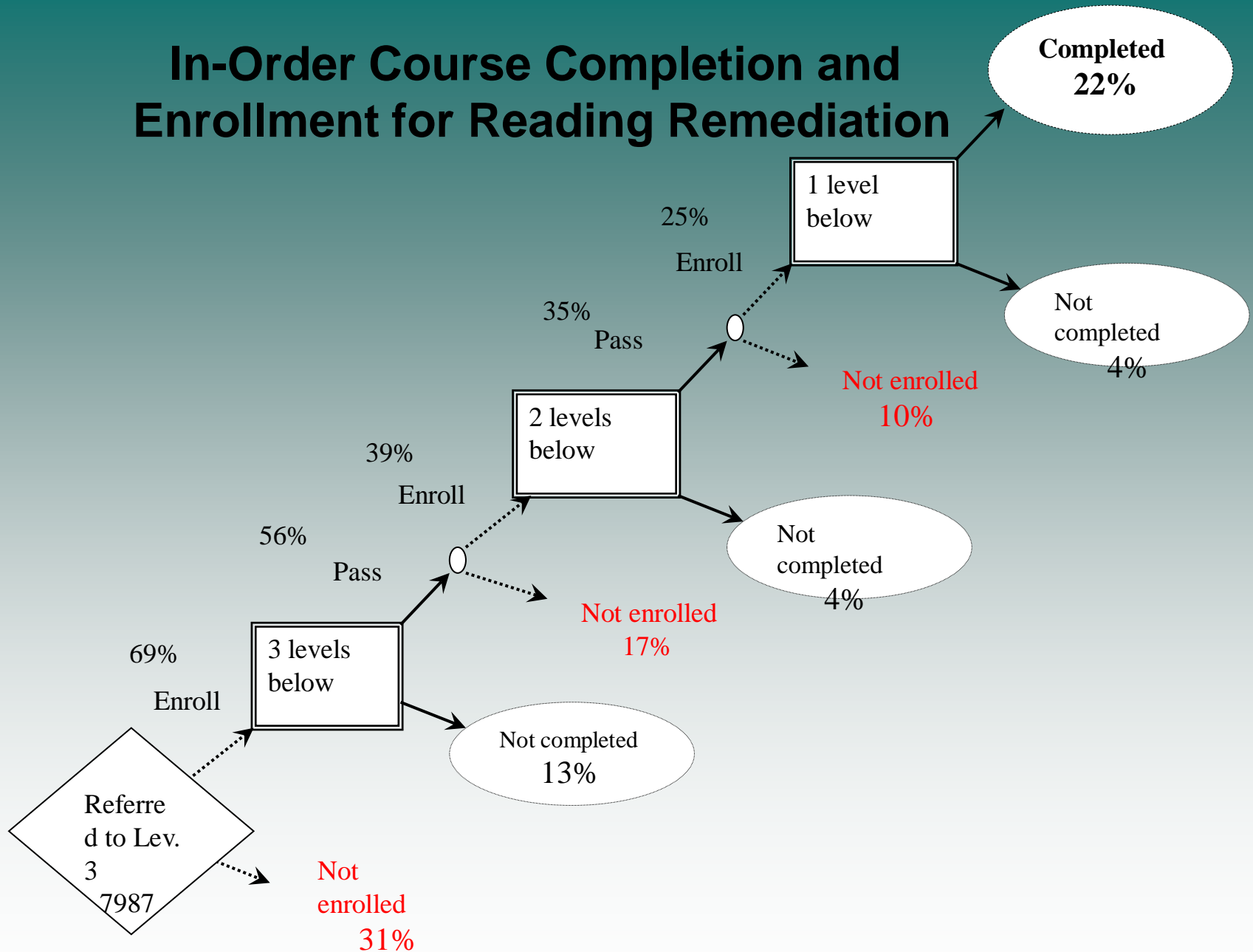
Reading - Full Sample



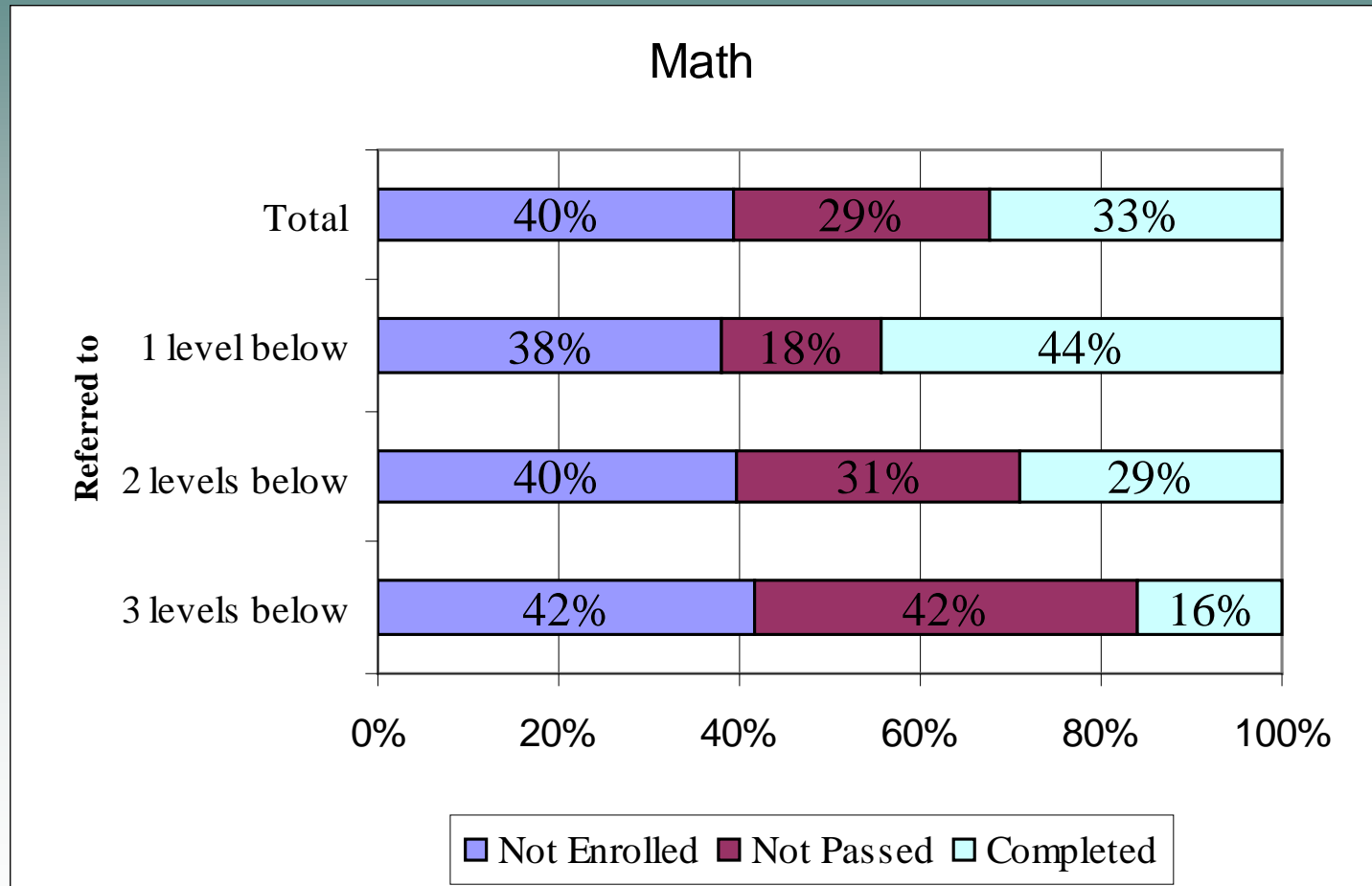
# In-Order Course Completion and Enrollment for Math Remediation



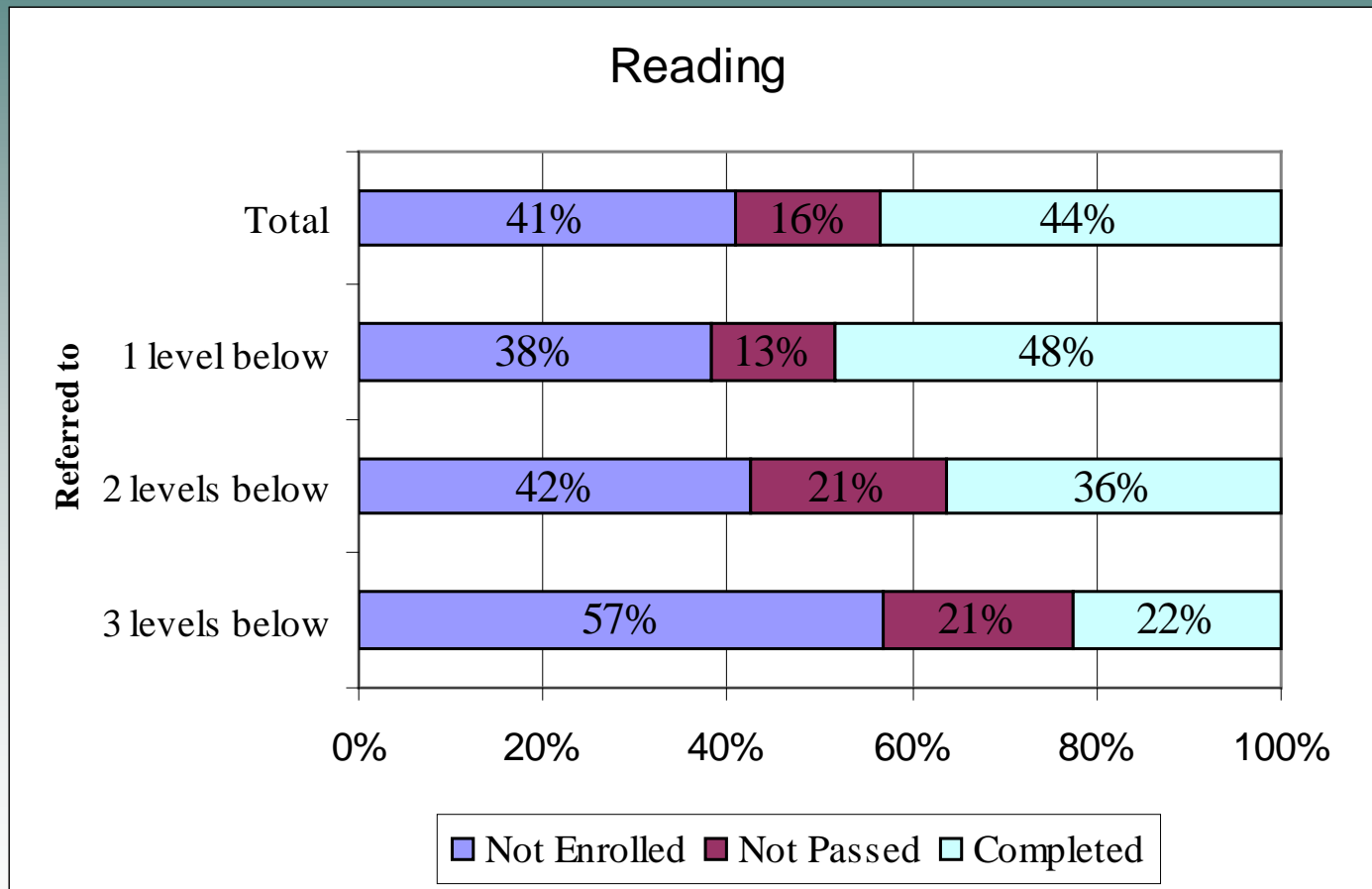
# In-Order Course Completion and Enrollment for Reading Remediation



# Enrollment and Progression Patterns Among Achieving the Dream Students

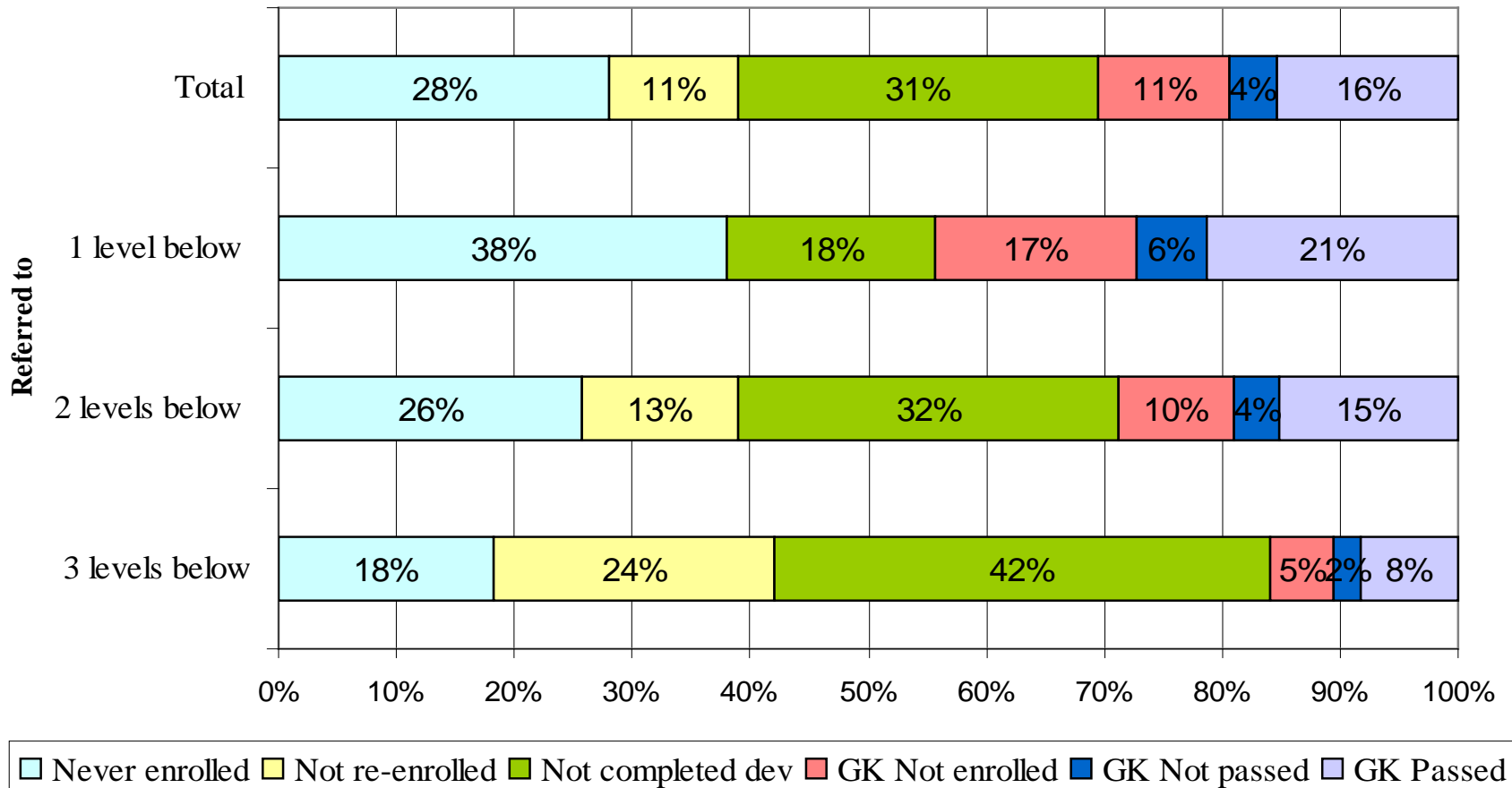


# Enrollment and Progression Patterns Among Achieving the Dream Students



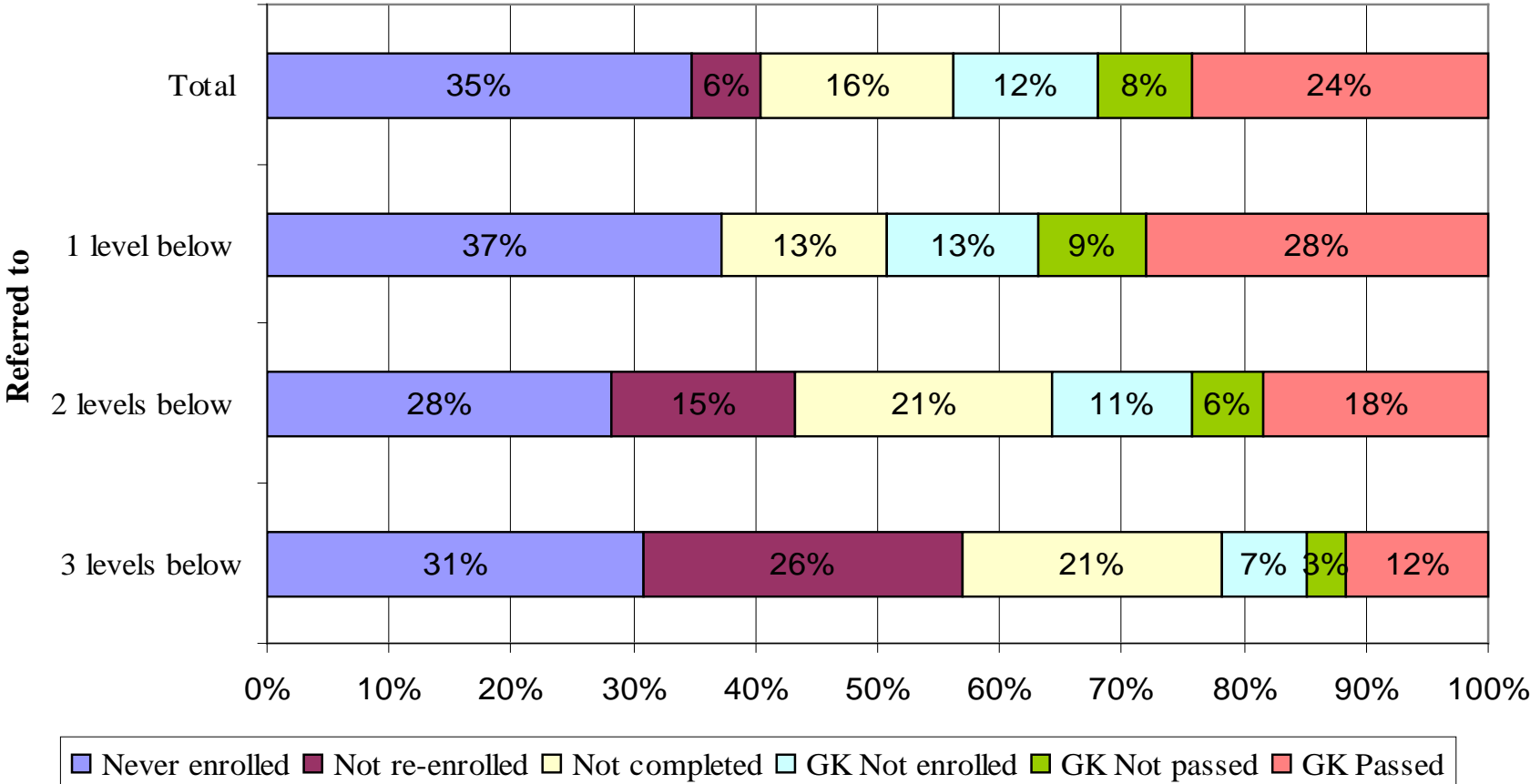
# Student Progression by Enrollment and Gatekeeper in Math

## Math - Full Sample



# Student Progression by Enrollment and Gatekeeper in Reading

## Reading - Full Sample





# Accelerate Remediation

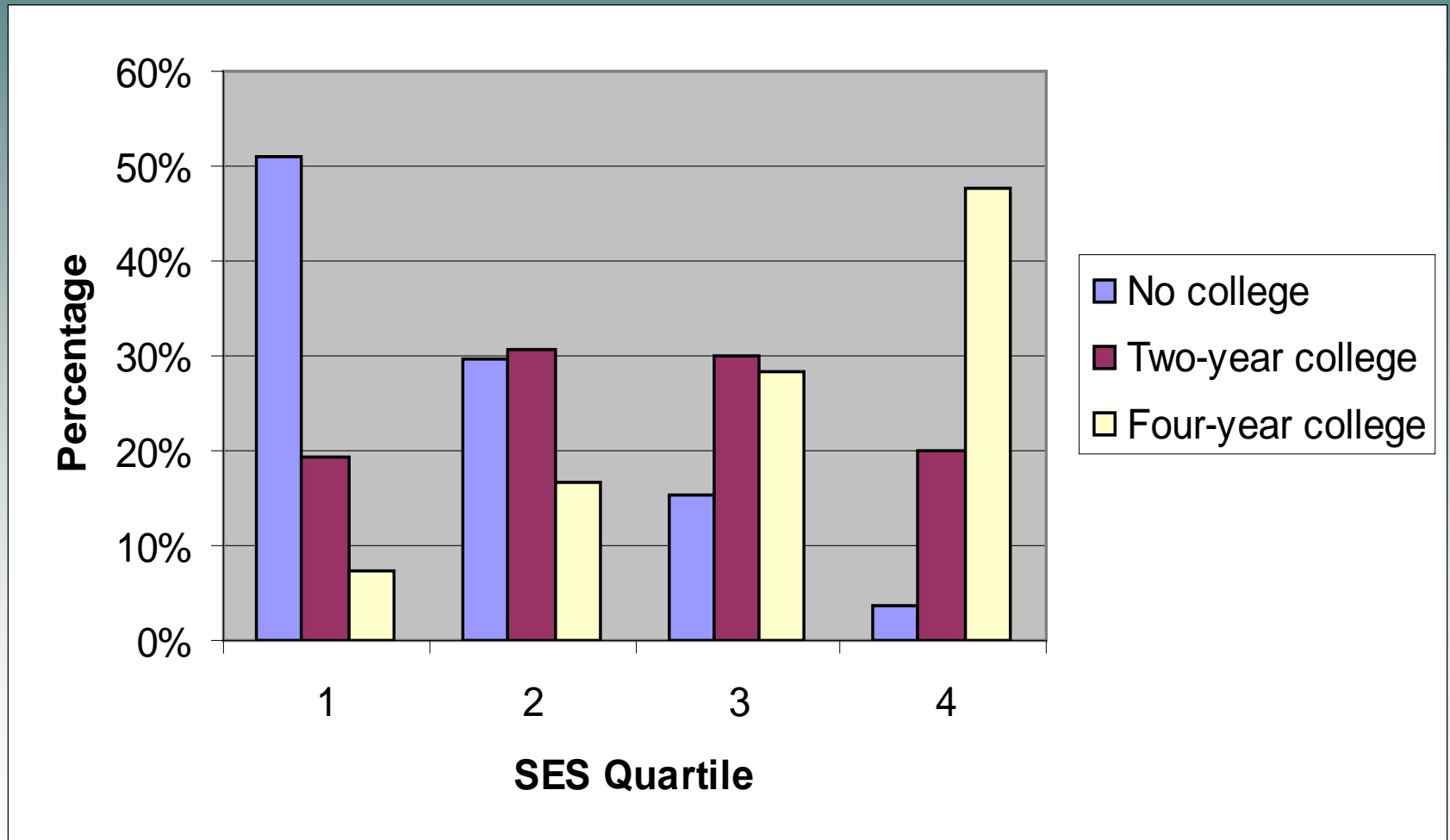
- Too many opportunities to leave
- Improve diagnostic power of assessments
- Combine college level and developmental instruction (help “college ready” students as well)
- Compressed schedules
- Summer bridge programs

# Strengthen the Pipeline to College

- Early warning
  - College Now
  - EAP in California
- Dual enrollment
- Access for adults--IBEST

# Educational Access and SES

## Experience by 2000 for HS Class of 1992



# Clearer Guidance and Pathways

- Student success courses—Florida and California studies
- Simplified program structures
- Advising?
- Technological solutions

# Discrete Programs versus Institutional Change

- Proliferation of small programs
- Many of them are not evaluated
- Have little relationship to a college's strategic plan and overall goals
- Use scarce faculty resources
- Rarely “go to scale”
- Don't lead to improvements in overall institutional performance

# Strong Role for States

- State in which college is located is the strongest predictor of graduation rates
- Innovation can be promoted by state policy
- Ability of state to influence college depends on governance structure
- Integrated state data promotes strong role for state higher ed agency

# For more information:

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*CCRC Briefs*, and sign-up for news  
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