

Exclusionary Discipline in DC Schools

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This is a “Know Your Rights” presentation and is not intended as legal advice.



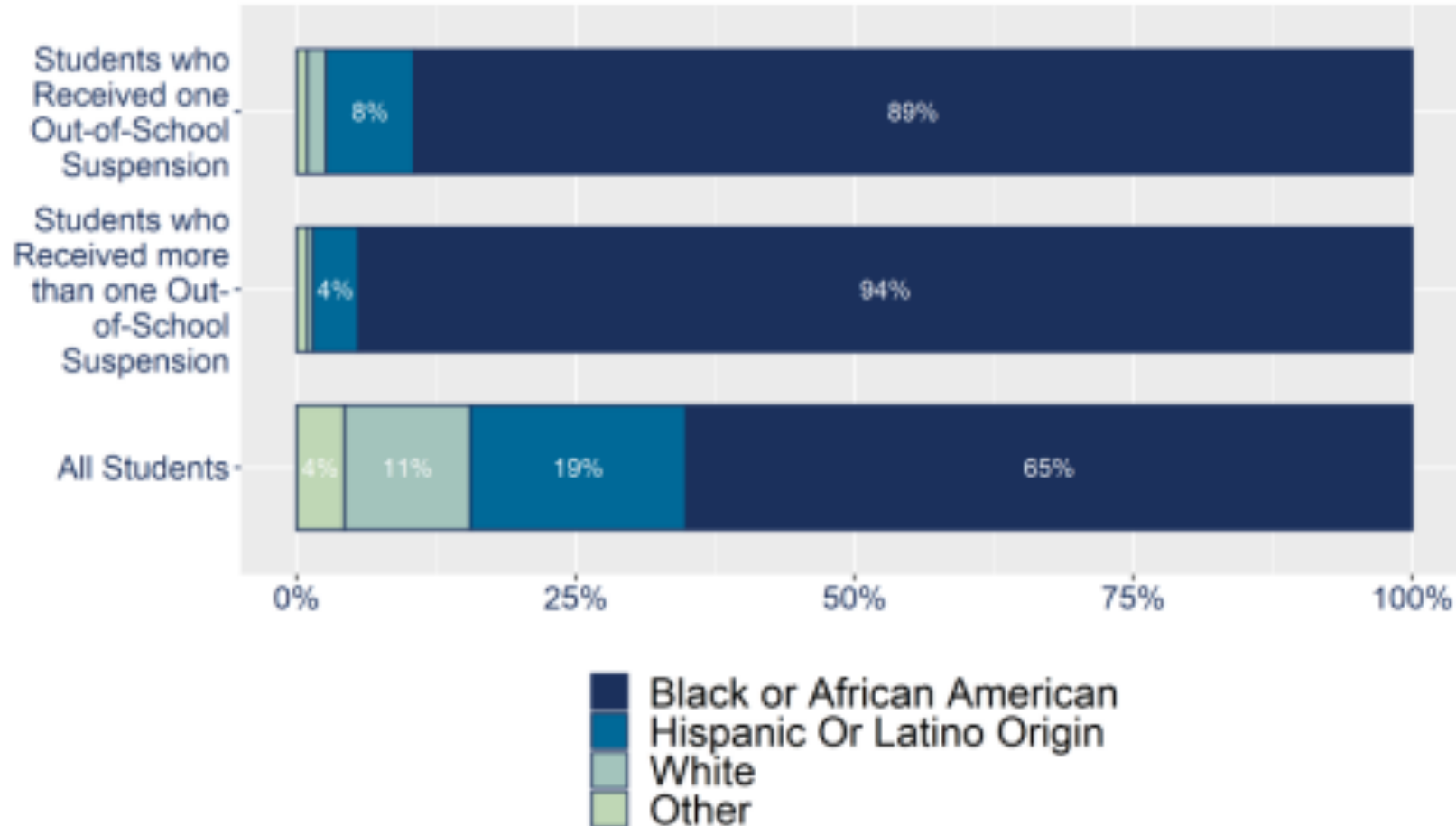
Exclusionary Discipline

Any removal of a student from their daily class schedule because of discipline or behavior issues, including:

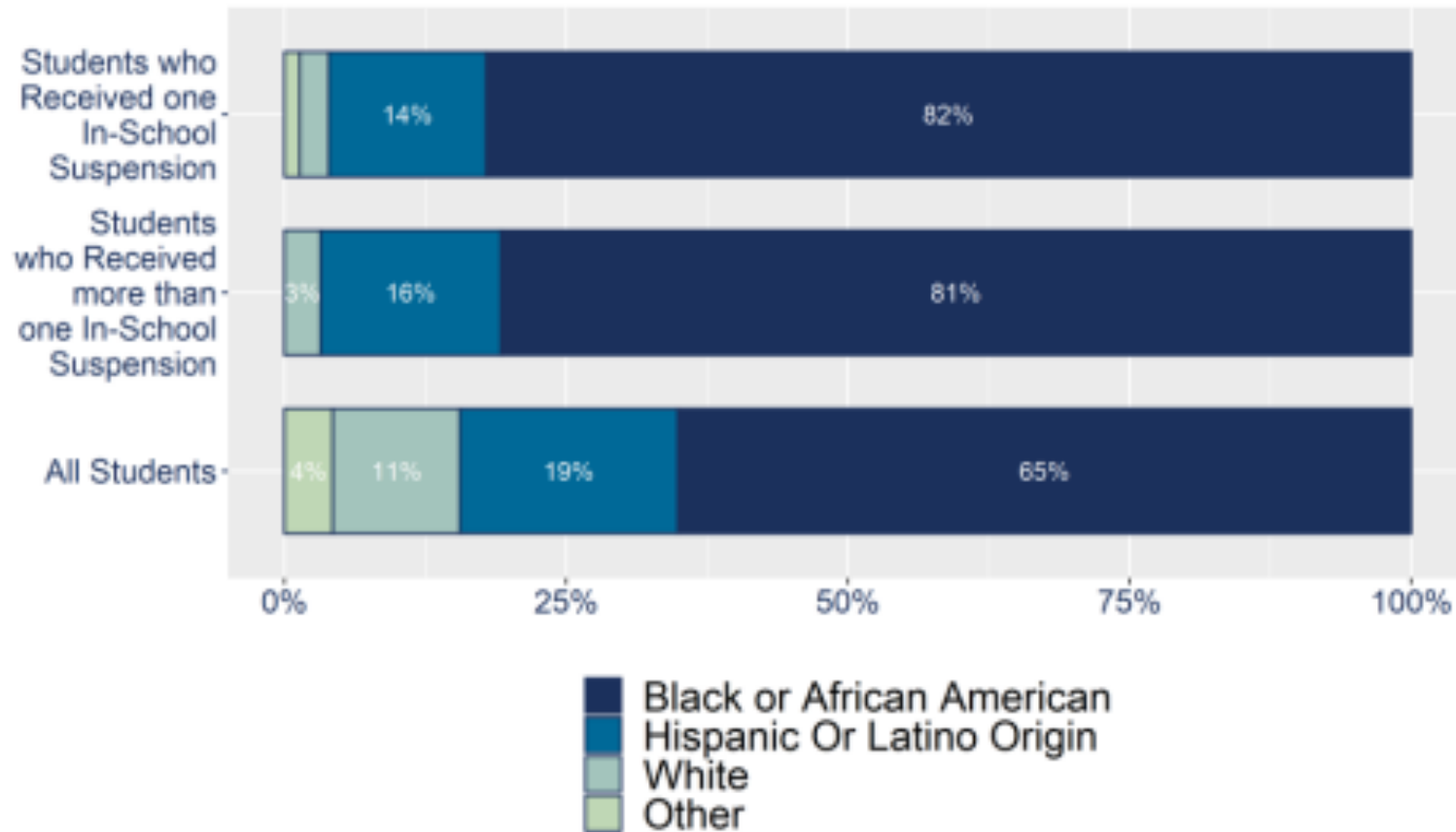
- **In-school Suspension**
- **Out-of-School Suspension**
- **Involuntary Dismissal**
- **Expulsion or Involuntary Transfer**

Does NOT include planned behavioral health interventions

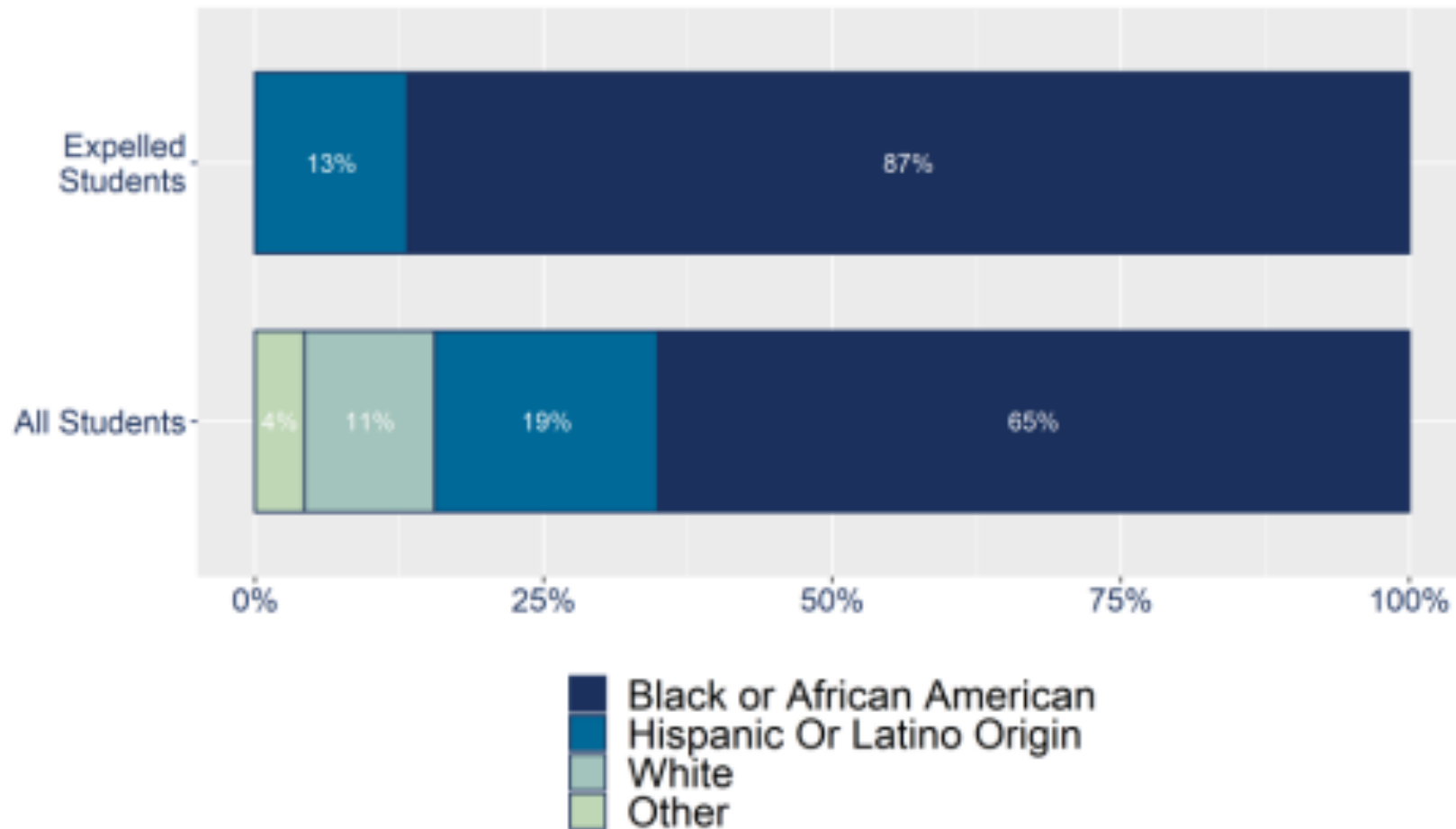
Disproportionality in the Use of Exclusionary Discipline



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In-School Suspension Disproportionality by Gender, 2019-20

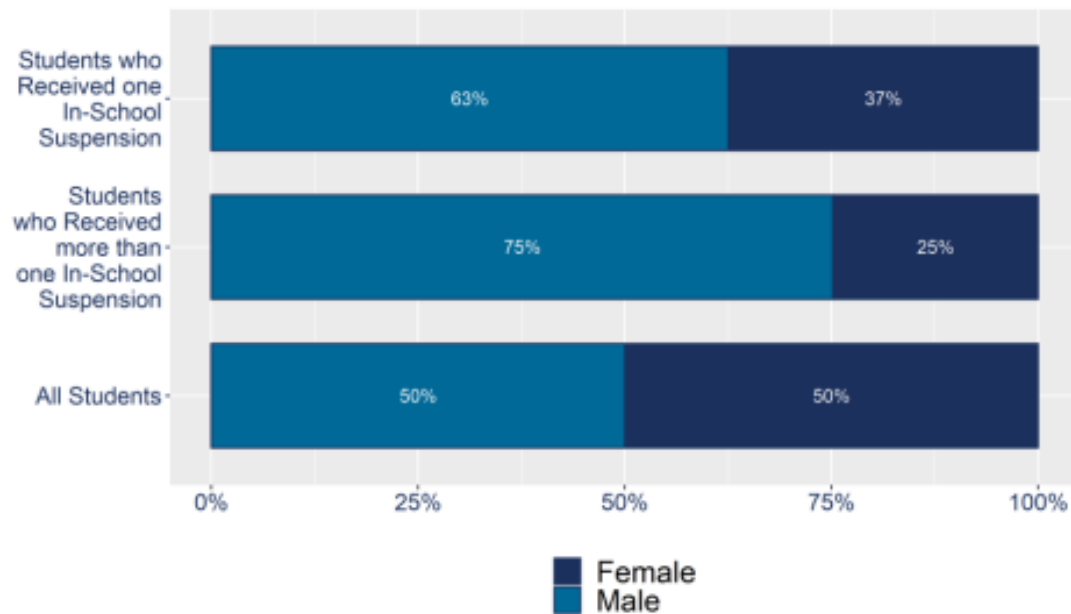
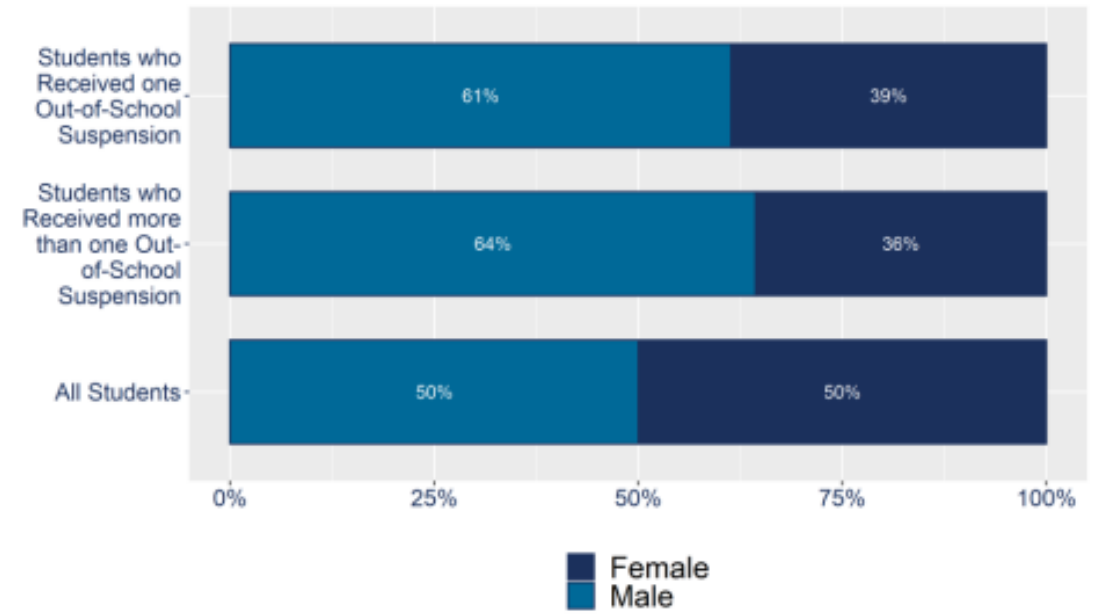
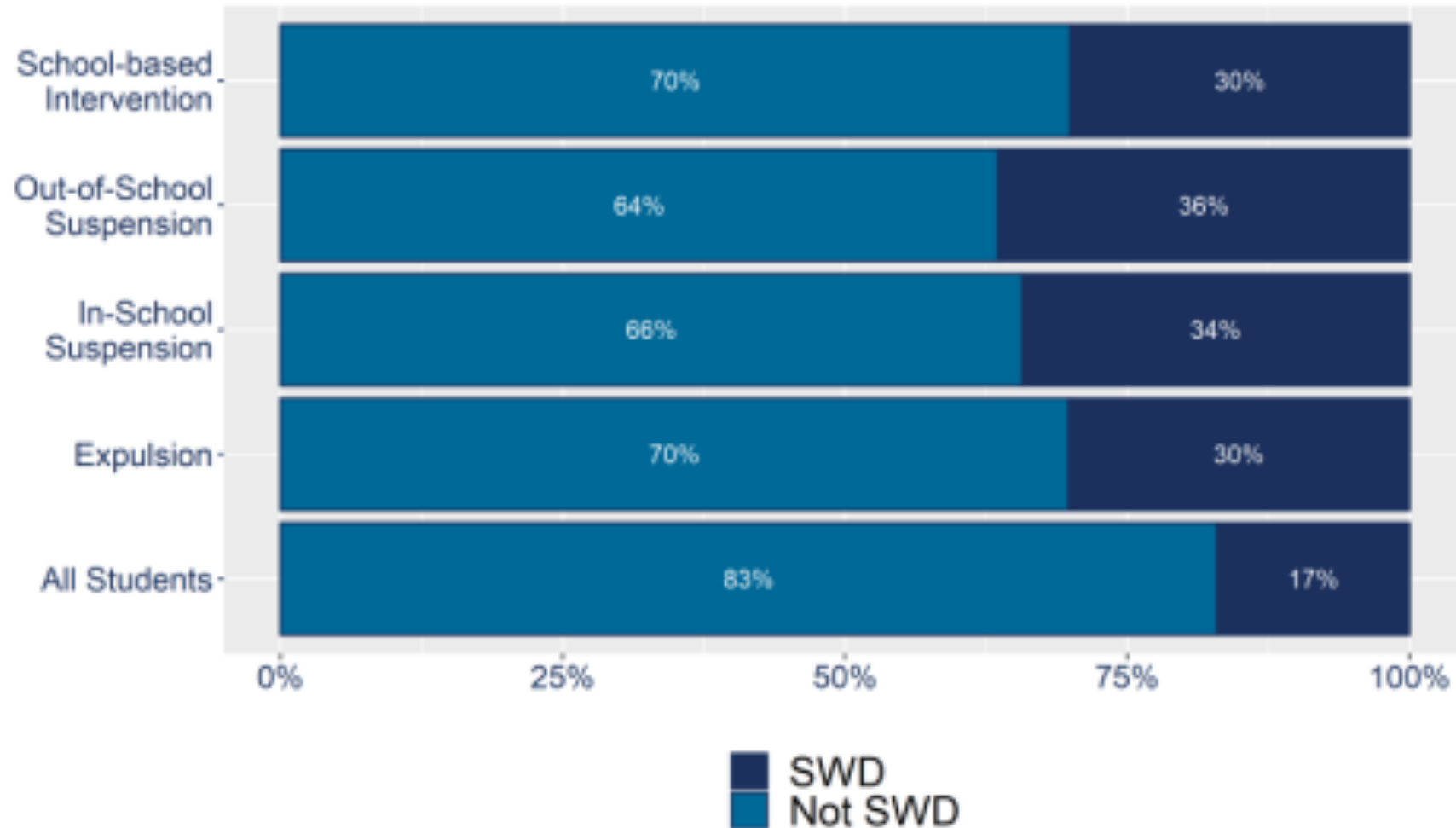


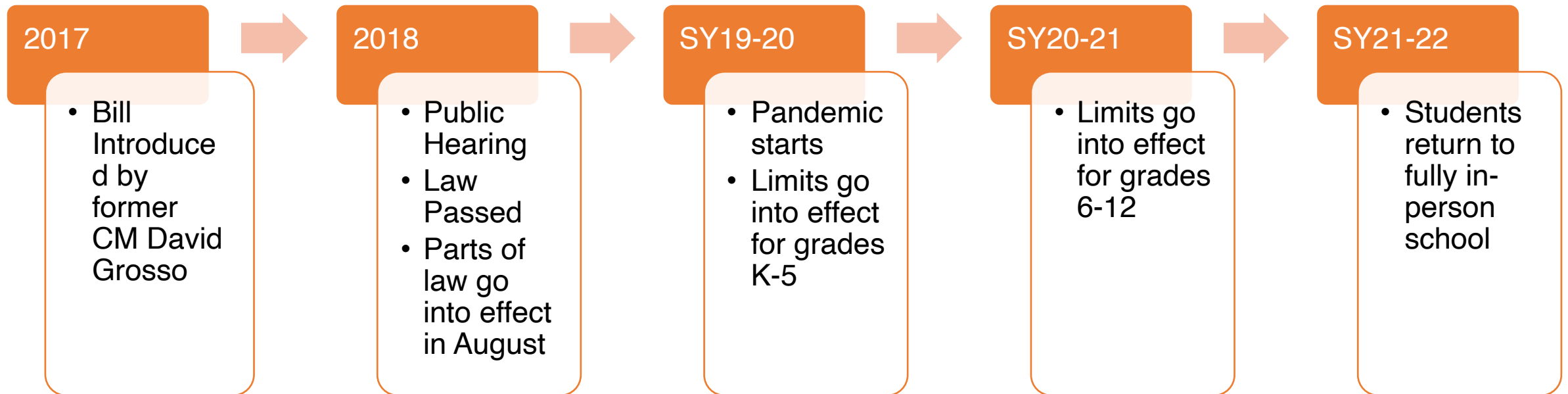
Figure 4: Out-of-School Suspension Disproportionality by Gender, 2019-20



Disproportionality in the Use of Exclusionary Discipline



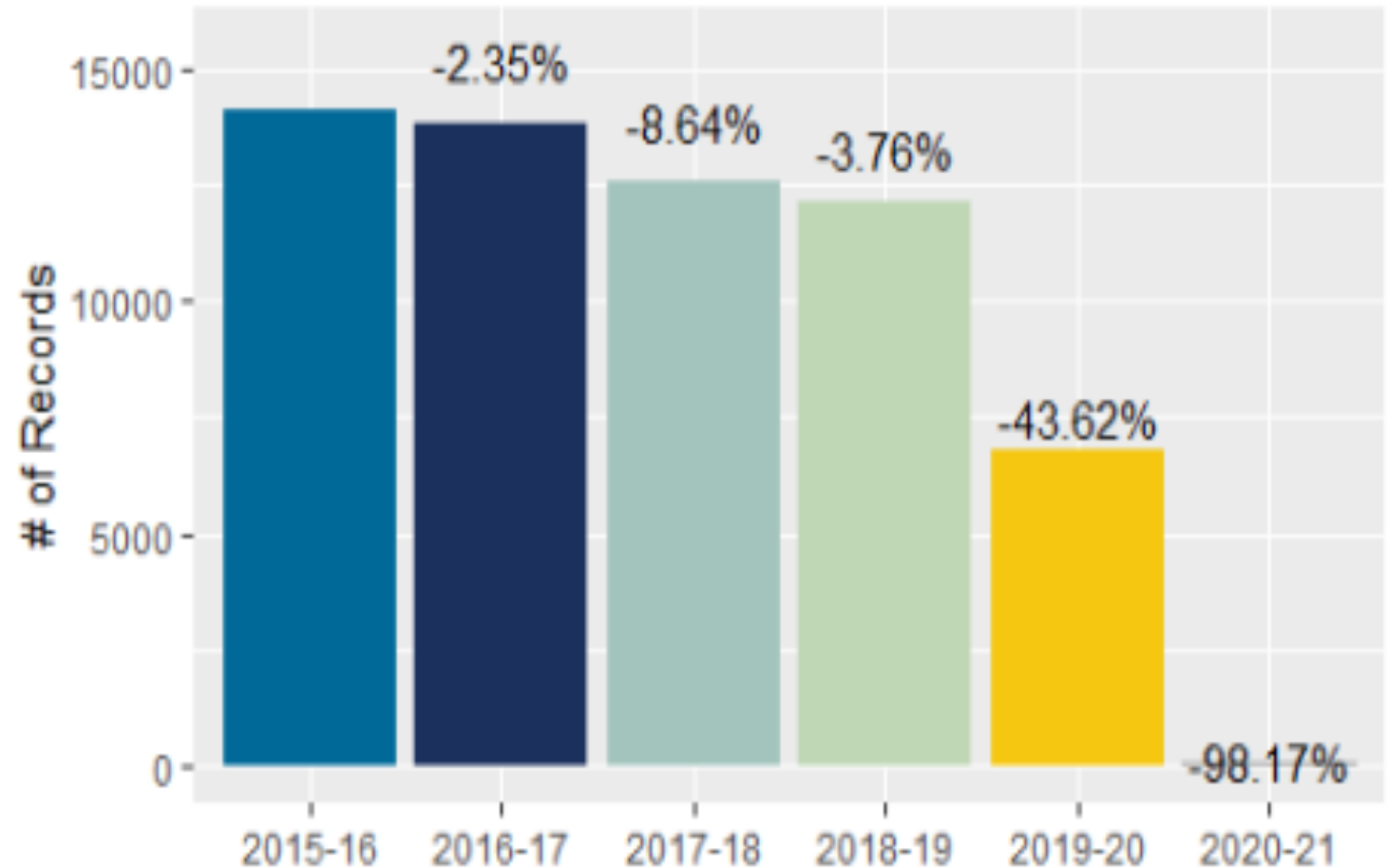
The Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act (SFASAA)



Goals of SFASAA

- Decrease the use of exclusionary discipline
- Require schools to justify any use of exclusionary discipline
- Make sure that students are receiving the supports they need to stay in the classroom

Figure 2.1: Percent Change in Records Submitted Each Year from 2015-2021



In-School Suspension

A student is removed from class - or not allowed to enter their class - because of discipline issues and the student is sent somewhere else in the school such as the hallway, the office, a room dedicated to in-school suspension, or another classroom.

Example: A student who was yelling or ignoring directions may be sent out of classroom to “cool off” or “calm down.”

Out-of-School Suspension

A student is temporarily barred from school and not allowed on school grounds for classes or activities because of discipline issues.

Example: A student is told they can't come back to school for X number of days.

Involuntary Dismissal

A type of out-of-school suspension where a student is sent home early and misses less than half of one school day.

Example: The school sends a student home early because they have “had a rough day.”

Expulsion

Barring a student from their school of enrollment for the remainder of the school year or longer because of discipline issues.

- Some schools may call this an “involuntary transfer.”

Example: A school transfers a student to another school because of discipline or behavior issues.

Exclusionary Discipline by Grade

For Students in ALL Grades

- Students CANNOT be suspended for dress code or uniform violations, willful defiance (being disruptive, insubordinate), behavior that happens off school grounds and not as part of a school-sponsored activity, or unexcused absences or late arrivals (however students can be unenrolled after 20+ unexcused absences)
- Students CANNOT be suspended for a total of more than 20 school days during any single academic year except if the head of the LEA provides written justification for exceeding the limit and explains why it was necessary or if the student's conduct "necessitated emergency removal"
- Schools must ensure that a suspended student receives all appropriate assignments for the duration of the suspension
- Schools must provide an opportunity to make up any schoolwork missed during the suspension that could not be done at home (like quizzes, projects, or exams)
- Schools must allow the student to return to school at the end of the suspension period whether a parent accompanies them or not

For All DCPS Students

- If suspended from a DCPS school, the school must document the suspension in the School Behavior Tracker (SBT) and record absences as excused.

Exclusionary Discipline by Grade

For Students in Pre-K

- Suspensions CANNOT be longer than 3 school days in a row
- The school CANNOT give out-of-school suspension unless the school leader determines that the student has intentionally caused or attempted to cause bodily injury, or threatened serious bodily injury to another person, except in self-defense

Exclusionary Discipline by Grade

For Students in Grades K-5

- Suspensions CANNOT be longer than 5 school days in a row

For DCPS Students in Grades K-5, students cannot be given an out-of-school suspension for:

- Inappropriate use of DCPS computer or network
- Selling items (such as snacks, sodas, school supplies)
- Possession or use of alcohol or tobacco products
- Leaving school without permission
- Disruption on school property or at school activity
- Lying, forgery, or academic dishonesty (plagiarism)
- Theft of school or personal property (unless force or violence involved)
- Vandalism

Exclusionary Discipline by Grade

For Students in Grades 6-12

- Suspensions CANNOT be longer than 10 school days in a row
- Students suspended for 6 or more days are entitled to a hearing by an impartial hearing officer

For DCPS Students in Grades 6-12

- Before a student can be suspended for 6 or more days, the principal must offer to have a meeting with the student before issuing the suspension unless there is an emergency, document all information related to the suspension, and notify the proposed suspension to a parent/guardian



Exclusionary Discipline

All DCPS schools are required to follow [DCPS's K-12 Student Discipline Policy](#).

DCPS also has [student behavior guidance](#) for parents.

Each charter school develops its own discipline policies. Visit your charter school's website to learn more about its policies.



Exclusionary Discipline

What to do if you think you suspect a SFASAA violation?

- **Students are entitled to a hearing before an impartial hearing officer for any suspensions six days or longer.**
- **In DCPS that means this hearing is held at the DC Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH).**
- **Charter schools have their own policies for how and where those hearings are held. Those policies must be explained in the parent/student handbook.**



Feedback & Questions

How could I make this “Know Your Rights” document more helpful for parents?

What else would you want to know if you had a SFASAA concern for your student?