



From 2012-13 to 2014-15,  
 the **Incident Rate** decreased by



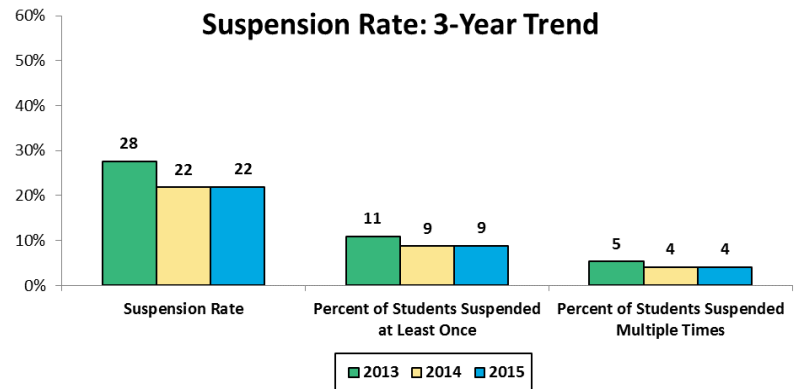
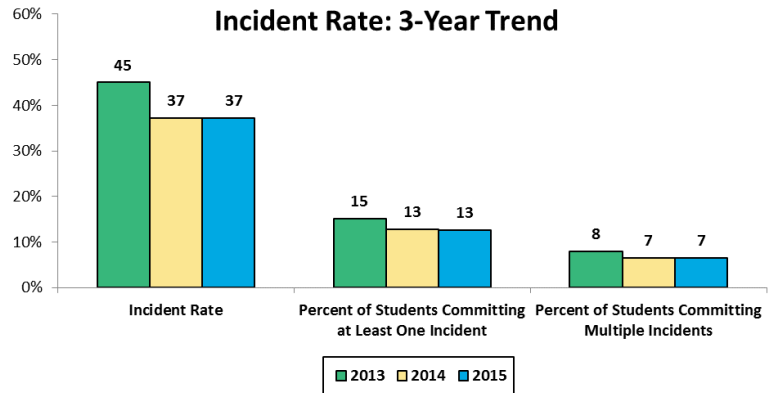
**8** percentage points

and the **Suspension Rate** decreased by

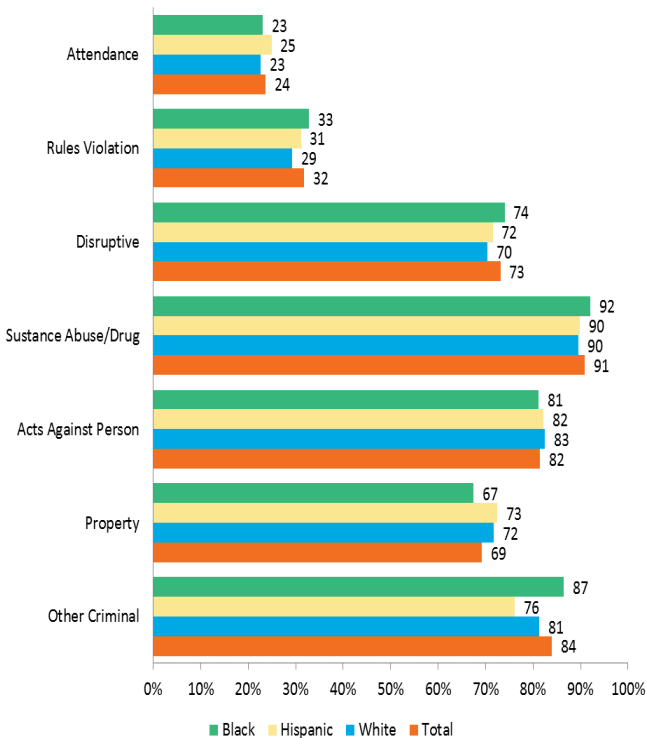


**6** percentage points

- The Incident Rate decreased from 45% to 37% between 2012-13 and 2014-15. The percent of students committing incidents decreased from 15% to 13% in the same time period, with the percent of students committing multiple incidents decreasing from 8% to 7%.
- The Suspension Rate decreased from 28% to 22% between 2012-13 and 2014-15. The percent of students suspended in the same time period decreased from 11% to 9%. The percent of students suspended multiple times decreased from 5% to 4%.



### Rate of Incidents Resulting in Suspension by Race/Ethnicity



- While the rate of incidents and suspensions decreased over the three year period, the **rate remained stable** from 2013-14 to 2014-15.
- Students from different ethnic groups were suspended at similar rates for the same incident.
- The majority of suspensions (89%) did not remove students from an academic environment (In-school 68%, AES 21%, and External 11%). This represents a 9 percentage point decrease in external suspensions since 2012-13.

### Additional Resources

- Detailed school-by-school results:  
<http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/sar/Releases.htm>
- Information on intervention programs:  
<http://www.browardprevention.org>

**THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF STRATEGY & OPERATIONS OFFICER**

**Maurice L. Woods  
Chief Strategy & Operations Officer**

*Original Signatures on File*

April 8, 2016

TO: All Principals

FROM: Maurice L. Woods  
Chief Strategy & Operations Officer

VIA: Valerie S. Wanza, Ph.D.  
Chief School Performance & Accountability

SUBJECT: **INCIDENTS AND SUSPENSIONS IN BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS, 2012-13 THROUGH 2014-15**

Student Assessment & Research staff compiled incident and suspension data for traditional and charter schools in the Broward County Public School system for the 2012-13 through 2014-15 school years. Both the incident and suspension rates decreased between 2012-13 and 2013-14 and remained stable between 2013-14 and 2014-15. Across the three-year period, the incident rate decreased by 17% and the suspension rate decreased by 21%.

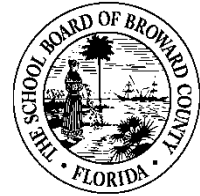
The incident rate decreased for each of the three major racial groups over the three-year period, with the overall pattern remaining the same. Black students registered the greatest rate of incidents with 19% of the Black student population committing at least one incident (down from 23% in 2012-13), followed by Hispanic students at 9% (down from 11% in 2012-13), and White students at 8% (down from 10% in 2012-13). The pattern of suspension rates mirrored that of incidents, with all racial groups receiving suspensions at a slightly lower rate than the rate of incidents registered (14%, 6%, and 5% for Black, Hispanic, and White students respectively).

This report presents data for the District overall as well as by school level (elementary, middle, high, and centers). Incidents are further broken out into categories that appear on the discipline matrix in order to provide information to support schools in selecting interventions and creating positive behavior plans.

Questions regarding this report should be directed to **Director Richard Baum, Student Assessment & Research at 754-321-2500**. This memo and report may also be accessed via the Student Assessment & Research Web site at: <http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/sar/index.htm>.

VSW/MLW/NB/RGB/SLS/JAC:rs  
Attachments

cc: School Board Members  
Senior Leadership Team  
Directors, School Performance & Accountability



# Research Brief

## BEHAVIOR INCIDENTS AND SUSPENSIONS IN BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 2012-13 THROUGH 2014-15

The District's Code of Student Conduct Policy (School Board Policy 5.8) provides policies, rules, and laws designed to create a positive school culture and safe environment that is conducive to learning. Behavioral incidents occur when a student's actions are not in accordance with the District's Code of Student Conduct. The majority of disciplinary issues are expected to be addressed by teachers. If the issue is not resolved at the classroom level, it then gets referred to the schools Collaborative Problem Solving Team for a multi-tiered intervention to be developed and monitored (School Board of Broward County, 2013a).

Some incidents are severe enough to warrant mandatory disciplinary action. Consequences to incidents are intended to match the severity of the misbehavior. Major violations and repeat offences are met with stronger consequences. In all circumstances, exclusion from school is reserved for situations in which all other disciplinary means have been exhausted.

The District's Code of Student Conduct contains a discipline matrix which offers guidelines for assigning consequences to violations of school board policies. In school year 2013-14, policy 6005 afforded principals more flexibility, offering the matrix as a guideline for assigning consequences, but allowing principals to use their own discretion to accommodate any mitigating or aggravating circumstances (Broward County Public Schools, 2013b).

This report examines the past three years of student behavioral incident and suspension data in Broward County Public Schools (BCPS).

### I. METHOD

Incident and suspension data for both traditional and charter schools were retrieved from the District's data warehouse for the past three school years (2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15). Data are presented overall as well as by school level (elementary, middle, high, and center) and by racial group. Incidents are further broken out into categories that appear on the discipline matrix (attendance, rules violation, disruptive, substance abuse/drugs, acts against persons, property, bus, and other criminal). Suspensions are further classified into three categories: internal suspension, external suspension, and alternative to external suspension (AES).

## II. DEFINITIONS AND FORMULAS

- **Incident Rate** is the rate of incidents occurring at schools and is calculated by dividing the total number of incidents by the total number of students enrolled in school.
- **Percent of Students Committing at Least One Incident** is calculated by taking the number of students who have committed at least one incident and dividing it by the total number of students enrolled in school.
- **Percent of Students Committing Multiple Incidents** is calculated by dividing the number of students with more than one incident by the total number of students enrolled in school.
- **Change (increase/decrease) in Incident Rate** is calculated by subtracting the initial incident rate from the new incident rate and then dividing by the original incident rate.
- **Suspension Rate** is the overall rate of suspensions for schools and is calculated by dividing the total number of suspensions by the total number of students enrolled in school.
- **Percent of Students Suspended** is calculated by dividing the number of students receiving at least one suspension by the total number of students enrolled in school.
- **Percent of Students with Multiple Suspensions** is calculated by dividing the number of students that have received more than one suspension by the total number of students enrolled in school.
- **Suspension Rate by Suspension Type** is the rate at which a specific type of suspension (internal, external, or AES) occurs at schools and is calculated by dividing the number of suspensions of a specific type by the total number of students enrolled in school.
- **Internal Suspension** is a suspension where the student remains on campus but is not allowed to attend regularly scheduled classes for a determined period of time.
- **External Suspension** is a suspension where the student is not allowed to attend classes on any campus for a determined period of time.
- **AES** is a suspension where the child is removed from campus but attends another School Board of Broward County site for a determined period of time.
- **Rate of Incidents Resulting in Suspension** shows how often a student who commits a specific incident type is suspended for committing that incident and thus is a measure of how equitably suspensions are issued. This rate is calculated by dividing the number of suspensions issued for a specific type of incident by the total number of incidents of that same specific type.
- **Change (increase/decrease) in Suspension Rate** is calculated by subtracting the initial suspension rate from the new suspension rate and then dividing by the original suspension rate.

### III. DISTRICT TOTALS

**Incident Rate and Percent of Students with Incidents.** The incident rate in 2014-15 remained stable from the prior year at 37.2%. This represents a 17% decrease in the incident rate from 2012-13 when the incident rate was 45.0%. The percent of students involved in incidents (12.7%) was lower than the incident rate due to some of the students (6.6%) being involved in multiple incidents.

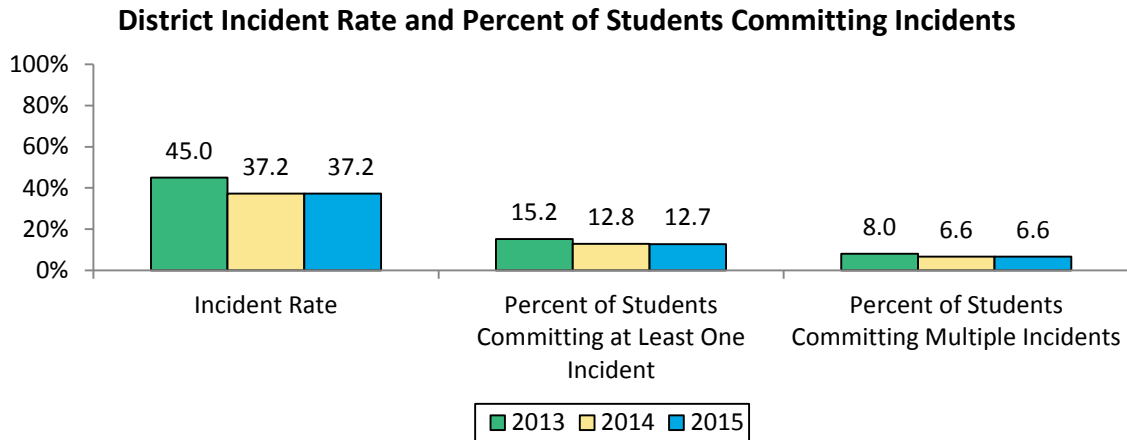


Figure 1. Incident rate and percent of students committing incidents Districtwide for the 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 school years.

**Incidents by Type.** Figure 2 shows the percent of students overall who committed specific types of incidents over the past three years. Disruptive incidents were registered by the largest percent of students across the District, followed by attendance, acts against person, and rules violation for the 2014-15 school year. For all three school years, disruptive incidents were the most reported incident type.

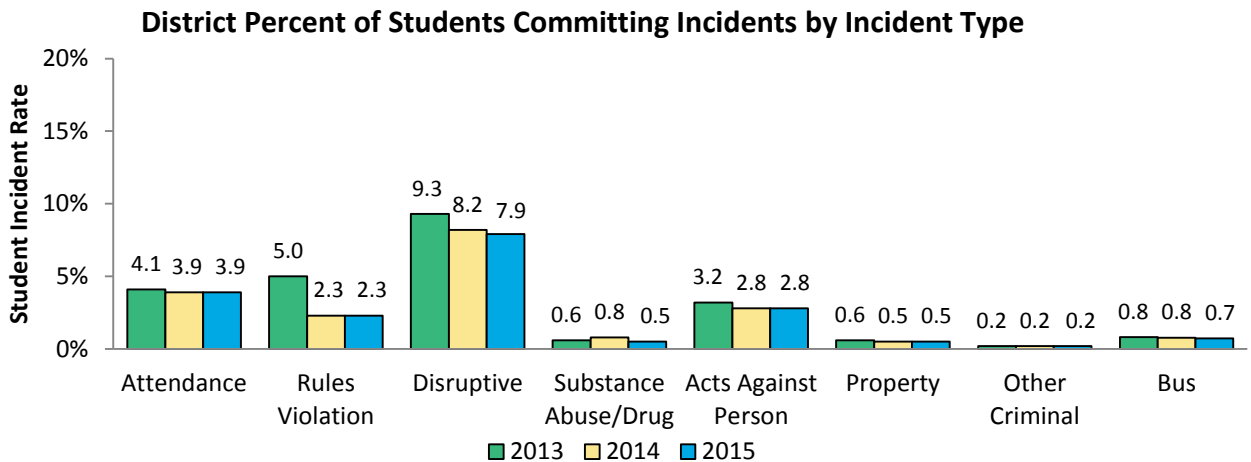


Figure 2. Percent of students with incidents by incident type Districtwide for the 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 school years.

**Suspension Rate and Percent of Students with Suspensions.** As with incidents, the suspension rate across the District in 2014-15 remained stable from the prior year at 22%. This represents a 21% decrease from 2012-13 when the suspension rate was 28%. The percent of students suspended (11%) was lower than the suspension rate due to some of the students (4%) receiving multiple suspensions.

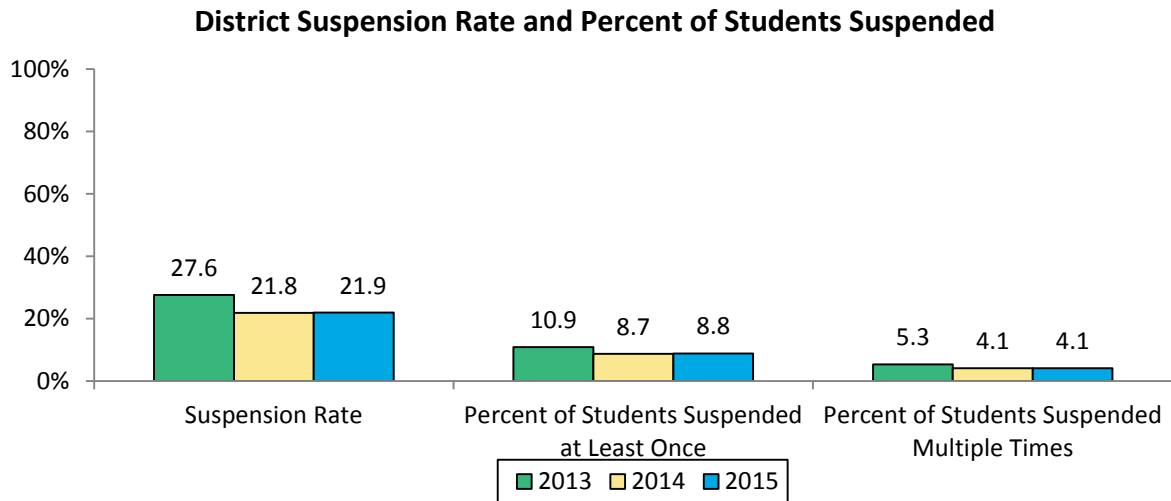


Figure 3. Suspension Rate and percent of students suspended Districtwide for the 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 school years.

**Suspensions by Type.** Less than 2% of students received external suspensions during the 2014-15 school year. Internal suspensions were the most common type issued, with 7.0% of students receiving an internal suspension, followed by AES, with 2.7% of students receiving an AES.

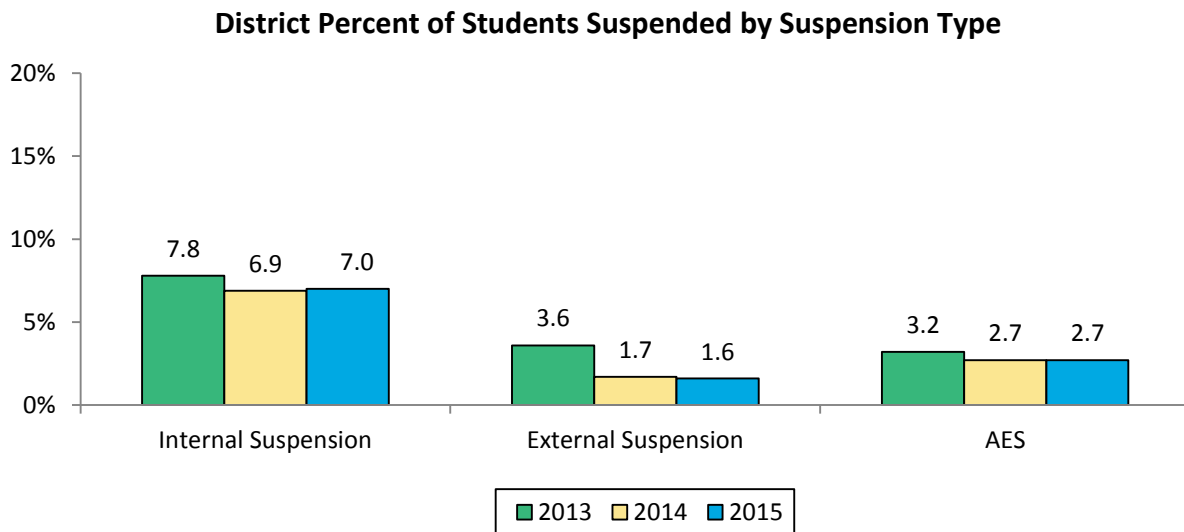


Figure 4. Percent of students with receiving specific types of suspensions Districtwide for the 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 school years.

### Distribution of Suspension by Suspension Type

The percent of suspensions that removed students from an academic environment (external suspensions) decreased from 20% in 2012-13 to 11% in 2014-15.

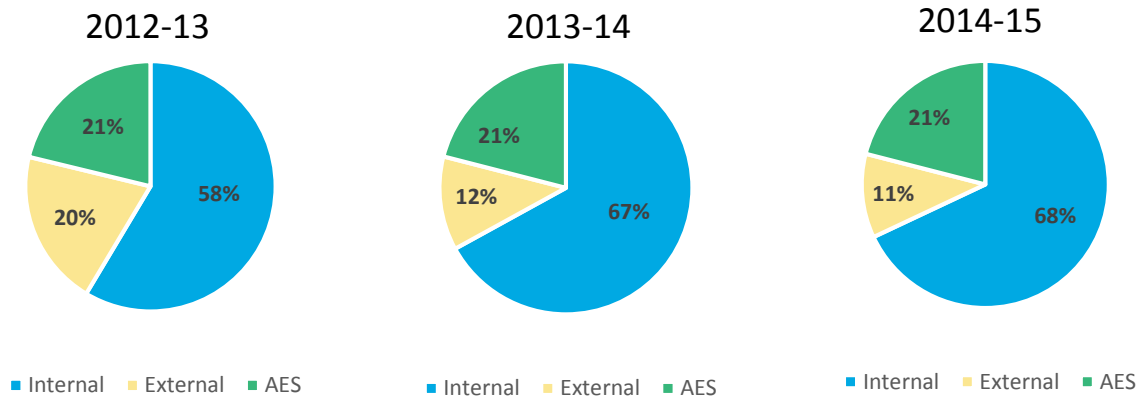


Figure 5. Distribution of suspensions by suspension type for school years 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15.

#### IV. District Totals by Student Race/Ethnicity

**Incident Rate and Percent of Students with Incidents by Race/ethnicity.** Black students registered the highest incident rate for the all three school years, with their incident rate being approximately three times that of Hispanic and White students. The percent of Black students involved in incidents was double that of Hispanic and White students. In all three groups, the incident rate dropped between 2011-12 and 2012-13 and then remained relatively stable between 2013-14 and 2014-15.

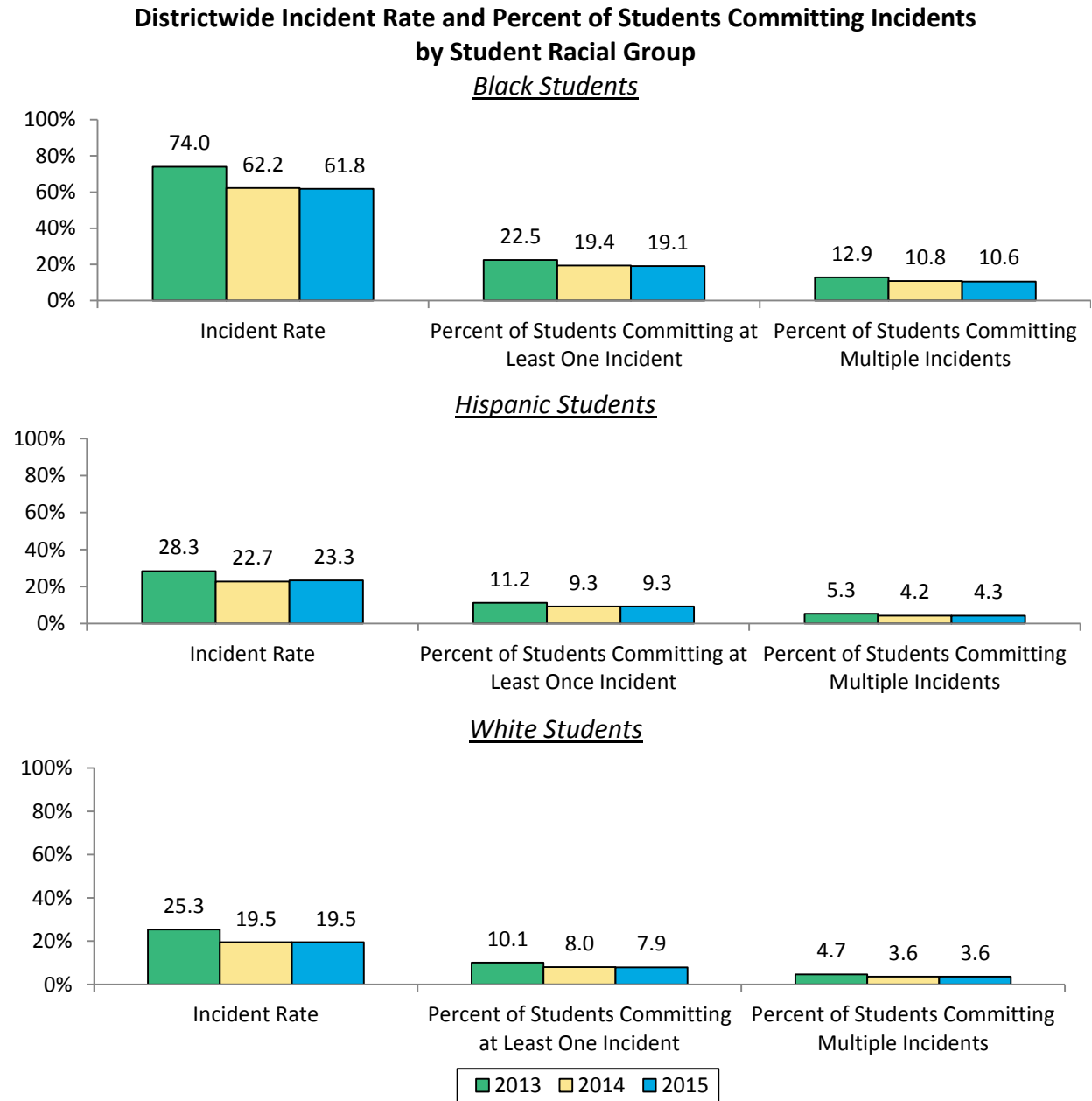


Figure 6. Incident rate and percent of students committing incidents Districtwide by race/ethnicity for the 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 school years.



**Percent of Students Committing Incidents Districtwide by Race/Ethnicity by Incident Type**

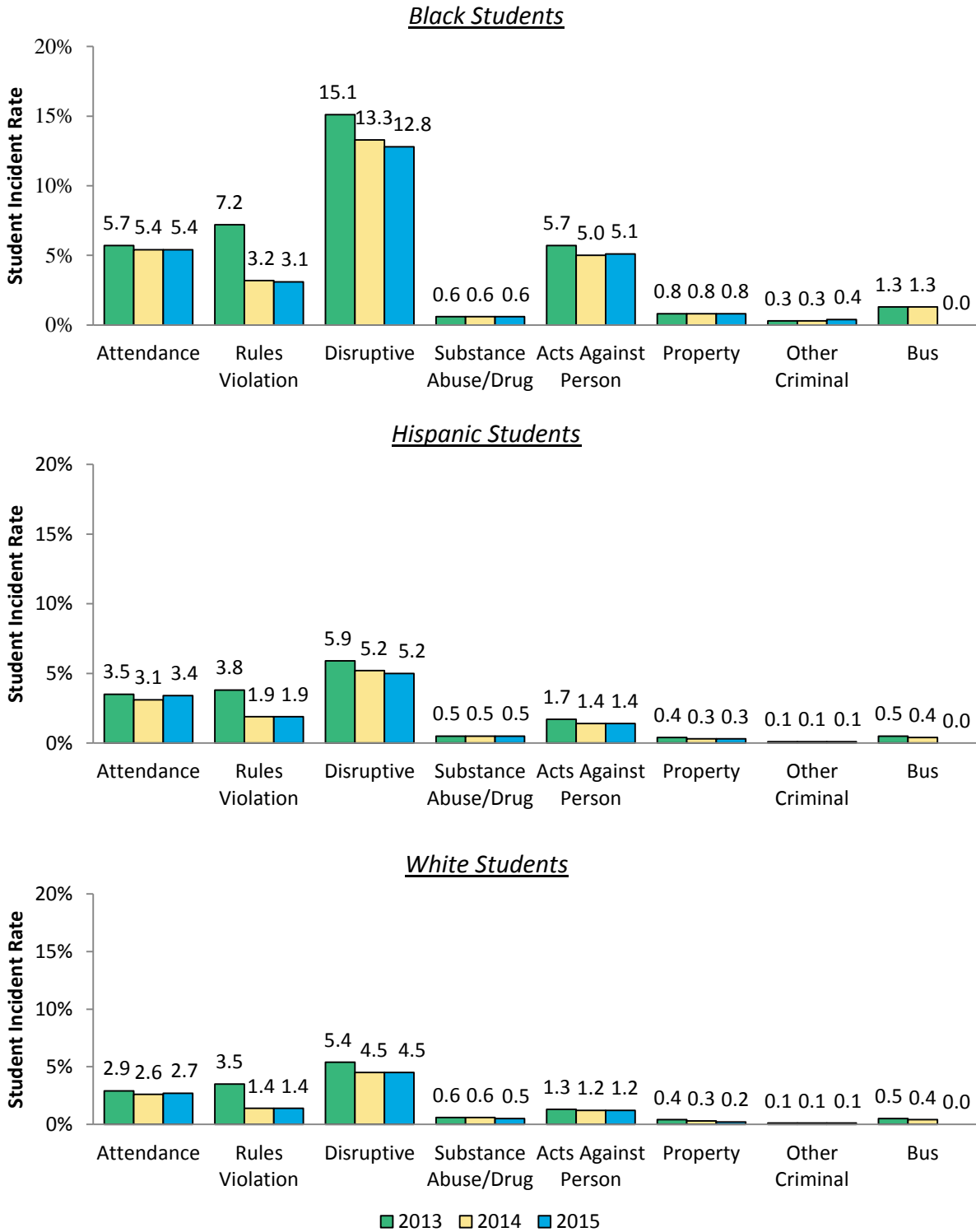


Figure 7. Districtwide percent of students with incidents by incident type by race/ethnicity for 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 school years.

**Suspension Rate and Percent of Students with Suspensions by Race/Ethnicity.** Suspension rates among the District’s three largest racial/ethnic groups are displayed in Figure 8. As with incidents, the suspension rate was higher for Black students compared to Hispanic and White students. During the most recently completed school year, 2014-15, the overall suspension rate for Black students was 14%, compared to 6% and 5% for Hispanic and White students, respectively. This pattern mirrors that of the rate of incidents by racial/ethnic group for the same year (17%, 8%, and 7% for Black, Hispanic, and White students respectively). For all three groups, the suspension rate decreased across the three school years.

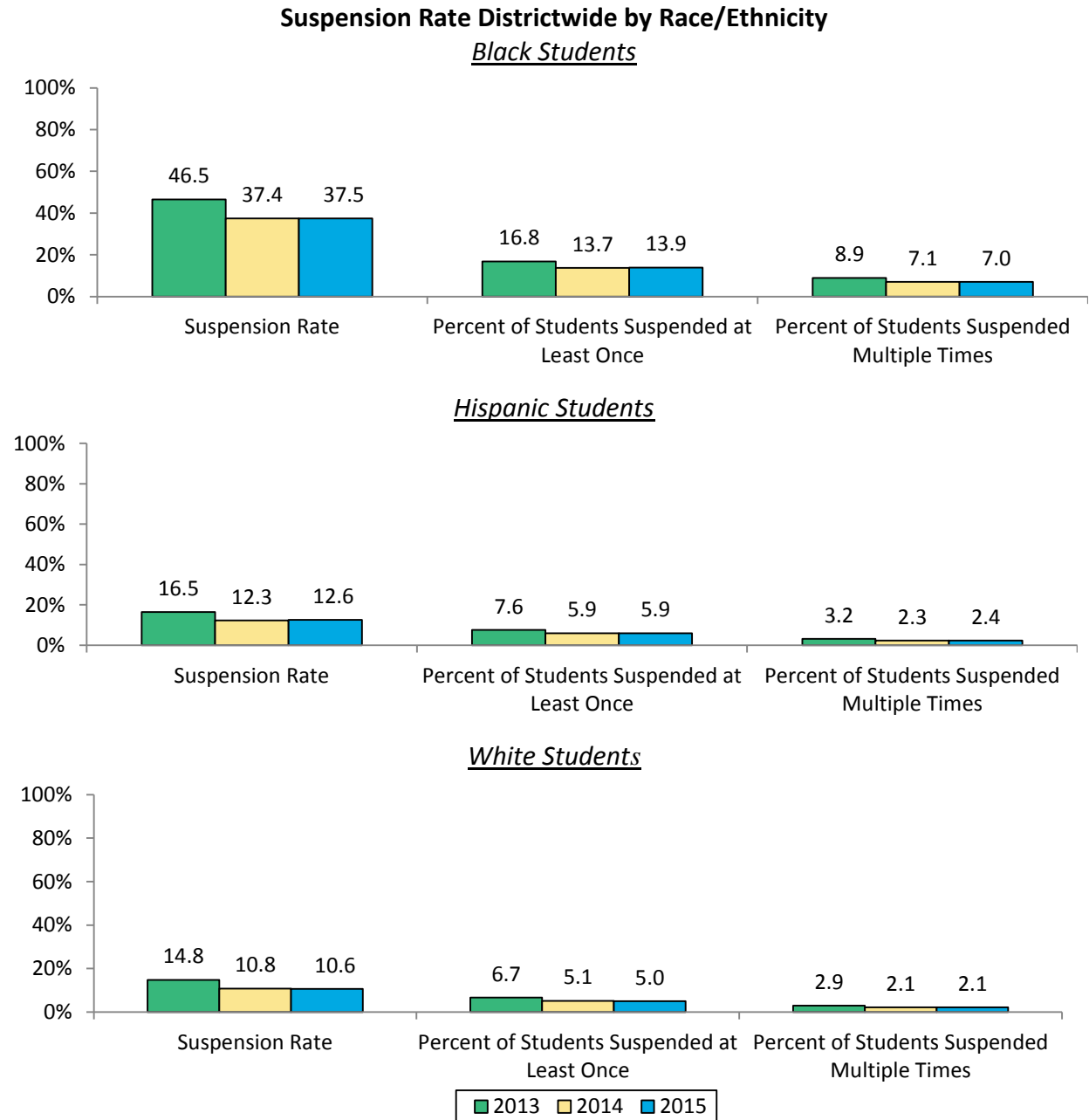


Figure 8. Suspension Rate and percent of students suspended Districtwide by race/ethnicity for the 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 school years.

**Suspensions by Type by Race/Ethnicity.** Internal suspensions were the most frequent type of suspension issued and external suspensions were the least frequently issued. Less than 3% of Black students and less than 1% of Hispanic and White students were suspended externally during the 2014-15 school year.

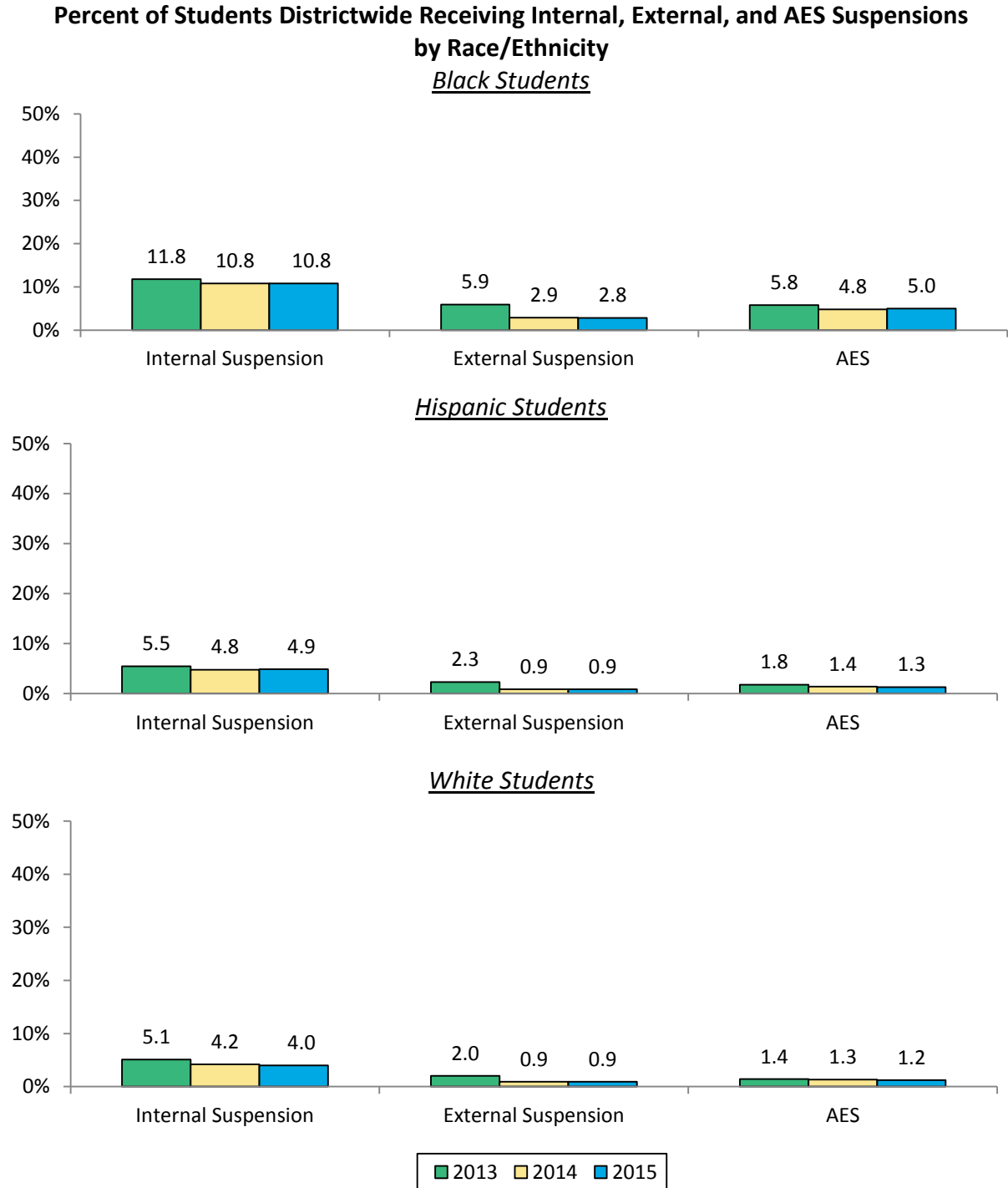


Figure 9. Percent students Districtwide with internal, external, and AES suspensions by race/ethnicity for the 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 school years.

**Rate of Incidents Resulting in Suspension.** Behavior violations resulted in suspensions at similar rates for all racial/ethnic groups. Black students registered somewhat higher suspension rates compared to White (5% higher) and Hispanic (11% higher) students for other criminal incidents. However, Black students registered lower suspension rates compared to White (4% lower) and Hispanic (5% lower) students for property incidents.

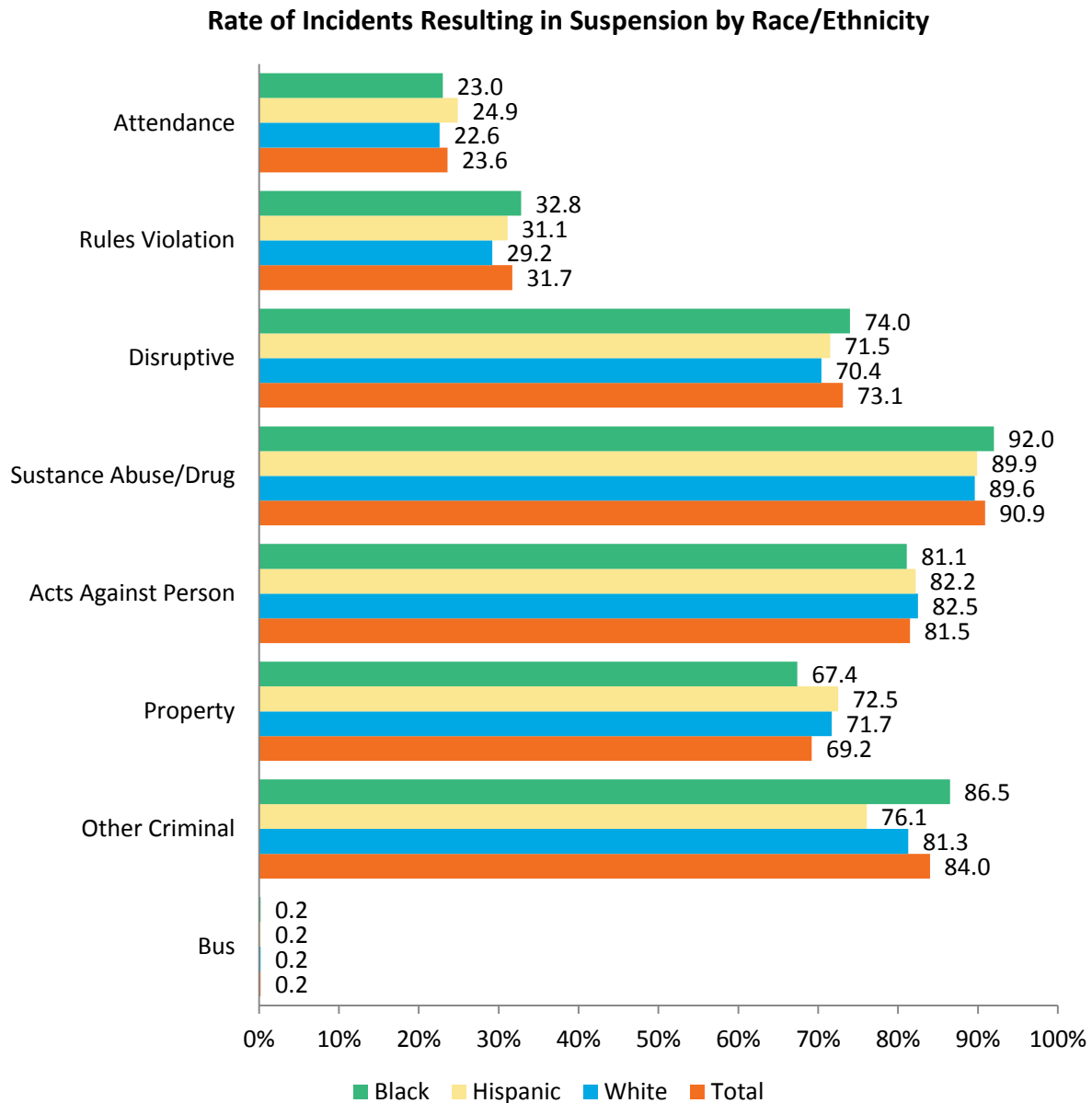


Figure 10. Rate of incidents resulting in a suspension by race/ethnicity by specific incident type for the 2014-15 school year.

## V. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TOTALS

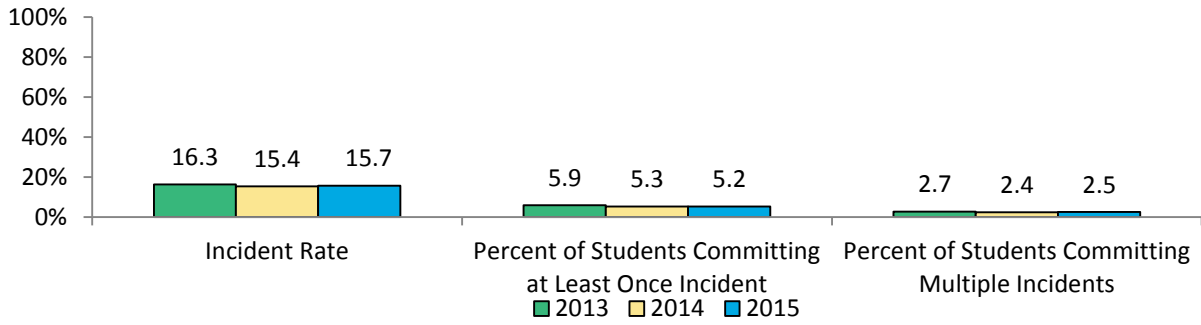
### **Incident Rate and Percent of Students Committing Incidents.**

Figures 11 and 12 illustrate the incident rate and percent of students committing incidents at elementary schools for the 2012-13 through 2014-15 school years. Over the three-year period the number and rate of incidents remained stable at elementary schools. Disruptive incidents were the most prevalent for all three school years, with 4.2%, 4.0%, and 3.8%, of all elementary school students registering at least one disruptive incident type. Less than 3% of elementary school students committed multiple offences for all three school years. These data include all incidents (including those that did not result in suspensions; see also Appendices A1 and A2).

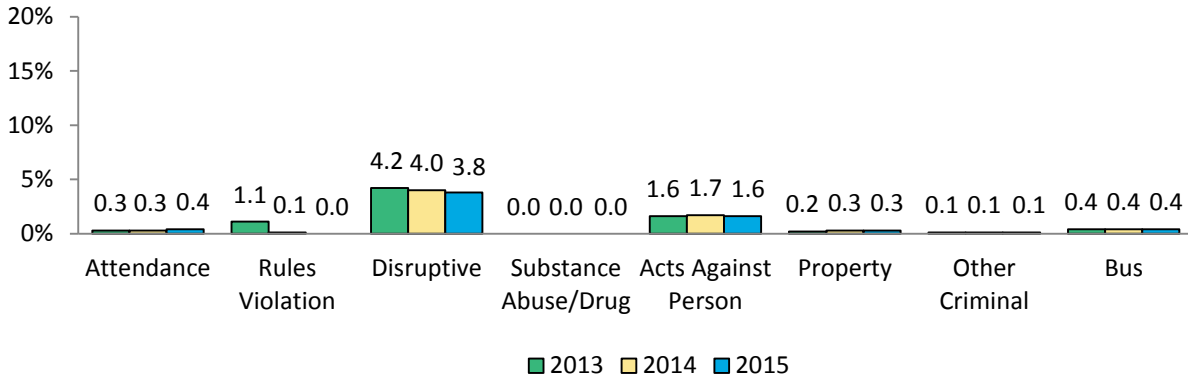
### **Suspension Rate and Percent of Students with Suspensions.**

Suspension rates and the percent of students suspended are displayed in Figures 13 and 14. As with incidents, these data indicate that, across all years, the rates for all types of suspensions were stable. During the most recently completed school year, 2014-15, the overall suspension rate was 6.2%, and the percent of students receiving at least one suspension of any type (internal, external, or AES) was 2.2%. Less than 1% of all elementary school students received an external suspension during the 2014-15 school year. About 1% of all elementary students were suspended multiple times (See also Appendix C).

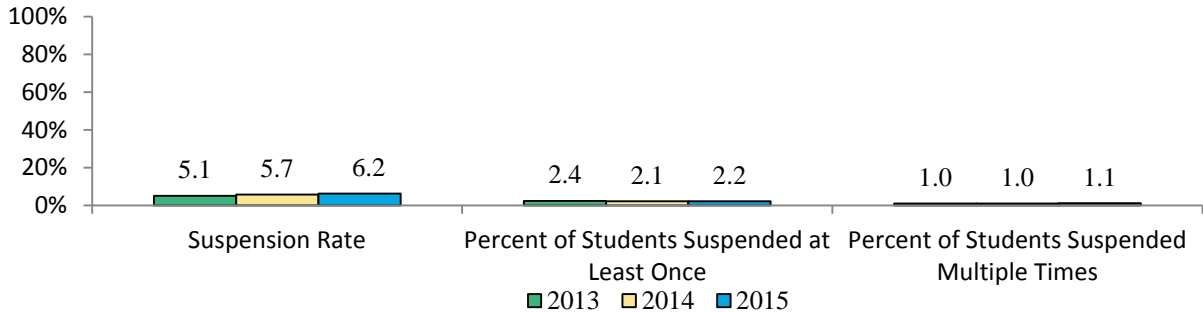
**Figure 11. Elementary School Incident Rate and Percent of Students Committing Incidents**



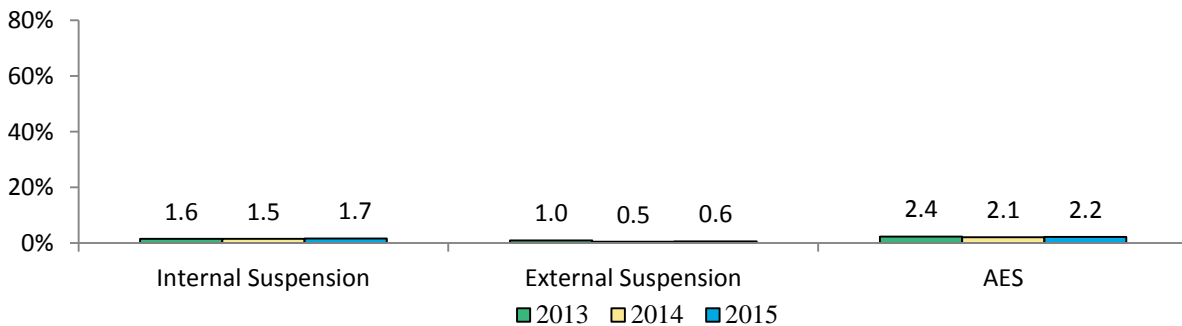
**Figure 12. Elementary School Percent of Students Committing Incidents by Incident Type**



**Figure 13. Elementary Schools Suspension Rate and Percent of Students Suspended**



**Figure 14. Elementary Schools Suspension Rate by Suspension Type**



Figures 11, 12, 13, and 14. Elementary school incident rate and percent of students committing incidents, percent of elementary students committing incidents by incident type, suspension rate and percent of students suspended, and percent of students with suspensions by suspension type for the 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 school years.

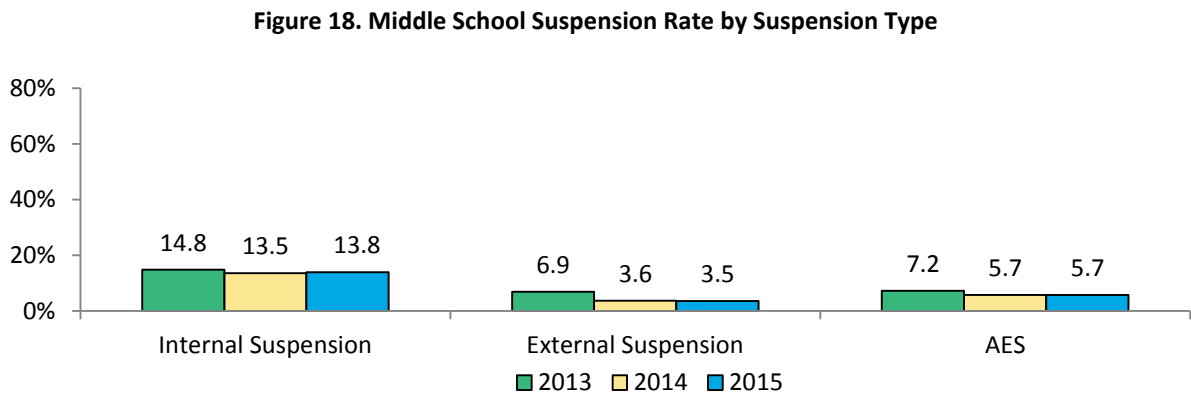
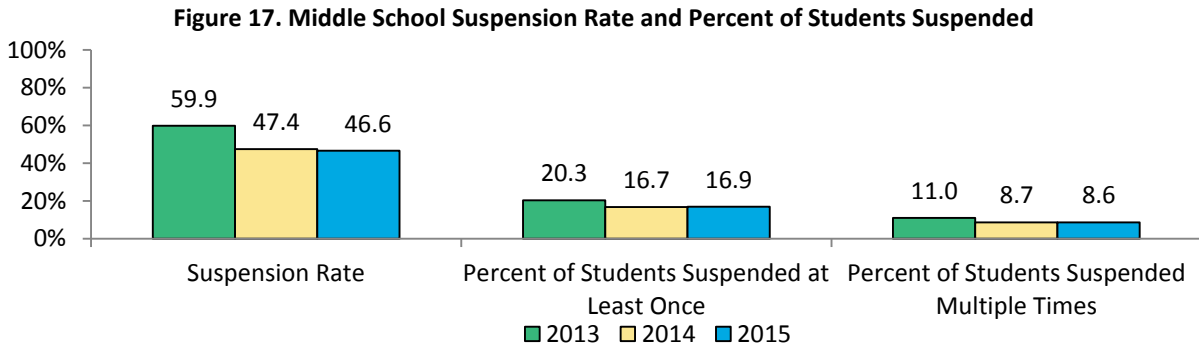
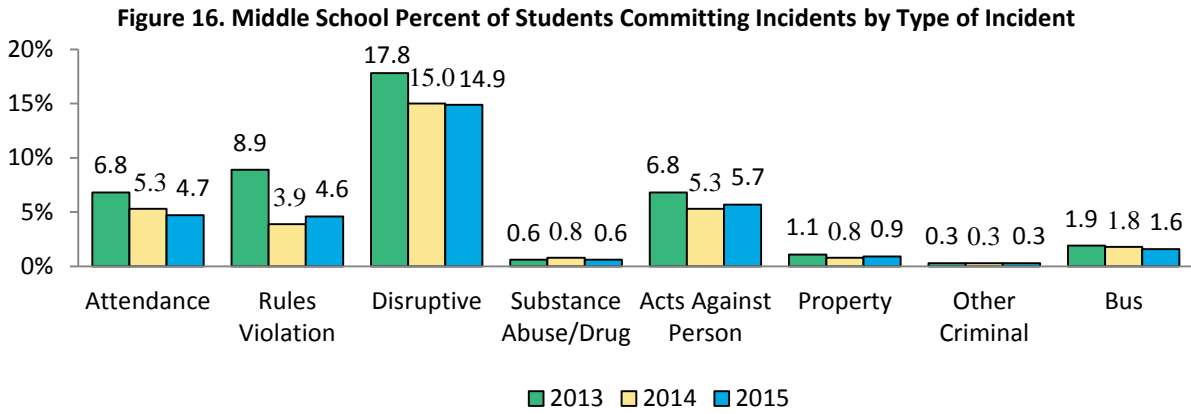
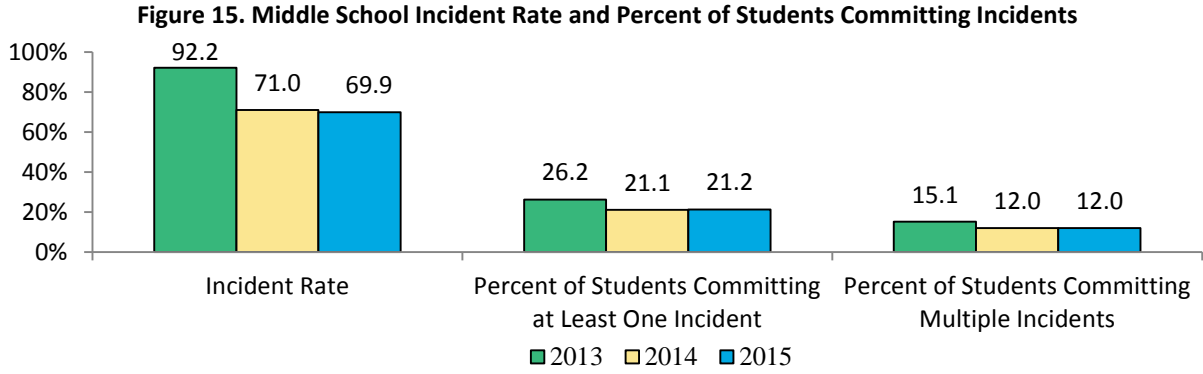
## VI. MIDDLE SCHOOL TOTALS

### **Incident Rate and Percent of Students Committing Incidents.**

The incident rate and percent of students committing incidents at middle schools for the 2012-13 through the 2014-15 school years are displayed in Figures 15 and 16. Over the three-year period the number and rate of incidents decreased at middle schools from 55,887 incidents (92.2% incident rate) in 2012-13 to 41,739 incidents (69.9% incident rate) in 2014-15. During the most recent school year, disruptive incidents registered the largest percent of students, with 14.9% of all middle school students registering at least one disruptive incident type, followed by acts against person (5.7%), and attendance (4.7%). These data include all incidents (including those that did not result in suspensions; see also Appendices A1 and A2).

### **Rate of Suspensions and Percent of Students with Suspensions.**

Suspension rates and the percent of students suspended are illustrated in Figures 17 and 18. These data indicate that, across all years, the rates for all types of suspensions decreased from 59.9% in 2012-13 to 46.6% during the 2014-15 school year. During the most recently completed school year, 2014-15, the percent of students receiving at least one suspension of any type (Internal, External, or AES) was 16.9%. Almost 4% of all middle school students received an external suspension during the 2014-15 school year, and less than 9% of all students were suspended multiple times (See also Appendix C).



Figures 15, 16, 17 and 18. Middle School incident rate and percent of students committing incidents, percent of students committing incidents by incident type, suspension rate and percent of students suspended, and percent of students with suspensions by suspension type for the 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 school years.



## VII. HIGH SCHOOL TOTALS

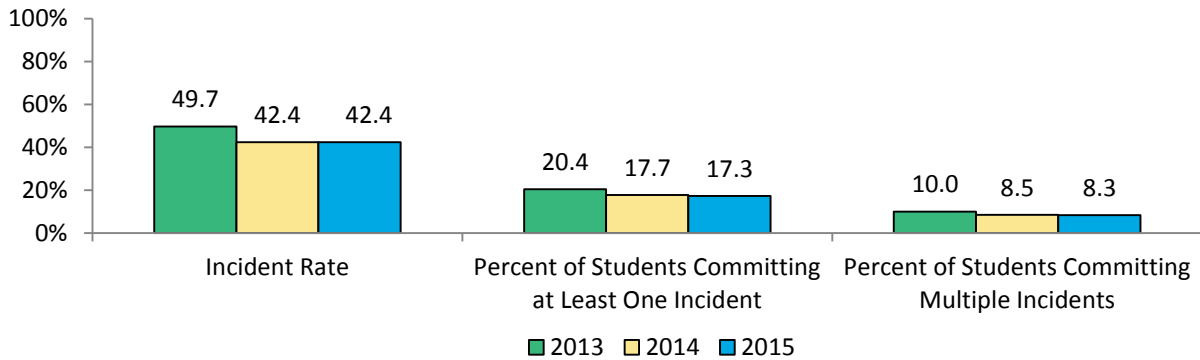
### **Incident Rate and Percent of Students Committing Incidents.**

The incident rate and percent of students committing incidents at high schools for the 2012-13 through the 2014-15 school years are displayed in Figures 19 and 20. Over the three-year period the number and rate of incidents decreased at high schools from 39,101 incidents (49.7% incident rate) in 2012-13 to 34,099 incidents (42.4% incident rate) in 2014-15. During the most recent school year, disruptive incidents registered the largest percent of students, with 8.5% of all high school students registering at least one disruptive incident type, followed by attendance (8.3%), and rules violation (3.8%). These data include all incidents (including those that did not result in suspensions; see also Appendices A1 and A2).

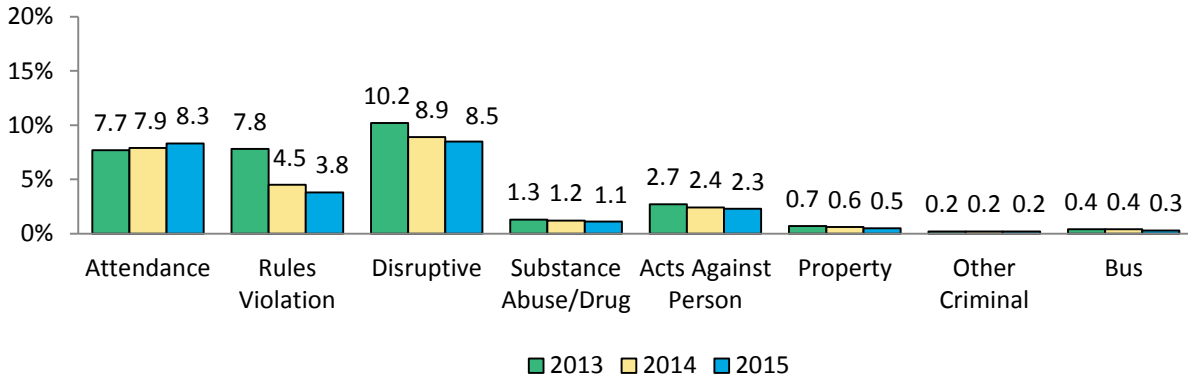
### **Rate of Suspensions and Percent of Students with Suspensions.**

Suspension rates and the percent of students suspended are illustrated in Figures 21 and 22. These data indicate that, across all years, the suspension rate decreased from 35.1% in 2012-13 to 24.9% during the 2014-15 school year. During the 2014-15 school year, the percent of students receiving at least one suspension of any type (Internal, External, or AES) was 12.2%. Less than 2% of all high school students received an external suspension during this year, and 5% of all students were suspended multiple times (See also Appendix C).

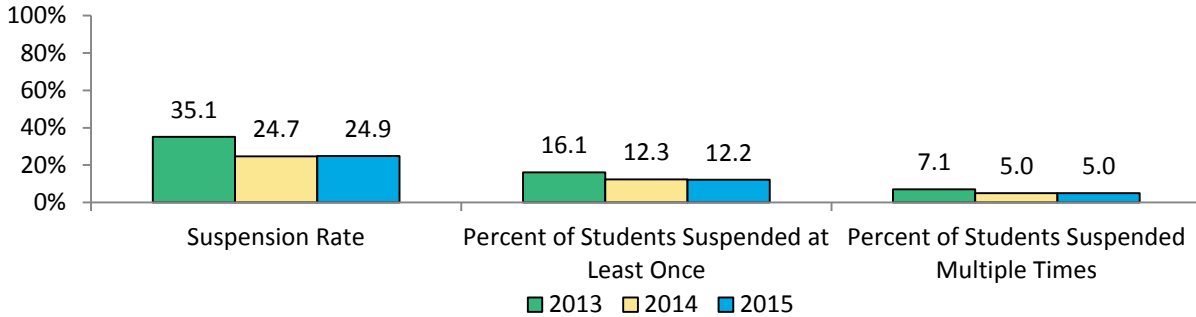
**Figure 19. High School Incident Rate and Percent of Students Committing Incidents**



**Figure 20. High Schools Percent of Students Committing Incidents by Incident Type**



**Figure 21. High Schools Suspension Rate and Percent of Students Suspended**



**Figure 22. High Schools Suspension Rate by Suspension Type**

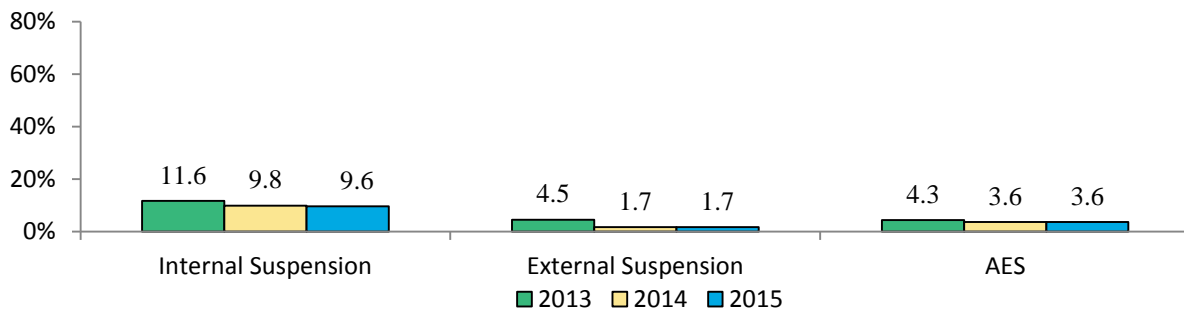


Figure 19, 20, 21 and 22. High School incident rate and percent of students committing incidents, percent of students committing incidents by incident type, suspension rate and percent of students suspended, and percent of students with suspensions by suspension type for the 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 school years.

## VIII. CENTER SCHOOLS TOTALS

### **Incident Rate and Percent of Students Committing Incidents.**

Figures 23 and 24 illustrate the incident rate and percent of students committing incidents at center schools for the 2012-13 through the 2014-15 school years. Over the three-year period the number and rate of incidents increased at center schools from 5,604 incidents (84.6% incident rate) in 2012-13 to 6,314 incidents (94.1% incident rate) in 2014-15. During the most recent school year, disruptive incidents registered the largest percent of students, with 14.4% of all center school students registering at least one Disruptive incident type, followed by attendance (11.5%), and acts against person (5.4%). These data include all incidents (including those that did not result in suspensions; see also Appendices A1 and A2).

### **Rate of Suspensions and Percent of Students with Suspensions.**

Suspension rates and the percent of students suspended are displayed in Figures 25 and 26. These data indicate that, across all years, the rates for all types of suspensions slightly increased from 2012-13 (58.2%) to 2014-15 (59.5%). During the 2014-15 school year, the percent of students receiving at least one suspension of any type (Internal, External, or AES) was 18.0%. Almost 7% of all center school students received an external suspension during the same year. Ten percent of all center students were suspended multiple times (See Appendix C).

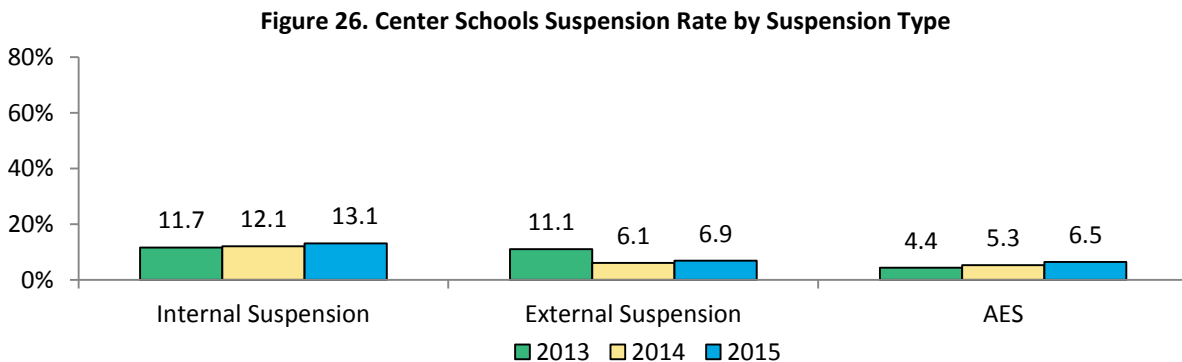
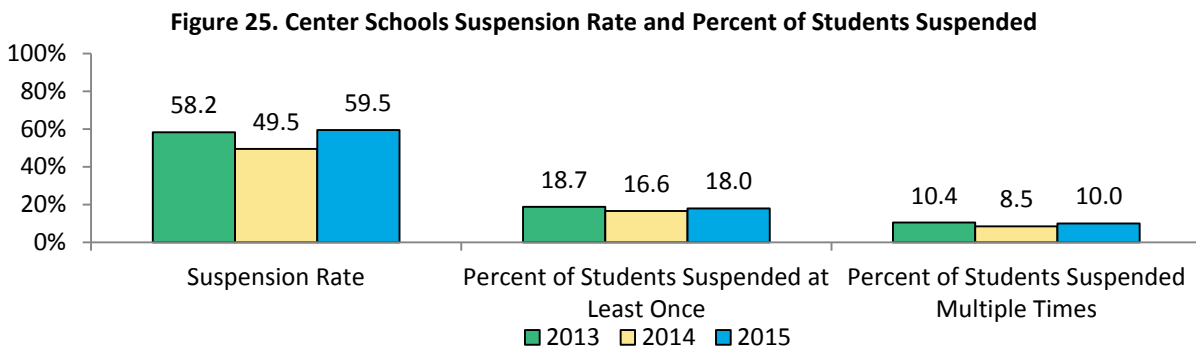
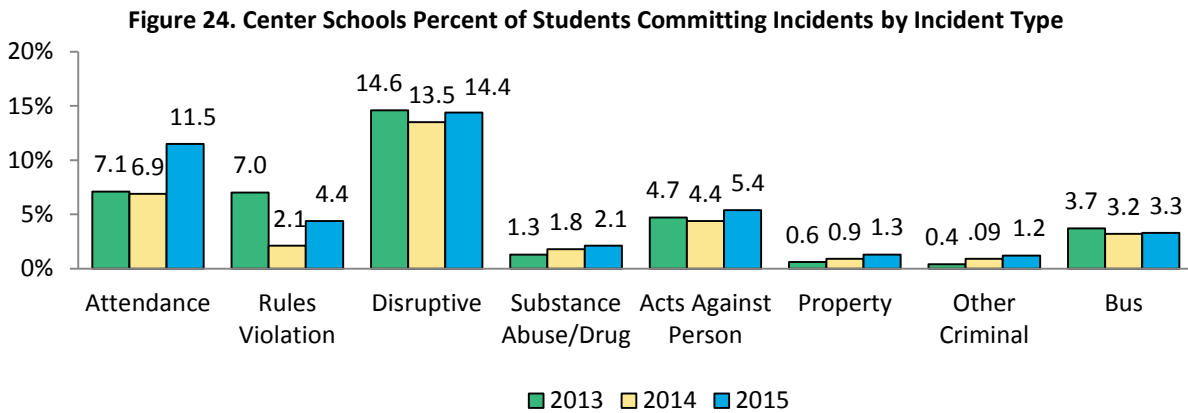
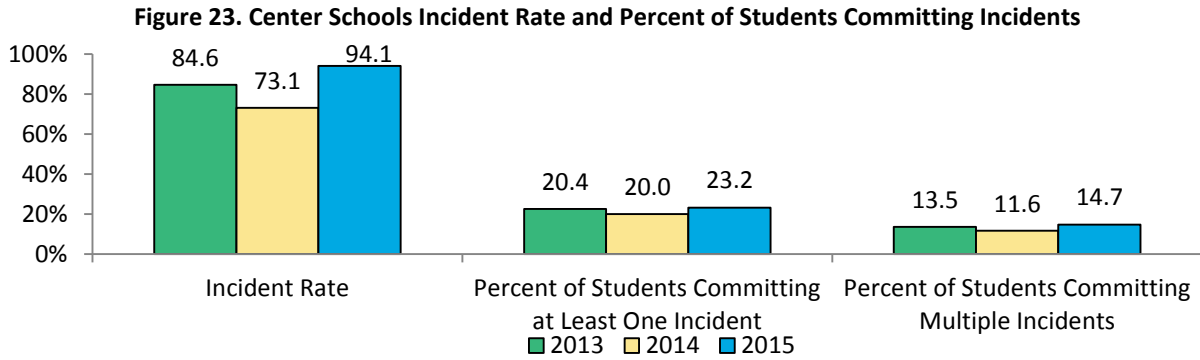


Figure 23, 24, 25 and 26. Center School incident rate and percent of students committing incidents, percent of students committing incidents by incident type, suspension rate and percent of students suspended, and percent of students with suspensions by suspension type for the 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 school years

## IX. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Districtwide data on incidents and suspensions for students enrolled in traditional and charter schools for the 2012-2013 through 2014-2015 school years were presented in this report. Overall, there was a 15% decrease in the number of incidents between 2012-13 and 2014-15 (from 120,325 to 101,993), which corresponds to a 17% decrease in the incident rate. The percent of students committing incidents decreased from 15% to 13% in the same time period, with the percent of students committing multiple incidents decreasing from 8% to 7%.

For the same three-year period, the number of suspensions decreased by 19% (from 73,868 to 59,728), which corresponds to a 21% decrease in the suspension rate. The percent of students suspended decreased from 11% to 9%. The percent of students suspended multiple times decreased from 5% to 4%.

While the rate of incidents and suspensions decreased (incident rate from 45% to 37% and suspension rate from 28% to 22%) over the three-year period, the rate remained stable from 2013-14 to 2014-15.

Centers had the highest incident rate (94%) in 2014-15, followed by middle schools (70%), high schools (42%), and elementary schools (16%). During the same school year, internal suspensions and AES assignments constituted 89% of all suspensions assigned, with only 11% of suspensions removing students from an academic environment. This is down from 20% in 2012-13.

At all school levels, disruptive behavior was the number one infraction (54.5%) for students who committed an incident. Incident and suspension rates decreased for each of the major racial groups, while maintaining the same pattern as previous years. Black students registered a higher incident rate (19.1%) than Hispanic (9.3%) and White (7.9%) students. The pattern of suspensions across racial/ethnic groups remained similar to the pattern of incidents across racial/ethnic groups, suggesting that students are suspended based on the infraction incurred.

The District has taken steps to ensure objectivity when determining disciplinary actions for students. The Discipline Matrix, which was introduced during the 2004-05 school year, was developed to assist school staff in making fair and equitable decisions related to the assignment and reporting of punitive actions. Schools are required by School Board Policy 5006: Suspension and Expulsion to use the Discipline Matrix as their guide in determining appropriate consequences for student infractions (School Board of Broward County, 2013b). The District also uses the Preventing Recidivism through Opportunities, Mentoring, Interventions, Supports, and Education program which provides alternatives to students who have committed infractions that would typically lead to arrest and entry into the juvenile justice system.

Schools create school-wide positive behavior plans annually which specify the prevention and intervention strategies that they will be using. Additionally, administrators are trained annually on current discipline legislation and policy, and are provided with data to monitor their school's

incident and suspension rates. In the beginning of school year 2014-15, Student Assessment and Research began providing data dashboards to school principals. These reports show the percent of students without behavior incidents for each month of the current school year as well as the number of incidents each month as a whole and by student sub-groups. Incident and suspension data are also available for teachers and administrators in the Behavioral and Academic Support Information System (BASIS).

The Diversity, Prevention and Intervention department handles all matters concerning student discipline. For further information regarding disciplinary policies and/or initiatives please contact the department at (754) 321-1655.

## **X. APPENDICES**

Detailed data summaries are provided in the appendices:

Appendix A:

Table A-1: Total number and rate of incident occurrences by incident type by school level, 2012-13 through 2014-15

Table A-2: Total number and rate of students who committed incidents by school level, 2012-13 through 2014-15

Appendix B:

Table B-1: Total number and rate of incidents by student race/ethnicity, 2012-13 through 2014-15

Table B-2: Total number and rate of students who committed incidents by student race/ethnicity, 2012-13 through 2014-15

Appendix C: Total number and rate of suspensions and students suspended by school level, 2012-13 through 2014-15

Appendix D: Total number of suspensions by student race/ethnicity and special populations, 2012-13 through 2014-15

Appendix E: Total number and rate incidents assigned a suspension by student race/ethnicity, 2014-15

Appendix F: Total number of incidents by school, 2012-13 through 2014-15

Appendix G: Total number of suspensions by school, 2012-13 through 2014-15

Appendix H: Incidents categories specifics

## XII. REFERENCES

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