



## Promising Pathways:

The Potential of High School Data to Spur Student Progress and Achievement

John J. Hetts  
Director of Institutional Research  
Long Beach City College  
@jjhetts

---

# Three goals

- Initiate reflection on student transition
- Briefly explain our research
- Introduce results of implementation of research as part of first cohort of the Long Beach City College Promise Pathways in F2012



# Transition to College: Assessment and Placement

- CCCs are open enrollment institutions
  - Requires assessing and planning for educational needs of students.
- Most rely largely, if not entirely, on standardized assessment
  - Ease of administration
  - Transparency of administration
  - Impartiality of administration
  - Pre-approval



# Consequences for student transition

- **Most** students placed into basic skills
  - **Significant** barrier to completion
- Colleges' **first** interaction with most students is to tell them they're not ready for college
- Implies that most students are not ready for college and are likely to fail
  - Convinces many, including students



# Conventional Wisdom

## Explaining Assessment Results

- It is a problem with today's students
  - Students are simply, vastly unprepared for college
  - Kids these days ....
- It is a problem with public education
  - Public education is failing to prepare high school students
  - Teachers these days...



# What If the Conventional Wisdom is Wrong?

- Substantial, long-term increase in IQ:
  - [bit.ly/FlynnEffectIQ](http://bit.ly/FlynnEffectIQ)
- 18-24 with HS degree: 90% - highest ever:
  - [bit.ly/HS18-24](http://bit.ly/HS18-24)
- National Assessment of Educational Progress: at highs in virtually every demographic category
  - [bit.ly/NAEPInfo](http://bit.ly/NAEPInfo)
- Research increasingly questions effectiveness of standardized assessment for placement
  - Little relation to college course outcomes. (e.g., Belfield & Crosta, 2012; Edgescombe, 2011; Scott-Clayton, 2012; Scott-Clayton & Rodriguez, 2012; Xu, forthcoming): [bit.ly/CCRCAssess](http://bit.ly/CCRCAssess)
  - NAGB, 2012: Incredible variability in cutscores, with 2-year colleges often using HIGHER cutscores than 4-year colleges: [bit.ly/NAGB2012](http://bit.ly/NAGB2012)



# Bigger questions

- What if the problem is not with our students, but with how **we** have assessed their capabilities?
- Alternatively, what if the biggest barrier to our students' successful transition to college is one that we have created and that we control?



# Long Beach College Promise: Origins of Promise Pathways

- **Seamless Education:** Partnership between LBUSD, LBCC and CSULB founded in 1994
- **Long Beach College Promise:** began March 2008
  - LBUSD: Preparing students for college
  - LBCC: Promise Scholarship
  - CSULB: Local high school graduates receive preferential admission
- Despite:
  - years of partnership
  - increasing numbers of LBUSD students going to CSULB
  - improvement in LBUSD student performance on CST and EAP
- LBCC assessments of college readiness among LBUSD students not only did not improve – they have been declining.





# Our research: we sought local answers to three questions

- What predicts how students assess and place into developmental courses?
- What predicts how students perform in those courses?
- How well are placement and performance aligned?



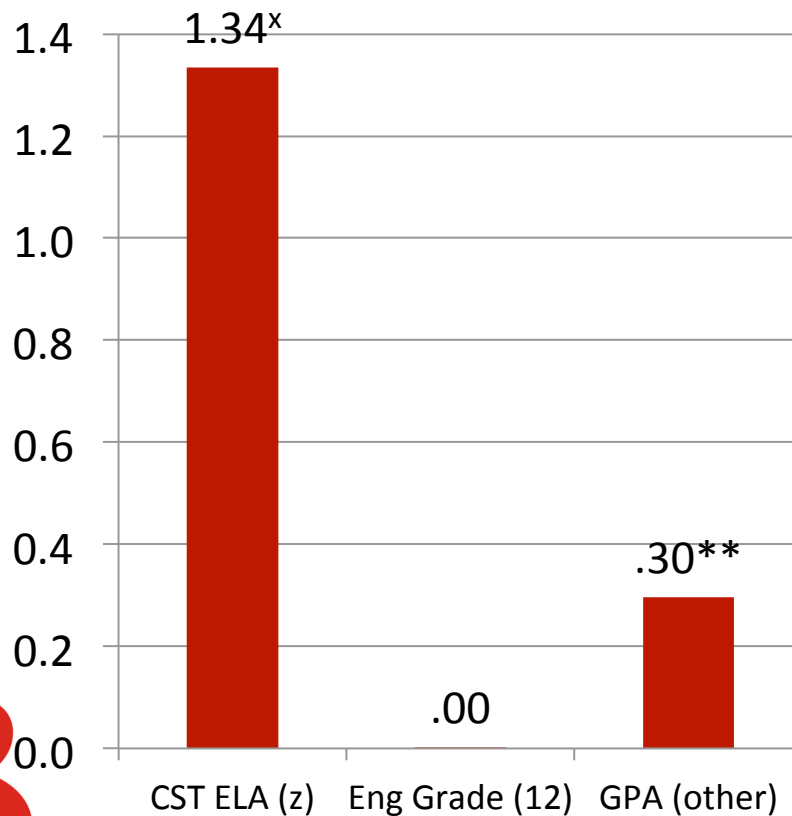
# Our Research

- Five longitudinal cohorts tracking more than 7,000 HS grads who attend LBCC directly after high school
  - built with help of Cal-PASS
- Examined predictive utility of wide range of high school achievement data
  - most notably 11th grade California Standards Test (**CST**) scores and **high school grades**
- For predicting:
  - How students are assessed and placed into developmental skills sequences
  - How students perform in those classes

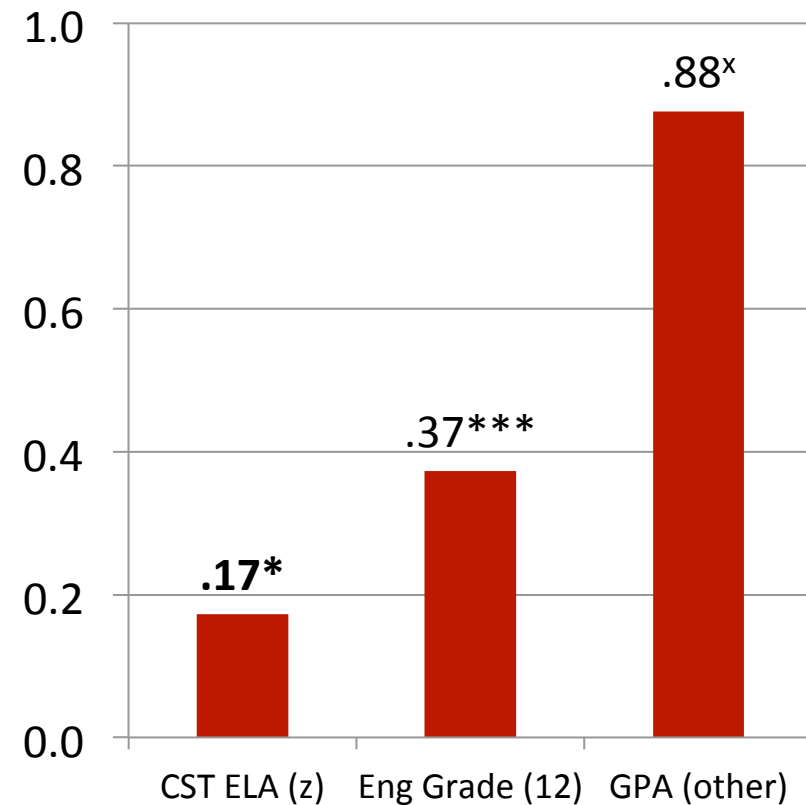


# Alignment in English

## Predicting Placement



## Predicting Performance

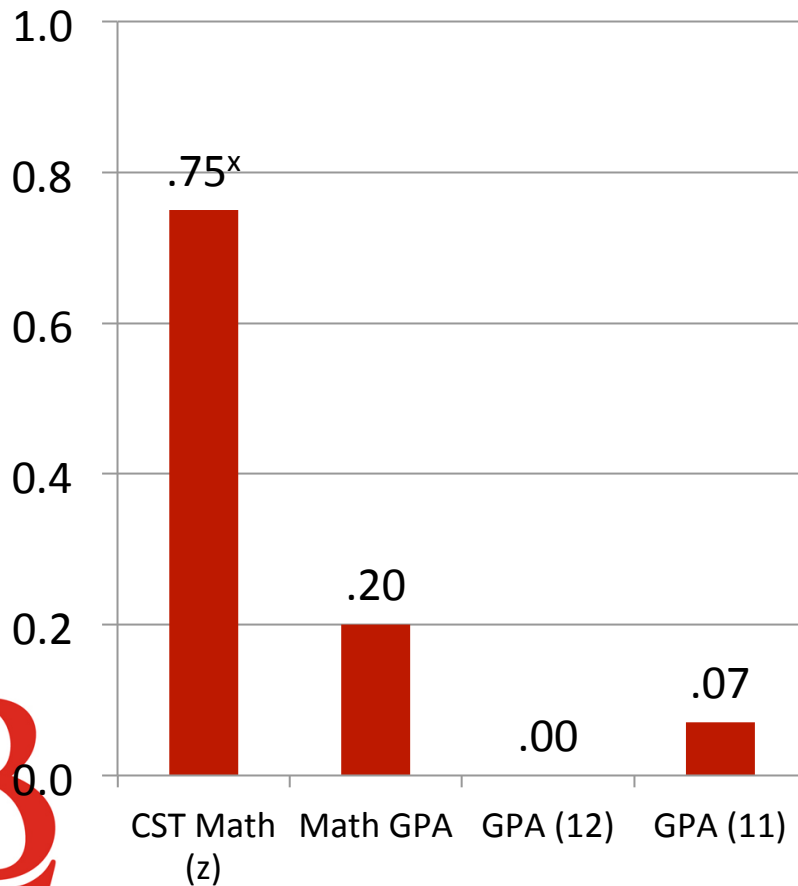


\*  $p < .05$  \*\*,  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , x =  $p < 1 \times 10^{-10}$

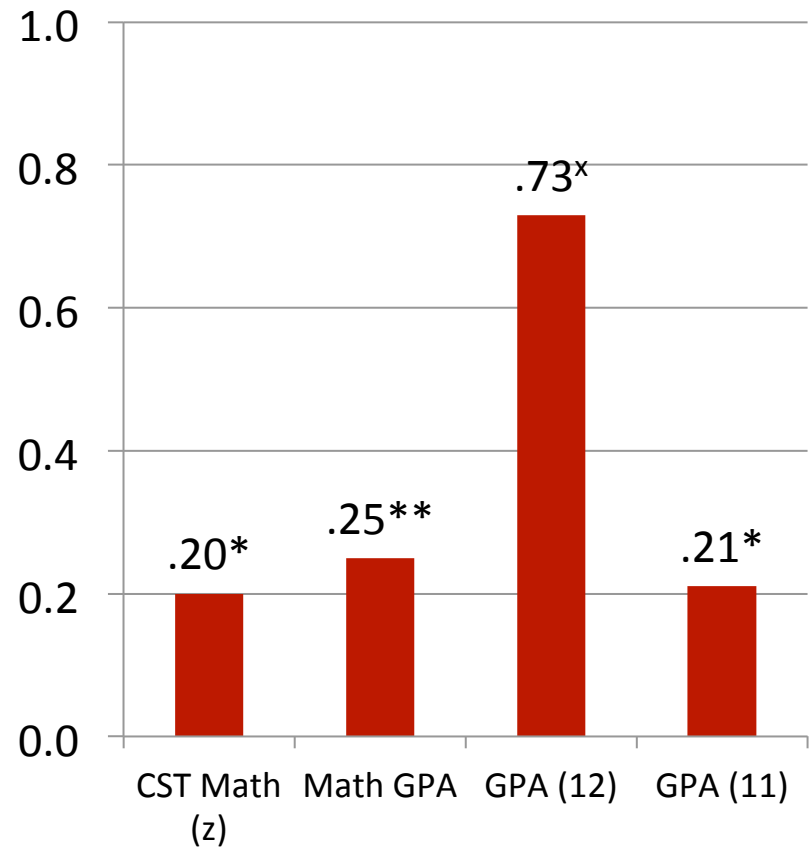


# Alignment in Math

## Predicting Placement



## Predicting Performance



\*  $p < .05$  \*\*,  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , x =  $p < 1 \times 10^{-10}$



# Key Takeaways

- Assessment should predict **how students will perform at our college**
  - Standardized tests predict standardized tests
  - Classroom performance predicts **classroom performance**
  - More information tells us more about students than less information
- **Significant opportunities** exist to improve placement, student achievement, and students' college experience.

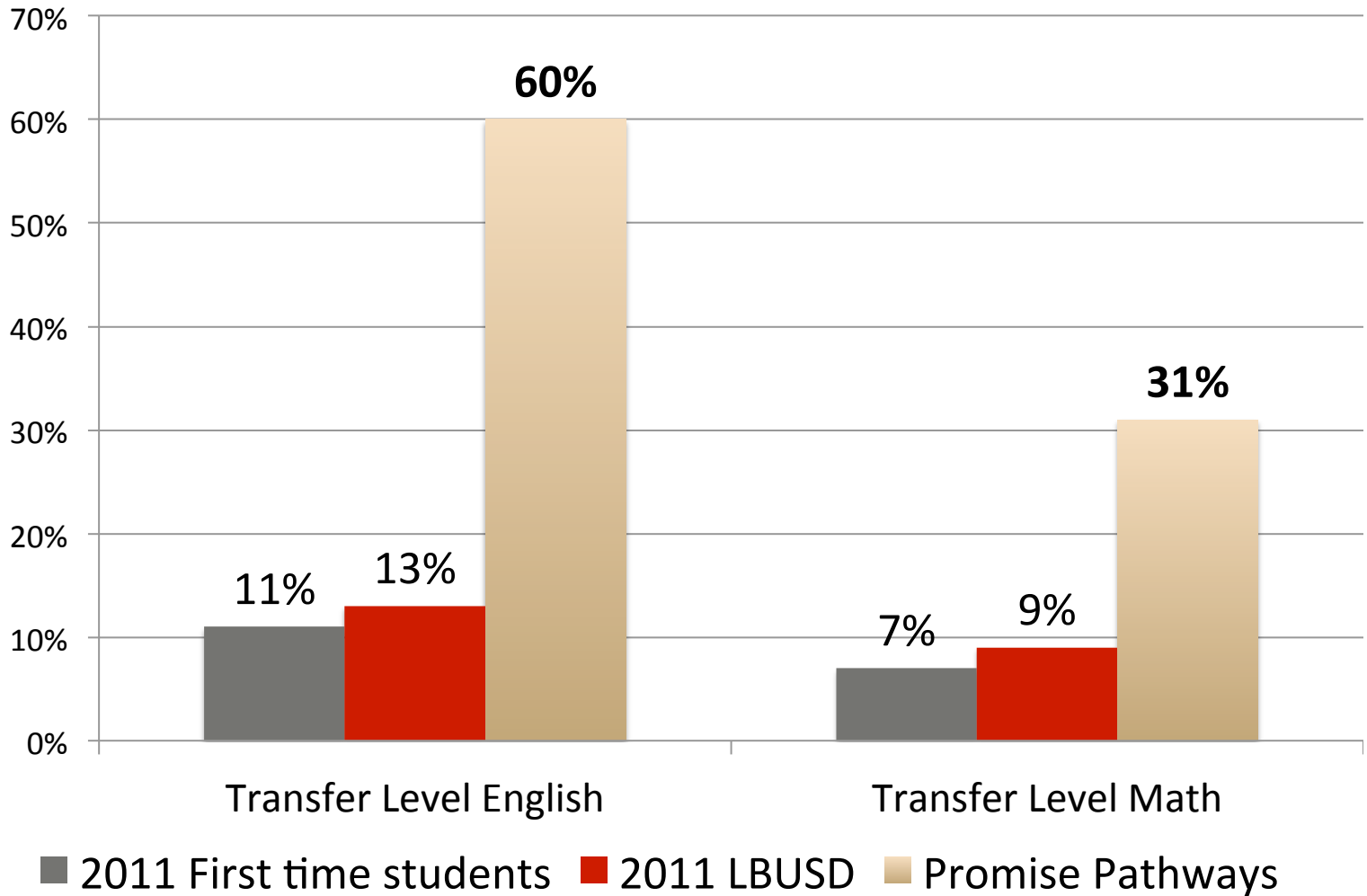


# Reimagining the Transition to College: Fall 2012 Promise Pathways

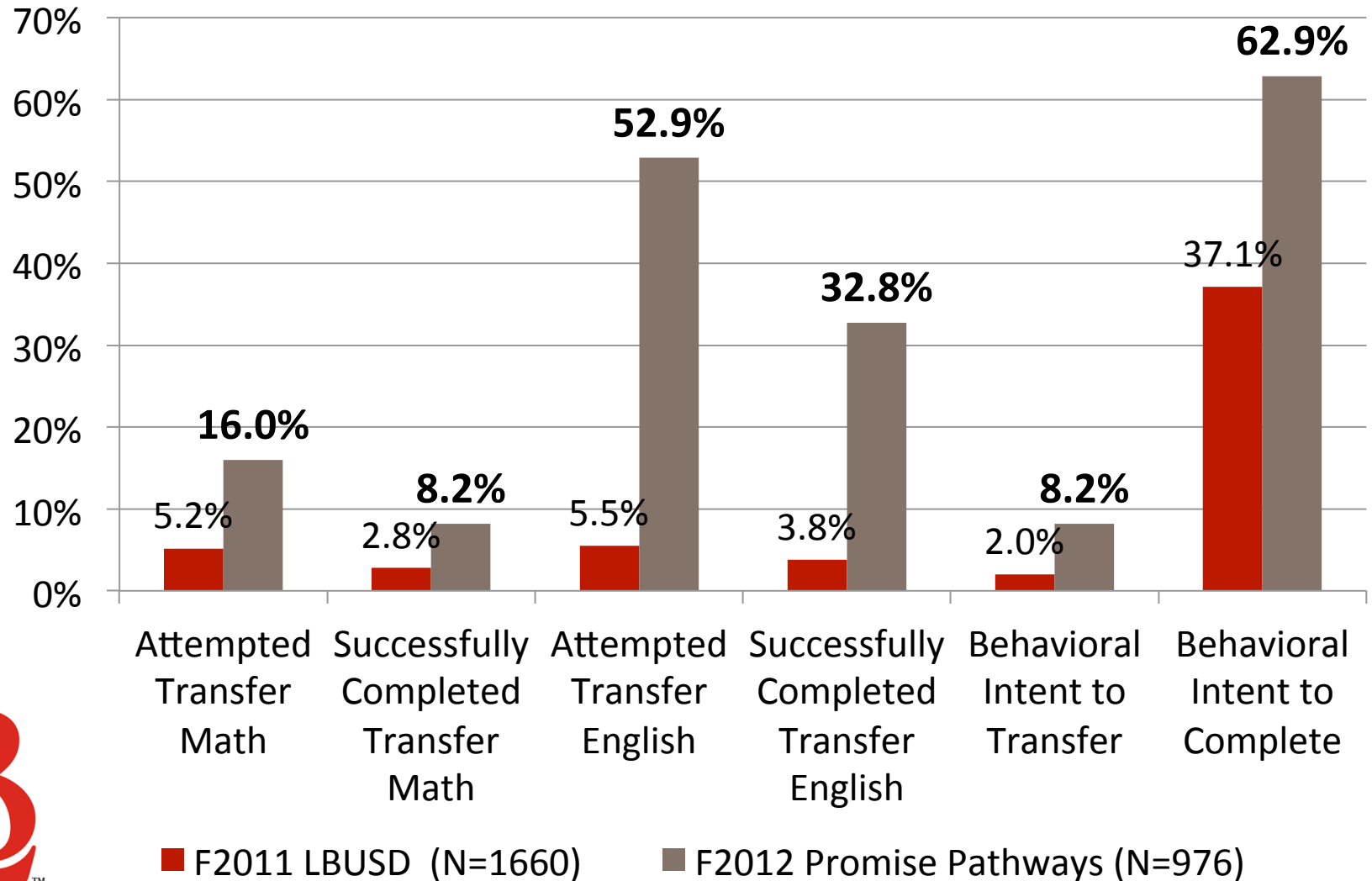
- ~1000 students received placement in English & Math using multi-method, evidence-based assessment
  - **English:** A or B in 12th Grade English (proxy)
  - **Math:** Predicted rate of success using all variables  $\geq$  average success rate in course
- Prescriptive, full-time course load via first-semester success plan



# \*Alternative placement: Transfer-level Placement Rates

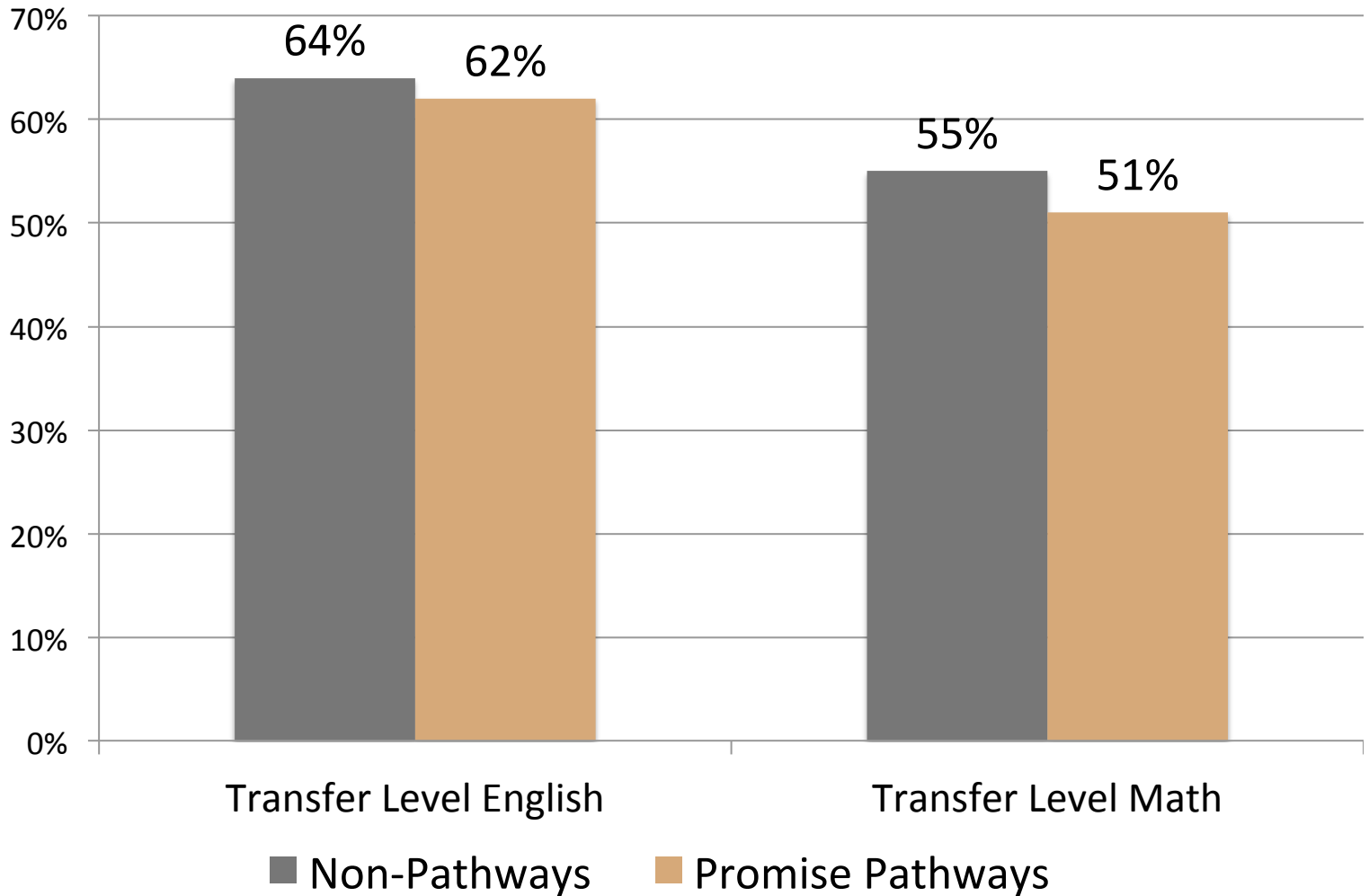


# First-term early educational milestone achievement





# Success rates in transfer-level courses Fall 2012

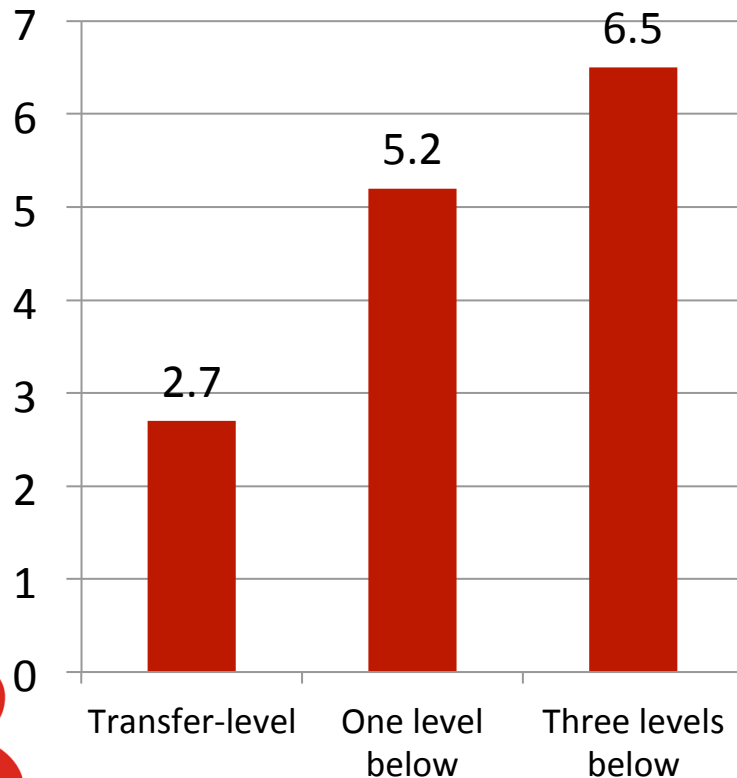


Neither of these differences approach significance,  $p > .30$

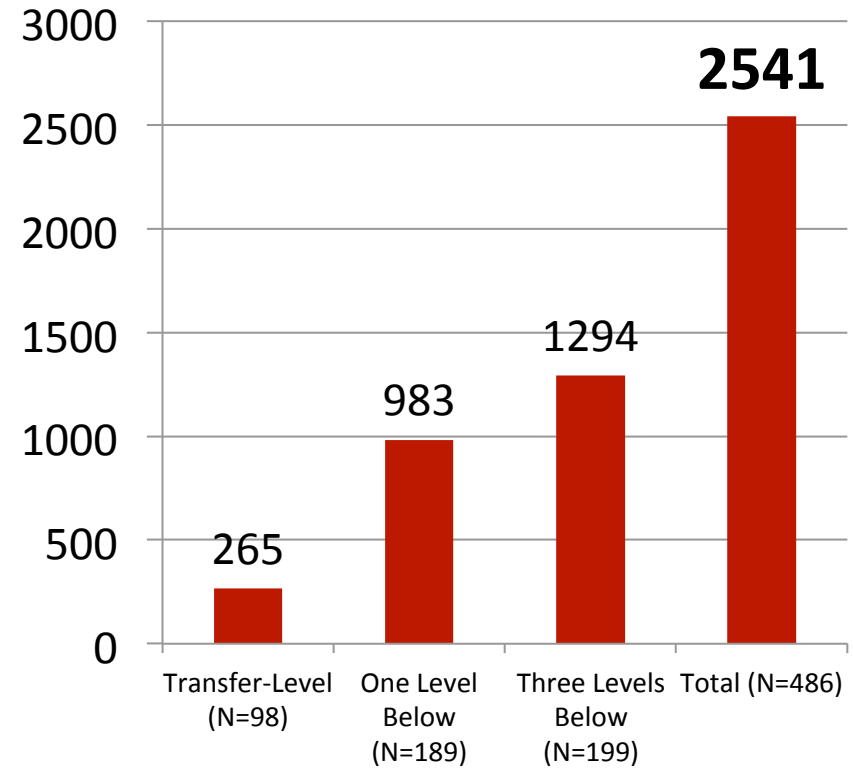


# How does it affect time to college-level work?

Average number of semesters to take English 1 by F2012 Non-Pathways Students by placement



Estimated number of semesters saved among F2012 Pathways English 1 Students by placement

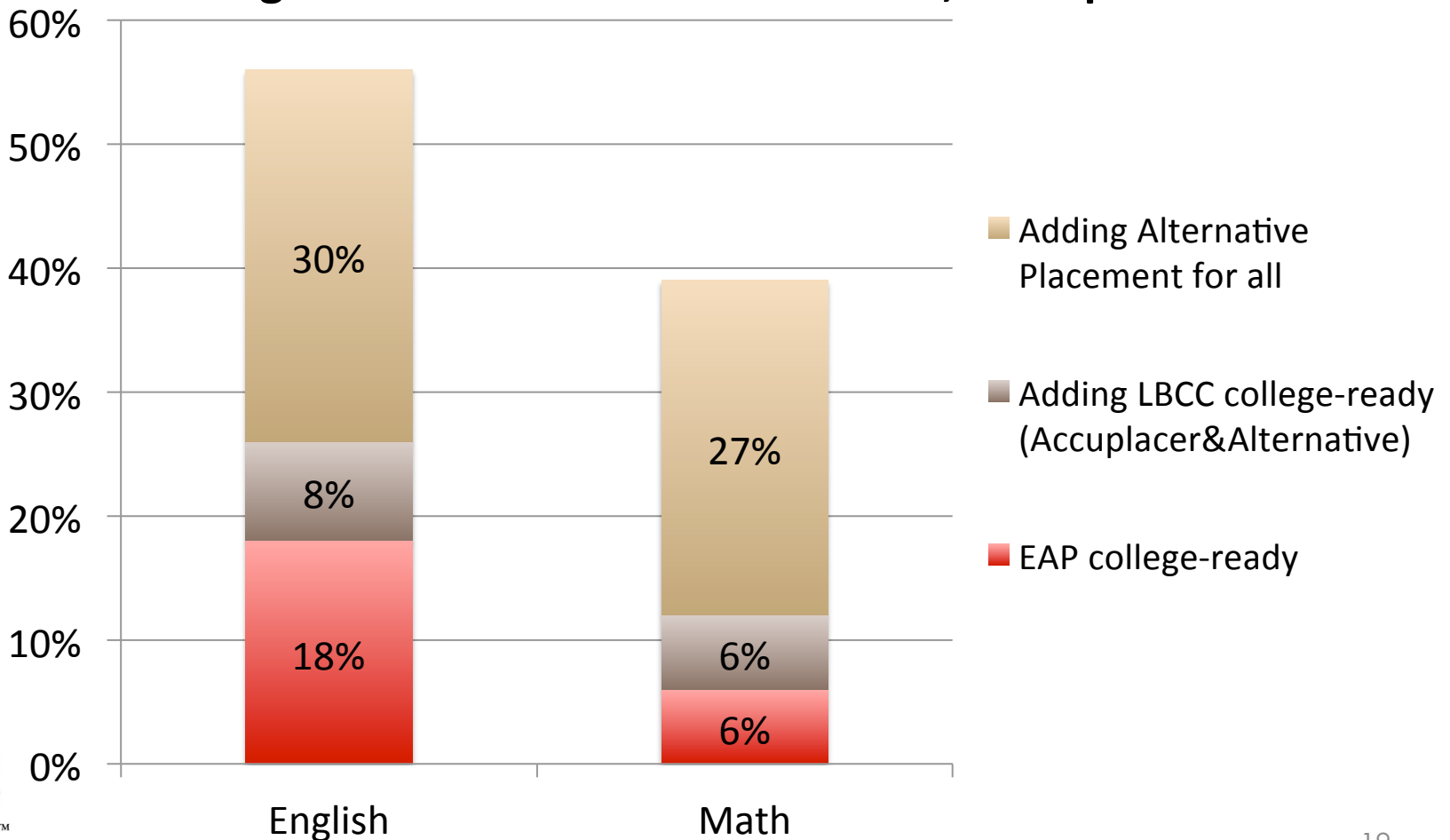


**1270 years** of student time saved, or approximately **2.6 years per student**



# Could this change how we understand college readiness

College Readiness – S2012 Graduates, Unduplicated



# What did LBCC gain through prescriptive, evidence based approach to transition to college

- **Dramatic increases** in students attaining early educational milestones, & **shorter times to do so**
- New discussion of research and instructional pedagogy, kick-starting **experimentation** and **innovation**
- **Strong challenges** to conventional wisdom and perceptions of students by administration, staff, faculty, and students themselves
- Concrete achievable steps that **any** college – can take to dramatically improve **all** of our students' futures.



# Contact Information

- Research questions
  - John Hetts, [jhetts@lbcc.edu](mailto:jhetts@lbcc.edu) or (562) 938—4052, Twitter: @jjhetts
- General questions about Promise Pathways
  - Mark Taylor, Director of College Advancement, College Advancement, Public Affairs and Governmental Relations, [mtaylor@lbcc.edu](mailto:mtaylor@lbcc.edu) or (562) 938-4206



# Additional Resources

- More information about our research
  - [bit.ly/PathwaysResearch](http://bit.ly/PathwaysResearch)
- Background research
  - Achieving the Dream/Jobs for the Future summary of alternative assessment
    - [bit.ly/AlternativeAssessment](http://bit.ly/AlternativeAssessment)
  - CCRC research on Assessment, Placement, and Progression in Developmental Education
    - [bit.ly/CCRCAssess](http://bit.ly/CCRCAssess) and [bit.ly/CCRCDevEd](http://bit.ly/CCRCDevEd)
- RP Group's Student Transcript-Enhanced Placement (STEPS) Project
  - [bit.ly/RPSTEPS](http://bit.ly/RPSTEPS)
  - Step by Step process for replication: [bit.ly/RPSTEPS2](http://bit.ly/RPSTEPS2)
- Similar CCC research and implementation:
  - Peralta CCD: [bit.ly/LaneySTEPS](http://bit.ly/LaneySTEPS)
  - Grossmont-Cuyamaca: [bit.ly/Grossmont](http://bit.ly/Grossmont)

