

# **Summary of Discipline Data for Girls in U.S. Public Schools: An Analysis from the 2015 - 2016 U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights Data Collection**

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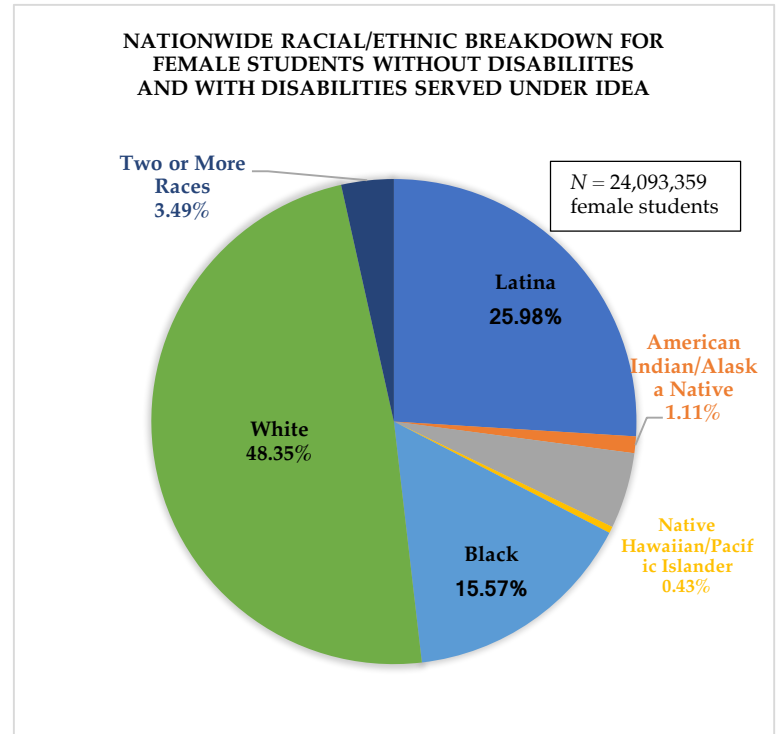
## Methodology

Our work sought to examine the extent of disparate school disciplinary practices for female students nationwide, with a focus on Black and Latina girls in comparison to their White female peers. Data presented in this fact sheet focuses explicitly on girls without disabilities and with disabilities served under the Individuals with Educational Disabilities Act (IDEA) in K-12 public schools in the United States.

To examine disciplinary trends, we used the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) from the 2015-16 school year, which the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights made available in April 2018. The CRDC is collected biennially and reflects self-reported information from every public school and school district in the country ( $N = 96,360$  schools), including juvenile justice facilities, charter schools, alternative schools, and schools serving youth with disabilities.

According to the [Office for Civil Rights](#), data from 2015-16 included 50.6 million students, and the racial-ethnic breakdown for all students was as follows: White (49%), Hispanic or Latino of any race (hereafter referred to as Latina; 26%), Black or African American (hereafter referred to as Black; 15%), Asian (5%), Two or more races (3%), American Indian or Alaska native (1%), and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (0.4%). Of this number, 49% were girls, and 51% were boys.

The present report focuses on the Black, Latina, and White girls without disabilities and with disabilities served under IDEA in this sample ( $N = 21,658,500$ ), who comprise 90% of the total female student population ( $N = 24,093,359$ ). In order to provide context, we include a pie chart with the racial-ethnic breakdown for female students without disabilities and with disabilities served under IDEA. The racial-ethnic breakdown for female students without disabilities and with disabilities served under IDEA was as follows: White (48.35%), Hispanic or Latino of any race (hereafter referred to as Latina; 25.98%), Black or African American (hereafter referred to



as Black; 15.57%), Asian (5.07%), Two or more races (3.49%), American Indian or Alaska native (1%), and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (0.43%).

This fact sheet examines differences in the following key disciplinary practices: one or more out-of-school (OSS) or in-school suspensions (ISS), arrests, referrals to law enforcement, physical restraint, and corporal punishment. We also examine the landscape of bullying/harassment on the basis of race and sex. For detailed information about how each of these practices are defined, please visit the Office of Civil Rights' [website](#).

Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 25.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA) and Microsoft Excel. Due to the large nature of the CRDC, selected files were merged to examine disciplinary trends (a) nationwide, (b) by geographic region, (c) by school level, and (d) for charter schools. As per OCR guidelines, the following were treated as missing values: -2 (small cell value), -5 (missing value), and -9 (N/A due to skip logic).

### Data Notes

The **total female population** only includes female students without disabilities and with disabilities served under IDEA because those are the only students for whom race/ethnicity information is collected for disciplinary practices.

Schools were categorized and coded into **geographic regions** based on United States Census classifications.

Geographic region	States included	Number of schools (% of schools nationwide)
Northeast	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania	15,317 (15.9%)
Midwest	Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota	24,935 (26.0%)
South	Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas	33,287 (34.5%)

West	Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington	22,821 (23.7%)
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Schools were then categorized and coded by **school type** to include elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. These categories also included schools that were ungraded but categorized students by the grade they would be in based on their age. Finally, charter schools were isolated and disciplinary trends were analyzed.

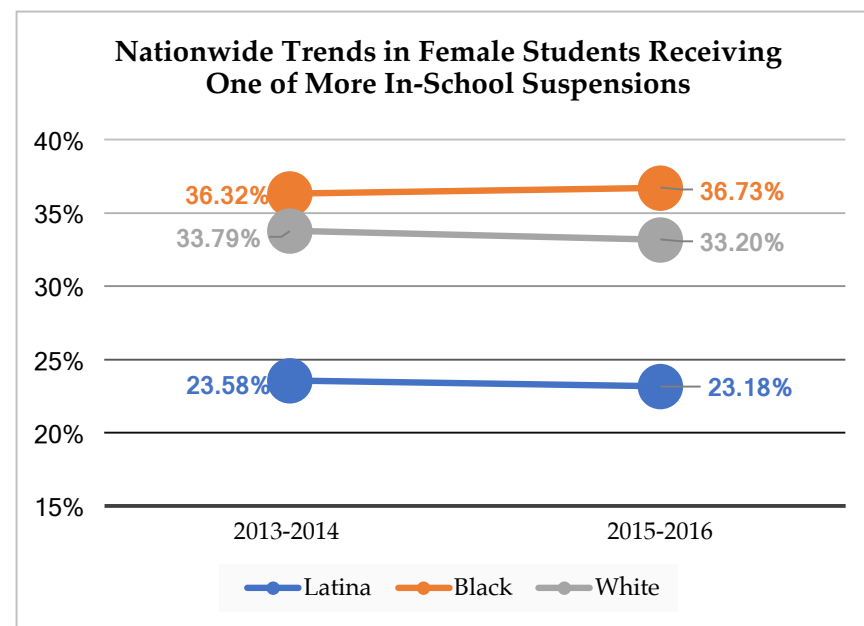
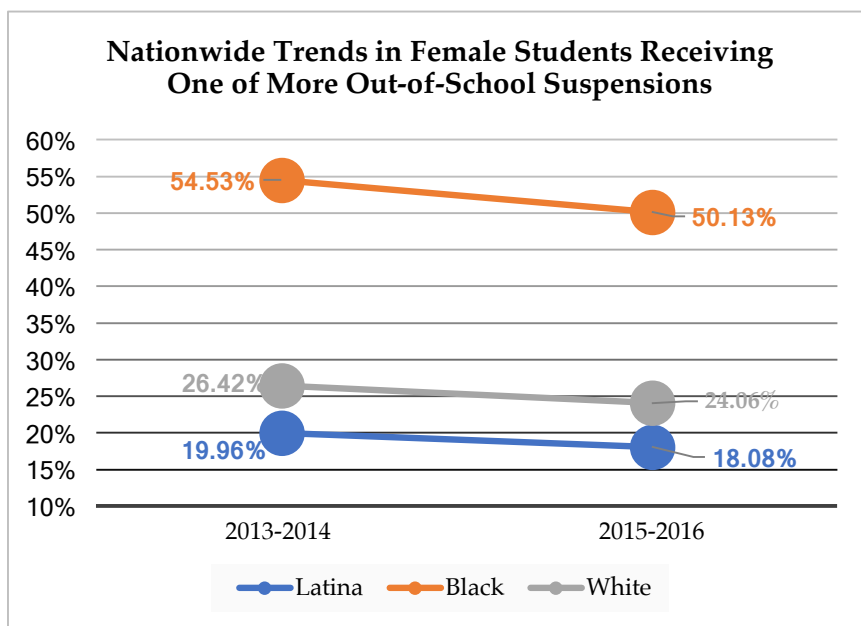
Category	Number of schools (% of schools nationwide)
Elementary schools (Kindergarten – 5 <sup>th</sup> grade)	36,829 (38.2%)
Middle schools (6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade)	29,157 (33.3%)
High schools (9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade)	21,721 (22.5%)
Charter schools	6, 822 (7.1%)

In the pages that follow, we provide two types of information:

1. The **prevalence of school discipline practices**, by providing a comparison between the total percent of the female student population that each racial/ethnic group represents with the percentage of girls who are disciplined within that group.
2. The **relative risk ratio**, which provides an estimate of the degree to which a group is overrepresented (if the value is greater than 1) or underrepresented (if the value is less than 1) for receiving a discipline sanction.

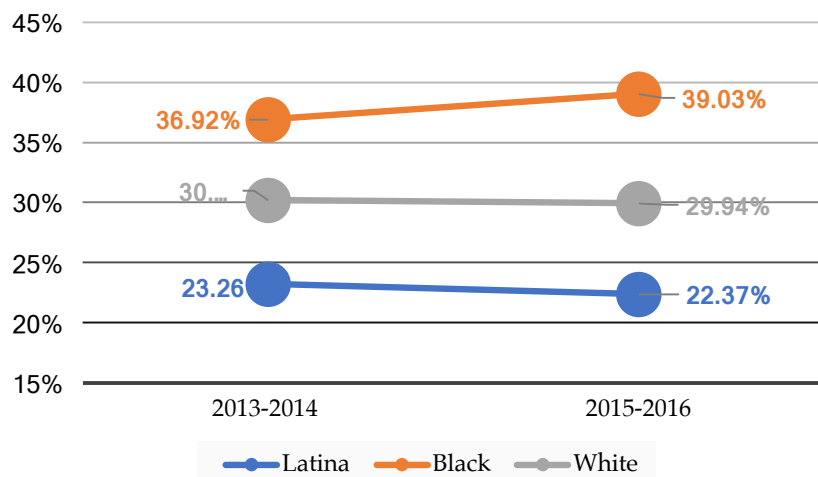
$$\text{Relative risk ratio} = \frac{\left( \frac{\text{Number of students experiencing (insert disciplinary action) among Black (or Latina) female students}}{\text{Total number of Black (or Latina) female students enrolled in group of interest}} \right)}{\left( \frac{\text{Number of White female students experiencing (insert disciplinary action)}}{\text{Total number of white female students enrolled in group of interest}} \right)} \times 100$$

## Nationwide Trends in School Discipline: Comparing 2013-14 & 2015-16 Data

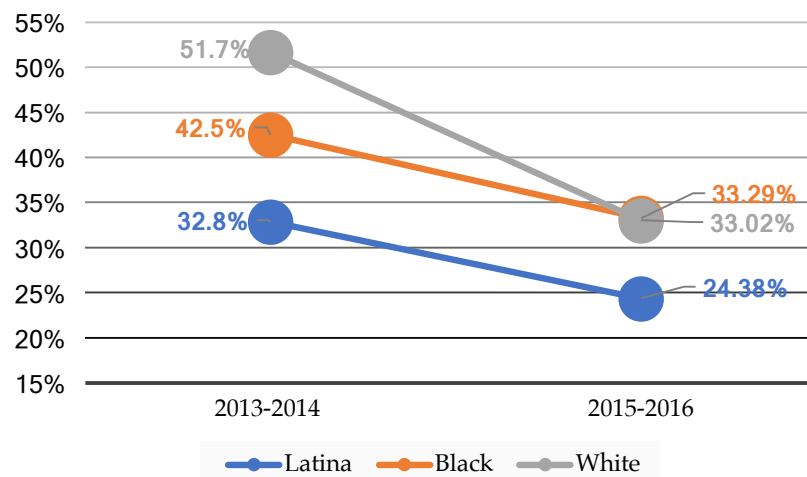


Nationwide, the percentage of female students who were suspended (either in- or out-of-school) has been relatively stagnant when comparing data from the 2013 – 14 academic year to data from the 2015 – 16 academic year.

### Nationwide Trends in Female Students Being Arrested

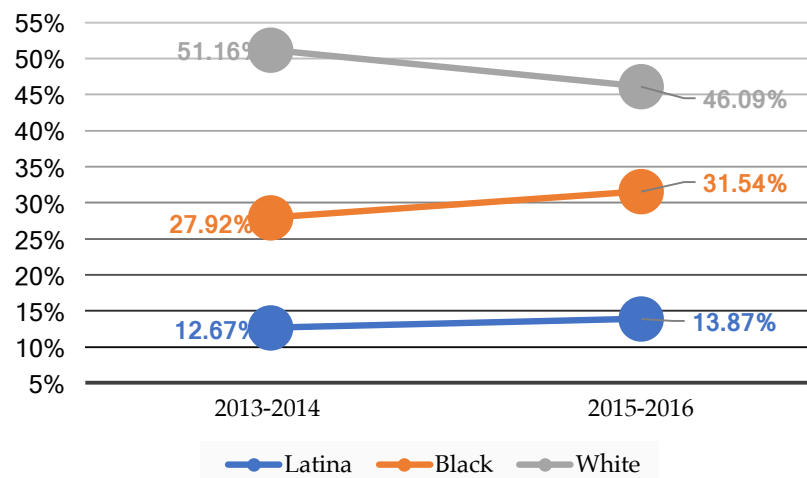


### Nationwide Trends in Female Students Being Referred to Law Enforcement



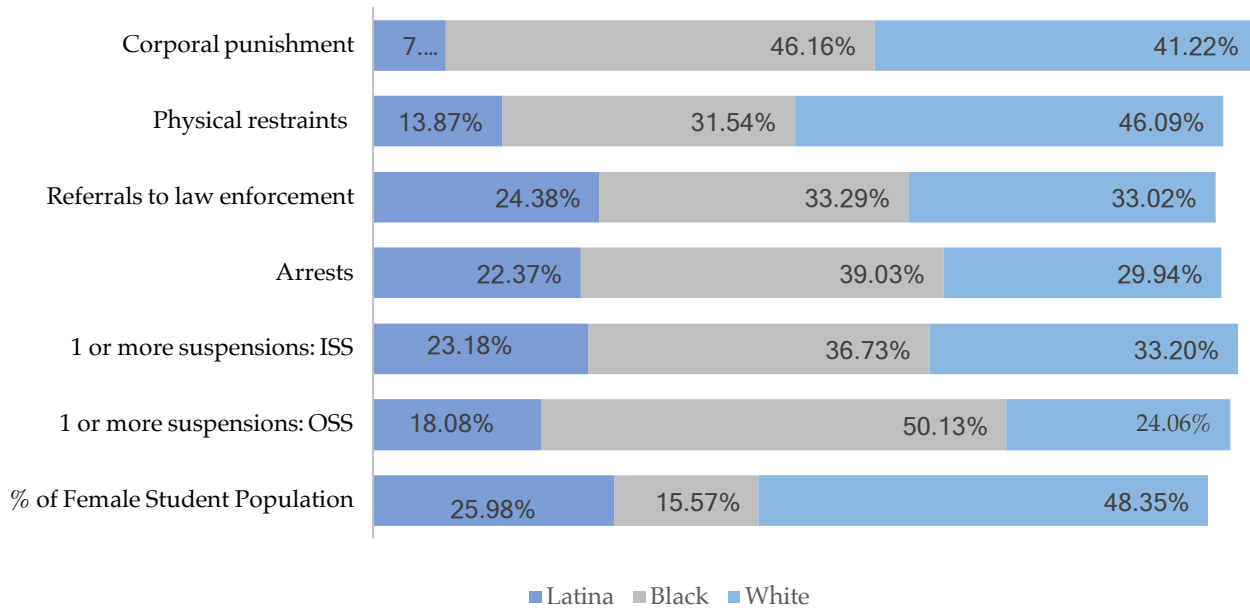
When comparing data from the 2013 – 14 academic year to the 2015 – 16 academic year, the percentage of female students who were arrested has been relatively stagnant. However, there was a decline in the percentage of female students who were referred to law enforcement. Finally, there were mixed results in terms of the percentage of female students who were physically restrained. While there was a decline in the percentage of White female students who were restrained, the percentage of Black and Latina female students who were physically restrained increased.

### Nationwide Trends in Female Students Being Physically Restrained



## Nationwide Disciplinary Practices

### NATIONWIDE PREVALENCE OF DISCIPLINE PRACTICES FOR FEMALE STUDENTS



Nationwide, 294,898 female students received 1 or more out-of-school suspensions (1+ OSS), 876,273 female students received one or more in-school suspensions (1+ ISS), 19,483 were arrested, 73,689 were referred to law enforcement, and 16,184 were physically restrained. Approximately 47 percent of female students nationwide were White, with approximately 25 percent Latina and 15 percent Black.

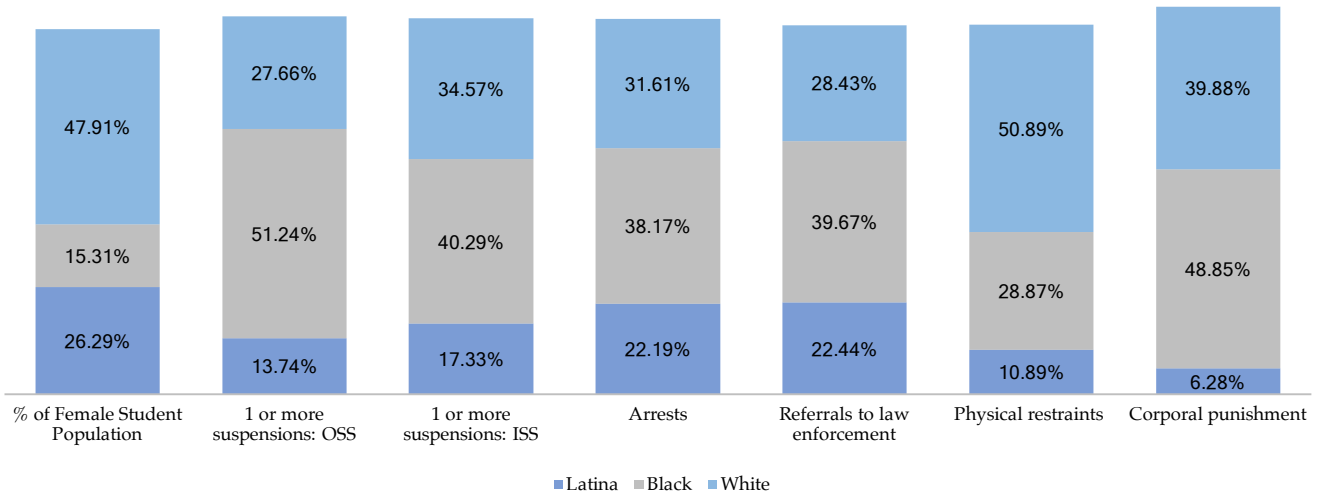
Relative Risk Ratio		
	Black Females	Latina Females
1+ OSS	7.30	1.58
1+ ISS	4.13	1.56
Arrests	4.05	1.39
Referrals	3.13	1.37
Restraints	2.12	0.56
Corporal punishment	3.67	0.37

Nationwide, Black female students were:

**7xs** more likely to receive 1 or more out-of-school suspensions  
**4xs** more likely to be arrested  
**4xs** more likely to receive 1 or more in-school suspensions  
**Over 3xs** more likely to receive corporal punishment  
**3xs** more likely to be referred to law enforcement  
**2xs** more likely to be physically restrained  
 in comparison to White female students.

## Disciplinary Practices by School Type

### PREVALENCE OF DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FEMALE STUDENTS



In elementary schools nationwide, 41,571 female students received 1+ OSS, 112,196 female students received 1+ ISS, 1,158 were arrested, 6,458 were referred to law enforcement, 7,475 were physically restrained, and 7,107 received corporal punishment. Nearly half of the female students in elementary schools were White, with about fifteen percent of the female students being Black and approximately one quarter being Latina.

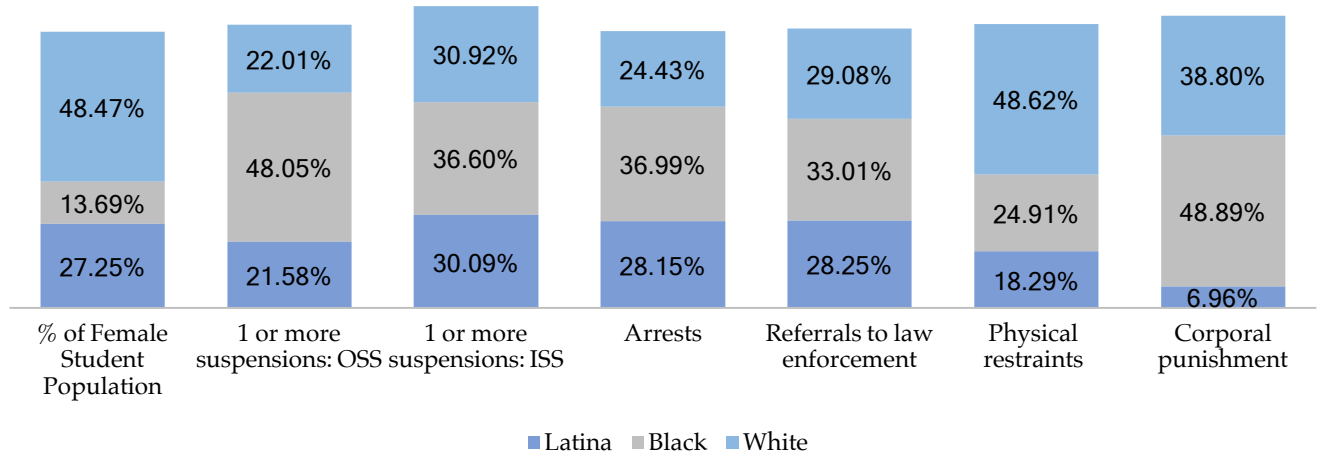
Relative Risk Ratio		
	Black Females	Latina Females
1 or more OSS	5.80	0.91
1 or more ISS	3.65	0.91
Arrests	3.78	1.28
Referrals	4.37	1.44
Restraints	1.78	0.39
Corporal Punishment	3.64	0.27

In elementary schools, Black female students were:

**Over 5xs** more likely to receive 1 or more out-of-school suspensions  
**4xs** more likely to be referred to law enforcement  
**Over 3xs** more likely to be arrested  
**Over 3xs** more likely to receive corporal punishment  
**Over 3xs** more likely to receive 1 or more in-school suspensions

in comparison to White female students.

## PREVALENCE OF DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL FEMALE STUDENTS



In middle schools nationwide, 81,271 female students received 1+ OSS, 249,477 female students received 1+ ISS, 4,040 were arrested, 18,328 were referred to law enforcement, 1,239 were physically restrained and 5,785 received corporal punishment. Nearly half of the female students in middle schools were White, with about thirteen percent of the female students being Black and approximately twenty-six percent being Latina.

Relative Risk Ratio		
	Black Females	Latina Females
1 or more OSS	7.73	2.15
1 or more ISS	4.19	0.98
Arrests	5.36	1.61
Referrals	4.02	1.35
Restraints	1.81	0.52
Corporal Punishment	4.79	0.25

In middle schools, Black female students were:

**Over 7xs** more likely to receive 1 or more out-of-school suspensions

**5xs** more likely to be arrested

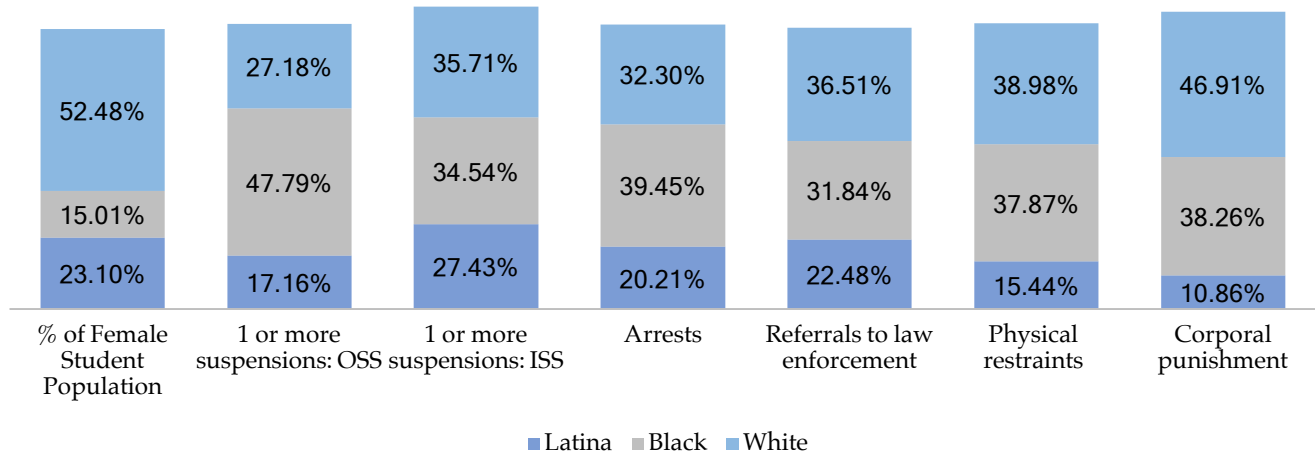
**Over 4xs** more likely to receive corporal punishment

**4xs** more likely to receive 1 or more in-school suspensions

**4xs** more likely to be referred to law enforcement

in comparison to White female students.

## PREVALENCE OF DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES FOR HIGH SCHOOL FEMALE STUDENTS



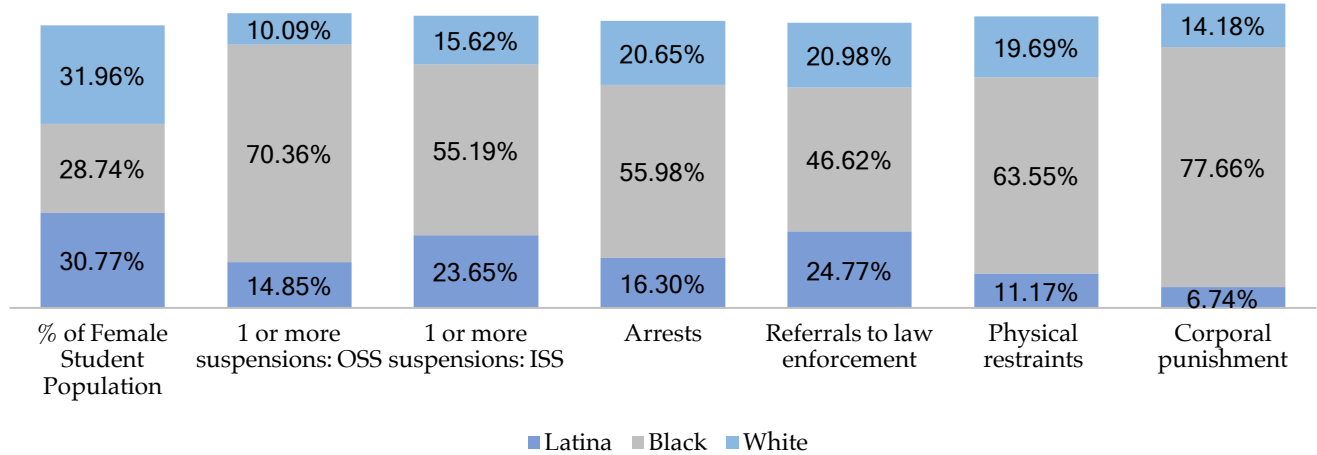
In high schools nationwide, 124,557 female students received 1+ OSS, 431,972 female students received 1+ ISS, 12,767 were arrested, 41,749 were referred to law enforcement, 3,874 were physically restrained and 5,941 received corporal punishment. Nearly half of the female students in high schools were White, with about thirteen percent of the female students being Black and approximately twenty-six percent being Latina.

Relative Risk Ratio		
	Black Females	Latina Females
1 or more OSS	6.15	0.88
1 or more ISS	3.38	0.92
Arrests	4.27	0.88
Referrals	3.05	0.86
Restraints	3.40	0.55
Corporal Punishment	2.85	0.32

In high schools, Black female students were:

**6xs** more likely to receive 1 or more out-of-school suspensions  
**4xs** more likely to be arrested  
**3xs** more likely to be physically restrained  
**3xs** more likely to receive 1 or more in-school suspensions  
**3xs** more likely to be referred to law enforcement  
**Over 2xs** more likely to receive corporal punishment  
 in comparison to White female students.

## PREVALENCE OF DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES FOR CHARTER SCHOOL FEMALE STUDENTS



In charter schools nationwide, 22,999 female students received 1+ OSS, 31,592 female students received 1+ ISS, 368 were arrested, 1,954 were referred to law enforcement, 716 were physically restrained and 282 received corporal punishment. The female student distribution was nearly equally distributed, with there being approximately 30 percent White, Black and Latina.

Relative Risk Ratio		
	Black Females	Latina Females
1 or more OSS	7.75	1.53
1 or more ISS	3.93	1.57
Arrests	3.01	0.82
Referrals	2.47	1.23
Restraints	3.59	0.59
Corporal Punishment	6.09	0.49

In charter schools, Black female students were:

**Over 7xs** more likely to receive 1 or more out-of-school suspensions

**6xs** more likely to receive corporal punishment

**Nearly 4xs** more likely to receive 1 or more in-school suspensions

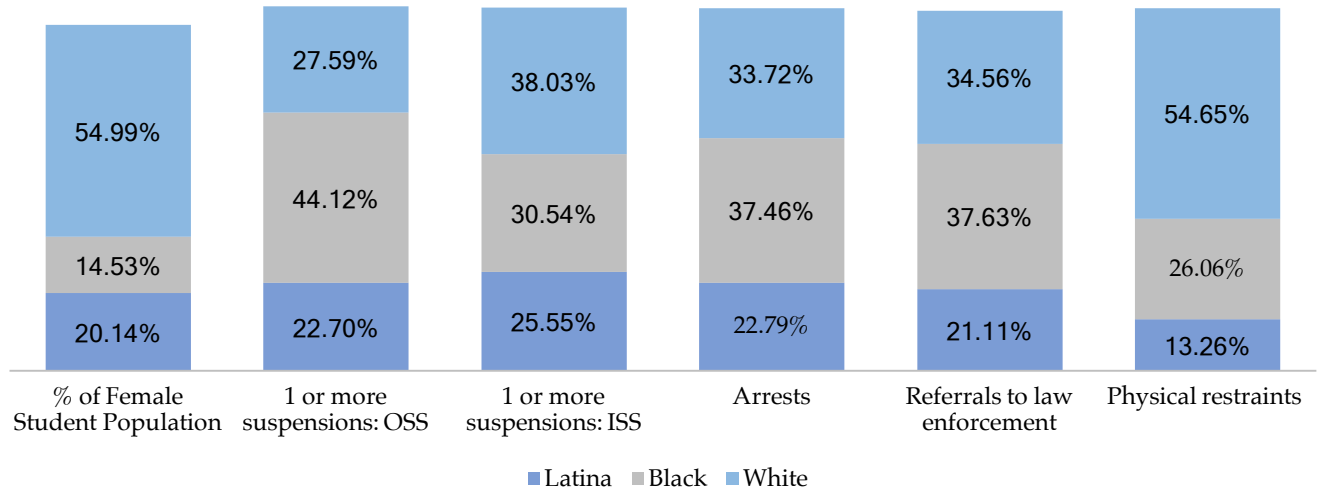
**Over 3xs** more likely to be physically restrained

**3xs** more likely to be arrested

**Over 2xs** more likely to be referred to law enforcement

in comparison to White female students.

## PREVALENCE OF DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES FOR FEMALE STUDENTS BY REGION: NORTHEAST



In the Northeast, 40,647 female students received 1+ OSS, 95,115 female students received 1+ ISS, 3,396 were arrested, 13,708 were referred to law enforcement, and 2,836 were physically restrained. Nearly half of the female students in Northeast schools were White, with about fifteen percent of the female students being Black and approximately one quarter being Latina.

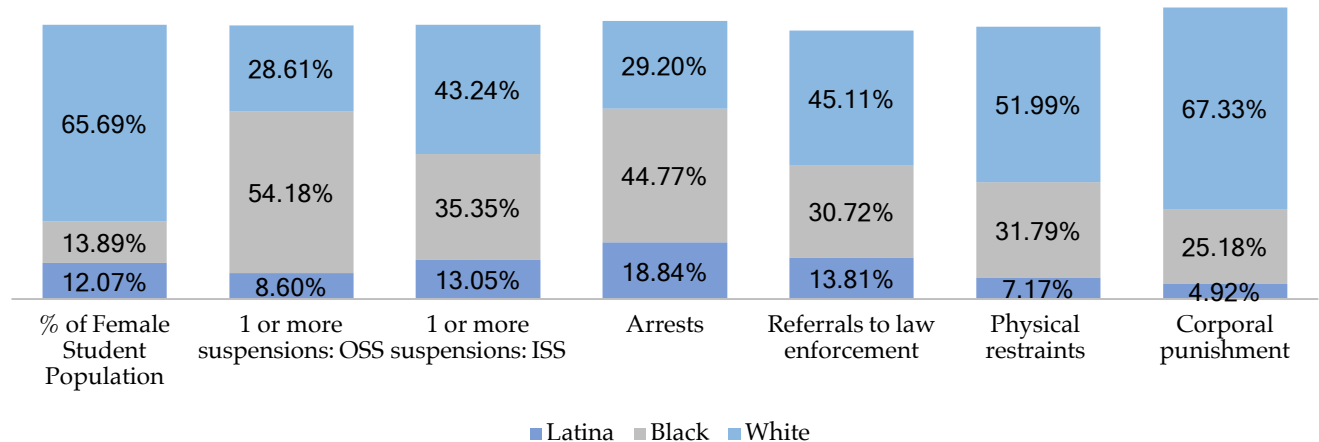
Relative Risk Ratio		
	Black Females	Latina Females
1 or more OSS	6.05	1.12
1 or more ISS	3.04	0.91
Arrests	4.20	0.92
Referrals	4.12	0.83
Restraints	1.80	0.33

In schools in the Northeast, Black female students were:

**6xs** more likely to receive 1 or more out-of-school suspensions  
**4xs** more likely to be arrested  
**4xs** more likely to be referred to law enforcement  
**3xs** more likely to receive 1 or more in-school suspensions

in comparison to White female students.

## PREVALENCE OF DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES FOR FEMALE STUDENTS BY REGION: MIDWEST



In the Midwest, 70,412 female students received 1+ OSS, 160,385 female students received 1+ ISS, 10,696 were arrested, 15,087 were referred to law enforcement, 5,511 were physically restrained and 854 received corporal punishment. Over two thirds of the female students in schools in the Midwest were White, with 14 percent Black females and nearly 12 percent Latina females.

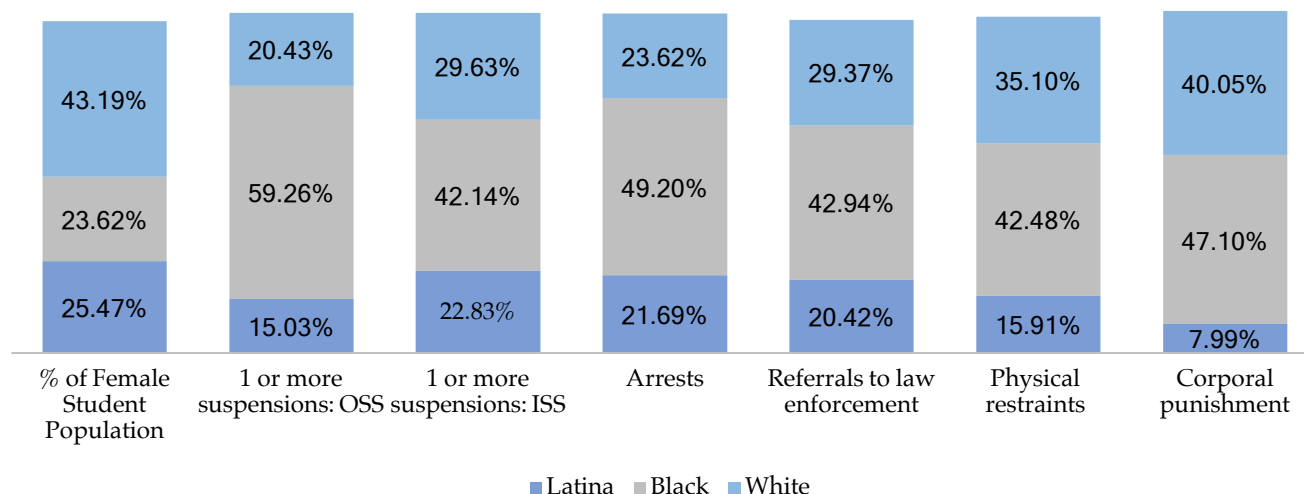
Relative Risk Ratio		
	Black Females	Latina Females
1 or more OSS	8.96	1.64
1 or more ISS	3.87	1.64
Arrests	7.25	3.51
Referrals	3.22	1.67
Restraints	2.89	0.75
Corporal Punishment	1.77	0.40

In schools in the Midwest, Black female students were:

**Nearly 9xs** more likely to receive 1 or more out-of-school suspensions  
**7xs** more likely to be arrested  
**Over 3xs** more likely to receive 1 or more in-school suspensions  
**3xs** more likely to be referred to law enforcement  
**Over 2xs** more likely to be physically restrained

in comparison to White female students.

## PREVALENCE OF DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES FOR FEMALE STUDENTS BY REGION: SOUTH



In the South, 140,713 female students received 1+ OSS, 534,154 female students received 1+ ISS, 8,655 were arrested, 29,169 were referred to law enforcement, 5,419 were physically restrained and 19,385 received corporal punishment. White females comprised approximately 42 percent of female students in the South, with Black and Latina girls each comprising approximately 24 percent of all female students in this region.

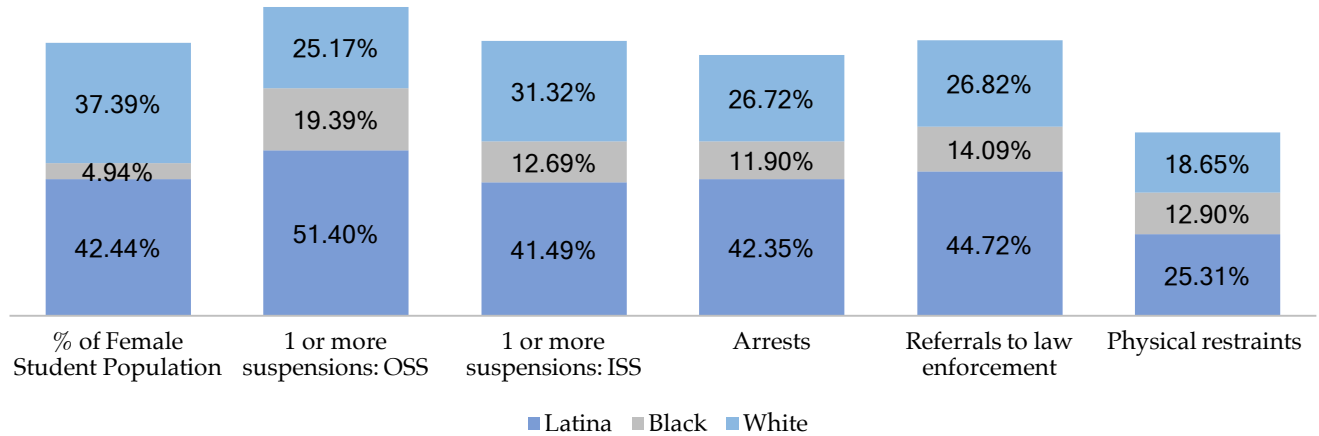
Relative Risk Ratio		
	Black Females	Latina Females
1 or more OSS	5.30	1.25
1 or more ISS	2.60	1.31
Arrests	3.81	1.56
Referrals	2.67	1.18
Restraints	2.21	0.77
Corporal Punishment	2.15	0.34

In schools in the South, Black female students were:

**5xs** more likely to receive 1 or more out-of-school suspensions  
**Over 3xs** more likely to be arrested  
**Over 2xs** more likely to receive 1 or more in-school suspensions  
**Over 2xs** more likely to be referred to law enforcement  
**Over 2xs** more likely to be referred to law enforcement  
**2xs** more likely to be physically restrained

in comparison to White female students.

## PREVALENCE OF DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES FOR FEMALE STUDENTS BY REGION: WEST



In the West, 43,126 female students received 1+ OSS, 86,619 female students received 1+ ISS, 2,732 were arrested, 15,725 were referred to law enforcement, and 2,418 were physically restrained. Latina females were 42 percent of all female students, with 37 percent being White females and nearly 5 percent being Black females.

Relative Risk Ratio		
	Black Females	Latina Females
1 or more OSS	5.83	1.79
1 or more ISS	3.06	1.53
Arrests	3.37	1.83
Referrals	3.97	1.97
Restraints	5.23	1.56

In schools in the West, Black female students were:

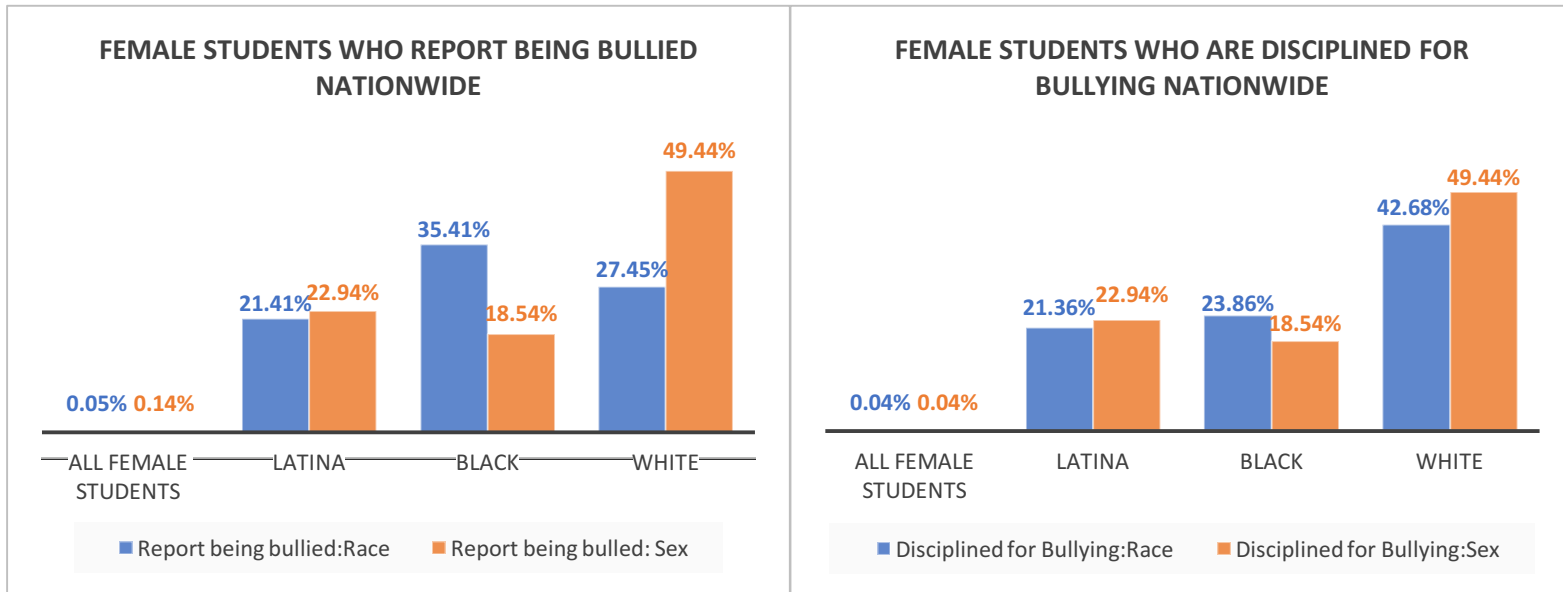
**Over 5xs** more likely to receive 1 or more out-of-school suspensions  
**5xs more** likely to be physically restrained  
**Nearly 4xs** more likely to be referred to law enforcement  
**3xs** more likely to be arrested  
**3xs** more likely to receive 1 or more in-school suspensions

AND Latina female students were:

**Nearly 2x** more likely to be referred to law enforcement

in comparison to White female students.

## Nationwide Prevalence of Bullying/Harassment



Nationwide, 35,156 female students reported being bullied or harassed on the basis of sex, while 12,475 reported being bullied or harassed on the basis of race. Additionally, 13,404 female students were disciplined for bullying their peers on the basis of sex, while 9,470 were disciplined for bullying their peers on the basis of race. Importantly, this data does not include information about the prevalence of bullying or harassment on the basis of race and sex simultaneously.

Relative Risk Ratio		
	Black Females	Latina Females
Report being bullied: Sex	1.16	0.86
Report being bullied: Race	4.00	1.45
Disciplined for bullying peers: Sex	1.70	1.08
Disciplined for bullying peers: Race	1.74	0.93

Nationwide, Black female students were:

**4xs** more likely to report being bullied on the basis of race  
in comparison to White female students.

*\*Note: harassment/ bullying data is only available for female students without disabilities. Harassment on the basis of race or sex is not disaggregated for female students served under IDEA.*

## ABOUT NBWJI

The National Black Women's Justice Institute (NBWJI) is a nonprofit organization focused on reducing racial and gender disparities across the justice continuum affecting cisgender and transgender Black women, girls, and their families, by conducting research, providing technical assistance, engaging in public education, promoting civic engagement, and advocating for informed and effective policies.

NBWJI conducts research independently and in collaboration with a number of domestic universities and organizations on Black women and girls in the U.S. who are impacted by criminalization and the criminal legal system as a function of their intersecting identities. Our work also includes training and technical assistance to public agencies that are working to improve outcomes for women and girls impacted by criminalization.



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