

Early Outcomes from the “Rigorous Tests of Programs of Study”

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Research Question

To what extent does participation in a POS lead to improved student outcomes in:

- academic achievement?
- technical skills achievement?
- high school completion?
- participation in and completion of POS by nontraditional and other special populations?
- employability?
- completion of coursework leading to college credits?

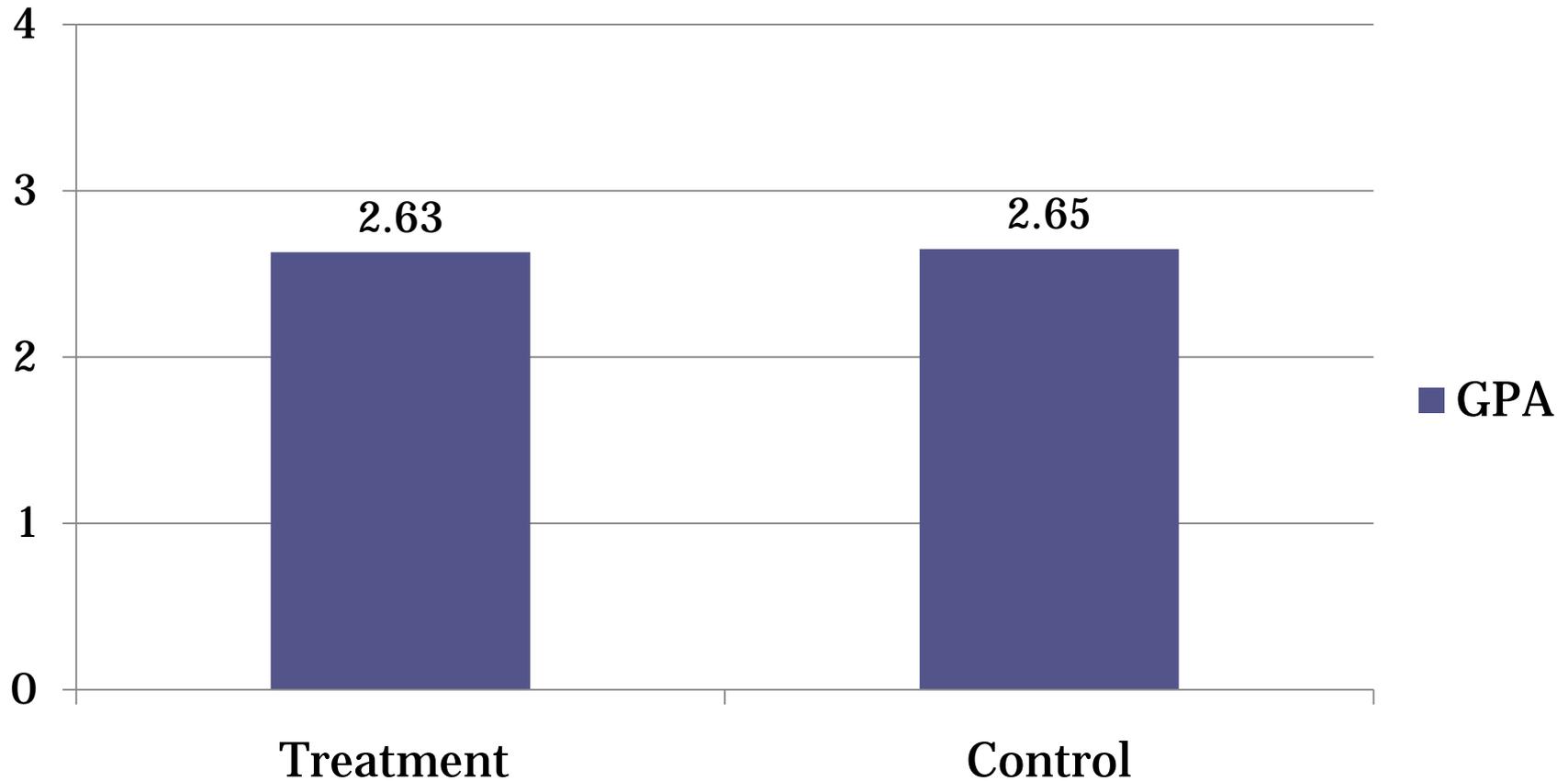
District 1 POS Structures

- Magnet wall-to-wall academies, high tech, 9th-grade start
- New specially designed facility, SLCs, project-based learning, 9th-grade start
- Modernized former career center, upgraded academics, 10/11th-gr. start

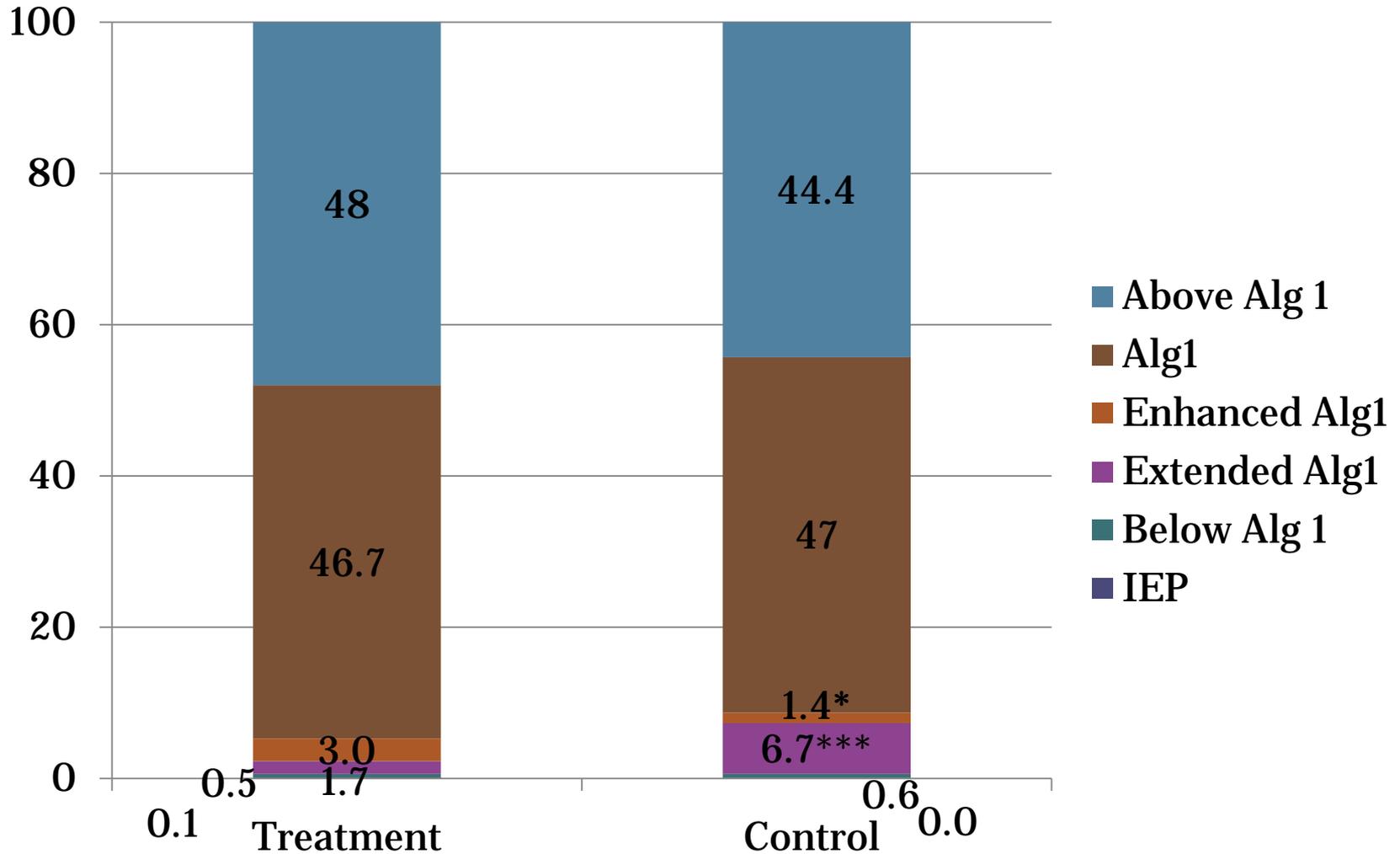
District 1 Sample

| | Treatment | Control |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Number of students | ~1957 | ~510 |
| | % | % |
| Female | 55 | 75*** |
| White | 38 | 34 |
| African American | 12 | 9 |
| Latino | 35 | 41* |
| Other | 16 | 16 |
| Free/reduced price lunch | 29 | 34 |
| Special education | 4 | 5 |
| 8 th math proficient + | 83 | 83 |
| 8 th reading proficient + | 83 | 81 |

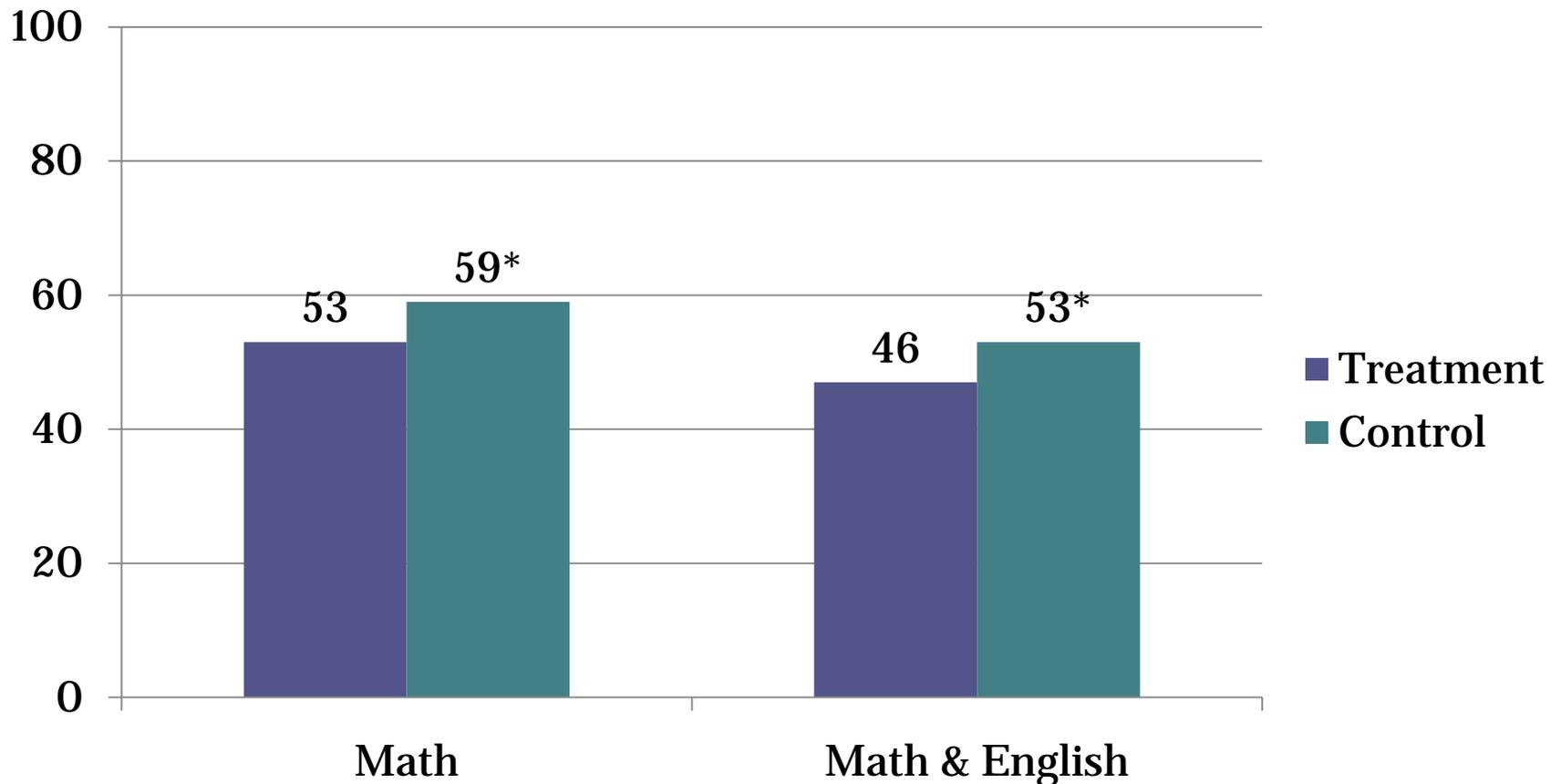
District 1: Academic GPA



Levels of Math Courses Taken



Students Who Took Honors Courses



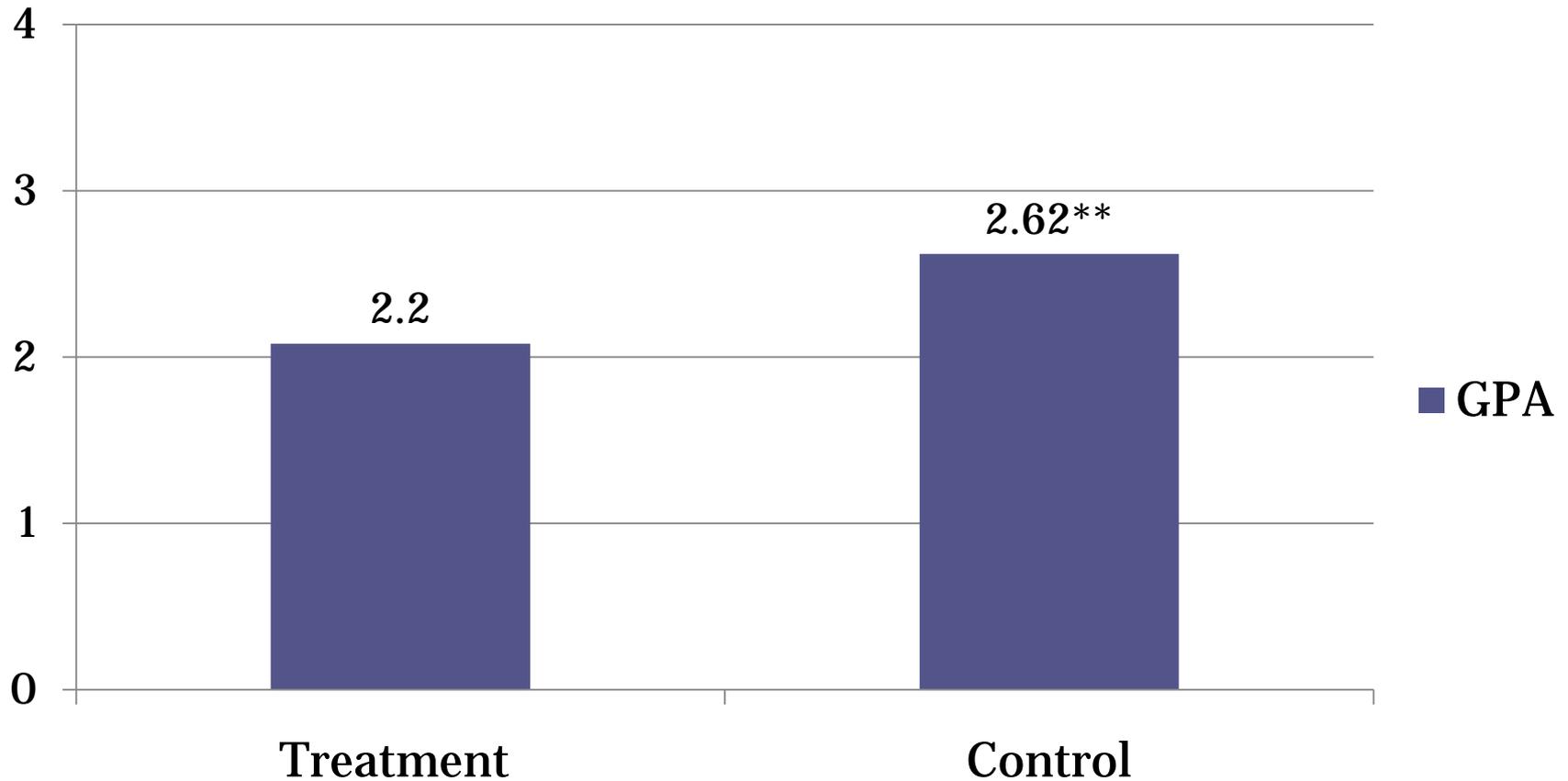
District 2 POS Structure

- Wall-to-wall technology-focused academies, 9th-grade start
- “Quasi-experimental” design
 - No lottery held
 - POS students closely matched with other district students not in a POS

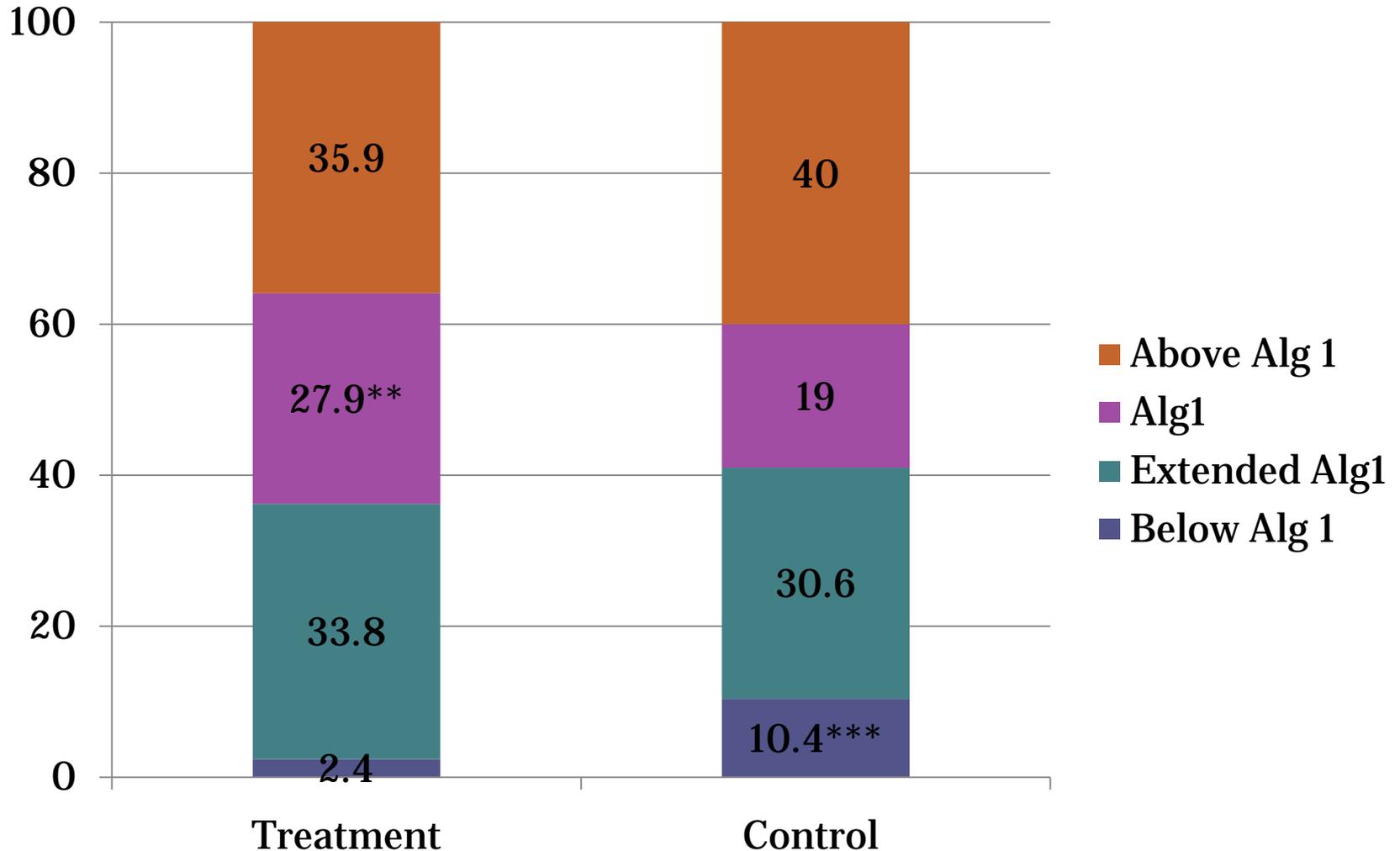
District 2 Sample

| | Treatment | Control |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Number of students | ~375 | ~750 |
| | % | % |
| Female | 48 | 50 |
| White | 11 | 11 |
| African American | 71 | 71 |
| Latino | 10 | 11 |
| Other | 8 | 8 |
| Free/reduced price lunch | 68 | 66 |
| Special education | 2 | 2 |
| 8 th math proficient + | 84 | 80 |
| 8 th reading proficient + | 63 | 61 |

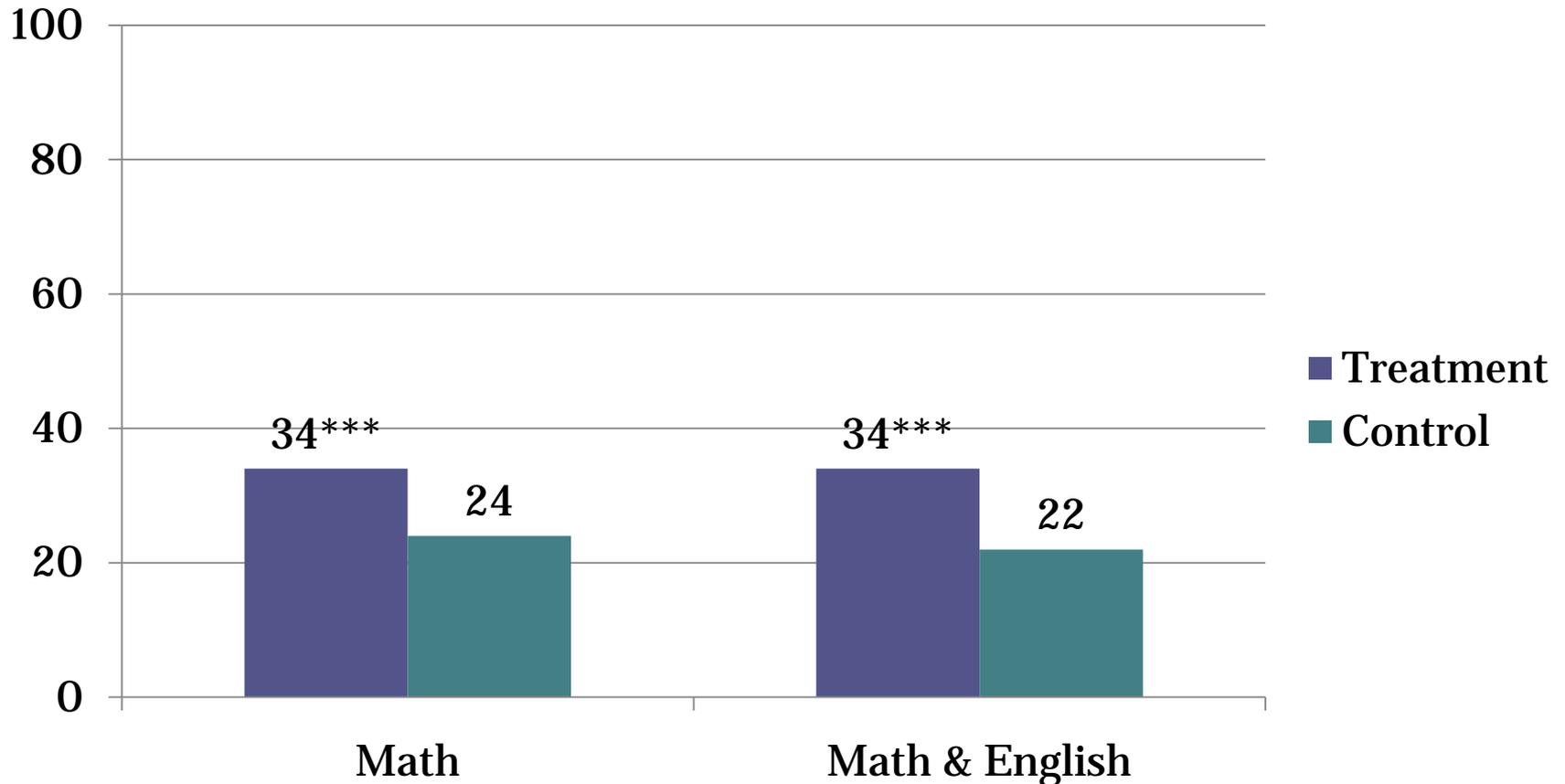
District 2: Academic GPA



Levels of Math Courses Taken



Students Who Took Honors Courses



Student Survey Results

| | District 1 | | District 2 | |
|----------------------------------|------------|------|------------|------|
| | T | C | T | C |
| Teachers Interesting | 67 | 79** | 67 | 70 |
| Teachers Help All | 70 | 73 | 87 | 75* |
| Teachers Encourage Me | 83 | 86 | 93 | 90 |
| | | | | |
| Work Hard to Meet High Standards | 90 | 95* | 93 | 95 |
| Spend Lots of Time on Homework | 75 | 79 | 66 | 83** |

- About half of students from each district met with counselor about POS
- In no case were counselors reported to have given the best advice

Next Steps

- Collect 10th, 11th, 12th grade student data
 - CTE becomes larger part of school day
- 2 years left of site visits
- Continue data collection into postsecondary (?)
- All as funding permits

A Longitudinal Study of the South Carolina Personal Pathways to Success Initiative

National Dropout Prevention Center
Clemson University



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Study Team

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South Carolina's "Personal Pathways to Success" (Established through EEDA in 2005)

Designed to better prepare South Carolina students for the workforce and post-high-school education through early career planning and an individualized curriculum.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does South Carolina's EEDA facilitate the development of POS?
2. What impact does the level of available community resources have on the implementation of EEDA and the development of POS?
3. What impact does the implementation of EEDA have on: (a) student high school outcomes; and (b) student postsecondary employment and education/training outcomes?
4. What impact do POS have on: (a) student high school outcomes; and (b) student postsecondary employment and education/training outcomes?

Data Collection

- 8 diverse South Carolina high schools
- 3 cohorts:
 - 11th grade – little to no EEDA exposure
 - 9th grade – exposure thru high school
 - 6th grade – exposure middle school thru 10th grade
- Qualitative and quantitative data

Guidance Personnel Play Key Role in EEDA

One of the major goals of the South Carolina EEDA is to make guidance personnel key players in career and life planning activities by limiting their school duties to guidance and counseling.

More Career-Focused Guidance Activities

Paper Survey

- Increase in duties in policy-mandated, career-focused activities across all schools
- Most consistent reported increases were in:
 - Assisting students with the development of their career plans and IGPs ($\bar{x}=4.6$)
 - Meeting with parents about career issues ($\bar{x}=4.3$)
 - Counseling students on career issues ($\bar{x}=4.2$)

Note: Scale from 1=duty decreased greatly to 5=duty increased greatly. Means do not include responses of counselors who reported that they had never been assigned this duty.

More Career-Focused Guidance Activities

Paper Survey (continued)

- More moderate changes in other required activities:
 - Identifying and coordinating work-based/extended learning opportunities for students ($\bar{x}=3.8$)
 - Conducting professional development workshops in career development and guidance for teachers and guidance counselors ($\bar{x}=3.6$)

Note: Scale from 1=duty decreased greatly to 5=duty increased greatly. Means do not include responses of counselors who reported that they had never been assigned this duty.

More Career-Focused Guidance Activities

Interviews

- More time spent engaging in one-on-one interaction with students with the majority of their counseling sessions centering on career issues.
 - “I think the Act has put us more in the role of working on career exploration and meeting with and counseling students, and the registration process is a cooperative effort.”
- An increased effort to discuss with students all postsecondary options:
 - “We share with them what their options are if they want to go directly into the workforce, if they wanted to go and get a technical degree or a 2-year degree or a 4-year degree. And, we make sure they understand what the requirements are on admissions in higher ed [education] so they could be accepted into those programs.”

Student Reports of Career-Focused Activities

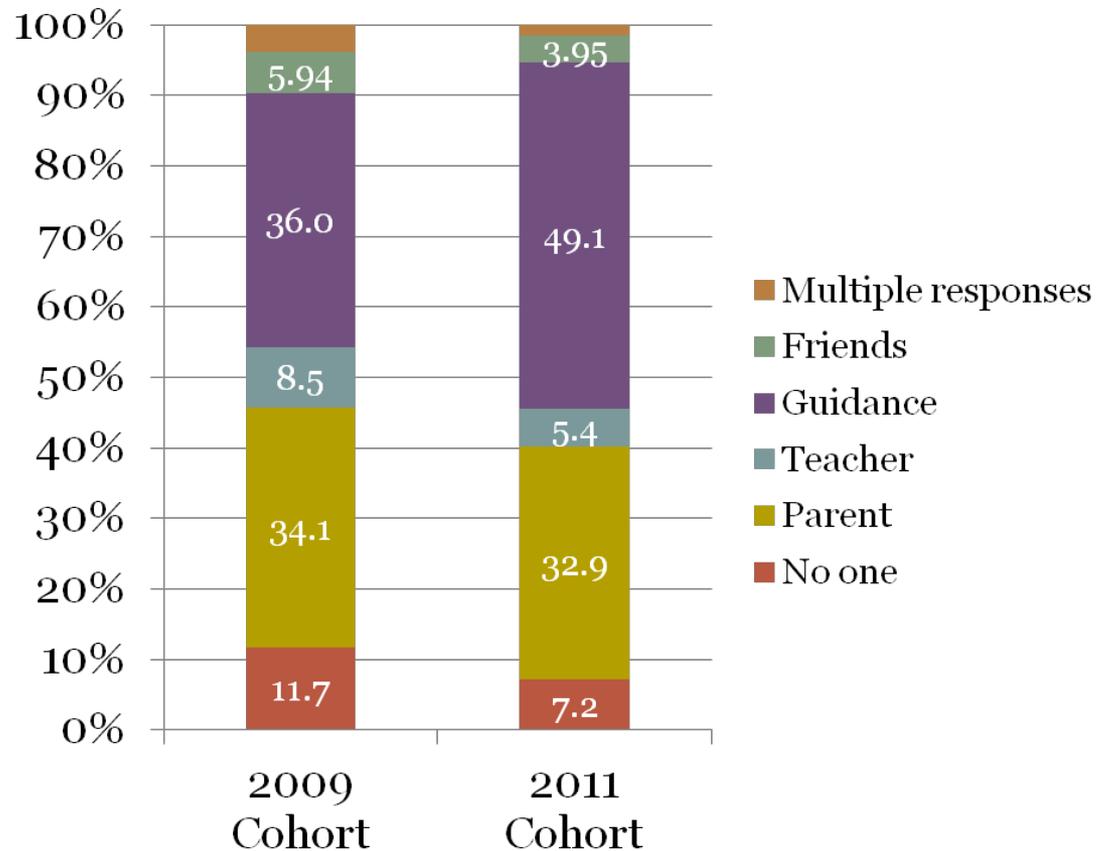
- Roughly 50% of the 2009 Cohort and 65% of the 2011 Cohort reported that they had **put together a career plan or Individual Graduation Plan (IGP)**.
- Of those students who had developed a plan, 61% of both the 2009 Cohort and the 2011 Cohort reported that they had **taken part in a parent-student-counselor meeting to discuss plans after high school at least once**.

Helpfulness

For both cohorts, students were more likely to report that **guidance counselors** were most helpful putting together their career plan or IGP, followed by parents.

About half of the 2011 Cohort reported that guidance counselors were the most helpful.

Who was most helpful putting together your career plan or IGP?



Increased Workload for Counselors

Paper Survey

- Evidence that duties are being added on to old duties rather than dropping some when adding new duties

Interviews

- Engagement in the development and renewal of Individual Graduation Plans (IGPs) resulted in an increase in duties for school counselors resulting in an increased workload of school counselors
 - caseload size and time spent on EEDA-related tasks were the predominant causes for the increase
 - "...caseloads have not decreased, if anything, it has increased because we haven't gotten any increase in staff."

Continuing Non-Essential and “Inappropriate” Guidance Activities

Paper Survey

- Reports on “inappropriate duties” indicate little change in guidance personnel’s involvement in these duties, with the lowest change occurring in the coordination of special services referrals ($\bar{x} = 3.2$)

Notes:

Scale from 1=duty decreased greatly to 5=duty increased greatly. Means do not include responses of counselors who reported that they had never been assigned this duty.

“Inappropriate” per EEDA guidelines (which include American School Counselor Association (ASCA) guidelines for guidance counselors).

Continuing Non-Essential and “Inappropriate” Guidance Activities

Paper Survey (continued)

- **Counselors more likely to report increased involvement in these “inappropriate” activities:**
 - Registering and scheduling students for classes ($\bar{x}=4.0$)
 - Developing the master class schedule ($\bar{x}=3.9$)
 - Maintaining/Completing educational records/reports ($\bar{x}=3.8$)
- **Very inconsistent changes across schools in testing duties:**
 - Administering standardized tests ($\bar{x}=3.4$; range from 1.0 to 5.0)
 - Coordinating standardized testing program ($\bar{x}=3.5$; range from 1.0 to 5.0)

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“Inappropriate” per EEDA guidelines (which include American School Counselor Association (ASCA) guidelines for guidance counselors).

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Programs of Study in *Perkins IV* and Practice

ACTE presentation

December 3, 2010

Corinne Alfeld & Sharika Bhattacharya



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
WORK AND LEARNING

Purpose of Study

- **Longitudinal study of “mature” POS sites**
 - Identify components and processes important in successful development and implementation of POS
 - Map the findings back onto Perkins IV legislation
- **Why?**
 - (1) to provide policymakers with feedback on the feasibility of POS, and
 - (2) to provide models and guidelines for successful POS implementation at other sites.

Study Design

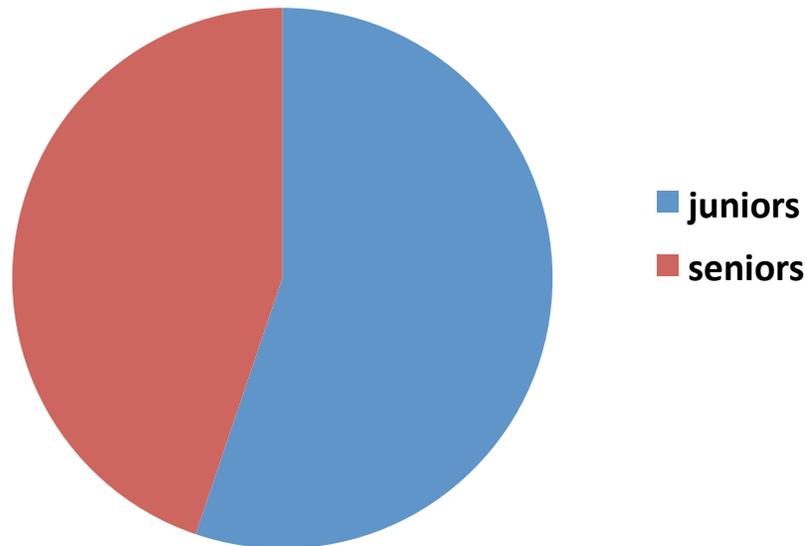
- 3 community colleges and their feeder high schools:
 - “Desert” college
(culinary arts, film crew technician, construction technology)
 - “Northern” college
(automotive technology, welding)
 - “River” college
(industrial maintenance, mechatronics)
- Qualitative and quantitative data collection
(interviews, focus groups, surveys, transcripts)
- Longitudinal (4 years, 2 cohorts), 2008-2012

How do Students See POS?

Initial Survey Findings*

High School Sample

217 students across 3 sites (14 HS) enrolled in courses in POS of interest



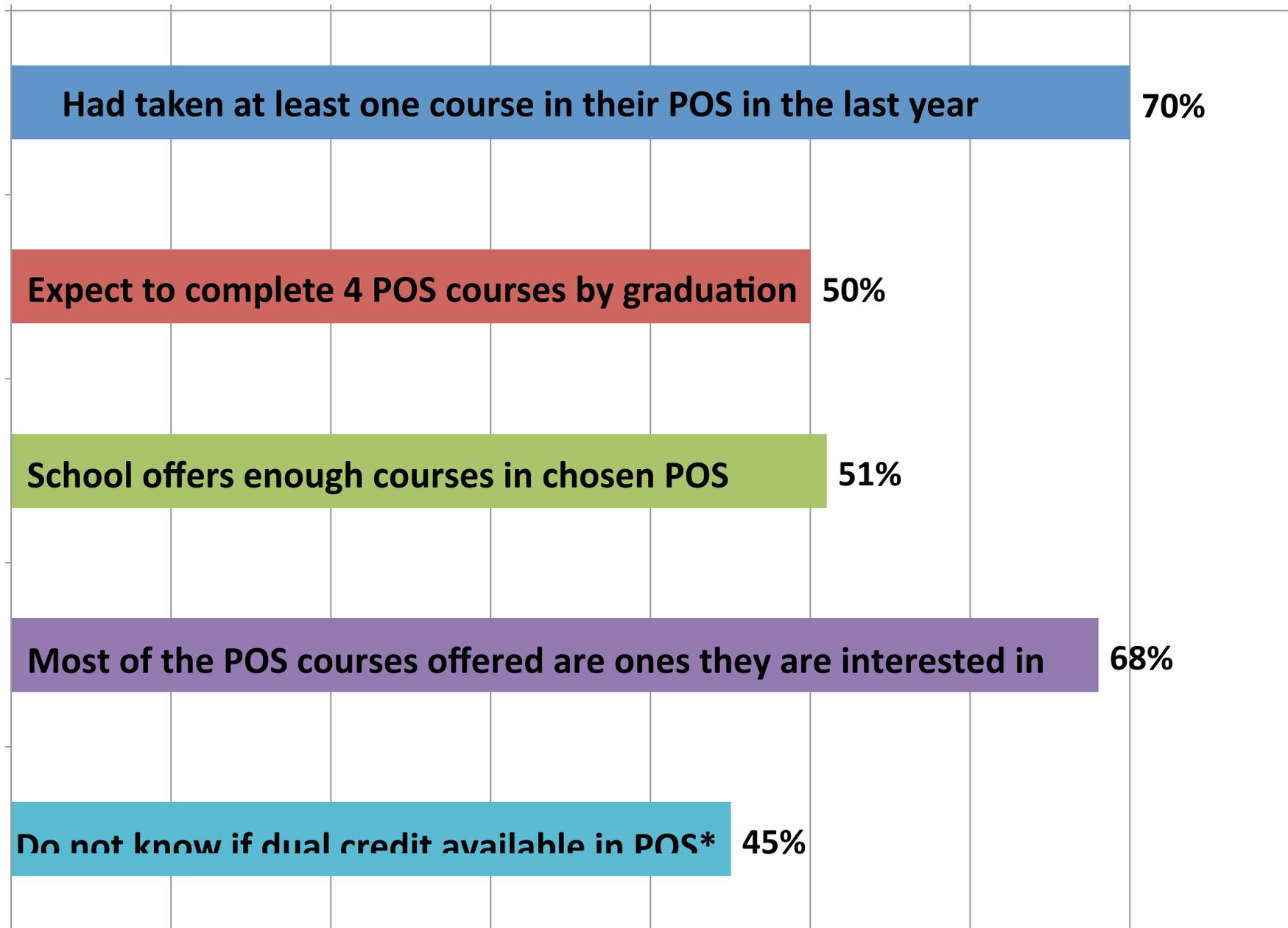
* Not representative!

In planning what courses to take in high school, students reported talking to:

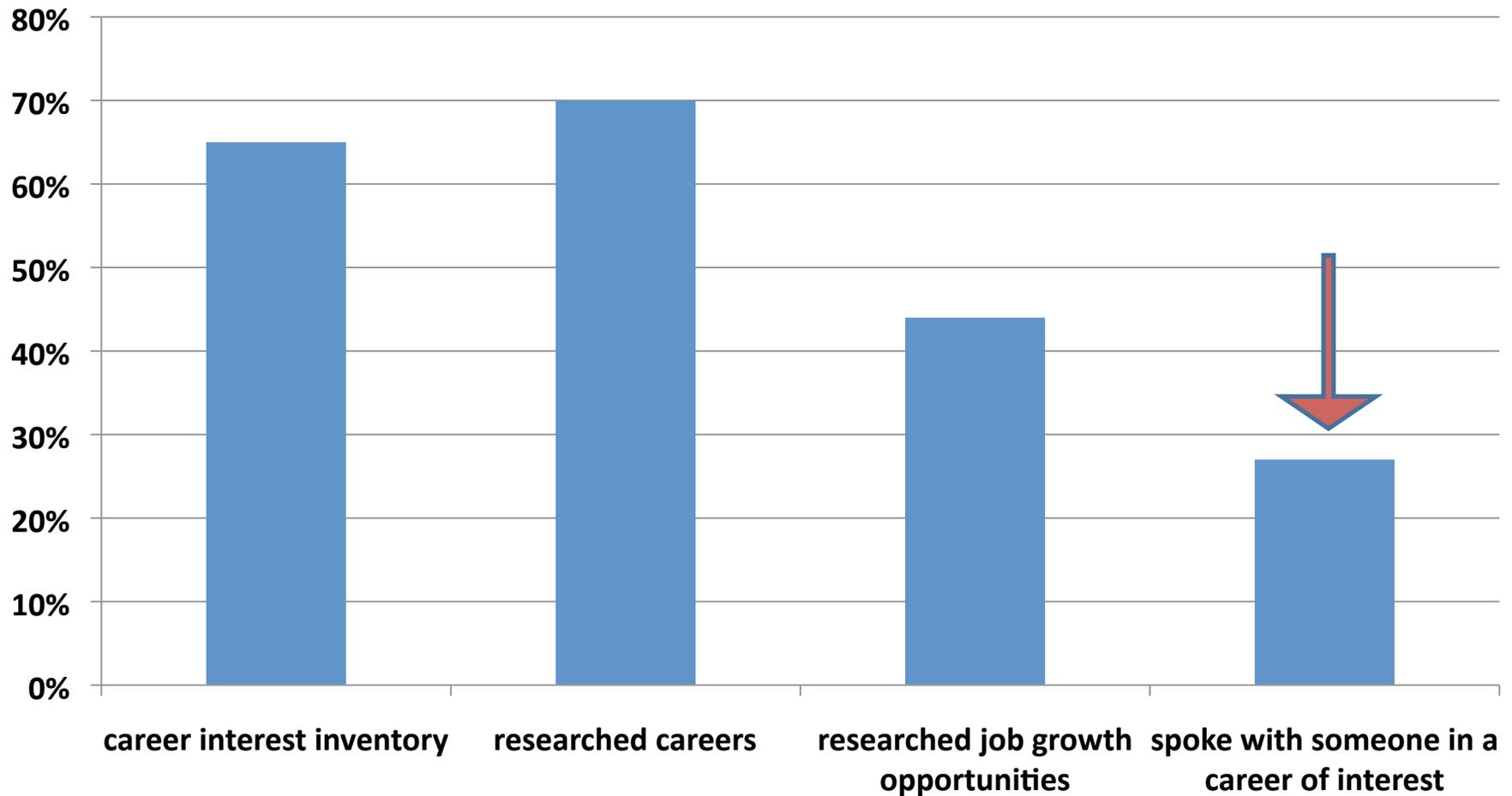
| | 3 or more times |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Parents | 46.6% |
| Teachers | 23.7% |
| Guidance Counselor | 19.6% |
| Friends | 60.3% |

Students were **3 times** more likely to talk to friends than to counselors about what courses to take.

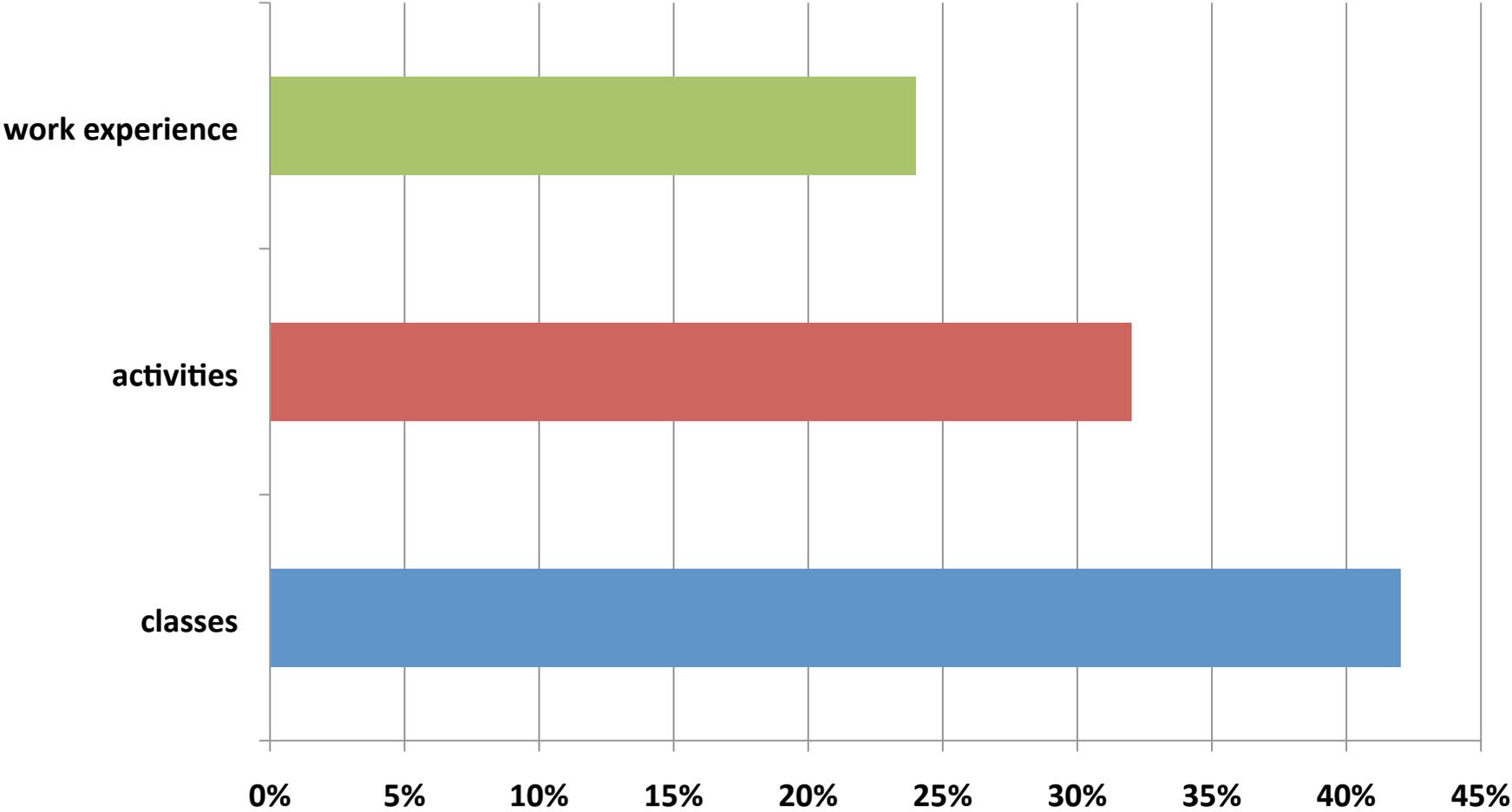
68% responded that they have NEVER taken part in a parent-student-counselor conference.



Have you done any of the following to help you identify interesting careers?



What have you done to explore possible career interests in the following areas?



Work-Based Learning Participation

- 21% - internship
 - 12% - co-op
 - 21% - job shadowing or work site visit
 - 18% - mentoring
 - 26% - community service
 - 8% - school based enterprise
 - 40% - none of these
- Only 30% of students who participated in WBL reported that their experiences were “closely related” to their career choice

Work for Pay

- 46% currently work for pay
- Of these, 40% work more than 20 hours/week
- Only 18% say their current job is “closely related” to their career choice
- 62% say their current job is “not related at all” to their career choice

Summary of HS Survey Findings

- Most students in Mature POS plan to go to at least a 2-year college
- Most students in Mature POS are satisfied with the help they received in planning their courses and with the POS courses offered
- Most students agreed or strongly agree that being in a POS has made them more engaged in school and in preparing for a career
- The majority of students have researched possible careers, but most have not talked to someone in a career area that interests them

On the other hand...

Even in Mature POS, guidance counseling is lacking:

- Most students had NOT had a conference with their parents and counselors.
- Three times as many students got advice from their friends than from their guidance counselor in planning their HS courses
- Twenty percent had not had help from ANYONE in planning their courses

Continued...

- The majority of students reported that their *work-based learning* experiences and *work for pay* in high school had little or nothing to do with their chosen career.



Conclusions

- Even when a POS is well-established (“mature”), it doesn’t always “trickle down” to students
- Students need more structured career guidance (in SC where it is mandated, it is happening more)
- Even though students are, for the most part, happy with their POS, and most plan to and do enroll in postsecondary education, few of the seniors in our study had enrolled in the same POS at the college the following year

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