

**Assessment Test Results  
New Students from High School  
El Camino College, Fall 2003 to Fall 2007**

This report displays course placement rates for new high school graduate-aged students entering El Camino College (ECC) over 5 years. Because graduation date information is not complete and new students to El Camino College can be of any age, the “direct from high school” cohort is defined as students aged 17 or 18. The report includes results for these students from tests administered between March 1 and the September census date of each year.

Assessment tests are offered in 5 general subjects at ECC: Chemistry, Mathematics, Reading, Writing and English as a Second Language (ESL).<sup>1</sup> The Math test consists of 3 different levels: Arithmetic, Algebra and College-level math. Students are diverted to different levels of the math test depending on performance on early test questions following a computer-based adaptive format.

Table 1 highlights the number of students taking each test or test level between March 1 and the September census date of each year listed. Students repeating the same test are counted only once. These test counts closely mirror fluctuations in college enrollment. The number of tests reached a low point in 2004 and have since climbed to a 5-year high in 2007. These numbers are expected to climb even higher in 2008. Tests administered at Compton Community Educational Center are included for 2006 and 2007, but enrolled students (last row) represent only those at El Camino College (Torrance campus). See the associated Compton report for a breakdown of enrolled students at the Compton Center.

**Table 1: Number of Assessment Tests by Student, March-September**

Test	Subject	Number of Students Taking Each Test or Level *				
		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Arithmetic	Math	4,916	4,310	4,237	4,671	5,629
Algebra	Math	6,549	5,742	5,967	6,621	7,707
College-level Math	Math	1,605	1,389	1,518	1,688	1,872
Reading Comprehension	Reading	6,421	5,601	5,826	6,514	7,706
Sentence Skills	Writing	6,428	5,614	5,835	6,516	7,703
Total Tests (duplicated)		25,919	22,656	23,383	26,010	30,617
Students Tested (unduplicated)		7,904	6,921	7,072	7,817	9,200
Tested Students Enrolled in Fall		5,076	4,388	4,716	4,906	5,182

\* Repeats of the same test by the same student have been excluded.

**Results**

The Reading, Writing and Mathematics tests place students in a variety of levels depending on test performance, ranging from 3 to 7 levels of course work. For this study, placements are grouped into categories of similarly-leveled courses. These groups are 1) transfer-level (or college-level)—courses that are generally transferable for credit at a 4-year institution, 2)

<sup>1</sup> Results from the Chemistry and ESL tests have been excluded from this analysis. ESL results will be published later in a separate report.

college-preparatory—courses that immediately precede transfer-level courses, and 3) basic skills—courses defined by El Camino College as developmental or basic skills courses. The specific ECC courses within each group and their levels below transfer level are listed in the appendix of this report.

Placement results for the 5 years of this study are summarized in Table 2 below by number and percentage in each test and course group. In addition, a chart tracking the percentage of placements in each course group is found below.

**Table 2: Assessment Test Results by Test and Course Group**

Test	2003 (n=2,645) **		2004 (n=2,382)		2005 (n=2,648)		2006 (n=2,796)		2007 (n=2,865)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Reading *</b>										
Transfer-level	1,024	40.5	985	43.9	987	38.9	979	36.5	1,085	39.5
College-prep	580	22.9	446	19.9	560	22.0	634	23.7	640	23.3
Basic Skills	925	36.6	813	36.2	993	39.1	1,066	39.8	1,024	37.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,529</b>		<b>2,244</b>		<b>2,540</b>		<b>2,679</b>		<b>2,749</b>	
<b>Writing *</b>										
Transfer-level	918	36.3	832	37.1	939	37.0	942	35.1	896	32.5
College-prep	1,082	42.8	952	42.4	1,098	43.2	1,279	47.7	1,433	52.0
Basic Skills	530	20.9	460	20.5	504	19.8	459	17.1	425	15.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,530</b>		<b>2,244</b>		<b>2,541</b>		<b>2,680</b>		<b>2,754</b>	
<b>Math</b>										
Transfer-level	198	8.0	178	7.9	197	7.8	235	8.9	213	7.9
College-prep	1,068	43.1	1,046	46.6	1,311	51.8	1,422	53.6	1,502	55.8
Basic Skills	1,211	48.9	1,019	45.4	1,021	40.4	997	37.6	976	36.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,477</b>		<b>2,243</b>		<b>2,529</b>		<b>2,654</b>		<b>2,691</b>	

\* Transfer-level placements for Reading and Writing reflect only that portion of the test, and thus, general preparation in reading and writing. To qualify for *enrollment* in English 1A, examinees must achieve a qualifying score on both the Reading and Writing portions of the assessment test (see pages 3-4).

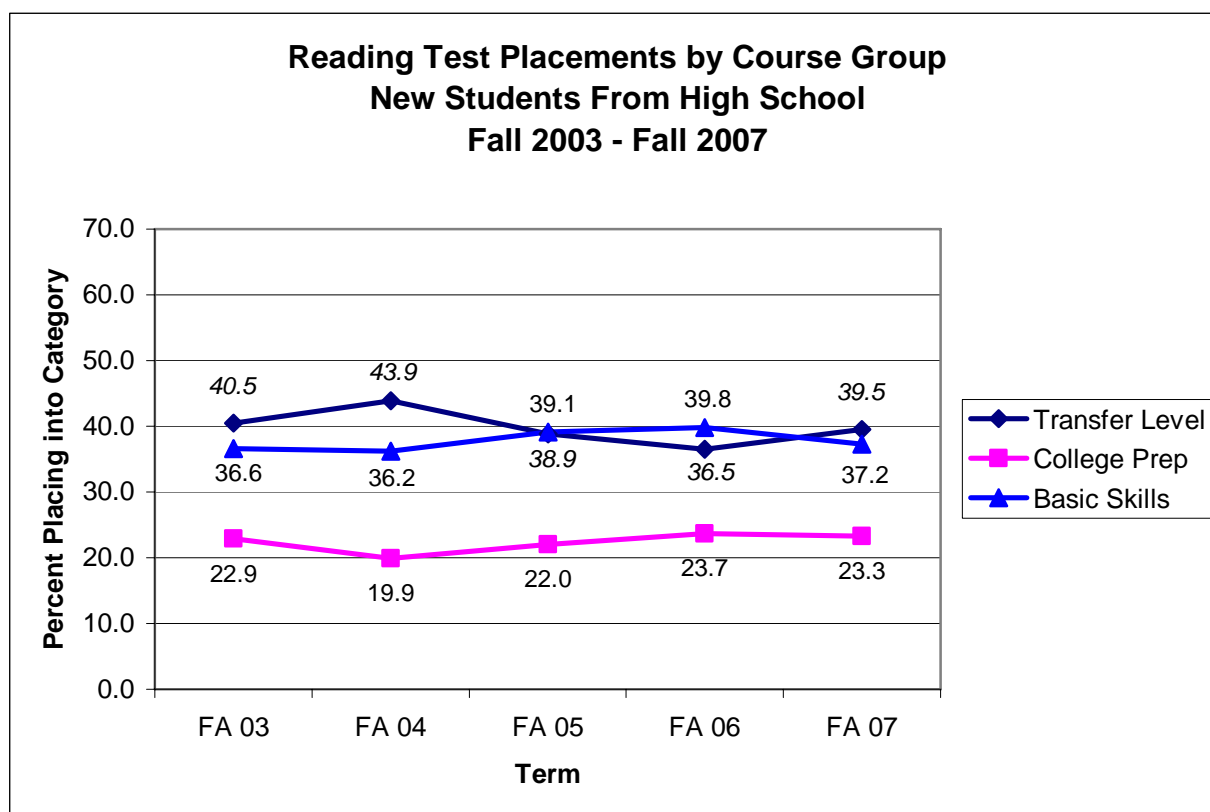
\*\* The “N” figures represent the total number of students aged 17 or 18 who took assessment tests between March 1 and the September census date in the year noted.

## Reading

Placements into reading courses were variable over the past 5 years. Placements into the transferable level (English 1A) declined by 7 percentage points across the middle 3 years of this study. This decline was followed by a 3-point upsurge in 2007. On average, about 40% of ECC students place into English 1A (not shown).

College preparatory placements remained stable last year after a 3-year increase of about 4 points. Average placements into the college-prep course (English 84 or 7) is about 22%.

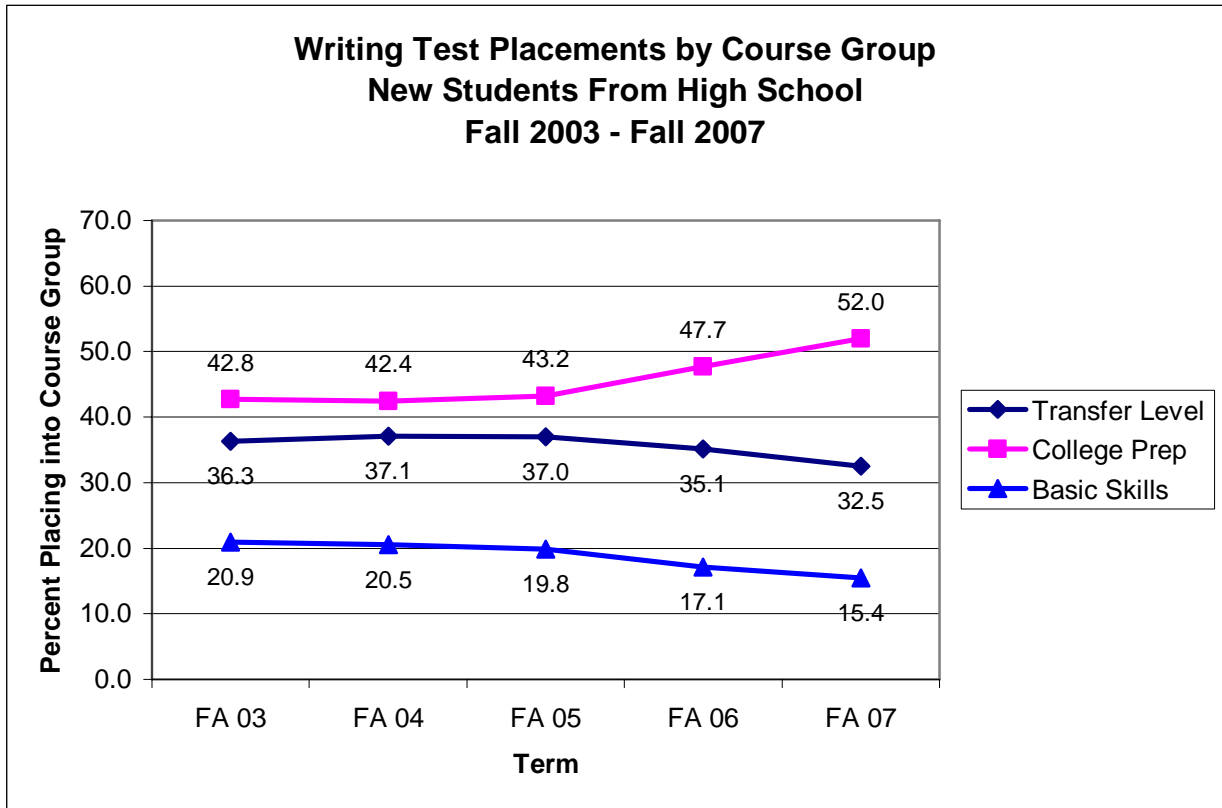
The number of basic skills placements increased during the same period and declined by about 2 percentage points in 2007. Beginning in Fall 2007, this category now consists of 2 basic skills courses (English 82 and English 80). About 5% of students place at the English 80 level. No adjustment was made to the English 82 placement cut score.



## Writing

In 5 years, transfer-level course (English 1A) placements were even for 3 years followed by a 2-year decline of nearly 5 percentage points. In contrast, college-prep (English A) placements followed the period of stability with a 9-point increase. Placement into the basic skills course (English B) declined consistently through the period with an overall 5-point decline.

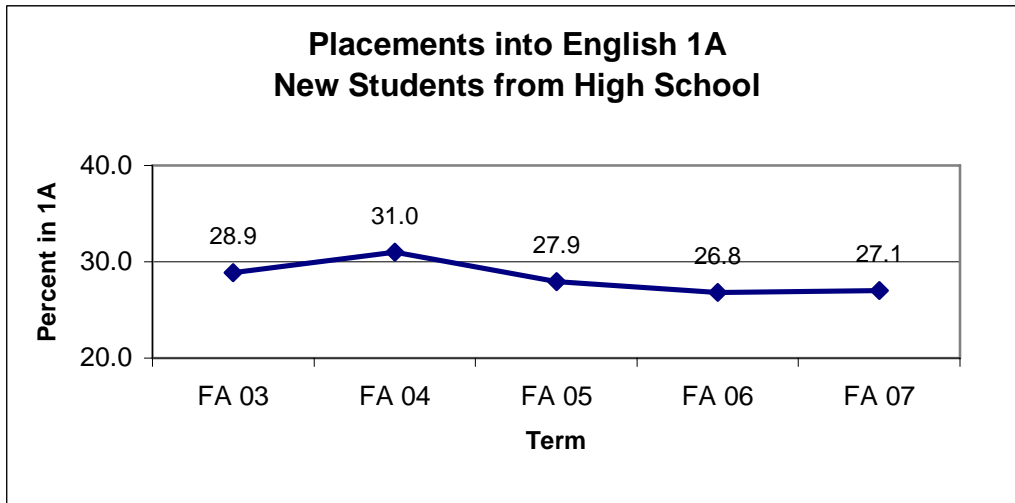
Five-year average placements into transfer-level, college-prep and basic skills writing courses were 36%, 46% and 19%, respectively.



## English 1A

To qualify for English 1A (transfer-level reading and writing), examinees must pass both the Reading and the Writing portions of the assessment test. The two tables above reflected placement rates into the transfer-level course (English 1A) based only on one of these two criteria in order to show academic preparation by subject. The table below reflects actual course placement rates using both the reading and writing qualifying test scores.

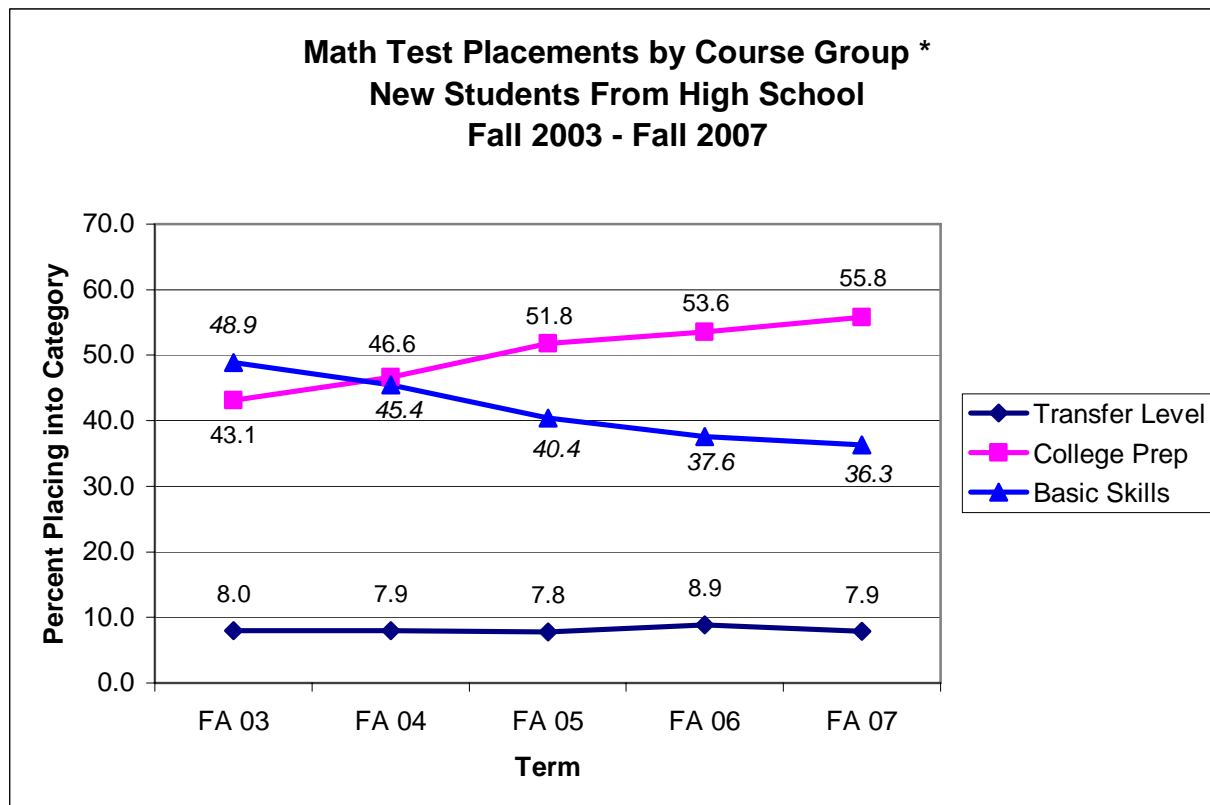
Placement rates fluctuated by as much as 4 percentage points over 5 years, with a 3-year decline followed by stable placements in the base 2 years. The 5-year average was 28%.



## Mathematics

Placements into the transfer level courses remained stable for the last 5 years, averaging around 8% (see Appendix for complete list of these courses.).

Over the 5 years of the study, math experienced an overall decline in placements into basic skills courses (pre-algebra, arithmetic) with a concomitant increase in placements into the middle category, representing college-preparatory algebra and geometry. College-prep placements climbed (and basic skills declined) by nearly 13 points during the period. Average placement percentages into college-prep and basic skills math courses were 50% and 41%, respectively.



## Conclusion

The major finding from this study is that basic skills placements have been in decline in English for the past 3 years and in Mathematics for the past 5 years. These changes are accompanied by increases in placements into the middle courses during the same time period.

It is not clear why basic skills placements are declining so dramatically. El Camino College may now be attracting a larger number of better-prepared students. Another possible contributing factor may be the institution of the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE). A passing score on the CAHSEE was required for high school graduation beginning in 2006. Students not passing the CAHSEE (who would likely place into the basic skills level at a community college) may be opting out of college altogether. This possible factor along with others will be explored in future studies.

## Appendix – Courses by Group

### READING & WRITING

Course Group	Levels Below Transfer	Reading	Writing
Transfer-level	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English 1A – Reading &amp; Composition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English 1A – Reading &amp; Composition</li> </ul>
College-preparatory	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English 84 (formerly Engl-2R) – Developmental Reading &amp; Writing</li> <li>English 7 – Speed &amp; Power Reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English A – Writing the College Essay</li> </ul>
Basic Skills	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English 82 (formerly Engl-R) – Introduction to Reading Skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English B – Introduction to the Composing Process</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English 80 – Basic Language Skills</li> </ul>	

### MATHEMATICS

Course Group	Levels Below Transfer	Course
Transfer-level	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Math 190 – Calculus</li> <li>Math 160 – Business Calculus</li> <li>Math 170 – Trigonometry</li> <li>Math 180 – Pre-Calculus</li> <li>Math 150 – Elem. Probability &amp; Statistics</li> <li>Math 140 – Finite Math</li> <li>Math 130 – College Algebra</li> <li>Math 120 – Nature of Math</li> <li>Math 115 – Prob. &amp; Stats for Elementary Teachers</li> <li>Math 110 &amp; 111 – Math for Elem. Teachers</li> <li>Computer Science 1, 5, 10</li> </ul>
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College-preparatory	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Math 70 – Intermediate Algebra</li> <li>Math 60 – Elementary Geometry</li> <li>Math 40 or 41A – Elementary Algebra</li> </ul>
	2	
Basic Skills	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Math 25 – Pre-Algebra Review</li> <li>Math 23 – Pre-Algebra</li> <li>Math 10A/12 – Basic Arithmetic Skills</li> </ul>
	4	