

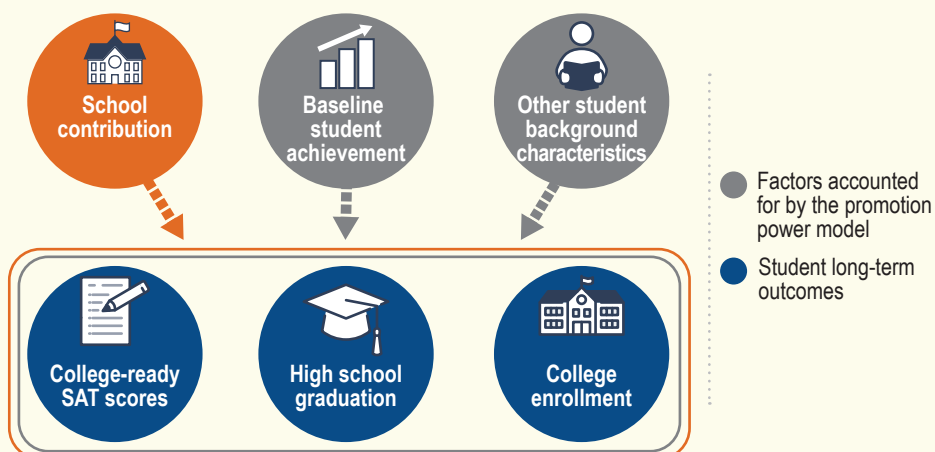


Leveling the playing field: Using promotion power to identify high school effectiveness

An important indicator of a high school's effectiveness is whether its students graduate and enroll in college, but **a high school's graduation or college enrollment rate can be affected by factors outside of the school's control**. REL Mid-Atlantic worked with public high schools in Washington, DC to examine their promotion power. Promotion power is an approach that accounts for factors outside a high school's control when examining the school's effectiveness, such as how prepared students are coming into high school and other background characteristics.

What is promotion power?

Promotion power distinguishes a school's contributions to student outcomes from the contributions of students' background characteristics and past academic performance.



Promotion power scores indicate how much better—or worse—a high school's student outcomes are relative to what its students' predicted outcomes would have been had the students attended a school with average promotion power. States and districts can use promotion power to better identify **schools with low promotion power scores that require additional support** and **schools with high promotion power scores that could be further examined and serve as models** for improving students' long-term success.

What have we learned from studying promotion power in DC?



States and large districts with many high schools generally have existing data that would allow them to calculate promotion power scores.

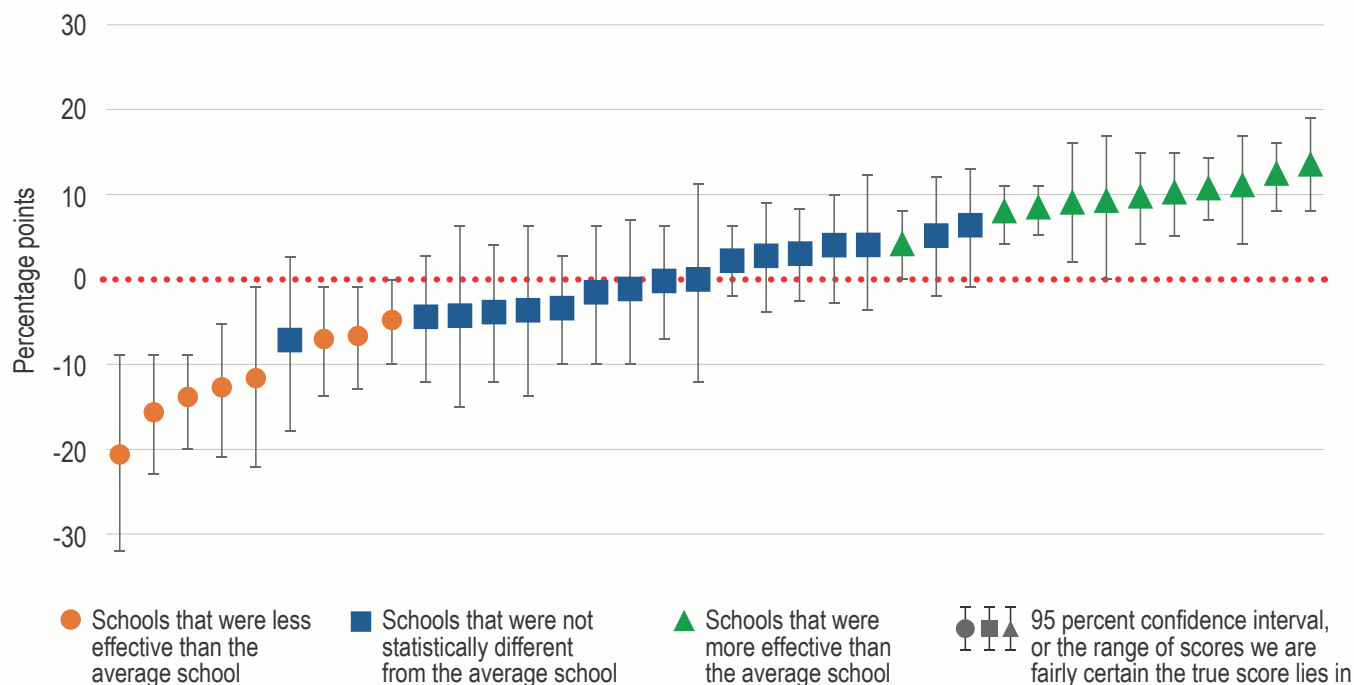


Promotion power scores can differentiate between DC high schools (see the graphic below).



Schools with higher promotion power for high school graduation are also more likely to have higher promotion power for college enrollment.

Promotion power scores—high school graduation



Note: The vertical axis represents promotion power scores—set to have an average of 0—on high school graduation. A score of 10 percentage points for a given school, for example, means the typical student is 10 percentage points more likely to graduate if the student attends that school rather than the average school.

Source: Authors' analysis of data from the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education



Read more about this study and the promotion power approach in the [full report](#).