Evaluation of Dallas City of Learning (DCOL): A University-School-Community Partnership to Expand Access to Out of School Time (OST) Programs

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CONSORTIUM on EDUCATIONAL
RESEARCH & IMPROVEMENT

Outline

1. Background of Big Thought and CORE collaboration
2. Current evaluation questions
3. Approach to defining programming patterns
4. Findings
5. What we take from this & next steps

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"Learning Continues All Year Long"

Dallas City of Learning (DCoL) ensures that youth have access to high quality out-of-school time programming year-round.

- Initially developed to improve access to summer learning – now spans summer and afterschool.

- Powerful network of neighborhood, community, and city partners that connect students to valuable in-person and digital resources.

recipes   Adobe Acrobat

Finish update

CITY OF DALLAS LEARNING

JOIN   LOGIN

HOME   EXPLORE   PARENTS   PARTNERS   ABOUT

BROWSE ACTIVITIES - Explore things to do around the city that you are interested in.

I'm interested in

Options   Reset   Search

Topics to Explore

143 Activities Found!

All Topics

- 🎓 Academics & College Prep
- 👥 Civics & Service
- 🤝 Community Resources
- 🎧 Music
- 🎤 Performing Arts

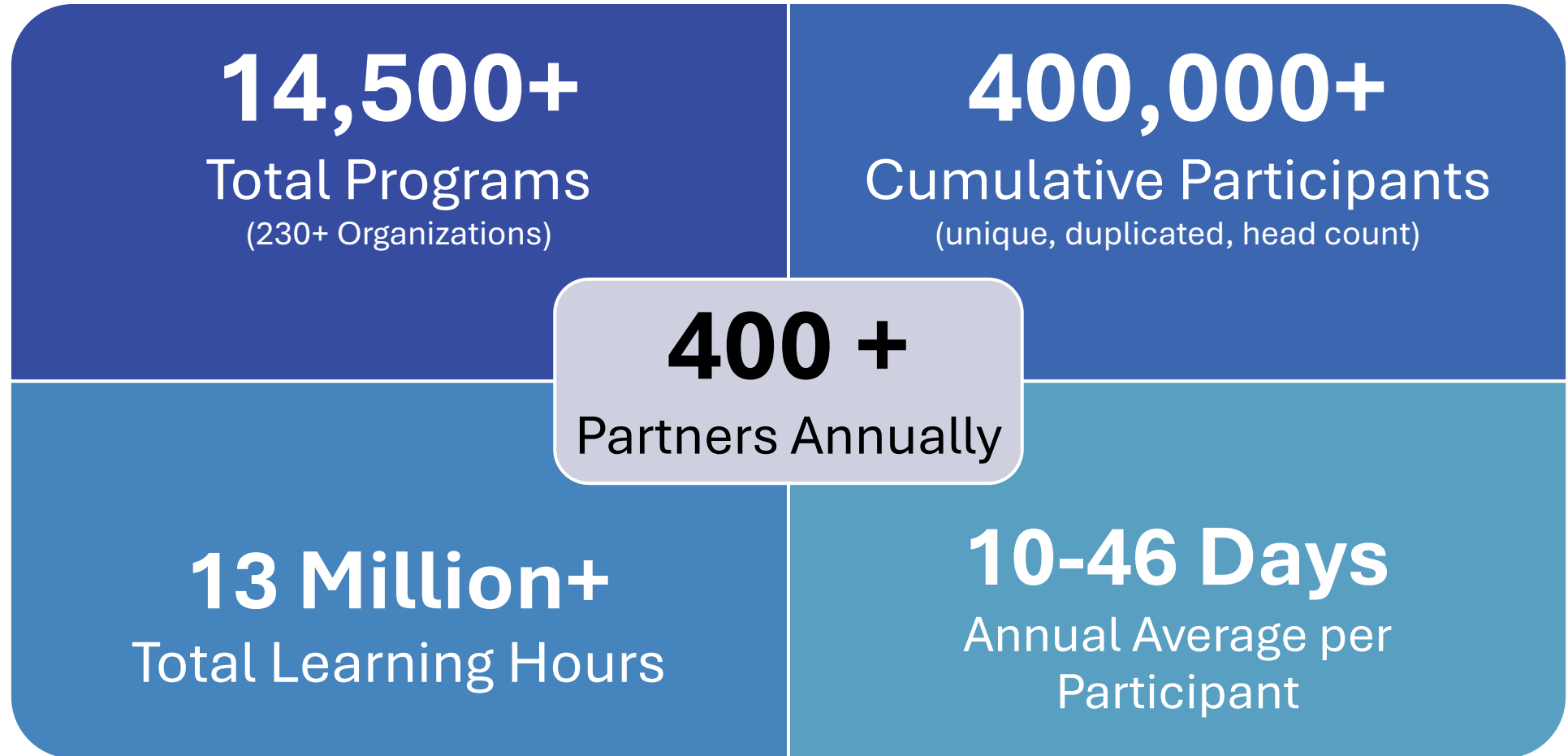**[A]LIVE**

(A)LIVE x Medlock

🎓

Big Thought

Make The World A Nicer Place to Live

❤️

Virtuleze

CITY OF DALLAS LEARNING

Big Thought Learning Hub_NASH DAVIS Rec Center_SPG2025
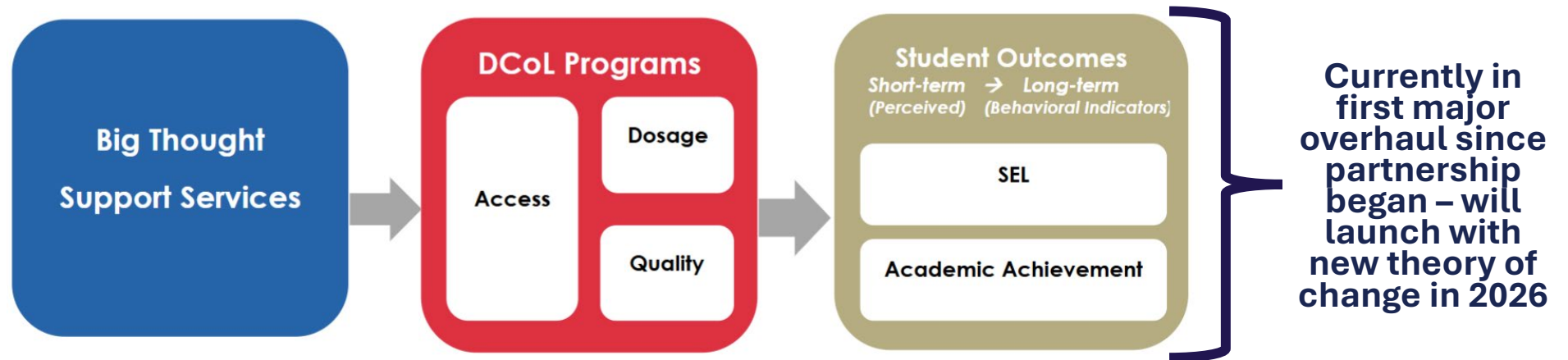
🎥

Dallas City of Learning

Evaluation & Research Supports

Research and evaluation partnership began in summer 2017

Combination of formative and outcomes-focused evaluation

Currently in first major overhaul since partnership began – will launch with new theory of change in 2026

Agenda and focus areas fluctuate annually

Data Flow that Enables This Work
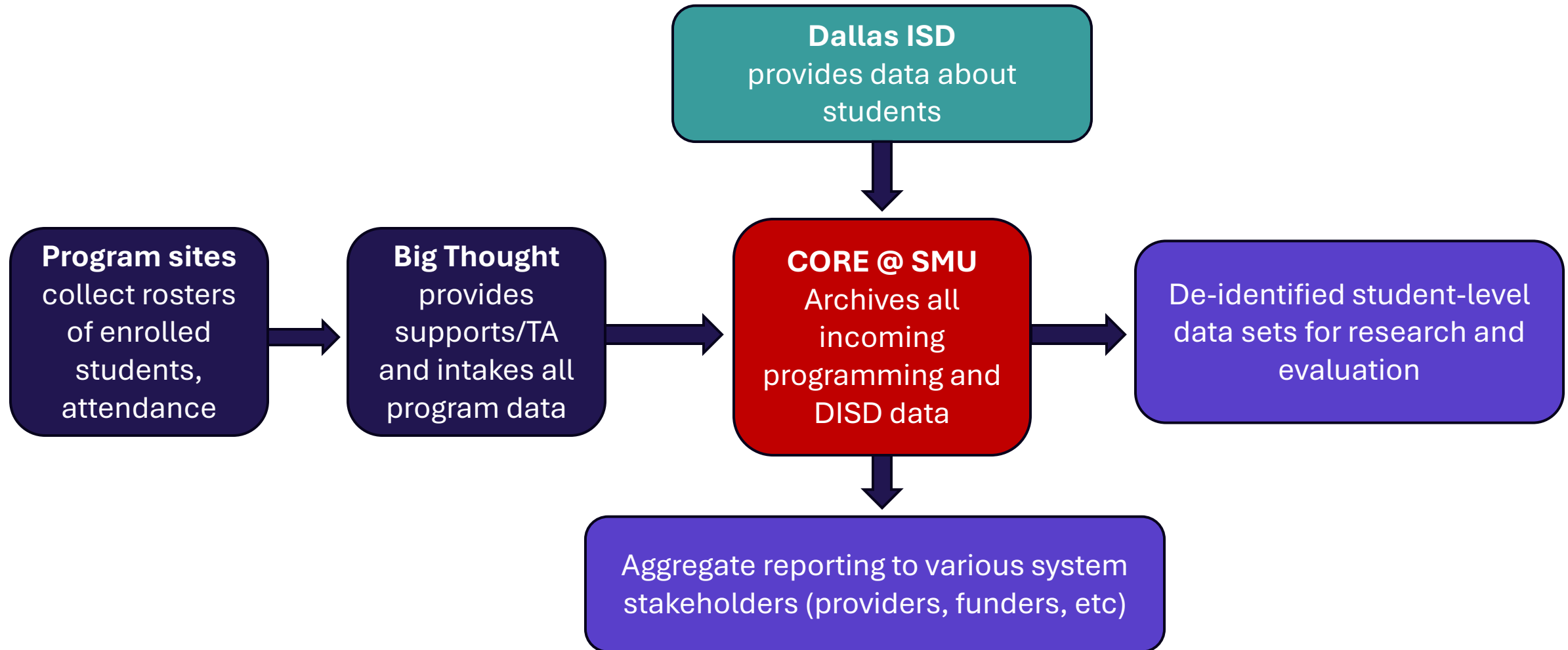
Prior Evaluations

- **Launched in 2014**

- 2017 - Engaged Southern Methodist University Center on Research & Evaluation as evaluative partner

- **Summer 2017** showed us that this "big idea" was **feasible**

- **Summer 2018** showed us that this big idea was **replicable**

- **Summer 2019** showed us that the ecosystem is **sustainable** and **impactful**

Outcomes Report #1 (released Jan 2020)

- Analyzes data from 2017 – 2019 (summer '17 & '18)

- **Key Finding: Summer Learning Matters.**
  - Attending summer programs positively impacts students' attendance and academic achievement.
  - Impacts really show up after about 30 days of programming.
  - One summer is good; two summers is better.
  - Summer matters most for kids who need it most.

- **With every 10 days of DCoL Programming:**
  - Elementary students were 25% more likely to pass STAAR Math
  - Elementary students were 25% more likely to pass STAAR Reading
  - High school students 40% more likely to pass EOC English 1

Prior Evaluations

Outcomes Report #2 (released 2022)

- Analysis of data stemming from 2018-19 through 2021-22 (summers '18, '19, and '20 and the bookended academic years)

- **Key Finding: At face-value, students engaging in summer are doing better post-pandemic.**
  - Since 2020-21, DCoL participants have **started year with higher GPA** than non-DCoL participants.
  - Students engaging in DCoL are **scoring higher on STAAR reading and math**.

- **Effect of Attending Summer: STAAR Achievement**
  - Summer 2020 participants of all grade bands were found to be **more likely to pass STAAR.**
  - Summer 2019 and 2020 participants of all grade bands were found to be **more likely to pass STAAR** (except Algebra 1, which was not statistically significant)
  - Summer 2018, 2019 and 2020 participants in middle school grades were found to be **more likely to pass STAAR Reading.**

Current Questions

1. **What are the patterns of program enrollment and attendance over the last 7 summers (2017 through 2024)?**
   - What "cohorts" or clusters of students emerge?

2. **What are the patterns of student achievement and school attendance over the 8 adjacent school years?** How does this vary between DCOL students and comparison students? How does this vary across the DCOL student enrollment/attendance groups?
   - Attendance patterns
   - Course grades
   - Course enrollment
   - Test scores

3. **What are the associations between summer enrollment/attendance patterns and student achievements?**

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Part One: Developing our DCOL Engagement Groups

category development

55,878 Students with DCOL Enrollment Data

subcategories:

organizational diversity
- one
- some (2-3)
- much (4+)

# of programs
- one (1)
- few (2)
- several (3)
- many (4+)

# of summers in multiple programs
- less than half
- half or more

- **none (1)**
- **some (2)**
- **more (3)**
- **most (4)**

diversity of different programs

subcategories:

consistency
- none
- some (2-3 consecutive)
- high (4 or more consecutive)

- **little (1)**
- **some (2)**
- **more (3)**
- **most (4)**

# of summers
- just one
- few (2-3)
- several (4-5)
- many (6-7+)

consistency & dosage

total # of hours
- well below (0-29)
- below (30-49)
- average (50-90)
- above (91-115)
- well above (116-200)
- exceptional (201+)

Diversity of program types*

program type diversity
- 0-2 different types
- 3-4 different types
- 5-6 different types
- 7-9 different types

- **little (1)**
- **some (2)**
- **much (3)**
- **most (4)**

*Include academics, enrichment, general academics, literacy, STEM, mentoring, sports, art, leadership
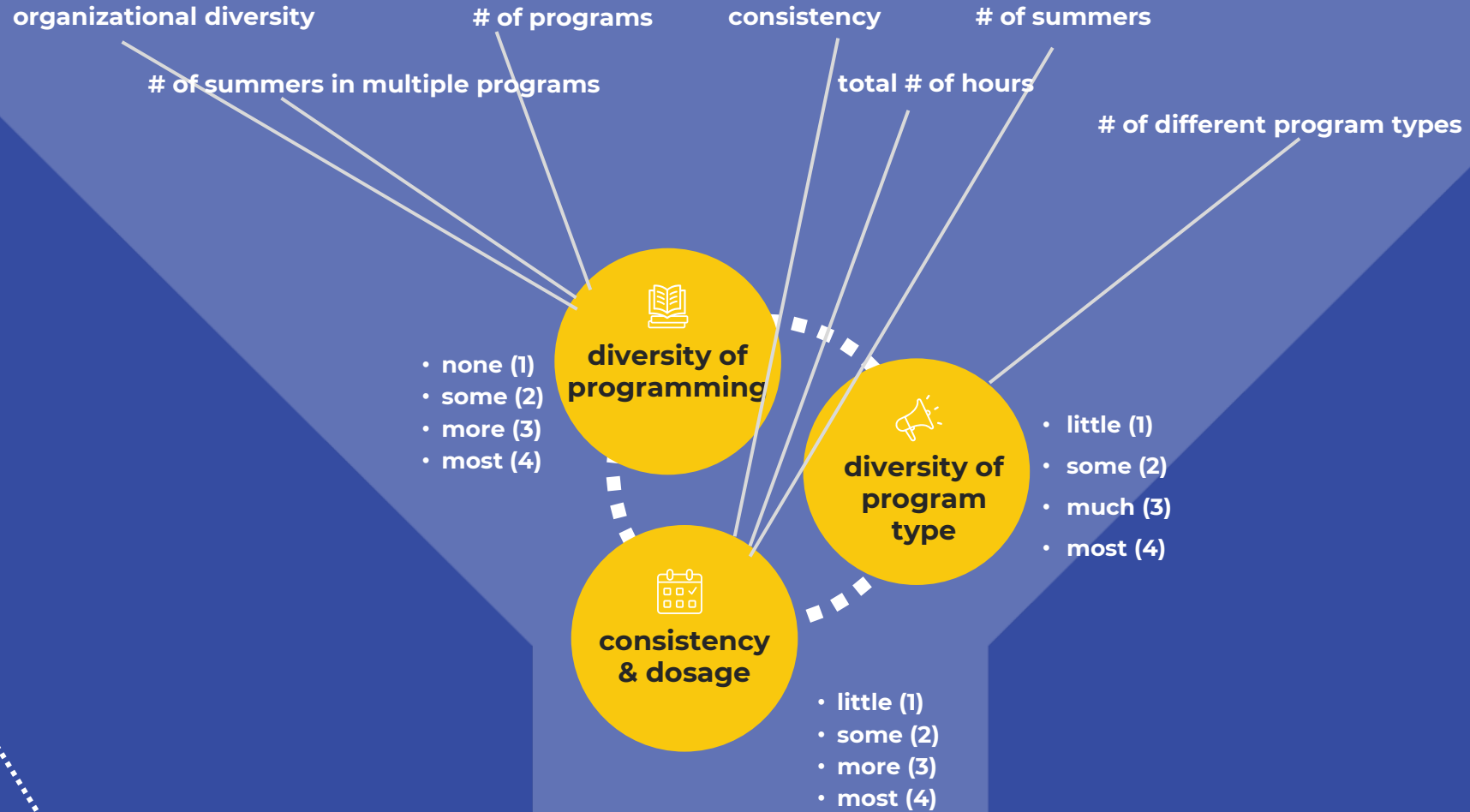
Development of Final Groupings
Subject Matter Knowledge Approach

GROUP	# of students
A	473
B	835
C	3121
D	3637
E	6747
F	5904
G	24761
H	10400

DOSAGE	FOCUS	DIVERSITY MOST	MORE	SOME	NONE
MOST	MOST	A	A	A	
	MUCH	A	A	B	
	SOME			C	
	LITTLE			D	
MORE	MOST	A	A	B	
	MUCH	A	B	C	D
	SOME	B	C	D	E
	LITTLE			E	F
SOME	MOST	A	B	C	
	MUCH	B	C	D	E
	SOME	C	D	E	F
	LITTLE			F	G
LITTLE	MOST	B	C	D	
	MUCH	C	D	E	F
	SOME		E	F	G
	LITTLE			G	H

A Little Bit About The Groups

Age Level Proportions at Onset of Timeline (2017)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	N
Early Elem	77%	74%	71%	54%	43%	21%	59%	37%
Upper Elem	13%	12%	17%	16%	16%	11%	23%	17%
Middle Sch	10%	5%	8%	12%	10%	11%	14%	22%
High Sch	0%	9%	5%	17%	30%	57%	3%	25%
	295	2645	3057	8111	8591	13086	831	110432

Gender Proportions

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	N
F	56%	48%	49%	48%	47%	45%	52%	48%
M	44%	52%	50%	51%	53%	55%	48%	50%

Race Proportions

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	N
Asian	10%	2%	3%	1%	2%	1%	3%	1%
Black	40%	23%	28%	27%	29%	26%	42%	24%
Hispanic	46%	70%	62%	65%	63%	69%	48%	66%
White	3%	4%	5%	5%	4%	3%	4%	6%
Others or Unknown	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%

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Part Two: Analyzing How School Attendance & Achievement Vary for the DCOL Engagement Groups

# Four Dimensions we Worked with for these Analyses

- **Groups of students: 9**
  - Group A=highest engagement...down to no engagement
- **Cohorts: 3**
  - K-6th grade
  - 2nd-8th grade
  - 6th-12th grade
- **Outcomes**: Attendance, course grades, standardized test scores
- **Time: 7** school years

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Big Picture Takeaways

- **Stronger Academics Middle School with Mixed Effects in Elementary**
  - more consistent growth in reading and math
  - more likely to reach state test mastery
  - most true for middle school
  - mixed results in elementary

- **Improved Overall School Success in High School**
  - fewer absences and tardies
  - consistently higher GPAs
  - higher passing and mastery rates on EOC exams

- **School attendance Patterns Shift with Age**
  - for younger students, attendance outcomes were mixed
  - by high school highly engaged students had reliably better attendance than peers.

	Elementary	Middle School	High School
School Attendance	Neutral Result	Neutral Result	Positive Result
Course Grades (GPA)	Neutral Result	Neutral Result	Positive Result
Standardized Tests	Mixed Result	Positive Result	Positive Result
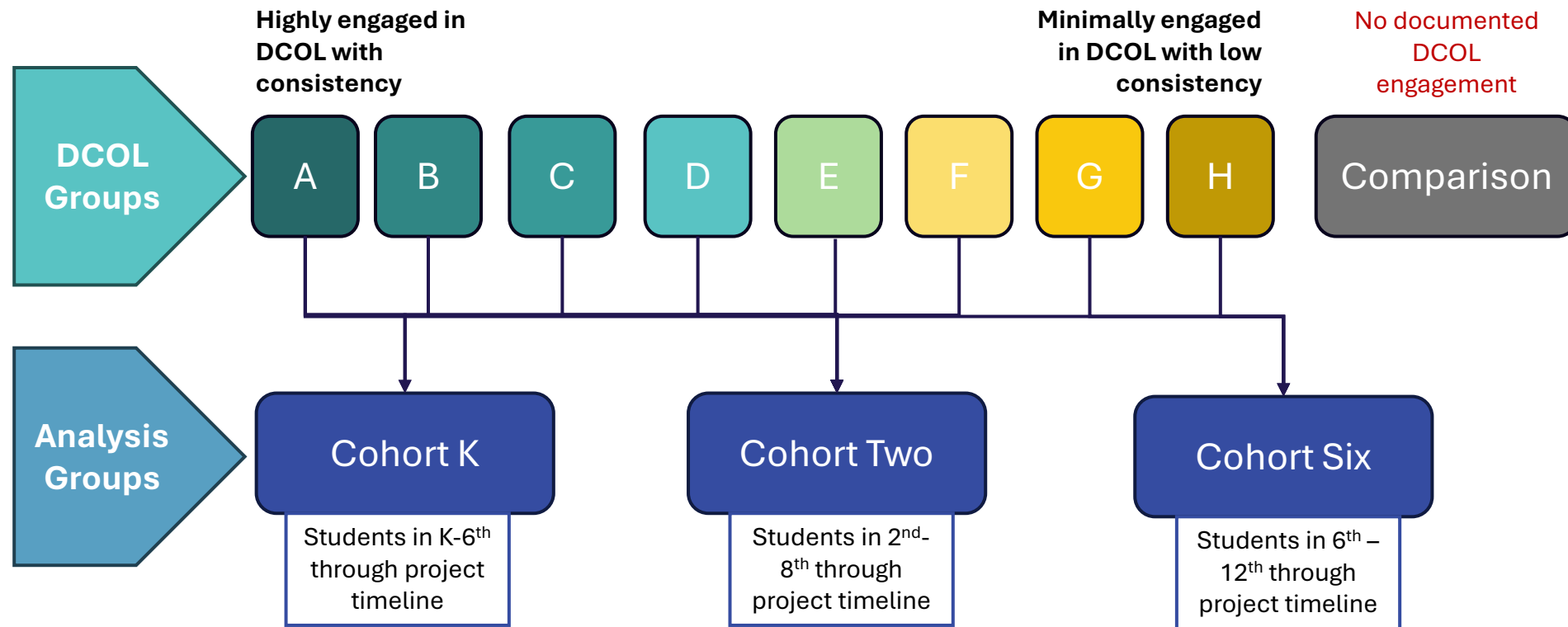
Approach to Analysis

- **Descriptive analyses unpack details about the group such as overall trends in the key outcomes**

- **To test for statistical significance**
  - Analysis of Covariance, or **ANCOVA**
    - blend of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and regression
    - used when you want to **compare the means of different groups** while **controlling for the effects of one or more other variables** (called covariates).
    - ANCOVA helps "level the playing field" as if all groups were equal at the beginning of our timeline, giving us a "cleaner" comparison between groups
    - Improves statistical power compared to standard means testing because it removes noise and influence caused by the covariate.

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Cohort K-6

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Grade Level	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Attendance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Course Grades			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MAP Reading & Math				✓	✓	✓	
STAAR Reading & Math				✓	✓	✓	✓

Attendance was mixed

Course grades looked about the same across all groups, regardless of summer engagement

Standardized test scores (MAP and STAAR) showed some benefits. The more engaged groups were more likely to make gains in reading (STAAR) and math (MAP) and to reach mastery STAAR reading.

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Group A's absences per year increases into 5th and 6th grade. Group H and the Comparison group have average absence numbers.
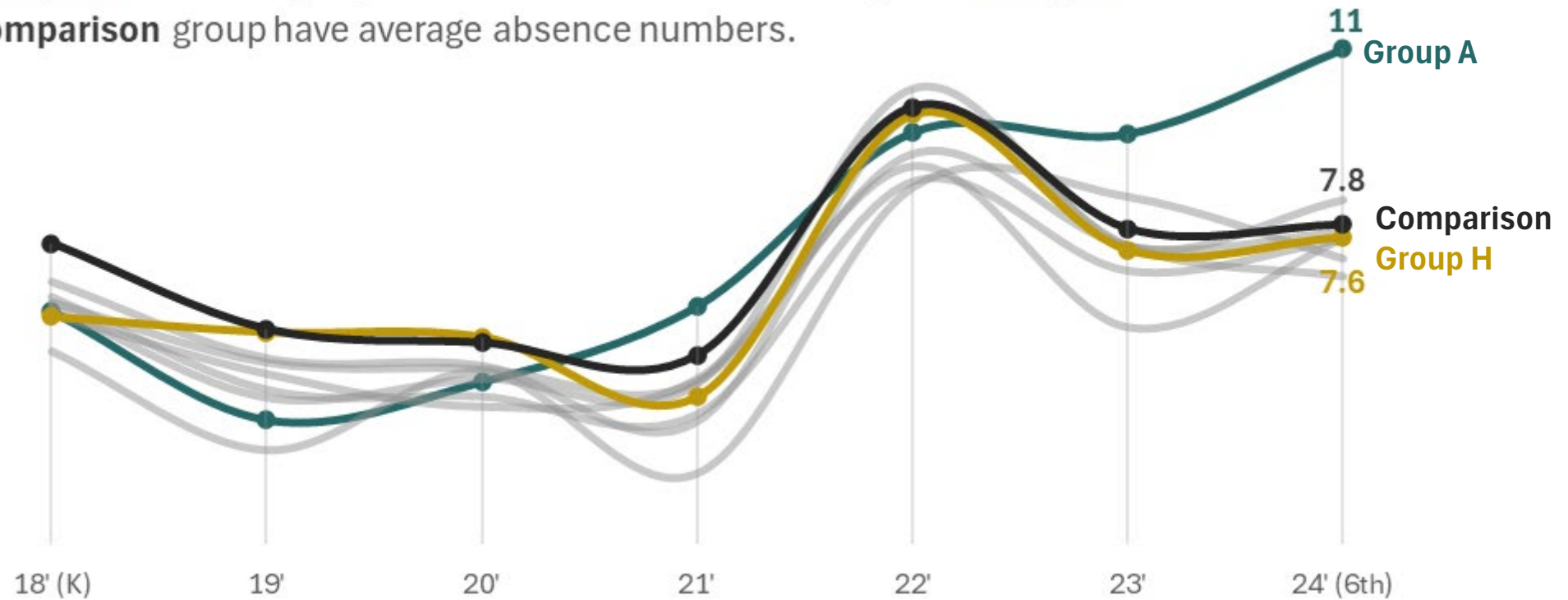
Group A's tardies per year increases into 6th grade. Group H and the Comparison group have below average tardy numbers.

27 Group A*

Group H & Comparison Group

5

18' (K)   19'   20'   21'   22'   23'   24' (6th)
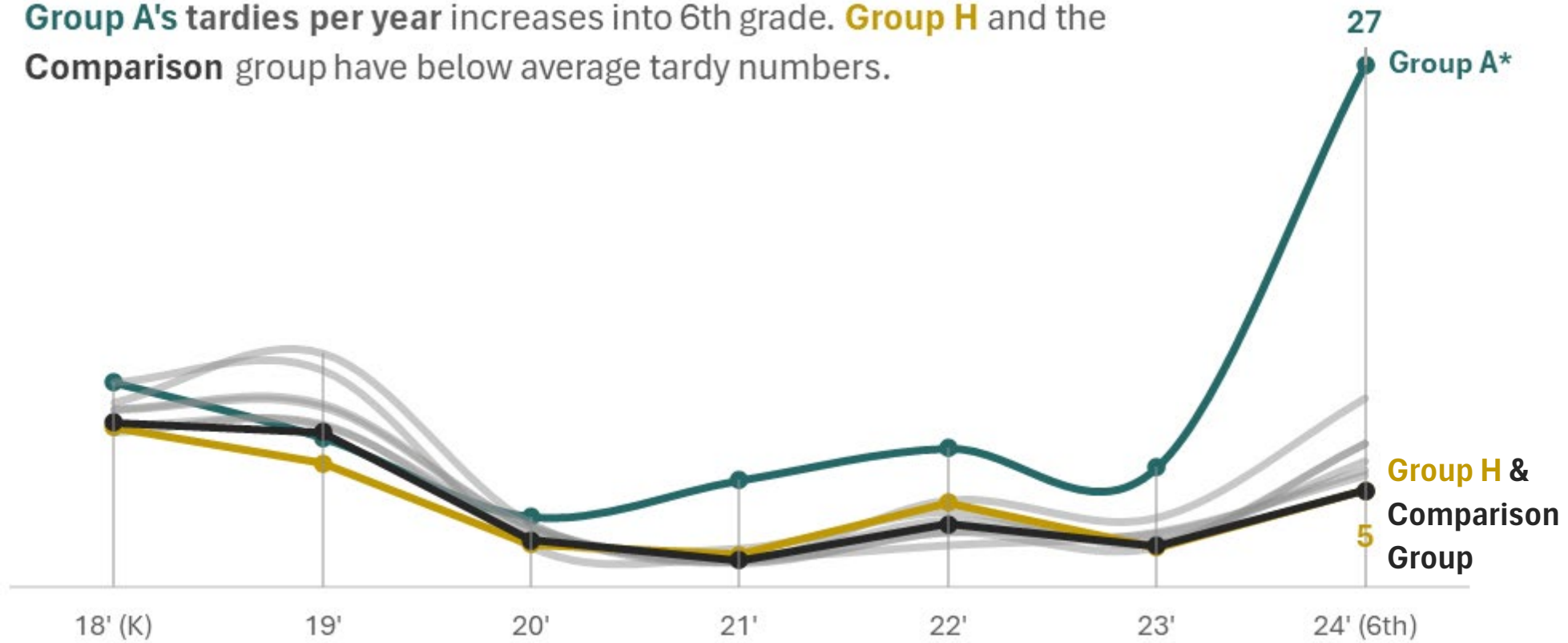
Summer programming did not have any positive effect on **MAP Math in elementary**; all DCOL groups scored below average.

48.2 **Comparison Group***

Group H
45.1

Group A
43.2

21' (3rd)　　　　22'　　　　23' (5th)
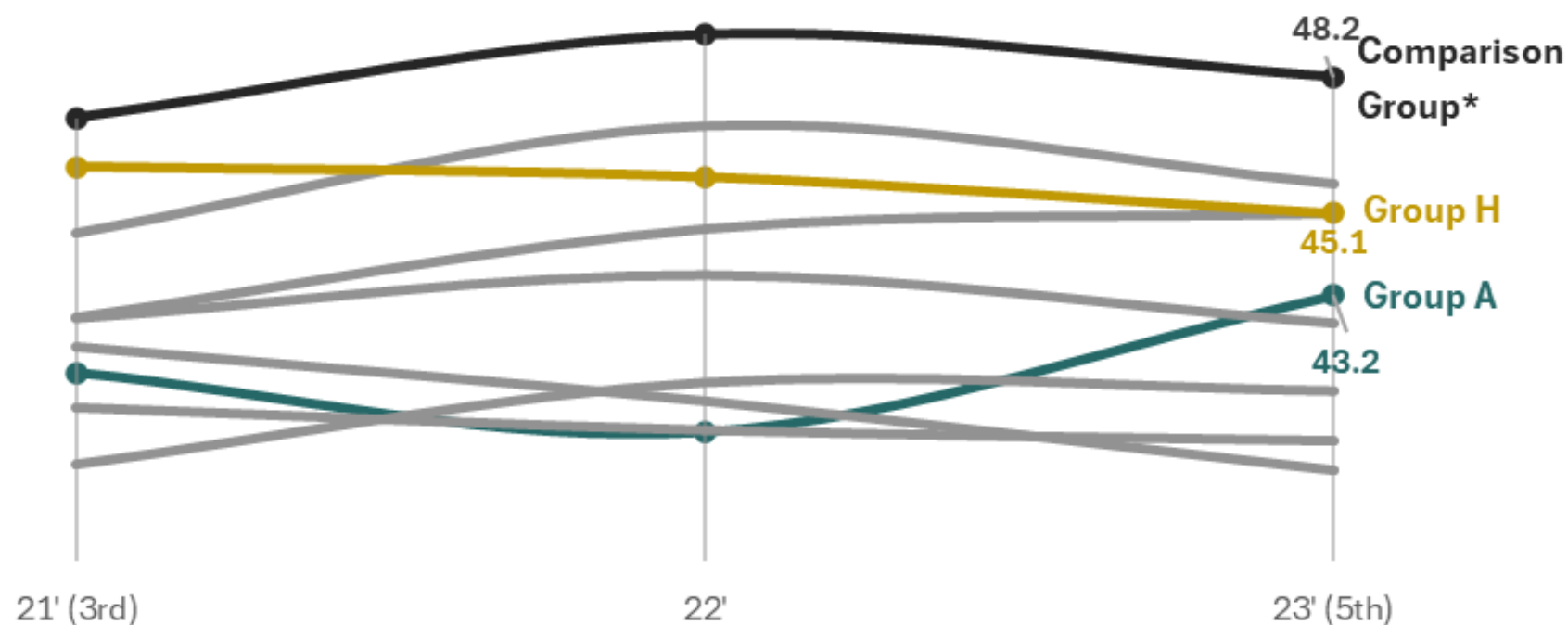
All groups have better **STAAR Reading** <u>**Passing**</u> rates by 6th grade. The comparison group had higher passing rates than the DCOL Groups.
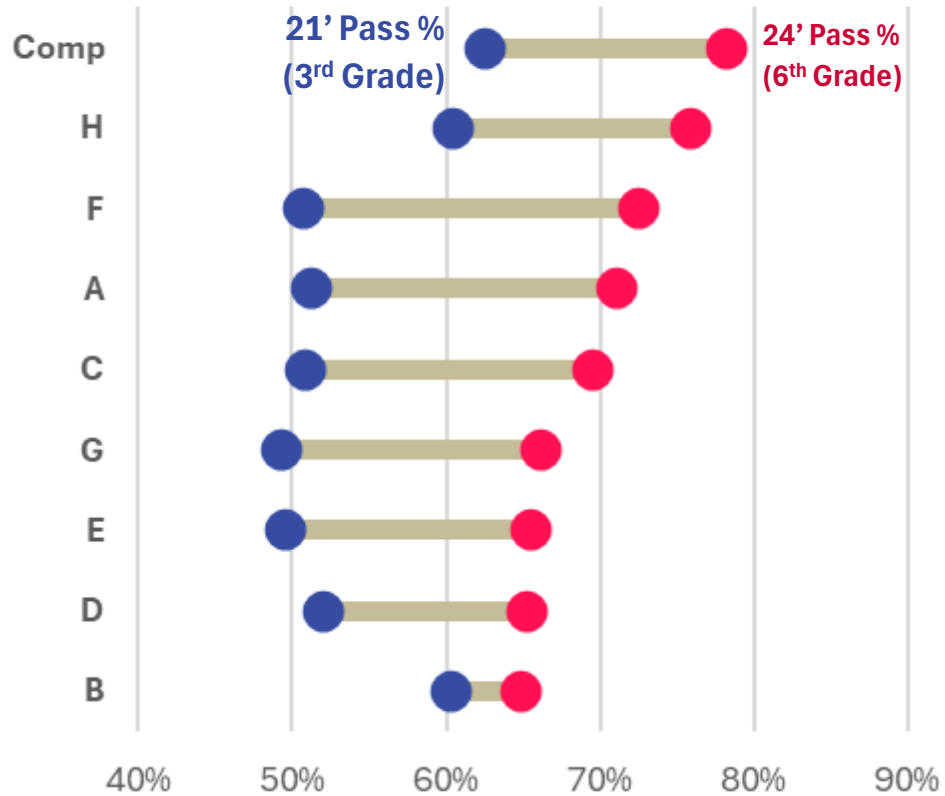
Groups A and B had the best STAAR Reading Mastery rates in 6th grade, a trend that was not as evident in 3rd grade.
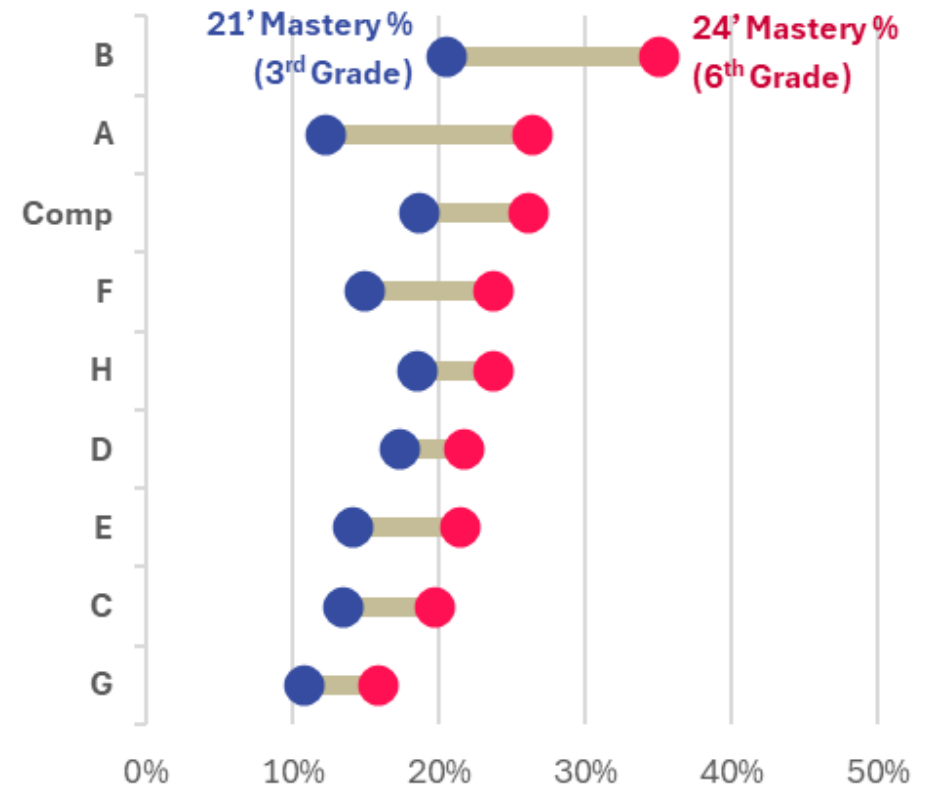
Cohort 2-8

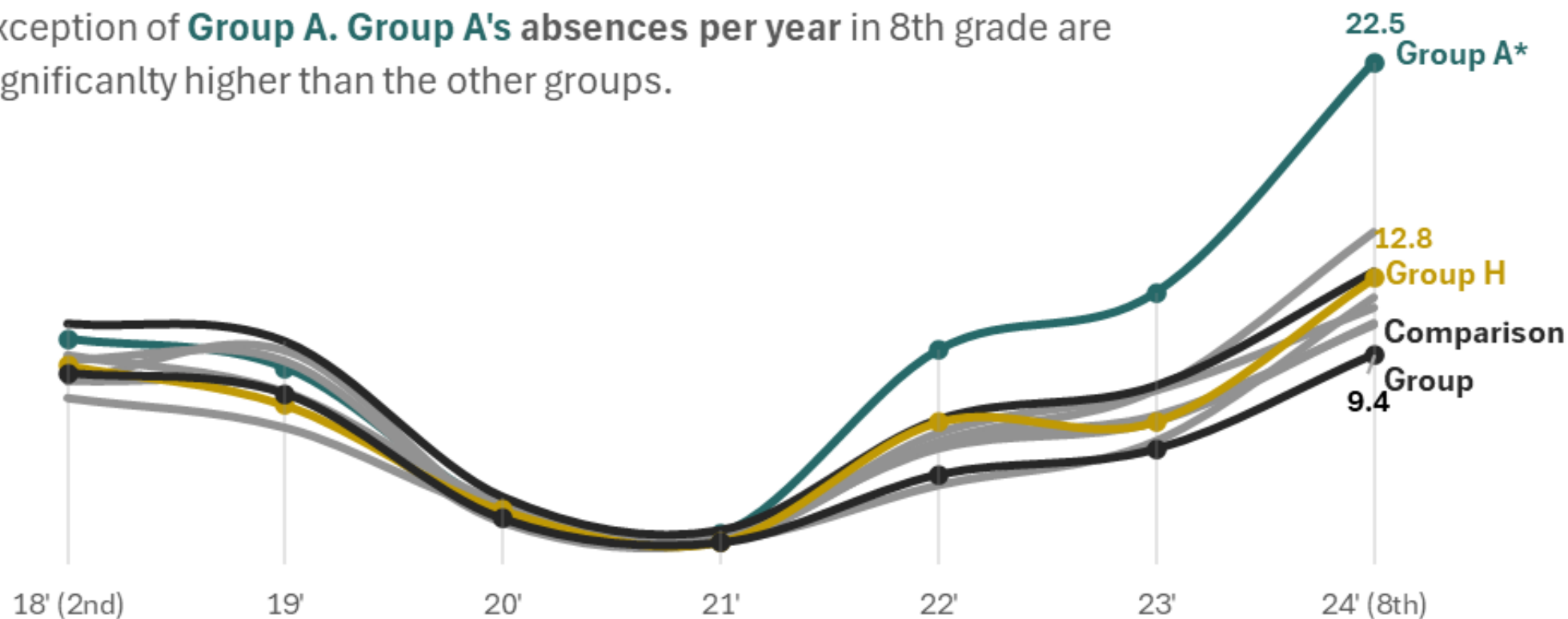|	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Grade Level	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
Attendance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Course Grades	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MAP Reading & Math				✓	✓	✓	
STAAR Reading & Math		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
STAAR EOC Algebra 1							✓

Attendance was mixed

Course grades looked about the same across all groups, regardless of summer engagement

Test scores stood out: Group A (the most engaged students) was the only group to consistently improve in both reading and math over time, and had higher mastery rates on the STAAR exams by 6th grade

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All groups have **similar absence trends** across the middle years, with the exception of **Group A. Group A's absences per year** in 8th grade are significanlty higher than the other groups.

22.5
Group A*

12.8
Group H

Comparison
Group
9.4

18' (2nd) — 19' — 20' — 21' — 22' — 23' — 24' (8th)

Most groups have similar trend of MAP Reading, with decreases from 5th through 7th grade. However, **Group A is the only group with an increase in MAP Reading** from 5th to 6th grade.

39.9 **Comparison Group**

32.0 **Group H**

Group A

30.8

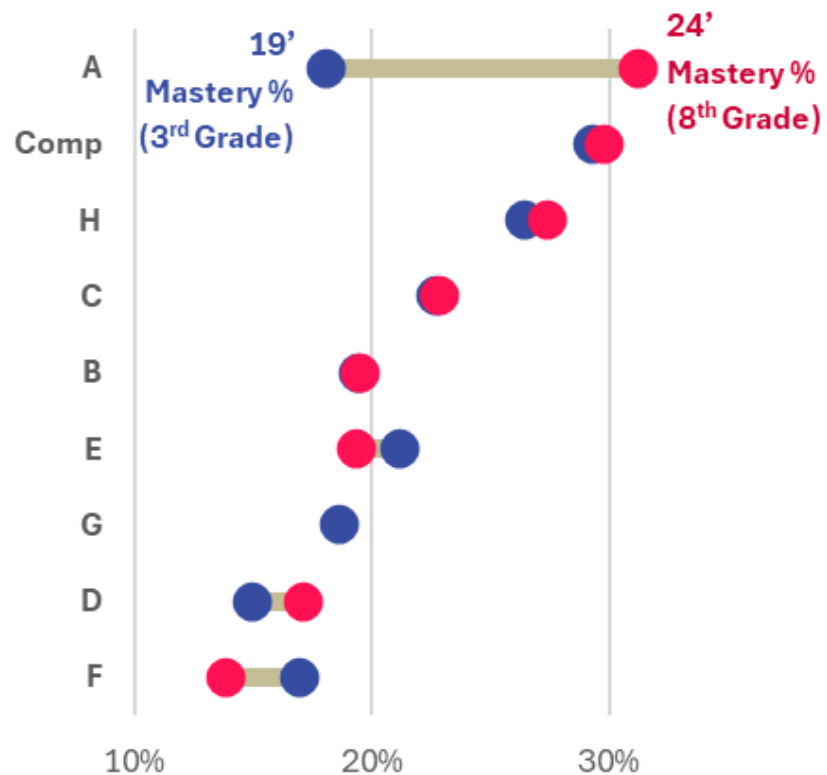21' (5th)   22'   23' (7th)
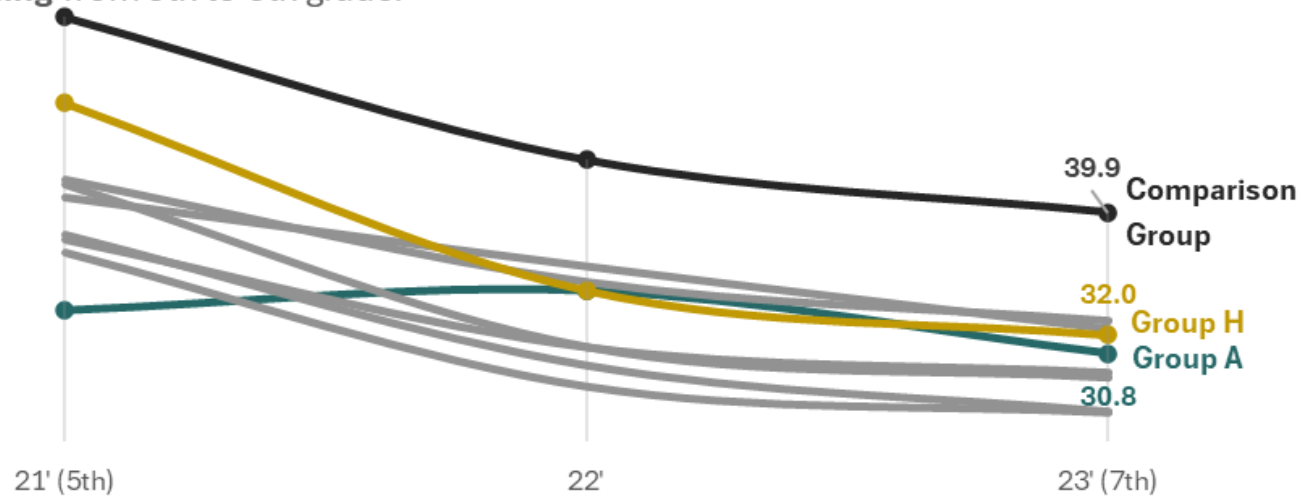
Most groups have similar trend of MAP Math, with decreases from 5th through 7th grade. **Group A is the only group with an increase in MAP Math** from 5th to 6th grade.
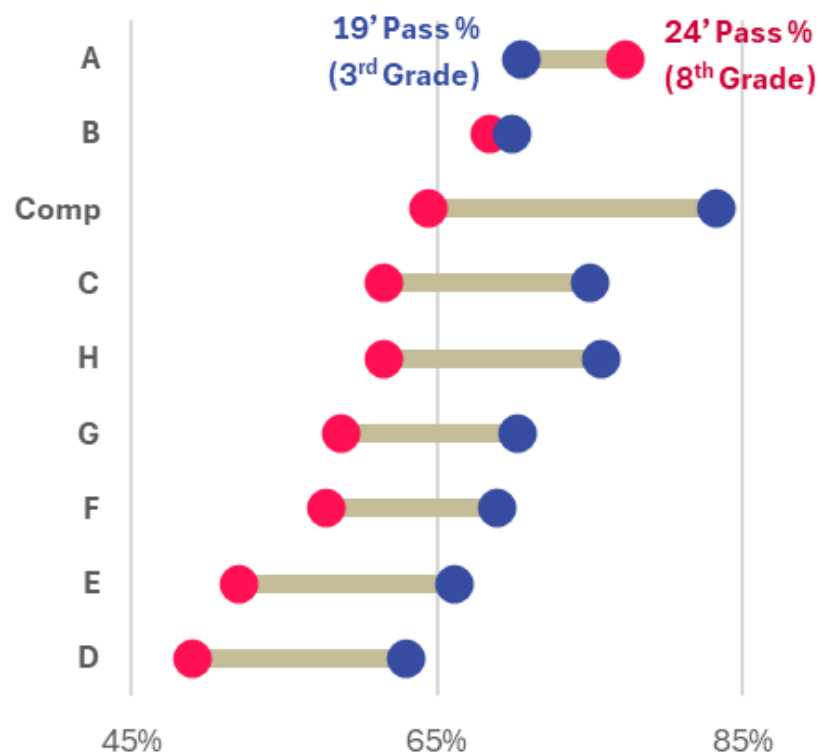
46.6 **Comparison Group**

41 **Group H**

Group A

39

21' (5th)   22'   23' (7th)
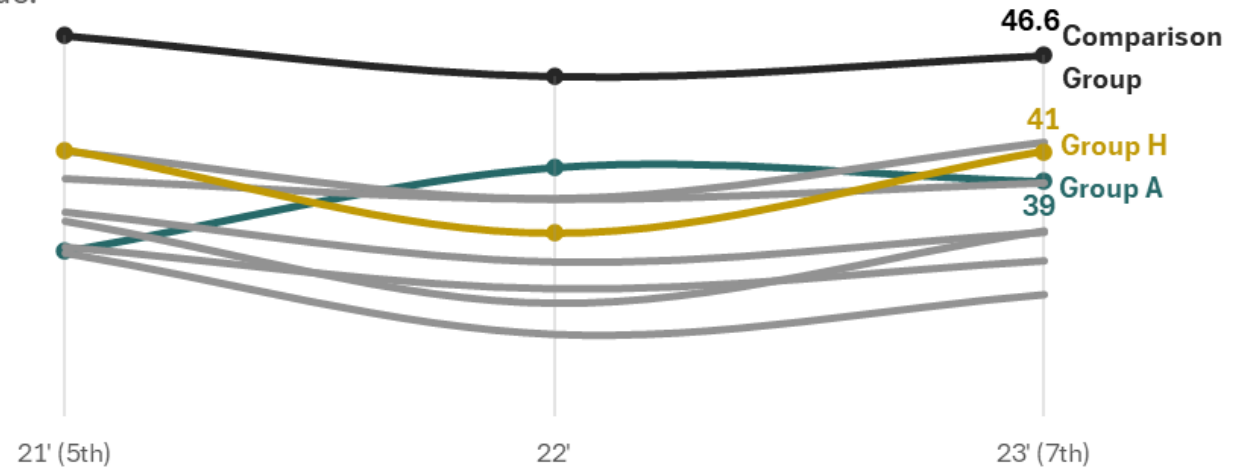
All groups have better **STAAR Reading Passing** rates by 8th grade. **Group A had the most growth** in STAAR Reading passing rates.
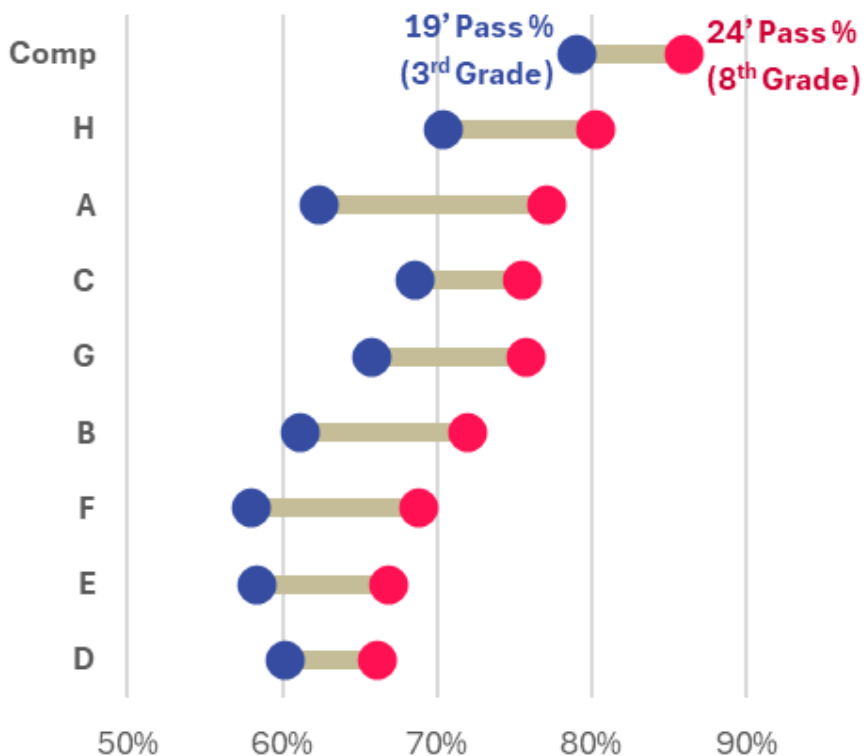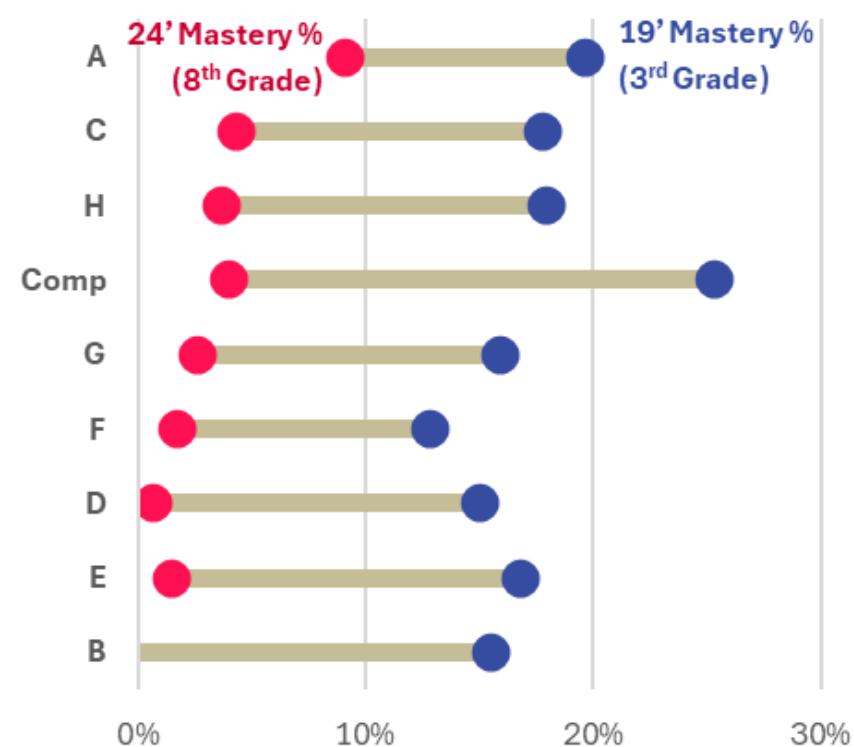
Group A had the most growth in **STAAR Reading mastery** rates and the highest mastery rate of all groups by 8th grade.

Cohort 6-12

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Grade Level	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Attendance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Course Grades	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
STAAR EOC Algebra 1				✓			
STAAR EOC Biology				✓			
STAAR EOC English 1				✓			
STAAR EOC US History						✓	

Attendance was better among the highly engaged groups – fewer absences and tardies

Grades were also higher — students with strong summer engagement earned consistently better GPAs.

Test scores stood out: the most engaged students had higher passing and mastery rates on the STAAR EOC exams throughout high school.

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All groups have relatively similar trends in **middle and high school GPA**.
However, **Group A students have consistently higher GPAs than their peers.**

91.3 — Group A
87.1 — Comparison
Group &
Group H

18' (6th)   19'   20'   21'   22'   23'   24' (12th)
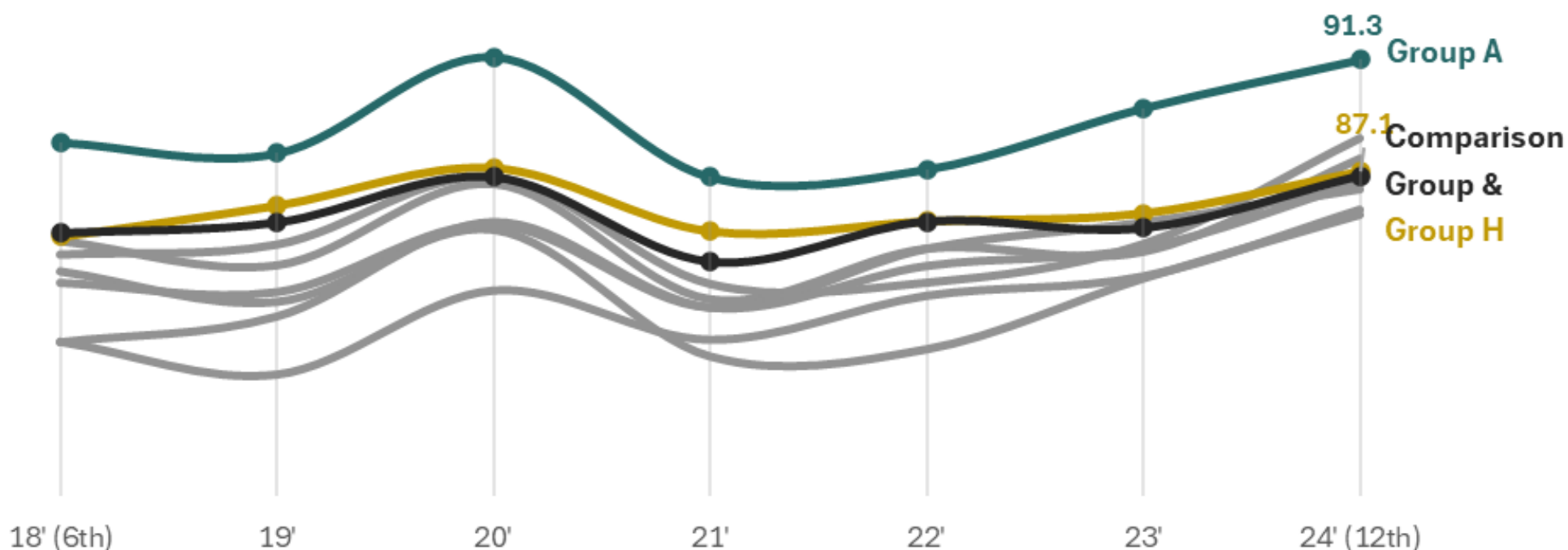
Group A had higher passing rates on 9th grade Algebra 1 EOC than their peer groups. Mastery rate trends are mixed.

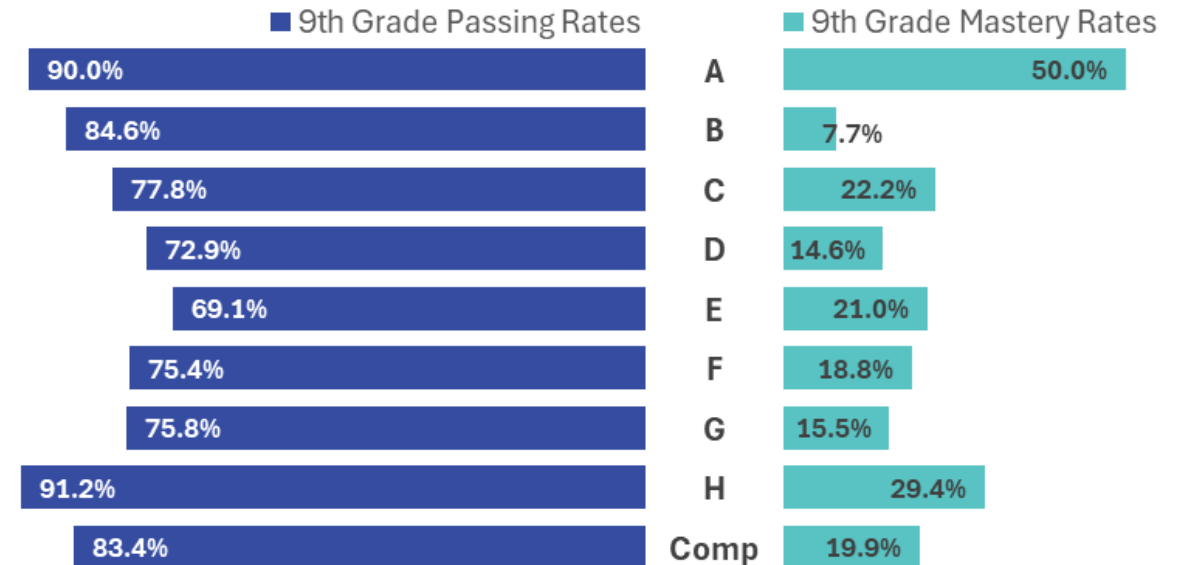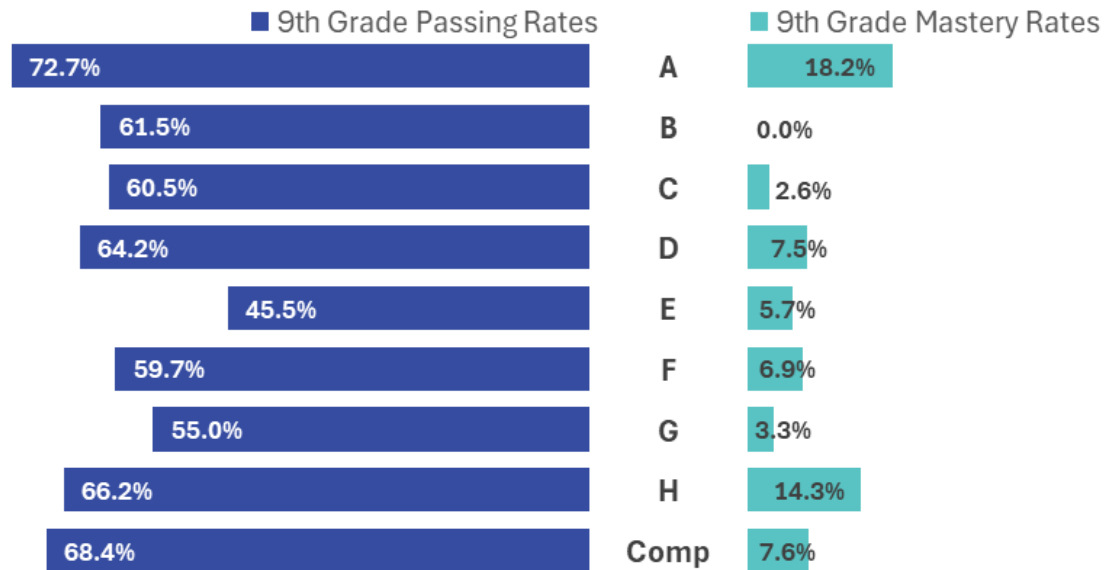9th Grade Passing Rates | 9th Grade Mastery Rates

Group	Passing	Mastery
A	87.5%	12.5%
B	57.1%	14.3%
C	57.1%	9.5%
D	62.5%	3.1%
E	54.0%	3.2%
F	54.8%	7.1%
G	55.9%	8.2%
H	60.5%	18.6%
Comp	66.5%	11.7%
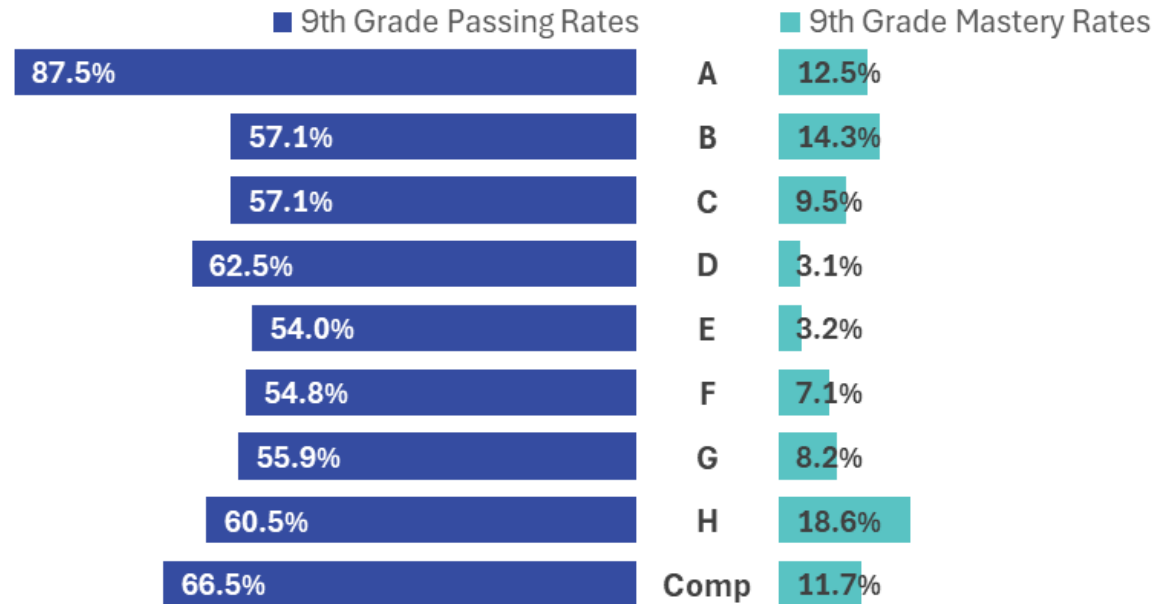
Group A had higher mastery rates on 9th grade Biology EOC than their peer groups. Passing rates show a steady decline from groups A-E with a rebound for groups F-H.

9th Grade Passing Rates | 9th Grade Mastery Rates

Group	Passing	Mastery
A	90.0%	50.0%
B	84.6%	7.7%
C	77.8%	22.2%
D	72.9%	14.6%
E	69.1%	21.0%
F	75.4%	18.8%
G	75.8%	15.5%
H	91.2%	29.4%
Comp	83.4%	19.9%

Group A had **higher passing rates** and **mastery rates** on **9th grade English 1 EOC.**

	9th Grade Passing Rates		9th Grade Mastery Rates
A	72.7%		18.2%
B	61.5%		0.0%
C	60.5%		2.6%
D	64.2%		7.5%
E	45.5%		5.7%
F	59.7%		6.9%
G	55.0%		3.3%
H	66.2%		14.3%
Comp	68.4%		7.6%

Group A had **higher passing rates** and **mastery rates** on **11th grade US History EOC.**
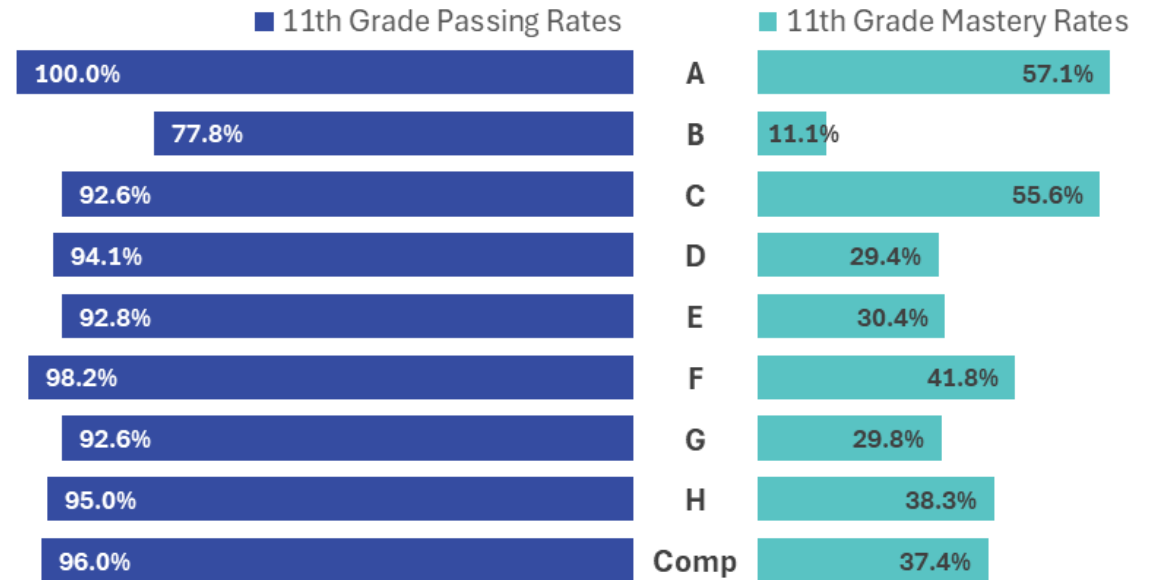
	11th Grade Passing Rates		11th Grade Mastery Rates
A	100.0%		57.1%
B	77.8%		11.1%
C	92.6%		55.6%
D	94.1%		29.4%
E	92.8%		30.4%
F	98.2%		41.8%
G	92.6%		29.8%
H	95.0%		38.3%
Comp	96.0%		37.4%

What We Take From These Findings

- **Encouraging That Findings Reinforce Learnings From Previous Outcomes Reports**

- **Indicates Signs Of An Effective Ecosystem**
  - **Campus & Community-Based**
  - **Summer & Afterschool**
  - **Many Providers & Programmatic Focuses**

- **Long-Term Commitment Yields Measurable Impact**

- Access, Engagement & Dosage Are **Critical Levers for Impact**

- How Can The Ecosystem Do More To Foster Increased Participation Over Time?

GROUP	# of students
A	473
B	835
C	3121
D	3637
E	6747
F	5904
G	24761
H	10400

14% (Groups A–D)

86% (Groups E–H)