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DATA REPORT: Youth in the Justice System

Indiana Youth Institute | March 2021

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Understanding the Justice System for Youth

Historical and current school discipline practices and policies continue to disproportionately push some kids of color out of the classroom and into the juvenile justice system, leading to severe long-term outcomes in education, economic well-being, and health. Even a short time in justice system can have profound and potentially lifelong negative consequences for the young people involved.¹ Locked detention can cause young people serious harm, both immediate and long-term. Harsh conditions and intensive supervision inside the facilities can also intensify symptoms for youth with serious mental health problems or a history of trauma or abuse. Involvement in the justice system disrupts a young



2 in 4
Hoosier youth in the justice system are kids of color.

person's schooling and makes it more likely that they will fail classes or drop out. When compared to peers who are not detained, youth who spent time in custody were less likely to complete high school and also less likely to find employment.

In 2017, Indiana's rate of 185 per 100,000 youth under 21 youth residing in juvenile detention, correctional and/or residential facilities ranked 7th in the nation and was higher than the national average of 138 per 100,000 youth. Indiana's rate was also higher than all its neighboring states.² Indiana's youth justice population steadily decreased by 23.9% by July 2020, indicating positive trends for the State.³

Understanding the policy context, data, underlying factors, and effects can illuminate and improve the outcomes for justice-involved youth. Half of all youth (50.9%) in the justice system are a racial or ethnic minority, though only 1 in 3 youth (34.1%) in Indiana are a race or ethnicity other than White. The factors pushing some kids into the juvenile justice system are complex and often may not be pinpointed to a singular offense or event. A variety of risk factors, such as experiencing maltreatment and abuse, living in poverty, low commitment to schools, and residing in a high-crime neighborhood can contribute to a child's likelihood of committing a crime and potential involvement with the youth justice system.⁴ Underlying risk factors can include:

- **Trauma:** This may be experienced prior to entering the system or during their involvement.
- **Abuse and Neglect:** A child that experiences abuse and neglect is 55% more likely to be at risk for arrest and 96% more likely to commit a violent crime.
- **Community Resources:** Communities that lack support, especially high poverty communities, may lead to youth being in the system.
- **Substance Abuse/Mental Health:** Between 60% to 70% of youth arrested yearly in the United States suffer from some kind of mental illness. Youth who have a severe mental illness and do not receive proper treatment are more likely to return to incarceration as an adult.⁵

Average Daily Population in Juvenile Correctional Facilities, Indiana: 2019

Facility	Number of Youth in DOC
LaPorte Juvenile Correctional Facility	37
Logansport Juvenile Correctional Facility	17
North Central Juvenile Correction Facility (which is part of the Logansport Facility)	126
Pendleton Juvenile Correctional Facility	224

Source: Indiana Department of Correction

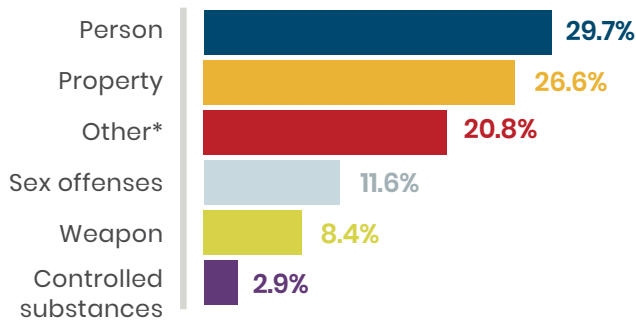
The U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reported the following trends among children and youth in the justice system, which illustrate potential causes for youth to turn to delinquency or crime:

- 70% reported that something very terrifying or bad had happened to them;
- 67% reported experiencing someone injured severely or killed; and
- 22% reported attempting suicide at some point in their lives.⁶

As of July 2020, 335 youth in Indiana were in an Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) juvenile correctional facility where 50.9% were committed for a violent crime (Offense Level I). This has dropped by 23.9% since July 2017, when nearly 400 juveniles were in facilities. Thirty-eight youth were on parole.⁷

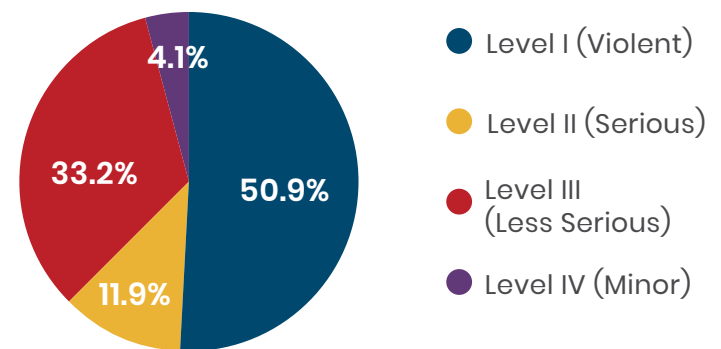
- The majority of the youth, as of July 2020, were male (91.9%).
- Among Hoosier youth committed to IDOC, 49.1% are White, 33.5% are Black, 7.8% are Hispanic and 9.5% are all other Hoosier youth.
- The average age at intake into a juvenile facility is slightly older than age 16, and the average length of stay is eight months.⁸
- 41.5% of youth committed to the Department of Correction were from five counties: St. Joseph (16.2%), Marion (10.9%), Vanderburgh (5.2%), Allen (4.8%), and Elkhart (4.5%).⁹

Type of Offense for Juveniles Committed to the Department of Correction, Indiana: July 2020



Source: Indiana Department of Correction

Percentage of Offenses by Level, Indiana: July 2020

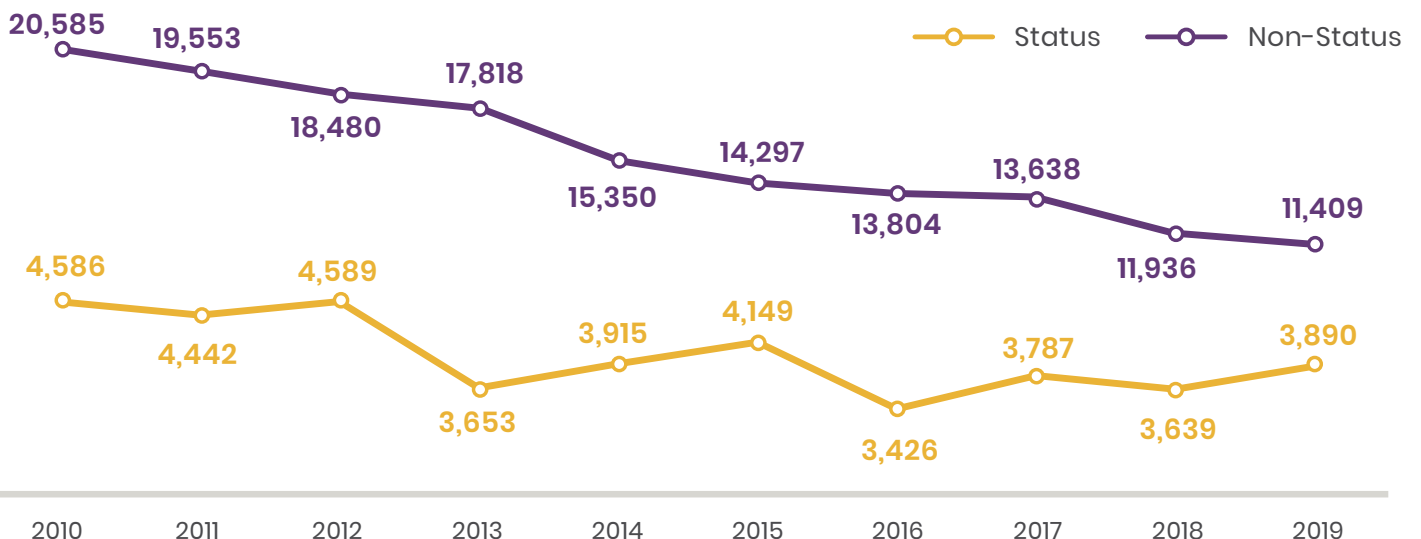


Source: Indiana Department of Correction

Children are processed through the youth justice system when they are under the age of 18 and have been accused of committing a delinquent act (an act that would be criminal if committed by an adult or is a status offense).¹⁰

Among juveniles committed to an IDOC correctional facility, the most common offense is against a person, which includes direct physical harm or force (29.7%). The next most common offense is property crime (26.6%), which includes burglary, theft, shoplifting and vandalism.¹¹

Juvenile Status and Non-Status Filings, Indiana: 2010–2019



Source: Indiana Office of Court Services, Office of Judicial Administration

Based on the IDOC classification of offense level for juvenile offenders, 50.9% of youth were committed for a violent offense (Offense Level I) and 4.1% were committed for a minor offense (Level IV).¹²

Juvenile offenses are divided into two primary categories, status offenses and non-status offenses. Status offenses would not be considered a crime if committed by an adult, such as running away, habitual truancy, or buying alcohol. Non-status offenses are those that would be a crime if committed by an adult, such as shoplifting or battery.¹³

- In 2019, there were 11,409 non-status delinquency cases and 3,890 status offense cases in Indiana.
- Between 2015 and 2019, the number of juvenile non-status case filings has fallen 20.2%, and the number of status case filings has fallen 6.2%.¹⁴

25,550 juveniles were placed on probation in 2018.

- Of the juveniles placed on probation, 69.2% of referrals were non-status delinquent and 30.0% were status delinquent.
- Of the 11,888 cases that were concluded in 2018, 84.0% were due to completion of probation.¹⁵

Percentage Change in Juvenile Offense Case Filings, Indiana: 2010–2019		
	2010 to 2015	2015 to 2019
Non-Status	25.4% ↓ Decrease in Filings	20.2% ↓ Decrease in Filings
Status	14.6% ↓ Decrease in Filings	6.2% ↓ Decrease in Filings
2010 to 2019		
Non-Status	44.6% ↓ Decrease in Filings	
Status	15.2% ↓ Decrease in Filings	

Source: Indiana Office of Court Services, Office of Judicial Administration



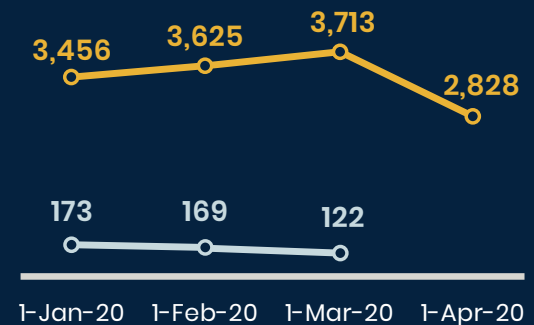
An April 2020 survey of Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) networks among 30 states found that juvenile detention populations decreased by 24% between March 1 (3,713 youth in juvenile detention facilities) and on April 1 (2,828 youth in juvenile detention facilities). Along with seeing a decrease in the overall juvenile detention populations, the average admissions per day

showed a decrease of 29%. The increase in the overall population was correlated to a decreased release rate not new admissions.¹⁶

Between February 1, 2020 and March 1, 2020, the percentage of juveniles being released increased by 11%, while new admissions decreased by 50%. In May 2020, the release rate decreased by 22% from March 2020, indicating youth are staying in the juvenile detention facilities longer.¹⁷

Juvenile Detention Population and Average Daily Admissions in 30 JDAI Sites, United States: January 1 – April 1, 2020

- Juvenile Detention Population
- Average Daily Admissions



Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation

Disproportionality in the System

Indiana's youth justice data illustrate racial and ethnic disparities of the youth involved with the system, as there is an overrepresentation of Black youth in Indiana's youth justice system. The data for justice-involved youth skew disproportionately towards Black youth as compared to the total representation of Black youth in Indiana.¹⁸

- Indiana's 2018–2020 Juvenile Justice Plan denoted the statistically significant disproportionality for youth of color that exists at every juvenile justice decision point. Black and Hispanic Hoosier youth have the greatest likelihood of disproportionate contact with the justice system; Black Hoosier youth face the greatest disparity in the justice system when compared to their peers.
- Black Hoosier youth are 3.5 times more likely to be referred to court than the average youth; 3.1 times more likely to be placed in secure confinement; and 3.1 times more likely to be waived to adult court.
- Hispanic youth are 1.5 times as likely to be referred to juvenile court than the average youth; 1.7 times as likely to be placed in secure confinement; and 2.8 times as likely to be waived to adult court.¹⁹

Black Hoosier youth are 3.5 times more likely to be referred to court than the average youth.

Disproportionality in the youth in justice system is not unique to Indiana; it is rooted in our country's history. Americans of color have a tumultuous history with policing, incarceration, and the social perceptions of crime. Many of these historical practices and policies continue to shape the justice system and the interaction with historically marginalized communities (e.g., racial and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and mental illness, and those who identify as LGBTQ).

The following resources provide deep insights into the history and policies that have shaped the juvenile justice system:

- [Repairing the Breach: A Brief History of Youth of Color in the Justice System and Stemming the Rising Tide: Racial & Ethnic Disparities in Youth Incarceration & Strategies for Change](#) (W. Haywood Burns Institute for Youth Justice, Fairness, & Equity)
- [Juvenile Crime, Juvenile Justice](#) (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine)
- [Disabled Behind Bars](#) (Center for American Progress)
- [Unjust: How The Broken Juvenile And Criminal Justice Systems Fail LGBTQ Youth](#) (Movement Advancement Project)

Connections between School Discipline and the Youth Justice System

Many disciplinary techniques can negatively impact student achievement, increase students' risk of dropping out, and increase the likelihood of involvement youth and criminal justice system. Harsh school disciplinary policies and law enforcement policies often intersect to feed young people into the youth justice system, colloquially known as the school-to-prison pipeline.²⁰ According to Indiana Code [20-33-8-14](#) and [20-33-8-16](#), students may be suspended or expelled for criminal behavior, defiant or disruptive behavior, or firearm/weapon possession. However, a student must be suspended or expelled for firearm and/or weapon possession. Suspensions can only be up to 10 days, while an expulsion may be for the remainder of a semester or the school year. A principal may require students to attend an alternative program, such as counseling, parent conferences, or community service.²¹

Students who are suspended early in their educational career are 10 times more likely to drop out of high school, experience academic failure, and face incarceration.

Students who are suspended early in their educational career, such as in preschool, are 10 times more likely to drop out of high school, experience academic failure, grade retention, hold negative school attitudes, and face incarceration. The early suspension or expulsion of children can establish a pattern for disciplinary actions throughout their educational career, as well as precedent of disproportionately skewed data. In

preschool, Black girls comprise 20% of girls enrolled nationally and 53% of out-of-school suspensions for girls. Indiana data regarding school discipline for preschoolers are not collected or reported by the State.

In the 2019-2020 academic year, 3.7% of Indiana students received in-school suspension, 5.0% received an out-of-school suspension, and 0.2% were expelled.²²

The percentage of students receiving in-school suspension in Indiana's counties ranges from 11.1% in Crawford County to 0.1% in Brown and Decatur Counties. The percentage of students receiving out-of-school suspension in Indiana's counties ranges from 8.7% in Lake County to 1.1% in LaGrange County.²³

There are immediate harms from being suspended, such as missing out on critical class time, but there are also long-term negative consequences:

- Students attending schools with higher suspension rates are significantly more likely to be arrested and incarcerated as adults;

Percentage of Race/Ethnicity of Youth in Justice Facilities, Indiana: July 2020

Black	33.5%
Hispanic	7.8%
White	49.1%
All Other	9.5%

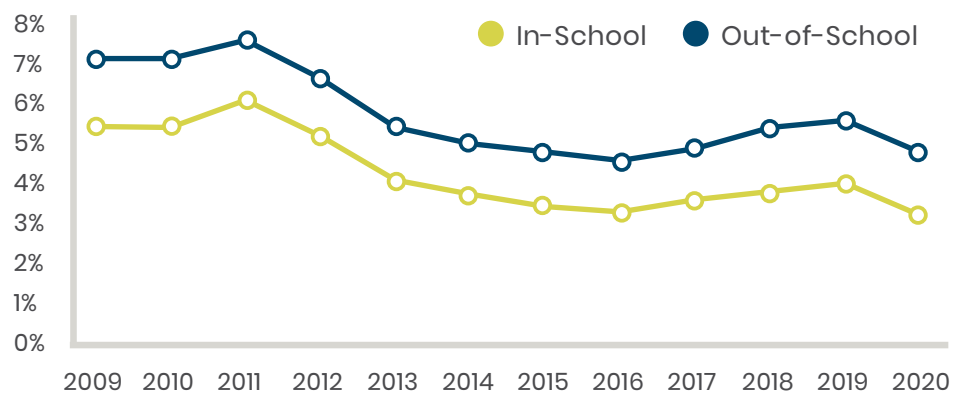
Source: Indiana Department of Correction
Note: Data are not disaggregated by the IDOC to include American Indian, Asian, or Two or more races youth.

Percentage of Race/Ethnicity of Total Population, Indiana: 2019

American Indian	0.2%
Asian	2.6%
Black	11.3%
Hispanic	11.4%
Two or more races	5.5%
White	77.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Tables B01001A-I

Percentage of Students Suspended, Indiana: 2009-2020



Source: Indiana Department of Education

- Students who attend schools with lower suspension rates are less likely to interact with the prison system as adults and also more likely to attend a four-year college;
- Male students of color were most likely to be affected negatively by stricter school policy; and
- It is unlikely that the gains from removing disruptive peers outweigh the substantial long-term costs to students who are suspended because of stricter disciplinary policy.²⁴

Across the nation and in Indiana, students of color face more frequent and severe disciplinary actions when compared to their peers.²⁵ School districts that have less diversity in enrollment between Black and Hispanic students and White students tend to have large gaps in academic achievement between these subgroups.²⁶ Echoing the disproportionality in national trends, Black students in Indiana are 3 times more likely to receive out-of-school suspension and 2 times more likely to receive in-school suspension than their peers of other races and ethnicities.²⁷

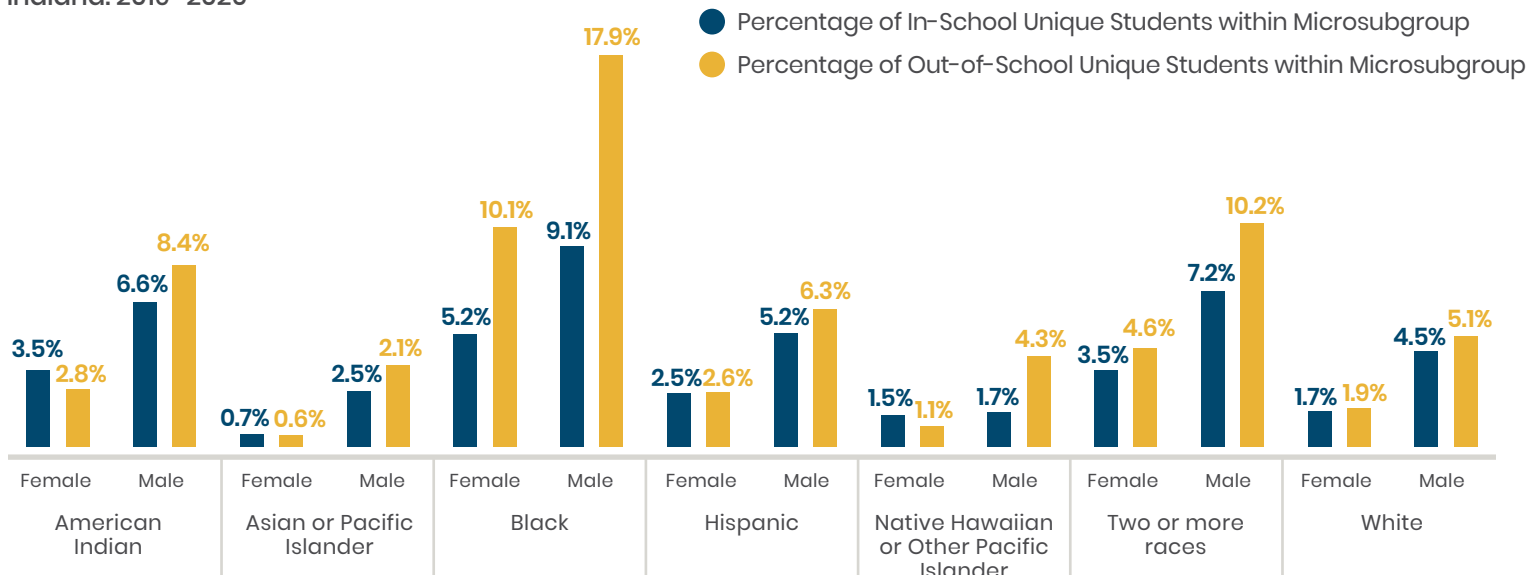
When disaggregating the percentage of unique students who received in- and out-of-school suspension with microsubgroups (which is disaggregating a subgroup by another subgroup), the disproportionality between males and females within a subgroup is magnified. In the chart below, the data compare the males and females within a racial/ethnic subgroup who experience in- or out-of-school suspension (e.g., the number of Hispanic girls who were suspended) to the total population of the microsubgroup (e.g., total population of Hispanic girls in Indiana high schools).

- 17.9% of Black male students in Hoosier schools received out-of-school suspension in 2019–2020, which is the highest percentage of student microsubgroups.
- Black male students also had the highest percentage of microsubgroup student populations receiving in-school suspension (9.1%).
- Male students who are Two or more races follow Black male students with high percentages of both in-school (7.2%) and out-of-school (10.2%) suspension.
- White males comprised the highest percentage of total in- and out-of-school suspension incidents when compared to their peers (38.4% of in-school suspension incidents and 32.7% of out-of-school suspension incidents). Black males had the second highest percentage of both types of incidents (17.6% of in-school suspension incidents and 26.1% of out-of-school suspension incidents).²⁸
- When correlating unique students and unique incidents data, it can be deduced that the same unique White male students are experiencing multiple suspensions, whereas there are a higher number of Black male students experiencing more singular incidents of suspensions.

Percentage of Students Receiving Out-of-School Suspension by County, Indiana: 2019–2020			
10 Highest Counties		10 Lowest Counties	
Lake	8.7%	LaGrange	1.1%
Marion	8.6%	Wabash	1.2%
Allen	8.0%	Ripley	1.3%
St Joseph	8.0%	Hamilton	1.3%
Knox	7.0%	Vigo	1.5%
Madison	7.0%	Dubois	1.6%
Jefferson	6.9%	Harrison	1.6%
Lawrence	6.8%	Dekalb	1.6%
LaPorte	6.7%	Warren	1.7%
Switzerland	6.6%	Adams	1.8%

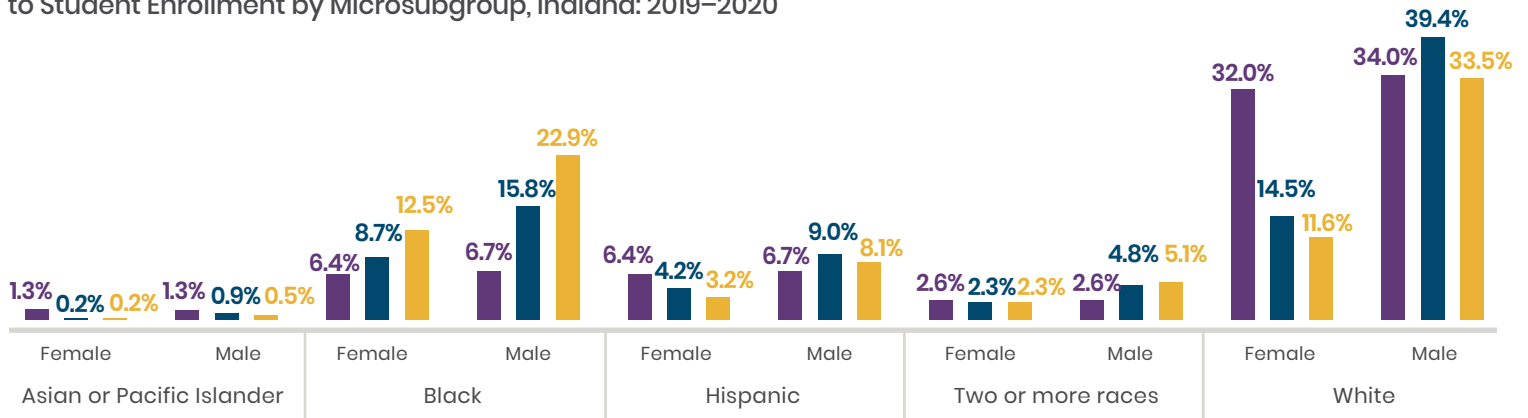
Source: Indiana Department of Education

Percentage of Unique Students Who Received In- and Out-of-School Suspension Within Microsubgroups, Indiana: 2019–2020



Source: Indiana Department of Education

Percentage of Unique Students who Received In-School and Out-of-School Suspensions Compared to Student Enrollment by Microsubgroup, Indiana: 2019–2020



Source: Indiana Department of Education

- Percentage of Unique Student Enrollment
- Percentage of Unique Students Who Received In-School Suspensions
- Percentage of Unique Students Who Received Out-of-School Suspensions

Whereas the chart on the previous page looks comparatively within microsubgroups (e.g., 17.9% of Black males received an out-of-school suspension in 2019-2020), the chart above compares the microsubgroups to the total population (e.g., 22.9% of students out-of-school suspended in 2019-2020 were Black males). When comparing the number of suspended students in microsubgroups to the total number of suspended students, disproportionality again emerges.

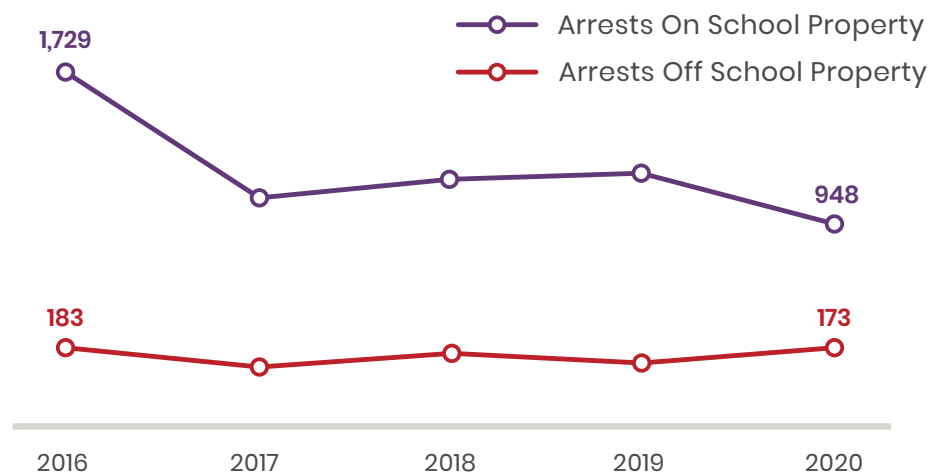
- Specifically for females and males in Black, Hispanic, and Two or more race subgroups, the percentage of students receiving in- and out-of-school suspensions is higher than their representation in Indiana’s student population.
- White male students have a relatively proportional suspension percentage. 34% of Indiana’s student population is White males; 39.4% of in-school suspensions were of White males; and 33.5% of out-of-school suspensions were of White males. Both suspension percentages near the population representation of this microsubgroup.
- White females, however, were disproportionately represented in conversely to their Black, Hispanic, and Two or more races peers. As suspensions of Black, Hispanic, and Two or more races females are higher than their population representation, the suspension of White females is significantly lower than their proportion of the general population.²⁹

Policies Leading to the Justice System

As discussed above, harsh disciplinary practices accompanying strict school policies and practices directly lead to criminalizing youth. Students at a school that has a higher suspension rate are 15% to 20% more likely to be arrested and incarcerated as adults.³⁰ Zero tolerance policies, which stemmed from the 1994 Gun-Free School Act, were intended to keep weapons out of schools, but unclear definitions lead to a significant increase in suspensions and expulsions. As zero-tolerance policies were introduced in schools to address violence, schools increased the use of suspensions for non-violent behaviors, like skipping class, talking back to a teacher, or other disruptive behavior.³¹

Per IC 20-26-16-6, school corporation police officers have general police powers, including the power to arrest all persons who within their view commit any offense. They have the same common law and statutory powers, privileges, and immunities as sheriffs and constables. In addition to any other powers or duties, such police officers shall enforce and assist the educators and administrators of their school corporation in the enforcement of the rules and regulations of the school corporation and assist and cooperate with other law enforcement agencies and officers.³² Arrests on and off school property in Indiana have been steadily decreased over the past 5 years.³³

Total Arrests On And Off School Property, Indiana: 2016 - 2020

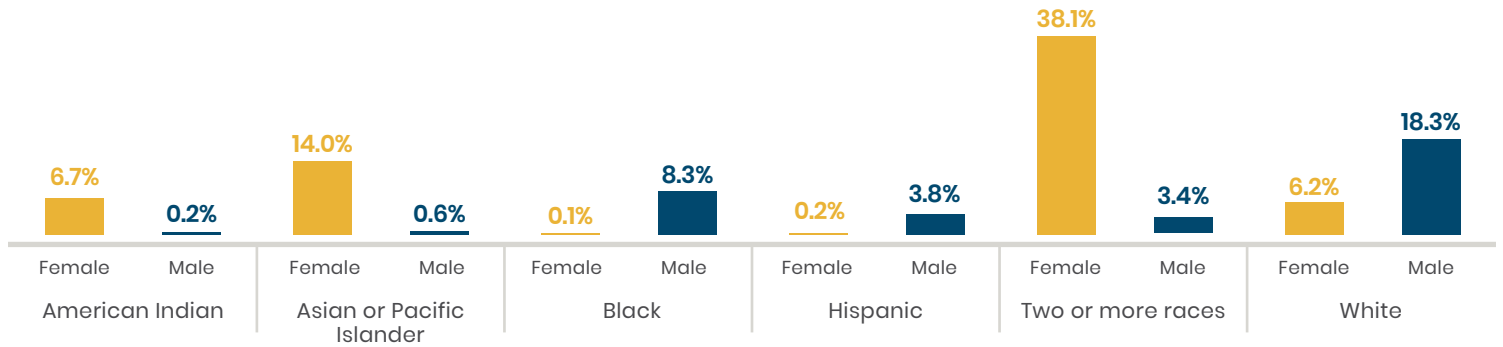


Source: Indiana Department of Education

During the 2019–2020 school year, 948 arrests were made on school property in Indiana.

- Battery was the top reason for arrests (23.3%), followed by possession of marijuana (15.5%), disorderly conduct (9.9%), intimidation (6.1%), and all other reasons for arrests were under 3.2%.
- Arrests throughout Indiana ranges as high of 139 arrests in Allen County and as low as one in 13 counties.
- Of these arrests, 57.5% of youth were White, 22.8% were Black, 10.2% were Hispanic, and 8.2% were Two or more races; 42.4% of the total arrests were of students of color. During the same school year, the Black student population made 12.3% of the total enrollment, the Hispanic student population 12.8%, and students who are Two or more races 5.1%.³⁴
- When disaggregating the data by race and gender, females in American Indian, Asian or Pacific Islander, or Two or more races have higher percentages of arrests than the males within their racial/ethnic subgroup. The data below reflect the number of arrests of a microsubgroup population on school property (e.g., number of American Indian females arrested on school) to the total number of arrests on school property.

Percentage of Arrests on School Property by Microsubgroups, Indiana: 2019–2020



Source: Indiana Department of Education

Impacting Youth’s Futures

Youth who are involved in the justice system are particularly vulnerable to academic challenges and failure, subsequent involvement in the justice or other social service systems, and sustained poverty. Youth who have been securely detained are less likely to graduate from high school or may not even return to school after returning to their families and communities. Education for youth who are incarcerated may lag due to the limited number of services available, specifically for special education, English language learning, and remedial educational programs.³⁵ Many youth enter the youth justice system with significant educational deficits. The academic achievement levels of adolescents who are adjudicated as delinquent rarely exceed the elementary school level. Some estimate that nationally as many as 70% of youth in the justice system have learning disabilities.³⁶ Additional barriers include:

- Failure of many correctional educational facilities to use curricula aligned with state standards, which can result in credits not transferring or being accepted by the home school district; and
- Significant delays in the transfer of youth’s educational records and credits from the correctional educational facility to their community school upon release.³⁷

Youth who were involved in the justice system during their childhood have a high likelihood of re-offending and relapsing to criminal behavior that results in rearrests. The Indiana Department of Correction defines recidivism as one who returns to incarceration within three years of release.³⁸

- 29.6% of juveniles released in 2016 returned to incarceration by 2019 either as a juvenile or adult.
- Of the juveniles who returned in 2019, approximately 96% were returned for a new crime.³⁹

Through federal programs, Indiana receives funding to support and develop resources and programming to positively impact juvenile offenders:

- **The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (JJDP A):** This law was the first comprehensive juvenile justice legislation passed by Congress. Through this program, U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention administered a grant of \$1,076,680 for Fiscal Year 2020 to Indiana that can be used to fund the planning, establishment, operation, coordination, and evaluation of juvenile delinquency programs and improve juvenile justice systems.⁴⁰ One of the core mandates of the JJDP A to states is to show they are working to address racial and ethnic disparities that exist in their juvenile justice systems,

Nationally, as many as 70% of youth in the justice system are estimated to have a learning disability.

as minority youth are involved in juvenile justice at disproportionately higher rates than nonminority youth across the U.S. The 2018 reauthorization replaced the concept of disproportionate minority contact with racial and ethnic disparities. States are to determine which juvenile justice system decision points create disparities and develop measurable objectives for reducing the disparities.⁴¹ Indiana's 2018-2020 objectives can be found here. Indiana's Disproportionate Minority Contact Plan, a subsection of the Indiana Juvenile Justice Plan, can be found [here](#).

- **Elementary and Secondary Education Act – Title I, Part D:** Indiana receives around \$500,000 annually in federal funds to help address the needs of neglected, delinquent, and at-risk youth.⁴² This federal funding stream helps fund the delivery of high-quality educational opportunities and credentials for students to complete while involved with the youth justice system.⁴³ Local facilities in Indiana primarily use Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent or At Risk funds for personnel costs for instructional and supplemental teachers and counselors. The Indiana Department of Education has three goals in the administration of the Title I, Part D program:

1. Improve educational services in local or state institutions for neglected and delinquent children and youth in order to provide equal access and opportunity to meet the challenging Indiana Academic Standards;
2. Improve youth transition from institutionalization to further school or employment; and
3. Prevent at-risk youth from dropping out, and provide youth returning from correctional facilities or institutions for neglected and delinquent children and youth with a reintegration support system to ensure their continued education and involvement of their families and communities.⁴⁴

The Indiana Department of Education's full plan can be found [here](#).

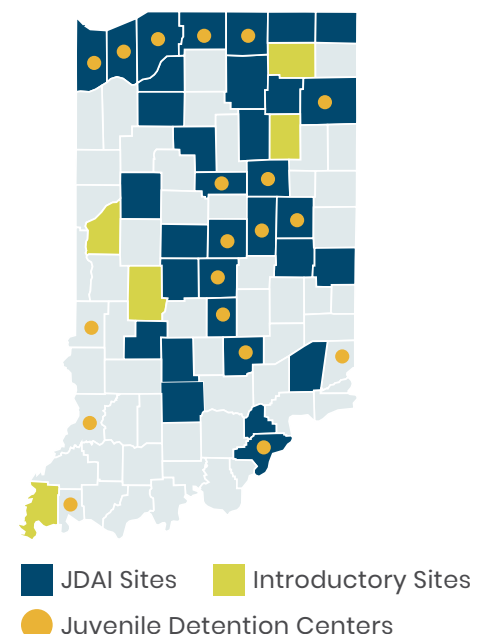
- **Career and Technical Education via Carl D. Perkins Act:** Currently, Indiana grants \$150,000 of Perkins funding to IDOC for equipment and machinery for Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. In the Fiscal Year 2020, the Office of CTE indicated extending an additional \$100,000 in Perkins funding to IDOC specifically for youth services in its State Plan. This additional funding can provide an opportunity for technical skills training to be integrated with core academic programs and the ability to connect classroom work and hands-on experiences.⁴⁵
- **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act:** Title I-Youth: This federal funding stream can provide support to accelerate skill development, education, and employment assistance for juvenile offenders. While youth are in detention facilities, communities can work with local Workforce Development Boards to direct this funding towards employability skill support, mentoring, career exploration, and other wraparound supports.

Recidivism Rate by Year and Gender, Indiana: 2016–2019

	Overall	Male	Female
Number Released	710	600	110
Recidivism Rates within 1 year of release	13.5%	14.2%	10.0%
Recidivism Rates within 2 years of releases	23.9%	24.7%	20.0%
Recidivism Rates within 3 years of releases	29.6%	30.8%	22.7%

Source: Indiana Department of Correction

Juvenile Detention Centers and JDAI Sites, Indiana: 2019



Source: Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative

An Alternative Initiative

In addition to the federal supports for the youth involved in the justice system, the Indiana Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) is a state-supported model for youth justice system improvement focused on eliminating unnecessary detention of youth, reducing racial disparities, and improving youth well-being.⁴⁶ The JDAI model leverages interagency collaboration, use of accurate data, and alternatives to detention to reducing secure confinement and racial disparities.⁴⁷

- In Indiana, 32 counties are implementing JDAI; one county is onboarding; and five are in an introductory phase for a total of 38 participating sites.
- In 2019, the total secure detention admissions in Indiana's 32 JDAI counties were 4,521. This is a 68% decrease compared to the sites' baseline years. For Black and Hispanic youth, there were 2,756 admissions, a 65% reduction compared to baseline years.
- In 2019, the average length of stay for youth in secure detention was 19.6 days. This is an increase of 30.6% compared to the sites' baseline years. For youth of color, the average length of stay was 21 days, a 50% increase compared to the sites' baseline years. Increases in average length of stay are expected when sites implement JDAI.
- In 2019, there were a total of 2,497 felony petitions filed in JDAI sites. This includes any petition to adjudicate delinquency with at least one felony allegation. The number of petitions filed has decreased by 54% when compared to the sites' baseline years.⁴⁸

LEVERAGING THE DATA

Locally:

- **Emphasize prevention, non-exclusionary intervention strategies:** Organizations, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Psychological Association, recommend that schools and youth serving organizations move away from zero-tolerance policies in favor of prevention and intervention. Schools and districts should examine their codes of conduct to ensure they establish expectations for appropriate behavior, responses to misbehavior in a tailored way, addressing student and victim needs, and building rehabilitative discipline systems.⁴⁹
- **Adapt programs for at-risk youth for the detention facilities:** Through careful examination of existing funds, local schools, youth serving organizations, and communities can direct resources to adapt successful programs serving at-risk youth in schools or out-of-school programs for use in detention facilities. The Jobs For America's Graduates (JAG) program is one example of an evidence-based program supporting at-risk students in high schools that communities could adapt to support their justice-involved youth. JAG is aimed to keep at-risk youth in school and on track for postsecondary education and career success. This program includes mentoring, leadership development, guidance and counseling, connections to school- and community-based services, and 12-month follow-up services.⁵⁰
- **Facilitate re-enrollment process:** Re-enrollment in school is one of the most important transitional services for youth at the time of release from a juvenile correctional facility. The transition from incarceration back into the community is often stressful for youth. Effective interventions to prevent recidivism are those that help build youth's academic, behavioral, social, and technical skills. For those youth who exit a juvenile detention center without their high school diploma, connecting to an adult education provider to earn their high school equivalency is crucial if they are not returning to a K-12 school system. The State can look for ways to strengthen the relationship between workforce and employment training programs and transitional supports that are provided to youth as they exit juvenile facilities. Adult recidivists who did not have a high school diploma or equivalent were consistently re-incarcerated earlier than those who had a high school diploma or equivalent. As well, post-release employment is one of the most influential factors to recidivism.⁵¹

Statewide:

- **Increase data transparency:** There is a need for increased tracking and reporting of data regarding juvenile offenders' academic success both within the facilities and through re-entry programs. A more robust transition and tracking plan can ensure justice-involved youth receive the education necessary to transition to additional postsecondary education and training or employment upon exit.
- **Align correctional educational programs with state standards and local graduation requirements to improve educational quality:** Youth in facilities should have access to safe learning space, curricula, and technology-based learning tools aligned to Indiana's college- and career-ready standards. Critical to this strategy is facilities employing qualified educators to teach in juvenile facilities. Given the particular educational challenges faced by youth under their supervision, juvenile justice systems can implement education programs for youth with educational and other disabilities, credit recovery and alternative credentialing programs, and CTE certification programs aligned with industry standards and local workforce needs.⁵²
- **Connect exiting juvenile offenders educational supports:** With the reinstatement of Pell eligible for incarcerated students and students who have drug-related offenses in the December 2020 Congressional stimulus bill, public higher education institutions can partner with juvenile facilities to help more youth take advantage of this new flexibility. With the flexibility to use Pell for technical formats in addition to Associate and Bachelor's degree programs, the State can offer more options for postsecondary education in its state facilities and through more postsecondary institutions for youth who are or were involved in the justice system. For younger youth in facilities, the State can provide supports around postsecondary planning and filing their FAFSA applications. For those justice-involved youth with disabilities, the State can direct specific federal funding to assist those students with accommodations and educational supports. Specifically, the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) program administered by the Family and Social Services Administration can be targeted to better support those youth with disabilities during their detention. State agencies can collaborate on how to adapt this program to support youth with disabilities with these services while they are in a detention facility.

Nationally:

- **End solitary confinement for youth:** Youth who experience solitary confinement while in the justice system are at risk of long-term effects on their physiological development. Because they are still developing mentally and physically, this practice may exacerbate behavioral issues rather than resolve them.⁵³

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