

**RACE AND ETHNICITY
OF JUVENILES IN MINNESOTA'S
JUSTICE SYSTEM**

July 2001

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Race and Ethnicity of Juveniles in Minnesota's Justice System was prepared for the Office of Youth Development in the Minnesota Department of Economic Security by Debra Hagel at the Criminal Justice Statistics Center at Minnesota Planning, with assistance from Susan Roth and Nathan James.

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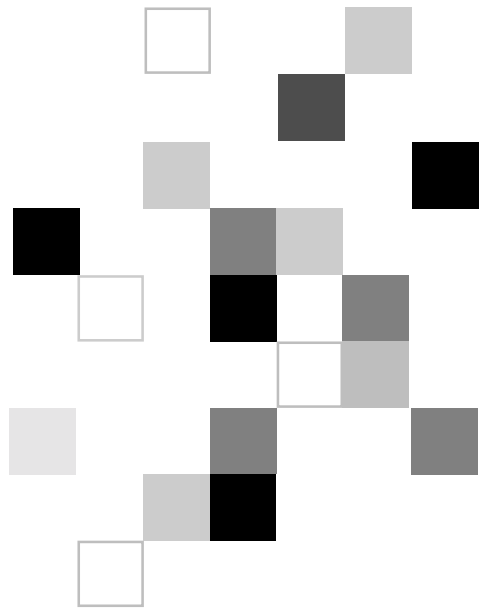
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RACE AND ETHNICITY OF JUVENILES IN MINNESOTA'S JUSTICE SYSTEM

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Glossary

Below are generally accepted definitions for terms used in this report.

Disciplinary incidents Student actions reported by a public school that require a disciplinary response. As defined by the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, incidents include: alcohol, arson, attendance, disorderly conduct, drugs (other than alcohol), physical assault or fighting, sexual offenses, threat, intimidation or verbal assault, tobacco vandalism or property-related, weapons and other major offenses.

Dropout A student reported as withdrawing from a public school and not enrolling with another school.

Ethnicity A classification of an individual as Hispanic or non-Hispanic.

Juvenile An individual under age 18.

Part 1 crimes As defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation: murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft and arson.

Part 2 crimes As defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the offenses of assaults other than aggravated assaults, forgery or counterfeiting, fraud, embezzlement, stolen property, vandalism, weapons offenses, prostitution, other sex offenses, narcotics offenses, gambling offenses, offenses against children or family, driving under the influence, violations of liquor laws, disorderly conduct, vagrancy and other offenses (except traffic).

Probation A process of supervision and monitoring of juveniles by court order, which may include house arrest, face-to-face contacts with probation officers and drug testing.

Race A classification of an individual as African American, American Indian, Asian or white. Some data sources also collect Hispanic as a race rather than an ethnicity.

Status offenses Behavior that is considered unlawful for children, even though the same behavior by an adult is legal. The most common status offenses are curfew violations, truancy and running away from home.

Summary

African American, American Indian and other minorities accounted for the majority of the population in Minnesota's juvenile correctional facilities in 1999. *Race and Ethnicity of Juveniles in Minnesota's Justice System* analyzes race and ethnicity of juvenile population, apprehensions, court cases, probation cases and correctional facilities. School data on dropouts and disciplinary incidents are also analyzed.

Analysis of juvenile justice-related data shows:

- In 1999, whites made up 89 percent of the estimated juvenile population but accounted for 75 percent of juvenile apprehensions.
- Hennepin and Ramsey counties recorded 87 percent of all African American juvenile apprehensions in Minnesota in 1999.
- Between 1995 and 1999, juvenile probation cases grew 10 percent but the probation population percentage of whites declined from 74 to 71 percent, respectively.
- Several juvenile justice data sources record Hispanic as a race rather than an ethnicity, which does not allow reliable comparison of race or ethnicity data to the census data.

Juveniles accounting for less of Minnesota's population

The juvenile population in Minnesota continues to increase in number; however, the adult population is increasing at a greater rate. Over the past five years individuals under age 18 accounted

for 27 percent of the population when compared to adults. Census 2000 shows that Minnesota juveniles make up 26 (1,286,894) percent of the population. From 1995 to 1999, the total of juveniles increased 2 percent while adults increased 4 percent. The decrease of juveniles in population representation is expected to continue. Minnesota population projections show juveniles at 23 percent of the population in 2025.

As the percentage of the white juvenile population is experiencing a slight decline statewide, minority juveniles are increasing. The 2000 census shows whites make up 84 percent of Minnesota's juvenile population compared to 92 percent in the 1990 census. This decrease in the white population may also be based on changes in 2000 census data collection methods which do not allow reliable comparison of race groups with past census data. The 2000 census allowed respondents to select multiple race groups while the 1990 census only accepted one choice. These collection method changes meant that when answers were aggregated into race categories the 2000 census had six race groups and an additional category of two or more races. The 1990 census had four race groups and did not record two or more races.

Race of Minnesota's juvenile population shifted slightly over the last five years. While all race groups continue to grow in number, African American and Asian juveniles had a slight increase in percent of the statewide juvenile population between 1995 and 1999, African Americans increased half of a percentage point and Asians increased seven-tenths of a percentage point. White juveniles declined from 91 percent to 89 percent and American Indians, the only race with no change, were at almost 2 percent of the state juvenile population. From 1995 to 1999, Hispanic juveniles grew from 2.4 percent to 3 percent of the juvenile population.

COUNTY NOTE

To compare racial representation within the state, the four counties with the largest number of juveniles in each race group and ethnicity were extracted from the 1999 population estimates. Hennepin and Ramsey counties were in the top four for each race and ethnicity category. Beltrami and St. Louis counties were included for American Indians, Dakota County for Hispanics and all races and Anoka County for Hispanics, whites and Asians. Washington County was included for its African American population.

1999 juvenile population estimates show Ramsey County has high percentage of Hispanics

Percent of juveniles within county

	White	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic	Total population
Anoka County	95%	1%	1%	3%	2%	98%	85,719
Beltrami County	72%	1%	27%	1%	1%	99%	11,906
Dakota County	93%	3%	0%	4%	4%	96%	100,695
Hennepin County	76%	14%	3%	7%	3%	97%	249,475
Ramsey County	74%	10%	2%	14%	7%	93%	122,599
St. Louis County	96%	1%	1%	2%	2%	98%	46,636
Washington County	95%	2%	1%	3%	3%	97%	58,911

Notes: Data represents population estimates of individuals under age 18. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

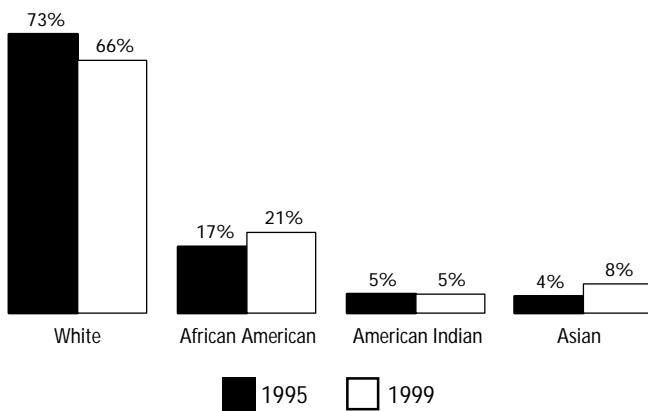
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Most juveniles apprehended are white

In past studies funded by the Department of Economic Security, Minnesota's juvenile justice system indicates an over-representation of minorities in confinement. Minnesota's overall race breakouts of juveniles apprehended between 1995 and 1999 had little change. Whites were about three-quarters of all apprehensions for the five years and African Americans, American Indians and Asians grew no more than 2 percentage points of the total. However, African Americans and Asians each grew

From 1995 to 1999, white juveniles were the only race to decline in percent of apprehensions for Part 1 offenses

Percent of Part 1 juvenile apprehensions by race within year



Notes: Part 1 offenses include murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft and arson. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Department of Public Safety

4 percentage points in their breakout of Part 1 crimes (murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft and arson). Asians were the only race group to see an increase in actual number of Part 1 apprehensions between 1995 and 1999, from 894 to 1,199, respectively.

Juvenile apprehensions for Part 2 offenses – such as vandalism, driving under the influence and disorderly conduct – saw a slight increase in Asians who went from 2 percent of all 38,497 Part 2 apprehensions in 1995 to 4 percent of the 45,869 in 1999. All other races fluctuated between a 1 percent increase or decrease over the five-year period. Status offenses, which include runaways, truancy and curfew violations that would not be criminal if committed by an adult, saw a high increase of African American apprehensions. African Americans made up 15 percent of the 9,361 status offenses in 1995 and 24 percent of the 11,055 status offenses in 1999. Whites were the only race with a percentage decrease of all status offense apprehensions between the five-year span, from 77 percent to 66 percent.

While juvenile apprehensions had some changes of race group representation over the past five years, ethnicity of juveniles apprehended stayed at 7 percent Hispanic and 93 percent non-Hispanic throughout the five-year span. Specific areas such as Part 2 and status offenses had little change in ethnicity breakouts of juveniles apprehended. Part 1 offenses did see an increase of Hispanic juvenile apprehensions though, from 8 percent of 20,354 in 1995 to 11 percent of 15,737 in 1999.

Race information unknown for many juvenile court cases

Hispanic is considered an ethnicity and is separate from race classification in census data. Minnesota juvenile courts consider Hispanic a race. This classification method of Hispanic does not

COUNTY NOTE

In 1999, the percentage of African American juvenile apprehensions in Hennepin and Ramsey counties was nearly three times their population percentage.

Hennepin and Ramsey counties accounted for 87 percent of all 1999 African American juvenile apprehensions

Percent of juvenile apprehensions within county

	White	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic	Total Apprehensions
Anoka County	94%	4%	1%	1%	5%	95%	4,859
Beltrami County	51%	0%	49%	0%	0%	100%	795
Dakota County	84%	8%	1%	8%	7%	93%	5,238
Hennepin County	50%	38%	7%	6%	9%	91%	20,826
Ramsey County	54%	29%	2%	15%	11%	89%	7,247
St. Louis County	83%	4%	13%	0%	5%	95%	3,533
Washington County	92%	6%	1%	2%	6%	94%	2,350

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

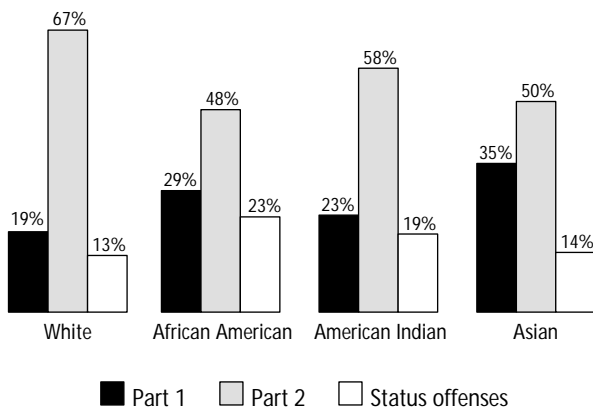
Source: Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Department of Public Safety

allow for reliable comparison of Hispanic or any race with population estimates.

Race and ethnicity court data were available between 1997 and 1999. Unknown race in court data accounted for 39 percent of 72,387 cases in 1999, 42 percent of 75,023 in 1998 and 47 percent of 69,060 in 1997. Data recording in the Minnesota courts was designed to track the number of cases filed with the courts in a year and the number of cases disposed in that year. New court software, which requires the recording of all data elements including race and ethnicity, was introduced in 2001.

About one-third of 1999 African American and Asian juvenile apprehensions are for Part 1 offenses

Percent of apprehensions for each race group by offense category



Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Department of Public Safety

COUNTY NOTE

Analysis of juvenile court race data within specific counties should be viewed with caution given the high percent of cases with unknown race.

High percent of cases with unknown race in 1999 court case filings limits race analysis

Percent of juvenile court cases filed within county

	White	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Unknown race	Total court case filings
Anoka County	46%	3%	1%	1%	0%	49%	2,929
Beltrami County	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	97%	1,015
Dakota County	74%	7%	1%	2%	2%	14%	5,416
Hennepin County	39%	33%	7%	5%	2%	14%	19,542
Ramsey County	42%	29%	3%	11%	4%	10%	4,401
St. Louis County	48%	3%	13%	0%	0%	36%	3,198
Washington County	2%	2%	0%	2%	0%	94%	1,463

Notes: Court case data was initially collected for court management purposes and for courts to assess the percent of cases filed and disposed within selected time periods. New data collection software eliminating any unknown race was introduced in the courts in 2001. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Minnesota Supreme Court

When excluding cases of unknown race from analysis, whites show decline in percent of juvenile court cases

Percent of juvenile court cases filed

	White	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Unknown race
1999	41%	12%	4%	3%	2%	39%
1999	66%	20%	7%	4%	3%	Excluded from analysis
1998	39%	11%	4%	2%	1%	42%
1998	67%	19%	7%	4%	2%	Excluded from analysis
1997	38%	9%	4%	2%	1%	47%
1997	71%	16%	7%	3%	3%	Excluded from analysis

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Minnesota Supreme Court

A basic trend in the race of juveniles apprehended between 1997 and 1999 can be seen in court data. Whites decreased and African Americans increased in percentage of juvenile apprehensions and juvenile court case filings during the three-year period.

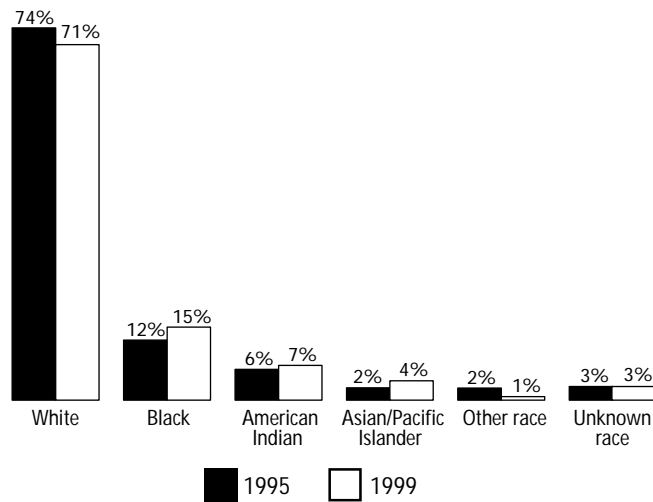
Juvenile probation cases rising

The Minnesota Department of Corrections records information on the number of juveniles on probation, which is a process of surveillance and supervision of offenders. The data is collected by survey and represents the number of probationers on one day in time, as each year probation officers record the number of juveniles under their supervision on December 31. Survey questions include the probationer's race and ethnicity.

Probation cases record Hispanic as an ethnicity, as well as an unknown ethnicity category. Race categories of probation cases include white, African American, American Indian and Asian; also included are other race and unknown race, which do not allow reliable comparison of probation cases with population estimates.

Juvenile probation cases reflect minority increase

Percent of probation cases by race for each year



Notes: Probation cases as of December 31, each year. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

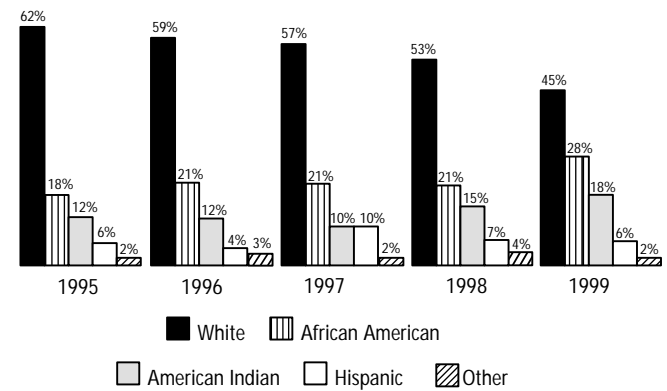
Source: Department of Corrections

Between 1995 and 1999, juvenile probation cases increased from 15,655 to 18,000. The increase in probation cases also saw an increase in the percentage of all races except whites, who declined from 74 percent in 1995 to 71 percent in 1999. This change in race may be partially due to the 3 to 6 percent of unknown races recorded during the five-year span.

Hispanics grew from 3 percent of all juvenile probation cases in 1995 and 1996 to 6 percent in 1997 through 1999. The number of unknown ethnicity cases fluctuated between 1 and 4 percent of all cases during the five years.

African Americans and American Indians were the only races to increase in percent of juvenile correctional facilities population between 1995 and 1999

Percent of juvenile correctional facility population by race for each year



Notes: Population as of January 1, each year. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Department of Corrections

State juvenile correctional facilities downsized

Minnesota currently has two state correctional facilities for male juveniles, Red Wing and Thistledeew. Red Wing is a fenced facility which promotes services for serious and chronic juvenile offenders. Thistledeew is an early-intervention program in a minimum security setting and has three-week and three-month programs designed to challenge the juveniles in an outdoor setting using physical and therapeutic methods. Minnesota also maintained Sauk Centre correctional facility until 1999, which held boys and girls. A contracted correctional facility, Mesabi Academy, currently houses female juveniles.

COUNTY NOTE

In 1999, American Indians accounted for not quite half of juvenile apprehensions in Beltrami County but were 62 percent of juvenile probation cases.

Ramsey County accounted for 44 percent of 1999 Asian juvenile probation cases statewide

Percent of juvenile probation cases within county

	White	African American	American Indian	Asian	Other race	Unknown race	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic	Unknown Ethnicity	Total population
Anoka County	78%	3%	2%	0%	0%	16%	1%	99%	0%	1,155
Beltrami County	38%	0%	62%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	226
Dakota County	77%	10%	2%	4%	0%	7%	3%	79%	18%	697
Hennepin County	42%	42%	9%	6%	0%	1%	8%	91%	1%	4,278
Ramsey County	46%	30%	4%	18%	0%	2%	6%	92%	2%	1,720
St. Louis County	77%	4%	12%	0%	0%	7%	1%	92%	7%	759
Washington County	94%	4%	0%	1%	0%	0%	3%	97%	0%	278

Notes: Probation cases as of December 31, 1999. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Department of Corrections

It is not mandatory that juveniles be sent to state correctional facilities if the courts give a disposition of incarceration. Some counties opt to send juveniles to community or out-of-state correctional facilities as well as public and private local residential facilities. Due to lack of data, this analysis excludes Thistledeew and correctional facilities not contracted or maintained by the state.

Population of juvenile state correctional facilities was 209 in 1995 but rose and fell over the next four years from 248 to 199 to 184 to 192 in 1999. These changes in population may be based in part on the closing of two juvenile correctional facilities over the past five years.

Analysis of race and ethnicity of juveniles in correctional facilities from 1995 to 1999 shows that African Americans rose 36 percentage points, American Indians rose 33 percentage points and whites declined 27 percentage points in representation of the facility populations.

Due to the severity of an offense and the age of an offender at the time the crime was committed, some juveniles are certified as adults by the courts and sent to an adult correctional facility. On January 1, 1999, the number of juveniles certified as adult and sent to adult correctional facilities was 246, or 4 percent of the entire adult prison population. Race and ethnicity statistics for the 4 percent were not available.

A county-level comparison of juvenile state correctional facilities was not possible for two reasons which do not allow accurate analysis of all counties:

- Counties that sent juveniles to community or out-of-state correctional facilities or to private or public local residential facilities would not be fully represented in state correctional facility data.

- State correctional facility data includes county of juvenile residence for only a limited number of counties.

Truancy may lead to school dropouts

Two federal publications, *Truancy: First Step to a Lifetime of Problems*, by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at the U.S. Department of Justice and *Manual to Combat Truancy*, by the U.S. Department of Education, cite studies which appear to show that when police target youth for apprehension of truancy, crime drops during the daytime hours. These studies also point out that truancy can lead to dropping out of school. School dropout data should not be used with the assumption that dropouts are necessarily offenders.

The Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning records the number of dropouts reported by all public schools in a school year for grades 7 through 12. The total number of dropouts was 14,325 in 1996-1997, 13,180 in 1997-1998, and 12,491 in 1998-1999. Race analysis shows whites as the majority of dropouts in all three school years at 65 to 67 percent. African Americans were 16 to 17 percent, Asians 6 to 7 percent, American Indians 7 percent and Hispanics 6 percent in the three school years examined.

COUNTY NOTE

Race and ethnicity dropout data cannot reliably be compared to juvenile apprehensions because Hispanic is recorded as a race in the dropout data. However, the race of dropouts in Hennepin and Ramsey counties in the 1998-1999 school year did show similarities to the race and ethnicity breakouts of the 1999 juvenile apprehensions.

In Hennepin County, nearly the same number of African Americans and whites dropped out during the 1998-1999 school year

Percent of 7th- through 12th-grade dropouts within county

	White	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Total dropouts
Anoka County	85%	4%	4%	4%	4%	909
Beltrami County	24%	0%	75%	0%	1%	180
Dakota County	85%	7%	1%	4%	3%	901
Hennepin County	38%	37%	7%	8%	9%	3,425
Ramsey County	43%	28%	3%	16%	10%	1,677
Saint Louis County	83%	3%	11%	0%	2%	497
Washington County	90%	3%	2%	3%	1%	406

Notes: Dropouts include all students by race who were in 7th to 12th grade and were recorded as withdrawing from public school and not enrolling elsewhere. Only public schools report dropout data. Dropout race data compared to juvenile apprehension race data must be used with caution as Hispanic is recorded as race in dropout data and an ethnicity in apprehensions. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Department of Children, Families and Learning

Because 7th- to 11th-grade dropouts have more time to decide to return to school, analysis was done on the number of 12th-grade dropouts recorded in the 1998-1999 school year. Six percent of 12th-grade students in Minnesota dropped out before the end of the school year. Race breakouts of those individuals included 76 percent white, 11 percent African American, 5 percent Asian, 4 percent American Indian and 4 percent Hispanic.

Disciplinary incidents and dangerous weapons in school

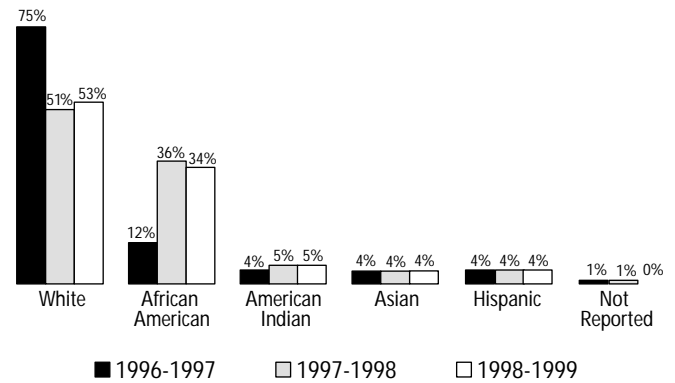
Public schools in Minnesota collect data on students involved in disciplinary incidents at school. If a weapon was used, information on the type of weapon is collected as well.

Disciplinary incidents in public schools fall into 11 categories including alcohol-related, attendance and sexual offenses. In the 1997-1998 and 1998-1999 school years, disorderly conduct, physical assaults or fighting and other major offenses made up more than 50 percent of disciplinary incidents for each race group. The 1996-1997 school year saw a similar pattern but was not analyzed by incident type because nearly 40 percent of all incidents went unrecorded. In the following school years, 3 percent went unrecorded.

Disciplinary incidents totaled 31,279 in 1996-1997, 53,576 in 1997-1998, and 57,820 in 1998-1999. The increase of incidents after the 1996-1997 school year may be due to a push by the Department of Children, Families and Learning for better recording practices of schools. Of all disciplinary incidents recorded by the public schools over the three school years, 93 percent or higher in each race group did not involve a weapon.

African American juveniles experienced a sharp increase in percent of disciplinary incidents at public schools

Percent of disciplinary incidents by race within year



Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Data limitations

Data comparisons

Because of changes in disciplinary incidents data collection methods since 1996-1997, data analysis was limited to the three most recent school years. Since race data was collected in the same manner, some trend comparisons may be possible between disciplinary incidents and dropouts. School population data collected on October 1 of the school year was used in calculating the percent of dropouts in a grade throughout the course of a year.

COUNTY NOTE

Physical assault or fighting was more than half of all 1998-1999 disciplinary incidents of Asian 12th-graders in Ramsey County, while it was 30 to 40 percent of all incidents for other race groups.

African Americans account for a high percent of juvenile disciplinary incidents in Hennepin County

Percent of 1998-1999 public school disciplinary incidents within county

	White	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Unknown ethnicity	Total disciplinary incidents
Anoka County	86%	7%	4%	2%	2%	0%	4,809
Beltrami County	58%	2%	38%	1%	1%	0%	780
Dakota County	80%	13%	1%	3%	3%	0%	2,863
Hennepin County	25%	63%	5%	4%	3%	0%	24,983
Ramsey County	45%	35%	2%	10%	8%	0%	6,763
Saint Louis County	75%	6%	17%	0%	1%	1%	1,908
Washington County	90%	5%	1%	3%	1%	0%	1,080

Note: Hispanic is considered a race in this data collection. Types of disciplinary incidents include attendance, disorderly conduct, physical assault or fighting. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Department of Children, Families and Learning

Individuals are not tracked through each database. For example, a juvenile cannot be followed from the apprehension to the probation data.

Age

Juvenile generally refers to an individual under age 18. However, juvenile court cases and state correctional facilities include individuals who were between age 10 and 17 at the time of the offense and juvenile probation cases include individuals who were on probation and between age 10 and 17 at the time of the probation survey.

Race and ethnicity

The race and ethnicity of a juvenile may be self-identified, observed or have elements of both recording methods. The recording of race and ethnicity categories also may vary. For example, race – white, African American, American Indian and Asian – of juvenile apprehensions is separate from ethnicity – Hispanic or non-Hispanic. Court cases record Hispanic as a race and do not have a separate ethnicity category. Some data also includes unknown race and ethnicity as well as “other race.” These variations in recording allow little comparison between data types, such as juvenile apprehensions compared to juvenile court cases. For a more accurate comparison, data should be analyzed for trends within each data type.

Population estimates

When juvenile population estimates are analyzed, caveats related to population should be considered. All demographic estimates are based, in part, on the most recent census data available and with time, reliability of population estimates decreases. Also, there is some speculation that American Indians were undercounted in the 1990 census. The data gathered in the census and used in population estimates is based on self-identification. A person may self-define as one race and ethnicity but another individual may observe that person as a different race or ethnicity. This type of situation creates a comparison problem with some criminal justice-related race and ethnicity data, where an observer may decide an individual's race and ethnicity.

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