

The School Discipline Reform Disaster

- I. Overview
 - a. *USA Today* “[The Obama Admin Made Schools More Dangerous](#)”
 - b. *New York Daily News* “[Backsliding on School Discipline](#)”
 - c. *City Journal* “[Suspension Reform is Tormenting Schools](#)”
 - d. *US News* “[Suspension Bans Hurt Kids](#)”
 - e. *Fordham Gadfly* “[Disparate Impact for School Discipline?](#)”

- II. The “[School-to-Prison Pipeline](#)”: Testimony to US Commission on Civil Rights

- III. Headlines from across the country
 - A. Durham: [Assaults on teachers up in Durham schools. See what else is driving suspensions](#)
 - B. Charlotte: [Guns, drugs and assaults on staff rise again in CMS](#)
 - C. Baton Rouge: [Classrooms of Fear](#)
 - D. St. Paul: [St. Paul teachers threaten strike over school violence](#)
 - E. Atlanta: [DeKalb Schools continue to decline, School Climate Star ratings show](#)
 - F. Washington DC: [Some D.C. high schools are reporting only a fraction of suspensions](#)
 - G. Santa Ana: [Santa Ana teachers oppose discipline-policy rollout](#)
 - H. Fresno: [As expulsions, suspensions decrease at Fresno schools, concerns about out-of-control classrooms grow](#)
 - I. Virginia Beach: [Virginia Beach schools see a drop in suspensions. But teachers feel less safe.](#)
 - J. Denver: [Teachers Union Survey Puts Spotlight On Student Discipline Issues](#)
 - K. Des Moines: [School discipline reform stirs backlash](#)
 - L. Syracuse: [School staff feels helpless in face of threats, violence, union survey says](#)
 - M. Jackson, Mississippi: [Teacher union survey alleges unreported violence in JPS](#)
 - N. Portland: [Teachers feel classroom environment is unsafe, according to union survey](#)
 - O. Buffalo: [Teacher survey points to disruptive students, lack of discipline](#)
 - P. Omaha: ['OPS, we have a problem,' school board is told as teachers plead for help with disruptive students](#)
 - Q. Harrisburg: [Teachers appeal to district for help with in-classroom, behavioral issues](#)

- IV. Student Surveys
 - a. New York City
 - b. Seattle
 - c. Reno

- V. Teacher Surveys
 - a. Buffalo
 - b. Oklahoma City
 - c. Denver
 - d. Baton Rouge
 - e. Tampa Bay
 - f. Portland
 - g. Syracuse
 - h. Santa Ana
 - i. Madison

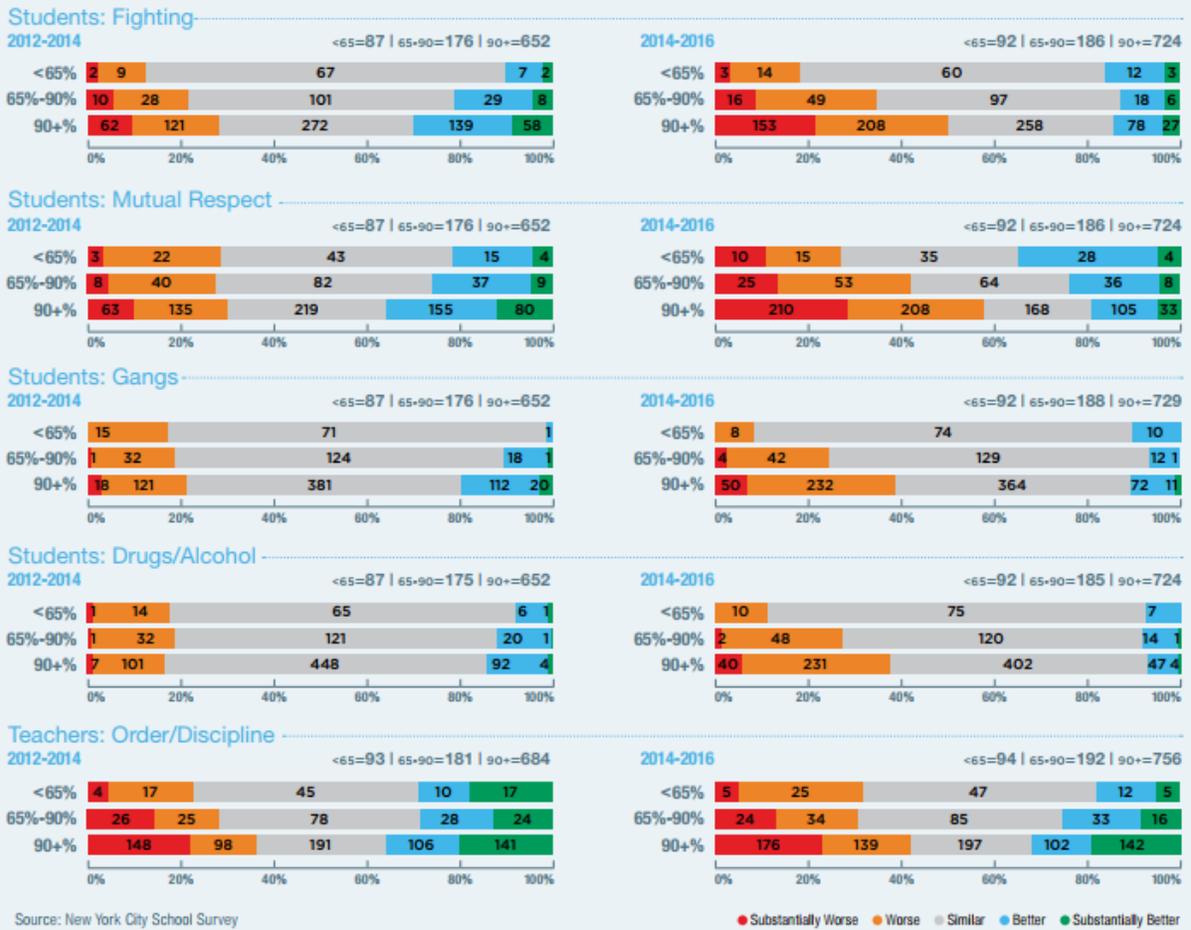
- VI. Deaths
 - a. Matthew McCree, New York City
 - b. Valeree Schwab, New Rochelle
 - c. Jovon Smith, Washington, DC

Student Surveys

The following three graphs represent changes in student answers to school climate surveys in school districts where there was a clear cut shift in discipline policy. These are the only three such datasets of which I am aware, and I have searched fairly exhaustively. The graphs are “distribution of differences,” showing changes in student answers to the same questions over time. Grey means that the percent of positive answers are within five percent from one year to the next. Orange means that the level of positive answers has decreased by 5-15 percent. Red means it decreased by 15+ percent. The first, of NYC, was published in my March 2017 report “Discipline Reform and Disorder” and breaks down the answers by racial demographics. Schools serving predominantly minority students were hit the hardest. Seattle and Reno results have not yet been published.

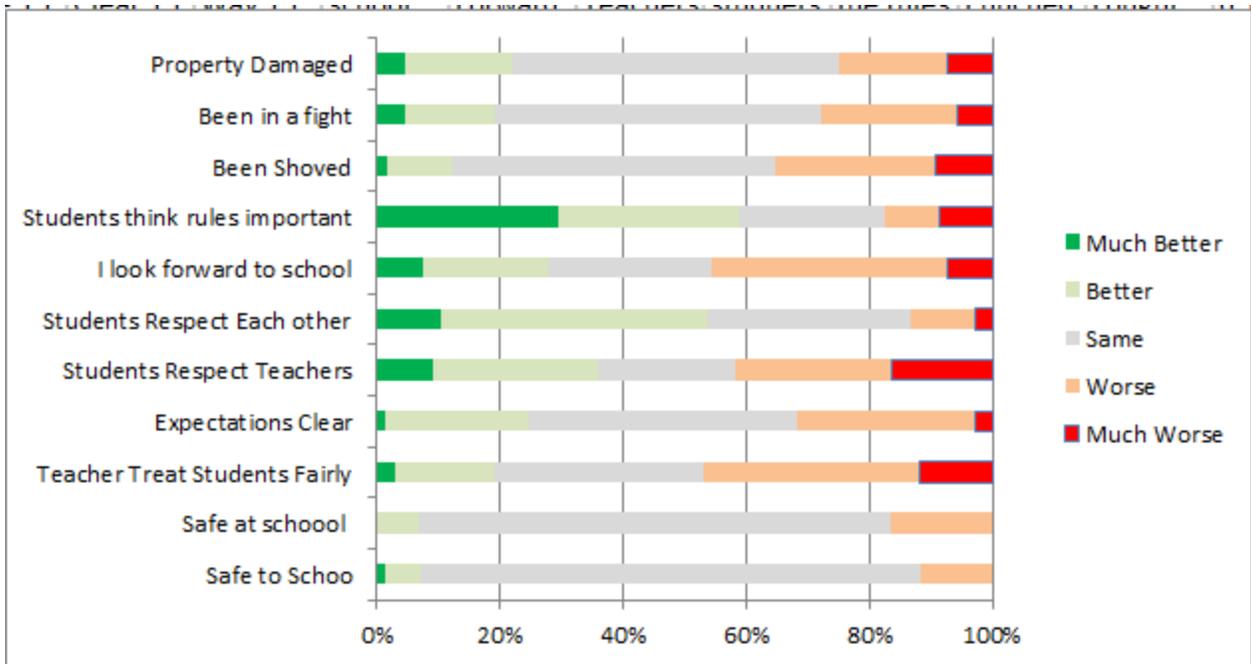
FIGURE 10.

Distribution of Differences by Percentage of Nonwhite Students, Schools, Period 1 vs. Period 2

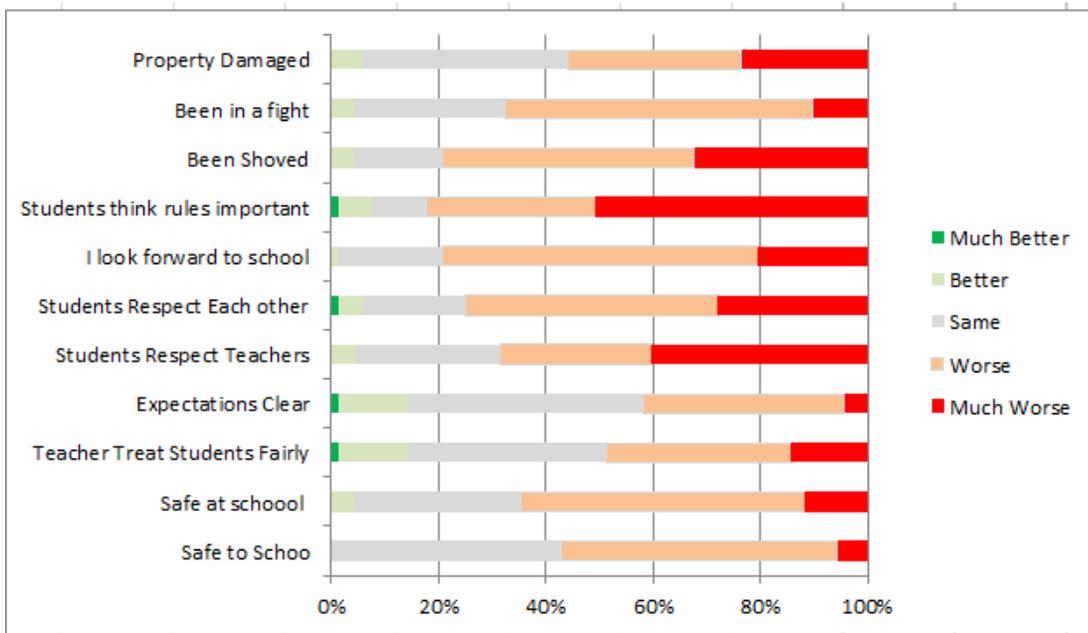


Washoe County. The discipline reform occurred in September of 2015 – so at the beginning of the 15-16 school year.

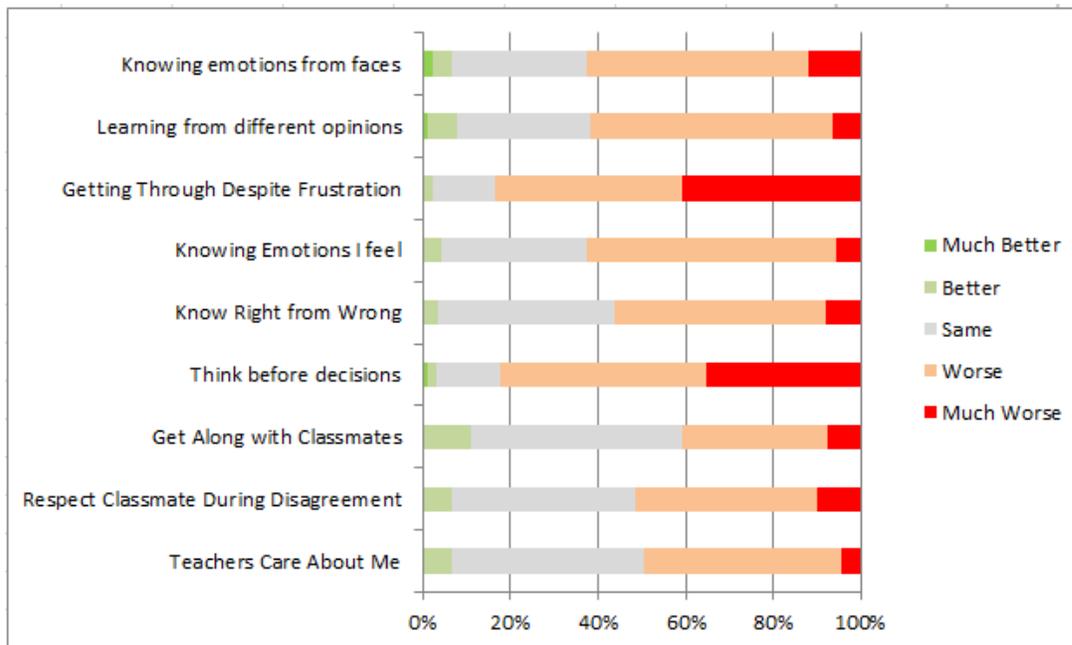
2012-13 to 2014-15



(2014-15 to 2016-17)

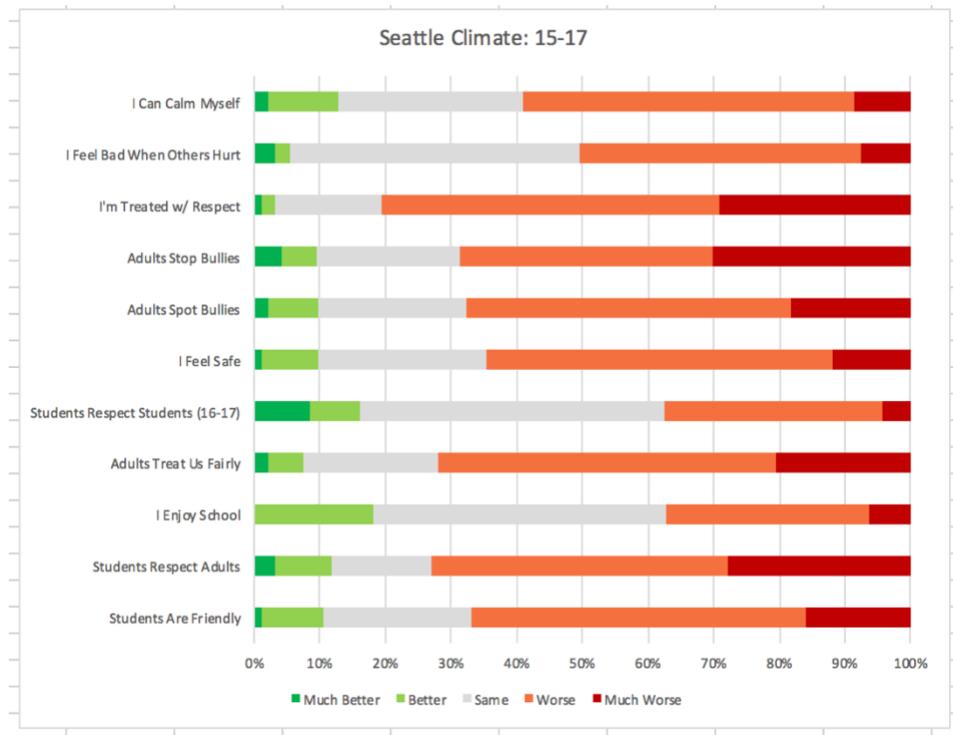


Social and Emotional skill shifts, after reform. – Dramatic deterioration



Seattle

We have no “before” data for Seattle. It has been under OCR investigation since 2013, but it announced a new initiative in 2015.



Teacher Surveys

Oklahoma City

How has the amount and frequency of offending behavior changed from last year?

57 percent say that OKCPS is declining

18 percent that it is improving.

47 percent say that behavior has gotten worse from last year

17 percent say that it has gotten better

65 percent say they need a greater enforcement of traditional discipline to be effective

11 percent say they want more implementation of “Positive” discipline.

Jackson, MI

65 percent indicated their work environment “feels out of control” on a daily or weekly basis due to student discipline issues.

45.9 percent “consider leaving their job or profession” due to student discipline issues.

61.7 percent “feel their school does not have adequate alternatives to detention, suspension, and expulsion.”

49.6 percent of respondents “feel that PBIS is not an appropriate intervention strategy to deal with student discipline.”

Buffalo, NY

9 percent of teachers say that discipline issues are handled effectively

80 percent of teachers say that their administrators systematically under-report problems

Baton Rouge

60 percent of teachers say they’ve experienced an increase in violence or threats

41 percent say they do not feel safe at work

33 percent say they’ve been physically assaulted by a student

66 percent say they’ve been verbally abused by a student.

61 percent say they've considered leaving due to disciplinary issues. Type out the key findings in that story

Madison

78 percent of teachers understand the "positive" approach to discipline

48 percent say that the "positive" approach aligns with their values

13 percent say that the "positive" approach has a positive effect on student behavior.

Denver

79 percent say it's caused a loss of planning time

60 percent say its affected their mental health

32 percent say it's hurt their personal safety

55 percent say its hurt their professional practice

Santa Ana

65 percent said the new discipline system is not working

71 percent said that the district is going in the wrong direction

Tampa Bay

65 percent said that the new policies did not improve school climate

28 percent said they feel supported by their administration when handling misbehavior

Portland

34 percent of teacher say that their school environment is unsafe.

Syracuse

66 percent of respondents said they were worried about their safety at work.

50 percent said they had been harassed on the job.

57 percent had been threatened on the job.

36 percent said they had been physically assaulted.

Deaths

Matthew McCree

Urban Assembly School for Wildlife Conservation, NYC

Matthew was [stabbed to death](#) in history class with a black switch blade by a classmate in history class. New York has been under OCR investigation for the past five years. The new leaders at Matthew's school refused to enforce basic rules, and the school declined into chaos. I've spoken with 8 teachers and 7 students, who all believe that Matthew would be alive today if basic rules had been enforced.



Valeree Schwab

New Rochelle High School

New Rochelle came under OCR investigation in January of 2016 and changed their discipline code in July of that year. Sources on the ground say that school order began to unravel that school year, and deteriorated further in the current year. When Valeree slipped off campus for lunch, she was chased and beaten by a gang, and ultimately [stabbed to death](#) with a steak knife.



Joevon Smith

Ballou High School, Washington DC

Two years ago Ballou High School received [glowing coverage](#) from the Washington Post for eschewing suspensions in favor of "Restorative Justice." According to a classmate, Joevon was beaten and [attacked with perfume and a stun gun](#) for not letting his classmates use his phone. He died three weeks later. Authorities are still investigating the cause of death, but his family believes it was due to the attack.

