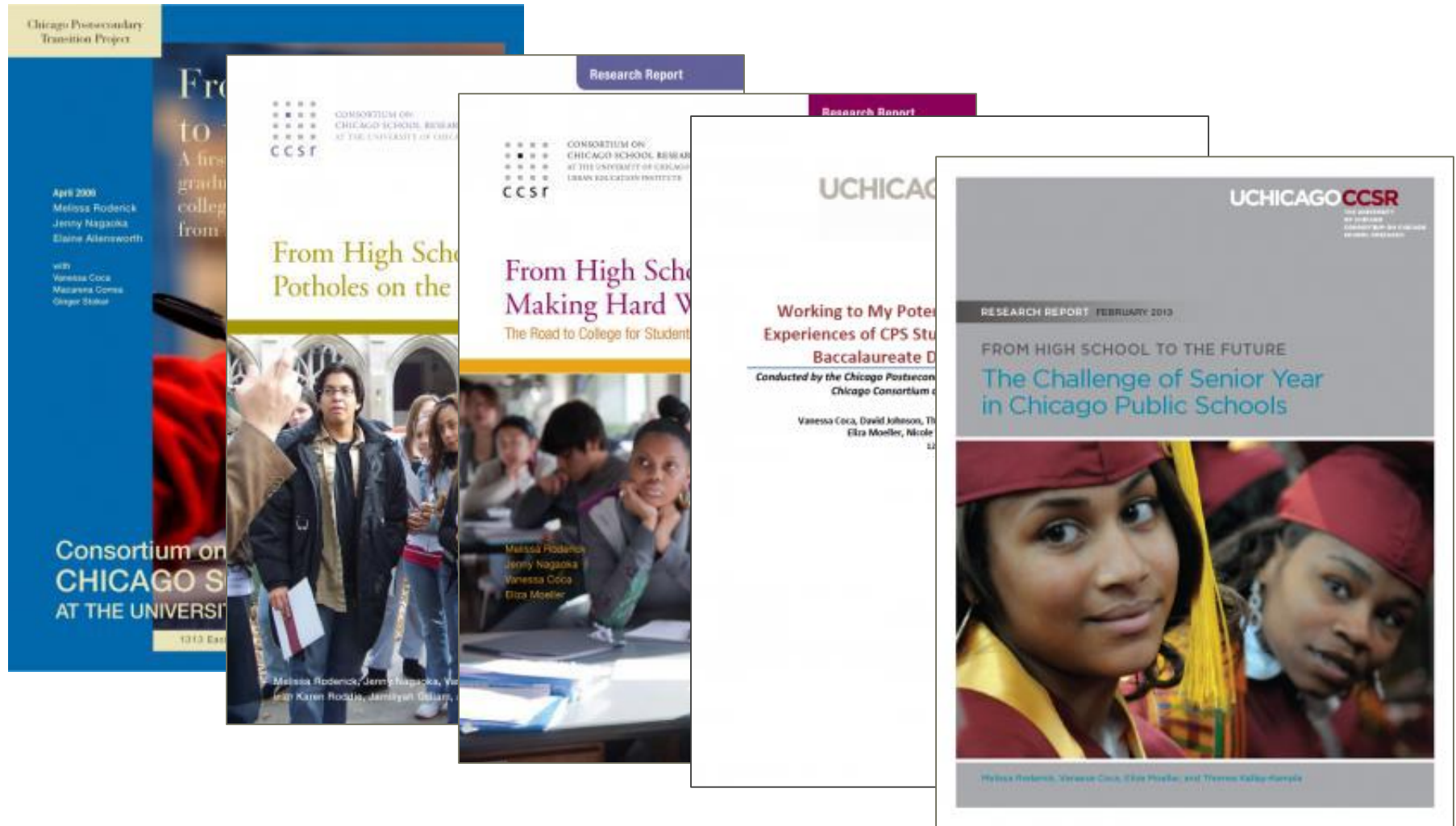


**UCHICAGO Consortium**  
**ON SCHOOL RESEARCH**

# Chicago Postsecondary Transition Project at the University of Chicago Consortium





# **From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College**

By Melissa Roderick, Jenny Nagaoka, Vanessa Coca, and  
Eliza Moeller



# Guiding Questions

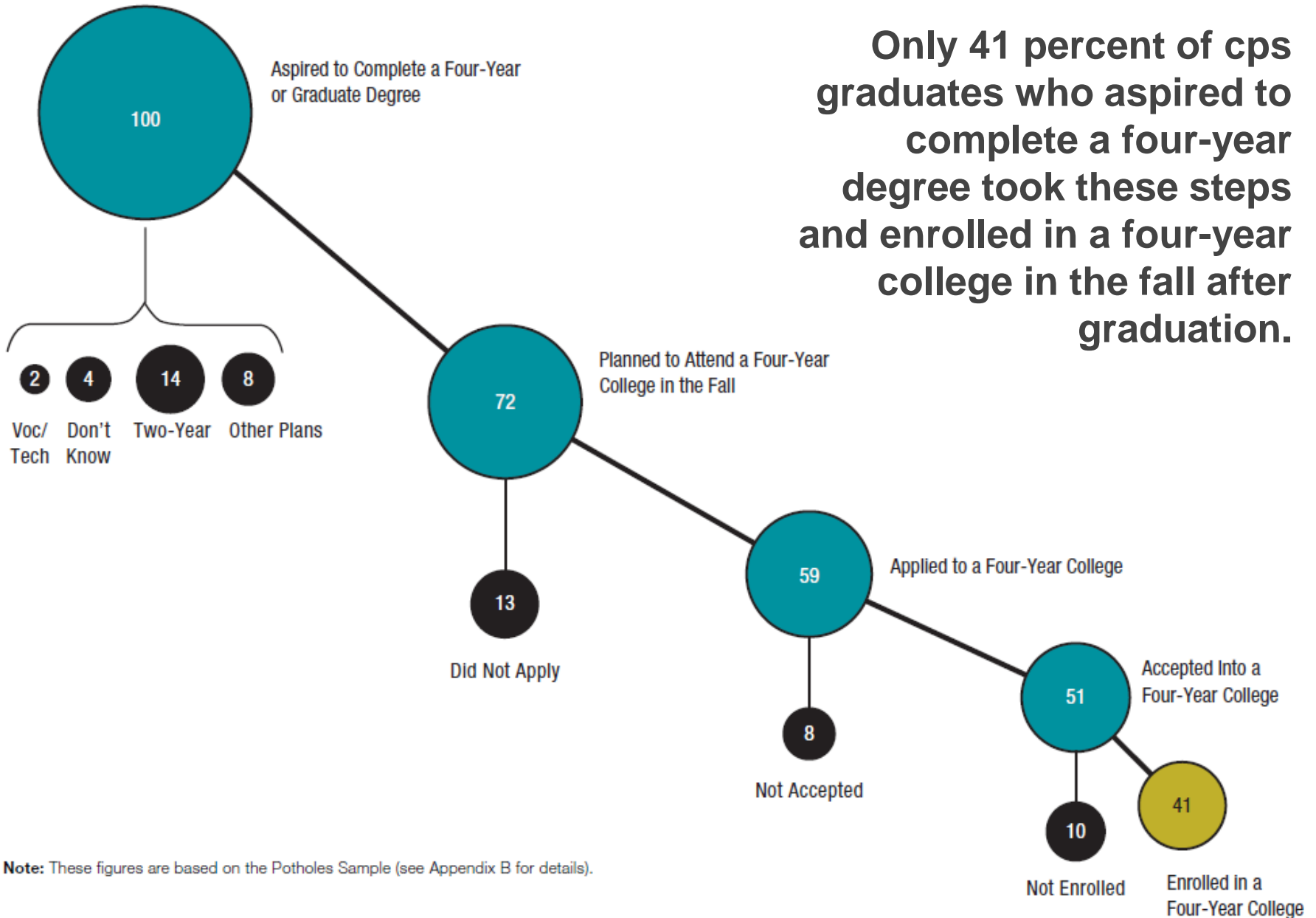
1. What are the major barriers to college enrollment that students at your school face?
2. What strategies are in place at your school to support students' college search and application process and who does it involve (9th-12th graders, teachers, counselors, school staff, external partners)?
3. Where are the gaps or blindspots that still need to be addressed at your school when it comes to improving access to college?

**Why do some high school graduates go to college and some do not?**

**Question 1: How effectively are  
CPS graduates participating in  
the college application  
process?**

# Tracking CPS Graduates' Steps Towards College

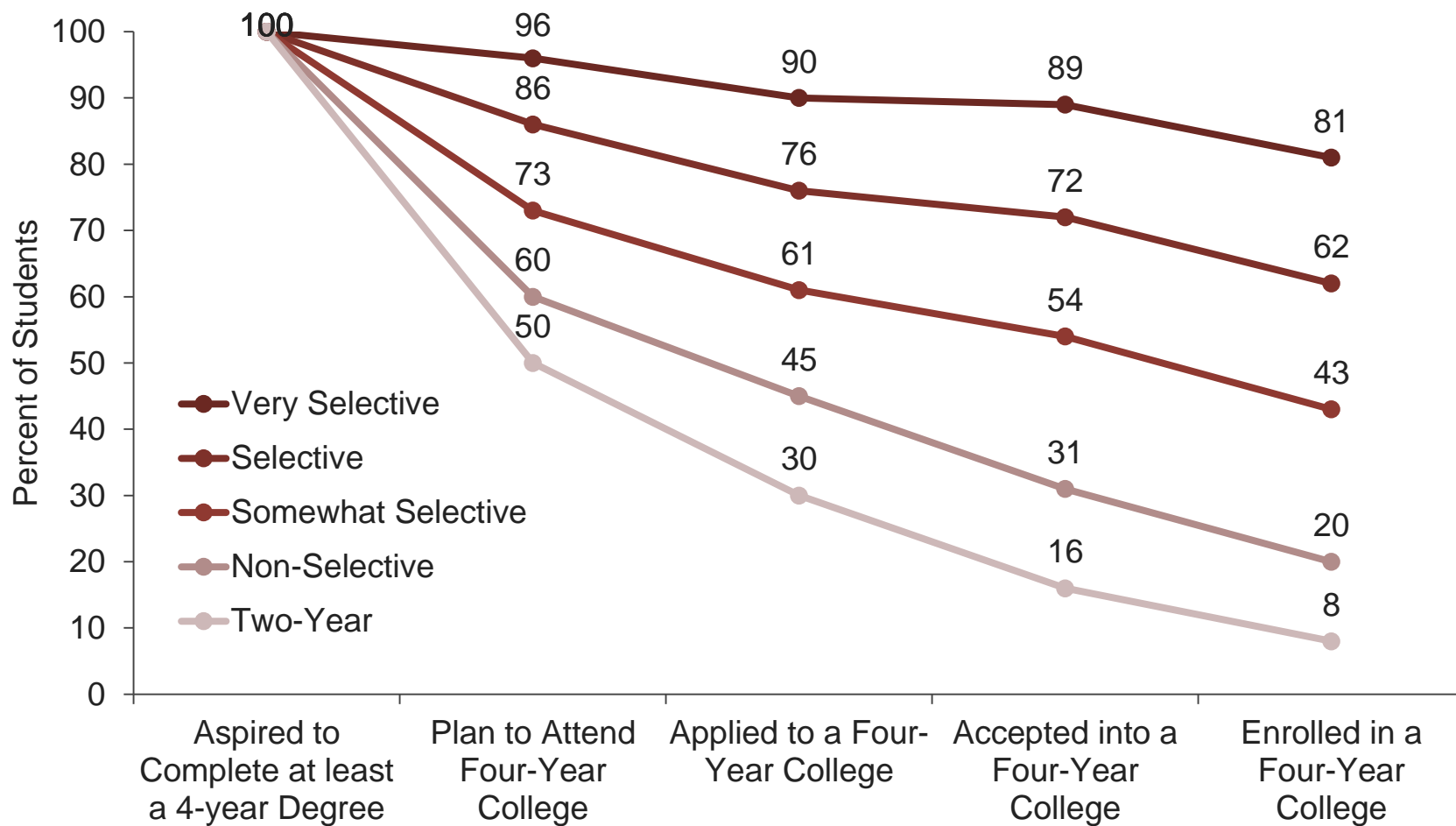
**Only 41 percent of cps graduates who aspired to complete a four-year degree took these steps and enrolled in a four-year college in the fall after graduation.**



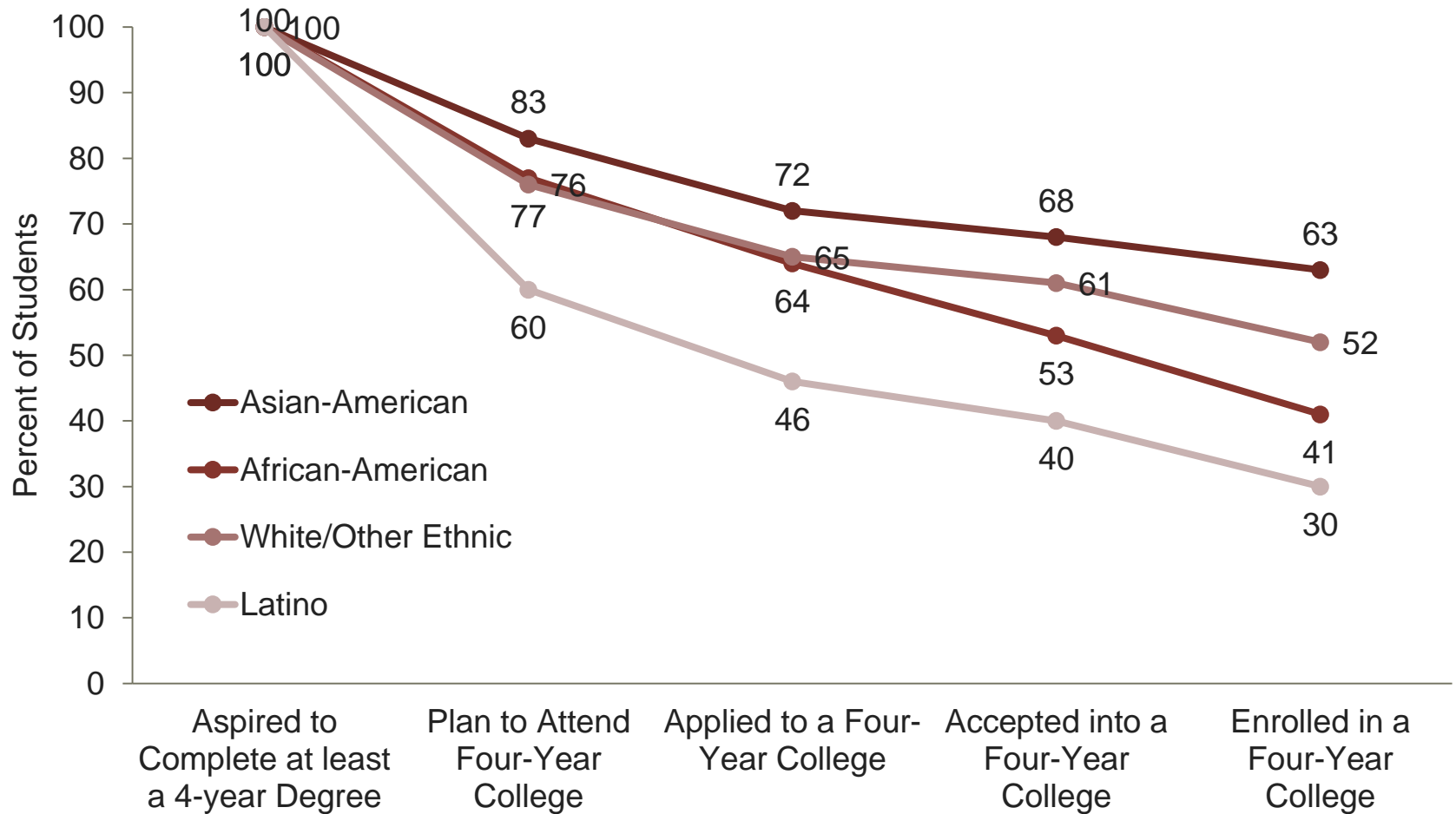
**Note:** These figures are based on the Potholes Sample (see Appendix B for details).



# Only 61 percent of students qualified to attend a somewhat selective college applied to a four-year college



# Of students who aspired to a Bachelor's degree, Latinos were the least likely to plan to attend and apply to a four-year college



**Can high schools make a  
difference?**

**Yes!**

# **Question 2: Are students effectively searching to find their “best match”?**

A young woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt, is raising her right hand in a classroom setting. In the background, other students are seated at desks, some with laptops open.

# Clara: Highly Qualified for College

- International Baccalaureate student
- 24 on the ACT
- 3.9 GPA (4.7 weighted)
- Class Valedictorian
- Puerto Rican descent
- Strong family press for college; little history of college-going in family
- Access to a very selective college or university

# Clara in Spring of Junior Year

## Experts Say: College Search

- College Search
  - Originally interested in the Illinois Institute of Art
  - Late in junior year, changes her mind, but is unable to formulate a new plan or college search
- Support
  - Strong family push for college
  - Had one pivotal suggestion from a teacher
  - Has not spoken to a counselor
    - went to the counseling office once and describes staff as “grouchy”

# Clara in Fall of Senior Year

## Experts Say: College Applications

- Applications
  - Plans to complete 8 applications, including mix of public and private local colleges
  - “Definitely” going to a local private institution
- Support
  - Visiting a lot of colleges with her mom
  - Has not had a one-on-one conversation with an adult at her school about her plans

# Clara in Winter of Senior Year

## Experts Say: Applications Finished

- Applications/Acceptances
  - Completed applications at 4 four-year colleges
  - Accepted to another local private institution and “definitely” plans to attend
- Finance
  - Very confused about FAFSA; thought she’d have it done in April/May
- Support
  - Has not seen a counselor



Interviewer: So you're definitely going to Loyola?

**Clara:** Uh, [small liberal arts college]. (laughs)

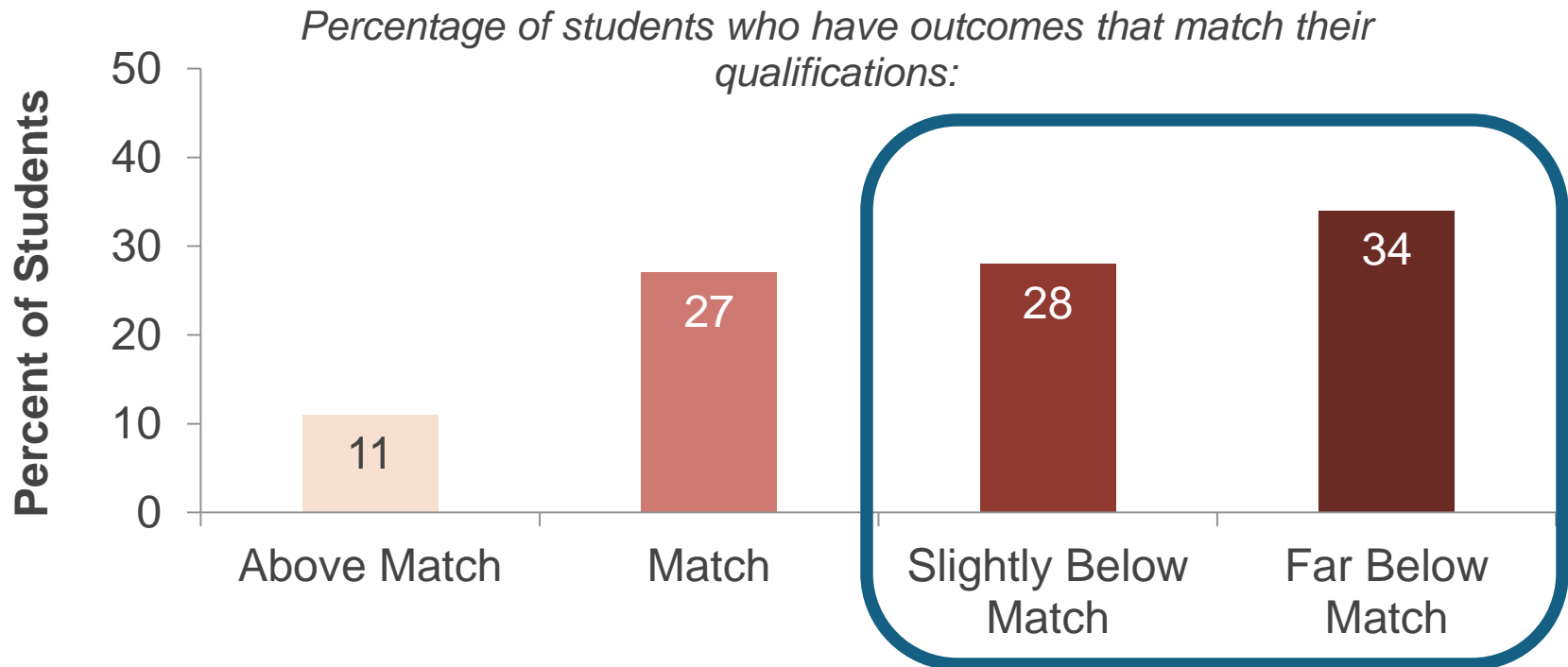
Interviewer: Ah, that's what I want to know. Last time I talked to you, you were like I mean I'll give you the list that you told me. 'Cause Loyola you had been accepted to.

**Clara:** Yeah. And Columbia. Columbia was like the first.

Interviewer: [Small liberal arts college] is not on this list. Last time you said Loyola, UIC, and Columbia. [**Clara:** (laughs) Yeah.] What happened?

**Clara:** Um, well my mom we passed by the school and I'm like this is a nice school. What is that? And then we looked and it's like [name of small liberal arts college]. So my mom like started looking up stuff she's like, "I think you'd like this school." And so we looked at it, the web page and then we signed up for the tour and I was like I really love this school.

# Most CPS graduates enroll in colleges that have selectivity levels far below the kinds of colleges where they would likely be accepted



Note: Students who are labeled as “Above Match” enroll in schools with selectivity ratings that exceed what they have access to attend. Students labeled as “Match” enroll in schools with ratings that match what they have access to attend. Students labeled as “Slightly Below Match” attend schools that are one selectivity category below their access level. In the case of students with only access to a two-year school, those who do not enroll in any college are considered “Slightly Below Match.” Students labeled as “Far Below Match” attend schools that are two or more selectivity levels below what they have access to attend, in some cases these students do not attend college at all.

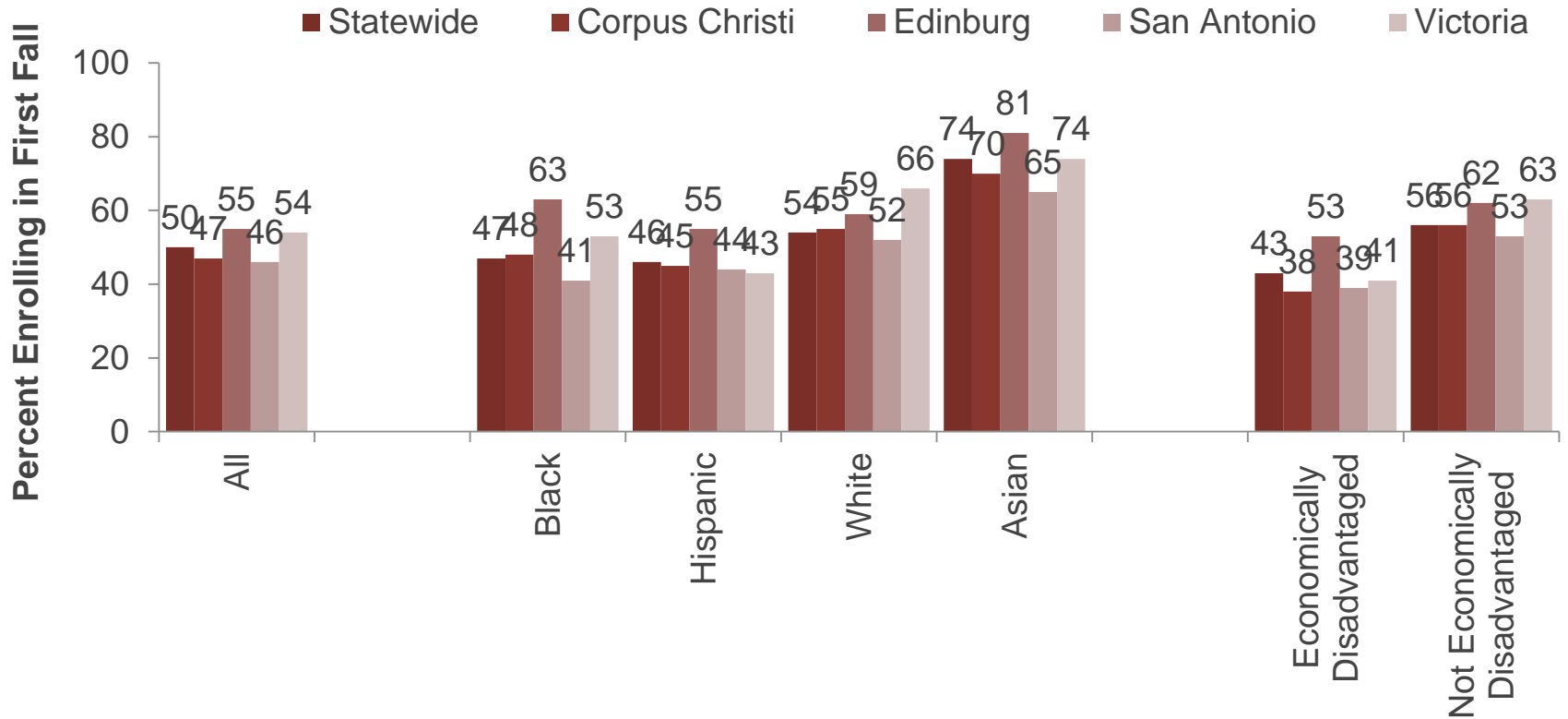
# Conclusion

- Chicago students at all levels of qualifications struggles at different points in the post-secondary planning process and often defaulted to colleges for which they were overqualified.
  - Only 41 percent of CPS students took steps necessary & enrolled in four-year college
    - Drop off is worse for Latino students & students with weaker qualifications.
  - Only about a third who aspired to complete a BA enroll in a college that matches or exceeds their qualifications.

# College Enrollment Rates in Texas

# Half of TX high school graduates do not enroll in college.

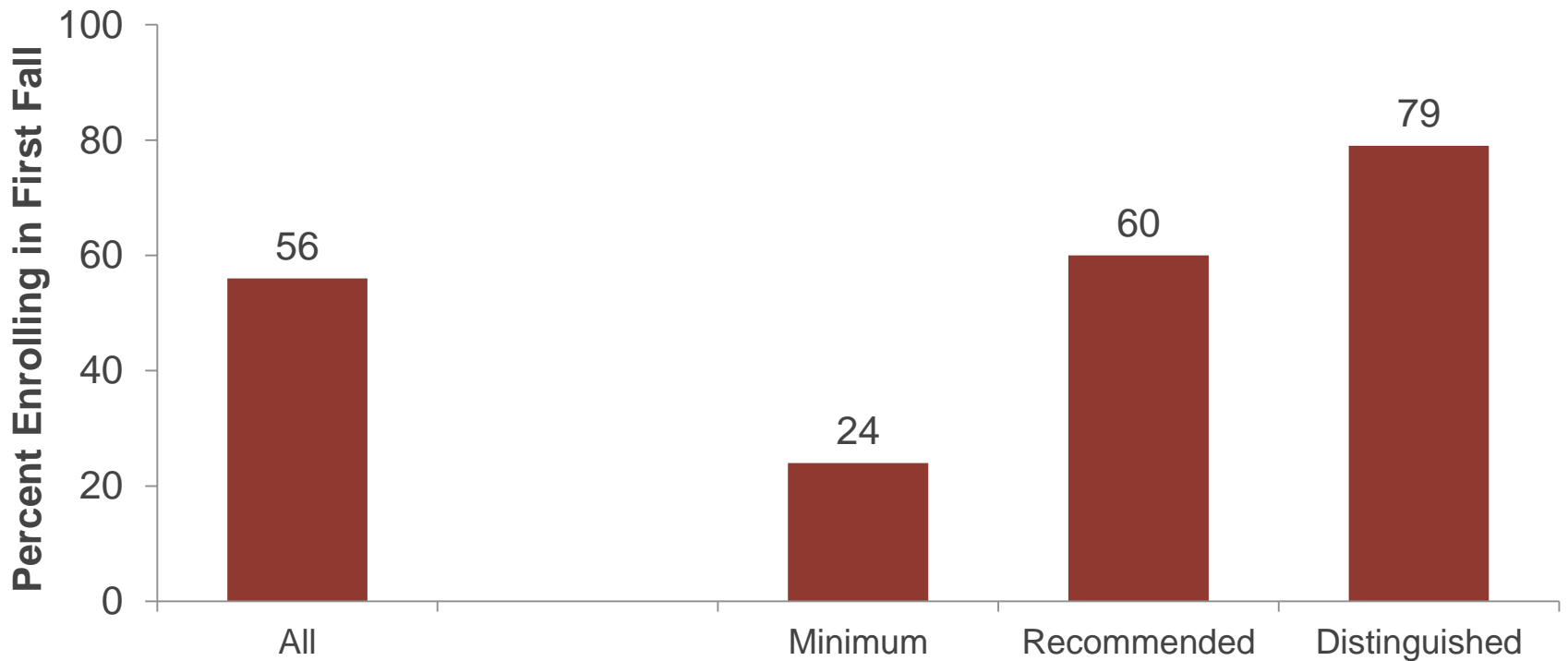
## 2015 College Enrollment Rates by Race/Ethnicity, Family Economic Status & ESC



Source: The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. *Tracking Postsecondary Outcomes. Dashboard.*

# Big differences emerge when comparing graduates with different high school diplomas

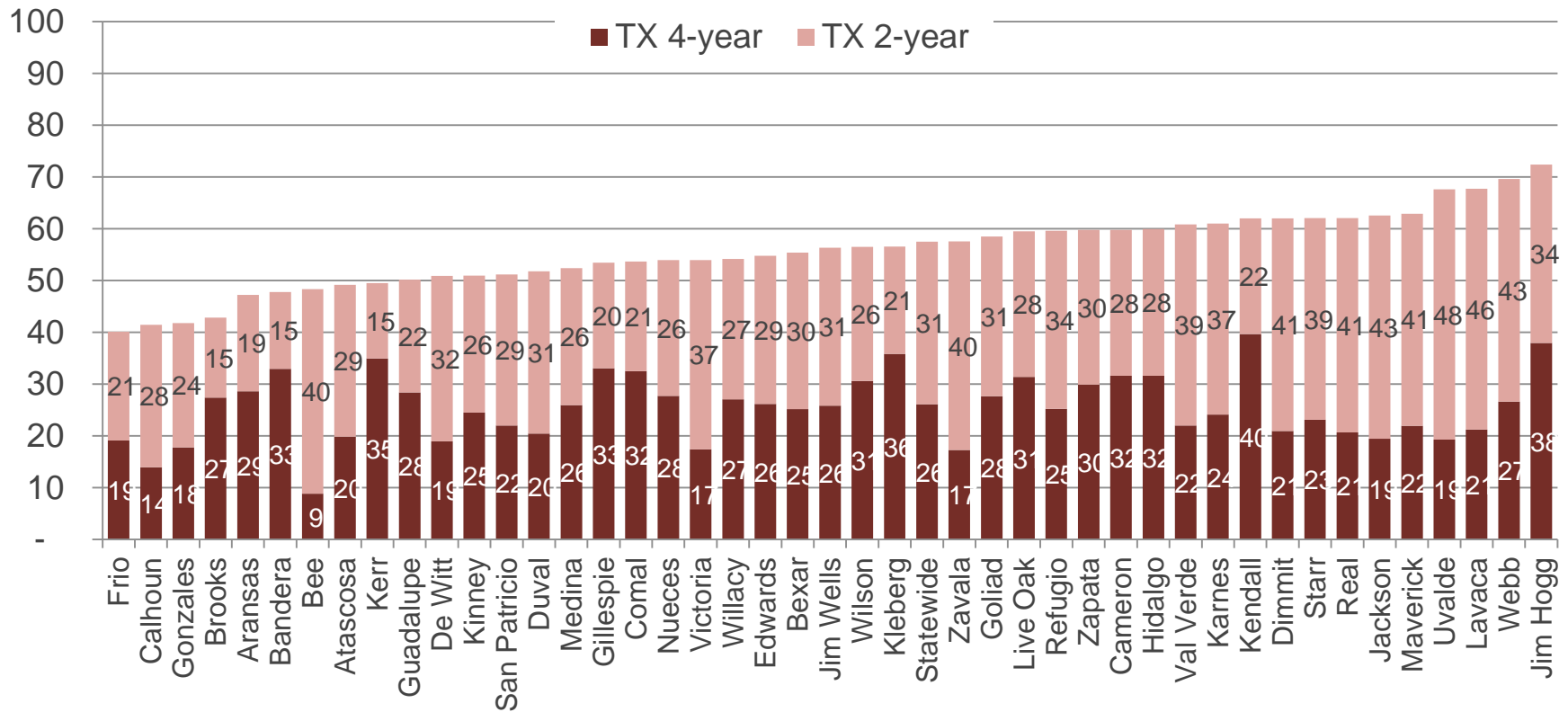
## 2009 College-Going Rates by Type of HS Diploma



Source: The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board website

# College enrollment rates differ by TX county

Academic Year 2013-2014 Texas Public High School Graduates Enrolled in Texas Higher Education, Academic Year 2014-2015



Source: The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board website







# Guiding Questions

1. What is the purpose of senior year at your school?
2. In what ways do the academic experiences of seniors at your school differ from the academic experiences of juniors?
3. How do the academic experiences of seniors differ across different groups of students at your school?



# **From High School to the Future: The Challenge of Senior Year in Chicago Public Schools**

By Melissa Roderick, Vanessa Coca, Eliza Moeller, &  
Thomas Kelley-Kemple

**What coursework should  
seniors take?**

# 2016-2017 CPS Graduation Requirements give little guidance on what to take senior year

- **4 credits of English**

- English I,II,III, IV

- **3 credits of Math**

- Algebra, Geometry, Advanced Algebra/Trigonometry

- **3 credits of Science**

- Biology and Chemistry, Earth & Space Science, Environmental Science, or Physics

- **3 credits of Social Science**

- World Studies, U.S. History, Civics, & Other social science

- **2 credits of World Language**

- Course I & II

- **2 credits of Fine Arts**

- Art or Drafting & Music

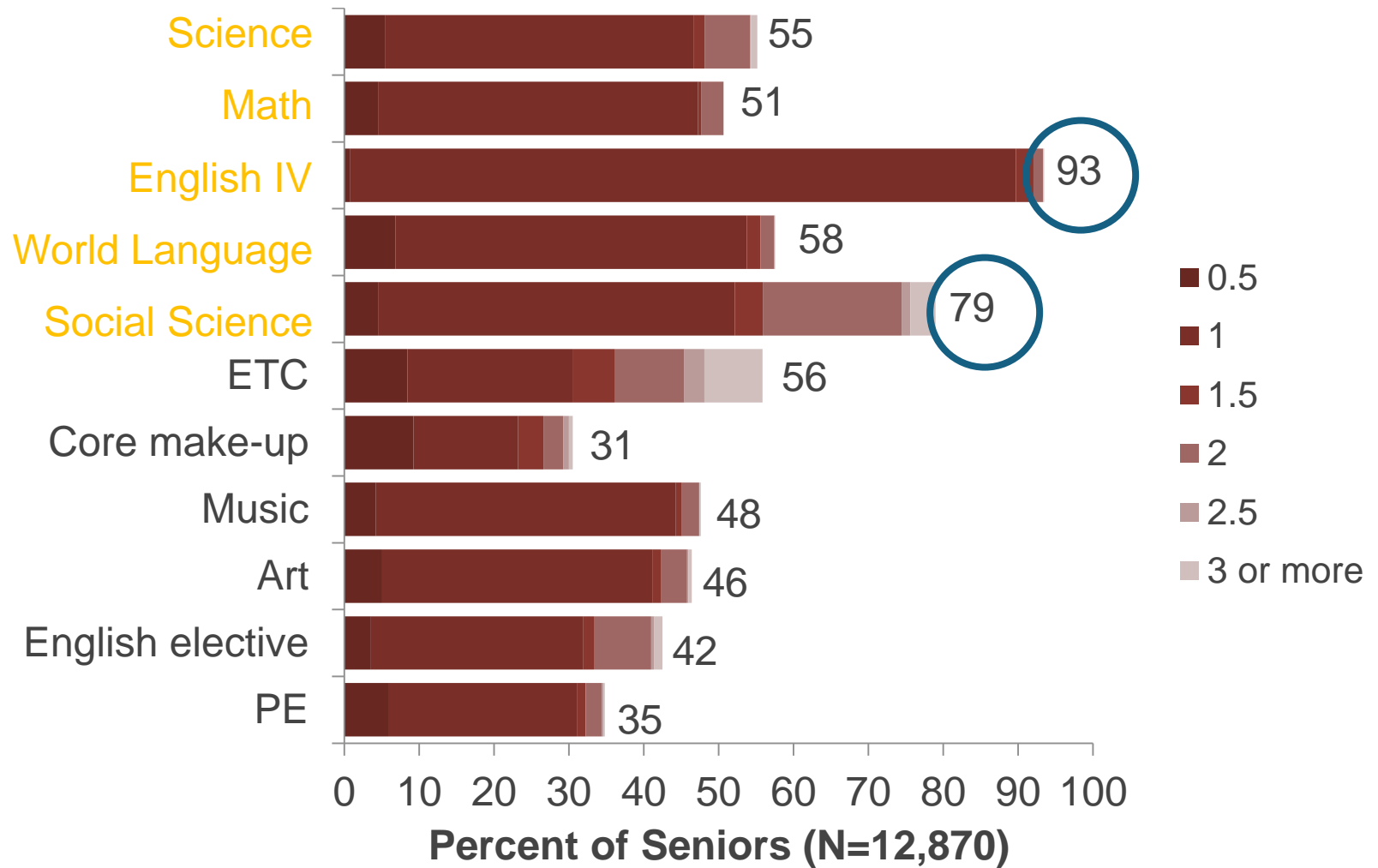
- **2 credits of PE or ROTC**

- **1 credit of Career Education or ROTC**

- **1 Computer Science**

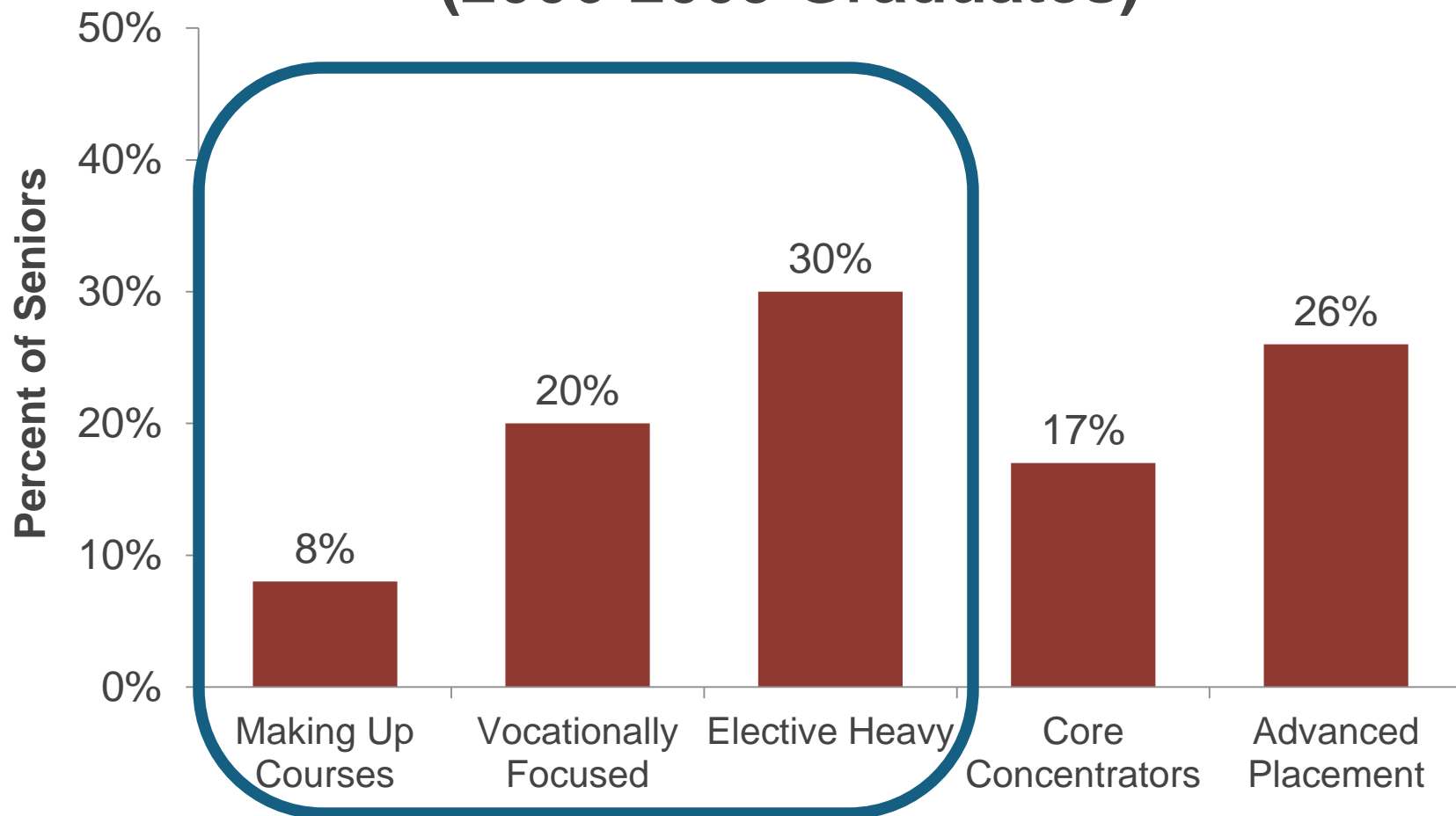
- **3 credits of electives**

# SENIORS were less likely than juniors to take courses in cores subject areas, particularly in math or science (2009 Graduates)



Note: Students included in the figure are those who graduated from CPS and were in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade in 2008 and 12<sup>th</sup> grade in 2009. The sample does not include students who were enrolled in special education or in alternative or charter high schools. The sample does not include students who took fewer than four courses when enrolled.

# Almost 60% of seniors have a schedule that is not academically focused (2006-2009 Graduates)



Note: Students included in these figures are those who graduated in 2006-09 (N=50,567). The sample does not include students who were enrolled in special education or in alternative or charter high schools. The sample does not include students who took fewer than four courses when enrolled.

**What does a typical schedule  
look like for seniors in these  
various groupings?**

# Sample Transcript of Elective Heavy Group (30 percent of graduates)

Period	Class
1	World Literature (English IV)
2	Drama (English Elec)
3	Urban Studies (Soc Sci Elec)
4	Spanish (World Lang)
5	Computer Software App (Vocational)
6	Beginning Mixed Chorus (Music)
7	PE

For this group:

- 65% took 4 or more core classes
- 30% took math
- 8% took one or more AP

Note: Students in this group take on average 1.95 Art, Music, and/or PE courses, and half of a vocational course. The rest of their senior year tends to be comprised of their required English IV class, social studies, English electives and foreign language.



# Sample Transcript of Advanced Placement Group (26 percent of graduates)

Period	Class
1	Journalism (English Elec)
2	AP English Lit and Comp (English IV)
3	AP U.S. Government (Soc Sci elec)
4	Law (Soc Sci elec)
5	Forensic Science (Science)
6	AP Statistics (Math)
7	Photography (Art)

## For this group:

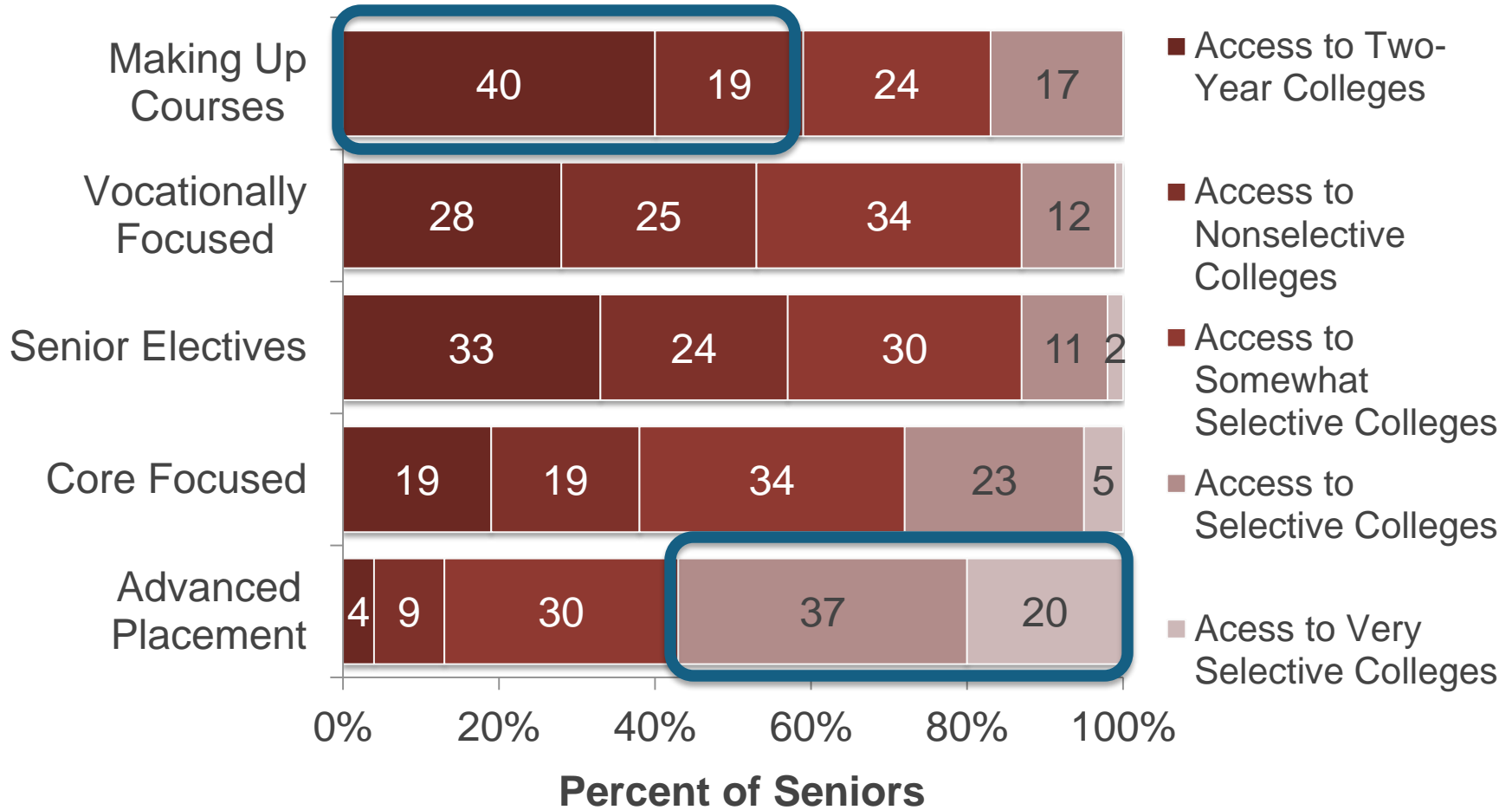
- 85% took 4 or more core classes
- 67% took math
- 98% took one or more AP

Note: Students in this group take on average 6.66 courses in their senior year. These students, on average, take 2.8 courses in core subjects. Of those core subjects, the average student in this group takes almost 2 (1.96) AP courses. These students are also very likely to take math and sciences courses. On average 1.62 of their total credits are made up of math or science courses, including AP.

# WHO ARE IN EACH OF THESE GROUPINGS?

- Unsurprising Finding: High performers are more likely to be in our academically focused groups and low performers are more likely to be in our Make-up and Vocationally focused group
- Surprisingly: Students with access to attend most public four-year university are spread out across these various groupings

# Students' Junior Qualifications Differ by Course-taking Grouping



Note: Students included in these figures are those who graduated in 2006-09 (N=50,053). 514 students did not have cumulative GPAs from their junior year to calculate their access to college. The sample does not include students who were enrolled in special education or in alternative or charter high schools. The sample does not include students who took fewer than four courses when enrolled.

# What are students taking senior year?

	Percent Taking Four or More Core	Percent Taking Fourth-year Math	Percent Taking One or More AP	Percent Taking Two or More Vocational Courses	Percent taking a Make-up Core course
Access to a Two-Year College (N=22,141)	44	15	7	33	46
Access to Non-selective Four-Year Colleges (N=17,295)	51	27	17	35	29
Access to Somewhat Selective Four-Year Colleges (N=27,237)	60	43	33	32	23
Access to Selective Four-Year Colleges (N=17,100)	75	64	66	21	22
Access to Very Selective Four-Year Colleges (N=5,339)	92	80	85	6	9

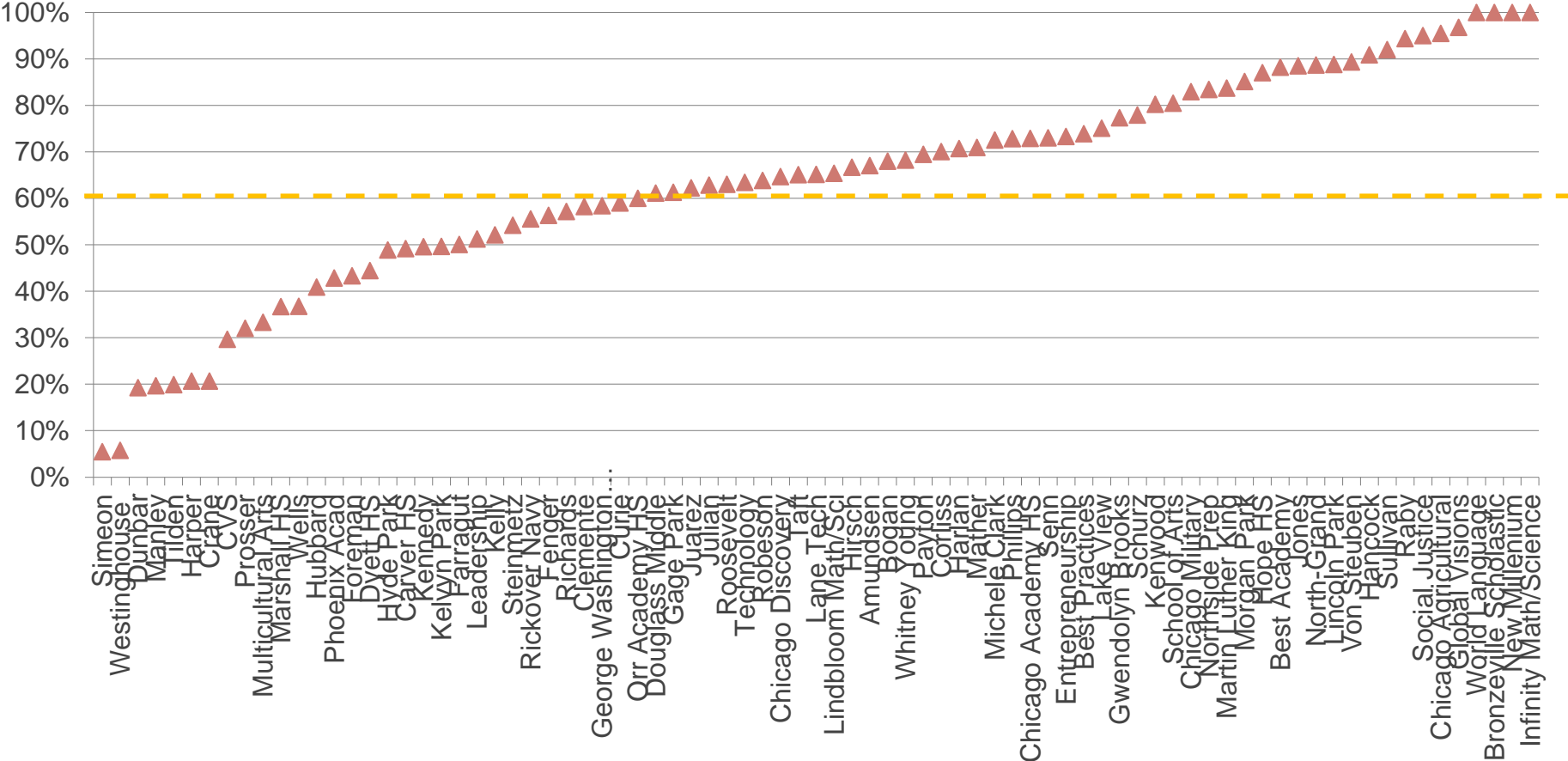
Note: Numbers in this table come from 2003-2009 CPS graduates (N=89,112) who were not in special education and not in alternative or charter high schools. The sample does not include students who took fewer than four courses in their senior year.

# Why do students with similar qualifications have disparate experiences?

A large part of the answer is that they attend different high schools

# The less than half of CPS high schools have 60 percent of their seniors with access to somewhat selective college taking four or more core classes

Students with access to a Somewhat Selective College



Note: Numbers in this table come from 2003-2009 CPS graduates who were not in special education and not in alternative or charter high schools. Data points were only included if school had 15 or more students in a given category.



The combination of:

- 1. wide variation in school practice**
- and**
- 2. differences across academic qualifications**

means that senior is differentiated by race/ethnicity

# Senior Courses Taking is Unevenly Distributed by Race/Ethnicity

	All CPS N=90,041	African- American N=42,162	Latino N=30,672	White N=11,264	Asian N=5,792
Percent Taking 4 or More Core	59	54	58	70	77
Percent Taking Fourth-Year Math	39	34	36	47	68
Percent Taking One AP or More AP	30	25	29	43	57
Percent Taking Two or More Vocational Courses	30	37	25	18	14

Note: Numbers in this table come from 2003-2009 CPS graduates (N=90,041) who were not in special education and not in alternative or charter high schools. The sample does not include students who took fewer than four courses in their senior year.



# Summary

- Majority of CPS seniors' schedules are dominated by makeup, elective, and non-core classes.
  - Most high achievers had rigorous schedules, but schedules for everyone else varied a great deal by high school and by race/ethnicity
- Most students described a senior year with minimal workload, little engagement, and low challenge.



# Small Group Activity

1. Get into groups of 4-5 people
2. Assign group note-taker & share-out leader
3. Read case study (5 minutes)
4. Discuss case study (15 minutes)
  - What worked or didn't work for this student?
  - What would you do at your school to improve the experiences of students who are like Nadia, Gregory, Alita or Abel?
5. Large group share (20 minutes)

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