

HOW ARE STUDENTS IN THE FOSTER SYSTEM FARING IN NEW YORK'S BIG 4 SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES?

Syracuse City School District and Onondaga County Key Findings (2017–18 through 2024–25 school years):

In a typical 180-day school year, **students in the foster system and students not in the foster system in Syracuse City School District missed about the same number of school days at twenty-three and twenty-five days (up to five weeks), respectively.**

In a typical year, **Black or African American students in the foster system in Rest of Onondaga County had the highest attendance rate in the region, by race, at 96 percent.**

Out-of-school suspension rates for students in the foster system in Syracuse City School District and Rest of Onondaga County were tied at 14 percent—a rate about one and a half times higher than students who weren't in the foster system in Syracuse City School District (9 percent) and about three and a half times higher than students who weren't in the foster system in Rest of Onondaga County (4 percent).

Average Enrollment (Number of Students)

SFS = Students in the Foster System SNFS = Students not in the Foster System

Syracuse City School District		Rest of Onondaga County	
SFS	SNFS	SFS	SNFS
91	18,931	65	47,403

Average Enrollment By Race (Number of Students)

Syracuse City School District			Rest of Onondaga County		
	SFS	SNFS		SFS	SNFS
Black or African American	52	9,144	Black or African American	17	5,034
Hispanic or Latino ¹	8	2,714	Hispanic or Latino	15	2,856
White	22	3,854	White	35	36,697

Lowest Average Attendance Rates (Regionally)

Lowest average attendance, by foster status:

Syracuse City School District students
not in the foster system



86%

On average, in a typical 180-day school year, students not in the foster system in Syracuse City School District missed the most school in the region at about 14 percent of school, or twenty-five days (five weeks). However, that attendance rate was *only marginally* lower than students in the foster system in Syracuse City School District who had an attendance rate of 87 percent.

Lowest average attendance, by foster status
and race:

Syracuse City School District Hispanic or
Latino students not in the foster system



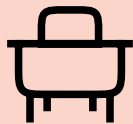
82%

On average, in a typical 180-day school year, Hispanic or Latino students not in the foster system in Syracuse City School District missed about 18 percent of school, or thirty-two days (over six weeks), the most of any student subgroup by race and foster status.

Highest Average In-School Suspension Rates (Regionally)

Highest average in-school suspension rate,
by foster status:

Rest of Onondaga County students in
the foster system

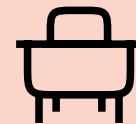


10%
(1 in 10 students)

On average, in a typical school year, students in the foster system in Rest of Onondaga County received in-school suspensions at a rate *more than two and a half times* higher than their peers who weren't in the foster system in Rest of Onondaga County (about 4 percent or 1 in 25 students).

Highest average in-school suspension rate,
by foster status and race:

Rest of Onondaga County Black or African
American students in the foster system



15%
(1 in 7 students)

On average, in a typical school year, Black or African American students in the foster system in Rest of Onondaga County received in-school suspensions at a rate *more than two and a half times* higher than their Black or African American peers who weren't in the foster system in Rest of Onondaga County (about 6 percent or 1 in 16 students).

Highest Average Out-of-School Suspension Rates (Regionally)

Highest average out-of-school suspension rate, by foster status:

Syracuse City School District and Rest of Onondaga County students in the foster system

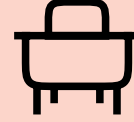


14%
(1 in 7 students)

On average, in a typical year, both students in the foster system in Syracuse City School District and Rest of Onondaga County received out-of-school suspensions at a rate *about one and a half times higher* than their peers who weren't in the foster system in Syracuse City School District (9 percent or 1 in 11 students) and Rest of Onondaga County (4 percent or 1 in 25 students).

Highest average out-of-school suspension rate, by foster status and race:

Syracuse City School District Black or African American students in the foster system



16%
(1 in 6 students)

On average, in a typical year, Black or African American students in the foster system in Syracuse City School District received out-of-school suspensions at a rate *only slightly higher* than their Black or African American peers who weren't in the foster system in Syracuse City School District (12 percent or 1 in 8 students).

Policy Recommendations:

- **Child Welfare.** New York State Office of Children and Families (OCFS) and the Onondaga County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) should conduct an in-depth analysis of the attendance and discipline outcomes of students in the foster system served by schools in the region and provide targeted support to students and school staff, where necessary, to improve outcomes. Particular attention should be paid to the experiences of Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino students due to their greater risk for lower attendance rates and suspensions.
- **Education.** New York State Education Department (SED), Onondaga County School Districts, Onondaga County Schools, Syracuse City School District, and Onondaga County Charter Schools should partner with Onondaga County DCFS to identify students in the foster system; develop and provide trauma-informed practices trainings and restorative discipline practices training for school staff that addresses the unique needs of foster youth; and provide holistic social-emotional and behavioral supports for students.

Notes

¹ Disaggregated enrollment, attendance, and suspension data by race in Syracuse City School District was suppressed for Hispanic or Latino students in the foster system in the 2017–18, 2018–19, 2019–20, 2021–22, 2022–23, 2023–24, and 2024–25 school years.

This data sheet is informed by data received from the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) regarding foster and non-foster students. The data is a cumulative assessment of data inclusive of the 2017–18 through 2024–25 school years.

For more information about the data and methodology, see the Appendix section of "[Lost Time: Foster Students' Educational Experience in New York's Big 4 School Districts and Surrounding Counties.](#)"