

# Improving Assessment and Developmental Education for Community College students

**Thomas Bailey**

**Idaho Remediation Summit  
Boise, ID**

# DE Basics

- The high school/community college connection is weak
- The assessment and placement system needs reform—**we cannot effectively separate students into developmental and college ready categories**
- Most CC students do not complete their developmental education sequences and developmental ed does a poor job of improving student outcomes,

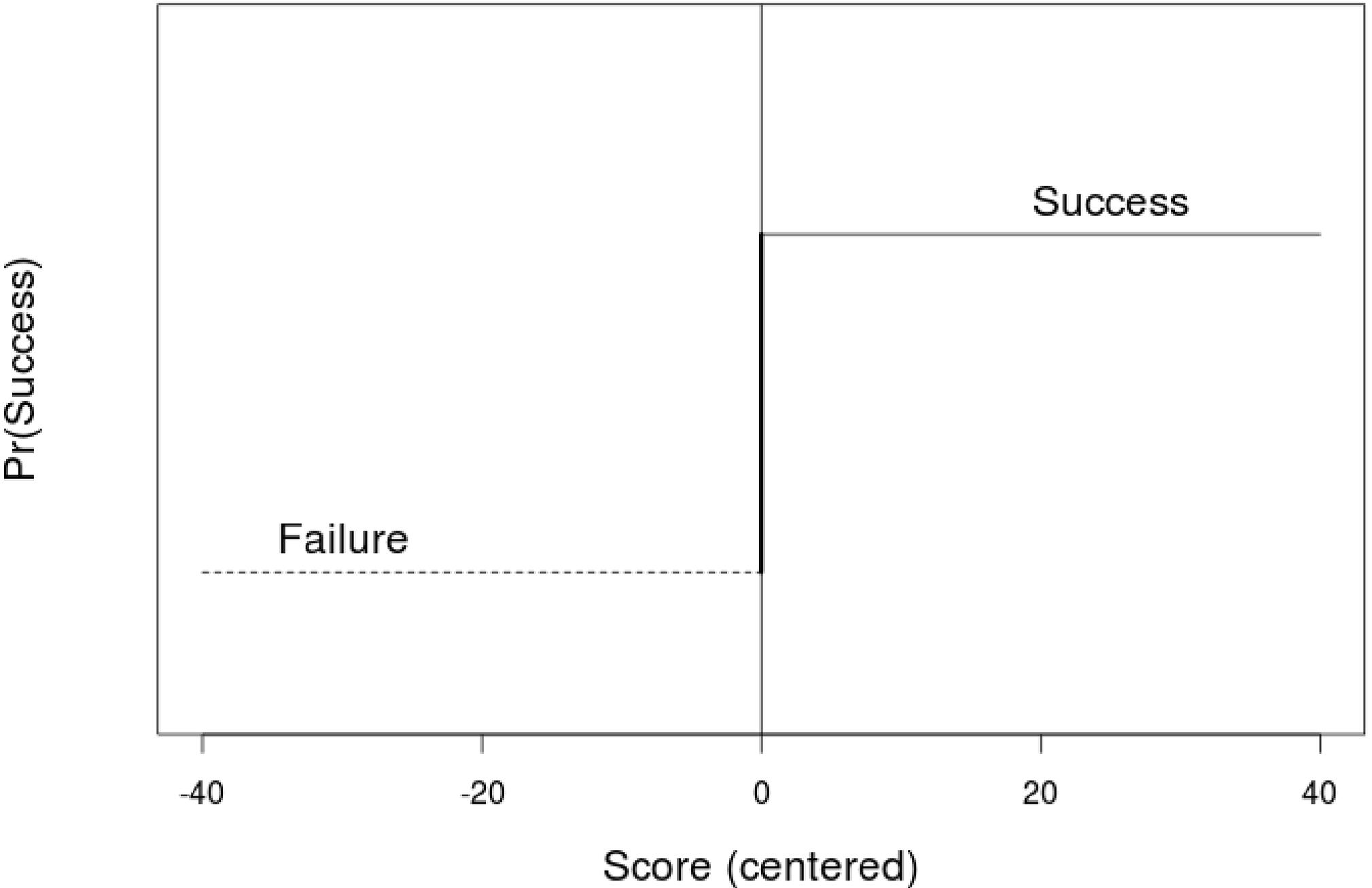
# DE Reform Basics

- Short-term focused reforms have modest positive effects that fade
- Educators and policy makers are turning to more ambitious and comprehensive reforms, including ambitious state-wide developmental ed redesigns
- DE reform should link backwards to HS and forward to the college level programs of study

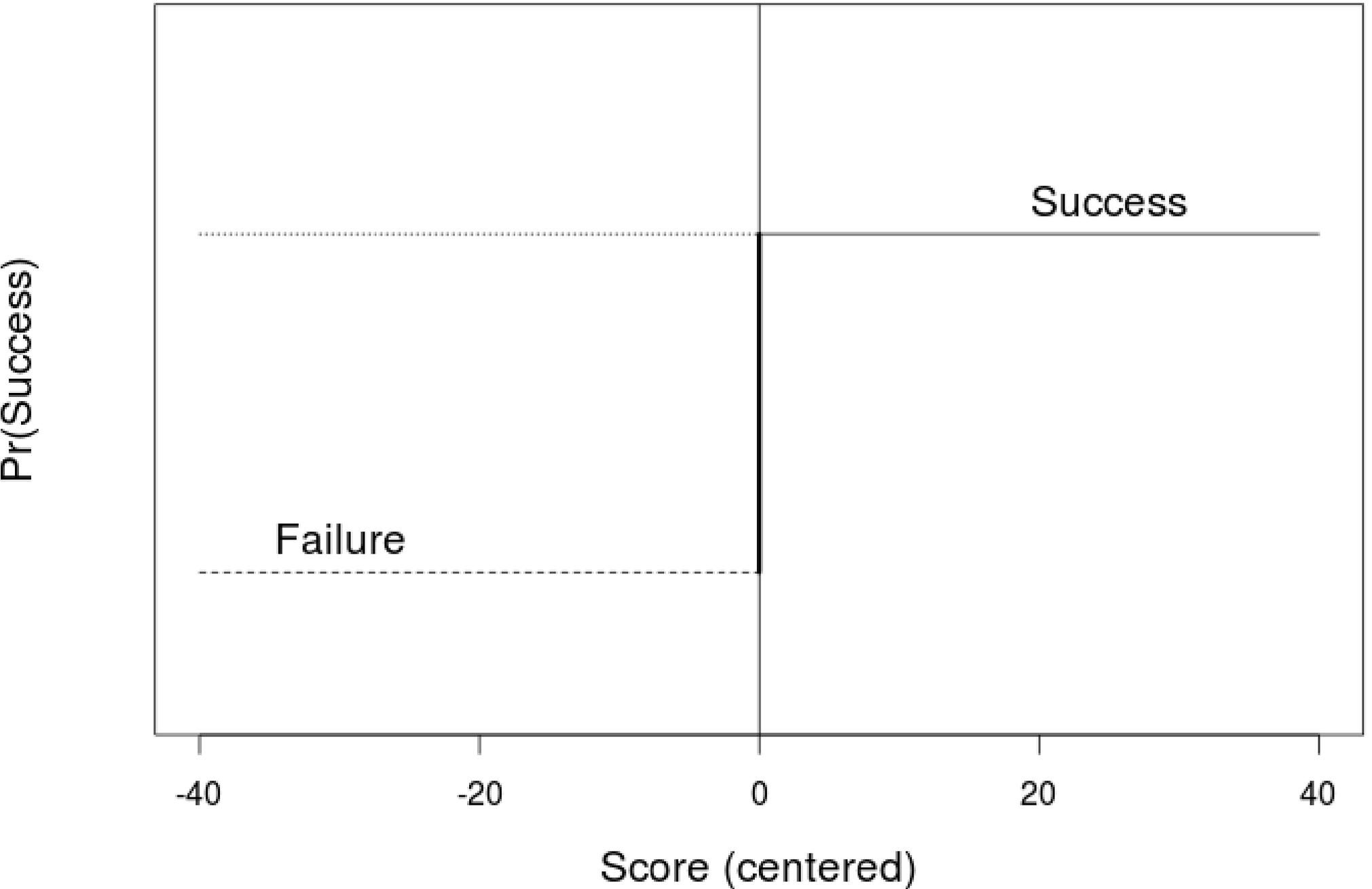
# Efficient vs. **Effective** Assessment

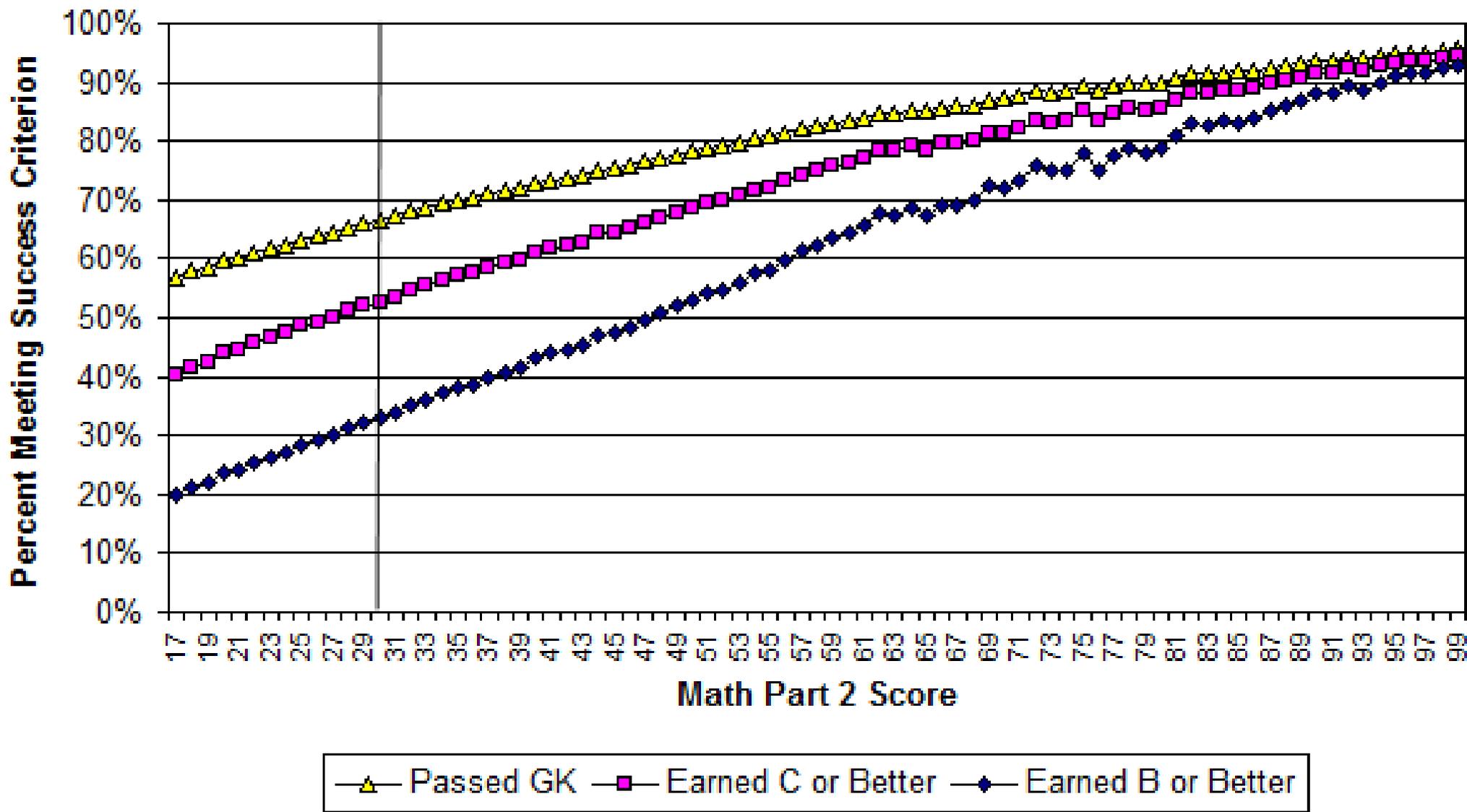
- Efficiency: Almost all CCs use standardized tests due to their efficiency
- Effectiveness: Yet administrative efficiency goes hand-in-hand with high rates of failure & attrition

# DE Assessment in Theory



# Theoretical Effect of DE Instruction





From Scott-Clayton, J. (2012). Do high-stakes placement exams predict college success?  
 CCRC: New York.

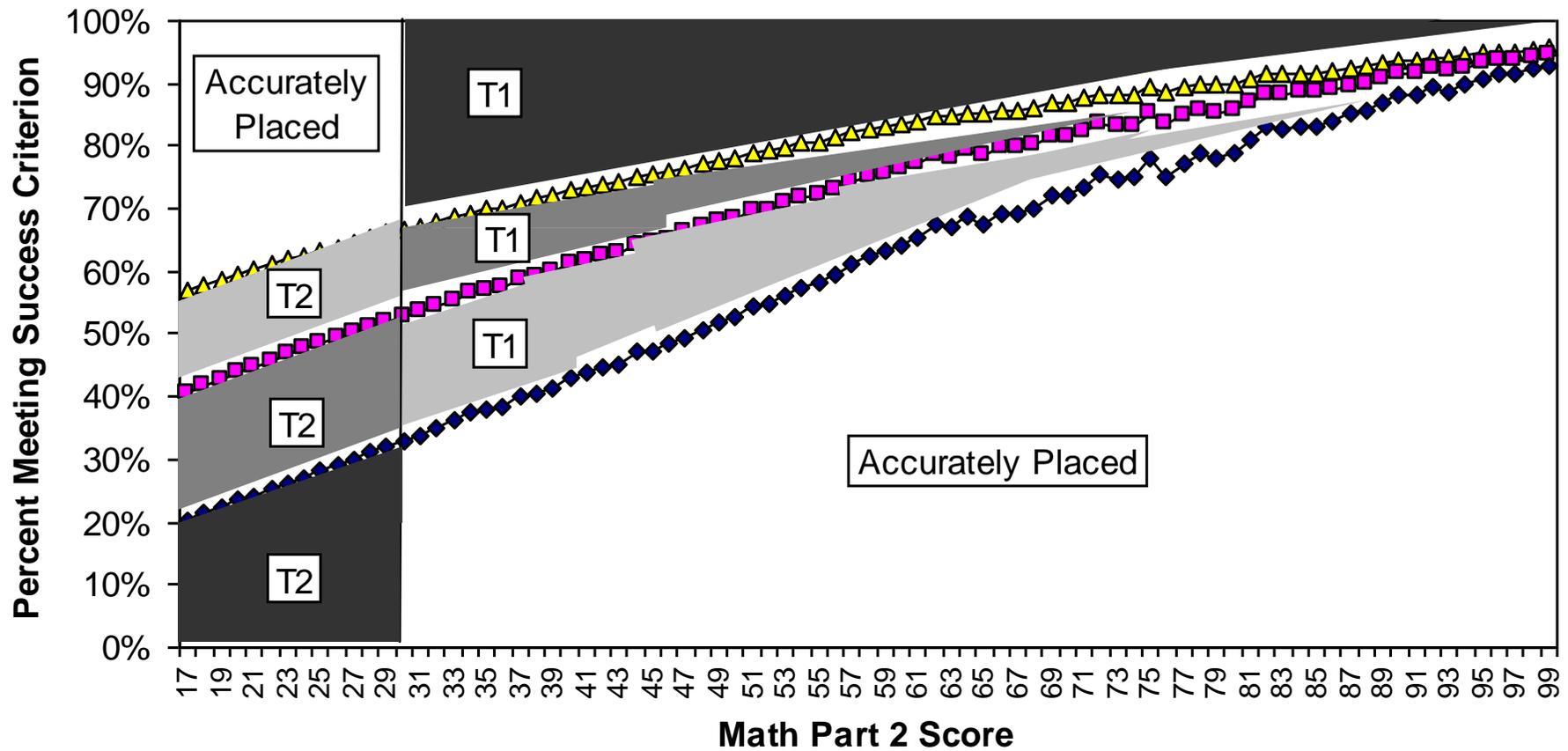
# Can We Effectively Divide Students into Dev Ed and College Ready Categories?

- No consensus on definition of “college ready” (Common Core?)
  - No consensus on cutoff scores
- Differs by grade standards
- No obvious cutoff point (continuous not discontinuous relationship)
- Required skills differ by student goals

# Severe Error Rate

- Overplacement: Student placed in college-level (CL) course but doesn't succeed
  - Severe overplacement: They fail the CL
- Underplacement: Student placed in dev ed but could have passed college-level course
  - Severe underplacement: could have passed CL with a B or better

**Figure 5. Probability of Gatekeeper Success, By Math Part 2 Scores**



Passed GK
  Earned C or Better
  Earned B or Better

# Severe Error Rates

## Math

Severe Error Rate	.24
Severe Overplacement	.06
Severe Underplacement	.18

## English

Severe Error Rate	.33
Severe Overplacement	.05
Severe Underplacement	.29

# Why is prediction weak?

- Short exam, doesn't capture non-academic strengths
- Students not prepared for / don't understand purpose of exam
- Test content not necessarily aligned with what students need to succeed
  - “Overmathing” students
  - Doesn't recognize diverse student goals and needs
  - Assessments not aligned with dev ed content which often not aligned with college level content

# Additional Issues

- Weak diagnostic information
- No focus on non-cognitive skills
- Present system also neglects “college ready” students

# Resolving the Conflict between Efficient and Effective Assessment

- Consider the cost of misplacement
- Early assessment and placement test prep
- Use multiple measures—high school information, especially GPA for recent high school graduates
- Create exams diagnostic in manageable number of key areas (probably works better for math than reading/writing)
- Link programming to diagnostic units—diagnostic assessment is only as good as the treatment

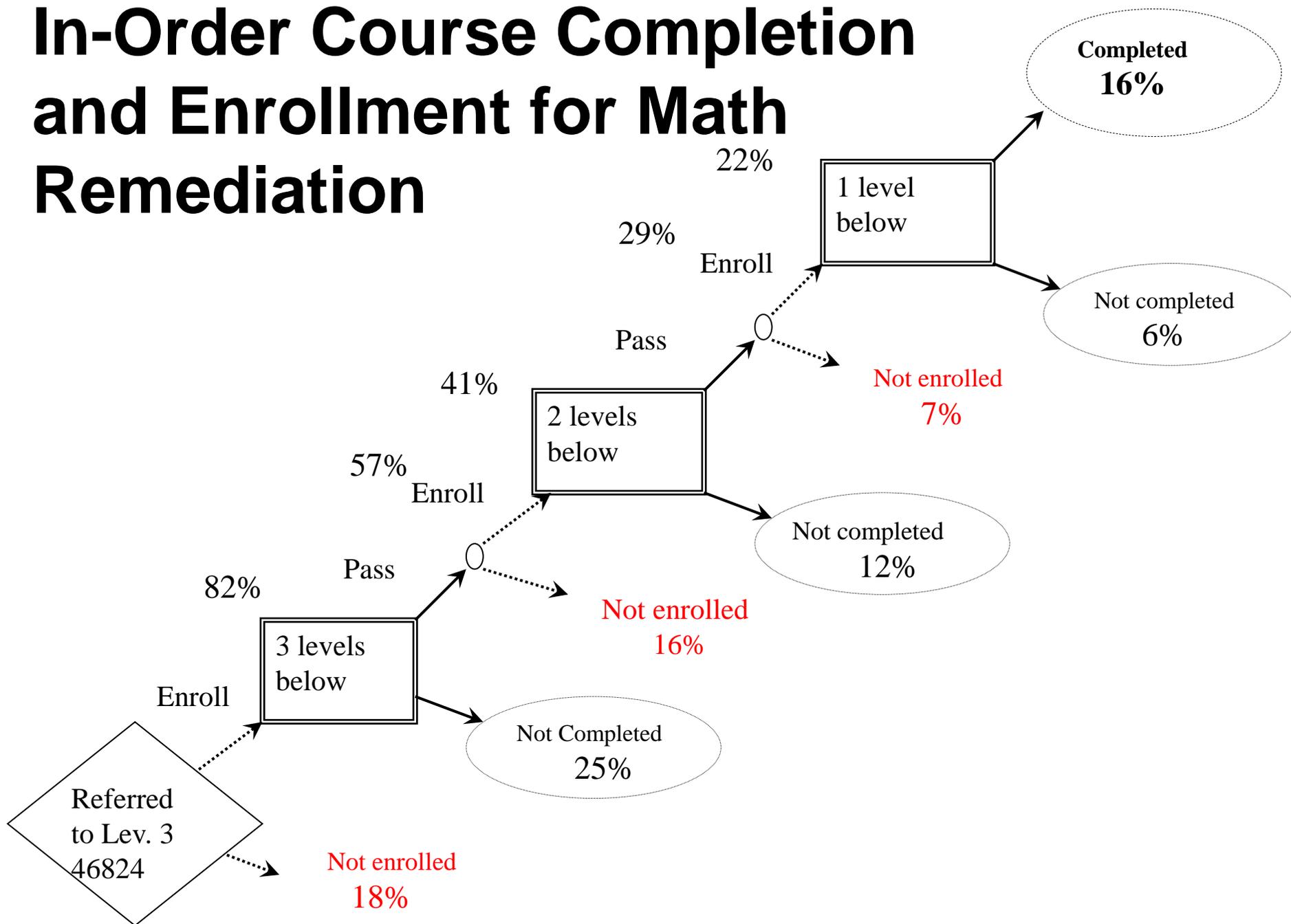
# Moving Beyond Assessment

- Take seriously the problem of underplacement—default to higher placement
- Assessment reform must be part of broader DE transformation

# Research on the Effect of DE

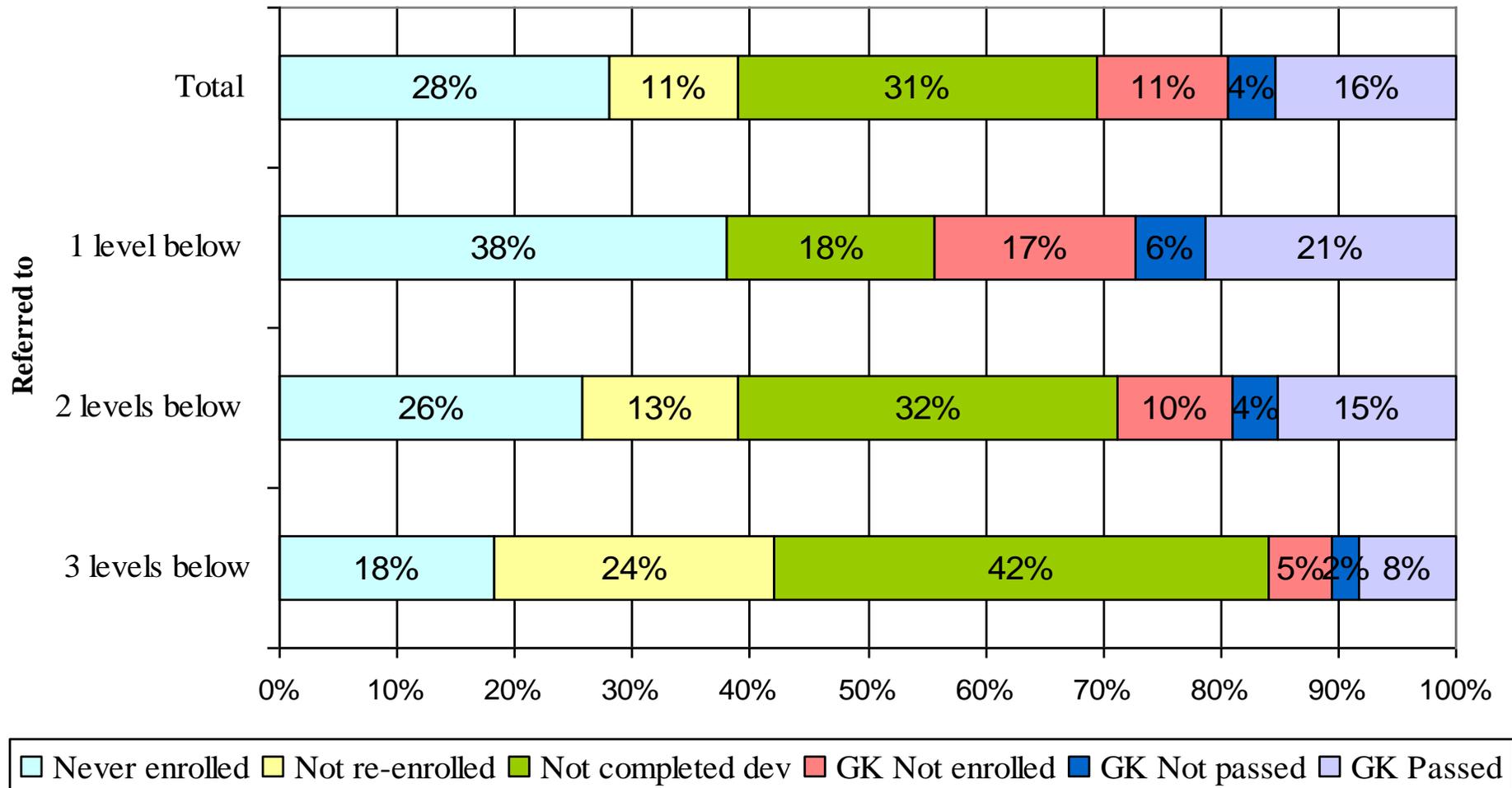
- Mostly no or negative effects at the developmental education cutoff
  - Bettinger and Long - Ohio
  - Calcagno and Long - Florida
  - Martorell and McFarlin - Texas
  - Scott-Clayton and Rodriguez - CUNY
- Varied but still mostly no or negative effects at lower levels
  - Boatman and Long - Tennessee
  - Melguizo, et. al. - California
  - Dadgar - Virginia
  - Jaggars and Hodara - CUNY

# In-Order Course Completion and Enrollment for Math Remediation



# Student Progression by Enrollment and Gatekeeper in Math

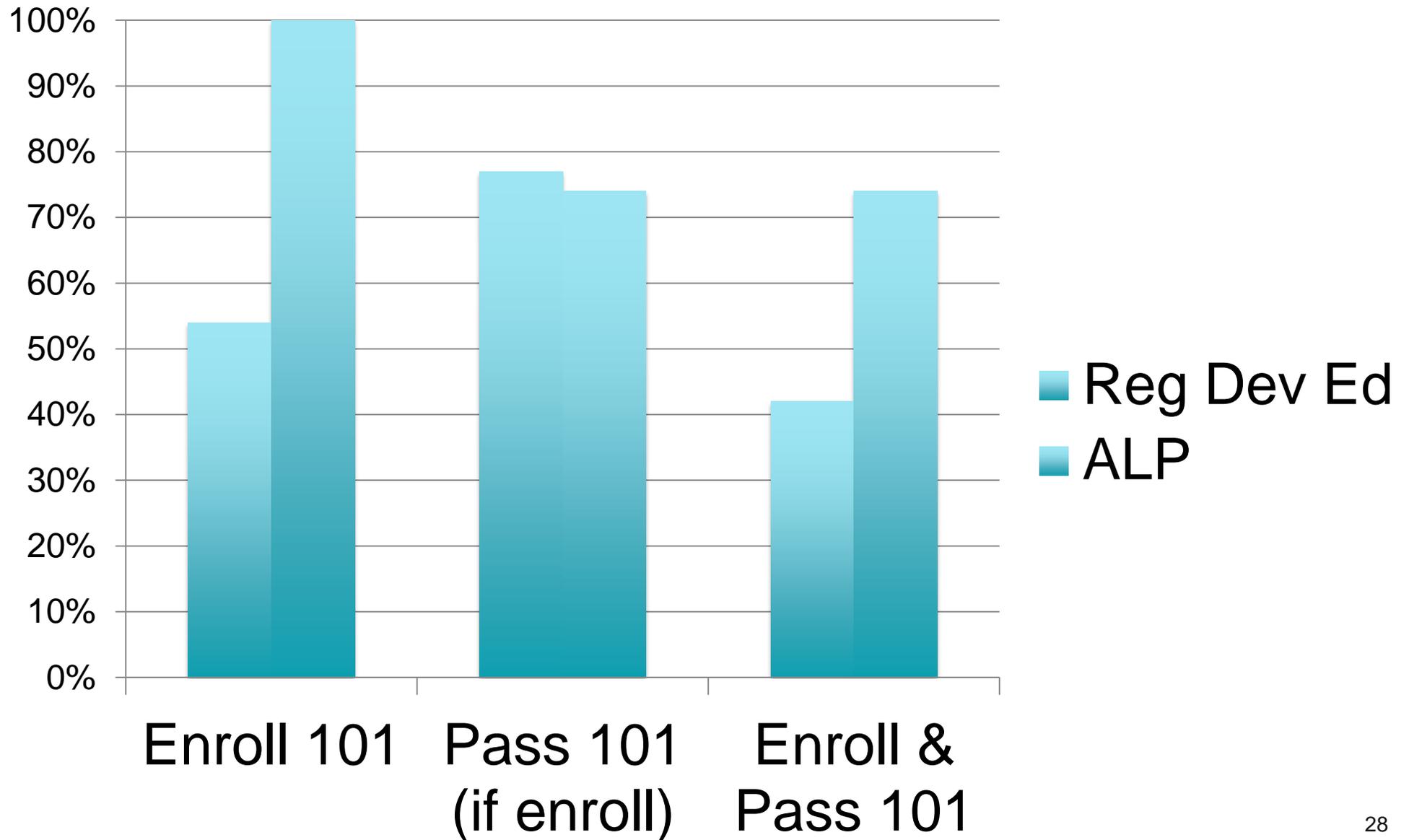
Math - Full Sample



# Completion of DE Sequence and 1<sup>st</sup> College Level Courses (Math)

Referred Level	Completed DE Sequence	Complete Gatekeeper
All Levels	31%	16%
1 Level Below	44%	21%
2 Levels Below	29%	15%
3 Levels Below	15%	8%

# CCBC ALP (1 year follow-up)



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# For more information:

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Community College Research Center  
Institute on Education and the Economy, Teachers College, Columbia University  
525 West 120th Street, Box 174, New York, NY 10027

E-mail: [ccrc@columbia.edu](mailto:ccrc@columbia.edu)

Telephone: 212.678.3091