DECLARE EQUITY

FOR GIRLS

it's time!

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"This report verifies what educators across the country have seen with our own eyes. Our girls who live in challenging circumstances need us to stand up for them! The obstacles of poverty, racism, lack of health care and housing can affect their lives forever. Equity in educational access and opportunity is a justice issue. Educators are thankful to Crittenton for this important report."

Lily Eskelsen Garcia
President, National Education Association

About Crittenton Services of Greater Washington

Crittenton Services of Greater Washington (Crittenton) empowers the most vulnerable teen girls to overcome obstacles, make positive choices, and achieve their goals through programs in schools in Washington, DC, and Montgomery County, MD. Our mission is to ensure that every teen girl—her race, ethnicity, and family income notwithstanding—has the support, knowledge, and skills she needs to thrive. We focus on the "whole girl" and her strengths, not her deficits. Participation is always voluntary, and any girl can join a group.

Each year, we provide nearly 500 sixth- to twelfth-grade girls with experiences that will help them to develop invaluable social, emotional, and leadership skills; enable them to make healthy choices; and bolster their motivation to learn, succeed in school, and go to college. Most importantly, they attain a belief in their ability to succeed, even in challenging situations.
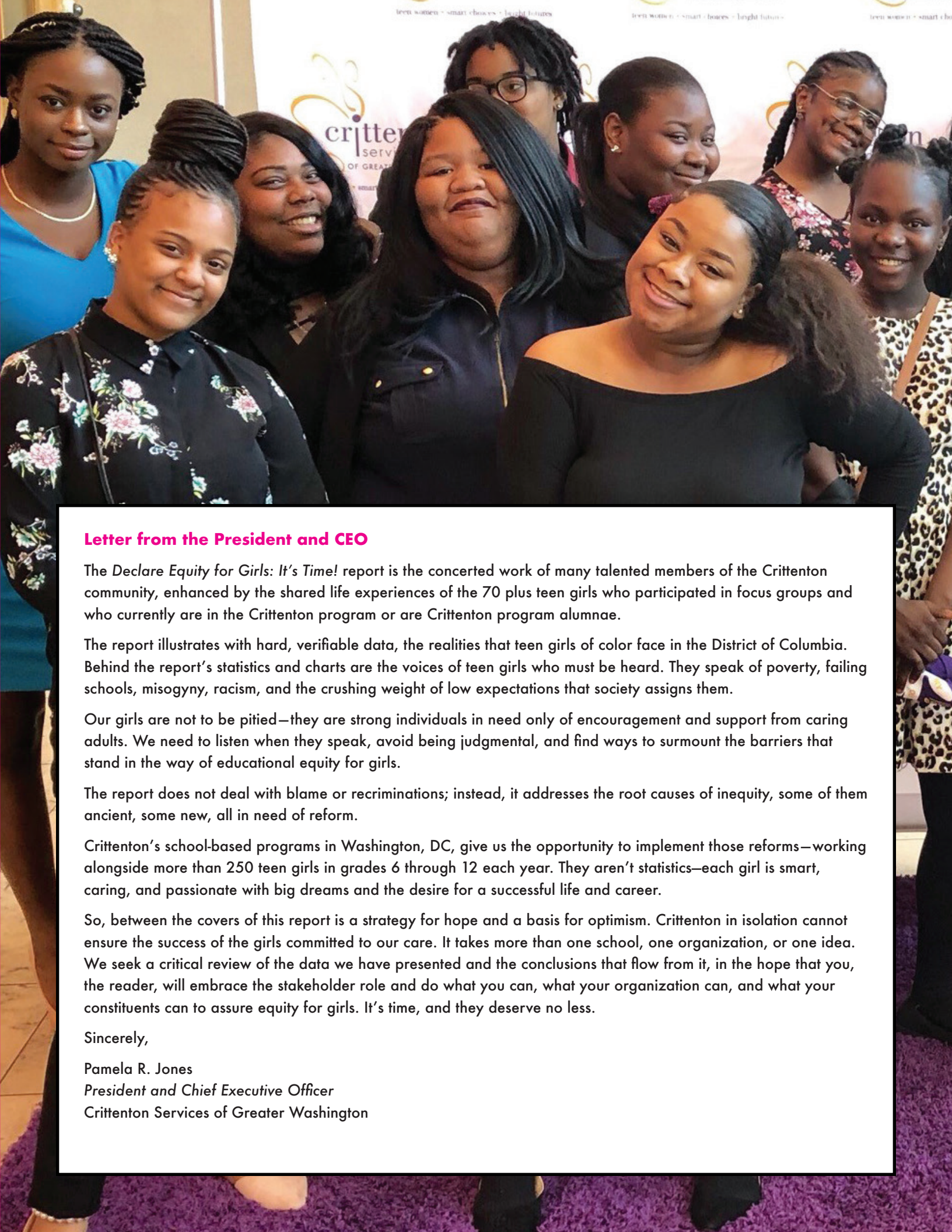
Since 1983, we have served more than 9,000 teen girls. The results have been life-changing: Crittenton girls are staying in school, avoiding pregnancy, becoming leaders in their schools and communities, graduating from high school, and going on to college and careers.

Acknowledgments

Letter from the President and CEO

The *Declare Equity for Girls: It's Time!* report is the concerted work of many talented members of the Crittenton community, enhanced by the shared life experiences of the 70 plus teen girls who participated in focus groups and who currently are in the Crittenton program or are Crittenton program alumnae.

The report illustrates with hard, verifiable data, the realities that teen girls of color face in the District of Columbia. Behind the report's statistics and charts are the voices of teen girls who must be heard. They speak of poverty, failing schools, misogyny, racism, and the crushing weight of low expectations that society assigns them.

Our girls are not to be pitied—they are strong individuals in need only of encouragement and support from caring adults. We need to listen when they speak, avoid being judgmental, and find ways to surmount the barriers that stand in the way of educational equity for girls.

The report does not deal with blame or recriminations; instead, it addresses the root causes of inequity, some of them ancient, some new, all in need of reform.

Crittenton's school-based programs in Washington, DC, give us the opportunity to implement those reforms—working alongside more than 250 teen girls in grades 6 through 12 each year. They aren't statistics—each girl is smart, caring, and passionate with big dreams and the desire for a successful life and career.

So, between the covers of this report is a strategy for hope and a basis for optimism. Crittenton in isolation cannot ensure the success of the girls committed to our care. It takes more than one school, one organization, or one idea. We seek a critical review of the data we have presented and the conclusions that flow from it, in the hope that you, the reader, will embrace the stakeholder role and do what you can, what your organization can, and what your constituents can to assure equity for girls. It's time, and they deserve no less.

Sincerely,

Pamela R. Jones
President and Chief Executive Officer
Crittenton Services of Greater Washington

"Teen girls in DC have high ambition and are intellectually powerful, but for too many girls, the conditions of chronic poverty, race and gender discrimination, and childhood trauma thwart their potential. Years of evidence reveal that a well-educated mother is one of the most important influences ensuring the academic and social success of children, so it's vitally important for DC leaders to improve collaborative efforts to make sure that teen girls stay in school, succeed in college, and enter the workforce well-prepared for professional life. Crittenton Services of Greater Washington offers an outstanding model for the kind of support that really makes a difference in the academic and personal success of girls."

Patricia McGuire, President, Trinity Washington College

INTRODUCTION

Each year, Crittenton Services of Greater Washington (Crittenton) delivers programs in the District of Columbia to more than 200 bright, strong, and resilient girls with big hopes and dreams. Our school-based programs focus on the health, healthy development, and wellness of sixth- to twelfth-grade girls. Our focus is holistic, emphasizing healthy relationships, physical and mental health, education, and overall quality of life. Independent evaluations of our programs have documented the life-altering changes that Crittenton girls make as they recognize their gifts, learn to use their voices to advocate for change, and acquire essential life and leadership skills.

The report that follows focuses on education because it is a social determinant of health, it is the context in which we work with teen girls, and it is still the surest pathway out of poverty. At the end of the 2016–2017 school year, we began a process of listening carefully and intentionally to girls and young women living in the communities we serve in Washington, DC, because of the many obstacles that stand in the way of their progress both while in school and after they graduate. We wanted to answer two questions:

1. What are the major barriers to success for girls living in communities of concentrated disadvantage?
2. What can be done to reduce those barriers?

Our primary research method was focus groups—with 71 participants, ranging in age from 12 to 24. During our discussions, participants reminded us that they are frequently talked at and talked about, but seldom talked with and listened to in meaningful ways. So, we listened and believe, as a result, that this report faithfully reflects the views of our focus group participants.

We believe that we have a deeper understanding of the landscape in which DC girls live and learn—both in and out of the classroom. Through this report, we seek to share what we learned with others who work with teen girls and with funders, policymakers, and community groups.

The report focuses on four common themes that emerged during our discussions. According to our focus group participants:

- The environment in their schools often is not conducive to learning.
- Their home and community environments can create additional challenges.
- They do not feel safe and respected either in school or in their communities.
- The interplay of school, inside-school, and outside-school factors contribute to high rates of absenteeism and school suspensions and low rates of academic achievement.

The report also presents data on academic outcomes gathered from multiple sources, whenever possible disaggregated by race, gender, and location to capture the profound disparities between the District's eight wards.

DC leaders and schools have taken and are taking important steps to promote educational equity. Our goal is to spur collaboration and cocreation to build upon these and additional efforts. With that in mind, we end the report with a path going forward, including:

- Creating healthier and more nurturing school environments by implementing whole school, evidence-based interventions.
- Reducing absenteeism, suspensions, and expulsions by addressing the root causes of "push out."
- Improving academic outcomes by developing early warning systems and using the data to provide an array of supports to all students who need them.
- Addressing sexual harassment and the demeaning of black girls in schools proactively and transparently.
- Engaging girls in crafting solutions to the challenges they face.

CONCENTRATED DISADVANTAGE
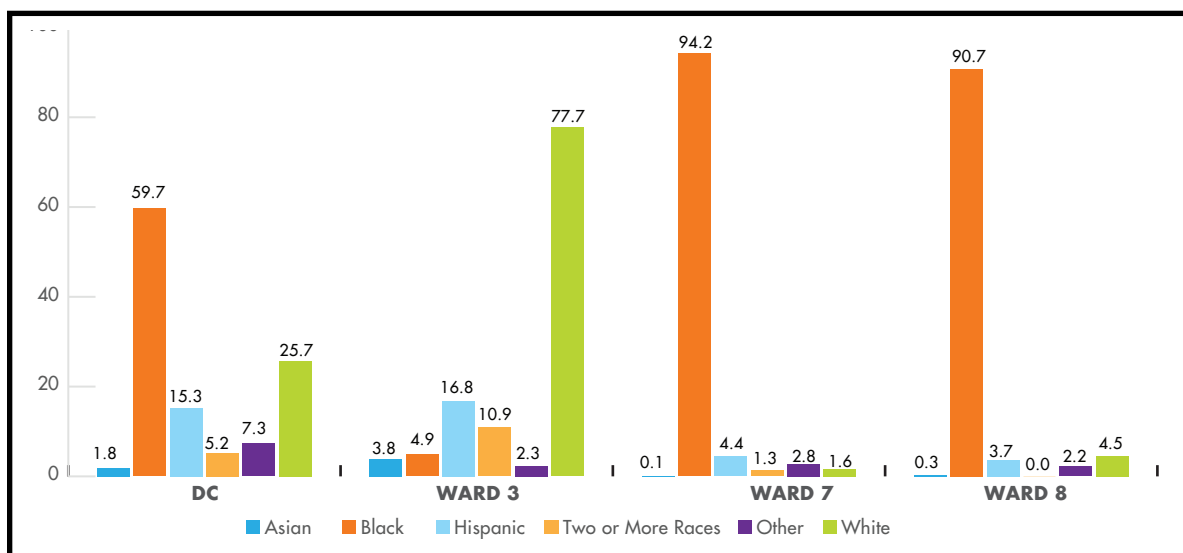
FIGURE 1: **Race and ethnicity of children under 18, 2016**
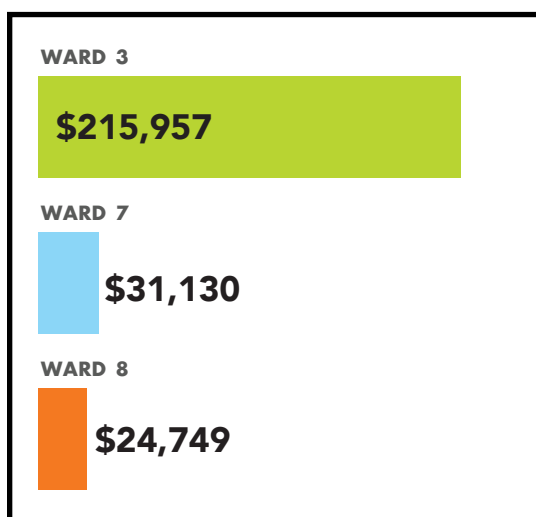
FIGURE 2: **Median family income by ward, 2016**
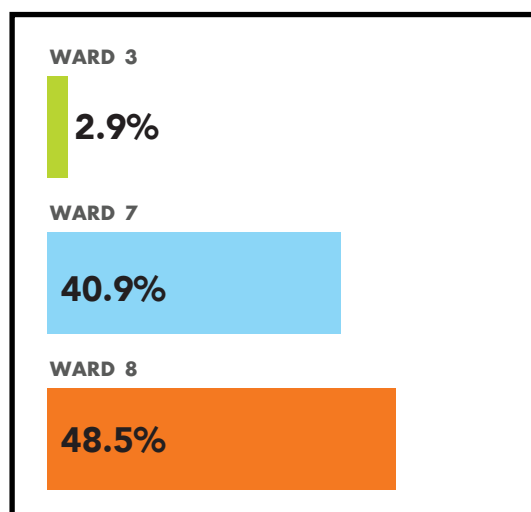
FIGURE 3: **Children under 18 living below the federal poverty level, 2016**

In 2016, 60,107 girls under age 18 lived in the District of Columbia.[1] Approximately 37% of DC girls live in Wards 7 and 8—where more than 40% of children under age 18 live below the federal poverty level.[2] More than 90% of Wards 7 and 8 girls are black or African American (see Table 1, p. 26).

We cannot understand the barriers to success that girls in Wards 7 and 8 face without understanding the context in which they develop, go to school, and live. Communities in Wards 7 and 8 have the District's lowest median family income and its highest unemployment rate, highest percentage of children under age 19 living in poverty, highest teen birth rate, and highest percentage of families headed by single women. These communities also have the highest number of

recorded incidents of violent crime and substantiated investigations of child neglect and abuse (see Table 2, p. 26).

The profound differences in well-being that exist between these communities of concentrated disadvantage and other DC communities are the result of long-standing systemic racism and discriminatory federal, state, and local policies and practices.[3]

Concentrated disadvantage exacerbates a host of negative conditions associated with poverty in general: poorer health, inadequate housing, unstable housing, higher rates of crime and violence, fewer job opportunities, unstable employment, as well as access to fewer resources and supports.[4] These conditions negatively affect children living in these communities, including those who are economically better off.[5]
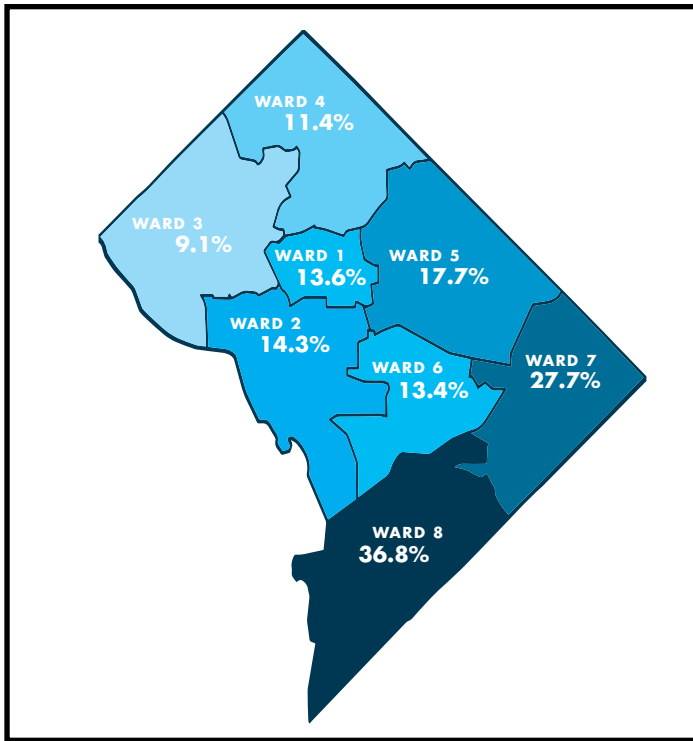
FIGURE 4: **Percentage of Poverty by Ward, 2016**

The detrimental effects on education are also well-documented: the concentration of disadvantage produces racially and economically segregated schools (see Table 3 and Table 4, p. 28) and low academic achievement.[6] The resulting achievement gaps are not due to an innate lack of ability but are also caused by discrimination and segregation.[7]

In sum, place matters. All of the above conditions are present in the District's most disadvantaged communities, including racially and economically segregated schools and the disparities in educational outcomes that are the primary focus of this report.
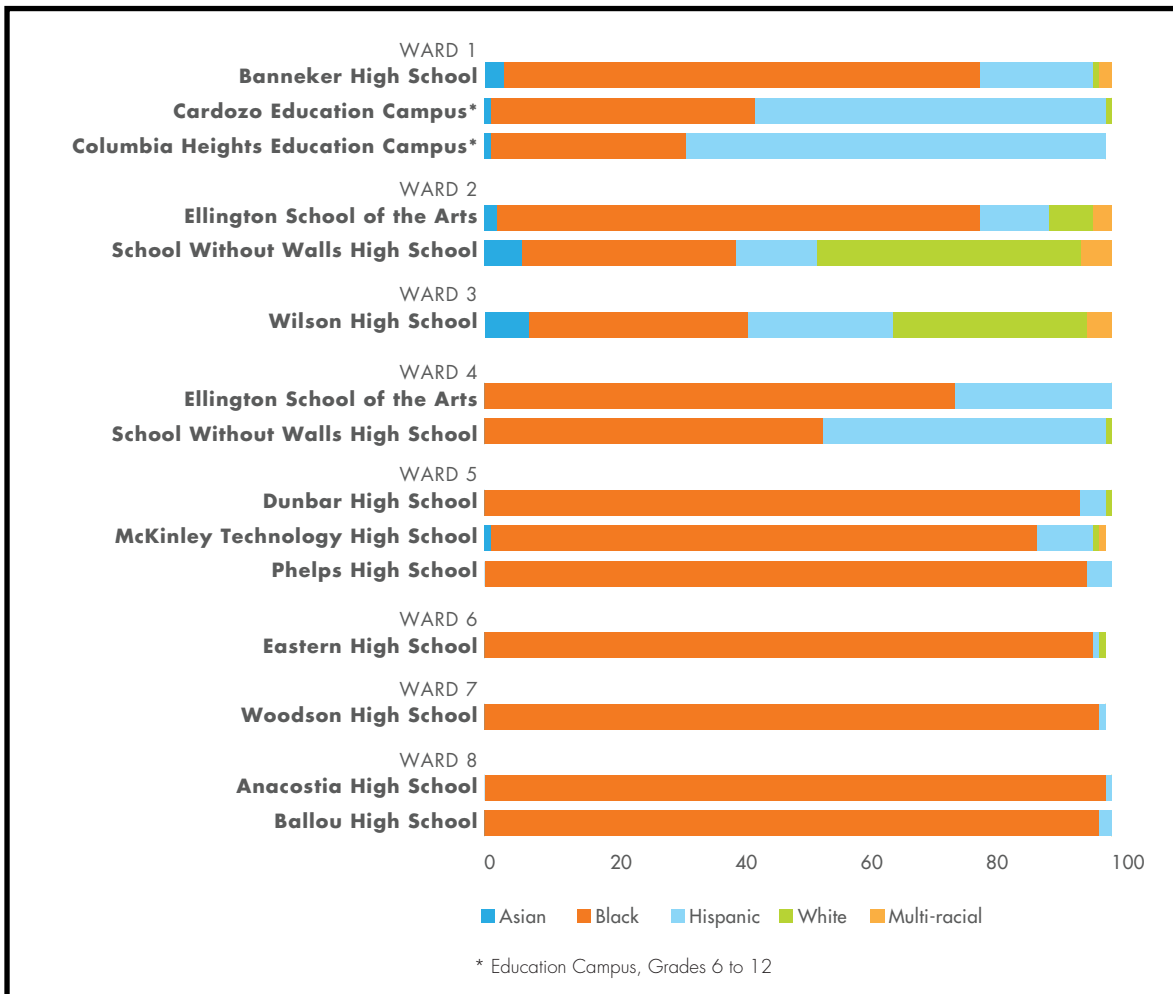
FIGURE 5: **Student's Race and Ethnicity at Schools Serving Grades 9 to 12 by Ward, 2017-2018**
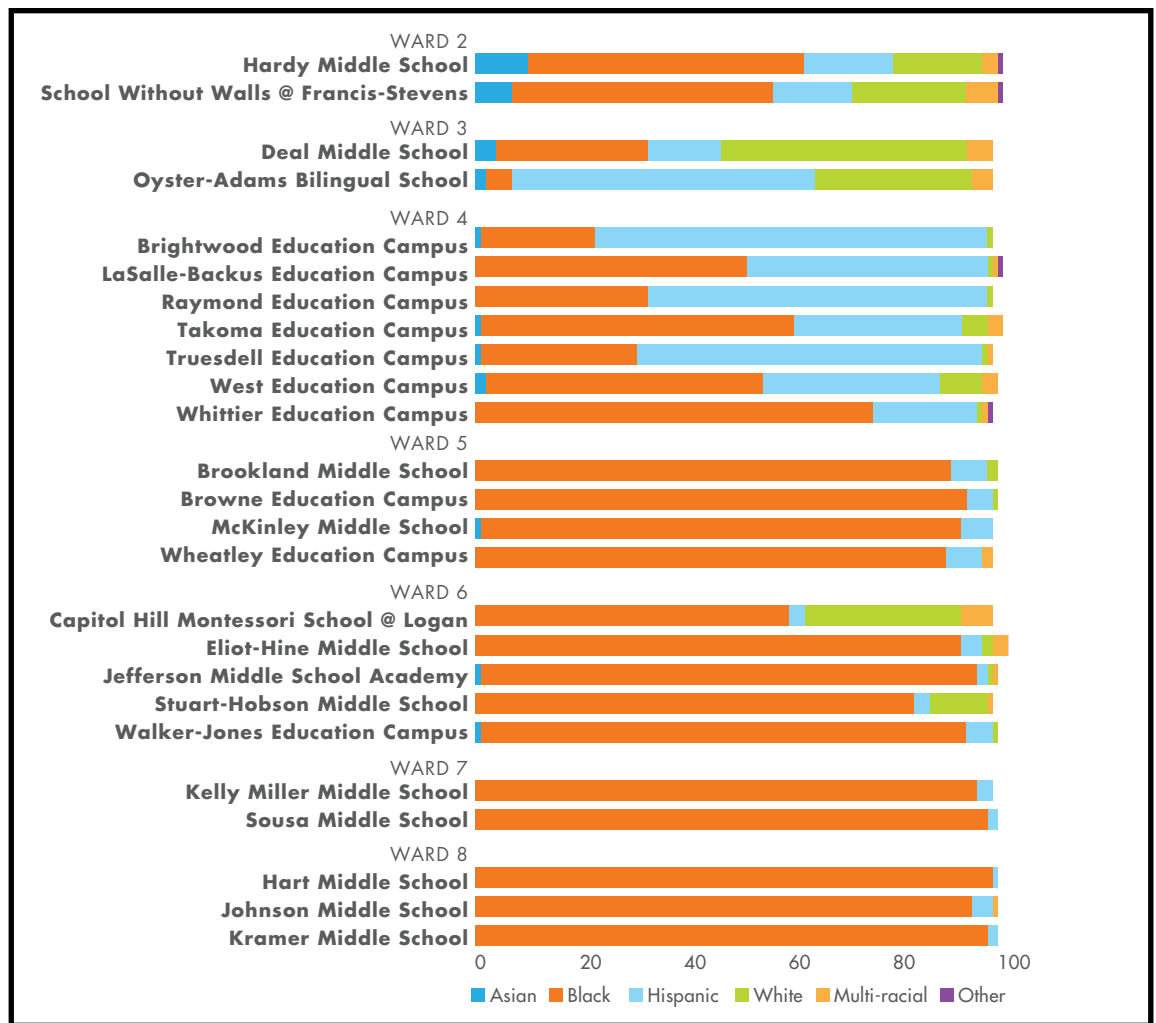
FIGURE 6: **Student's Race and Ethnicity at DC Schools Serving Grades 6 to 8 by Ward, 2017-2018**

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS THAT ARE
NOT CONDUCIVE TO LEARNING

Successful and healthy schools provide safety, support, and academic challenge. Their students feel connected to teachers and peers and believe that they can succeed.[8] But as early as the seventh grade, many of the girls in our focus groups felt disconnected from school and described school environments that are full of "drama" and conflict between students, teachers, and school staff. The girls who were still positive about school invariably mentioned their connection to a teacher or another adult in their school.

As described by focus group participants, "drama" results from student, teacher, and school staff behaviors. They described students who disrupted their classrooms and teachers struggling, but often failing, to maintain classroom decorum.

Although the girls acknowledged that students behave badly and disrespect teachers, they also argue that they deserve respect from teachers that they sometimes do not receive.

It is essential to understand that the "drama" is in no small measure due to trauma. In 1998, the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)* study documented the cumulative effects of adversity on long-term life outcomes.[9] Subsequent studies have documented that ACEs cause psychological (panic, depression, and anxiety, for example) and biological responses due to stress hormones like cortisol coursing through the body during an adverse experience. Furthermore, many youth are bombarded by severe adversity throughout their adolescence. In the District, 32% of youth ages 12 to 17 have experienced violence in their neighborhood, compared with 14% nationally; and 24% have experienced economic hardship.[10] These and other adverse experiences can have lasting negative effects. As a result, "bad behavior may simply be a biological response to the grinding torture of life below the poverty line."[11]

Girls in all groups agreed that bullying—most often in the form of cyberbullying— is pervasive in schools and a potent contributor to unhealthy school environments. A telling example is what both middle and high school girls called "being exposed." When a girl is exposed, someone posts statements or pictures on social media to embarrass her. The content is usually sexually explicit, and the perpetrator is more often than not a boy.

Sometimes, the same girls acknowledged that they had been bullied, had engaged in bullying, and had been bystanders while others were bullied. Punitive measures would not stop bullying, they said. The result, as one focus group participant put it, would be "lots more suspensions."

In this context, physical fighting is rampant and can lead to serious injuries. Focus group participants described multiple fights per week at some schools—most often between girls.

*ACEs include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect, intimate partner violence, mother treated violently, substance misuse within household, household mental illness, parental separation or divorce, and incarcerated household member.

"The drama stops people from learning."

"I don't have any negative feelings towards my school because after a while, you just zone out."

"Bad vibes everywhere! Negativity everywhere in the school building. Nobody can get along. It's always something with somebody."

"One of the positive things about my school is some of my teachers' support and tough love on the bad days."

Black or African American middle school girls who...

Ever carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club

20.1%

Were ever in a physical fight

68.2%

Have been afraid of being beaten up at school one or more times during the 12 months before completing the survey

13.0%

FIGURE 7: **DC Middle School YRBS Results for Black Girls, 2017**

Black or African American high school girls who...

Ever carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club

13.5%

Were in a physical fight

33.1%

Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school during the 30 days before completing the survey

8.3%
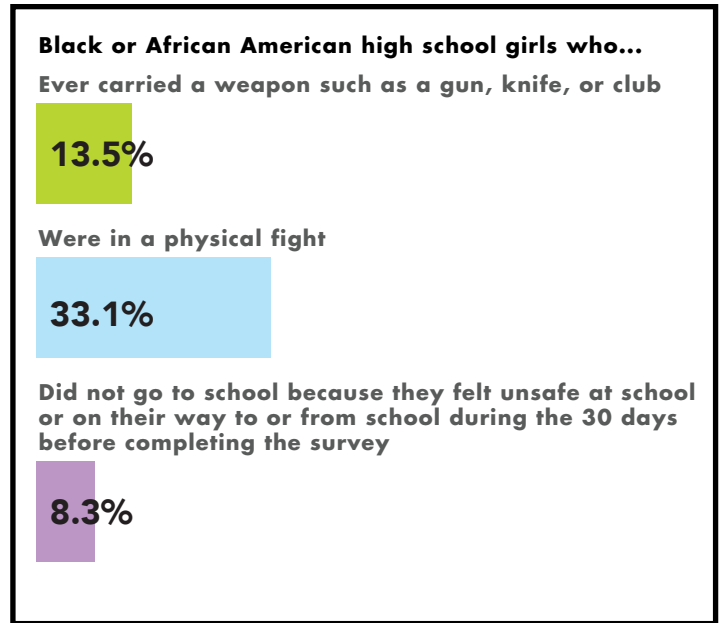
FIGURE 8: **DC High School YRBS Results for Black Girls, 2017**

"The teachers are always talking about 'you have to respect them.' You have to respect me if you want respect."

Participants' description of fighting in their schools is consistent with the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) results for DC students (see Table 5, p. 29). Nearly 13% of black middle school girls reported that they had been afraid of being beaten up at school one or more times during the 12 months before completing the survey; and 8% of black high school girls did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school during the 30 days before completing the survey. Moreover, 20% of black middle school girls reported that they had carried a weapon, and 68% had been in a physical fight. Almost 14% of black high school girls had carried a weapon, and 33% had been in a physical fight at least once during the 12 months before completing the survey. The difference between middle and high school rates of fighting is also consistent with general decreases in the prevalence of physical fighting with age.[12]

We did not have access to YRBS data disaggregated by ward or by school. But based on participants' responses, it would be reasonable to assume that DC-wide averages understate the intensity of the problem in the schools our focus group participants attended—given that these schools have the highest suspension rates and that fighting is the most frequently stated cause for suspension.[13]

In this unhealthy environment, students can neither concentrate on their school work nor feel safe. Disconnection from school is a predictable consequence of the potential for daily conflict and violence and belief that little can or will be done by the schools to stop it.

CHALLENGES
OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL
WEIGH HEAVILY ON GIRLS

Home environments can directly affect children's ability to succeed in school.[14] For more than 20,000 children living in poverty in Wards 7 and 8, resources that are essential for their healthy growth and development are scarce or unavailable. Instead, these children experience housing instability, food insecurity, and the stress of day-to-day living below the poverty line.

Our focus group participants felt that their schools either did not fully understand the impact that their struggles at home had on their ability to function in school or were unable to respond appropriately or effectively.

Rather than seeing school staff as a potential source of support, some focus group participants stated that they did not trust school staff to keep things they told them about problems at home confidential. Some stated that they would not confide in their teachers because they did not want their families to be referred to Child Protective Services.*

Girls face a unique obstacle in that they are often required to assume adult or parental responsibilities at home, including getting siblings ready for school, preparing family meals, supervising younger siblings, and acting as parents for adults who are ill or unable to shoulder parental responsibilities. This "parentification" of girls is a consequence of poverty, especially for single-parent households.[15] Not surprisingly, focus group participants cited numerous examples of their own or friends' experiences.

Focus group participants also described at least three ways their adult responsibilities interfere with their schooling: they have less time to study, caretaking often makes them late for school or makes them unable to attend school, and they cannot participate in after-school programs or enrichment activities that have been shown to improve educational outcomes for all students. Most importantly, they experience chronic stress, which has both short- and long-term negative consequences.

For pregnant and parenting girls, the struggle is even more daunting. Despite significant reductions in teen births across the nation and in DC, dramatic differences persist in the number of teen births across wards in the District. Extensive research on teen pregnancy has documented the correlation between higher teen and unintended birth rates, a range of negative health outcomes, and community disadvantage.[16] This pattern certainly holds for the District.

During focus group discussions, young mothers who were still in school talked about both psychological and material challenges. They are burdened by parenthood in ways that boys are not. They feel disrespected and judged by school staff and other adults in their communities, including strangers they encounter on the street. They also discussed the effects that coping with financial insecurity and child-rearing have on their continued progress in school. On the one hand, having a baby motivates them to finish high school because they want a better life for their children. At the same time, raising a child makes getting to school and focusing on schoolwork more difficult.

As mandated reporters, teachers are legally required to report observed or suspected abuse to Child Protective Services.

> "We tell our counselor our problems. She says, 'Okay, I'll see what I can do' and ends up not doing anything."

> "She says, 'Y'all never come to school.' But she doesn't know what is really going on at home. She sent my mother to court because my mom had a job, and my sister had to stay home to take care of the baby."

> "It's hard because my mother works, and I have to babysit. It's so irritating having to babysit every day."

WARD 3

15.4%

WARD 7

81.5%

WARD 8

80.4%

FIGURE 9: **Children under age 18 who live with their own single parent, 2016**

WARD 3

1

WARD 7

131

WARD 8

150
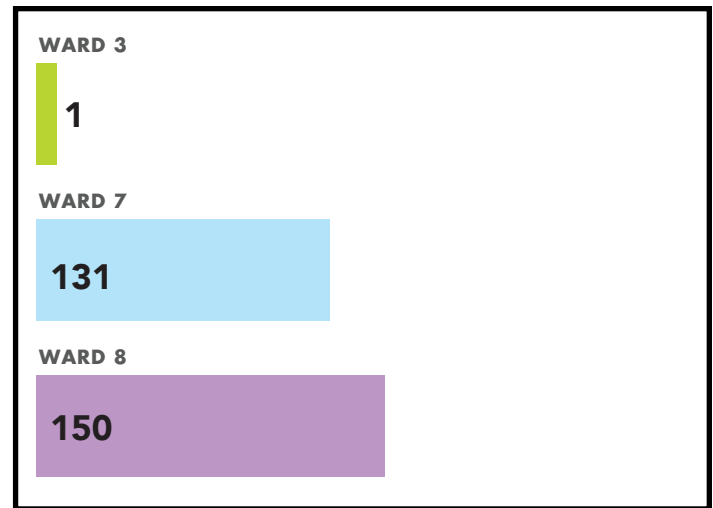
FIGURE 10: **Births to mothers under 19, 2015**

"I was getting straight As. Now that I have my son, I don't have a 4.0 anymore."

"It's difficult to admit to your family that you have a mental health problem. You can't turn to your family and look to them as a 'safe space,' because they don't understand."

The young mothers singled out two major challenges: finding stable housing and quality daycare. In the neighborhoods where our participants lived, affordable housing is scarce. They also reported that teen mothers can become homeless when family conflict forces them to find a new place to live. Last, they described being unable to attend school regularly because they could not find suitable daycare for their children.

Participants in the first-generation college students' group reported that family responsibilities continued to be a challenge even after they went to college.

First-generation group members also agreed that a gap in understanding exists between them and family members who did not go to college.

The gap becomes especially problematic when family members don't understand their high levels of stress and need for mental health services.

UNSAFE AND DISRESPECTED
IN SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY

Sexual harassment of black girls in schools "is often more public, more violent, and inflicts longer-term damage than that of their non-black peers."[17] Focus group participants experienced sexual harassment both inside and outside their schools. They described being called names and touched without their consent. They also felt that the adults in their schools did not take their complaints seriously and would not help them. In fact, they said that the opposite was true: they were punished for standing up for themselves.

Harassment begins before they enter the school building; but on the way to school, the perpetrators are often men rather than boys.

More than 18,000 Ward 7 and 8 children and youth live in the communities with the highest rates of violent crime.[18] In describing their concerns about their communities, the girls in our focus groups specifically cited gun violence. They talked about their fears walking to and from school past locations where people had been shot, described hearing gunshots all night, and reported seeing people with weapons in their neighborhoods. Although their tone was matter-of-fact, they acknowledged the danger posed because, as one participant said, "Bullets don't have names on them."

Put Down

Girls are subjected to daily put-downs from both students and adults regarding their physical appearance, dress, and sexual behavior. They are painfully aware that their bodies are routinely examined and evaluated by others; and if a girl has a certain type of body, her peers and adults assume that she is sexually active.

This mistreatment of black girls and young women is deeply rooted in negative racial and gender stereotypes that have existed since slavery. Many of the contemporary images of black girls and women that are propagated by the media focus on sexuality.[19]

From the youngest to the oldest, our focus group participants described the profoundly negative stereotypes that they had heard used to describe black girls.

"Male teachers see boys touching girls, but they don't do anything about it. But when a girl slaps the boy, she gets in trouble."

"What if you go to school by yourself and you have to walk through a whole crowd of men. They're saying, 'Come here, little this or that.' I keep walking, and one of them starts following me. I don't want to run because he could chase me. Why can't we have school buses?"

WARD 3
74

WARD 7
978

WARD 8
925

FIGURE 11: **Recorded incidents of violent crimes, 2017**

"Two people were shot in the same spot I walk past every day on my way to school."

When girls perceive peers, teachers, and other adults to hold and routinely express negative, gender-biased views, their academic performance suffers.[20] When faced with a negative school environment, as well as low or negative teacher expectations, the result may be emotional distancing, heightened levels of stress and anxiety, depression, and school disengagement.[21]

The implicit biases that are driven by these stereotypes not only affect how boys and men behave but also how adults respond to black girls' victimization.[22] Because black girls are viewed as being "less innocent," "in less need of protection," and "more sexually and physically aggressive," they are thought to "bring sexual harassment upon themselves."[23] The Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality's study on how adults view black girls concluded that these views help explain disproportionate discipline.[24] We agree and believe the same is true for adults' responses to sexual harassment.

Boys Get More Respect

In sharp contrast, at least one girl in every focus group said "boys get more respect," and other girls agreed. The girls mentioned special programs that have been created for boys and opportunities that boys are given that they do not receive.

Participants voiced their concerns regarding the disproportionate emphasis that schools placed on the needs and interests of boys and used athletics as one example. They said their interest in athletics was not taken seriously. One girl said that a teacher told her, "You just want to be around boys; you aren't really interested in sports." In addition, girls are not provided equal resources for athletics. According to one participant, at her school, "The boys' basketball team has three coaches, and we have a part-time coach." Another said, "This school has boys' track, but not girls' track." This differential treatment not only violates federal law, it also prevents girls from obtaining athletic scholarships.

The implicit message the girls receive is that girls matter less and that their educational opportunities matter less. The net impact is yet another reason to disconnect from school. Absent the active engagement of a caring adult, there is little to counter this devaluing message.

"You might as well say boys have a whole floor for just them, and they go on field trips. What do girls get?"

"Boys are treated differently than us because they have a lot of programs. We've never had anything like that for girls."

HIGH ABSENTEEISM, DISCRIMINATORY DISCIPLINE, LOW ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

In terms of educational outcomes, the confluence of neighborhood effects, school environment, and home environment creates a perfect storm. In their responses to our questions, focus group participants described how each of these come together to produce high absenteeism, discriminatory discipline, and DC schools' lowest levels of academic achievement.

Chronic Absenteeism

Absenteeism is extremely high in DC schools. During the 2016–2017 school year, almost 25% of DC students ages 5 to 18* were truant, meaning that they accumulated ten or more unexcused absences during the school year (see Table 6, p. 29). Nearly 27% of all compulsory-age students were chronically absent, i.e., absent— for both excused and unexcused reasons—for more than 10% of instructional days.[25] The educational significance is profound: chronic absenteeism is one of the most reliable indicators of academic risk in that missing 10% of school days can negatively affect test scores, reduce academic growth, and increase the chances a student will drop out.[26]

As troubling as the citywide averages are, they mask tremendous differences between schools and wards. In addition, average truancy rates for high school students are much higher, at 49.5% District-wide. Not surprisingly, for all but one of the application high schools,** rates of truancy are well below the 49.5% 2016–2017 average for grades 9 to 12. Truancy rates for four other selective high schools range from less than 5% for School Without Walls High School to 32% for McKinley Technology High School (see Table 7, p. 30).

All neighborhood high schools, except Coolidge High School, have truancy rates that are higher than 49.5%. The truancy rates for Wards 7 and 8 high schools are 37 to 41 points above the average truancy rate. The chronic absenteeism rates for Wards 7 and 8 neighborhood high schools are 31 to 35 points above the average for black students in grades 9 to 12.[27] The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)*** *2016–2017 Attendance Report* data**** also showed statistically significant increases in both chronic absenteeism and truancy from 2015–2016.[28]

WARD 3	
56.3%	

WARD 7	
90.5%	

WARD 8	
88.3%	

Source: OSSE, 2016-2017 Attendance Report, Appendix A

FIGURE 12: **Average Truancy Rates for Neighborhood High Schools by Ward, 2016-2017**

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* The DC Attendance Clarification Act of 2016 requires all public and charter schools to report attendance for all compulsory-age students, ages 5 and 18.

** Selective or "application" high schools admit students based on specific criteria or eligibility requirements. Any student who is eligible to enroll in grades 9 to 12 can apply, but these schools only admit students who meet their requirements. Currently, the DC public school system has six selective or "application" high schools: Banneker High School; Columbia Heights Education Campus; Ellington School of the Arts; McKinley Technology High School; Phelps Architecture, Construction, and Engineering High School; and School Without Walls High School. Students have a guaranteed right to enroll in all other high schools, known as neighborhood schools, if they live within the boundaries for those schools.

*** The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) oversees both DC public schools and charter schools, ranging from preschool through adult education.

**** The OSSE report does not include gender-disaggregated data for schools. It does note, however, that the difference between girls' and boys' chronic absence rates (27.0% and 27.7%, respectively) is less than 1%.

We asked focus group participants a simple question: "Why don't girls come to school?" Their forthright answers make it clear that high absenteeism results from a complex interplay of school, inside-school, and outside-school factors.

Pushed Out

That girls of color are being "pushed out" of schools is indisputable. In the United States, the suspension rate for girls of color (4%) was nearly three times the rate for white girls (1.4%) during the 2015–2016 school year. In the District, the suspension rate for all girls of color was 5.9%, for black girls 7.0%, and for white girls 0.3%.[29]

Still, the District average obscures tremendous variation not only by race but also by place. Simply put: girls who attend high schools in Wards 7 and 8 have far higher suspension rates than girls at other DC high schools, including schools in other wards that are also predominately black (see Table 8, p. 30). Middle school suspension rates are higher than high school rates, and the rates for girls attending Wards 7 and 8 middle schools range from 21% to 37% (see Table 9, p. 31). Moreover, these reported suspension rates do not include illegal "send homes" where students are excluded from school without formal suspensions.[30]

Our focus group participants argued that girls are frequently suspended for trivial reasons, that the rules regarding suspensions are applied capriciously, and that girls are treated differently than boys.

Our participants' responses and DC school data are consistent with the findings of multiple national and local studies on discriminatory discipline. Our participants' experiences mirror the key observations in Kimberlé Crenshaw's national study of "pushout."[31] Also, the National Women's Law Center's *Dress Coded: Black Girls, Bodies, and Bias in D.C. Schools* found the same link between school policies and practices regarding girls' dress and discriminatory discipline.[32]

Schools' intent may be to create an atmosphere conducive to learning by imposing discipline and order, but the result can be quite different. Suspension does not improve the subsequent school behavior of students whose bad behavior is the result of trauma, and may even exacerbate their anger.[33] According to OSSE's *School Year 2016–17 Discipline Report*, the average unexcused absence rate for students before their first out-of-school suspension was 43.2% but grew to 53.1% after being suspended. This is fully in keeping with research that found that suspension increases detachment from school. Moreover, the findings of a study on the relationship between racial differences in discipline—the "punishment gap"—and the academic achievement gap support the "proposition that school discipline is a major source of the racial achievement gap and educational reproduction of inequality."[34]

Low Academic Achievement

Disparities in academic achievement are among the most potent and persistent causes of inequality in this country. Researchers have posited multiple explanations: social and economic inequities outside of school play an important role, as does de facto school segregation.[35] In this context, the District must still contend with systemic inequities in the American education system caused by decisions made a century ago.

For the girls who attend schools in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage, academic outcomes remain poor despite modest but steady improvements.[36] The standardized method the District uses to measure academic achievement is the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) score. The English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA) exam assesses students' real-world skills such as communication, teamwork, critical thinking, analytical writing, and problem-solving. The test grades students on a five-point scale: Level 1 "did not yet meet expectations," Level 2 "partially met expectations," Level 3 "approached expectations," Level 4 "met expectations," and Level 5 "met or exceeded expectations."

Level 3 is the minimum "passing" score. Students who performed at Levels 4 and 5 have demonstrated readiness for promotion to the next grade level or college and career. A score of Level 1 or 2 is essentially a failing grade.

The disparities in PARCC ELA scores for African American or black girls in the District are stunning (see Tables 10, p. 31, and 11, p. 32). On the 2016–2017 test, nearly 35% of black girls at Banneker High School "exceeded expectations" and 86% "met or exceeded expectations." In sharp contrast, none of the black girls at the four neighborhood high schools in Wards 5, 7, and 8 "exceeded expectations." Only 7% to 15% "met expectations," and 69% to 81% did not pass the exam. More than half of Ward 7 and 8 black girls in the eighth grade did not pass the ELA exam, with 57% to 84% of girls scoring at Levels 1 and 2.

UNITED STATES
8%[*]

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
7%[*]

WARD 7
23%[**]

WARD 8
25%[**]

[*] 2015-2016 Suspension Rates for Girls by Race/Ethnicity and State
[**] 2015-2016 High School Equity Reports

FIGURE 13: **Suspension Rates for Black Girls**

"They suspend people for petty reasons. Somebody could curse out a teacher. They won't get suspended. But if you're not in class and you're walking in the hallway, you can get two or three days suspension. You don't have a pass, two or three days. You are late for lunch. How are you going to be late for lunch?"

Anacostia High School	27.50%
Ballou High School	21.20%
Dunbar High School	16.10%
Woodson High School	15.20%
Eastern High School	11.20%
Roosevelt High School	10.60%
McKinley Technology High School	8.50%
Coolidge High School	5.20%
Phelps High School	3.20%
Ellington School of the Arts	3.00%
Wilson High School	2.00%
Banneker High School	0.30%
School Without Walls High School	0.00%

WARD 1
WARD 2
WARD 3
WARD 4
WARD 5
WARD 6
WARD 7
WARD 8

FIGURE 14: **Suspension Rates for Girls Attending DC High Schools, 2016-2017**

FIGURE 15: **Suspension Rates for Girls Attending Middle Schools and Education Campuses, 2016-2017**

School	Rate	Ward
Kramer Middle School	36.7%	Ward 8
Jefferson Middle School Academy	29.2%	Ward 6
Johnson Middle School	27.7%	Ward 8
Kelly Miller Middle School	25.5%	Ward 7
Hart Middle School	25.1%	Ward 8
Sousa Middle School	20.9%	Ward 7
Brookland Middle School	20.5%	Ward 6
Eliot Hine Middle School	18.4%	Ward 6
McKinley Middle School	14.0%	Ward 5
Walker-Jones Education Campus	7.7%	Ward 6
Stuart-Hobson Middle School	6.2%	Ward 6
Takoma Education Campus	5.5%	Ward 4
Hardy Middle School	4.7%	Ward 2
Brightwood Education Campus	3.9%	Ward 4
LaSalle-Backus Education Campus	3.9%	Ward 4
Wheatley Education Campus	3.5%	Ward 5
Deal Middle School	1.9%	Ward 3
Browne Education Campus	1.3%	Ward 5
Raymond Education Campus	1.3%	Ward 4
School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens	1.3%	Ward 2
West Education Campus	1.3%	Ward 4
Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan	1.0%	Ward 6
Truesdell Education Campus	0.6%	Ward 4
Whittier Education Campus	0.6%	Ward 4
Oyster-Adams Bilingual School	0.0%	

Neither the truancy rates nor the test scores are consistent with graduation rates for schools with both high rates of chronic absenteeism and low test scores (see Table 12, p. 32). In November 2017, National Public Radio (NPR) reported that Ballou High School promoted and graduated students despite poor academic outcomes.[37] Mayor Bowser immediately called for an investigation that subsequently concluded that Ballou students received passing grades despite having unexcused absences in violation of DCPS policy and that teachers were pressured to provide opportunities to students with excessive absences.[38] In a response to the NPR story, a former DCPS teacher called it a "culture of passing" that is endemic not only at Ballou but at other schools and school systems as well.[39]

This culture of passing, however well-intentioned, sends all the wrong messages to students and results in graduating some who are woefully unprepared for either college or work. For example: in one Crittenton group with eleven members, their December 2017 report cards showed that:

• One eleventh-grade participant and two twelfth-graders were reading at a third-grade level.

• Another twelfth-grade participant was reading at the first-grade level.

• Eight had more than ten days of unexcused absences, and five had more than twenty days.

• Seven had a cumulative grade point average of less than 1.8.

And yet, of the four reading at the third- or first-grade level, three graduated and one was promoted to the next grade. One of the graduates is now a freshman at a four-year college.

"We must be smart because they keep passing us."

Sadly, given the PARCC scores for Wards 7 and 8 schools, the data from this group of Crittenton girls suggests that the same may be true for other students who have graduated from these schools. While the District's graduation rates have risen, graduation is not enough if students lack the basic tools to successfully complete college.[40] Acceptance to college is meaningless if high school does not prepare the student for the rigors of college. Earning a family-sustaining wage may be even more difficult if the graduate cannot read above an eighth-grade level.

The net result, especially for girls, is greater risk for economic and social marginalization and multigenerational poverty.

Graduation is not enough if students lack the basic tools to successfully complete college.
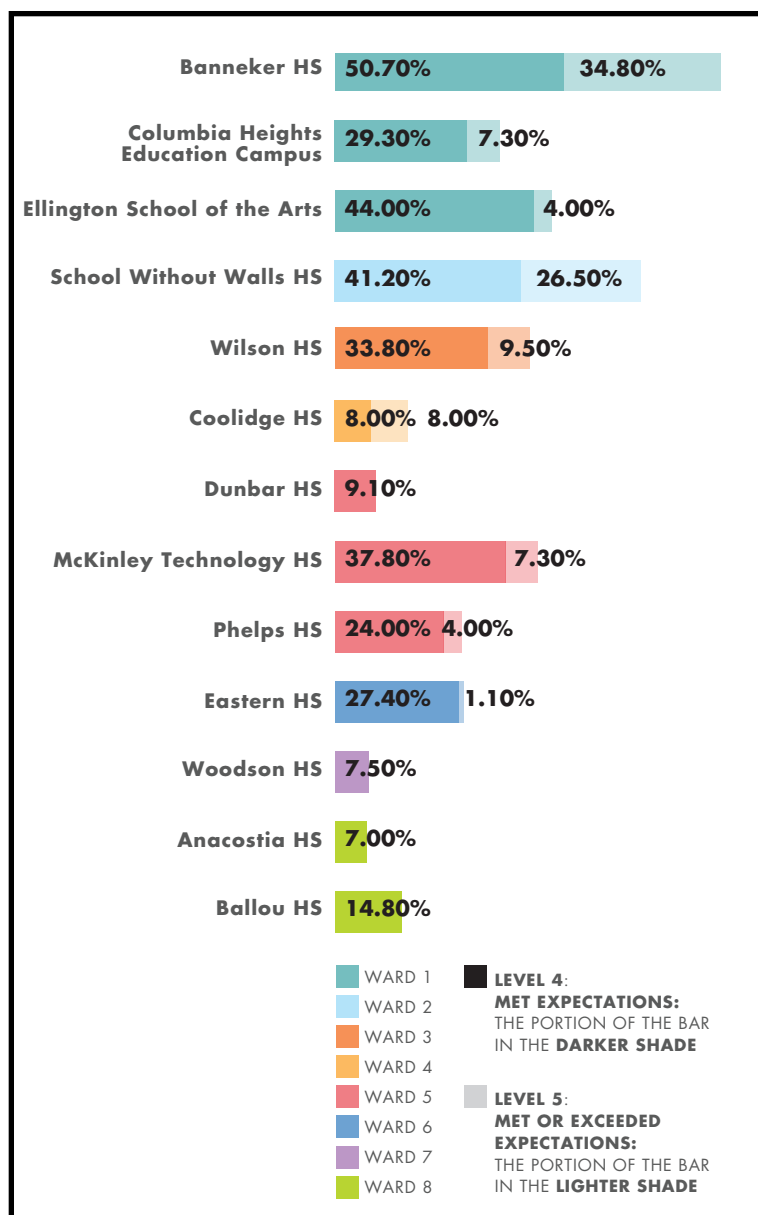
FIGURE 16: **Percentage of Black 9th to 12th grade girls who were ready for college or promotion to the next grade, 2016-2017**
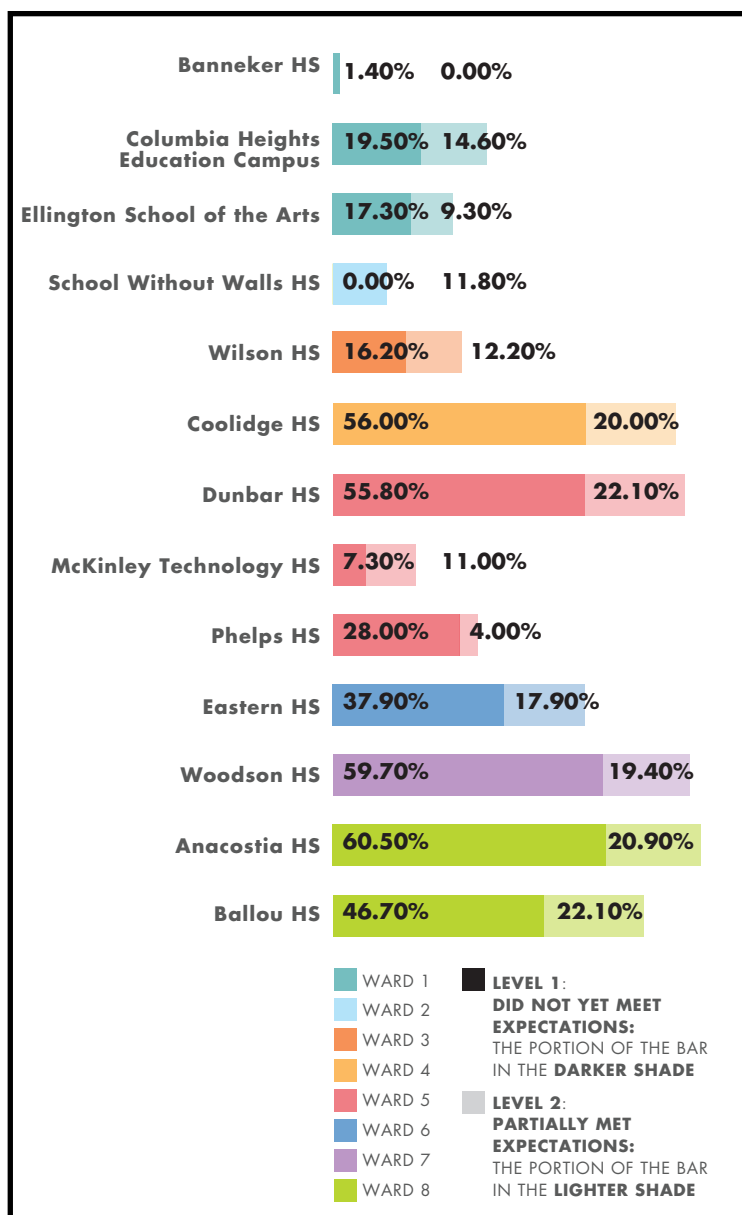
FIGURE 17: **Percentage of Black 9th to 12th grade girls who were not ready for college or promotion to the next grade, 2016-2017**
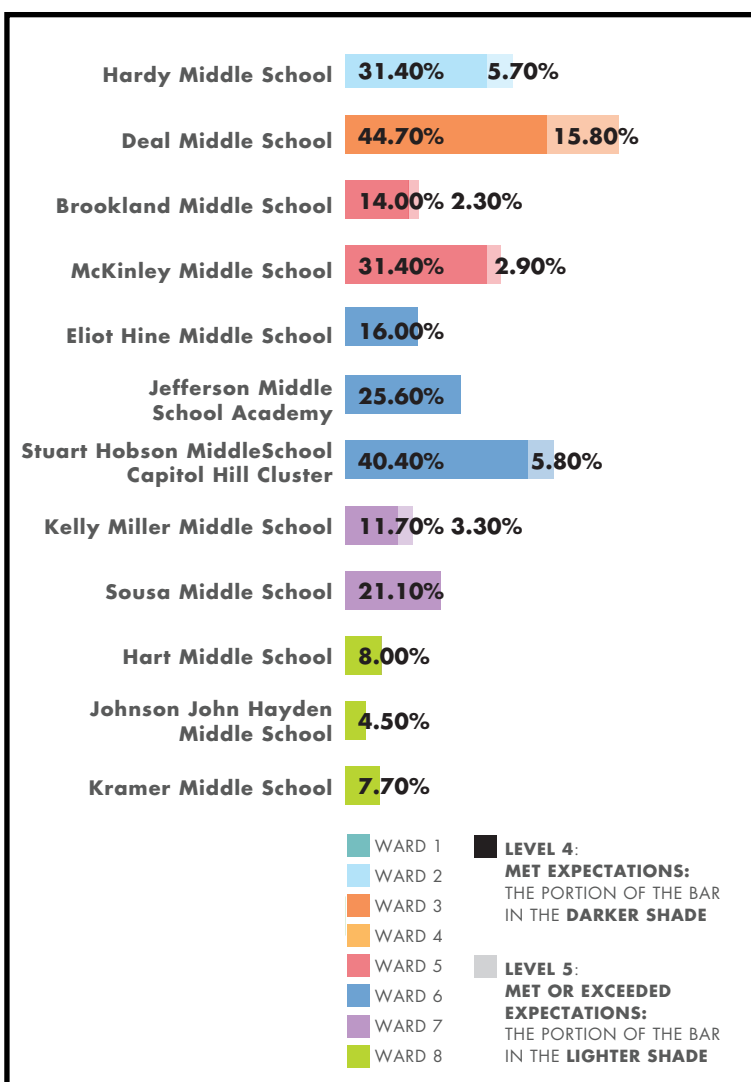
FIGURE 18: **Percentage of Black 8th grade girls who were ready for promotion to the next grade, 2016-2017**

Hardy Middle School — 31.40% 5.70%
Deal Middle School — 44.70% 15.80%
Brookland Middle School — 14.00% 2.30%
McKinley Middle School — 31.40% 2.90%
Eliot Hine Middle School — 16.00%
Jefferson Middle School Academy — 25.60%
Stuart Hobson MiddleSchool Capitol Hill Cluster — 40.40% 5.80%
Kelly Miller Middle School — 11.70% 3.30%
Sousa Middle School — 21.10%
Hart Middle School — 8.00%
Johnson John Hayden Middle School — 4.50%
Kramer Middle School — 7.70%

WARD 1
WARD 2
WARD 3
WARD 4
WARD 5
WARD 6
WARD 7
WARD 8

LEVEL 4: **MET EXPECTATIONS:** THE PORTION OF THE BAR IN THE **DARKER SHADE**

LEVEL 5: **MET OR EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS:** THE PORTION OF THE BAR IN THE **LIGHTER SHADE**

FIGURE 19: **Percentage of Black 8th grade girls who were not ready for promotion to the next grade, 2016-2017**

Hardy Middle School — 2.90% 20.00%
Deal Middle School — 6.60% 13.20%
Brookland Middle School — 34.90% 18.60%
McKinley Middle School — 11.40% 25.70%
Eliot Hine Middle School — 20.00% 24.00%
Jefferson Middle School Academy — 18.60% 37.20%
Stuart Hobson Middle School Capitol Hill Cluster — 13.50% 13.50%
Kelly Miller Middle School — 23.30% 33.30%
Sousa Middle School — 44.70% 23.70%
Hart Middle School — 38.00% 36.00%
Johnson John Hayden Middle School — 54.50% 29.50%
Kramer Middle School — 50.00% 19.20%

WARD 1
WARD 2
WARD 3
WARD 4
WARD 5
WARD 6
WARD 7
WARD 8

LEVEL 1: **DID NOT YET MEET EXPECTATIONS:** THE PORTION OF THE BAR IN THE **DARKER SHADE**

LEVEL 2: **PARTIALLY MET EXPECTATIONS:** THE PORTION OF THE BAR IN THE **LIGHTER SHADE**

School	Rate
Anacostia High School	55.9%
Roosevelt High School	57.7%
Ballou High School	67.9%
Coolidge High School	68.3%
Dunbar High School	81.0%
Woodson High School	82.8%
Eastern High School	84.0%
Wilson High School	92.3%
Ellington School of the Arts	98.9%
Banneker High School	100.0%
McKinley TechnologyHigh School	100.0%
School Without Walls High School	100.0%

WARD 1
WARD 2
WARD 3
WARD 4
WARD 5
WARD 6
WARD 7
WARD 8

FIGURE 20: **Girls' High School Graduation Rates, 2017**

All children need schools that are safe, supportive, engaging, and challenging to reach their full potential.

THE PATH GOING FORWARD

Our research examined the extent to which teen girls attending schools in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage are getting what they need to succeed academically and personally. The inescapable conclusion is that far too many girls are attending schools that do not provide safe and supportive environments that are conducive to learning. Poor academic outcomes are the result of the complex interplay of school, inside-school, and outside-school challenges.

The barriers to success that the girls face—both inside and outside of school—are certainly daunting, but not insurmountable. District leaders and schools have taken promising steps that demonstrate their commitment to removing barriers. Mayor Bowser's "Every Day Counts!" attendance initiative*and the DCPS contract with CASEL, the country's leading expert on school-based social and emotional learning interventions, are two examples.**

Moreover, the City Council has increased funding for "at-risk students"—defined as students living in foster care, experiencing homelessness, overage for their grade, or receiving SNAP or TANF—to enable low-income students to have the same kinds of enriching opportunities and services as their higher-income peers. The intent is to help schools provide supplemental resources and expand important services for the students who need them most.

More than 40% of DC students are considered "at-risk."[41]

This section summarizes our recommendations for additional measures that can make schools places where girls can feel safe, be safe, and learn by providing teachers and students the resources and support they need.

We have developed these recommendations as a point of departure for ongoing discussion and collaboration with stakeholders to co-create evidence-informed solutions that will address the needs of the whole school and the whole child.

1. Implement whole-school, whole-child, evidence-based interventions that will lead to healthier and more nurturing school environments.

Experience has demonstrated that schools can effectively adopt evidence-based programs in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage, particularly, in schools with "at-risk" students, low test scores, and high rates of absenteeism, suspensions, and expulsions.

The most effective approach is a combination of evidence-based school climate and social and emotional learning (SEL) interventions because each contributes to the attainment of the other. A positive school climate creates the conditions for social and emotional learning, and the social and emotional competence of school community members affects school climate.[42]

SEL begins with training adults. The best way to help children develop social emotional competence is by interaction with teachers and other caring adults who model the competencies through their own behaviors and teaching practices. Despite the importance of social and emotional skills, a recent CASEL study of teacher training programs found that few focus on these essential skills.[43] Once adults understand and internalize SEL skills, they are able to transfer those skills to students.

2. Reduce suspensions and expulsions by addressing the root causes of "push out."

There is no evidence that removing misbehaving students from the classroom improves either school safety or student behavior. To the contrary, suspensions and expulsions can increase detachment from school, deprive students of much-needed classroom time, and become the first step toward the school-to-prison pipeline.

- School discipline reforms are a necessary but insufficient means of curbing "push out." But if students and teachers do not receive resources and support, then suspensions and expulsions will continue "off the record" in both blatant and subtle ways.
- Implicit bias training ensures that application of discipline is not discriminatory.[44] New York City, for example, has committed $23 million over the next four years to provide anti-bias education to the city's teachers.[45]
- Discipline policies such as dress codes disproportionately target and punish black girls.[46]

Some challenges will be addressed through implementation of the recommended school climate and SEL interventions, but more is needed to help students whose behavior problems are driven by the impact of trauma and behavioral health problems.

- To that end, schools should become trauma-informed, beginning with training school staff to recognize signs of trauma and mental illness.[47]
- Schools can partner with sister agencies such as those addressing behavioral health to ensure that students have access to appropriate, culturally competent treatment through the presence of a sufficient number of school-based mental health professionals in schools with the greatest need.
- With adequate funding, schools can employ ACEs screening and screening for chronic exposure to environmental stressors to identify and assist at-risk students.
- Pregnancy and parenting make it especially difficult for girls to engage fully in school. Pregnant and parenting students require both home-based and in-school support and access to stable housing and quality day care.

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* In August 2017, Mayor Muriel Bowser launched "Every Day Counts!"—a citywide initiative to highlight the importance of school attendance and its impact on student achievement and promote investment in helping students and families overcome obstacles to attendance.

**According to a contract posted on its website, DCPS has contracted with CASEL to "provide support, training, and guidance in developing and executing a plan for systemic implementation of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) during the 2018–2019 school year."

The foregoing steps require substantial investment to strengthen the capacity of schools and their partners to support students who require intensive, tailored support.[48] School officials and administrators must inform the community and legislatures of the need for these programs and the substantial return on investment resulting from their implementation.

3. Develop "early warning systems" and systematically use the data to identify students in need of an array of supports.

No girl should graduate from high school reading at the third-grade level, nor should there be shocking disparities of achievement in different geographical areas of a school system.

Schools require an early warning system (EWS) to identify students in need of targeted support well before they enter high school. An effective EWS gathers data to identify students who are "off track" academically or who are in danger of going off track. EWS data is most effective when shared with stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, counselors, nonprofit partners, parents, and students, and when it is shared with policymakers and the public disaggregated by race and ethnicity, gender, family income, school, and geographical location.

Early warning indicators are symptoms of deeper problems. Hence, identifying off-track students is only the first step.

- Knowing that a student is off track is not the same as knowing why the student is struggling. An EWS program, for example, allows schools to work with students and parents to identify the underlying cause of absenteeism and to develop individualized plans for frequently absent students.

- It is imperative that individualized plans to reduce both academic and attendance problems include targeted supports that will address the many ways that "life outside of school" affects school performance.[51]

- The ultimate goal of these programs is to substitute the "culture of passing" for one that sets high expectations, has minimal standards of literacy for promotion and graduation, and provides every child the encouragement, support, and resources needed to succeed.

4. Proactively address sexual harassment and the demeaning of black girls in schools.

Legal prohibitions against sexual harassment and protections for victims already exist, but are effective only if schools apply these protections consistently and fairly to protect female students from sexual harassment and gender-based violence.

- Law and policy changes are not sufficient to put an end to harassment. All too often, the emphasis has been on teaching girls how to protect themselves—sometimes in a manner that blames the victim—rather than on changing the behaviors of boys and men.

- The conversation about harassment and gender-based violence still takes place primarily among women. But to end harassment in schools, it is imperative to teach boys about consent and that harassment is totally unacceptable behavior. Schools can work with their nonprofit partners to deliver programs that teach boys about healthy relationships, healthy masculinity, and the effects of sexual harassment so that male students will not engage in harassing behaviors and can speak out when they see it happening. One such program is "Coaching Boys into Men," an evidence-based program that trains and motivates high school coaches to promote respectful behavior among their players and help prevent relationship abuse, harassment, and sexual assault.[53]

- Crittenton would welcome the opportunity to join nonprofits serving boys and to work with schools on interventions that promote dialogue between girls and boys on gender stereotypes, how they impact the lives of young people, and how young men can be allies to young women.

5. Engage girls in crafting solutions to the barriers they face.

The participants in our focus groups spoke insightfully about the challenges they face and possible solutions. They see themselves as emerging leaders who can contribute now and in the future to improve their schools and communities. Regrettably, their voices have largely been absent from discussions regarding education reform.

If the achievement gap is to be closed, students—including girls such as those who participated in our focus groups—have much to offer and should be heard. Hence, our final recommendation is to ensure that girls' voices are heard through active participation in discussions on educational reform. They are the "experts" on their own experience and can offer invaluable information, not only on problems but also on possible solutions.

Some jurisdictions have made youth engagement an explicit goal of their school reform initiatives. The most successful of these efforts found that it was necessary to intentionally connect youth engagement to broader systemic goals, including improving academic achievement, climate, culture, and personalization of the learning environment. Youth in these communities clearly demonstrated that they benefitted academically from engagement and that they were able to contribute to educational change.[54]

Oakland　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**Example**
Sexual Harassment and Girls Engagement

In 2017, the Oakland Unified School District partnered with Alliance for Girls, a nonprofit organization, to develop a policy to reduce sexual harassment in schools—with significant input from community groups and students leading the way.

The policy spells out what constitutes harassment—from unwanted leering and name-calling to spreading of sexual rumors and battery. It also designates a point person at each school to handle sexual assault and harassment; lays out the reporting process transparently for students, teachers, and parents; and requires schools to provide mental health support to accusers. Students who file complaints have a right to know what's happening throughout the process.

Last, schools must determine whether there is a systemic problem that they must then address.[52]

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> **"Powerful positive social transformation can only be achieved if led by those most impacted by the injustice and inequity that exists in any society. *Declare Equity for GIRLS: It's Time!* is a clear example of this and of the force for change of girls leading the way."**
>
> **Jeannette Pai-Espinosa,**
> **President, National Crittenton,**
> **Director, OJJDP National Girls Initiative**

TABLE 1. **Race and Ethnicity of Children under 18 by Ward, 2016**

Race/Ethnicity	DC	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5	Ward 6	Ward 7	Ward 8
American Indian/Native Alaskan	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.4%	0.8%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Asian	1.8%	3.5%	7.1%	3.8%	1.3%	1.5%	3.2%	0.1%	0.3%
Black or African American	59.7%	32.6%	7.3%	4.9%	47.2%	71.0%	47.8%	94.2%	90.7%
Hispanic or Latino	15.3%	42.1%	19.1%	16.8%	29.0%	15.2%	9.0%	4.4%	3.7%
Multiracial	5.2%	7.5%	10.2%	10.9%	5.8%	5.0%	7.3%	1.3%	0.0%
Other	7.3%	0.8%	12.7%	2.3%	18.3%	8.3%	1.6%	2.8%	2.2%
White	25.7%	38.0%	65.2%	77.7%	26.6%	13.3%	39.9%	1.6%	4.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

TABLE 2. **Demographic and Socioeconomic Data for the District of Columbia's Eight Wards**

Race/Ethnicity	DC	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5	Ward 6	Ward 7	Ward 8
Population									
Total population*	659,009	82,898	76,956	83,237	84,065	85,464	87,480	75,796	83,108
Population of Children under 18*	115,327	10,444	4,387	12,902	17,233	15,470	11,547	17,963	24,765
Race/Ethnicity									
White*	40.4%	30.1%	73.9%	77.1%	27.1%	22.0%	56.8%	2.4%	5.6%
Black*	48.3%	44.3%	8.8%	7.1%	55.3%	65.7%	34.1%	93.8%	90.9%
Hispanic*	10.5%	4.6%	0.2%	0.4%	20.3%	2.2%	4.3%	0.3%	0.4%
Asian*	36.5%	20.2%	9.2%	6.2%	0.7%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.1%
Two or More Races*	27.7%	0.1%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
American Indian/Alaska Native*	0.3%	0.1%	3.9%	1.8%	11.9%	9.2%	6.2%	2.1%	1.6%
Pacific Islander*	0.0%	8.2%	11.3%	4.0%	2.9%	4.8%	1.3%	1.1%	1.4%
Other*	4.5%	3.3%	73.9%	10.6%	2.1%	2.5%	3.1%	3.5%	2.6%
Economic Well-Being Indicators									
Median family income, 2016*	$70,991	$54,375	$182,019	$215,957	$101,869	$70,336	$136,250	$31,130	$24,749
Unemployment, 2016**	6.4%	4.5%	4.3%	4.0%	5.6%	7.7%	5.0%	10.9%	13.3%
Children receiving TANF, 2015***	28,115	1,446	1,591	32	2,408	3,400	3,832	6,811	8,594
Children applied and eligible for Medicaid/CHIP, 2017^	78,985	7,824	6,307	651	13,378	9,702	7,521	15,480	19,122
Children under 18 years living below the federal poverty level, 2016*	25.8%	24.7%	4.6%	2.9%	13.0%	18.1%	17.7%	40.9%	48.5%
Education									
Residents, ages 18 - 24, with a high school diploma or equivalent, 2016*	90.1%	92.9%	99.0%	98.3%	82.8%	92.0%	89.9%	76.2%	75.3%
Family Structure									
Births to mothers under 19 and younger, 2015^^	503	36	5	1	65	80	35	131	150
Children under age 18 who live with their own single parent, 2016*	49.9%	43.0%	13.8%	15.4%	30.4%	50.8%	37.0%	81.5%	80.4%
Families headed by a single mother, 2016*	41.0%	33.0%	12.0%	13.0%	24.0%	44.0%	30.0%	72.0%	70.0%
Safety									
Substantiated investigations of child neglect and abuse, 2016^^^	902	47	NA	NA	60	95	46	196	314
Entries and re-entries into foster care, 2015#	458	24	5	1	25	50	33	95	204
Recorded incidents of violent crimes, 2017##	4425	458	409	74	371	698	512	978	925

TABLE 3. **Student's Race and Ethnicity at Schools Serving Grades 9 to 12 by Ward, 2017-2018**

School	Total	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Multi-racial
Ward 1						
Banneker High School	482	3%	76%	18%	1%	2%
Cardozo Education Campus*	797	1%	42%	56%	1%	0%
Columbia Heights Education Campus*	1336	1%	31%	67%	0%	0%
Ward 2						
Ellington School of the Arts	537	2%	77%	11%	7%	3%
School Without Walls High School	585	6%	34%	13%	42%	5%
Ward 3						
Wilson High School	1750	7%	35%	23%	31%	4%
Ward 4						
Coolidge High School	346	0%	75%	25%	0%	0%
Roosevelt High School	668	0%	54%	45%	1%	0%
Ward 5						
Dunbar High School	584	0%	95%	4%	1%	0%
McKinley Technology High School	619	1%	87%	9%	1%	1%
Phelps Architecture, Construction & Engineering High School	328	0%	96%	4%	0%	0%
Ward 6						
Eastern High School	818	0%	97%	1%	1%	0%
Ward 7						
Woodson High School	634	0%	98%	1%	0%	0%
Ward 8						
Anacostia High School	449	0%	99%	1%	0%	0%
Ballou High School	930	0%	98%	2%	0%	0%

*   Education Campus, Grades 6 to 12

Source:
DCPS School Scorecard 2017-2018

TABLE 4. **Student's Race and Ethnicity at DC Schools Serving Grades 6 to 8 by Ward, 2017-2018**

School	Enrollment	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Multi-racial	Other
Ward 2							
Hardy Middle School	374	10%	53%	17%	17%	3%	1%
School Without Walls @ Francis-Stevens	471	7%	50%	15%	22%	6%	1%
Ward 3							
Deal Middle School	1477	4%	29%	14%	47%	5%	0%
Oyster-Adams Bilingual School	674	2%	5%	58%	30%	4%	0%
Ward 4							
Brightwood Education Campus	755	1%	22%	75%	1%	0%	0%
LaSalle-Backus Education Campus	369	0%	52%	46%	1%	1%	1%
Raymond Education Campus	613	0%	33%	65%	1%	0%	0%
Takoma Education Campus	468	1%	60%	32%	5%	3%	0%
Truesdell Education Campus	679	1%	30%	66%	1%	1%	0%
West Education Campus	315	2%	53%	34%	8%	3%	0%
Whittier Education Campus	341	0%	76%	20%	1%	1%	1%
Ward 5							
Brookland Middle School	254	0%	91%	7%	2%	0%	0%
Browne Education Campus	309	0%	94%	5%	1%	0%	0%
McKinley Middle School	213	1%	92%	6%	0%	0%	0%
Wheatley Education Campus	321	0%	90%	7%	0%	2%	0%
Ward 6							
Capitol Hill Montessori School @ Logan	361	0%	60%	3%	30%	6%	0%
Eliot-Hine Middle School	200	0%	93%	4%	2%	3%	0%
Jefferson Middle School Academy	305	1%	95%	2%	1%	1%	0%
Stuart-Hobson Middle School	431	0%	84%	3%	11%	1%	0%
Walker-Jones Education Campus	451	1%	93%	5%	1%	0%	0%
Ward 7							
Kelly Miller Middle School	449	0%	96%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Sousa Middle School	255	0%	98%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Ward 8							
Hart Middle School	349	0%	99%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Johnson Middle School	252	0%	95%	4%	0%	1%	0%
Kramer Middle School	193	0%	98%	2%	0%	0%	0%

Source:
DCPS School Scorecard 2017-2018

TABLE 5. **2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results for District of Columbia Female Students**

YRBS Questions	Asian	Black	Hispanic/Latino	White	All Other Races	Multiple Races
Middle School Survey: Percentage of students who ...						
QN10. Ever carried a weapon	-	20.1%	19.6%	11.9%	-	25.6%
QN11. Were ever in a physical fight	-	68.2%	40.9%	18.1%	-	61.6%
QN12. Were ever bullied on school property	-	35.9%	38.0%	41.8%	-	44.7%
QN13. Were ever electronically bullied	-	16.8%	20.0%	19.9%	-	20.3%
QN53. Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to/from school	-	17.2%	19.3%	5.0%	-	14.0%
QN54. Have been afraid of being beaten up at school	-	13.0%	20.3%	15.4%	-	16.8%
QN56. Experienced physical dating violence	-	9.1%	10.7%	5.4%	-	7.0%
QN57. Have ever bullied someone else on school property	-	16.6%	16.7%	5.8%	-	15.8%
High School Survey: Percentage of students who ...						
QN12. Carried a weapon	4.5%	13.5%	12.5%	3.5%	-	16.3%
QN15. Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to school	6.2%	8.3%	12.4%	3.6%	-	11.9%
QN16. Were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property	4.5%	6.5%	8.3%	2.4%	-	9.3%
QN17. Were in a physical fight	4.5%	33.1%	20.4%	5.5%	-	31.3%
QN18. Were in a physical fight on school property	2.7%	17.3%	7.9%	1.5%	-	18.2%
QN19. Were ever physically forced to have sexual intercourse	4.5%	9.1%	12.1%	4.5%	-	9.0%
QN22. Experienced physical dating violence	-	14.4%	15.0%	3.8%	-	15.4%
QN23. Were ever bullied on school property	12.8%	10.7%	14.6%	14.0%	-	13.1%
QN24. Were ever electronically bullied	11.8%	8.4%	13.2%	13.9%	-	13.2%

Source:
2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results

TABLE 6. **Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism Rates for 9th to 12th Grade DC Students, 2016-2017**

Ward	School	Truant	Chronically Absent
Ward 2	School Without Walls High School	4.62%	29.04%
Ward 1	Banneker High School	5.82%	14.76%
Ward 1	Ellington School of the Arts	29.55%	37.31%
Ward 5	McKinley Technology High School	32.21%	36.23%
Ward 4	Coolidge High School	43.68%	51.32%
Ward 3	Wilson High School	56.30%	65.01%
Ward 5	Dunbar High School	70.51%	89.42%
Ward 6	Eastern High School	73.77%	73.41%
Ward 4	Roosevelt High School	74.27%	70.91%
Ward 5	Phelps Architecture Construction & Engineering High School	79.62%	74.92%
Ward 8	Anacostia High School	86.46%	91.83%
Ward 8	Ballou High School	90.19%	87.83%
Ward 7	Woodson High School	90.51%	90.82%

Source:
OSSE, 2016-2017 Attendance Report, Appendix A

TABLE 7. **Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism Rates for Middle School and Education Campus Students, 2016-2017**

Ward	School	Truant	Chronically Absent
Ward 2	Hardy Middle School	0.25%	13.05%
Ward 3	Oyster-Adams Bilingual School	1.86%	5.83%
Ward 3	Deal Middle School	5.17%	10.07%
Ward 6	Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan	7.79%	10.44%
Ward 6	Stuart-Hobson Middle School	8.05%	18.79%
Ward 4	Raymond Education Campus	8.19%	10.47%
Ward 4	Truesdell Education Campus	10.38%	17.90%
Ward 4	West Education Campus	13.01%	19.39%
Ward 2	School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens	13.15%	19.88%
Ward 6	Eliot Hine Middle School	13.22%	22.91%
Ward 4	LaSalle-Backus Education Campus	14.13%	30.68%
Ward 5	Browne Education Campus	16.21%	23.97%
Ward 4	Brightwood Education Campus	16.22%	18.65%
Ward 4	Whittier Education Campus	17.85%	24.35%
Ward 4	Takoma Education Campus	20.33%	31.30%
Ward 8	Kramer Middle School	20.66%	28.93%
Ward 8	Hart Middle School	22.56%	31.33%
Ward 5	Wheatley Education Campus	28.53%	37.86%
Ward 5	Brookland Middle School	31.88%	27.54%
Ward 6	Jefferson Middle School Academy	32.71%	39.25%
Ward 6	Walker-Jones Education Campus	45.05%	37.32%
Ward 7	Sousa Middle School	47.37%	36.14%
Ward 8	Johnson Middle School	53.92%	44.03%
Ward 7	Kelly Miller Middle School	54.74%	41.49%
Ward 5	McKinley Middle School	56.45%	39.11%

Source:
OSSE, 2016-2017 Attendance Report, Appendix A

TABLE 8. **Suspension Rates for Girls Attending DC High Schools, 2016-2017**

Ward	School	Rate
Ward 8	Anacostia High School	27.5%
Ward 8	Ballou High School	21.2%
Ward 5	Dunbar High School	16.1%
Ward 7	Woodson High School	15.2%
Ward 6	Eastern High School	11.2%
Ward 4	Roosevelt High School	10.6%
Ward 5	McKinley Technology High School	8.5%
Ward 4	Coolidge High School	5.2%
Ward 5	Phelps Architecture Construction & Engineering High School	3.2%
Ward 2	Ellington School of the Arts	3.0%
Ward 3	Wilson High School	2.0%
Ward 1	Banneker High School	0.3%
Ward 2	School Without Walls High School	0.0%

Source:
OSSE, 2016-2017 School Equity Reports

TABLE 9. **Suspension Rates for Girls Attending Middle Schools and Education Campuses, 2016-2017**

Ward	School	Rate
Ward 8	Kramer Middle School	36.7%
Ward 6	Jefferson Middle School Academy	29.2%
Ward 8	Johnson Middle School	27.7%
Ward 7	Kelly Miller Middle School	25.5%
Ward 8	Hart Middle School	25.1%
Ward 7	Sousa Middle School	20.9%
Ward 5	Brookland Middle School	20.5%
Ward 6	Eliot Hine Middle School	18.4%
Ward 5	McKinley Middle School	14.0%
Ward 6	Walker-Jones Education Campus	7.7%
Ward 6	Stuart-Hobson Middle School	6.2%
Ward 4	Takoma Education Campus	5.5%
Ward 2	Hardy Middle School	4.7%
Ward 4	Brightwood Education Campus	3.9%
Ward 4	LaSalle-Backus Education Campus	3.9%
Ward 5	Wheatley Education Campus	3.5%
Ward 3	Deal Middle School	1.9%
Ward 5	Browne Education Campus	1.3%
Ward 4	Raymond Education Campus	1.3%
Ward 2	School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens	1.3%
Ward 4	West Education Campus	1.3%
Ward 6	Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan	1.0%
Ward 4	Truesdell Education Campus	0.6%
Ward 4	Whittier Education Campus	0.6%
Ward 3	Oyster-Adams Bilingual School	0.0%

Source:
OSSE, 2016-2017 Attendance Report, Appendix A

> "With the right attention and supports, girls and young women across the DC Metropolitan Area continue to scale the formidable barriers of gender discrimination, racism, and income inequality. Crittenton Services of Greater Washington's partnership with young women is essential in translating their priorities into policies and programs that meaningfully expand opportunity."
>
> **Mary Bissell, Partner, ChildFocus**

TABLE 10. **PARCC ELA SCORES FOR 9TH TO 12TH GRADE BLACK GIRLS, 2017-2018**

Ward	School Name	Percent Level 1	Percent Level 2	Percent Level 3	Percent Level 4	Percent Level 5
Ward 1	Banneker High School	1.4%	0.0%	13.0%	50.7%	34.8%
Ward 1	Columbia Heights Education Campus	19.5%	14.6%	29.3%	29.3%	7.3%
Ward 1	Ellington School of the Arts	17.3%	9.3%	25.3%	44.0%	4.0%
Ward 2	School Without Walls High School	0.0%	11.8%	20.6%	41.2%	26.5%
Ward 3	Wilson High School	16.2%	12.2%	28.4%	33.8%	9.5%
Ward 4	Coolidge High School	56.0%	20.0%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%
Ward 5	Dunbar High School	55.8%	22.1%	13.0%	9.1%	0.0%
Ward 5	McKinley Technology High School	7.3%	11.0%	36.6%	37.8%	7.3%
Ward 5	Phelps Architecture Construction and Engineering High School	28.0%	4.0%	40.0%	24.0%	4.0%
Ward 6	Eastern High School	37.9%	17.9%	15.8%	27.4%	1.1%
Ward 7	Woodson High School	59.7%	19.4%	13.4%	7.5%	0.0%
Ward 8	Anacostia High School	60.5%	20.9%	11.6%	7.0%	0.0%
Ward 8	Ballou High School	46.7%	22.1%	16.4%	14.8%	0.0%

Source:
DCPS School Scorecard 2017-2018

TABLE 11. **PARCC ELA Scores for 8th Grade Black Girls, 2017-2018**

Ward	School Name	Percent Level 1	Percent Level 2	Percent Level 3	Percent Level 4	Percent Level 5
Ward 2	Hardy Middle School	2.9%	20.0%	40.0%	31.4%	5.7%
Ward 3	Deal Middle School	6.6%	13.2%	19.7%	44.7%	15.8%
Ward 5	Brookland Middle School	34.9%	18.6%	30.2%	14.0%	2.3%
Ward 5	McKinley Middle School	11.4%	25.7%	28.6%	31.4%	2.9%
Ward 6	Eliot Hine Middle School	20.0%	24.0%	40.0%	16.0%	0.0%
Ward 6	Jefferson Middle School Academy	18.6%	37.2%	18.6%	25.6%	0.0%
Ward 6	Stuart Hobson Middle School Capitol Hill Cluster	13.5%	13.5%	26.9%	40.4%	5.8%
Ward 7	Kelly Miller Middle School	23.3%	33.3%	28.3%	11.7%	3.3%
Ward 7	Sousa Middle School	44.7%	23.7%	10.5%	21.1%	0.0%
Ward 8	Hart Middle School	38.0%	36.0%	18.0%	8.0%	0.0%
Ward 8	Johnson John Hayden Middle School	54.5%	29.5%	11.4%	4.5%	0.0%
Ward 8	Kramer Middle School	50.0%	19.2%	23.1%	7.7%	0.0%

Source:
DCPS School Scorecard 2017-2018

TABLE 12. **Girls' High School Graduation Rates, 2017**

Ward	School	Rate
Ward 8	Anacostia High School	55.9%
Ward 4	Roosevelt High School	57.7%
Ward 8	Ballou High School	67.9%
Ward 4	Coolidge High School	68.3%
Ward 5	Dunbar High School	81.0%
Ward 7	Woodson High School	82.8%
Ward 6	Eastern High School	84.0%
Ward 3	Wilson High School	92.3%
Ward 1	Ellington School of the Arts	98.9%
Ward 1	Banneker High School	100.0%
Ward 5	McKinley Technology High School	100.0%
Ward 2	School Without Walls High School	100.0%
Ward 6	Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan	1.0%
Ward 4	Truesdell Education Campus	0.6%
Ward 4	Whittier Education Campus	0.6%
Ward 3	Oyster-Adams Bilingual School	0.0%

Source:
OSSE, 2016-2017 School Equity Reports

Focus Group Participants

Seventy-one girls and young women participated in eight focus groups held in May, June, and July 2017. Crittenton program team members facilitated sessions that lasted 120 to 150 minutes. The groups were comprised of girls and young women who were participants in, or alumnae of, Crittenton programs and those who were not.

All participants were black or African American and ranged in age from 12 to 24. The average age was 16. The distribution by grade was:

- 18% in the 7th grade
- 17% in the 8th grade
- 17% in the 9th grade
- 15% in the 10th grade
- 11% in the 11th grade
- 8% in the12th grade or recently graduated from high school

Another 3% were in a GED program, and 10% were first-generation college students or college graduates.

Of the middle and high school participants:

- 13% lived in Ward 5
- 25% lived in Ward 7
- 58% lived in Ward 8
- 5% lived in other DC wards or neighboring suburbs

All of the then middle or high school students, recent high school graduates, and GED students were attending, or had attended, schools in Washington, DC.

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