On Average 94.0% of students are in school everyday.

- The average daily attendance rate increased by 0.3 percentage points between 2017-18 and 2019-20.
- Attendance was lower for high schools (93%) compared to elementary, multi-level (95%), and middle schools (96%). Attendance at centers was the lowest (66%).
- Average absence per student ranged from 5 at middle schools to 36 at centers during the 2019-20 school year. Average absences were down at all school levels in 2019-2020 at least in part because physical attendance stopped being taken on March 13, 2020 due to the Coronavirus outbreak having closed down physical schools.
- Black, Hispanic, and White students had the same daily attendance rate (94%). However, Black students had a higher proportion of unexcused absences (66%) than Hispanic (52%) or White students (37%).
- Middle schools had the smallest proportion of students with chronic or severe chronic absenteeism (11%), followed by multi-level (13%), elementary (14%), high (22%) and centers (78%).

Additional Resources
- Detailed school-by-school results: https://www.browardschools.com/sar
- Information on BCPS's attendance programs: https://www.browardschools.com/Page/34787
DATE: July 29, 2020

TO: All Principals

FROM: Daniel F. Gohl
Chief Academic Officer

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


Broward County Public School's overall average daily attendance rate (ADA) increased by 0.3 percentage points between the 2017-18 (93.7%) and 2019-20 (94.0%) school years. This increase was due in part to the Coronavirus outbreak that led to the closure of physical schools on March 13, 2020. Physical attendance was only taken up to March 13, 2020 and this report only charts attendance up to that date. This likely led to an increased ADA for 2019-20 because student absences tend to drop off in the last quarter of the school year. The ADA rate was similar for elementary, middle, and multi-level schools (ranging from 95.1% to 95.7%) in 2019-20. High schools were lower (93.3%), and centers showed the lowest ADA rate (65.7%).

During the most recent school year, ADA rates were the same for Black, Hispanic, and White students (93.9%, 94.0%, and 94.1%, respectively). However, absences varied by type for each group. Of all absences recorded, Black students had the largest proportion of unexcused (compared to excused) absences (66.4%) followed by Hispanic (51.8%) and White students (37.1%).

Broward data for the 2019-20 school year were examined using the attendance categories that align with the School Improvement Plans. The categories are: Regular Attenders (0 – 4.9% absences), At-Risk (5 – 9.9% absences), Chronic Absence (10 – 19.9% absences), and Severe Chronic Absenteeism (20% or more absences). For students categorized as having either chronic or severe chronic absenteeism, middle schools had the smallest proportion of students (10.7%), followed by multi-level (13.2%), elementary (13.7%), high (22.4%), and centers (78.4%).

Questions regarding this report should be addressed to Richard Baum, Director of Student Assessment & Research at 754-321-2500. This report may also be accessed on the Student Assessment & Research website at: https://www.browardschools.com/sar.

RWR/DG/VSW/RGB/RAA/JAC:rs

Attachments

cc: School Board Members
Senior Leadership Team
Directors, Office of School Performance & Accountability
STUDENT ATTENDANCE IN BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

This brief summarizes attendance trends in Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) for the three school-year period from 2017-18 to 2019-20 at both innovative district and charter schools. Due to the Coronavirus outbreak, all attendance data related to the 2019-20 school year in this report is based on physical classroom attendance records ending on March 13, 2020.

METHOD
Data from all three school years, excluding summers, were gathered from the District’s data warehouse. For each school year, the total population reflects the number of students in grades kindergarten through 12 who attended a BCPS school for at least five days during the year. Student absences are credited to the school the student attended the most during that school year. Absences are classified as excused (parent/guardian notified the school), unexcused (no parent/guardian notified the school), or suspension (external suspension). Due to the Coronavirus outbreak, students’ physical classroom attendance for 2019-20 ends on March 13, 2020. Students’ daily login status to their virtual learning that began on March 30, 2020 to the end of the school year is not presented in this report. Thus, this report includes only those dates up to March 13, 2020. Results are presented in figures and tables, and additional materials are included in appendices.

OVERALL ATTENDANCE
The overall District average daily attendance (ADA) rate increased from 93.7% in 2017-18 to 94.0% in 2019-20. Figure 1 illustrates the ADA rate by school level for the three-year period (also see Appendix A).
Figure 1. Average daily attendance rate, by school level, 2017-18 through 2019-20.

Figure 2 shows the average number of days absent per student by school level for the three-year period. Historically, high school students averaged more days absent than middle, elementary, and multi-level students. Over the three-year period the average number of recorded absences decreased at all school levels from 2017-18 to 2019-20. Students at centers averaged more than three times as many days absent than students at the high school level (also see Appendix B). The lowered average absences per student is in large part an effect of cutting the 2019-2020 school year off in this report on March 13, 2020 as the number of days possible to be absent decreased in 2019-2020. Also, traditionally the number of student absences increase after Spring State testing, which did not take place in 2019-2020.

Table 1 displays the average daily attendance rate by race/ethnicity for the three-year period. For the District, the ADA increased with slightly less than a one percentage point difference (0.3 percentage points) between 2017-18 and 2019-20. Black, Hispanic, and White students all had relatively the same average daily attendance rate (93.9, 94.0, and 94.1, respectively) in the 2019-
20 school year. In all three years, Asian students had the greatest average daily attendance rate (also see Appendix C).

Table 1  
*Student Attendance Rates by Students’ Race/Ethnicity, 2017-18 through 2019-20*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>2017-18 Average Daily Attendance Rate</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>2018-19 Average Daily Attendance Rate</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>2019-20 Average Daily Attendance Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>9,962</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>10,024</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>9,952</td>
<td>95.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>106,869</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>105,974</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>104,480</td>
<td>93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>95,440</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>97,034</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>97,618</td>
<td>94.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Racial</td>
<td>7,377</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>7,410</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>7,279</td>
<td>93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>93.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>94.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>56,399</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>53,829</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>51,658</td>
<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>District</strong></td>
<td><strong>277,260</strong></td>
<td><strong>93.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>275,429</strong></td>
<td><strong>93.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>272,087</strong></td>
<td><strong>94.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 displays the number and percent of students with perfect attendance and students with fifteen or more total absences, by school level. In 2019-2020, multi-level schools had the highest percent of students with perfect attendance (15.3%), followed by middle schools (14.4%) and elementary schools (10.3%). High schools and centers had the lowest percent of students with perfect attendance (7.8%, and 6.1%, respectively). Centers had the highest percent of students with fifteen or more absences (69.9%). High schools had the next highest (16.5%), followed by multi-level (9.0%), elementary (8.6%), and middle schools (6.7%).
### Table 2
**Number and Percent of Students with Perfect Attendance and Fifteen or More Absences by School Level, 2017-18 through 2019-20**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017-18</th>
<th></th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th></th>
<th>2019-20</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Absences</td>
<td>15+ Total Absences</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>No Absences</td>
<td>15+ Total Absences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>7,750</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>19,135</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>115,103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>4,007</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>8,123</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>54,295</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>3,886</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>23,475</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>78,830</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3,888</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>5,236</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi</td>
<td>2,293</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>4,010</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>23,796</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Absences by Type: Excused, Unexcused, and Suspension**

Figure 3 shows the percent of absences disaggregated by type: excused, unexcused, and suspension, by school level for 2019-20. Centers had the highest percent of unexcused absences (89.5%), followed by multi-Level schools (58.0%). The school level with the lowest percent of unexcused absences was middle schools (37.0%; also see Appendix D).
Figure 3. Rate of absence by type and by school level, 2019-20.

Figure 4 shows the percent of excused, unexcused, and suspension data based on the total number of absences, by the largest student racial/ethnic groups. The data show that although Black, Hispanic, and White students all have about the same average daily attendance rate (93.9%, 94.0%, and 94.1%, respectively), Black students registered a higher unexcused absence percent (66.4%) than Hispanic (51.8%) or White students (37.1%; also see Appendix E).

Figure 4. Rate of absence by type and by largest racial/ethnic groups, 2019-20.
ABSENCE TYPE AND ACHIEVEMENT PERFORMANCE  
(2019-20 NOT AVAILABLE)

Differences in 2019-20 achievement test performance could not be explored between students with only excused absences and students with only unexcused absences, as the Spring 2019-2020 state tests did not take place due to the Coronavirus outbreak. Previous school year analyses can be found at the links below.


ATTENDANCE CATEGORIES IN 2019-20

Passed by Congress in 2015, the federal education law, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), replaces No Child Left Behind (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). States must include five indicators of school quality, four on academic achievement, and a fifth, non-academic measure. Many states chose chronic absenteeism as the fifth indicator (Jordan & Miller, 2017). Florida’s ESSA plan requires school districts to implement an early warning system which identifies students in K-8 who may need additional support to succeed in school. As part of the early warning system, attendance must be included (Florida Department of Education, 2018).
Broward data for the 2019-20 school year were examined using the attendance categories that align with the School Improvement Plans. The categories are: Regular Attenders (0 – 4.9% absences); At-Risk (5 – 9.9% absences); Chronic Absenteeism (10 – 19.9% absences); and Severe Chronic Absenteeism (20% or more absences). Middle schools had the smallest proportion of students categorized as having either chronic or severe chronic absenteeism (10.7%), followed by multi-level (13.2%), elementary (13.7%), high (22.4%), and centers (78.4%); (see Figure 5 and Appendix F).

*Figure 5. Percent of students absent by school level and attendance category for the 2019-20 school year.*
**On March 13, 2020 due to the Coronavirus outbreak Broward School County Public Schools closed physical classrooms through the end of the school year. Students completed the school year through distance learning. Online login rates from March 30, 2020 through June 2, 2020 will be reported in a separate Research Brief.**

**School Level Attendance Information in 2019-20**

Three years of detailed attendance information at the school level, including absence by type, students with 10 or more unexcused absences, students with 15 or more total absences, the average daily attendance rate, and the average number of absences per student, are available in Appendix G.

**Summary**

**Overall Trends in Attendance**

- The District’s average daily attendance rate increased by 0.3 percentage points from 2017-18 (93.7%) to 2019-20 (94.0%) (see Figure 1 and Appendix A).
- Attendance was lower for high schools (93.3%) compared to elementary (95.1%), middle (95.7%), and multi-level schools (95.3%). Attendance at centers was the lowest (65.7%) (see Figure 1 and Appendix A).
- Students enrolled at centers missed an average of 36 days during the 2019-20 school year, up until March 13, 2020, when physical schools in Broward County closed due to the Coronavirus outbreak. On average, high school students missed 8 days, elementary school and multi-level school students missed 6 days, and middle school students missed 5 days during the same time period (see Figure 2 and Appendix B).
- Black, Hispanic, and White students all had similar average daily attendance rates (93.9%, 94.0%, and 94.1%, respectively) in the 2019-20 school year, while in all three years, Asian students had the greatest average daily attendance rate (see Table 1 and Appendix C).
- Overall, the average daily attendance rate went up for the 3-year period of 2017-18 to 2019-20 and the average number of absences per student went down. This is partly due, however, to the fact that schools stopped taking record of physical attendance after March 13, 2020 due to the closing of physical schools due to the Coronavirus outbreak. This led to fewer total days students could be absent in the 2019-20 school year and may have affected the average daily attendance rate as well, given that attendance historically drops off in the final quarter of the year, after state testing has taken place.
Attendance Type in 2019-20

- **Perfect attendance:** Multi-level schools had the highest percentage of students with perfect attendance (15.3%), followed by middle schools (14.4%), elementary schools (10.3%), and high schools (7.8%). Centers had the lowest percentage of students with perfect attendance (6.1%; see Table 2).

- **Fifteen or more absences:** Centers had the highest percentage of students with 15 or more absences (69.9%). High schools had the next highest (16.5%), followed by multi-level (9.0%), elementary (8.6%) and middle schools (6.7%; see Table 2).

- **Unexcused absences by school level:** Centers had the highest percentage of unexcused absences (89.5%), followed by multi-level schools (58.0%). The lowest percentage of unexcused absences was in middle schools (37.0%; see Figure 3 and Appendix D).

- **Unexcused absences by race/ethnicity:** Black students had a higher percentage of unexcused absences (66.4%), compared to Hispanic students (51.8%), and White students (37.1%; see Figure 4 and Appendix E).

Attendance Categories in 2019-20

- Middle schools had the smallest proportion of students categorized as having either chronic or severe chronic absenteeism (10.7%), followed by multi-level (13.2%), elementary (13.7%), high (22.4%), and centers (78.4%; see Figure 5 and Appendix F).

**DISCUSSION**

The Student Services Department, responsible for monitoring attendance and initiating policy change, has taken the following actions to address attendance in the past year:

**Mandatory Training for Staff: Attendance Recordkeeping**

The BCPS Attendance Office in the Student Services Department coordinated with the Professional Development Standards & Support Department to provide training to teachers, principals, and attendance clerks to record and monitor student attendance. The training courses were delivered on the Canvas learning platform and were completed by: 10,516 teachers; 1,097 school leaders; and 830 attendance clerks. Training included a review of Florida laws & District policy, guidelines for attendance recordkeeping, best practices for improving regular attendance, promotion of the new online absence reporting form, and information to share during back-to-school nights.

The Coordinator for District Attendance is available as a resource for school-based staff that may need assistance with aligning practice to policy. School leaders were supported, as requested, with presentations for school staff meetings and planning for interventions.
Attendance Awareness Month, September 2019

A resolution in recognition of Attendance Awareness Month was submitted and acknowledged by the School Board of Broward County on August 20, 2019.

The Miami Marlins partnered with the BCPS Attendance Office and Plantation High School to offer free tickets to a game in September for students with regular attendance from the 2018/19 school year. More than 1,100 students were contacted to recognize their previous year’s regular attendance and were offered tickets to pick up from school staff. Appendix F indicates that regular attendance at Plantation High School increased 11.4% from 2018/19 to 2019/20.

The Office of Communications assisted with the development and promotion of Attendance Awareness Month messaging on the District website and social media. A memo from the Student Support Initiatives & Recovery Division was provided to principals in September and included messages to help promote regular attendance through robocalls, school websites, social media, and school marques.

The Attendance Twitter account (@BCPS_180) observed 3,225 impressions from two Tweets in August 2019 related to Attendance Awareness Month. During Attendance Awareness Month in September, there were six Tweets with 16,465 impressions.

Attendance Awareness Activities 2019/20

During the 2019/20 school year, the Miami Marlins and Florida Panthers continued partnerships with the BCPS Attendance Office. Students with stellar attendance continued to be recognized and offered incentives with support from these organizations to help improve student attendance. Parents were notified through the ParentLink system by voice messages, email, and text messages.

After the 1st and 2nd marking periods during the National Hockey League (NHL) season, students with regular attendance (during 2019/20) were included in a special recognition. More than 60% of students enrolled in BCPS attended more than 95% of school days and were notified that Broward Schools and the Florida Panthers appreciate their daily efforts. In addition, families had an opportunity to purchase discounted tickets (with free parking at the BB&T Center) for a Florida Panthers hockey game. No purchases were required to receive the recognition via robocall for this attendance recognition. There was no additional cost to the school district for this initiative.

The Miami Marlins and BCPS Attendance Office had plans to recognize students and parents that maintained regular attendance (less than 5% absences) through the end of the 3rd quarter of the 2019/20 school year. The potential reach for this recognition would have included more than 160,000 students. This initiative would not result in additional cost to the school district, however the closing of schools and postponement of the Major League Baseball season due to the COVID-19 pandemic changed the course of engagement through the end of the school year. The Attendance Office would like to recognize the Miami Marlins for their continued support of our students and families.
The BCPS Attendance Office maintains the @BCPS_180 Twitter account. (The account refers to Broward Schools and 180 school days). The intent of this account is to share important information about student attendance to the District’s stakeholders. The account is maintained throughout the year, including summer months. Messages are designed to promote regular attendance, educate stakeholders about awareness of chronic absenteeism, how chronic absenteeism impacts an individual student and an entire classroom, and where to find resources to help reduce chronic absenteeism in their school. Principals are encouraged to follow @BCPS_180 and share useful messages that can help promote attendance at their school. Parents, teachers, and community partners may find useful information through the history of the account.

*NEW* – Introduction of the Online Absence Reporting Form

BCPS launched a new online absence reporting form that was made available on all traditional school websites at the start of the 2019/20 school year. The online form can be found on each school website under the main heading “Contact” on a page titled “Report an Absence.” The online form will send the parent’s reason to excuse an absence to their child’s school attendance clerk and a confirmation message to the parent with a copy of their submission.

In the first year of use, the form was submitted 34,650 times throughout the District schools. Student information is matched with either the student’s date of birth or student number. The matching rate to confirm student identities was 89%. Date of birth was used most with 75% of matching submissions using the student’s date of birth instead of the student ID number. Single day absences were reported on 80% of submissions, while 20% of submitted forms reported absences for multiple days.

Cooper City High School and Cypress Bay High School reported the highest volume of use for reporting absences. From 2018/19 to 2019/20, both high schools experienced an increase in the percent of excused absences and a decrease in average number of absences per student (Appendix G).

At a Regular School Board Meeting on February 20, 2019, it was suggested to implement an application, or electronic form, for parents to submit a reason for excused absences to their child’s school. The online form was designed to be accessed on a mobile device through the BCPS Mobile App (available on Android and Apple formats) and on the mobile device’s internet browsers. This initiative was developed at no additional cost to the District through collaboration with the Student Services Department, I&T Department, District Advisory Council, District Attendance Committee, and survey responses from Attendance Clerks in our schools.

School Improvement Plan (SIP): Attendance Plan

Each school in the District is required to complete a School Improvement Plan (SIP). Attendance Plans are a required component in the SIP because of the strong correlation between regular attendance and academic achievement. Data provided to each school for the SIP mirrors data
collected by the State of Florida for ESSA and further categorizes student attendance based on their total days of enrollments as:

- **Regular Attenders**: 0 – 4.9% absences
- **At-Risk Attendance**: 5 – 9.9% absences
- **Chronic Absenteeism**: 10 – 19.9% absences
- **Severe Chronic Absenteeism**: 20% or more absences

These categories are useful for school leaders and community members in identifying which individual students and grade levels have the highest needs for student & family engagement, parental support, or connections to additional services through the school district or community partners. While a relatively small percentage of students fall into the Severe Chronic Absenteeism category, this is also where schools are likely to find students and families that may need support from a school social worker or a family therapist due to additional stressors. Data specific to each school is available in Appendices F and G.

All schools in BCPS are required to have representation at training sessions hosted by the Office of Service Quality at the Office of School Performance & Accountability. The Coordinator for District Attendance was available for direct support to staff that had questions or concerns about their school’s attendance data or for help with their attendance plan. Specific feedback regarding the Attendance Plan was provided to each school principal by October 13, 2019.

**District Policies and Recommendations from the District Attendance Committee**

The District Attendance Committee reviewed *Policy 5.5: Attendance* during the 2019/20 school year to ensure alignment with recent updates to Florida Statutes. The committee’s considerations also included review of trends in student attendance data over a 3-year period and District practices. The committee and District staff collaborated to develop revisions for Policy 5.5 that were brought to the School Board of Broward County for adoption. To access the most recent adoption of Policy 5.5 on the District website, visit:

- [https://www.browardschools.com/attendance](https://www.browardschools.com/attendance)
- [https://www.browardschools.com/policies](https://www.browardschools.com/policies).

The Student Code of Conduct is guided by District policies and informs parents and students of responsibilities for regular school attendance. Portions of the Attendance Policy are represented in Section 1 of the 2019-2022 version of *The Code Book for Student Conduct*.

The District Calendar Committee meets monthly to consider calendar development and options for upcoming school years. Student attendance data is often considered for: the day of the week that a school year starts; average daily attendance (ADA) before and after holidays or community crisis events (i.e. severe weather, public health concerns, community violence, etc.). The BCPS Attendance Office is responsible for providing reports to help the committee make informed decisions regarding calendar dates.
Increased Mental Health Support in Broward Schools

Mental health staff can help to improve the well-being of students experiencing personal challenges. Student attendance is a key performance indicator associated with student achievement. Students with attendance concerns may benefit from interventions from a school counselor, school social worker, school psychologist, or family therapist.

Since the 2018 Florida Legislature passed Senate Bill 7026, the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act, Broward County Public Schools has been able to increase the number of mental health staff directly serving students and families. A Broward County Referendum, “Secure the Next Generation,” was approved by voters in 2018 to provide four years of additional local funding that includes essential programs such as school counselors, school social workers, and behavioral staff.

At the start of the 2019/20 school year, this combined additional funding for Broward County Public Schools resulted in a plan to hire an additional 151 positions for direct student support.

Attendance Policy 5.5 and Additional Attendance Information

Policy 5.5: Attendance is available in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Portuguese at: https://www.browardschools.com/attendance

For further information regarding attendance policies and/or initiatives please contact Phillip Shaver, Coordinator, District Attendance, at 754-321-1623.
Appendix A:
Average daily attendance rate by school level, 2017-18 through 2019-20

Appendix B:
Average number of absences per student, by school level, 2017-18 through 2019-20

Appendix C:
Average daily attendance rate by student demographics, 2017-18 through 2019-20

Appendix D:
Number and percent of excused and unexcused absences, by school level, 2017-18 through 2019-20

Appendix E:
Number and percent of excused and unexcused absences, by race/ethnicity, 2017-18 through 2019-20

Appendix F:
Chronic absenteeism by school level and by school, 2018-19 through 2019-20

Appendix G:
Number and percent of excused and unexcused absences, students with 10 or more unexcused absences, 15 or more total absences, average daily attendance rate, and average number of absences per student, by school 2017-18 through 2019-20
References


Prepared by
Jack Ciminera, Database Researcher IV
Rachel Askew, Research Specialist
Richard Baum, Director

The School Board of Broward County, Florida

Donna P. Korn, Chair
Dr. Rosalind Osgood, Vice Chair
Lori Alhadeff
Robin Bartleman
Heather P. Brinkworth
Patricia Good
Laurie Rich Levinson
Ann Murray
Nora Rupert

Robert W. Runcie, Superintendent of Schools

The School Board of Broward County, Florida prohibits any policy or procedure that results in discrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national origin, marital status, race, religion, or sexual orientation.