



# Toward Equitable Placement for All: California's AB 705



**theRPgroup**  
Research • Planning • Professional Development  
for California Community Colleges



California  
Community  
Colleges



# Agenda

- What is AB 705 and how did we get here?
- What has been the role of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office in supporting implementation?
- What early successes (and challenges) have we seen?
- How have colleges approached implementation?
- How does implementation vary?
- Where is the research going next?
- Your questions!

# What is AB 705 and how did we get here?

## AB 705 (Irwin) – Assessment and Placement

Unanimously passed CA legislature, signed into law Oct. 2017

- Colleges must use of high school grades as the primary basis for placement in English and math
- Students have a default right to enroll in transferable, college-level courses
- To require students to enroll in remedial courses, colleges must be able to demonstrate that:
  - The student is “highly unlikely to succeed” in a transferable, college-level course  
AND
  - Starting in a remedial course will “maximize probability that a student enter and complete transfer-level coursework in English and math within a one-year timeframe” (a metric called “throughput” in CA)

# Equitable Placement, Support and Completion

- **Goal:** Maximize student success
- **Policy Reform:** Stipulates the time to enrollment & completion; what information can be used for placement; and the standard of proof for any BTL placements
- **Implementation:** Research to establish standards & best practices; Required adoption plans with a two-year innovation window; Required validation of practices; Enforcement of the law; Improvement plans; Continued evaluation and improvement

**AB 705 is a historic reform to dismantle structural racism and classism barriers.**



California  
Community  
Colleges

Educational  
Services & Support

## Implementation Progress

October 2017	Legislation Signed
March/July 2018	Default Placement Rules Established
March 2019	English and Math Regulations Approved
July 2019	English and Math Adoption Plans Submitted
Fall 2019	Implementation Deadline for English and Math
March 2020	ESL Regulations Approved
Spring 2020	ESL Adoption Plan Deadline extended to July 1, 2021 for Fall 2021 Implementation
Spring 2020	Published Equitable Placement Toolkit
Spring 2021	English and Math Validation of Practices Data Collected



California  
Community  
Colleges

Educational  
Services & Support

Implementation Progress	
Spring 2021	<a href="#"><u>Transfer Level Gateway Completion Dashboard Created</u></a>
Spring 2021	ESL Data Analysis and Research
July 1, 2021	ESL Adoption Plans Due
July 2021	Equitable Placement & Completion BOG Spotlight: Results of Validation of Practices
Fall 2021	Implementation Deadline for ESL
Fall 2021	Reconstituted Assessment Committee
Fall 2021	Assessing ESL Adoption Plans
Fall 2021	Equitable Placement & Completion Improvement Plans

Anticipate AB 1705 to be signed this fall.



California  
Community  
Colleges

Educational  
Services & Support

# What We Know

**Evidence from numerous sources supports one key finding:**

**When local placement practices require, encourage or allow students to enroll in pre-transfer level coursework, throughput is not being maximized. Students are more likely to complete transfer requirements in math and English when they are placed and enroll in transfer-level coursework.**

- For all student groups
- No matter students' high school performance
- No matter how long students have been out of school
- No matter students' prior math completion



California  
Community  
Colleges

Educational  
Services & Support

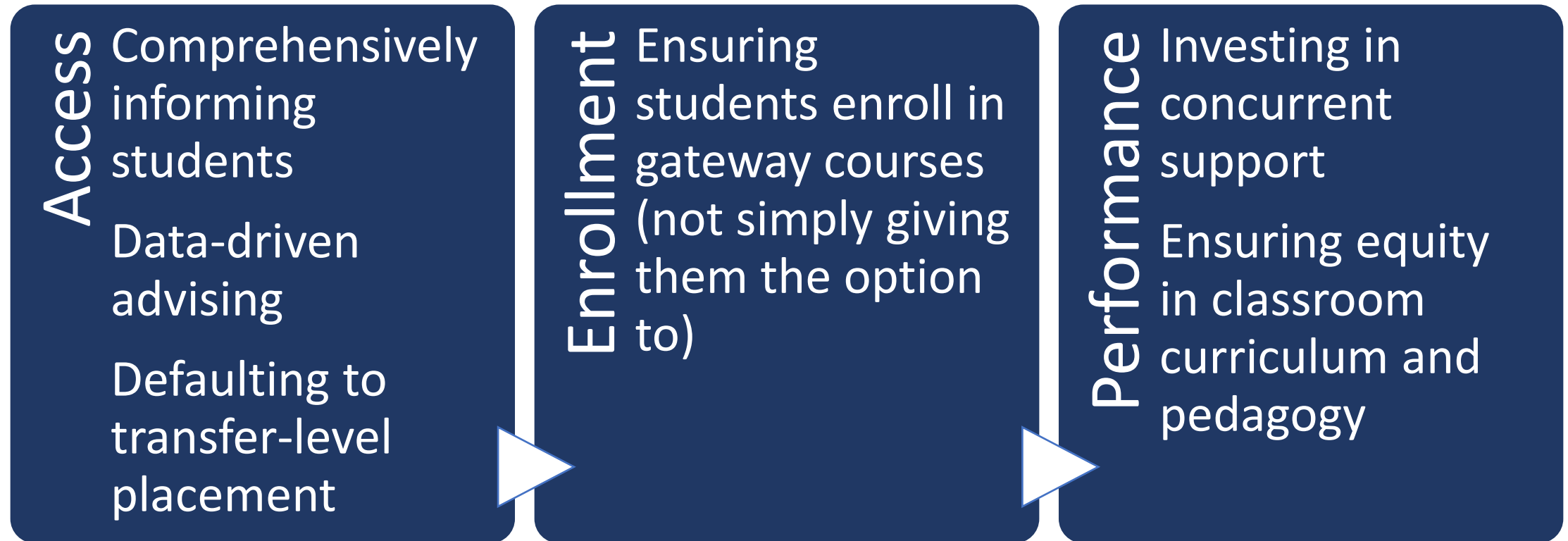


# What We Know

- Starting in transfer-level gives students the best chance of successfully completing transfer-level
- Overall non-successful completions have declined post-AB 705 (not increased)
- Even students who start in and fail transfer-level are more likely to then pass transfer-level than if they had started below transfer-level



# From Compliance to Continuous Improvement



Let's work together so that all students and colleges can be successful.

See appendix for research sources.



California  
Community  
Colleges

Educational  
Services & Support

# The Paradigm Shift of AB 705

## Where we were:

- Focused on individual course pass rates
- Concerned about placing students too high
- College's purview to place students below transfer
- Strong focus on placement tests
- Firm placement for everyone
- Strong focus on long remedial sequences

## Where we are:

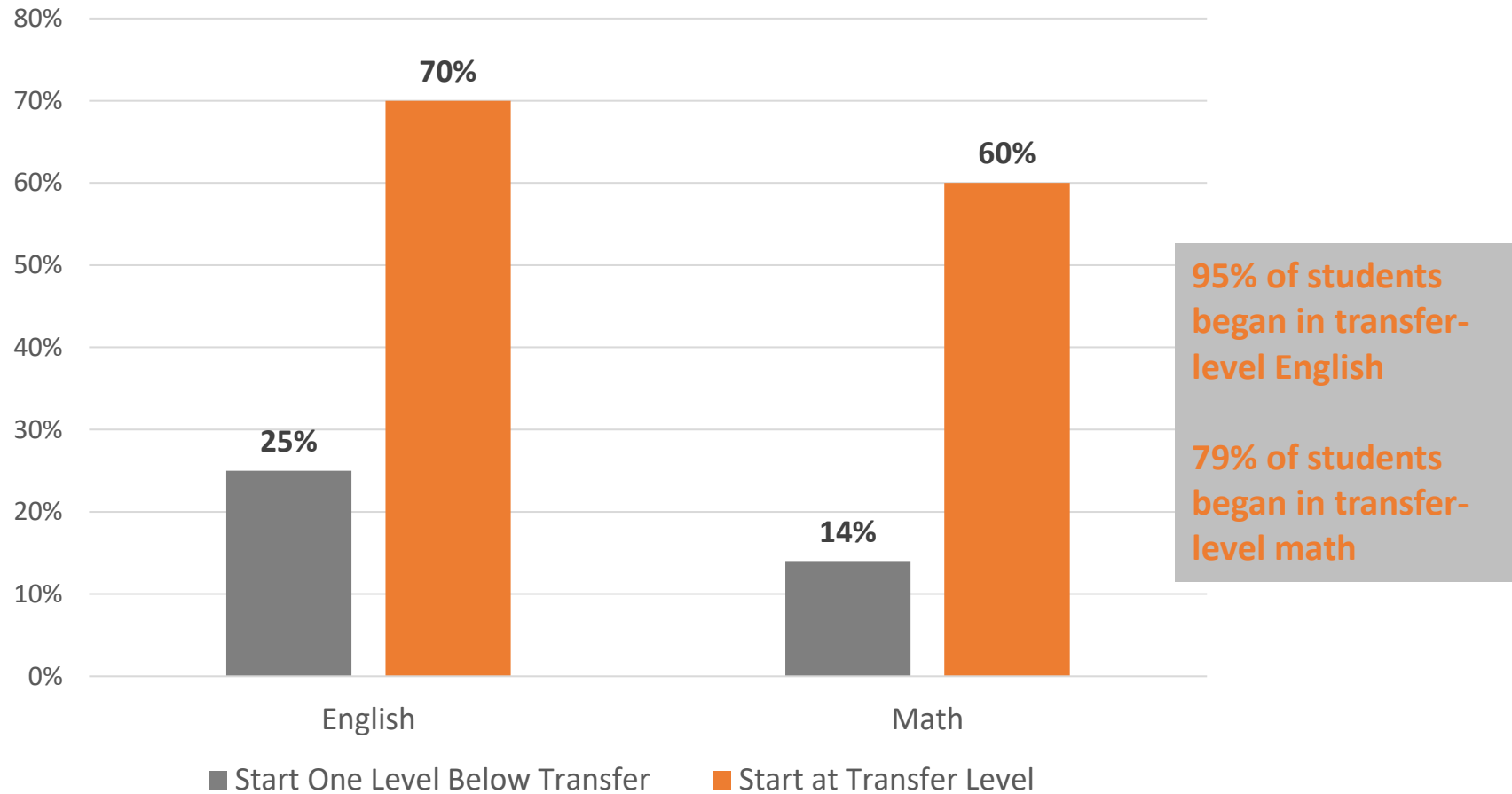
- Focused on attrition and completion of the transfer level course (throughput)
- Concerned about placing student too low
- Student right to access transfer level coursework
- High school grades for placement
- Guided placement based on educational goals
- Focus on varied supports including corequisite instruction



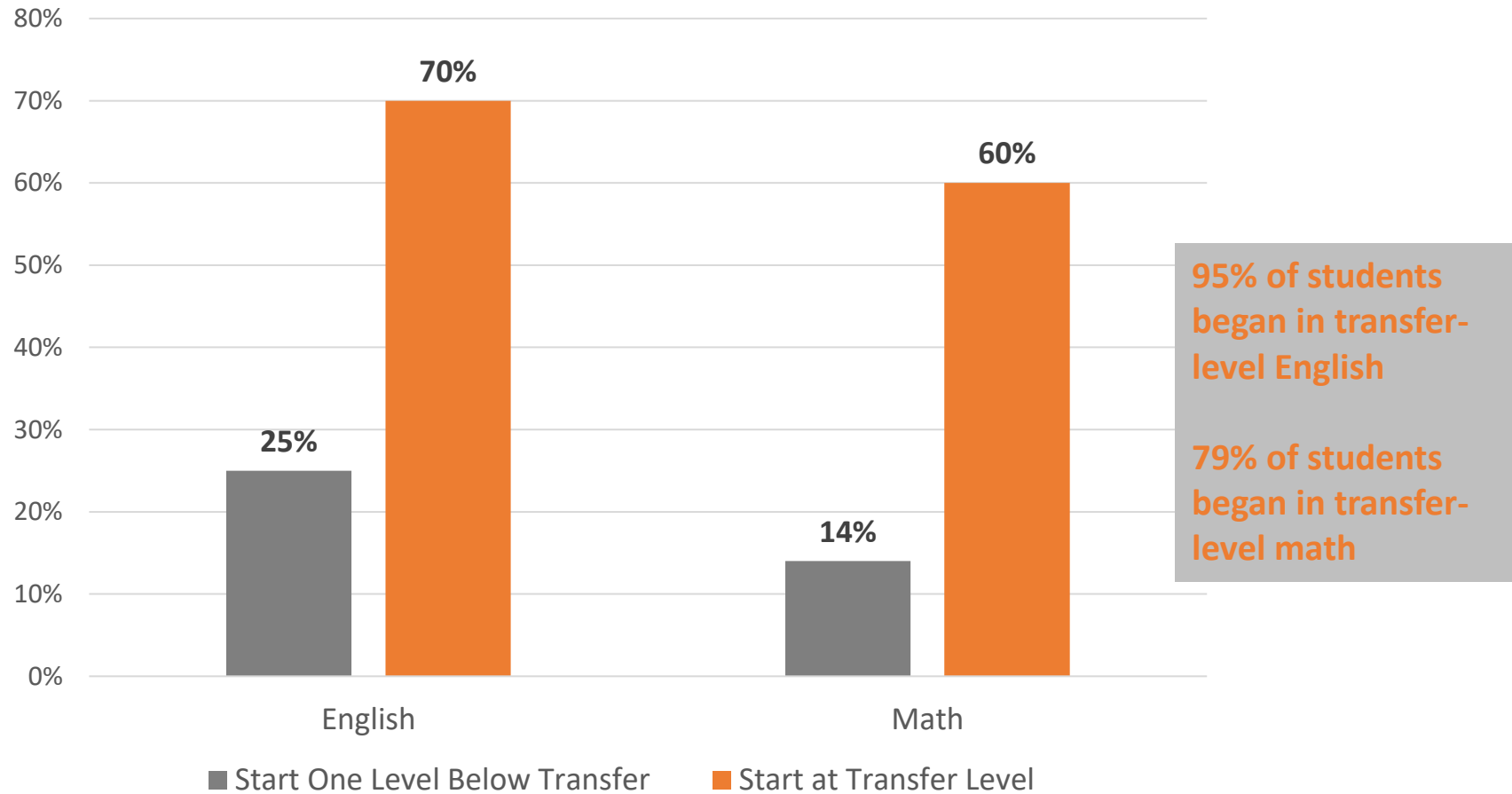
# What early successes (and challenges) have we seen?

# Results from the First Year 2019-2020

## Completion Higher if Students Start in Transfer Level Course, 2019-20

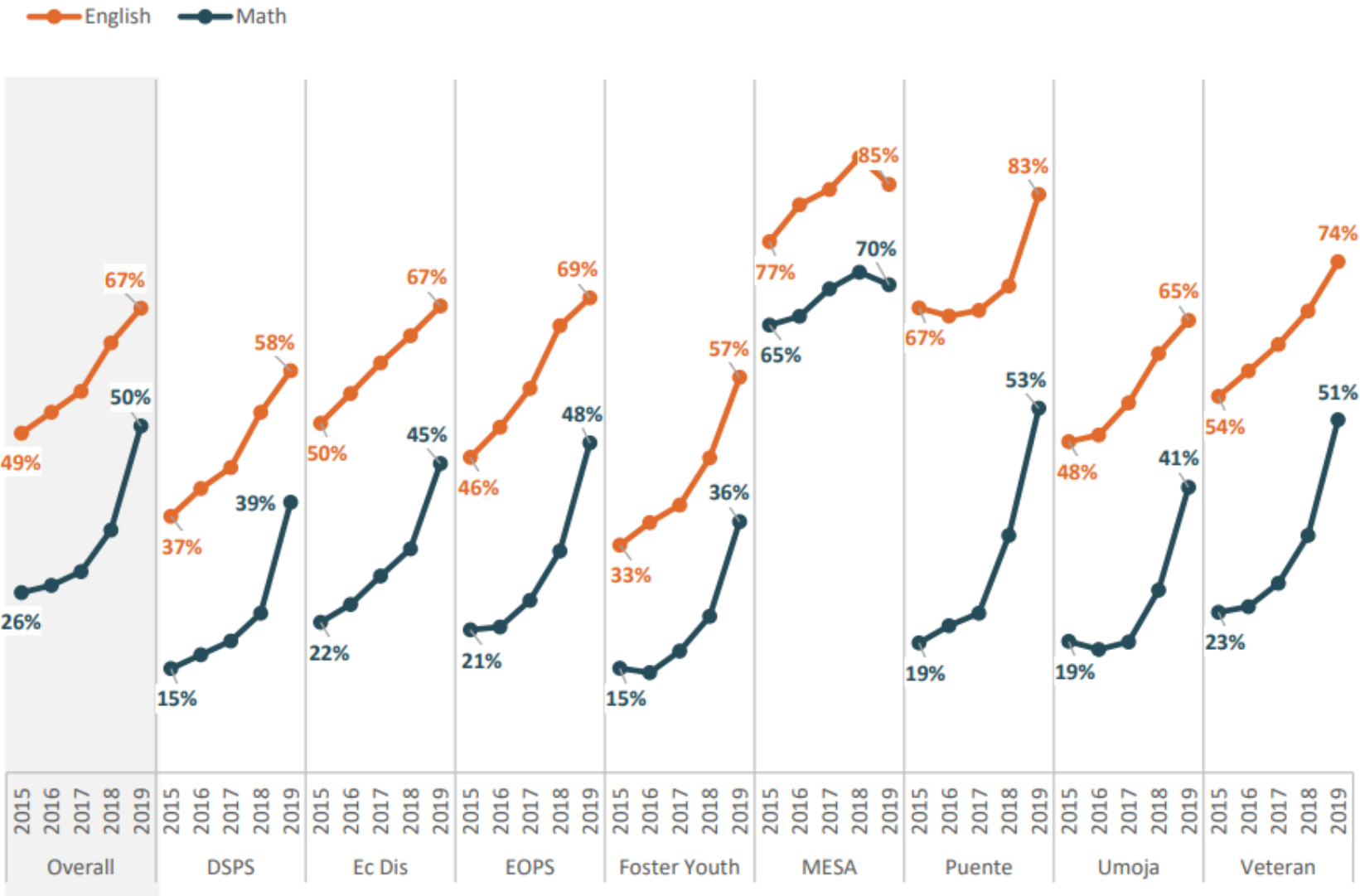


# Completion is higher if students start in transfer level courses.



# Throughput rates increased in both English and Math across all groups.

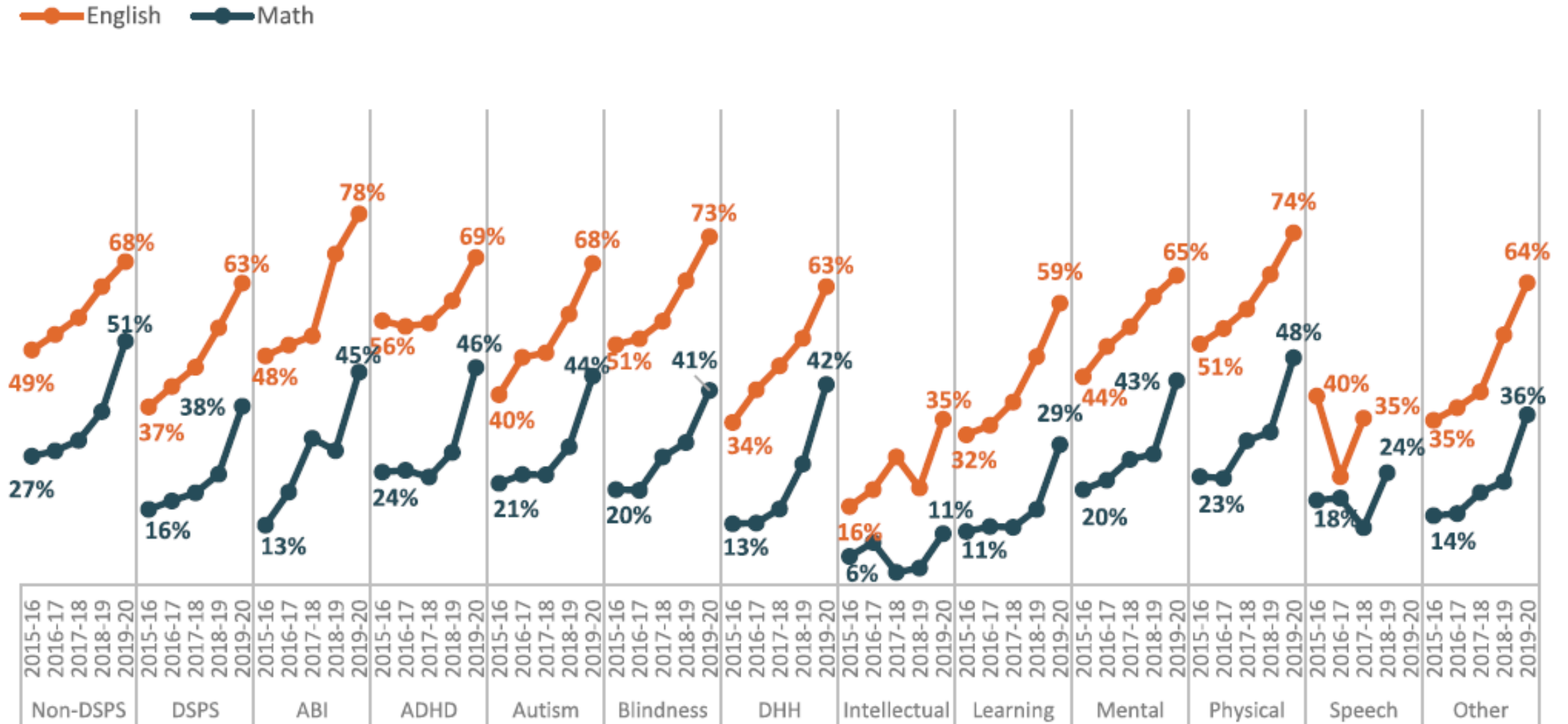
**Figure 2. One-Year Throughput Rates in Transfer-Level by Student Subgroup (Fall Cohorts)**





# Throughput rates increased substantially for both English and Math across all disability types.

## One-Year Transfer-Level Throughput Rates by Disability Type





# How have colleges approached implementation?

## How colleges determined the placement rules they are currently using:

- Task force or committee created to lead AB 705 implementation
- Discipline faculty had a deciding vote
- Administration supported the faculty

## Factors that influenced colleges' decisions on placement rules:

- Statewide data
  - Default placement rules
  - Multiple Measures Assessment Project (MMAP) findings
- Local throughput data
- Prior initiatives focused on shortening sequences and increasing support

# Most positive outcomes so far

- Increases in student centeredness
  - Simplified placement process
  - Guided and self-placement – ownership of starting level
  - Access to transfer-level saves time and money
- Development of new curriculum
  - Shorter sequences
  - Embedded support
  - Corequisite support courses
- Increased collaboration
  - Within disciplines
  - Across disciplines
- Development of new strategies
  - Pedagogy
  - Support models
- Improved academic outcomes
  - Access, success, throughput



*Our college saw an increase of 750+ students complete transfer-level math this fall [fall 2019] compared to the prior academic year. Over half of the students who completed transfer-level were Hispanic, compared to only 30% the prior year.*

*—Counselor*



# Greatest implementation challenges

- Ensuring sufficient buy-in
  - Faculty, administration, students, feeder schools, community
- Operational issues
  - Student registration system
  - Support models
  - Enrollment challenges
- Providing student support
  - Ensuring students who need support have access to it and utilize it
- Availability of data
  - Timely access to data to support data driven decisions
- Communication
  - Dissemination of accurate and consistent messaging
  - Sharing best practices



*We are worried we don't have enough safety nets for students who need more time and support.*

*—Dean of Liberal Arts*



# Belief in students' capacity to succeed at transfer level

- A new conversation
  - The message students now receive is that they are college-ready
  - The belief is that students can succeed in transfer-level courses in their first year if they have the necessary support
- Concurrent support and services
  - Students are reassured they will receive the support they need from the college
- Equity gaps persist
  - Concern that eliminating remedial courses prevents the college from being able to accommodate different skill levels
- Non-academic barriers
  - Colleges are examining various influences and barriers that contribute to an unsuccessful student outcome



*The college is now treating all students as having the capacity to complete transfer-level courses.*

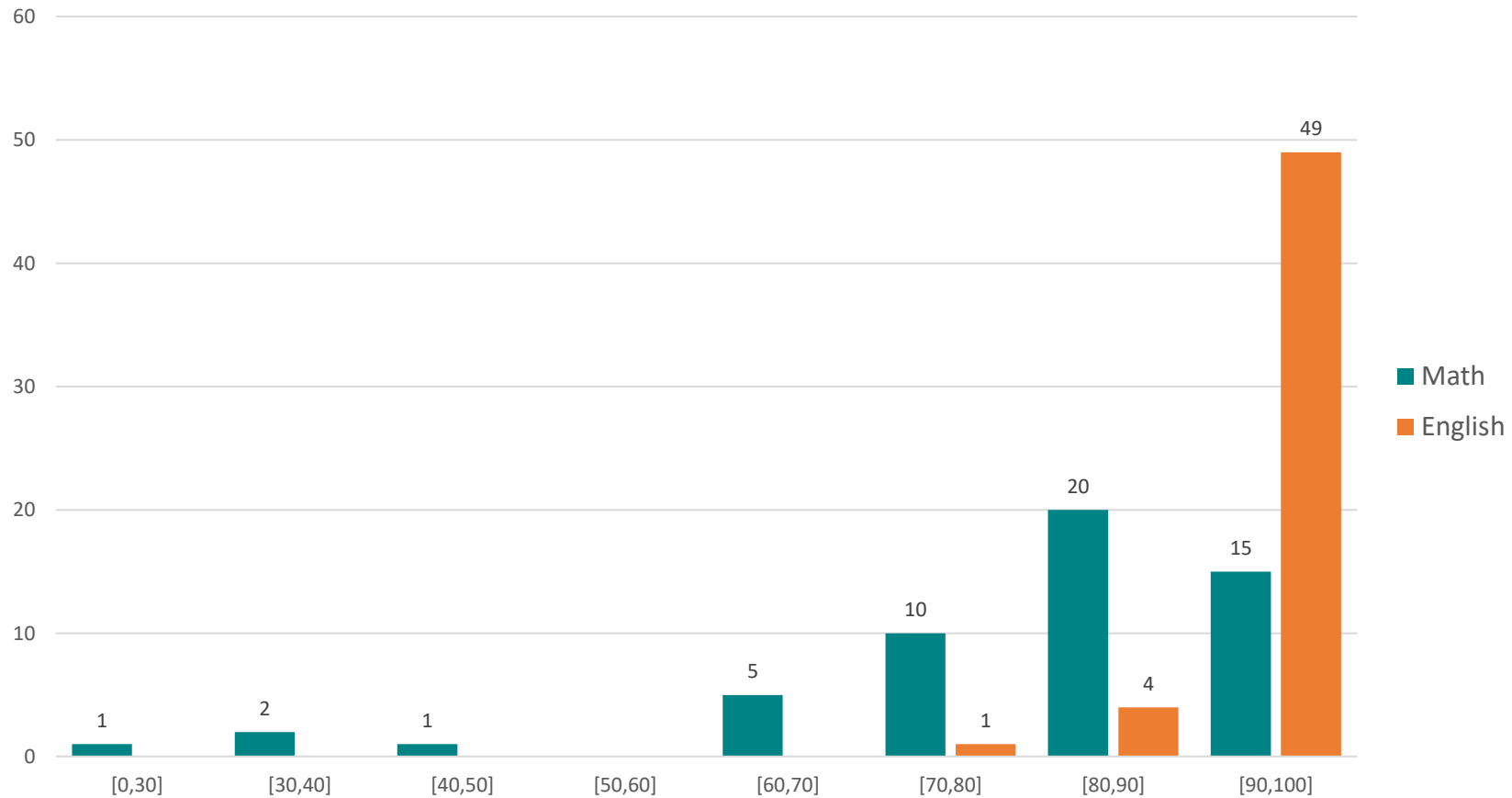
—Assessment Coordinator



# How does implementation vary?

# Sections at transfer-level, math and English, Fall 2021

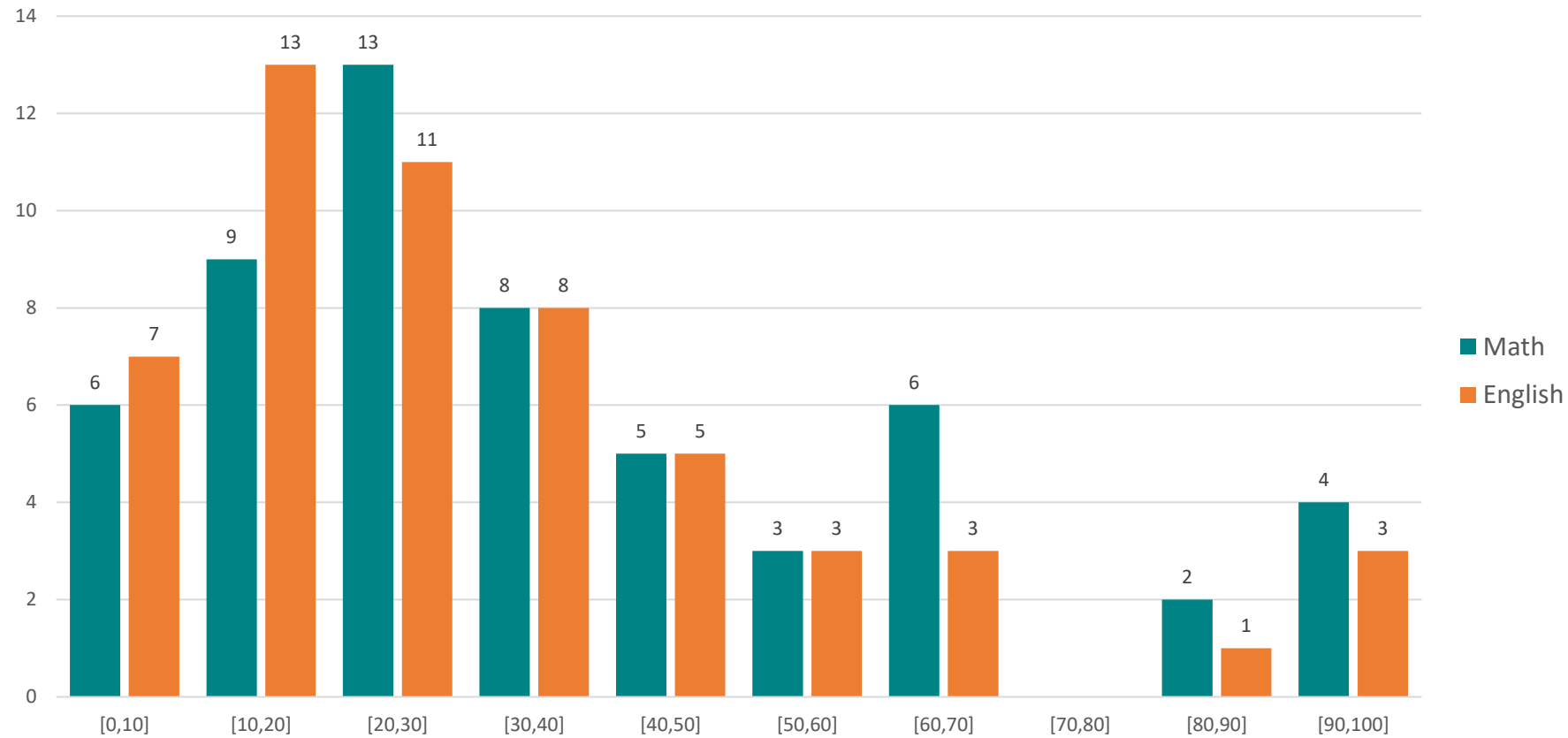
n (math)=56 institutions; n (English) = 54 institutions





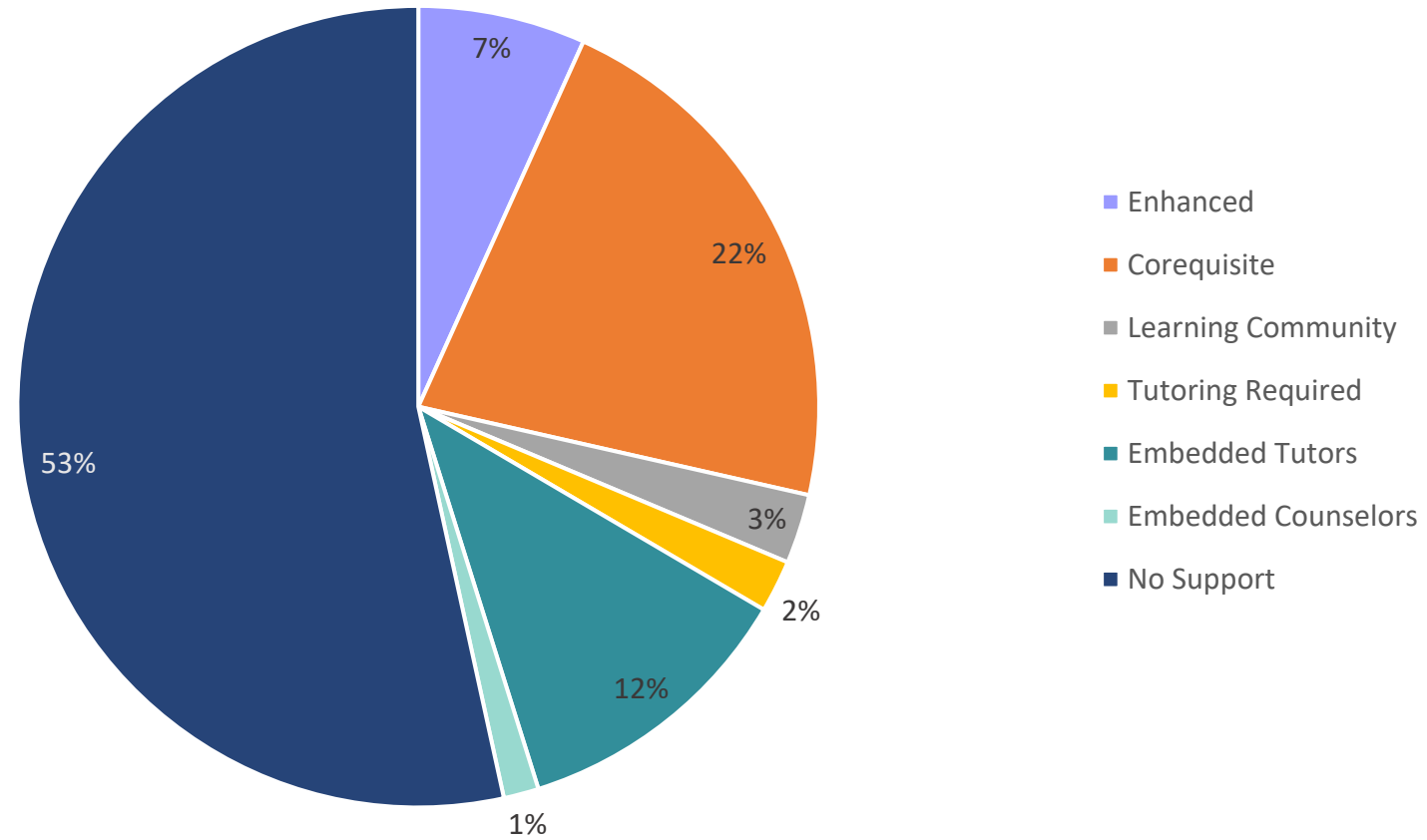
# Section-level cocurricular supports, math and English, Fall 2021

n (math)=56 institutions; n (English) = 54 institutions



# Sections with cocurricular supports, math and English

n (math)=56 institutions; n (English) = 54 institutions



# Where is the research going next?

## Other research areas

- Are colleges continuing students along their math pathway from high school to college without repeating courses?
  - [Report](#)
- What happens to students who did not complete Algebra 2 in high school?
  - [Report](#)
- What are the best pathways for English language learners in English as a Second Language courses?
  - [Report](#)
- What are emerging practices for ESL?
  - [Guides](#)

# Next Steps for Research

- What types of corequisites work and for which students?
- What happens after students complete the next course?
- What happens when a student does not pass a course the first time?
- Are there improvements in long term outcomes such as degree attainment and transfer?
- How can we successfully work towards closing equity gaps?





# Your questions?