



WAKE COUNTY YOUTH WELL-BEING PROFILE

Written by the community for the community
February 2015



the
forum
FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT

YOUTHTHRIVE
WE ALL SUCCEED WHEN YOUTH SUCCEED
wake county, nc

DEDICATION OF THE WAKE COUNTY YOUTH WELL-BEING PROFILE



Youth Thrive wishes to dedicate this first-ever *Wake County Youth Well-being Profile* to all young people living in Wake County, as well as those who work so hard to serve them. Without the dedication of our youth-serving professionals and organizations, Wake County would not be the wonderful place that it truly is to raise youth.

We hope that you find the information in this document helpful in describing just how well our youth are doing, but that you can also clearly discern where work must be done. Together, we are helping Wake County youth thrive.

A Word on Sensitivity of Data

The intent of this document is to report the types of questions community leaders have about how *well* youth in Wake County are doing and to answer as many questions as possible with data. It has been the expressed desire of those who have worked on the *Wake County Youth Well-being Profile* to speak positively about our community and its youth, while also presenting a clear picture of current well-being and local conditions that require further attention.

We have chosen to report information about all youth and to report disparities in the information where it is significant. The information in this document is meant to *serve* all of our youth, and doing so requires us to celebrate their strengths but also to address concerns about the realities they face. After reading this report, we hope that you better understand just how well our youth are doing in Wake County, but that you also emerge determined to find ways to work together to help them thrive.

Data and Analysis

The data reported in the *Wake County Youth Well-being Profile* come from a variety of sources. Data owners were asked to share their data, look into other data sources, and provide access to the data stewards who are most knowledgeable about the data and the methodologies used to collect it. These stewards were asked to assist in analyzing data so that we could accurately answer key questions involved in understanding the population and working toward more effective strategies to address identified problems. In each section, you will find a list of the data sources and, where necessary, a description of data limitations.

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Compiled by Youth Thrive in consultation with the Forum for Youth Investment

Youth Thrive is a community-based collaborative comprised of individuals and organizations working to create positive change for Wake County youth (ages 5-18). By ensuring an effective and unifying partnership, Youth Thrive seeks to provide a space for communication, alignment and sharing of resources to better serve our young people. www.youth-thrive.org.

The Forum for Youth Investment is a non-profit, nonpartisan action tank dedicated to helping communities and the nation make sure all young people are ready by 21 – ready for college, work and life. www.forumfyi.org. Ready by 21® is a set of innovative strategies developed by the Forum that helps communities and states make a measurable difference in the lives of children and youth. Ready by 21 is a registered trademark of the Forum for Youth Investment.

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FOREWORD

BY KAREN PITTMAN, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, THE FORUM FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT



Every community wants the best for its children and youth. They are the present and the future, the active “ingredients” that combine to determine a community’s social, civic and economic health.

Their well-being often reflects past decisions made by them, their families, schools, public agencies, community organizations and peers. These decisions are often influenced by (even if not directly related to) money or financial security. Family decisions include which neighborhood to live in and whether to sign up for health insurance. School leaders determine which courses to offer and how to create fair suspension policies. Community leaders decide how much to invest in parks, social services or afterschool programs. Young people choose how to respond to peer pressure and how to assume responsibility for their actions.

Well-being is not a destination, like high school graduation. It is a journey with many twists and turns. As all of us who have taken long, hard journeys know, snapshots of single moments can serve as prompts to help us determine what was important and to recount the fuller story.

The *Wake County Youth Well-being Profile* is a series of snapshots of conditions, compiled to help leaders complete the big picture of how the county’s children and youth are doing along their journeys to adulthood. The snapshots were carefully selected by a Data Action Team that started not with piles of data, but with a facilitator who asked its members to step back and ask: What questions does the community want or need to address in order to better understand how well youth are doing? They let the questions guide the data search.

As a consequence, you will note that the sections of the *Profile* (which reflect the big categories of questions asked) are uneven in the volume of their content. For example, the Data Action Team found much more data about young people’s educational progress than about their connections to the workforce or to civic life. To their credit, the team members did not drop or collapse the categories that had scant data. Instead they shared the data that exists and pointed out where and why more is needed. They did so knowing this means their job is not complete; it’s just beginning. Kudos to the team for showing that data gaps can be as educational as data abundances.

The story told in these pages is a story of both journeys and destinations. The good news is that many young people in Wake County are arriving where and as they should be. Seventy-seven percent of kindergarteners arrive on their first day of school with solid pre-school skills. Eighty-three percent of high school students arrive at their graduation dates on time. The bad news is that not as many students have fully benefited from the opportunities that we presume are available along the journey. Only 50 percent of middle schoolers are proficient in math. Only 27 percent of high school seniors get sufficient exercise. Only 13 percent of high schoolers take advantage of AP courses.

It is reasonable to wonder if the young people who missed the opportunities are the same ones who engage in high-risk behaviors or find themselves in risky circumstances. Are those who have fallen behind in school the same students who are suspended repeatedly? Who are bullied? Smoke cigarettes? Feel hopeless?

Getting those answers requires more than snapshots. It requires rules for sharing data across systems and resources, and analyzing that data to answer questions that cut across boundaries. The Forum is proud to have helped Youth Thrive and its Data Action Team make the shift toward using data, not just for system accountability, but for shared inquiry and action.

INTRODUCTION

Children and youth ask big questions all the time. Just think about it. They constantly ask “Why?” They wonder “What if ...?” They seek big answers and challenge adults when faced with questions that are sometimes greater than we imagined. Young people face considerably more difficult conditions and situations than 10 years ago. The world is a faster, more complicated place now, and youth are challenged in ways our society has not yet addressed.

It is the job of adults to make our communities safer for young people. Leaders and those in positions of power must create conditions that enable youth to thrive in such a way that the world, once placed in their hands, is better for it. By asking big questions, community leaders can begin to understand what we need to know about the youth in Wake County in order to foster an environment where they receive the supports they need to become productive adults. As a community, we must constantly remain aware of the realities that our youth face. At the same time, we must continuously strive to align our work to the needs of the community, and then with each other as agencies and organizations serving youth.

We hope the community will use the *Wake County Youth Well-being Profile* to gain greater understanding of the conditions for young people in our county. By doing so, we hope, you will become part of a greater collaborative solution for creating better outcomes for youth. **Together, we can help youth thrive.**

YOUTH THRIVE: WAKE COUNTY'S YOUTH COLLABORATIVE

History of Youth Thrive

In January 2010, a group of key individuals and organizations in Wake County convened to identify gaps in services for our young people, to share resources and information related to conditions experienced by youth, and to explore the possibility of creating a positive youth development delivery system. After receiving funding from the John Rex Endowment in March 2011, Youth Thrive was established to serve the community as a convener and collaborator; to provide training and technical assistance to youth-serving professionals and organizations; and to work toward establishing shared measures.

Today, Youth Thrive is the place for all voices to be heard when it comes to youth, ages 5-18, in Wake County. We do what is difficult for most organizations involved in program and service delivery: We coordinate collaboration. Our future work depends on the continued engagement of individuals and organizations serving youth. Based on the local conditions identified through this document, Youth Thrive will set out to facilitate large-scale planning for all services reaching our youth in Wake County – through creation of the county's first Youth Master Plan. We hope you join us.

Youth Thrive as a Community Convener

Notice that this document, though facilitated by Youth Thrive, was created by our community for our community. Youth Thrive simply coordinated the collaboration necessary to make this *Wake County Youth Well-being Profile* possible.

We will continue to help build this collaborative space. We are moving forward to create new Action Teams focused on specific issues related to young people. We hope you will join us and the great work happening in partnership to ensure better outcomes for youth in Wake County. To join an Action Team, contact us at www.youth-thrive.org.

USING DATA TO BUILD COLLECTIVE IMPACT

With the interest in “collective impact”¹ that sparked in 2011, shared measurement has become a buzzword in communities across the nation. Many communities, however, are struggling to define what this really means. Working to meet the five conditions of collective impact (common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, constant communication and backbone support functions), Youth Thrive set out to find its way toward shared measurements that community partners and stakeholders could agree to adopt. Terminology related to common measures, indicators and shared measurement are provided below:

Common Measures: Data elements used by organizations to identify shared or similar goals in a defined social area to help provide insight and measure progress. (Example: high school graduation)

Indicators: Data elements that have been agreed upon as the best way to indicate (measure) similar or shared goals. (Example: graduation rates)

Shared Measurement: A collaborative measurement process conducted among a number of organizations engaged in a defined social area who are working together to achieve similar or shared goals. Shared measurement includes not only the joint definition of common goals and measures, but also an agreed measurement process, the sharing of measurement findings, and engagement in collaborative analysis and continuous learning.

The Importance of a Data Action Team

As part of a collaborative effort to create better outcomes for youth in Wake County, Youth Thrive established a Data Action Team in June 2014. This team is a cross-sectional representation of data governors, stewards, holders and managers, as well as those who use data in their daily work. (See the back cover for the list of organizations and individuals who have contributed to this document.)

The team is charged with the long-term goal of supporting collaborative analysis and continuous learning related to data use and data sharing. The team’s first assignment was to create the *Wake County Youth Well-being Profile*. Team members took on this ambitious assignment with enthusiasm, working together to generate questions and identify data sources. Members also used their experience on the data team as an opportunity to reflect on data collection and data use within their own organizations. Activate Good is one of those organizations.

How a Local Organization Changed its Data Collection as a Result of Serving on the Youth Thrive Data Action Team

Activate Good is the Hands on Network of Volunteer Centers affiliate for the Research Triangle area. The organization has long been a Youth Thrive partner and quickly stepped up to the plate when the Data Action Team was formed. As a result of being involved with the creation of the *Wake County Youth Well-being Profile*, the organization was inspired to take a closer look at its course evaluations to ensure that it had the most useful and desirable long-term data – not only for itself, but for the community as well.

Rather than relying on anecdotal evidence about barriers that youth face in finding civic engagement opportunities, Activate Good now more intentionally collects data about the ways in which youth are able to engage in regular volunteerism and about factors that inhibit them from doing so.

Most importantly, Activate Good realized the need for collecting data on the Wake County youth who serve as volunteers with the organization, along with the non-profits served. While Activate Good has been connecting youth to volunteer work for over 10 years, it did not have a mechanism to quickly and accurately pull numbers on youth volunteer turnout. Having this data more readily available will allow Activate Good to assess youth engagement with the organization, as well as to provide meaningful information to its non-profit partners and collaborators who are interested in youth civic engagement.

Youth report a greater likelihood of volunteering when their involvement is affirmed by parents, teachers and community leaders.² Community organizations can affirm the contributions of youth volunteers by tracking their involvement consistently and recognizing their participation in the same way adults are recognized.

¹ John Kania and Mark Kramer. “Collective Impact.” Stanford Social Innovation Review. Winter 2011.

² Camino, 2000; Fogel, 2004; Jarrett, Sullivan, & Watkins, 2005

THE PROCESS FOR CREATING THE WAKE COUNTY YOUTH WELL-BEING PROFILE

Organizational and personal agendas can creep into any data gathering process. Because of this, Youth Thrive realized the value of an outside consultant to assist the Data Action Team in moving through a data organization process toward the creation of a youth well-being profile. A data specialist from the Forum for Youth Investment introduced the team to a process that provided space for all ideas, while focusing on what was manageable and relevant for telling the story of youth in Wake County.

STEP 1 - ORIENTATION AND TASK DEFINITION. The first meeting with the Data Action Team was to orient members with each other, with the idea of creating a youth well-being profile and with our vision for longer-term youth master planning. Information was provided about shared measurement and what that means for the community as we move forward.

STEP 2 - QUESTION DEVELOPMENT. Using the Ready by 21[®] Readiness Target, participants were led through a “gallery walk” exercise to determine the questions that they wanted answers to, all related to the seven well-being domains reflected in the sections of this report: academic, vocational, social, civic, physical, emotional, and safety. The Data Action Team arrived at 147 questions. Similar questions were combined and checked for proper categorization under the seven domains. The remaining questions were reviewed to determine the quality and availability of data to answer them.

STEP 3 - DATA IDENTIFICATION AND DATA QUALITY. The creation of the initial 147 questions did two things. First, it identified what we want to know about our youth. Second, it helped us understand what data are and are not available. Questions were coded red (those for which there was low/no data quality), yellow (moderate data quality) and green (high data quality). All green questions were kept. Yellow questions were assessed as either “need to know” or “nice to know,” while some were converted to green. Red questions were eventually dropped, but not forgotten, as they often identified data gaps that can be addressed later.

STEP 4 - DATA GATHERING. After finalizing the questions to be answered, the Data Action Team members were assigned specific questions, collected the information to answer those questions and used the answers to create the sections of this report. This enormous undertaking resulted in a document very much created *by the community for the community*, with Youth Thrive serving only as the central repository for questions and data for the final compilation.

STEP 5 - KEY INDICATORS SELECTION. This document identifies suggested key indicators. Final decisions related to these indicators will be left up to Action Teams. The identification of common indicators will guide future planning toward the development of a Youth Master Plan. This plan will address key issues and how the community will work together to achieve collective impact.

A Youth Well-being Profile: What it Is and What it Isn't

This well-being profile is *not* a comprehensive community assessment focused on youth. This is *not* a series of surveys or data points answering *every* question you would want to know about youth in Wake County. It is, however, a snapshot understanding of current conditions affecting the well-being of our young people.

The creation of this document serves two immediate purposes: 1) to establish a set of common data-driven indicators that can become the launch pad for Action Teams to engage in large-scale planning related to youth in Wake County; and 2) to begin changing the culture of data sharing among data holders in Wake County.

The first purpose will be addressed through further development of Action Teams and the creation of the first Wake County Youth Master Plan. Progress toward the second purpose, changing the data sharing culture, is beginning to unfold. Data holders admit that because local programs and services are often fragmented, so are the data. Because of this, our community leaders and stakeholders do not have a complete and clear picture of the well-being of the young people we are all trying to support. The Data Action Team members will

continue to work together, guiding the youth master planning process and identifying issues that require the community's attention.

There are some limitations to the document. Not all questions about youth are answered. In fact, some areas of exploration might be entirely untouched. This is partly because there are existing efforts throughout Wake County already committed to address those areas. But it's also because we need to investigate how to improve data collection locally. Having localized data is a must, and it will be the work of the Data Action Team to continue to work together to close data gaps.

This youth well-being profile provides a snapshot in time of the conditions and well-being of Wake County youth, ages 5-18. It tells a story – a story we hope you find compelling enough for you to engage in local efforts to change local conditions. It will take the hearts and minds of many to address the issues that our youth face. And we must be willing to ask big questions. If we do not, we leave it to our youth to question us. Let us be willing to find the answers.

Next Step: The Wake County Youth Master Plan

Youth Thrive and its partner organizations will establish additional Action Teams to begin high-level youth master planning efforts. This is not an attempt to create another “strategic plan”; it's an opportunity to bring together and align existing strategic plans for organizations/agencies serving youth, as well as to build the space for new ideas and efforts to grow.

This process will be carried out through much of 2015, resulting in a high-level plan that will go before local boards, councils and other stakeholder groups for vetting and adoption. By being part of this master planning process, organizations/agencies will ensure that their efforts to reach youth are identified, and also help the community identify gaps that need to be filled.

The identification of a suggested set of common indicators will help Youth Thrive's Action Teams dig deeper into the root causes behind the indicators, so the teams can engage the community in problem-solving. As stated above, the final decisions on the indicators rest with the Action Teams themselves. If an Action Team determines that a different indicator would be better or that additional data collection efforts are required, that determination will be reported back to the Data Action Team for further work and inclusion in future youth well-being reporting. Action Teams will be able to address conditions illuminated through new data, will be expected to identify emerging issues and will be given the latitude to adapt when necessary. The *Wake County Youth Well-being Profile* gives them a place to start. Where they land is up to them *and you*.

READY BY 21: A METHOD FOR MOVING COMMUNITY CHANGE

Moving through community change and managing high-level partnerships is not easy. Without a framework or a roadmap, it is nearly impossible to engage individuals and organizations meaningfully and in a way in which they feel heard and valued – while also getting work done.

Organizationally, Youth Thrive has chosen to use the **Ready by 21**[®] framework and approach developed by the Forum for Youth Investment (the Forum, www.forumfyi.org), a national non-profit organization that “helps leaders get young people ready for college, work and life.” Ready by 21 (www.readyby21.org) tools and products are designed to help communities do just that.

Youth Thrive selected Ready by 21 because the Forum believes community leaders are the most important piece of the change equation. The Forum “meets leaders where they are” with a commitment to help them see their potential for fostering a “cradle-to-career” support system for all youth. The Forum is a key partner in the Collective Impact Forum, co-founded by FSG, authors of the initial white paper on the topic of collective impact, and the Aspen Forum on Community Solutions, a leader in efforts around the nation to address opportunity youth using a collective impact approach.

The Ready by 21 Theory of Change



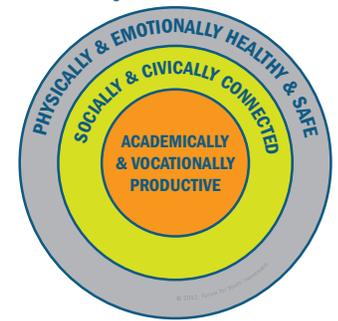
Ready by 21 uses **The Three Gears** to help communities visualize a bold theory of change, emphasizing the big picture of what it takes to improve child well-being. The focus on building the capacity of community partnerships reflects a belief that moving “the small gear” is critical to achieve collective impact, because that’s the only way to address the fragmentation typically found in communities.

Well-being is not defined by a single outcome or measure, and not limited to a single age or developmental stage. Services, systems and resources, however, are often defined in these narrow ways. Ready by 21 uses the three gears to

emphasize that addressing one outcome (e.g., 3rd grade reading) in an attempt to improve child and youth well-being (the large gear) requires communities to assess, improve and coordinate the supports and services offered to families, in schools and through a host of public systems and community organizations (the middle gear). Doing this requires commitments to new partnership structures designed to support the collective seeing and learning needed for leaders to arrive at solutions that break down silos (the small gear).

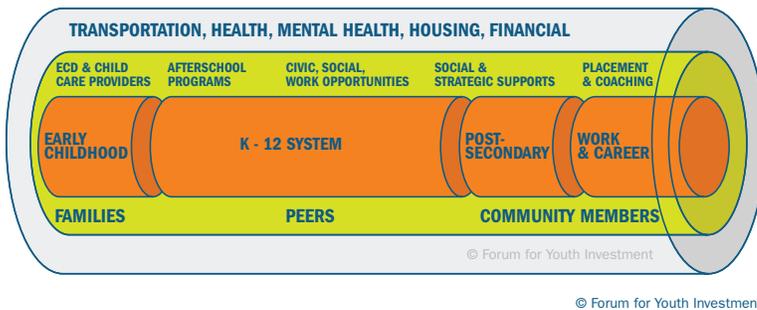
The Readiness Target helps partnerships determine what makes youth “ready” for college, work and life. Too often, communities focus only on academic achievement (the inner circle) and risky behavior reduction (the outer layer) because of the easy availability of data and the connection to public funding streams. Most educators, business leaders, families and young people themselves, however, agree with the Forum’s assertion that “problem-free is not fully prepared.”

The Readiness Target



Through the identification of seven domains, Ready by 21 ensures that all aspects of a young person’s life are included in understanding their well-being, and encourages communities to set goals for which they may not yet have data to evaluate progress.

The Ready by 21 Insulated Education Pipeline



The Insulated Education Pipeline visually describes the components of a community readying youth for success. While school plays a critical role in a young person’s life, it is not the only environment in which he or she lives. The pipeline demonstrates the layers of people, organizations, systems and services that are designed to help, but that sometimes hinder, youth in progress toward success. The “insulation” of the education pipeline is important. Understanding the layers of influence and care in a young person’s life is essential to understanding his or her well-being.

Youth Thrive promotes the use of the pipeline to include the birth to early childhood and post-secondary timeframes. As an organization, however, Youth Thrive focuses on young people, ages 5-18 (kindergarten through 12th grade), and invites partnership with those on either side of this section of the pipeline. Ideally, all systems, supports and services insulating the pipeline would be aligned and working together to ensure the best outcomes for youth.

WHO ARE THE YOUTH IN WAKE COUNTY?

- **One in four residents in Wake County (almost 250,000 people) is under 18.**
- **Two-thirds are White.**
- **Seven in 10 live with both parents.**
- **One in seven live in poverty.**

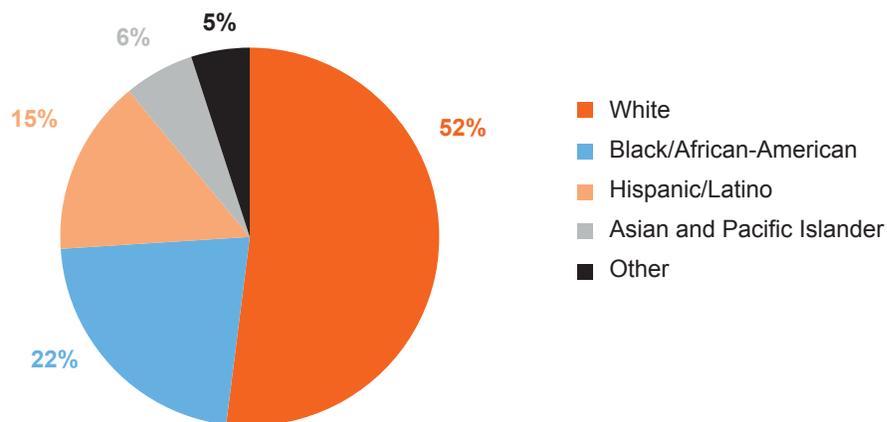
Wake County, the capital county of North Carolina, is the 46th largest county in the United States, and surpassed 1 million residents in August 2014. The county is home to 12 municipalities: Apex, Cary, Fuquay-Varina, Garner, Holly Springs, Knightdale, Morrisville, Raleigh, Rolesville, Wake Forest, Wendell and Zebulon.

Families in the county are doing well overall. The median household income is \$66,160, with the median family income resting at \$81,545.³ Wake County is home to a booming technology industry, is a higher education haven with numerous colleges and universities, and was recently named the 4th healthiest capital county by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings & Roadmap.⁴

Wake County is home to 245,705 children under the age of 18.⁵ They account for 25 percent of the total population. The youth population is about equally divided among three age groups: 32 percent are under age 6, 34 percent are ages 6-11 and 34 percent are 12-17. Fifty-one percent of those under 18 are male and 49 percent are female.

The composition of the youth population in Wake County is rapidly changing, but the majority of youth in the county are White. Among youth under 18, 52 percent are White, 22 percent are Black/African-American (Non-Hispanic), 6 percent are Asian and Pacific Islander (Non-Hispanic) and 15 percent are Hispanic/Latino origin (of any race).

FIGURE 1: WAKE COUNTY CHILD AND YOUTH POPULATION, BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2013



Source: American Community Survey, 2013

Children's family situations are diverse: Seven in 10 live with both married parents. One in seven lives below poverty. Twenty percent of children living in Wake County live in food insecure homes.⁶ Age and race are too often better proxies for well-being than they should be, due to their association with other factors, such as poverty and family composition. Much more information about children and their families is needed, however, if the goal is not just to predict challenges, but to address them.

³ American Community Survey, 2013

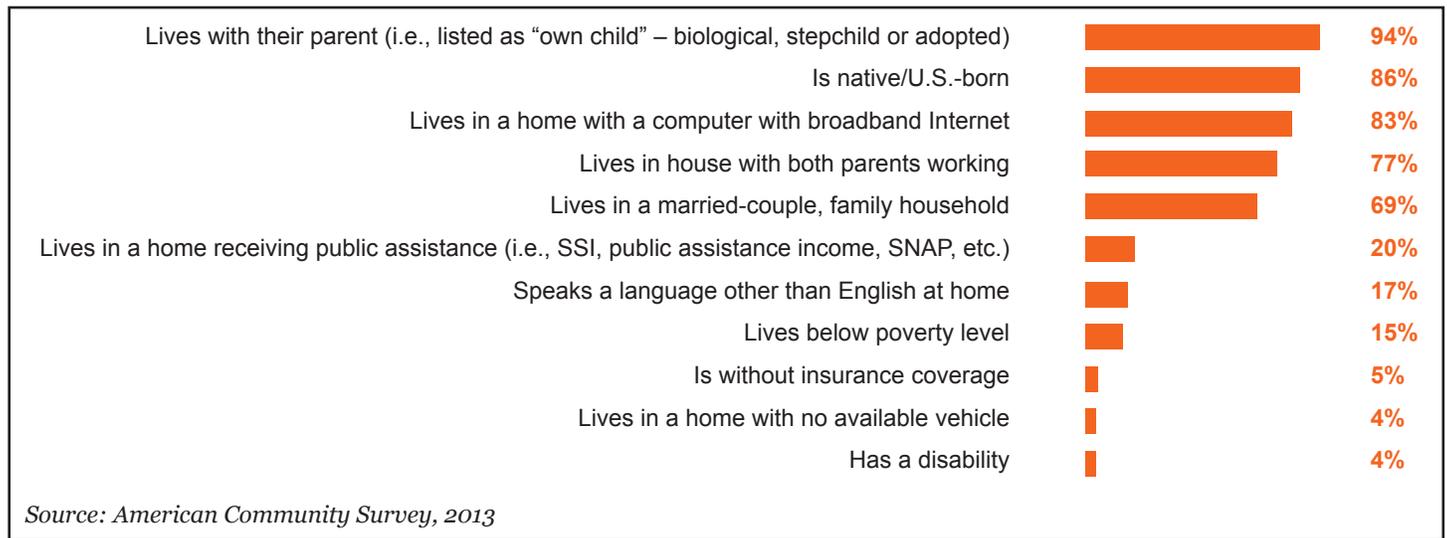
⁴ www.countyhealthrankings.org

⁵ While Youth Thrive focuses on youth 5-18, some data are reported in ranges that includes 0-5, 6-11 and 12-17. There are places in this document where we report data in the 0-4 and 19-24 ranges because it is important to understand the population on either side of our focus population.

⁶ <http://hunger-research.sog.unc.edu/content/2013-wake-county-nc>

Below is a chart of additional descriptors for youth under 18 in Wake County. It reflects the types of assets and challenges to be considered when creating strategies that apply national research about youth development in ways that speak to local realities.

FIGURE 2: ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTORS OF WAKE COUNTY YOUTH



Homeless Children and Youth in Wake County

Data regarding this population is difficult to collect and often dependent on point-in-time counts. Having a snapshot of child and family homelessness, however, is critical because of the domino effect of this factor.

The North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness conducted a point-in-time data collection across the state for homelessness.⁷ This count was taken on Jan. 30-31, 2014, and includes the same settings as the statewide data collection. The numbers of homeless in Wake County on those nights were sobering:

- 351 adults and children were counted as homeless in emergency/seasonal housing, transitional housing considered unsheltered homeless, or counted as unaccompanied children.
- 228 of these individuals were children age 17 or under, indicating almost two out of every three homeless individuals were children.
- 296 of these individuals were Black/African-American, which was 84 percent of the total homeless population counted, with 36 identified as White and 10 listed as Hispanic/Latino.

The Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) reported there were 2,669 students identified as homeless during the 2013-2014 school year. This is an unduplicated count of youth who meet the living situations identified in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act⁶, which includes students who do not have a fixed, regular and adequate residence. The difference between the point-in-time numbers and the annual numbers reflects the volatility of this demographic status. Students and their families can be homeless for weeks, months or years, and can change status multiple times during the course of a year. Too often, these changes result in disruptions in school attendance and changes in school assignments, even when parents make every effort to minimize them.

Limitations of Demographic Data on Youth in Wake County

The American Community Survey (ACS), a part of the U.S. Census, is a survey of the community and not an actual count. Because of this, there may be slight variations in the population.

The data on homeless youth includes a single point-in-time count, which is not indicative of an overall understanding of the homeless population of youth in Wake County.

⁷ To be counted as “homeless,” a person had to be living in places not meant for human habitation (cars, abandoned buildings, etc.), in an emergency shelter (including domestic violence shelters), or in transitional housing for people who had been in those two living conditions. http://www.ncceh.org/media/files/page/f5c820e4/Statewide-2014_Homeless_County.pdf

HOW WELL ARE YOUTH IN WAKE COUNTY DOING?

- *Most students come to school ready for kindergarten with pre-school experience (77 percent) and most graduate on time from high school (83 percent).*
- *Too many, however, leave without the skills they need to succeed. African-American and Hispanic students are the most likely to be struggling to build these skills, with proficiency rates generally only half those of White students.*
- *Too many students of all backgrounds struggle with hopelessness, experiment with harmful substances and take risks while driving.*

Much of the data in the profile focuses on youth in middle and high school age ranges, as there is limited data on elementary youth in the well-being domains that were used. Significantly more data is available on the academic and physical domains than on the other five domains. The suggested indicators combine to provide the best balance possible across age groups as well as broad division among the three rings of the Readiness Target (physically and emotionally healthy and safe, socially and civically connected, academically and vocationally productive). With the exception of the data on pre-school attendance of incoming kindergarten students and voter registration, all of the indicators selected are available by race and ethnicity.

Because this is a report on youth *well-being*, it was important to look for a balance between assets and risks. The suggested indicators include behaviors considered assets (e.g., physical activity, math proficiency), as well as those considered risks (e.g., dropping out of school, substance use).

FIGURE 3: SUGGESTED INDICATORS

	Academic and Vocational	Social and Civic	Physical, Emotional and Safety
All		School Suspensions	
Elementary	Pre-school attendance 3rd grade reading proficiency		
Middle	Middle school math proficiency		Physical exams Physical activity Substance use in past 30 days
High	High school math disparity High school graduation rates High school dropout rates Idle youth rates	Fighting on school property Voter registration rates for 18-year-olds	Feeling hopeless Suicidal thoughts Physical activity Substance use in past 30 days Motor vehicle crashes Distracted driving (texting)

THE SEVEN DOMAINS OF YOUTH WELL-BEING

The *Wake County Youth Well-being Profile* provides data on “how well” youth in Wake County are doing right now. Over time, we will update the document to help the community understand changes, impact and new or emerging issues that require attention. The data provided within the seven domains provide a snapshot of current conditions affecting well-being for youth, ages 5-18, in Wake County. (Some data are outside of this age range.) This is not a comprehensive set of data delineating every aspect of a child’s life. Instead, the data were gathered to help find the answers to big questions about our young people.

ASSETS TO BUILD AND RISKS TO REDUCE

If moving through the K-12 system is a key measure of success – as many policymakers, parents and professionals believe it is – then Wake County’s children and youth can be considered headed toward success. Almost 80 percent of Wake County students enter school with solid skills and over 80 percent of them graduate on time.

Doing well by our children, however, requires us to monitor their progress carefully. When we do, we find that they might not be building all the assets they need to not only make their way through the education pipeline, but to emerge ready for life’s challenges.

In reviewing data in the *Wake County Youth Well-being Profile*, we can identify assets upon which to build success, as well as risks that need to be reduced. This is why timely and regular data collection and understanding is so important. The data indicate graduating on time is an attainable goal for most students, but we can see that disparities are developing and they continue through the education pipeline.

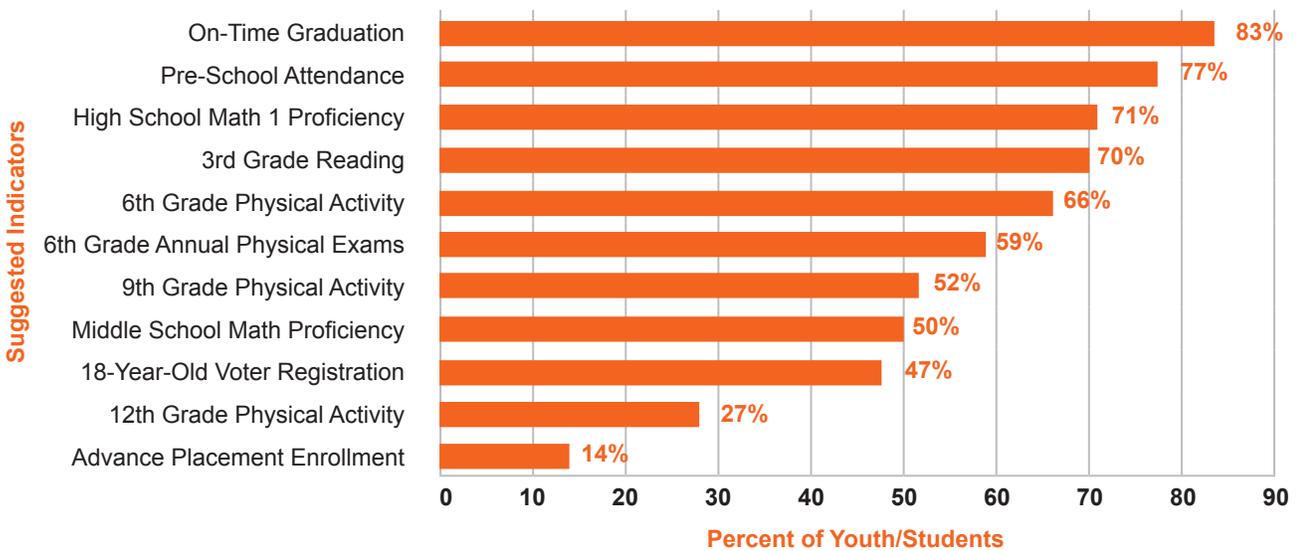
The Wake County Public School System recently issued its new strategic plan, which calls for an increase in the district graduation rate to 95 percent by 2020. By watching the factors that contribute to graduation rates, such as scores in 3rd grade reading and high school Math I, we can move, as a community, toward this goal. The goal, however, is also affected by conditions youth face beyond their lives as students. Helping our children and youth succeed requires us to think not only about the supports they need as they move through school, but also about the supports they need to be socially sound, mentally and physically healthy, civically engaged and safe. And, it requires the community to monitor behaviors and circumstances that can be harmful.

While our district dropout rate is only two percent annually (which is very low), four percent of 16- to 19-year-olds are considered idle (that is, not working and not in school). Each year, seven percent of all students are suspended from school. These conditions contribute to overall youth well-being; thus the community must address them. The percentages of students who are in school but who are engaged in risky behavior (or are victims of it) are considerably higher: from 16 percent of seniors smoking cigarettes to 40 percent of teen drivers texting or e-mailing while their attention should be on the road.

If we, as a community, do not keep our eyes on *all* conditions affecting child and youth well-being, then we cannot ensure their educational success and their readiness for college, work and life.

In the chart on the next page, we see the assets to build upon – both where our youth are performing well (pre-school attendance) and less well (enrollment in Advance Placement courses). By tracking these types of indicators, our community can observe the factors contributing to higher markers of success, like graduating from high school.

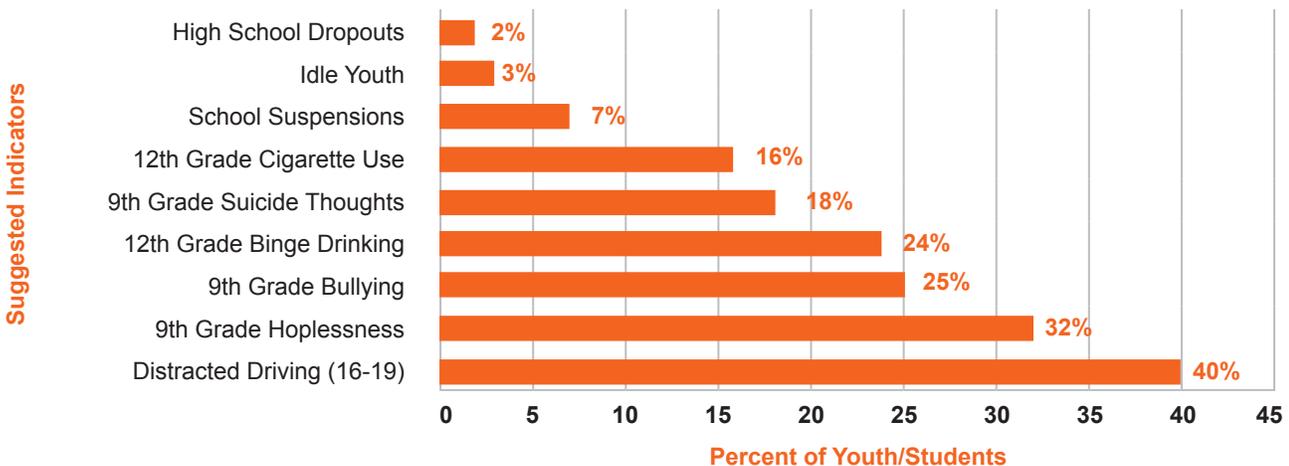
FIGURE 4: WAKE COUNTY YOUTH ASSETS TO BUILD UPON



As we look at conditions affecting youth as they travel through the education pipeline, we know they are faced with choices and experiences that can change the course of their lives. We know conditions are not always perfect; therefore, the community must continue working to re-engineer those conditions to reduce risks and create better outcomes.

Below are suggested indicators for risks that need to be reduced in order to create better conditions for youth success. For example, we need to address young people’s driving habits. We need to bring the dropout rate even lower. These indicators are all pieces of a bigger puzzle that, not well-addressed, can result in graduation dropping away as a young person’s goal.

FIGURE 5: WAKE COUNTY YOUTH RISKS TO REDUCE



ACADEMIC WELL-BEING: HOW WELL ARE YOUTH DOING ACADEMICALLY?

Overall, students in Wake County are doing well academically, with 83 percent of the high school student population graduating on time (within a four-year period). Most students are performing above state averages in math and reading proficiency. There are instances where specific pockets within the student population are not performing well and where attention needs to be focused.

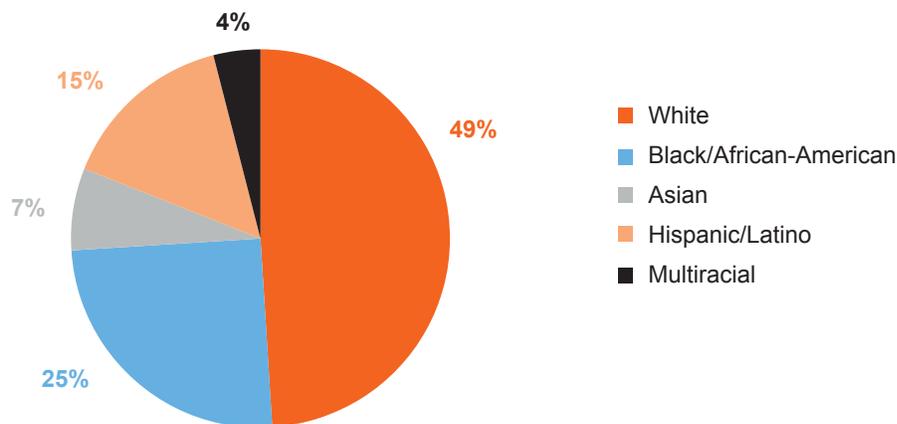
There are significant issues related to disparities by race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status that must be addressed by the community. With a single school district serving such a geographically vast and demographically diverse county, the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) is faced with the same challenges that confront many metropolitan areas. Meeting the needs of such a diverse student population cannot be accomplished by the schools alone. The whole community must understand the challenges students face in the classroom, as well as in other parts of their lives.

Wake County Needs Well-Educated Adults to Thrive	
Educational attainment is important to maintain Wake County's positive job market, ensuring local jobs are filled and the local economy remains sound. According to the 2013 U.S. Census, of the population 25 and older in Wake County:	
18.1%	have a graduate degree
31.0%	have a bachelor's degree
7.6%	have an associate's degree
18.5%	have attended some college, but are without a degree
16.3%	have a high school diploma or equivalent
4.4%	have less than a high school diploma

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

During the 2012-2013 school year, there were 149,508 children served by the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS), the 16th largest in the nation and home to 171 schools. In the current school year, WCPSS reports 104 elementary schools, 33 middle schools, 27 high schools, four special/options schools and three academies. Grade-level breakdown of WCPSS students in 2012-2013 school year finds 71,190 youth in K-5th grade; 34,631 in 6th-8th grades; and 43,687 in 9th-12th grades. Like the total population of youth in Wake County, WCPSS has a 51 percent male population and 49 percent female. During the 2012-2013 school year, WCPSS had a diverse student population, with just less than half being White.

FIGURE 6: WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM ENROLLMENT, BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2012-2013



Source: Wake County Public School System Demographics Profile: 2012-2013

- 19,915 students (13 percent) were enrolled in special education programs.
- 11,143 students (7 percent) were considered “Limited English Proficiency.”
- 5,382 students (4 percent) required English as a Second Language (ESL) services.
- 50,432 students (34 percent) received free- and reduced-lunch benefits.

Non-Public Education in Wake County. In addition to the 149,508 students in the Wake County Public School System, there are an additional 6,721 students in 19 charter schools.⁸ Charter schools receive state funding but are not a part of local school districts. Private schools, which include religious schools, had an enrollment of 16,249 students through the sixth month of the 2013-2014 school year.⁹ For the same school

Additional student characteristics help paint a more in-depth picture of the students who are most likely to need assistance to succeed. Below are characteristics for students in WCPSS. It is likely that some of these students appear in several categories. Understanding this would be helpful in creating strategies to address their challenges.

⁸ <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/fbs/accounting/data/>

⁹ <http://www.ncdnpe.org/documents/13-14-CS-Directory.pdf>

year, an estimated 9,559 students were homeschooled in Wake County.¹⁰ In all, there are 32,529 students (18 percent of the county’s total student body) in a school other than a district public school. The remaining data in this section reflects only the students served by WCPSS.

FIGURE 7: PRE-SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND KINDERGARTEN INITIAL ASSESSMENT SKILLS

	Attended Pre-School	Did Not Attend Pre-School
Total # of kindergarten students	8,528 (76%)	2,656 (24%)
% who were read to daily or several times/week	87%	52%
% who recognized more than half of print concepts	68%	30%
% who identified more than 10 letters	92%	57%
% who could not identify letter sounds	17%	54%
% who could not identify any words	42%	73%

Source: Wake County Public School System

WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM STUDENT PROGRESS

Initial Kindergarten Assessment for Skills.

WCPSS uses a “kindergarten initial assessment” to identify each child’s strengths and weakness to help teachers prepare for teaching these new students.¹¹ This assessment checks for literacy, letter identification and sounds, oral language and math skills. The assessment also includes basic physical tasks (i.e., catching and throwing a ball).

Exposure to programs or formal pre-school prior to entering kindergarten can help young children entering the school environment for

the first time. In addition to assessing entering students’ skills, WCPSS collects data on pre-school attendance. Of the children assessed during the 2011-2012 school year, using the Kindergarten Initial Assessment (11,184), 76 percent attended pre-school and 24 percent did not. ***The children who attended a pre-school program outperformed their peers in every assessment category.***

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT MILESTONES MEASURED BY END-OF-GRADE/END-OF-COURSE TESTING

Students in North Carolina take annual end-of-grade (EOG) exams in reading and math in grades 3-8. Most high school students take three end-of-course (EOC) exams (Math 1, English 2, and Biology). WCPSS students have performed at higher rates of proficiency than students in the state as a whole; however, there are still large achievement gaps by race and ethnicity. In general, White and Asian students have proficiency rates two or more times higher than those of Black/African-American and Hispanic/Latino students. Proficiency is defined as the total of students who scored higher than three on a five-point scale. See the limitations section on these data for information on comparison.

Third Grade Reading and Math Proficiency. Being at grade-level proficiency in any academic area is important for all students, but third grade reading is a significant milestone. The National Research Council identifies a failure to achieve third grade reading proficiency as a “link to future failures”¹², and even states that a child not reading well at the end of third grade is unlikely to graduate from high school. Third grade is pivotal, as students are beginning to read to learn and understand material placed before them. When compared with the state, WCPSS students perform better in both reading and math proficiency. ***Overall, about 70 percent of Wake County third graders are proficient in reading and math, but the disparities among the population of students are large.***

White third graders in Wake County are almost twice as likely to be proficient in reading as are their Black/African-American and Hispanic/Latino peers. There are clear gaps in achievement related to race/ethnicity:

¹⁰ <http://www.ncdnpe.org/documents/hhh239.pdf>

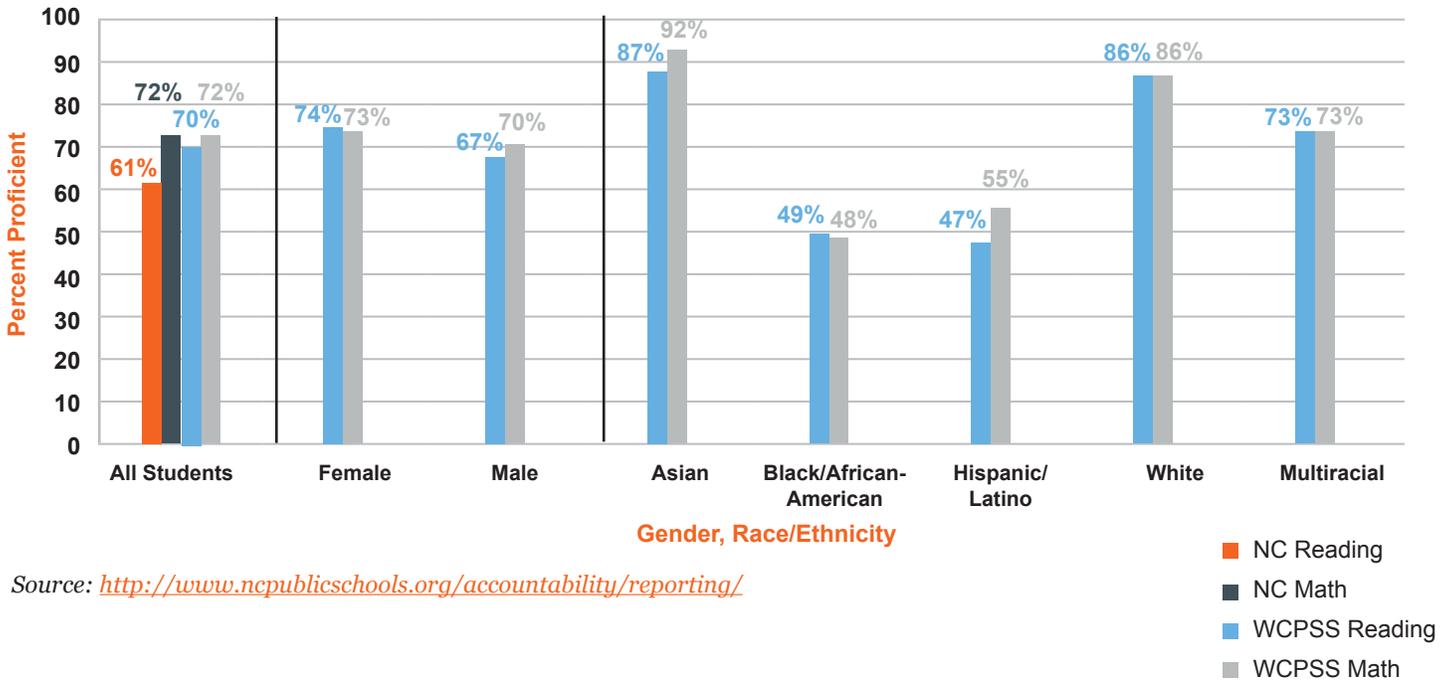
¹¹ <https://www.wcpss.net/parents/kindergarten/assessment.html>

¹² <http://www.greatschools.org/find-a-school/school-visit/7378-importance-third-grade-reading.gs>

Asian and White students are significantly above their peers who identify as Black/African-American or Hispanic/Latino. These gaps persist across grades.

Similar to reading proficiency, there are disparities in third grade math proficiency: White and Asian students perform better than all other groups, with significant gaps with Black/African-American and Hispanic/Latino students.

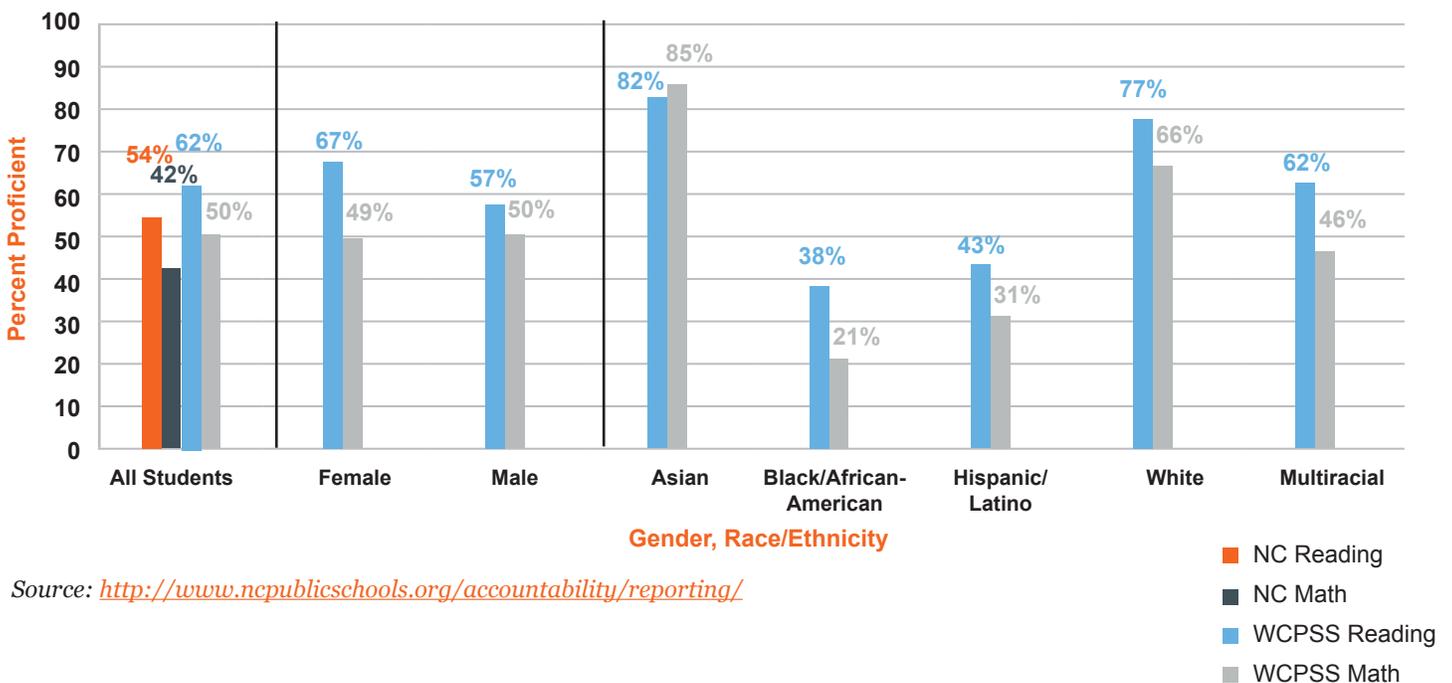
FIGURE 8: GRADE 3 READING AND MATH PROFICIENCY BY GENDER, RACE/ETHNICITY, 2013-2014



Source: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/>

Middle School Reading and Math Proficiency. *Middle school students in WCPSS perform better than the state average in reading and math proficiency, but their rates are lower than those for 3rd graders and the racial/ethnic gaps are larger.* Overall, only 62 percent of middle school students are proficient in reading and only 50 percent in math. In reading, females perform better than their male peers.

FIGURE 9: 8TH GRADE READING AND MATH PROFICIENCY BY GENDER, RACE/ETHNICITY, 2013-2014

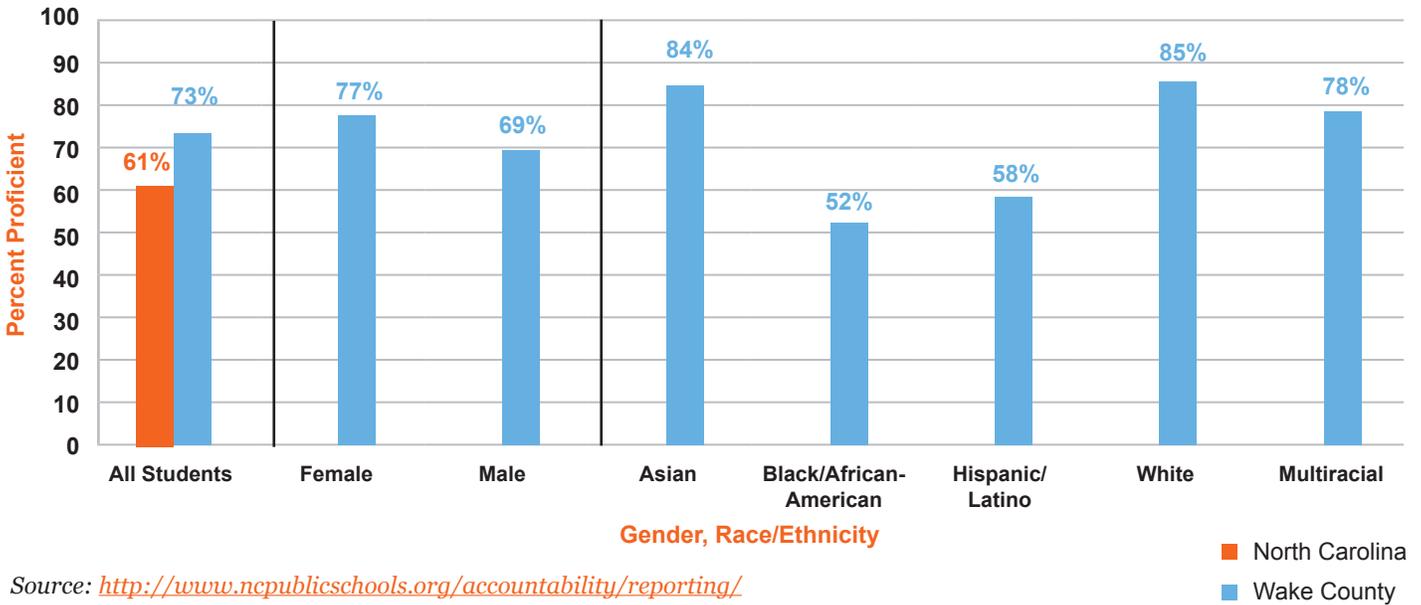


Source: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/>

English 2 and Math I Proficiency. Proficiency rates for high school students improve and remain higher than the state rates. *Overall, more than 70 percent of students are proficient in English 2 and Math I. Racial and ethnic gaps are smaller than in other academic areas, but still significant.*

As in other areas of testing, Asian and White students perform better than their Black/African-American and Hispanic/Latino peers in English proficiency. Compared with the state, WCPSS students perform better.

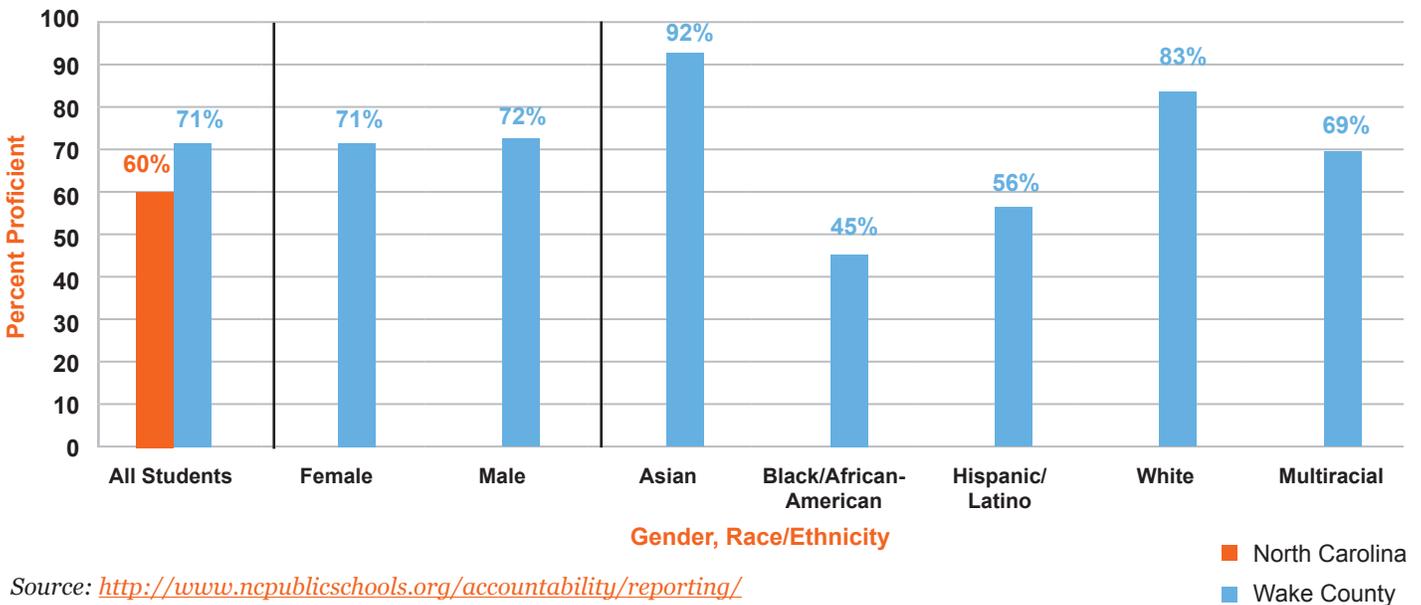
FIGURE 10: ENGLISH 2 PROFICIENCY BY GENDER, RACE/ETHNICITY, GRADES 9-12, 2013-2014



Source: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/>

Many educators consider Math I an indicator of college success. Once again, in Wake County, Asian and White students perform better in this subject than do their Black/African-American and Hispanic/Latino peers. Compared to the state, WCPSS students perform better in Math 1 Proficiency.

FIGURE 11: MATH 1 PROFICIENCY BY GENDER, RACE/ETHNICITY, GRADES 9-12, 2013-2014



Source: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/>

Advanced Placement Courses in Wake County High Schools. Advanced Placement (AP) courses enable students to take college-level courses in high school, and in some cases to earn college credits. **Over time, WCPSS has increased its AP course offerings to reach more students. During the 2012-2013 school year, 14 percent (6,163 students) of all WCPSS high school students took 12,646 AP exams.** The number of courses available varies by school, with Enloe High School offering the highest number (26 of a possible 34 made available by the College Board).

FIGURE 12: AP ENROLLMENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY

	2012-2013			
	High School Enrollment / %		Total AP Enrollment*	%
American Indian	195	0%	54	0%
Asian	2,508	6%	3,796	17%
Black/African-American	11,313	26%	1,684	8%
Hispanic/Latino	5,530	13%	1,397	6%
Hawaiian/Pacific Is.	55	0%	17	0%
Multiracial	1,890	4%	859	4%
White	21,852	50%	14,080	64%
Total	43,343		21,887	

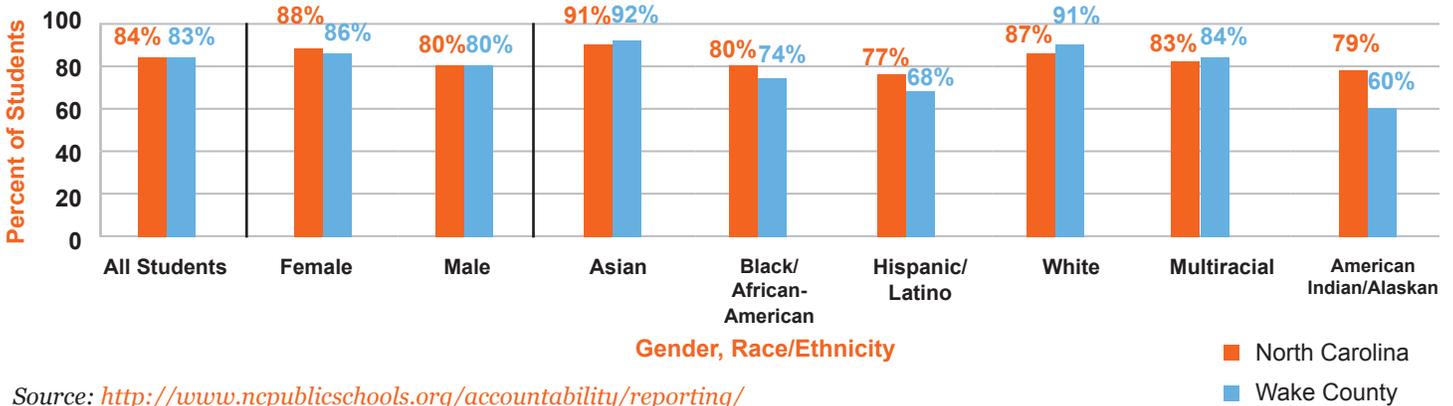
* Counts students enrolled in more than one AP course.

Source: Wake County Public Schools Data and Accountability Report No. 13.17, March 2014

Note that 17 percent of the total AP student population were Asian, while this same population makes up only 6 percent of the total student population for WCPSS. **Black/African-American students, who make up 26 percent of the student population, were only 8 percent of the student population taking AP courses in the 2013-2014 school year.**

High School Graduation Rates. *WCPSS's 2013-2014 graduation rate of 83 percent was up from the previous year, but slightly lower than the rate for the state (84 percent).* Female students graduate at a higher rate than male students regardless of race and ethnicity, although the gender gaps among Black/African-American and Hispanic/Latino students are much wider. While students who are Asian or White graduate at the highest rates, students who are Black/African-American, Hispanic/Latino and American Indian have the lowest graduation rates. Students in WCPSS graduate at a similar rate to students across North

FIGURE 13: FOUR-YEAR COHORT GRADUATION RATES BY GENDER, RACE/ETHNICITY, 2013-2014



Source: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/> Carolina.

Dropout Rates in Wake County. *Annual dropout rates for students in WCPSS have consistently been declining.* During the 2012-2013 school year, the dropout rate for high school students was 2 percent (870 students). Hispanic/Latino youth experienced the highest dropout rate (4 percent), with Black/African-American students dropping out at a 3 percent rate. The dropout rate for White students was 1 percent; for Asian students, 0.8 percent; and for multiracial students, 1 percent.¹³ Among all dropouts, 62 percent (535) were male and 39 percent (335) were female.

Limitations of Academic Data

EOG and EOC exams were revised in 2012-2013 to align with new, more rigorous common core standards; therefore, comparison with years prior to 2012-2013 are not recommended.

EOG and EOC exams are given one time for each student and may not reflect students' true ability or mastery. Scores on exams are sorted into five achievement levels, and proficiency is defined as the percentage of scores at levels 3-5. In addition to changing the content of the tests, the state periodically adjusts the cut-off scores used to determine proficiency.

¹³ Dropout counts for Asian, American Indian and Pacific Islander students are not included in the data due to small numbers.

VOCATIONAL WELL-BEING: HOW WELL ARE YOUTH DOING VOCATIONALLY?

Wake County is rich with employment opportunities for those interested in technology, science, and product research and development, and is a fast-growing job market in many of these areas.

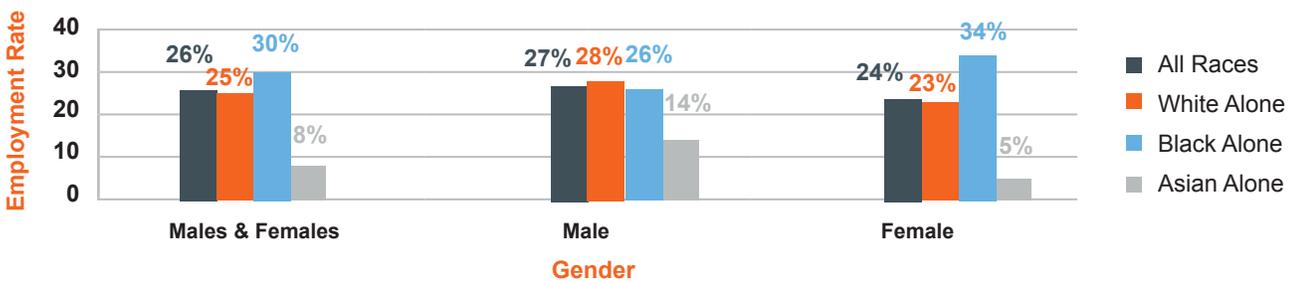
Of Wake County’s top 23 employers¹⁴, five are major technology companies (Cisco Systems, SAS Institute, Affiliated Computer Systems, Lenovo and NetApp). The community needs to ensure the growth of a youth population with the skills needed to fill these local jobs.

The answer to how well youth in Wake County are doing vocationally is woefully incomplete. Because of scarce and fragmented data, it is difficult to provide a clear picture of what is happening to prepare youth for vocations and what is needed to do so fully. The community would benefit from a program scan to truly understand where Wake County has programming related to youth vocational skill development and where gaps exist. Additionally, the community needs to know more from local businesses about their workforce needs.

Teen and Young Adult Employment. Employment rates¹⁵ in the county are generally high. There are a total of 457,859 individuals (regardless of age) employed in Wake County, with unemployment at 5 percent.¹⁶ Teen employment rates are expected to be lower, because many teens are still in school. That said, most teens, even those committed to school, report an interest in or need for working part-time and during the summer.¹⁷ But teen employment rates nationally are at their lowest levels since World War II.

Race and gender teen employment patterns are complex. Employment rates reflect two factors – job search and employment success. *Job seeking can vary significantly across student populations, depending on their need or desire to work. This makes it hard to interpret the data. That said, African-Americans ages 16-19 are employed at a slightly greater percentage than White and Hispanic teens. Asian youth are far less likely to be employed.* Gender differences have distinct patterns within each racial group. White males tend to be employed slightly more than their female counterparts (28 percent vs. 23 percent). Asian males are significantly more likely to be employed than Asian females (14 percent vs. 5 percent). Black/African-American teen males, however, are one-fourth less likely to be employed than their female counterparts (26 percent vs. 34 percent).

FIGURE 14: EMPLOYMENT FOR 16- TO 19-YEAR-OLDS IN WAKE COUNTY, BY GENDER AND RACE/ETHNICITY



Source: American Community Survey, 2013

¹⁴ <http://www.wakegov.com/planning/demographic/Documents/trends2014.pdf>

¹⁵ Employment data reflect the number of youth employed out of the whole youth population, not just those that are in the labor force. The percent of youth not employed, therefore, should not be interpreted as the percentage of youth who are looking for but unable to find work. It includes those unemployed but in the labor force and those not seeking work.

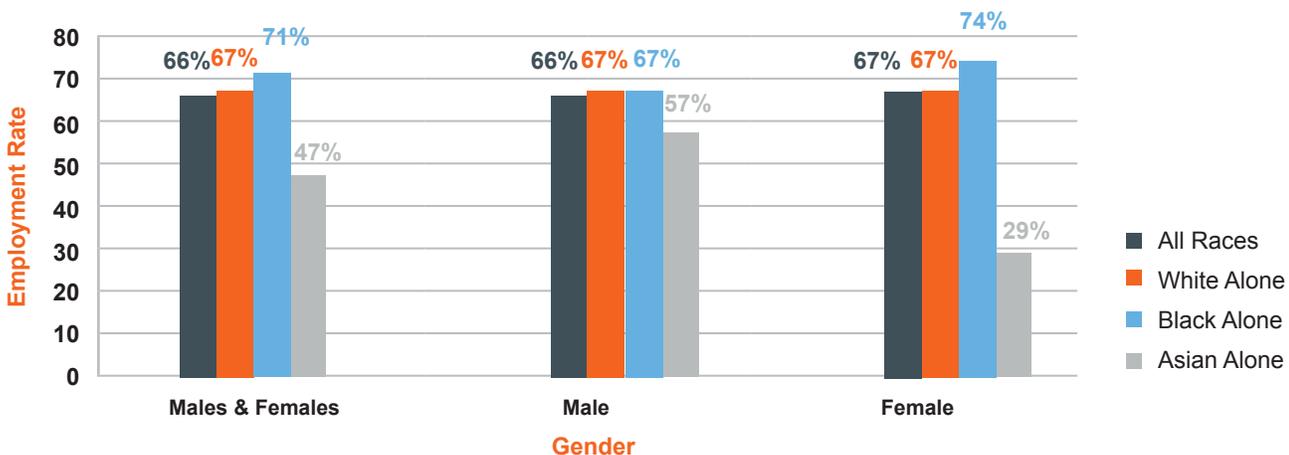
¹⁶ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

¹⁷ <http://www.nationaljournal.com/next-economy/big-questions/what-happens-when-american-teenagers-can-t-find-work-20140409>

The challenge with this data is that it is impossible to explain the differences without more information and, as stated earlier, vocational data is difficult to obtain. Questions to be asked include whether specific populations are seeking employment, but simply not finding it for whatever reason. What factors make it difficult for a youth to find employment? Is it possible that some groups of youth have a responsibility to contribute to their household income or provide for their own children, thus increasing the chances that they will have jobs? Without better understanding of these and other factors, it will be difficult to develop strategies to address vocational preparedness.

Reviewing the data for the age group immediately beyond high school and/or college, ages 20-24, gives us a sense of where teens might be heading. As expected, more young people are employed in their early twenties (65 percent) than in the late teens (25 percent). **Overall, rates of employment for White and Black/African-American young adults are similar.** Black/African-American females, however, continue to be employed at higher levels than black males. Asian females continue to be significantly less employed than any other group.

FIGURE 15: EMPLOYMENT FOR 20- TO 24-YEAR-OLDS IN WAKE COUNTY, BY GENDER AND RACE/ETHNICITY



Source: American Community Survey, 2013

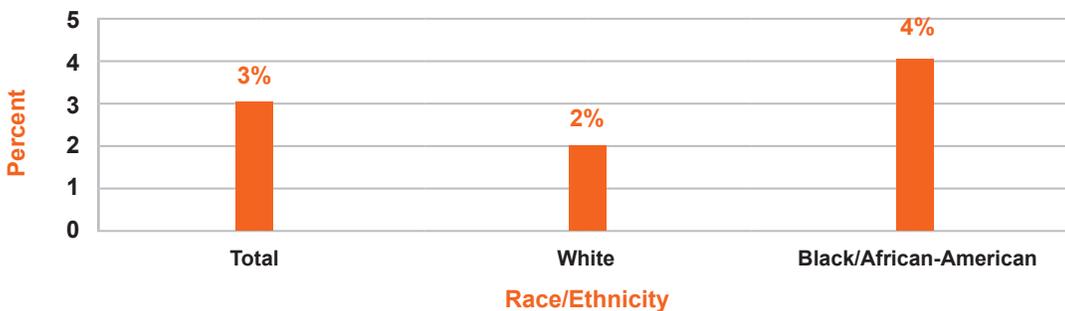
To advance our understanding of vocational well-being in the future, it will be important to look at unemployment rates (which capture information on those who are trying, but not succeeding at finding employment), as well as part-time employment rates (which usually reflect preference if the young adult is in school, but might reflect labor market limitations for those who would prefer full-time jobs).

Idle Youth. While the identifiable number of “idle youth” is low in Wake County, the burden for each one is high. Being able to find a job is a significant indicator of overall life success. Additionally, idle youth (that is, those not involved in work or school, newly referred to as “opportunity youth”) place economic burdens on the community now and in the future. Communities have to ask the big question of whether or not they are creating local conditions to teach and train youth for the community jobs that will be available to them in adulthood.

According to a 2012 report on *The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth*, the estimated economic burden of each idle youth per year is \$13,900 per tax payer, plus a \$37,450 social burden. These youth are also more likely to have poor health and engage in criminal behavior. Additionally, it is important for youth to begin to enter into the labor force so they can develop soft skills (see more about this on the next page) and gain the work experience they need to be productive as adults. **While the 2.7 percent rate of idle youth in Wake County might seem very low, that totals approximately 1,411 youth who are idle – putting a \$72.4 million tax and social burden on Wake County each year.**¹⁸ Additionally, a disproportionate number of Black/African-American youth are considered idle.

¹⁸ Idleness data from the American Community Survey are the number of youth surveyed who were not in school and not employed. Unlike other idleness measures, this measure does not include youth who are unemployed but in the labor force.

FIGURE 16: PERCENT OF POPULATION CONSIDERED “IDLE,” AGES 16-19, BY RACE/ETHNICITY



Source: American Community Survey, 2013

Addressing Skill and Opportunity Gaps. Youth Thrive conducted five Community Stakeholder Conversations throughout Wake County in the winter of 2014. Multiple individuals spoke about the local need for programs and services that would help youth build soft skills – that is, personal skills in such areas as relationships, communication and self-management. Additionally, exposure to vocational opportunities and mentors willing to teach were noted as key needs for youth workforce development. The chart below shows responses from the Community Stakeholder Conversations about both the skills and opportunities needed for youth workforce readiness, by region.¹⁹ Note that these data reflect the opinions of a small sample of youth-serving professionals. It is not a survey of actual opportunities for youth, nor an assessment of youth skills.

FIGURE 17: IDENTIFIED SKILLS FOR WORKFORCE READINESS

Needed for Workforce Readiness	Western	Central	Northern	Southern	Eastern ¹⁹
Increased opportunities to practice skills	X				X
Skill-building for youth	X	X	X	X	X
Accountability for actions	X				
Persistent resourcefulness		X			
Increased opportunities to explore career options		X	X	X	X
Increase educational tracks to include vocational education			X		
Increase in number of businesses willing to offer opportunities for youth				X	

Source: Youth Thrive Community Stakeholder Conversations, Winter 2014

STEM-Based Education in Wake County. As a means to respond to growing job markets, school systems across the U.S. have created STEM schools, which focus on science, technology, engineering and math. The school leaders establish business and community partnerships to provide opportunities and resources for students. The Wake County Public School System identifies 26 of its 169 schools as STEM magnet schools or STEM-focused, with a total enrollment of 1,246.

Limitations of Data Related to Vocational Well-being

For the idle youth measure, some research includes youth who are 1) not in school, 2) not in the labor force, and 3) in the labor force, but unemployed. This particular measure, taken from the American Community Survey, only includes youth who are not in school and not in the labor force.

¹⁹ Regions are defined as: Eastern (Wendell, Zebulon and Knightdale); Western (Cary, Morrisville, Apex); Southern (Holly Springs, Garner and Fuquay-Varina); Northern (Wake Forest, North Raleigh and Rolesville); and Central (City of Raleigh).

SOCIAL WELL-BEING: HOW WELL ARE YOUTH DOING SOCIALLY?

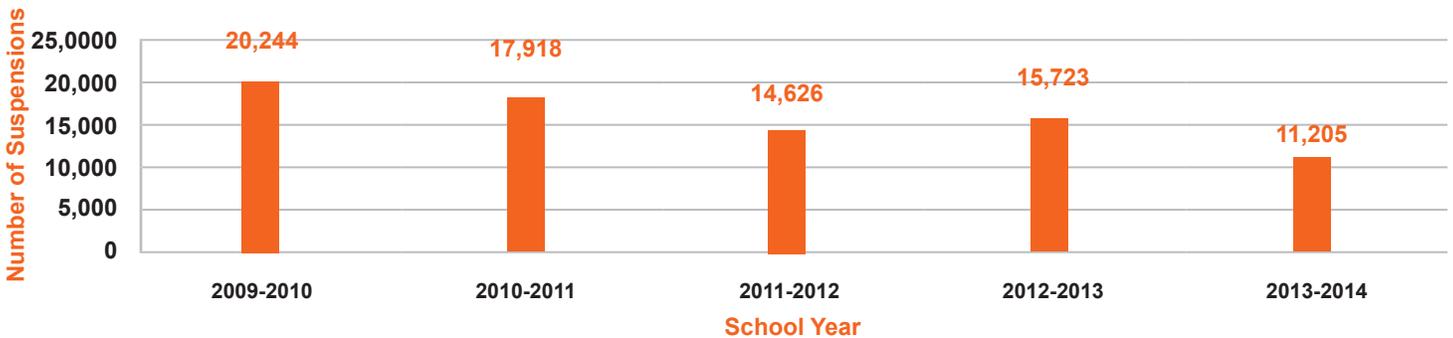
Typically, the words “social well-being” in relation to teenagers conjure images of friends, family, hobbies and connection through social media. While having this understanding is certainly important in learning about the overall well-being of youth, it does not reflect the new importance being placed on personal and social skills, such as problem-solving, team work, time management, relationship management, public speaking and conflict resolution. These skills help determine not only how much, but how well and with whom young people are “socially involved.”

This information, however, is hard to come by and is not readily available for consideration by a community. The data available to communities typically reflect changes in a youth’s relationship to public systems, such as the education and juvenile justice systems, which often results from the absence of these skills or of appropriate opportunities to use them. Understanding these types of connections to society also helps us know more about the challenges that youth face in Wake County.

School Suspensions. School suspensions are a documented issue in Wake County. While progress had been made toward reducing the number of suspensions, significant disparities remain in who receives suspensions in our schools. Lost instructional time hinders learning for young people, so attention should be paid to keeping students in the classroom.

Data indicate a five-year downward trend in the total number of school suspensions, which encompasses short-term, long-term and 365-day suspensions. ***There has been a 35 percent reduction in individual students suspended over the past five years.*** It is important to note that the actual number of suspensions has decreased – not just the percentage – even as the student population has increased 9.4 percent over the past five school years.

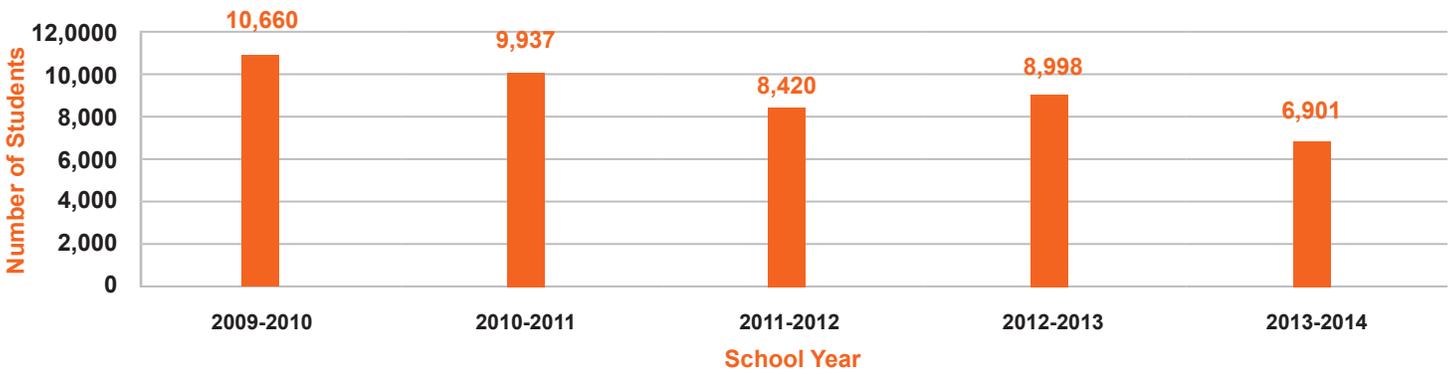
FIGURE 18: TOTAL NUMBER OF SUSPENSIONS IN WCPSS: FIVE-YEAR TREND



Source: Wake County Public School System Annual Report Student Discipline Data

For the 2013-2014 school year, there were a total of 11,205 suspensions across elementary (1,905), middle (4,381) and high (4,919) schools in the WCPSS. This is an overall reduction of 4,518 suspensions from the previous year. This trend has been fairly consistent since the 2009-2010 school year, with a slight increase from the 2011-2012 school year to the 2012-2013 school year.

FIGURE 19: NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS SUSPENDED IN WCPSS: FIVE-YEAR TREND

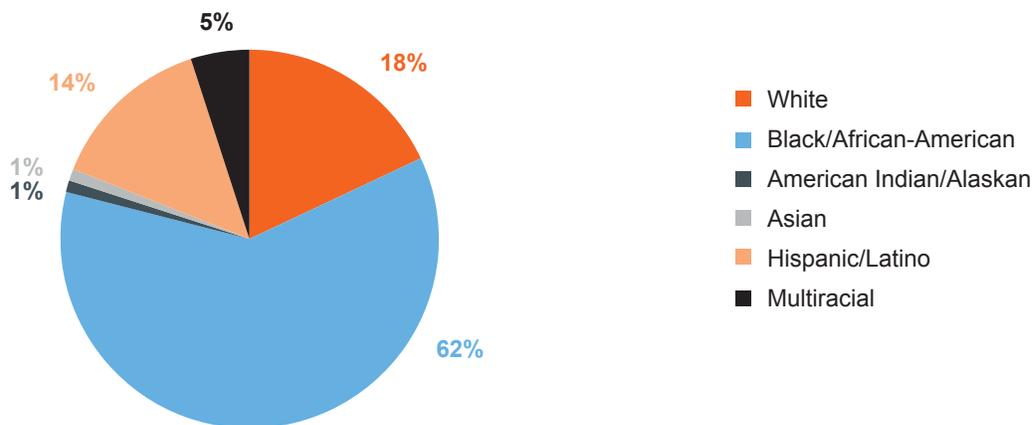


Source: Wake County Public School System Annual Report Student Discipline Data

Five years ago, WCPSS revised its student code of conduct to encourage school leaders to avoid using out-of-school suspension for minor, non-violent infractions. According to available data, there were 6,901 students suspended for the 2013-2014 school year. **Of the total student population (152,899), African-American students make up 25 percent of the total student body, but 62 percent of suspensions.**²⁰

FIGURE 20: SUSPENSIONS, BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2013-2014

Total Suspensions = 11,205



Source: Wake County Public School System Annual Report Student Discipline Data, December 10, 2014

²⁰ <http://www.wcpss.net/blog/2014/12/student-suspensions-down-45-over-past-5-years/>

In the 2013-2014 school year, there were 19,247 students with disabilities in the Wake County Public School System. ***Students with disabilities represent 13 percent of the total WCPSS student population, but 33 percent of individual students suspended.***

District and school leaders have implemented a number of strategies to reduce suspensions, aimed at both preventing poor student behavior and intervening more effectively. On the prevention front, for example, more than 100 schools in WCPSS²¹ use the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS)²² framework, a school-wide approach that demonstrates positive behavior and rewards those who perform well. On the intervention front, schools in the district are making more and better use of Alternative Learning Centers (ALCs), which are designed for students who temporarily need to work outside the regular classroom, either because of behavior problems or because they are behind academically. ALC teachers receive extra training on helping students stay on track academically while also addressing behavioral issues.

Juvenile Justice Involvement. Youth, their families and society suffer multiple consequences from juvenile crime and related problems. Youth disproportionately commit arson, vandalism, motor vehicle thefts, burglaries, and larceny/thefts, with financial ramifications for victims. Crimes committed by juveniles also carry economic, social and psychological burdens, many of which can be long-term. Expenses related to medical treatment, productivity loss and other consequences of juvenile crime are felt throughout layers of the community.²³

The total number of Wake County juvenile complaints to law enforcement for fiscal 2014 was 1,795. Of these complaints, 1,138 were minor charges, 618 were serious offenses and 40 were violent offenses.²⁴ The total number of unduplicated youth involved in these complaints was 792. This small number means that the community can easily identify these young people and develop strategies and pathways to improve their chances of halting delinquent behavior.

Juvenile Facility Operations. There are two types of secure commitment centers for youth in North Carolina: juvenile detention centers and youth development centers.

Juvenile detention centers temporarily house youth alleged to have committed a delinquent act or considered a runaway. Youth are generally placed in a juvenile detention center while awaiting a court hearing, or until another placement can be found. Juveniles transferred to Superior Court for trial as adults are housed in juvenile detention pending trial if they are not released on bond. In fiscal 2014, there were an average of 29 youth per month in the Wake County Juvenile Detention Center.²⁵

Youth development centers are secure facilities that provide education and treatment services to prepare committed youth to successfully transition to a community setting. These facilities, which are more restrictive than detention centers, house juveniles who have been adjudicated for violent or serious offenses or those with a lengthy delinquency history. In fiscal 2014, there were four Wake County youth committed to Youth Development Centers.²⁶

Youth, 18 and under, in Adult Prison in Wake County. A point-in-time count of the county's adult correction facility on Nov. 6, 2014, revealed a total population of 1,145 individuals. Of the total inmate population, 24 individuals were ages 16-18, equating to 2 percent of the total prison population. Of these 24 individuals, 79 percent were Black/African-American, while the total inmate population is roughly 65 percent Black/African-American. Along gender lines, the youth inmate population falls roughly in line with the total inmate population: The youth inmate population is 92 percent male, while the total inmate population is 88 percent male.

²¹ <http://www.wcpss.net/what-we-teach/services/pbis-schools.html>

²² <https://www.pbis.org>

²³ https://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojdp/juris_tap_report/ch2_08.html

²⁴ Violent offenses are any Class A-E Felony (i.e., Armed Robbery or a Felony Assault).

A Serious Offense is a Class F-I felony and an A1 Misdemeanor. A class F-I Felony includes Breaking and Entering. An A1 misdemeanor includes Assault on a Government Employee. North Carolina Department of Public Safety Division of Adult Corrections and Juvenile Justice, Community Programs

²⁵ Wake County Human Services, Division of Administration

²⁶ North Carolina Division of Public Safety, Division of Adult Corrections and Juvenile Justice

North Carolina Legislative Efforts to Raise the Age for Youth Offenders

North Carolina remains one of only two states that automatically prosecute all 16- and 17-year-old youth as adults. This significantly affects the data picture for our young people. In reviewing “complaints” for youth of middle school age, the numbers are higher than those for high school-aged youth because a large pocket of the population is not included. Two bills addressing this issue are up for review in the North Carolina General Assembly²⁷:

NC House Bill 725, Young Offenders Rehabilitation Act, or *Raise the Age*, increases the age of juvenile jurisdiction for all 16- and 17-year-olds charged with misdemeanors. This bill passed the House of Representatives in a bipartisan vote (77 to 39) on May 21, 2014. The Senate did not take up the bill, which means a new bill needs to be introduced for the 2015 session.

NC House Bill 217, Section 4 (Criminal Law/Procedure Amendments, Transfer of Jurisdiction of Juvenile to Superior Court) removes judicial discretion for certain felonies allegedly committed by youth who are 13 and older. Just by a written motion signed by the elected or appointed district attorney, section 4 of HB217 gives prosecutors the power to prosecute youth who are 13 and older in the adult criminal court system and relinquishes the juvenile court judges’ discretion. If the alleged felony constitutes a Class B1 through Class B2 felony, and if the juvenile was 15 or older at the time of the alleged offense and the court finds probable cause, upon motion signed by the elected or appointed district attorney for the prosecutorial district, the court shall transfer the case to the superior court for trial as in the case of adults. This bill passed 92-26 in the House, but has not been taken up by the Senate.

Limitations of Data on Social Well-being

One shortcoming of juvenile justice data in North Carolina is that 16- to 17-year-olds are not included, despite the fact most people consider these individuals to be “juveniles.” In North Carolina, youth in this age range are charged as adults. See the text box above for more information.

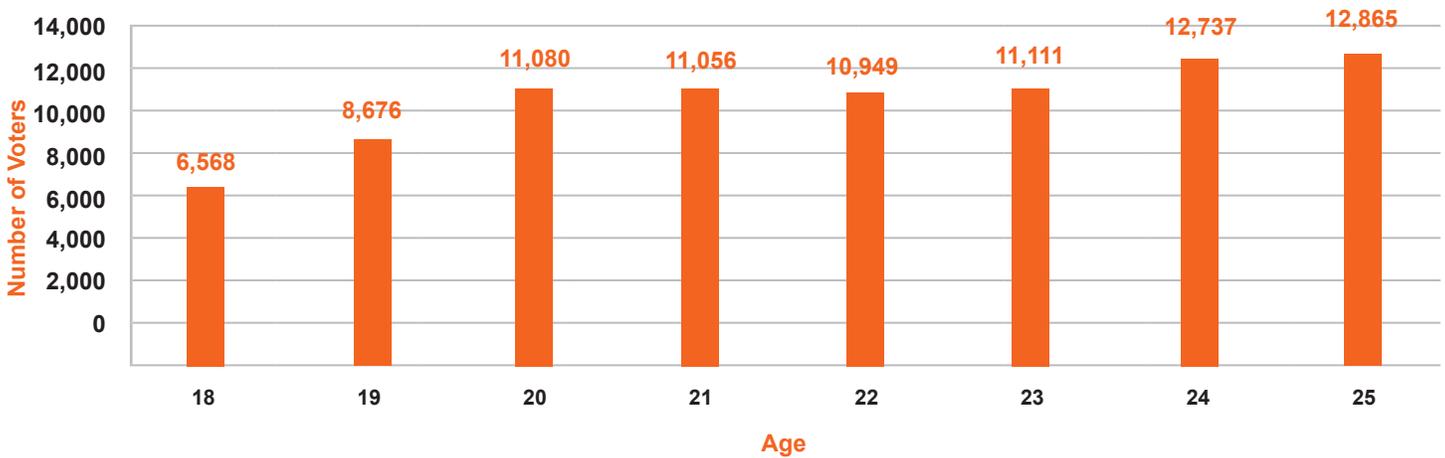
²⁷ North Carolina Division of Public Safety, Division of Adult Corrections and Juvenile Justice. www.ncleg.net

CIVIC WELL-BEING: HOW WELL ARE YOUTH DOING CIVICALLY?

Civic engagement is an important factor in the health of any community. The civic well-being of youth in Wake County is still to be determined. There are significant gaps in data and an unclear understanding of how local organizations can collect information on civic engagement and supply it to inform the community. Data related to civic engagement is extremely limited and does not show an accurate picture of the level at which young people in our community are civically engaged.

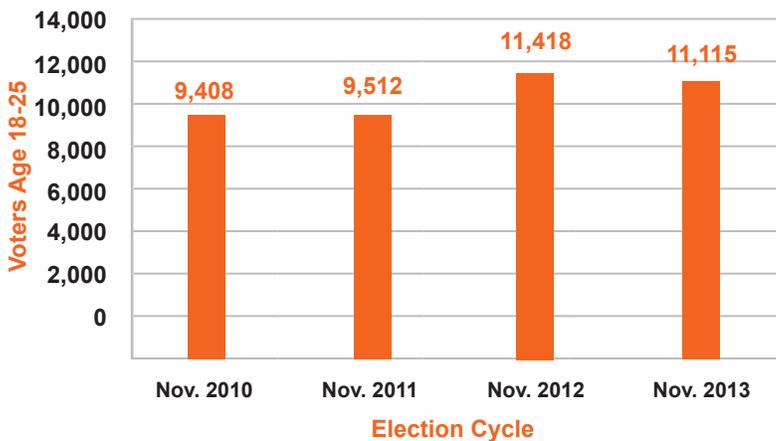
Participation in the electoral process is one key component of civic engagement.²⁸ The voting behavior of the population (ages 18 and older) might be indicative of the preparation and motivation toward civic engagement among those under the legal voting age. **A total of 85,042 individuals, ages 18-25, were registered to vote in Wake County as of Nov. 3, 2014. Assuming that approximately 100,000 individuals in the 18-25 age range reside in Wake County,²⁹ this means that most young adults are registered to vote. Voter registration numbers were lowest among 18-year-olds and increased with age.**

FIGURE 21: NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS BY AGE, AS OF NOV. 2014



Source: Wake County Board of Elections

FIGURE 22: NUMBER OF VOTERS IN WAKE COUNTY, AGES 18-25, BY ELECTION CYCLE



Source: North Carolina State Board of Elections, Oct. 3, 2014

Unfortunately, a relatively small proportion of young people who are registered to vote actually do vote. Between 2010 and 2013, an annual average of approximately 10,000 individuals ages 18-25 voted in Wake County general and municipal elections. Assuming that the number of registered young voters in November 2014 is similar to the number of registered young voters in 2010 to 2013, this means that only about one out of every eight eligible young people voted.

²⁸ American Psychological Association: <http://www.apa.org/education/undergrad/civic-engagement.aspx>

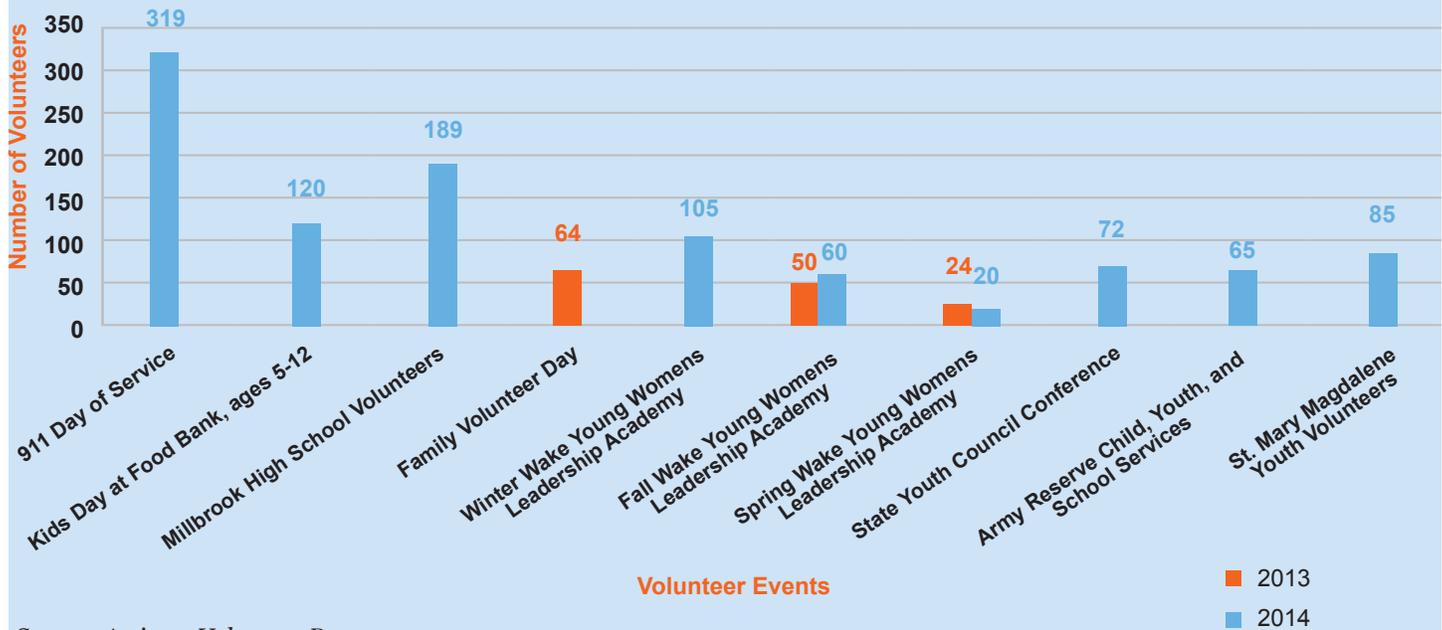
²⁹ Wake County, North Carolina, Demographic Profile from the 2010 Census: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/371831k.html>

Activate Good: Measuring Youth Activism

Wake County is rich with philanthropic and volunteer opportunities. Data related to civic engagement (beyond voter data) continues to be a challenge to collect. Through our partnership with a local non-profit, Activate Good, data was provided related to volunteering.

Activate Good is the Hands on Network of Volunteer Centers affiliate for the Research Triangle area that links volunteers with volunteer opportunities. In 2014, Activate Good offered and filled more volunteer opportunities and partnered with more non-profits than in 2013. The organization has experienced an increase in youth volunteer interest since starting its Activate Schools initiative, a service-learning and leadership elective course offered by high schools in Wake County. The graph below shows the service opportunities offered by Activate Good in 2013 and 2014 and the number of volunteers under age 18 who participated.

ACTIVATE GOOD VOLUNTEER PROJECTS WHERE VOLUNTEERS ARE 18 AND UNDER, 2013-2014



Source: Activate Volunteer Data 2013-2014

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING: HOW WELL ARE YOUTH DOING PHYSICALLY?

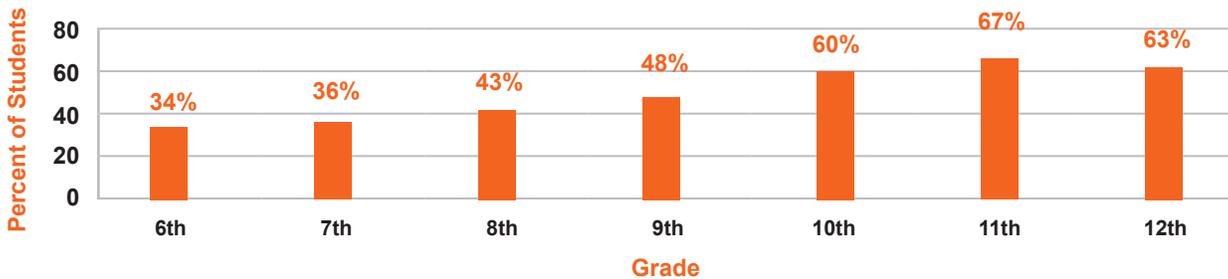
The physical well-being of youth is important to understand, as it affects their ability to learn, interact and grow into productive and contributing adults. Long-term physical health of children starts at birth and continues through the lifecycle. Children and youth in Wake County have access to hundreds of miles of walking and bike paths through the local greenway system. There are eight parks managed by Wake County Parks and Recreation; 128 managed by the City of Raleigh, with the other 11 municipalities having their own parks and recreational areas. In addition, Wake County is home to two state parks: Falls Lake State Recreation Area and William B. Umstead State Park. There is one physician for every 1,243 people in Wake County,³⁰ and numerous hospitals. Less than 5 percent of Wake County children under 18 lack health insurance.³¹

Many of the questions in this section of the profile were answered with data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS),³² a paper survey issued in odd numbered years by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through local school districts. This data is incredibly informative, as most communities do not have localized data to answer questions about youth perceptions about health and other factors influencing their well-being without it. WCPSS administered the YRBS in 2013, with results published in the fall of 2014.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Healthy Weight and Physical Activity. Issues related to healthy weight are of concern in Wake County. Childhood obesity often leads to the same condition in adulthood. Thirty-seven percent of children and youth in Wake County are considered overweight or obese.³³ National data suggest that physical activity among secondary school students is lower than that of elementary school students. Exercise habits are set early. This decline in student physical activity contributes to concerns about adult inactivity. **High school juniors and seniors are twice as likely to be inactive as 6th and 7th graders.**

FIGURE 23: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG STUDENTS (<60 MINS. PER DAY, FEWER THAN 5 OUT OF 7 DAYS), BY GRADE, 2013



Source: Wake County Public Schools, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

³⁰ <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/north-carolina/2014/measure/factors/4/map>

³¹ American Community Survey, 2013

³² <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>

³³ http://www.wakegov.com/humanservices/publichealth/information/chronic/pages/obesity_over_weight.aspx

Wellness Checks and Physical Exams. Preventive care is important to keep young people healthy. During a complete well-child visit, a doctor and/or nurse can discuss with parents and caretakers the wellness and lifestyle habits that might harm the child's health or contribute to health risks. ***Of those surveyed through the YRBS, over one-third of middle school students reported that they had not seen a doctor or nurse for a check-up during the past year.***

SUBSTANCE USE

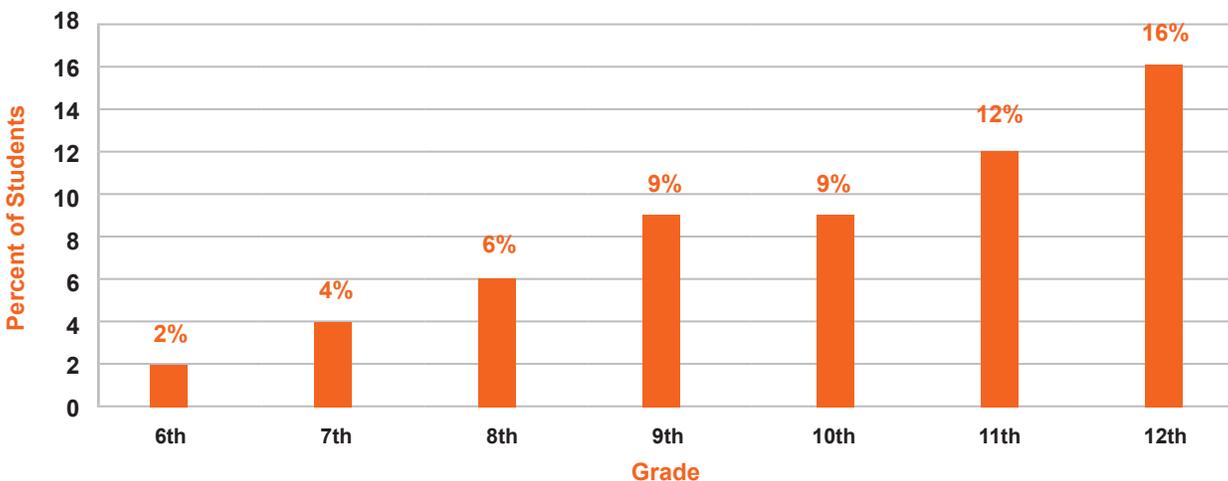
Youth Tobacco Use. During adolescence, the human brain undergoes significant developmental growth. When young people use alcohol and other drugs during this time, normal brain growth is interrupted and even altered. Preventing youth substance use also prevents its related consequences, such as traffic crashes, lost productivity and poor academic performance.³⁴

The YRBS administered in Wake County asked a series of questions related to use of alcohol, tobacco (cigarettes only) and marijuana. The survey did not ask about any other illicit drugs, including the misuse of prescription drugs, which is a growing problem in the teenage population.

Tobacco use is at an all-time low across the nation, but is still a problem. ***Sixteen percent of 12th graders surveyed report they had smoked a cigarette in the past 30 days.*** In the middle- and high school-age groups, males report cigarette use more than their female counterparts. For middle school students, 6 percent of males report smoking in the past 30 days, while 3 percent of females report this behavior. ***White students start using tobacco later than other ethnic groups, but have the highest 30-day use rates in high school.***

Across race/ethnicity groups in middle school, Hispanic students report a slightly higher rate of cigarette use (6.7 percent) than Black students (6.1 percent) and a significantly higher rate than White students (3 percent). The data look much different in high school. While major gaps still exist between genders (with 14 percent of males and 10 percent of females reporting past 30-day cigarette use), the differences among race/ethnicity groups widens and switches: 15 percent of White students report cigarette use in the past 30 days, with Hispanic students not far behind at 13 percent. Seven percent of Black students report past 30-day cigarette use. The graph below shows past 30-day use of cigarettes among 6th to 12th graders.

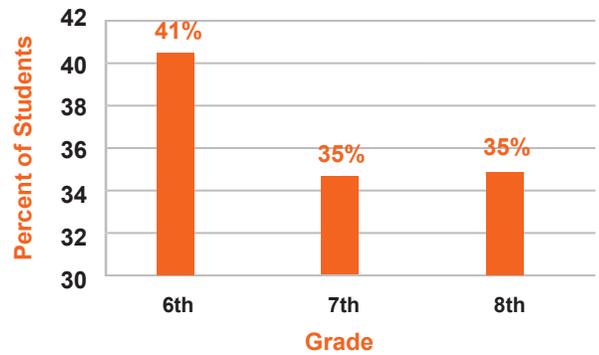
FIGURE 25: PAST 30-DAY CIGARETTE USE, GRADES 6-12, 2013



Source: Wake County Public Schools, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

³⁴ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/prevention-intro>

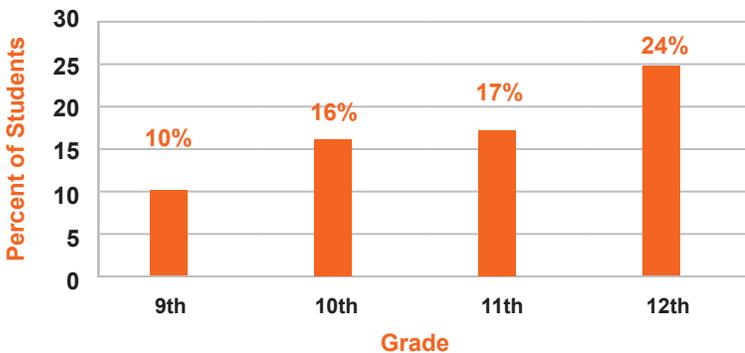
FIGURE 24: MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS REPORTING NO CHECK-UP IN PAST 12 MONTHS, 2013



Source: Wake County Public Schools, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Youth Alcohol Use. Alcohol consumption by individuals under age 21 has been illegal in North Carolina since 1986. Despite this, underage drinking is a local, state and national public health problem. Nationally, by age 18, 70 percent of teens have had a least one alcoholic drink.³⁵ As reported in the YRBS, 17 percent of males and 10 percent of females in high school report drinking more than a few sips of alcohol before age 13, with 23 percent of Hispanic high school students reporting this behavior.

FIGURE 26: BINGE DRINKING IN THE PAST 30 DAYS, GRADES 9-12, 2013

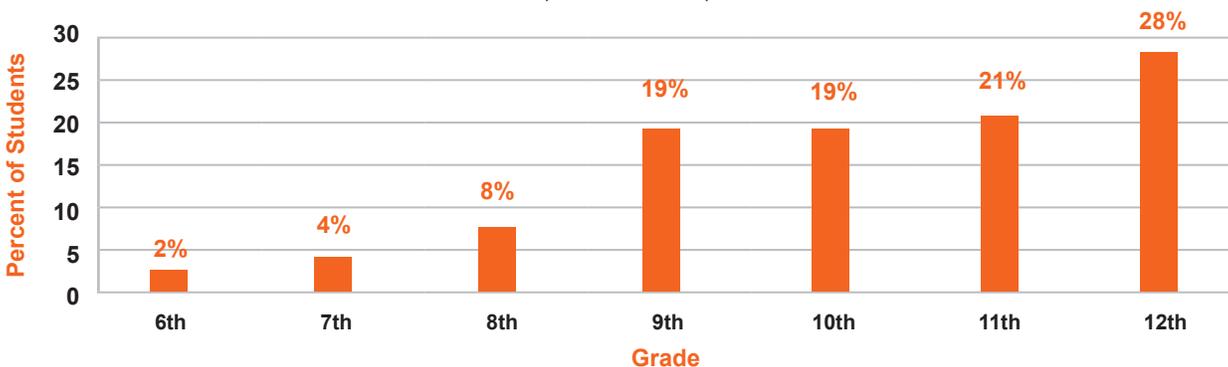


Source: Wake County Public Schools, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

The frequency and manner in which a young person consumes alcohol can also be of concern. Binge drinking is defined as five or more drinks for a male in about two hours and four or more drinks for a female in this same timeframe.³⁶ **Alcohol consumption in Wake County follows the national pattern of increasing as students get older, with 24 percent of 12th graders surveyed reporting they have engaged in binge drinking in the past 30 days.**

Youth Marijuana Use. Marijuana use by youth is on the rise nationally.³⁷ **The YRBS indicates that 22 percent of high school students surveyed have used marijuana in the past 30 days.** That includes 23 percent of males and 21 percent of females. When reviewing this data across race/ethnicity, 27 percent of Hispanic high school students report past 30-day marijuana use, while 25 percent of Black students and 20.6 percent of White students report this behavior. More than half of the surveyed Hispanic/Latino students report ever using marijuana, compared with 44 percent of Black high school students and 37 percent of White high school students. Middle school marijuana use rates are considerably lower than those of high schoolers, with only 5 percent reporting past 30-day use.

FIGURE 27: MARIJUANA USE IN THE PAST 30 DAYS, GRADES 6-12, 2013



Source: Wake County Public Schools, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

³⁵ <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/special-populations-co-occurring-disorders/underage-drinking>

³⁶ <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/moderate-binge-drinking>

³⁷ <http://www.nih.gov/news/health/dec2012/nida-19.htm>

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

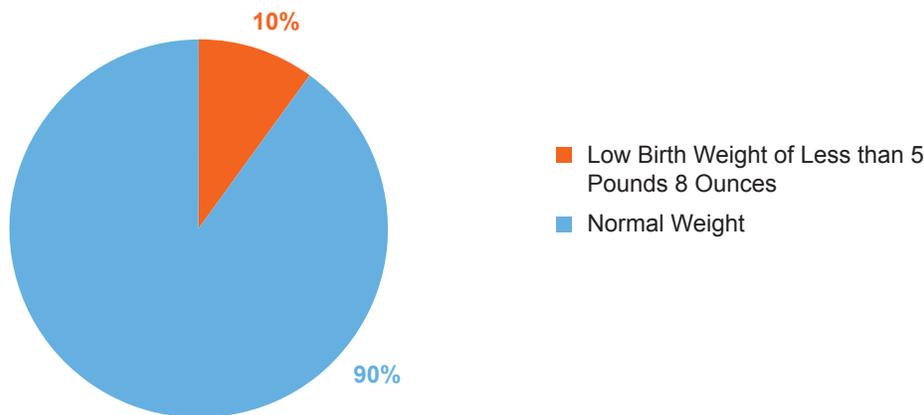
Teen Pregnancy. Pregnancy includes live births, as well as those ending in abortion and fetal loss. Compared to their peers, teen girls who become pregnant are less likely to complete high school; more likely to need public assistance; more likely to live in poverty as adults; and more likely to have children who have poorer educational, behavioral and other health outcomes over their course of their lives than babies born to older parents.³⁸

In 2013, there were 741 known pregnancies experienced by females, ages 15-19, in Wake County. Of these pregnancies, 210 were to teens age 15-17, with the remaining 531 among females age 18-19. Of these 741 known pregnancies, 376 were to Black/African-American females, 199 to Hispanic/Latino females, 150 to White females, nine to Other, Non-Hispanic females, and five to American Indian/Alaskan Native females. For two pregnancies, race/ethnicity were not reported.³⁹ Wake County's pregnancy rate is low compared with other counties in the state, ranking 73 among 100 counties for teen pregnancy. The county experienced a 12.5 percent reduction in teen pregnancies from 2012 to 2013.

Low Birth Weight Among Teen Births. The following data includes only live births. Conditions at birth set the stage for how well a child's early development continues. Being born at a low birth weight (less than 2,500 grams) is the single most important factor in deaths of infants; those who survive are at increased risk of other health problems.⁴⁰ Being born to a mother in her teens also poses increased risks to the pregnant mother and her baby.

In 2013, there were 529 infants born to mothers, ages 13-19, in Wake County. Of those, 10 percent (or 52 total) were born at low birth weight. Of these births, 34 were born to Black/African-American mothers, nine to White mothers, eight to Hispanic/Latino mothers, and one to a mother listed as Other, Non-Hispanic. One baby of unknown weight was born to a Hispanic/Latino mother.⁴¹

FIGURE 28: LOW-WEIGHT INFANTS BORN TO TEENAGERS, AGES 13-19, 2013



Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, State Center for Health Statistics

³⁸ U.S. Office of Adolescent Health. Overview, Teen Pregnancy and Childbearing, Nov. 2, 2014 <http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-health-topics/reproductive-health/teen-pregnancy/>

³⁹ <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/data/vital/pregnancies/2013/>

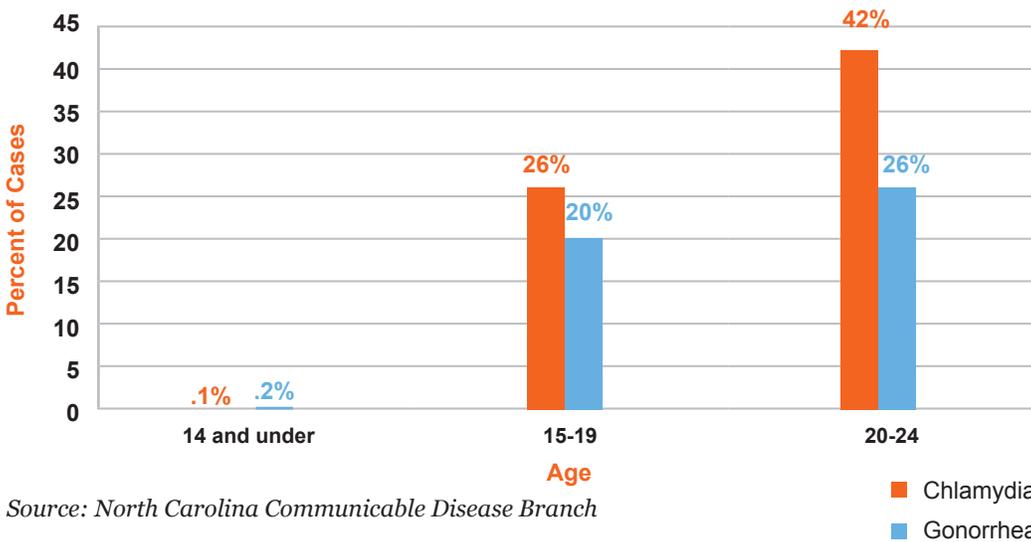
⁴⁰ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Pediatric and Pregnancy, Nutrition Surveillance System, March 4, 2014

⁴¹ North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, State Center for Health Statistics

Sexually Transmitted Diseases/Infections. Overall reproductive health sets the stage for babies to be born healthy, thus increasing the likelihood for better health outcomes later. Sexually transmitted infections (STI) can lead to other serious health problems in addition to the STI symptoms. For example, if chlamydia or gonorrhea are not properly treated, damage to the reproductive system may result.⁴² Additionally, substantial evidence demonstrates that the presence of other STIs increases the likelihood of transmitting and acquiring HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.⁴³

Similar to national and state trends, chlamydia and gonorrhea rates are highest among 15- to 24-year-olds in Wake County. In 2013, there were 417 youth under 14 diagnosed with chlamydia (accounting for less than 1 percent of all cases in the county) and 14,425 who were ages 15-19 (26 percent of all cases). There were 84 gonorrhea cases among those under 14 (less than 1 percent of all cases in the county), with 3,061 in the 15-19 age range (20 percent of all cases). The 20-24 age range continues to show high incidences of STIs.

FIGURE 29: PERCENT OF REPORTED CHLAMYDIA AND GONORRHEA CASES IN WAKE COUNTY, BY AGE, 2013



Data provided by the WCPSS’s 2013 administration of the YRBS indicate that 13.6 percent of high school males and 22.5 percent of high school females report talking with a parent or other adult family member about STIs or pregnancy prevention. When crossed by race/ethnicity, 26.5 percent of Black/African-American students surveyed report that they talked with a parent or other adult family member about STIs or pregnancy prevention, with 24.7 percent of Hispanic/Latino students and 13.4 percent of White students reporting this behavior.

Limitations of Data Related to Physical Well-being

For all YRBS data: These data were collected by the Wake County Public School System using a modified version of the North Carolina Youth Risk Behavior Surveys for middle and high school students. The 1,506 (66 percent response rate) of middle school students who completed the survey represented only 4.2 percent of the 6th to 8th graders in the WCPSS. The 1,446 (67 percent response rate) high school students who completed the survey represented only 3.3 percent of students in 9th to 12th grades.

⁴² <http://www.cdc.gov/std/Chlamydia/STDFact-Chlamydia.htm> and <http://www.cdc.gov/std/gonorrhea/stdfact-gonorrhea.htm>

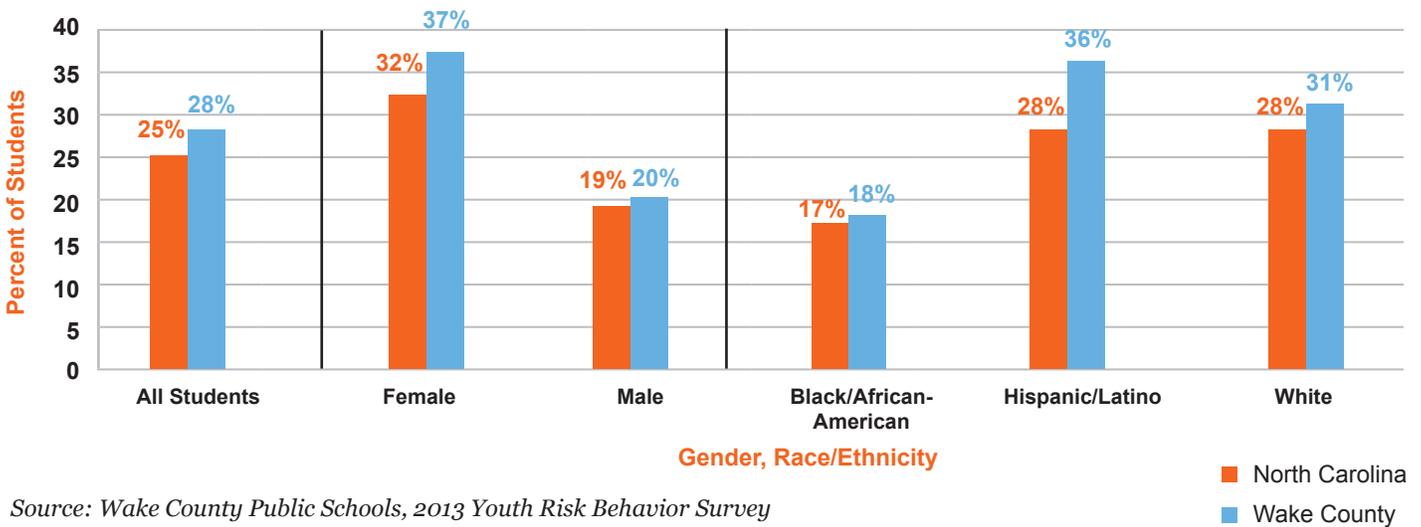
⁴³ <http://www.cdc.gov/std/hiv/stdfact-std-hiv.htm>

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING: HOW WELL ARE YOUTH DOING EMOTIONALLY?

Wake County youth, like their peers across the country, face the emotional tides that come with life and personal growth. It is important to understand that youth in Wake County have many positive experiences, but there are pockets within our youth population where emotional health needs attention.

Once again, the YRBS adds depth to local understanding about youth perceptions of their own well-being. **Among high schoolers surveyed, 28 percent report that they “strongly disagreed,” “disagreed” or “were not sure” that they feel good about themselves.** The percentage of students who did not feel good about themselves varied by gender, grade level and race/ethnicity. **In particular, more than one-third of female students (37 percent) and Hispanic/Latino students (36 percent) did not agree that they feel good about themselves.** Responses within WCPSS were similar to those across the state.

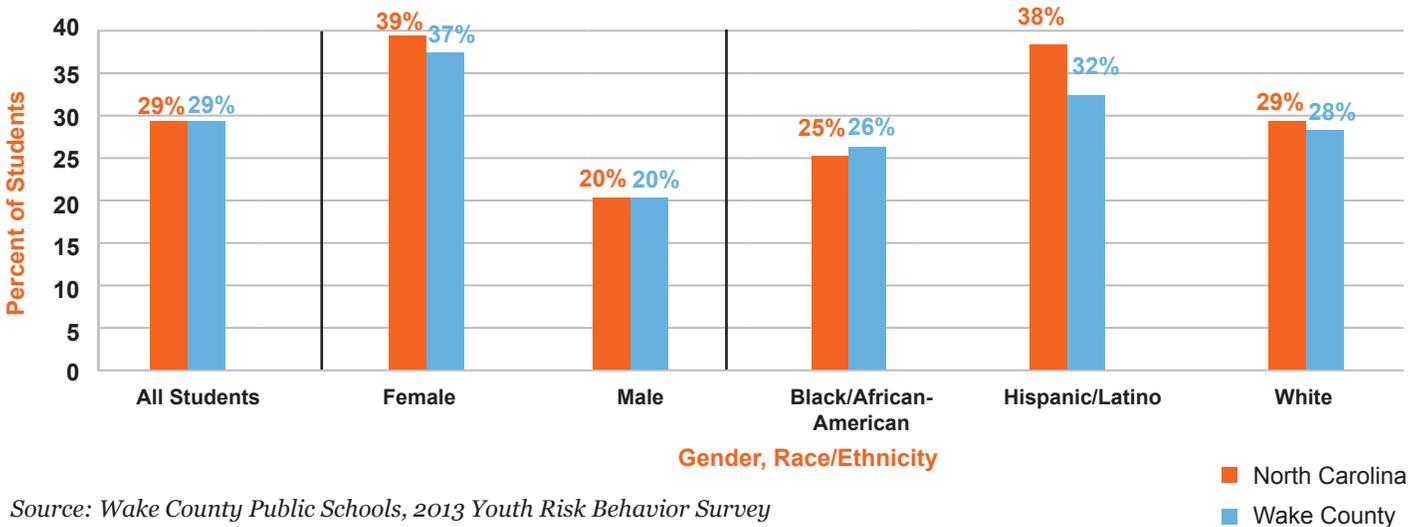
FIGURE 30: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO STRONGLY DISAGREE, DISAGREE OR ARE NOT SURE IF THEY FEEL GOOD ABOUT THEMSELVES, BY GENDER, RACE/ETHNICITY, 2013



Source: Wake County Public Schools, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Female students report higher instances of feeling sad or hopeless than male students. Over one-fourth (29 percent) of high school students surveyed report feelings of sadness or hopelessness that interfered with usual activities within the past year, with over one-third of female students (37 percent) reporting these feelings.

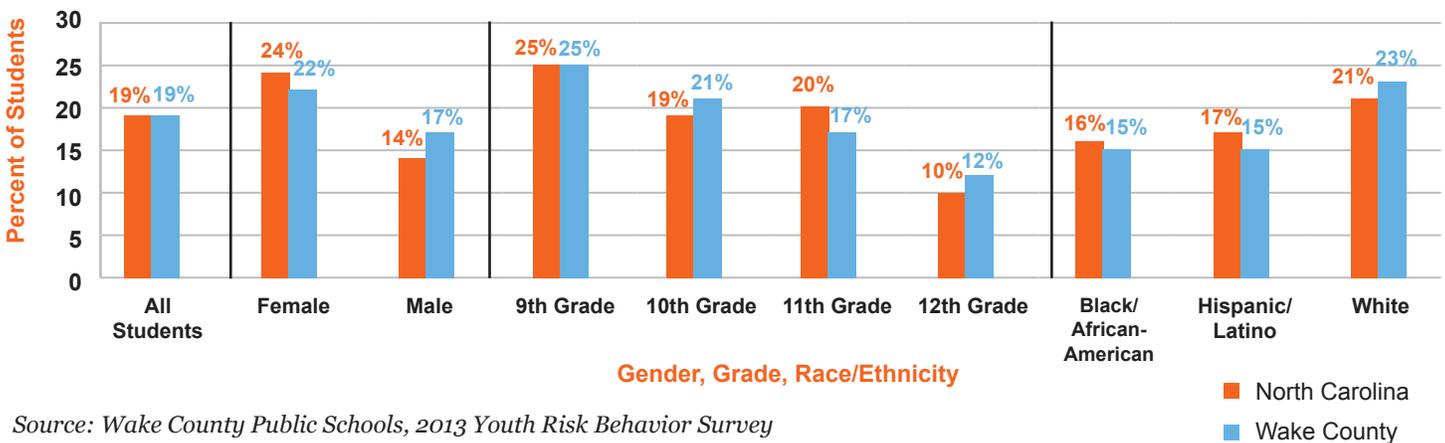
FIGURE 31: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO FELT SO SAD OR HOPELESS ALMOST EVERY DAY FOR TWO WEEKS OR MORE THAT THEY STOPPED DOING SOME USUAL ACTIVITIES IN PAST 12 MONTHS, 2013



Source: Wake County Public Schools, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Bullying. Bullying is a serious issue among school-age youth. Being teased or threatened for any reason is not conducive to allowing a young person to thrive in the school or community environments. **One in five (19 percent) surveyed high school students reported being bullied on school property within the past year, with 9th and 10th graders reporting being bullied on school property more than 12th graders.**

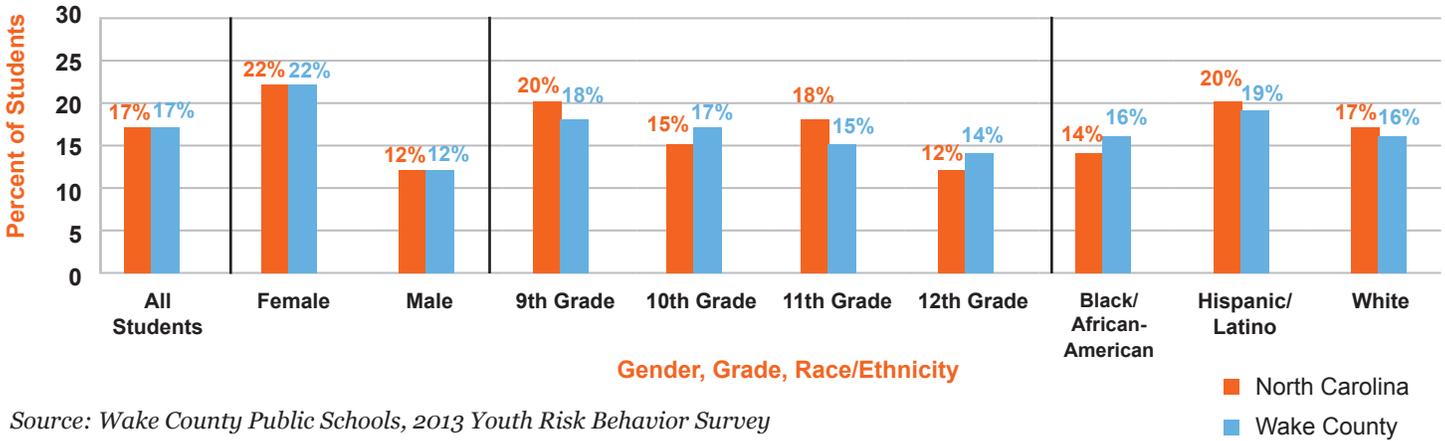
FIGURE 32: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN BULLIED ON SCHOOL PROPERTY DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, 2013



Source: Wake County Public Schools, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Suicide Consideration. As discussions about bullying and other emotional issues faced by youth increase around the nation, so does concern about suicide. Among Wake County youth surveyed through the YRBS, 17 percent indicate that they have seriously considered suicide. While there are racial and ethnic differences in suicide consideration, the biggest difference is between genders. *Compared with male students, nearly twice as many female students indicated that they have seriously considered suicide.*

FIGURE 33: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED ATTEMPTING SUICIDE DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, 2013



Source: Wake County Public Schools, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

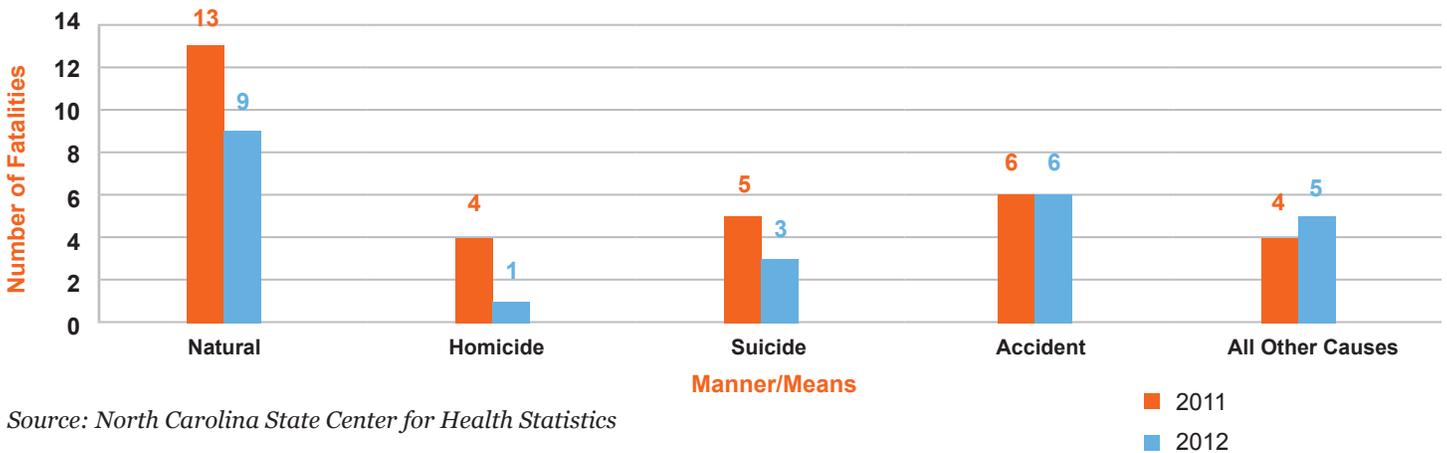
SAFETY: HOW WELL ARE YOUTH DOING WHEN IT COMES TO SAFETY?

The definition and understanding of safety varies throughout childhood and into adolescence. Young children who experience the milestone of learning to walk also experience falls and injuries related to their new skill. As children age, their basic physical activities – like playing outside – present safety risks. Once they become teenagers, their safety turns into an entirely different set of risks: car crashes, dating violence and other forms of assault. There are times, too, where those who are charged with caring for children abuse or neglect them. These wide-ranging and ever-changing safety risks make it difficult to specifically determine how safe our young people are.

DEATHS, ASSAULTS AND INJURIES

Deaths in the Youth Population. Why and how children die, when combined with other information (such as population and injury data), can be an indicator of the health of a community and the safety of its environment. *In 2011 and 2012, there were 56 deaths in Wake County among children ages 5-18: 32 deaths in 2011 and 24 in 2012.*

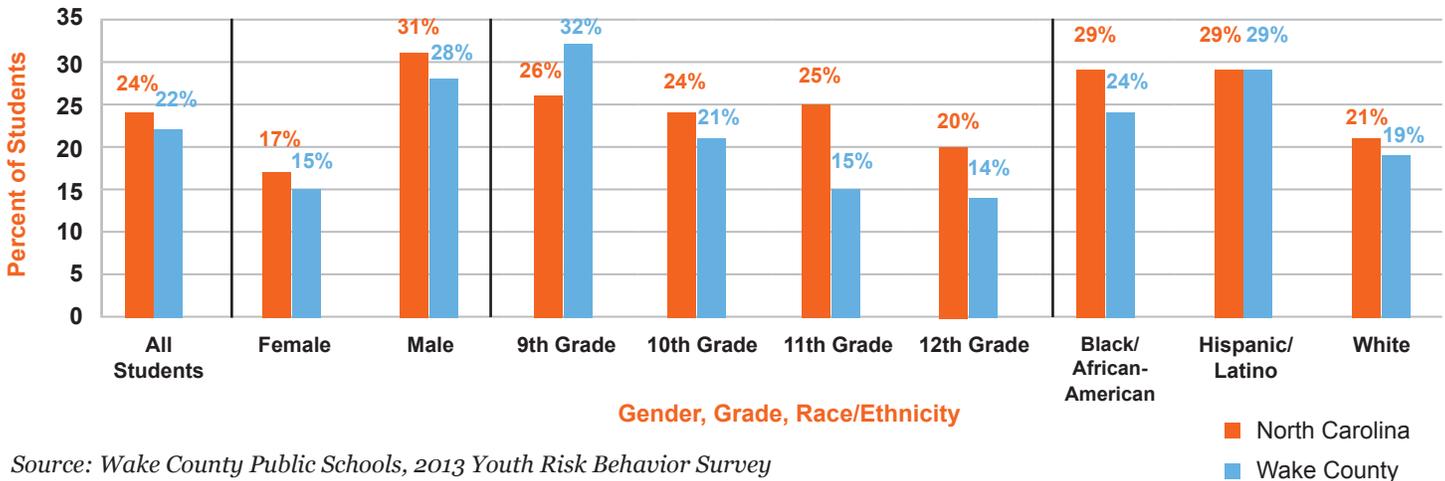
FIGURE 34: WAKE COUNTY FATALITIES, AGES 5-18, BY MANNER/MEANS AND YEAR, 2011-2012



Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics

Physical Assaults. When they reach the teen years, young people more often experience various types of violence, including dating violence and violence between peer groups. *Among high schoolers surveyed, 22 percent report they were in a physical fight (not on school property), with 32 percent of 9th graders reporting they had been in a physical fight in the past 12 months and 14 percent of 12th graders reporting the same behavior.*

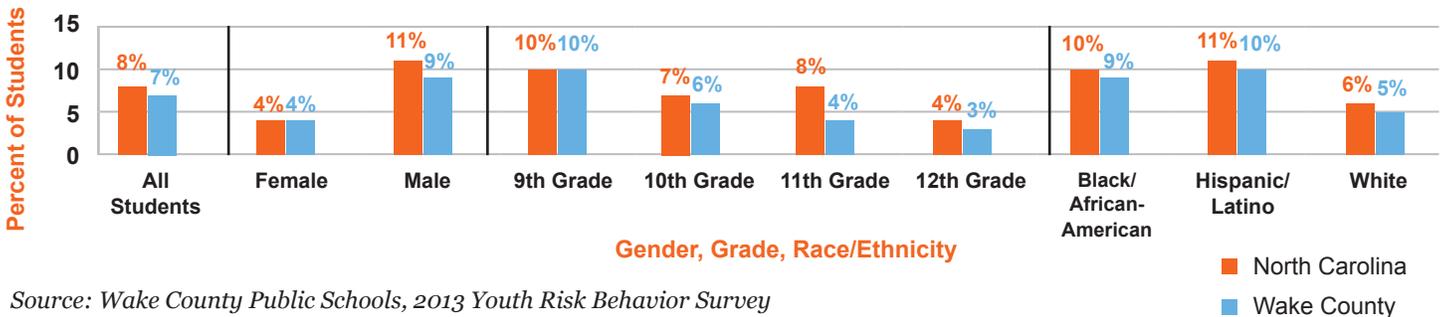
FIGURE 35: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS INVOLVED IN A PHYSICAL FIGHT DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, 2013



Source: Wake County Public Schools, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

When asked about physical fights *on school property*, 7 percent of surveyed high school students report engaging in this behavior in the past 12 months. Males report engaging in this behavior more than females.

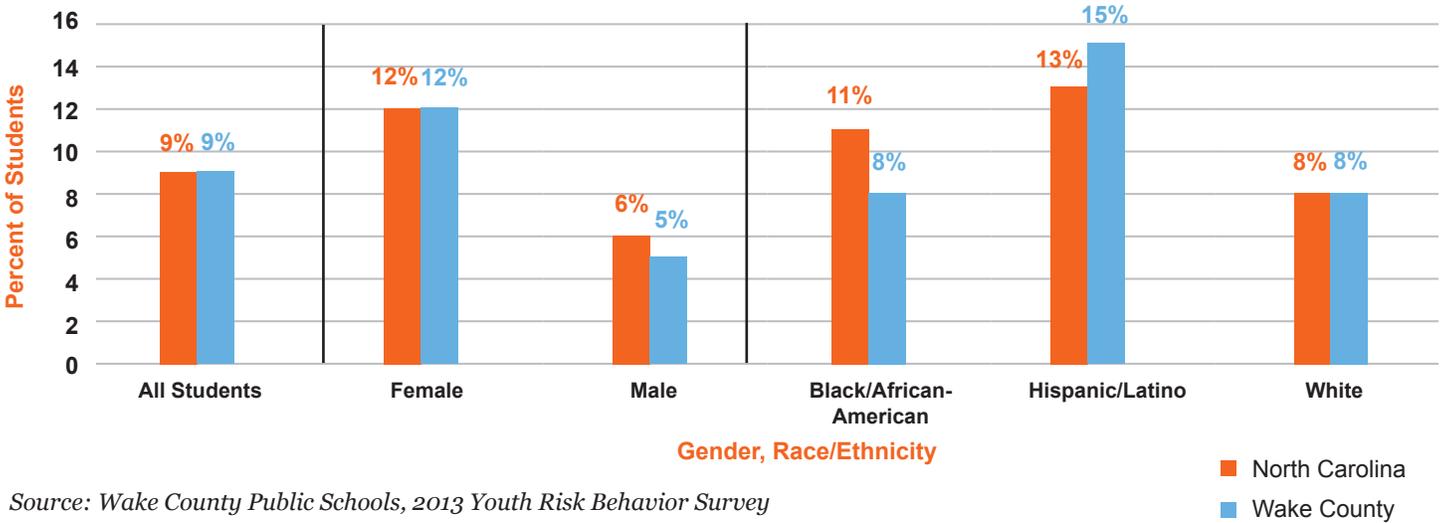
FIGURE 36: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS INVOLVED IN A PHYSICAL FIGHT ON SCHOOL PROPERTY IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, 2013



Source: Wake County Public Schools, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Of students surveyed by WCPSS using the YRBS, 9 percent report they had been physically hurt at least once by someone they were dating. A larger percentage of female students report being hurt by their date than do male students (12 percent compared with 5 percent, respectively). Results within WCPSS were similar to results for the state.

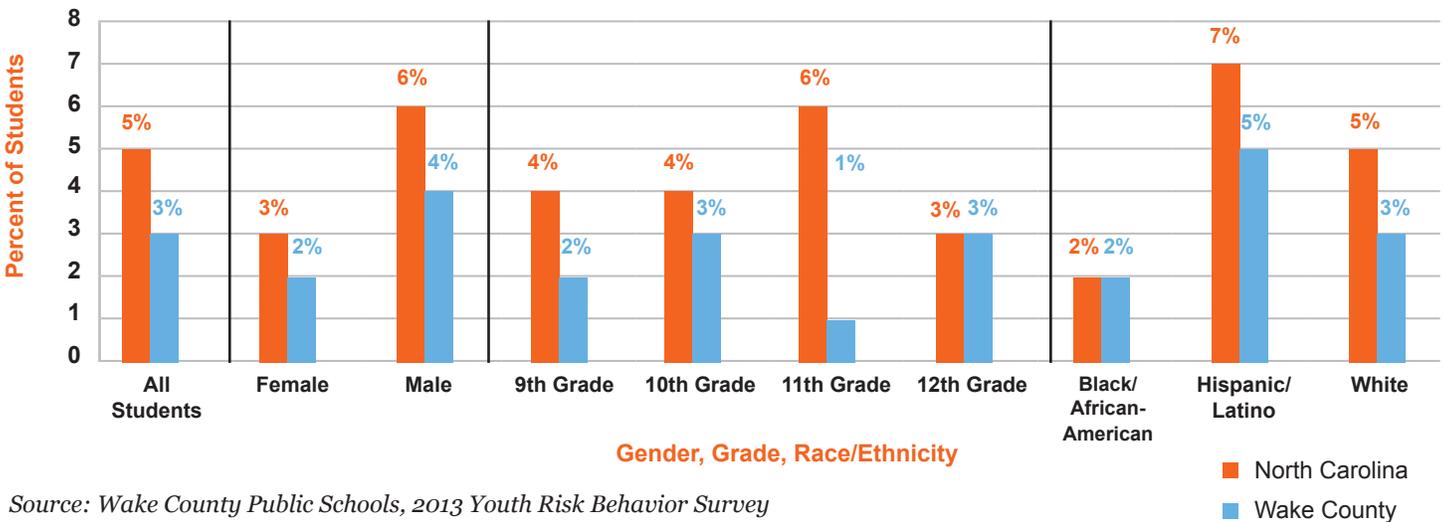
FIGURE 37: OF THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO DATED SOMEONE DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, PERCENT WHO WERE PHYSICALLY HURT ON PURPOSE BY SOMEONE THEY WERE DATING, 2013



Source: Wake County Public Schools, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Carrying a Weapon. The YRBS asks two questions related to carrying a weapon. One is simply carrying a weapon in the past 30 days; the second pertains to carrying a weapon on school property. Among high school students surveyed, 14 percent report carrying a weapon, which could include a hunting rifle or other sport weapon. *When it comes to carrying a weapon on school property, 3 percent of students report having done so in the past 30 days.* Both figures are lower than the state and national averages.

FIGURE 38: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO CARRIED A WEAPON ON SCHOOL PROPERTY IN PAST 30 DAYS, 2013



Source: Wake County Public Schools, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

DRIVING SAFETY

It is important to teach safe driving habits and behaviors at an early age, and to be an example of desirable behaviors for learning drivers. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, motor vehicle crashes are among the leading causes of death for young people in the U.S.⁴⁴ Having safe roads on which families can travel and teens can learn to drive is important. North Carolina is home to a well-outlined graduated licensing program,⁴⁵ which provides progressive milestones for new drivers.

Young Drivers and Motor Vehicle Crashes. In 2013, there were 3,765 accidents involving drivers 16-19 in Wake County. Seventy-three percent of those accidents caused property damage only; they did not cause bodily injury or death. ***In the past five years (2009-2013), 42 people have been killed in 128 traffic crashes involving a teen driver, with six of those deaths occurring in 2013.***

In 2013, regardless of driver age, 38 children were killed in traffic crashes on Wake County roads, accounting for 20 percent of all traffic deaths in Wake County. For the past five years, the county has averaged 36 traffic deaths per year among the youth population.

Over the past five years, there have been 295 accidents involving teen drivers under the influence of alcohol. Non-fatal injuries resulted from 126 of these crashes, while four accidents caused fatalities. From 2009-2012, there was one fatal accident involving a teen driver under the influence of alcohol each year, but there were no such fatalities in 2013.⁴⁶

Risk-taking is a part of adolescence, but it also puts young people in danger. In the YRBS, 20 percent of high school youth reported that in the past 30 days they had ridden in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol. When asked if they had driven after drinking alcohol, 8 percent of high schoolers surveyed reported having done so in the past 30 days.⁴⁷

Distracted Driving. Distractions in the car are a way of life. The distractions used to come primarily from the radio, then from the changing of compact discs. Today, you can access the entire world on a mobile phone while driving. This removes the driver's focus from the task at hand and causes significant risk on our roads.

The state of North Carolina recently enacted a "no texting and driving" law. The law states that all drivers under 18 are banned from using cell phones while driving, but can dial 911 in case of an emergency. All drivers, regardless of age, are prohibited from texting while driving. This is different, however, from a "hands free law," where a person cannot touch the cell phone while driving a vehicle.⁴⁸ ***Forty percent of high school students surveyed report that they had texted or emailed while driving in the past 30 days.***⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Leading Causes of Death by Age Group and 10 Leading Causes of Injury Deaths by Age Group Highlighting Unintentional Injury Deaths, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011)

⁴⁵ <http://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/driver/license/first/>

⁴⁶ <http://nccrashdata.hsrb.unc.edu/datatool.cfm>

⁴⁷ Wake County Public Schools, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

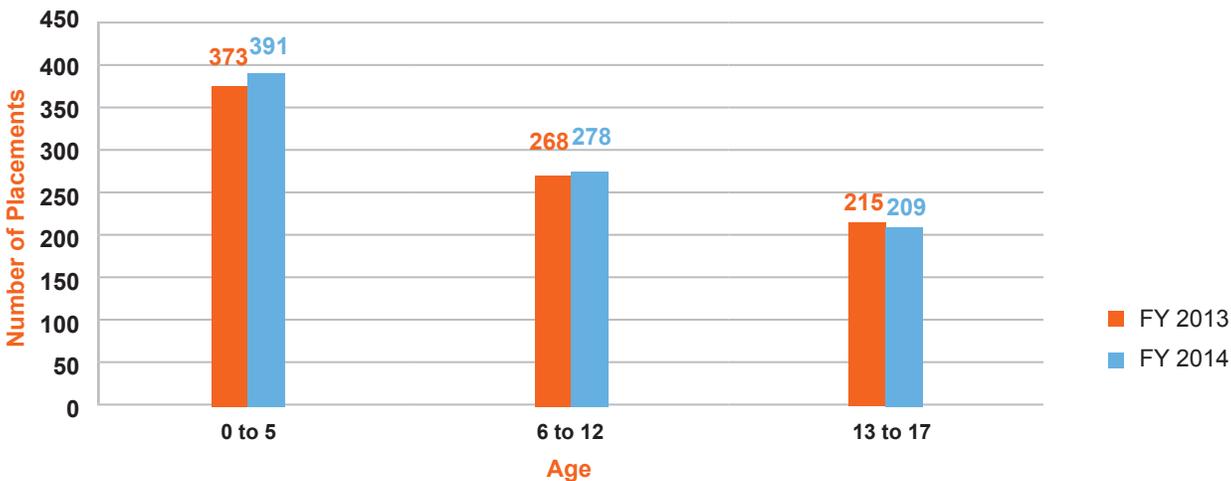
⁴⁸ <http://www.dmv.org/nc-north-carolina/safety-laws.php#Cell-Phones-and-Texting>

⁴⁹ Wake County Public Schools, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

Youth in Foster Care in Wake County. Children and youth placed into foster care are often victims of maltreatment, including various forms of abuse and neglect. **During fiscal 2014, 878 youth (ages 0-17) were placed in out-of-home care in Wake County, an increase from fiscal 2013 (856).** While this is a small number of young people considering the county's total youth population, the outcomes for these youth are often incredibly challenging.

FIGURE 39: WAKE COUNTY YOUTH, AGES 0-17, IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT, FISCAL 2013-2014



Source: Duncan, D.F., Kim, H.C., Flair, K.A., Steward, C.J., Vaughn, J., Bauer, R., and Reese, J. (2014) *Management Assistance for Children Welfare, Work First, and Food & Nutrition Services in North Carolina (v3.1)*. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Jordan Institute for Families website: <http://ssw/unc/edu/ma>

Limitations of Safety Data

Data related to youth fatalities is collected from death certificates and coded to meet set data collection standards. Manner of death (i.e., suicide) is different than the cause or means of death (i.e., gunshot wound). Causes of death vary within a manner of death. "All other causes" can include different manners and means, as well as those deaths in which no cause or manner could be determined.

In the collection of traffic crash data, there is no distribution of fault in assigned in traffic crashes, meaning not all crashes that listed a teen driver "involved" were *caused by* teen drivers.

The crash data query system does not allow for data breakdown by exact age, but rather by age in 10-year increments. That being the case, the data extends outside of the 5-18 range, including children ages 0-4, as well as individuals age 19.

RECOGNITION FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WAKE COUNTY YOUTH WELL-BEING PROFILE

This document is the culmination of the work of many people both seen and unseen. Without the individuals and organizations represented on the Youth Thrive Data Action Team and many others, this effort would not have been possible.

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