



# Citizen Schools: Expanding Learning Opportunities to Prepare Middle School Students for High School Success

March 20, 2009

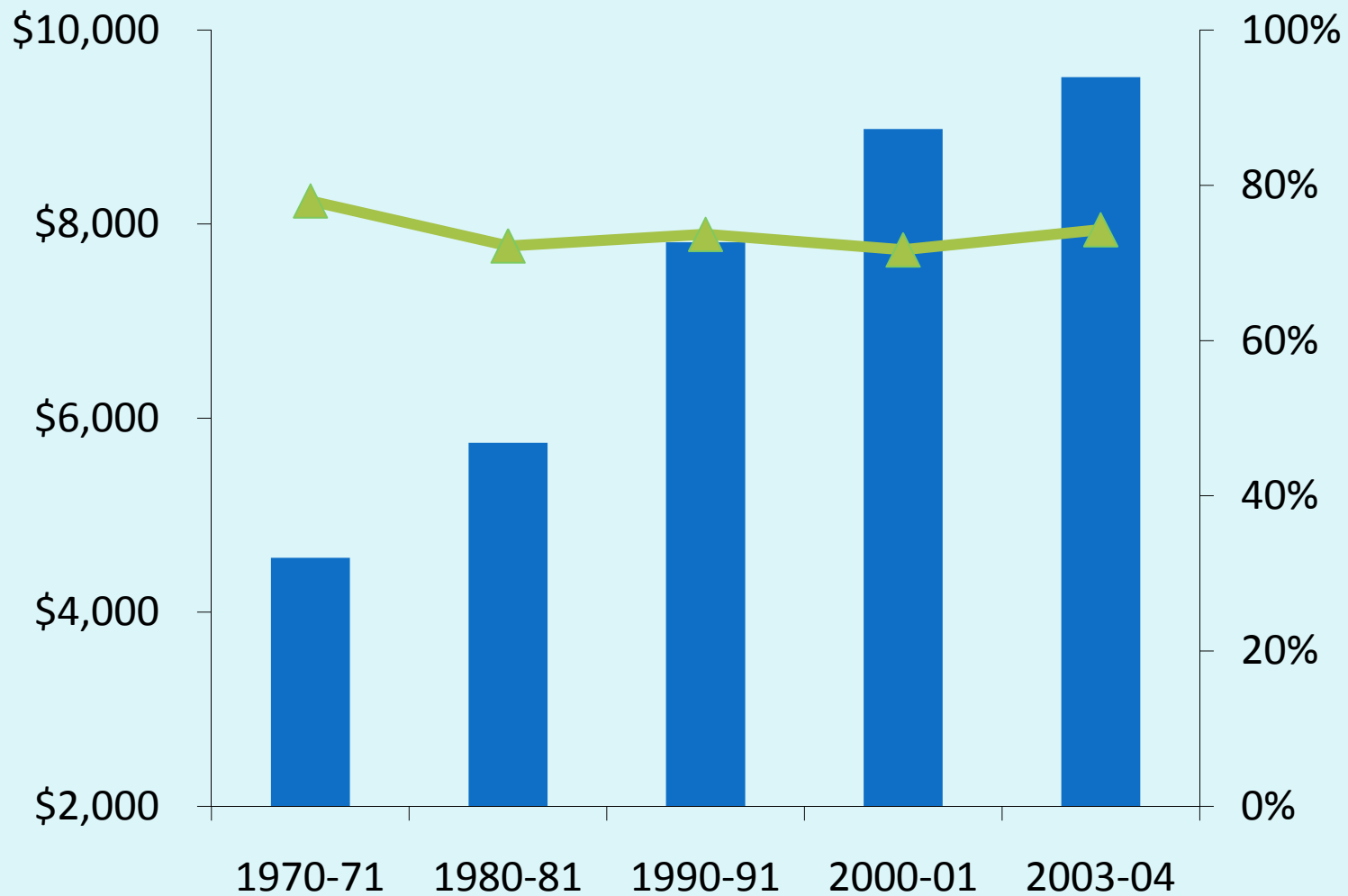
# The Challenge

Decades of school reform and a significant increase in funding have produced some gains for younger children ...

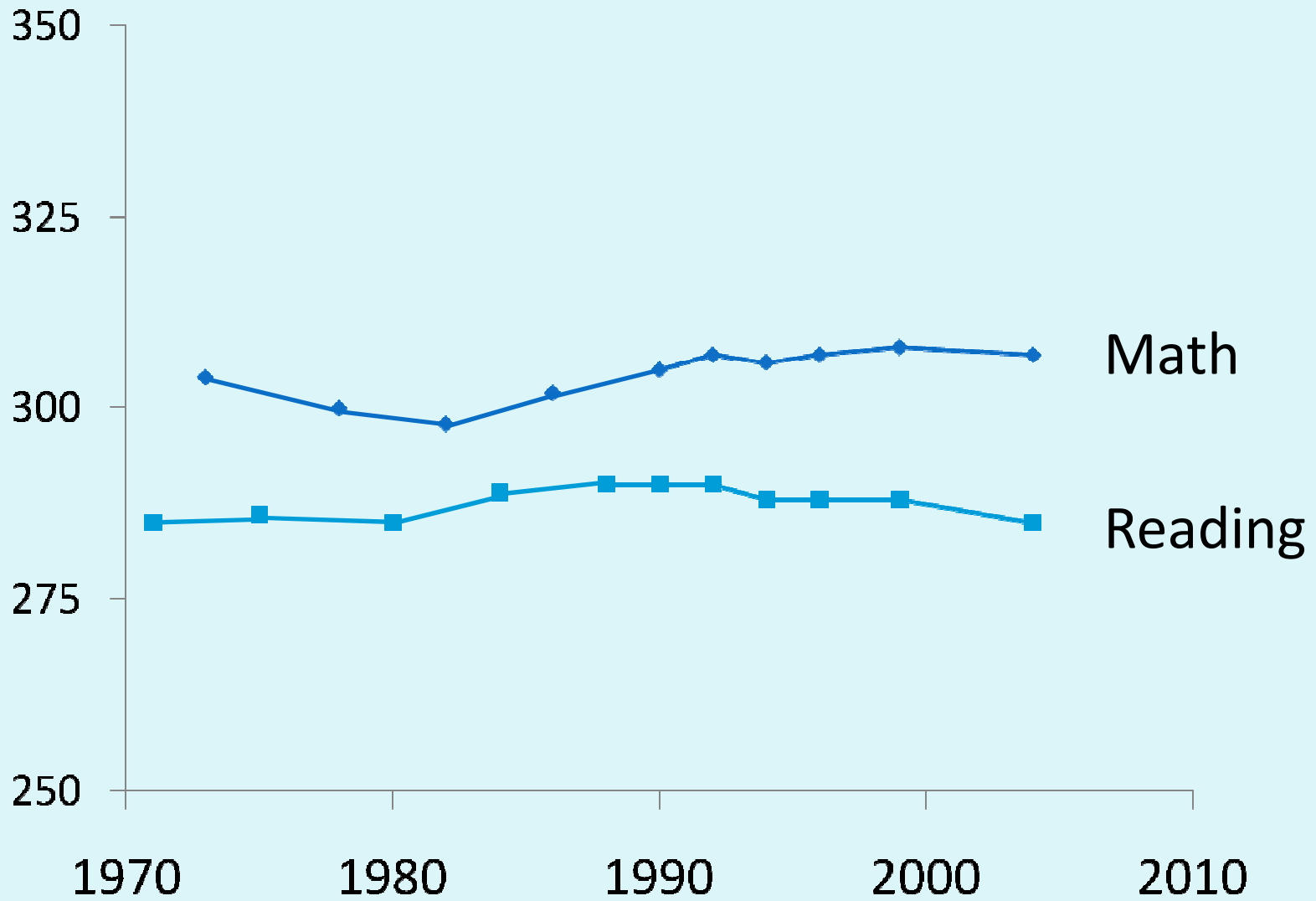
... but no change in the dropout rate or in high school achievement levels.

# Expenditure per Pupil and High School Graduation Rates

■ Current Expenditure per Pupil    ▲ High School Graduation Rates



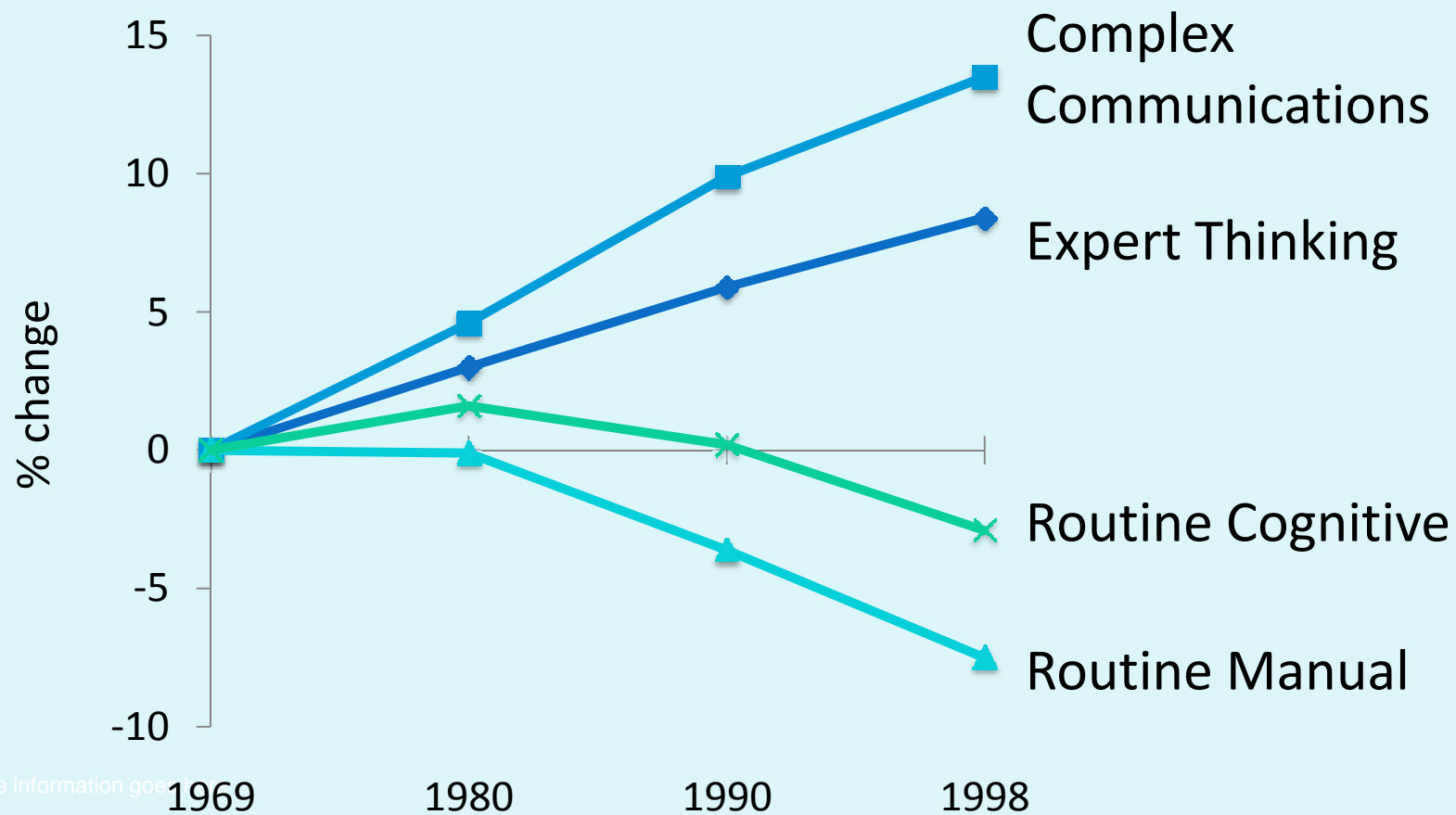
## Trends in Average NAEP Scale Scores for Students Age 17



# The Challenge

At the same time, economic and civic success now require **higher-order thinking, teamwork, and creativity** skills that are often not taught or measured in traditional schools.

## Changes in the tasks carried out by the American Work Force: 1969-1998



Source information goes here.

SOURCE: Source information goes here.

Note: From chapter 3 of Levy- Murnane, *The New Division of Labor* (2004).

# The Citizen Schools Difference

The mission of Citizen Schools is to **educate youth and strengthen communities.**

To drive educational reform and help low-income students succeed, Citizen Schools partners with existing schools to provide:

- More **time**
- More **relevance**
- More **relationships**

# Sample Expanded Day Schedule

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>First Shift: School Day Teachers</b>	Homeroom (15 min.)	Homeroom (15 min.)	Homeroom (15 min.)	Homeroom (15 min.)	Homeroom (15 min.)
	Literacy & ELA (60 min)	Literacy & ELA (60 min)	Literacy & ELA (60 min)	Literacy & ELA (60 min)	Literacy & ELA (60 min)
	Science (60 min.)	Science (60 min.)	Science (60 min.)	Science (60 min.)	Science (60 min.)
	Elective (60 min.)	Elective (60 min.)	Elective (60 min.)	Elective (60 min.)	Math (60 min.)
	Social Studies (60 min.)	Social Studies (60 min.)	Social Studies (60 min.)	Social Studies (60 min.)	Social Studies (60 min.)
	Lunch (35 min.)	Lunch (35 min.)	Lunch (35 min.)	Lunch (35 min.)	Joint Professional Development
Math (60 min.)	Math (60 min.)	Math (60 min.)	Math (60 min.)		
<b>Second Shift: Citizen Schools</b>	Transition & Snack (15 min.)	Transition & Snack (15 min.)	Transition & Snack (15 min.)	Transition and Snack (15 min.)	
	Opening Circle (30 min.)	Math League & Homework and Org/Study Skills (60 min.)	Math League & Homework and Org/Study Skills (60 min.)	Math League & Homework and Org/Study Skills (60 min.)	
	Math League & Homework and Org/Study Skills (90 min.)	Apprenticeships & Math All-Stars (90 min.)	Choice/Explorations (90 min.)	Apprenticeships & Math All-Stars (90 min.)	
	Team Time (30 min.)				

# Needs That Citizen Schools Addresses

- Students need to learn the skills essential for success in high school and college, including:
  - Academic skills for high school and college success
  - 21<sup>st</sup> century savvy to make smart choices and work well with others
  - Motivation to invest effort and to focus on the long term
- Society needs to prevent disadvantaged youth from drifting away from high school and dropping out

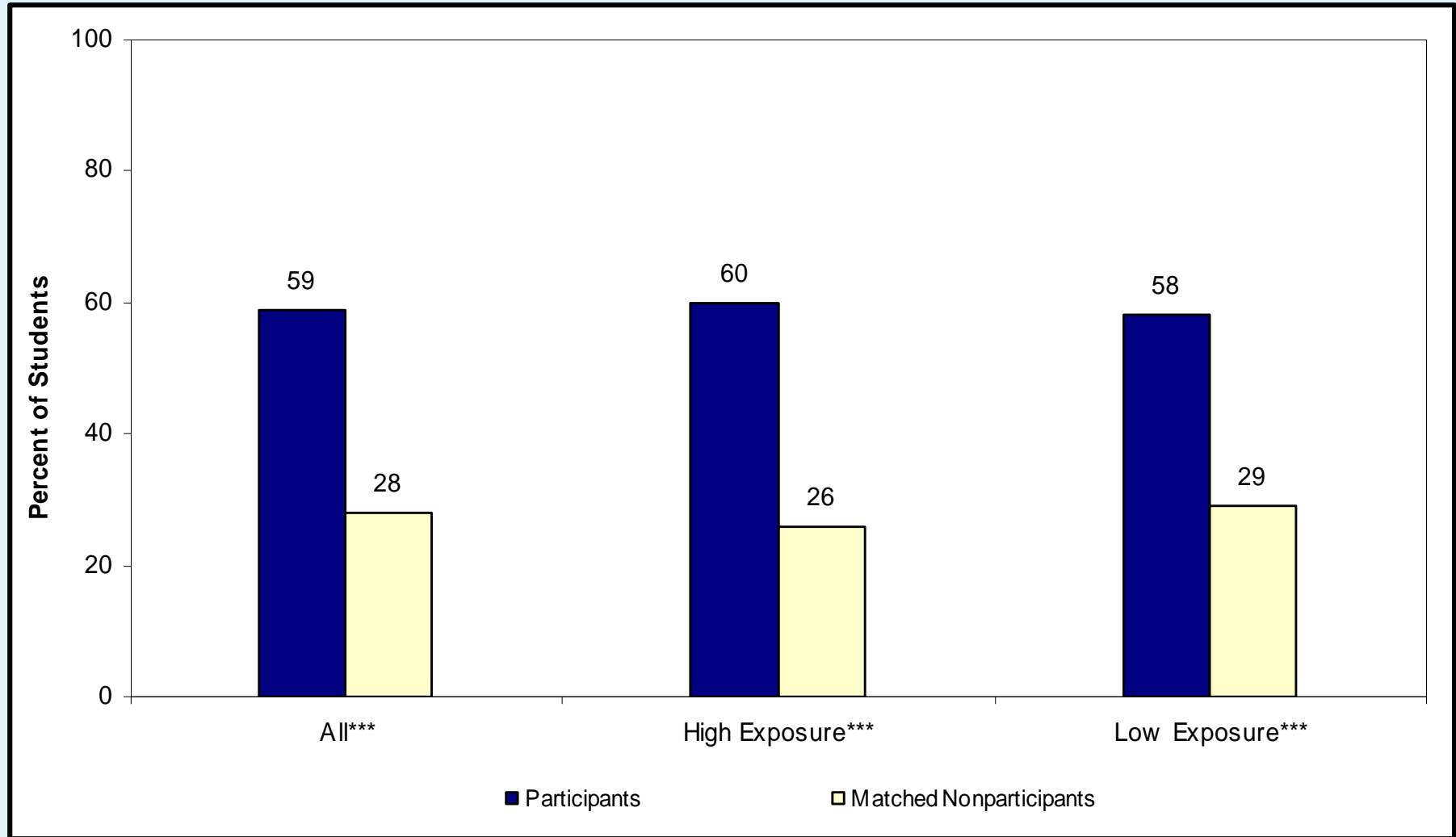
# How Citizen Schools Addresses Those Needs

- Citizen Schools targets urban, low-income, low-achieving youth in middle school.
- It provides enriched learning experiences to build skills, savvy, and motivation for long-term success.
- Research at the National Center on Education Statistics and elsewhere confirms high dropout rates among youth like the Citizen Schools students: urban, low-income, and low-achieving.

# Citizen Schools' Results

- For 5 years, PSA has tracked the progress of participants in Boston, using a matched comparison group
- Recent reports in this series focus on the high school progress of the 2 groups
- PSA has found that participants
  - Selected high-quality high schools more often
  - Had higher levels of academic achievement
  - Were more likely to be on track to graduation

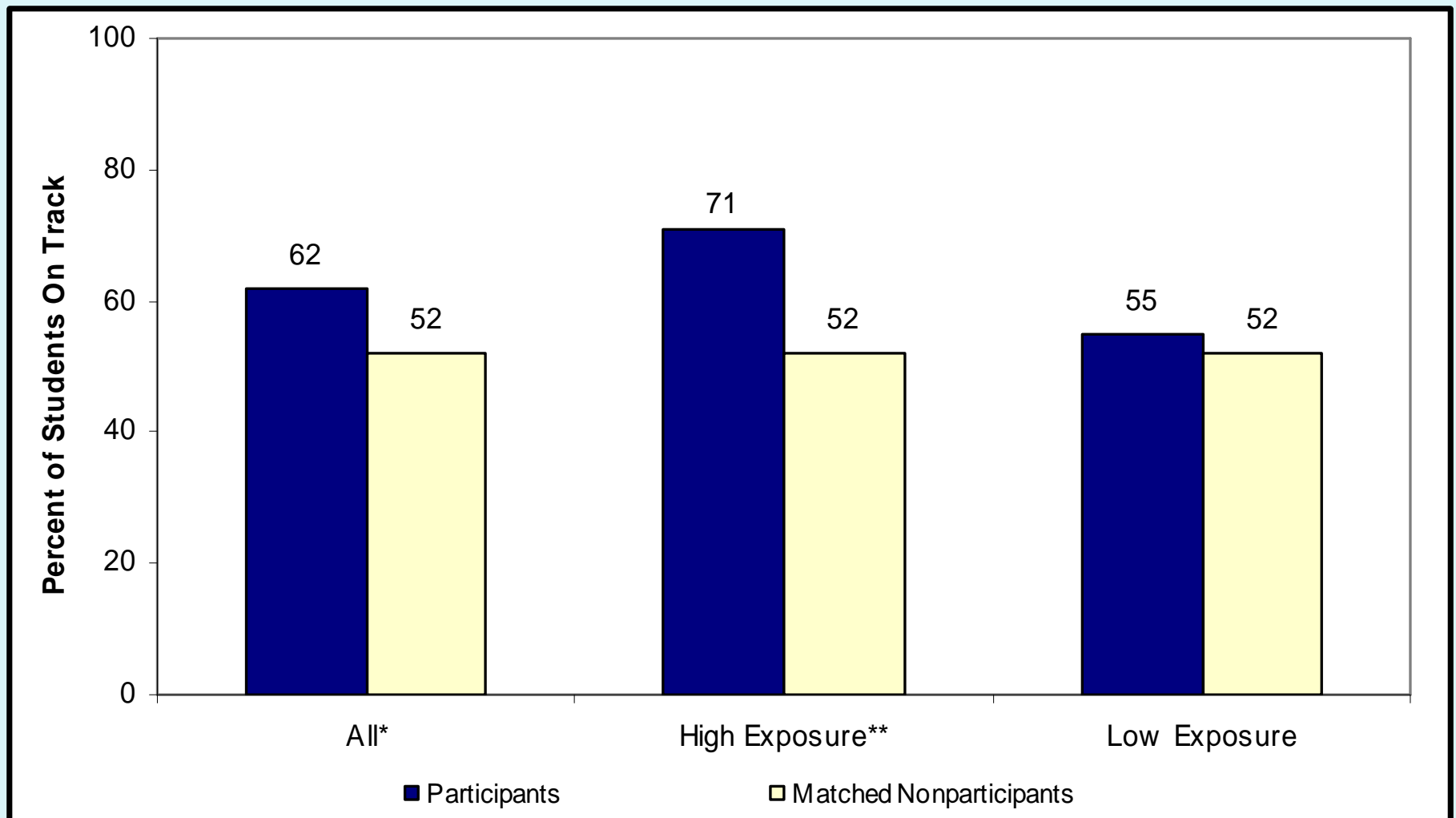
# Percent of Citizen Schools and Comparison Students Selecting High-Quality High Schools



# High School Academic Achievement

	Participants	Matched Nonparticipants
Percent passing 9 <sup>th</sup> grade English course*	84	71
Percent passing 9 <sup>th</sup> grade math course	72	68
Percent passing ELA MCAS*	94	86
Percent passing math MCAS	86	81

# Percent of Students on Track to Graduation

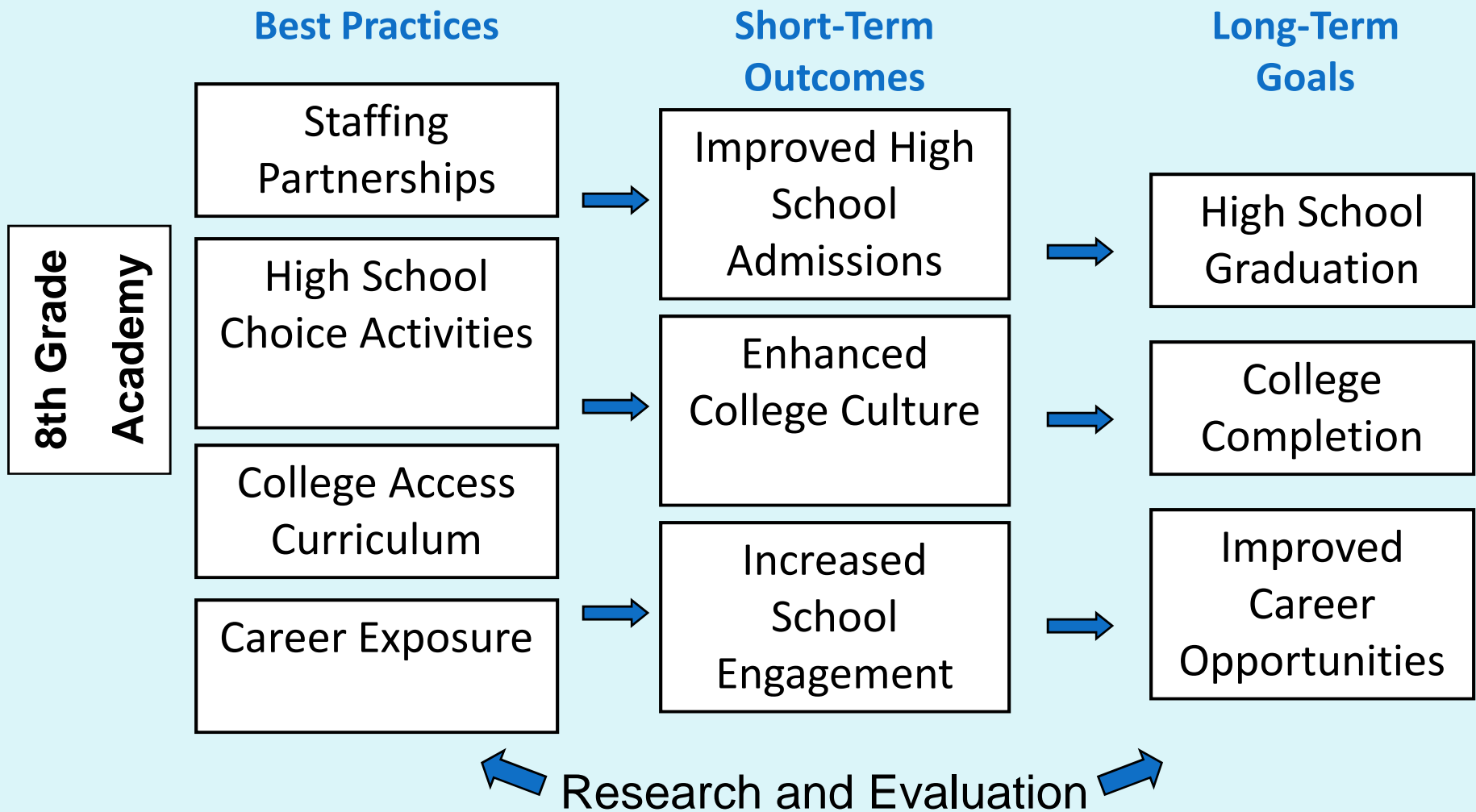


# What is 8th Grade Academy and Who Are Citizen Schools Students?

<b>Texas Snapshot: Fall 2008</b>	
<b>Enrollment statewide</b>	574
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	
Latino	49%
African American	36%
White	9%
Asian	3%
Other	3%
<b>First language</b>	
English	67%
Spanish	29%



# 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy: Confronting the Challenges of High Dropout and Low College Enrollment Rates



# Best Practice: Staffing Partnerships

Case Study: Grady Middle School  
*Building a College Bound Culture*

- High School and College Center at Grady named “The Future”
- College Access Curriculum for Grades 6-8 at Grady
- High School and College Awareness Events



# Best Practice: School Choice Activities

Gaining admission to a top high school is critically important for students in the Houston Independent School District

Case Study: Sharpstown and Jane Long Middle Schools

*8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy students visit and research high-quality high schools*

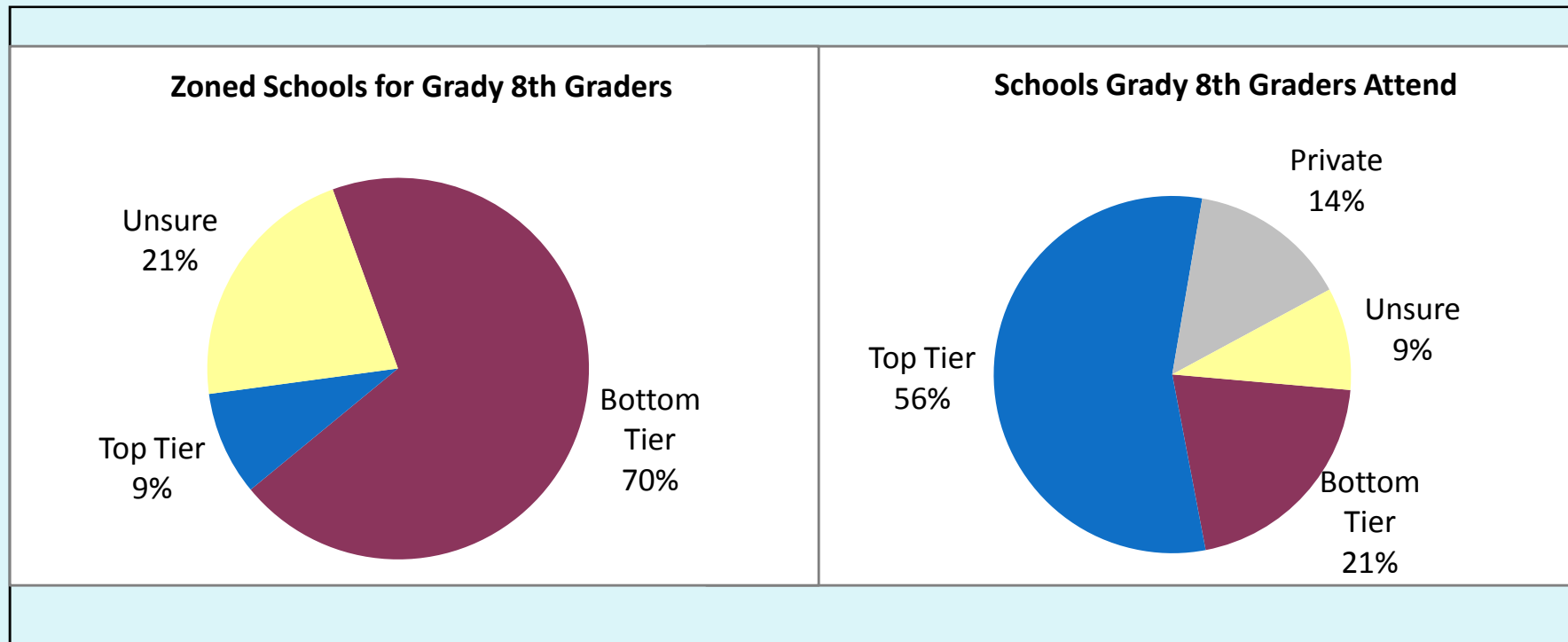


- Students used PowerPoint to create data-based presentations about Houston high schools
- In partnership with Univision Radio, students wrote and produced PSAs about the importance of choosing a strong school

# Best Practice: School Choice Staffing Partnerships

Citizen Schools staff work with 8th graders throughout the school on high school admissions.

## Case Study: Grady Middle School 2007-2008



\* For Houston high schools, 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd tier designations are based on Children at Risk High School Rankings ([www.childrenatrisk.org](http://www.childrenatrisk.org))

# Best Practice: College Awareness

Although 92 percent of our students plan to attend college, significantly fewer of our students know what it takes to get in.

## Case Study: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy

*8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy students learn what they can do **now** to prepare for college admissions.*

- Students spend over 2 hours a week in a college awareness curriculum.
- Students take 8-10 College trips per year.



# Best Practice: Career Connections

A common career choice for our 8<sup>th</sup> graders is to become a doctor, but few students have heard of medical school.

## Case Study: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy Careers Unit

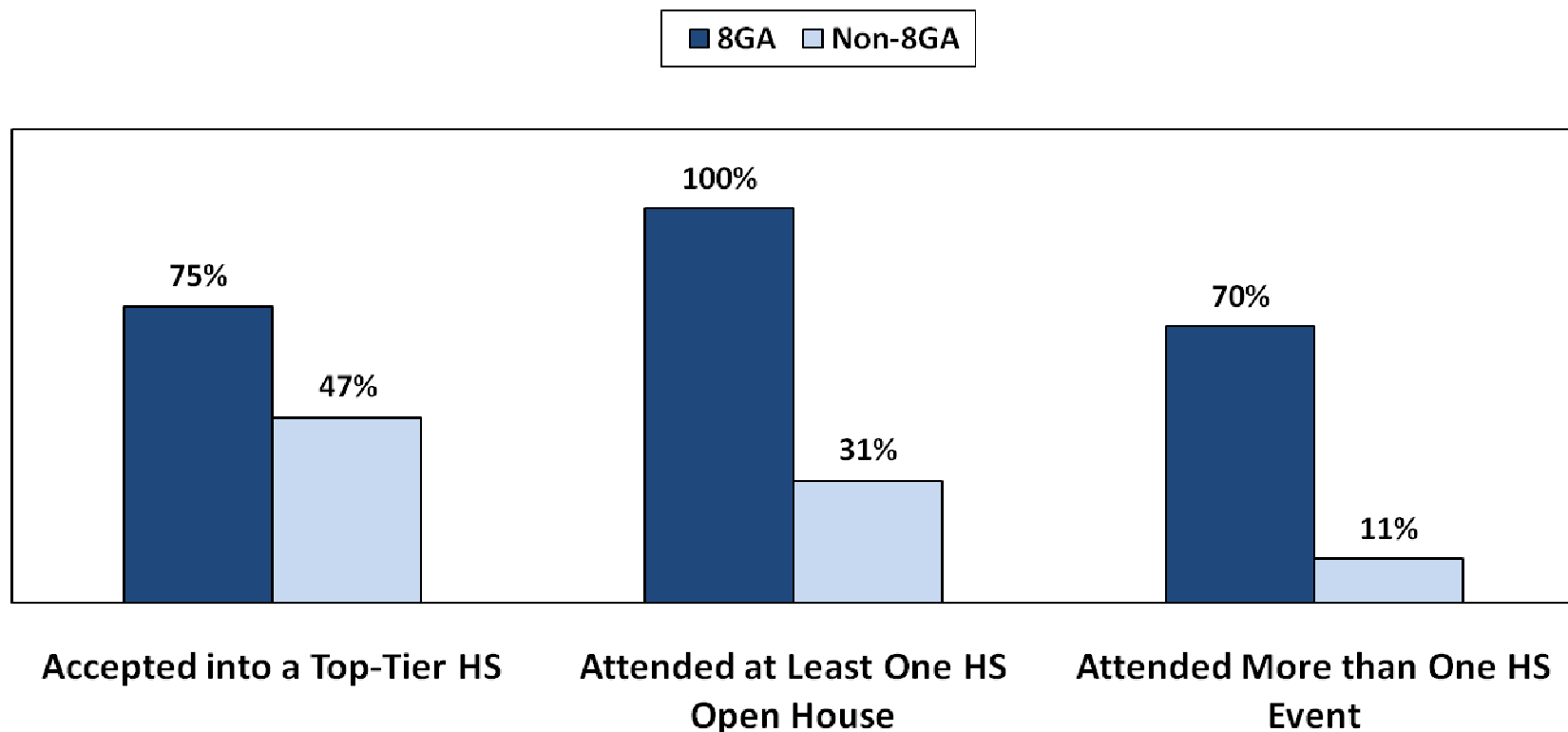
- Students learn how to write resumes, dress professionally, and prepare for job interviews.
- The [8GA Career Fair](#) will engage over 40 professionals in knowledge sharing and mentoring our students.



# Citizen Schools Results

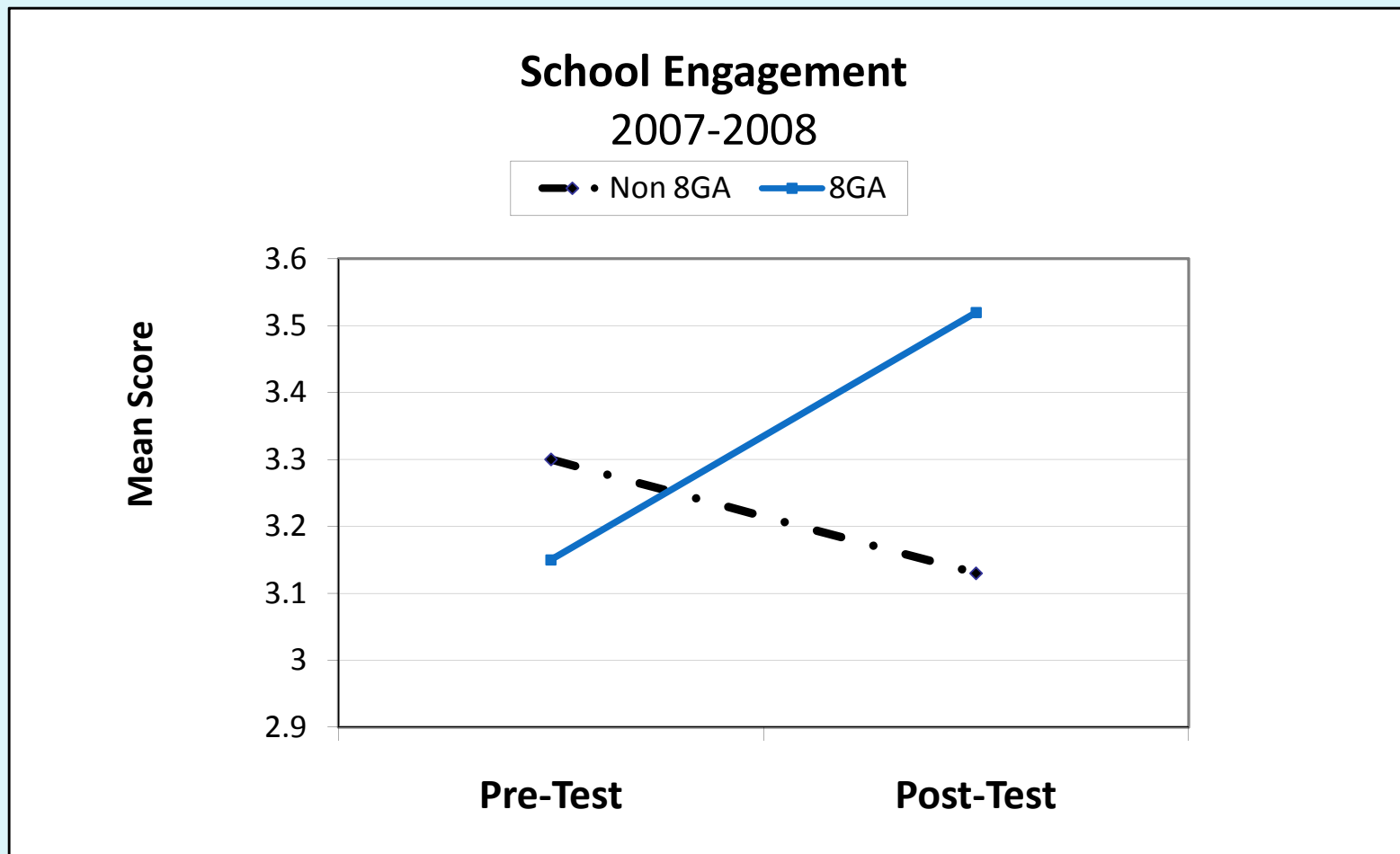
Program evaluations by staff show that our students are better prepared for the transition to high school than their peers.

Percent of Students Participating in High School Transition Activities



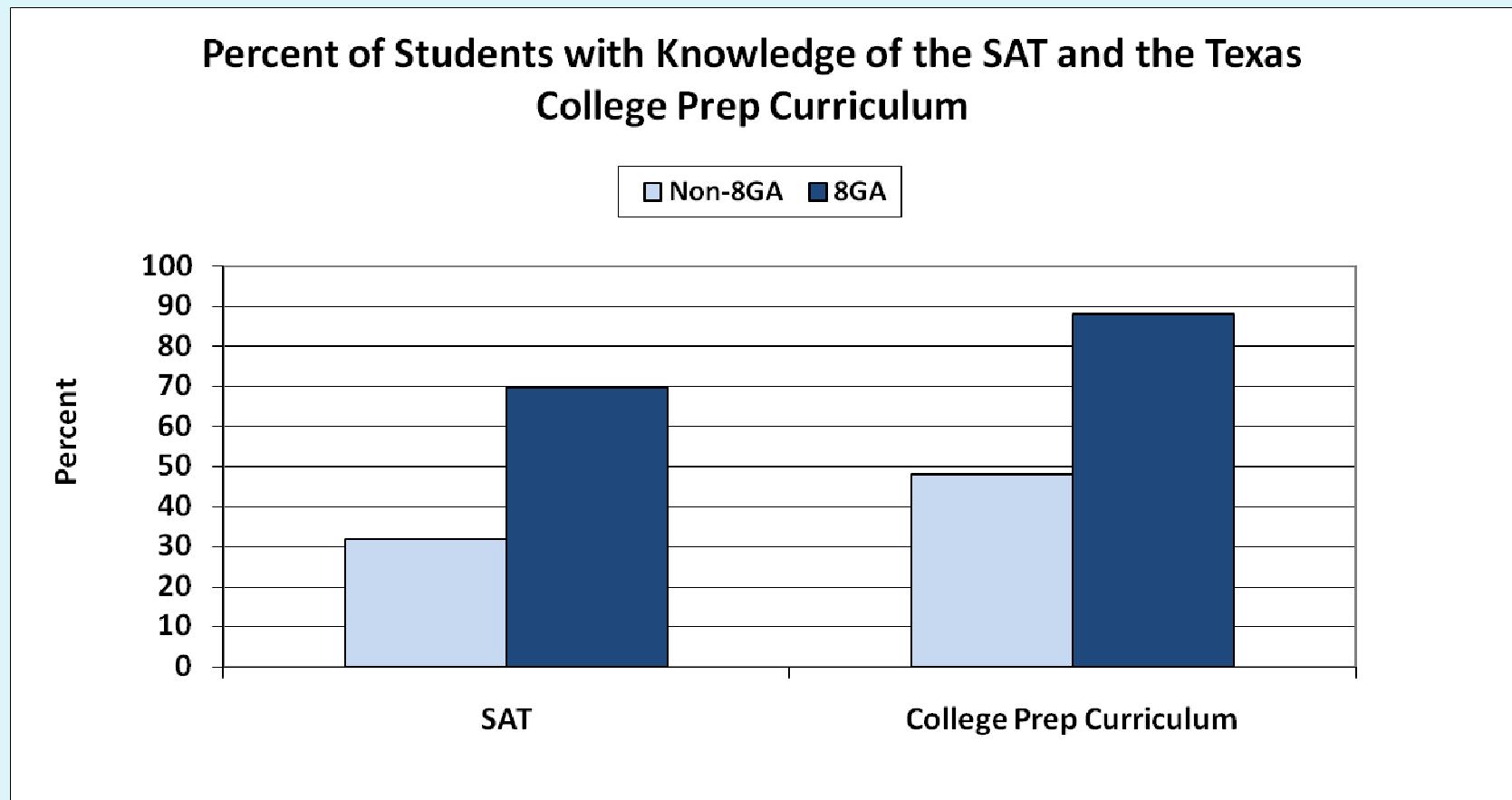
# Citizen Schools Results

Program evaluations by staff show improved school engagement for 8th Grade Academy students.



# Citizen Schools Results

Program evaluations show that 8th Grade Academy students are significantly more knowledgeable about the SAT and courses needed for college than their peers.



# Citizen Schools' Policy Priorities

- **TALENT**: Engage more caring adults in providing more relevant learning
- **TIME**: Create more time for learning
- **GROW WHAT WORKS**: Provide growth capital for education reforms that work

# Contact Information

Eric Schwarz

President & CEO

Citizen Schools

[EricSchwarz@citizenschools.org](mailto:EricSchwarz@citizenschools.org)

Elizabeth Reisner

Principal

Policy Studies Associates

[ereisner@policystudies.com](mailto:ereisner@policystudies.com)

Elena Kennedy

Teaching Fellow

Citizen Schools

[ElenaKennedy@citizenschools.org](mailto:ElenaKennedy@citizenschools.org)

Juliet Diehl Vile

Research Associate

Policy Studies Associates

[jvile@policystudies.com](mailto:jvile@policystudies.com)