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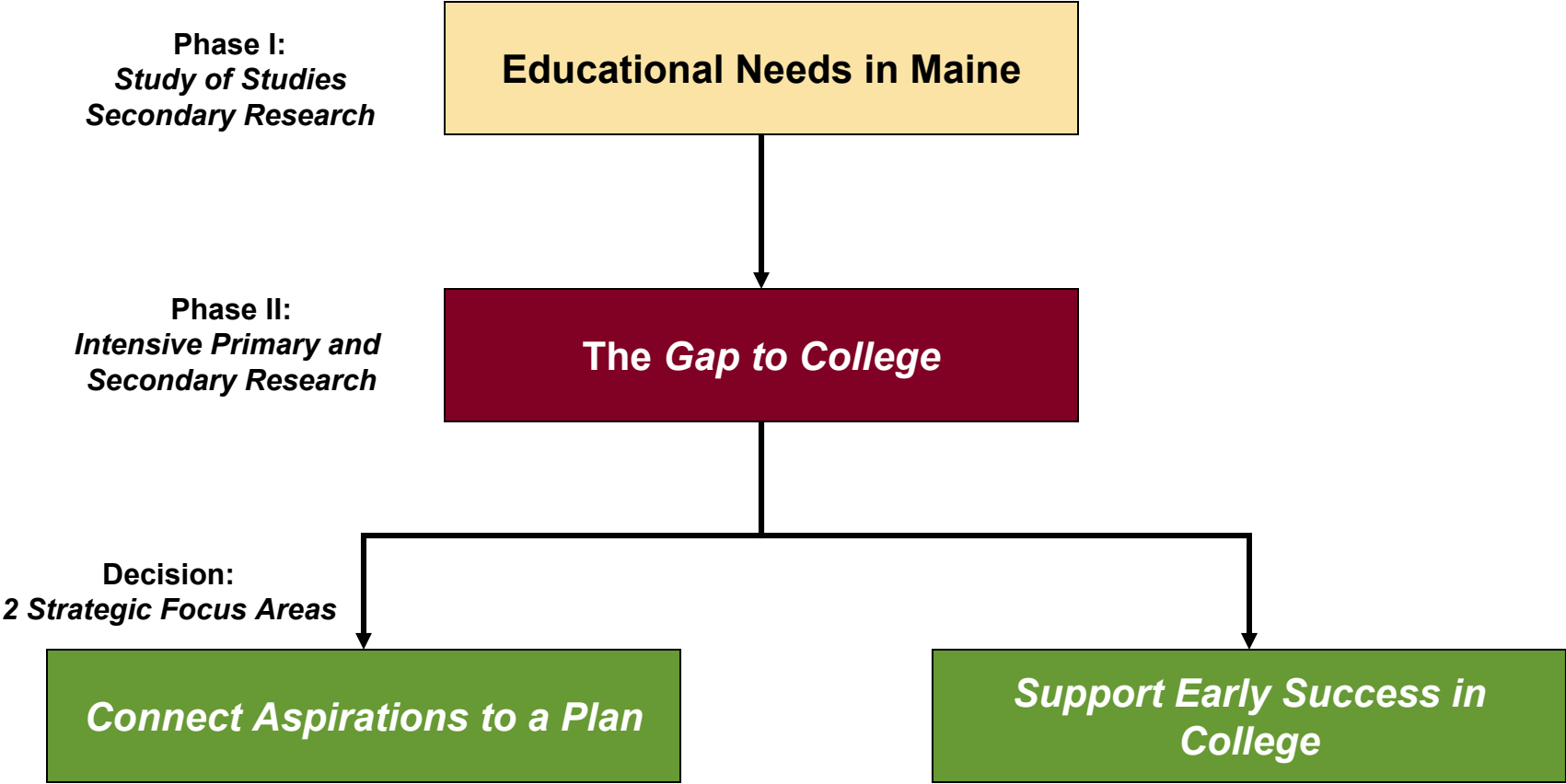
OVERVIEW OF STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT DECEMBER 2002

in collaboration with

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The Educational Needs Assessment for MELMAC Resulted in the Identification of Two Strategic Focus Areas



The Needs Assessment Activities Were Designed to Identify Highly Leveraged Opportunities to Impact Education in Maine

Phase I Activities – Conducting a *Study of Studies*

- Catalogue, review and synthesize over 25 recent studies on educational needs specific to Maine, including independent research, legislative recommendations, and presentations at major conferences
- Compare select educational statistics for Maine to national and regional figures

Phase II Activities – Examining Maine’s *Gap to College*

- Conduct interviews with over 65 educational leaders, funders, and practitioners across Maine (e.g., Commissioner of Education, University and Technical College presidents, guidance counselors, financial aid officers, school superintendents, legislators, TRIO program directors)
- Size the different potential target populations in Maine who may be considered at risk of not attaining a college degree
- Analyze the funding landscape to identify the foundation and federal resources currently directed toward educational priorities in Maine
- Review findings from the Mitchell Institute’s study on *Barriers to Postsecondary Education in Maine (July 2002)* and analyze additional data from the surveys of students, young adults, parents and educators conducted for the study
- Hold 8 focus groups with 4 different constituencies across the state – parents who did not graduate from college and have children in HS, young adults who aspired to college but did not enroll, young adults who attended college but left in the first year, and non-traditional age college students

The *Study of Studies* Reviewed the Findings of 25 Maine Studies

Study	Date	Source
<i>30 and 1000: How to Build a Knowledge-Based Economy in Maine and Raise Incomes to the National Average by 2010</i>	2001	State Planning Office
<i>A Decade of Progress and Some Lessons Learned</i>	2001	Maine Education Symposium
<i>A Fresh Look at College Going Rates in Maine</i>	2000	Finance Authority of Maine
<i>Aspirations Survey - Data from 60,000 Students Representing Every County in Maine, October 2001</i>	2001	National Center for Student Aspirations
<i>Barriers to College in Maine</i>	2001	Mitchell Institute
<i>Comparisons of Higher Education Information for New England States</i>	2001	Maine Education Policy Research Institute, USM
<i>Degree Recipients Older, Census Shows</i>	2001	Bangor Daily News
<i>Essential Programs and Services</i>	1997	Maine State Board of Education
<i>Higher Education Achievement in Maine</i>	1998	Maine Development Foundation
<i>Higher Education for All Maine People</i>	2001	Maine Center for Economic Policy
<i>Maine Kids Count</i>	2002	Maine Children's Alliance
<i>Maine Marks</i>	2001	Governor's Children's Cabinet
<i>Maine's Disappearing Youth: Implications of a Declining Youth Population</i>	2002	Maine Leadership Consortium
<i>Maine's Labor Force Analysis Regions</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>Measures of Growth 2002</i>	2002	Maine Development Foundation
<i>Quality Educators: The Best Opportunity for Maine Children</i>	2001	Maine Legislature
<i>Report of Blue Ribbon Commission on Postsecondary Attainment</i>	2002	Maine Legislature
<i>Report of the Commission on Higher Education Governance</i>	1996	Maine Legislature
<i>Rising to the Literacy Challenge</i>	2002	Jobs for the Future
<i>Survey of ME Citizens Who Have Not Attained a College Degree</i>	2001	SMS
<i>The Community College Gap in Maine Higher Education</i>	1998	Maine Center for Economic Policy
<i>The Condition of K-12 Public Education in ME</i>	2002	Maine Education Policy Research Institute, USM
<i>Types of Barriers Maine High School Students May Face in Fulfilling Post-Secondary Educational Aspirations</i>	N/A	Maine Education Policy Research Institute, USM
<i>The Public Policy Dilemma for Financing Opportunity for Higher Education in ME</i>	1997	Finance Authority of Maine
<i>Youth and the Labor Market in ME: Holding Our Own Will Not Hold Us</i>	N/A	Muskie School

Interviews Were Conducted with 44 Constituencies and 65 Individuals – Leaders, Funders and Practitioners

<p>9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joyce Hedlund, EMTC Hank Schmelzer, Maine Community Foundation 	<p>10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arthur Doyle, College Board 	<p>11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rick Sykes, Former Principal and Chair of Public Advisory Committee John Fitzsimmons, Maine Technical College System Mark Gray, MEA 	<p>12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Henry Bourgeois, Maine Development Foundation Dennison Gallaudet, Superintendent Gene Lee, Nellie Mae Education Foundation 	<p>13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dale Douglass and Terry McCabe, Maine School Board Association Pete Thibodeau, Jobs for Maine Graduates Duke Albanese, Department of Education
<p>16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stephanie Cook and Nelson Walls, Maine Leadership Consortium Gordon Donaldson and Dave Brown, U of Maine School of Education 	<p>17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colleen Quint and Lisa Plimpton, Mitchell Institute Bob Woodbury, Former U of Maine System Chancellor Sawin Millett, Former Education Committee (R) 	<p>18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Julian Haynes – Former U of Maine System Dierdre Mageean, Policy Research Margaret Chase Smith Center Paula Tingley, Guidance Director 	<p>19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tony Krapf, Superintendent Financial Aid Officers Chris Hall, Chamber of Commerce 	<p>20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TRIO Program Directors
<p>23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Silvernail, USM, Education Policy Research Rosa Redonnet, USM, Enrollment/ Admissions Charlie Colgan, USM, Labor Policy Research 	<p>24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonnie Sparks and Joan Fink, Distance Learning/ University College Centers Dick Durost, Principals' Association 	<p>25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peter Geiger, Business and Former State Board of Education 	<p>26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charlie Lyons, UMA Guidance Directors Peggy Rotundo, Education Committee (D) & Bates College 	<p>27</p>
<p>30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gilda Nardone, Women, Work and Community Jim Reir, State Board of Education 	<p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ron Bancroft, Maine Coalition for Excellence Judy Ryan, Parents as Scholars Marty Duncan and Sally Daniels, Adult Education Programs 	<p>2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jean Gulliver, State Board of Education 	<p>3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sarah Rademacher and Christine Seavey, MBNA Scholars Program 	<p>October Continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kathy Klock, Gates Foundation Bob Kautz, Superintendent Greg Gollihur, FAME Russ Quaglia, National Center Student Aspirations

Agenda

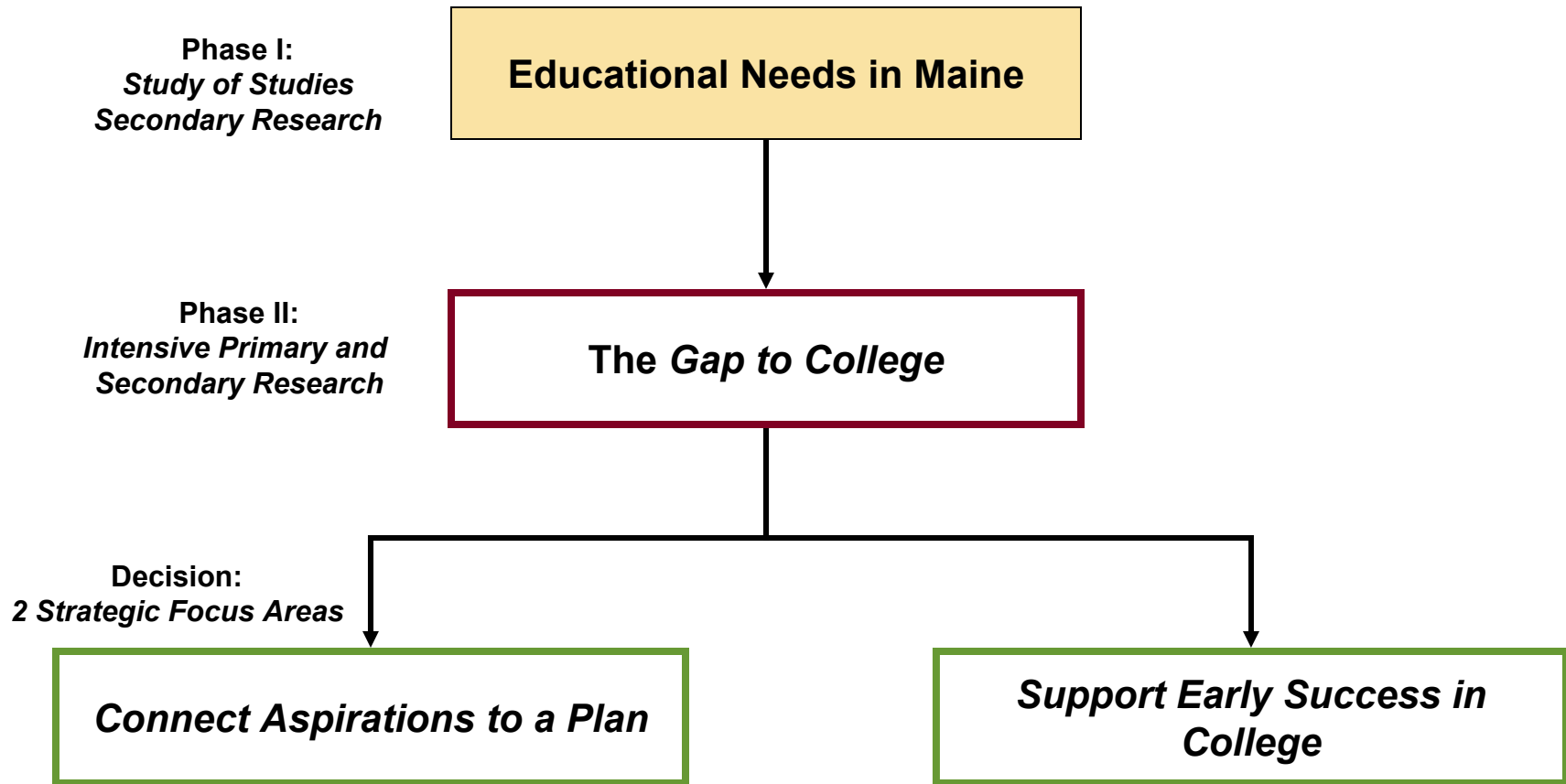
I. Conducting a *Study of Studies* on Educational Needs in Maine

II. Examining Maine's *Gap to College*

III. Identifying Leverage Points in the *Gap to College*

IV. Defining MELMAC's Approach and Action Plan

The Needs Assessment Began with a Scan of Over 25 Studies (*Study of Studies*) on Issues Critical to Maine's Educational Performance



***Synthesis of existing research revealed significant educational issues
to explore in greater depth***

The *Study of Studies* Research On Educational Needs and Opportunities in Maine Was Organized Around Three Need Areas: *Aspirations, Access, and Achievement*

Sample indicators of needs and opportunities

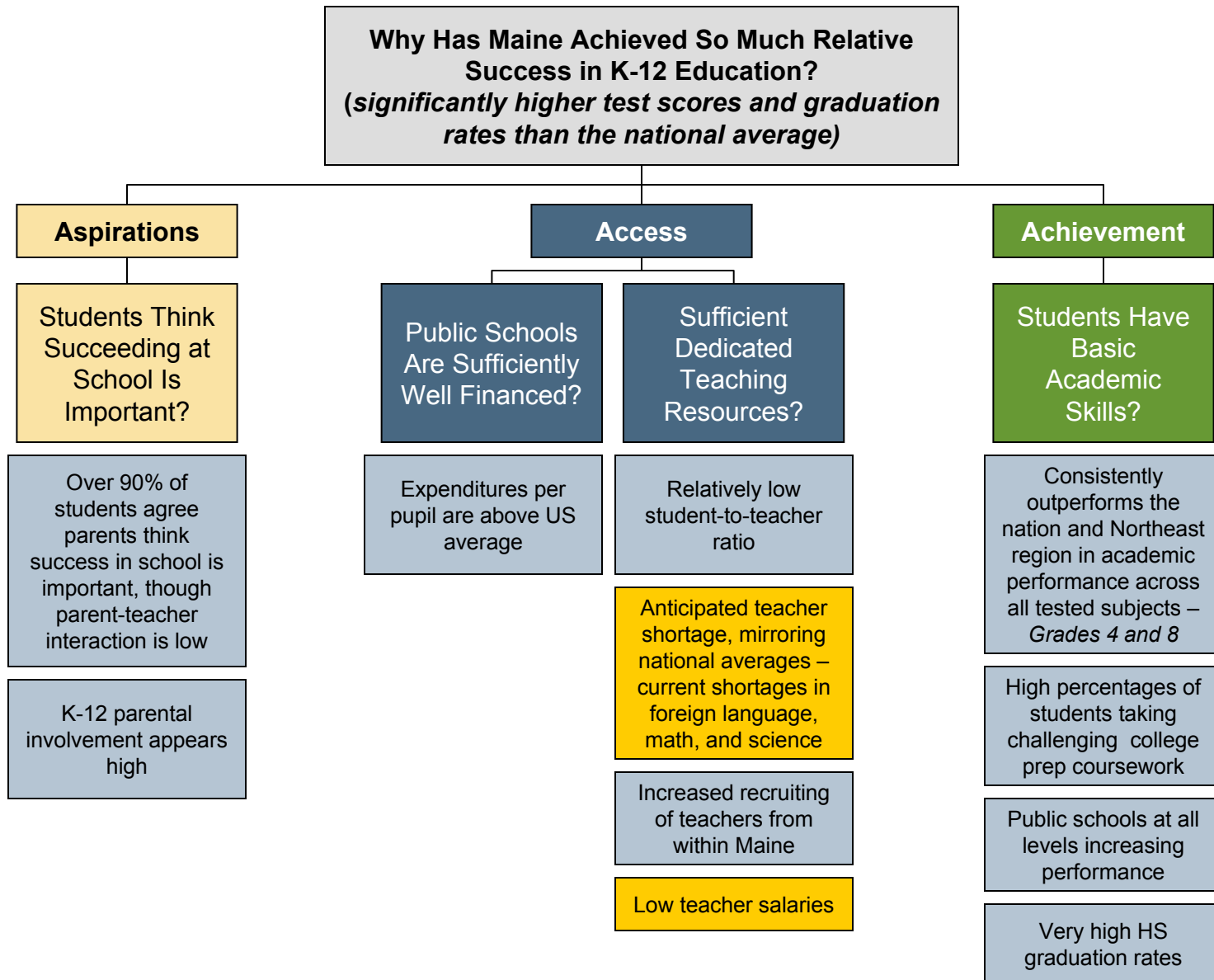
Success Factors	Elementary	Middle School	High School	Traditional Post Secondary	Adult GED	Adult Post-Secondary	Job Training
Aspirations <i>Want to achieve educational success?</i>	% of students aspiring to post secondary education			# of recent HS grads enrolling	Wait lists for ABE programs	Presence or absence of clear incentives for continuing education	
	Parental and community involvement in schools						Adults interested in returning to school
			% taking PSAT & SAT				
Access <i>Have the resources and options to achieve educational success?</i>		% taking Algebra in 8 th grade	% taking SAT	Affordability	Capacity of GED programs	Affordability	Level of business investment in job training
	Student-teacher ratio		% taking AP classes	Capacity of low-cost institutions		Capacity of low-cost institutions	
	Per pupil spending on public schools		Counselor-student ratio				
Achievement <i>Have the ability to achieve educational success?</i>	Standardized test scores		SAT Scores	6-year graduation rate	Literacy rates	% of adults with a post-secondary degree	% of adults employed in declining industries
			Graduation rate		% of adults with HS equivalency		
	Quality of teachers, facilities, etc.				Relevance of coursework to job opportunities		

The *Study of Studies* highlighted areas where Maine underperforms relative to national averages and the performance of selected peer states

Studies Show that Maine's K-12 Educational System Performs Very Well Relative to the Nation and to the Region

- Student **aspirations** to succeed in school, as measured by parental involvement in the schools, exceed national levels.
- **Access** issues, like K-12 public school funding and expenditures per pupil, are above national averages. Maine students enjoy better teacher-to-student ratios than the national average, although public schools may face a teacher shortage as the teaching population ages and retires.
- Maine consistently outperforms the nation and the northeast region on K-12 **achievement**. Maine students have significantly higher test scores and high school graduation rates (including GED recipients) than the national and northeast averages.

A Wide Variety of Factors May Be Contributing to Maine's Outstanding K-12 Achievement

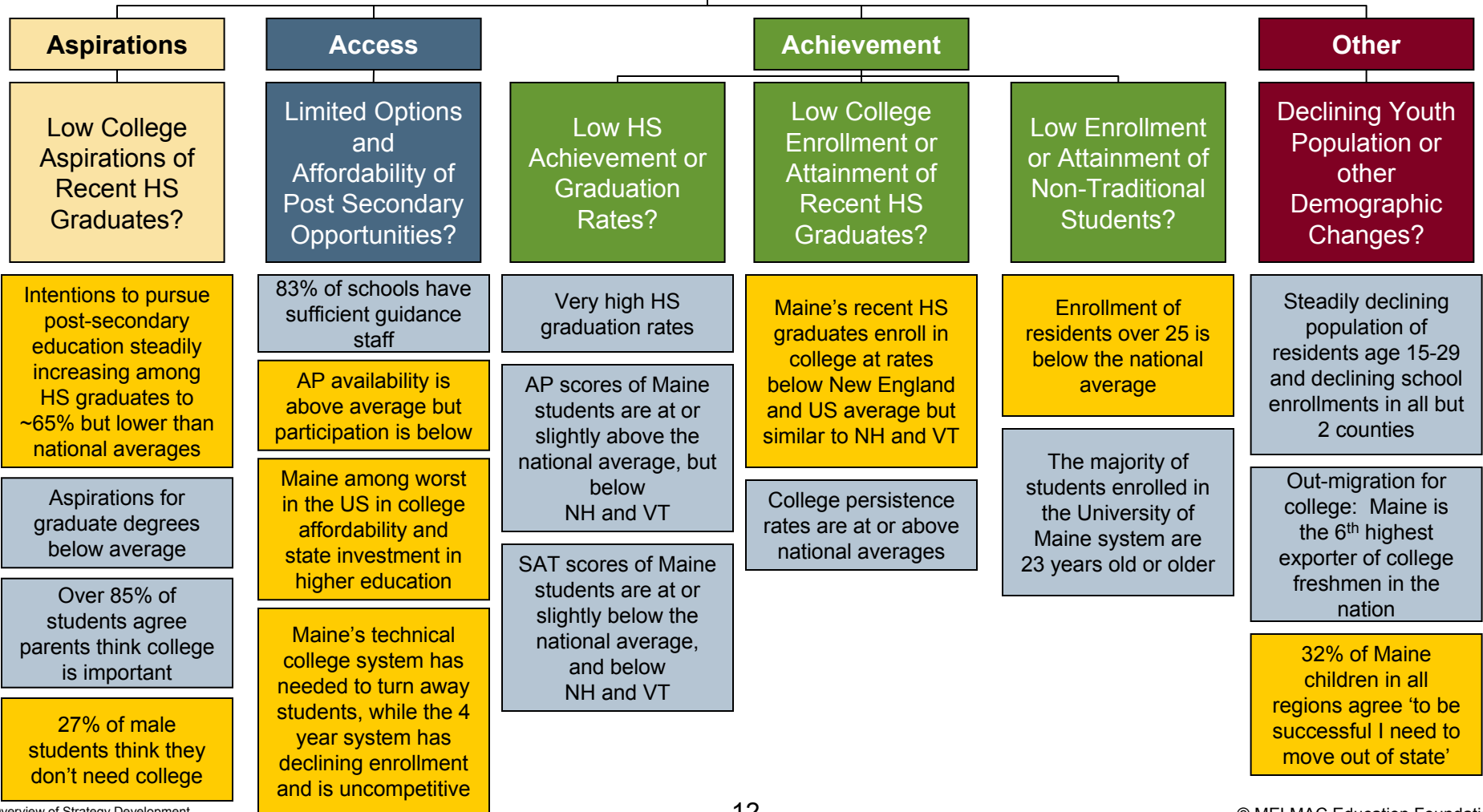


Maine Underperforms In Postsecondary Attainment Relative To the Nation and the Region

- Student **aspirations** to pursue postsecondary education have been steadily increasing in Maine, but still trail national averages by approximately 10%. Parents' own educational attainment levels are critical, and are correlated to their children's educational success.
- **Access** to college preparation resources in high school (e.g., number of counselors, AP course availability) is above average in Maine, though the application of these resources may be an area for improvement. Access issues are also significant after students leave high school. This is true both for recent high school graduates and nontraditional students.
 - Cost is a significant barrier to college access. Maine ranks as one of the worst in the nation in both affordability and state investment in higher education.
 - Maine's postsecondary infrastructure lacks sufficient low-cost entry points, a key component of success for states successful in increasing bachelor's degree attainment rates. The technical college system appears to be at over-capacity.
- Lack of **achievement** at the high school or postsecondary levels does not appear to be a major factor contributing to Maine's low college attainment. Once students are in college, persistence rates are at or above national averages, although if enrollment rates increase colleges may have more difficulty retaining students who currently don't enroll in college.
- **Demographic factors** present a challenge to increasing Maine's statewide bachelor's degree attainment rates. Maine's youth population is steadily declining as the older population grows, and postsecondary enrollment for nontraditional students is below the national average. Maine is a net exporter of college freshmen to other states, primarily to attend 4 year institutions.

A Wide Variety of Factors May Be Contributing to Maine's Low Participation in and Attainment of Higher Education

Why is There Such Low Percentage of Adults in Maine with at Least a Bachelor's Degree?
(significantly lower than national average and decreasing in national rank)



Agenda

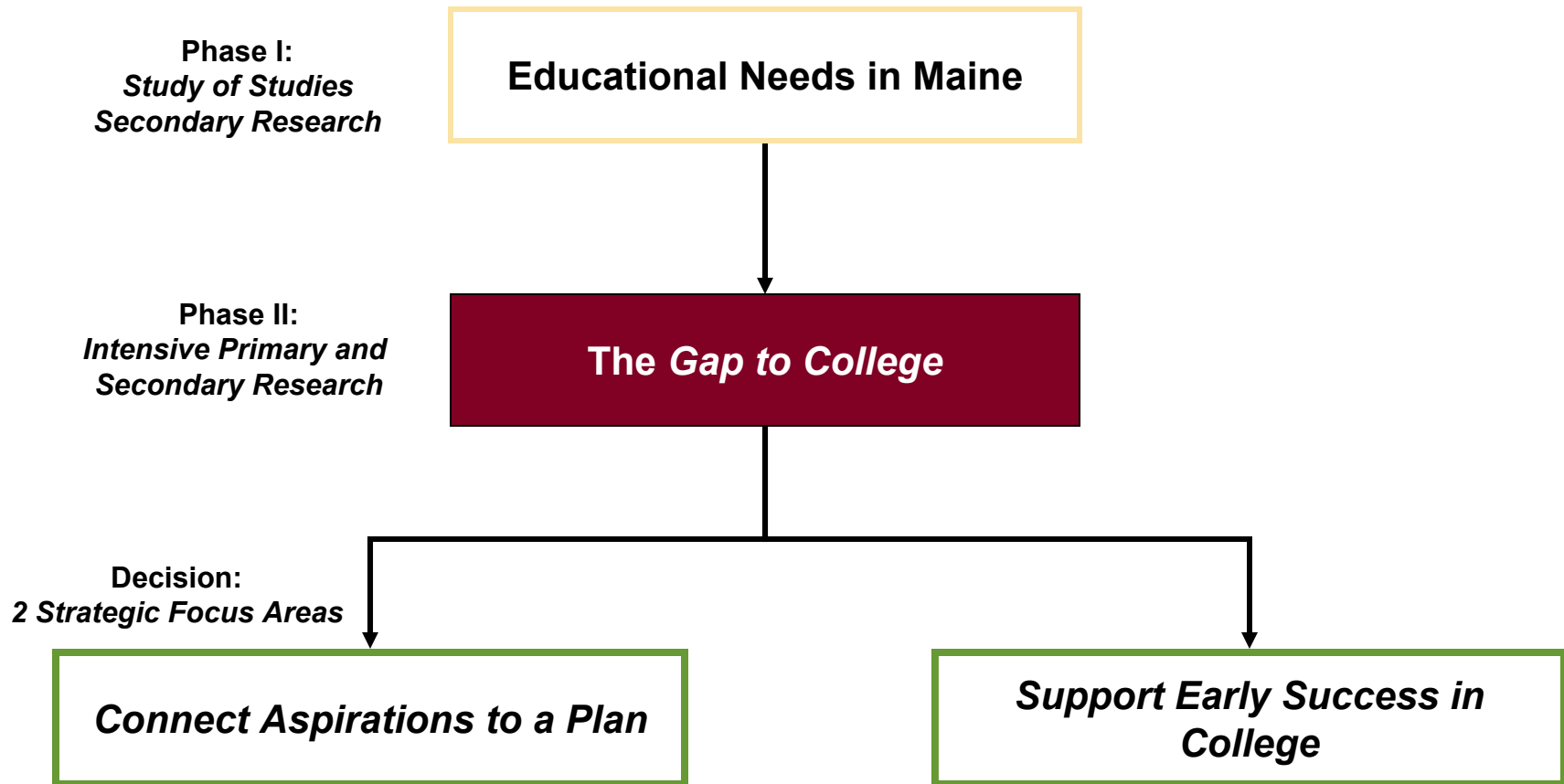
I. Conducting a *Study of Studies* on Educational Needs in Maine

II. Examining Maine's *Gap to College*

III. Identifying Leverage Points in the *Gap to College*

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The *Study of Studies* Resulted in a Decision to Focus the More Intensive Needs Assessment Research on Factors Underlying the *Gap to College*

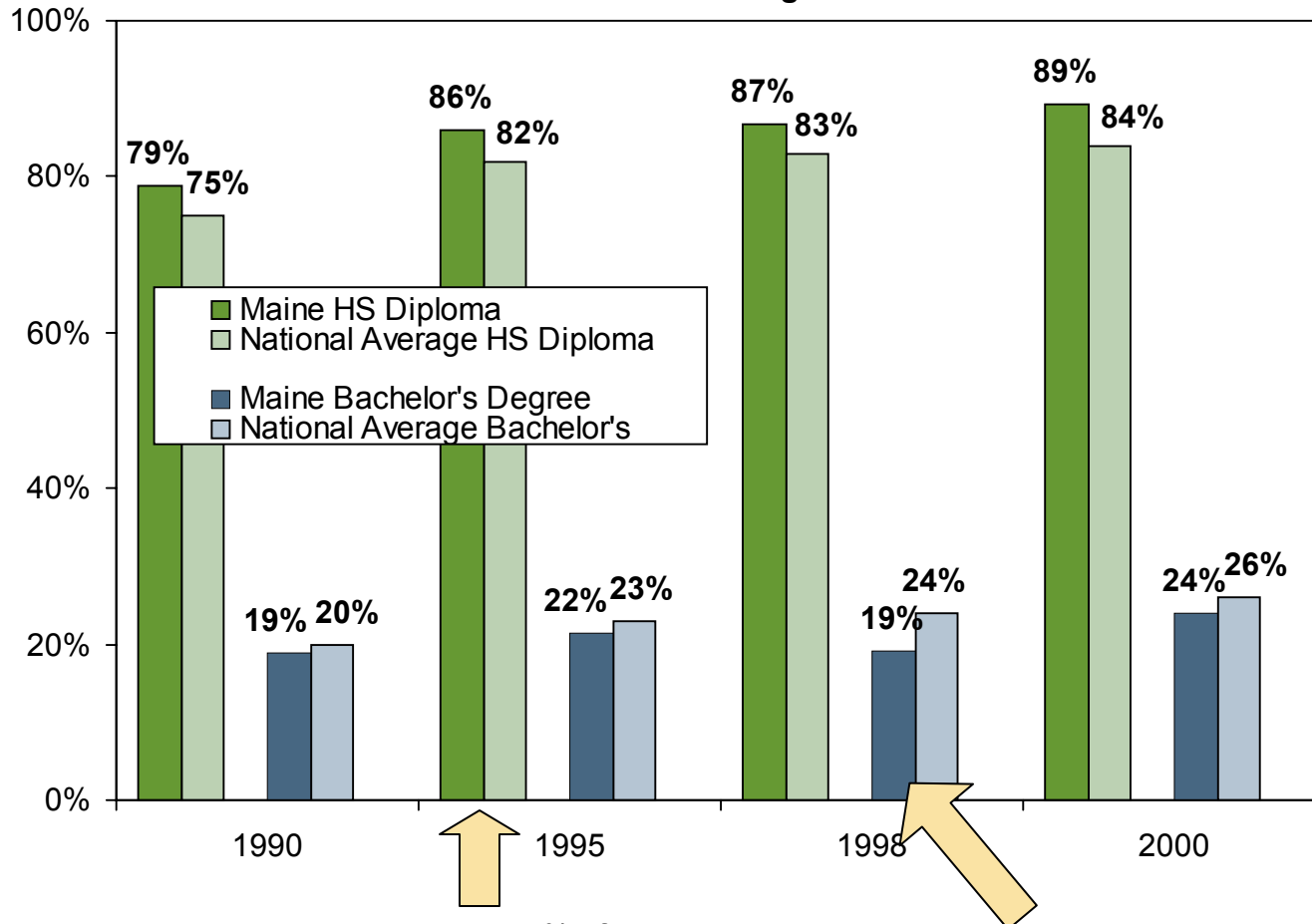


The Most Critical Educational Priority for Maine Surfaced by the *Study of Studies* Is the Gap Between High School Graduation and College Degree Attainment

- Although a variety of issues were surfaced, the issue that stood out as the most critical was the disparity between Maine's strong high-school graduation rates and low college attainment - both for the population at large and Maine's traditional-age students graduating from high school.
 - Maine outperforms the nation and the northeast region in K-12 achievement and high-school graduation rates. However, above average K-12 achievement does not translate into postsecondary success for the vast majority of Maine students.
 - Rates of bachelor's degree attainment are below expectations, particularly given the exceptional performance of Maine's New England peers.
 - Over the last decade, the gap between Maine's national rankings for high school graduation and bachelor's attainment has widened, rather than narrowed.
- Based on current statistics, Maine HS graduation rates exceed those of the nation, but the state begins to fall behind as fewer Maine students 1) aspire to college after graduating from high school or 2) enroll. Persistence once students are in college is a challenge, as fewer than 2/3 of enrolled students will graduate.
 - If college aspirations and enrollment for Maine students were to reach the national average and rates of college persistence were maintained for these new postsecondary students, it would result in 1,355 more students, or a 7% increase, graduating from college each year
 - For this to be true, Maine college persistence rates would have to remain constant – a challenge assuming these 1,355 students would have significant barriers to overcome once enrolled – similar to the barriers that may be preventing them from aspiring to or enrolling in a postsecondary program today.

Maine's Adult Population Outperforms the Nation in High School Graduation but Lags in Bachelor's Degree Attainment

Percentage of Maine Residents 25 and Older With a HS Diploma and a Bachelor's Degree

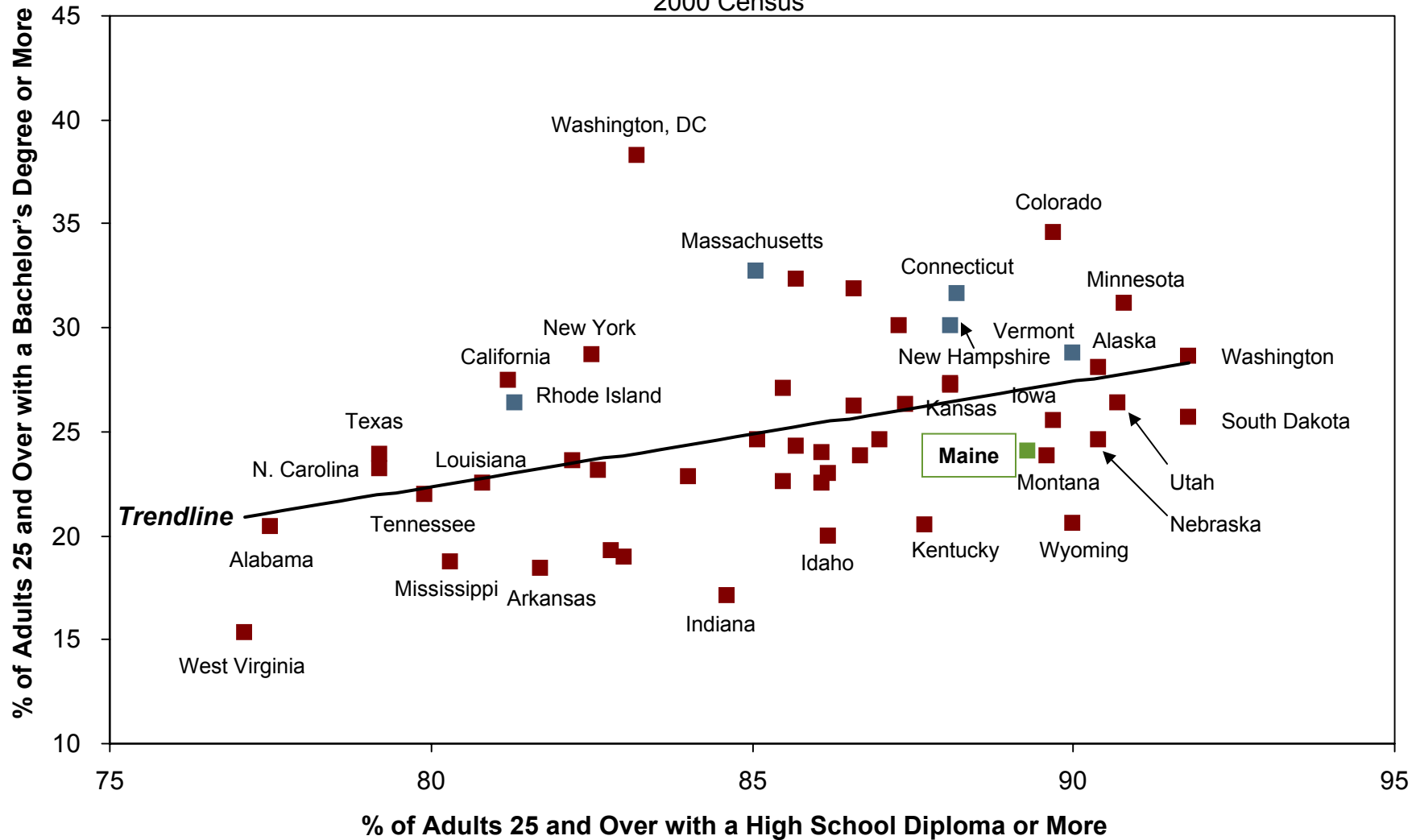


In the mid-1990s 91.8% of Maine's 18-24 year olds completed HS through a regular diploma or completing an alternative or GED program

In 1998 Maine's % of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher reached a low point, with a national ranking of 47

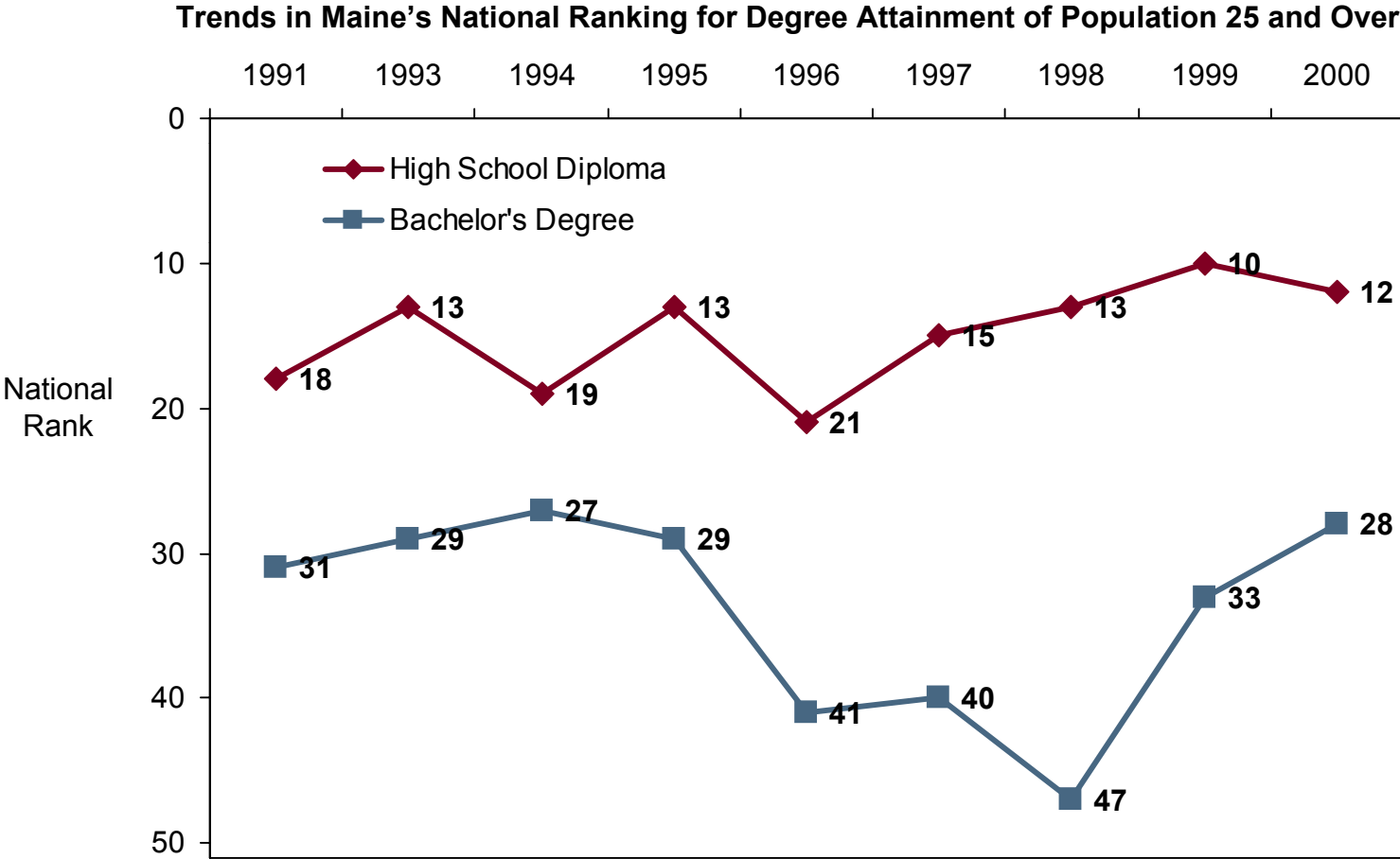
Maine's College Attainment Rates Are Below Expectations, Particularly Given the Performance of New England Peers

Rates of Attainment for a Bachelor's Degree vs. Rates of Attainment for a High School Diploma
2000 Census



Source: US Census Data, FSG Analysis

Over the Last Decade, the Gap Between Maine's National Rankings for High School and College Attainment Has Widened

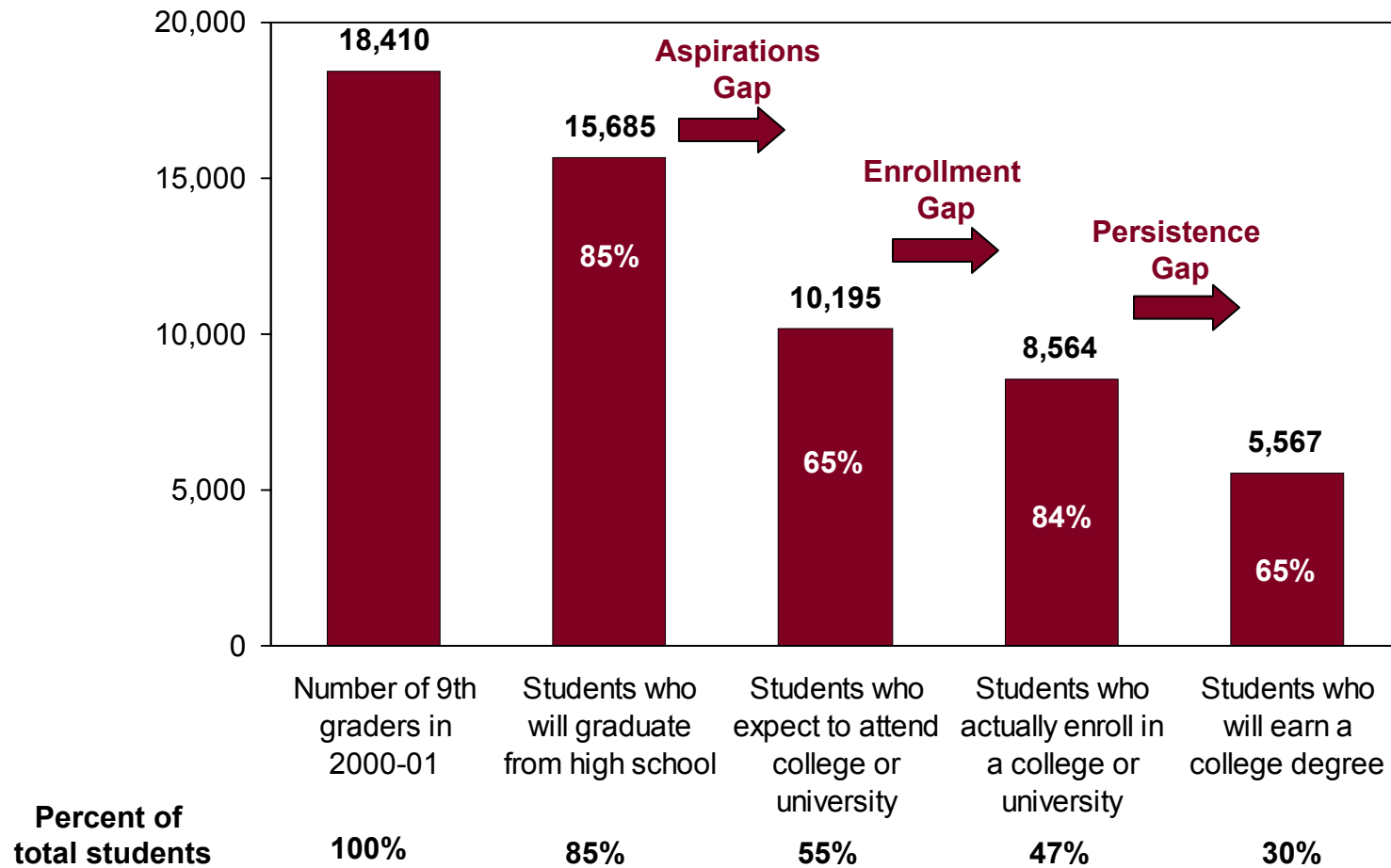


Bachelor's degree attainment has improved since 1998, narrowing the gap from its widest point

Source: US Census Data, FSG Analysis

For Traditional-Age Students Aspirations, Enrollment and Persistence Rates Contribute to the Gap From HS Graduation to College Attainment

Projected Educational Attainment of Maine Public School Ninth Grade Students

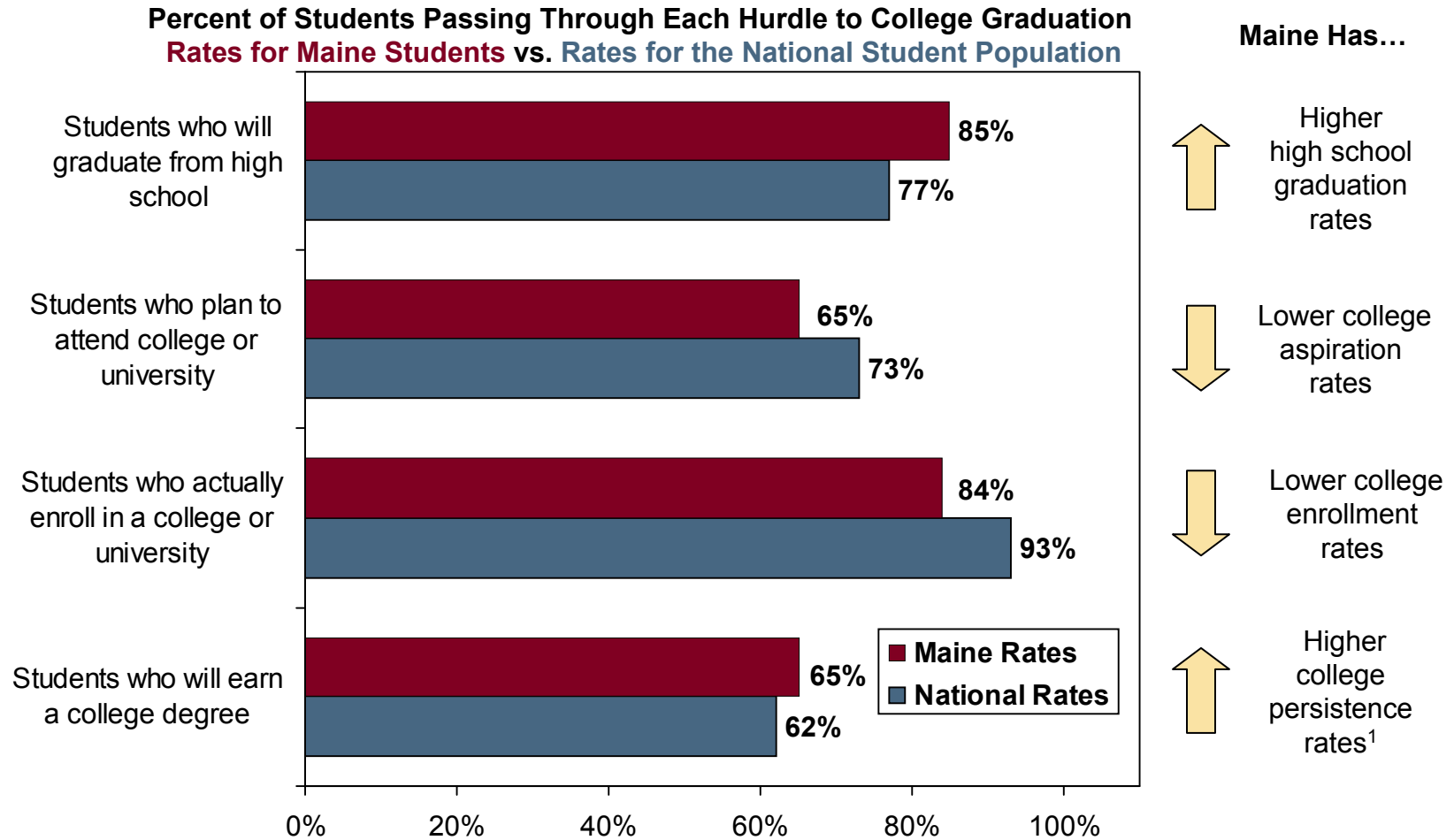


While 85% of Maine 9th graders are expected to graduate from high school, only 30% will get a college degree

Note: % of students planning to attend modified to reflect most recent Maine Department of Education data

Source: Maine Education Policy Research Institute. Maine Department of Education (2001). National Center for Education Statistics (1999).

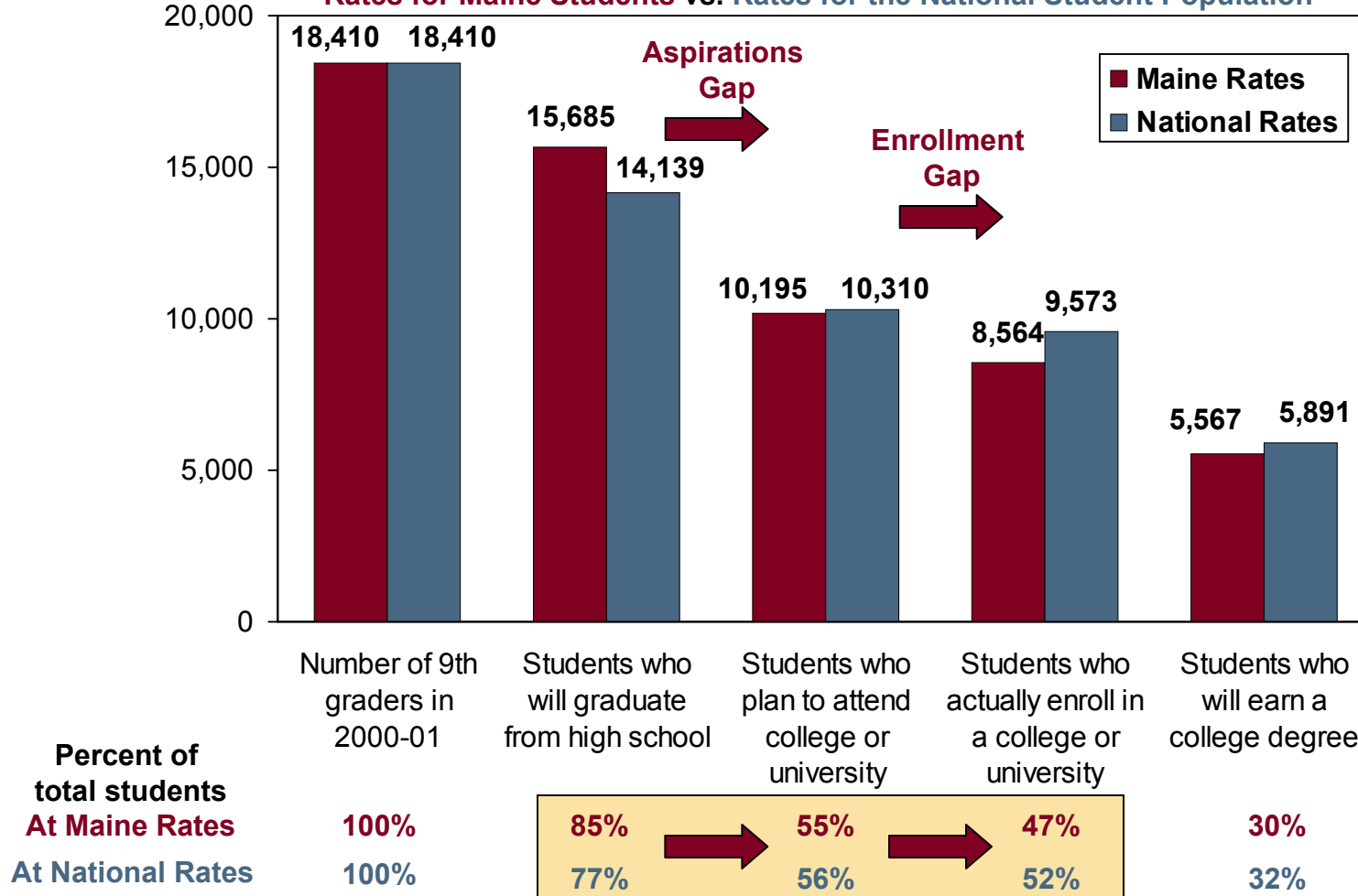
Maine Exceeds National Rates for High School Graduation and College Persistence, but Lags in Aspirations and Enrollment



¹While current persistence rates are higher than national averages, Maine's persistence rates may drop if enrollment rates were to increase
 Source for ME rates: Maine Education Policy Research Institute. Maine Department of Education (2001). National Center for Education Statistics (1999).
 Source for US rates: National Center for Education Statistics (1999) for Graduation Rate; National Library of Education (1992) for Intentions to Enroll in Postsecondary; US DOE (1997) for Postsecondary Enrollment Rate; NCES *Condition of Education 1996* for Postsecondary Persistence Rates

When Maine's Attainment Rate Is Disaggregated and Compared to National Expectations, the Largest Gaps Are Aspirations and Enrollment

Projected Educational Attainment of Maine Public School Ninth Grade Students
Rates for Maine Students vs. Rates for the National Student Population

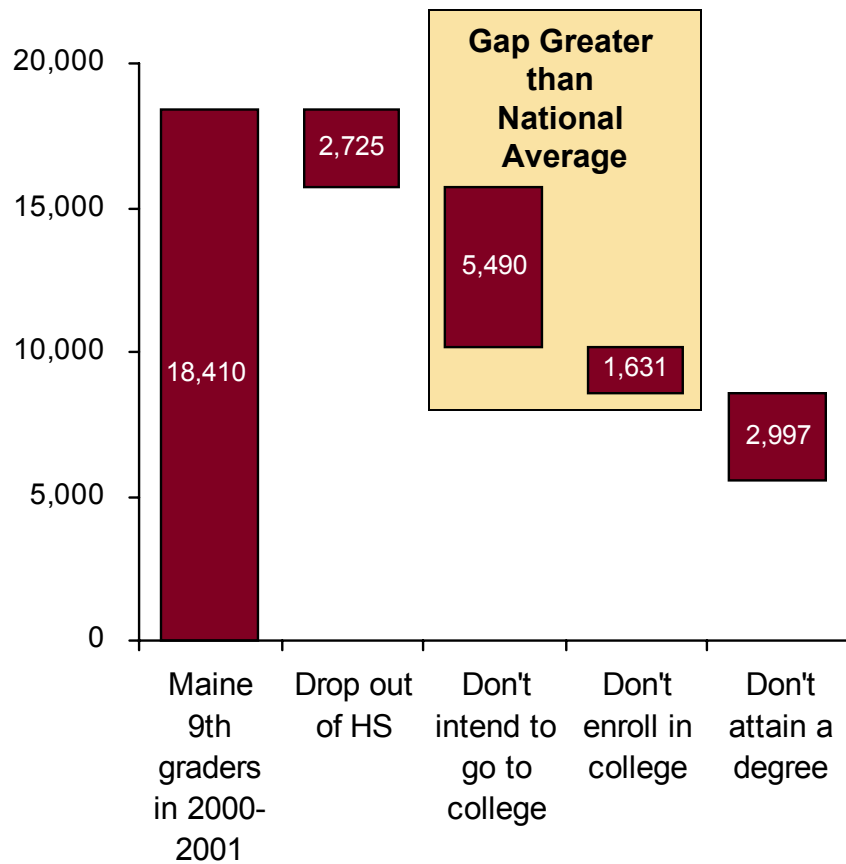


Source for ME rates: Maine Education Policy Research Institute. Maine Department of Education (2001). National Center for Education Statistics (1999).
 Source for US rates: National Center for Education Statistics (1999) for Graduation Rate; National Library of Education (1992) for Intentions to Enroll in Postsecondary; US DOE (1997) for Postsecondary Enrollment Rate; NCES *Condition of Education 1996* for Postsecondary Persistence Rates

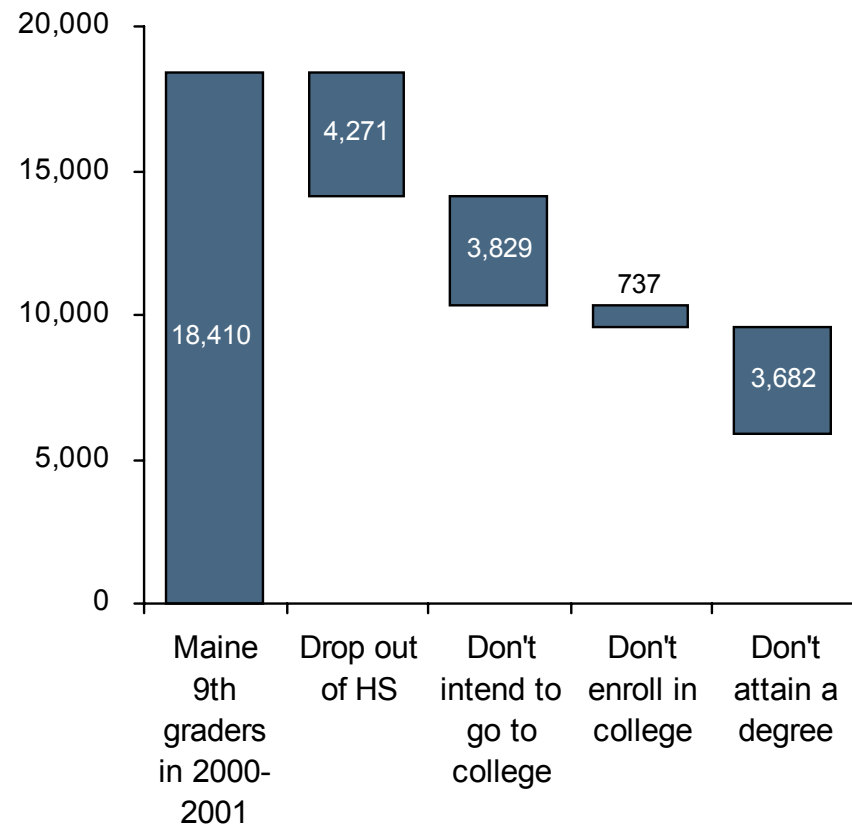
Relative to National Expectations, the *Gap to College* Is Greater For Maine Students Who Don't Aspire To College or Aspire But Don't Enroll

Projected Educational Attainment of Maine Public School Ninth Grade Students

Status Quo
Rates for Maine Students



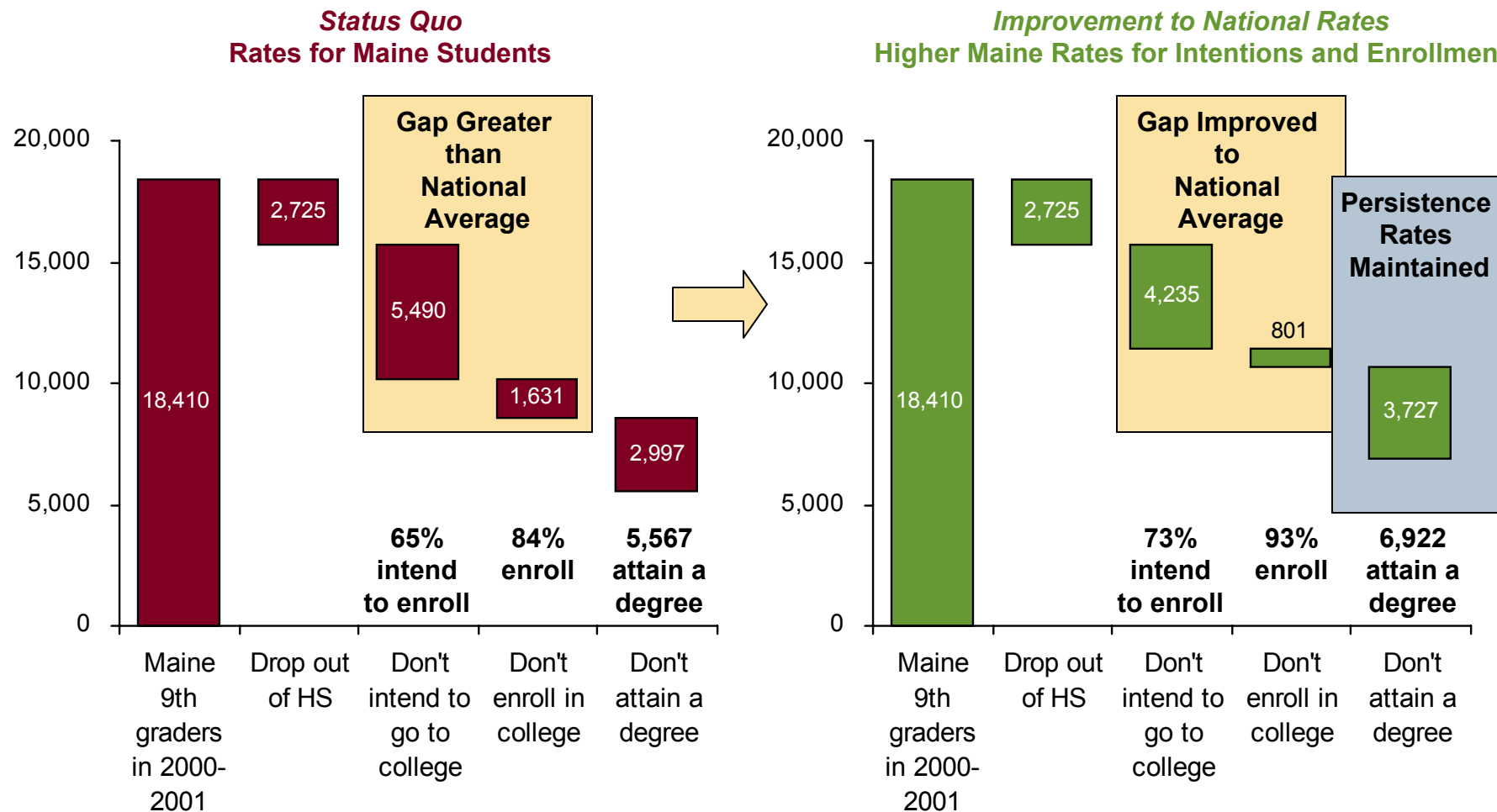
Comparison to National Expectations
Rates for the National Student Population



Source for ME rates: Maine Education Policy Research Institute. Maine Department of Education (2001). National Center for Education Statistics (1999).
 Source for US rates: National Center for Education Statistics (1999) for Graduation Rate; National Library of Education (1992) for Intentions to Enroll in Postsecondary; US DOE (1997) for Postsecondary Enrollment Rate; NCES *Condition of Education 1996* for Postsecondary Persistence Rates

If Aspirations and Enrollment Increased to US Averages and Persistence Is Maintained, 1,355 More Students Would Attain Degrees Each Year

Projected Educational Attainment of Maine Public School Ninth Grade Students



Source for ME rates: Maine Education Policy Research Institute. Maine Department of Education (2001). National Center for Education Statistics (1999). Source for US rates: National Center for Education Statistics (1999) for Graduation Rate; National Library of Education (1992) for Intentions to Enroll in Postsecondary; US DOE (1997) for Postsecondary Enrollment Rate; NCES *Condition of Education 1996* for Postsecondary Persistence Rates

Agenda

I. Conducting a *Study of Studies* on Educational Needs in Maine

II. Examining Maine's *Gap to College*

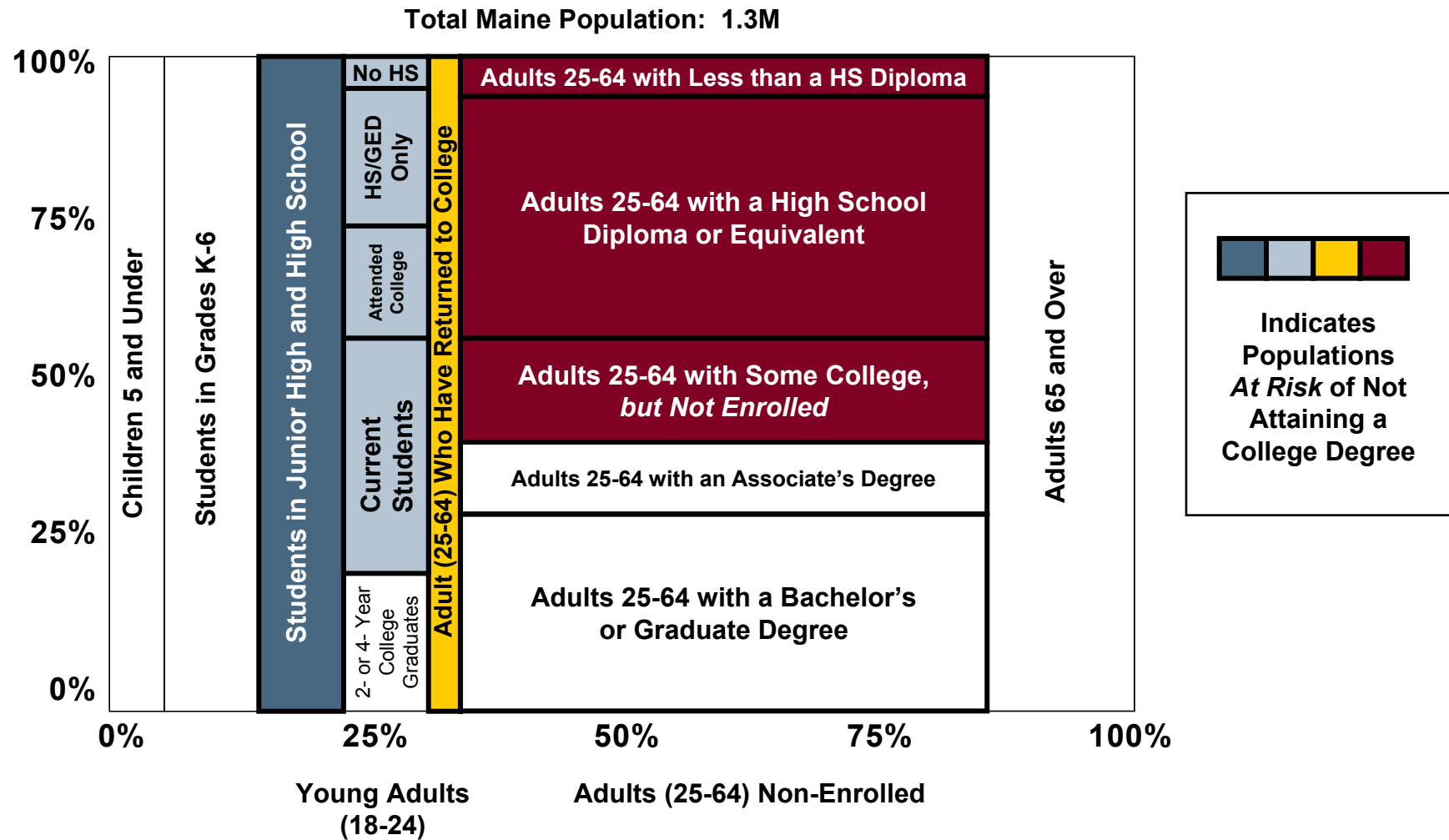
III. Identifying Leverage Points in the *Gap to College*

IV. Defining MELMAC's Approach and Action Plan

Four Types of Internal and External Screening Criteria Helped Define the *Gap to College Opportunities That Would Be the Best Fit for MELMAC*

	Needs	Leveraged Populations	Values	Funding
Key Question	Does it address critical needs in reducing the <i>Gap to College</i> in Maine?	Does it address a significant, reachable population likely to change behavior?	Does it fit with MELMAC's stated values and priorities?	Does it fill gaps and capitalize on collaborative opportunities in the funding landscape?
Criteria	<p>Addresses key issues in aspirations, enrollment and persistence surfaced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Study of Studies • Additional research (e.g. Mitchell Institute study) • Expert interviews • Focus groups with students and parents 	<p>Focuses on a sufficiently large population that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to identify • Easy to reach • Demonstrates college aspirations • Disproportionately impacts future generations of Maine citizens • Relatively easy to change behavior 	<p>Addresses Board's stated values and priorities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affect systemic change to benefit the average Maine student • Work through existing institutions to support new practices • Lead through action • Provide opportunity for collaboration • Provide opportunity to evaluate progress • Avoid political advocacy 	<p>Addresses gaps in the funding landscape by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leveraging existing funds to be more effective • Avoiding capital grants and scholarships

616,000 Maine Residents Ages 12-64, or 48% of the Population, Could Be Considered *At Risk* of Not Attaining A College Degree

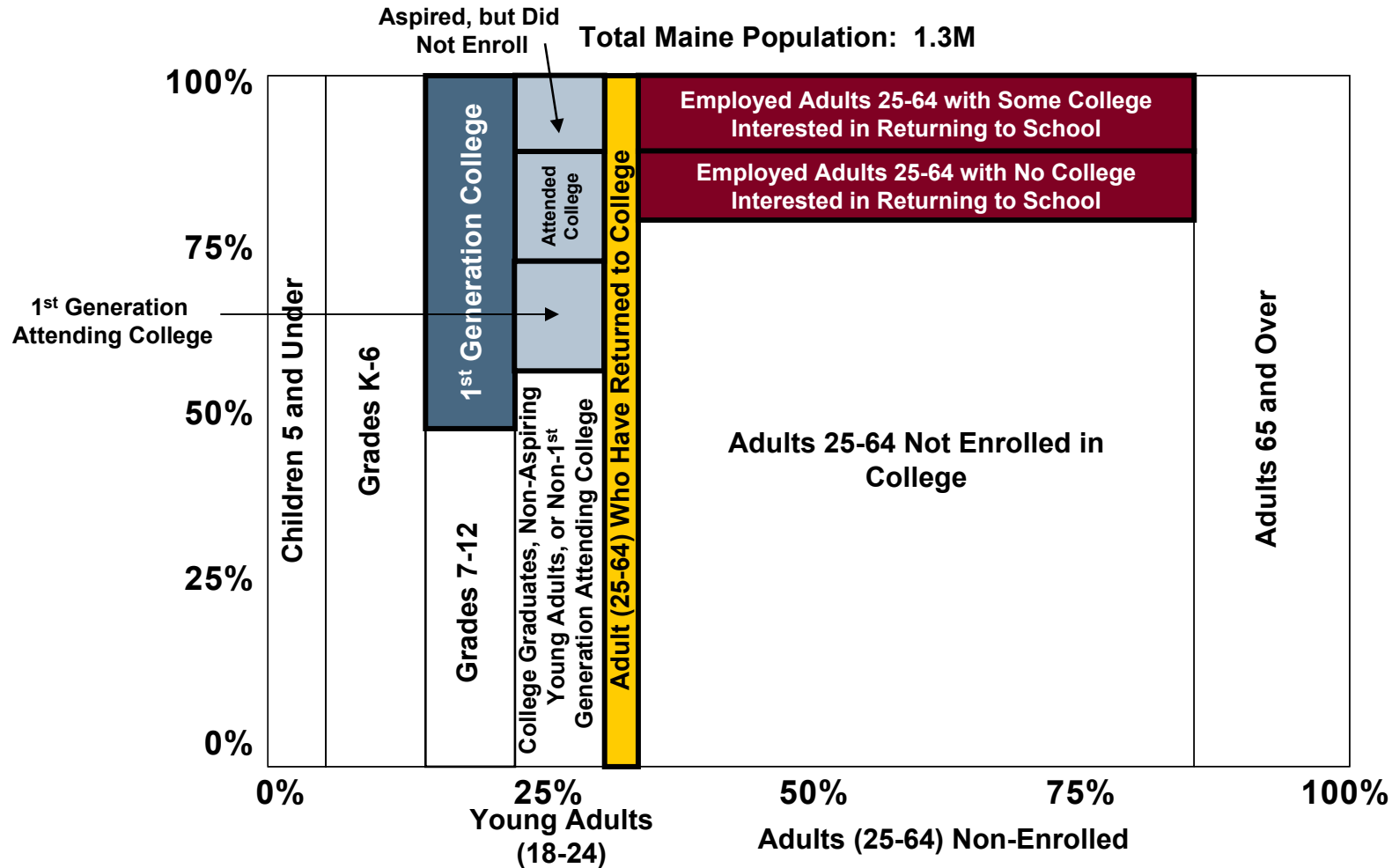


Source: FSG Analysis of Census data, Mitchell Institute data, and USM data

There Are 7 Potential Target Populations Which Are Both At Risk and Higher Leverage in Impacting the *Gap to College*

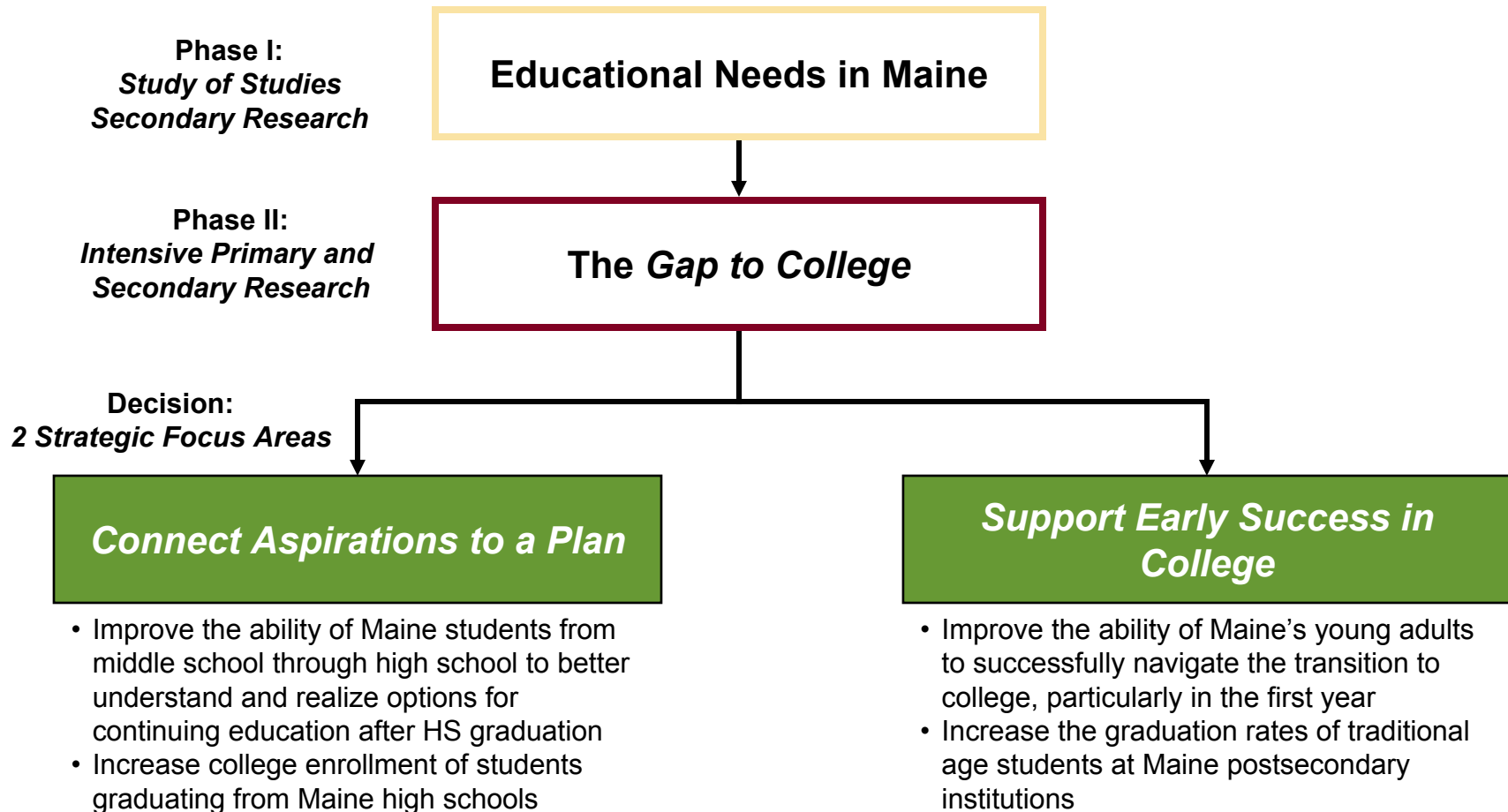
Population Category	High Leverage Population	Size (and % of Maine Population)	Higher Expected Return			
			Sizeable Population	Youth	Aspirations	Influence Next 1 st Generation Students
Current School Students	Grade 7-12 students who would be 1st generation college students/parents do not have a 4-year degree	54,000 (4.2% of ME; 51% of grades 7-12)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Young Adults 18-24 in Maine Without College Degrees	Young adults who aspired to college, but did not enroll	12,000 (0.9% of ME; 11% of 18-24)		✓	✓	✓
	Young adults who attended college, but did not persist	18,000 (1.4% of ME; 17% of 18-24)		✓	✓	✓
	Young adults who are in college in Maine, and are 1st generation	17,000 (1.3% of ME; 16% of 18-24)		✓	✓	✓
Adults 25-64 in Maine Without College Degrees	Employed adults with some college who did not complete a degree and are interested in returning to school	41,000 (2.6% of ME; 10% of 25-64)	✓		✓	✓
	Adults with no college , who are interested in returning to school	68,000 (11% of ME; 7% of 25-64)	✓		✓	✓
	Adults who have returned to school and are working toward a degree	34,000 (3.6% of ME; 5% of 25-64)	✓		✓	✓

Each Potential Target Group Accounts for 1-5% of the Maine Population, Is Significant and Sufficiently Large to Create an Impact



Goals for impacting any target population will need to be more specific than raising the overall postsecondary attainment of Maine's residents – which is driven largely by demographic and economic factors

Two Strategic Focus Areas Were Identified as High Leverage Based on Internal and External Screening Criteria



These two focus areas, pursued in sequence over a 10 year period, form the core of MELMAC's strategy for statewide impact

Across the Range of Possible *Gap to College* Focus Areas, Two Emerged With Very Strong Support from Constituents Interviewed

Range of Possible Focus Areas	Priority for Aspirations	Priority for Enrollment	Priority for Persistence
Increasing Academic Achievement	Lower Priority	Lower Priority	Lower Priority
Changing Community Attitudes	Critical, but More Challenging Priority	Critical, but More Challenging Priority	Lower Priority
Increasing Planning and Preparation	Critical Priority	Critical Priority	Lower Priority
Providing Financial Support	Lower Priority	Lower Priority	Lower Priority
Changing Institutional Options (e.g. Community College)	Lower Priority	Critical, but More Challenging Priority	Critical, but More Challenging Priority
Improving Support During Transitions	Lower Priority	Lower Priority	Critical Priority

Connect Aspirations to a Plan Involving Parents and Community
83% of Interviewees Cite as Top Priority*

Creating More Institutional Options is a Priority – but Changing Higher Education Infrastructure is Not Recommended for MELMAC

Support Early Success in College
43% of Interviewees Cite as Top Priority*

■ Critical Priority

■ Critical, but More Challenging Priority

■ Lower Priority

* 1st, 2nd, or 3rd priority – Interviewees were asked open-ended questions about priorities

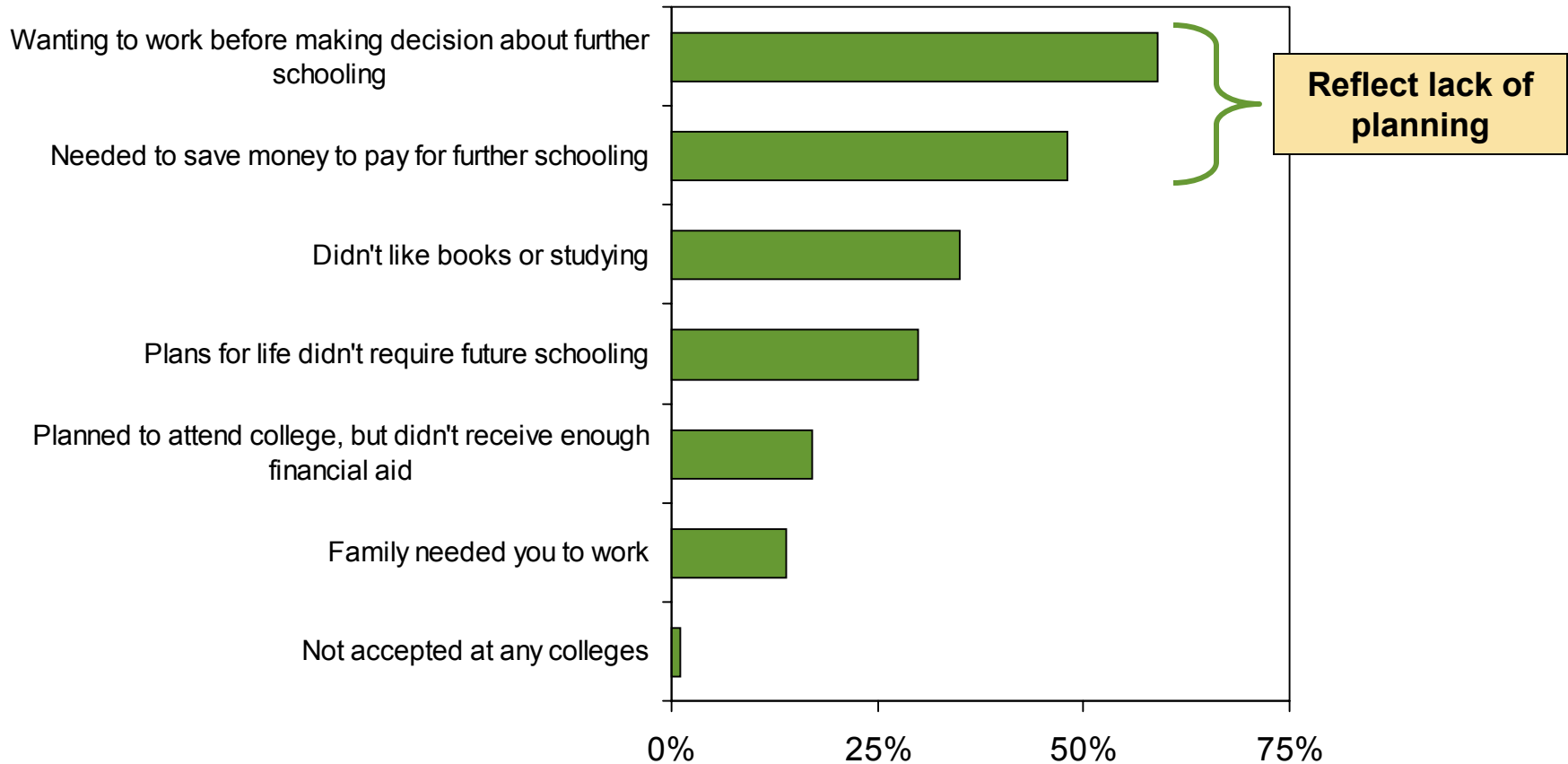
Early Goal Setting And Understanding the Range of College Options Is Critical to Making Aspirations Real and Closing the Enrollment Gap

Connect Aspirations to a Plan

- Student aspirations as traditionally defined (“I want to go to college”) are not the primary issue in closing the *Gap to College*
 - *“My thinking has evolved about aspirations...The research done over the last 5 years suggests that the issue for Maine youth is **not aspirations, but the ability to set goals and accomplish them.**”*
- Increasing **self-direction, articulating motivations for college, and connecting college aspirations to real experiences** are the key factors in making aspirations meaningful
 - *“It is critical for aspirations to be based in reality – for students to see the opportunities a college education creates through some family member. If mom and dad didn’t go to school, they don’t know what it’s like and kids have to get it from somewhere else.”*
- The financing issue is significant – but it’s **changing the perception of the price tag** and helping people understand the return on investment rather than reducing the cost which is a priority
 - *“[Too many] kids don’t have someone in their lives who helps them think through the financial tradeoffs.”*
- **Increasing parents’ engagement** in the college planning and decision-making process yields significant impact – and is particularly important for those parents who did not attend college themselves
 - *“If you’re looking at levers, the parents may be more important targets than the students themselves... If you can get the information into parents’ hands, they can help them understand ways to afford postsecondary education and the importance of it for their future prosperity and well-being.”*
- **College preparation guidance should begin earlier** – and needs to serve all students well

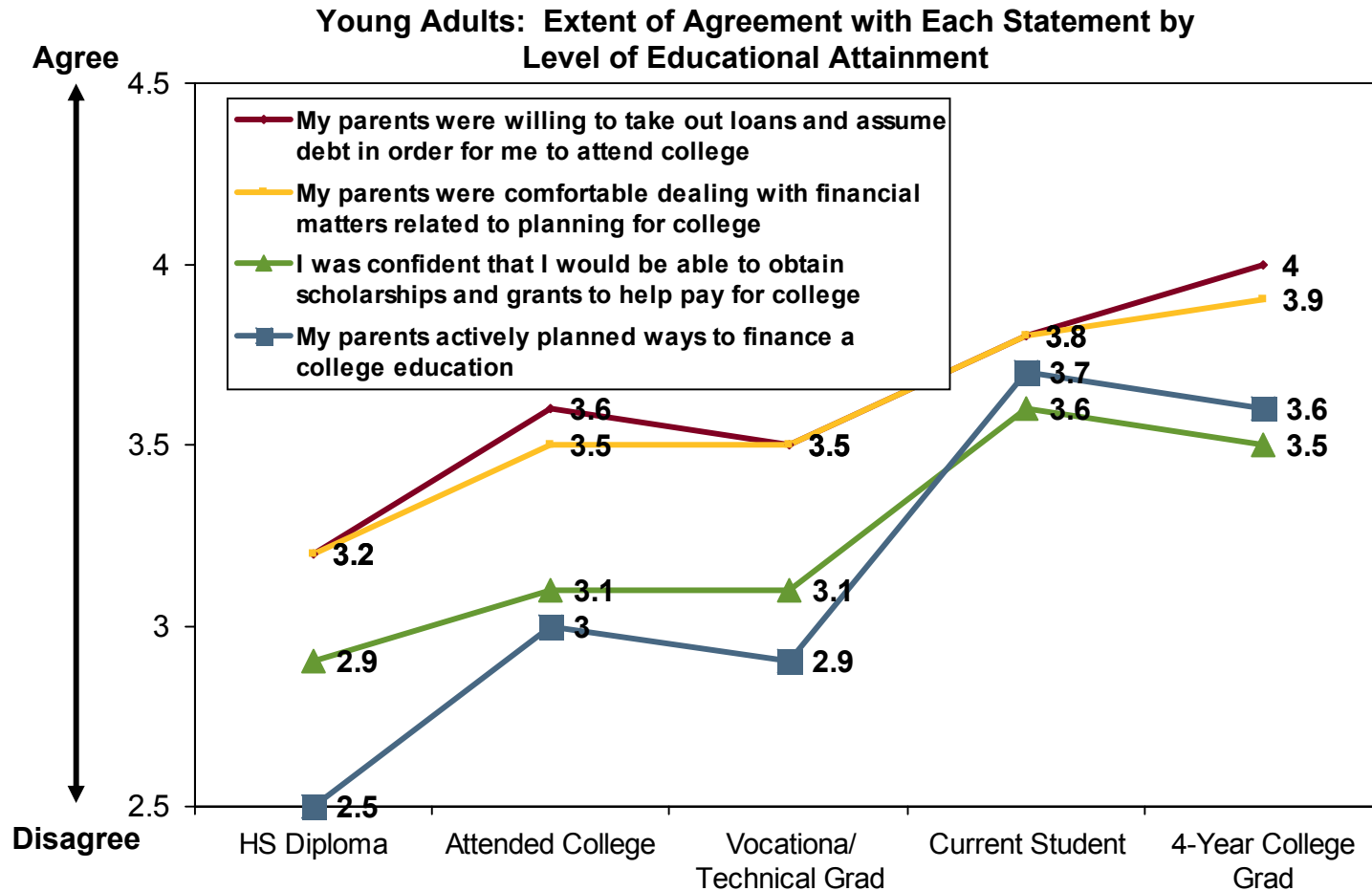
A Lack of Planning, Along with Job and Money Considerations, Influences the Decision to Not Attend College Following High School

Young Adults Who Did Not Attend College Directly Following HS Graduation:
Which of the following were factors in your decision not to pursue college directly after high school?



Of young adults not attending college, three times as many claim they needed to work to save money for college versus planned to attend college but did not because they did not receive enough financial aid

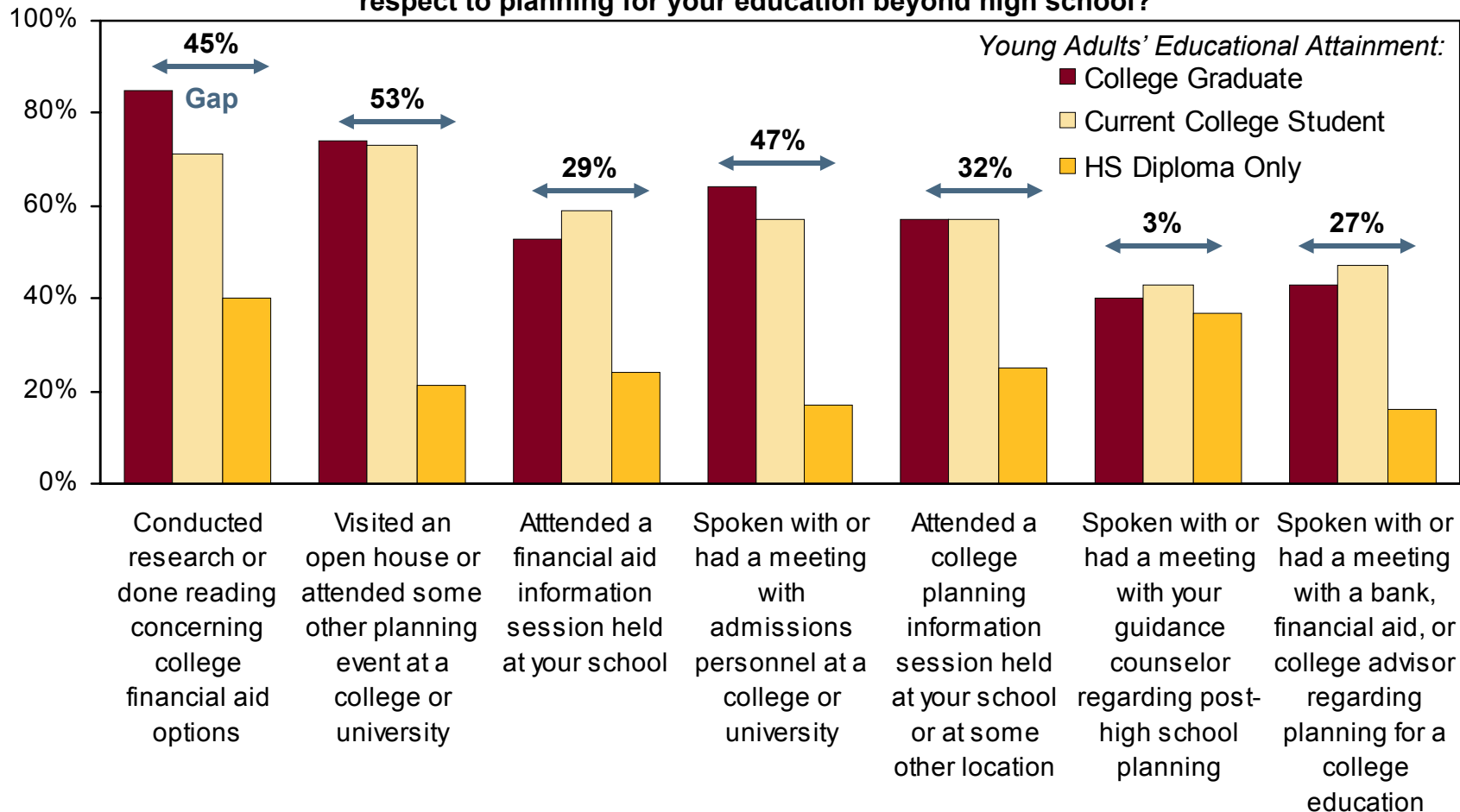
Young Adults Who Pursued and Attained Bachelor's Degrees Had Families Who Were More Comfortable with College Financing Options



Source: Mitchell Institute, *Barriers to Postsecondary Education in Maine*, July 2002, D-42 and D-44

Students With Parents Who Are Proactive in College Planning Have an Increased Likelihood of Graduating from College

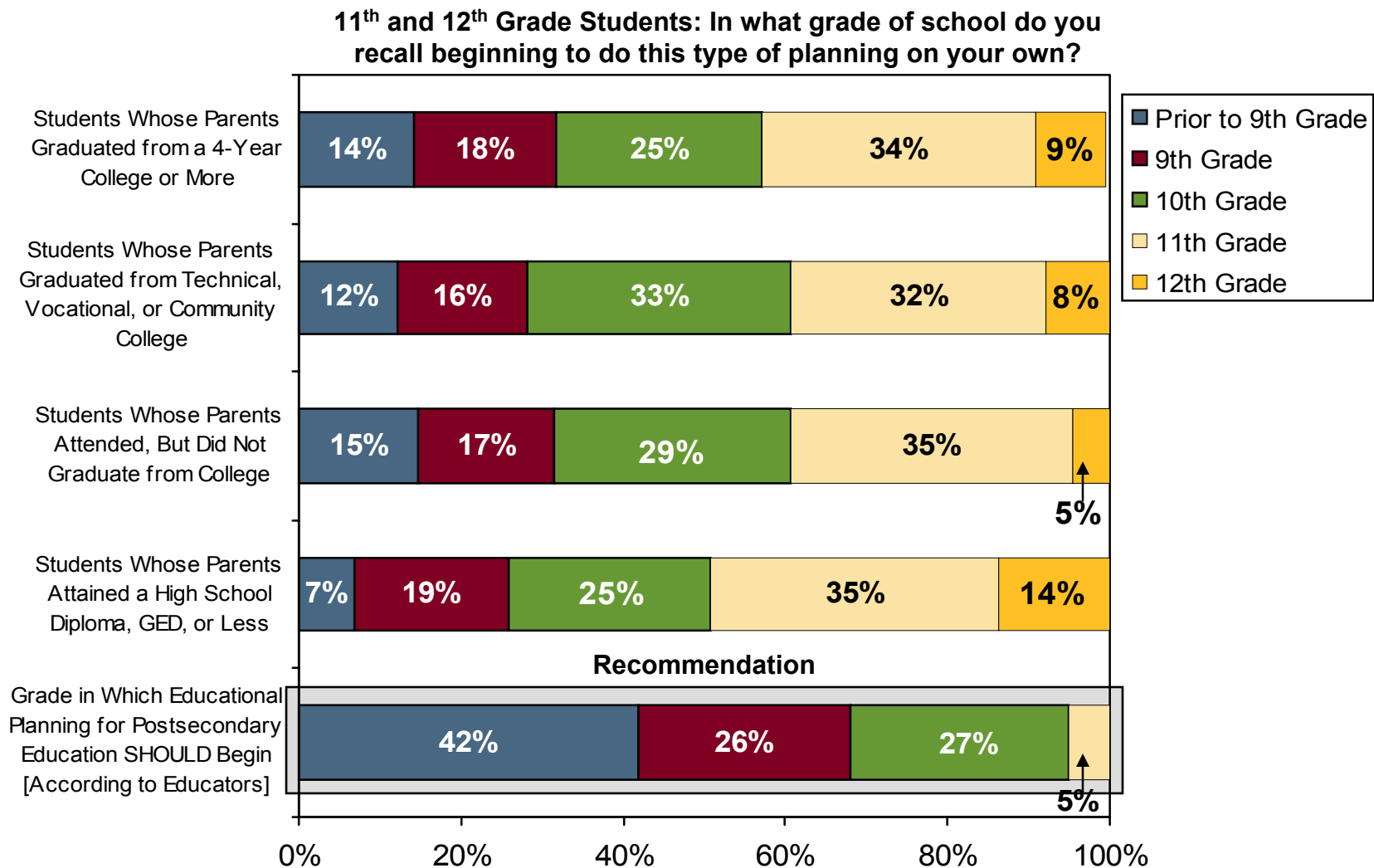
Young Adults: Which of the following things did your parents do with respect to planning for your education beyond high school?



Parents without college degrees are the least likely to take these action steps to help students plan for college – though participate more in events held at schools

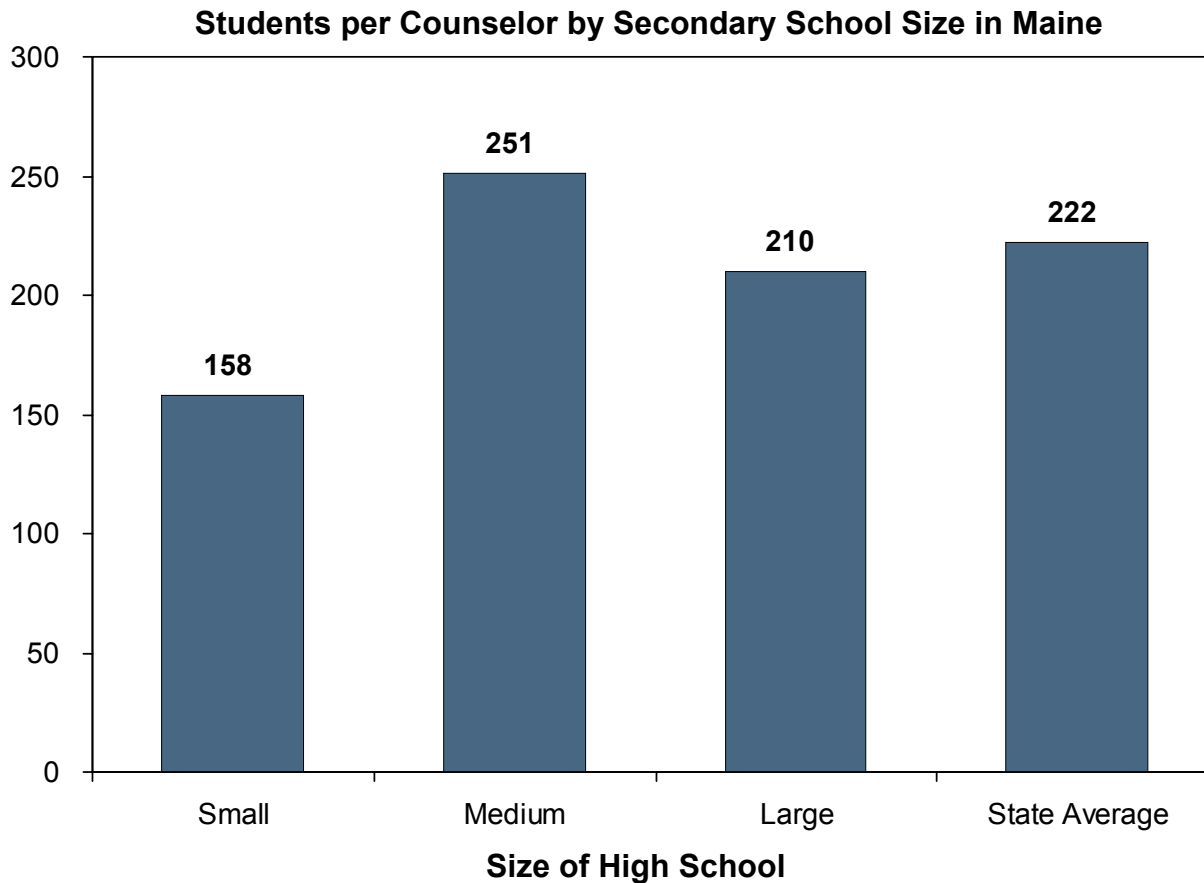
Source: Mitchell Institute, *Barriers to Postsecondary Education in Maine*, July 2002, D-35, FSG Analysis of Mitchell Institute Data

Only 1/3 of Students Meet Educators' Recommendations For Starting College Planning By 9th Grade



Source: Mitchell Institute, *Barriers to Postsecondary Education in Maine*, July 2002, FSG Analysis of Mitchell Institute Data

When Guidance Counselors Are Called Upon to Address Students' Non-Academic Needs, the Capacity to Provide Personal Pre-College Support to All Students Is Limited



“When you look at guidance counselors’ loads, they’re incented to look at the sure bets. They have limited resources.”

“Guidance staff wind up needing to spend time on a wide range of things outside of postsecondary planning.”

“There’s a need for much more staffing of some form to have personal relationships with all students...This is needed even with the option of engaging teachers more in the advising role.”

On average, each Maine guidance counselor serves 222 students

Focusing Attention And Research on Ways to Support Students Early in College Is Critical to Addressing the Persistence Gap

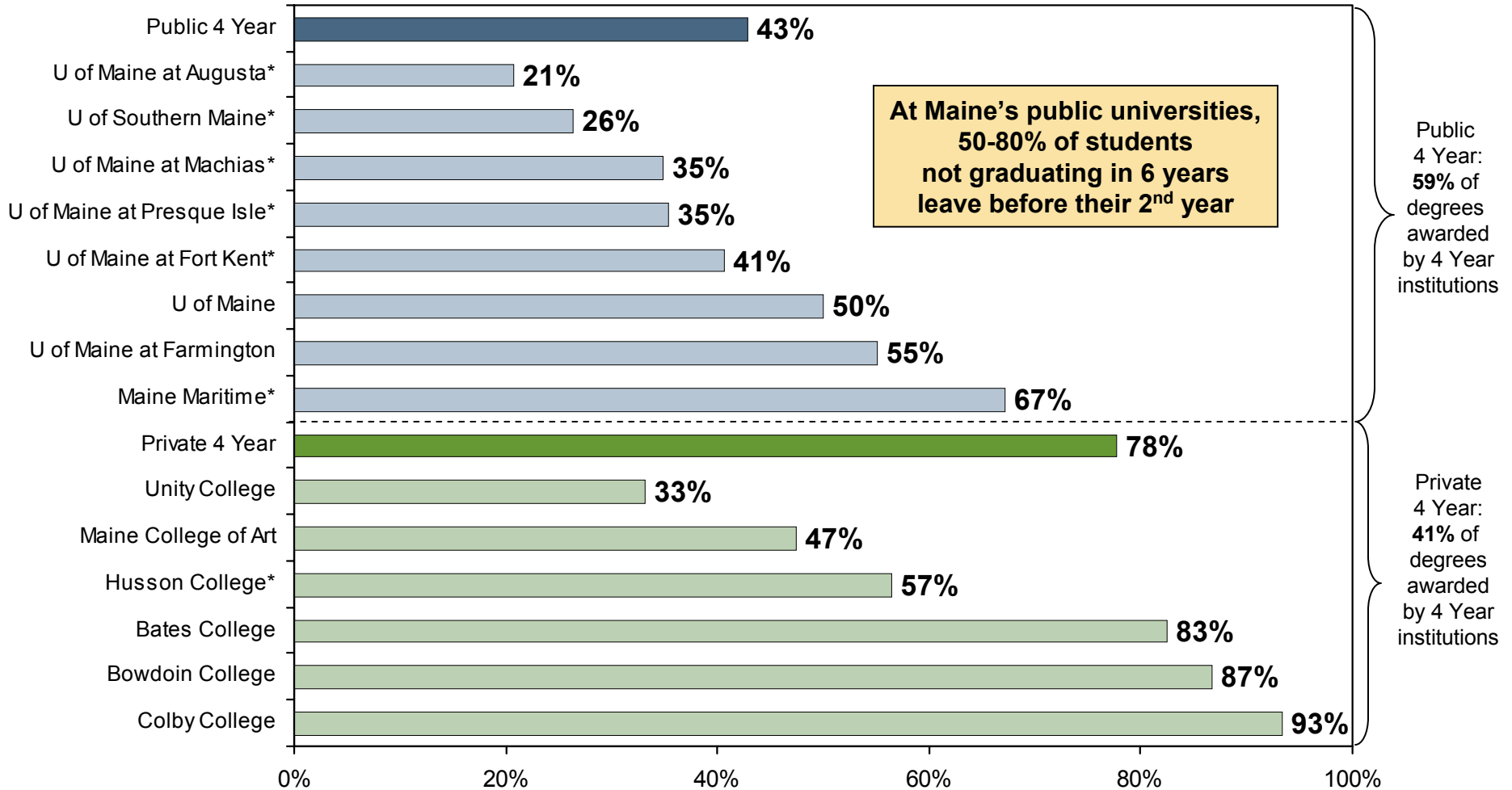
Support Early College Success

- Social issues are critical. **Providing support during the transition period** into college (through sophomore year) is important to students' persistence, but often receives inconsistent attention by higher education institutions
 - *“At the public universities, the message we send is ‘you’re here, you’re on your own’.”*
 - *“It’s not a matter of persistence, it’s a matter of assistance...Providing this requires behavior change on the part of the whole system, particularly professors.”*
 - The impact of existing programs designed to support student persistence is unknown. **Student cohorts** are sometimes cited as a successful intervention that increases student retention
 - *“Students succeed when they have a support group, are getting attention, and they have mentors...This happens today in the honors groups and in specific vocational programs.”*
- **Students need to be prepared to deal with financial issues throughout college** – financing is perhaps even more difficult to manage in the 2nd year as financial aid packages change. Students and families who have support and are motivated to make the college investment are much more likely to make it work.
 - *“Financial issues continue to be significant once a student is enrolled in college – working out living expenses and getting more help in the later years is big for people to make it work.”*
- **Academic factors play a limited role**
 - *“For some kids that leave college early and come home – the issue is the big world versus the small town. They get out there and it’s too different of a lifestyle. It’s not academic.”*

Educational leaders have a much less concrete sense of the issues affecting persistence – much more is known about aspirations and enrollment

Over Half the Students Who Enroll In Maine’s Public Institutions Do Not Get a Degree Within Six Years

Six-Year Graduation Rates at Maine Four-Year Colleges and Universities, 1997



The first year of college is currently when most of the attrition occurs

* Four-year colleges and universities that offer associate as well as bachelor’s degree programs – Maine undergraduates interested in pursuing non-technical associate degrees enroll at a public or private four-year institution that offers both associate and bachelor’s degree programs.

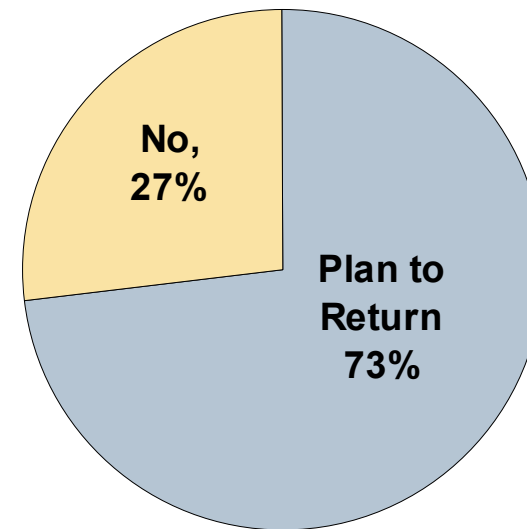
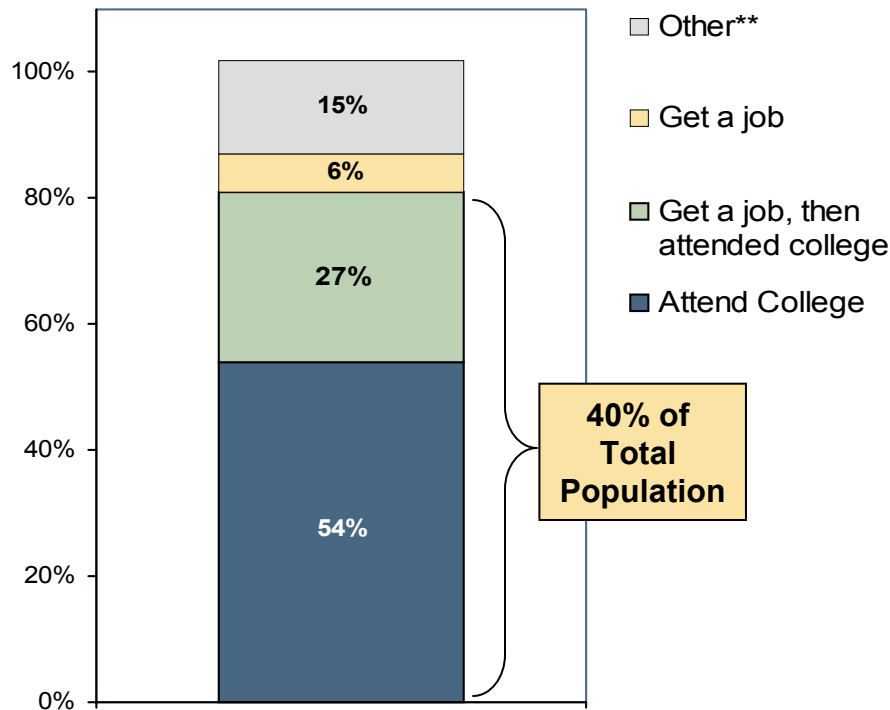
Young Adults Who Did Not Persist Have Regrets and Still Value College

Young Adults Who Attended College and Stopped:
If you could choose again what to do directly after high school, would you do something different?

Young Adults Who Attended College and Stopped:
Do you plan to return to college?

% Answering Yes **51%**

What would you do?



40% of young adults who “stopped out” would still attend college (or get a job and then attend) if they could go back and 73% plan to return

**: “Other” includes Travel, Pursue Different Field, Go into the Military, Other and Don’t Know/Refused
 Source: Mitchell Institute, *Barriers to Postsecondary Education in Maine*, July 2002, D-50 and D-52

Agenda

I. Conducting a *Study of Studies* on Educational Needs in Maine

II. Examining Maine's *Gap to College*

III. Identifying Leverage Points in the *Gap to College*

IV. Defining MELMAC's Approach and Action Plan

MELMAC Will Approach Its Work Through a Proactive and Focused Strategy

- In order to achieve the greatest impact for students in the state of Maine, the MELMAC Education Foundation plans on being both **focused and proactive**. The Foundation will support Maine communities and educational institutions interested in making the college aspirations of students and families a reality
- MELMAC will **bring together Maine communities and institutions to work toward achieving specific goals**, issuing **calls for proposals** and partnering with successful applicants and committed leaders over **multiple years**
- Success will require **collaboration with a variety of partners** - working directly with Maine's public schools and postsecondary institutions, but also bringing together business partners, policy leaders, and community-based organizations
- In addition to directly working with communities and institutions to transform their work with students, MELMAC anticipates it will dedicate a portion of its resources to **fostering dialogue across the state** about the issues critical to students' success in college
- MELMAC's approach will **emphasize building and sharing knowledge** that is based on the experiences of Maine communities and institutions as they work to *Connect Aspirations to a Plan and Support Early Success in College*. The Foundation expects that through a **rigorous evaluation of outcomes** and the **development of successful models** that can be shared across the state its work will yield impact for students across the entire state

The Foundation Plans to Pursue Two Strategic Focus Areas In Sequence

A. Begin with *Connect Aspirations to a Plan*

- Begin to Build Knowledge* 1. Conduct research to identify a range of innovative college and career planning practices successful at increasing the college enrollment of Maine’s traditional-age students (and possibly persistence)
- Design Pilots* 2. Share practices with interested professionals across the state (included invited higher ed professionals)
- Test Pilots* 3. Initiate a planning grant process bringing together communities and schools whose leadership is interested in implementing innovative practices with consultants that are able to help think through the options and process of implementation
- Link Focus Areas* 4. Fund the communities who successfully completed the planning process with Implementation grants – over as many as 6-7 years, these grantee communities will test innovative practices in the context of different Maine communities and institutions – and evaluate success for both students in the community and the institutions
- Share Learning* 5. Follow graduating students from grantee communities to college
- 6. Continue to share practices being tested by grantee communities with interested professionals across the state – in a way that encourages others to model these innovative practices
- 7. After 7-8 years conduct research to identify innovative college and career planning practices – comparing findings to the original study to gauge progress over time

B. Pursue *Support Early Success in College* once *Connect Aspirations to a Plan* is well into implementation in pilot communities

- Begin to Build Knowledge* 1. Begin a dialogue on persistence issues and early college success with interested professionals
- 2. Conduct research to identify a range of innovative college retention practices
- 3. Share practices with interested professionals across the state
- Design Pilots* 4. Fund communities to support graduating students’ persistence in college and evaluate progress
- 5. Initiate a planning and/or implementation grant process for higher ed institutions whose leadership is interested in implementing innovative practices
- Share Learning* 6. Continue to share practices being tested by grantee institutions with interested professionals across the state – in a way that encourages others to model these innovative practices

Over time, the Foundation will build its ability to link issues of college planning to issues of success in college

Proposed Timeline

MELMAC's Strategy Consists of A Sequenced Plan, Involving Key Partners to Test Approaches, Support a Group of Core Communities, and Build the State's Knowledge Base

