

Education

Susan Dynarski

University of Michigan &
National Bureau of Economic Research

My Research Agenda:

Education & Economic Mobility

- Evaluate effect of education policies on educational attainment, achievement & well-being
 - Charter schools, class size, K12 curricula, financial aid
- Document levels, trends & inequality in educational outcomes
 - By parental income
 - By race, sex

Data Sources I Use

- Traditional surveys
 - NLSY, PSID, CPS, ACS, Census
 - NCES datasets: NLS, HSB, ECLS
- Administrative Data
 - Research partnerships with state education agencies
 - Massachusetts, Michigan, Tennessee

Research: Charter school effects in Massachusetts

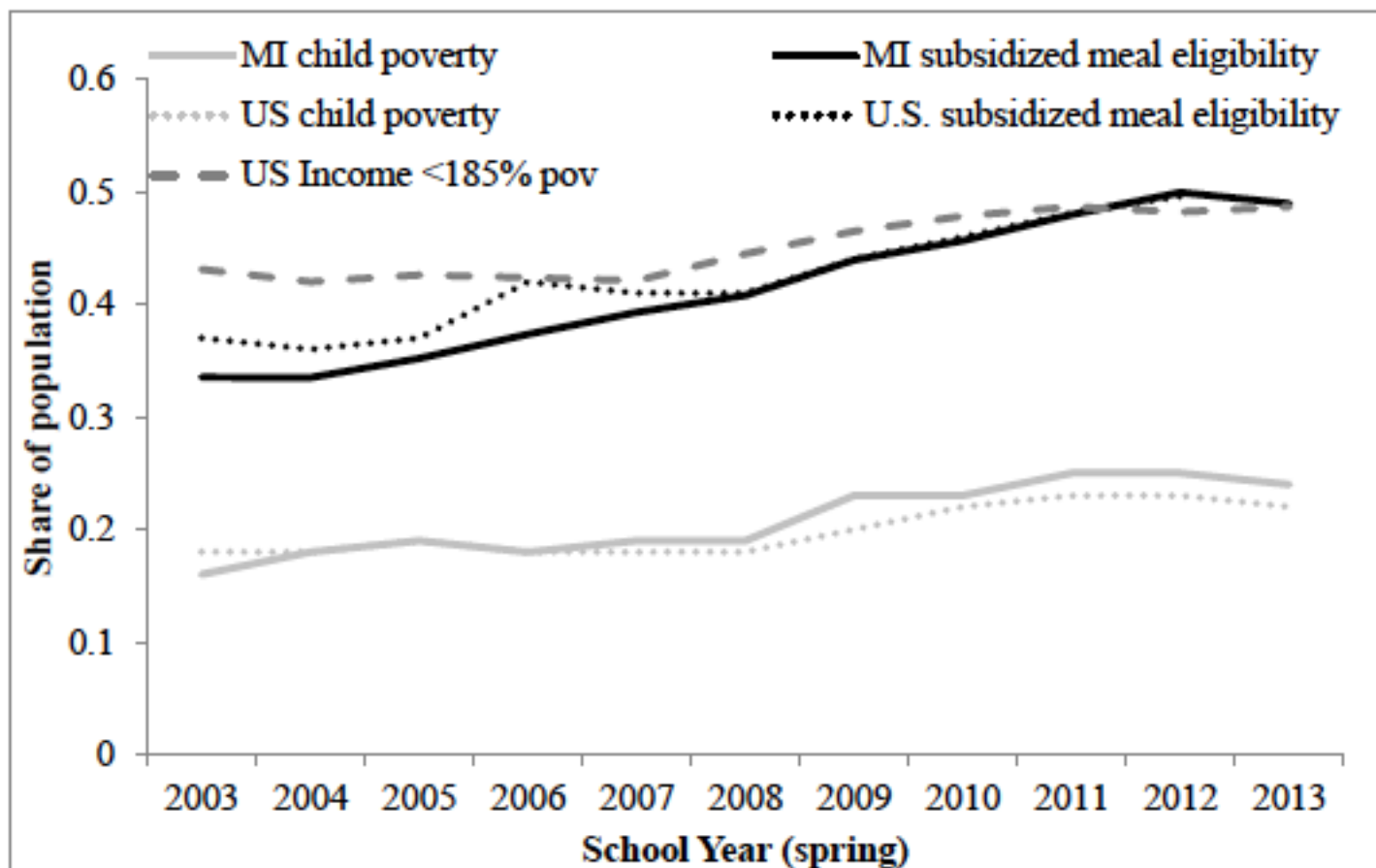
- Data Sources
 - School data: lotteries
 - State data: test scores, grade progression, HS graduation
 - Other data: AP scores, SAT scores, postsecondary attendance & degrees (incomplete, NSC)
- Research gaps
 - Parents' education, income, occupation
 - Students' earnings, unemployment, occupation

Research: Inequality in academic achievement

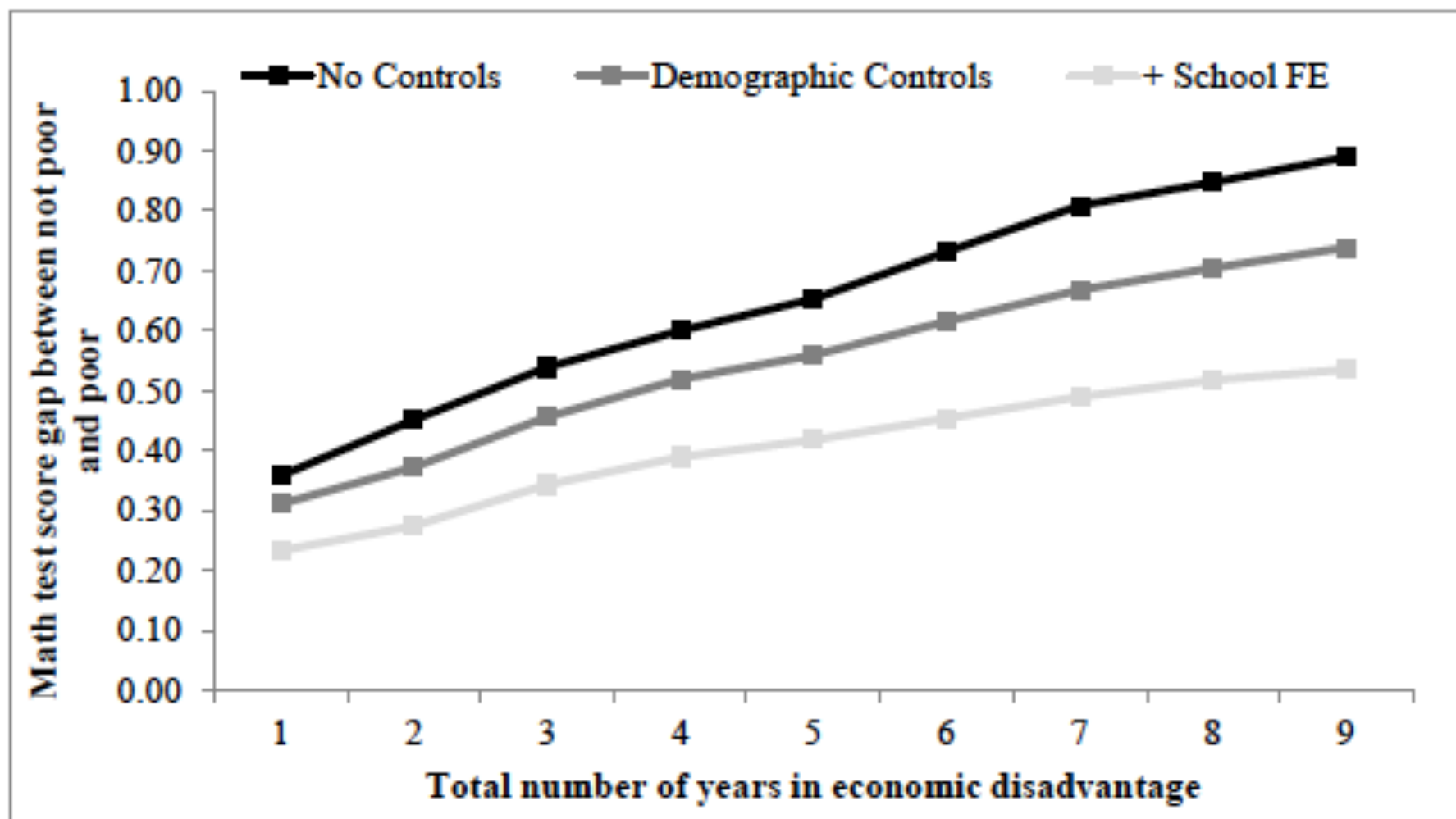
- Data
 - MI administrative data
 - test scores
 - subsidized lunch eligibility (FRPL)
- Measuring SES
 - FRPL eligibility the only information on SES in administrative, education data systems
 - Education research increasingly relies on these data sources
 - IES focus & funding

Crude Measure: 50% FRPL-eligible

Figure 1. Share of K-12 students experiencing economic disadvantage by year



Squeezing More Info Out of FRPL

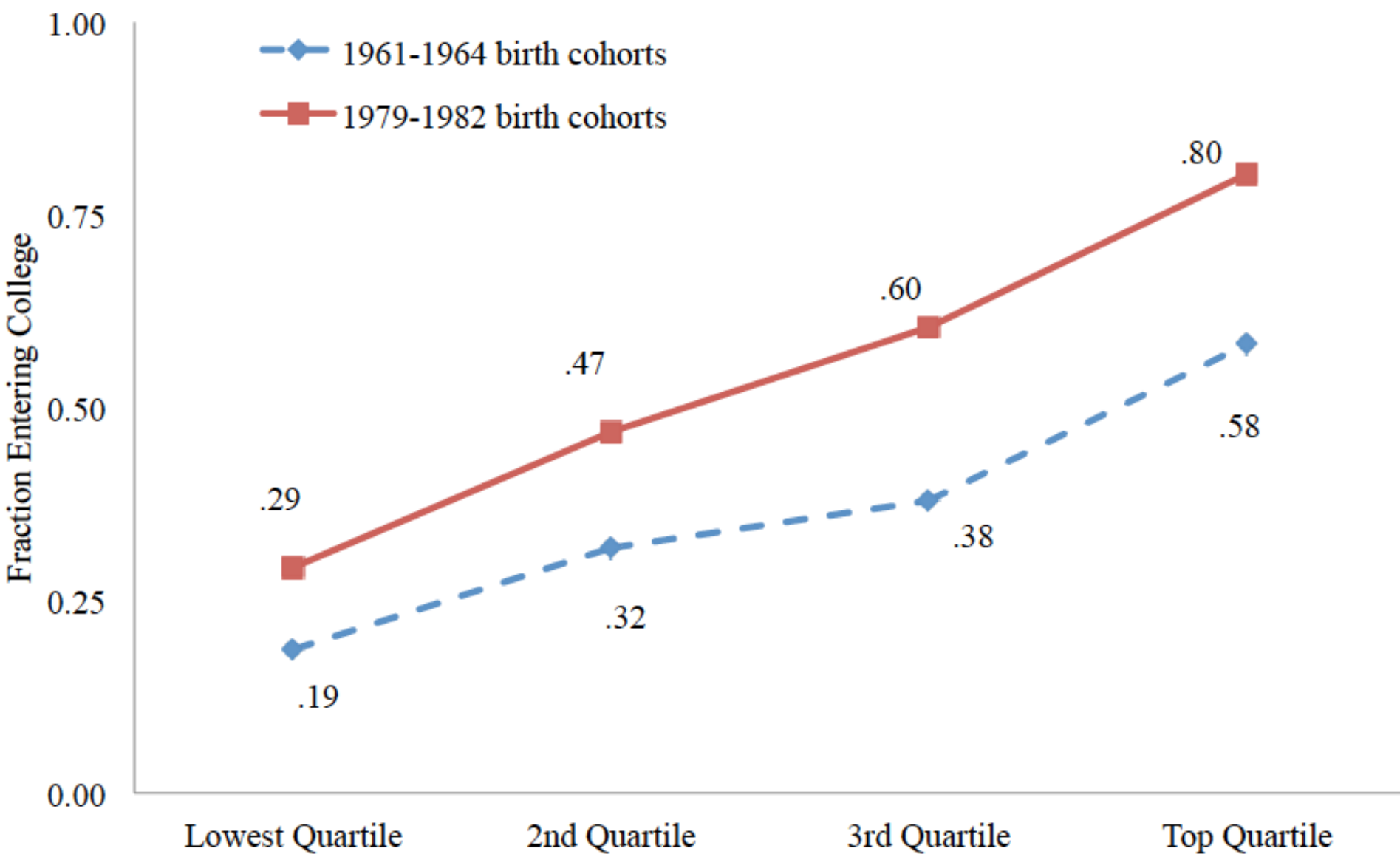


Source: Micheltmore & Dynarski

Research: Income inequality in postsecondary attainment

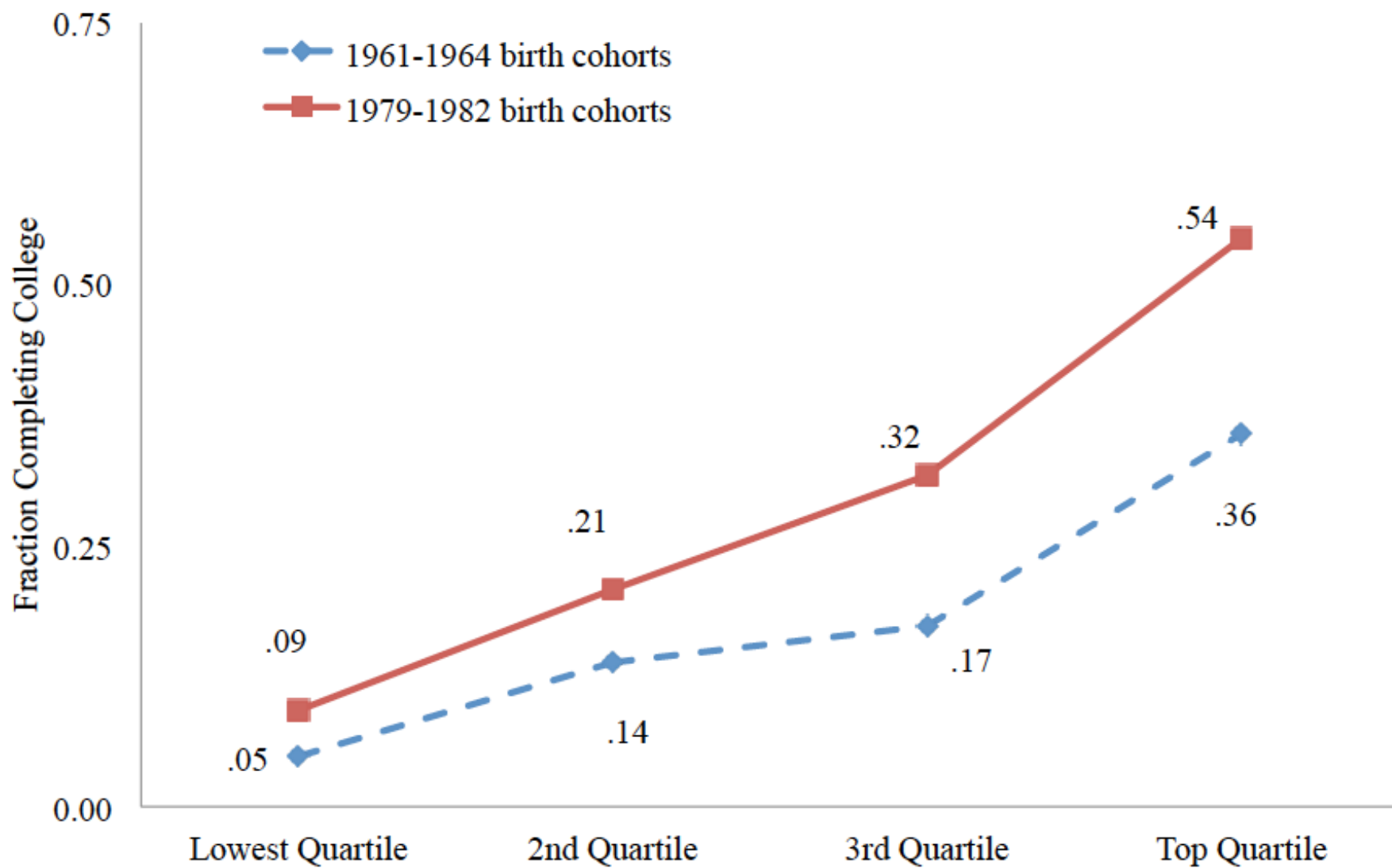
- Outcomes
 - College attendance
 - Degree completion
- Data
 - NLSY79 & NLSY97; PSID
 - NCES (decadal longitudinal surveys)
 - IRS (as of late 90s has attendance, not degrees)

Figure 2: Fraction of Students Entering College, by Income Quartile and Birth Year

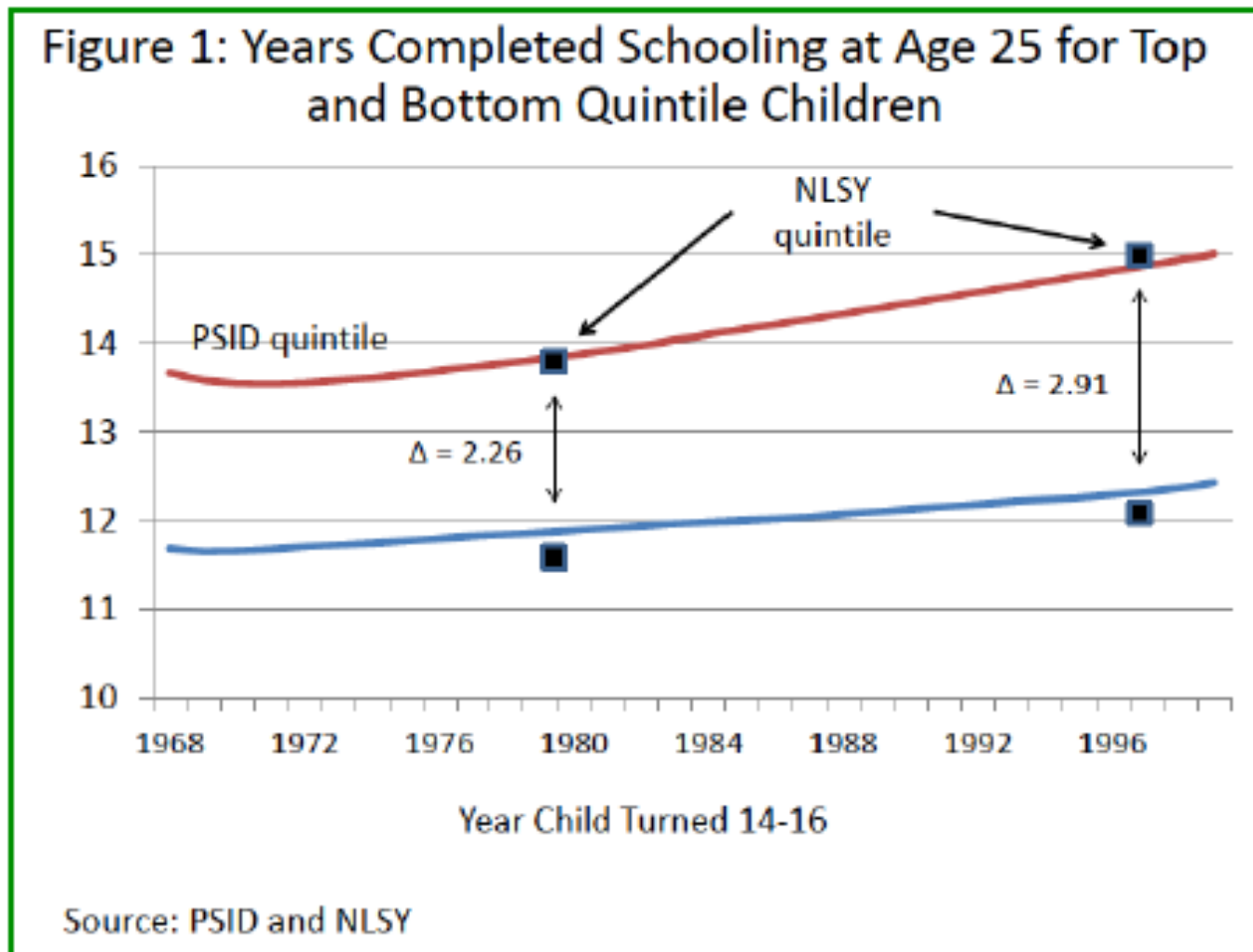


Source: Bailey & Dynarski

Figure 3: Fraction of Students Completing College, by Income Quartile and Year of Birth



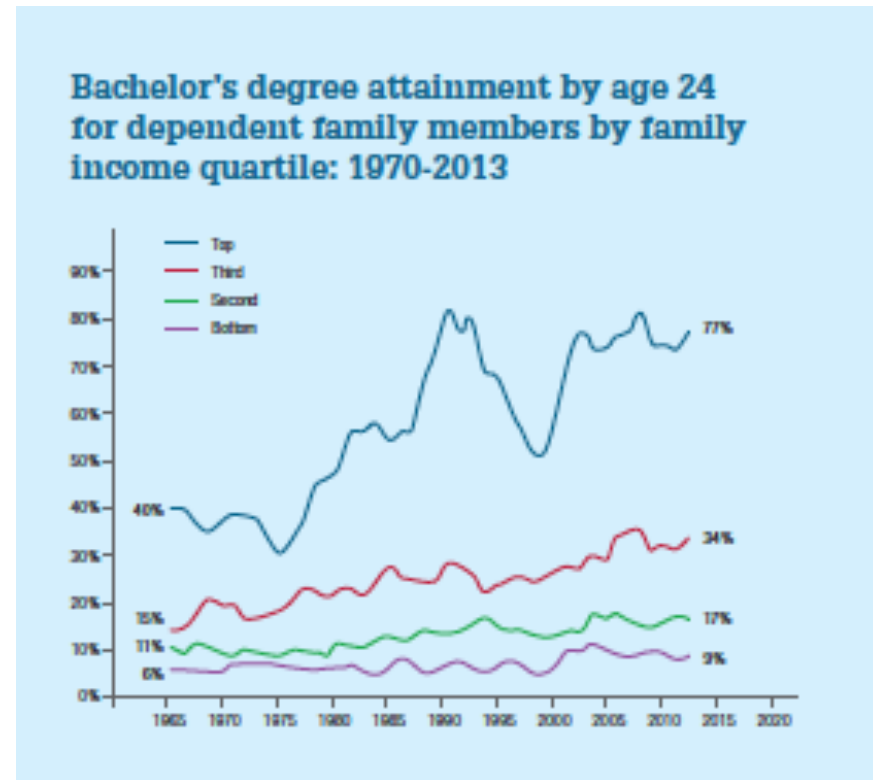
Parents' Income & Education



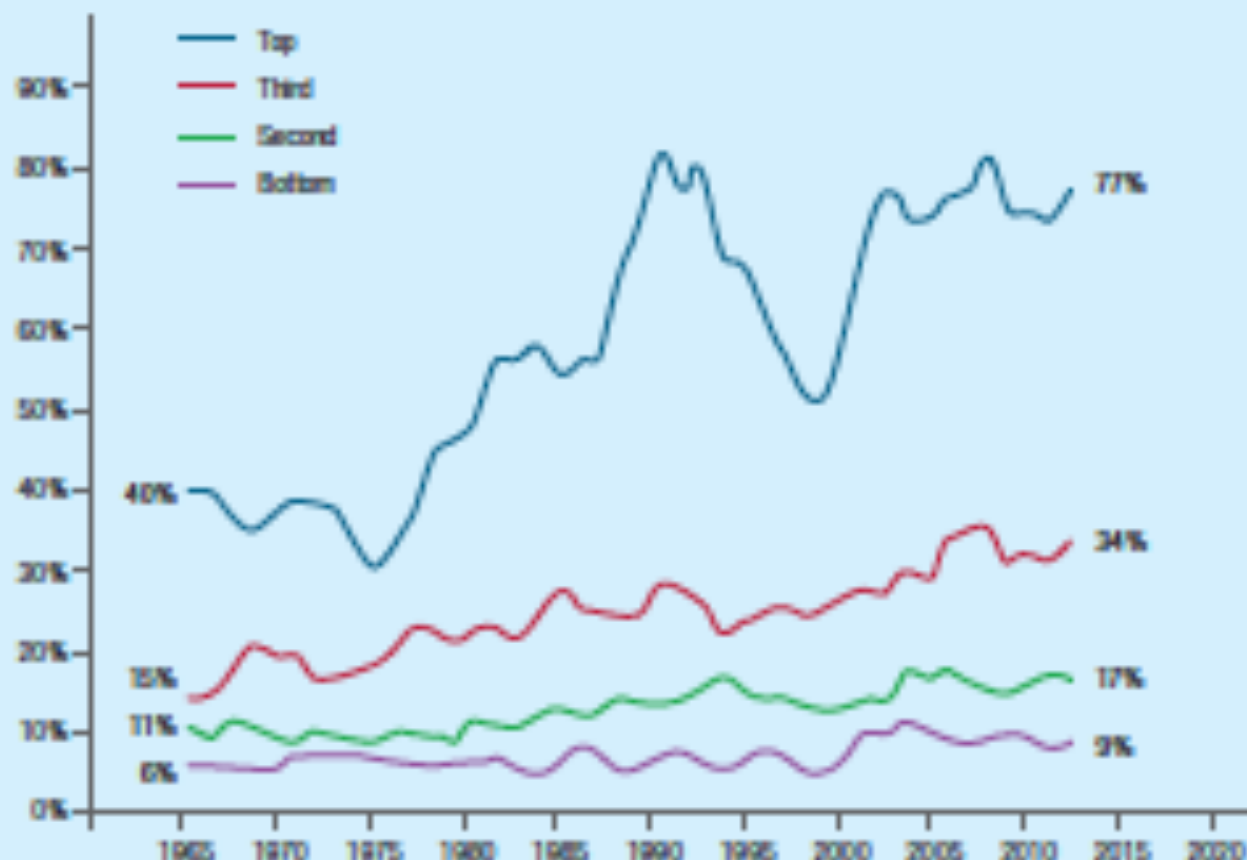
Parents' Income & Education Done Wrong: CPS

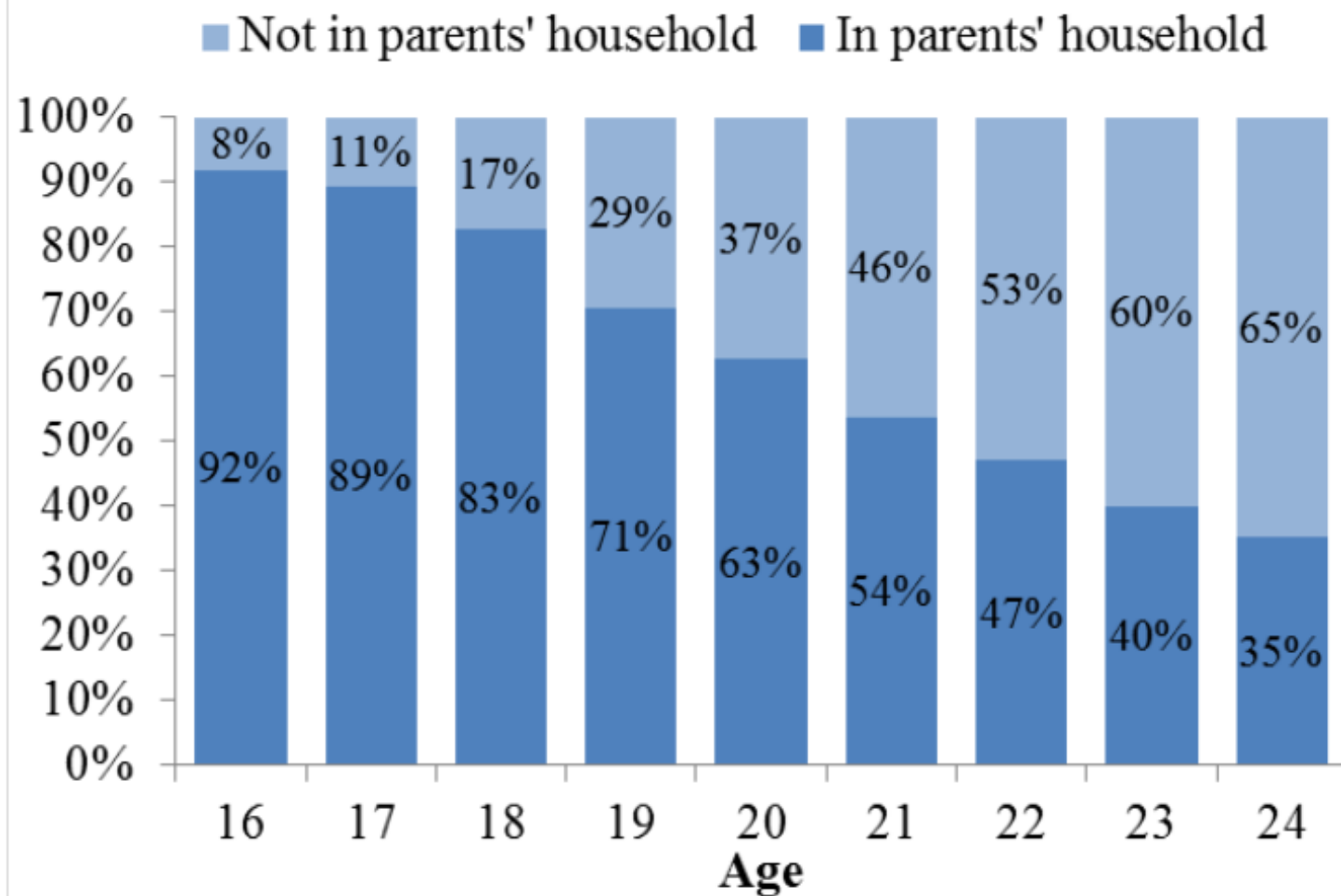
INDICATORS

OF HIGHER EDUCATION EQUITY
IN THE UNITED STATES



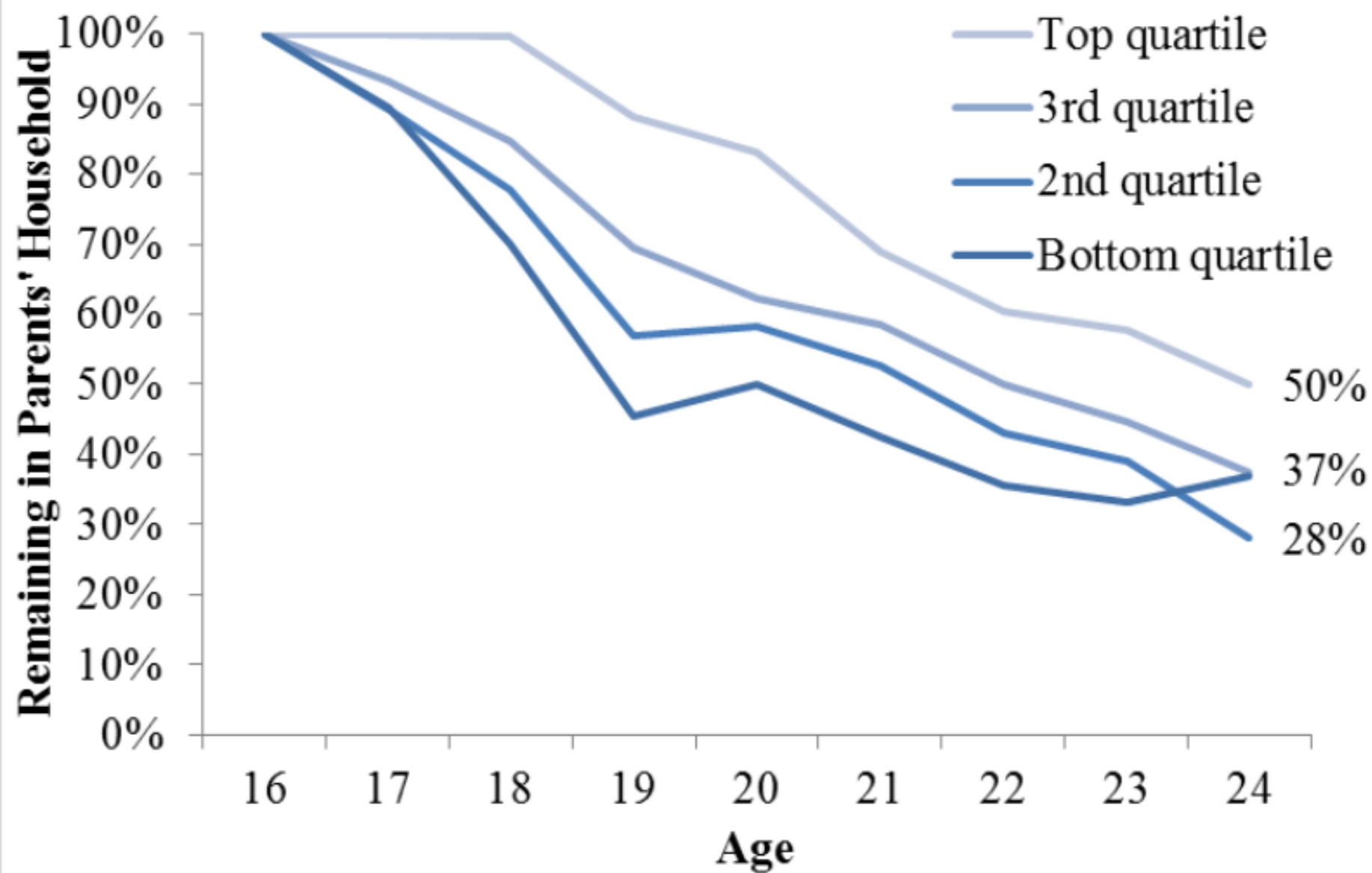
Bachelor's degree attainment by age 24 for dependent family members by family income quartile: 1970-2013





Source: Authors' calculations using October CPS data, 2005 (age 16) through 2013 (age 24)

Notes: Living in parents' household defined as respondents of listed age identified as living in parent's, grandparent's, or foster parent's household.



How can we track trends in educational attainment by parental income? Hint: not with the Current Population Survey

By: Matthew M. Chingos and Susan M. Dynarski



There are many Americans who would benefit from a postsecondary education but who never attend college, or who start college but don't earn a degree. Many come from low-income families.¹ Addressing gaps in educational attainment by family income, which exist even among similarly prepared students, is one of the most significant challenges facing policymakers concerned about income inequality and socioeconomic mobility.

Better data, better research

- Effects of education interventions on adult well-being
 - Connection to state education data critical
 - Trace effects during school to effects in adulthood
 - Need the short-term connection to inform education policy
 - ED has poured money into building these systems & funding of research partnerships
- Barriers
 - FERPA and its variable interpretation
 - Varying legal, administrative, & research capacity at states

Improving Research I

Effects of education interventions on adult well-being

- Data Needs
 - Student Outcomes
 - Connection of adult outcomes to state education data
 - Trace effects during school to effects in adulthood
 - Need the short-term connection to inform education policy
 - Parental Background
 - Better info on SES
 - Limited to subsidized-lunch variable
- Barriers & Opportunities
 - FERPA and its variable interpretation
 - Varying legal, administrative, & research capacity at states
 - ED has poured money into building these systems & funding of research partnerships

Improving Research II

Intergenerational mobility in postsecondary education

- Data Need
 - Comprehensive national data on attendance, attainment, degrees
 - National Student Clearinghouse is private, incomplete, expensive
- Barriers & Opportunities
 - Unit record ban
 - Law barring feds from constructing database of college students
 - Higher education associations lobbied for this to block accountability
 - ED has info *only* for aid recipients in National Student Loan Data System
 - Includes parental income for dependents (age < 24)

Who Controls the Data?

- K12 education is locally funded & controlled
 - Districts, and to some extent, states.
 - Feds have zero student-level administrative data
- Postsec is funded both locally & nationally, but controlled locally
 - Feds provide student-level funding: loans, Pell Grants
 - Feds have NSLDS, a census of students who use this aid
 - Some states have data systems, many don't
 - When they do, it's public colleges

Website for more information:

<http://users.nber.org/~dynarski/>