
Strategic Plan Priority Four Update: Empowering Culture

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OCS 2021-2026 Strategic Plan



**Teaching
Tomorrow's
Leaders**

**Exemplary
Staff**



EQUITY



**Excellence
and
Efficiency**

**Empowering
Culture**



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Core Beliefs Regarding Student Expectations

- Students deserve consistency in use, interpretation, and application of OCS policies outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.
- Students are more likely to uphold expectations when there is consistency in the application of policy among school staff.
- Parents and caregivers are essential in our continued efforts to support desirable school behavior.
- School administration should use equitable supportive measures, opportunities, strategies, and interventions for students to solve problems and correct behaviors.
- Reasonable and fair consequences should be issued at all times.



Making Decisions with Three Lenses

OCS cares deeply about all of its students and families and wants them to thrive in schools. OCS is committed to do what is best for each and every one of them. To determine what is best, the Equity and Student Engagement Team and Equity Task Force applied three lenses:

- An equity lens - What does each student need to be successful?
- A data lens - What does the evidence say about what is best/effective for students?
- A community lens - What knowledge can the student, family, and their community bring to the table to help us make decisions about what is best?

(Weiler, 2025)



Priority Four (Current) Goal One

Strategic Plan Priority Four: (Current) Goal One

Reduce the suspension rate of Black students from 9% to 3% by 2026. Reduce the suspension rate of multiracial students from 8% to 3% by 2026.

Strategies:

- Increase the number of students who feel engaged in school to 90% or greater in grades 3-5 and to 90% or greater in grades 6-12
- Reduce each and every student referral in grades 3-5 and in grades 6-12. Reduce referrals of Black and multiracial students K-12.
- 100% of all new OCS employees will receive introductory equity/culturally responsive training as part of the district's comprehensive onboarding process.

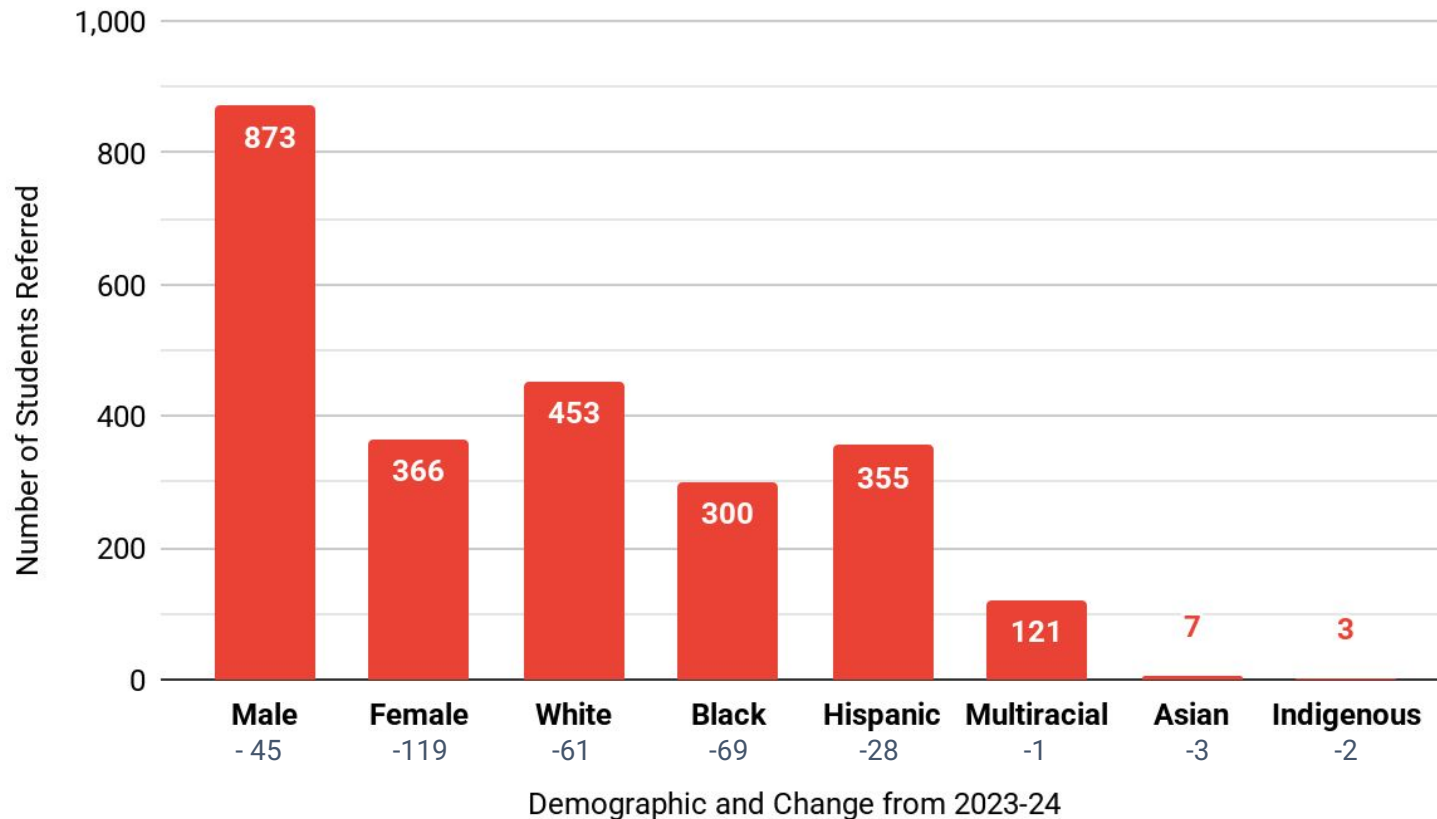


Discipline Data

Office Referrals

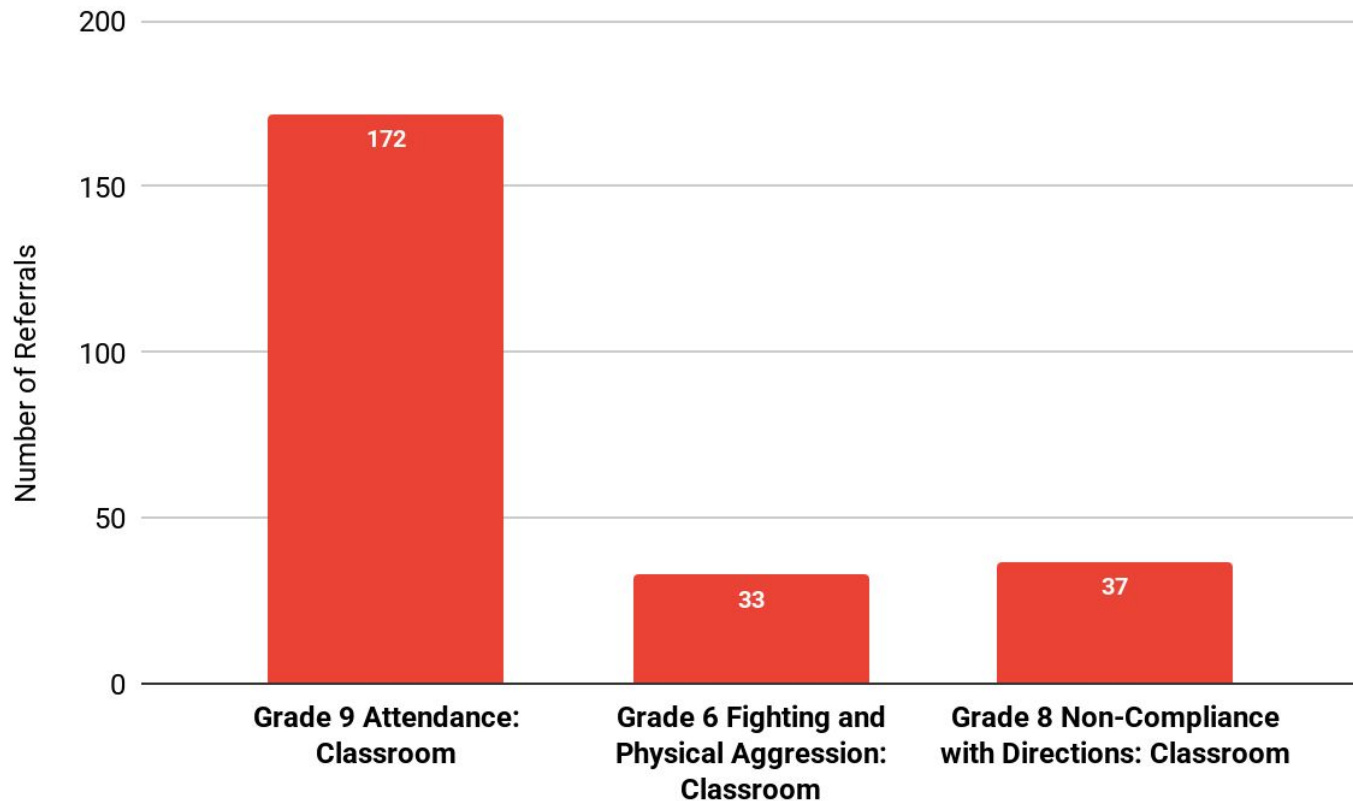
OCS Total Office Referrals

Number of Individual Students Referred: July 1, 2024 to May 2, 2025



2025 Top 3 OCS Office Referrals: Grade/Activity/Location

July 1, 2024 to May 2, 2025



Summary of the Data

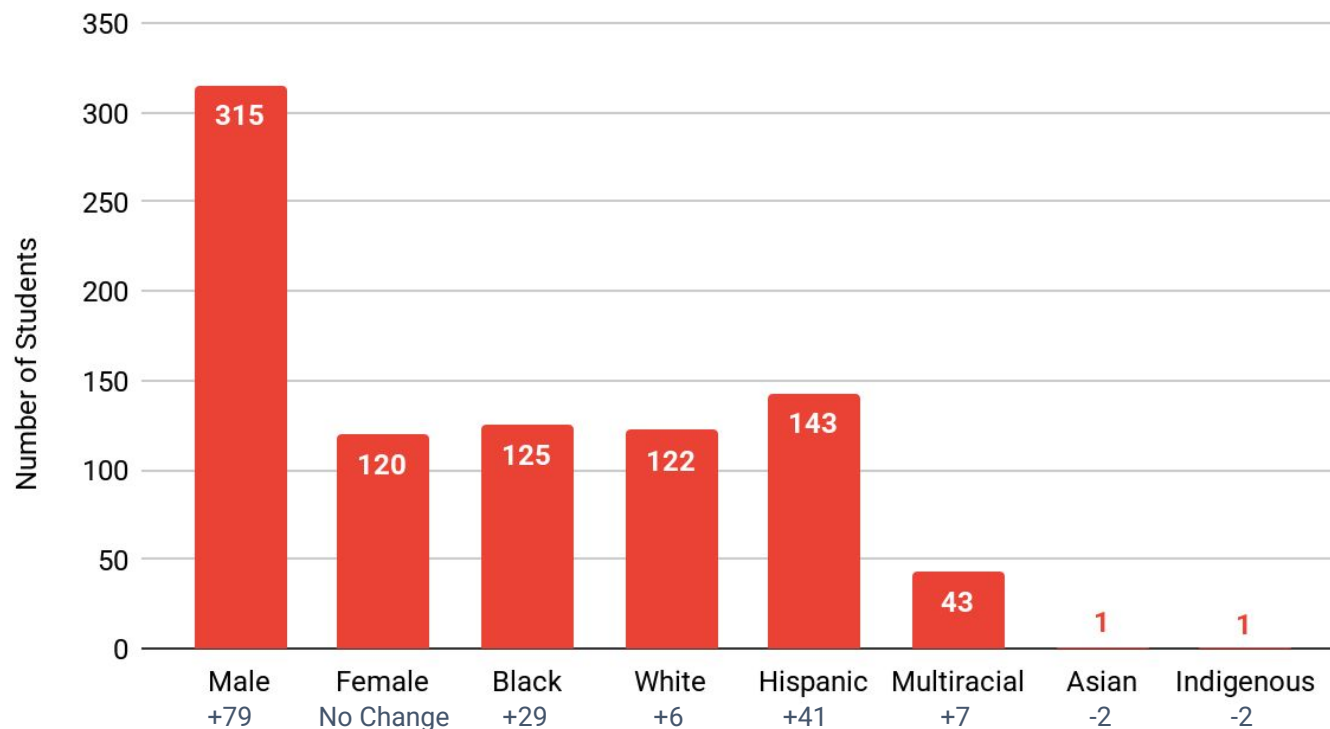
- There has been a decrease in the number of individual students referred in every subgroup.
- Attendance at the 9th grade level is an area of growth for the district.



In-School Suspension

In-School Suspensions

Number of Students Experiencing ISS: July 1, 2024 to May 2, 2025



Demographic and Change from 2023-24

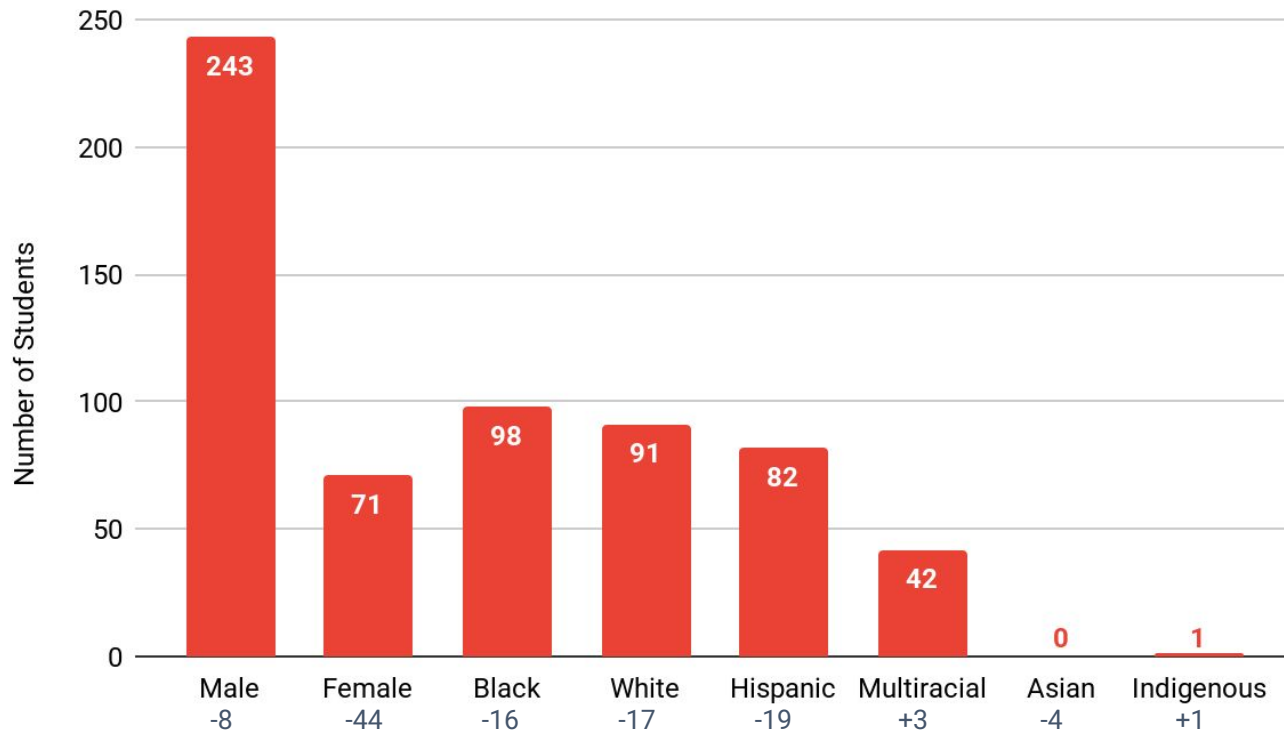


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Out-of-School Suspension

Out-of-School Suspensions

Number of Students Experiencing OSS: July 1, 2024 to May 2, 2025



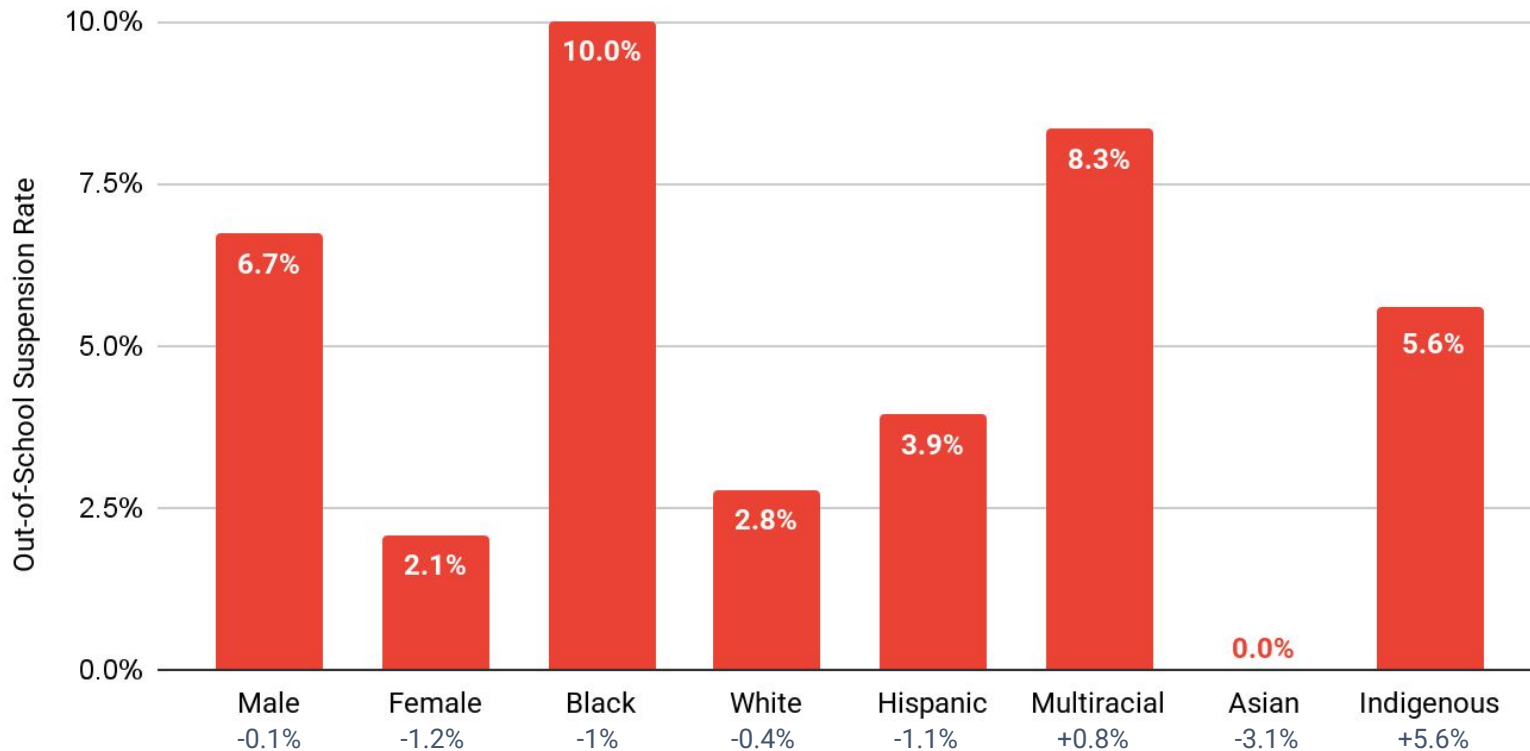
Demographic and Change from 2023-24



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Out-of-School Suspension Rate by Demographic

July 1, 2024 to May 2, 2025 (students/enrolled)



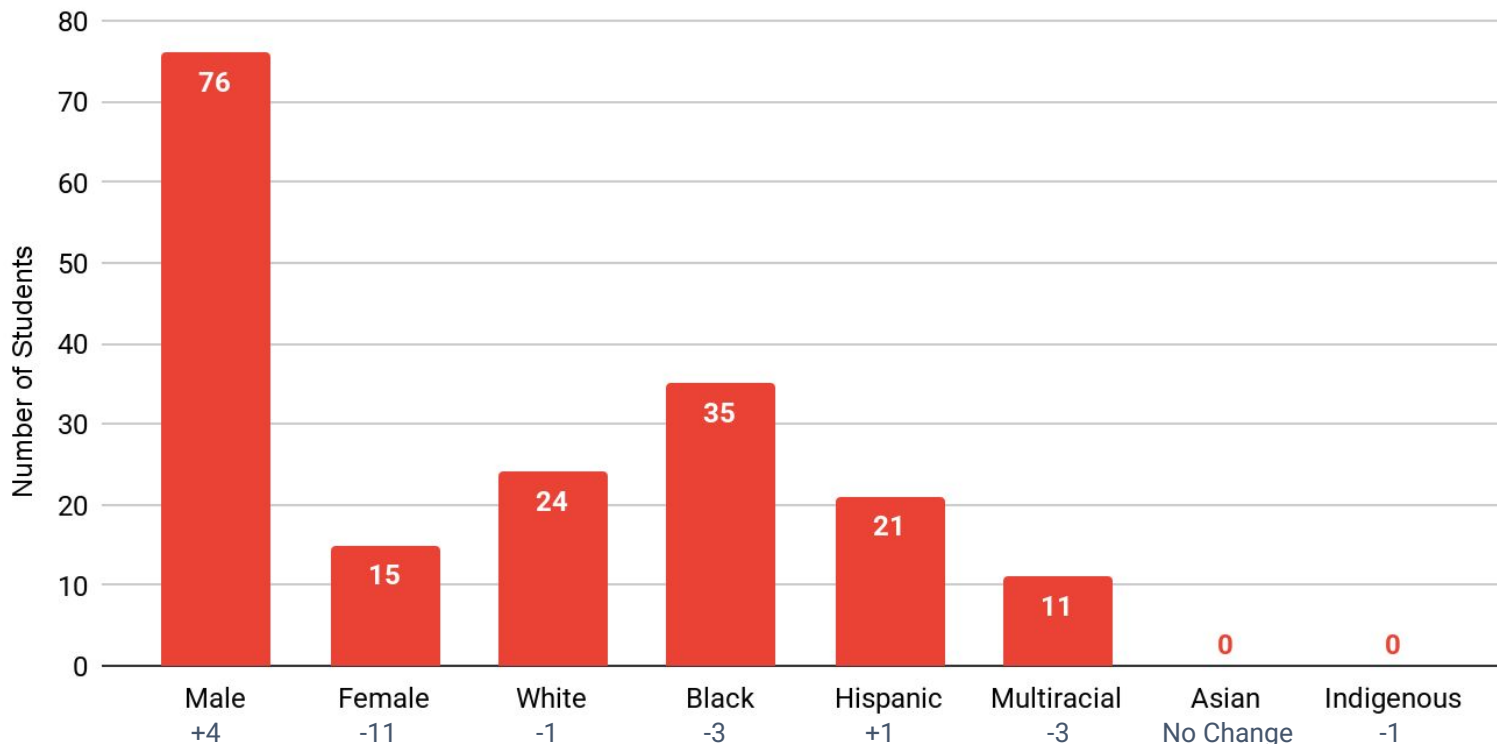
Demographic and Change from 2023-24



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Students Repeatedly Experiencing Out-of-School Suspension

July 1, 2024 to May 2, 2025



Demographic and Change from 2023-24

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Summary of the Data

- There was an increase in the number of students experiencing in-school suspension in every subgroup except Asian, Indigenous, and females.
- There was a decrease in the number of students experiencing one out-of-school suspension while Hispanic students increased by three and Indigenous students increased by one.
- The only subgroups that experienced an increase in their rate of out-of-school suspensions were Multi-racial and Indigenous students. (The Indigenous column represents one incident out of 18 total enrolled students. There were no incidents of out-of-school suspension by Indigenous students in the 2023-2024 school year.)
- There was a slight increase of four male students and one Hispanic student experiencing two or more incidents of out-of-school suspension. There was no change with Asian students. Every other subgroup experienced a slight decline.



Priority Four: Proposed Goal One and Action Steps Amendments

Strategic Plan Priority Four

Goal I

By June 2026, Orange County Schools will decrease the overall number of out-of-school suspensions in all subgroups by 10% annually.



Strategic Plan Priority Four

Goal One: Strategies

- Monitor and perfect the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) planning process to ensure the development and implementation of a robust, rigorous instructional framework such that daily lesson/unit plans and instruction is representative of all students.
- Monitor and perfect the implementation of instructional strategies for all students to explore real-world examples, explore their individual interests, share their unique stories and experiences, and be supported on their personal pathways to academic success.
- Provide ongoing professional learning to principals, assistant principals, and educators on the interpretation and use of the Code of Student Conduct, Board policy, and the distinction between minor and major office referrals.
- Adopt objective criteria for office referrals to reduce the risk of bias leading to disproportionately punitive consequences for student behavior.



Strategic Plan Priority Four

Goal One: Strategies

- District staff and school administration will collect and analyze discipline data using the Educator's Handbook. This data should be disaggregated and would include the following:
 - Location of incidents (including buses)
 - Time of incidents
 - Staff members
 - Disciplinary action taken
 - Incidents (disrespect, disruption, discretionary, etc.)
 - Students including repeat offenders
 - Risk ratio
 - Bullying and harassment reports



Strategic Plan Priority Four

Goal One: Strategies

- District and school-based administration will review data monthly to examine disproportionate discipline practices and implement research and evidence-based wraparound services to reduce disproportionality.
- Provide and institutionalize restorative practice training districtwide/schoolwide; document and evaluate the implementation and outcome(s) of restorative practices.



Priority Four (Current) Goal Two

Strategic Plan Priority Four: (Current) Goal Two

Increase the average daily attendance rate of each and every student from 89% to 95% or greater by 2026.

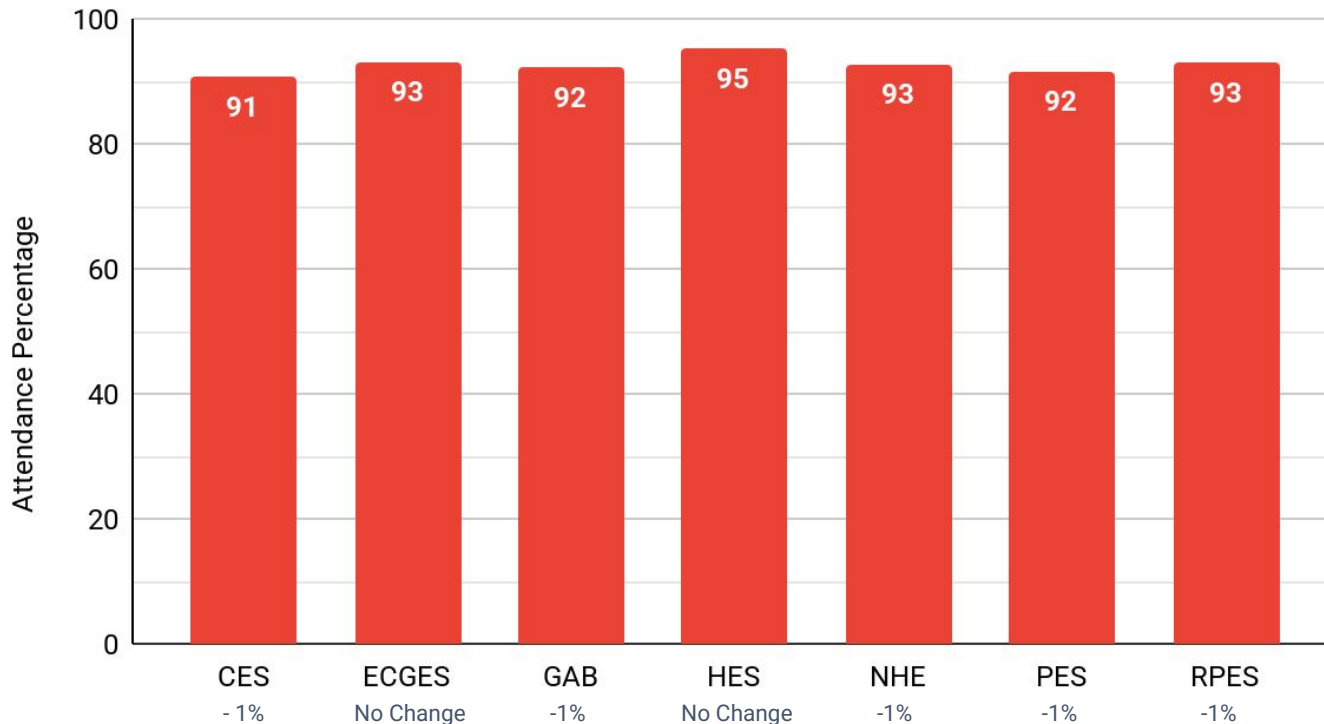
Strategies:

- Increase daily attendance at three lowest performing elementary schools to 95%, two lowest performing middle schools to 95%, and one lowest performing high school to 95%.
- Increase daily attendance rate among Black and multiracial students to 95%.
- Increase the percentage of students who feel engaged in school (as seen through the Panorama survey) from 86% to 90% or greater in grades 3-5 and 84% to 90% in grades 6-12.



Average Daily Attendance Rate - Elementary Schools

July 1, 2024 to May 2, 2025



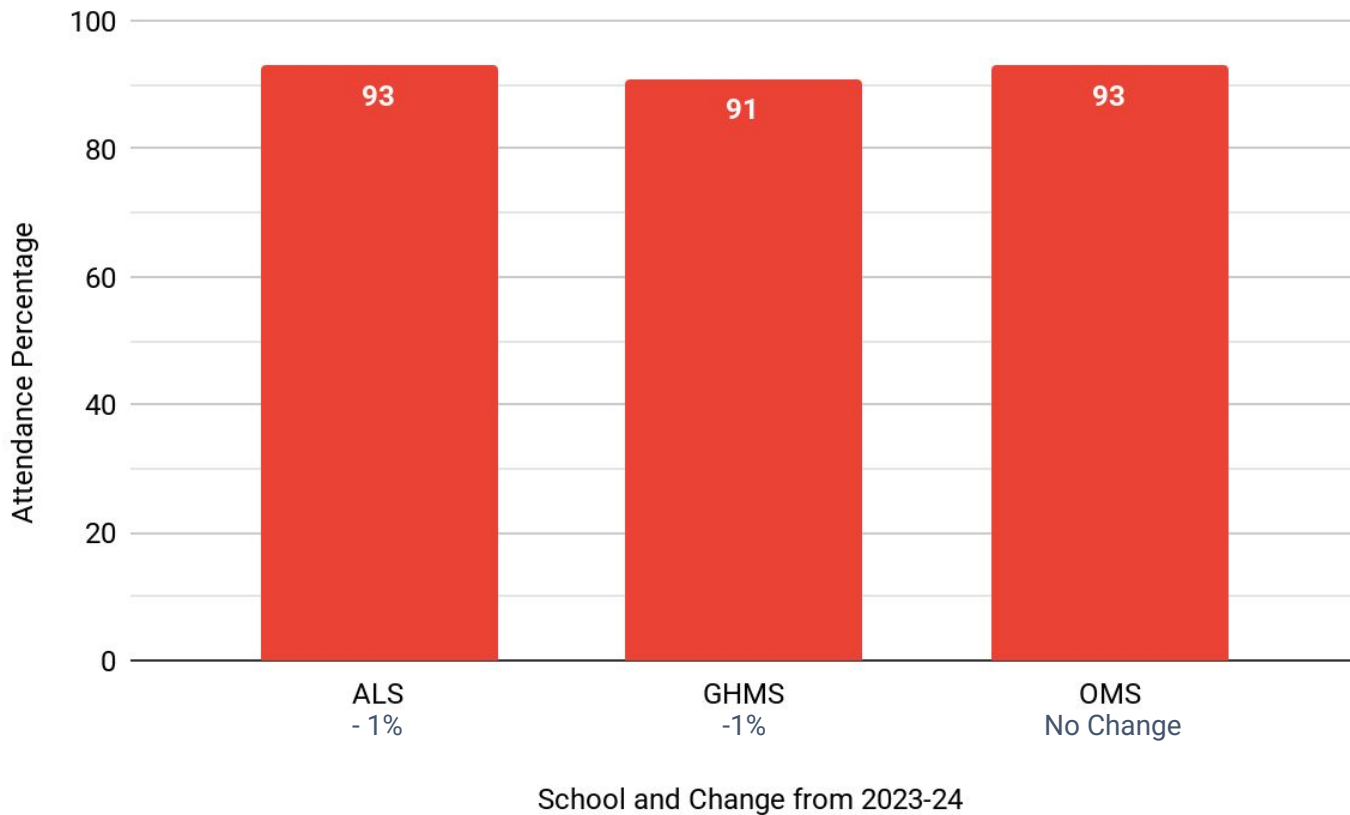
School and Change from 2023-24



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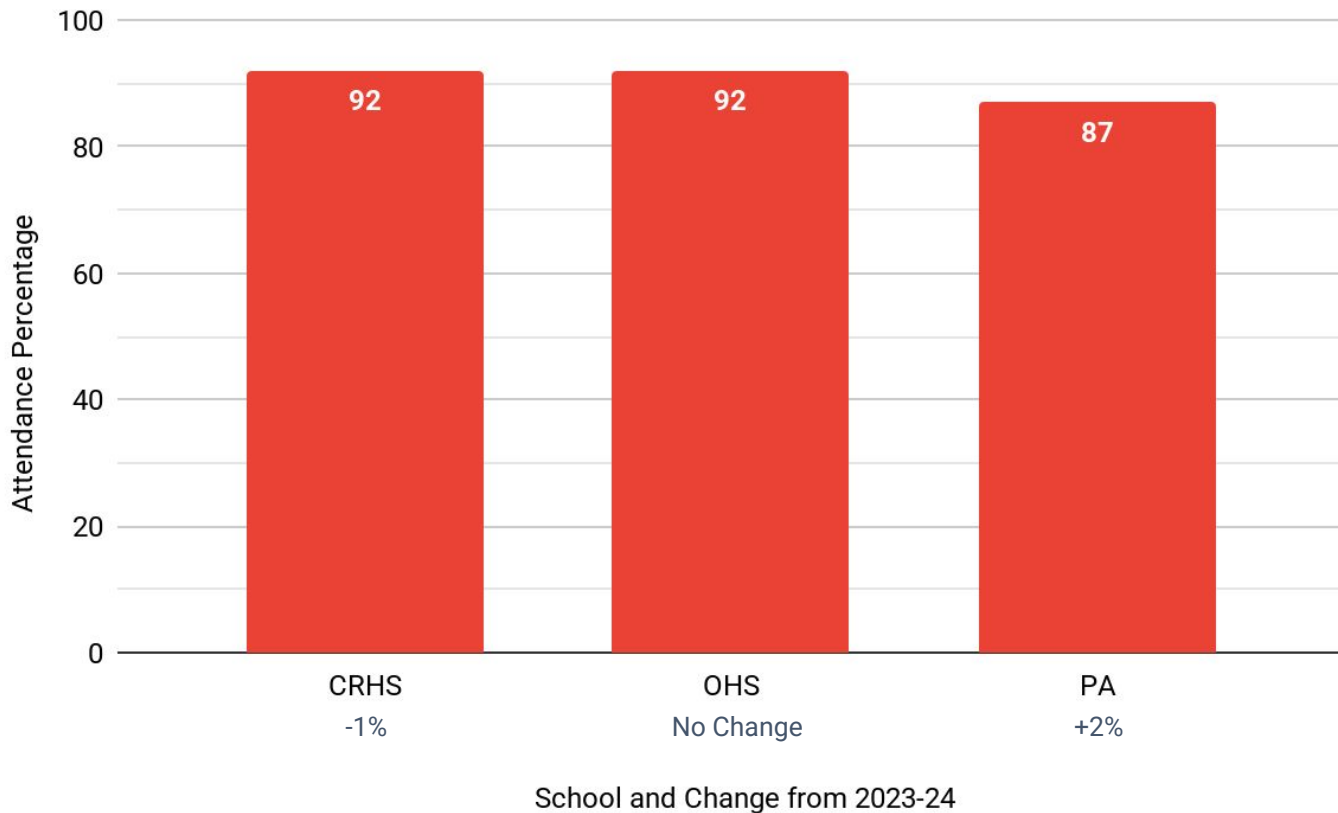
Average Daily Attendance Rate - Middle Schools

July 1, 2024 to May 2, 2025



Average Daily Attendance Rate - High Schools

July 1, 2024 to May 2, 2025



Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic Absenteeism

Definition

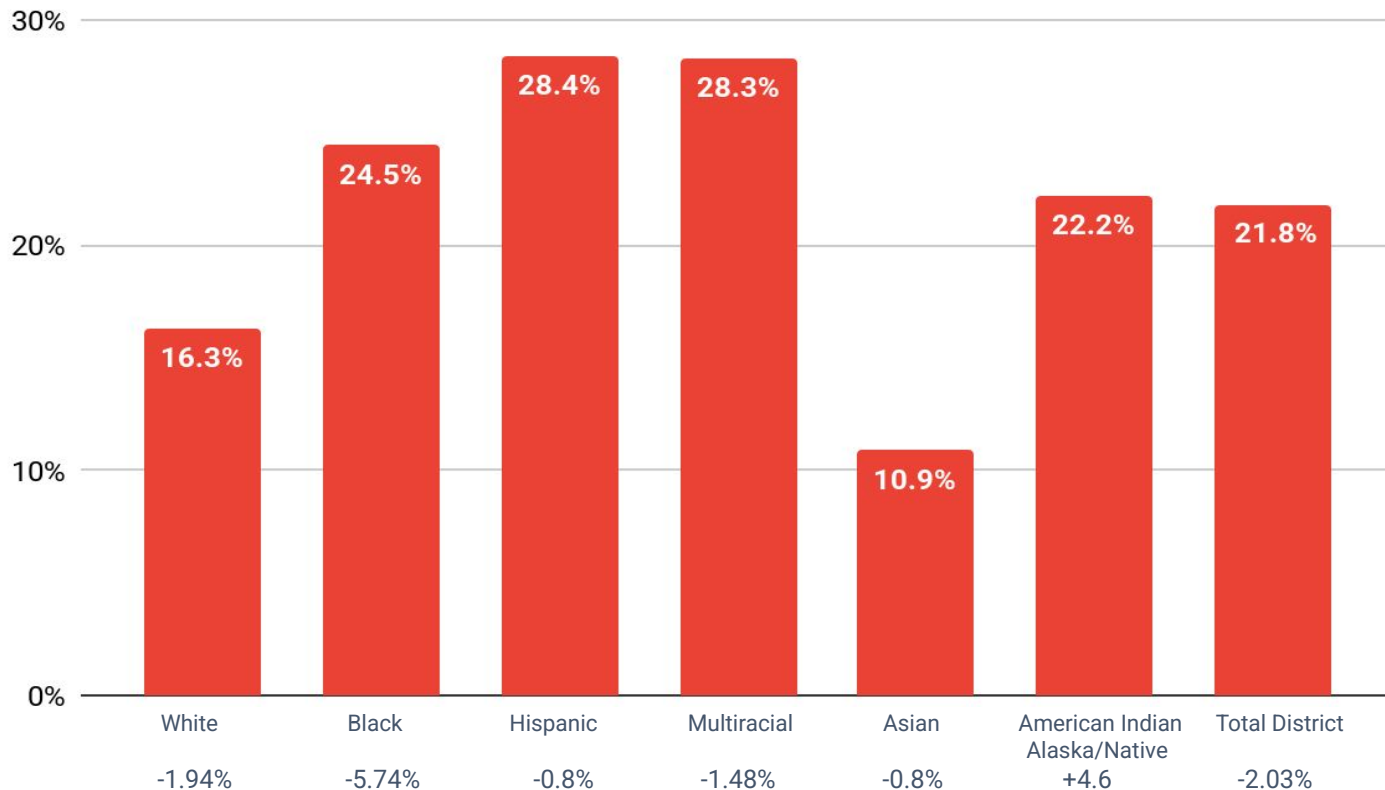
A student is defined as chronically absent when they are enrolled in a North Carolina public school for at least 10 school days at any time period during the school year, and whose total number of absences is equal to or greater than 10 percent of the total number of days that the student has been enrolled at any school during a given school year.

Student chronic absence differs from both truancy and average daily attendance. Student chronic absence refers to missing so much school, for any type of absence (excused, unexcused, disciplinary), that a student is at risk of falling behind academically.



Chronic Absenteeism Rate

July 1, 2024 to May 2, 2025



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Panorama Data: Spring 2025 (Grades 4 - 5)

Panorama Survey: Sample Questions

Grades 4 - 5

Supportive Relationships

- Do you have a teacher or other adult from school who you can count on to help you, no matter what?
- Do you have a friend from school who you can count on to help you, no matter what?

Self-Management

- During the past two weeks, how often did you get your work done right away, instead of waiting until the last minute?
- During the past two weeks, how often did you pay attention in class?



Panorama Survey: Sample Questions

Grades 4 - 5

Positive Feelings

- During the past week, how often did you feel safe?
- During the past week, how often did you feel happy?

Social Awareness

- During the past two weeks, how much were you able to disagree with others without starting an argument?
- During the past two weeks, when others did not agree with you, how respectful were you of their opinions?



Panorama Survey Response Rate

Grades 4 - 5: Fall 2024

Race	Supportive Relationships (90%)	Self-Management (72%)	Positive Feelings (66%)	Social Awareness (60%)
White	92%	79%	69%	63%
Black	87%	69%	62%	55%
Multiracial	87%	67%	65%	57%
Hispanic	86%	64%	60%	54%
Asian	89%	74%	56%	63%



Panorama Survey Response Rate

Grades 4 - 5: Spring 2025

Race	Supportive Relationships (89%)	Self-Management (74%)	Positive Feelings (63%)	Social Awareness (60%)
White	88%	80%	65%	62%
Black	87%	79%	55%	55%
Multiracial	87%	77%	57%	57%
Hispanic	91%	64%	55%	55%
Asian	84%	74%	69%	64%



Panorama Survey: Spring 2025

Grades 4 - 5: Summary of the Data

- The number of students that participated in the survey increased from 761 in the fall to 934 in the spring.
- There was no change in the category of “social awareness.”
- There was a 3% decrease in the category of “positive feelings.”
- There was a 1% decrease in the category of “supportive relationships.”
- There was a 2% increase in the category of self-management.”



Panorama Data: Spring 2025 (Grades 6 - 12)

Panorama Survey: Sample Questions

Grades 6 - 12

School Climate

- My school is welcoming, understanding and kind towards parents/caregivers.

Supportive Relationships

- Do you have a teacher or other adult from your school who you can be completely yourself around?
- Do you have a friend from school who you can count on to help you, no matter what?

Sense of Belonging

- My school has a variety of after-school activities that students are able to be part of regardless of money and transportation?



Panorama Survey: Sample Questions

Grades 6 - 12

Teacher-Student Relationships

- Adults in my school model the behavior they expect from students.
- Adults maintain calm when dealing with misbehavior and conflict in my school.

Self-Management

- During the past two weeks, how often did you come to class prepared?
- During the past two weeks, how often did you follow directions in class?

Cultural Awareness and Action

- I feel that my school is preparing me to deal with real-life challenges and the future ahead.



Panorama Survey: Sample Questions

Grades 6 - 12

Diversity and Inclusion

- My teacher includes lessons, classwork, and homework that I can relate to.
- I hear hurtful comments about students based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disabilities, etc. from other students in my school.

Social Awareness

- During the past two weeks, how well did you get along with students who are different from you?
- During the past two weeks, how much were you able to disagree with others without starting an argument?



Panorama Survey: Sample Questions

Grades 6 - 12

Positive Feelings

- During the past week, how often did you feel loved?
- During the past week, how often did you feel hopeful?

Social Perspective-Taking

- How much do you try to understand your teachers' motivation for doing different classroom activities?
- Overall, how much effort do you put into figuring out what your teachers are thinking?



Panorama Survey Response Rate

Grades 6 - 12: Fall 2024

Race	School Climate (90%)	Supportive Relationships (83%)	Sense of Belonging (81%)	Teacher Student Relationships (74%)	Self-Management (72%)
White	91%	86%	83%	75%	76%
Black	86%	82%	79%	72%	66%
Multiracial	87%	83%	75%	70%	72%
Hispanic	91%	83%	81%	76%	65%
Asian	85%	88%	83%	83%	80%



Panorama Survey Response Rate

Grades 6 - 12: Spring 2025

Race	School Climate (88%)	Supportive Relationships (84%)	Sense of Belonging (80%)	Teacher Student Relationships (73%)	Self-Management (67%)
White	90%	86%	81%	72%	71%
Black	85%	82%	76%	70%	64%
Multiracial	84%	84%	68%	67%	66%
Hispanic	88%	83%	79%	76%	62%
Asian	93%	91%	90%	80%	76%



Panorama Survey Response Rate

Grades 6 - 12: Fall 2024

Race	Cultural Awareness and Action (71%)	Diversity and Inclusion (64%)	Social Awareness (57%)	Positive Feelings (55%)	Social Perspective-Taking (45%)
White	67%	63%	61%	57%	47%
Black	68%	58%	54%	53%	41%
Multiracial	65%	59%	56%	48%	44%
Hispanic	78%	67%	53%	54%	40%
Asian	83%	71%	63%	57%	48%



Panorama Survey Response Rate

Grades 6 - 12: Spring 2025

Race	Cultural Awareness and Action (69%)	Diversity and Inclusion (62%)	Social Awareness (56%)	Positive Feelings (53%)	Social Perspective-Taking (42%)
White	81%	77%	59%	47%	41%
Black	68%	57%	51%	50%	36%
Multiracial	58%	58%	56%	50%	45%
Hispanic	72%	65%	53%	53%	39%
Asian	86%	64%	63%	59%	45%



Panorama Survey: Spring 2025

Grades 6 - 12: Summary of the Data

- The number of students that participated in the survey increased from 3,007 in the fall to 3,223 in the spring.
- There was a 1% decrease in the following categories: “sense of belonging,” “teacher-student relationship,” and “social awareness.”
- There was a 2% decrease in the following categories: “school climate,” “cultural awareness and action,” “diversity and inclusion,” and “positive feelings.”
- There was a 3% decrease in the category of “social perspective-taking.”
- There was a 5% decrease in the category of “self-management.”
- There was a 1% increase in the category of “supportive relationships.”



School-Based Mental Health

Co-Located (School-Based Mental Health)

Agency/School Based on Feeder Pattern (Elementary/Middle/High)

Gaggle Therapy (Virtual)	Piedmont Health	Renaissance Wellness	Upward Change	Youth Extensions
Central Efland-Cheeks Grady Brown Hillsborough New Hope Pathways River Park A.L. Stanback Gravelly Hill Orange Middle Cedar Ridge Orange High Partnership	Efland-Cheeks	Grady Brown New Hope A.L. Stanback Cedar Ridge	Efland-Cheeks Hillsborough River Park Gravelly Hill Partnership	Central Pathways Orange Middle Orange High



Co-Located (School Based Mental Health)

Data as of May 06, 2025

Agency	Number of Referrals	Students Seen	Students on Waitlist
Gaggle Therapy	36	36	0
Piedmont Health	37	37	0
Renaissance Wellness	52	38	4
Upward Change	27	9	3
Youth Extensions	41	15	0
Total	193	135	7



Priority Four: Proposed Goal Two and Action Steps Amendments

Strategic Plan Priority Four

Goal II

By June 2026, Orange County Schools will address attendance by reducing the district chronic absenteeism rate from 21.83% to 19% as a way to improve student readiness, engagement, and academic outcomes by resolving a significant barrier to student learning.



Strategic Plan Priority Four

Goal II: Strategies

- Build the capacity of families by providing annual training regarding attendance and the impact on student achievement (academic, social-emotional, on-time graduation, grade-level proficiency).
- Monitor the effectiveness of wraparound services, interventions, and programming through continued examination of monthly school discipline data and quarterly district discipline data.
- Systematically track and analyze data while utilizing a three-tiered system of support to provide differentiated strategies for students to improve attendance at all levels.
- OCS students will participate in the annual Panorama survey with a minimum completion rate of 95% or higher.



Strategic Plan Priority Four

Goal II: Strategies

- District and school-based administration will analyze student climate survey data and will facilitate reflective and critical conversations about the ways in which school processes, procedures, policies, adult actions, and adult interactions with students may contribute to disparities.
- Expand the number of questions in the “sense of belonging” section of the Panorama survey to be able to get a clearer understanding of the student perspective on identifying their school community as “a good place to attend and learn” and that they “feel like they belong.”



Priority Four (Current) Goal Three

Strategic Plan Priority Four: (Current) Goal Three

Increase family partnerships and engagement among Black families from 18% to 40% and 11% to 40% for Latino families by 2026.

Strategies:

- Increase the percentage of all families logging into Parent Portal: including Black families, and Hispanic families (from baseline).
- Increase the number of district-led parent engagement opportunities each year for families.
- Increase Family Academy attendance, including for Black families and Hispanic families.

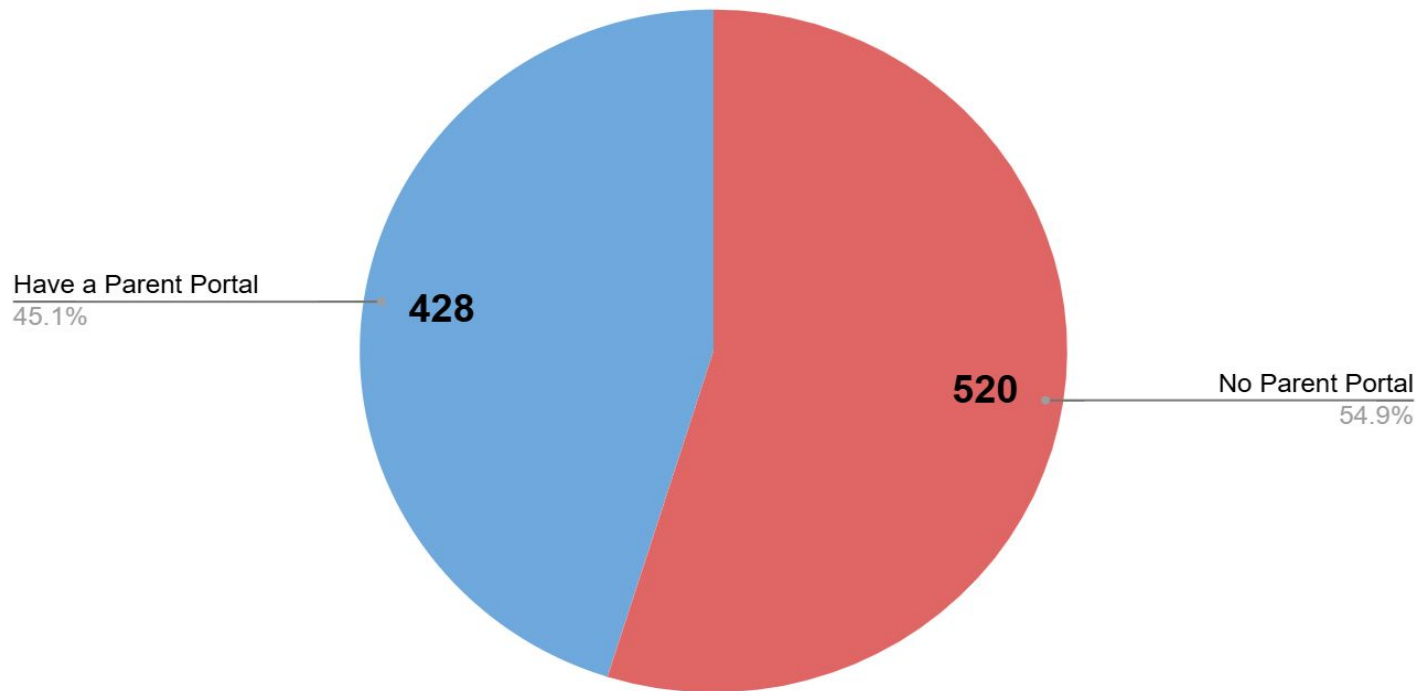


Campus Parent Portal

Campus Parent Portal

OCS Black or African American Students

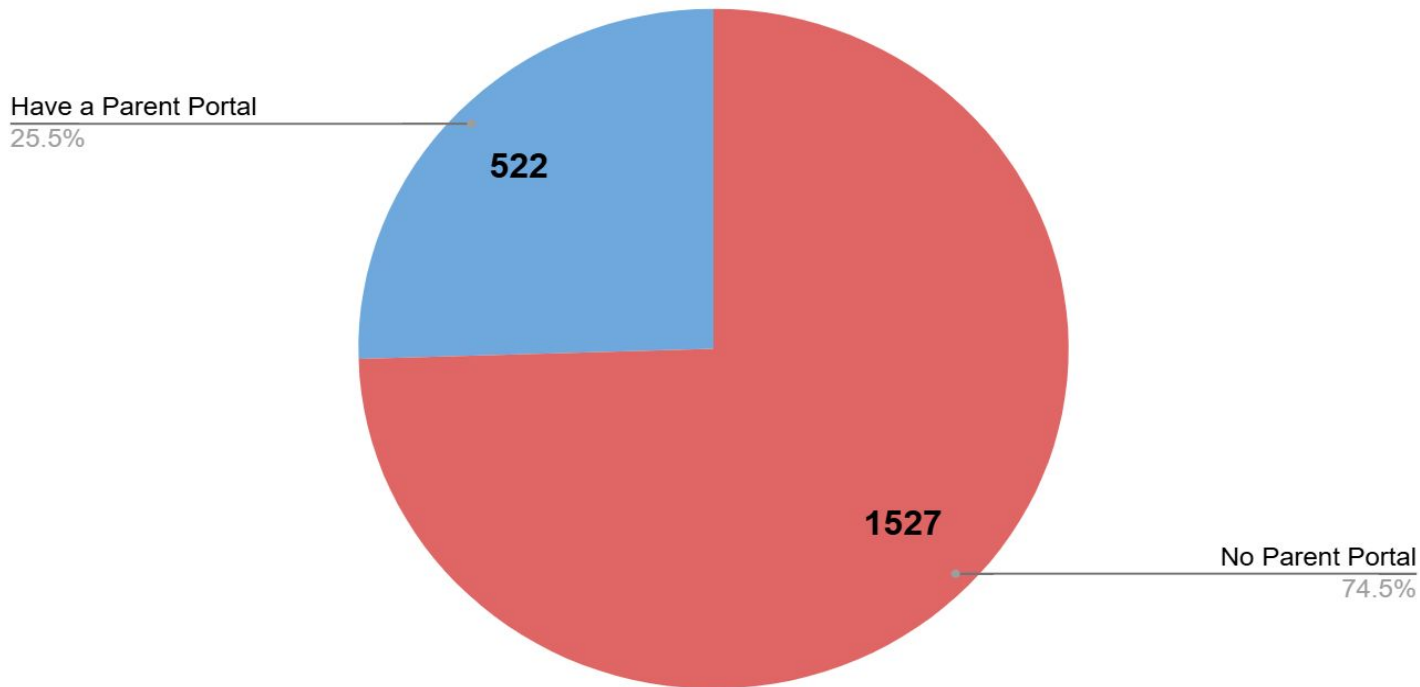
Percentage of Students With Guardians With and Without a Parent Portal Account as of 5/5/25



Campus Parent Portal

OCS Hispanic or Latino Students

Percentage of Students With Guardians With and Without a Parent Portal Account as of 5/5/25



Parent Engagement

Family Academy

Session Topics/Attendance

Month	Session Topic	Number of Families
September	"Focus on Academics"	24
October	"Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month"	40
November	"Understanding Your Child's Rights"	25
December	"Exploring Future CTE Careers"	30
January	"Preparing for High School"	59
February	"Black History Month Student Expo"	85
March	"Preparing for Middle School"	157
May	"Health and Wellness Fair"	22



Priority Four: Proposed Goal Three and Action Steps Amendments

Strategic Plan Priority Four

Goal III

By June 2026, Orange County Schools will implement and maintain ongoing, effective, and meaningful engagement methods to strengthen communication and relationships between schools, families, and the community.



Strategic Plan Priority Four

Goal III: Strategies

- Implement a clear process for identifying and approving community organizations as district partners.
- Communicate with families in multiple languages and modes to best meet their needs.
- Strengthen two-way communication between school, home, and the community by establishing a “School Champion Program” to provide key information necessary to positively impact students’ educational experiences and academic achievement.
- Provide ongoing training for school and district staff on meaningful family and community engagement.
- Strengthen district customer service at all “touch points,” and establish clear ways to measure effectiveness and inform improvement.



Priority Four: Proposed Goal Amendments

Strategic Plan Priority Four: Action Item

Adopt Proposed Goal Amendments

Current Goals

- **Goal I:** Reduce the suspension rate of Black students from 9% to 3% by 2026. Reduce the suspension rate of multiracial students from 8% to 3% by 2026.
- **Goal II:** Increase the average daily attendance rate of each and every student from 89% to 95% or greater by 2026.
- **Goal III:** Increase family partnerships and engagement among Black families from 18% to 40% and 11% to 40% for Latino families by 2026.

Proposed Goal Amendments:

- **Goal I:** By June 2026, Orange County Schools will decrease the overall number of out-of-school suspensions in all subgroups by 10% annually.
- **Goal II:** By June 2026, Orange County Schools will address attendance by reducing the district chronic absenteeism rate from 21.83% to 19% as a way to improve student readiness, engagement, and academic outcomes by resolving a significant barrier to student learning.
- **Goal III:** By June 2026, Orange County Schools will implement and maintain ongoing, effective, and meaningful engagement methods to strengthen communication and relationships between schools, families, and the community.





Questions?



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