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# Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education

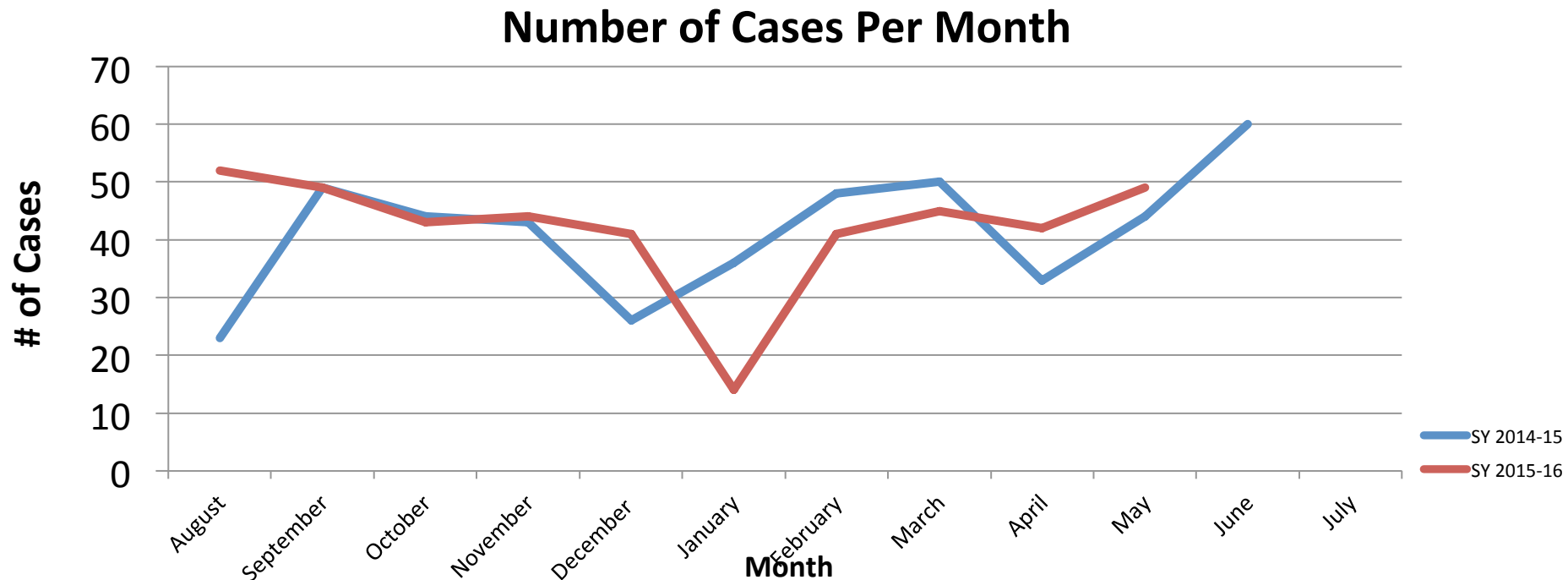
Quarter 3 Report  
School Year 2015-16

**DC** Office of the  
**Ombudsman**  
for Public Education



# Number of Cases

We have received 411 cases for 2015-16 School Year to date, compared to 390 at this point in 2014-15 School Year.

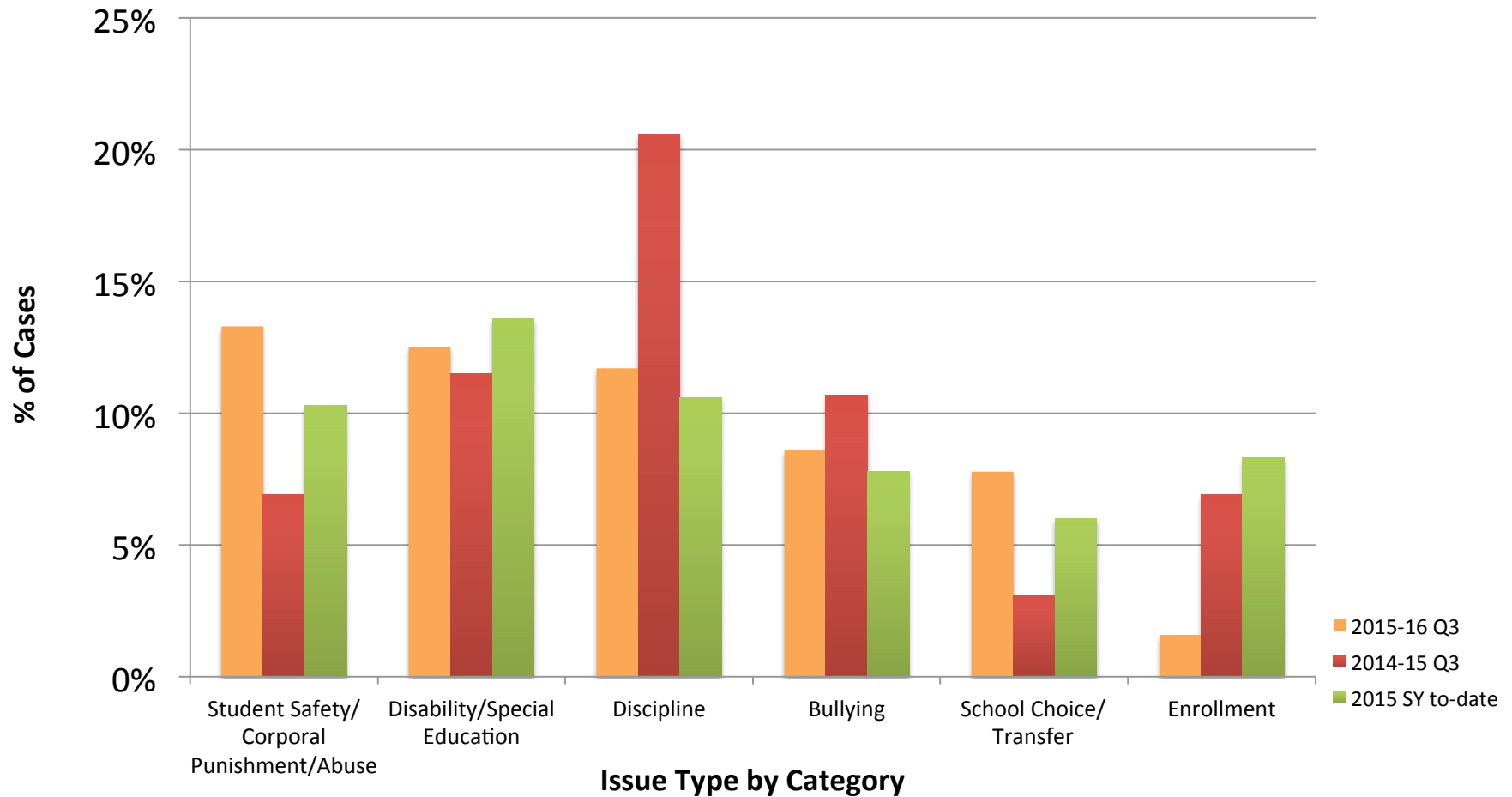


# Month by Month Case Comparison

	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
14-15 SY	23	49	44	43	26	36	48	50	33	44	60
15-16 SY	52	49	43	44	41	14	41	45	42	49	

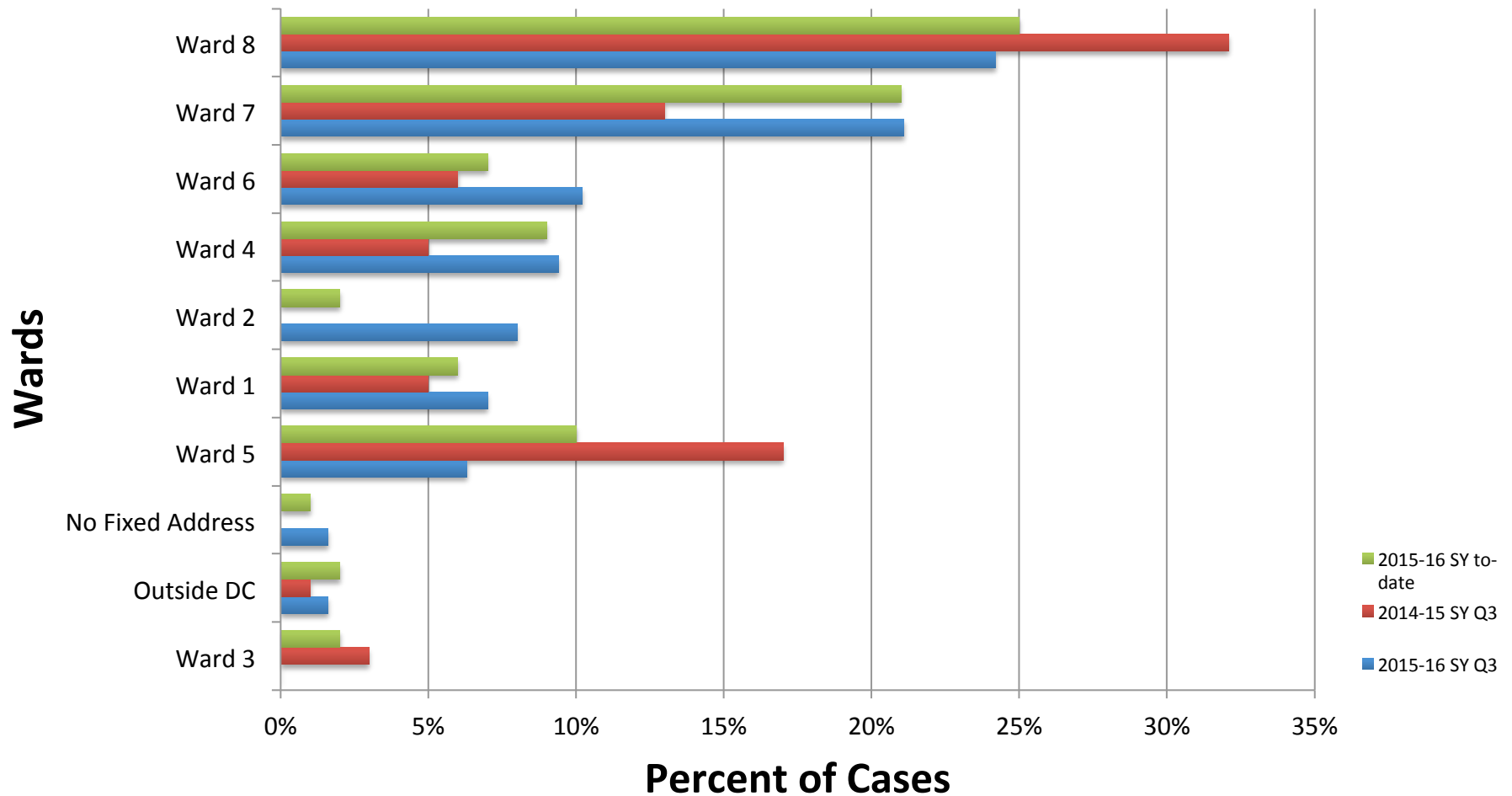
# Top Complaints

## Top Complaints by Category



# Complaints by Ward

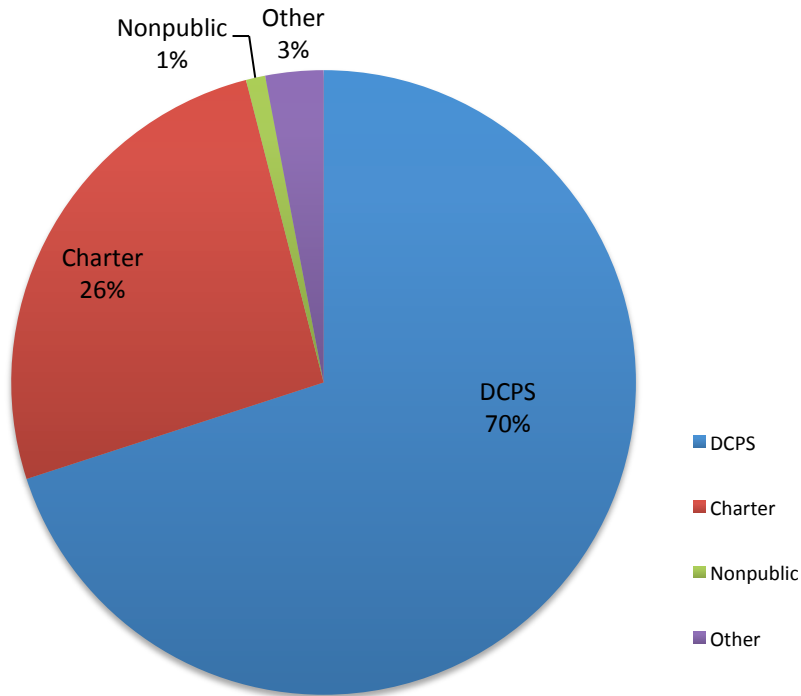
## Percent of Cases in Each Ward for Q3



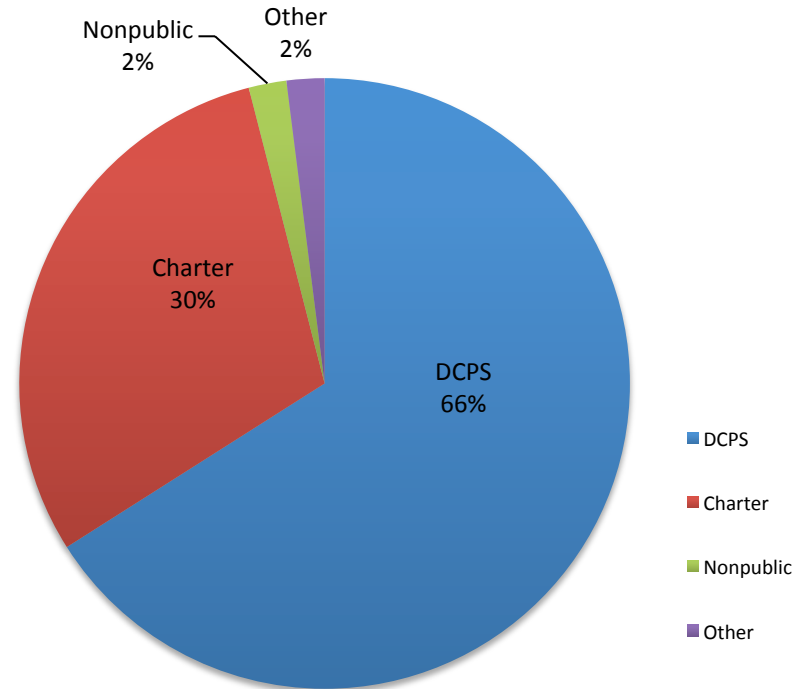
# School Type

## Percent of Cases by School Type

**Q3 SY 2015-16**

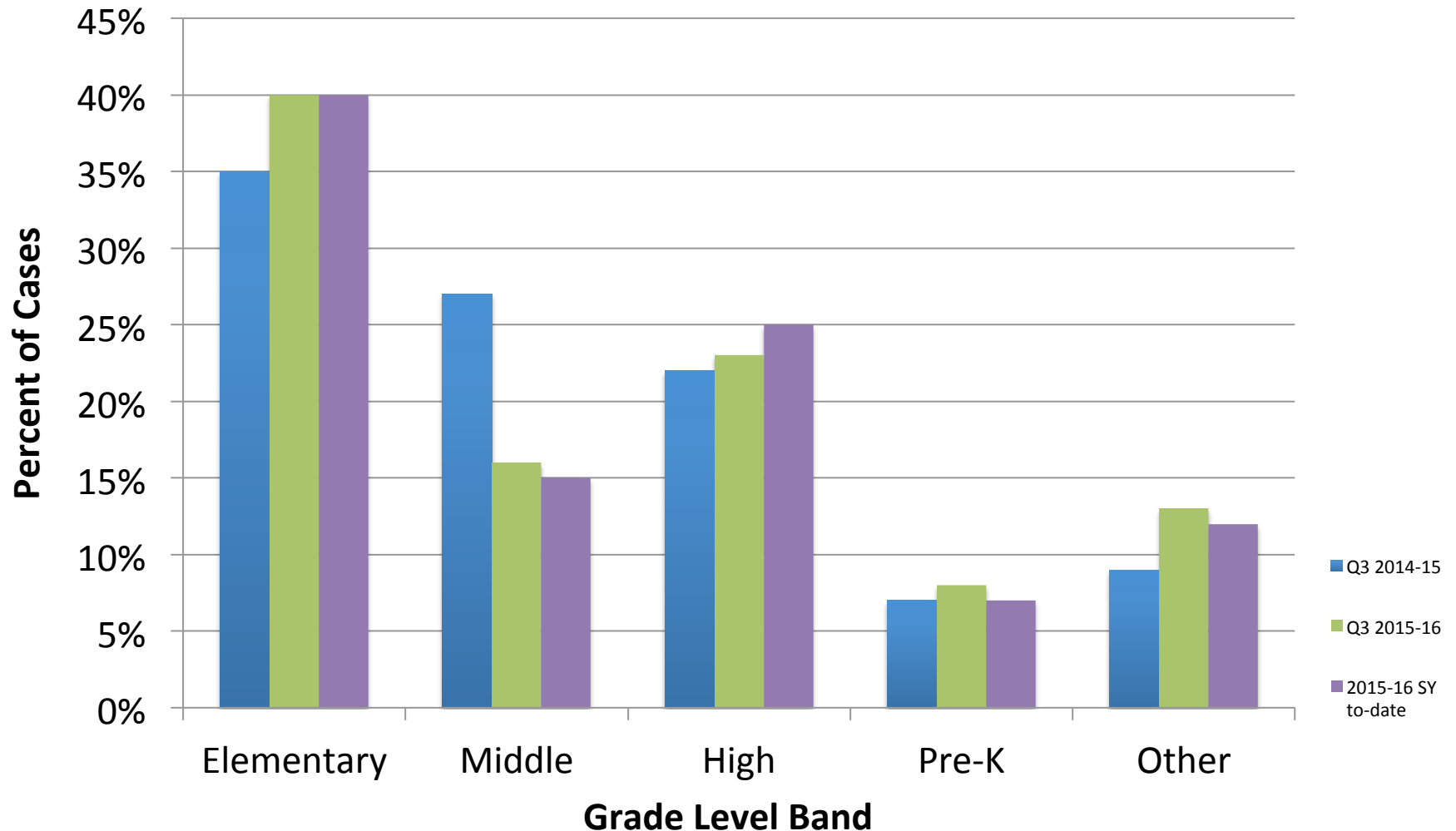


**Q3 SY 2014-15**



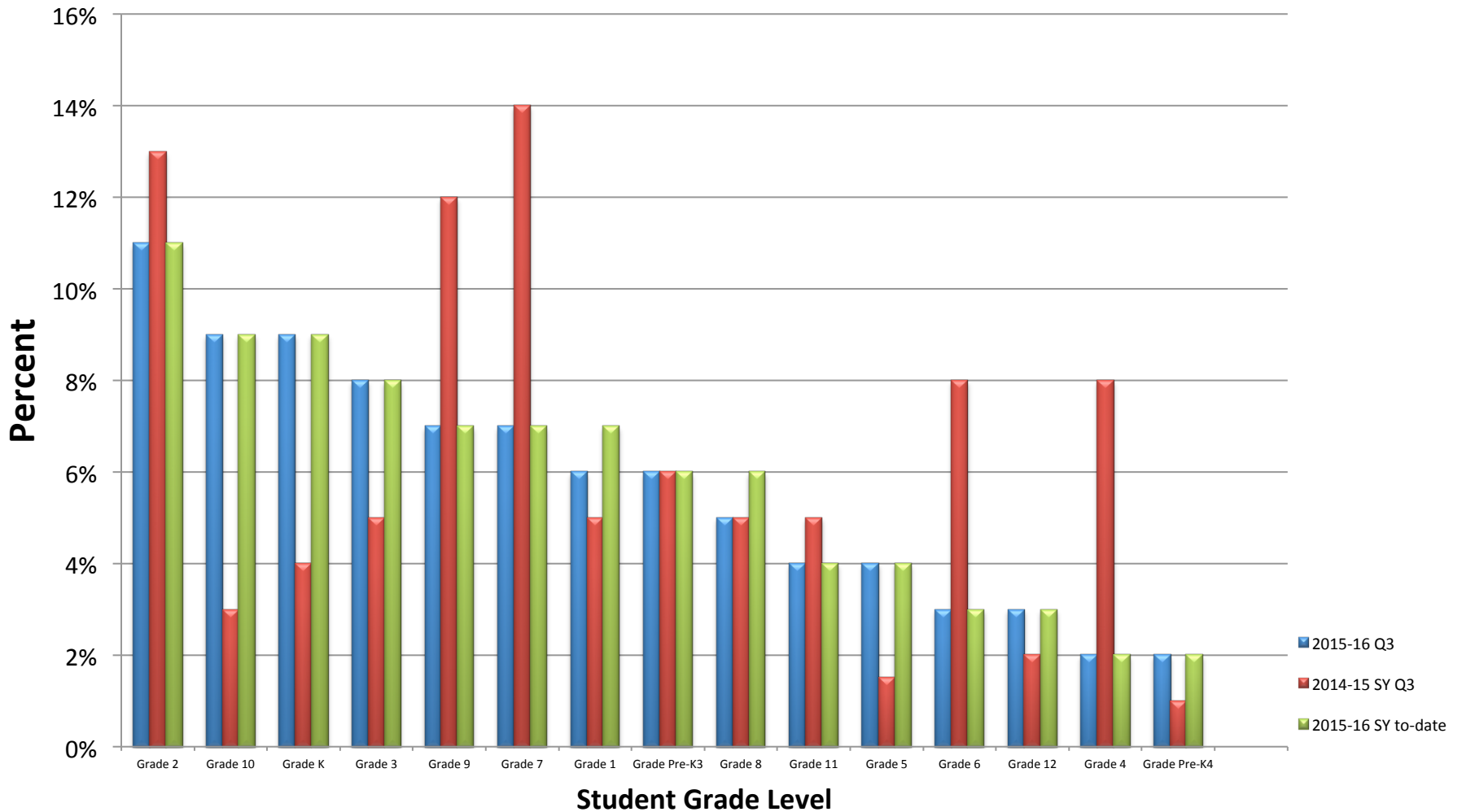
# Grade Level Band

## Percent of Cases Within a Grade Band



# Grade Level

## Percent of Students by Grade Level





# Systemic Issues: Special Education and Lottery

## **Systemic issues we are currently monitoring:**

- We are receiving reports from families who have entered the lottery that some schools are delaying entry or refusing enrollment of students with significant IEP needs.
  - Public schools are not permitted to discriminate based on the special education needs of students. Students who are eligible for special education services can apply to any DCPS or public charter school through the lottery and the school is supposed to meet their needs through supports and services. Accordingly, the My School DC application does not ask if an applicant has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or any other questions about special education because it is illegal.

# Trends and Systemic Issues-Lost Children

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- DCPS students are being denied re-entry to out-of-boundary schools when absent for 20 consecutive days.
  - DCPS has a rule that if a student is absent for 20 consecutive days, they will withdraw the student from the school. However, a student has a right to return back to that out-of boundary school.
  - Some of our students have encountered push back from DCPS principals when they tried to return back to school after being absent for 20 or more days from school.
  - **Students actually have a right to attend their out-of-boundary school through the remainder of the year even though the DCPS school is not obligated to invite them to return the following year.**

# Trends and Systemic Issues-Lost Children

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- DCPS students receive long-term suspensions at out-of-boundary schools and are administratively withdrawn and sent to CHOICE for the duration of the suspension. If students do not attend CHOICE and try to return back to the out-of-boundary school at the end of the suspension, principals are strongly discouraging students from returning.
  - Students who demonstrate a desire to return back to school, and are of compulsory age, should be able to return to school with no barriers.
  - Schools are not cited for truancy, because these students are not enrolled anywhere. Some students are out of school for months throughout the school year. Who is tracking the number of students who never return back to school?

## Community Engagement Efforts in Q3

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- Family Court Committee meetings where attendees from CFSA, DCPS, PCSB, and district government agencies and family court judges discuss issues affecting DC youth.
  - Regularly attending monthly meetings
  - Committee currently putting together an education conference for Fall of 2016.
- Panelist during Washington Bar Association/National Bar Association Region XII CLE Program; May 21<sup>st</sup> session entitled “Special Education after Blackman Jones.”

## Community Engagement Efforts in Q3

- Panelist for May 11<sup>th</sup> Brown Bag Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect (CCAN) Office with the DC Superior Court to discuss opportunities for collaboration with DC special education attorneys.
- April 21: Co-presented with Faith Gibson Hubbard at the Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative to discuss our respective offices and ways to collaborate with their community based organization.
- Truancy Taskforce member
- Co-Chair of the Education Committee of the United States Ombudsman Association

## Looking ahead: Quarter 4

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- We have experienced acute staffing challenges this quarter. Even so, as you can see from our numbers, during 2/3 months of Q3, we accepted more cases than Quarter 3 of SY14-15. We are currently utilizing a waitlist and we have families that are on a waitlist for our services.
  - We are also recruiting for Beth's former position and thanks to the Education Committee, we anticipate hiring an additional FTE, an Associate Ombudsman position, in FY17. We are on our way to having a fully viable office.

## Looking ahead: Quarter 4

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- We recently made revisions to our Ombudsman statute to fit the current needs of our office. It appears as if most of those changes will go into effect in the near future. Again, some of the proposed revisions include: revising the timeline for submission of the annual report to the State Board from 90 days to 120 days; proposing minor amendments to the required data for reporting, and revising language regarding access to student records, for example.
- We will begin working on our third annual report which will be presented to the DC State Board in either September or October of 2016.