



# *Suspending Our Future*

HOW INEQUITABLE DISCIPLINARY

PRACTICES DISENFRANCHISE BLACK KIDS

IN CALIFORNIA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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*by*

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More than 6.1 million students were enrolled in California public schools in the 2019–2020 academic year. These students are representative of diverse experiences and backgrounds, including students of color, low-income students, students with disabilities, English language learners, and many other identities. Among these students are Black children and youth who accounted for 5.3% of all students ( $n = 324,496$ ). In accordance with national trends, these students experience outcomes in California public schools that are concerning. For instance, based on 2019–2020 data, the 4-year high school graduation rate for all students is 84.3%. However, for Black students, the average graduation rate is 76.9%, and only 72.3% for Black males. There are also differences in collegiate preparation. For example, although only 50.9% of graduates across the state met minimum requirements to attend the California State University or University of California systems, this rate drops to 40.6% for Black students. Another measure of success tracked by the state are graduates earning a Golden State Seal Merit Diploma. Although 26.6% of all students earned this recognition, only 13.1% of Black graduates did so.

Beyond these differences, assessment scores for English language arts and math readiness serve as signs of differential graduation outcomes. Only 33.2% of Black children met or exceeded English language arts standards on the 2018–2019 Smarter Balanced Test results. In contrast, 51% of all children met or exceeded these standards. Math outcomes bear a similar pattern, with only 20.6% of Black students meeting or exceeding state standards compared to 39.7% of all students. In the context of these outcomes, the focus of this report is on the use of suspension and other forms of exclusionary discipline impacting the education of Black children and youth in California public schools. We report on publicly available data from the 2018–2019 school year, which is the most recent data available. These data were reported by local educational agencies (LEAs) to the state government. Before being reported, the data are certified by authorized personnel at the LEA level. Thus, the data represented in this report were reported to the state by the schools and districts.

Suspensions represents a key type of exclusionary discipline, encompassing practices that remove children from learning environments. Suspensions and expulsions are most prominently

discussed; other forms of exclusionary discipline include loss of recess, limitations on cocurricular activities (i.e., participation in field trips, school spirit activities, clubs and athletic experiences), restrictions from after-school programs, the use of mechanical restraints, and physical seclusions. Ultimately, exclusionary discipline practices inhibit children's learning, growth, and development by removing them from learning environments and fostering oppositional relationships between school educators and the children and families they serve (Wood et al., 2018).

There are two primary categories of school suspension, including in-school (also called in-house) and out-of-school (also called out-of-house) suspensions. In an in-school suspension, the child remains in the school and is relocated to another classroom, office, or space to work independently in a group with other children who were similarly suspended. Out-of-school suspensions temporarily bar a child from the school grounds, usually meaning they remain at home. School suspensions can occur for mandatory reasons, such as distributing drugs, bringing a firearm or weapon to campus, and fighting; however, they can also occur for small innocuous actions as well.

It should be noted that the documentation of in-school and out-of-school suspensions are incomplete due to a number of practices. In-school suspensions can occur where a child is removed from a classroom for a full day or for part of the day, but the suspension is not documented. This can occur for a number of reasons, such as the suspension being limited in duration, the time needed to complete required documentation, and even through intentional efforts to not report the suspension. Out-of-school suspensions can also occur without documentation. For example, a parent may be asked to pick up a child early from school or be encouraged to keep the child at home for a day or more, which is then documented as absenteeism as opposed to a suspension. Notwithstanding, significant disparities have been found in the application of exclusionary discipline that have led many researchers to suggest differential suspension outcomes are a function of racism and xenophobia (Fitzgerald, 2015; Losen & Skiba, 2010; Morris & Perry, 2016).

## Statewide Patterns: Exclusionary Discipline

Although the majority of this report focuses on suspensions, there are several other types of exclusionary discipline worthy of attention, including mechanical restraints, physical restraints, seclusions, and expulsions. Though statewide expulsion data are imperfect estimates of actual expulsions (due to systemic practices that undercount expulsions), existing data do show Black children are significantly overrepresented among students who were expelled. In the 2018–2019 school year, the statewide expulsion rate for all students was .08%, accounting for a total of 5,236 expulsions (see Table 1). However, the expulsion rates of two student groups are noticeably higher, including African American and Native American students, who were expelled at rates of .19% and .22%, respectively. For African American students, this rate is 2.4 times higher than the statewide average. When disaggregated by gender, more differences are revealed

with the expulsion rates of Black and Native American males at .26% and .32%. For Black males, this rate is 3.3 times higher than the state average (see Appendix A). Due to COVID-19, data from 2019–2020 are not comparable across years; however, the representation of Black students within the total number of students is. In 2019–2020, there were a total of 3,263 expulsions. As noted, Black students accounted for 5.3% of total enrollment in this year; however, they represented 12.9% of expulsions. This suggests disproportionate expulsion patterns have continued.

## Table 1

*Statewide Expulsion Rate for All Students, 2018–2019*

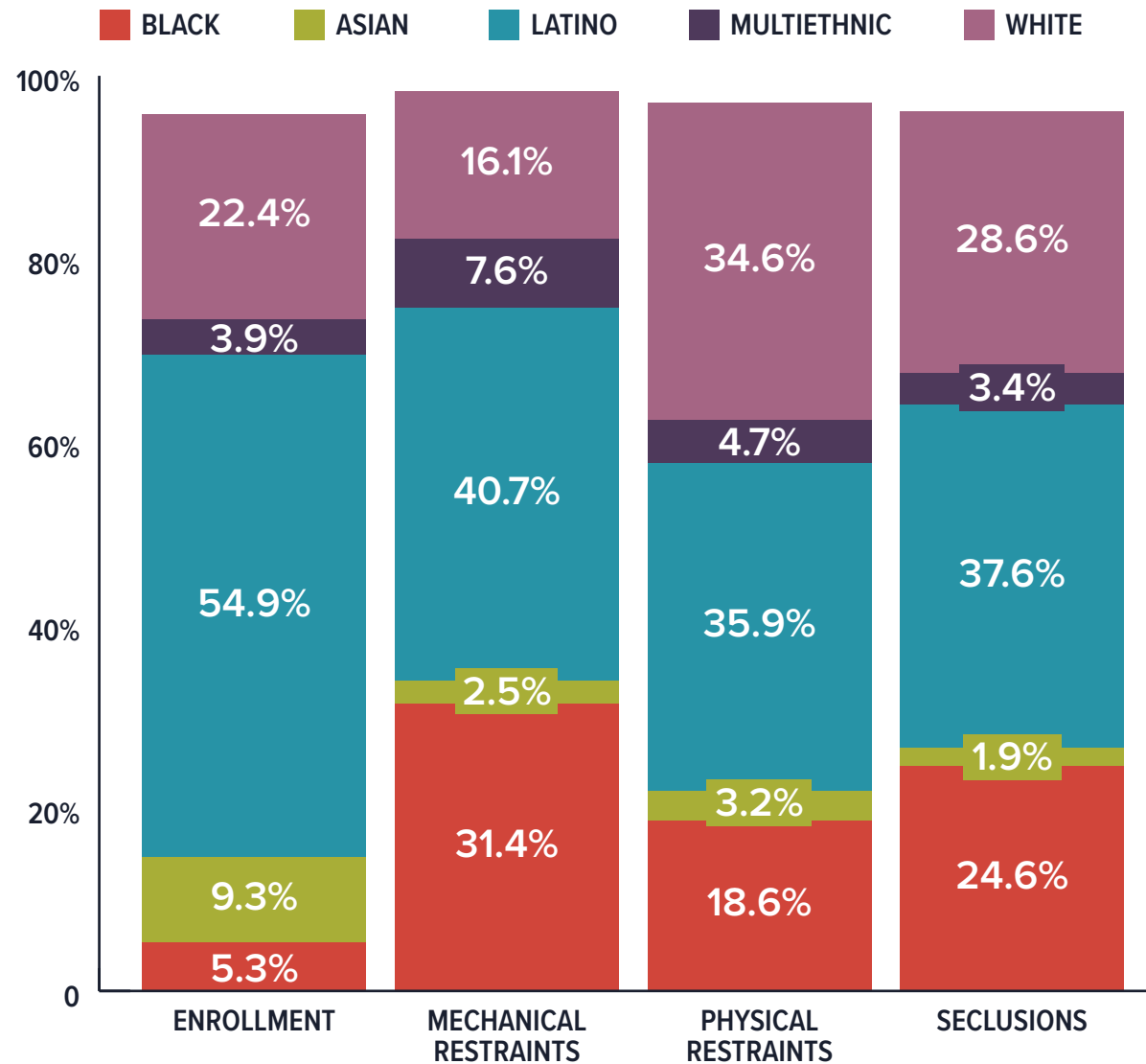
ETHNICITY	CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT	TOTAL EXPULSIONS	UNDUPLICATED COUNT OF STUDENTS EXPELLED	EXPULSION RATE
African American	349,651	673	666	0.19%
American Indian or Alaska Native	32,455	74	73	0.22%
Asian	585,618	147	144	0.02%
Filipino	151,377	42	41	0.03%
Hispanic or Latino	3,454,040	3,193	3,169	0.09%
Pacific Islander	28,946	33	32	0.11%
White	1,435,718	868	861	0.06%
Two or More Races	238,472	157	156	0.07%
Not Reported	53,606	49	49	0.09%

In addition to expulsions, the state recently released data on the use of restraint and exclusions as forms of discipline. These data encompass three different types of practices: mechanical restraints, physical restraints, and seclusions. A mechanical restraint involves the use of a device to restrict a student’s movement. A physical restraint involves a person physically immobilizing a student’s ability to move their body, arms, head, and/or legs. In contrast, a seclusion refers to the involuntary confinement of a student in a room or area

that prohibits them from physically leaving the room or area. Based on the 2019–2020 data, Black students accounted for 5.3% of statewide enrollment, and they were significantly overrepresented among those who experienced restraints and seclusions. More specifically, they accounted for 31.4% of mechanical restraints, 18.6% of physical restraints, and 24.6% of seclusions (see Figure 1). This disproportionality is noticeably egregious.

# Figure 1

Use of Restraint and Exclusions as Discipline, 2019–2020

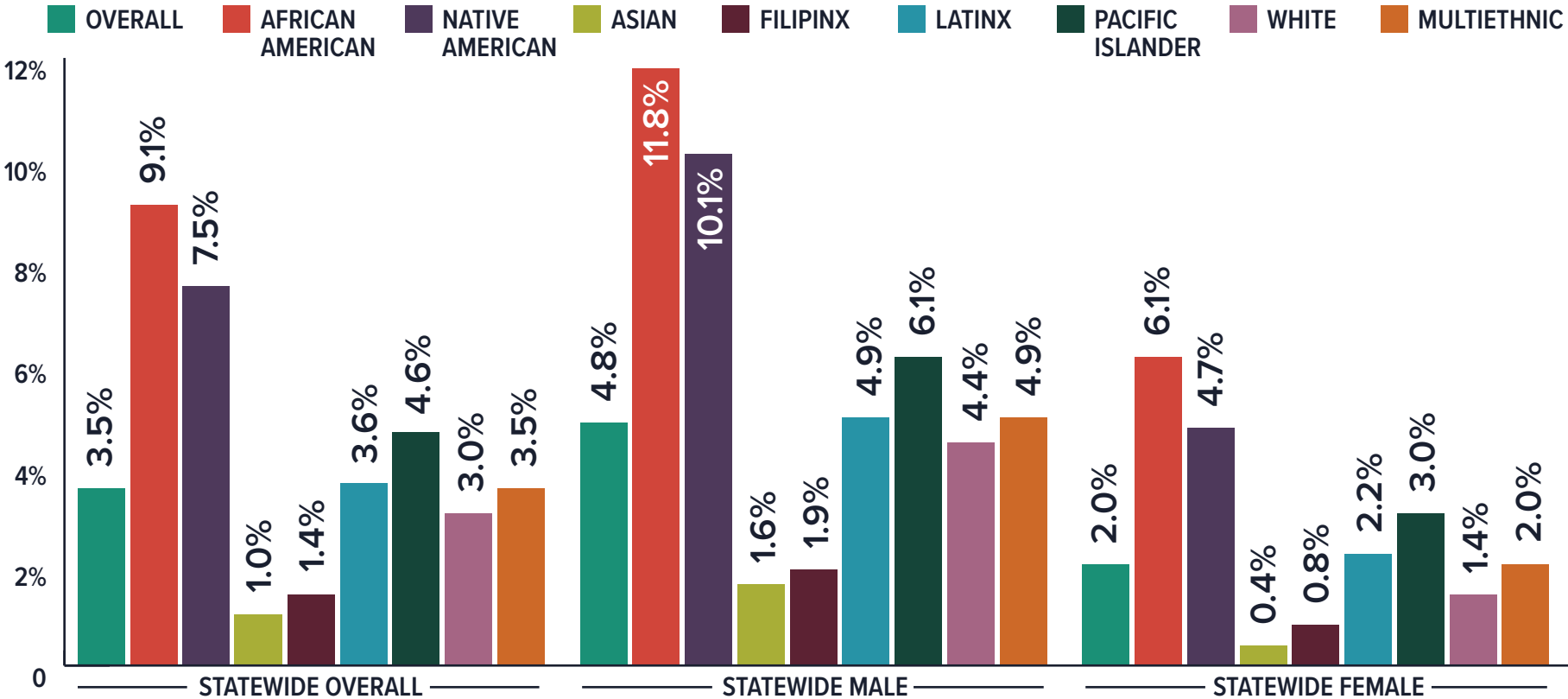


## Statewide Patterns: School Suspensions

Black students are significantly overrepresented among students who are exposed to exclusionary discipline, including school suspensions. For example, the statewide average for suspension for all students was 3.5% in 2018–2019. This suggests 3½ out of every 100 children in California were suspended at least one time during the academic year. However, the rates for Black children and youth are higher than this statewide average, at 9.1%. This suggests nearly 1 in every 10 Black children are suspended in a given academic year. This rate is 2.6 times higher than the statewide average and should serve as a clarion call to educators and policymakers alike. When disaggregated by gender, additional interesting patterns are revealed. Specifically, the suspension rate for Black males is 11.8%, markedly higher than the statewide average. This represents the highest suspension rate for all racial/gender groups, followed by Native American males at 10.1%. Among girls, Black girls have the highest suspension rate at 6.1%, far exceeding suspension rates among girls, which are noticeably lower than rates among boys (see Figure 1).

# Figure 2

Statewide Suspension Rates by Race Compared to Statewide Average, 2018–2019



Recently, the State of California updated their suspension database to include (for the first-time) nonbinary students. This has been a major gap because few data sources have provided insight into what was occurring to our nonbinary students. The data are not comparable to other

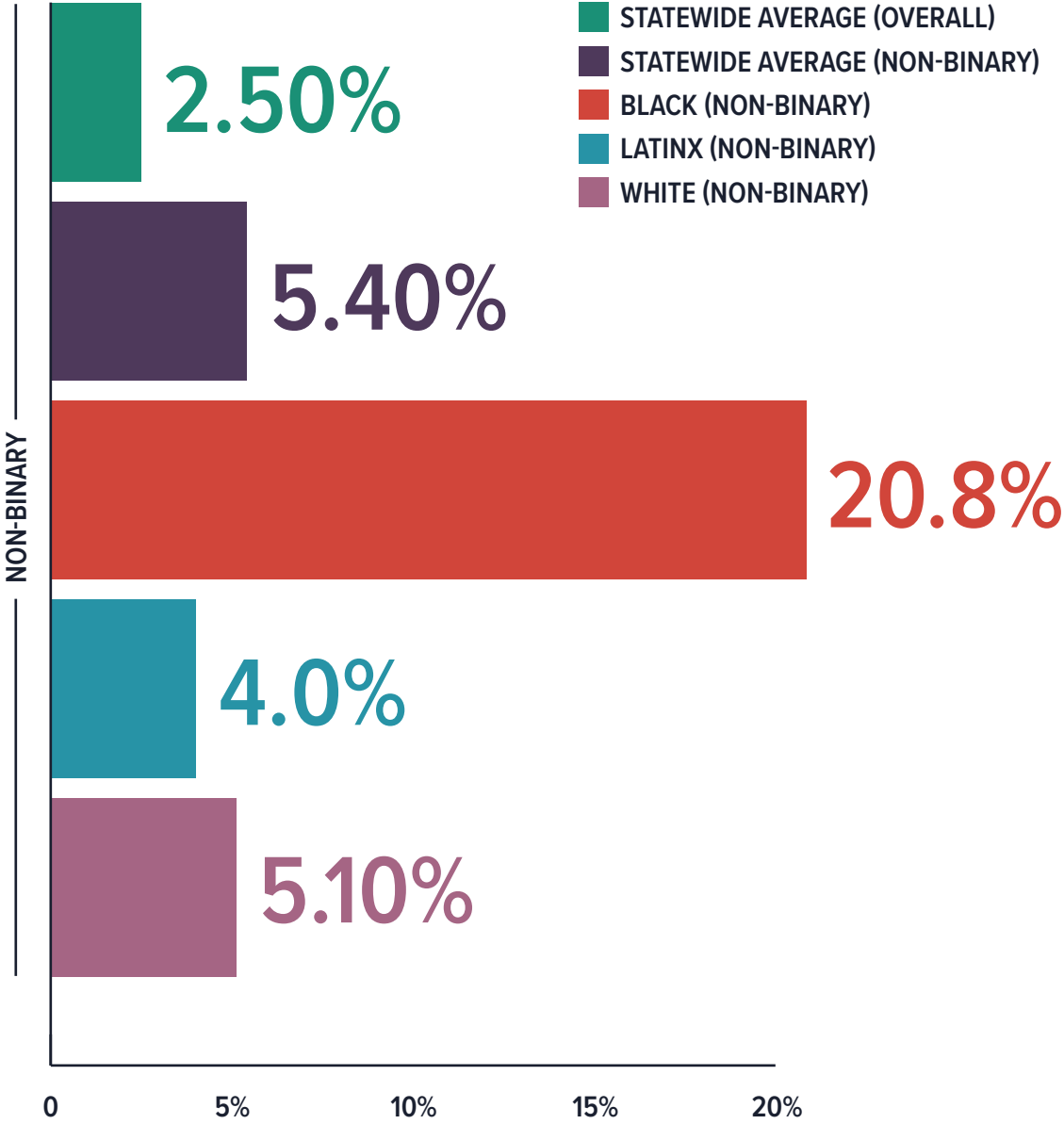
years due to COVID-19; however, they do demonstrate the role intersectional identities have in student outcomes. The statewide average for suspensions was only 2.5% (lower than normal due to COVID-19); however, during this time, the suspension rate for Black nonbinary

students was an astounding 20.8%. As a disclaimer, the data are based on a smaller sample of all students who self-identified as nonbinary ( $n = 446$ ) (see Figure 3). That said, the suspension rate for Black nonbinary students is 732% higher than the statewide average.

### Figure 3

*Suspension Rates for Gender Nonbinary Students in California (by Race), 2019–2020*

Although the statewide suspension rate for all students is 3.5%, this rate differs across grade band. For example, across all grade levels, middle school students have the highest suspension rates at 6.7%. A slightly lower suspension rate is evident in high school, at 4.7%, a decrease that can partially be attributed to student attrition between middle and high school. Following this pattern, the highest suspension rate for Black male students is in middle school, at 19.1%. This means 2 in every 10 middle school Black males are suspended at least once in a given year. Although Black males in middle school have the highest suspension rate, disparities can also be examined within each grade level. Specifically, disparity ratios involve the examination of the suspension of Black students by grade band compared to the statewide average. Using this approach, the highest suspension disparities are evident in early childhood education, in kindergarten through third grade. At this level, Black male students are 6.2 times more likely to be suspended than their same-grade peers.

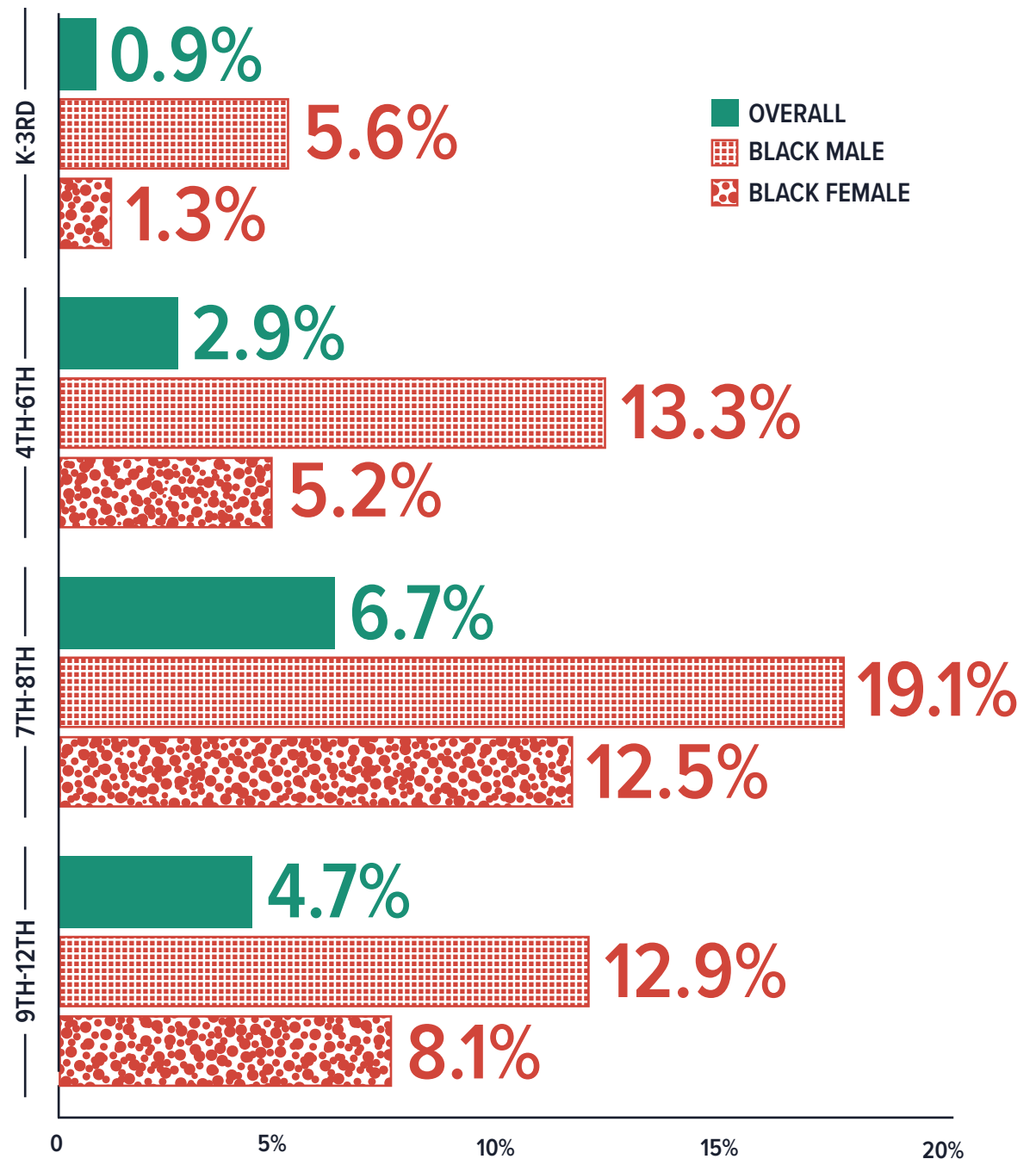


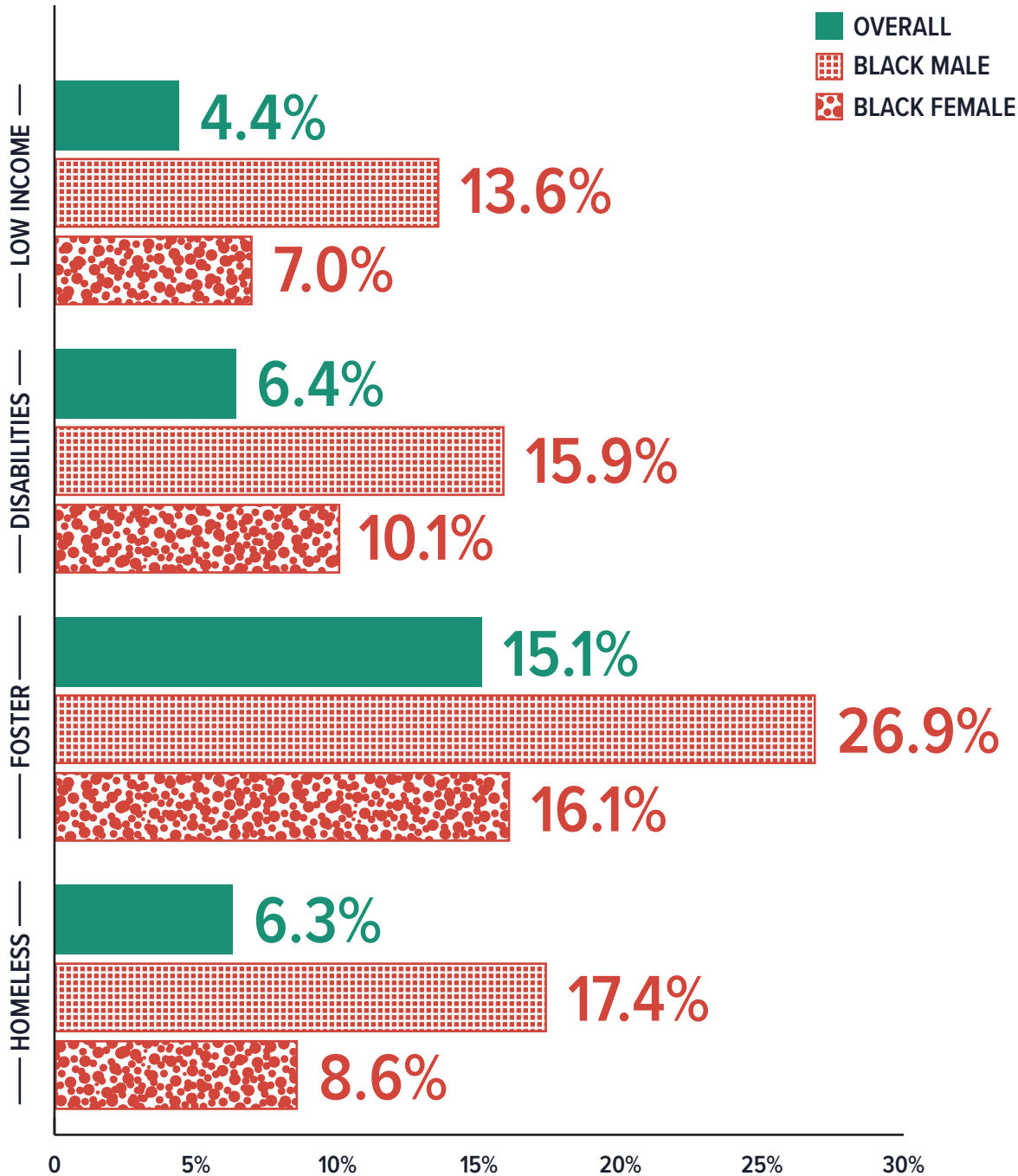


## Figure 4

### *Suspension Rates of Black Male and Female Students (by Grade Level) Compared to Statewide Averages, 2018–2019*

Differences in suspension rates are also evident across special populations (see Figure 4). The state has readily available data on students who are low-income, students with disabilities, foster youth, and students who are unhoused. The statewide suspension rate for low-income students was slightly higher than the overall statewide average at 4.4%. However, for Black female students, 7.7% were suspended in the 2018–2019 academic year. Even more, 13.6% of Black males were suspended. Students with disabilities are also more likely to be suspended. The suspension rate for Black males was 15.9%, significantly higher than the overall statewide average (of 3.5%) and the average for students with disabilities (at 15.9%). While the statewide suspension average for students who are unhoused is 6.3%, this is markedly lower than the rate for Black males (at 17.4%).





**Figure 5**

*Suspension Rates of Black Male and Female Students (by Subgroup) Compared to Statewide Averages, 2018–2019*

Notwithstanding, suspension rates for foster youth (across the board) are particularly concerning (see Figure 5). The overall statewide average for foster youth was 15.1%, an egregiously high rate. Partially, this is explainable by the significant overrepresentation of underserved students of color among foster youth, especially given approximately 75% of these students are Native American, Black, and Latinx. Specifically, 55% of foster youth enrolled in public schools were Latinx, with 18.2% and 1.4% being of Black and Native American descent, respectively. Foster children and youth are under the care of the government and social services agencies. Often, such placements are the result of abuse (e.g., physical, sexual, emotional, psychological) from parents or guardians. Although the placement in foster care is designed to ensure an environment that is safer, more permanent, and better suited for the child’s well-being, outcomes in schools for foster youth tend to be challenged.

In particular, foster students are often overrepresented in special education, significantly less likely to be enrolled in the appropriate grade, and more likely to be suspended and expelled compared to their peers (Scherr, 2007). Data from 2018–2019 demonstrated over a quarter (26.9%) of Black male foster youth were suspended. This rate rises to 35.8% for Black male foster youth in middle school (Grades 7 and 8).

As described previously, the suspension rate for foster youth (without disaggregation) is 15.1%. This suggests 15 out of every 100 foster children are suspended in a given academic year (see Figure 6). This rate is 331% higher than the statewide average and should serve as a clarion call to educators and policymakers alike. There are three groups of foster youth who have suspensions that rise noticeably above this rate, including Multiethnic students at 16.8%. However, the highest suspension rates are for Black and Native American foster youth, at 21.8% and 18.4%, respectively. Compared to the statewide average, this suggests Black and Native American foster youth, at 523% and 426%, are more likely to be suspended than their peers.

## Figure 6

*Suspension Rates of Foster Children and Youth (by Race) Compared to Statewide Average, 2018–2019*

### Countywide Patterns: School Suspensions

Suspension rates differ greatly across California counties. Appendix B provides the top 20 counties that suspend Black children and youth in the state. This represents the highest total suspensions, based on an unduplicated suspension total. The highest suspension county was Los Angeles, where 6,418 students were suspended at least once (with 11,365 total suspensions). This is followed by Sacramento County, where 4,175 Black students were suspended at least once (total suspensions,  $n = 8,252$ ). Sacramento County has been the focus of several of our previous reports, highlighting the county as the Capitol of Suspensions for the State of California.

San Bernardino County also has noticeably more suspensions than other counties in California, with 4,000 unduplicated suspensions and 7,570 total suspensions. Although total suspensions are helpful for understanding overall patterns, they do not account for the size of a county nor high suspension rates.

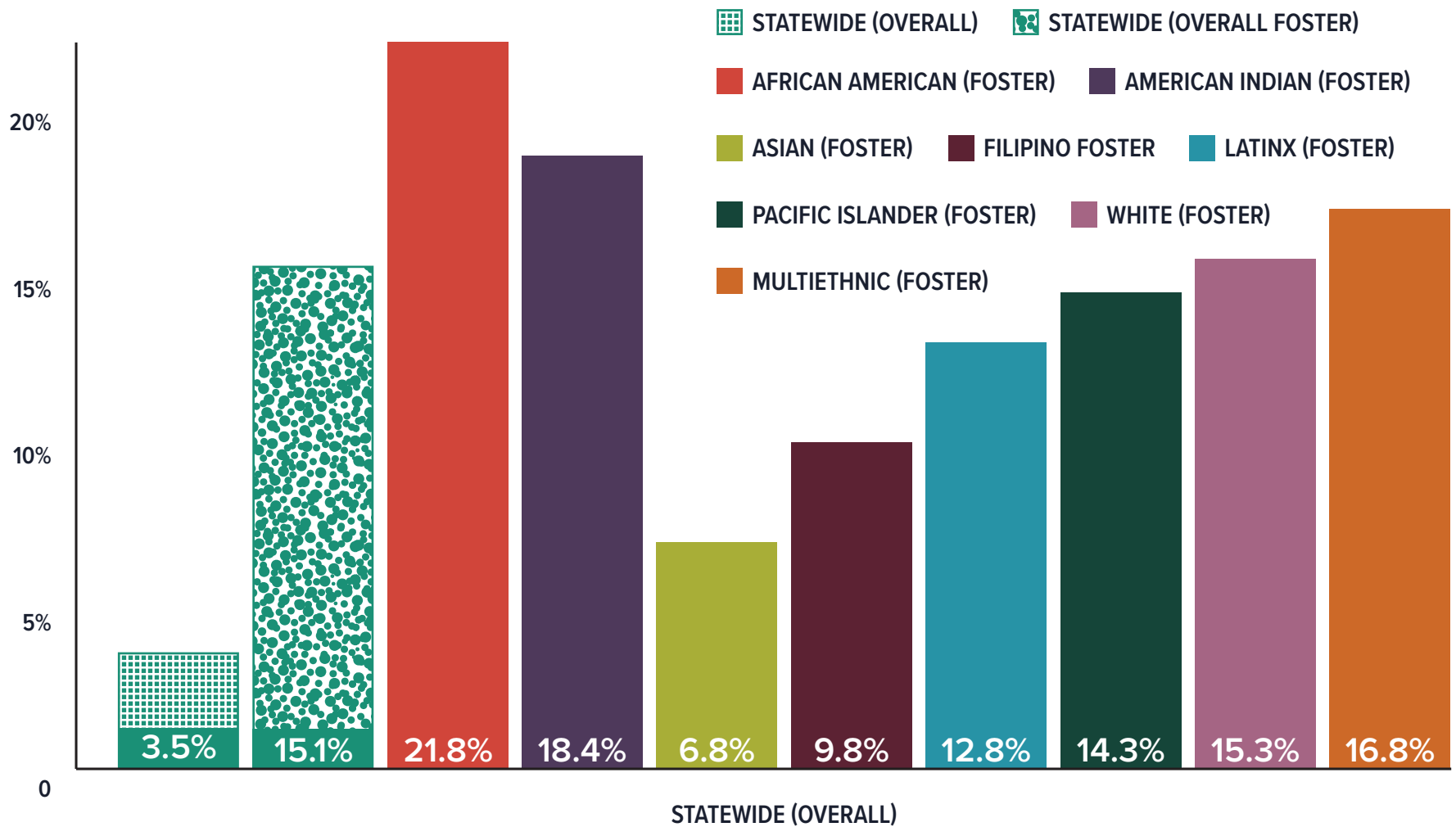


***Although the placement in foster care is designed to ensure an environment that is safer, more permanent, and better suited for the child's well-being, outcomes in schools for foster youth tend to be challenged.***

The highest suspension county was Modoc County, with an average suspension rate of 25%. This is followed by Amador County (at 23.1%), Glenn County (at 16.7%), Madera County (at 16%), and Plumas County (at 15.4). While these counties may have

lower enrollments of Black students compared to larger counties, their exorbitantly high suspension rates suggest a need for immediate attention by policymakers and state officials. Beyond these counties, there are several large counties that have both

high suspension rates and high total numbers of suspensions for Black youth. These counties include Fresno, Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, San Bernardino, and Kern counties.



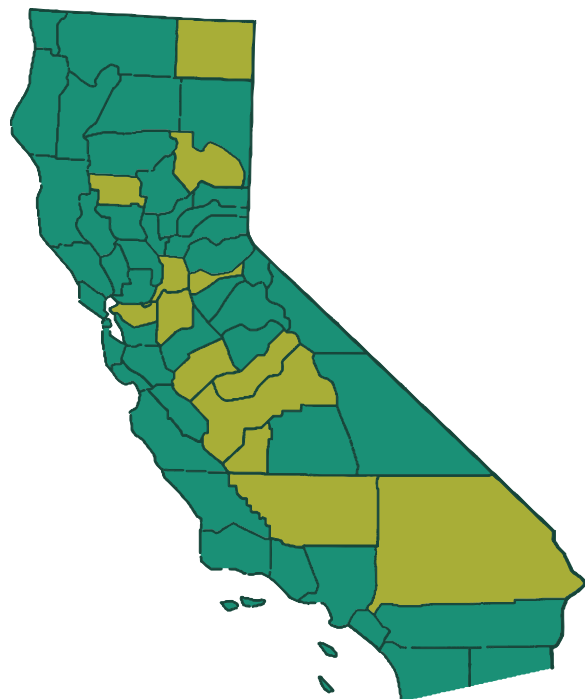
In consideration of both county suspension totals and suspension rates, Table 2 presents counties deemed as being an urgent concern. The first five counties are small counties with smaller Black enrollments. These counties, as previously mentioned, include Modoc,

Amador, Glenn, Madera, and Plumas counties. These represent the worst suspension counties for Black males by rate and account and are of urgent concern. The next eight counties are those counties that appear in the top 20 for both total suspensions and

suspension rates. The first among these is Sacramento County, which has a suspension rate of 13.8%. This is followed by San Bernardino, Contra Costa, and San Joaquin counties.

## Table 2

*Urgent Concern Counties for Black Students in California (by Total and Rate), 2018–2019*



COUNTY NAME	CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT	TOTAL SUSPENSIONS	UNDUPLICATED COUNT OF STUDENTS SUSPENDED (TOTAL)	UNDUPLICATED COUNT (DEFIANCE-ONLY)	SUSPENSION RATE (TOTAL)
Modoc	16	5	4	1	25.0
Amador	26	8	6	0	23.1
Glenn	24	12	4	1	16.7
Madera	549	164	88	16	16.0
Plumas	26	5	4	0	15.4
Sacramento	30205	8252	4175	968	13.8
San Bernardino	36786	7570	4000	548	10.9
Contra Costa	16141	4717	2268	503	14.1
San Joaquin	13015	3110	1626	302	12.5
Fresno	10727	3330	1566	231	14.6
Kern	11497	2085	1215	137	10.6
Merced	1798	399	208	53	11.6
Kings	1204	207	127	22	10.5



***Suspension rates for many of the top suspension districts are more volatile based on smaller enrollments of Black students. That said, smaller enrollments of Black students should enable the districts to more easily identify and deliver supports for Black students that would curb high suspension rates.***

## Districtwide Patterns: School Suspensions

Districtwide suspension rates help to further reveal which districts in the aforementioned counties have high suspension totals and rates. Based on unduplicated suspensions, the highest suspension district in California was Elk Grove Unified ( $n = 1,164$ , total suspensions  $n = 2,386$ ). This is followed closely by Oakland Unified, with 1,138 unduplicated suspensions. However, an important distinguishing characteristic is that Oakland has far more Black students enrolled than Elk Grove yet suspends fewer than Elk Grove. This is an indicator of how egregious Elk Grove Unified's suspensions are. Rounding out the top five districts are Fresno Unified, Sacramento City Unified, and Los Angeles Unified. However, as noted, suspension rates are also an important indicator of overrepresentation. The highest suspension district for Black students was Sutter County Office of Education, which suspended 30.8% of Black students in 2018–2019. This district is followed by Modoc Joint Unified (at 28.6%), Bayshore Elementary (at 27.8%), and Miller Creek Elementary (at 26.7). Both El Monte Union High and Upper Lake Unified are tied with a suspension rate of 25%. It should be noted that suspension rates for many of the top suspension districts are more volatile based on smaller enrollments of Black students. That said, smaller enrollments of Black students should enable the districts to more easily identify and deliver supports for Black students that would curb high suspension rates. Table 3 presents the top 20 suspension districts for Black males.

## Table 3

### *Most Concerning Suspension Districts for Black Students, 2018–2019*

COUNTY	DISTRICT	CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT	TOTAL SUSPENSIONS	UNDUPLICATED COUNT OF STUDENTS SUSPENDED (TOTAL)	UNDUPLICATED COUNT (DEFIANCE-ONLY)	SUSPENSION RATE (TOTAL)
Sutter	Sutter County Office of Education	13	8	4	1	30.8
Modoc	Modoc Joint Unified	14	5	4	1	28.6
San Mateo	Bayshore Elementary	18	7	5	0	27.8
Marin	Miller Creek Elementary	30	13	8	5	26.7
Los Angeles	El Monte Union High	44	16	11	4	25.0
Lake	Upper Lake Unified	12	6	3	1	25.0
Los Angeles	Los Angeles County Office of Education	2026	1568	482	190	23.8
Kings	Hanford Joint Union High	177	62	41	3	23.2
Merced	Merced County Office of Education	129	69	28	11	21.7
Butte	Oroville Union High	97	30	21	11	21.6
San Bernardino	Barstow Unified	1537	835	331	73	21.5
Kern	Kern High	2562	867	514	54	20.1
Los Angeles	Antelope Valley Union High	4203	1307	732	101	17.4
Contra Costa	Antioch Unified	4710	1782	782	254	16.6
Fresno	Fresno Unified	6636	2294	1105	131	16.7
Los Angeles	Palmdale Elementary	3872	1228	620	125	16.0
Contra Costa	Pittsburg Unified	2131	952	373	158	17.5
Solano	Vallejo City Unified	4252	1582	756	189	17.8
San Bernardino	Victor Valley Union High	2531	699	418	16	16.5

## Schoolwide Patterns: School Suspensions

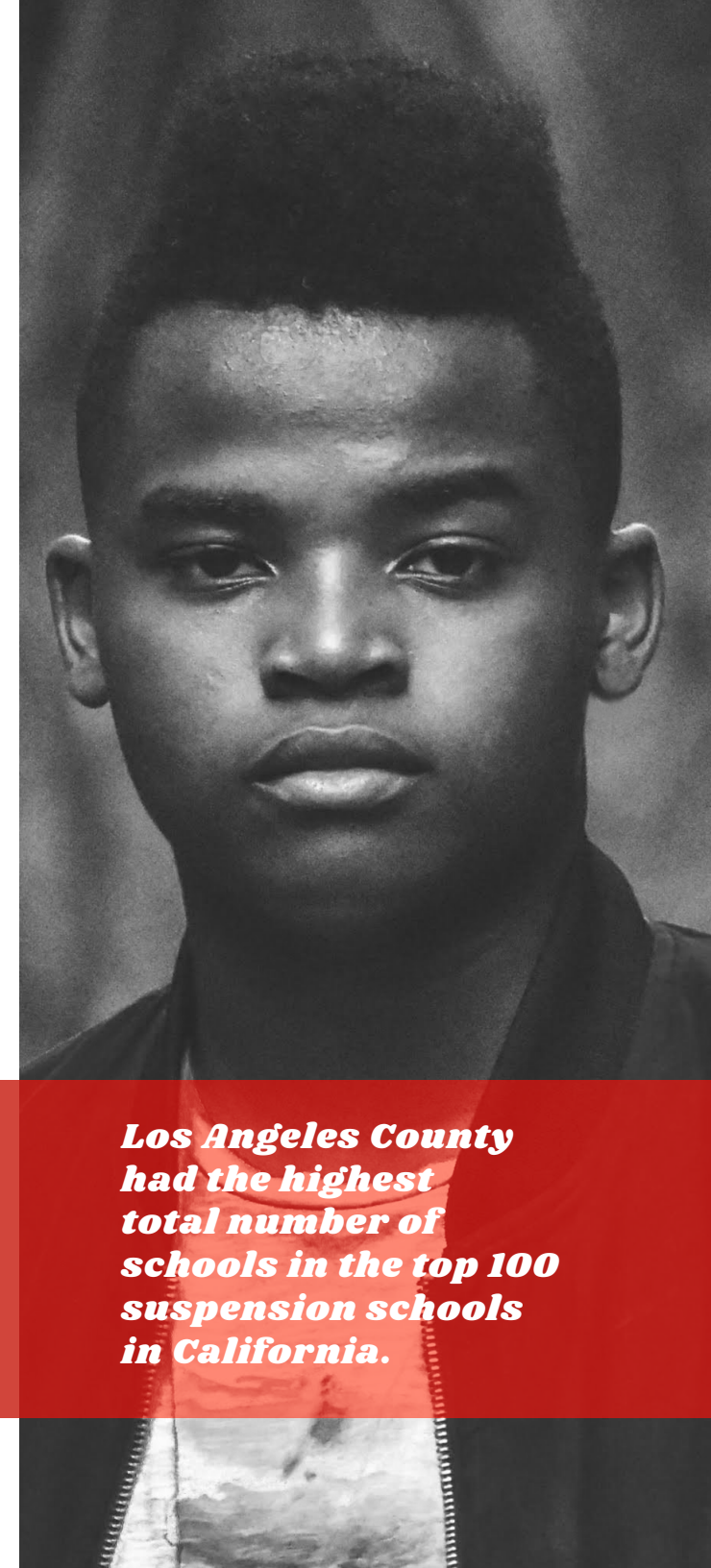
There are a number of schools in the state with exorbitantly high suspension rates. These schools are largely situated in the districts and counties where the highest suspension rates are occurring. Los Angeles County had the highest total number of schools in the top 100 suspension schools in California, at 16.5% (see Figure 7). This is followed by Sacramento County and Contra Costa County tied at 10.7%. Fresno County accounts for 9.7% of the top 100 suspension schools. Rounding out the top five counties is Riverside and San Bernardino counties at 7.8% each.

### Figure 7

#### *County Share of the Top 100 Suspension Schools in California for Black Students, 2018–2019*

In terms of school type, more than half of the schools with the highest suspension rates are traditional public schools (at 53.4%). This is followed by community day schools and continuation schools, both at 15.5% (see Figure 8).

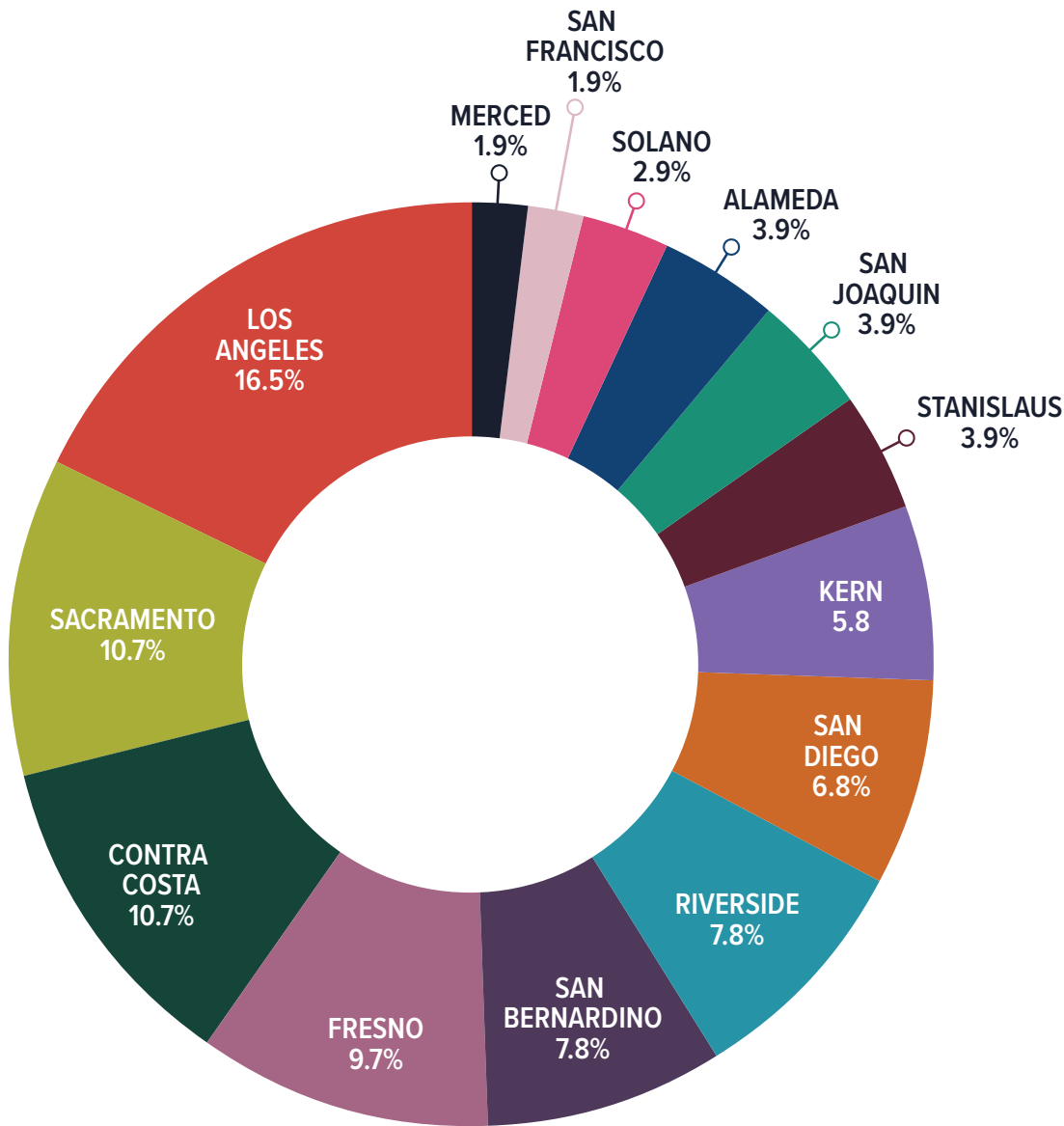
Although the majority of schools in the top 100 suspension schools in California are traditional public schools, only one school in the top 20 suspension schools is a traditional public school: Hoover Herbert Middle School in San Francisco Unified, with a suspension rate of 59.1%. This rate is 16.9 times greater than the statewide suspension average. Appendix D features the top 20 suspension schools. Including nontraditional schools, the highest suspension school in the state is STAR at Anderson Community Day, a kindergarten through sixth grade school, where 92.3% of the 13 Black students enrolled were suspended for a total of 105 suspensions. This is followed by Rocky Glenn Camp and Afferbaugh-Paige Camp in the Los Angeles County Office of Education, with suspension rates of 83.8% and 80.3%, respectively. Following these is Palmiter Special Education School in the Sacramento County Office of Education, which has a suspension rate of 77.5%. Rounding out the top five schools is Kirby Dorthy Camp, which, like the other camp schools in the Los Angeles County Office of Education, has an egregiously high suspension rate at 74.5%.



***Los Angeles County  
had the highest  
total number of  
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Figure 7

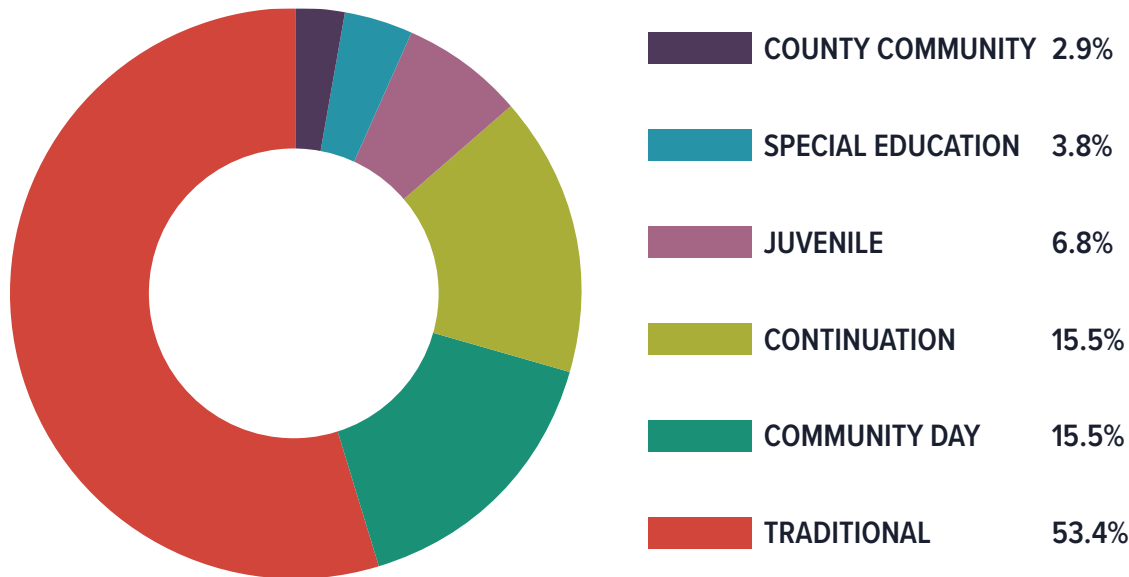


ALAMEDA	3.9%
SANTA CLARA	0.0%
SAN FRANCISCO	1.9%
CONTRA COSTA	10.7%
SAN JOAQUIN	3.9%
SUTTER	0.0%
SOLANO	2.9%
SACRAMENTO	10.7%
STANISLAUS	3.9%
TULARE	0.0%
RIVERSIDE	7.8%
FRESNO	9.7%
KINGS	0.0%
YUBA	0.0%
SAN BERNARDINO	7.8%
KERN	5.8%
SAN MATEO	0.0%
MERCED	1.9%
SAN DIEGO	6.8%
LOS ANGELES	16.5%

## Figure 8

### *School Type Share of Top 100 Suspension Schools in California for Black Students, 2018–2019*

In terms of traditional public schools, the top 50 suspension schools in California are featured in Table 4. There are more than 50 schools on this list due to ties in suspension rates. As noted, Hoover (Herbert) Middle has the highest suspension rate in the state. This is followed by C.A. Jacobs Intermediate in Dixon Unified, with a suspension rate of 53.3%. There are two additional schools that suspend 50% or more of their Black students: Aspire Lionel Wilson College Preparatory Academy in Oakland Unified and Wonderful College Prep Academy in the Kern County Office of Education—at 51.9% and 50%, respectively.



***More than half of the schools with the highest suspension rates are traditional public schools.***

**Table 4***Top 50 Suspension Schools for Black Students (by Rate) in California, 2018–2019*

COUNTY	DISTRICT	SCHOOL	CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT	TOTAL SUSPENSIONS	UNDUPLICATED COUNT OF STUDENTS SUSPENDED (TOTAL)	UNDUPLICATED COUNT (DEFIANCE-ONLY)	SUSPENSION RATE (TOTAL)
San Francisco	San Francisco Unified	Hoover (Herbert) Middle	22	32	13	0	59.1
Solano	Dixon Unified	C. A. Jacobs Intermediate	15	17	8	1	53.3
Alameda	Oakland Unified	Aspire Lionel Wilson College Preparatory Academy	27	38	14	1	51.9
Kern	Kern County Office of Education	Wonderful College Prep Academy	12	6	6	0	50.0
Los Angeles	Los Angeles Unified	Vox Collegiate of Los Angeles	29	24	14	1	48.3
Los Angeles	Palmdale Elementary	Cactus Medical, Health and Technology Magnet Academy	168	153	81	18	48.2
Kern	Muroc Joint Unified	Boron Junior-Senior High	24	21	11	7	45.8
Fresno	Fresno Unified	Tehipite Middle	42	53	19	8	45.2
Contra Costa	Antioch Unified	Antioch Middle	196	258	87	52	44.4
Stanislaus	Empire Union Elementary	Norman N. Glick Middle	25	18	11	3	44.0
Sacramento	Twin Rivers Unified	Nova Opportunity	16	24	7	0	43.8
Riverside	Moreno Valley Unified	Moreno Valley Community Learning Center	21	27	9	3	42.9
San Mateo	South San Francisco Unified	South San Francisco High	21	26	9	5	42.9
Los Angeles	Palmdale Elementary	Space Aeronautics Gateway to Exploration Magnet Academy	227	192	96	50	42.3
Solano	Vallejo City Unified	Franklin Middle	244	393	103	59	42.2
Sacramento	Elk Grove Unified	James Rutter Middle	146	150	61	12	41.8
Contra Costa	Mt. Diablo Unified	Valley View Middle	24	13	10	1	41.7
Contra Costa	Contra Costa County Office of Education	Invictus Academy of Richmond	24	14	10	4	41.7
Los Angeles	Pomona Unified	Garey High	41	47	17	13	41.5
Stanislaus	Ceres Unified	Cesar Chavez Junior High	17	9	7	1	41.2
Contra Costa	Pittsburg Unified	Hillview Junior High	219	389	90	64	41.1
San Bernardino	Morongo Unified	La Contenta Middle	37	69	15	10	40.5
Alameda	Oakland Unified	United for Success Academy	74	46	29	1	39.2
San Joaquin	Stockton Unified	John C. Fremont Elementary	51	72	20	6	39.2
Contra Costa	Antioch Unified	Park Middle	248	335	97	54	39.1

COUNTY	DISTRICT	SCHOOL	CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT	TOTAL SUSPENSIONS	UNDUPLICATED COUNT OF STUDENTS SUSPENDED (TOTAL)	UNDUPLICATED COUNT (DEFIANCE- ONLY)	SUSPENSION RATE (TOTAL)
Santa Clara	East Side Union High	Yerba Buena High	21	11	8	5	38.1
Fresno	Fresno Unified	Fort Miller Middle	114	90	43	8	37.7
Riverside	Palm Springs Unified	Painted Hills Middle	77	96	29	9	37.7
Sacramento	Elk Grove Unified	T. R. Smedberg Middle	160	205	60	37	37.5
Sacramento	San Juan Unified	Encina Preparatory High	334	301	125	64	37.4
Alameda	Oakland Unified	West Oakland Middle	132	83	48	4	36.4
Contra Costa	Mt. Diablo Unified	Oak Grove Middle	22	32	8	0	36.4
San Bernardino	Ontario-Montclair	De Anza Middle	11	4	4	0	36.4
San Diego	Vista Unified	Madison Middle	25	19	9	5	36.0
Sacramento	Elk Grove Unified	Samuel Jackman Middle	220	200	79	37	35.9
Los Angeles	Montebello Unified	Montebello High	14	6	5	0	35.7
Fresno	Central Unified	Glacier Point Middle	141	110	50	16	35.5
Sacramento	Twin Rivers Unified	Rio Linda Preparatory Academy	31	20	11	1	35.5
San Diego	San Diego Unified	Montgomery Middle	34	18	12	5	35.3
San Diego	Oceanside Unified	San Luis Rey Elementary	17	8	6	0	35.3
Solano	Vallejo City Unified	Hogan Middle	268	176	94	19	35.1
Fresno	Fresno Unified	Yosemite Middle	23	20	8	2	34.8
Contra Costa	West Contra Costa Unified	Pinole Middle	121	88	42	14	34.7
San Bernardino	San Bernardino City Unified	Serrano Middle	130	105	45	0	34.6
Fresno	Fresno Unified	Kings Canyon Middle	58	35	20	2	34.5
Riverside	Palm Springs Unified	Desert Springs Middle	93	59	32	7	34.4
San Bernardino	Victor Valley Union High	Lakeview Leadership Academy	247	200	85	6	34.4
San Joaquin	Lodi Unified	Delta Sierra Middle	167	117	56	0	33.5
Contra Costa	West Contra Costa Unified	Summit Public School: Tamalpais	54	35	18	1	33.3
Fresno	Washington Unified	West Fresno Middle	42	30	14	3	33.3
Sacramento	Folsom-Cordova Unified	Mills Middle	132	85	44	6	33.3
San Bernardino	Hesperia Unified	Hesperia Junior High	99	62	33	6	33.3
San Diego	Sweetwater Union High	Granger Junior High	21	12	7	2	33.3
San Francisco	San Francisco Unified	Gateway Middle	69	38	23	0	33.3
Sutter	Yuba City Unified	Andros Karperos	18	28	6	5	33.3

# Recommendations

There are a number of recommendations that can serve to improve the aforementioned outcomes detailed in this report. In this section, we offer policies that can be implemented at the state and district levels to directly address disproportionate suspensions.

**Require school principals to consult with a social worker before suspending a foster child.**

A key finding from this report was the high suspensions of foster youth overall and Black foster youth in particular. These students are in the greatest need of support and care; however, data demonstrate they are being systematically excluded from learning environments. Currently, state law requires a child’s representative (attorney or social worker) to be invited to a meeting before their suspension can extend beyond 5 days or if they are being considered for expulsion. However, state law should be amended to require the consultation of a child’s social worker before any out-of-school suspension. This should occur for all foster students across all grades and is particularly important for young children in kindergarten through third grade.

**Report voluntary and involuntary transfer data publicly.**

As part of the background research for this report, the practice of voluntary and involuntary transfer became a critical area of concern. Students can be transferred through voluntary or

involuntary means to another school within their district.<sup>1</sup> Many districts use this as a de facto expulsion without having to report it publicly in the same way suspension data are reported. This is a loophole in policy and practice that allows for many more Black students, Indigenous students, and students of color to be expelled without being documented as such.

**Require training for all preservice and in-service teachers on bias, inclusive practices, and positive behavior interventions.**

An underlying cause for overrepresentation of Black children among those suspended is lack of teacher awareness and preparation to teach and support diverse students. All in-service teachers should be required to undergo intensive, ongoing professional learning on implicit bias, racial microaggressions, racial battle fatigue, and school-based trauma. Otherwise, teachers will not be fully prepared to engage and support Black children. Districts should be required to work with their county office of education to coordinate and provide training across their respective counties. Moreover, all preservice teachers should be required to undergo similar coursework in preparation to teach in the classroom. A large segment of teachers goes through formal preparation programs in California’s community colleges and universities. These institutions should be required to ensure all teachers have the necessary coursework for success in the classroom.

## **Eliminate suspensions and expulsions in early learning.**

Although this report focused on K-12 data, the patterns of higher levels of disproportionate impact for Black boys in K-3 is reprehensible.

Preschool represents a black box of information given few representative data sets collect data on preschools in California. Thus, it is believed preschools may have even higher suspension rates because of a lack of oversight and accountability. Black Men for Educational Equity is advocating for a statewide bill to eliminate these practices. Given children in preschool are often between the ages of 3 and 5, the importance of these efforts cannot be understated.

## **Extend ban on willful defiance suspensions for all elementary students.**

Beginning in July of 2020, a state law was passed that ended the practice of willful defiance suspensions in kindergarten through third grade. This policy was modeled after a similar ban that took place in Los Angeles Unified, which covers all of K-12 and drastically reduced suspensions. Unfortunately, willful defiance suspensions often represent a grey area in terms of a student's actions, because Black and other children of color are disproportionately targeted due to stereotypes and differences in perceived behavior. Through the policy process, the statewide law was curbed from the K-12 ban on defiance-only suspensions to K-3 alone. This ban should be extended to all elementary students in fourth and fifth grades.

## **Establish grade-level specific suspension requirements that are age appropriate.**

Across the state, there is wide variation in what is viewed as a suspension-level concern. It is common for a district to have guidelines for suspension-level behavior that do not take into account the grade level of a child. For example, it is developmentally appropriate for a student in early childhood education to turn around in their seat and fidget, tap their pencil, talk to others during instruction, and other normal behaviors. However, there are a number of districts that have created policies that do not attend to what should be viewed as developmentally appropriate behavior based on age. All districts should be required to have suspension criteria based on grade-level expectations. Otherwise, a student in high school and a child in kindergarten can be suspended for the same actions when they are developmentally appropriate.

## **Prohibit hidden in-school and out-of-school suspensions.**

Currently, there are a number of strategies schools use to avoid reporting accurate suspension data. As noted earlier, in-school suspensions can occur when a child is removed from a classroom for a full day or part of the day, but the suspension is not documented. This can occur for a number of reasons, such as the suspension being limited in duration, the time needed to complete required documentation, and even through intentional efforts to not report the suspension. Out-of-school suspensions can also occur without documentation. For example, a parent may be asked to pick up a child early from school or be encouraged to keep the child at home for a day or more, which is then documented as absenteeism

as opposed to a suspension. This can also occur without the parent, as a recommendation from a principal or educator to the student. A recommendation to go home or stay at home can be portrayed as friendly advice to help the student; however, this is not the case.

### **Make suspension data publicly available on district and school websites.**

Districts and schools should be required to make suspension data for all of its schools publicly available. The goal of this recommendation is to provide a mechanism for information and accountability for families and communities that are served by the District and its schools. These data must not only be made available and presented in a way that is transparent and accessible, but they must also be disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender (including non-binary) within race/ethnicity to reveal patterns of inequity in school discipline that are typically unknown or overlooked. In addition, these data must be disaggregated by students' disability status, foster youth status, and other identities that are salient within the district. This recommendation is aligned with the "Student Right-to-Know" act, which was passed in 1990 and requires higher education institutions to share completion and graduation rates for full-time degree-seeking students.

### **Reduce attendance monies for schools when students receive an out-of-school suspension.**

Schools receive money for the attendance of each student per day. When a student receives an out-of-school suspension, their daily attendance monies are reduced for each day

beyond the first day of the suspension. For example, if a student is suspended Monday for two days, the school receives attendance monies for Monday but not for Tuesday and Wednesday. This is irrespective of whether the student was in attendance for five minutes or five hours. Thus, many schools will implement an out-of-school suspension for the day of the infraction and have the student return the following day in order to ensure that attendance monies are not lost. We recommend that attendance monies be restricted for both the day of the suspension as well as subsequent days. An alternative course be a funding formula based on the proportion of the day the student was in the classroom or with a school counselor. Otherwise, schools receive monies for services and support that they are not actually providing.

### **Implement charter school funding models that reduce attendance monies for students who are suspended.**

Charter schools offering independent study programs may informally suspend students for multiple days without any reduction in daily attendance, because their funding is based on work productivity not attendance. Thus, a student could be given a work packet and informally suspended from school for four days; yet if the work packet is turned in (regardless of the quality of the work completed), the school still receives funding. This can lead to students being suspended, falling behind in their studies, and then leaving the charter school system to enter juvenile court schools. This occurs because student attendance is not required in many independent study programs. Given this, we recommend a hybrid funding model accounting for both work productivity as well as attendance.

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# Appendix A

## *Statewide Expulsion Rates for Male Students, 2018–2019*

ETHNICITY	CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT	TOTAL EXPULSIONS	UNDUPLICATED COUNT OF STUDENTS EXPELLED	EXPULSION RATE
African American	180,693	471	464	0.26%
American Indian or Alaska Native	16,615	54	53	0.32%
Asian	302,462	124	121	0.04%
Filipino	78,881	37	36	0.05%
Hispanic or Latino	1,771,367	2,491	2,473	0.14%
Pacific Islander	14,843	22	21	0.14%
White	744,094	698	691	0.09%
Two or More Races	121,469	123	122	0.10%
Not Reported	27,470	34	34	0.12%

## *Statewide Expulsion Rates for Female Students, 2018–2019*

ETHNICITY	CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT	TOTAL EXPULSIONS	UNDUPLICATED COUNT OF STUDENTS EXPELLED	EXPULSION RATE
African American	168,958	202	202	0.12%
American Indian or Alaska Native	15,840	20	20	0.13%
Asian	283,156	23	23	0.01%
Filipino	72,496	5	5	0.01%
Hispanic or Latino	1,682,673	702	696	0.04%
Pacific Islander	14,103	11	11	0.08%
White	691,624	170	170	0.02%
Two or More Races	117,003	34	34	0.03%
Not Reported	26,136	15	15	0.06%

# Appendix B

*Top 20 Suspension Counties for Black Students (by Total), 2018–2019*

COUNTY NAME	CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT	TOTAL SUSPENSIONS	UNDUPLICATED COUNT OF STUDENTS SUSPENDED (TOTAL)	UNDUPLICATED COUNT (DEFIANCE-ONLY)	SUSPENSION RATE (TOTAL)
1. Los Angeles	114602	11365	6418	953	5.6
2. Sacramento	30205	8252	4175	968	13.8
3. San Bernardino	36786	7570	4000	548	10.9
4. Riverside	28273	4438	2514	290	8.9
5. Contra Costa	16141	4717	2268	503	14.1
6. Alameda	23395	3750	2132	264	9.1
7. San Diego	24261	2902	1640	325	6.8
8. San Joaquin	13015	3110	1626	302	12.5
9. Fresno	10727	3330	1566	231	14.6
10. Solano	9503	2585	1336	289	14.1
11. Kern	11497	2085	1215	137	10.6
12. San Francisco	8108	808	414	15	5.1
13. Stanislaus	3197	582	317	64	9.9
14. Orange	6862	452	311	36	4.5
15. Santa Clara	5246	505	309	50	5.9
16. Merced	1798	399	208	53	11.6
17. Kings	1204	207	127	22	10.5
18. San Mateo	1489	223	121	26	8.1
19. Tulare	1249	210	114	12	9.1
20. Ventura	1733	161	111	7	6.4

*Top 20 Suspension Counties for Black Students (by Rate), 2018–2019*

COUNTY NAME	CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT	TOTAL SUSPENSIONS	UNDUPLICATED COUNT OF STUDENTS SUSPENDED (TOTAL)	UNDUPLICATED COUNT (DEFIANCE-ONLY)	SUSPENSION RATE (TOTAL)
1. Modoc	16	5	4	1	25.0
2. Amador	26	8	6	0	23.1
3. Glenn	24	12	4	1	16.7
4. Madera	549	164	88	16	16.0
5. Plumas	26	5	4	0	15.4
6. Fresno	10727	3330	1566	231	14.6
7. Contra Costa	16141	4717	2268	503	14.1
8. Solano	9503	2585	1336	289	14.1
9. Sacramento	30205	8252	4175	968	13.8
10. Butte	694	179	91	28	13.1
11. Colusa	31	5	4	1	12.9
12. San Joaquin	13015	3110	1626	302	12.5
13. Mariposa	17	4	2	1	11.8
14. Merced	1798	399	208	53	11.6
15. Lake	171	55	19	8	11.1
16. San Bernardino	36786	7570	4000	548	10.9
17. Kern	11497	2085	1215	137	10.6
18. Yuba	630	104	67	18	10.6
19. Kings	1204	207	127	22	10.5
20. Marin	635	116	66	20	10.4

# Appendix C

## *Top Suspension Districts for Black Students (by Total), 2018–2019*

COUNTY	DISTRICT	CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT	TOTAL SUSPENSIONS	UNDUPLICATED COUNT OF STUDENTS SUSPENDED (TOTAL)	UNDUPLICATED COUNT (DEFIANCE-ONLY)	SUSPENSION RATE (TOTAL)
1. Sacramento	Elk Grove Unified	8310	2386	1164	317	14.0
2. Alameda	Oakland Unified	12669	2002	1138	101	9.0
3. Fresno	Fresno Unified	6636	2294	1105	131	16.7
4. Sacramento	Sacramento City Unified	8156	2012	1104	195	13.5
5. Los Angeles	Los Angeles Unified	52122	1405	1081	44	2.1
6. Los Angeles	Long Beach Unified	9973	1349	898	141	9.0
7. San Diego	San Diego Unified	11081	1592	850	198	7.7
8. Contra Costa	Antioch Unified	4710	1782	782	254	16.6
9. San Bernardino	San Bernardino City Unified	7023	1512	758	96	10.8
10. Solano	Vallejo City Unified	4252	1582	756	189	17.8
11. Los Angeles	Antelope Valley Union High	4203	1307	732	101	17.4
12. San Joaquin	Stockton Unified	4873	1377	679	92	13.9
13. Contra Costa	West Contra Costa Unified	5143	1187	672	45	13.1
14. Sacramento	Twin Rivers Unified	4802	1336	664	164	13.8
15. Los Angeles	Palmdale Elementary	3872	1228	620	125	16.0
16. Riverside	Moreno Valley Unified	5105	1128	591	67	11.6
17. Los Angeles	Lancaster Elementary	5226	1136	569	73	10.9
18. Sacramento	San Juan Unified	4285	1121	526	198	12.3
19. Kern	Kern High	2562	867	514	54	20.1
20. Los Angeles	Los Angeles County Office of Education	2026	1568	482	190	23.8

*Top Suspension Districts for Black Students (by Rate), 2018–2019*

COUNTY	DISTRICT	CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT	TOTAL SUSPENSIONS	UNDUPLICATED COUNT OF STUDENTS SUSPENDED (TOTAL)	UNDUPLICATED COUNT (DEFIANCE-ONLY)	SUSPENSION RATE (TOTAL)
1. Sutter	Sutter County Office of Education	13	8	4	1	30.8
2. Modoc	Modoc Joint Unified	14	5	4	1	28.6
3. San Mateo	Bayshore Elementary	18	7	5	0	27.8
4. Marin	Miller Creek Elementary	30	13	8	5	26.7
5. Los Angeles	El Monte Union High	44	16	11	4	25.0
6. Lake	Upper Lake Unified	12	6	3	1	25.0
7. Los Angeles	Los Angeles County Office of Education	2026	1568	482	190	23.8
8. Kings	Hanford Joint Union High	177	62	41	3	23.2
9. Merced	Merced County Office of Education	129	69	28	11	21.7
10. Butte	Oroville Union High	97	30	21	11	21.6
11. San Bernardino	Barstow Unified	1537	835	331	73	21.5
12. Butte	Oroville City Elementary	90	61	19	8	21.1
13. San Joaquin	Linden Unified	19	9	4	1	21.1
14. Merced	Winton	24	7	5	0	20.8
15. Madera	Golden Valley Unified	49	22	10	3	20.4
16. Kern	Kern High	2562	867	514	54	20.1
17. Amador	Amador County Unified	25	7	5	0	20.0
18. Humboldt	Northern Humboldt Union High	20	5	4	0	20.0
19. Colusa	Pierce Joint Unified	15	4	3	1	20.0
20. Humboldt	Humboldt County Office of Education	15	3	3	1	20.0

# Appendix D

*Top 20 Suspension Schools (Unduplicated) for Black Students in California (by Total) Including Traditional and Nontraditional Schools, 2018–2019*

COUNTY	DISTRICT	SCHOOL	CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT	TOTAL SUSPENSIONS	UNDUPLICATED COUNT OF STUDENTS SUSPENDED (TOTAL)	UNDUPLICATED COUNT (DEFIANCE-ONLY)	SUSPENSION RATE (TOTAL)
1. Contra Costa	Antioch Unified	Deer Valley High	738	340	170	71	23.0
2. Los Angeles	Los Angeles County Office of Education	Central Juvenile Hall	520	334	153	39	29.4
3. Los Angeles	Antelope Valley Union High	Antelope Valley High	639	223	134	19	21.0
4. Sacramento	Sacramento County Office of Education	Fortune	878	210	130	29	14.8
5. Solano	Vallejo City Unified	Vallejo High	517	202	129	33	25.0
6. Los Angeles	Antelope Valley Union High	Eastside High	707	202	125	26	17.7
7. Sacramento	San Juan Unified	Encina Preparatory High	334	301	125	64	37.4
8. Los Angeles	Antelope Valley Union High	Lancaster High	604	214	123	6	20.4
9. Solano	Vallejo City Unified	Jesse M. Bethel High	507	202	106	22	20.9
10. Los Angeles	Los Angeles County Office of Education	Nidorf, Barry J.	412	222	103	24	25.0
11. Solano	Vallejo City Unified	Franklin Middle	244	393	103	59	42.2
12. San Bernardino	Victor Valley Union High	Silverado High	611	137	102	0	16.7
13. Contra Costa	Antioch Unified	Dallas Ranch Middle	326	214	101	13	31.0
14. Los Angeles	Los Angeles County Office of Education	Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall	440	216	100	41	22.7
15. Contra Costa	Antioch Unified	Antioch High	485	173	98	18	20.2
16. Contra Costa	Antioch Unified	Park Middle	248	335	97	54	39.1
17. Los Angeles	Palmdale Elementary	Space Aeronautics Gateway to Exploration Magnet Academy	227	192	96	50	42.3
18. Sacramento	Elk Grove Unified	Sheldon High	396	169	96	27	24.2
19. San Bernardino	Barstow Unified	Crestline Elementary	326	291	94	21	28.8
20. Solano	Vallejo City Unified	Hogan Middle	268	176	94	19	35.1

*Top 20 Suspension Schools for Black Students in California (by Rate)  
Including Traditional and Nontraditional Schools, 2018–2019*

COUNTY	DISTRICT	SCHOOL	GRADE LEVEL	CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT	TOTAL SUSPENSIONS	UNDUPLICATED COUNT OF STUDENTS SUSPENDED (TOTAL)	UNDUPLICATED COUNT (DEFIANCE-ONLY)	SUSPENSION RATE (TOTAL)
1. San Bernardino	San Bernardino City Unified	STAR at Anderson Community Day	K-6	13	105	12	0	92.3
2. Los Angeles	Los Angeles County Office of Education	Rockey, Glenn Camp	7-12	37	106	31	19	83.8
3. Los Angeles	Los Angeles County Office of Education	Afflerbaugh-Paige Camp	7-12	61	223	49	40	80.3
4. Sacramento	Sacramento County Office of Education	Palmiter Special Education	7-12	40	108	31	10	77.5
5. Los Angeles	Los Angeles County Office of Education	Kirby, Dorothy Camp	7-12	51	152	38	28	74.5
6. Sacramento	Folsom-Cordova Unified	Prospect Community Day	7-12	32	63	23	7	71.9
7. Riverside	Val Verde Unified	Val Verde Student Success Academy	6-10	12	18	8	2	66.7
8. Los Angeles	Los Angeles County Office of Education	Onizuka Camp	7-12	30	77	19	9	63.3
9. Sacramento	San Juan Unified	La Vista Center	6-12	26	52	16	3	61.5
10. Los Angeles	Antelope Valley Union High	Phoenix High Community Day	9-12	49	121	30	25	61.2
11. Fresno	Clovis Unified	Clovis Community Day Secondary	7-12	18	24	11	0	61.1
12. Merced	Merced County Office of Education	Valley Atwater Community	6-12	41	65	25	11	61.0
13. Contra Costa	Antioch Unified	Bridges	7-12	15	24	9	7	60.0
14. San Francisco	San Francisco Unified	Hoover (Herbert) Middle	6-8	22	32	13	0	59.1
15. Los Angeles	Los Angeles County Office of Education	McNair Camp	7-12	26	35	15	3	57.7
16. Merced	Merced Union High	Sequoia High	9-12	16	18	9	2	56.3
17. Los Angeles	Los Angeles County Office of Education	Road to Success Academy at Campus Kilpatrick	7-12	45	54	25	5	55.6
18. Fresno	Fresno County Office of Education	Violet Heintz Education Academy	7-12	38	82	21	1	55.3
19. Sacramento	Sacramento City Unified	Success Academy	4-8	33	45	18	6	54.5
20. Los Angeles	Lancaster Elementary	Crossroads Community Day	K-8	90	194	49	3	54.4

