


The Dropout Challenge:

Insights from the Data and from Schools that Get it Right



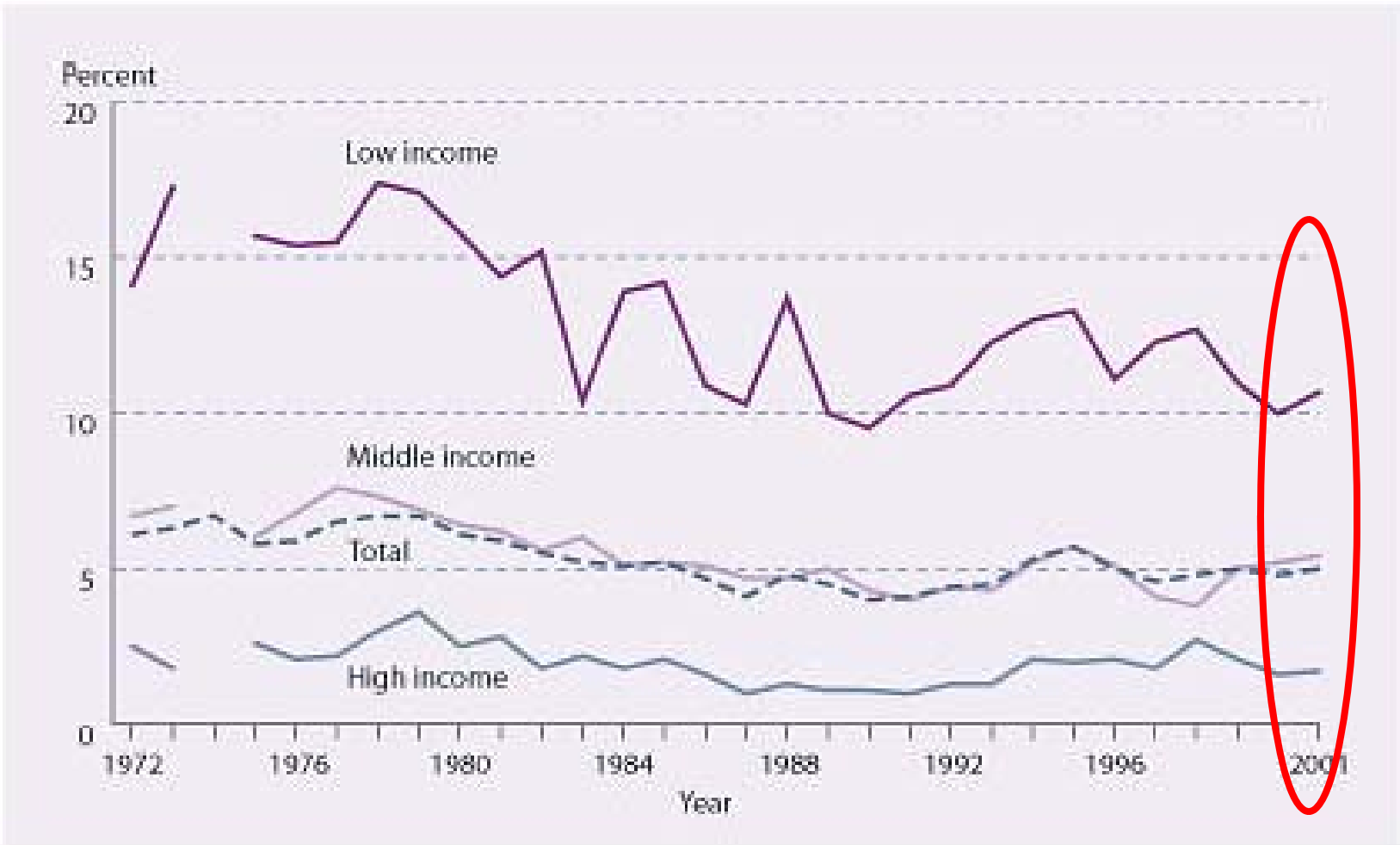
The Education Trust

NCSL: Task Force on School Dropout Prevention
April 10, 2010



Dropouts are more likely to be
poor...

EVENT DROPOUTS: Event dropout rates of 15- through 24-year-olds who dropped out of grades 10–12, by family income: October 1972–2001



Source



They are more likely to be male and
of color....

Table 1. School Dropout Rates among Young Adults Aged 18 to 24, by Demographic Characteristics: 002

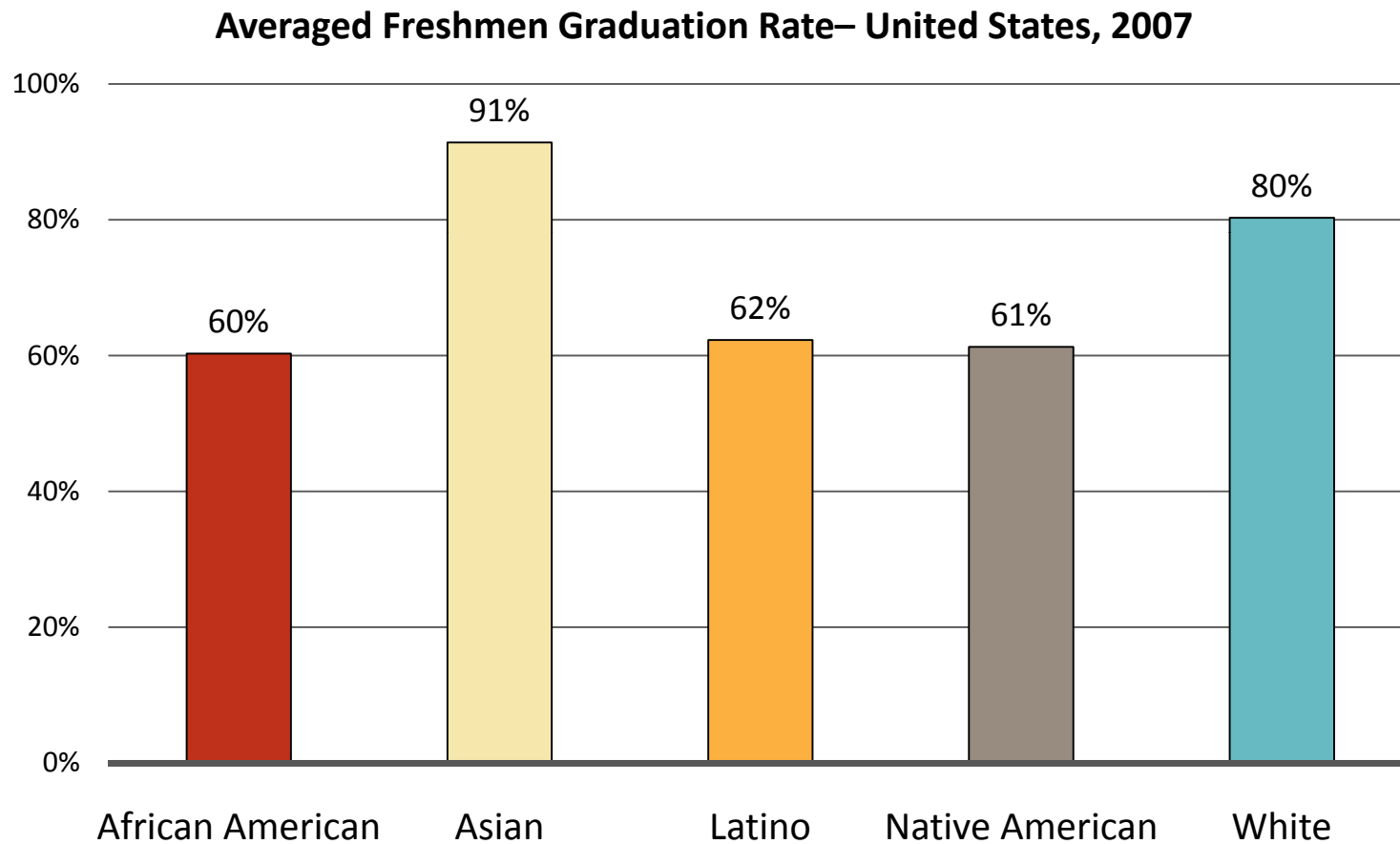
Demographic Characteristic	Percentages Who Are School Dropouts
Total	11.5
Gender	
Male	12.9
Female	10.1
Race/Ethnicity	
White	7.7
Black	10.4
American Indian/Alaska Native	13.6
Asian	2.3
Hispanic	27.9
Age Group	
18 to 20	10.9
21 to 24	12.0

Source:



And statistics like these...

Not enough students are graduating from high school

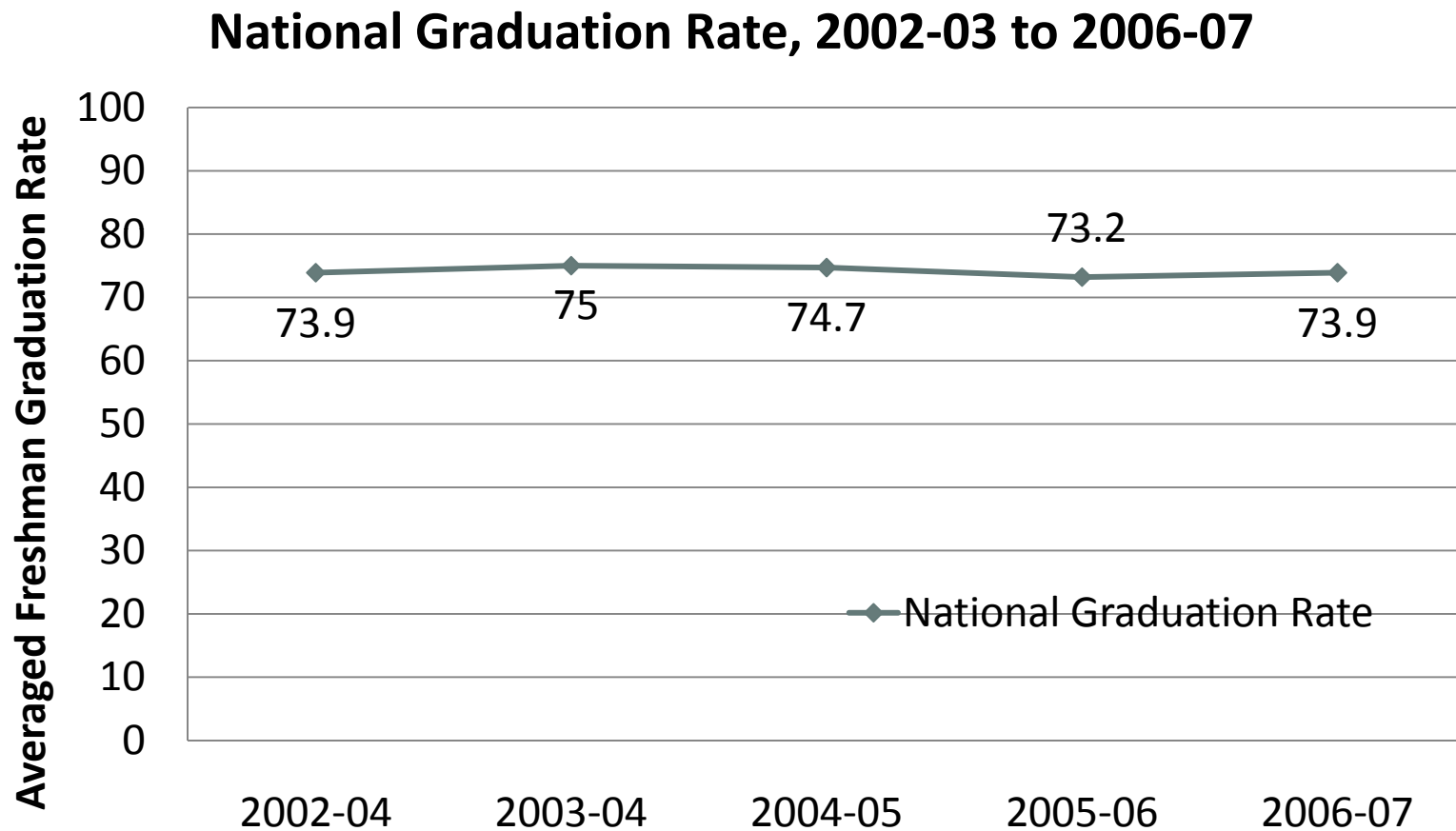


Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, 2006-2007




And these...

Graduation Rate Not Getting Better



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data



Are keeping many concerned
Americans—policymakers,
educators, employers, parents, and
government leaders—awake at
night.

Because we know that almost all
adult outcomes are better with
more education.

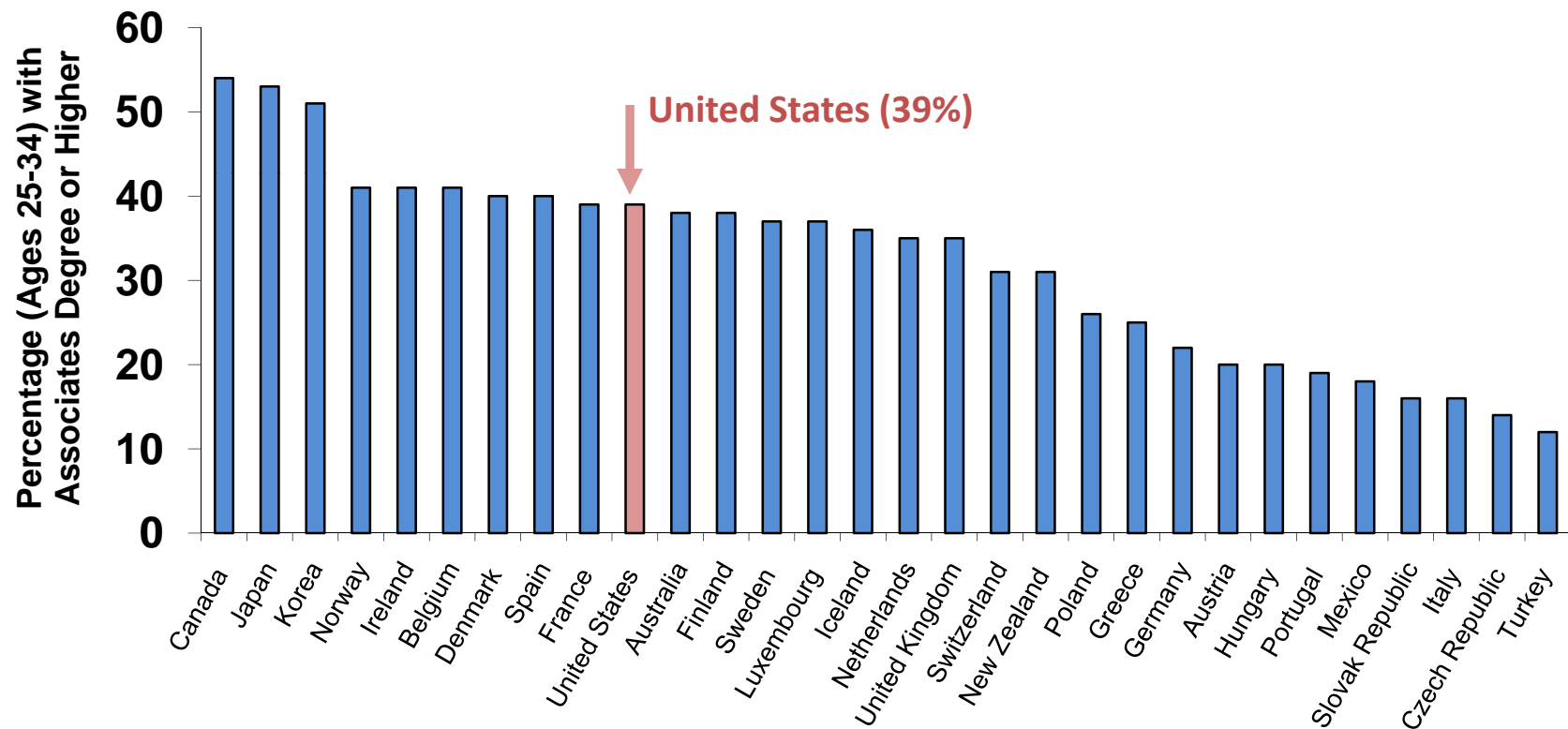
With more education:

- Annual earnings go up;
- Unemployment rates go down;
- Voter participation up;
- Healthy life choices go up;
- More and more stable marriages.

And in the knowledge economy, the point is not just to get students through high school, but to get them postsecondary credentials as well.

We need higher postsecondary completion to catch up with our peers.

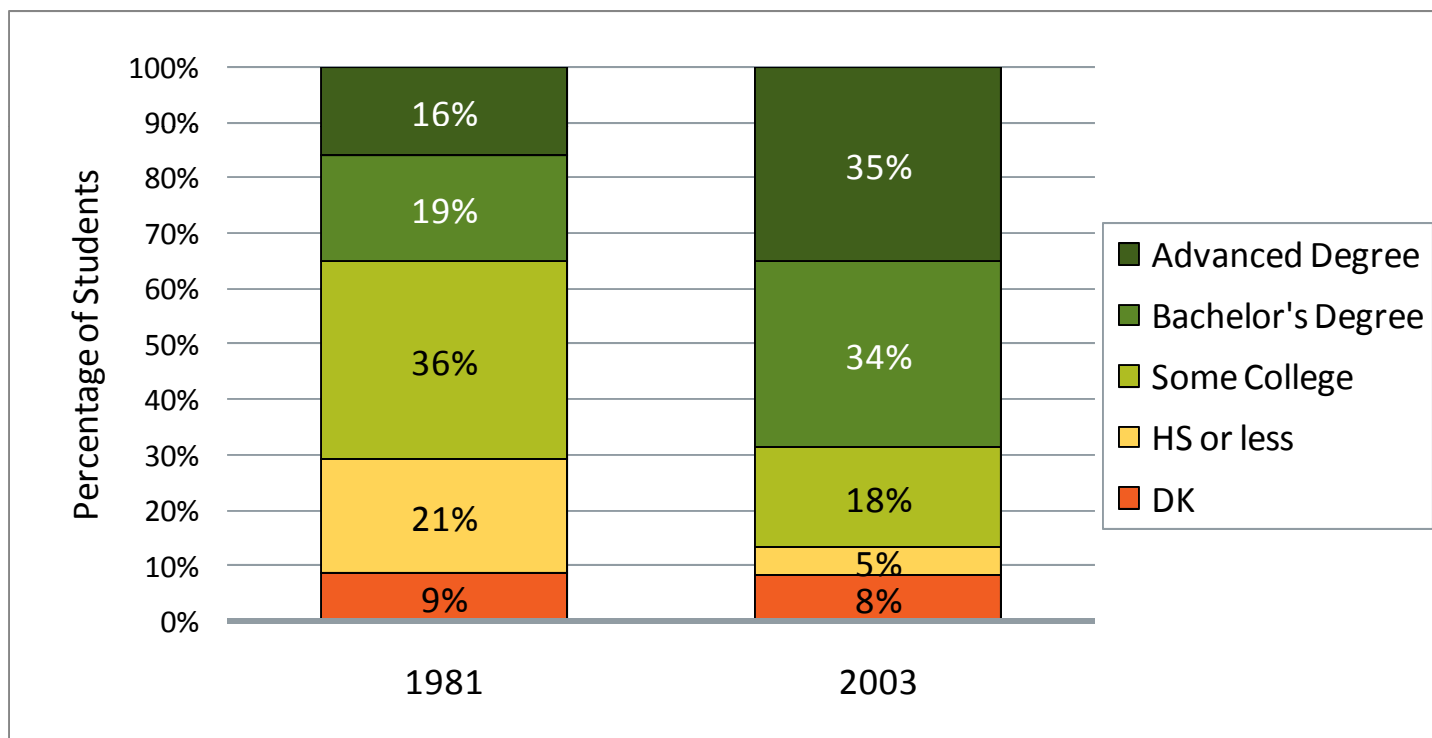
U.S. tied for 9th out of 30 OECD nations in the percentage of *younger workers* with an associates degree or higher



And fortunately, our young people
get that—and expect that—too.

Postsecondary Expectations

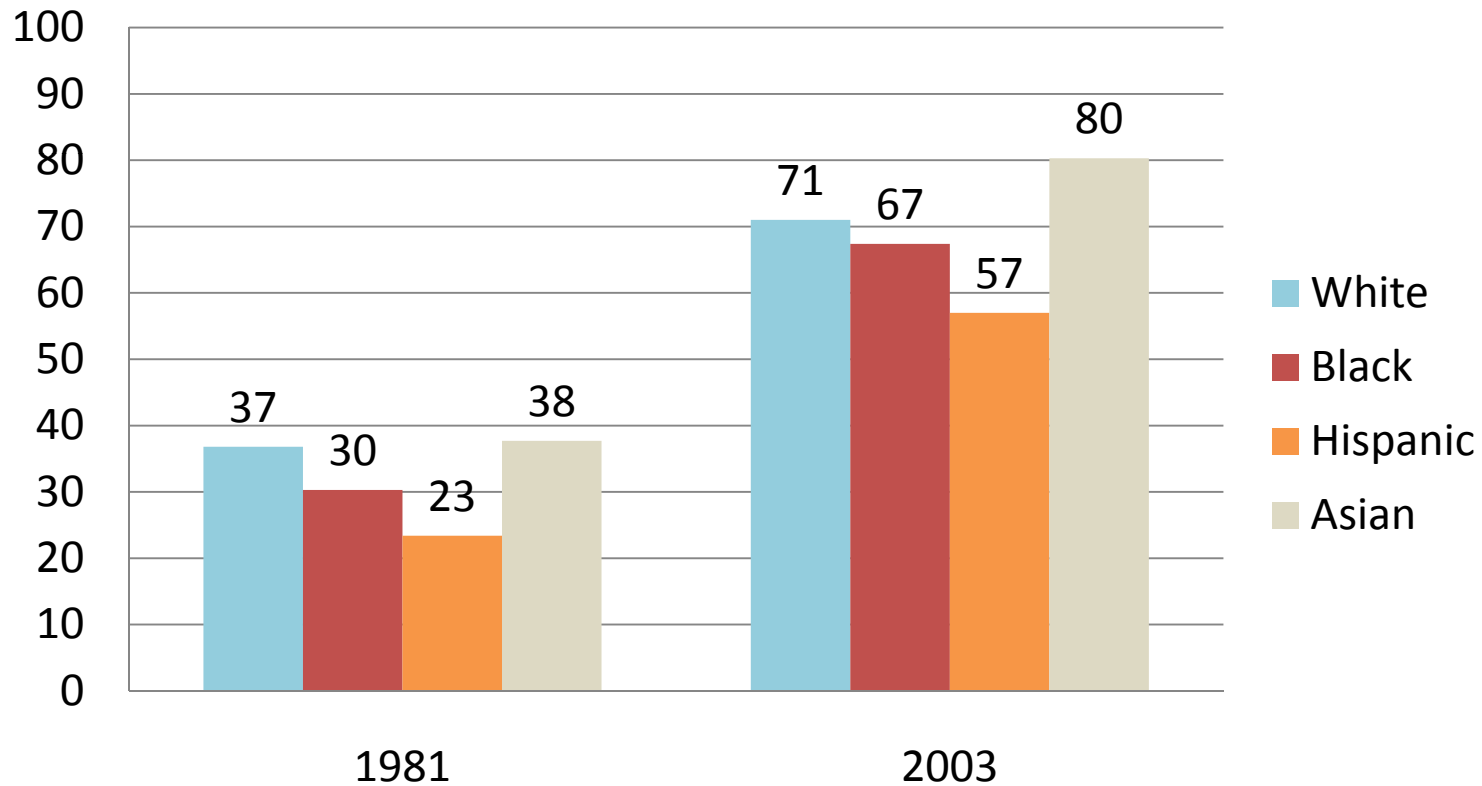
Percentage of 12th Graders Aspiring to Each Level of Postsecondary Attainment, 1981 & 2003



Source: USDOE, NCES. (2006). The Condition of Education 2006, NCES 2006-071, Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.

Students have high educational expectations

Percentage of U.S. 12th Graders Who Expect to attain a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, 1981, 2003 by Race/Ethnicity



Source: USDOE, NCES. (2006). The Condition of Education 2006, NCES 2006-071, Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office. Note: National Sample

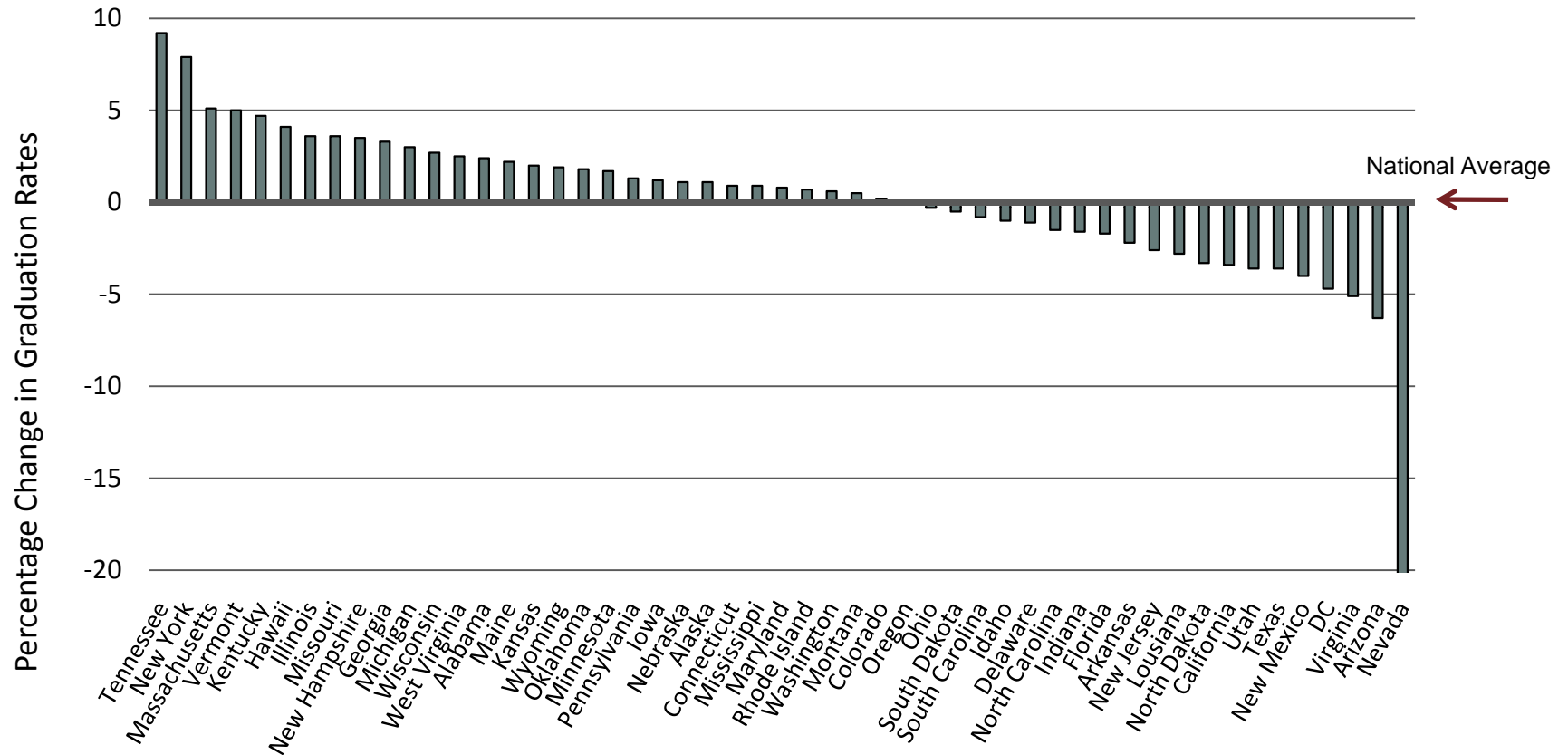
So, what can we do?

First thing to recognize is that
change is possible.


Though national graduation rate is flat, some states have made significant gains...

Although the national trend is flat, some states have made great gains and others losses

Change in Graduation Rates from 2002-2003 to 2006-2007, by State

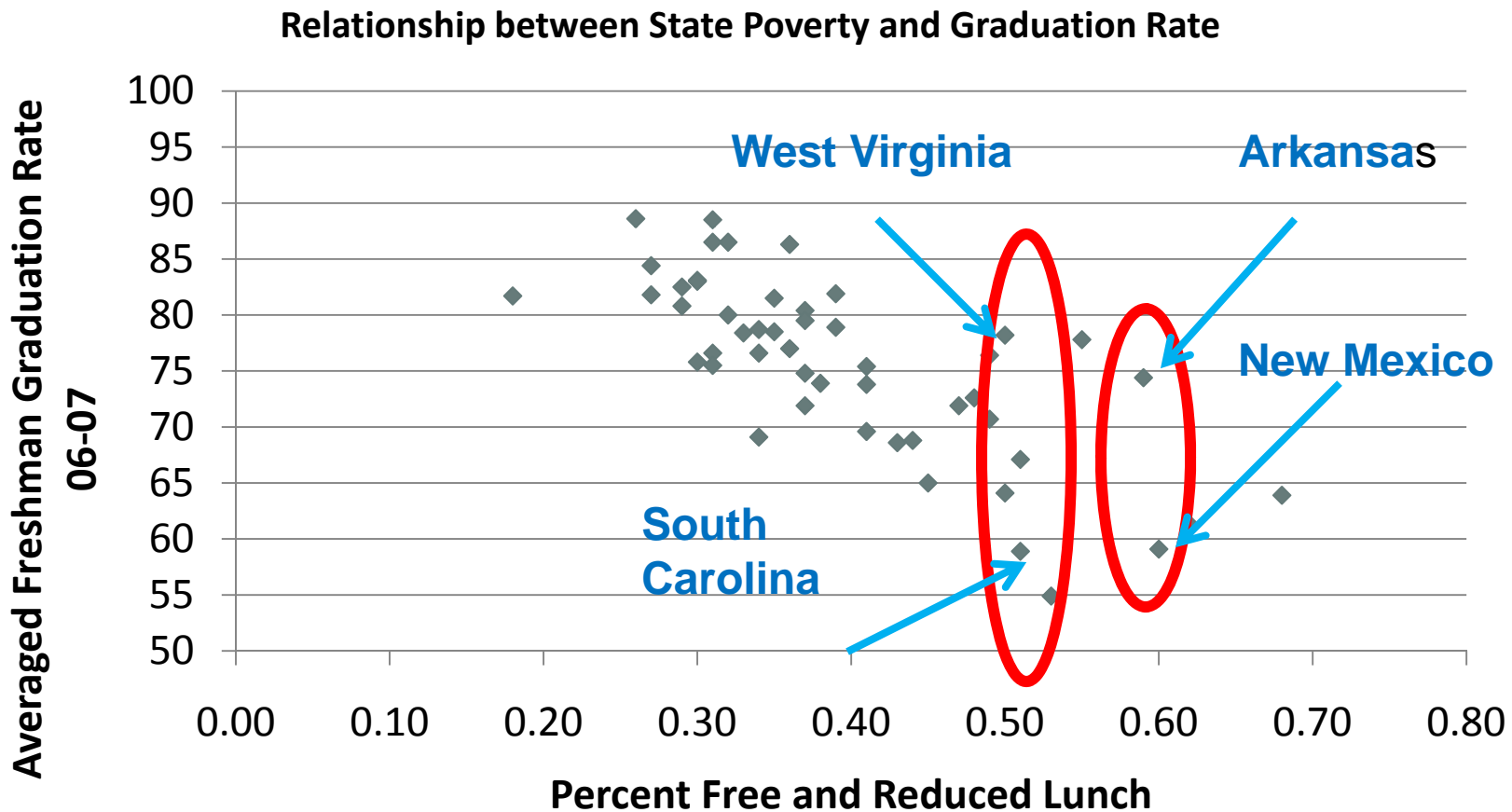


Source: Public School Graduates and Dropouts From the Common Core of Data: School Year 2006-2007, National Center for Education Statistics




Though higher poverty states, on average, have higher dropout rates, some states do much better than others.

States with higher poverty have lower graduation rates



Source: Public School Graduates and Dropouts From the Common Core of Data: School Year 2006-2007, National Center for Education Statistics



Similarly, though dropout rates are generally higher in high poverty and high minority schools, some schools do a much better job than others at keeping students in school.

A Tale of Two High Schools

Elmont Memorial Junior-Senior High School

- Location: Elmont, NY
- Enrollment: 1,880 students
- Grades: 7-12
- Demographics:
 - 76% African American
 - 14% Latino
 - 28% low-income

Jamaica High School

- Location: Jamaica, NY
- Enrollment: 1,804 students
- Grades: 9-12
- Demographics:
 - 62% African American
 - 17% Latino
 - 20% low-income

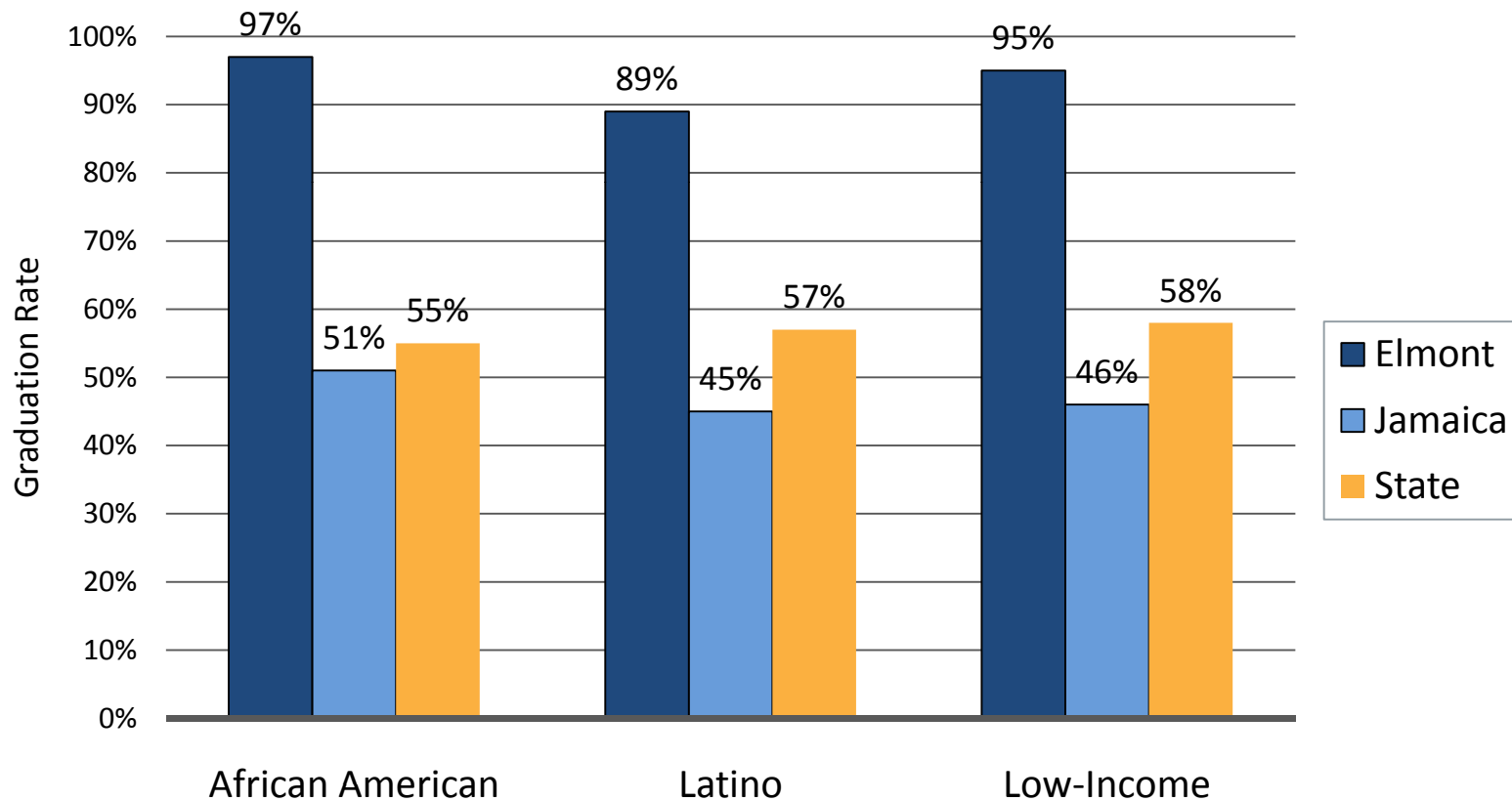


Similar demographics.

Very different results.

More Students Graduate at Elmont Memorial Junior-Senior High

Class of 2008



Source: New York Department of Education

Imperial High

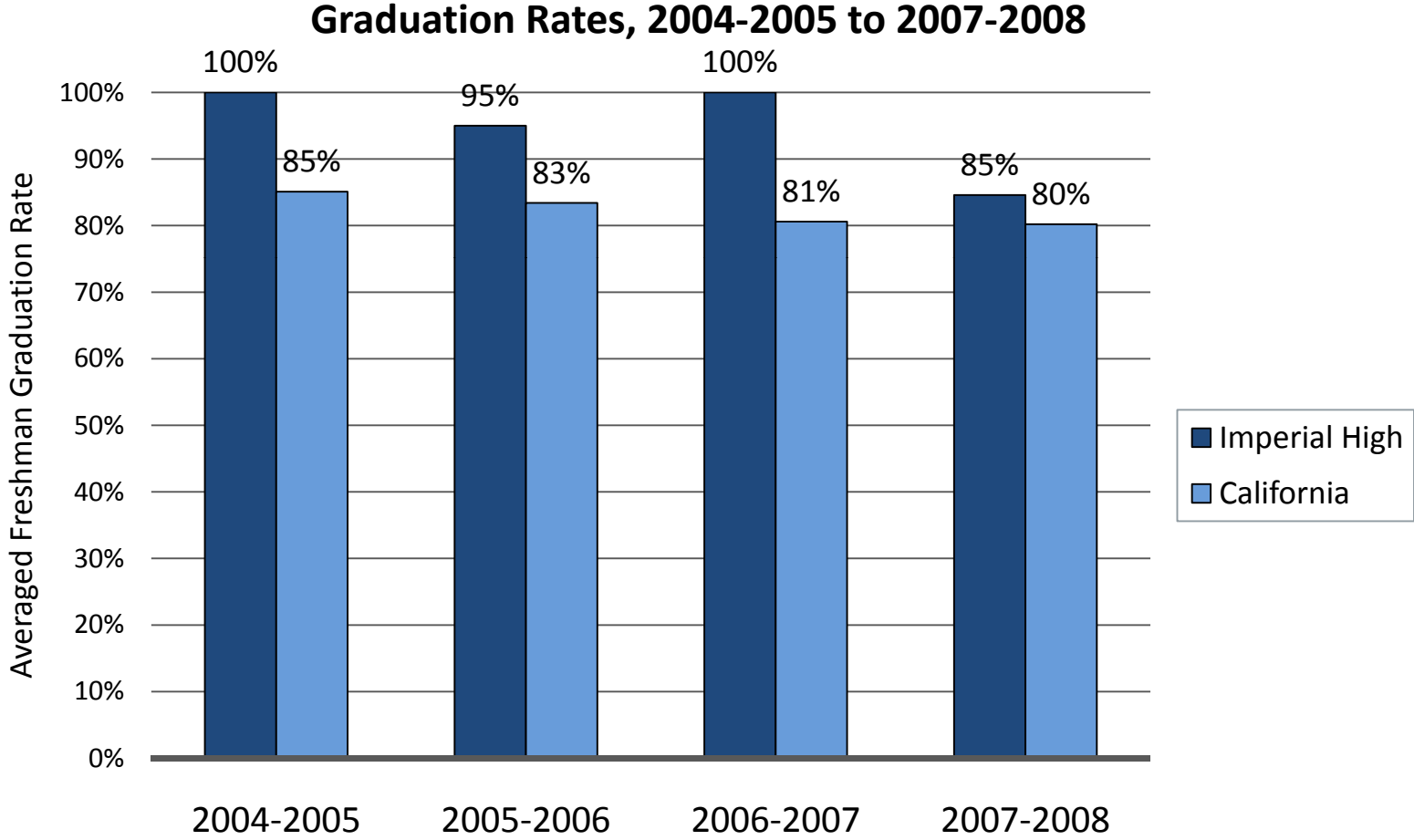
Imperial, California

- 850 students in grades 9-12
 - 71% Latino
- 27% Low-Income
- 13% ELL




Source: California Department of Education


Imperial High School Outperforms State



Source: California Department of Education




In other words, what we do in
schools matters.



Second thing that is critically
important to recognize:

**DUMBING DOWN REQUIREMENTS
DOESN'T HELP!**



Even when they start with high drop out rates, high impact high schools focus on preparing all kids for college and careers

Education Trust 2005 study, “Gaining Traction, Gaining Ground.”

Elmont Memorial Junior-Senior High

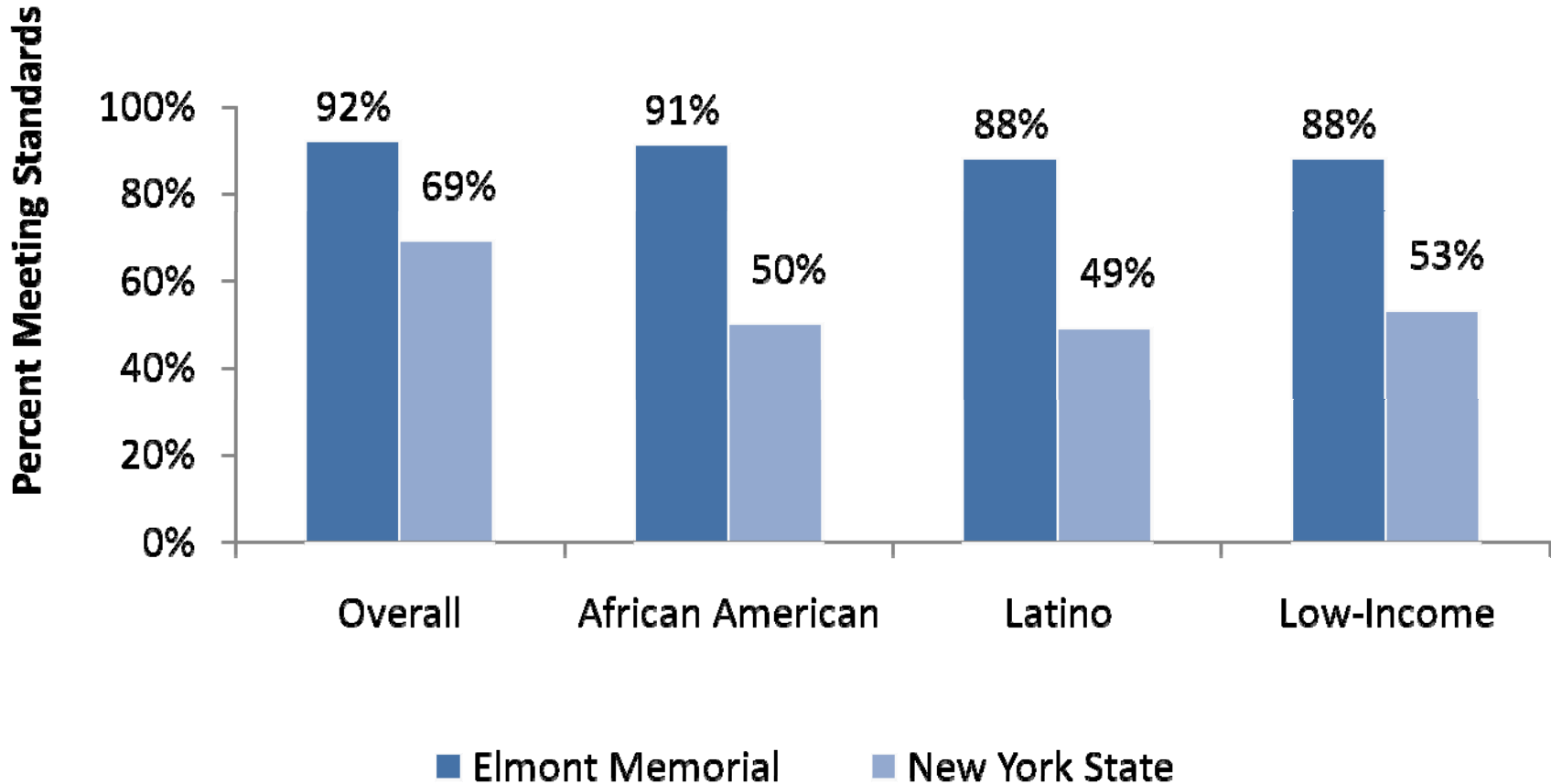
Elmont, New York

- 1,945 students in grades 7-12
 - 77% African American
- 27% Low-Income

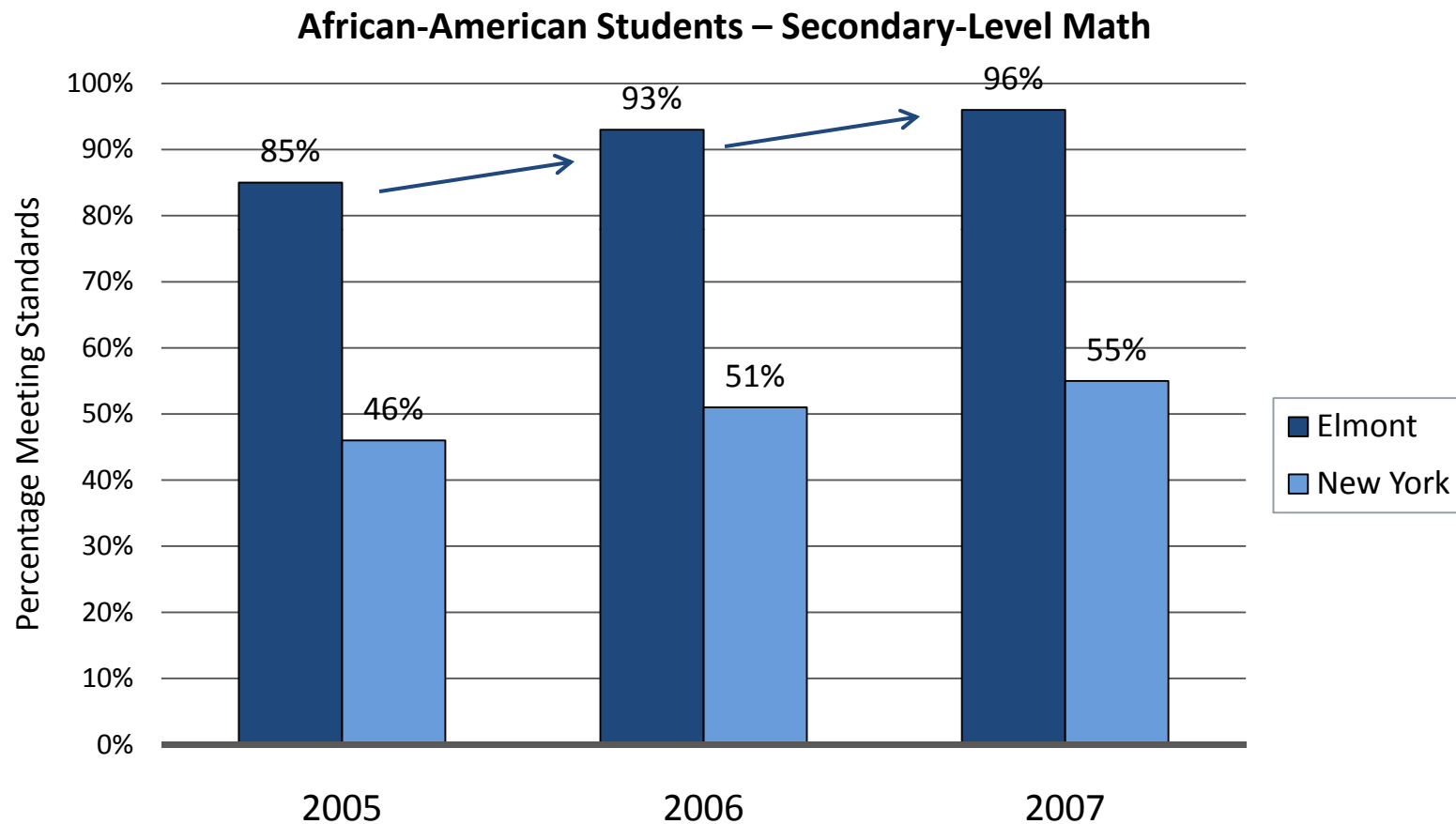


Source: New York Department of Education

Elmont: Out-Performing the State Secondary-Level English (2006)

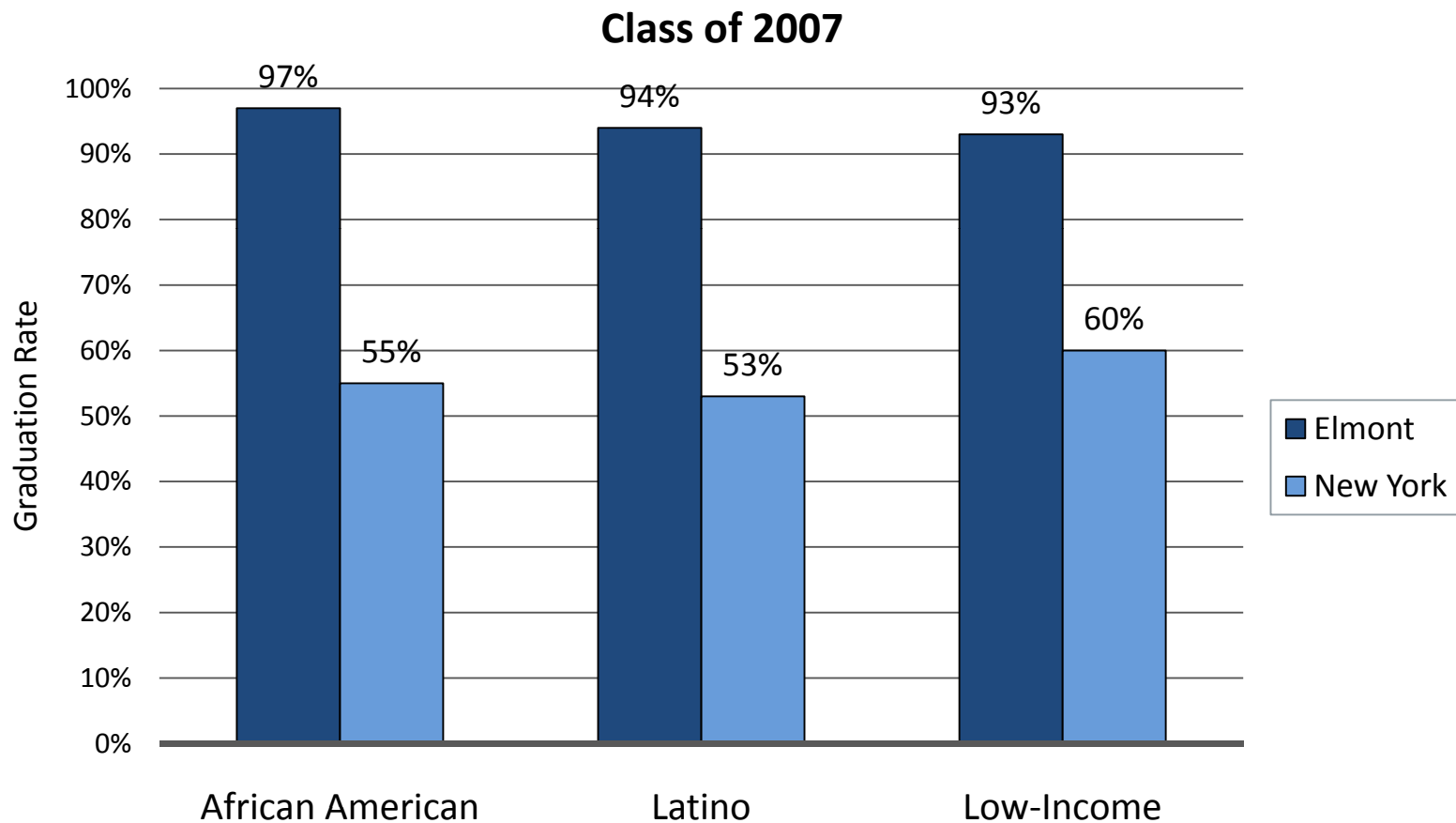


Improvement and High Performance at Elmont Memorial Junior-Senior High



Source: New York Department of Education

More Students Graduate at Elmont Memorial Junior-Senior High



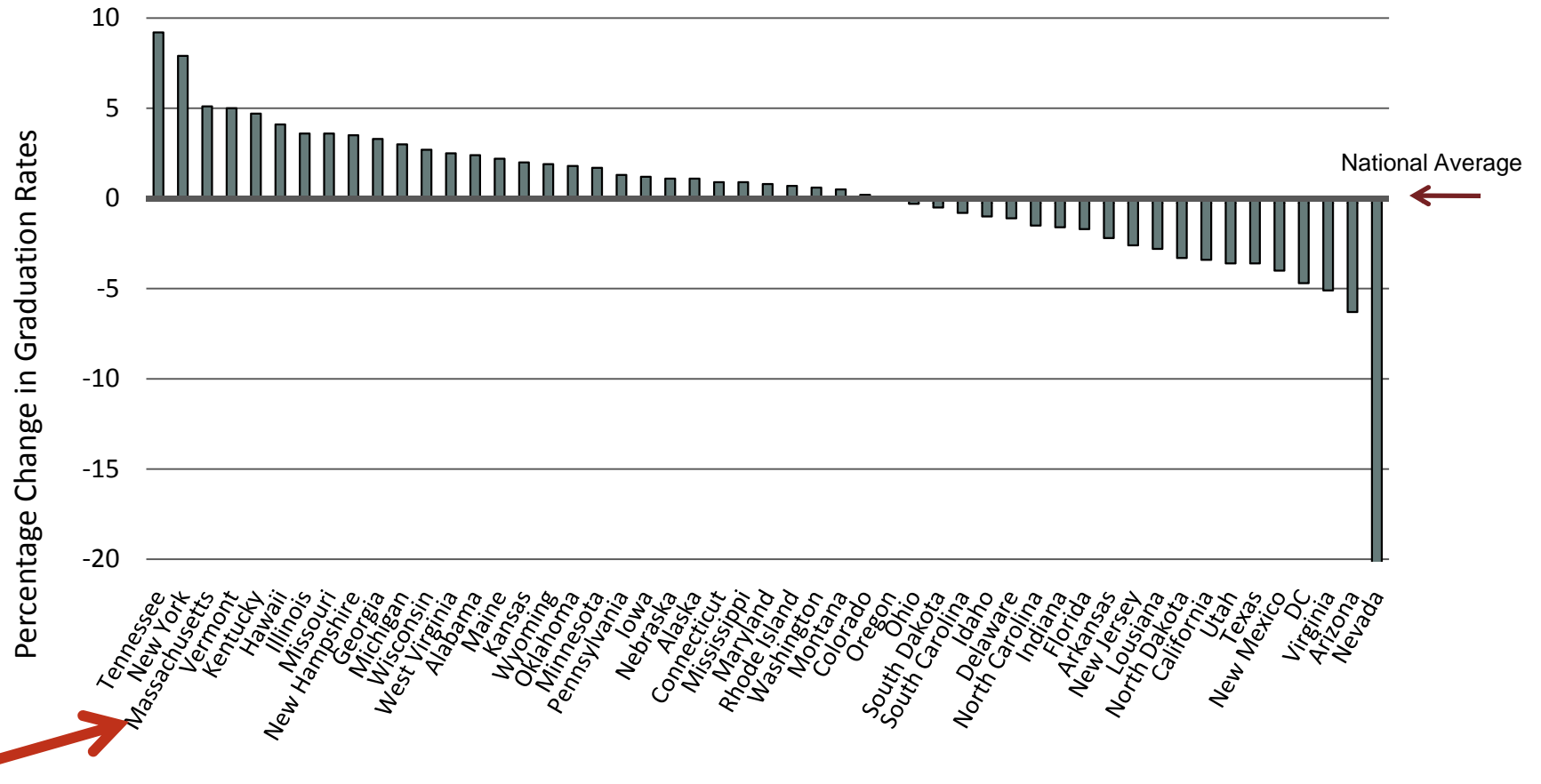
Source: New York Department of Education



True at state level, too.

Although the national trend is flat, some states have made great gains and others losses

Change in Graduation Rates from 2002-2003 to 2006-2007, by State




Source: Public School Graduates and Dropouts From the Common Core of Data: School Year 2006-2007, National Center for Education Statistics



Some Ideas to Consider

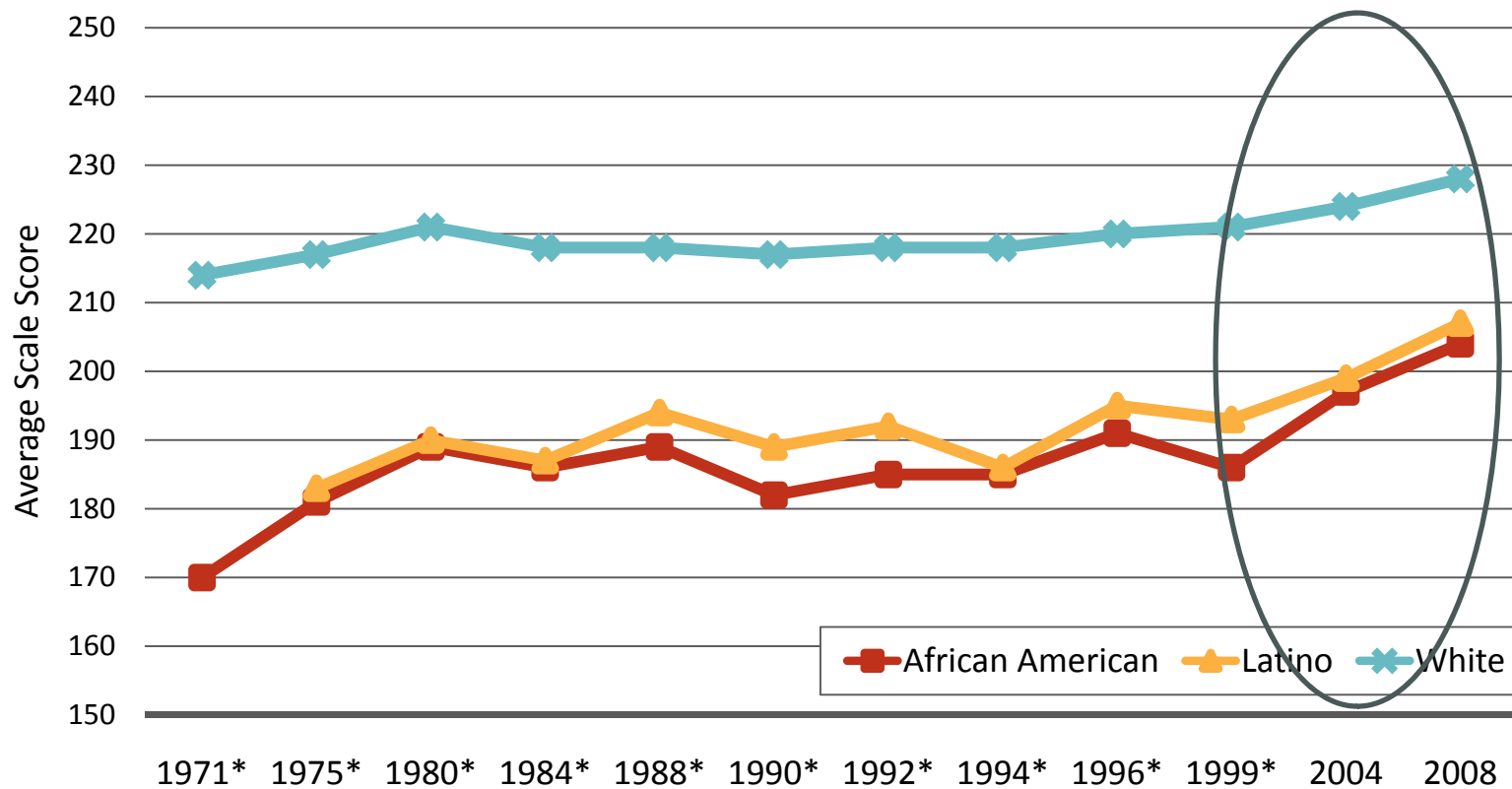
1. The best thing we could do to reduce dropout and, especially, close grad rate gaps is to close achievement gaps in elementary and middle school.



We're making some progress on
that...

4th Grade Reading: Record Performance with Gap Narrowing

9 Year Olds – NAEP Reading

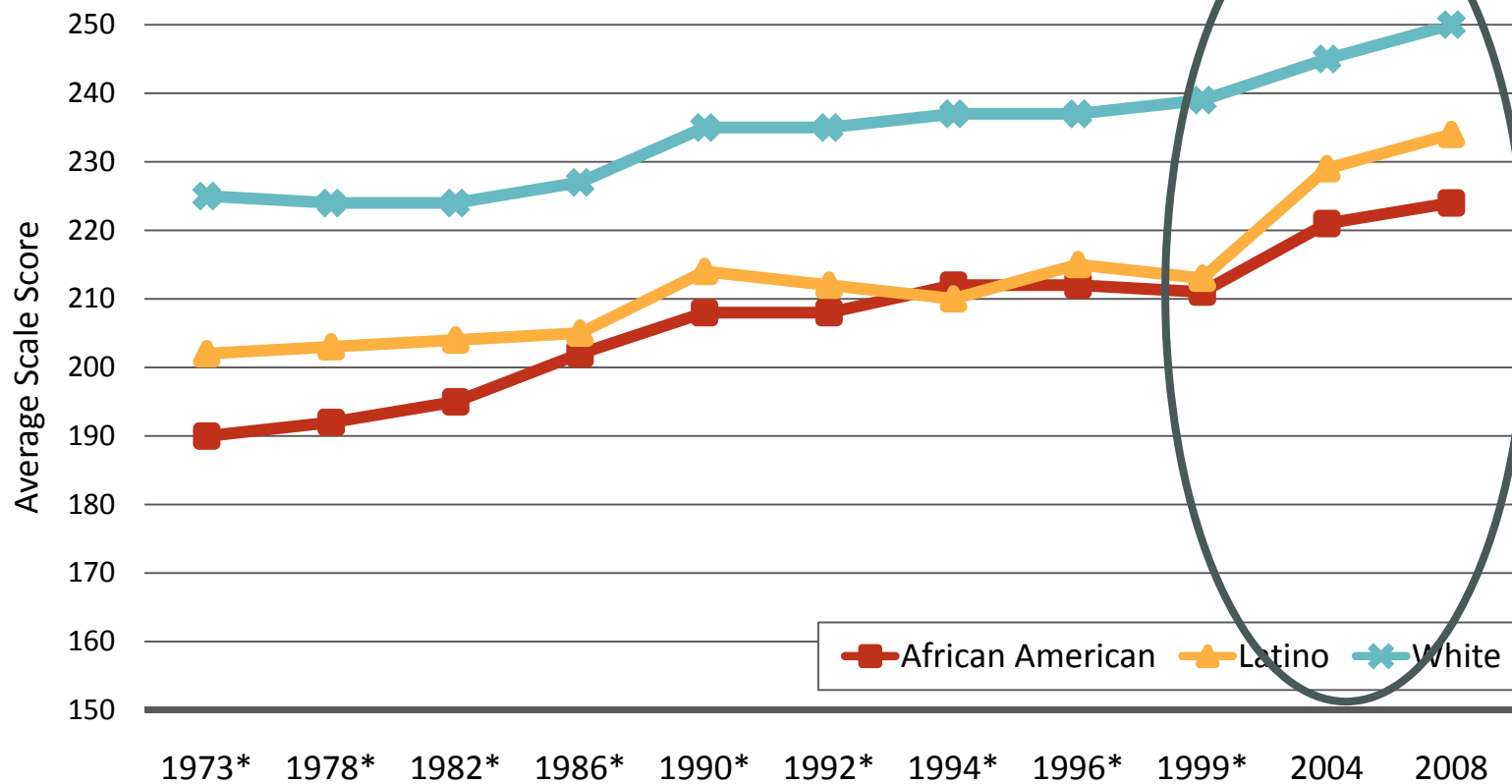


*Denotes previous assessment format

Source: NAEP 2008 Trends in Academic Progress, NCES

4th Grade Math: Record Performance with Gap Narrowing

9 Year Olds – NAEP Math

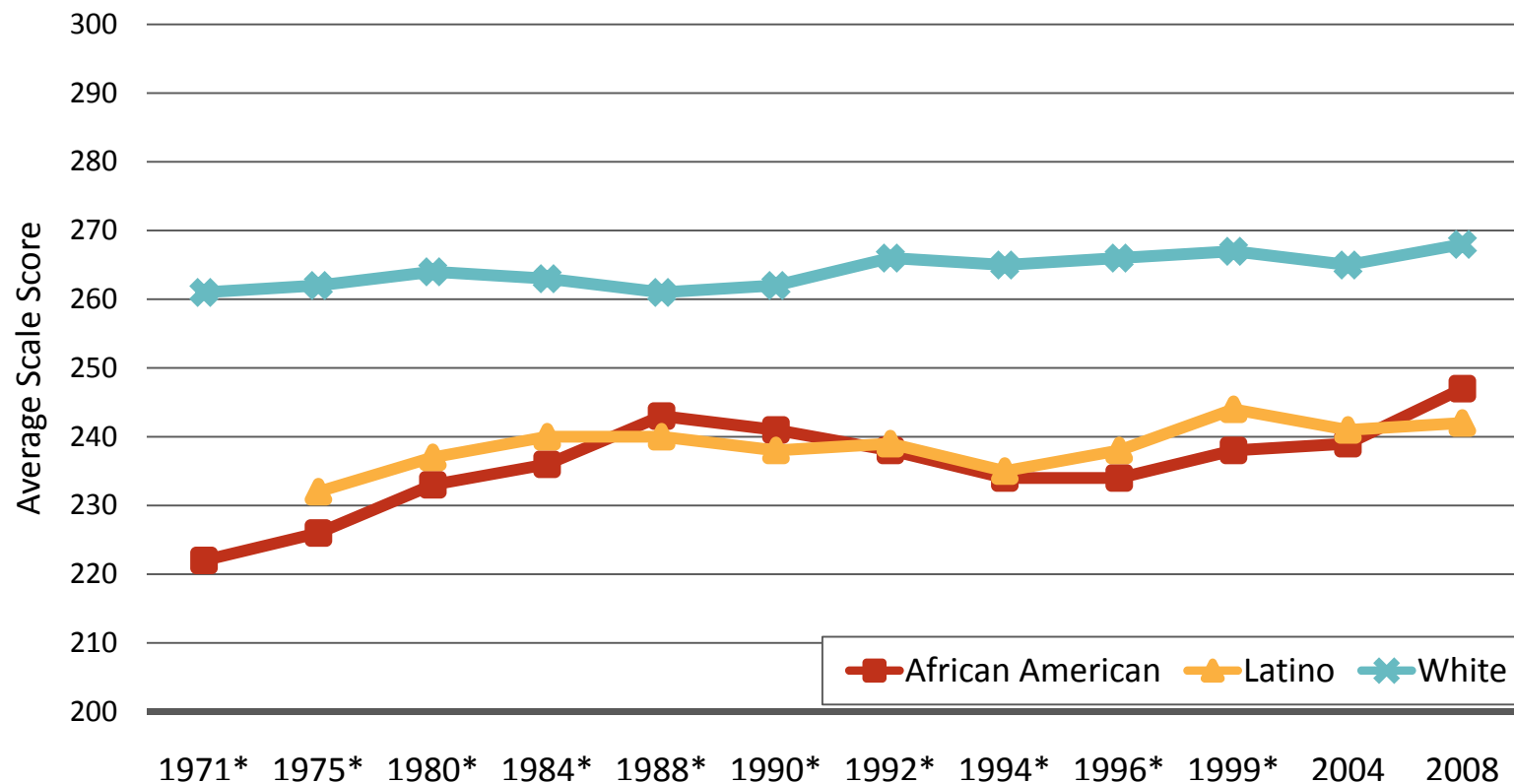


*Denotes previous assessment format

Source: NAEP 2008 Trends in Academic Progress, NCES

8th Grade Reading: Recent Gap Narrowing for Blacks, Less for Latinos

13 Year Olds – NAEP Reading

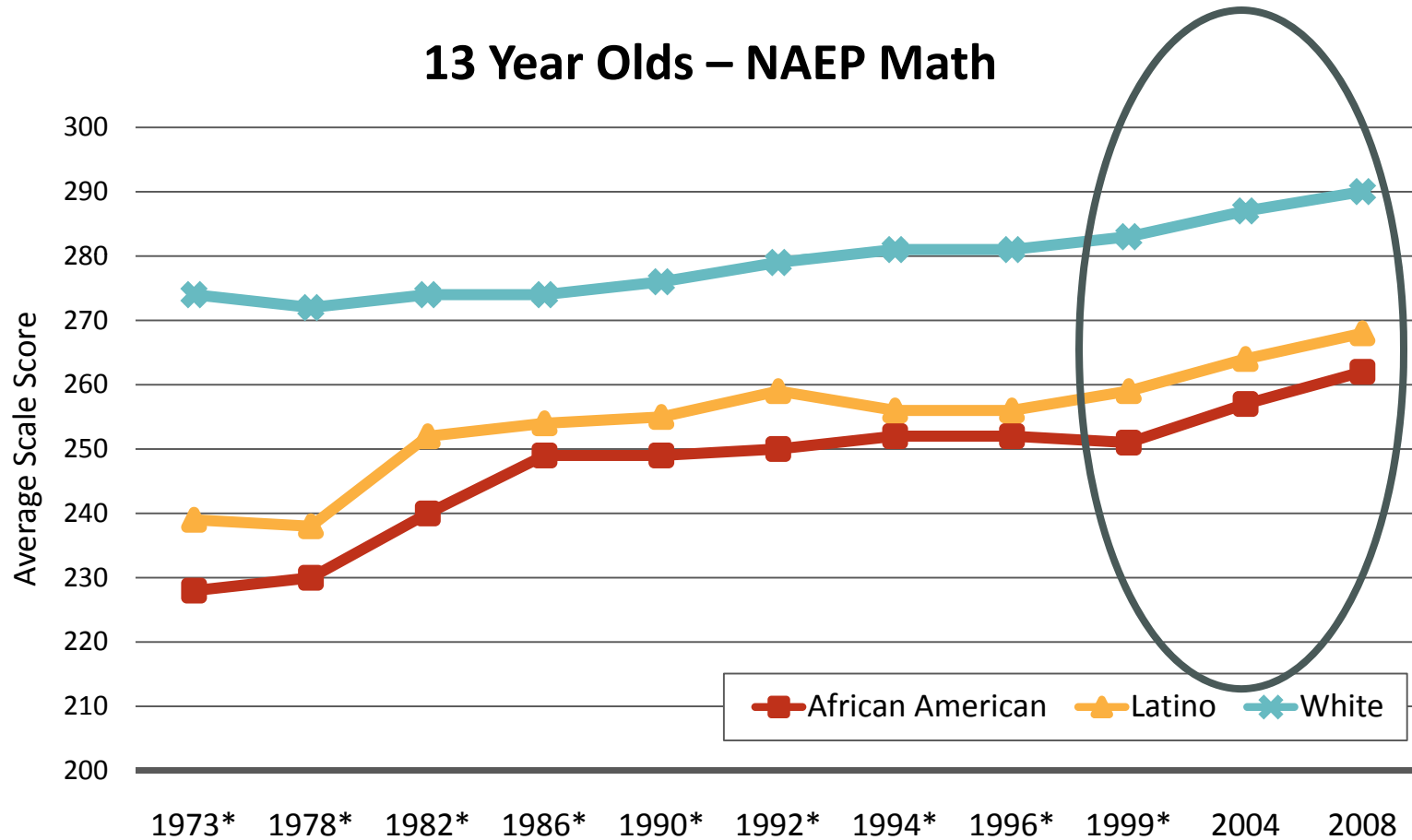


*Denotes previous assessment format

Source: NAEP 2008 Trends in Academic Progress, NCES


8th Grade Math: Progress for All Groups, Some Gap Narrowing

13 Year Olds – NAEP Math



*Denotes previous assessment format

Source: NAEP 2008 Trends in Academic Progress, NCES



But deep inequities in our
educational system continue to get
in the way.



What do I mean by that?

A lot of Americans believe that gaps are mostly about poverty, parents and communities.




These gaps begin before children
arrive at the schoolhouse door.

But, rather than organizing our educational
system to ameliorate this problem, we
organize it to exacerbate the problem.



How?

By giving students who arrive with
less, less in school, too.




Some of these “lesser” are a result of choices that policymakers make.


National Inequities in State and Local Revenue Per Student

	Gap
High Poverty vs. Low Poverty Districts	-\$938 per student
High Minority vs. Low Minority Districts	-\$877 per student

Source: Education Trust analyses based on U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Census Bureau data for the 2005-06 school year.

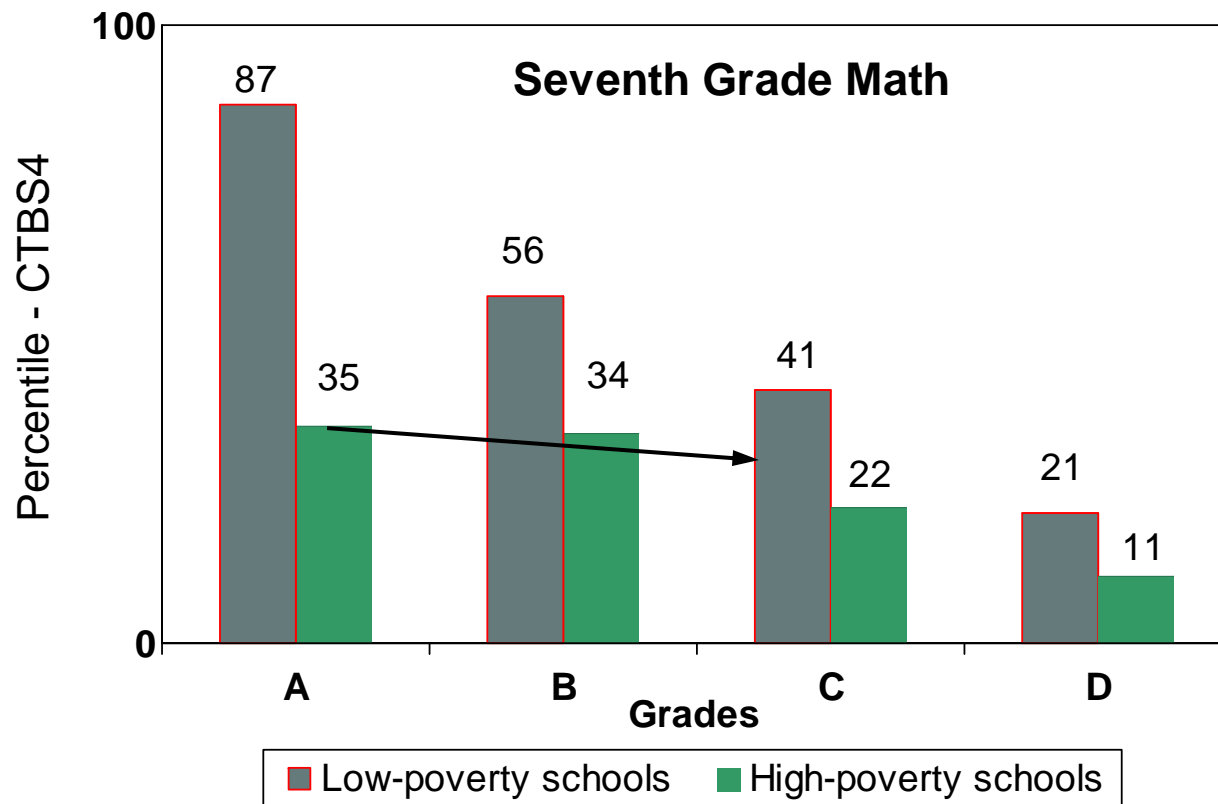


In truth, though, some of the most devastating “lesses” are a function of choices that we educators make.




Choices we make about what to
expect of whom...

Students in Poor Schools Receive 'A's for Work That Would Earn 'Cs' in Affluent Schools

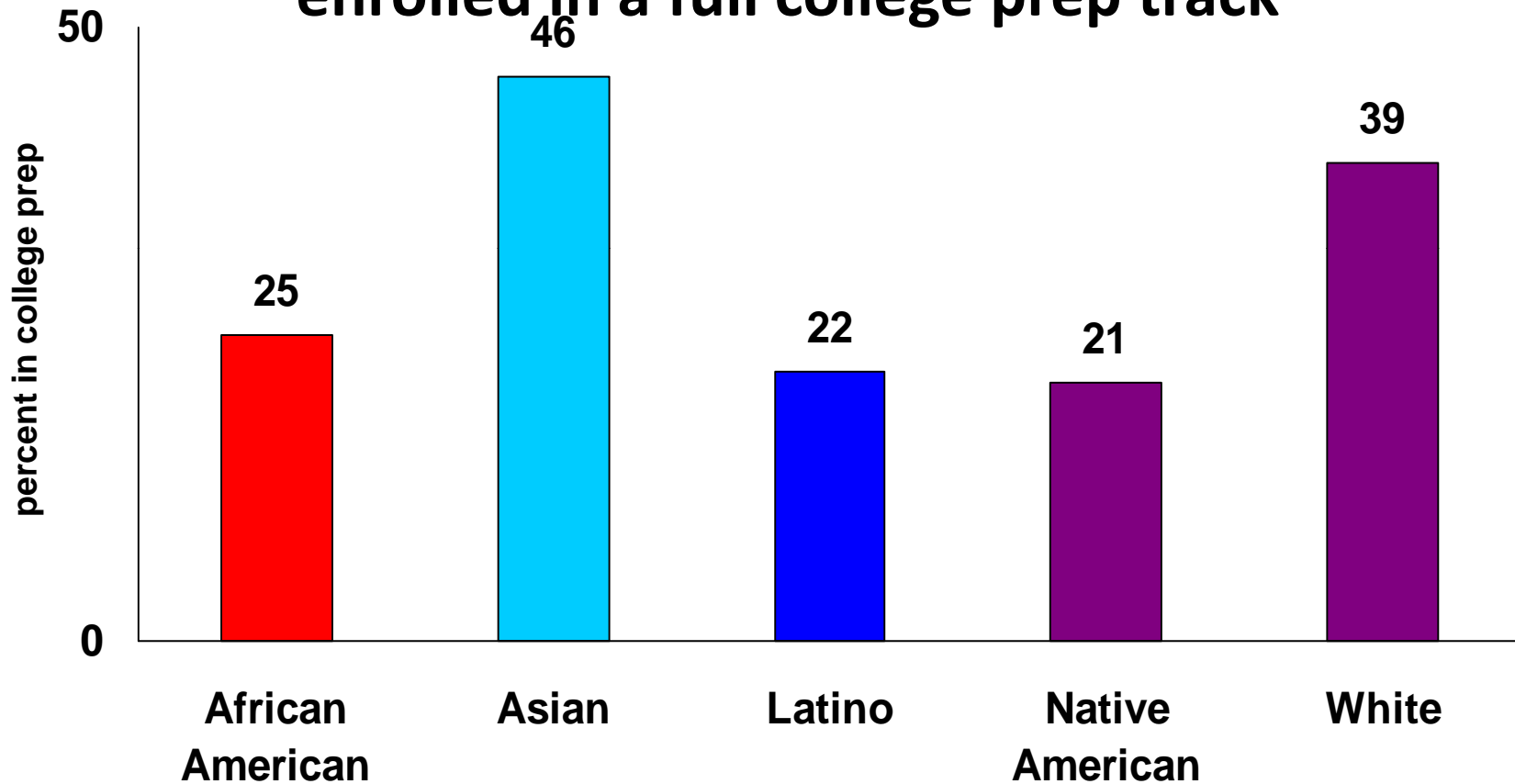


Source: Prospects (ABT Associates, 1993), in "Prospects: Final Report on Student Outcomes", PES, DOE, 1997.




Choices we make about what to
teach whom...

African American, Latino & Native American high school graduates are less likely to have been enrolled in a full college prep track

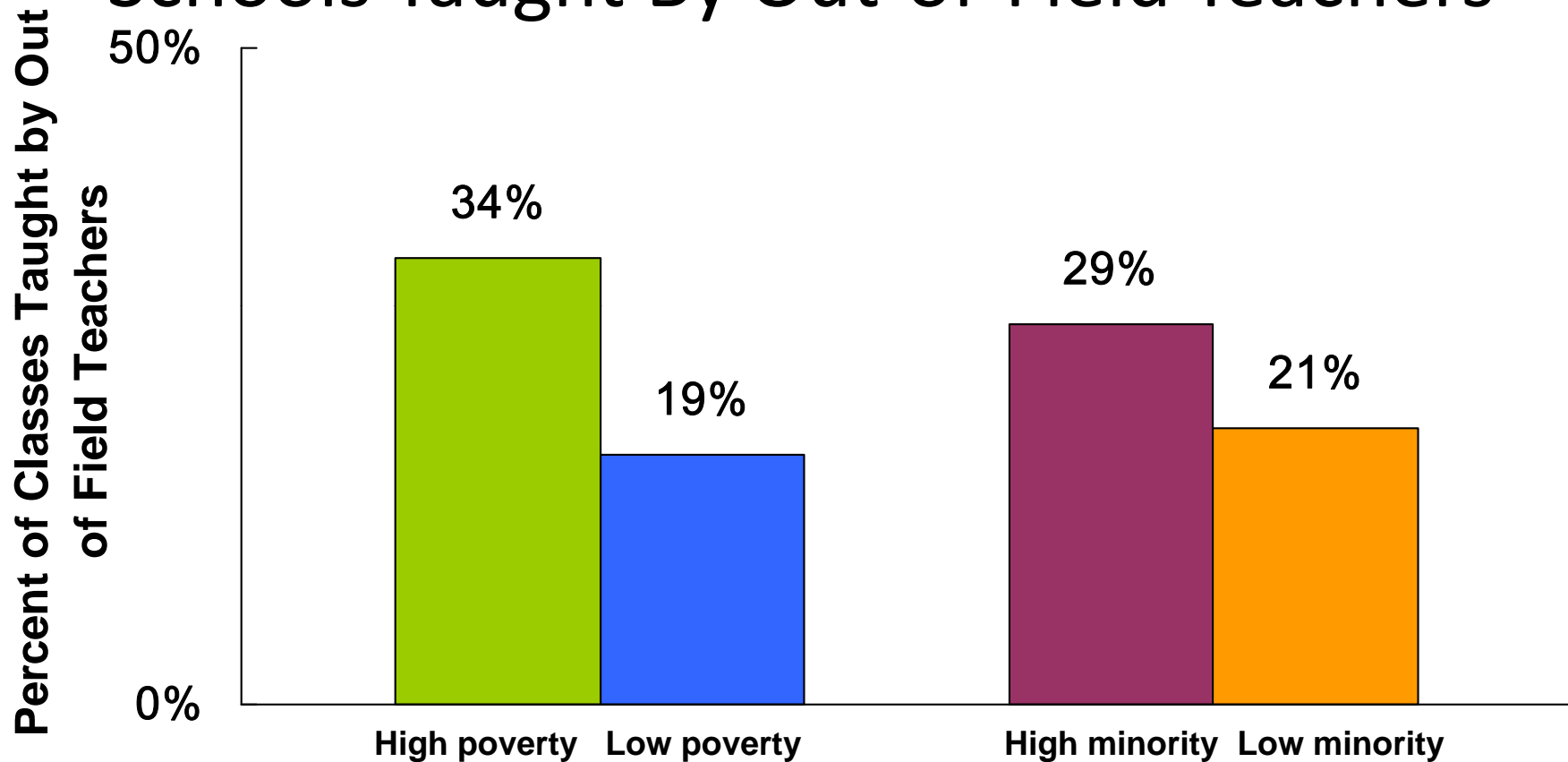


Full College Prep track is defined as at least: 4 years of English, 3 years of math, 2 years of natural science, 2 years of social science and 2 years of foreign language



And choices we make about
who teaches whom...

More Classes in High-Poverty, High-Minority Schools Taught By Out-of-Field Teachers



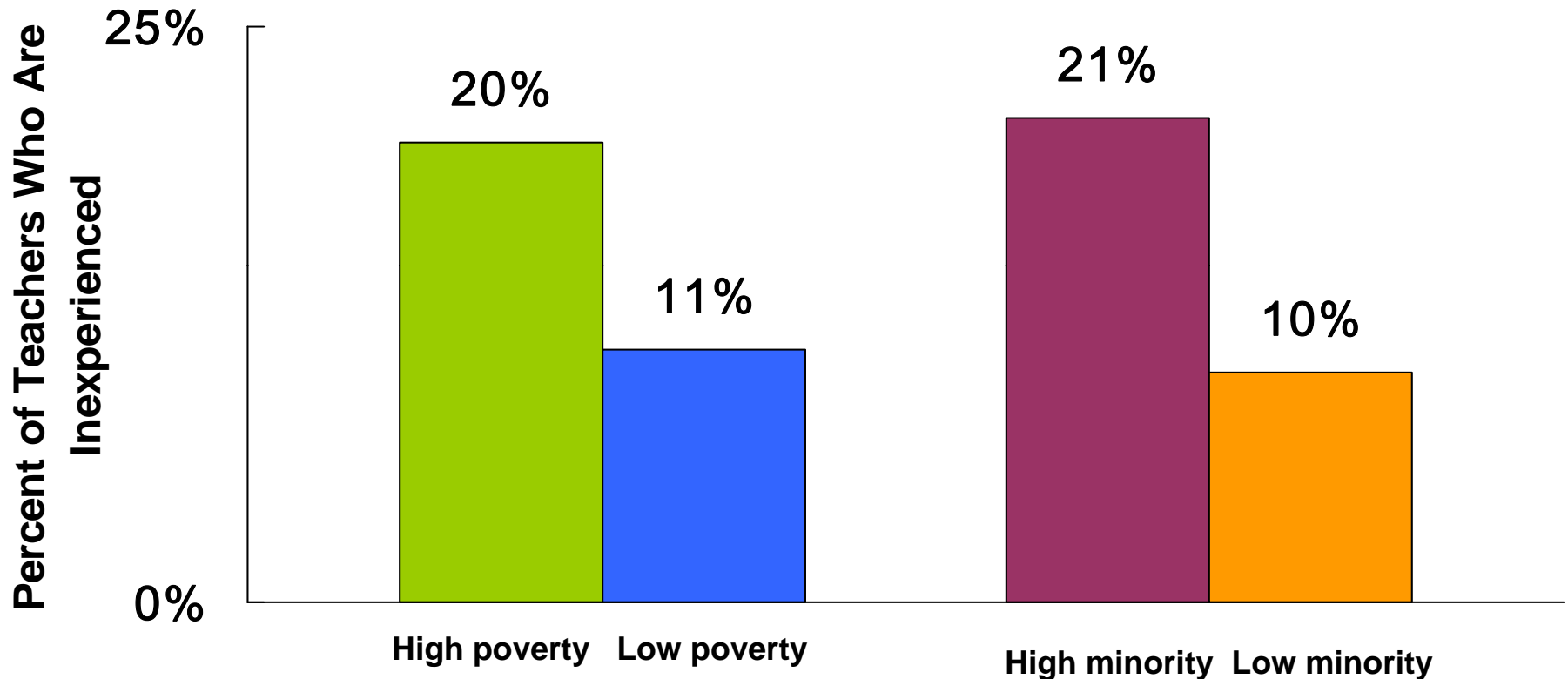
Note: High Poverty school-50% or more of the students are eligible for free/reduced price lunch. Low-poverty school -15% or fewer of the students are eligible for free/reduced price lunch.

High-minority school - 50% or more of the students are nonwhite. Low-minority school- 15% or fewer of the students are nonwhite.

***Teachers lacking a college major or minor in the field. Data for secondary-level core academic classes.**

Source: Richard M. Ingersoll, University of Pennsylvania. Original analysis for the Ed Trust of 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey. © 2010 THE EDUCATION TRUST

Poor and Minority Students Get More Inexperienced* Teachers



***Teachers with 3 or fewer years of experience.**

Note: High poverty refers to the top quartile of schools with students eligible for free/reduced price lunch. Low poverty-bottom quartile of schools with students eligible for free/reduced price lunch. High minority-top quartile; those schools with the highest concentrations of minority students. Low minority-bottom quartile of schools with the lowest concentrations of minority students



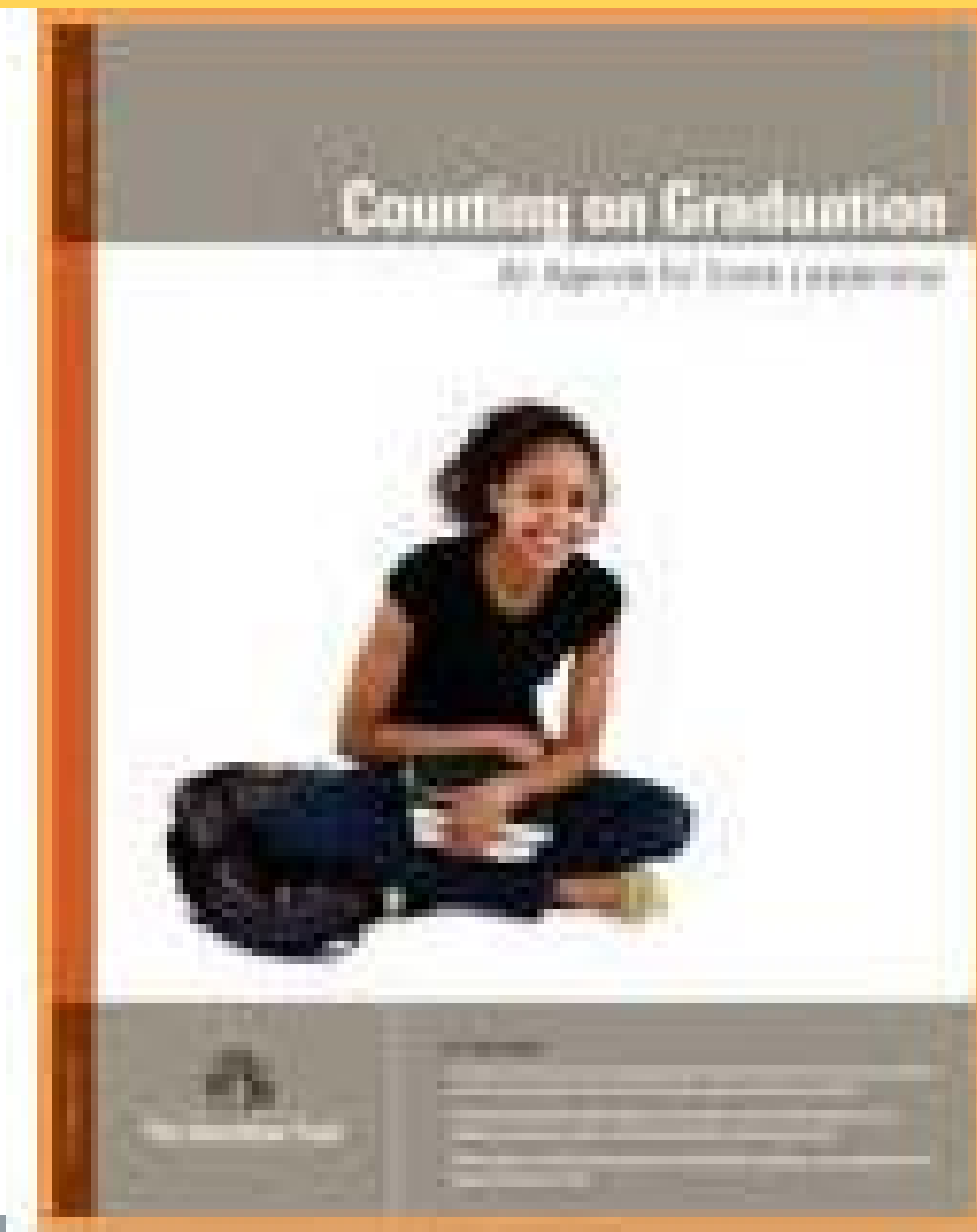
Results are devastating.

Kids who come in a little behind,
leave a **lot** behind.


2. Our goals for reducing dropouts are pathetically low.



Source:



Source:




Fortunately, that is beginning to
change.

**But bottom line is if you aim high
you'll get better results.**


3. Demand more from high school students.

Higher performing secondary schools put all kids—not just some—in a demanding high school core curriculum.




Single biggest predictor post-high school success is
QUALITY AND INTENSITY OF HIGH SCHOOL
CURRICULUM

Cliff Adelman, *Answers in the Tool Box*, U.S. Department of Education.

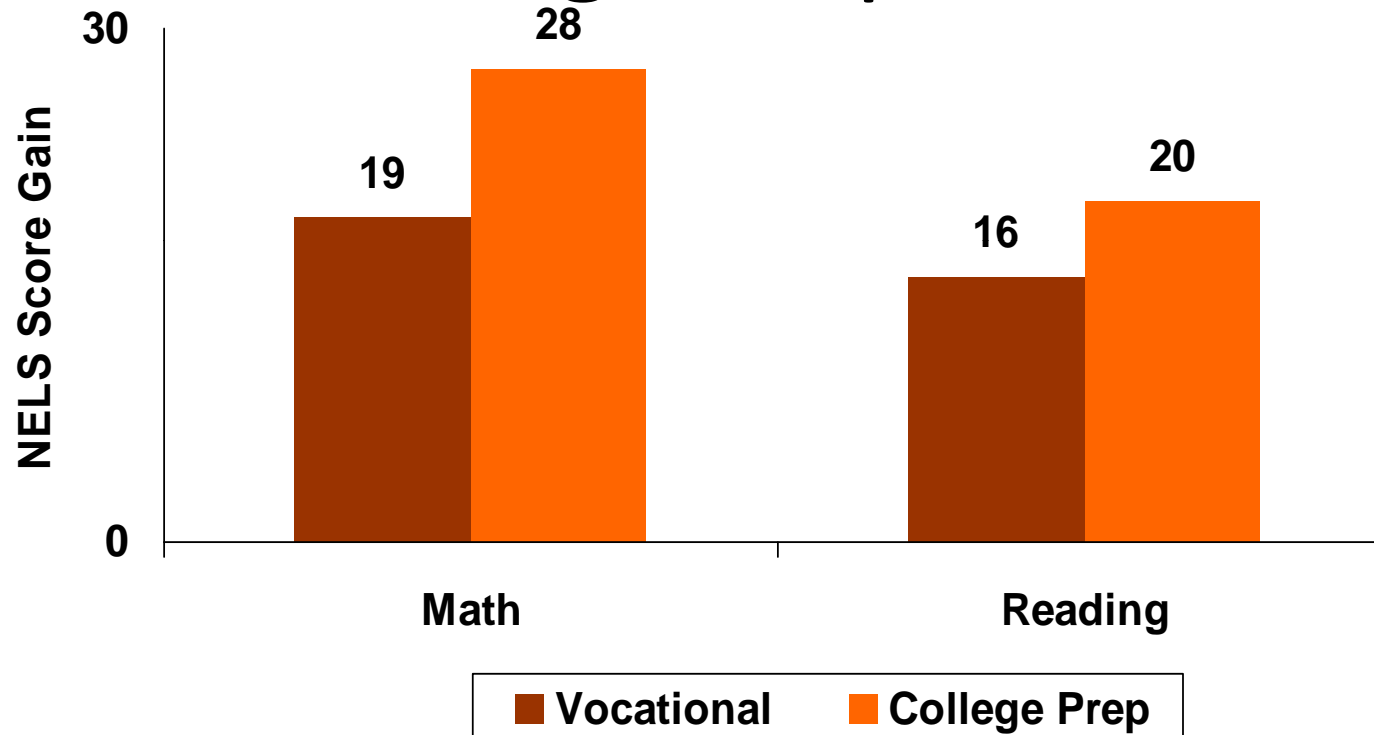


College prep curriculum has
benefits far beyond college.



Students of all sorts will learn
more...

Low Quartile Students Gain More From College Prep Courses*



***Grade 8-grade 12 test score gains based on 8th grade achievement.**

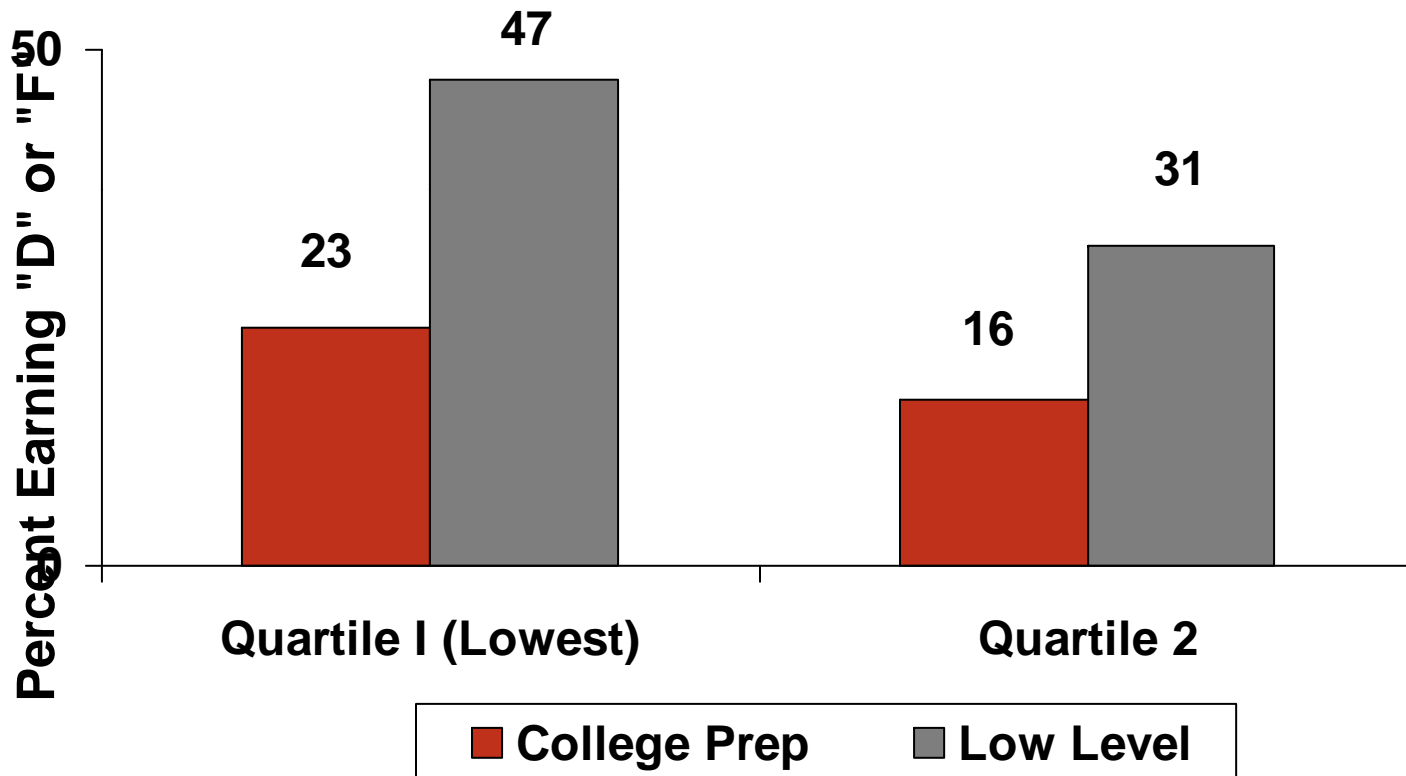
Source: USDOE, NCES, Vocational Education in the United States: Toward the Year 2000, in Issue Brief: Students Who Prepare for College and Vocation




They will also fail less often...

Challenging Curriculum Results in Lower Failure Rates, Even for Lowest Achievers


Ninth-grade English performance, by high/low level course, and eighth-grade reading achievement quartiles



Source: SREB, "Middle Grades to High School: Mending a Weak Link". Unpublished Draft, 2002.




And they'll be better prepared
for the workplace.



Leading states, districts making
college prep the default
curriculum.


Texas, Indiana, Arkansas, Michigan,
Oklahoma, Kentucky, Kansas.

4. Incentives Matter



But right now, most of the incentives at the school level flow in the wrong direction.


When students drop out, life for teachers and administrators is
EASIER.



Policymakers should consider
funding penalties...or
incentives...or both.

If students are not there after
October, why do you continue to pay
for them?

5. Speaking of incentives, how about providing them to bring students back?



Texas:
A lot of recent dropout recovery
efforts.

Pharr-San Juan ISD

- Created College-Career Technology Academy;
- Focused on dropouts 18-25
- First graduating class Dec '07
- 444 dropouts graduated by '09
- District grad rate has declined from twice the state rate to half the state rate.

Source:

6. Never give up.

Exemplary Schools: A Chicago Case Study

- The Consortium on Chicago School Research chose three improving small high schools with higher than average student GPA's and proportions of on-track students.
 - High student engagement levels
 - Supportive classroom practices
 - Calm classroom environments
 - Organized school structure

Imperial High's Philosophy on Student Support

- State standards are the floor
- Teach for college and work force prep
- All students need help at one time or another
- Different learners require different interventions and at various times
- All staff need to be ready to meet all needs
- We are all life-long learners
- Teachers by departments are expected to create learning plans for all students

Source: Imperial High School presentation at 2009 Education Trust National Conference



Imperial High School:

“The Huddle”

**Download this presentation
on our website!**

www.edtrust.org



The Education Trust

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