



Health Disparities Profile Report for the Southside and West End Neighborhoods in Providence, Rhode Island

Authors: Office of Minority Health, Rhode Island Department of Health

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The primary objective of the Rhode Island Department of Health, Office of Minority Health's Princes to Kings Mentorship Initiative (**P2K**) is to address a key social determinant of health, low high school graduation rates (i.e., regular diploma and/or GED equivalent) among Hispanic, Black, and Southeast Asian males who are 12 to 18 years of age. "**Students who graduate with a regular diploma four years after starting ninth grade**" is one of 26 leading health indicators selected by Healthy People 2020 (**HP2020**) to communicate high priority health issues. Low graduation rates are associated with a number of poor economic and health outcomes (e.g., poverty, poor mental health, teen pregnancy, and chronic disease).

The P2K Initiative will be implemented in Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School, Roger Williams Middle School, and Gilbert Stuart Middle School which are located in the Southside and West End neighborhoods in Providence, Rhode Island. These schools and communities have some characteristics that may increase the risks for high school dropout, which we present in the accompanying report. However, it must be noted that these schools and communities may also have some positive features that can facilitate students' academic success. Unfortunately, we are unable to include these positive features in the baseline report as these data are not currently measured or included in any of the available data sources.

To understand the risk factors for low on-time high school graduation rates and high dropout rates, we organized the health disparities indicators and health disparities profile using a socio-ecological model. This model suggests that public policies (e.g., state and local school policies), culture (e.g., norms and values), communities (e.g., neighborhood factors), organizations (e.g., school environments and zero tolerance policies), interpersonal relationships (e.g., peers and family), and individual factors (e.g., gender) influence on-time high school graduation and high dropout rates [1-3].

To select these aforementioned risk factors, we conducted a review of the extant scientific literature and the Rhode Island Department of Education InfoWorks statewide, district, and school data releases for the 2013 – 2014, 2014 – 2015, and 2015 - 2016 academic years. We also incorporated data from the United States Census Bureau, the National Center for Education Statistics, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, Rhode Island Kids Count, and Providence Plan. The health disparities report includes the following indicators:

Community Factors

- **Racial and Ethnic Minority Population:** This indicator shows the percentage of persons by race and ethnicity [4].
- **Foreign Born Population:** These indicators show the percentages of foreign-born residents and residents who speak a language other than English in the home [4].
- **Poverty Rate:** This indicator depicts the poverty rate according to the Office of Management and Budget's Statistical Policy Directive [4].
- **Median Household Income:** This indicator shows the median household income [4].
- **Neighborhood Safety:** This is an indicator of the percentage of students who report

feeling safe while walking outside of their school [5].

School Factors

- **Race and Ethnicity of Student Population:** This indicator shows the percentage of students by race and ethnicity [5].
- **Gender:** This indicator shows the percentage of students by gender [5].
- **Student-Teacher Ratio:** This indicator measures the number of students per one classroom teacher [5].
- **Stability Index:** The Stability Index is a measure of a student's tendency to switch or stay within school districts over a school year [5].
- **Eligibility for Subsidized Lunch:** This shows the percentage of students who are eligible to receive subsidized lunch (free or reduced price) [5].
- **Students Receiving ESL/Bilingual Education Services:** This is an indicator of the percentage of students receiving ESL/Bilingual Education [5].
- **Suspension Rate:** This is an indicator of the number of suspensions per 100 students [5].
- **Weapons:** This indicator measures the percentage of students who have seen a weapon in school [5].
- **School Safety:** This indicator is a measure of the percentage of students who report feeling safe in the school hallways [5].

Interpersonal Relationships

- **Bullying:** This indicator measures the percentage of students who report being bullied two times or more while in school [5].

Individual Factors

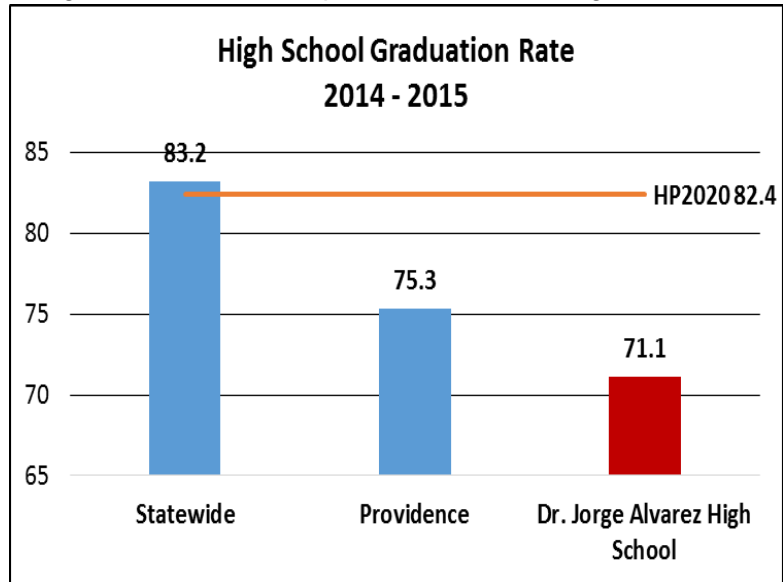
- **Chronic Absenteeism:** This is an indicator of the percentage of students who missed 10% or more school days during the year. This includes only students who were enrolled at least 90 days in a given school or district [5].
- **English Language Arts/Literacy:** This indicator is a Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers measure of the percentage of students who meet English Language Arts/Literacy standards by grade level [5].
- **Mathematics:** This indicator is a Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers measure of the percentage of students who meet Mathematics standards by grade level [5].
- **Post-Graduation Plans:** This indicator shows the post high school plans for students [5].
- **Alcohol Consumption:** This indicator measures the percentage of students who have consumed alcohol during the past 30 days [5].
- **Illegal Drug Use:** This indicator measures the percentage of students who used illegal drugs during the academic school year [5].
- **Teen Pregnancy:** This indicator measures the number of pregnancies per 1,000 girls among girls ages 15 to 19 years. [6]
- **Mental Health:** This indicator measures the percentage of students who reported

feeling sad and hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row, which resulted in them stopping some of their usual activities [7].

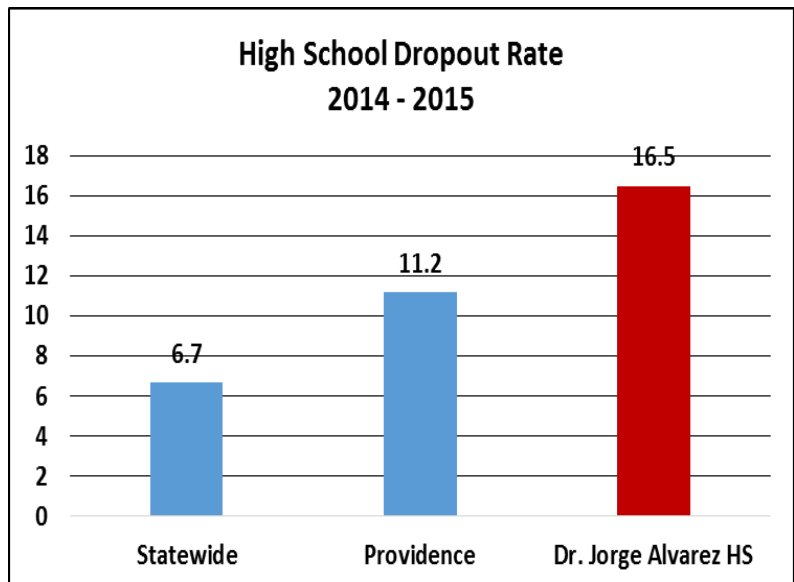
- **Arrests per 100,000:** This is an indicator of the number of arrests of children 18 and under per 100,000 children [6, 8].
- **Youth Homicide:** This indicator measures the percentage of youth victims of homicide from 2004 – 2012 [9].

High School Graduation and Dropout Rates

This is an indicator of the percentage of students who graduated on-time during the 2014 – 2015 school year [5]. High school graduation is associated with higher lifetime earnings, better health, increased national income, and other positive individual and societal outcomes [10]. During the 2014-2015 school year, Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School had a lower on-time, four year graduation rate compared to statewide graduation rates and Providence Public School District graduation rates. While statewide graduation rates surpassed the HP2020 goal of 82.4%, Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School and Providence Public School District graduation rates were below the HP2020 goal. In the Providence Public School District during the 2013 – 2014 academic year, Black males had a graduation rate of 59% and Hispanic males had a graduation rate of 67% [11]. These graduation rates for Black and Hispanic males were lower than statewide and Providence Public School District graduation rates for 2013 – 2014.

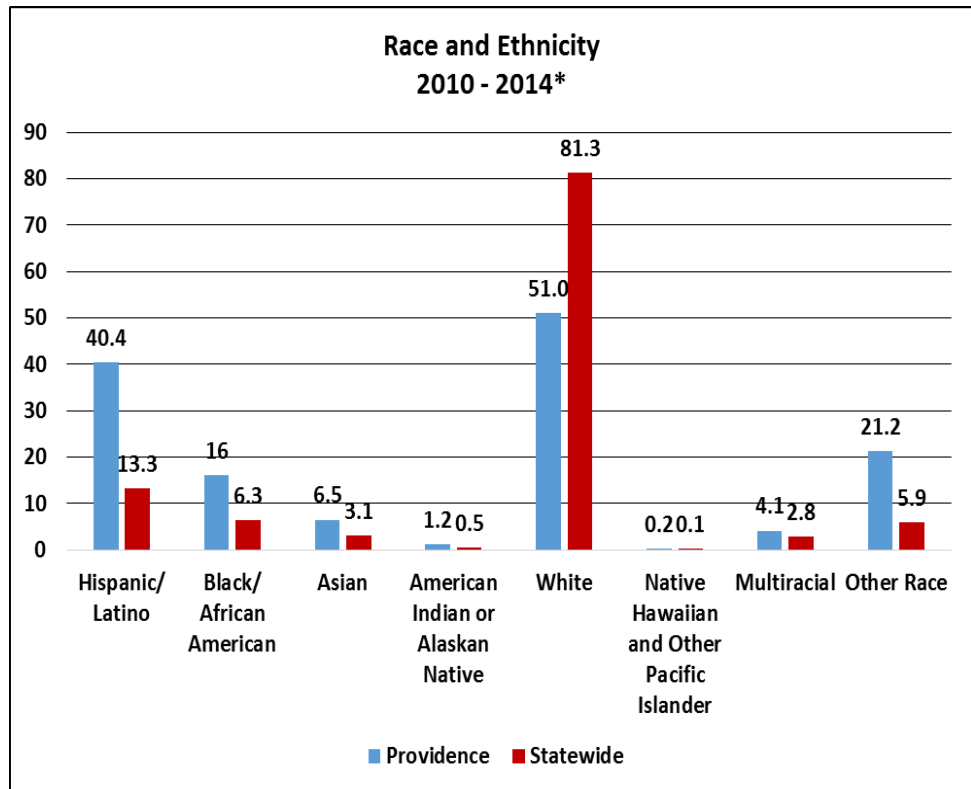


This is an indicator of the percentage of students who dropped out of high school during the 2014 – 2015 academic year [5]. High school drop out is associated with lower lifetime earnings, higher unemployment, incarceration, teenage pregnancy, poor health, and other adverse individual and societal costs [10, 12]. Students at Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School were almost 2.5 times more likely to dropout compared to students statewide. Students at Dr. Jorge Alvarez also had a higher dropout rate than students in the Providence Public School District. For example, 16.5% of students at Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School dropped out compared to 6.7% of students statewide. Some minority groups have higher dropout rates than their non-minority peers. During the 2013 – 2014 academic school year, 28% of Native American students, 13% of Hispanic students and 12% of Black students in Rhode Island dropped out [11].



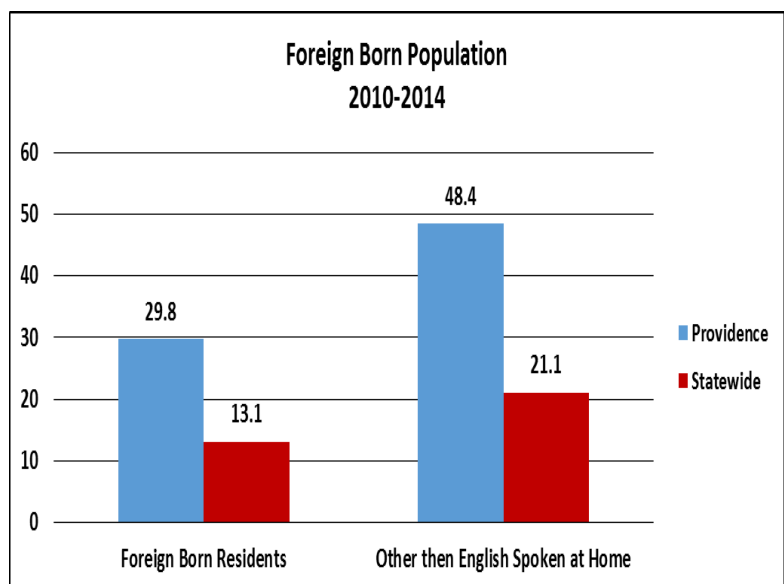
Community Environment

*This indicator shows the percentage of persons by race and ethnicity in Providence city and Rhode Island according to the American Community Survey Five Year Estimates, 2010 – 2014 [4]. Relative to their non-minority counterparts, some racial and ethnic minority groups experience higher levels of inequality in relation to



economic opportunity, safe communities, and quality childcare and education which may result in lower educational attainment [13]. Census data indicate that relative to statewide estimates, racial/ethnic minority populations represent a large percentage of Providence city's total population. Individuals identifying as Hispanic/Latino (40.4%) represent the largest ethnic minority group in Providence.

These indicators show the percentages of foreign-born residents and residents who speak a language other than English at home according to the American Community Survey Five Year Estimates, 2010 – 2014 [4]. While immigrant status itself is not a deterrent to educational attainment, many foreign born residents are of lower socioeconomic position and experience language barriers that create impediments to educational achievement [14]. The proportion of foreign-born residents in Providence (29.8%) is much higher than for Rhode Island overall (13.1%). In Providence, 48.4% of residents ages five and older speak a language other than English at home compared to

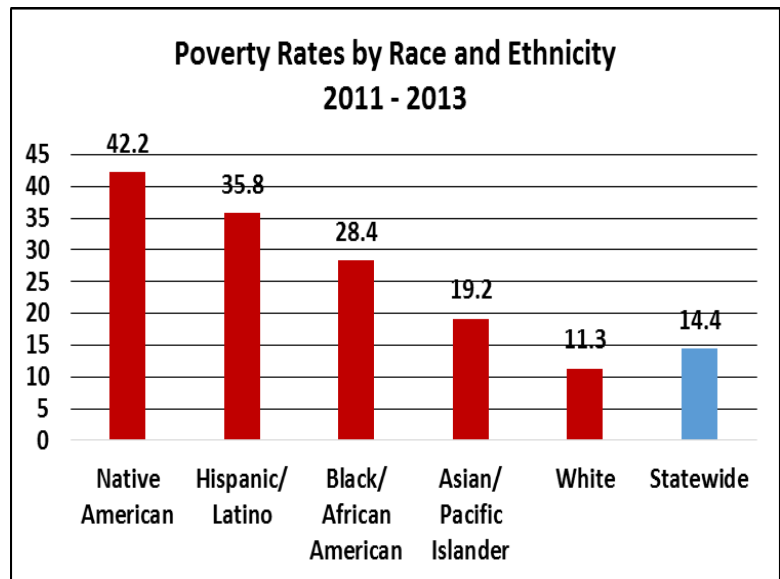
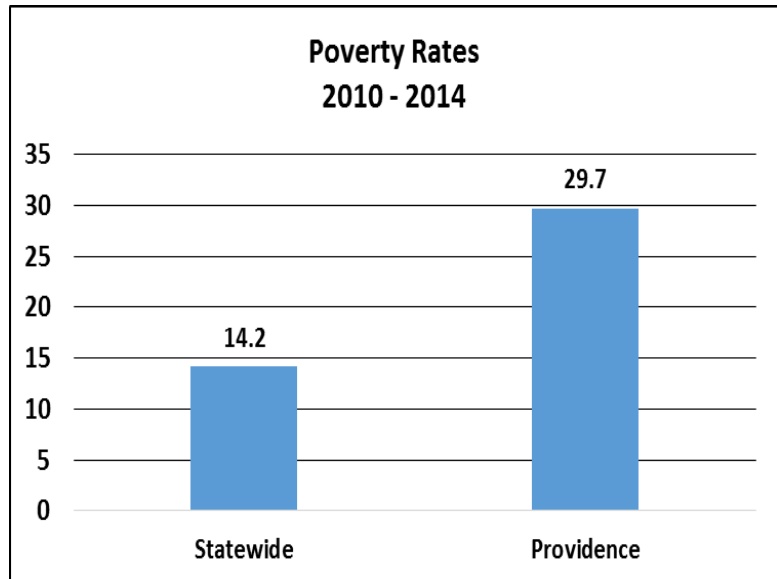


21.1% for the state as a whole.

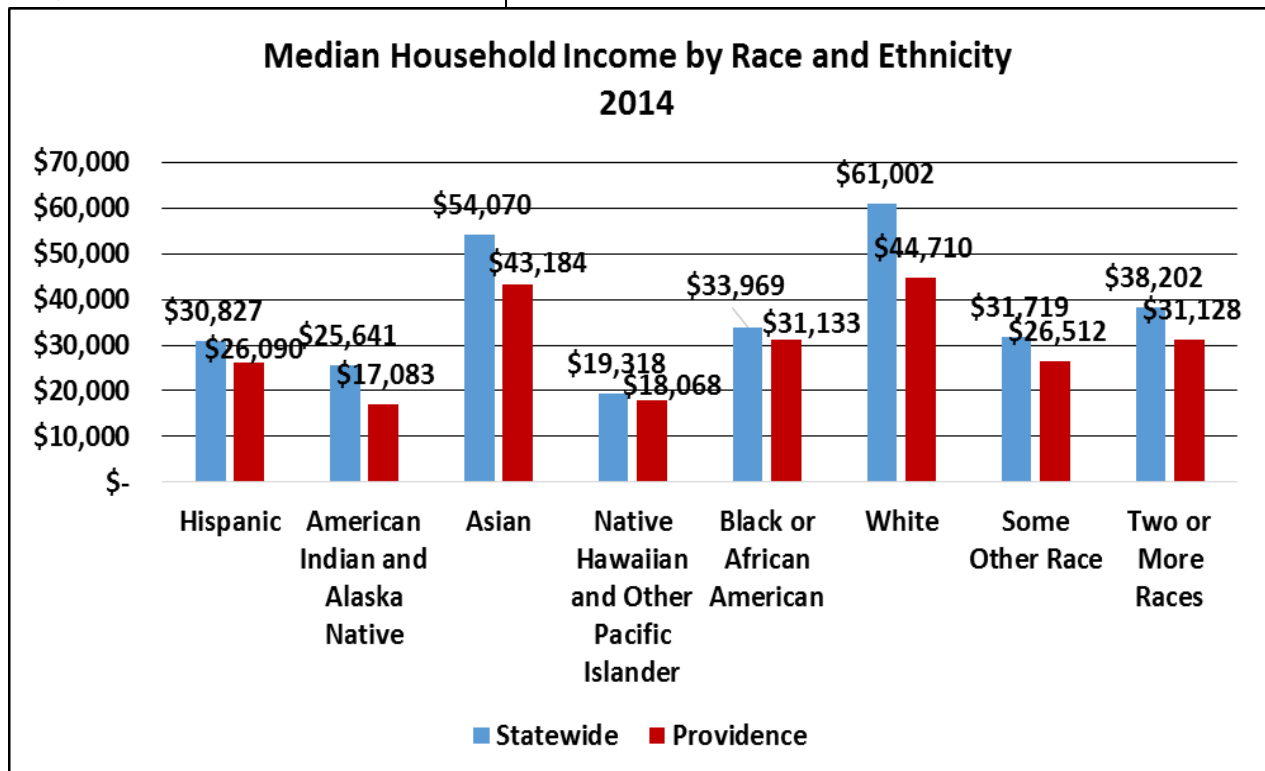
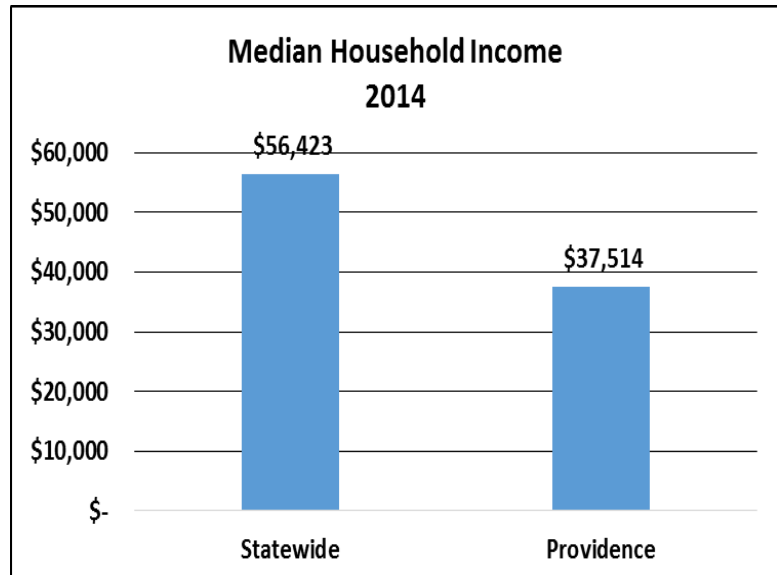
These indicators depict poverty rates for Providence and Rhode Island according to the American Community Survey Five Year Estimates 2010 – 2014 and Three Year Estimates, 2011 – 2013, for each racial and ethnic group [4]. Poverty is associated with poorer quality schools, lower academic achievement, high school dropout, and chronic disease [10, 12].

The overall poverty rate in the city of Providence is more than two times the state poverty rate, 29% and 14.2%, respectively.

When the poverty rate is broken down by race/ethnicity, there are clear disparities with almost half of Native American (42.2%) and more than one-third of Hispanic or Latino (35.8%) populations living in poverty. Approximately twenty-eight percent of Blacks or African Americans, 19.2% of Asians and Pacific Islanders, and 11.3% of Whites live in poverty.

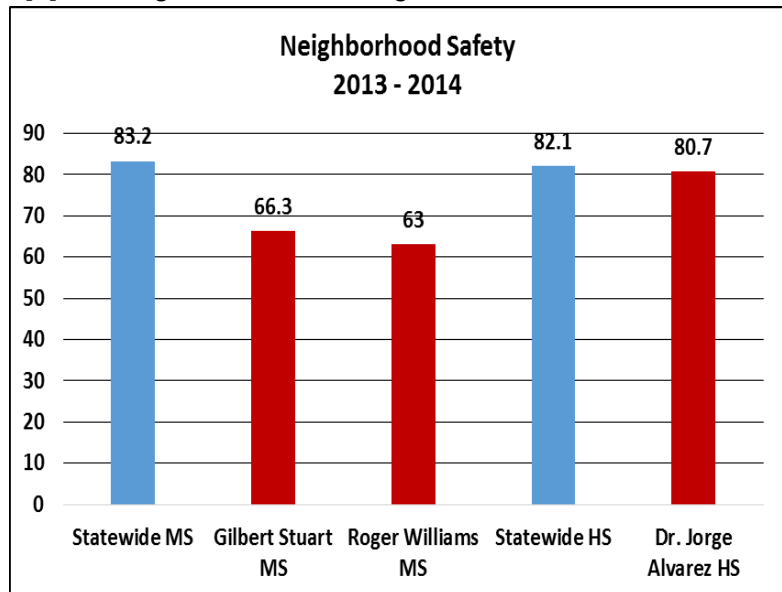


This indicator shows the median household income for Providence and Rhode Island according to the American Community Survey Five Year Estimates, 2010 – 2014 adjusted to 2014 dollars [4]. Low income negatively affects children’s academic achievement, likelihood of graduating from high school and college, and their potential lifetime earnings [15]. The median household income for Providence was \$37,514 which is well below the Rhode Island median income of \$56,423.

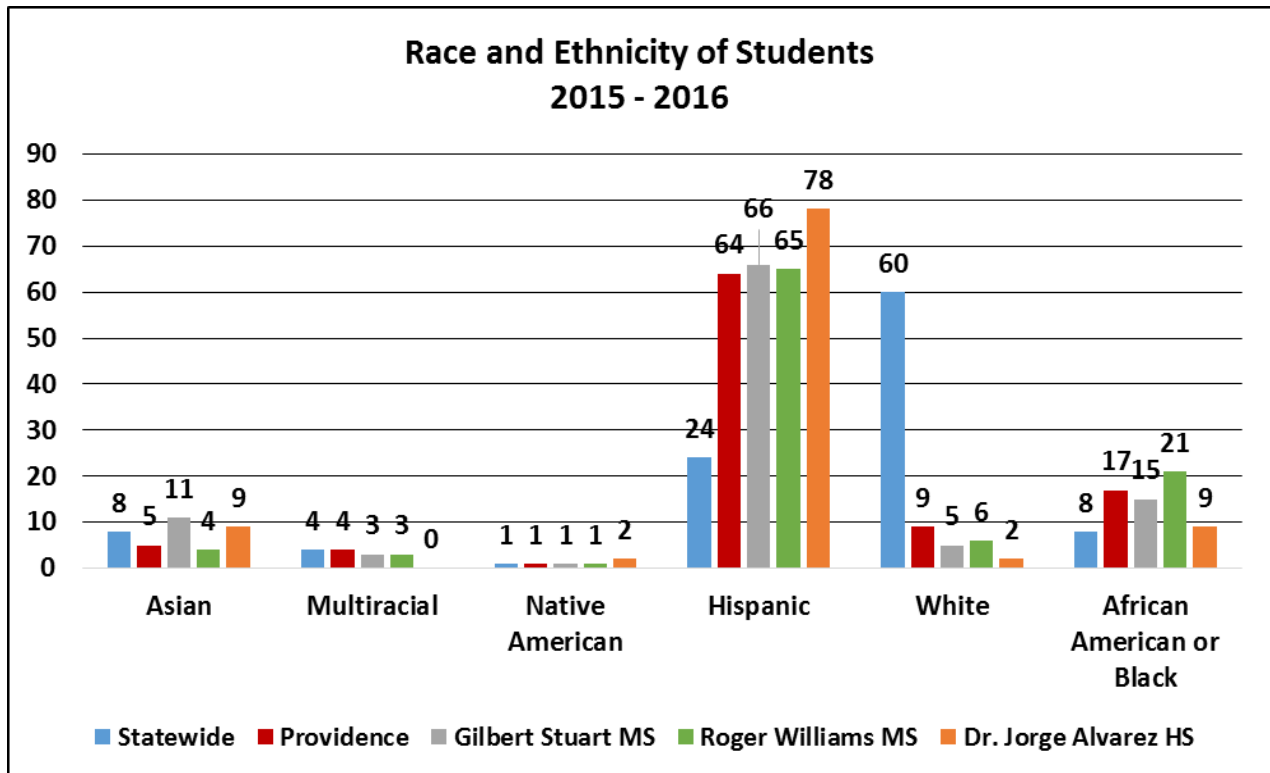


When the median household income is broken down by race and ethnicity, there are clear differences. American Indian and Alaska Native households have the lowest median income both in Rhode Island and in Providence city (\$25,641 and \$17,803, respectively). In Rhode Island and Providence city, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Latino, Black or African Americans, Multiracial, and Other Racial groups also have lower median incomes than Asians and Whites.

This is an indicator of students' perceived neighborhood safety while walking outside of school during the 2013 – 2014 academic year [5]. Feeling unsafe in the neighborhood is associated with lower academic success, less school engagement, and higher dropout rates [10]. A lower percentage of students at Gilbert Stuart Middle School, Roger Williams Middle School, and Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School reported feeling safe while walking outside of school. For example, 63% of students at Roger Williams Middle School felt safe compared to 83.2% of middle school students statewide.



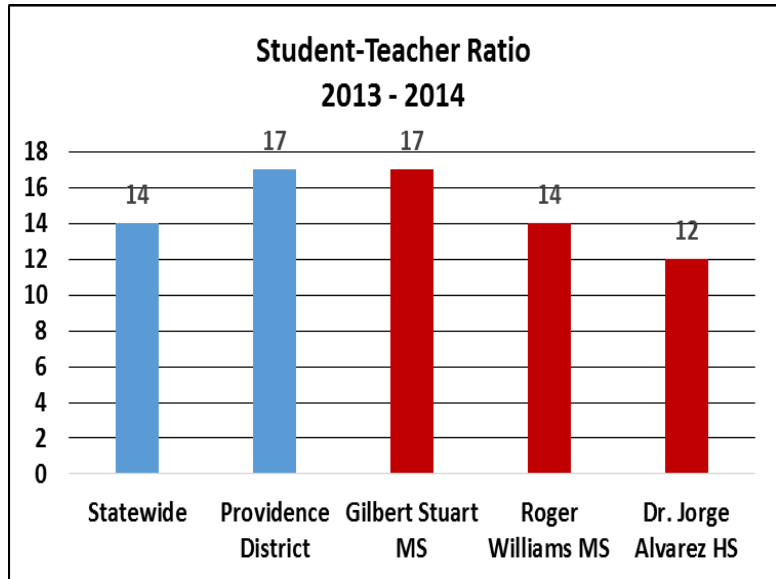
School Environment



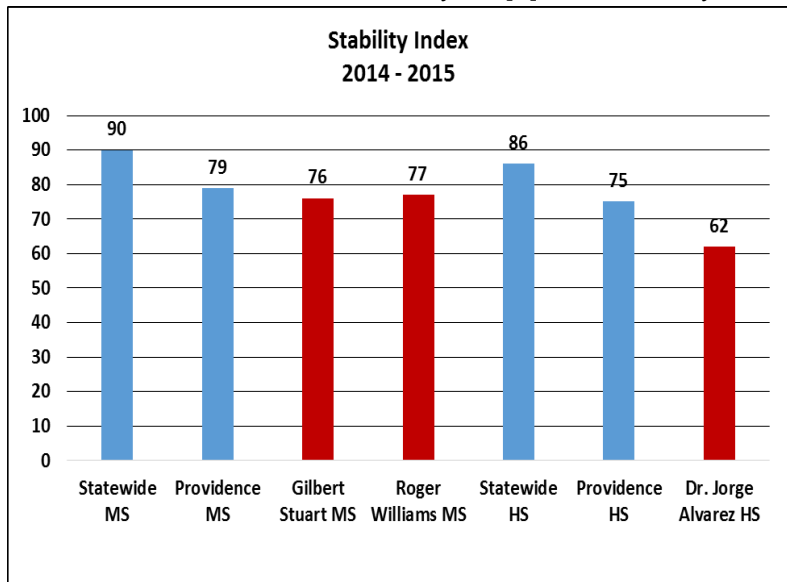
This indicator depicts the race and ethnicity of students during the 2015 - 2016 academic year [5]. These data show that although White students comprise 60% of the student population in Rhode Island, they make up 9% of students in the Providence Public School District. Also, while Hispanic students make up 24%

of the student population, they account for almost two-thirds of students in the Providence Public School District. During the 2013 – 2014 academic year, the gender profile in the Providence Public School District was similar to statewide profiles with more female than male students [5].

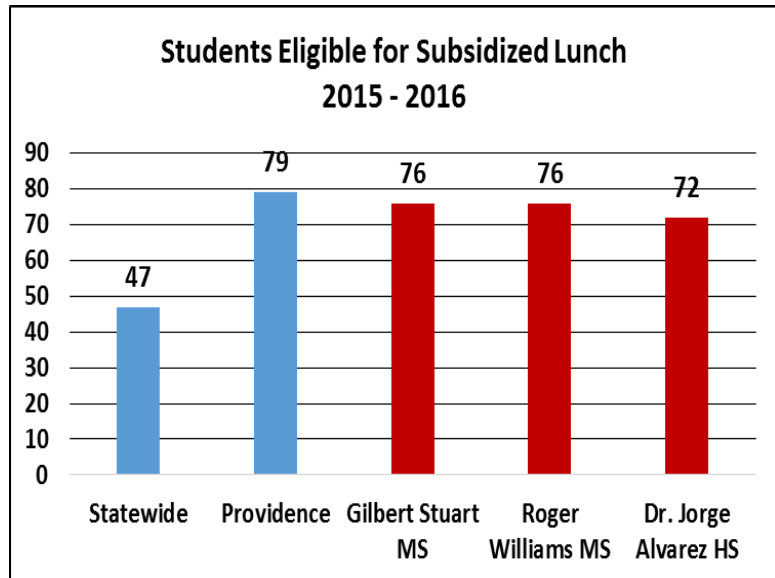
This indicator measures the number of students per classroom teacher for the 2013 – 2014 academic year [5]. The student/teacher ratio is an indicator of the workload and availability of teachers to students [16]. The lower the student-teacher ratio, the greater availability of teacher services to students [16]. For example, the value of 17 for Gilbert Stuart Middle School means that there are 17 students for every one classroom teacher.



This indicator depicts the Stability Index for the 2014 – 2015 academic year [5]. The Stability Index is a measure of a student's tendency to switch or stay within school districts over a school year [5]. Lower stability is associated with lower math and reading scores and high school dropout [17, 18]. Students at Gilbert Stuart Middle School, Roger Williams Middle School, and Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School scored lower on the Stability Index relative to their counterparts statewide and in the Providence Public School District. For example, 86% of high school students in Rhode Island and 75% of high school students in the Providence Public School District remained within the same school district during the 2014 – 2015 academic year compared to 62% of students in Dr. Jorge Alvarez high school.

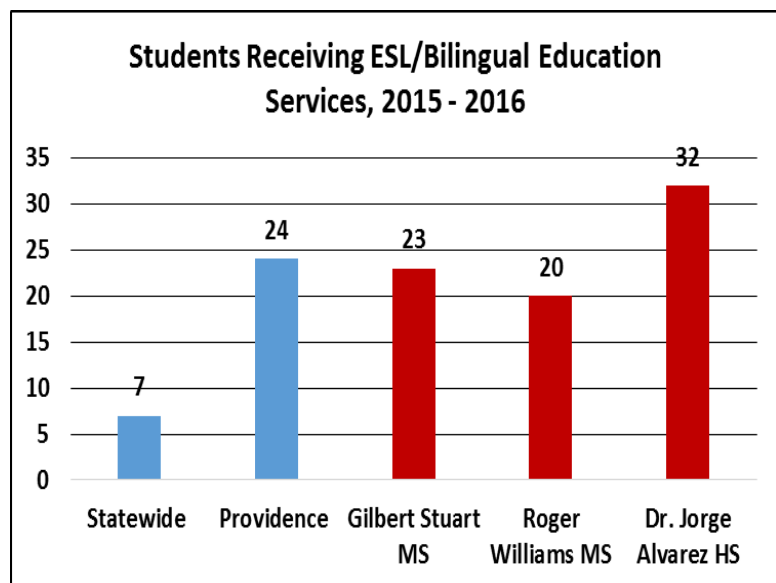


This indicator is an indirect estimate of school and neighborhood socioeconomic position [5]. To be eligible for subsidized meals, family income must not exceed 185% of the federal poverty guideline [19]. Low socioeconomic position is strongly linked to the likelihood of dropping out [10, 12]. Poverty affects academic outcomes including poor school facilities, limited budgets of school administration, and lower levels of available professional services for students [20]. However, subsidized school meal programs are associated with lower food insecurity,



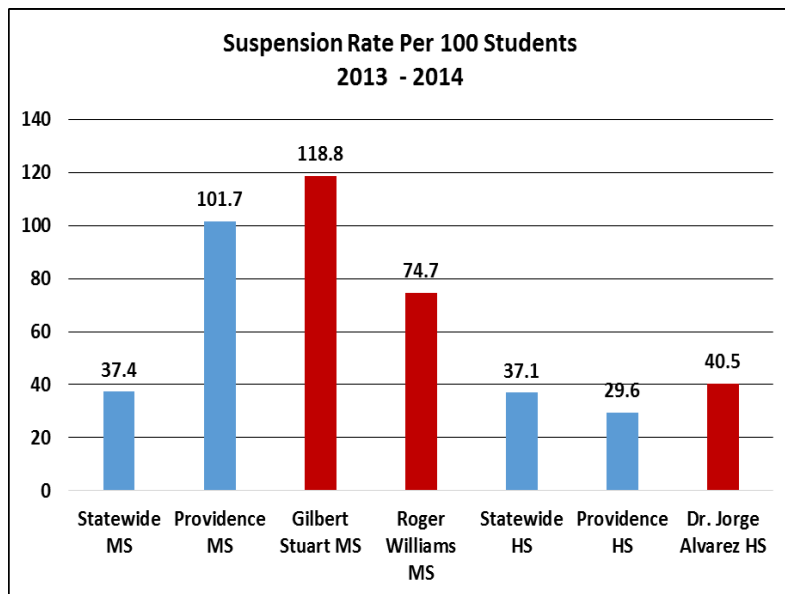
better cognitive functioning, and academic success [21]. During the 2015 – 2016 academic year, students at Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School were 1.5 times more likely to be eligible for subsidized lunch than students statewide. In this same academic year, 72% of students at Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School and 47% of students statewide met eligibility criteria.

This is an indicator of the percentage of students receiving ESL/Bilingual Education during the 2015 – 2016 academic year [5]. Compared to other students, English Language Learner students are more likely to dropout of high school as a result of limited English proficiency, lower socioeconomic position and cultural factors [22, 23]. A larger percentage of Dr. Jorge Alvarez high school students receive ESL/Bilingual Education services compared to students statewide and in the Providence

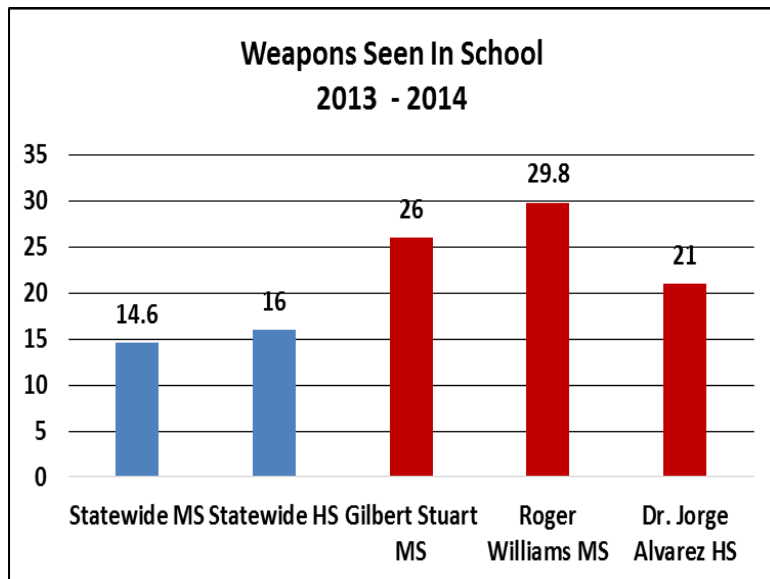


Public School District. For example, 32% of students at Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School receive these services compared to 24% of students in the Providence School District.

This is an indicator of the number of suspensions per 100 students during the 2013 – 2014 academic year [5]. Suspension is associated with lower student achievement, being behind grade level, and high dropout rates [24]. The suspension rates at Gilbert Stuart Middle School and Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School were higher than both the statewide and Providence Public School District suspension rates. For example, the suspension rate at Gilbert Stuart Middle School was 118.8 per 100 students compared to the statewide suspension rate of 37 per 100 students and Providence Public School District suspension rate of 101.7 per 100 students. During this same academic year, minority students made up 39% of the student population, but received 57% of all disciplinary actions [6].

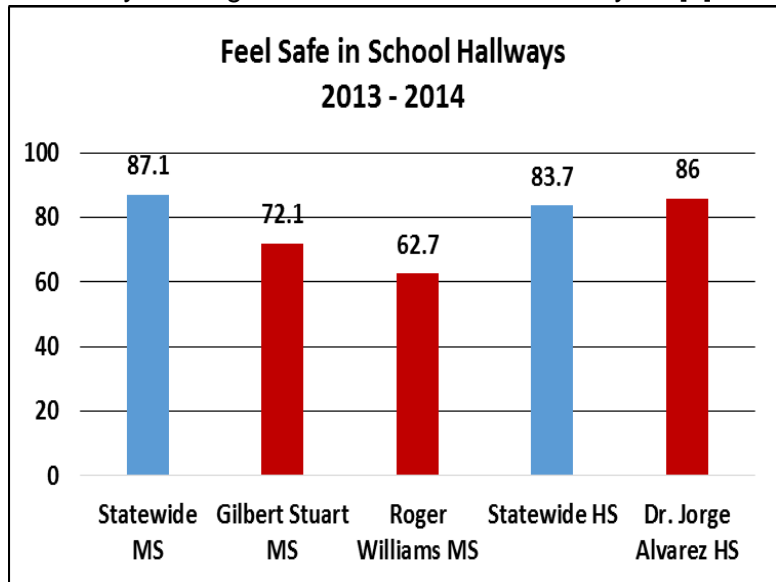


This indicator measures the percentage of students who saw a weapon in school during the 2013 – 2014 academic year [5]. The carrying of weapons in school is associated with the likelihood that students will witness violence and experience psychological distress, and lower academic performance [25]. Weapons carrying is also associated with future violence, criminal offenses, and behavioral problems in school [26, 27]. At Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School, students were more likely than their peers statewide to see a weapon at school (21 % versus 16%). Outcomes are similar at Gilbert Stuart Middle School and Roger Williams Middle School where students were more likely than their peers statewide to see a weapon at school (26% and 29.8% versus. 14.6%).



This is an indicator of feeling safe in the hallways during the 2013 – 2014 academic year [5].

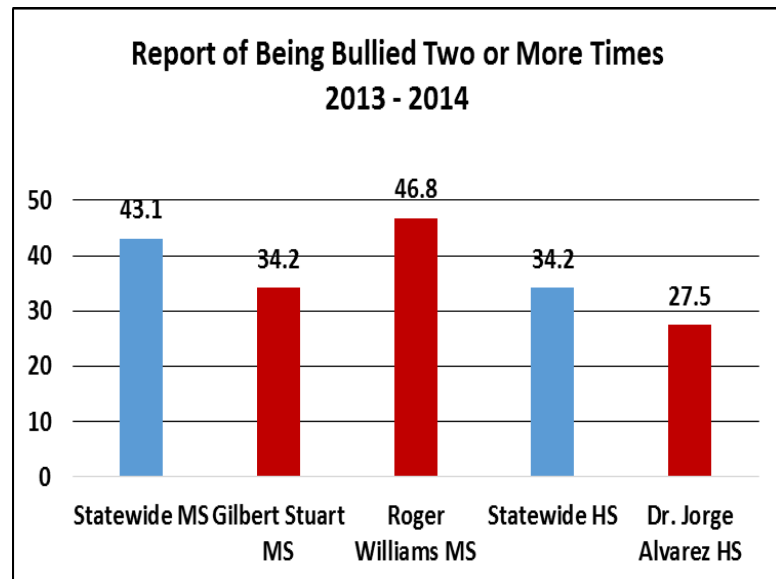
Subjective reports of feeling safe in school are associated with better student learning and academic achievement [27]. Compared to middle school students statewide, a lower percentage of students at Gilbert Stuart Middle School and Roger Williams Middle School reported feeling safe. A larger percentage of students at Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School reported feeling safe in the hallways compared to high school students statewide. For example, 86% of students at Alvarez High School reported feeling safe in the hallways compared to 83.7% of high school students statewide.



Interpersonal Relationships

This indicator measures students reports of being bullied two times or more during the 2013 – 2014 academic year [5]. Being bullied is associated with chronic absenteeism, lower student achievement, high school dropout, poverty and poor mental health [26, 28, 29].

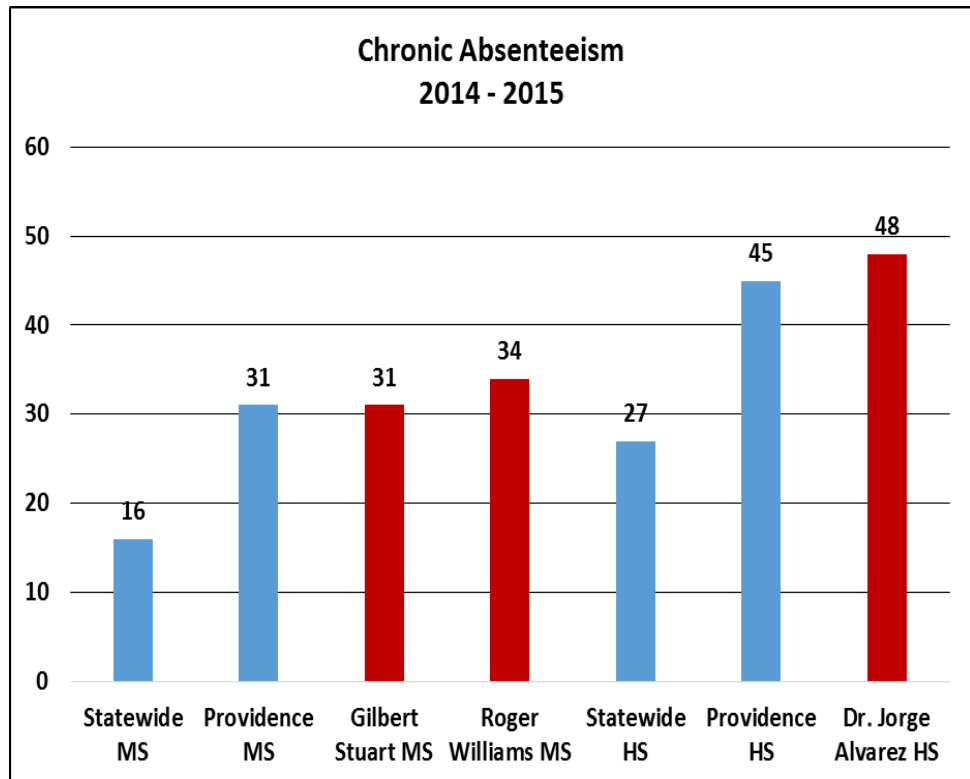
Students at Gilbert Stuart Middle School, Roger Williams Middle School and Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School reported more bullying than high school students statewide. For example, 42.6% of Roger Williams Middle School students reported being bullied compared to 36.7% of middle school students statewide.



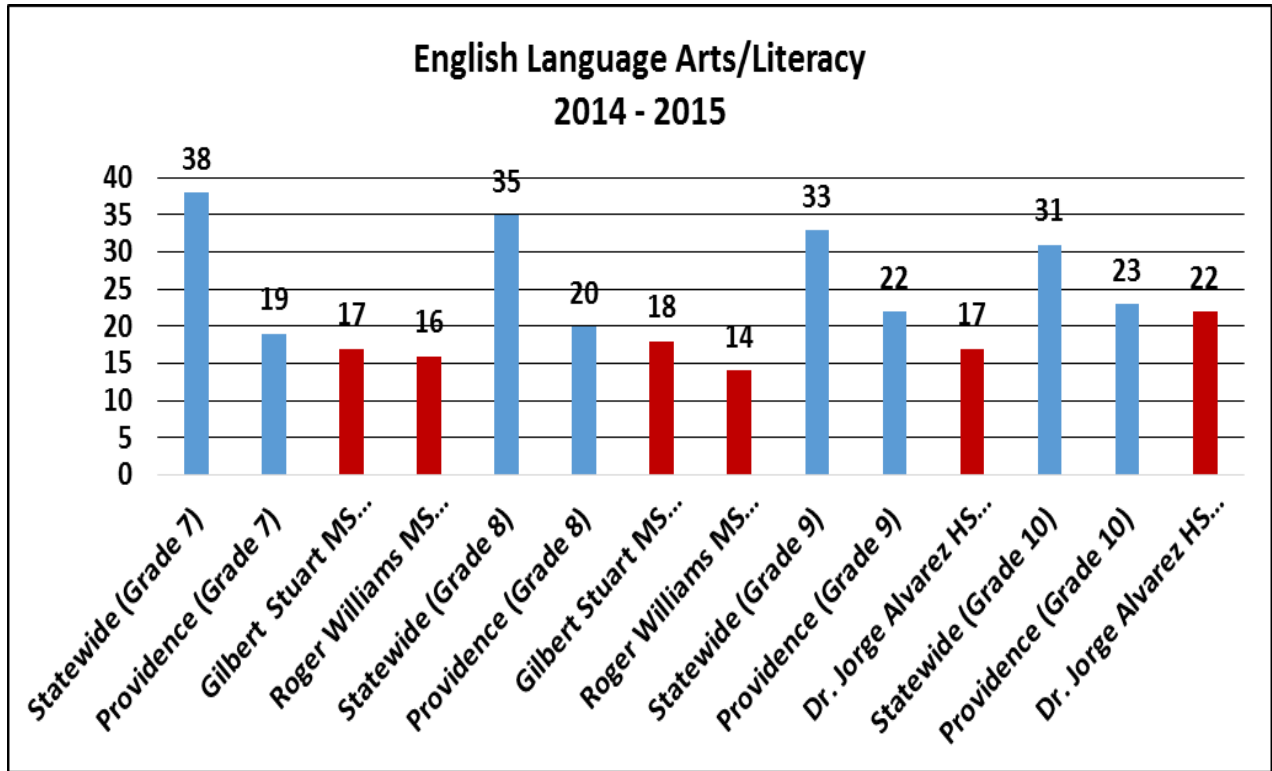
Student Outcomes

School-related Outcomes

Chronic Absenteeism is an indicator of the percentage of students who missed 10% or more school days during the year for the 2014 - 2015 academic year [5]. Students who are frequently absent from school miss critical academic and social learning opportunities and are at risk of disengagement from school, academic failure, and dropping out [10, 12, 22, 24,

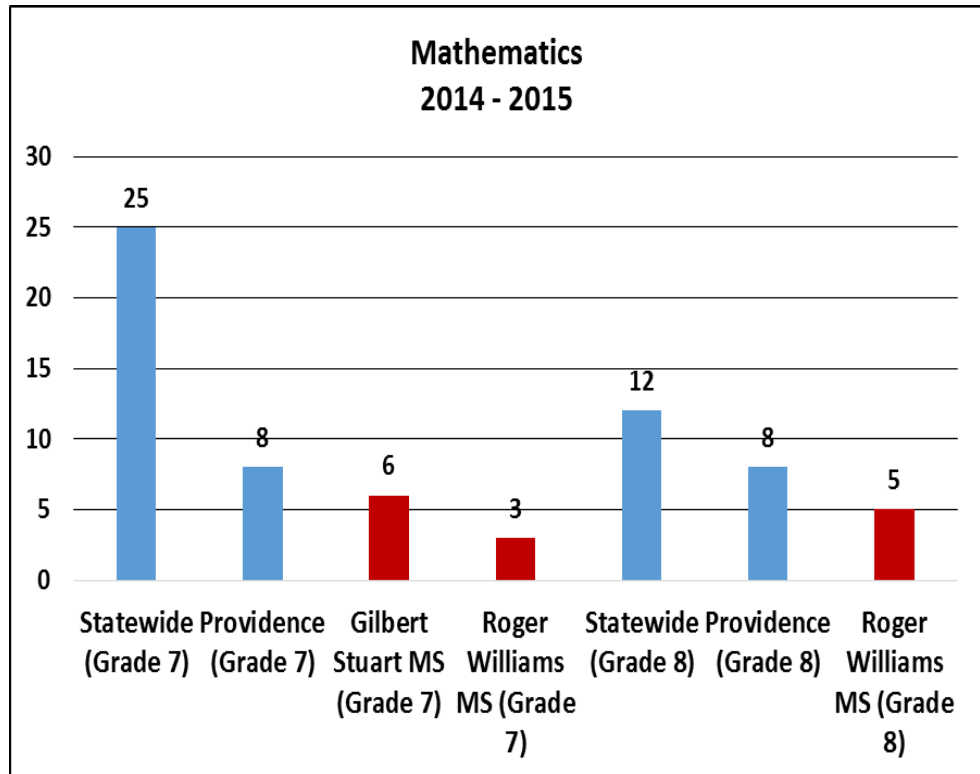


30]. Family and economic factors connected to student absenteeism include poverty, lack of access to health care, substance abuse, domestic violence, foster care placement, student employment, student disability, and lack of affordable or reliable transportation. School factors contributing to chronic absence include school climate, school size, attitudes of school staff, and discipline policies [30]. Students at Gilbert Stuart Middle School and Roger Williams Middle School were almost two times more likely to be chronically absent than middle school students statewide. Students at Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School were more than 1.5 times likely to be chronically absent from school compared to high school students statewide. For example, 48% of students at Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School and 45% of students in the Providence Public School District were chronically absent compared to 27% of students statewide.

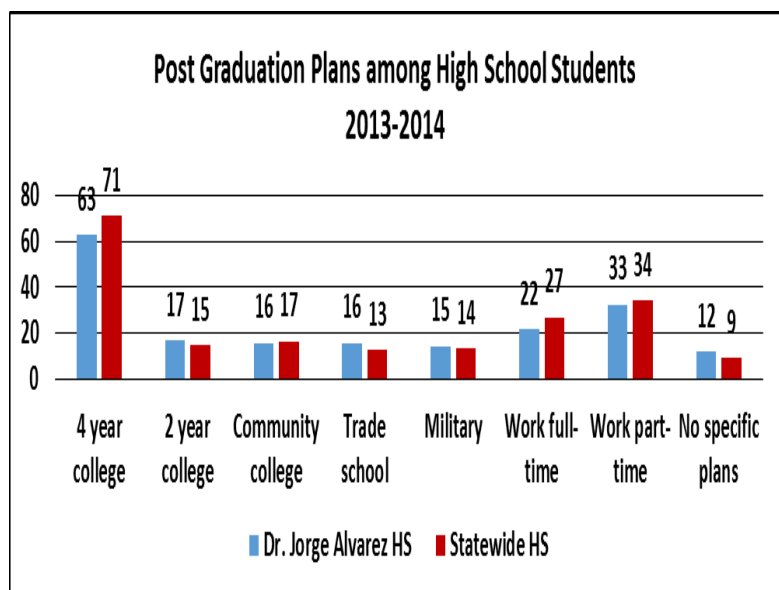


This indicator is a measure of English Language Arts/Literacy for Grades 7 through 10 during the 2014 – 2015 academic year [5]. Student academic outcomes, especially ninth-grade academic outcomes, are strongly associated with a student’s likelihood of graduating or dropping out of high school [31]. Across all schools and grade levels, Gilbert Stuart Middle School, Roger Williams Middle School, and Alvarez High School had lower levels of English Language Arts/Literacy relative to statewide and Providence Public School District estimates. For example, in Grade 7, 17% of students at Gilbert Stuart met English Language Arts/Literacy compared to 38% of Grade 7 students statewide and 19% of Grade 7 students in the Providence Public School District.

This indicator is a measure of mathematics readiness for Grade 7 and Grade 8 [5]. Student academic outcomes, especially ninth-grade academic outcomes, are strongly associated with a student's likelihood of graduating or dropping out of high school [31]. Across all schools and grade levels, Gilbert Stuart Middle School and Roger Williams Middle School had lower levels of mathematics readiness relative to middle school students statewide and in the Providence Public School District. For example, in Grade 7, 3% of students at Roger Williams met mathematics readiness benchmarks compared to 25% of students statewide and 8% of Providence Public School District students.



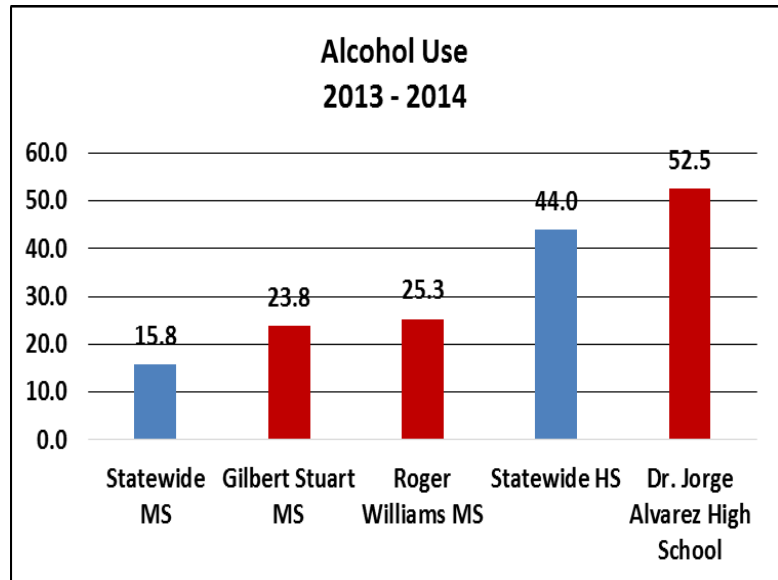
This indicator shows the post high school plans for high school students during the 2013 – 2014 academic year [5]. Post-secondary education is beneficial to long term occupations and economic outcomes. However, students from lower socioeconomic position backgrounds are less likely to attain four-year college degrees [32]. Students at Dr. Jorge Alvarez HS reported that they were less likely to attend a four-year college than their counterparts statewide (63% versus 71% statewide) and were more likely to report having no specific plans post-graduation relative to their peers statewide (12% versus 9% statewide).



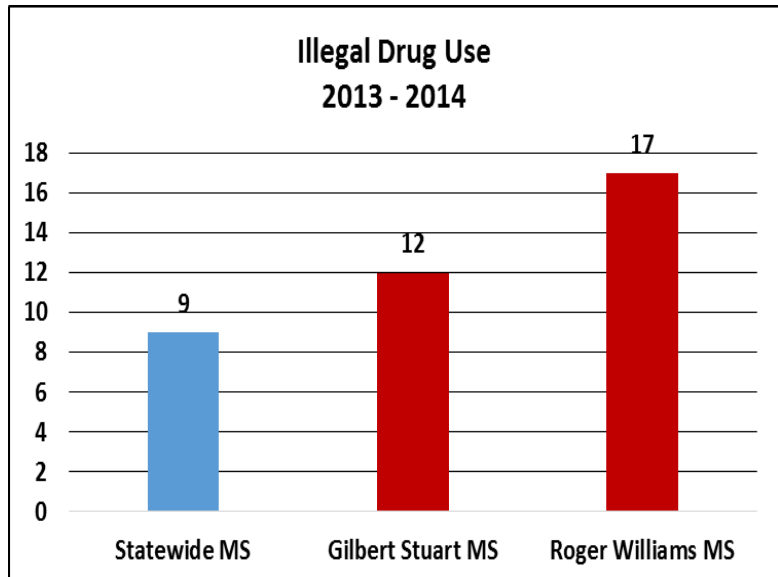
However, a larger percentage of students at Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School reported that they would attend a two-year college (17% versus 15% statewide) or go to trade school (16% versus 13% statewide).

Student Risk Health Behaviors and Outcomes

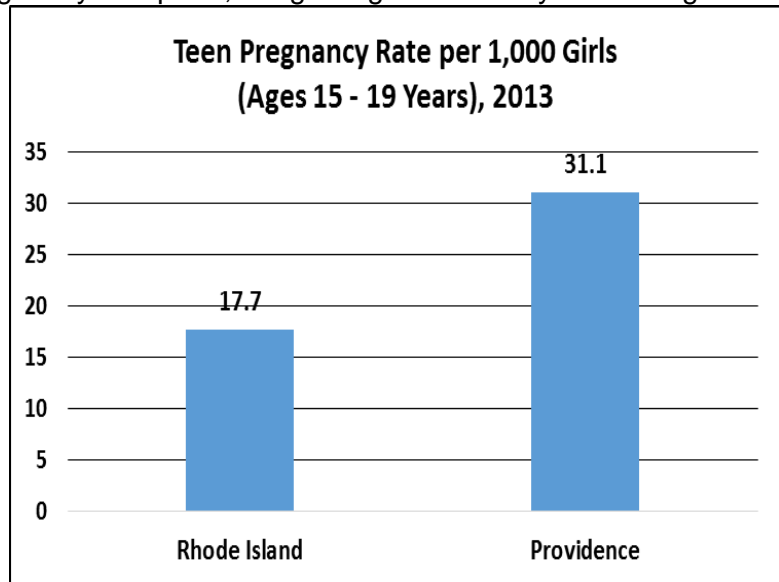
This indicator measures the percentage of students who consumed alcohol during the 2013 – 2014 academic year [5]. Consuming alcohol can make youth more vulnerable to unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, violence, and other negative outcomes, including sexual victimization [33]. Students at Gilbert Stuart Middle School and Roger Williams Middle School consumed more alcohol than their counterparts statewide. For example, 25.3% of Roger Williams Middle School students consumed alcohol compared to 15.8% of middle school students statewide.



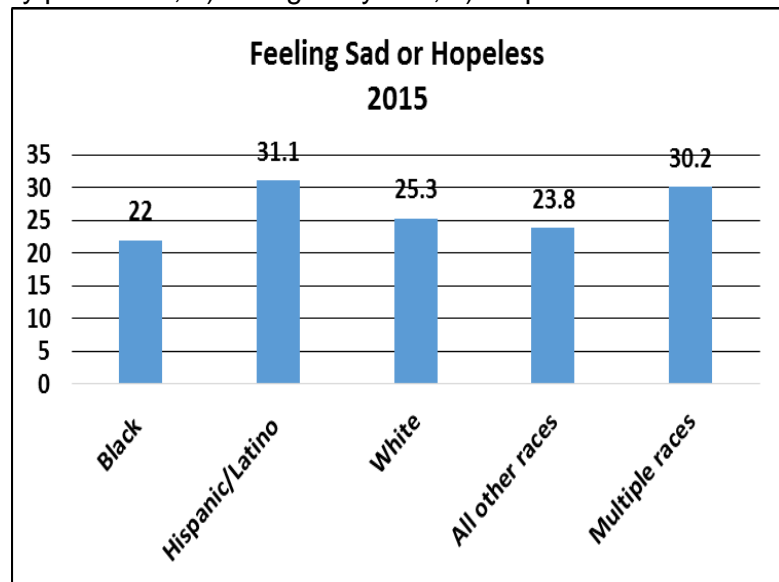
This indicator measures the percentage of students who used illegal drugs during the 2013 – 2014 academic year [5]. Consuming drugs can make youth more vulnerable to adverse educational and health outcomes. At Gilbert Stuart Middle School and Roger Williams Middle School, students were more likely than their peers in Rhode Island to ever take an illegal drug (12%, 17% vs. 9%).



This indicator measures the teen pregnancy rate per 1,000 girls ages 15 to 19 years during 2013 [6]. In 2013, girls in Providence were almost two times more likely to have been pregnant. In Providence, the rate was 31.1 per 1000 girls compared to 17.7 per 1,000 girls of the same age statewide.

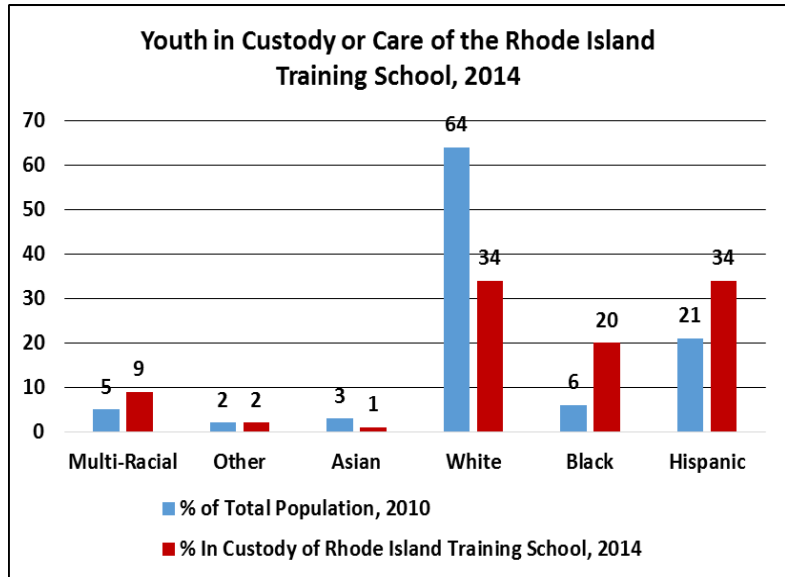


This indicator measures the percentage of students who reported feeling sad and hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row, which resulted in them stopping some of their usual activities [7]. The Rhode Island Child Death Review Team Youth Suicide Issue Brief (2005 – 2010) identified populations at increased risk for suicide including 1) youth with a history of substance abuse; 2) military personnel; 3) immigrant youth; 4) Hispanic and African American youth; 5) bullied youth; 6) youth with disabilities and 7) sexual minority youth [34]. In 2015, 30.2% of multiple race students, 31.1% of Hispanic students, 25.3% of White students, and 23.8% of students of all other races reported that they “felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more” [7].



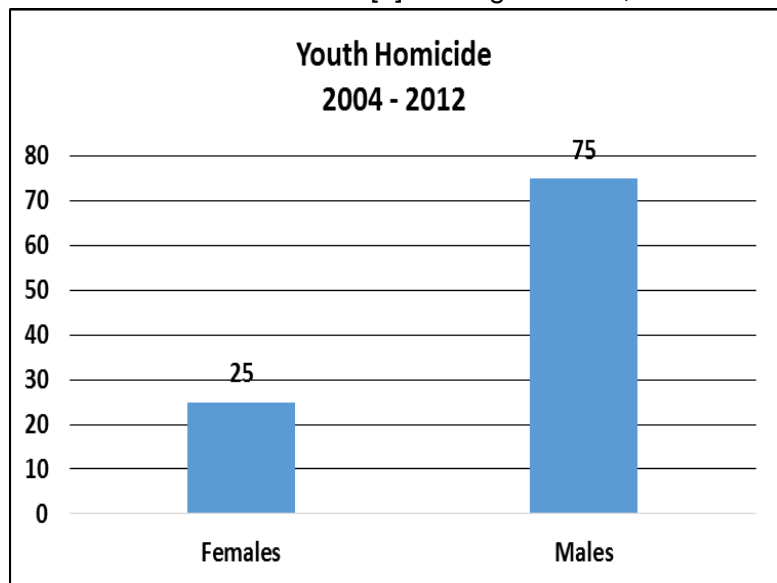
In the 2013 – 2014 school year, 31% of Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School students felt sad and hopeless, compared to 29% of all Rhode Island high school students. Also, 33% of Gilbert Stuart Middle School students and 32% of Roger Williams Middle School students felt this way compared to 28% of all RI middle school students [5].

This is an indicator of the percentage of youth age 18 or under who were in the custody or care of the Rhode Island Training School in 2014 [8]. Racial and ethnic minority youth are disproportionately represented at every stage of the juvenile justice system. Racial and ethnic minority youth are more likely to be arrested, be formally charged in court, are more likely to be placed in secure detention, and also receive harsher treatment than white youth [8]. In 2014, Hispanic and Black youth were disproportionately placed in the custody or care of the Rhode Island Training School. In



Providence, children ages 10-18 years represented 17.6% of all arrests [6, 8]. In 2013, arrest and detention reports indicated that in Providence, 40% of all offenders committed to juvenile detention were Hispanic, 38.7% were Black or African-American, and 72% were male [6, 8]. Providence youth were also more likely to have an incarcerated parent (25.7 per 1,000 children) than their counterparts throughout the state (11.8 per 1,000 children). Statewide, black or African American youth disproportionately felt the burden of having an incarcerated parent (63.8 per 1,000 children) compared to all other racial and ethnic groups [6, 8].

This indicator measures the rate of homicides from 2004 to 2012 [9]. During this time, homicide was the leading cause of violent deaths among those <25 years of age in Rhode Island. More than one-third of all homicides during this time period were among youth ages 0 to 24 years [9]. However, the majority of homicide victims, 74% occur among youth ages 18 to 24 years [9]. The homicide rate for males was three times the rate for females. Youth homicide victims were mostly Hispanic (42%), non-Hispanic White (29%), and non-Hispanic Black (25%).



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