

Persistent Disparities Found Through Comprehensive Civil Rights Survey Underscore Need for Continued Focus on Equity

Gaps Exist in Discipline, Rigorous Courses—All Seen in Data Available Online for Download for First Time

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The U.S. Department of Education's [Office for Civil Rights](#) (OCR) today unveiled [new data](#) from the 2013–2014 school year showing gaps that still remain too wide in key areas affecting educational equity and opportunity for students, including

incidents of discipline, restraint and seclusion, access to courses and programs that lead to college and career readiness, teacher equity, rates of retention, and access to early learning.

U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr. said that, despite significant work from districts across the country, the persistent disparities shown in the [new Civil Rights Data Collection](#)—which collected data from all public schools and school districts nationwide for the 2013–14 school year—highlight the need for a continued focus on educational equity, especially in the implementation of the new *Every Student Succeeds Act*.

The CRDC, which collected student absenteeism rates for the first time, revealed that 6.5 million students—13 percent of all students—were chronically absent from schools in 2013–14.

While student discipline occurs in high numbers and disparities remain significant, the 2013–14 CRDC reveals that out-of-school suspensions decreased by nearly 20 percent since 2011–12, as more schools find alternative ways of addressing non-violent student behavior. But this



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progress is not occurring for all groups of students; the data show, that, in general, students of color, English learners, and students with disabilities are, on average, disciplined more often than their classmates.

"The CRDC data are more than numbers and charts—they illustrate in powerful and troubling ways disparities in opportunities and experiences that different groups of students have in our schools," said King. "The Obama Administration has always stressed how data can empower parents, educators and policy makers to make informed decisions about how to better serve students. The stories the CRDC data tell us create the imperative for a continued call to action to do better and close achievement and opportunity gaps. This is one of the reasons I am excited by the opportunity offered by the new *Every Student Succeeds Act*. It makes clear the obligation our schools and states have to ensure that all students have access to an excellent education that prepares them to succeed in college and careers. It also makes clear that *ESSA's* Title I funds are to be used to provide the additional support needed to make that happen."

"The CRDC data shines a spotlight on the educational opportunities proffered, and denied, to our nation's sons and daughters in schools every day," said Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Catherine E. Lhamon. "We urge educators, researchers and the public to join us in using this data to its full potential to support students in realizing theirs."

The Department releases the CRDC every two years to create transparency around the educational opportunities and experiences of millions of public school students.



Similar to the 2011–12 CRDC, the 2013–14 CRDC covers more than 50 million students enrolled in nearly every school and school district in the United States.

In addition to chronic student absenteeism, the 2013–2014 CRDC collected data on several new topics for the first time, including access to educational programs in justice facilities; availability of distance education, including online courses; the presence of sworn law enforcement officers in schools (including school resource officers); availability of partially or fully cost-subsidized preschool; and whether the district has a civil rights coordinator.

The CRDC measures access to early learning programs. Schools are

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required under federal law to provide special education and related services for preschool-age children with disabilities. But more than half of school districts are offering preschool above and beyond what is required. More than 85 percent of those school districts are providing those services at no cost to families. Unfortunately, the remaining school districts are charging families to attend, which is a burden to low- and middle-income families.

Key data points of note follow and are included in the CRDC First Look document.

Student discipline

Nationwide, 2.8 million K–12 students received one or more out-of-school suspensions—which is a nearly 20 percent decrease from the number of out-of-school suspensions reported two years ago.

Black preschool children are 3.6 times as likely to be suspended as are white preschool students.

In kindergarten through the 12th grade, black students are nearly four times as likely to be suspended as are white students. Black students also are nearly twice as likely to be expelled—removed from school with no services—as are white students.

Students with disabilities are more than twice as likely as students without disabilities to be suspended in K–12 settings. They also represent two-thirds of students who are secluded from their classmates or restrained to prevent them from moving—even though they are only 12 percent of the overall student population.

The Administration has made reforming school discipline one of its top priorities. Last July, the My Brother’s Keeper Taskforce convened 40 school districts from across the nation to the White House to announce new commitments to encourage alternatives to suspension and expulsion. The Department of Education’s #RethinkDiscipline campaign is aimed at raising awareness of the long-term damage suspensions and expulsions do to children. The campaign also highlights alternatives to those practices and has prioritized some of these alternatives through the final grant competition of the Investing in Innovation fund. The Administration has also had an important focus on eliminating expulsion and suspension in early learning settings, and released the first Federal policy statement on this issue, with recommendations to states and local early childhood programs, in 2014.

Access to advanced courses

More than half of high schools do not offer calculus, four in ten do not offer physics, more than one in four do not offer chemistry, and more than one in five do not offer Algebra II, which is considered a gateway class for success in college.

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By many measures, some student groups are more likely than others to miss out on these opportunities:

Only a third of high schools with high black and Latino enrollments offer calculus, compared to 56 percent of those that serve low numbers of black and Latino students.

Less than half the high schools with high black and Latino enrollments offer physics, while two in three high schools that have low numbers of black and Latino student offer physics.

English learners have disproportionately low participation rates in Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) programs: while English learners are 11% of all students in schools offering GATE programs, fewer than 3% of GATE students nationwide are English learners.

Black and Latino students also participate at lower rates in Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) programs. Although black and Latino students make up 42 percent of students enrolled in schools that offer GATE programs, they are only 28 percent of the students who participate in those programs.

Girls are underrepresented in some advanced coursework such as physics, but not in others such as calculus.

Teacher and Staffing Equity

10 percent of the teachers in schools with high numbers of black and Latino students are in their first year of teaching, compared to only 5 percent in schools with low numbers of black and Latino students.

11 percent of black students, 9 percent of Latino students and 7 percent of American Indian or Alaska Native students attend schools where more than 20 percent of teachers are in their first year of teaching, compared to 5% of white students.

More than 20 percent of high schools lack any school counselor.

1.6 million students attend a school with a sworn law enforcement officer but not a school counselor.

Today's release is the first in a series of data analyses from the 2013–14 CRDC that the Department will issue over the course of the summer and fall. To make these data more accessible and useful for parents, educators, policymakers and others, for the first time, the whole data file is available online at CRDC.ed.gov.

One group that plans to use the new data is the nonprofit [GreatSchools](http://GreatSchools.org), which reaches more than half of U.S. families with school-age children with school information each year. Using the CRDC, GreatSchools



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aims to build a richer set of individual school profiles that shed light on student access to educational opportunity, with a particular focus on equity. Specifically, the group hopes to spotlight access to rigorous coursework, college readiness milestones, student absenteeism, discipline rates, athletics participation, and counselors-per-student.

“The unique national scale, school-level information and transparency that the CRDC offers can help drive meaningful conversations from the kitchen table to the principal’s office to a school board meeting,” said Matthew Nelson, Chief Operating Officer of GreatSchools. “GreatSchools is proud to partner with Secretary King and the Department of Education in making this information accessible to American families, educators and policy-makers to shine the light on educational opportunity for all students.”

The federal government has collected civil rights data about schools since 1968. As with previous Civil Rights Data Collections, the purpose of the 2013–14 report is to obtain vital data related to civil rights laws requiring public schools to provide equal educational opportunity.



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