

CHRONIC STUDENT ABSENTEEISM IN CONNECTICUT'S DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS

October, 2014

Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Bureau Chief
Performance Office

Data Prepared by:

Francis Apaloo

Angela Gambaccini-May

Marqu elle Middleton



School Attendance Matters

- Students need to attend school daily to succeed. If chronic *early* absence is not addressed at the elementary level, then it may worsen in the higher grades. A report by John Hopkins University outlines various research findings that highlight the **association of chronic absenteeism to student academic achievement and high school graduation**.
- Factors that contribute to chronic absence may be situated in the **family, school and/or the community**. Some examples of such factors include inadequate healthcare, high family mobility, low maternal education, food insecurity, ineffective parent engagement, and high levels of community violence.
- Solutions to high levels of chronic absenteeism will require the **collaborative efforts** of schools, communities, and families.
- *Chang & Romero, Present, Engaged & Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades, National Center for Children in Poverty: September 2008.*
- *Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012). Chronic Absenteeism: Summarizing What We Know From Nationally Available Data. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools.*

School Attendance: A National Problem

- A report published by Attendance Works in 2014 suggests between 5 and 7.5 million U.S. students miss nearly a month of school each year.

Chronic Absenteeism can lead to:

- *Reduced classroom instructional time*
 - *Lower graduation rates*
 - *Increased achievement gaps*
-
- Absenteeism in Kindergarten can negatively affect a child's attitude toward their school success in later elementary school years.
 - Several studies suggest that missing 10 percent of the school year in the early grades (e.g. Preschool and kindergarten) can cause a delay in a child's ability to master reading by the end of third grade.

Ginsburg, Jordan & Chang, *Absences Add Up: How School Attendance Influences Student Success: August 2014.*

Defining Attendance: Terms/Measures

District/School Overall Attendance Rate

- The percentage of a school or district's overall student population that are physically present in school on any given day. This measure is not based on an individual student's attendance rate.

District/School Chronic Absenteeism Rate

- A measure of how many students miss at least 10 percent of days enrolled for any reason including excused and unexcused absences and days absent due to out of school suspensions served.

Why Focus on Chronic Absenteeism?

- Commonly reported aggregate attendance measures for districts/schools/subgroups (e.g., overall attendance rate) may not adequately highlight the extent of individual absenteeism. For example, a high school may have an attendance rate of 92% but as many as quarter of their students could be chronically absent.
- Tracking attendance and chronic absenteeism on a regular basis throughout the school year can help districts and schools to identify students who need interventions and support services. It is the first step to helping children achieve success in school.

Chronic Absenteeism Calculation

- Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing ten percent or greater of the total number of days enrolled in the school year for any reason. It includes both excused and unexcused absences in addition to out of school suspensions and expulsions served.

$$\text{Student Attendance Rate}^* = \frac{\text{Student's Total Days of Attendance}}{\text{Student's Total Days of Membership}}$$

- A student is classified as chronically absent if his/her attendance rate is less than or equal to 90%.
- SDE analyzes chronic absenteeism at the state, district, school, and student subgroup levels.

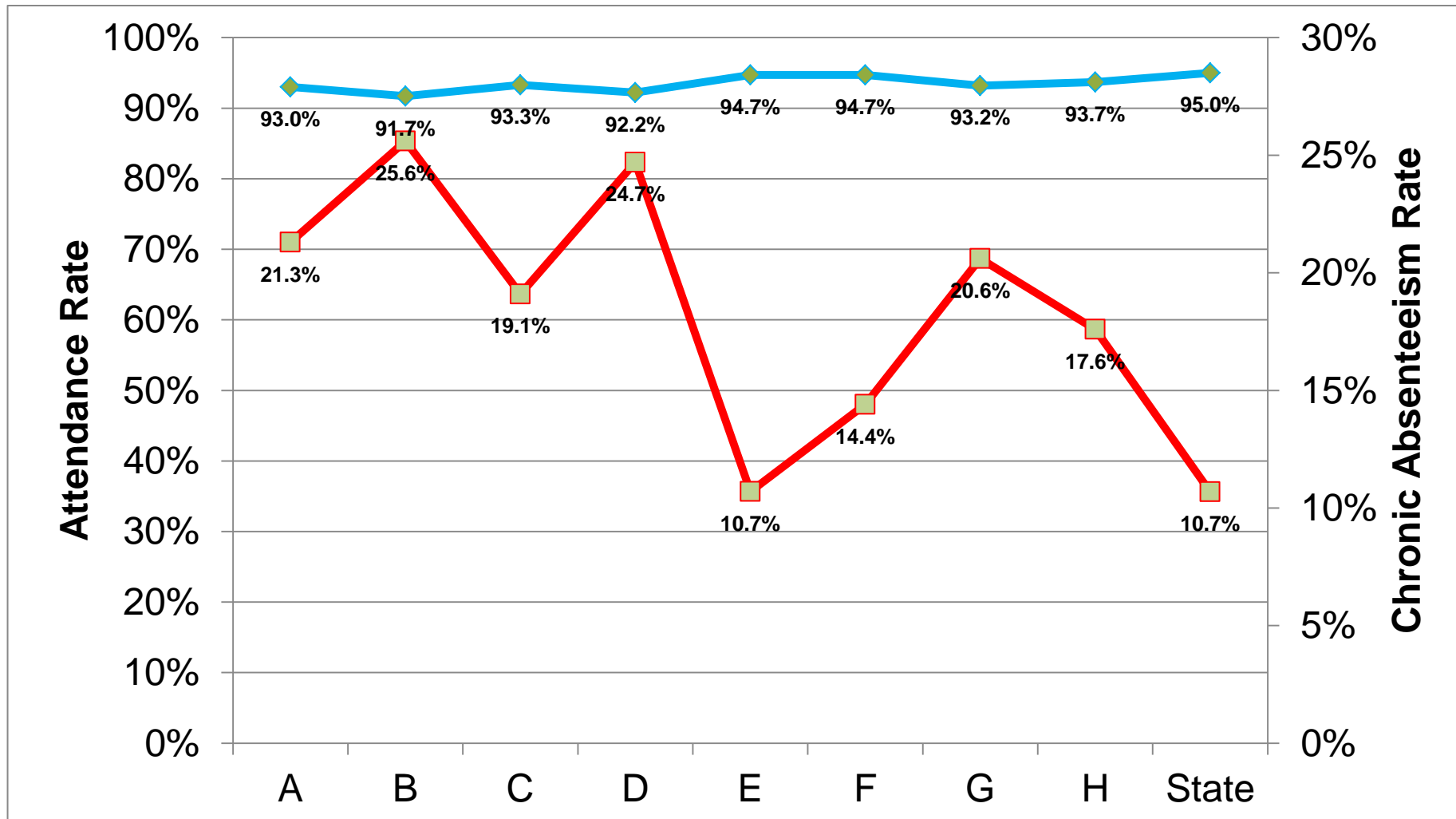
What have we learned?

(2013-14 Statewide Analysis)

- 10.7 percent of K-12 students (over 56,000 students) were chronically absent in the most recent 2013-14 school year.
- Great disparities still exist in chronic absenteeism rates across student subgroups at the state level and within many districts:
 - The chronic absenteeism rate for students eligible for **free meals** is *more than three times* that of those who ineligible for lunch subsidies
 - The chronic absenteeism rates for **Black/African American** and **Hispanic or Latino** students are both *more than two times* that of **White** students
 - **English Language Learners** and **Students with Disabilities** continue to evidence substantially higher chronic absenteeism rates when compared to their general education peers.
 - Chronic absenteeism rates are significantly higher in the **urban** districts.

Attendance Rate and Chronic Absenteeism, 2013-14

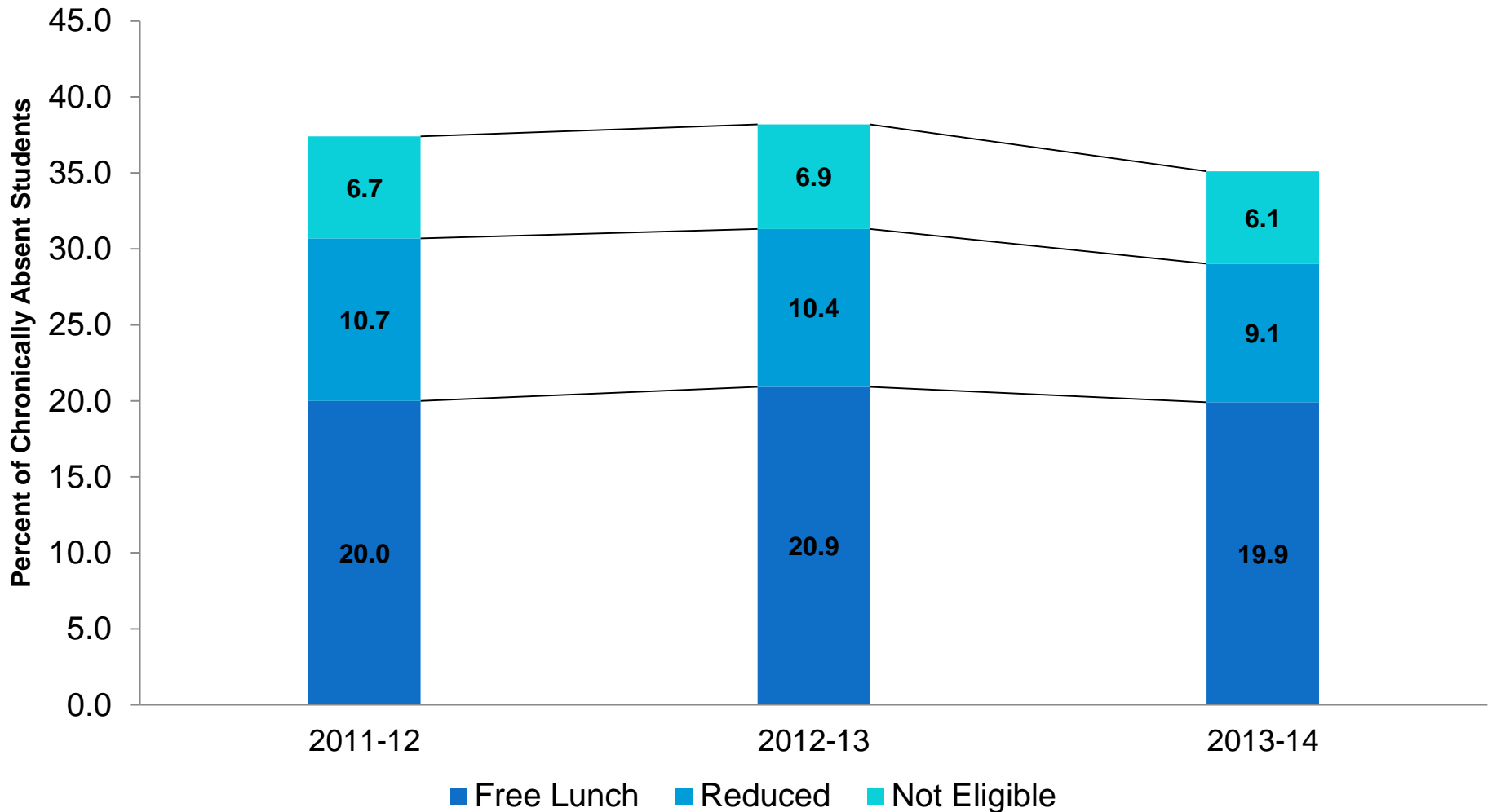
(Eight Alliance Districts with Network Schools)



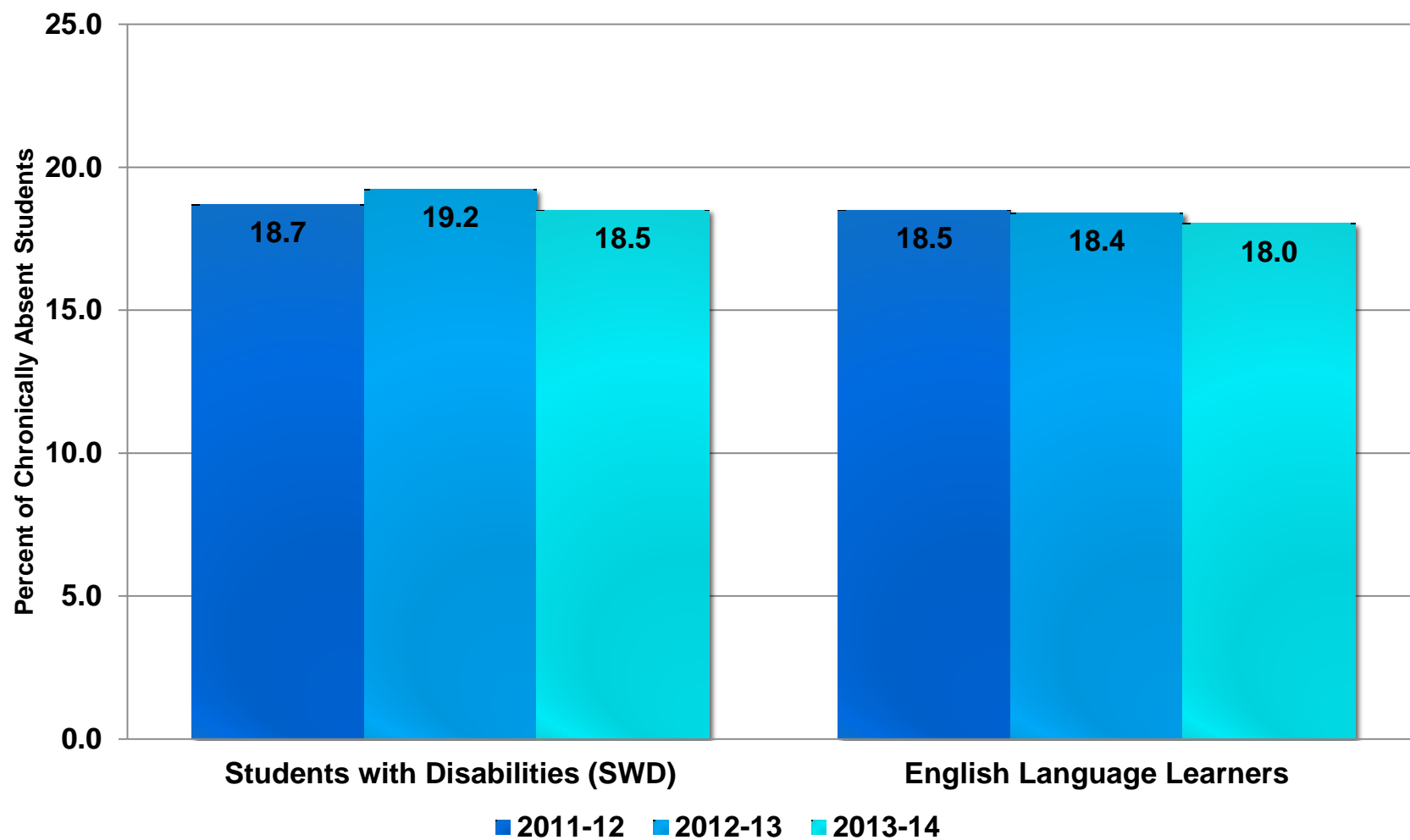
3-YEARS STATEWIDE DATA TREND

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	YR. 1 to YR. 2	YR 2 to YR. 3
<u>Race-Ethnicity</u>					
American Indian or Alaska Native	14.6	13.9	12.2	-0.7	-1.7
Asian	7.0	7.3	6.4	0.3	-1.0
Black or African American	15.2	16.0	15.7	0.8	-0.3
Hispanic/Latino of any race	18.4	19.1	18.1	0.7	-0.9
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	11.4	12.0	10.6	0.6	-1.5
Two or More Races	10.9	11.9	10.9	0.9	-1.0
White	8.0	8.2	7.2	0.2	-1.0
<u>Special Populations</u>					
Students with Disabilities	18.7	19.2	18.5	0.5	-0.7
ELL Students	18.5	18.4	18.0	-0.1	-0.4
<u>Meal Program Status</u>					
Free Meals	20.0	20.9	19.9	0.9	-1.0
Reduced	10.7	10.4	9.1	-0.3	-1.3
Not Eligible	6.7	6.9	6.1	0.2	-0.8
<u>Grade Range</u>					
Elementary Level (Grade K-3)	8.3	8.9	8.6	0.6	-0.3
Middle Grades (Grades 4-8)	8.9	9.0	8.4	0.1	-0.6
Secondary School (Grades 9-12)	16.2	16.9	15.4	0.7	-1.5
STATEWIDE	11.0	11.5	10.7	0.5	-0.8

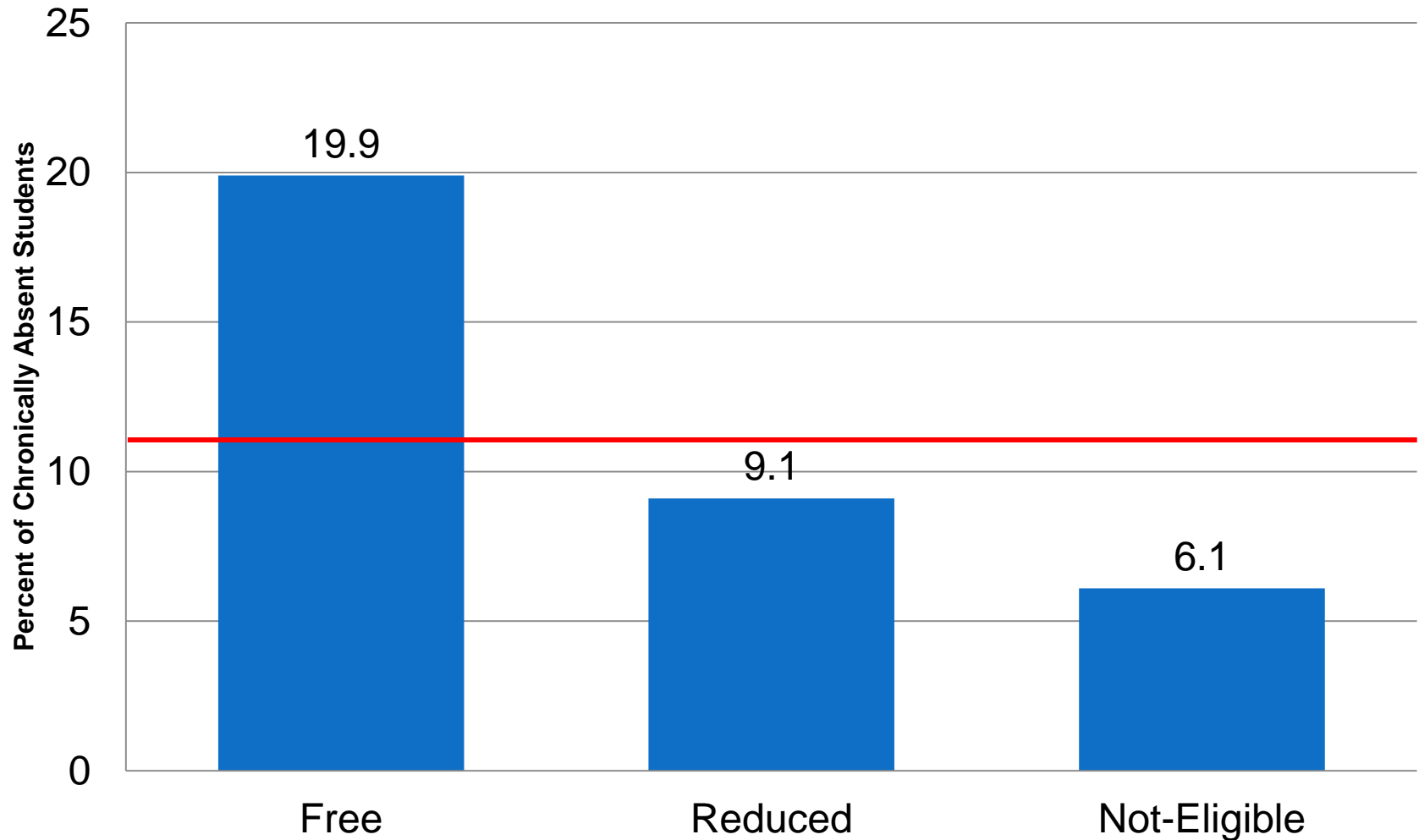
3-Year Analysis of Statewide Chronic Absenteeism by Meal Program Eligibility (proxy for poverty)



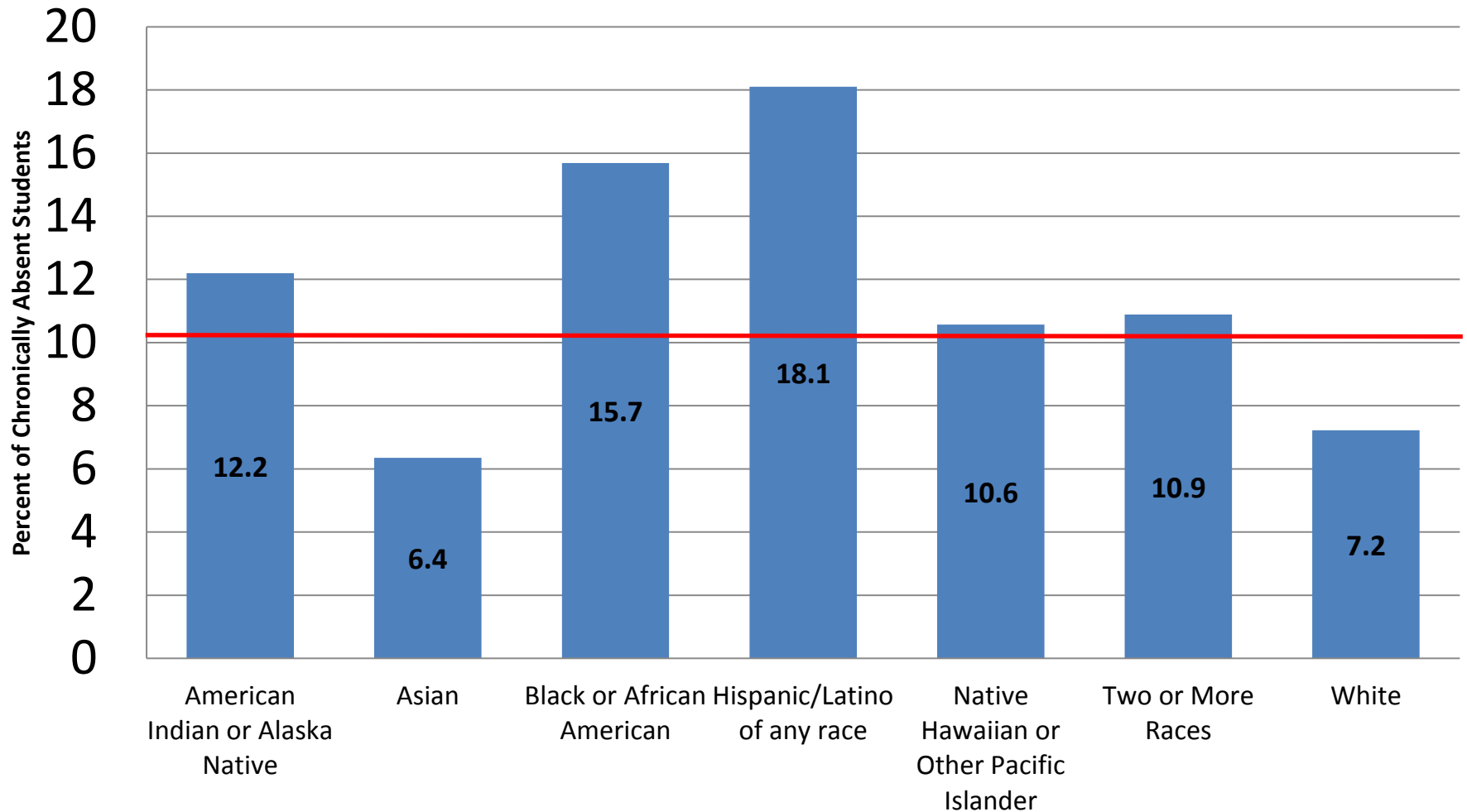
3-Year Analysis of Statewide Chronic Absenteeism by Instructional Program



Percent of Students Chronically Absent by Lunch Eligibility, 2013-14

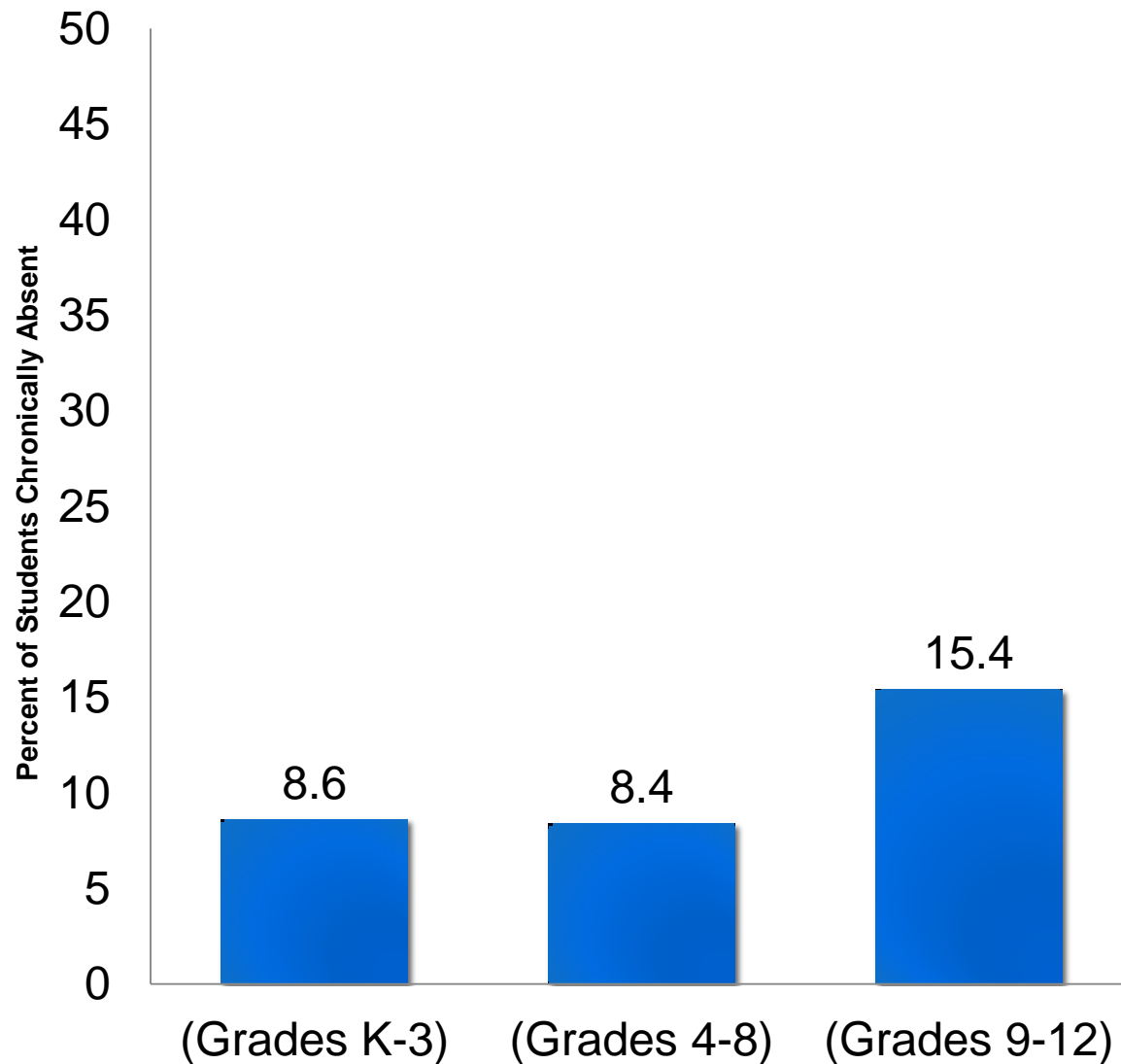


Percent of Students Chronically Absent by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-14

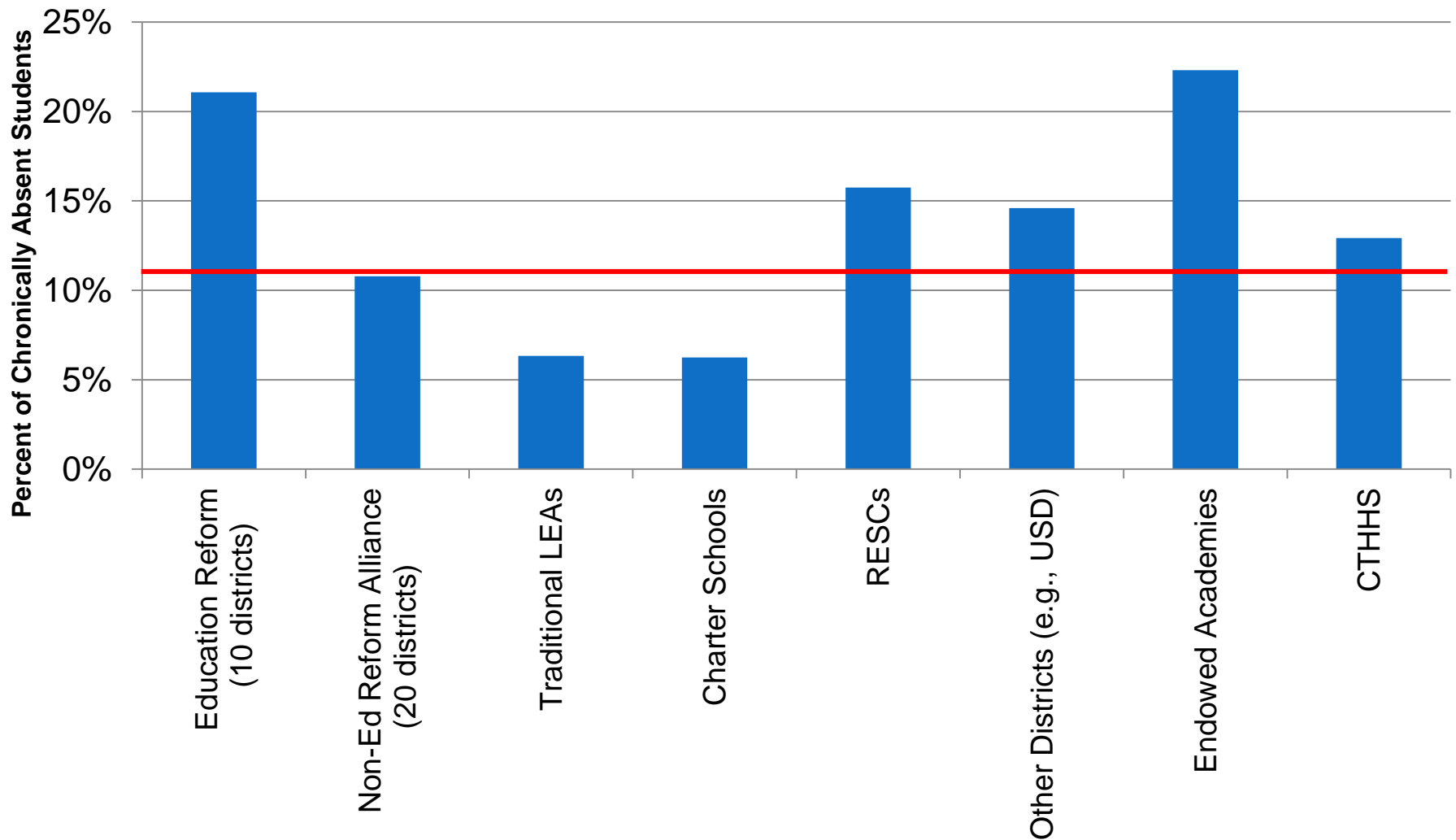


Chronic Absenteeism by Grade-Level

The chronic absenteeism rates for high school students is nearly twice that of students in grades K-8.



Chronic Absenteeism by District Type, 2013-14

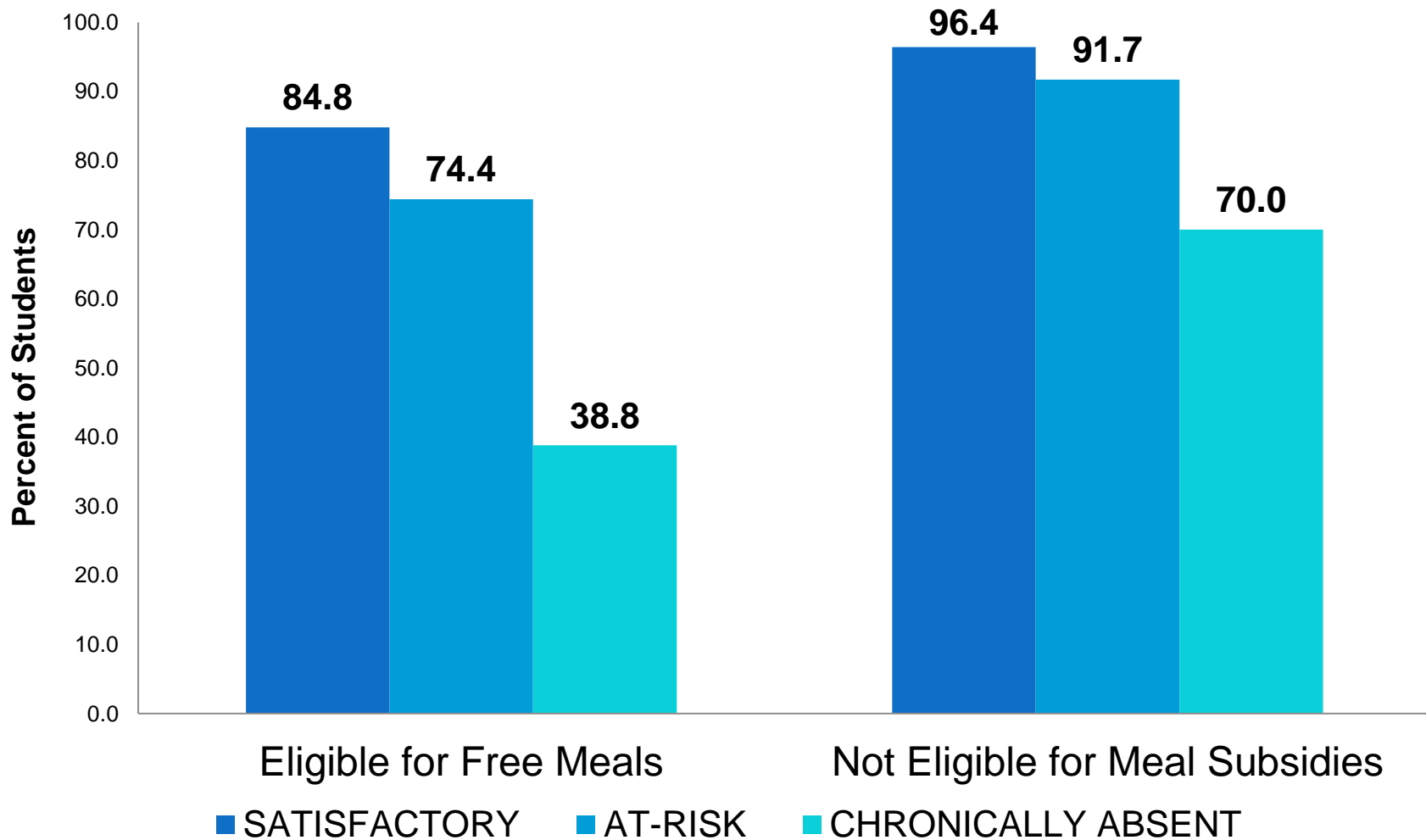


Associations between Student Attendance and Graduation

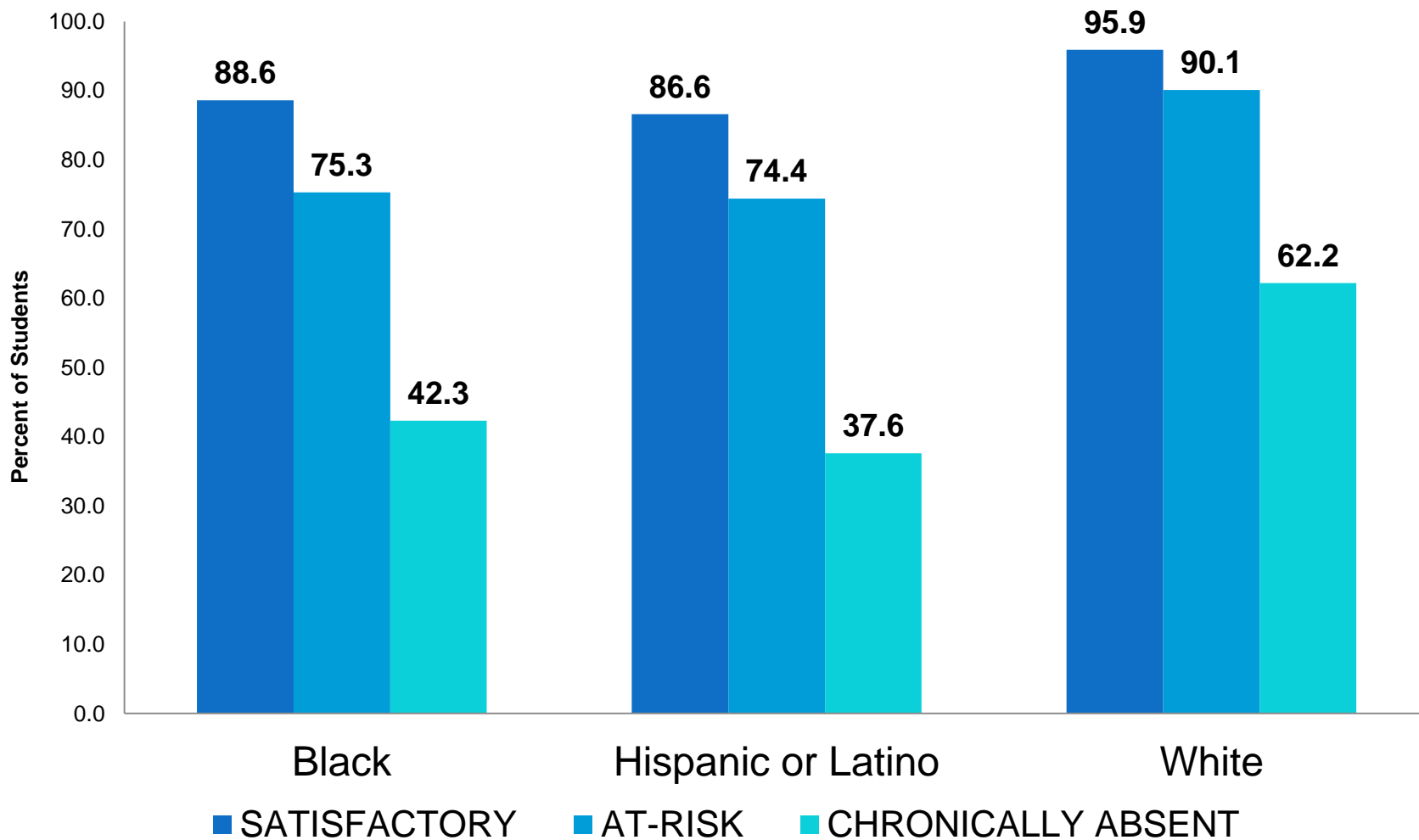
Students were grouped into the following attendance categories to examine their association to 4-year graduation and discipline

Attendance Rate Level	Definition
Satisfactory	Student attendance rate greater than 95%
At Risk	Student attendance rate between 90-95%
Chronically Absent	Student attendance rate of less than or equal to 90%

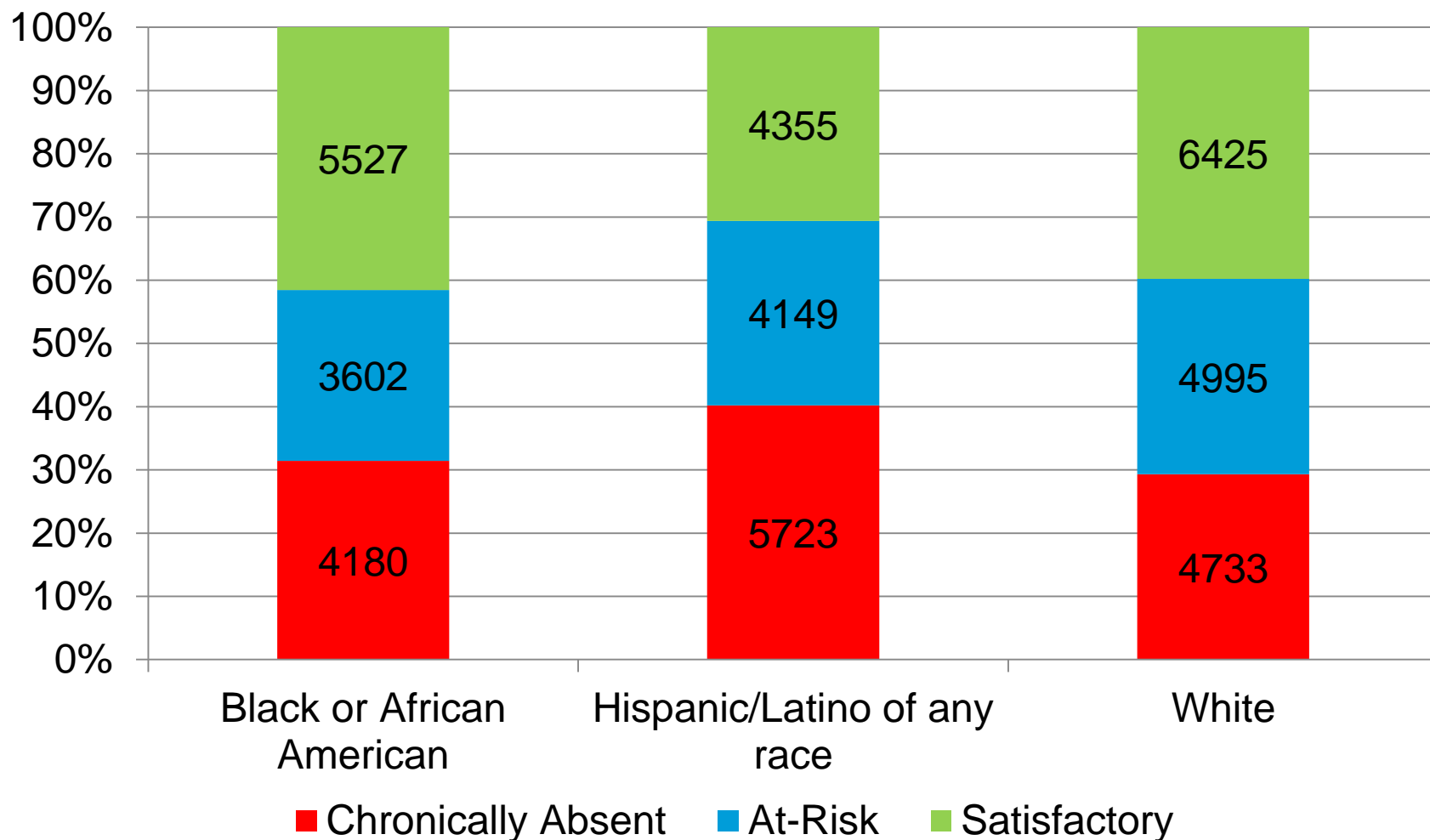
Attendance in 9th Grade and Graduation in 4 Years by Meal Eligibility, 2012-13 Cohort



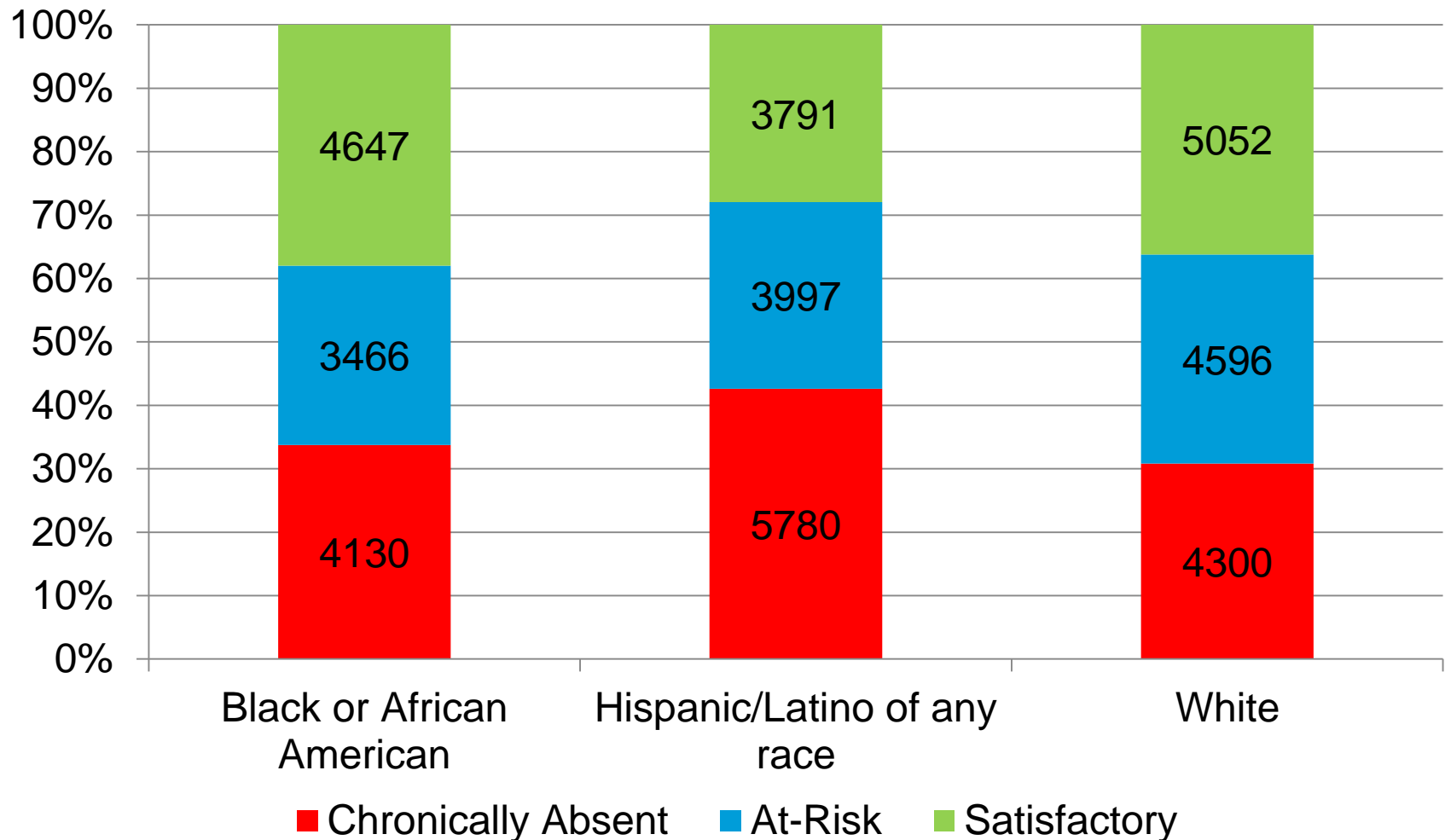
Attendance in 9th Grade and Graduation in 4 years by Race/Ethnicity, 2012-13 Cohort



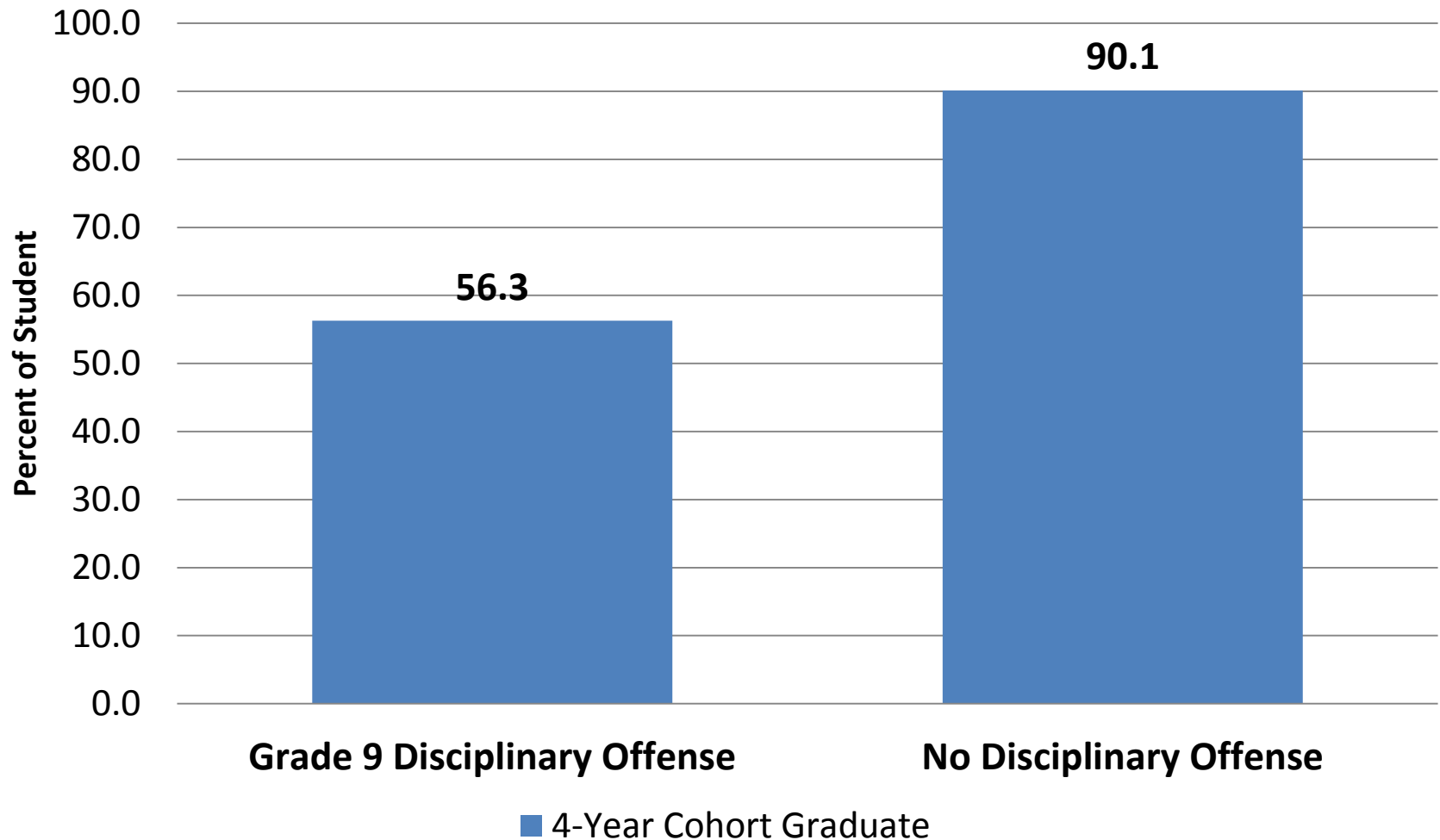
Attendance of Students Receiving ISS, OSS or Expulsion by Race: Percent of Students (unduplicated) 2011-12



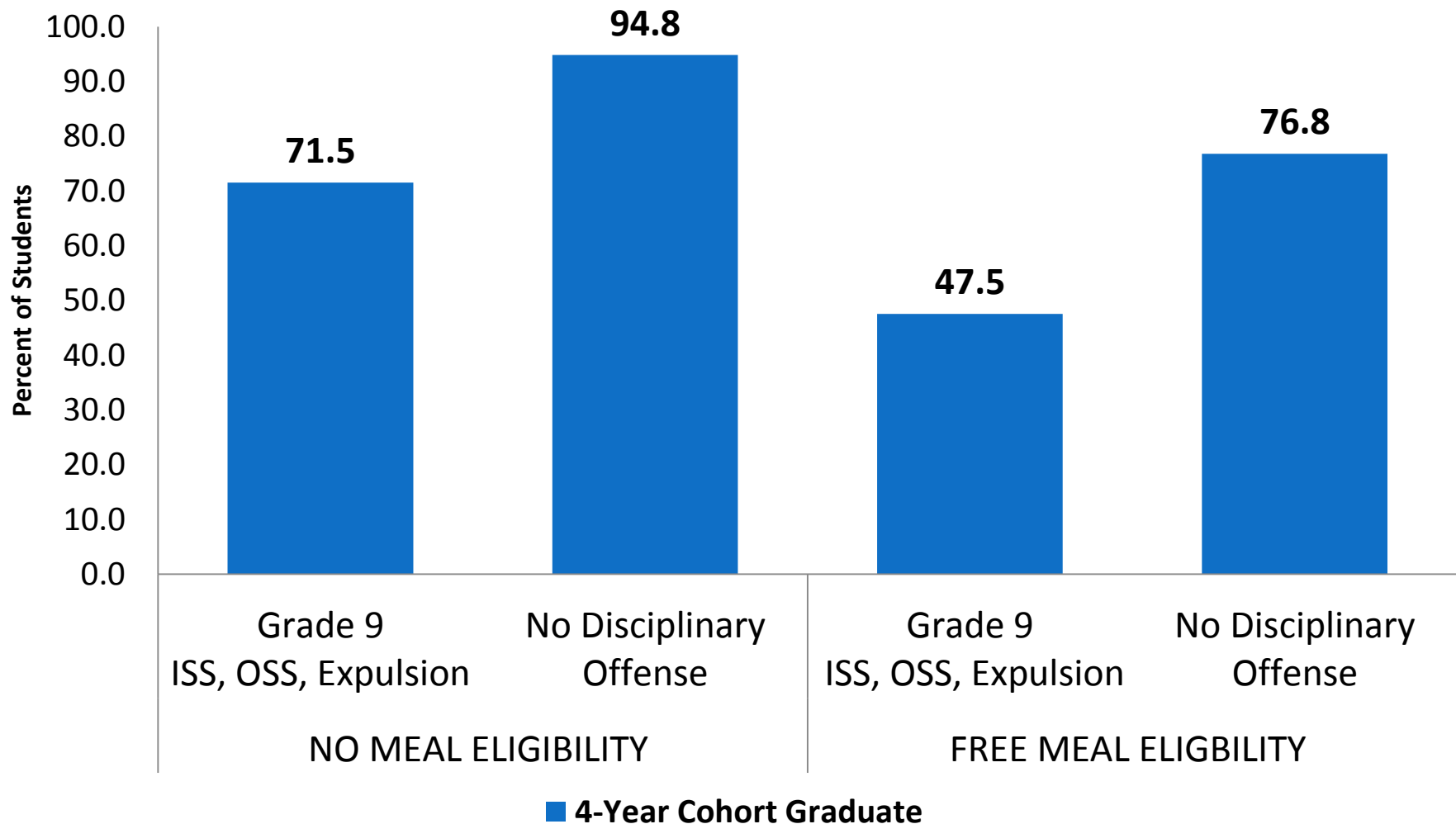
Attendance of Students Receiving ISS, OSS or Expulsion by Race: Percent of Students (unduplicated) 2012-13



Discipline Incident (ISS, OSS, Expulsion) in 9th Grade and Graduation in 4 Years, 2013 Cohort



Discipline Offenses (ISS, OSS, Expulsion) in 9th Grade and Graduation in 4 Years by Lunch Eligibility, 2013 Cohort



CT Chronic Absenteeism Summary

- Chronic absenteeism is a significant challenge for Connecticut. African American, Hispanic or Latino, students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and those reported as eligible for Free or reduced meal subsidies evidence substantially higher rates of chronic absenteeism than their peers who do not belong to those respective subgroups.
- Though the severity of overall absenteeism varies across school districts in our state, subgroup disparities exist among a vast majority of districts statewide.
- In 2013-14, 10.7% ($N=56,171$) of K-12 students in our State were chronically absent.
- A three year trend analysis of State level data reveals only a slight decrease in the percent of chronically absent students from year to year with no substantial decreases across student subgroups (e.g. Race, Grade Level Groupings, SWD, ELL).