

The Dream Deferred: Increasing the College Preparedness of At-Risk Students

Patrick T. Terenzini

Professor of Higher Education
Pennsylvania State University

Alberto F. Cabrera

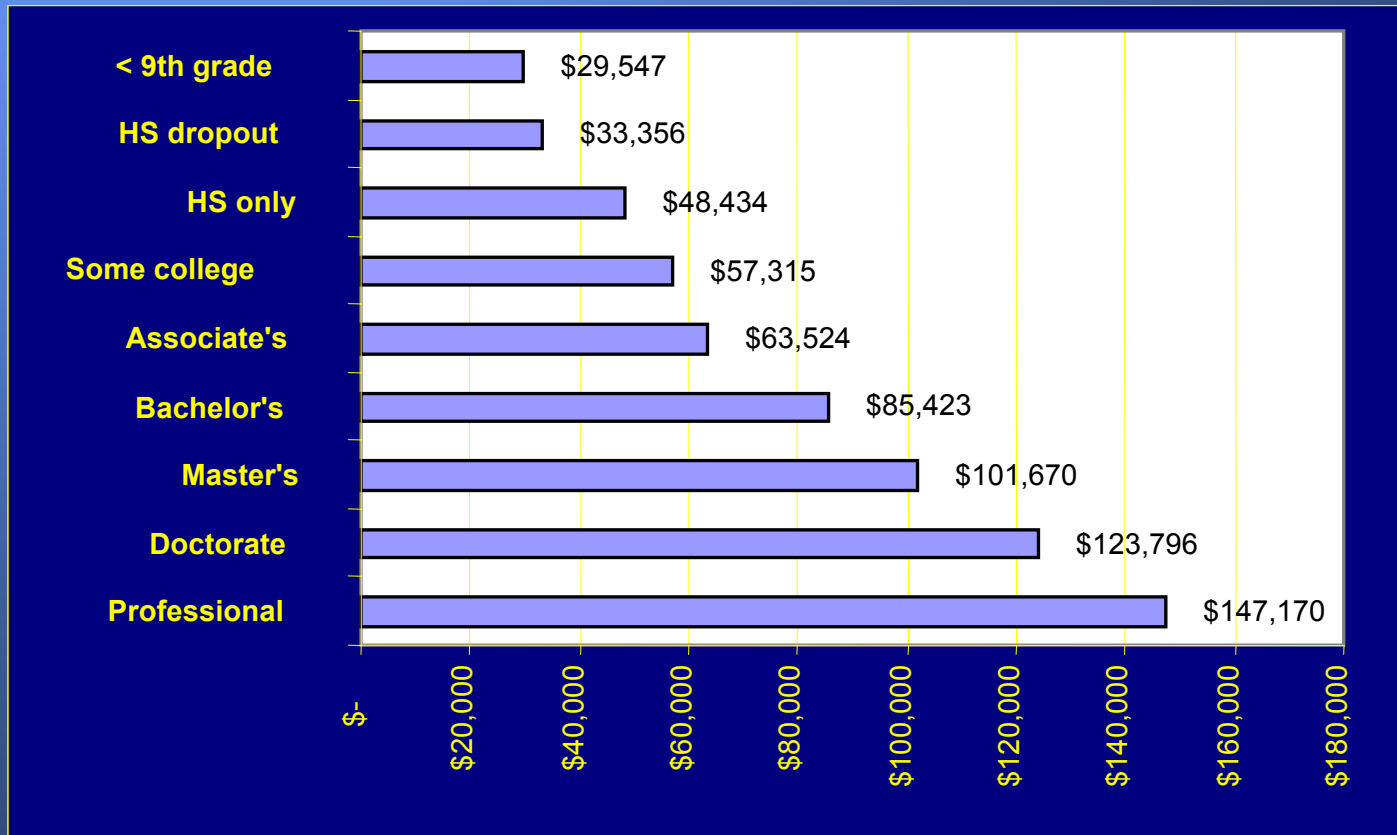
Professor and Senior Researcher
University of Wisconsin - Madison

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Center for the Study of Higher Education

Average Family Income by Educational Attainment of Householder, 1998



Source: Mortenson (1999)

Investing in Equity?

- ◆ Over \$74 billion in student financial aid awarded in 2001.
- ◆ Issues of equity and access to:
 - Higher education (i.e., attendance *somewhere*)
 - The *benefits* of college attendance

Source: Terenzini, P. T., Cabrera, A. F., & Bernal, E. M. (2001). *Swimming Against the Tide: The Poor in American Higher Education*. Research Report No. 2001-1. New York: The College Board.

ON THE WAY TO THE AMERICAN DREAM: A PROFILE OF LOW-SES STUDENTS (College Search & Choice Stage)

Low-SES students (vs. their more affluent peers) are:

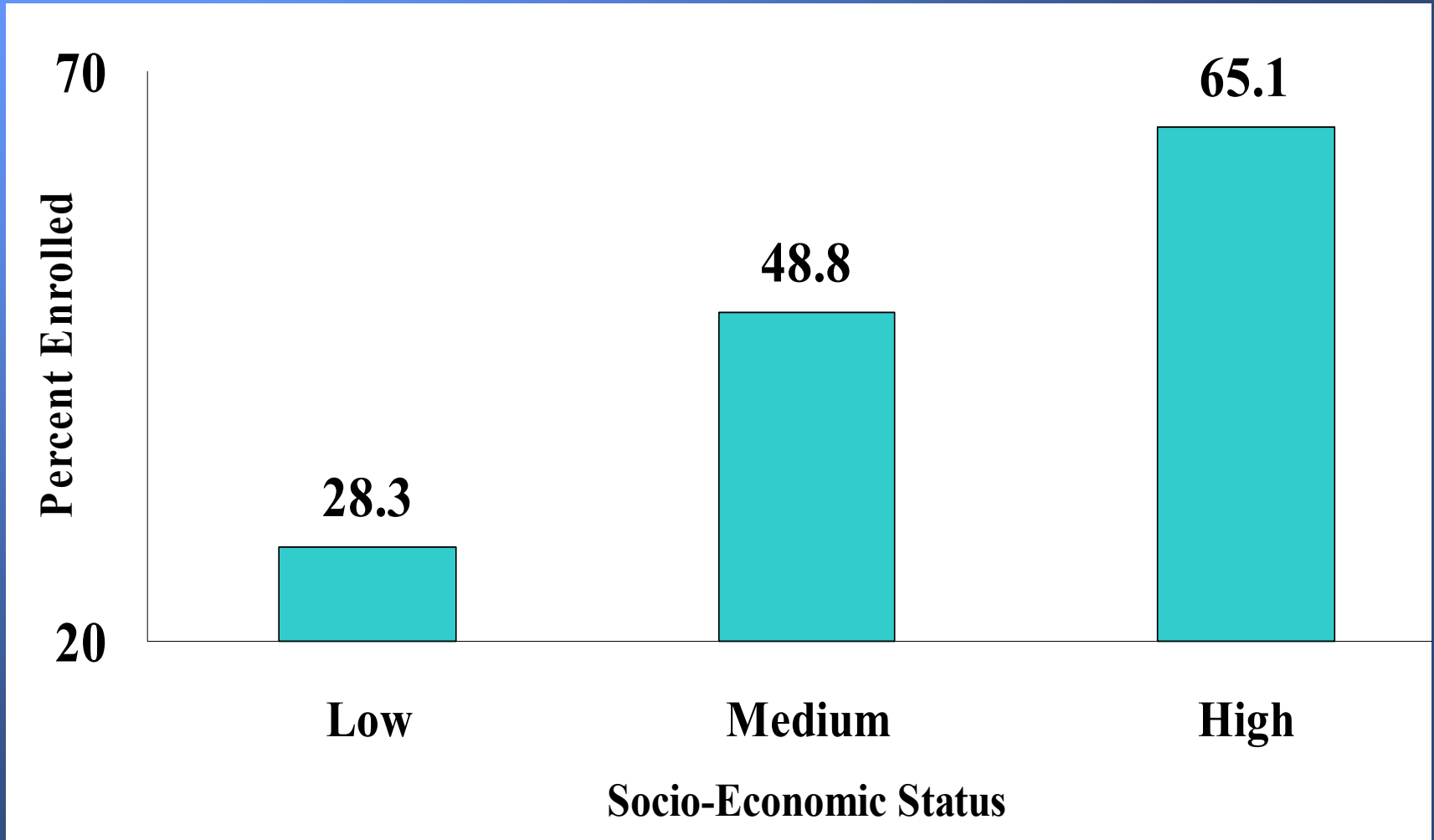
◆ **Less likely to:**

- have parents with college experience of any kind
- have parents who are saving for their children's college educ.
- have degree aspirations for the baccalaureate or beyond

◆ **More likely to:**

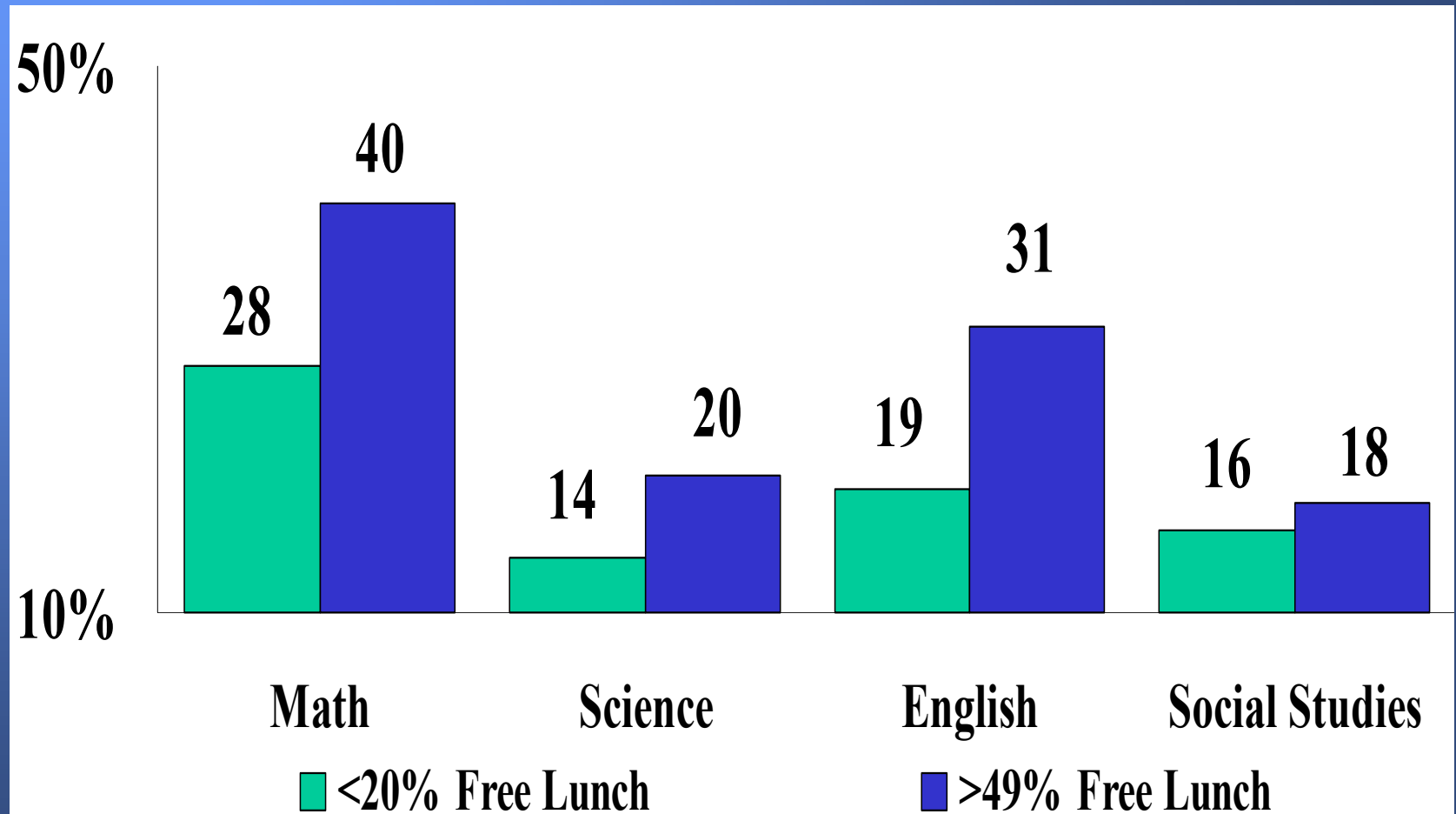
- come from a single-parent home
- be sensitive to costs and financial aid when choosing an institution
- need more financial aid to meet needs fully

Low-Income Students Less Likely to be Enrolled in a College Preparatory Track



Source: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988: Second Follow-Up, 1992 in: *A Profile of the American High School Senior in 1992.* (p. 36) Washington, DC: US Department of Education, June 1995.

Classes in High Poverty High Schools More Often Taught by Underqualified* Teachers

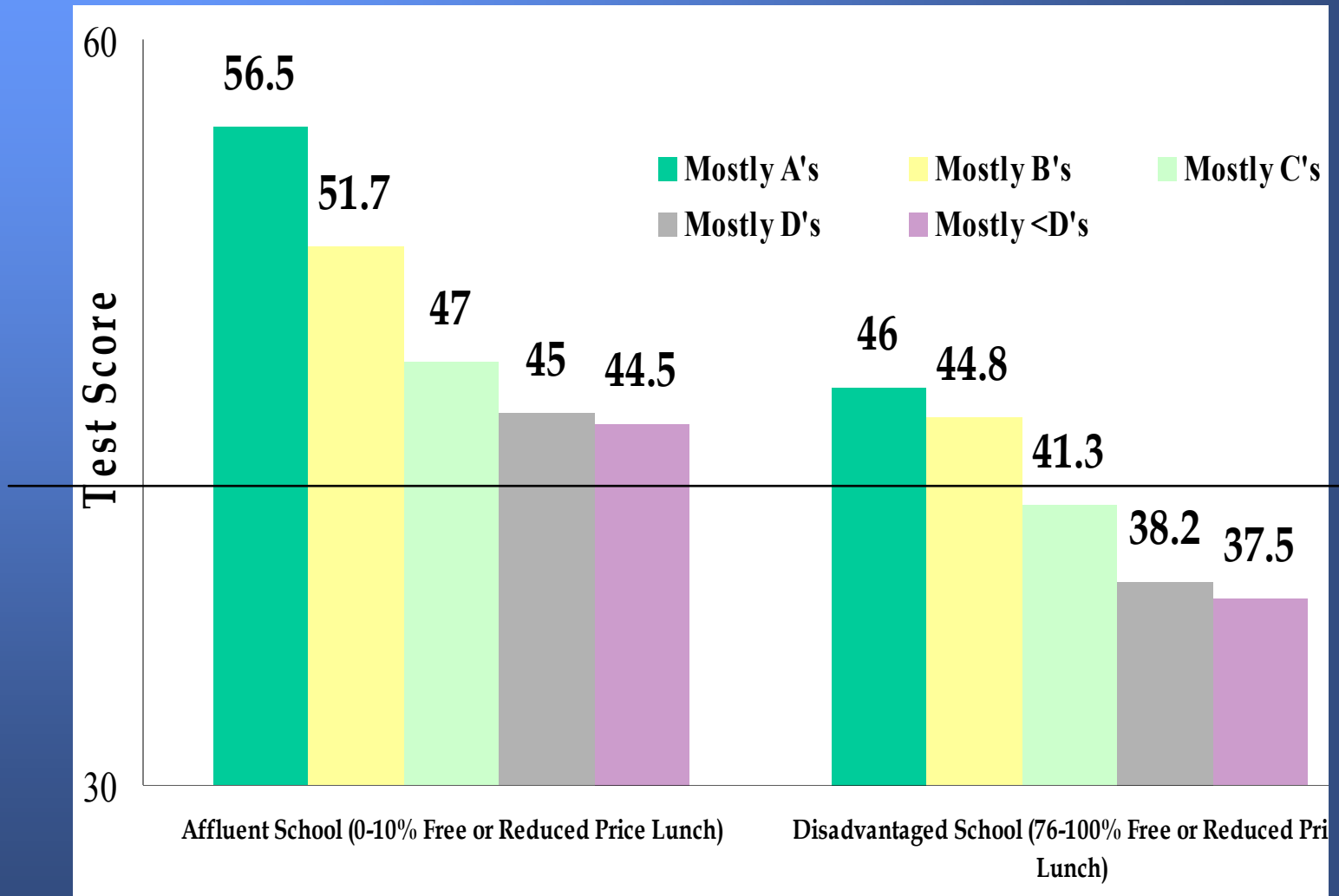


* Teachers who lack a minor in the field.

Source: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future* (p.16) 1996.

1998 by The Education Trust, Inc.

“A” Students in High Poverty Schools Score at About the Same Level as “C” and “D” Students in Affluent Schools



Source: US Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. *What Do Student Grades Mean? Differences Across Schools*. Educational Research Report (p. 3) January 1994.

1998 by The Education Trust, Inc.

The Transition-to-College Stage

Low-SES students (vs. their more affluent peers) are:

◆ **Less likely to:**

- enroll in any form of postsecondary education
- enroll at a 4-year institution
- begin college right after high school graduation
- bring adequate academic resources to college

◆ **More likely to:**

- bring more “risk factors”
- require assistance in making the transition successfully

The College Experience

Low-SES students (vs. their more affluent peers) are:

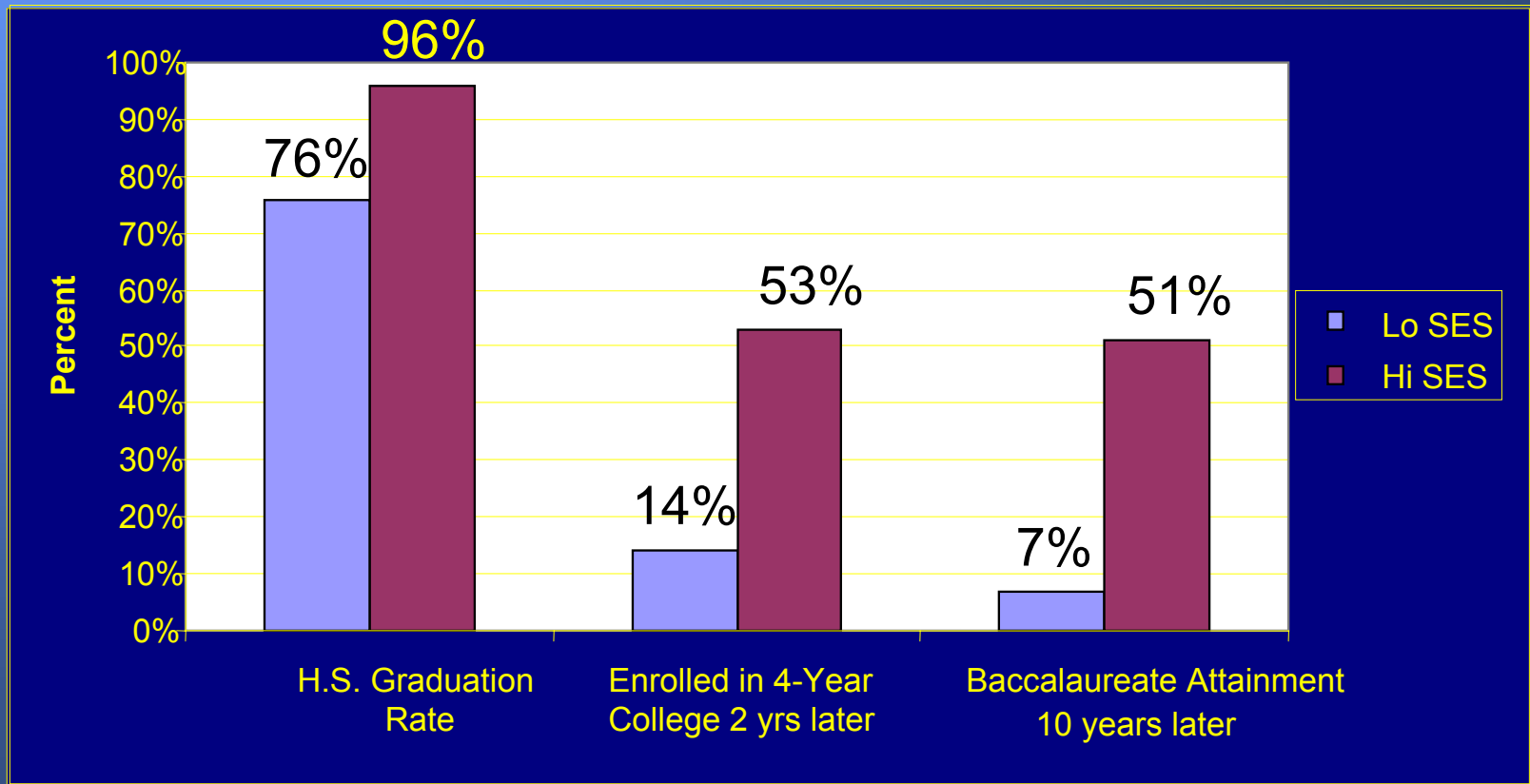
◆ **Less likely to:**

- get involved in out-of-class campus activities
- remain on the “persistence track”

◆ **More likely to:**

- work off-campus
- work more hours
- borrow money to pay schooling bills
- be repaying education loans
- Receive no help in making those repayments

H.S. Graduation, 4-yr. College Participation, and Bachelor's Degree Attainment Rates by SES Status



Graduation and Participation Rates from NELS:88.
Attainment Rates from HS&B: Sophomore Cohort.

Educational and Occupational Benefits

Low-SES students (vs. their more affluent peers) are:

◆ **Less likely to:**

- be employed 12 years after enrolling (w/o the BA/BS)
- attend graduate/professional school after baccalaureate

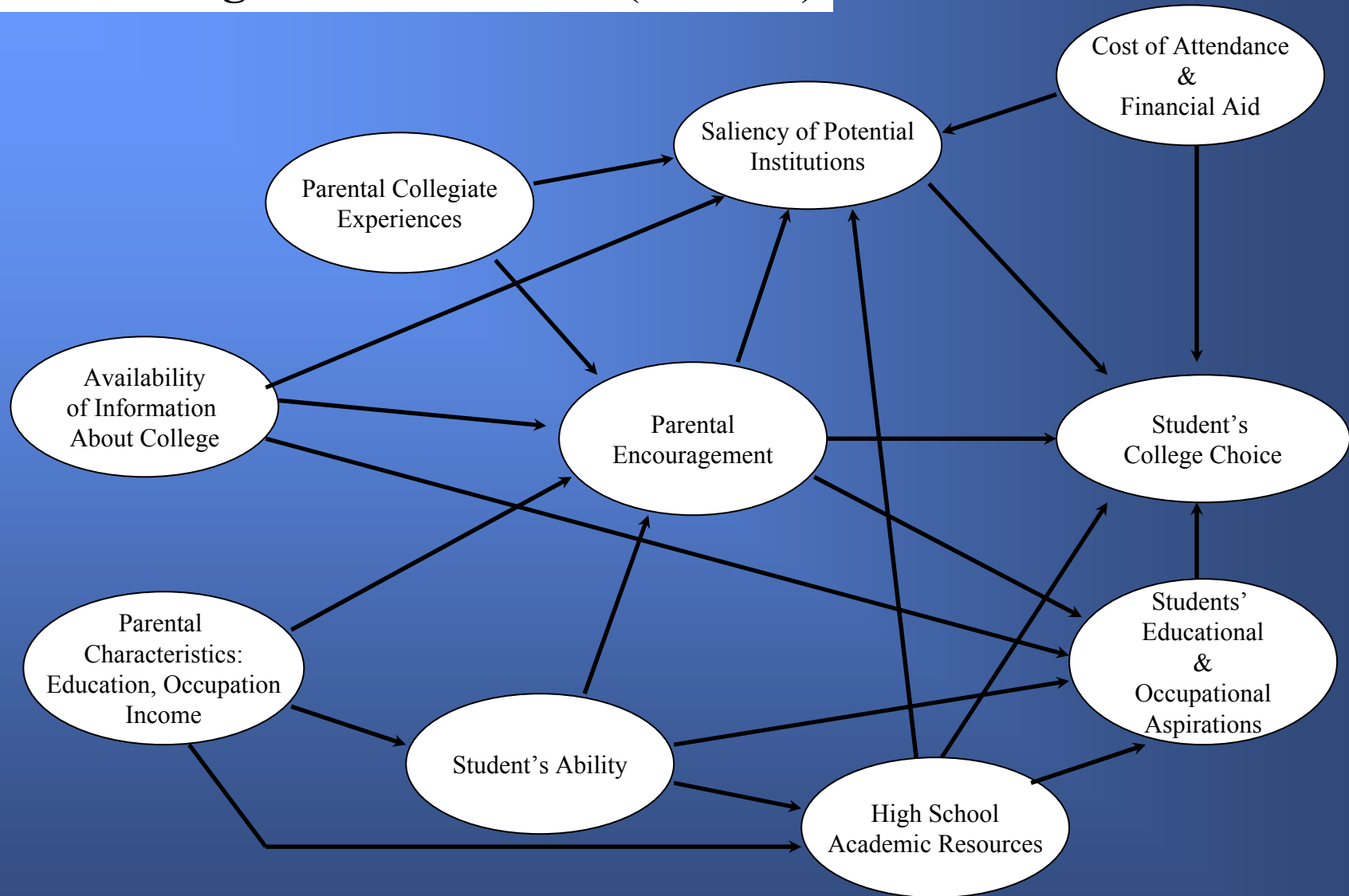
◆ **More likely to:**

- earn less
- be employed in lower status occupations (w/o BA/ BS)

Three Fundamental Points

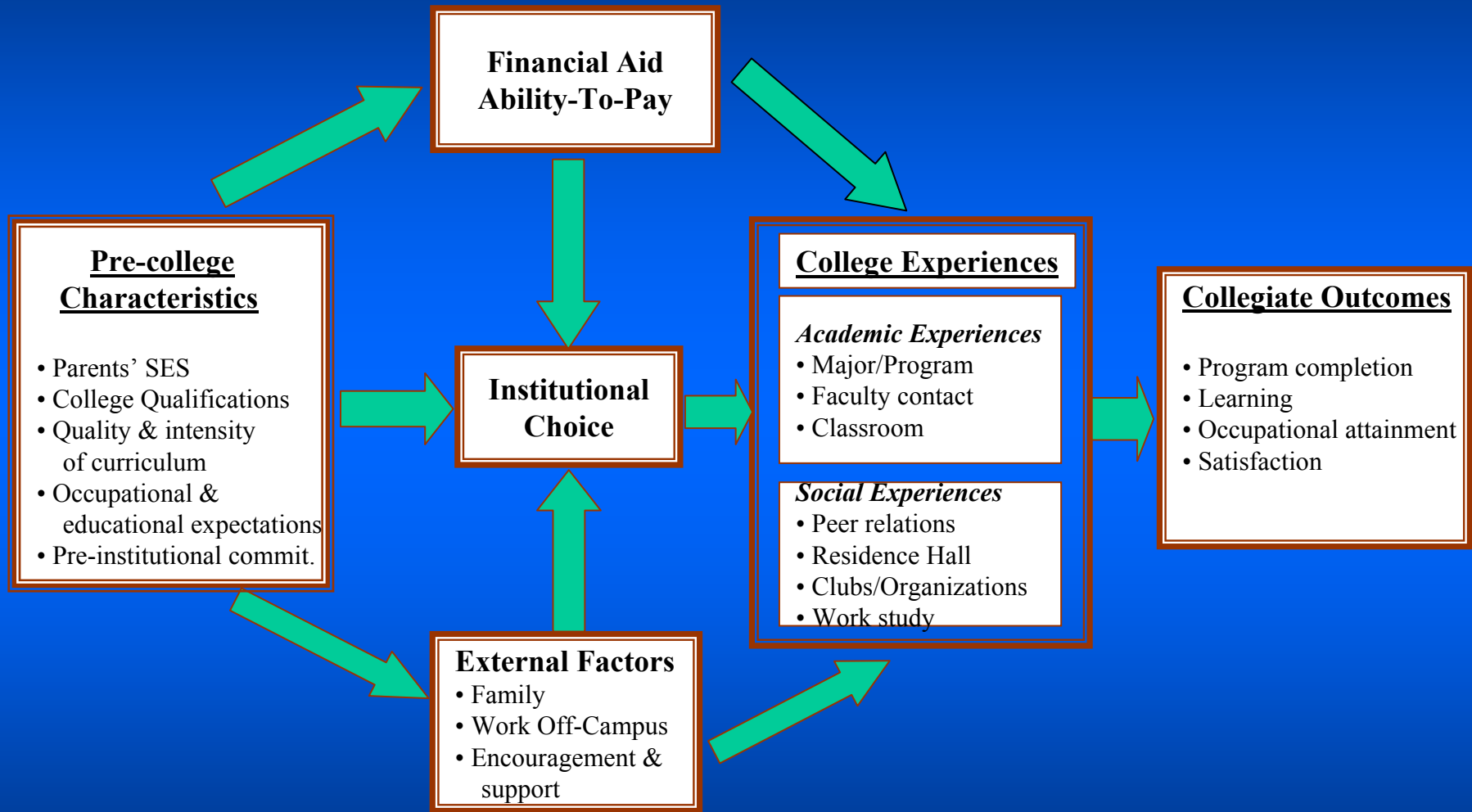
1. Public policy has focused too narrowly on access.
2. Dropping-out of college starts at an early age.
3. Discrete, unintegrated, and uncoordinated efforts are likely to be effective only at the margin.

The College Choice Process (Cabrera)



Source: Adapted from Flint (1993, 1997); Hossler & Vesper (1993); Hossler, Schmit & Vesper, (1999); Sewell & Hauser (1975); Stage & Hossler (1989); St. John (1990).

College Processes & Outcomes



GEAR UP

(Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs)

◆ Funds Partnerships

- High-poverty middle schools
- Colleges and universities
- Community groups and organizations
- Businesses and corporations

◆ Provides wide-array of services/activities for students, parents, and teachers

Tutoring

Mentoring

Info on college reqs

Info on financial aid

Emphasis on core academic prep.

Professional devel. for teachers

Summer & after-school progs.

College visits

Some GEAR UP Characteristics

◆ Primary Purpose

- Elevate the awareness of, and readiness for, college among low-income students and their parents.

◆ Scope

- Year 1: Partnerships in 164 districts and 600 schools
Served 450,000 students nation-wide
1,000 organizations in partnerships
- Year 2: Serving 750,000 students thru 235 partnerships
- Year 3: \$258 million for FY 2002 to serve .8 million students

GEAR UP vs. Other Pre-College Intervention Programs

1. GU partnerships begin no later than 7th grade.
2. Partnerships work with *entire* grade-cohorts
3. GU programs and activities stay with students through high school graduation
4. GU has a 1-for-1 matching requirement, leveraging non-federal resources

PURPOSES OF THE STUDY: A Marriage of Scholarship, Practice, and Policy-in-Action

1. Estimate the individual and joint contributions of Partnership components to increasing students' and parents' level of awareness and preparedness for college.
2. Generate nationally generalizable findings relevant to partnership practitioners and to state and federal policy-makers.

Dream Deferred Project's Star Graduate Research Assistant



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