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Pittsburgh's Dropouts: A Look at the Numbers

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TRWIB, Inc.

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The Steelers!





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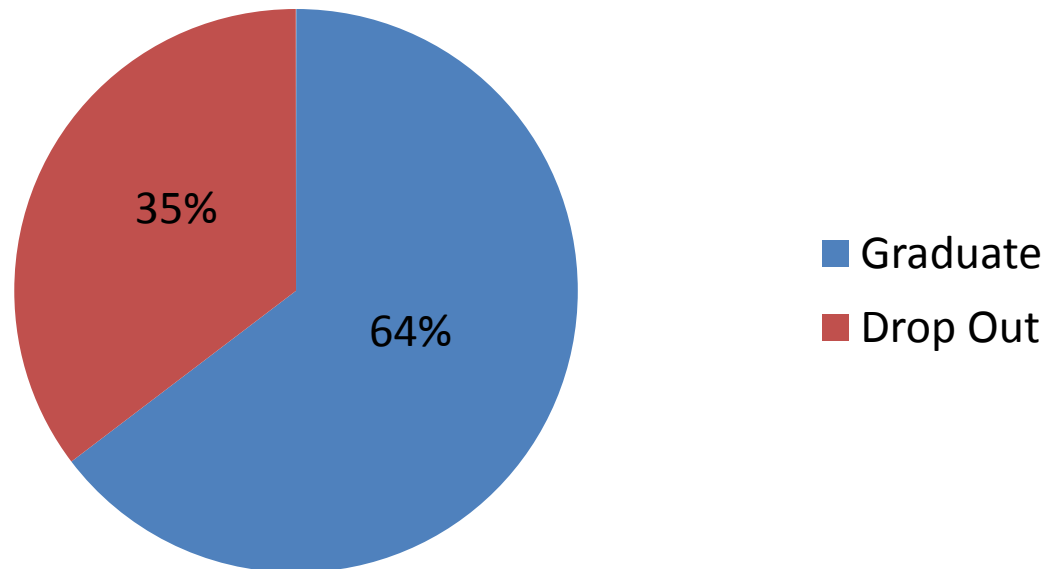
The Offensive Line





2006 RAND Study

5 Year Rates





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Today's Agenda

- I. What did we learn from talking to students?
- II. What did we learn from Pittsburgh Public Schools' data?
- III. What can we do about it?



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What We Learned from Students



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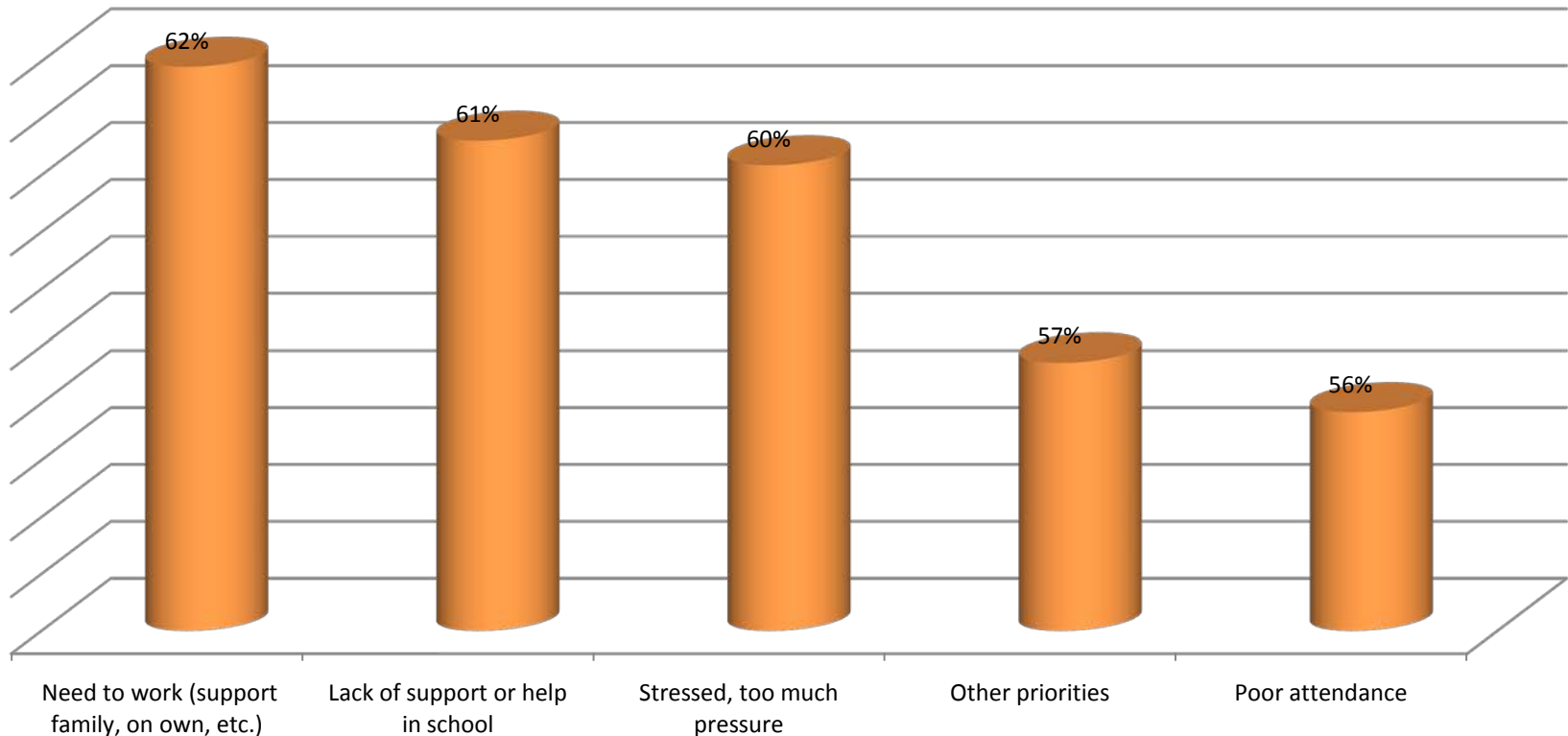
The Research

On behalf of Mayor's Office, Lyceum
Group Conducted:

- 1770 Surveys
- 100 Peer-to-peer Interviews
- 123 Family Focus Groups

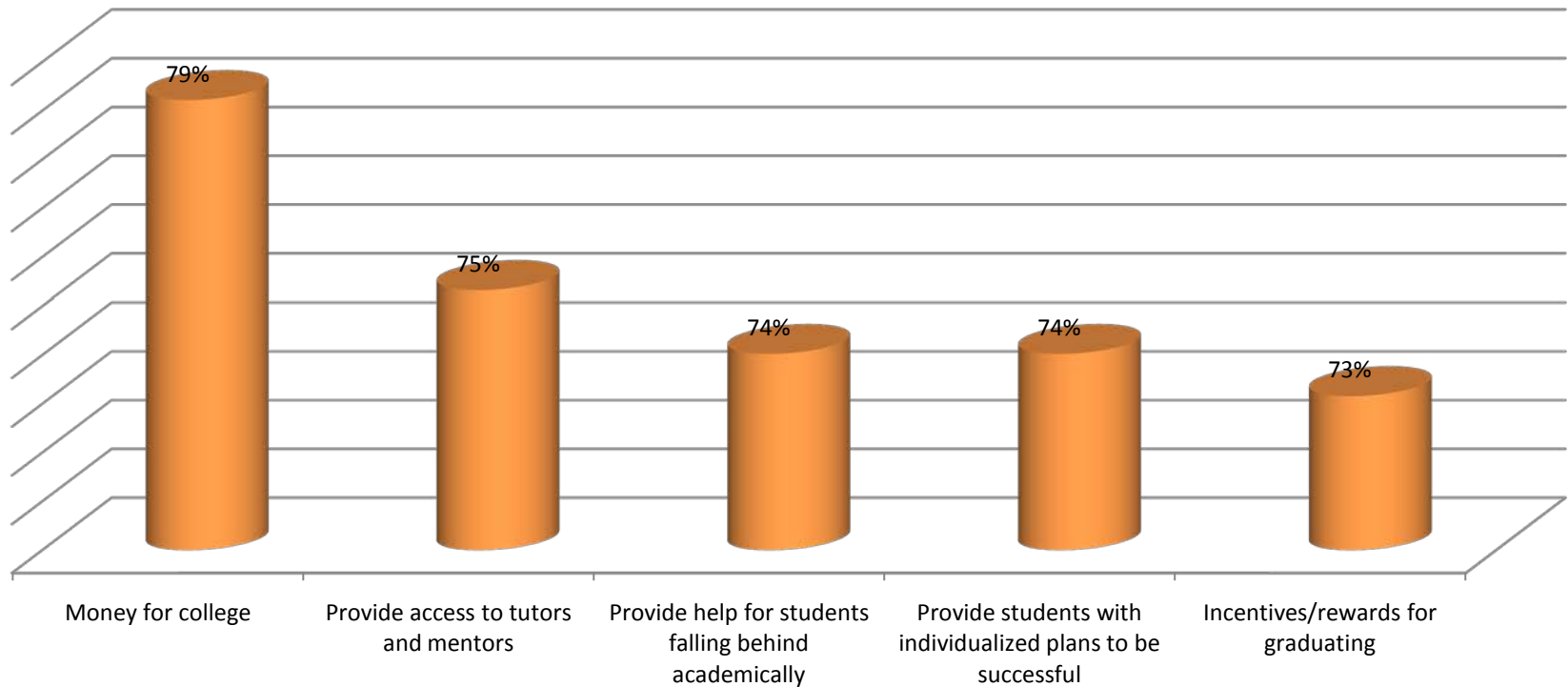


Why did you leave school if you left before graduating from high school?





What would keep you interested in graduating from high school?





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What Does This Mean?

1. Students drop out for both social and school-related reasons.
2. Many things that would keep them in school are within the control of the school district.



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What Did We Learn from Pittsburgh Public Schools' Data?



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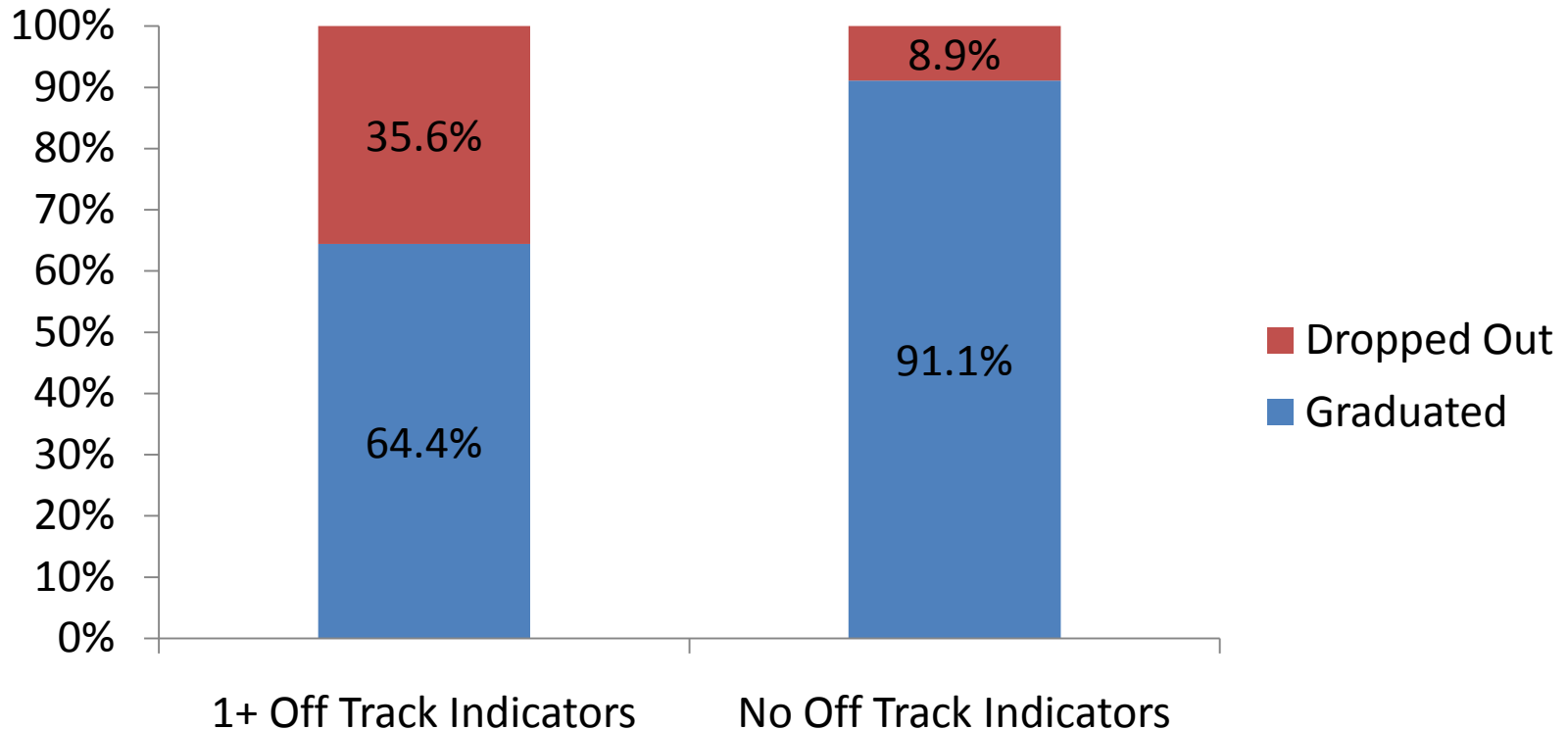
Research Question

Are there factors in 6th grade that are both statistically significant predictors of eventual high school dropout, AND characterize a substantial (at least 10%) percentage of eventual dropouts?



Off Track Indicators and Dropout

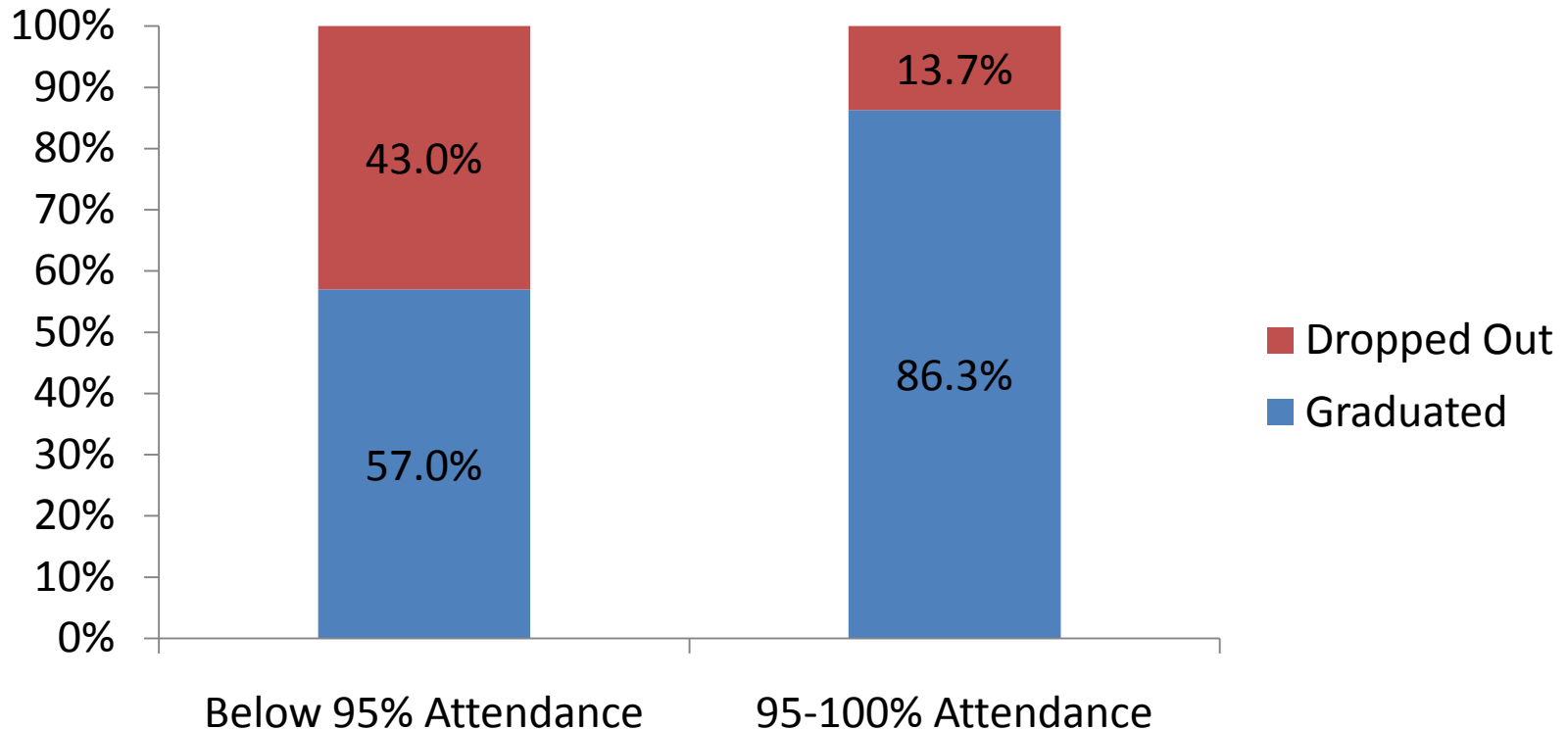
- 1,010 students (50.6% of the cohort) displayed at least 1 Off Track Indicator in 6th Grade
- 79.8% of dropouts had at least 1 Off Track Indicator





Off Track Indicator #1 - Absence

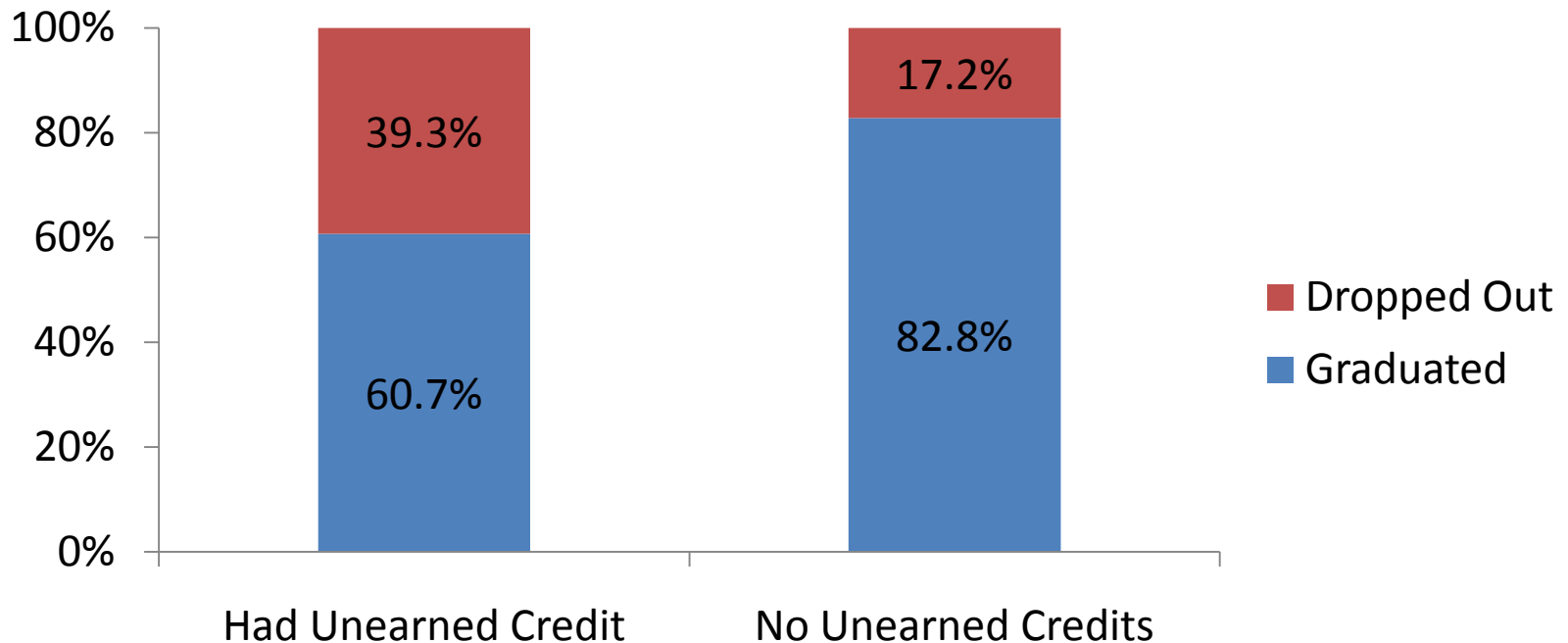
- 509 students (25% of the cohort) attended less than 95% of school days during 6th grade
- 48.6% of dropouts had a 6th grade attendance rate below 95%





Off Track Indicator #2 – Unearned Credits

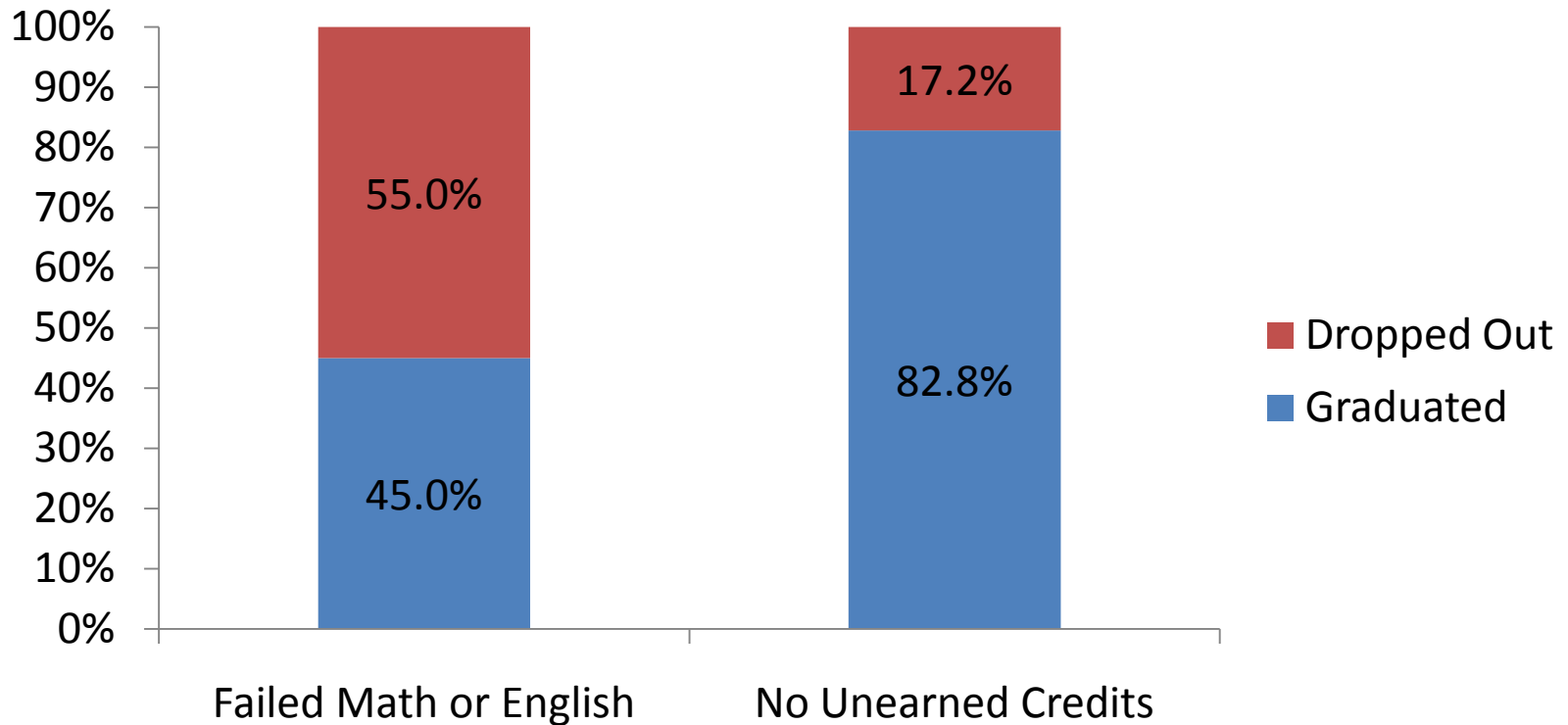
- 458 students (22.5% of the cohort) earned fewer credits than they attempted in 6th grade
- 39.9% of dropouts had an unearned credit in 6th grade





Off Track Indicator #2 – Unearned Credits

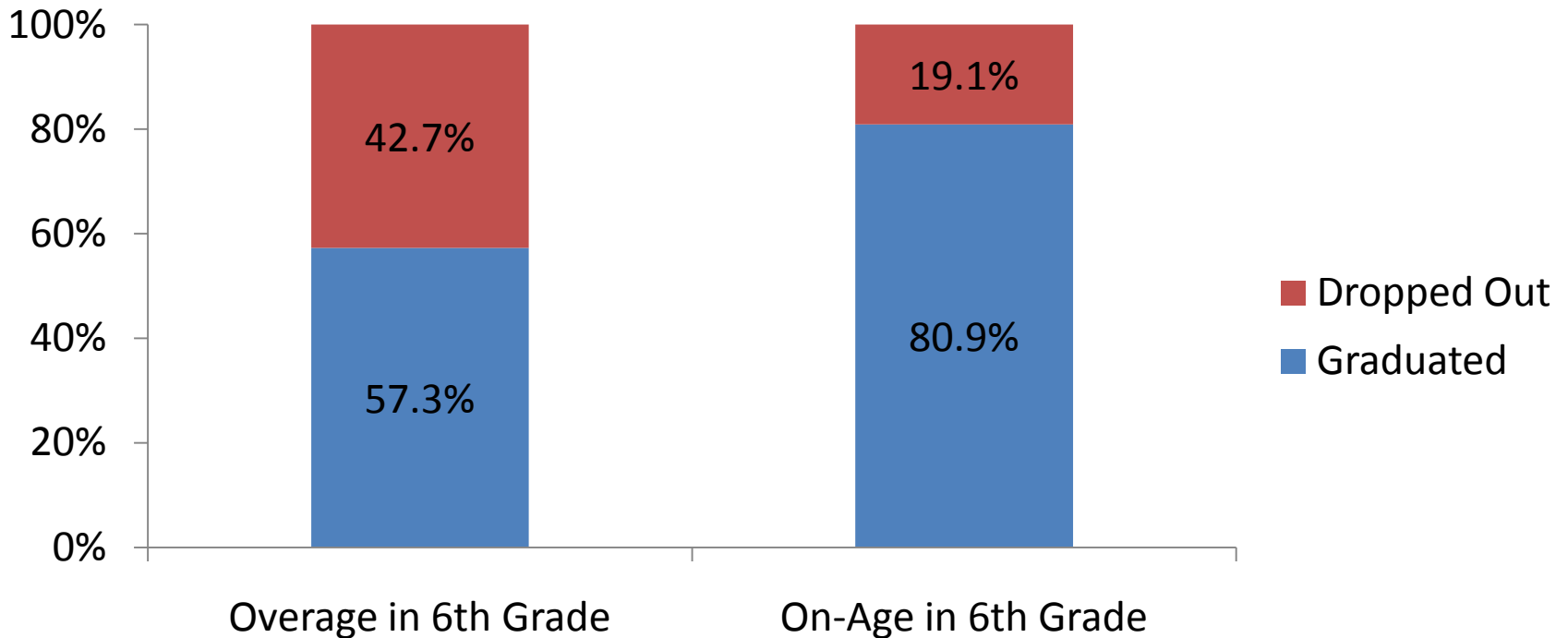
- Students who failed a math or English class in 6th grade were particularly likely to drop out.





Off Track Indicator #3 – Overage Students

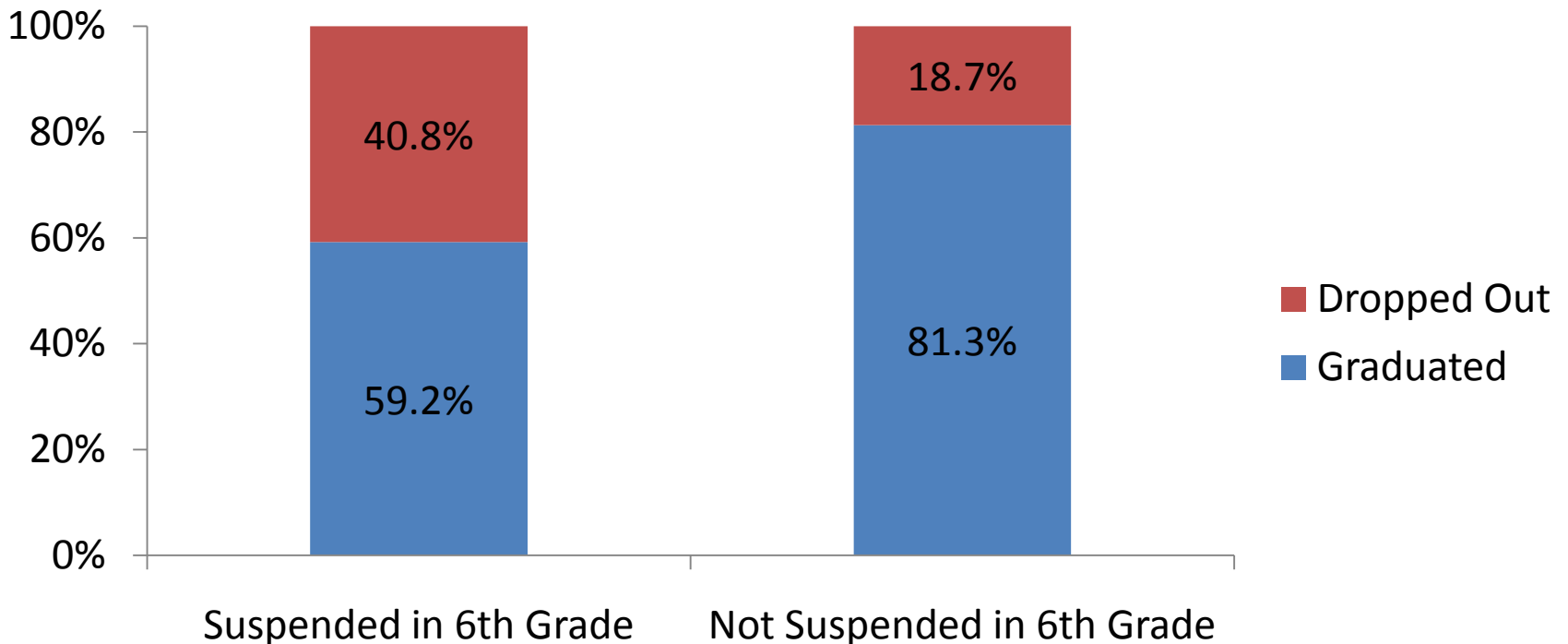
- 260 Students (12% of cohort) were overage entering 6th grade
- 24.6% of dropouts were overage entering 6th grade





Off Track Indicator #4 – Out of School Suspension

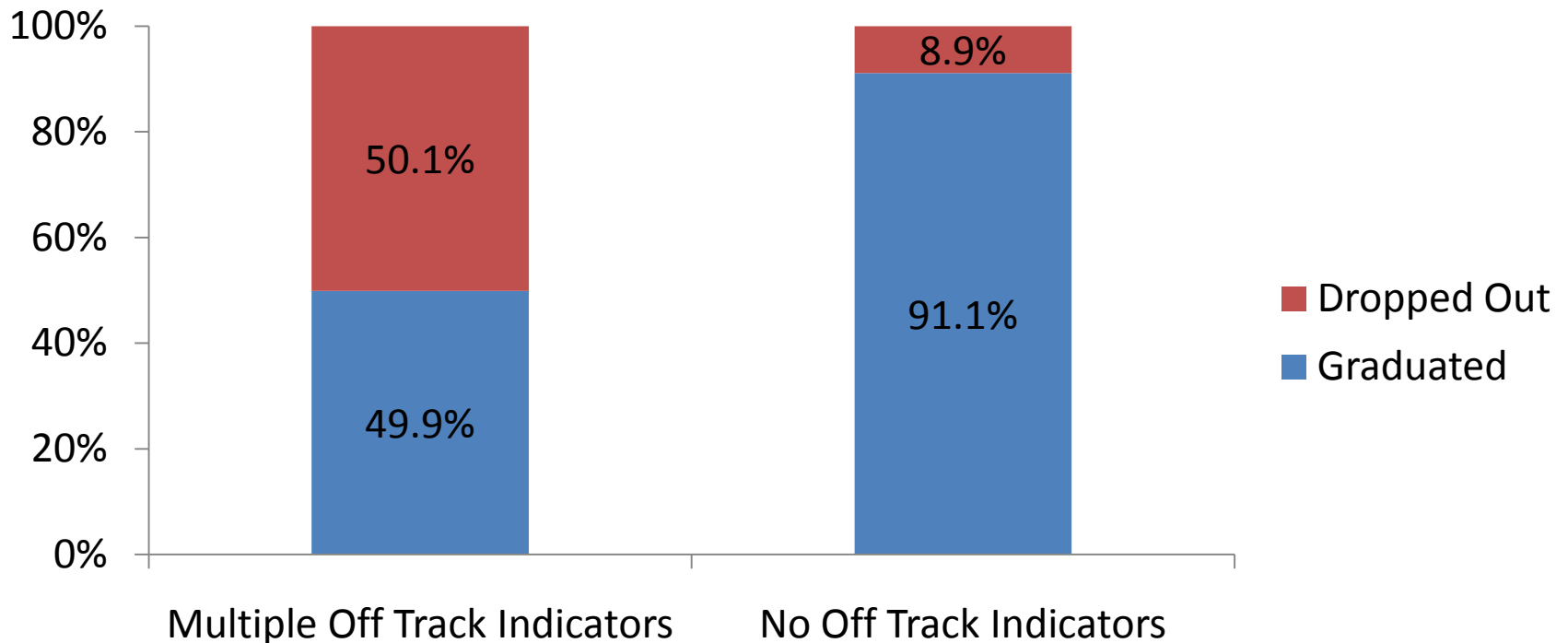
- 314 Students (15% of cohort) were suspended for one or more days in 6th grade
- 28.4% of dropouts were suspended in 6th grade





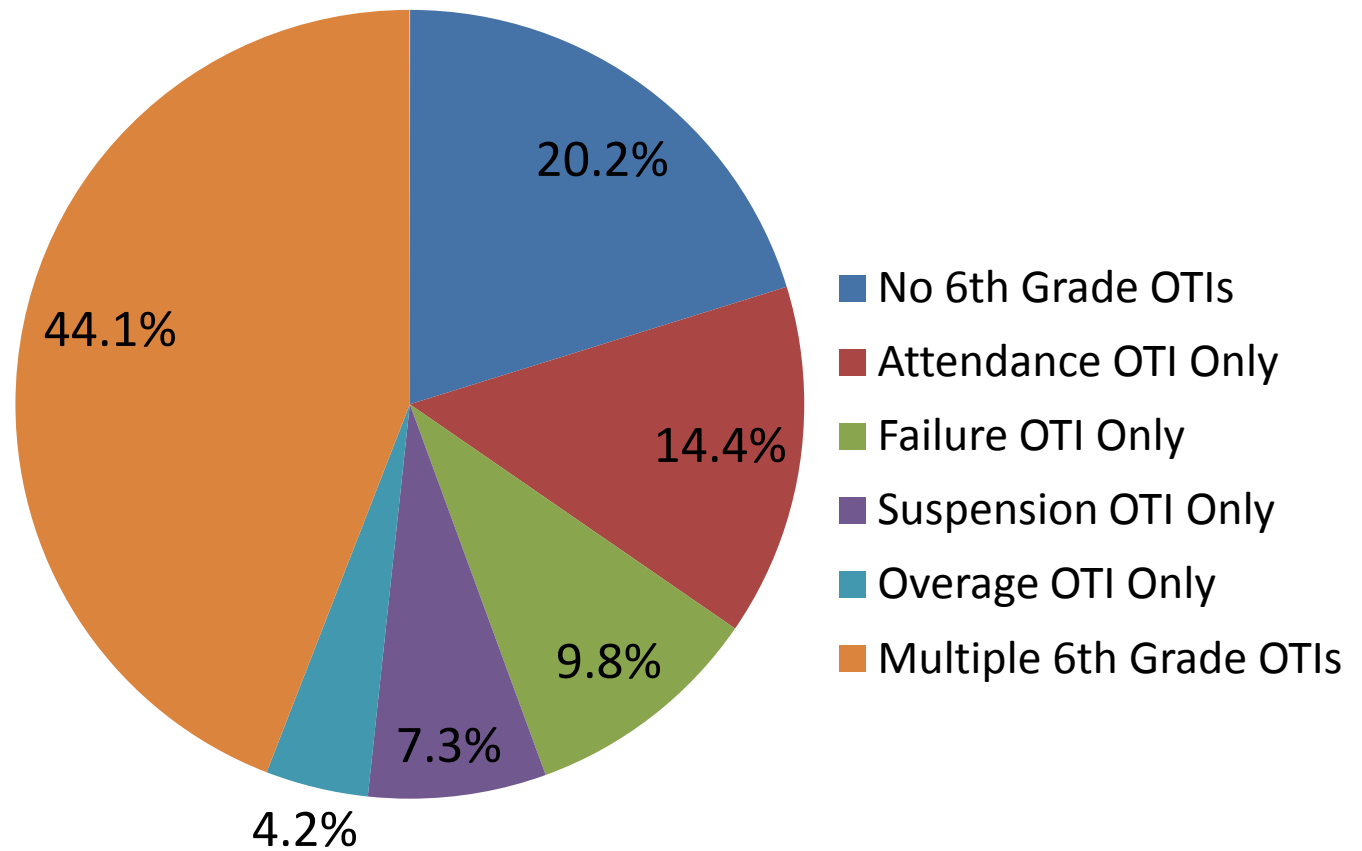
Multiple Off Track Indicators in 6th Grade

- 397 students (19.5% of cohort) displayed multiple off track indicators in 6th grade
- 44.1% of dropouts displayed multiple off track indicators





6th Grade OTIs of Eventual Dropouts



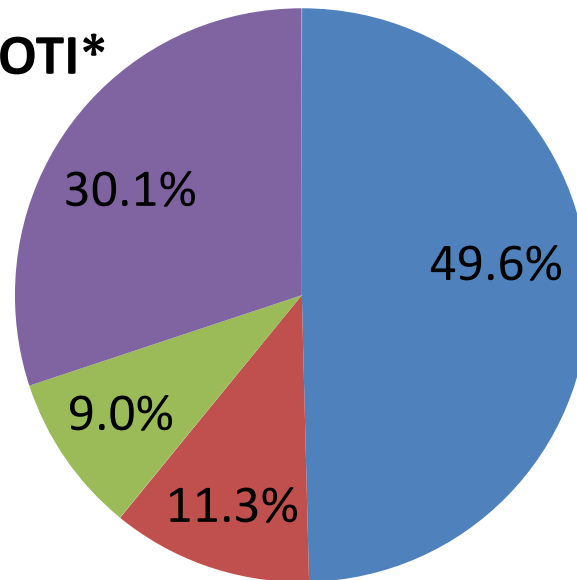


The Timing of Off Track Indicators

- 230 students developed an OTI in 7th grade
- 183 students developed an OTI in 8th grade
- 614 students had no middle school OTIs

Grade Developing OTI*

*Out of cohort of dropouts

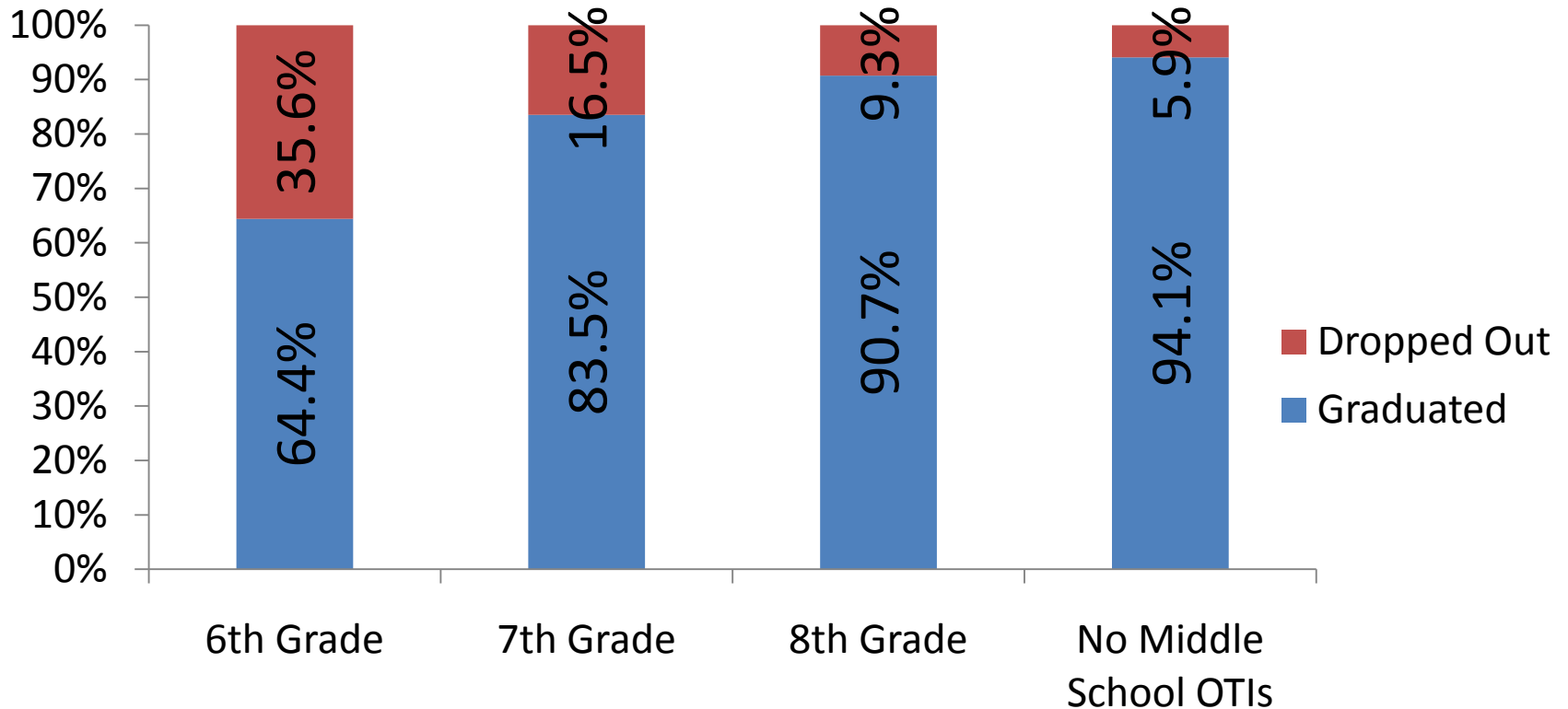


■ 6th Grade ■ 7th Grade ■ 8th Grade ■ No Middle School OTIs



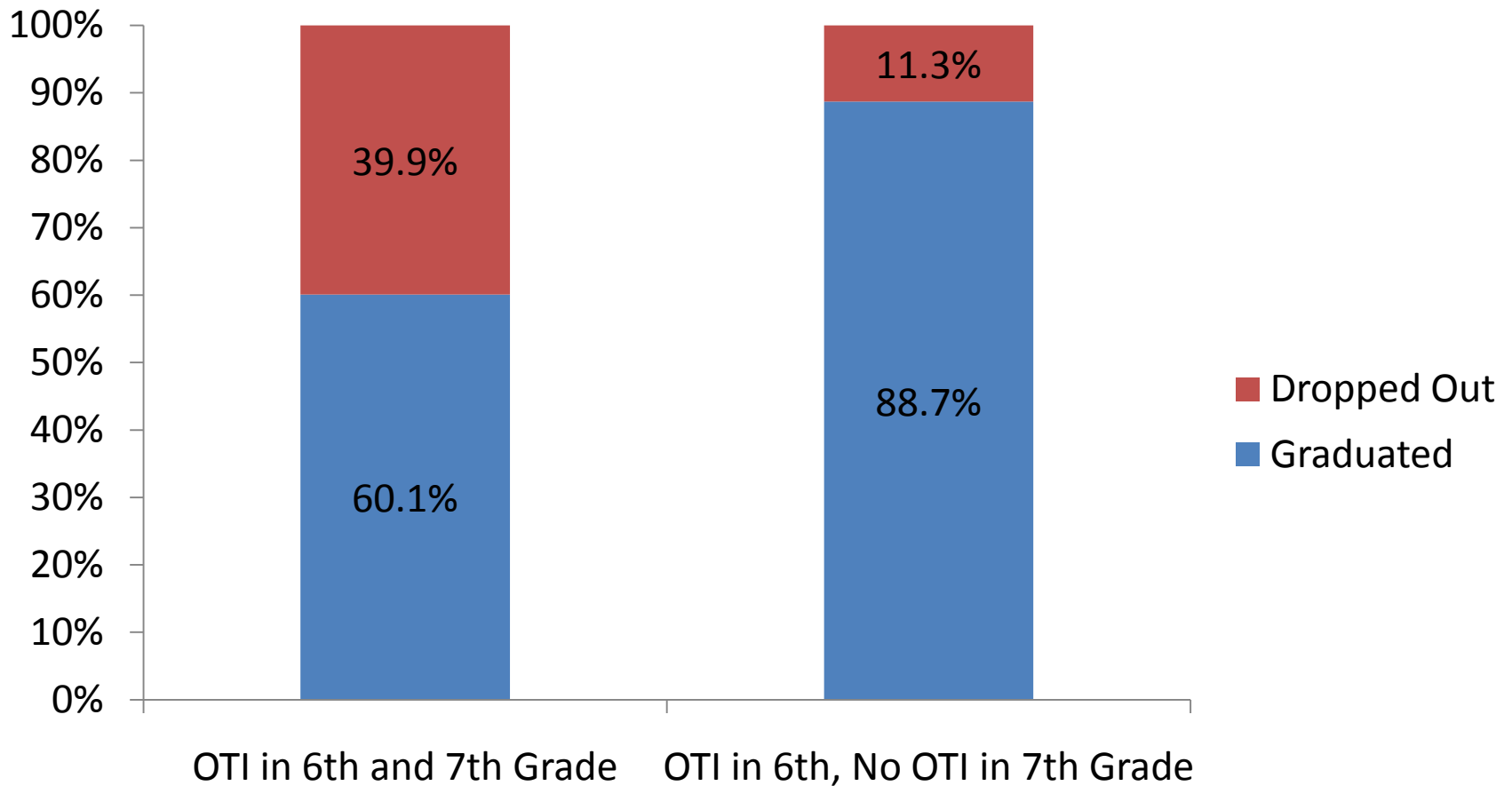
The Timing of Off Track Indicators

- This chart looks at graduation odds based on timing of developing an Off Track Indicator





The Effects of Student Resiliency





Overage and Under-Credited

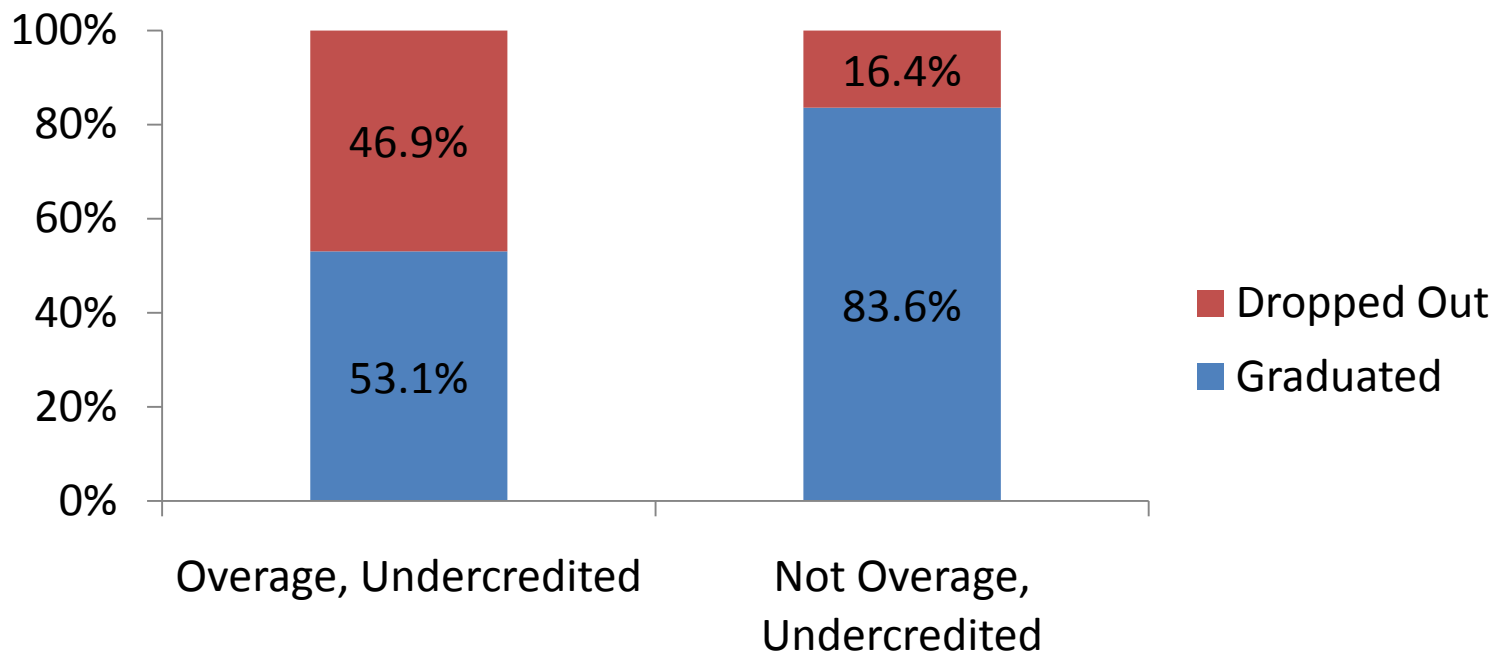
- Overage and under-credited was defined as:

Grade Level	Age at Start of School Year	Credits
9	Age 15	Fewer than 6.5 Credits
10	Age 16	Fewer than 13 Credits
11	Age 17	Fewer than 19.5 Credits
12	Age 18-21	Any number of Credits



Overage and Under-Credited

- The graduation rate for students who were overage and under-credited at any point from 2003-2008 was lower than the graduation rate for students who were never overage and under-credited





Conclusions

- PPS data for this 6th grade cohort indicate that there are four Off Track Indicators that are predictive of eventual dropout: attendance, course credits, student age, and suspensions.
- Students with multiple 6th grade Off Track Indicators are especially likely to drop out
- Students who are resilient in subsequent grades are no more likely to drop out than students with no 6th grade Off Track Indicators
- Students who become overage and under-credited at any point in their school careers are very likely to drop out.



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Recommendations: How We Make Our Students as Successful as Our Steelers



Educational Options

- Continue to develop a portfolio of programs and schools to ensure that all students graduate ready for post-secondary education, training, and/or employment
- Continue to promote and use The Pittsburgh Promise [™] as an incentive strategy across alternative programs
- Formally transition students to post-secondary education, training, and/or employment.



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Policies and Procedures

- The Pathways Planning Team advises that current Pittsburgh Public School policies, some with concurrent procedures, be examined for possible revision.
- Teachers and administrators together can address the dropout issue by close adherence to the ABC early warning indicators: Attendance, Age, Behavior, and Course Failure.



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Stakeholders

- The dedicated Stakeholder Advisory Group that has met to provide input and guidance to the Graduate Pittsburgh Summit and the Pathways Planning Team Members should continue their involvement with this valuable project. The Advisory Group Membership should also be expanded.
- Stakeholders should provided targeted, strategic academic remediation for students who have fallen behind or who have arrived at postsecondary education, training, or employment without the necessary skills to be successful.



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Special Thanks

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Pittsburgh Public Schools

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Questions?

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TRWIB, Inc: www.trwib.org or (412) 552-7090

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