



# The Status of Girls

*in North Carolina*

2017



President's Message	1
Executive Summary	2
Demographics, Poverty and Economic Security	5
Education	8
Juvenile Offending and Victimization	13
Media Engagement	19
Physical Health	21
Mental Health	25
Leadership and Civic Engagement	29
Sexual Health	32
LGBT Youth	35
Gaining Ground, Losing Ground	40
Notes and References	43

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## **President's Message**

Our Meredith College faculty and students are proud to release the 2017 *Report on the Status of Girls in North Carolina*. Following the results of the 2013 report and its dissemination to educators, legislators, and community organizations, we realized that the data and focus of this report merit ongoing monitoring.

In the course of the four years between reports, some aspects of the lives of girls have improved—most notably fewer pregnancies, slightly less television viewing, and more active civic engagement. Other factors, including the use of social media, physical inactivity, and increased poverty rates, reflect ongoing concerns for the health and well-being of girls in our state.

In addition to the quality of life overall for girls in North Carolina, we must pay particular attention to those who are falling between the cracks—most likely those of minority races, ethnicities, and sexual orientation. The disparate levels of poverty, juvenile offending, and educational attainment among minority and majority girls continues to plague our state.

At the core of Meredith College's educational values is a persistent commitment to the well-being and upward mobility of all girls in our state. We know that as any individual girl makes progress, her impact on others may also inspire change. At the very least, her advancement affects the quality of life for her current and future family, as well as her career opportunities and her community. In short, as girls make progress, our state makes progress.

As an investment in us all, girls of all races, ethnicities, and sexual orientation must be encouraged, supported, challenged, and praised for making good decisions, for asking for and responding to offers of help, for seeking out positive role models, and for aligning themselves with allies.



Dr. Jo Allen, '80  
President of Meredith College

## **The Status of Girls in North Carolina Executive Summary**

Prior to Meredith College's 2013 release of *The Status of Girls in North Carolina*, little data had been compiled to document the status of girls within the state. The original report closed that information gap by providing details about the dynamics that impact girls' lives in North Carolina. This 2017 report updates the original data and expands the focus areas of the 2013 report. In addition to the original seven content areas—demographics and poverty, education, media engagement, physical health, mental health, sexual health, and leadership and civic engagement—the 2017 report covers juvenile offending and victimization as well as conditions facing LGBT youth. The report pulls together information from more than a dozen different national and state datasets. Meredith also collected data directly from high schools and girl-serving community organizations on girls' leadership activities in North Carolina.

### **Demographics and Poverty**

As in 2013, girls in North Carolina are being raised in increasingly diverse family structures with increasingly diverse incomes. Twenty seven percent of the children in North Carolina are being raised in families headed by a single mother. Almost half of those families are living below the poverty line. The gap between the median family income between all families with children and families headed by a single mother has increased since 2010. The rates of poverty among African American, American Indian, and Latina girls is almost double that of white girls in North Carolina. The rate of poverty among children in North Carolina exceeds the national average, and almost half of North Carolina's children are living at or near poverty—despite notable improvements in a variety of state-level economic measures.

### **Education**

Girls continue to perform on par academically with boys in North Carolina, as measured by end of grade (EOG), end of course (EOC), or SAT exam results. However, isolating the academic performance of girls, racial disparities persist. While the 2011-12 data suggested that the gap between higher performing groups and lower performing groups narrowed as girls moved through high school, this was no longer the case in 2015-16 academic year. Over the last decade there has been a lot of focus on increasing the number of girls in STEM fields. While girls in North Carolina high schools make up over 60% of students enrolled in AP Biology courses, they make up less than half of students in AP Calculus courses and only 1 in 4 students in AP Physics and AP Computer Science courses.

### **Juvenile Offending and Victimization**

Girls in North Carolina are less likely to be involved with the criminal justice or school punishment systems than boys. However, as is true nationally, non-white girls are more likely to be identified as juvenile offenders or to be subject to serious school discipline than their white peers. Among females, the ratio of African American to white school suspensions is six to one for short-term suspensions and five to one for long-term suspensions. Although young women are far less likely than boys to be identified as juvenile offenders, they are far more likely to be victims of bullying and to experience sexual and intimate partner violence.

### **Media Engagement**

The percentage of girls in North Carolina reporting significant amounts of television viewing has decreased slightly in the past five years. However, this decrease has been matched with an increase in girls' usage of computers and electronic devices for non-academic purposes. While in 2011 there was a significant difference in the rates of computer usage between boys and girls, by 2015 the gender difference in likelihood of high-usage had disappeared. As is the case nationally, girls in North Carolina are more likely than boys to have a social media presence—particularly as they move through adolescence into young adulthood.

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## Physical Health

Girls in North Carolina struggle to stay physically active compared to their male peers. While the number of girls participating in organized high school athletics has increased slightly over the past decade, over 65% of high school females report that they are not regularly physically active. In 2015, rates of obesity increased among high school females. While these are important concerns, young women in North Carolina are less likely than their male counterparts to have a high BMI, yet they are significantly more likely to view themselves as overweight. More than half all middle and high school girls state they are trying to lose weight. Adding to concerns about physical health is the uptick in usage of e-cigarette and similar vaping products among youth.

## Mental Health

Young women in North Carolina fare slightly better than teens nationwide in self-reports of depression and are less likely to seriously consider suicide than girls nationally. However, the percentage of young women in North Carolina making a serious suicide attempt has doubled since 2011. African American and Latina girls are more than twice as likely as their white peers to make an injurious suicide attempt. The percentage of girls who report seriously considering suicide peaks in early adolescence—between 7th and 10th grades.

## Leadership and Civic Engagement

New data collected for this report indicates that young women are active leaders in their school communities. In both public and private high schools, girls are almost twice as likely as boys to serve as student government officers. Girls are also supported by a number of national organizations working with girls in their local communities across the state. Organizations such as Girl Scouts and Girls on the Run work to foster leadership and enhance self-esteem among thousands of North Carolina girls.

## Sexual Health

Rates of teenage pregnancy continue a decades long decline in North Carolina. Between 2010 and 2015, the rate of pregnancy among young women 15-19 has fallen by more than half—from almost 80 pregnancies per 1,000 to 30 pregnancies per 1,000. Parents in North Carolina are talking with their teens about sex. In 2011, three out of four teens reported that a parent or other adult family member had talked with them about sex. By 2015, that number had dipped slightly to 70%. As girls progress through high school, they are more likely to report these kinds of discussions with parents, while boys become less likely. Despite this high level of parental communication, North Carolina female teens continue to have higher STD incidence rates than the national average.

## LGBT Youth

Consistent with national rates of sexual self-identification, 12% of young people in North Carolina identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or unsure of their sexual orientation. Many LGBT youth in North Carolina experience their school environment as hostile or unsafe. More than 70% of LGBT students in North Carolina have been verbally harassed at school and one in four have been physically harassed. North Carolina youth who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual are four times more likely than heterosexual youth to seriously consider suicide. While over 90% of public schools have an anti-bullying policy, fewer than half of those policies include sexual orientation or gender identity.

This update of the Status of Girls in North Carolina continues our commitment to providing concise, usable information to help our communities—including lawmakers, fellow educators, and community organizations—foster growth, leadership and safety for the girls of North Carolina.

**To read the full report, visit [http://www.meredith.edu/about\\_meredith/college-research/status-of-girls](http://www.meredith.edu/about_meredith/college-research/status-of-girls)**

**To learn more about Meredith College, visit [meredith.edu](http://meredith.edu)**

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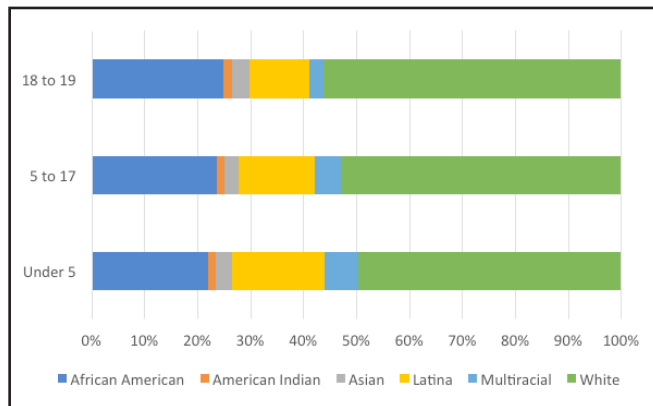
## Demographics, Poverty, and Economic Security

Females make up 51.25% of North Carolina's current population of over 10 million residents.<sup>1</sup> The total female population of youth under 18 in North Carolina is 1,116,469, slightly more than 11% of the state's total population. Females in North Carolina are at great risk for poverty. This is particularly true of single mothers and very young girls.<sup>2</sup> Almost half of North Carolina's children are either low-income or poor.<sup>3</sup>

### Demographics

North Carolina has experienced annual population growth rates averaging almost 2.0% over the last two decades.<sup>4</sup> Between 2000 and 2010 North Carolina added almost 1.5 million residents, making it one of the fastest growing states in the country. Our growth has slowed in recent years; in 2014, the population grew by only 0.9%. While some areas of the state are seeing a lot of growth, other areas are experiencing population losses. Growth has primarily been concentrated in the metropolitan areas of the state. Over half of all rural counties have experienced population loss. In contrast, the Raleigh-Cary area ranks as the fifteenth fastest growing metropolitan statistical area (MSA) in the country.<sup>5</sup> While the state is experiencing overall population growth, the racial/ethnic makeup of the girls who call North Carolina home continues a long-term trend of changing demographics.

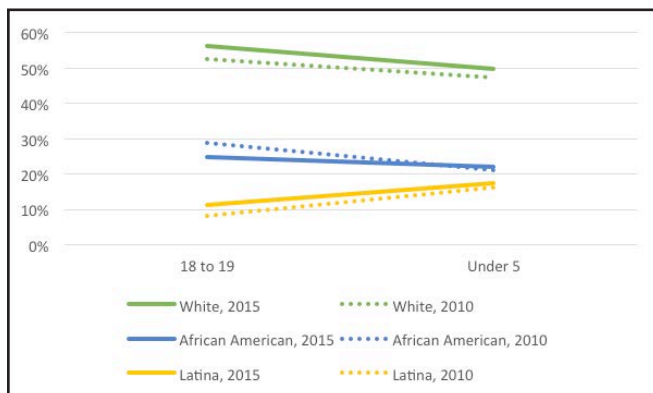
**Figure 1. Percent of girls in North Carolina by race/ethnicity, 2015**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015

North Carolina's shifting demographics are particularly noticeable among the youngest girls in the state. The share of girls in North Carolina of Latina origin and those identifying as multiracial is growing, while the percentage of both white and African American girls in North Carolina is declining. These trends have remained relatively consistent since 2010.

**Figure 2. Percentage of North Carolina females by age and race/ethnicity**

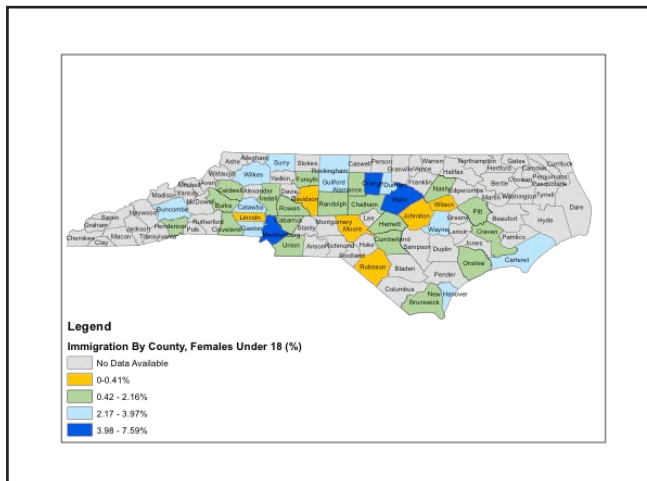


Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010

### Immigration status

Only 8% of North Carolina's population is foreign born. Ninety-seven percent of girls under 18 in North Carolina and 91% of women 18 and over are native born. Among the counties with available data, Orange County has the largest proportion of foreign-born girls under 18 at slightly over 7.5%. Of those young women, 1.21% are naturalized citizens, while 6.38% are non-citizens. North Carolina's female immigrant population is primarily clustered in the central (Piedmont) region.

**Figure 3. Percentage of immigration among females under 18, by county**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015

Nationally, immigration rates have declined. This is true in North Carolina as well. In 2010 five counties had populations of foreign-born girls that exceeded 5%. In 2015, there were only two.<sup>6</sup>

### Family demographics

North Carolina's children are growing up today in a variety of family configurations. At present, data is difficult to find on all the possible configurations that exist.<sup>7</sup> The information available shows that the majority of children are growing up in homes with two married parents, but those numbers have declined since 2000.<sup>8</sup> Children in North Carolina are more likely to grow up in a single parent household now than they were fifteen years ago.

**Table 1. Percentage of North Carolina children by family type**

Family Type	2000	2010	2015
Married	73%	67%	67%
Single Mother	22%	26%	27%
Single Father	5%	7%	7%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010; U.S. Census, 2000.

The percentage of children in North Carolina living with single parents, particularly single mothers, has increased while the percentage of children living within a two-parent married family declined between 2000 and 2015. There is a small, but increasing, number of children growing up in homes with same-sex parents. Researchers estimate that approximately 18.5% of the over 18,000 same-sex couples in North Carolina are raising children. Approximately 2.6% of children in North Carolina are living with same-sex couples.<sup>9</sup>

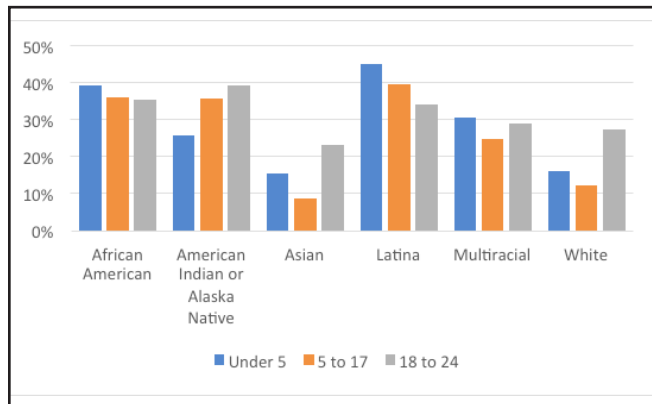


## Child Poverty

North Carolina, like the rest of the nation, continues steady economic growth as we near a decade post-recession. Despite this economic improvement, the state's economic recovery has been uneven. The rate of both economic growth and unemployment vary regionally and by population group.<sup>10</sup> Data on the economic security of North Carolina's girls and young women shows that while the poverty rate has stabilized after years of growth, the poverty rate of the youngest girls and the severe economic struggles of families headed by women remain troubling. According to the current federal poverty guidelines, a child is considered poor if she lives in a family of four whose income falls below \$24,250.<sup>11</sup> Poverty experts agree that it takes an income at least twice the federal poverty line for a family to survive and cover key expenses.<sup>12</sup>

Nationally, about 21% of children live in poverty while approximately 44% are considered low-income (defined as twice the poverty line).<sup>13</sup> Twenty-three percent of North Carolina's children are poor.<sup>14</sup> North Carolina has the 14th highest rate of child poverty nationally and saw an increase of approximately 5% in the number of poor children between 2000 and 2015.<sup>15</sup> An additional 30% of the state's children are living in low-income families in which at least one parent is working.<sup>16</sup> Approximately half of the state's children are in or near poverty.

**Figure 4. Poverty status of North Carolina females, by race/ethnicity**



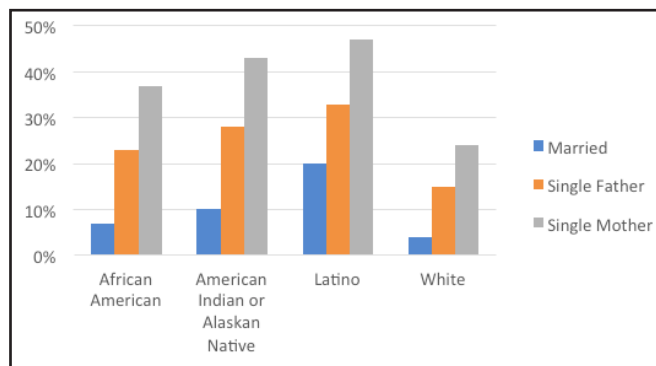
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015

## Spotlight Organization: Our Lady of the Rosary Food Pantry

Our Lady of the Rosary Food Pantry is based in Franklin County, NC. It is a branch of the Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church, but religious affiliation is not taken into consideration when providing services. Though most of its clients are located in Franklin County, the pantry provides relief for people from surrounding counties as well. The pantry engages in significant outreach to the local immigrant population. One of the group's largest projects is providing food and necessities to seasonal farmworkers. This specific population is in much need of support because their employment requires them to travel from place to place to work in agriculture and move into temporary housing while working. Likewise, more than a food pantry, this organization provides clothes to impoverished families and tutoring services for Spanish-speaking children. During the holidays, the pantry also provides turkeys and presents for the children of these families. For more information, see: <http://www.catholicolr.org/food-pantry>.

Poverty rates among North Carolina's girls are high, but not all girls are equally at risk for living in poverty. First, non-white girls, with the notable exception of those of Asian descent, are at far greater risk of living in poverty when compared to their white counterparts. This pattern holds at all ages. Second, while the youngest girls—those under 5 years old—were most likely to be poor across racial and ethnic categories in 2010, in 2015, this is only true for African American, Latina, and multiracial girls. Among white, Asian, and American Indian or Alaskan Native girls, the oldest girls—those from 18 to 24—are more likely to be poor.

**Figure 5. Percentage of families living in poverty with children, by race/ethnicity**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015

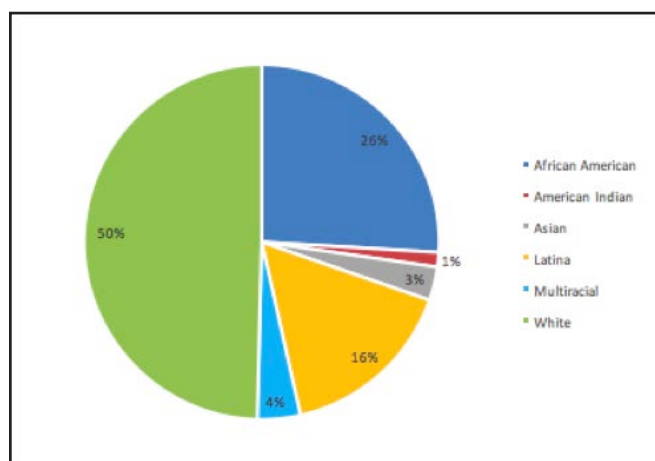
In the same way that the relative risk of a girl living in poverty differs by her age and racial/ethnic status, it also differs by family type. While the median income for families in North Carolina is \$60,074, that average hides quite a bit of disparity.<sup>17</sup> For example, among families headed by a single mother, the average annual income is just slightly under \$23,000.<sup>18</sup> The gap between the median family income for all families with children and for families headed by a single mother has increased since 2010. This means that children growing up in with a single mother are very likely to be poor or low-income. In 2015, families headed by women make up 27% of families in North Carolina and almost 49% of those families lived below the poverty line.<sup>19</sup>

### Cause for Concern

Residents should celebrate the increasing diversity among the girls in North Carolina. However, the increased likelihood of poverty among non-white girls and their families is troubling. The rate of poverty in families headed by a lone woman (single-mother) and the growing gap between the incomes of different family types are also troubling trends. All families must be supported with adequate wages and affordable, high-quality childcare.

## Education

Girls in all grade levels have shown great educational promise across the state of North Carolina. In the 2015-16 school year, the vast majority of 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade girls scored at a Level III or above on End of Grade (EOG) exams, indicating overwhelming grade level proficiency among girls in all subject areas. However, the achievement gap among racial/ethnic subgroups of girls in North Carolina persists.

**Figure 6. Female school enrollment, 2015-2016**

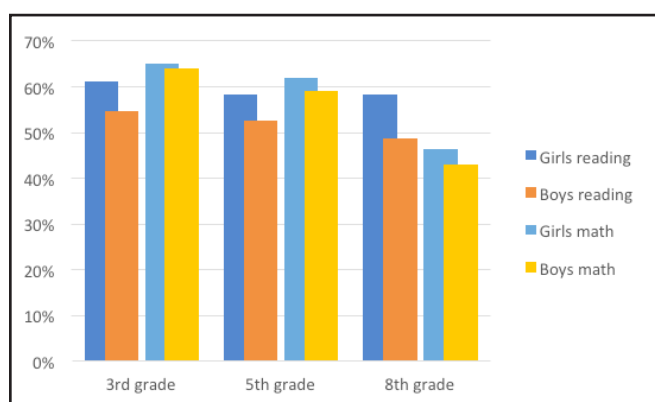
Source: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

North Carolina's student population is an increasingly diverse one. Between 2010 and 2015, the percentage of both white and African American female students continued to decline and the percentage of Latina students showed the greatest growth.

While white students only make up half of the female students enrolled in North Carolina's schools, they are over-represented among the charter school population where they comprise 57% of the female student body.<sup>20</sup> Charter schools have been a feature of North Carolina's public educational landscape since the 1990s, however, four out of ten of our current 167 charter schools opened in the last four years.<sup>21</sup> As the rate of charter school opening continues its rapid expansion, the racial makeup of the charter school population is an important trend to track.

### Academic Performance

North Carolina's female students exhibit strong performance on the state's standardized testing measures.

**Figure 7. Percentage of grade-level EOG scores by grade and gender, 2015-16**

Source: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Reports of Disaggregated State, School System and School Performance Data, 2015-16

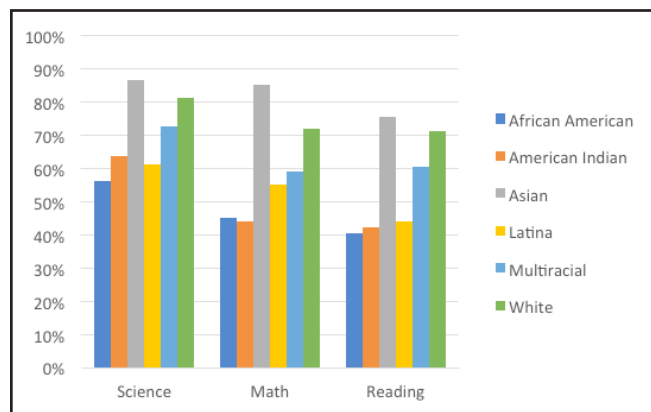
Throughout elementary and middle schools, girls are performing at rates similar to their male counterparts in all subject areas. This includes math and science—fields in which women have historically been underrepresented.

**Table 2. SAT mean scores by gender, 2015-16**

	NC Public Schools			NC Association of Independent Schools		
	Critical reading	Mathematics	Writing	Critical reading	Mathematics	Writing
<b>Females</b>	493	490	472	573	568	577
<b>Males</b>	500	521	463	571	588	552

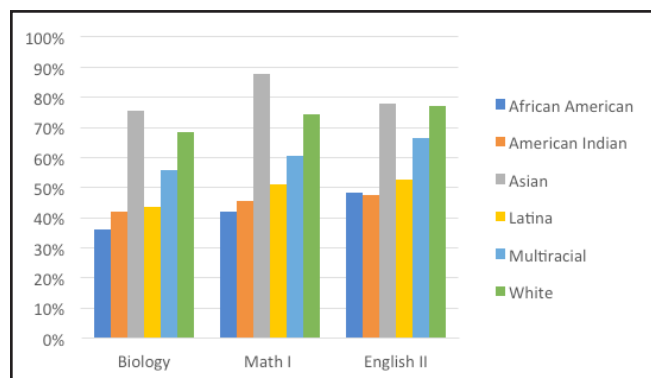
Sources: College Board. *North Carolina-Public Schools Overview, 2015-2016*; North Carolina Association of Independent Schools, *Demographic Summary of SAT Takers*

Though slight, there is some difference in the mean SAT scores between male and female test-takers in North Carolina, with males scoring higher on average than female test-takers in both critical reading and mathematics and females scoring higher than males in writing. The gender difference in math and reading is most pronounced among students in public schools. Mean test scores are higher overall for students in the independent private schools.

**Figure 8. Percentage of 5th grade females with grade-level EOG scores by race/ethnicity, 2015-16**

Source: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, *Reports of Disaggregated State, School System and School Performance Data, 2015-16*

Despite the equity in academic performance between male and female students in North Carolina, the performance of racial/ethnic subgroups of girls reveal important disparities.

**Figure 9. Female students with grade-level EOC scores by race/ethnicity, 2015-16**

Source: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, *Reports of Disaggregated State, School System and School Performance Data, 2015-16*

Between elementary school and high school, the gap between the highest performing groups (measured at grade-level proficiency) and the lowest performing groups is similar in English but widens alarmingly in the

areas of science and math. The gap between the highest performing groups and other racial/ethnic subgroups persists—and widens slightly—when looking at EOC performance at the college/career readiness level.<sup>22</sup>

### STEM Education

The North Carolina school system values STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education. The state has developed a STEM recognition program where schools are recognized as prepared or model programs. There are also several community-based and higher education STEM programs aimed specifically at young women.<sup>23</sup> These efforts are important to help counter prevailing stereotypes that females are either not interested in or not skilled in the sciences or mathematics.<sup>24</sup>

**Table 3. STEM-related AP course enrollment, 2014-15**

Course name	% Female
AP Biology	62.01%
AP Environmental Science	54.81%
AP Chemistry	50.44%
AP Calculus AB	48.24%
AP Calculus BC	45.17%
AP Physics 1	31.38%
AP Physics 2	27.19%
AP Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism	26.63%
AP Physics C: Mechanics	26.58%
AP Computer Science	25.14%

Source: Department of Public Instruction, Report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee, *Broaden Successful Participation in Advanced Courses, 2015*

### Spotlight Organization: Wake Young Women's Leadership Academy

The Wake Young Women's Leadership Academy was established in 2012 with the goal of providing educational opportunities for girls and young women to cultivate leadership skills, develop tools for entrepreneurship, and engage in serving the local community. Each year, 50 percent of available seats are allotted for prospective first-generation college students, and with students completing 95 percent of high school graduation requirements before 11th grade, they can enroll in early college courses at Saint Augustine's University. With approximately 50 students per grade level in grades 9 through 13, Wake Young Women's Leadership Academy offers a unique environment for young women to strengthen relationships through student organizations such as the Performing Arts Troupe, the Green Team (which emphasizes environmental awareness), and Tech Savvy Girls.

In the summer of 2016, Meredith College and Wake Young Women's Leadership Academy formed a partnership to allow rising high school seniors an opportunity to participate in collaborative projects through the Meredith College Undergraduate Research Program. Projects included Biofuel Generation from Table-food Waste, Christian Ethics and Women in Mass Media, and The Impact of Women on County Spending Patterns. The partnership has been extended for the summer of 2017, solidifying a valuable relationship between two institutions designed to foster the advancement of young women. For more information see: <http://www.wcpss.net/wywla>

It is commendable that North Carolina has made serious investments in STEM education. However, young women are heavily concentrated in a very small number of STEM-related advanced placement (AP) courses. Females make up over 60% of the students in AP Biology courses, while barely a quarter of the students in physics or computer science are female.<sup>25</sup>

**Graduation Rates and Postsecondary Education**

Despite making up slightly less than half of the students enrolled in North Carolina’s schools, females make up slightly more than half of high school graduates.<sup>26</sup>

**Table 4. Female cohort graduation rate by ethnicity, 2014-2015**

Race/Ethnicity	Graduation rate
African American	87.8%
American Indian	84.5%
Asian	93.2%
Latina	84%
Multiracial	88%
White	90.8%

*Source: Department of Public Instruction, North Carolina  
4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate Report for the 2014-15 School Year*

Females in North Carolina exhibit high rates of high school graduation. While there are some racial disparities in the graduation rates—with Asian girls having the highest graduation rate and Latinas having the lowest—girls are graduating from high school on time and at relatively equal rates. The young women who have the lowest graduation rates are those with limited English proficiency and those with disabilities. In both sub-populations, less than three-quarters of students graduated from the 2014-15 cohort.<sup>27</sup>

However, it is important to note that successful attainment of a high school diploma is not necessarily indicative of college and career readiness. As is indicated in the test score data above, North Carolina high schools are not necessarily preparing all girls to be equally successful in post-high-school life. Thus, while the graduation rates of girls in the state are certainly promising, North Carolina must continue to strive to ensure that all its female high school graduates are equipped to flourish in their future educational or vocational pursuits.

**Cause for Concern**

While girls in North Carolina show strong academic and educational promise, there are important inequities based on race/ethnicity and geographic location that must be addressed in order for all girls to be equally positioned for success. While girls in the state are performing on par with their male peers across all subject areas, an achievement gap that particularly affects African American, Latina, and American Indian girls in all grade levels persists. Through programs and policies that aim to uplift these marginalized groups, North Carolina must continue in its efforts to level the educational playing field for young women and girls across the state.

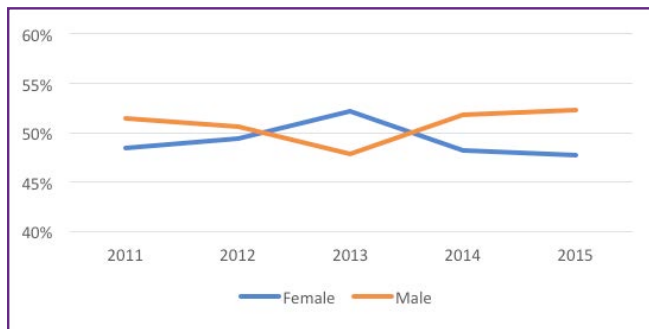
## Juvenile Offending and Victimization

Girls in North Carolina are less likely to be involved with the criminal justice or school punishment systems than boys. However, as is the case nationally, non-white girls are more likely than their white peers to be identified as juvenile offenders or to be subject to serious school discipline. Girls are more likely than their male peers to report being the victims of bullying, dating violence and sexual assault. Though the rates among the most serious types assaults are quite low, no amount of victimization should be tolerated.

### Juvenile Offending

Girls in North Carolina are significantly less likely than their male counterparts to be criminalized as juvenile offenders.<sup>28</sup> Females make up one in four of the total complaints against juveniles in North Carolina.<sup>29</sup> There is only one type of juvenile offense in which female are charged at rates approaching that of their male peers—a category of activity known as status offenses.

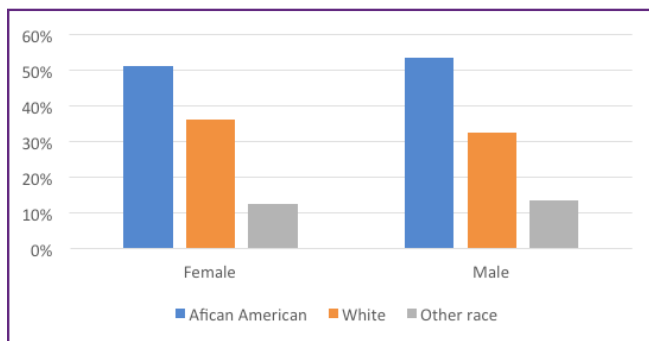
**Figure 10. Percent of status offense complaints by gender, 2015**



Source: NC Department of Public Safety, Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice

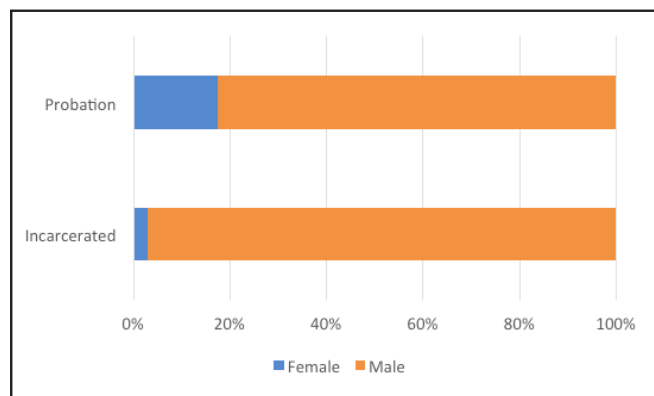
A status offense is something that is only illegal due to the offender's age (meaning these behaviors would not be illegal if they were done by adults). This includes, but is not limited to, behaviors such as alcohol consumption, tobacco use, curfew violations, and truancy. While girls made up close to half of the status offense complaints in 2015, during this same period they comprised less than 7% of the juvenile complaints for violent offenses.<sup>30</sup>

**Figure 11. Juvenile offense complaints by gender and race, 2015**



Source: NC Department of Public Safety, Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice

Though African Americans only make up 23% of the population of youth under 18 in North Carolina, they comprise over 50% of the complaints against juveniles. This is true for both young men and women. In 2015, African American males and females accounted for 53.6 percent and 51.4 percent, respectively, of the complaints against juveniles.

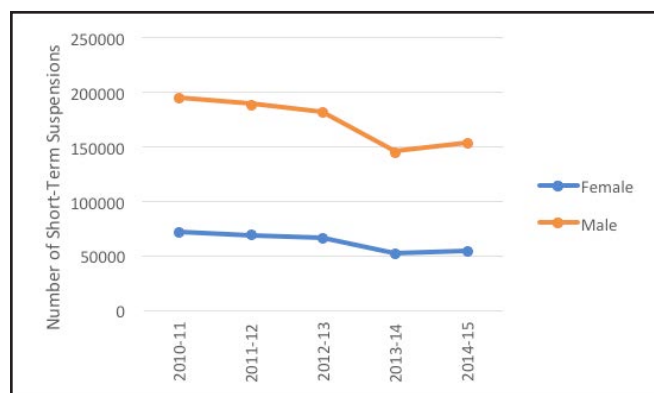
**Figure 12. Rates of incarceration and probation among juveniles in North Carolina, 2015**

Source: NC Department of Public Safety, Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice

Young women in North Carolina have lower rates of both incarceration and probation than young men in the state. Among juveniles incarcerated in 2015, females made up only 3% of this population and among juveniles on probation in 2015, females made up 17% of the total.

### School discipline

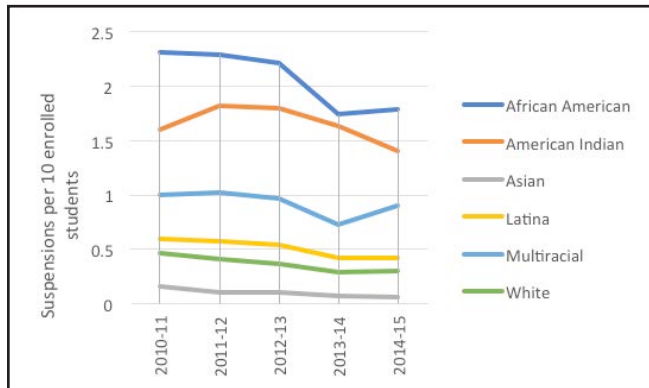
One of the primary spaces in which youth face increasingly serious punishments are schools. Young people spend the bulk of their daytime hours in schools and research suggests that for some youth schools effectively function as another site of policing.<sup>31</sup> The most recent estimate indicates that there are over 1,000 school resource officers in schools (primarily high schools and middle schools) across the state.<sup>32</sup> Of the most serious punishment strategies, suspension is the most common. Suspensions in the North Carolina public school system are broken up into two types: short-term and long-term. Short-term suspensions are defined as a suspension lasting no more than 10 days; anything more is considered a long-term suspension.<sup>33</sup>

**Figure 13. Number of short-term suspensions by gender, 2010-15**

Source: NC Department of Public Instruction, Consolidated Data Report, 2015

As with juvenile criminal complaints, males are more likely to receive both short-term and long-term suspensions. The ratio of male to female suspensions is higher among long-term suspensions at 4 to 1, whereas girls receive about a quarter of suspensions that are 10 days or less. Overall, both short and long-term suspensions have decreased during the last 5 years. The most extreme form of school-based discipline is expulsion. In North Carolina, expulsions are rare. There were 33 males expelled during the 2014-15 school year and only 5 females.<sup>34</sup>



**Figure 14. Number of short-term suspensions among female students by race/ethnicity, 2010-15**

Source: NC Department of Public Instruction, Consolidated Data Report, 2015

While African American boys and young men get punished more than any other group, the racial disparity in school punishment is higher among females than males in North Carolina.

**Table 5. Ratio of African American to white suspensions by gender, 2014-15**

	Females	Males
Short-term suspensions	6:1	4:1
Long-term suspensions	5:1	4:1

Source: NC Department of Public Instruction, Consolidated Data Report, 2015

**Table 6. Ratio of African American to white short-term suspensions by gender in the largest school districts, 2014-15**

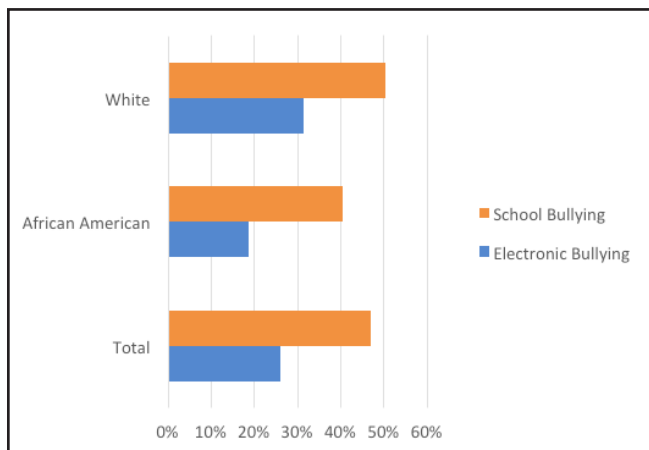
	Females	Males
Wake County Schools	7:1	3:1
Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Schools	16:1	11:1
Guilford County Schools	8:1	4:1
Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools	5:1	3:1
Cumberland County Schools	7:1	4:1

Source: NC Department of Public Instruction, Consolidated Data Report, 2015

The largest disparity is in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Schools where for every white girl given a short-term suspension, sixteen African American girls are suspended; the ratio among males is 11 to 1. In each of these districts, African American girls and young women are more likely to be suspended than white young men and boys. Taken collectively in the five largest districts in North Carolina, for every white young man receiving a short-term suspension two African American young women receive the same punishment.

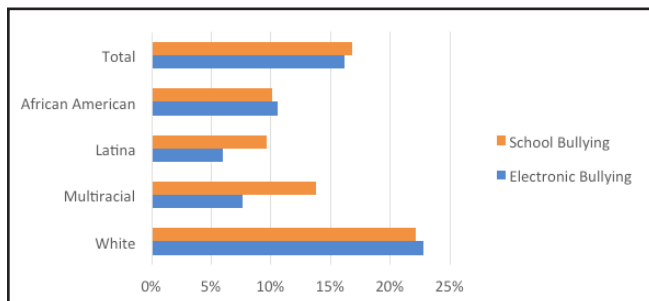
### Victimization

Middle school students in North Carolina are more likely to report having been bullied than their high school peers. Overall, both middle and high school females were more likely to be bullied than males—though this was not true for some racial groups. Among high schoolers, Latino and multiracial young men report experiencing in-person bullying behaviors at slightly higher rates than females.

**Figure 15. Percentage of female middle school students who experienced bullying by type of bullying and race, 2013<sup>35</sup>**

Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2013

With one in four middle school girls reporting being the victim of electronic bullying, rates of electronic bullying continue to be a major social concern. Equally alarming is the fact that almost half of all girls report experiencing in-person bullying at school.

**Figure 16. Percentage of female high school students who experienced bullying by type of bullying and race/ethnicity, 2015**

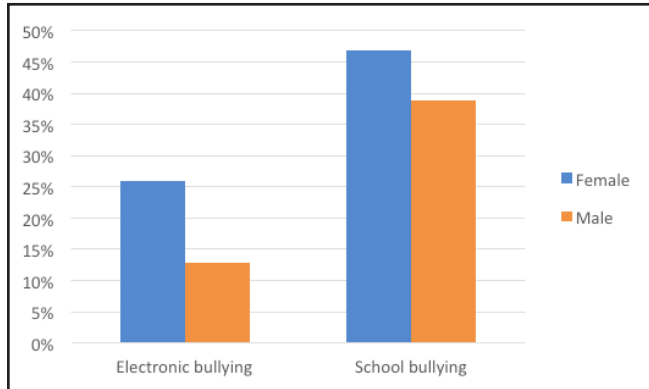
Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015

## Spotlight Organization: Teen Court

First-time juvenile offenders between the ages of 9 and 17 may be referred to Teen Court for misdemeanor or status offenses. The offender goes through an entire trial with a judge, jury, and sentence. However, the only adult involved in the process is the judge, who is either a licensed attorney or currently presiding as a judge. Everyone else is a volunteer between the ages of 9 and 17, who act as attorneys (both defense and prosecuting), bailiffs, clerks, and jurors. Sentences imposed involve community service, group therapy, monetary restitution, verbal or written apologies, and jury duty for another teen court trial. Teen court is held in over 50 different counties within the state of North Carolina. Research shows that Teen Court can be very beneficial to all who are involved in the process. In a study of over 500 teen court cases, recidivism rates for many the youth being charged in teen court were lower than cases that went through the traditional juvenile justice system. For more information see: <http://www.ncteencourts.org/>

Among high schoolers, reports of electronic bullying among young women have decreased slightly in the last five years.<sup>36</sup> The rate of bullying among high school students is lower overall than among middle school students. White young women (middle and high schoolers alike) report having experienced bullying behavior at rates higher than any other group. Whereas females are more than twice as likely as males to report electronic bullying, the reports of bullying on school property are much closer.

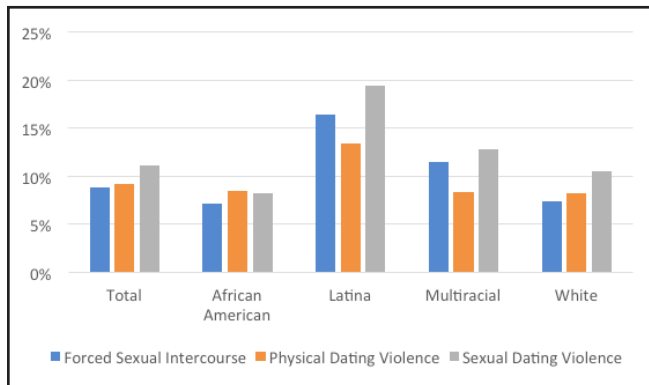
**Figure 17. Percentage of middle school students who experience bullying by type and gender, 2013**



Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2013

Among North Carolina high school students, young men are twice as likely as young women to report being threatened or injured by a weapon at school. African American youth were the most likely to experience this kind of threat or injury and white youth were the least likely, for both males and females.

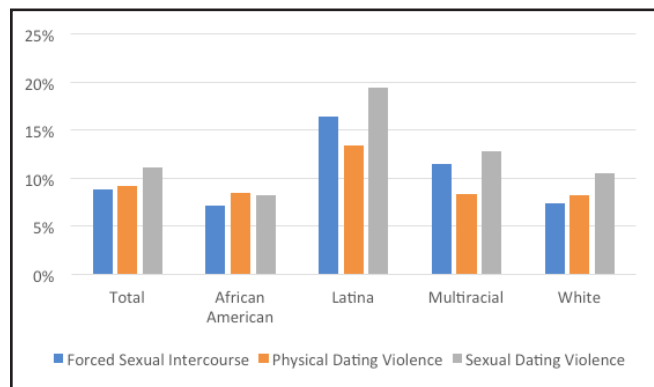
**Figure 18. Percentage of high school students who were threatened or injured by a weapon by race and gender, 2015**



Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015

Although rates of forced sexual intercourse, physical dating violence, and sexual dating violence have decreased slightly for females from 2013 to 2015, young women remain more likely than young men to experience these forms of violence.<sup>37</sup> Sexual dating violence is the most common form of sexual violence for young women in North Carolina.

**Figure 19. High school female students who experienced forced sexual intercourse, physical dating violence, and/or sexual dating violence by race**



Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015

In 2015, Latina young women were more likely than their African American and white peers to experience forced sexual intercourse, physical dating violence and sexual dating violence. Across all racial/ethnic groups, young women were more likely than their male counterparts to experience this type of victimization.<sup>38</sup>

### Cause for Concern

The data reveal that girls in North Carolina are less likely to be juvenile offenders, incarcerated, or on probation than males. Consistent with the racial disparities in academic performance, there is a troubling racial disparity in both school disciplinary actions and the formal justice system among both males and females. Although girls are far less likely than boys to be identified as juvenile offenders, they are more likely to be victims of bullying and more likely to experience sexual and intimate partner victimization.

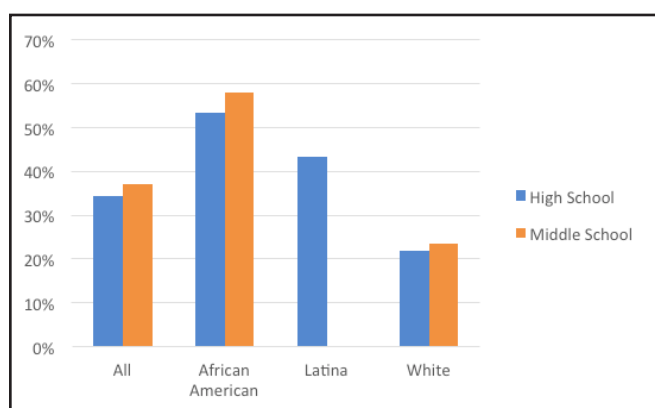
## Media Engagement

Girls in North Carolina spend a lot of time engaged with both traditional and new media. The percentage of girls reporting a significant amount of television consumption has decreased slightly in the past five years. However, this has been matched with an increase in girls' usage of computers and electronic devices for non-academic purposes. While in 2011 there was a significant difference in the rates of teens reporting computer usage between boys and girls, by 2015 the difference in usage rates had disappeared.

### Television and Computer Usage

Girls in North Carolina—like young people across the country—continue to watch television. The primary concern over television (and other forms of media consumption) is that when young people are watching many hours of television it is often at the expense of other activities such as school work, play, or physical activity.

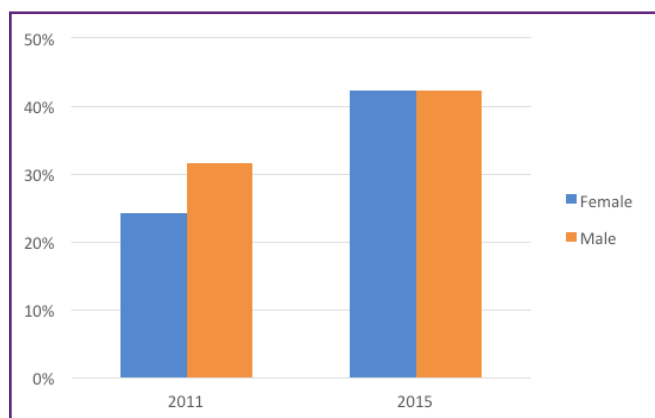
**Figure 20. Percentage of North Carolina girls watching over 3 hours of television on a typical school day, 2013**



Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2013

Consumption rates across all racial and ethnic groups decrease slightly between middle and high school.<sup>40</sup> African American and Latina girls are significantly more likely than their white counterparts to consume large amounts of television on school days.

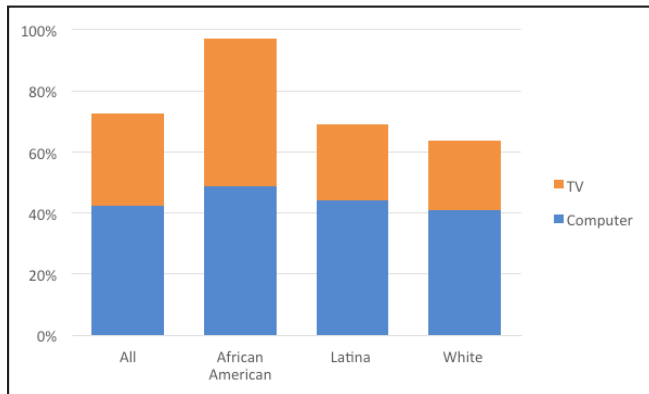
**Figure 21. Non-academic computer use among North Carolina high schoolers**



Sources: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015; CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2011

Just five years ago, males were significantly more likely to use computers (for non-academic purposes) or gaming systems for over three hours on a typical school day than females. By 2015 this was no longer the case. Young men and women also watch television at comparable rates.<sup>41</sup>

**Figure 22. Rates of non-academic computer use and television watching among NC high school females, 2015**



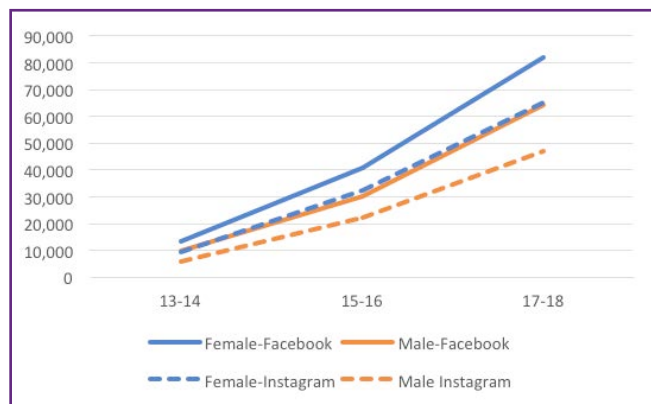
Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015

Computer usage now outpaces watching television as a form of recreation among young women in North Carolina. The questions on both television and computer usage ask young people to indicate if they watch television and use a computer for non-academic purposes for more than three hours on a typical school day.<sup>42</sup> However, research suggests that many young people consume multiple types of media simultaneously, so this should not necessarily be interpreted as young women spending over six hours on screens on a typical school day.<sup>43</sup> The research on screen multi-tasking is mixed in terms of the cognitive, academic and social impacts on youth, but does suggest a relationship between screen multitasking and lower academic performance.<sup>44</sup>

### New Media

According to research from the Pew Research Center, 92% of U.S. teens use the internet daily; almost a quarter report being online nearly constantly.<sup>45</sup> The vast majority of teens in the U.S. report using online social networking sites. Girls are more likely than boys to share and communicate via social media whereas boys are more likely to engage in gaming as a means of recreation and as an online social platform.<sup>46</sup> Girls are also more likely to have a presence on multiple social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Tumblr.

**Figure 23. North Carolina youth social media users, by age and gender, 2016**



Source: Facebook.com

North Carolina teens start out using Facebook and Instagram at similar rates.<sup>47</sup> But by age 15, social media usage diverges among young women and young men. Consistent with national trends on social media, more young women in North Carolina have established a presence on Facebook and/or Instagram than young men.

The ways in which teens communicate is changing. Nationally, almost three-quarters of teens between the ages of 13-17 own or have access to a smart phone—an increase of almost 10% from 2011.<sup>48</sup> Female teens between 14-17 are the most frequent texters (as compared to young girls or male teens).<sup>49</sup> Sixty-three percent of teens report texting every day as a means of staying in touch with friends, while almost 29% of teens nationally report using social networking site messaging systems to communicate with peers. This same research finds that both face-to-face interactions and daily phone calling as a means of communicating with friends are both declining—though phone calls are declining more rapidly. Only 19% of teens report talking daily with a friend on a landline, and 39% use a cell phone daily to talk to friends.

The expansion of technology provides many potential opportunities for the empowerment of young women. Blogs and Twitter are forums in which young women are giving voice to their unique perspectives on society, creating communities of learning and shared experience. However, there is a darker side to social media. Many young people, particularly female, report bullying and other forms of electronic harassment. As noted earlier, one in five high school females and one in four middle school female teens in North Carolina reports being electronically bullied.

### **Cause for Concern**

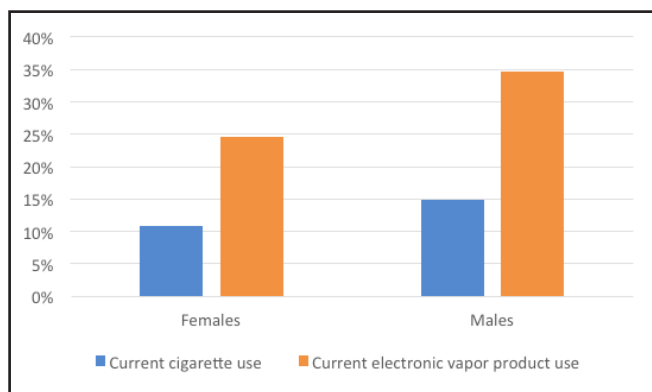
Concerns about media overconsumption are mounting—from worries about obesity and lack of exercise to girls' exposure to harmful media images. North Carolina's African American and Latina young women are more likely to watch hours of television and use computers for non-academic purposes on an average school day than white young women. And though rates of excessive television consumption are decreasing among young women in North Carolina, rates remain high. While media in and of itself is not inherently negative, time spent watching TV or interacting with social media, video games, or consuming other media content is time not spent on school work or engaging in physical activities. In addition, new forms of technology and media allow for unprecedented access to peers. For many of North Carolina's teens and pre-teens, this results in bullying and negative interactions.

## **Physical Health**

Girls in North Carolina struggle to stay physically active compared to their male peers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified childhood obesity as having both immediate and long-term effects on health and well-being. Children and adolescents who are obese are at greater risk for bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and social and psychological issues including stigmatization and poor self-esteem. Children and adolescents who are obese are likely to be obese as adults and are therefore more at risk for adult health problems such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and stroke. Added to these very real physical concerns, females in U.S. society also face many social pressures to conform to a narrow set of beauty ideals.

### **Tobacco Use**

The percentage of North Carolina high school students who smoke cigarettes regularly has been cut in half over the past few years.<sup>50</sup> While there is cause to celebrate the decrease in conventional tobacco use, this decrease is offset by a dramatic increase in electronic vapor, or e-cigarette, product use.

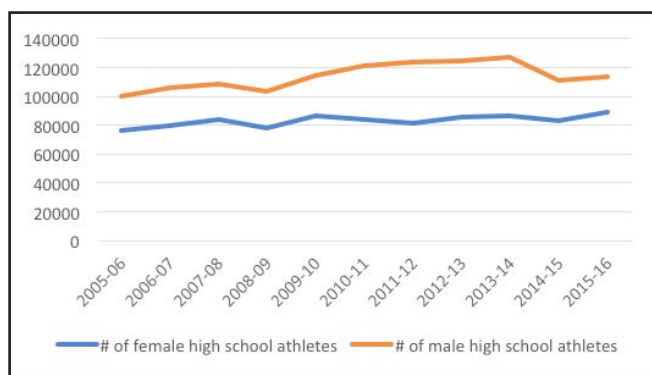
**Figure 24. Percentage of NC high schoolers using tobacco products, 2015**

Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015

The use of electronic vapor products among teens in North Carolina mirrors trends nationally.<sup>51</sup> In 2015, close to 30% of high school students in North Carolina and about a quarter of students nationally reported using electronic vapor products. While girls are significantly less likely than their male counterparts to use e-cigarettes, the American Lung Association is concerned about the public health impact on any amount of use among youth due to the unknown effects of these electronic vapor products and their emissions.<sup>52</sup>

### Physical Activity Participation

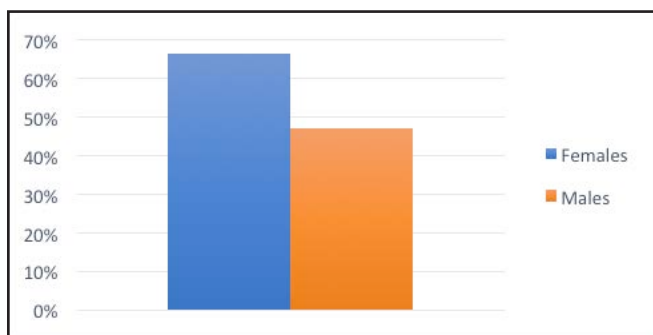
The benefits of physical activity are well documented.<sup>53</sup> In North Carolina, girls lag boys in terms of their level of regular physical activity.

**Figure 25. Number of students participating in high school athletics by gender**

Source: North Carolina High School Athletic Association, Student Athlete Participation Numbers 2005-2016

While the number of females participating in high school athletics has increased somewhat since the 2005-06 school year, males are still more likely to participate in high school athletics. The gap in raw numbers between males and females has remained roughly the same over the past ten years.



**Figure 26. Percent of high schoolers not regularly physically active by gender, 2015**

Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015

While the increasing number of females who participate in high school athletics is encouraging, female teens are almost 20% less likely to be regularly physically active than males. African American and Latina females are about 10% less likely to exercise regularly than white females. The lack of physical activity among females in North Carolina may have a correlation to an increase in the rates of obesity and percentage of young women who are overweight.

**Table 7. Percentage of high school females who are overweight/obese**

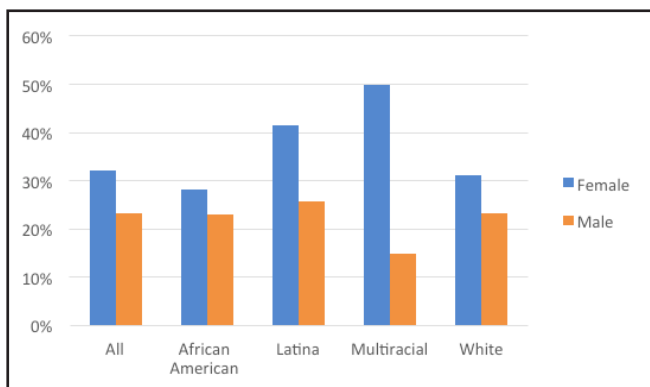
	Overweight		Obese	
	2011	2015	2011	2015
<b>African American</b>	23%	15%	15%	20%
<b>Latina</b>	17%	19%	12%	15%
<b>White</b>	13%	18%	8%	9%

Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2011; CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015

Rates of obesity among North Carolina's female high schoolers are increasing. Over one-third of North Carolina's African American and Latina female high school students are considered overweight or obese and rates among white young women are not far behind. Rates of obesity increased among females between 2011 and 2015, reversing a previous trend in which rates of obesity had remained constant for over a decade.<sup>54</sup> In North Carolina, the increase in obesity rates among young men between 2011 and 2015 was sharper than that among young women. Rates of obesity remain higher among young men than young women, both in North Carolina and nationally.<sup>55</sup>

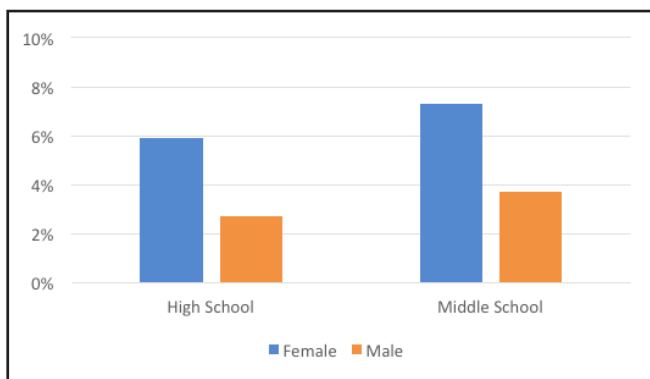
## Spotlight Organization: Girls on the Run of the Triangle

Girls on the Run of the Triangle (GOTR) is a physical activity-based, positive youth program for girls in the third to eighth grades dedicated to creating a world where every girl learns to boldly pursue her dreams. Girls learn their worth comes from within, that healthy relationships matter and that they can be a force for good in their community. The program is based on a research-based curriculum that creatively integrates running. Meeting twice a week in small teams, GOTR of the Triangle certified volunteer coaches teach girls life skills through engaging lessons and fun movement activities. At the end of each semester, girls are encouraged to participate in a welcoming, non-competitive 5k walk/run. In 2016, GOTR of the Triangle served over 2,000 girls in Durham, Orange and Wake counties and one of every three received a scholarship. Girls on the Run of the Triangle recently began a program for middle school girls—Heart and Sole. This program is particularly vital as middle school is a fragile time in the social, emotional and academic development for many girls. For more information see: <https://www.gotrtriangle.org/>

**Figure 27. North Carolina high school students' perceptions of themselves as overweight, 2015**

Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015

High school females are significantly more likely to view themselves as overweight than males, despite having a lower incidence of high BMI (body mass index). Young women are highly vulnerable to struggles with body image issues. Sixty percent of high school females and 55% of middle school females in North Carolina report trying to lose weight.<sup>56</sup> Young women are almost twice as likely as their male peers to report body dissatisfaction. The pressures associated with achieving certain beauty ideals can lead young women into risky behaviors to manage perceived weight issues, including problematic eating, vomiting, and the use of laxatives or other pills.<sup>57</sup>

**Figure 28. Percentage of students who vomited or took laxatives to lose weight**

Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2013

Negative body image perceptions are higher among school-aged females than males, and problematic body behaviors are higher among younger female teens and pre-teens. The likelihood of using a problematic strategy such as vomiting to lose weight peaks among adolescent females between 7th and 9th grades.<sup>58</sup> While the rates are relatively low—less than 10%—this is cause for concern. Female adolescents are almost twice as likely as male adolescents to use these kinds of strategies to lose weight, whereas male and female teens report using healthier weight loss strategies such as exercise at comparable rates.<sup>59</sup>

### Cause for Concern

Despite an increase in rate of obesity among young women in North Carolina, males continue to have higher incidence of obesity. However, female adolescents are more likely to see themselves as overweight and be trying to lose weight. A small percentage of young girls are engaging in problematic behaviors to control what may or may not be an actual weight problem. The focus on youth obesity is important, but discussions of obesity must be balanced with the awareness that girls are inundated with problematic messages about their bodies. Girls are less likely than their male counterparts to report being regularly physically active. Additionally, the new threat of electronic vapor products and their unknown effects have become a pressing concern for all youth.

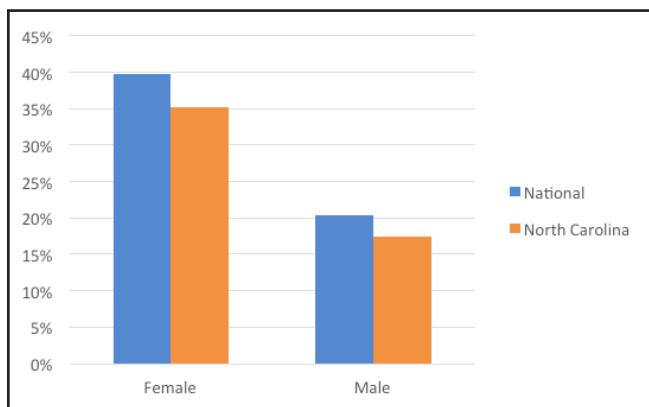
## Mental Health

Mental health is increasingly a part of the national conversation. North Carolina's female teens fare slightly better than teens nationwide in self-reports of depression and are less likely to seriously consider suicide than girls nationally.<sup>60</sup> However, the rate of young women making a serious suicide attempt—one that results in a treatable injury—has doubled in North Carolina since 2011 and now exceeds the national average among female teens.

### Depression

The rates of self-reported depression-like symptoms among high schoolers in North Carolina are slightly lower, but statistically similar, to rates among teenagers nationally. However, in North Carolina—like the rest of the country—rates of depression are significantly higher among young women than young men.

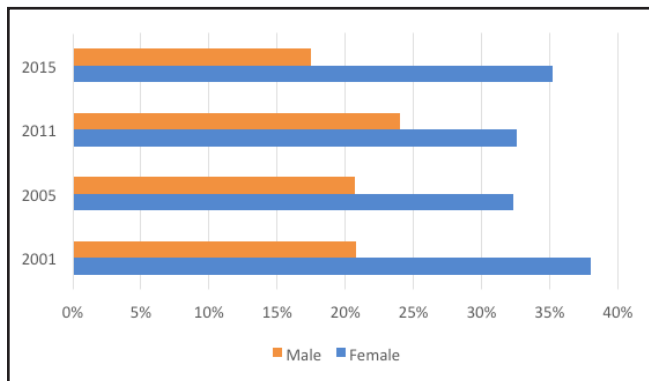
**Figure 29. Percentage of HS students feeling sad/hopeless for two or more continuous weeks by sex and region, 2015**



Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015

Looking specifically at teens in North Carolina, young women have consistently reported higher levels of depression over the past fifteen years than young men. Rates of depression steadily declined between 2001 and 2011 for young women. Though there was a slight uptick in reports among females in 2015, levels continue to remain below 2001's high of 38%. Of concern, however, is that more than one-third of high school girls report having a period of depression in 2015. Among young men, current rates of self-reported depression have now fallen below a more recent high of 24% in 2011.

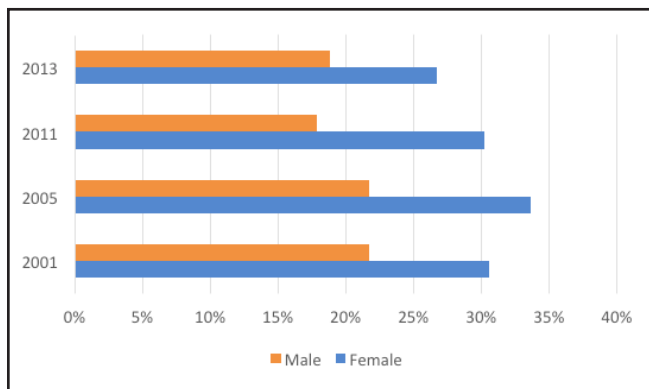
**Figure 30. Percentage of North Carolina high school students feeling sad/hopeless for two or more continuous weeks**



Sources: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015, 2011, 2005, and 2001

Between 2001 and 2013 (the most recent year of data available for middle school students in North Carolina) rates of hopelessness decreased slightly for middle school students. However, like their high school counterparts, middle school girls are significantly more likely to report symptoms linked to depression than their male peers.

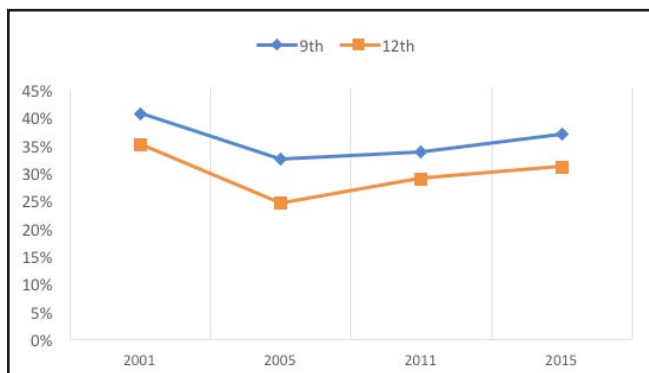
**Figure 31. Percentage of NC middle school students feeling sad/hopeless for two or more continuous weeks**



Sources: Adapted from North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2013, 2011, 2005, and 2001

Looking specifically at young women, early adolescents are consistently more likely than their older counterparts (as measured by grade-level) to report feelings of depression.

**Figure 32. Percentage of depression among North Carolina high school females by year and grade level**

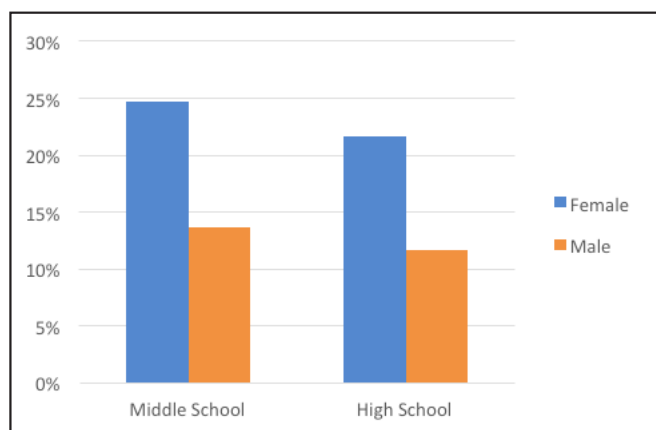


Sources: Adapted from North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2001, 2005, 2011, 2015

## Suicide

Young women in North Carolina report high rates of hopelessness and extreme sadness. For some, this leads to thoughts of suicide. Among teens in North Carolina, girls are almost twice as likely as boys to consider suicide; however, young men are slightly more likely to attempt suicide<sup>61</sup> and three times as likely to commit suicide.<sup>62</sup> Rates of youth suicide in North Carolina are 15.59 per 100,000 for males aged 15-19 and 4.69 per 100,000 for females aged 15-19.<sup>63</sup> This gender difference holds among teens (and adults) nationally.<sup>64</sup>

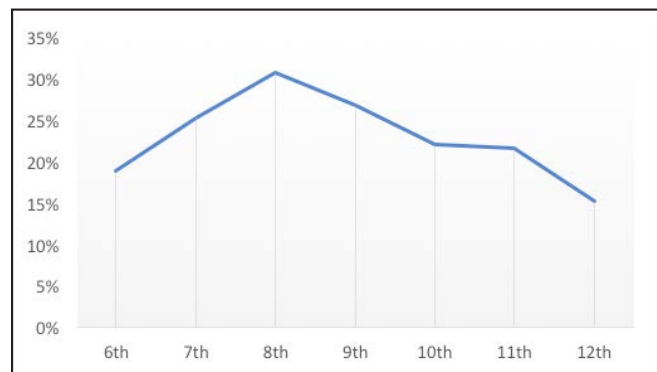
**Figure 33. Percentage of North Carolina youth who have seriously considered suicide, 2013**



Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2013

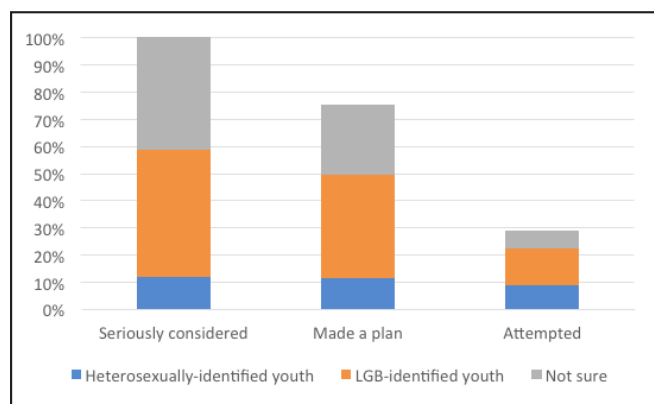
One in four middle school girls in North Carolina seriously considered suicide in 2013. This is consistent with the rate from 2011. The rate is slightly lower among high school-aged females. The percentage of girls thinking seriously about committing suicide peaks in 8th grade, and is concentrated in the early adolescent years between 7th and 9th grades.

**Figure 34. Percentage of NC girls who have seriously considered suicide by grade level, 2013**



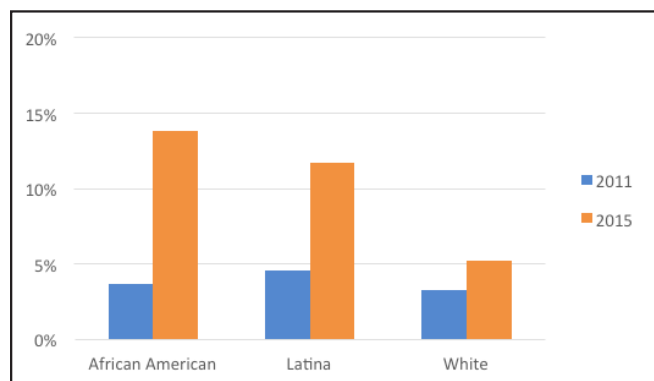
Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2013

The young people most at-risk for many of these suicide-related behaviors both nationally and here in North Carolina are students who identify as a sexual minority. Among high schoolers, lesbian, gay, bisexual or youth who are not sure of their sexual identity are more likely than their heterosexually-identified peers to have considered suicide, made a suicide plan or made a suicide attempt.<sup>65</sup>

**Figure 35. Suicide-related behaviors among NC high school students by sexual orientation, 2015**

Source: CDC, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9–12 — United States and Selected Sites, 2015*. August 2016.

In 2015, one-fifth of high school-aged females in North Carolina reported seriously considering suicide—a significant increase from 2011, though this is slightly lower than the rate nationally. However, of greater concern, more than 8% of North Carolina’s high school-aged young women made suicide attempts that resulted in medical attention.<sup>66</sup> This is more than double the rate for this same group in 2011 and more than double the rate of female high schoolers nationally.<sup>67</sup>

**Figure 36. Percentage of North Carolina high school females who made an injurious suicide attempt, 2015**

Sources: CDC, *Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015*; CDC, *Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2011*

Both African American and Latina young women are significantly more likely than white high schoolers in North Carolina to report making a serious attempt on their own life.

### Cause for Concern

Many girls and young women in North Carolina experience severe depression-like feelings of hopelessness and sadness. Young women are more likely than their male counterparts to report symptoms of depression and to seriously consider suicide. Rates of depressive symptoms and feelings of suicide peak in early adolescence for females. This is a group in need of increased social and emotional supports. Among high school females, rates of serious suicide have doubled in the past five years—driven primarily by increases among Latina and African American young women. This is a very troubling trend. Finally, LGBT youth are at the highest risk for suicide-related behaviors and are also in need of safe, supportive environments.

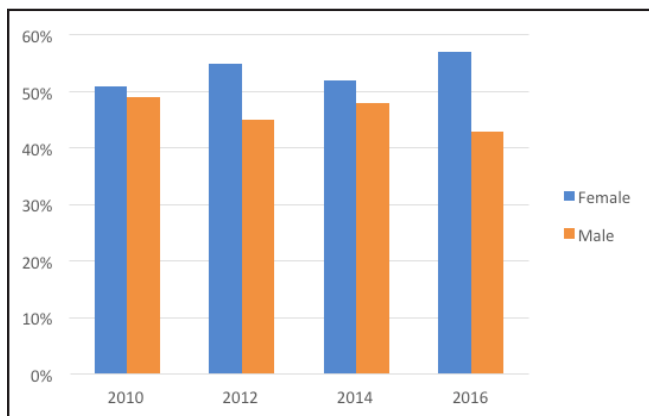
## Leadership and Civic Engagement

Girls in North Carolina are active members of their communities. Young women are taking on school leadership positions, are civically engaged, and are participating in community leadership programs and organized athletics at higher rates than ever before. These are part of a cluster of leadership behaviors thought to be positively associated with future academic and occupational success.<sup>68</sup>

### Civic Engagement

Women in North Carolina vote. In the 2016 general election, women made up 55% of the voters and slightly over 70% of women turned out to vote.<sup>69</sup> Women comprise 52% of the current registered electorate in North Carolina and are a majority of registered voters in every county.<sup>70</sup> Among young people 18-19, females also make up a majority of voters.

**Figure 37. Percentage of voters among young people 18-19 by gender**



Source: *ncvotetracker.com*, a project of the Civitas Institute

Beyond voting, there are other ways that young women are civically engaged. North Carolina ranks 29th nationally in terms of our volunteer rate with residents volunteering an average of 30 hours a year.<sup>71</sup> This is a substantial increase from our 2010 ranking of 47th in the nation. In 2015, 28% of women and 23% of men in North Carolina volunteered in some capacity in the community.<sup>72</sup>

**Table 8. Civic engagement rates among youth ages 16-29, by gender**

Civic Engagement Behaviors	2014		2011	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Volunteered	23%	17%	24%	18%
Donated \$25 or more	32%	21%	34%	26%
Attended public meeting	3%	4%	6%	5%
Fixed something in the neighborhood	3%	5%	6%	1%

Source: *Current Population Survey, September Volunteering Supplement, 2014*

### Community and School Organizations

Girls and young women across North Carolina are participating in a host of community-based leadership, educational, advocacy and esteem-building programs.

Girl Scouts is a national organization that supports local councils working directly with girls organized into age-based troops. The national organization and regional councils provide local troops with resources and programming in areas like financial literacy, environmentalism, leadership, and STEM, among other topics. Over 65,000 girls participate in local Girl Scout troops across the state.

In addition to the Girl Scouts, there are other national and state-level organizations working in communities throughout North Carolina to build capacities among girls. One of the largest girl-serving programs working across the state is Girls on the Run (GOTR). This international organization also works through regional councils that provide training to adult coaches who work with small groups of girls afterschool to take them through a curriculum that builds life skills through physical fitness. GOTR served almost 13,000 in 2016 in programming for elementary school and middle school aged girls.

**Table 9. Community organization membership among girls by race/ethnicity**

	African American	American Indian	Asian	Latina	Multiracial	White	Other	Not Reported
<b>Girl Scout Councils-North Carolina</b>								
<b>Colonial Coast</b>	26%	0%	1%	0%	7%	57%	2%	7%
<b>Peaks to Piedmont</b>	15%	0%	1%	5%	3%	70%	2%	8%
<b>Hornets Nest</b>	27%	0%	2%	7%	4%	56%	3%	8%
<b>Coastal Pines</b>	29%	1%	1%	6%	3%	43%	4%	8%
<b>Girls on the Run-North Carolina</b>								
	16%	0%	2%	10%	5%	62%	1%	2%

Sources: Membership data provided by Girls on the Run International<sup>73</sup> and Girl Scout individual councils and council annual reports<sup>74</sup>

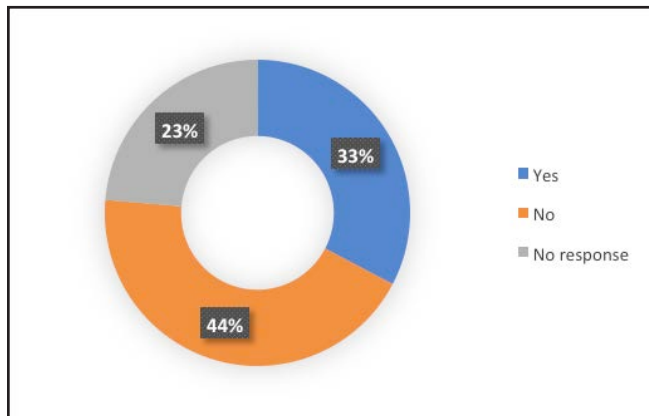
Both Girl Scouts and GOTR serve a diverse a population of girls across North Carolina. Both organizations emphasize that girls be able to participate regardless of financial needs. GOTR reports that in North Carolina almost 40% of participants received a financial scholarship in calendar year 2016.

Community organizations are not the only space in which girls are getting leadership opportunities, building skills, and finding spaces of support. Schools are another venue in which some girls are honing their leadership skills and engaging in community activities.

## Spotlight Organization: Girl Scouts—North Carolina Coastal Pines

Girl Scouts is an organization dedicated to helping girls become brave, bold and strong leaders in their schools and communities. The Coastal Pines Council serves 41 counties in parts of central and eastern North Carolina. Coastal Pines is the largest council in the state, with over 25,000 Girl Scouts. Council activities are low-cost to ensure that all girls can participate regardless of financial means. The Council provides financial assistance to approximately one-third of their members. The Council emphasizes girl-led experiences where every girl learns—and leads—by doing. Program areas include business skills, STEM and innovation, outdoor learning, and leadership. Local troops design their own set of activities in which girls earn badges and patches by mastering new skills, engaging in community service, and testing their own limits. The Council operates three outdoor camps, which troops can use for camping or day outdoors adventures. Individual girls (whether Girl Scouts or not) can also attend summer camps. And, of course, there are the cookies! For more information, see: <http://www.nccoastalpines.org/content/girlscoutsnccp/en.html>



**Figure 38. Percentage of high schools with club or afterschool activity for girls**

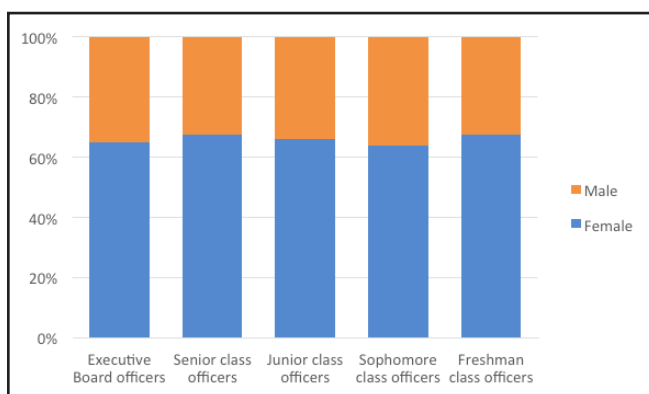
Source: Hess, et al. 2016, *North Carolina High School Leadership and Policies Survey*

One third of schools participating in our survey of North Carolina high schools indicated that their school hosts at least one student organization primarily for girls or young women. The clubs were primarily clustered in three areas: STEM, ethnic/racial identity, and self-esteem/fitness.

In addition to the important academic and esteem support that programming for girls provides, school-based and community programs provide other benefits. The Afterschool Alliance reports that 15% of children in North Carolina participate in after school programs, and 20% of girls nationwide participate in after school programs.<sup>75</sup> Additionally, 19% of children in North Carolina and 15% of girls nationally are left unsupervised after school.

### School Leadership

Girls in North Carolina are very active in student government. Girls make up 65% of student government association members in North Carolina high schools.<sup>76</sup>

**Figure 39. Student government officers by gender, 2014-16**

Source: Hess, et al. 2016, *North Carolina High School Leadership and Policies Survey*

In both public and private schools across North Carolina, girls were almost twice as likely as boys to serve as student government officers across all levels of student government.<sup>77</sup>

**Cause for Concern:**

Females—young and old—are actively engaged social citizens in North Carolina and nationally. However, this has been slow to translate into direct representation among political leadership, representation in the ranks of corporate executives, or a narrowing of the gender wage gap in North Carolina.<sup>78</sup>

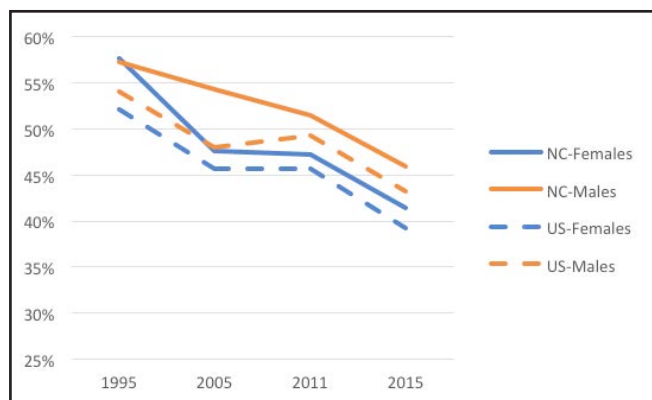
## **Sexual Health**

By 8th grade, the majority of North Carolina youth have received some sort of sexual health education. Most, about 80%, have had abstinence-only or abstinence-focused education. Sixty seven percent of 8th grade students say that they have also been taught about HIV or AIDS infection—though this is down from 85% in 2011.<sup>79</sup>

**Sexual activity**

The rate of sexual activity among North Carolina's youth continues a 20-year decrease. In 2015, only four out of ten of North Carolina's female high schoolers report having ever had sexual intercourse, down from almost half in 2011. Parents in North Carolina are talking with their teens about sex. In 2011 three out of four teens reported that a parent or other adult family member talked with them about sex, though by 2015 that number had dipped somewhat to 70%.<sup>80</sup> There is a gender difference in parent-teen communication about sexual health. As girls progress through high school they are more likely to report these kinds of discussions with parents, while boys are much less likely. The high level of parental involvement in setting expectations for their children in this area is good, but when parents fail to communicate these expectations with young men, it places more of the burden of sexual responsibility with girls.<sup>81</sup>

**Figure 40. Percentage of high school students who have ever had sex, by gender and region**



Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 1995; 2005; 2011; 2015

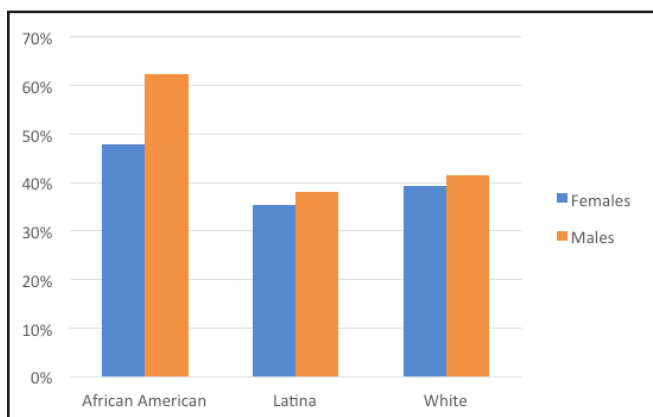
The rates of sexual activity among high school teens in both the United States as well as North Carolina have been on the decline since the mid-1990s.

**Table 10. Percentage of North Carolina high school students who have ever had sex by grade level, 2015**

	Females	Males
<b>9th Grade</b>	21%	31%
<b>10th Grade</b>	42%	48%
<b>11th Grade</b>	55%	54%
<b>12th Grade</b>	52%	56%

Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015

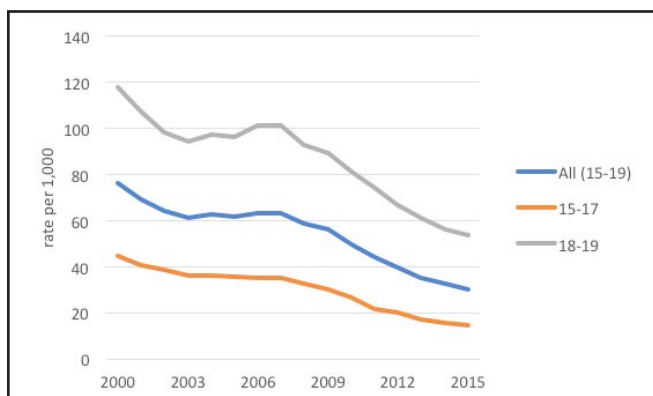
Though rates of sexual activity have declined in the past five years, certain patterns remain consistent. First, as students progress through high school they are more likely to have engaged in sexual intercourse. A significantly higher percentage of juniors and seniors (both male and female) have had sex as compared to students earlier in their high school career. Second, African American females are significantly more likely to have had sex than their white or Latina counterparts.

**Figure 41. Percentage of North Carolina high school students who have ever had sex by race, 2015**

Source: CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015

### Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Diseases

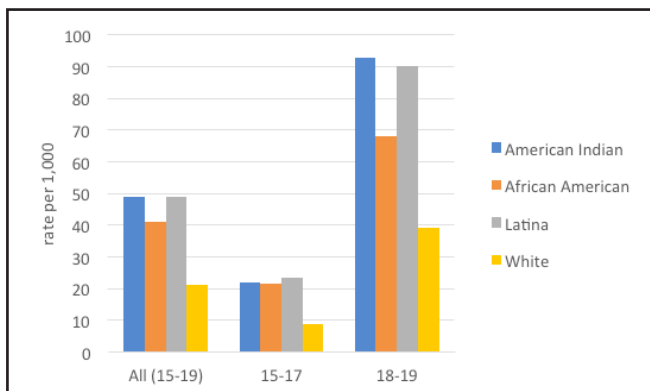
The pregnancy rate among teens 15–19 in North Carolina in 2015 is 30.2 per 1,000, and the live birth rate for teens in North Carolina is 23.5 per 1,000.<sup>82</sup> Teen birth rates have decreased both in North Carolina and nationally over the past twenty years.<sup>83</sup> In North Carolina births among teenagers have declined by almost 10% over the past five years.

**Figure 42. Rates of pregnancy among teens in North Carolina, by age**

Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics

Since the 1990s, there has been a steady decline in rates of teenage pregnancy in North Carolina. Younger teens have a much lower rate of pregnancy than older teens, but the rate of decline among the older group is slightly sharper.

**Figure 43. Rates of pregnancy among teens in North Carolina by age and race, 2015**



Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics

While African American young women report the highest rate of sexual activity, Latina and American Indian young women have the highest rate of teenage pregnancy at 49.1 per 1,000 among 15-19 year olds.

**Table 11. STD incidence rates (per 100,000) among North Carolina teens aged 15-19, 2015**

	Females	Males
<b>Chlamydia</b>	3735.1	811.9
<b>Gonorrhea</b>	662.7	333.9
<b>HIV</b>	2.2	17.8

Source: N.C. Division of Public Health, Communicable Disease Branch, 2015 HIV/STD Surveillance Report.

## Spotlight Organization: SHIFT NC

SHIFT NC (Sexual Health Initiatives for Teens) is a statewide nonprofit organization in North Carolina that aims to improve sexual health among adolescents and young adults. The organization works with other local organizations and community groups to help them promote adolescent sexual health. Shift NC helps communities and schools implement effective and age appropriate sex education, and provides professional development resources to organizations that work with North Carolina youth. The organization works with health care providers in order to make services more accessible to youth, increases awareness of adolescent sexual health, and helps to strengthen parents' voices in their families and communities. SHIFT NC helps to reach the most vulnerable youth in communities, and works with youth to provide information and advocacy opportunities. SHIFT NC focus areas include teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and STIs, sexuality, development, relationships, and access to care. For more information see: <http://www.shiftnc.org/>

Young women in North Carolina have higher rates of both chlamydia and gonorrhea than their male counterparts. Females aged 15–19 made up 22.3% of all chlamydia cases reported in North Carolina in 2015 and 12.6% of gonorrhea cases. Young women aged 20–24 have the highest rates of these sexually transmitted diseases in the state. Together, young women aged 15–24 make up more than half of newly diagnosed cases of chlamydia in the state. While rates among female teens in North Carolina have declined since 2011, they continue to have much higher rates than the national average of 2994.4 per 100,000 for chlamydia and 244.8 per 100,000 for gonorrhea.<sup>84</sup>

### Cause for Concern

The data on sexual activity and teenage pregnancy in North Carolina reveals both good and bad news for girls. Rates of sexual activity are declining, and younger females—those in 9th and 10th grades—are less likely to have had sex than their older peers. However, among students who are sexually active, girls are less likely than their male counterparts to have used a condom during their most recent sexual encounter.<sup>85</sup> Given the high rates of sexually transmitted diseases among young women in North Carolina, the fact that almost half of girls did not use a condom suggests that there is work to be done educationally. And, as in other aspects of girls' lives in North Carolina, there are racial/ethnic disparities in sexual health.

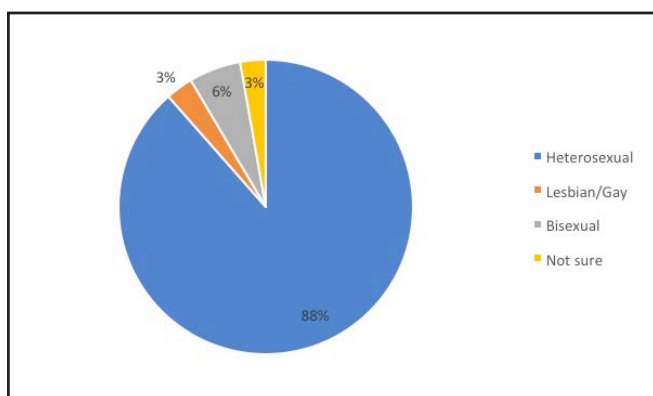
## LGBT Youth

There have been rapid legal, social, and attitudinal changes nationally and in North Carolina, in the areas of same-sex marriage, parental rights, and general acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals. In most cases the changes have been in the rights-granting direction. In North Carolina new rights for LGBT folks have been met with some legislative resistance. In this section, we explore how these shifts at the national and state level affect the actual lives of LGBT youth in North Carolina.

### Sexual Identity

Most young people in North Carolina identify themselves as heterosexual. However, 12% of North Carolina's high school aged youth identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or indicate they are unsure of their sexual identity.

**Figure 44. Sexual identity of North Carolina high school students, 2015**



Source: CDC, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, *Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors*

The numbers in North Carolina are consistent with national trends among sexual self-identification of young people. There is not data at the state-level on sexual identity by gender, but at the national-level young women are far more likely to identify as bisexual than young men (9.8% versus 2.4%) and less likely to identify as heterosexual (84.5% versus 93.1%).<sup>86</sup>

**Table 12. Sexual behavior of teens by sex of sexual contact**

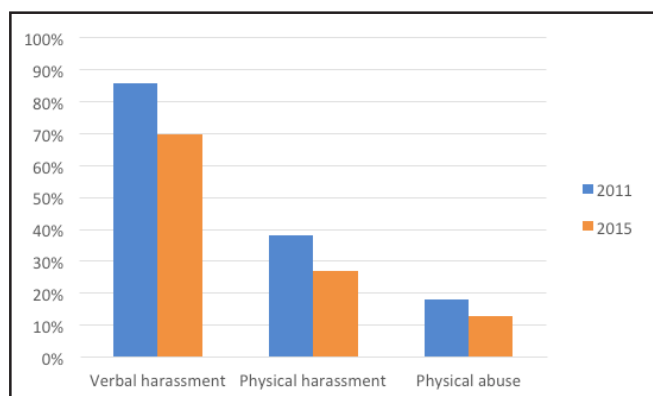
	Opposite sex only	Same sex only	Both sexes	No sexual contact
<b>North Carolina</b>	51%	3%	5%	41%
<b>National</b>	48%	2%	5%	46%
<b>National-females</b>	43%	2%	7%	48%
<b>National-males</b>	53%	1%	2%	44%

Source: CDC, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors*

Young people in North Carolina are far more likely to engage in sexual activity with members of the opposite sex. And many high schoolers—both nationally and in North Carolina—are not sexually active. However, an important minority of young people are engaged in sexual activity with members of the same or both sexes. Consistent with sexual identification trends nationally, young women are more likely than males to engage in sexual activity with other women or both men and women.

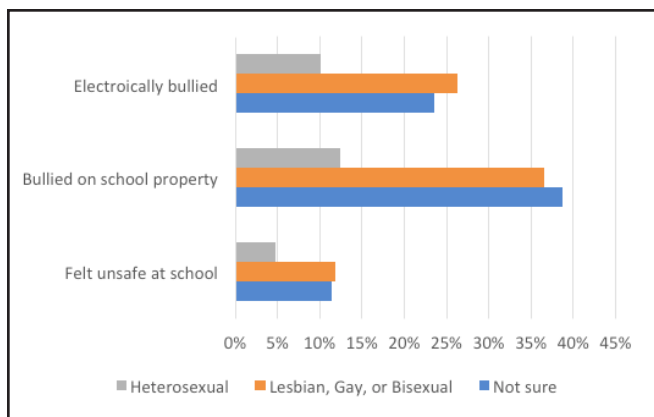
### Harassment and victimization

There is a growing body of research that documents the heightened level of risk sexual minority youth face as targets of both verbal and physical harassment and other forms of victimization.<sup>87</sup>

**Figure 45. Percentage of North Carolina youth reporting harassment or abuse in schools based on sexual orientation**

Source: GLSEN, *School Climate in North Carolina (State Snapshots), 2015 & 2011*

While it is encouraging that the percentage of young people experiencing harassment and violence has declined between 2011 and 2015, it remains untenable that upwards of 70% of sexual minority youth continue to face verbal harassment based on their sexual orientation in North Carolina schools. Related, GLSEN reports that 80% of LGBTQ students heard homophobic remarks in the school setting.<sup>88</sup>

**Figure 46. Percent of NC high school students reporting negative experiences by sexual identification, 2015**

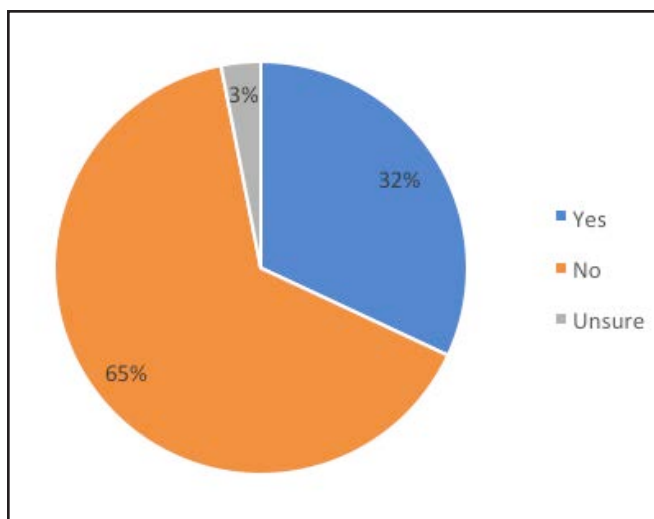
Source: CDC, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors*

Young people who identify sexually as other than heterosexual—as lesbian, gay, bisexual or unsure of their sexual identity—are far more likely than their heterosexual peers to experience their school environment as unsafe and hostile. Sexual minority youth are more than twice as likely to skip school because they felt unsafe at school or in transit. This group of youths are almost four times as likely to be bullied by peers on school property and three times as likely to be bullied via social media, text, or some other electronic means.

The hostile environment that many LGBT youth experience in schools has the potential for serious negative effects in terms of mental health, academic performance, attendance, and social adjustment.<sup>89</sup>

### School supports

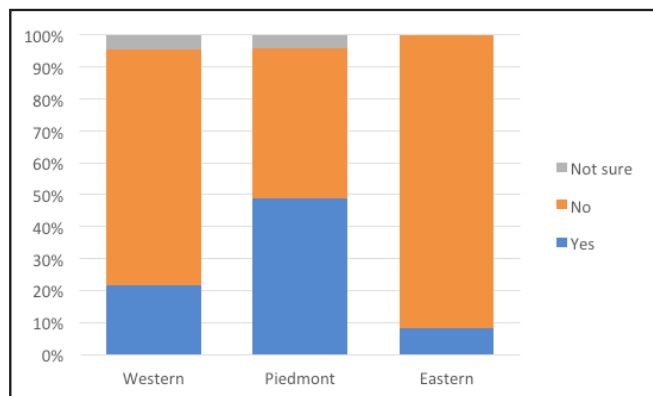
There are ways that schools can support sexual minority youth, transgender youth, or youth who are otherwise gender variant. Research suggests that effective supports include a comprehensive anti-bullying policy, gay-straight alliance (GSA) student clubs, and a curriculum that includes positive representations of LGBTQ people.<sup>90</sup>

**Figure 47. Percent of high schools with a GSA student organization**

Sources: Hess et al., *North Carolina High School Leadership Survey, 2016*

According to our survey of North Carolina high schools, almost a third of responding schools had a GSA student organization. We collected the data in two waves—2014 and 2016—and found no appreciable difference between these periods. In their annual survey of sexual minority youth, GLSEN found that in 2015 almost half of North Carolina students surveyed indicated their high school had a GSA—up from 29% in 2011.<sup>91</sup>

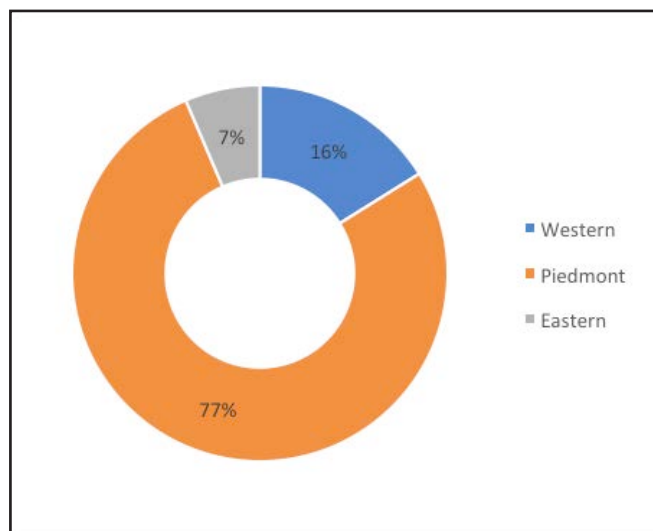
**Figure 48. Regional variation in presence of GSA student organizations**



Sources: Hess et al., *North Carolina High School Leadership Survey, 2016*

Most schools reporting the presence of a GSA student organization are in the central (or Piedmont) region of the state. This is not entirely surprising given that the state's major population centers (and two most populous school districts) are in this region. But the almost total lack of schools in our sample from the eastern portion of the state indicating a GSA or similar student organization is of concern for the many sexual minority living in that region.

**Figure 49. Distribution of schools with a GSA, by region**

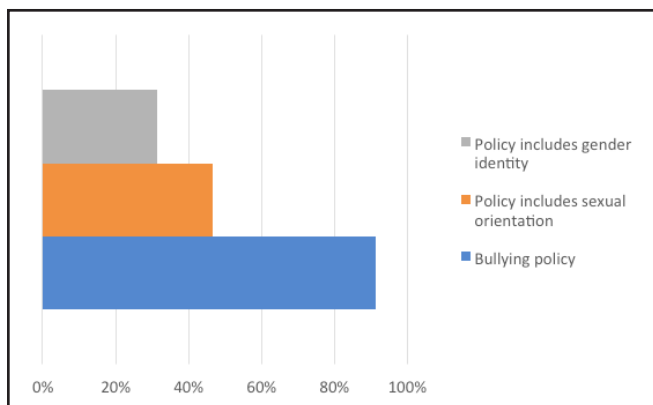


Source: Hess et al., *North Carolina High School Leadership Survey, 2016*



One of the most important supports that schools can offer at an institutional level is an environment free of harassment. In the 2009-10 school year, North Carolina's anti-bullying policy, the North Carolina School Violence Prevention Act, went into effect. Under this policy all public schools are required to create and adopt an anti-bullying policy that sets forth processes and consequences for those engaged in bullying or harassing behaviors. Among other things like race, gender, and learning differences or other disabilities, the Act specifies that policies must include both sexual orientation and gender identity.

**Figure 50. Percentage of public schools with an anti-bullying/harassment policy, by policy characteristic**



Source: Hess et al., North Carolina High School Leadership Survey, 2016

While it is encouraging that 9 out of 10 schools indicate they have a bullying policy, it is discouraging that less than half of schools report that their bullying policy includes sexual orientation and only one-third of schools have a policy that includes gender identity.

### Cause for Concern

Almost 10% of youth in North Carolina self-identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual. A further 3% are unsure of their sexuality (often referred to as “questioning”). Many LGBT young people experience their school environment as hostile or unsafe. For some sexual minority youth, these negative environments are associated with negative mental health outcomes, poor academic performance, or skipping school. There are steps that schools can take to improve the climate for LGBT students. These measures include a comprehensive anti-bullying policy that includes sexual orientation and gender identity (as required by North Carolina’s School Violence Prevention Act) and encouraging a gay-straight alliance student organization.

### Spotlight Organization: Time Out Youth

The Time Out Youth Center in Charlotte is an organization serving and supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQQ) youth. The Center’s mission is to support LGBTQQ youth by offering programs, fostering unconditional acceptance, and creating safe spaces for self-expression through leadership, community support, and advocacy. The Center offers a daily afterschool youth drop-in space and planned weekly programming designed to address the social, emotional, physical, and activist needs of marginalized youth. The Center also supports the larger community with outreach to schools, community service programs, and a speaker’s bureau. For example, the Center has resource support for schools wishing to start or better support a GSA student organization. They also recently conducted an LGBTQ homeless youth needs assessment. For more information on Time Out Youth, see: [www.timeoutyouth.org/](http://www.timeoutyouth.org/)

## **Gaining Ground, Losing Ground**

Women across the United States are forging new ground. In 2016, history was made when a woman accepted the nomination for one of the two major political parties to run for President of the United States. Add to this, women now hold 21% of the seats in the U.S. Senate and 19.1% of the seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. This represents a slight uptick in the representation of women politically over the previous five years. Thirty five percent of the women who make up a part of the 115th Congress are women of color. In addition, the only person of color from the North Carolina federal delegation is Congresswoman Alma Adams. Women represent both major political parties, and make up a part of the most racially, ethnically, and sexually diverse Congress in history. In North Carolina, women currently make up 24% of the state legislature, though only 13% of North Carolina's federal delegation. Political representation is just one area in which to look for both signs of change and resistance for women both nationally and locally. It is important to consider the areas in which girls in North Carolina are gaining ground and where they are losing it. But, it is just as important to think about which girls are gaining and which are losing. North Carolina must be a place where all girls can thrive.

One of the most persistent findings of this report—from 2013 to 2017—is that there are tremendous differences in outcomes for girls based on their racial or ethnic background. Despite declining rates of poverty since the release of our first report, girls of color in North Carolina are disproportionately represented among children living in poverty. This sets up enormous barriers to success for these young people. These effects can be seen in childhood and adolescence in lower educational achievements, higher rates of teen pregnancy, and higher rates of obesity. As the demographics of North Carolina continue to shift, residents must find ways to enable all girls to become strong, successful leaders.

### **Gaining ground**

There are many areas in which girls in North Carolina are excelling or showing important signs of improvement.

#### ***In education...***

- The percentage of girls with grade-level EOG and EOC scores is on par with (and, in some cases exceeds) that of boys across all grades and subjects.
- Girls also perform on par with boys on SAT testing.
- Female graduation rates exceed those of males; female have high rates of graduation across all racial and ethnic groups.

#### ***In economic security, safety, and school support...***

- Though not specific to girls, it is worth celebrating the decline in poverty rates among families headed by a single mother since 2011. It is also important to note that these families are at greatest risk of poverty when compared to two-parent or single father families across all racial and ethnic groups.
- Girls are far less likely than boys to be identified as juvenile offenders in the criminal justice system or to receive serious punishments (i.e. suspension or expulsion) in school settings.
- Almost all public high schools report having an anti-bullying/harassment policy in place to ensure that all students have a safe and productive learning environment. However, less than half specify sexual orientation or gender identity in those policies.
- Rates of harassment and physical abuse among LGBT youth have declined since 2011, though one in seven LGBT youth report experiencing verbal harassment at school.

***In health...***

- Rates of smoking have declined among all teens between 2011 and 2015. Females are much less likely to smoke cigarettes and to use e-cigarette products than their male peers. However, the rate of e-cigarette use among teens is alarmingly high.
- The number of young women participating in organized high school athletics continues a decades long increase.
- Rates of sexual activity among high school females continues to decrease. Only 52% of young women in 12th grade report having had sex—down ten percentage points from 2011.
- Teen pregnancy rates also continue to decline. The rate of teen pregnancy among girls in North Carolina has been halved between 2000 and 2015 across 15-19 year olds.

***In media consumption...***

- The percentage of both middle and high school females watching excessive amounts of television on school days continues to a decade-long decrease. This decrease is matched with an increase among non-academic computer use among this same population.

***In leadership...***

- Thousands of girls across the state are participating in girl-focused community leadership organizations like Girls on the Run and Girl Scouts. These organizations have a commitment to serving all girls, regardless of financial need.
- Young women make up approximately two-thirds of student government officers in high schools across North Carolina.
- Among voters aged 18-19 in the 2016 national election women made up over half of the electorate.

**Losing ground**

Many areas remain in which the collective efforts on behalf of girls and young women of North Carolina need to be redoubled.

***In economic security...***

- While poverty rates have declined for children in North Carolina since our first report was published in 2013, the rate of child poverty remains higher in North Carolina than the national rate.
- African American and Latina children remain more than twice as likely to live in poverty than their white or Asian counterparts.

***In education...***

- The racial achievement gap as measured by EOG and EOC scores persists. While the 2011-12 data suggested that the gap narrowed as girls moved into high school, the 2015-16 data indicates a reversal of this trend.
- While girls make up over 60% of student enrolled in AP Biology courses, they make up less than half of student in AP calculus courses, and barely a quarter of students enrolled in AP physics and AP computer science courses.

***In safety and school supports...***

- Though African Americans make up less than a quarter of the youth under 18, they comprise over half of the complaints among juveniles. This is true for both young men and young women.
- The racial disparity in school punishments is greater among females than males (though African American males are punished at higher rates than any other group of students).

- The percentage of Latina young women reporting a sexual assault has increased by 5% since 2011. Latinas report the highest rate of forced sexual intercourse, physical dating violence, and sexual dating violence.
- Among high school students, white young women are almost twice as likely as other young women to report being bullied (both electronic and bullying on school property).
- Over one in four LGBT students report being electronically bullied and one in three report being bullied on school property. LGBT students are twice as likely as students identifying as heterosexual to report feeling unsafe at school.

#### *In health...*

- The percentage of young women who are overweight or obese increased between 2011 and 2015. The specific patterns of the increase differed by racial or ethnic group, but all groups saw some level of increase.
- Young women are significantly less likely than their male peers to be physically inactive on a regular basis.
- Girls experiencing depressive symptoms increased among high school females in 2015 for the first time in a decade. Females are more than twice as likely as their male peers to report depressive symptoms.
- Reports of depression and suicide-related thoughts seem to be concentrated among early adolescents—girls in 7th through 9th grades.
- The percentage of both African American and Latina high school females who made a suicide attempt that resulted in an injury more than doubled between 2011 and 2015.
- When compared to their heterosexual peers, youth identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or unsure are significantly more likely to seriously consider, plan for, and attempt suicide.
- Rates of sexually transmitted diseases among young women in North Carolina remain alarmingly high (though they have declined since 2011) and higher than incidence rates of STDs nationally.

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## Notes and References

- <sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates, 2014.
  - <sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015.
  - <sup>3</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2015. Kids Count Data Center. See: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>.
  - <sup>4</sup> North Carolina Office of Budget and Management, Municipal Estimates, 2015.
  - <sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates, 2014.
  - <sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015.
  - <sup>7</sup> For example, while we have data on same-sex couples raising children, we do not have data on the sexual orientation of single individuals raising children. Similarly, it is difficult to obtain reliable data on the number of cohabitating opposite-sex couples raising children.
  - <sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015; U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2010; U.S. Census, 2000.
  - <sup>9</sup> Williams Institute. May, 2016. *Same-sex Couple and LGBT Demographic Data Interactive*, May 2016. The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law.
  - <sup>10</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, North Carolina: Economy at a Glance, 2016.
  - <sup>11</sup> Office of the Federal Register. 2015. Retrieved from: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/01/22/2015-01120/annual-update-of-the-hhs-poverty-guidelines>.
  - <sup>12</sup> Wight, Vanessa R., Michelle Chau, and Yumiko Aratani. March, 2011. *Who are America's Poor Children: The Official Story*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health.
  - <sup>13</sup> Jiang, Yang, Mercedes Ekono, and Curtis Skinner. February, 2015. *Basic Facts about Low-Income Children*. National Center for Children in Poverty: 2014. Retrieved from: [http://nccp.org/publications/pub\\_1145.html](http://nccp.org/publications/pub_1145.html).
  - <sup>14</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2015. Kids Count Data Center. See: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>.
  - <sup>15</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2015. Kids Count Data Center. See: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>.
  - <sup>16</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2015. Kids Count Data Center. See: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>.
  - <sup>17</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015.
  - <sup>18</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015.
  - <sup>19</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015.
  - <sup>20</sup> North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, *Facts and Figures 2015-2016*.
  - <sup>21</sup> North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, *Report to the General Assembly: Annual Charter Schools Report*, 2015.
  - <sup>22</sup> For example, looking specifically at EOC scores in Math for 2014-15, the gap between Asian young women, the highest performing group, and everyone else grows by five percentage points. The gap in academic testing performance between white young women and African American and Latina widens as well, but only by one to three percentage points.
  - <sup>23</sup> List some programs and then talk about women and other underrepresented groups in STEM fields.
  - <sup>24</sup> See Bian, Lin, Sarah-Jane Leslie, and Andrei Cimpriani. 2017. "Gender stereotypes about intellectual ability emerge early and influence children's interests." *Science* 355(6323): 389-91.
  - <sup>25</sup> This is consistent with an earlier finding by Corn et al. (2011) in their evaluation of the 131 STEM-designated high schools in North Carolina. That evaluation found that a lower proportion of girls attend engineering-focused STEM schools and a higher proportion of girls attend high schools focused on health and life sciences.
  - <sup>26</sup> North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, North Carolina 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate Report, 2015.
  - <sup>27</sup> North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, North Carolina 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate Report, 2015.
  - <sup>28</sup> Detailed data on juvenile complaints was provided upon our request by the Division of Adult Corrections and Juvenile Justice of the North Carolina Department of Public Safety.
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- <sup>29</sup> North Carolina is one of two states in which juveniles aged 16 or over are automatically prosecuted as adults for felony crimes.
- <sup>30</sup> Data provided upon request by the Division of Adult Corrections and Juvenile Justice of the North Carolina Department of Public Safety.
- <sup>31</sup> The phenomenon in which young people—particularly students of color—are criminalized within the school setting in ways which involves them in the formal criminal justice system has come to be called the school to prison pipeline. There is a substantial body of research on this nationally and in North Carolina. For a comprehensive report on racial and gender disparities in school punishments and the effects of school discipline, see: Smith, Edward J. and Harper, Shaun R. 2015. *Disproportionate impact of K-12 school suspension and expulsion on Black students in southern states*. Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education, University of Pennsylvania.
- <sup>32</sup> School resource officers are community law enforcement officers assigned to work in a school setting. For more information on the school resource officers in North Carolina see: North Carolina Center for Safer Schools. 2015. North Carolina School Resource Officer Census. North Carolina Department of Public Safety.
- <sup>33</sup> North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Annual Report of Suspensions and Expulsions, part of the Consolidated Data Report, 2014-15. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.
- <sup>34</sup> Due to privacy compliance concerns, the Department of Public Instruction does not give detailed information when numbers of any given cell are below a specific threshold. Therefore, we do not have expulsion data broken down by gender and race.
- <sup>35</sup> North Carolina did not have enough participation in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey to achieve a weighted sample among middle schoolers in 2015, so we are using 2013 data—the most recent available.
- <sup>36</sup> According to the YRBS survey, in 2011 21% of young women reported experiencing electronic bullying and 23% reported experiencing bullying on school property.
- <sup>37</sup> The Youth Risk Behavior Survey only began asking about physical and sexual dating violence in 2013.
- <sup>38</sup> CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015
- <sup>39</sup> Butts, Jeffrey A. and Jennifer Ortiz. 2011. “Teen Courts—Do They Work and Why?” *NYSBA Journal*.
- <sup>40</sup> As noted earlier, North Carolina did not have enough participation in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey to achieve a weighted sample among middle schoolers in 2015, so we are using 2013 data. Similarly, for some questions in 2013 there was not a representative sample among particular racial, ethnic or age groups. In this case, among Latina middle school girls, so that data cannot be reported.
- <sup>41</sup> CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015.
- <sup>42</sup> To look at the exact questions asked to young people in the YRBS surveys see documentation at <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/questionnaires.htm>
- <sup>43</sup> Foehr, Ulla G. 2006. *Media Multitasking Among American Youth: Prevalence, Predictors and Pairings*. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.
- <sup>44</sup> Most of the academic research on screen-multitasking and youth has been conducted on college students. This research does suggest an association between screen multitasking and lower academic performance among the college student population. For a comprehensive review see, Downs, Edward, Angela Tran, Robert McMenemy, and Nahom Abegaze. 2015. “Exam Performance and Attitudes Toward Multitasking in Six, Multimedia-Multitasking Classroom Environments.” *Computers & Education* 86: 250-59. See also, van der Schuur, Winneke A., Susanne E. Baumgartner, Cindy R. Sumter, Patti M. Walkenburg. 2015. The Consequences of Media Multitasking for Youth: A Review.” *Computers in Human Behavior* 53: 204-15.
- <sup>45</sup> Lenhart, Amanda. 2015. *Teen, Social Media and Technology Overview*. Washington D.C.: PEW Research Center.

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- <sup>46</sup> Lenhart, Amanda. 2015. *Teen, Social Media and Technology Overview*. Washington D.C.: PEW Research Center.
- <sup>47</sup> Statistics based on data computed from facebook.com/ads/create as of September, 2016.
- <sup>48</sup> Lenhart, Amanda. 2015. *Teen, Social Media and Technology Overview*. Washington D.C.: PEW Research Center and Lenhart, Amanda. 2012. *Teens, Smartphone, and Texting*. Washington D.C.: Internet & American Life Project, PEW Research Center.
- <sup>49</sup> Lenhart, Amanda. 2012. *Teens, Smartphone, and Texting*. Washington D.C.: Internet & American Life Project, PEW Research Center
- <sup>50</sup> CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015 and 2011.
- <sup>51</sup> Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, April 2015. See: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6414a3.htm>
- <sup>52</sup> See American Lung Association, <http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/smoking-facts/e-cigarettes-and-lung-health.html>, for their statement on e-cigarettes and a bibliography of current research.
- <sup>53</sup> On the leadership and prosocial benefits of organized athletics for girls, see, Stevenson, Betsey. 2010. "Beyond the Classroom: Using Title IX to Measure the Return to High School Sports." *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 92(2): 284-301. On the positive relationship between mental health and physical activity see, Biddle SJ, M. Asare. 2011. "Physical Activity and Mental Health in Children and Adolescents: A Review of Reviews." *British Journal of Sports Medicine* 45(11): 886–895. There are, of course, other benefits of physical activity, notably physical fitness and weight management.
- <sup>54</sup> CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015 and 2005.
- <sup>55</sup> CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015.
- <sup>56</sup> CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015 and 2013.
- <sup>57</sup> For more on young women, body image, and eating disorders see: Jung, Jahee and Gordon B. Forbes. 2012. "Body Dissatisfaction and Characteristics of Disordered Eating Among Black and White Early Adolescent Girls and Boys." *Journal of Early Adolescence*; Boyd, Emily M., John R. Reynolds, Katherine Harker Tillman, and Patricia Yancey Martin. 2011. "Adolescent girls' race/ethnic status, identities, and drive for thinness." *Social Science Research*, 40(2): 667-84; Hesse-Biber, Sharlene, Stacey Livingstone, Daniela Ramirez, Emily Brooke Barko, and Alicia Lorene Johnson. 2010. "Racial Identity and Body Image Among Black Female College Students Attending Predominately White Colleges." *Sex Roles* 63 (9-10): 697-711; Hutchinson, Delyse M., Ronald M. Rapee, and Alan Taylor. 2010. "Body Dissatisfaction and Eating Disturbances in Early Adolescence: A Structural Modeling Investigation Examining Negative Affect and Peer Factors." *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 30(4): 489-517; and Vecitis, Katherine Sirles. 2011. "Young Women's Accounts of Instrumental Drug Use for Weight Control." *Deviant Behavior*, 32(5): 451-74.
- <sup>58</sup> North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, NC Healthy Schools, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Middle and High School Reports, 2013.
- <sup>59</sup> North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, NC Healthy Schools, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Middle and High School Reports, 2013.
- <sup>60</sup> CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015.
- <sup>61</sup> CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2015.
- <sup>62</sup> CDC, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS.
- <sup>63</sup> CDC, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS.
- <sup>64</sup> The national rate in 2014 for males aged 15-19 is 13.02 per 100,000 and for females aged 15-19 the rate is 4.18 per 100,000. According to the WISQARS data, there is a marked gender difference in suicide rates among men and women at all age groups.
- <sup>65</sup> Kann, Laura, Emily O'Malley Olsen, Tim McManus, et al. 2016. Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9–12 — United States and Selected Sites, 2015. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Surveillance Summaries* 65(9): 1-202. Also see the LGBT Youth section of this report for more discussion of North Carolina's sexual minority youth.
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- <sup>66</sup> CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015.
- <sup>67</sup> CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015 and 2011.
- <sup>68</sup> On athletics see, for example: Stevenson, Betsey. 2010. "Beyond the Classroom: Using Title IX to Measure the Return to High School Sports." *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 92(2): 284-301. On more general measures of student success in higher education see: Kuh, George D., Jillian Kinzie, Jennifer A. Buckley, Brian K. Bridges, and John C. Haydek. July, 2006. *What Matters to Student Success: A Review of the Literature*. National Postsecondary Education Cooperative.
- <sup>69</sup> Analysis from Democracy North Carolina with original data from the North Carolina State Board of Elections. For the full demographic analysis see, <http://nc-democracy.org/analysis-who-voted-in-2016-who-didnt/>.
- <sup>70</sup> North Carolina State Board of Elections.
- <sup>71</sup> Corporation for National and Community Service, State Rankings by Volunteer Rate, 2015.
- <sup>72</sup> Corporation for National and Community Service, North Carolina Trends and Highlights Overview, 2015.
- <sup>73</sup> In calendar year 2016, the Girls on the Run organization included twelve local councils across North Carolina with a total of almost 13,000 girls participating in community-level programming. The data reported here includes information from nine out of the twelve councils and approximately 10,000 girls.
- <sup>74</sup> Data spans multiple membership years. The earliest membership year reported is 2014-15, and the latest membership year reported is 2016. In some cases Councils report members of Latin descent as an ethnic category, so some totals may exceed 100%. This means also that in some cases the percentage of white members or other racial groups may be higher because this includes whites of Latin descent. Also note that some Councils are likely to include girls from neighboring states, so total membership numbers for North Carolina are only approximate.
- <sup>75</sup> Afterschool Alliance. 2014. "America After 3PM: Afterschool Programs in Demand." and After school Alliance. 2016. "Afterschool Fostering Student Success in North Carolina."
- <sup>76</sup> In collecting data for the first iteration of this report (released in 2013) there was a paucity of data in the area of student leadership and gender. In 2014 and again in 2016 we conducted a survey of North Carolina high school administrators to collect data on student leadership as well as policies on gender and sexual equality. The data on LGBT supports is discussed in a later section of this report. We use a random sample stratified by region of both public and private schools serving high school students, with a response rate of 30%.
- <sup>77</sup> Data are reported across all school types. Analyses were conducted separately on public schools and private schools, but no meaningful differences were found.
- <sup>78</sup> For information on women in politics in North Carolina see: The Status of Women in North Carolina, Meredith College, [http://www.meredith.edu/about\\_meredith/college-research/women-nc-politics](http://www.meredith.edu/about_meredith/college-research/women-nc-politics)). For information on women, wages, and work in North Carolina see: Cynthia Hess, Ph.D., Ariane Hegewisch, Youngmin Yi, Claudia, <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/the-status-of-women-in-north-carolina>.
- <sup>79</sup> North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, NC Health Schools, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015 and 2011.
- <sup>80</sup> In 2011, over three-quarters of young people reported that a parent or other adult in their family talked with them about sex.
- <sup>81</sup> For a thorough examination of the research on the challenges and implications of parent communication with teens about sex and sexuality see, Elliott, Sinikka. 2012. *Not my Kid: What Parents Believe about the Sex Lives of their Teenagers*. New York: NYU Press.
- <sup>82</sup> North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, *Vital Statistics-Reported Pregnancies*, 2015.
- <sup>83</sup> The CDC reports that the US had a decline of 42% in the teen birth rate between 2007-2014.
- <sup>84</sup> CDC, *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance Report*, 2015.



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- <sup>85</sup> North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, NC Health Schools, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015.
- <sup>86</sup> Kann, Laura, Emily O'Malley Olsen, Tim McManus, et al. 2016. Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9–12 — United States and Selected Sites, 2015. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Surveillance Summaries* 65(9): 1-202.
- <sup>87</sup> Greytak, Emily A., Joseph G. Kosciw, Christian Villenas, and Noreen M. Giga. 2016. *From Teasing to Torment: School Climate Revisited, A Survey of U.S. Secondary School Students and Teachers*. GLSEN.
- <sup>88</sup> Kosciw, Joseph G., Emily A. Greytak., Noreen M. Giga, Christian Villenas, and David J. Danischewski. 2016. *The 2015 National School Climate Survey: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth in Our Nation's Schools*. GLSEN.
- <sup>89</sup> For example, GLSEN's 2015 school climate report finds that LGBTQ students who experience high levels of harassment have lower levels of academic aspiration and are more likely to miss school than students who experience lower levels of harassment. See also Burton, Chad M., Michael P. Marshal, Deena J. Chisolm, Gina S. Sucato, and Mark S. Friedman. 2013. "Sexual Minority-Related Victimization as a Mediator of Mental Health Disparities in Sexual Minority Youth: A Longitudinal Analysis." *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 42(3) 394-402.
- <sup>90</sup> For research on the effects of GSAs see, Fetner, Tina, Athena Elafros, Sandra Bortolin, and Coralee Drechsler. 2012. Safe Spaces: Gay-Straight Alliances in High Schools. *Canadian Review of Sociology* 49(2): 188-207; Nicholas C. Heck, Annesa Flentje, and Bryan N. Cochran. 2011. Offsetting Risks: High School Gay-Straight Alliances and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Youth. *School Psychology Quarterly* 26(2): 161-174. For a more general discussion of the moderating effects of school climate see, Birkett, Michelle, Espelage, Dorothy L., and Koenig, Brian. 2009. "LGB and Questioning Students in Schools: The Moderating Effects of Homophobic Bullying and School Climate on Negative Outcomes." *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 38: 989-1000.
- <sup>91</sup> GLSEN, School Climate in North Carolina (State Snapshot), 2015; GLSEN, School Climate in North Carolina (State Snapshot), 2011.
- <sup>92</sup> The Center for American Women in Politics, see: <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/current-numbers>.
- <sup>93</sup> PEW Research Center, see: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/24/115th-congress-sets-new-high-for-racial-ethnic-diversity/>.
- <sup>94</sup> Women's Legislative Network of the National Conference of State Legislators, see: <http://www.ncsl.org/legislators-staff/legislators/womens-legislative-network/women-in-state-legislatures-for-2017.aspx>.





**Report prepared by** Amie Hess, Associate Professor of Sociology

**Undergraduate research assistants, 2016:** Zeidy Jaen, Melissa Jenkins, Kirby Jones, Haley Ligon, Alexandra Parker, Cooper Rodriguez, Maria Rodriguez, Cameron Ruffin, and Katie Sills

**Undergraduate research assistants, 2014:** Taylor Hudgins and Robin Moore

**Faculty contributor:** Matthew Stutz, Associate Professor of Geoscience

**Graphic design:** Circus Design Studio, Meredith College



**Office of the President**

3800 Hillsborough Street  
Raleigh, NC 27607

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