



Independent Evaluation of CAHSEE

Update on Evaluation Findings and Recommendations

Presentation to:

The California State Board of Education

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Background

- ◆ SB-2X, passed in 1999, established the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)
 - ◆ HSEE Standards Panel was established to recommend the content of the English-language arts and mathematics sections of the exam.
 - ◆ Exam content was adopted by the State Board in December 2000.
 - ◆ Beginning with the Class of 2004, students must pass both sections of the exam to receive a high school diploma.
 - ◆ A multiyear independent evaluation of the CAHSEE began in January 2000.
- ◆ AB-1609, passed in 2001, required CDE, with approval from the State Board, to contract for a study to determine if:
 - The CAHSEE test development process and
 - The implementation of standards-based instructionmeet standards required for a high school graduation test.



Background

- ◆ The CDE contracted with Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) to conduct the evaluation of the CAHSEE following requirements in EC 60855
- ◆ EC 60855 requires:
 - A preliminary report based on field test results in July 1, 2000
 - Biennial reports on operational results beginning with Feb. 1, 2002
- ◆ HumRRO's contract with CDE also requires an annual report of evaluation activities plus any findings and recommendations
 - This presentation summarizes the findings and conclusions to be included in our Feb. 1, 2004 Biennial Report
 - It covers preliminary results from the July 2002 through June 2003 test administrations, plus school surveys, and reviews of development activities



Overview of Results

This presentation covers the following topics:

◆ Passing Rates

- ◆ For 10th graders in the Class of 2005, taking the CAHSEE for the first time
- ◆ For 11th graders in the Class of 2004, taking the CAHSEE for a second or subsequent time
- ◆ Estimates of cumulative passing rates for each class

◆ Retention and Drop-Out Rates

- ◆ Trends in enrollment declines from one grade to the next
- ◆ Student responses to questions on graduation and post-high school plans

◆ School Efforts to Improve Initial and Remedial Instruction

- ◆ Spring 2003 survey of teachers and principals provided data to supplement the AB1609 survey conducted in Feb. 2003
- ◆ Longitudinal study design supports identification of trends



Main Findings

While precise comparisons are not possible, by the end of 10th grade, passing rates for students in the Class of 2005 were slightly lower than passing rates for students in the Class of 2004.

- ◆ Many students in the Class of 2004 were able to take the CAHSEE twice before the end of 10th grade; this was not true for the Class of 2005.
- ◆ By the end of 10th grade, 67% of the Class of 2005 had passed the ELA test compared to 73% of the Class of 2004 at the end of 10th grade.
- ◆ Corresponding passing rates for Math were 52% for the Class of 2005 and 53% for the Class of 2004.
- ◆ Math passing rates for some demographic groups continued to be very low. Passing rates for the Class of 2005 10th graders were:
 - ◆ 31% for Black students and 35% for Hispanic students
 - ◆ 16% for English Learners and 14% for special education students



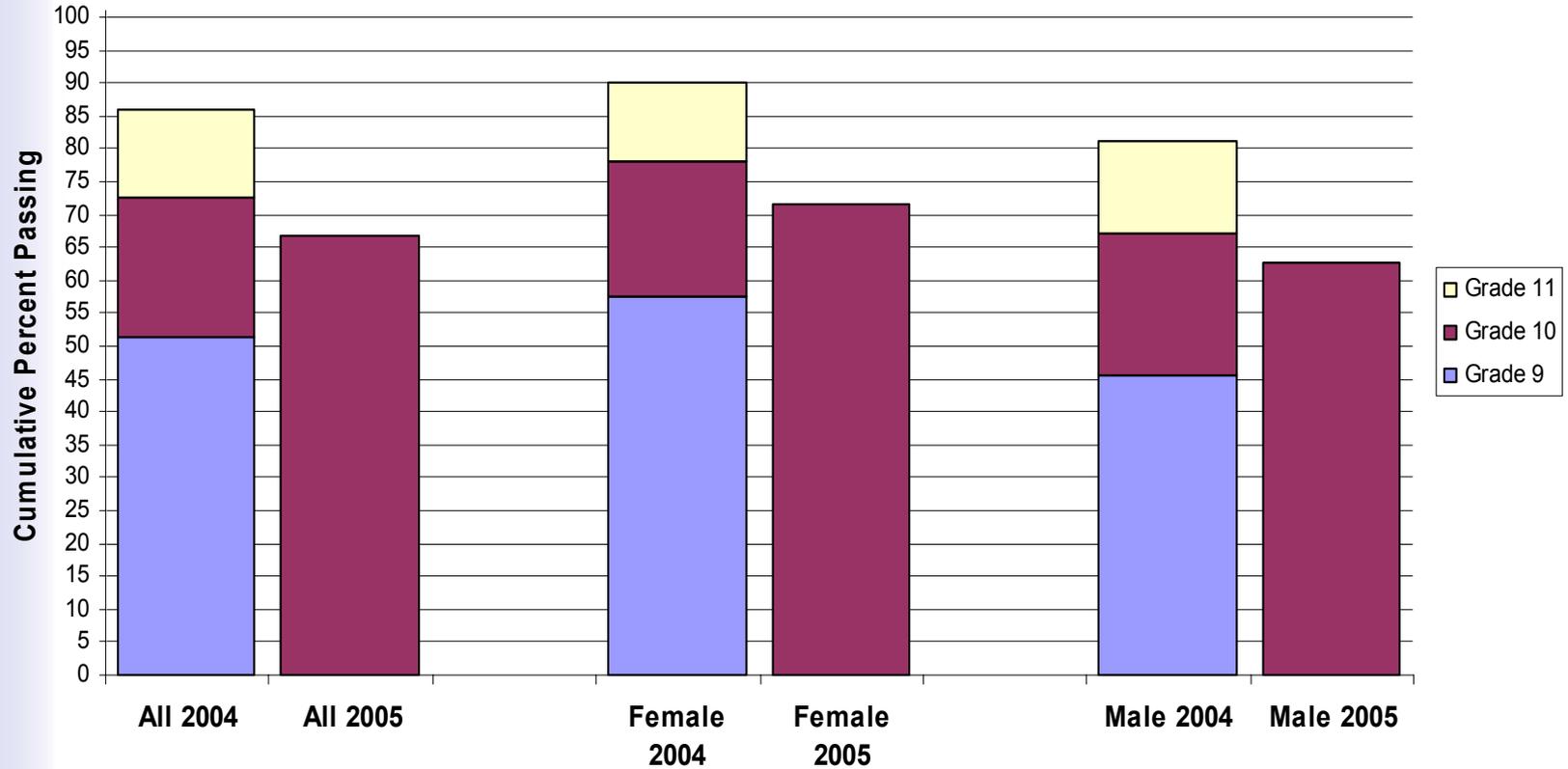
Number of Tests Administered July 2002 through June 2003

High School Class	ELA	Math
10 th Graders – Class of 2005	404,748	417,736
11 th Graders – Class of 2004	170,447	318,770
Other Students	3,751	4,499
10 th Grade Enrollment		
Class of 2004	459,580	
Class of 2005	471,648	



Cumulative ELA Passing Rates

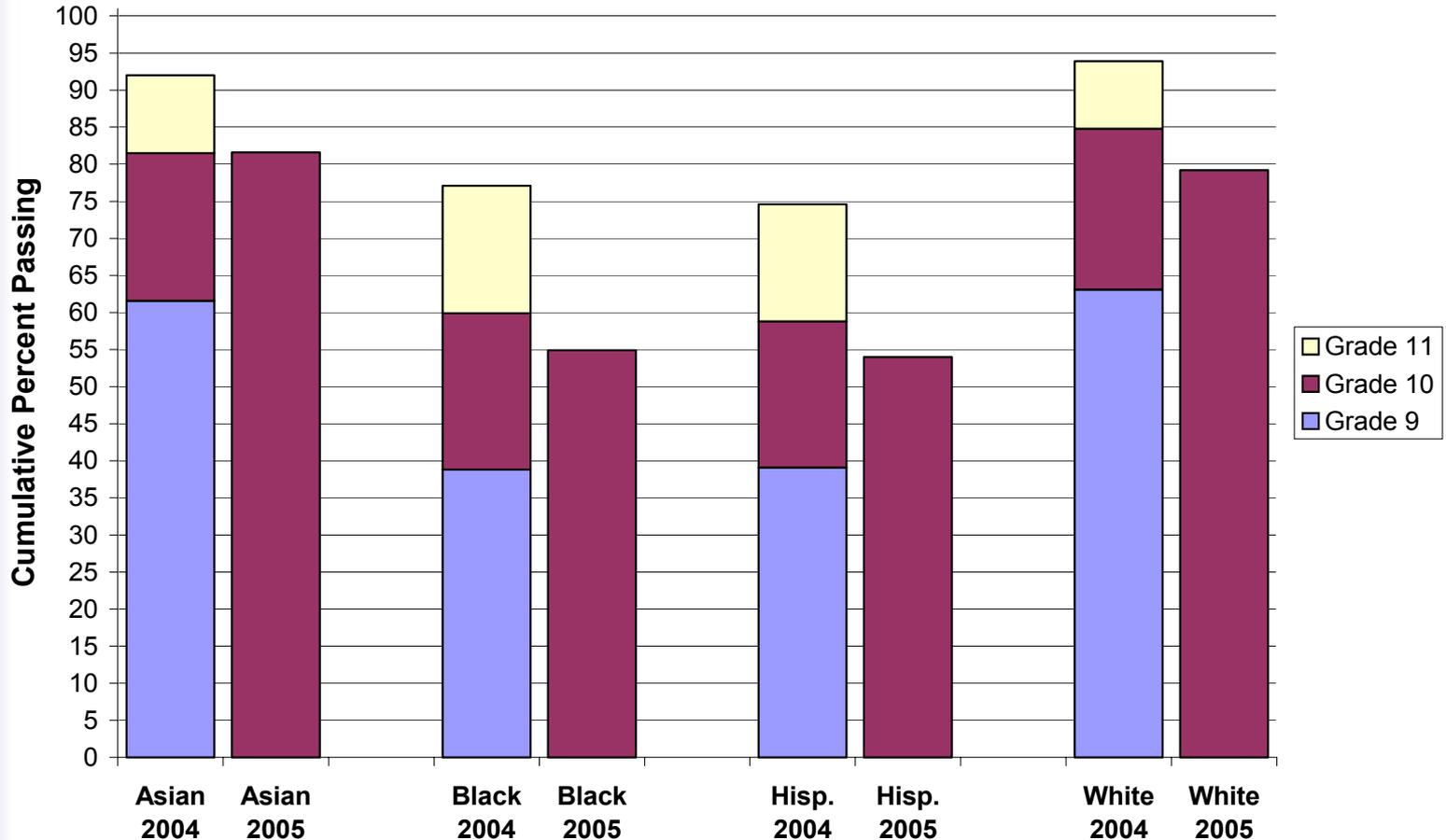
ELA Passing Rates by Gender and Class





Cumulative ELA Passing Rates

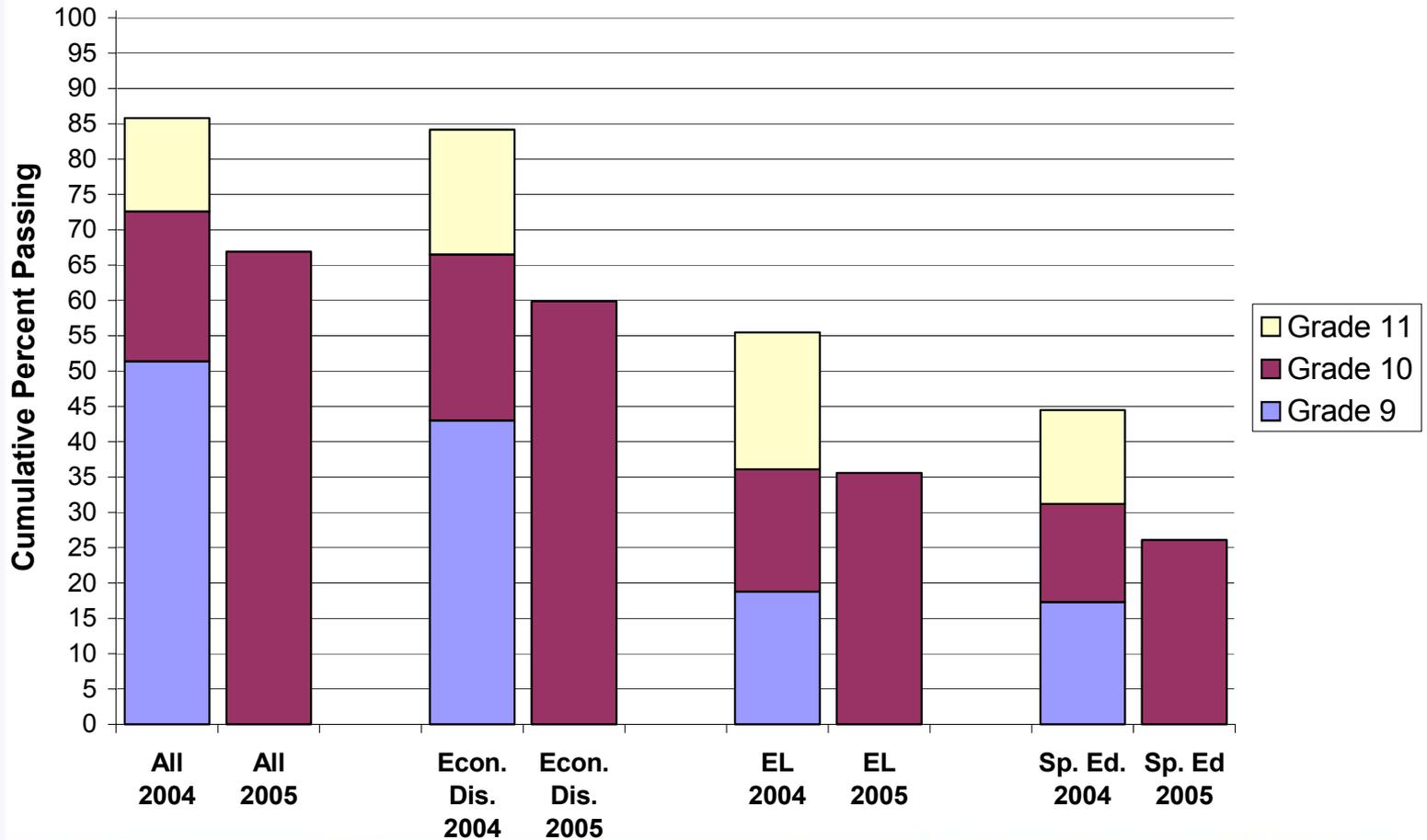
ELA Passing Rates by Ethnicity and Class





Cumulative ELA Passing Rates

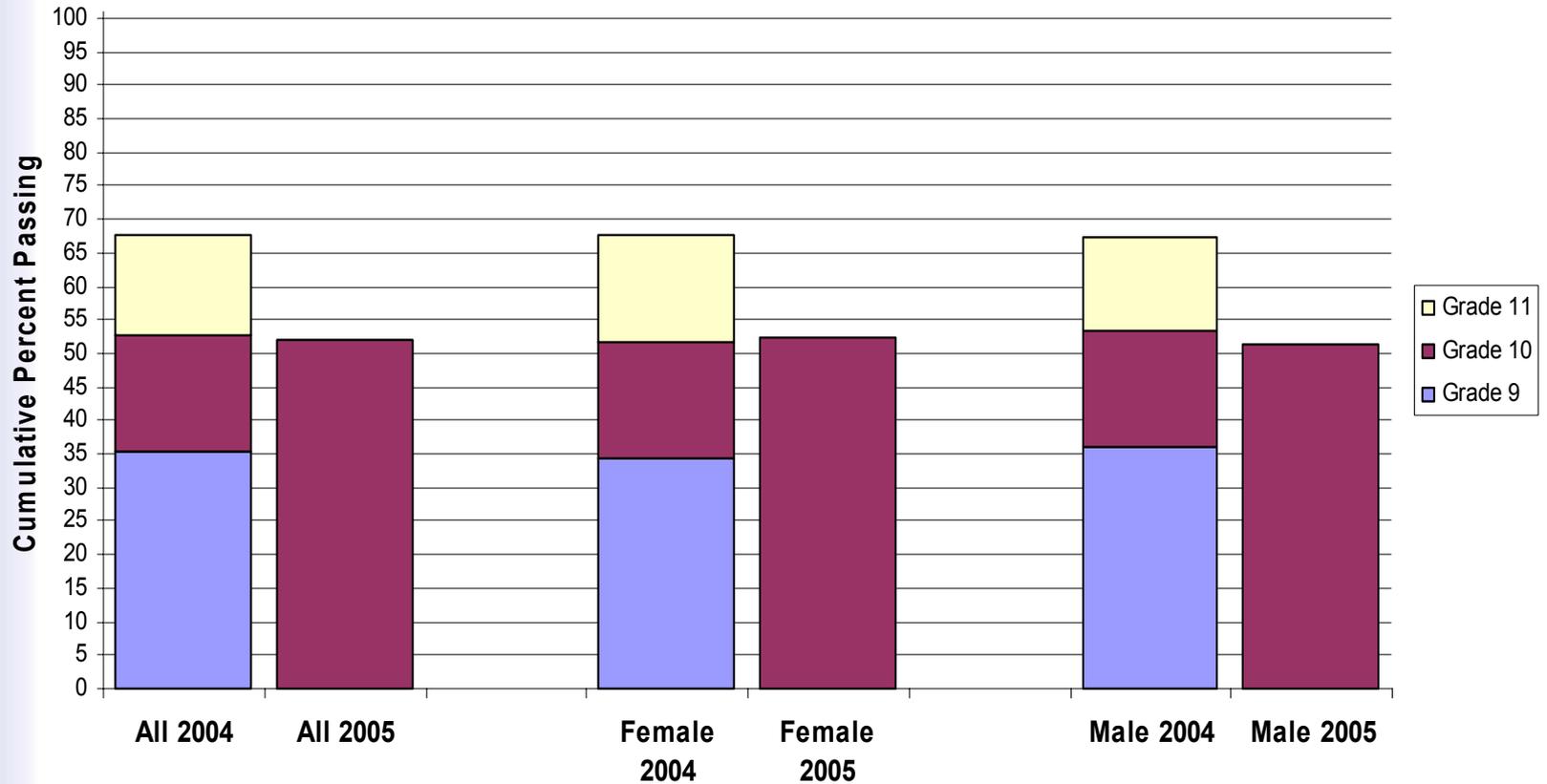
ELA Passing Rates by Special Population and Class





Cumulative Math Passing Rates

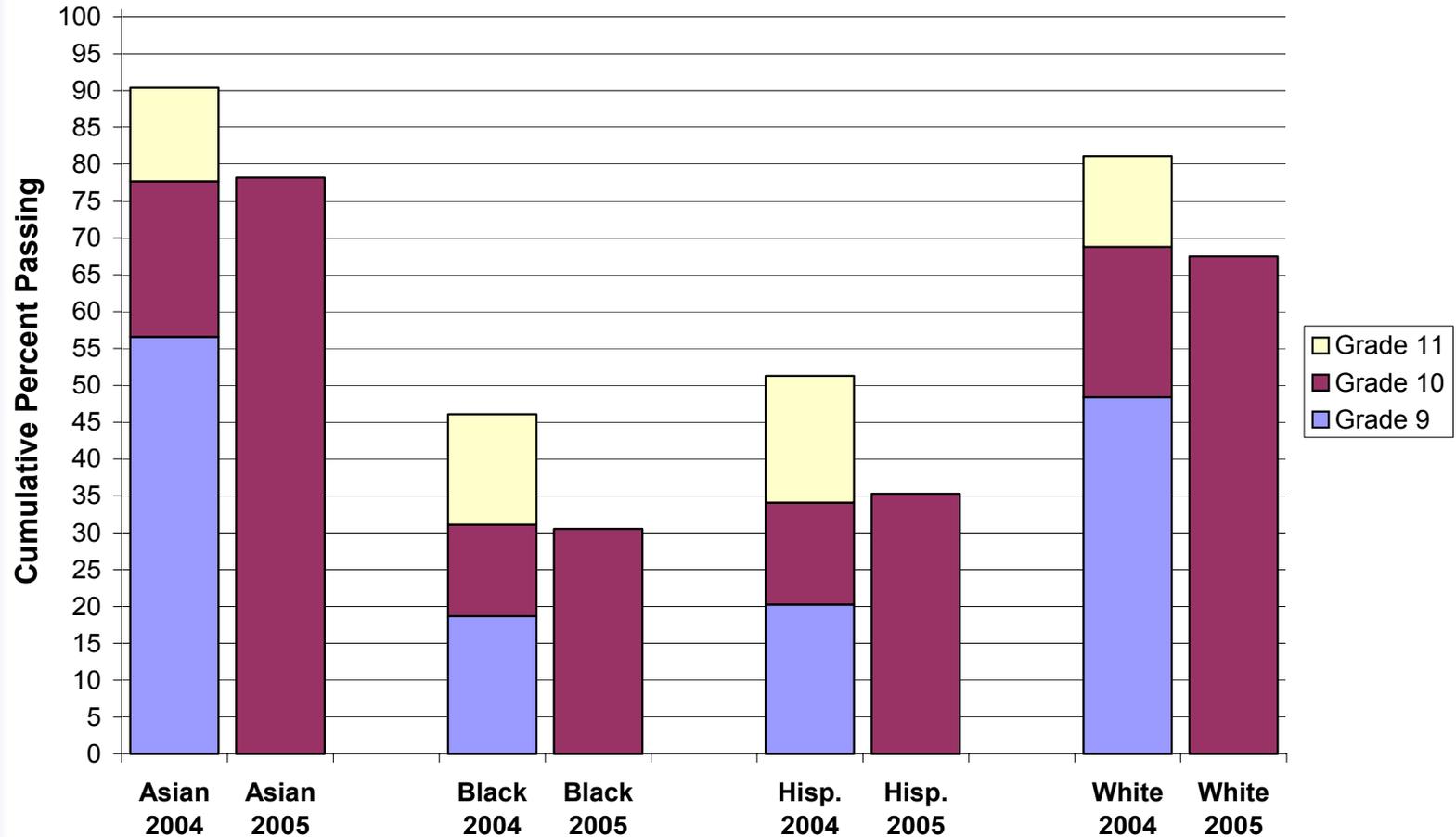
Mathematics Passing Rates by Gender and Class





Cumulative Math Passing Rates

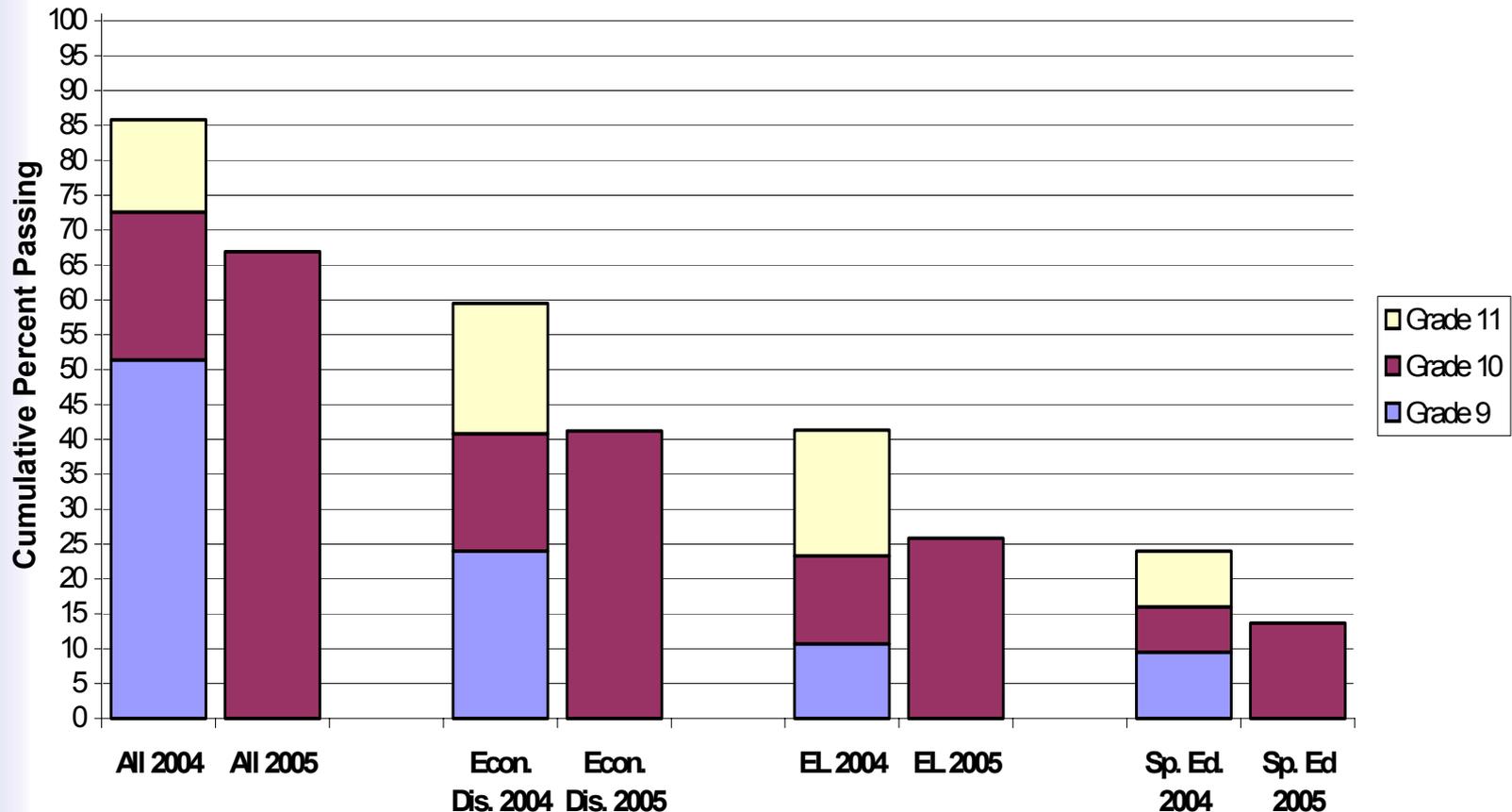
Mathematics Passing Rates by Ethnicity and Class





Cumulative Math Passing Rates

Mathematics Passing Rates by Special Population and Class





Findings

Available evidence indicates that the CAHSEE has not led to any increase in dropout rates. In fact, enrollment declines from 10th to 11th grade for the Class of 2004 were significantly lower than declines for prior high school classes.

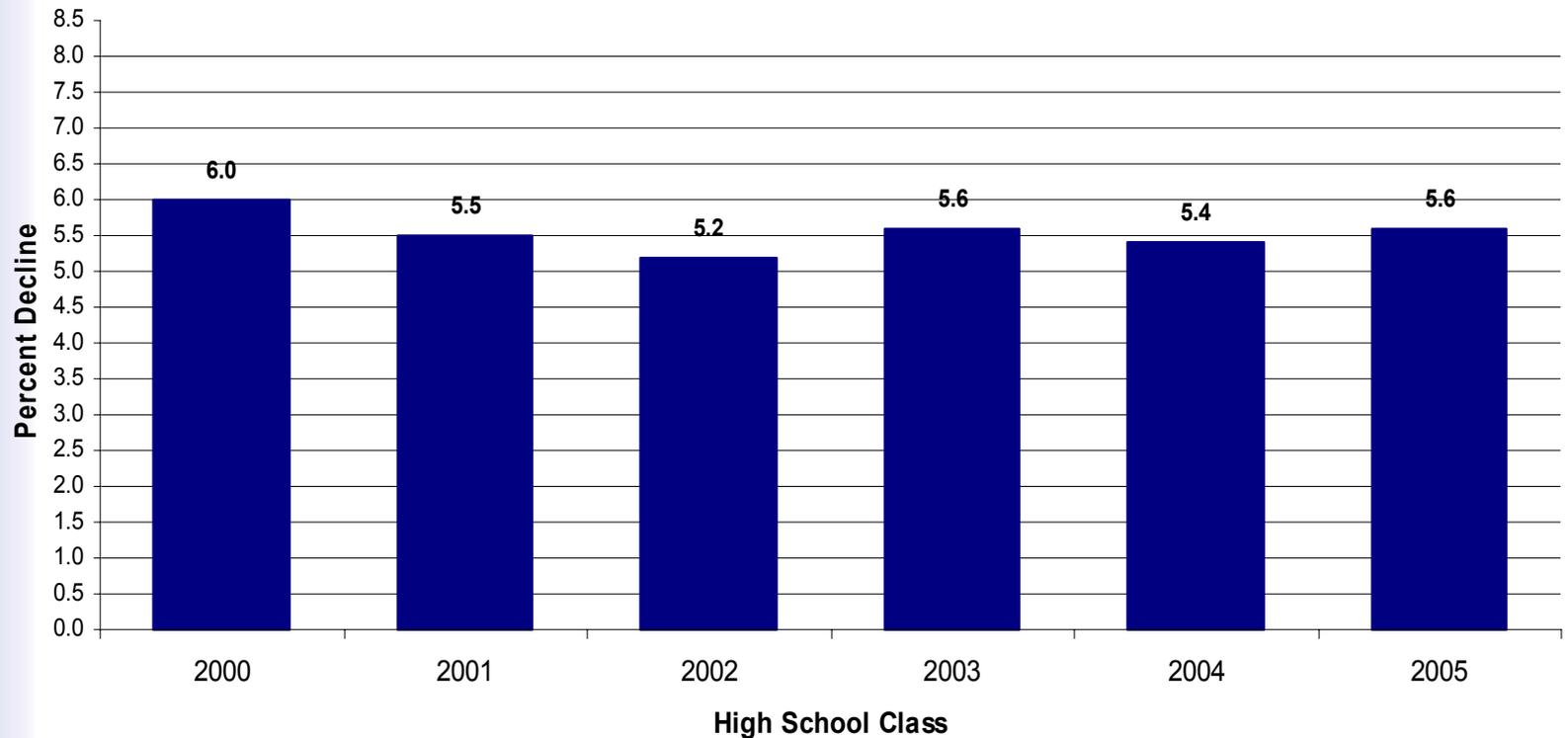
- ◆ Enrollment declines result from a combination of dropouts and students who are retained in grade.
- ◆ Enrollment declines from 9th to 10th grade were 5.4% for the Class of 2004 and 5.6% for the Class of 2005 compared to between 5.2% and 6.0% or prior classes.
- ◆ The enrollment decline from 10th to 11th grade was 6.8% for the Class of 2004 compared to 7.4 to 7.9%.



Trends in Enrollment Declines

Enrollment Decline from Grades 9 to 10

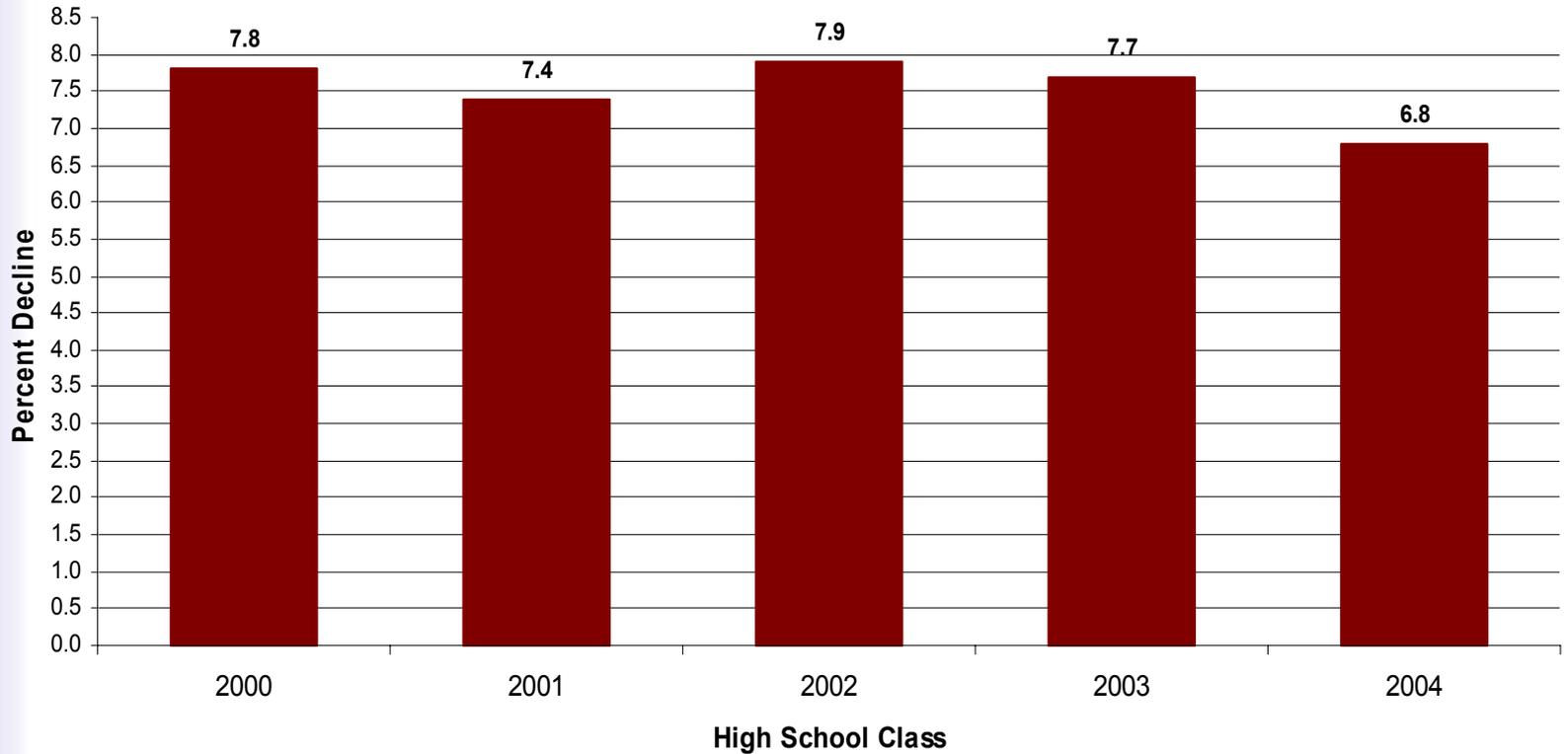
(Percent Decrease in Fall Enrollment from Grade 9 One Year to Grade 10 the Next)





Trends in Enrollment Declines

Enrollment Decline from Grades 10 to 11
(Percent Decrease in Fall Enrollment from Grade 10 One Year to Grade 11 the Next)





Findings (Continued)

More students in the Class of 2005 believed that the CAHSEE was important to them compared to Class of 2004 students when they were in the 10th grade. Slightly more said they did as well as they could on the exam. Expectations for graduation and post-high school plans were largely unchanged for the Class of 2005 in comparison to the Class of 2004.

- ✎ In 2003, 75% of 10th graders (Class of 2005) said the test was very important compared to 69% of first-time test-takers in 2002.***
- ✎ In 2003, 82% of 10th graders said that they did as well as they could compared to 79% of first-time test-takers in 2002.***



Findings (Continued)

Schools are continuing efforts to cover the California Content Standards in instruction and provide support for students who need additional help in mastering these standards. Many programs that were planned or only partially implemented a year ago have now been fully implemented.

-  More high school principals reported the following programs were fully implemented in 2003 compared to 2002:
- Adoption of California Content Standards
 - Increased remedial courses
 - Individual/group tutoring
 - Use of test results to change instruction
 - Placement of students according to abilities
 - Ensured availability of demanding courses from the beginning



Implementation of Activities to Help Students Pass the CAHSEE

Program/Activity	2002 % Fully Implemented	2003 % Fully Implemented
Adopted California Content Standards	45%	82%
Placed students by ability	23%	57%
Provided individual or group tutoring	29%	45%
Offered demanding courses from beginning	25%	43%
Increased remedial courses in high school	10%	33%
Used test results to change instruction	5%	25%
Included teachers of other subjects in instructional planning for CAHSEE	16%	26%



Findings (Continued)

Additional Findings:

- Teacher and principal expectations for the impact of the CAHSEE on students were largely unchanged from prior years.*
- Professional development in the teaching of the state's academic content standards has not yet been extensive.*
 - 38% of teachers received no or poor CAHSEE-related professional development from local sources; 60% said they received no or poor CAHSEE-related professional development from the state
- Some issues remain with the student data provided by schools and assignment of testing accommodations.*

Examples:

- Some students in the Class of 2005 tested early.
- In a few cases, information on disabilities or limited English proficiency was not consistent with information on testing accommodations provided.
- Schools continued to request corrections to demographic data after results were released.



Recommendations

Restarting the exam with the Class of 2006 provides some opportunities for improvement; however, careful consideration should be given to changes to the testing program.

- ◆ The ELA test is being shortened to allow it to be administered in a single day. Data are not yet available to indicate the extent to which the accuracy of the test scores or coverage of the content standards will be compromised by the reduction in number of test questions, particularly the reduction from two essay questions down to one.
- ◆ For math, the same minimum percent correct standard will be applied to somewhat easier sets of test questions. The likely increase in passing rates due to this change cannot yet be determined.



Recommendations (Continued)

The Department of Education and the State Board of Education should continue to monitor and encourage efforts by districts and schools to implement effective standards-based instruction

- ◆ Results from the AB1609 Study, reported in May 2003, indicated that the CAHSEE requirement has led to significant improvements in both initial and remedial instruction.
- ◆ This instruction was still not effective for many students, who appeared to lack prerequisite skills.
- ◆ Continued monitoring is needed to ensure all students in the Class of 2006 and beyond have adequate instruction in the material covered by the CAHSEE.



Recommendations (Continued)

Professional Development for Teachers is a significant opportunity for improvement.

- ◆ CDE could build and/or evaluate professional development activities around the use of the CAHSEE teacher guides and the newly released Student Study Guides.
- ◆ In addition to providing funding for professional development, the state could do more in evaluating the quality of professional development programs and disseminating information about programs with proven effectiveness.



Recommendations (Continued)

Further consideration of the CAHSEE requirements for special education students is needed, in light of the low passing rates for this group.

- ◆ Different expectations, in the form of an alternative diploma, might be considered for special education students who cannot participate in regular instruction and thus do not receive instruction in the content covered by the CAHSEE.
- ◆ Passing rates for English Learners increase dramatically once they learn English so further considerations are less critical for EL students.