

PLACEMENT GAP PROJECT · JUNE 2026

# The Placement Gap: Measuring Missed Advanced Math Opportunity

**Research question:** Are students with similar academic readiness placed into different math tracks depending on income, race, language status, disability, or school context?

≈ 1 in 2

high-readiness, lower-income students are NOT placed into advanced math, versus about 1 in 5 higher-income peers.

### WHY IT MATTERS

- A wrong 8th or 9th grade math placement can foreclose calculus, AP, a STEM major, and a competitive college.
- Near-ready students need only weeks of support, yet are sorted into regular tracks and rarely catch up.
- The least visible are missed most: low-income, first-generation, and multilingual learners.

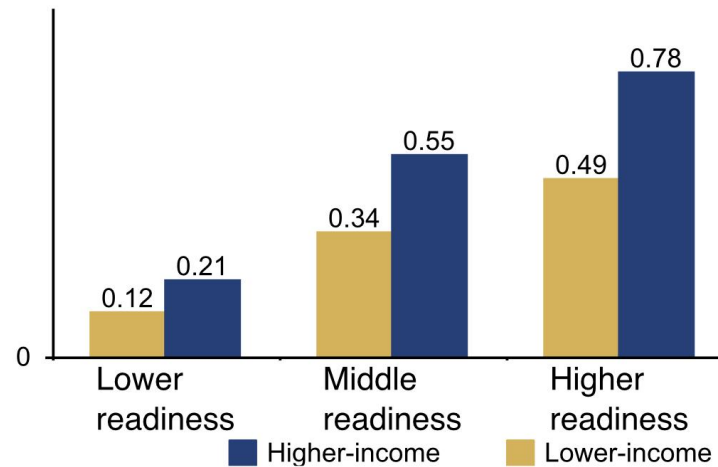
### THE METRIC · PLACEMENT GAP SCORE

**Expected placement (from readiness) – actual placement**

Scored per student, aggregated by group. A negative score flags systematic under-placement.

### Same readiness, different placement

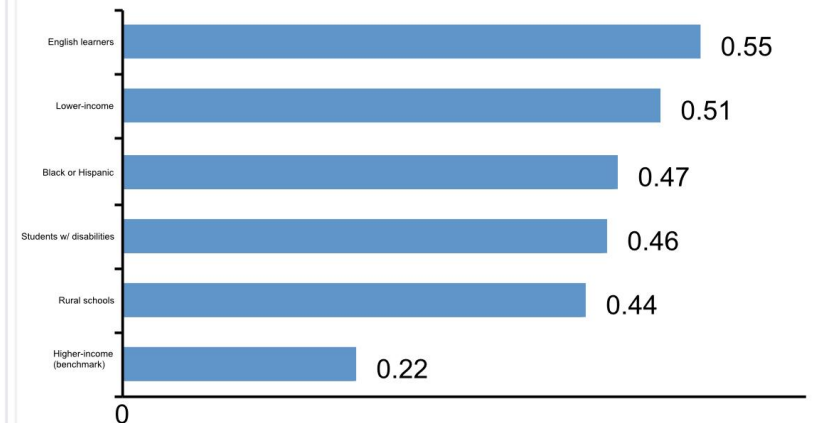
Advanced math placement rate, by readiness level and family income



**Read:** among the highest-readiness students, 78% of higher-income but only 49% of lower-income are placed into advanced math.

### Who gets missed

Share of high-readiness students NOT placed into advanced math, by group



The benchmark bar (navy) is higher-income students; gold bars show how far each group falls behind at equal readiness.

**FROM FINDING TO TOOL:** R2A: Readiness Profile → Placement Gap → Bridge Protocol → Mobility Tracking.

**PlacementBridge AI:** diagnose, bridge in 4–6 weeks, re-assess, and report.

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