

Exclusionary Discipline in Multnomah County Schools: How suspensions and expulsions impact students of color

Disrespect to Authority
Weapon Insubordination Assault Alcohol
Class Cutting Open Defiance Theft Drugs
Threat of Violence Vandalism Battery
Harassment Abusive Language
Disruptive Conduct
Menacing Truancy Bullying Profanity

A report of the Multnomah County Commission on Children, Families & Community (2012)
Rebecca Stavenjord, Lead Staff



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Executive Summary	1
Research: What do we know about exclusionary discipline?	7
Profile on PBIS	11
Profile on Restorative Justice in Schools	11
Profile on Culturally Responsive Practices	13
Disciplinary Decisions Project:	15
Phase I – Quantitative Analysis	15
Phase II – Qualitative Analysis	16
Phase III – Promising Practice Analysis	16
Data: What do things look like in Multnomah County?	17
2009–10 Multnomah County School Data	18
Solutions: Where do we go from here?.	35
School and School District Data:	38
Centennial School District: 2009–2010 Student Data	38
David Douglas School District: 2009–2010 Student Data	39
Gresham-Barlow School District: 2009–2010 Student Data	40
Parkrose School District: 2009–2010 Student Data	41
Portland Public School District: 2009–2010 Student Data	42
Reynolds School District: 2009–2010 Student Data	43
Important Definitions.	44
Education & Life Success Workgroup and Discipline Disparities Project Partners	46

***“I’ve been suspended five times,
been to alternative schools,
they made me feel
like I was a bad kid...
I probably would have
graduated on time.”***

—Youth Listening Sessions

To community members and education partners,

A young person’s commitment to education is their key to success in life. Exclusionary discipline, in contrast, disconnects a young person from school, limiting the prospects for their success. Youth need positive adult relationships, safe and supportive environments in which to learn, and engaging curriculum that guides them through transitions and developmental stages.

Our goal as a community is to reduce factors that inhibit academic success. This report asserts that we must agree that exclusionary discipline is a primary factor leading to academic disconnection and ultimately failure; therefore reducing or providing alternatives to exclusionary discipline should be prioritized for all students and especially students of color.

Academic success is tied to many factors including quality instruction, culturally responsive practices, relationship building, and a commitment to learning. If students drop out of school they are more likely to be underemployed, reliant on government systems and more apt to be involved in the justice system later in life. We know how many young people locally are being impacted by exclusionary discipline practices and policies. With coordinated efforts we can reduce the number of students excluded from school and increase the number of students who graduate from high school and move into higher education and gainful employment.

Great value can derive from looking at this issue in depth and in a consistent and collaborative way. Practices and definitions differ across districts; however changes can be made as we learn from schools and from students and their families. We can begin to ask ourselves hard questions that will lead to better outcomes for youth. We owe it to young people in our community to address this issue with accurate data, thoughtful analysis, and collaborative solutions.

Whether or not we have children in school the entire community will benefit from addressing this issue. Educated children and youth are valuable parts of a thriving community and economy. We need to provide them with the proper supports to have the best chance of living up to their full potential. There are disparities in our current educational supports for children and youth that need to be addressed. This project identifies these inequities and outlines proposed solutions we can all take part in.

Along those lines, it is important to add that blame has no place in this analysis. This is an important conversation for our entire community to contribute to and be an active part in so we can build solutions together. In order to accomplish this, we must include school districts at every level; community partners and educational advocates who are committed to positive student outcomes; policy leaders who can shift systems to make long-lasting differences; and most importantly youth and their families in shaping quality change.

Finally, on behalf of the ELS Workgroup, we would like to recognize the leadership and efforts of Rebecca Stavenjord who convened the ELS workgroup and was the principle researcher and author of this report.

Together we can make this a reality.

Education and Life Success Workgroup of Multnomah County’s Commission on Children, Families & Community

Karen Gray
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Superintendent Parkrose School District

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Executive Summary

About the Education and Life Success (ELS) Workgroup

The ELS, an effort co-convened by the Commission on Children, Families & Community and the SUN Service System comprised school personnel, advocates, and community partners committed to equity in educational success, youth voice, and family engagement.¹ Work goals were identified as the result of youth voice at the 2005 Latino Youth Summit and charged to the earlier Educational Success Workgroup. ELS was created through a merger of the Education Success and the CCFC's Academic Success workgroups and convened from 2005–2011. ELS addressed projects tied to each goal of the County's 6-Year Plan to Improve Outcomes for Children & Families while connecting to local policy conversations via the Education Cabinet and the Leaders Roundtable (now merged into the P20 Cradle to Career initiative), the County Commission on Children, Families and Community, MOU Operations Team of systems serving youth, and Community Education Partners (a coalition of community and government organizations).

The Discipline Disparity project was prioritized because of the connection between discipline inequalities and lowered academic success for students of color. The goal of the project is to bring community partners, schools, and policy/decision makers together in a conversation about commitment to student success. This report provides both a baseline data analysis of discipline across Multnomah County that will be revisited annually, and solutions developed by community members and decision makers to effectively reduce disciplinary exclusions.

Through a partnership with the Superintendent's Council, MOU Operations Team, and the Multnomah Education Service District, the ELS compiled disciplinary data, policies, practices, and interventions across 6 of the 8 school districts within Multnomah County to provide a foundation to identify promising practices, support efforts to reduce disparities in discipline, and promote consistent application of discipline policies and practices.

Research Findings

Since the early 1970s, out of school suspension and expulsion rates, on a national level, have escalated dramatically. When students are removed from the supports of a positive educational environment they fall behind in their classes and become disconnected from school. We see this in a rise of drop-out rates, failure to graduate on time, lack of post-secondary matriculation, and an increase in a variety of risky behaviors. Too many youth in our communities fall through the cracks of the education system and leave high school without the skills necessary for a path toward college, work, and adult life.

Locally, the Coalition of Communities of Color and Urban League of Portland report that Portlanders of color have outcomes in poverty, employment, and educational measures that are 15–20% worse than white communities.² Educational attainment is identified as a key predictor of income, employment, health, and quality of life and the report calls for access to “excellent and complete education” for all people of color. The Coalition notes that discipline data is difficult to obtain and is necessary in order to identify disparities.³ National data show there is an issue with discipline disparities but locally there are gaps in data consistency and gathering. The local data gathered for this report mirror national trends in discipline data for students of color and represents the first time our community has been able to compare discipline data, disaggregated by race, across all districts using shared definitions and assumptions.

The report summarizes national research and readings in the following areas:

- Disproportionality in Exclusion
- The Discipline Gap
- From Discipline to the Achievement Gap
- Juvenile Justice and the School-to-Prison Pipeline
- Zero Tolerance and the Discipline Gap
- Bridging the Cultural Gap
- A Case for In School Suspension

¹ Goals identified in the Six Year Community Plan for Improving Outcomes for Children and Families of Multnomah County.

² *State of Black Oregon* (2009) Urban League of Portland

³ Curry-Stevens, A. (2010). *Communities of Color in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile*. Communities of Color in Multnomah County, Portland State University. Portland: Portland State University.

The Project and Findings

There are many factors that influence the dropout rate. This study isolates one variable of academic disconnect—exclusionary disciplinary practices—and proposes promising solutions to keep students in school, connected to learning, and graduating from high school. The project was completed in three phases⁴:

Phase I – Quantitative Analysis

- **Data query of incidents of student discipline.** Middle and high school level data reported with the six largest districts participating. Data gathered using the eSIS student data system with the assistance of the Multnomah Education Service District and data specialists from local school districts.
- **Data query of reasons for exclusion.** Specific exclusion data grouped by reason for exclusion and by race/ethnicity subgroup of student population.

Phase II – Qualitative Analysis

- **District survey.** Sent to all participating districts, soliciting response from administrative building level leadership (41 responses from five local school districts).
- **Case study survey.** In partnership with Parkrose School District, to gain insight into a sample of classroom level educators. Administered to Parkrose School District teaching staff (45 responses, consisting of 25% of the teaching staff).
- **Youth survey.** Developed with assistance from the Multnomah Youth Commission for distribution to young people with experience with school discipline.
- **Youth listening sessions.** Conducted in partnership with the Multnomah Youth Commission, Department of Community Justice Juvenile Services Division, Helensview School and Fir Ridge Campus. Small samples of youth were engaged in a conversation about their experience with exclusionary discipline and its impact on their lives.

Phase III – Promising Practice Analysis

- **District interviews.**⁵ Discussion of best and promising practices in place across the districts. Analysis of effectiveness, levels of implementation, sustainability and funding support.

- **Community conversations.**⁶ Involvement of community partners in the discussion of exclusionary discipline practices and impacts on student success.

**Major findings of the study are as follows:
In Multnomah County schools, there are 23 exclusions for every 100 students of color, a rate twice that of white students.**

Specifically, African-American and Hispanic/Latino students are excluded at higher rates, which mirror national numbers, but locally we see Native American student population exclusions are higher for that subgroup as well. Available data does not isolate students from Slavic or African Immigrant populations. We support efforts to further disaggregate data in non-traditional ways to find these students.

- **African-American** exclusions exist at a rate of nearly 40 per every 100 students. Almost 3.5 times the rate of white students.
- **Hispanic/Latino** exclusions exist at a rate of nearly 23 per every 100 students. Almost twice the rate of white students.
- **Native American** exclusions exist at a rate of nearly 26 per every 100 students. Nearly 2.2 times the rate of white students.

The Relative Rate Index (rate of disproportionality in exclusion for subgroups of students of color compared to their Caucasian peers) was also used to determine disparities between subgroups within schools. With the exception of Asian/Pacific Islander students, over-representation existed for all students of color.

- **African American** students are excluded from school at a rate 3.3 times greater than white students.
- **Hispanic/Latino** students are excluded 1.88 times more than white students.
- **Native American** students are one of the smallest student populations but are excluded at a rate 2.13 times greater than white students.

⁴ The Education and Life Success Workgroup in partnership with the Superintendent's Council, the MOU Operations Team, and partners from local school districts have designed this analysis of exclusionary discipline outcomes in Multnomah County schools.

⁵ Conversations took place with cabinet level administration, Student Services Directors, PBIS coordinators and other key staff.

⁶ Community partners include: Multnomah Youth Commission, members of the Coalition of Communities of Color, Early Childhood Council, SUN Service System, School Based Health Centers, PBIS Coordinators and members of the Community Education Partners.

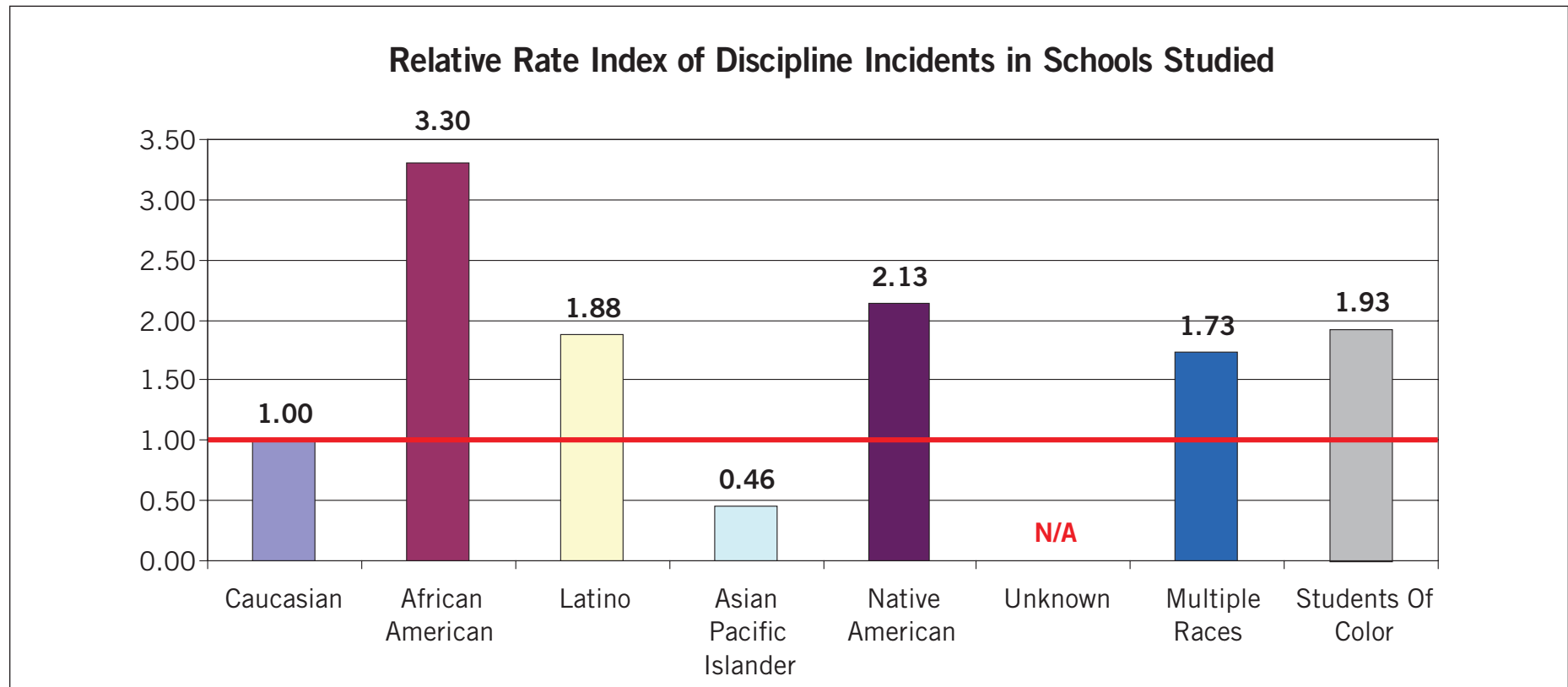
Finally, the reasons for exclusion were reviewed. Nationally, Caucasian students are referred to the office significantly more frequently for offenses that can be objectively documented (e.g. smoking, vandalism, leaving without permission and obscene language). African-American students, in contrast, are referred more often for disrespect, excessive noise, threat and loitering—behaviors that would seem to require more subjective judgment on the part of the referring agent. And, on a national level, students of color facing discipline for the first time are typically given harsher, out-of-school suspension, rather than in-school suspensions, more often than white students.

Locally, students of color make up 45.6% of the enrollment in schools studied; yet 60.6% of discipline exclusions are connected to students of color. When looking at reasons for exclusion, students of color are excluded in more subjective ways than their Caucasian peers. Although “fighting” is the

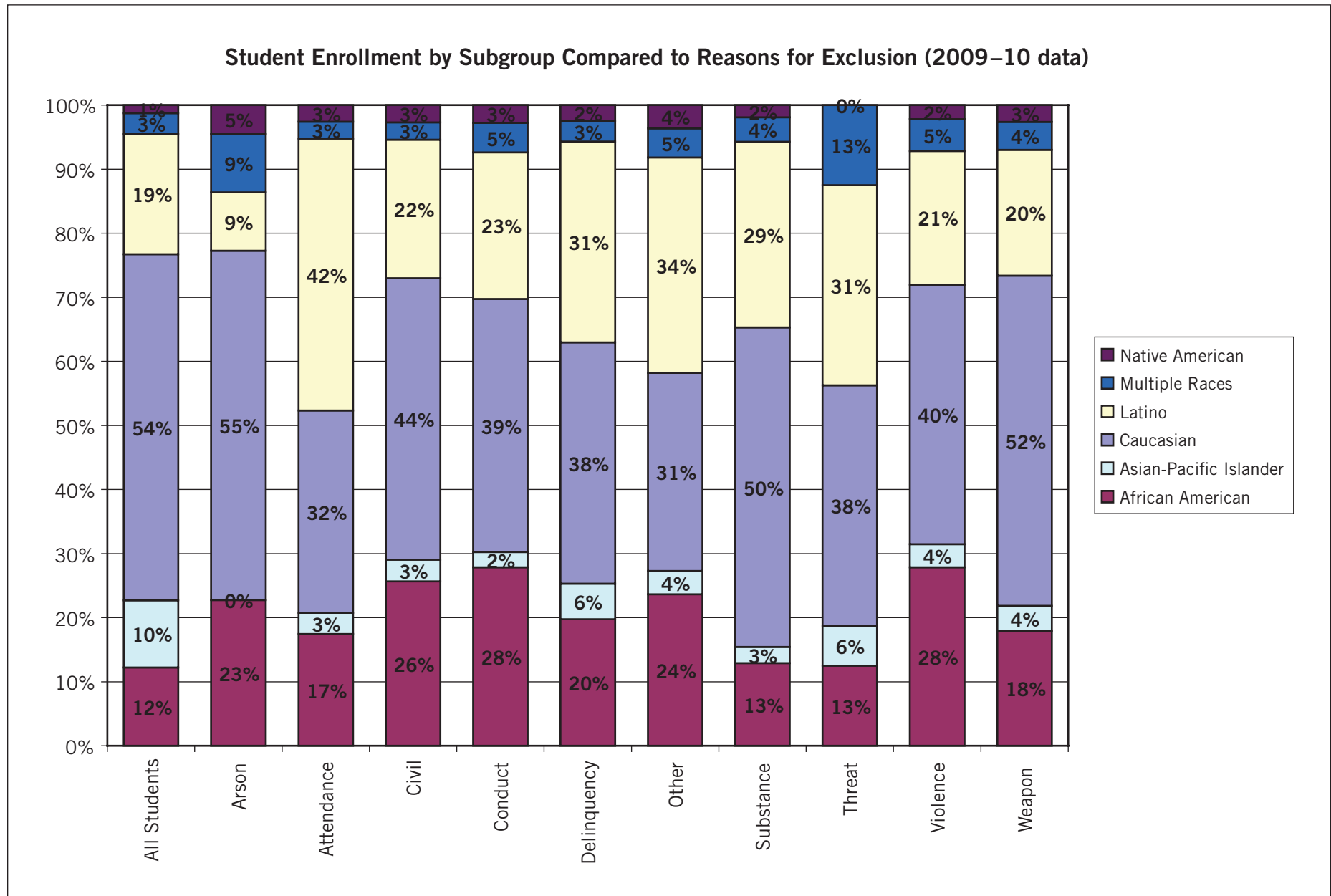
largest category for exclusion across most subgroups, after that, subjective categories of “Disruptive Conduct” and “Insubordination” top the charts for students of color.

These are largely exclusions that are made using an individual perception or lens and are in some cases the result of implicit bias.

“It has to do with the way you look, the way you dress. You’re automatically categorized according to how you look.”
 -Youth Listening Sessions



In the exclusion categories on the following chart, we have isolated disproportionality of students of color and disparity among subgroups. Caucasians are under-represented in nearly every category and severely in more subjective areas.



Recommendations

Disciplinary actions taken in that response to typical adolescent behavior that remove students from school do not better prepare students for adulthood. Instead, they increase risk of educational failure and dropout. This project serves to elevate the conversation about exclusionary discipline practices and stimulate discussion among education leaders and decision makers in our community. How can we reduce suspensions and expulsions while maintaining safe school climates and supportive environments? How are disciplinary actions linked to school success and at what levels are interventions most effective?

Schools should not be expected to do this alone. The community must also step up to support youth and youth-serving systems to keep students in a safe environment and ensure equity in disciplinary actions. There are effective forms of prevention and intervention that yield better academic and social outcomes. This issue must be addressed by bringing strengths from multiple sectors and systems together to best serve the needs of students as they transition into adulthood.

Community partners convened to discuss best approaches to address disproportionality and disparities in exclusionary discipline. The following suggestions for how to truly address disproportionality and disparities in school discipline may, at first, appear overwhelming. Schools have exceedingly difficult jobs and we don't expect that progress can be made in every area suggested below at the same time. What is important is that school districts, community partners, and family & youth work together across three key areas:

- Collaborative action grounded in shared data and definitions
- Supportive and inclusive school & community culture
- Systemic and personal accountability for improvement in reducing the number of students excluded and disconnected.

An extensive list of possible strategies related to these three areas is included in the full report. Genuinely embracing some of the suggestions in these three areas will support work locally to impact the discipline gap for students of color and achieve the goals set by the community in Cradle to Career—that all students are supported in and out of school, succeed academically and enroll in college or training. What follows are three of the highest-level recommendations with examples of short, mid, and long-term strategies.

1. Support shared countywide goals to keep students connected to school and on track to graduate by reducing and if possible eliminating all non-statutorily mandated exclusions.

Short-term strategy

Commit to annual bench line data review of exclusionary discipline facilitated by MOU Operations Team that incorporates deeper analysis of data disaggregated to include Special Education, Free and Reduced Lunch, English Language Learners, and Gender, as well as Race/Ethnicity. Seek to include the Corbett and Riverdale school districts as well as the Multnomah Education Service District and alternative schools into future analysis. Integrate the data and review into the Cradle to Career Report to the Community.

Mid-term strategy

Increase accountability for disparity in exclusions locally. Encourage districts to establish increased outcomes around discipline and equity for example, by integrating data analysis and a written commitment to eliminating exclusions into School Improvement Plans

Long-term strategy

Discuss an alert notification and response system for district discipline over-representation.

2. Reduce or eliminate exclusions through efforts to support a culture at the school building level that proactively address conflict and prevent behaviors that could lead to enhanced discipline methods.

Short-term strategy

Prioritize Countywide, full implementation of PBIS with fidelity in all schools and all levels.

Mid-term strategy

Support integration of Restorative Justice elements in conjunction with PBIS. Focus coaching supports at the classroom level to support school culture that relies on shared accountability not just punishment.

Long-term strategy

Support Courageous Conversations and equity training at all levels of administration and instruction, including boards and engage community

partners to assist with these conversations across systems. Support awareness of classroom level instructors and mechanisms to ask for assistance, support and review when making disciplinary referrals.

3. Create authentic opportunities for students and families to engage in the discipline process that focus not on punishment but problem solving and provision of support.

Short-term strategy

Develop a tool (document, video, process) to inform youth and families of their rights in discipline hearings. Support a district-specific video featuring the Superintendent to be shown at the beginning of every disciplinary hearing that outlines rights and responsibilities.

Mid-term strategy

Partner with culturally specific organizations to target outreach to families and youth.

Long-term strategy

Establish advocates for youth and families in disciplinary hearings, identify a cohort of community partners to serve as external advocates in pilot school/s. Target middle school and early high school transitions (similar to priority staffing model of foster care). Support advocates for youth at the building level (providing social-emotional supports).

“A meaningful approach to school discipline is one that treats students and their families with respect throughout the process, seeks to learn from students and to nurture their learning and growth as human beings, and that finds ways to bring students more deeply into the school community.”

*—Justice Matters Institute Report:
“How School Communities Prevent Racism
in School Discipline”*

Research: What do we know about exclusionary discipline?

Since the early 1970s, we have seen out of school suspension and expulsion rates on a national level escalate dramatically. When students are removed from the supports of a positive educational environment they fall behind in their classes and become disconnected from school. We see this in a rise of drop-out, failure to graduate on time, lack of post-secondary matriculation and an increase in a variety of risky behaviors. Too many youth in our communities fall through the cracks of the education system and leave high school without the skills necessary for a path toward college, work, and adult life.

Locally, the Coalition of Communities of Color and Urban League of Portland report that Portlanders of color have outcomes in poverty, employment, and educational measures 15–20% worse than white communities.⁷ Educational attainment is identified as a key predictor of income, employment, health, and quality of life and they call for access to “excellent and complete education” for all people of color. The Coalition notes that discipline data is difficult to obtain and is necessary in order to identify disparities.⁸ We have much national data to show there is an issue with discipline disparities but locally there are gaps in data consistency and gathering. As we are able to pull together local numbers, we see that they mirror what we’re seeing for students of color nationally.

Nationally, twenty percent of students cited discipline, either suspension or expulsion, as one of the factors that led to their dropping out of high school.⁹ A recent study followed nearly one million Texas public secondary school students, over a period of more than six years, showing nearly 60 percent were at one point suspended or expelled. About 15 percent were suspended or expelled 11 times or more; nearly half of the students with 11 or more disciplinary actions were involved in the juvenile justice system.¹⁰ This pathway from schools to the justice system is a priority area highlighted nationally through the efforts of Attorney General Eric Holder and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

⁷ *State of Black Oregon* (2009) Urban League of Portland.

⁸ Curry-Stevens, A. (2010). *Communities of Color in Multnomah County: An unsettling Profile*. Communities of Color in Multnomah County, Portland State University. Portland: Portland State University.

⁹ Way 2005

¹⁰ July 19, 2011 Breaking Schools’ Rules: A Statewide Study of how School Discipline Relates to Students’ Success and Juvenile Justice Involvement (<http://justicecenter.csg.org/resources/juveniles>)

Disproportionality in Exclusion

Nationally, African-American and Latino youth are over-represented in school suspensions. African American students are now over three times more likely than Caucasian students to be suspended. Increased use of exclusionary discipline has been largest for poor and minority students which leads to an even greater disparity for students of color.¹¹

As an example, recent information from Texas shows that African-American students and those with particular educational disabilities were disproportionately disciplined for discretionary actions. Student subgroups with at least one disciplinary action included: 83% of African American males, 74% of Hispanic males, and 59% of White males. The pattern is mirrored in female students with 70% of African American females, 58% of Hispanic females and 37% of White females with at least one disciplinary action.¹⁰

Questions remain around why students of color are disciplined at higher rates than white students. Some argue that minority children, particularly male students of color, tend to misbehave more frequently in school than do Caucasian children. Actual research, however, on student misbehavior, race, and discipline has found no evidence that African-American over-representation in school suspension is due to higher rates of misbehavior.¹¹ This calls for a deeper analysis of the issue and our systems of support for students and their families.

“I’ve been suspended five times, been to alternative schools, they made me feel like I was a bad kid... I probably would have graduated on time.”

—Youth Listening Sessions

¹¹ Losen, D. & Skiba, R (2010) *Suspended Education Urban Middle Schools in Crisis*. Indiana University

The Discipline Gap

The divide of the achievement gap is paralleled by disparities between Caucasian students and students of color in what is called the discipline gap. This refers to greater disproportionality in actual disciplinary actions and the specific reasons for discipline.

Caucasian students are referred to the office significantly more frequently for offenses that can be objectively documented (e.g. smoking, vandalism, leaving without permission and obscene language). African-American students, in contrast, are referred more often for disrespect, excessive noise, threat and loitering—behaviors that would seem to require more subjective judgment on the part of the referring agent.¹¹ And, on a national level, students of color facing discipline for the first time are typically given harsher, out-of-school suspension, rather than in-school suspensions, more often than white students.

*“It has to do with the way you look, the way you dress.
You’re automatically categorized according to how you look”*

—Youth Listening Sessions

The strongest predictor of achievement is time spent learning and when students are suspended or expelled they lose that valuable instructional time. A state’s suspension ranking was negatively related to its National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) achievement ranking in mathematics, writing, and reading.¹² In short, higher rates of exclusionary discipline are correlated with lower achievement rates.

Racial disparities in school discipline exist—even when economic status is considered. “We can call it structural inequity or we can call it institutional racism” says Russ Skiba, Director of the Equity Project, a consortium of research projects offering evidence-based information to educators and policymakers on equity in special education and school discipline.¹⁵

The National Center on Education Statistics showed that more than 3.3 million students were suspended or expelled in 2006—nearly one in 14. Of those, fewer than one in ten were for violent offenses. The vast majority were for vague, noncriminal offenses, such as tardiness, talking back to a teacher, or violating dress codes. For students of color, the crisis is even more extreme: In 2006, about 15 percent of black students were suspended, compared to 7 percent of Hispanic students and 5 percent of white students, according to NCES data.¹³

Skiba adds, “What we really need to do is go in to those districts and see if these really are choices being made. We don’t really know enough about the reasons for African-American and Latino over-representation in school discipline. We have enough data to show that it’s more than just poverty and any greater misbehavior. My guess is it is very subtle interactional effects between some teachers and students.”

National Statistics about Race and Student Success (2008)¹⁴

- 1** African-American student is suspended every seven seconds of the school day.
- 34%** of African-American students attend high poverty schools where three quarters of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. Only 3% of white students do.
- 7%** of the teachers in the United States are African-American. The number of teachers who are black men is even lower: 1%.
- 3x** The likelihood that black students will be suspended for an offense as compared to their non-black peers.
- 91%** of eighth-grade black students are designated below proficiency in math.
- 104** of every 1,000 African American students will drop out of high school.
- 68%** of African American high school students say they frequently face discrimination at school.

¹² Skiba et al 2003 c.f. Dignity in Schools n.d.

¹³ April 13, 2011 “Zero-Tolerance Education Policies Are Destroying Young People’s Lives,” via AlerNet by Gara LaMarche

¹⁴ Sources: National Center for Education Statistics, Chicago Tribune, NAEP, Pew Research Center Compiled by scholastic.com

From Discipline to the Achievement Gap

Removing a young person from an opportunity to learn has a huge impact on their life path and likelihood of success as they transition to adulthood. “We see disparities in achievement and graduation but we also see disproportionality in student discipline rates as more students of color are being excluded. There is evidence to suggest that the discipline gap may have a causal role in the achievement gap” says Russ Skiba.¹⁵ Even short term exclusions, depending on their timing in the school year, can have a detrimental effect as suspensions are categorized as unexcused absences. Students are therefore not allowed to make up assignments, tests or other activities missed during those days out of school. Some schools offer academic support programs or tutoring support so students don’t fall behind, but suspensions may have significant long-term repercussions as students who need the supports of a positive educational environment are more frequently excluded from it.¹¹

Repeated suspension from school tends to foster a downward spiral of academic failure, disengagement from school, and antisocial behaviors, with an increased probability of dropping out.¹⁶ The widespread disproportionate suspension of minority students has been linked to minority underachievement. The relationship between suspension and failure to graduate is strengthened by classroom separation, which often leads to further isolation/disconnection and falling behind. Students who already struggle with “fitting in” and succeeding in school become further isolated when separated from the classroom and will likely struggle with catching up on school work and attaining the requirements needed to graduate.⁹

Students have been found to have had devastating academic results when suspended or expelled. Students who were repeatedly disciplined, were more likely to be held back a grade or to drop out than were students not involved in the disciplinary system. In fact, 31 percent of students disciplined once or more repeated their grade at least once. Those disciplined 11 times or more had a 40 percent graduation rate.^{10,17}

“...I’m not going to go through all that work to get back in school, most kids are gonna be like, ‘Okay, I’ll just go kick it.’”

—Youth Listening Sessions

15 Classroom Strategies for Teaching Across Race. www.scholastic.com

16 Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Harvard University, Civil Rights Project, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 2006

17 Hauser 1999 c.f. Harvard Civil Rights Project 2000

There has also been recent evidence of association between suspension/expulsion and failure to graduate on time. There is a negative relationship between the use of school suspension and expulsion and academic achievement, even when controlling for demographics such as socioeconomic status.¹⁸ School discipline, including suspension and expulsion, increases the likelihood that a student will not graduate from high school. Suspension is a moderate to strong predictor of an individual’s failure to graduate high school. Harvard’s Civil Rights Project has found that more than 30% of sophomores who drop out have been suspended.¹⁹

Juvenile Justice and the School-to-Prison Pipeline

In July, 2011 Attorney General Eric Holder and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the launch of the Supportive School Discipline Initiative, a collaborative project to address the “school-to-prison pipeline” and disciplinary policies and practices that can push students out of school and into the justice system. “Maintaining safe and supportive school climates is absolutely critical, and we are concerned about the rising rates and disparities in discipline in our nation’s schools” said Secretary Duncan.

The goals of the Supportive School Discipline Initiative are to:

- Build consensus for action among federal, state, and local education and justice stakeholders;
- Collaborate on research and data collection that may be needed to inform this work, such as evaluations of alternative disciplinary policies and interventions;
- Develop guidance to ensure that school discipline policies and practices comply with the nation’s civil rights laws and promote positive disciplinary options to both keep kids in school and improve the climate for learning; and
- Promote awareness and knowledge about evidence-based and promising policies and practice among state judicial and education leadership.²⁰

Student data shows that when a student was suspended or expelled, his or her likelihood of being involved in the juvenile justice system the subsequent year increase significantly.¹⁰ Russ Skiba commented, saying these findings are, “very much representative of the nation as a whole.” Skiba’s project maps each student’s school records against any entry in the juvenile

18 Bowditch 1993 c.f. APA Zero Tolerance Task Force 2008; Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack & Rock 1986 c.f. APA Zero Tolerance Task Force 2008

19 Skiba and Peterson 1999 c.f. Harvard Civil Rights Project 2000

20 <http://www.juvenilejusticecouncil.gov>

justice system. If collaborations locally are able to attain this level of analysis, we can isolate deeper levels of disconnection and determine appropriate resources to allocate at certain steps or transitions of a student's life.

Exclusionary discipline policies have shown to dramatically increase the likelihood of future involvement with the juvenile-justice system—especially for students of color. The United States has the world's highest incarceration rate and the number of juveniles in detention has swelled in recent decades. In the US, more black men ages 18–24 live in prison cells than in college dorm rooms, according to US Census data.¹³

“Being in school was keeping me from doing bad things, then I go out and get in trouble, that leads to something bigger...”

—Youth Listening Sessions

Zero Tolerance and the Discipline Gap

A school's discipline policy creates a school culture and environment that influence the likelihood of graduation and academic success for all students. About half of all students, regardless of their race/ethnicity or educational attainment, rated school discipline policies as ineffective and unfair.³²

Zero tolerance policies have expanded dramatically in many school systems to include automatic suspension or expulsion for minor disciplinary infractions. Scientific reviews find no evidence that zero tolerance prevents school violence.^{21,22}

While the philosophy and practice of zero tolerance has led to increases in the use of suspension and expulsion, recent examinations have raised serious questions about both the effectiveness and fairness of such strategies.²³ Some argue these policies remove disorderly students so that others can

learn without distraction yet there is no evidence that frequent reliance on removing misbehaving students improves school safety or student behavior. In addition, suspended students miss instructional time and experience decreased opportunities to learn.

“I made one mistake, they wanted to send me out.”

—Youth Listening Sessions

Some programs seek to keep students in school while addressing misbehavior through conflict resolution and mediation practices. Restorative Justice programs are finding increased popularity throughout the nation as students work together to address the root of the conflict, develop a plan to manage future conflicts, and remain within the supports of quality instructional time. Principles of restorative justice have been successfully implemented in schools since the early 1990s in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These principles have been applied in preschools, and elementary, secondary, postsecondary, public, private, parochial, and alternative schools.²⁴

“...especially when you're a parent too, it's hard to go back 'cause of child care. I tried but they didn't have child care.”

—Youth Listening Sessions

In Multnomah County, Restorative Justice programs can be found in Parkrose School District, Portland Public Schools, and David Douglas School District. Funding for this model is minimal but growing steadily and strategies have been adjusted to reflect needs of schools and limitations of funding structures. Across schools and districts, there is increasing interest in combining elements of Restorative Justice with school-wide PBIS strategies.

21 American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Astor, Guerra, & Van Acker, 2010; Cornell, 2006; Skiba & Knesting, 2001

22 American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Gladden, 2002; Mayer & Leone, 2007

23 e.g. APA, 2008; Skiba & Rauch, 2006

24 Implementing restorative justice: A guide for schools. Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority <http://www.icjia.state.il.us/public/pdf/BARJ/SCHOOL%20BARJ%20GUIDEBOOK.pdf>

Profile on PBIS

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an approach to combating school violence and student misbehavior that has demonstrated positive results in randomized controlled trial research.²⁵ More than 13,000 schools nationwide have adopted PBIS, making it one of the most widely used positive behavior support initiatives in the nation.

Unlike other nonpunitive programs, it is not a curriculum but a multi-tiered approach to school discipline—three tiers, in particular. The primary tier of prevention consists of defining and teaching behavior expectations, rewarding positive behavior, providing a continuum of possible consequences for problem behavior, and collecting data for decision-making purposes. The secondary tier of prevention is designed for students who are at-risk for behavior problems or displaying early signs of behavior problems; it consists of targeted interventions that are consistent with schoolwide behavioral expectations. The third tier of prevention is implemented to support children with more serious behavior problems; it includes more intense, individualized intervention, often with family or community involvement, as guided by a functional behavioral assessment.

Several studies have examined the implementation and impact of PBIS across all grade levels. Recently released experimental studies have found a link between the use of this approach at the elementary school level and students' improved academic performance, better social behavior, and reductions in referrals to the principal's office for discipline problems. Implementation studies have found that PBIS can be implemented with fidelity across grade levels. Moreover, studies have identified schools that have sustained the approach for nearly a decade.

Evidence supports several new approaches to discipline. Schools often respond to disruptive students with exclusionary and punitive approaches that have limited value. Two major approaches to school discipline and student self-regulation are PBIS and Social and Emotional learning (SEL). Research strongly suggests that both approaches are beneficial, but neither is sufficient. Next generation evidence-based disciplinary systems should include a blend of elements of SWPBS and SEL and large-scale demonstration and implementation research is needed.²⁶

25 March 2011 Research-Results Brief from Child Trends Publication #2011-09 Multiple Responses, Promising Results: Evidence-Based, Nonpunitive Alternatives to Zero Tolerance. Christopher Boccanfuso, Ph.D., and Megan Kuhfeld, B.S.

26 Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010

Additional studies support defined effectiveness for students of color and fidelity of implementation, consistency across schools/districts, and specific attention to training, professional development, and coaching.²⁷ Locally, we can look at aligning classroom expectations with school-wide, building expectations. There are local needs for effective, evidence based models of coaching and professional development with the flexibility to work with individual school cultures.

Profile on Restorative Justice in Schools

Restorative justice in schools has emerged as an alternative discipline model to reduce exclusionary practices, as well as decrease police and juvenile justice involvement. Restorative justice is not a singular program, rather a philosophy and practice based on a core set of principles that emphasizes healing over punishment, inclusion over exclusion, and individual accountability with a high level of community support. Restorative practices aim to create a supportive community & reintegrate students who have misbehaved as productive members of the school community, rather than excluding them and risking further separation, negative attitudes towards school, and discontinuation of academic learning.

Restorative practices include a variety of proactive and reactive processes that can be implemented school-wide, in the classroom and within the disciplinary structure, such as restorative inquiry, circling, mediation, conferencing, and dialogue, which are rooted in three fundamental underpinnings.

Engaging Community

Restorative practices rely on building a web of relationships throughout the school community, including administrators, teachers, staff, school resource officers, students, family, and community organizations. This community supports students in making responsible decisions and holds them accountable for misbehaviors. Community engagement could mean building community in the classroom through the circle process, participation of a parent in a restorative process or providing community service opportunities.

27 Discipline Gets the Boot

Understanding the Impact and Repairing the Harm

Restorative practices in schools focus on understanding the collective impact and repairing the harm associated with misbehaviors, establishing responsibility and meaningful accountability, and preventing future misbehaviors. Each process incorporates the following guiding questions:

- What happened?
- Who was affected/impacted?
- What can be done to make things right?
- What will keep things right?
- How can others support you?

Giving Voice

Restorative practices focus on giving voice to each member of the community, whether through community building processes or responding to misbehaviors, where those involved and those impacted are empowered to make decisions about how to make things right and prevent future harm.

Currently, in Multnomah County, eight schools are incorporating restorative justice philosophy and practices in their school communities: Parkrose Middle School, Rigler School, Grant High School, POIC, Beverly Cleary School, King School, Floyd Light Middle School, David Douglas High School.

In the example of Denver Public Schools the district changed its policy in 2008 to officially focus on PBIS and RJ, each RJ school has a coordinator to mediate and monitor conflicts. 21 Personnel from 70 schools across DPS have been trained and the “number of out-of-school suspensions, which spiked in 2002–2003 at 14,000, decreased to about 8,000 last year.” In the Los Angeles Unified School District, the following has been developed as part of their Restorative Justice approach:

10 Alternatives to Suspension

- Alternative programming
- Behavior monitoring
- Appropriate in-school alternatives
- Community service
- Counseling
- Parent supervision in school
- Mini-courses
- Restitution
- Problem-solving
- Contracting

Bridging the Cultural Gap

Young people respond to positive adults who make an effort to build relationships with them. Knowing that someone cares about them and wants to connect to their reality goes a long way in increasing connection to school and a motivation to succeed. A candid conversation about race and culture can help to move past systemic and institutional bias.

Encouraging students, families, and staff to talk about their experiences, fears, and hopes when it comes to their school environment can help to break down barriers to communication and potential misunderstandings. Many times school is a microcosm of the larger world and many variables affect the success of young people, for example- knowing that teachers and staff care about them and are making a genuine effort to support them can build self-esteem and school retention.²⁸

“You never know what someone is going through when they get in trouble.”

—Youth Listening Sessions

Locally, several districts have begun conversations about culturally responsive practices to best serve students and their families. Some districts use Courageous Conversations and others have undergone extensive trainings in Cultural Responsiveness. This is a step in the right direction, to bring these conversations into every level of administration and instruction. The foundation is set for this process to be informed by school and student level data around exclusionary discipline and educational success. Community partners, such as the Community Education Partners coalition, have begun the partnership process with local schools to design positive goals toward culturally responsive practice.

²⁸ Classroom Strategies for Teaching Across Race www.scholastic.com Are you Biased? Caralee Adams, Jan/Feb 2008

Profile on Culturally Responsive Practices

“Culturally responsive practices are specific educational practices, instructional strategies, team processes, and curricula content which have been established by research to increase the achievement of culturally diverse students.²⁹”

We can make positive change by providing early intervention services and employing a response-to-intervention process, strengthening parent/family involvement and community partnerships, and utilizing culturally appropriate teaching skills and establishing a culturally competent school environment. There are many resources for developing culturally appropriate curriculum, school environments, and instructional practices. The following are some suggestions of best practices for addressing disproportionality.

Practices of Culturally Responsive Educators:

- Start with a culturally responsive curriculum
- Increase knowledge about students’ culture, language, and learning style
- Modify curriculum and instruction accordingly
- Build connections between academic learning and the student’s prior understanding, knowledge, and values
- Culture, language, and dialect are valued and used as assets in learning
- Empower students
- High expectations and standards are set
- Remedial work is not acceptable
- Activities for higher order thinking
- Most effective practice is hands on, cooperative and collaborative, culturally aligned
- Place less emphasis on lecture

Training Culturally Responsive Teachers:

- Communicate commitment to cultural responsiveness
- Teach to remove barriers to learning
- Provide resources for teachers to develop effective culturally responsive pedagogical methods
- Train teachers to place students and their cultures at the center of learning
- Ensure that all teachers respect the culture of their students
- Teach cultural sensitivity
- Train teachers to empower students

29 Culturally Responsive Best Practices in Addressing Disproportionality Renae Azziz, Pamela June (2008)

A Case for In School Suspension

“Connected” students are more likely to succeed academically and eventually graduate from high school.³⁰ Recent research consistently reveals academic factors—known as “early-warning data,” “risk factors,” or “on-track measures”—that more accurately predict whether or not a student is likely to drop out than socioeconomic factors. By preventing students from falling through the cracks and ensuring that they receive the appropriate level of attention, instruction, engagement, and support needed to succeed in their classes, educators can give every student the chance to graduate from high school prepared for college, the modern workforce, and life.³¹

If we begin rethinking the culture of schools and discipline, we may be able to retain some students who are on the edge. If school becomes a place where one “gets into trouble... [and as messages of failure and inadequacy] accumulate into concrete problems such as failing courses and becoming credit deficient toward graduation, the choices become those of continuing an extra year or more in a setting that offers increasingly negative experiences, or dropping out”.³²

In comparison, a quality In-School Suspension program can be the key to success by keeping students engaged, on-track, and connected to the supports of a positive school structure. Across Multnomah County, we struggle to define a quality In-School Suspension program with clear, evidence-based standards. In order to maintain this connection to school and quality instructional time, we need to begin examining In-School Suspension programs. There is a lack of consistency in program design and implementation across programs. Documented problems with ISS programs include:

- Lack of written procedures for ISS
- Inadequate training for ISS staff, and
- Failure to ensure students are given academic work during their stay in an ISS classroom, which can cause students to fall behind academically—particularly when this action is coupled with lack of direct instruction.¹⁰

30 Connell et al 1995 c.f. Blum 2005; Wentzel 1998 c.f. Blum 2005

31 Pinkus, L. (2008). Using Early-Warning Data to Improve Graduation Rates: Closing Cracks in the Education System. *Alliance For Excellent Education*, 1–14.

32 Wehlage and Rutter 1985, pp. 37–39

“I’d rather just skip than be suspended.”

—Youth Listening Sessions

Without student level data, we cannot analyze how students excluded for low level offenses disconnect from school. But, by isolating **only** exclusions for tardies or skipping school, we find that over \$2.2 million in ADM (Average Daily Membership, the amount schools receive per student) is attributed to youth with these incidents. If these students disconnect completely from school, it impacts the amount of funding schools receive for instruction. Let’s say, hypothetically, half of those students excluded for tardies/skipping school end up dropping out. Districts then lose roughly \$1 million. That would mean an additional 10–15 FTE devoted to keeping students connected to school. Or it could also mean 15 more fully staffed Restorative Justice programs in local schools.

If we are able to design In-School Suspension programs that reduce disconnection and replicate the supports students receive during the regular school day, those students could be retained, they would remain connected to academic and social supports and days in ISS won’t ultimately count toward the maximum number of cumulative absences a student can have before they are withdrawn from school.

For additional clarification or information on how schools calculate ADM, please visit: [OR Dept of Education: FAQs on ADM](#)

*“Teachers see you in a certain way,
to them, we’re bad kids.”*

—Youth Listening Sessions

Disciplinary Decisions Project

There are many factors that influence the dropout rate. The following study isolates one variable of academic disconnect—exclusionary disciplinary practices—and proposes promising solutions to keep students in school, connected to learning, and graduating from high school. First, the disproportionality of exclusionary discipline is identified and then the disparities between students of color and their Caucasian peers are highlighted.

The project was completed in three phases³³:

Phase I – Quantitative Analysis

- **Data query of incidents of student discipline.** Middle and high school level data were reported with the six largest districts participating. Data was gathered using the eSIS student data system with the assistance of the Multnomah Education Service District and data specialists from local school districts.
- **Data query of reasons for exclusion.** Specific exclusion data grouped by reason for exclusion and by race/ethnicity subgroup of student population.

The initial data query contained incident data for grades 6–12 (in the case of K–8 schools, elementary school data may also be included). Incidents were disaggregated by race/ethnicity and divided into categories for Expulsion, Out of School Suspension, In School Suspension and Other (lower level referrals, minor offenses). Incidents of Out of School Suspension and Expulsion were selected for two reasons: this is the area of most consistent data across districts, schools, and youth in every subgroup of race/ethnicity and because once students are excluded from an opportunity to learn their likelihood of success greatly decreases. This was the starting point for this initial study. In future reports districts should identify additional areas of depth to reach in future reviews.

This combined database is the first attempt to compile discipline data across multiple districts. As such, in consultation with District representatives and community partners, the project has accommodated some degree of

inconsistency in reporting protocols among the six districts. Even with this caveat, the findings are firmly grounded in the data and provide an accurate picture of the overall impact of disciplinary policies and practices.

Data for early grades, minor/low level offenses, and In School Suspensions are too unreliable to establish a useful baseline for all subgroups. Although not all levels of discipline are represented in the formal analysis of this project, they inform the next steps toward quality assurance in data collection and analysis for students. There is a need to look at data collection, quality, and definitions for these categories as well as tracking trends of students disconnecting from school at early grades and the cumulative impact low level disciplinary referrals have on a student's commitment to school.

The starting point for this query looked at the prevalence and impact of exclusionary discipline for racial/ethnic subgroups of the student population of Multnomah County and therefore, prioritized incidents for students of color. A small sample from participating school districts analyzed in more depth variables of: Sex, Special Education, English Language Learner, and Free and Reduced Lunch Status. There is value in data disaggregated by these areas, analyzed to best understand the challenges of multiple variables and used to design the most appropriate strategies in the school and community. This is recommended for future study.

In addition to the incidents of exclusion, the reasons for exclusion are key to understanding discipline decisions and implicit perceptions of students of color. Nationally, there are trends that show more students of color are excluded for subjective reasons while their white counterparts are suspended or expelled for more defined reasons. This addresses a deeper issue of implicit bias, prejudice, and racism that is embedded in all our systems of decision-making, institutions, and subconsciously in every one of us. These data inform courageous conversations about these issues at every level of decision-making that impacts the lives of youth in our community.

³³ The Education and Life Success Workgroup in partnership with the Superintendent's Council, the MOU Operations Team, and partners from local school districts have designed this analysis of exclusionary discipline outcomes in Multnomah County schools.

Phase II – Qualitative Analysis

- **District survey.** Sent to all participating districts, soliciting response from administrative building level leadership (41 responses from five local school districts).
- **Case study survey.** In partnership with Parkrose School District, to gain insight into a sample of classroom level educators. Administered to Parkrose School District teaching staff (45 responses, consisting of 25% of the teaching staff).
- **Youth survey.** Developed with assistance from the Multnomah Youth Commission for distribution to young people who had experienced exclusionary school discipline.
- **Youth listening sessions.** Conducted in partnership with the Multnomah Youth Commission, Department of Community Justice Juvenile Services Division, Helensview School, and Fir Ridge Campus. Small samples of youth were engaged in a conversation about their experience with exclusionary discipline and its impact on their lives.

A majority of discipline referrals originate at the classroom level. To best understand the issue of disparities in exclusionary discipline we have to hear from two important sectors: teachers and students. It is our hope that this sample of these populations provides insight and a demonstrated need for further conversations with both teachers and students as we work to develop community and school based strategies for changes in youth outcomes.

The district survey was completed primarily by building principals and vice principals and provides a view into one level of decision making. The additional sample survey performed with Parkrose teachers gathered feedback from 25% of the classroom level educators on their interaction with student level data, conversations about diversity, and disparities in discipline decisions. This level of information is necessary for successful development and implementation of strategies.

Youth listening sessions were performed with young people who have experienced exclusionary discipline. We understand that these young people are a specific sample and do not represent the entire student body or the majority of youth who receive lower level disciplinary actions. This is exactly why we wanted to hear from them. Many of these youth have had significant obstacles to their educational success; they have the experience and system knowledge to provide a thoughtful analysis and some youth-friendly solutions.

We asked them how they defined success, about their experiences with discipline, if they perceived policies to be fair, how exclusionary discipline had an impact on their lives, and if they had any suggestions for decision makers.

Moving this effort forward, it is absolutely imperative to include the voice of students and their families. It is recommended that listening sessions with youth continue throughout the next school year to inform discussions around how we best respond to disproportionality and disparities in our community.

Phase III – Promising Practice Analysis

- **District interviews.**³⁴ Discussion of best and promising practices in place across the districts. Analysis of effectiveness, levels of implementation, sustainability, and funding support.
- **Community conversations.**³⁵ Involvement of community partners in the discussion of exclusionary discipline practices and impacts on student success.

Data profiles of each district were discussed with teams consisting of assistant superintendents and cabinet level administrators, directors of student services and high school curriculum, data specialists, PBIS coordinators, and others involved in decisions around disciplinary actions. These conversations addressed district data summaries, trends in each area of discipline and for each subgroup of student, and an inventory of current initiatives addressing disproportionality. This created an accurate picture of efforts, capacity, and commitment to solutions for positive student outcomes. It created a complete picture of each district and the catalytic points for movement among their administration.

Community partners committed to equity were consulted throughout the study. Current community efforts to support schools, students, and families were integrated into the report and recommendations in an effort to blend common goals and capacity.

³⁴ Conversations took place with cabinet level administration, Student Services Directors, PBIS coordinators and other key staff.

³⁵ Community partners include: Multnomah Youth Commission, members of the Coalition of Communities of Color, Early Childhood Council, SUN Service System, School Based Health Centers, PBIS Coordinators and members of the Community Education Partners.

Data: What do things look like in Multnomah County?

Process

Data analysis performed with a Relative Rate Index (RRI), which is formulated using rates of exclusion for Caucasian students and students in designated subgroupings of race and ethnicity. This RRI formula is used widely within juvenile justice systems for determining disproportionate minority contact and confinement. It is also utilized by local Community Education Partners in their work with Portland Public Schools. In addition to the RRI, we have also included incident numbers and raw numbers to control for random occurrences and outliers.

Relative Rate Index (example)

Imagine a hypothetical school reported the following statistics: 100 Hispanic students enrolled, who account for 150 exclusions; 100 White students enrolled, who account for 50 exclusions; and 100 African American students enrolled, who account for 100 exclusions. The RRI for Hispanic students would be their rate of discipline (150/100) divided by White students' rate of discipline (50/100), or a score of 3. The rate for African American students would be 2. The higher the score is from 1 (the expected value), the greater the school's use of disproportional discipline for this type of student as compared to White students.

Rate of discipline for White students = $50/100 = 0.5$
Discipline Index value for White students = $0.5/0.5 = 1$

Rate of discipline for Hispanic students = $150/100 = 1.5$
RRI for Hispanic students = $1.5/0.5 = 3$

Rate of discipline for African American students = $100/100 = 1$
RRI for African American students = $1/0.5 = 2$

Data Analysis

In order to compare similar data across multiple schools and districts, the following protocol for data was used:

- Data includes grades 6–12 (in the case of PPS K–8 schools, all grades are included)
- Data includes discipline incidents resulting in Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsions only
- The National No Child Left Behind standards were used to protect small samples of students
- In School Suspensions are provided in a County level analysis
- Low-level, minor incidents are referenced in the project narrative only

Further disaggregation of pilot data shows higher trends of discipline decisions for male students, lower income students, English language learners, and special education students. This pilot sample is not unique in the challenges faced with these disaggregated findings. What is important is that these subgroups of students are being removed from the opportunity to learn and often disconnect from school that impacts their life-long path toward success.

Disciplinary removal has negative effects on student outcomes and the learning climate, often predicting school dropout. Emerging national data indicate that schools with higher rates of school suspension and expulsion have poorer outcomes on standardized achievement tests, regardless of the economic level or demographics of their students.¹¹ The question for us in Multnomah County is where do we stand on exclusions and their impact on student success, specifically for students of color? If decision makers agree that exclusionary discipline promotes disconnection from school, we must find collaborative solutions and alternatives that address problem behavior while also maintaining supportive, positive connections to a student's learning environment. If, as a community, we are serious about addressing the high school drop out rate and student achievement this is a fruitful area of work.

2009–10 Multnomah County School Data

Summary of Exclusionary Discipline

Important Note: *the following data represents the number of disciplinary incidents. Some students account for multiple incidents and there is a possibility of multiple incidents attributed to individual students in this analysis. We feel this view of discipline is more accurate of the over-representation of students of color in disciplinary actions because of the multiple incidents attributed to individual students. A simple count of students with at least one disciplinary incident was not in-depth enough for the analysis desired for this project.*

In Multnomah County schools, we exclude 23 of every 100 students of color, at a rate twice that of white students.

Specifically, African-American and Hispanic/Latino students are excluded at higher rates that mirror national numbers but locally we see Native American student population exclusions are higher for that subgroup as well. Available data does not isolate students from Slavic or African Immigrant populations. We support efforts to further disaggregate data in non-traditional ways to find these students.

- **African-American** exclusions exist at a rate of nearly 40 per every 100 students. Almost 3.5 times the rate of white students.
- **Hispanic/Latino** exclusions exist at a rate of nearly 23 per every 100 students. Almost twice the rate of white students.
- **Native American** exclusions exist at a rate of nearly 26 per every 100 students. Nearly 2.2 times the rate of white students.

The total number of students enrolled in K–12 in the 6 school districts studied is 90,512. In schools studied (public schools, grades 6–12 with the exception of K–8 schools in PPS), the enrollment is 52,573. Here we see over 50% of students identify as Caucasian. If the rate of disciplinary incidents is equal to the rate of enrollment, we would also see over half of the disciplinary incidents attributed to white students.

There were 8,911 reported disciplinary incidents that resulted in exclusion. When the number of disciplinary incidents for each subgroup is compared to the total number of incidents, we see there is disproportionality among subgroups of students as compared to their enrollment in the schools studied.

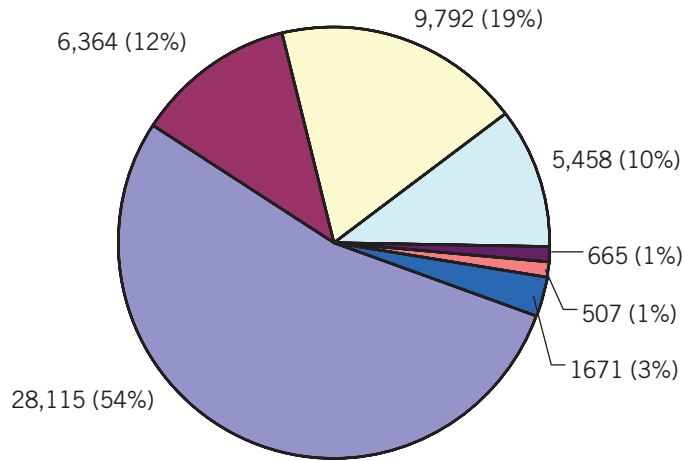
(6 of 8 districts)		Total Student Enrollment	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Native American	Unknown Race/ Ethnicity	Multiple Races	All Students of Color
Multnomah County	Total Enrollment (k-12)	90,512	48,688	9,058	18,317	8,782	1,129	1,238	3,300	40,586
	Percentage of Enrollment		53.8%	10.0%	20.2%	9.7%	1.2%	1.4%	3.6%	44.8%
	Enrollment of Schools Studied	52,573	28,115	6,364	9,792	5,458	665	507	1,671	23,950
	Percentage of Enrollment		53.5%	12.1%	18.6%	10.4%	1.3%	1.0%	3.2%	45.6%
	Disciplinary Exclusions	8,911	3,254	2,519	2,209	300	170	n/a	346	5,544
	# of Exclusions per 100		11.6	39.6	22.6	5.5	25.6	n/a	20.7	23.1
	Relative Rate Index (RRI)		1.00	3.42	1.95	0.47	2.21		1.79	2.00
	In School Suspensions	6,290	2,566	1,339	1,602	239	77	n/a	352	3,609

Caucasian students make up 54% of the population but only 38% of the discipline is attributed to white students. African American students account for 12% of the population but 28% of incidents are linked to African American students. Strikingly, Native American students make up 1% of the student

enrollment and 2% of the disciplinary incidents but when we isolate the number of incidents per 100 students they are being excluded from school at a higher rate than their Latino peers who make up 19% of the student population and account for 25% of discipline incidents.

Race/Ethnicity of Student Enrollment in Schools Studied

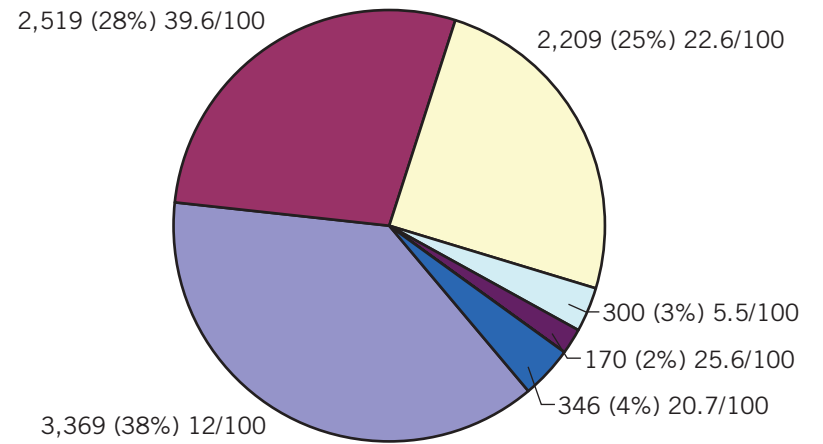
(Includes percentage of total enrollment for subgroups)



2009–2010 school year data
public schools, grades 6–12

Race/Ethnicity of Discipline Incidents in Schools Studied

(Includes percentage of total number of exclusions and rate of exclusions per 100 students for subgroups)



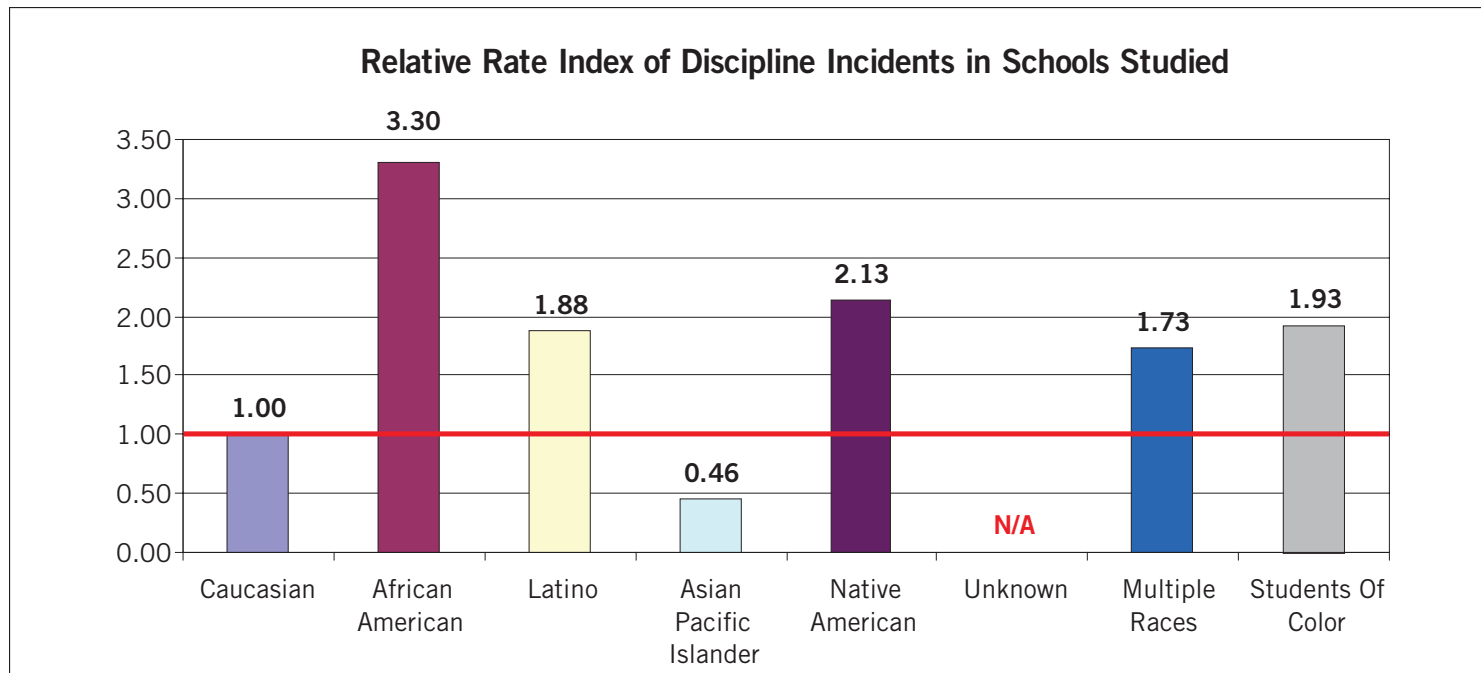
2009–2010 school year data
public schools, grades 6–12

Assuming equity in student discipline, the Relative Rate Index (RRI) or rate at which students are excluded when compared to their Caucasian peers would be 1.0 across all subgroups. In actuality, we see disparity in every subgroup of students with the exception of students who identify as Asian/Pacific Islander. The RRI for African American students is 3.30 which means exclusions for African American students are 3.30 times the rate of those for white students.

Some argue that we are over-disciplining all students. While this may be true, reducing disciplinary actions across all categories will not have an

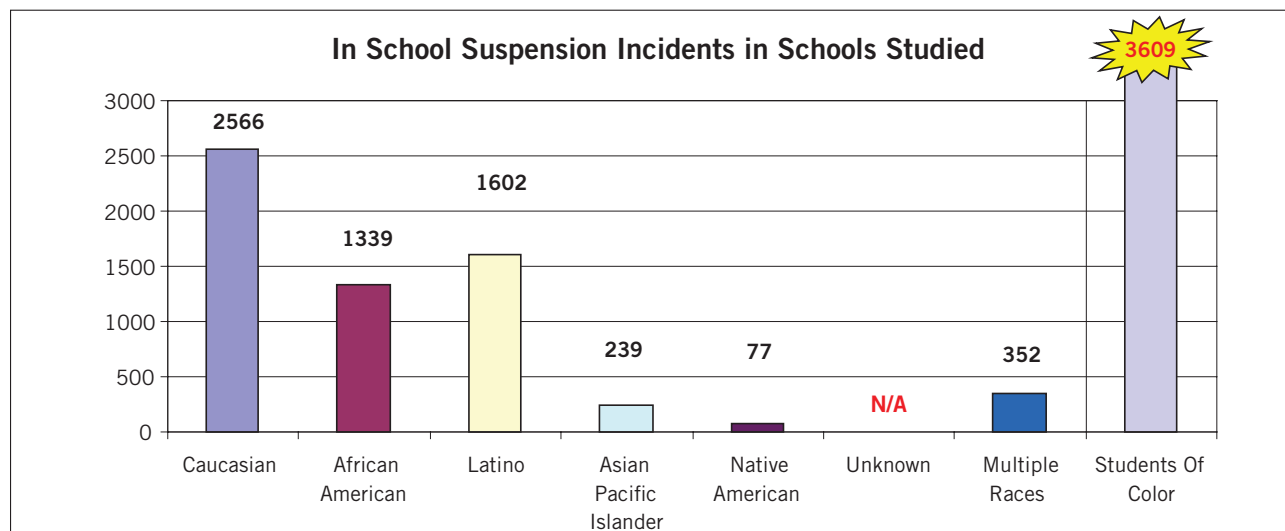
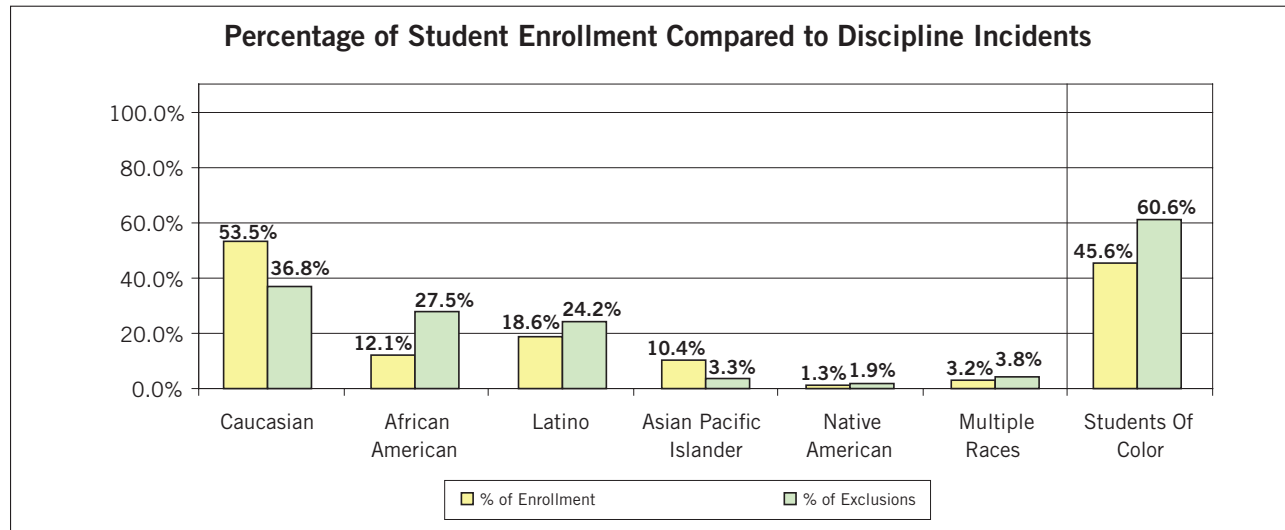
impact on the discipline gap highlighted above. We must agree on culturally responsive approaches to educating students of color and isolate the steps at which these disciplinary incidents occur.

Many less serious, conduct incidents may be a result of cultural misunderstandings and miscommunication. These incidents rank higher for students of color than their white peers as reasons for exclusion at both the national level and locally. As a community, we need to look at subjective reasons for entry into all service systems (education, child welfare, juvenile justice) and question the lens with which we view these young people and their families.



Students of color make up 45.6% of the enrollment in schools studied, yet 60.6% of discipline exclusions are connected to students of color. In nearly every subgroup of students of color, we see over-representation in disciplinary actions compared to the enrollment of that subgroup. These actions result in Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsions. Although the data is not statistically valid for lower level actions (In-School Suspension, detentions, etc) the disparity exists at all levels.

Without solid data for In-School Suspensions, we aren't able to draw definite conclusions but with the data we have available we are able to see that a considerably higher number of students of color end up in In-School Suspension programs. These programs are not consistent across schools or districts and in many cases do not exist formally. This is an under-reported area of student discipline.



Note: Categories of students of color includes all racial categories excluding Caucasian.

Reasons for Exclusion

Overall, “Fighting” is the most common reason for exclusion. But when looking at the top reasons students of color are disciplined, we see the same trend as national research—students of color are generally excluded for more subjective reasons than white students. Less serious offenses and conduct issues rank higher for students of color in subgroup comparisons and across categories of discipline.

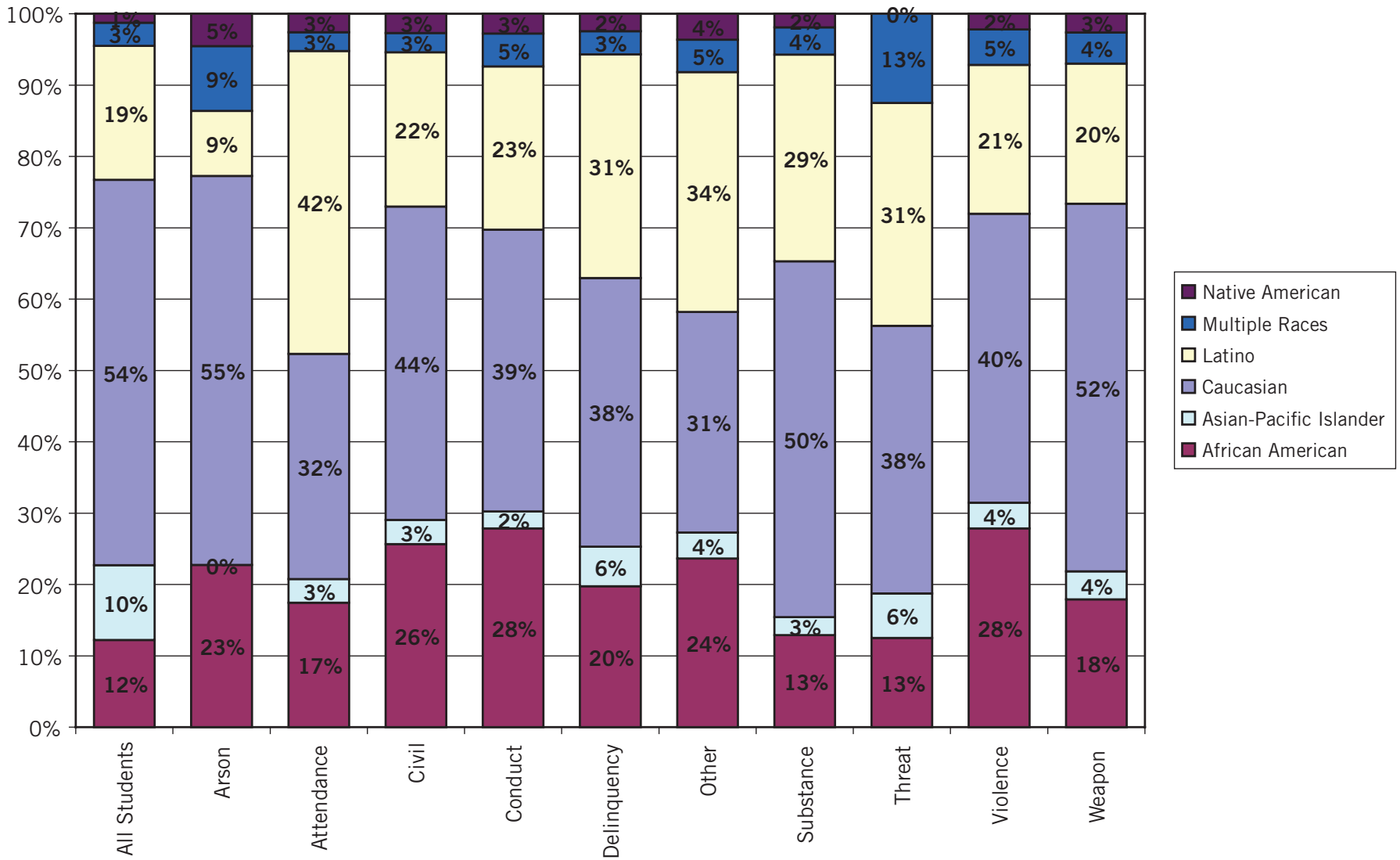
It is important to note that for this study we requested two data queries, one for “reasons for exclusion” and one for “discipline incidents.” There were inconsistencies between the two files. This has been noted in our request for data collection consistency moving forward. It is also important to note that these specific discipline categories are built into eSIS, the student information system used by local schools. The incidents are often reported in hard copy form and then inputted into eSIS by administrators and/or administrative staff.

Through grouping of these categories for ease of interpretation (i.e. combining “Truancy” and “Class Cutting/Truancy”) we see the disparity between objective and subjective reasons for exclusion of students. In the following chart, student enrollment is displayed at a 100% stacked bar; each discipline category follows with percentages of incidents within that category for each subgroup of students. Offences within each summary category are outlined on the following pages. Schools and school districts have not grouped their data in this way before; we hope that it provides a starting point for beginning conversations about the seriousness of disciplinary incidents, how they are assigned to students of color, and how that impacts student success.

White Students (enrollment 28,115)	3,529 total exclusions
	<i># of incidents</i>
1st – Fighting	773
2nd – Drugs	314
3rd – Disruptive Conduct	308
4th – Insubordination	246
5th – Harassment	186
6th – Assault / Menacing	170
7th – Language	164
8th – Class Cutting / Truancy	135
9th – Weapon	118
10th – Theft	116

Students of Color (enrollment 23,950)	5,216 total exclusions
	<i># of incidents</i>
1st – Fighting	1,165
2nd – Disruptive Conduct	577
3rd – Insubordination	340
4th – Drugs	298
5th – Harassment	242
6th – Truancy	235
7th – Class Cutting / Truancy	217
8th – Assault / Menacing	199
9th – Language	195
10th – Theft	190

Student Enrollment by Subgroup Compared to Reasons for Exclusion (2009–10 data)



The following eSIS classifications were combined into categories for the purposes of analysis. This grouping was presented to Student Services Directors at the MOU Operations Team, they provided input that shaped the final version but were not asked to vote or formally approve this grouping. This is meant to be a starting point for deeper conversation about subjective reasons for discipline.

Please note: incidents in these categories resulted in exclusion from school; there may be many other minor offenses in similar categories that are not included in this report.

Arson:

- **22 incidents**
- Only contains 'Arson' incidents

Attendance:

- **728 incidents**
- Class Cutting/Leaving w/o Permission/Truancy
- Off Limits
- Tardiness
- Truancy

Civil:

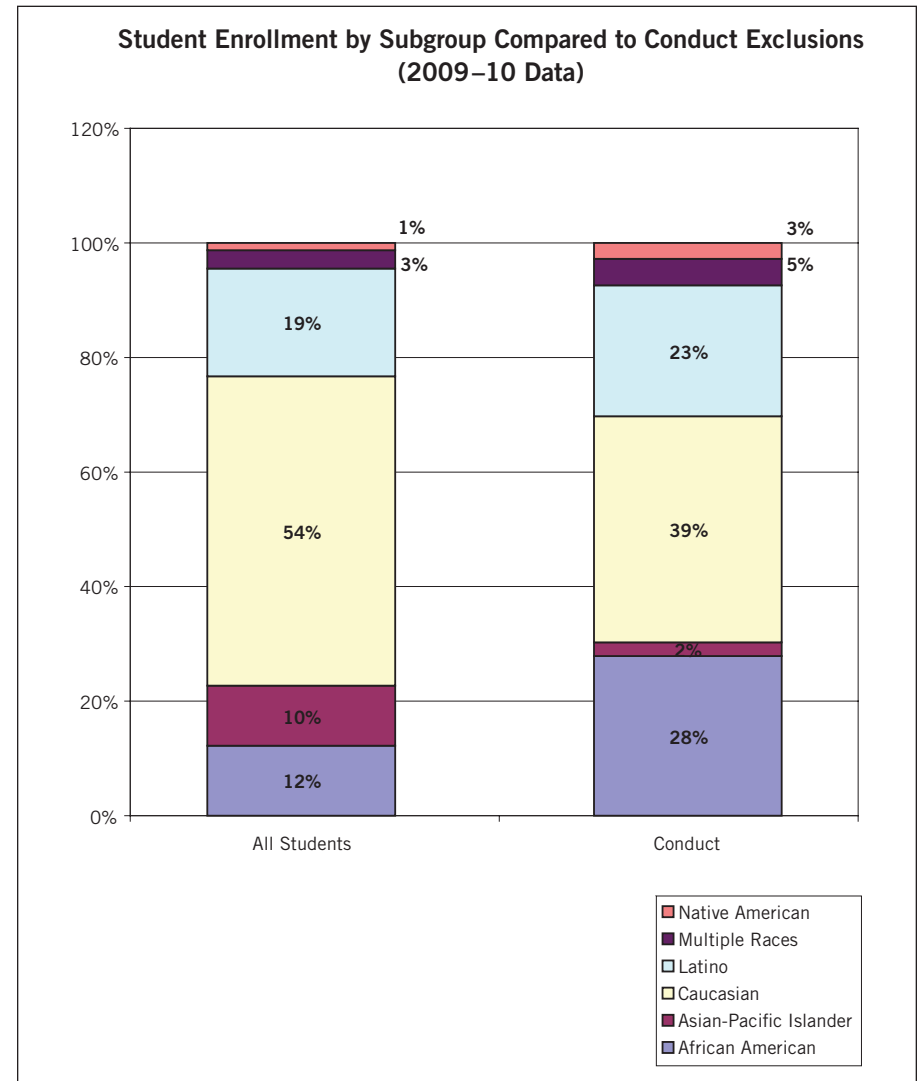
- **148 incidents**
- Harassment – Racial
- Harassment – Sexual

Conduct:

- **3111 incidents**
- Cheating/Plagiarism
- Chronic Minor Offenses
- Display of Patently Offensive Material

- Disrespect to Authority
- Disruptive Appearance
- Disruptive Conduct
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Inappropriate Display of Affection
- Inappropriate Dress
- Insubordination
- Interference with School Personnel
- Language - Abusive / Profane
- Lying / Dishonesty
- Non-compliance of Disciplinary Action
- Obscene Gestures
- Open Defiance
- Prohibited item
- Roughhousing
- Violation School Rules – Other
- Willful Disobedience

The area of 'Conduct' is the largest category of student discipline and is overwhelmingly subjective in nature. It is here that we find offenses such as 'Insubordination', 'Disruptive Conduct', and 'Open Defiance' among other offenses that can have multiple levels of interpretation. Of the total number of incidents, only 60 resulted in an Expulsion from School. Exclusions in the category 'Conduct' are in large part Out of School Suspensions and the highest levels of over-representation occur for African American, Native American, and students of Multiple Races as shown by the following chart.



Delinquency:

- **613 incidents**
- Burglary
- Deliberate Misuse of Property
- Extortion
- Forgery
- Gang Identifier
- Indecent Exposure
- Loitering
- Mischief
- Reckless Endangering
- Stolen Property Possession
- Theft – Attempted
- Theft – Major
- Theft – Minor
- Trespassing
- Vandalism – Major
- Vandalism – Minor
- Vehicle – Reckless Use

Other:

- **110 incidents**
- Closed Campus Violation
- Computer or Internet Abuse
- Electronic Devices – Poss. and/ or Use
- Fire Alarm – False

Substance:

- **836 incidents**
- Alcohol – Possession and/or Use
- Alcohol – Related Behavior / Other

- Alcohol – Sale or Transfer
- Drugs – Medication (Rx/OTC) Inappropriate Use
- Drugs – Possession and/or Use
- Drugs – Related Behavior / Other
- Drugs – Sale or Transfer
- Tobacco – Possession and/or Use
- Obsolete Alcohol / Drugs – Sale or Transfer

Threat:

- **16 incidents**
- Threat to School – Bomb
- Threat to School – Other

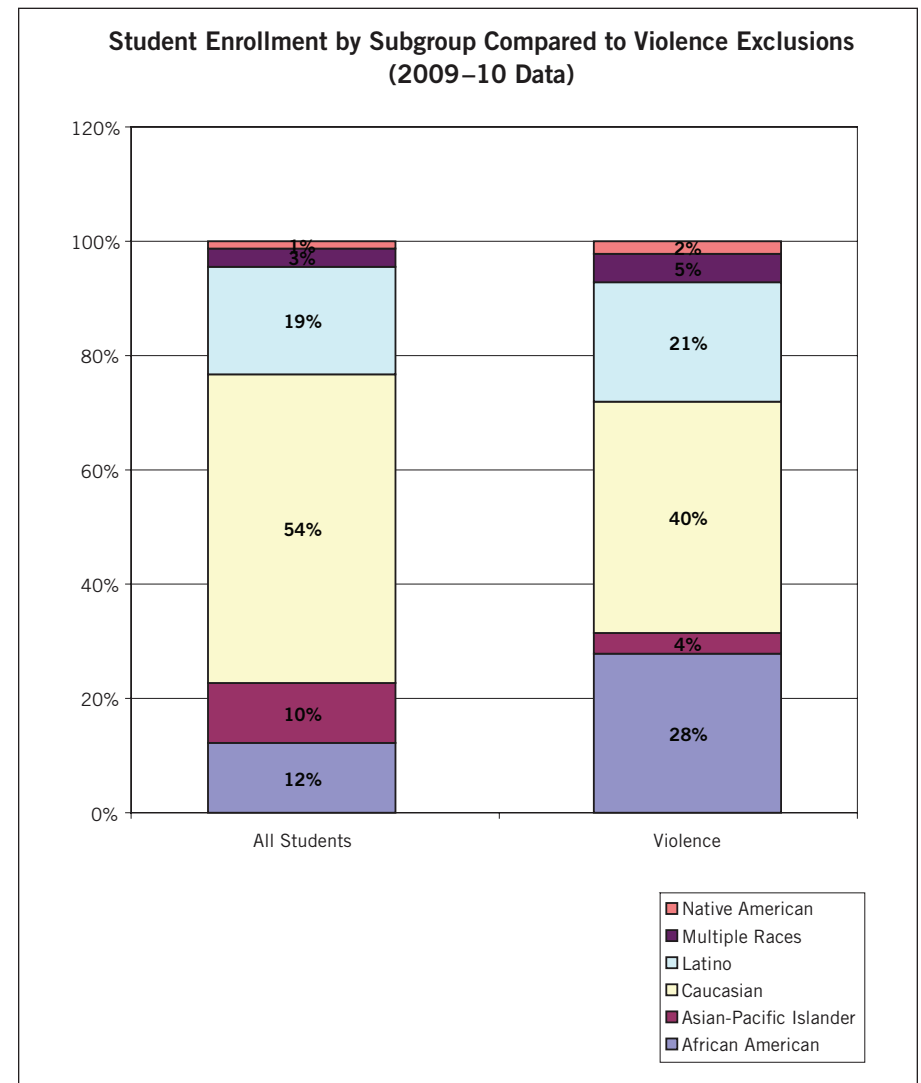
Violence:

- **2934 incidents**
- Assault / Menacing
- Battery
- Bullying
- Fighting
- Firecracker / Explosive – Poss. / Use
- Intimidation
- Threat of Violence toward Individual(s)

Weapon:

- **229 incidents**
- Weapon – Possession Only
- Weapon – Use / Attempted Use
- Weapon – Threat with weapon or dangerous instrument

The second largest category of discipline, 'Violence' sees the same issues of disproportionality and disparity in school discipline. As we look deeper at these issues, we must pay attention to issues related to our own cultural lens and implicit bias. Solutions targeting the discipline gap will need to prioritize the way we view and interact with young people of color. In many ways, our systems are built for a historically dominant, white society and our communities no longer reflect that. We must update the way we serve all community members and look at inequity at all levels of decision-making.



Students of color are typically excluded for more subjective offenses. After observing over-representation in the two largest categories: ‘Conduct’ and ‘Violence’, we compiled a breakdown of the steps within each category and disproportionality that exists. For the purposes of confidentiality, numbers are only provided for the three largest subgroups of students (Caucasian, African American and Latino).

Total Enrollment	52,065	% of Enrollment	Total Incidents	8,747	% of Incidents
Caucasian	28,115	54%	Caucasian	3,529	40%
African American	6,364	12%	African American	2,152	25%
Latino	9,792	19%	Latino	2,189	25%

The initial table shows that already within the number of incidents we see disparity between students of color and their white counterparts. White students are excluded at a rate less than that of their enrollment. Both African American and Latino students are excluded at higher rates.

Within the category of ‘Conduct’, white students are under-represented while African American and Latino students have higher rates of exclusion than enrollment. The same trend exists within ‘Violence’. Expulsion for ‘Violence’ is the only area where we see more white students excluded than their percentage of enrollment. This is aligned with national data that shows white students are excluded more frequently for defined offenses like violence compared to the more subjective exclusions of students of color.

Conduct	3,111	% w/in Conduct	Expulsions	60	% w/in expulsions
Caucasian	1,228	39%	Caucasian	28	47%
African American	867	28%	African American	18	30%
Latino	712	23%	Latino	8	13%
Out of School Suspensions					
			Out of School Suspensions	3,051	% w/in suspensions
			Caucasian	1,200	39%
			African American	849	28%
			Latino	704	23%

Violence	2,934	% w/in Violence	Expulsions	124	% w/in expulsions
Caucasian	1,188	40%	Caucasian	50	40%
African American	817	28%	African American	43	35%
Latino	613	21%	Latino	20	16%
Out of School Suspensions					
			Out of School Suspensions	2,810	% w/in suspensions
			Caucasian	1,138	40%
			African American	774	28%
			Latino	593	21%

Within each category, the reasons for exclusion show additional levels of disproportionality and disparity between students of color and white students. In nearly all cases, white students are under-represented. In the area of 'Conduct', African American students are connected to exclusions at a rate that doubles that of their enrollment in school.

Because reasons for exclusion vary between subgroups of student population, it is important to view these data in multiple ways. With the help of the

Multnomah Youth Commission's Education Committee, we created a visual that shows a weighted comparison for each subgroup of students.

The Education Committee was also instrumental in gathering the voices of young people affected by exclusionary discipline. It is imperative that any strategies adopted through this report also include youth input, voice, and leaders.

Reasons for Out of School Suspension Exclusion: Within the category 'Conduct'

Disruptive Conduct	873	%	Language	358	%	Disrespect to Authority	248	%
Caucasian	301	34%	Caucasian	163	46%	Caucasian	95	38%
African American	286	33%	African American	92	26%	African American	61	25%
Latino	185	21%	Latino	71	20%	Latino	76	31%
All Other Groups	101	12%	All Other Groups	32	9%	All Other Groups	16	6%
Harassment								
Harassment	275	%	Open Defiance	218	%	Insubordination	577	%
Caucasian	117	43%	Caucasian	83	38%	Caucasian	242	42%
African American	69	25%	African American	75	34%	African American	149	26%
Latino	63	23%	Latino	39	18%	Latino	139	24%
All Other Groups	26	9%	All Other Groups	21	10%	All Other Groups	47	8%

Reasons for Out of School Suspension Exclusion: Within the category 'Violence'

Fighting	1,904	%	Battery	152	%	Assault	336	%
Caucasian	760	40%	Caucasian	63	41%	Caucasian	155	46%
African American	495	26%	African American	47	31%	African American	96	29%
Latino	441	23%	Latino	27	18%	Latino	48	14%
All Other Groups	208	11%	All Other Groups	15	10%	All Other Groups	37	11%
Bullying								
Bullying	112	%	Threat of Violence	246	%			
Caucasian	50	45%	Caucasian	89	36%			
African American	33	29%	African American	90	37%			
Latino	15	13%	Latino	47	19%			
All Other Groups	14	13%	All Other Groups	20	8%			

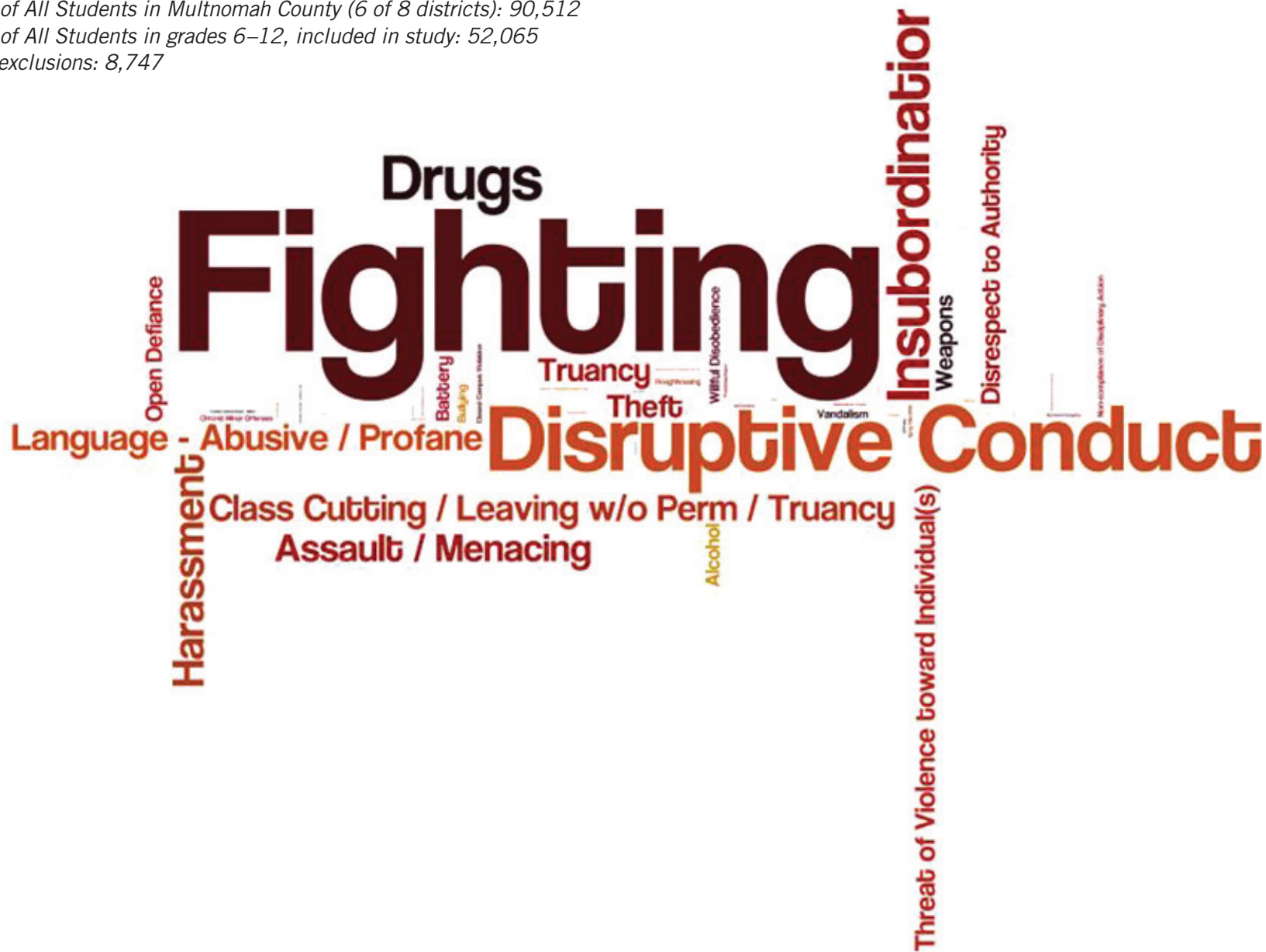
The following graphics were designed using www.wordle.net. Weighted values for reasons for exclusion in each student subgroup were inputted using the same font, layout, and color to show disparities in the reasons students of color are excluded from school.

Reasons for Exclusion – All Students – All Districts – 2009–10 Data

Enrollment of All Students in Multnomah County (6 of 8 districts): 90,512

Enrollment of All Students in grades 6–12, included in study: 52,065

Number of exclusions: 8,747



Reasons for Exclusion – White Students – All Districts – 2009–10 Data

Enrollment of White Students in Multnomah County (6 of 8 districts): 48,688

Enrollment of White Students in grades 6–12, included in study: 28,115

Number of exclusions: 3,529

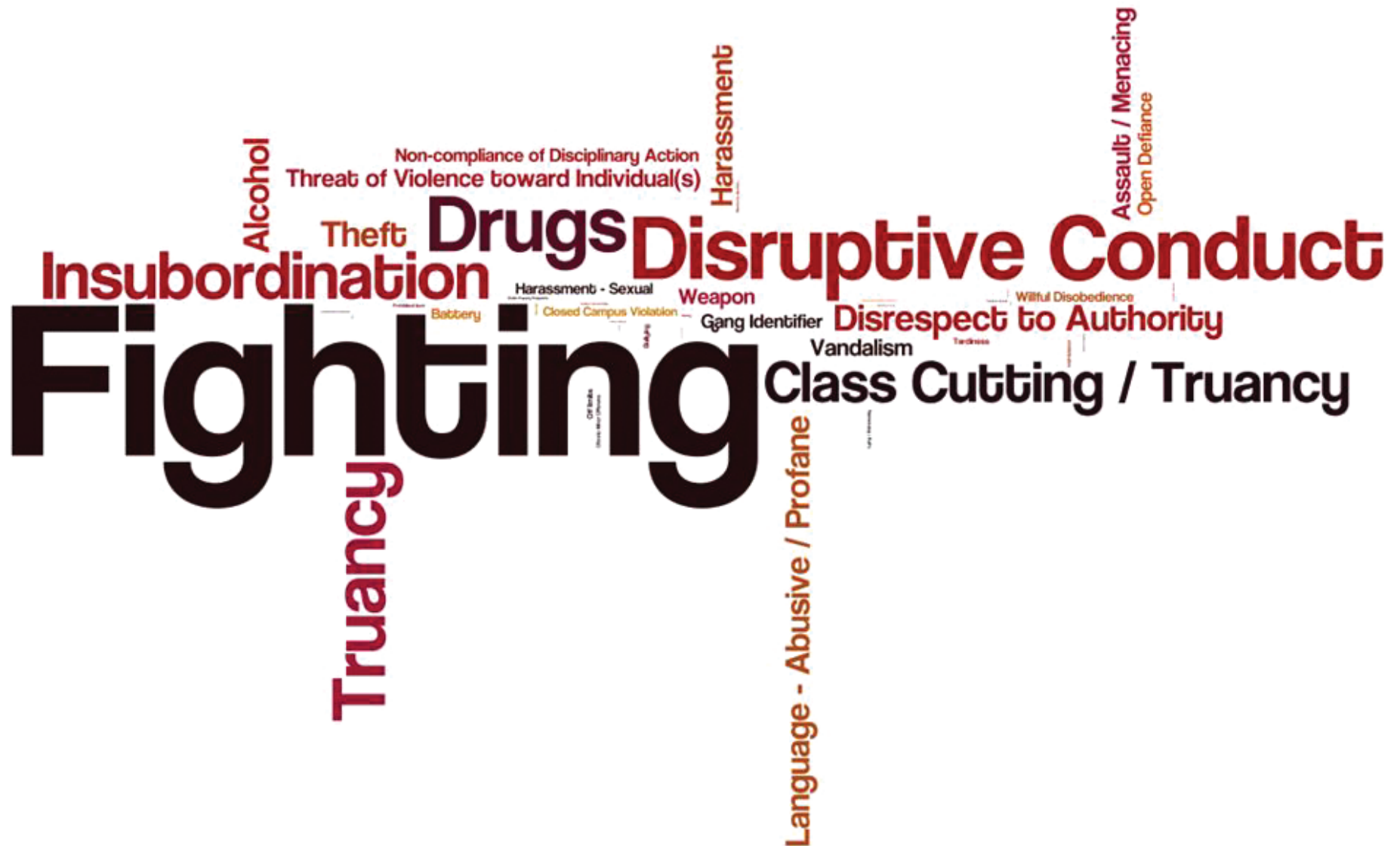


Reasons for Exclusion – Hispanic/Latino Students – All Districts – 2009–10 Data

Enrollment of Hispanic/Latino Students in Multnomah County (6 of 8 districts): 18,317

Enrollment of Hispanic/Latino Students in grades 6–12, included in study: 9,792

Number of exclusions: 2,189



Reasons for Exclusion – African American Students – All Districts – 2009–10 Data

Enrollment of African American Students in Multnomah County (6 of 8 districts): 9,058

Enrollment of African American Students in grades 6–12, included in study: 6,364

Number of exclusions: 2,152



Reasons for Exclusion – Students of Multiple Race – All Districts – 2009–10 Data

Enrollment of Multiple Race Students in Multnomah County (6 of 8 districts): 3,300

Enrollment of Multiple Race Students in grades 6–12, included in study: 1,671

Number of exclusions: 383



Reasons for Exclusion – Asian/Pacific Islander Students – All Districts – 2009–10 Data

Enrollment of Asian/Pacific Islander Students in Multnomah County (6 of 8 districts): 8,782

Enrollment of Asian/Pacific Islander Students in grades 6–12, included in study: 5,458

Number of exclusions: 278



Reasons for Exclusion – Native American Students– All Districts – 2009–10 Data

Enrollment of Native American Students in Multnomah County (6 of 8 districts): 1,129

Enrollment of Native American Students in grades 6–12, included in study: 665

Number of exclusions: 216



Solutions: Where do we go from here?

“A meaningful approach to school discipline is one that treats students and their families with respect throughout the process, seeks to learn from students and to nurture their learning and growth as human beings, and that finds ways to bring students more deeply into the school community.”

*—Justice Matters Institute Report:
“How School Communities Prevent Racism in School Discipline”*

Disciplinary actions that respond to typical adolescent behavior by removing students from school do not better prepare students for adulthood. Instead, they increase risk of educational failure and dropout. There are disciplinary methods that are developmentally sound and proven effective with regard to safety and achievement, yet keep the loss of instructional time to an absolute minimum.¹ These methods must be implemented in cooperation with a commitment to addressing institutional bias, racism, and systemic oppression for students and families of color.

This project serves to elevate the conversation about exclusionary discipline practices and stimulate discussion among education leaders and decision makers in our community. How can we reduce suspensions and expulsions while maintaining safe school climates and supportive environments? How are disciplinary actions linked to school success and at what levels are interventions most effective?

Schools should not be expected to do this alone. The community must also step up to support youth and youth-serving systems to keep students in a safe environment and ensure equity in disciplinary actions. There are effective forms of prevention and intervention that yield better academic and social outcomes. This issue must be addressed by bringing strengths from multiple sectors and systems together to best serve the needs of students as they transition into adulthood.

The following suggestions for how to truly address disproportionality and disparities in school discipline may, at first, appear overwhelming. Schools have exceedingly difficult jobs and we don't expect that progress can be made in every area suggested below at the same time. What is important is that school districts, community partners, and family & youth work together across three key areas:

- Collaborative action grounded in shared data and definitions
- Strengthening school & community culture which is supportive and inclusive
- Hold ourselves and our systems accountable for making improvement in the number of students excluded and disconnected.

Genuinely embracing some of the suggestions in these three areas will support work locally to impact the discipline gap for students of color and achieve the goals set by the community in Cradle to Career that all students are supported in and out of school, succeed academically, and enroll in college or training.

Collaborative Action Grounded in Shared Data and Definitions

Effective, cross-district data definitions, collection and analysis methods

- Annual bench line data review of exclusionary discipline facilitated by MOU Operations Team. Incorporates deeper analysis of data disaggregated to include Special Education, Free and Reduced Lunch, English Language Learners, Gender as well as Race/Ethnicity. Work to include the Corbett and Riverdale school districts as well as the Multnomah Education Service District and alternative schools in future analysis.
- Develop common definitions of offenses, referral process, and data collection. Study minor and classroom level offenses to isolate trends and disparity, prioritize decision points and actions within disciplinary referrals.

- Continue youth listening sessions into the 2011–12 school year.
- Increase family and youth voice in planning and analysis of annual data report. MOU Operations Team to develop protocol for increased youth voice sessions in schools in partnership with Multnomah Youth Commission and Resolutions NW/Restorative Justice.
- Design better collection methods for smaller populations of disaggregated data (i.e. Native American students) Partner with communities of color to design culturally appropriate data collection methods to further study impacts on these communities. Gather qualitative data from local schools to augment the data query.
- Begin to map student data against Juvenile Justice involvement data to isolate points of disconnect and entry into the justice system

Consistent countywide exclusionary discipline policies and procedures

- Support shared countywide goals to keep students connected to school and on track to graduate by reducing and if possible eliminating all non-statutorily mandated exclusions.
- Develop common administrative policies and directives across districts; review building level policies and practices for disparities.
- Examine zero tolerance policies for exclusionary discipline and review for subjectivity.
- Define which offenses are mandatory and which are building-defined.
- Develop a tool (document, video, process) to inform youth and families of their rights in discipline hearings. Support a district-specific video featuring the Superintendent to be shown at the beginning of every disciplinary hearing that outlines rights and responsibilities.
- Make audio recording of discipline hearings mandatory.
- Formally link efforts to reduce disproportionality and disparity across systems of education, juvenile justice, and foster care.

Supportive and Inclusive School and Community Culture

Resources for conflict resolution and enhanced implementation of PBIS

- Prioritize Countywide, full implementation of PBIS (all tiers, all schools) and fidelity at all levels.
- Support integration of Restorative Justice elements in partnership with PBIS. Focus coaching supports at classroom level to support school culture that relies on shared accountability not just punishment.
- Study methods of prevention and intervention utilized in school buildings, track impacts.
- Renew commitment to disconnected youth and target supports they need to be successful.
- Study the number of students excluded for reasons that could be directed to In School Suspension programs, look at effective elements of ISS programs and consistency across districts in availability and implementation of ISS.

Support for school cultures that are caring and culturally responsive

- Reduce or eliminate exclusions through efforts to support a culture at the school building level that proactively address conflict and prevent behaviors that could lead to enhanced discipline methods.
- Examine subjectivity in exclusion to study consequences of exclusion and impact on students of color.
- Use data as foundation for constructive, courageous conversations about equity. Create countywide trainings and information sharing on equity and educational success.
- Each school district reviews report and local data at board level. Design common efforts around training/technical assistance, informed by data, specifically delivered at all levels of schools including classrooms.

Design discipline policies/practices that thoughtfully embody a diverse school culture

- Support Courageous Conversations and equity training at all levels of administration and instruction; engage community partners to assist with these conversations across systems. Support awareness of classroom level instructors and their mechanisms to ask for assistance or support when making disciplinary referrals.

Support better systems for parent/family and youth involvement and engagement


- Create authentic opportunities for students and families to engage in the discipline process that focus not on punishment but problem solving and provision of support.
- Partner with culturally specific organizations to target outreach to families and youth
- Establish advocates for youth and families in disciplinary hearings, identify a cohort of community partners to serve as external advocates in pilot school/s. Target middle school and early high school transitions (similar to priority staffing model of foster care). Support advocates for youth at the building level (providing social-emotional supports).
- Multnomah Youth Commission, Resolutions NW, and Community Education Partners bring conversation to annual Parent Leadership Conference and other tables for community input
- Study the impact of absences and missed work on educational success. Track the timing of exclusions and impact on school completion and student dropout.

Systemic and Personal Accountability for Improvement in Reducing the Number of Students Excluded and Disconnected

- Increase accountability for disparity in exclusions locally. Encourage districts to establish increased outcomes around discipline and equity for example, by integrating data analysis and a written commitment to eliminating exclusions into School Improvement Plans
- Facilitate integration of exclusionary discipline indicators into C2C outcomes/measures. Align with academic priority designation within C2C, support further definition of this designation to include certain disciplinary exclusions.
- Integrate exclusionary discipline data review into the Cradle to Career Report to the Community.
- Discuss an alert notification and response system for district discipline over-representation.


School and School District Data:

Centennial School District: 2009–2010 Student Data

		Total Student Enrollment	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	Native American	Unknown Race/Ethnicity	Multiple Races	All Students of Color
Centennial SD 28J	Total Enrollment	6552	3670	312	1464	719	55	6	326	2876
	Percent of Enrollment		56.0%	4.8%	22.3%	11.0%	0.8%	0.1%	5.0%	43.9%
	Enrollment of Schools Studied	2854	1683	135	557	337	19	3	120	1168
	Percent of Enrollment		59.0%	4.7%	19.5%	11.8%	0.7%	0.1%	4.2%	40.9%
	# of Discipline Incidents	600	316	71	147	18			28	284*
	Relative Rate Index		1.00	2.80	1.41	0.28			1.24	1.30


* For populations of students of color where the number of discipline incidents was less than 6 data was masked by districts. Individual racial categories do not total 284 because 20 incidents are masked to protect anonymity. Total incidents for all students of color reflect total number of incidents, including masked data.

David Douglas School District: 2009–2010 Student Data


		Total Student Enrollment	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	Native American	Unknown Race/Ethnicity	Multiple Races	All Students of Color
		David Douglas SD 40	Total Enrollment	10710	5161	949	2414	1493	91	97
	Percent of Enrollment		48.19	8.86	22.54	13.94	0.85	0.91	4.72	50.91
	Enrollment of Schools Studied	5652	2785	519	1155	864	45	36	248	2831
	Percent of Enrollment		49.3%	9.2%	20.4%	15.3%	0.8%	0.6%	4.4%	50.1%
	# of Discipline Incidents	964	398	210	206	40	16		68	555*
	Relative Rate Index		1.00	2.83	1.25	0.32	2.49		1.92	1.37

* For populations of students of color where the number of discipline incidents was less than 6 data was masked by districts. Individual racial categories do not total 555 because 15 incidents are masked to protect anonymity. Total incidents for all students of color reflect total number of incidents, including masked data.


Gresham-Barlow School District: 2009–2010 Student Data

		Total Student Enrollment	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	Native American	Unknown Race/Ethnicity	Multiple Races	All Students of Color
Gresham-Barlow SD 10J	Total Enrollment	12210	8291	279	2640	450	132	70	348	3849
	Percent of Enrollment		67.9%	2.3%	21.6%	3.7%	1.1%	0.6%	2.9%	31.5%
	Enrollment of Schools Studied	6742	4777	154	1275	263	78	8	187	1957
	Percent of Enrollment		70.9%	2.3%	18.9%	3.9%	1.2%	0.1%	2.8%	29.0%
	# of Discipline Incidents	1004	563	48	327	7	15		44	441
	Relative Rate Index		1.00	2.64	2.18	0.23	1.63		2.00	1.91

Parkrose School District: 2009–2010 Student Data


		Total Student Enrollment	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	Native American	Unknown Race/Ethnicity	Multiple Races	All Students of Color
		Parkrose SD 3	Total Enrollment	3426	1330	406	787	642	42	3
	Percent of Enrollment		38.82	11.85	22.97	18.74	1.23	0.09	6.3	61.09
	Enrollment of Schools Studied	1819	747	230	359	342	28	1	112	1071
	Percent of Enrollment		41.1%	12.6%	19.7%	18.8%	1.5%	0.1%	6.2%	58.9%
	# of Discipline Incidents	420	152	110	104	17	9		28	268
	Relative Rate Index		1.00	2.35	1.42	0.24	1.58		1.23	1.24

Portland Public School District: 2009–2010 Student Data

		Total Student Enrollment	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	Native American	Unknown Race/Ethnicity	Multiple Races	All Students of Color
Portland SD 1J	Total Enrollment	46596	25237	6342	7157	4565	690	1045	1560	20314
	Percent of Enrollment		54.2%	13.6%	15.4%	9.8%	1.5%	2.2%	3.3%	43.6%
	Enrollment of Schools Studied	30117	15464	4893	4805	3155	432	454	913	14198
	Percent of Enrollment		51.3%	16.2%	16.0%	10.5%	1.4%	1.5%	3.0%	47.1%
K-8 Schools	Total Enrollment	13872	6005	2709	2769	1459	206		508	7651
	# of Discipline Incidents	2189	675	977	302	79	40		54	1514*
	Relative Rate Index		1.00	3.21	0.97	0.48	1.73		0.95	1.76
Middle Schools	Total Enrollment	5211	3364	469	618	472	70		175	1804
	# of Discipline Incidents	825	354	237	148	14	20		52	471*
	Relative Rate Index		1.00	4.80	2.28	0.28	2.72		2.82	2.48
High Schools	Total Enrollment	11034	6095	1715	1418	1224	156		230	4743
	# of Discipline Incidents	1510	545	538	274	72	29		46	965*
	Relative Rate Index		1.00	3.51	2.16	0.66	2.08		2.24	2.28
District Total	# of Discipline Incidents	4524	1574	1752	724	165	89		152	2950*
	Relative Rate Index		1.00	3.52	1.48	0.51	2.02		1.64	2.04

* For populations of students of color where the number of discipline incidents was less than 6 data was masked by districts. Individual racial categories do not total across because incidents are masked to protect anonymity. Total incidents for all students of color in each school category (K-8, Middle, High and District Total) reflect total number of incidents, including masked data.

Reynolds School District: 2009–2010 Student Data

		Total Student Enrollment	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	Native American	Unknown Race/Ethnicity	Multiple Races	All Students of Color
Reynolds SD 7	Total Enrollment	11018	4999	770	3855	913	119	17	345	6002
	Percent of Enrollment		45.4%	7.0%	35.0%	8.3%	1.1%	0.2%	3.1%	54.5%
	Enrollment of Schools Studied	5389	2659	433	1641	497	63	5	91	2725
	Percent of Enrollment		49.3%	8.0%	30.5%	9.2%	1.2%	0.1%	1.7%	50.6%
	# of Discipline Incidents	1658	524	323	693	52	41		25	1134
	Relative Rate Index		1.00	3.79	2.14	0.53	3.30		1.39	2.11

Important Definitions

Minor Offenses vs. Major Offenses: Behavior that results in disciplinary action is categorized into minor offenses and major offenses. Minor offenses lead to a variety of consequences (meeting with family, warning to student, exclusion from extra-curricular activities, exclusion from class, time-out room, after-school detention, in-school suspension, collection of unauthorized material, restitution, referral to alternative program or service, and others determined by school/district). Major offenses result in a suspension, suspension pending expulsion, or expulsion from school.

Disciplinary Referral: If a district employee (teacher, administrator, non-classified staff) witnesses behavior warranting disciplinary action, they make a referral for further investigation such as a suspension or expulsion meeting/hearing. The referral may result in a formal incident indicated in the student's record or may be dismissed at the meeting/hearing.

Incident: Behavior in violation of district rules for conduct. Incidents are categorized as minor offenses, major offenses and in some automatic cases resulting in exclusion (Example: weapons, drugs or threat of harm). For data collection purposes of this report, incidents are reported by type of behavior, not by student. (Example: a student suspended twice during the year is counted as two incidents)

Out of School Suspension: A disciplinary action that denies a student of the right to attend school, including all classes and school activities (clubs, extra-curricular, sports, dances, etc). If suspension is due to certain major offenses, a minimum suspension period may be assigned. School administration makes this decision.

Suspension Pending Expulsion: After a suspension hearing with administrators, the student, and their family, the district may find that the offense requires expulsion under district policy or evidence indicated the possible need for expulsion. This is the ruling entered into the student data system until an expulsion hearing can take place. District administration makes this decision.

Expulsion: Disciplinary action that denies a student the right to attend school, including all classes and school activities (clubs, extra-curricular, sports, dances, etc) for up to one calendar year. District administration makes this decision.

eSIS: A web-based student information system that is updated by schools and districts across Multnomah and Clackamas Education Service Districts. eSIS contains information on individual students such as demographics, attendance, course scheduling, marks/grades received, incident tracking, student testing information, and more. These data can be aggregated by school or by district.

Disproportionality: The over- or under-representation of a particular race or cultural group in a program or system. Looking at disproportionality helps look for patterns and whether there are “too many” or “too few” people from a particular group getting access to a service or affected by policy.

Disparity: The comparison of one group's disproportionality (over- or under-represented) to another group. Disparity helps compare treatment between groups, highlighting the issue of equity—that is, is the system and the people in it fair, objective, and impartial?

Relative Rate Index (RRI): A calculation used to compute a rate of disparity. First, the number of incidents is used to determine a rate of discipline for each subgroup. Then the rate of a certain subgroup is compared to that of white students. This shows over-representation of that subgroup from what we would expect. If all groups were disciplined at an equal rate, the RRI would always be a value of one. A value higher than one shows us how much more a subgroup is disciplined compared to their white peers.

Zero Tolerance Policies: Policies that bar school administrators from using discretionary judgment in particular situations and the student is automatically excluded from school/school activities. These policies are usually promoted as preventing drug use/abuse and violence in schools. Common

zero-tolerance policies concern possession or use of drugs or weapons. There has not been conclusive evidence that shows zero tolerance policies are effective in reducing violence or drug abuse by students. References to specific forms of zero-tolerance offenses can be found in:

- Gun-Free School Zone Act of 1990, 18 U.S.C. Sections 921(a)(25), (26) and 922(q)
- Youth Handgun Safety Act, 18 U.S.C. Sections 922(x) and 924(a)(6)
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

*These definitions may vary slightly across district, for more current policies and procedures contact your school or district and ask for a student conduct handbook and/or policies, procedures, administrative directives related to student discipline. Some districts also have student/family rights and responsibilities outlined and can provide this for further information.

Links to Student Discipline Handbooks

Centennial School District:

<http://bit.ly/CSDStudentHandbook> (Middle School)

<http://bit.ly/CSDStudentHandbook2> (High School)

David Douglas School District:

<http://bit.ly/DDSDStudentHandbook> (High School)

Gresham Barlow School District:

<http://bit.ly/GBSDStudentHandbook>

Parkrose School District:

<http://bit.ly/PSDStudentHandbook> (Middle School)

<http://bit.ly/PSDStudentHandbook2> (High School)

Portland Public Schools:

<http://bit.ly/PPSSStudentHandbook>

Reynolds School District:

<http://bit.ly/RSDStudentHandbook> (Middle School)

<http://bit.ly/RSDStudentHandbook2> (High School)

Education & Life Success Workgroup and Discipline Disparities Project Partners

This project is the result of over two years of hard work and dedicated service from dozens of members of our community- government, nonprofit, parents, and student partners. We would like to thank them for informing, guiding, challenging, and ultimately making this report possible. Members of the Education & Life Success Workgroup are noted in **bold**.

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