

School Consolidations Report

Every child in every neighborhood in Chicago deserves access to a high quality education that prepares them to graduate 100% college ready and 100% college bound. But for too long, children in certain parts of Chicago had been cheated out of the resources they needed to succeed in the classroom, because they were in underutilized, under-resourced schools.

Last school year, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) had space for 511,000 students, but only 403,000 were enrolled in our schools. Half of our schools were underutilized and nearly 140 were more than half-empty. This meant that resources across the district were spread too thinly and were not being used in the best interest of our students and school communities. CPS was spending money on half-empty buildings instead of redirecting those limited resources to ensure a high quality education for every student in every neighborhood.

As a result of this crisis, CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett created a Commission on School Utilization to begin a community dialogue around potential school consolidations and the impact that a more efficiently-run district would have on students and school communities. The Commission held several meetings throughout the City to engage residents in this dialogue and to engage CPS staff regarding the district's capacity to effectively implement school consolidations. The Commission's final report stated that school consolidations were justified if students were moved into better educational environments. Furthermore, the Commission identified that CPS could effectively implement 80 school consolidations and recommended that CPS make the necessary investments to effectively implement the consolidations.

In March, 2013 CEO Byrd-Bennett issued school consolidation recommendations that took the recommendations made by the Commission on School Utilization into account. These initial recommendations led CPS staff to engage in another round of community dialogue about the CEO's proposal. The CEO's proposal was narrowed following this round of community input.

In May 2013, the Chicago School Board of Education approved a proposal to close 49 underutilized elementary schools and one high school program, and co-locate eleven other schools. This action allowed Chicago Public Schools to not only offer students opportunities to enroll in higher performing schools but also saved the District about \$41 million in annual operating expenses, which in the first year was reinvested in our welcoming schools across the City of Chicago in order to create a quality, 21st Century education for every child.

The Board of Education's decision to consolidate underutilized schools was informed by the recommendations of the Independent Commission on School Utilization and a comprehensive and coordinated engagement process that took place over seven months and allowed more than 34,000 members of the school community to provide feedback.

Following the board's decision, the District made an unprecedented \$155 million investment to outfit 55 Welcoming Schools with the resources that parents, teachers and CPS agree students need, such as new science labs, engineering labs, computers, wireless access, libraries, art rooms, air conditioners and other needed building repairs. To help ease the transition and create safe, positive learning environments CPS also invested in more robust social and emotional supports for students and developed cultural integration programs to build strong, supportive school communities.

A mid-year analysis conducted by Chicago Public Schools shows promising trends for students involved in last year's school consolidations and underscores the District's comprehensive approach to providing a smooth transition for students in their new schools. The findings include:

- About half of students from schools that closed or consolidated in 2013 have improved attendance in SY13-14.
- Priority-groups of students that are particularly at-risk, diverse learners and those in temporary living situations have slightly higher rates of attendance in SY13-14 compared to last school year.
- Reported misconducts for students from closed or consolidated schools have decreased slightly from 9.9% to 9% in SY13-14, whether those students attended their designated welcoming school or chose another school.
- Grade point averages in core subjects such as English, math, reading and science have increased slightly for students involved in school transitions.
- The percentage of students in grades 3-8 who are “on-track” for graduation has also risen slightly among all types of students.

These early successes suggested by the mid-year data analysis reaffirm the District’s commitment to investing so heavily in the transition process, from making needed facility improvements to equipping welcoming schools with additional social and emotional learning supports for students to also ensuring that the district offered students opportunities to attend higher performing welcoming schools.

Facilities Investments

CPS has delivered on its \$155 million commitment for capital investments in all Welcoming Schools, providing additional resources to help ease the transition for students, teachers, principals and staff. The investments included:

- Air conditioning in every welcoming school classroom;
- A library in every welcoming school;
- Customized school safety plans;
- User-ready laptops and iPads for all students in grade 3-8;
- New and upgraded technology supports;
- Improved Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility;
- Upgraded facilities; and
- Improved food service capacity.

CPS also made several IT Infrastructure investments including:

- Installing over 2,100 wireless access points and 830 switches;
- Upgrading or installing 77 fiber circuits into schools;
- Moving or changing over 3,700 physical phones and 7,800 phone lines;
- Delivering and installing over 20,000 devices, including 15,000 iPads;
- Deploying 66 servers supporting 750 security cameras in 61 schools;
- Constructing new or upgrading science labs, computer labs, engineering labs and media labs.

Programmatic Investments

CPS invested \$78 Million in additional instruction and programming, expanding learning opportunities as well as social and emotional support for students. This has resulted in strengthened neighborhood schools that provide:

- 10 new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programs, six new International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes and a new Fine Arts program in welcoming schools to ensure that students in every neighborhood have access to high-quality programs;
- Specialized academic Support;
- Cultural Integration Support;
- Social and Emotional Student Support;
- Additional support for students with disabilities, those in temporary living situations, and English Language Learners; and
- A dedicated principal transition coordinator (PTC) for every school to ensure that the school transition process occurred smoothly.

Safety Investments

CPS worked in partnership with the Chicago Police Department (CPD), community members and city agencies to expand Safe Passage routes and provide safe learning environments. This collaboration built upon the work CPS and CPD do every day through its Safe Passage partnership at nearly 40 schools.

The District hired an additional 600 Safe Passage workers representing 18 different community organizations who were specifically assigned to Welcoming Schools, ensuring that students could get to and from school safely. Safe Passage routes were designated by the CPD after months of collaboration with parents, principals, and community members.

There have been no major incidents involving students on Safe Passage routes near Welcoming schools during the program's operational hours. In the few instances where an issue arose, police say the response time by officers was immediate, often times leading to arrest, because they were staffing the route along with other city workers.

Mid-Year Data Analysis

CPS conducted a mid-year analysis of several data points to track the progress of students impacted by school consolidations. The results of that analysis show that attendance, GPAs and student on-track rates are up for students who were impacted by school consolidations – this includes increases for our diverse learners (students with IEPs) as well as those students in temporary living situations (STLS). The analysis also shows that misconducts are down when compared to the same time period last year for students whose school was closed.

CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett has been and continues to be committed to ensuring that proper supports are given to students with IEPs and students in temporary living situations. The analysis below shows that these students are seeing positive gains in attendance, GPS, and on-track rates showing that CPS met its commitment to these students.

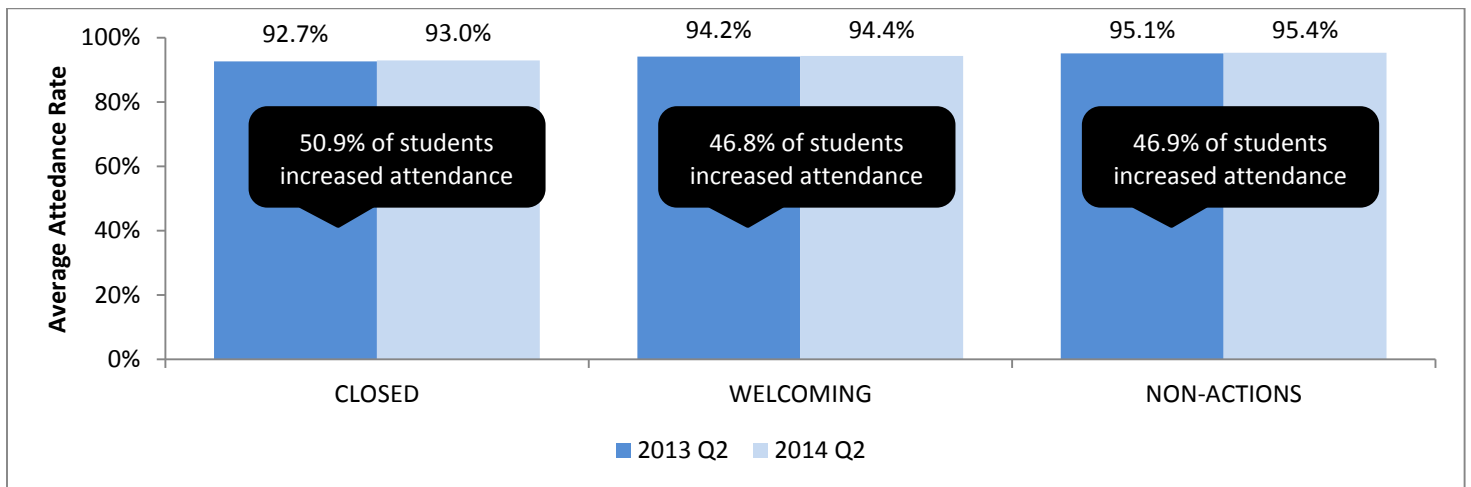
These positive results are due to the focused effort CPS placed on the transition process that was implemented in the spring and summer of 2013 and the engagement from the school community that has worked together to ensure our students enjoyed a smooth transition.

Attendance Rates

Attendance rates for CPS students impacted by last year's school consolidations have increased. Graph 1 below compares 2013 and 2014 Quarter 2 attendance rates for students who were in closing, welcoming and non-actions

schools at the end of SY 2013. Attendance rates as of the end of Quarter 2 are up this year compared to attendance rates at the end of Quarter 2 in SY 2013 for all groups of students.

Graph 1: Q2 Attendance Rates by Impacted Status

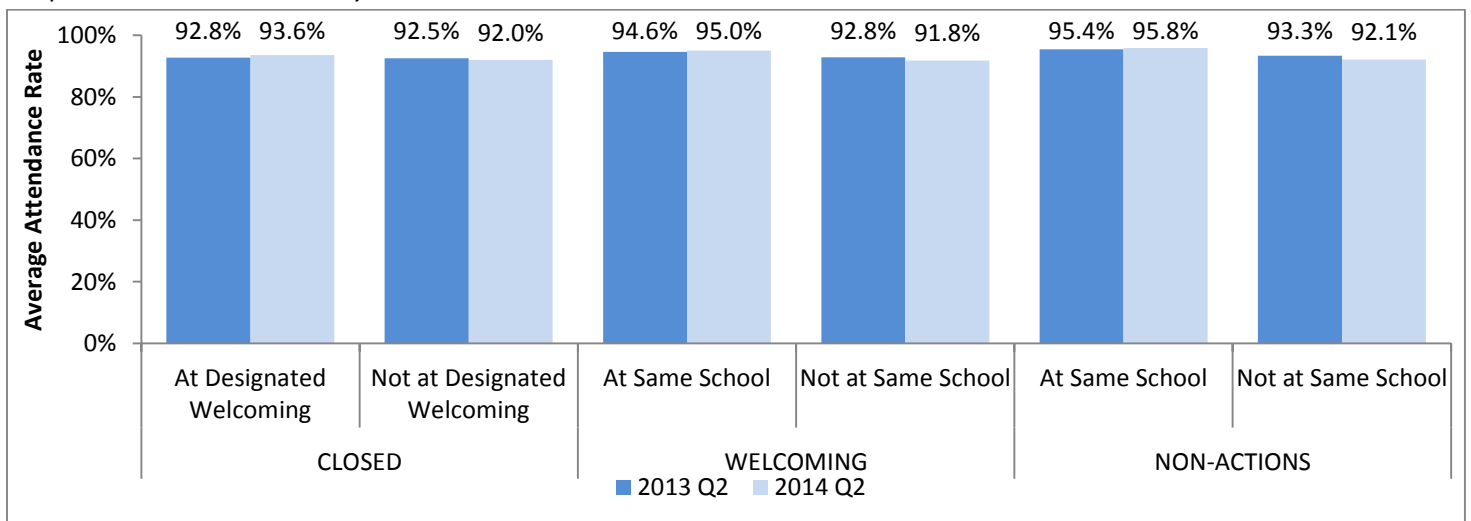


** The statistics in the black boxes reflect the percentage when comparing last year’s student’s attendance to this year’s student attendance. Over half of students from closed schools improved their attendance this year, higher than the District’s average at schools unaffected by consolidations.

Attendance by School Choice

Graph 2 presents attendance rates for impacted students by school choice. **Attendance rates increased for impacted students who chose to attend their designated Welcoming school.** Similarly, students from designated Welcoming Schools and students not impacted by actions who chose to remain enrolled at the same school have slightly higher attendance rates than those who chose to switch schools.

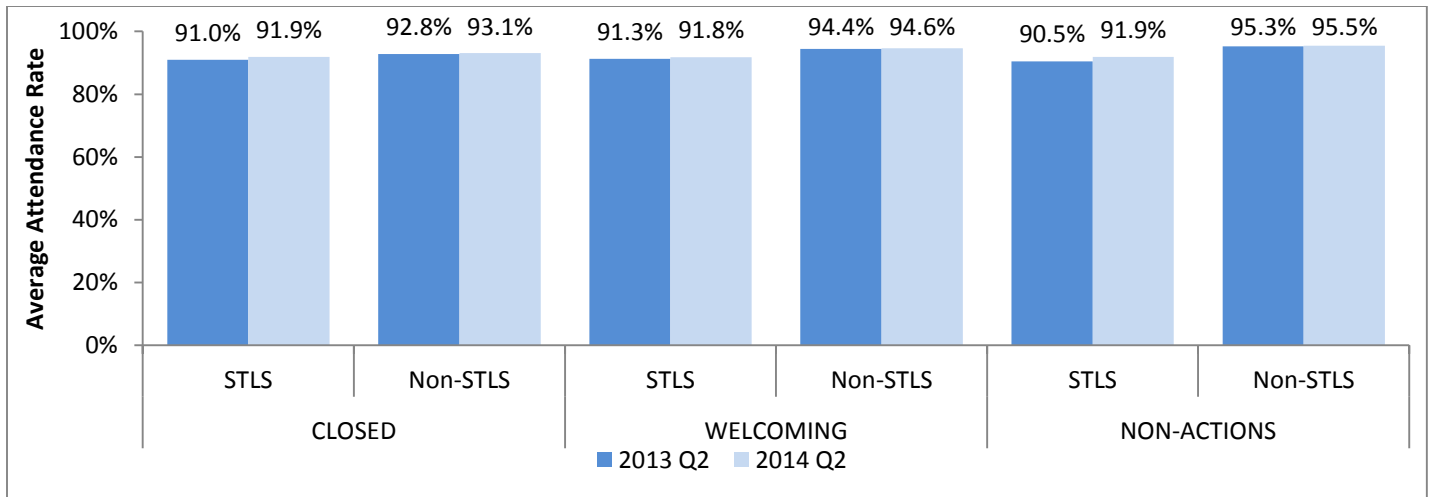
Graph 2: Attendance Rates by School Choice Status



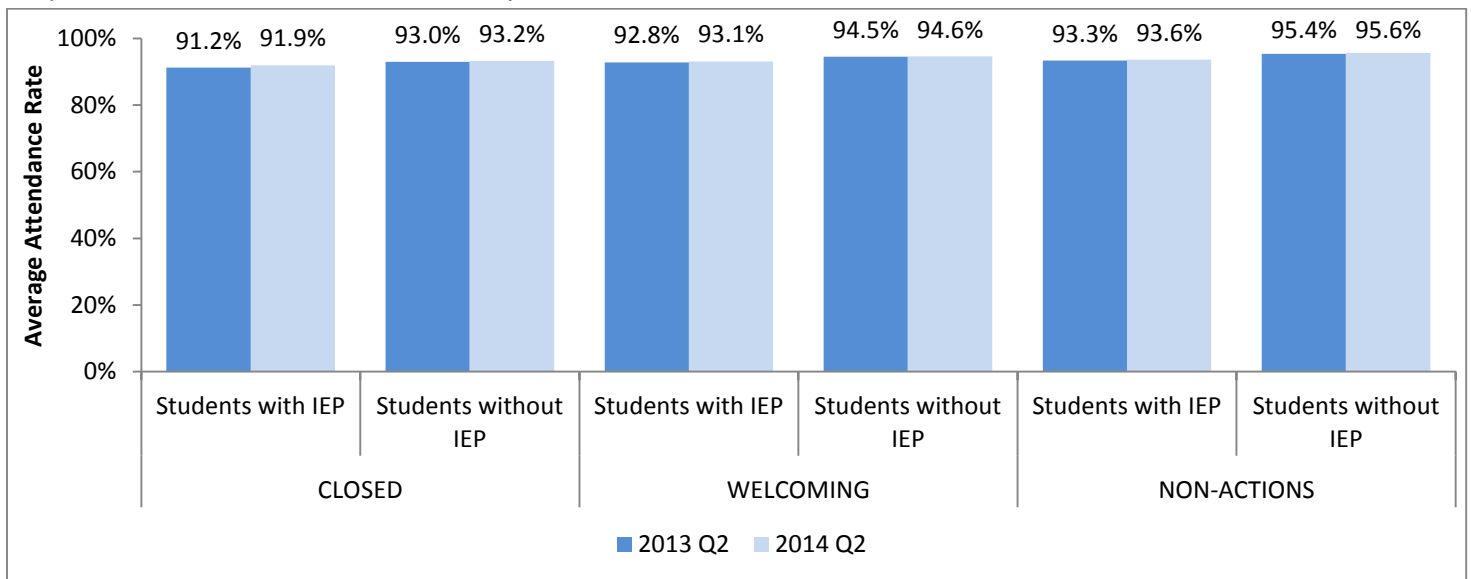
Attendance by Student Demographic Variables

Graphs 3 and 4 present student attendance rates as of Quarter 2 2013 and Quarter 2 2014 for Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) and Students with an IEP. **These graphs mirror the slight increases seen in overall attendance for impacted and non-impacted students.** These two student populations typically have lower attendance rates compared to their peers, regardless of whether they were impacted by school consolidations.

Graph 3: Attendance Rates at Quarter 2 by STLS (Students in Temporary Living Situation) Status



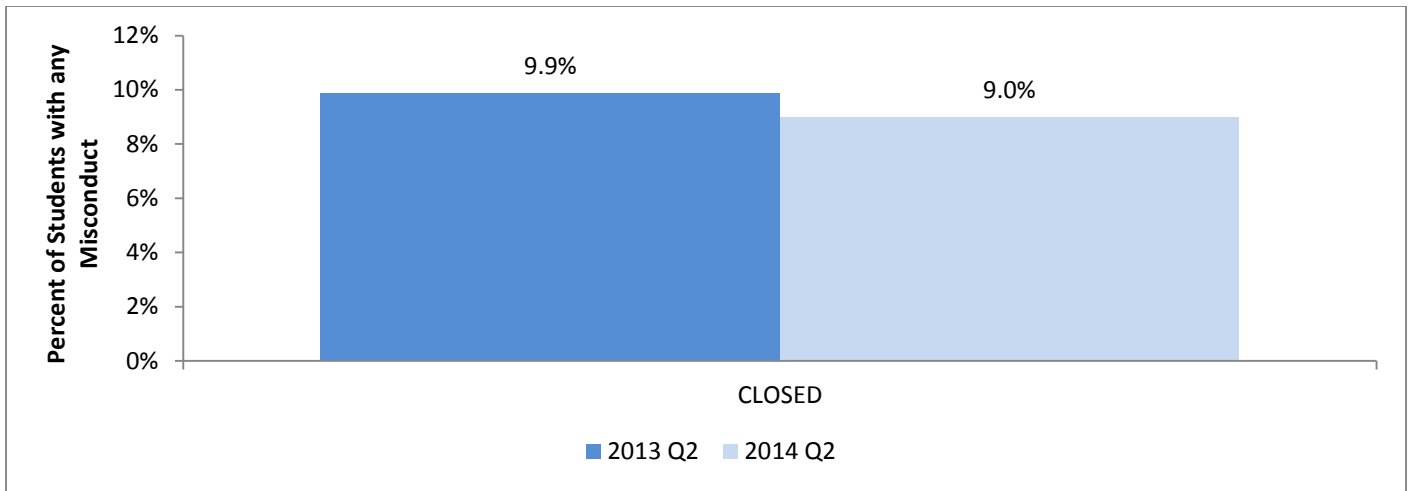
Graph 4: Attendance Rates at Quarter 2 by IEP Status



Misconduct

Graph 5 shows that students impacted by school consolidations have seen their rates of misconduct decrease through Quarter 2, regardless of whether they enrolled in their designated Welcoming School or chose another school option. This trend is further indication that the District’s investments into social-emotional learning and creating positive learning environments is working.

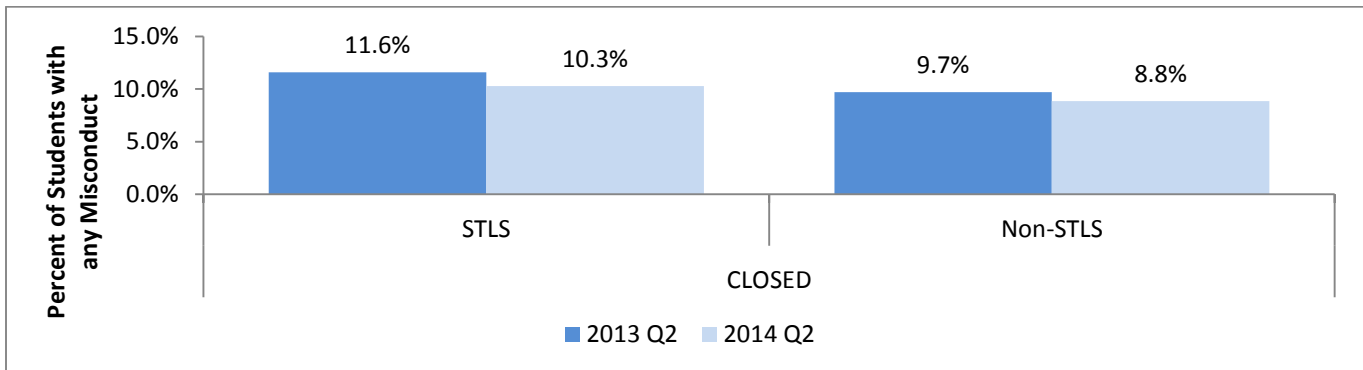
Graph 5: Percent of Students with Any Misconduct by Actions Status



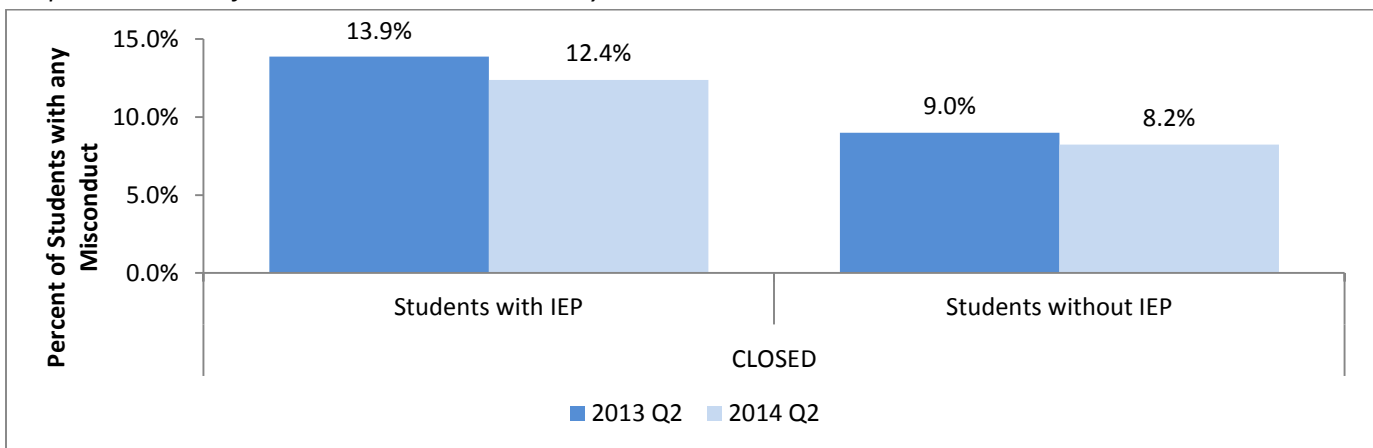
Misconducts by Student Demographics

Graphs 6 and 7 show the percent of impacted students with any misconduct by demographic variables, including Students in Temporary Living Situations and those with IEPs. Both student populations showed decreases in their rates of misconduct.

Graph 6: Percent of Students in Temporary Living Situations with Any Misconduct



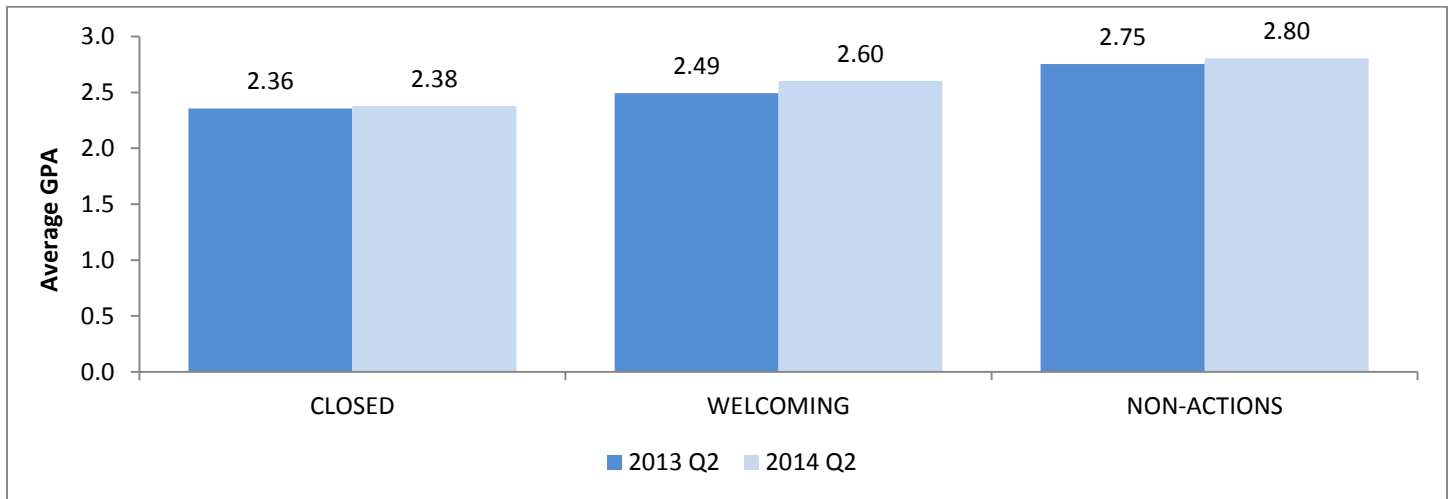
Graph 7: Percent of Students with an IEP with Any Misconduct



GPA in Core Courses

Unweighted grade-point averages were calculated using Quarters 1 and 2 grades in core classes (e.g. math, reading, English, science, history/social sciences). As can be seen in graph 8, across all groups, GPAs increased from SY2013 to SY2014.

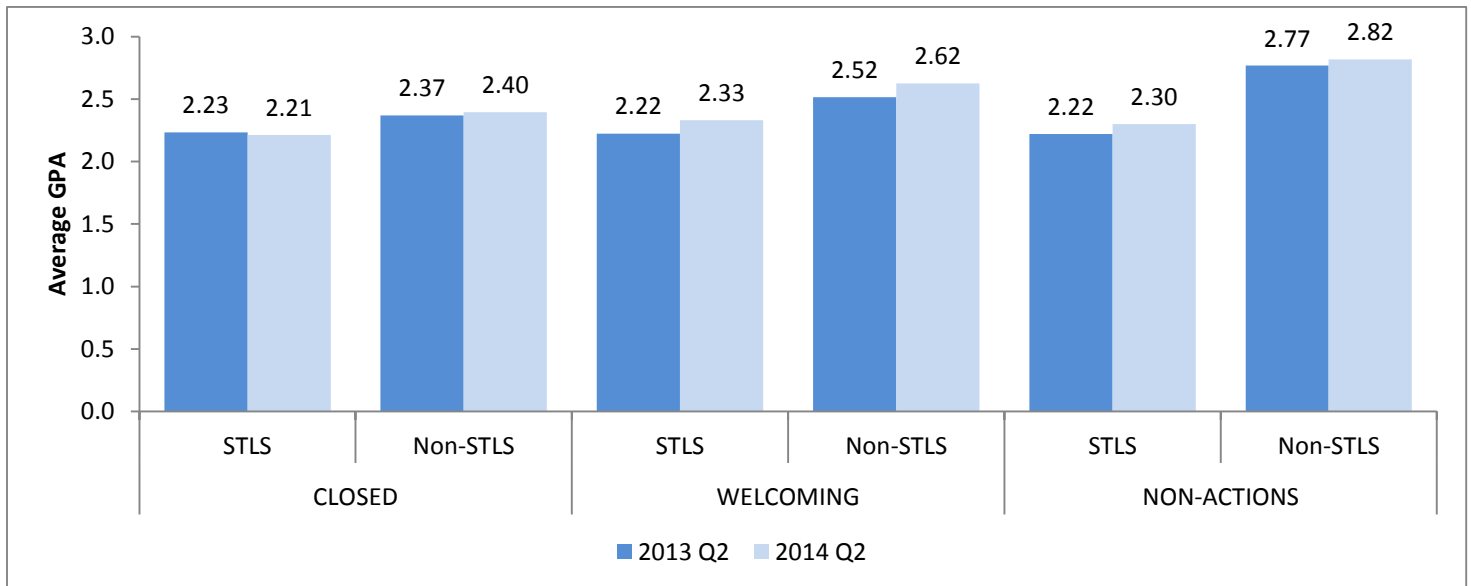
Graph 8: GPA by Impacted Status



GPA by Student Demographic Variables

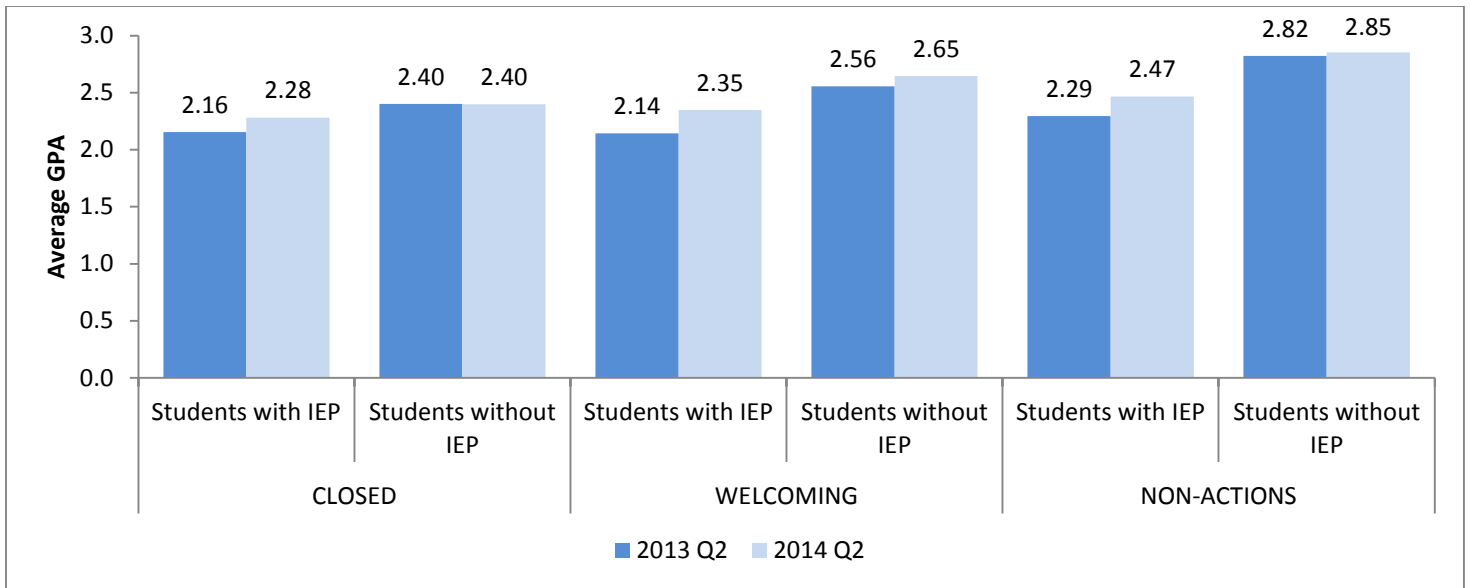
Graphs 9, 10, and 11 present Quarter 2 average GPA by impacted status and student demographics. These graphs generally mirror the increases seen overall in GPA.

Graph 9: GPA by Impacted Status and STLS Status



Graph 10 shows that across all impacted statuses, students with an IEP are showing GPA gains, more so than students without an IEP.

Graph 10: GPA by Impacted Status and IEP Status



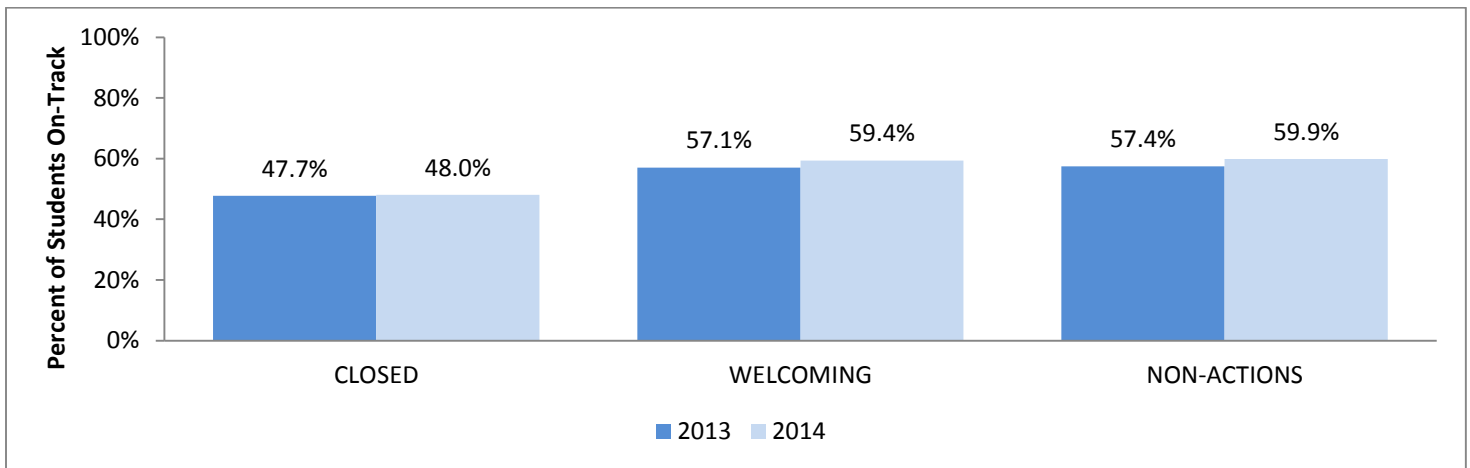
On-Track Rates

The percentage of students who are “on-track” for graduation is increasing for those involved in school transitions. On-Track status is calculated for students in grades 3-8. A student is considered to be on track if she/he meets both of the following conditions:

1. Attendance, YTD, is 92% or higher; and
2. The lowest mark is a C or better in both Reading and Math.

While all groups of students showed increases in On-Track rates from Quarter 2 of SY2013 to Quarter 2 of SY2014, students from designated welcoming schools and students not impacted by actions showed more substantial increases.

Graph 12: On-Track Rates by Impacted Status



On-Track Rates by Student Demographic Variables

Students in Temporary Living Situations show greater increases in On-Track rates across all groups of impacted students compared to their peers that are not in temporary living situations.

Graph 13: On-Track Rates by Impacted Status and STLS Status

