

Evaluation of Smaller Learning Communities in LAUSD

Presentation to the
Los Angeles Board of Education
2007-08 Evaluation Findings

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Evaluation Timeline

Fall 2003

- *Public Works, Inc.* hired as LAUSD's third-party, objective local evaluator as required under federal guidelines.

2003-2007

- Evaluated SLC outcomes and implementation for Cohorts III-VI (28 schools)

2007-08

- Cohorts III and IV exited grant. Evaluation in 2007-08 covered 19 schools in Cohorts V & VI

2008-09

- Evaluation will cover Cohorts V, VI, and VIII (note: no LAUSD schools awarded USDE SLC grants under Cohort VII).



The Schools in Our Evaluation

19 Large, Urban Comprehensive High Schools with median of:

- 3,297 students
- 76% Hispanic/Latino
- 68% Free/Reduced Meals
- 27% English Learner
- 11% Special Education

Cohort 5 and Cohort 6 LAUSD Grantee Schools

Cohort V (first funded 2005-06)

- Canoga ParkHuntington Park
- Lincoln Los Angeles Manual Arts
- Marshall San Pedro Sylmar
- Washington Prep Grant

Cohort VI (first funded 2006-07)

- Bell Chatsworth Franklin
- Locke Monroe* Polytechnic*
- Roosevelt* Van Nuys Westchester



The key research question

To what extent has LAUSD's SLC initiative resulted in structures and strategies that...

- Create personalization?
- Achieve equity and access?
- Help students master rigorous academic content?
- Help students transition to postsecondary education and careers?

Evaluation Methods

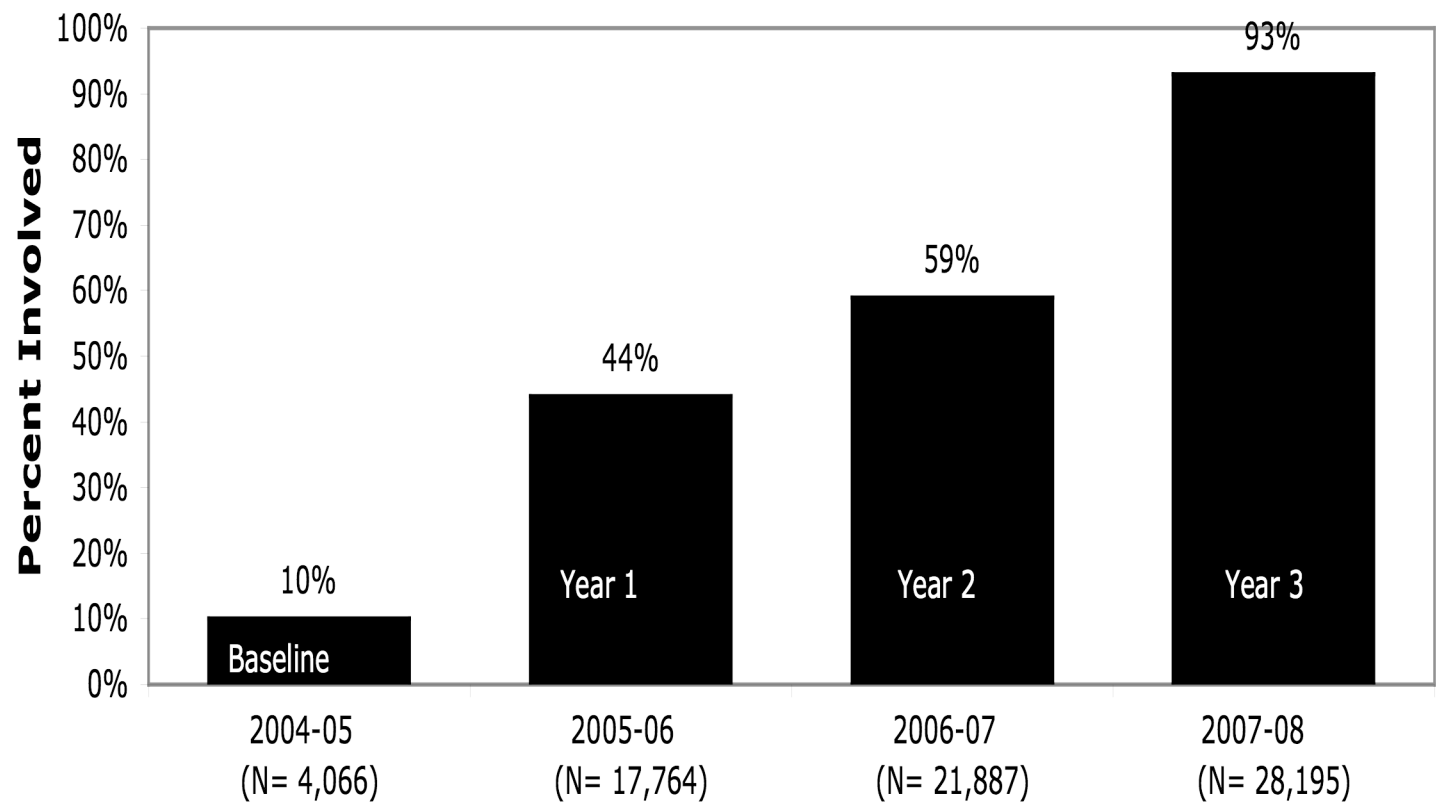
- Quantitative student outcome and school performance measures
- Surveys of all 10th and 12th grade students
- Surveys of all school staff
- Follow-up survey of 12th graders 3-4 months after graduation
- Annual site visit to evaluate SLC implementation in relation to 8 LAUSD Attributes

Key Findings - SLC Participation

- SLC enrollment has increased exponentially
- SLCs have become more demographically representative at school-wide aggregate level

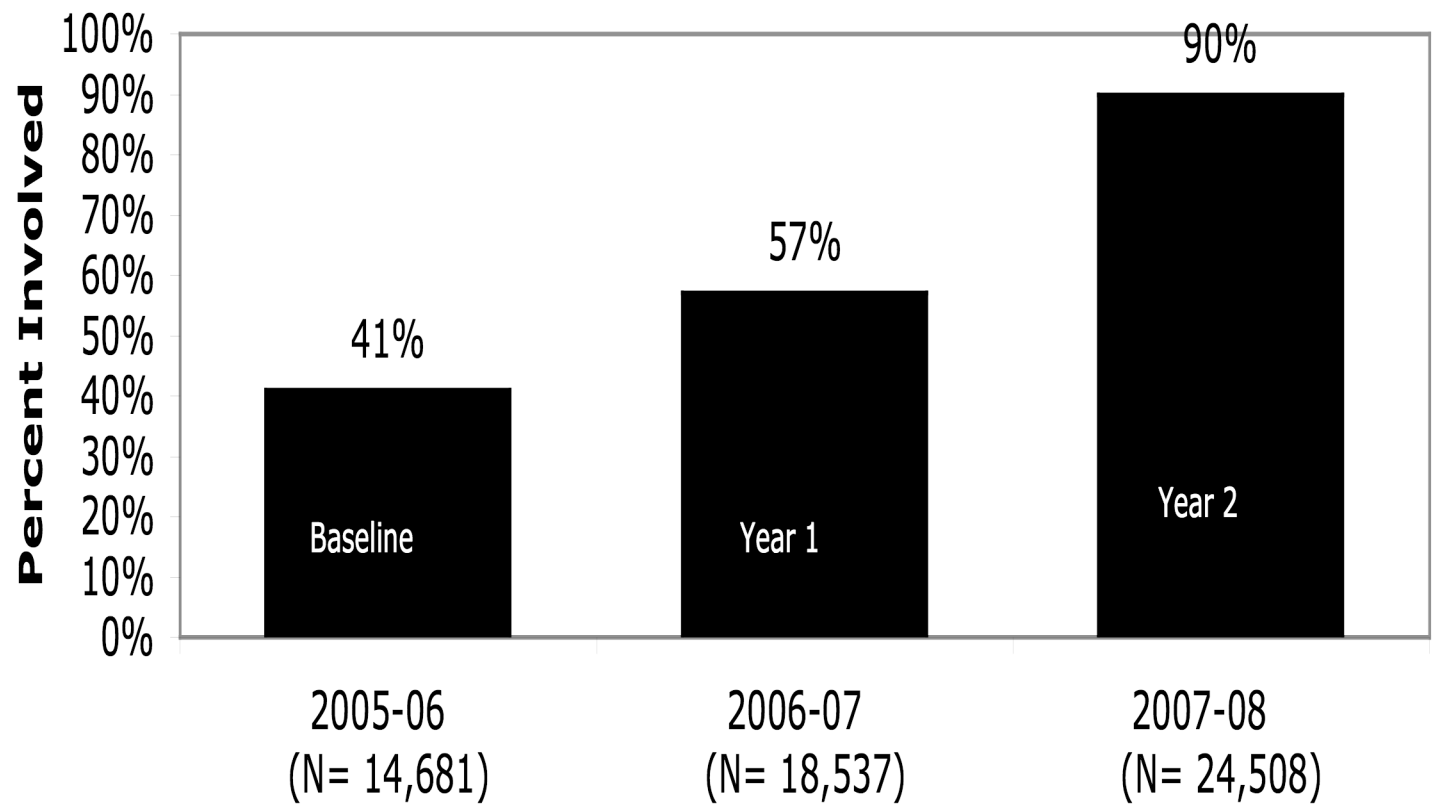
Student Involvement in SLCs: Cohort V

Cohort 5 SLC Involvement



Student Involvement in SLCs: Cohort VI

Cohort 6 SLC Involvement



Rating School Progress in terms of SLC Attributes

SLC Implementation Rubric

1= No Evidence of Implementation

2= Planning for Implementation

3= Early Implementation

4= Developmental Implementation

5= Solid Implementation

6= Full Implementation



SLC Implementation Ratings

From Planning to Early Implementation

- Unifying Vision
- SLC Identity
- Equity/Access
- Personalization

Stuck in Planning Mode

- Curriculum/Instruction
- Leadership/Accountability
- Parent/Community Engagement
- Professional Development



Key Findings - SLC Structures

- Career Pathway (18 of 19)
- Other Themed SLC (15 of 19)
- Magnet/College Prep SLC (14 of 19)
- Freshman House (9 of 19)
- Common Planning by SLC (8.5 of 19)
- Advisory Period (5.5 of 19)

Key Accomplishments

- ❖ Structural components of SLC reform are largely in place
 - ❖ Staff are assigned to SLCs
 - ❖ Students are involved enrolled in SLCs
- ❖ SLC implementation has gone hand-in-hand with more distributed leadership
- ❖ Personalization is taking hold in schools implementing SLCs
- ❖ Master Schedule alignment to SLC has improved
- ❖ More schools focusing on 9th grade transition

Key Challenge - From Structure to Instruction

SLC restructuring not a significant unifying and organizing force *for instructional change.*

- ❖ **SLC reforms not systematically infused into classroom teaching and learning.**
- ❖ **Drive to improve standards-based rigor has not been well integrated with *school-wide* SLC efforts to deliver a personalized and relevant high school education. Instead, schools have “pockets” or “islands” of excellence.**
- ❖ **Outcome data show similar outcomes for both USDE funded and unfunded schools**

Looking at Outcomes

Compare four groups of schools

- Cohort 5
- Cohort 6
- Previous USDE funded schools (Cohorts 3 & 4)
- Other LAUSD high schools not funded by USDE

Note: includes only non-magnet comprehensive high schools with at least 1000 students



Looking at Outcomes

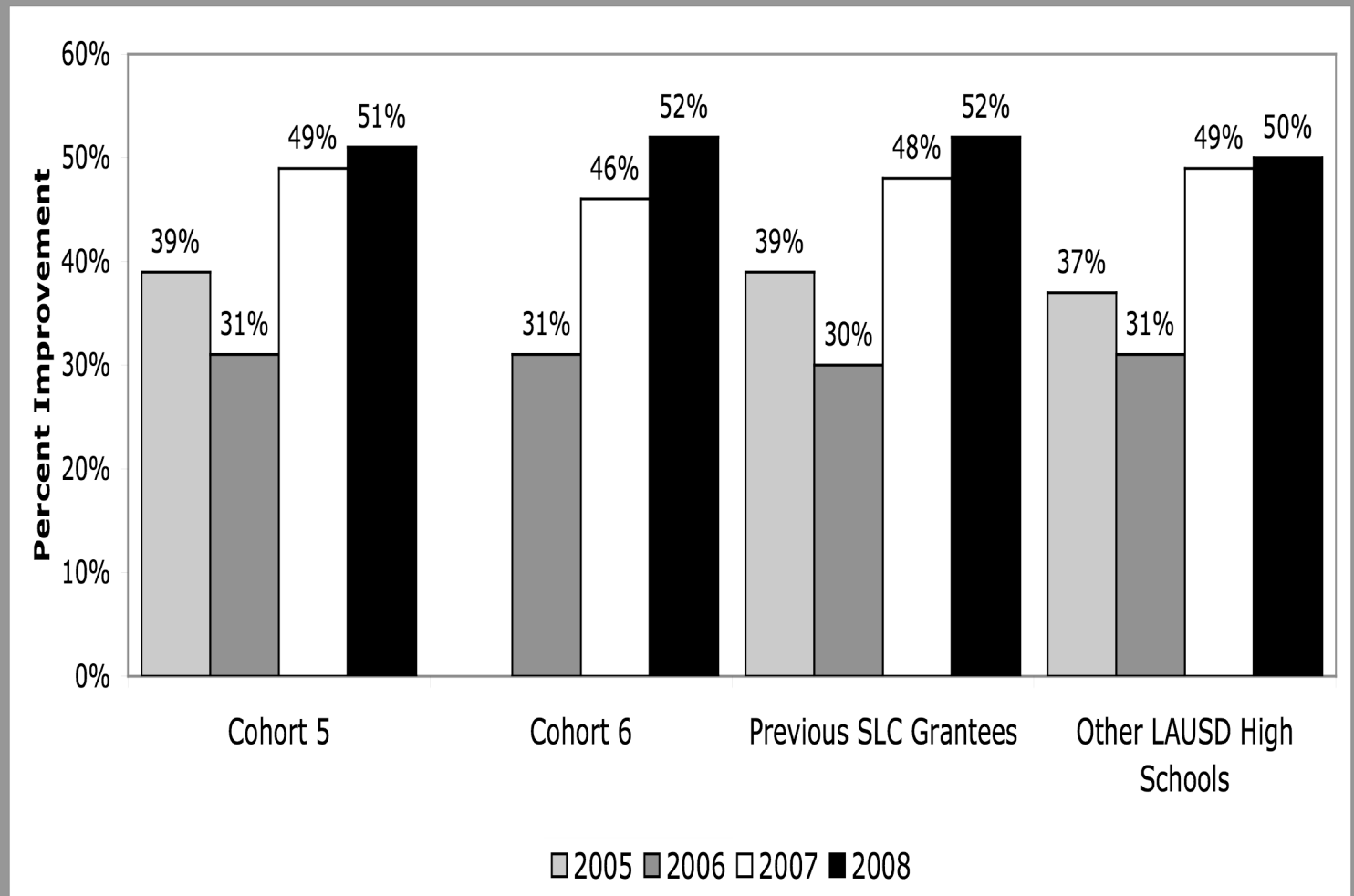
For CST results, we examined changes in proficiency level movement

- What % of FBB students improved?
- What % of BB students improved?
- What % of B students improved?

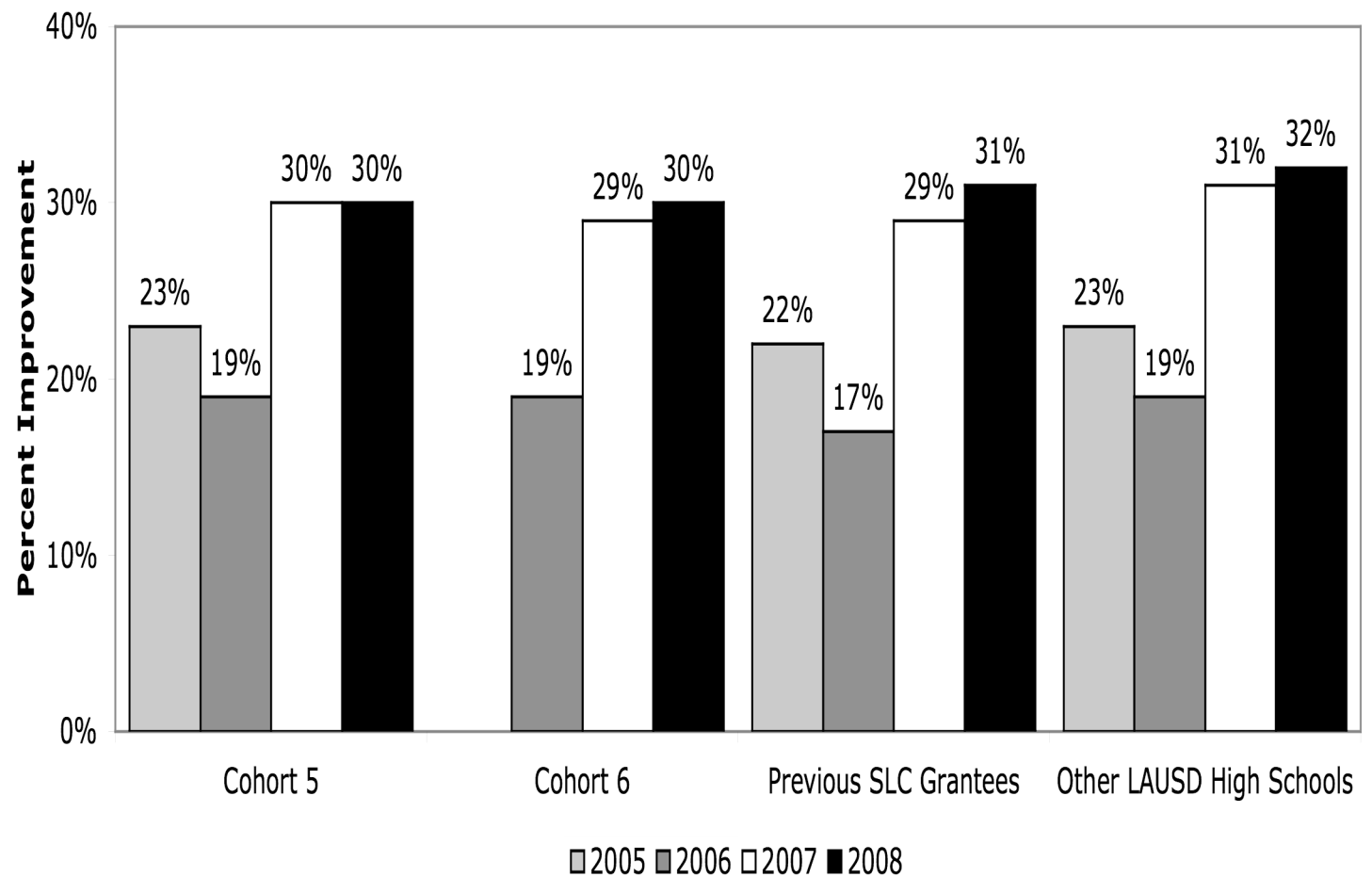
Note: No longer appropriate or possible to compare SLC and Non-SLC



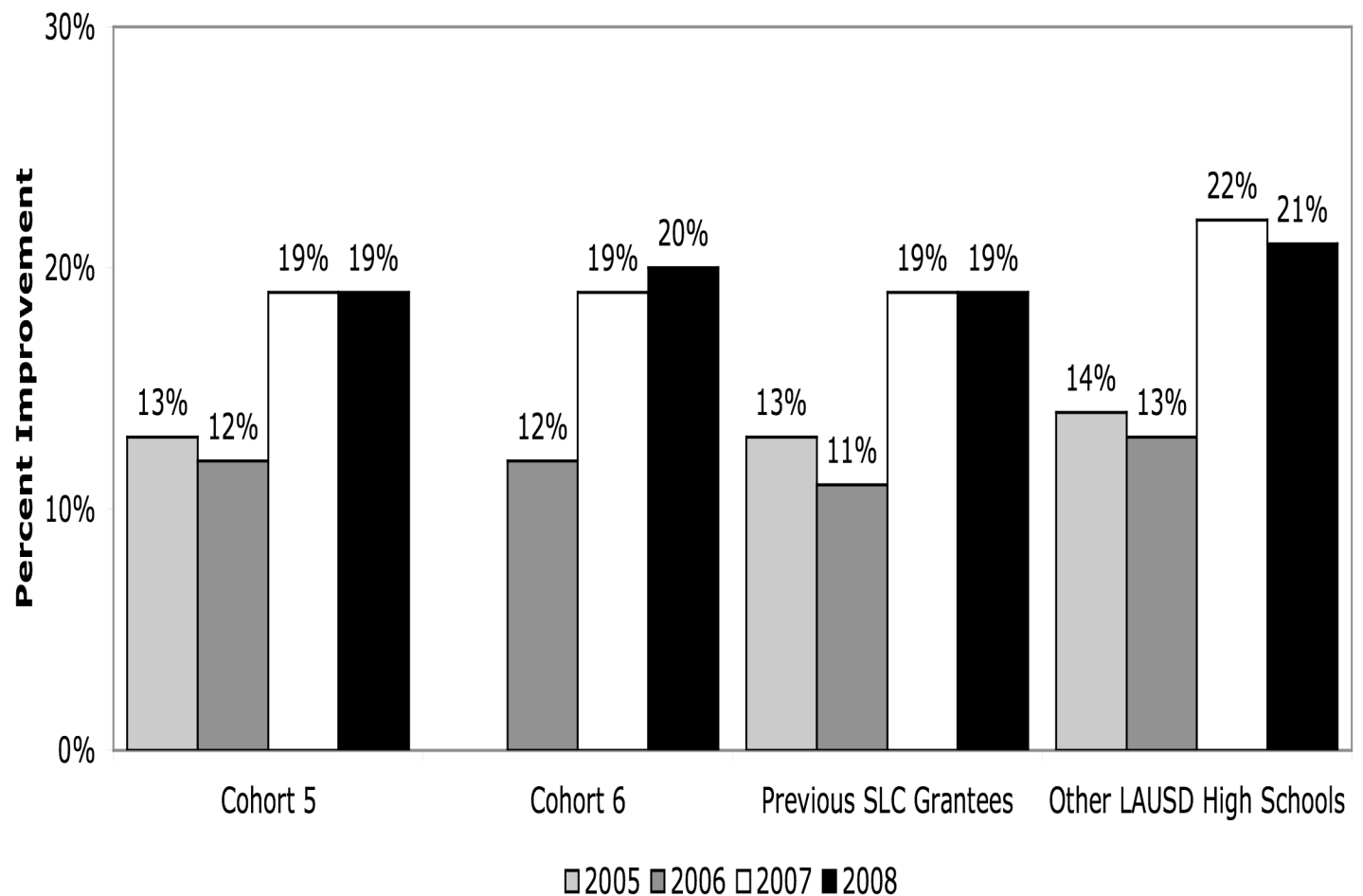
Student Outcomes - CST ELA (Far Below Basic students 2005-2008)



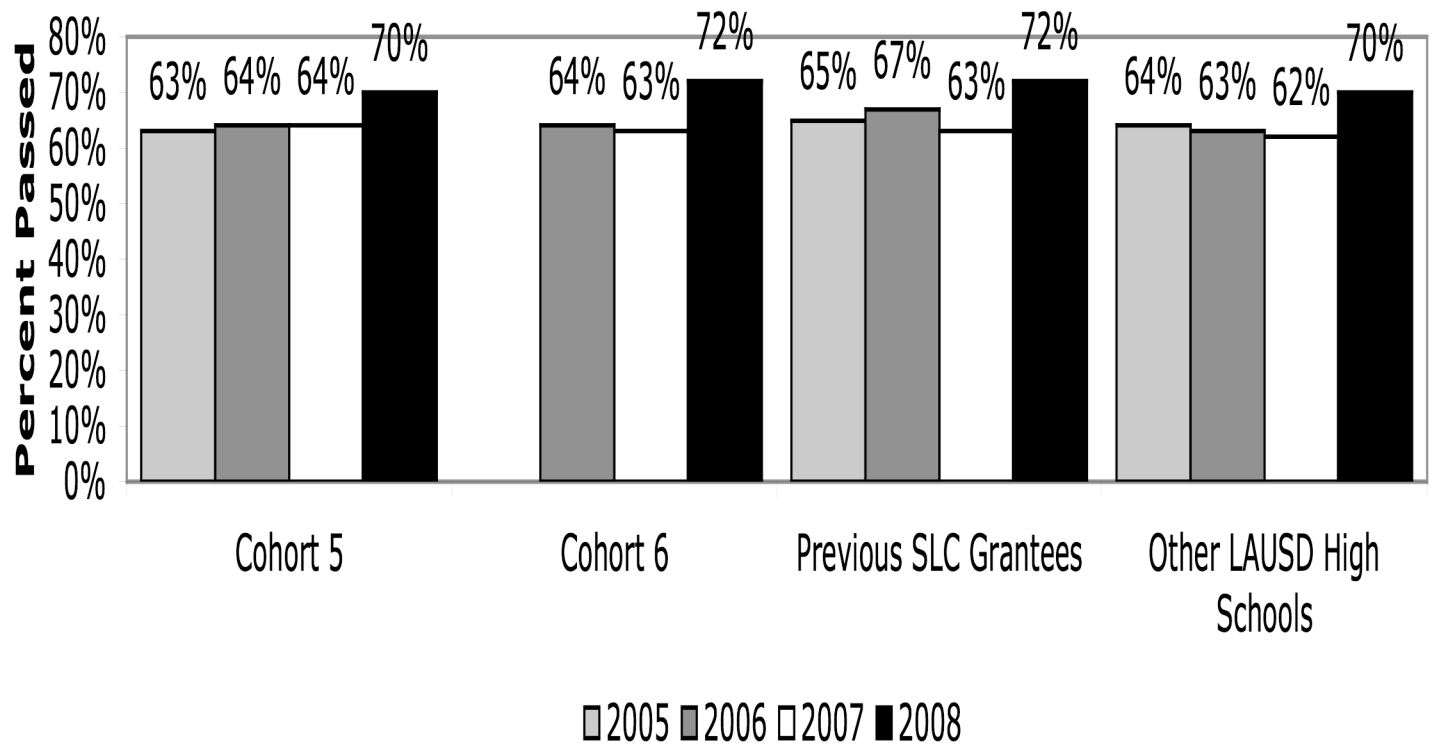
Student Outcomes - CST ELA (Below Basic students 2005-2008)



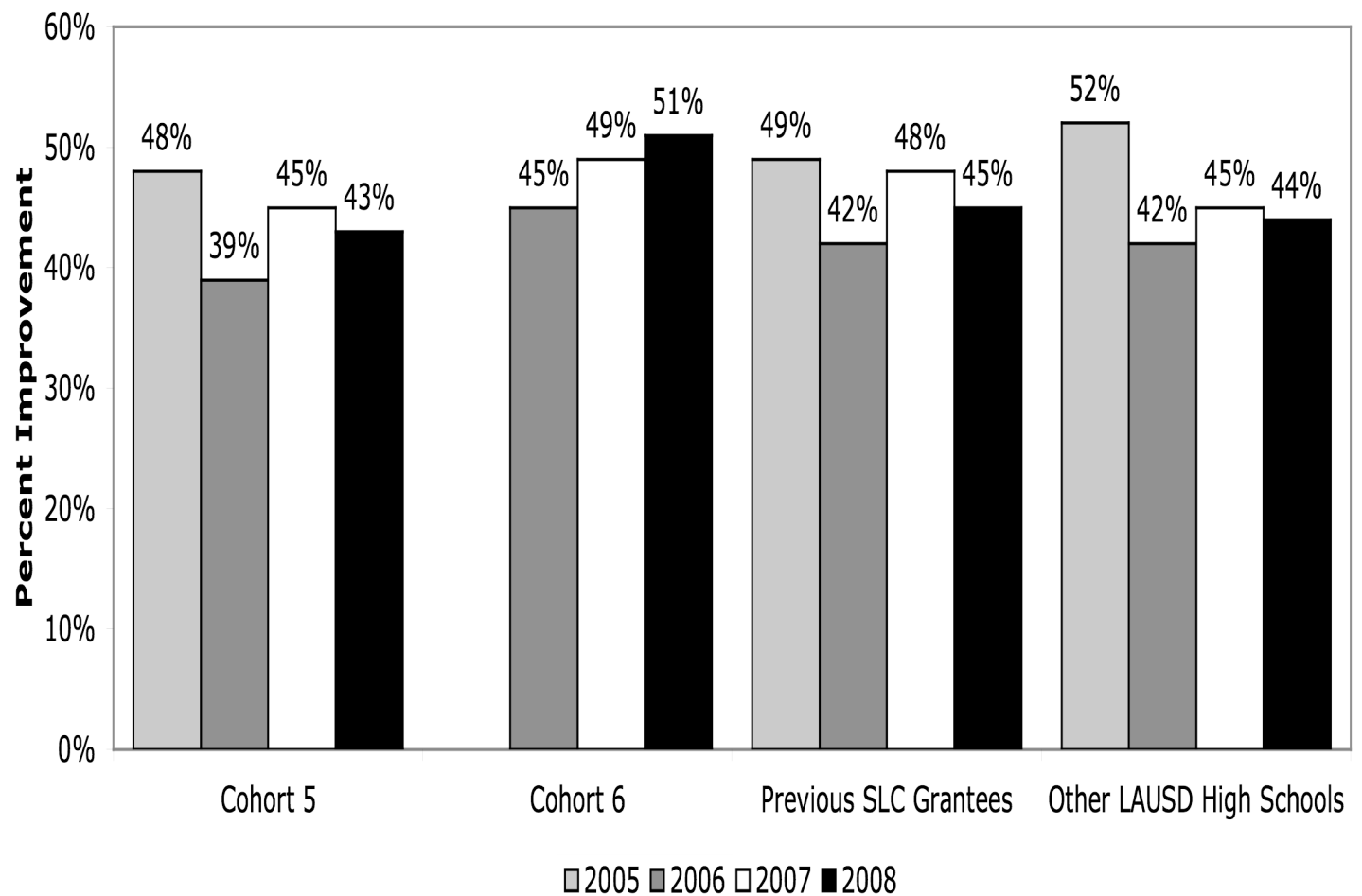
Student Outcomes - CST ELA (Basic students 2005-2008)



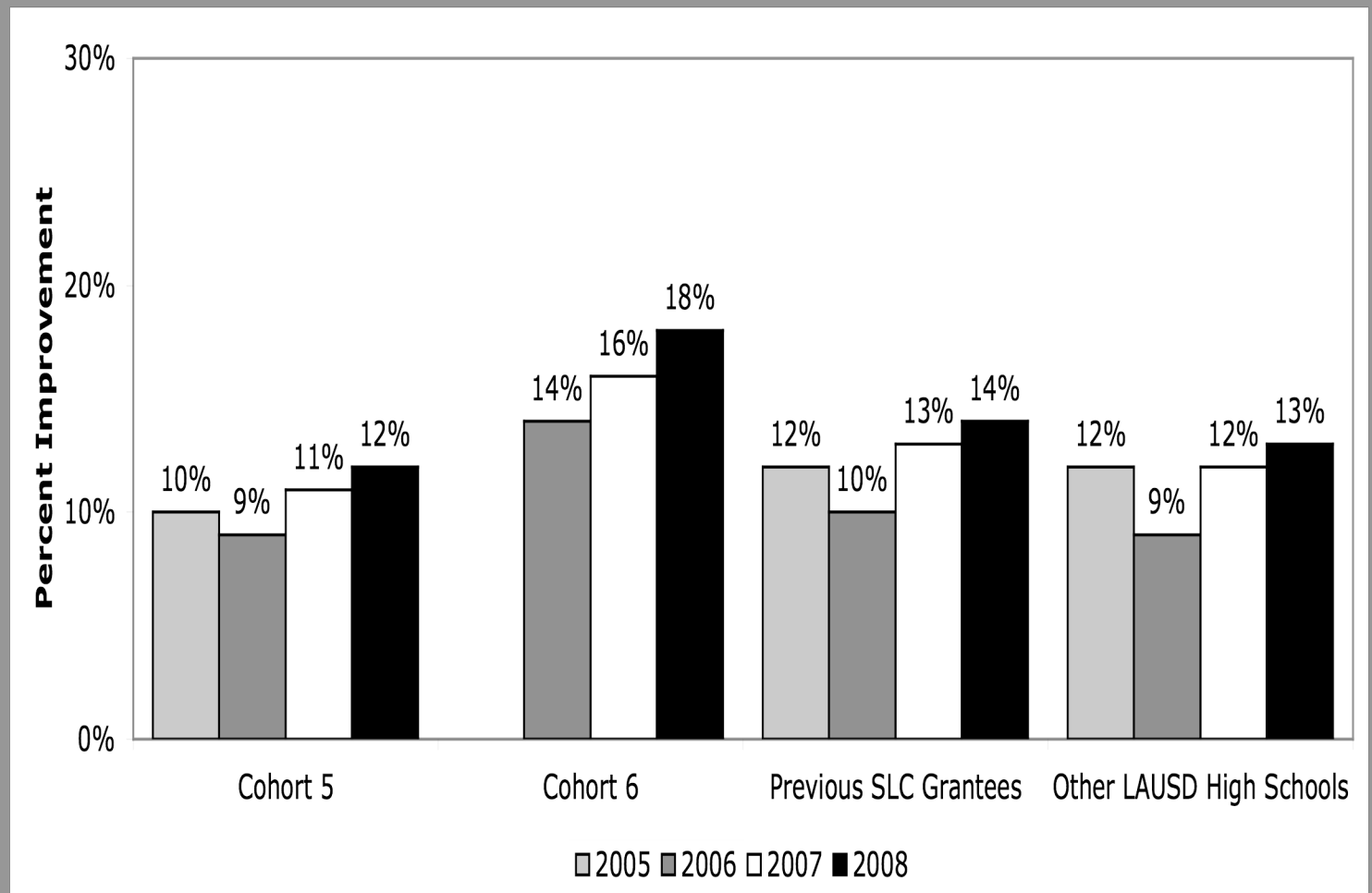
Student Outcomes - 10th Grade CAHSEE ELA Pass Rate



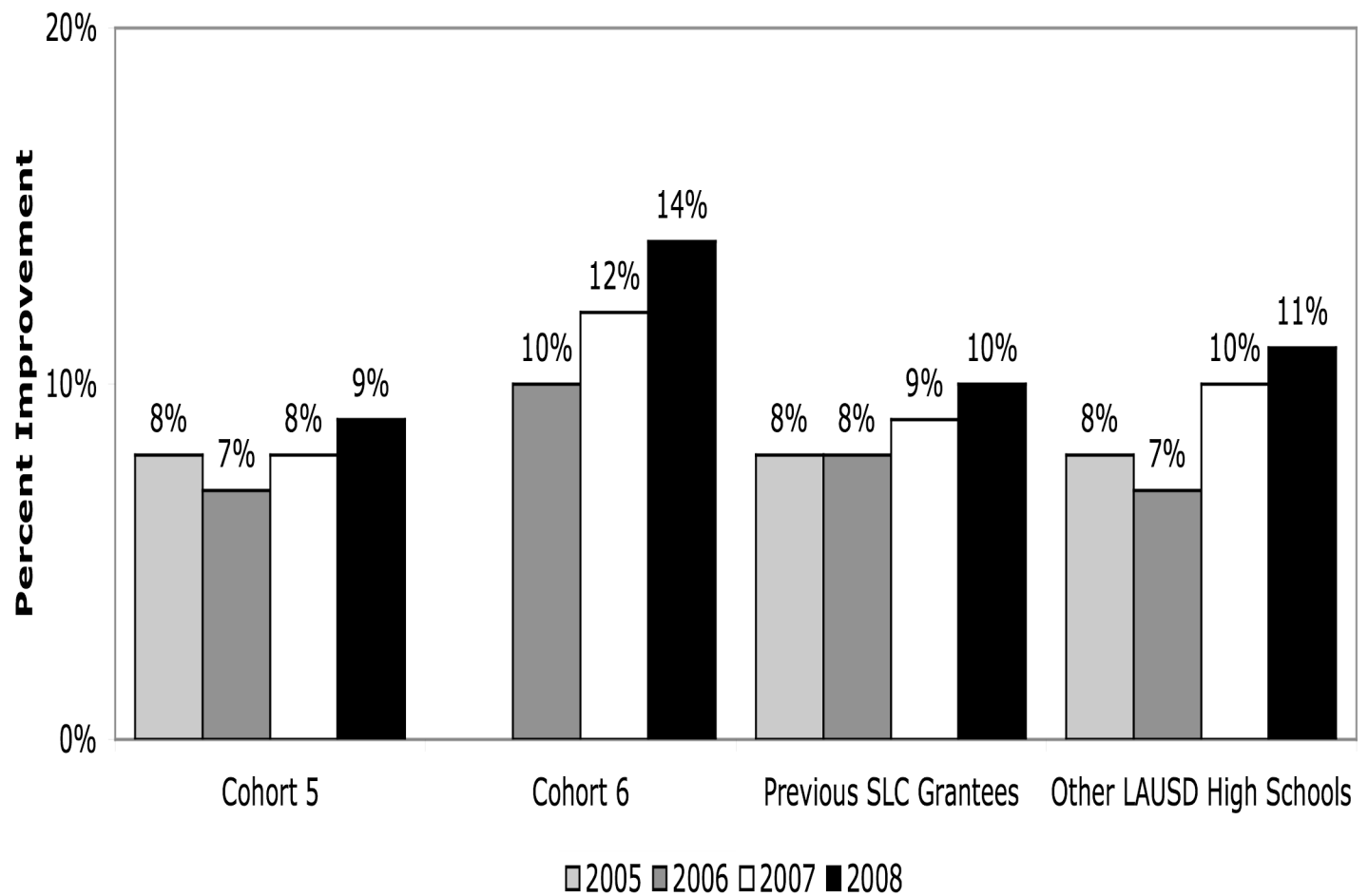
Student Outcomes - CST Math (Far Below Basic students 2005-2008)



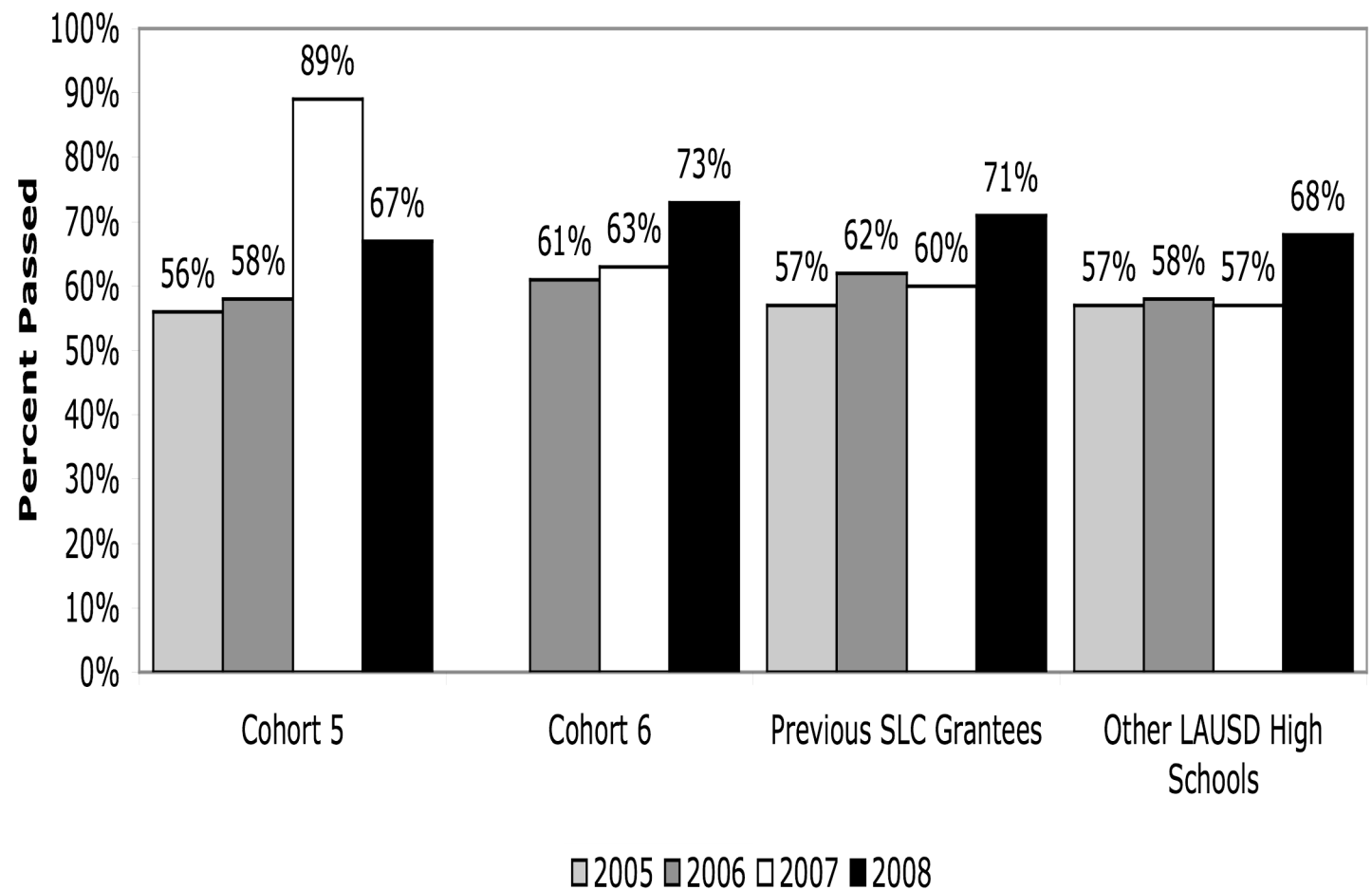
Student Outcomes - CST Math (Below Basic students 2005-2008)



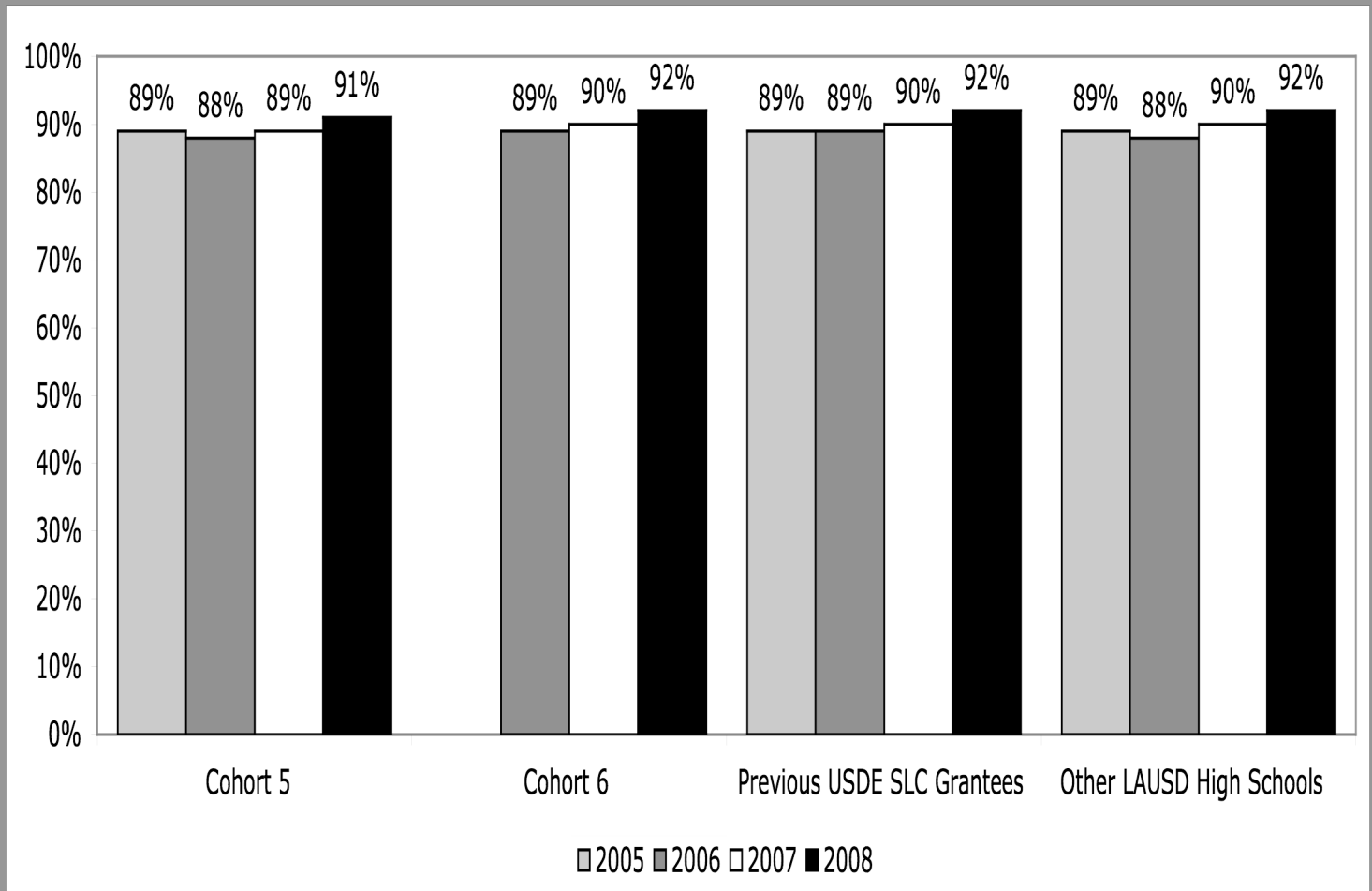
Student Outcomes - CST Math (Basic students 2005-2008)



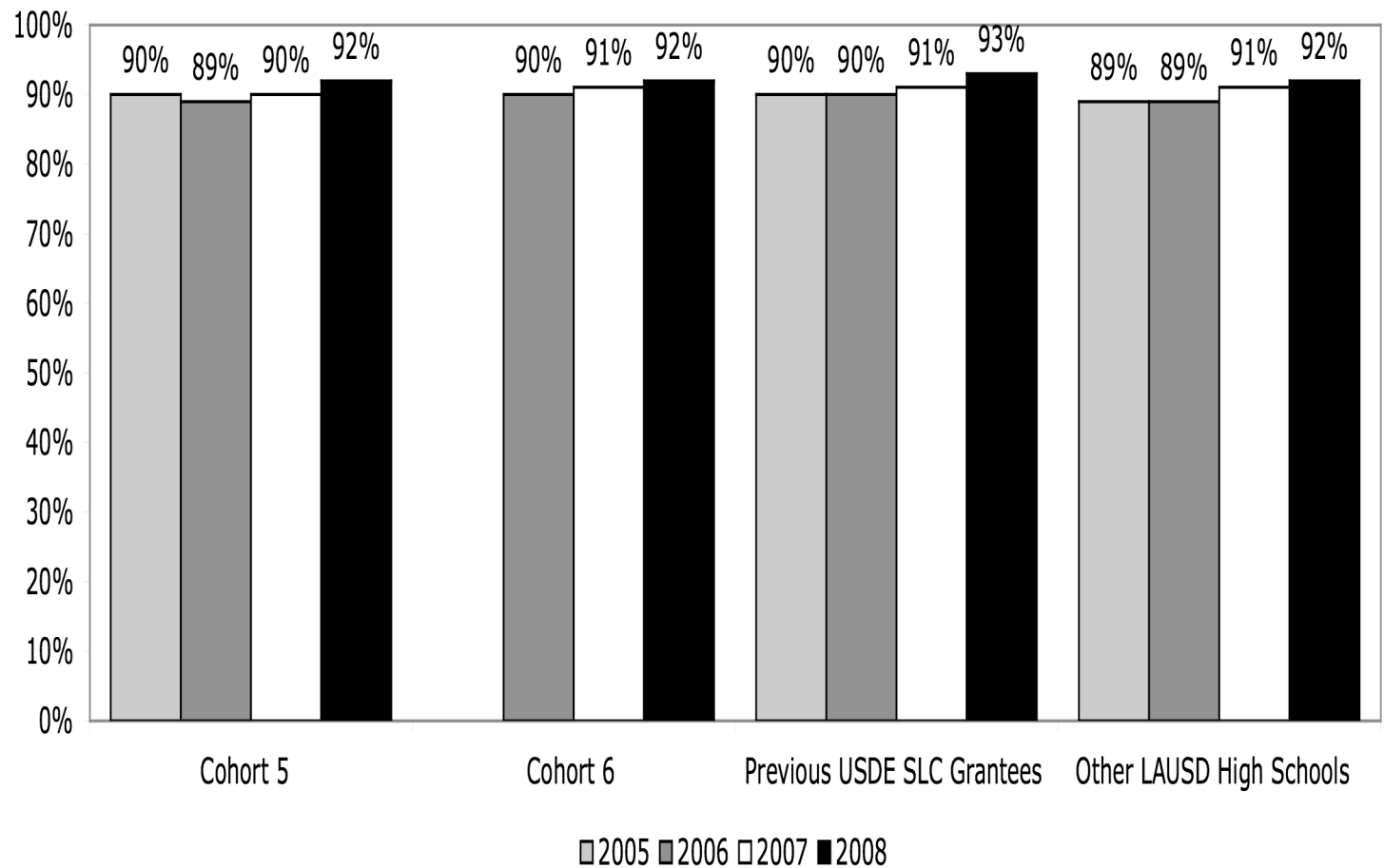
Student Outcomes - 10th Grade CAHSEE Math Pass Rate



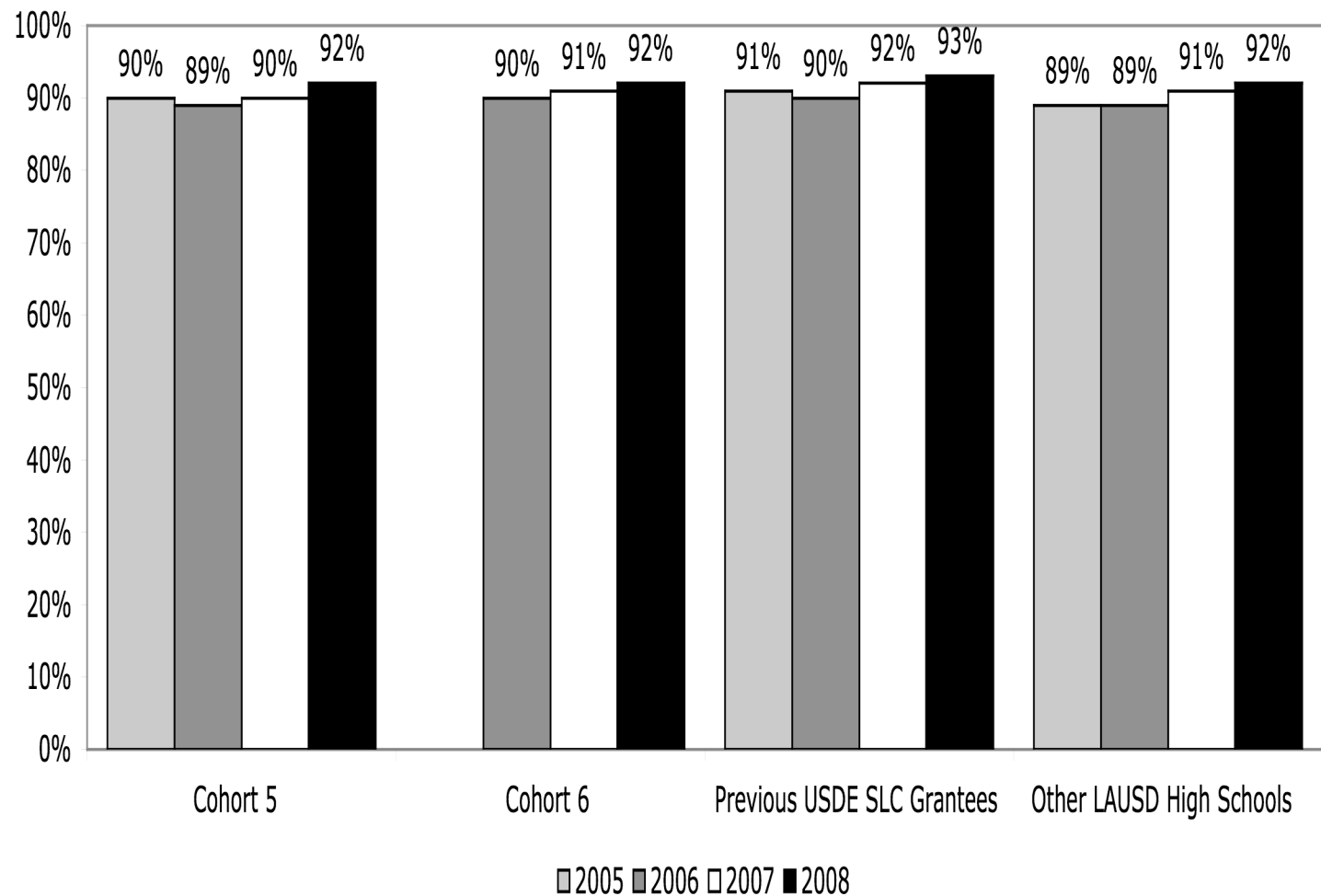
Student Outcomes - Pupil Attendance (9th Grade)



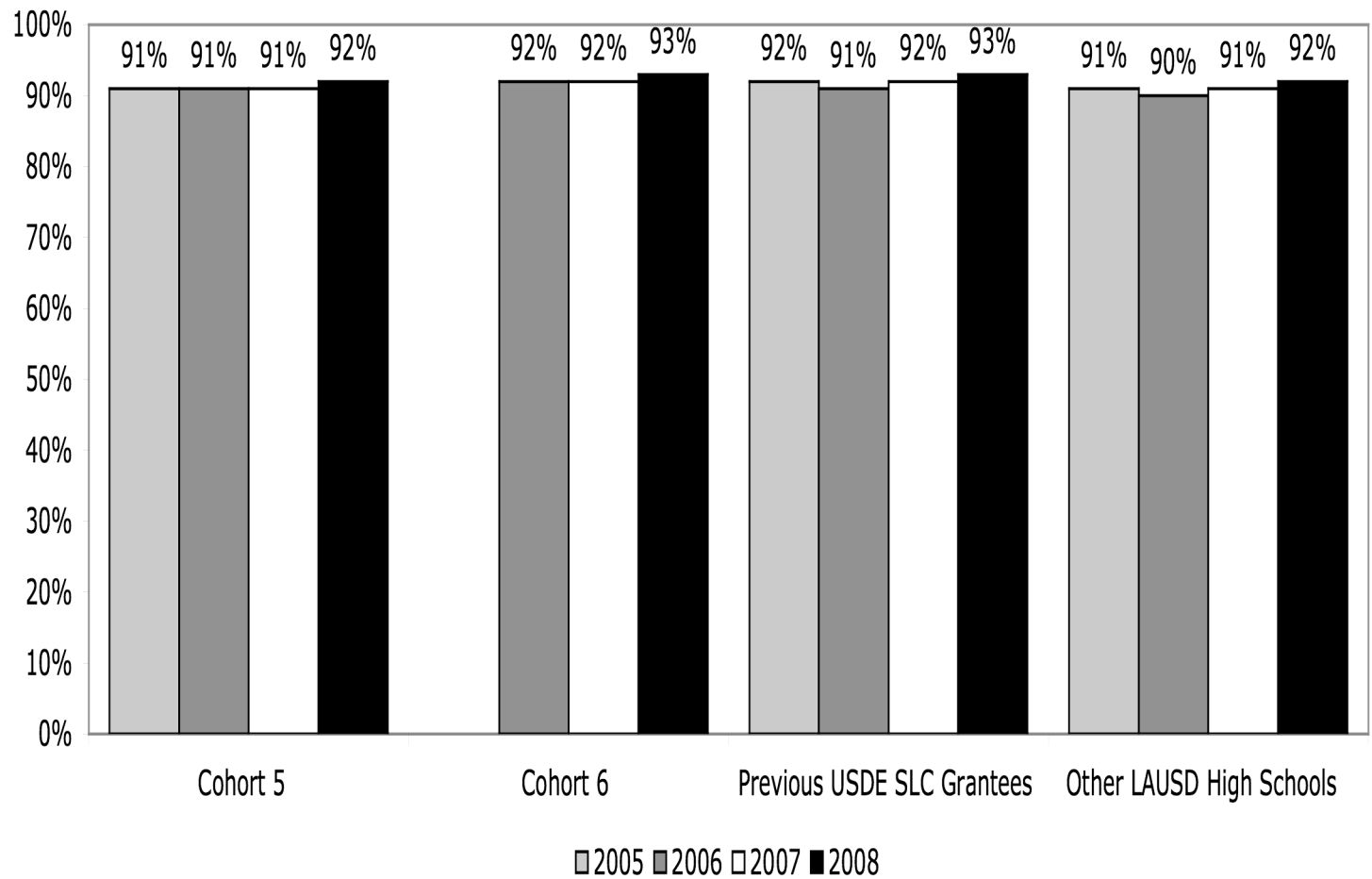
Student Outcomes - Pupil Attendance (10th Grade)



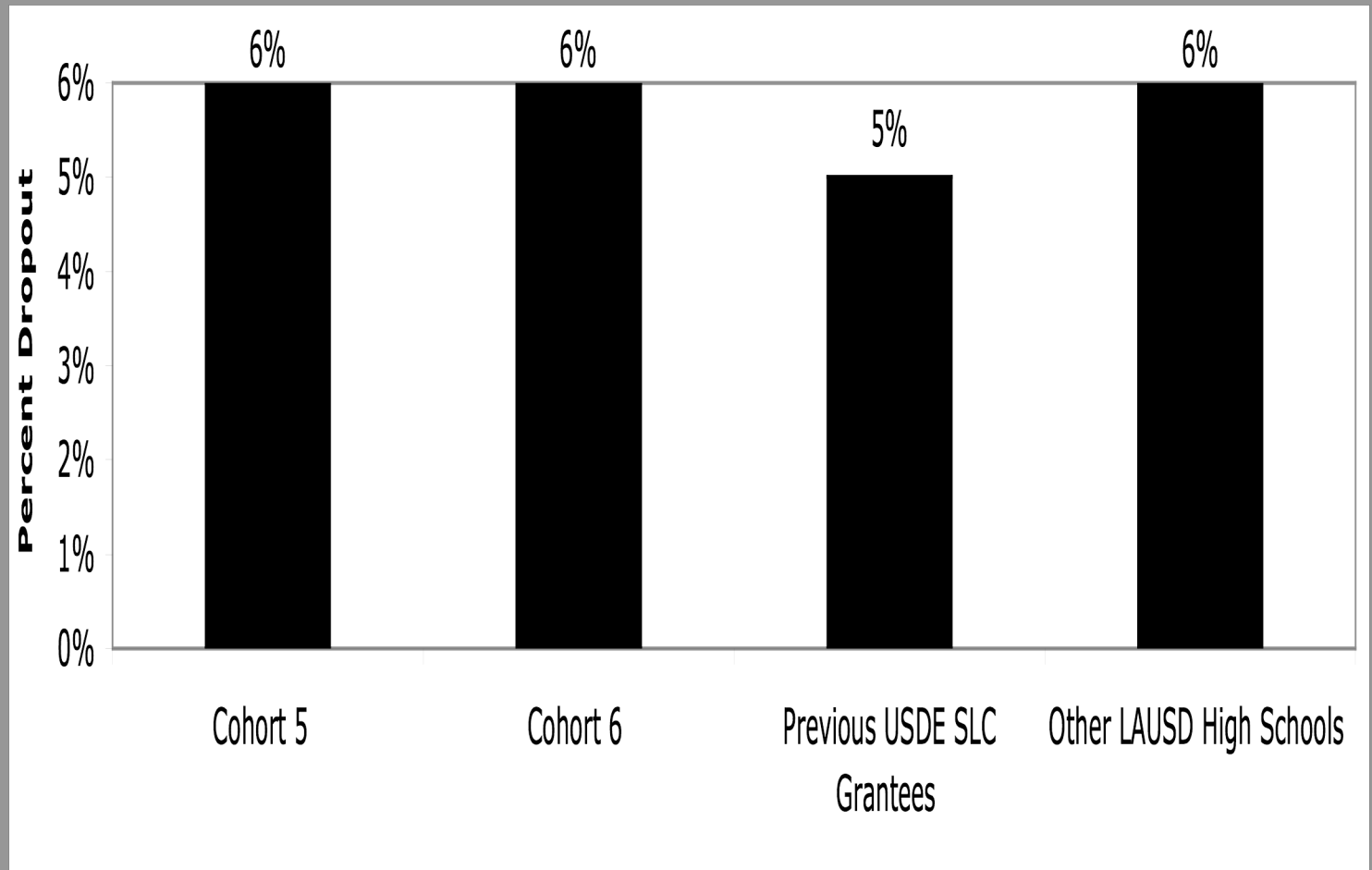
Student Outcomes - Pupil Attendance (11th Grade)



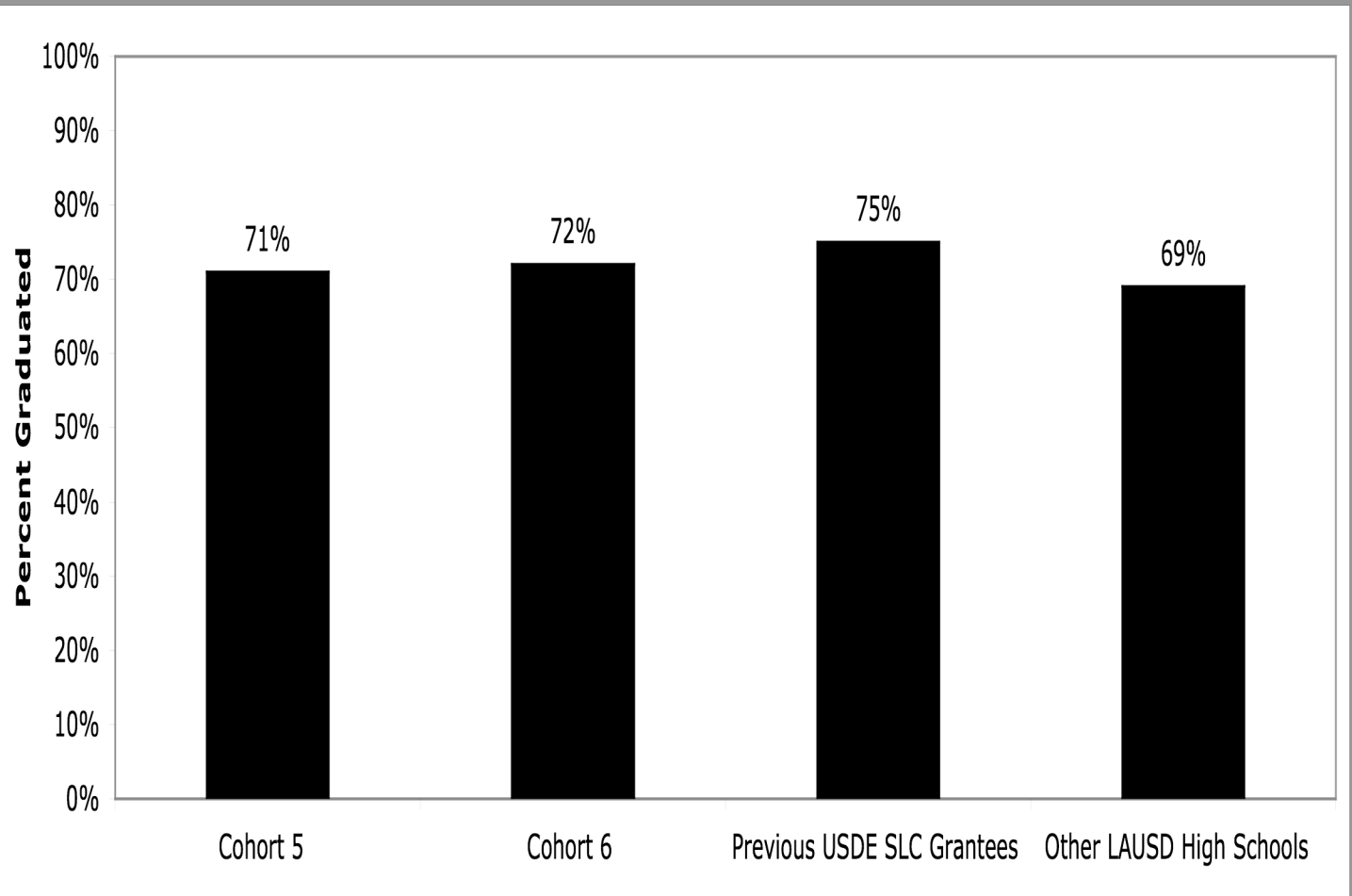
Student Outcomes - Pupil Attendance (12th Grade)



Student Outcomes - 4-Year Derived Dropout Rate (2006-07)

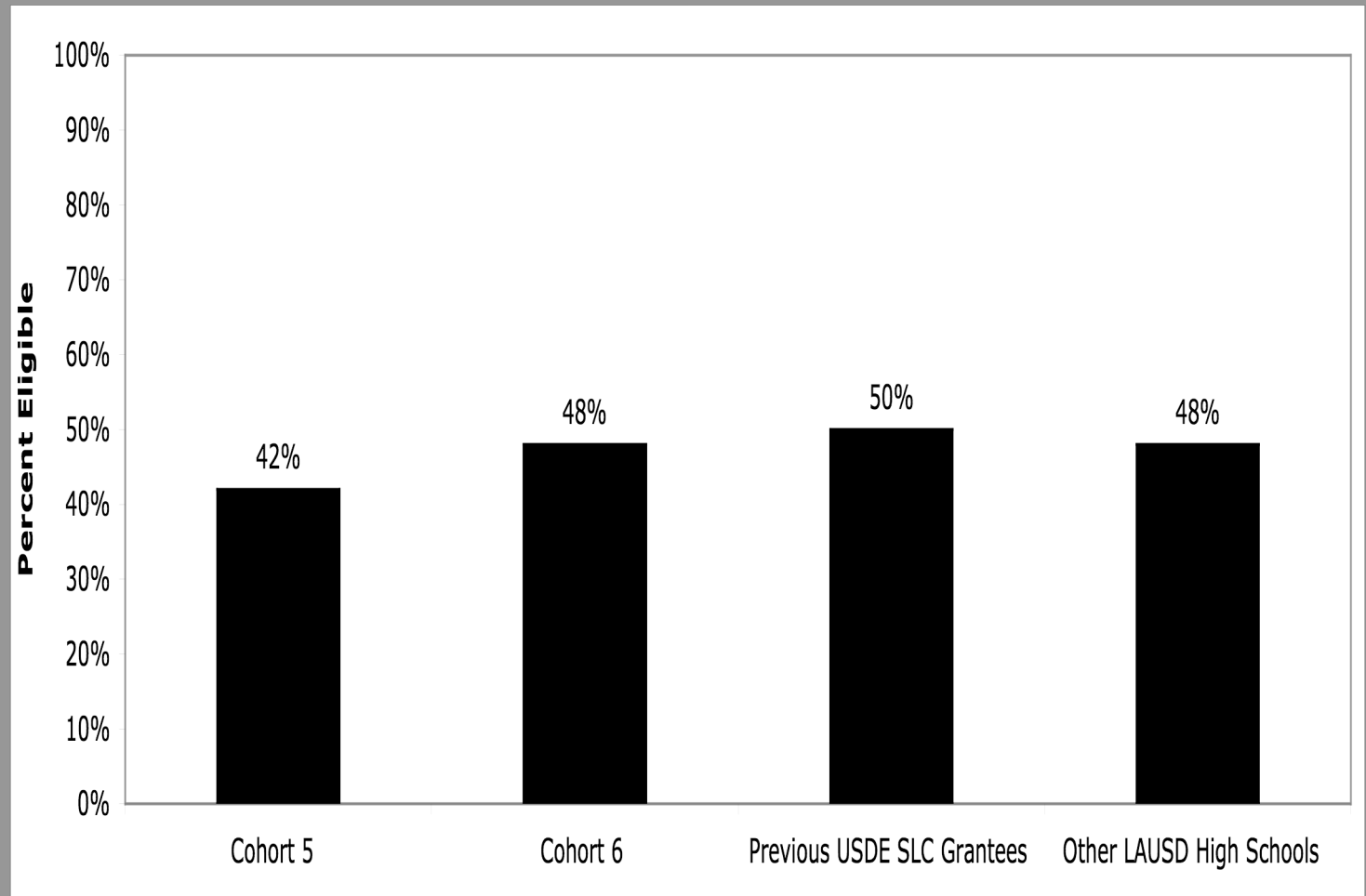


Student Outcomes - 2006-07 NCEES Graduation Rate



Student Outcomes - 2006-07

Graduates with UC/CSU Eligibility



Staff Survey - Perceived Barriers to Implementation

- Master Schedule adaptation is occurring (9% fewer) but still at 25%
- Facilities concerns are being addressed (7% fewer compared to 3 years ago) but at 27%
- Staff resistance to change is seen as the biggest barrier (32% cited with no decrease past 3 years).
- Staff collaboration seen as barrier by 27% with 1% increase over past 3 years.
- Parent/Community Involvement seen as barrier by 30% with 1% increase over past 3 years.

Other Challenges

- ❖ **SLC-related professional development has not been adequately integrated into the regular school-wide professional development calendar.**
- ❖ **New efforts to institute Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have not been connected to SLC reforms and instead have tended to bypass interdisciplinary groupings of teachers altogether.**
- ❖ **While the overall demographics of students in SLCs match overall school demographic characteristics, some individual SLCs are less “representative” compared to school-wide averages.**

Other Challenges

- ❖ **Very limited evidence of wholesale change in how schools conduct outreach to parents or the degree to which parents are involved in either decision-making tied to SLC design or supporting the educational reforms under SLC implementation.**
- ❖ **While external partnerships have been established, the vast majority are with pre-existing SLCs or other programs. Moreover, few have been concretely connected to SLC efforts.**

Recommendations to Schools

Vision and Leadership

- Continue to communicate the school-wide vision for SLC implementation to all staff
- Improve transparency and the inclusionary aspects of school decision-making

SLC Identity

- **Continue to focus on establishing a strong academic identity for each SLC that is evident in what students are learning in the classroom**
- Define SLC autonomy locally while the district struggles to balance centralized and decentralized functions

Recommendations to Schools

Standards-based Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

- Focus SLC efforts on changing classroom instruction; move from structure to instruction
- Consider employing SLCs as a vehicle for academic intervention

Professional Development

- Support SLCs with set aside time for collaboration
- Reorient school-based professional development to highlight the instructional component of SLC reforms

Recommendations to Schools

Equity & Access

- Prioritize articulation with feeder middle schools to improve SLC recruitment
- Monitor and balance SLC placement for students and staff

Personalization

- Move beyond relationship-building to personalized instruction
- Connect personalized instruction to broader delivery of guidance and counseling services

Recommendations to Schools

Accountability & Distributed Leadership

- Reinforce the commitment to distributed leadership through definition of roles for SLC lead teachers, counselors, and assistant principals
- Make better use of data, disaggregated by SLC, to drive school improvement

Parent & Community Engagement

- Develop more systematic ways to involve parents up-front in design of SLCs and in SLC implementation
- Create SLC advisory boards for parents and external partners to link concretely to development and expansion of SLCs

Recommendations to Local Districts

- Continue to monitor and provide oversight of school master schedules
- Assist schools in the alignment of school improvement plans (WASC, PI, HPSG, SAIT, SLC, etc.)
- Minimize site administrative turnover
- Assist schools in designing professional development
- Support schools in use of data, disaggregated by SLC

Recommendations for LAUSD

- Recommit to SLCs as an “umbrella” restructuring effort that encompasses standards-based instructional reforms
- Provide guidance on how to integrate SLC Identity with accountability and curricular mandates (i.e., pacing guides and formative assessments).
 - Translate district instructional mandates for SLCs (importance of all three R’s - rigor, relevance, relationships).

Recommendations for LAUSD

- Define the extent of allowable school autonomy in instruction
- Provide incentives for schools once approved by SLC Committee or based on SLC progress/accomplishments
- Ensure that SLCs are staffed with highly qualified teachers in all core academic areas
- Provide leadership training for SLC leads, Department Chairs, and Assistant Principals
- Examine longitudinal performance of SLC schools in new manner now that all or nearly all are “SLC” students