

National EDHI 2022
Black Deaf Students: Language
Deprivation and Suspension

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Language Deprivation and the Discipline of Black Deaf Students

- 90% Deaf children born to hearing parents
- Language deprivation
- Deaf Schools
- Suspension
 - Effects
- Overall suspension rates with Deaf Black Students

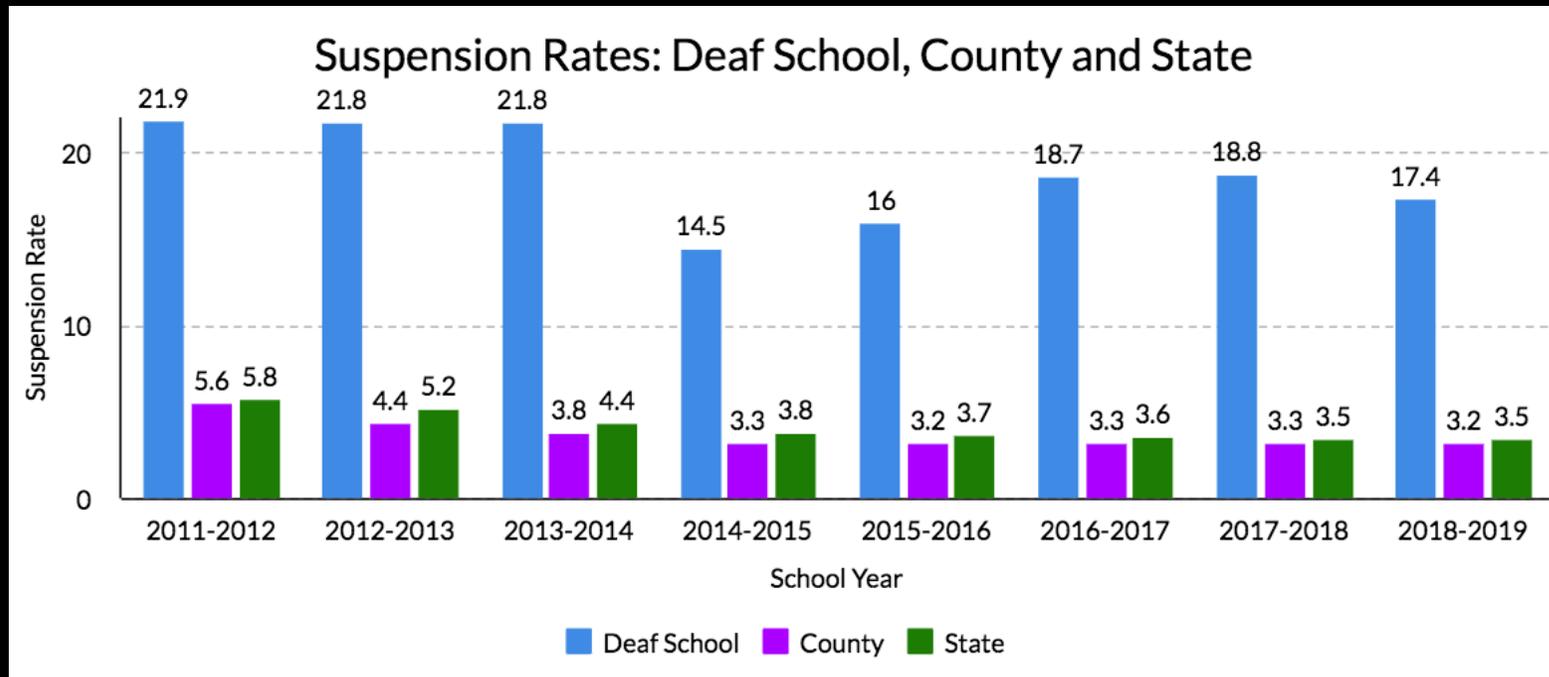
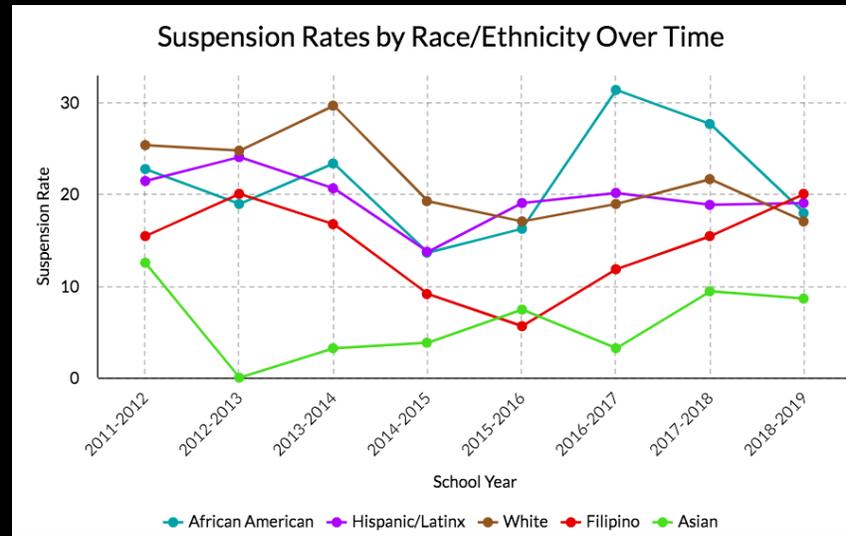


Figure 1. Compares suspension rates for the Deaf school with the average rate for all schools in the same county, and the state average. In each of the last eight years that suspension data was available, the Deaf school revealed an alarmingly high suspension rate. While the county and state averages stay between 3-6% every year, the Deaf school's lowest rate was 14.5% and the highest rate was 21.9%. Although the Deaf school seems to be trending toward lower rates in more recent years, the rates nevertheless continue to remain disconcertingly high.



As Figure 2 illustrates, Black Deaf students received some of the highest suspension rates every that discipline data is available, and these rates are especially high in the last four school years. Addressing these high suspension rates for all races/ethnicities is critical; however, the high suspension rates of Black Deaf students is of particular concern considering the compounding effects that suspensions can have on depriving Black Deaf students of the language rich classroom environment. Furthermore, suspension rates as numbers do not capture the true negative impact suspensions may have on students who carry two minority identities, both Black and Deaf (Amisshah, 2013, 2015).

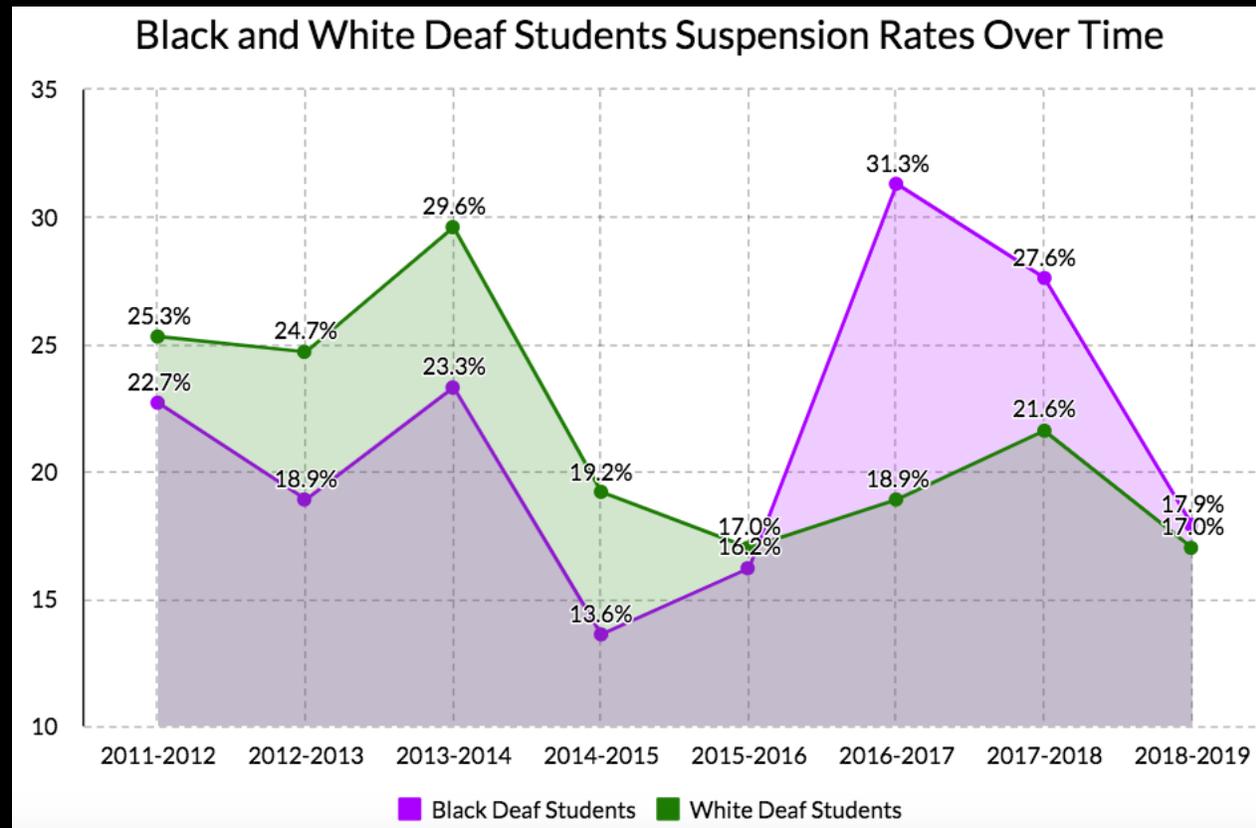
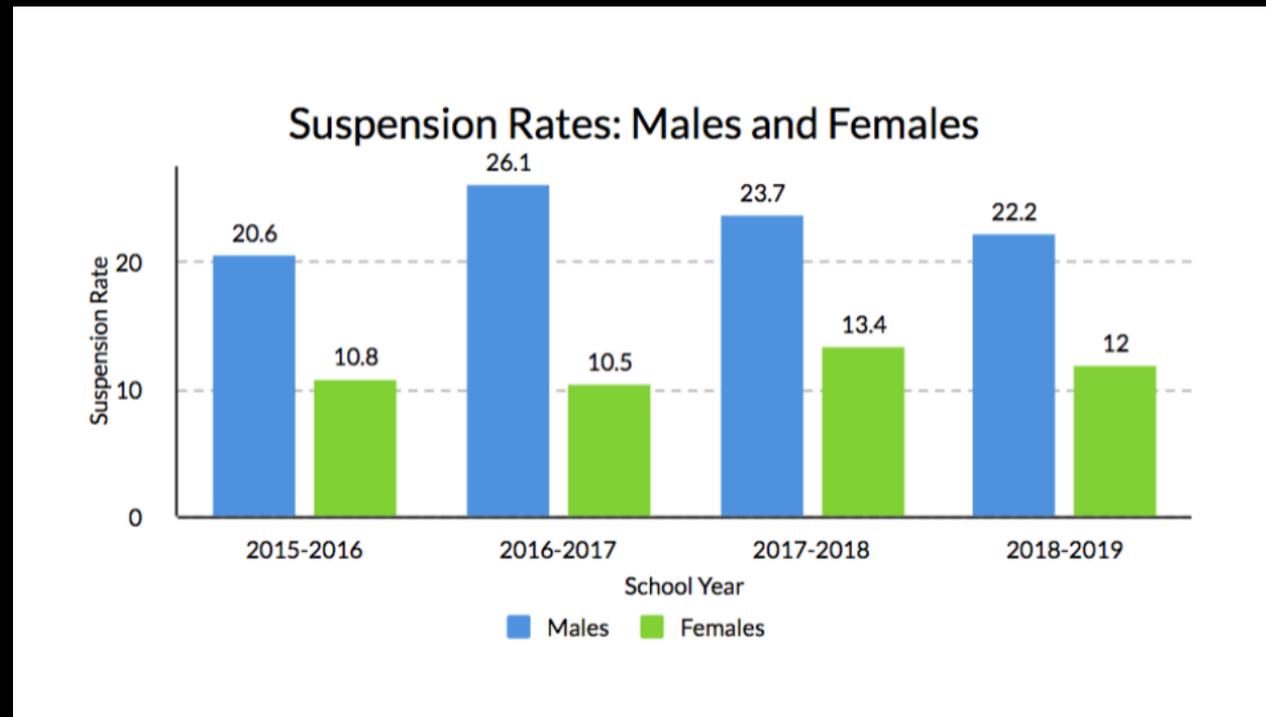


Figure 3 directly compares the suspension rates of Black and white students over time. The data reveal several important findings. First, from the 2011-2012 school year to the 2015-2016 school year, suspension rates were higher for white students than Black students. During these years, the suspension patterns for both groups followed similar trends, when the suspension rates for white students rose/dropped from the previous year, the rates also rose/dropped for Black students. Starting in the 2015-2016 school year and continuing for the next four school years, Black Deaf students received higher suspension rates than white students. Furthermore, during these years, their suspension patterns were less similar. From the 2015-2016 to the 2016-2017 school year, suspension rose slightly for white students, from 16.2% to 18.9%, while suspensions for Black students rose from 17% to 31.3%.



Our data corroborates previous research findings that males receive higher suspension rates compared to females (see Figure 4.) and that Black males specifically may be at an elevated risk of suspension compared to other males (Skiba, Michael, Nardo & Peterson, 2002; Wallace Jr, J. M., Goodkind, S., Wallace, C. M., & Bachman, 2008).

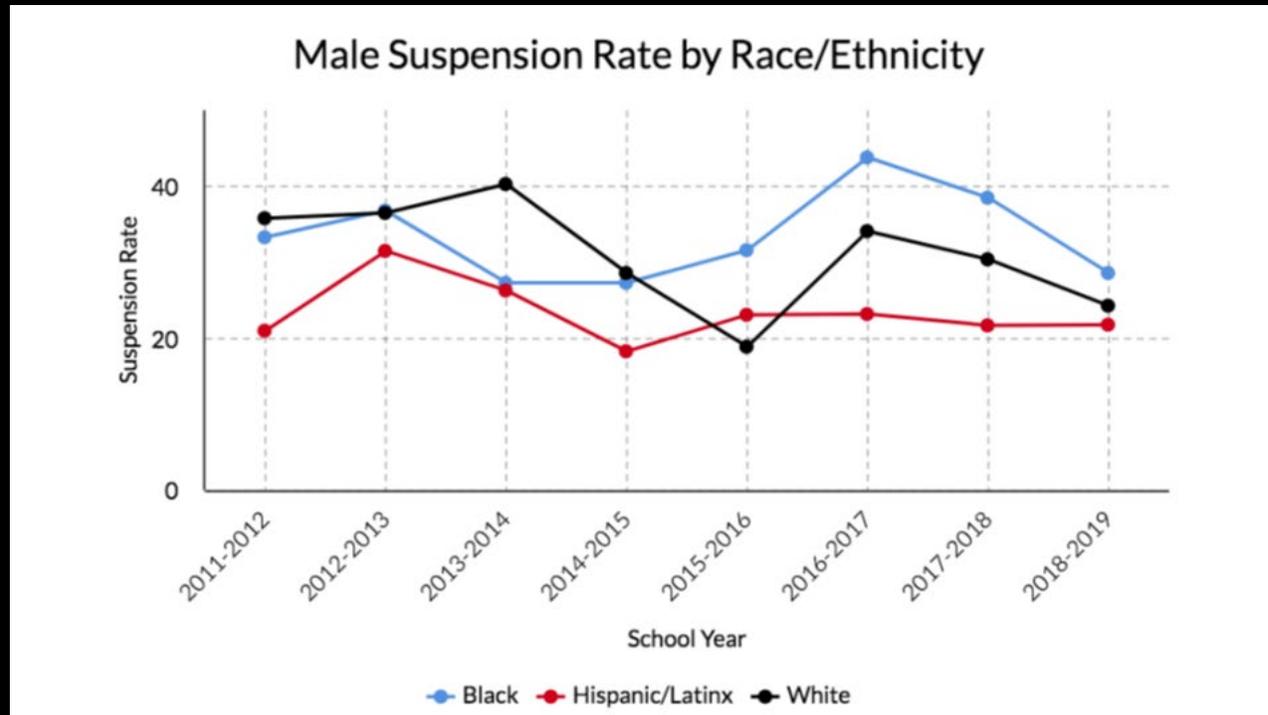


Figure 5 depicts suspension rates of males across three racial/ethnic groups for the eight school years that suspension data is provided from the Deaf school. There are two main patterns to notice. First, although suspension rates fluctuate greatly for all three groups, across the eight school years, the single highest suspension rate was for Black male students in the 2016-2017 at 43.8%. From 2011-2012 to 2014-2015 white males were suspended at higher rates than Black males; however, for the last four school years, this pattern has reversed with rates higher for Black males. Interestingly, while suspension rates for white males dropped from 2013-2016, suspensions for Black males rose. The last three school years show a downward trend for both Black and white students, but the rates continue to remain higher for Black males.

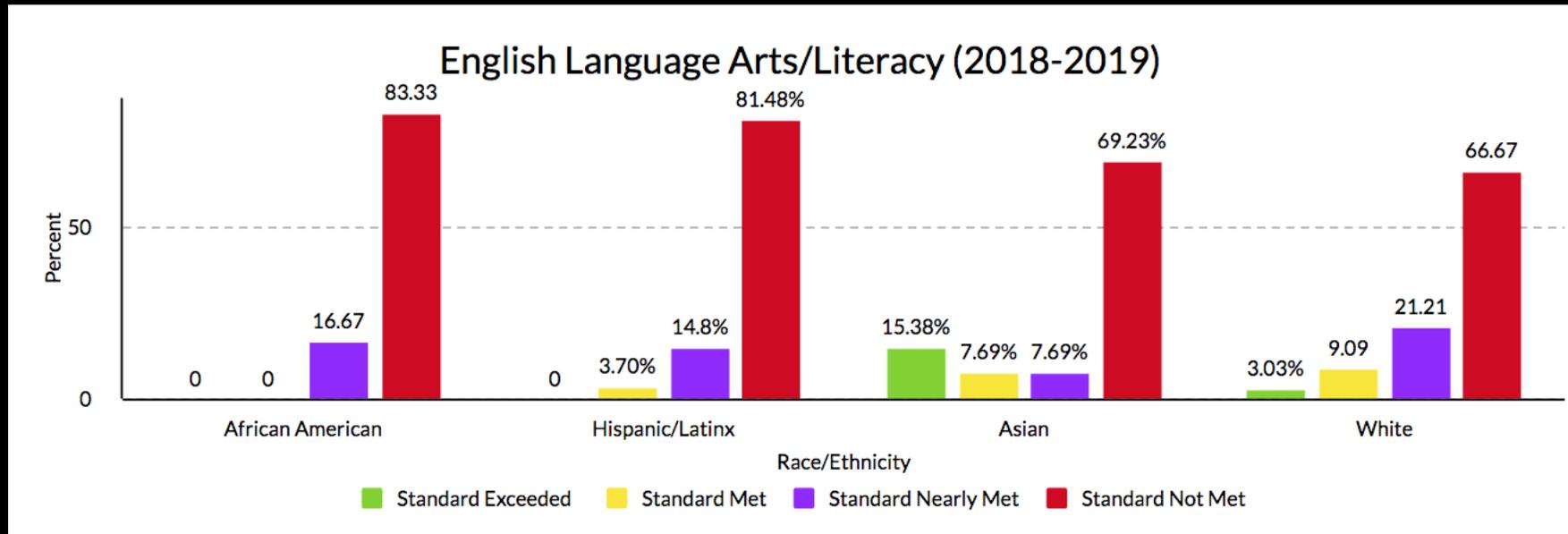


Figure 6 shows rates of English language arts/literacy achievement for Deaf students across race/ethnicities, at the same school where we collected the suspension data. In 2018-2019, 15.38% of Asian students and 3.03% of white students exceeded the standard while 7.69% of Asian students and 9.09% of white students met the standard. In comparison, zero African American students exceeded the state standard and not one African American student met the standard.

Why are the scores for Black Deaf students so low and what can we do to improve them?

- Complex Answer
- Black students are suspended at higher rates throughout grade levels, beginning in preschool
- Black Deaf students, especially males, are disproportionately miss out on the language-rich classroom environment
- If Black Deaf students are suspended at high rates throughout their school experience, then a compounding effect can take place.
- Whereas suspending a Deaf Black student once results in a short-term deprivation of the language-rich classroom, repeated suspensions over time could, cumulatively, result in a disproportionate lower amount of classroom language enrichment for Black Deaf students that negatively impact their language and academic abilities.

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