

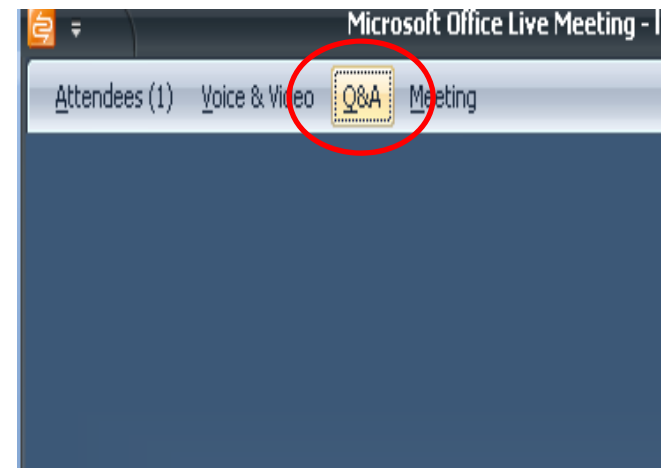
# ***What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public Schools: A Focus on Students with Disabilities***

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**December 8, 2009**

# Have a Question?

- During the Webinar, participants can submit written questions by clicking the “Questions and Answers” (Q&A) button at the top left of your screen, typing your question in the box, and then pressing “Enter” to submit your question.
- As part of our collaboration with the Consortium on Chicago School Research and as our featured December Experts, the report authors will answer questions in our December Ask the Expert column (<http://www.betterhighschools.org/expert/default.asp>). You may email questions for the authors to [helpfor@betterhighschools.org](mailto:helpfor@betterhighschools.org).



# Who We Are

- **Consortium on Chicago School Research**

The Consortium on Chicago School Research (<http://ccsr.uchicago.edu>) aims to conduct research of high technical quality that can inform and influence policy and practice in Chicago and nationwide. Founded in 1990, the Consortium is located at the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute.

- **National High School Center**

The National High School Center ([www.betterhighschools.org](http://www.betterhighschools.org)), established in 2005, serves as a central source of expertise on high school-related issues for the Regional Comprehensive Centers, a national network developed by the U.S. Department of Education. It provides the latest research, user-friendly tools and products, and high-quality technical assistance to inform the high school improvement landscape. The National High School Center is housed at the American Institutes for Research ([www.air.org](http://www.air.org)), located in Washington, D.C.

# Purpose

- The purpose of this Webinar is to share findings from the new report, *What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public Schools: A Focus on Students with Disabilities*.
- We will also discuss the implications of the research findings for Early Warning Systems.

# Agenda

- **Welcome**
  - *Joseph R. Harris*, Director,  
National High School Center
- **Presentation**
  - *Holly Hart*, Associate Director for Survey Research,  
Consortium on Chicago School Research
  - *Mindee O’Cummings*, Technical Assistance Liaison,  
National High School Center
- **Questions and Answers**
  - *Lou Danielson*, Director of Research,  
National High School Center
- **Closing**

# Featured Presenters

- **Presenters**

- *Holly Hart*, Associate Director for Survey Research, Consortium on Chicago School Research
- *Mindee O' Cummings*, Technical Assistance Liaison, National High School Center

- **Moderators**

- *Joseph R. Harris*, Director, National High School Center
- *Lou Danielson*, Director of Research, National High School Center

- **Additional Authors**

- *Julia Gwynne*, Senior Research Analyst, Consortium on Chicago School Research
- *Joy Lesnick*, Senior Research Analyst, Consortium on Chicago School Research
- *Elaine Allensworth*, Interim Co-Executive Director, Consortium on Chicago School Research



# What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public Schools: A Focus on Students with Disabilities

Julia Gwynne, Joy Lesnick, Holly Hart

Elaine Allensworth

December 8, 2009

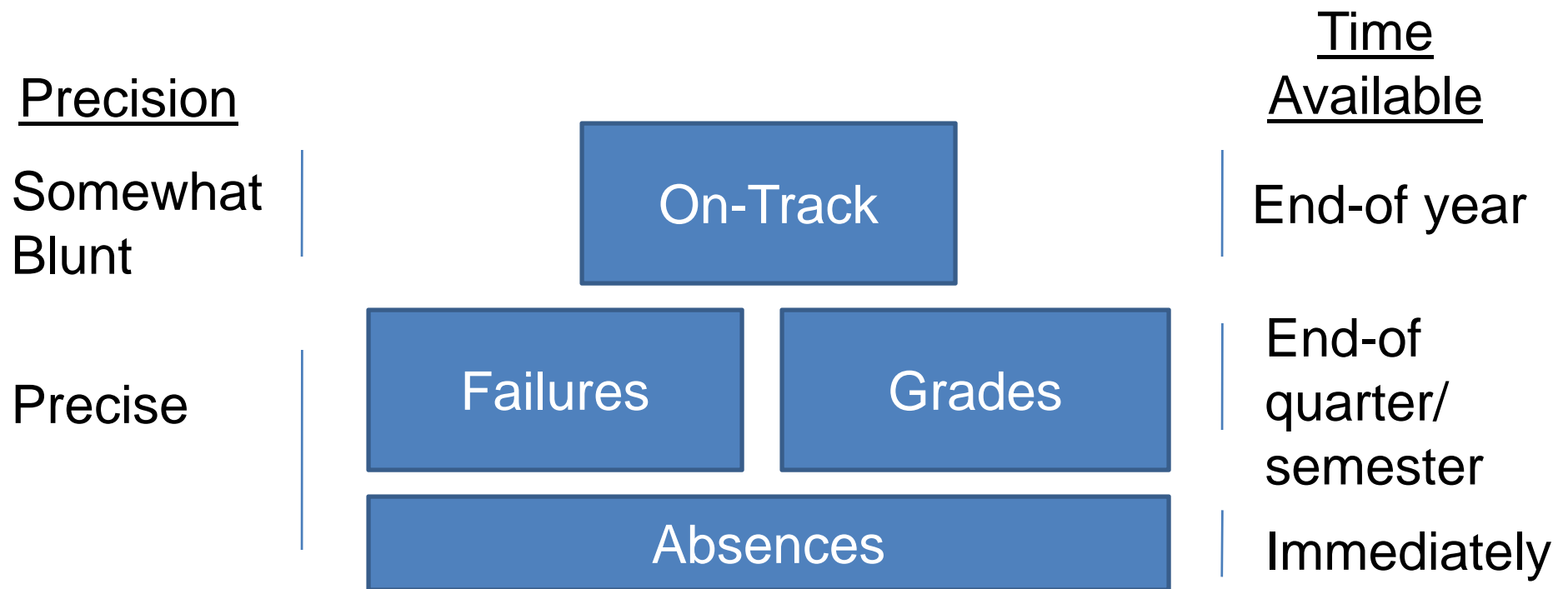
THE CONSORTIUM ON CHICAGO SCHOOL RESEARCH  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO / URBAN EDUCATION INSTITUTE

# Overview of this presentation

- Describe the freshman year indicators and findings from the original *What Matters Report (What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public Schools)*
- Our findings for students with disabilities:
  - Describe 9<sup>th</sup> grade course performance
  - Examine relationship between course performance indicators and graduation
  - Explain differences in course performance between students with and without disabilities

# The freshman year matters!

Freshman year framework for predicting graduation

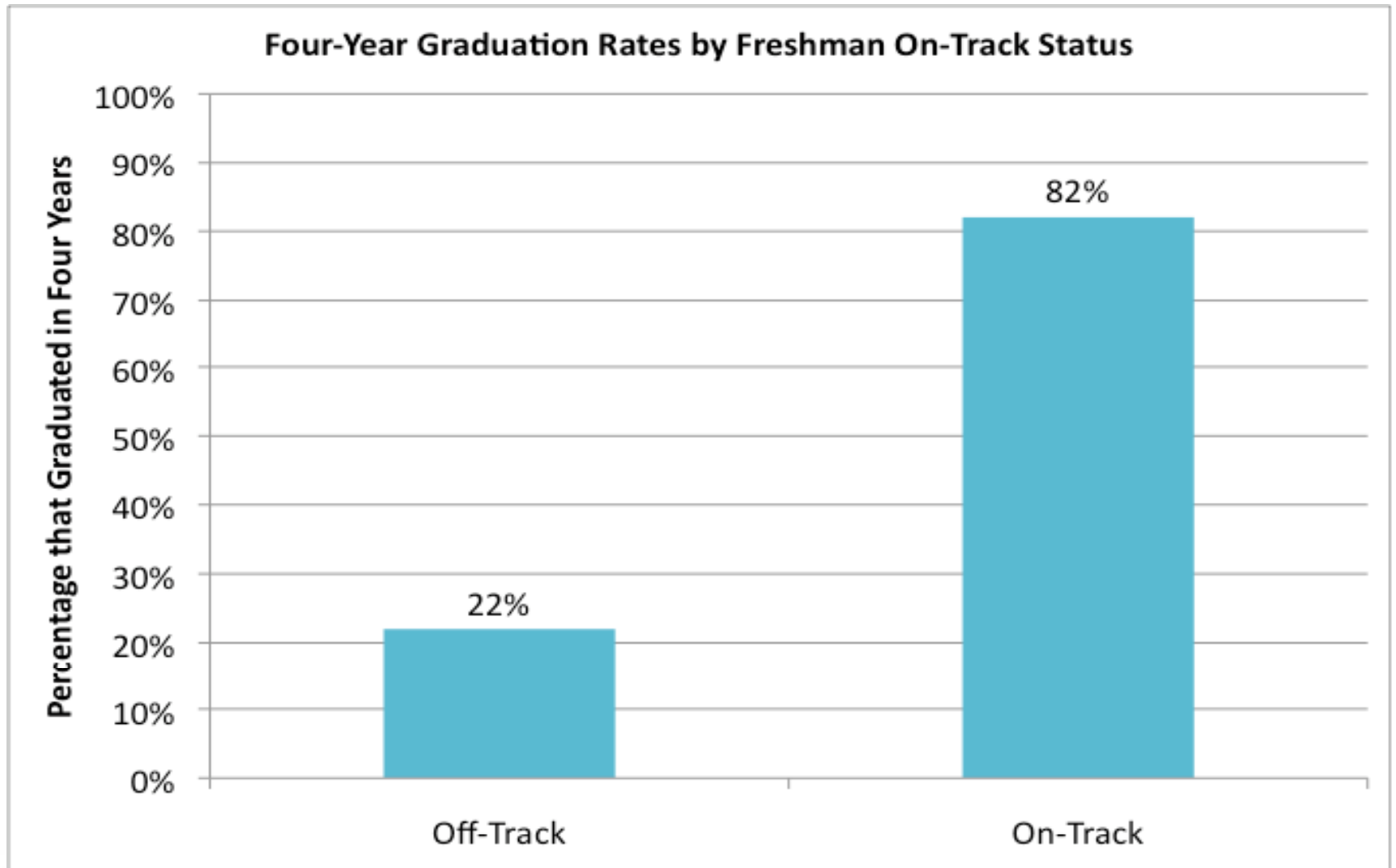


# Freshman on-track indicator

A measure of progress during the first year of high school

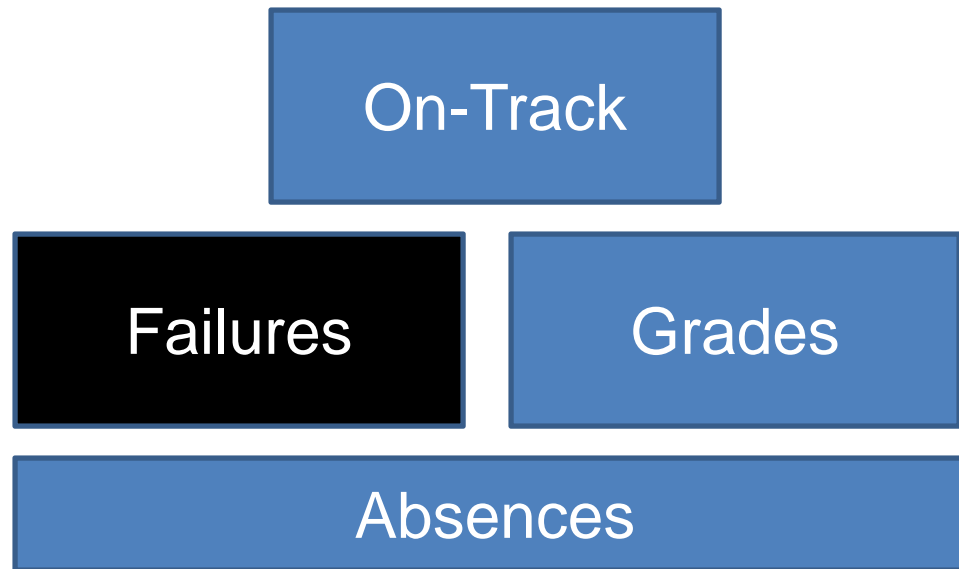
- An on-track student has no more than one semester F in a core subject
  - English, math, science, or social studies
- An on-track student has accumulated five full course credits (in any subject)
  - The number required to move to 10<sup>th</sup> grade Chicago's CPS policy

# How is on-track related to graduation?

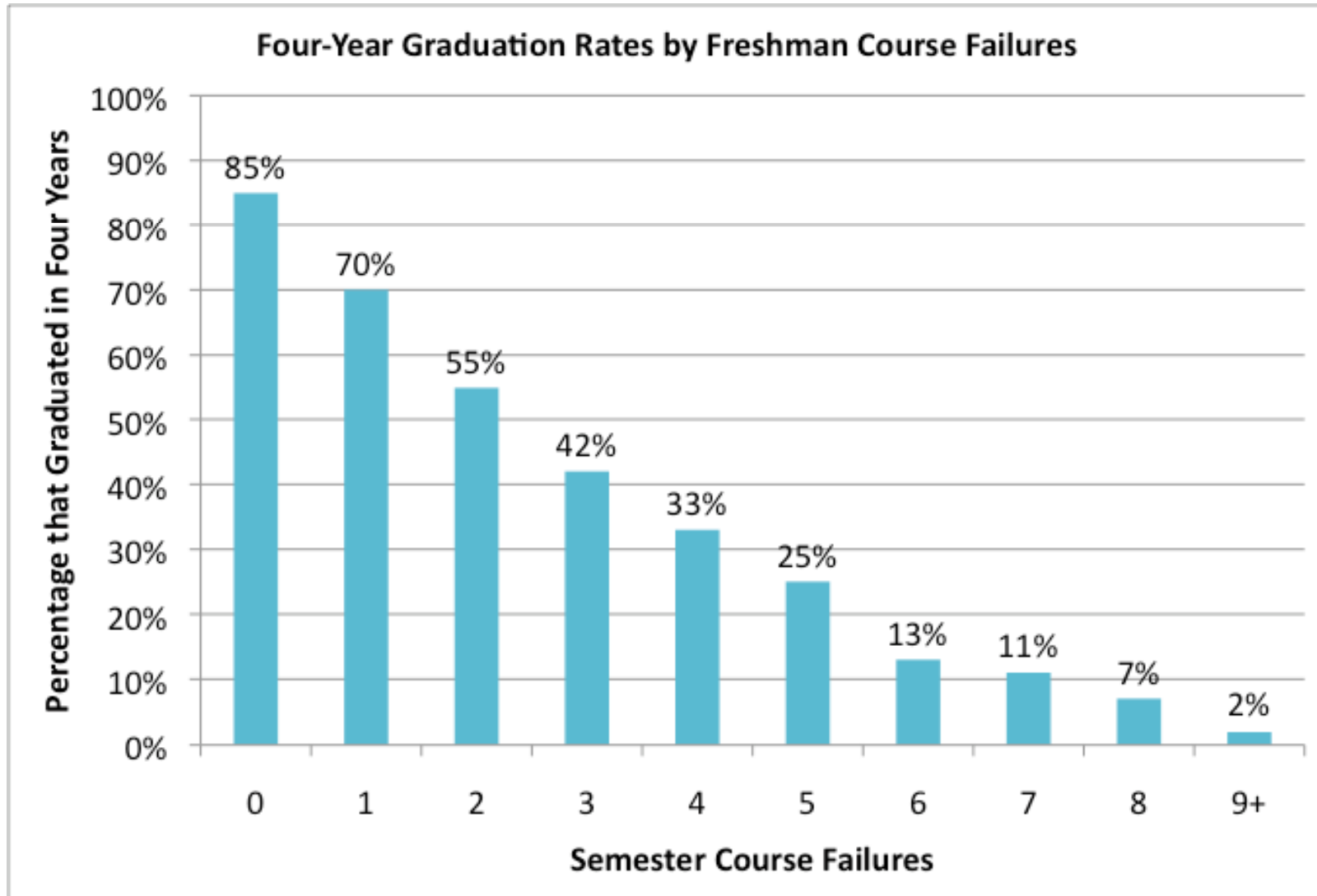


All students, including students with disabilities

# Additional freshman year information



# Students who fail more courses are less likely to graduate

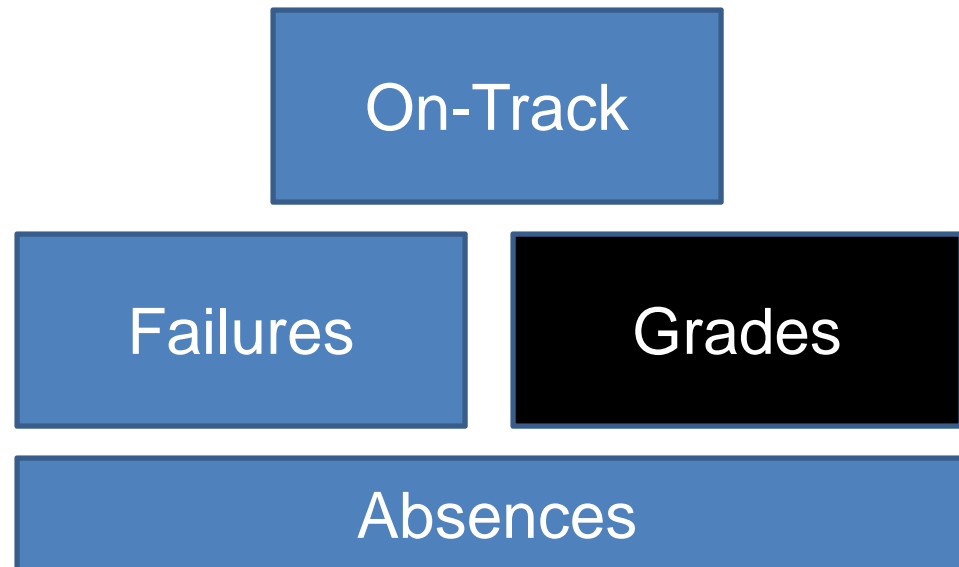


*Note: Out of 14 possible semester courses in one year*

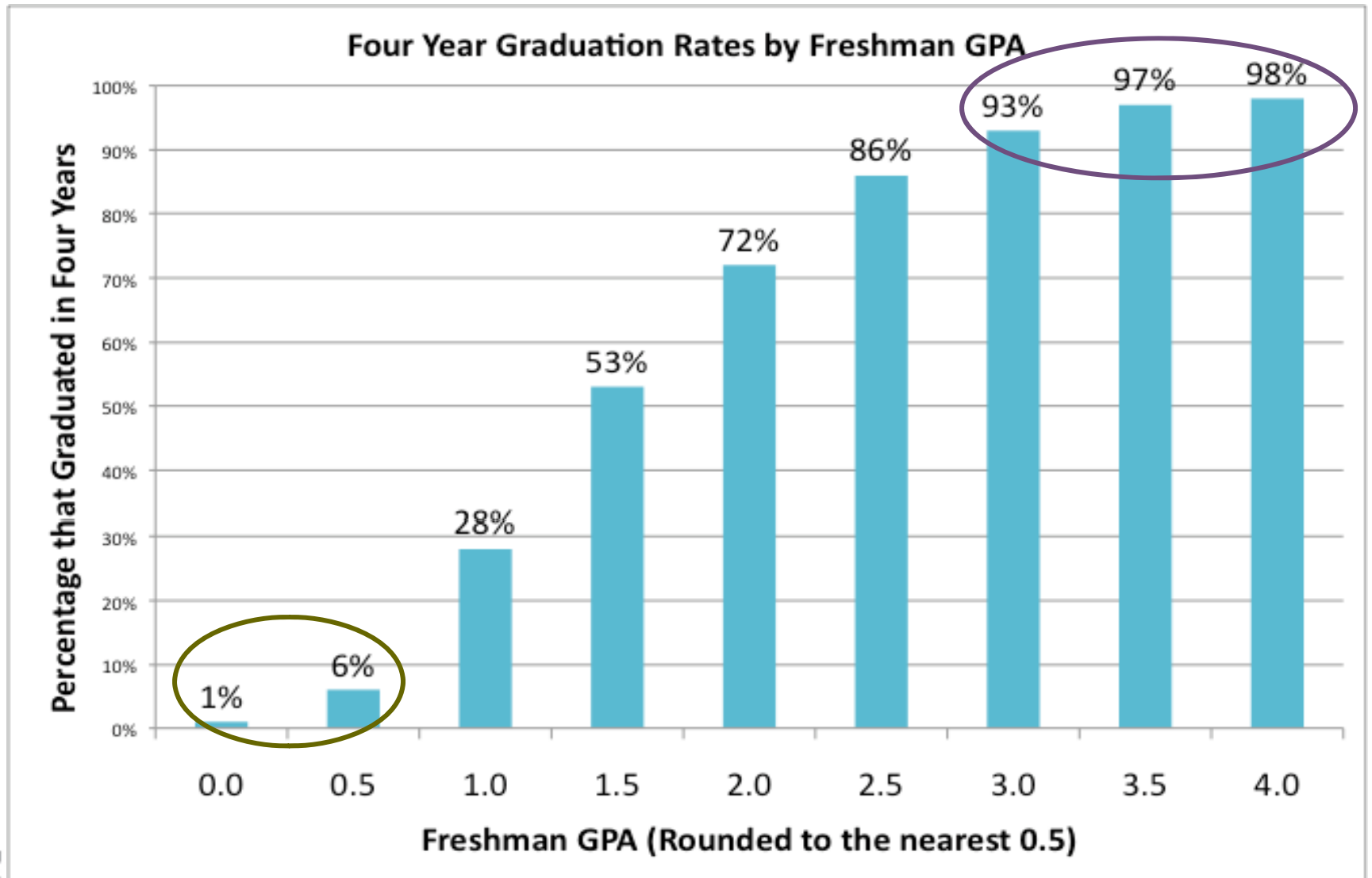


All students, including students with disabilities

# Additional freshman year information

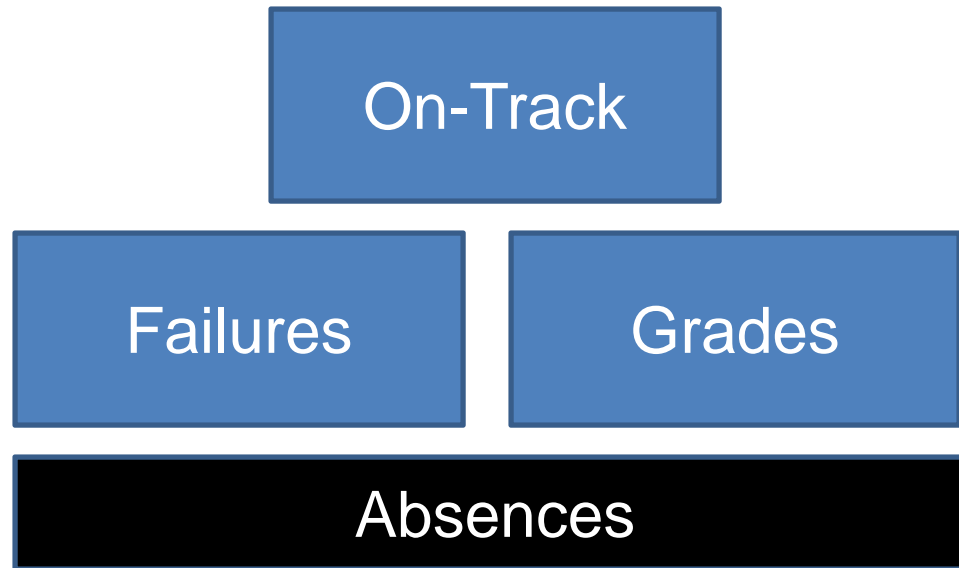


# Students with low grades in the freshman year will not graduate

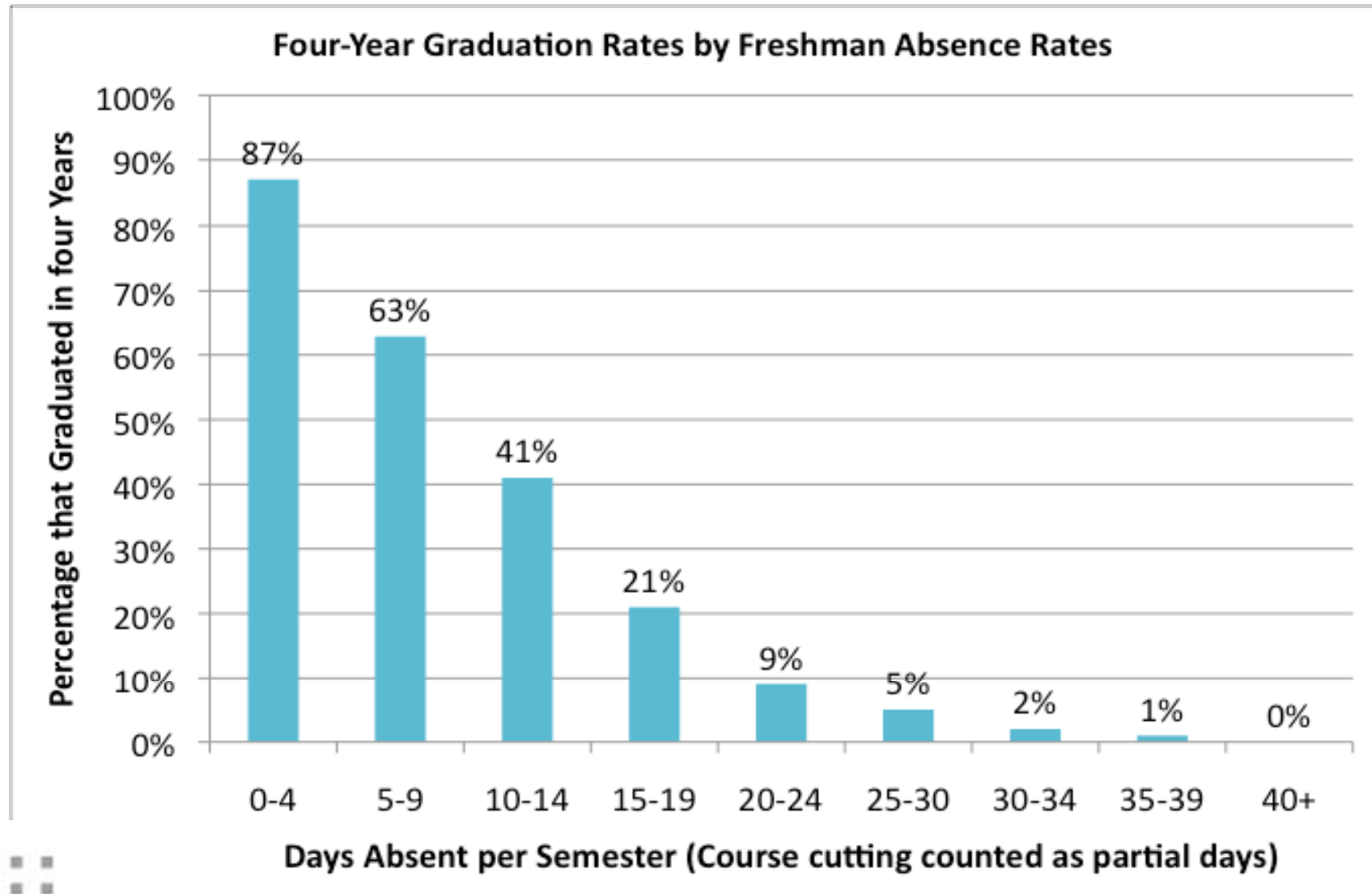


All students, including students with disabilities

# Additional freshman year information

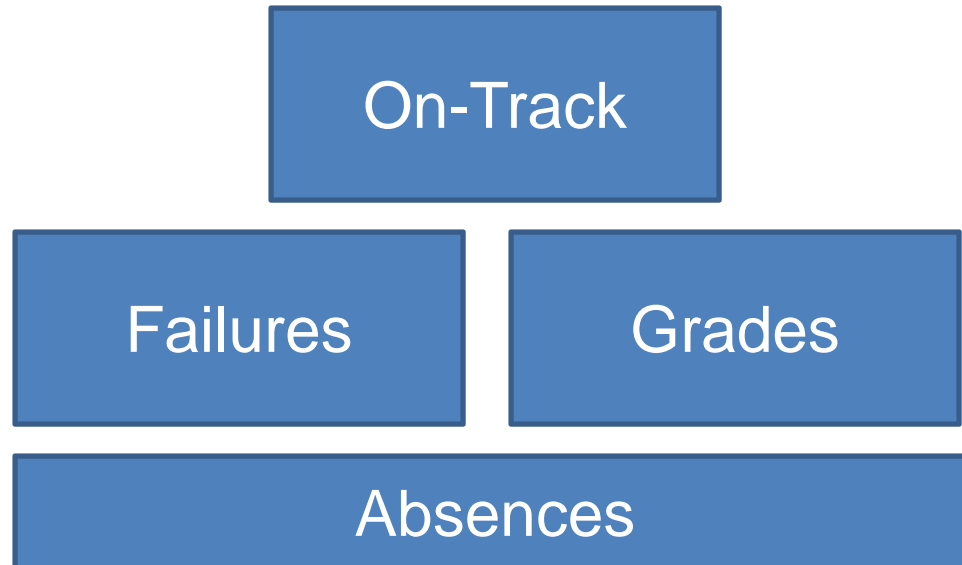


# Students who are absent or cut too many classes don't graduate




All students, including students with disabilities

# Summarizing the freshman year



- Freshman performance is crucial for graduation
- Students have to go to class
- Students have to get good grades



How do freshman year indicators  
work for students with  
disabilities?

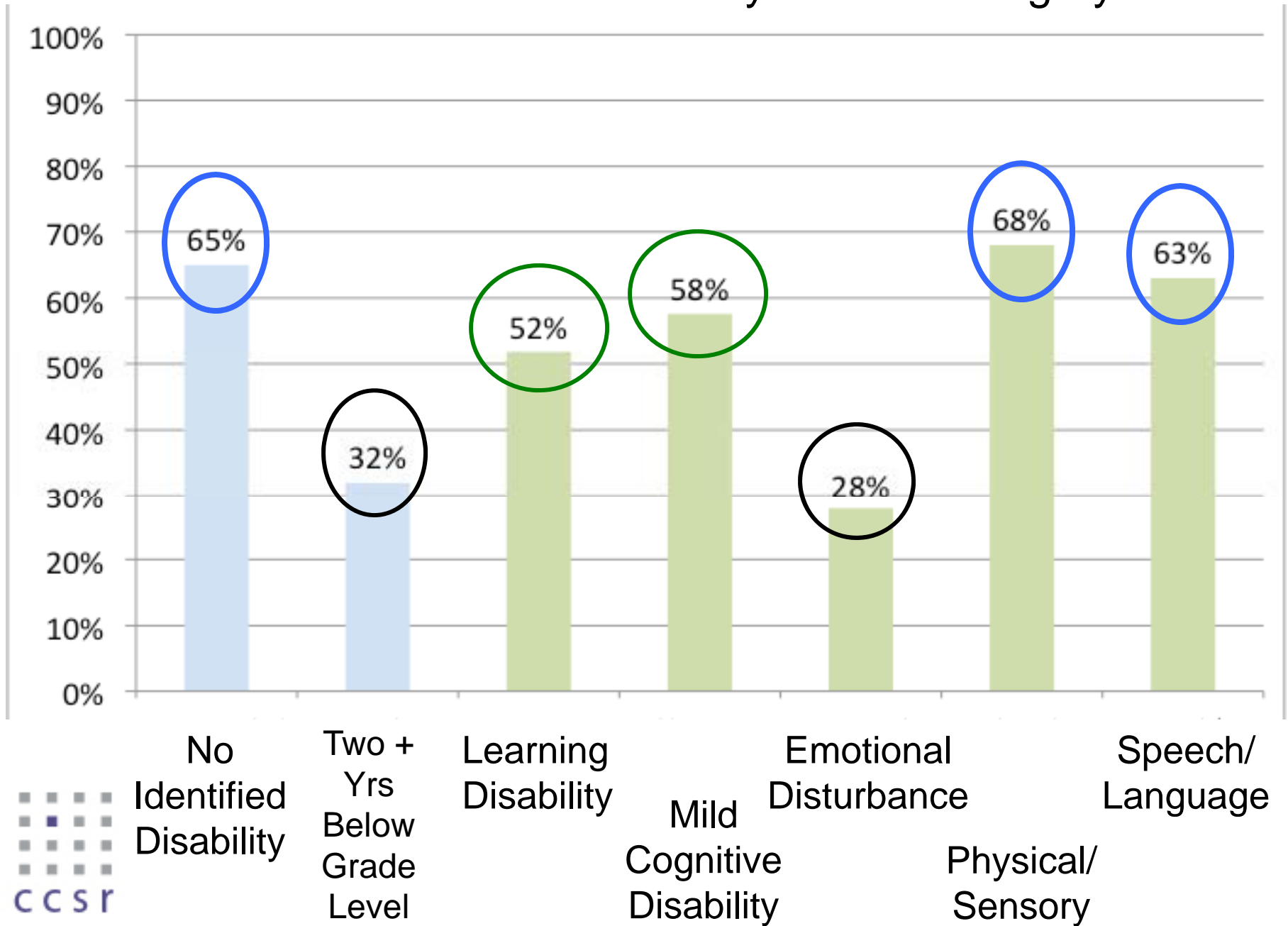
# Cohorts and subcategories for this report

Category	2001		2004	
	Count	Percent of all CPS 9 <sup>th</sup> graders	Count	Percent of all CPS 9 <sup>th</sup> graders
Students without Identified Disabilities (Not two+ years below)	19317	80.9%	20657	80.5%
Two+ Years Below	366	1.5%	525	2.0%
Learning Disability	3221	13.5%	3306	12.9%
Mild Cognitive Disability	435	1.8%	458	1.8%
Emotional Disturbance	290	1.2%	336	1.3%
Speech/Language	97	0.4%	65	0.3%
Physical/Sensory Disabilities <i>(including Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, and Other Health Impairment)</i>	89	0.4%	152	0.3%

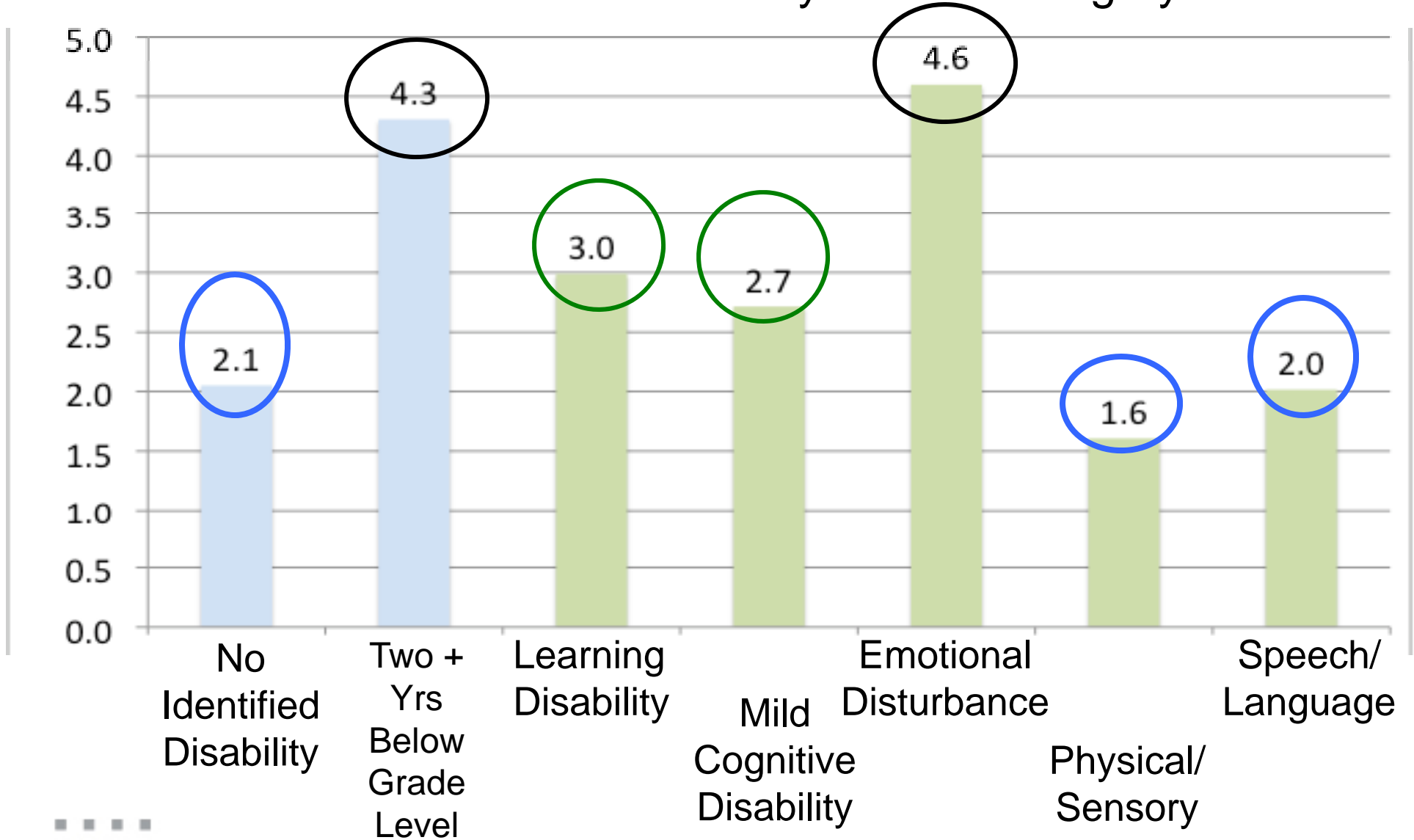


# Performance of students with disabilities on freshman year indicators

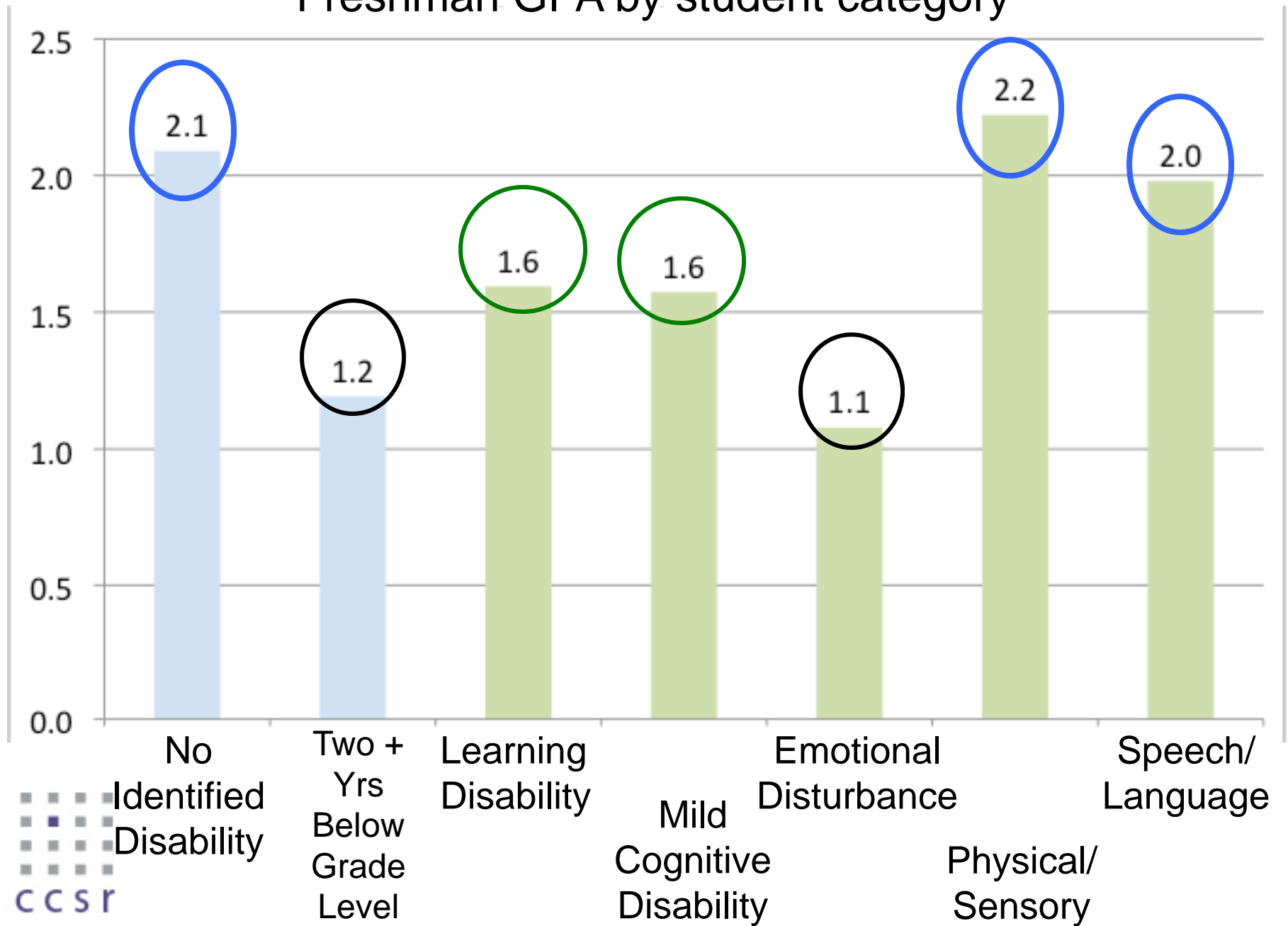
# Freshman on-track rates by student category



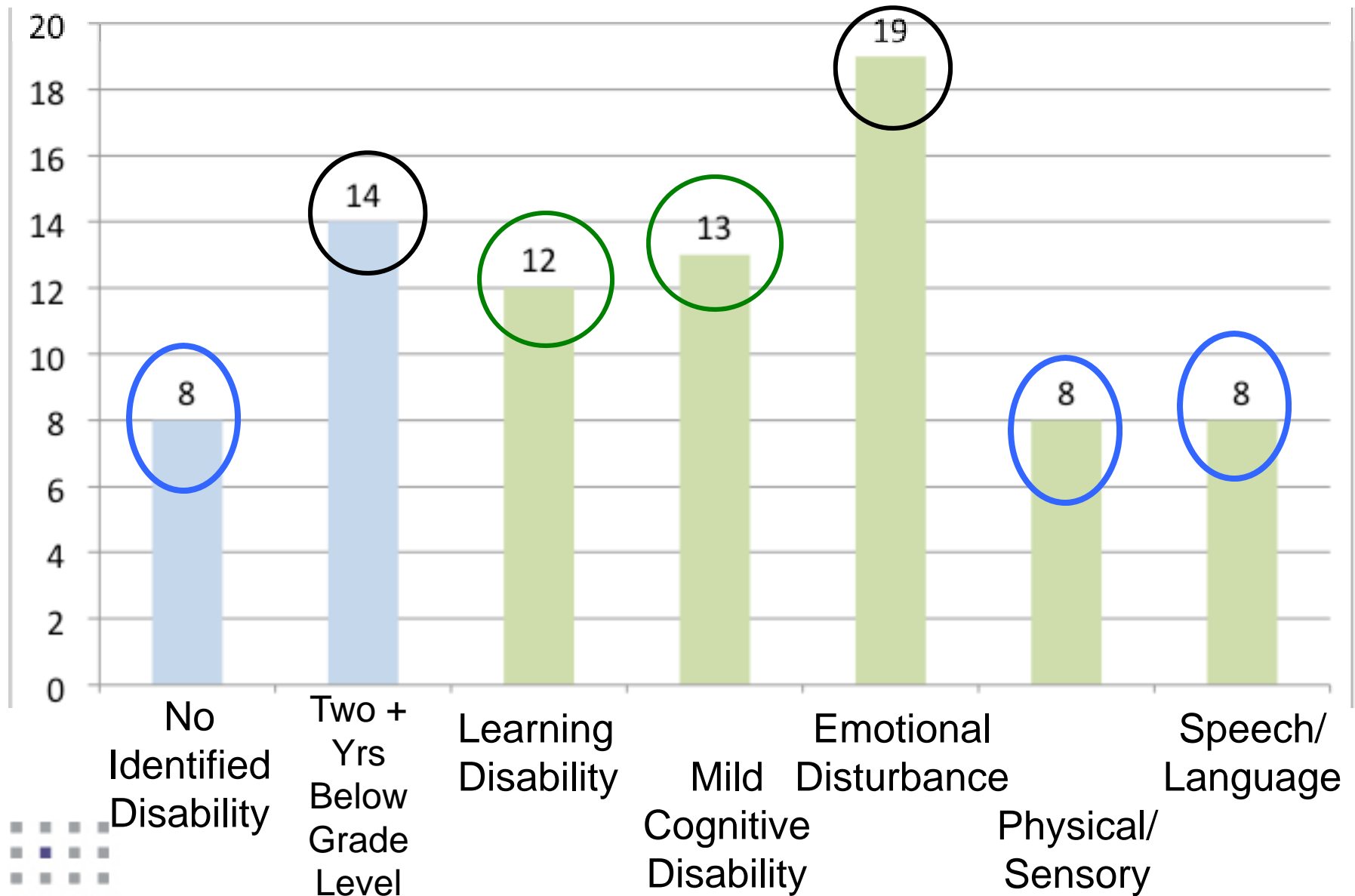
## Semester course failures by student category



## Freshman GPA by student category



## Average semester absences by student category



*Note: Absences in days per semester*

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# Course performance and five-year graduation rates for students with disabilities

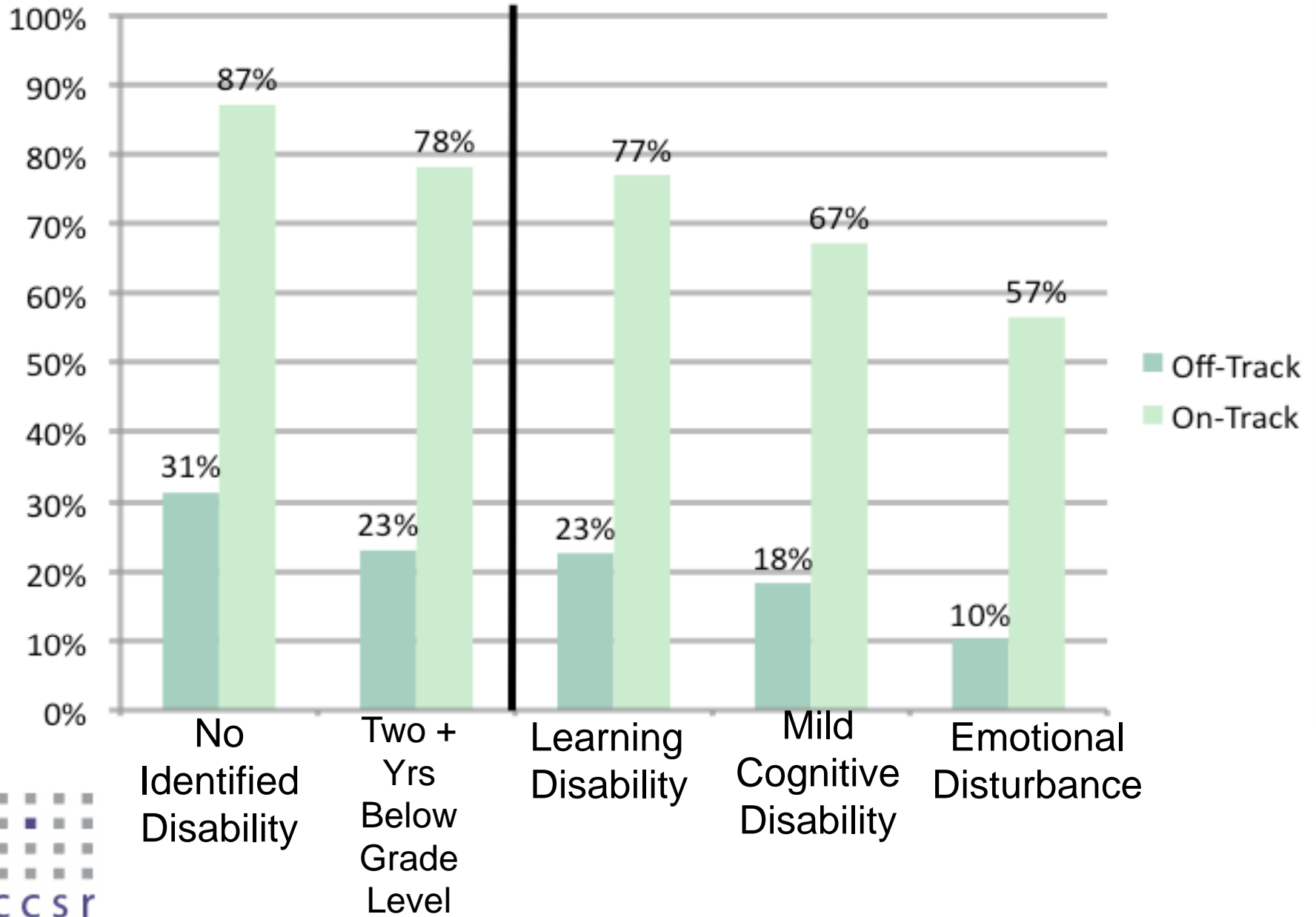
## Four and Five Year Graduation Rates

	Four-Year Graduation Rate	Five-Year Graduation Rate
Students without Identified Disabilities	67.1%	69.6%
Two+ Years Below Grade Level	45.5%	49.0%
Learning Disability	47.8%	52.7%
Mild Cognitive Disability	41.7%	47.2%
Emotional Disturbance	18.7%	23.5%
Speech/Language Disabilities	58.1%	63.5%
Physical/Sensory Disabilities	75.0%	77.5%

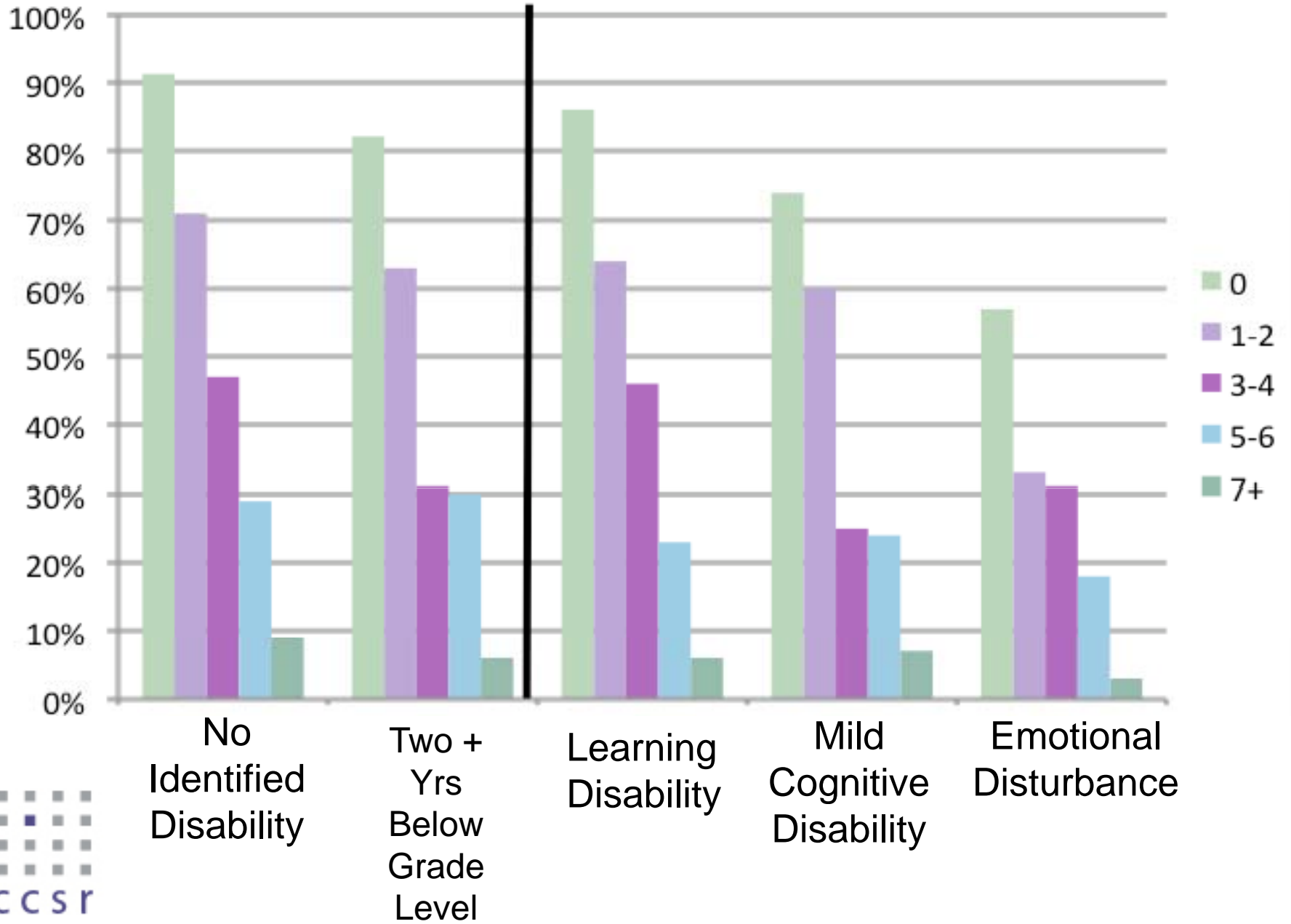


*Note: Rates displayed for 2001 CPS Freshman Cohort*

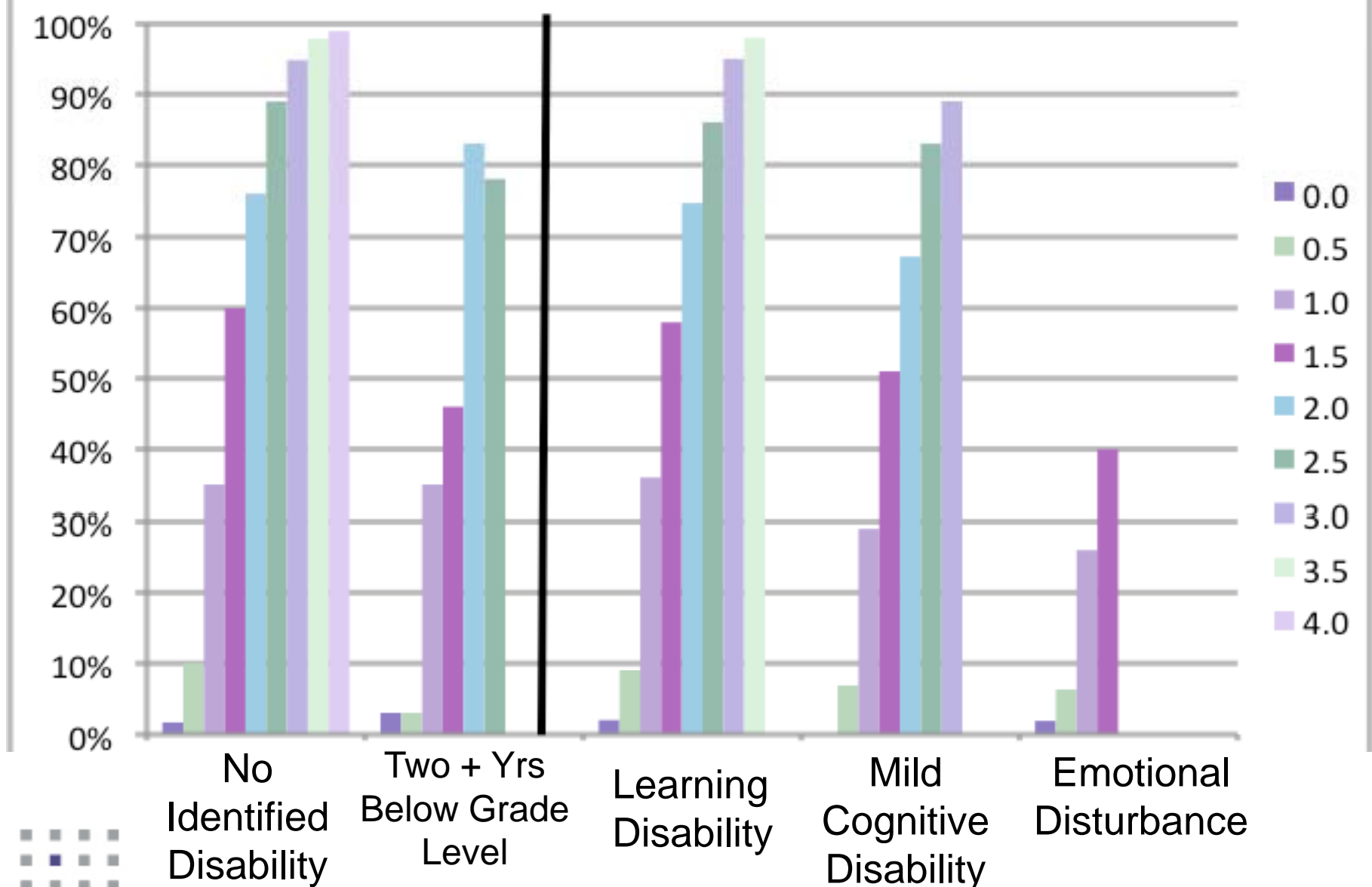
Five-Year Graduation Rates by On-Track Status



Five-Year Graduation Rates by Number of Fs

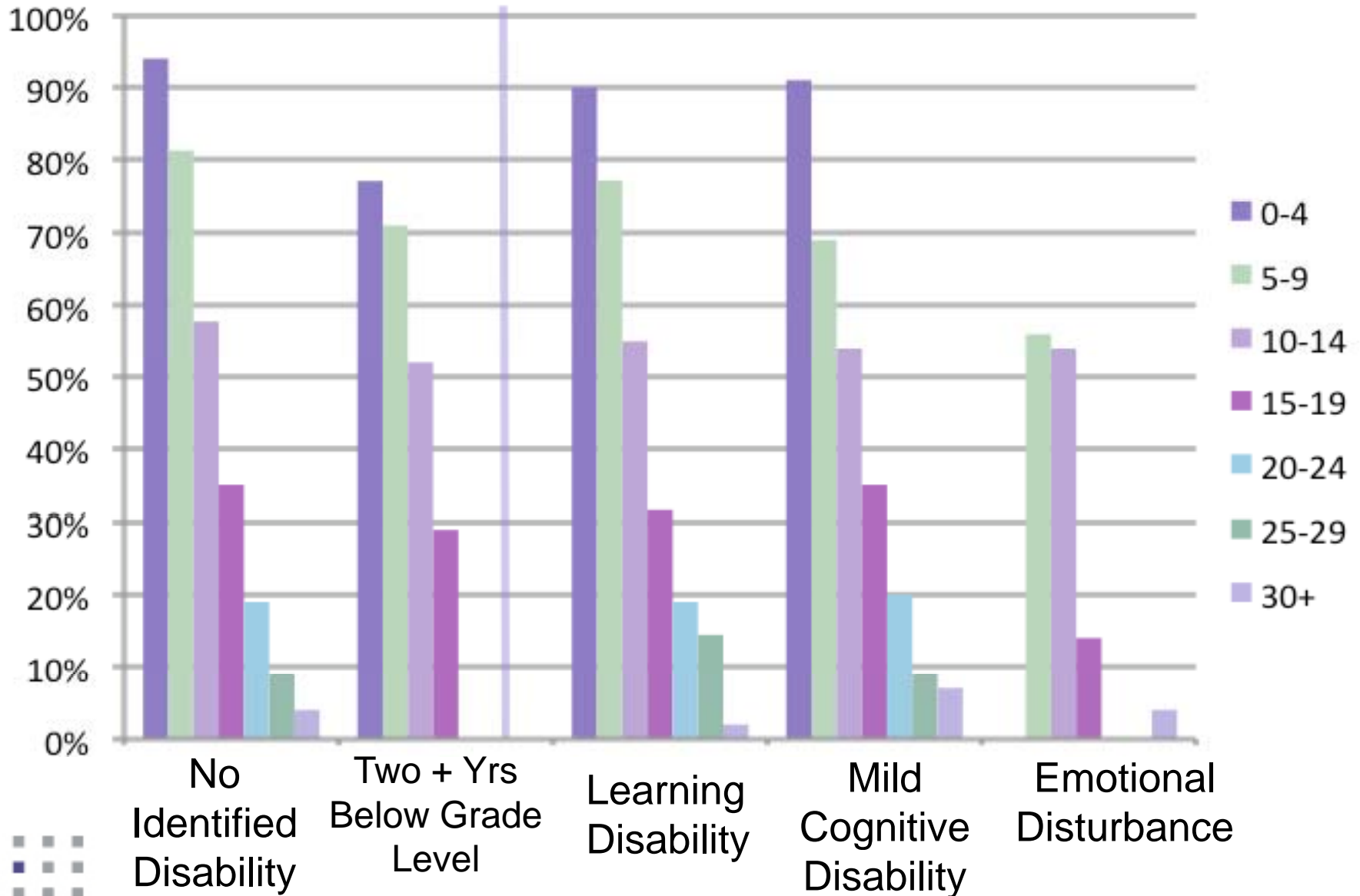


**Five-Year Graduation Rates by GPA**



*Note: Graduation rate reported only for cells with at least 25 students*

### Five-Year Graduation Rates by Absences



*Note: Graduation rate reported only for cells with at least 25 students*

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Other factors that explain the  
difference in performance  
between students with and  
without disabilities – beyond  
prior achievement

# Three explanations:

- Student background characteristics
  - Race, gender, age, SES, mobility
- School effects
  - Concentration in neighborhood schools with low achievement
- Freshman year behavior
  - Absences
  - Rigorous study habits

# Attendance and studying play important role in course failures and GPA for ALL students

- According to the original *What Matters* report, attendance and studying were more predictive of course failure than test scores or student background characteristics.
- Students with disabilities' report similar studying behavior
- **Students with disabilities' worse performance due to greater absences**

## Benefits from studying...

- Students with emotional disturbances benefit from studying the same as non-disabled students
- Students with learning disabilities seem to benefit less from studying than non-disabled students
- Students with mild cognitive disabilities do not seem to benefit from increased studying

# In summary...

- Freshman year indicators (on-track, Fs, GPA, attendance) predict graduation for students with disabilities.
- However, due to lower grades, higher failure rate and more absences, graduation rates are lower for students with disabilities.
- Students with disabilities remain at a higher risk for dropping out than students without identified disabilities, even when performing well on these indicators.
  - This is especially true for students with emotional disturbances.
- Increasing the attendance of students with disabilities is key to improving course performance.

# 9<sup>th</sup> Grade is a Critical Year

- Ninth grade is a “make or break year”
  - More students fail 9th grade than any other grade in high school
  - A disproportionate number of students who are held back in 9th grade subsequently drop out
- By the end of 9th grade or even during the first semester, powerful indicators exist that can predict whether students will complete high school:
  - Engagement
  - Course performance
  - “On-Track” Indicator

Herlihy, C. (2007). *State and district-level supports for successful transition into high school*. Washington, DC: National High School Center.

Allensworth, E., & Easton, J.Q. (2007). *What matters for staying on-track and graduating in Chicago Public High Schools: A close look at course grades, failures and attendance in the freshman year*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

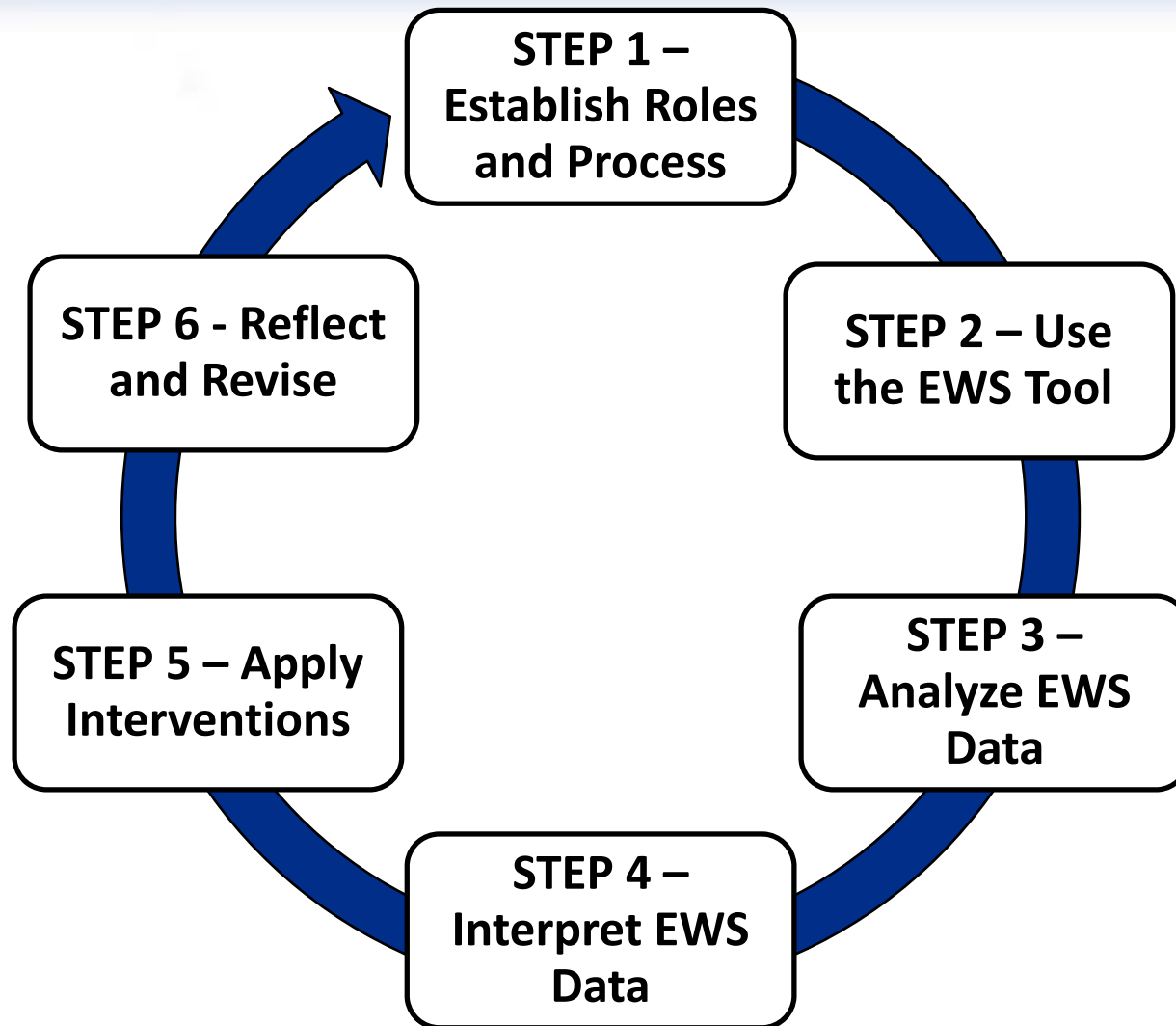
# Early Warning Systems

- Early warning systems (EWS) use readily available data housed at the school to:
  - Predict whether a student is likely to drop out of high school
  - Examine patterns and identify school climate issues that may contribute to disproportionate dropout rates at a subset of high schools or within subpopulations of students
  - Target resources at the school- and district- level to support off-track students while they are still in school, before they drop out

# “High Yield” 9th Grade Indicators

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Benchmark (red flag)</b>
Absenteeism	Missing 10% or more of instructional time
Course failures	One or more failed courses
Grade point average	2.0 or lower (on a 4-point scale)
“On-track”	Fail two or more semester core courses, or accumulate fewer credits than the number required for promotion to the 10th grade

# Implementing the EWS Process



# Step One: Establish Roles and Process

EWS teams should include school- and district-level individuals who have:

- Authority to make decisions
- Knowledge of a diverse students
- Expertise to manage and analyze data
- Information about strategies

# Step Two: Use the EWS Tool

- Routinely available data are good predictors of whether a student is likely to drop out of high school
- First-month absences, in addition to end of the semester grades, are additional strong predictors of dropout
- Individual student identification and school and district patterns can enable accurate resource allocations to change the odds for students with a high propensity to drop out

Microsoft Excel - Demo EWS Tool 10-15-08 [Read-Only]


File Edit View Insert Format Tools Data Window Live Meeting Help Adobe PDF

Type a question for help

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Data Window Live Meeting Help Adobe PDF

Meet Now User Preferences... Live Meeting Help

J8

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1	 <p><b>National High School Center</b> betterhighschools.org</p>															
2																
3																
4																
5																
6																
7																
8	<b>Early Warning System Tool</b>															
9	Jessica B. Heppen, Mindee O'Cummings and Susan Bowles Therriault															
10	<b>How to Use This Tool:</b>															
11																
12	The Early Warning System tool automatically calculates high-yield indicators related to dropout such as those involving attendance, course failures, GPA, and on-track status and provides a report that shows which students are below the defined benchmark on each of the indicators.															
13																
14																
15																
16																
17	The information generated by this tool is based on each school's readily available data that may be entered regarding student grades and attendance. The student data included in the worksheet are examples for demonstration purposes only and may be deleted.															
18																
19																
20	To use the Tool:															
21																
22	• Enter school-level data in the "School Information" form.															
23																
24	• Enter student-level data in the "Student Information" form. These data only need to be input once and carry over to other screens.															
25																
26																
	• Enter semester one data in the appropriate table in the "Semester One Data"															

Instructions School Information Student Information Semester One Data Semester Two Data Student Report

Ready NUM

1	<b>School Information Form</b>														
2															
3															
4	(Enter School Information in Table)														
5	<b>School Information</b>														
6															
7	Days in Quarter 1		45												
8	Days in Quarter 2		45												
9	Days in Quarter 3		45												
10	Days in Quarter 4		45												
11	Total # of credits required for graduation		24												
12	GPA scale (e.g. 4-point, 5-point)		4												
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# Step Three: Analyze EWS Data

## Questions about EWS data:

- *Student-level patterns:* What do your data tell you about individual students who are at-risk?
- *School-level patterns:* What do your data tell you about how the school is doing?
  - Are students who were flagged from the beginning remaining “off-track” through the year?
  - Are students who were flagged at one reporting period back “on-track” at the next?

# Step Four: Interpret EWS Data

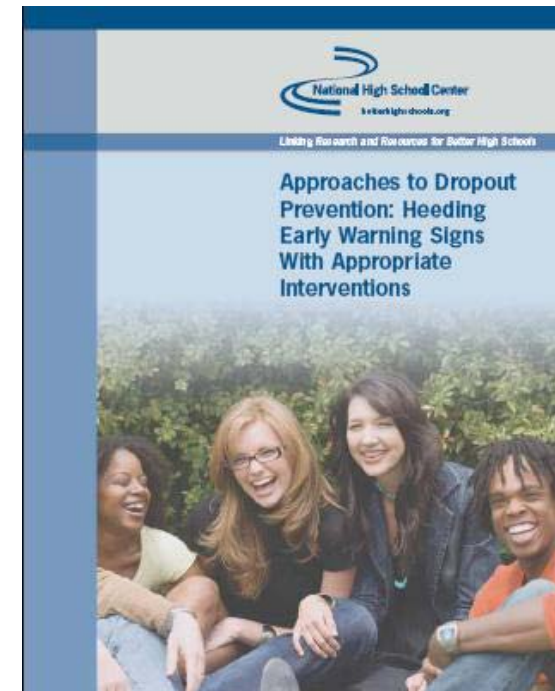
Student

School

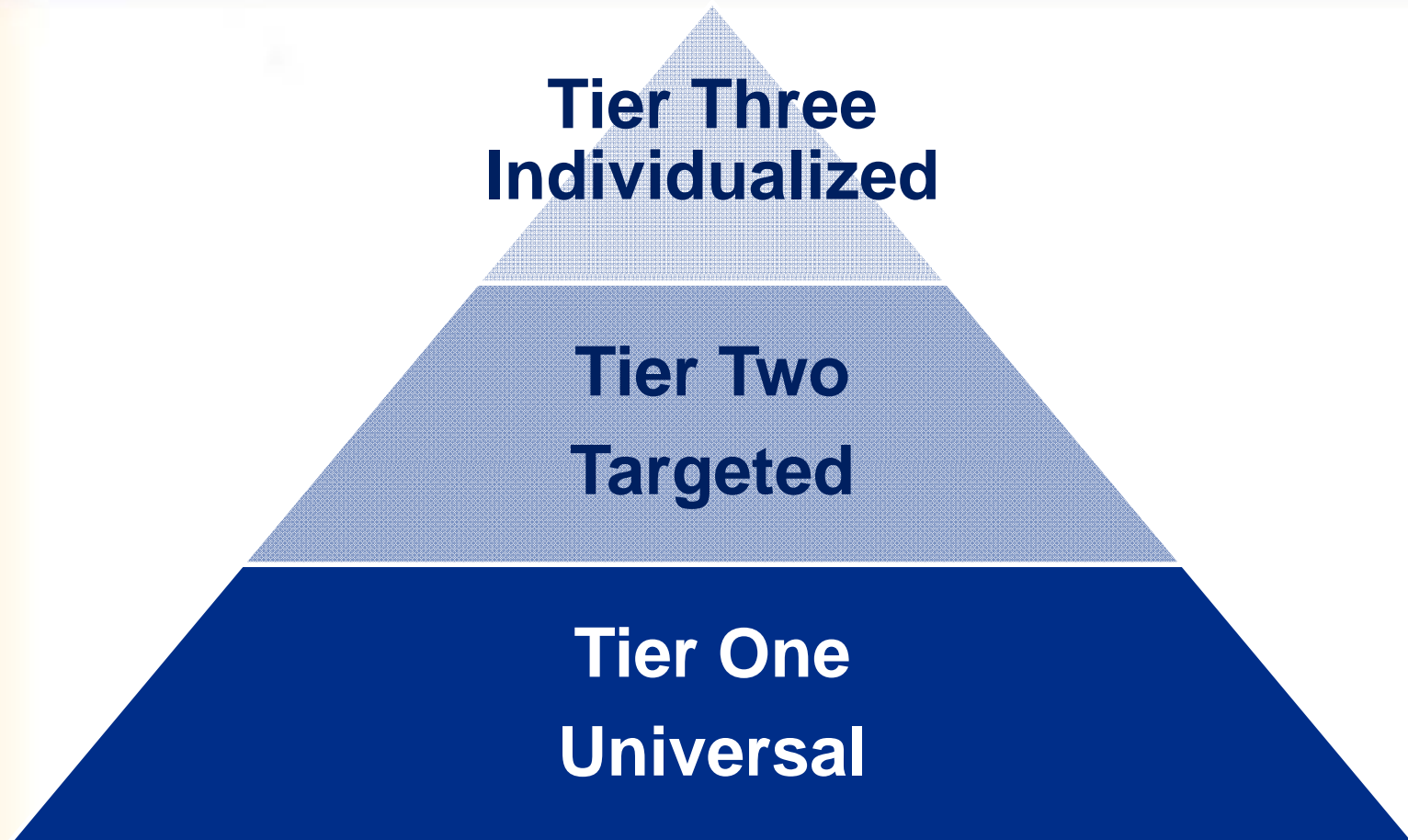
District

# Step Five: Interventions

- Focus on achievement in core courses
- Content recovery courses
- Tutoring as an academic support
- Tiered approaches
- Attendance and behavior monitors
- Advisories and team teaching
- Counseling and mentoring
- Small learning communities and school within a school for greater personalization
- Partnerships between high schools and feeder middle schools
- Ninth grade transition programs
- Support for students with disabilities outside of school
- Career and college awareness
- Family engagement
- Community engagement



# Tiered Approach to Dropout Prevention



# New Hampshire's Model

**Individualized**

Examples: RENEW (Rehabilitation, Empowerment, Natural supports, Education and Work) facilitators

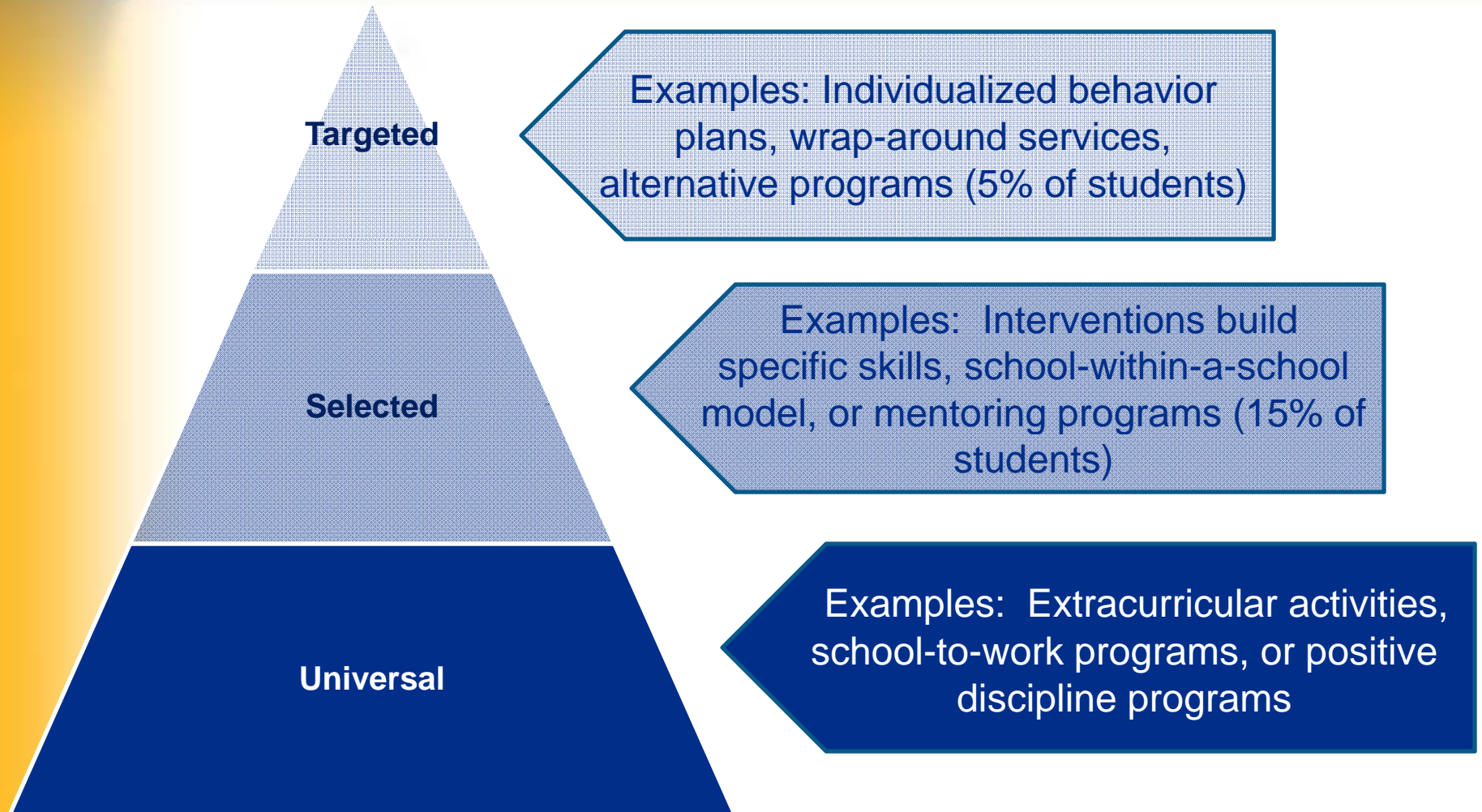
**Targeted**

Examples: Intervention Team of specialists and administrators will focus on students who exhibit challenging behaviors and who are at risk for school

**School-wide**

Examples: Positive Behavioral Supports model (PBS) and Universal Leadership Team including a diverse representation of “opinion-leaders”

# Minnesota's Model



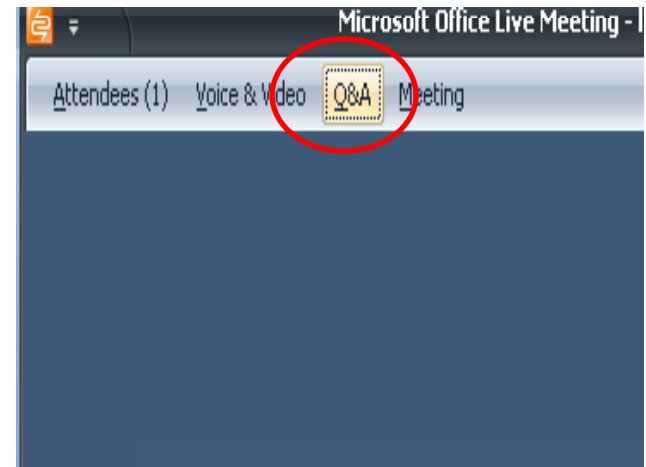
# Step Six: Reflect and Revise

- Regularly
- Collectively
- Systematically

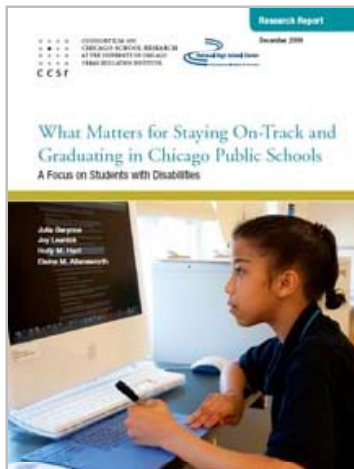


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# Additional Resources

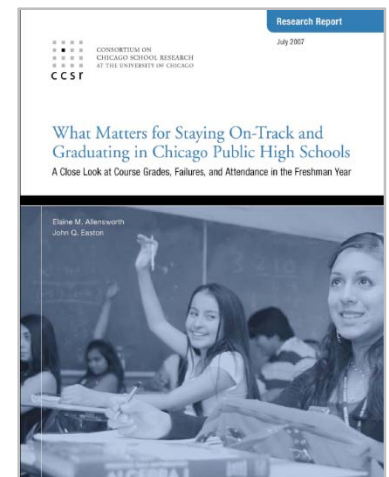


## *What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public Schools: A Focus on Students With Disabilities (2009)*

<http://www.betterhighschools.org/docs/NHSCCCSRSpecialEd.pdf>

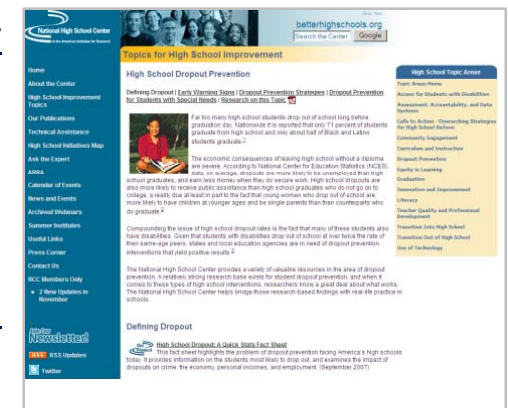
## *What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public Schools (2007)*

<http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/07%20What%20Matters%20Final.pdf>



# Additional Resources

- *Developing Early Warning Systems to Identify Potential High School Dropouts (2008)*
  - Early Warning System Guide  
[http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/ews\\_guide.asp](http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/ews_guide.asp)
  - Early Warning System Tool  
[http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/EWStool\\_000.xls](http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/EWStool_000.xls)
- *Approaches to Dropout Prevention: Heeding Early Warning Signs with Appropriate Interventions (2007)*  
[http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/NHSC\\_ApproachestoDropoutPrevention.pdf](http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/NHSC_ApproachestoDropoutPrevention.pdf)
- National High School Center Dropout Prevention Resources  
<http://www.betterhighschools.org/topics/DropoutPrevention.asp>



# Thank You to Our Presenters!



For more information on the  
Consortium on Chicago School Research,  
please visit  
<http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/content/index.php>

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