

Passing the California High School Exit Exam

Have Recent Policies Improved
Student Performance?

Julian Betts



Outline

- CAHSEE's goals and impact
- Recent interventions
- Earlier interventions and forecasting
- The CAHSEE Early Warning Model
- Policy implications



The CAHSEE Is a High-Stakes Exam

- Passing the CAHSEE is a graduation requirement for classes of 2006 and later
- Two components: English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics
- The exam's primary goals:
 - Measuring grade-level competency
 - Boosting student achievement



Many Students Struggle to Pass

- Students have multiple chances to pass between grades 10 and 12
- Statewide results for 2010:
 - About 3 out of 10 failed at least one component in grade 10
 - About 1 in 16 failed to pass the exam before the end of grade 12



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Recent Interventions Are Aimed at Students Who Have Failed the Exam

- AB 128: Support for students who have yet to pass CAHSEE
- AB 347: Support for students after grade 12 to pass CAHSEE
- AB 1802: Funding for school counselors
- SDUSD's intervention: CAHSEE prep courses

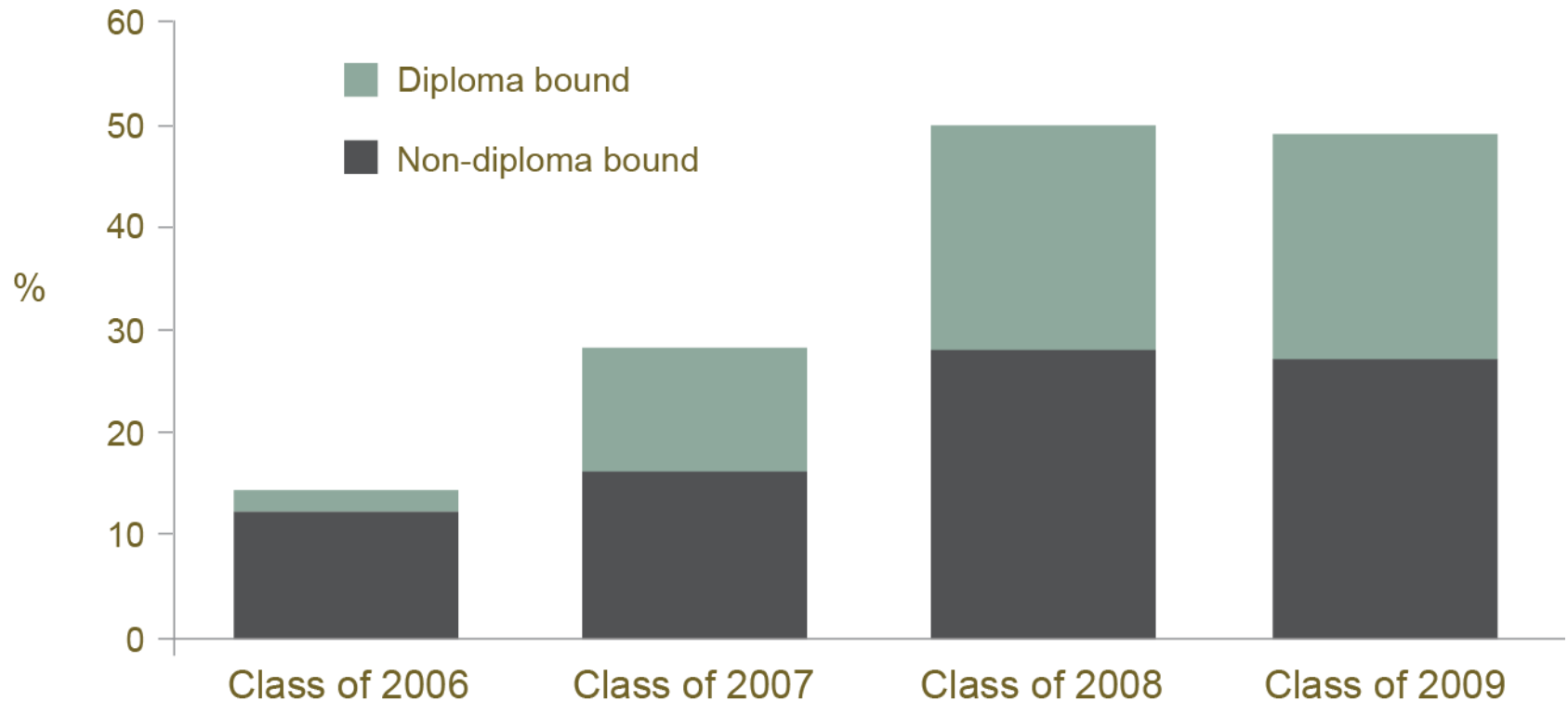


AB 128 Has Had No Noticeable Effect

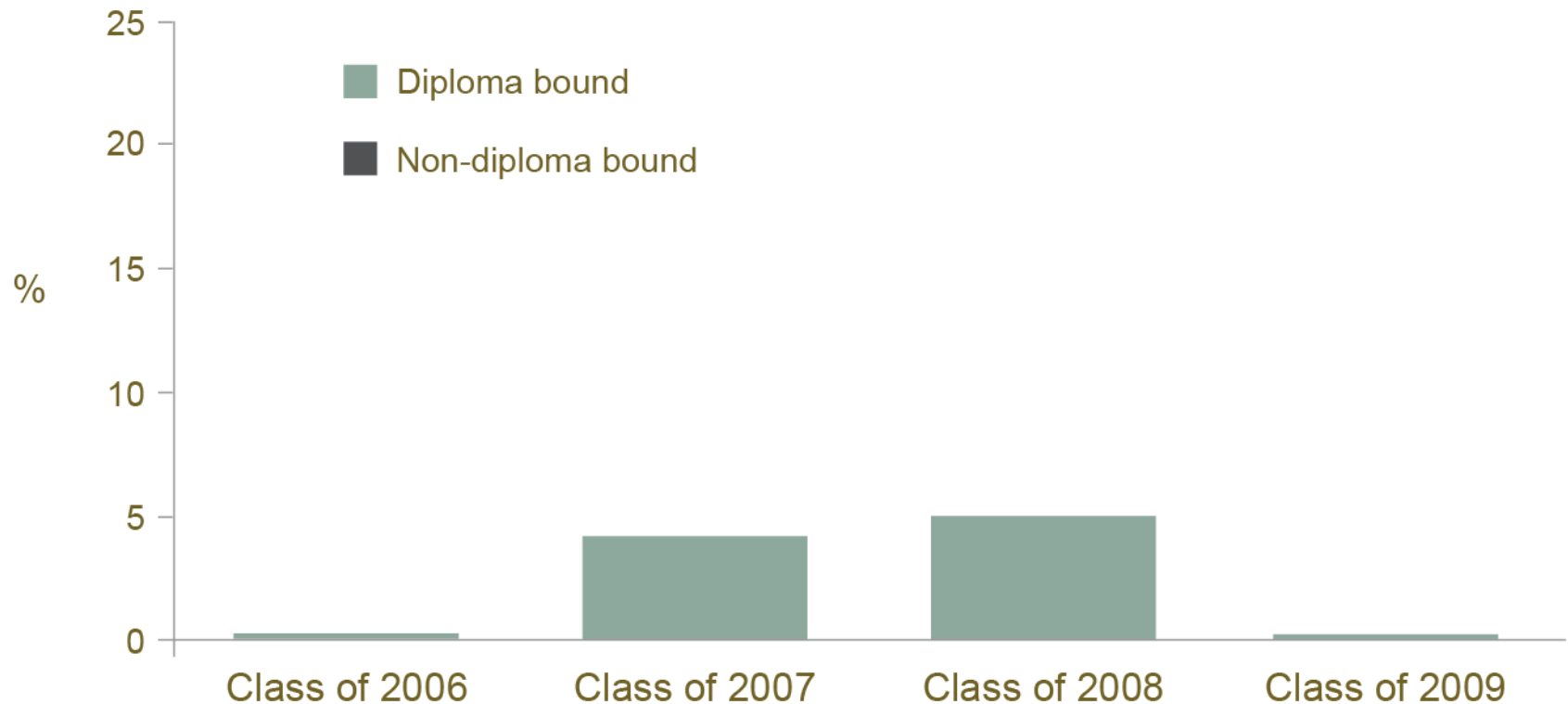
- We compared CAHSEE results with and without AB 128 support
- Passage rates did not improve among students eligible for AB 128 support



AB 347 May Have Increased Re-enrollment a Year after Grade 12



But CAHSEE Passage Has Not Risen Much after Grade 12

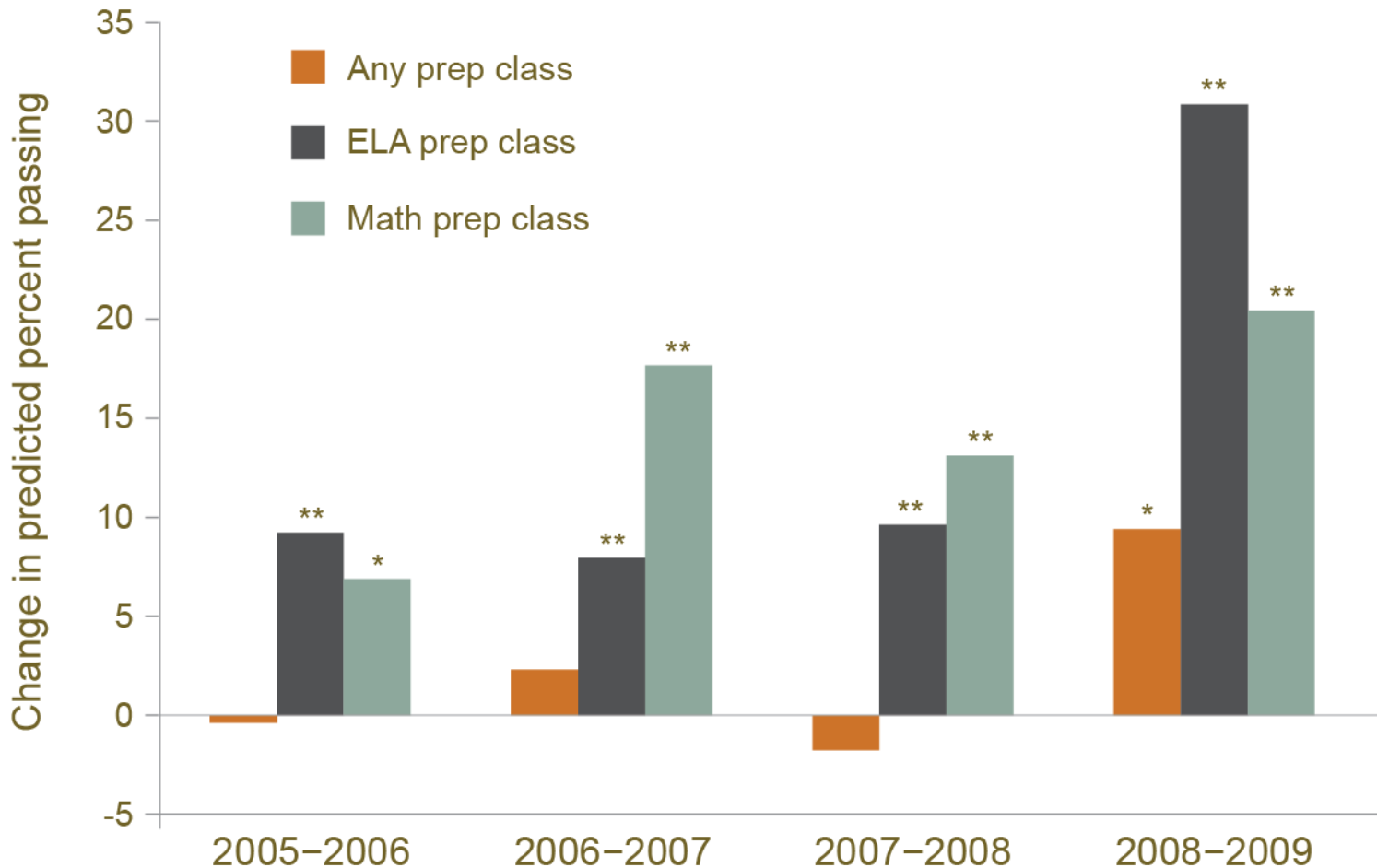


Prep Class Enrollment at San Diego Unified Is Increasing

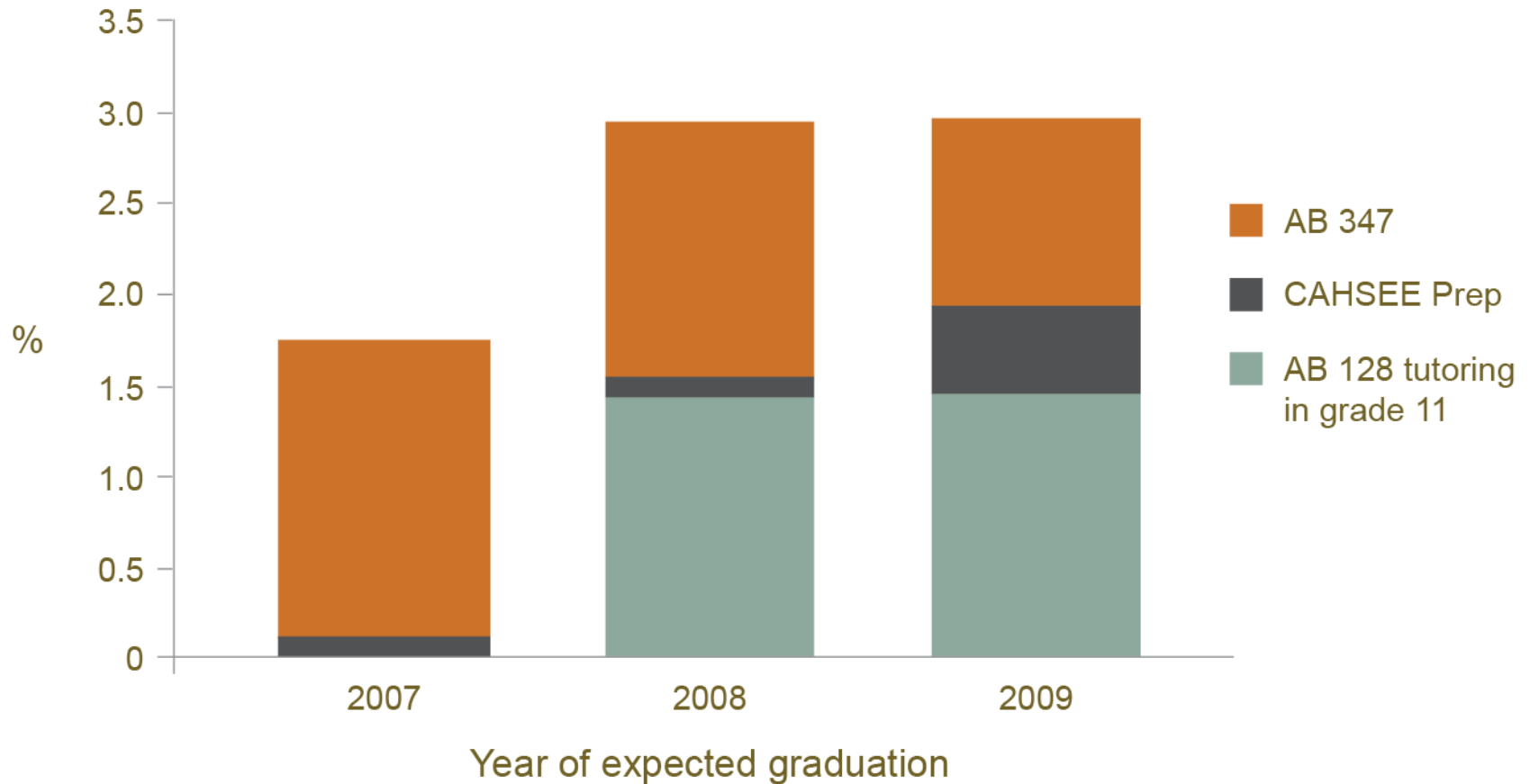
Grade level	Class of 2006	Class of 2007	Class of 2008	Class of 2009
9	13	35	665	567
10	70	232	360	707
11	118	425	341	282
12	248	289	233	261
Total	449	981	1599	1817



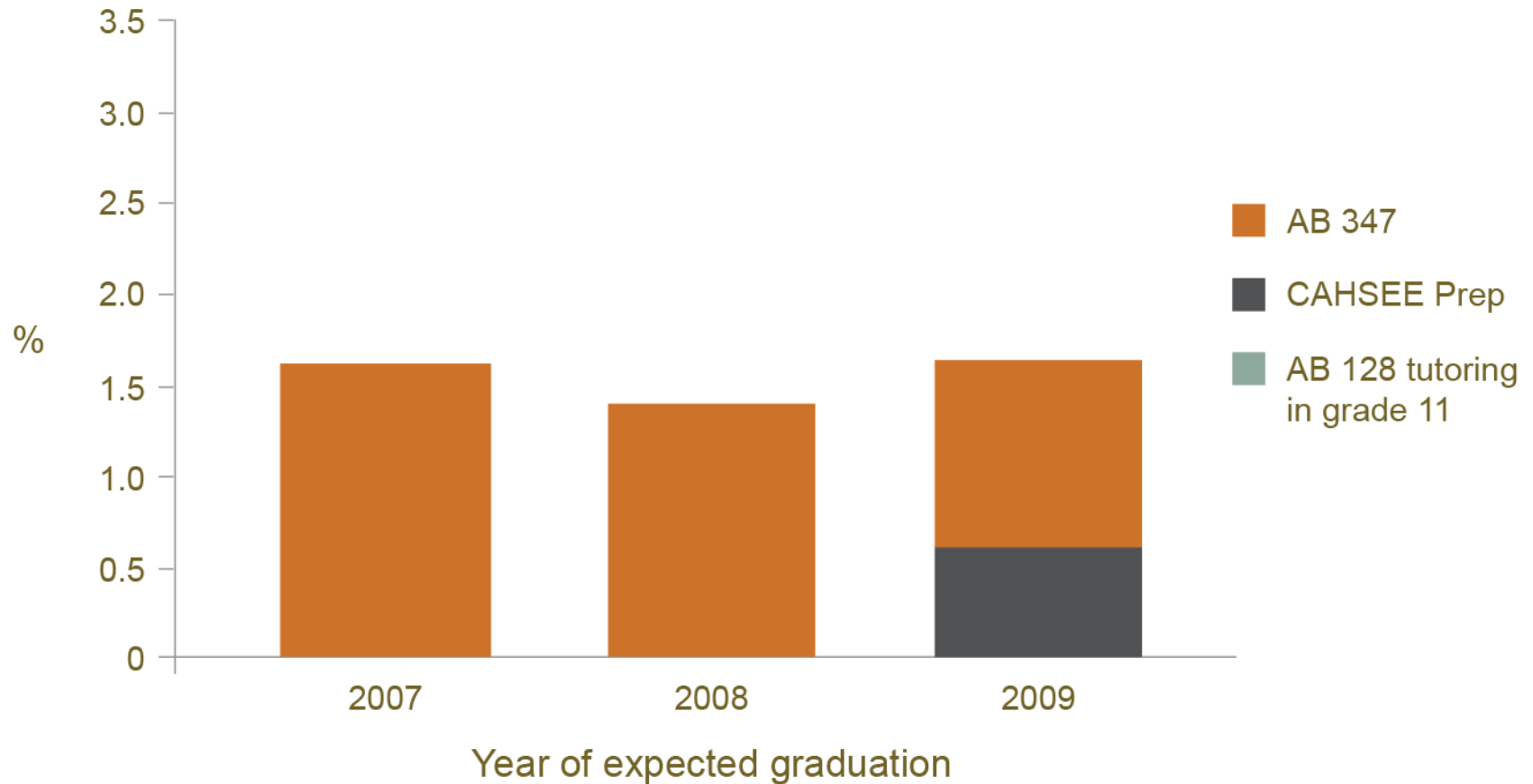
Prep Classes Do Not Improve Overall Passage Rates



Even Optimistic Estimates Reveal Minimal Overall Impact



Less Optimistic Estimates Show Even Smaller Effects



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Early Intervention Makes Sense

- Most skills tested in the CAHSEE are taught in upper elementary and middle school
- Earlier support would cost less than later intervention
- Support over many grades is more likely to have a lasting effect

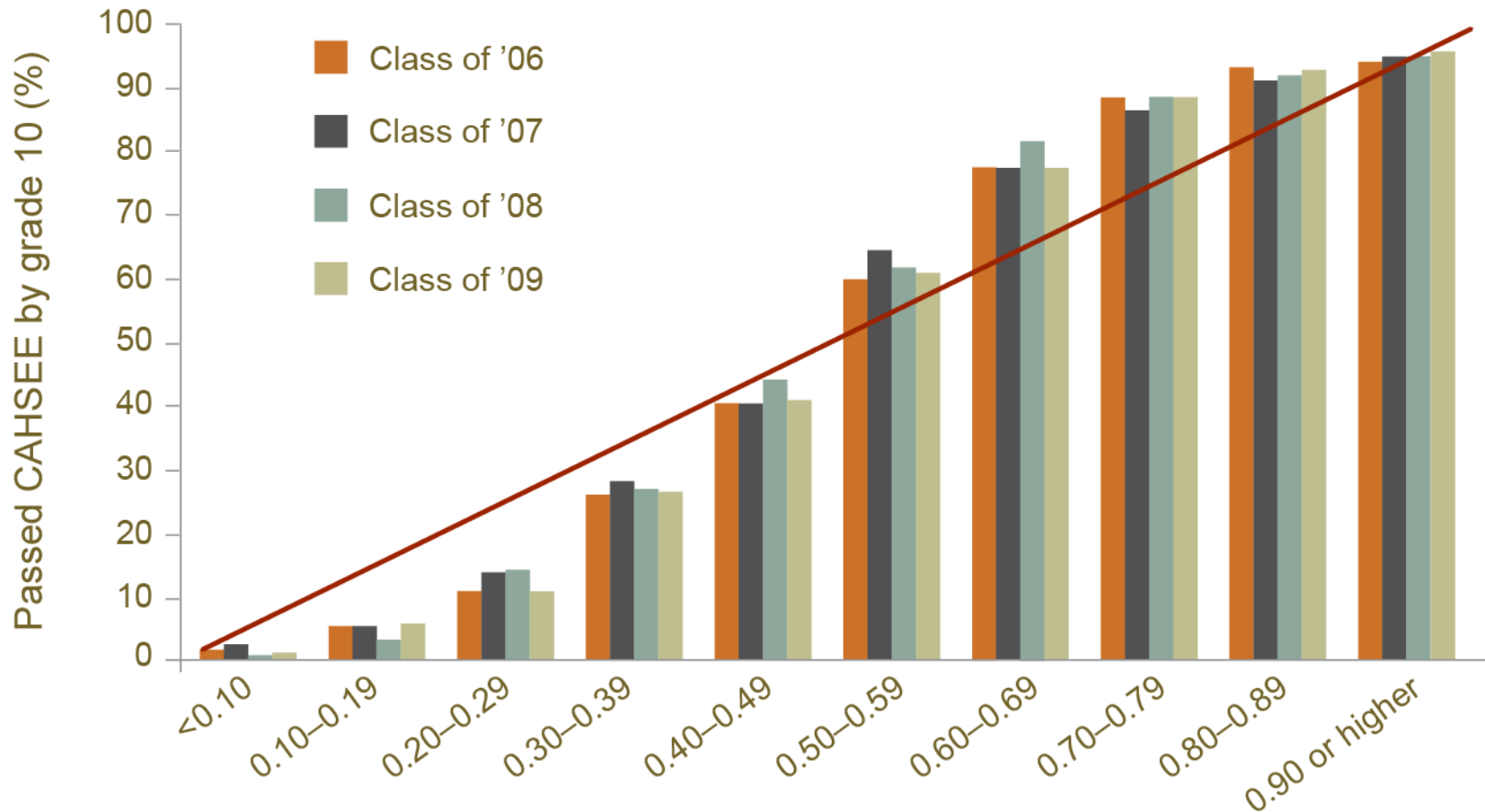


How Can Districts Identify At-Risk Students in Earlier Grades?

- Zau and Betts accurately predicted student performance with data from grades 4–9
- Create an accurate forecasting tool that uses data easily available to school districts
- Ensure that the model holds up over time



The Earlier Model Is Consistent over Time



Note: Predictions based on student data from grade 9.



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Introducing the CAHSEE Early Warning Model

- A simple spreadsheet tool can help identify struggling students **before** they first take the exam in grade 10
- Districts can use data from grade 6 or grade 8:
 - Grade 6 forecasting would enable assistance to begin earlier
 - Grade 8 forecasting would be slightly more accurate



Validation Is a Crucial First Step

- Districts need to test the model (based on SDUSD class of 2009) using data from a cohort that has already taken the CAHSEE in grade 10
- Districts can estimate how many students would need intervention at various levels by entering cutoff points

How Many Students Identified at Each Cutoff?

72		Table 6 Number of Students to Be Included in an Intervention			Table 7 % Who Failed Who Would be Included in Intervention			Table 8 % Who Passed Who Would be Included in Intervention		
73	Cutoff: Choose Students with Predicted Passage Probability Below:	Overall Pass	Pass Math	Pass ELA	Overall Pass	Pass Math	Pass ELA	Overall Pass	Pass Math	Pass ELA
74	0.1	97	30	15	6.6%	2.4%	1.4%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%
75	0.2	329	150	97	22.5%	11.7%	8.9%	0.8%	0.5%	0.3%
76	0.3	597	347	259	38.0%	25.8%	22.2%	2.6%	1.6%	1.1%
77	0.4	872	591	469	52.6%	41.2%	36.6%	5.0%	3.5%	3.0%
78	0.5	1168	889	723	65.3%	57.6%	51.8%	8.8%	6.7%	5.8%
79	0.6	1480	1189	977	74.1%	69.0%	64.3%	14.6%	11.6%	9.4%
80	0.7	1848	1581	1311	82.9%	79.7%	73.9%	22.1%	19.2%	15.9%
81	0.8	2292	2024	1739	90.4%	88.2%	84.1%	32.5%	29.1%	24.8%
82	0.9	2921	2697	2460	95.7%	94.8%	92.8%	49.3%	46.0%	42.1%



Once the Model Is Validated, Forecasting Can Begin

- Districts enter student data from either grade 6 or grade 8
- The forecasting spreadsheet predicts students' probabilities of passing the CAHSEE in grade 10

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Current Policies Are Not Effective

- AB 128 tutoring has been ineffective
- AB 347 may have increased re-enrollment of students after grade 12, but CAHSEE passage rates have risen only slightly
- SDUSD's prep classes help on each section of the exam but do not boost overall passage rates
- Between 1.5% and at most 3% of students passed the CAHSEE because of these interventions



How Can Districts Help Students Pass the Exam?

- AB 128 funds are now part of a pot of money that districts can use more flexibly
 - Opens up the possibility of intervening before grades 11 and 12
- Districts may want to develop their own CAHSEE prep courses
 - Courses for students below grade 10 could be particularly helpful
- Together, early warning and early intervention could be helpful and cost effective



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Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.

