



# **Summary of RateYourFuture.org Survey Findings**

**Presented to the Nation's Governors at the  
NGA Annual Meeting  
Des Moines, Iowa  
July 16, 2005**

# Major Findings

**Of students who plan to graduate from high school:**

- **Less than 1 in 10 say high school has been “very hard.”**
- **More than one-third say high school has been “easy.”**
- **32% “strongly agree” they would work harder if high school offered more demanding and interesting courses.**
- **71% think taking courses related to the kinds of jobs they want is the best way to make their senior year more meaningful.**

# More Major Findings

**Of teens who have dropped out or are considering dropping out:**

- **Over half say they want to eventually finish high school.**
- **One-third of them want to go to a community college.**
- **66% say they would be more likely to stay in school if they received personal attention to help them with their studies.**



## Background

- **This summary highlights the major conclusions of an online study conducted among 10,387 teenagers ages 16-18.**
- **Section 1 presents the responses of students currently in high school and intending to graduate.**
- **Section 2 presents the responses of teenagers not currently in high school and teenagers currently in high school who say they plan to leave before graduating.**



# Section 1

**Students currently in  
high school and  
intending to graduate**

## Major Findings About Teens in School

**High schools students are unaware of the level of preparation they need to excel in college or in life. Although teens say they are learning and believe high school is useful, most say it isn't difficult and they would work harder if high school offered more demanding and interesting courses.**

- **More than 9 in 10 students say they have learned a “great deal” or “some” in high school.**
- **Nine in 10 students say that high school has been “very” or “somewhat” useful.**
- **Less than 1 in 10 students say high school has been “very hard” and more than one-third say it has been “easy.”**
- **Two in three students agree with the statement: “I would work harder if high school offered more demanding and interesting courses.”**



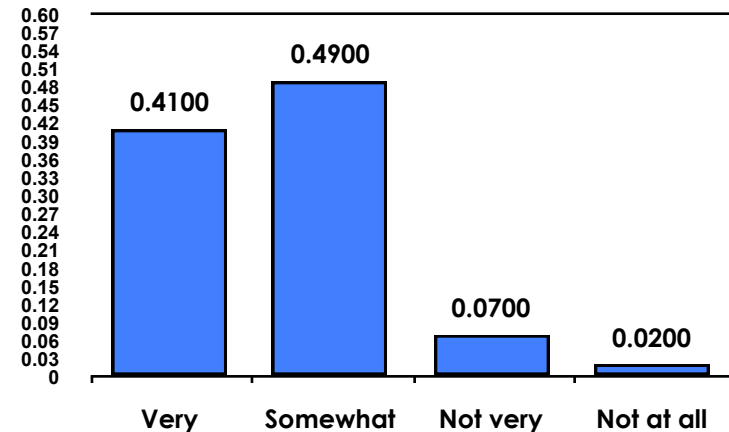
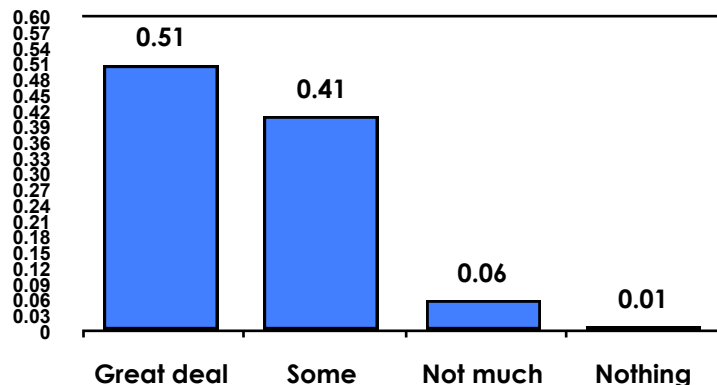
## **More Major Findings About Teens in School**

**High school students say their senior year could be much more meaningful if they could take courses that matter later in life and count as college credit.**

- More than 3 in 5 teens say the following would “work very well” in making high school more meaningful:**
  - “Taking courses that will matter later in life.”**
  - “Practical information on college.”**
  - “Taking courses that count as college credit.”**
  - “Being allowed to choose their courses.”**
  - “Receiving money to take and pass AP courses.”**

# Teens Say They are Learning and that High School is Useful

*Teens planning on college are more likely to say they have learned a great deal and that high school has been very useful.*





## How Do You Rate Your High School on Each of the Following?

<b>Students Rate Their Schools</b>	<b>Excellent/ Good</b>	<b>Fair/Poor</b>
<b>Giving me the skills to succeed</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Classes</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Challenging me academically</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Preparing me for college</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>37%</b>
<b>Providing me personal attention</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Preparing me for a skill or trade</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Holding my attention</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>62%</b>

## How Well Do You Think Your High School Prepares You in Each of the Following Areas?

Students Rate Their Schools	Excellent/ Good	Fair/Poor
Basic reading skills	80%	19%
Basic math skills	80%	19%
Ability to read at high level	75%	24%
Algebra	71%	28%
Using personal computers	71%	28%
Work effectively in groups	68%	31%
Ability to communicate effectively	67%	32%

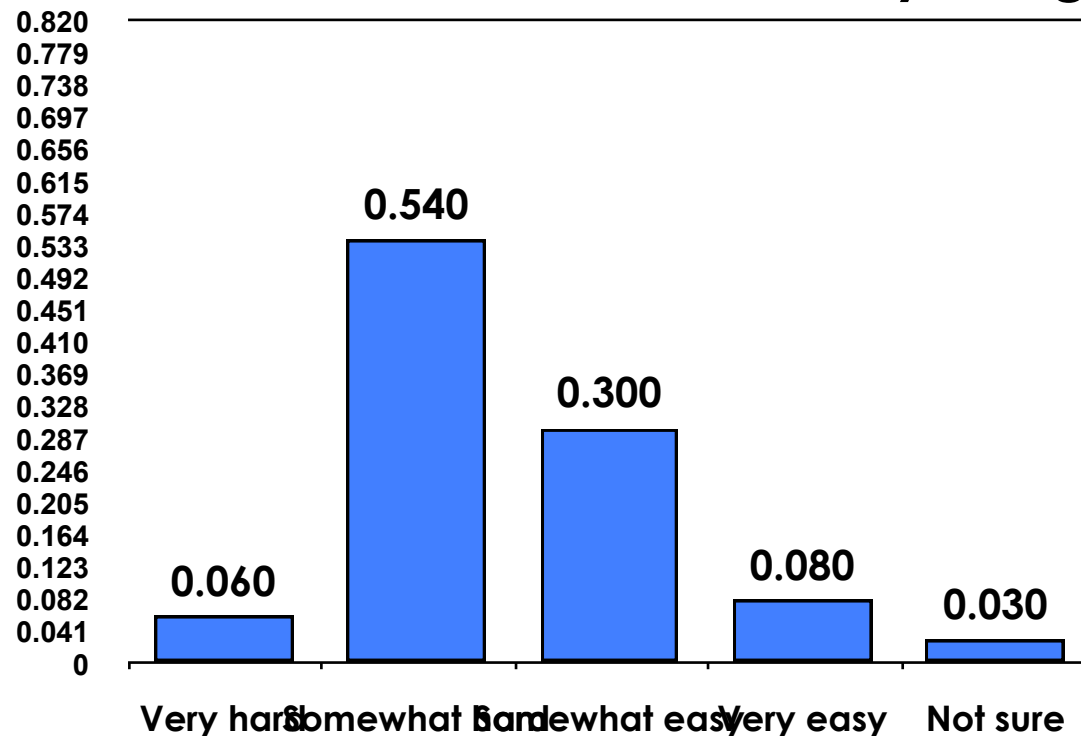


## How Well Do You Think Your High School Prepares You in Each of the Following Areas?

<b>Students Rate Their Schools</b>	<b>Excellent/ Good</b>	<b>Fair/Poor</b>
<b>Thinking critically</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Analyzing problems</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Science</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>37%</b>
<b>Giving oral presentations</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>Demonstrating what I know</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Gaining practical or life skills</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>Learning a trade or skill</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>49%</b>

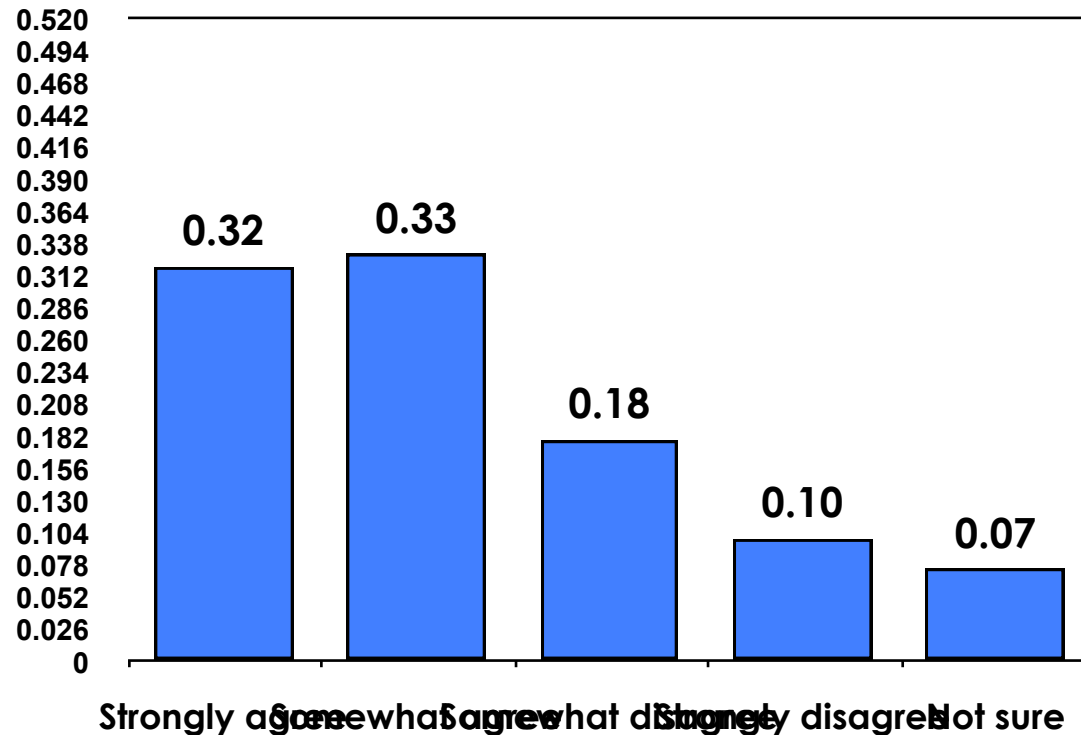
## Students Could be Challenged More

Students were asked: How hard or easy is high school?

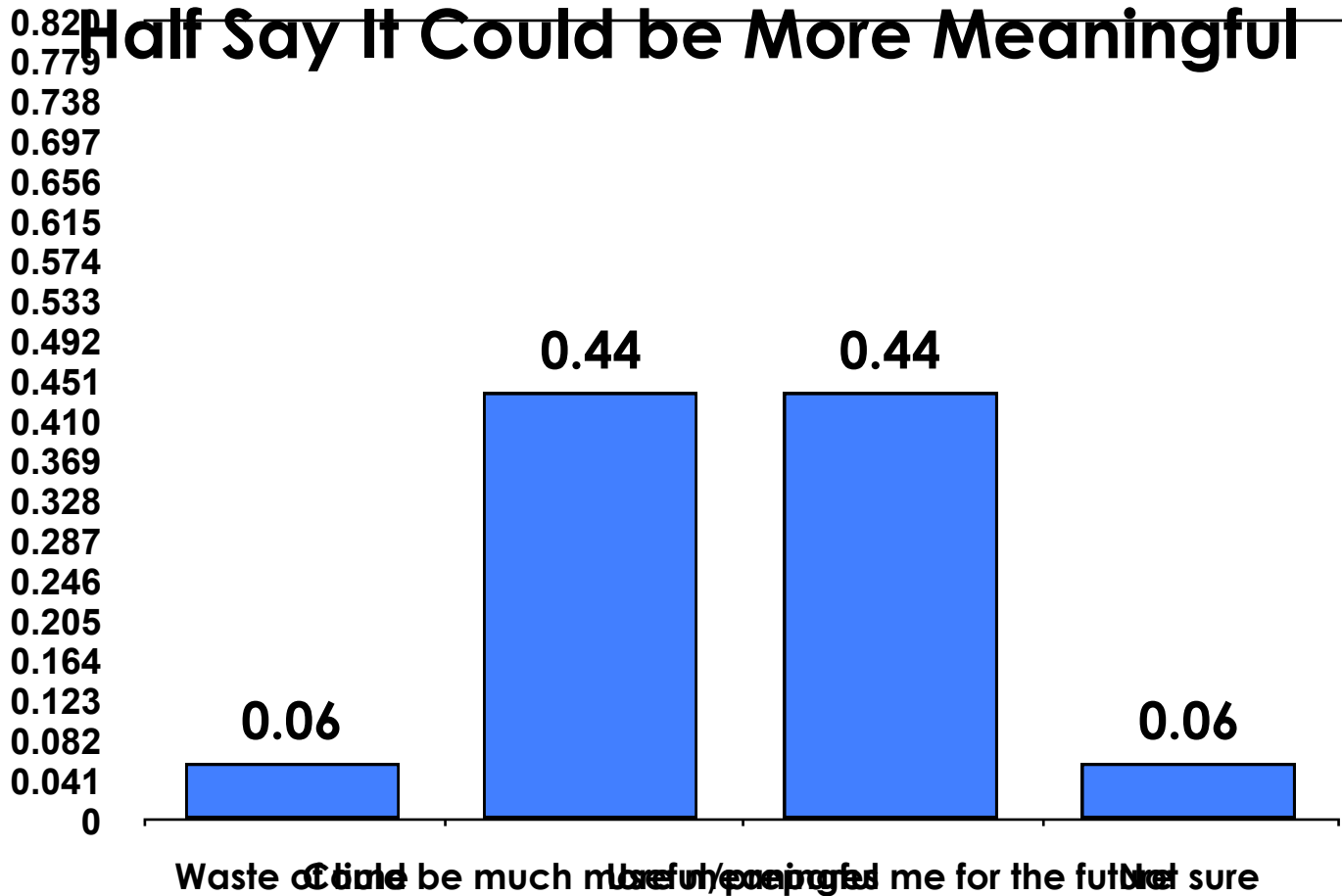


# Students Would Work Harder if Challenged

Level of agreement: I would work harder if high school offered more demanding and interesting courses.



# What Do Teens Think of Senior Year?





## Teens Say These are the Best Ideas to Make Senior Year More Meaningful

Idea	Work Very Well	Work Well (Very + Somewhat)
Taking courses related to the kind of job I want.	71%	93%
Receiving detailed information on colleges.	65%	89%
Taking courses that count as college credit.	64%	89%
Being allowed to pick and choose the course I want.	63%	86%
Receiving money to take and pass AP courses.	60%	84%



## A Majority Say These Ideas Would Work Well in Making Senior Year More Meaningful

Idea	Work Very Well	Work Well (Very + Somewhat)
Receiving scholarships to attend college while in high school.	58%	85%
Receiving money to take courses at community colleges.	58%	82%
Taking AP courses that count as college credit.	56%	82%
Getting 1-to-1 help on courses you are struggling with.	54%	85%
Taking college preparation courses.	53%	75%
Receiving money to take industry certification exams.	51%	77%





## Teens Say These Ideas are “OK” but Not as Good as the Others

Idea	Work Very Well	Work Well (Very + Somewhat)
Taking college placement exams in junior year.	48%	81%
Combining work and high school with internship.	47%	88%
Taking independent study classes with favorite teacher.	43%	78%
Taking high school exit exam early to know weaknesses.	41%	76%
Taking college-level courses outside of high school.	41%	76%
Receiving money to get certified in an industry.	33%	68%
Taking International Baccalaureate classes.	33%	59%



## Section 2

**Students not currently in  
high school or not  
intending to graduate**

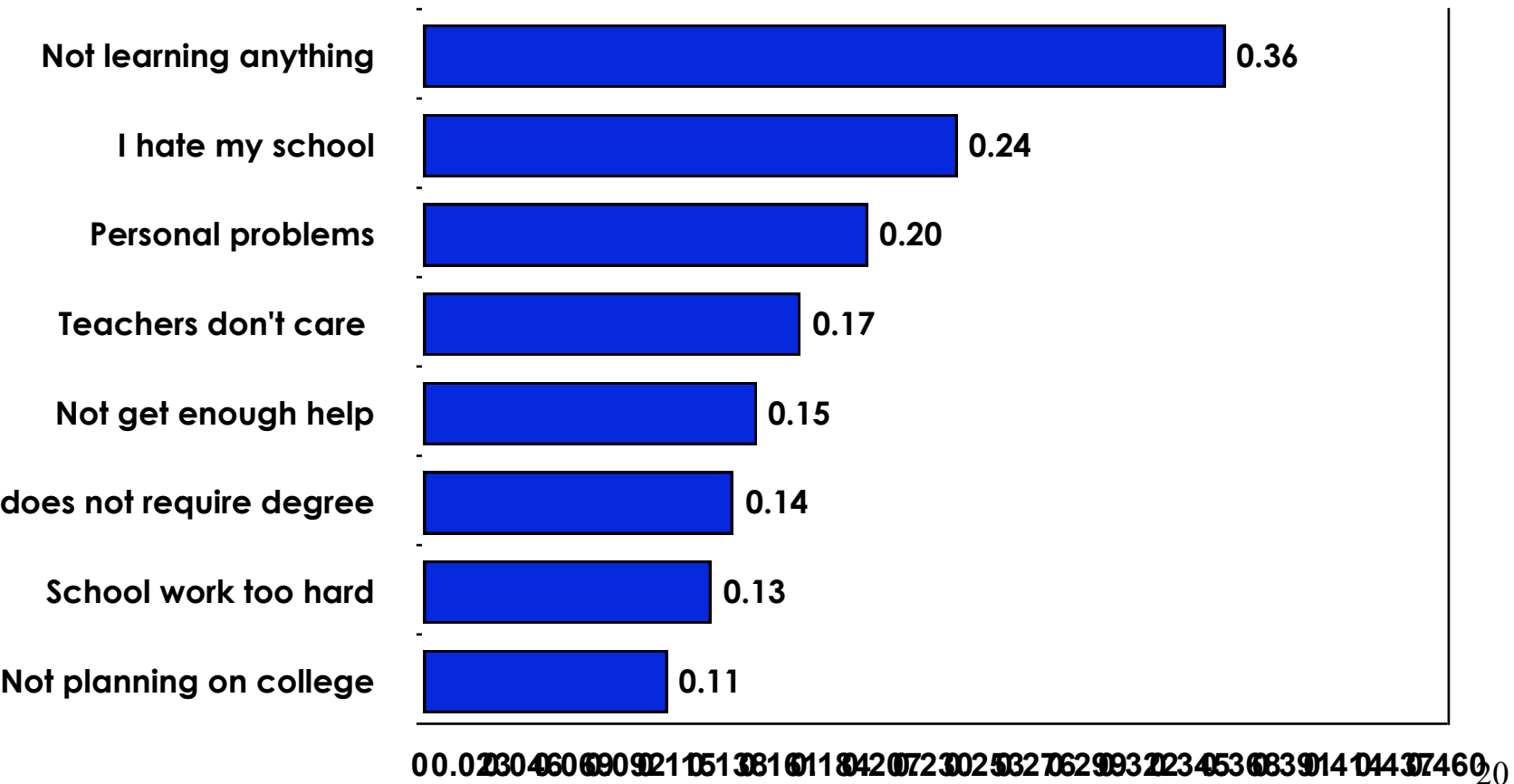
## **Major Findings About Teens Not in School**

**Making high school more personalized and letting students know a high school diploma will get them a better job and more money would work to get drop-outs back in school and convince those thinking about leaving to stay in.**

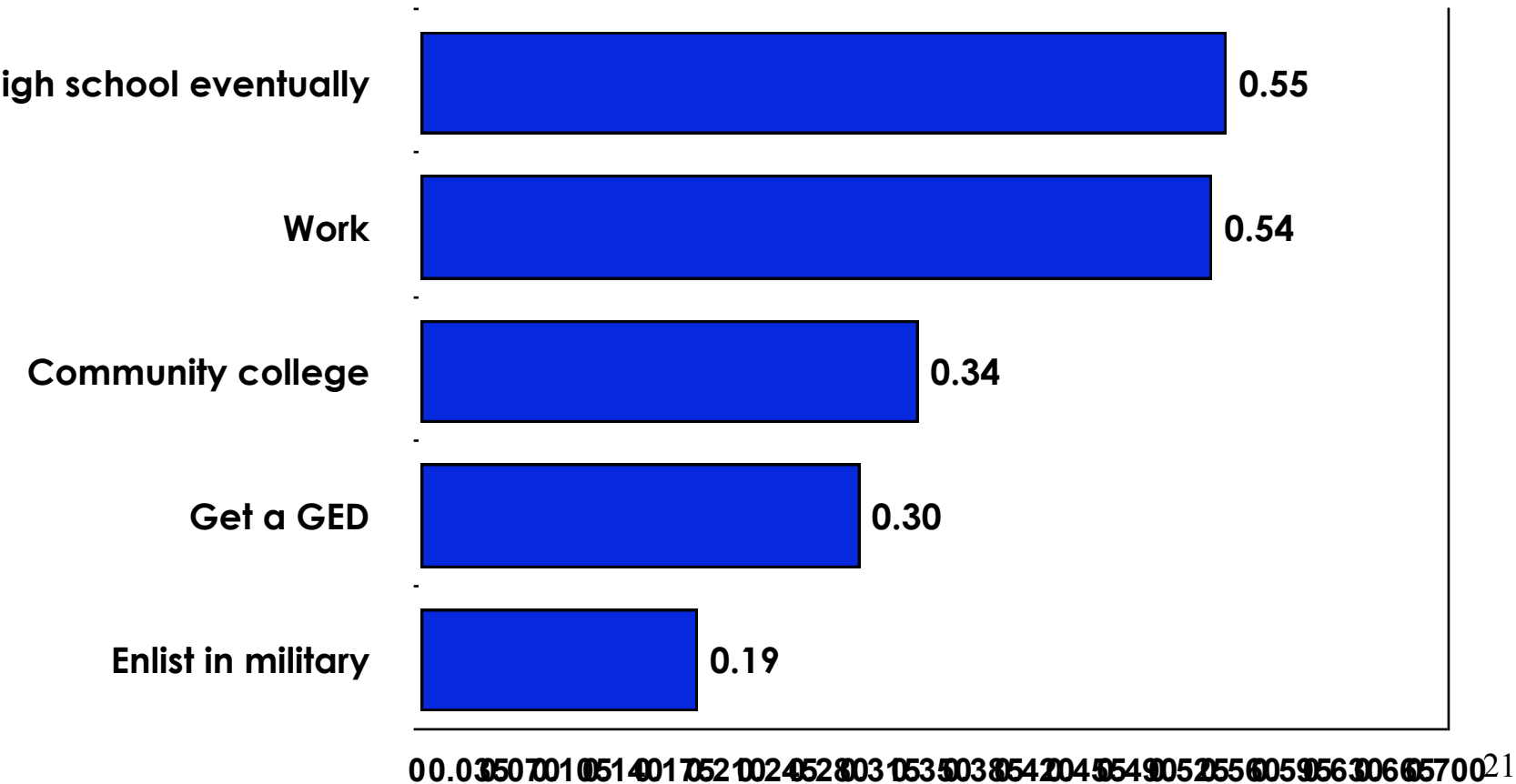
- Over half of teens who have dropped out or are thinking about dropping out say they want to eventually finish high school. One-third of them want to go to a community college.**
- More than 3 in 5 of these teens say the following will make them more likely to stay in school:**
  - “Personal attention to help me with my studies.”**
  - “If I knew I’d earn more money after graduating.”**
  - “If I knew I’d get a better job after graduating.”**



## Reason Teens Leave High School Early or are Thinking About It



## What are Their Future Plans After Leaving High School Early?



## What Would Make These Teens Who Left Early or are Thinking About It Stay and Finish School?

Reasons to Stay in School	More Likely	Much More Likely
Personal attention to help me with my studies.	66%	39%
If I knew I'd earn more money after graduating.	64%	37%
If I knew I'd get a better job after graduating.	62%	35%

## Conclusions

- ***It is critical to communicate to students that they need to seek out and take rigorous courses to be prepared for the future.***
- ***Educators and parents must do a better job of encouraging students to find meaning in senior year by emphasizing its importance to their futures.***
- ***The message “you too can benefit from a high school education,” if continually reinforced, can work because a majority of teens who dropped out or who plan to drop out want to finish high school.***