

THE ARTS ADVANTAGE IN CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

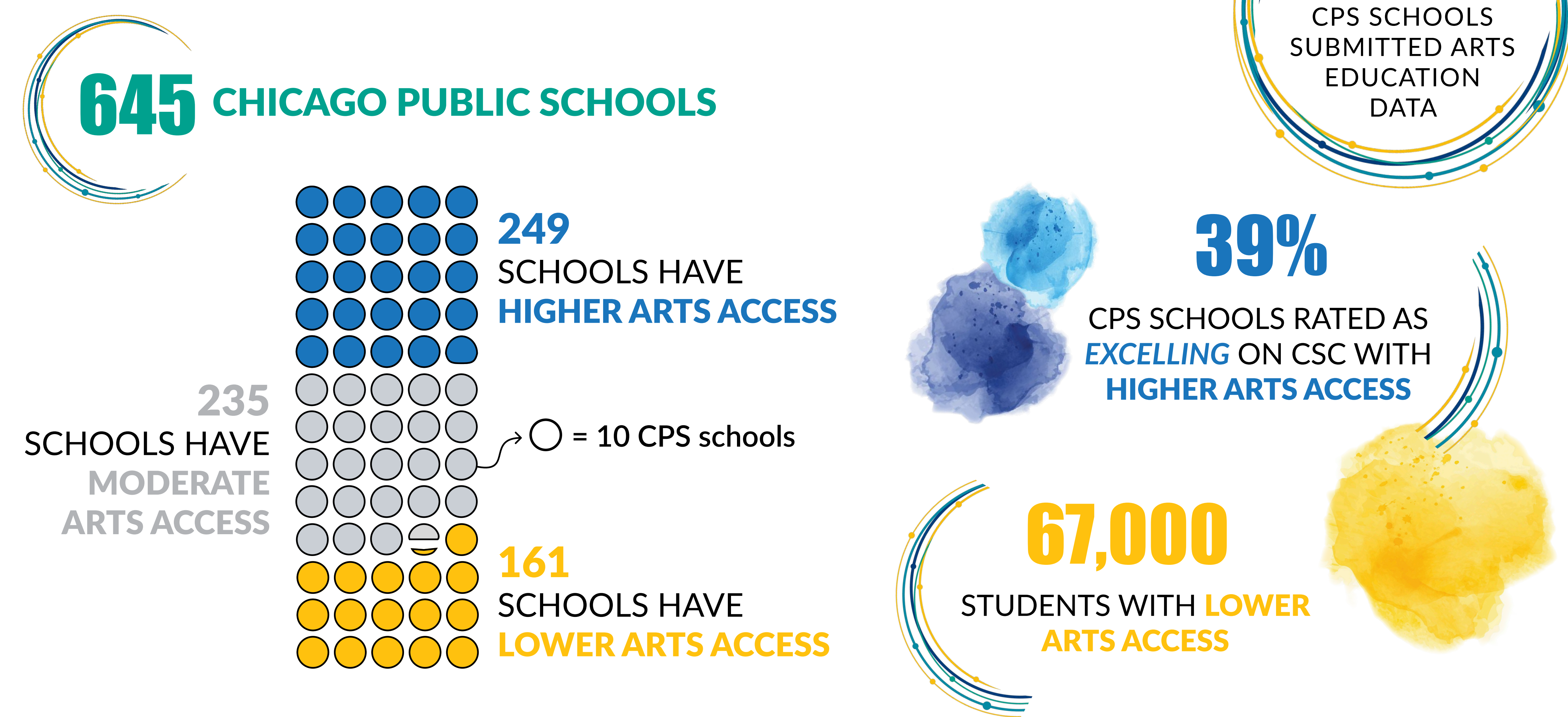
Connectedness, Wellbeing, and Academic Achievement

The arts matter on their own – and they also matter for student success. Many people across the district share this belief but do not have the data. Through the Creative Schools Certification (CSC), now embedded within CPS' Continuous Improvement and Data Transparency accountability policy, Ingenuity has tracked arts education access and conditions across Chicago Public Schools since 2012-13.

KEY FINDINGS:

The arts are correlated with better student outcomes in CPS, including attendance, chronic absenteeism, test scores, and postsecondary success. While access to arts education is closely correlated with access to opportunity and resources, arts access remains a statistically significant predictor of these outcomes after controlling for opportunity-related factors.

STATE OF THE ARTS:



DATA & METHODOLOGY:

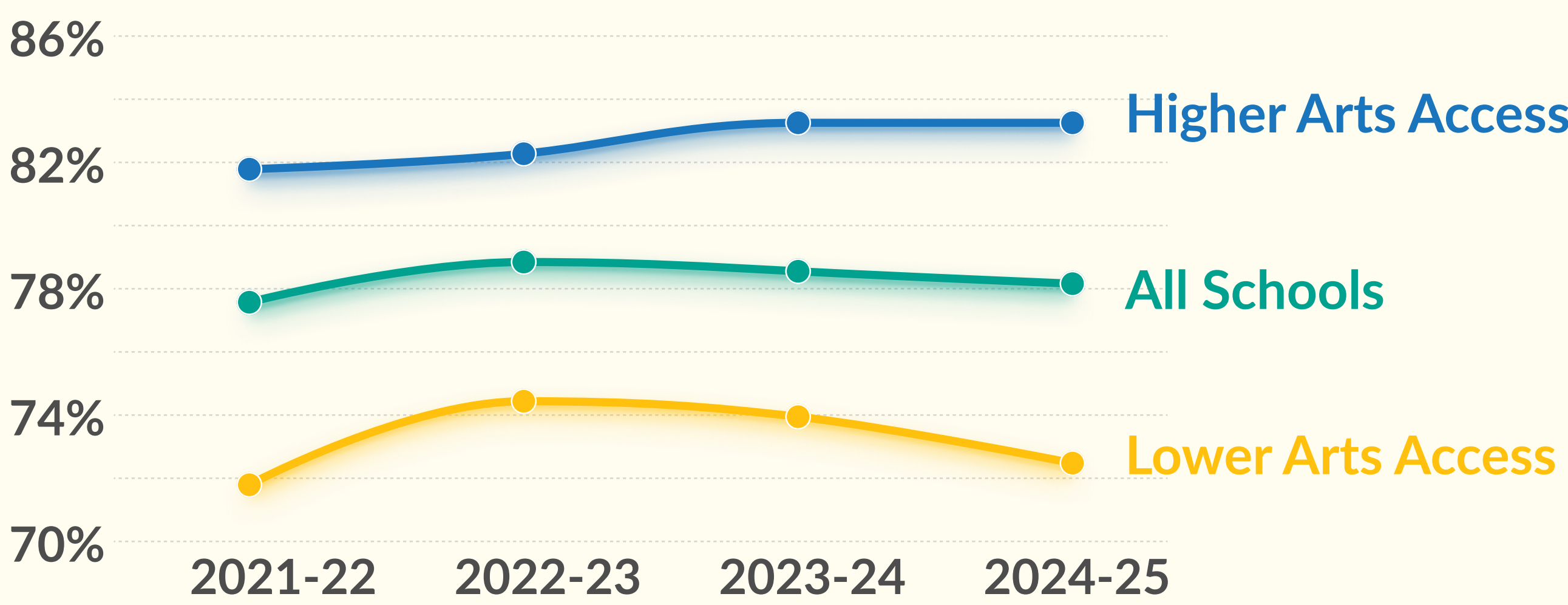
This study uses the most recent available Creative Schools Certification and CPS data, with most analyses drawing on data from the 2024-25 school year. Schools with **higher access to arts education** are defined as those rated *Excelling* on the Creative Schools Certification (90-100 points), while schools with **lower access to arts education** are those rated as *Emerging or Developing* (79 or fewer points).

For each metric, CPS school-level data was mapped to the corresponding school's Creative Schools Certification rating for that school year. College enrollment data lags by one year (2023-24), and college persistence data by two years (2022-23). Linear regression analyses were conducted for all outcomes, controlling for the CPS Opportunity Index (a measure of school-level access to opportunity and resources), school category (elementary or high school), school governance structure (district-managed or non-district managed), and total CSC points (out of 100 possible). Non-district managed schools include charters, contracts, and some options schools. The CPS Opportunity Index was revised in 2024-25. For regression analyses using data from 2023-24 and earlier, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students was used instead. Total CSC points provide a more nuanced and continuous measure of arts education access than CSC rating categories. Total CSC points was a statistically significant predictor ($\alpha=0.05$) across all outcomes, including attendance, chronic absenteeism, college enrollment, college persistence, and IAR test scores. For additional detail on CSC methodology and rubric, please refer to [Ingenuity's website](#).

CONNECTEDNESS & WELLBEING

ATTENDANCE

High schools with higher access to the arts have consistently had average attendance rates that were **8 to 11 percentage points higher** than schools with lower arts access.



CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

High schools with higher access to the arts had, on average, an **11 percentage point lower** chronic absenteeism rate.

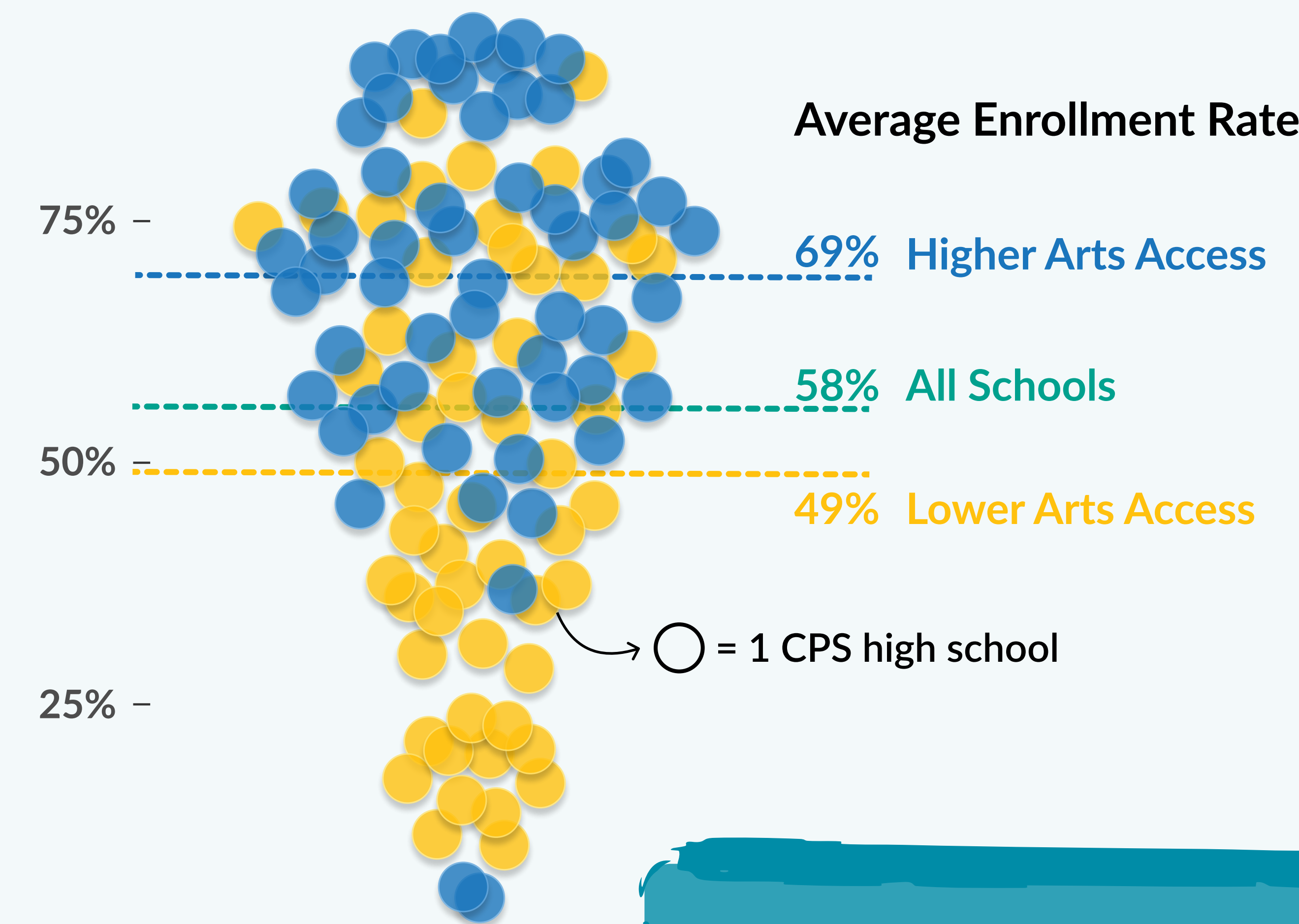


The chronic absence rate is the percentage of students who missed 10% or more enrolled days for any reason.

POSTSECONDARY SUCCESS

COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

On average, students in schools with higher access to the arts were **20 percentage points more likely** to enroll in a 2-year or 4-year college.



COLLEGE PERSISTENCE

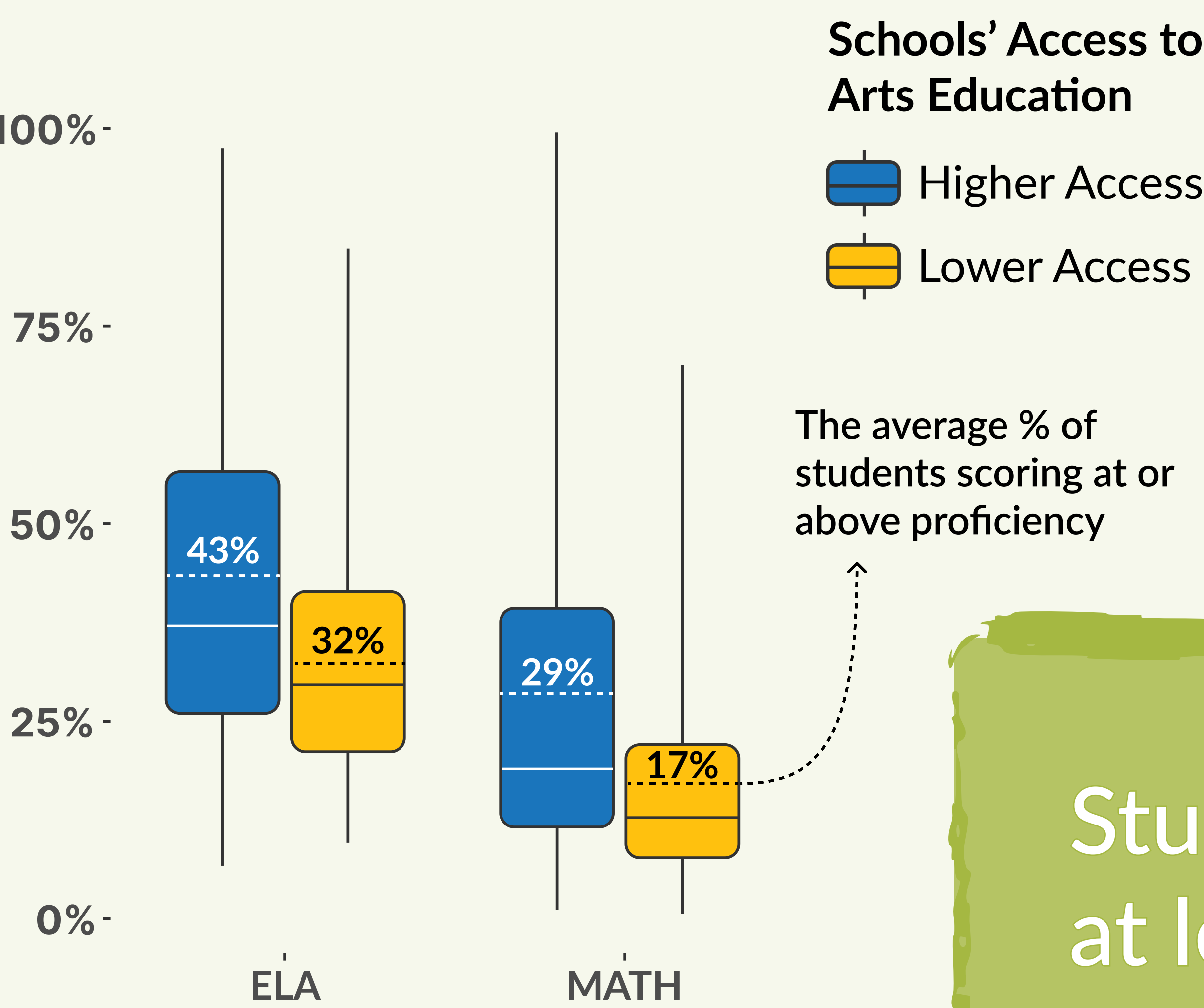
Students in schools with higher access to the arts were **30% more likely to remain in college** after their first year of enrollment than students with lower arts access.

TEST SCORES

ILLINOIS ASSESSMENT OF READINESS (IAR)

Students in schools with higher access to the arts were **70% more likely** to score at or above proficiency on the IAR Math exam and **30% more likely** to score at or above proficiency on the IAR ELA exam.

School-level distribution of students scoring at or above proficiency:



The IAR is administered by the Illinois State Board of Education and is the primary state-mandated assessment for students in grades 3-8 for English Language Arts (ELA) and Math.

Students in schools with at least one full-time arts teacher were almost **2x more likely to score at or above proficiency** on the IAR Math exam.