

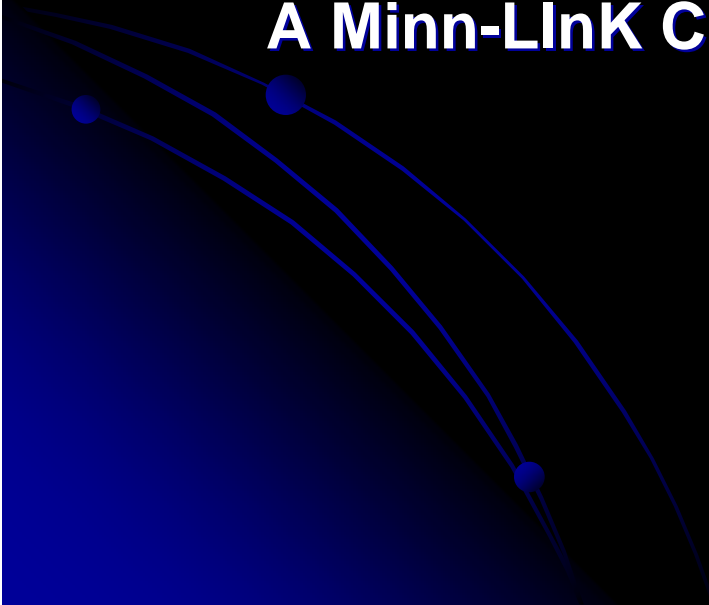
High School Graduation and Child Welfare

A Description of the Education Status of Older
Minnesota Adolescents in the Academic Year
after Substantiated Child Maltreatment Findings

A Minn-LInK Child Welfare Special Topic Report

Anita Larson
Marcie Jefferys


April, 2006



Why Study this Population?

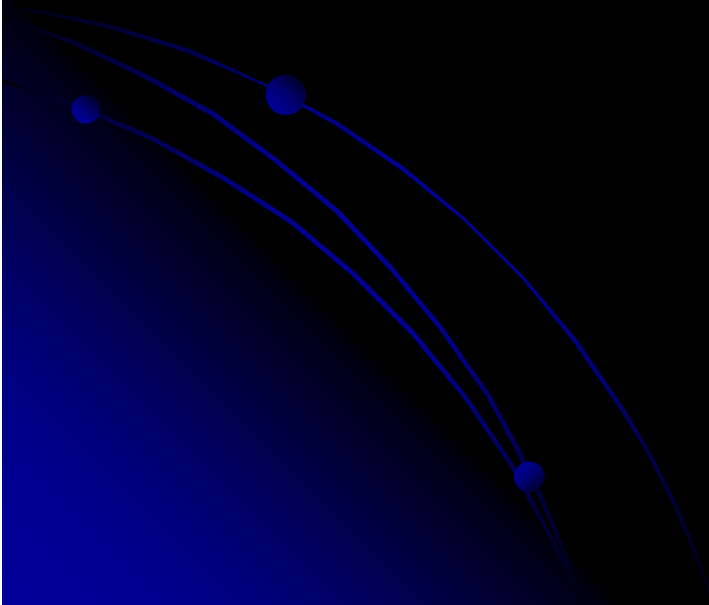
- Adolescence a time of rapid brain development
- Adolescence and young adulthood “lasts longer” than it used to
- At-risk adolescents have poor adult outcomes
- Poor adult outcomes cost communities

CASCW Commitment to Study Adolescents

- The Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare has made Adolescence a focus
 - 2005 conference “Leave No Adolescent Behind: Issues in the Transition to Adulthood” where issues were related to
 - Brain development and teen behavior
 - Outcomes of at-risk adolescents such as long-term foster care youth
- 

Study of Minnesota Youth

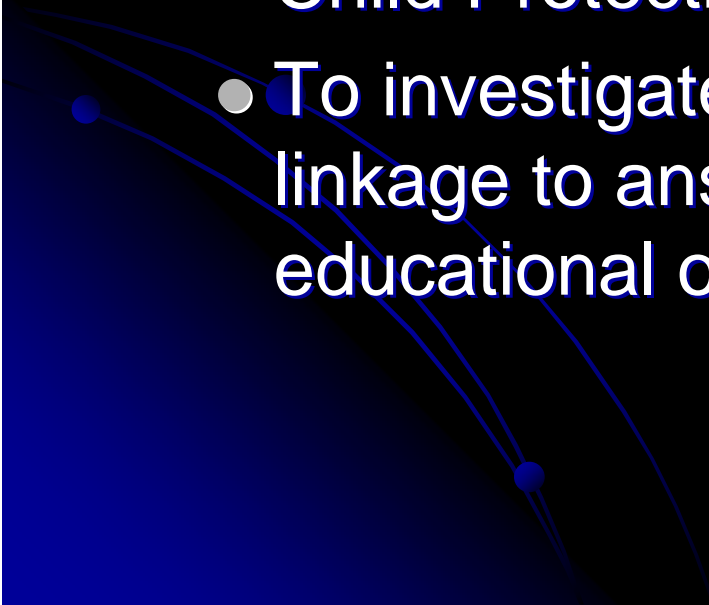
- CASCW wanted to explore further the outcomes of Minnesota youth – particularly those who had had contact with the Child Protection system.



Minn-Link

- Houses large secondary administrative data sets from
 - Department of Education
 - Child Protection and public assistance (*under negotiation*)
 - Birth records
- Resource for students & faculty
- Each project involves input and advising from community, state and local agencies, advocates, and practitioners.

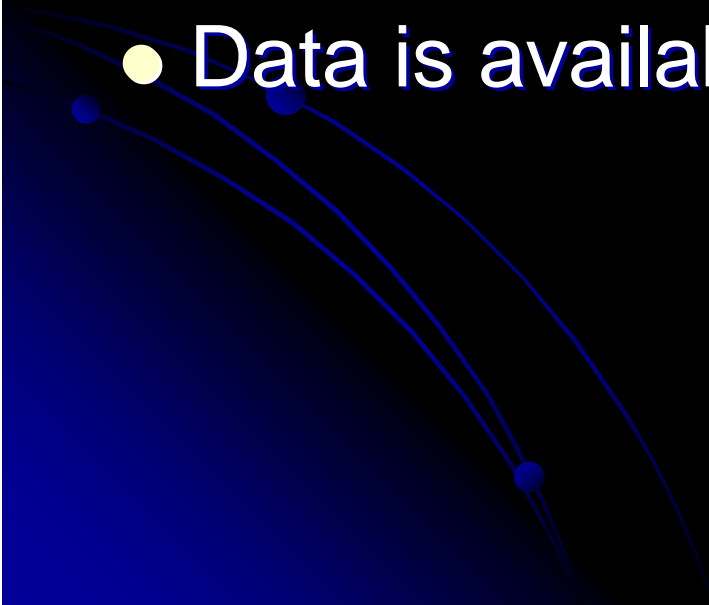
High School Graduation & Child Welfare

- Purposes:
 - To explore the educational outcomes of adolescents who had had recent contact with Child Protection
 - To investigate a new cross-system data linkage to answer questions about educational outcomes.
- 

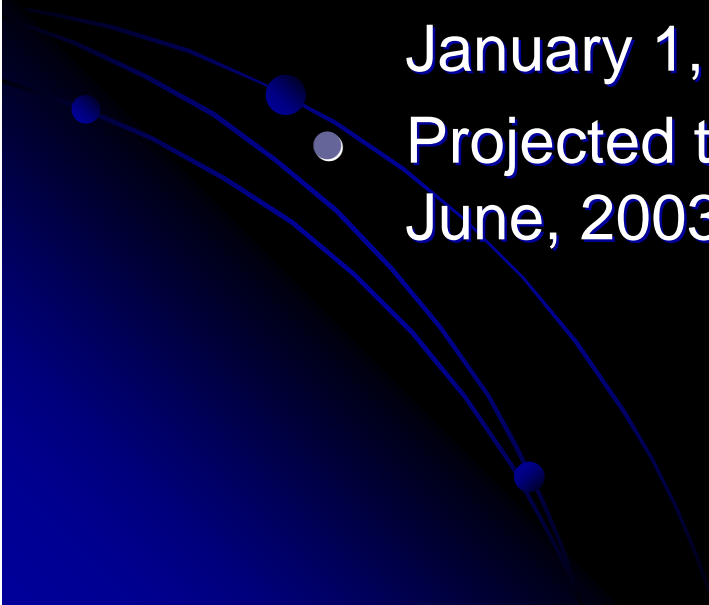
Previous Research....

- Primary focus has been on foster care youth
 - Have found poor outcomes for
 - Mental health
 - Physical health
 - Contact with corrections
 - Wages
 - Education

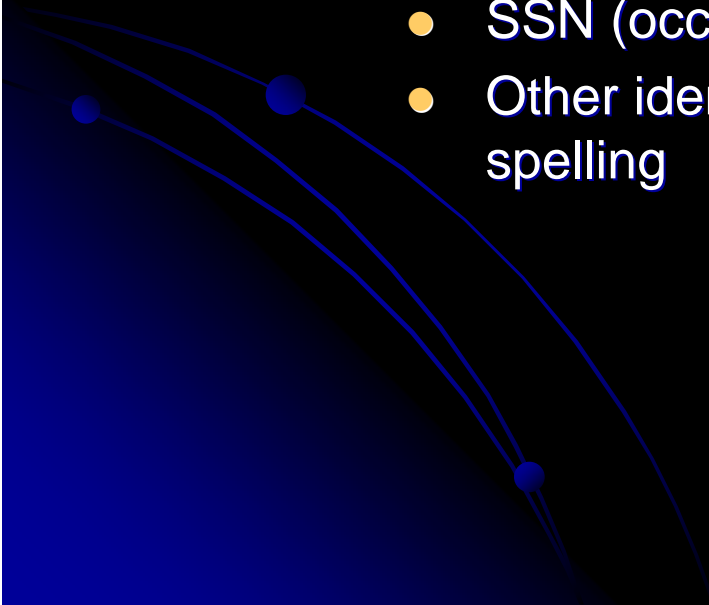
Focus on Education

- Critical to adult outcomes
 - Earnings
 - Parenting and (future) parent-child interaction
 - Self-esteem and emotional stability
 - Data is available for study (Minn-LInK)
- 

The Study Process

1. Began with adolescents who had had contact with the child protection system
 - Substantiated (investigated and harm determined) maltreatment over the period of January 1, 2001 – June 1, 2003
 - Projected to be at or near graduation age by June, 2003
- 

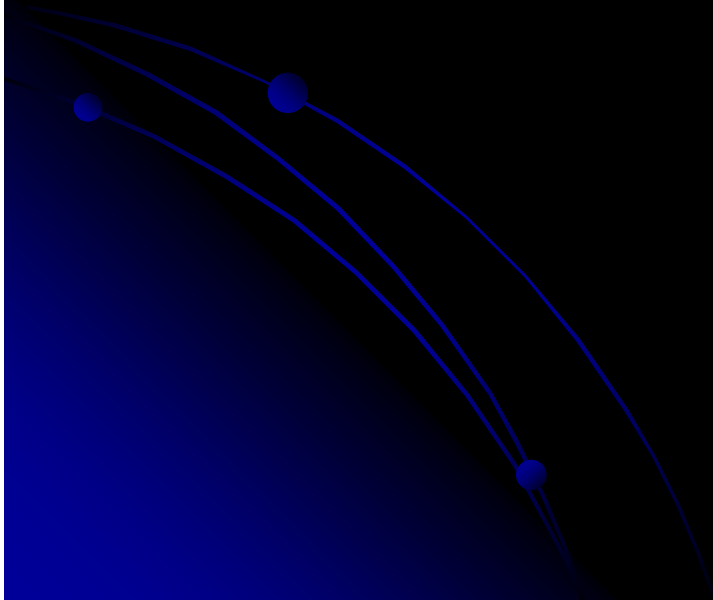
The study process (con't)

2. Matched child protection records to education records from the 2002-2003 school year by combination of
 - Names
 - Birth dates
 - SSN (occasionally available)
 - Other identifying information and alternate name spelling
- 

Time-frames and Data

Child Protection Data: Jan - Dec 2001 Jan - Dec 2002 Jan - Jun 2003

Education Data : Sep 2002 - Jun 2003



Match Rate

Table 1. Education Match Rate for Child Welfare Adolescent Group, by Age Cohort

Age at Maltreatment (January, 2000 – June, 2002)		Age as of June, 2003	Number of Adolescents in Base Group	Number Matched to Education Records	Match Rate by Age Cohort
Age	Number				
15	28	18	564	397	70%
16	274				
17	228				
18	34				
16	39	19	320	92	29%
17	191				
18	69				
19	21				
17	14	20	115	12	10%
18	58				
19	33				
20	10				
Total = 999		Total	999	501	50%

Graduation Rates

- Minnesota's overall (all 12th graders) graduation rate is high. Actual percentage varies by calculation method and source:
 - Minnesota Four-Year Rate 87% (Star Tribune, 3/2005)
 - Census Bureau – 92% (2003)
 - Urban Institute using CPI – 78.9% (2003)
 - Minnesota Planning Children's Report Card – Steady at 78.5% (2002)
 - Manhattan institute – 82% (1998)
 - Minnesota Department of Administration Minnesota Milestones report – 78% over period of 1996 through 2000 (2000)
 - Minnesota Department of Education, Annual Yearly Progress graduation rates 87.8% (2003) and 88.9% (2004)
- Child Welfare Graduation rates from other studies range from 45-50% (Barth, Casey, Wertheimer)
- Minnesota Child Welfare Adolescent graduation rate for this group is 47%

Graduation Rate Calculations & The Gap

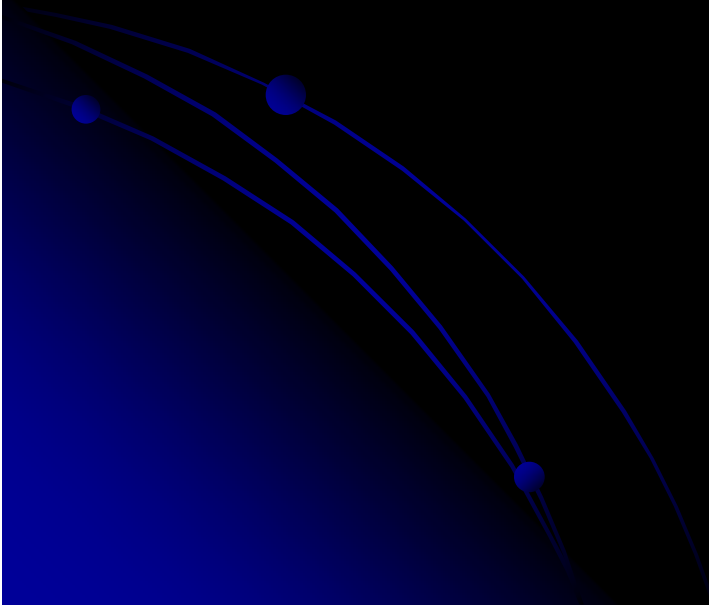
Calculation of graduation rate = $\frac{\text{\# of graduates}}{\text{All seniors enrolled anytime during 2002-03}}$

Using this method, the overall graduation rate of all 12th grade graduates in Minnesota public schools during the 2002-2003 school year was 74%.



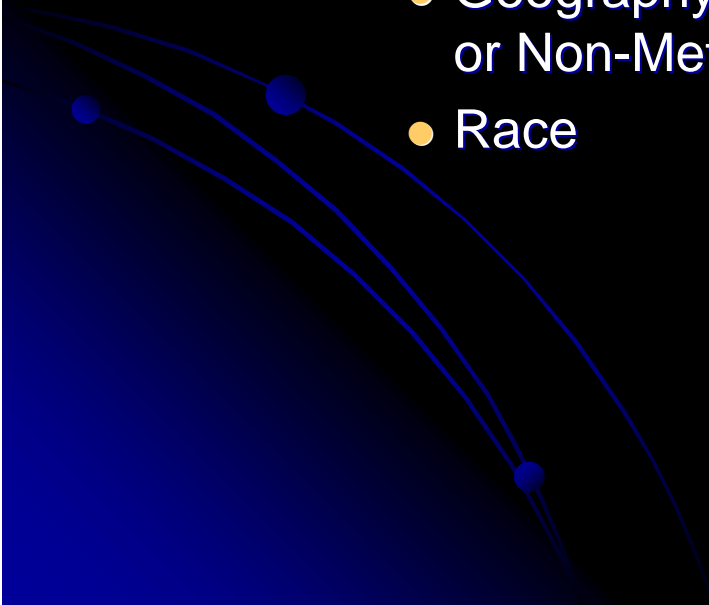
Graduation Gap

Focus of findings is on the gap between all graduates and the child welfare graduates which is 27%



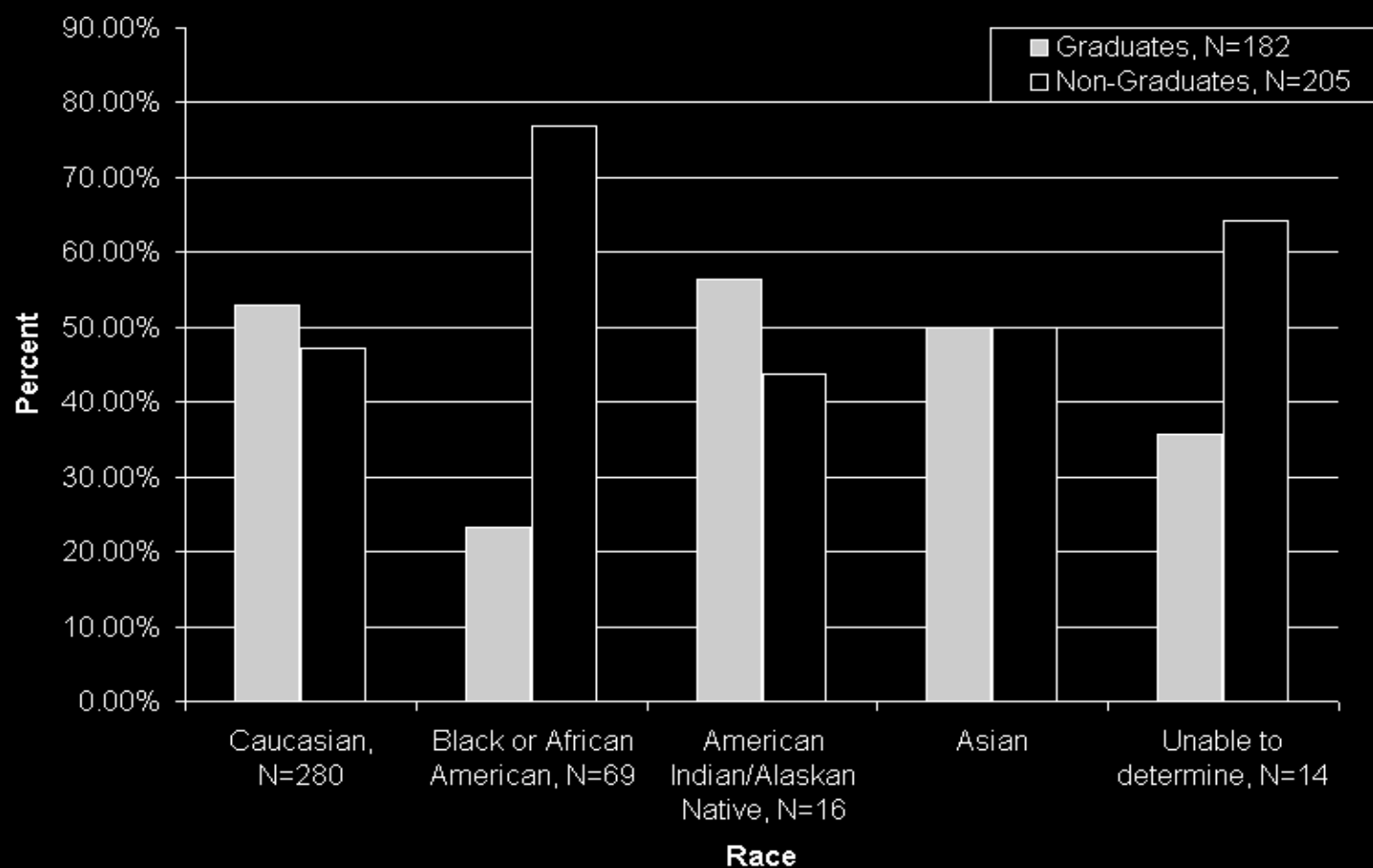
12th Grade Graduates and Non-Graduates

- Certain demographics were related to whether or not a 12th grade child welfare student graduated:
 - Geography (whether or not the student was from a Metro or Non-Metro county)
 - Race



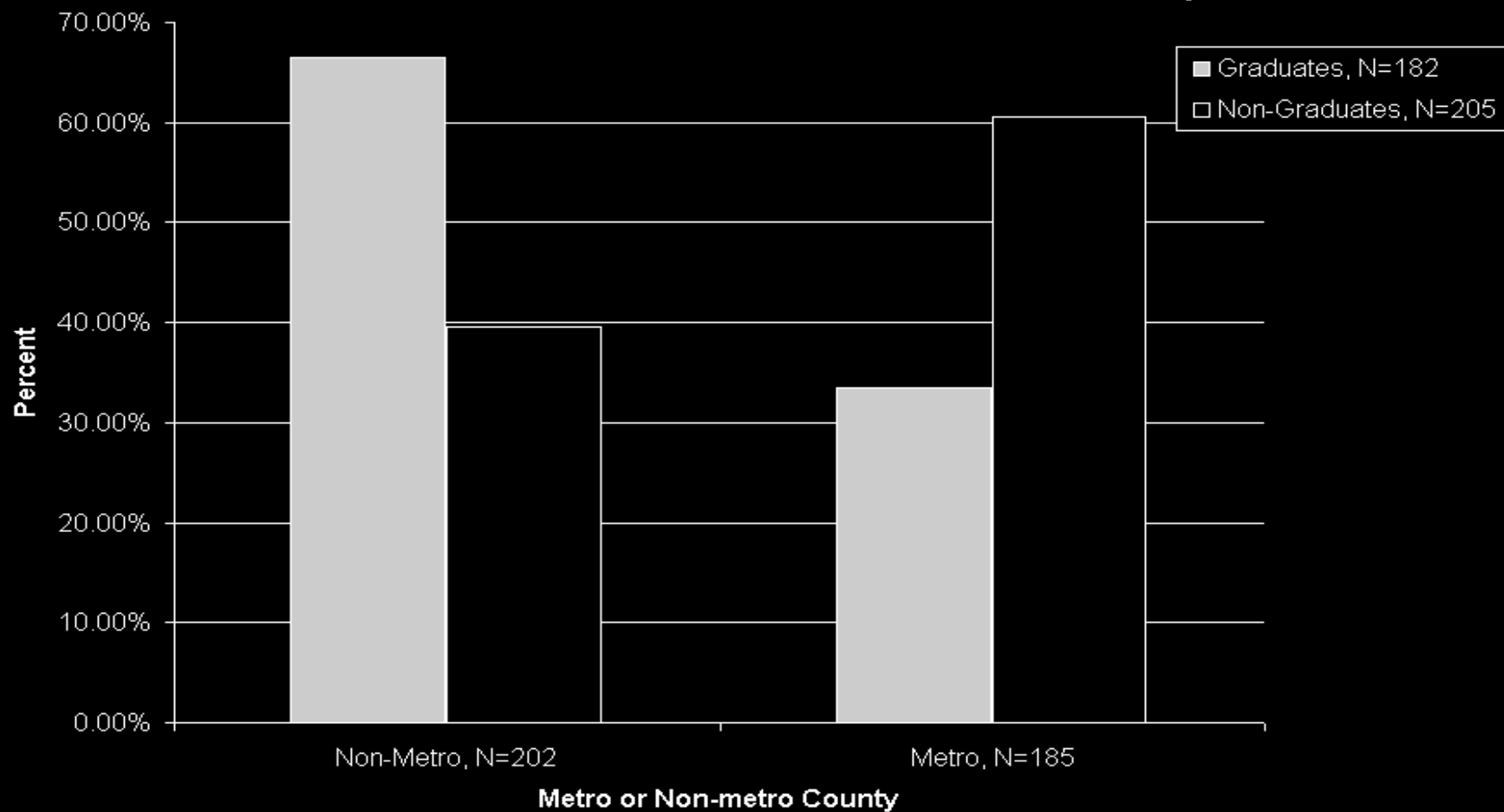
Graduation and Race

Chart 1. Race of 12th Grade Graduates and Non-Graduates of the Child Welfare Adolescent Group



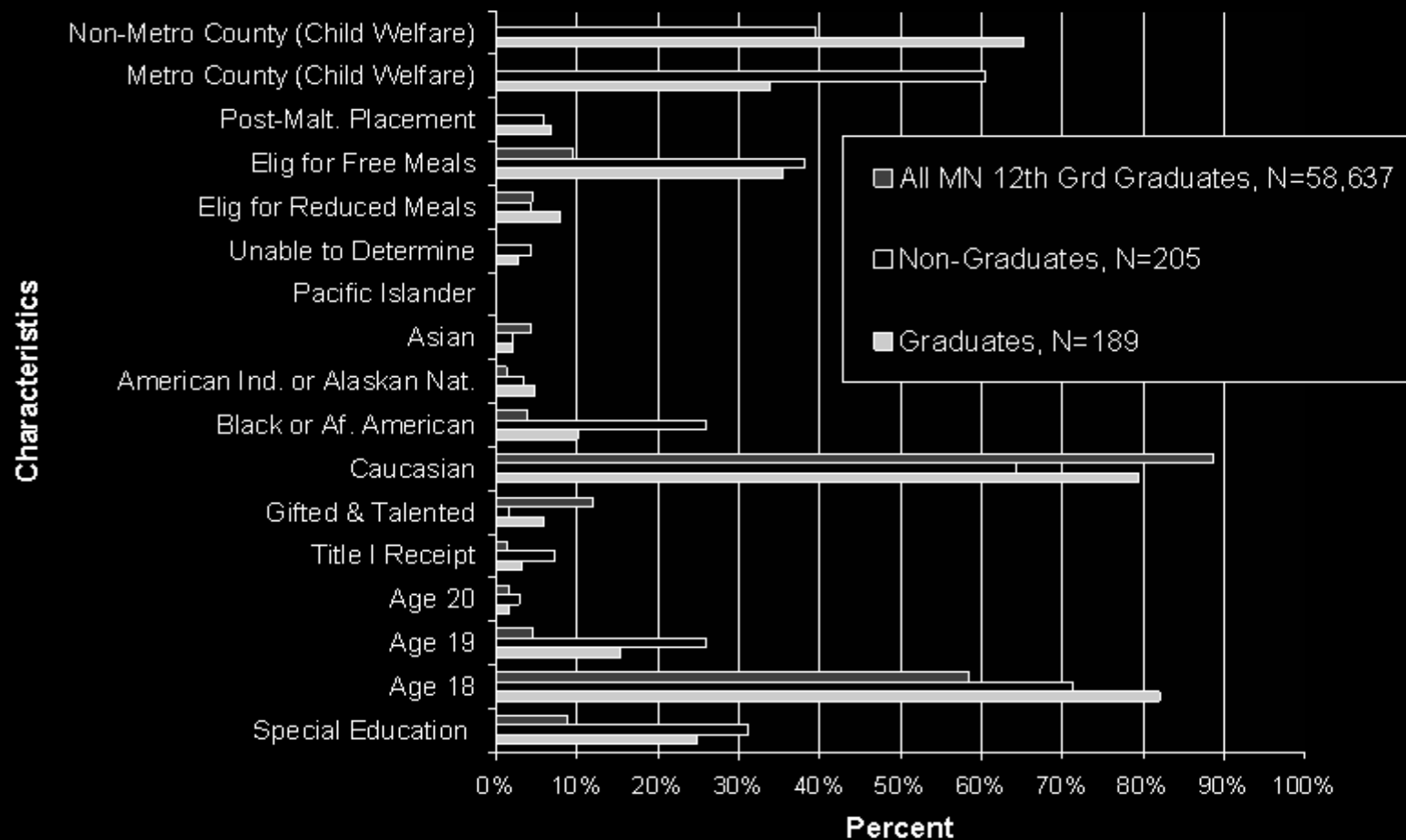
Graduation and Geography

Chart 8. Metro or Non-Metro County* of 12th Grade Graduates and Non-Graduates of the Child Welfare Adolescent Group



All Graduates

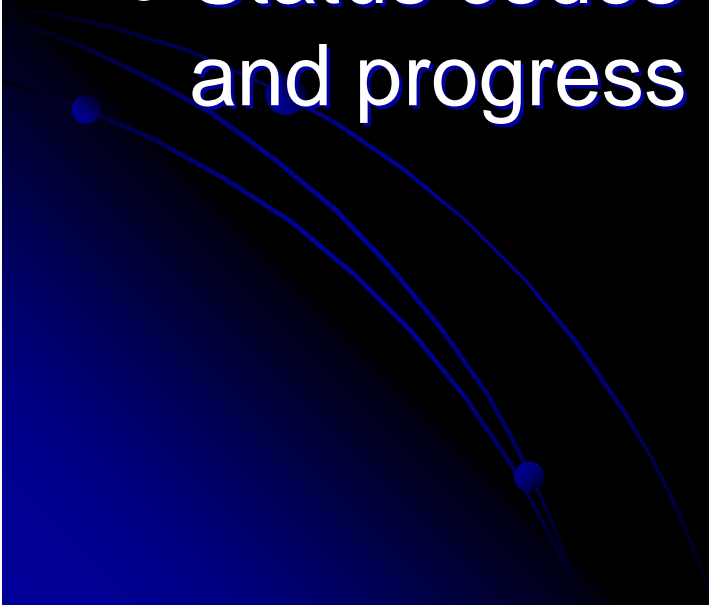
Chart 3. Characteristics of 12th Grade Adolescent Group Graduates and Non-Graduates and All Minnesota 12th Grade Graduates, 2002-2003 School Year



Educational Status – All Grades

- Seniors did not constitute entire study group (387 out of 505)
- Desire to explore the educational progress of all child welfare students
- To examine progress, needed to have a way to assess the progress of non-graduates

Education “Status End” Code Use

- Student records are updated with one of a number of status end codes throughout the academic year
 - Status codes provide life event information and progress of student
- 

Progress, Set-Backs, and Unknowns

(examples of codes and categorizations)

“Progress”

- Graduated
- Left to attend GED program
- Continued enrollment

“Set-Back”

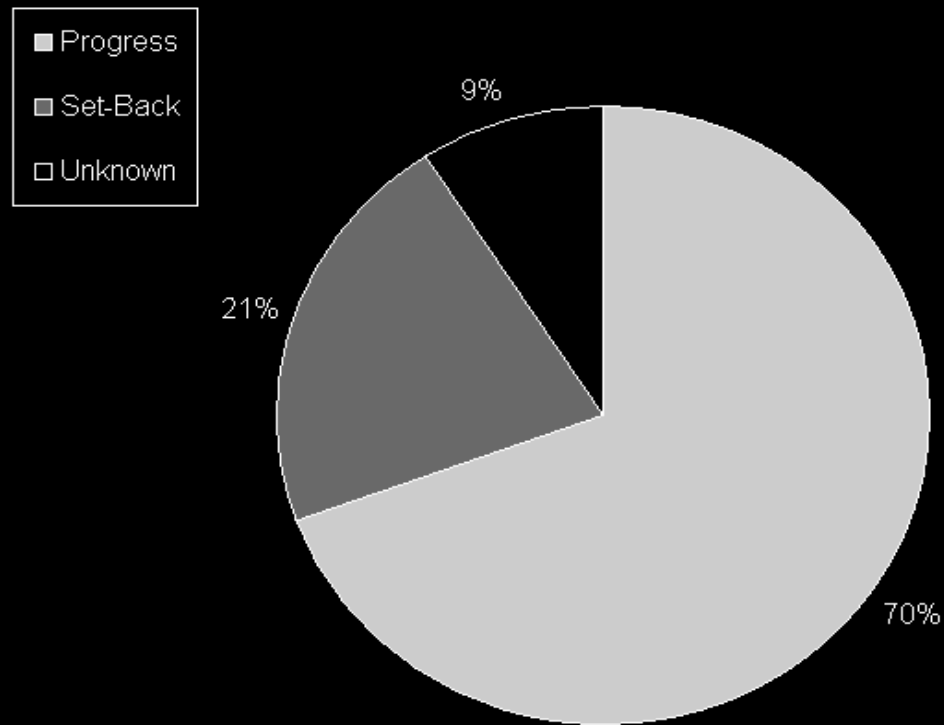
- Left due to pregnancy
- Left for financial reasons
- Committed to treatment facility

“Unknown”

- Withdrew and transferred to a non-public school
- Moved outside of state/country
- Student moved outside of district

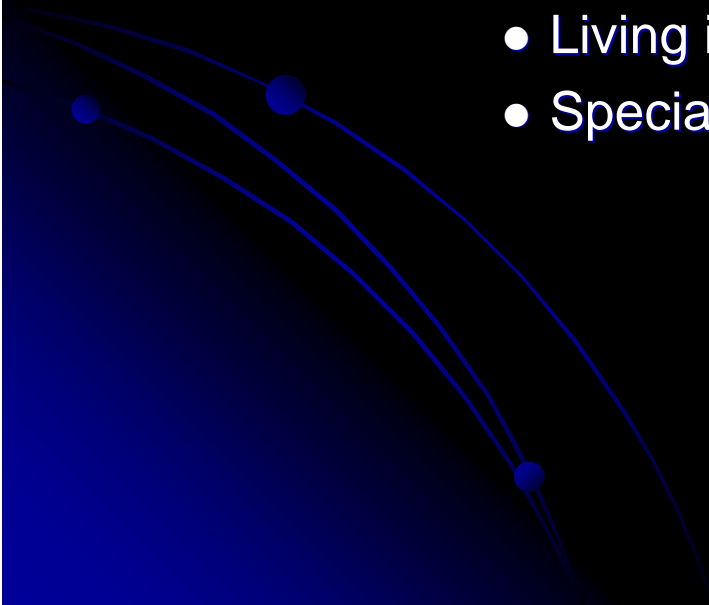
Status of all Child Welfare Adolescents

Chart 4. Educational Progress: Entire Child Welfare Adolescent Group
(All ages, All grades)



Patterns Observed

Patterns observed using the status codes were less clear, but a few potential interest areas emerged:

- Students experiencing Set-backs tended to be
 - Of color
 - Living in a Metro County
 - Special education recipient
- 

Our Findings...

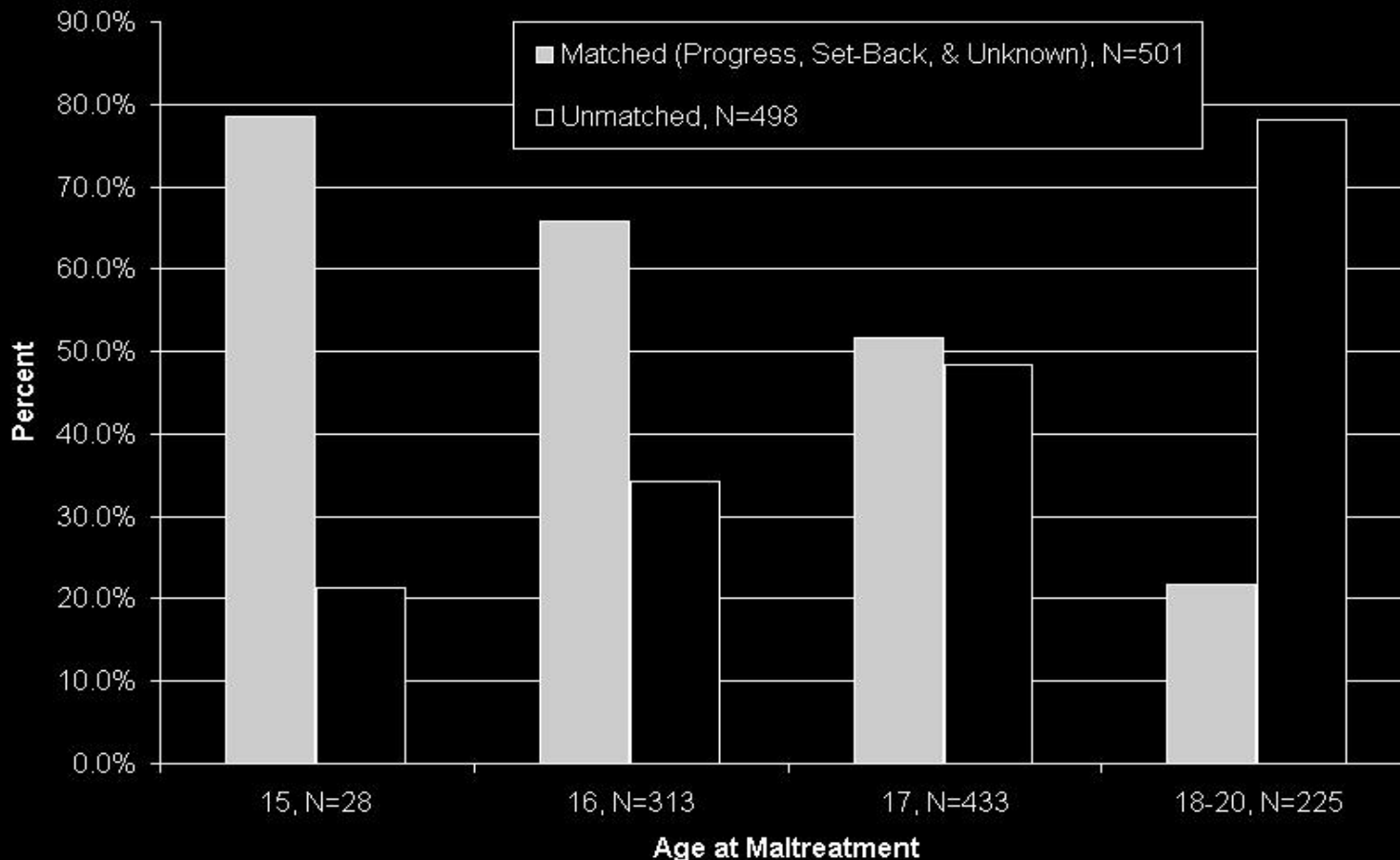
- Do not surprise advocates, state or local agencies, or direct practitioners.
- Reinforce what those working with youth observe
- Helped “put a number” on the educational outcomes that practitioners experience
- Provides a baseline against which intervention programs may measure results.

Matched & Unmatched Records

- About half (49.8%) of the Child Welfare group's records could not be located in the Education data.
- Reasons for why some records matched when others did not were unknown.
- Desire to know more about the "matched" and "unmatched" records.

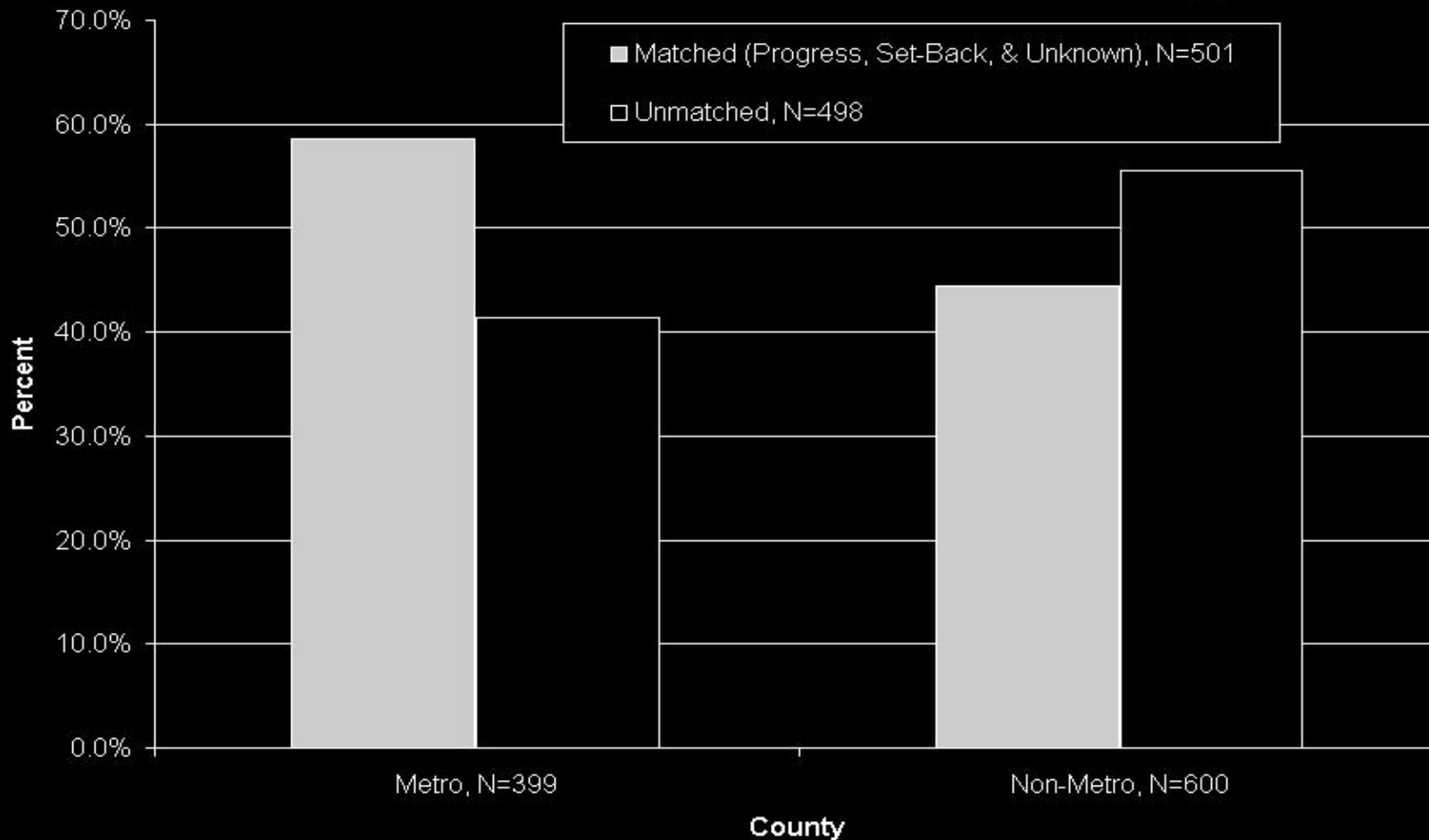
Matched & Unmatched Records and Age at Maltreatment

Chart 11. Age at Maltreatment for Matched and Unmatched Child Welfare Adolescent Group, N=999



Matched and Unmatched Records and Geography

Chart 12. Geography (Metro or Non-Metro County) of Matched and Unmatched Child Welfare Adolescent Group, N=999



Recommendations - Practice

- Examine what best practices are in place.
- Explore ways in which schools and counties can improve collaboration (and be proactive rather than reactive)
- Consider education advocate roles that also serve students without active case plans.
- Monitor special education youth more closely.

Recommendations - Policy

- Consider funneling funding to support at-risk students through schools
- Revisit funding for Family Services Collaboratives
- Consider expanding out-of-home placement for students beyond age 18.
- Incorporate cost-benefit analysis of programming into policy decision-making

Recommendations – Further Research

- Examine the graduation rate differences between Metro and Non-Metro Minnesota counties.
- Follow-these students into post-secondary education systems in Minnesota.
- Examine the wages earned by these students in the years after high school.
- Examine the public assistance (“welfare”) program use of students, post-high school.



For more information, see the CASCW Web site: <http://ssw.che.umn.edu/cascw.html>

Anita Larson, amlarson@che.umn.edu

612-626-3831

