Changes in High School Course-Taking Patterns under the Florida College & Career Readiness Initiative (FCCRI)

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Data and Definitions

- Data source: FL Department of Education’s Education Data Warehouse
- Analysis compares two cohorts:
  - 2008/09 grade 11 – first voluntary cohort (Voluntary)
  - 2011/12 grade 11 – first mandatory cohort (Mandatory)
- Definition of student groups:
  - Targeted (scored 2 to 4 on FCAT Math, 2 to 3 on FCAT Reading)
  - Non-targeted (scored 2 on FCAT Math or FCAT Reading)
  - College-ready (scored 5 on FCAT Math, 4 to 5 on FCAT Reading)

Research Questions

1. How have course offerings changed at the school level?
2. How have targeted students’ high school course-taking patterns changed?
3. How have non-targeted students’ high school course-taking patterns changed?
4. How have students performed in college readiness courses?
5. How have students performed on the PERT if they retake it in grade 12?

Findings

1. Course Availability

   - Comparing Voluntary vs. Mandatory cohorts:
     - Percentage of schools offering college readiness courses increased significantly.
     - While college readiness course offerings increased, the availability of other types of courses did not seem to be negatively impacted.
     - Average number of regular courses decreased slightly: math (10.4 to 9.9 courses), reading (16.5 to 15.4 courses)

2. Course Taking: Targeted Students

   - Comparing Voluntary vs. Mandatory cohorts:
     - Percentage of targeted students not taking a math class their senior year decreased from 25.3% to 6.7%.
     - As expected, targeted students took more college readiness courses and fewer regular courses in both math and reading.

3. Course Taking: College-Ready Students

   - Comparing Voluntary vs. Mandatory cohorts:
     - In both cohorts, more than 95% of students who are college-ready in math took an honors course or college credit.
     - In reading, there was an 8 percentage point increase in students taking honors courses or college credit. Cannot say with certainty if this is attributable to FCCRI or another policy change.

4. Course Performance

   - Less than 4% of students failed a math or reading college readiness course.
   - College readiness course grades were lowered for at-risk students, particularly in math.

5. PERT Performance

   - The percentage of students who re-test college-ready is 25% in math and 32% in reading.
   - Most students improve their scores when re-taking the PERT in either subject.
   - The percentage of students who re-test college-ready is 25% in math and 32% in reading.

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