
Variations in the graduation rates and educational pathways of English language learners in Metro Vancouver.

Bruce Garnett, PhD



The Metro Vancouver context

- ▶ Roughly 10% of BC school students have ESL designations, our only provincially reported proxy for ESL students (BC Ministry of Education).
- ▶ ESL students are concentrated in the 12 Metro Vancouver jurisdictions (Vancouver and its suburbs).
 - ▶ E.g. 58% of Vancouver school board students have a home language other than English.
- ▶ Some immigrant students attend the Conseil Scolaire francophone.
- ▶ Grade 8 is the typical starting point of secondary school.
 - ▶ Student typically turns 13 this year.
 - ▶ Graduation from grade 12 in 5 years is a typical non-delayed progression.

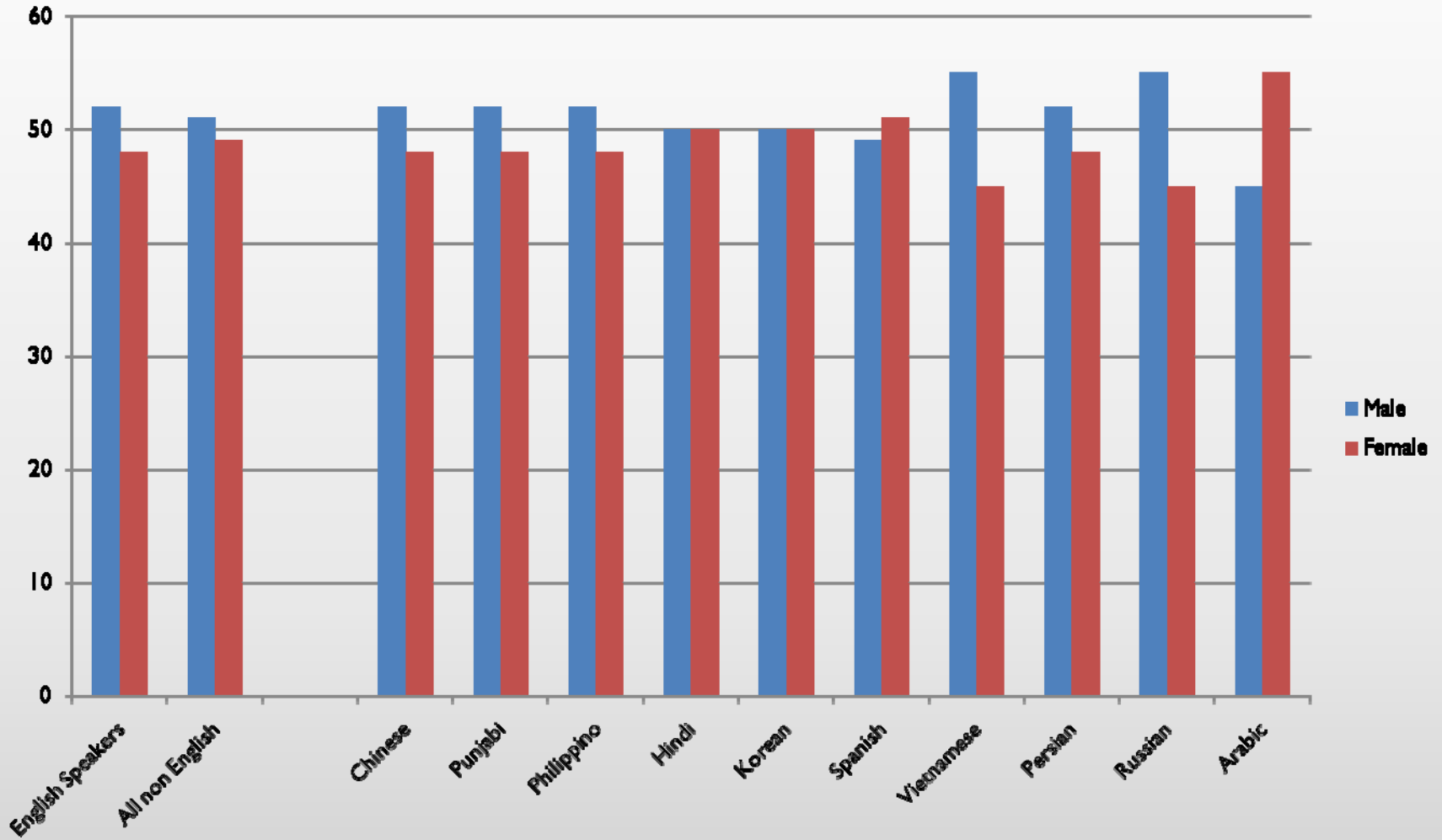


The target group

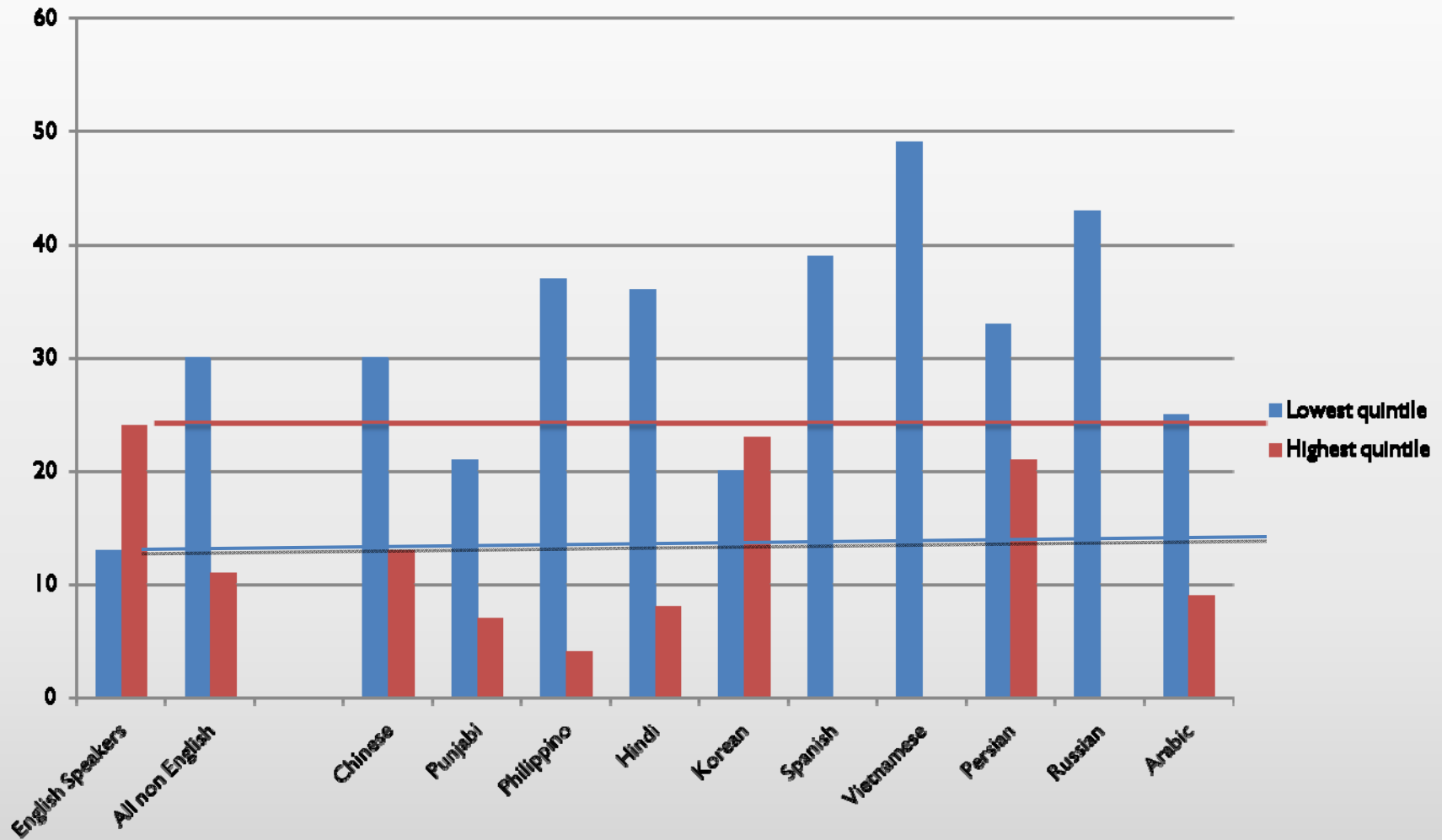
- ▶ 1999 grade 8 cohort
- ▶ 12 Metro Vancouver school districts
- ▶ Total N = 9 039
 - ▶ Chinese (n=3,573),
 - ▶ Punjabi (n=1,332),
 - ▶ Philippino (n=516),
 - ▶ Hindi (n=368),
 - ▶ Korean (n=375),
 - ▶ Spanish (n=363),
 - ▶ Vietnamese (n=358),
 - ▶ Persian (n=319),
 - ▶ Russian (n=139)
 - ▶ Arabic (n=103)
- ▶ Comparison group (English speakers) N =15 034



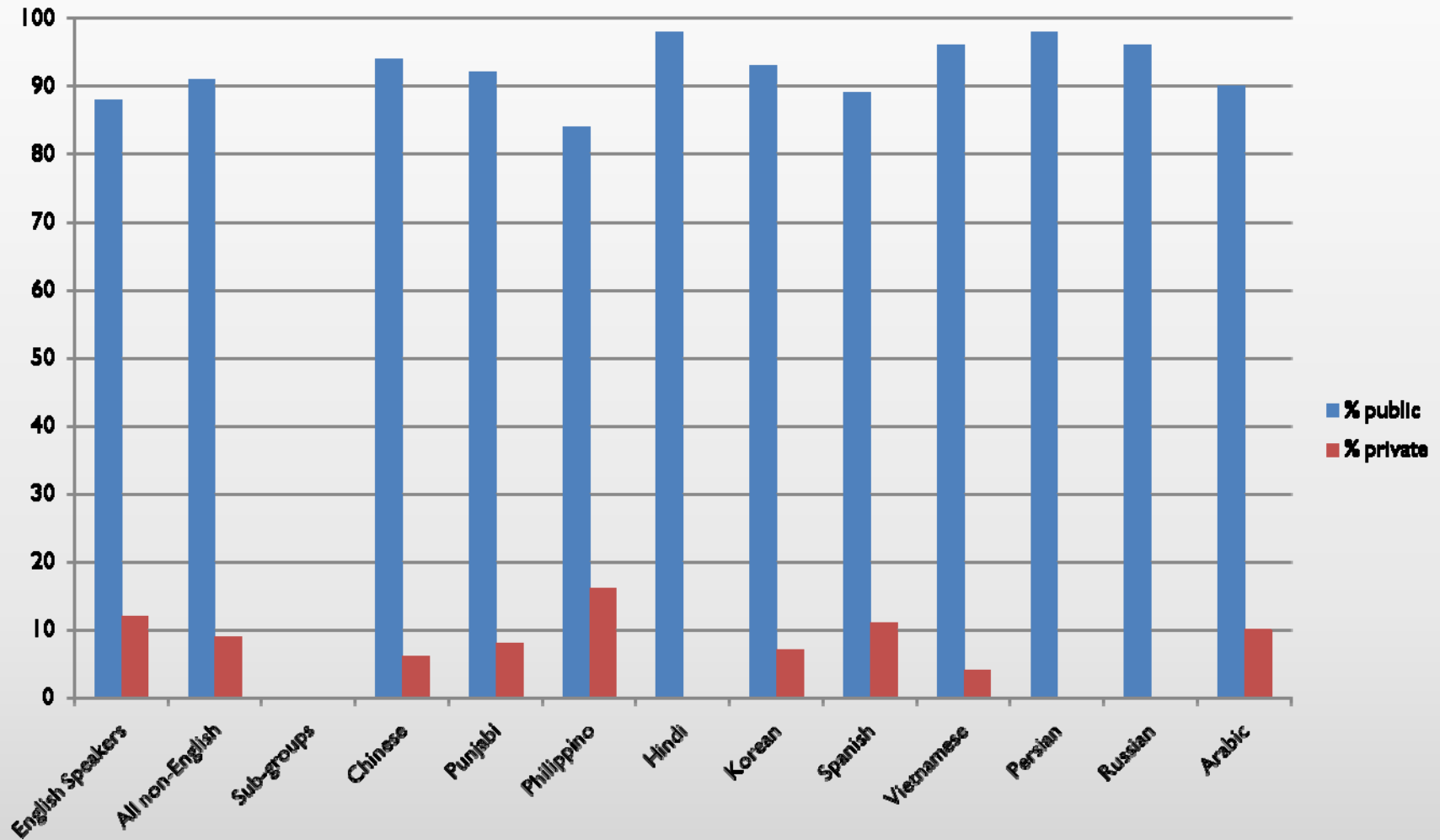
Gender distribution



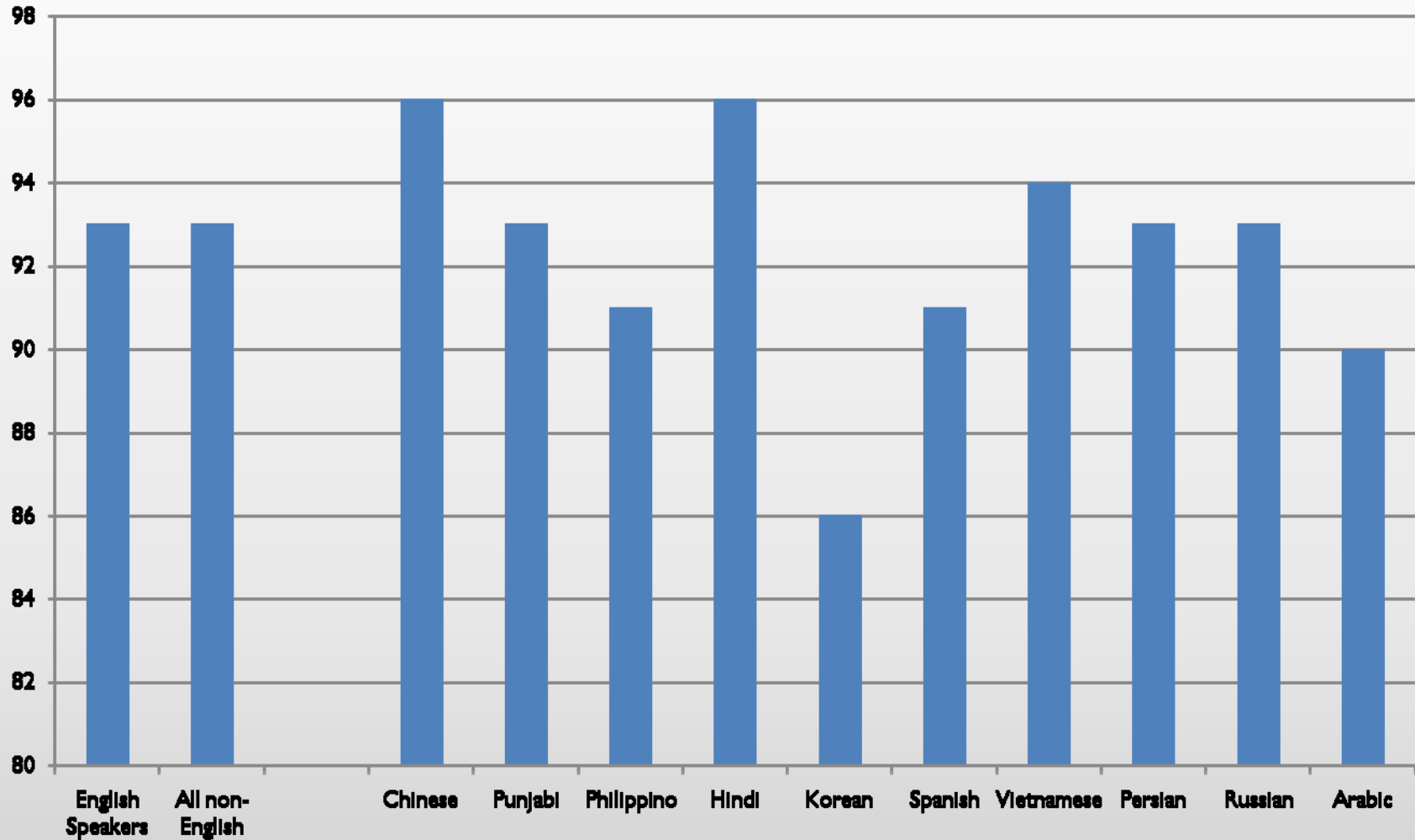
Median family income in EA of residence



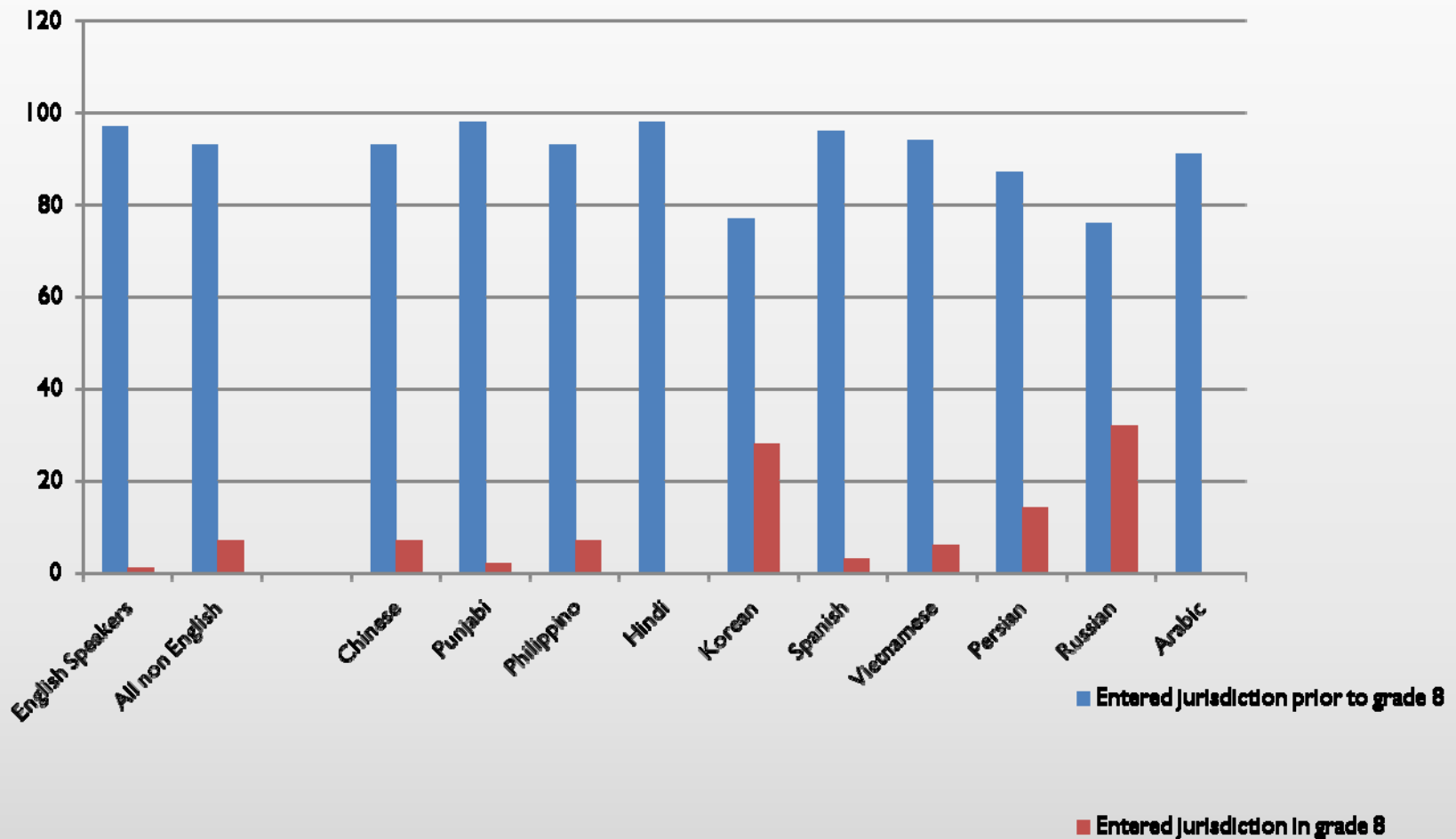
Percentage of each group enrolled in public or private school



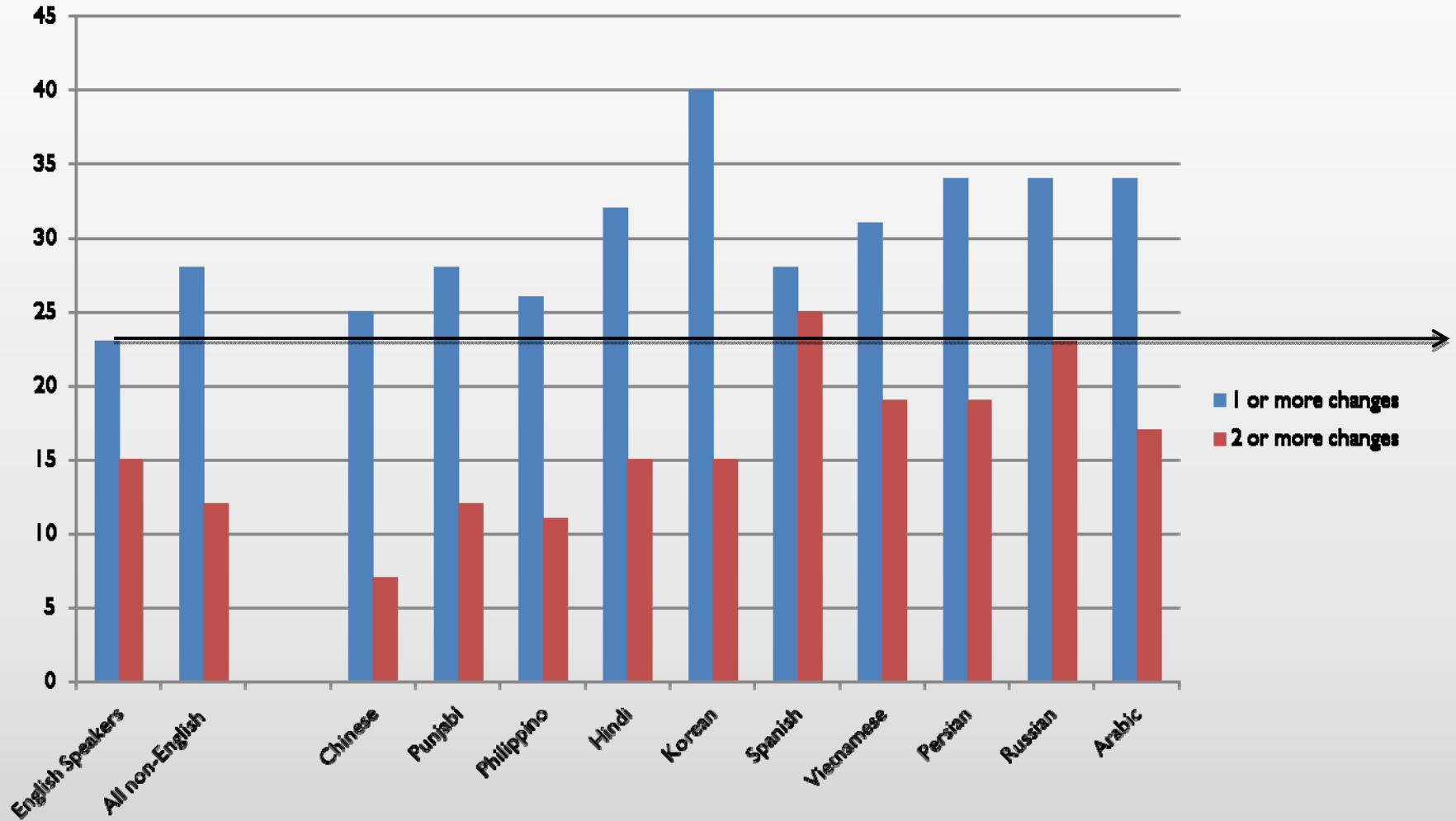
Percentages of students entering high school on time



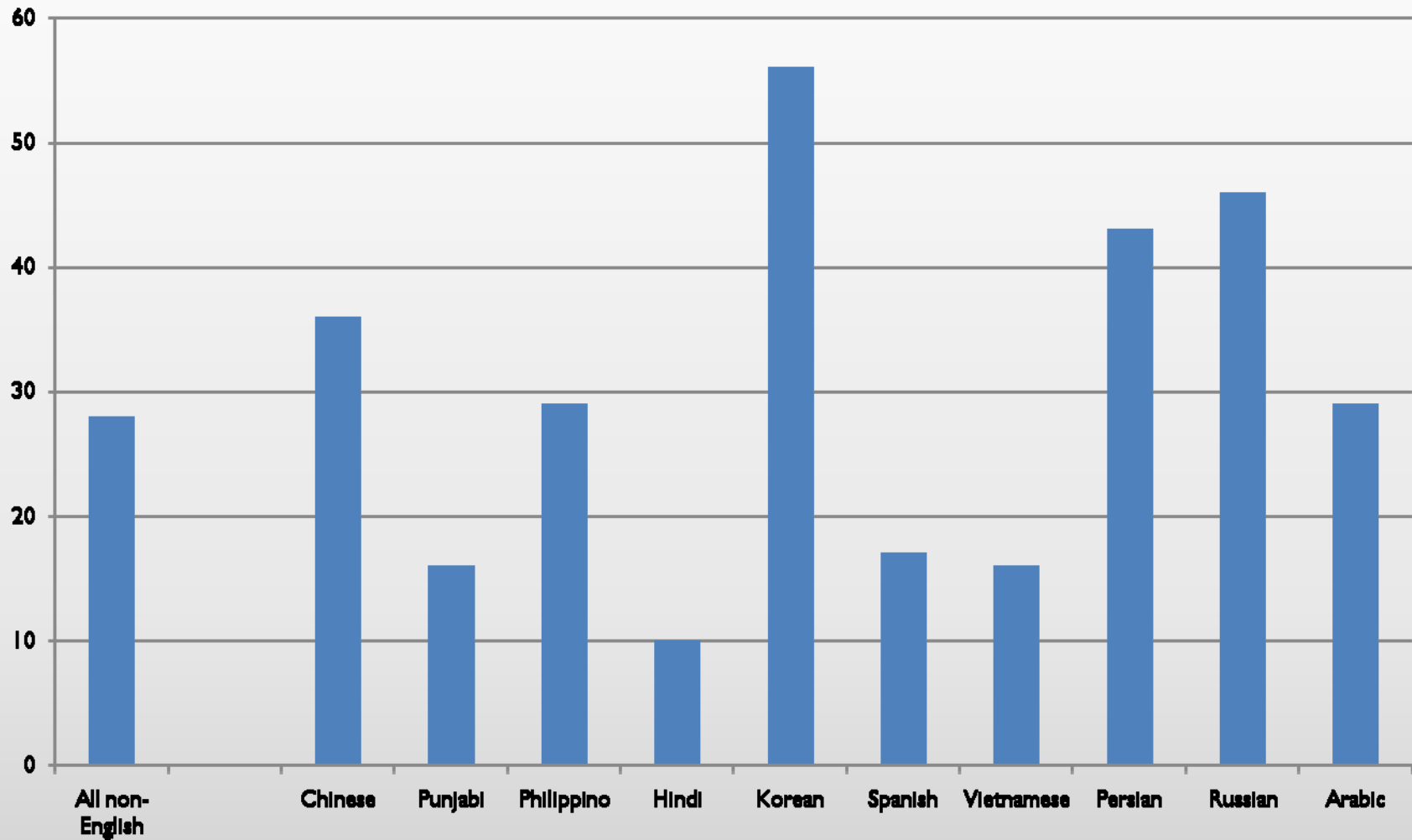
Grade level of entry to Metro Vancouver jurisdictions



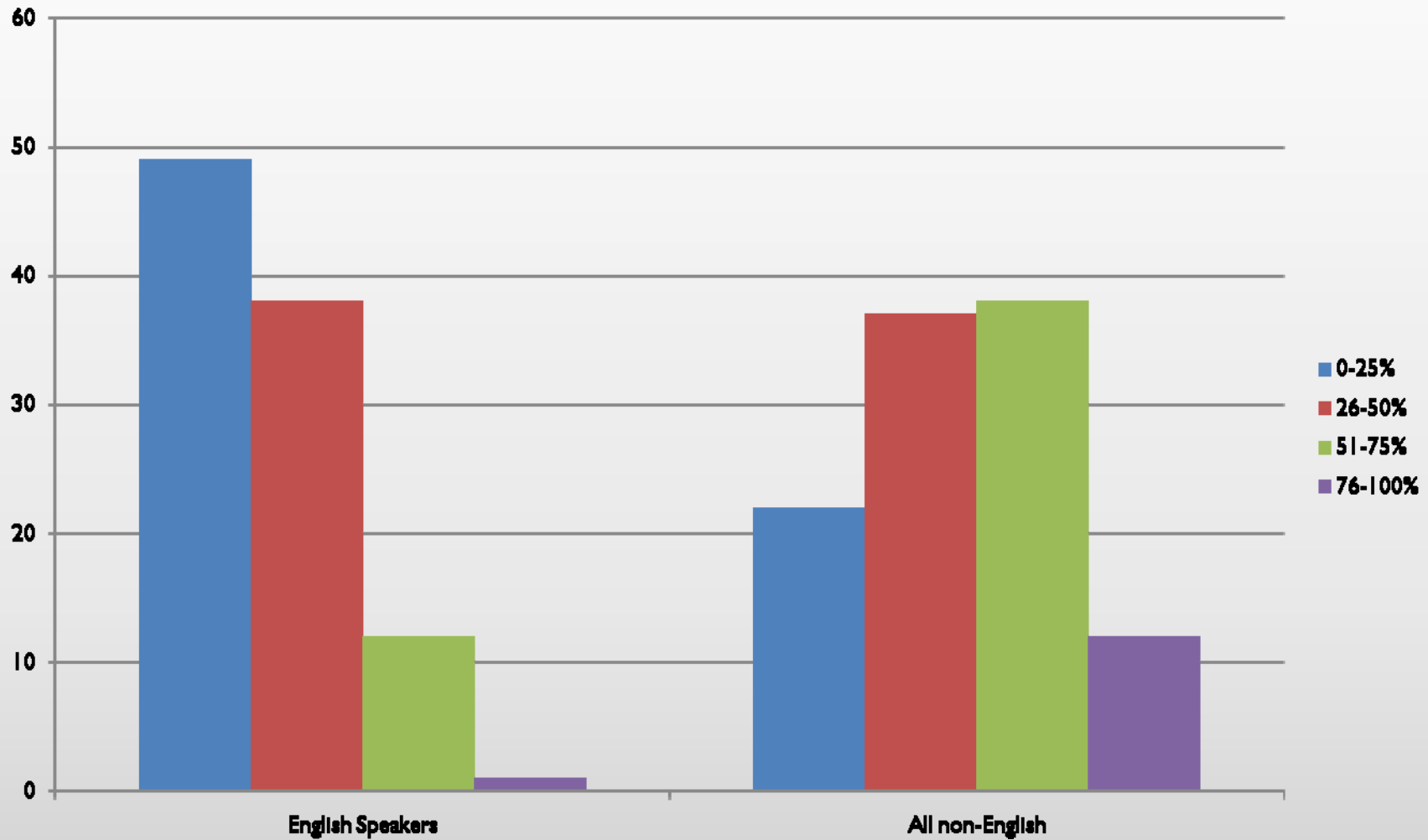
Frequency of school changes (within 4 years of entering grade 8)



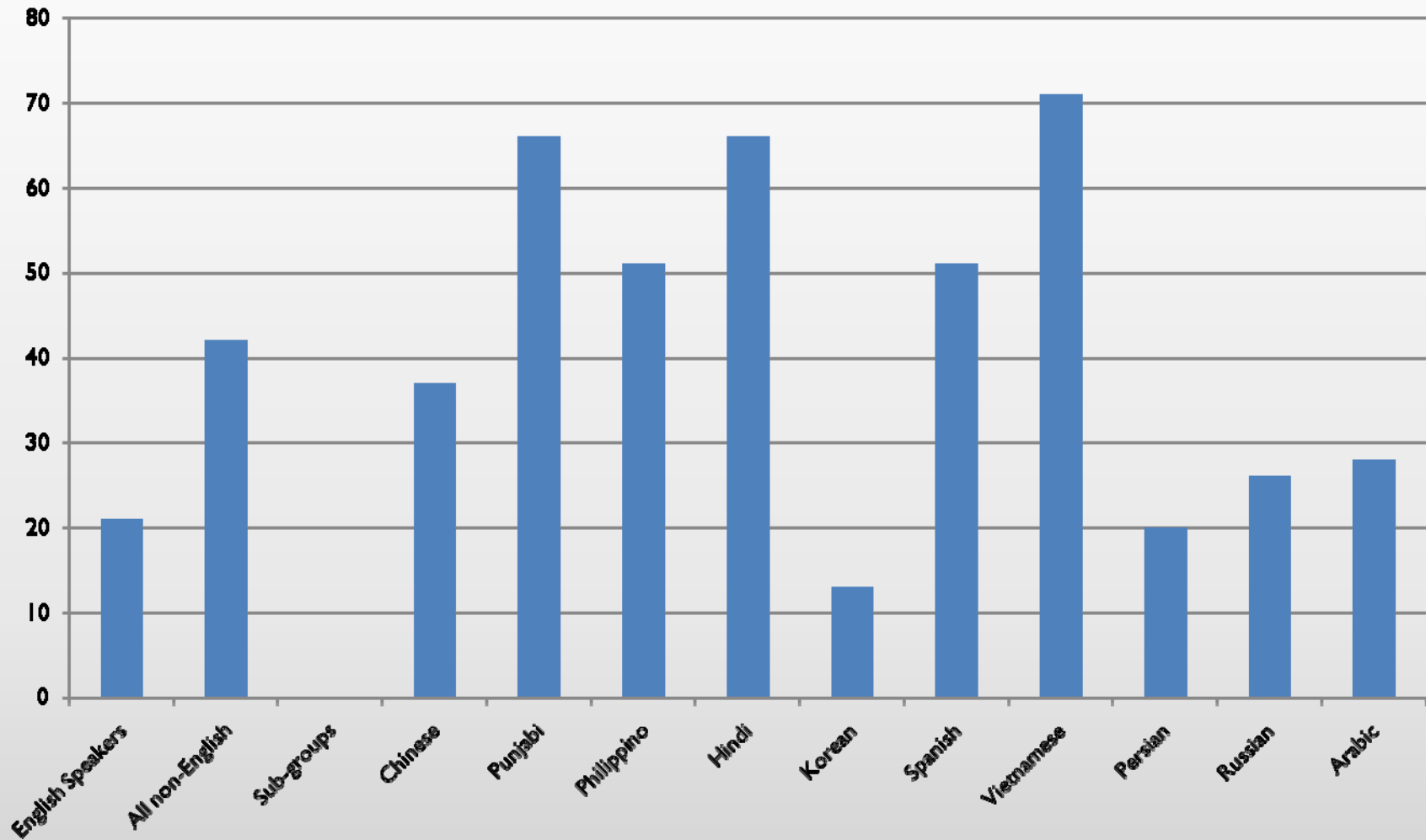
Frequency of enrollment in ESL classes during high school (grade 8 or after),



Concentration of non-English speakers in school attended



Percentage of each group enrolled in a socio-economically challenged school

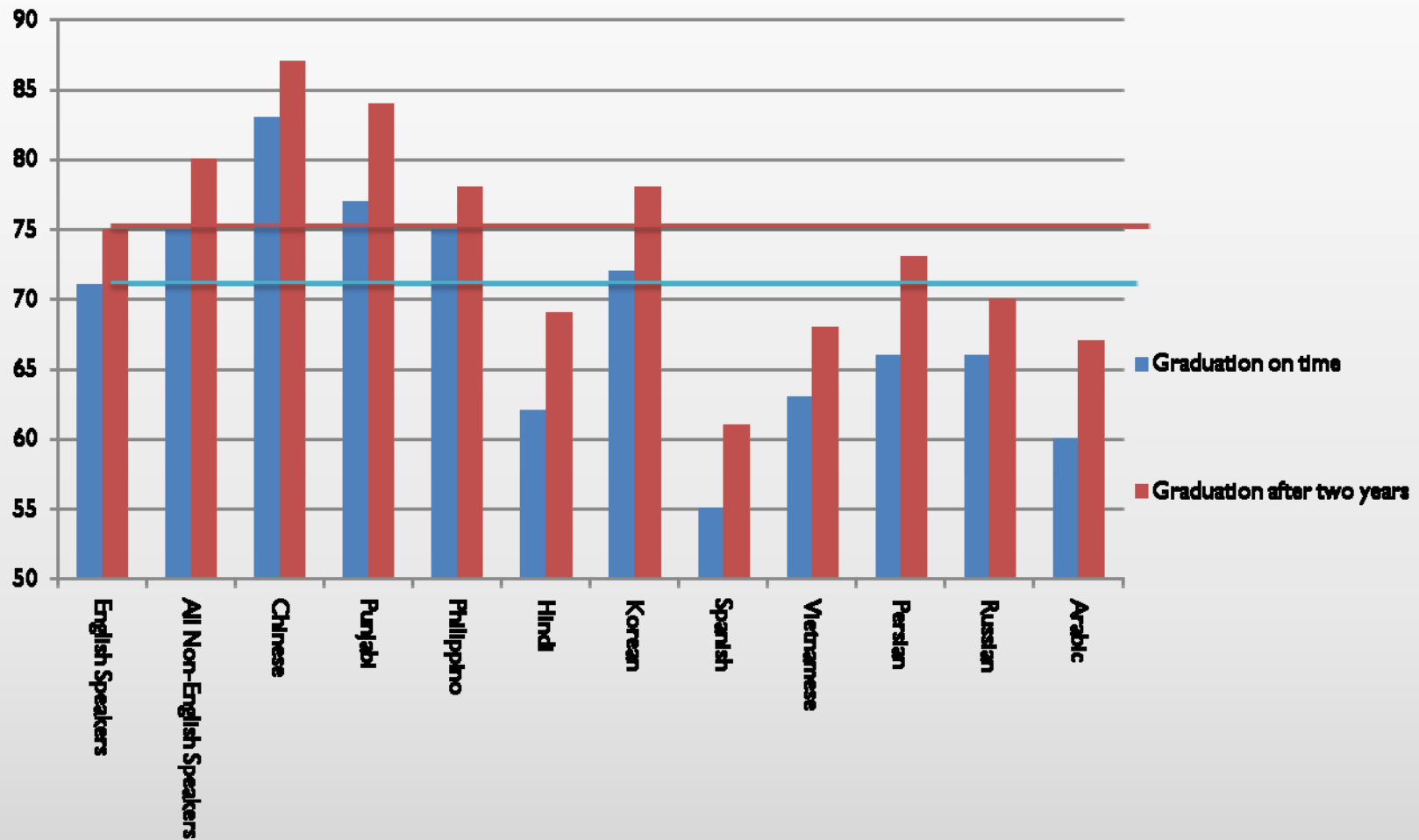


Characteristics overall

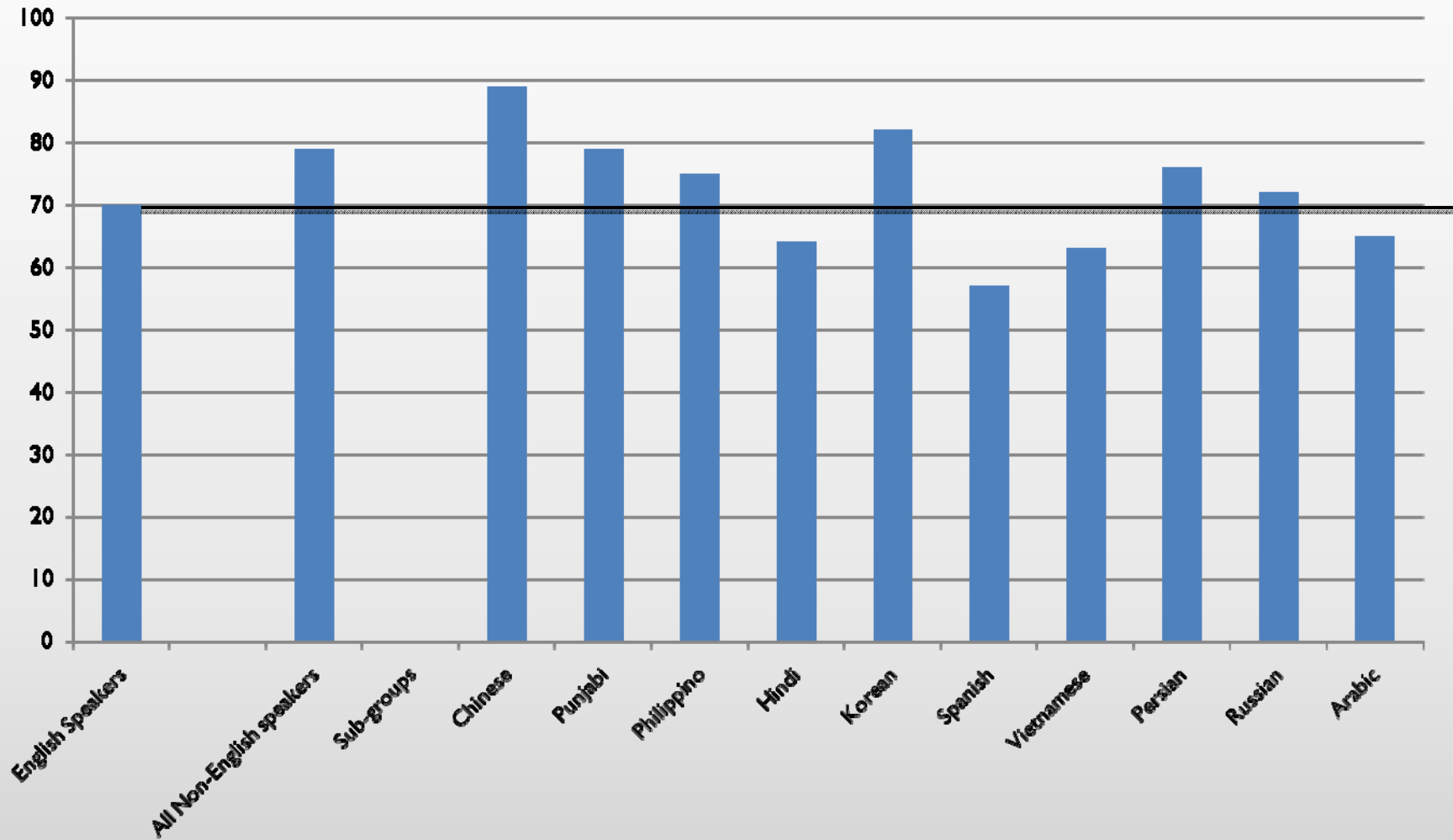
- ▶ Non-English speaking groups typically have more risk factors than English speakers:
 - ▶ Lower median incomes
 - ▶ Generally lower enrolments in private schools
 - ▶ More frequently change schools
 - ▶ More frequently enrolled in schools with larger proportions of other non-English speakers
 - ▶ More frequently enrolled in socio-economically challenged schools.



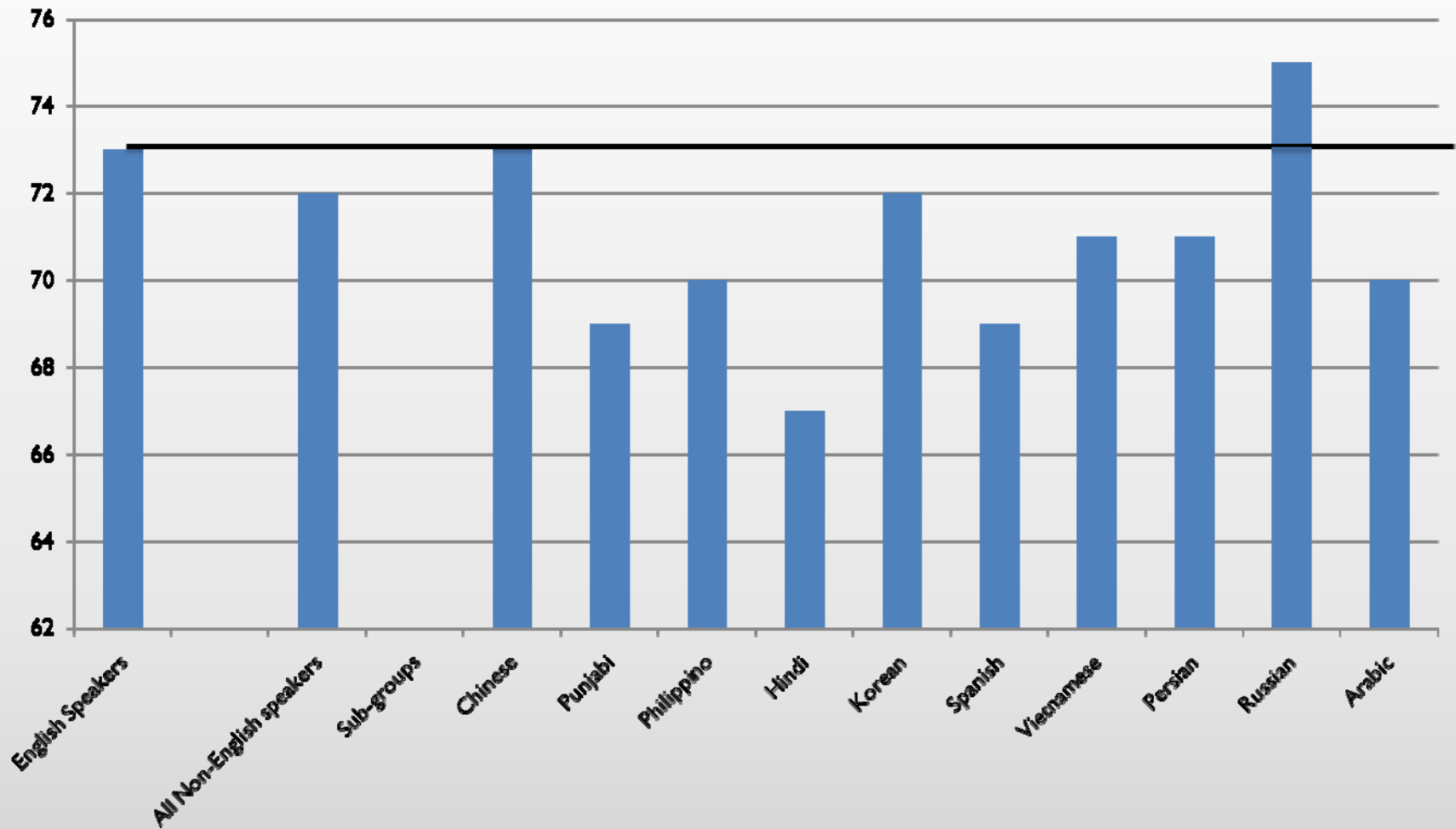
Graduation rates of linguistic subgroups



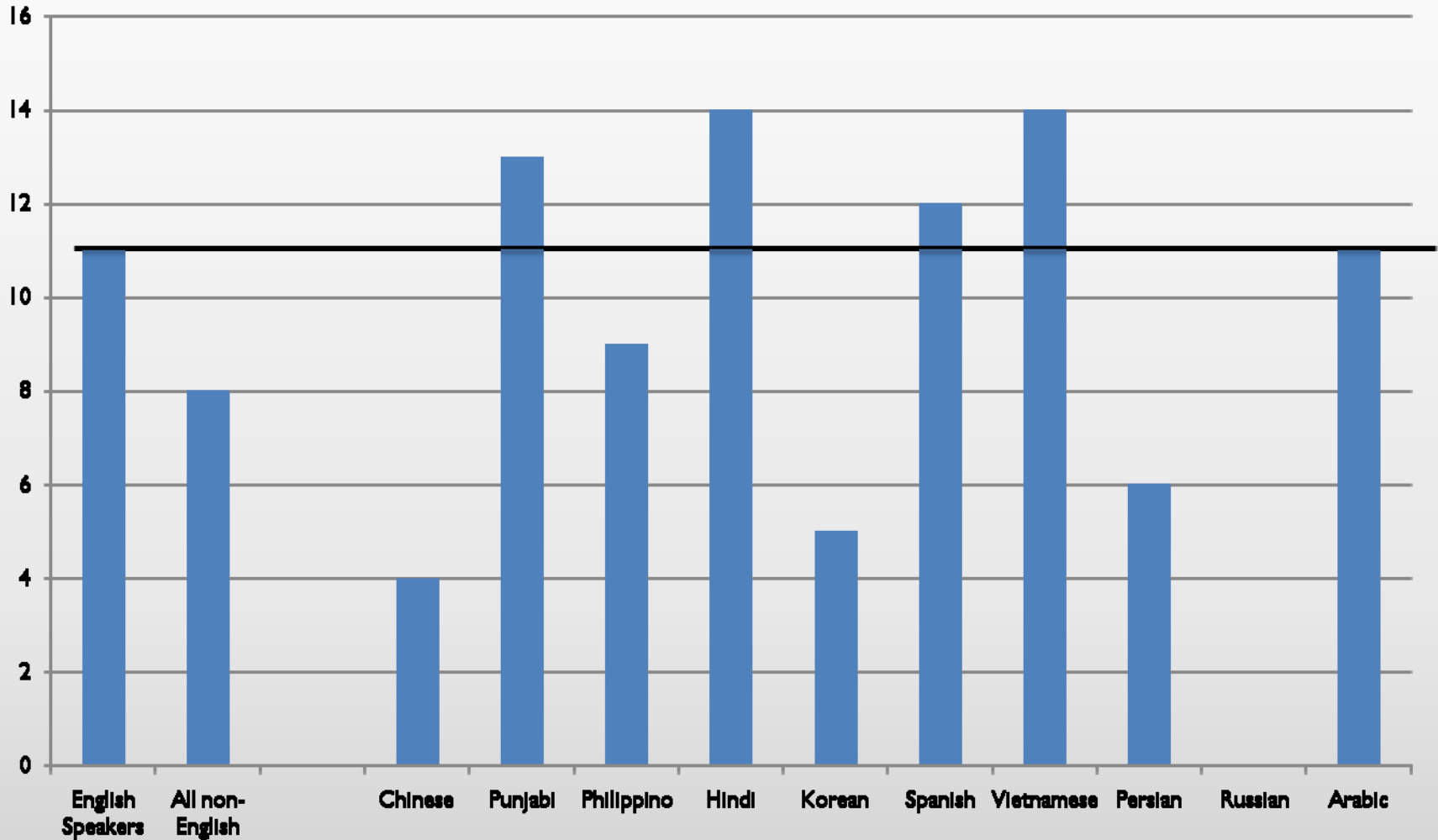
English 12 participation 'high track'



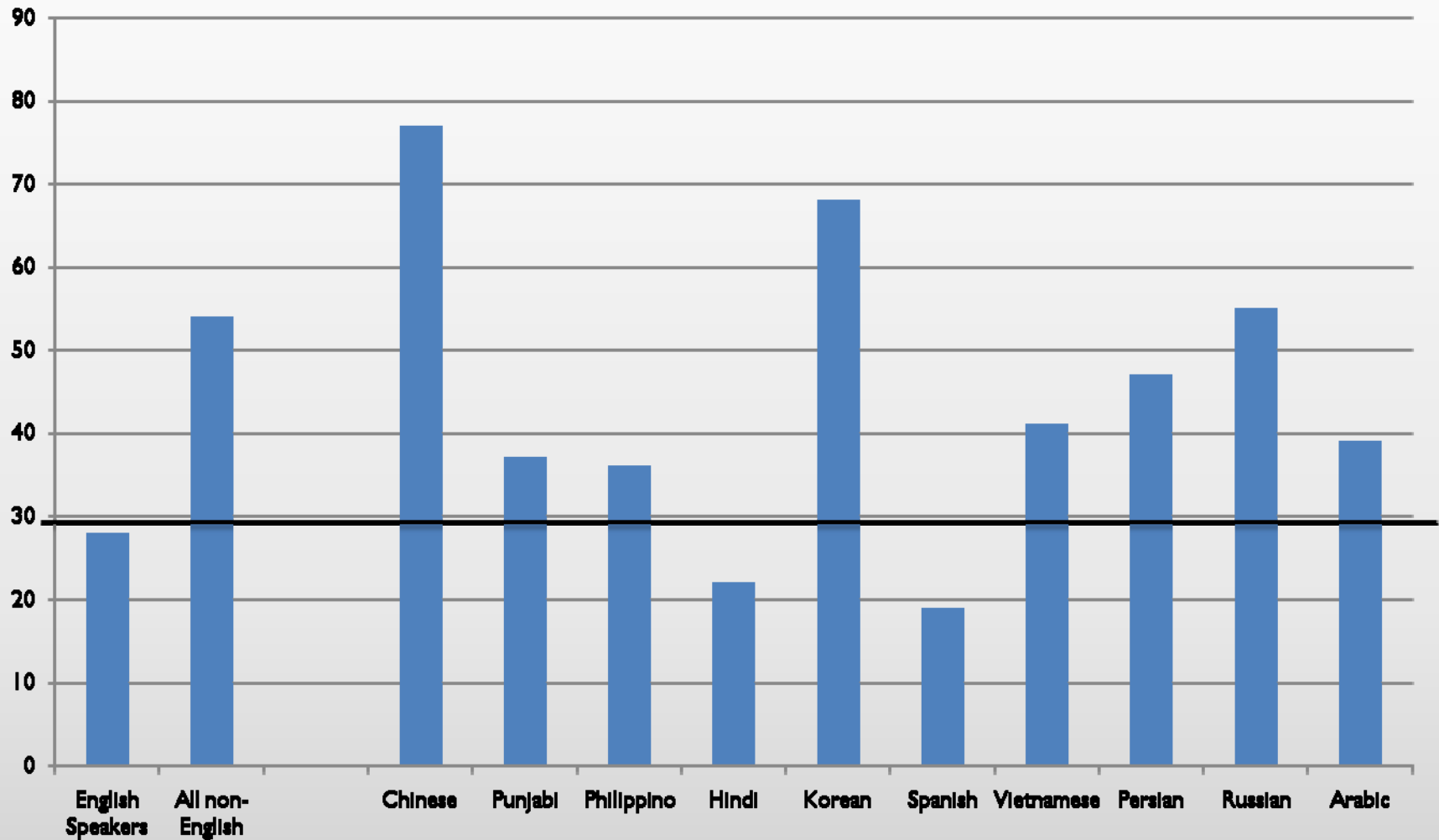
English 12 performance



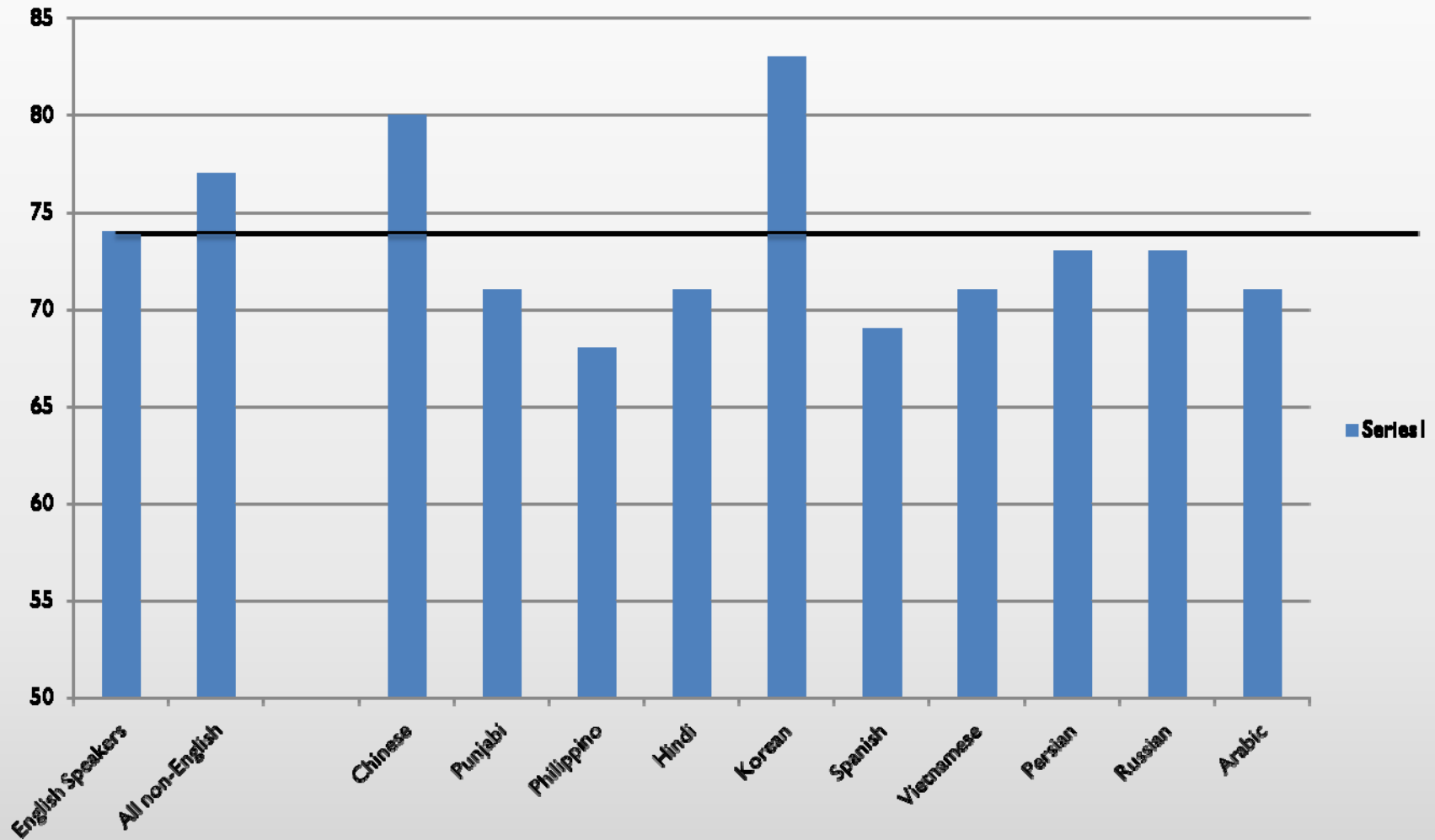
Participation in low track English 12



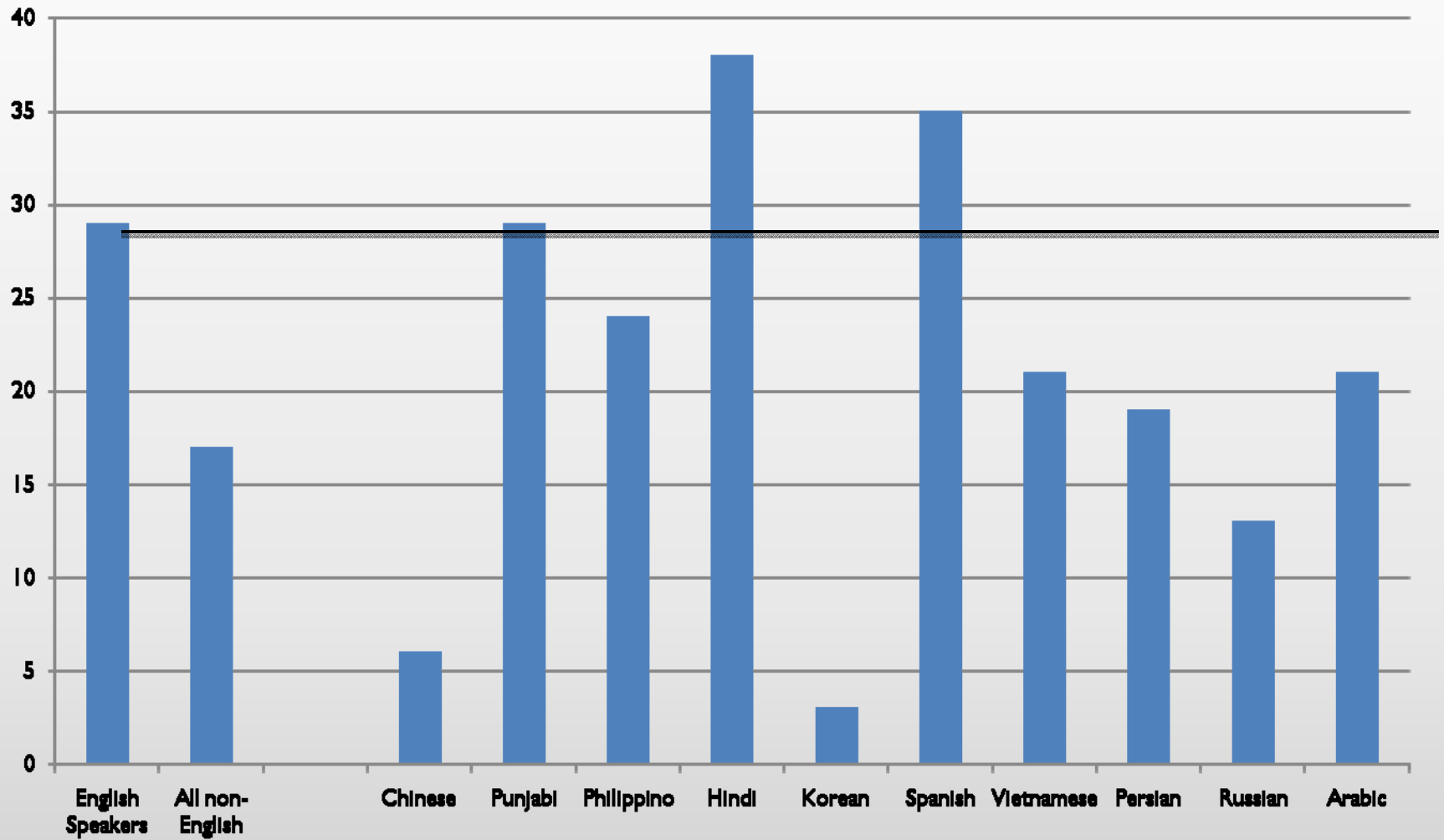
Participation in high track Math 12



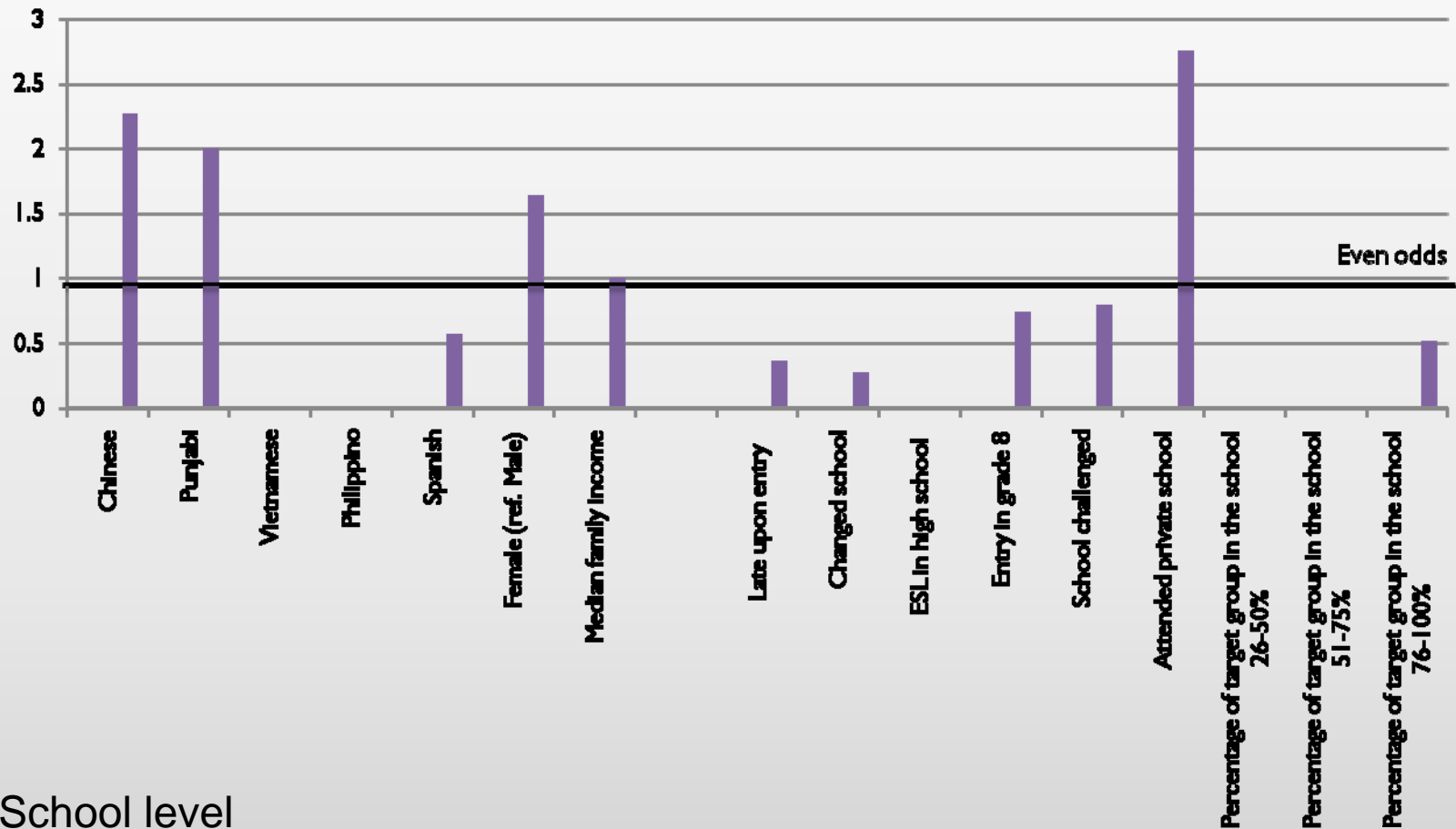
Performance in high-track Math 12



Participation in low-track Math



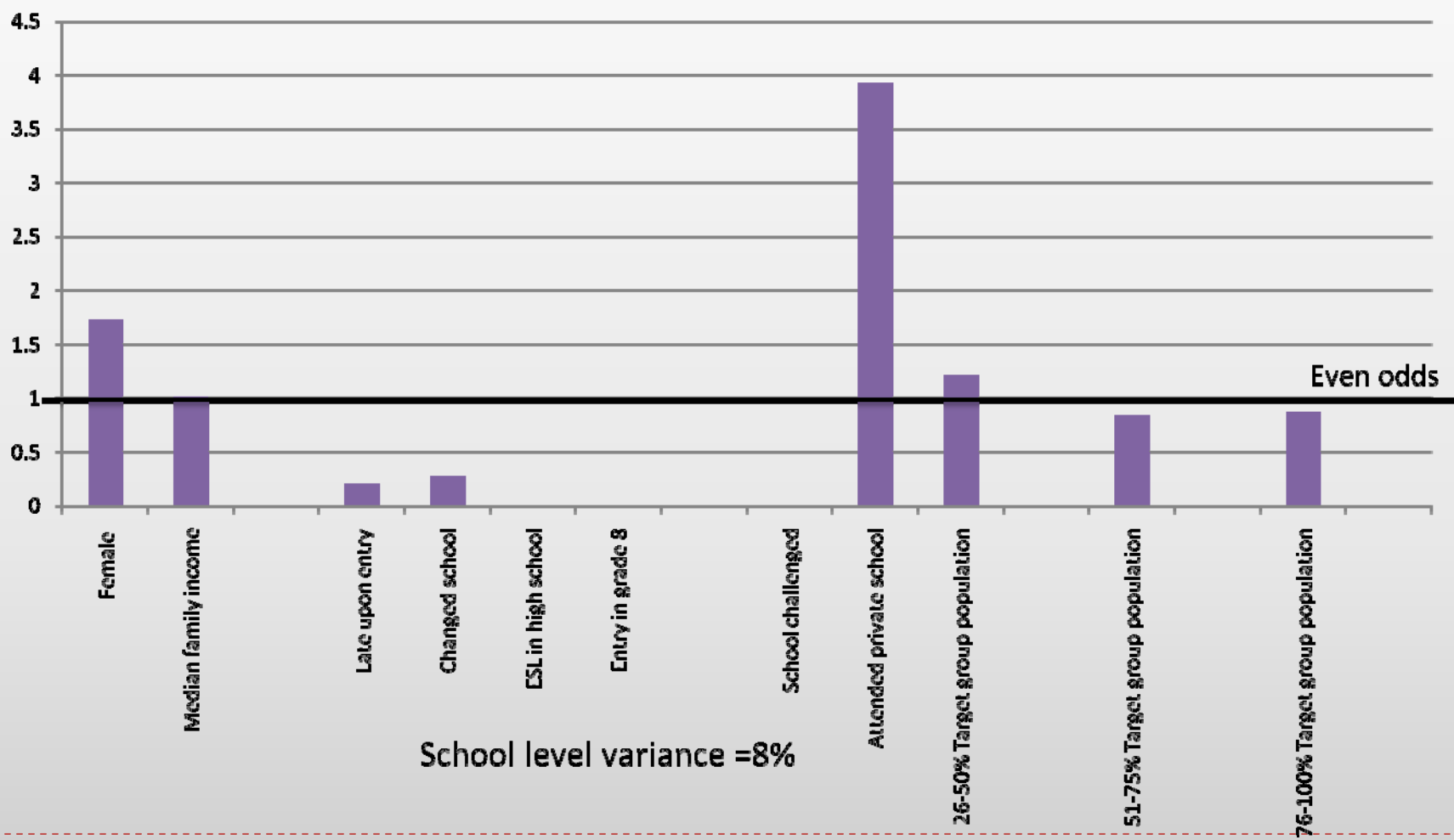
Graduation: Impact of language group, socio-demographic, schooling process and school level variables on non-English speakers only



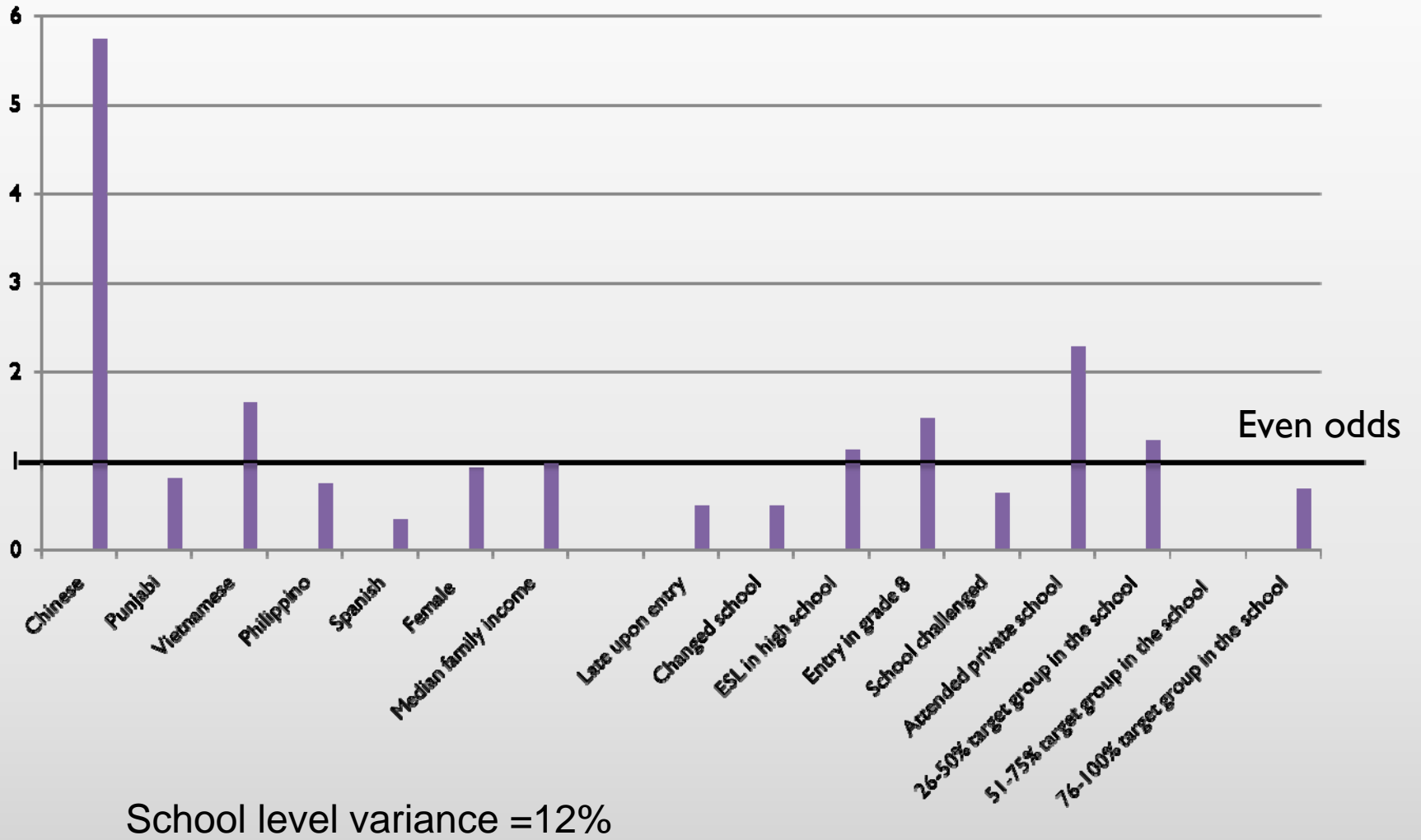
School level variance =20%



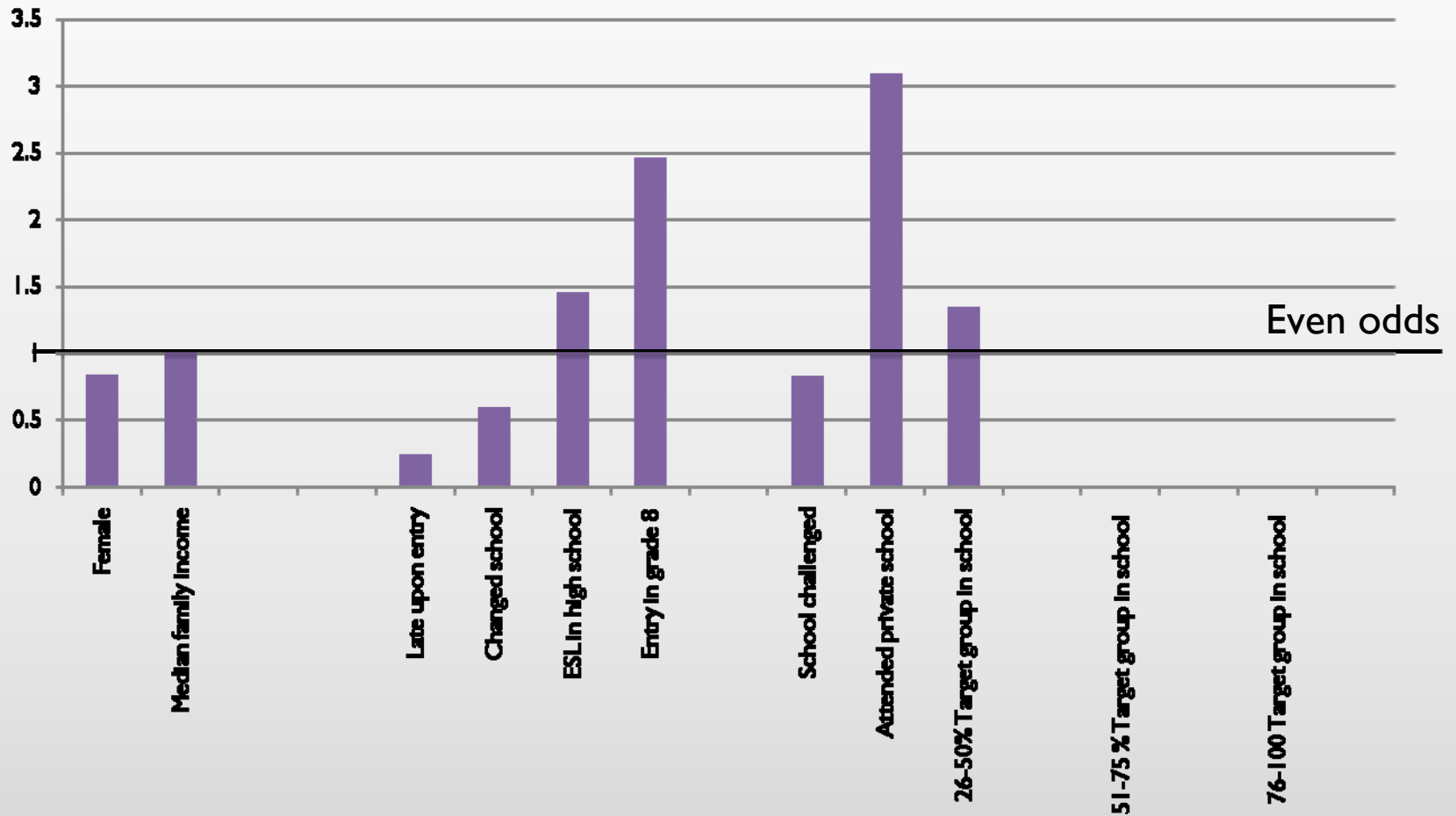
Graduation: Impact of language group, socio-demographic, schooling process and school level variables on English speakers only



Participation Math 12: Impact of language group, socio-demographic, schooling process and school level variables on non-English speakers



Participation Math 12: Impact of language group, socio-demographic, schooling process and school level variables on English speakers



School level variance = 6%



Themes from this research and Garnett(2008)

- ▶ Macro-level data mask underlying ethno-cultural/linguistic variation.
 - ▶ Labels are of limited value.
- ▶ Most ethno-cultural groups appear to aspire to academic success.
- ▶ There is a gap between the academic participation of most immigrant groups and their actual achievement.
- ▶ First language academic knowledge (not just English proficiency) appears correlated with success.
- ▶ The male disadvantage generally extends to ESL groups.
- ▶ Disadvantage is additive and multiplicative.
- ▶ School level effects appear modest.



Policy implications

- ▶ Disaggregate data for decision making.
- ▶ Target support towards groups most in need.
- ▶ Assess for prior learning before entry to the system.
- ▶ Schools should do what schools do best (i.e. teach language and content).
- ▶ The policy mix should target both students and schools (time, attitudes, professional development).
- ▶ ESL support should be ongoing.
- ▶ Provide additional time for graduation.

