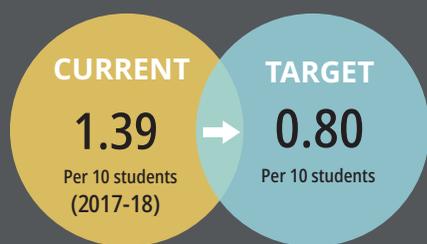


HEALTH INDICATOR 3: SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION RATE

DESIRED RESULT: DISMANTLE STRUCTURAL RACISM



DEFINITION

Number of out-of-school short-term suspensions in educational facilities for all grades per 10 students

DETAILS

Includes Kindergarten – 12th grade; short-term suspension is 10 days or less; data reflect total numbers of short-term suspensions that may include multiple suspensions per student

NC SHORT-TERM SUSPENSIONS (2017-18)

1.39 per 10 students

2030 TARGET

0.80 per 10 students

RANGE AMONG NC LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES

0.0 – 8.22 per 10 students

RANK AMONG STATES

Not Available

DATA SOURCE

NC Department of Public Instruction

STATE PLANS WITH SIMILAR INDICATORS

North Carolina Perinatal Health Strategic Plan^K - indicator of addressing social and economic inequities

Rationale for Selection:

In the education system, children of color are disproportionately punished through mechanisms like short-term suspension from school. These punishments inhibit academic achievement and open a gateway that can, in time, lead to subsequent involvement with the justice system. Limitations in academic achievement can have lifelong effects on health and well-being.^K

Context

Exclusionary discipline (i.e., suspensions and expulsions) is a strong predictive factor for negative outcomes in students' academic achievement and high school completion. Some of the negative student outcomes associated with suspension include:

- lower academic performance,
- higher rates of dropout,
- failure to graduate on time,
- lower academic engagement, and
- continued targeting for future disciplinary action.³⁶

These negative educational outcomes can have lifelong impacts on health as those with less education have more challenges finding employment that provides a living wage and have decreased levels of social supports. It is estimated that each additional year of education leads to around 11% more in annual income and high-paying jobs are more likely to provide benefits such as health insurance and paid leave.³⁷

Besides missing important class time essential for academic success, suspensions also force students to miss out on extracurricular activities key to accumulating the social experiences just as necessary for a high-quality life.

Disparities

Across the nation, students of color are suspended and expelled at higher rates than their peers even though studies have shown no difference in behavior among students by race/ethnicity.³⁸ In North Carolina, on average, there were 3 short-term suspensions for every 10 African American students compared to less than 1 short-term suspension for every 10 white and Hispanic students (See Figure 9).³⁹

North Carolina's suspension data reveal other stark disparities across different groups of students, including American Indian and multiracial students who are more likely to be suspended than their white, Asian, and Hispanic peers. Children receiving special education services account for 24% of all suspensions.³⁹ Boys receive the majority of suspensions, representing half of school populations but nearly two-thirds of suspensions. However, African American and American Indian girls had notably higher rates of suspension than their white peers, receiving 1.81 and 1.36 suspensions per 10 students, respectively, compared to 0.30.³⁹

“In North Carolina, on average, there were 3 short-term suspensions for every 10 African American students compared to less than 1 short-term suspension for every 10 white and Hispanic students.”

^K North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. North Carolina Perinatal Health Strategic Plan: 2016-2020. March 2016. <https://whb.ncpublichealth.com/phsp/>

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FIGURE 8

Short-term suspension rates across populations in North Carolina and distance to 2030 target

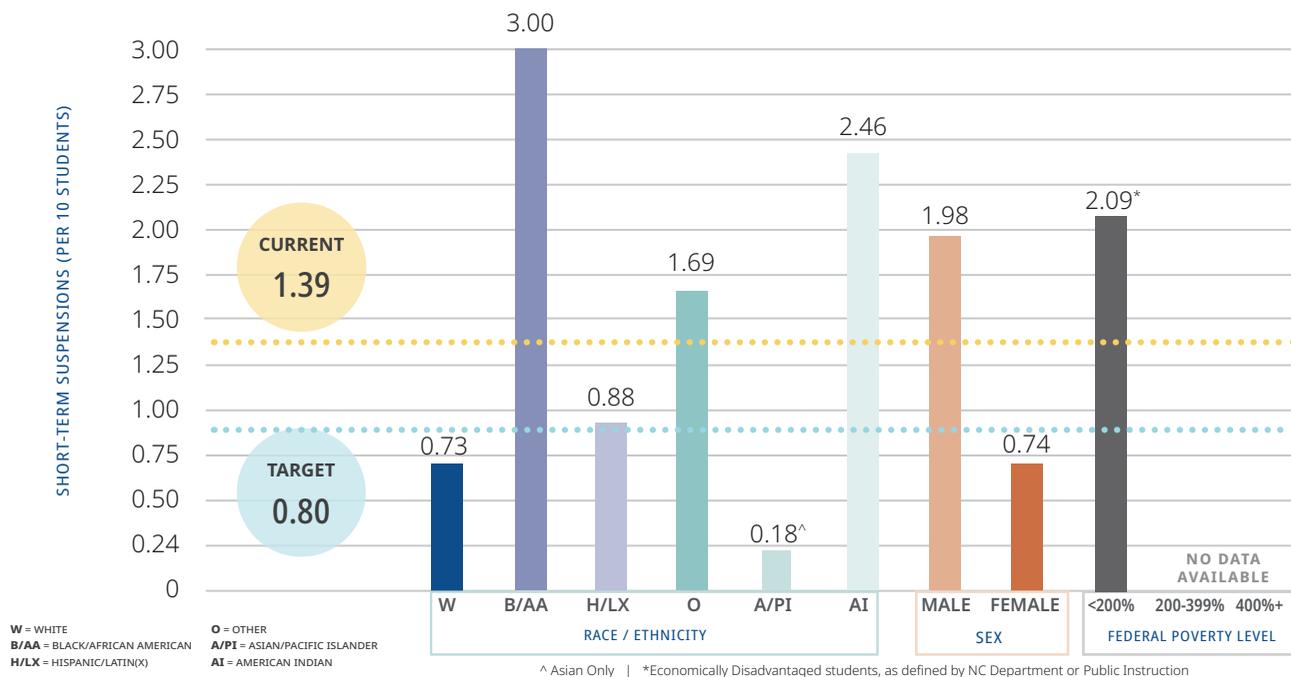


FIGURE 9

North Carolina Student Population and Short-Term Suspensions by Race



Source: Youth Justice Project. *The State of Discipline in NC Schools*. April 2018. <http://youthjusticenc.org/2018/04/11/state-of-discipline/>

2030 Target and Potential for Change

The HNC 2030 group considered the current data across student race/ethnicity as a primary method for target setting. With white, Hispanic, and Asian around or below 0.80 suspensions per 10 students, this was chosen as the target for all students. Meeting this target is largely dependent upon eliminating the disparities we see in the use of short-term suspension for African American and American Indian students. With the growing understanding of disproportionate use of exclusionary discipline approaches, the group felt confident that significant movement toward the target could be achieved in the next decade.

Levers for Change

(Kostyo et al, 2018)

- Train teachers, administrators, school resource officers, and others working with students on implicit bias
- Develop collaborative learning groups for schools to share best practices
- Include suspension rate in measures of school quality
- Develop statewide system of restorative justice programs
- Provide informational resources for schools on how to reduce disciplinary actions
- Promote non-exclusionary approaches to discipline