

PROBLEM STATEMENT WITH DATA

General Problem Statement:

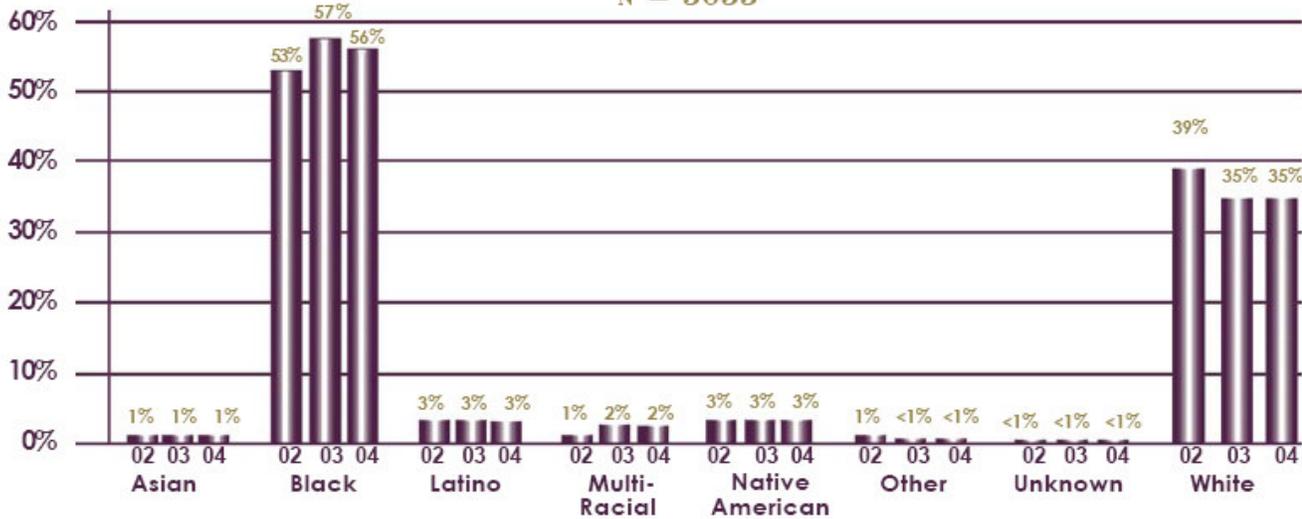
Throughout the United States, as well as here in Cumberland County, children and youth from African American/Black, Multi-racial, Latino/Hispanic and American Indian families face more obstacles than their Caucasian counterparts as they grow up. Especially in the public schools and juvenile justice system, children of non-Caucasian heritage face higher rates of suspensions, expulsions, poor grade performance, arrests and incarceration (lock-up)...There are many reasons given for these problems -- some are legitimate issues, some are political or personal opinions. But what matters most is that many of the solutions to these issues rest within youth themselves...they may need help from parents, teachers, and others – but youth must help others understand (from their own point of view) why they face these barriers, and their suggestions for how the barriers may be overcome...that's why you are here – to discuss and plan community solutions that will empower youth, engage them, and promote them toward success.

Problem Statement (Data): African American/Black, Latino/Hispanic and other Multi-racial youth have disproportionately high rates of poorer outcomes (school failure, arrests, lock-up) as indicated in the following information:

Compare the following 2 graphs coming from the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice:

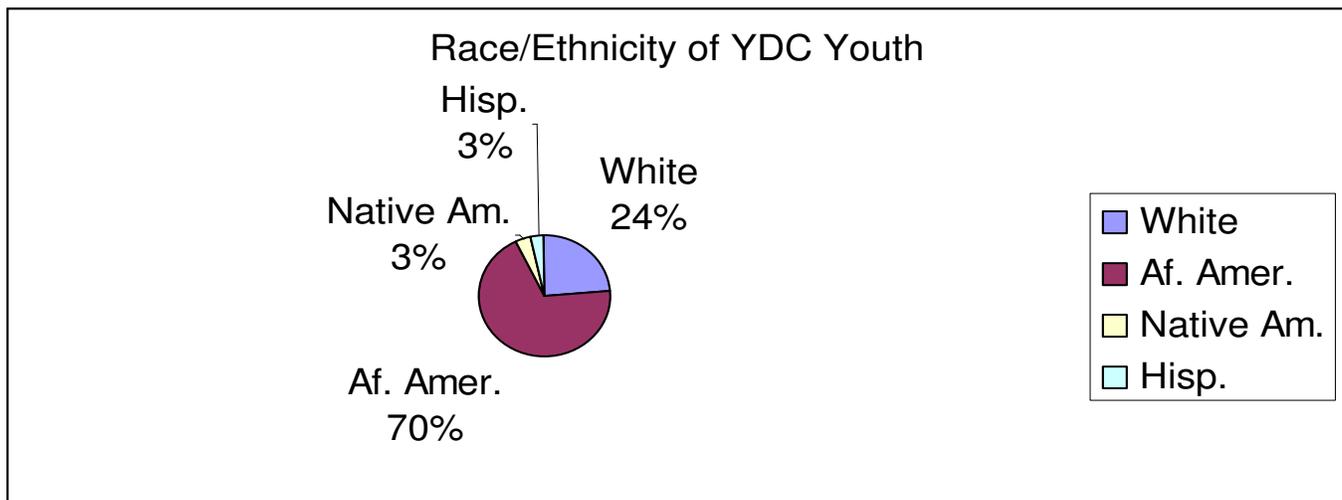
2004 JUVENILES DETAINED BY RACE

N = 5055



THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE & DELINQUENCY PREVENTION 2004 ANNUAL REPORT

The above graph show the racial makeup of youth who are “detained” in detention centers through the NC Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention --- Black youth are detained at almost a 2 to 1 rate compared to Caucasian youth. The next graph shows the racial makeup of youth sent to state training schools (now called “Youth Development Centers”) – again the number of Black / Multiracial youth are strongly over-represented --

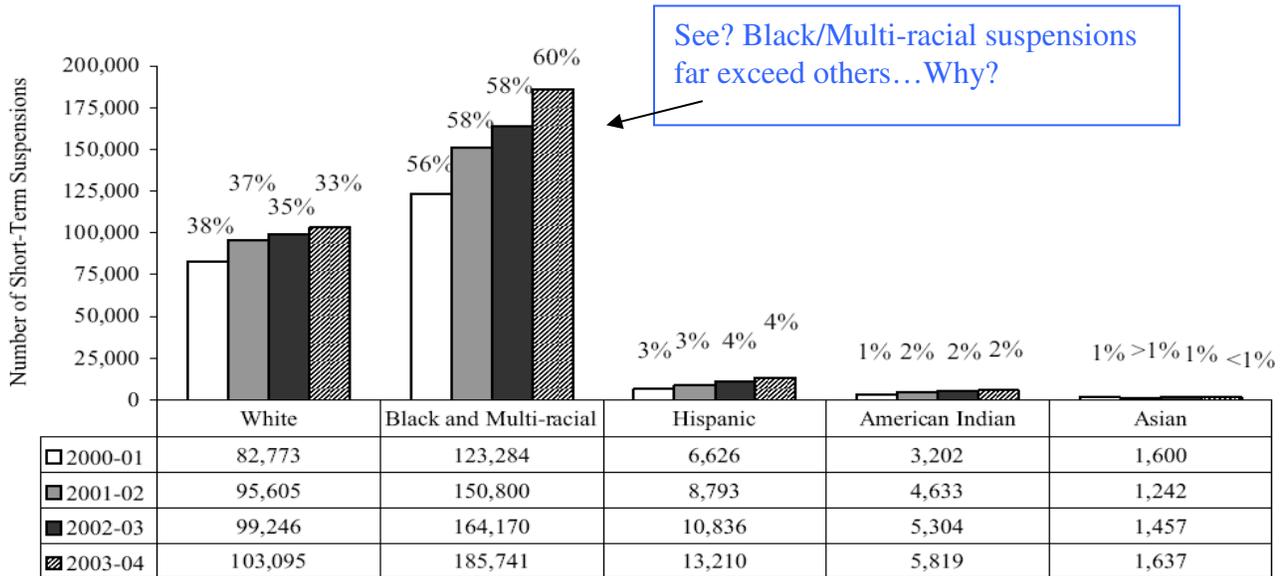


Again, the deepest end of the youth court/justice system has nearly twice as many Black/Multiracial males incarcerated than Caucasian and other youth. So what do these graphs mean really? Children/youth of color

enter the juvenile justice system at rates higher than their white counterparts; and once in the system, they receive detention and YDC commitments **more substantially higher than their white counterparts...**

These trends are seen in school suspensions/expulsions also – the following graphs show state level information from the **2004 Annual Report on Suspensions/Expulsions** from NC Department of Public Instruction (March 2005):

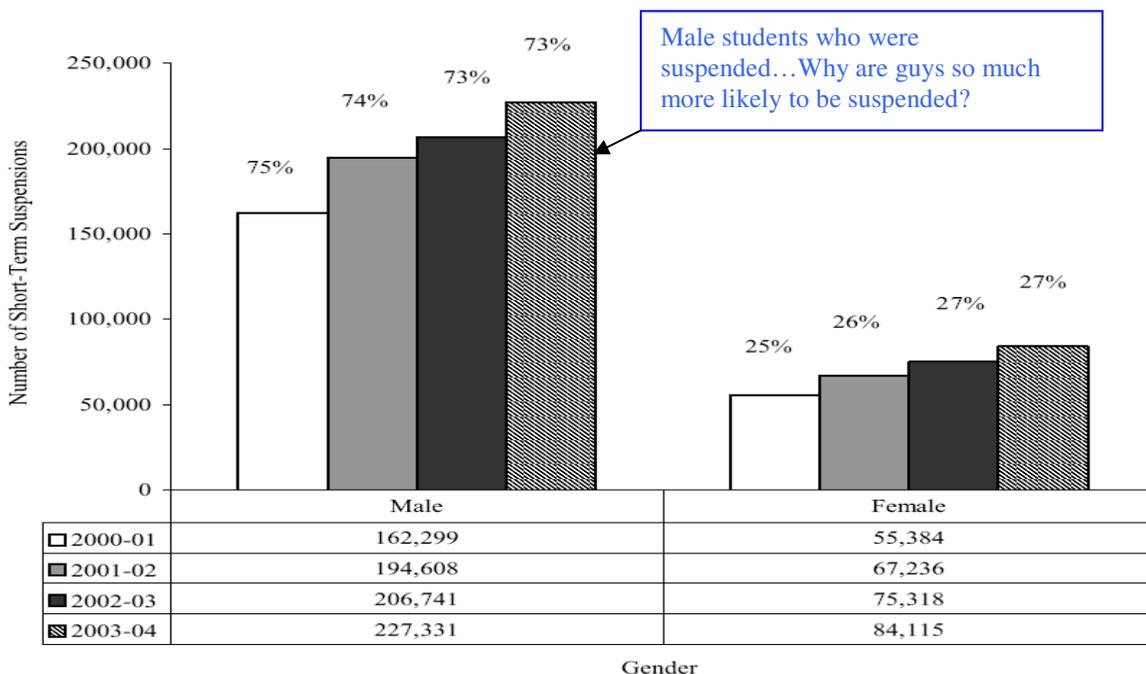
Short-Term Suspensions by Ethnicity



Note: The percentages indicate the proportion of short-term suspensions in each ethnicity. Ethnicity was not reported or was reported as "Other" for 273 short-term suspensions given in 2000-01, 907 in 2001-02, 1,227 in 2002-03, and 1,980 in 2003-04 (1,954 out of 1,980 were classified as Other in 2003-04).

As you can see from the following graph, **males are far more active** in getting suspended than females:

Short-Term Suspensions by Gender



So from the information you've been given, for a number of reasons (both known and unknown) young males of African American/Black/Multiracial descent have the most negative experiences with schools and other institutions....

Your job as a participant in our process is to help answer:

- (1) Why do African American/Black/Multiracial youth experience these problems at nearly twice the rates of other youth? What factors do you see as being involved?
- (2) Without blaming, who do you see as being critical to changing these trends? Why are these individuals, groups or systems critical?
- (3) What specific, do-able steps can be taken to improve things?
- (4) It's okay to talk about racism, class-ism, discrimination, etc. --- BUT, you must also suggest solutions for the group to consider and to maybe try out in the community. Our process is not designed simply to gripe about systems, people, places – rather, we're hoping that the diverse strengths of youth working for youth will help solve the divide between various poor outcomes involving our young people.

We're asking you, as participants, to help us reach youth through youth – to find new, safe and creative ways for each of you to reach out to each other, and to those youth who may already be at risk or in trouble, to find positive ways to help them stay in school and avoid legal problems.

The answers start with each of you.....THANK YOU for caring about the youth of our community!