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LEGISLATIVE POLICY
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Use of Restraint and Seclusion in Oregon Public Schools: Data Summary

PREPARED FOR: House Interim Committee on Education

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Overview

- In late 2025, LPRO conducted research summarizing the use of restraint and seclusion in Oregon public schools. Analysts reviewed Oregon laws, analyzed publicly available data from the 2019–2020 through 2023–2024 school years, and compared Oregon to a small selection of other states.
- Today's presentation will focus on findings from the data analysis, which shows trends on key indicators related to the use of restraint and seclusion.
- **Overall, the use of restraint and seclusion in Oregon public schools is decreasing, but the trends for other key indicators vary. Additionally, the number of incidents investigated and substantiated for abuse is low compared to the total number of incidents reported.**



Definitions in Oregon Laws

Restraint means **restricting a student's actions or movements by holding or using pressure or other means**. It does not include actions such as holding a student's hand, providing consensual physical assistance, or intervening physically with minimal force to break up a fight, interrupt a student's threatening or dangerous behavior, or protect oneself or someone else from assault, injury, or sexual contact. [ORS 339.285\(2\)](#)

Seclusion means **involuntarily confining a student alone in a room from which they are physically prevented from leaving**. It does not include temporarily removing a student for a short time to let the student regain self-control if the student is not physically prevented from leaving that space. [ORS 339.285\(3\)](#)



Oregon Restraint and Seclusion Laws

Oregon laws restrict how public school personnel use restraint and seclusion on students.¹

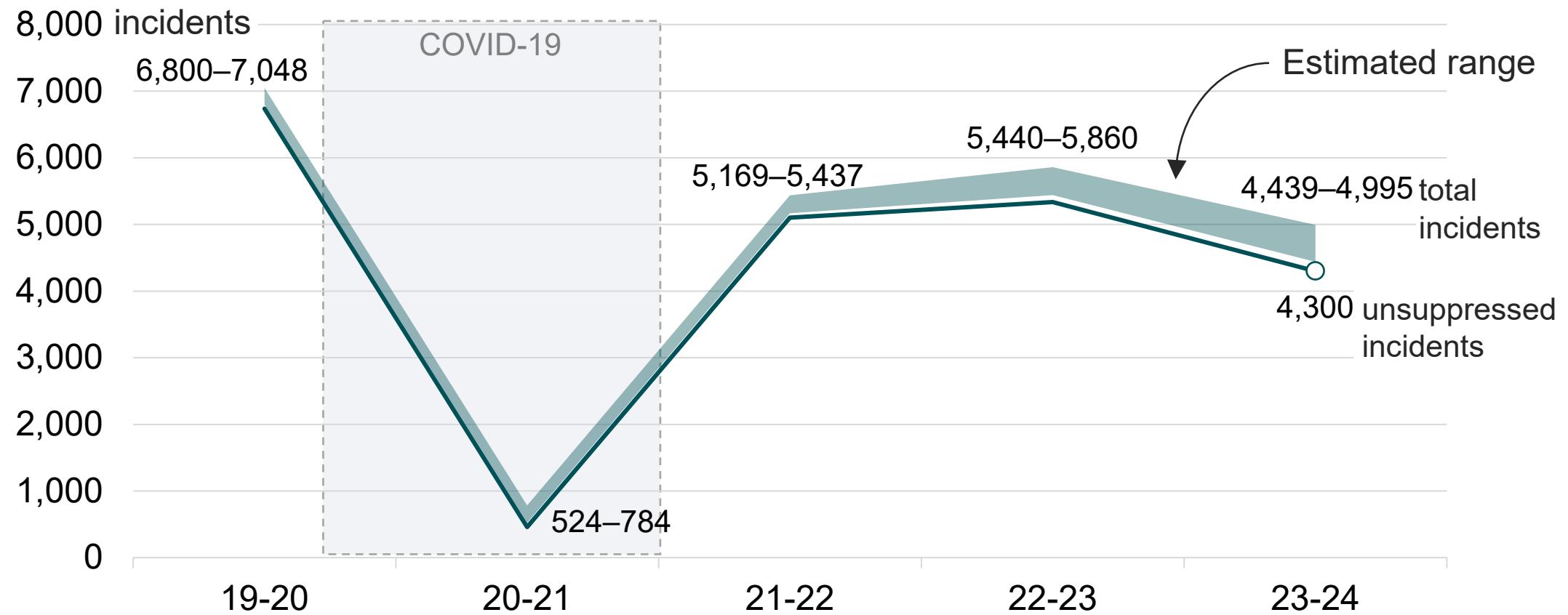
State laws:

- prohibit certain types of restraint and seclusion;
- prohibit the use of restraint and seclusion for discipline, punishment, retaliation, or convenience;
- outline circumstances in which restraint and seclusion are allowed;
- require staff training;
- prescribe procedures schools must follow after a restraint or seclusion incident;
- require notification to the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) if a student is injured or dies;
- require schools to keep records on restraint and seclusion incidents;
- require a process for investigating complaints;
- prohibit the use of seclusion cells; and
- include violations of these laws in the definition of abuse until 2028.



¹ [ORS 339.285 to 339.303](#)

Total Restraint and Seclusion Incidents, 2019–2020 to 2023–2024



Source: Legislative Policy and Research Office
Data: Oregon Department of Education

Restraint and Seclusion Incidents by Type, 2019–2020 to 2023–2024

Restraint

6,000 incidents

COVID-19

5,000

4,000

3,000

2,000

1,000

0

19-20 20-21 21-22 22-23 23-24

Seclusion

Estimated range of total incidents

3,599 unsuppressed incidents

6,000

5,000

4,000

3,000

2,000

1,000

0

19-20 20-21 21-22 22-23 23-24

Restraint and Seclusion

6,000

5,000

4,000

3,000

2,000

1,000

0

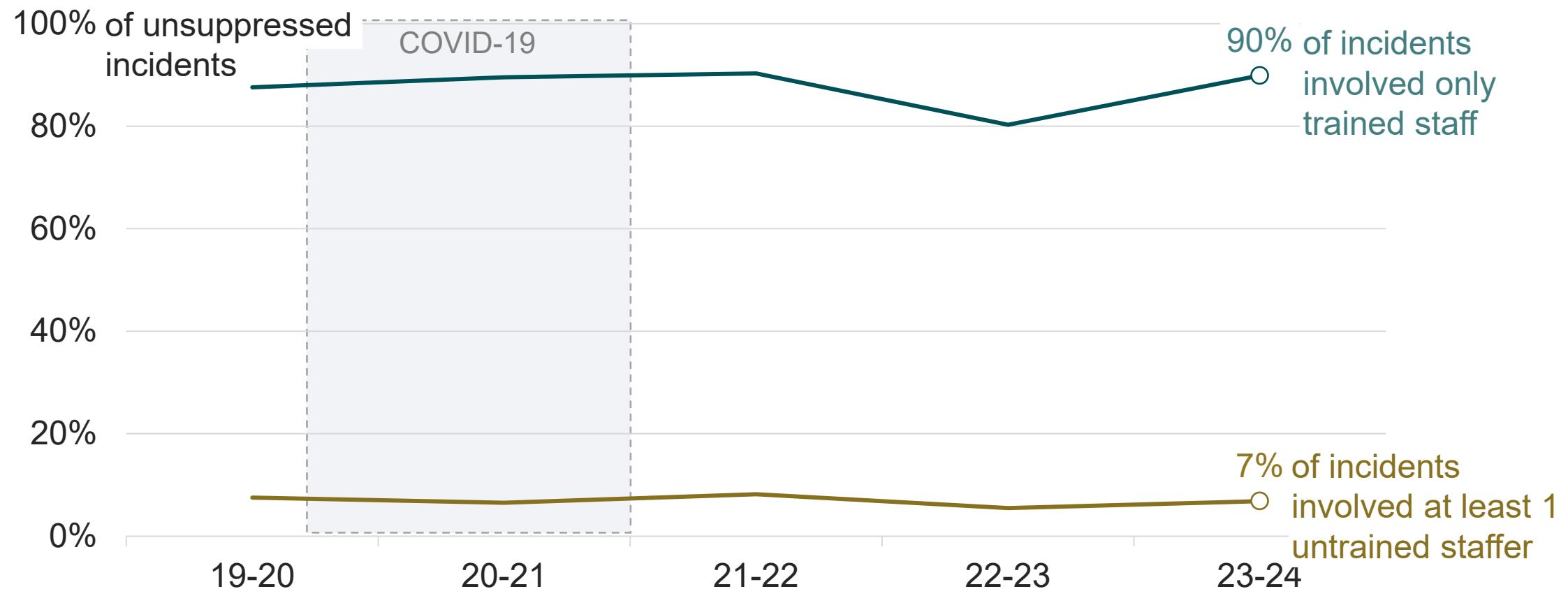
19-20 20-21 21-22 22-23 23-24



Source: Legislative Policy and Research Office

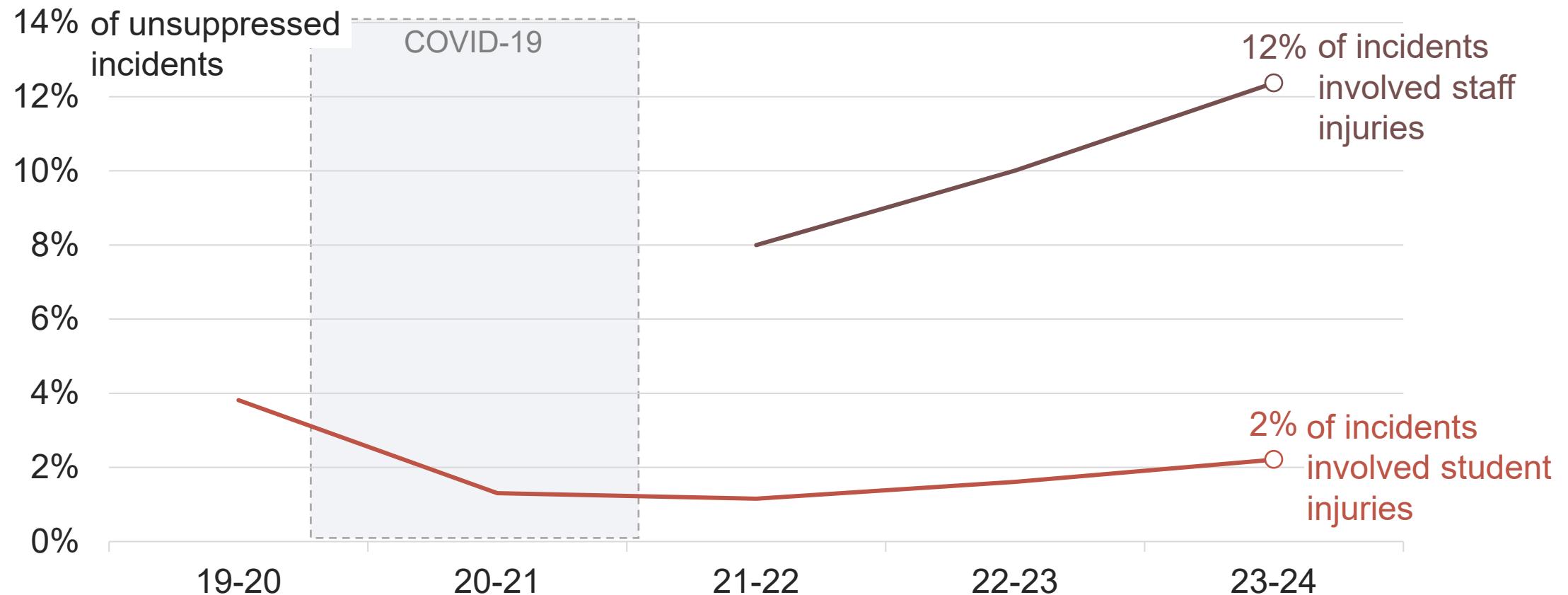
Data: Oregon Department of Education

Trained and Untrained Staff Involved in Restraint and Seclusion Incidents, 2019–2020 to 2023–2024



Source: Legislative Policy and Research Office
Data: Oregon Department of Education

Restraint and Seclusion Incidents Involving Injuries, 2019–2020 to 2023–2024



Source: Legislative Policy and Research Office
Data: Oregon Department of Education

Restraint and Seclusion Incidents Investigated by ODHS, 2023–2024

The Oregon Department of Human Services **investigated 82 allegations of abuse** related to wrongful restraints involving **62 individual program staff** during the 2023–2024 school year.

20 allegations were substantiated as abuse, involving **16 program staff**.



Source: Oregon Department of Human Services

Questions Publicly Available Data Cannot Answer

- **How many students or staff were injured?** The data reports the number of incidents involving injuries but does not include the number of students or staff injured.
- **How many and/or what percent the restraint and seclusion incidents reported by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) were investigated or substantiated by the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) for abuse?** ODE and ODHS data are not directly linked.
- **How does the use of restraint and seclusion in Oregon public schools compare to other states?** Differences in state policies, definitions, and data collection practices makes it difficult to compare the use of restraint and seclusion incidents across states.



References

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