

# Using Data to Improve Attendance

April 30, 2019



# Agenda | What we will cover today

- Lessons Learned from Data Analysis: OSSE's Division of Data, Assessment, and Research
- School Story: Center City Public Charter Schools—Brightwood
- Questions and Answers



# Learning Objectives

## **By the end of this webinar, participants will understand:**

- Strategies for using data to improve the effectiveness of attendance interventions
- Best practices to improve student attendance
- How OSSE analyzes data to help schools/LEAs improve attendance



# OSSE Attendance Reporting

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*Cailyn Torpie, Education Research Analyst*

*August Warren, Management Analyst*



# OSSE Attendance Reporting - Metrics

- **Chronic Absenteeism:** when a student is absent – either excused or unexcused – for 10 percent or more of instructional days a student was enrolled across all schools and sectors in a given school year
- **Truancy:** the accumulation of 10 or more unexcused absences across all schools and sectors in a given school year
- **In-Seat Attendance:** percentage of the cumulative sum of instructional days on which enrolled students are present in school during a given school year
- **Attendance Growth:** Score Calculated for individual students by taking the change in a student's attendance rate and subtracting the median change in attendance rate for students in the same age group



# OSSE Attendance Reporting – Available Data

- **Public data**

- Attendance Report (*prior years, using final validated data*)
  - Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy
  - All students enrolled for a minimum of 10 instructional days
- DC School Report Card (*prior years, using final validated data*)
  - In-Seat Attendance, Attendance Growth, 90 Percent Attendance (the inverse of chronic absenteeism)
  - Inclusion criteria for metrics more restrictive for the purpose of accountability
- Every Day Counts! Taskforce Quarterly Reports (*current year and prior years, preliminary data*)
  - In-Seat Attendance, Chronic Absenteeism, and Truancy
  - All students enrolled for a minimum of 10 instructional days

- **Data provided to LEAs only**

- Qlik (*current year, preliminary data updated daily*)
  - In-Seat Attendance, Chronic Absenteeism, and Truancy
  - In-Seat Attendance inclusion criteria aligned with DC School Report Card
  - Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy inclusion criteria aligned with Attendance Report and Quarterly Reporting



# Attendance Report

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*Cailyn Torpie, Education Research Analyst*

*August Warren, Management Analyst*





# Overview

- The annual attendance report provides analysis on chronic absenteeism and truancy in the District
  - **Chronic Absenteeism:** *when a student is absent – either excused or unexcused – for 10 percent or more of instructional days a student was enrolled across all schools and sectors in a given school year*
  - **Truancy:** *the accumulation of 10 or more unexcused absences across all schools and sectors in a given school year*
- This year's report focused on students in grades K-12, which is more inclusive than prior years' reporting on students of compulsory age
  - Aligned with universe of students included in the attendance metrics on school report cards
- More than purely descriptive statistics, we hope the data presented in the report are actionable to help guide how and where to invest resources to improve attendance for students in the District



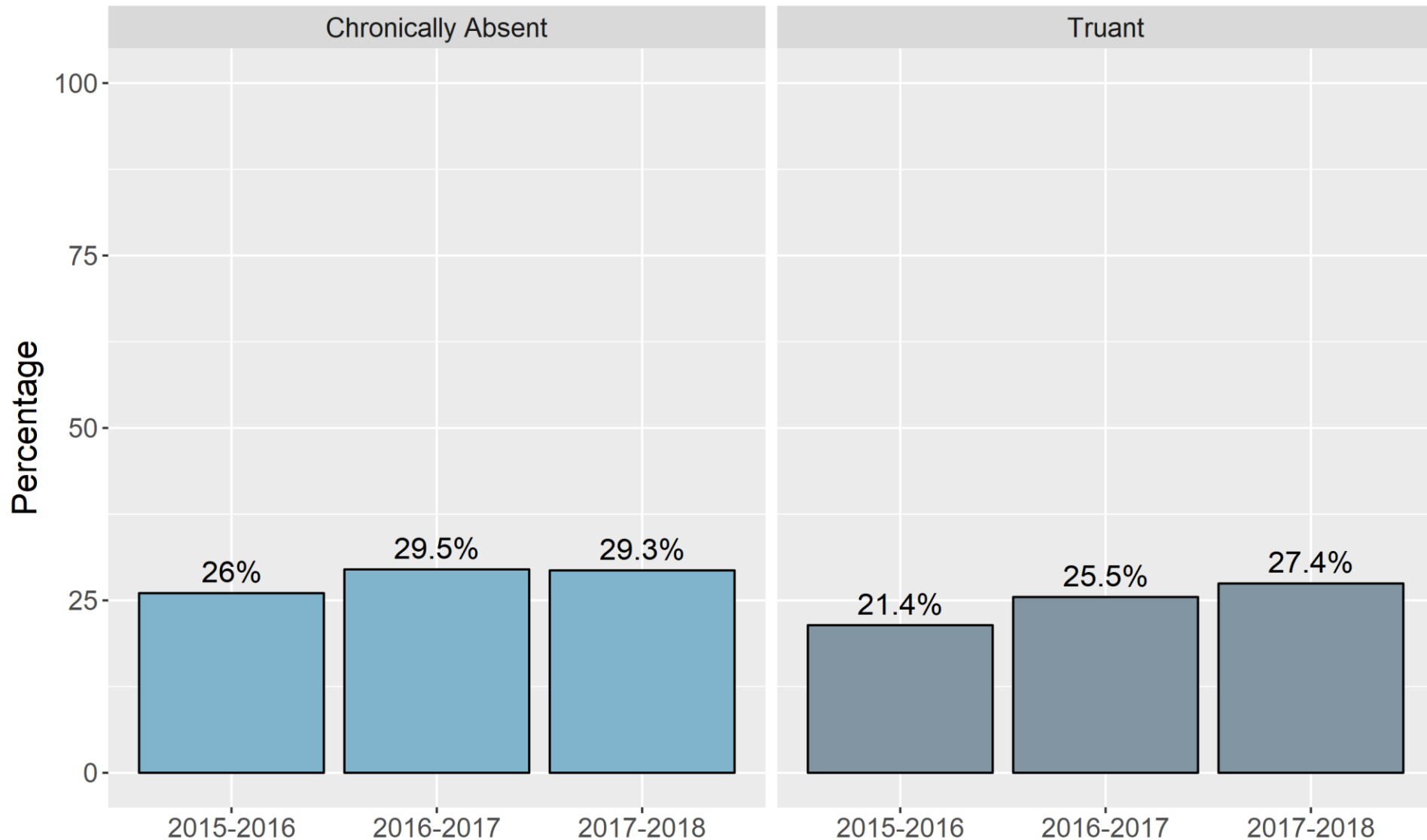


# Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy: Overview and Trends



# State-level rates of Truancy & Chronic Absenteeism

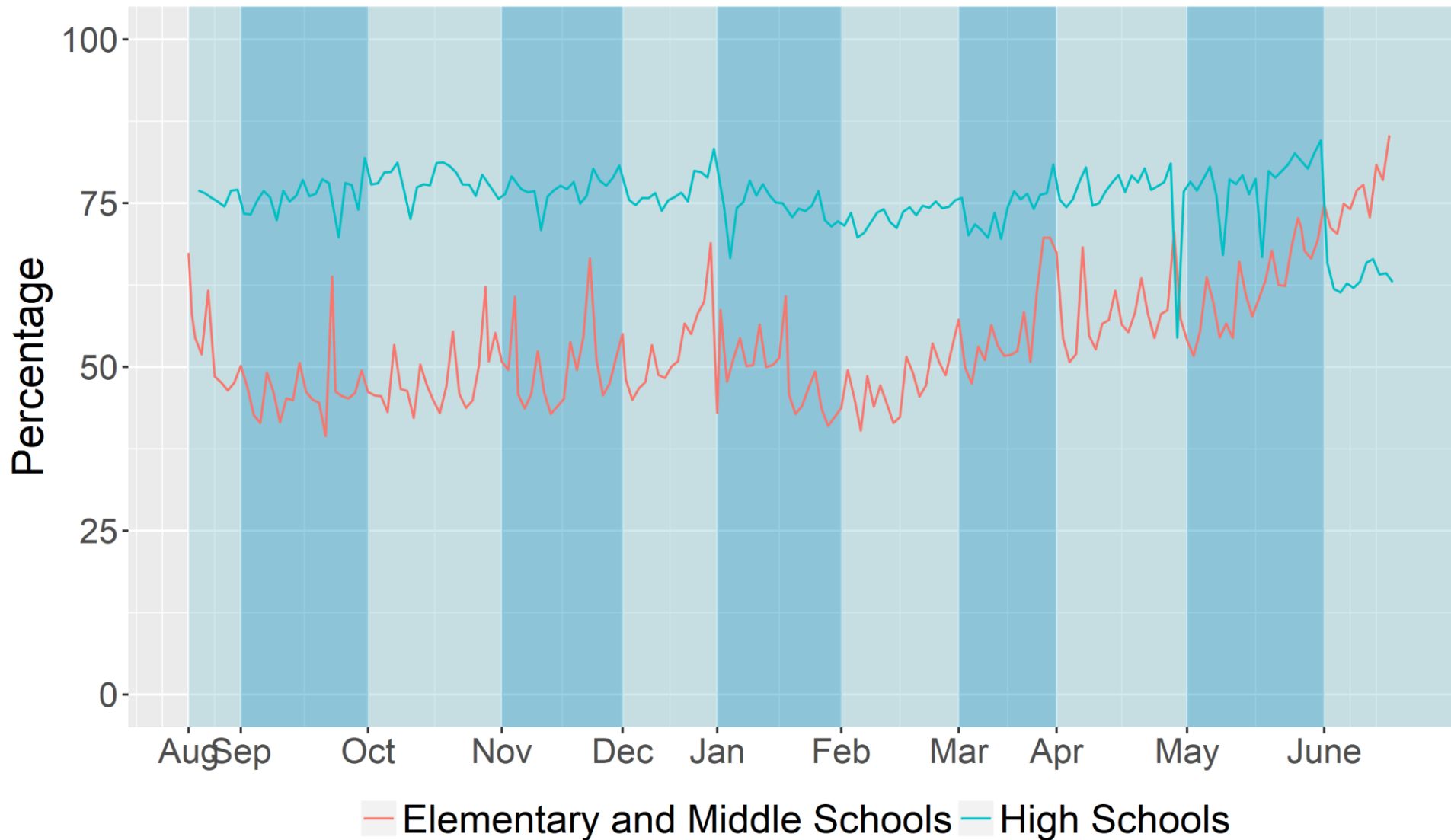
Year over Year





# Unexcused Absences out of Total Absences

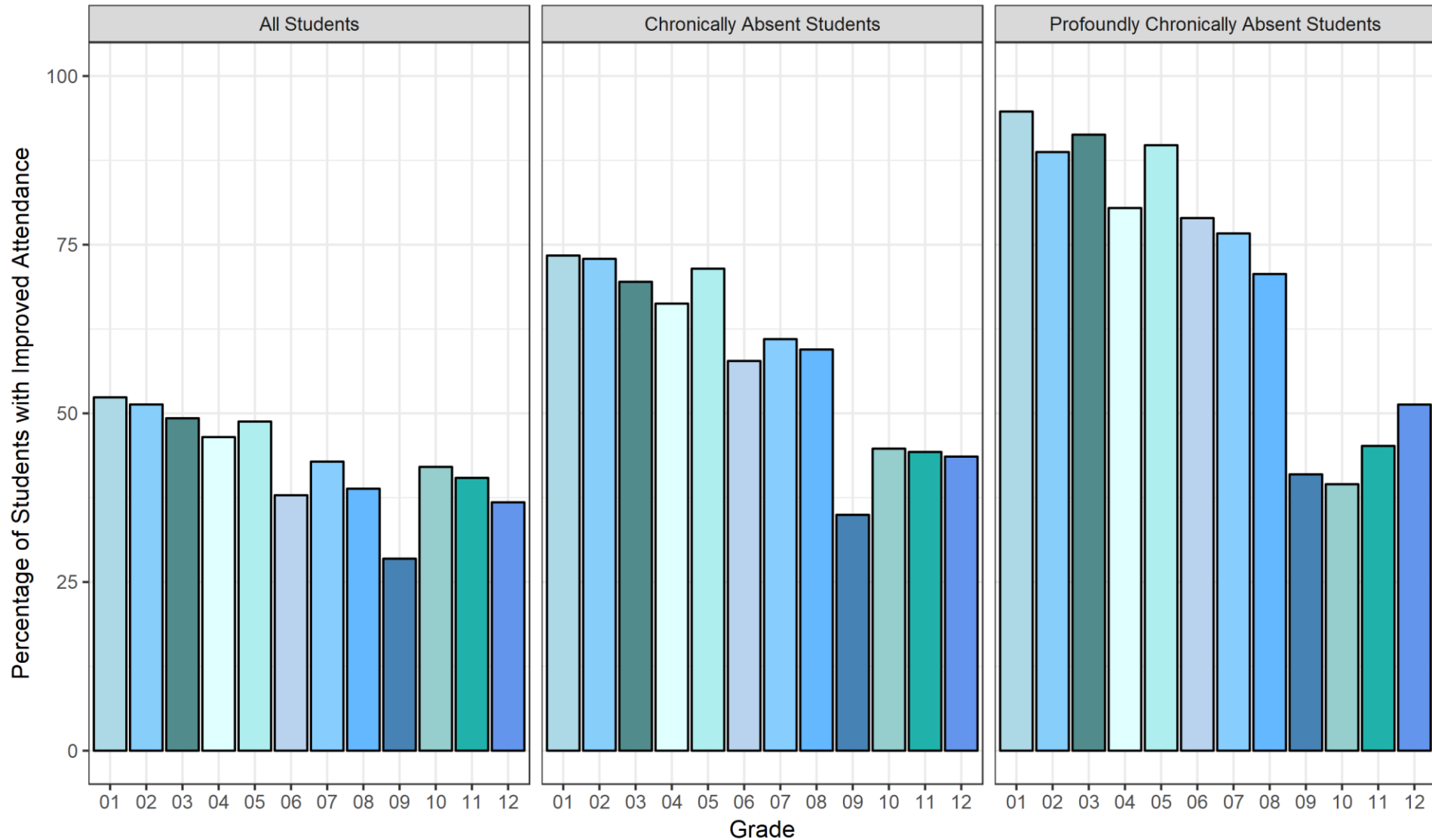
by Grade Band





# Student Improvement in Attendance

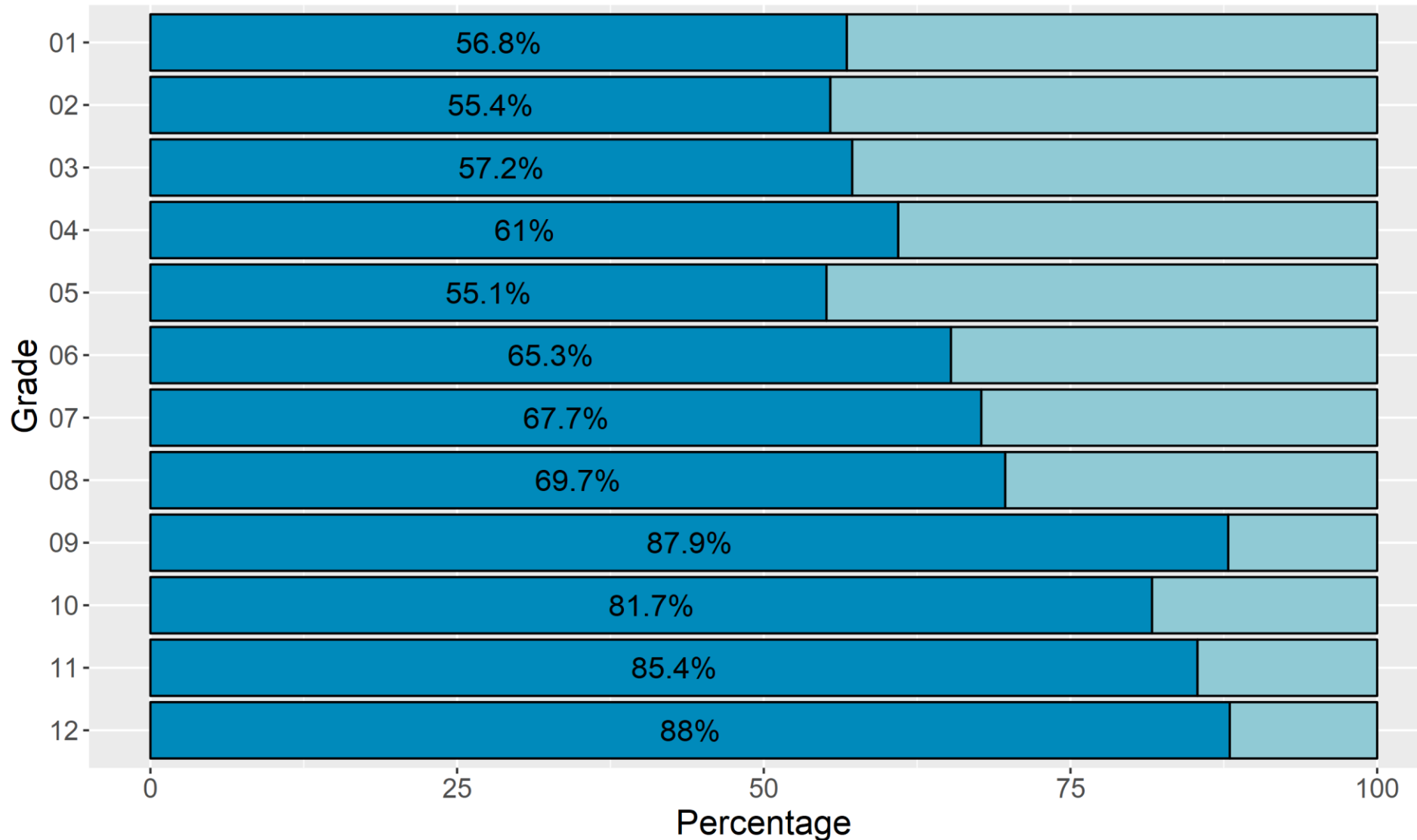
by Grade and Level of Absenteeism





# Recurrence of Chronic Absenteeism 2016-17 to 2017-18

by Grade in 2017-18





# Examining Barriers to School Attendance



# Absenteeism and Distance

to School

**Motivation:** Given school choice, there is a great level of variability among DC students in distance traveled to school.

**Question:** Is living farther away from school systematically related to higher levels of absenteeism?

**What We Did:**

- Calculated commute time for students in the District by bringing together student address and enrollment information
- Rates of absenteeism calculated for each student, address, school combination

**Findings:** On average across the District, a longer distance travelled to school is not systematically associated with higher levels of absenteeism

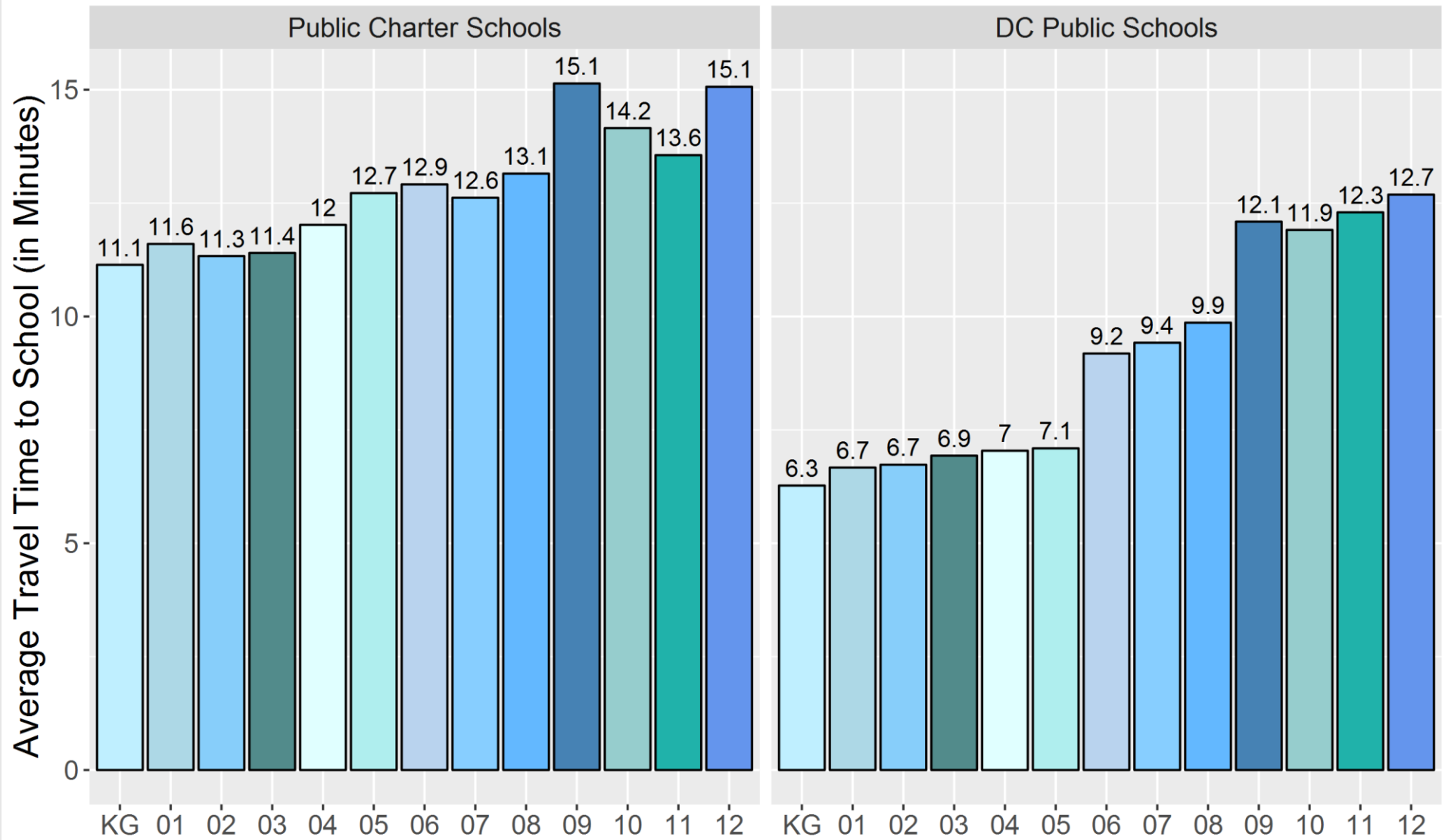
- However, in a model controlling for school effects, OSSE found that within a given school, students who live further from the school are more likely to be chronically absent





# Average Driving Commute Time

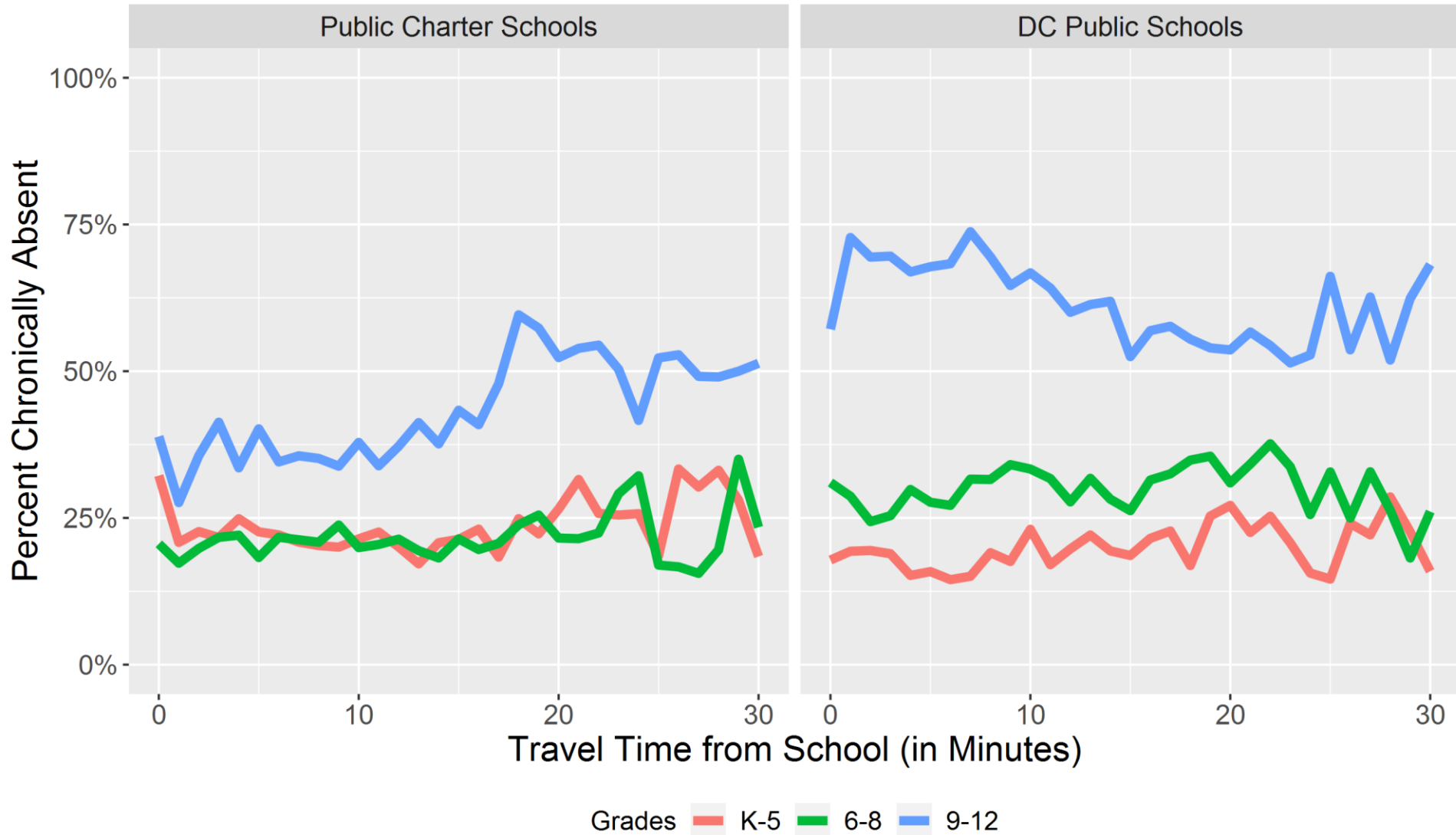
by Sector and Grade





# Chronic Absenteeism

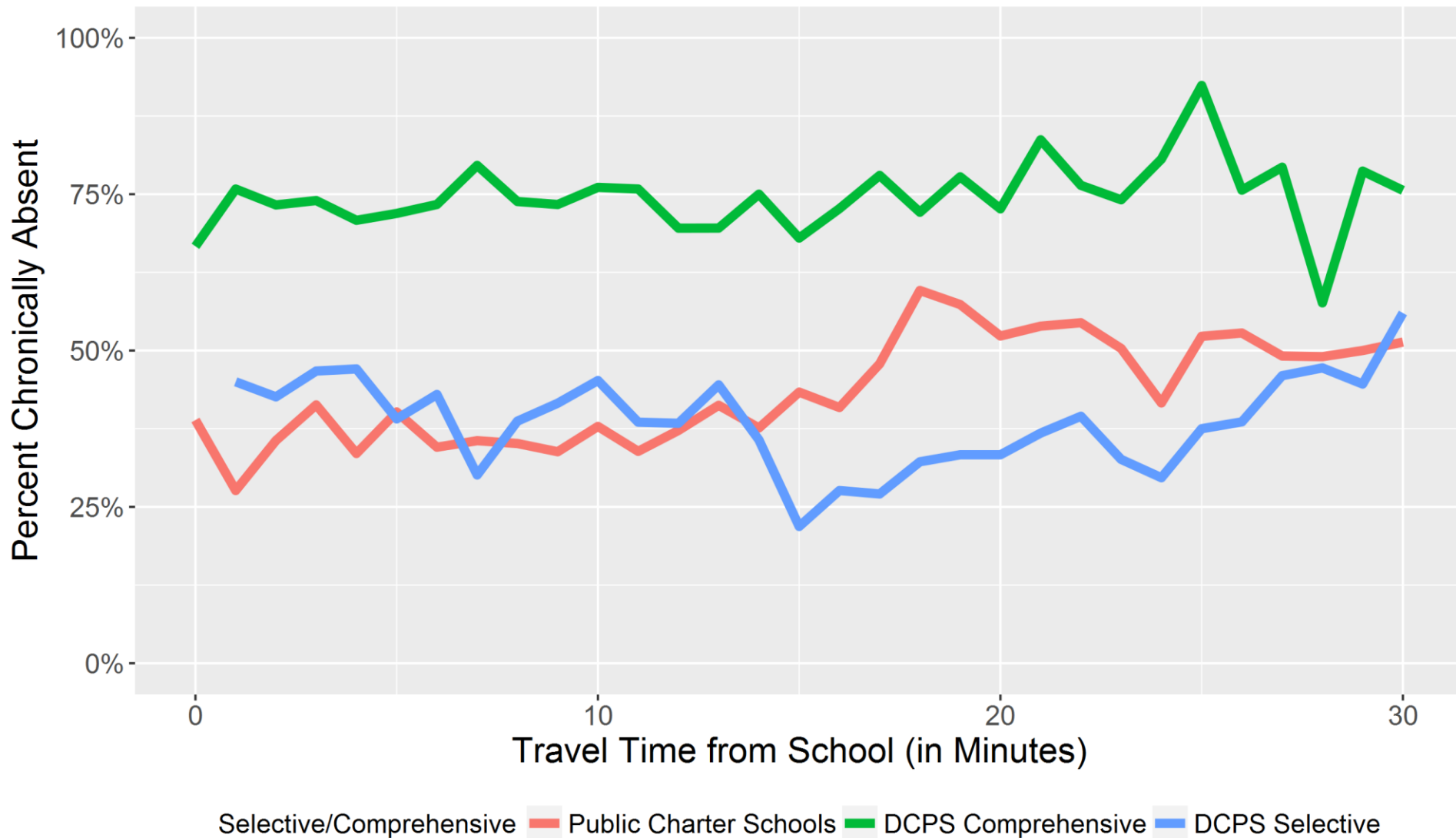
by Sector, Grade Band and Commute Time





# Chronic Absenteeism in High Schools

by Type of School and Commute Time





# Absenteeism and Siblings

**Motivation:** Anecdotally, we have heard that the responsibility of taking a sibling to school may have some impact on school attendance.

**Question:** How does living in the same household or having an older sibling impact younger siblings' attendance? Does the responsibility of taking younger siblings to school differentially impact older students' attendance?

**What We Did:** Matched attendance records of older and younger sibling siblings that reside in the same household.

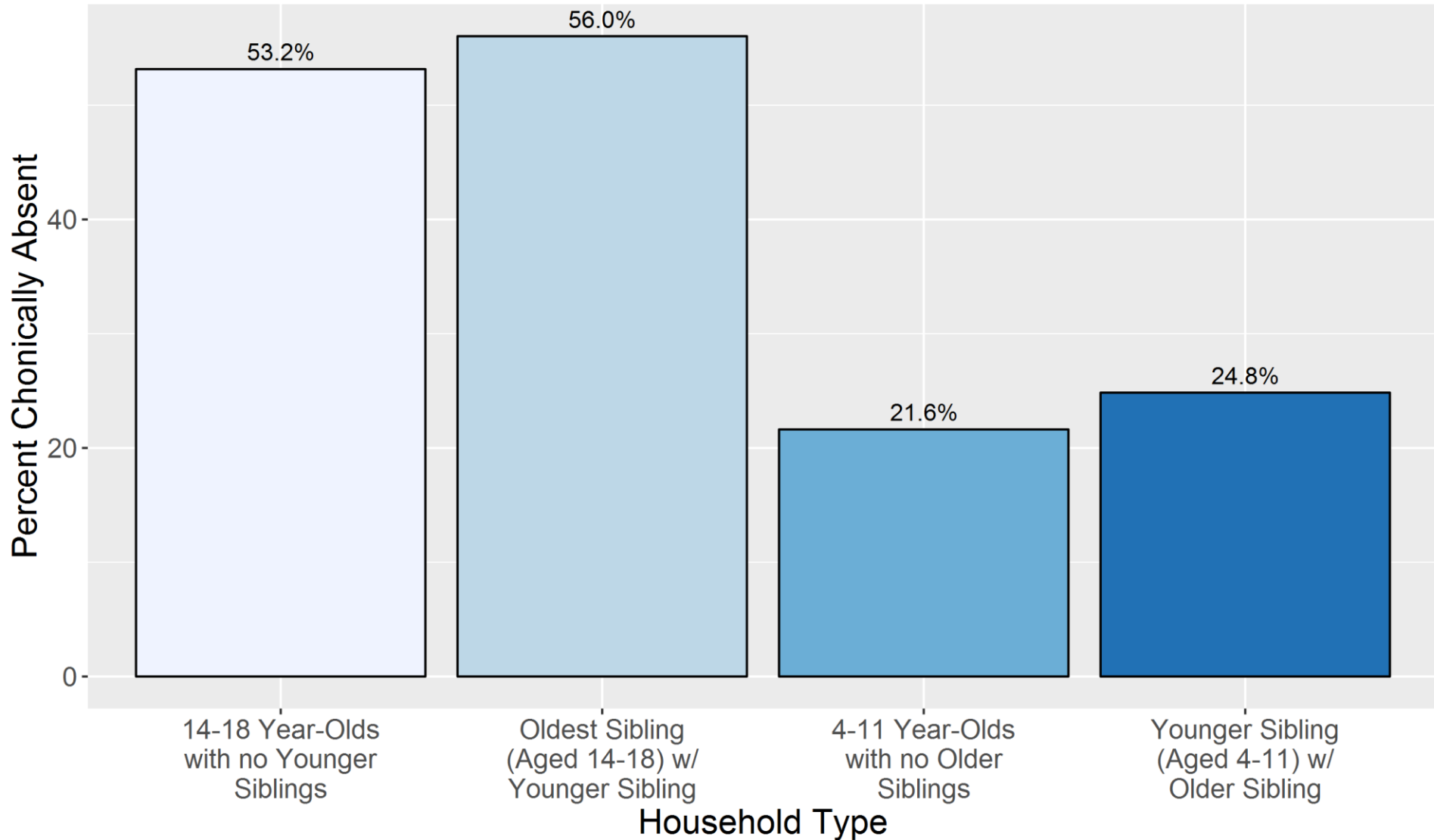
**Findings:** Attendance of the younger sibling is related to the attendance of the older sibling.

- Examining daily attendance patterns reveals that younger students with older students residing in the same household are more than two times more likely to be absent on a date when their older sibling is also absent



# Chronic Absenteeism

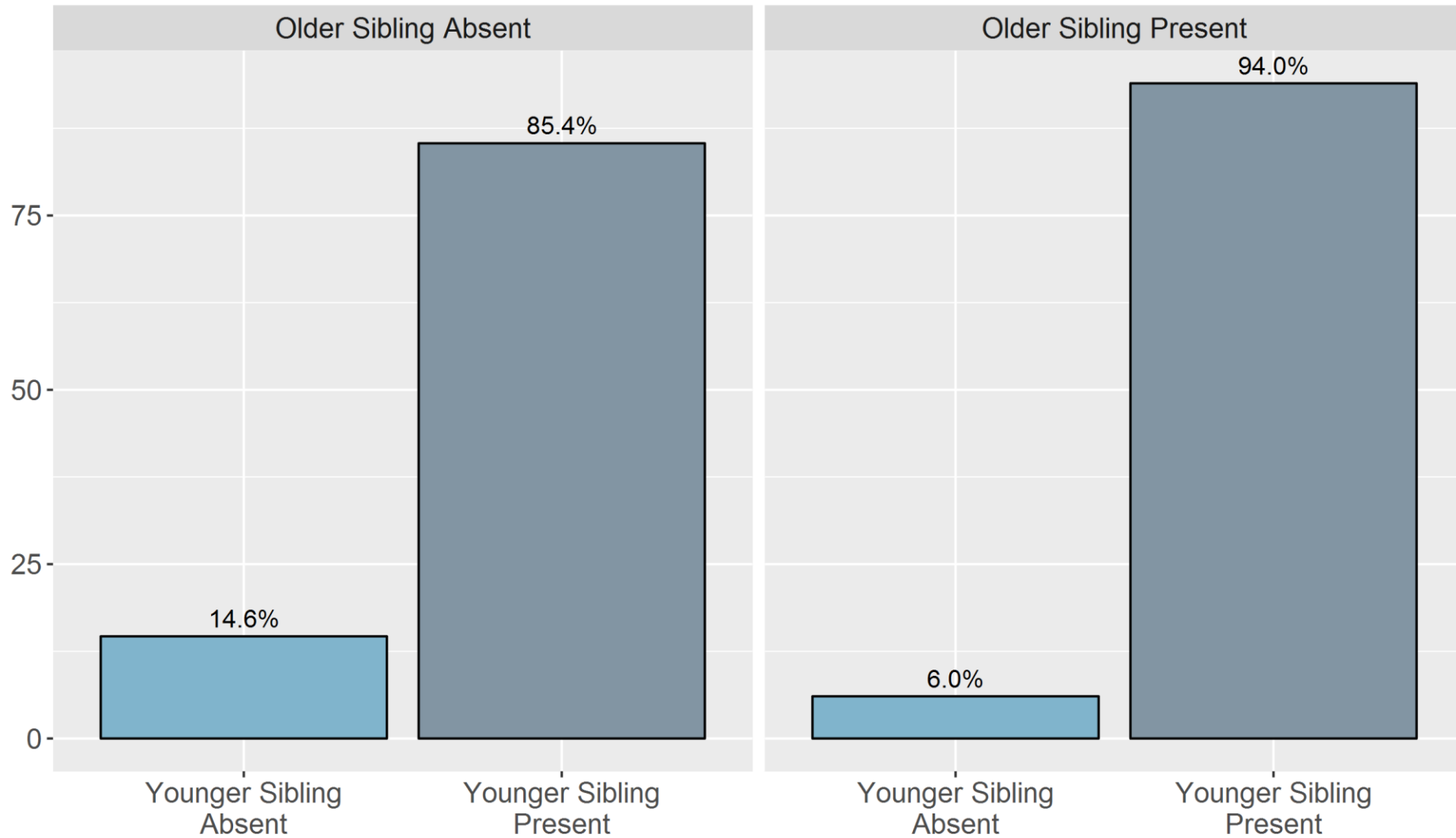
by Sibling Status





# Absenteeism of Younger Siblings

by Absenteeism of Older Siblings





## **Center City Public Charter Schools Brightwood**

Rachel Tommelleo, Principal

Heidi Romero, Operations Manager







# School Details

- 250 students
- PreK3-8
- Only one class per grade
  - 47% Hispanic, 51% African American
    - Many students are from families that are immigrants from El Salvador and Ethiopia.
- They are ranked highest in DC among charter schools for families having to travel the shortest distance from home to school.
- They have high retention rates, and a lot of siblings attending.





# Attendance Interventions

## Parents

- Family engagement is a priority.
- They emphasize the importance of attendance during orientation.
- They take pride in being a Tier One school, and know that attendance is a part of that.
- The school sets clear expectations of parents about things such as:
  - When the doors open and close
  - Attendance policy, including requirements to document excuses
- They conduct home visits every year for 100 percent of their students.





# Attendance Interventions

## School Staff

- They discuss the importance of attendance during summer orientation.
- They set up robo-calls to get students up and out the door.
- There is a Morning Academy for child care before school.
- The Operations Manager and School Counselor hold meetings twice per week that are focused on attendance (one day for absences and one day for tardies), which include reviewing student attendance, sending out letters, contacting parents if necessary, etc.
- They reach out to the families of absent students daily and escalate the intensity of interventions if problems persist.
- They make home visits as needed.



# Attendance Interventions

## Data Use

- School administrators receive the attendance list daily by 10:00AM.
  - Principal checks the list for red flags.
- They look at yearly comparisons for trends using the Qlik database.
- For new students, they review the records from their former school to see if there is anything to discuss with the family from the start.
- At times, they print out and review student absences during parent-teacher conferences.





# Other Advice

- Consistency is important.
- Hold the time for reviewing attendance data sacred on your calendar.
- Incentives work best for older students.
- Student distance to school is a factor.





# Success Story

- A few years ago, one of our 4<sup>th</sup> Grade students was exhibiting chronic absenteeism. After several in-school meetings and conversations with his mother, the student still had 47 absences, so the School Counselor, Operations Manager and Assistant Principal scheduled a Home Visit to discuss the implications of the student missing so much school.
- During the home visit, the school team learned that the student had been missing multiple days at school due to mom needing to administer his asthma medication(s) at home (the student suffered from moderate to severe asthma which could cause emergency visits to the doctor and ER). The team let mom know that we could administer these medications in school, which she was open to. Mom felt like with this information and support, things would be a lot better the following year...and they were!
- The following school-year, the student went down to having only 11 absences for the entire school year, compared to 50 the year prior!



**For all questions, issues uploading data, or anything else, please  
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**Questions?**

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Please provide your feedback:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZLQ9JHN>