

Using Research and Data to Drive School Improvement

KC-AERC

John Q. Easton

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Embracing the challenge of this historic moment in education

- Billions of new stimulus dollars will drive far-reaching changes in states and school districts nationwide
- “A perfect storm for school reform”

Some background on IES

- Nation's engine for education research, evaluation, and statistics
- Part of Department of Education, but politically independent
- NAEP – “Nation's Report Card”
- What Works Clearinghouse

New priorities driving change at IES

Preserve rigor, shift focus to relevance
and usability

Expand from “disseminating” findings to “facilitating” use of research in partnership with practitioners and policy makers

Build stronger and more iterative R & D processes that address problems of practice

Develop stronger knowledge base on
school improvement

Build capacity of local and state districts to conduct research, evaluate programs and effectively use their longitudinal data systems

IES priorities shaped by Chicago experience

Chicago's Consortium challenged traditional models of policy research

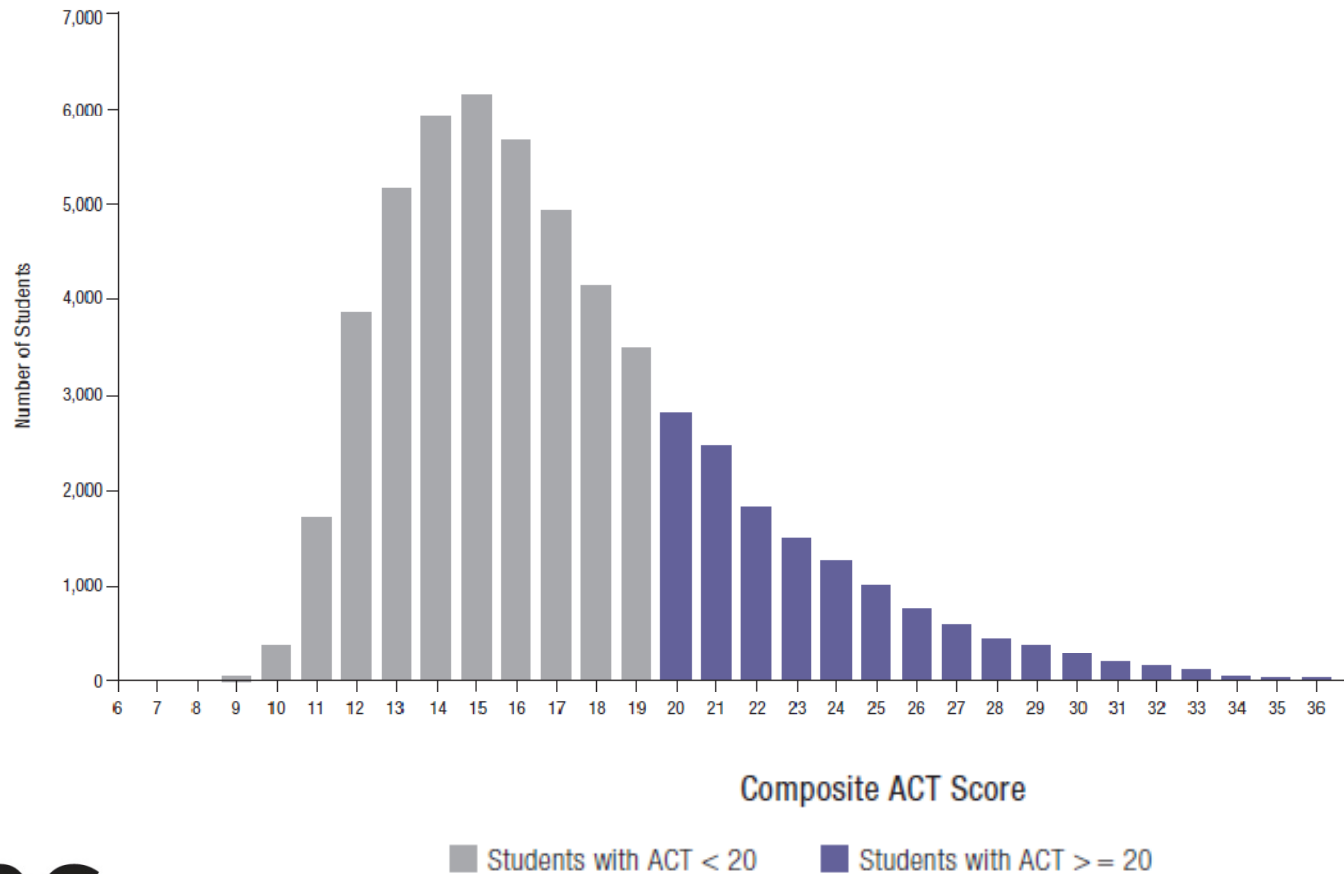
- Much education research driven by interests and theories of researchers, not by needs of schools
- Many education researchers work in silos of specialization, not across disciplines and expertise to view problems holistically
- CCSR as partner to district in “search for solutions”

One case study from my experience in Chicago

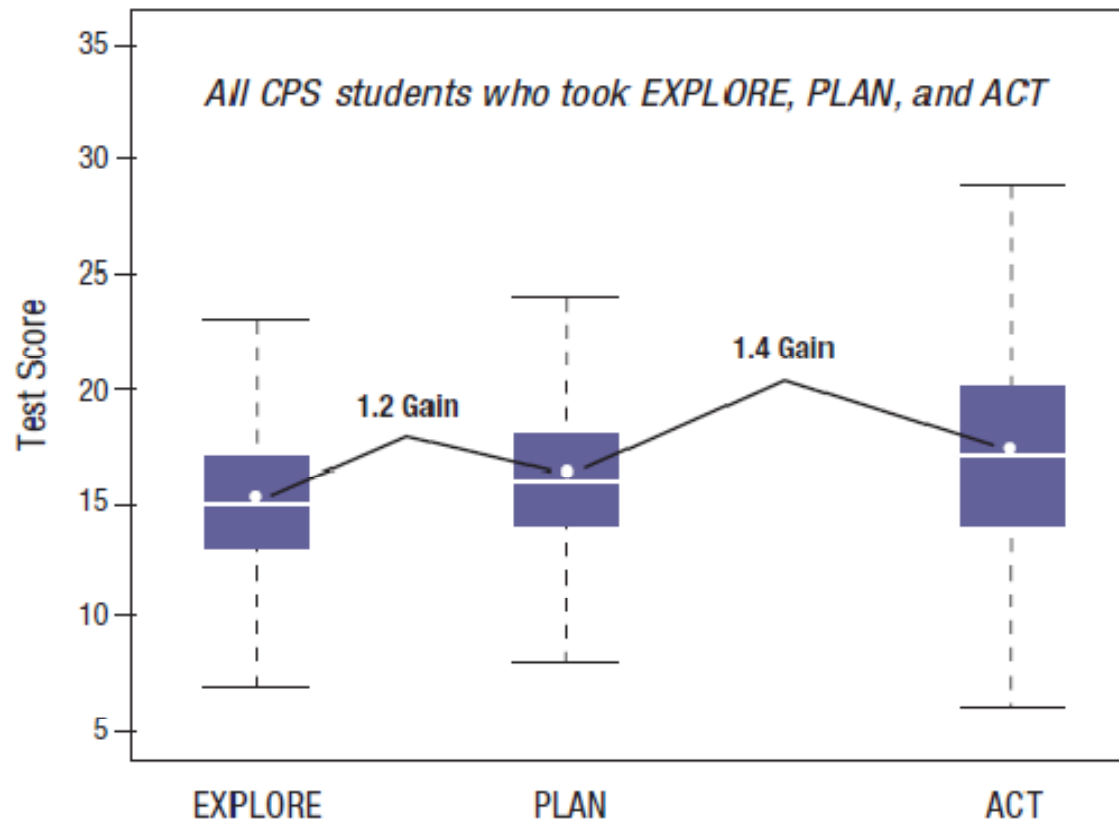
Path to 20: How to get more urban students achieving this goal on the ACT

- Chicago and other districts set goal to increase number of students who reach 20 on these college entrance exams

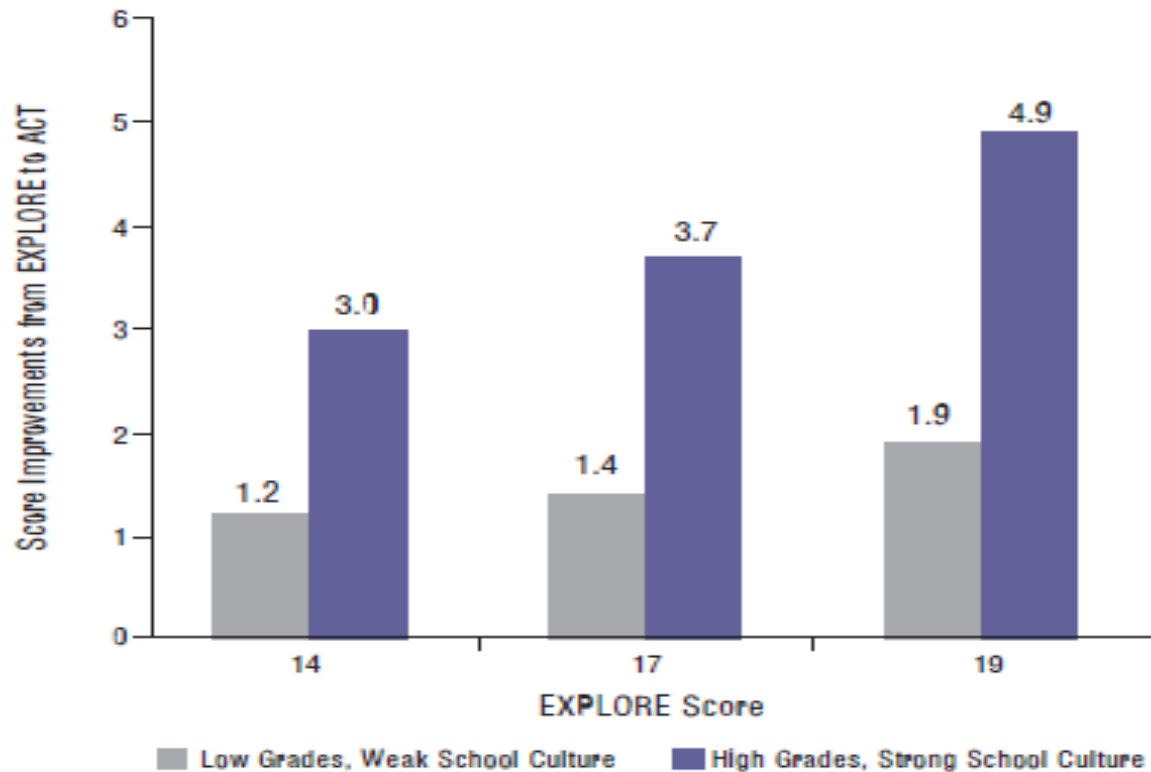
About one-quarter of CPS juniors score 20 or above on the ACT



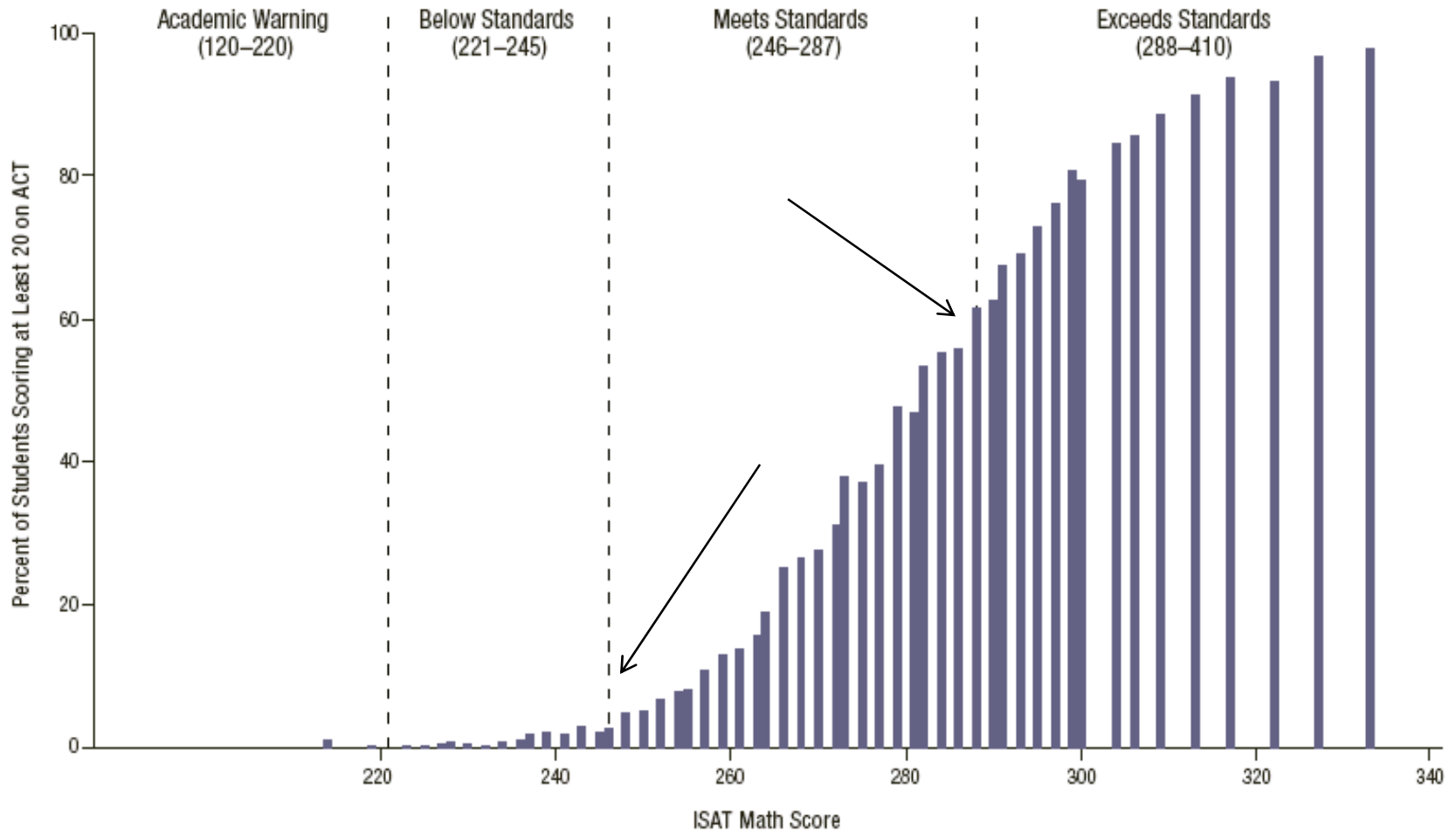
CPS students see much smaller improvements from PLAN to ACT than students nationally



Students who earn high grades and attend strong schools see the biggest gains



Only students who exceed standards on their eighth grade ISAT math tests have at least a 62 percent chance of scoring 20 on their ACT



How did this data analysis change policy and school practice?

- School leaders in Chicago and downstate start pushing more schools to “exceeds”
- State joins America Diploma Project
- State re-thinking standards and tests

Implications for KC-AERC?

Traditional IES approach compared to CCSR approach

- Chicago's model: School improvement means studying schools and districts as complex organizations, learning how they improve through multi-method research and practitioner interaction
- IES model: School improvement driven by results of scientifically tested interventions using RCTs

Similarities between CCSR and IES

- Raising the bar with commitment to high standards, rigorous research
- Protecting autonomy/independence by remaining neutral on controversial policy issues
- Using data and data analysis as powerful tools for monitoring progress of school improvement

**How do we build a new a model
and bring it to scale?**