Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

School-Based Arrests in the District of Columbia, 2013-2023

Report

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About the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

As an independent agency, the mission of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) is to serve as a forum for identifying challenges and generating solutions to enhance public safety and the fair administration of justice for District of Columbia residents, visitors, victims, and justice-involved individuals. Th CJCC facilitates information sharing and collaboration, conducts research and analysis, and provides training and technical assistance on behalf of its District and federal member agencies.

CJCC is the home of the DC Statistical Analysis Center (SAC). The mission of the SAC is to apply the highest level of scientific rigor and objectivity in the study of criminal justice policies, programs and practices, and to identify activities that improve the administration of justice. The SAC aims to produce empirical research and analysis that informs stakeholders and enhances policy decision-making in the District.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction

The patterns and causes of juvenile arrests have long been a subject of interest and concern. While many reports analyze District-wide data, there is less understanding of the types and patterns of arrests that occur at the District's schools.

The Council of the District of Columbia mandated that the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council submit a report to the Mayor and Council on the root causes of youth crime and prevalence of adverse childhood experiences that incorporates results from a voluntary survey of youth with juvenile justice system involvement on their perspectives. The CYJAA specified that the report should examine factors "such as housing instability, child abuse, family instability, substance abuse, mental illness, family criminal involvement, and other factors deemed relevant by the CJCC" (D.C. Law 21-23).

In accordance with this mandate, CJCC obtained administrative data from multiple sectors on a representative sample of youth enrolled in public schools in the District during the 2016 – 2017 school year and identified youth with justice system involvement, which was defined as being arrested or petitioned/charged the following year. During the fall of 2018, the CJCC conducted surveys and focus groups with DYRS-committed and DOC-incarcerated youth under the age of 21, and, during the spring and summer of 2018, conducted interviews with youth service providers.

Effective April 2, 2022, D.C. Council amended the law to read, "By October 1, 2022, the CJCC shall submit a report to the Mayor and the Council that analyzes protective factors that reduce the risk of District youth entering the juvenile and criminal justice systems."[1] A report issued in October 2022 contained both a replication of prior empirical research as well as discussion surrounding protective factors and how they are currently implemented in the District or how they could be implemented.

In the April 2022 amendment, the Council also mandated that the CJCC submit a report to the Mayor and District of Columbia Council by October 1, 2024, that analyzes the types of school-based incidents that lead to law enforcement referral or arrest.[2] In accordance with this mandate, CJCC obtained juvenile arrest data pertaining to arrests occurring at public and charter schools in the District of Columbia during the 2013-14 through the 2022-23 school years.

This new analysis addresses the following questions related specifically to the intersection of schools and juvenile justice system involvement:

1. What current and historical policies or legislation may have impacted the number of school-based arrests?
2. How many arrests of juveniles occurred at schools relative to the total number of juvenile arrests in the District of Columbia?
3. What were the characteristics of and trends in individuals and offenses associated with school-based arrests?

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[1] D.C. Law 24-105
[2] D.C. Law 23-274, §903

II. An Overview of School-Based Arrests and Non-School-Based Arrests

Trends in Juvenile Arrests and Efforts to Reduce Juvenile Justice System Involvement

Most of the juveniles arrested in the District of Columbia each of the last several years – over 90% – were Black. Over the past several years the District of Columbia has taken steps to reduce the exposure and involvement of juveniles in the justice system. These include juvenile diversion programs, alternatives to prosecution, and the use of specialty courts.

Some specific actions include the Metropolitan Police Department's (MPD) January 2020 update to General Order 305.01, which modified procedures with respect to juvenile arrests and detention. Specifically, the order expanded the criteria for pre-arrest diversion, such as including individuals who have had prior misdemeanor arrests, and placed restrictions on officers' ability to arrest juveniles who are 12 and under.[3] Additionally, in January 2020, the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) established a 24/7 hotline that enabled MPD officers, upon apprehending a juvenile, to consult with OAG attorneys in real-time. If the OAG attorney determines, based on the nature of the offense and the current evidence, that the case would not be papered, then MPD would release the youth and not proceed with the arrest/booking process.

Diversion programs include the Alternatives to the Court Experience (ACE) program and the Parent and Adolescent Support Services (PASS) Intensive Case Management (ICM) program. The ACE program is run by the Department of Human Services (DHS) along with the Court Social Services Division (CSSD), Office of the Attorney General (OAG), Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), and MPD. It is for youth who have committed low-level delinquency offenses or status offenses that the government has chosen not to prosecute. Both MPD and OAG may divert youth who qualify for ACE based on specific eligibility criteria. The PASS ICM program, run through DHS, provides intensive case management services to juveniles who engage in behaviors such as skipping school (truancy), leaving home without permission, not returning home by curfew, and/or exhibiting extreme disobedience in and/or outside the home. PASS can accept referrals from schools, community members, as well as juvenile justice system agencies.

Other efforts to reduce the penetration of juveniles into the justice system include alternatives to prosecution like the OAG's Restorative Justice (RJ) program, or the use of specialty courts like the Here Opportunities Prepare you for Excellence (HOPE) Court for youth involved in or at risk of sexual exploitation and the Juvenile Behavior Diversion Program (JBDP), which provides mental health supports and services.
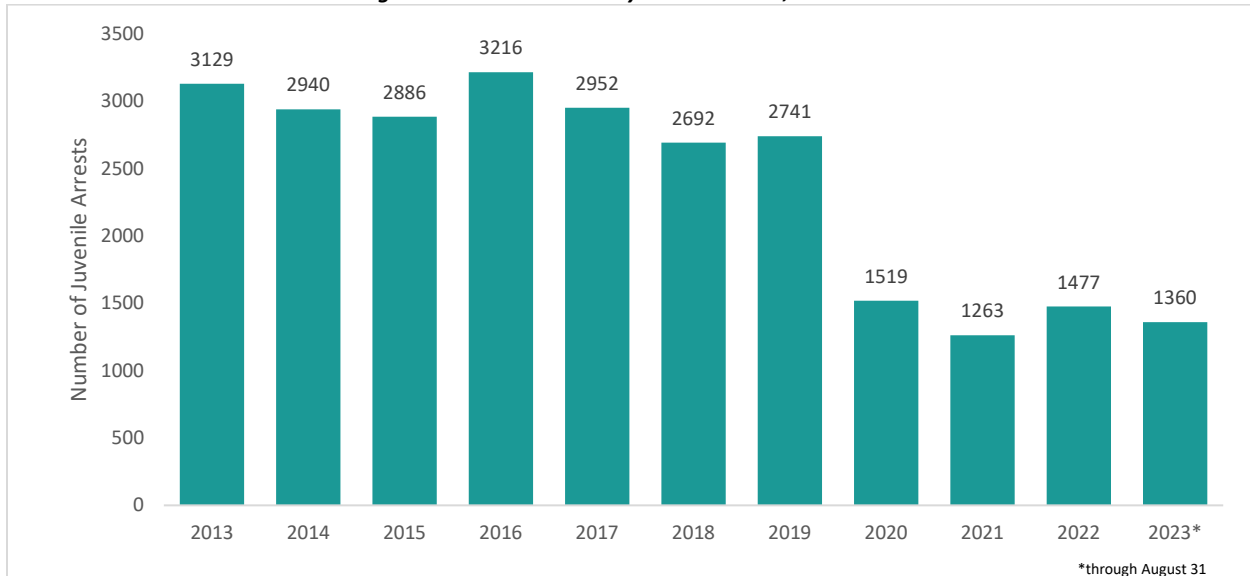
School-Based Arrests vs. Non-School-Based Arrests

To analyze trends in school-based juvenile arrests, it is important to first examine them in the context of overall juvenile arrests. Metropolitan Police Department data shows 25,833 unique juvenile arrests between January 1, 2013, and July 31, 2023. Juvenile arrests peaked in calendar year 2016 with 3,216 unique juvenile arrest events and have been declining since. Juvenile arrests sharply declined during the

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[3] MPD General Order 305.01, "Interacting with Juveniles"

COVID-19 pandemic and, although there was an increase in juvenile arrests in 2022 compared to 2021, the level is roughly half that of the 2016 peak. Figure 1 shows unique juvenile arrests by calendar year, from January 1, 2013 – August 31, 2023.[4]

Figure 1: Juvenile Arrests by Calendar Year, 2013-2023

*through August 31

Tracking school-based arrests requires determining a more appropriate unit of measurement for time than calendar year because of trends in seasonality and amount of time spent by juveniles on school properties. This analysis uses the published start and end dates of the DCPS school year calendar.[5] Although some charter schools may not adhere directly to these dates, they provide a meaningful and consistent proxy that will enable cross-school-year comparisons. The Appendix contains details about the school year start and end dates used in this analysis.

With the school-year periods defined, we match arrest data of juveniles (under 18 years old) within the corresponding window of dates with the locations of public and charter schools in the District of Columbia. There is no single cutoff age for student eligibility in DCPS and PCS schools, and while there were some students above the age of 18, focusing on juveniles ensures that only student populations were captured, and the analysis is not erroneously including arrests of older individuals with no relationship to the schools at which they were arrested. This methodology differs from other MPD reporting on school-based arrests by excluding youth between the ages of 18-20 and including weekend and overnight arrests. In addition, data limitations prevented a case-level review of each incident, thus some arrests reported in this analysis may be unrelated to the school where they occurred.

Figure 2 shows the number of total unique juvenile arrests from SY13-14 through SY22-23 and Figure 3 displays the number of unique juvenile arrests that occurred at a public or charter school in the District of Columbia for each school year from SY13-14 through SY22-23.[6] There were 19,652 total arrests of juveniles within this time frame and 1,761 arrests of juveniles at schools (8.96% of total juvenile arrests).

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[4] The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on juvenile arrests and school attendance is available in the Appendix.
[5] DCPS school calendars available at https://dcps.dc.gov/node/936772.
[6] Throughout this report any discussion of 'Total' juvenile arrests will be referring to arrests that occurred during the same time frame as the DCPS school year.

As with overall juvenile arrests, we see a peak in the number of juveniles arrested at schools in SY15-16 and a steep drop-off beginning in SY19-20 and continuing through the subsequent academic years.

Figure 2: Total Juvenile Arrests by School Year, SY13-14 – SY22-23
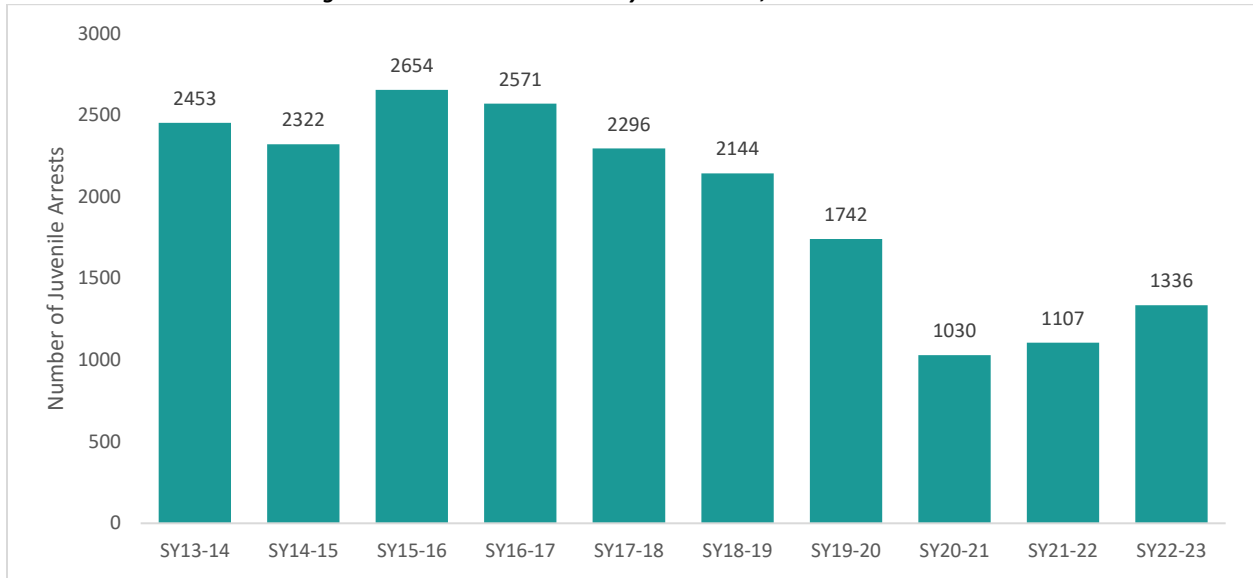

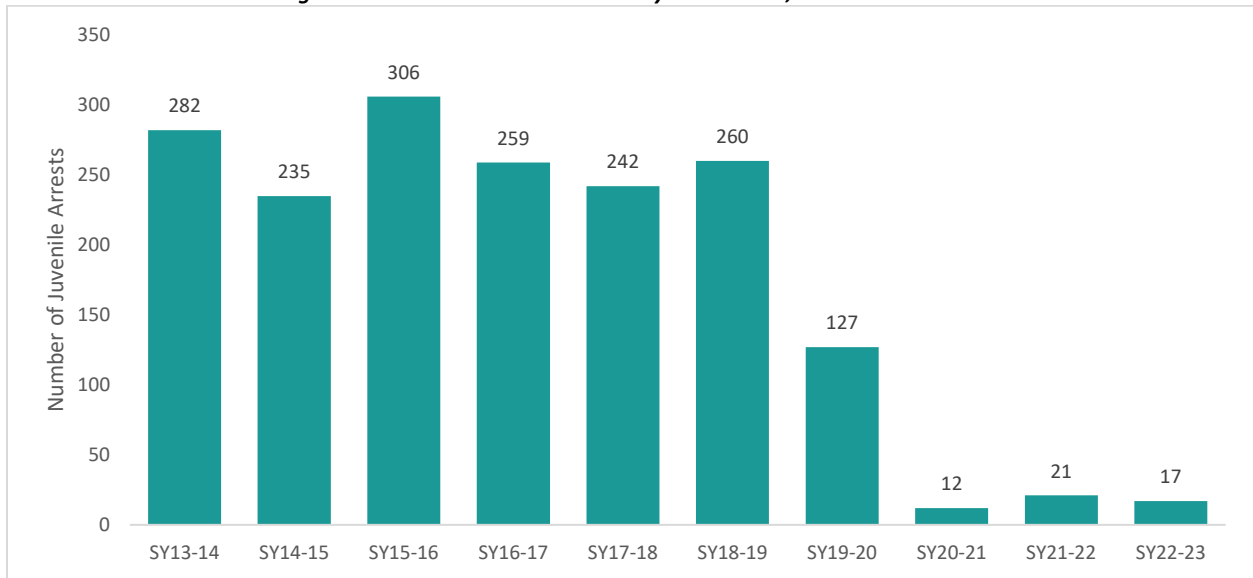*Figure 3: Juvenile Arrests at Schools by School Year, SY13-14 – SY22-23*

Figure 4 shows the percentage of total unique juvenile arrests that occurred at a public or charter school, by school year. From SY13-14 through SY18-19, an average of roughly 11% of all juvenile arrests occurred at a school. There was an initial decline to 7.3% in SY19-20 (capturing the start of the pandemic) and then a drop to an average of 1.5% from SY20-21 through SY22-23.
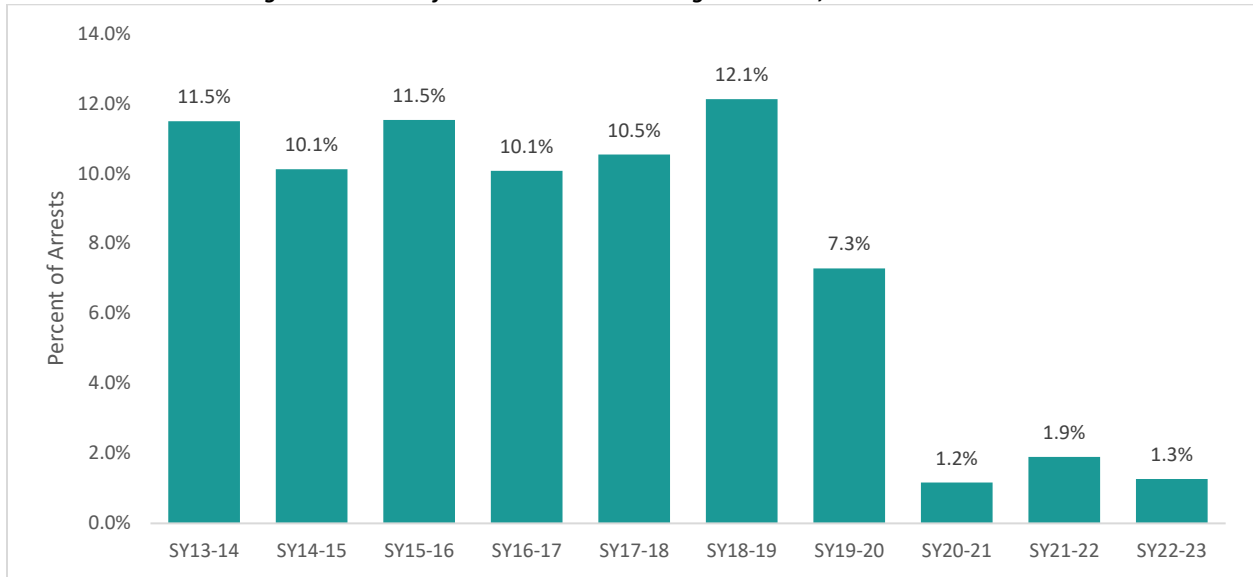
While the initial drop in the proportion of juveniles arrested at schools can be attributed in large part to the transition to remote or hybrid learning for large portions of SY19-20 through SY20-21, other social factors and legislative efforts along with structural elements of the School Resource Officer program may have contributed as well.

Demographic Composition of Juveniles Arrested at School Compared to All Juveniles Arrested

There were few demographic differences between all juveniles arrested and juveniles arrested at schools. Approximately 94% of juveniles arrested in total were Black. Similarly, 94.1% of juveniles arrested at schools were Black and 94.6% of juveniles arrested elsewhere were Black. There was a similar proportion of White juveniles arrested in total (3.4%), at schools (3.7%), and not at schools (3.5%). There is inadequate ethnicity data to determine the proportion of juvenile arrests in total and at school that involve youth of Hispanic origin.

Table 1 shows the gender, race, and age distribution of youth in the District of Columbia. Between 2013 and 2020 the proportion of male and female juveniles remained the same. However, the share of Black youth declined from 72.5% in 2013 to 65.4% in 2020 while the share of Hispanic (17.0% to 20.7%) and White youth (24.2% to 30.3%) rose. The age distribution shifted slightly as well with a slight increase in the proportion of 10-, 11-, and 12-year-olds and a slight decline in the proportion of 15-, 16-, and 17-year-olds. Despite the shift in demographics, the profile of juveniles arrested at schools remained consistent.[7]

With respect to gender, female juveniles made up a slightly larger proportion of school-based arrests (31.9%) than total arrests (27.5%). Figure 5 shows the distribution of arrests by gender for both total

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[7] Because the vast majority (>99.99%) of juveniles arrested were age 10 or above, the age portion of this table only includes youth between the ages of 10 and 17.

juvenile arrests during the SY13-14 through SY22-23 period as well as school-based arrests over the same period.

Table 1: Gender, Race, and Age Distribution of District of Columbia Youth, 2013-2020

Year	Gender		Race/Ethnicity				
	Male	Female	Black/African American	Hispanic	White/ Caucasian	Asian	American Indian
2013	50.4%	49.6%	72.5%	17.0%	24.2%	3.1%	0.3%
2014	50.4%	49.6%	71.5%	17.9%	25.0%	3.2%	0.3%
2015	50.5%	49.5%	70.6%	18.7%	25.9%	3.2%	0.2%
2016	50.5%	49.5%	69.6%	19.1%	26.7%	3.4%	0.2%
2017	50.4%	49.6%	68.9%	19.6%	27.4%	3.5%	0.3%
2018	50.4%	49.6%	68.1%	20.0%	28.0%	3.6%	0.3%
2019	50.5%	49.5%	66.8%	20.5%	29.1%	3.8%	0.3%
2020	50.5%	49.5%	65.4%	20.7%	30.3%	4.1%	0.3%

| Year	Age (10-17 only)								
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Total #
2013	14.1%	12.8%	13.1%	14.1%	12.7%	11.4%	10.9%	11.0%	**5,119**
2014	13.4%	13.3%	12.0%	12.9%	13.5%	12.1%	11.5%	11.3%	**5,568**
2015	13.3%	12.7%	12.7%	11.8%	12.8%	12.9%	12.2%	11.6%	**5,921**
2016	15.4%	12.5%	11.9%	12.1%	11.3%	12.0%	12.6%	12.2%	**6,167**
2017	15.8%	14.6%	11.8%	11.1%	11.7%	10.7%	12.1%	12.3%	**6,536**
2018	15.4%	15.0%	13.7%	11.5%	10.6%	11.2%	10.8%	11.9%	**6,826**
2019	15.7%	14.6%	14.2%	13.0%	10.8%	10.2%	11.0%	10.6%	**7,227**
2020	15.5%	14.6%	13.8%	13.4%	12.5%	9.8%	9.9%	10.5%	**7,558**

Figure 5: Distribution of Arrests by Gender, SY13-14 – SY22-23
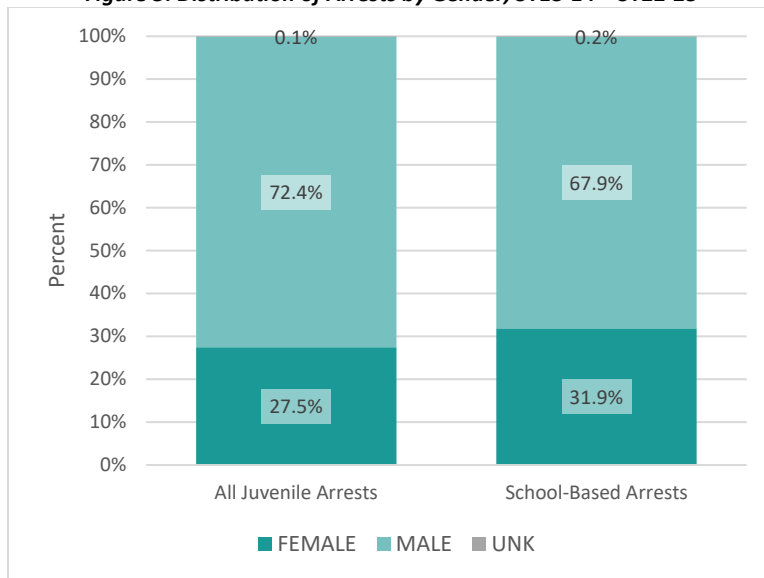
Juveniles arrested at school were, on average, slightly younger. The average age of all arrested during the sample period is 15.4 years compared to an average age of 15.1 years for juveniles arrested at a

school. Figure 6 shows the percent of juveniles by age category for total juvenile arrests and school-based arrests.

Figure 6: Distribution of Total and School-Based Juvenile Arrests by Age, SY13-14 – SY22-23
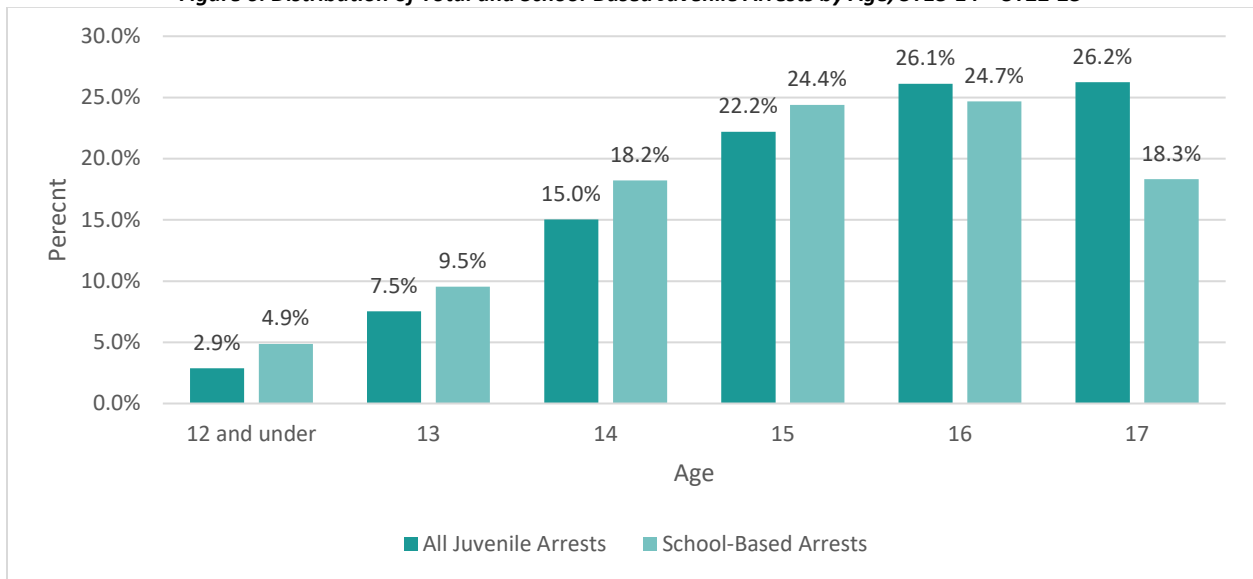
## Demographic Characteristics of Juveniles Arrested at Schools

Most juveniles arrested at schools over the study timeframe were Black males (1,105 of 1,761 - 62.7%). The second largest group is Black females, who made up 31.3% of the population (551 of 1,761). Figure 7 shows the percent of arrests at schools that were of Black students for each school year.

Figure 7: Percent of Juveniles Arrested at School who were Black, SY13-14 – SY22-23
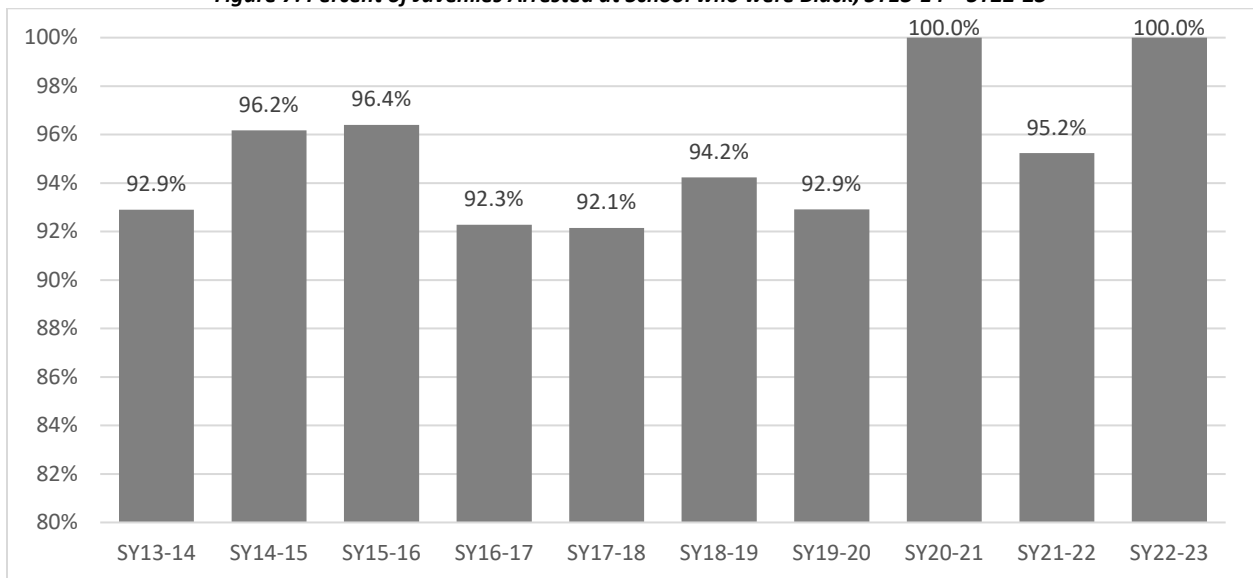
Males account for most school-based arrests, accounting for 67.5% of the total arrests at school over the sample period. Figure 8 shows the number of school-based arrests each school year broken down by gender. There is one arrest record in SY13-14 and one arrest record in SY14-15 with no gender recorded.

*Figure 8: Percent of School-Based Arrests of Males, SY13-14 – SY22-23*
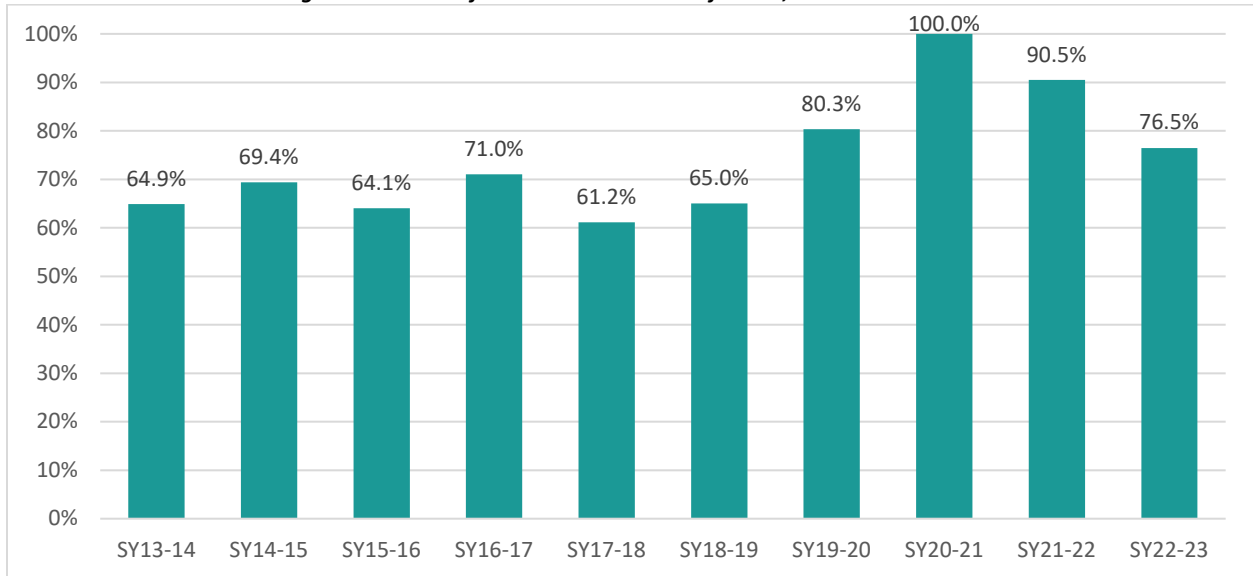
The average age of juveniles arrested at school is 15.07 years old. This is slightly younger than the peak risk age for juveniles to have any involvement in the juvenile justice system calculated in the 2022 Study of Factors that Affect the Likelihood of Juvenile Justice System Involvement.[8] Figure 9 shows the age distribution for juveniles arrested at school during the entire sample timeframe, Figure 10 shows the distribution of school-based arrests by age for each school year.

Figure 9: Number of Arrests at Schools by Age, SY13-14 – SY22-23

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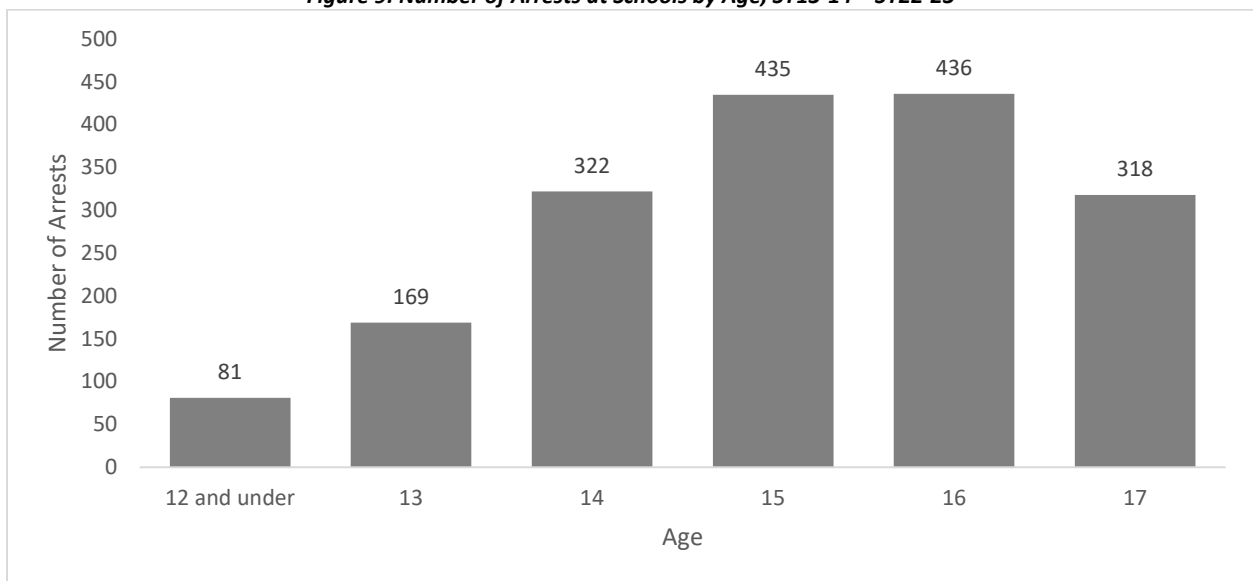
[8] CJCC, "A Study of Factors that Affect the Likelihood of Juvenile Justice System Involvement"

Figure 10: Distribution of Arrests at Schools by Age and School Year, SY13-14 – SY22-23
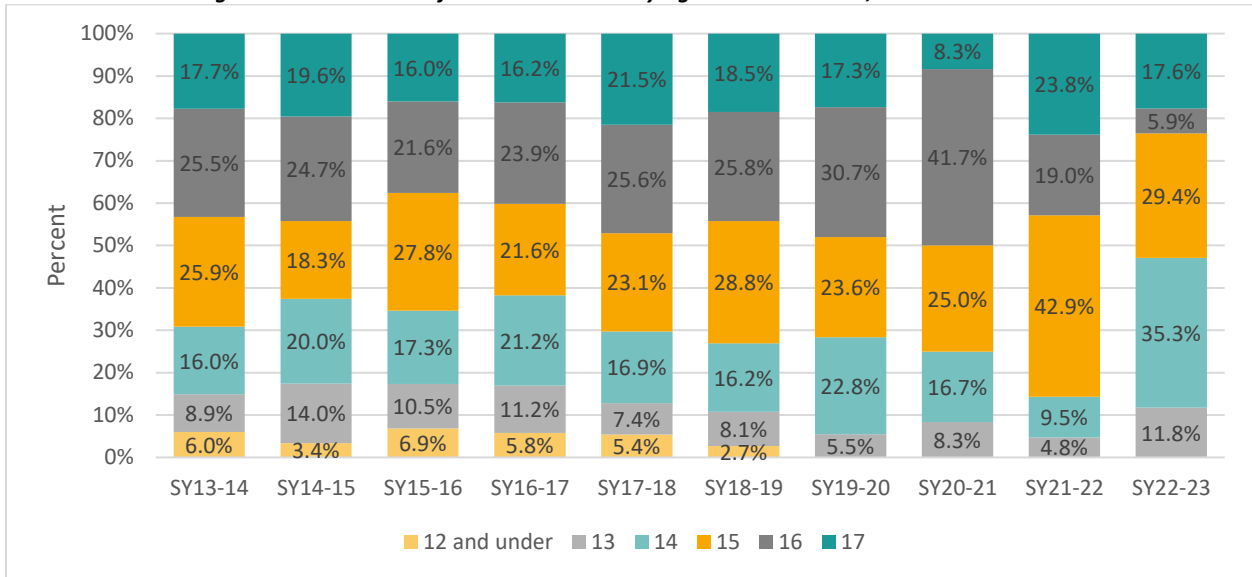
In each year from SY13-14 – SY19-20 15- or 16-year-olds account for the greatest share of total school-based arrests. Those two age groups combined account for nearly half (49.5%) of all school-based arrests of juveniles in that period.

Top Charge Offense Types of Juveniles Arrested at School Compared to All Juveniles Arrested

Figure 11 shows the offense types of the top arrest charges for total juvenile arrests and school-based arrests during the SY13-14 – SY22-23-time frame.

Figure 11: Percent of Top-Charge Offense Types: All Juvenile Arrests and School-Based Arrests, SY13-14 – SY22-23
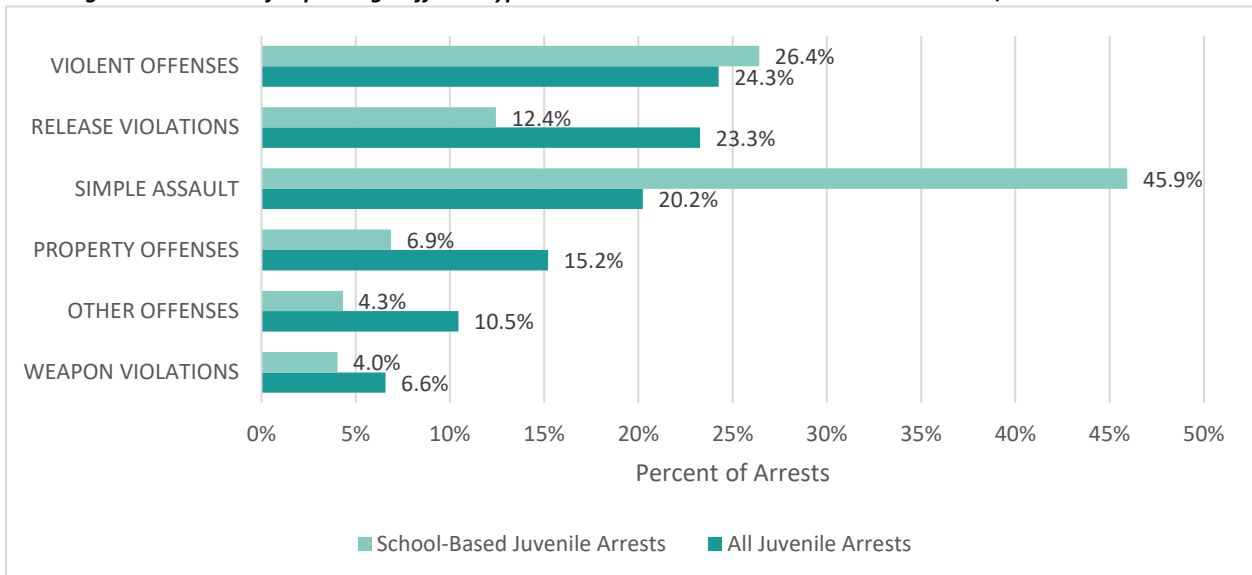
The key difference between the offense types for all arrests compared to school-based arrests is with respect to simple assault. While one in five juvenile arrests during the study period was for a simple assault charge, more than double that – just under half – of school-based arrests were for simple assaults. The only other category in which school-based arrests had a higher proportion was violent offenses, but the difference was small (26.4% compared to 24.3%).

Release violations (e.g., failure to appear, contempt, and abscondence), property offenses, weapon, and other offences were all represented at a higher proportion in the total sample compared to the sample of school-based arrests.[9]

As illustrated above, simple assaults account for the greatest share of school-based arrests at 45.9% followed by violent offenses (26.4%) and release violations (12.4%). Figure 12 shows the distribution of different offense types for each school year.

Figure 12: Distribution of Offense Types of School-Based Arrests by School Year
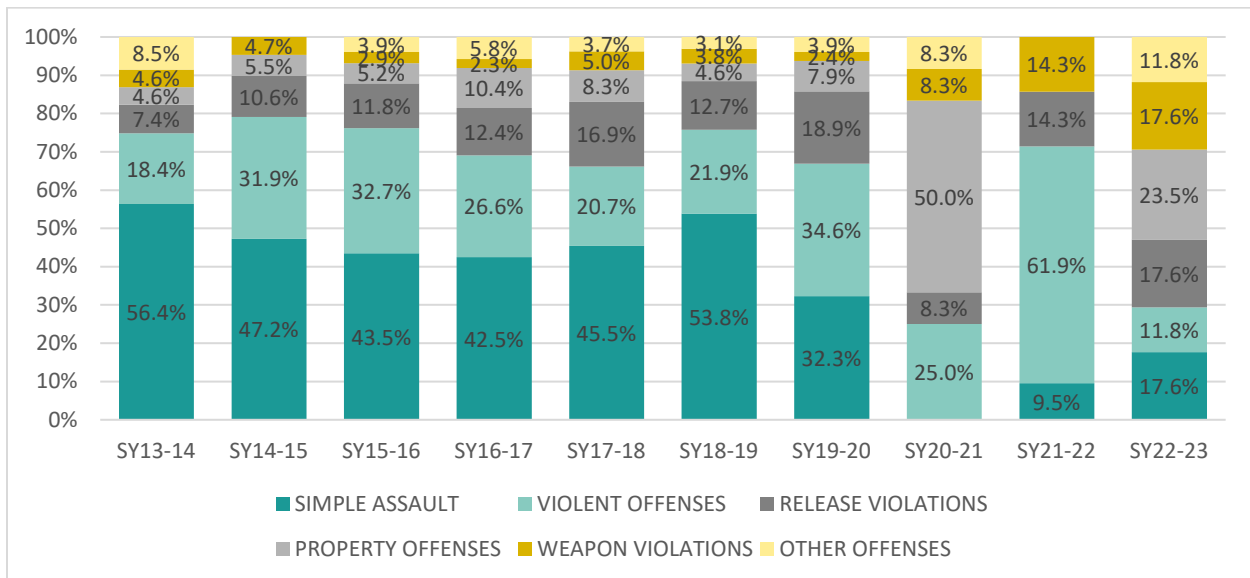
The distribution of offense types for each school year is mostly consistent from SY13-14 through SY19-20 with much greater variation in the three most recent school years, likely attributable to small sample sizes relative to the preceding years. However, whereas in earlier years simple assault was the predominant offense, more recently property and violent crimes have made up a greater share of offenses.

Over the 10 school years included in this study, males account for just over two thirds of all school-based arrests (67.5%) and females just under one third (32.4%). Relative to the expectation given this distribution of gender, males were disproportionately overrepresented in arrests for violent offenses, property offenses, weapon violations, and other offenses while females were overrepresented in arrests

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[9] The category of 'Other Offenses' includes narcotics offenses, traffic offenses, gambling, and other offenses that are not elsewhere classified.

for simple assault and release violations. Figure 13 shows the number of school-based arrests for each offense type by gender and Figure 14 shows the distribution of offense types by gender.[10]

Figure 13: Number of Offense Types of School-Based Arrests by Gender, SY13-14 – SY22-23
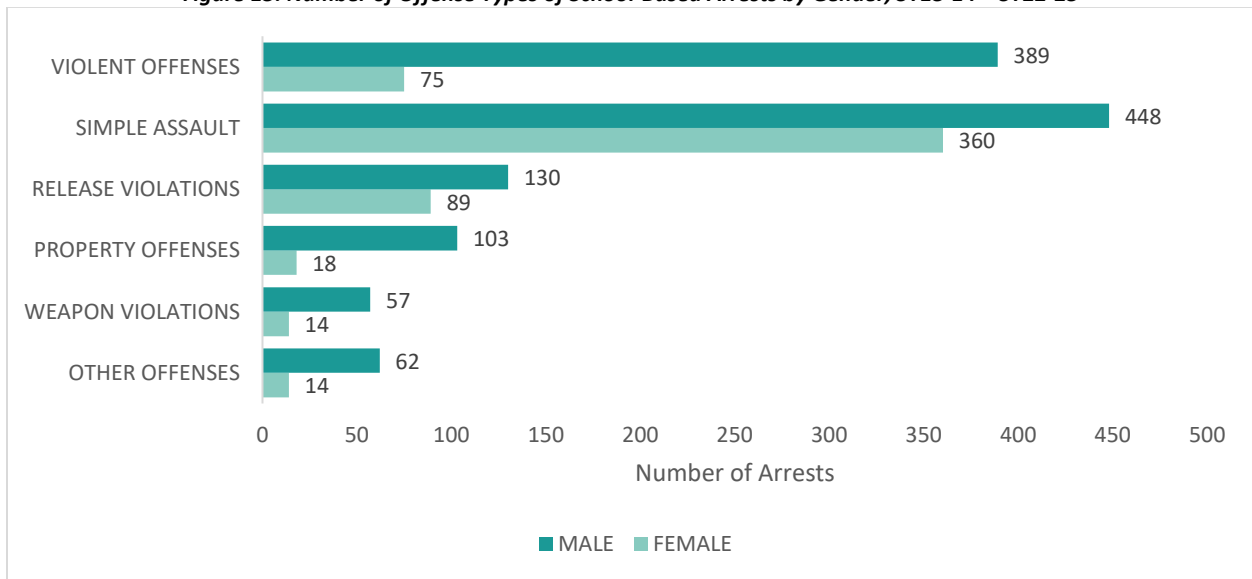

Figure 14: Distribution of Offense Types of School-Based Arrests by Gender, SY13-14 – SY22-23
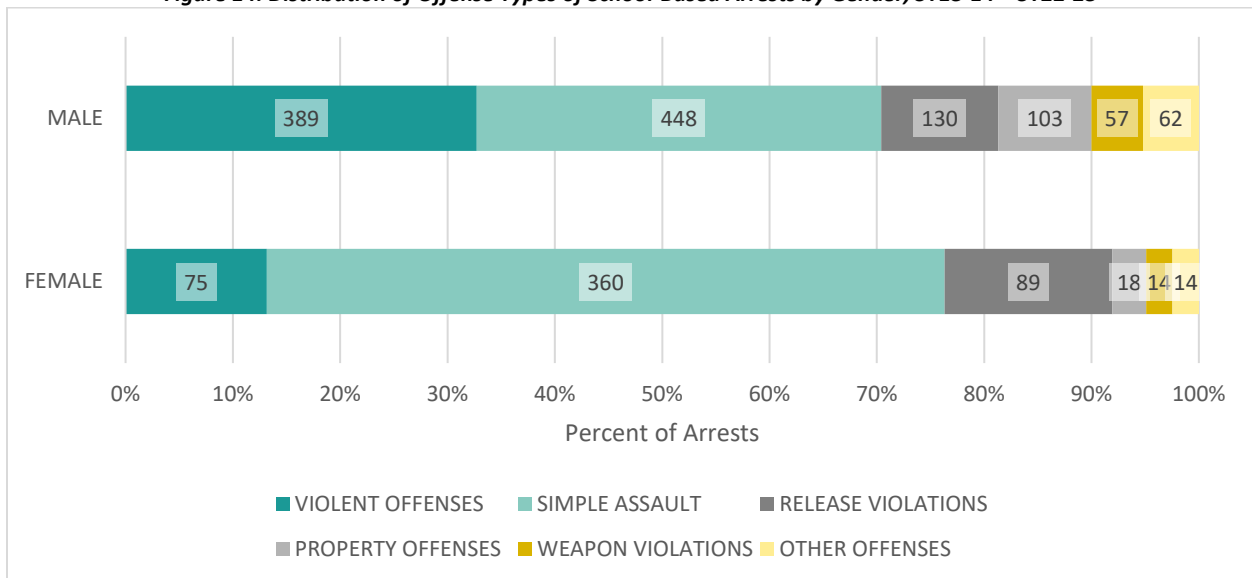

Figure 15 shows the number of arrests by age for each offense type. The distribution of offense types by age is shown in Figure 16. The types of offenses for which youth are arrested shift with age. For example, among 13-year-olds, 55.0% of arrests are for simple assault offenses and 20.7% are for violent offenses. However, among 15-year-olds 42.1% of arrests are for simple assault offenses and 28.7% of arrests are for violent offenses. We also observe an increase in the proportion of release violation offenses as youth age increases.

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[10] There are 2 arrests records with an unknown or missing gender identifier.

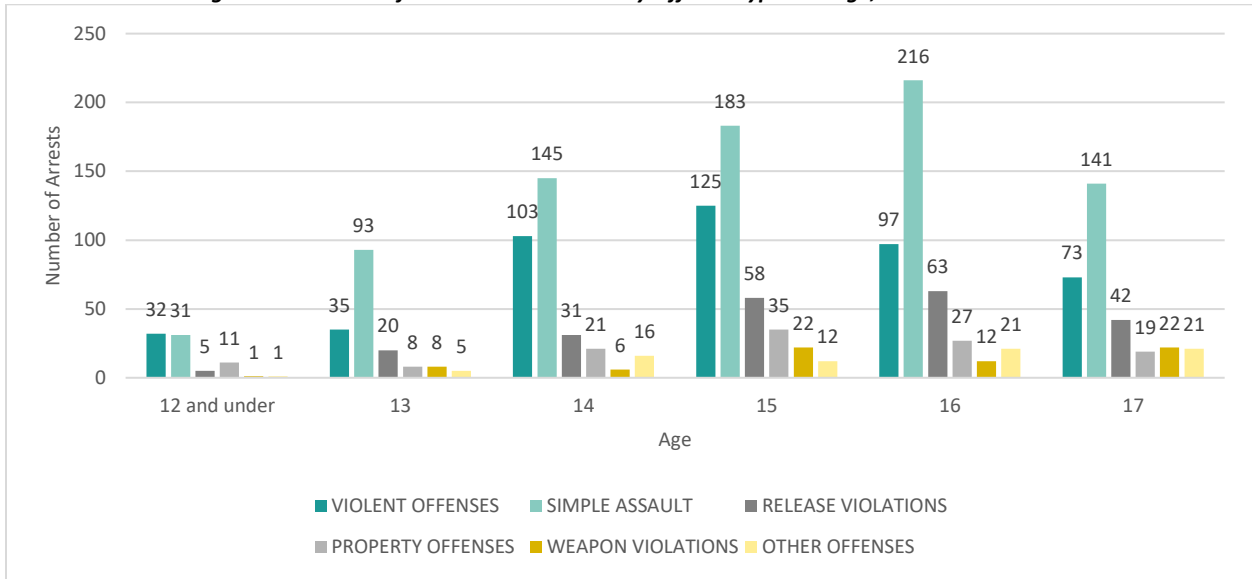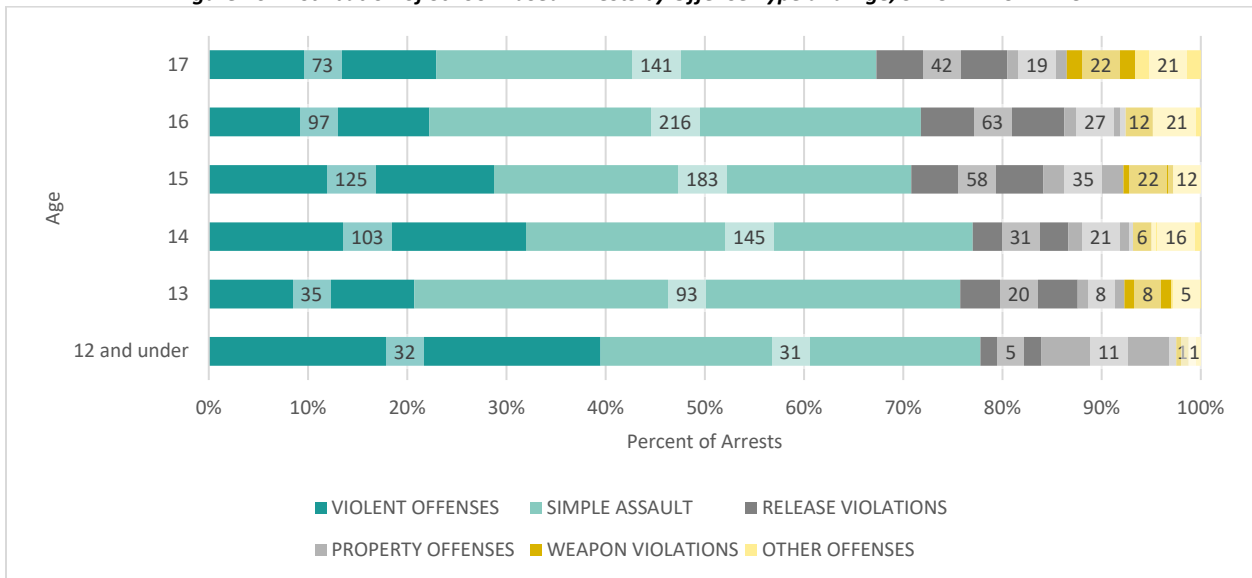*Figure 15: Number of School-Based Arrests by Offense Type and Age, SY13-14 – SY22-23*

Figure 16: Distribution of School-Based Arrests by Offense Type and Age, SY13-14 – SY22-23

14

III. Characteristics of Schools with School-Based Arrests

Types and Locations of Schools

The District of Columbia is home to both public (DCPS) and public charter (PCS) schools. The total student population has grown from 82,958 in SY13-14 to 97,059 in SY22-23. From SY13-14 to SY22-23 the proportion of District students enrolled in a DCPS school has fluctuated between 52.0% and 55.9% with an average of 53.8% of students in the District of Columbia enrolled in a DCPS school, with the remainder enrolled in public charter schools or private schools. Figure 17 shows the number of unique juvenile arrests at DCPS and PCS locations each school year and Figure 18 shows the percentage of school-based arrests that occurred at a public school or a charter school.

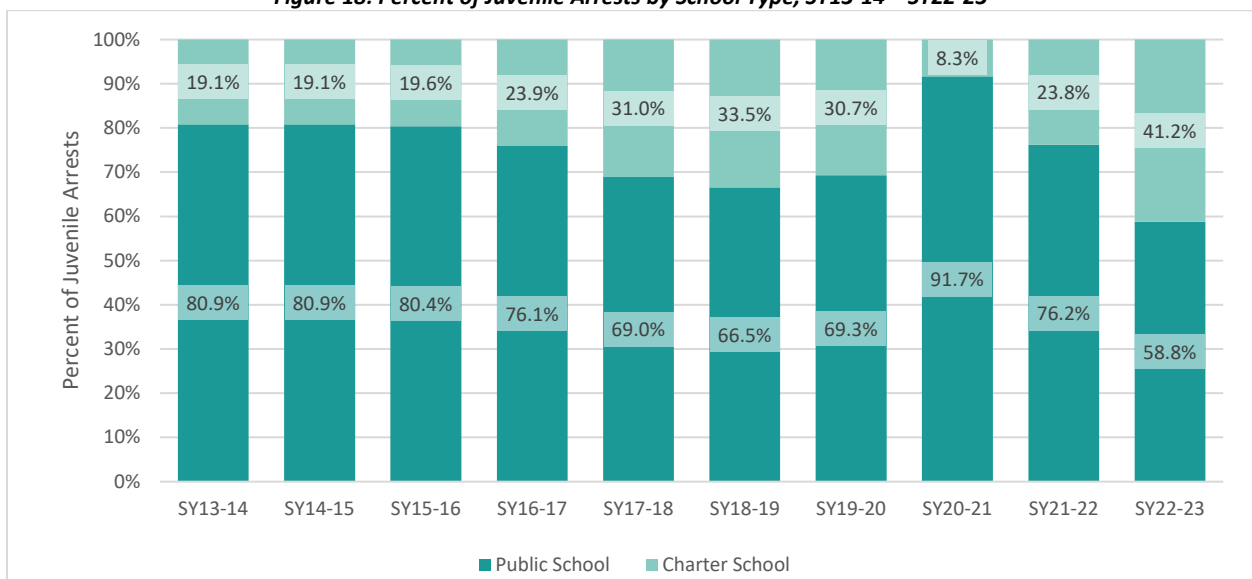*Figure 17: Number of Juvenile Arrests by School Type, SY13-14 – SY22-23*
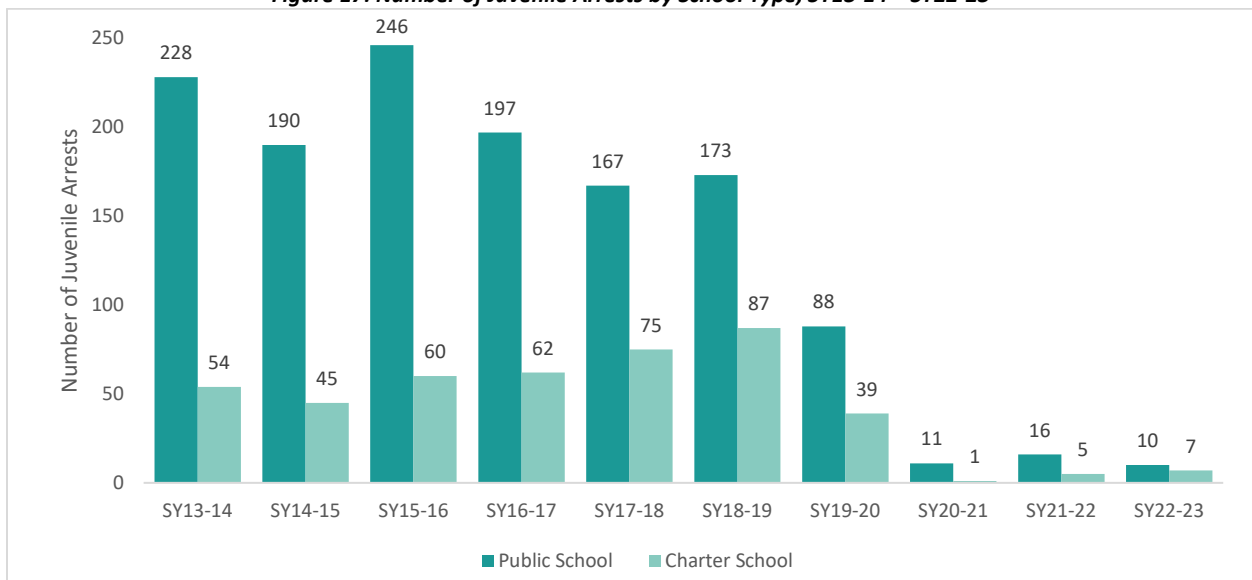
Figure 18: Percent of Juvenile Arrests by School Type, SY13-14 – SY22-23

Despite the approximately even distribution of students in the District of Columbia between public and charter schools, most school-based arrests occurred at public schools. The distribution of offense types, illustrated in Figure 19, is roughly the same. A higher proportion of arrests at public schools were for simple assault offenses (47.5% compared to 41.1% at charter schools) and charter schools see a slightly higher proportion of arrests for release violations (16.3% compared to 11.2% at public schools).

Figure 19: Distribution of Offense Types for Juvenile Arrests at Public and Charter Schools, SY13-14 through SY22-23
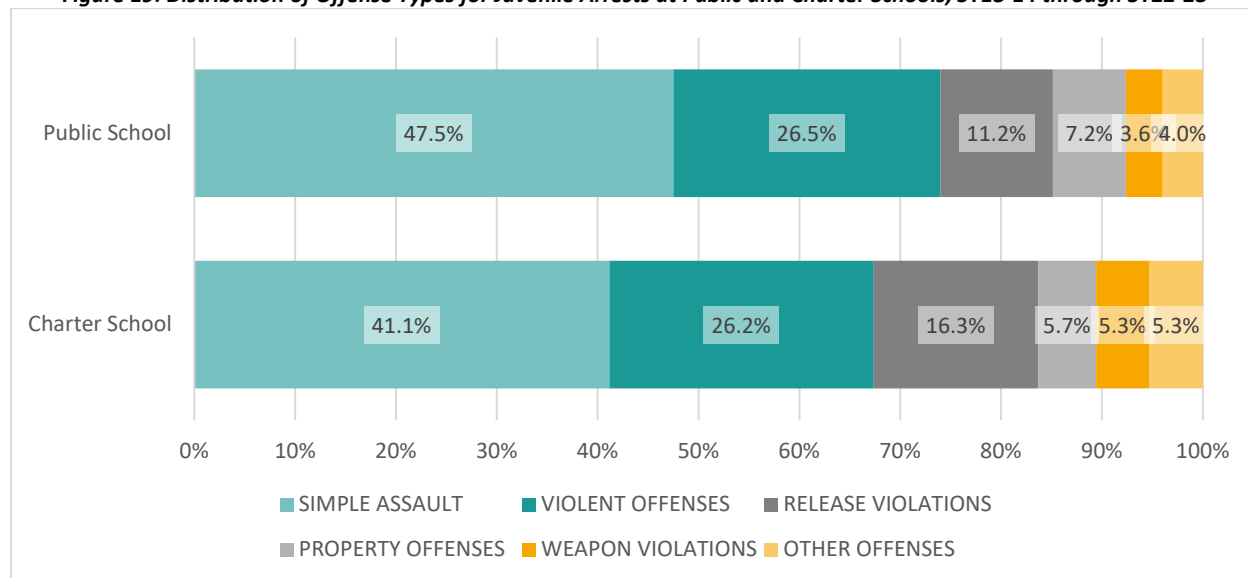
As of SY22-23 there were 154 charter schools and 123 public schools in the District of Columbia. As shown in Table 2, about one-third of charter schools and about half of public schools had at least one arrest. However, a majority of the school-based arrests occurred at a relatively small number of schools. Table 2 provides a more detailed breakdown, and further details are available in the Appendix.

Table 2: Number of Schools and Percent of School-Based Arrests Accounted for by Top Schools, SY13-14 – SY22-23

	Public School	Charter School
Number of Schools in the District of Columbia	123	154
Number of Schools with at least 1 School-Based Arrest	60 (48.8%)	48 (31.2%)
Number of Schools with > 10 School-Based Arrests	41 (33.3%)	35 (22.7%)
Total Number of School-Based Arrests, SY13-14 – SY22-23	1326	435
Percent of School-Based Arrests Accounted for by:		
Top School (highest number of arrests):	257 (19.4%)	51 (11.7%)
Top 5 Schools:	744 (56.1%)	200 (46.0%)
Top 10 Schools:	999 (75.3%)	284 (65.3%)

IV. Other Trends in School-Based Arrests

Location of Offenses

While the arrests considered in this report all occurred at school locations, many arrests were associated with offenses that occurred elsewhere. Of the 1,761 arrests, 1,289 (73.2%) were for offenses that occurred at a school and 472 (26.8%) were for offenses that occurred elsewhere. Figure 20 shows the yearly trends in offense location for school-based arrests.

Figure 20: Percent of School-Based Arrests by Offense Location, SY13-14 – SY22-23
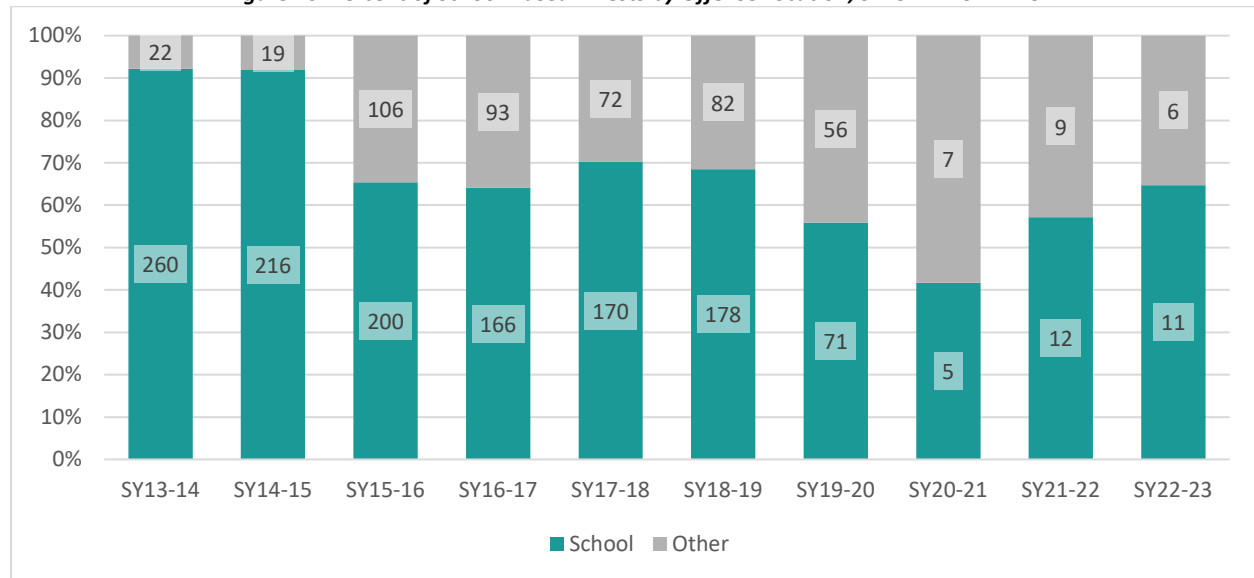
The types of offenses that juveniles were arrested for at school that occur at school differ from offenses that occur elsewhere. Figure 21 and Figure 22 show the number and percent of offense locations by offense type and the distribution of offense types of school-based arrests based on offense location.

Figure 21: Percent of School-Based Arrests by Offense Location and Offense Type, SY13-14 – SY22-23
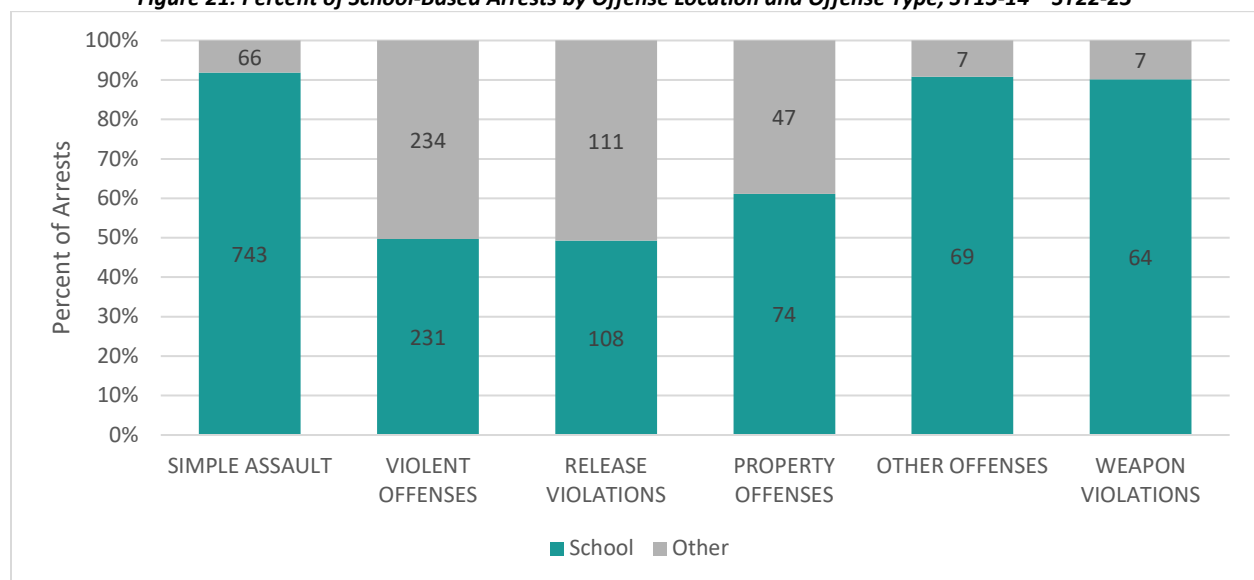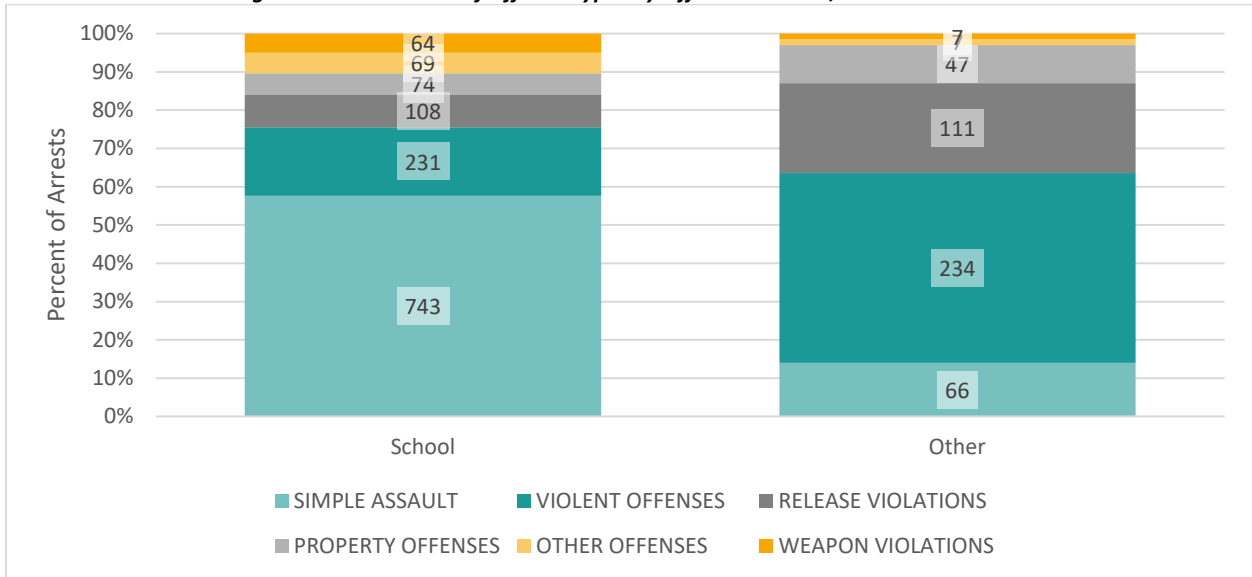
Figure 22: Distribution of Offense Types by Offense Location, SY13-14 – SY22-23

Simple assault (57.6%) is the most common offense type for offenses that occur at schools and result in an arrest, followed by violent offenses (17.9%) and release violations (8.4%). Of offenses that occur away from school locations, violent offenses (49.6%) were the most common type. One potential explanation could be that offenses that occur at schools tend to be lower-level offenses, such as fights or other interpersonal conflicts, while arrests at schools for offenses that occurred elsewhere could be a result of a custody order or warrant being issued in a more serious matter.

Time of Arrests

This report analyzes arrests that occur at schools from SY13-14 through SY22-23. A common debate when performing an analysis of school-based arrests is determining whether to consider restrictions on days or times of arrests. As previously mentioned, this report only considers the periods between the first and last day of school based on the DCPS calendar. During the study period, there were 51 arrests at school addresses that occurred in the summer periods between each of those ten school years – less than 3% of total arrests.

Similarly, the time of day must be considered. Schools may have varying hours of operation, and pre- and post-school activities may extend those hours on an irregular basis. Based on the reported time of arrest, more than 97% of school-based arrests in the sample occur between 8am and 8pm. Figure 23 shows an hourly breakdown of school-based arrests at DCPS and charter schools.

Figure 23: Number of Arrests at Public and Charter Schools by Time of Day, SY13-14 – SY22-23
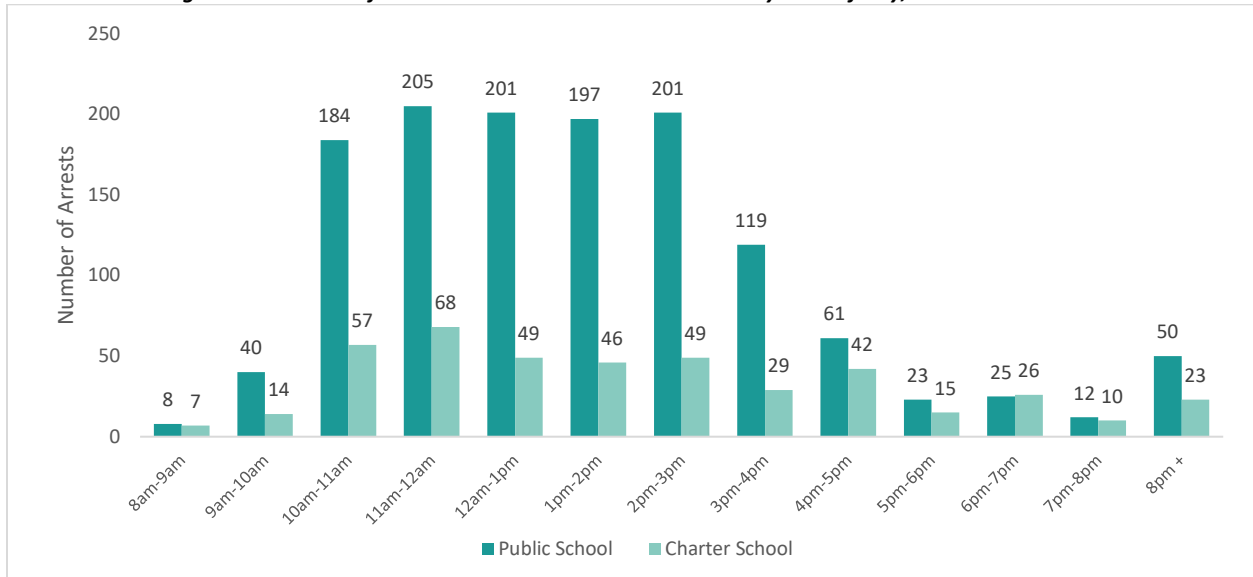
School-based arrests peak between 11am and noon at both public and charter schools. Most arrests occur between 10am and 3pm – 74.5% of arrests at public schools and 61.8% of charter school arrests.

Daily Trends

Nearly all school-based arrests of juveniles occur from Monday through Friday (98.5%). Thursday is the most common day on which juveniles were arrested, accounting for 22.7% of all arrests. Friday is the least common weekday, with just 14.1% of arrests occurring. Figure 24 shows the total number of school-based arrests by day of week, and Figure 25 shows the distribution of school-based arrests by day of week for each school year.

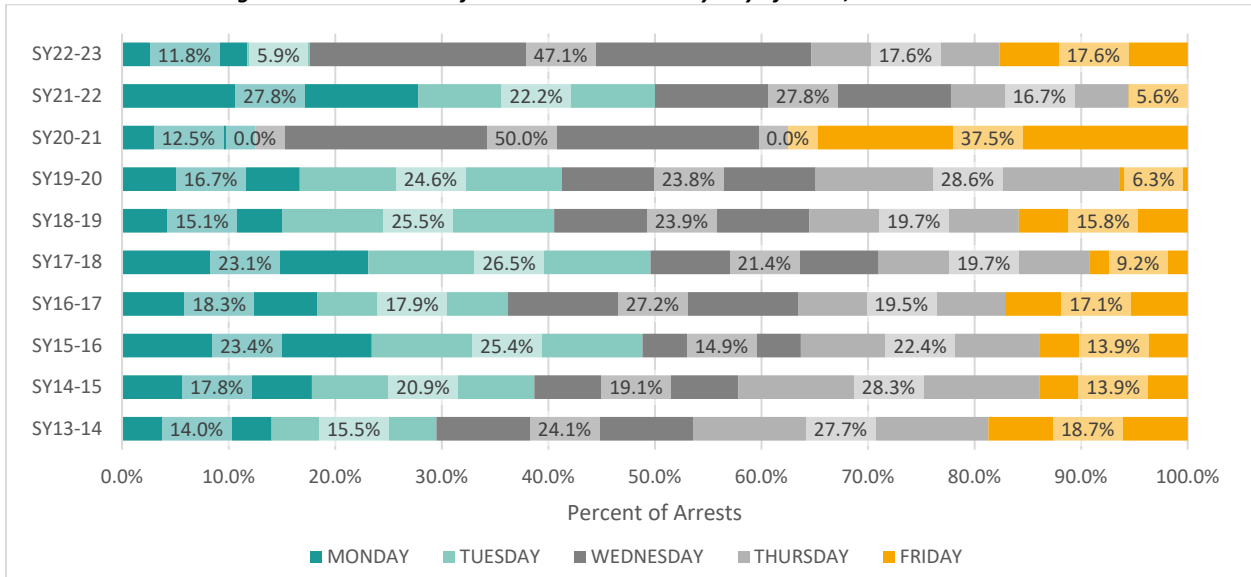Figure 24: Number of Arrests at Schools by Day of Week, SY13-14 – SY22-23
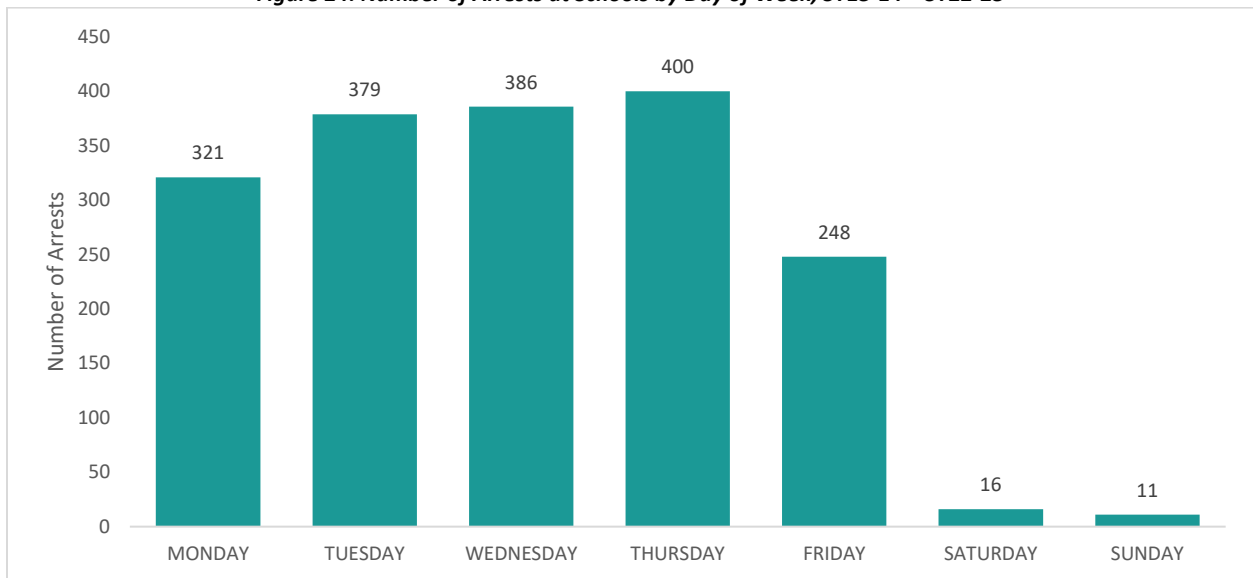
Figure 25: Distribution of School-Based Arrests by Day of Week, SY13-14 – SY22-23

Monthly Trends

The data in this report captures a degree of seasonality in school-based arrests. Over the ten school years for which data is available, arrests peak near the beginning of the school year (September and October) and during the late winter and early spring period (February and March). This pattern can be attributed to the number of days of school in each month and pattern of school breaks, with months with more in-school days or a return from a longer break seeing slight increases in school-based arrests. Figure 26 shows the arrests by month. Note that the months of August and June are truncated based on school start date, thus the number of school-based arrests listed in the figure is not representative of the entire month.

Figure 26: Number of Arrests at Schools by Month, SY13-14 – SY22-23
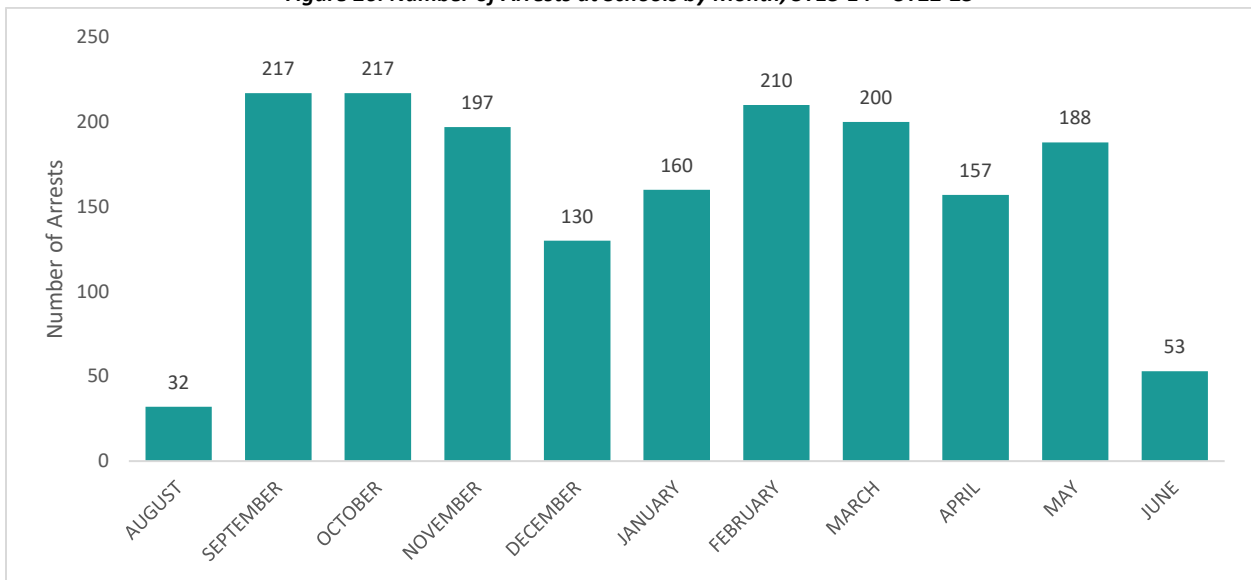
# V. The Role and History of School Resource Officers (SROs) in the District of Columbia

In 2004 the Council of the District of Columbia expanded the role of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) in preserving school safety with the passage of the School Safety and Security Procedures Act of 2004. This delegated contracting authority for school security services at District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) facilities from DCPS to MPD. The legislation established the MPD School Safety Division and outlined the roles and responsibilities of School Resource Officers (SROs). The key responsibilities of SROs are: [11]

   A. Prevent crime through community-oriented policing strategies;
   B. Address crime and disorder, gang, and drug activity problems affecting or occurring in or around the schools to which the school resource officer is assigned; and
   C. Ensure that DCPS schools and grounds are safe environments for students, teachers, and staff.

School Resource Officers have historically been deployed in a "cluster model," with SROs supporting multiple schools in a defined geographic area. MPD's annual School Safety and Security Reports contain detailed descriptions of these clusters. The SRO service areas correspond to MPD's seven Police Districts.[12] Not every public and charter school in the District of Columbia is included in an SRO cluster, yet all but 9 of the 1,761 school-based arrests during the study timeframe occurred at schools that were included in an SRO cluster.

Just over half (53%) of all school-based arrests occurred in the Sixth or Seventh police districts. Just under half (49.8%) of school-based arrests at DCPS schools occurred in the Sixth or Seventh police districts while nearly two thirds (62.8%) of school-based arrests at public charter schools occurred in those same areas. Figure 27 shows the number of school-based arrests by police district and school type.

Figure 27: Number of School-Based Arrests by Police District and School Type, SY13-14 – SY22-23

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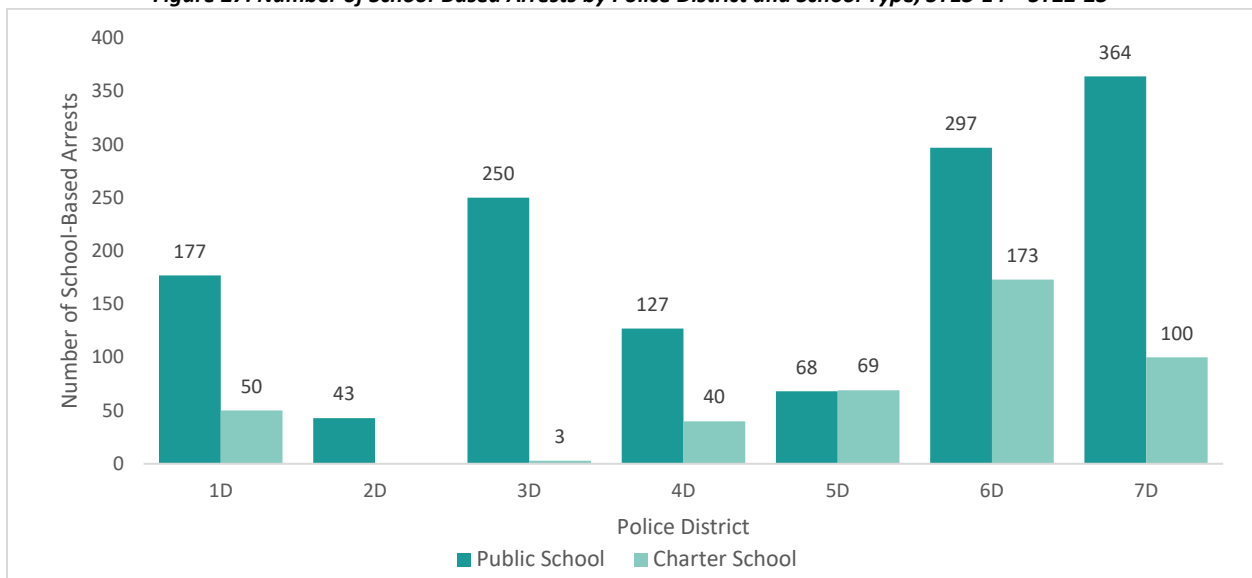
[11] School Safety and Security Procedures Act of 2004
[12] A map of MPD's Police Districts and Police Service Areas (PSAs) is available in the Appendix.

While the arrest data used in this report lacks an indicator variable for whether the arresting officer was an SRO, MPD's previous reports to Council can help shed some light on the distribution of stops and arrests at schools by SROs and non-SROs. For example, MPD reports 101 stops of individuals age 20 and under at school addresses during the 2021-2022 school year, 39 involving an SRO (38.6%). During the 2022-2023 school year MPD made 36 stops, 13 involving an SRO (36.1%). During the combined 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years, MPD reported 26 arrests at school addresses, 17 by SROs (65.4%).[13]

There are several more recent developments with respect to SROs in the District of Columbia. Effective November 13, 2021, D.C. Law 25-45, the "Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Support Act of 2021"[14] amended the School Safety and Security Contracting Procedures Act of 2004 to include drawdown provisions regarding the number of School Safety Division officers in the District of Columbia. The legislation required a maximum of 60 personnel by July 1, 2022, a maximum of 40 personnel by July 1, 2023, a maximum of 20 personnel by July 1, 2024, and dissolution of the School Safety Division and an end to MPD staffing DCPS and public charter schools with SROs by July 1, 2025.

However, on February 27, 2023, the Safe Schools and Students Amendment Act (Bill 25-153) was introduced. This bill would repeal the amendment requiring a reduction in and eventual dissolution of the School Safety Division. The legislation remains pending, and the future role of SROs in the District's schools remains uncertain.

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[13] These and other details can be found in MPD's submission for their FY22 Performance Oversight Hearing. Note that the methodology used to generate these numbers differs from the methodology of this report. Additional details regarding data and methodology are presented in Appendix A.

[14] D.C. Law 24-45, Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Support Act of 2021.

VI. Conclusion

While in previous years school-based arrests accounted for just over 10% of total juvenile arrests, that number has declined significantly in recent years, hovering between 1% and 2% over the three most recent school years. School-based arrests of juveniles account for a small portion of total juvenile arrests, and the COVID-19 pandemic and pivot towards remote and hybrid learning intensified the decline in school-based arrests, as did District-wide efforts to reduce the involvement of juveniles in the justice system.

This report is a companion to the CJCC's 2020 'Study of the Root Causes of Juvenile Justice System Involvement' and 2022 'Study of Factors that Affect the Likelihood of Juvenile Justice System Involvement.'[15] These reports discuss the educational, demographic, socioeconomic, and medical risk factors that influence the likelihood of juvenile justice system involvement, including in school-based arrests. The factors that influence overall juvenile involvement in the justice system are likely to correspond to the factors that influence the likelihood of juveniles being arrested at schools. However, given the small number of juveniles arrested at schools – particularly in recent years – it is impossible to perform a more robust statistical analysis of factors that increase the likelihood of being arrested at school with meaningful measures of statistical significance.

Alternative forms of future analysis could include the development of focus groups and/or case studies for qualitative research purposes. Since we observe a concentration of school-based arrests at a small number of public and charter schools, it would be possible to target an analysis at the highest-concentration areas. Finally, developing a robust understanding of the universe of programs and services provided to the highest-risk students both inside and outside of the school environment could generate an even clearer picture of the overall landscape.

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[15] Both reports are available on CJCC's website: CJCC Research and Reports | cjcc (dc.gov)

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List of Tables and Figures

Appendix

Sample and Time Frame

We identify the universe of school-based arrests by using MPD arrest and offense data from 2013 – present and Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) school public and charter school address data. We identify the location of all DCPS and PCS schools operating from 2013 – present and match geolocations and addresses with MPD arrest data. Only juveniles (17 and under) are considered in this analysis. For arrests of juveniles that occur at schools, we match the arrest and offense CCNs to identify whether the arrest was for an offense that occurred at the school or elsewhere.

We limit the time frame of consideration to the DCPS school year calendar (Table A1). This ensures that we capture arrests that occur at school during a period where we can be reasonably confident school is in session and youth are congregating at school locations. Figure A1 shows that there were few juvenile arrests at schools during the summer period.

Table A1: DCPS School Year Start/End Dates

	START DATE	END DATE
SY13-14	8/26/2013	6/19/2014
SY14-15	8/25/2014	6/19/2015
SY15-16	8/24/2015	6/16/2016
SY16-17	8/22/2016	6/14/2017
SY17-18	8/21/2017	6/13/2018
SY18-19	8/20/2018	6/14/2019
SY19-20	8/26/2019	5/29/2020
SY20-21	8/31/2020	6/24/2021
SY21-22	8/30/2021	6/27/2022
SY22-23	8/31/2022	6/22/2023

Figure A1: Number of Juvenile Arrests at Schools by School Year and Summer Period
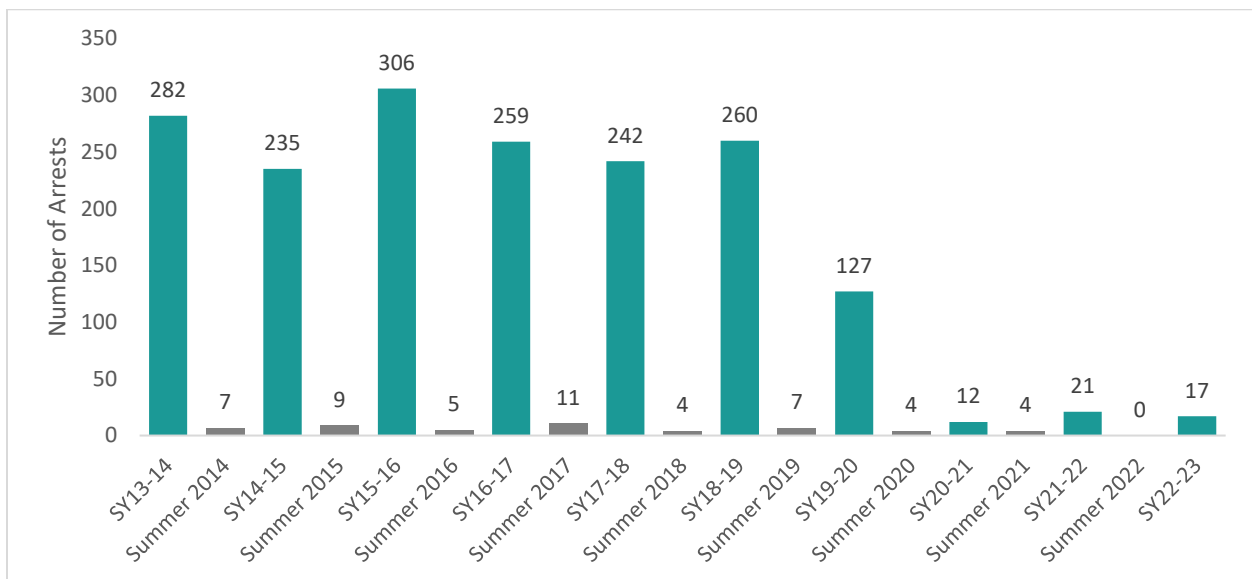
In addition to implementing time constraints, this analysis also excludes arrests that happen at the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services' (DYRS) Youth Services Center (YSC). Although there are educational services provided to youth under the supervision of DYRS it is not possible to isolate arrests related to school services from other arrests or offenses at the facility.

PSA Map and SRO Assignment

SROs are assigned to short beat and clusters covering multiple public and charter schools in a manner corresponding with MPD's general police districts. Figure A2 shows the boundaries of MPD police districts. Additional details on SRO assignments and which schools belong to specific short beats or clusters can be found in MPD's annual School Safety and Security Reports.

Figure A2: MPD Police Districts, Sectors, and PSA Boundaries
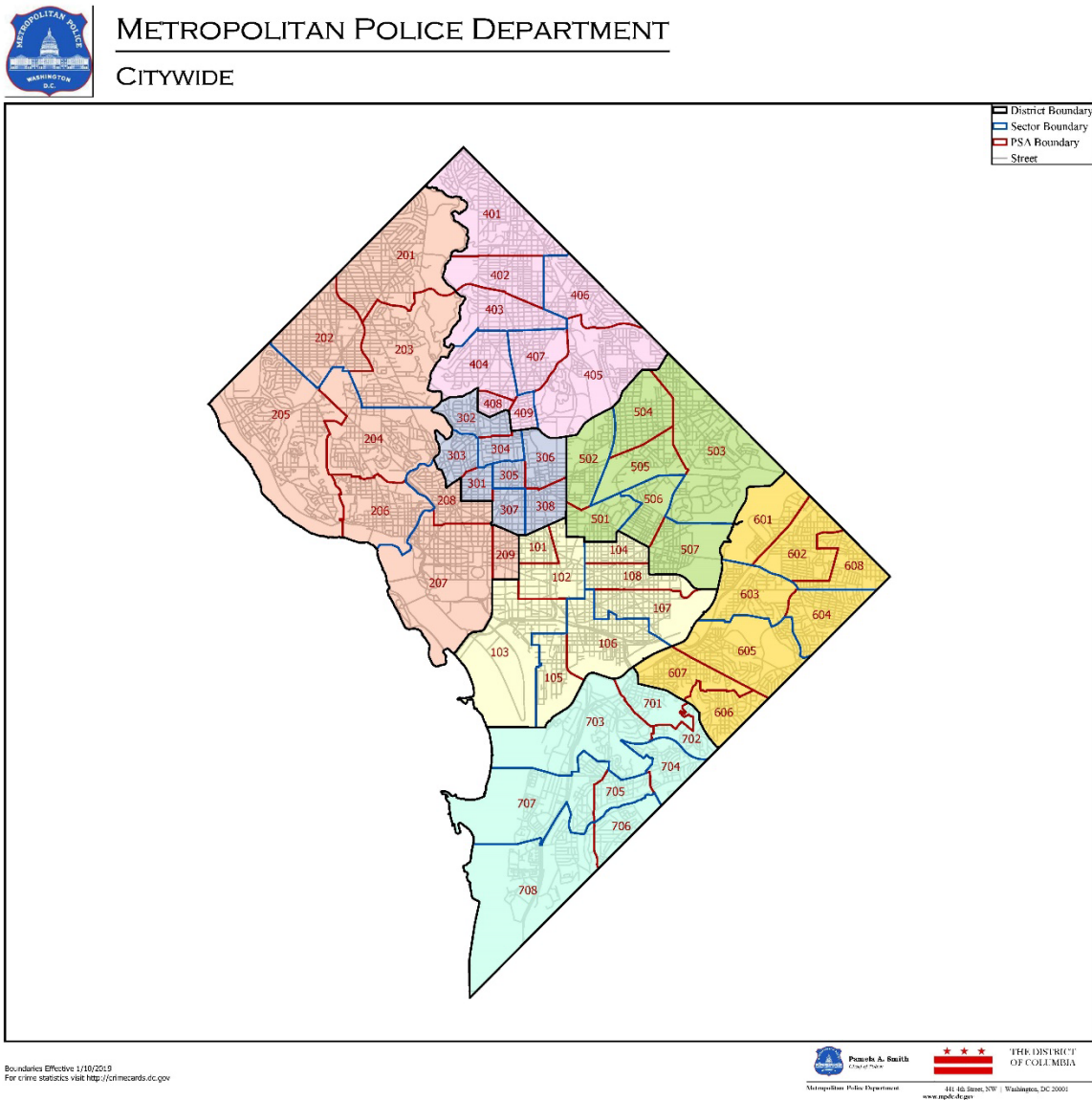
School Breakdown

School-based arrests are not evenly distributed across all schools. On both the public and charter school side, the top-5 schools (in terms of number of arrests) account for roughly half of all arrests. Tables A2 and a 3 contain details on the ten highest arrest public and charter schools over the SY13-14 – SY22-23 period.

Table A2: DCPS Schools with Greatest Number of School-Based Arrests, SY13-14 – SY22-23

	School	Address	# Arrests (% of DCPS arrests)
		DCPS (Number of arrests = 1326)	
1	Ballou High School	3401 4th Street SE	257 (19.4%)
2	Anacostia High School	1601 16th Street SE	135 (10.2%)
3	Cardozo Education Campus	1200 Clifton Street NW	126 (9.5%)
4	Eastern High School	1700 East Capitol Street NE	119 (9.0%)
5	H.D. Woodson High School	540 55th Street NE	107 (8.1%)
6	Dunbar High School	101 N Street NW	74 (5.6%)
7	Johnson Middle School	1400 Bruce Place SE	63 (4.8%)
8	Columbia Heights Education Campus	3101 16th Street NW	43 (3.2%)
9	Roosevelt High School	4301 13th Street NW	40 (3.0%)
10	Coolidge High School	6315 5th Street NW	35 (2.6%)

Table A3: PCS Schools with Greatest Number of School-Based Arrests, SY13-14 – SY22-23

	School	Address	# Arrests (% of PCS arrests)
	PCS (Number of arrests = 435)		
1	Cesar Chavez PCS for Public Policy - Parkside High School	3701 Hayes Street NE	51 (11.7%)
2	Friendship PCS - Collegiate Academy	4095 Minnesota Avenue NE	44 (10.1%)
3	KIPP DC - Wheeler	3301 Wheeler Road SE	36 (8.3%)
4	Maya Angelou PCS	5600 East Capitol Street NE	35 (8.0%)
5	Kingsman Academy PCS	1375 E Street NE	34 (7.8%)
6	IDEA PCS	1027 45th Street NE	23 (5.3%)
7	KIPP DC - College Preparatory PCS	1405 Brentwood Parkway NE	18 (4.1%)
8	Friendship PCS - Technology Preparatory High	2705 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE	15 (3.4%)
9	SEED PCS of Washington, DC	4300 C Street SE	15 (3.4%)
10	Monument Academy PCS	500 19th Street NE	13 (3.0%)

Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic caused dramatic, rapid shifts in school operations. In March 2020 schools in the District of Columbia pivoted to a remote learning stance. A combination of remote and hybrid learning was in place well into the 2021-2022 school year. Many of the significant declines in school-based arrests that we observe occur around this timeframe and can, at least in part, be attributed to the pandemic. Arrests of juveniles at school declined significantly because juveniles were simply *not* at schools.

However, we do not observe a return to previous levels of school-based arrests in SY22-23, despite a return to normal school operations. This may be in part to the underlying policies and legislation concerning SROs, but a longer-term analysis of trends in school-based arrests is not yet possible.