

# Sexual Violence and Sex-based Harassment or Bullying in U.S. Public Schools During the 2020-21 School Year

2020-21 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC)



U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights

## About the Civil Rights Data Collection

The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) is a mandatory survey of all public schools and school districts in the 50 states, Washington, D.C., and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. It gathers information about student access to educational programs, activities, staff, and school climate factors from public schools serving students in preschool through 12th grade. For more information about the CRDC or to download the full 2020-21 CRDC public-use data file, please visit <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE<sup>1</sup>

For the purposes of the CRDC, sexual violence includes rape or attempted rape and sexual assault (other than rape).

*During the 2020-21 school year, school districts reported ...*

2,700

Incidents of Sexual Assault

350

Incidents of Rape or Attempted Rape

<sup>1</sup>For the 2020-21 CRDC, school districts had the option of reporting the number of sexual violence incidents committed by students and the number of such incidents committed by staff. Also, reporting the number of allegations of sexual violence made against school staff was optional. School districts will be required to report these data for the 2021-22 CRDC.

## Harassment or Bullying on the Basis of Sex or Sexual Orientation

*During the 2020-21 school year, school districts nationwide reported ...*

17,000

Allegations of Harassment or Bullying on the Basis of Sex<sup>2</sup>

8,200

Allegations of Harassment or Bullying on the Basis of Sexual Orientation<sup>3</sup>

14,900

Students Reported as Being Harassed or Bullied on the Basis of Sex

20,800

Students Disciplined for Harassment or Bullying on the Basis of Sex

<sup>2</sup>For the purposes of the CRDC, harassment or bullying on the basis of sex includes sexual harassment and harassment or bullying based on sex stereotyping. Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, such as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

<sup>3</sup>For the purposes of the CRDC, harassment or bullying on the basis of sexual orientation refers to intimidation or abusive behavior toward a student based on actual or perceived sexual orientation. Harassing conduct may take many forms, including verbal acts and name-calling, as well as non-verbal behavior, such as graphic and written statements, or conduct that is physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating.

Note: The 2020-21 CRDC did not collect data on students reported as being harassed or bullied and students disciplined for harassment or bullying on the basis of sexual orientation.

FIGURE 1

### Students Reported as Being Harassed or Bullied and Students Disciplined for Harassment or Bullying by Sex

Girls were reported as being harassed or bullied on the basis of sex at a higher rate than boys. Of the students reported as being harassed or bullied on the basis of sex, 63% were girls, and 37% were boys. Boys were more often disciplined for harassment or bullying on the basis of sex. Of the students disciplined, 78% were boys, and 22% were girls.

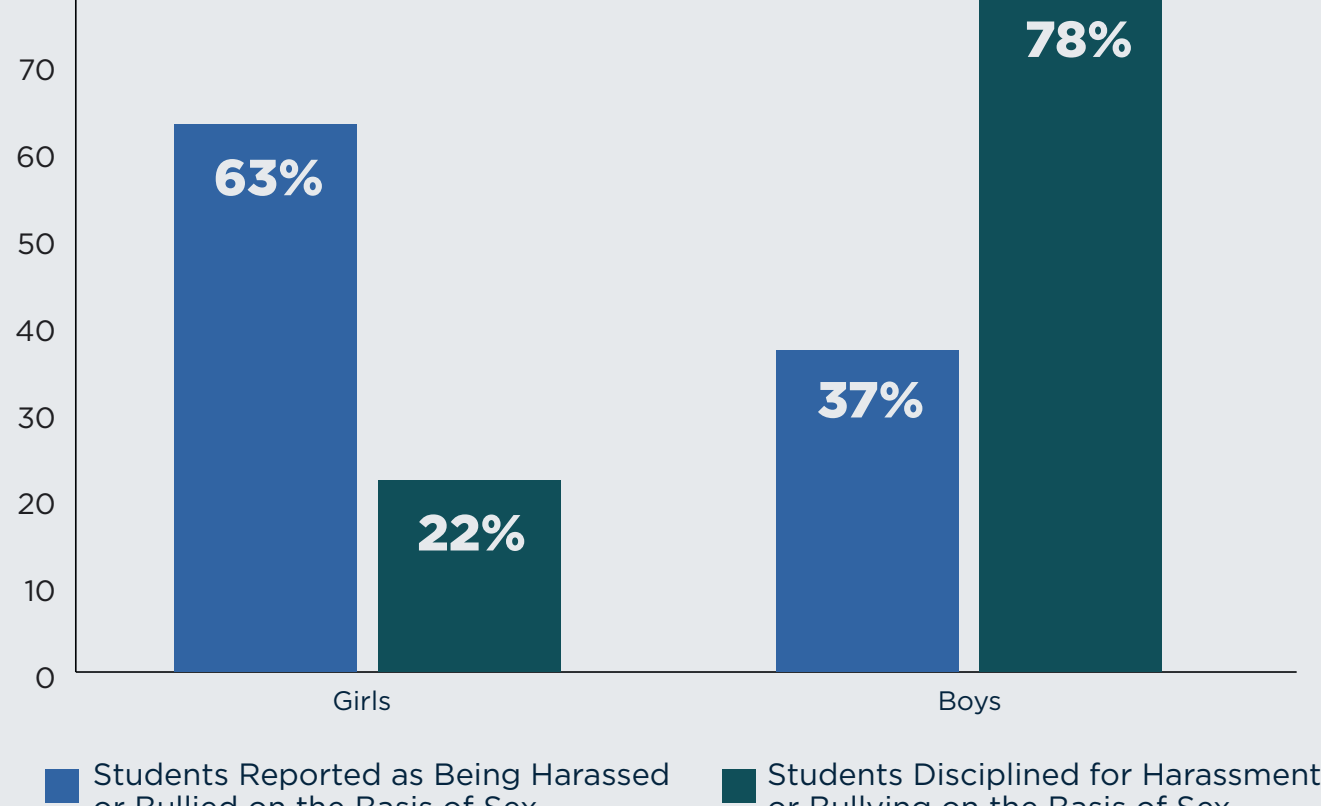


FIGURE 2

### Students Reported as Being Harassed or Bullied and Students Disciplined for Harassment or Bullying by Sex and Race/Ethnicity

	Hispanic or Latino of any race	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Black or African American	White	Two or more races
Boys	Enrollment	15%	<1%	3%	<1%	8%	24%
	Disciplined	14%	1%	1%	<1%	10%	48%
	Reported	4%	1%	1%	<1%	6%	24%
Girls	Enrollment	14%	<1%	3%	<1%	7%	22%
	Disciplined	6%	<1%	<1%	<1%	2%	13%
	Reported	8%	1%	1%	<1%	7%	45%

Note: Although rounded percentages are presented, all calculations are based on unrounded data. Percentage distributions may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

White boys represented 24% of total K-12 student enrollment but accounted for 48% of students disciplined for harassment or bullying on the basis of sex. Black boys, American Indian or Alaska Native boys, and boys of two or more races were also overrepresented among students who were disciplined for harassment or bullying on the basis of sex.

White girls represented 22% of total K-12 student enrollment but accounted for 45% of students reported as being harassed or bullied on the basis of sex. American Indian or Alaska Native girls were also overrepresented among students who were reported as being harassed or bullied on the basis of sex.

## U.S. Department of Education Initiatives to Address Sexual Violence and Harassment

ED's [Best Practices Clearinghouse](#) and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education offer extensive training and other technical assistance for schools, districts, and the public on preventing and responding to sexual violence and harassment, including through the [National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments](#) and the [Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center](#). In May 2023, the Biden-Harris Administration released the first-ever [U.S. National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence](#), which sets out a comprehensive, whole-of-government approach to preventing and addressing gender-based violence in the United States. ED also co-leads the Interagency Task Force on Sexual Violence in Education with the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services. As set out in the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2022, the Task Force is responsible for making recommendations on preventing and responding to the sexual violence in educational settings to the Secretary of Education, the Attorney General, Congress, educational institutions, and the public. ED also launched "Free to Learn" to galvanize state and local efforts to implement and sustain evidence-based practices and policies to support safe, positive school climates and prevent harassment. Resources are available on the [Best Practice Clearinghouse](#) and <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/free-learn>.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020-21 Civil Rights Data Collection, released November 2023, available at <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.

The data presented in this report is from the 2020-21 CRDC privacy-protected, public-use data file, released November 2023.

The calculated counts and percentages in this report may differ from those by other offices within the U.S. Department of Education (ED) due to differences in methodology, data sources, and survey population (or universe of schools and school districts that submit data). For additional information about the differences between the CRDC and other ED data, please see, [Building Bridges: Increasing the Power of the CRDC Through Data Linking With an ID Crosswalk](#).

OCR cautions readers and data users to consider the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on students and on educational conditions when comparing the 2020-21 CRDC to CRDCs from previous years.

The percentages listed are rounded to the nearest whole number. Counts of 1,000,000 or greater are rounded to the nearest hundred thousand. Counts of 1,000 or greater are rounded to the nearest hundred. Counts of less than 1,000 are rounded to the nearest ten.

This analysis excludes schools for which OCR determined potentially erroneous data had been reported. For more information on the 2020-21 CRDC data quality efforts, review the User's Manual available at <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.

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