Racial Equity Report Card

2017 • Produced by Youth Justice Project

Union County Schools

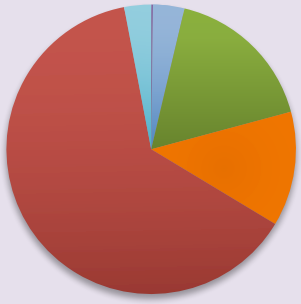
What are the Racial Equity Report Cards (RERCs)? The RERCs use publically available data to provide a snapshot of a community's school-to-prison pipeline, including any racial disproportionalities that exist in the pipeline.

What is the school-to-prison pipeline (STPP)? The STPP is the system of policies and practices that push students out of school and into the juvenile and adult criminal systems. The STPP has many entry points. Once students are caught in the STPP, it can be very difficult for them to reengage and be successful at school. In almost every NC community, students of color are overrepresented at each entry point to the pipeline.

What is the purpose of the RERCs? The RERCs are intended to be a starting point for community education and discussion. There are many causes of racial disproportionality including, but not limited to, implicit racial bias of decision-makers, institutional and structural racism, and explicit discrimination against people of color. Together, these forces perpetuate racial disproportionality in a community's STPP. The RERCs are not meant as an attack on the critically important public institutions that serve our youth, but rather, as a call-to-action for students, parents, advocates, policy makers, and institutional stakeholders to collectively examine the causes of racial inequity in their community and develop solutions that will help young people, especially youth of color, avoid and escape the school-to-prison pipeline.

School District Demographics

2016-17



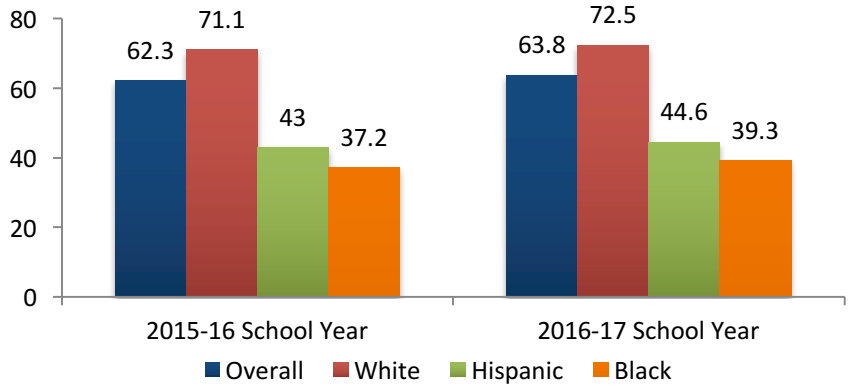
- American Indian (.2%)
- Asian (3.5%)
- Hispanic (17.1%)
- Black (12.8%)
- White (63.3%)
- Multi-Racial (3%)
- Pacific Islander (0%)

Total District Population:
41,511

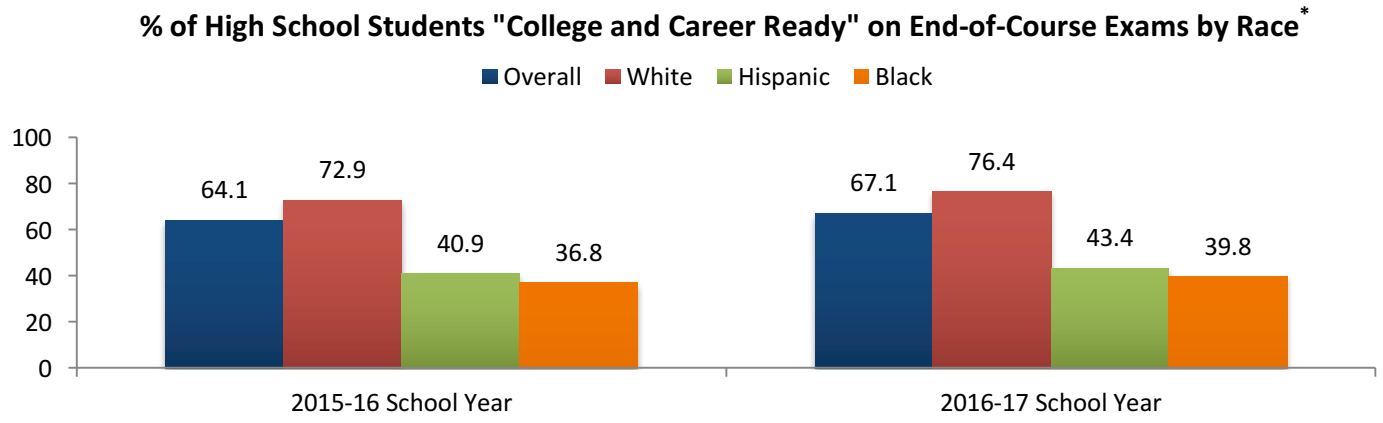
Academic Achievement

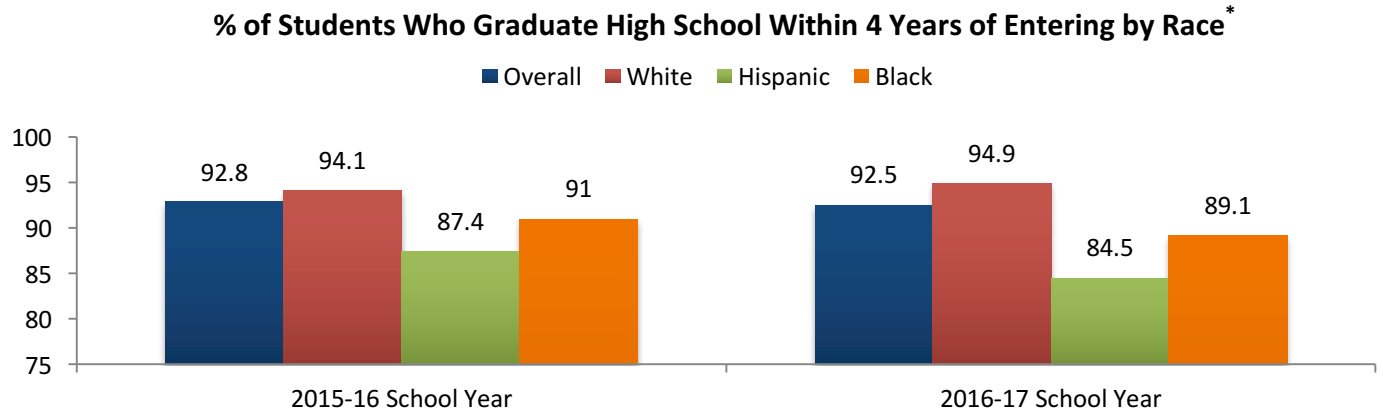
Students who are behind or failing academically are more likely to be truant, act out, and ultimately drop out of school. Statewide, in 2016-17, only 29.7% of Black students in grades 3-8 scored "College and Career Ready" on their final exams, compared to 61.7% of White students. While standardized test scores are not necessarily an accurate measure of true ability, they serve as the basis for many important decisions (e.g. course placement, grade promotion). Thus, low scores negatively impact a student's academic opportunities and outcomes.

% of Students Grade 3-8 "College and Career Ready" on End-of-Grade Exams by Race*



In the 2016-17 school year in this district, White students in grades 3-8 were **1.8 times more likely** to score "Career and College Ready" on end-of-grade exams than Black students in the same grades.





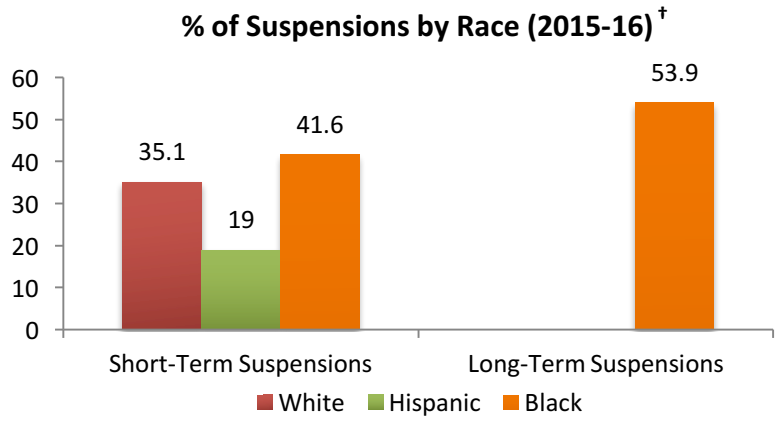
School Discipline

Any time spent out of the classroom for disciplinary reasons is time a student is not learning. Research shows that out-of-school suspension is ineffective at correcting misbehavior. Instead, suspension is linked to academic failure and court involvement, with no measurable positive impact on overall school safety. Statewide, in 2015-16, Black students received 57% of all short-term suspensions, even though they make up only 26% of the student population.

While many school districts have decreased out-of-school suspensions in recent years, there has been a corresponding increase in other discipline measures that take students out of their normal classroom or school, such as in-school suspension or transfer to an alternative school. These measures are also disruptive to learning and are often ineffective unless individualized and research-based support is provided in the alternative environment.

2015-16 District Overview

Short-Term Suspensions (STS) *(1-10 school days)*	**5,419**
High School STS Rate *(Per 100 Students)*	**14.51**
Long-Term Suspensions *(more than 10 days)*	**26**
Expulsions *(indefinite)*	**0**



In the 2015-16 school year in this district, Black students were **5.8 times more likely** than White students to receive a short-term suspension.

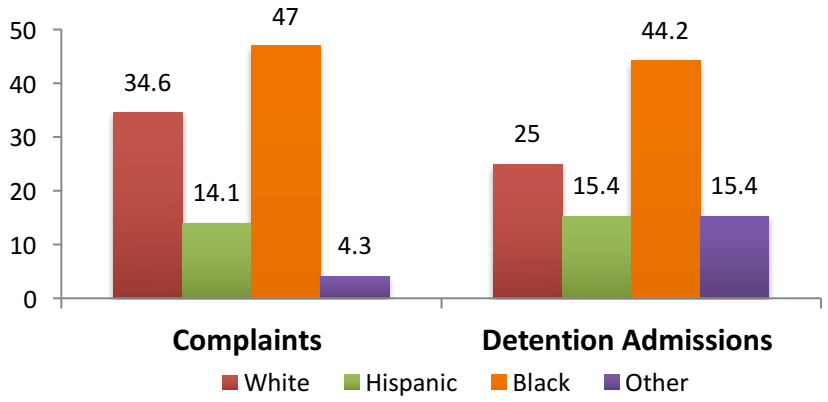
Court Involvement

Criminalization of youthful misbehavior has immediate and long-term consequences. Studies show youth who are court involved are more likely to reoffend and be entangled in the criminal system as adults. Furthermore, court involvement can impact a youth's access to public education, employment, public housing, public benefits, voting rights, and other sources of opportunity and support. In 2016-17, over 40% of juvenile court referrals statewide came from schools. Over half of all juvenile complaints were filed against Black youth even though they make up less than a quarter of the population.

The data in this section only includes youth under 16 years old. In North Carolina, all 16 and 17 year olds are automatically sent to the adult criminal system regardless of the offense. This will change in December 2019 when all youth under the age of 18 will be sent to the juvenile system, with some youth sent to adult court for serious offenses. However, until this change takes effect, data on arrests and detention for youth who are 16 and older is not available.

2016 County Overview	
Total # of Juvenile Court Complaints	609
Total # of Juvenile Detention Admissions	52

% of Juvenile Court Complaints and Detention Admissions in County by Race (CY 2016)**



Data Notes:

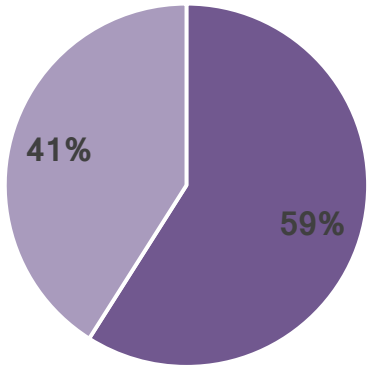
*Lack of data in a category indicates the district did not have sufficient data for reporting in that category. Percentages greater than 95 or less than 5 are reported by the state as >95 and <5 respectively. Here, they are displayed as 95 and 5 respectively.

† In some instances, it is impossible to know the exact number of suspensions for a racial group because of the way suspension data is publically reported. If there is enough data to approximate percentages by race, the RERCs display those approximations. All approximations are equal to or slightly lower than the actual percentages.

**Racial breakdowns are not publically available for categories in which the county had fewer than 50 overall occurrences in that category.

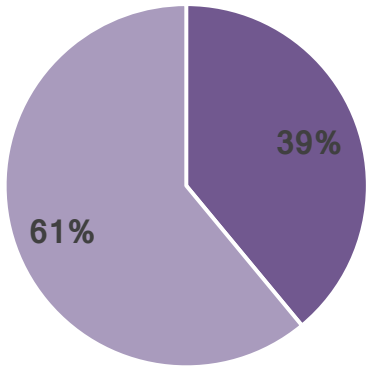
% of Juvenile Complaints that were School Based

July 2016-June 2017



% of School Based Juvenile Complaints against Black Students**

July 2016-June 2017



Youth Justice Project *of the Southern Coalition for Social Justice works to ensure equity, fairness, and justice for youth in high-quality education, juvenile, and criminal systems.*

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