



The Rigor Gap: Comparing Course Grades and End-of-Course Exam Results of Algebra I and 10th Grade English Students in Florida

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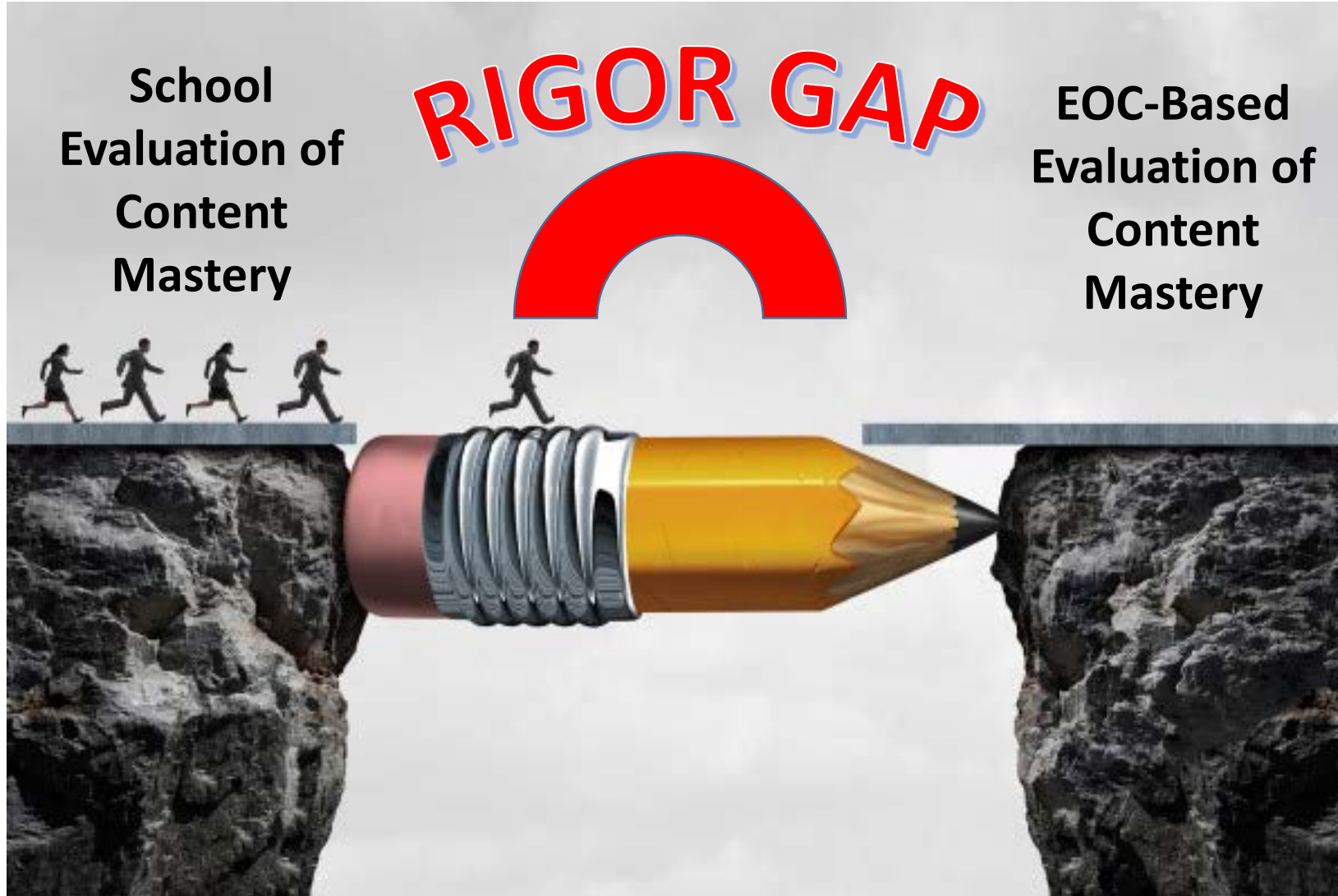
- Private, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of business and civic leaders
- Represent over 140 companies with more than 1.3 million employees
- Since 1961, advises Governor, Cabinet, Legislature, other policy makers

Reason for Study



- Horizons 2040 Project: Grades PreK-12
- Met with subject-matter and pedagogical experts, teachers, leaders, and students
- Guiding values of “Highest Expectations” and “Accountability”
- Build upon the proven formula of high standards, rigorous assessments, and strong accountability for all Florida students

The Rigor Gap



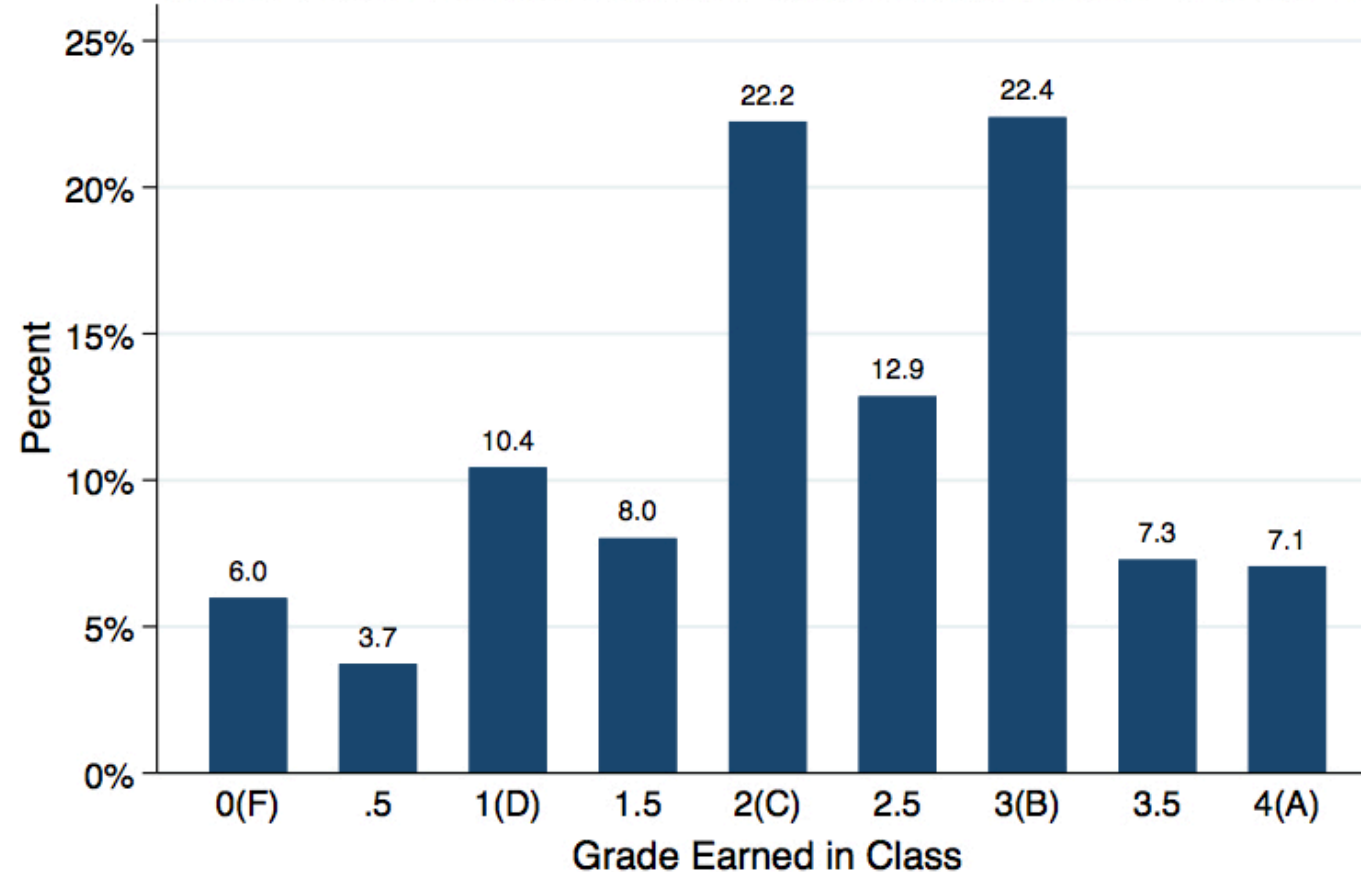
Research Question



- What are the Algebra I and English 2 course grades of students who did not earn a passing score on the corresponding EOC/FSA?

- Administrative data provided by Florida Department of Education for school years 2015–16 through 2017–18
 - English 2 Grades and ELA Grade 10 FSA Scores: 230,458 Students
 - Algebra I Grades and EOC Scores: 202,308 Students

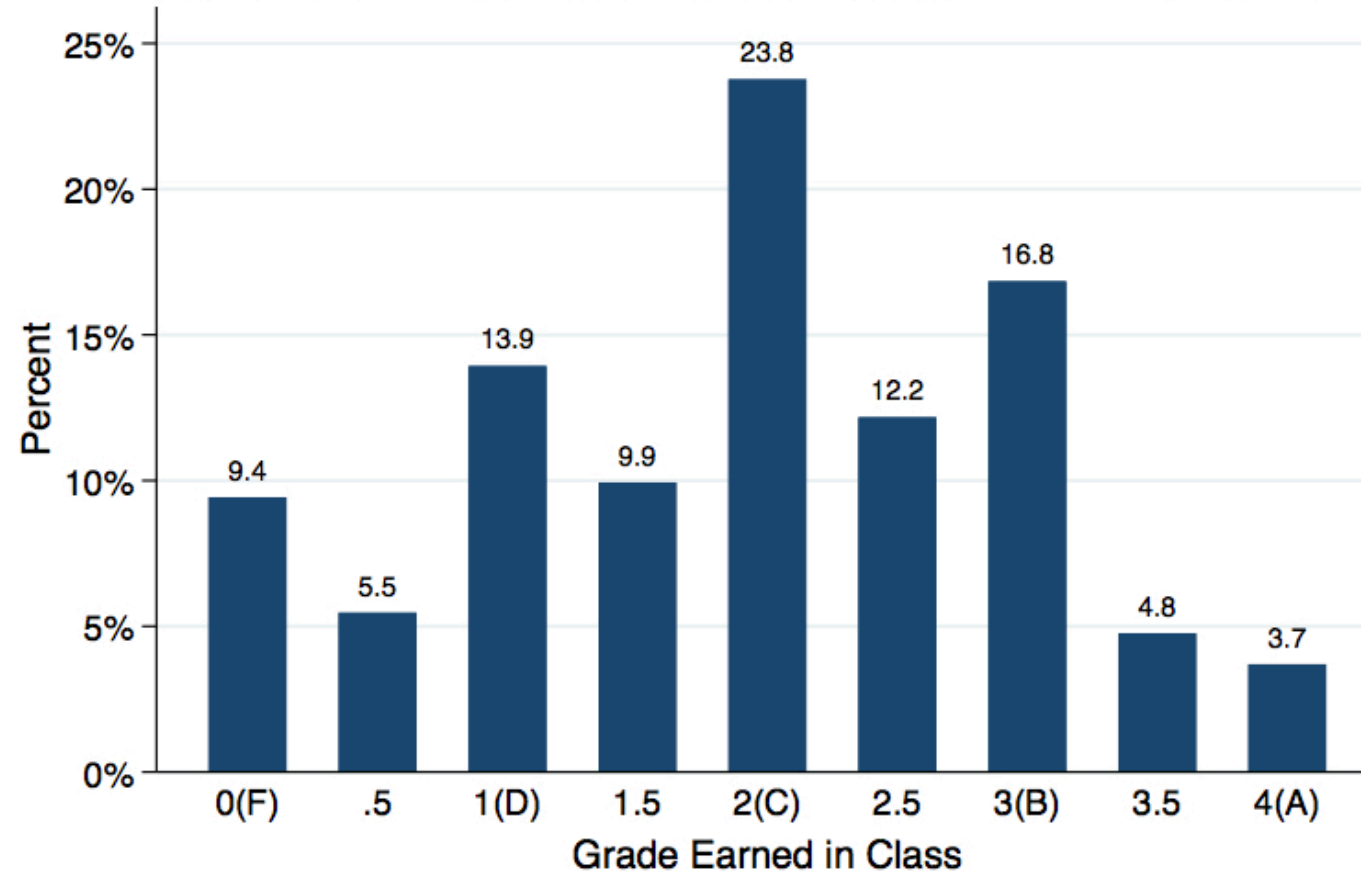
Course Grade Distribution of Non-Passing ELA FSA Grade 10 Students



Note: Data from 2015-16 school year through 2017-18 school year (230,458 students)

- 37% Earning 3(B) or Higher
- 72% Earning 2(C) or Higher

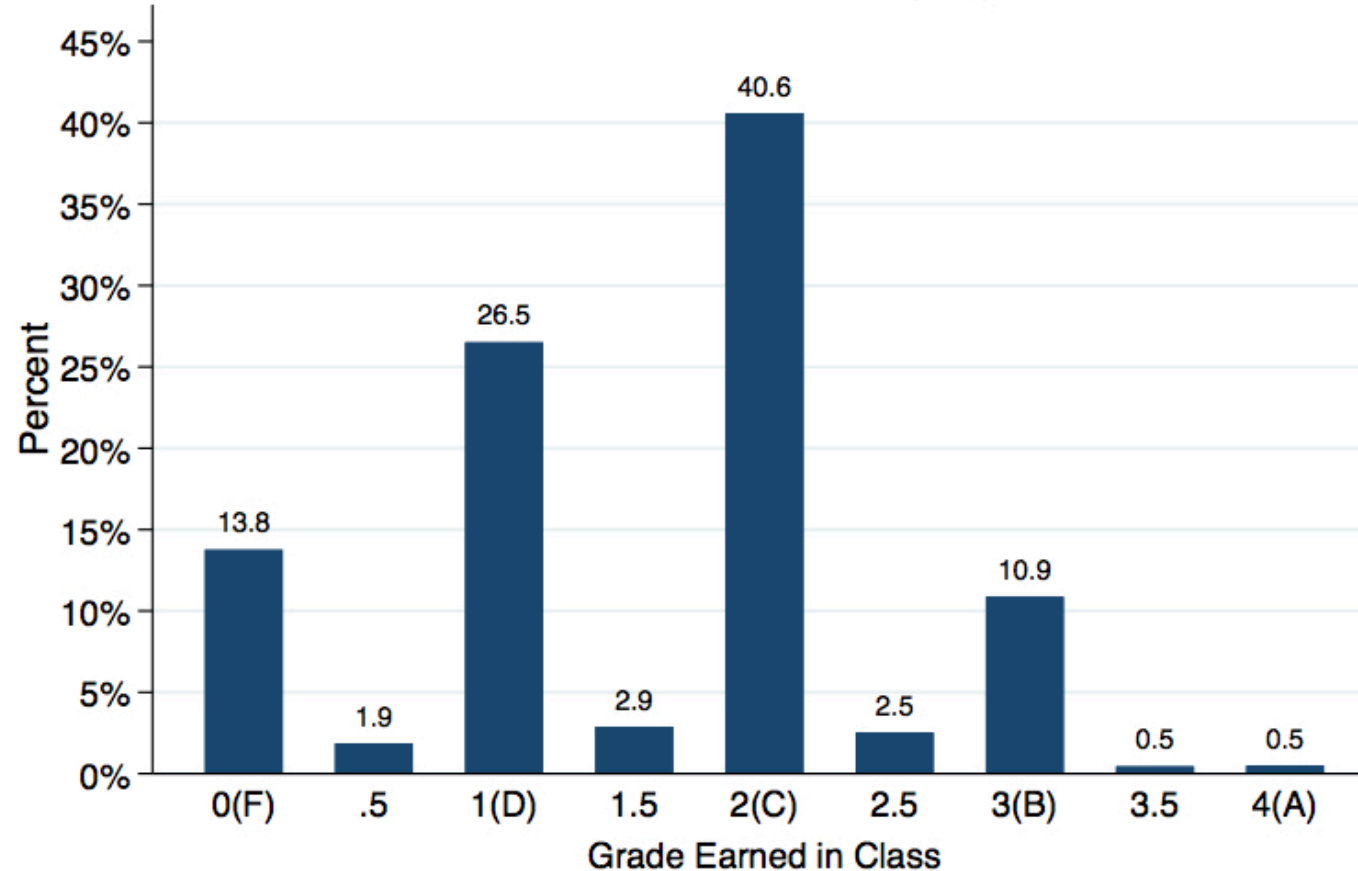
Course Grade Distribution of ELA FSA Grade 10 *Level 1* Students



Note: Data from 2015-16 school year through 2017-18 school year (102,846 students)

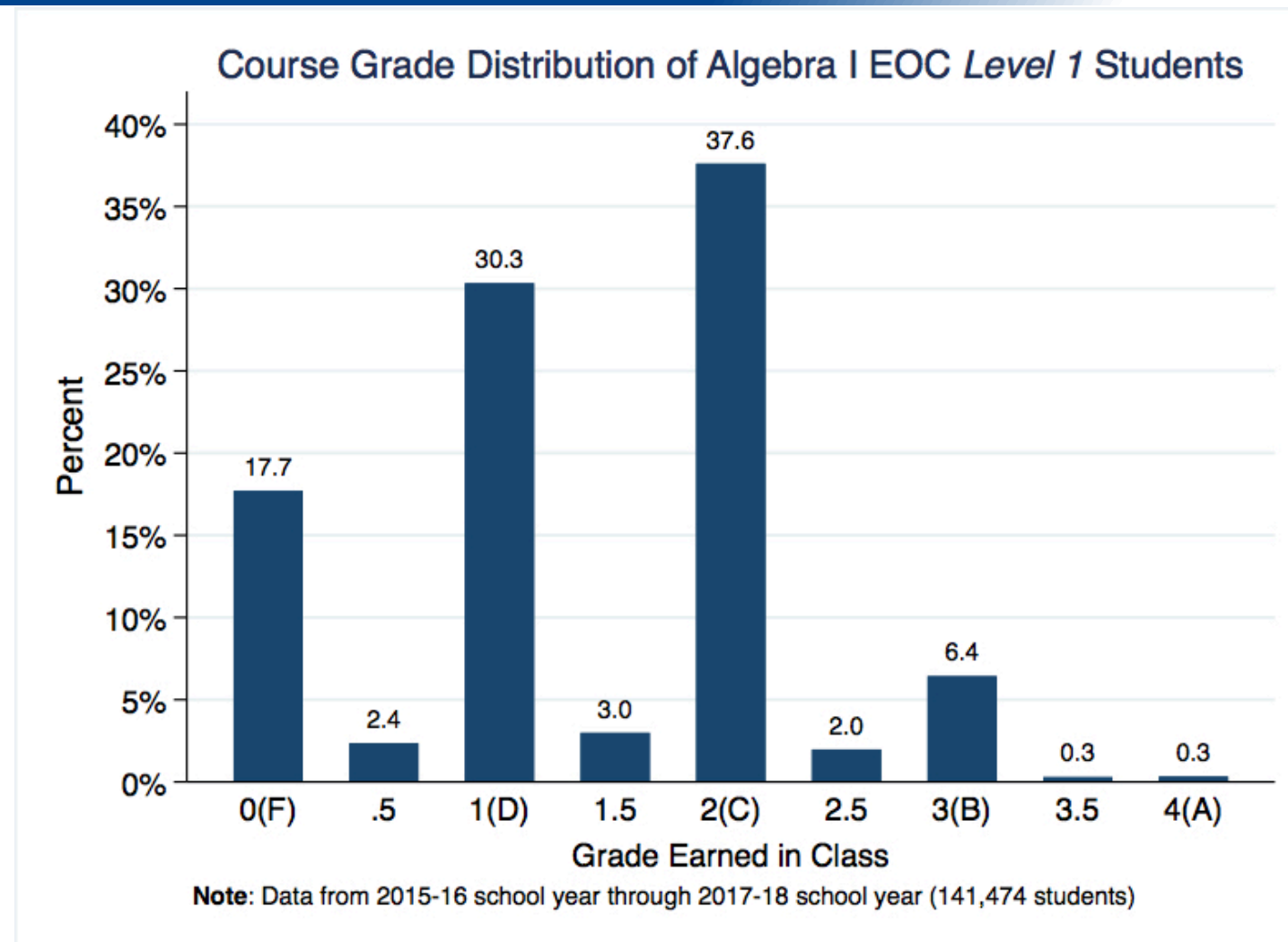
- Over 25% Earning 3(B) or Higher
- 61% Earning 2(C) or Higher

Course Grade Distribution of Non-Passing Algebra I EOC Students



Note: Data from 2015-16 school year through 2017-18 school year (202,308 students)

- 12% Earning 3(B) or Higher
- 55% Earning a 2(C) or Higher



–7% Earned 3(B) or Higher
 – 47% Earned 2(C) or Higher

- Apparent disconnect between rigor of classroom and rigor of End-of-Course Exams
 - Potentially long-standing problem
 - Figlio (2004): 61% of B-students and 17% of A-students not proficient on FCAT
 - Creates cognitive dissonance for students and parents
- Easier course likely means less content mastery accumulated throughout academic year
 - Babcock (2010): Average study time 50% lower in class in which average expected grade of students in the class is an A than in same course where average expected grade is C
- Our research cannot illuminate the specific mechanism(s) by which some students arrive at a higher course grade than their EOC score would merit

**“Today’s NAEP results make it very clear that unless we start raising expectations for students, we will continue to see stagnant growth.”
–Commissioner Richard Corcoran 10/30/19**

- Create a more seamless way for school personnel to compare the course grades and EOC scores of their students
- Identify closing of the rigor gap as an additional student need under the School Community Professional Development Act and similar programs
- Expedite research into mastery–based education
- Conduct research seeking to ascertain the causes of the rigor gap

QUESTIONS?

