Race and Discipline in Ohio Schools

What the Data Say

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Background / Executive Summary

Central to the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity is the mission of creating a just and inclusive society where all people and communities have the opportunity to succeed. This concept of opportunity permeates our many domains of work. We recognize that opportunity is unevenly distributed in our society, as structural racialization and implicit racial biases operate in ways that create barriers to opportunity for many communities of color.

One of the many realms in which racialized outcomes gained attention recently is the K–12 education system, particularly with respect to school discipline. In January 2014, the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice jointly issued policy guidance to address school discipline policies and the racially disproportionate application of these policies. For example, national-level data indicate that Black students are suspended and expelled at rates three times higher than their White peers. These disparities have persisted over time and can have lasting impacts on students’ educational trajectories.

Similar to national trends, school discipline data from Ohio also reflects racial disproportionalities. This report examines K–12 discipline disparities by race in Ohio. Among the key findings are the following:

- Black, non-Hispanic students are and have been disciplined more often than their non-Black peers. Looking at the data starting in 2005–06, even during the academic year when non-Hispanic Black student discipline rate was at its lowest (62.3 disciplinary actions per 100 in 2009–10), it was still more than twice the rate of the next most disciplined group that year (Multiracial students had 30.8 disciplinary actions per 100 in 2009–10).

This research was funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. We thank them for their support and acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of the author(s) alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the foundations.
• When we isolate out-of-school suspensions, we find that despite a brief decline for non-Hispanic Black students from 2008–09 to 2010–11, this rate has gradually increased in recent years, furthering the gap between these students and their peers of all other races.

• The most common form of school discipline in 2012–13 was out-of-school suspensions. Removing students from the school environment, such as via out-of-school suspensions, can have lasting impacts and reduces their educational opportunities. The lost classroom time does not allow them to continue to engage with or benefit from the presence of teachers, adult mentors, and peer role models.

• With few exceptions, disobedient/disruptive behavior is overwhelmingly listed as the most common reason for each type of disciplinary action in Ohio in 2012–13. Disobedient/disruptive behavior accounts for approximately half of all out-of-school suspensions and nearly three quarters of all in-school suspensions. These high percentages are notable because determinations of disobedient/disruptive behavior tend to be highly subjective; what one individual regards as disobedient or disruptive may not necessarily be viewed as such by others. **Subjective determinations of disobedient/disruptive behavior may be susceptible to the influence of implicit bias.**

• Looking at students who were disciplined on the basis of disobedient/disruptive behavior, disaggregating this data by race reveals that for both non-Hispanic Black students and Hispanic students in Ohio, more than 50% of the disciplinary consequences resulted in them being excluded from school (e.g., out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and other forms of school removal) in the 2012–13 school year.

• Many districts have begun to implement alternative discipline approaches that promote a positive school climate and seek to minimize the number of students who are removed from the school environment via out-of-school suspensions and expulsions.

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**Students who are pushed out of the classroom through disciplinary measures are denied educational opportunities, which can have lasting life impacts**

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In addition to an overview of state-specific data and trends, we provide brief case studies of four Ohio school districts. These case studies shed light on the impacts of various school discipline approaches by race.

Understanding racialized discipline disparities, particularly those that exclude students from school, is an important issue for Ohio. Students who are pushed out of the classroom through disciplinary measures are denied educational opportunities, which can have lasting life impacts. Shedding light on the uneven landscape of school discipline in Ohio is a first step towards dismantling these disparities and crafting discipline policies that are fair and just for all students.
Introduction

At the Kirwan Institute, we recognize education as a critical opportunity structure that can have a transformative impact on people's lives. Education provides a foundation for academic, social, and professional success. Due to its significance in all areas of life, public education is a tremendously important institution for young people. Across the country, educators, parents, and other stakeholders invest time, energy, and resources to ensure that students' educational experiences situate them for future success.

Despite the shared value we place in quality education, many schools unfortunately face significant challenges. Shrinking educational budgets and pressures from high-stakes testing are just a few of the many obstacles facing public education. Associated problems include overcrowding and increased class sizes as a result of school closings, among others. Teachers and administrators acutely feel the pressures of these challenges in the classroom environment.

Among the many concerns of today's educators, school discipline is consistently reported as one of "the most serious obstacles to promoting effective teaching." Deciding when and how to apply discipline measures in school is an important process that has immediate and long-term implications for students. Some disciplinary methods are more productive than others; however, districts do not always have adequate funding or staffing capacity to implement nontraditional, alternative discipline measures, like restorative justice.

Consider the following situation: one student in a group of 25 disrupts the classroom learning environment, making it hard to teach the lesson. Some form of discipline appears necessary in this situation, or else the lesson cannot continue successfully. The teacher is faced with a difficult dilemma: should the disruptive student be removed from the classroom? Since the other students cannot learn in a chaotic classroom environment, it would not be fair to the majority of students in the classroom to allow one disruptive student to interrupt the learning process. Conversely, perhaps the disruptive student could benefit from educational or emotional guidance, rather than removal from the classroom or school. Given the range of external forces affecting students' lives, it is important to acknowledge that students who disrupt class or act out may not do so purposefully, but rather may be responding to stressors, such as food insecurity or family financial concerns.

Unfortunately, in many schools, limited resources are available for nontraditional nonexclusionary discipline. Even if he or she wanted to, a teacher in this scenario has few options. As a result, students who break the rules or disrupt class are often removed from the classroom and recommended for suspension or expulsion.

Several types of traditional discipline exist. Suspensions and expulsions are examples of traditional and exclusionary discipline methods. In some cases, suspensions and expulsions result from zero tolerance school discipline policies, which mandate fixed consequences for any rule infractions.

Out-of-school suspensions can last anywhere from 1 to 14 school days, although they usually involve three to five school days at home or in an alternative learning environment. Conversely, in-school
suspensions relocate students from their classrooms to an alternate room within the school building during the school day. Varying in length, in-school suspensions typically are between 1 and 5 days. Expulsions permanently remove the student from the school, although sometimes an expulsion can result in a transfer to an alternative school.

The aim of school discipline is to maintain a safe and productive classroom environment that is conducive to learning. When teachers and administrators implement school discipline, their intention is to help the student learn appropriate behavior, not to punish them unnecessarily. However, studies have shown that zero tolerance discipline policies often push students out of classrooms and toward the destructive school-to-prison pipeline, even for minor misbehaviors.

This unintended consequence hurts some students more than others. Reviews of school discipline data have shown that the implementation of these disciplinary policies has often unevenly and negatively impacted students of color. A 2010 publication by The Advancement Project uncovered these startling national statistics:

- “In 2006–2007, Black students were over three times more likely to be suspended out-of-school than their White peers. Latino students and Native American students were 42% and 66% more likely than their White peers to be suspended out-of-school, respectively.” (p. 20)

- “Black students were almost three-and-a-half times as likely to be expelled as White students in 2006–07, and Latino and Native American students were over one-and-a-half times as likely to be expelled.” (p. 20)

- “While the number of suspensions per Black student from 2002–03 to 2006–07 increased by 8% and the number of suspensions per Latino student rose by 14%, the number of suspensions per White student actually decreased by 3%. Similarly, while the number of expulsions per Black student increased 33% in just four years, and expulsions per Latino student increased by 6%, the number of expulsions per White student decreased by 2%.” (p. 20)

More recent national data released in March 2014 from the U.S. Department of Education’s 2011–2012 Civil Rights Data Collection echoes many of these findings. For example, the 2011–12 data indicate that Black students are suspended and expelled at rates three times higher than their White peers. Specifically, while on average 4.6% of White students receive suspensions, 16.4% of Black students do. When the out-of-school suspension data is disaggregated by race and gender, Black boys have the highest out-of-school suspension rates. American Indian/Alaskan Native boys and Black girls round out the top three groups. Notably, this report found that the racialized discipline disparities in the K–12 system surface as early as preschool.

Recognizing that the application of school discipline often represents a moment that shapes students’ access to educational opportunity and larger life trajectory, this report seeks to capture a snapshot of the state of K–12 discipline disparities by race with a focus on student experiences in Ohio. In addition to an overview of state-specific data and trends, we provide brief case studies of four Ohio school districts in an effort to examine the impacts of various school discipline approaches.
Ohio Data

School discipline disparities, particularly between Black and White students, have persisted over time, both nationally and in Ohio. Nationally, in the 2006–2007 school year, every single state suspended Black students more frequently than White students.11 Ohio was unfortunately among the worst, ranking 14th in the nation when comparing out-of-school suspension rates between Black and White students.12 Specifically, Black students in Ohio received 3.2 suspensions for every one suspension given to White Ohio students in 2006–2007.13 This disparity worsened the following year; by 2007–2008, Black students were almost 5.5 times more likely than White students to be suspended out-of-school in Ohio.14 The Children’s Defense Fund - Ohio reports that during the 2010–2011 academic year in Ohio, Black students were roughly five times more likely to be suspended from school compared to their White peers.15 Clearly these troubling disparities are persisting.

Data from the Ohio Department of Education from 2005 to 2013 sheds light on the rates of use of specific disciplinary measures over time. CHART 1 displays state-level data of all disciplinary actions per 100 students, by race, from 2005–2013. The data show that Black (non-Hispanic) students are and have been disciplined more often than their non-Black peers. While all other racial groups’ disciplinary actions remained relatively consistent (34 or fewer disciplinary actions per 100 students) in the years shown, the range for non-Hispanic Blacks varied between approximately 62 and 83 disciplinary actions per 100 students. This means that even during the academic year when non-Hispanic Black student discipline rate was at its lowest (62.3 per 100 in 2009–10), it was still more than twice the rate of the next most disciplined group that year (Multiracial students – 30.8 per 100 in 2009–10).
While all other racial groups’ disciplinary actions remained relatively consistent—34 or fewer per 100 in the years shown—the range for non-Hispanic Blacks varied between approximately 62 and 83 disciplinary actions per 100 students.
The next charts disaggregate this data by specific type of disciplinary action—out of school suspensions, expulsions, and other types of discipline. **Chart 2** shows that the rate of out-of-school suspensions for non-Hispanic Black Ohio students is much higher than their peers across the entire time span. At its lowest rate, the gap between non-Hispanic Black students (32.9 per 100 in 2005–06) and their peers with the next highest rate that year (Multiracial students at 15.6 per 100 in 2005–2006) is still more than two times as high. At its highest rate, non-Hispanic Black students were suspended out of school at a rate of 42.3 per 100 in 2008–09. The group with the second highest rate that year was American Indian or Alaskan Native students with a rate of 17 out-of-school suspensions per 100 students. Alarmingly, while the rate for out-of-school suspensions for non-Hispanic Black students declined briefly (2009–09 to 2010–11), this rate has gradually increased in recent years, furthering the gap between these students and their peers of all other races.

**Chart 2: Out-of-School Suspensions by Race**

Per 100 Ohio Students, 2005–2013

![Chart 2: Out-of-School Suspensions by Race](image)

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
The data on expulsions show a different trend. As Chart 3 indicates, there is a visible downward trend for expulsion rates in Ohio for all racial groups. That said, non-Hispanic Black students still had the highest expulsion rates per 100 students across all years shown, with the exception of a one-time spike for Pacific Islanders in 2011–12, which brought their rate up to equal that of non-Hispanic Blacks. Rates for American Indian or Alaskan Native students fluctuated over time; however, the overall rate remained below 0.5 per 100 students for all but one year shown (2005–06).

**Chart 3: Expulsions by Race**
Per 100 Ohio Students, 2005–2013

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
Ohio Department of Education data captures a fourth category of disciplinary data broadly titled “other discipline types” (SEE CHART 4). Like overall disciplinary actions, suspensions, and expulsions, (Charts 1–3), this category also indicates that non-Hispanic Black students are subjected to these forms of discipline at a higher rate than other racial groups.

**Chart 4: Other Discipline Types by Race**

*Per 100 Ohio Students, 2005–2013*

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
In order to explore discipline data further, we break down the data from the 2012–2013 academic year into discipline occurrences and reasons for each of the discipline actions administered, grouped by race (CHARTS 5A THROUGH 5G).

**Chart 5a: Non-Hispanic Whites**

*Discipline Occurrences and Reason, 2012–13 (Ohio Statewide Data)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Expulsion</th>
<th>Out of School Suspension</th>
<th>In-School Suspension</th>
<th>Emergency removal by district personnel</th>
<th>Removal by a hearing officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>3,010</td>
<td>8,583</td>
<td>2,744</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting/Violence</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>19,837</td>
<td>4,180</td>
<td>1,321</td>
<td>894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1,007</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1,892</td>
<td>898</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of a Gun</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of weapon other than gun/explosive</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>1,583</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of explosive/ incendiary/ poison gas</td>
<td></td>
<td>130</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of tobacco</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3,378</td>
<td>1,047</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of alcohol</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of other drugs</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>2,277</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False alarm/Bomb threats</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobedient/Disruptive Behavior</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>38,567</td>
<td>42,512</td>
<td>20,824</td>
<td>2,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment/Intimidation</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>5,575</td>
<td>2,541</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearm Look-a-likes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwelcome Sexual Conduct</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious Bodily Injury</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,545</strong></td>
<td><strong>79,738</strong></td>
<td><strong>60,959</strong></td>
<td><strong>26,795</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,555</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
### Chart 5b: Non-Hispanic Blacks

Discipline Occurrences and Reason, 2012–13

(Ohio Statewide Data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Expulsion</th>
<th>Out of School Suspension</th>
<th>In-School Suspension</th>
<th>In-School Alternative Discipline</th>
<th>Emergency removal by district personnel</th>
<th>Removal by a hearing officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3,203</td>
<td>4,841</td>
<td>1,424</td>
<td>132</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fighting/Violence</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>27,941</td>
<td>2,629</td>
<td>3,213</td>
<td>1,818</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vandalism</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>2,302</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of a gun</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of weapon other than gun/explosive</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of explosive/incendiary/poison gas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of tobacco</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of alcohol</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of other drugs</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>False alarm/Bomb threats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobedient/Disruptive Behavior</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>62,885</td>
<td>34,613</td>
<td>16,151</td>
<td>3,833</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harassment/Intimidation</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>5,940</td>
<td>1,311</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>347</td>
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<tr>
<td>Firearm Look-a-likes</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unwelcome Sexual Conduct</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1,061</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serious Bodily Injury</td>
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<td>2,263</td>
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<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,822</strong></td>
<td><strong>109,139</strong></td>
<td><strong>44,401</strong></td>
<td><strong>22,525</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,418</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
### Chart 5c: Hispanics

Discipline Occurrences and Reason, 2012–13
(Ohio Statewide Data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Expulsion</th>
<th>Out of School Suspension</th>
<th>In-School Suspension</th>
<th>In-School Alternative Discipline</th>
<th>Emergency removal by district personnel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>306</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting/Violence</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1,943</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of a Gun</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of weapon other than gun / explosive</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of tobacco</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of alcohol</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of other drugs</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>160</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False alarm/Bomb threats</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobedient/Disruptive Behavior</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5,065</td>
<td>3,275</td>
<td>1,644</td>
<td>230</td>
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<td>Harassment/Intimidation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearm Look-a-likes</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwelcome Sexual Conduct</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious Bodily Injury</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>195</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,017</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,496</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,141</strong></td>
<td><strong>312</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
**Chart 5d: Asians**  
Discipline Occurrences and Reason, 2012–13  
(Ohio Statewide Data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Out of School Suspension</th>
<th>In-School Suspension</th>
<th>In-School Alternative Discipline</th>
<th>Emergency removal by district personnel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting/Violence</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of weapon other than gun / explosive</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of tobacco</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of other drugs</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobedient/Disruptive Behavior</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harassment/Intimidation</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>590</strong></td>
<td><strong>448</strong></td>
<td><strong>212</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
# Chart 5e: Multiracial Students

Discipline Occurrences and Reason, 2012–13  
(Ohio Statewide Data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Expulsion</th>
<th>Out of School Suspension</th>
<th>In-School Suspension</th>
<th>In-School Alternative Discipline</th>
<th>Emergency removal by district personnel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>1,063</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting/Violence</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3,097</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>101</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of weapon other than gun / explosive</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>141</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of explosive/incendiary/poison gas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of tobacco</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of alcohol</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/Possession of other drugs</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>189</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False alarm/Bomb threats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobedient/Disruptive Behavior</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6,625</td>
<td>5,299</td>
<td>2,046</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment/Intimidation</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearm Look-a-likes</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwelcome Sexual Conduct</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious Bodily Injury</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>204</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,069</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,267</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,873</strong></td>
<td><strong>717</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
### Chart 5f: Pacific Islanders

**Discipline Occurrences and Reason, 2012–13**  
*(Ohio Statewide Data)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Out of School Suspension</th>
<th>In-School Suspension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fighting/Violence</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobedient/Disruptive Behavior</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card

### Chart 5g: American Indian and Alaskan Natives

**Discipline Occurrences and Reason, 2012–13**  
*(Ohio Statewide Data)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Out of School Suspension</th>
<th>In-School Suspension</th>
<th>In-School Alternative Discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting/Violence</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobedient/Disruptive Behavior</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment/Intimidation</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>267</strong></td>
<td><strong>187</strong></td>
<td><strong>72</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
A few notable trends emerge from this series of charts. First, while this state-level data cannot account for individual school districts’ differences in discipline philosophies, the overall data indicate that in Ohio in 2012–13, the most common form of school discipline—regardless of student race—was out-of-school suspensions. (See CHART 6.) Removing students from the school environment, such as through out-of-school suspensions or expulsions, reduces their educational opportunities and does not allow them to continue to engage with or benefit from the presence of teachers, adult mentors, and peer role models. The new federal guidelines on school discipline and school climate released in January 2014 discourage removing students from school and instead support interventions that keep students engaged in the educational environment.

**Chart 6: Total Disciplinary Actions in Ohio 2012–13**

- **Expulsion:** 3,766
- **Out-of-School Suspension:** 210,868
- **In-School Suspension:** 117,797
- **In-School Alternative Discipline:** 54,618
- **Emergency Removal by District Personnel:** 11,012
- **Removal by Hearing Officer:** 67

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
The new federal guidelines on school discipline and school climate released in January 2014 discourage removing students from school and instead support interventions that keep students engaged in the educational environment.

Second, as the highlighted cells show, with a few exceptions, disobedient/disruptive behavior is overwhelmingly listed as the most common reason for each type of disciplinary action, regardless of student race. More specifically, isolating the percentage of each type of disciplinary action that was attributed to disobedient/disruptive behavior reveals surprisingly high percentages across all racial groups (see Chart 7). For example, across all racial groups, disobedient/disruptive behavior accounts for approximately half of all out-of-school suspensions (range: 47.1% to 63.7%) and nearly three quarters of all in-school suspensions (range: 69.7% to 84.5%). These high percentages are notable because determinations of disobedient/disruptive behavior tend to be highly subjective; what one individual regards as disobedient or disruptive may not necessarily be viewed as such by others. Moreover, these perceptions of misbehavior may also be culturally influenced; responses that are deemed culturally appropriate in some cultures may be perceived as inappropriate to others. As such, determinations of disobedient/disruptive behavior are susceptible to the influence of implicit bias.16

**Chart 7: Percentage of Each Type of Disciplinary Action Attributed to Disobedient/Disruptive Behavior**

2012–13, By Race (statewide data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Expulsion</th>
<th>Out of School Suspension</th>
<th>In-School Suspension</th>
<th>In-School Alternative Discipline</th>
<th>Emergency Removal by District Personnel</th>
<th>Removal by a Hearing Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
<td>76.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian &amp; Alaskan Native</td>
<td>63.7%</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
<td>72.9%</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
<td>69.7%</td>
<td>777%</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
Finally, we also examined the extent to which disruptive/disobedient behavior resulted in exclusionary disciplinary consequences (i.e., expulsions, out-of-school suspensions, emergency removals by district personnel, and removals by district hearing officers) versus discipline in which the student remained in the school environment (i.e., in-school suspensions and in-school alternative discipline 2). Disaggregating by race reveals that for both non-Hispanic Black students and Hispanic students in Ohio, more than 50% of the disciplinary consequences resulted in them being excluded from school in the 2012–13 school year. Excluding these students on the basis of disruptive/disobedient behavior is a severe consequence, particularly when disobedient/disruptive behavior is not objectively determined. The implications of the uneven application of in-school versus out-of-school discipline for the exact same infraction (disobedient/disruptive behavior) mean that some racial groups tend to remain connected to the school during their disciplinary action, while other groups do not. This is yet another way in which implicit bias may be contributing to racialized discipline outcomes.

With these broad trends in mind, we turn our attention to four specific Ohio school districts in an effort to explore discipline policies and data in specific contexts.

2) Not all school districts in Ohio currently offer in-school alternative discipline options.
Case Studies

To better understand school-district specific disciplinary approaches, we selected four Ohio school districts for further analysis. Recognizing that the discipline disparities uncovered at these districts are not unique but rather mirror those found in many districts across the state and nation, we chose to employ pseudonyms when referring to the districts, the individual schools, and any teachers or administrators we discuss. We have chosen to substitute pseudonyms for actual names to keep the focus of our issue brief on the macro trends in school discipline decision-making within the state. It is not our intention to shine a spotlight on any particular district or school in this report, as our review of the data has led us to conclude that the experiences summarized here were repeated in districts and school systems across the state. Nevertheless, our decision to use pseudonyms is not intended to absolve any district, school, or set of administrators from accountability to the children and families they serve. Specific data for each district can and should be reviewed with careful attention to what those data reveal at http://reportcard.education.ohio.gov.

We have given the following pseudonyms to the four districts discussed here: Rockville Local, Pinecrest Public, Langbrook City, and Oakfield Public. These four districts have several differing qualities that make them worthwhile to compare. Two are urban (Langbrook City and Oakfield Public) while two are suburban (Rockville Local and Pinecrest Public). They have varying levels of academic success, as evidenced by their range of ratings (A+ through D) on the Ohio Department of Education's 2011–12 report cards. Because we are interested in the racialized nature of discipline disparities, we chose four districts with enrollments that are at least 50% non-White.

These four districts have distinctive and evolving approaches to school discipline. Data from the Ohio Department of Education's Interactive Local Report Card allows us to explore the effects of these varying disciplinary policies by race. This report captures the 2005–06 academic year through the most recent data available (2012–13). The scope of this project unfortunately did not afford us the opportunity to interview students or others directly involved in disciplinary processes. We recognize that their voices would shed valuable light on these complex dynamics and hope to explore this angle further in future work.

Before delving into specific districts, a quick overview of Ohio data can help contextualize these discussions. Looking at racial demographics across the state in 2012, Ohio's population was 83.4% White, 12.5% Black or African American, 2.0% two or more races, 1.8% Asian, and 0.3% American Indian and Alaska Native. Hispanics or Latinos, regardless of race, comprised 3.3% of the state's population. Median household income in Ohio (2008–2012) was $48,246. Like the rest of the country, Ohio felt the impact of the economic recession acutely. Unemployment in the state exceeded 10% in 2009 and 2010, but has begun to decrease in recent years, falling to 7.2% by 2012. While approximately 15% of Ohio residents were below poverty level (2008–12), the numbers for children are slightly higher (23.6% in 2012). Approximately 45% of Ohio children received free or reduced price lunch in 2011. The four-year longitudinal graduation rate in Ohio was roughly 81% in 2011–12.

With these baseline numbers in mind, we turn to our case studies. After highlighting district-specific data and policies, we close this report with concluding reflections.
# Rockville Local School District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ODE GRADE (2011–2012):</th>
<th>A+; Excellent with Distinction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION:</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOLS IN DISTRICT:</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROX. STUDENTS IN DISTRICT (2012–2013):</td>
<td>5,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROX. PERCENT NON-WHITE (2012–13 ACADEMIC YEAR):</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2012):</td>
<td>$70,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEMPLOYMENT (2012):</td>
<td>7.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT CENSUS POVERTY RATE (2012):</td>
<td>24.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE (2010):</td>
<td>$9,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREE/REDUCED PRICE LUNCH ENROLLMENT (2011):</td>
<td>41.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (2011):</td>
<td>5.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLLMENT (2011):</td>
<td>14.70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## District Profile

Rockville Local School District, established in 1870, has been the site of major pedagogic and structural change over the past few years. The relatively small district has 15 schools: seven elementary schools, four middle schools, and four high schools. The district serves 5,974 students in a state suburb. The district and the community have been facing major economic challenges since 2008, but remarkably, their academic ranking has improved. To cope with the economic downturn, Rockville overhauled its building organization, froze teacher salaries, reduced bussing, downsized personnel, increased extra-curricular fees, and partnered with community organizations. Many of these changes were controversial and took time to be implemented.

Rockville Local’s rating on the Ohio Department of Education’s district report card historically fluctuated between an “A” and “B” grade. After securing an “A” grade in 2011, the district earned an “A+,” in 2012, signifying “Excellence with Distinction.”

As shown in Chart 8, the racial and ethnic composition of Rockville Local School District has gradually diversified over time. As of 2012–13, non-White students now comprise the majority of students in the Rockville Local District. Of the 5,972 students enrolled in 2012–13, 51.9% (3,097) were students of color.

In 2012, the district reported a 38% poverty rate,²⁵ up from 23% the previous year.²⁶ However, even with the declining economic situation, the school managed to improve its academic rating to the highest rating possible. The district’s per pupil expenditure is below the state average,²⁷ yet the district is still able to provide students with a quality education. The district’s success despite rising

> “Not only do we innovate, we innovate without adding cost. We’re spending less money ... yet we have more opportunities for kids than we had before.”

—Superintendent Rhett Beyer

The Columbus Dispatch, October 30, 2012

poverty is reflected in its mission statement: “every child can succeed.” District superintendent Rhett Beyer believes that there are no excuses for a Rockville student to fail, because the school and staff should intervene proactively. The superintendent and the district had to learn how to meet the needs of every student while maintaining a tight budget.

The most striking aspect of the district’s recent academic achievement is its ability to allocate limited resources in a productive way. Two Rockville Local schools, Hoover Middle School and Whitman Elementary School, have seen major academic improvement in spite of the increased poverty rate. These two schools exemplify the district’s “doing more, with less” initiative by developing new ways to monitor students who are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds or who have troubled home situations. More than 50% of students at both schools are economically disadvantaged, and both are high quality schools; Hoover Middle School earned the Ohio Department of Education district report grade of “Excellent with Distinction” rating in 2012, and Whitman Elementary School earned an “Excellent.”

Chart 8: Demographics of Rockville Local School District
2005-2012 Academic Years

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
At Hoover Middle School, the administration asserts that poverty is not an excuse for poor academic performance. Macie Pascal, former Principal of Hoover Middle School and future Rockville superintendent, emphasizes that students who come from troubled backgrounds are just as capable to succeed as their peers. She stresses that “kids aren’t stupid just because they come from a situation with poverty.” Instead, economically disadvantaged children are monitored more closely than other students to ensure that home-life issues are not impacting their academic growth.

At Whitman Elementary School, former Principal Regina Morris-Hall encouraged all students to read and increase their vocabulary to put them on the right track for college. According to Morris-Hall, teachers at Whitman do not ask students “if they are going to college,” but rather, “where are you going to college?” The motto at this school is “no child goes unnoticed.” This motto reflects the educators’ belief that no student should slip through the cracks and fall behind in their learning. All students at Whitman are held to high expectations, regardless of socioeconomic background.

**DISCIPLINE POLICIES**

Generally speaking, students who are economically disadvantaged are more likely to be disciplined in school than students who are not. In the Rockville school district, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students is considerable, yet the district is not excessively punitive with school discipline.

The principals in Rockville Local schools have more decision-making power than principals in other districts. The superintendent believes that the principals should run their schools autonomously; he refers to them as “building CEOs.” Among their numerous responsibilities, principals possess the authority to hire and fire personnel at their respective school. Rather than running the district central office as a higher authority than the schools, the superintendent uses the central office as a resource for principals, thereby allowing the schools to function with a high degree of autonomy. Thus, in terms of discipline, the principals are responsible for the majority of disciplinary issues with students. This model differs from other school districts where the superintendent addresses serious discipline violations. Since the principals interact with the students on a daily basis, they are regarded as being better situated than a superintendent to assess and address individual students’ needs. Superintendent Rhett Beyer believes that the best way to improve a school is to empower the principals, who in turn empower teachers. He wants to “support principals by removing barriers to their jobs.”

One novel discipline approach Rockville Local offers is an alternative to suspension known as “whole day parent shadowing.” In this situation, students can shadow their parent for a day as a form of out-of-school suspension. The district also offers an alternative school for in-school suspensions.

**DISTRICT DISCIPLINE DATA**

This section explores the data on discipline in the Rockville Local School district from 2005–06 to 2012–13. **CHART 9** reflects disciplinary actions per 100 students for all types of discipline. Although not consistent over time, recent years generally suggest an overall decline in disciplinary actions, with all racial groups having fewer than 40 disciplinary actions per 100 in the most recent year for which data is available. Since 2005, Asians have always been the group with the fewest disciplinary actions in Rockville Schools, while Black, non-Hispanics have generally been the subject...
of the highest rates of disciplinary actions. The extent of this discipline gap is notable. Even in the year with the smallest discipline gap between racial groups (2011–2012), Black, non-Hispanic Rockville students were:

- 7 times more likely to be disciplined than their Asian peers,
- 2.9 times more likely to be disciplined than their Hispanic peers,
- 2.3 times more likely to be disciplined than their White, non-Hispanic peers, and
- 1.4 times more likely to be disciplined than their Multiracial peers.

In short, despite declines in overall disciplinary actions, racial differences remain.

3) In 2007-08, the district had 10 American Indian or Alaskan Native students, all of whom were subject to some form of discipline. These students were only in the district that year, so they do not appear on this trend chart.
Pinecrest Public Schools

ODE GRADE (2011–2012) ........................................ B; Effective
LOCATION ....................................................... suburb
SCHOOLS IN DISTRICT ........................................ 10
APPROX. STUDENTS IN DISTRICT (2012–2013) ........ 5,245
APPROX. PERCENT NON-WHITE (2012–2013 ACADEMIC YEAR) ........ 69%
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2012) ..................... $70,454
UNEMPLOYMENT (2012) ......................................... 9.20%
STUDENT CENSUS POVERTY RATE (2012) ...................... 25.80%
PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE (2010) .............................. $14,528
FREE/REDUCED PRICE LUNCH ENROLLMENT (2011) ........ 58.60%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (2011) ..................... 10.60%
SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLLMENT (2011) ................ 14.70%

DISTRICT PROFILE
The Pinecrest Public School district was created in 1955 by combining nine schools in eight small school districts. The consolidated school district now serves 5,245 students in ten schools: eight elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The suburban district received an “Effective” or “B” rating on the ODE report card. In 2009, the district earned a rating of “Excellent” or “A,” but since then has maintained “Effective/B” status.

CHART 10 displays the district’s demographic composition since 2005–2006. Notably, Pinecrest Public School District has become increasingly non-White, even despite a gradual decline in the Black, non-Hispanic population. Overall the district’s diversity has increased, driven by the larger Hispanic population.

The district’s core beliefs emphasize that everyone is a learner throughout their lives and everyone benefits from ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural diversity. With students speaking more than 30 languages, the district itself is highly diverse; the superintendent describes the district as having no dominant culture.

Pinecrest Public’s mission statement encourages students to “inspire to dream, challenge to achieve.” Superintendent Theodore Van Horne aspires to have all Pinecrest students accepted into colleges, vocational schools, the armed forces, or “ready for work” after graduation. (As of 2011, the portion of graduates prepared to pursue these paths is approximately 40%. To accomplish this goal, Van Horne has instituted major changes, including a shift to STEM education and technologically advanced classrooms. Van Horne has described the rapidly changing school environment as “engineered chaos.”

In 2012, the district passed a 6.5 million dollar operating levy that maintained student services and programs. Additionally, Pinecrest Public Schools recently made improvements to its elementary schools and is currently in the latter stages of constructing a new junior high/senior high complex.

Chart 10: Demographics of Pinecrest Public Schools
2005-2012 Academic Years

DISCIPLINE POLICIES
The Pinecrest Public Board of Education states that student conduct and learning are closely aligned; “an effective instructional program requires an orderly school environment, and the effectiveness of the educational program is, in part, reflected in the behavior of students.”45 Like many other districts, the discipline policy emphasizes zero tolerance of violent, disruptive, or inappropriate student behavior.46

The local Board of Education also states that the best discipline is self-imposed, which makes students personally responsible for their behavior and any consequences of their behavior.47 The Board of Education outlines five principles on which all school rules are based. Students are required to “conform to reasonable standards of socially-acceptable behavior, to respect the person and property of others, to preserve the degree of order necessary to the educational program in which they are engaged, to respect the rights of others, and to obey constituted authority and respond to those who hold that authority.”48
The student code of conduct provides specific penalties for the rule infractions. The Board of Education outlines that the penalties will “relate in kind and degree to the infraction, help the student learn to take responsibility for his/her actions, and be directed, where possible, to reduce the effects of any harm which may have been caused by the student’s misconduct.”

At Pinecrest Public Schools, suspensions may not exceed ten school days. The code lists three offenses that result in automatic expulsion: possession of a firearm or knife, violent conduct, and a bomb threat. Students are expelled from school if they bring a firearm or knife onto school property, although the superintendent may reduce the length of the expulsion. Students may also be expelled if they commit a violent act at school that would be a criminal offense if committed by an adult and results in serious physical harm to a person. If students are expelled for more than 20 school days, the superintendent provides students and families with contact information for public or private agencies in the community that offer programs or services that can help correct the behaviors and attitudes that led to the expulsion. The superintendent may also provide alternative educational options to students who have been suspended or expelled.

The student code of conduct stresses the importance of respect for the law and authority, but also respect for the rights of others. The code mandates that students have respect for “property, pride in one’s work, achievement in the range of one’s ability, and exemplary personal standards of courtesy, decency, and honesty.” Students, teachers, and administrators are responsible for maintaining a learning environment that allows effective communication and opportunities to learn. Additionally, classroom environments must have fair and developmentally appropriate consequences. The classroom environment must consider the student and the circumstances of the situation, and enforce the student Code of Conduct/Student Discipline Code accordingly. The student Code of Conduct/Student Discipline Code is reviewed annually.

**DISCIPLINE DATA**

Data for all discipline types per 100 Pinecrest Public students is shown in [CHART 11](#). The discipline rate for Black, non-Hispanic students is notably higher than both their White and non-White peers. This disproportionality continues over time, despite general decreases in overall discipline rates for nearly all groups.

The extent of discipline for Black, non-Hispanic students is alarming across all years, but particularly in the first two years shown on Chart 11. In those years (2005–06 and 2006–07), discipline of Black, non-Hispanic students exceeded 100 disciplinary actions per 100 students, meaning that some Black students were subjected to multiple disciplinary actions. In 2005–06, Pinecrest Public Schools reported 123.9 disciplinary actions per 100 Black students; this number remained above 100 the following year (104.4 in 2006–07). Even after declining and stabilizing somewhat in recent years, the rate of approximately 70 disciplinary actions per 100 Black students remains remarkably high, particularly when the next most disciplined groups are under 40 actions per 100 students.

To contextualize this data further, recall from the previous case study that at its peak (2007–08), non-Hispanic, Black students in Rockville Local had approximately 90 disciplinary actions per 100 students, but in recent years, all Rockville racial groups received fewer than 40 disciplinary actions per 100 students.

“The Board believes that the best discipline is self-imposed and that students should learn to assume responsibility for their own behavior and the consequences of their actions.”

– Pinecrest Public School District - Bylaws & Policies (Section 5600 Student Discipline)
actions per 100 students. Thus, while Pinecrest Public has brought down their numbers of disciplinary actions, their rate of discipline per 100 Black students in 2012–13 remains more than 1.8 times higher than Rockville Local Schools for the same year.

![Chart 11: Disciplinary Actions Per 100 Students
All Discipline Types](chart11.png)

Pinecrest Public Schools, 2005–2012 academic years

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
To further explore the data behind these trends in Pinecrest Public, **CHARTS 12 AND 13** display the distribution of all discipline types per 100 students for the first and last years (2005–06 and 2012–13) of the timeline we use. Isolating these data shows continued racial disproportionality, despite lower overall rates of discipline.

**Chart 12: Distribution of All Discipline Types (2005–2006)**
Per 100 Students, by Race

**Chart 13: Distribution of All Discipline Types (2012–2013)**
Per 100 Students, by Race

- **Asian**
- **Hispanic**
- **Multiracial**
- **White, Non-Hispanic**
- **Black, Non-Hispanic**
- **American Indian or Alaskan Native**

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
Langbrook City Schools

ODE GRADE (2011–2012) ............... C; Continuous Improvement
LOCATION .................................. urban
SCHOOLS IN DISTRICT ......................... 58
APPROX. STUDENTS IN DISTRICT (2012–2013) ........ 29,959
APPROX. PERCENT NON-WHITE (2012–13 ACADEMIC YEAR) ........ 74%
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2012) ....................... $54,879
UNEMPLOYMENT (2012) .......................... 11.60%
STUDENT CENSUS POVERTY RATE (2012) ...................... 43.70%
PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE (2010) .......................... $13,037
FREE/REDUCED PRICE LUNCH ENROLLMENT (2011) ............ 62.60%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (2011) ......................... 3.70%
SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLLMENT (2011) .................... 21.50%

DISTRICT PROFILE
Langbrook City Schools (LCS) district was established in 1829. Since then, the district has expanded greatly; it is comprised of 55 schools that serve more than 30,000 students. Of these 55 schools, 39 are elementary schools, 12 are high schools, and four serve a K–12 population. As Ohio’s third largest district, Langbrook City School district covers 91 square miles in the southwest region of the state.

Langbrook City Schools’ goal is to “develop and implement strategies to build high-performing schools and achieve high-quality education for all students.” In the 2012–2013 school year, the district received an Ohio Department of Education grade of “Continuous Improvement,” or a “C.” In previous years (2009–2011), the district earned a grade of “Effective,” or “B.” During those years, Langbrook City was the only urban school district in Ohio to achieve the “effective” rating, making it the highest rated urban school district in the state at the time.

The diverse Langbrook community comprised of multiple socioeconomic, cultural, and racial communities is represented in the school district. Student demographics and socioeconomic situations vary significantly, both within schools and within the district as a whole. Pockets of wealth and poverty in the surrounding county make for an inconsistent landscape.

CHART 14 sheds light on some of this demographic diversity. Across the eight academic years shown, the percentage of non-White students in Langbrook City School District has consistently hovered around 75%. Black, non-Hispanic students comprise the bulk of the student population, though those numbers have declined slightly in recent years as the numbers for other groups (e.g., Hispanics and Multiracial students) have increased.

Chart 14: Demographics of Langbrook City Schools
2005-2012 Academic Years

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
DISCIPLINE POLICIES
Langbrook City Schools embraced a Positive School Culture Plan in 2004. The plan “aims to help students learn good behavior and offers alternatives to putting students who misbehave out of school,” and also emphasizes mutual respect between students and staff. The idea that school discipline should help students learn good behavior and keep them in school undergirds the plan. The purposes of the Positive School Culture Plan are as follows:

- “To create an environment where teaching and learning can prosper
- To promote character development to enable students to make meaningful contributions to the community
- To provide an alternative to suspension and expulsion
- To involve families and the community in creating safe and effective learning environments
- To address the needs of students with behavior problems.”

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS
The district’s vision for Positive Behavior Supports is to “create and maintain a safe and orderly educational community that keeps students in school and engaged in learning.” The district believes that all students have the right to learn, and no student should interfere with another student’s learning. Moreover, the district asserts that if students have clear expectations of how to behave, they are less likely to exhibit problem behavior. The district publicly encourages students to “Be Safe. Be Respectful. Be Responsible.” To demonstrate appropriate behavior to students, the district Code of Conduct explicitly lists actions that either follow or violate these expectations, as well as the disciplinary consequences associated with violating these expectations. The choices available to school personnel to address student infractions focus on positive or corrective behavioral supports that engage students.

There are three categories of offenses that a student could commit, and each category has specific corrective behavioral supports that teachers and administrators can employ. Category I offenses include disobedience, disruptive behavior, inappropriate communication, tobacco use, cell phone use, and cheating. These behaviors are usually addressed by teachers, not administrators. The consequences of these infractions could include community service, in-school suspension, detention, reflective activities, creation of a behavior contract, or referral to an intervention assistance team.

Fighting, profanity, stealing, gang activity, bullying, and sexual misconduct constitute Category II offenses. The consequences of Category II infractions could include any of the Category I consequences, and also written reflections, parent contact, Saturday school, repeated check-ins with administrators, or counseling with a mentor or counseling agency. Category II offenses can also result in assignment to an Alternative to Suspension program.

Finally, Category III offenses include alcohol/drug use, serious bodily injury, possession of dangerous weapons and firearms, sexual assault, sexting, and starting a fire. Category III offenses
require a disciplinary office referral and may also include any of the Category II consequences. Category III offenses can also result in assignment to an Alternative to Suspension or Alternative to Expulsion program.

ALTERNATIVE DISCIPLINE PROGRAMS

Two key discipline programs in the Positive School Culture Plan are the Alternative to Suspension program and the Alternative to Expulsion program, both of which embrace the idea that taking students out of school to punish them is not conducive to their personal and academic growth. In addition, the district Board of Education and superintendents assert that merely removing students from the classroom environment through traditional suspensions or expulsions does not correct problematic behavior and often causes students to fall behind in their schoolwork. In both Alternatives programs, students receive academic instruction and counseling from certified teachers and counselors. The goal of both programs is to return a student to their regular school with improved behavior, study skills, and an understanding of the relationship between behavior and consequences. Both programs are available to all Langbrook students in grades 4–12, and are housed in a district-central location, away from regular schools. Additionally, recognizing the unique traits of students, both of the alternative programs may be amended for students with disabilities and/or Individual Education Plans. For example, students with Individual Education Plans meet with a teacher and an Intervention Specialist.

ALTERNATIVE TO SUSPENSION (A2S)

Teachers and administrators decide whether to assign students to the Alternative to Suspension program only after considering whether or not the school has done everything possible to remedy the problematic behavior(s). Students in this program are not considered dangerous; rather, they need therapy to address chronic misbehavior. Once placed in this program, the student is required to attend every day, for between five and fifteen days. The program is divided in two age groups: grades 4–6 and grades 7–12. Students receive the same academic instruction that they would in their regular school, but they also participate in mandatory meetings with teachers and counselors. The students are required to participate in the classroom activities as well as individual and group social-skills counseling.

ALTERNATIVE TO EXPULSION (A2E)

A district Hearing Officer decides whether a student is placed in the Alternative to Expulsion program. Students are recommended for the A2E program if they commit a Category III offense, such as breaking and entering. Certain violations, however, require the student to be expelled from the school, such as possession of a firearm. The program is divided in two age groups: grades 4–8 and grades 9–12. Students in the A2E program receive classroom instruction as they would in their regular school, and they receive additional help based on individualized plans. Apart from academic instruction, students receive social-skills instruction and mental health services, both individually and in small groups. There is potential for students to leave the program early if they have a high attendance rate, strong academic performance, and complete community service. If a student is assigned to the A2E program but does not complete it, they are expelled. If a student fails to show up for the program, they are referred to juvenile court for truancy.

“[Langbrook] uses Positive Behavior Supports to emphasize that the removal of a child from school is an option of last resort.”

Langbrook City Schools Positive School Culture Plan
Another integral part of the Positive School Culture Plan and the district Code of Conduct is the Pyramid of Interventions, a three-tiered framework of instruction and intervention. The Langbrook City Schools’ Pyramid of Interventions is an adaptation of the Ohio Integrated Systems Model (OISM). The Pyramid of Interventions addresses behavioral and academic concerns in an integrated system. The previous district superintendent, Irene Holton, believed that academic and behavioral problems must be addressed in tandem. The POI is described as “a framework for implementing existing initiatives in a systematic, integrated way,” rather than a new initiative.

In the Pyramid model, there are three tiers of progressive levels of support: school wide, targeted, and intensive. The majority of students can be successful academically and behaviorally with minimal intervention, thus between 80 and 90% of students are successful in the school wide tier. For the 5–10% of students who are still struggling, a second, targeted tier provides strategies for success. Support in this tier focuses on small groups of students. Strong efforts in these first two tiers reduce the number of students who require intensive support in the top tier. About 1 to 5% of students need individual support at the top tier of the model. One of the benefits of the Pyramid of Interventions model is that fewer students are referred to Langbrook City Public Schools’ Alternative to Suspension and Alternative to Expulsion programs.

**The Pyramid of Interventions**

Two schools within the district that highlight the success of the Pyramid of Interventions are Paulsen-James College and Career High School and Webster Elementary. Langbrook City Schools reported that the Pyramid of Interventions greatly improved the school climate at both schools.

Paulsen-James College and Career High School is a college-preparatory school serving 434 students in grades 9–12. After implementing the Pyramid of Interventions, discipline violations and fighting incidents decreased by 50 percent at the school. Other changes that accompanied the adoption of the Pyramid of Interventions were a ban on cell phones, mandatory uniforms, and a program called “Caught Doing Good,” which rewards good behavior with school announcements and letters sent home to parents.

As an elementary magnet school focusing on intensive study of foreign language, Webster Elementary offers instruction for 506 students in preschool through eighth grade. The school marked a 50 percent decrease in discipline referrals and incidents after implementing the Pyramid of Interventions. The intervention training led the school to develop a set of “Big Expectations” that guide expected student behavior. Students and staff collectively agreed on “Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Problem-solvers.”

DISCIPLINE DATA
Like the schools discussed thus far, discipline data from the Ohio Department of Education reveal that the discipline rates per 100 for Black, non-Hispanic students are much higher than nearly all other students. CHART 15 illustrates the discipline rates by race for the 2005–2008 and 2010–2012 academic years. Across most of these years, discipline rates for Black, non-Hispanic students gradually declined, going from 102.3 disciplinary actions per 100 students in 2005–06 to 70.5 disciplinary actions per 100 students in 2011–12 before rising slightly in 2012–13.

The only other racial group with similar discipline values similar to non-Hispanic Blacks are Pacific Islanders, whose data only appear in 2012–2013. While Black, non-Hispanic students received 73.7 disciplinary actions per 100 students in 2012–13, Pacific Islanders (though a small population of only 25 students) received 69.3 actions per 100. The next closest group was Multiracial students, with a rate of slightly over 40 per 100.

Particularly notable for Langbrook City Schools is their extremely low expulsion rate. Too low to merit their own chart, expulsions are nearly non-existent in Langbrook City Schools. From the 2005–2012 academic years, at their highest for any racial group, the value was 0.2 expulsions per 100 Hispanic students in 2005–06. Since that time, no racial group has exceeded 0.1 expulsions per 100 students. These stunningly low values are likely connected to the impact of Langbrook’s Alternative to Expulsion program.

With respect to the district’s Alternative to Suspension program, it, too, appears to be having a positive impact in keeping students from receiving out-of-school suspensions. CHART 16 shows the data for out-of-school suspensions for the 2005–2012 academic years (2009 excluded). While considerable gaps in racial disproportionality exist, these are relatively low when considering that the maximum value of the vertical (Y) axis is less than five.

4) Ohio Department of Education data for Langbrook City Schools for the 2009-2010 academic year is excluded from these charts and analysis because the incredibly low values suggest flawed data.
Chart 15: Disciplinary Actions Per 100 Students  
All Discipline Types  
Langbrook City Schools, 2005–2012 academic years

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card

Ohio Department of Education data for Langbrook City Schools for the 2009-2010 academic year is excluded from these charts and analysis because the incredibly low values suggest flawed data.
Chart 16: Out-of-School Suspensions by Race
Per 100 Students, Langbrook City Schools, 2005–2012 academic years

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
Oakfield Public

ODE GRADE (2011–2012) ........................................ D; Academic Watch
LOCATION .................................................. urban
SCHOOLS IN DISTRICT ...................................... 16
APPROX. STUDENTS IN DISTRICT (2012–2013) ........... 5,239
APPROX. PERCENT NON-WHITE ............................. 80%
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2012) .................... $35,728
UNEMPLOYMENT (2012) ...................................... 19.30%
STUDENT CENSUS POVERTY RATE (2012) .................. 53.60%
PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE (2010) ............................ $13,194
FREE/REDUCED PRICE LUNCH ENROLLMENT (2011) .... 87.50%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (2011) ..................... 3.20%
SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLLMENT (2011) ............... 21.90%

DISTRICT PROFILE
The Oakfield Public Schools district has been faced with many challenges caused by economic instability in the region. The Oakfield district saw a 19.3% unemployment rate in 2012 and a 53.6% student poverty rate in 2012. In spite of this adversity, the district’s mission is to be “a beacon of success” for the state region. About 5,239 students attend the 16 Oakfield district schools. In the 2011–2012 school year, the district received a grade of “Academic Watch” or “D” from the Ohio Department of Education.

Unfortunately, Oakfield Public Schools failed to meet the state’s Adequate Yearly Progress markers for four years (2006–2010). Ohio law mandates that in this situation, the state is compelled to intervene and create an Academic Distress Commission to assist the district. As part of these interventions, the Oakfield Academic Distress Commission (OADC) has implemented an Academic Recovery Plan to help the district be successful fiscally and academically. The Academic Distress Commission will preside over the Oakfield district until it has earned a rating of “Continuous Improvement” for two consecutive years. Oakfield Public Schools is in the process of complete overhaul; the district is restructuring multiple schools and implementing programs to improve the quality of education and the allocation of resources.

The Academic Distress Commission’s Academic Recovery Plan focuses on short-term and long-term goals, frequent monitoring and evaluations, and dedicating resources to improvement efforts. The Recovery Plan is modified and approved by the state Superintendent of Public Instruction at least once a year, and steady improvement is expected.

Turning to the district’s demographics (CHART 17), the enrolled student population is predominantly Black, non-Hispanic, with this group representing between 66% and 69% percent of enrolled students since 2005–06. Non-Hispanic Whites comprised the second largest population across these academic years, accounting for 22.7% of the total district enrollment in 2005–06 and declining gradually since then.

Aside from these race-specific trends, however, it is vital to note that the district’s overall enrollment has also been waning. In 2005–06, the district served more than 8,000 students; within the seven subsequent years shown on Chart 18, district enrollment has dwindled to 5,239.

**Chart 17: Demographics of Oakfield Public Schools**

*2005-2012 Academic Years*

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
DISCIPLINE POLICIES

The 2013–2014 Oakfield Code of Conduct is divided into three levels of offenses. According to the code, Level 3 misconduct always results in a recommendation for expulsion, while Level 2 behavior can occasionally result in expulsion, and Level 1 rarely would result in expulsion.

Level 1 behavior encompasses conduct that impedes on the orderly operation of the classroom or school. Such behaviors include cheating, disorderly conduct, dress code violations, forgery, gambling, indecent language, littering, and truancy. This behavior is typically handled by the classroom teacher whenever possible; however, Level 1 behavior can be addressed by teachers, principals, and other school authorities. Consequences of the listed infractions include, but are not limited to: verbal reprimand, special assignments, oral or written notification to parents, mediation, detention, reflective activities, counselor or administrative referrals, and loss of class privileges. Although the code states that out-of-school suspension is not an option for Level 1 rule infractions, dress code violations are the exception.

Level 2 behaviors are defined as “illegal and/or serious misconduct – not life or health threatening to others.” Offenses include possession of tobacco, use of cell phones, hazing, extortion, disruptive behavior. For the first offense, the penalty is a short-term suspension, which lasts one to three days. For the second offense, students serve a long-term suspension of three to ten days. If there is a third offense, the penalty is a recommendation for expulsion.
Level 3 behavior is “illegal and/or serious misconduct – potentially life or health threatening to others.” Examples include, arson, assault, possession of alcohol or drugs, vandalism or theft, and sexual offenses. A recommendation for expulsion is the penalty for all offenses in this category. First offenders for tobacco or drug or alcohol possession, and first offenders for sexual offenses are referred to counseling and/or treatment programs.

**DISCIPLINE DATA**

**CHART 19** shows all disciplinary actions per 100 Oakfield Public School students. Several trends are notable here. First, overall discipline in Oakfield Public schools is very high. Note that the vertical axis value of 100 appears near the middle of the chart. Data above the value of 100 represents more than one disciplinary action per student (i.e., exceeding a 100 actions per 100 students or 1:1 ratio), so to exceed that amount—indeed, to almost double it—indicates a devastating problem. After a brief period of decline, disciplinary actions have spiked considerably in recent years (2011–12 and 2012–13), which is particularly alarming in light of the decline in overall student population. There are significantly fewer students, yet increasing disciplinary actions. Moreover, the racial discipline gaps have actually expanded. At its smallest, the interracial discipline gap was 50 actions per 100 students in 2010–11. (Black, non-Hispanics were the highest at 78.5 per 100 compared to White, non-Hispanics at 28.5 per 100.) This gap between the most and least disciplined racial groups has ballooned in recent years, more than doubling in 2011–12 (161 per 100 for Black, non-Hispanics compared to 50.1 per 100 for White non-Hispanics) and then further widening in 2012–13.

The number of out-of-school suspensions is also exceedingly high in Oakfield Public Schools (see **CHART 20**), reaching an alarming rate of 97.3 per 100 Black, non-Hispanic students in 2008–09. The most recent data available (2012–13) shows that even the racial group that had the lowest rate of out-of-school suspensions (White, non-Hispanics) were suspended at a rate of 24.3 per 100. That year, Black, non-Hispanics had the highest out-of-school suspension rate, at 65.5 per 100.

To put these numbers in context, consider that, at their respective high points, the most disciplined of any racial group across these years in each of these districts had out-of-school suspension rates of:

- **97.3 per 100** (Oakfield Public – Black, non-Hispanics in 2008–2009),
- **46.2 per 100** (Pinecrest Public – Black, non-Hispanics in 2006–07),
- **44.2 per 100** (Rockville Local – Black, non-Hispanics in 2007–08), and a mere
- **4.0 per 100** (Langbrook City – Black, non-Hispanics in 2010–11).

This means that even at their highest rate of out-of-school suspensions, the rates of the other three districts pale in comparison to Oakfield, with Langbrook City providing a particularly stark contrast.
Chart 19: Disciplinary Actions Per 100 Students
All Discipline Types
Oakfield Public Schools, 2005–2012 academic years

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
Chart 20: Out-of-School Suspensions by Race
Per 100 Students, Oakfield Public Schools, 2005–2012 academic years

Source: Ohio Department of Education - Interactive Local Report Card
Case Study Reflections

These rich case studies yield several themes worthy of further consideration.

First, several districts moved away from the traditional model of discipline in which rules mandate specific disciplinary actions and instead adopted a paradigm that encourages shared responsibility. This new approach creates a culture in which students’ rights and responsibilities are central to discipline guidelines. For example, with a nod to the Fourteenth Amendment, Rockville Local school district outlines constitutional rights for all pupils and states that students share responsibility for making the school environment conducive to learning. Similarly, Pinecrest Public emphasizes that students, along with teachers and administrators, share in the responsibility of maintaining a productive learning atmosphere by respecting the rights of others. Another high-level approach to uplifting students’ rights and responsibilities has been implemented in Langbrook City Schools. Langbrook’s Positive School Culture Plan emphasizes fostering mutual respect, highlighting the collaborative nature of discipline, and providing alternative discipline programs. In short, by reframing discipline from an infraction-consequence model to one that promotes students’ school citizenship appears to positively influence the school climate.

Second, like numerous districts across the country, Langbrook is focusing on creating a positive school climate. Through the district’s Positive School Culture Plan, discipline takes a proactive form, and Positive Behavior Supports reinforce good behaviors. Positive Behavior Supports views removing a student from the classroom as a last resort option and instead encourages mutual respect and problem-solving among all members of the educational environment. These approaches align closely with the increasingly popular Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model. PBIS is a relatively new framework that utilizes a prevention-oriented approach, favoring corrective feedback over traditional penalties. The promise of this framework is reflected in the fact that many districts across the U.S. are finding PBIS a worthwhile addition to their discipline programs. Currently, over 20,000 schools have implemented PBIS.

Third, an extensive body of research uncovered the detrimental effects of exclusionary discipline policies such as out-of-school suspension and other actions that remove students from the classroom. Recognizing this, some districts have developed alternative strategies in which the learning environment for disciplined students is preserved. In Rockville, the district offers an alternative school as well as “whole day parent shadowing” as an unconventional form of out-of-school suspension. Moreover, Langbrook City Schools’ adoption of PBIS led them to create two alternative programs designed to keep students in school for the duration of their disciplinary action. The two programs, Alternative to Suspension and Alternative to Expulsion, provide Langbrook students academic instruction and counseling while working to improve behavior. These interventions collectively help students return to their regular classrooms.

These reflections highlight only a few of the myriad approaches and practices that school districts are employing to improve school climate. This document is not meant to advocate for specific discipline strategies, but rather to provide a glimpse into the efforts of some Ohio districts. While we recognize that these efforts may be somewhat district-specific, some of the ideas presented here merit consideration in other locales.
Conclusion

This review of K-12 school discipline rates in Ohio shows considerable and enduring racial disparities. Non-Hispanic Black students overwhelmingly are bearing the brunt of this disproportionate discipline despite their relatively low enrollment numbers; from the 2005 to 2012 academic years, Non-Hispanic Black students comprised less than 17% of Ohio’s enrolled student population. While overall state trends appear to show some decline in overall disciplinary actions, alarming racial gaps persist.

Additionally, disobedient/disruptive behaviors stand out as being a main explanation for many student discipline referrals. Given the ambiguous and contextualized nature of this infraction, the subjective act of judging what actions are perceived as disobedient or disruptive means that these referrals could be inconsistently applied. What one school staffer perceives as being disobedient or disruptive may not be the same as how another individual would perceive the same situation. Notably, ambiguous situations in which subjective judgments are required are conducive to the rise of implicit biases. As such, when potential disciplinary situations arise, we must recognize the possible influence of implicit bias, as teachers’ “background experiences and automatic associations shape his or her interpretation of the scene.”

Broadly speaking, the data show an uneven disciplinary landscape, in which some students are far more likely to be removed from school via out-of-school suspensions or expulsions than others. This matters because missing school days due to disciplinary actions can weaken students’ bonds to the school and contribute to feelings of school alienation. Students removed from school miss valuable class time and can fall behind in their coursework, hindering their ability to succeed academically.

Furthermore, excluding students from school is not necessary to maintain a safe and orderly school environment as evidenced by school districts that have moved away from exclusionary discipline. Some districts, such as Langbrook City Schools, have successfully instituted alternative discipline programs that help keep students in the school environment, thereby dramatically decreasing suspension and expulsion rates. The exclusion of students from school is an important issue for Ohio not only because it impacts educational opportunities, but also workforce development, economic competitiveness, and criminal justice costs, among other outcomes. The consequences of removal from school can have lasting life impacts, including increased chances of future drop out and risk for future involvement in the juvenile justice system. Conversely, remaining in school and graduating is associated with a range of positive benefits for both individuals and society as a whole, including higher incomes and lower unemployment rates compared to those who do not complete high school.

While the racialized discipline disparities in Ohio are alarming, numerous other states are facing similar challenges. In fact, the federal guidance package on school discipline and school climate released in January 2014 calls attention to racialized school discipline disparities throughout the U.S. and encourages districts to consider alternative forms of discipline that keep students in the educational environment. This new federal policy package provides a timely opportunity for Ohio school districts to consider their current disciplinary practices and policies, and work towards creating codes of conduct that maintain a safe and fair learning environment for all students.


3. An alternative to traditional discipline, restorative justice changes the focus from punishing wrongdoers to instead emphasize repairing the damages caused by the misbehavior and prevent its reoccurrence. This approach highlights the notion that every school member has a responsibility to the larger school community. Rather than focusing on rule breaking, restorative justice focuses on the harm that was done, promotes collaborative problem solving that includes both the offender and the victim, and encourages meaningful reparations. Restorative justice practices could include mediation, talking circles, or peer juries.


8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.


16. For more on implicit bias, see the Kirwan Institute’s “State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review.” http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/implicit-bias-review/


18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.


24. Ohio Department of Education’s Interactive Local Report Card. 4-year longitudinal graduation rate (state).


27. The New America Foundation Federal Education Budget Project http://febp.newamerica.net/k12/Ohio/3904700


31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.


41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.


46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.


52. Ibid.


57. Ibid.


59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.


66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.


72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.


This publication was produced by the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University. As a university-wide, interdisciplinary research institute, the Kirwan Institute works to deepen understanding of the causes of—and solutions to—racial and ethnic disparities worldwide and to bring about a society that is fair and just for all people.

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