Racial Equity Report Card

SOUTHERN COALITION for SOCIAL JUSTICE

• 2022-2023

Watauga County Schools

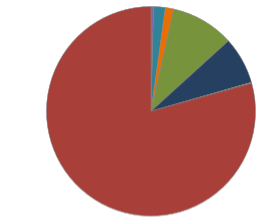
What are the Racial Equity Report Cards (RERCs)? The RERCs use public data to provide a snapshot of a community's school-to-prison pipeline, including any racial disproportionalities that exist.

What is the school-to-prison pipeline (STPP)? The STPP is the system of policies and practices that push students out of school and into the juvenile and adult criminal systems. The STPP has many entry points. Once students are caught in the pipeline, it can be very difficult for them to reengage and be successful in school. In almost every NC community, students of color are overrepresented at each entry point to the pipeline.

What is the purpose of the RERCs? The RERCs are a starting point for community education, discussion, and advocacy. There are many causes of racial disproportionality including implicit racial bias of decision-makers, institutional and structural racism, and explicit discrimination against people of color. Together, these forces fuel racial disproportionality in a community's STPP. The RERCs are not intended as an attack on the critically important public institutions that serve our youth, but rather, as a call-to-action for students, educators, parents, advocates, policy makers, and stakeholders to collectively examine the causes of racial inequity in their community and develop solutions that will help young people, especially youth of color, avoid and escape the school-to-prison pipeline.

Want to learn more? To see RERCs for other school districts or the state, learn more about the RERCs, and access additional resources, visit us at www.southerncoalition.org/resources/racial-equity-report-cards/

School District Demographics
2022-2023



- Indigenous (0.4%)
- Asian (1.8%)
- Black (1.3%)
- Latinx (9.8%)
- Multi-Racial (7.3%)
- Pacific Islander (0.1%)
- White (79.5%)

Total District Population:

4,628

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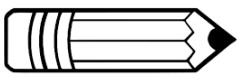


2.9X

White students in grades 3-8 were **2.9X times more likely** to score "Career and College Ready" on final exams than Black students.

1.5X

Black students were **1.5X times more likely** than White students to receive a short-term suspension.

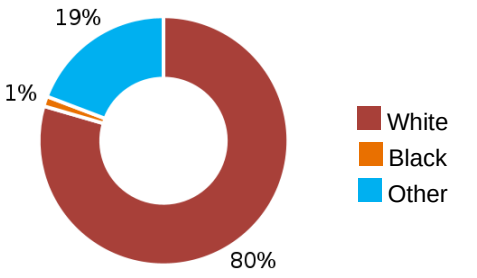
46.0%

46.0% of all juvenile delinquency complaints in the County were school-related.

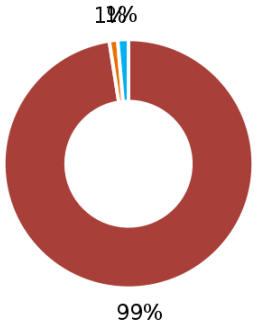
SCHOOL PERSONNEL

A diverse school staff representative of the student body is one important way to help equalize opportunities for students of color. A recent study revealed that low-income Black students in North Carolina who had at least one Black teacher in elementary school were significantly more likely to graduate high school and consider attending college. Despite this, North Carolina's teaching force remains disproportionately White. In 2022-23, 78.3% of the state's teachers were White, even though only 45.6% of the state's student population was White.

School Year 2022-23



Students by Race



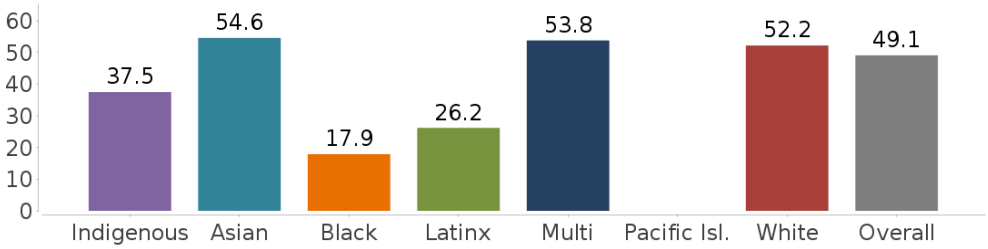
Teachers by Race

Academic Achievement

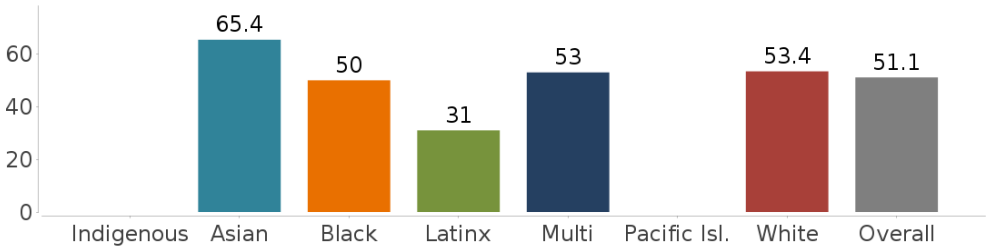
Students who are behind academically are more likely to have attendance issues, experience behavior struggles, and drop out of school. **Statewide, only 18.7% of Black students in grades 3-8 scored "College and Career Ready" on their final exams, compared to 41.6% of White students in 2022-23.** While standardized test scores are not a reliable measure of true ability for all students, they serve as the basis for many important decisions (e.g. course placement, grade promotion, identification as academically or intellectually gifted). Thus, low test scores can negatively impact a student's overall academic opportunities and outcomes.

School Year 2022-23

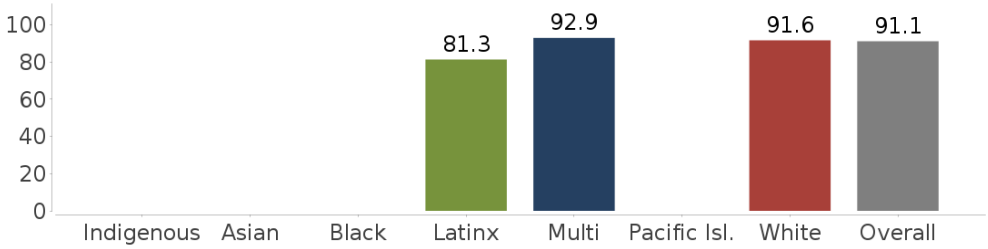
% of Students in Grades 3-8 Scoring "College and Career Ready" on End-of-Grade Exams *



% of Students in Grades 9-12 Scoring "College and Career Ready" on End-of-Course Exams *



% of Students Who Graduate High School Within 4 Years of Entering *



SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Any time a student spends out of the classroom for disciplinary reasons is time that student is not learning. Research shows that out-of-school suspension is ineffective at correcting student misbehavior and, instead, increases a student's chances of experiencing negative academic outcomes and future court involvement. Further, the use of suspension has no measurable positive impact on overall school safety.

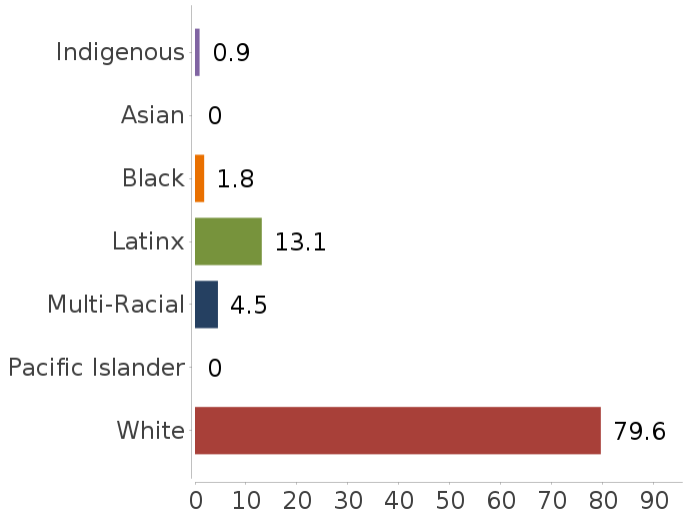
Importantly, some students are more likely to receive a suspension. **Statewide, Black students received 51.2% of all short-term suspensions, even though they made up only 25.5% of the student population in 2022-23.** This disproportionality exists despite the fact that studies show Black and White students misbehave at similar rates.

While many schools have decreased suspensions in recent years, there has been an increase in other discipline measures that take students out of their normal classroom or school, such as in-school suspension or transfers to alternative schools. Like suspension, these measures disrupt student learning and are often ineffective unless appropriate support is provided in the alternative setting.

2022-23 District Overview	
Short-Term Suspensions (STS) (1-10 school days)	**221**
STS Rate (Per 100 Students)	**4.8**
Long-Term Suspensions (more than 10 days)	**0**
Expulsions (indefinite)	**0**

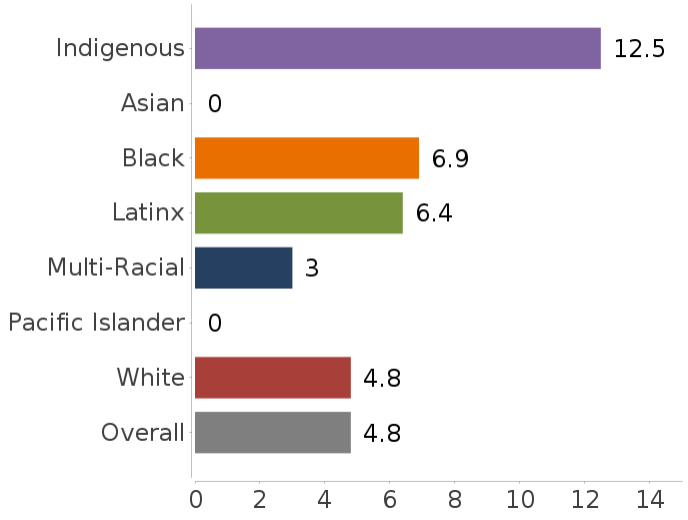
% of Short-Term Suspensions by Race†

School Year 2022-23



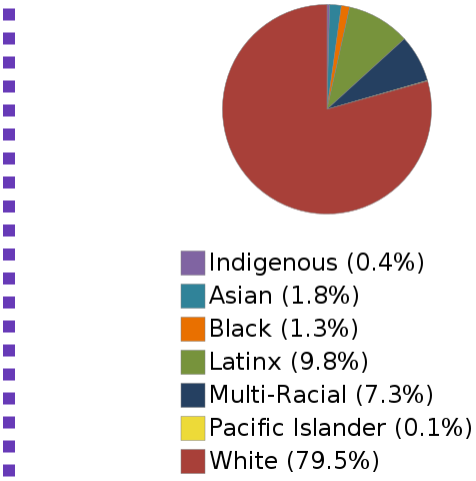
Short-Term Suspension Rates by Race†

School Year 2022-23



% of Students by Race

2022-2023



---- MISSING INFORMATION ----

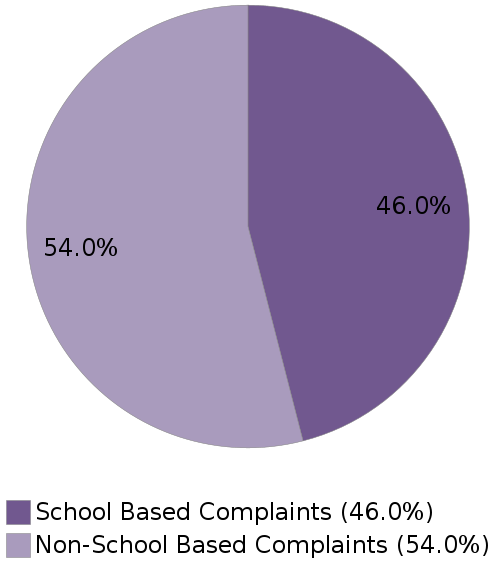
Unfortunately, statewide data is not publicly available for many important measures such as:

- Use of in-school suspension at the school and district level
- Suspensions disaggregated by offense, grade, length, etc.
- Assignments to alternative programs at the school and district level
- School-based arrests and use of force at the school and district level

These are only a few examples of data that should be collected and reported by the N.C. Department of Public Instruction.

% of Juvenile Complaints in County that were School Based

July 2022-June 2023

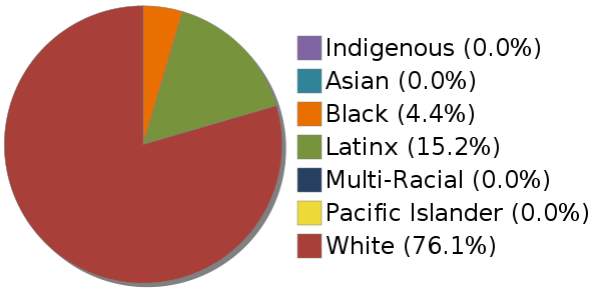


COURT INVOLVEMENT

Criminalization of youthful misbehavior has immediate and long-term consequences. Studies show youth who are court involved are more likely to reoffend and experience lifelong entanglement in the criminal system. Furthermore, court involvement can impact a youth's access to education, employment, housing, public benefits, voting rights, and other sources of opportunity and support.**Statewide, 38.0% of juvenile court referrals came from schools in 2022-23. Further, 50.2% of all juvenile complaints were filed against Black youth even though they make up only a quarter of the population.**

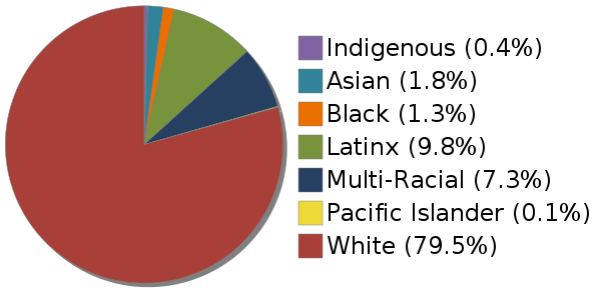
% of School-Based Complaints by Race

School Year 2022-23



% of Students in District by Race

School Year 2022-23



Data Notes:

*Lack of data in a category indicates the district did not have sufficient data for reporting in that category. Percentages greater than 95 or less than 5 are reported by the state as >95 and <5 respectively. Here, they are displayed as 95 and 5 respectively.

† In some instances, it is impossible to know the exact number of suspensions for a racial group because of the way suspension data is publicly reported. If there is enough data to approximate percentages or rates by race, the RERCs display those approximations. All approximations are equal to or slightly lower than the actual percentages or rates.

Southern Coalition for Social Justice (SCSJ) was founded in 2007 by a multidisciplinary group—predominantly people of color — who believed families and communities engaged in social justice movements need a team of lawyers, social scientists, community organizers, and media specialists to support them in their efforts to dismantle structural racism and oppression.

For more information, visit us at http://www.southerncoalition.org/