

Supporting Students in Developmental Education

The Stakes, the Challenge, and the Hope for Improvement

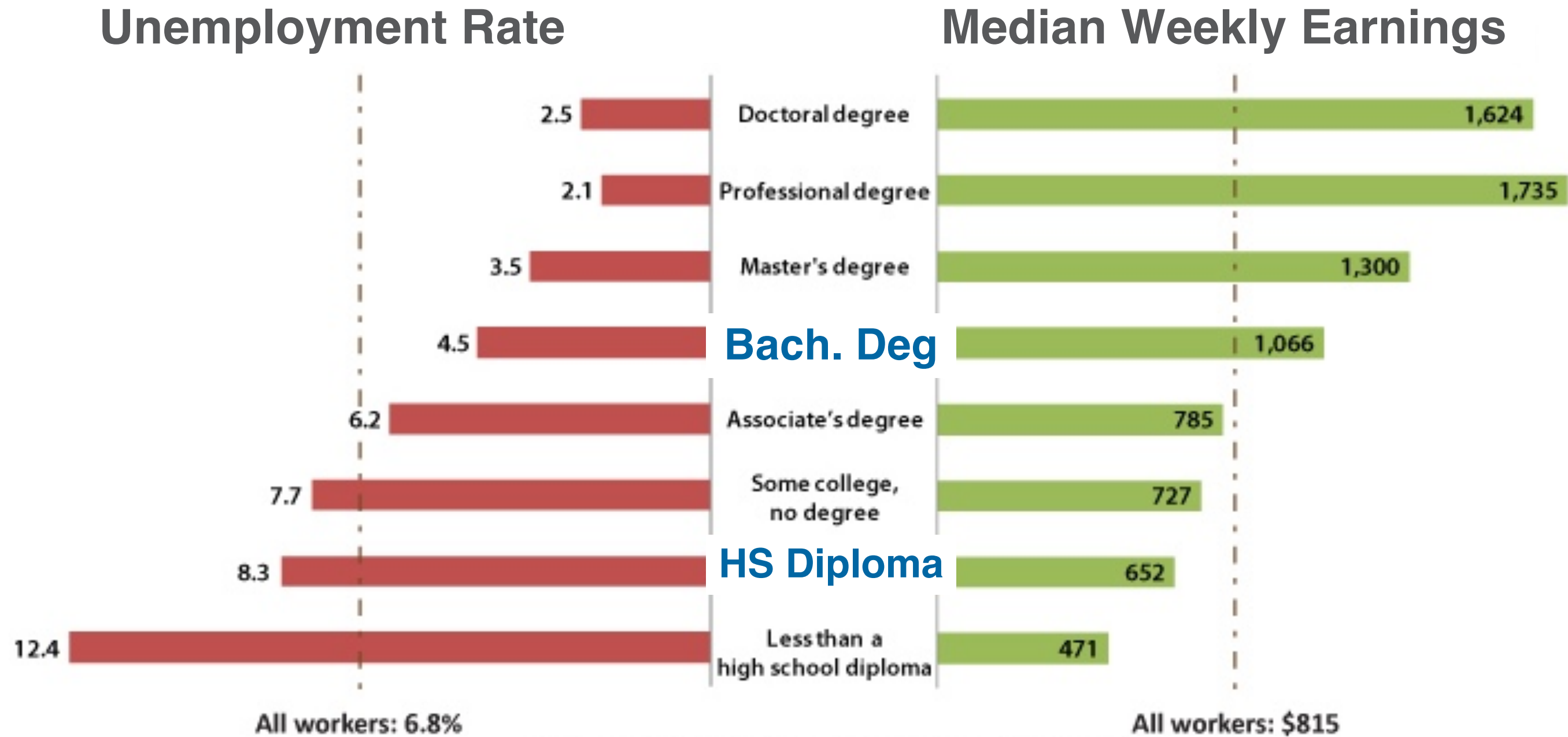
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The Stakes

**Why we need to
focus on
developmental
education**

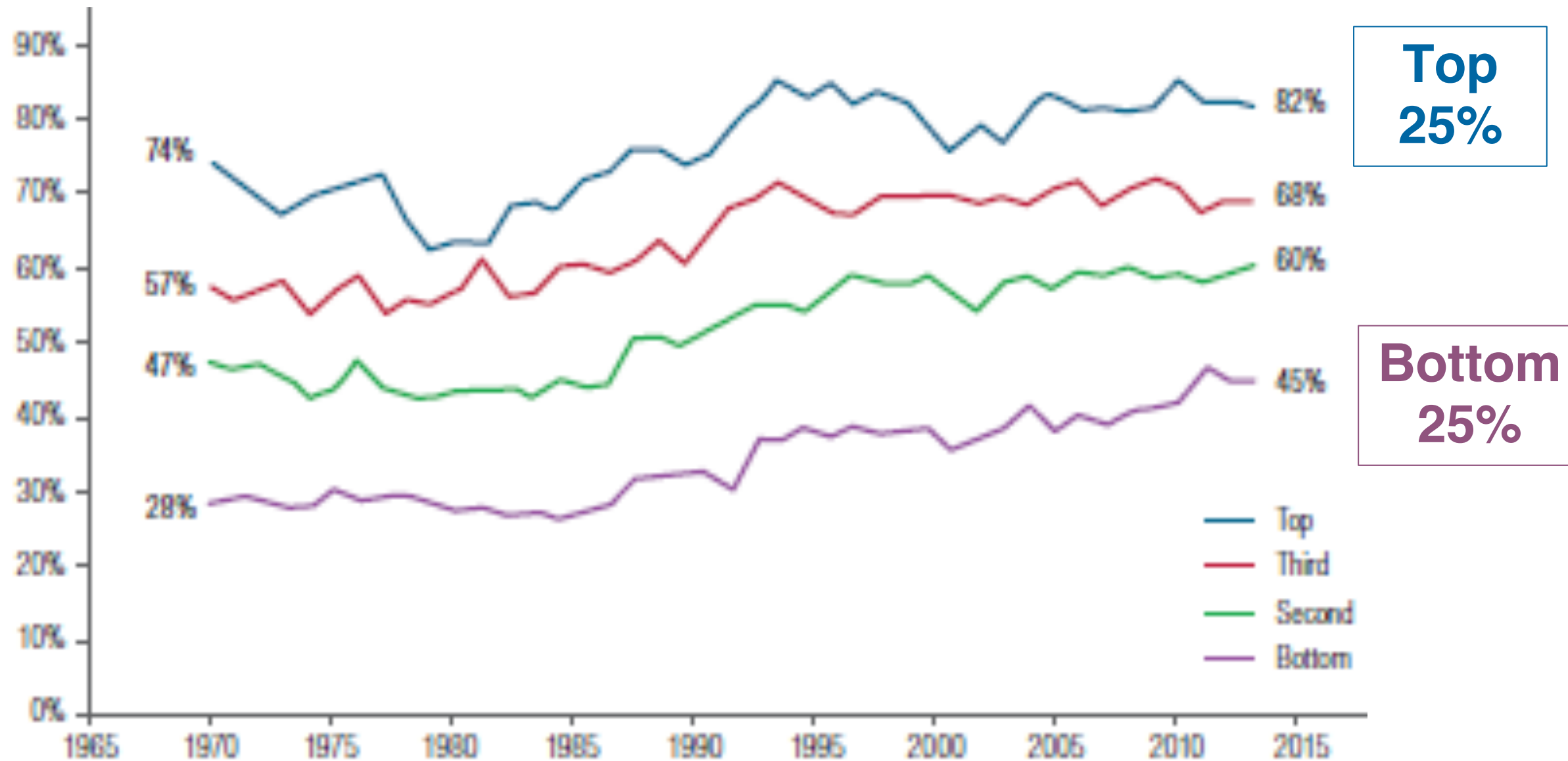
The Importance of Higher Education



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

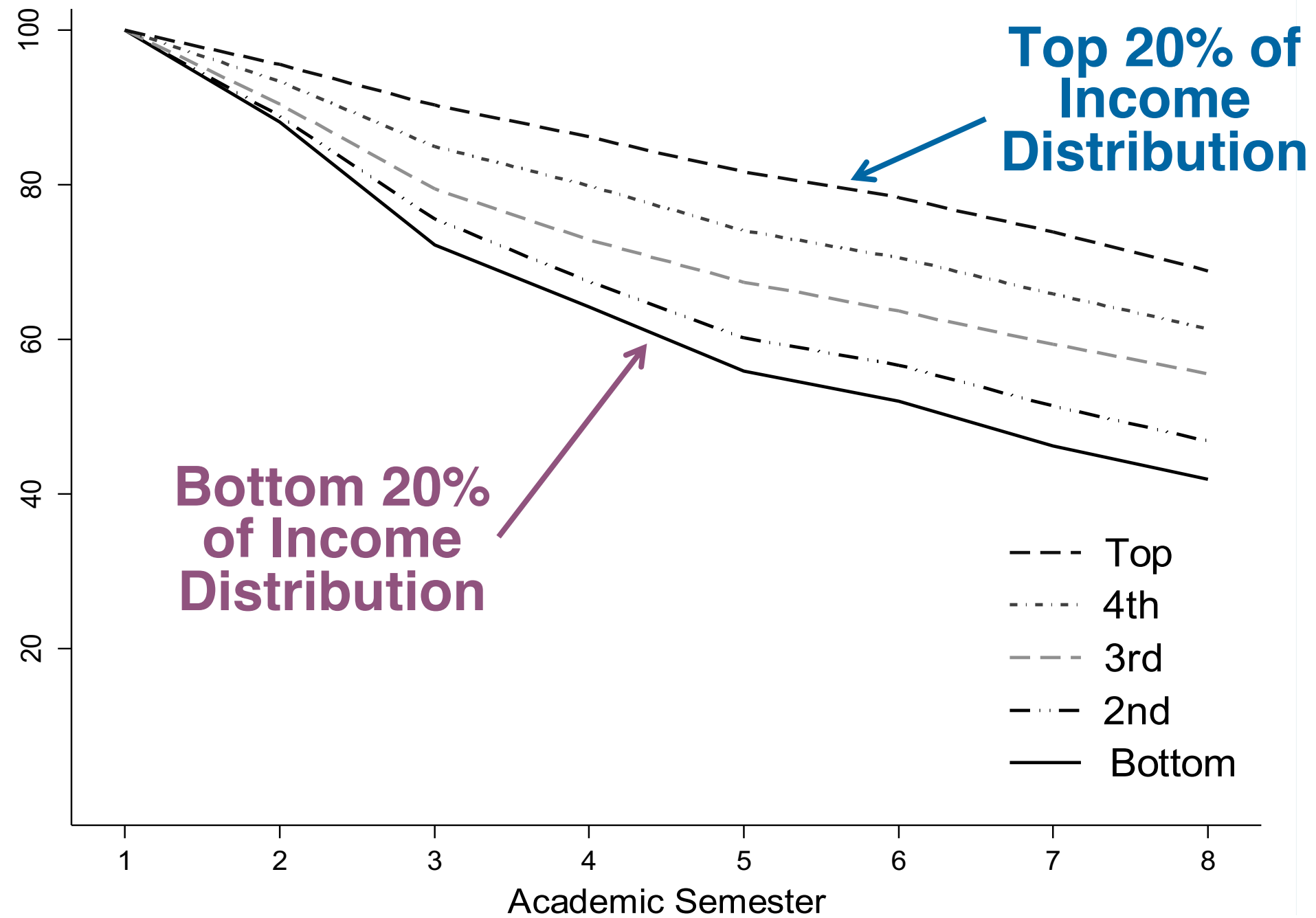
The College Access Problem

College Enrollment Rate, 1965-2015
By Family Income Quartile (18 to 24 year olds)



The College Persistence Problem

Persistence in College by Income Quintile



Sample: Ohio Public Four-year Colleges (Long and Mabel, 2012)



Higher education is an **expensive**, but also **necessary**, investment for most to reach a middle-class standard of living...

Meanwhile, there are large, continual gaps in enrollment, persistence, and completion by income and race...

...and these trends are happening in the midst of **changing demographics** and **increasing student needs**.



What Role is Developmental Education playing in the gaps we see?

Many students are placed in remediation.

50.1% of those seeking an associate degree require remediation



20.7% of those seeking a bachelor's degree require remediation



What Role is Developmental Education playing in the gaps we see?

Most don't succeed.

The Outcomes of Students in and out of Remediation

After 6 years	Four-year Colleges			
	None	Math Remed.	English Remed.	Math & English
Completed Bachelor's Degree	64.73	36.27	33.05	18.99
Stopped Out and Did Not Return	26.18	45.95	49.89	60.65

The True Gatekeeper to College... Developmental Education

- Nationally **35%** to **40%** of 1st year students (**55-60%** at community colleges)
- Bulk of remediation is provided at non-selective public colleges, the point of entry for 80% of 4yr students and 99% of 2yr students
- The remediation placement exam taken once arriving on campus has become the **key academic gate-keeper** to postsecondary study

Is Developmental Education really part of the problem?

- **The Quality of the Courses:** The content, engagement level, and pedagogy may be lacking
- **Scarlet Letter Effect:** Students are discouraged when placed in a developmental education course; it causes (or confirms) questions about whether they belong in college
- **Peer Effects:** There may be negative effects for being isolated with other struggling students
- **Sorting Hypothesis:** Institutions know many students are just “trying out” college and use remedial courses as a way to protect the more upper-level courses

“Do we really need developmental education?”

Recent State Policy Developments

Florida

- Make remediation optional

Tennessee

- Shift to corequisite remediation

California State University system

California Community College system

- Eliminating free-standing courses

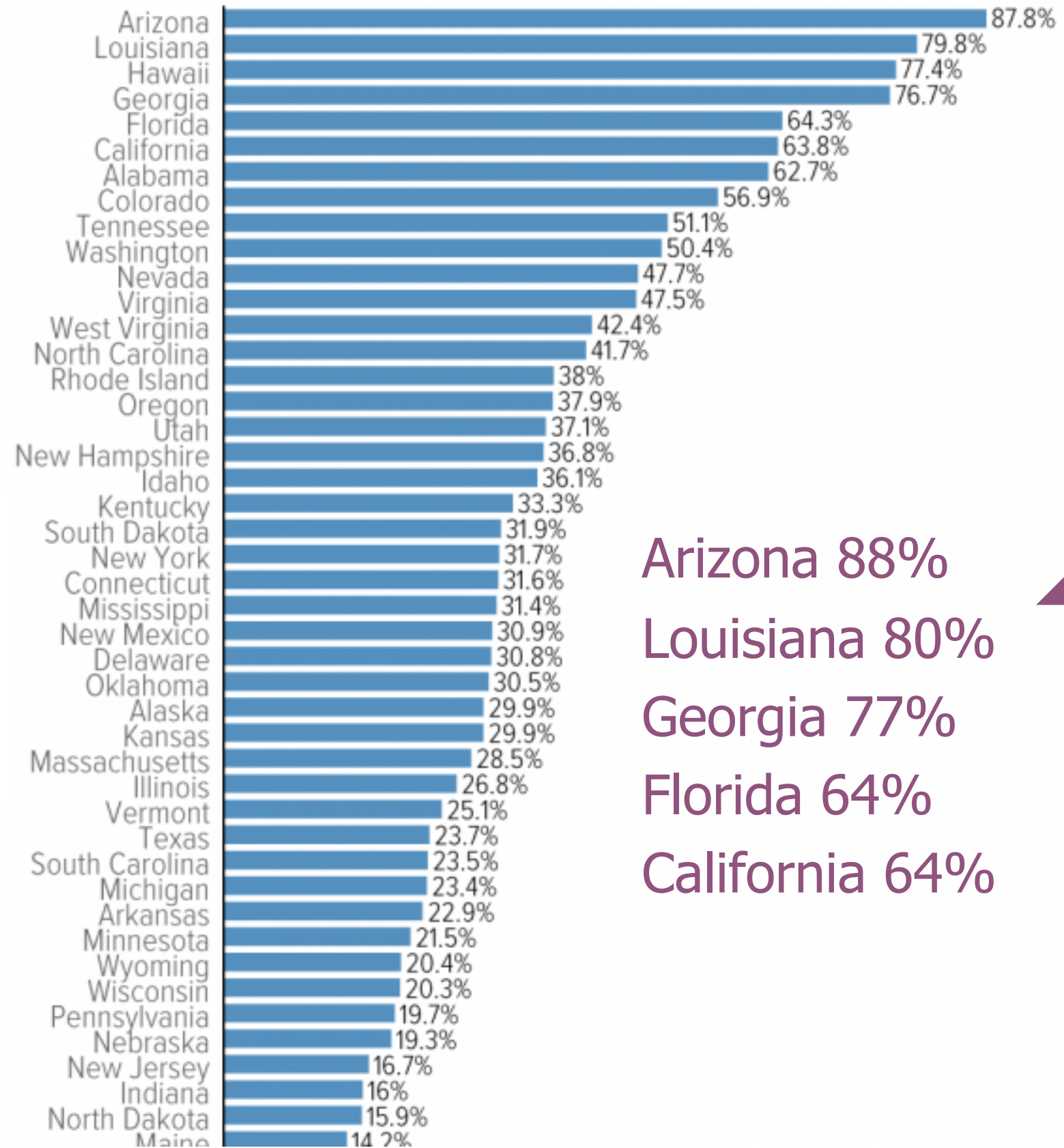


The elimination of remediation in higher education could “effectively end the American experiment with mass postsecondary education” *Time* (Oct 2002)

But this is a difficult time for Higher Education...

Recent Trends in Public Tuition

Percentage Change in Average Tuition at Public Four-years, 2008-2016 (real dollars)

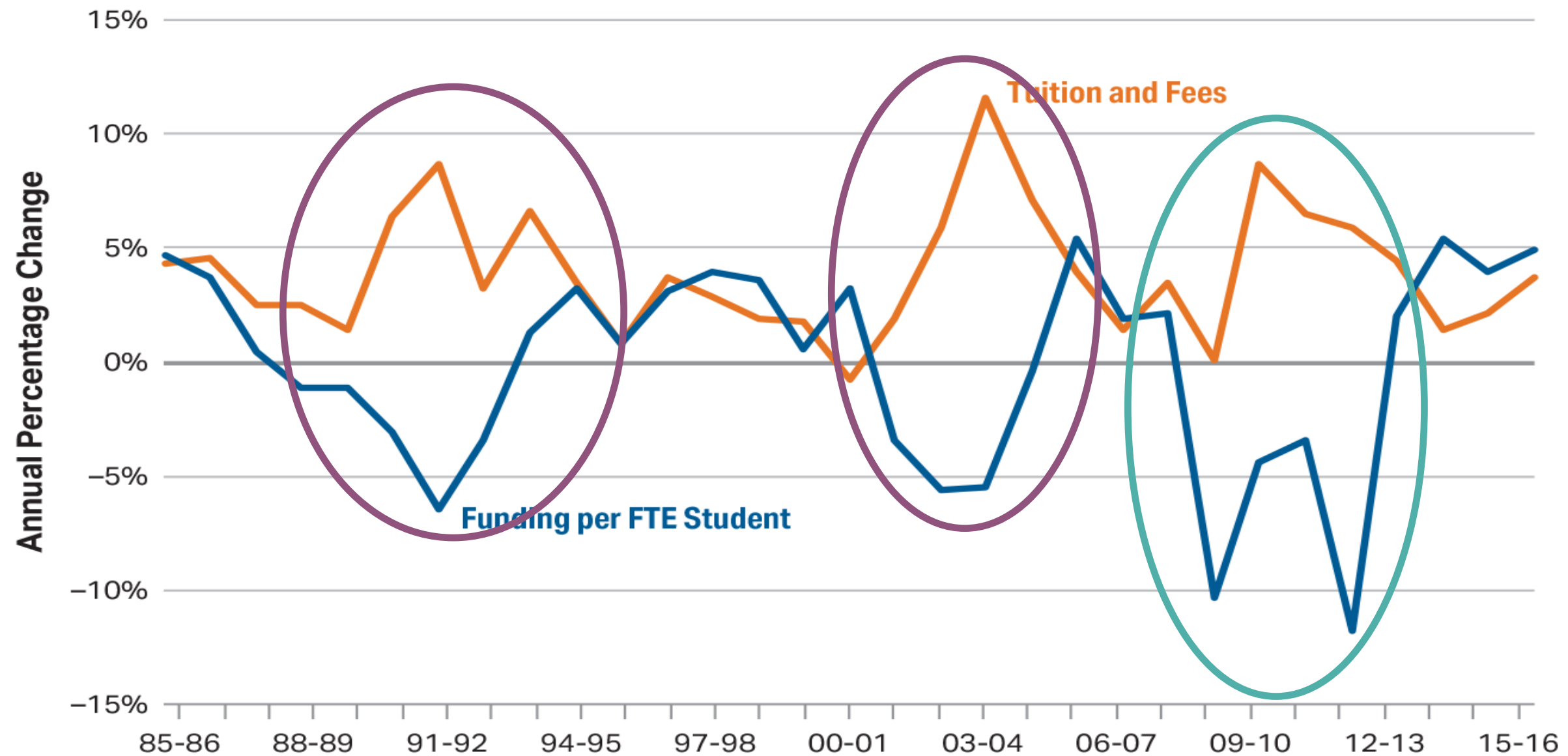


Arizona 88%
Louisiana 80%
Georgia 77%
Florida 64%
California 64%



What will the next Recession bring?

Annual Percentage Changes in Per-Student State Funding for Higher Education and Tuition and Fees at Public Institutions (1985-86 to 2015-16)

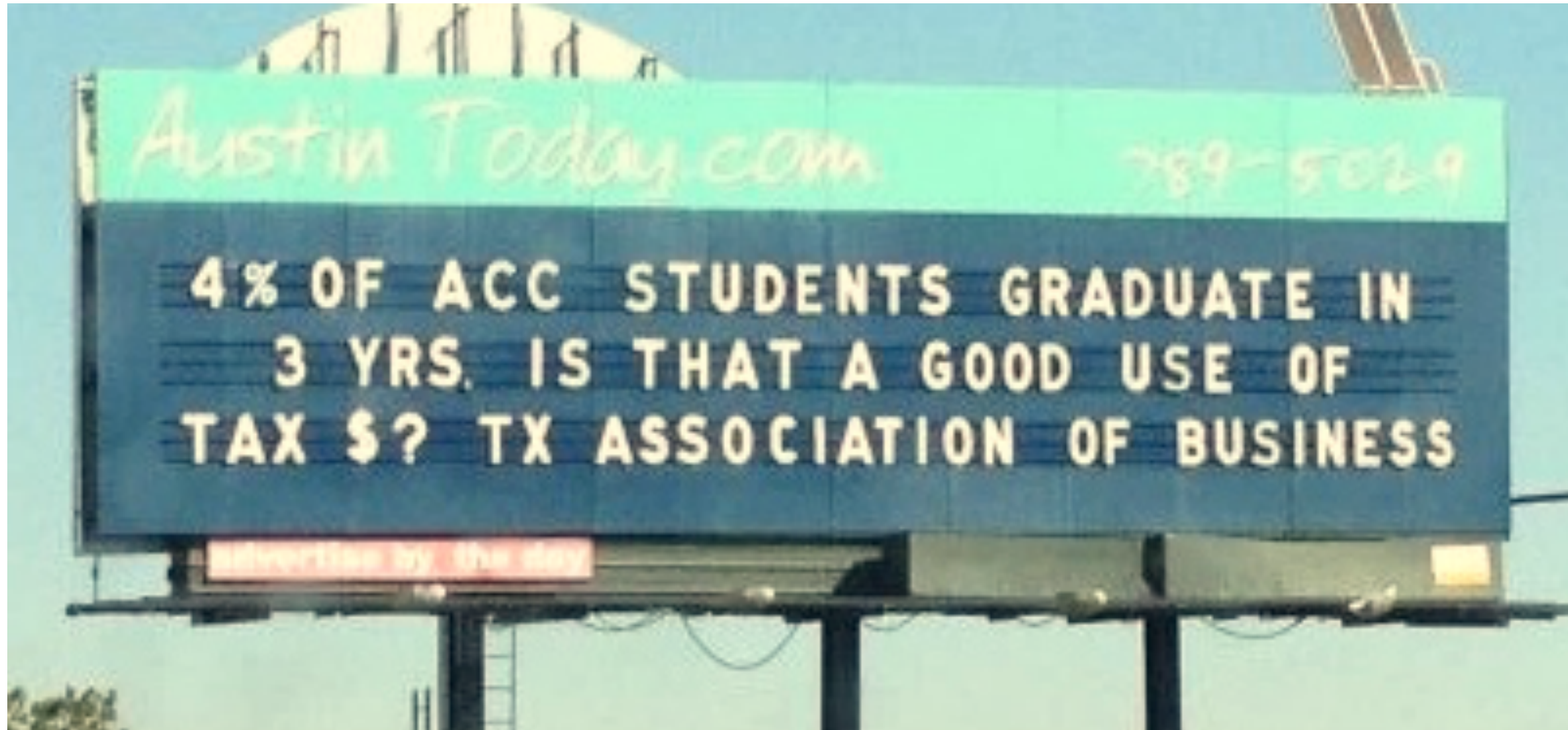


A Difficult Time for Higher Education...

- Unstable and Declining Government Resources
- Changing Student Demographics
- Growing Competition for Students and Resources
- Increased Accountability
- Increased Labor Market Demands

The Challenge

There is no “silver bullet” to addressing the needs of academically-underprepared students



A billboard sponsored by the Texas Assoc. of Business concerning Austin Community College

The Blame Game...

From the *Chronicle of Higher Ed* Comment section (Oct 1, 2015)

COMMENT #1: "Four year colleges should not be wasting resources 'remediating' the failures of the high schools and/or the students. If the students didn't learn the high school curriculum the first time, the place for them to learn it now is back at the high schools..."

COMMENT #2: "I get your point XXX, and I agree. However, I would like us to understand and admit that this is not only a high school failure. Remediation is often the result of a K-6 failure... Yet, they are promoted from grade to grade..."

COMMENT #3: "...it is not necessarily the fault of K-6 either. As all teachers do, they do the best with what they are given. Parents who don't put their kids high on their list of priorities..."

COMMENT #4: "...this is a larger cultural failure. We can start with legislatures that fail to adequately fund education and the voters who let them get away with this."

Debates and Questions about Developmental Education

- Why do so many students need developmental education?
- What do students need?
- How should institutions provide developmental education?
- What should institutions provide?
- What else is needed beyond academic supports?

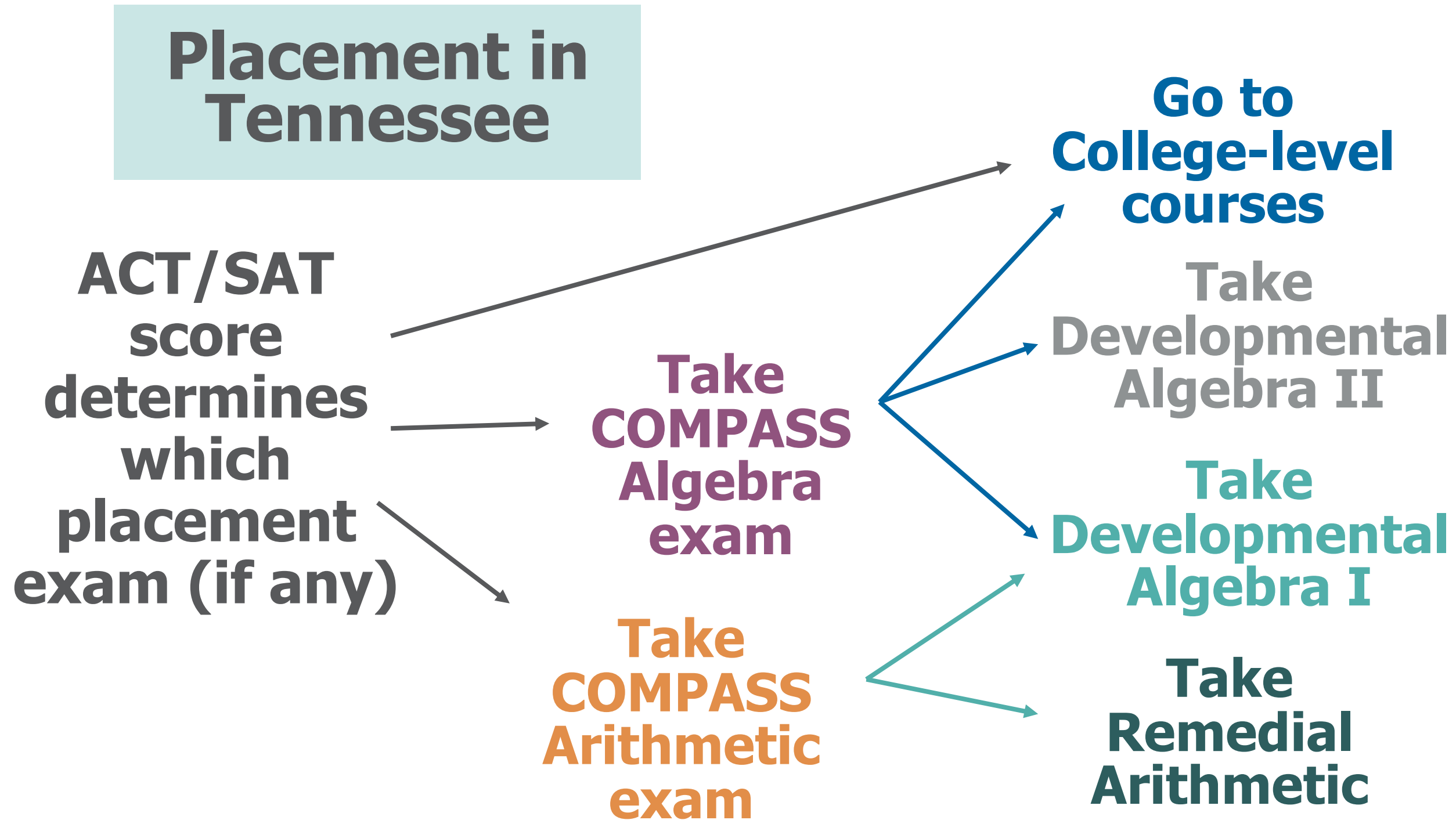
The Disconnect between K-12 & Higher Education

“The current fractured systems send students, their parents, and K-12 educators **conflicting and vague messages** about what students need to know and be able to do to enter and succeed in college.”

- Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio (2003)

<i>Many students believe...</i>	<i>The Truth</i>
Meeting HS requirements will prepare me for college	Adequate preparation requires a more demanding curriculum
CCs don't have academic standards	Students must take a placement exam at CCs
It's better to take easier classes and get better grades	Taking rigorous classes is the best predictor of success

Variation in Student Needs



Variation in Student Needs

How far will models focused on students just below the cut-off (e.g., corequisite remediation) get us?

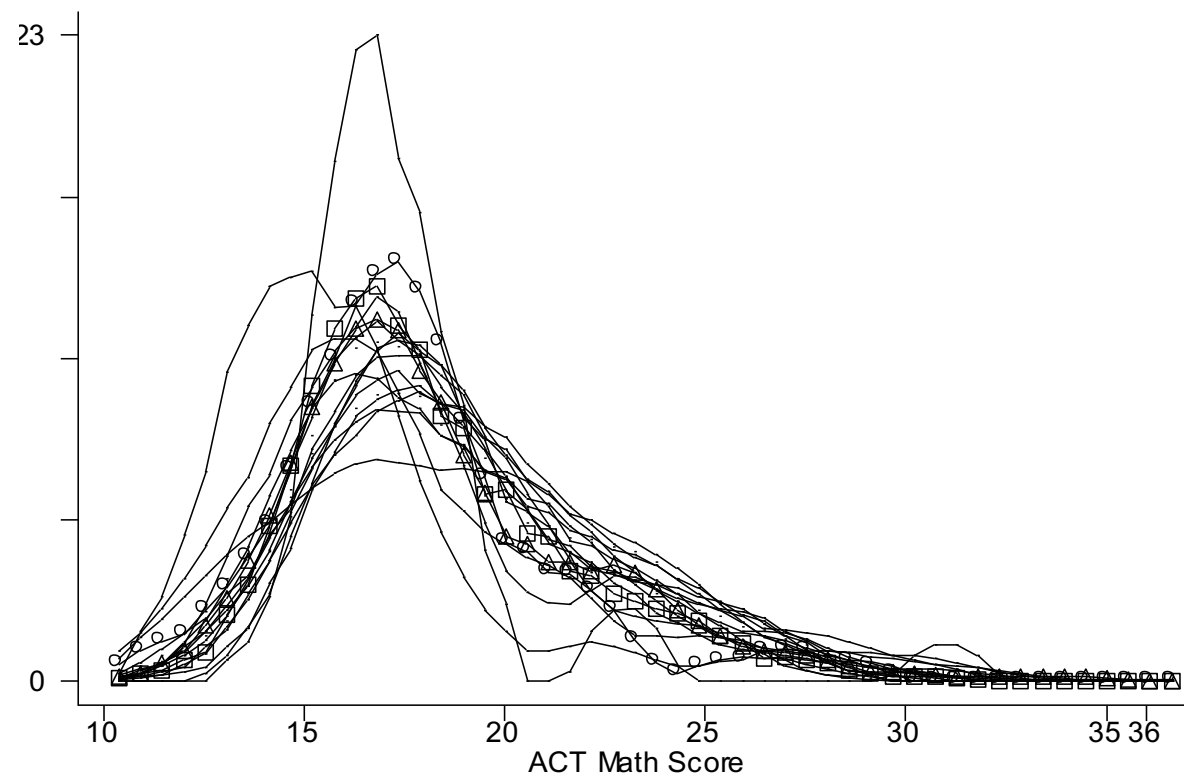
“[I]t’s unrealistic to expect nearly everyone to succeed right off the bat in a college-level class — no matter how much advising, tutoring, and nonacademic support they receive. What will happen to the returning adult whose last math class was three decades ago, the immigrant for whom English is a second language, or the first-generation student overwhelmed with work and family obligations?”

- *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Feb 18, 2019)

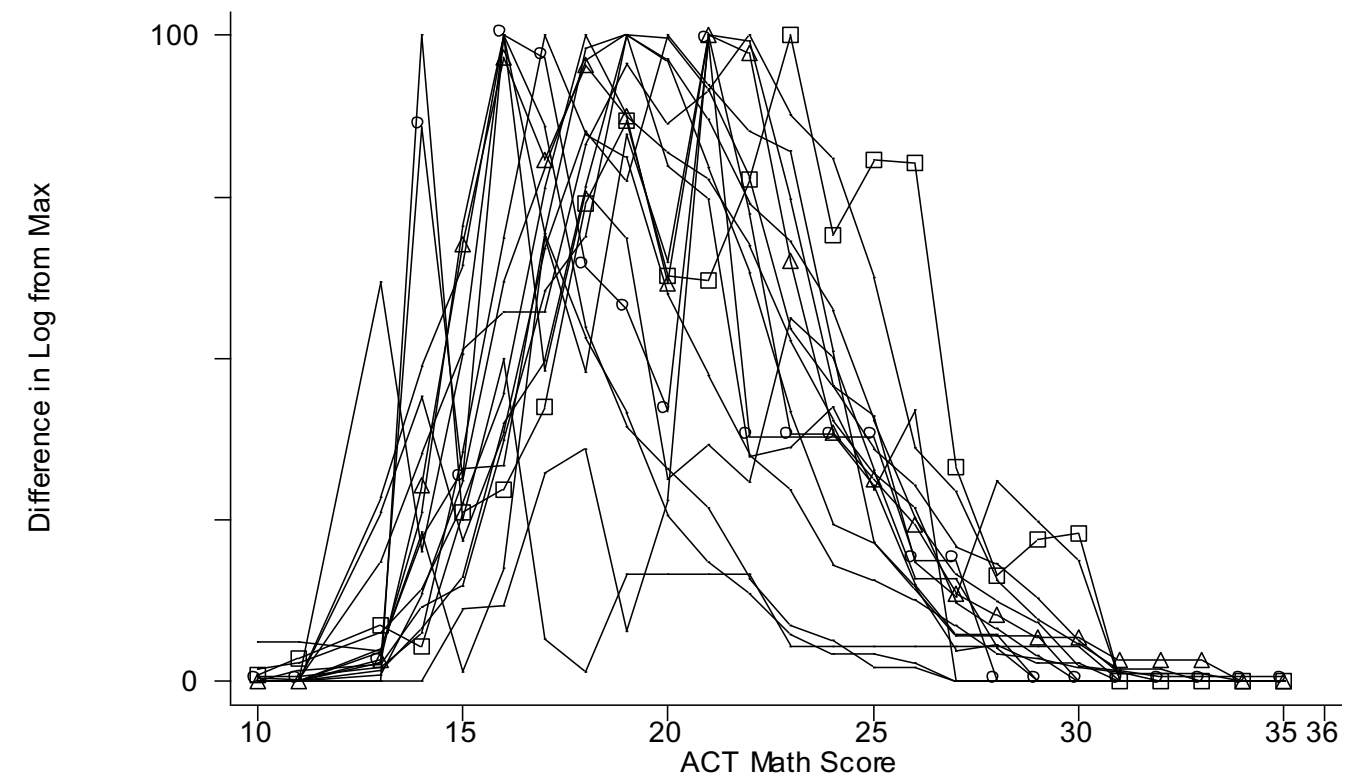
Variation in Institutional Policies

Ohio Community Colleges

Student Body
ACT Distribution

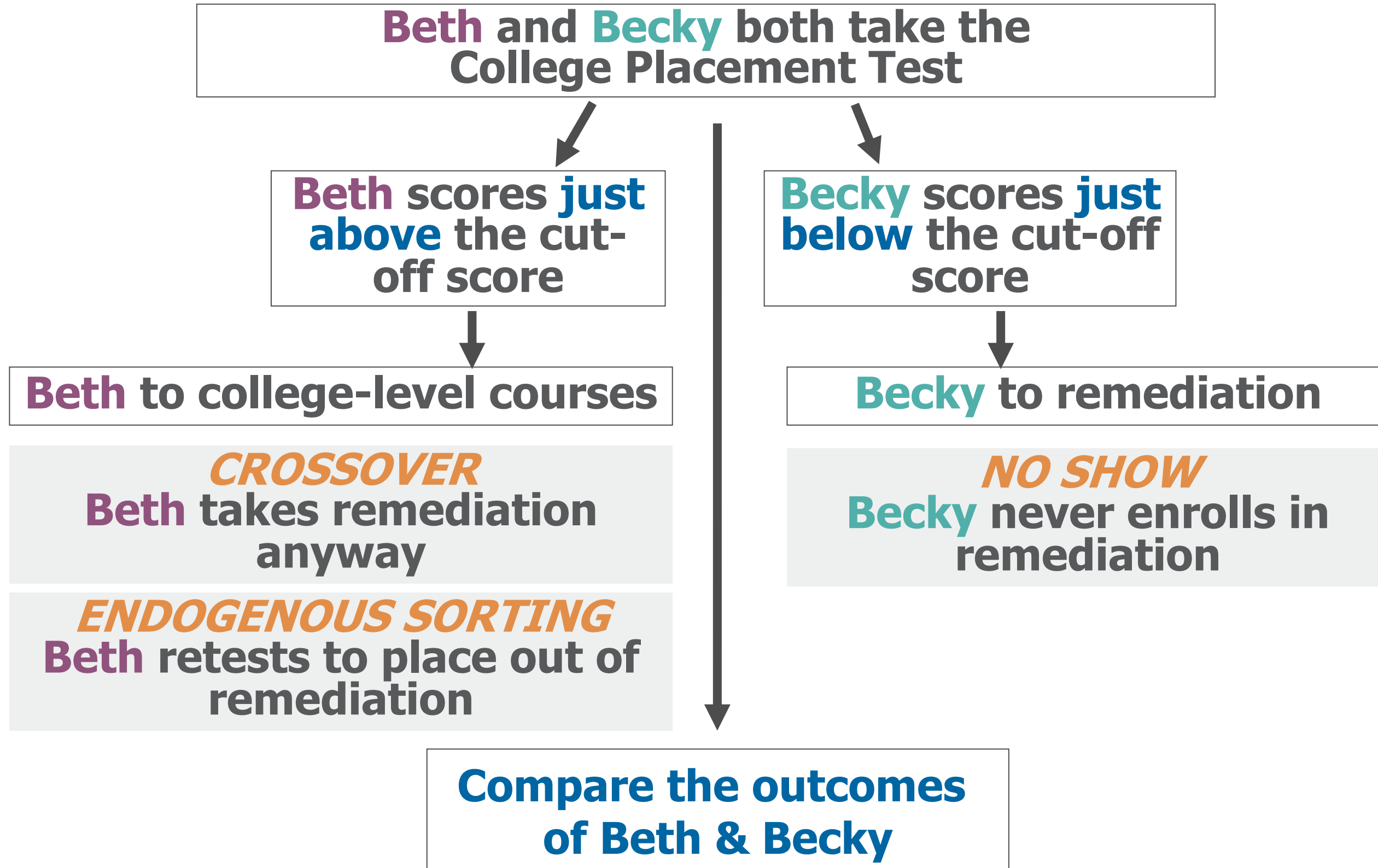


Maximum Likelihood Estimate
of Remediation Cutoff



Institutions differ in what they consider “below college-level material”

The Implications for Research



The Hope for Improvement

Promising practices and policies to support student learning and postsecondary success

What have we learned?

1. Process matters

- When are students informed of the process?
- When are they tested?
- Can they provide other evidence of achievement?
- Can they retake the placement exam?

2. Assessments matter

- Placement exam or multiple measures?
- Cutoff placement?

What have we learned?

3. Learning design matters

“**Mainstreaming**”: Eliminated developmental math; placed students into college-level courses with a special outside workshop



“**Modules**”: Combined 3 courses into one course with 12 modules

“**Acceleration**”: Students who complete a developmental course before the end of the term are allowed to begin the next course in immediately

What have we learned?

4. One size does not fit all

- Students just below the college-level cutoff versus needing multiple courses
- Recent high school graduates versus older students
- Differences by gender, race, income, etc.

What have we learned?

5. Academic success requires more than just academic supports

- Intensive counseling
- One-stop student services offices
- Summer Bridge programs
- Learning Communities
- Study skills courses
- Mentoring programs
- Aid for other costs (e.g., transportation, books, food)
- Childcare

What have we learned?

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3. Learning design matters

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The Stakes...

The Challenge...

**The Hope for
Improvement...**

Looking to the Future

Ongoing Questions

1. What academic foundation do students truly need in order to success in college and longer term?
2. What government policies would enable successful programs?
3. How can we personalize learning and supports by student needs and context?

Reimagining Developmental Education

CAPR \ 2019

Thank you!

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