

Dropout Indicators

Freshman on-track and freshman attendance as predictors of sophomore dropout status

The 2014-15 school year marks the first time that the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) has had student level freshman on-track (students who had earned the higher of 6 credits or 25% of their district's total credit requirement for a high school diploma by the end of their first year of high school) and full year dropout data¹ for the same students.

Preliminary data analysis indicates that on-track status may be a promising indicator of the future likelihood of dropping out of school. Despite having been enrolled for a majority of their freshman year, students who had not met the requirements for on-track status dropped out at a rate more than 16 times higher than their peers who had met the district credit requirements.

Status of 2013-14 Freshmen	Number of Students ²	2014-15 Dropout Rate	Risk Ratio	% of dropouts ³
On-Track	32,476	0.26%	16.4	19%
Not On-Track	8,531	4.35%		81%
Regular Attender	34,370	0.46%	9.7	35%
Not Regular Attender	6,637	4.49%		65%
Both On-Track and Regular Attender	29,503	0.20%	36.5	13%
Neither On-Track nor Regular Attender	3,664	7.42%		60%
On-Track, not a Regular Attender	2,973	0.87%	4.3	6%
Regular Attender, not On-Track	4,867	2.03%	10.0	22%

Regular attender data (students who attended 90% or more of the days that they were enrolled) also appears to be a promising indicator of future dropout status. Even excluding the most highly mobile students, students who were not regular attenders were nearly 10 times as likely to drop out the following year as their regular attender peers.

In combination with the on-track measure, students who were neither on-track nor regular attenders in their freshman year were more than 36 times as likely to drop out in their sophomore year than students who were both. Although these students comprise less than 9% of the 2014-15 sophomore enrollment, they represent 60% of the dropouts.

Both freshman on-track and regular attender data are finalized and available to districts in September of the following school year, and preliminary data sets are available as early as June/July. Nearly three-quarters of the students in the group of highest concern (neither on-track nor regular attenders) did not dropout until January of the following school year, giving districts time to intervene with most of these students even if they wait for ODE's data to be finalized before acting.

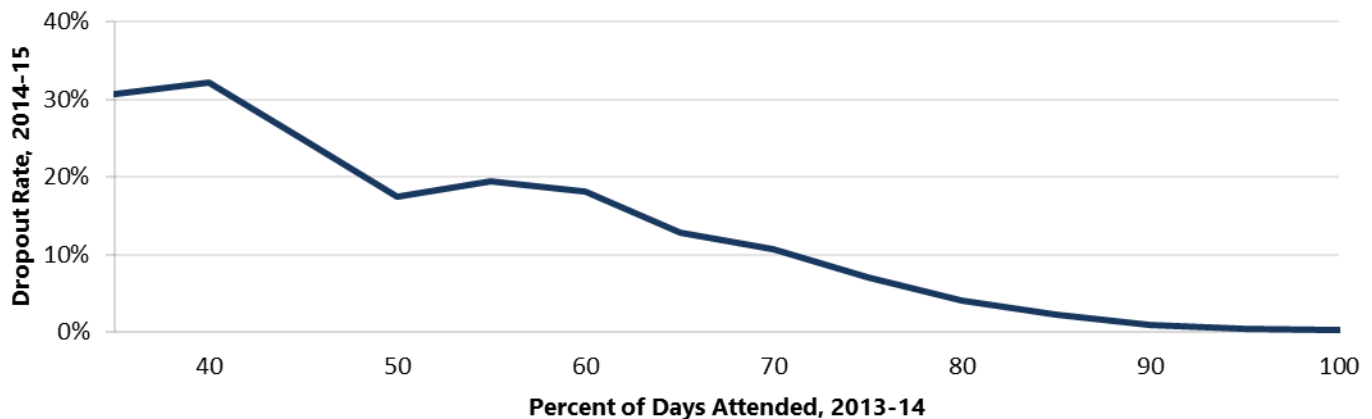
¹ Students are considered dropouts for the 2014-15 school year if they completed the 2013-14 school year but did not return as expected for the 2014-15 school year, or if they dropped out during the 2014-15 school year, and had not re-enrolled by October 1, 2015.

² Data are based on 41,007 students who first entered high school in 2013-14, were enrolled on May 1, 2014, had sufficient enrollment in one district to qualify for inclusion in both regular attender and freshman on-track measures, and had 2014-15 enrollment or expected enrollment. Students whose freshman-year enrollment was short or highly mobile, and students who enrolled in a non-attendance-based type of instruction (e.g., part-time alternative programs), are excluded from the analysis.

³ Based on a population of 457 dropouts who met the above criteria and had a dropout event during the 2014-15 school year.

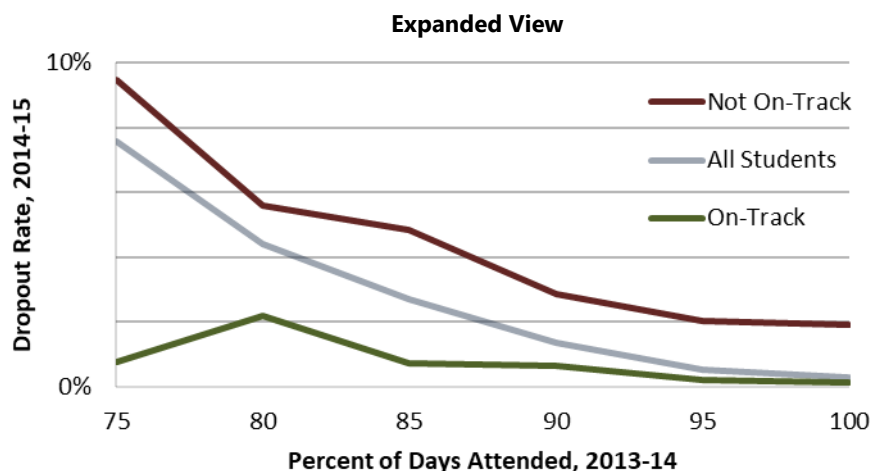
Subgroup	Both On-Track and Regular Attender	Neither On-Track, nor Regular Attender	Risk Ratio
All Students	0.20%	7.42%	36.5
Female	0.24%	7.41%	31.1
Male	0.17%	7.44%	44.0
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.28%	8.26%	29.6
Asian	0.14%	*4	--
Black	0.33%	6.62%	20.1
Hispanic	0.19%	6.26%	33.6
Multiracial	0.33%	5.79%	17.5
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.00%	*	--
White	0.20%	8.10%	40.5
Special Education	0.24%	6.84%	28.7
Economically Disadvantaged	0.36%	7.93%	21.8
English Learners	0.63%	9.80%	15.6

Percent of Students who dropped out in 2014-15, by Attendance Rate in 2013-14



As attendance rates improve, the likelihood of a student dropping out decreases dramatically. Even with near-perfect attendance, however, students who were not On-Track dropped out at higher rates than did their peers.

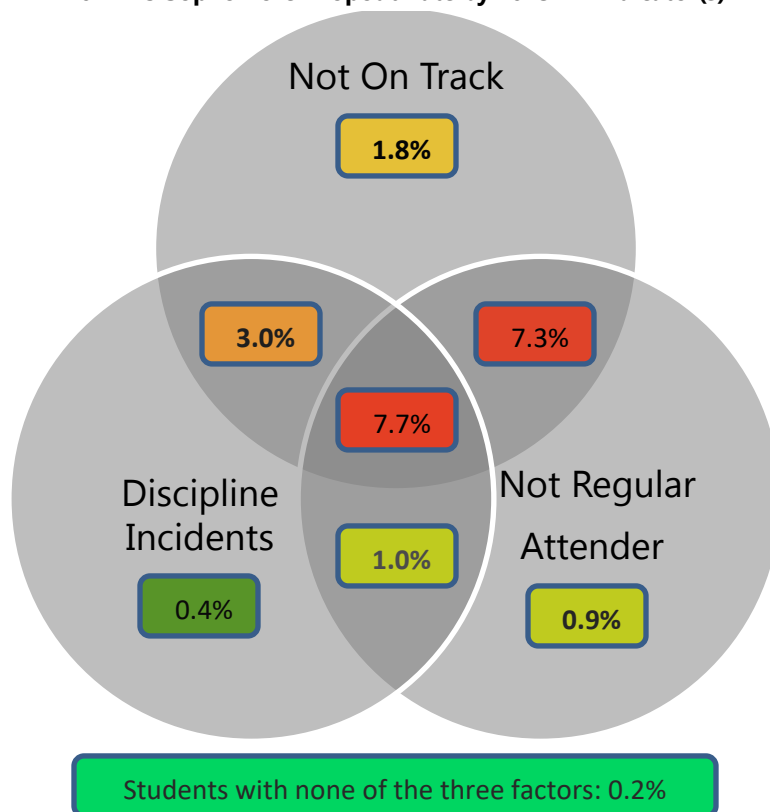
Attendance rate and On-Track status are correlated. 1 in 5 students with an attendance rate around 75% were On-track, compared to 4 in 5 students with an attendance rate around 95%.



⁴ An asterisk indicates that the subgroup had fewer than 50 students in the denominator.

Exclusionary discipline incidents were also investigated as a possible predictor, but appear to have a smaller predictive effect on dropout rates than the other two factors, as displayed in the chart to the right. Students were included in this group if they experienced one or more exclusionary discipline incidents (in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion) during the 2013-14 school year. Although approximately 3,800 students in the group met this criteria, as a whole, 3.5% of those students dropped out – a little less than 4 times as high a rate as the dropout rate for students who had not been disciplined. Two thirds of disciplined students were also members of one or more of the other risk groups.

2014-15 Sophomore Dropout Rate by 2013-14 Indicator(s)



A logistic regression model controlling for demographic factors found that On-Track and Regular Attender status were highly significant ($p < .001$), but discipline incidents were not significant, in predicting a student's likelihood of dropping out.