



KISR! Program Report



Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

December 2018

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Our Program

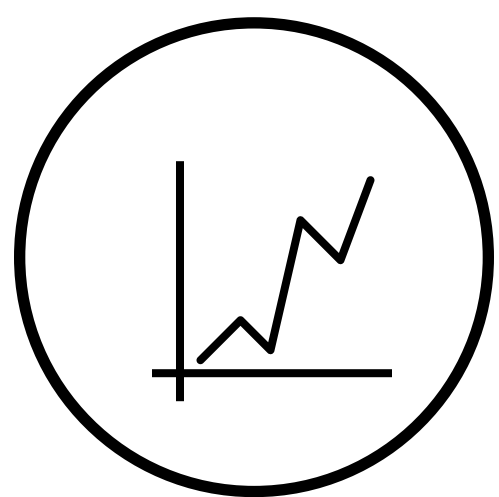
Serving Youth Since 2008

For children in foster care, school should be a place of stability, consistency, and valuable opportunities. Kids in School Rule! (KISR!) was created and designed to ensure that happens.

KISR! is a collaboration to promote improved education outcomes for students in Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) who are either in the custody of the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services (JFS) or under agency protective supervision. KISR! partners are CPS, JFS, Hamilton County Juvenile Court (Court), The Children's Home of Cincinnati and the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati/Southwest Ohio, LLC (LAS).

Launched in 2008, KISR! uses intentional strategies and data-driven interventions to create a proven record of accomplishments. Over the last decade the project has expanded not just in the number of students served, but also in the type and quality of interventions offered. The capacity to exchange and access data has grown, as has the use of that data to guide day-to-day interactions with students as well as project-wide strategies.

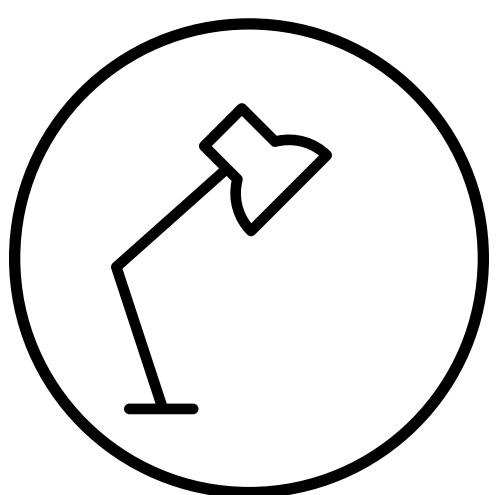
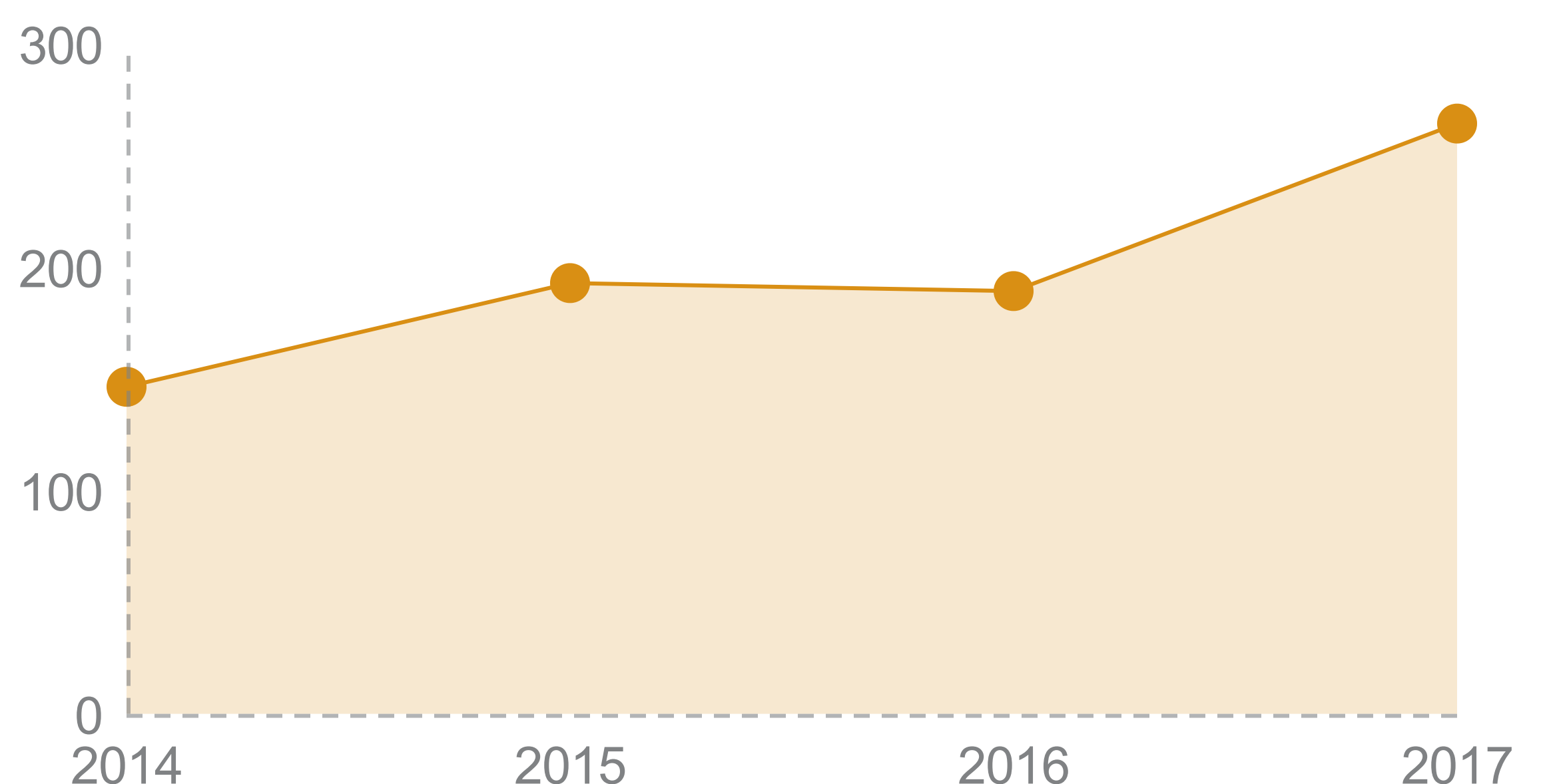
Growth of KISR! - By the Numbers



Since 2008

KISR! has served over 1600 youth and is growing.

of KISR! Students Served Over Time



KISR! has grown from 22 pilot schools in 2008 to serving students in

all 64 Cincinnati Public Schools in 2018.



Originally designed for students in out-of-home care,

KISR! now includes child welfare involved students who return home under protective supervision of the court.

KISR! History



"KISR! is a vehicle that allows us to integrate critical child welfare data with school data to produce measurable results that help us shape system improvements and support academic progress."

Moira Weir
Director, Hamilton County Job & Family Services

2008

- Launch KISR! pilot in 22 schools
- Develop KISR! Education Court Report to share education progress

2011

- Selected as Federal Grantee
- Partners sign Memorandum of Understanding and start monthly Leadership Team meetings
- CPS initiates "No Barrier Enrollment" practice

2012

- Expand to all CPS schools
- Expand to students who are returned home under Court protective supervision
- Initiate use of integrated data for the KISR! program

2015

- The Children's Home of Cincinnati joins KISR! and the Leadership Team
- New initiatives added:
 - academic support for credit-deficient older students
 - academic support to meet Ohio's 3rd Grade Reading Guarantee
 - linking students to extra-curricular activities

2018

- Launch after-school tutoring and academic support initiative at elementary and high school level
- Explore expansion to serve preschool-age children

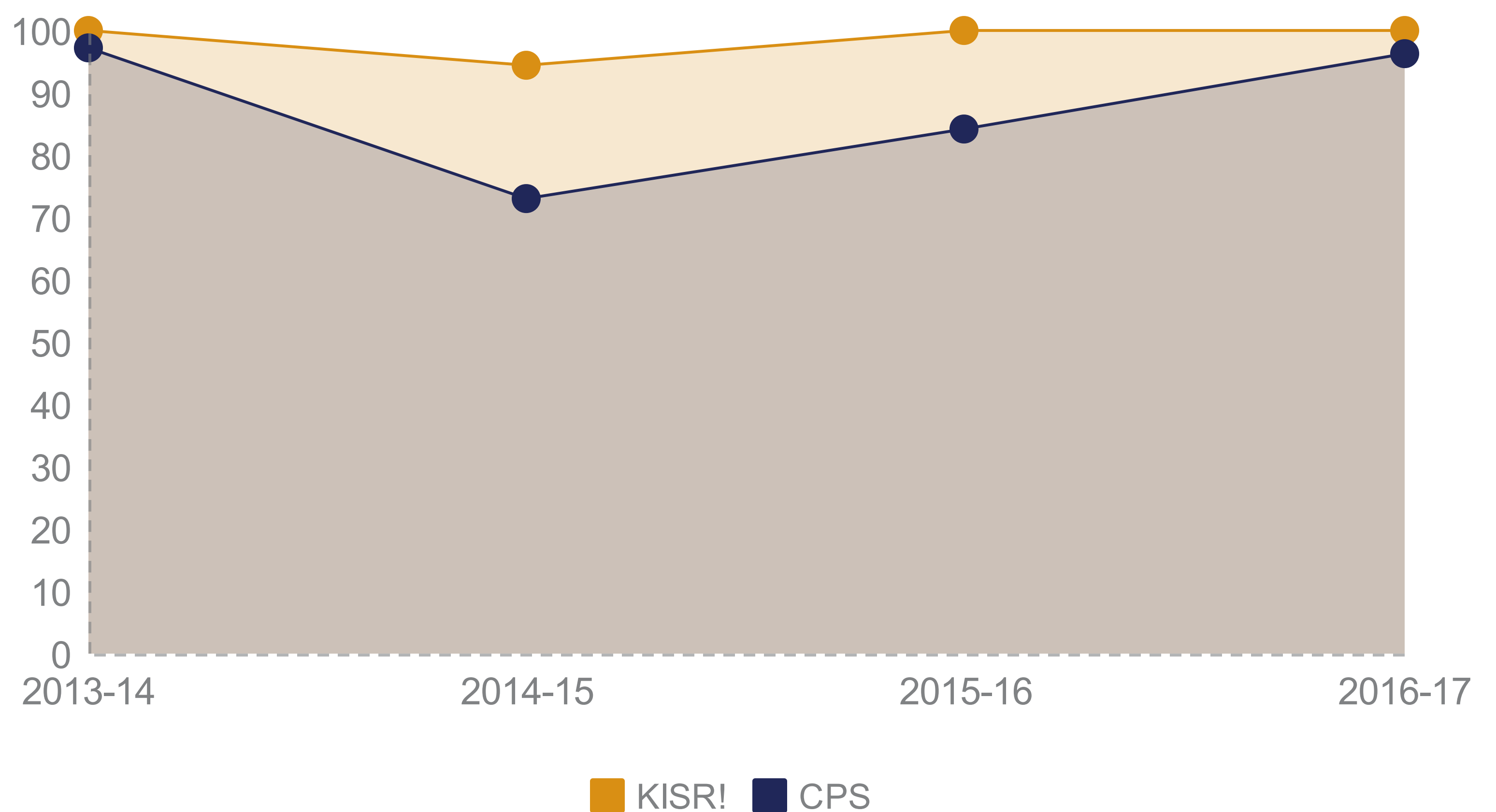
Outstanding Results!

A major benefit to a 10 year initiative is the ability to look at trends over time to identify areas of improvement and sustained strengths, as well as areas that may need more targeted attention. The time, attention and focus of the KISR! program have delivered several "wins" that have been sustained over time.

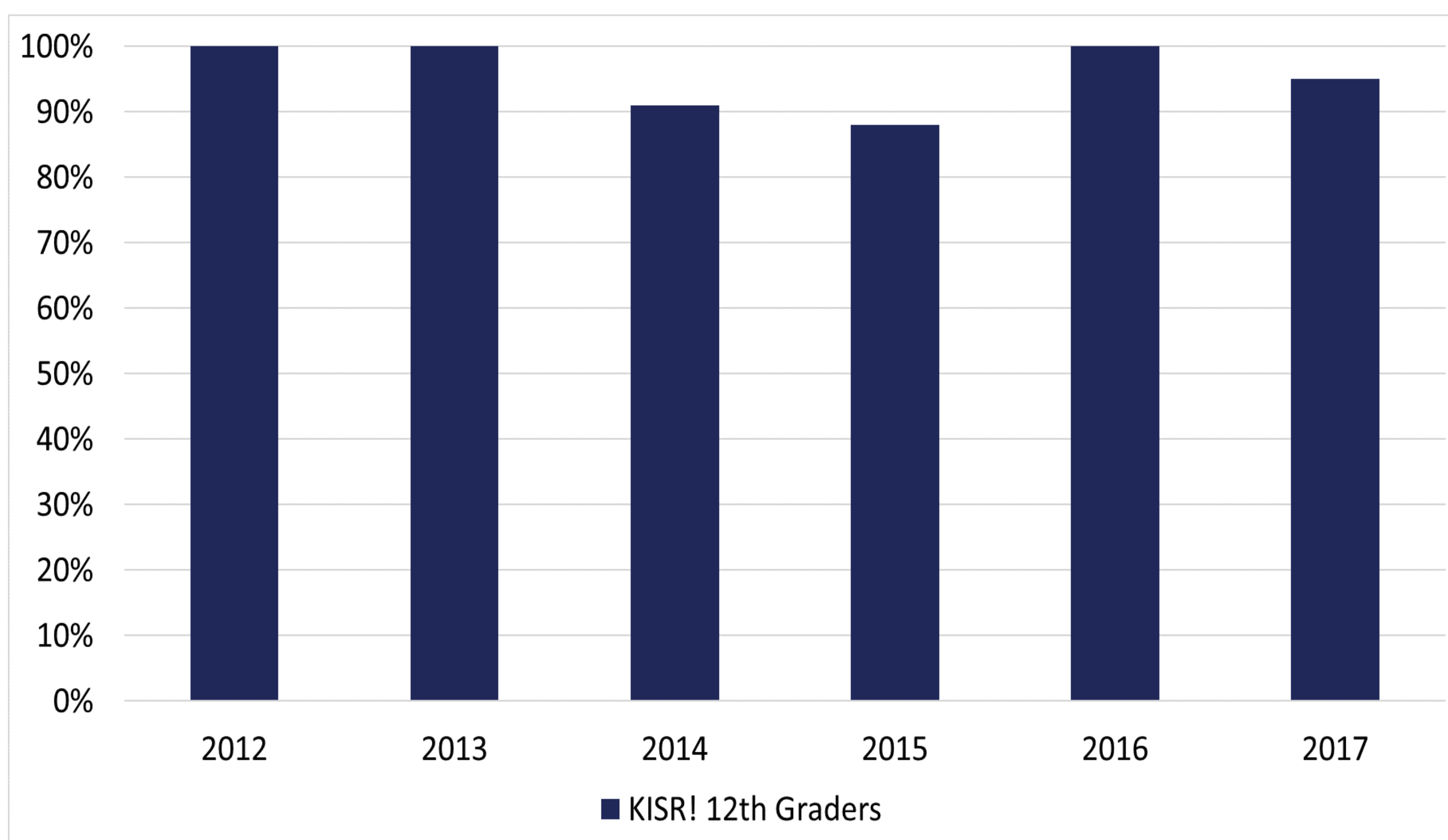
Students Meet Ohio's 3rd Grade Guarantee

KISR! intervenes to ensure students have the foundational skills to be successful in school.

Over 98% of KISR! students met Ohio's 3rd Grade Reading Guarantee.



KISR! Senior Graduation Rate



Nationally, youth in foster care have a 4-year graduation rate between 40% and 63%.

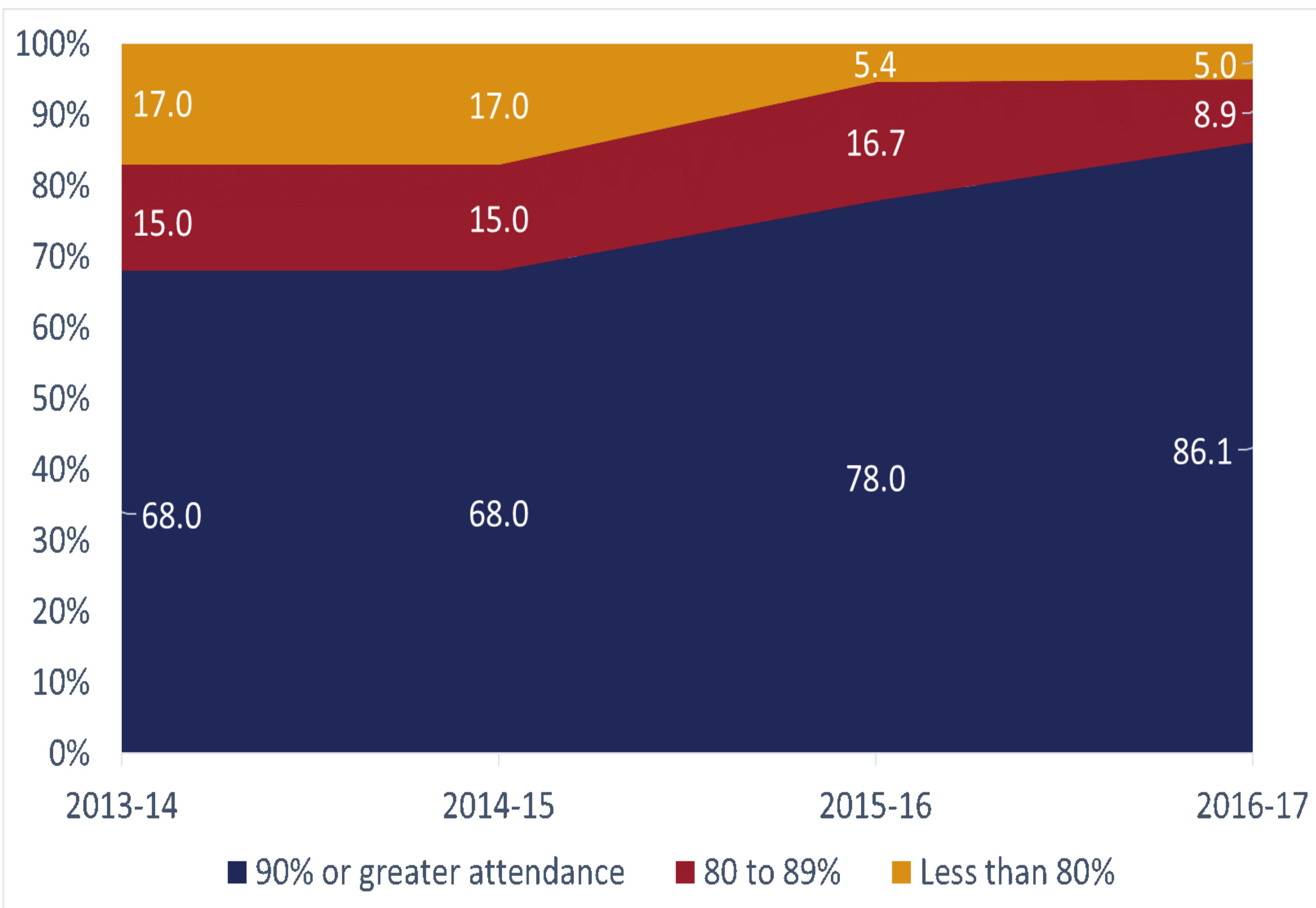
Cincinnati Public Schools had a 74.7% 4-year graduation rate in 2017.

KISR! supports students all the way across the K-12 finish line. In 2017, 95% of KISR! Seniors graduated!

Outstanding Results!

The academic success of KISR! students is a reflection of sustained attention to daily attendance and academics, including grade promotion rates.

KISR! Student Attendance Rates



Over the last four years, KISR! students have shown a steady increase in attendance rates.

Over 86% of KISR! students had attendance rate of 90% or higher during the 2016-17 school year.

KISR! Student Grade Promotion Rate

The percentage of KISR! students promoted to the next grade level increased over the last four years.

2016-17 featured the highest grade promotion rate in program history.

2013-14



2014-15



2015-16



2016-17



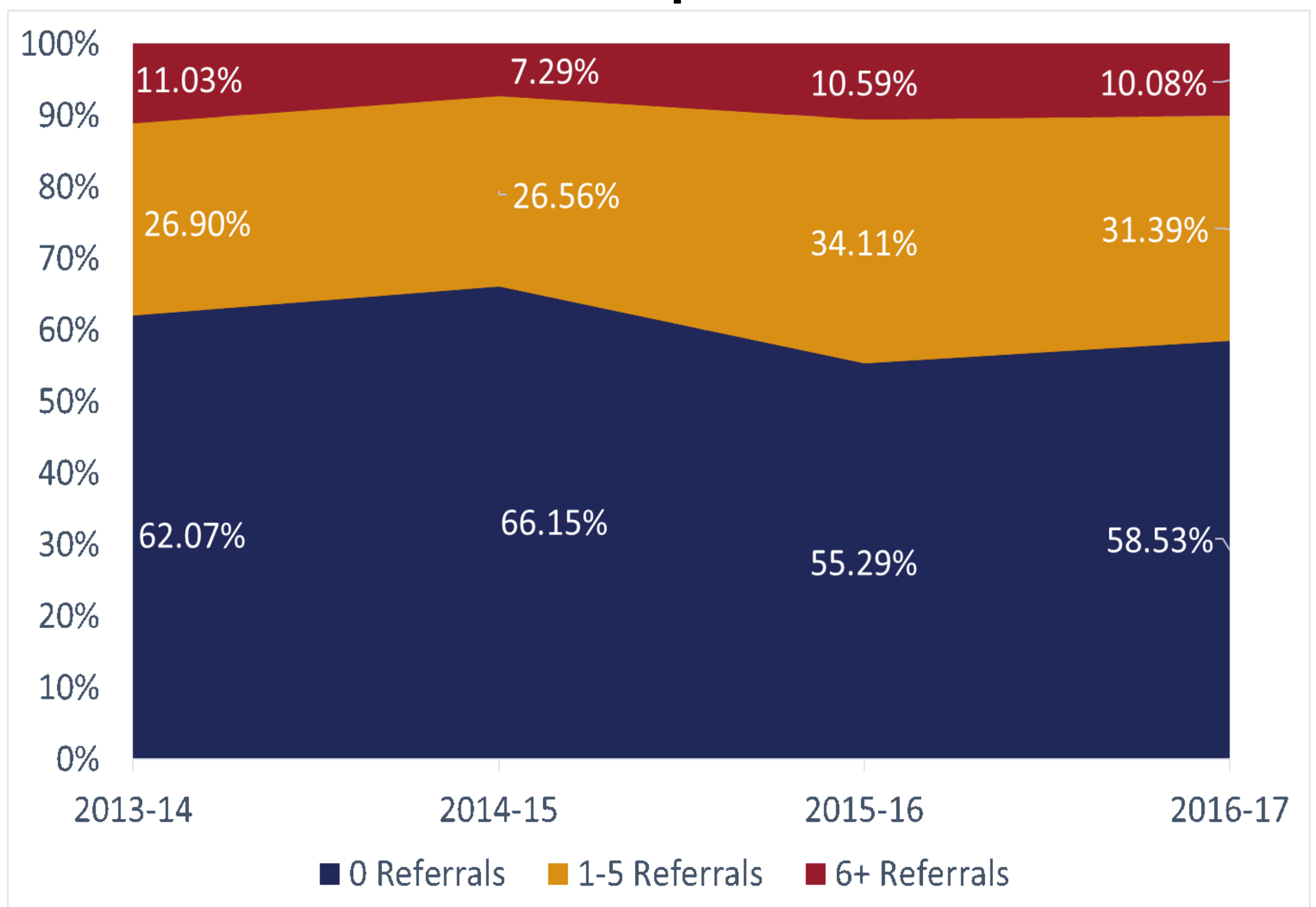
Outstanding Results!

Discipline and school mobility data show small fluctuations over the four-year period from 2013-14 to 2016-17. Program data is influenced by many factors. A review of the data over four years demonstrates strong outcomes for KISR! students.

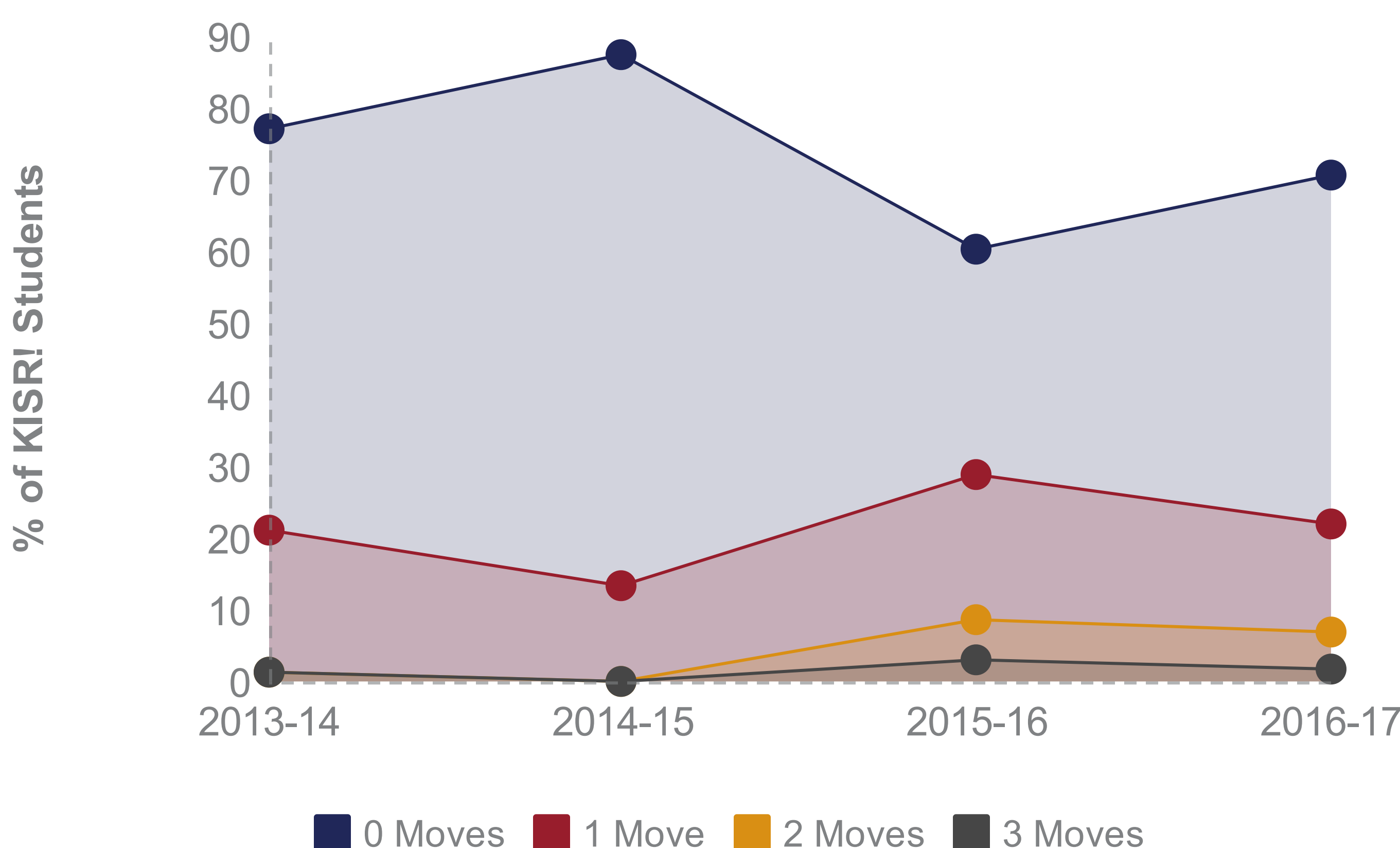
In 2012-13, only 32% of KISR! students had no disciplinary referrals. Since that time, KISR! has made huge strides to have fewer disciplinary incidents for students in the program, with a four year average of 61% of KISR! students with no referrals.

Declines in discipline referrals are a big win, especially when attendance rates have gone up and there are simply more days when kids are in school and have the potential to be referred.

KISR! Student Discipline Referral Rate



School Mobility Rates



KISR! has been able to maintain high rates of school stability over multiple years of the program, with an average of 74% of students experiencing no school moves.

School stability decisions are child specific. Variations in rates of stability are expected in a program actively making quality best interest decisions related to school placement.

Our Team and How We Do It



1. **At CPS,** a KISR! Liaison is identified by each school. The individual school Liaison communicates regularly with the JFS KISR! Education Specialist assigned to the students in that school. A CPS KISR! Program Manager coordinates the network of Liaisons and assists with data collection, enrollments, and progress monitoring. Additional CPS administrators and legal counsel also participate in Leadership Team meetings.

2. **At JFS,** KISR! Education Specialists are the “go-to” point persons for education-related issues for KISR! students in each CPS school. Each KISR! Education Specialist gets to know individual students and works together with the CPS KISR! Liaison to address concerns and promote coordination and problem-solving. KISR! Education Specialists link KISR! Liaisons with the student’s JFS caseworker.

Our Team and How We Do It

The Leadership Team, convened by Legal Aid, meets monthly to support effective communication among partners, oversee data-driven interventions, and develop strategies to improve the quality of the KISR! program.

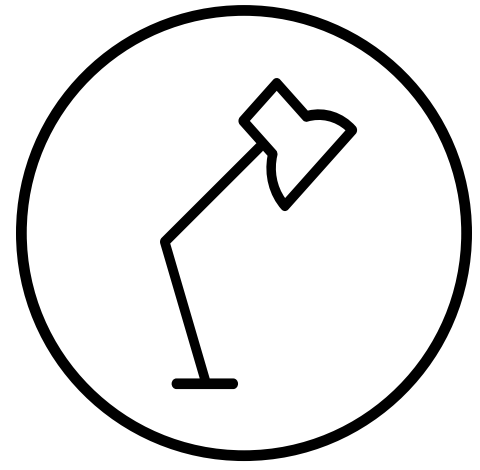


3. **In the Juvenile Court**, Magistrates prioritize education success when KISR! students come before the Court. They support this focus on school, including the use of a customized Judicial Benchcard for Education Success.

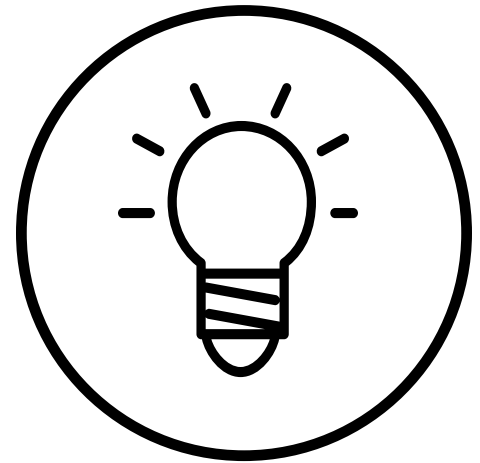
4. **The Children's Home of Cincinnati**, a mental health agency, participates in this program and partners with CPS and the KISR! team to provide a wide range of academic, behavioral, and mental health services to students placed in its onsite schools. Staff focus on smooth transitions back to CPS schools when placement ends.

5. **At Legal Aid**, an education advocate and attorneys lead and coordinate the KISR! collaboration to ensure that shared data collection is used to boost individual student outcomes and drive program priorities. LAS promotes communication among partners and in the community, and provides advocacy on enrollment, disciplinary removals, and special education. LAS also provides training throughout the community about education law, school issues and best practices to promote school success and stability for students in care.

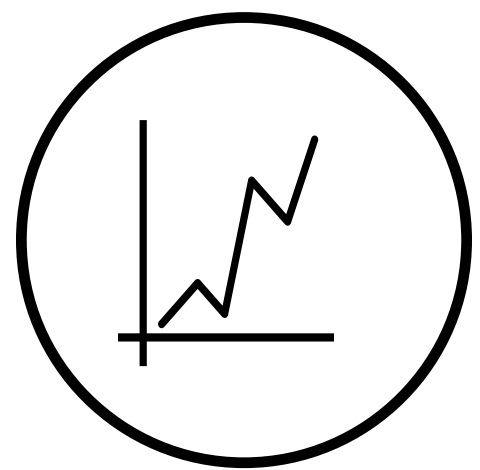
Shared Management and Data-driven Strategies



Integrated child welfare and education data
spotlight information that informs decision-making



Frequent data matching and real-time access to school portals means advocates have the
right information at the right time



Data at program and participant levels allows partners to
track trends and progress

SOURCES OF DATA

Learning Partner Dashboard (LPD), managed by CPS, is an integrated platform that allows JFS and CPS data to be merged on a regular basis to track student outcomes as well as overall program performance.

CPS PowerSchool provides additional student specific data and is accessed by the JFS Education Specialists.

JFS SACWIS system maintains education information, including documenting best interest decisions related to school stability.

LAS electronic case management system tracks types of referrals and outcomes for all KISR! cases.

Juvenile Court tracks the filing of KISR! Education Court Reports.

Examples of how we collaboratively use data...

1.

...at our monthly Leadership Team meetings, to get updates on students currently being served.

2.

...at our annual September Kick-Off Meeting, to put real information in the hands of CPS Liaisons, with guidance on how to access information in Powerschool.

3.

...at individual student and quarterly review meetings throughout the year to drive decision-making and interventions.

4.

...to make referrals for enrichment activities or individual tutoring.

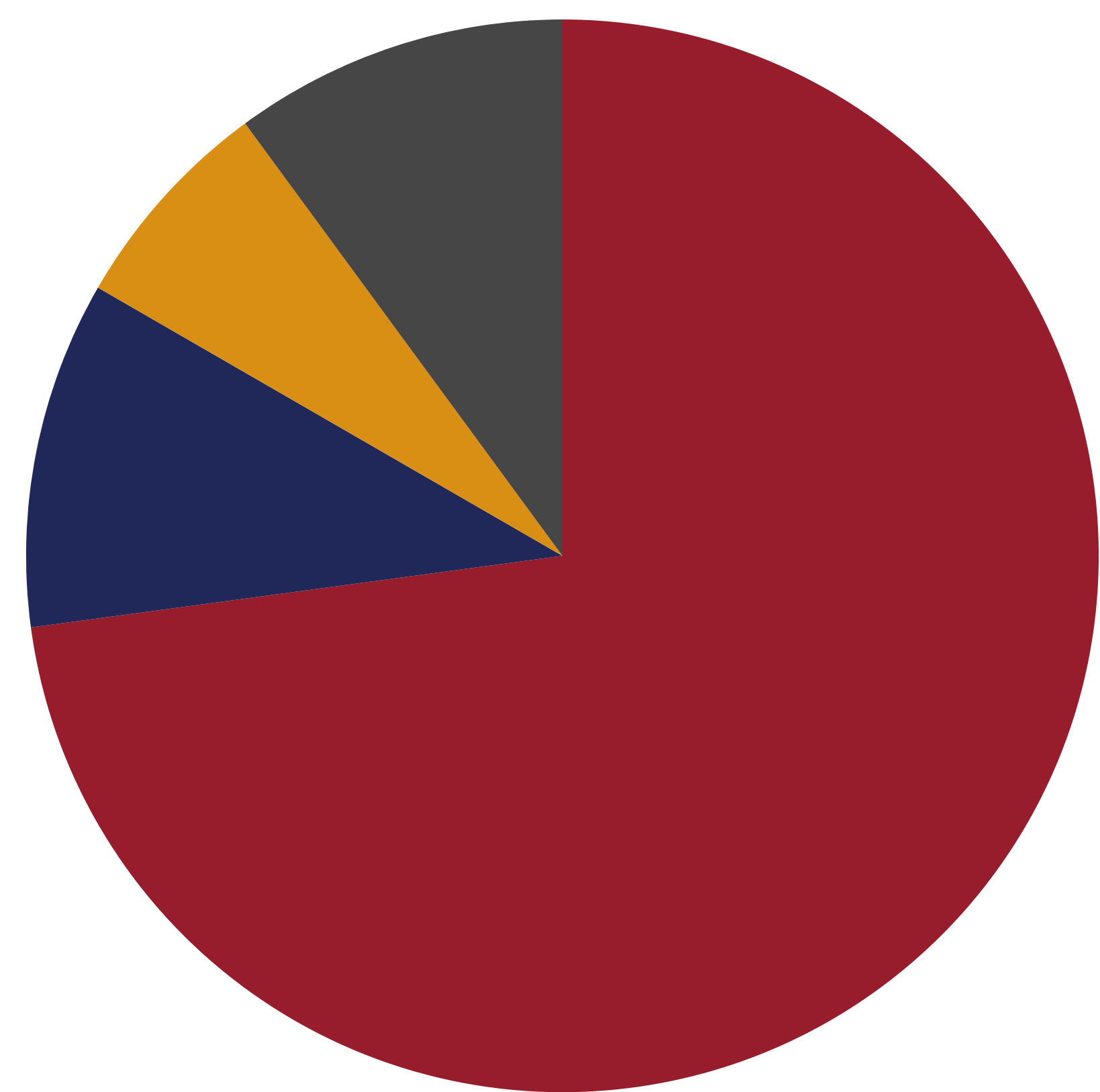
Snapshot for 2016-17

Each year, the KISR! program serves a large number of students. Some of those students remain in the program from previous school years, but many enter and leave during an academic year. This report takes a close look at 2016-17 year data as a representative year to demonstrate how supports and services are delivered through the program and what the outcome data reveals for KISR! students.

Exploring 2016-17 school year data, we take a close look at:

- School Stability
- Education Advocacy
- Secondary Youth
- Elementary Youth

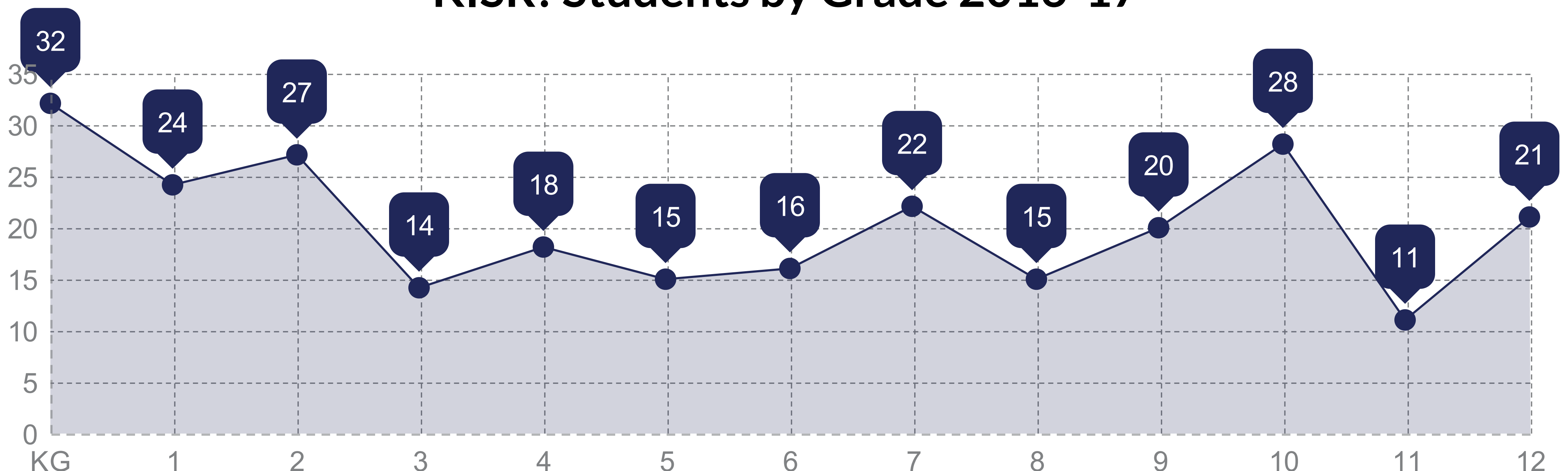
KISR! Students by Placement Type 2016-17



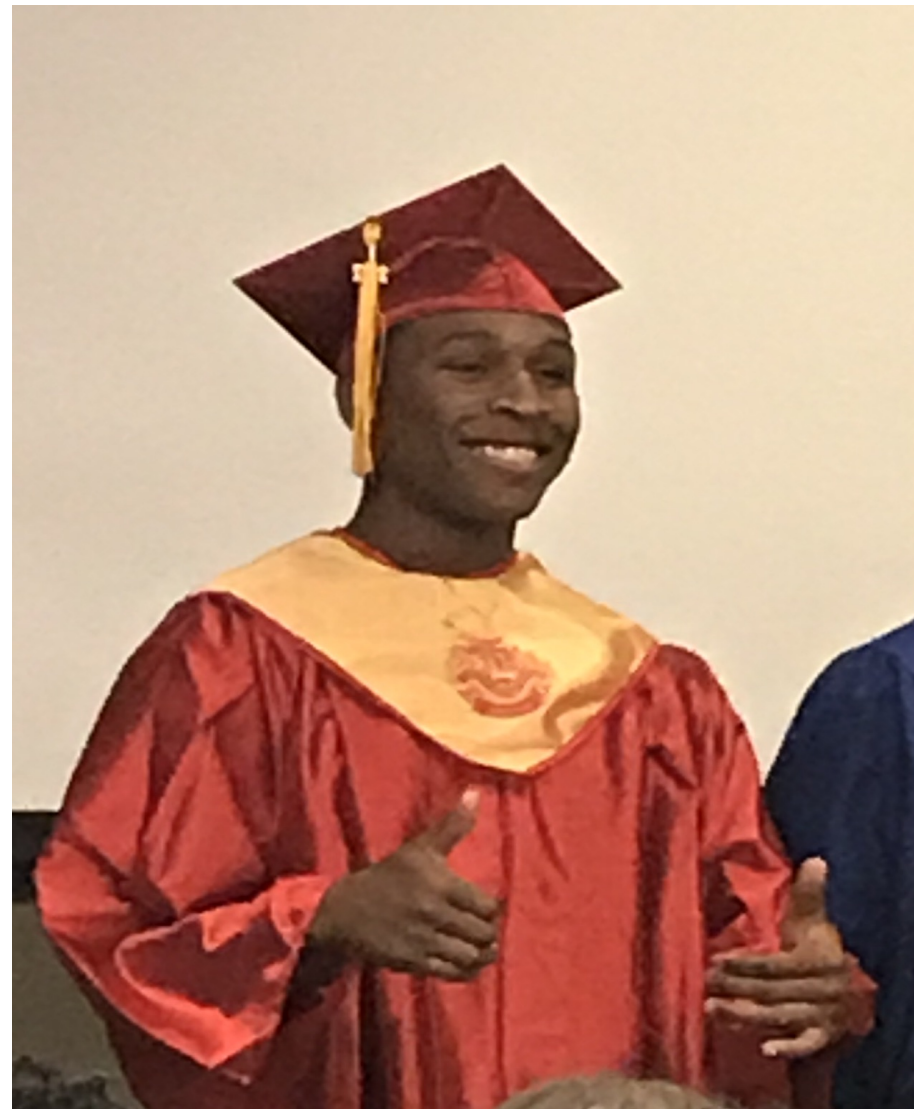
279
students served
in 2016-17

■ Family-Like Setting (72.87%) ■ Congregate Care (10.47%)
■ Independent Living (6.59%) ■ Other (10.08%)

KISR! Students by Grade 2016-17



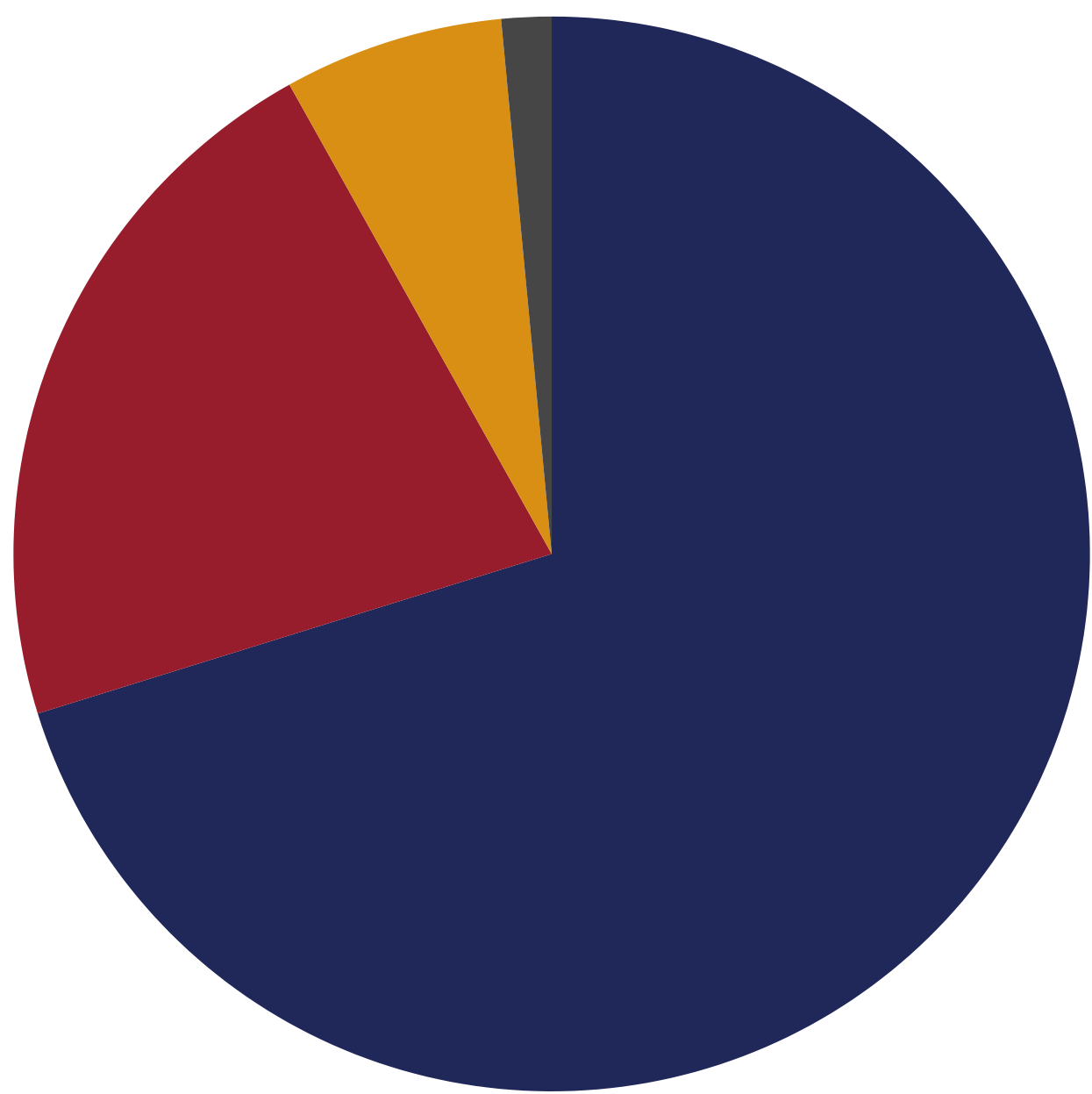
Snapshot 2016-17: Focus on School Stability



"Together with the Kids in School Rule! partners, Cincinnati Public Schools is committed to providing a stable educational environment for students in foster care."

Laura Mitchell,
Cincinnati Public Schools Superintendent

of School Moves for KISR! Students



*Includes only school moves within Cincinnati Public Schools, not out of district transfers

■ Zero Transfers (70.20%) ■ 1 (21.70%) ■ 2 (6.60%)
■ 3+ (1.50%)

Why This Matters

- Nationally, studies reveal that school mobility negatively impacts academic achievement and places students at higher risk for dropping out.
- Students lose about three months of reading and math with each change of schools. School moves often result in declining grades, increasing the risk of dropping out of high school.
- There will be times when school changes are necessary and in the best interest of the student. The KISR! web of supports ensures that when a child moves into or within Cincinnati Public Schools, attention will be focused on easing the student's transition.

Nationwide, children in foster care often experience one or more changes in their living placements when they enter, and remain in care. These placement changes often result in school changes.

KISR! prioritizes school stability, with policies and processes in place to minimize school changes whenever possible.

As a result, the vast majority of KISR! students experience zero or only one school move.

How We Do It

- Annual Kick-off meeting at the start of each school year to bring Liaisons and Education Specialists together and share necessary information for new staff.
- CPS "No Barrier Enrollment" process ensures seamless transitions and timely enrollment of KISR! students.
- Streamlined process to ensure waiver of school fees for KISR! students to avoid delays in records access or transfer due to fees owed.
- KISR! Liaison Handbook includes a calendar with important deadlines.
- Legal Aid individual student and systemic advocacy secure appropriate school enrollment and prevent school moves during the academic year.
- Transportation Agreement between CPS and JFS ensures transportation is arranged timely and costs shared appropriately.

Snapshot 2016-17: Focus on Education Advocacy



"We are very fortunate to partner with Legal Aid, which is equally invested in the academic success of our students. Legal Aid education advocacy has led to steady improvement in school enrollment and stability, drastic reductions in disciplinary removals and overall academic improvement for our students. Their work has been a big part of KISR!'s success."

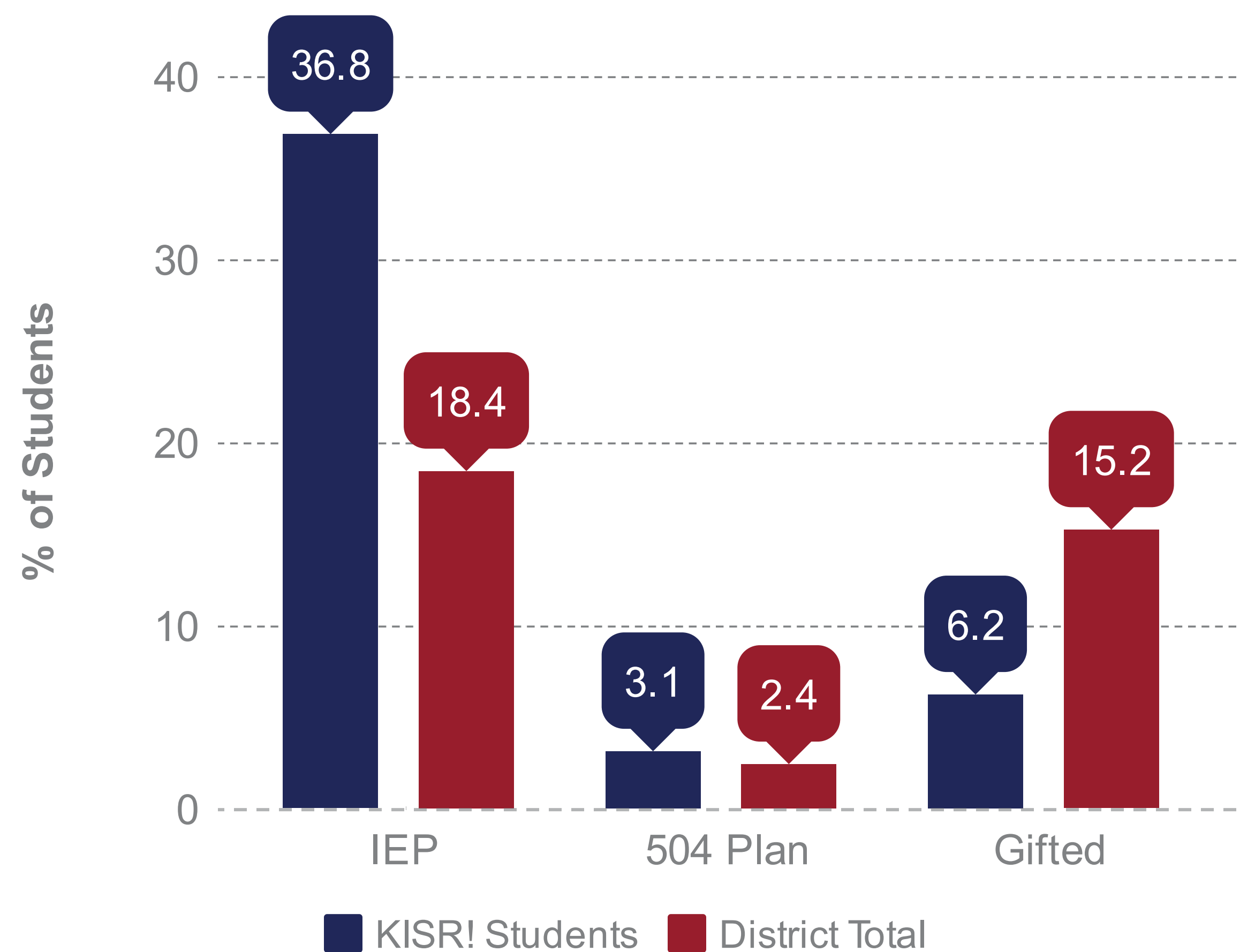
Margie Weaver, Assistant Director,
Children Services, HCJFS

Supporting Students with Disabilities

- Referrals to Legal Aid ensure protection of legal rights of children with disabilities.
- In 2016-17, 62 of 77 cases of KISR! students represented by Legal Aid involved modifying or implementing an IEP or 504 Plan or obtaining appropriate interventions.

Approximately 37% of KISR! students have a disability warranting special education services.

Special Education Snapshot: KISR! vs. District 2016-17



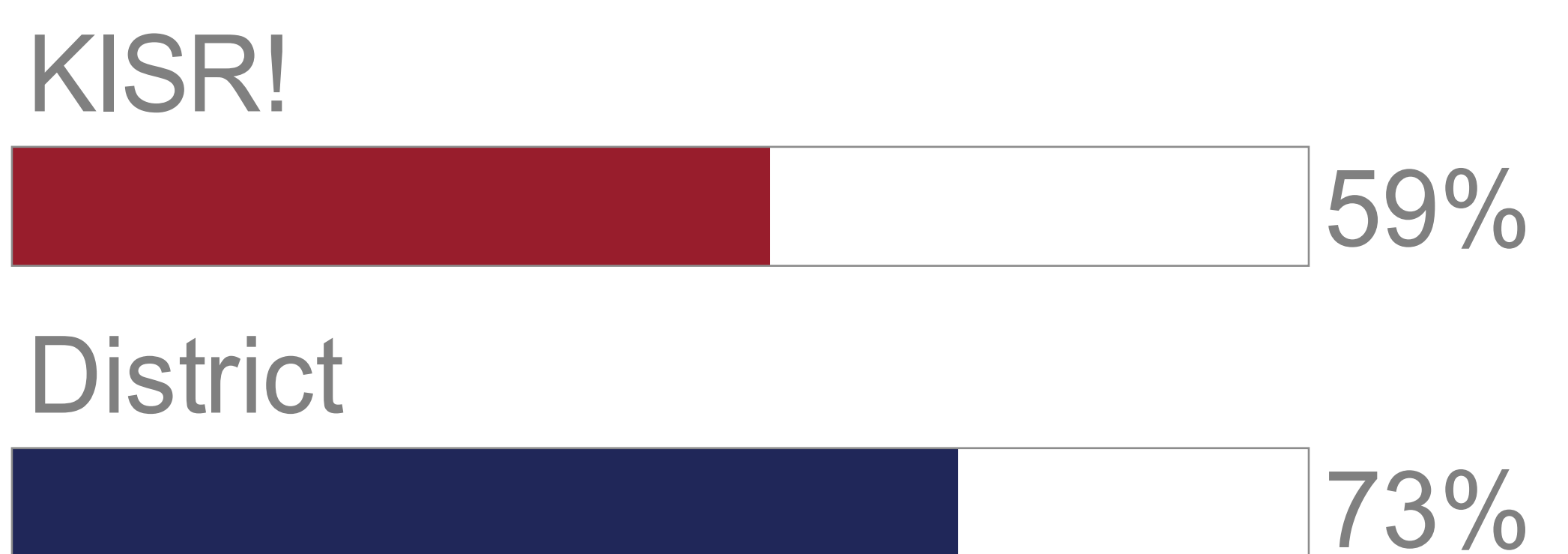
Mitigating Disciplinary Removals

KISR! students are experiencing disciplinary referrals at higher rates than their peers.

Interventions through the KISR! program ensure that KISR! students have advocacy to limit the impact of these disciplinary actions.

In 2016-17, Legal Aid prevented or mitigated disciplinary removals for 42 KISR! students.

Students with Zero Discipline Referrals



Snapshot 2016-17: Focus on Secondary Youth (7-12th Grade)



“KISR! provided me with extra educational support which helped shape a path for my academic success.”

L.K., KISR! Alumna
2014 graduate of Western Hills University High School
HEMI participant and college student

7th-12th Grade Students 2016-17

90% or Greater Attendance



Promoted to Next Grade



12th Grader Graduation Rate



Why This Matters

- Youth with a high school diploma earn \$8,500 more on average per year.
- Attendance, behavior, and successful course completion are key to making progress toward a diploma.
- High school graduates live 9 years longer than dropouts.
- 80% of incarcerated population did not graduate from high school.

How We Do It

**Pathways to Graduation:
support for credit-deficient older
students**

In the inaugural year of this initiative, **75 students ages 17 and older** were served. Goals of the initiative are to:

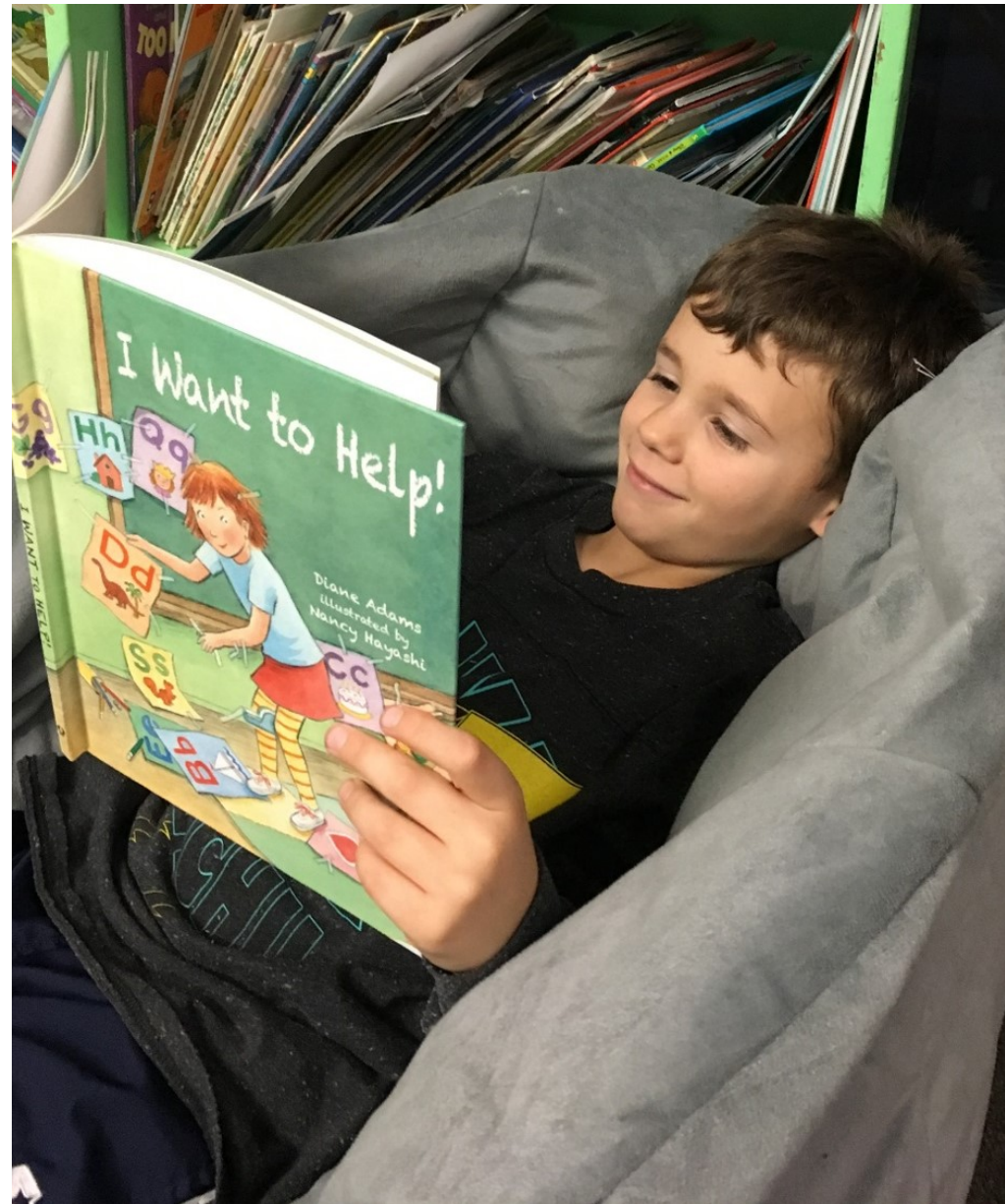
- Develop individual graduation plans to help each student make **rapid progress**.
- Monitor progress toward graduation goals each grading period with **data-driven interventions**.
- **Promote academic success.**



Supports in graduation plans might include:

- Team meetings to improve performance and address barriers.
- Special education evaluations requested as appropriate.
- IEP/504 Plan goals and accommodations reviewed and modified as appropriate.
- Tutoring and mentoring services provided.
- Credit recovery options established.

Snapshot 2016-17: Focus on Elementary Youth (K-6th Grade)



"School success can change the trajectory for our most vulnerable youth, and is the best predictor for life success in areas that include, but are not limited to postsecondary professional development, employment, income, housing, family relationships, and community contributions."

The Honorable John M. Williams, Administrative Judge,
Hamilton County Juvenile Court

K-6th Grade Students 2016-17

Promoted to Next Grade



Regular Attendance



3rd Grade Reading Guarantee



How We Do It

- KISR! second and third graders are **progress monitored each grading period** – data-driven interventions toward reading proficiency and overall school success are implemented.
- **Interventions for reading proficiency** – strong literacy skills are fundamental to success in all academic areas.
- **Academic and behavioral interventions** include calling team meetings to improve performance and address barriers, request special education evaluations, or review IEP/504 Plan goals and accommodations.
- **Intentional focus on enrollment** of incoming Kindergarten students.

Why This Matters

- Third grade is the crucial year when students make the leap from learning to read to reading to learn.
- Other subjects also require reading proficiency (e.g., math story problems and science/social studies texts).
- 75% of students who struggle with reading in 3rd grade never catch up, making them 4 times as likely to drop out of high school.
- High school dropouts are 3 times more likely to be incarcerated as adults, so not reading by 3rd grade may increase chances of eventual imprisonment.



KISR! Reaches Beyond School Walls

"While we work to strengthen how schools respond to and support children in foster care, KISR! stands out for simultaneously promoting systemic changes within the child welfare agency and the Court. The program focuses on academic as well as social-emotional supports. This holistic strategy includes a strong emphasis on cross-system training and collaboration, and tracks data on how well systems are addressing the needs of students and on the ultimate question of how students are doing educationally."

Elaine Fink, Managing Attorney
Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio, LLC



1.

Enriching activities during childhood and adolescence guide children and youth to build lasting relationships, develop self-identity, allow for exploration and transition into adulthood. Activities Beyond the Classroom (ABC) partners with KISR! to coordinate registration, transportation and cover fees. In 2016-17, 113 KISR! students were connected with enrichment activities of their choice.

2.

A customized **Judicial Bench Card** for Education Success, used by all Juvenile Court Magistrates who preside over abuse and neglect cases, focuses attention to educational issues every time a KISR! student comes before the Court.

3.

KISR! conducts numerous **trainings** each year that reach hundreds of professionals, including Magistrates, caseworkers and supervisors, GALs, CASAs, mentors, foster parents, KISR! CPS Liaisons, school psychologists, school social workers, and principals.

4.

Partnership with the **Higher Education Mentor Initiative (HEMI)**, a University of Cincinnati program designed to encourage foster youth to pursue higher education and support them in that process.

What Lies Ahead



In looking back over the many years of the KISR! Program, there are some consistent themes that emerge. Cross-system collaboration among all of the agencies and partners has been a constant, as has strong leadership and a strong Leadership Team that guides the work. Another theme that has emerged is a constant growth and expansion of the project — first to serve all CPS schools; then to serve children in protective supervision; then to serve children placed in The Children’s Home.

Expansion has not just been limited to which children are served by the program, but there has also been expansion of what interventions and strategies are available to support those students. These past years have seen success with expansions targeting 2nd and 3rd grade readers to ensure proficiency on Ohio's 3rd Grade Reading Guarantee. Another expansion has been to target credit-deficient older students — and convene planning meetings to coordinate and support their success. Yet another has involved connecting youth to extra-curricular activities. The 2018-19 year will also include goals of further expansion, including academic supports and tutoring, and exploring preschool expansion.

The 2018-19 year will also be one of reassessment and revisioning. With the growing numbers of students served and an increase in services and supports offered to KISR! students, there is a need for the Leadership Team to assess the foundation and infrastructure to ensure there is proper capacity to support the growth of the last several years.

Get in Touch with Us

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