
Strategic Plan Priority Four Update: Empowering Culture

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OCS Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan 2021-26 Priorities

EQUITY

PRIORITY 1: Teaching Tomorrow's Leaders

PRIORITY 2: Excellence and Efficiency

PRIORITY 3: Exemplary Staff

PRIORITY 4: Empowering Culture



Strategic Plan 2021-26 Priorities

EQUITY

PRIORITY 4:

Empowering Culture

Goal I: By June 2026, OCS will decrease the overall number of out-of-school suspensions in all subgroups by 10% annually.

Goal II: By June 2026, OCS 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, OCS will implement and maintain ongoing, effective, and meaningful engagement methods to strengthen communication and relationships between schools, families, and the community.





OCS Core Beliefs Student Expectations

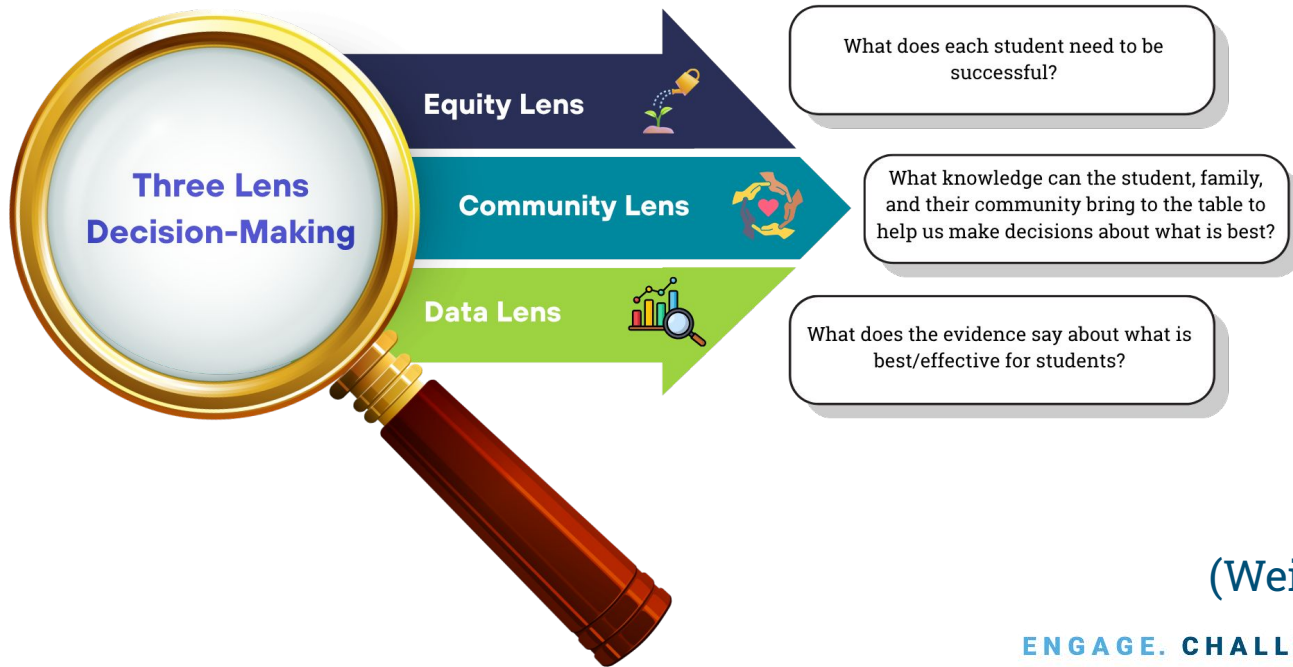
Core Beliefs Regarding Student Expectations

- 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 Achievement Team and Equity Task Force applies three lenses:



(Weiler, 2025)

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Panorama Data: Spring 2026 (Grades 4 - 5)

Panorama Survey (Favorable Responses)

Grades 4 - 5: Fall 2025

Topic Description	Results	Change (+/-) Year Over Year
Positive Feelings	65%	+ 2
Self-Management	74%	No Change
Social Awareness	62%	+ 2
Supportive Relationships	91%	+ 2

Panorama Data: Spring 2026 (Grades 6 - 12)

Panorama Survey (Favorable Responses)

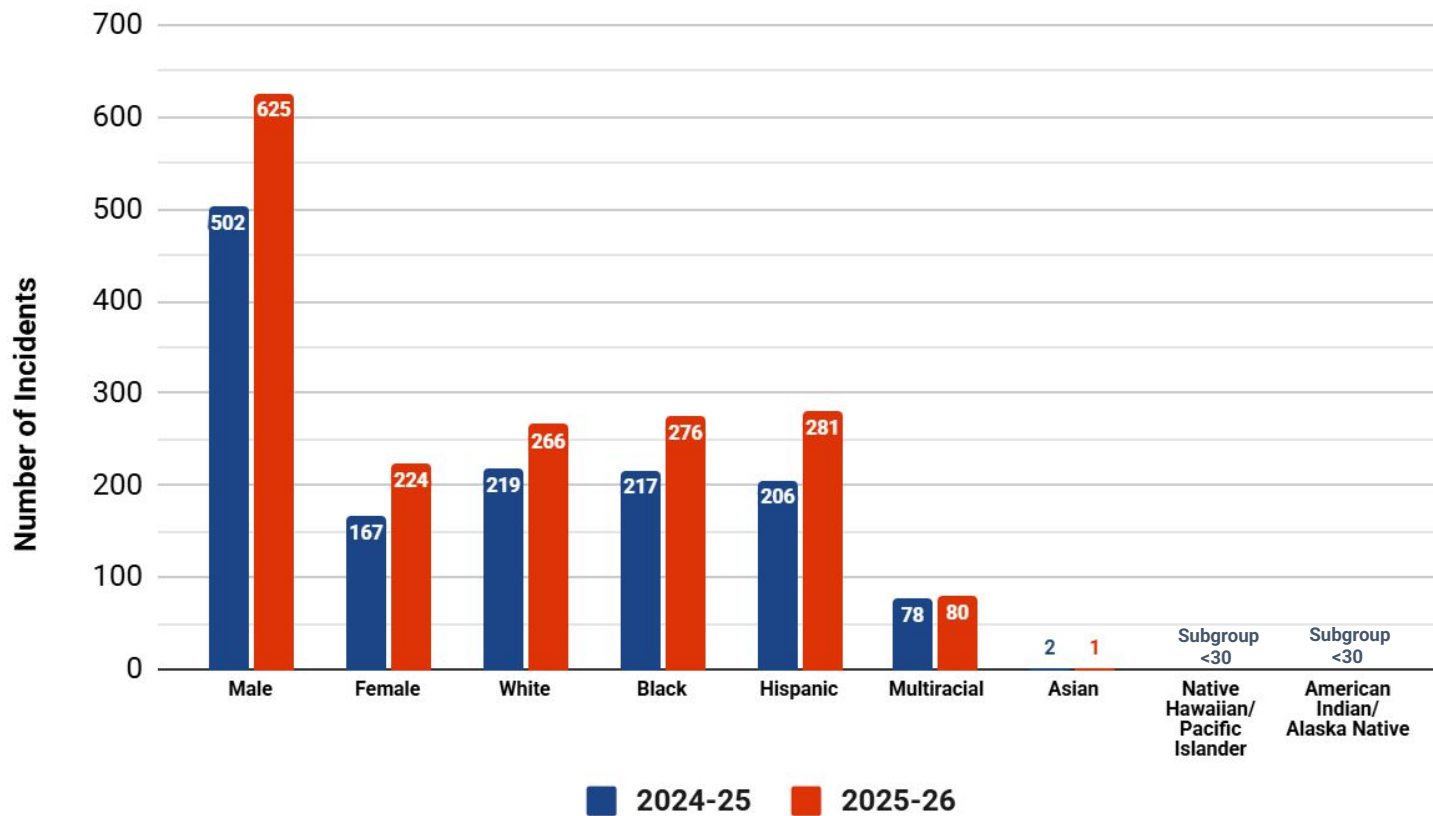
Grades 6 - 12: Fall 2025

Topic Description	Results	Change (+/-) Year Over Year
Cultural Awareness and Action	67%	- 2
Diversity and Inclusion	62%	No Change
Positive Feelings	59%	+ 6
School Climate	88%	No Change
Self - Management	70%	+ 3
Sense of Belonging	81%	+ 1
Social Awareness	61%	+ 5
Social Perspective - Taking	46%	+ 4
Supportive Relationships	85%	+ 1
Teacher-Student Relationships	73%	No Change

In-School Suspension

In-School Suspensions

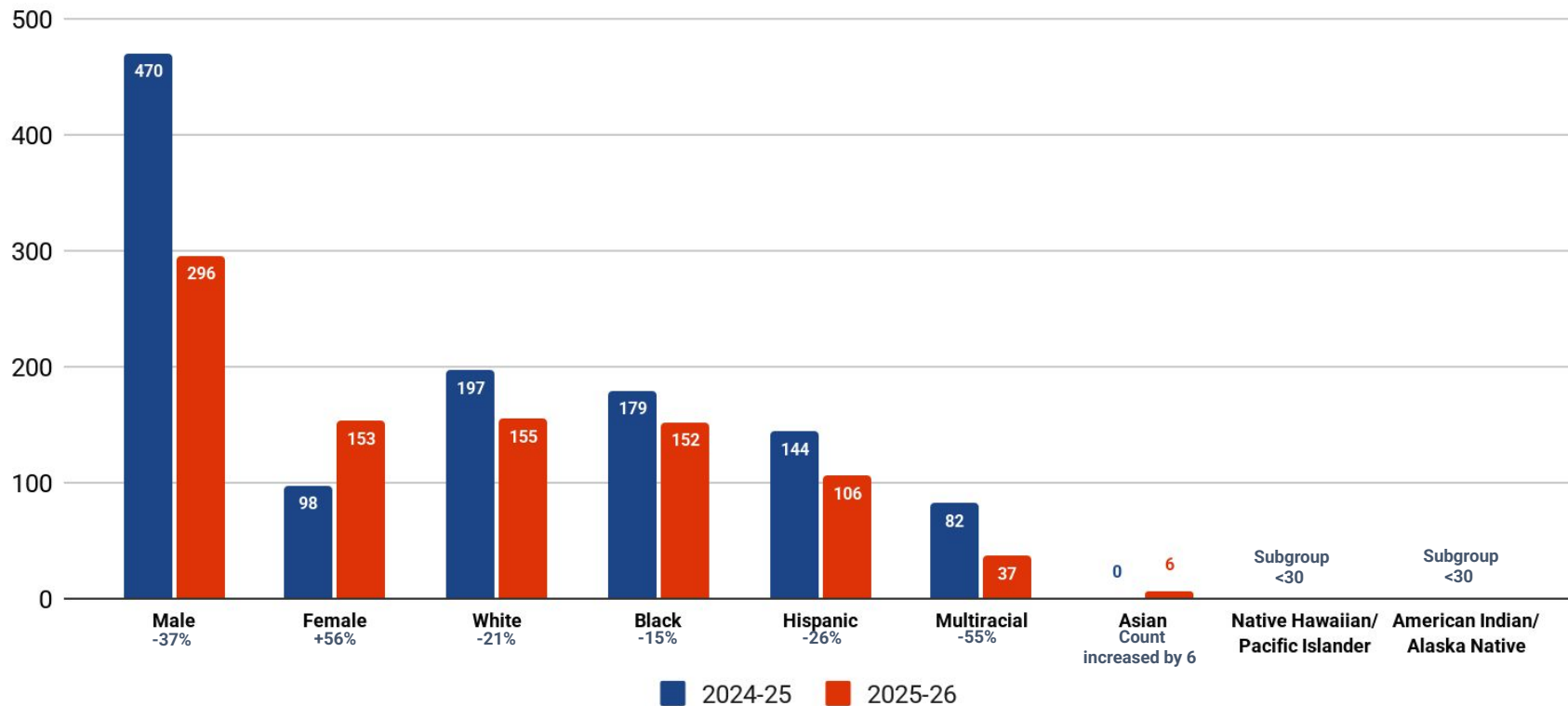
Incidents: July-May Year-Over-Year



Out-of-School Suspension

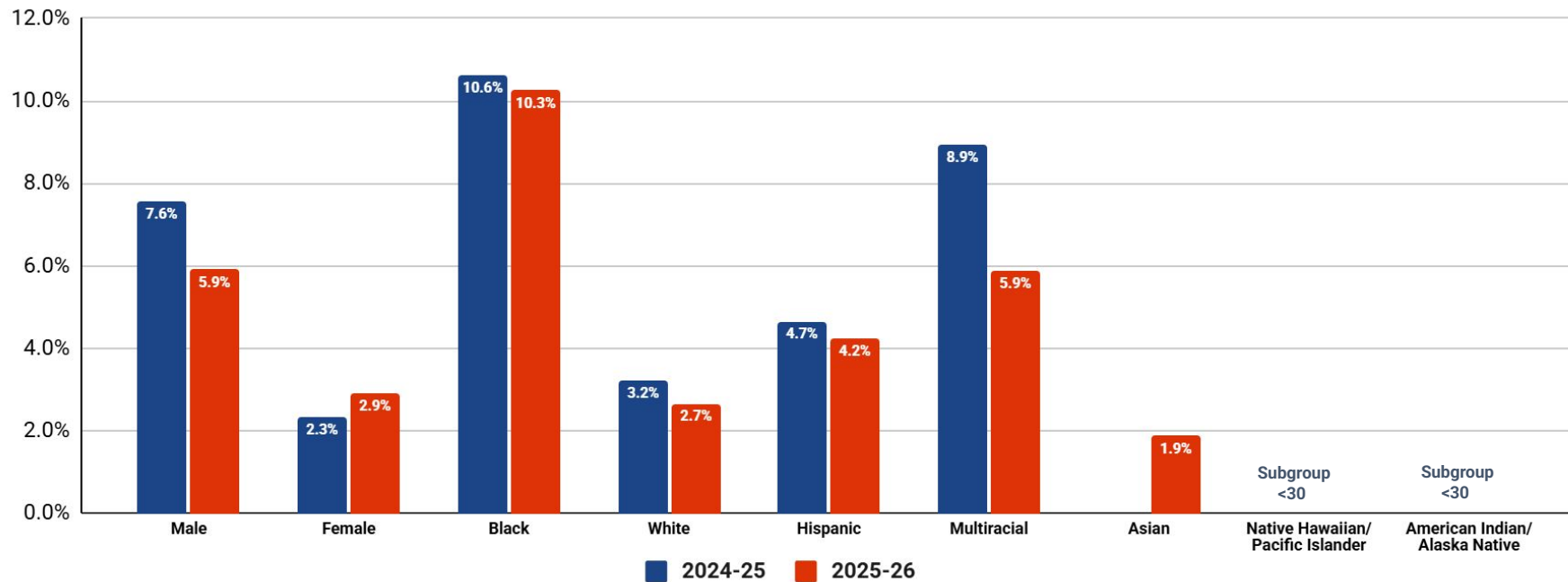
Out-of-School Suspensions

Incidents: July - May 2026 Year-Over-Year



Out-of-School Suspension Rate by Demographic

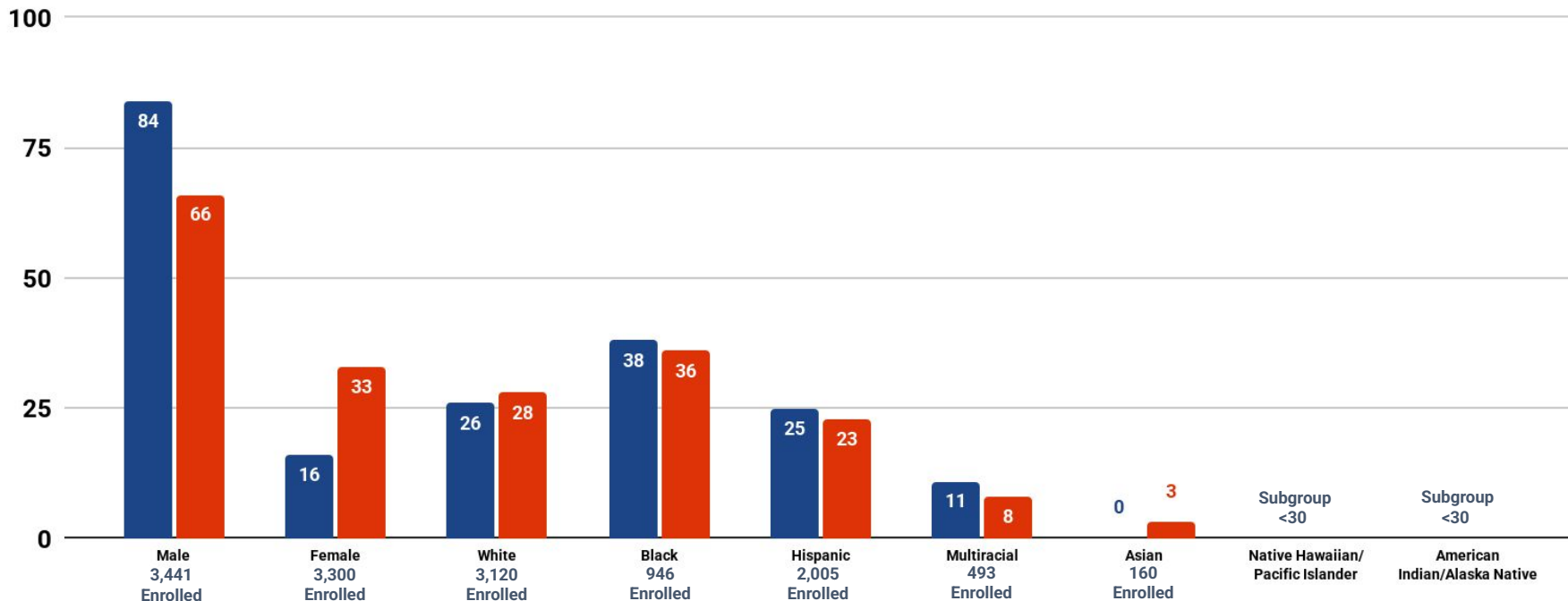
July - May 2026 (students/enrolled)



Students Repeatedly Experiencing Out-of-School Suspension

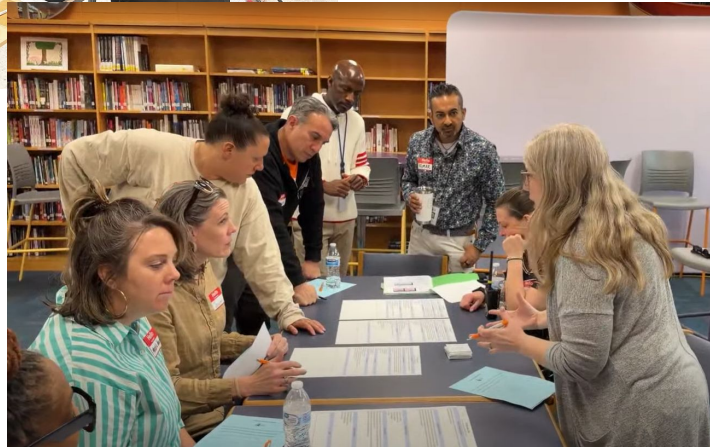
July - May 2026

■ 2024-25 (100 Students) ■ 2025-26 (99 Students)



Next Steps

Discipline Data



Impact:

- ❑ Priority 4 Goal 1 Met
 - ❑ 10% Reduction in Out-of-School Suspensions
- ❑ Valuable Feedback & Support:
 - ❑ Students
 - ❑ Families
 - ❑ School Staff & Admin
- ❑ Input for Strategic Planning



Next Steps

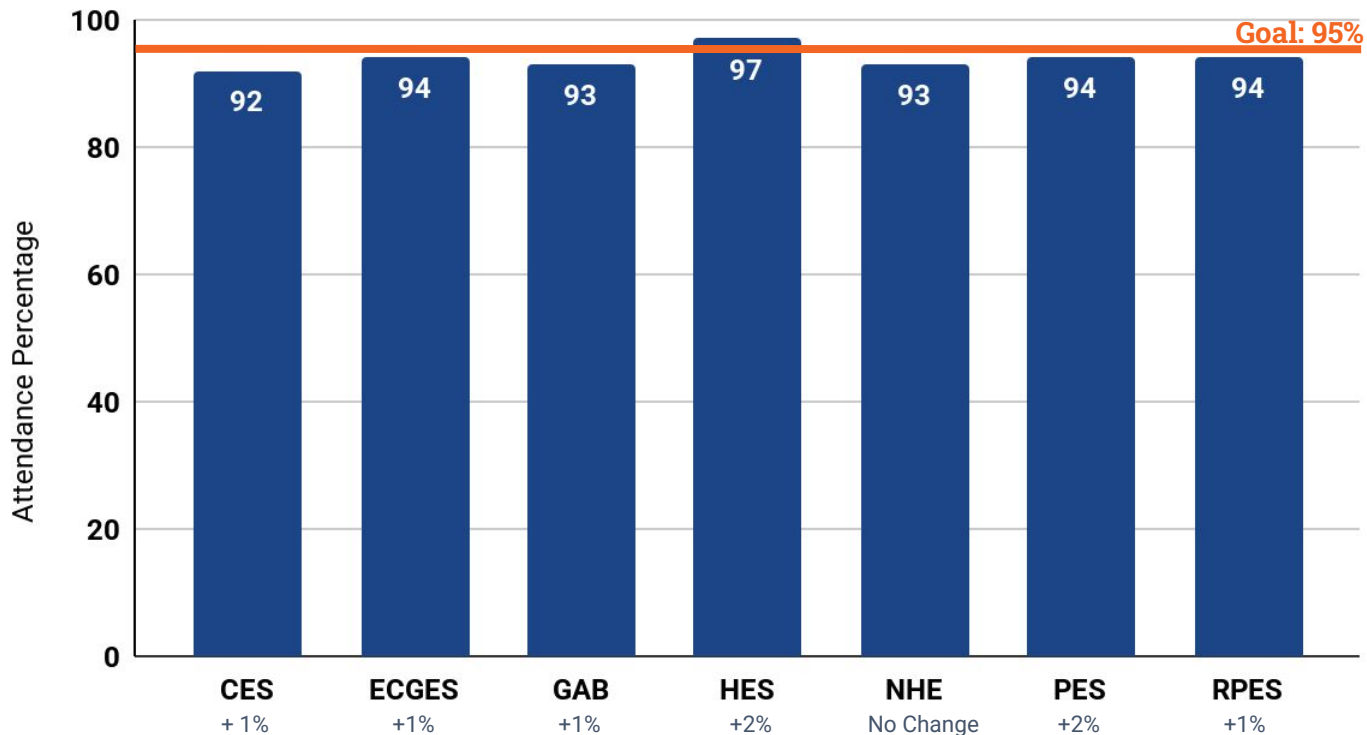
- Collaborative meetings with district and school personnel to discuss current interventions and the need for additional supports.
- Expand the RISE program in all secondary schools.
- Targeted SEL lessons to address decreases in areas indicated in Panorama results.
- Continue to support school-based efforts to ensure students understand the Student Code of Conduct, behavioral expectations, and available supports.
- Gather feedback on supportive measures and targeted interventions through secondary student roundtables and conversations with students repeatedly experiencing out-of-school suspensions.



Attendance Data

Average Daily Attendance Rate - Elementary Schools

July 2025 to May 2026

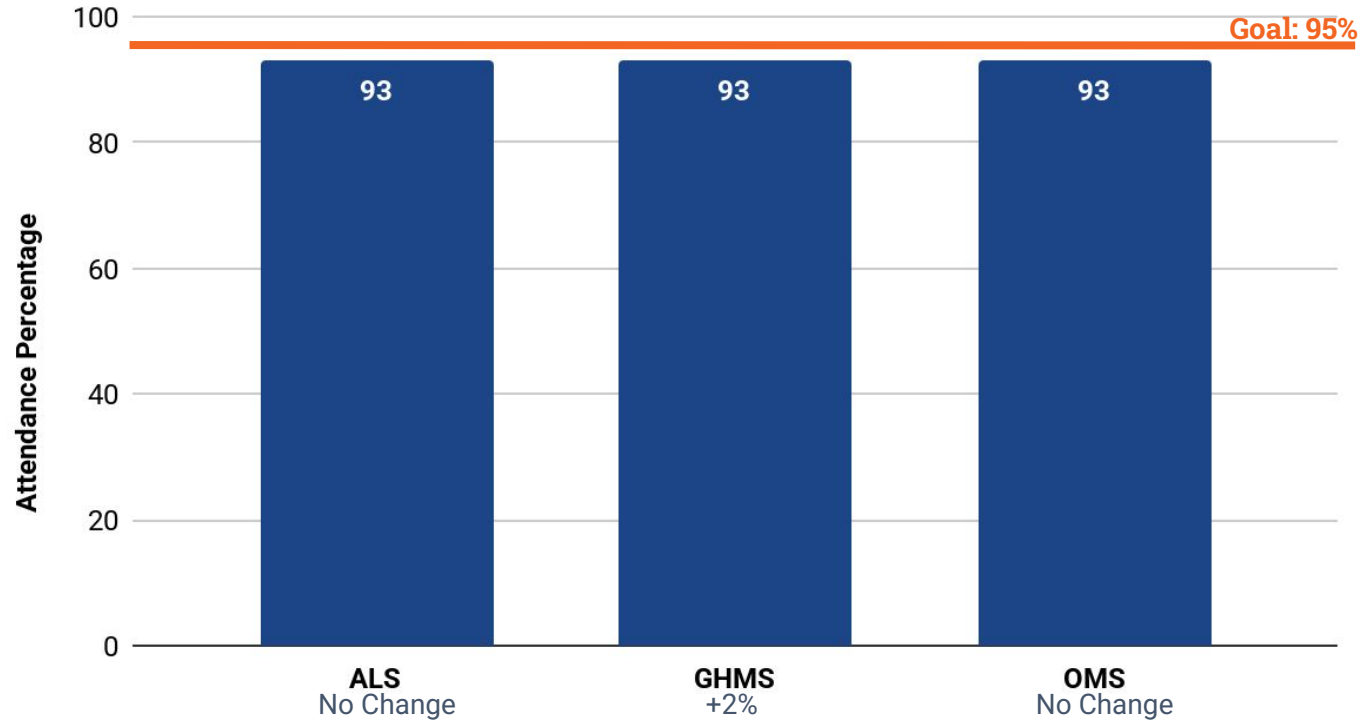


School and Change from 2024-25



Average Daily Attendance Rate - Middle Schools

July 2025 to May 2026



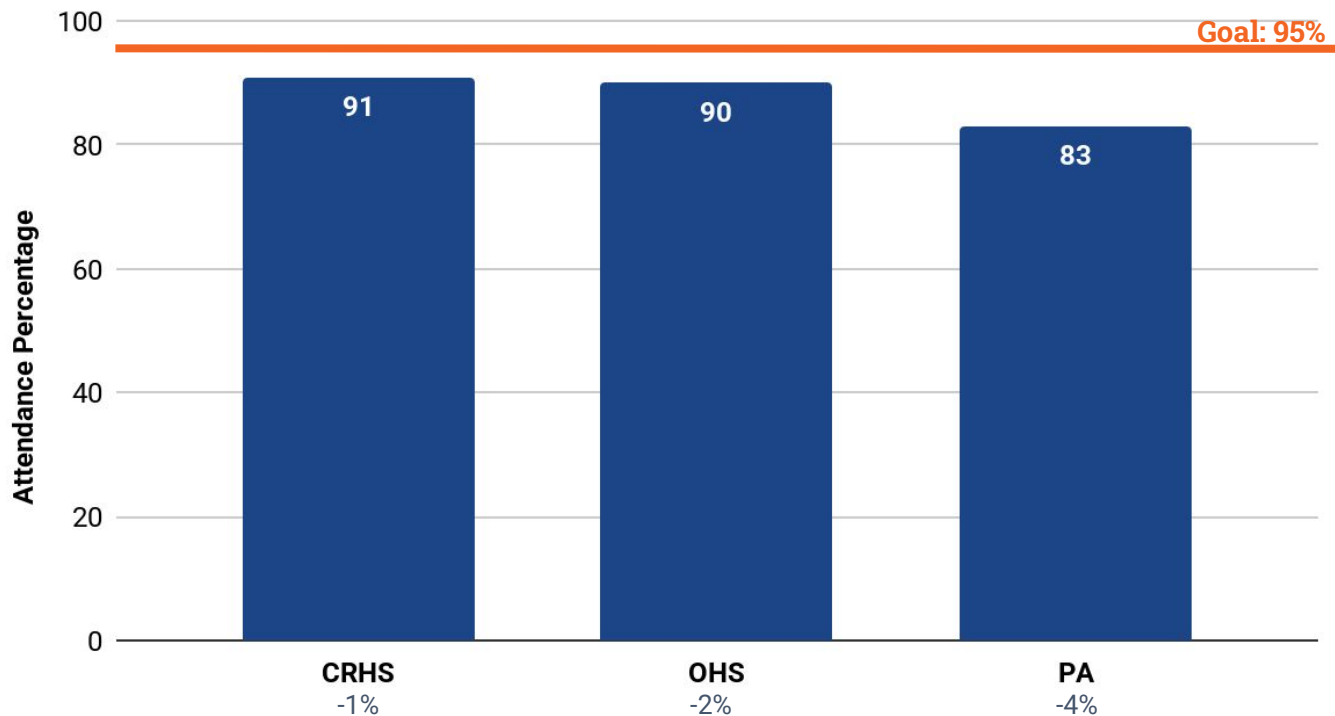
School and Change from 2024-25



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Average Daily Attendance Rate - High Schools

July 2025 to May 2026



School and Change from 2024-25

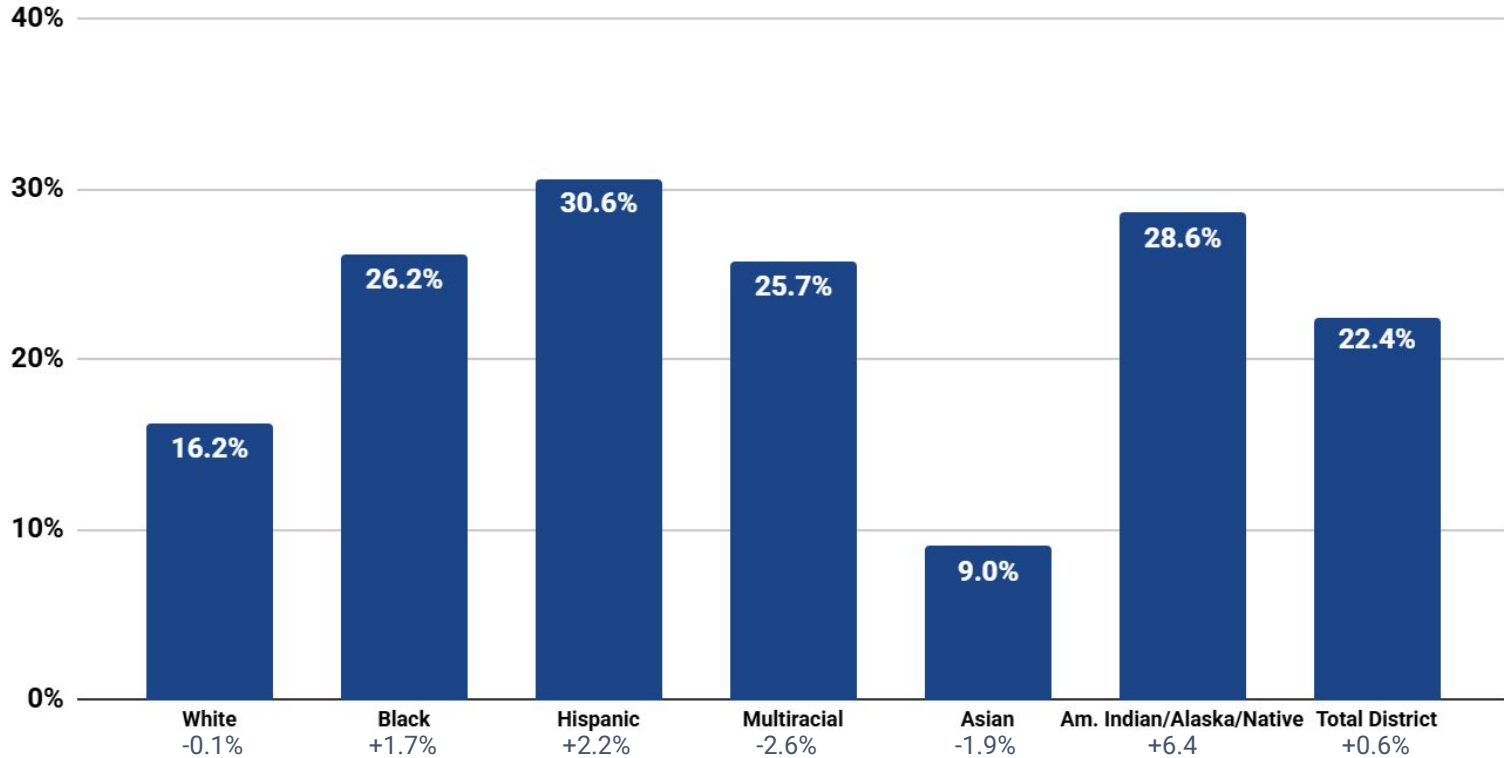


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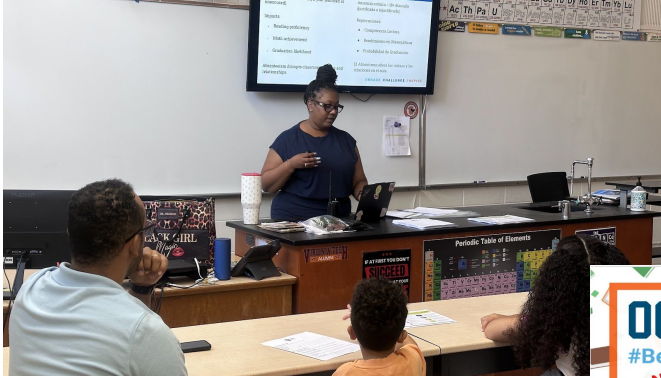
Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic Absenteeism Rate

July 2025 to May 2026



Attendance Initiatives



Family + School = Attendance Success Familia + Escuela = Éxito en la Asistencia

Parents and caregivers play a key role:

- Setting routines
- Monitoring absences
- Communicating with the school
- Avoid unnecessary trips during school days

Schools provide support: • Tiered interventions (MTSS, or Multi-Tiered Systems of Support)

- Social workers, counselors, and attendance teams **ready to help**

Los padres y cuidadores desempeñan un papel fundamental:

- Establecer rutinas
- Controlar las ausencias
- Comunicarse con la escuela
- Evitar viajes innecesarios durante los días de escuela

Las escuelas brindan apoyo:

- Intervenciones por niveles (MTSS, o Sistema de Apoyos en Múltiples Niveles)
- Trabajadores sociales, consejeros y equipos de asistencia, **listos para ayudar**



OCS ATTENDANCE WEEK

#BeHereToGetThere! #OCSAttendanceWeek

NEW DATES!

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 2-6, 2026

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold; color: red;">SCHOOL COLORS DAY</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0; font-size: small;">Wear school or district colors to represent with pride!</p>	<p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold; color: green;">MENTAL HEALTH/SEL DAY</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0; font-size: small;">Wear green in support of mental health awareness</p>	<p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold; color: red;">ENLISTMENT DAY</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0; font-size: small;">Wear red, white, and blue in solidarity with our troops</p>	<p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">ENTREPRENEURSHIP/ CAREER DAY</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0; font-size: small;">"Dress to impress" to match the profession you seek</p>	<p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold; color: orange;">COLLEGE ENROLLMENT DAY</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0; font-size: small;">Wear your college gear!</p>



Common Barriers to Attendance - Barreras Comunes para la Asistencia

- Health issues (physical and mental)
 - Transportation challenges
 - Family emergencies
 - Housing or food insecurity
 - Anxiety, bullying, or school avoidance
 - Lack of understanding about policies (especially for excused vs. unexcused)
- Problemas de salud (físicos y mentales)
 - Dificultades de transporte
 - Emergencias familiares
 - Inseguridad alimentaria o de vivienda
 - Ansiedad, acoso escolar o absentismo escolar
 - Falta de comprensión de las políticas (especialmente en lo que respecta a las ausencias justificadas frente a las injustificadas)



Next Steps



- Meet with district and school staff to review current interventions and identify additional supports
- Deliver targeted SEL lessons based on areas of need identified in Panorama results
- Monitor attendance impacts on cohort graduation rates to reduce chronic absenteeism
- Use attendance data to guide MTSS support and placement decisions



School-Based Mental Health (SBMH) & Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

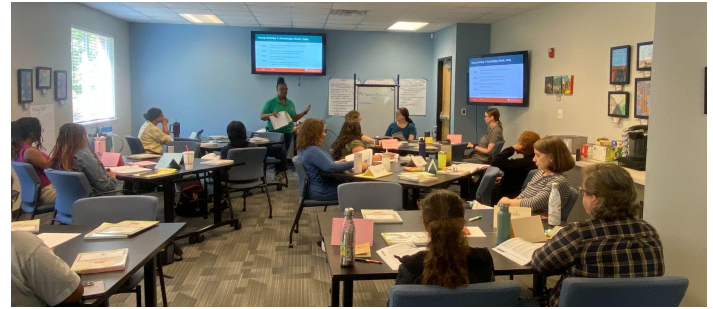
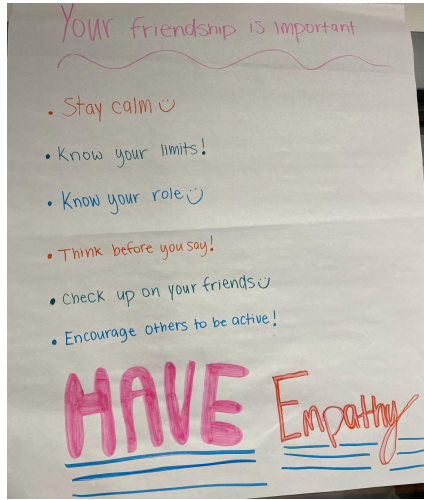
Co-Located (School Based Mental Health)

Data as of May 22, 2026

Agency	Number of Referrals	Students Seen	Students on Waitlist
Andrews Counseling	83	45	0
Daybreak Health	14	1	2
Gaggle Therapy*	42	38	0
Piedmont Health	46	58	7
Renaissance Wellness	39	23	9
Youth Extensions	36	28	0
Total	260	193	18



Our SBMH Work in Action



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Next Steps

- Expand and strengthen school-based mental health (SBMH) partnerships
- Continue SPARCS and Bounce Back training opportunities for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISPs)
- Increase Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training opportunities for staff and families
- Provide additional social-emotional learning (SEL), suicide prevention, and mental health awareness training opportunities for students across grade levels
- Continue Teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA) training for all 9th grade students
- Continue utilizing district-approved SEL curriculum and resources



Family and Community Engagement (F.A.C.E.)

Family Academy



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Next Steps

F.A.C.E.

- Quarterly Themes for Engagement
 - Attendance
 - Learning Differences
 - Preparing for the Future
 - Health and Wellbeing
- Increased Engagement at the School Level
 - Engagement newsletter for each quarter
 - Including SEL lessons and engagement programming for each theme
 - Continuing Cultural Celebrations, YMHFA Parent Training, Family Academy



School Champions Pilot

“School Champions” Summary

2025-2026 Pilot Year

- **Volunteer opportunity** for parents or guardians of enrolled OCS students
- **Key Action Steps:**
 - Apply to participate
 - Meet monthly during 2025-2026 school year
 - Build community with current and prospective OCS families
- **Desired Outcomes:**
 - Provide insight to improve two-way communication between schools and families
 - Advance the mission and vision of Orange County Schools



Next Steps

“School Champions” and Two-Way Communication

- **Pilot Results:**

- Eight applicants from seven schools (3 ES, 2 MS, 2 HS)
- Remote meetings offered via Zoom with interpretation
- Email updates between meetings about district initiatives

- **Takeaways:**

- Families follow and advocate primarily for schools and classrooms
- District and school communication can be better coordinated to promote student programming, family engagement, and other opportunities
 - *“Where are teachers, schools, and OCS all working together?”*

- **Next Steps:**

- Consider “School Champions” or related initiative to help adults advocate for their school and OCS in the broader community







Orange County Schools

NORTH CAROLINA

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