

Advancing Student Well-Being Behavioral Health and Discipline Practices

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Wake JCPC, 10-9-2025



WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

PRIORITY 2

STUDENT DISPOSITIONS AND WELL-BEING

Behavioral Health

High-quality Instructional Core for All Content Areas

AIM 9: Provide a safe, inclusive learning environment that is responsive to all students' behavioral health needs and promotes a sense of belonging.

Equity-focused Practices

AIM 10: Eliminate over-representation by race, ethnicity, gender, and disability in student discipline referrals, suspensions, and absences.

Family and Community Engagement

AIM 12: Build strong relationships among staff, families, and community organizations in order to share resources and promote well-being.

PRIORITY 2

STUDENT DISPOSITIONS AND WELL-BEING

Behavioral Health

Goal 4: Attendance

By **2028**, WCPSS will ensure **95%** of all students are in attendance at least **95%** of their days in membership and will **eliminate disparities** by race, ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status.

Goal 5: Student Well-Being

By **2028**, **90%** of WCPSS students will **demonstrate the social-emotional competencies** of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making and **eliminate any disparities** by race, ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status.

Strategic Plan Alignment





Understanding Behavioral Health

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

The term Behavioral Health encompasses the **mental, emotional, and social factors** that influence a student's overall **well-being and ability to succeed** in school.

It includes proactive support for challenges such as **social-emotional learning, behavior management, and mental health needs**. Addressing Behavioral Health begins with creating supportive school environments and may involve partnerships with community specialists to ensure comprehensive care.



SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Equipping students with essential life skills such as resilience, empathy, and self-awareness.

TIERED BEHAVIOR RESOURCES

Providing customized support and interventions based on students' individual needs and challenges.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

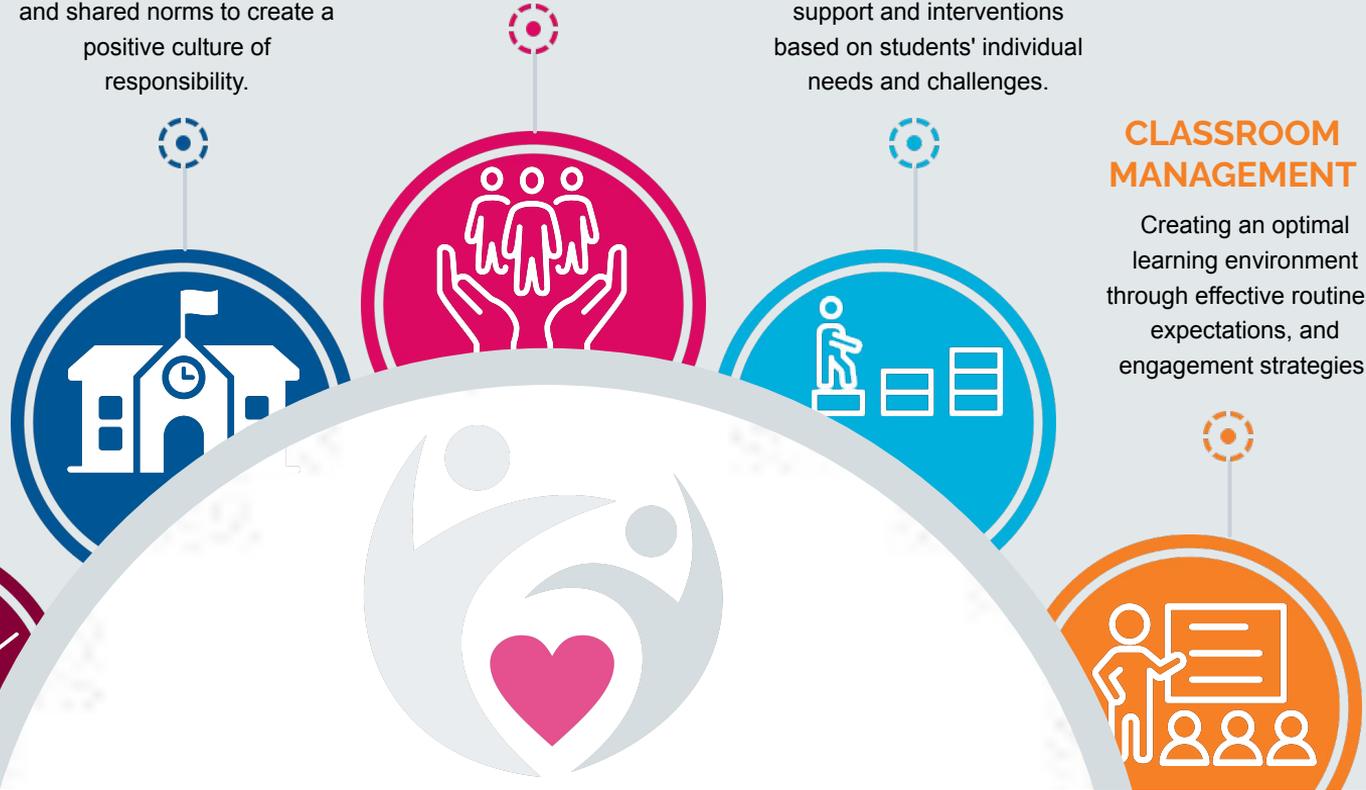
Creating an optimal learning environment through effective routines, expectations, and engagement strategies.

SCHOOLWIDE EXPECTATIONS

Establishing clear standards and shared norms to create a positive culture of responsibility.

RESTORATIVE & TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES

Fostering empathy and resolving conflicts through community-centered approaches to discipline.



Behavioral Health Framework



Behavior is Relational

- Strong teacher-student relationships are foundational to positive behavioral outcomes.
- Students respond better to trust, consistency, and care.



Behavior is Intentional

- Addressing behavior requires understanding the “why” behind actions and responding with empathy.
- Intentional strategies focus on fostering skills like self-regulation and decision-making.



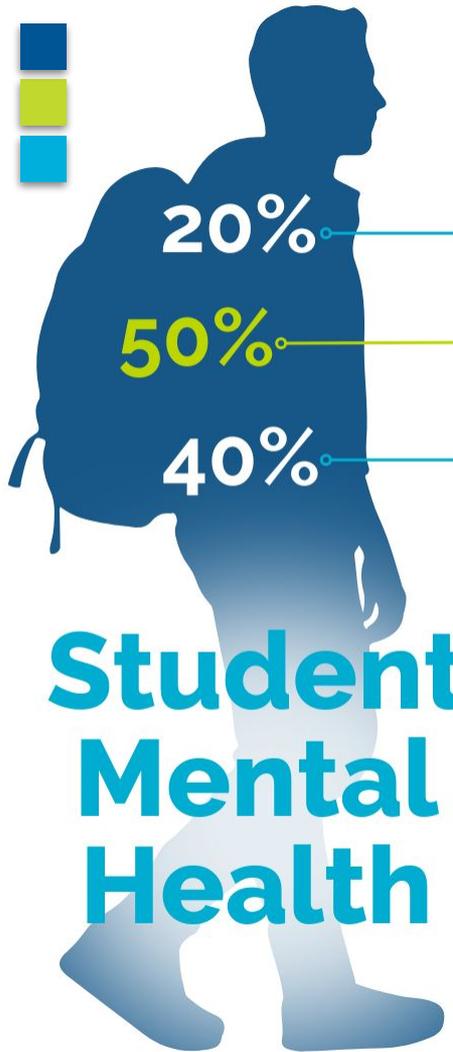
Proactive vs Reactive

- Schools must prioritize proactive strategies, such as setting clear expectations and teaching social-emotional skills, rather than simply reacting to misbehavior.



**Every BEHAVIOR
tells a STORY.**

Understanding the
student's perspective
is the first step to
meaningful change.



20%

Approximately 20% of youth ages 12-18 suffer from a mental health condition.

Source: NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness). "Mental Health by the Numbers." (2023)

50%

Nearly 50% of all lifetime mental health conditions begin by age 14, and 75% by age 24.

Source: NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness). "Mental Health by the Numbers." (2023)

40%

Only 40% of students with emotional, behavioral, and mental health disorders graduate from high school, compared to the national average of 76%.

Source: Child Mind Institute. (2021).

Student Mental Health

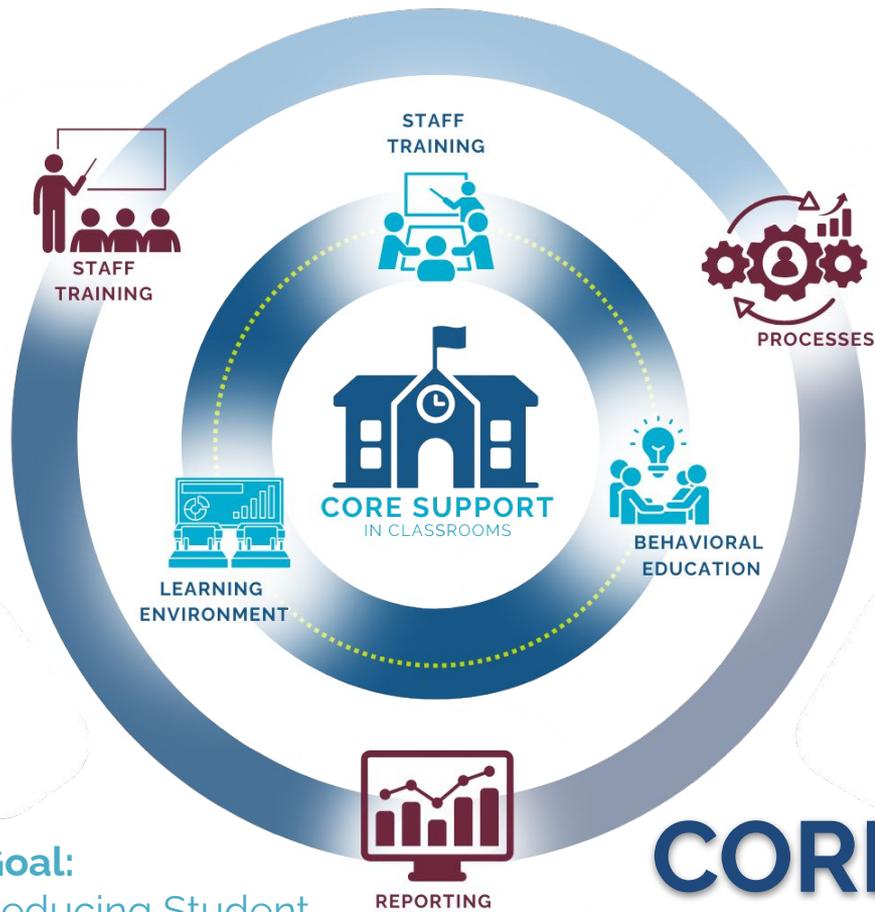
Students who receive social-emotional and mental health support in schools show a significant improvement in mental health symptoms and social skills.



WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM



Seclusion and Restraint Fall 2024 Data



Goal:
Reducing Student
Outcomes of
Seclusion and Restraint

CORE SUPPORT



Empowering Students Through Prevention

Reducing the Need for Seclusion and Restraint

Key Areas of Focus

- Behavioral Health Support
- Mental Health Support
- Professional Development for Staff
- Ongoing Monitoring and Data Review
- Family and Community Engagement



WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Federal and State Definitions



**PHYSICAL
RESTRAINT**

**MECHANICAL
RESTRAINT**

SECLUSION



Fostering Positive Classrooms

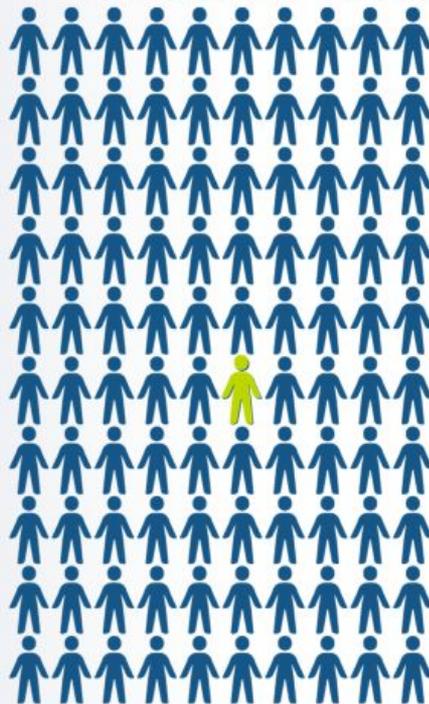


Notification to Parents

Prioritizing Student Well-Being



Seclusion and Restraint Practices



~160,000
WCPSS STUDENTS



Seclusion
and Restraint

Impacts **less than 1%**
of our student body.

544



FEDERAL

Physical Restraint

Definition: A personal restriction that reduces the ability of a student to move his or her torso, arms, legs, or head freely.

When to Report: Report any use of physical restraint that does not solely include physical escorts.

VS

STATE

Physical Restraint

Definition: A personal restriction that reduces the ability of a student to move his or her torso, arms, legs, or head freely.

When to Report: Any use of physical restraint resulting in **observable physical injury**.



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



FEDERAL

Mechanical Restraint

Definition: The use of any device or equipment to restrict a student's freedom of movement.

When to Report: Report **any use of mechanical restraint**, including if a student is handcuffed by a law enforcement officer and no arrest is made.

VS

STATE

Mechanical Restraint

Definition: The use of any device or material attached or adjacent to a student's body that restricts freedom of movement and that the student cannot easily remove.

When to Report: Report any restraint involving the **tying, taping, or strapping down of a student**.



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



FEDERAL

Seclusion

Definition: The **involuntary** confinement of a student **alone** in a room or area from which the student is **physically prevented from leaving**

When to Report: When a student is **alone and prevented** from leaving an enclosed space.

VS

STATE

Seclusion

Definition: The confinement of a student **alone in an enclosed space** from which the student is:

- Physically prevented** from leaving by **locking hardware** or other means
- Not capable of leaving** due to physical or intellectual incapacity.

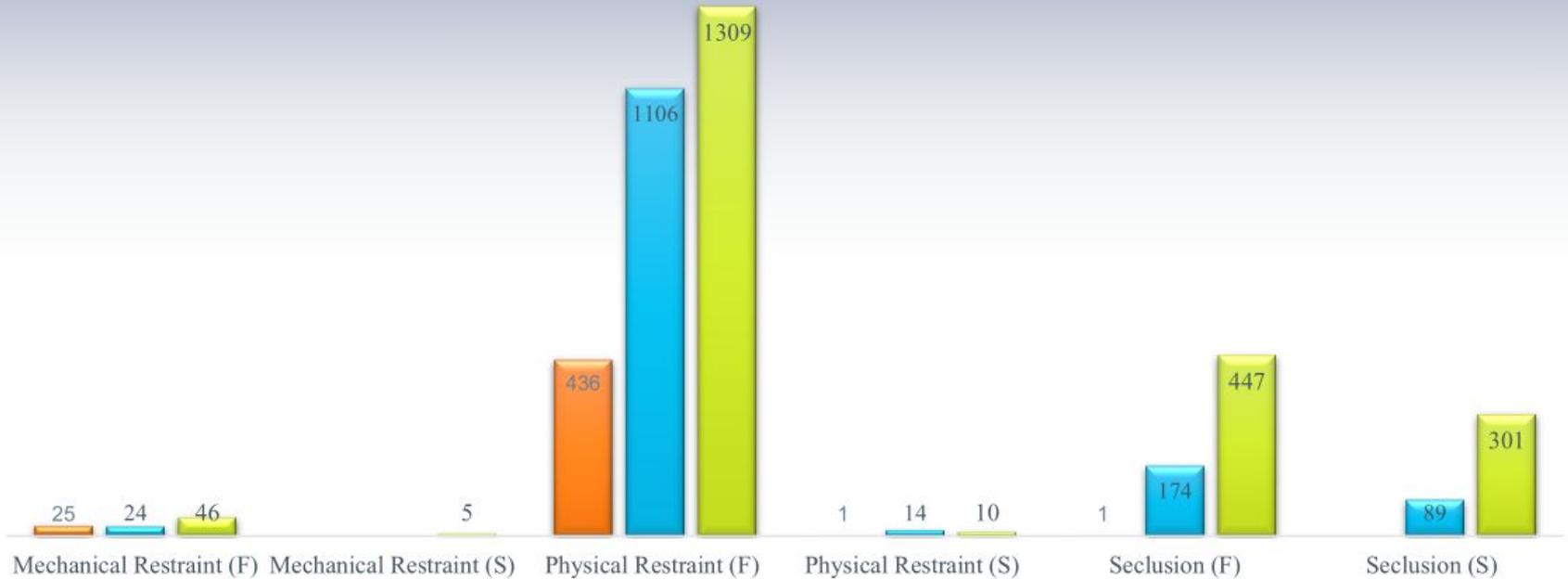
When to Report: Any use exceeding 10 minutes or the amount specified in the student's IEP or 504.



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Comparison Data

2022-2023 2023-2024 2024-2025



Data Overview: Incidents and Students Involved



Unique Students Impacted by Behavior Response



- Unique Students
- Estimated total students in district

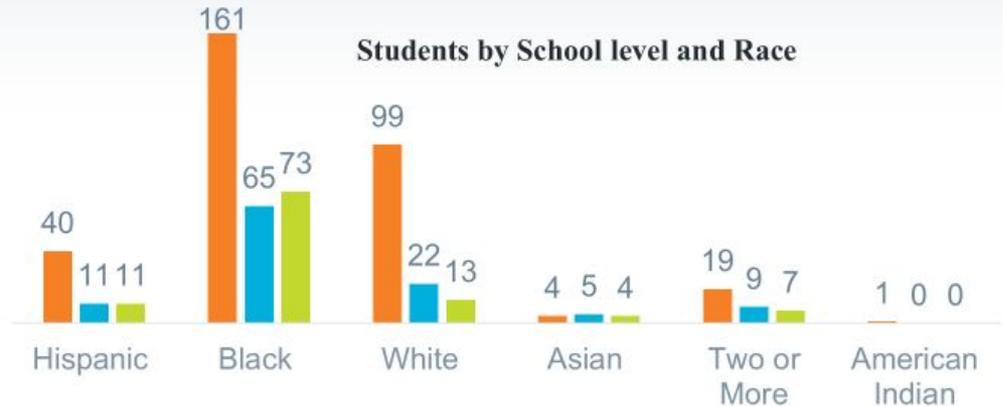
Students by School Level



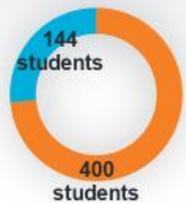
Students by School level and Gender



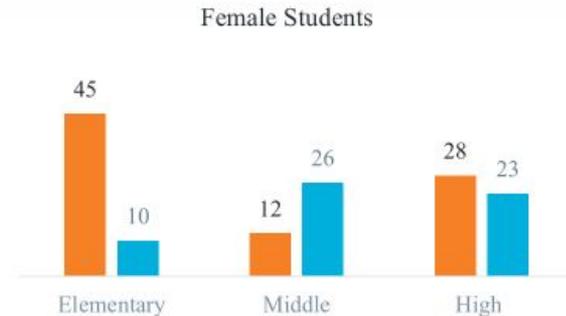
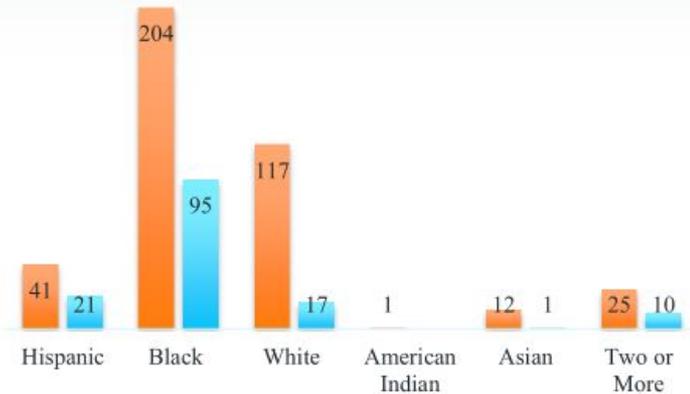
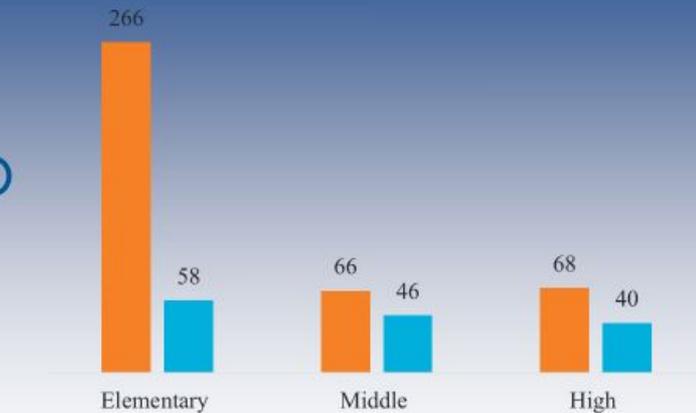
Students by School level and Race



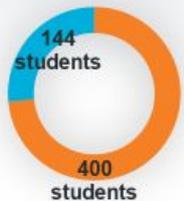
Data by Subgroup and IEP Status



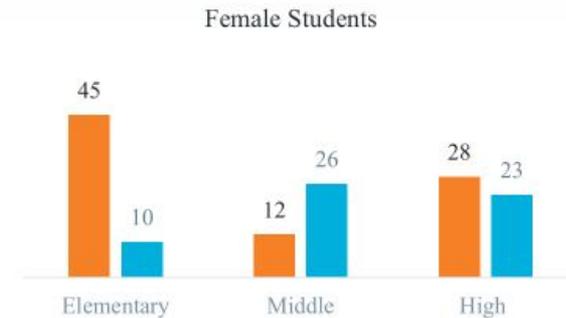
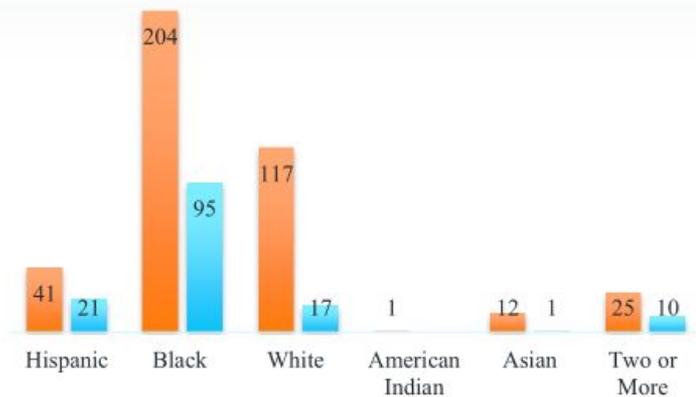
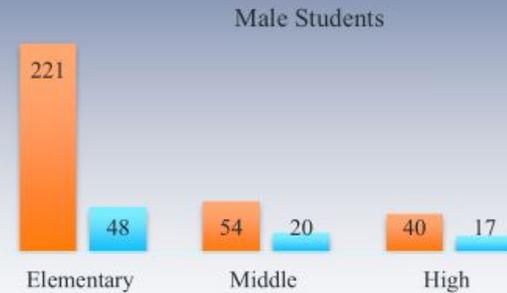
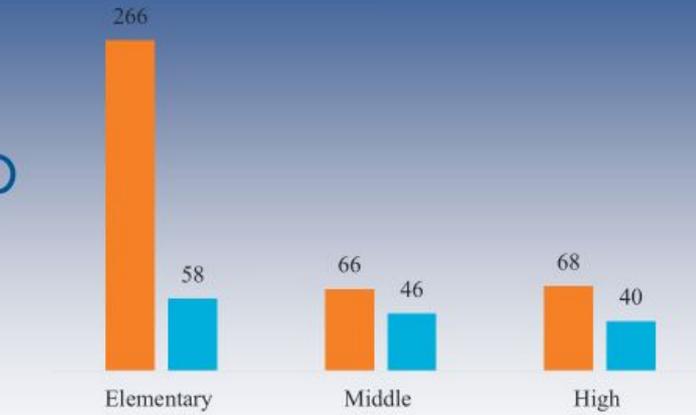
■ Exceptional Children (EC)
■ Non-Identified



Data by Subgroup and IEP Status



■ Exceptional Children (EC)
■ Non-Identified



Promoting Alternatives to Seclusion and Restraint



By continuing to expand and improve our mental health services, we are taking a proactive approach to reduce seclusion and restraint, ultimately fostering a safer and more supportive learning environment for every student.

One key strategy is **enhancing our mental health supports.**

- **Reducing Incidents**
Improved mental health services lead to fewer seclusion and restraint incidents.
- **Supporting Regulation**
Mental health support aids in student behavior management and emotional regulation.



2025-2026 Special Education Focus

Creation of District Team

Use of Specialized Staff

Implementation and Continuation
of Training

Ongoing Collaboration



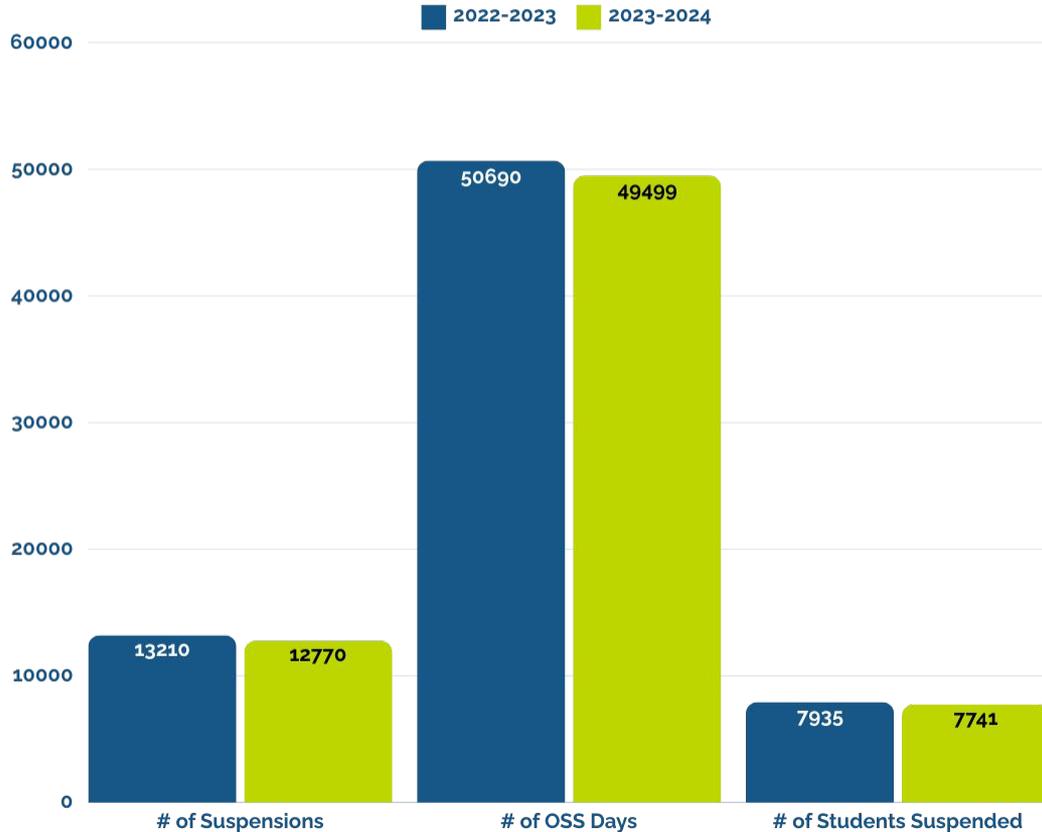
Summary Discipline Data and Trends



2024-2025 Suspensions by Race

YEARLY TRENDS

Suspensions and Lost Days of Instruction



REDUCTION IN SUSPENSIONS

The number of suspensions has slightly decreased from **13,210 in 2022-2023 to 12,770 in 2023-2024**, indicating a positive trend in managing behavioral interventions.



REDUCTION IN LOST INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS

The total days of out-of-school suspensions (OSS Days) **dropped from 50,690 to 49,499**, reflecting a slight improvement in keeping students engaged with learning.



INCREASED ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

"Exposure to restorative practices has been shown to improve standardized test performance in both English Language Arts and Mathematics."



REDUCED RECIDIVISM

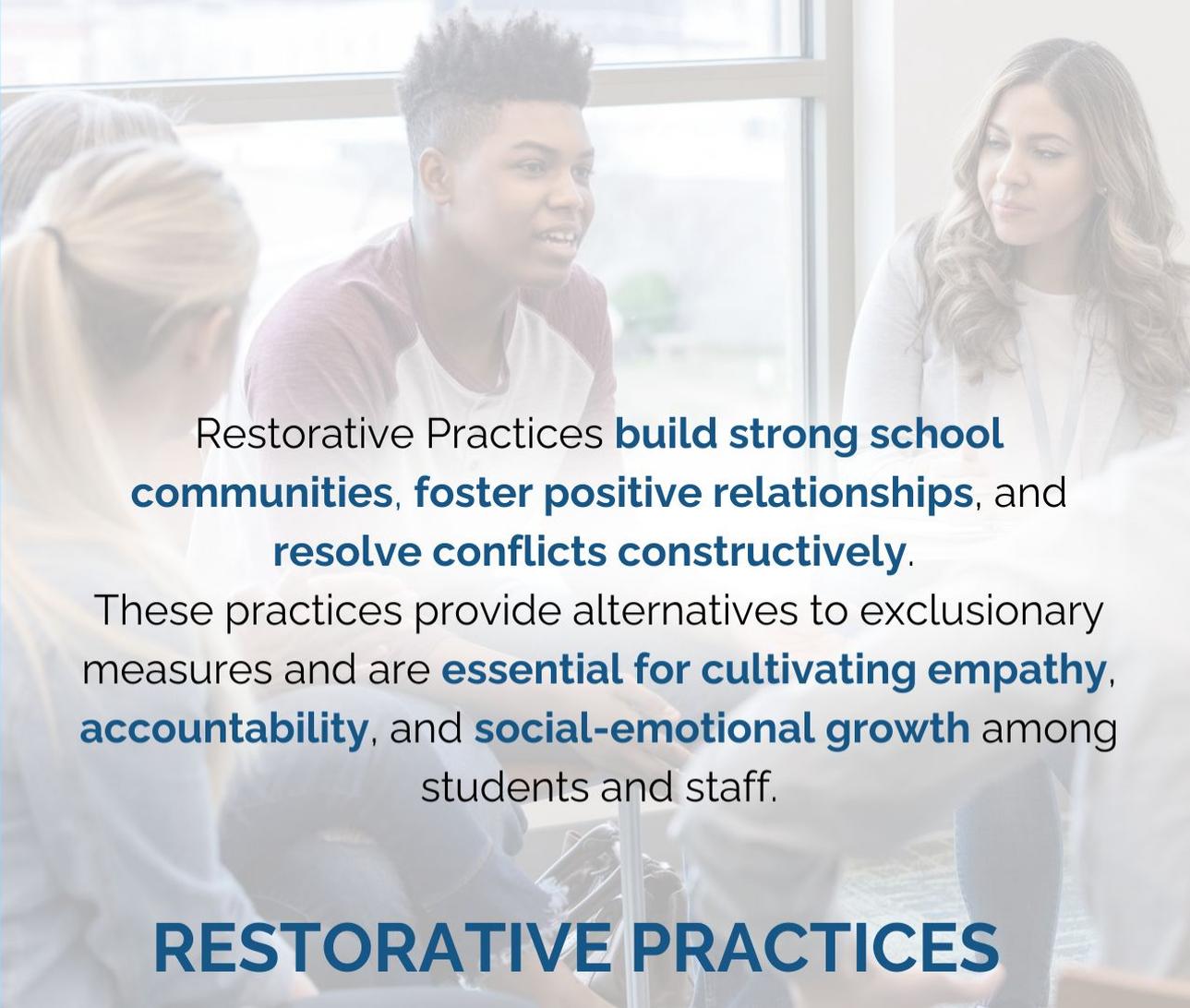
"Schools implementing restorative practices have observed declines in schoolwide student misbehavior, gang membership, victimization, depressive symptoms, and substance abuse."



NARROWING EQUITY GAPS

"Restorative practices can reduce racial disparities in discipline and academic achievement, with stronger positive associations for Black and Latino/a students."

Darling-Hammond, S. (2023). Fostering Belonging, Transforming Schools: The Impact of Restorative Practices. Learning Policy Institute.



Restorative Practices **build strong school communities, foster positive relationships, and resolve conflicts constructively.**

These practices provide alternatives to exclusionary measures and are **essential for cultivating empathy, accountability, and social-emotional growth** among students and staff.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES



Interventions and Behavioral Health Strategies

Behavioral Health Strategies

Intensive
or
Specialized
Services

INTENSIVE

- Restorative Re-entry*
- Mental Health Referral
- Behavior Intervention Plan Support
- Tier III Intensive Behavior Intake

Targeted or Early
Intervention Services

SUPPLEMENTAL

- Check-In Check-Out
- Restorative Conversations*
- Student Observations
- Mediation (Peer and Adult)*

Universal or Preventive Services

CORE

- Explicit SEL Instruction
- Classroom Management
- School-Wide Expectations
- Community Building Circles*

Staff Wellness

Professional Development

Family-School-Community Partnerships

Systemic * Collaborative * Equitable * Sustainable



WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Exploring Strategies Aligned with Restorative Practices



Building Relationships
Among Students and Staff



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Constructive Conflict
Resolution Methods



Alternatives to Exclusionary
Discipline Practices





24-25 Professional Learning Plan

Universal Supports



Teachers and Leaders

- Explicit, scheduled Social Emotional Learning Instruction
- Classroom Management (Canvas)
- School-Wide Expectations

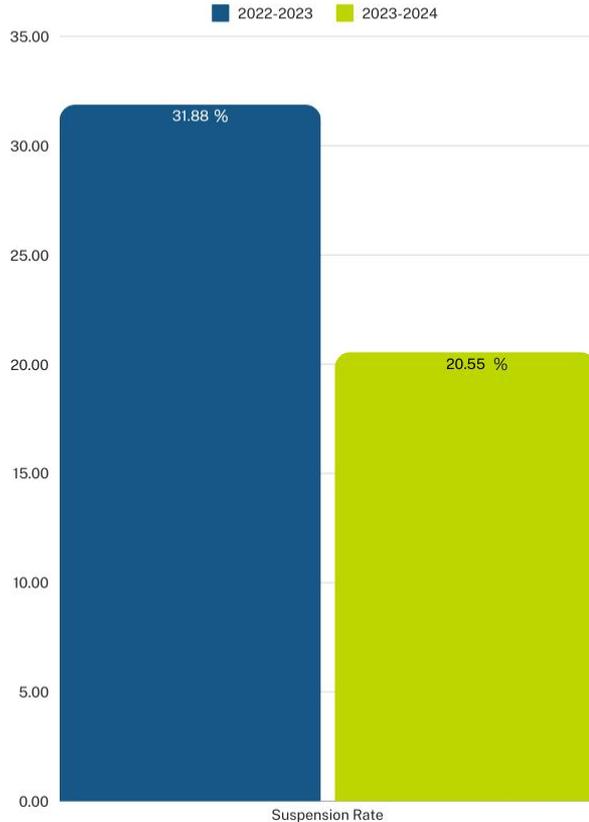
Additional Supports



- Check-In Check-Out
- Restorative Conversations
- Behavior Intervention Plan

Walnut Creek Elementary

SUSPENSION RATE COMPARISON



In just one year, **reduced suspension rates from 31.88% to 20.55%**, reflecting a commitment to restorative practices and alternatives to exclusionary discipline.



Successful Interventions

Data Analysis and Progress Monitoring

Self-Selected Professional Learning Aligned to Goals

Classroom Management Professional Learning

Social-Emotional Learning Instruction on Emotional Regulation

District Coaching, Support, and Quarterly Meetings

Walnut Creek Elementary



-9.64

BLACK STUDENTS

The suspension rate for Black students **dropped** by **9.64 percentage points**, from **42.25%** to **32.61%**.

-9.60

HISPANIC STUDENTS

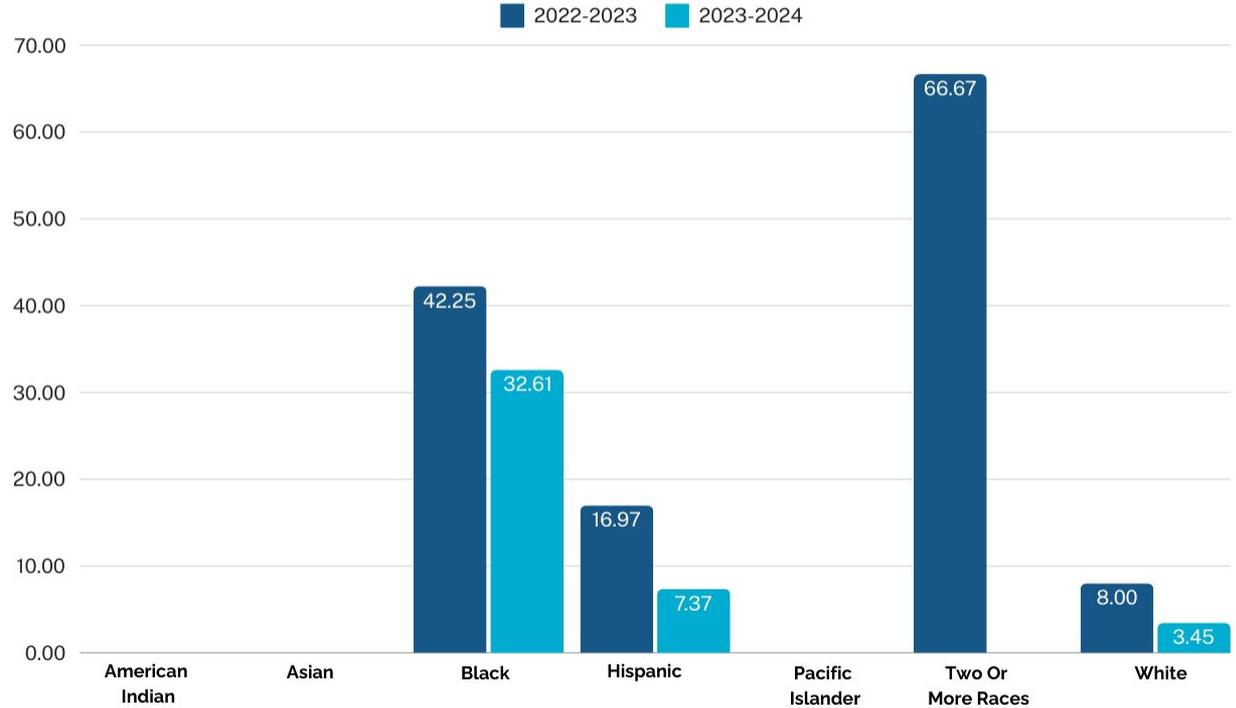
The suspension rate for Hispanic students **dropped** by **9.60 percentage points**, from **16.97%** in 2022-23 to **7.37%** in 2023-24.

-4.55

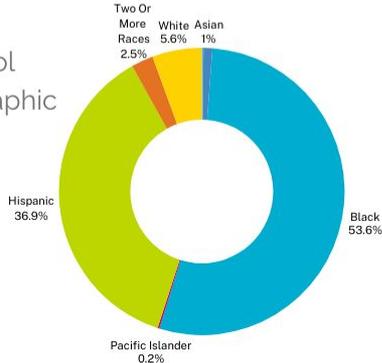
WHITE STUDENTS

The suspension rate for White students **decreased** by **4.55 percentage points**, from **8.00%** in 2022-23 to **3.45%** in 2023-24.

SUSPENSION RATES BY STUDENT GROUP COMPARISON



School Demographic





Next Steps and Future Goals

Post-Pandemic Student Challenges

Behavioral Challenges

87% of public schools reported that the pandemic negatively affected students' socio-emotional development during the 2021–22 school year.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2022.

Increased Mental Health Needs

70% of public school educators noted a rise in students seeking mental health services post-pandemic.

University of Phoenix Survey, 2022

Addressing Equity and Disparities in Discipline



ROOT CAUSES AND CHALLENGES

- Increased student trauma and unmet mental health needs.
- Limited resources for early interventions and mental health support.

STRATEGIES



Professional Learning

- Provide inclusivity training for staff.
- Expand restorative practices training and implementation.



Interventions

- Pilot alternative learning programs.
- Expand mental health supports through grant funding.

Our Goals for Improvement



Increased **behavioral health supports** and reduced suspension rates through **proactive intervention.**



Expand Student Wellness Programming and Restorative Practices



Conduct frequent reviews of suspension and discipline data in alignment with outcome data to inform decision-making and address trends proactively.





Questions