



A RIGHT DENIED

THE CRITICAL NEED FOR GENUINE SCHOOL REFORM

DEMOCRATS

for **EDUCATION REFORM**

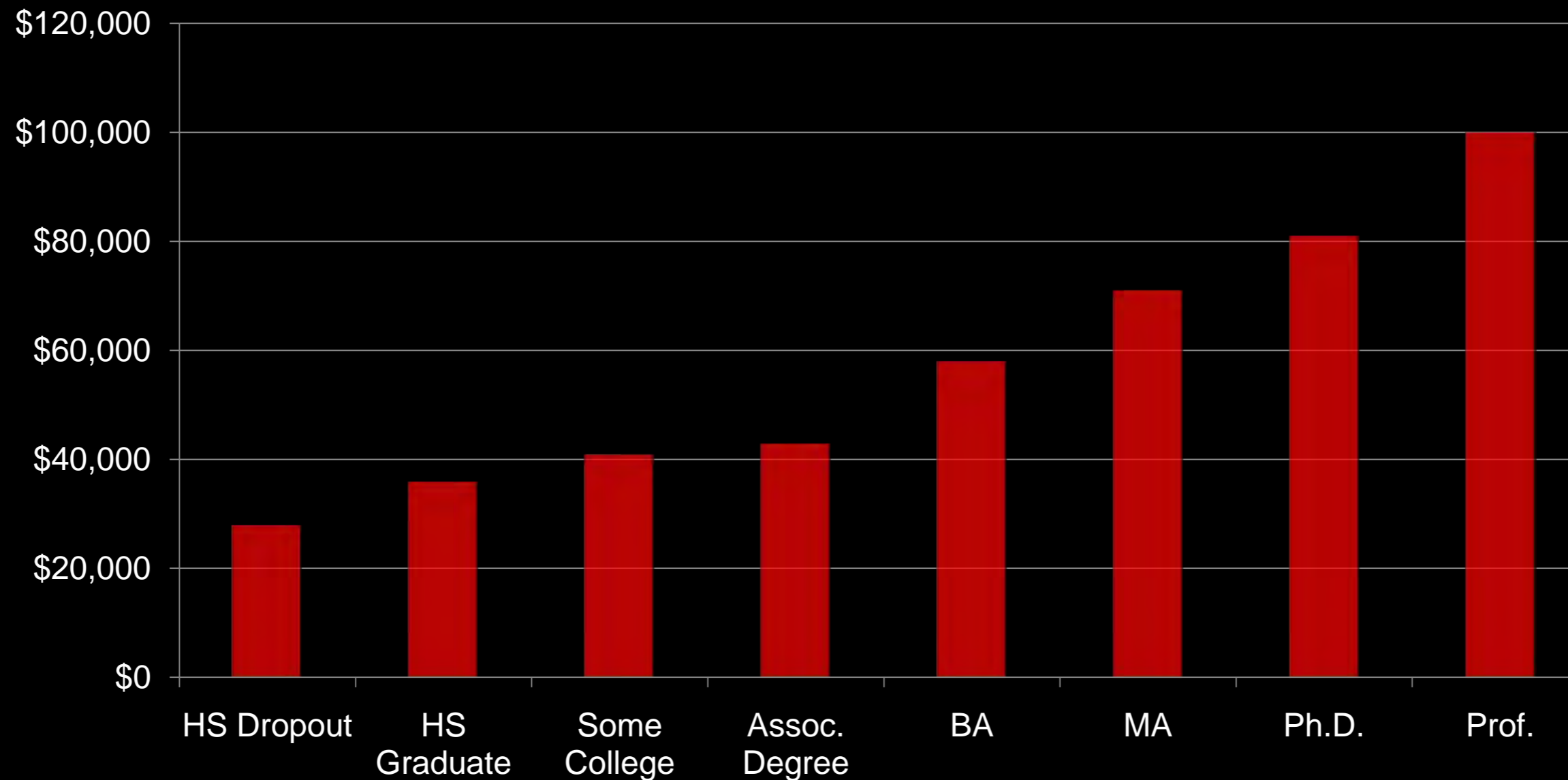
THE INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

RETURNS ON EDUCATION ARE HIGH AND RISING



Education is highly correlated with earnings.

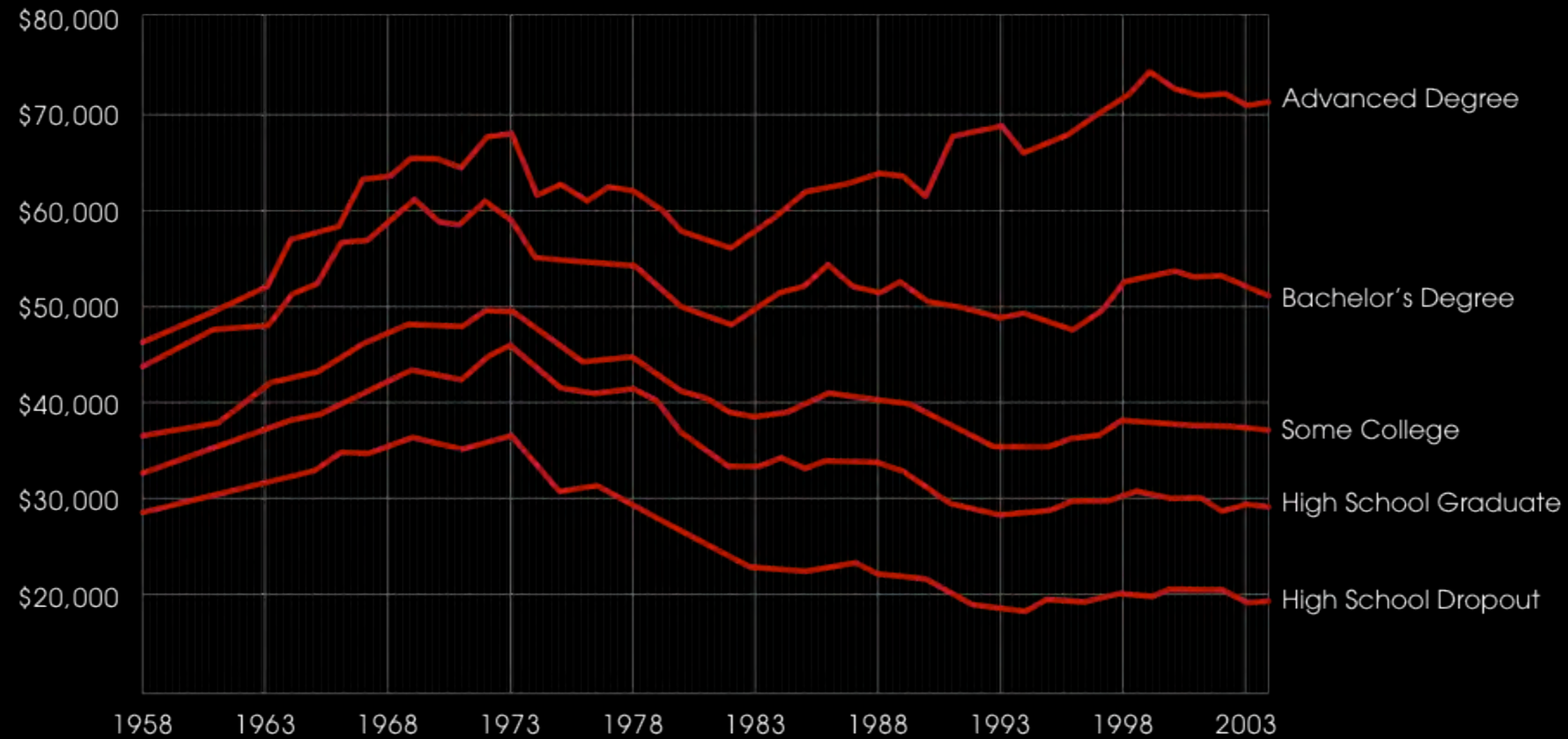
Over the course of a lifetime, a college grad will earn more than \$1 million more than a high school grad.



Source: U.S. Census Current Population Reports, Series P-60, from Digest of Education Statistics, 2005.

Wage trends are ominous for men without a college degree.

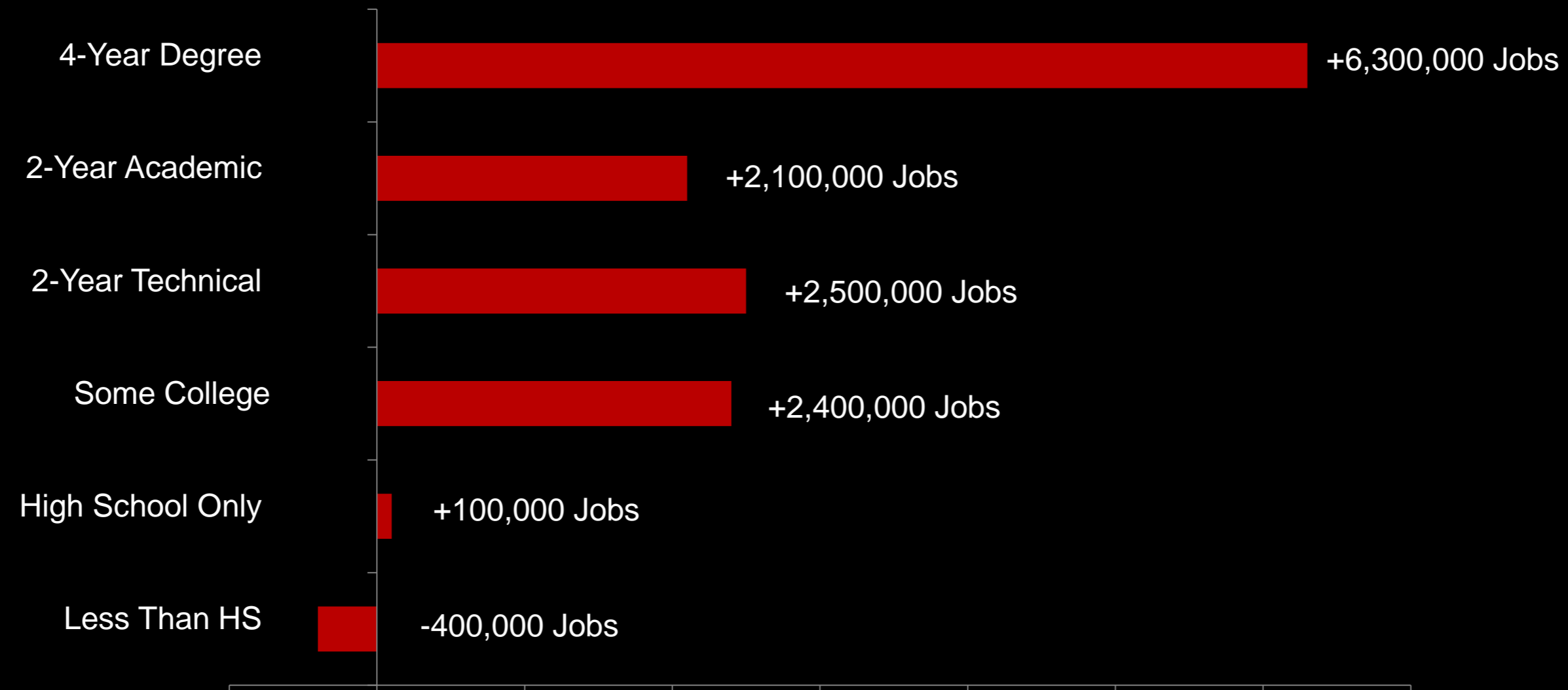
Income Change by Education (1958– 2003)



Source: Inherited Opportunity for Higher Education, Association for Institutional Research, 5/16/06.

New job trends are also ominous for those without a college degree.

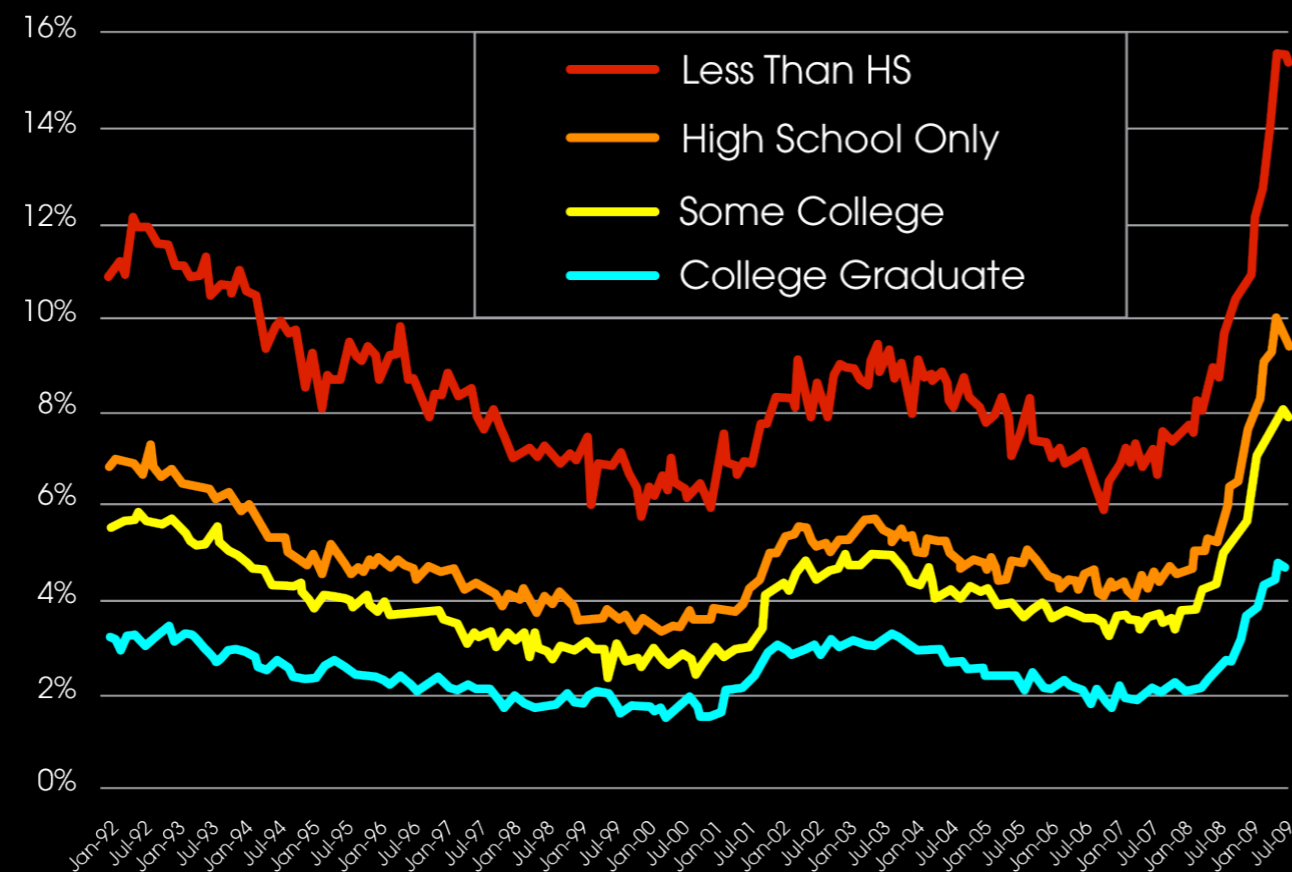
Employment Change by Education (1992 – 2002)



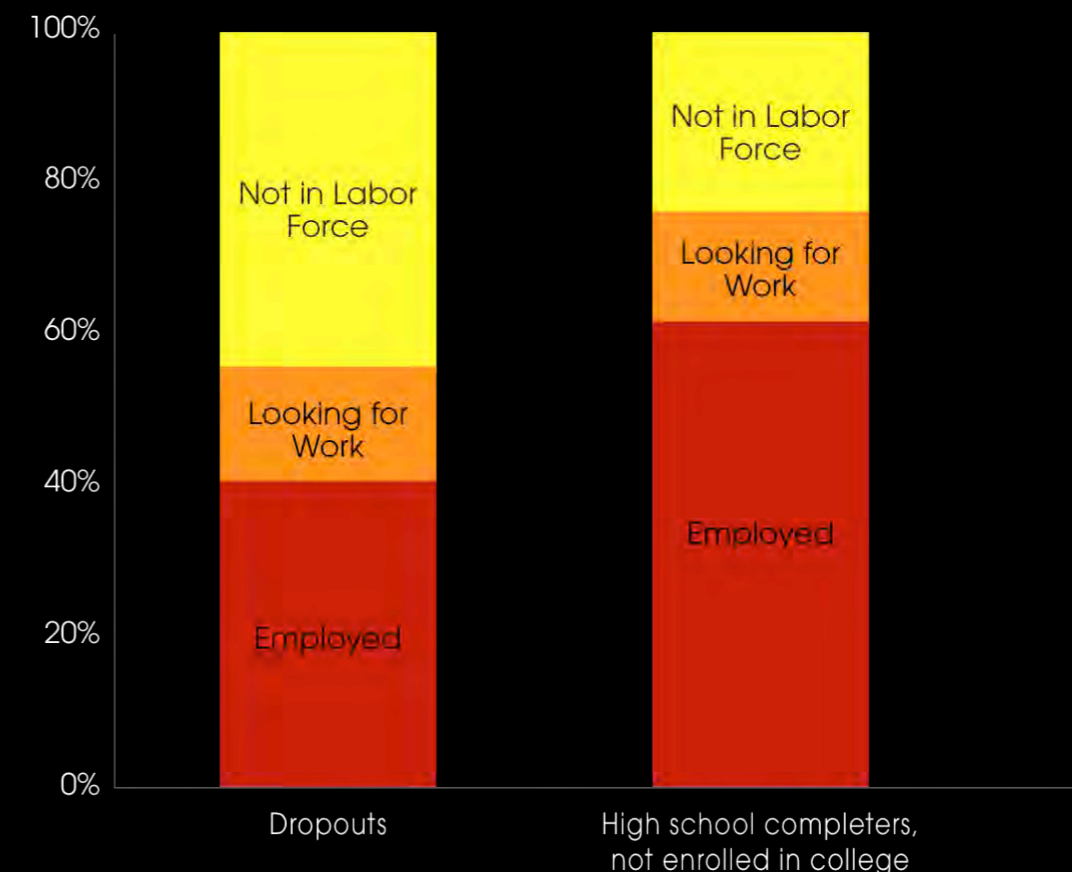
Source: Employment Policy Foundation tabulations of Bureau of Labor Statistics / Census Current Population Survey data; MTC Institute.

Education is also highly correlated with employment and workforce participation.

High school dropouts today have nearly 4x the unemployment rate of college graduates.



44% of high school dropouts are not in the labor force and an additional 15% are unemployed.

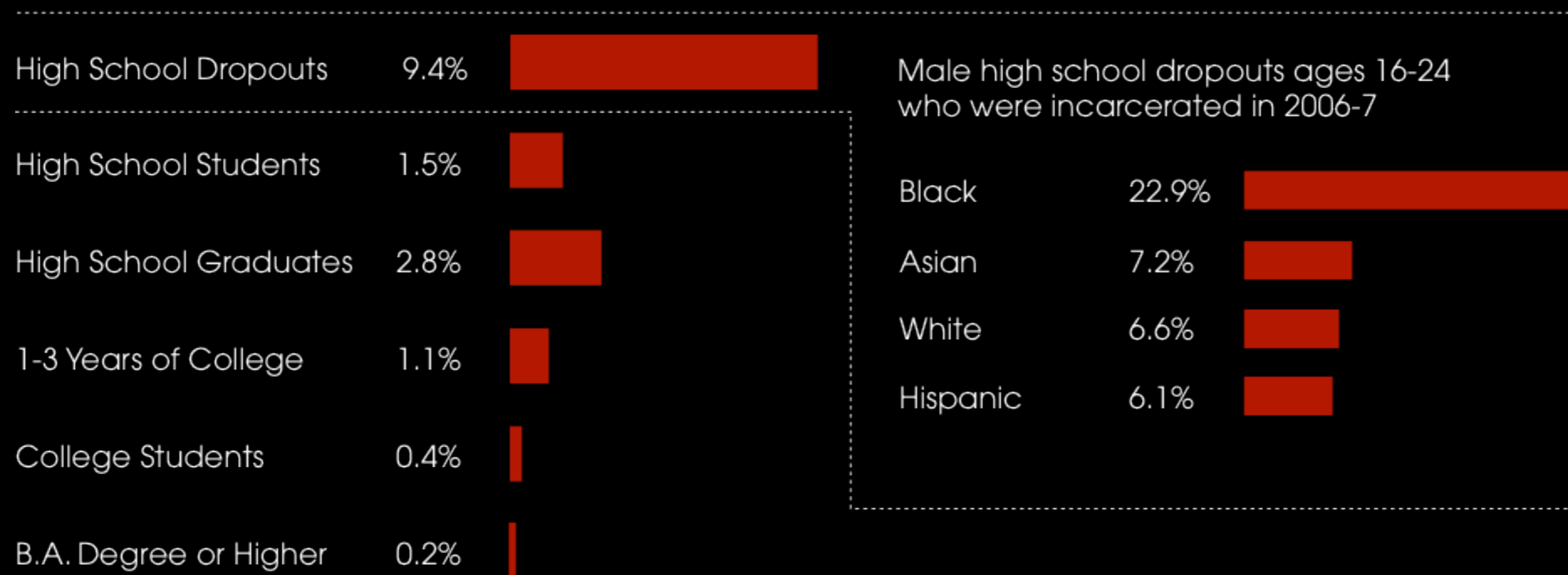


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (left); U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October 2007.

Male high school dropouts were 47 times more likely than a college graduate to be incarcerated.

Black males had the highest incarceration rate.

Males ages 16 to 24 who were incarcerated in 2006-7



Source: NY Times, 10/9/09.

A lack of education is literally deadly.

Mortality Rate by Education for Adults 25-64 years:

More Than
High School

206.3/100,000

Only High
School

477.6/100,000

Less Than
High School

650.4/100,000

30% of people in poverty report that their health is poor or fair, almost five times the rate reported by the wealthiest 20% of the population.

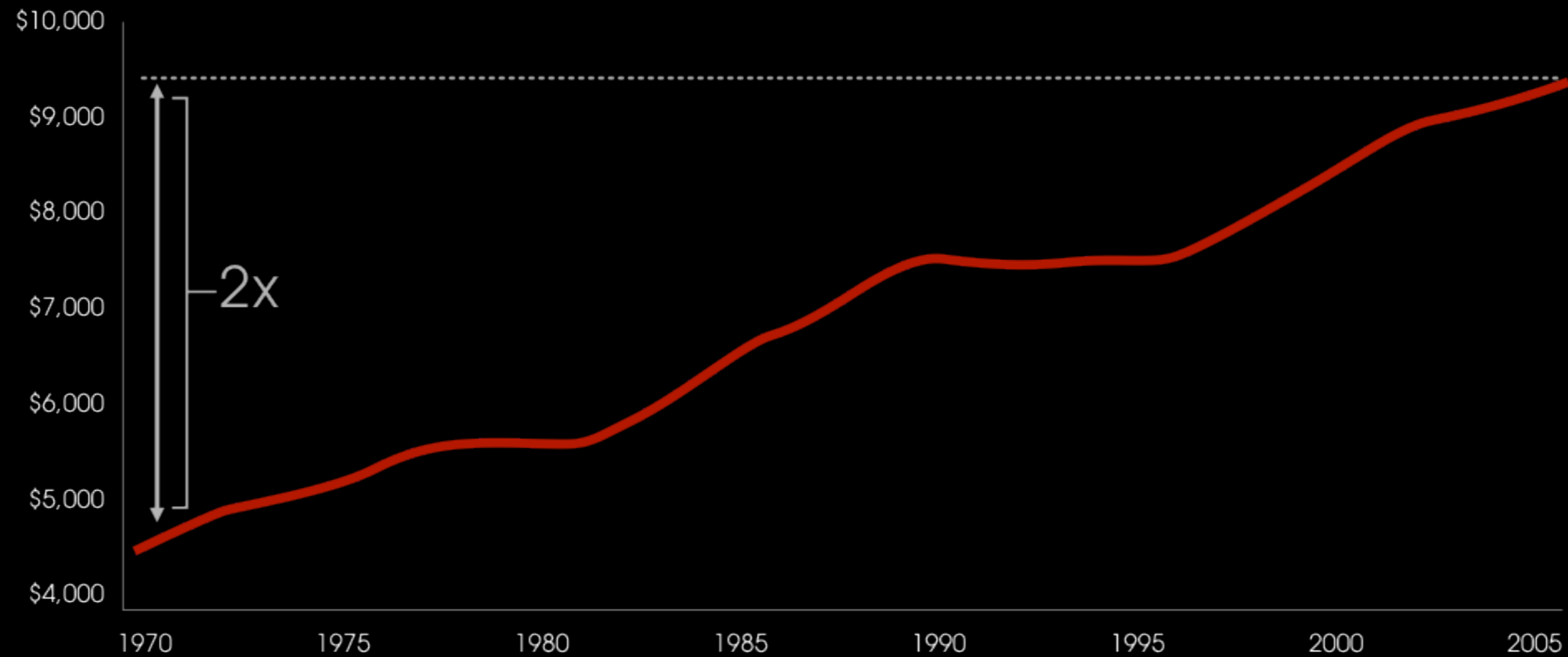
Source: Social Policy as Health Policy, Steven H. Woolf, Journal of the American Medical Association, 3/17/09

DESPITE MASSIVE SPENDING INCREASES,
EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES HAVE STAGNATED



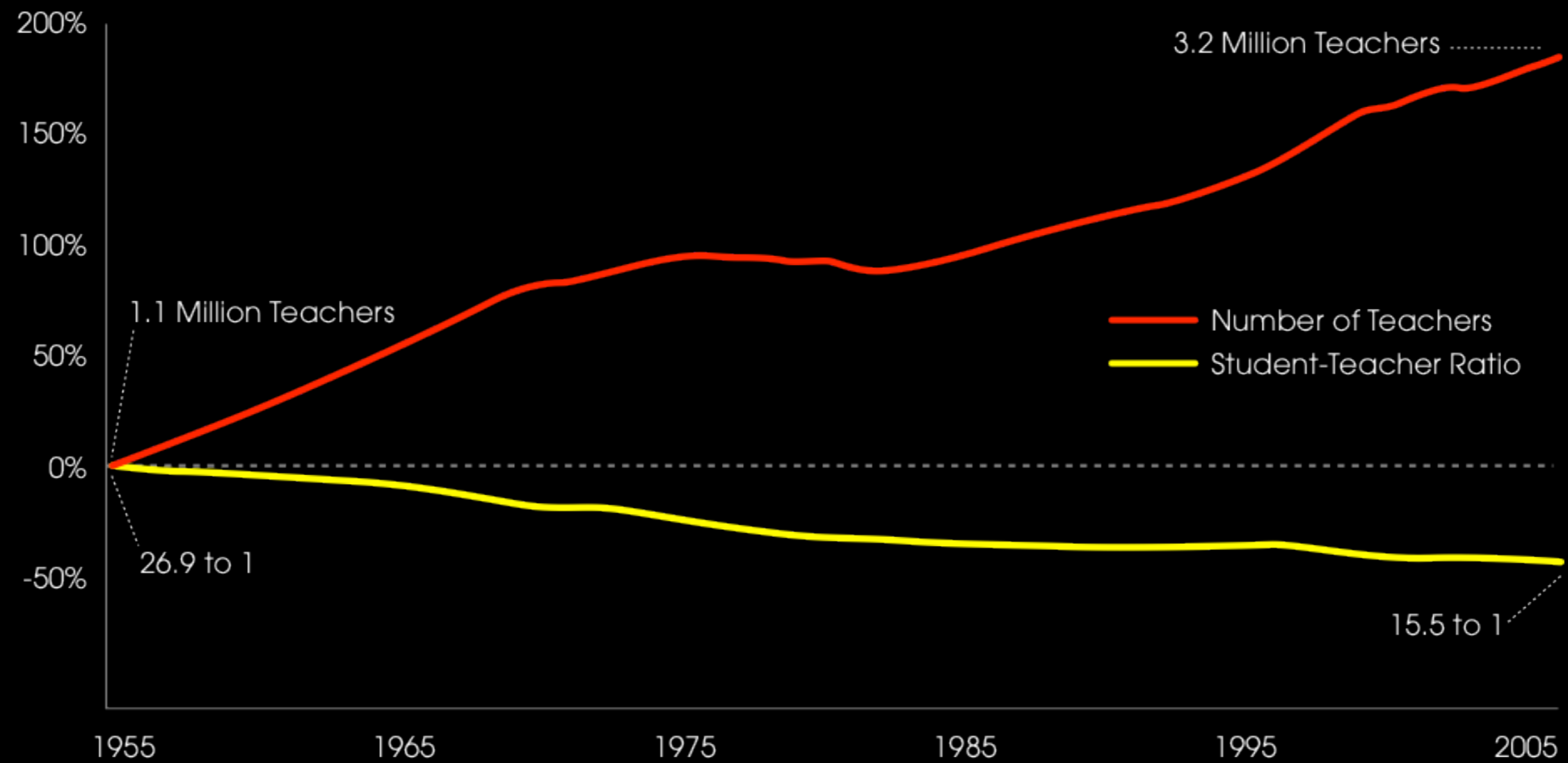
Overall K-12 education spending has grown rapidly over time.

Per-pupil spending, adjusted for Inflation, has doubled over the past 35 years.



Source: Digest of Education Statistics, 2008, pg. 59.

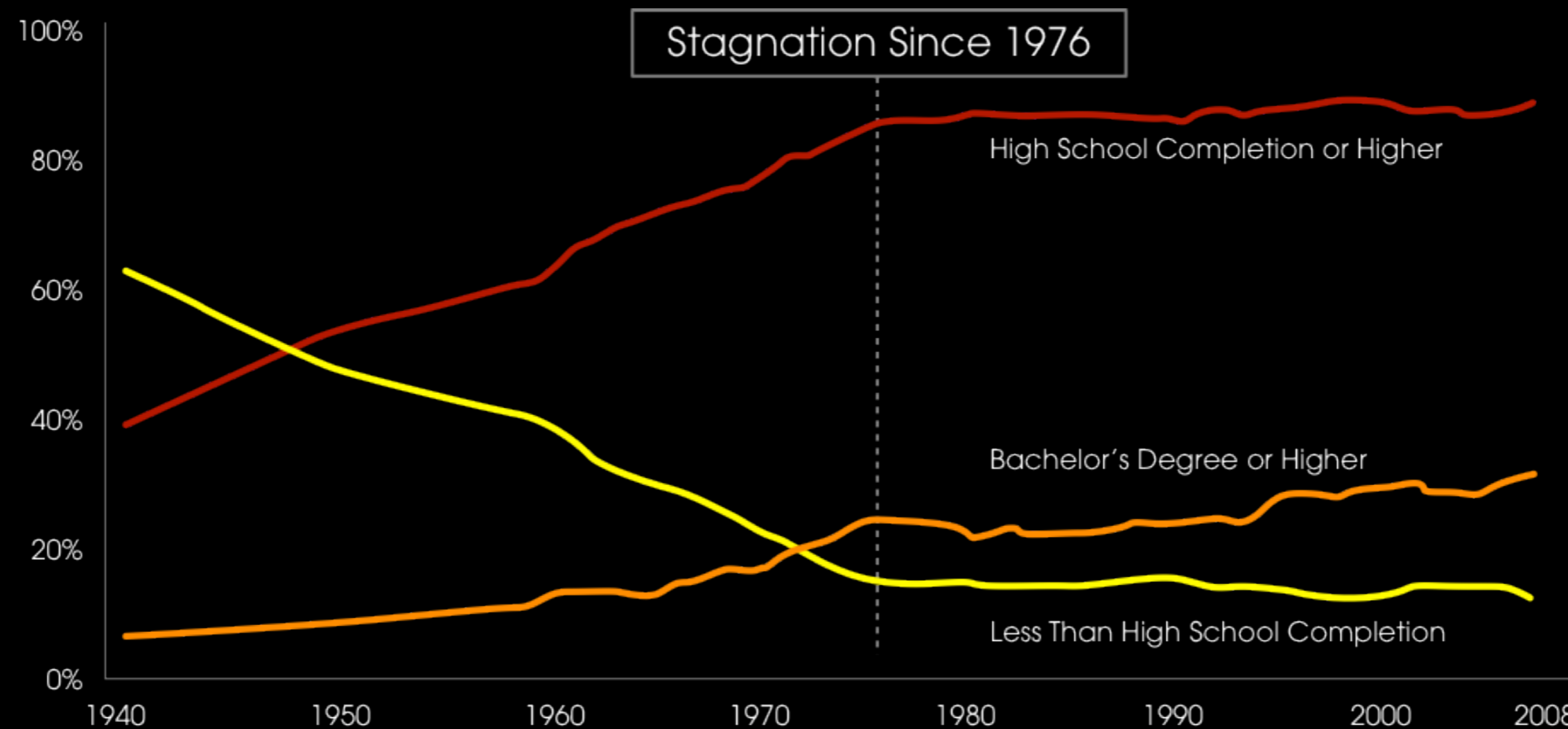
The rise in spending has been driven mainly by a tripling in the number of teachers over the past 50 years, which has led to a 43% reduction in the student-teacher ratio.



Source: U.S. Census Current Population Reports, Series P-60, from Digest of Education Statistics, 2005.

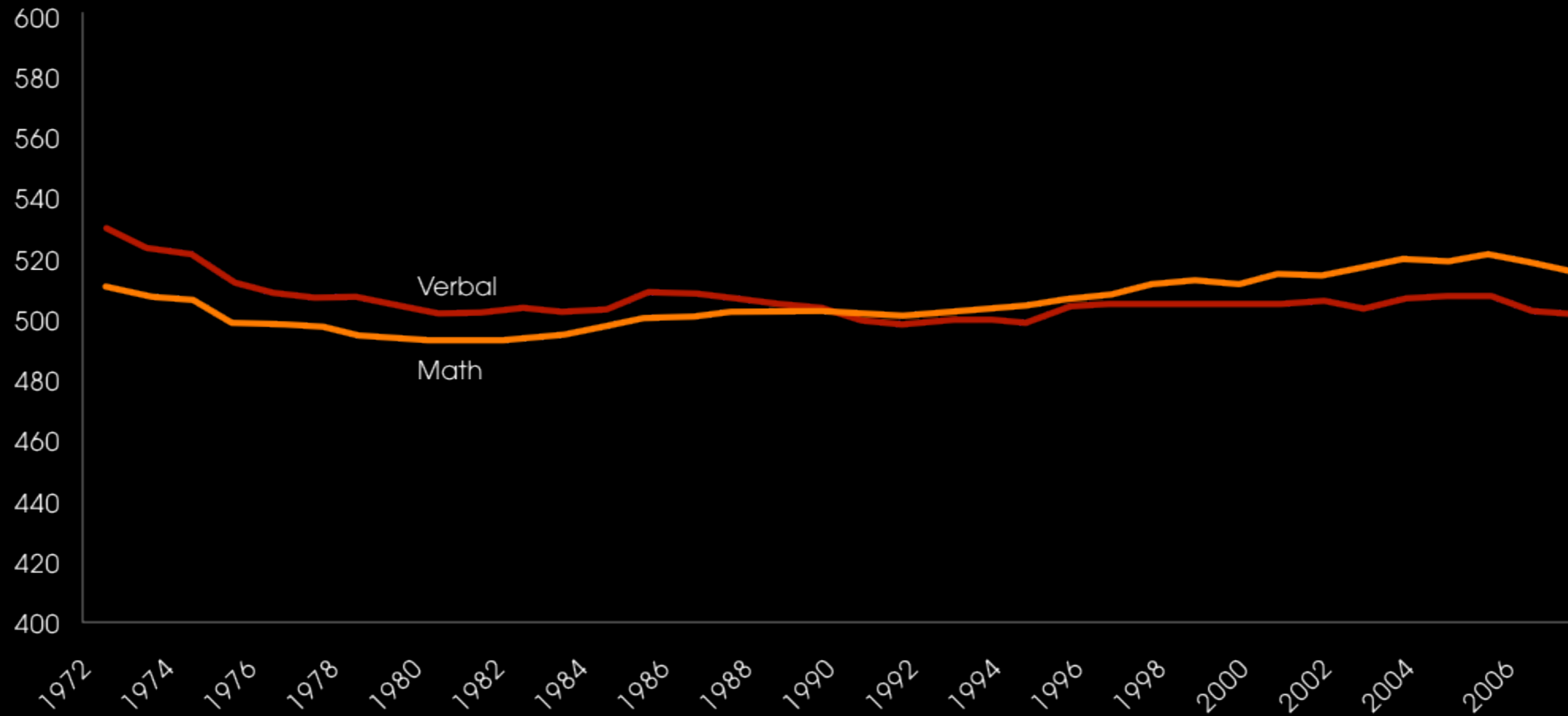
Despite a doubling of spending since the mid-1970s, average educational attainment has stagnated.

Percentage of persons 25-29 years old, by highest level of educational attainment.



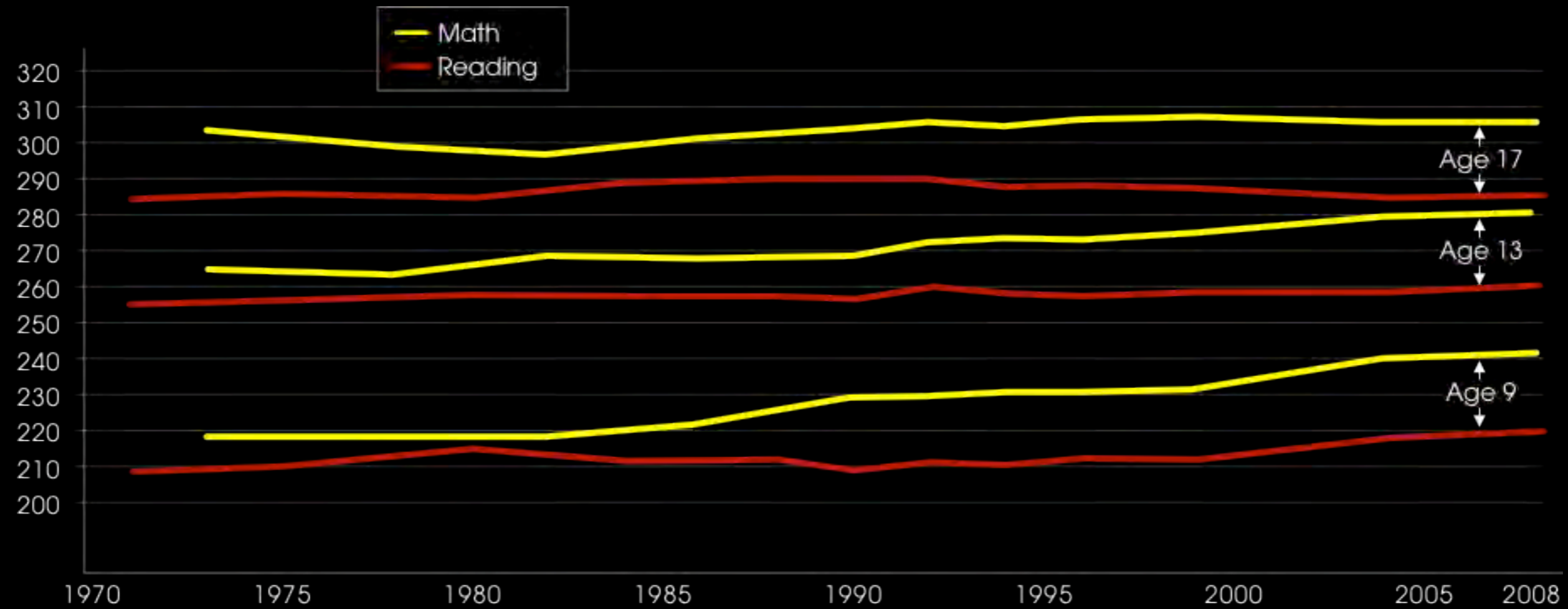
Source: Digest of Education Statistics, 2008, pg. 57.

SAT scores haven't budged since the early 1970's.



Source: Wikipedia

NAEP scores have stagnated as well.



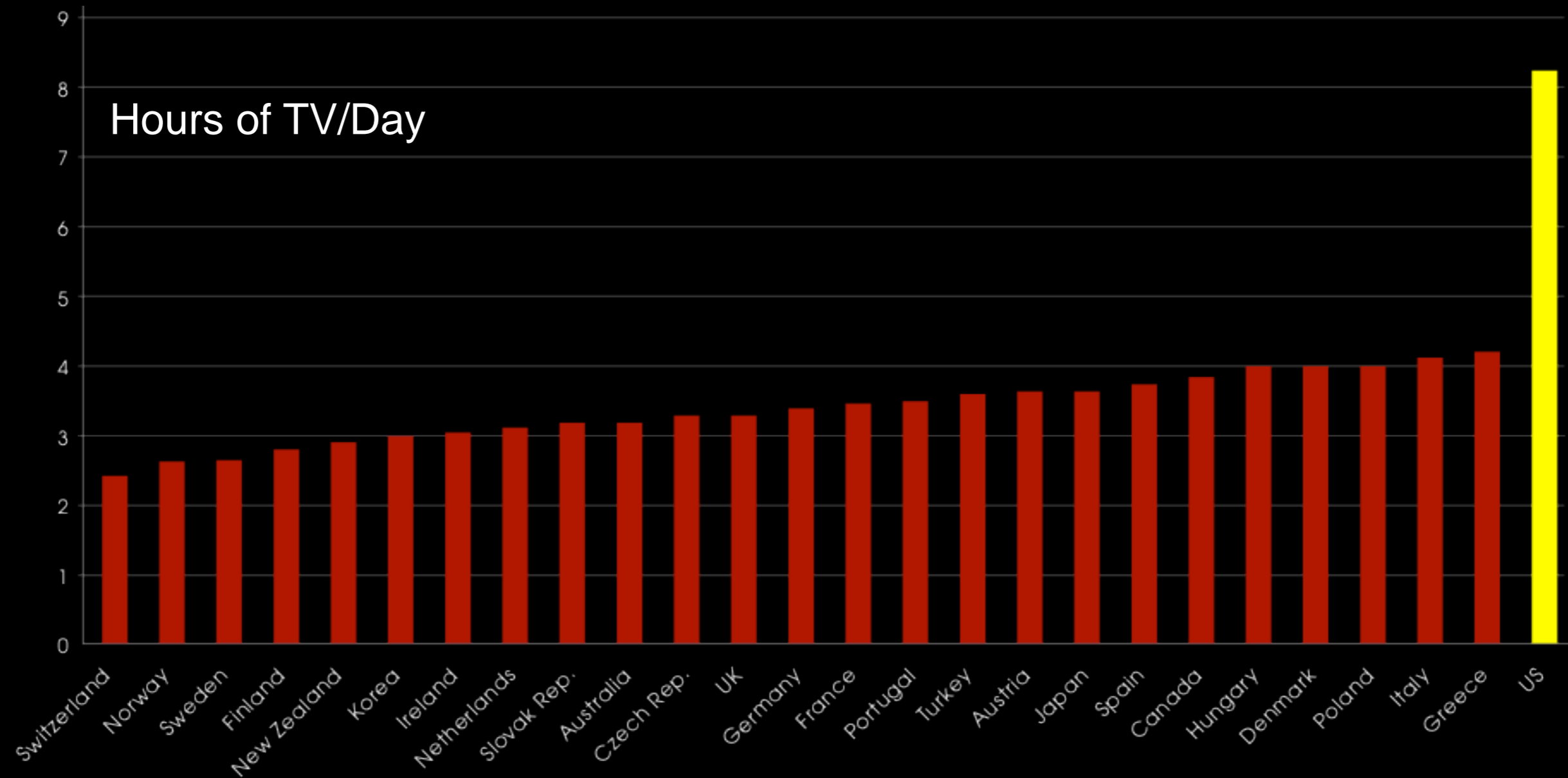
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 1971–2008 Long-Term Trend Reading Assessments.

Why hasn't additional money resulted in improved results?

1. Teacher quality has been falling rapidly over the past few decades
2. Our school systems have become more bureaucratic and unaccountable
3. As a nation, have been so rich for so long that we have become lazy and complacent. Our youth are spending more time watching TV, listening to iPods, playing video games (up 25% in the last four years), going to sporting events, etc. rather than studying hard. These two pictures capture what's happening in China vs. the U.S.:

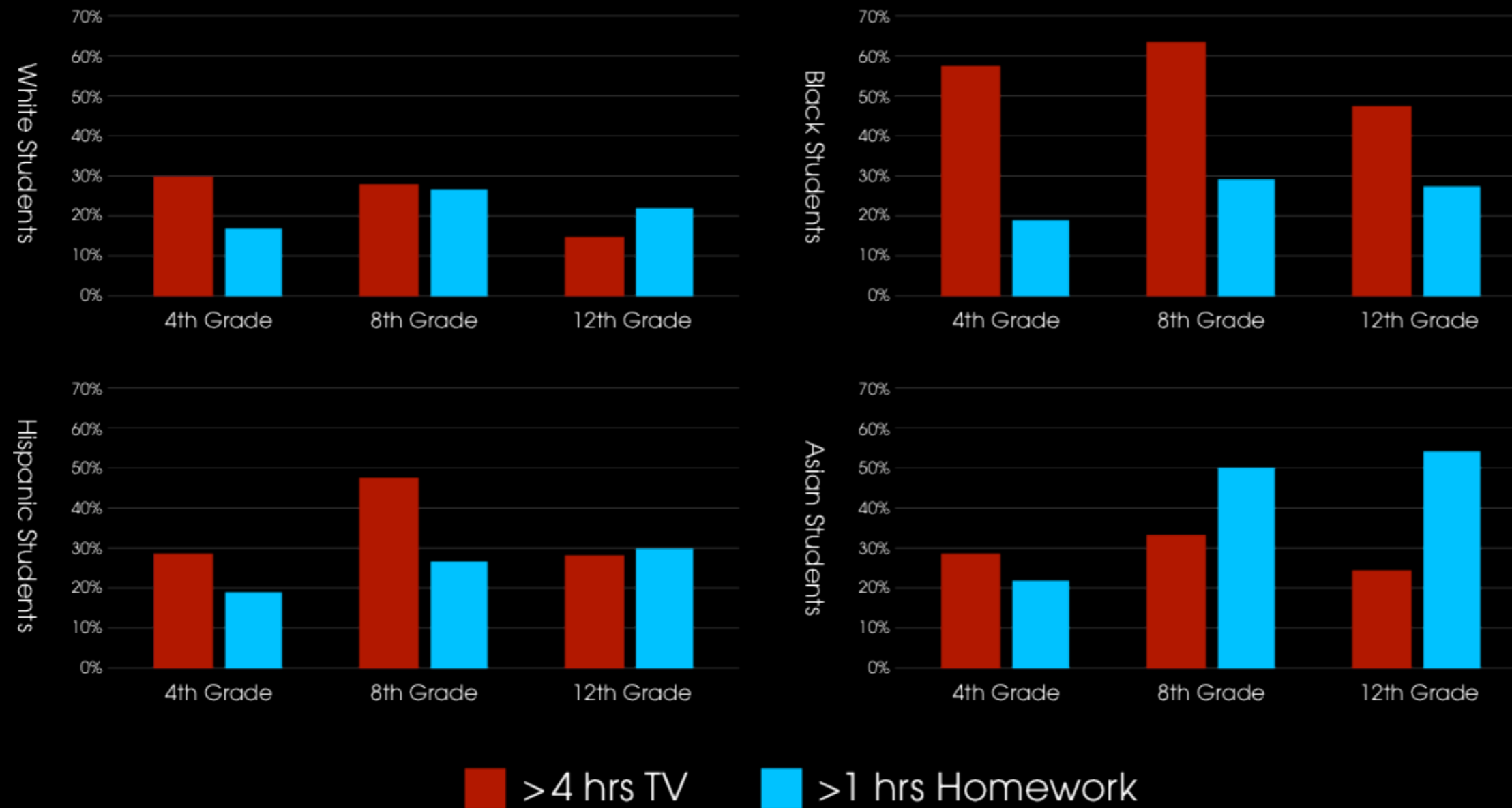


Americans watch more than twice as much TV as any other country.



Source: OECD Communications Outlook 2009; <http://browse.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/pdfs/browseit/9309031E.PDF#page=202>.

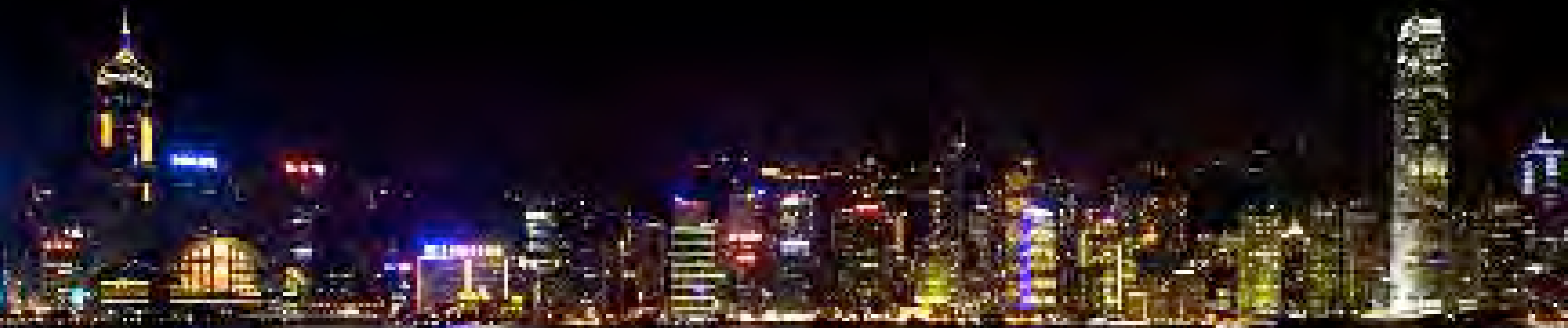
Overall, students at all grade levels are spending far more time watching TV than doing homework.



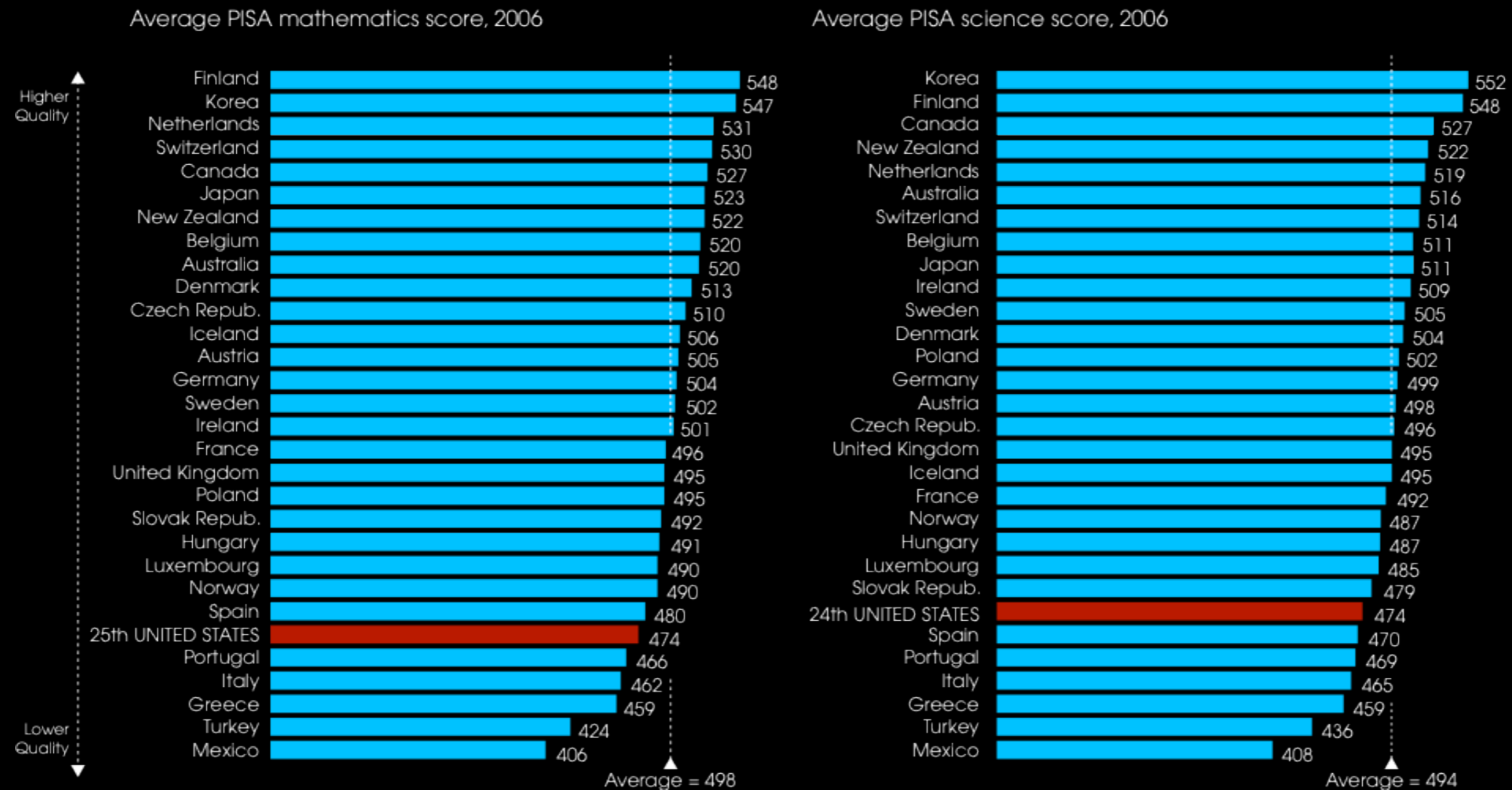
Source: No Excuses.

ACHIEVEMENT GAP #1

WE ARE FALLING BEHIND OUR ECONOMIC COMPETITORS



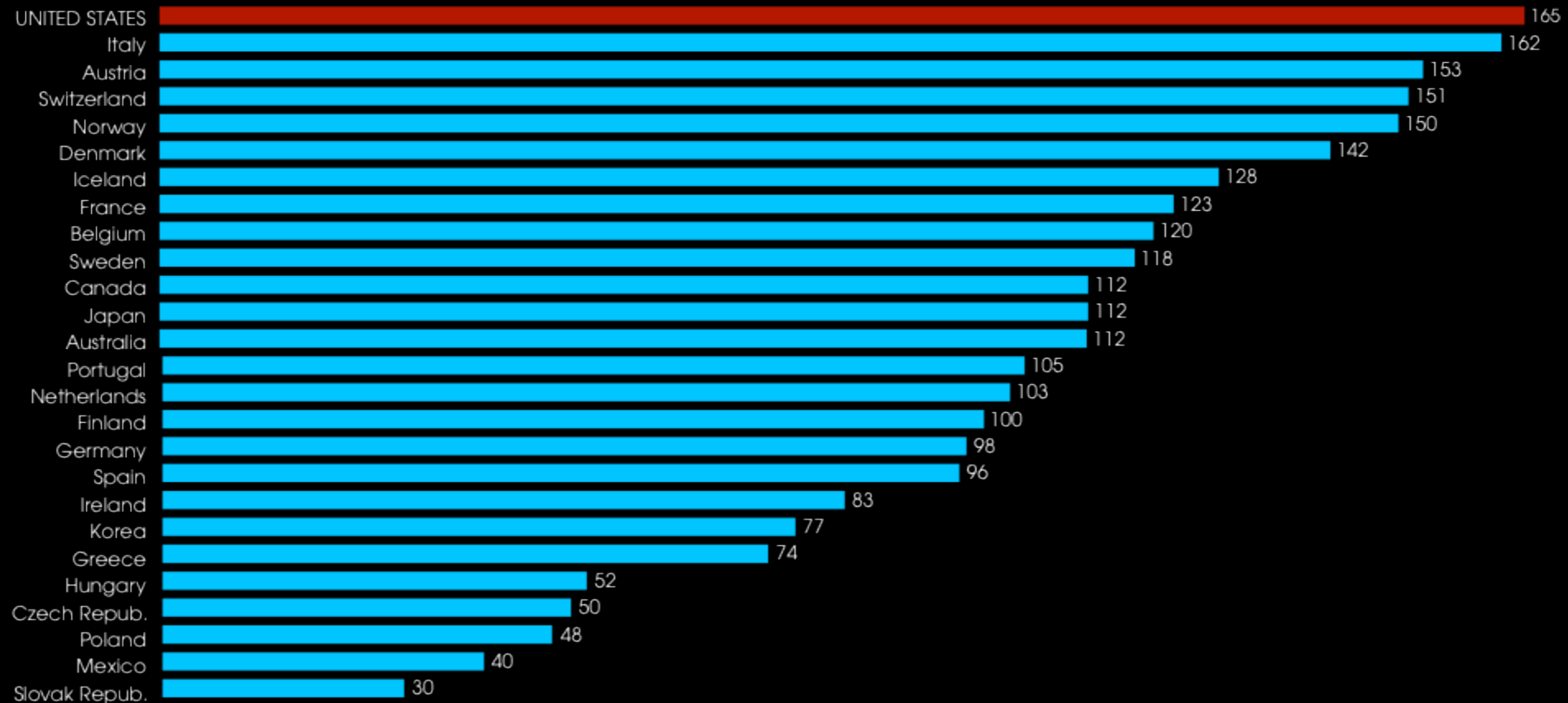
Our 15-year-olds trail nearly all other OECD countries math and science.



Source: OECD; Appeared in The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America's Schools, McKinsey & Co., 4/09.

We get very little bang for our education buck.

\$ in cumulative spending per student per point on PISA mathematics, 2003

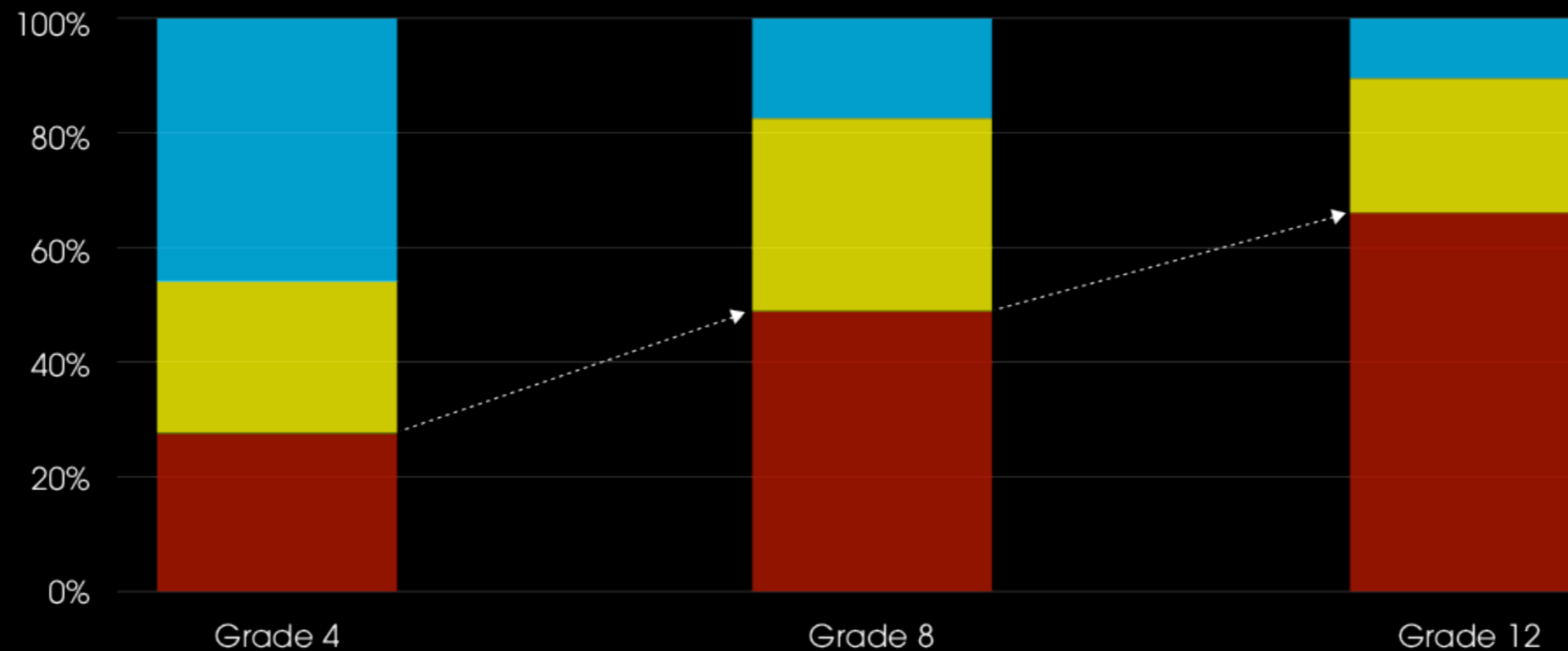


Source: National Center for Education Statistics; US Census Bureau; OECD; GovernmentSpending.com; McKinsey analysis;
Appeared in The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America's Schools, McKinsey & Co., 4/09.

Our relative performance is weak and declines dramatically the longer our students are in school.

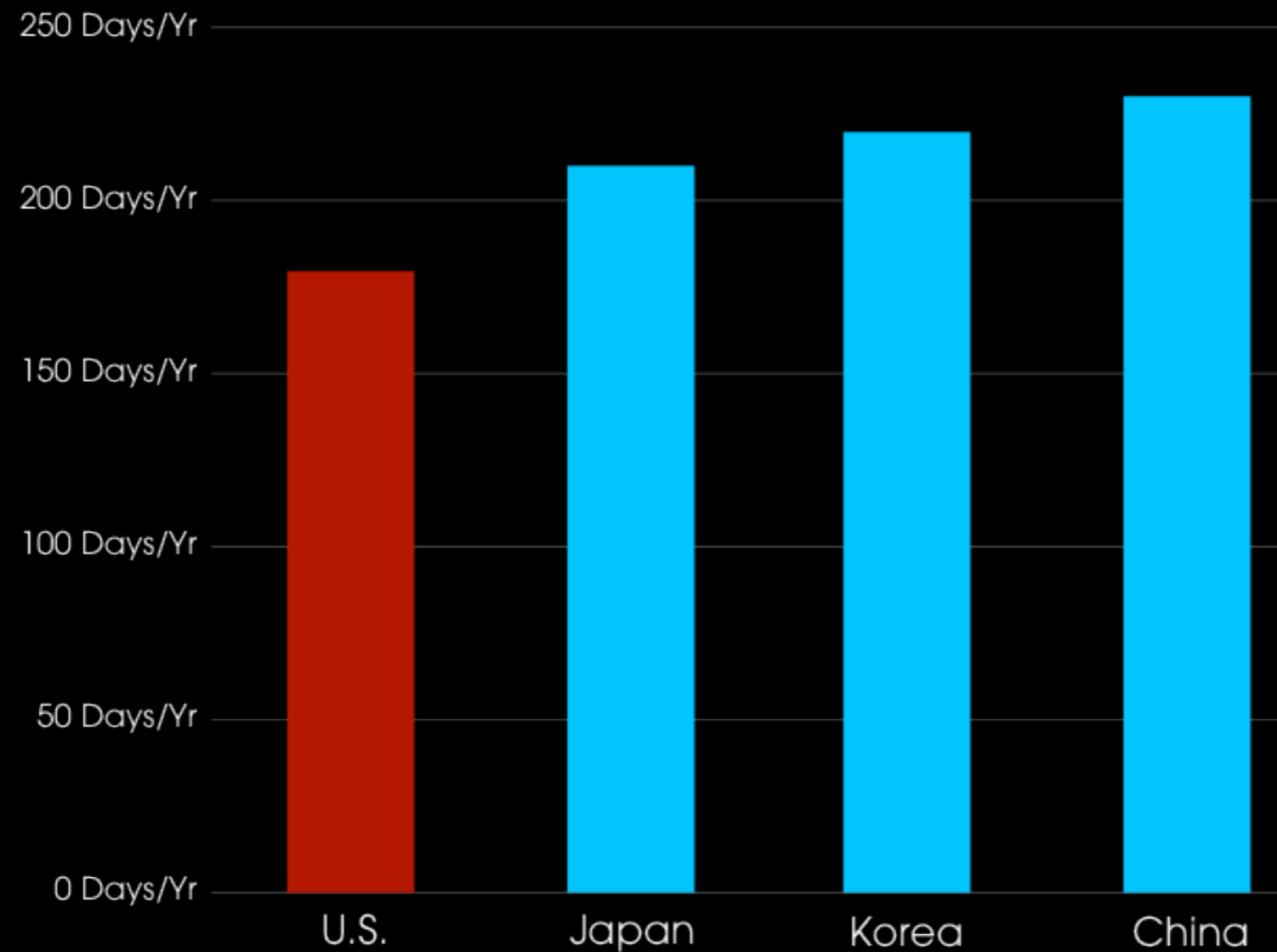
Math Performance

- Nations Scoring Higher than U.S.
- Nations Scoring the Same as U.S.
- Nations Scoring Below U.S.



Source: NCES 1999-081R, Highlights From TIMSS. Slide courtesy of Education Trust.

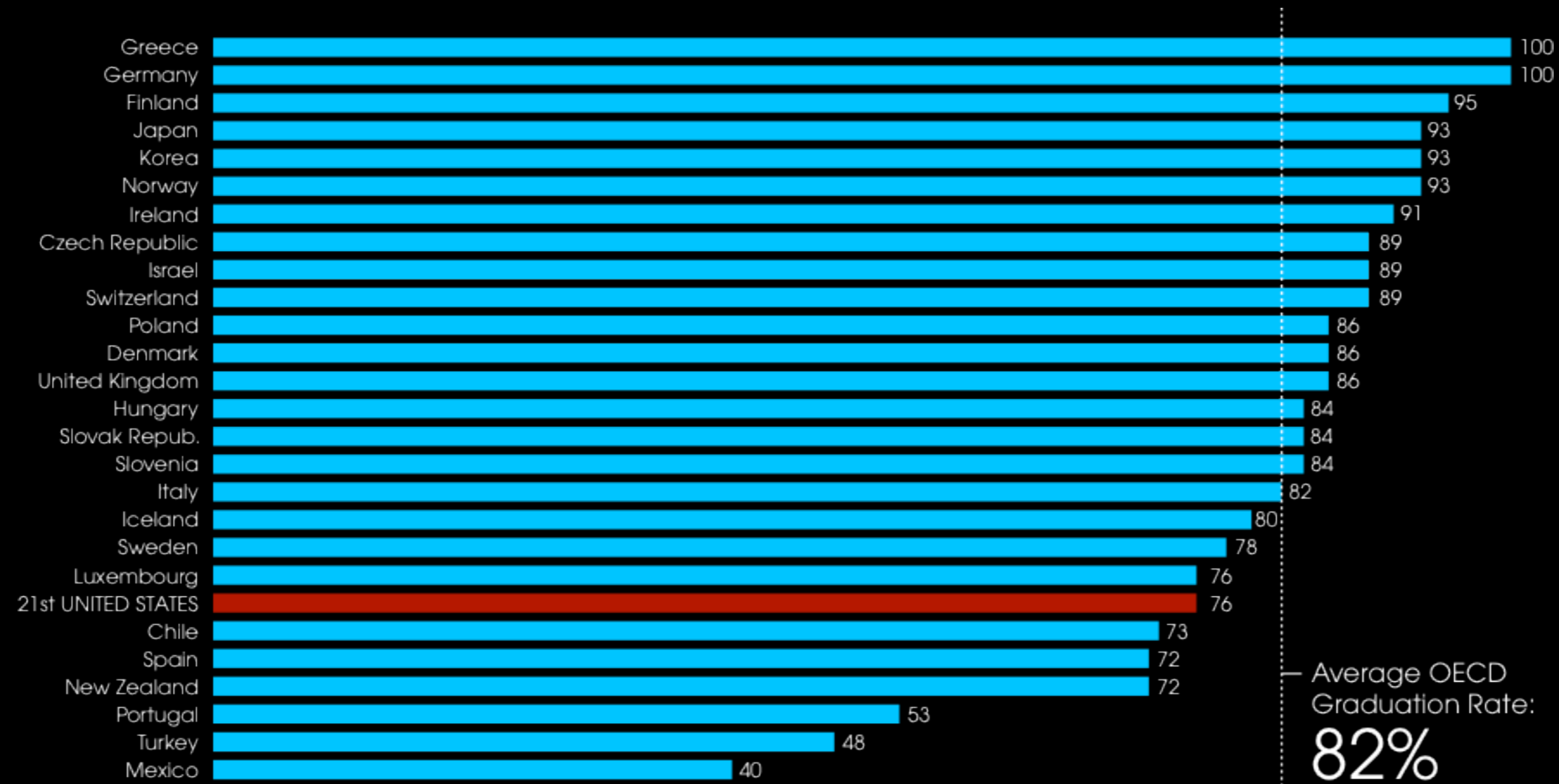
U.S. students go to school fewer hours per day and fewer days per year than students in Asia.



Over a 13-year school career, students in Asia receive 2-4 more years of academic instruction.

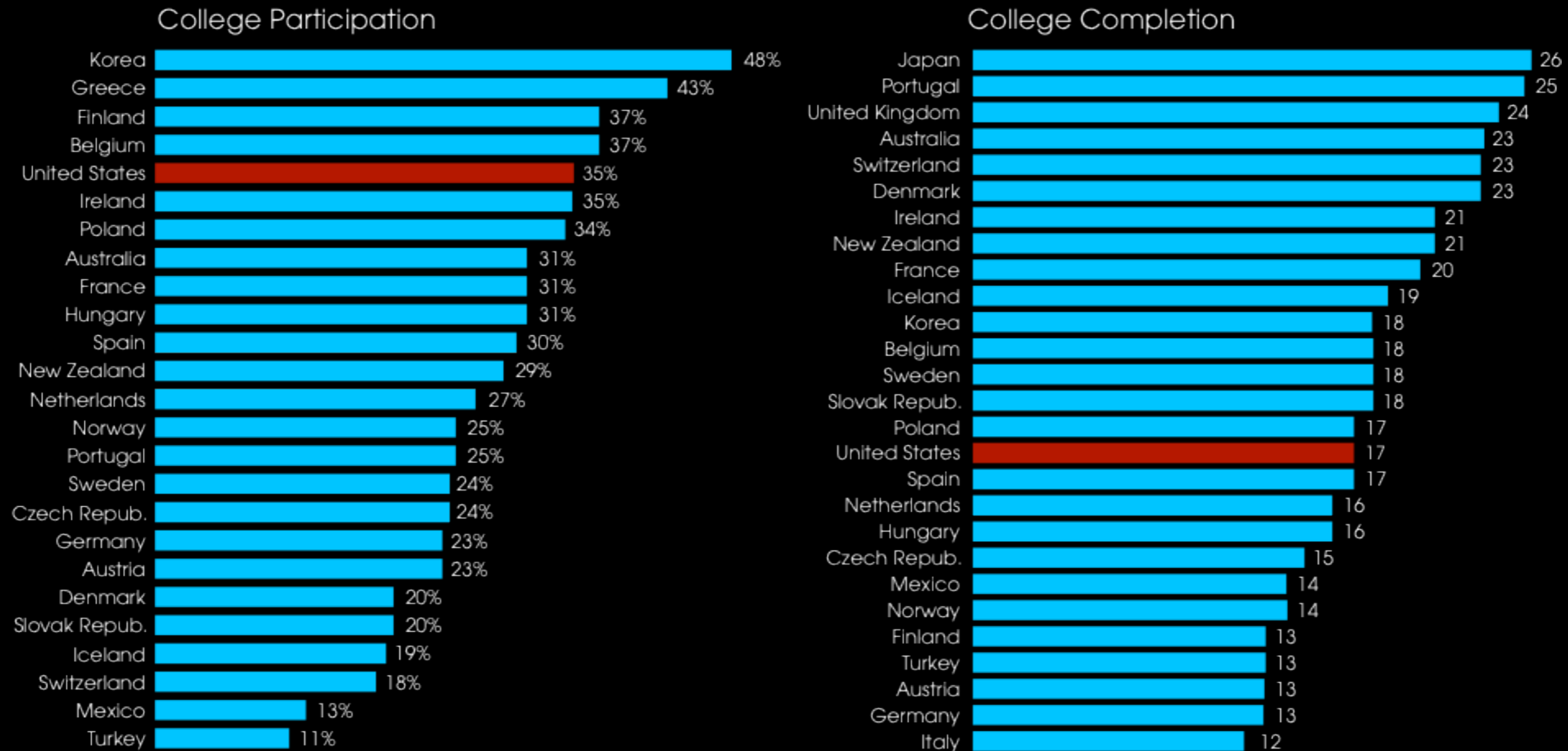
Source: Business Week, James P. Lenfestey.

Our high school graduation rate lags nearly all other OECD countries.



Source: OECD, Education at a Glance, 2007; 2005 data; Appeared in The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America's Schools, McKinsey & Co., 4/09.

The U.S. is among the leaders in college participation but ranks in the bottom half in college completion.

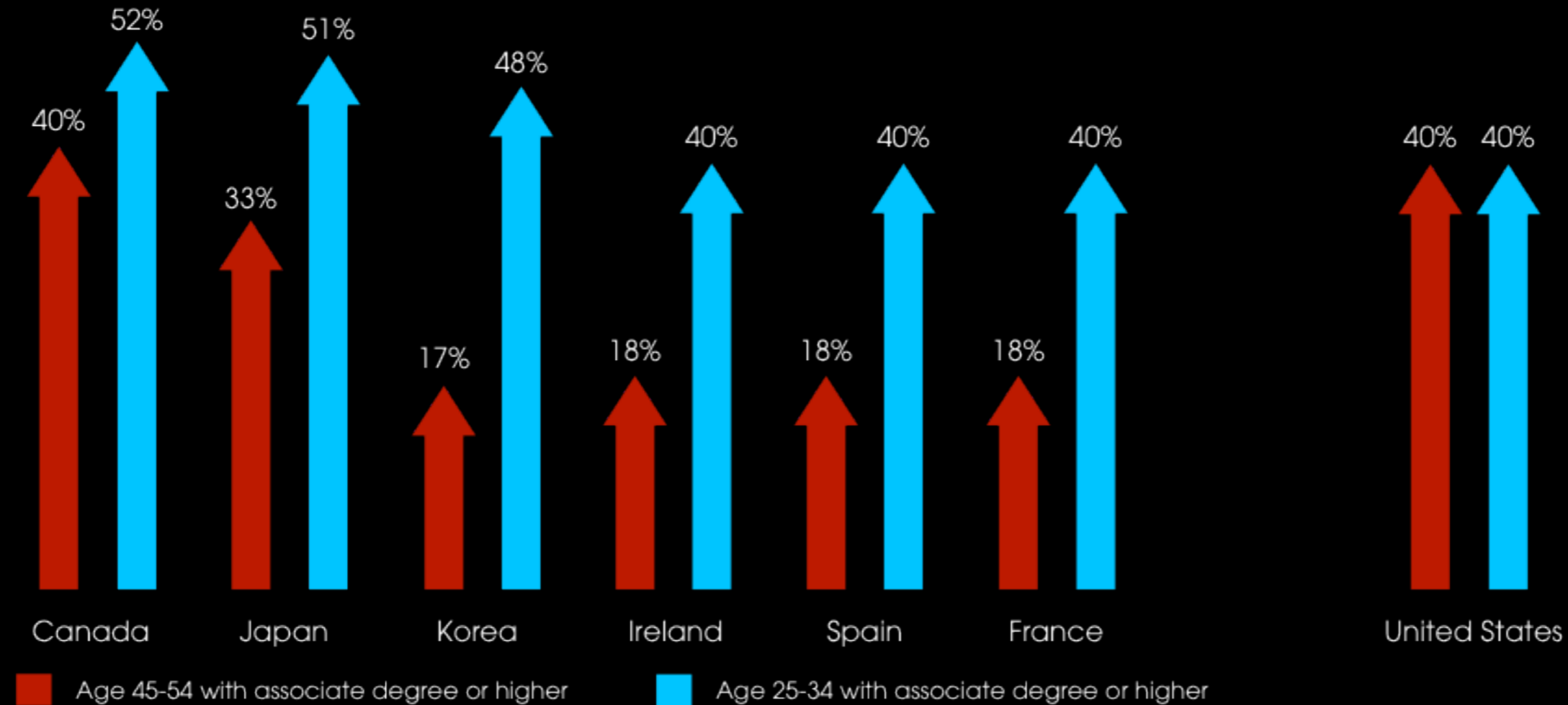


Source: National Report Card on Higher Education, <http://measuringup.highereducation.org>.

Our college completion rate has stagnated, allowing our economic competitors to pass us.

Other nations are showing dramatic gains in educating its populations...

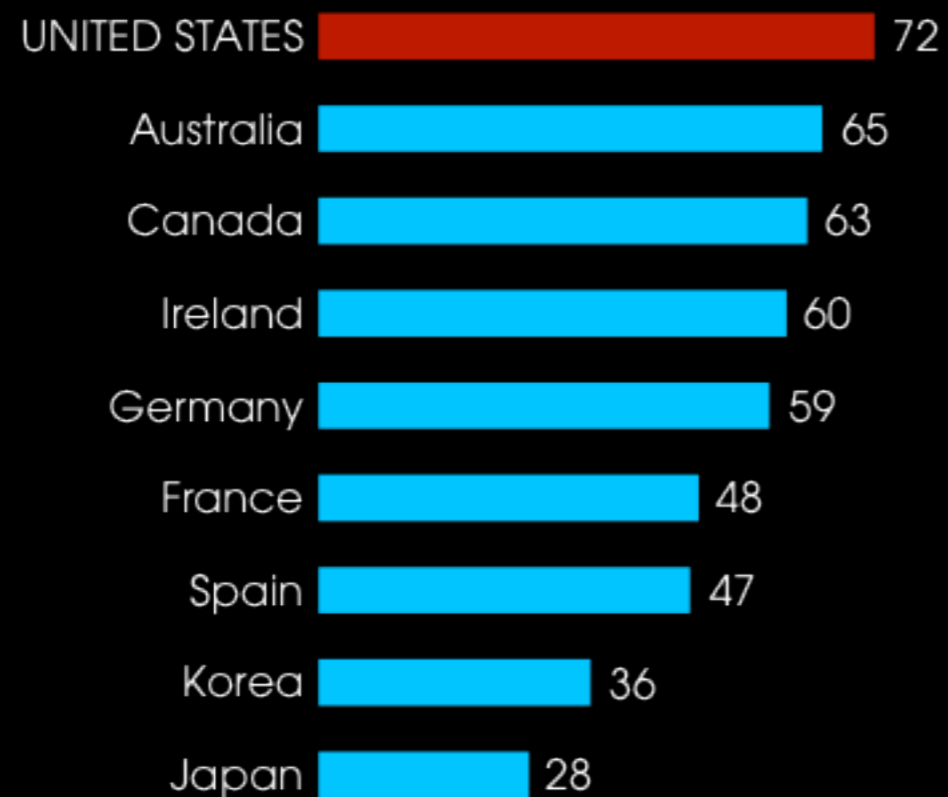
...while the U.S. stands still.



Source: OECD

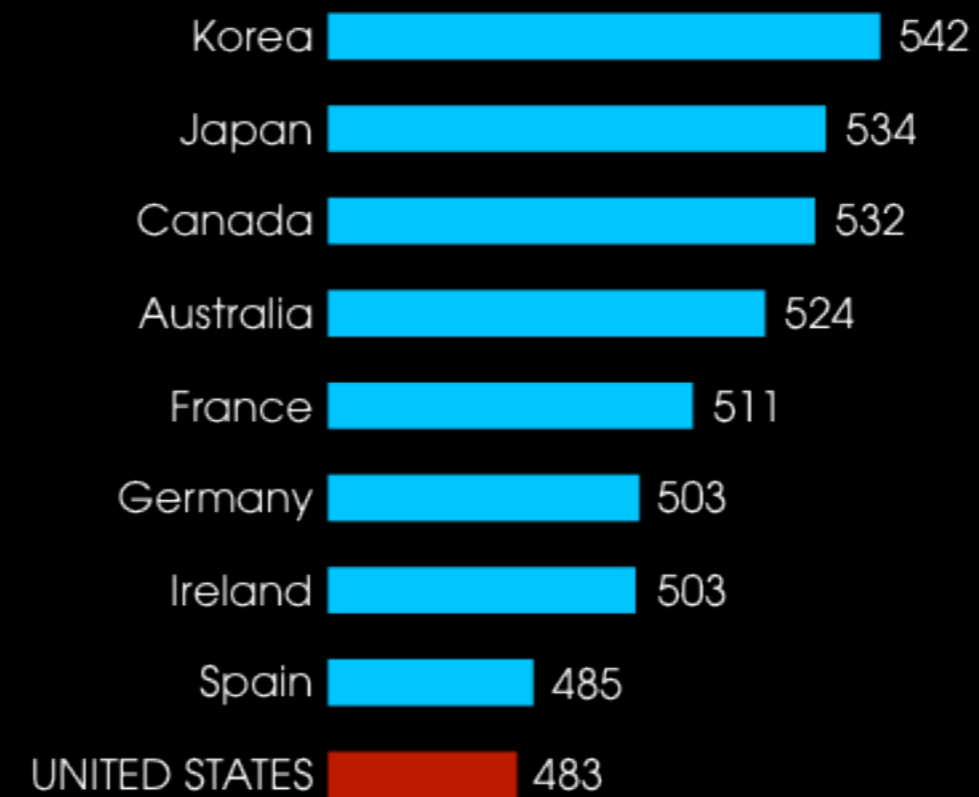
American students score highly in only one area relative to their international peers: self-confidence.

"I get good marks in mathematics."



Percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing

Math Literacy



Average PISA Score, 2003

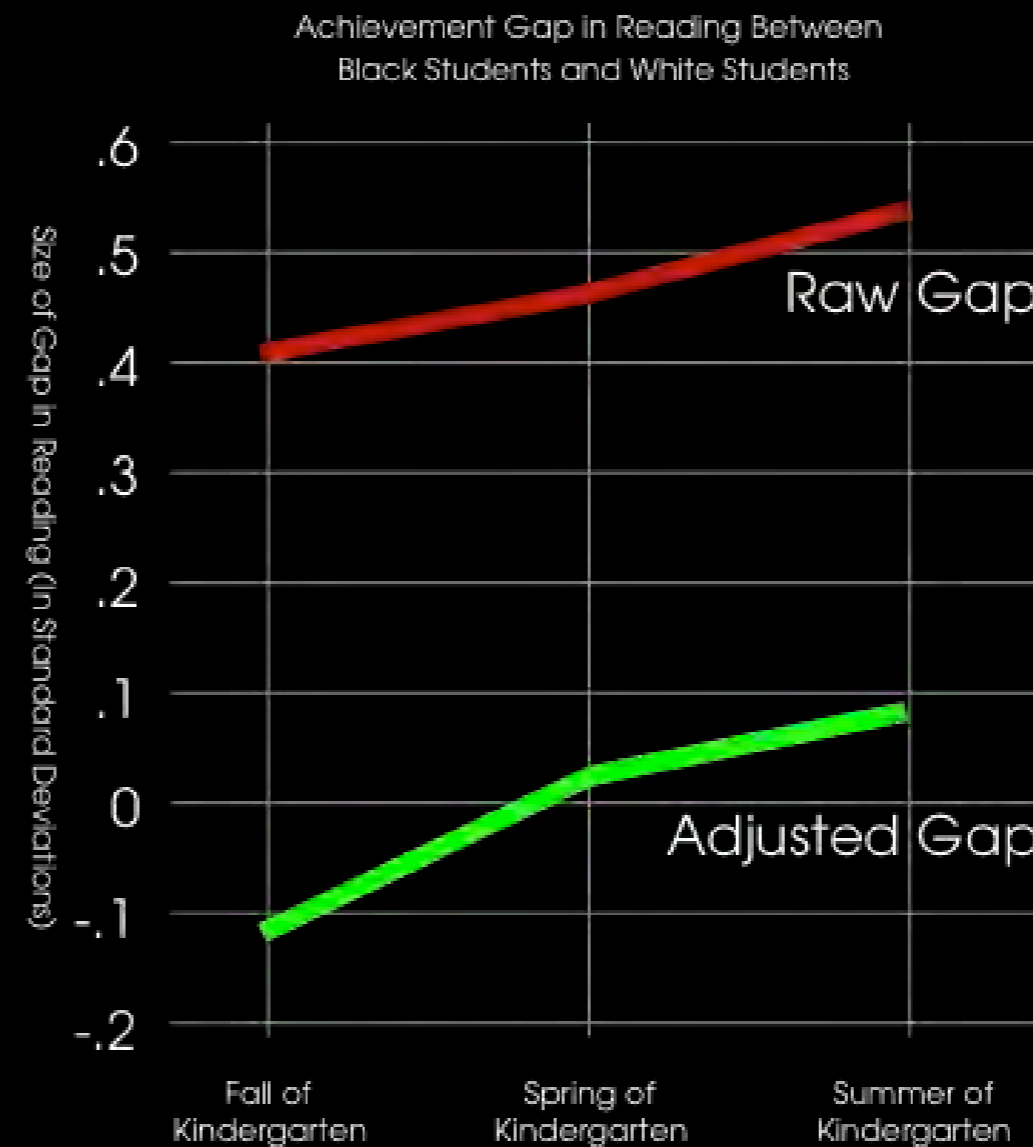
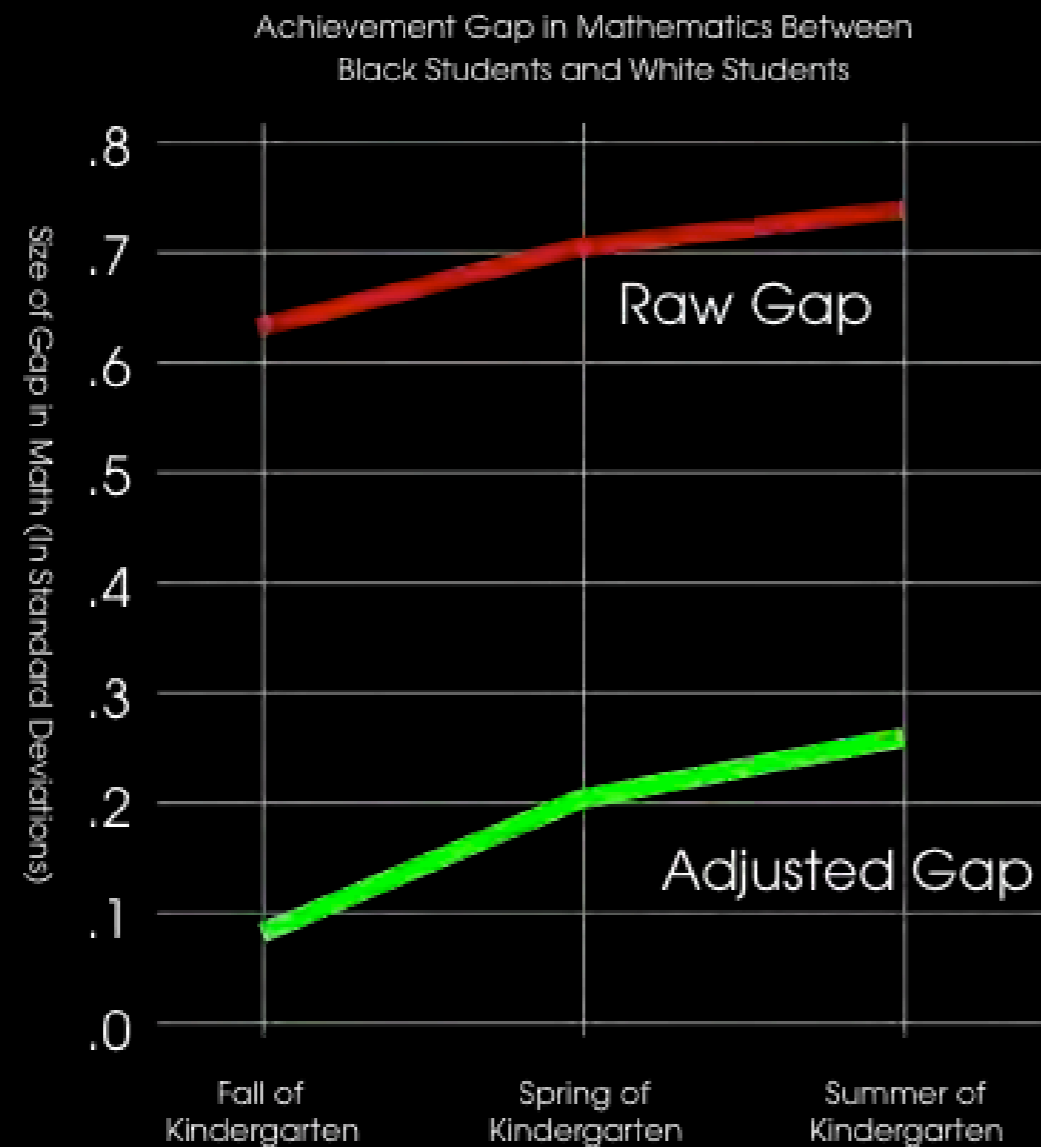
Source: OECD

ACHIEVEMENT GAP #2

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF LOW-INCOME,
MINORITY STUDENTS IS DRAMATICALLY
LOWER THAN THEIR MORE AFFLUENT PEERS



The black-white achievement gap is one year in kindergarten and begins widening immediately.

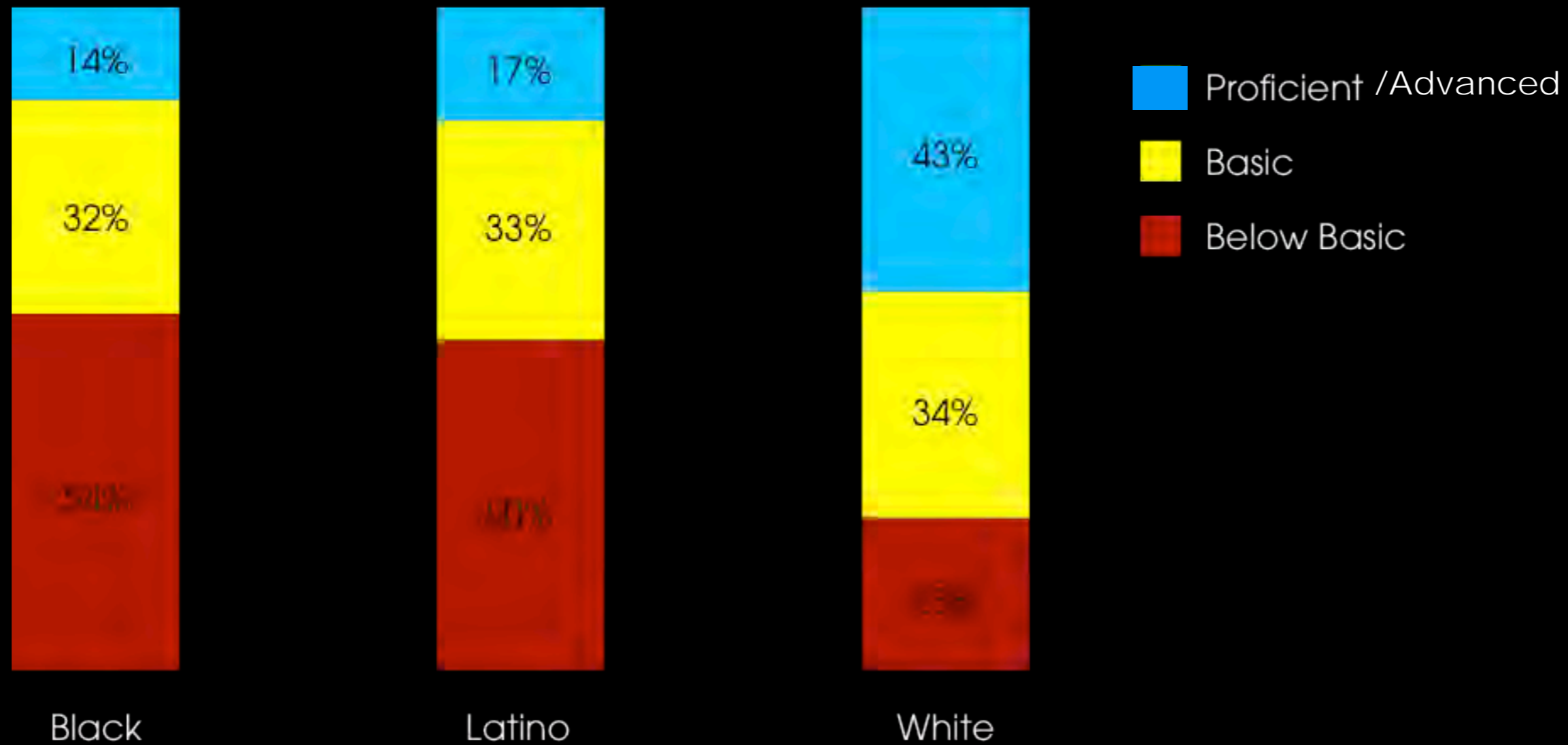


Note: In the figures above, the Raw Gap represents the actual difference in test scores between black students and white students. The Adjusted Gap represents the remaining inter-ethnic test-score gap after adjusting the data for the influence of students' background characteristics. Adjusted results control for socioeconomic status, number of books in the home, gender, age, birth weight, WIC participation, and mother's age at birth of first child. All adjusted gaps are statistically significant at the .05 level. Where the results indicate that the gap is negative, black children with similar characteristics actually score higher than their white counterparts.

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Kindergarten Cohort (1998), U.S. Department of Education, appeared in *Falling Behind*, Fryer & Levitt, Education Next, Fall 2004.

The majority of Black and Latino 4th graders struggle to read a simple children's book.

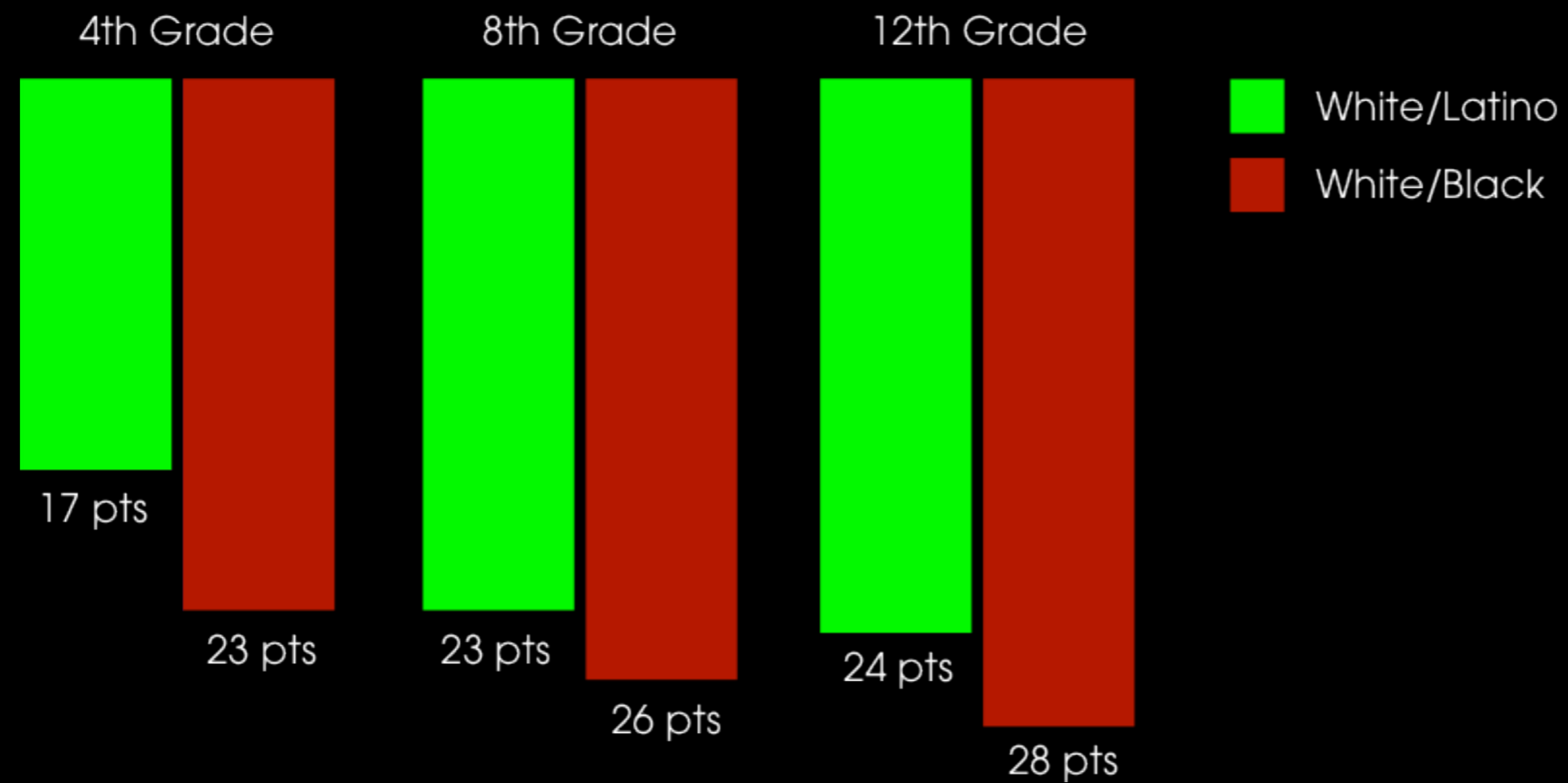
Reading Performance



Source: 2007 data, National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde>

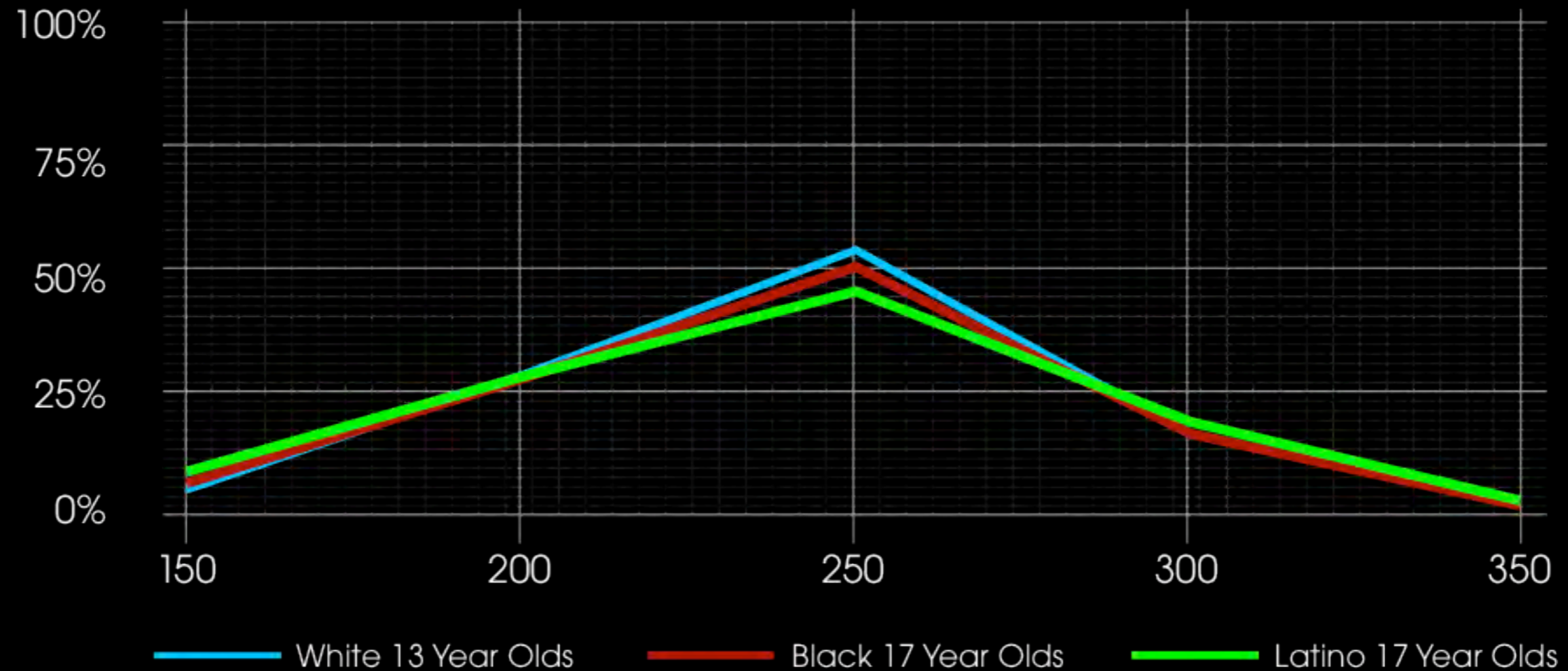
The achievement gap widens the longer students are in school.

Difference in NAEP math scores, 2004



Source: US DOE, NCES, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Summary Data Tables, data for public schools; Appeared in The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America's Schools, McKinsey & Co., 4/09.

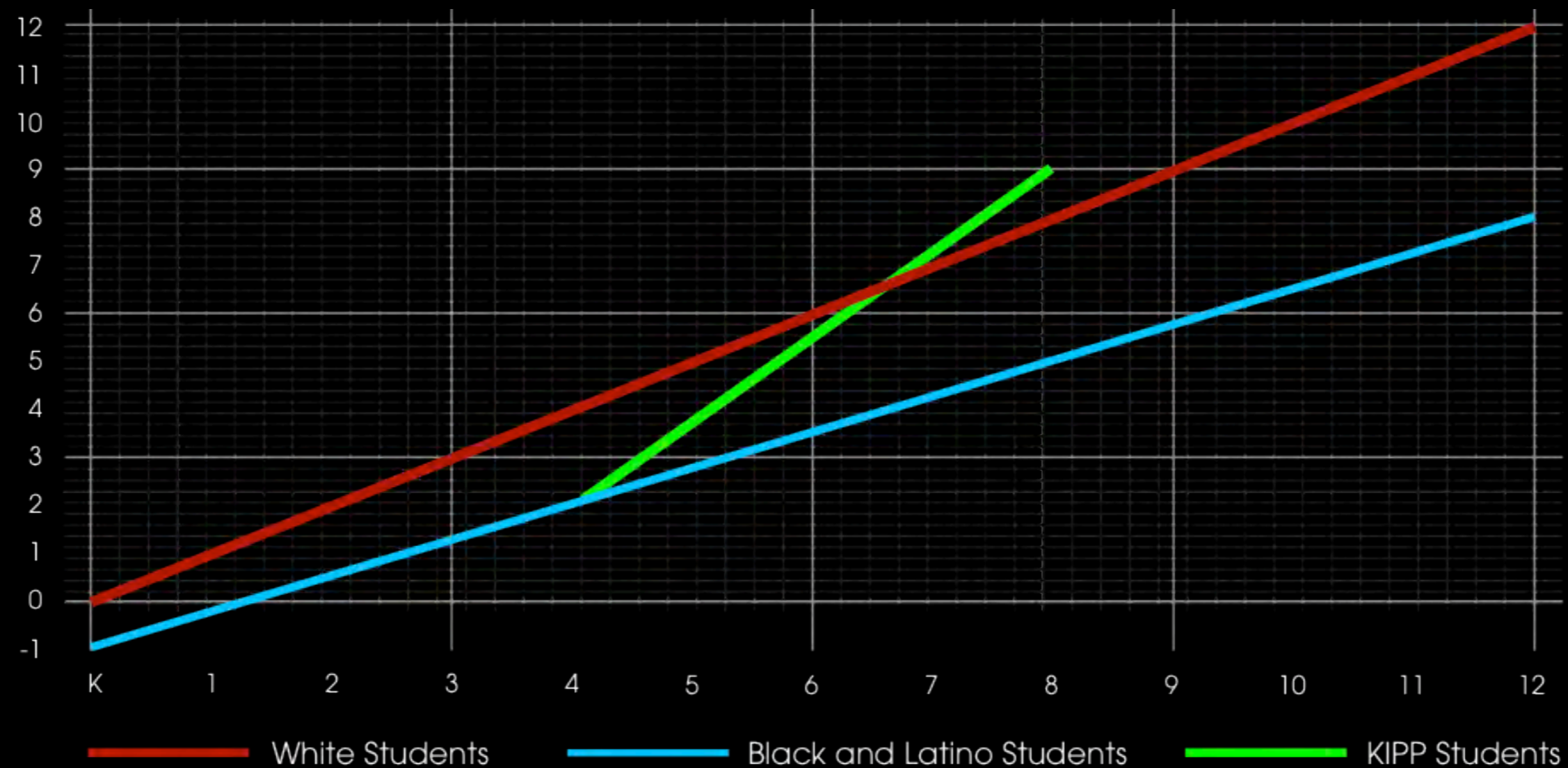
Black and Latino 12th graders read and do math at the same level as white 8th graders.



Source: NAEP 2005 data. Slide courtesy of Ed Trust.

Black and Latino children start school one year behind and the achievement gap grows every year.

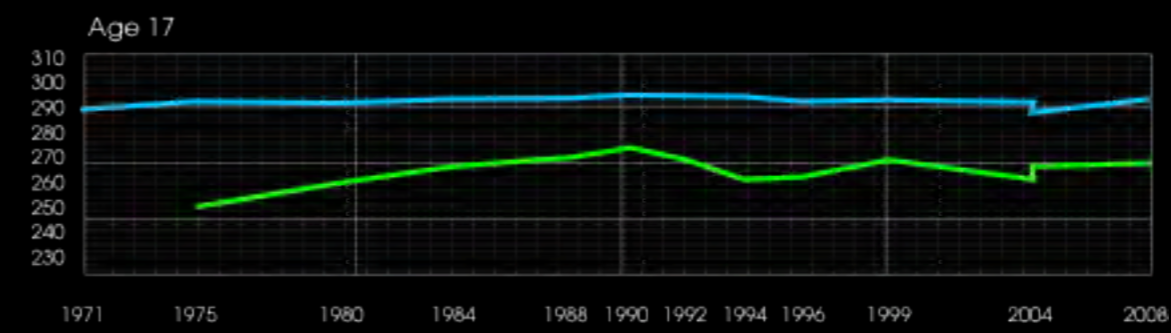
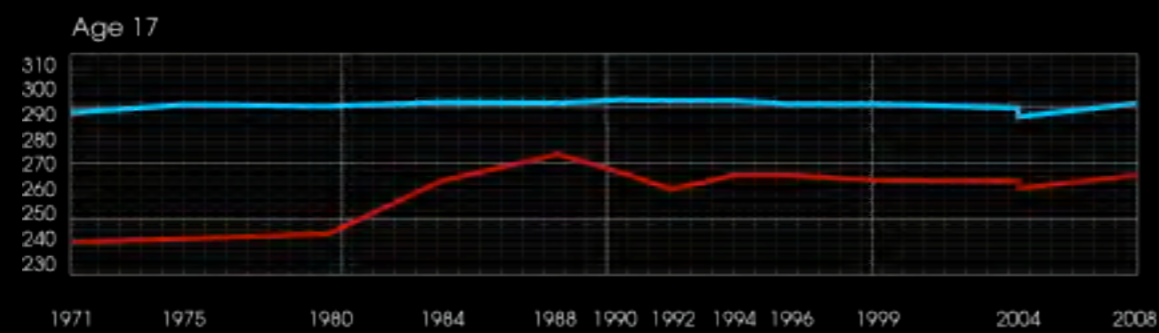
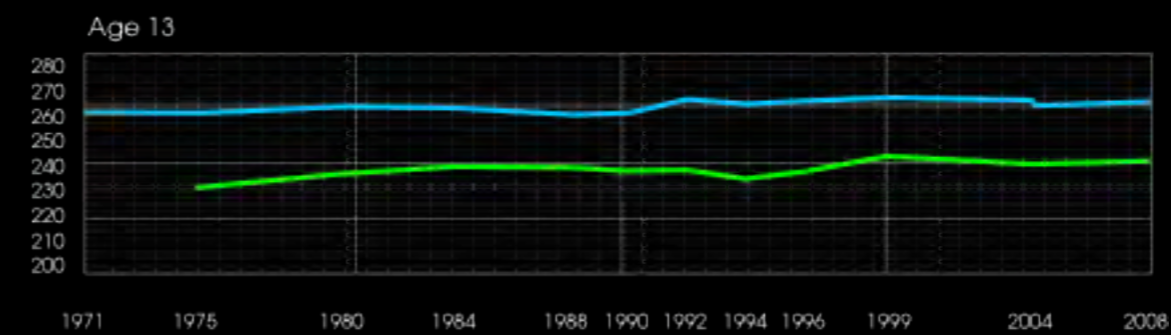
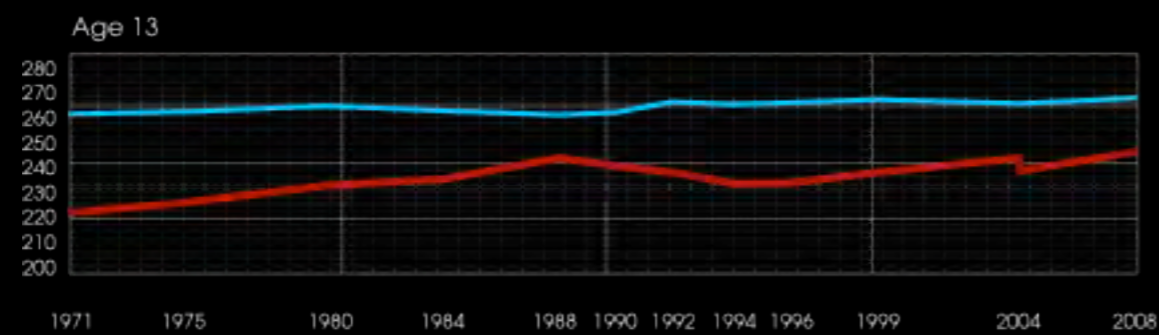
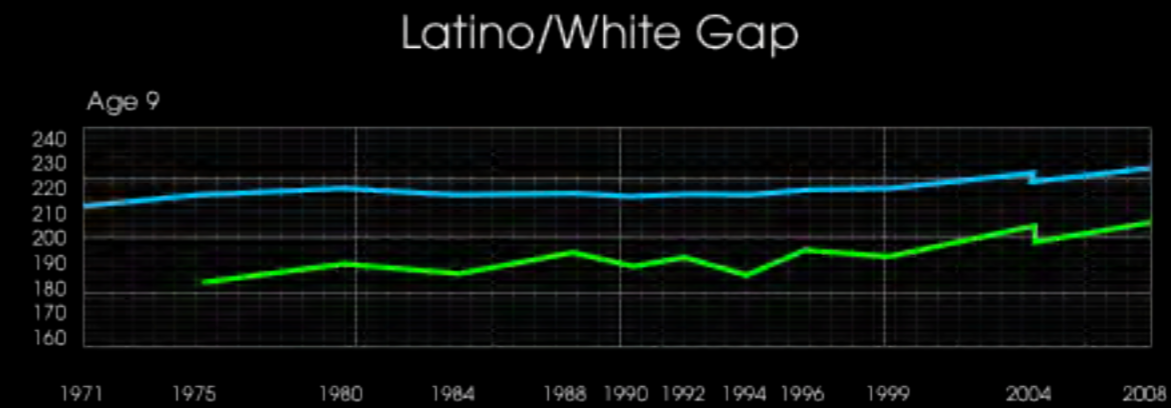
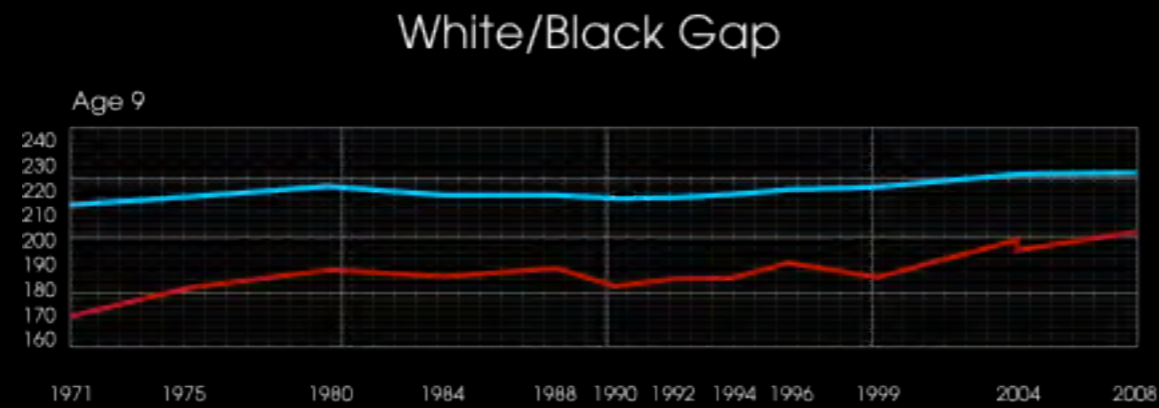
But KIPP and other high-performing schools reverse this trend.



Note: The entire gap achievement gap in kindergarten can be explained by the following background characteristics: socioeconomic status, number of books in the home, gender, age, birth weight, WIC participation, and mother's age at birth of first child. The widening of the gap cannot be explained by a change in background characteristics.

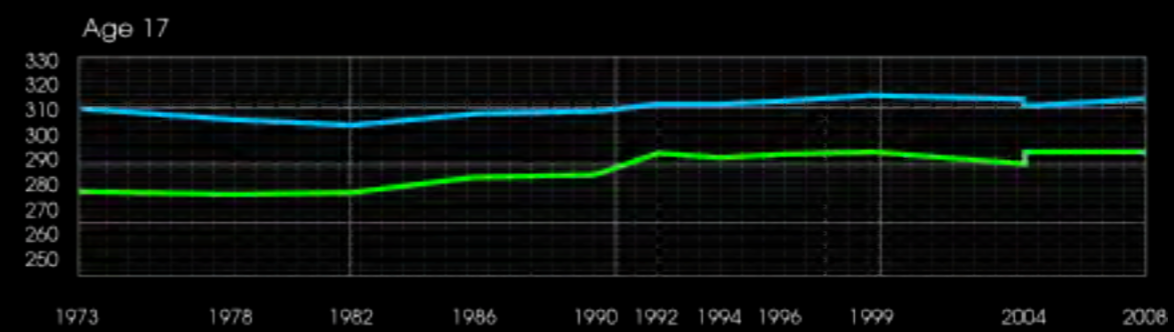
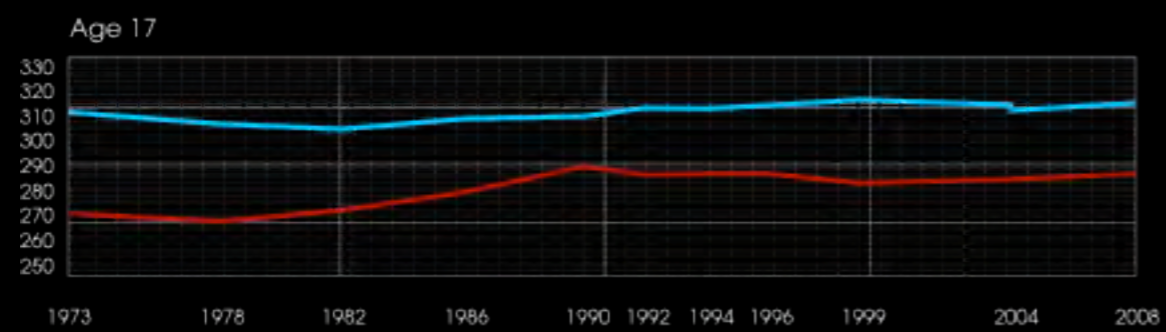
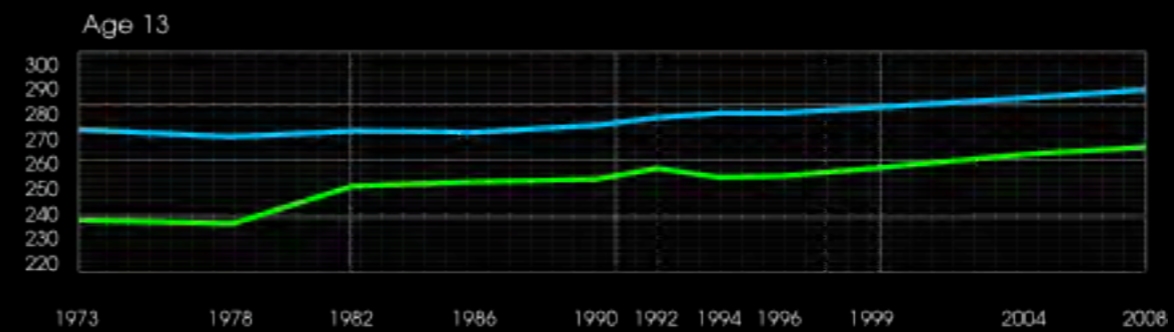
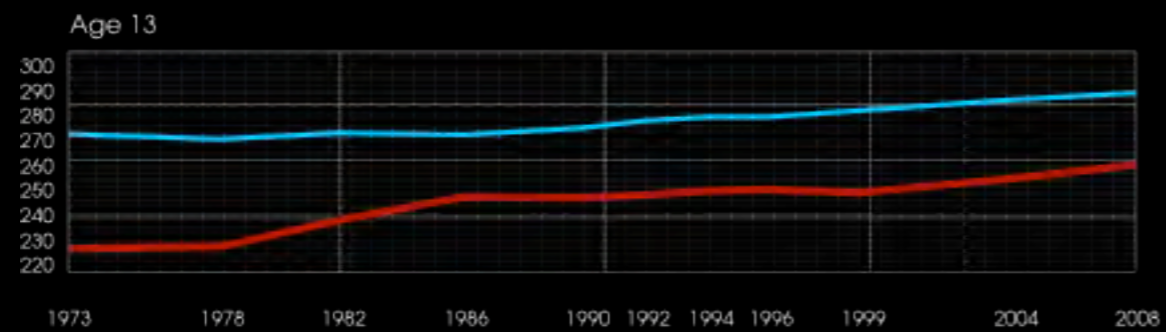
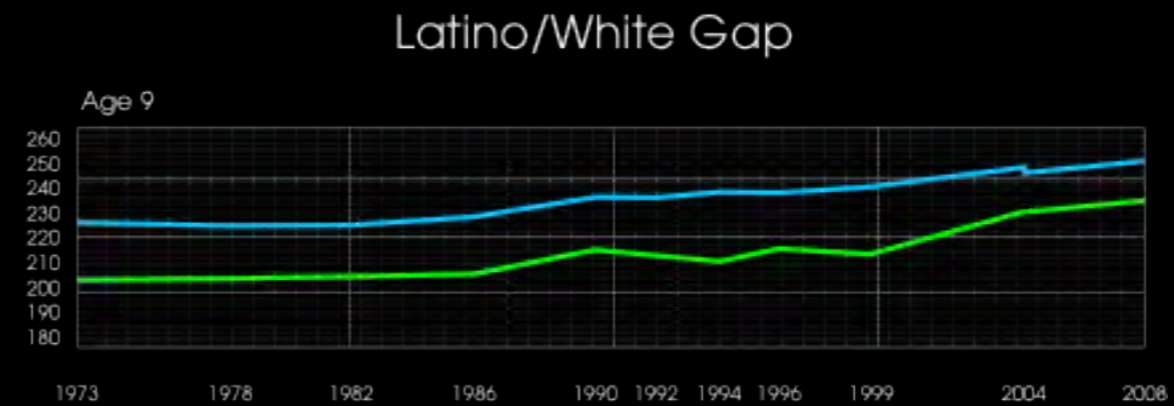
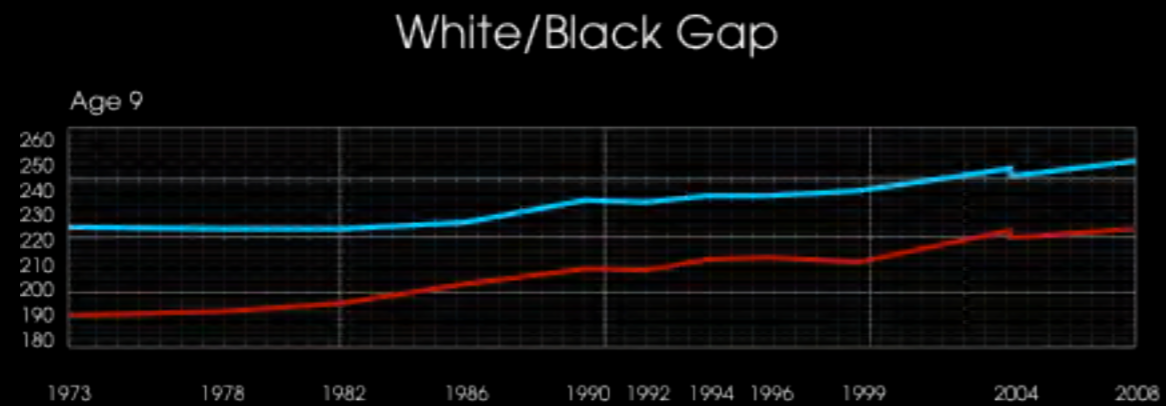
Sources: Previous slides, KIPP data, Whitney Tilson estimates.

Over the past 20 years, the achievement gaps in reading have remained persistently wide.



Source: NAEP 2008 Trends in Academic Progress.

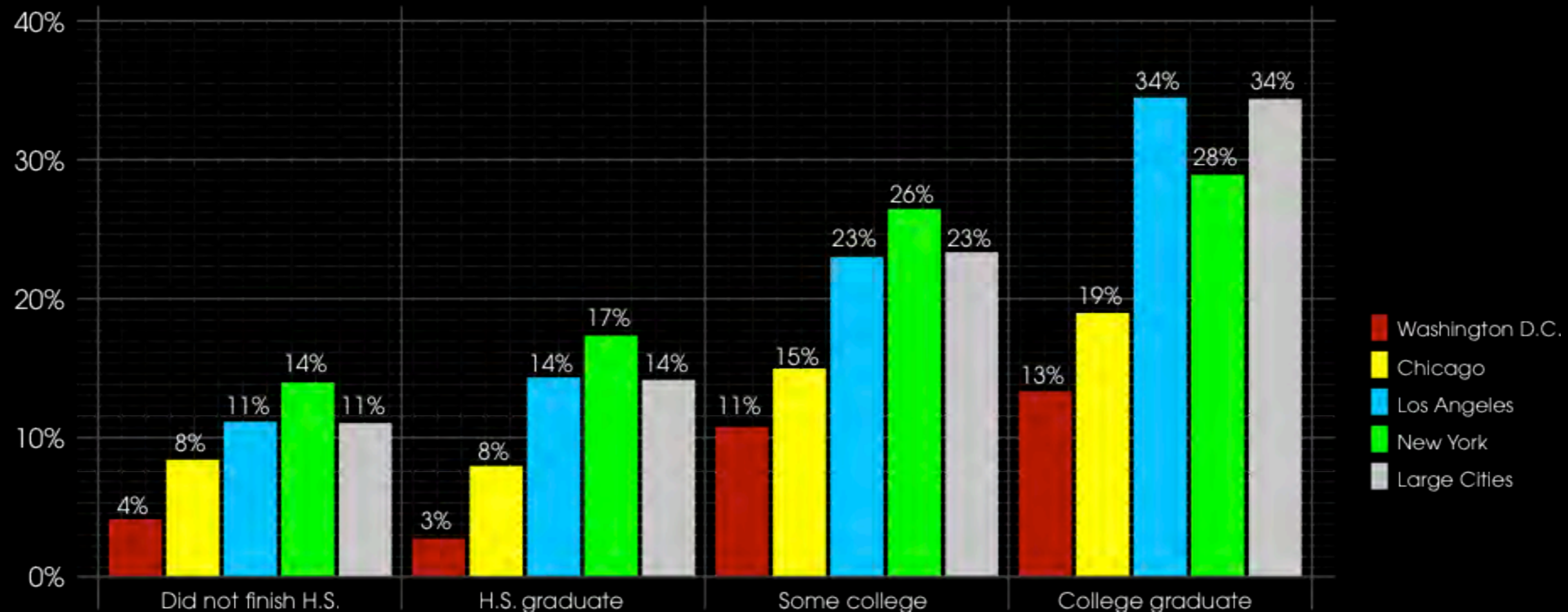
In the past 18 years, the achievement gaps in math have remained persistently wide as well.



Source: NAEP 2008 Trends in Academic Progress.

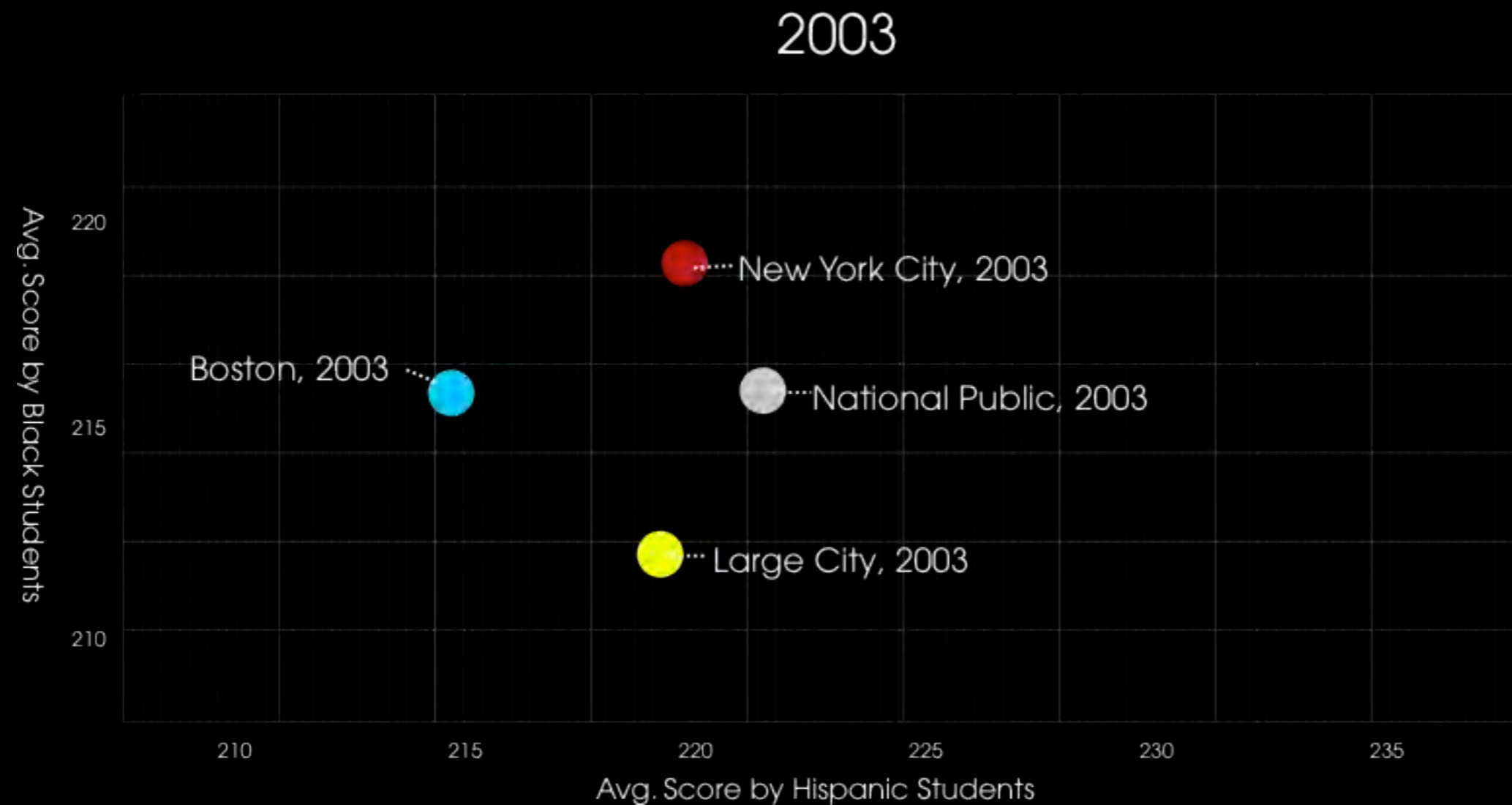
Some cities do a better (or less bad) job than others: Even after adjusting for parental education, the achievement gap varies widely among cities.

Percent of 8th grade students that
scored 'proficient' or above on the 2007
math NAEP by parental education level.



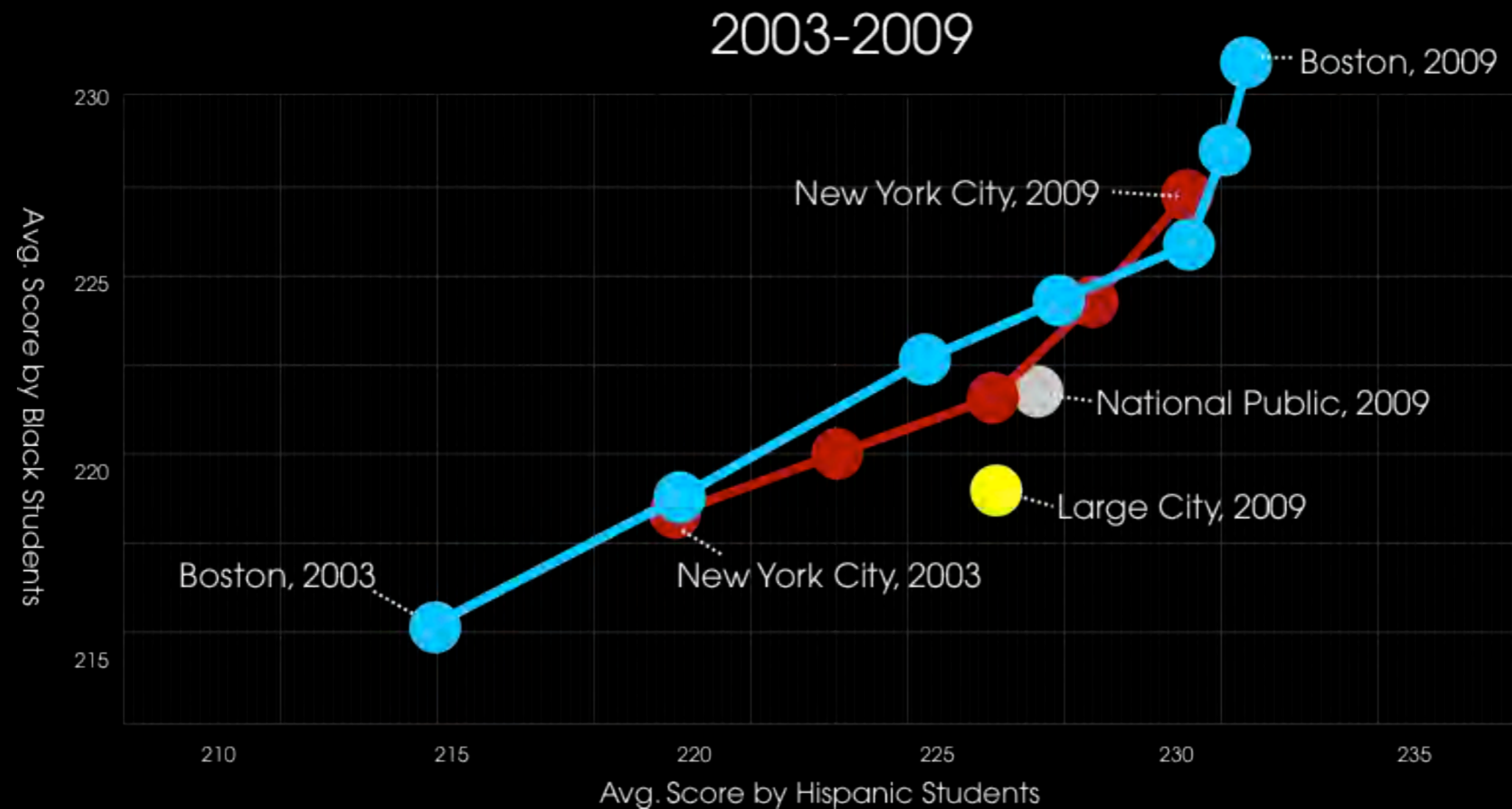
Source: USDOE, NCES, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data, 2007.

Progress *is* possible: In 2003 in math, both Black and Hispanic 4th graders in Massachusetts did not stack up well compared to NYC, the averages for large cities, and all public school students.



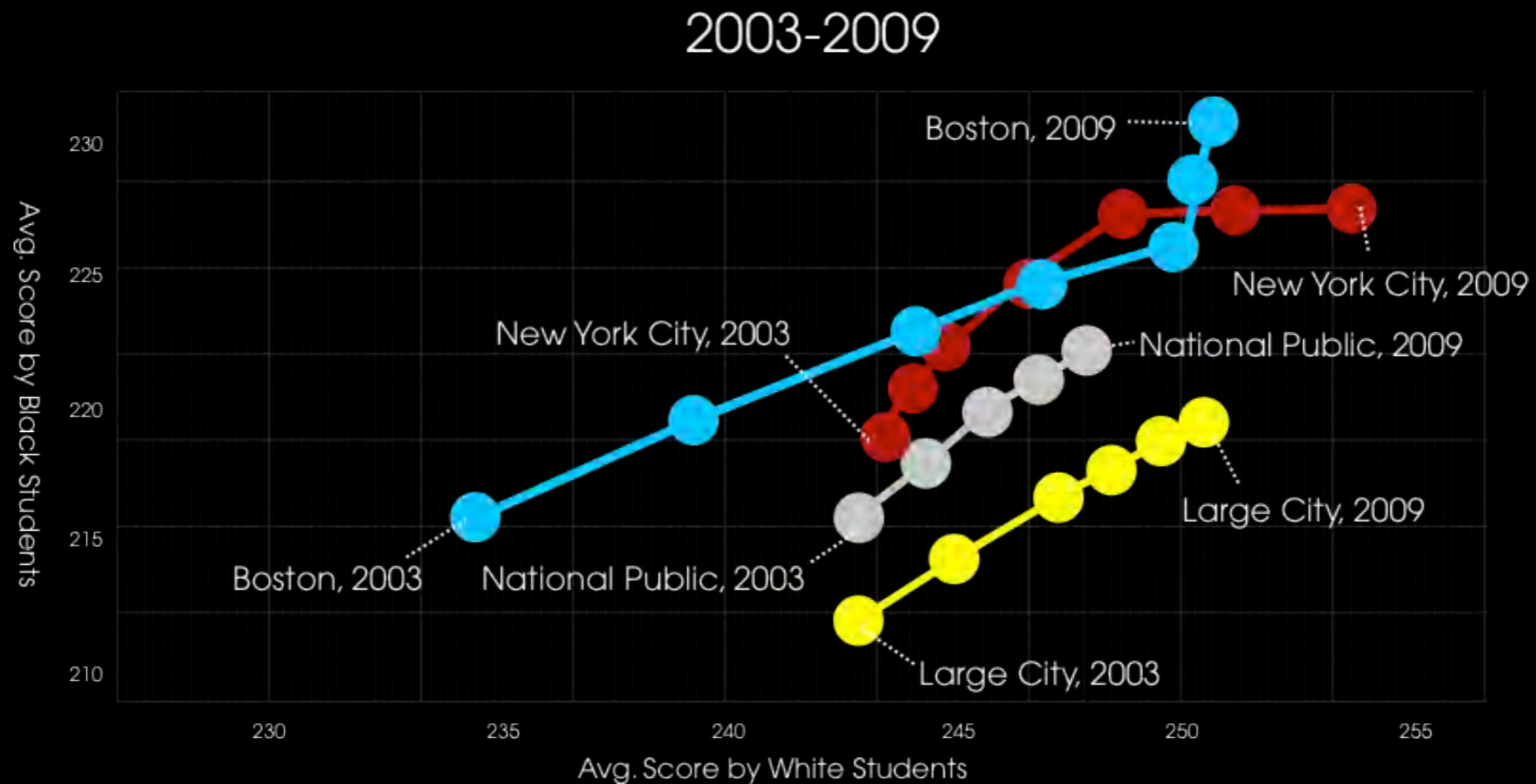
Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 2003–2009 Trial Urban District Reading Assessments, http://nationsreportcard.gov/math_2009/district_g4_motion.asp.

Over the past six years, Black and Hispanic 4th graders in Massachusetts and New York City have made great strides in math.



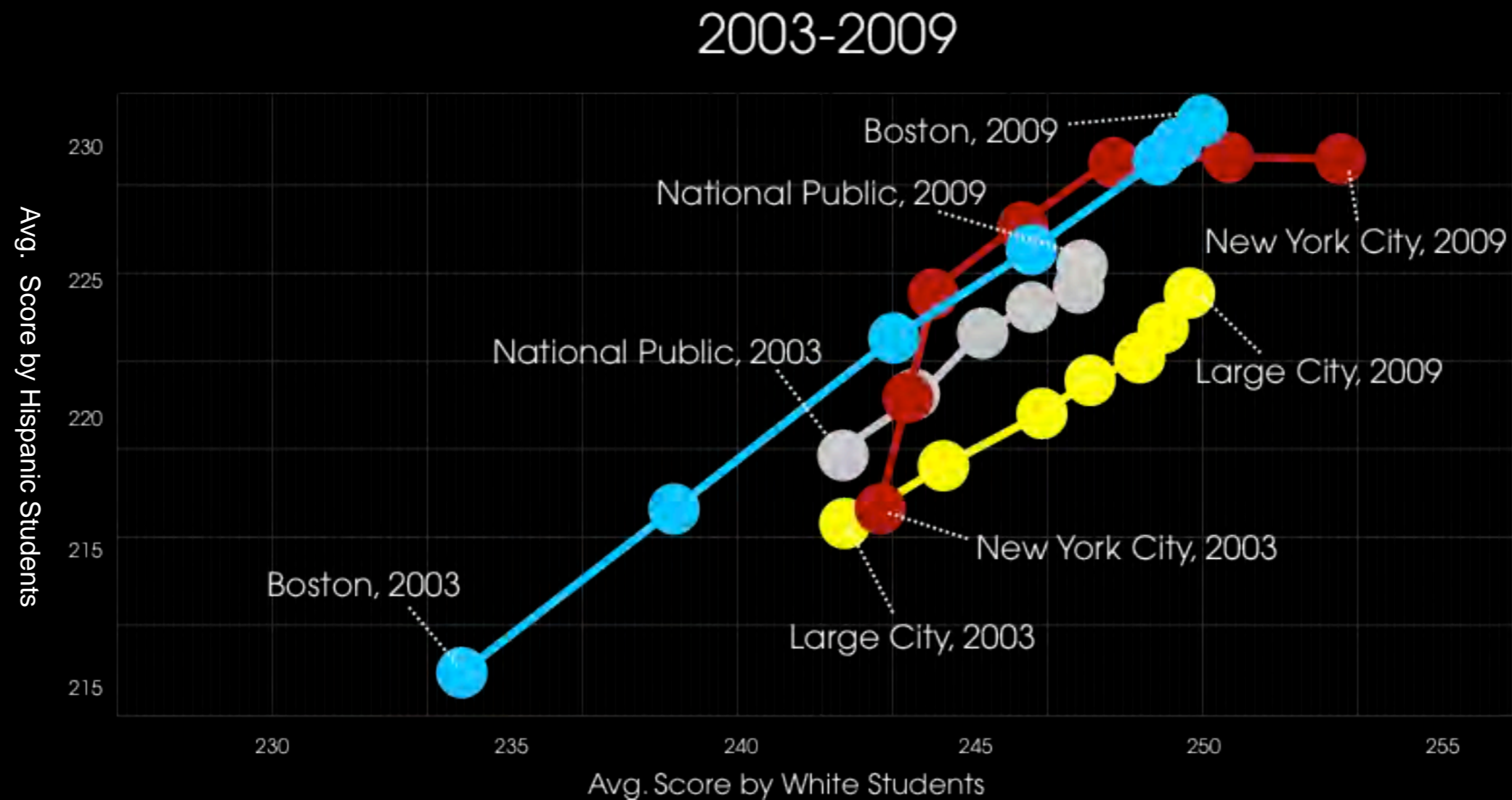
Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 2003–2009 Trial Urban District Reading Assessments, http://nationsreportcard.gov/math_2009/district_g4_motion.asp.

Both Black and white 4th graders in Massachusetts, NYC and across the country have made great strides in math since 2003, so the stubborn two-year achievement gap remains.



Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 2003–2009 Trial Urban District Reading Assessments, http://nationsreportcard.gov/math_2009/district_g4_motion.asp.

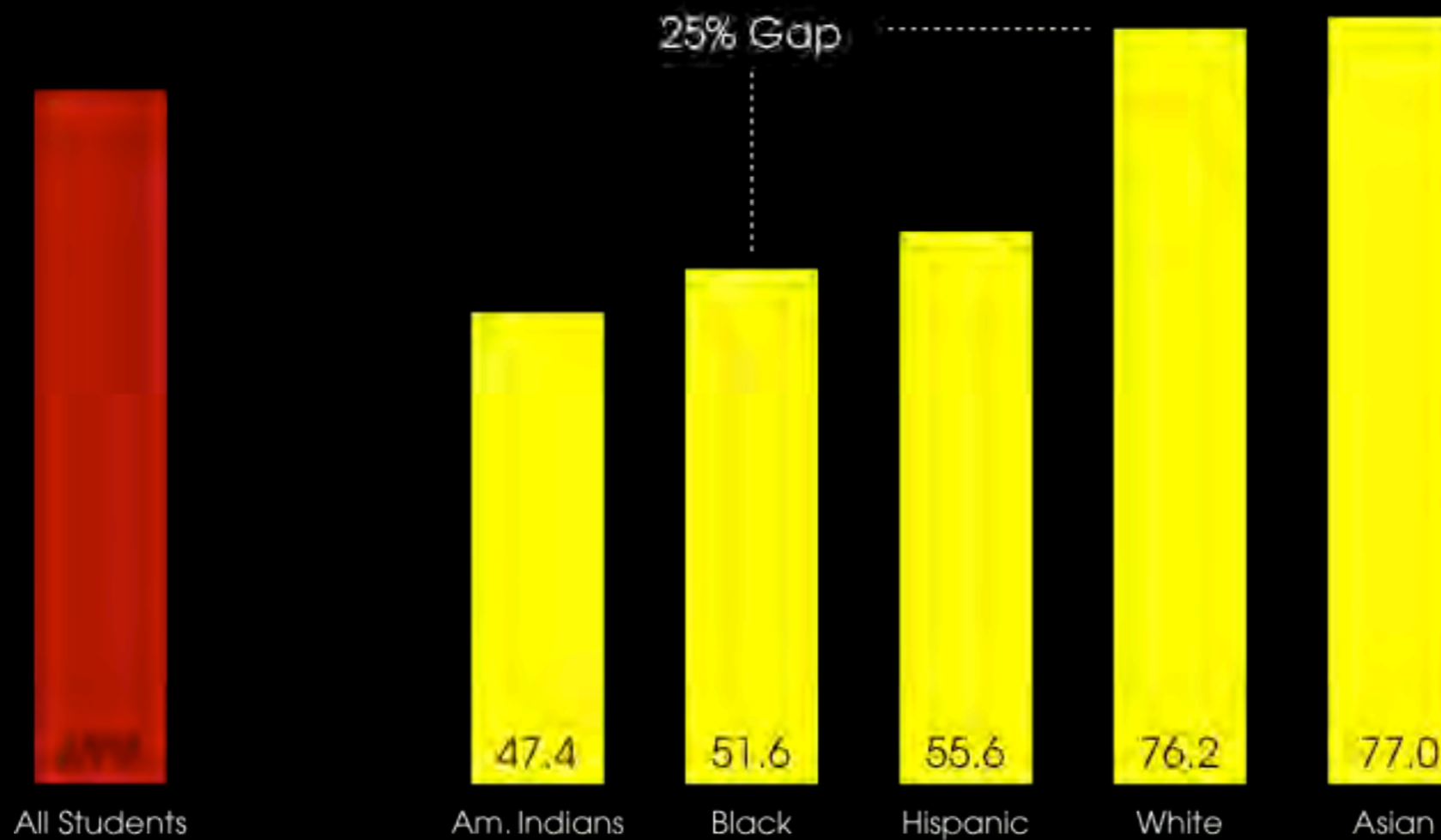
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Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 2003–2009 Trial Urban District Reading Assessments, http://nationsreportcard.gov/math_2009/district_g4_motion.asp.

There are large racial gaps in high school graduation rates.

National Graduation Rates 2002-03




As bad as these numbers are, they're far worse for Black males in many major cities: their graduation rate is 20% in Indianapolis and Detroit, 31% in Baltimore and Buffalo, 34% in Atlanta and Cleveland.

Source: The Graduation Project, 2006.

Few black and Latino students make it to college and even fewer graduate.

Of African-American and Latino students who receive a high school diploma, only 28% and 16%, respectively, receive a bachelor's degree.

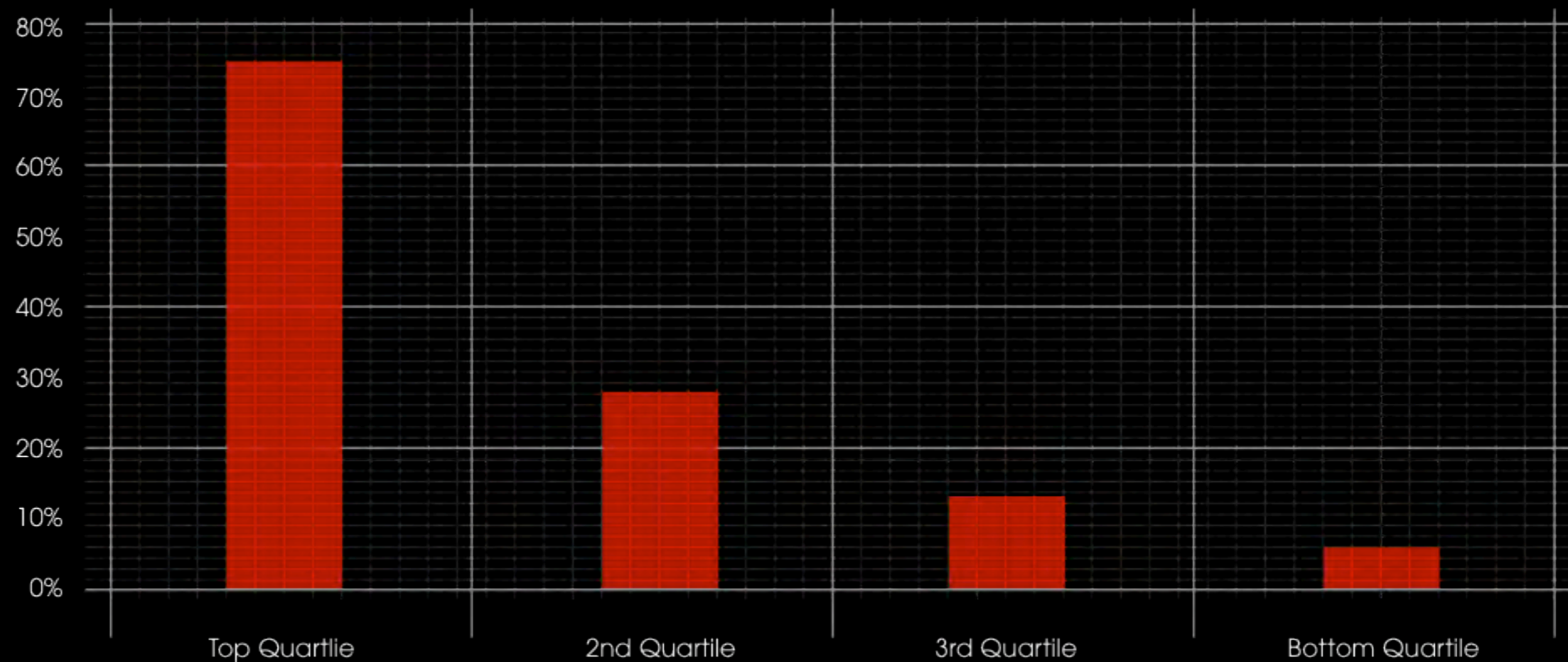
 = 25,000 Students



Sources: U.S. Dept. of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, State-level Enrollment and Degree Attainment Data. U.S. Census Bureau, 2003 Current Population Survey, Educational Attainment in the United States, June 2004. Slide courtesy of Education Trust.

Very few children from low-income households are graduating from *any* four-year colleges.

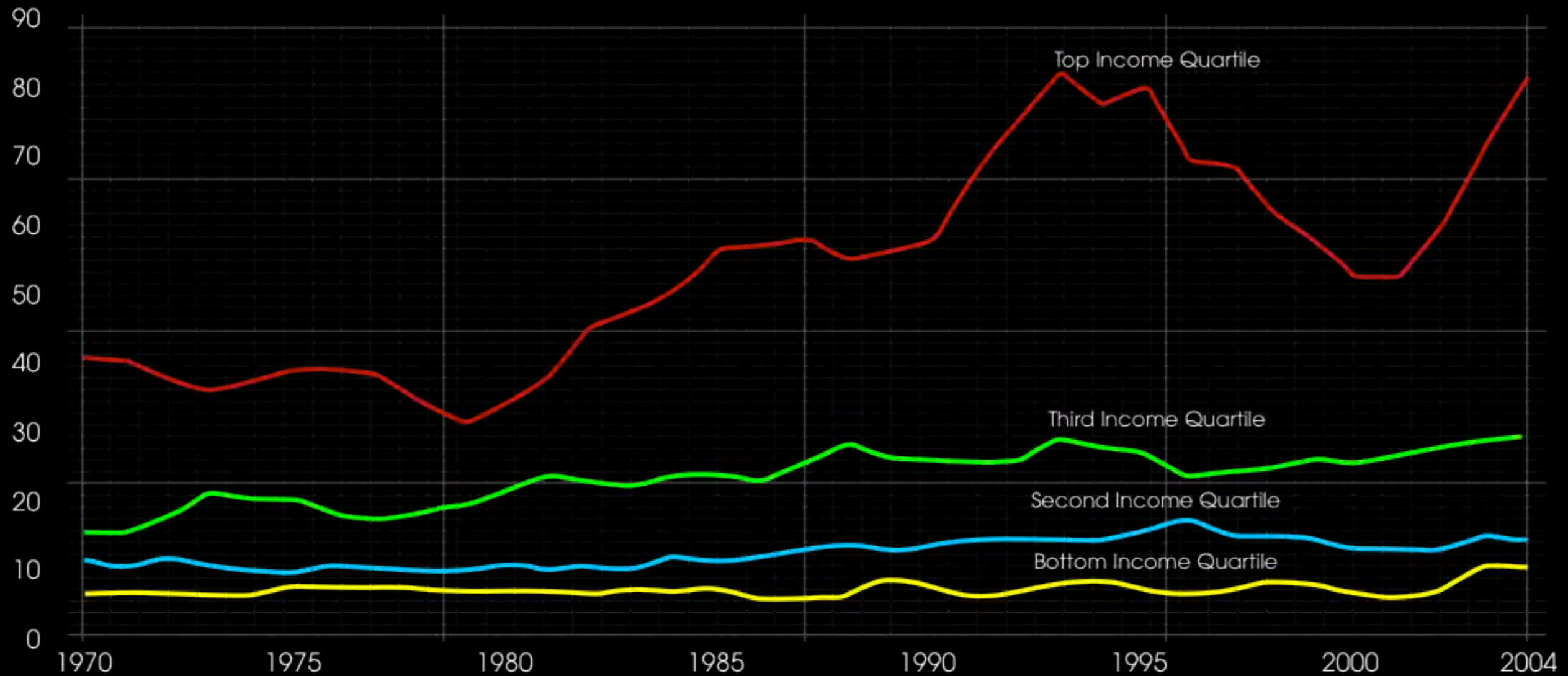
Bachelor's Degree Attained by Age 24



Notes: 2003 data. Household income limits: Top quartile: \$95,040+; 2nd quartile: \$62,628-\$95,040; 3rd quartile: \$35,901-\$62,628; Bottom quartile: <\$35,901.
Source: www.postsecondary.org/archives/Reports/Spreadsheets/DegreeBy24.htm

Very few children from low-income households are graduating from any four-year colleges... and there has been little improvement over the past 40 years.

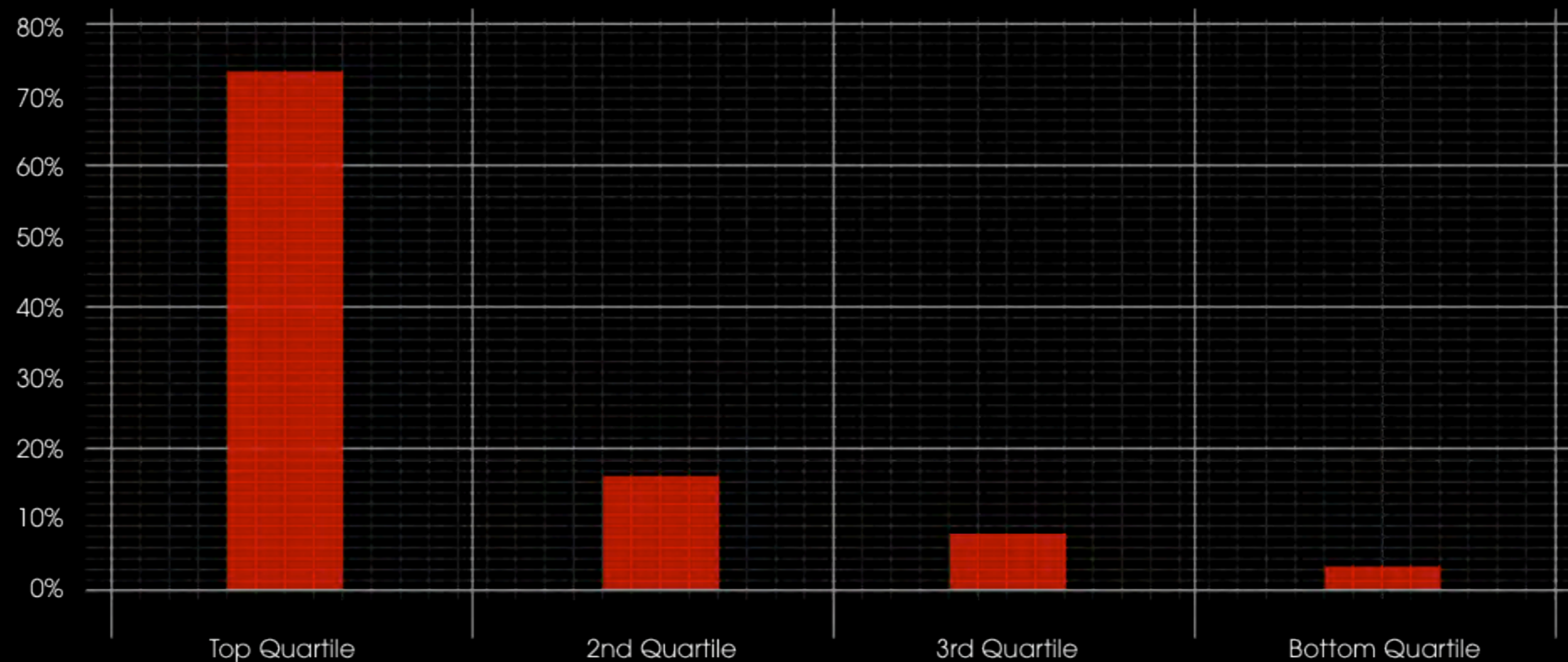
Estimated Baccalaureate Degree Attainment by age 24 by Family Income Quartile 1970 to 2004



Source: Inherited Opportunity for Higher Education, Association for Institutional Research, 5/16/06.

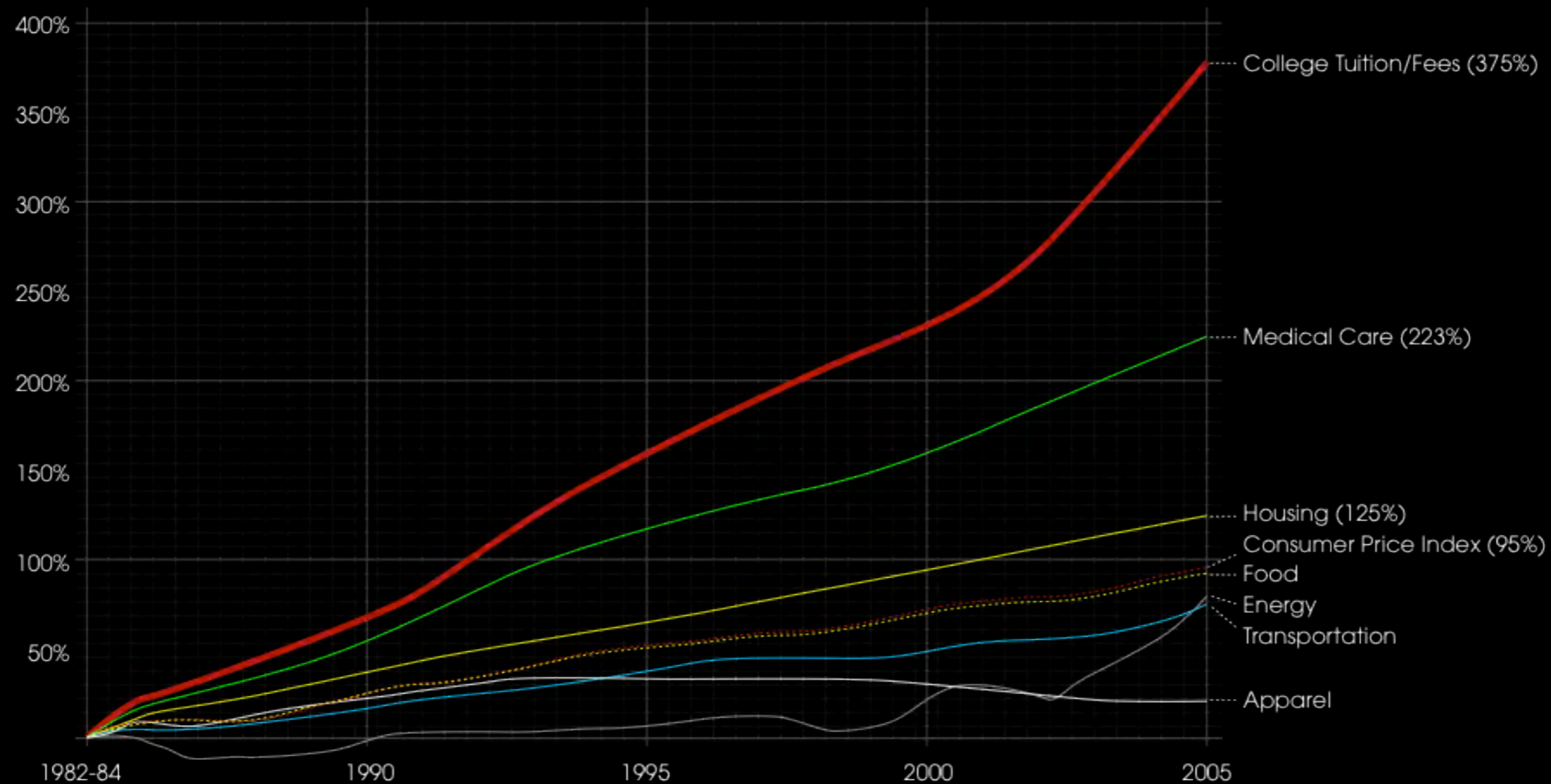
74% of students at elite colleges are from top quartile households and only 9% are from bottom half households.

Percentage of Students at Elite Colleges



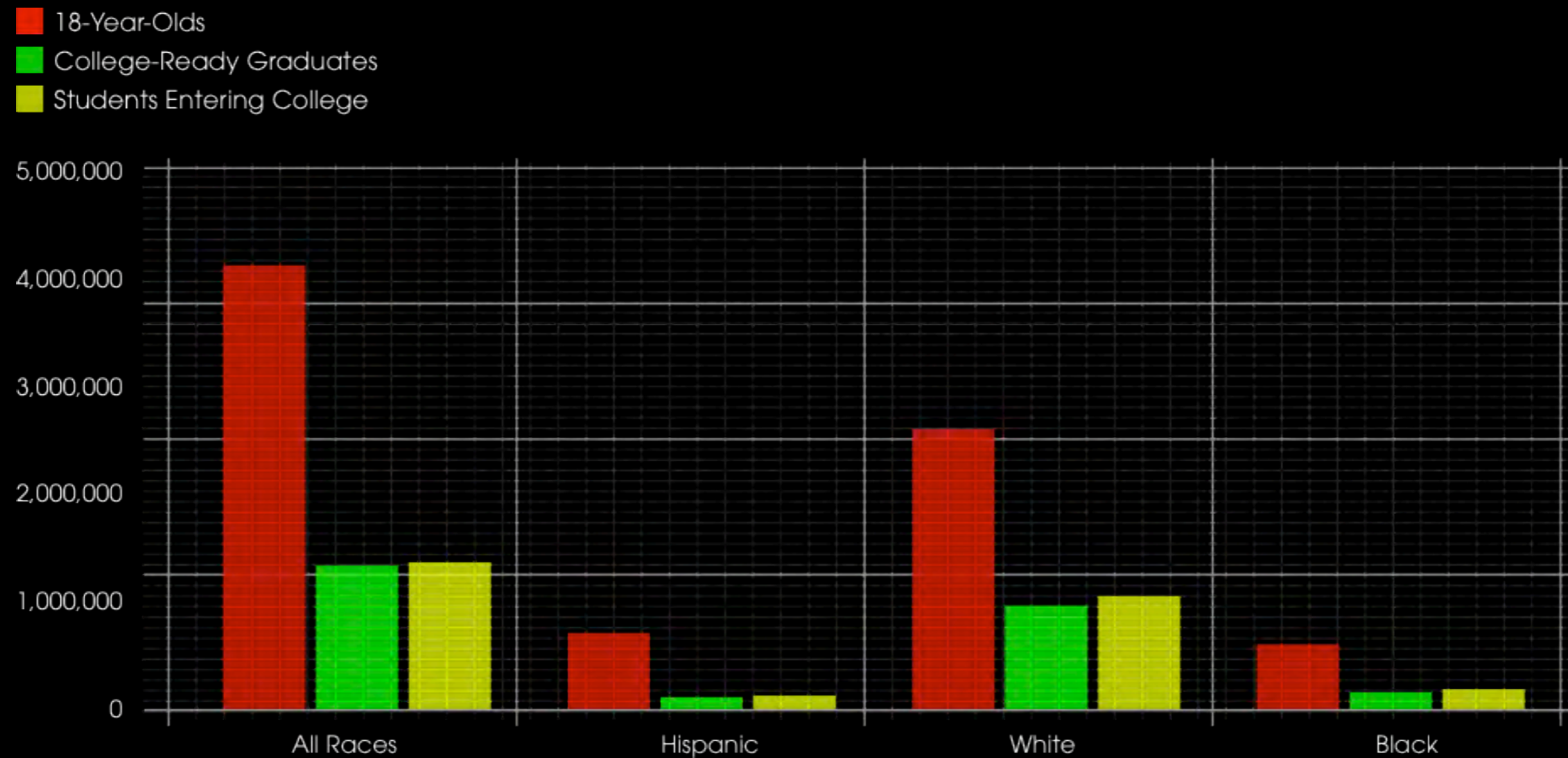
Notes: Elite colleges are the 146 most selective, as determined by *Barron's: Profiles of American Colleges, 24th ed.*
Source: Socioeconomic Status, Race/Ethnicity, and Selective College Admissions, Carnevale & Rose, Century Foundation

The dearth of low-income students in college is in part due to the rising cost.



Source: National Report Card on Higher Education, <http://measuringup.highereducation.org>.

In spite of rapidly rising costs, however, nearly all college-ready high school students are going to college. The problem is that our K-12 schools are preparing far too few students – especially low-income ones – for college.



Source: Education Myths, year 2000.

Even the better students – the ones who go to college – are alarmingly unprepared.

- Close to *half* of the students who enter college need remedial courses:
 - At Cal State, the system admits only students with at least a B average in high school,
 - yet 37% of the incoming class last year needed remedial math, and 45% needed remedial English
- According to scores on the 2006 ACT college entrance exam, only 21% of students applying to four-year institutions are ready for college-level work in all four areas tested: reading, writing, math and biology
- Lack of preparedness leads to nearly half of all students beginning higher education by attending a community college, which has negative consequences:
 - One study showed that 73% of students entering community college hoped to earn four-year degrees, but only 22% had done so after six years
 - The Pew Charitable Trusts recently found that three-quarters of community college graduates were not literate enough to handle everyday tasks like comparing viewpoints in newspaper editorials or calculating the cost of food items per ounce

Source: *At 2-Year Colleges, Students Eager but Unready*, New York Times, 9/1/06

The failure of so many of our schools costs our society enormously.

- We are paying higher and higher taxes to pay for the increasing cost of our public schools, yet they are failing to deliver improved performance
- To compensate for underprepared workers, U.S. industry spends about \$25 billion on dropouts yearly on remediation
- High school dropouts:
 - Are more likely to be unemployed
 - Earn lower wages
 - Have higher rates of public assistance
 - Are more likely to be single parents
 - 52% of males who fail to finish high school father a child out of wedlock
 - Have children at a younger age
 - More likely to become criminals and end up in jail...or dead
 - 82% of America's prisoners are high school dropouts
 - 80% of prison inmates are functionally illiterate
 - 52% of African-American men who fail to finish high school end up in prison at some point in their lives

Why are low-income, minority students performing so poorly?

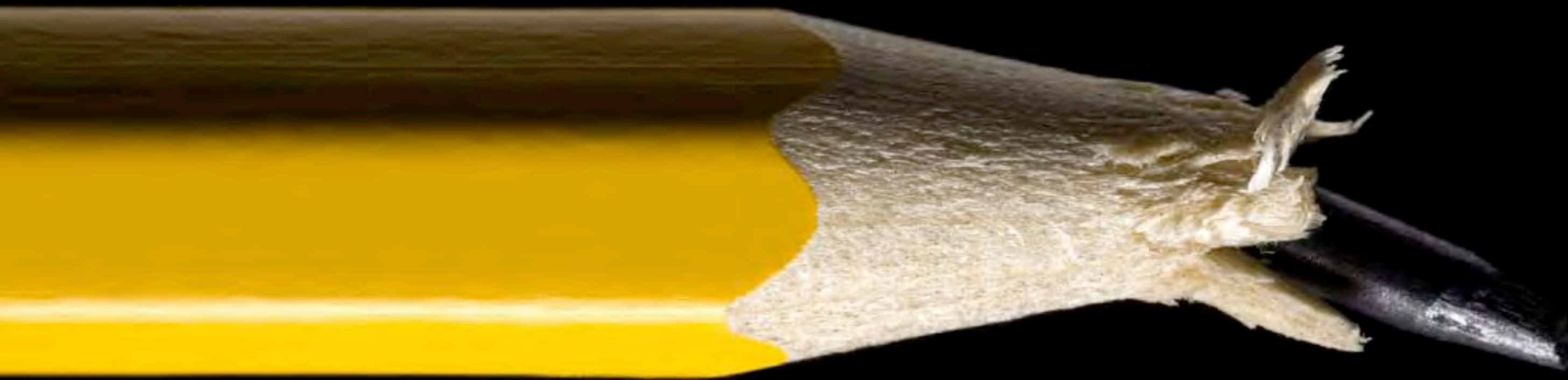
- There are many reasons why low-income, minority children are performing so poorly academically – and many of these reasons are beyond the control of schools
 - There is no doubt that children from troubled communities and families, in which few people have completed high school, much less college, are a challenge to educate
- When asked to explain the achievement gap, surveys show that most Americans cite lazy, unmotivated students and parents who don't care about education
- There are, however, many schools that are generating extraordinary academic success with precisely these children
- Thus, we must reject a “blame the victim” mentality
- Given that many low-income, minority children enter school with two strikes against them, they need the best schools and teachers to change their life trajectories, yet they get the worst; they overwhelmingly get the lowest quality teachers and attend school systems that are deeply dysfunctional and unaccountable, with skewed incentives

In summary, the color of your skin and your zip code are almost entirely determinative of the quality of the public education this nation provides.

This is deeply, profoundly wrong and is contrary to everything this nation stands for.

FIXING THE SYSTEM

STARTS WITH UNDERSTANDING IT



Overview of our K-12 public school system today.

- 48.1 million public school students in 98,793 schools in 13,862 independent school districts
- Total spending approaching of \$600 billion dollars annually, exceeding all areas of government spending except healthcare
- A high degree of state and local autonomy
 - No scale/R&D
 - No common metric of success
 - Fiscal inequity
- A “delivery system” that has changed little for generations
- Entrenched bureaucratic system of top-down governance
- Overall, there are a small percentage of excellent schools, usually serving the most privileged students, a wide swath of mediocrity, and a catastrophically failing system among the bottom 25% of schools, which victimize mostly low-income, minority children (there are exceptions, of course)



Source: Digest of Education Statistics, 2008 (2006-07 data); chart: The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America's Schools, McKinsey & Co., 4/09.

There are two general approaches to fixing our schools.

Improve the current system.

- Set high standards, benchmarked against international standards
- Hire/train better principals and empower them
- Better measure student achievement and teacher effectiveness, in part by improving collection and use of data
- Hold principals and teachers accountable for improving student achievement, and reward those that deliver it
- Distribute teacher talent more equitably
- Pay teachers more in certain high-demand subject areas, in hard-to-staff schools, and based on merit
- Renegotiate onerous provisions of teacher contracts (make it harder to get tenure and easier to remove ineffective teachers, eliminate seniority “bumping” rights, etc.)
- More choice *among* public schools
- Eliminate social promotion
- Lengthen the school day and year
- Take strong actions to address chronically underperforming schools

Create alternatives to the current system.

- Create choices outside of the traditional public system via charter schools, tuition vouchers and tax credits. This will both create better options for many students and spur the regular public schools to improve, benefiting even the students “left behind.”

We need to adopt both strategies.

- Charter schools provide critical lifelines for more than 1.5 million children, and are also laboratories of innovation and models for change
 - As of November 2009 there were 5,043 charter schools in 40 states and the District of Columbia
- Once they reach a critical mass, choice programs/schools do indeed create pressure for change – but this is often not enough
 - “In the absence of broader organizational and institutional changes, choice-driven competition is unlikely to deliver the results that its proponents desire.”
 - Frederick Hess, author of Common Sense School Reform
- For the foreseeable future, the vast majority of children will continue to be educated at their local public school
- First and foremost, parents don’t want choice – they want a good local school!

The United States has two educational systems. One is failing miserably, while the other is the envy of the world.

Characteristics of our K-12 public school system:

- Only people with means can afford to opt out of the public schools
- Public schools have dominant market share
- Students and their parents typically have little or no choice of school; they are assigned to one school based on where they live
- Money doesn't follow students; if they don't attend their local public school, they get nothing
 - If students or their parents are dissatisfied with a school, they have few options
- Failing schools typically face few consequences
- Teachers, even the most ineffective teachers, almost always get tenure within a few years
- Very little innovation and specialization among schools

Characteristics of our post-secondary system:

- Public, private and religious schools all compete fiercely for students
- No one type of school has dominant market share
- Students and their parents choose among a vast array of options when determining which school is best, depending on each student's interests and needs
- Money in the form of scholarships and student loans – both public and private – largely follows students
 - If students or their parents are dissatisfied with a school, they can easily switch schools
- Failing schools face severe consequences and/or go out of business
- It takes many years for teachers to earn tenure, and the process is generally rigorous and competitive
- Tremendous innovation and specialization among schools
 - Think of the differences between MIT, Amherst, the University of Michigan, Notre Dame and City College of New York, for example

Too many school systems today are dominated by the “Three Pillars of Mediocrity.”

1. Lifetime tenure (i.e., cannot remove ineffective performers)
2. Lockstep pay
3. System driven by seniority (not merit)

“These three pillars need to be replaced with a culture that differentiates based on merit and organizational need.”

– Joel Klein, Chancellor, NYC public schools

4 steps for fixing any broken system: What schools must do to be successful.

1. Hire and train great leaders and then empower them

- Give principals the power to manage their schools by giving them more control over their budgets and the ability to hire great teachers (and streamline the process for removing ineffective ones)

2. Adopt the right strategy and tactics

- Set high standards and expectations, focus on teacher quality, extend the school day and year, use proven curricula, eliminate social promotion, etc.

3. Measure results

- For principals, measure overall school performance
 - We must eliminate “happy schools” – schools in which the students are happy, the parents are happy, the teachers are happy and the principal is happy – the only problem is that the children can’t read!
- Rigorously evaluate teachers, with a focus on student performance (including, but not limited to, test scores)

4. Hold people accountable

- Reward success and punish failure
- Put ineffective principals and teachers on probation, give them training and support and, if they do not improve, remove them
- Close and reconstitute chronically underperforming schools, rather than just throwing more money at them

How do KIPP and a handful of other schools succeed with the same students who are failing in regular public schools?

1. They identify and train top-notch school leaders who are empowered and held accountable for building outstanding schools
2. The school leaders focus on recruiting, training, motivating and retaining top 1% teachers
3. Extended school day and school year
 - KIPP students get 60% more class time than they would in regular public schools
4. Character and culture
 - Work hard, be nice, there are no shortcuts, we're climbing the mountain to college, etc.
 - One study showed that grit and determination were twice as powerful as IQ in predicting life success

KIPP schools share a core set of operating principles known as the five pillars.

There is no reason why every school couldn't adopt these five pillars.

1. **High Expectations.** KIPP Schools have clearly defined and measurable high expectations for academic achievement and conduct that make no excuses based on the students' backgrounds. Students, parents, teachers, and staff create and reinforce a culture of achievement and support through a range of formal and informal rewards and consequences for academic performance and behavior.
2. **Choice & Commitment.** Students, their parents, and the faculty of each KIPP School choose to participate in the program. No one is assigned or forced to attend these schools. Everyone must make and uphold a commitment to the school and to each other to put in the time and effort required to achieve success.
3. **More Time.** KIPP Schools know that there are no shortcuts when it comes to success in academics and life. With an extended school day, week, and year, students have more time in the classroom to acquire the academic knowledge and skills that will prepare them for competitive high schools and colleges, as well as more opportunities to engage in diverse extracurricular experiences.
4. **Power to Lead.** The principals of KIPP Schools are effective academic and organizational leaders who understand that great schools require great School Leaders. They have control over their school budget and personnel. They are free to swiftly move dollars or make staffing changes, allowing them maximum effectiveness in helping students learn.
5. **Focus on Results.** KIPP Schools relentlessly focus on high student performance on standardized tests and other objective measures. Just as there are no shortcuts, there are no excuses. Students are expected to achieve a level of academic performance that will enable them to succeed at the nation's best high schools and colleges.

Given that fewer than 1% of low-income, minority students nationwide attend high-performing schools like KIPP, why are such schools so important?

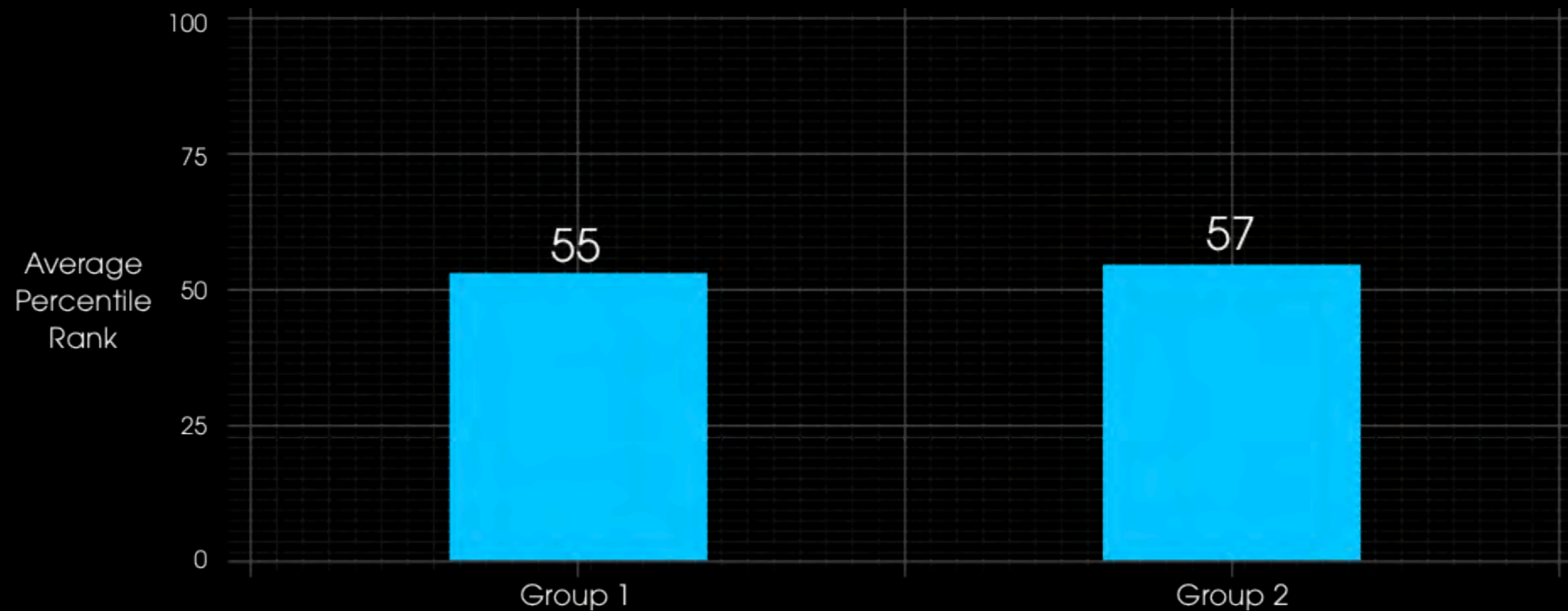
- KIPP and a handful of other top schools are “black swans.”
- Just as the existence of even one black swan proves that all swans aren’t white, even a small number of high-performing schools proves that, without spending any additional money, schools have the capability to change the life trajectories of children and send nearly all low-income, minority students to college. They prove that demography is *not* destiny!
- KIPP schools have been a major catalyst in transforming the debate about the achievement gap, from one focused on excuses (“we just need to spend more money”) and blaming the victims (“it’s impossible to educate *those kids*”) to one that centers on how to make *every* school as successful as KIPP schools.

The Overwhelming Importance of Teacher Quality

Numerous studies have shown that the most important determinant of student achievement, by far, is teacher quality.

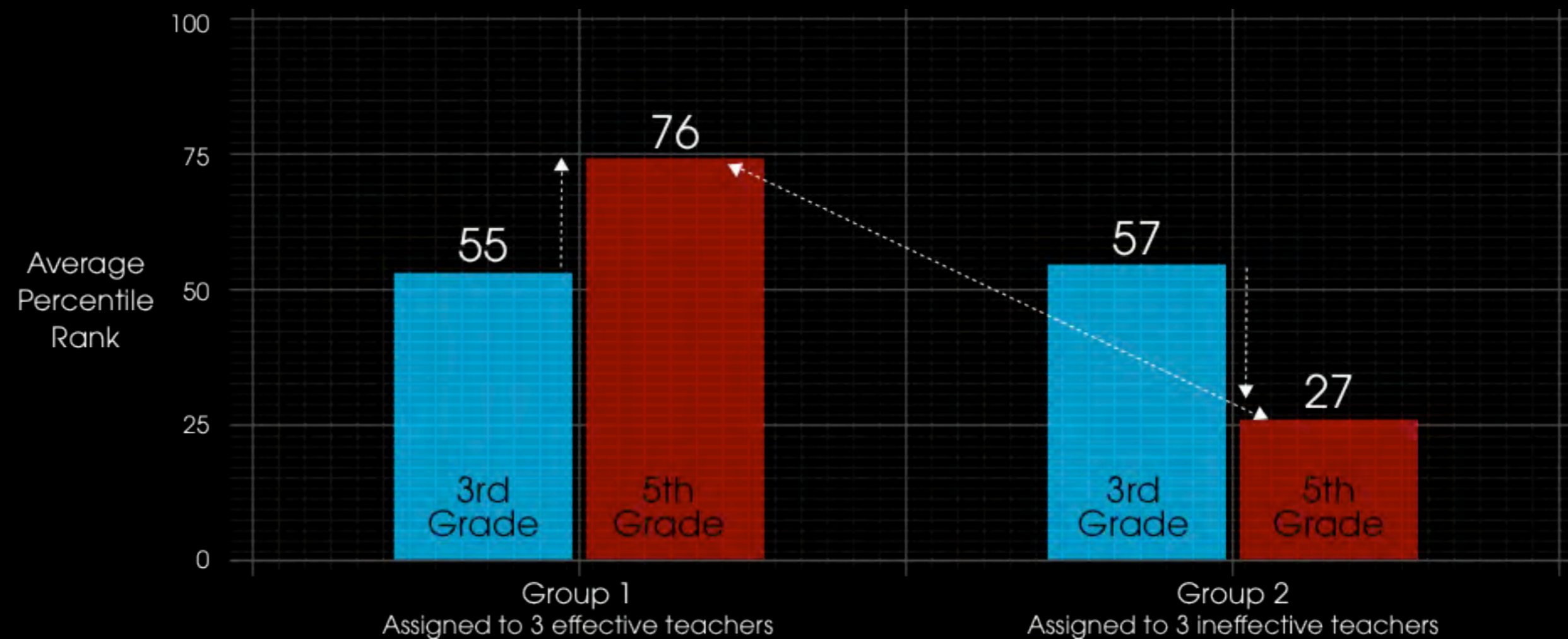
There is enormous variability among teachers.

One study in Dallas compared two groups of students, both of which started 3rd grade at about the same level of math achievement.



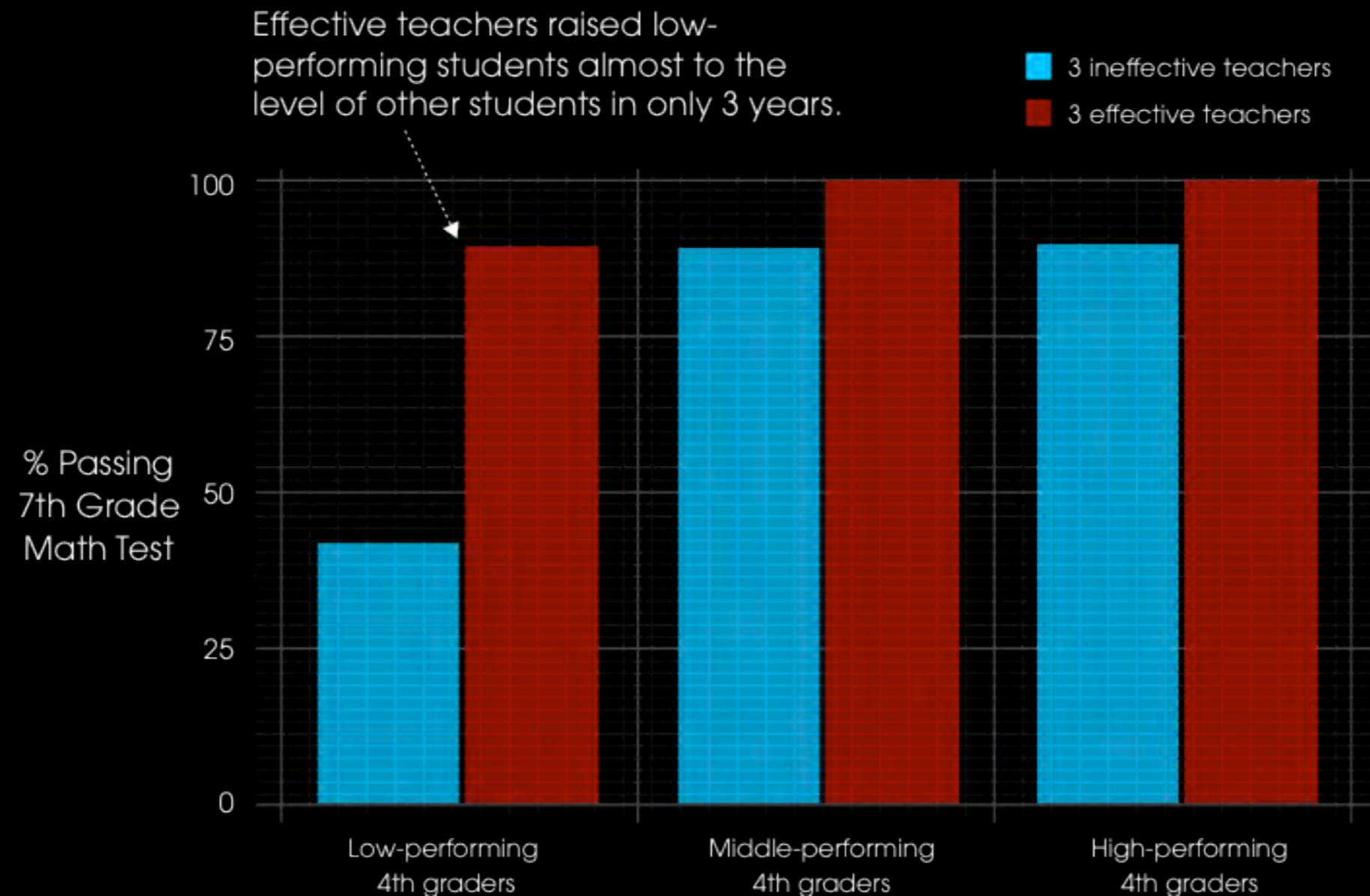
Source: Heather Jordan, Robert Mendro, and Dash Weerasinghe, *The Effects of Teachers on Longitudinal Student Achievement*, 1997. Slide courtesy of Ed Trust.

Three years later, one group vastly outperformed the other. The only difference: group 1 had three effective teachers, while group 2 had three ineffective teachers (results were similar in reading).



Source: Heather Jordan, Robert Mendro, and Dash Weerasinghe, *The Effects of Teachers on Longitudinal Student Achievement*, 1997. Slide courtesy of Ed Trust.

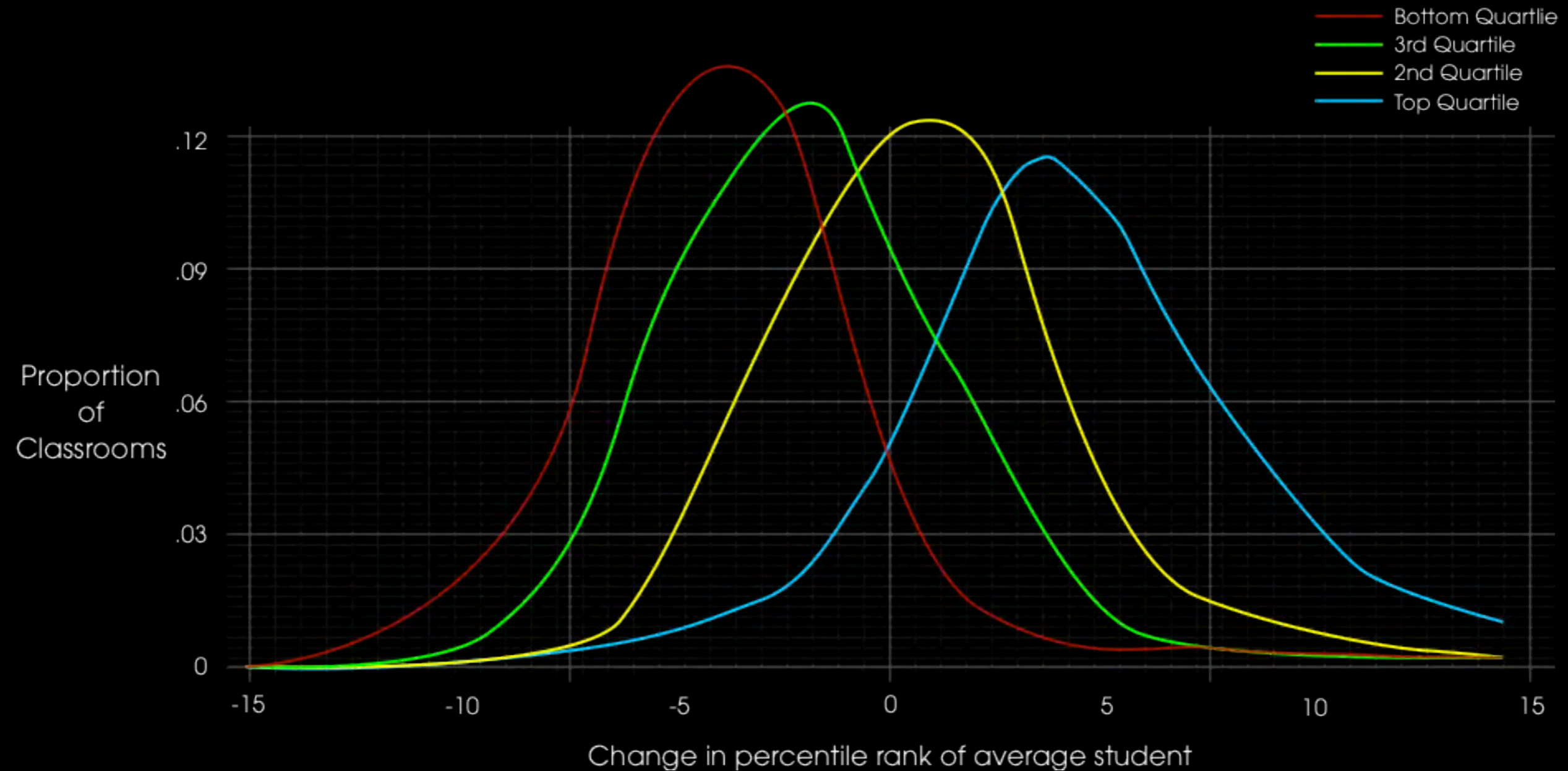
Effective teachers turned low-performing Dallas 4th graders into high-performing 7th graders.



Source: Heather Jordan, Robert Mendro, and Dash Weerasinghe, *The Effects of Teachers on Longitudinal Student Achievement*, 1997. Slide courtesy of Ed Trust.

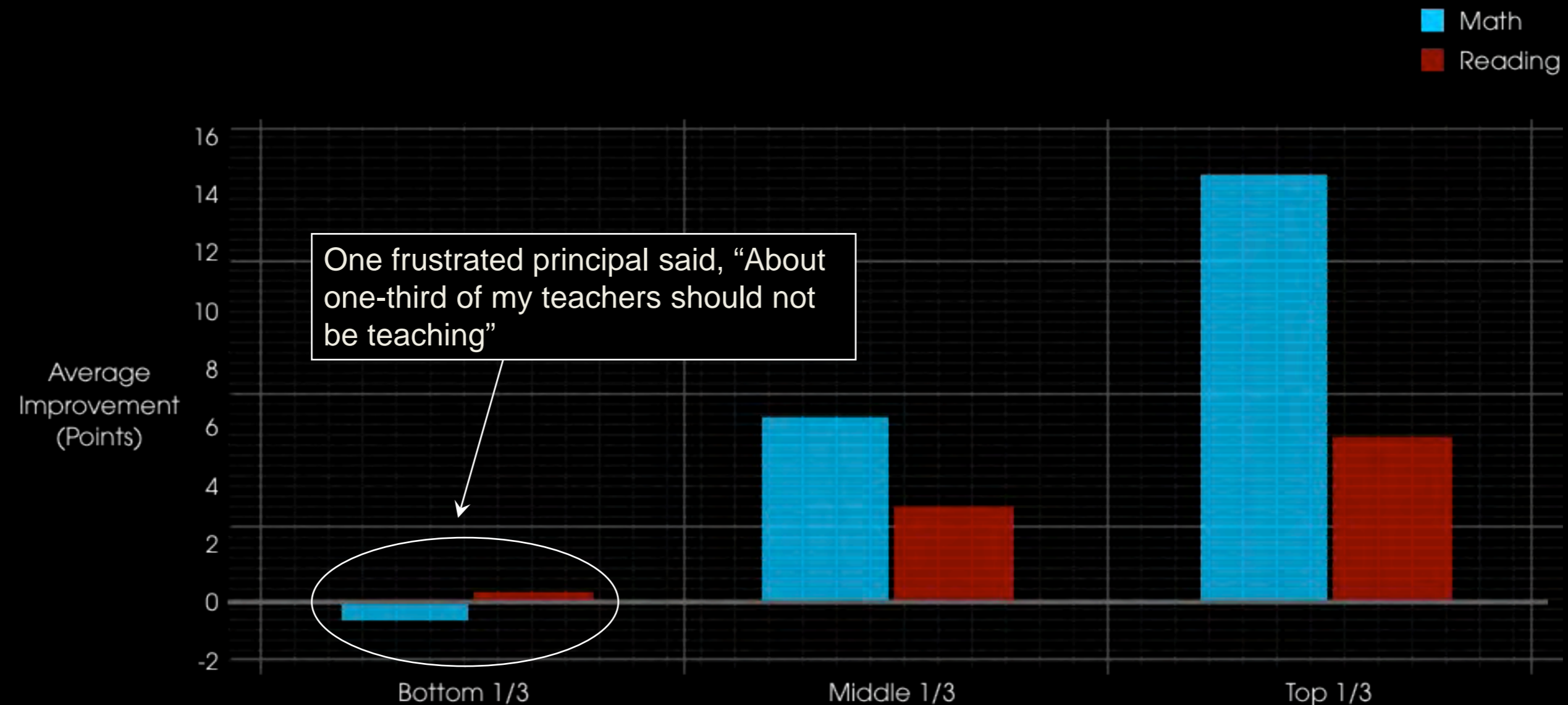
There is enormous variation in teacher effectiveness.

Teacher impacts on math performance in third year by ranking after first two years:



Source: Identifying Effective Teachers Using Performance on the Job, Hamilton Project, April 2006.

One study in Boston concluded that “one-third of the teachers had no measurable effect on the reading and math skills of their students.”

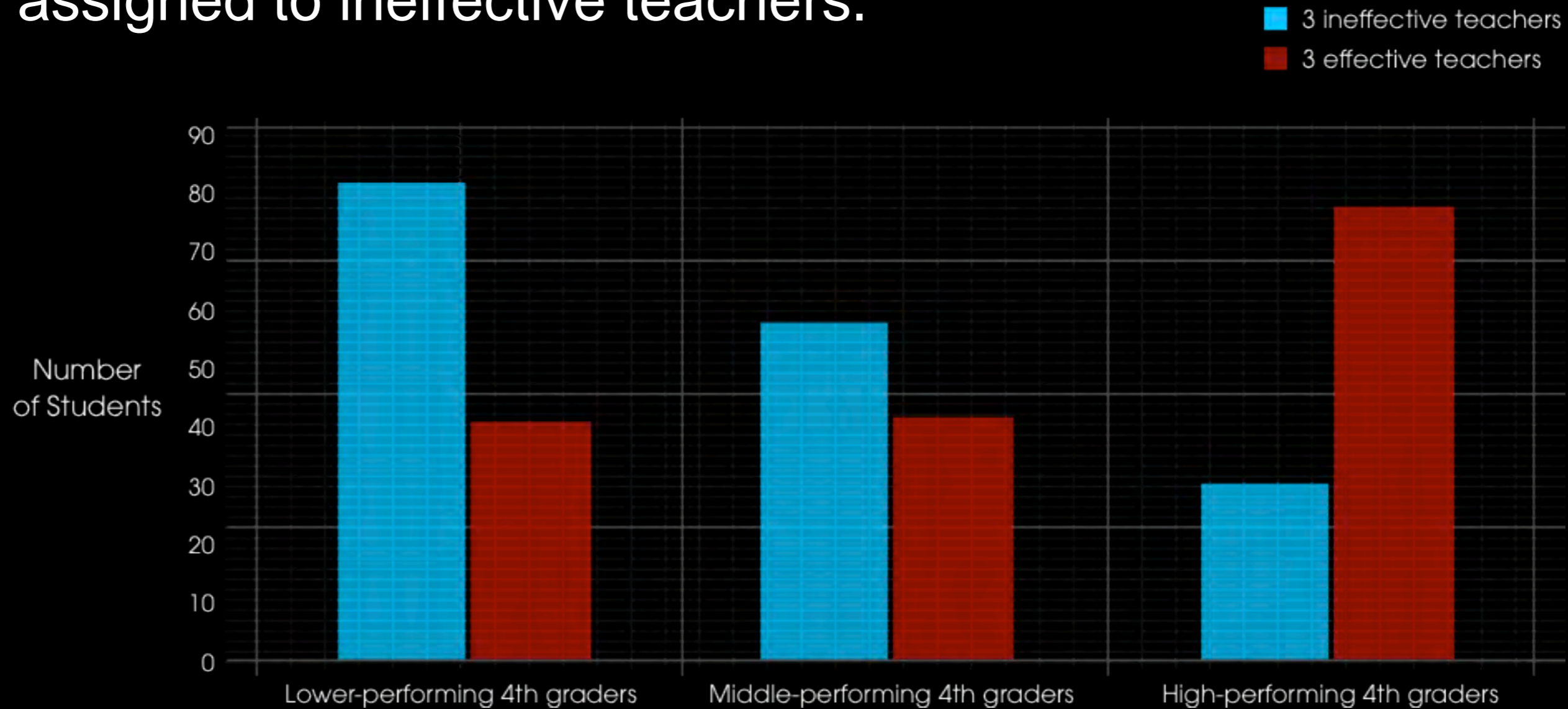


Notes: 10th grade students at non-selective Boston public schools; average student scores prior to 10th grade were comparable (670-687 range); excluded bilingual and special education students.
Source: [Boston Public Schools](#), Bain & Company, 3/31/98

By any measure, low-income, minority students are not getting their fair share of high-quality teachers.

- On average, they are much more likely to be taught by teachers who:
 - Didn't major or minor in the field they are teaching
 - Are inexperienced
 - Did poorly on SATs and other standardized tests
 - Got poor grades in high school and college
 - Attended noncompetitive colleges

Low-performing 4th graders in Dallas were far more likely to be assigned to ineffective teachers.



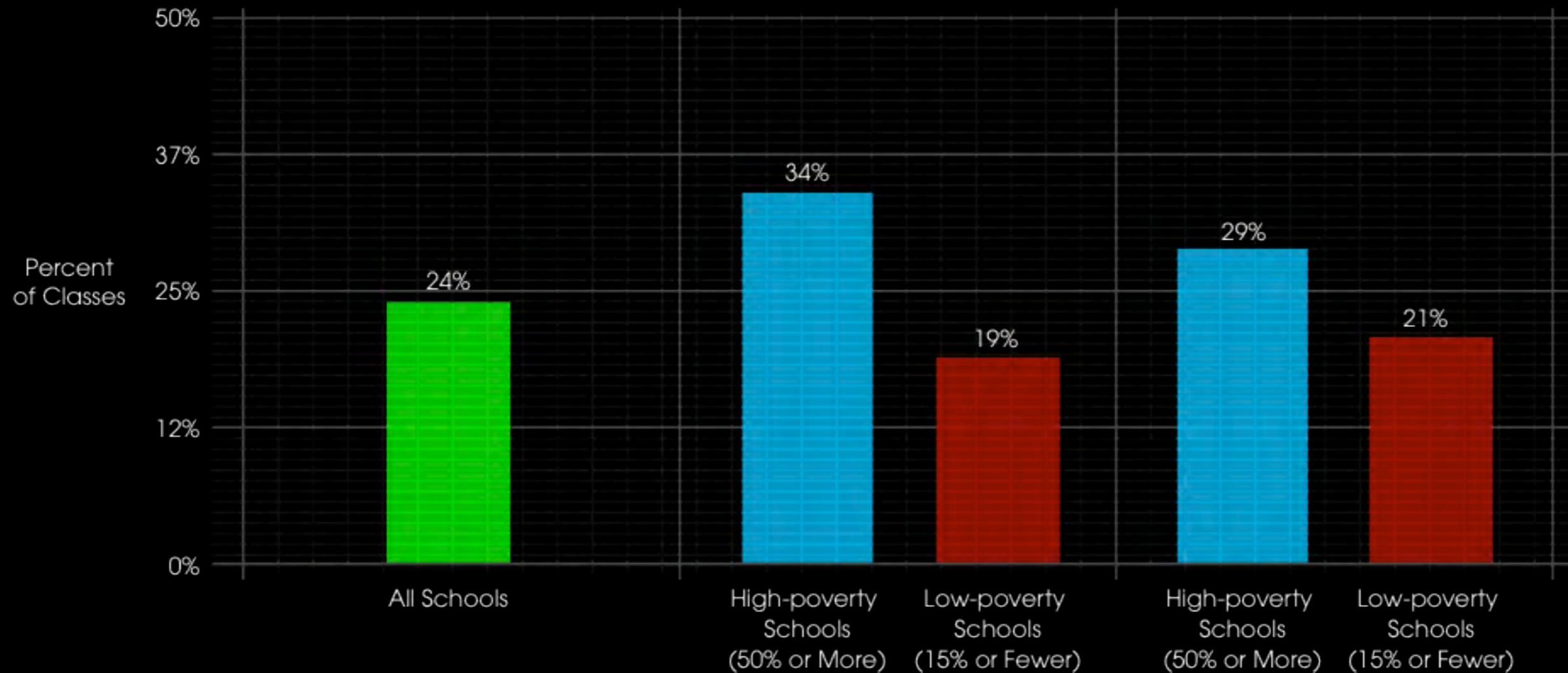
Source: The Real Value of Teachers, Education Trust, Winter 2004.

High-poverty schools have far more teachers who did poorly on SATs and attended non-competitive colleges.



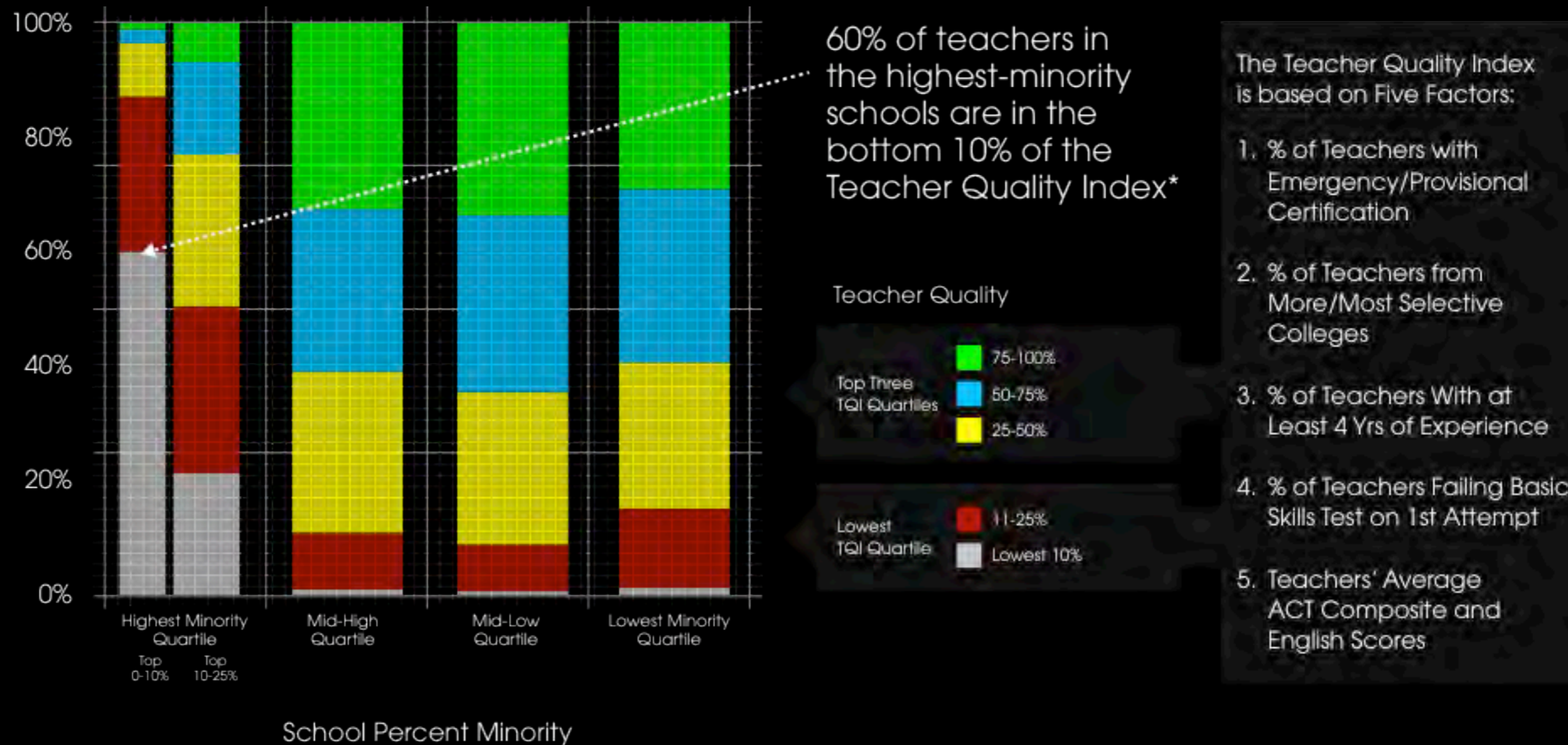
Source: The Real Value of Teachers, Education Trust, Winter 2004.

Poor and minority high school students nationwide are more often taught by teachers who did not major or minor in the field they are teaching.



Source: Teaching Inequality, Education Trust, June 2006

High-minority schools in Illinois have by far the lowest-quality teachers*.



Source: The Real Value of Teachers, Education Trust, Winter 2004.

Why is teacher talent distributed so unfairly?

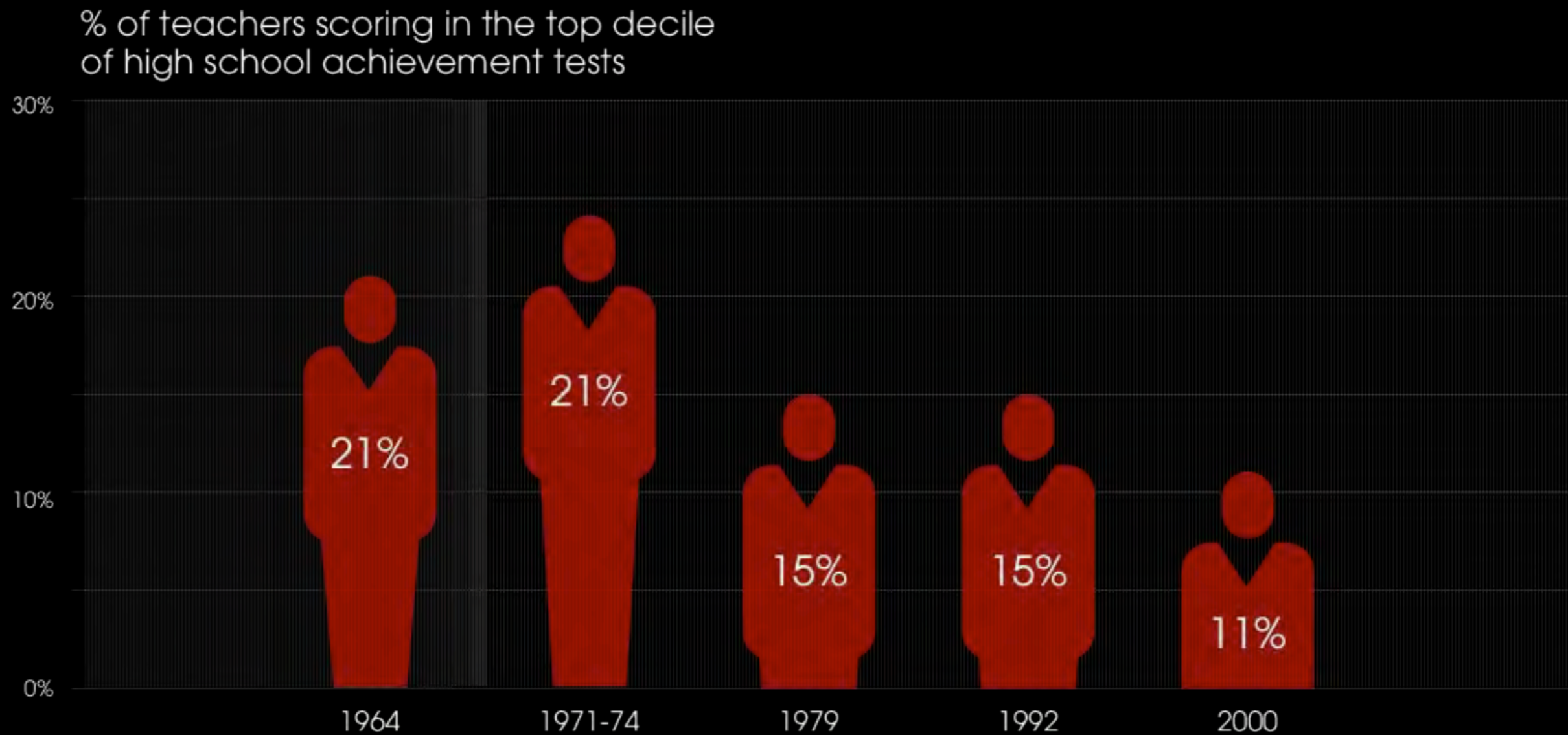
- Experienced teachers use seniority to get placed at “good” schools
- Rookie teachers are disproportionately assigned to schools with teacher shortages (i.e., those serving low-income, minority students)
- The best principals (who tend to attract the best teachers) tend to end up at more affluent schools
- Affluent parents demand high-quality principals and teachers – and know how to raise a ruckus if they don’t get them

Overall teacher quality has been declining for decades, which has exacerbated the problem of the unfair distribution of teacher talent.

- Among high-school students who took the SAT in 1994-1995, those who intended to study education in college scored lower on both the verbal and math sections than students expressing an interest in any other field
- In 1998 the mean SAT score for students who intended to major in education was 479 math and 485 verbal—32 and 20 points lower than all college-bound seniors
- Once in college, education majors were more likely to be in the bottom quartile and less likely to be in the top quartile than any other major

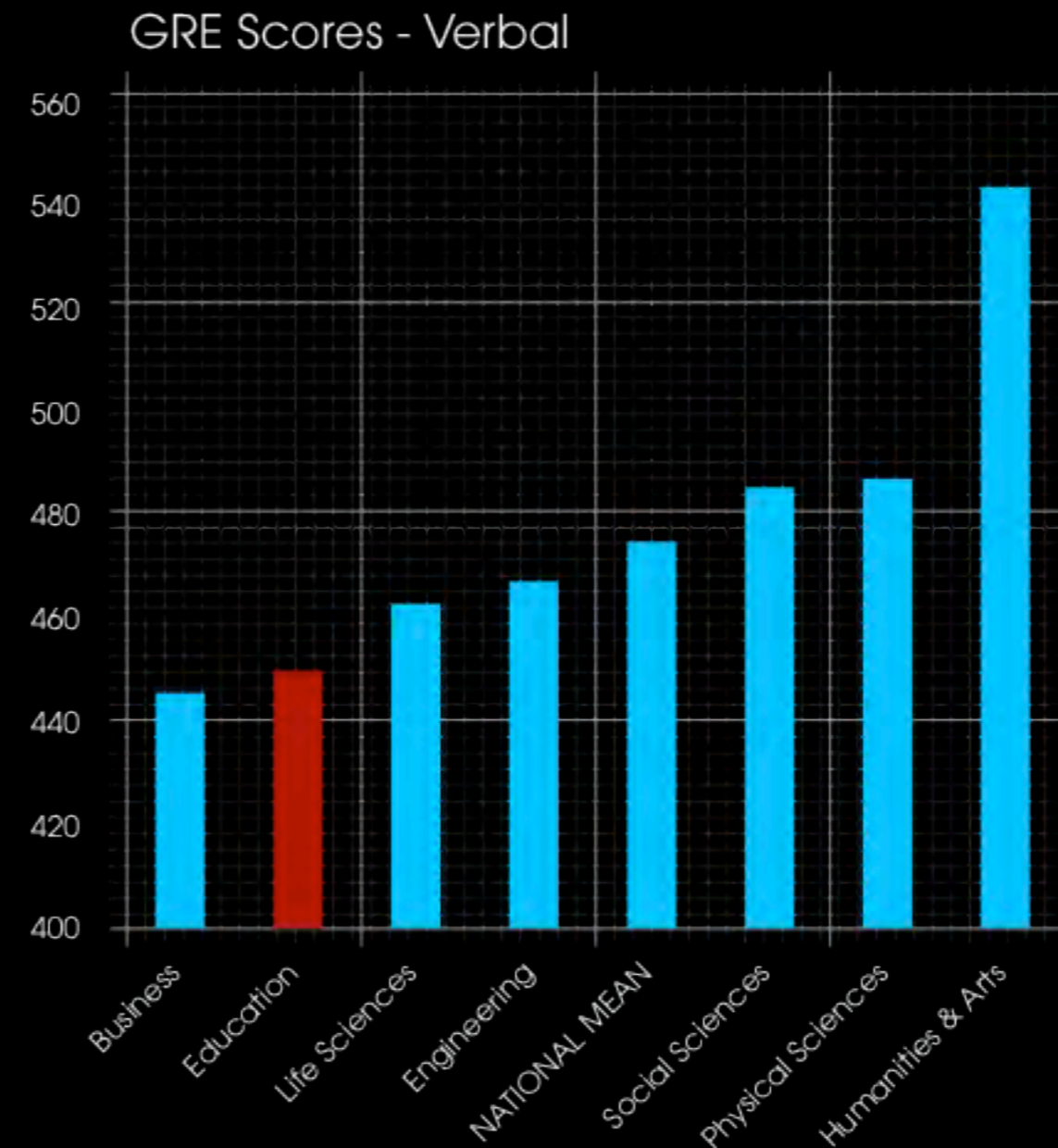
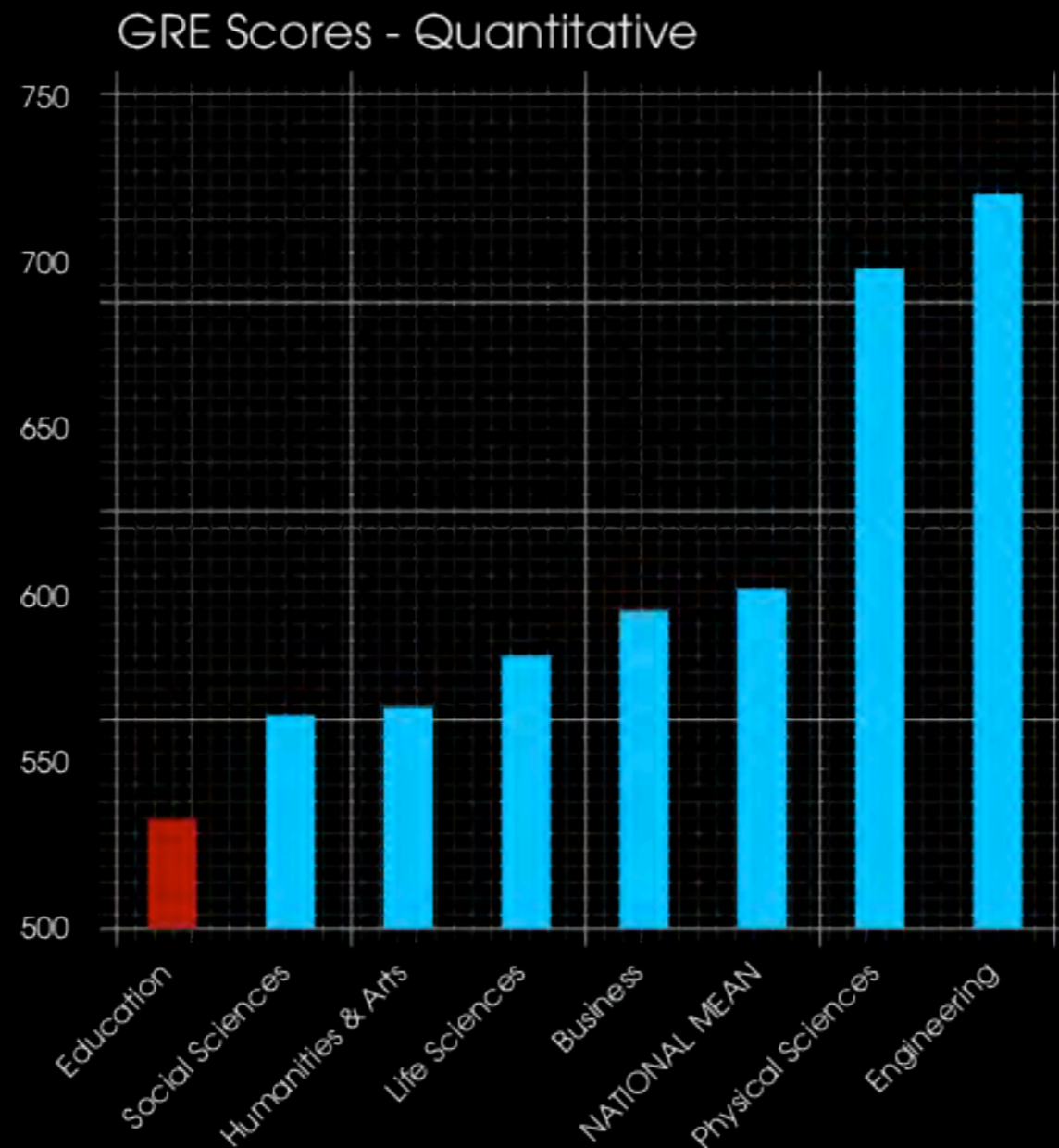
Source: Thomas D. Snyder, et al., *Digest of Education Statistics 1997*, U.S. Department of Education, p. 135; Tyce Palmaffy, "Measuring the Teacher Quality Problem," in *Better Teachers, Better Schools*, edited by Marci Kanstoroom and Chester E. Finn, Jr., Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, pp. 21-22; Robin R. Henke, et al., *Out of the Lecture Hall and into the Classroom: 1992-1993 College Graduates and Elementary/Secondary School Teaching*, U.S. Department of Education, p. 58.

Top-performing high school students are far less likely to enter teaching.



Source: Teaching at Risk-Progress and Potholes, The Teaching Commission, March 2006.

College seniors who plan to go into education have very low test scores.



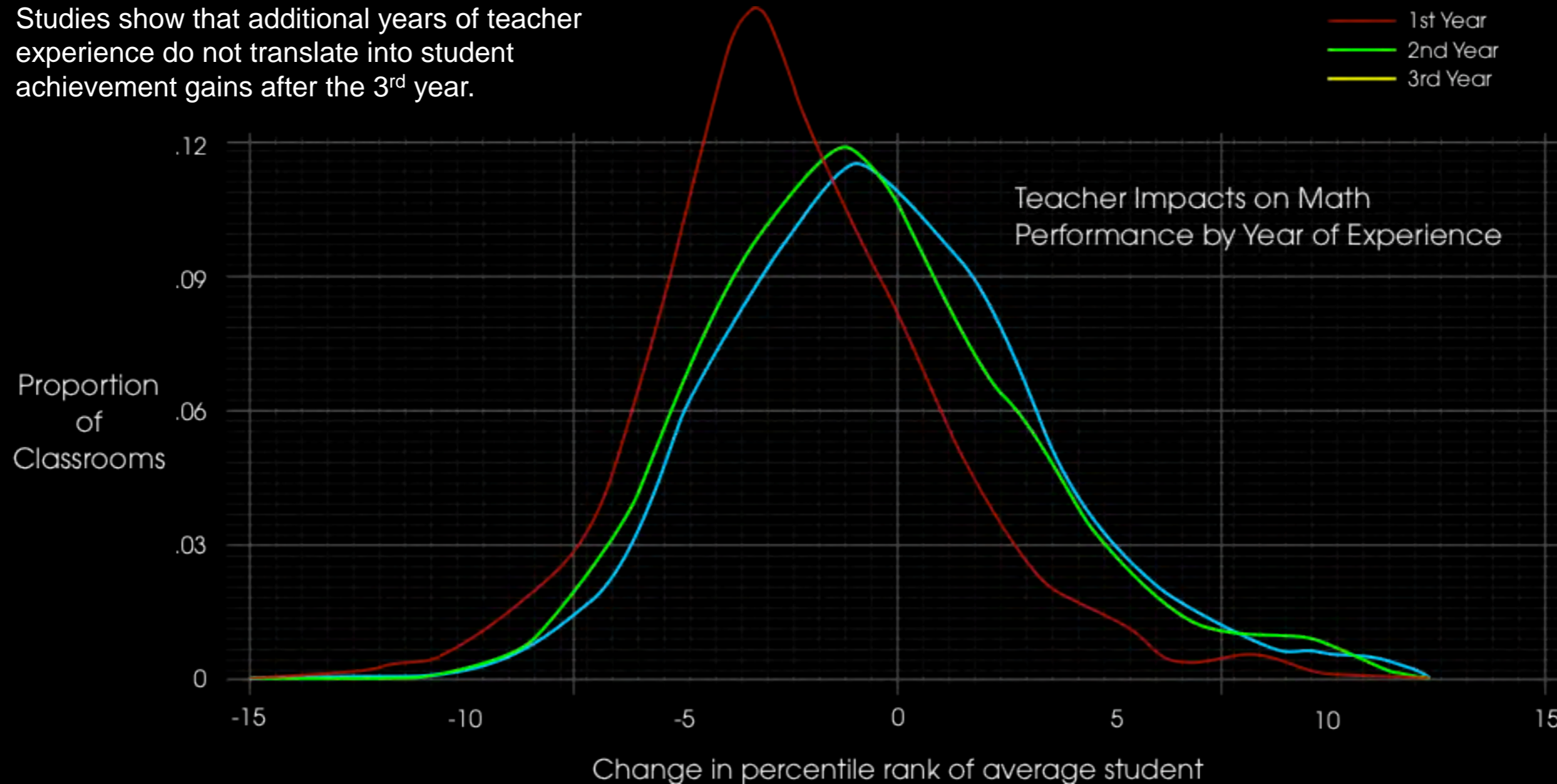
Source: General Test Percentage Distribution of Scores Within Intended Broad Graduate Major Field Based on Seniors and Nonenrolled College Graduates, Educational Testing Service, www.ets.org/Media/Tests/GRE/pdf/5_01738_table_4.pdf.

Why has teacher quality been declining?

- More career opportunities for women and minorities
 - 40 years ago, 52% of college-educated working women were teachers; today, only 15% are
- Ineffective recruiting and training practices
- Abysmal schools of education
- Lack of accountability in the system
- Increasing difficulty of removing ineffective teachers
- Outstanding performance is not rewarded
 - Differential pay has all but disappeared
- Teacher pay is determined almost entirely by two factors, seniority and certifications, which have little to do with student achievement

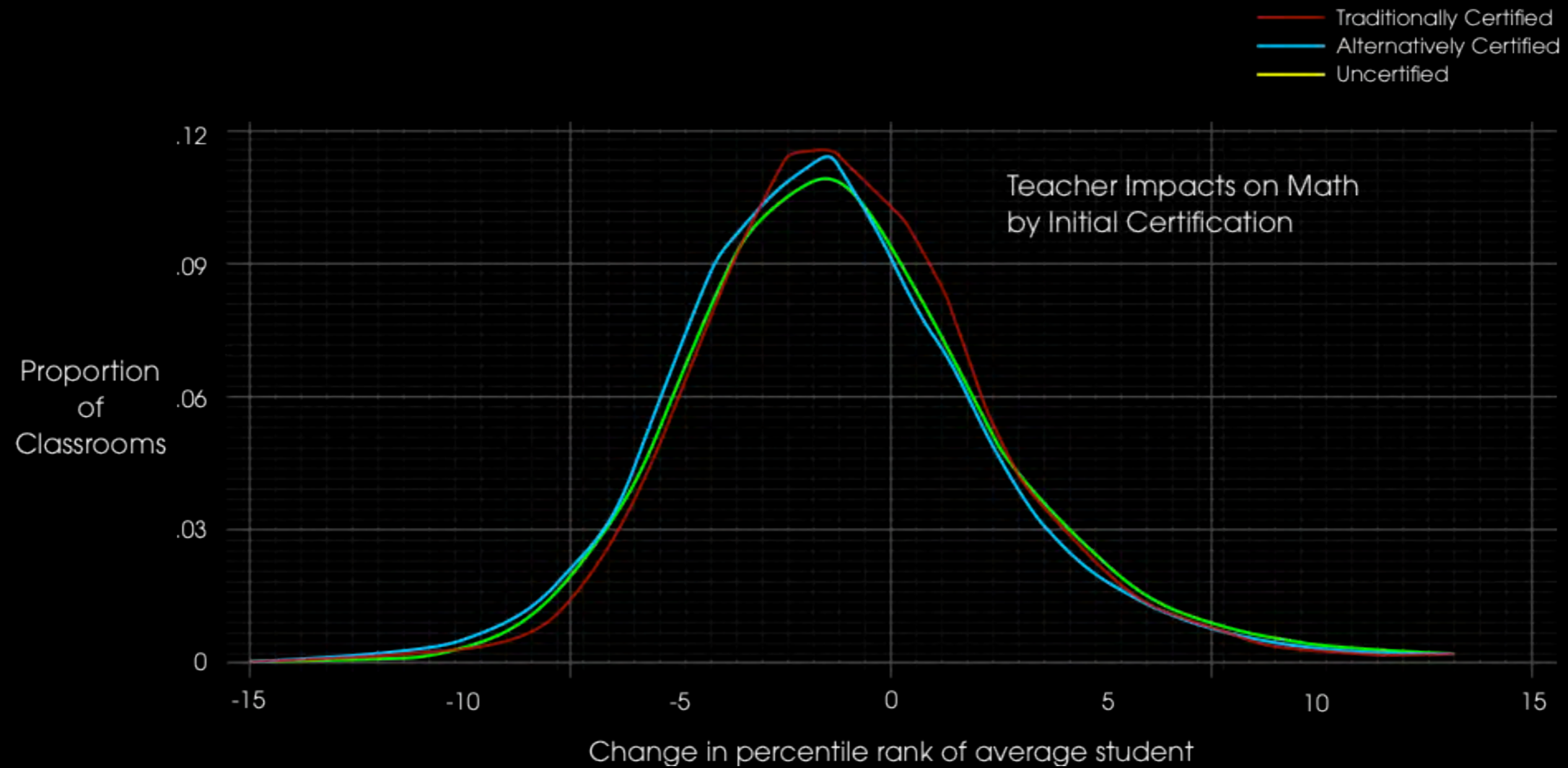
Teacher experience matters in the first three years but then appears to matter little, if at all.

Studies show that additional years of teacher experience do not translate into student achievement gains after the 3rd year.



Source: Identifying Effective Teachers Using Performance on the Job, Hamilton Project, April 2006.

Whether a teacher is certified has little impact on student achievement.



Source: Identifying Effective Teachers Using Performance on the Job, Hamilton Project, April 2006.

THE IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL AND COMMUNITY ADVOCACY



Why hasn't more been done to improve the system? Jobs, Money, Power and Politics.

- There's a fierce debate about *how* to fix the system but a major factor is that the system, while failing millions of children, works very well for the adults
 - Over time, the trends have been toward more pay, better benefits, fewer hours worked and greater job security
 - It's not just teachers who are benefiting; it's principals, administrators, custodians, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, etc.
- The adults are well organized and extremely politically powerful, especially in large cities (where, not coincidentally, the schools are the worst). These powerful entrenched interests benefit from the status quo – and fight fiercely to preserve it
- In contrast, the victims of the failing system – primarily low-income, minority children and their parents – are the most marginalized, powerless people in our society
- There is little doubt that if wealthy white families had to send their children to failing schools, there would be a huge outcry and schools would be improved quickly

DEMOCRATS

for EDUCATION REFORM

- Mission: To move the Democratic Party to champion genuine school reform
- Rationale: Only Democrats can move the Democratic Party, so DFER is founded, run and funded by Democrats
- We must change the debate from Republicans vs. Democrats to those who defend the educational status quo vs. those who demand more for our children
- DFER seeks to influence the Democratic Party at all levels, with an emphasis today at the national level, plus a number of state and local affiliates (California, Colorado, Michigan, Missouri, Newark, New York)
- DFER began supporting Barack Obama more than six years ago, before his 2004 speech at the Democratic National Convention and before he was elected to the Senate



Statement of Principles

A first-rate system of public education is the cornerstone of a prosperous, free and just society, yet millions of American children today – particularly low-income and children of color - are trapped in persistently failing schools that are part of deeply dysfunctional school systems. These systems, once viewed romantically as avenues of opportunity for all, have become captive to powerful, entrenched interests that too often put the wants of adults before the educational needs of children. This perverse hierarchy of priorities is political, and thus requires a political response.

Both political parties have failed to address the tragic decline of our system of public education, but it is the Democratic Party – our party – which must question how we allowed ourselves to drift so far from our mission. Fighting on behalf of our nation's most vulnerable individuals is what our party is supposed to stand for.

Democrats for Education Reform aims to return the Democratic Party to its rightful place as a champion of children, first and foremost, in America's public education systems.

We support leaders in our party who have the courage to challenge a failing status quo and who believe that the severity of our nation's educational crisis demands that we tackle this problem using every possible tool at our disposal.

We support efforts to create great schools and initiatives to empower all parents to access great schools for their children. We believe that reforming broken public school systems cannot be accomplished by tinkering at the margins, but rather through bold and revolutionary leadership.

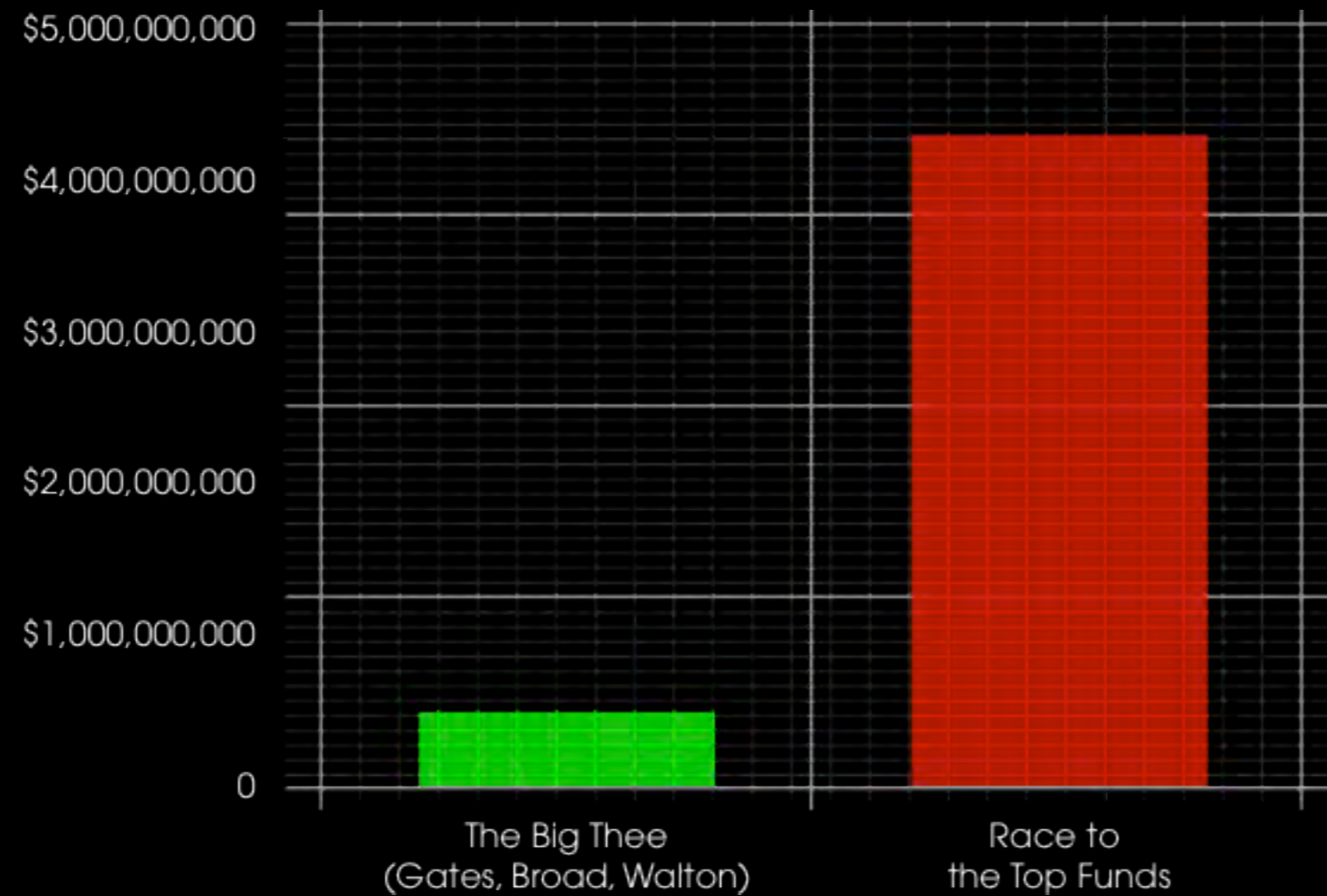
We believe that anything less than an all-out effort to save our children is un-American, un-Democratic, and an insult to the very fabric of our nation and its proud commitment to educating its citizenry.

We know that decisive action today can save our children, our party and ultimately our nation.

Race to the Top

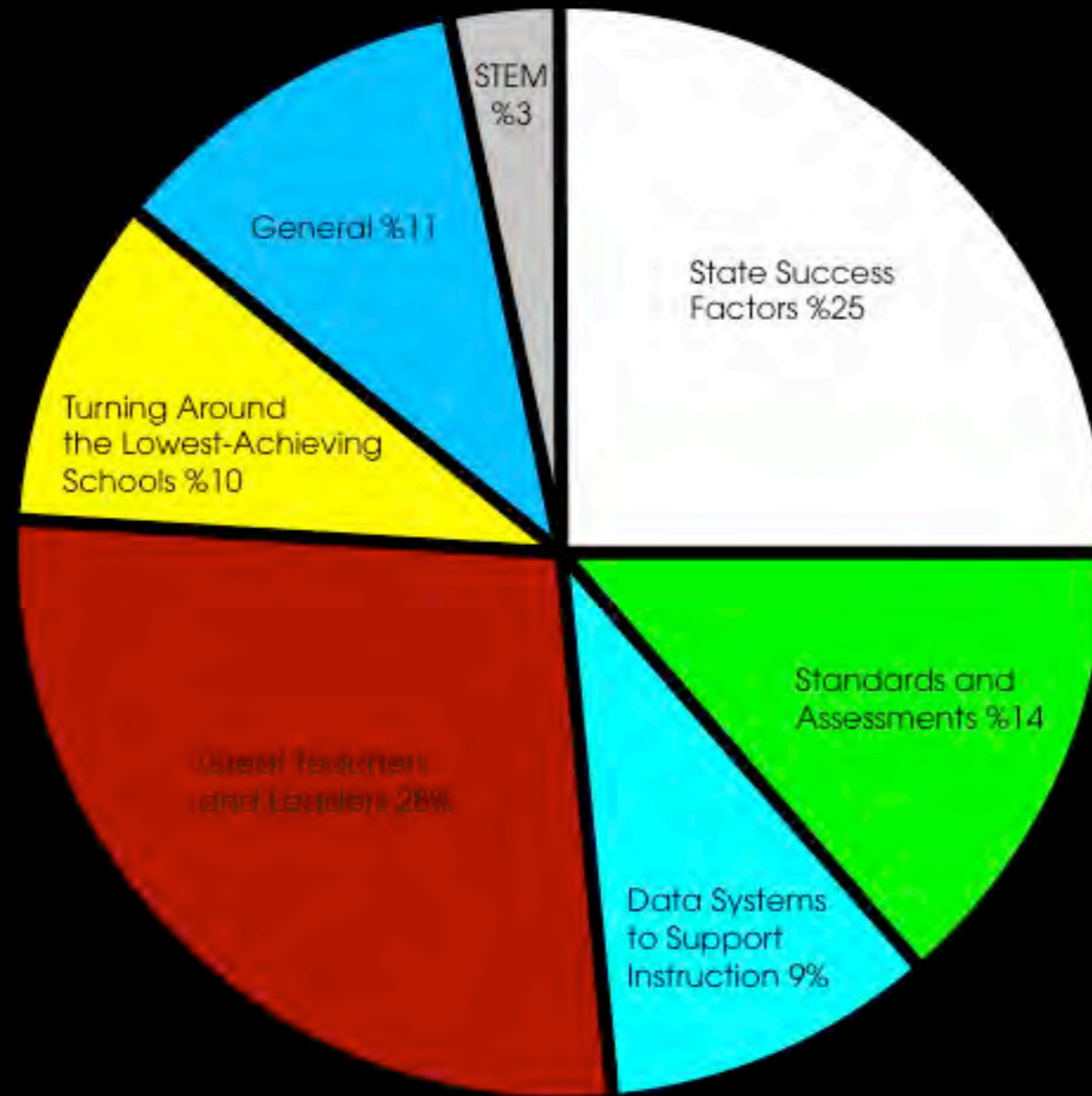
- A historic opportunity for reform: President Obama has a chance to reinvent the relationship that exists between feds and states.
- \$4.3 billion in new, one-time federal funding (part of the stimulus package)
- Awarded competitively to states that embrace reforms favored by Obama administration
- States all over the country are moving rapidly to make reforms and pass legislation to improve their chances of winning RttT funds
- RttT is a competition and the Obama administration has made it clear that many states will get little or no money

Race to the Top funds dwarf philanthropic money available for reform.



Arne Duncan has *twice* as much discretionary money as his eight predecessors over the past 29 years *combined!*

Race to the Top points:



Source: U.S. Department of Education, www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/executive-summary.pdf.

Race to the Top selection criteria:

- A. STATE SUCCESS FACTORS (125 POINTS)
 - Articulating state's education reform agenda and LEAs' participation in it (65 points)
 - Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans (30 points)
 - Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps (30 points)
- B. STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS (70 POINTS)
 - Developing and adopting common standards (40 points)
 - Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments (10 points)
 - Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments (20 points)
- C. DATA SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT INSTRUCTION (47 POINTS)
 - Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system (24 points)
 - Accessing and using state data (5 points)
 - Using data to improve instruction (18 points)
- D. GREAT TEACHERS AND LEADERS (138 POINTS)
 - Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals (21 points)
 - Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance (58 points)
 - Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals (25 points)
 - Improving effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs (14 points)
 - Providing effective support to teachers and principals (20 points)
- E. TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST ACHIEVING SCHOOLS (50 POINTS)
 - Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs (10 points)
 - Turning around the lowest-achieving schools (40 points)
- F. GENERAL SELECTION CRITERIA (55 POINTS)
 - Making education funding a priority (10 points)
 - Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charters and other innovative schools (40 points)
 - Demonstrating other significant reform conditions (5 points)

What you can do: Do's

- Be informed
 - You have to know what's going on at the local, state and national level
 - Join my email list and I'll do the work for you – just email me at WTilson@tilsonfunds.com
- Support grassroots programs, but also become politically active on this issue
 - Showing up at political events and asking tough questions, and writing checks to politicians isn't sexy (and only political junkies like me think it's fun), but it is *by far* the most leveraged way to bring about large-scale change that benefits large numbers of children
- Let your voice be heard – at events and in the press
- Increase the percentage of your philanthropy that goes toward advocacy
- Build in the costs of advocacy (particularly parent advocacy) into school budgets
 - The education reform movement overall has done a terrible job of organizing our greatest political asset: our parents
 - There are a few notable exceptions: Eva Moskowitz in Harlem; Steve Barr in Los Angeles; John Kirtley organizing inner-city parents to support vouchers in Florida
- Meet regularly with politicians and decision-makers
- Attend political fundraisers and ask tough questions
- Contribute to politicians who are helpful – and hold those who aren't accountable
- Bring people to visit local high-performing schools such as certain charter schools
 - People don't *really* understand charter schools until they visit one
- Join DFER (www.dfer.org), sign our statement of principles & become part of the team!

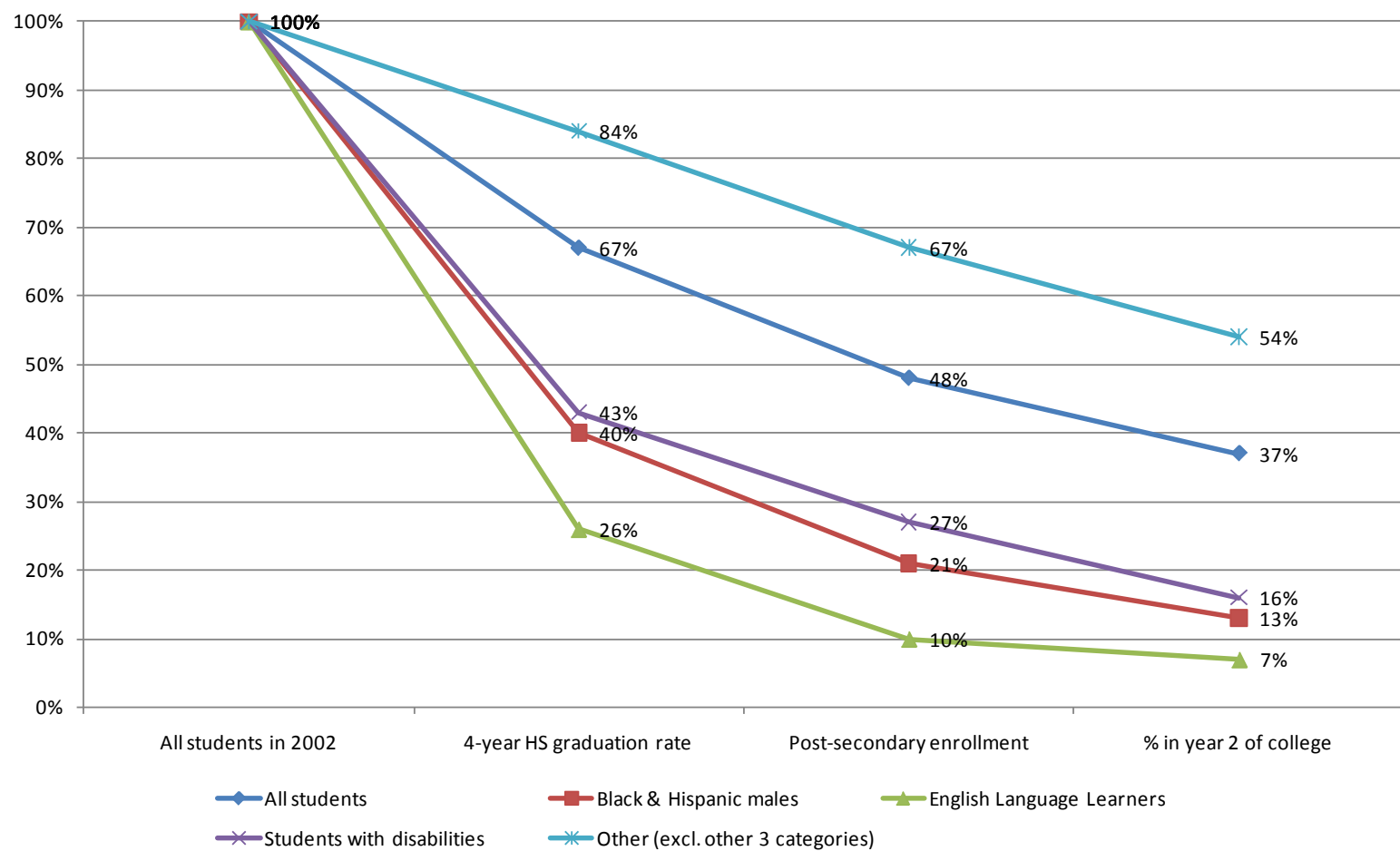
What you can do: Don'ts

- Don't assume that running a great school matters when it comes to advocacy
 - Case study: KIPP Ujima Village Academy in Baltimore
- Don't assume that politicians understand the issues, or even the politics behind them
 - Tennessee legislators didn't know President Obama was a charter supporter
- Don't think that effective advocacy is cheap
- Don't allow reform opponents to define the debate
 - It's time to play offense!
- Don't forget to go to www.dfer.org, sign our statement of principles and join the team!

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In New York State, of Those in 9th Grade in 2002, Only 13% of Black & Hispanic Males and 7% of English Language Learners Were in Their Second Year of College Six Years Later



The Government's Obligation

- Federal, state and local governments have a moral and practical responsibility to provide every family with a good local public school – or must provide an alternative
- The current status quo, in which parents – mostly low-income, minority ones who can't opt out of the system – are forced to send their children – *millions of them* – to schools that *everyone knows* are dangerous and chronically failing is simply unacceptable
- Given the widespread failure at the state and local level, a greater role for the federal government is called for to, for example, set standards and demand accountability. Such a role is consistent with the federal role in other important breakthroughs such as *Brown vs. Board of Education* and the Great Society

Steps to Fixing the System – Big Picture

Most Big-City School Systems Are Caught in “Doom Loops”

In *Good to Great*, Jim Collins contrasts the culture of discipline inside truly great organizations with those of struggling competitors. The highly successful companies found a "hedgehog concept" - what they could be the best in the world at - and they slowly, methodically built their business around this concept, gaining momentum each year. The image Collins uses to describe this momentum buildup is of the great companies pushing a huge flywheel; the first three, five, 15, 100 turns take exceptional effort, but once the flywheel is turning, the momentum makes it easier for each turn to go faster with less effort. The pattern within these companies creates sustained excellence: steps forward consistent with hedgehog concept, accumulation of visible results, personnel energized by results, flywheel builds momentum, steps forward consistent with the hedgehog concept.

In contrast, the companies with chronically poor results were caught in devastating "doom loops" that were characterized by a familiar yet highly destructive pattern: disappointing results, reaction without understanding, new direction/program/ leader/event/fad, no accumulated momentum, disappointing results. Collins writes:

“Instead of a quiet, deliberate process of figuring out what needed to be done and then simply doing it, the (poorly performing) companies launched new programs - often with great fanfare and hoopla aimed at 'motivating the troops' - only to see the programs fail to produce sustained results. They sought the single defining action, the grand program, the one killer innovation, the miracle moment that would allow them to skip the arduous buildup stage and jump right to the breakthrough.”

There is no magic bullet, no 100% solution. We need 100 1% solutions.

The Importance of Effective School Leaders

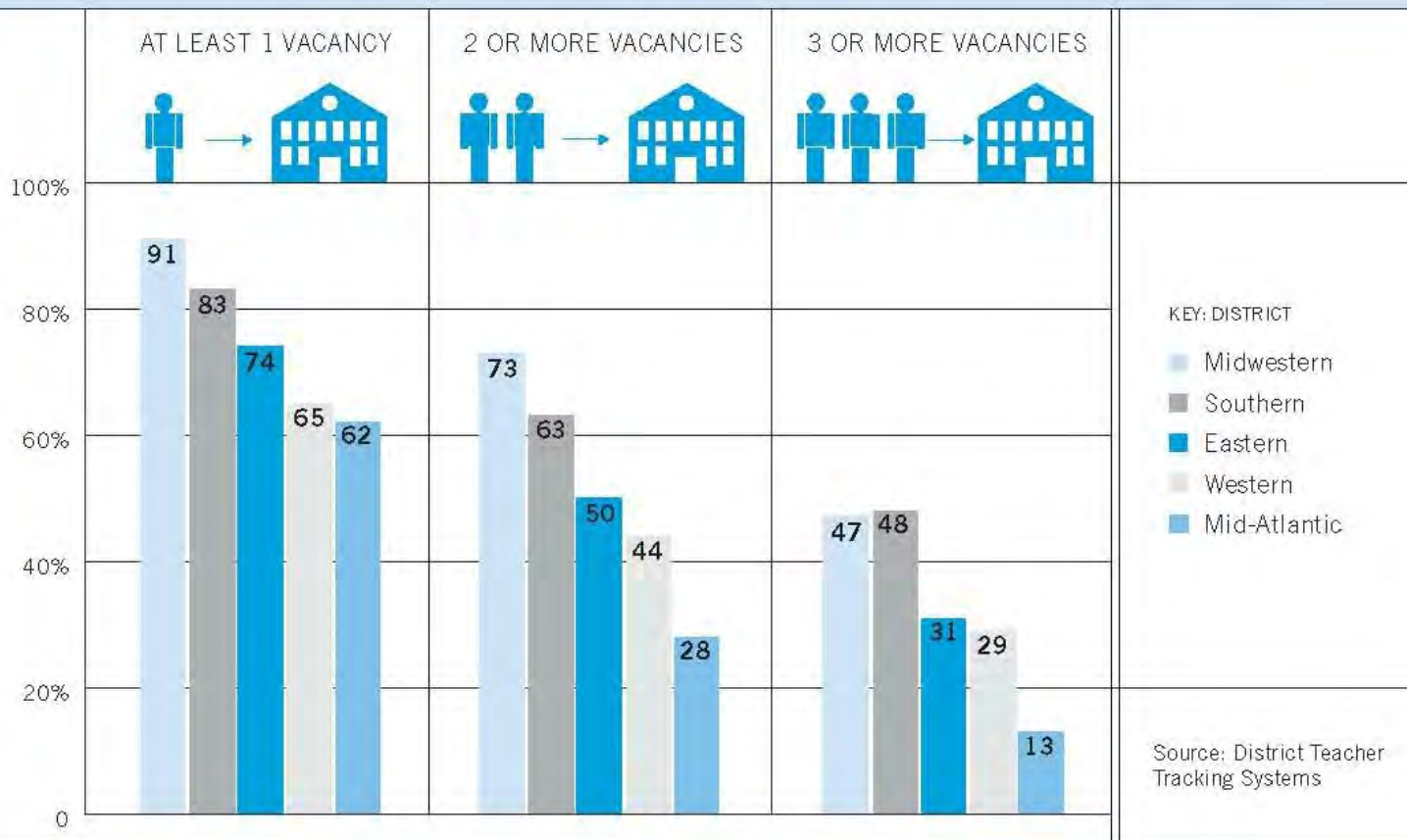
- Great principals establish the right “culture” at a school and attract and retain great teachers



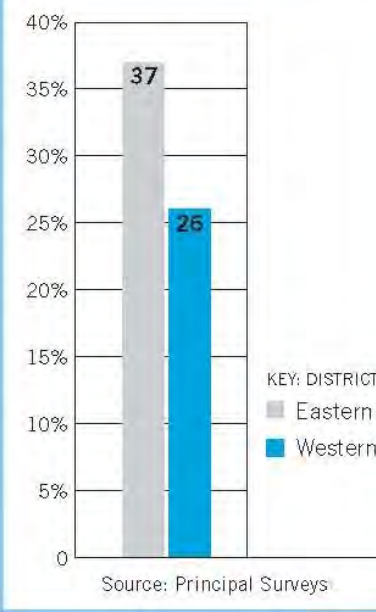
Principals Are Increasingly Being Held Accountable for Their Schools' Success or Failure

Yet in Most Urban Districts, They Have Limited Ability to Hire and Fire Staff

PERCENT OF SCHOOLS THAT HAD NO CHOICE OR RESTRICTED CHOICE IN FILLING...



PERCENT OF PRINCIPALS WHO ADMITTED TO ENCOURAGING A POORLY PERFORMING TEACHER TO TRANSFER OR PLACING ONE ON AN EXCESS LIST



“Nine out of 10 times, the person that is coming is not succeeding in his or her school . . . [E]veryone wants to keep their good teachers.” – Urban Principal

We Need to Hire and Train Better School Leaders, Give Them Greater Autonomy and Then Hold Them Accountable for Results

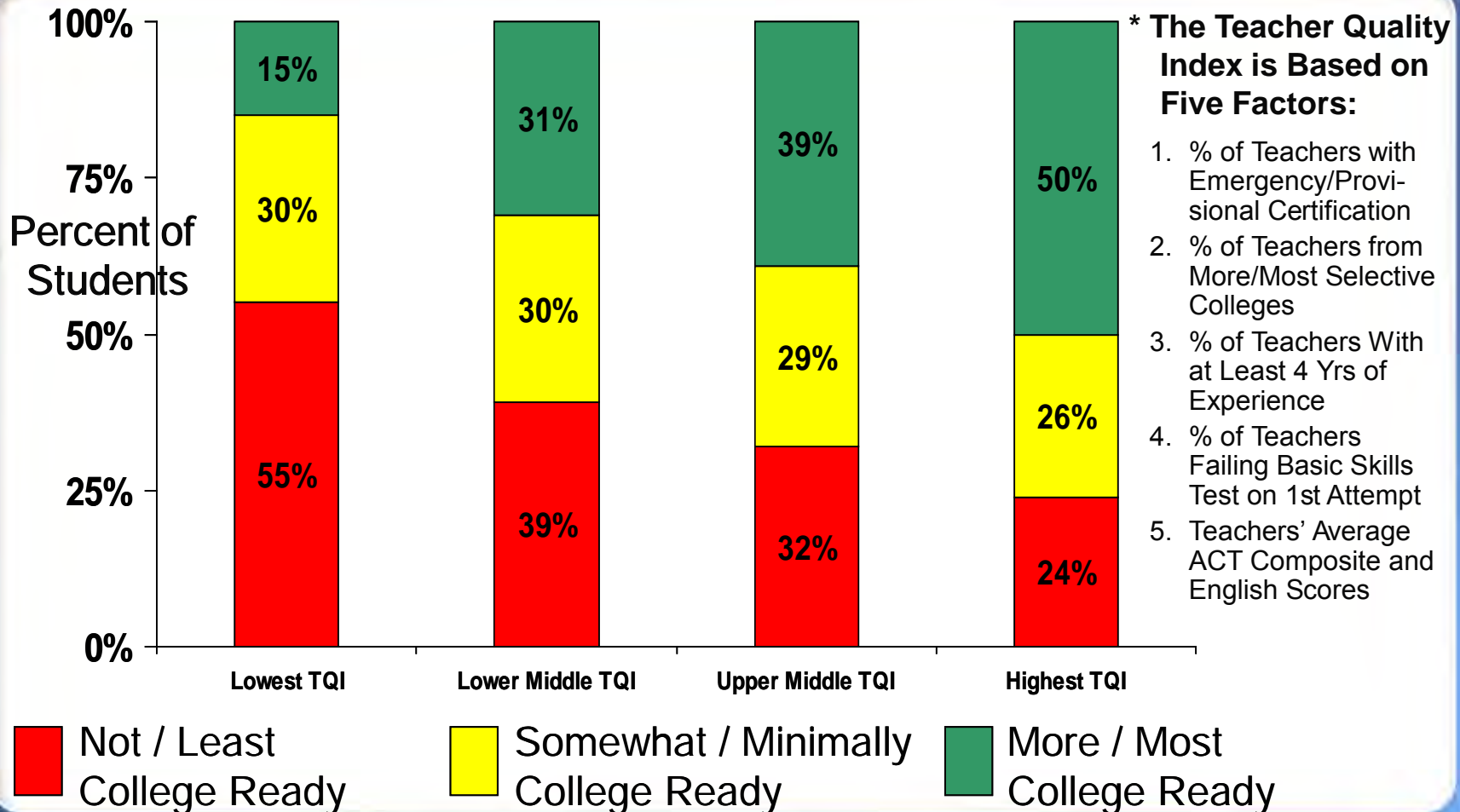
Case Study: New York City Empowerment Schools

- Principals sign performance agreements that lay out principals' new powers, resources, and responsibilities in exchange for:
 - Increased authority over instructional practices, professional development, organization, school schedule, and summer programming
 - Substantially greater discretion and fewer restrictions over school budget
 - Additional money, in place of mandatory DOE programs and services, with which to decide what services to purchase – either from outside vendors or the DOE itself
 - For each school, \$100,000 in newly unrestricted funds and about \$150,000 in funds previously managed centrally on behalf of the school
 - Fewer administrative requirements and reduced reporting and paperwork
 - A significant voice in selecting and evaluating a dedicated support team charged with serving each school. Each dedicated support team will be a partner for principals, assuring that schools' needs are satisfactorily met
- There are annual assessments and each school receives a progress report and overall letter grade (A through F)
 - Schools that receive a grade of “D” or “F” (or a grade of “C” in three consecutive years) are subject to consequences, including the use of intervention teams and leadership changes
- Empowerment School principals will form into “networks” of no more than 20 schools
 - Networks will choose “network support leaders” who will work with small teams to help principals learn from each other and solve problems
 - An Integrated Service Center will support the network support teams
- 48 schools participated in a two-year pilot program
 - 80% met their target goals
 - They outperformed citywide averages as well as their own past performance prior to entering the pilot program
- 331 schools (including the original 48 plus 10 charter schools) – approximately 1 in 5 schools in the city – recently volunteered to become Empowerment Schools

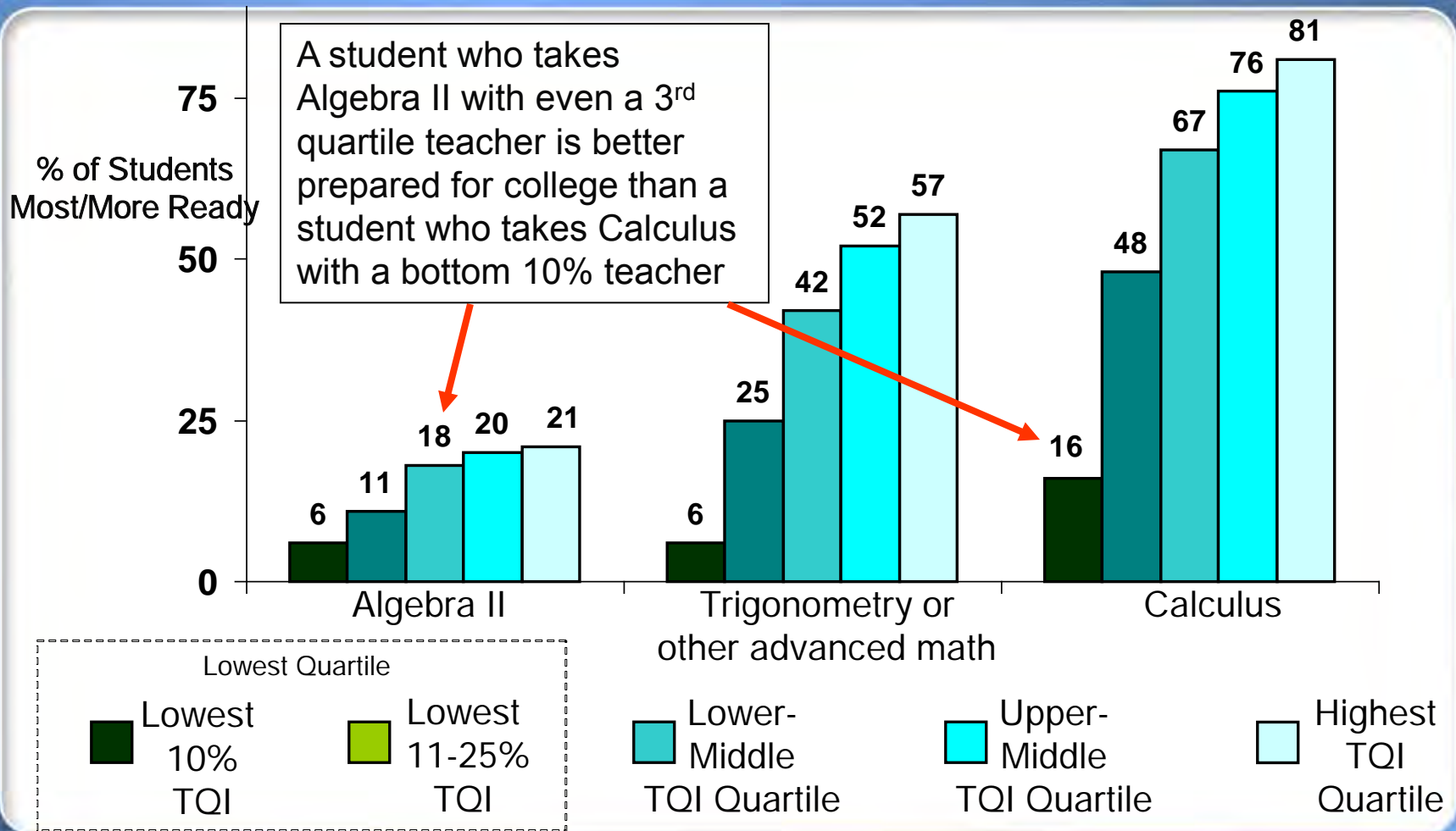
More on Teacher Quality and Distribution



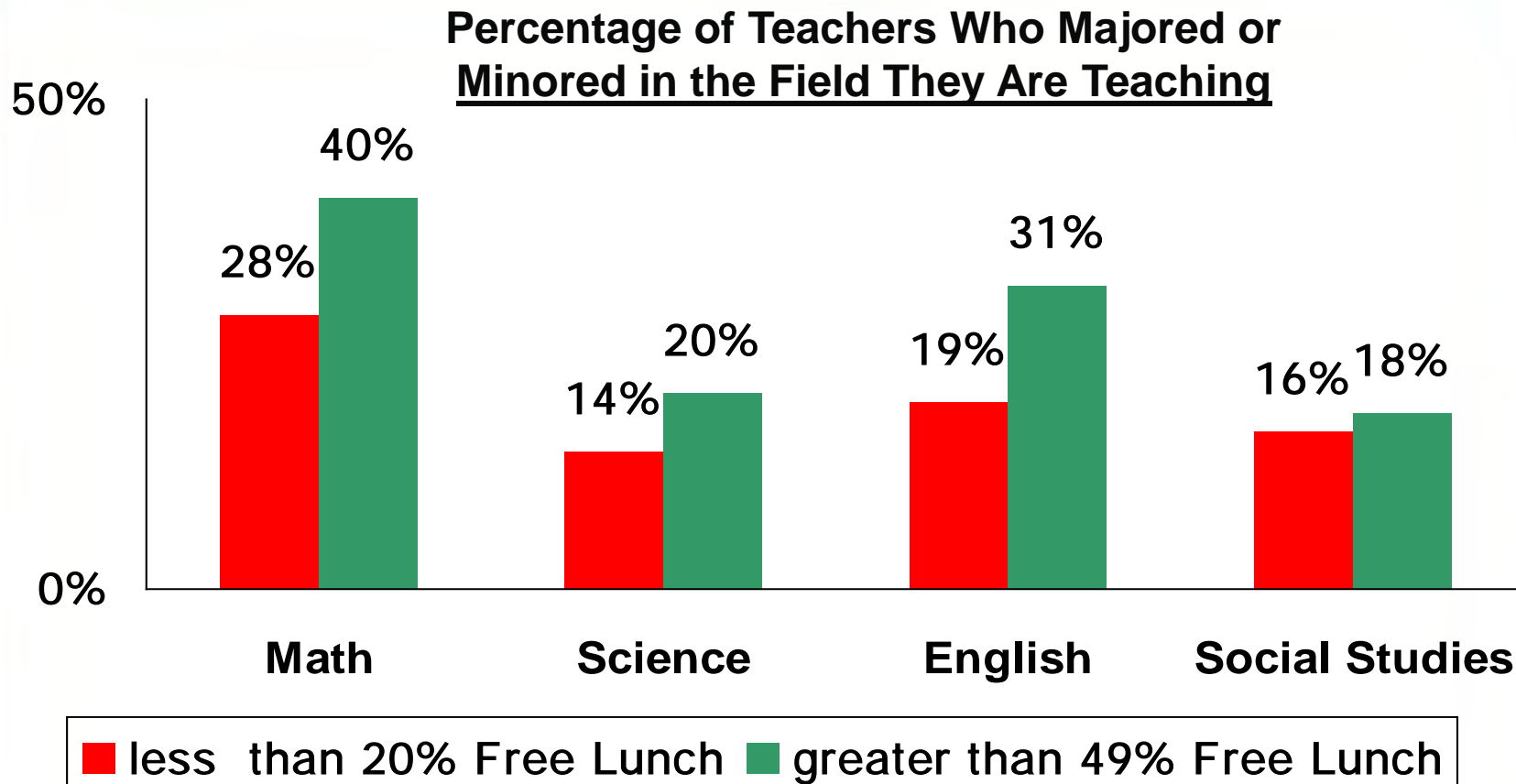
College Readiness Increases With Teacher Quality*



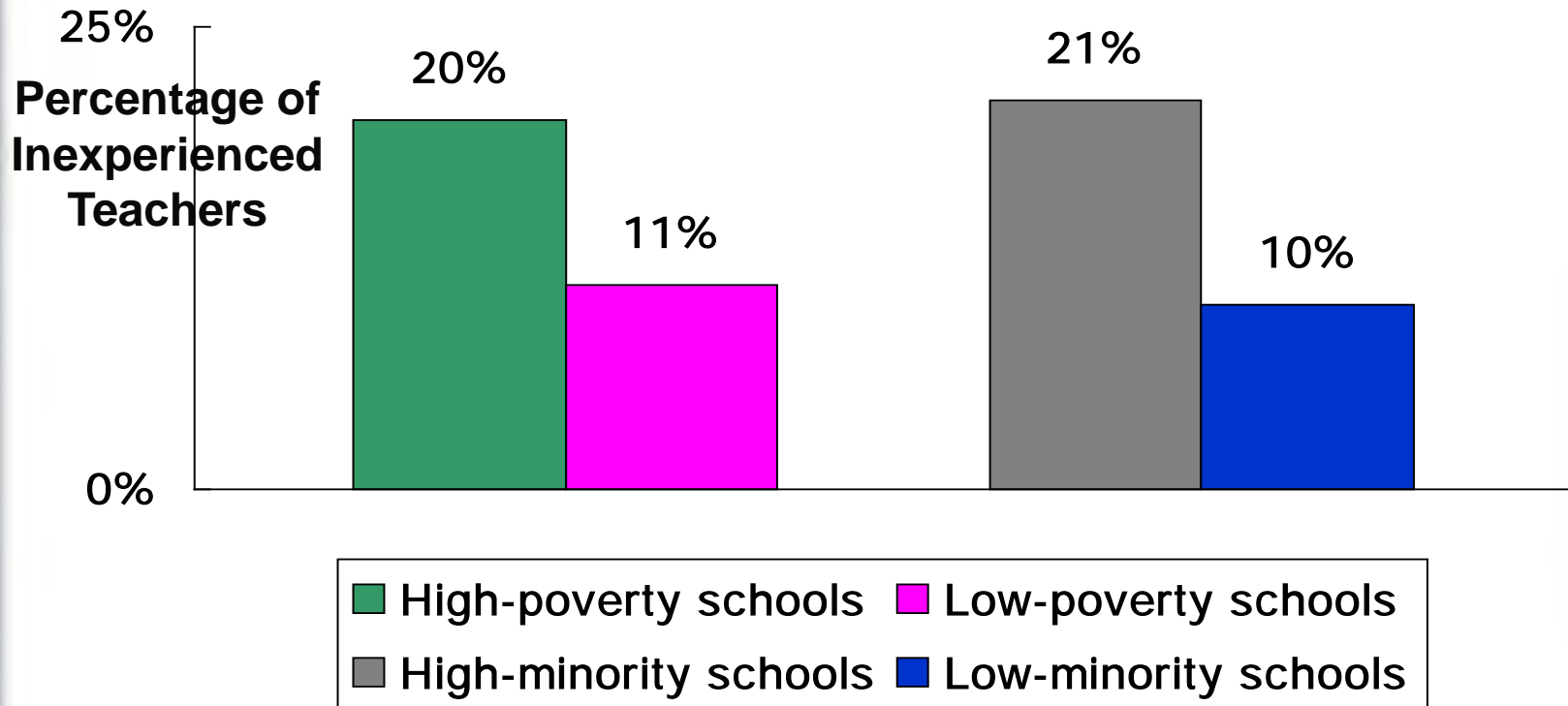
College Math Readiness Is Affected More by Teacher Quality Than by the Level of Courses Taken



Poor High School Students Are More Often Taught by Less-Qualified Teachers



Poor High School Students Are More Often Taught by Inexperienced* Teachers



*Teachers with 3 or fewer years of experience. High and low refer to top and bottom quartiles.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "Monitoring Quality: An Indicators Report," December 2000. Slide courtesy of Ed Trust.

High-Poverty Schools in Illinois and New York Have Far More Teachers Who Did Poorly on State Certification Exams

- In Illinois, children in high-poverty schools were five times more likely to be taught by teachers who failed the state teacher licensure exam at least once, and 23 times more likely to be taught by teachers who failed it at least five times
 - One Chicago teacher failed on 24 of 25 tries – including all 12 of the tests in the subject area in which she taught – yet is still teaching
- In New York, of those teaching minority students, 21% of teachers failed one of the state's certification exams vs. 7% of those who teach white students

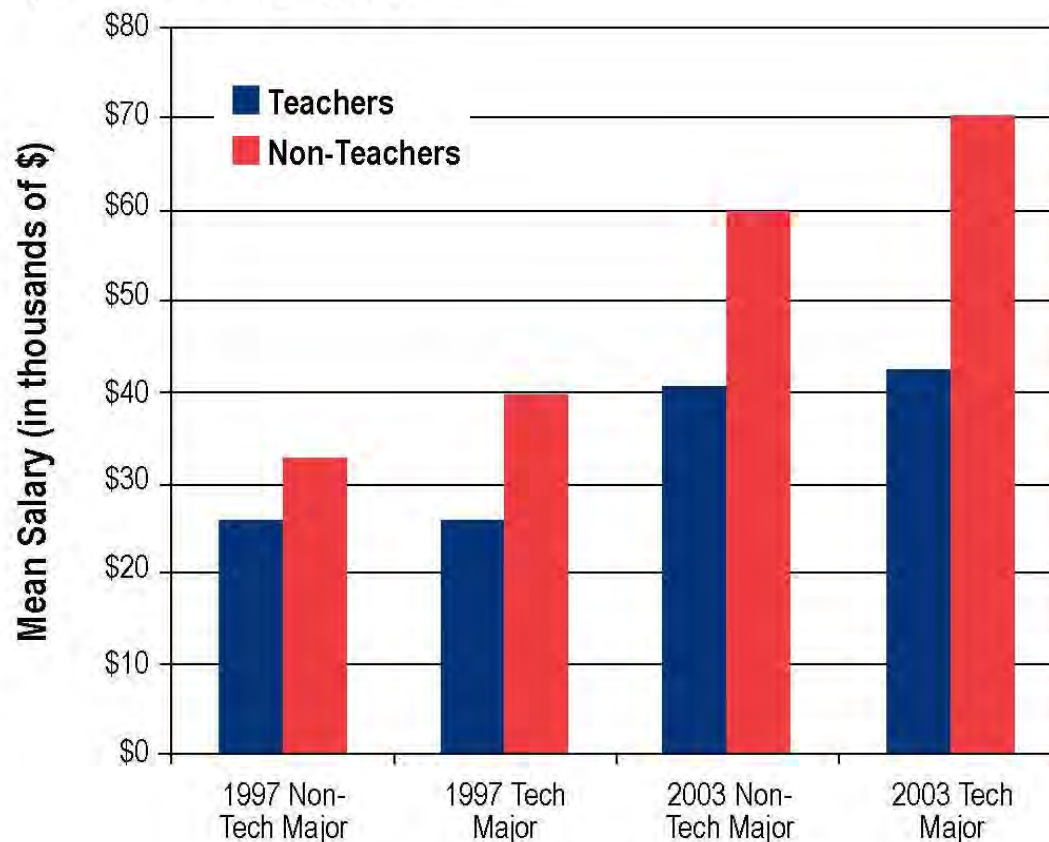
High-Poverty Schools In New York State Have Far More Teachers Who Attended Non-Competitive Colleges

- The 10% of public schools in New York State with the highest-income students have almost no teachers who attended “least-competitive” colleges
- In the 10% of public schools with the lowest-income students, more than 30% of teachers attended “least-competitive” colleges
- Minority students in New York are more than twice as likely as white students to be taught by teachers from the least-competitive colleges

Lockstep Pay for Teachers Is Having Devastating Consequences for Teacher Quality

To Compete With the Private Sector, Schools Need to Pay Math and Science Teachers More – But Aren't

Figure 1—Returns to Major by Occupation



Earnings in 1997 and 2003 by Major-type

Teachers With High Test Scores Used

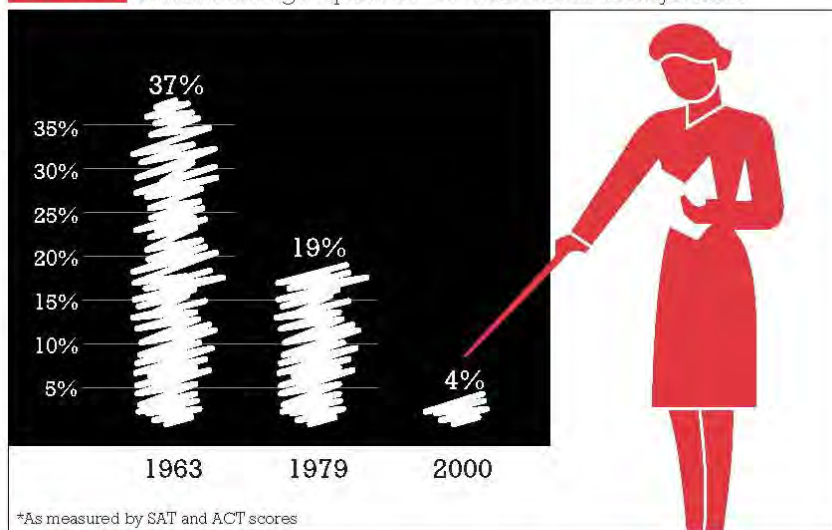
to be Paid More – But No Longer Are

Is It Any Wonder, Therefore, That Numerous Studies Have Shown That Fewer and Fewer Top Students Are Becoming Teachers?

**VITAL
SIGNS**

Teacher Pay Compression

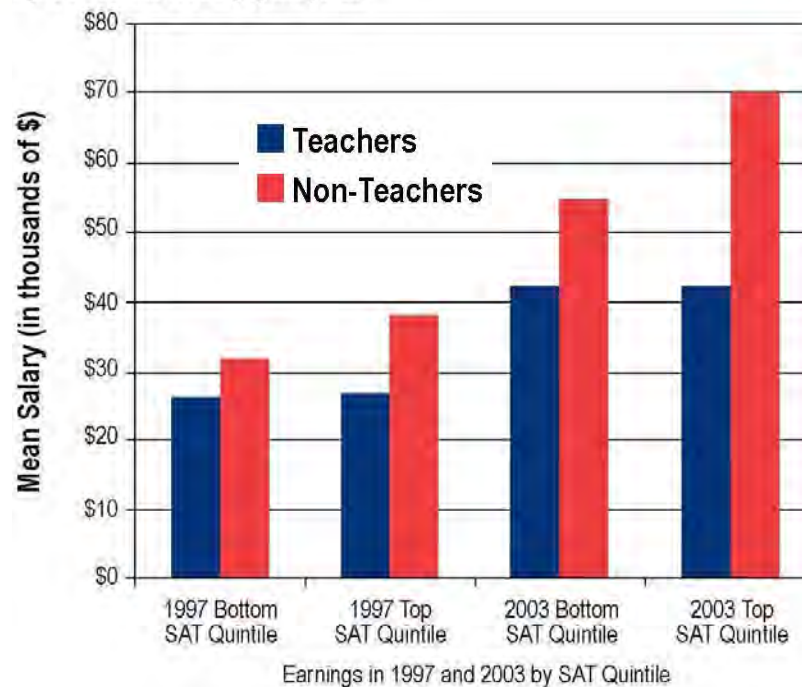
Pay differential between teachers of highest and lowest college aptitude* in Ohio and Pennsylvania



Why It Matters Research suggests that because teachers of high aptitude generally earn no more than teachers of low aptitude, it may be more difficult for teaching to recruit and retain the talent it needs.

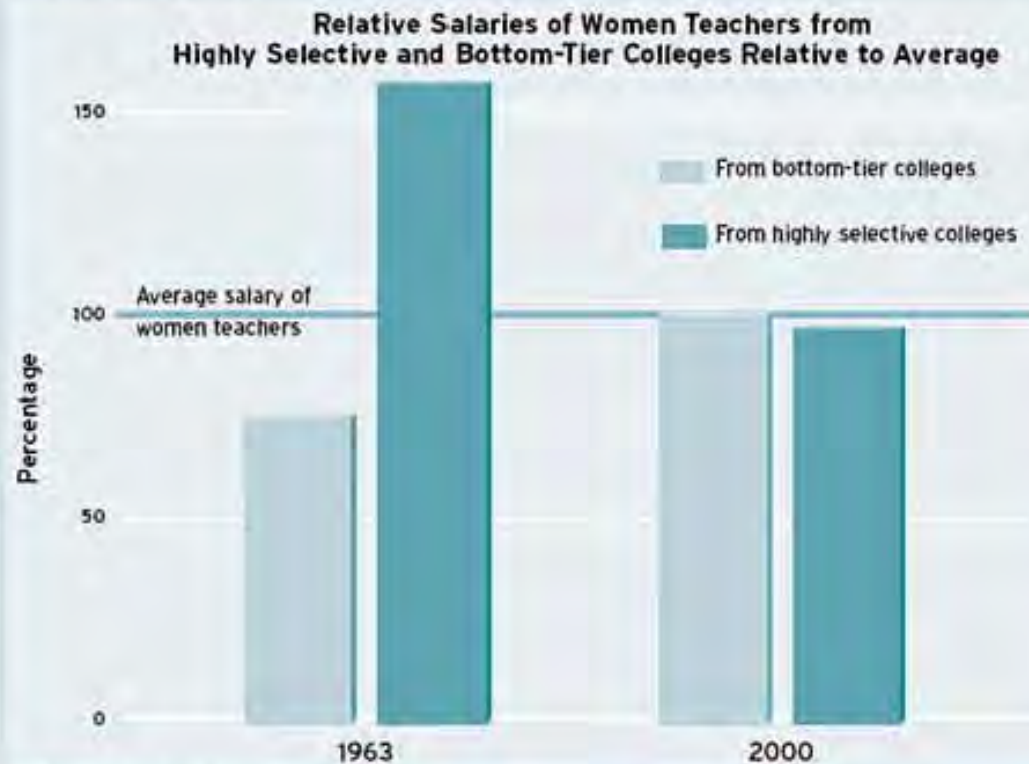
Source: Caroline M. Hoxby and Andrew K. Leigh, "Pulled Away or Pushed Out? Explaining the Decline of Teacher Aptitude in the United States," *American Economic Review* (2004).

Figure 2—Returns to Ability by Occupation



Female Teachers from Highly Selective Colleges Used to be Paid More – But No Longer

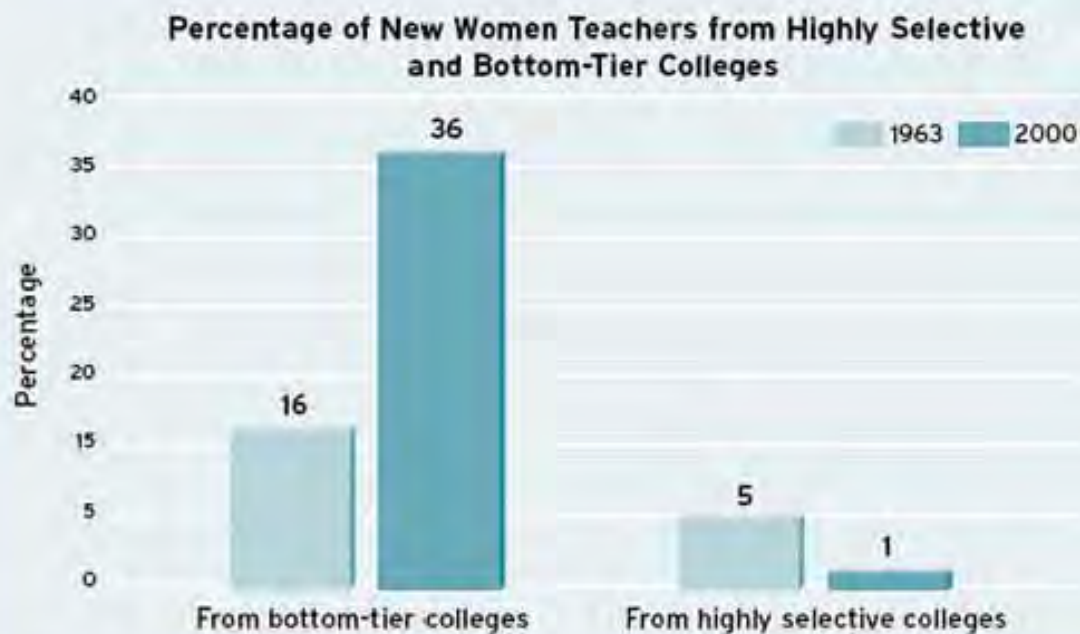
In 1963 the average salary of women teachers from highly selective colleges was much higher than the salary received by women teachers from bottom-tier colleges. By the year 2000 the two groups were earning about the same.



SOURCE: Authors' calculations

It's Not Surprising, Therefore, That Far Fewer Women Who Attend Highly Selective Colleges Are Going Into Teaching

The share of female teachers who attended highly selective colleges fell dramatically from 1963 to 2000. At the same time, the share that came from bottom-tier colleges more than doubled. By 2000, more than one-third of new female teachers had graduated from a bottom-tier college.



SOURCE: Authors' calculations

Under Most Teacher Contracts, It Is Virtually Impossible to Pay Any Teacher More for Exceptional Duties or Performance

For example, to pay a teacher in New York City more for exceptional duties, the following steps are required:

1. An audit is conducted
2. The Division of Human Resources reviews the audit
3. The United Federation of Teachers is consulted
4. The chancellor approves the salary; and
5. Any disagreement is arbitrated

What Can Be Done to Improve Teacher Quality?

Broadly speaking, there are four general ways to improve teacher quality:

1. Attract more talented people into the profession
2. Upgrade the skills and teaching ability of current teachers
3. Better retain effective teachers
4. Remove ineffective teachers

The best schools and districts do all of these things; unfortunately, most don't

Teacher Pay Should Be Tied to Many Factors That Are Not Currently Used

- The best teachers – defined primarily as those who deliver high student achievement – should be paid more
- Teachers willing to teach in the schools with the greatest concentration of the most disadvantaged students should be paid more
- Hard-to-find teachers, such as those in math and science, should be paid more

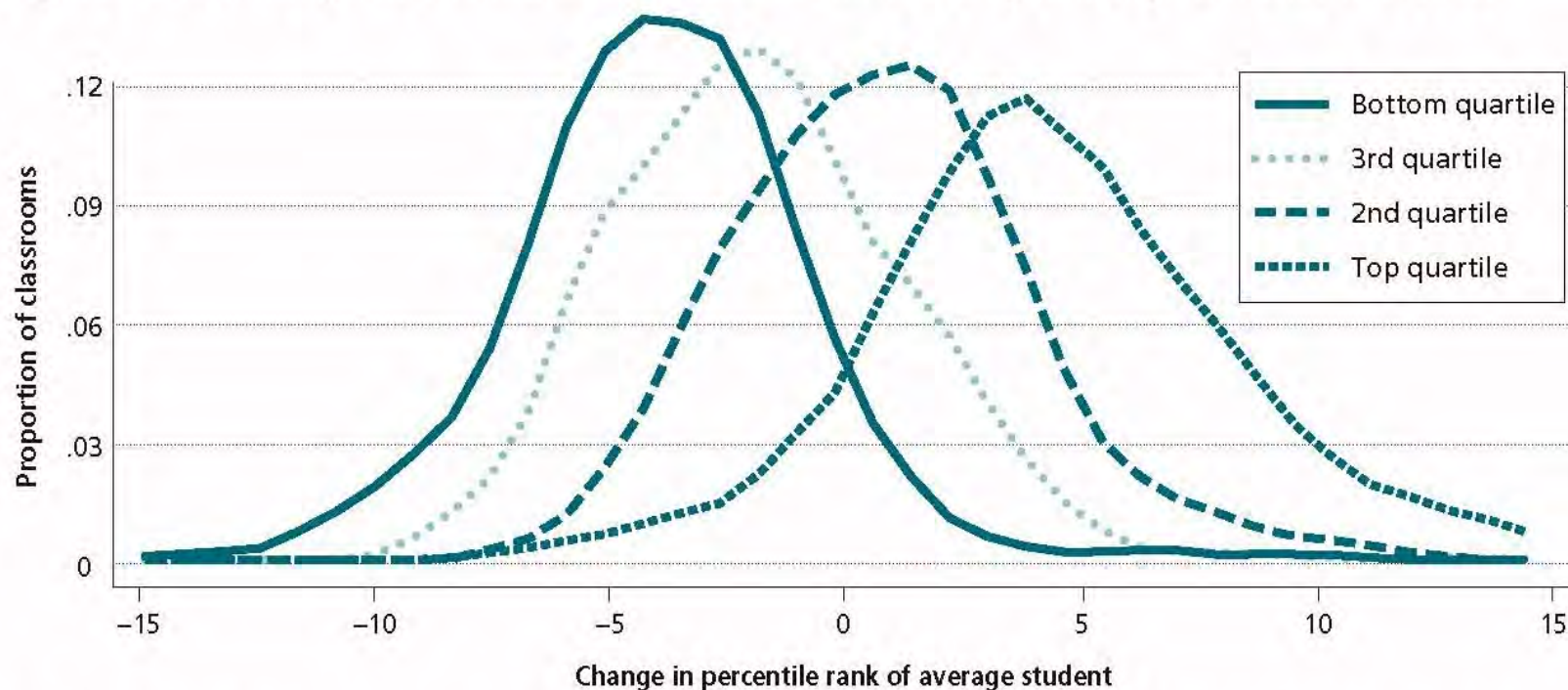
Specific Steps to Improve Teacher Quality

- Support charter schools (like KIPP) that have a proven ability to recruit and retain highly effective teachers
- Hire/train better principals and give them more control over their staff
 - Ensure that the placements of voluntary transfers and excessed teachers are based on the *mutual consent* of the teacher and receiving school
- Improve the recruiting process; hire teachers earlier
- Better support, train and protect novice teachers
- Improve overall teacher training; substantially reform ed schools
- Measure teacher effectiveness to identify the most effective and ineffective teachers
 - Studies show that teacher effectiveness can be identified quickly
- Don't grant tenure to ineffective teachers
 - Today, virtually all teachers who stay on the job get tenure, regardless of effectiveness
- Streamline the process of removing ineffective teachers, while maintaining appropriate protections against arbitrary firings
- Introduce differential pay (e.g., pay more to the most effective teachers, teachers willing to teach in the schools with the greatest concentration of the most disadvantaged students, and hard-to-find teachers, such as those in math, science and special ed)

Set Up “Value-Added” Systems So Effective (and Ineffective) Teachers Can Be Identified

Such Teachers Can Be Identified Relatively Quickly

Figure 2. Teacher Impacts on Math Performance in Third Year By Ranking after First Two Years



Note: Classroom-level impacts on average student performance, controlling for baseline scores, student demographics, and program participation. LAUSD elementary teachers, < 4 years' experience.

Streamline Removal of Ineffective Teachers

In Many Cities, It Is Virtually Impossible to Remove Even the Most Ineffective Teacher

- Out of 95,500 tenured teachers in Illinois, an average of only *two* (0.002%) are fired each year for poor performance
 - In the past 18 years, 94% of school districts have never *attempted* to fire a tenured teacher
- In another study of five cities' school systems, of 74,600 teachers, fewer than *four* (0.005%) per year were fired for poor performance
- In another study (The Widget Effect, <http://widgeteffect.org>) of 12 districts in four states:
 - 81% of administrators and 58% of teachers said there was a tenured teacher in their school who was performing poorly, and 43% of teachers said there was a tenured teacher who should be dismissed for poor performance, yet...
 - Fewer than 1% of teachers were rated unsatisfactory
 - At least half of the districts had not dismissed a single non-probationary teacher for poor performance in the previous five years
 - 41% of administrators reported that they had never denied tenure to a teacher or “non-renewed” a probationary teacher

Reform Schools of Education

- Three-quarters of the country's 1,206 university-level schools of education don't have the capacity to produce excellent teachers
- More than half of teachers are educated in programs with the lowest admission standards (often accepting 100% of applicants) and with "the least accomplished professors"
- When school principals were asked to rate the skills and preparedness of new teachers, only 40% thought education schools were doing even a moderately good job
- Teacher U in New York City, a collaboration among KIPP, Achievement First and Uncommon Schools is an exciting model
- As with ed schools today, a century ago many medical schools were schools of quackery
 - But they were reformed because people were *dying* in the care of poorly trained doctors
 - People die (or end up in jail, on welfare, or lead ruined lives) when poorly trained teachers fail to educate, so there needs to be a similar hue and cry to reform or shut down the many ed schools of quackery

Other Key Steps

- Until national standards are adopted, states need to set high standards
- End social promotion
- Address the hidden teacher spending gap

The Importance of High Standards

- One of the biggest flaws of No Child Left Behind is that it lets states set their own bar for proficiency/passing
- To their everlasting shame, the vast majority of states engaged in a race to the bottom so politicians and educators could tell the public that the vast majority of students were doing well – when they weren't
- One of the few exceptions was Massachusetts, which set high, internationally benchmarked standards, developed rigorous tests (MCAS) and publicizes each school's results.
- As a result, Massachusetts' students are doing exceptionally well – if it were a country, it would be among the top 5 in the world
- At about the same time, neighboring Connecticut, which had similar demographics and performance, adopted loosey-goosey watered-down standards and has now fallen far behind Massachusetts

Ending Social Promotion Is A Powerful Accountability Mechanism

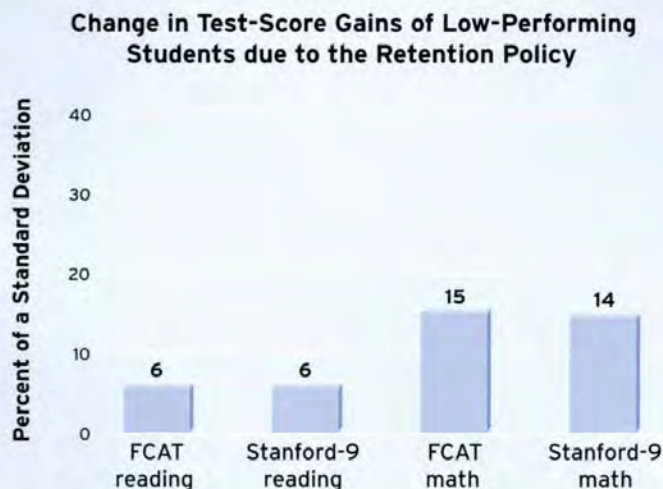
- No longer can schools get rid of the most difficult-to-educate children by promoting them and, eventually, passing them along to other schools (or until they drop out)
- Instead, the messages to the system are clear:
 1. “You must educate *every* child”; and
 2. “If you fail to educate *any* child, then you have to try again”
- It helps combat the reprehensible yet widespread practice of assigning least effective teachers to the most difficult students
- “In the immortal words of Roberto Duran, we are saying, ‘*No mas!*’ We will educate students and then promote them, not the reverse”
-- Joel Klein, Chancellor, NYC Department of Education

Florida Students Benefited When the State Ended Social Promotion

Students Potentially Affected By the Retention Policy Did Better...

A Productive Policy (Figure 1)

Low-scoring 3rd graders subjected to Florida's new retention policy in 2003 made larger test-score gains the following year than did comparable students not subjected to the policy who entered 3rd grade in 2002.



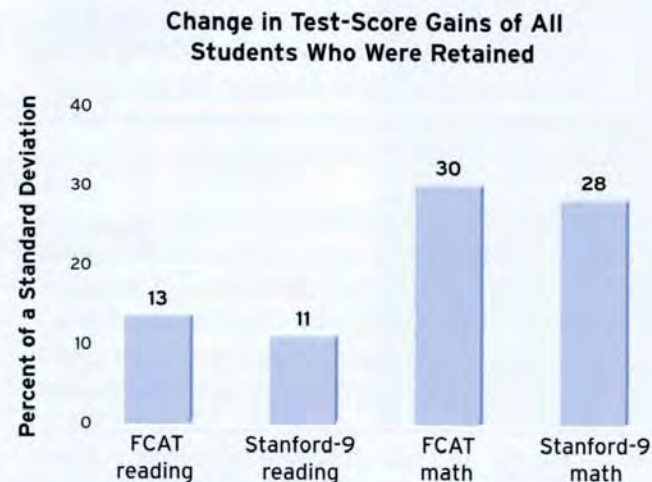
Note: All effects are statistically significant at the 0.001 level and control for differences in race, free or reduced-price lunch status, Limited English Proficiency status, and prior test scores.

SOURCE: Authors' calculations from Florida Department of Education data

...As Did Students Retained

Retention Works (Figure 2)

Students retained in 2003 as a result of the new policy made substantially more progress in reading and, especially, in math than comparable students who were not retained.



Note: All effects are statistically significant at the 0.001 level and are adjusted for differences in race, free or reduced-price lunch status, Limited English Proficiency status, and prior test scores.

SOURCE: Authors' calculations from Florida Department of Education data

The Hidden Teacher Spending Gap

- Funding gaps *between* school districts—*inter*-district funding discrepancies—have been the subject of much debate and numerous lawsuits. Less attention, however, has been paid to the funding gaps separating schools *within* the same school district
- Virtually all districts nationwide, when budgeting for each school in the district, apply the average teacher cost for the district to *all* teachers at a school, even if some schools – typically those serving primarily low-income, minority students – have a higher percentage of low-paid teachers (e.g. those with less experience and fewer credentials)
 - “In virtually every school district, schools are given teacher allocations, not budget allocations. That is, a school is told it can hire 40 teachers, not that it has \$2 million dollars for teacher salaries.”
- The hidden effect of this budgeting is that significantly less is actually spent on schools with a high concentration of low-income, minority students than is reported

Impact of the Hidden Teacher Spending Gap

Low-Income and Minority Students Were Shortchanged in New York, Though Recent Reforms Have Addressed This

- Schools in New York State's high-poverty districts receive \$2,040 less per pupil than schools in its low poverty districts
 - \$51,000 less for a classroom of 25
 - \$816,000 less for a school of 400
- The state's high-minority districts receive \$1,797 less per pupil than schools in its low-minority districts
 - \$44,925 less for a classroom of 25
 - \$718,800 less for a school of 400

Impact of the Hidden Teacher Spending Gap

Case Study: Low-Income and Minority Students are Shortchanged in California

- Of the 50 largest school districts in California, 42 of them (84%) spend less on teachers in schools that are in the top quartile of low-income and minority students (compared to schools in the bottom quartile)
 - At schools in the top quartile of poverty, the average salary gap is \$2,576/teacher/year or \$87,584/year for a typical school with 34 teachers
 - At high minority schools, the gap is even larger: \$3,014/teacher/year or \$102,476/year for a typical school
- The gaps are even larger in the 10 largest school districts in California, which account for 22% of all public school students in the state
 - At high-poverty schools, the average salary gap \$3,388/teacher/year
 - At high minority schools, the gap is the largest: \$4,119/teacher/year
- Conclusion: “For a student in high schools serving mostly Latino and African-American students, the estimated average teacher salary is \$4,119 less per teacher than in a high school serving the fewest minority students. Assuming this student has six teachers a day, he is taught by teachers paid \$24,714 less per year than his counterparts. Over the course of a four-year high school career, \$98,856 less is spent on his teachers as compared to the teachers teaching in schools serving the fewest concentrations of Latino and African-American students. If this student attended the schools serving the highest numbers of Latino and African-American students from the time of kindergarten through high school, California will have spent a total of \$172,626 less on all of his teachers (K-12) than on the K-12 teachers in schools with the fewest Latino and African-American students.”

One Solution to the Hidden Teacher Spending Gap Is Weighted Student Funding

- A proposal in which:
 - Funding from all levels follows every student to whatever public school he or she attends
 - The amount varies according to the student's needs
 - Funding arrives at schools as real dollars that can be spent flexibly, with accountability gauged by results rather than inputs, programs, or activities
- Proposed by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, it is winning bipartisan support for educational leaders such as former Secretary of Education Rod Paige, former San Francisco superintendent Arlene Ackerman and Center for American Progress President John Podesta
- Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein in New York City and Governor Spitzer in New York State have proposed “Fair Student Funding”
- For more information, see www.edexcellence.net/fundthechild

Seven Big Myths

To move forward, we must first understand the reasons – and associated “solutions” – that do *not* explain the underperformance of low-income minority children:

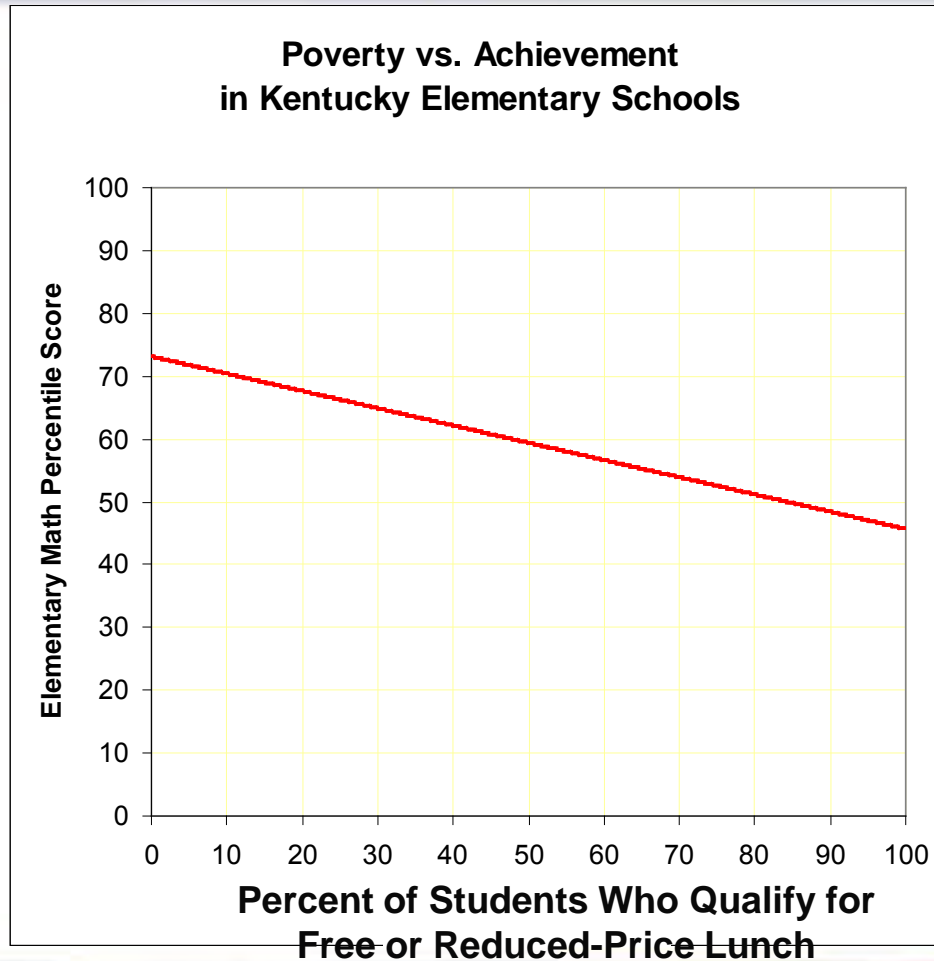
1. They don't want to and/or can't learn
2. Students are overworked
3. Students are worse off today than in the past
4. We're not spending enough
5. We need to reduce class size
6. Teachers are underpaid
7. No Child Left Behind is costly and unnecessary

Myth #1: Low-Income Minority Students Don't Want To and/or Can't Learn

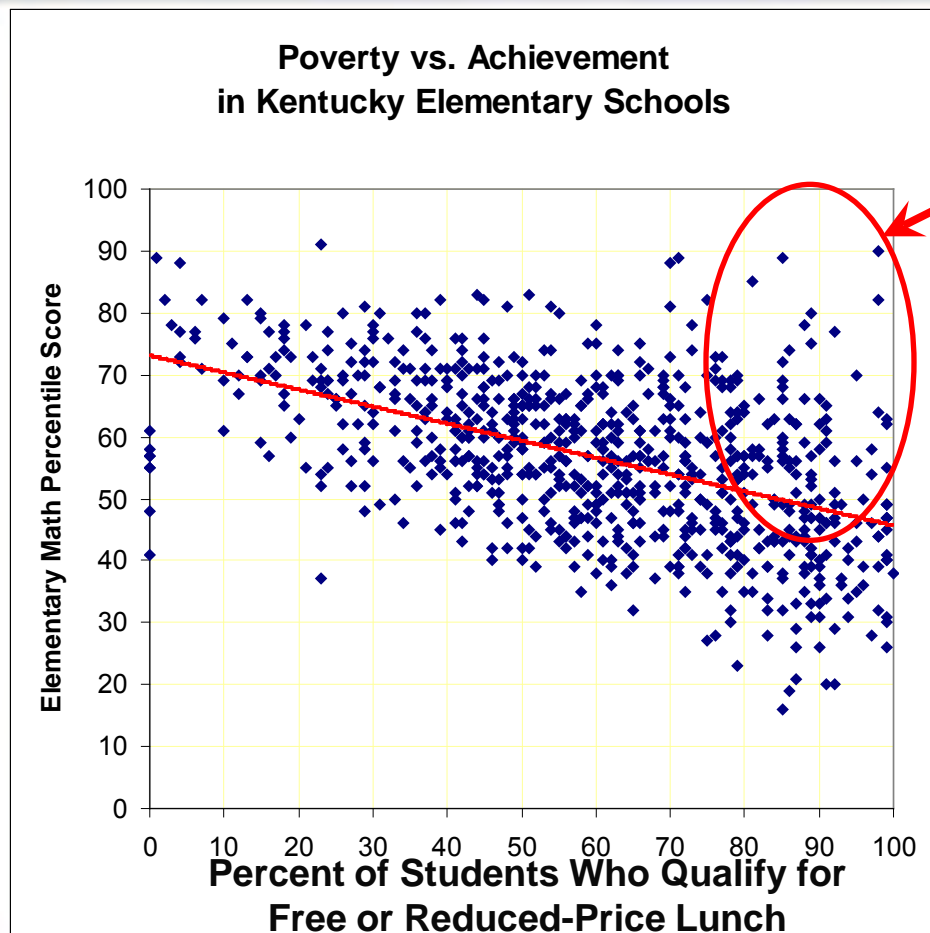
Fact: Many schools are proving that this is nonsense

- Especially the “no excuses” charter schools like KIPP

Not Surprisingly, As Student Income Levels Decline, So Do Test Scores

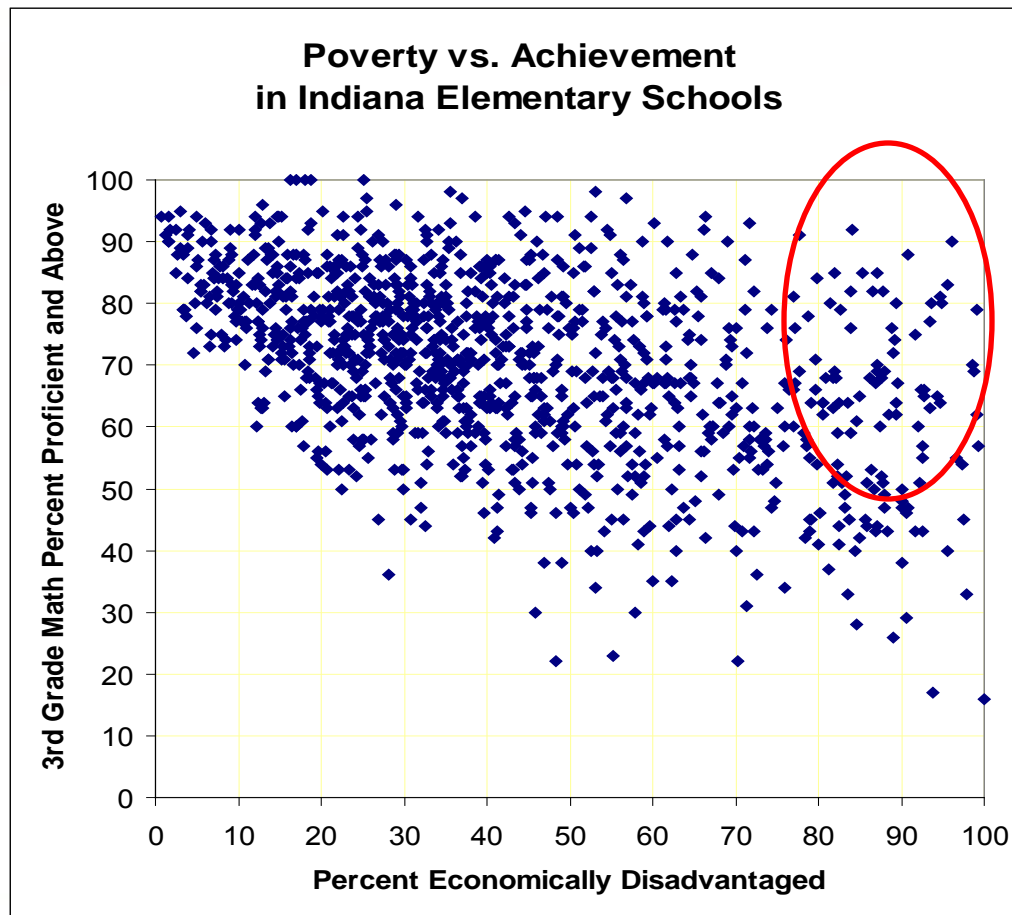


Yet There Is Enormous Variability Among Schools



**Some schools
are delivering
high student
performance in
spite of low
income levels**

The Same is True in Indiana



Myth #2: Students Are Overworked

Facts:

- Filled with vivid anecdotes, recent books such as *The Overachievers: The Secret Lives of Driven Kids* and *The Case Against Homework: How Homework is Hurting Our Children and What We Can Do About It*, have led to the widespread misperception that American children are being overworked
- However, the facts show that, with the exception of a small number of schools and parents, not enough is being demanded of students
- 71% of U.S. students told the Public Agenda Foundation in 2006 that they do the bare minimum to get by and only two in 10 students say they have too much homework
- A 1995 study showed that American students spend on average just 1.7 hours a night on homework, compared with 2.7 hours for students in other nations
 - Not coincidentally, however, U.S. 12th graders who took advanced math and science reported having homework more often than their international peers
- Another study by Brookings (2003) found that typical American students spent an hour a day on homework – a pattern unchanged in the past quarter-century
- Only 5% of American schoolchildren have more than two hours of homework per night
- Almost half of high school students acknowledge that they should do homework, but don't – *The Homework Myth*, Martin Davis, NY Post, 8/27/06
- “UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute regularly asks about 400,000 college freshmen how much homework they did in high school. About two-thirds say only an hour a night or less. Remember, these are the homework habits of students who went on to college.” – *Too Few Overachievers*, Jay Mathews, Washington Post, 8/21/06
- “The University of Michigan Institute for Social Research collects time diaries from American teenagers. These documents make clear our youth are not taking long walks in the woods or reading Proust. Instead, 15- to 17-year-olds on average between 2002 and 2003 devoted about 3 1/2 hours a day to television and other "passive leisure" or playing on the computer. (Their average time spent in non-school reading was exactly seven minutes a day. Studying took 42 minutes a day.)” –Mathews

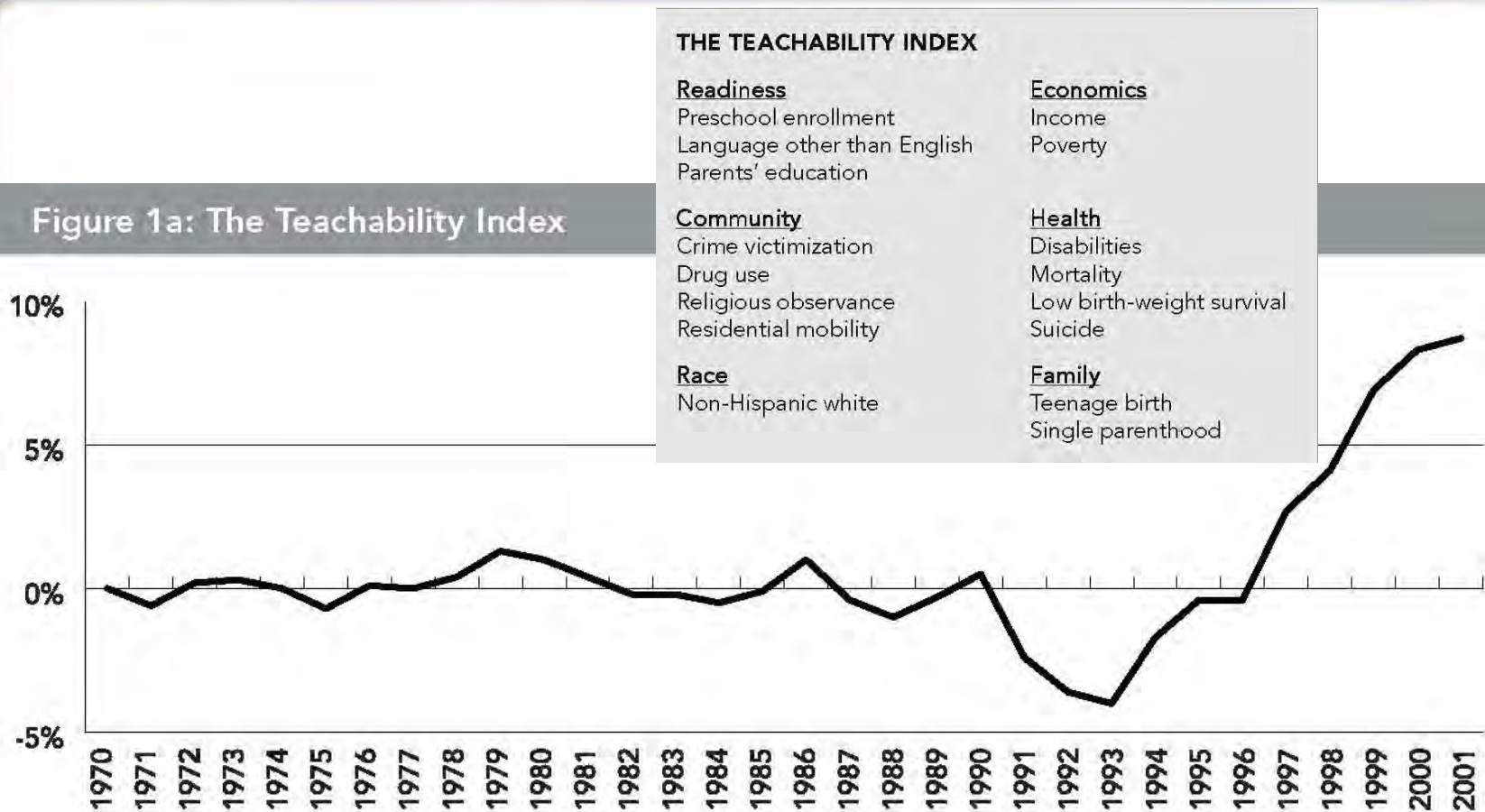
Myth #3: Students Are Worse Off Today Than in the Past (And Therefore Schools Aren't to Blame for their Failure)

Fact:

- Students are *better* off today

According to a Study That Measured 16 Factors, Students Today Are the Most “Teachable” Ever Yet Their Performance Has Scarcely Budgeted

Figure 1a: The Teachability Index



Myth #4: We're Not Spending Enough

If We Just Spent More, Student Achievement Would Improve

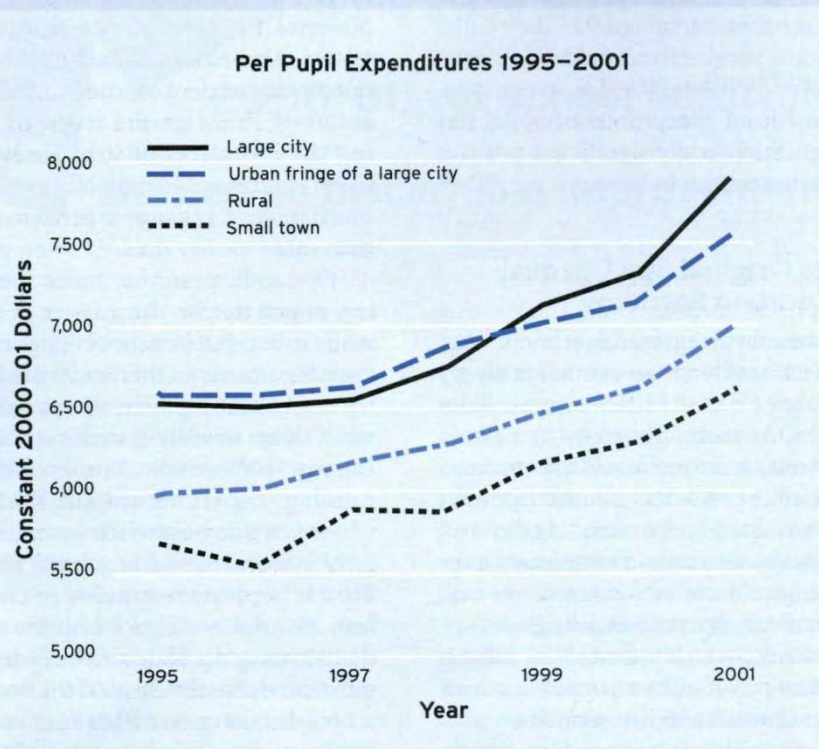
Facts:

- Overall spending, even adjusted for inflation, has risen steadily...and large city schools are spending the most per pupil
- In the absence of genuine reform, simply increasing spending has proven to be a waste of money
- The key is to marry reform with additional resources

The Widespread Failure of Schools in Large Cities is Not Due to Less Spending

Where the Most Bucks Stop (Figure 1)

Large urban school districts now spend more per pupil than districts in other geographic locations.



SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, "The Condition of Education"

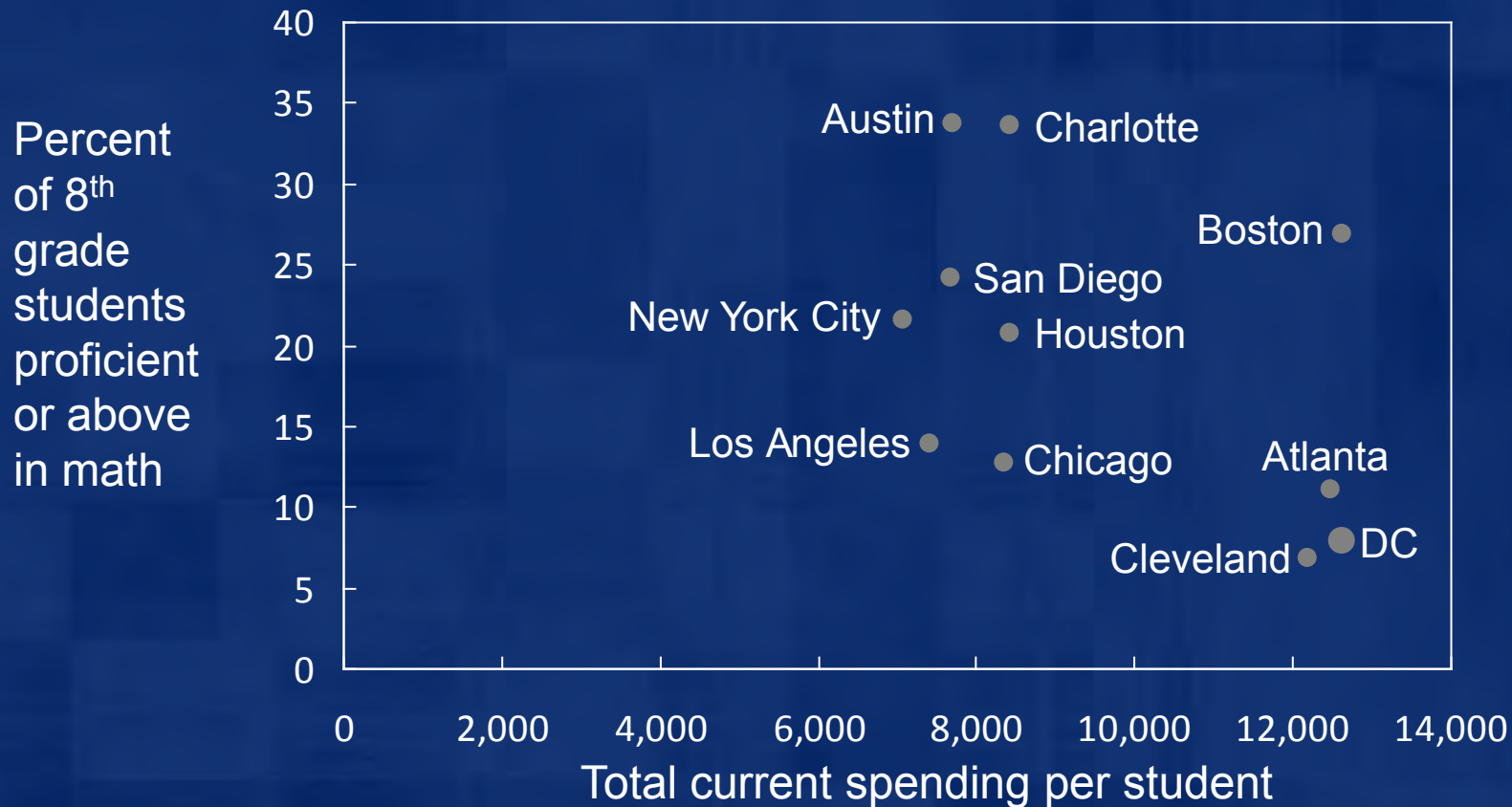
Cities with some of the very worst schools such as Newark, Camden, Washington DC and Hartford spend among the *most* per pupil of any U.S. cities

U.S. \$8,019

1)	Newark, NJ	\$17,652
2)	Trenton, NJ	\$15,438
3)	Jersey City, NJ	\$14,820
4)	Paterson, NJ	\$14,514
5)	Camden, NJ	\$14,499
6)	Passaic, NJ	\$14,380
7)	East Orange, NJ	\$14,047
8)	Yonkers, NY	\$13,892
9)	New Rochelle, NY	\$13,803
10)	Boston, MA	\$13,730
11)	Arlington Heights, IL	\$13,643
12)	Union City, NJ	\$13,520
13)	Arlington, VA	\$13,334
14)	Washington, DC	\$13,328
15)	Hartford, CT	\$13,292

There is No Correlation Between Higher Spending and Better Outcomes Among Cities

2007 urban district spending per student vs. proficiency rates



If Spending More Money Leads to Better Student Outcomes, Then Why Do Private School Children Do Just As Well, Despite Private Schools Only Spending Roughly Half What Public Schools Do?

- “The report from the Education Department...concluded, after compensating for socioeconomic differences and other factors, that public-school students score slightly better on tests in fourth grade, while private-school students score slightly better in eighth grade.”
- “[Yet,] According to federal surveys, the typical private school’s tuition is only about half what a public school spends per pupil... General Motors would not celebrate the news that its \$40,000 Cadillac performed almost as well as a \$20,000 Honda.”

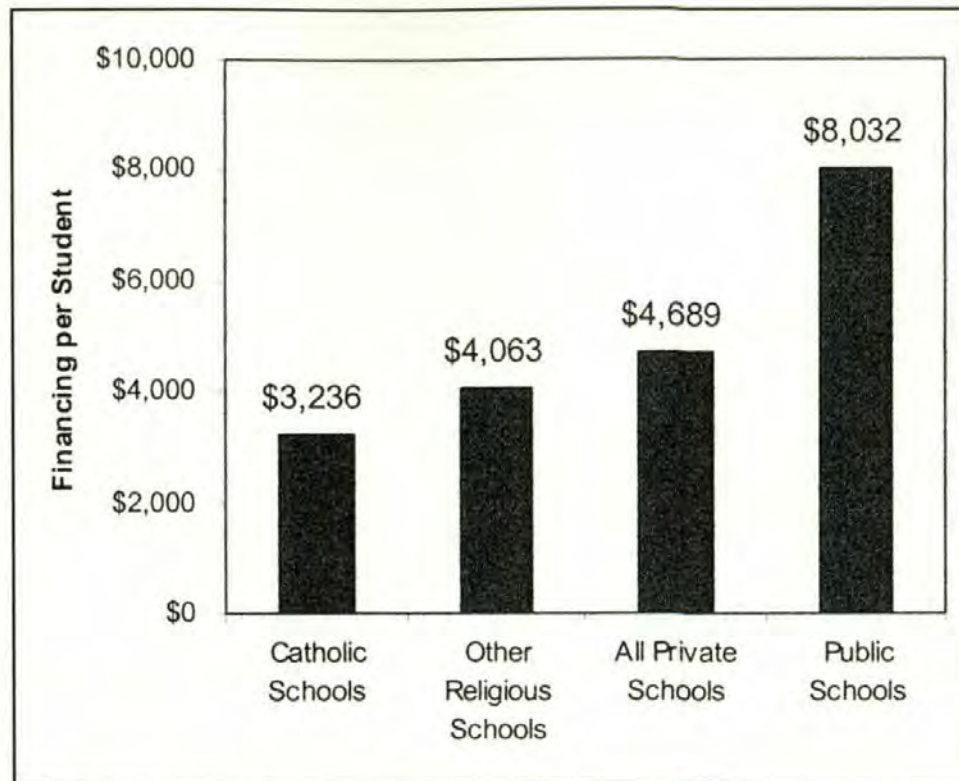


Figure 14.1. Private Schools Don't Have More Money

Source: *Digest of Education Statistics 2002*, U.S. Department of Education, Tables 61 and 166.

Spending More Money – Even A Lot More Money – Does Not Lead to Improved Student Achievement *Unless* It is Accompanied by Major Reforms

Kansas City Case Study

- "Sometimes we even crank up the intensity with which we write these checks, but because the system is built in a way that puts other needs ahead of children, our students don't benefit. In Kansas City, Missouri, where tumultuous conditions wore out 20 school superintendents in 30 years, a court ordered that an extra \$2 billion be spent over a dozen years [\$167 million/year] (between the mid-1980s and late 1990s) as a supplement to the district's \$125 million per year operating budget to improve education for minority students. School officials used the unprecedented cash infusion to boost teacher salaries and build 15 new schools [both among Kozol's big recommendations]. They included such pricey luxuries like an Olympic-size swimming pool with an underwater viewing room, television and animation studios, a robotics lab, a 25-acre wildlife sanctuary, a zoo and a model United Nations chamber with simultaneous translation capability. Unfortunately, after a dozen years very little had really changed and the district still failed to meet any of the state's performance standards. Structure matters in education, particularly when school systems are configured in ways that assure that the needs of adults are addressed first and foremost." – Cheating Our Kids
- "Fifteen years and \$2 billion later, the schools were no more racially integrated than in 1985, and despite a student-teacher ratio of thirteen to one (among the lowest in the nation), test scores were just as dismal. A local attorney who had served as a court-appointed monitor for the program summed it all up: 'The only things we have to show for \$2 billion in new educational spending in Kansas City are beautiful buildings, highly paid, grossly inadequate teachers and a huge administrative staff that I estimate has cost us \$43 million.' ...Even Professor Gary Orfield of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, one of the country's staunchest proponents of court-ordered desegregation remedies, admits that 'Kansas City is a very, very sad story. They really can't show much of anything, though they spent \$2 billion.'" – No Excuses

More Money – Accompanied by Major Reforms – Made a Difference for Two Schools in Austin

“As part of a settlement in a desegregation case in the late 1980s, 16 high-minority, high-poverty elementary schools in Austin, Texas were given a very substantial increase of \$300,000 a year for five years on top of their regular budgets. Did it promote greater student learning? Five years later, it turned out, no improvement at all was visible in 14 of the sixteen schools.

These 14 schools had spent the extra money reducing class size, but the teachers were simply doing what they had always done and their students were learning no more. The other two, though, did make impressive gains, because they had innovative and dynamic principals who devoted great effort to involving parents, to reshaping the curriculum, and to training the teachers to handle their classes differently. The extra money helped make these changes possible. But more money was no magic bullet – which the record of 14 made clear.”

Myth #5: Reducing Class Sizes Is an Effective Way to Boost Student Achievement

Facts:

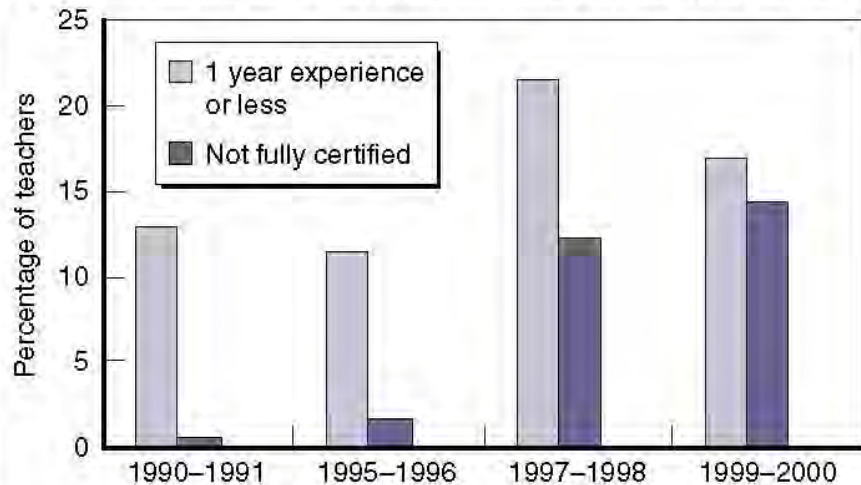
- Teacher quality is far more important than class size...and reduced class size initiatives often lead to *lower* teacher quality
 - Would you rather have your child in a class of 25 students led by an excellent teacher or a class of 18 students with an ineffective teacher?
- Reducing class sizes is extremely expensive, yet there is little evidence that it results in gains in student achievement
- Teachers support it because it because smaller classes are easier to manage and they can spend more time with individual students
 - This is no doubt correct, all other things being equal...
 - But all other things are *not* equal; large-scale initiatives to reduce class sizes lead to rapid hiring of many new teachers, thereby diluting average teacher quality
- Because it requires hiring many more teachers, this “reform” is strongly favored by the teachers’ unions

Two Studies: One Instructive and the Other Not

- Proponents of smaller class size cite the STAR program in Tennessee in the 1980s, in which students in smaller classes did better, but the findings are unreliable
 - Unclear whether students were randomly assigned to small classes
 - Unclear if results could be replicated on a large scale
- In 1996, California appropriated \$4 billion (\$1 billion/year) to reduce elementary school class sizes by 1/3 to a max of 20 students in grades K-3
 - From 1996-96 to 1999-2000, average class size fell from 29 to 19
 - 46% more teachers were hired in only three years (62,226 to 91,112); previously, only 4,000 K-3 teachers were hired each year

California's Class Size Reduction Failed Due to Far More Uncertified and Inexperienced Teachers

Figure 1—Teacher Experience and Certification, Grades K–5, 1990–2000



In 1996, California passed the largest class size reduction law in the nation, which led to the hiring of many new teachers with little experience or lacking full certification.

“I’d rather have one good teacher than two crummy teachers, any day” – Irwin Kurz, principal of a very successful New York public school with low-income students and large classes

“The small-class mandate in California forced the hiring of many teachers who were apparently ill-qualified, especially in schools where the need for strong instruction is greatest. The sudden jump in the demand for teachers allowed those with better credentials – whether new or experienced – to move to schools in safer, more pleasant neighborhoods. Reading scores rose only slightly and math scores actually declined in the most heavily black schools in the state...

The lack of academic progress should have been expected. The smaller the average class, the more teachers a school needs, and the harder it may be to maintain teacher quality...

In their desperate search for additional staff, California’s high-minority, low-income schools evidently had no choice but to hire the weakest teachers in the pool. The disappointing results would seem the logical consequence.”
– No Excuses

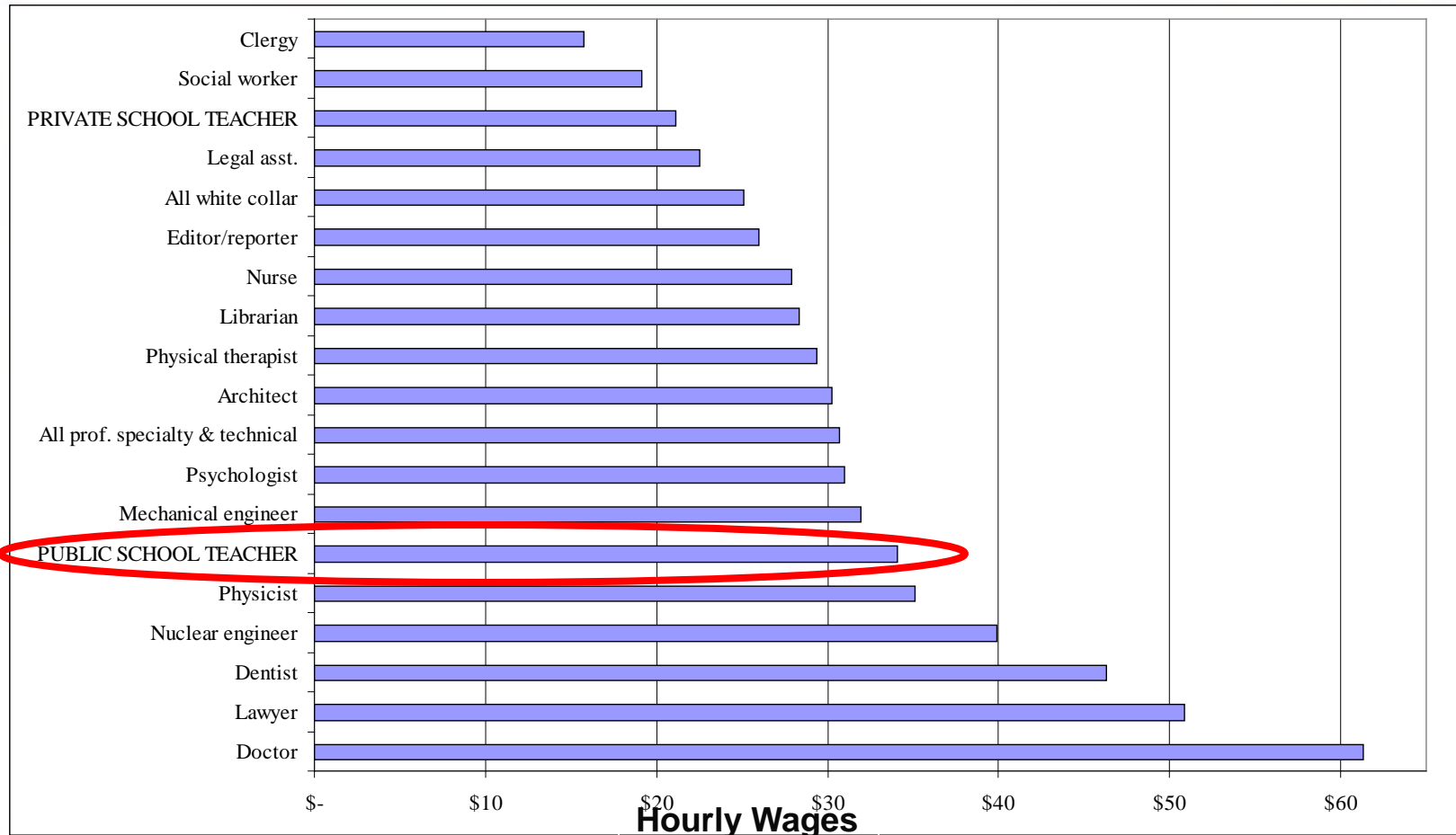
Myth #6: Teachers Are Underpaid

Facts:

- Some teachers are indeed underpaid, but overall teachers are quite well paid
 - And have excellent benefits
- The problem is *how* teachers are paid
- Certain teachers should be paid more, but only those who deliver high student achievement, are willing to teach in the schools with the greatest concentration of the most disadvantaged students, and teach subjects in which there is a teacher shortage such as math and science

Overall, Teachers are Not Underpaid

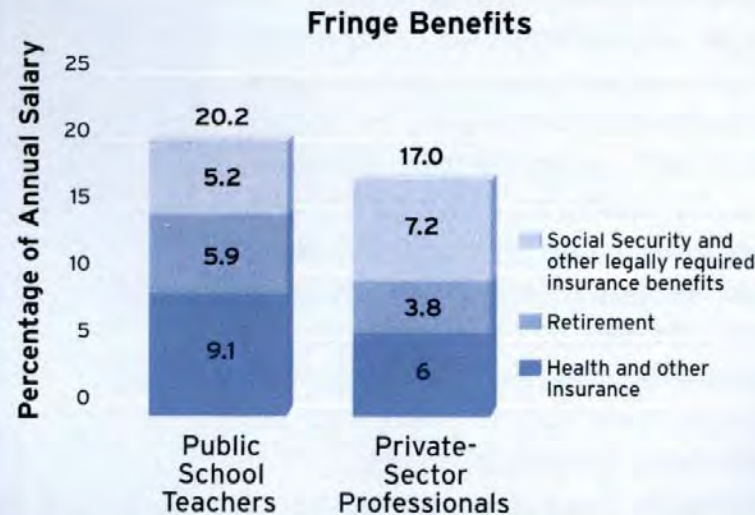
They Earn 61% Per Hour Than Private School Teachers and Significantly More Than Other White-Collar Workers, Even Specialty/Technical Ones



Teachers Also Receive Excellent Benefits And Have Extraordinary Job Security

Fringe Benefits of Teaching (Figure 3)

The total fringe benefits paid on behalf of public school teachers are higher than those for private-sector workers.



Note: Private-sector workers include all management, professional, and related personnel. "Other legally required insurance" includes Medicare, state and federal unemployment insurance, and workers compensation. "Other insurance" includes life insurance and short- and long-term disability.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Employer Costs for Employee Benefits—June 2004"

Myth #7: No Child Left Behind is Costly and Unnecessary

Facts:

- NCLB requires much-needed performance measurement
- Creates much-needed accountability, which is leading to...
- Much-needed improved performance
- And the cost is small relative to other reform measures

What Is No Child Left Behind?

- The central aim of NCLB is to make every public-school student proficient in reading and math by the year 2014. It has three core principles:
 1. “A core principle of NCLB is that every student must reach the desired level of performance: no group of students—minority, disabled, poor, limited English proficient, mobile—should be left behind.
 2. Another core principle of NCLB is that every child is capable of attaining proficiency, defined in an appropriate way. Thus, while progress is important, NCLB deliberately emphasizes reaching proficiency, not making gains each year, regardless of past performance. NCLB provides no special recognition to students or schools that exceed the minimum. This is not a good thing or a bad thing, but it clearly demonstrates that the focus of NCLB is on bringing low-achieving students to a sound level of academic achievement.
 3. A third principle of NCLB is that it works through the states, long the workhorses of the country’s education system. States and localities provide more than 90 percent of funding for schools, so it makes sense for them to exercise control. Furthermore, with fewer schools to watch, states are in a much better position than the federal government to monitor multiple targets. Thus, even though NCLB monitors only proficiency, it encourages states, in their own accountability systems, to reward schools that make gains along the entire spectrum of achievement.” – Inadequate Yearly Progress, Hoxby, Education Next, Summer 2005
- “Passed with strong bipartisan support in 2001 [Ted Kennedy was one of the sponsors], the law requires states to develop accountability goals and use a standardized test to measure whether students are reaching those goals. NCLB provides sanctions for schools that fail to make adequate gains for several years in a row. These include the diversion of a portion of schools’ federal subsidies to tutoring for failing students, and allowing students to transfer to other public schools. States are also held accountable for their overall performance through the diversion of portions of their federal funding.” – Education Myths

No Child Left Behind Is Proving To Be a Highly Effective Piece of Civil Rights Legislation

- NCLB forces schools (and states) to break out test results by race
- This exposes the dirty secret of far too many schools: that children who are perceived to be slow learners – disproportionately low-income, minority children – are assigned the least effective teachers and essentially given up on
- "I think it represents the greatest piece of civil rights legislation since the passage of the [1965] Voting Rights Act." – Steven Adamowski, new Superintendent of Hartford public schools

The 2005 National Teacher of the Year Has Changed His View of No Child Left Behind

From an article in the Washington Post about Jason Kamras, 2005 National Teacher of the Year:

In Virginia, a middle school principal pulled him aside. He told Kamras that before No Child Left Behind, he used to assign "a warm body" to teach his low-performing classes.

Now, the principal said, he puts his best teachers with his lowest-performing students so they can meet testing standards. It changed Kamras's opinion of the legislation.

"Like many teachers, I had thought NCLB was an attack on public education," Kamras said. "Now I have a much more positive view, because it's forcing everyone to pay attention to the achievement of children who'd been ignored."

The anecdote became a part of his talks. If the story made a difference in Kamras's philosophy, he said, maybe it could inspire other teachers to embrace some parts of the act.

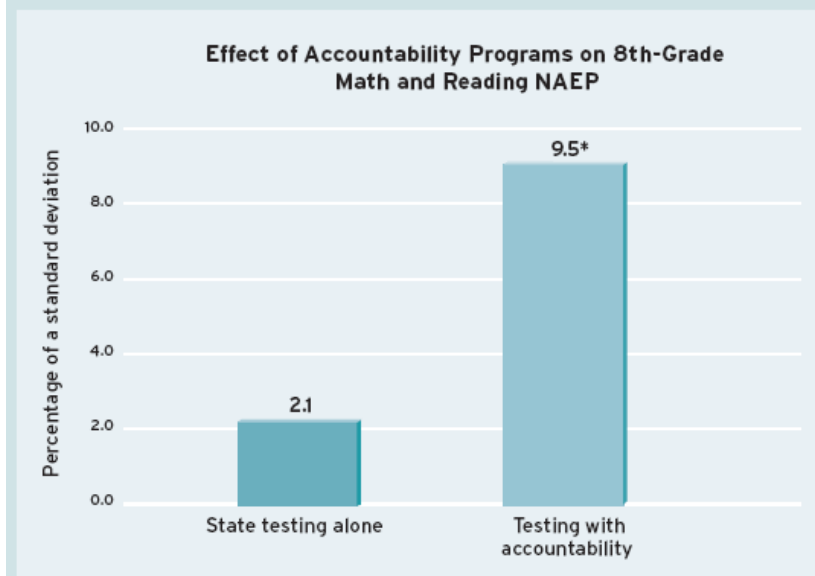
Making a difference in education policy began to pique his interest. Kamras is now considering taking a more political role to continue bringing issues of inequality to public attention.

Testing Leads to Accountability Which Leads to Improved Results

States With Statewide Testing Systems Showed More Improvement in the 1990s

Accountability Works (Figure 1)

Compared with students in states without a statewide testing system from 1992 to 2002, students in states with accountability systems improved by nearly 10 percent of a standard deviation between the 4th and 8th grades on the National Assessment of Educational Progress math and reading tests. But in states that required only public reporting of test results—and not a full range of accountability mandates—students did not make significant gains.



* Statistically significant at the 1 percent level

Note: Gains relative to other states after controlling for changes in the education level of the states' adult population, NAEP exclusion rates, per pupil spending, and racial composition.

SOURCE: Eric Hanushek and Margaret Raymond, "School Accountability and the Black-White Test Score Gap," in Paul E. Peterson, ed., *In One Generation*, forthcoming, 2005

Opponents of NCLB Label It an “Unfunded Federal Mandate” and Decry Its Cost

But In Fact the Cost of Accountability Testing is Low Relative to Other Reform Measures

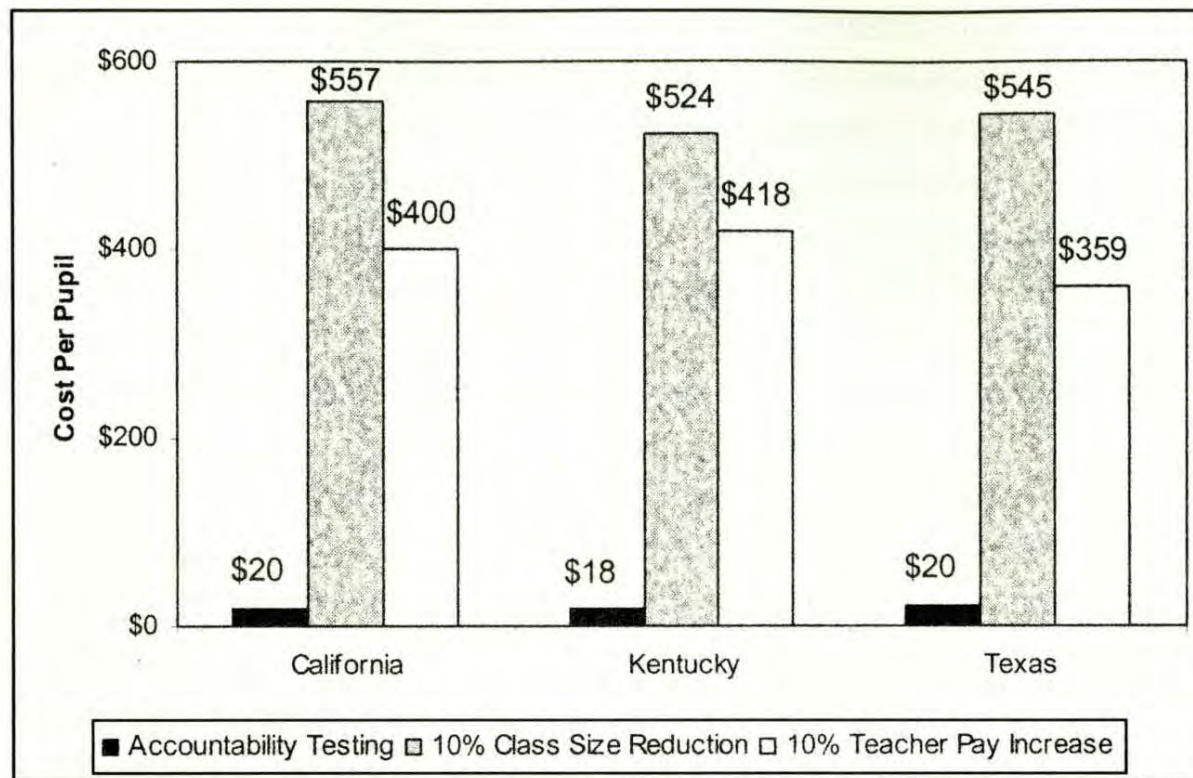


Figure 12.1. Accountability Testing Is an Inexpensive Reform

Source: Hoxby, "The Cost of Accountability," in *School Accountability*, Evers and Walberg, eds., Hoover Institution.

Opponents of NCLB Mischaracterize NCLB

The Box on the Left Was Circulating the Internet; My Rebuttal Is on the Right

No Child Left Behind: The Football Version

1. All teams must make the state playoffs, and all will win the championship. If a team does not win the championship, they will be on probation until they are the champions, and coaches will be held accountable.
2. All kids will be expected to have the same football skills at the same time and in the same conditions. No exceptions will be made for interest in football, a desire to perform athletically, or genetic abilities or disabilities. ALL KIDS WILL PLAY FOOTBALL AT A PROFICIENT LEVEL.
3. Talented players will be asked to work out on their own without instruction. This is because the coaches will be using all their instructional time with the athletes who aren't interested in football, have limited athletic ability or whose parents don't like football.
4. Games will be played year round, but statistics will only be kept in the 4th, 8th and 11th games.
5. This will create a New Age of sports where every school is expected to have the same level of talent and all teams will reach the same minimal goals.

If no child gets ahead, then no child will be left behind.

No Child Left Behind: Revised Version

1. All teams must play hard and do their best. If a team is poorly managed and disorganized, it will be put on probation until it improves, and the coaches will be held accountable. The children and their parents will not be blamed for the failure of the coaches.
2. All kids will be expected to play. Obviously, some kids will play with more skill than others, but all kids will be expected to work hard and perform at a proficient level. Some kids may need to work extra hours to achieve proficiency. The coaches will be expected to put in those extra hours with the kids to ensure their success.
3. Coaches will not focus their resources solely on the handful of players who demonstrate unusual proficiency at an early age. Coaches will be held accountable for the success of EVERY player.
4. Games will be played year round, and statistics will be collected, analyzed and widely disseminated frequently.
5. This will create a New Age of sports where every kid learns the necessary tools to succeed.

Just because some children get ahead, it's not acceptable that many children get left behind.



The Importance of
Political and Community Advocacy

Teacher Unions Are the Most Powerful Interest Group in the Country

They Are Particularly Influential in the Democratic Party

- Nearly 2% of U.S. adults are teacher union members
 - 223 million people in U.S. over age 18
 - NEA membership: 2.8 million; AFT: 1.3 million
- Public employees are the only growing force in the labor movement
- Teacher union representatives account for approximately 10-12% of the delegates at the Democratic National Convention
 - More than any state except California
- “An internal NEA document in 1992-93 celebrated the fact that the union ‘now participates in all political and senior staff meetings held by the Democratic Party’” – Cheating Our Kids
- “NEA/AFT revenues at all levels probably exceed \$1.3 billion a year, not including their PAC funds, foundations, and a host of special funds under their control.” – Dr. Myron Lieberman
- Not just money, but grassroots organization to get out the vote, etc.
 - Turnkey campaign operation
 - Filings, yard signs, mailings, telephone calls, volunteers, fundraising
 - Crucial foot soldiers in elections
 - Southern governor: “There’s only one thing you have to know about politics in my state. Every teacher has every summer before every election off.” – Crash Course
- Often very influential in electing school board members
 - In such cases, they are, in effect, *negotiating with themselves*

The Teacher Unions Have a Very Consistent Agenda

- Increase spending and reduce class size (e.g., more money to more teachers)
- Weaken charter schools and reduce their number
- Vehemently oppose any type of voucher program
- Oppose differential pay for teachers, other than for certifications and seniority
- Fight for rapid tenure and greater job security (e.g., make it difficult to remove any teachers, even the most ineffective ones)
- Oppose systems to measure teacher effectiveness
- Defeat mayors and school superintendents who are serious about reform
- Organize opposition to NCLB

Thoughts on the Teacher Unions

- Many school reformers are outraged that the teacher unions are often not fighting on behalf of schoolchildren
- This is an unreasonable expectation. Just like any other union, they exist to fight for the interests of their members
- Like most unions, among their major goals are higher pay, better benefits, shorter work hours and greater job protection
- They have been extraordinarily effective at achieving these aims
- They have been very clever to embrace the children, such that any attack on them or their interests appears to be an attack on children and children's interests
- In fact, the interests of teachers are often completely contradictory to the interests of children
 - For example, it is obviously in the best interests of children if ineffective teachers can be removed quickly, yet the unions fight – generally very successfully – to make it extremely difficult to remove even the most ineffective teacher
 - Among the unions favorite prescriptions to fix our schools is to reduce class size, which obviously benefits unions because it requires hiring many more teachers, yet the evidence shows that this is very costly yet does little to help students – and may even harm disadvantaged students
- School reformers must make it clear that *they*, not the unions, are the ones who are putting the interests of children first

But It's Not Just Unions

- There are many other entrenched interests
 - Politicians, bureaucrats, etc.
- School reform is seen as a threat to good jobs for minorities – with good reason
 - Lean and efficient schools mean fewer jobs
 - Many of the nation's leading charter school and school reform organizations are not led by minorities

The School System is the Largest Employer in Many Cities

	<u>Largest Private Employer</u>	<u>School System</u>
Baltimore	8,000 (Baltimore Gas & Electric)	11,414
Detroit	13,659 (Chrysler)	18,822
Washington DC	5,756 (Georgetown)	14,235

Government Jobs Have Been the Primary Route to the Middle Class for African Americans

- Statistics in a 1976 study for the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education by Harvard University economist Richard Freeman reveal the importance of government employment:
 - Overall, about 51% of all male Black college graduates are employed by governments – either federal, state, or local – compared to about 25% of college-educated white males.
 - Although the largest number are teachers, there are high proportions of Blacks employed by governments in other fields as well - about 28% of Black lawyers, compared to 14% of lawyers overall; 47.5% of personnel and labor relations professions, compared to 25% overall; and 24% of all Black men who are managers, which is about double the overall proportion.
- Freeman also reports that 72% of Black women college graduates work for some branch of government.

Government is a Particularly Important Employer for African Americans...

Gov't Employment of Household Heads

By Race/Ethnicity (1959–2003)



11

...Especially for College Graduates

Gov't Employment of College Graduates

By Race/Ethnicity (1959–2003)



13

Perceptual, Ideological and Communal Bonds Are Major Impediments to School Reform

“The politics of jobs can be – and often is – an impediment to systemic school reform, but the power of education professionals rests on more than the votes and campaign contributions they can muster from within their own ranks. African-American educators in black-led cities share perceptual, ideological, and communal bonds with elected officials, parents, and other important community actors, including the black churches that play a pivotal role in shaping the political life in many inner-city areas. These bonds help to account for the fact that community mobilization around school issues often takes the shape of protecting jobs and their incumbents instead of demanding higher levels of performance and structural change.”

The Democrats' Dilemma – And Obama's Solution

Fact 1: America's public schools are failing urban children of color on a mass scale

Fact 2: Urban minorities are a critical base of support for the Democratic party

Fact 3: Urban leaders could drive the political agenda, but with a few notable exceptions remain passengers on someone else's policy bus

Fact 4: The party's two core constituencies – urban minorities and education status quo – are on a collision course

Fact 5: Until Obama was elected, the Democratic party was paying a high and increasing price for being on the wrong side of this issue

Fact 6: As a candidate and now as President, Obama has embraced a reform agenda, both because it's the right thing to do, but also it's smart politically

- Shows he's a centrist and demonstrates political courage by being willing to buck his party's strongest interest group
- He is poised to be to education reform what Clinton was to welfare reform

Equation for the Average Democratic Politician

Support Genuine School Reform

- Lose unions' financial backing and organizational support
- More likely that party or union will run someone against you in the primary
- Accused of hurting your party and being a closet Republican
- Perhaps cost your constituents jobs

BUT

- Do what's best for children and stay true to your principles

Toe the Party Line

- Gain financial backing and organizational support
- More likely to run unopposed in the primary
- Be "part of the team"
- Protect good jobs (and perhaps patronage)

BUT

- Don't do what's best for children

Case studies: Cory Booker (first election), Eva Moskowitz

This equation is changing somewhat, however, thanks to President Obama's leadership and the political cover it provides

What We Are Fighting Against: A Story from the Trenches

I taught in the South Bronx with TFA back in the late nineties. I want to emphasize here that I no longer teach in the Bronx, so I have little idea how things have changed and have seen the current Administration take a number of important steps that may be making a great impact. I'm not close enough to the ground to know, but my guess is that there are still plenty of schools in the Bronx and in every other low-income community in the country that reflect some of the miserable stuff I saw in my school. You should really start collecting a book of stories like these. Among all the people I know who've done TFA, these stories are just a few among many sad ones.

As I filled out the survey, I was first reminded of the art teacher in our school. She was truly a caricature of bad teaching. Like something out of the movies. She spent almost every minute of every day screaming at the top of her lungs in the faces of 5-8 year olds who had done horrible things like coloring outside the lines. The ART teacher! Screaming so loud you could hear her 2-3 floors away in a decades old, solid brick building. When she heard I was looking for an apt, she sent me to an apt broker friend of hers. I told the friend I wanted to live in Washington Heights. "Your mother would be very upset with me if I let you go live with THOSE PEOPLE. We fought with bricks and bats and bottles to keep them out of our neighborhoods. Do you see what they have done to this place?" This same attitude could be heard in the art teacher's screams, the administration's ambivalence towards the kids we were supposed to be educating and the sometimes overt racism of the people in charge. The assistant principal (who could not, as far as I could tell, do 4th grade math, but offered me stop-in math professional development for a few minutes every few months with gems like "these numbers you see here to the left of the zero are negative numbers. Like when it is very cold outside.") once told me "I call them God's stupidest people" referring to a Puerto Rican woman who was blocking our way as we drove to another school. She also once told me I needed to put together a bulletin board in the hallway about Veteran's Day. I told her we were in the middle of assembling an Encyclopedia on great Dominican, Puerto Rican and Black leaders (all of my students were Dominican, Black or Puerto Rican). "Mr. _____, we had Cin-co de May-o, and Black History Month, and all that other stuff. It is time for the AMERICAN Americans."

What We Are Fighting Against: A Story from the Trenches (2)

Not everyone in the school was a racist. There were many hard working teachers of all ethnicities who did not reflect this attitude at all. But the fact that the leadership of the school and a number of the most senior teachers was either utterly disdainful of the students they taught, or has completely given up on the educability of the kids, had a terrible effect on overall staff motivation. And many of the well-meaning teachers were extremely poorly prepared to make a dent in the needs of the students even if they had been well led. The Principal told more than one teacher there that "as long as they are quiet and in their seats, I don't care what else you do." This was on the day this person was HIRED. This was their first and probably last instruction. He never gave me a single instruction. Ever. And I was a new teacher with nothing but TFA's Summer Institute under my belt. The Principal proceeded to get a law degree while sitting in his office ignoring the school. When we went to the Assistant Superintendent to report that the school was systematically cheating on the 3rd grade test (i.e., the third grade team met with the principal and APs, planned the cheating carefully, locked their doors and covered their windows and gave answers) she told the principal to watch his back. A few months later, inspectors came from the state. After observing our mostly horrible classes for a full day, they told us how wonderful we were doing and that they had just come down to see what they could replicate in other schools to produce scores like ours. And the list goes on and on.

Like when I asked the principal to bring in one of the district's special education specialists to assess two of my lowest readers, both of whom had fewer than 25 sight-words (words they could recognize on paper) in the 3rd grade, he did. She proceeded to hand one of the students a list of words that the child couldn't read and tell her to write them over again. Then she went to gossip with the Principal. After explaining to him in gory detail, IN FRONT OF THE STUDENT, that she had just been "dealing with a case where a father had jumped off a roof nearby and committed double-suicide with his 8 year old daughter in his arms", she collected the sheet with no words on it, patted the child on the head and left. No IEP was filed nor was I allowed to pursue further action through official channels (I lobbied the mother extensively on my own). I never asked for her to come back to assess the other student.

What We Are Fighting Against: A Story from the Trenches (3)

Our Union Rep was said to have tried to push another teacher down a flight of stairs. The same Union Rep, while I was tutoring a child, cursed out a fellow teacher in the room next door at the top of her lungs so the child I was tutoring could hear every word. When I went to address her about it, the other teacher had to restrain the Rep as she threatened to physically attack me. And when the cheating allegations were finally take up by city investigators, the same Union Rep was sent to a cushy desk job in the district offices. I hear that most of the people I'm referencing here are long gone now, and some of them actually got pushed out of the system, but how rare can this story really be given the pitiful results we see from so many of our nation's poorest schools and how far the system goes to protect horrible teachers and administrators like the ones I worked with?

At the same time as all of this was happening, by the way, the few good teachers in the building often became beaten down and disillusioned. One of the best in my building was consistently punished for trying to make her corner of the school a better place for learning. They put her in a basement corner with no ventilation, no windows and nothing but a 6-foot-high cubicle-style partition separating her from the other 5 classrooms in the basement. After fighting the good fight she went to teach in the suburbs. When I got a financial firm to donate 20 computers, the principal said he didn't have the resources to get them setup for use and refused to allow them into the school. When I had my students stage a writing campaign to get the vacant lot behind the building turned into a playground, the principal wanted me silenced.

The saddest thing about the whole damn mess was that our K-3 kids still REALLY WANTED TO LEARN. Every day they came eager for knowledge. And every day this cabal of cynicism, racism and laziness did everything within their powers to drain it out of them. It was unreal. Don't get me wrong. There were some good teachers there. And some well meaning, but poor teachers. But in many classrooms, the main lesson learned was that school became something to dread, many adults thought you were capable of very little, and some adults couldn't be bothered to lift a finger.

What We Are Fighting Against: A Story from the Trenches (4)

I hope if any of the good, hard-working teachers who fought so hard to rid the school of this mess read this, they'll know I'm not lumping them in with the rest. But the problem was, when I addressed the worst practices in the school at a staff meeting, the bad teachers laughed and the good teachers took it the hardest and thought I was criticizing them.

Let's make these stories known.

Recommended Reading

- Whitney Tilson's school reform resource page: www.tilsonfunds.com/Personal/SchoolReform
- Cheating Our Kids: How Politics and Greed Ruin Education, Joe Williams
- Work Hard, Be Nice, Jay Mathews
- Escalante, Jay Mathews
- Crazy Like a Fox, Ben Chavis and Carey Blakely
- Education Myths: What Special Interest Groups Want You to Believe About Our Schools--And Why It Isn't So, Jay Greene
- No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning, Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom
- Relentless Pursuit: A Year in the Trenches with Teach for America, Donna Foote
- Stupid in America, 20/20 television report, posted at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bx4pN-aiofw
- *The Education Gadfly* (email thegadfly@edexcellence.net to receive it)
- Education Intelligence Agency, www.eiaonline.com (email mike@eiaonline.com to receive weekly emails)
- Sign up for the *Charter Schools News Daily* by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools at www.publiccharters.org
- Andy Rotherham's blog at www.eduwonk.com
- Education Trust's web site, www.edtrust.org

Appendix 2

(last updated summer 2007)

Appendix 2: Table of Contents

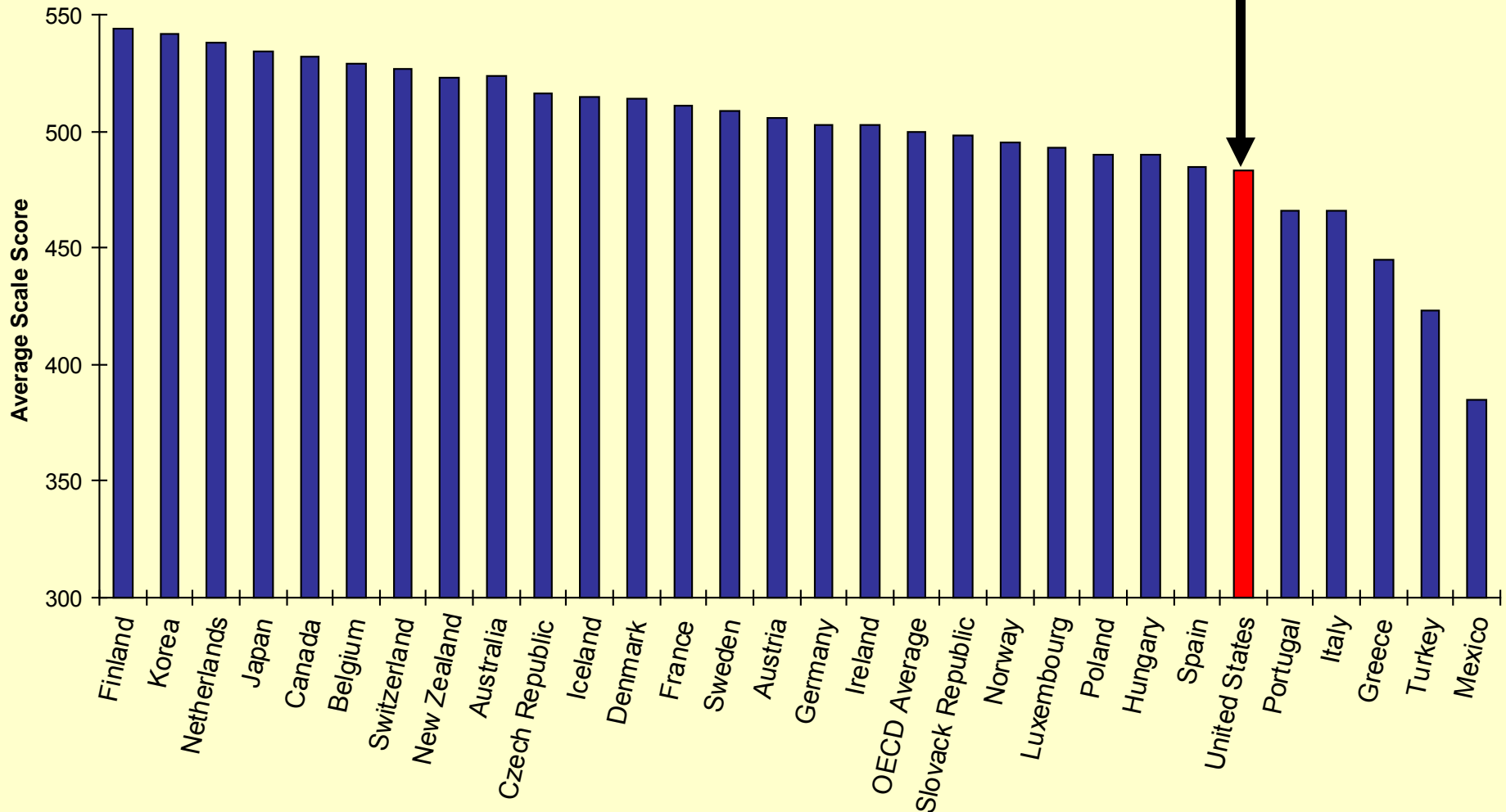
1. More on Achievement Gap #1: American students are falling further and further behind their international peers Page 174
2. More on Achievement Gap #2: There is an enormous gap between in achievement between our low-income, minority students and better-off students Page 180
3. Creating alternatives: Charter schools Page 191
4. Creating alternatives: Vouchers Page 206
 - There is substantial evidence that public schools *do* respond when alternatives are offered Page 216
5. More on teacher quality, distribution and pay Page 219
6. Adopt a rigorous high school curriculum Page 226
7. Barriers to change Page 235

Achievement Gap #1

- Despite a doubling of spending over the past 30+ years, our students' achievement has barely budged and we are falling further and further behind other countries

U.S. 15-Year-Olds Ranked 24th out of 29 OECD Countries in Mathematics

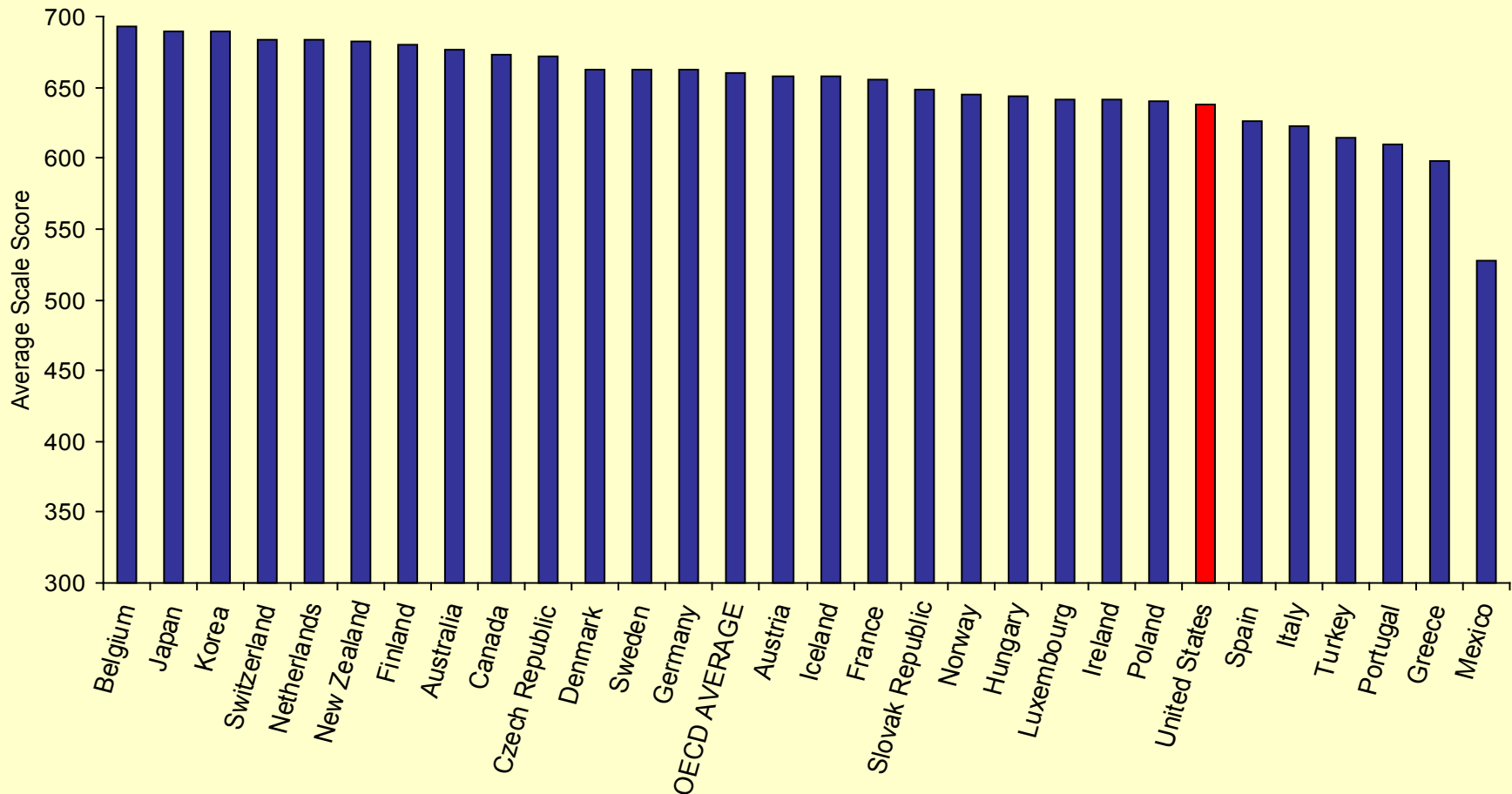
And Only Slightly Better in Literacy (15th)



Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), PISA 2003 Results, data available at <http://www.oecd.org/>. Slide courtesy of Ed Trust.

Even Our Highest-Performing (Top 5%) Students Are Performing Poorly...

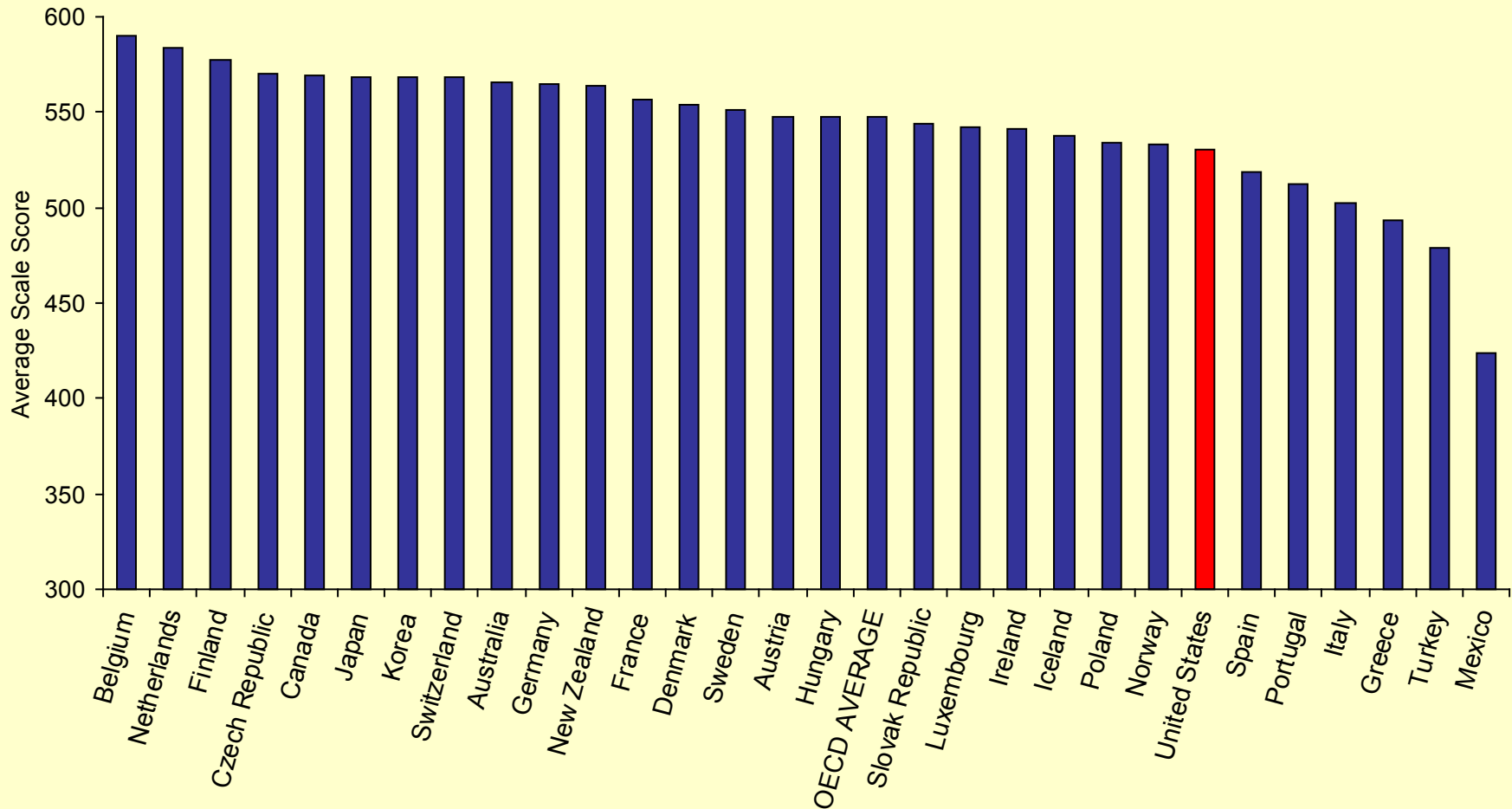
The U.S. Ranks 23rd out of 29 OECD Countries



Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), PISA 2003 Results, data available at <http://www.oecd.org>. Slide courtesy of Ed Trust.

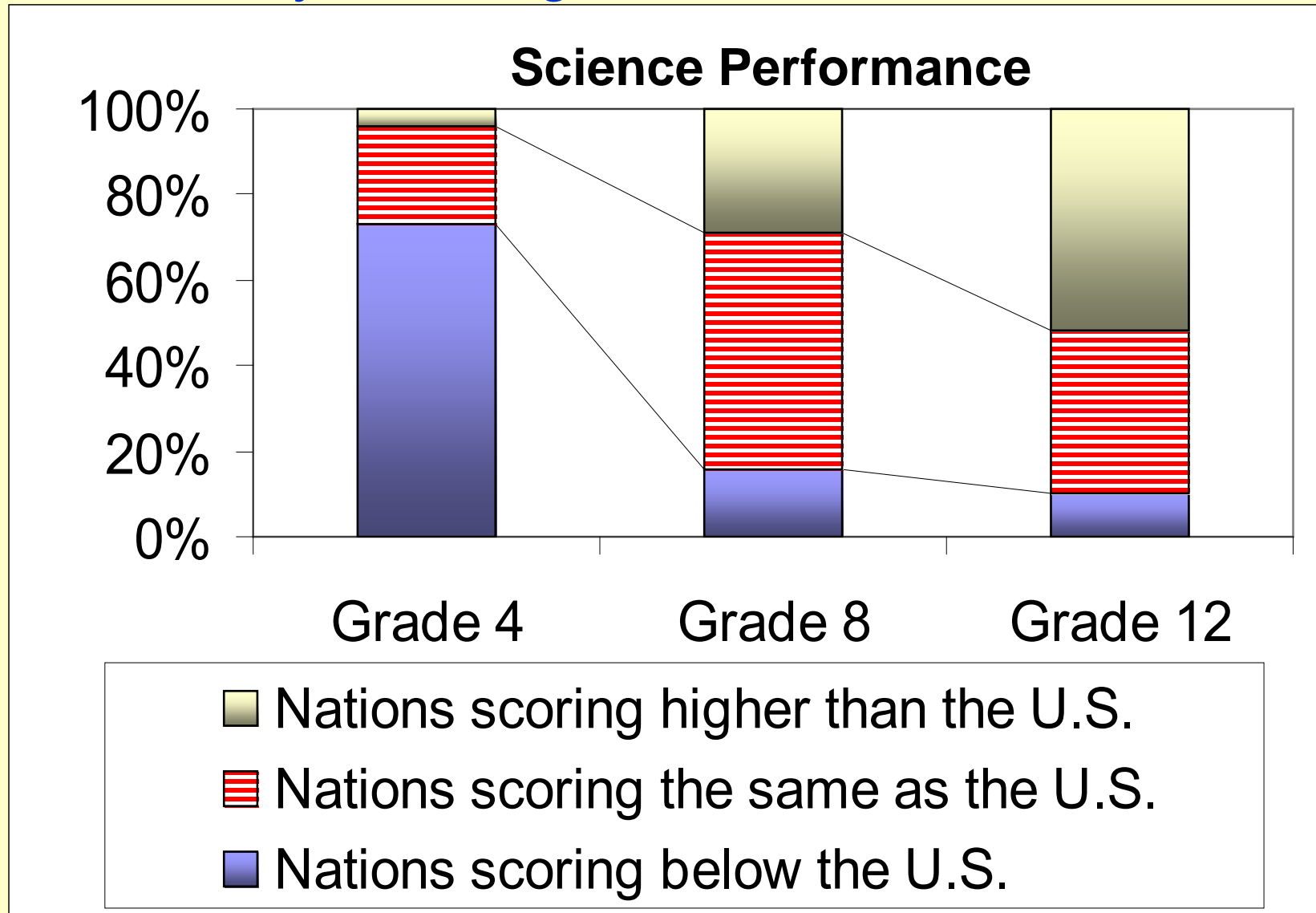
...As Are Our Students from Wealthy Families

U.S. Ranks 23rd out of 29 OECD Countries



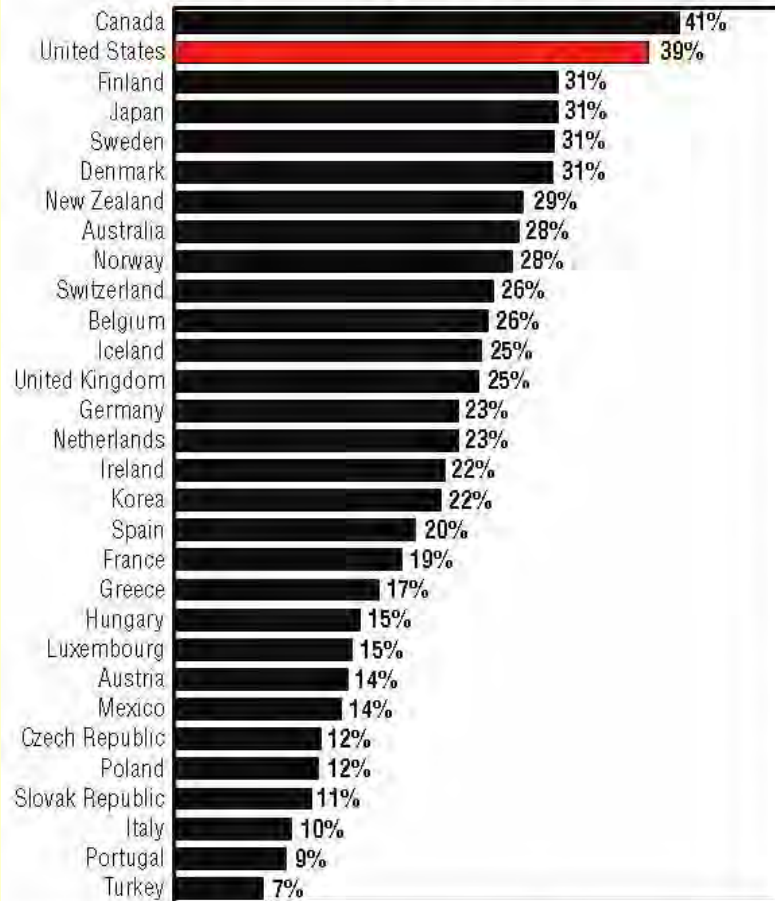
Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), PISA 2003 Results, data available at <http://www.oecd.org/>. Slide courtesy of Ed Trust.

Our Relative Performance is Weak – and Declines Dramatically the Longer Our Students Are in School

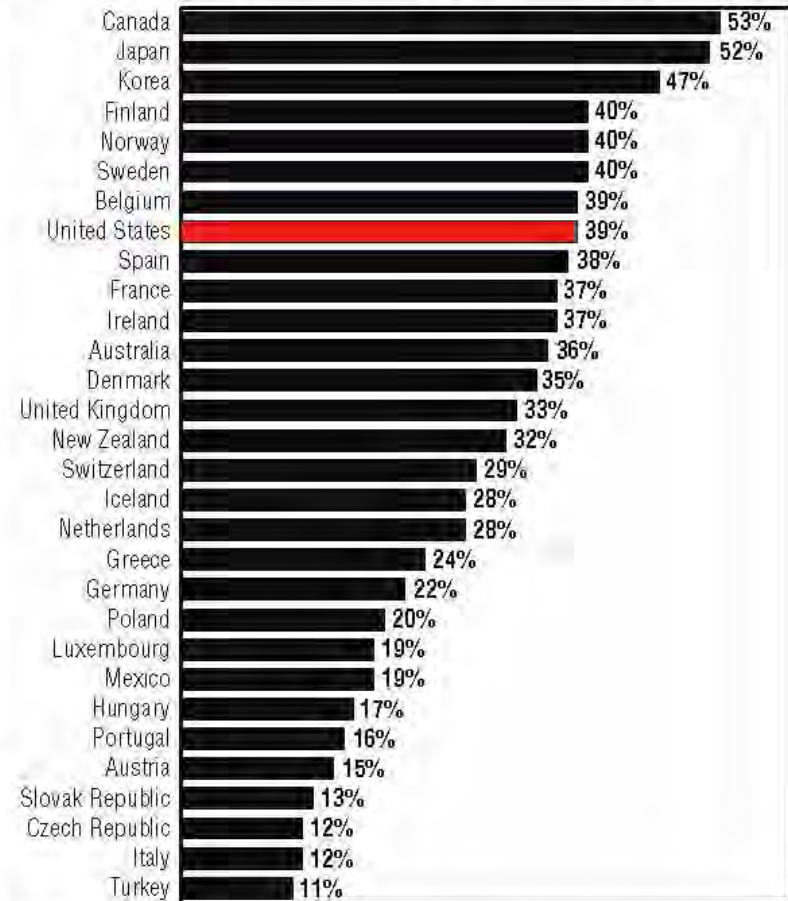


The United States is Still Among the Top Nations in the Proportion of Older Adults Holding a College Degree But It Drops to 7th in the Educational Attainment of Young Adults

Older Adults (Ages 35 to 64)



Younger Adults (Ages 25 to 34)

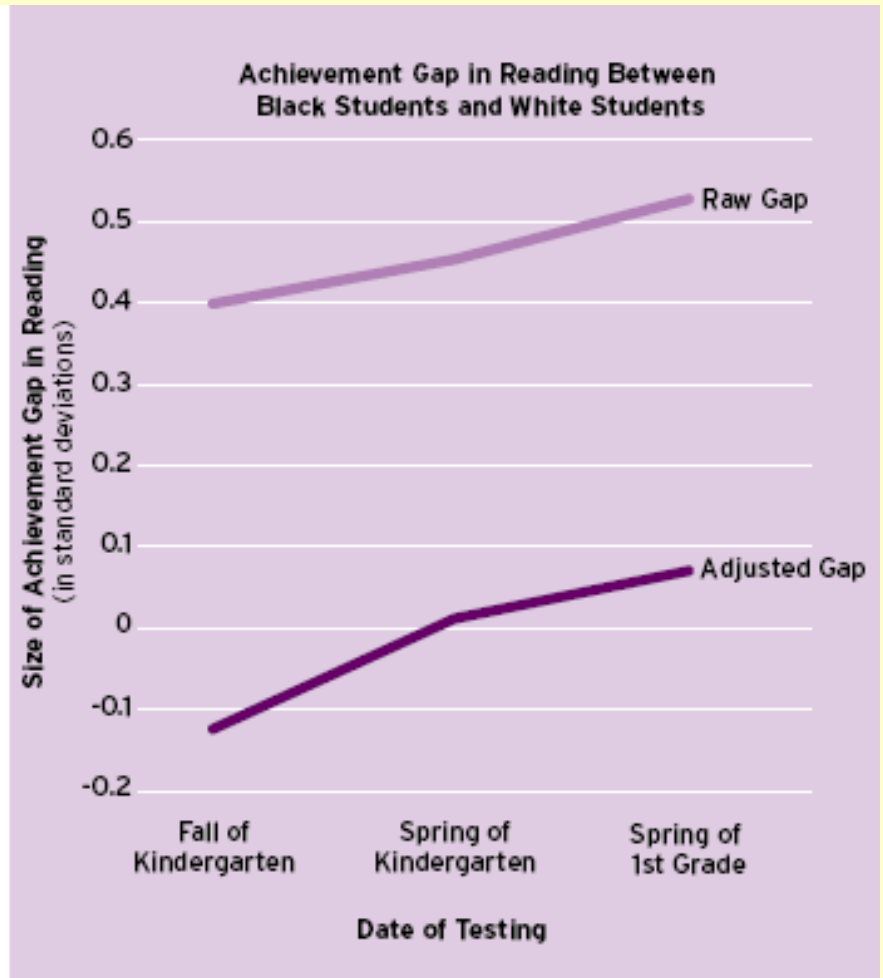
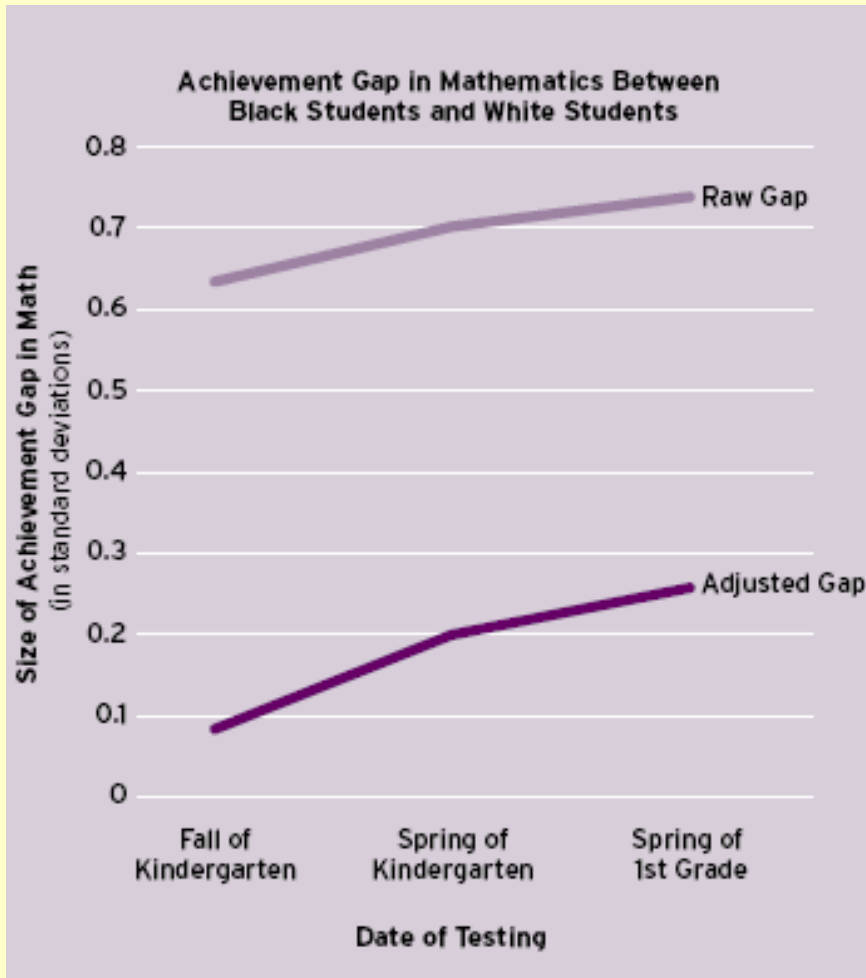


Source: Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Data represent the percentage of adults with an associate's degree or higher in 2003.

Achievement Gap #2

- The achievement of low-income, minority students is dramatically worse than their better-off peers
 - This achievement gap widens the longer students are in school

The Black-White Achievement Gap Is Present When Children Enter School – And Begins Widening Immediately

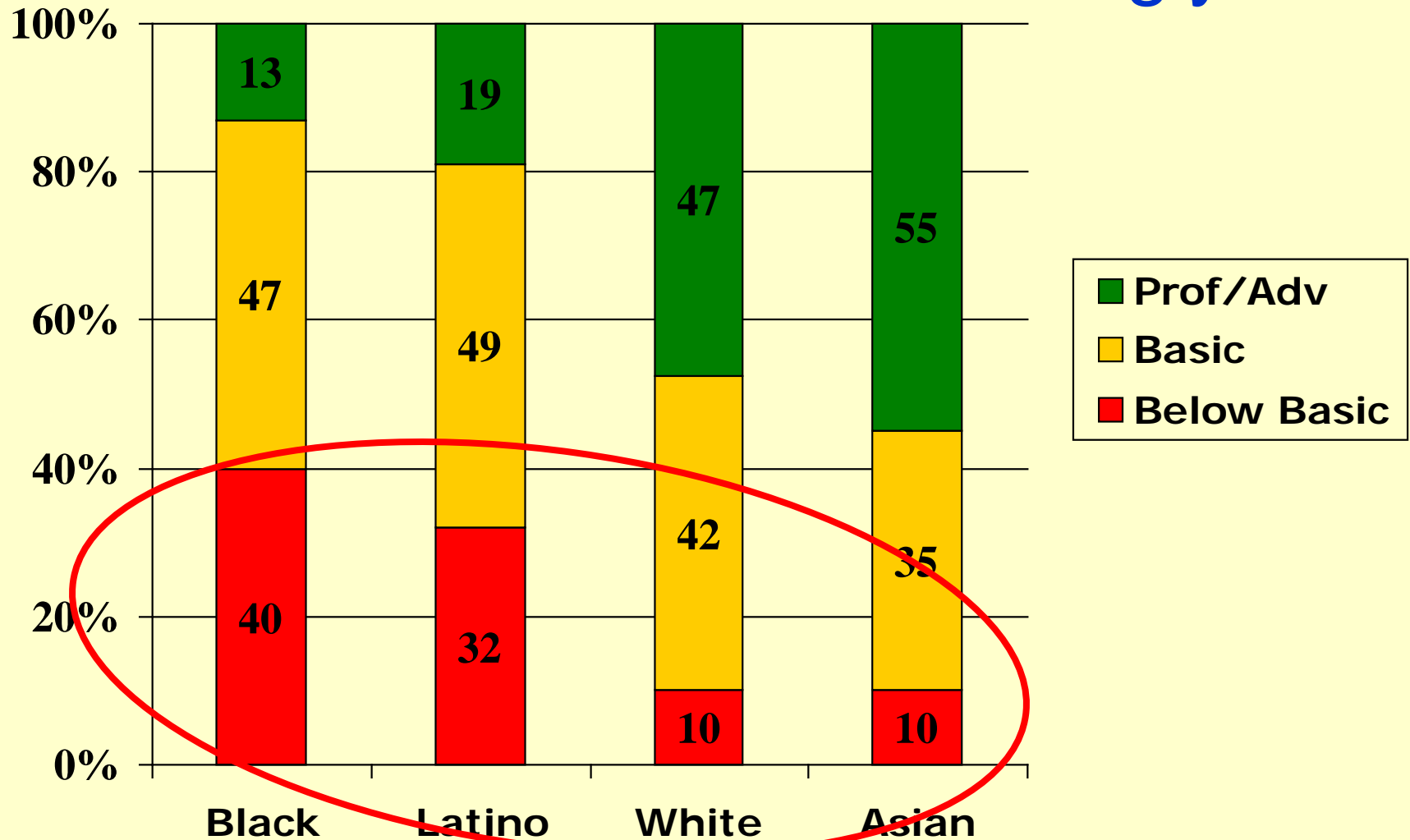


Note: In the figures above, the Raw Gap represents the actual difference in test scores between black students and white students. The Adjusted Gap represents the remaining inter-ethnic test-score gap after adjusting the data for the influence of students' background characteristics. Adjusted results control for socioeconomic status, number of books in the home, gender, age, birth weight, WIC participation, and mother's age at birth of first child. All adjusted gaps are statistically significant at the .05 level. Where the results indicate that the gap is negative, black children with similar characteristics actually score higher than their white counterparts.

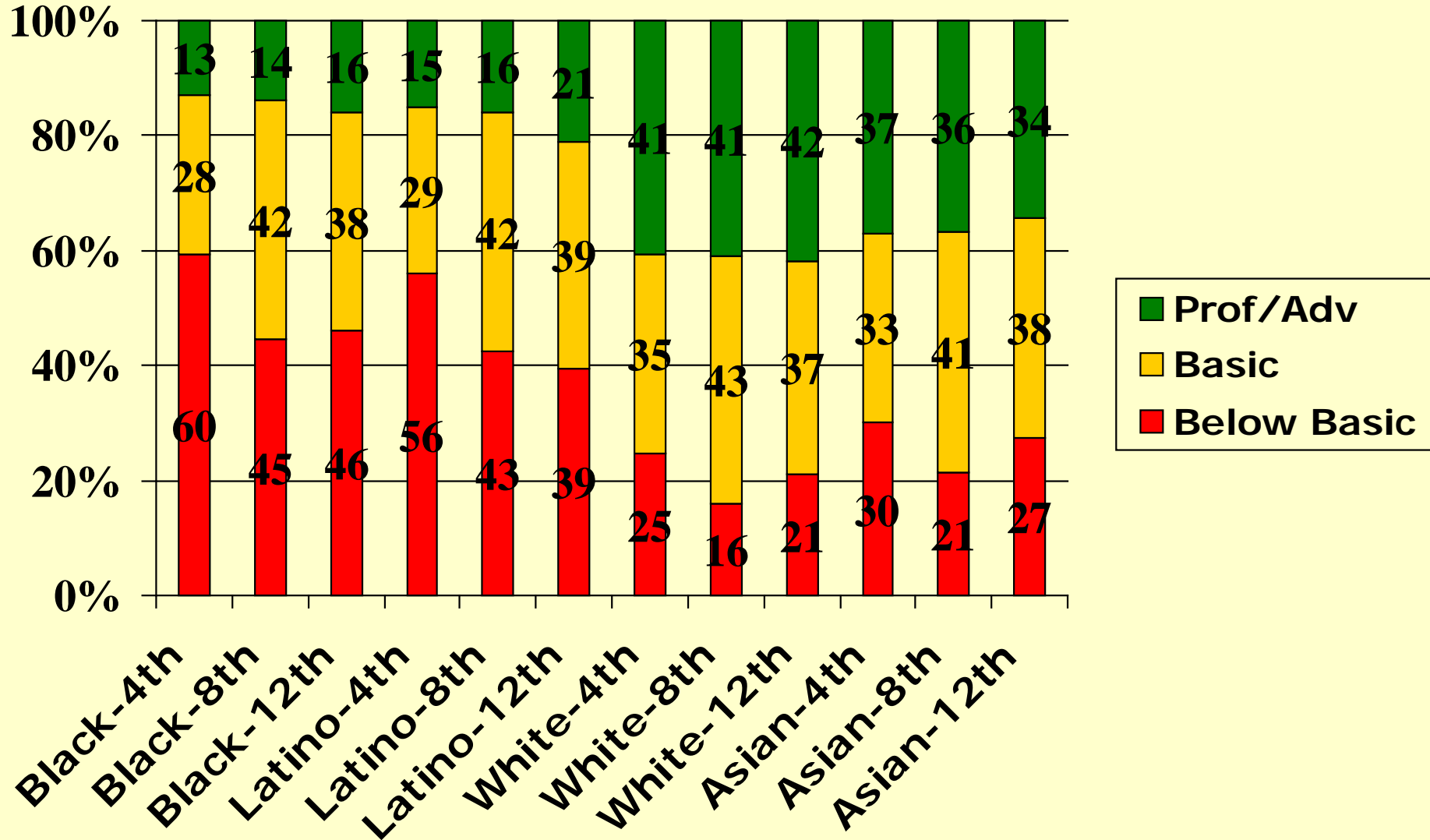
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Kindergarten Cohort* (1998), U.S. Department of Education

Source: [Falling Behind](#), Fryer & Levitt, Education Next, Fall 2004

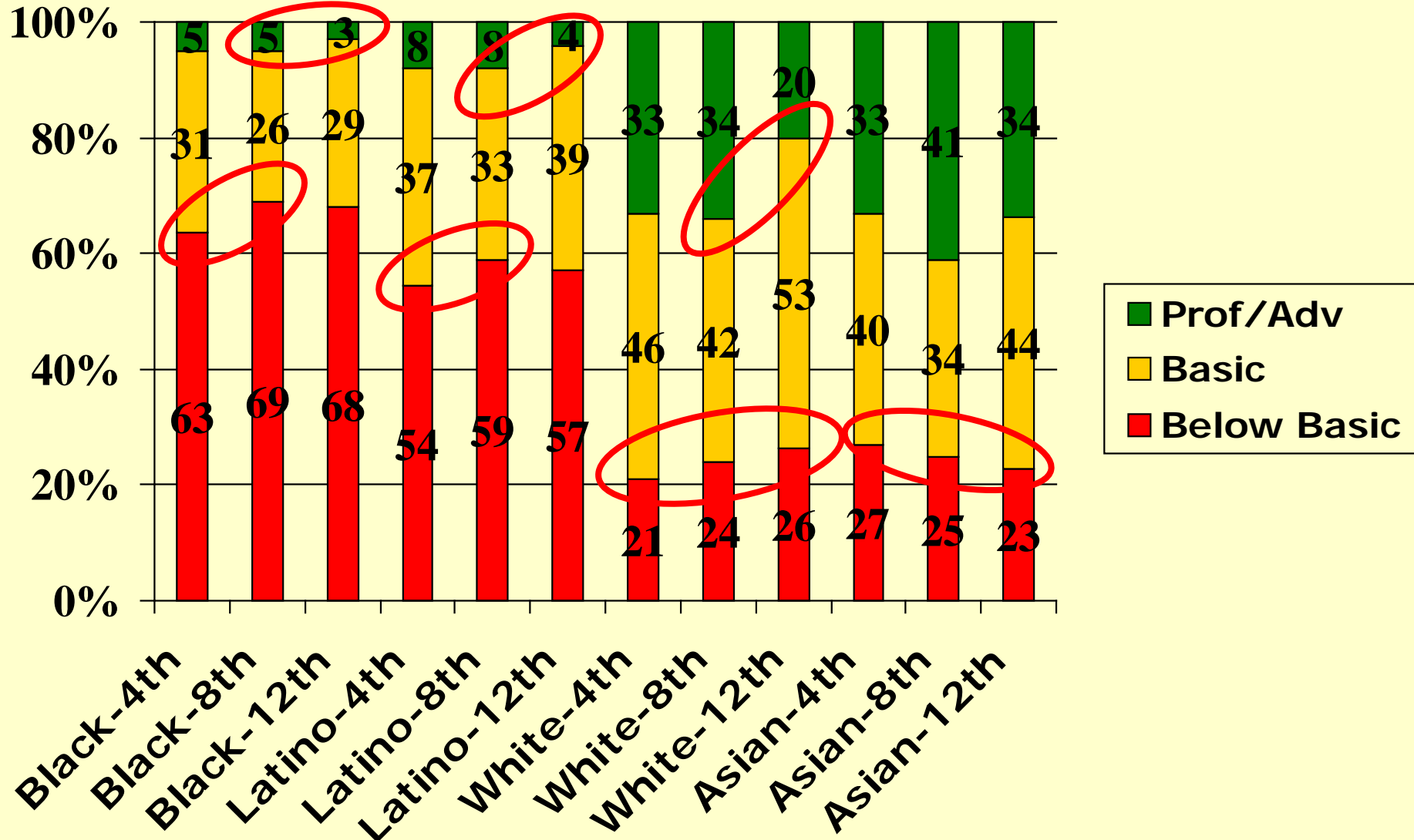
The Gaps in Math Are Smaller Than Reading, But the Performance of Black and Latino 4th Graders Is Still Alarming



In Reading, All Races Do Better from 4th Grade to 8th Grade; from 8th Grade to 12th Grade, Latinos Do Better, Blacks Are Flat and Whites and Asians Do Worse

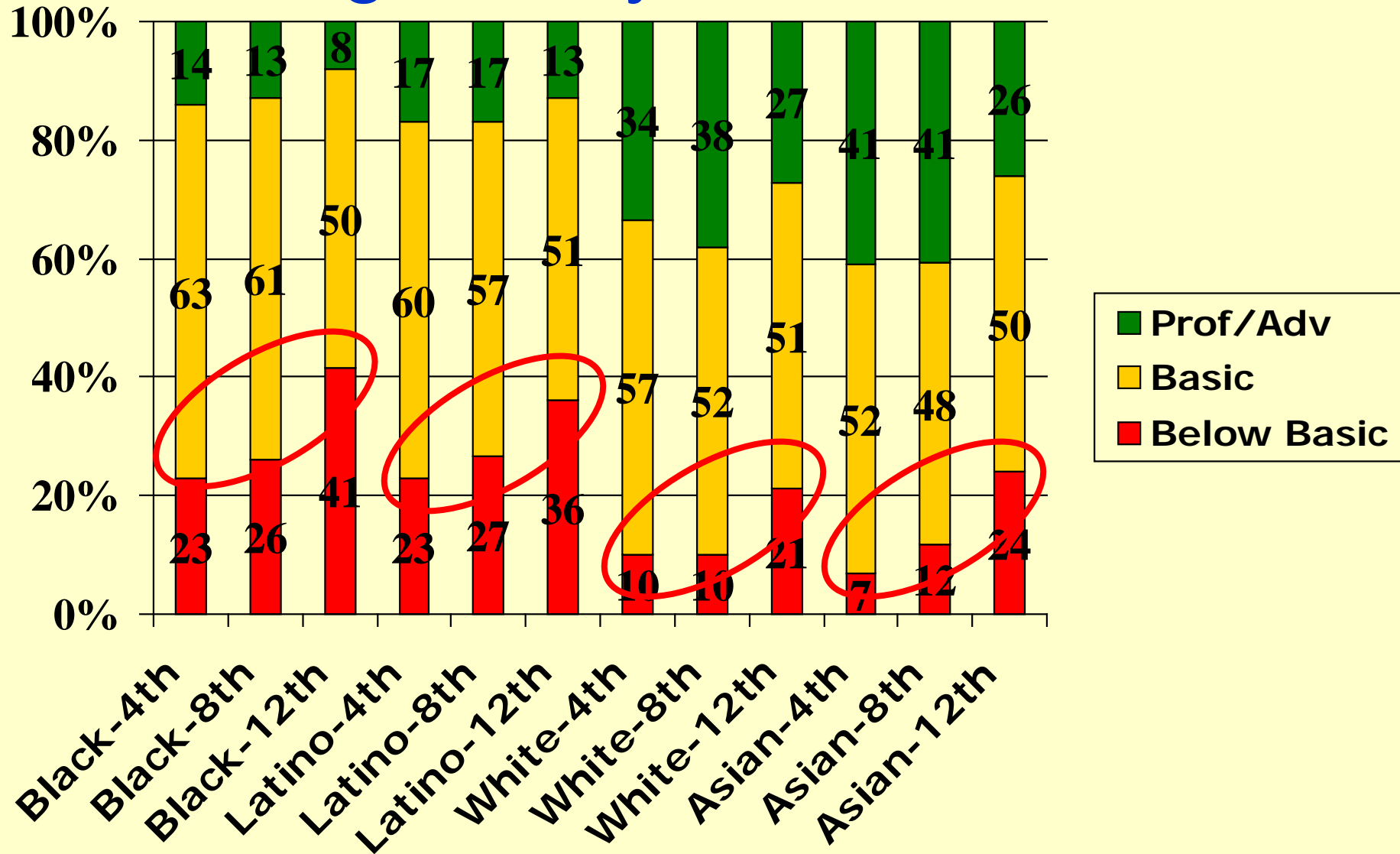


In Math, All Students Except Asians Do Worse the Longer They Are in School

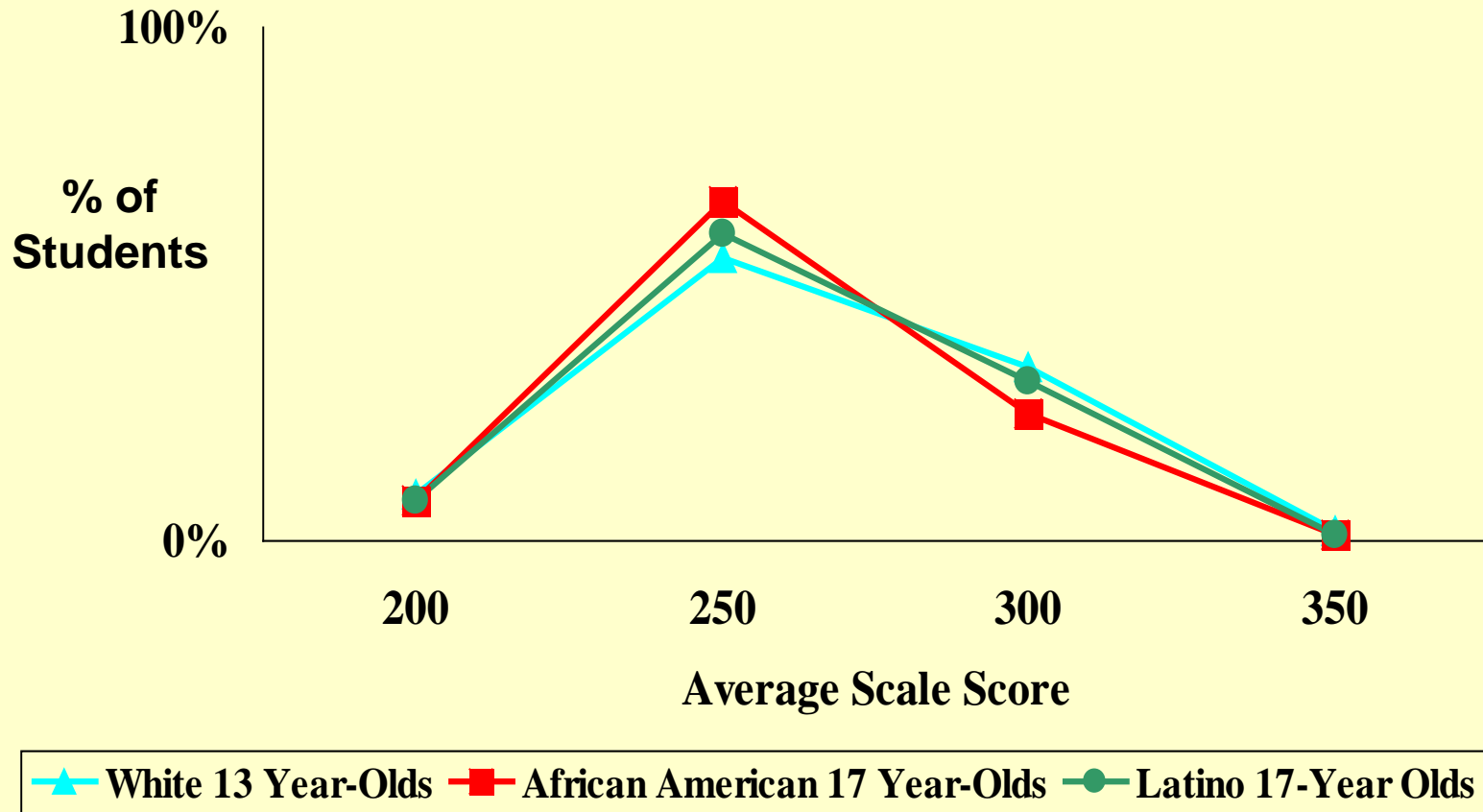


Source: 2000 data, 4th grade data for Asians not available in 2002; National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/>

In Writing, All Students Do Worse the Longer They Are in School

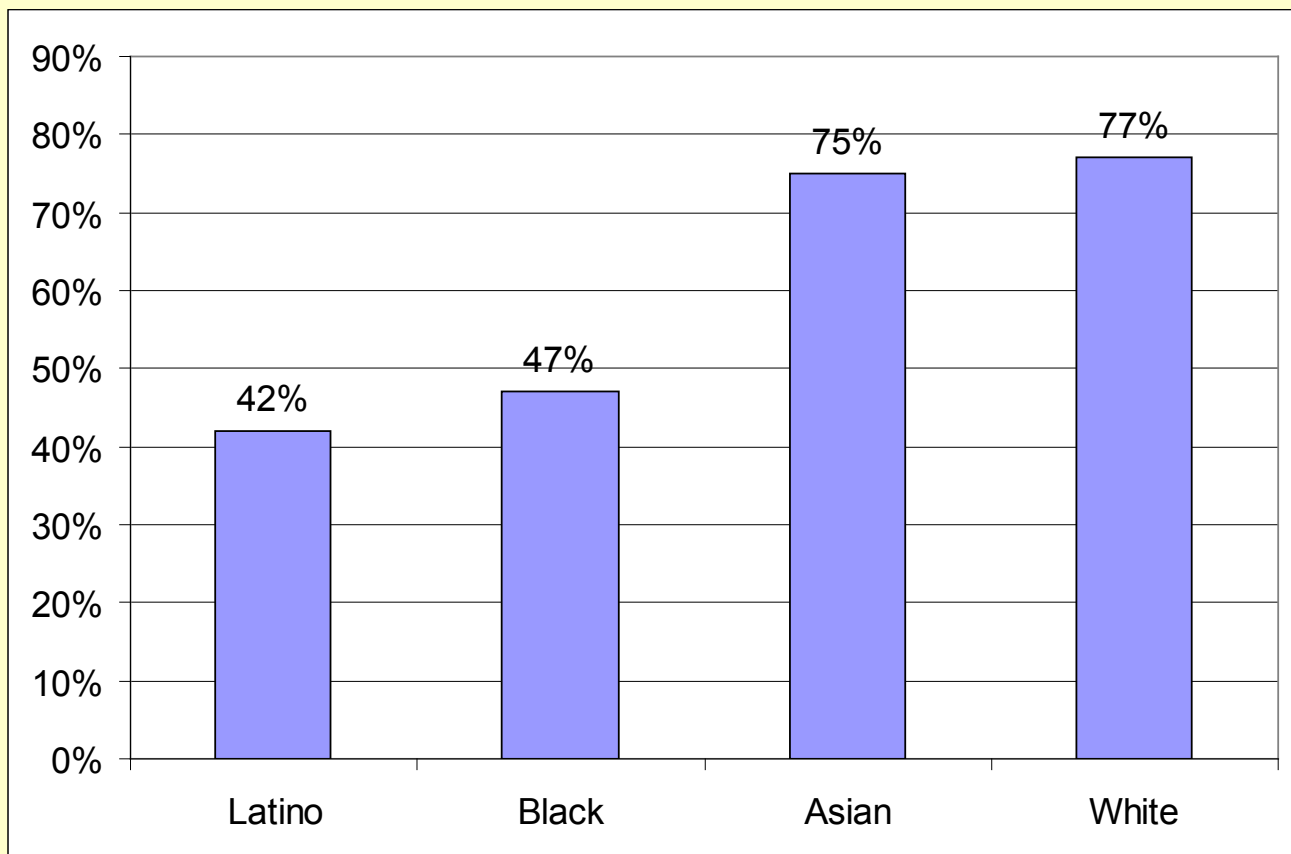


African American and Latino 12th Graders Do Math at the Same Level As White 8th Graders



The High School Graduation Rate for Latino and Black Students in New York State is Very Low

The 47% Graduation Rate for Blacks is the Lowest in the Nation

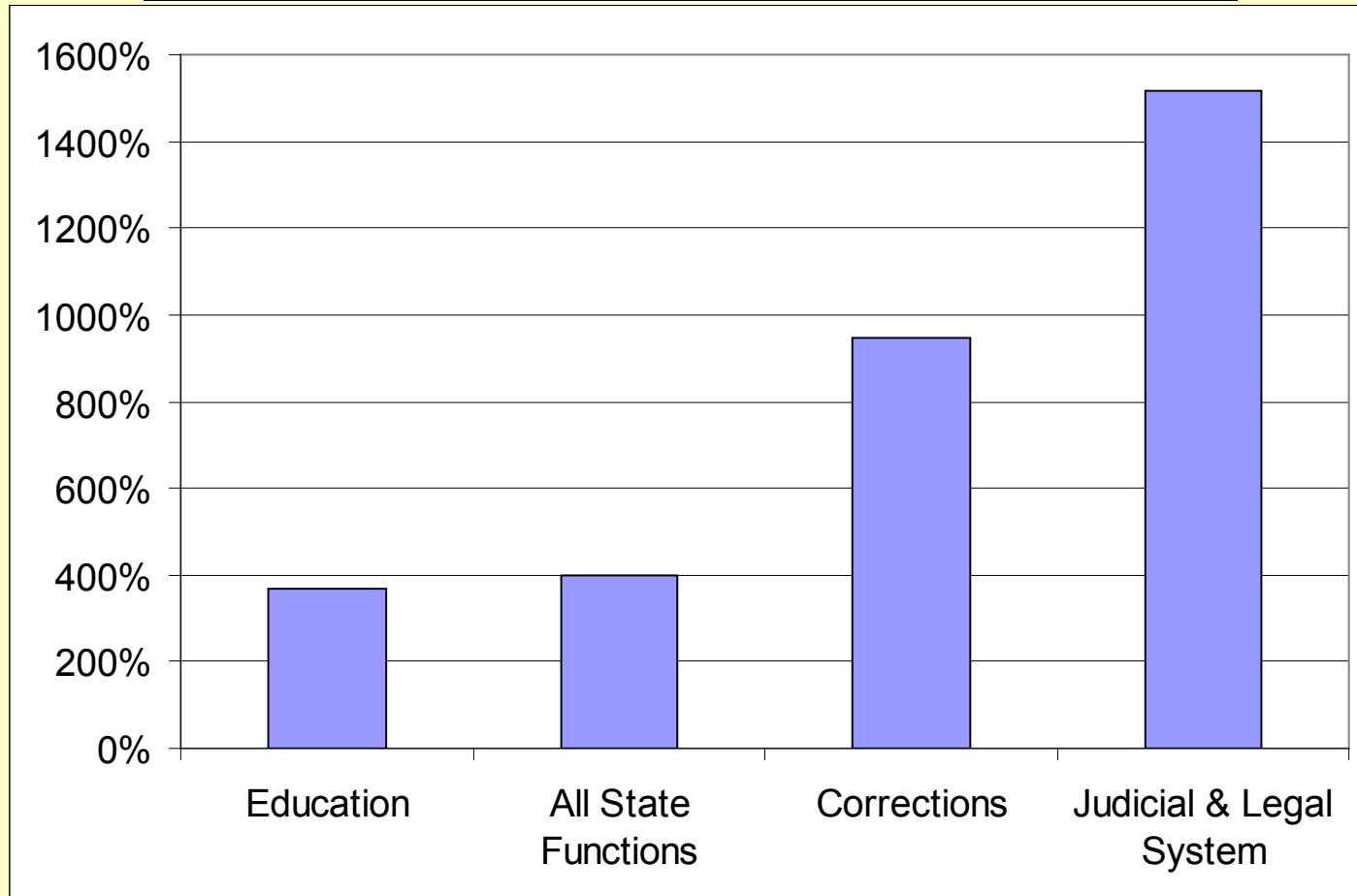


Note: The percentage of students statewide who entered the ninth grade in 1997 earned a standard diploma within 4 years.

Source: The Education Trust * EdwatchOnline 2004 * State Summary Report

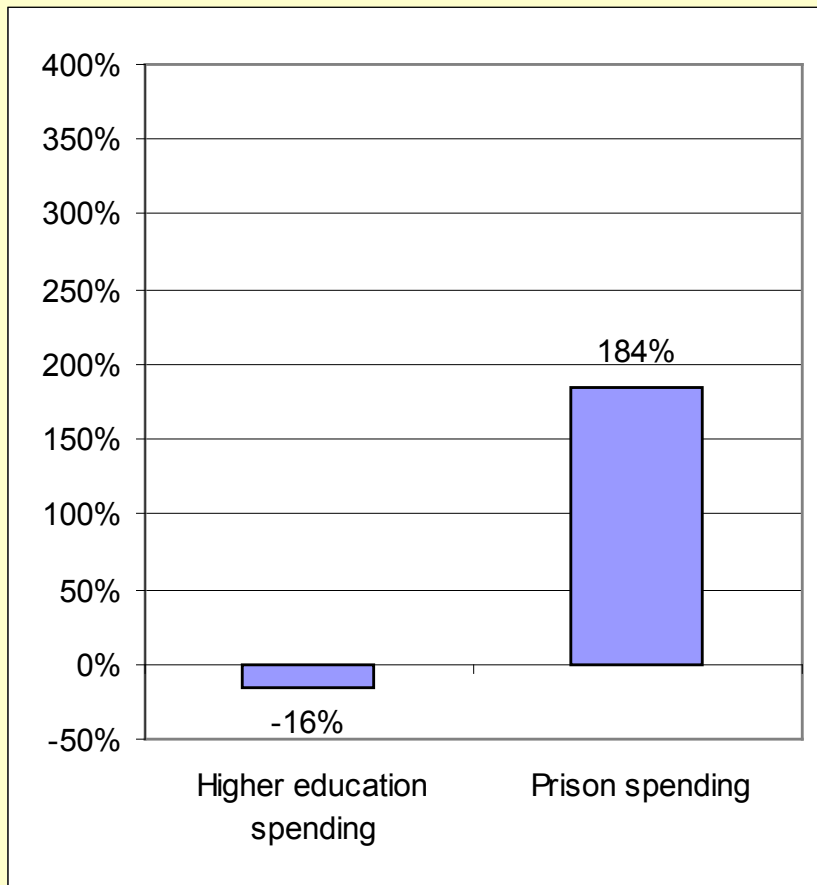
Rather Than Educating Our Youth Properly, We're Spending Enormous Amounts to Lock Them Up As Adults

1977-1999 Increase in State & Local Expenditures

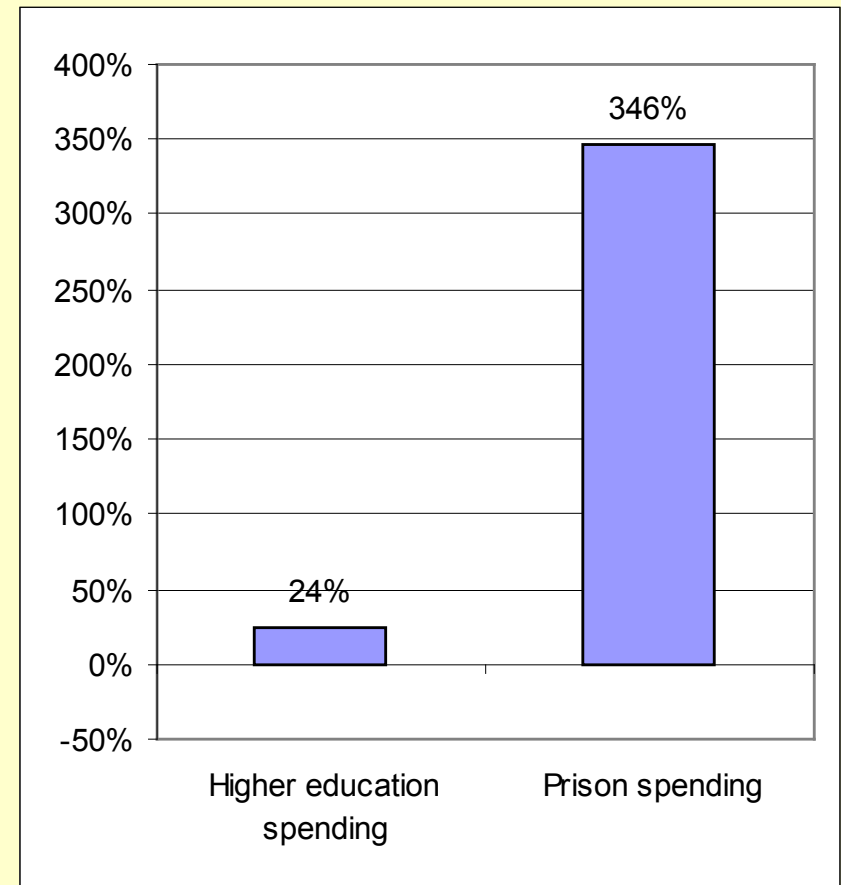


Rather Than Educating Our Youth Properly, We're Spending Enormous Amounts to Lock Them Up As Adults (2)

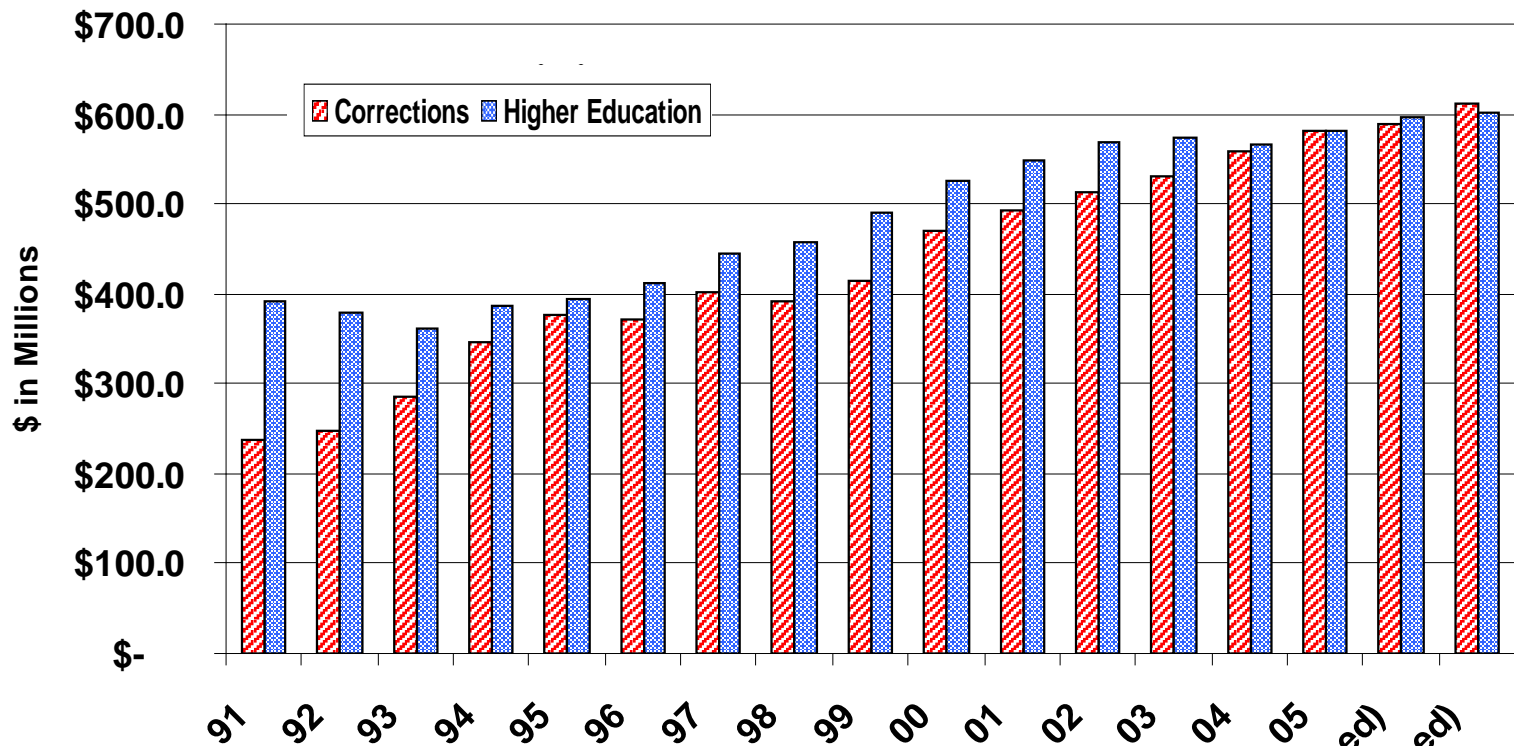
California, 1985-2000



Texas, 1985-2000



Connecticut Spent More for Corrections Than Higher Education for the First Time in 2007



* Not including detention, juvenile, and adult services (CSSD) or Ct Juvenile Training School (DCF), totaling \$117 million for 2006 and \$120 million for 2007

06 (proposed)
07 (proposed)

Creating Alternatives

Case Study: Charter Schools

Charter Schools Are Tuition-Free, Non-Selective Public Schools That Operate With Greater Autonomy – And More Accountability – Than Regular Public Schools

“A public charter school is a publicly funded school that, in accordance with an enabling state statute, has been granted a charter exempting it from selected state or local rules and regulations.

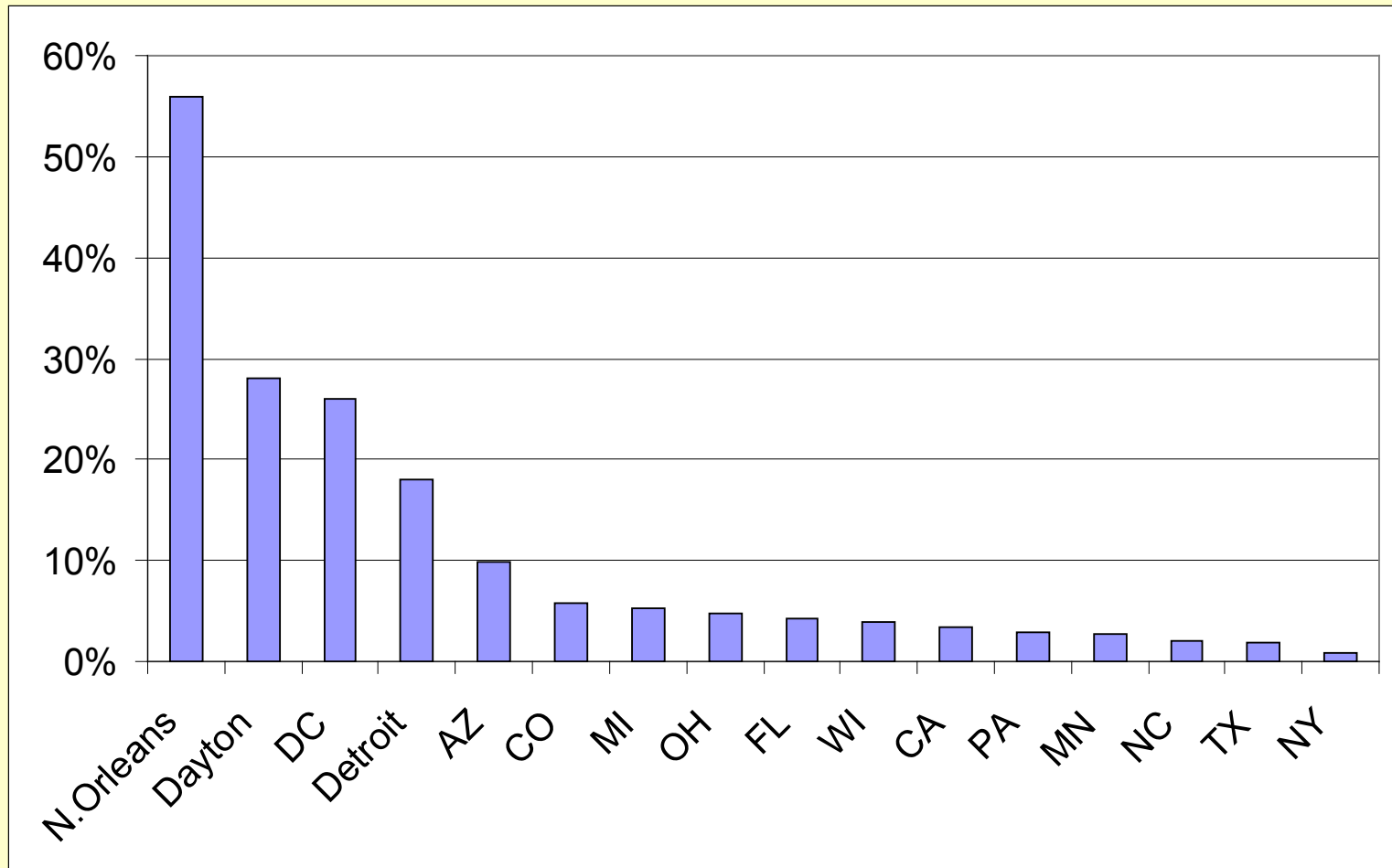
A charter school may be newly created, or it may previously have been a public or private school; it is typically governed by a group or organization (e.g., a group of educators, a corporation, or a university) under a contract or charter with the state.

In return for funding and autonomy, the charter school must meet accountability standards. A school's charter is reviewed (typically every 3 to 5 years) and can be revoked if guidelines on curriculum and management are not followed or the standards are not met.”

Charter Schools Are Spreading Rapidly Across the Nation

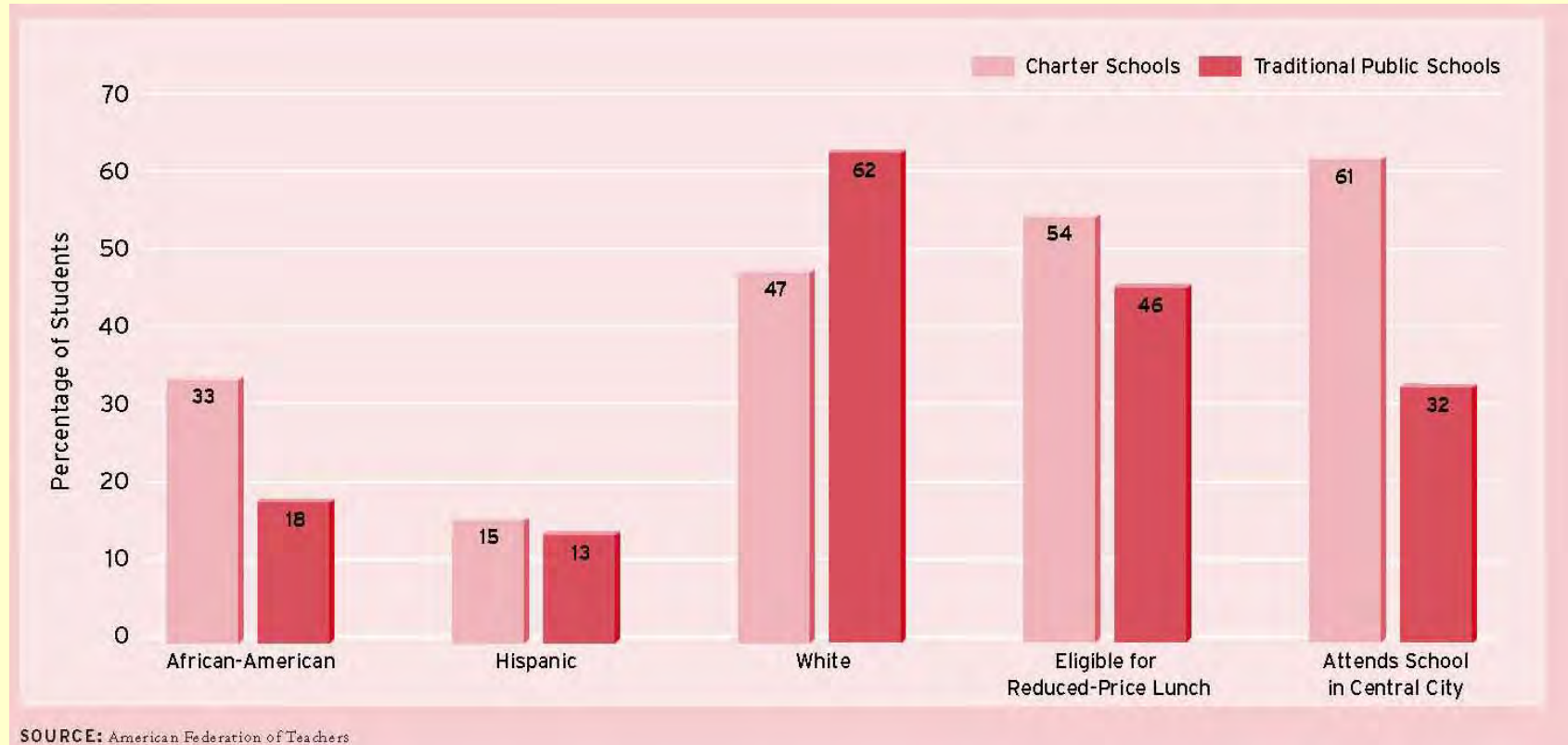
There Are 4,600 Charter Schools as of 2009 in 40 States and DC

Charter School Market Share is Highest in These 4 Cities & 12 States



Source: The Center for Education Reform, 2006-07 school year

Charter Schools Typically Serve the Most Disadvantaged, “At Risk” Children

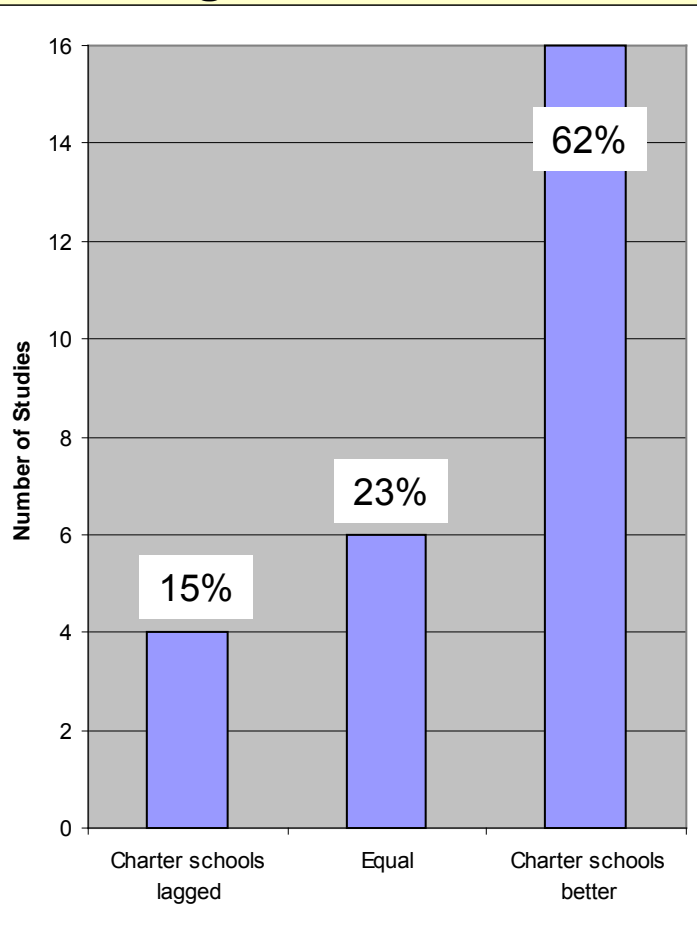


Contrary to popular perception, charter schools do not “cream” the best students. Charter school students performed worse, relative to their fellow students, when they were in regular schools *prior* to attending charter schools.

-- 4.5 NPR points worse in reading and 6.7 points worse in math

Despite Taking the Most Difficult Students, Most Studies Show That Charter School Students Are Making Greater Gains Than Comparable Students in Nearby Public Schools

Analysis of 26 Studies That Compared Student Progress Over Time



But what about the studies that appear to show that charter schools are underperforming?

- Charter school students do indeed have lower test scores than regular public schools (according to 12 of 18 “snapshot” studies), but that’s because they serve higher concentrations of disadvantaged, “at risk” students. The gold standard is to measure student progress *over time*
- The snapshot studies failed to adequately adjust for critical factors such as household income and parents’ education and marital status
- The 2003 data used for these studies included only 5% of all charter schools
- University of Washington researcher Mary Beth Celio’s dismissed the widely publicized 2004 study as “one of the most unsophisticated, low-level analyses I’ve ever seen.”
- The editorial board at the *Chicago Tribune* deemed the findings “about as new as a lava lamp, as revelatory as an old sock, and as significant as a belch.”

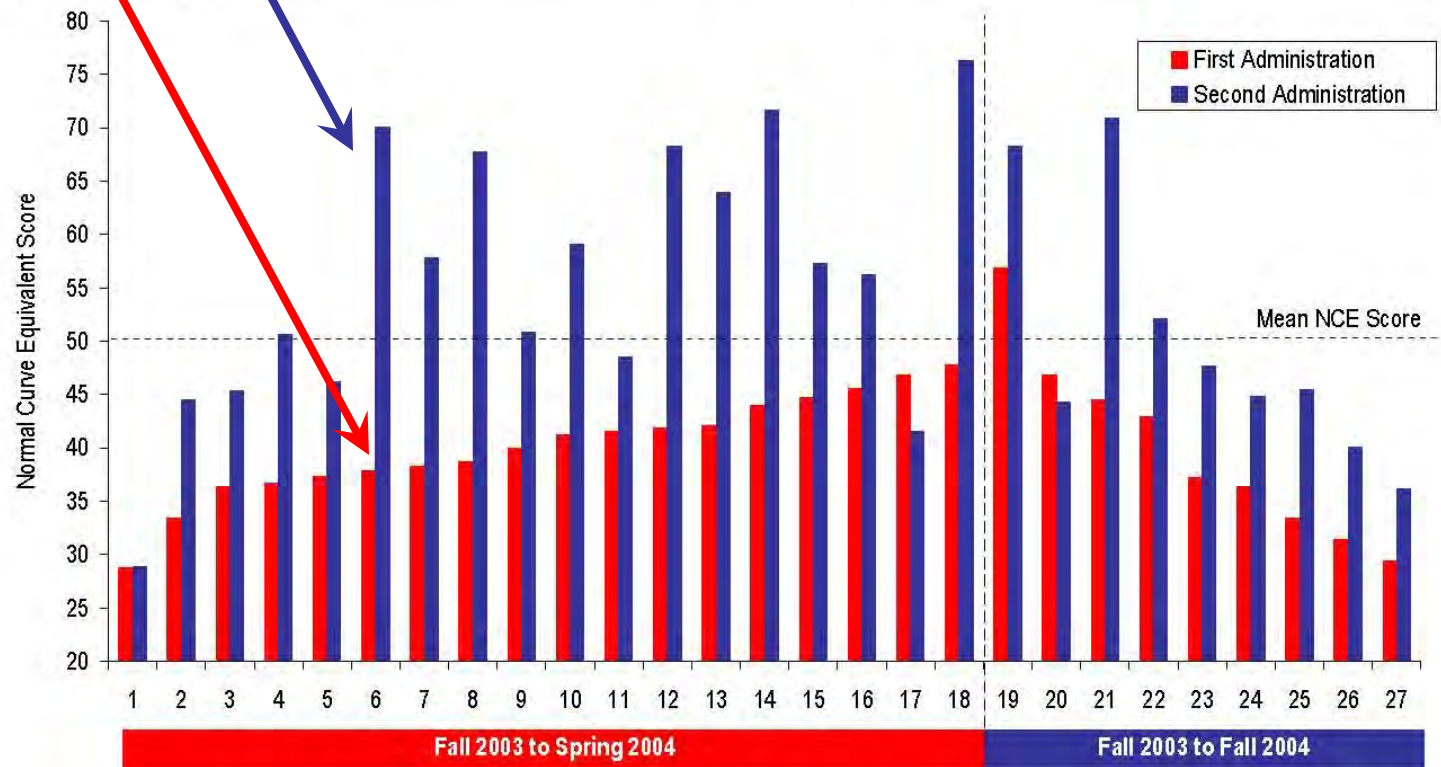
Some Charter Schools Are Achieving Nothing Short of Educational Miracles With the Most Disadvantaged Children

- Especially the “no excuses” charter schools like KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program), Achievement First (Amistad) and Uncommon Schools (North Star)

The KIPP Charter Schools – More Than 50 Nationwide – Are Showing What Low-Income Minority Students Can Achieve

The **red** bars are the test scores when students first enter KIPP schools; the **blue** bars are the scores the following Spring or Fall

Figure 3. KIPP Mathematics Normal Curve Equivalent Scores for the 5th Grade on the Stanford Achievement Test by School, 2003-04



NOTE: Three KIPP schools administered SAT 9/10 tests in both spring and fall 2004, thus summing 27 indicators from 24 schools.

Source: An Academic Impact Analysis of the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP), Educational Policy Institute, August 2005

Another Case Study of Gap-Closing Performance: Amistad Academy

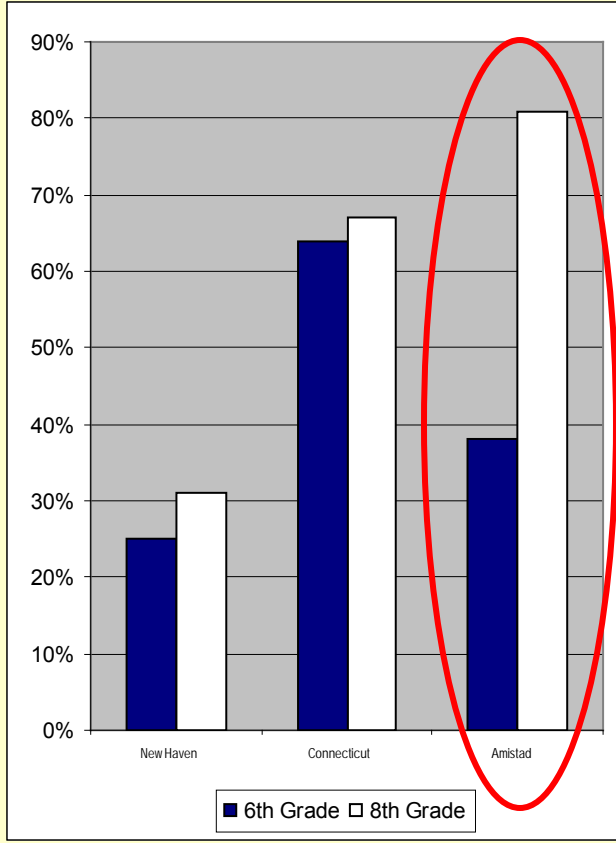
- 97% Black and Latino students
- Selected by lottery from the City of New Haven
- 84% free or reduced price lunch
- 246 students in grades 5-8
- 10% Special Education
- 100% participation on Connecticut Mastery Test
- On average, incoming fifth graders are two years below grade level in reading and math, according to baseline tests.



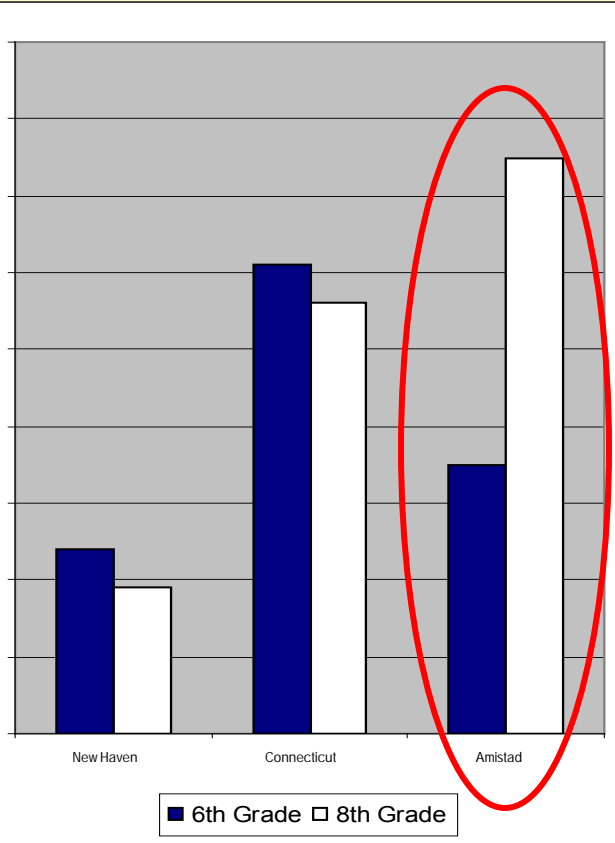
Amistad Is Achieving Extraordinary Success

And Is Spending Less: \$10,700/Student vs. More Than \$12,000 New Haven Average

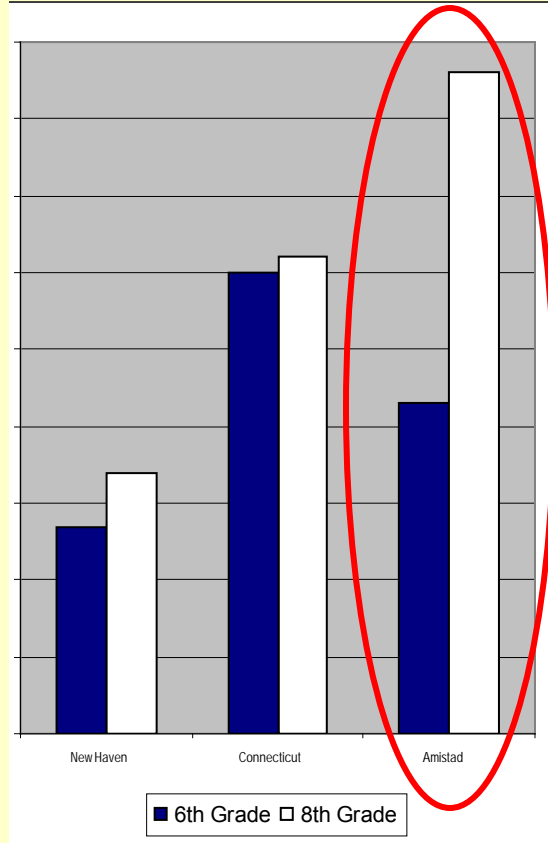
Reading (% at Mastery)



Math



Writing



Source: www.achievementfirst.org

Amistad's "12 Lessons About School Reform"

1. **"These Kids" CAN Learn.** Amistad Academy's students, who are 98 percent African-American or Latino and 84-percent free/reduced lunch, outperformed the Connecticut state average in every subject tested. Since Amistad's students were selected by a blind lottery run by the New Haven Public Schools and the school has a higher percentage of poor and minority students than the district as a whole, the argument that poor, minority students cannot achieve seems clearly false. Our measure of success will never be to do just a little bit better or to compare ourselves only to other schools serving poor, minority students. We are not interested in reducing the achievement gap; we want to close it. Every Achievement First school will be expected to raise student achievement to at least the state average within three years, and each AF school will be expected to have 90 percent of all students who have been at the school for five or more years at or above the proficiency level in all tested subjects. These will always be our most important metrics. All Achievement First schools will also be unapologetically college preparatory.
2. **Leadership Matters – Mightily.** Great leadership at the school site is the most vital variable for institutional success [so] Achievement First will aggressively recruit the finest educational professionals to lead its schools. As Achievement First grows, we will consciously and systematically groom our best teachers to assume leadership roles, providing them with the finest training in the nation.
3. **Teachers Are More Important Than Curricula...** In the past 50 years, policymakers and superintendents have tried (in vain) to fix American education by changing curricula and programs. The result has been wave after wave of educational fads and a lack of attention on who is in front of the classroom. Unfortunately, all of this often misguided energy around program has obfuscated a dirty little secret in American education: the teachers in front of the student aren't always good enough. The number one predictor of student achievement is teacher quality. The message is clear: Get great teachers in front of students, and they will have great results. What does this mean for Achievement First? Achievement First will aggressively recruit some of the finest teachers in America. We have already developed a rigorous recruiting process..., a comprehensive plan for casting a wide net to increase the candidate pool, and a two-year professional development program to rapidly accelerate the skills of rookie and early-career educators.

Amistad's "12 Lessons About School Reform" (2)

4. **...But Some Curricula Are Better Than Others.** There is a remarkable similarity among the curricular of the schools that have closed the achievement gap are in terms of curriculum. All are intensely standards-based, taking away the endless debate about what is taught, an ceaseless discussion that cripples most schools. We have done extensive research to find the best curricula, visiting high-performing schools, talking to experts and curriculum reps, and reading the research literature. Through the process, we have picked or developed curricula that have a proven track record of producing dramatic student achievement. We do not believe in taking chances with children's futures; instead, we have picked the best curricula, and we will invest extensively in the professional development of our teachers so that they know these curricula well. A great curriculum combined with the knowledge and skill of a master teacher is a winning combination.
5. **"Mere Mortals" not "Superhumans".** We also recognize that almost all of the high-performing charter schools, including Amistad Academy, have relied on one or more "heroic leaders" who combine an incredible 75-plus-hour-a-week work ethic and a charismatic leadership style. Achievement First does not believe that a "heroic leader" is necessary in every school. In fact, we think that "heroic leaders" are not usually the best leaders for long-term, systematic change. We do believe that a strong, passionate, talented leader is necessary at each school unit, but we also believe that, in the past, "heroic leaders" at great urban schools had to be heroic to succeed because their schools did not have the necessary supports. Achievement First's model focuses on finding and training great instructional leaders; surrounding them with dedicated, talented teachers; giving these leaders and teachers a strong, proven school-based model to implement; and providing strong "back office" support so that the teachers and leaders can focus on student achievement. This "back office" support takes two forms: school unit and central office.
6. **An Unwavering Focus on Student Achievement.** Before No Child Left Behind, the discussion about equity in schools most often focused on inputs: per pupil funding, class size, student to teacher ratios and others. The urban schools that have closed the achievement gap have all spent the same or less than their host districts and almost always have larger class sizes and less experienced teachers than the other schools in the city where they are located. However, by focusing exclusively on one output, student achievement, these schools have test scores that often double or triple the average scores of other students in the district. Our name, Achievement First, was consciously selected to constantly reinforce our unwavering focus on producing dramatic, life-changing student achievement, chiefly as measured by statewide, criterion-referenced tests. Furthermore, the entire focus of Achievement First teachers and leaders will be on outputs. Each school will create a "Yearly School Report Card" that highlights key output metrics, which will be mailed to all parents and posted on the Achievement First website.

Amistad's "12 Lessons About School Reform" (3)

7. **Interim Assessments and the Strategic Use of Data**. Achievement First realizes that schools that thrive are those that live their data. Achievement First has developed scope and sequences that clearly outline what standards are to be taught when. Teachers at Achievement First schools are empowered by data; knowing clearly their students strengths and weaknesses, Achievement First teachers pick the best strategies to ensure that *every* student masters the material.
8. **One Hundred 1% Solutions**. School reform efforts in the past have focused on finding the "magic bullet" that will fix the schools. Whether the holy grail was reduced class size, a specific curriculum or increased teacher pay, schools have gone from fad to fad, each time believing that the latest solution was the magic answer. What the high-performing urban schools realize is that it takes all of the following (and more) to close the achievement gap: solid leadership, talented teachers, structured curriculum, effective policies, targeted professional development, no-nonsense school culture, parent engagement, and smooth systems. Brett Peiser, the achievement-oriented principal of South Boston Harbor Academy, says, "There is no 100 percent solution to creating a great school. At South Boston, we have 100 one percent solutions."
9. **Serve ALL Urban Kids**. Building on the strong legacy of Amistad Academy, Achievement First schools will locate all of its schools in high poverty areas with a history of low student performance and will commit to serving the same student population as the host district. Our schools also commit themselves to firm policies against expulsion except in the most extreme cases. Publicizing for student admission will be equal across the entire school catchment area (the entire city for New Haven schools and large swaths of a borough for New York City schools). Achievement First schools will also have 100 percent of students take the state tests each year, and unlike other public schools, we will publicize attrition rates clearly so as not to inflate achievement scores or graduation rates.

Amistad's "12 Lessons About School Reform" (4)

10. **Sweat the Small Stuff.** Walk into one of the few great urban schools in America and there is a palpable, immediately noticeable difference from the chaos, disrespect, and disorder that mar the typical urban school. We reject the dominant paradigm - pick your battles and don't worry about the "small stuff", such as rolling eyes, untucked shirts, or leaning back in chairs. Our schools set extraordinarily high expectations for student behavior, and they are relentless in ensuring that students live up to these expectations. Achievement First recognizes that dramatic academic achievement can only occur in schools with a no-nonsense, structured, positive, achievement-oriented, college-focused environment. Because their teachers are persistent, insistent, and consistent, students' behavior rises to the high expectations.
11. **Fidelity to a Clear, Successful Model is Important.** When Alan Bersin became superintendent in San Diego, he found a district with over 50 reading and math programs and a professional development system characterized by "drive by" sessions in which a guru or external expert would impart his or her educational views without any connection to the curriculum in use or assessment standards. Such fragmentation makes it impossible to drive systemic reform, and Bersin quickly moved toward having common curricula and providing teacher coaches well-versed in the curricula and standards. Achievement First will not be a loose network of schools, each interpreting a broad set of standards in its own way. Curricula, systems, and school culture approaches will be very similar across the schools. Each teacher new to Achievement First will go through a two-year sequence of professional development activities designed to have them fully understand the mission, vision, and values of Achievement First and become master teachers of the Achievement First curriculum.
12. **Flywheel v. Doom Loop.** In *Good to Great*, Jim Collins contrasts the culture of discipline inside truly great organizations with those of struggling competitors. The highly successful companies found a "hedgehog concept" - what they could be the best in the world at - and they slowly, methodically built their business around this concept, gaining momentum each year. The pattern within these companies creates sustained excellence: steps forward consistent with hedgehog concept, accumulation of visible results, personnel energized by results, flywheel builds momentum, steps forward consistent with the hedgehog concept. In contrast, the companies with chronically poor results were caught in devastating "doom loops" that were characterized by a familiar yet highly destructive pattern: disappointing results, reaction without understanding, new direction/program/leader/event/fad, no accumulated momentum, disappointing results. Achievement First will avoid this "doom loop" by sticking to our "hedgehog concept" - our clear school model. Instead of lurching toward new programs, we will continually tweak and improve (not replace) our systems and develop in our people the ability to consistently use our model to produce great results. Instead of looking to "savior leaders" from the outside to run our schools, we will rely on leaders steeped in how to effectively implement our school model.

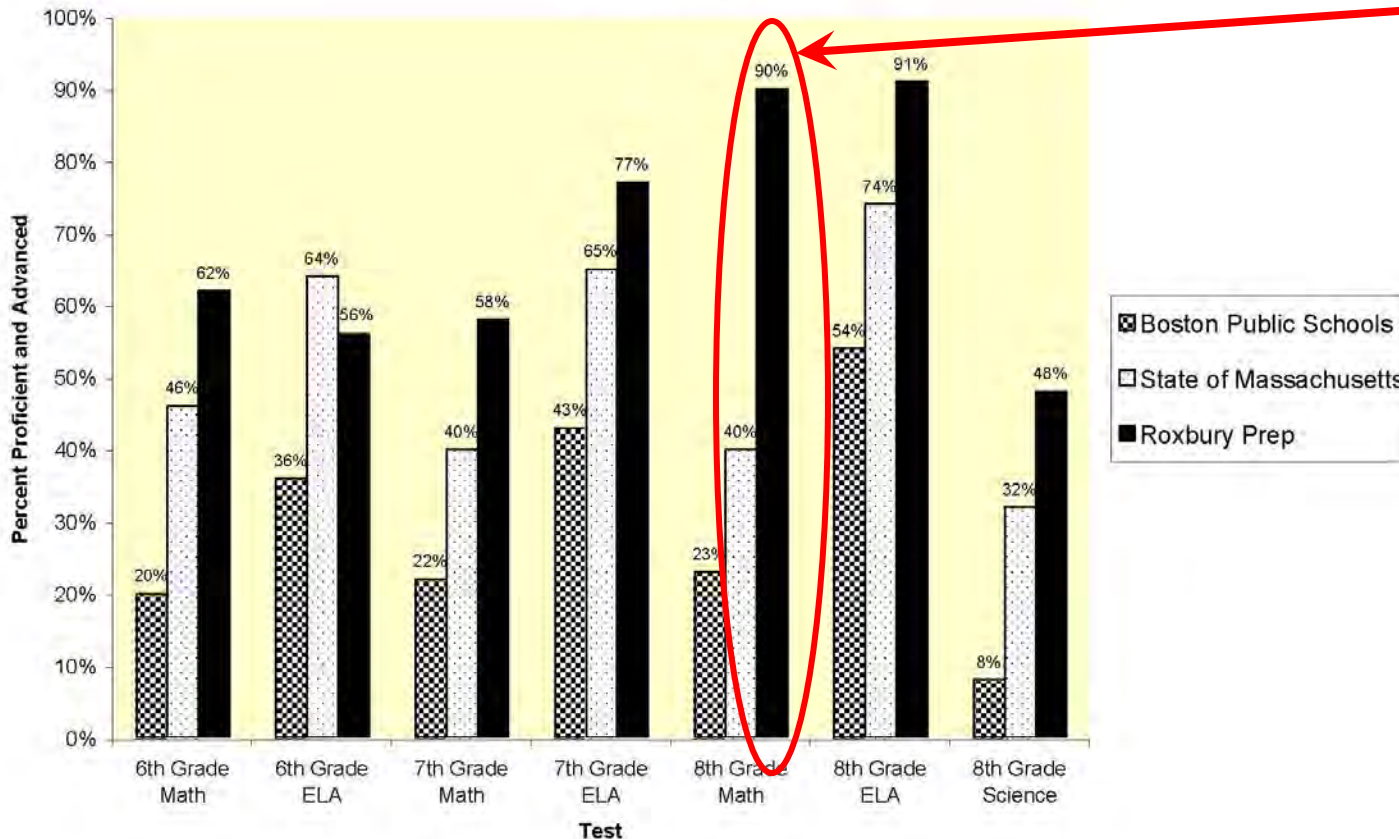
A Third Case Study of Gap-Closing Performance: Roxbury Prep

- Serves 195 Black and Latino 6th, 7th and 8th graders in Boston's Roxbury neighborhood
- Like most successful school, there is a strong focus on culture.
- Core values:
 1. **Scholarship:** We think critically and aspire to and achieve academic excellence.
 2. **Integrity:** We are honest and ethical in our words and our actions.
 3. **Dignity:** We have self-respect and honor our heritages.
 4. **Responsibility:** We are accountable for our decisions and our actions.
 5. **Perseverance:** We are resourceful, work hard, and always strive to do our best.
 6. **Community:** We use our talents to make positive contributions to our communities.
 7. **Leadership:** We act on the principle that if we are not part of the solution, we are part of the problem.
 8. **Peace:** We resolve conflicts with compassion and help others to do the same.
 9. **Social Justice:** We endeavor to make our society more just.
 10. **Investment:** We are reflective, act with foresight, and invest in our futures.

Roxbury Prep Has Been Extraordinarily Successful

- Roxbury Prep students outperform White students in Massachusetts, thereby *reversing* the achievement gap
- It is the highest performing urban middle school in the state
- It has the highest test scores of any predominantly Black school in the state

2006 MCAS Results



Only 10% of these students were at grade level in math in 4th grade, before attending Roxbury Prep

Creating Alternatives

Case Study: Vouchers

There Are Many Misperceptions Around Vouchers That Lead Many to Conclude That They Are a Bad Idea

Facts:

- Voucher programs have a long and successful history in this country
- Nearly every study of vouchers shows that they benefit students who take advantage of them
- Studies show that public schools respond to the competition and thus even the students “left behind” benefit from them
- Vouchers are enormously popular with students and parents

Overview of Vouchers

- School vouchers redirect the flow of education funding, channeling it directly to individual families rather than to school districts. This allows families to select the public or private schools of their choice and have all or part of the tuition paid
- Vouchers can be funded and administered by the government, by private organizations, or by some combination of both
- Most voucher programs are carefully targeted at disadvantaged students
 - Disabled, low income and/or attend chronically failing schools

Voucher-Like Programs Have a Long and Successful History

Federal-Level Examples: Pell Grants and G.I. Bill

- Pell Grants
 - Federally funded grants (not loans) help about 5.3 million full- and part-time college and vocational school students
 - Currently up to \$4,050/year (average: \$2,230), based on need and other factors
 - Most Pell awards go to students with family incomes below \$20,000
- The G.I. Bill
 - Signed into law in 1944, it allowed returning veterans to use publicly funded vouchers to pay for education and training at the institution of their choice, religious or secular, public or private
 - Colleges expanded hugely; had awarded degrees to 160,000 graduates in 1940, but were teaching 2,328,000 students in 1947 as 2 million returning G.I.s chose to pursue higher education
 - Opened higher education to all – including those who previously had been discriminated against. Quotas restricting admission of Jews and Catholics disappeared as schools were swamped with veterans. Previously all-white colleges admitted African-Americans. In fact, one-third of veterans at college between 1946 and 1950 were black and many went on to become leaders in the civil rights movement

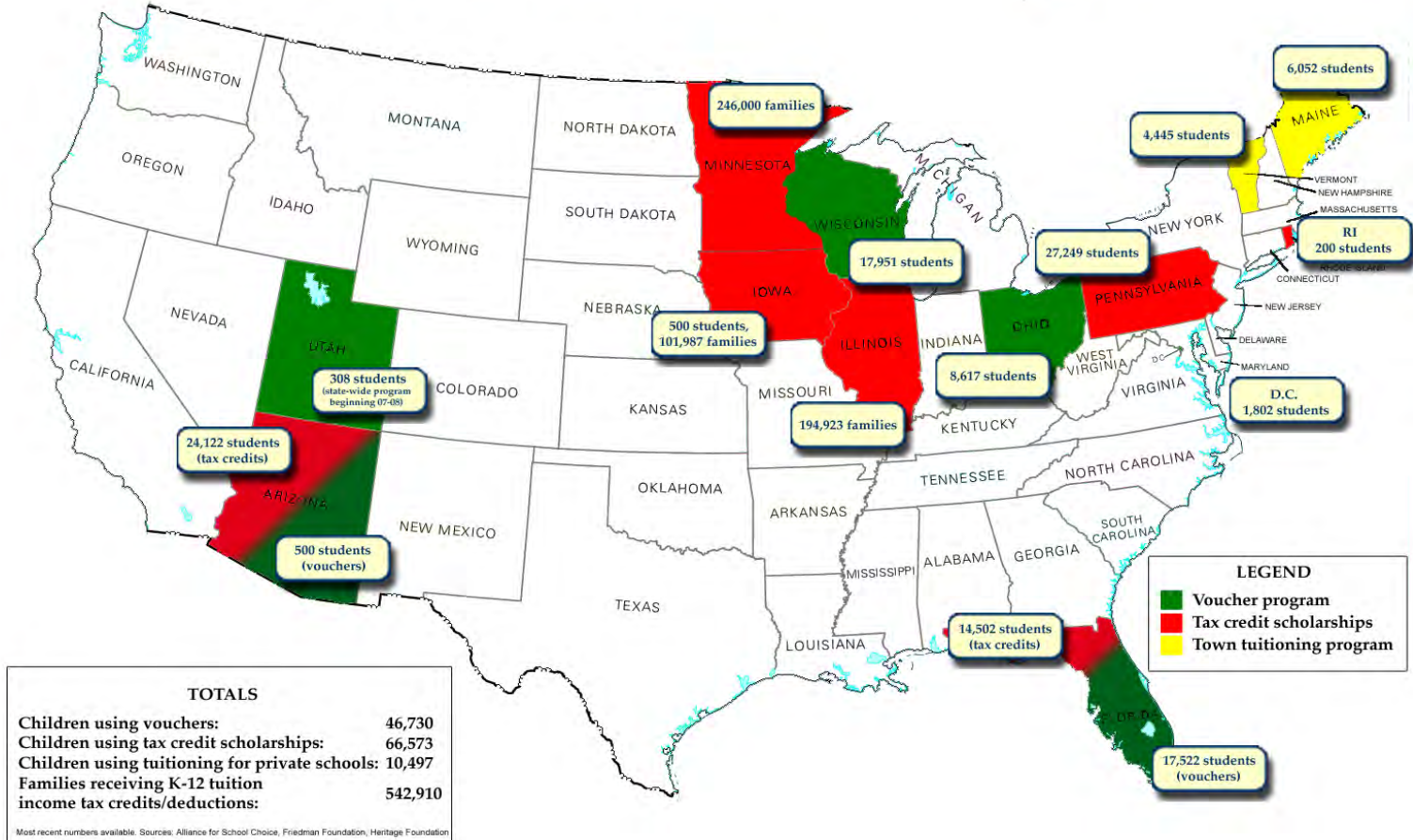
Voucher-Like Programs Have a Long and Successful History (2)

State-Level Examples: Maine and Vermont “Town Tuitioning”

- Maine and Vermont Town Tuitioning
 - “Under a system that is well over a century old, many small towns in Maine and Vermont do not maintain their own high schools, and some do not even maintain elementary schools. These towns instead “tuition” their students to schools in other locations. That is, they raise education funding through local taxes and use it to pay for students to attend either public or private schools nearby. In some cases the town designates a school to which all its students go, often because it is the only school nearby. However, in most cases parents may send their children to any qualifying school, public or private (not including religious schools). All students living in towns that do not maintain schools in their grade level are eligible.” More than 6,000 students in Maine (55% of those eligible) and nearly 4,500 (43%) in Vermont use these vouchers to attend private schools, some even out of state.

School Voucher Programs Are in Effect in Only a Few Areas

Publicly-Funded School Choice Programs



Special Education Students Who Received Vouchers Are Far More Satisfied With the Private Schools They Transferred To, As Are Their Parents

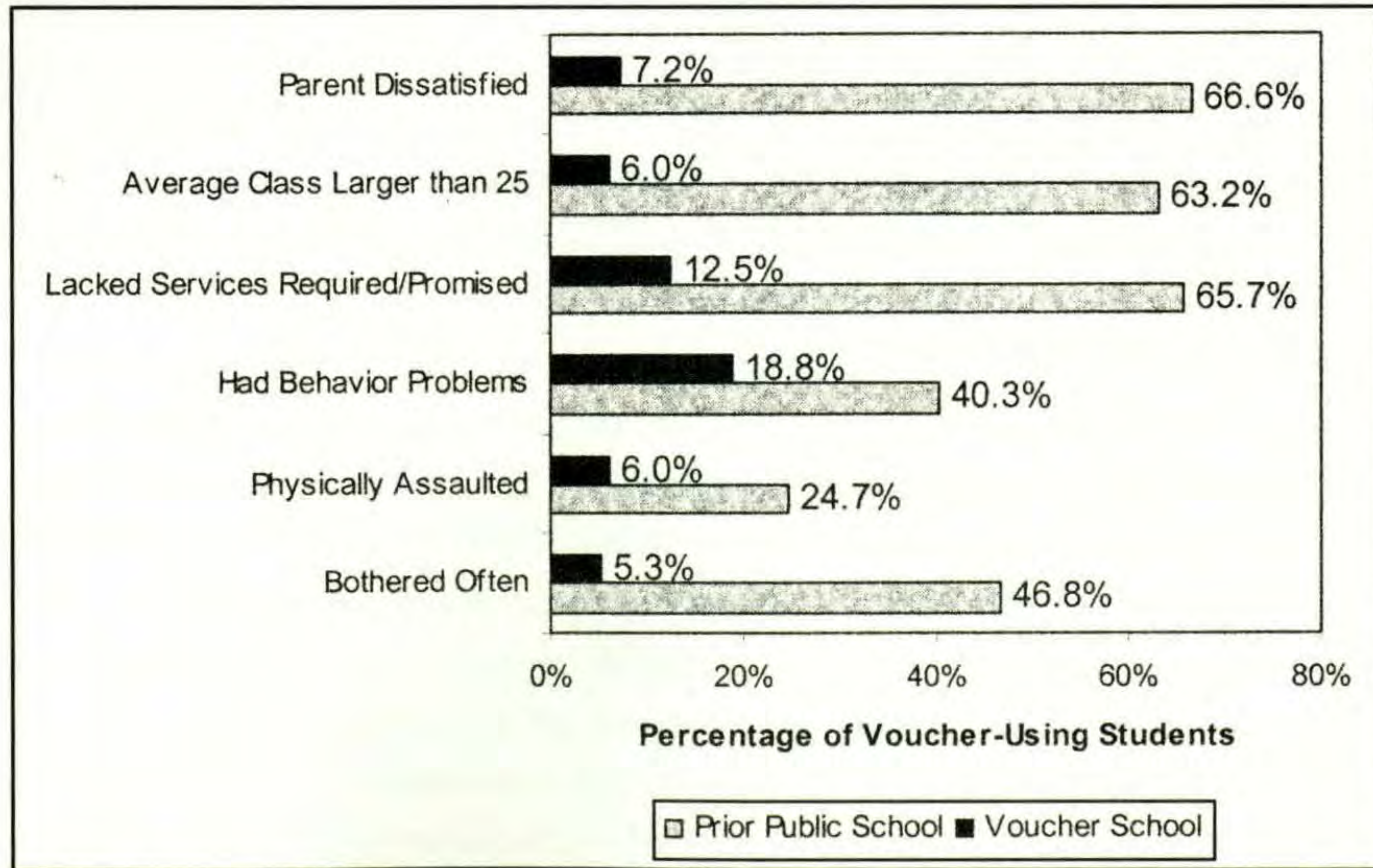


Figure 16.1. Private Schools Serve Disabled Students Better

Source: Greene and Forster, "Vouchers for Special Education Students," Manhattan Institute.

Vouchers Have Been Very Successful in the Few Places They've Been Tried

Contrary to Opponents' Claims, the Data on Vouchers is *Not* Inconclusive

In addition to extremely high rates of parental satisfaction and evidence that affected public schools are spurred to improve, the students who receive vouchers do better in every case:

Table 13.1. Statistically Significant Findings on Voucher Effects

<i>City</i>	<i>Voucher Effect</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Time in Program</i>
Milwaukee	6 percentile point gain	Reading	Four years
	11 percentile point gain	Math	Four years
	8 percentile point gain	Math	Four years
Charlotte	6 percentile point gain	Combined	One year
Dayton	6.5 percentile point gain	Combined	Two years
New York City	9.2 percentile point gain	Combined	Three years
	4.7 percentile point gain	Math	One year
Washington, D.C.	9.2 percentile point gain	Combined	Two years

But What About the Recent Study That (Supposedly) Showed That Public School Students Do Just As Well As Those At Private Schools?

It Was Treated As a Public-School Triumph That “Casts Doubt on the Value of Voucher Programs,” As The Wall Street Journal Described It

- “If anything, the report from the Education Department did just the opposite. It concluded, after compensating for socioeconomic differences and other factors, that public-school students score slightly better on tests in fourth grade, while private-school students score slightly better in eighth grade. Given a choice, would you rather be ahead in the fourth inning or later in the game?”
- “According to federal surveys, the typical private school’s tuition is only about half what a public school spends per pupil... General Motors would not celebrate the news that its \$40,000 Cadillac performed almost as well as a \$20,000 Honda.”
- “The most scientific way to compare schools is with the kind of randomized experiment that has been conducted in New York, Dayton and Washington. In these cities, students from low-income families were given a chance to apply for school vouchers. After the vouchers were awarded by lottery, researchers tracked the voucher students in private schools and compared them with a control group: the losers of the lottery who remained in public school.

After three years, the white and Hispanic voucher students were doing as well as their counterparts in public school, and the African-American voucher students were testing a full grade level higher than the blacks in the control group. The parents of all the voucher students — white, Hispanic and African-American — reported that there was much less fighting, cheating, vandalism and absenteeism in their schools than did the public-school parents.

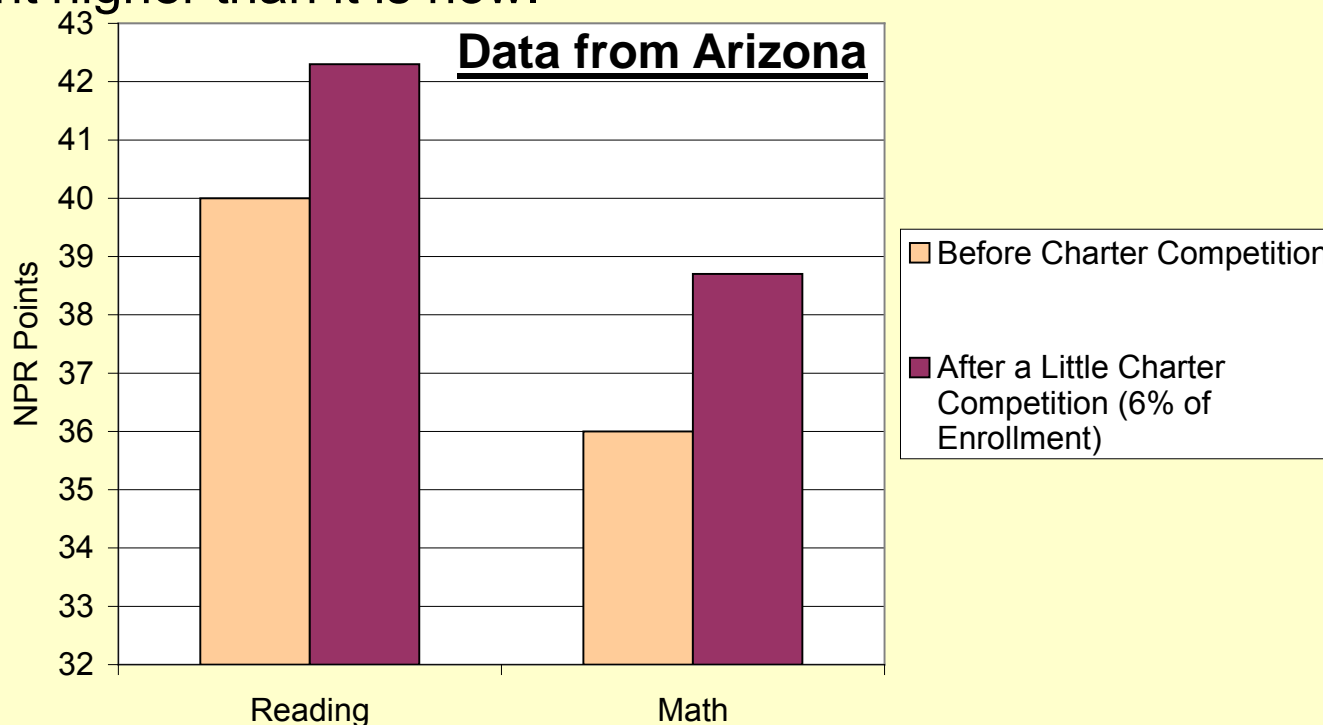
Even though the private schools spent less money per pupil than the public schools, the parents were much more satisfied with them. Happier parents, better students, lower costs — those are the clear advantages of private schools and voucher programs.”

Case Study: Milwaukee's Highly Successful Voucher Program

- The oldest voucher program in the nation, launched in 1990
- More than 15,000 students, equal to 15% of the city's students, attend 125 schools, 70% of them religious
- Families/students have an abundance of choice, the main elements of which are: 1) there is open enrollment within the public school system, meaning students can apply to schools in any district with open seats; 2) for low-income families there's the voucher program; and 3) charter schools.
- Due to political wrangling, there hasn't been a study since 1995 of how the voucher students are doing, but high school graduation rates are much higher (64% vs. 36%) and parental satisfaction is extremely high
- Highly successful for *both* the voucher students *and* the students in Milwaukee public schools
 - Two studies showed that as the program expanded, there was a marked improvement in test scores at the public schools most affected by the program (those with low-income students eligible for the vouchers)
 - In 13 of 15 categories, public school student scores on state standardized test increased between 1997 and 2005
 - The dropout rate declined from 16.2% to 10.2%
 - The program saves money: Public schools spend more than \$10,000/student; private schools get less than \$6,400/voucher student
 - Far from draining money from the public schools, per pupil spending, inflation adjustment, has *risen* 27% from \$8,888 in 1990 to \$11,317 in 2005

There Is Substantial Evidence That Public Schools Do Respond When Alternatives Are Offered Whether From Other Districts, Charter Schools and/or Vouchers

- Harvard University economist Caroline Hoxby found that competition sparked improvement in neighboring public schools in Arizona, Michigan, and Milwaukee and concluded: "If every school in the nation were to face a high level of competition both from other districts and from private schools, the productivity of America's schools, in terms of students' level of learning at a given level of spending, would be 28 percent higher than it is now."



There Is Substantial Evidence That Public Schools Do Respond When Alternatives Are Offered (2)

- A study in North Carolina, which created charter schools in 1996, compared public schools that faced competition from charter schools and those that didn't. It concluded:
 - “These comparisons provide consistent evidence that charter-school competition raises the performance composite of traditional public schools by about 1 percent. This represents more than one-half of the average achievement gain of 1.7 percent made by public schools statewide between 1998–99 and 1999–2000 and is, from a policy perspective, nontrivial.”
- The Washington (DC) Teachers' Union recently reversed long-standing positions and agreed to allow teachers to earn bonuses tied to student performance and to opt out of some union work rules
 - According to an article in the Washington Post:

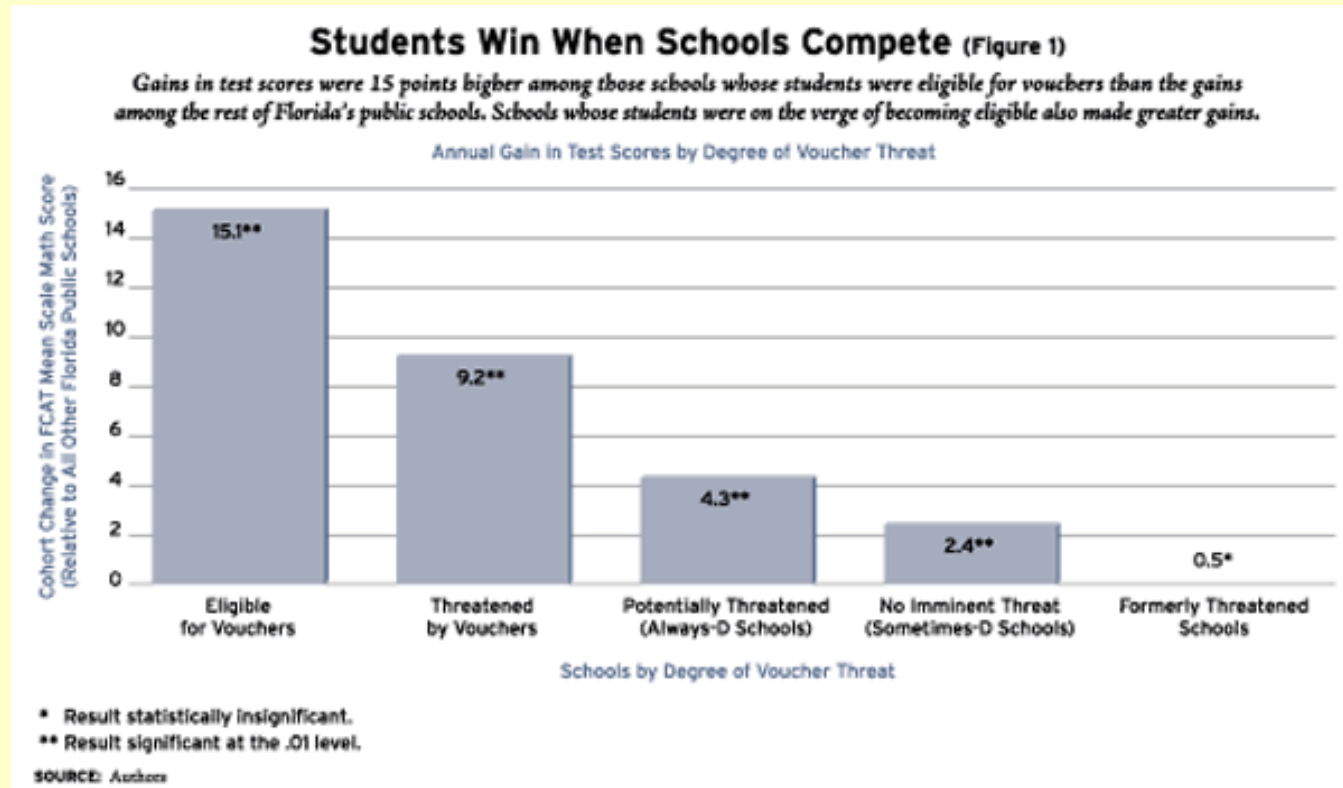
Union President George Parker said the changes are needed so that the District's traditional public schools can compete more successfully with the public charter schools, which have lured away thousands of students.

"The landscape has changed. Our parents are voting with their feet," Parker said. "As kids continue leaving the system, we will lose teachers. Our very survival depends on having kids in D.C. schools so we'll have teachers to represent."

Fifty-one charter schools are operating in the city. In five years, charter school enrollment has grown by 7,000 students, to 17,500. During the same period, enrollment in the D.C. school system has dropped by about 10,000 students, to 58,000.

There Is Substantial Evidence That Public Schools Do Respond When Alternatives Are Offered (3)

- In Milwaukee, two studies showed that as the voucher program expanded, there was a marked improvement in test scores at the public schools most affected by the program (those with low-income students eligible for the vouchers)
- In Florida's A+ program, which offers vouchers to all students at chronically failing schools, students at schools faced with the threat – or reality – of losing students to vouchers improved the most



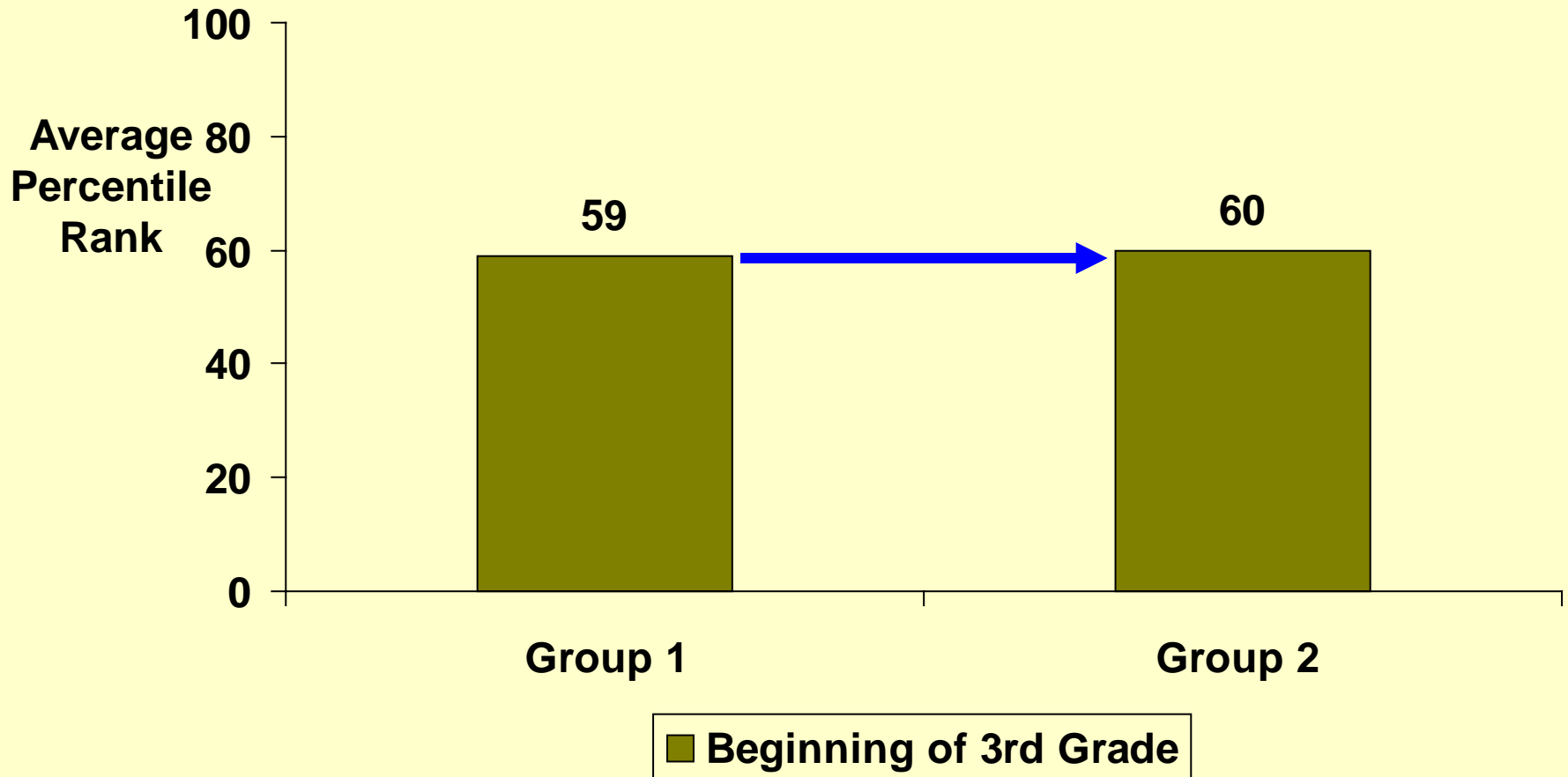
Note: The results were similar using Stanford-9 test results

Source: [Competition Passes the Test](#), Greene, Winters, Education Next, Summer 2004

The Importance of Effective Teachers

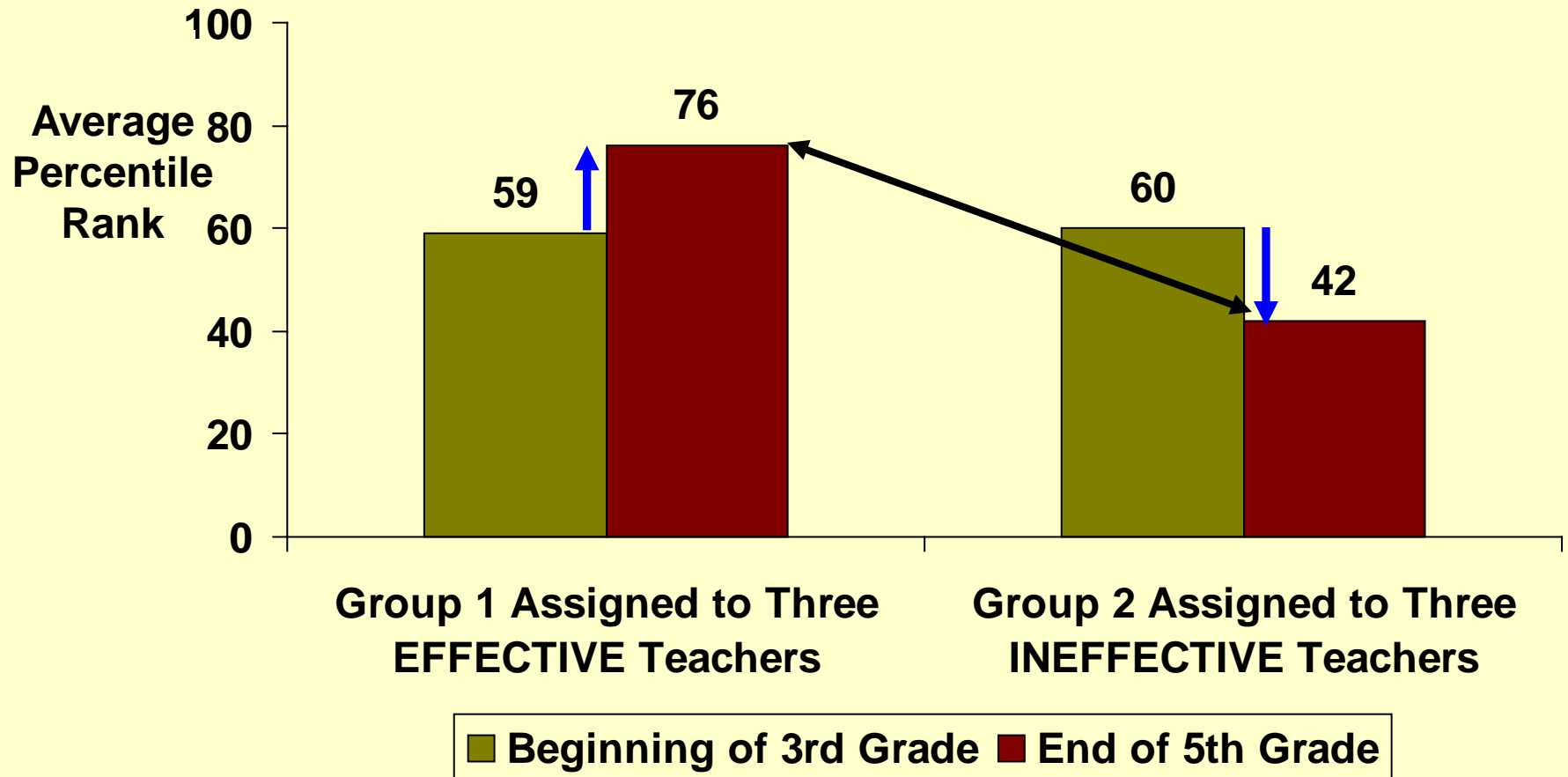
- Numerous studies have shown that the most important determinant of student achievement, by far, is teacher quality
- There is enormous variability among teachers

One Study in Dallas Compared Two Groups of Students, Both of Which Started 3rd Grade at About the Same Level of Reading Achievement...



Source: Heather Jordan, Robert Mendro, and Dash Weerasinghe, *The Effects of Teachers on Longitudinal Student Achievement*, 1997. Slide courtesy of Ed Trust.

Three Years Later, One Group Vastly Outperformed the Other.
The Only Difference: Group 1 Had Three Effective Teachers,
while Group 2 Had Three Ineffective Teachers

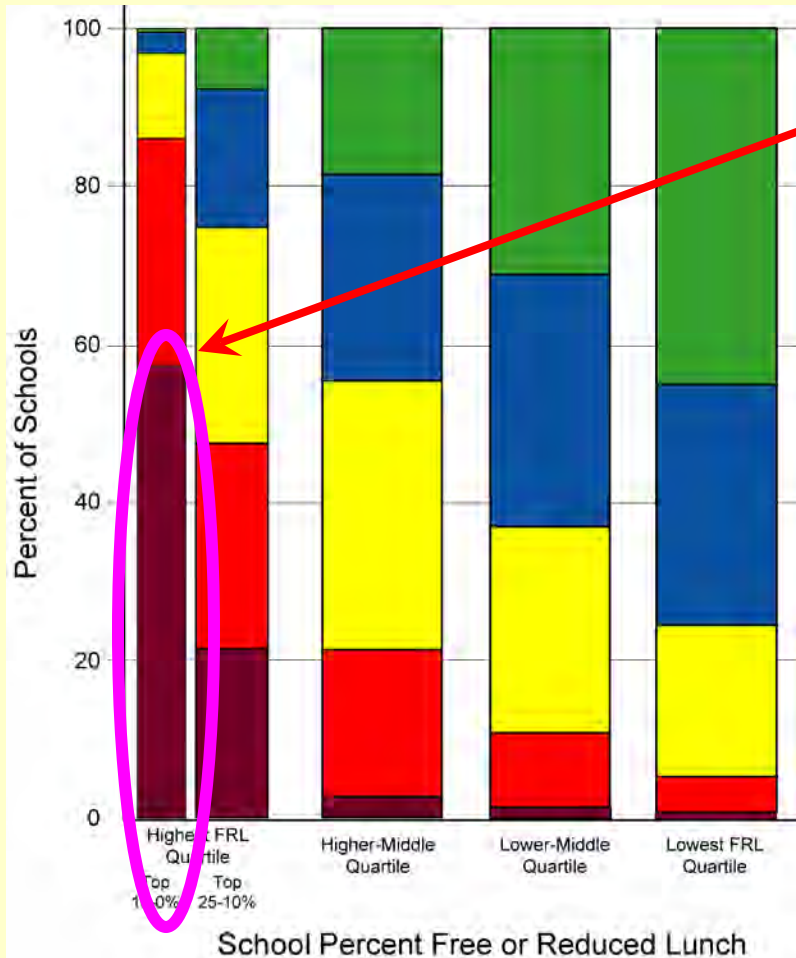


Source: Heather Jordan, Robert Mendro, and Dash Weerasinghe, *The Effects of Teachers on Longitudinal Student Achievement*, 1997. Slide courtesy of Ed Trust.

Now That We've Established That Teacher Quality Matters A Lot, Let's Examine How Teacher Talent Is Distributed

- By any measure, low-income, minority students are not getting their fair share of high-quality teachers
 - Teachers in schools nationwide that primarily serve such students have consistently told me that 20-30% of teachers in these schools are highly ineffective
 - This is reinforced by the Bain study cited earlier

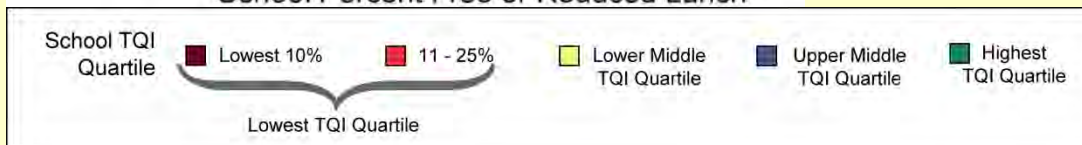
High-Poverty Schools in Illinois Have By Far the Lowest-Quality Teachers*



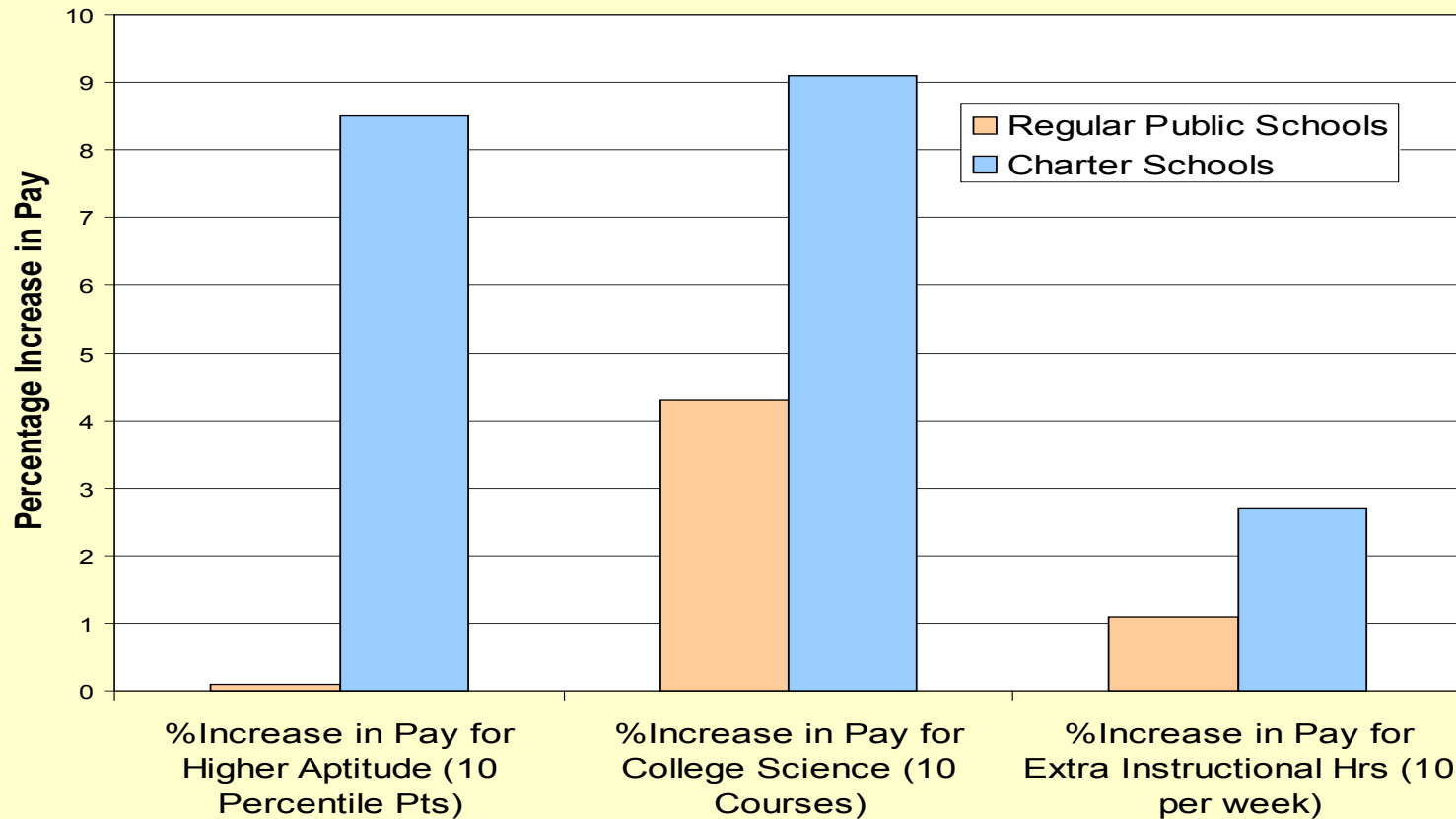
Nearly 60% of teachers in the highest-poverty schools are in the bottom 10% of the Teacher Quality Index*

* The Teacher Quality Index is Based on Five Factors:

1. % of Teachers with Emergency/Provisional Certification
2. % of Teachers from More/Most Selective Colleges
3. % of Teachers With at Least 4 Yrs of Experience
4. % of Teachers Failing Basic Skills Test on 1st Attempt
5. Teachers' Average ACT Composite and English Scores



In Contrast With Public Schools, Charter Schools Have Highly Variable Pay



It /s Possible to Change Teacher Compensation

Denver Teachers Voted Overwhelmingly to Adopt a New System

The Traditional Pay System

Denver's Salary Schedule (Figure 1)

With relatively low starting salaries and guaranteed raises over time, the current Denver Public Schools salary schedule is typical of compensation schemes for teachers. Each step represents a year of teaching.

	B.A.	M.A.	DOCTORATE
New Hire	\$31,320	\$31,779	
Step 1	\$32,971	\$33,454	\$39,169
Step 2	\$33,073	\$33,697	\$40,903
Step 3	\$33,225	\$35,101	\$42,642
Step 4	\$33,480	\$36,503	\$44,377
Step 5	\$33,785	\$38,053	\$46,251
Step 6	\$33,988	\$39,671	\$48,219
Step 7	\$35,421	\$41,337	\$50,290
Step 8	\$36,912	\$43,087	\$52,449
Step 9	\$38,456	\$44,924	\$54,702
Step 10	\$40,092	\$46,860	\$57,057
Step 11	\$41,784	\$48,843	\$59,521
Step 12	\$43,566	\$50,944	\$62,082
Step 13	\$45,546	\$53,401	\$64,919

SOURCE: Denver Public Schools

The New Pay System

Merit and Battle Pay in Denver (Figure 2)

Denver teachers hired before 2006 have a choice between the traditional salary schedule and this four-dimensional merit pay system. Teachers hired after January 1, 2006, will automatically enter the new system.

Learning Gains

- Teachers who exceed expectations for student growth as measured by a statewide Colorado test will receive a sustainable 3% raise.
- All teachers will set two student growth objectives with the help of their supervisors. Teachers who meet both objectives will receive a 1% raise; those who meet one objective receive a 1% bonus.
- Teachers at schools identified as distinguished will receive a 2% bonus.

Evaluation

- Teachers found to be unsatisfactory will have their salary increase delayed for a minimum of one year.
- Probationary teachers will be evaluated every year in their first three years of service and will receive a 1% raise if they are judged to be satisfactory.
- Non-probationary teachers will be evaluated every three years, and will receive a raise of 3% if they are deemed satisfactory.

Battle Pay

- Teachers working in assignments identified as hard-to-staff and in schools termed hard-to-serve will receive a 3% bonus.

Credentials

- Teachers with active licenses from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) will be awarded a salary increase of 9%.
- Teachers who complete one Professional Development Unit (PDU) in their concentration will receive a 2% raise.
- Teachers who complete an advanced degree relevant to their assignment will receive a 9% raise.

SOURCES: Denver Public Schools and Denver Classroom Teachers Association

The High School Curriculum Needs to Be Strengthened

Courses for a Typical U.S. High School Student

Freshman Year, Fall

- English
- Health Ed/Academic Foundations
- Conceptual Physics
- Volleyball

Freshman Year, Spring

- Algebra
- Auto Shop
- Auto Shop
- Volleyball

Sophomore Year, Fall

- English
- Spanish
- Chemistry
- Open Period

Sophomore Year, Spring

- Geometry
- World History
- Volleyball
- Open Period

The High School Curriculum Needs to Be Strengthened (2)

Courses for a Typical U.S. High School Student

Junior Year, Fall

- Mythology
- Algebra
- Auto Shop
- Career Choices

Junior Year, Spring

- Algebra 2
- American History
- Arts Tech
- English

Senior Year

- To embarrassing to even show...

Other Sample Courses

- Pre-Spanish
- Future Studies
- Exploring
- Principles of PE
- Teen Living
- Life Management
- Food Fundamentals
- Winter Activities

There Are Big Differences in Rigor Between Courses With the Same Name

Example #1: Grade 10 Writing Assignment

Rigorous

A frequent theme in literature is the conflict between the individual and society. From literature you have read, select a character who struggled with society. In a well-developed essay, identify the character and explain why this character's conflict with society is important.

Non-Rigorous

Write a composition of at least four paragraphs on Martin Luther King's most important contribution to this society. Illustrate your work with a neat cover page. Neatness counts.

Example #2: 9th Grade Paper on *The Odyssey*

Rigorous

Comparison/Contrast Paper Between Homer's Epic Poem, *The Odyssey* and the Movie "O Brother Where Art Thou"

By nature, humans compare and contrast all elements of their world. Why? Because in the juxtaposition of two different things, one can learn more about each individual thing as well as something about the universal nature of the things being compared.

For this 2-3 page paper you will want to ask yourself the following questions: what larger ideas do you see working in *The Odyssey* and "O Brother Where Art Thou"? Do both works treat these issues in the same way? What do the similarities and differences between the works reveal about the underlying nature of the larger idea?

Example #2: 9th Grade Paper on *The Odyssey*

Non-Rigorous

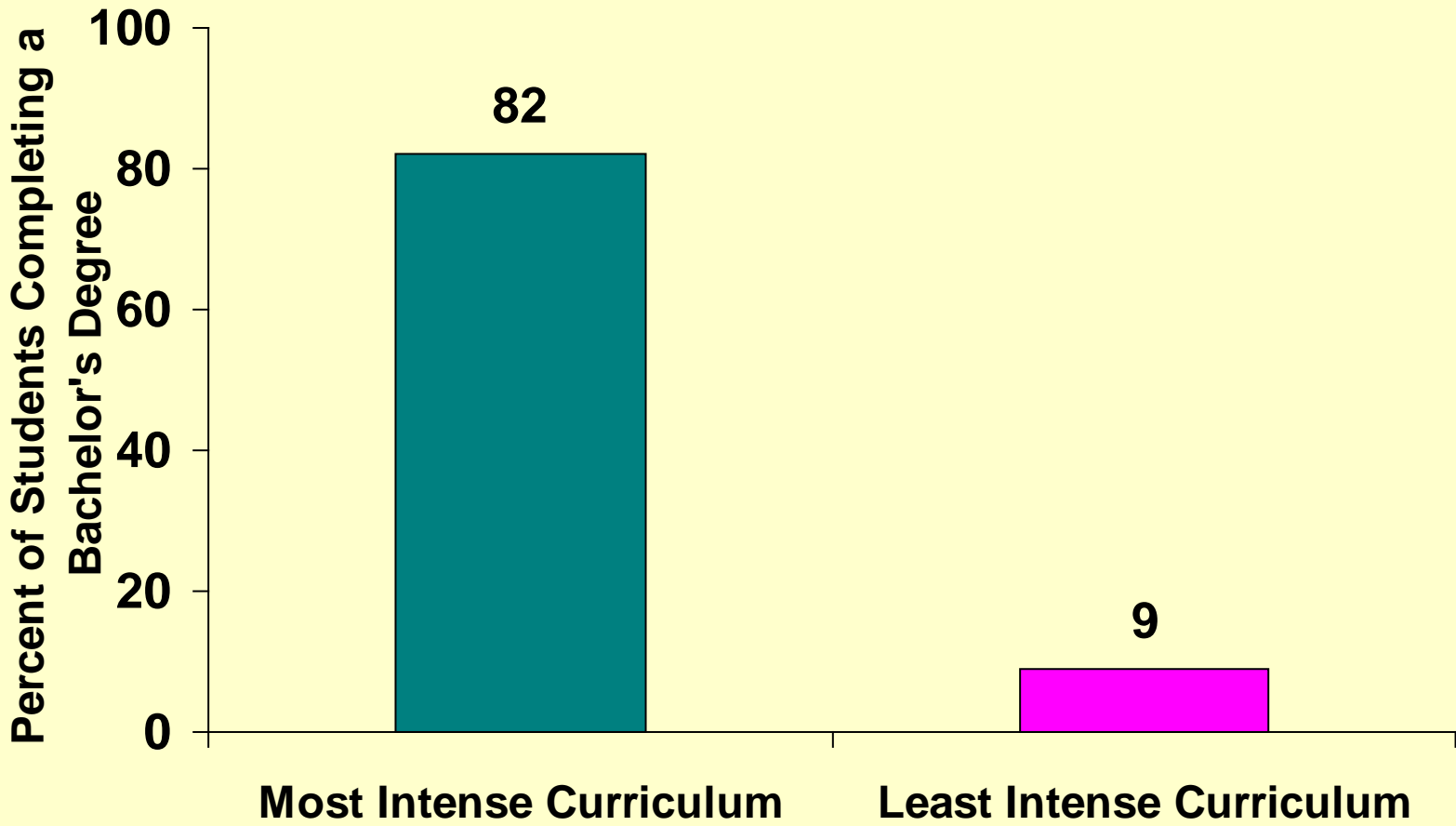
Divide class into 3 groups:

Group 1 designs a brochure titled "Odyssey Cruises". The students *listen* to the story and write down all the places Odysseus visited in his adventures, and list the cost to travel from place to place.

Group 2 draws pictures of each adventure.

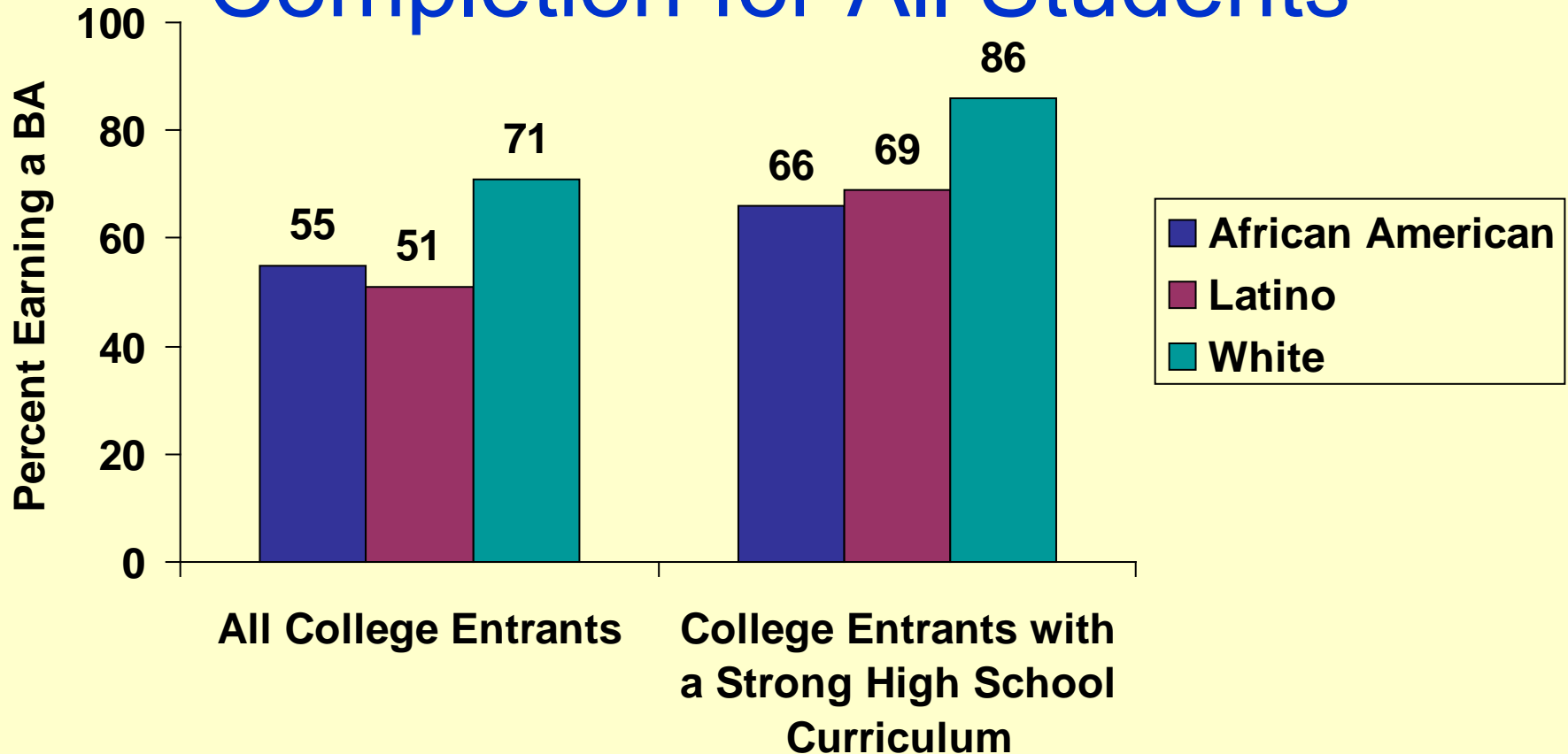
Group 3 takes the names of the characters in the story and gods and goddesses in the story and designs a crossword puzzle.

High School Curriculum Intensity is a Strong Predictor of Bachelor's Degree Completion



Curriculum quintiles are composites of English, math, science, foreign language, social studies, computer science, Advanced Placement, the highest level of math, remedial math and remedial English classes taken during high school.

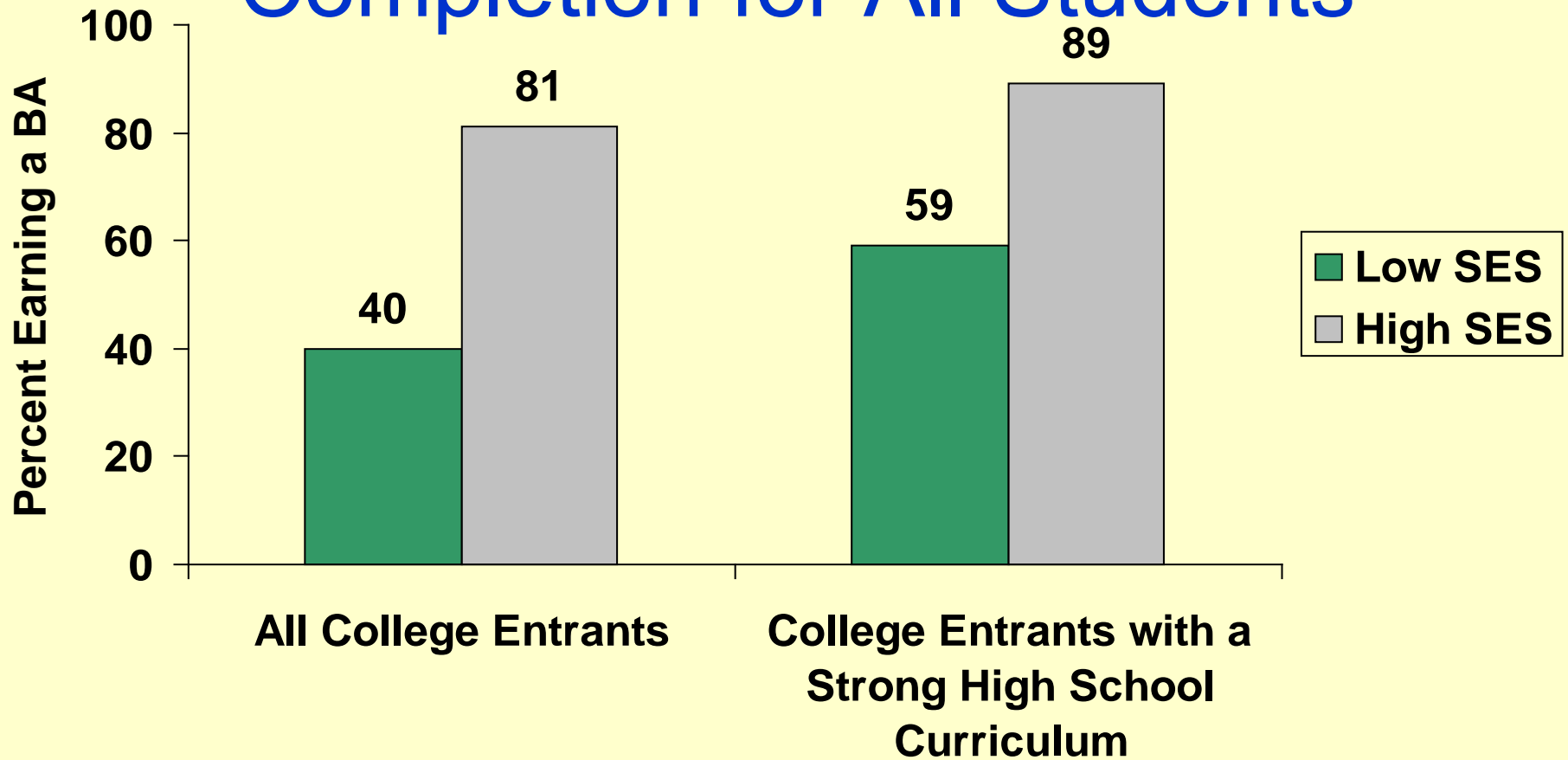
A Rigorous High School Curriculum* Greatly Increases Bachelor's Degree Completion for All Students



*Rigorous Curriculum is defined as the top 40 percent of high school curriculum and the highest high school mathematics above Algebra 2.

Note: These numbers reflect outcomes for high school graduates who enter four-year institutions with no delay.

A Rigorous High School Curriculum* Greatly Increases Bachelor's Degree Completion for All Students

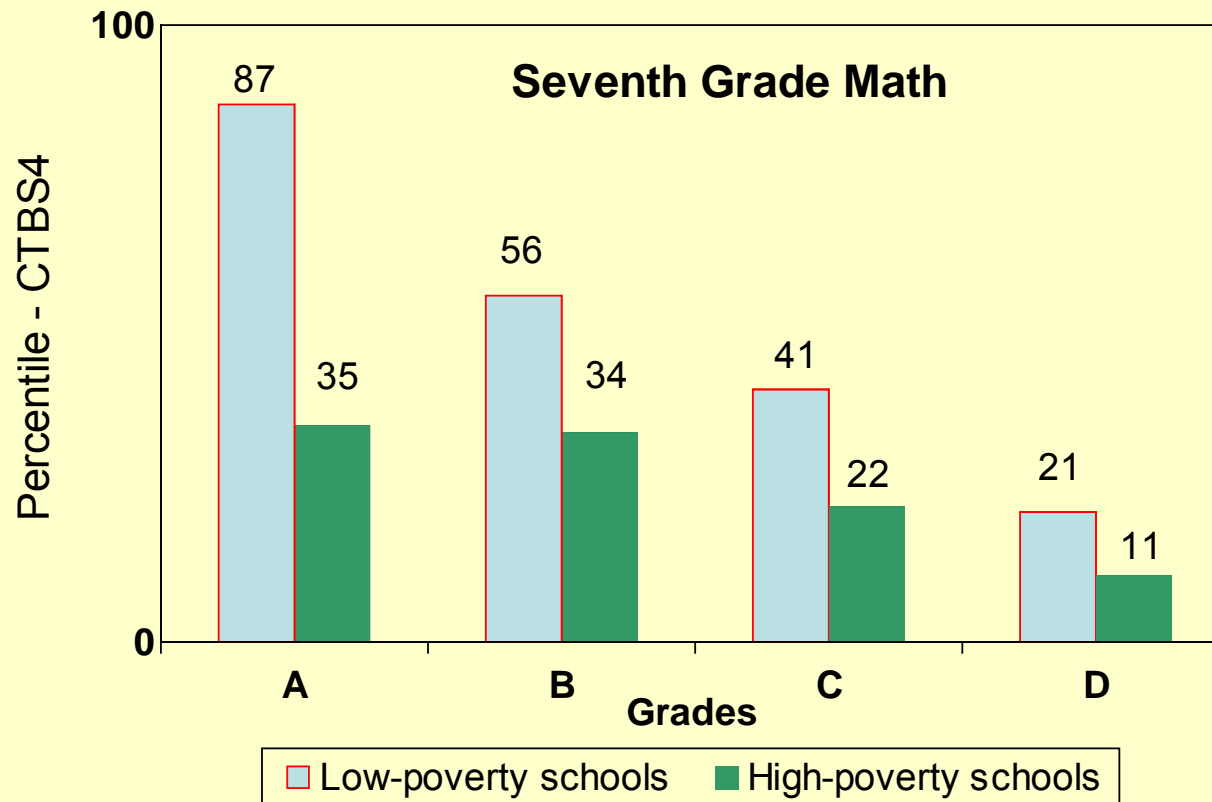


*Rigorous Curriculum is defined as the top 40 percent of high school curriculum and the highest high school mathematics above Algebra 2.

Note: These numbers reflect outcomes for high school graduates who enter four-year institutions with no delay.

Source: Clifford Adelman, U.S. Department of Education, The Toolbox Revisited, 2006. Slide courtesy of Ed Trust.

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. Slide courtesy of Ed Trust.

Barriers to Change

“It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it.”

– Upton Sinclair

The Teacher Union Contract Can Be an Enormous Barrier to Needed Reform

Case Study: New York City

The teacher union contract is more than 200 pages long; with the various side agreements and state laws that supplement the terms of the contract, it grows to 600. These pages determine nearly every aspect of what a teacher does, and does not do, in a New York City school, and what can and can't be done to them. For example, a high-school teacher in New York City cannot be asked to teach for more than 3.75 hours per day.

Nor can a teacher be asked to...help special-education students on and off the bus, help college applicants prepare their transcripts, score city-wide tests, or write truant slips. One New York City teacher cannot be paid more, or less, than any other teacher at the same level of seniority, regardless of the particular teacher's talents and effort or the difficulty of recruiting a teacher for a hard-to-find position such as math or science...The right to fire a teacher is limited by teachers' "retention rights" and a complex and lengthy set of due process procedures. Assistant principals have similar rights.

In short, although principals are supposed to be the CEOs of their schools, they have little control over their management teams. Hiring, firing, promoting, setting compensation, determining work hours and assignments, setting requirements and expectations: these powers, taken for granted in most organizations, are, for all practical purposes, outside the purview of a principal.

Steps for Giving a Tenured Teacher a Poor Performance Rating in New York City

Under the contract, a principal can give an unsatisfactory (“U”) rating to a teacher at the end of any school year, with or without providing interim feedback or support. Typically, however, a principal may first informally speak to a teacher who has performance problems and suggest ways to improve, perhaps through counseling memos “or other non-disciplinary means” (p. 128 and Memorandum of Agreement). The principal’s authority to do so is limited, however.

A principal may also seek a formal conference with the teacher or attempt formal peer intervention (p. 132). This process is repeated as often as the principal deems necessary and can spare the time to do it. If these steps fail, the teacher eventually receives a “U” rating.

After a teacher receives a first “U” rating, the teacher cannot transfer to another school and must be offered professional development to improve performance. If problems persist, the cycle of documenting problems continues and, if no improvement occurs by the end of a second year in the classroom, another “U” rating is given.

The Principal Union Contract Can Also Be an Enormous Barrier

Case Study: New York City

School principals, whose union contract is a slim document (150 pages) by New York City union standards, also work by rules that reward uniformity before excellence. Principals are paid in lockstep, regardless of their performance, abilities, or even the size of the school they oversee. Their agreement also spells out in mind-numbing detail the circumstances under which a superintendent can relieve a principal of his or her responsibilities. Tenured principals have to do something truly egregious to be fired. The process for removing a principal begins with sending letters of complaint to the personnel file, any and all of which can be appealed by the principal. The process, if successful, can take as long as 150 days, which is most of a school year.

By the same token, even small procedural details in the contract can have profound effects on the operation of a school. Principals and assistant principals, for instance, are not required to notify superintendents in advance of their retirement, a circumstance that can create significant disruptions. You can “retire” in the middle of the year and head off to Bermuda, as my son’s principal did, without any penalty or deduction from the pension.

Remarkably, while the school system purports to hold children to a standard of excellence, principals can be removed only if they engage in “persistent educational failure.” Intermittent failure or persistent mediocrity is perfectly acceptable.

How Has the Party Managed to Sustain This Dissonance This Long?

- Minority leadership has failed to own, much less force the issues
 - Three reasons: Power, History, Lack of Knowledge/Apathy
- Union message has dominated the debate:
 - More money, less class size
- Party managed “straddle” brilliantly
 - Sometimes support charter schools, the “safest” alternative among reform initiatives
 - Largely avoided taking the issue seriously (other than early support of NCLB)
 - Kerry’s “evolving” position a perfect example
 - No outrage; serious reform simply not a priority

But a Day of Reckoning is Near

- A handful of established Democratic politicians are moving on this issue
- More importantly, a new wave of Black and Latino leaders are poised to seize control of the nation's education agenda
 - Well funded
 - Of unimpeachable credentials/credibility
- And are on the verge of doing so
 - With the right leadership and funding
 - Examples:
 - Barack Obama
 - Cory Booker (Newark mayor)
 - Adrian Fenty (DC mayor)