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**VILLAGE**

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THE INITIATIVE  
FOR EQUITY IN EDUCATION

# Sixth Annual Equity Report 2023-2024

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# OUR MISSION

The Village is an organization formed to promote unity and education while building a bridge between local schools and parents, to help them get connected with the tools available to aid each child in reaching their full potential. Our goal is to create the blueprint to build villages wherever they are needed.

# OUR VISION

We will work with Williamsburg-James City County (WJCC) schools to address the achievement gap and the disproportionate percentages of expulsion and suspension of minority youth which leads to the pipeline to prison. We also seek to educate the community on voting at all levels and promote social justice by inviting everyone to be part of the process.

# Sixth Annual Evidence-Based Equity Report

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This report marks The Village Initiative's sixth consecutive year producing its Annual Equity Report. The Village Initiative works with its partners at William & Mary to take stock of efforts to achieve equity in the Williamsburg-James City County (WJCC) Schools. The data presented is publicly available data provided by the Virginia Department of Education and the Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools.

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## What is equity?

According to the Virginia Department of Education, Education Equity is achieved when we eliminate "the predictability of student outcomes based on race, gender, zip code, ability, socioeconomic status or languages spoken at home."

This predictability of outcomes is related to long histories of racism and economic and other marginalization that have benefitted some groups over others. Achieving equity requires investing in those students who have historically been denied resources and opportunities.

# SHOULD WILLIAMSBURG AND JAMES CITY COUNTY SPLIT?

The Williamsburg City Council and the James City County Board of Supervisors are currently considering whether their constituents would be best served by splitting into separate school divisions or remaining together in a joint school division.

## THE CITY COMMISSIONED A FEASIBILITY STUDY THAT FOUND:

- The current system is failing City students, especially Black students and those with disabilities, as well as Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students and English Learners.

## THE VILLAGE INITIATIVE'S EQUITY REPORT FINDS:

- This is NOT just a City problem. By disaggregating County data by sub-group, we find that the system is also failing these same student sub-groups in the County.

**Together or separate, EQUITY must be the focus.**

# **Question #1: Are ALL WJCC students succeeding in the classroom?**

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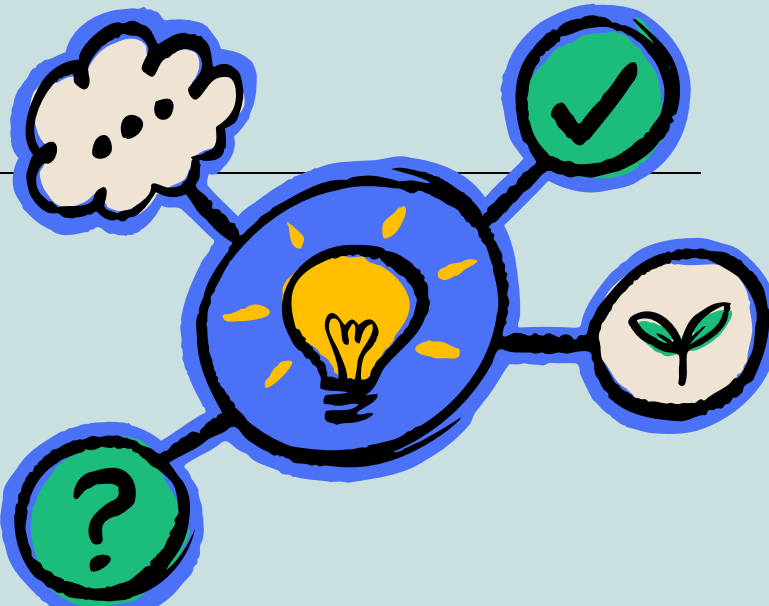
**Our equity reports over the last 6 years have demonstrated persistent double digit achievement gaps in WJCC Schools. This year, we highlight:**

**1) the most severe gaps, where our students are falling behind their counterparts at the state level.**

**2) schools such as James Blair Middle and James River Elementary that largely serve County students to provide an analysis of achievement gaps by sub-group, similar to the analysis provided for City students in the City's Feasibility Study.**

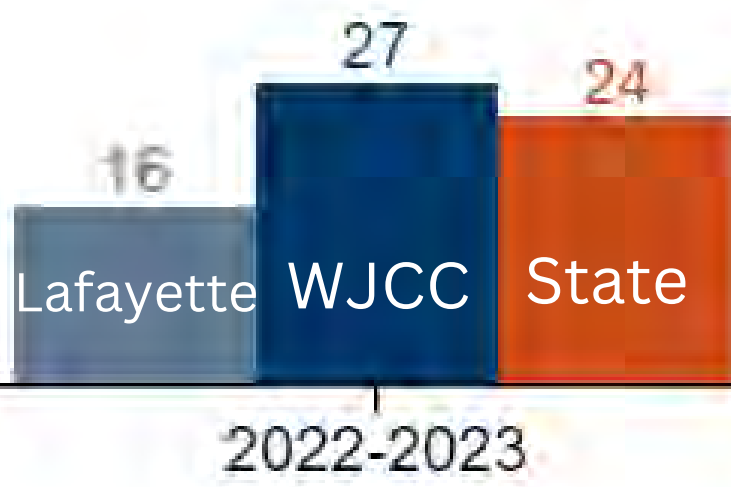
**Teachers and staff are working tirelessly to address student needs - they need more investment and support to help all students succeed.**

# Our Students with Disabilities are Falling Through the Cracks



Percentage of Students With Disabilities Who Passed the English Writing SOL, 2022-23

Lafayette High School



James Blair Middle School



At both Lafayette High School and James Blair Middle School, **students with disabilities are falling behind** their counterparts within the division and the state in English Writing.

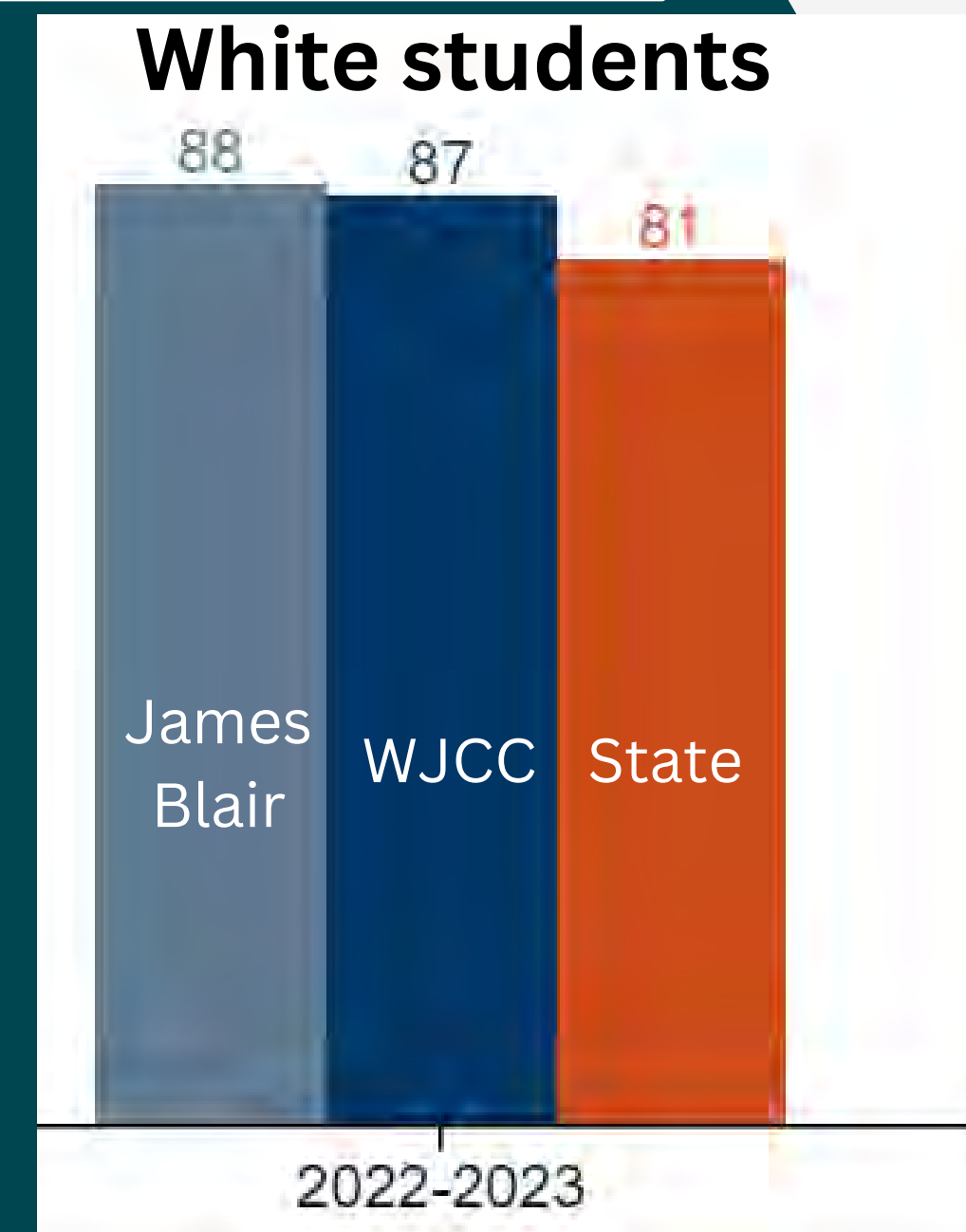
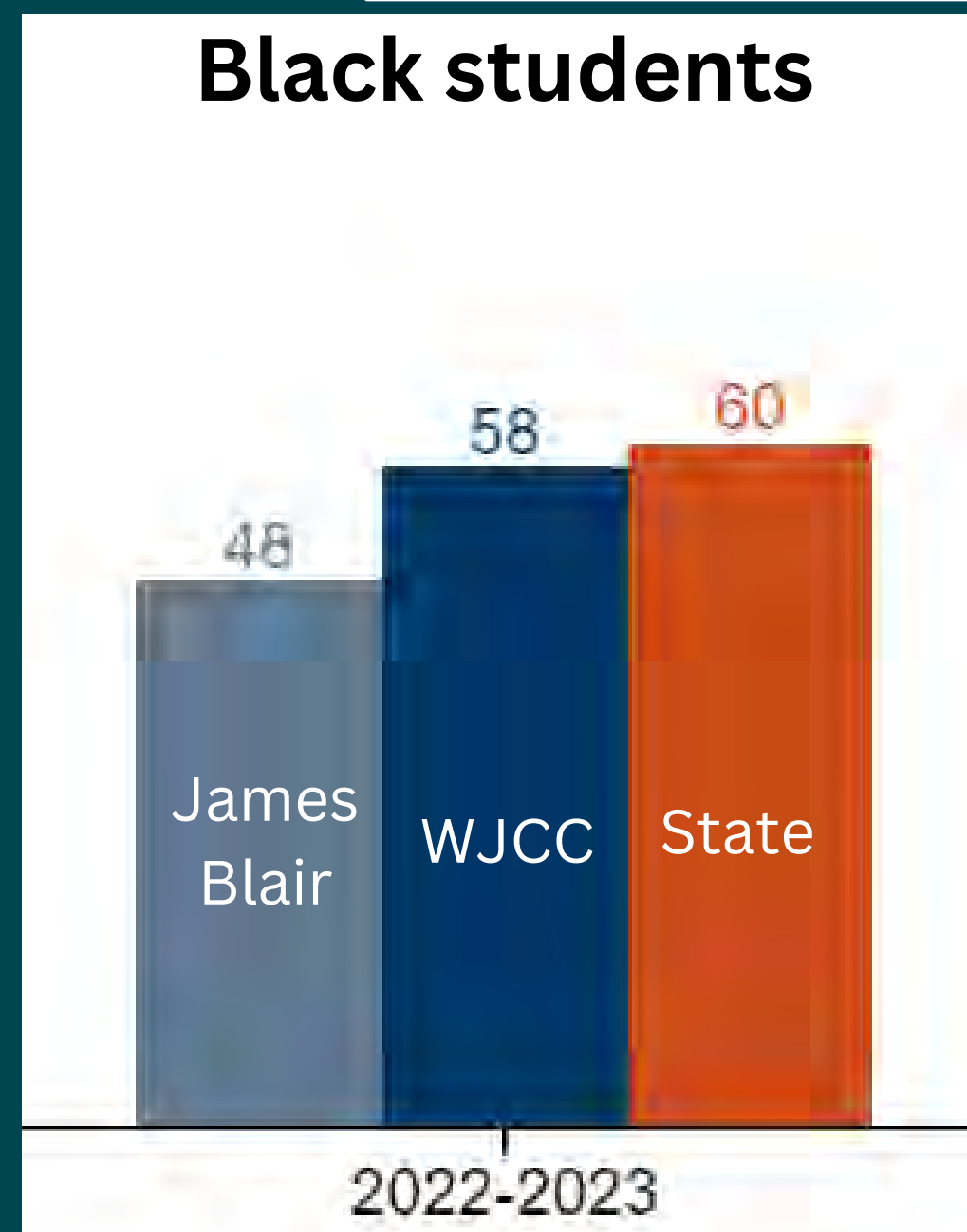
Source: Virginia Department of Education School Quality Profiles

# Serving Our White Students, Failing Our Black Students?



## Percentage of Students Who Passed the Reading SOL, 2022-23

- James Blair Middle School is persistently "**Accredited with conditions**" due to its significant Achievement Gaps in Reading between Black and white students.
- While **white students at James Blair are out-performing their counterparts** at the state level, **Black students at James Blair are falling behind.**

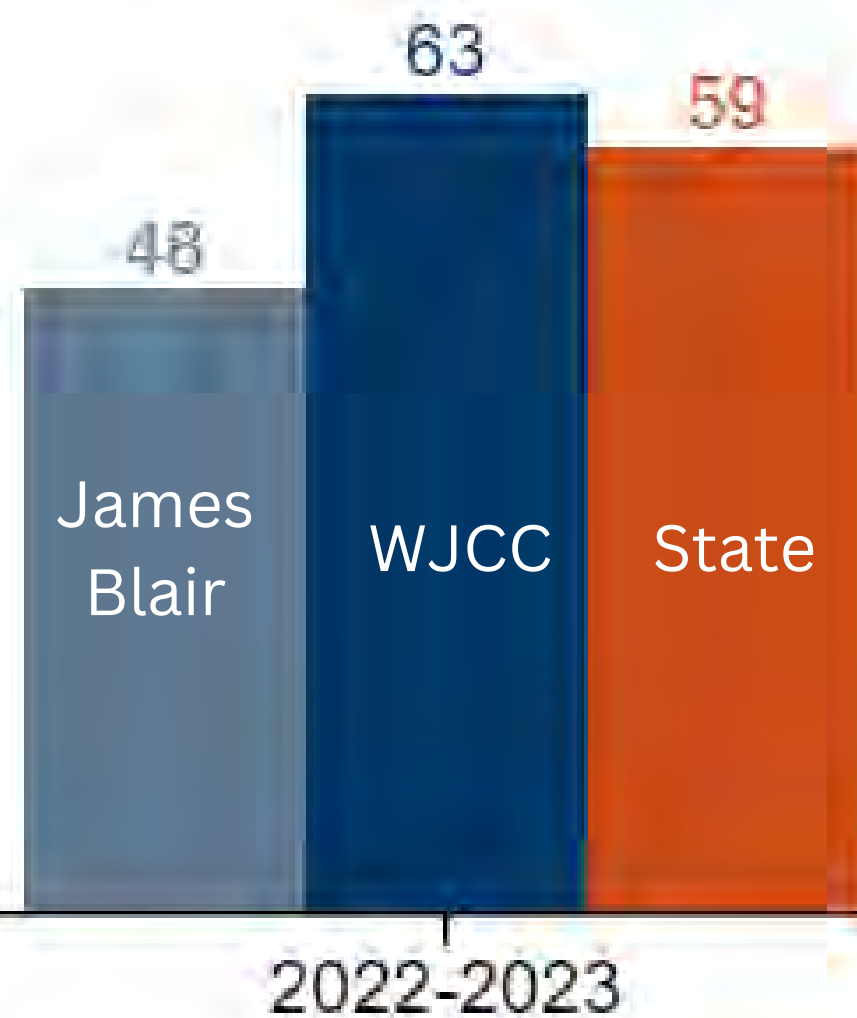


Source: Virginia Department of Education School Quality Profiles

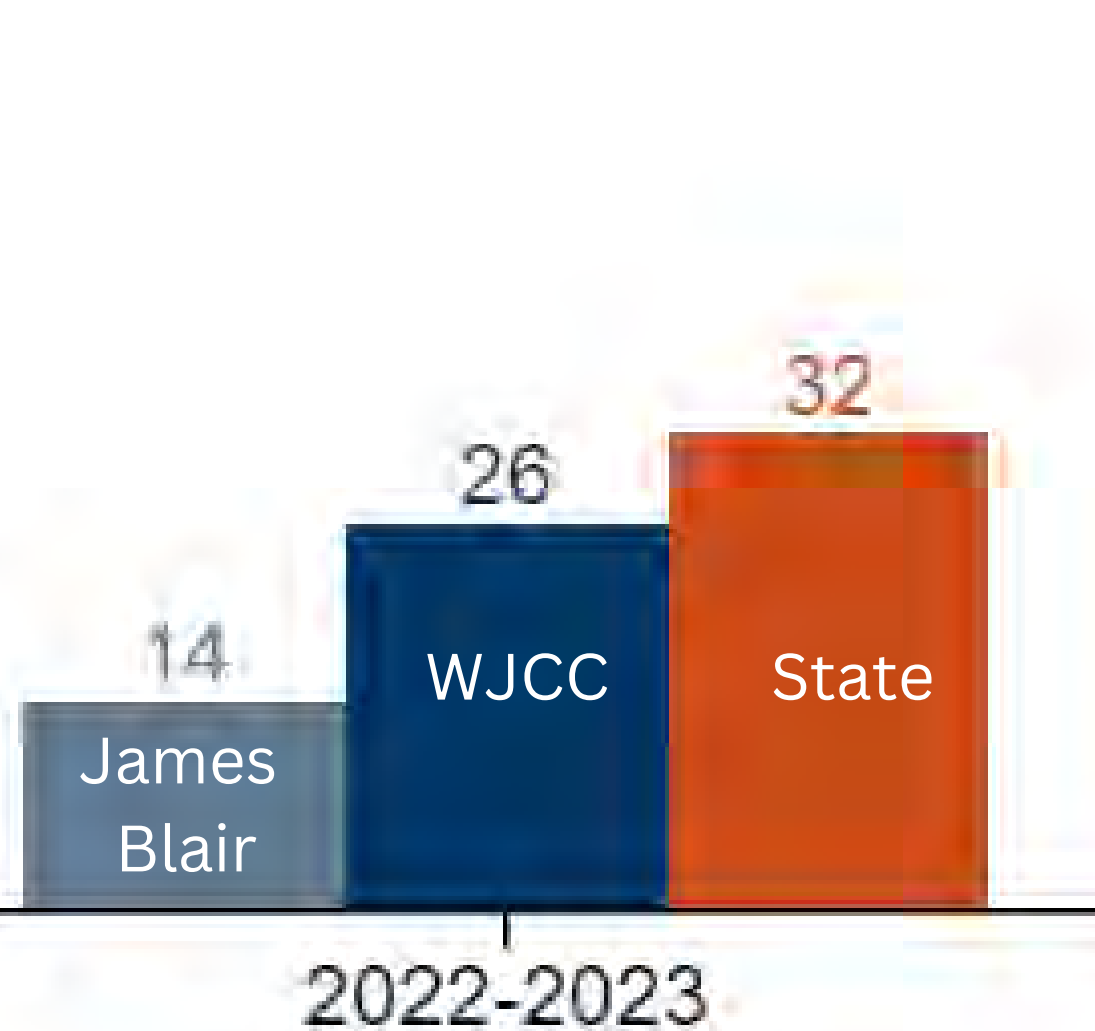
# WJCC Falling Behind State Averages

## Percentage of Students Who Passed the Reading SOL, 2022-23, James Blair Middle School

### Hispanic Students



### English Learners



**Both Hispanic students and English Learners at James Blair Middle School are falling behind their counterparts at the state and division levels in Reading.**

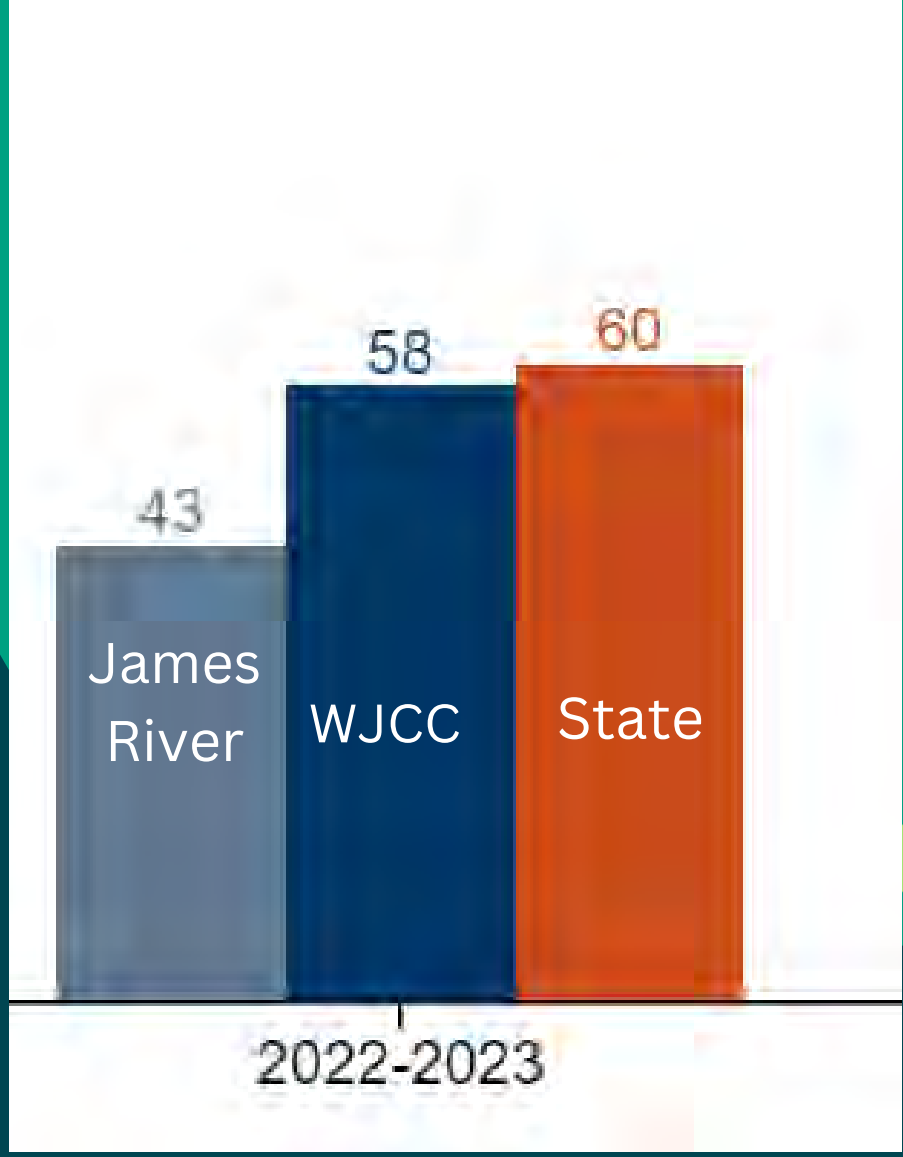
Our Hispanic and English Learners are not failing!  
**WE are failing them.**



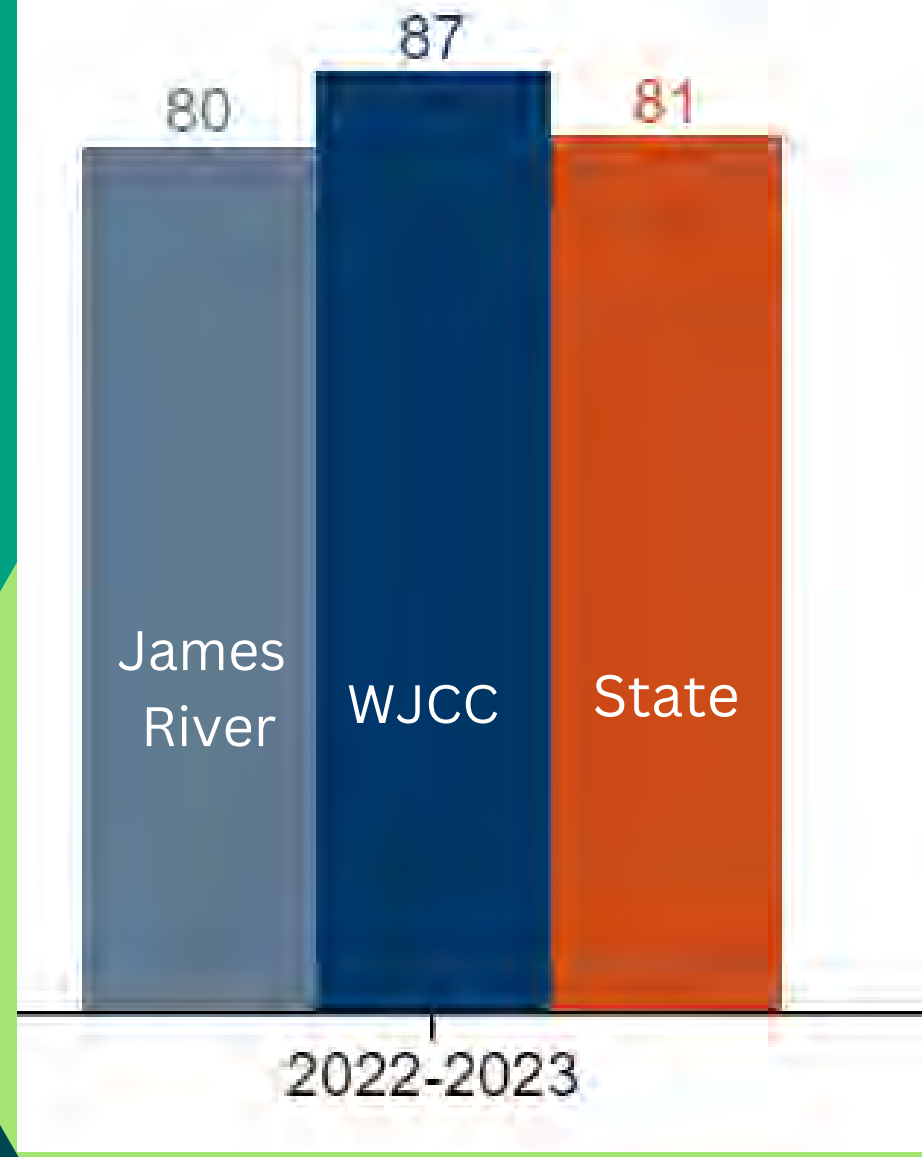
# Educational Equity Gaps: James River Elementary

## Percentage of Students Who Passed the English Reading SOL, 2022-23

### Black students



### White Students



James River Elementary serves exclusively students who live in the County, and is one of the most severe sites of inequities in the joint school division.

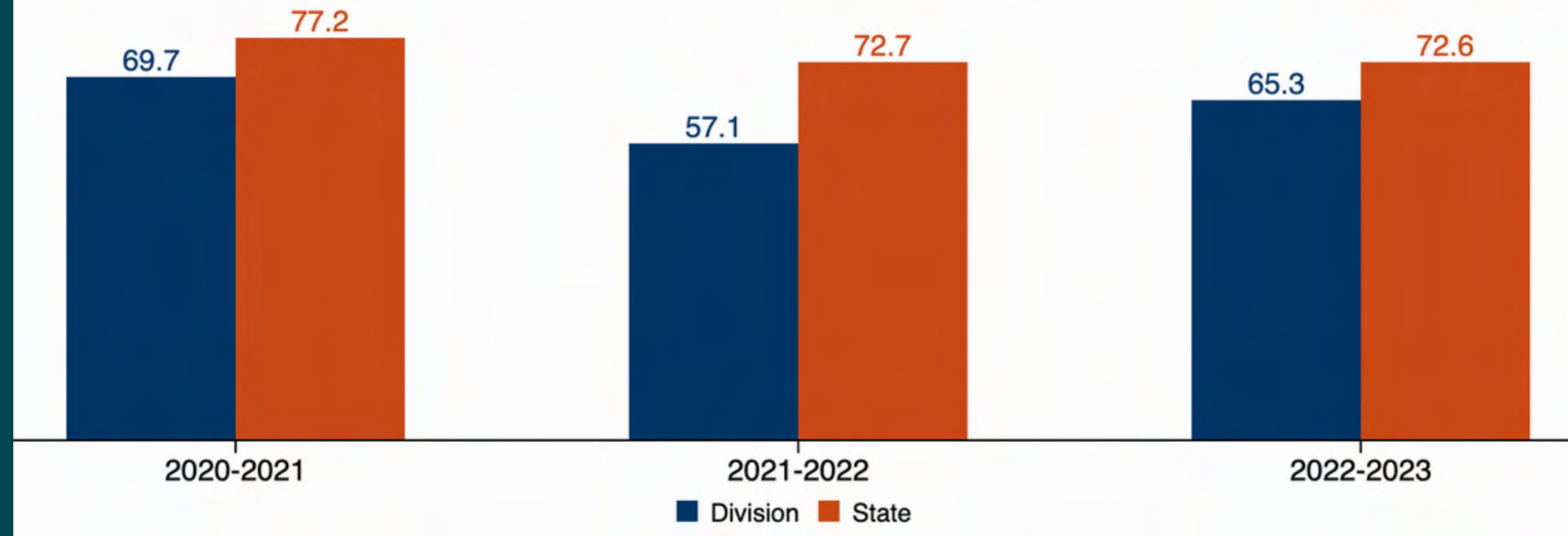
At James River Elementary, white students are performing similarly to their counterparts at the state level, yet Black students are **falling far behind** their state-level counterparts.

Source: Virginia Department of Education School Quality Profiles

# English Learners are Not Dropping Out, They are Being **Pushed Out**

- WJCC on-time graduation rates are above state averages, yet graduation rates for our English Learners are **below state average for the third consecutive school year.**
- The teachers supporting English Learners need more staff and more administrative support and investment.

Percentage of English Learners Graduating On-Time, WJCC Schools vs. State, 2020-23



Source: Virginia Department of Education School Quality Profiles

**Fewer than 4 in 10 English learners in WJCC schools go on to college, **trailing the state average.****



# Support English Learners: Family Engagement

The Aprendiendo Juntos program engages English learning students *and their families*.

Services Provided Include

- Tutoring
- Networking
- Language acquisition
- Reading skills

Led by William & Mary Professor Jennifer Bickham Mendez of the Village & Professor Katherine Barko-Alva, the Aprendiendo Juntos program recruited 50 college students to tutor English learners at Jamestown & Lafayette High Schools.

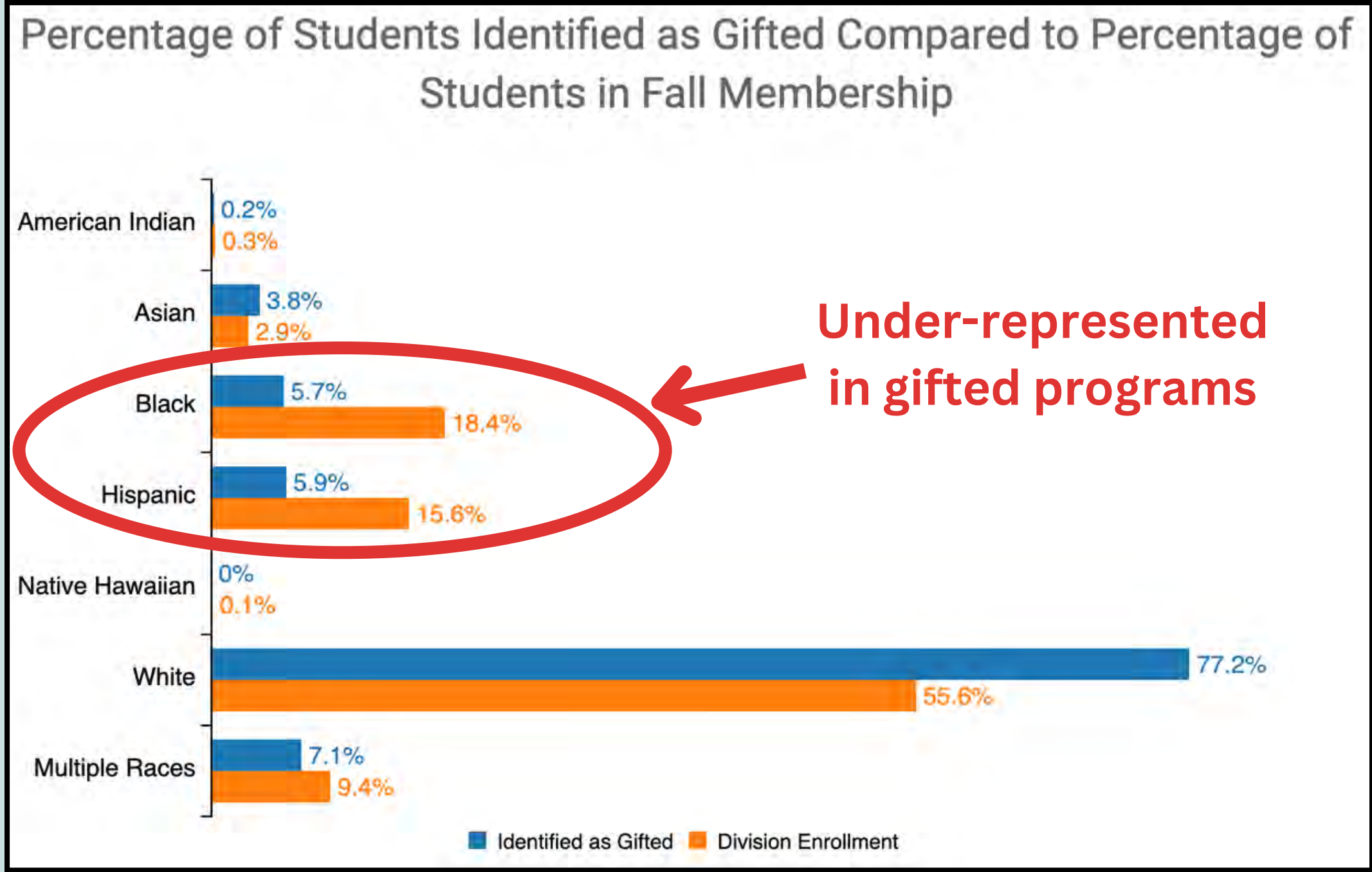


**Parental engagement is associated with higher achievement and graduation rates.** WJCC needs to find creative solutions to engage multilingual and non-English-speaking parents. **Community members cannot be expected to fill in these gaps.**

A woman in a dark suit and a large, colorful earring is clapping her hands. She is smiling and looking towards the left. In the foreground, a young girl with braids is sitting at a desk, looking towards the woman. Another student is partially visible behind her. The desk has several papers, a pencil, and a pen. The background shows a window with a view of a building and some greenery.

**Question #2: Are all WJCC students served well  
by our current gifted services?**

# No! There is a Lack of Equity within Gifted Education



## In 2022-23:

- **White students were overrepresented** in gifted education, accounting for 77.2% of students identified as gifted but making up only 55.6% of the student population.
- **Black and Hispanic students were underrepresented**, accounting for only 5.7% and 5.9% of students identified as gifted, while making up 18.4% and 15.6% of the student population.

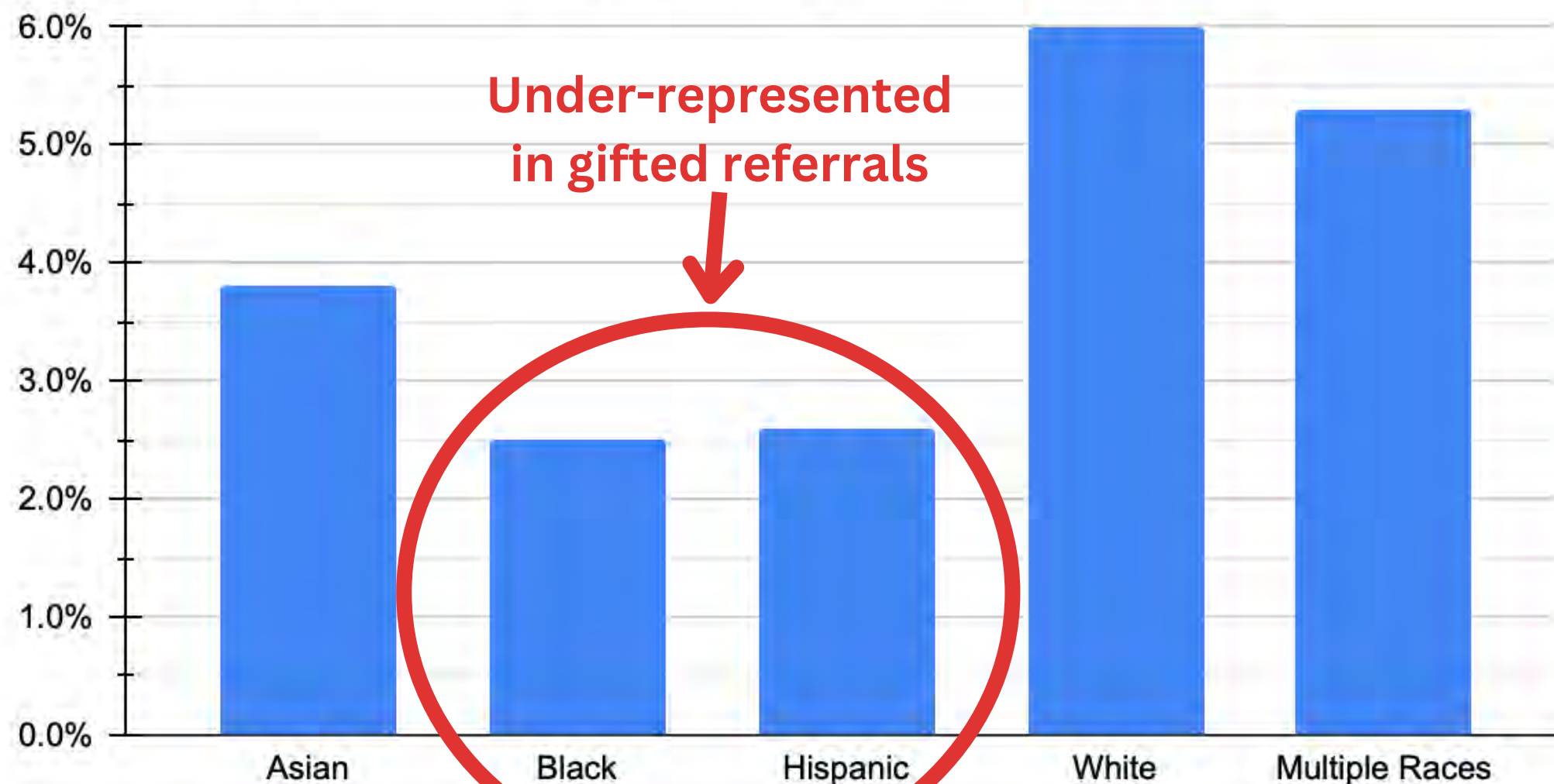
Source: Virginia Department of Education School Quality Profiles

# Black and Hispanic students are underrepresented in referrals for gifted services

Students are screened for gifted services through standardized tests. Following the screening, students are referred for further evaluation and then are identified as gifted or not. Teachers and parents can also refer students directly for evaluation.

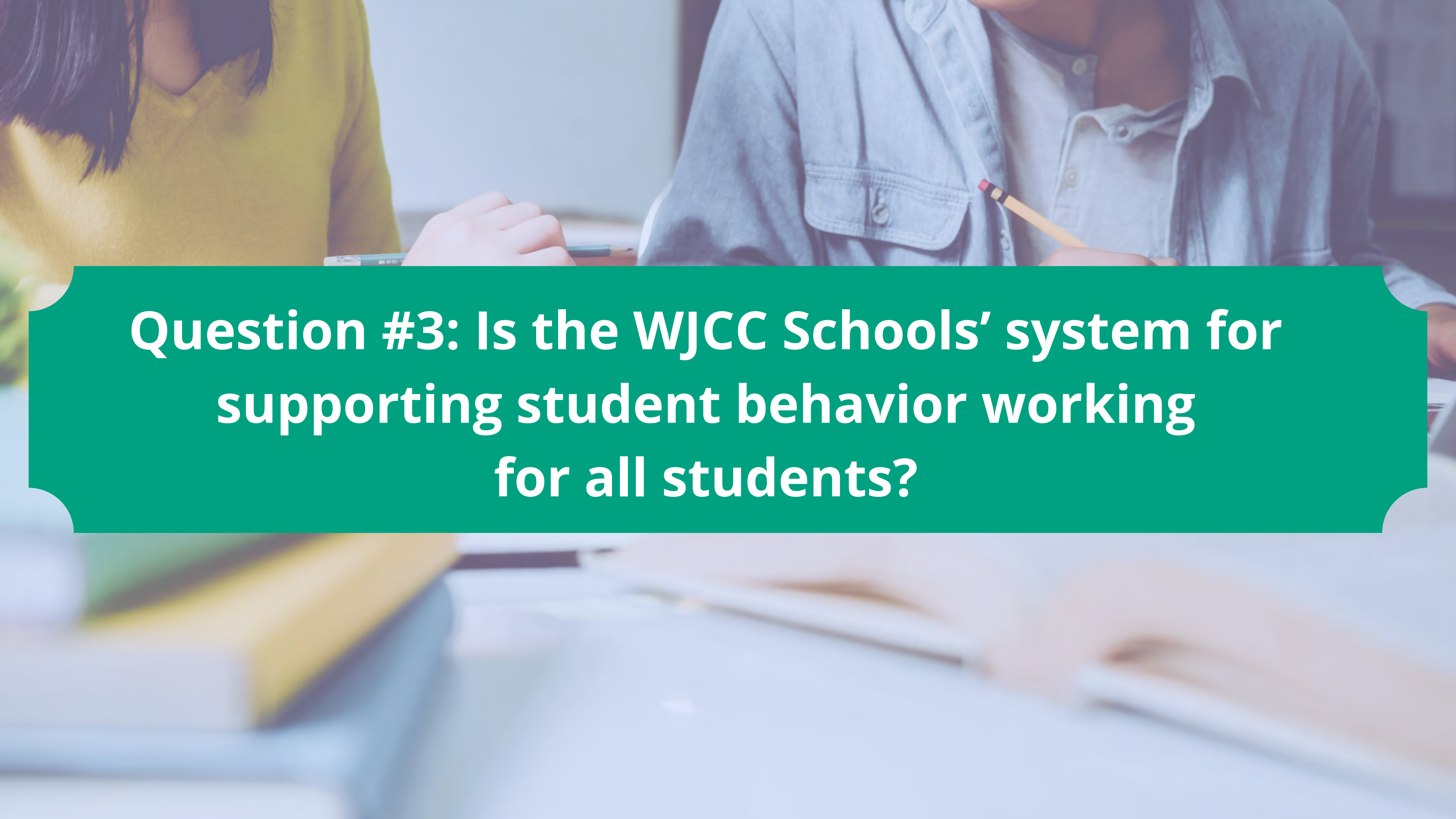


Percentage of Students Referred for Gifted Services, Williamsburg-James City County Schools, 2022-23



## In 2022-23:

- White students were **twice as likely** to be referred for gifted services than **Black and Hispanic** students.
- WJCC Schools is piloting a 'Talent Development' approach to gifted education. **How is success being measured?**

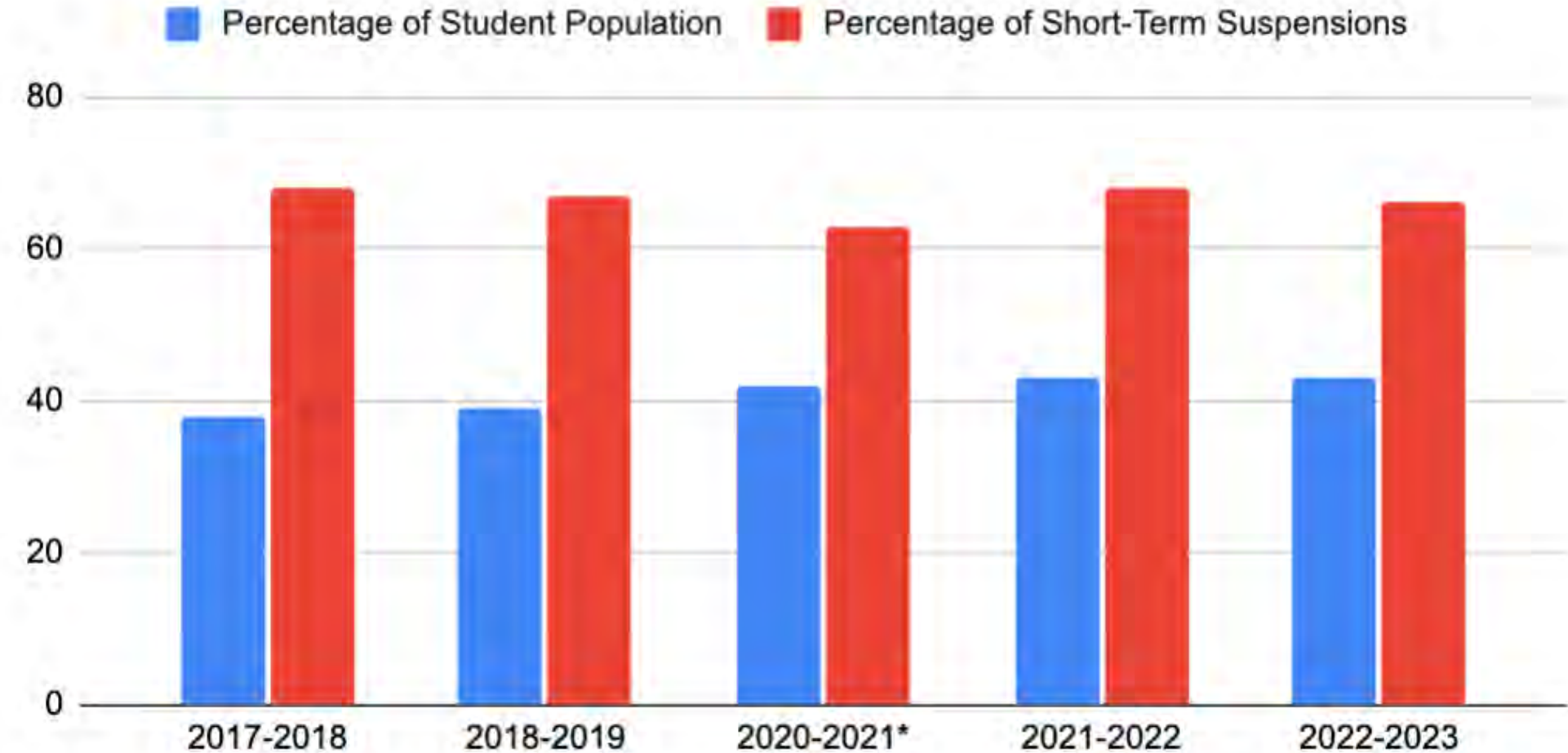
A photograph of two students sitting at a desk in a classroom. The student on the left is wearing a yellow sweater and has their hand near a pencil. The student on the right is wearing a light blue denim shirt and is holding a yellow pencil. A large green text box with white text is overlaid on the center of the image.

**Question #3: Is the WJCC Schools' system for supporting student behavior working for all students?**

# Students pushed out of the classroom cannot learn

- Since 2017, students identifying as Black, Hispanic, or multiple races have been **dramatically and consistently overrepresented in short-term suspensions.**
- In 2022-23, students identifying as Black, Hispanic, or multiple races made up **43% of the student population,** yet accounted for **66% of the short-term suspensions.**

Racial Discipline Gap in Short-Term Suspensions for Students Identifying as Black, Hispanic, or Of Two or More Races in WJCC Schools



\*No data available for 2019-20. In 2020-21, students were learning in virtual and hybrid formats.

Source: Virginia Department of Education School Quality Profiles

## This is a startling racial discipline gap

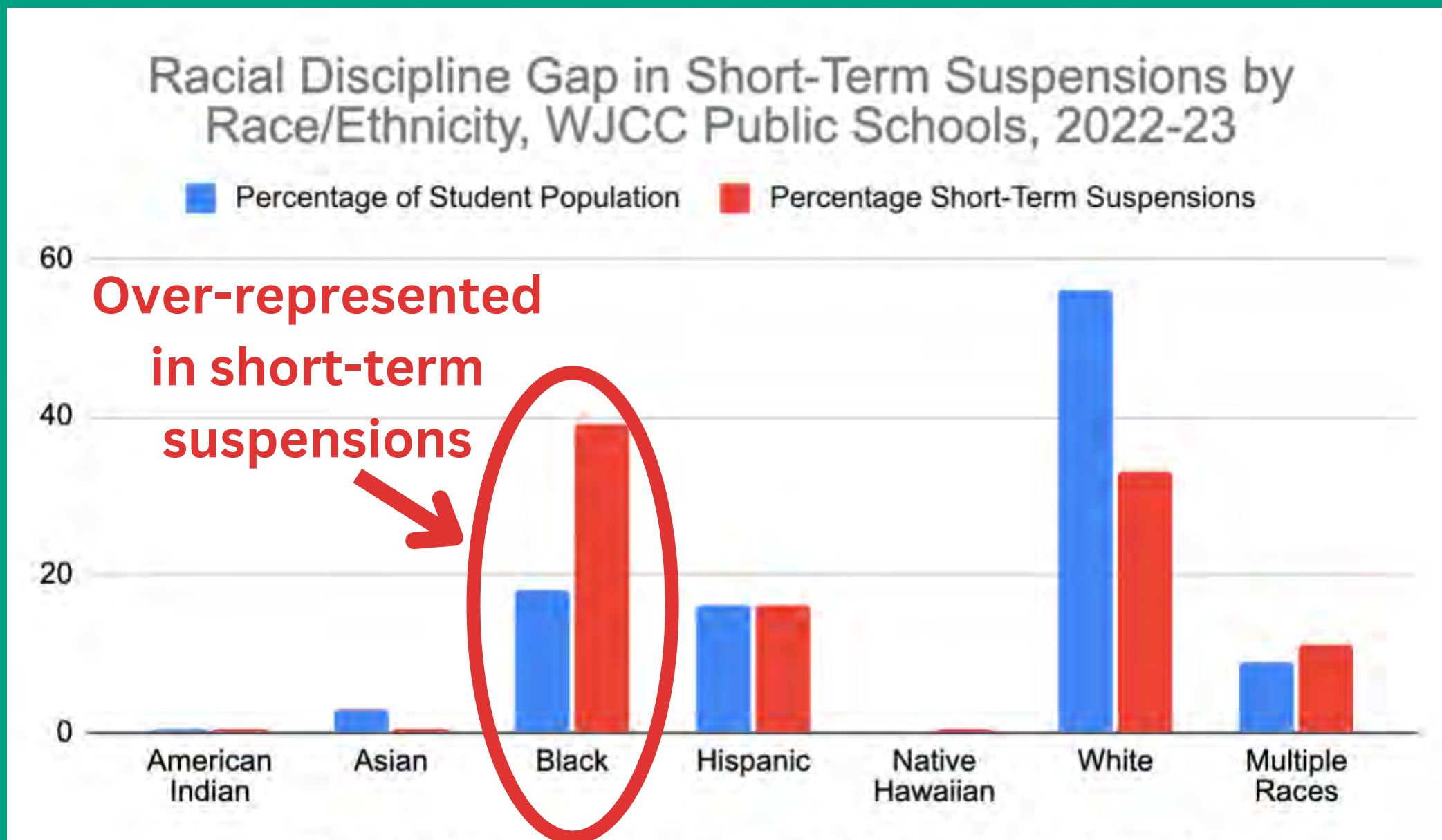


# The Foundations of the School-to-Prison Pipeline

In 2022-23, Black students made up just **18% of the WJCC student population**, yet accounted for **39% of short-term suspensions**.

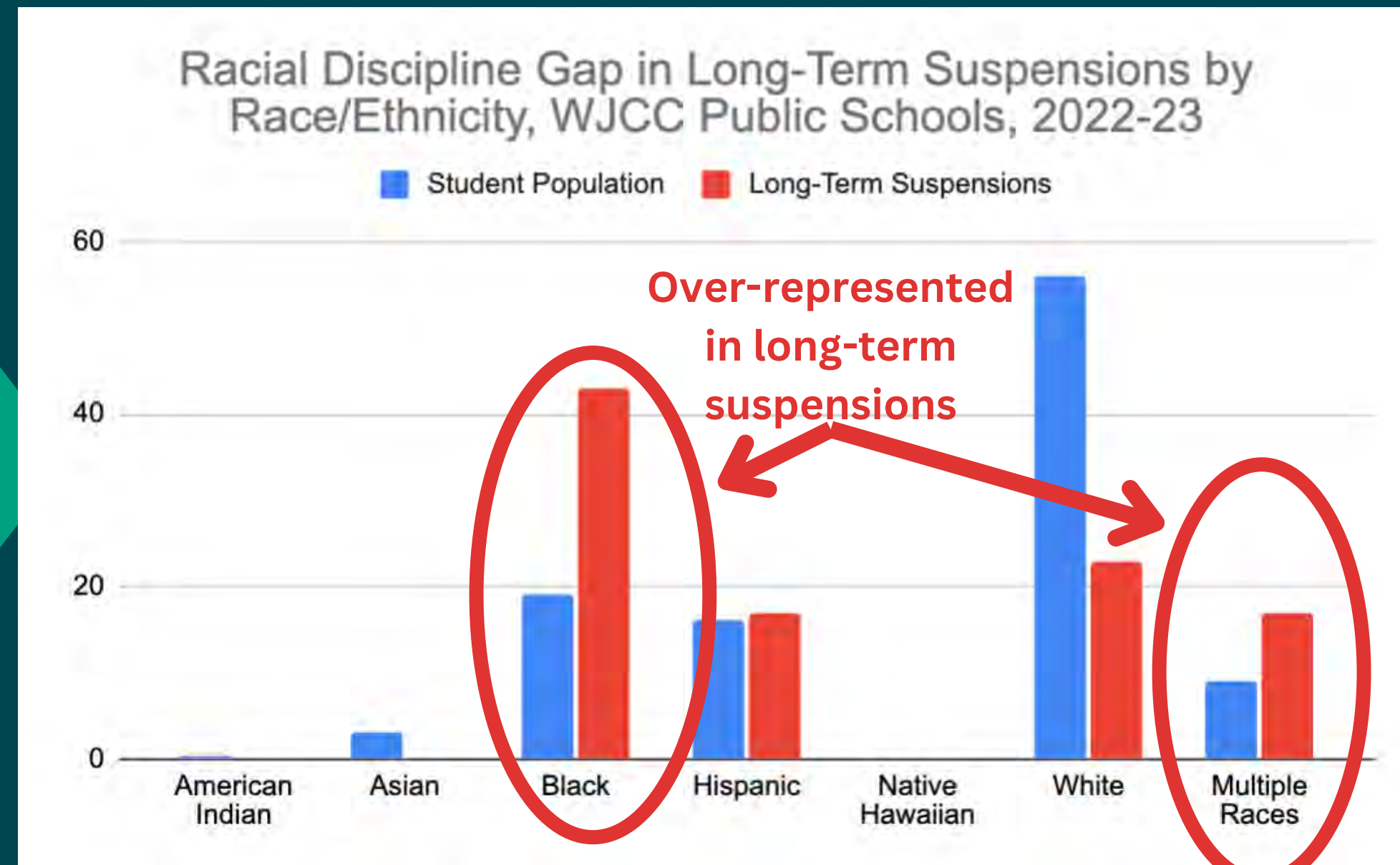
**The racial discipline gap is a problem at all three high schools:**

- At Jamestown, Black and Hispanic students make up **59.8% short-term suspensions** despite accounting for only 26.6% of all students.
- At Lafayette, Black students are only 22% of the student population but **account for 47.5% of all short-term suspensions**.
- At Warhill, Black students make up 20% of the student population but accounted for **37% of short-term suspensions**.



# An Unacceptable Racial Discipline Gap in Long-Term Suspensions

- In 2022-23, students identifying as Black, Hispanic, or multiple races made up **43% of the student population**, yet accounted for **76.9% of long-term suspensions**.
- In 2022-23, Black students alone made up **18% of the student population**, yet accounted for **43% of long-term suspensions**.



Source: Virginia Department of Education School Quality Profiles

A desk setup featuring a copper-colored alarm clock on the left, a stack of colorful books in the background, and an open blue notebook in the foreground. A green banner with white text is overlaid on the image.

**Question #4: Does the WJCC School Division adequately support teachers and staff?**

# Give Teachers and Staff a Seat at Table

- WJCC employees have little influence over their contracts.
- **WJCC teachers and staff work tirelessly on the frontlines**, delivering a quality education, nutritious food, clean schools, and safe transportation.
- **The Village Initiative supports collective bargaining for educators and staff.**



**Teachers and staff of WJCC Schools deserve dignity on the job and a voice in decision-making!**

# A Crisis Level Shortage of Teachers of Color

2023-24 data  
not available

## WJCC Elementary Schools, 2022-2023

School	Student of Color Percentage	Staff of Color Percentage
Clara Byrd Baker ES	51.7%	9.5%
D.J. Montague ES	51.1%	2.2%
J. Blaine Blayton ES	40.9%	4.8%
James River ES	77.3%	4.2%
Laurel Lane ES	50.2%	5.1%
Matoaka ES	37%	11.1%
Matthew Whaley ES	47.2%	4.8%
Norge ES	48.7%	5.9%
Stonehouse ES	35.6%	20%

Source: WJCC Teacher Recruitment Outcomes SY 2021-22

## WJCC Middle & High Schools, 2022-2023

School	Student of Color Percentage	Staff of Color Percentage
Berkeley MS	49.2%	13.5%
Hornsby MS	44.3%	14.1%
James Blair MS	50.3%	24.4%
Toano MS	41.2%	15.7%

School	Student of Color Percentage	Staff of Color Percentage
Jamestown HS	34.9%	8.5%
Lafayette HS	47.7%	8.3%
Warhill HS	41.6%	19.1%

Source: WJCC Teacher Recruitment Outcomes SY 2021-22



James River ES has the largest percentage of students of color at 77.3%, but one of the **smallest** percentages of staff of color at just 4.2%.

**\*OUR TEACHERS DO NOT REPRESENT  
OUR STUDENTS\***



# 2023 Village Team

**Founder and Executive  
Director:**

**JACQUELINE BRIDGEFORTH WILLIAMS**



**PHILIP CANADY**

**Executive Team:**

**JENNIFER BICKHAM  
MENDEZ**

**MOLLY ROBINSON**

**AMY QUARK**

**MATT NWANERI**



**Community Fellows:**



**SUMAYYAH YASIN**

**ISOBEL LAUX**