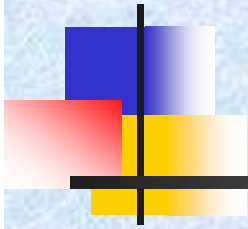


Advocating Across Systems to Shut Down the Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Pipeline



**The 2008 Equal Justice Conference
Pursuing Justice: Balancing Challenges and
Opportunities**

May 9, 2008

Irene M. Opsahl

Tonya K. Long

Dan Stewart



What are we covering today?

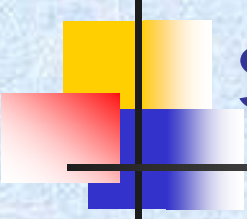
- Individual Representation Approach = Irene
- Systemic Change: Collaborative Partners and Community Education = Tonya
- Policy Efforts; Rule Making = Dan



Introduction

- Children start out in school and end up in the criminal justice system
- How are children fed into the pipeline?



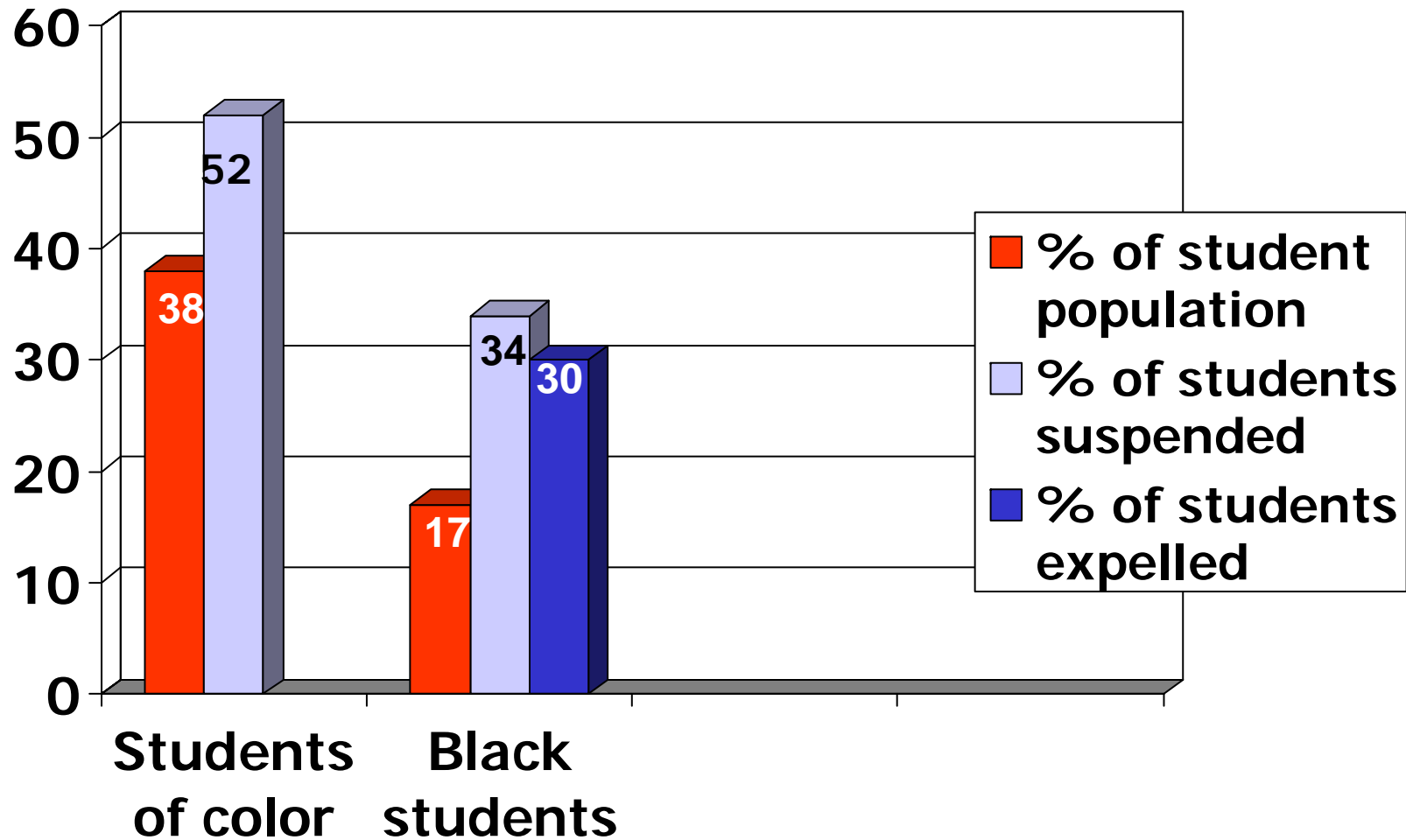


Do we need to look at statistics?

- Reminder of how bad it is
- Highlight racial disparity

Nationwide Impact

(2000)





Who Drops Out

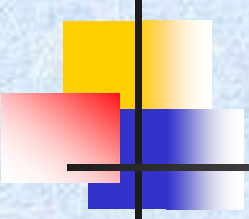
- 31 % of students who were suspended three or more times before spring of sophomore year
- 6 % of students who had never been suspended



High School Dropouts – Incarceration Rates

- 10% of dropouts ages 22-30 were incarcerated by their early thirties
- 52% of young African American males who dropped out were incarcerated by their early thirties

http://www.ushrnetwork.org/files/ushrn/images/linkfiles/CERD/8_Juvenile%20Justice.pdf; citing Westin, Petit, and Guetzkow, 2002



School Arrest Information (2003)

- Chicago
 - 8, 539 students arrested
 - 10% were age 12 or younger
 - Black students
 - 77% of the arrests
 - 50% of the school population



Des Moines

- Total School Arrests in 2003 = 556
- Black students:
 - 15 percent of student pop
 - 33% of the students arrested



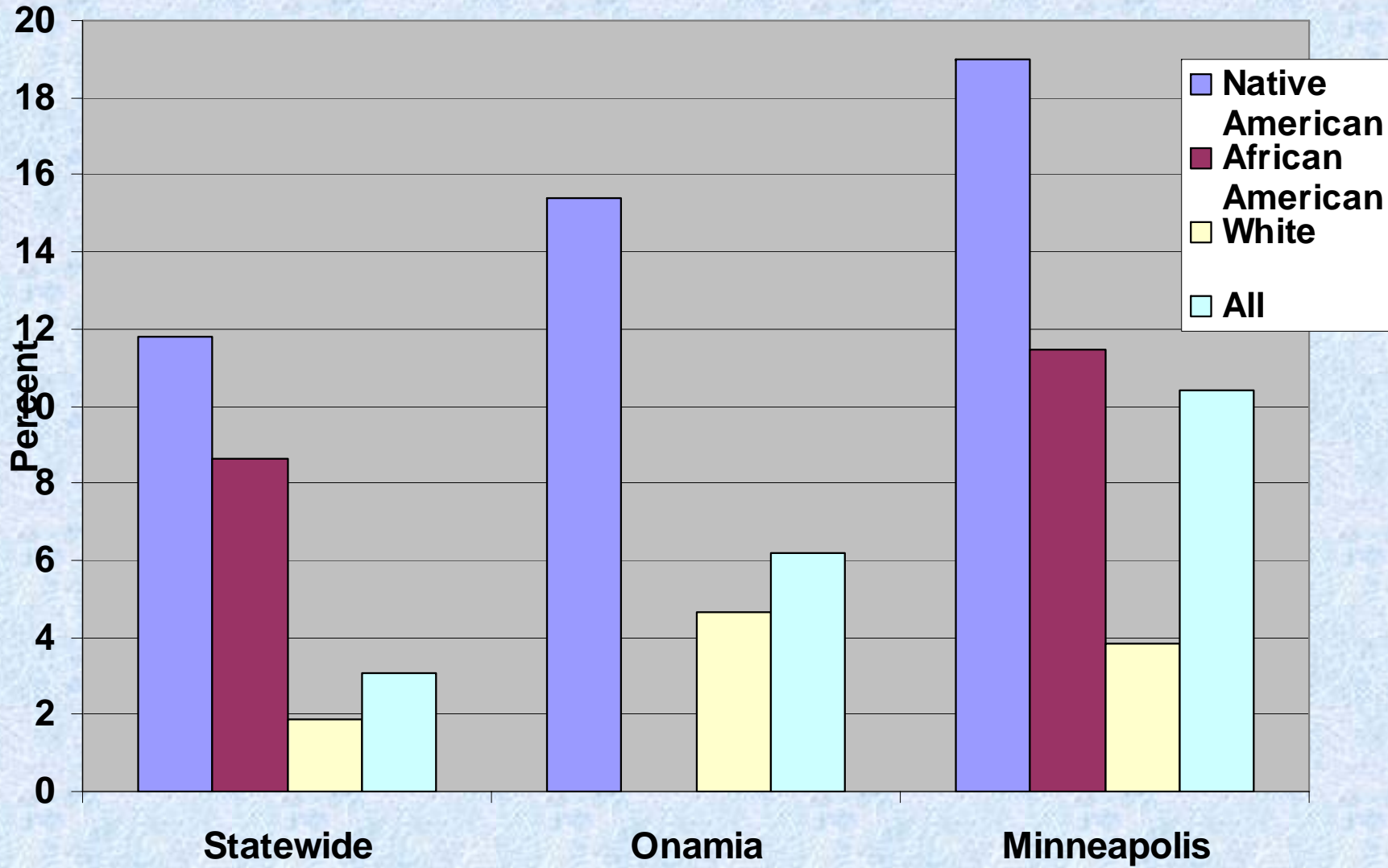
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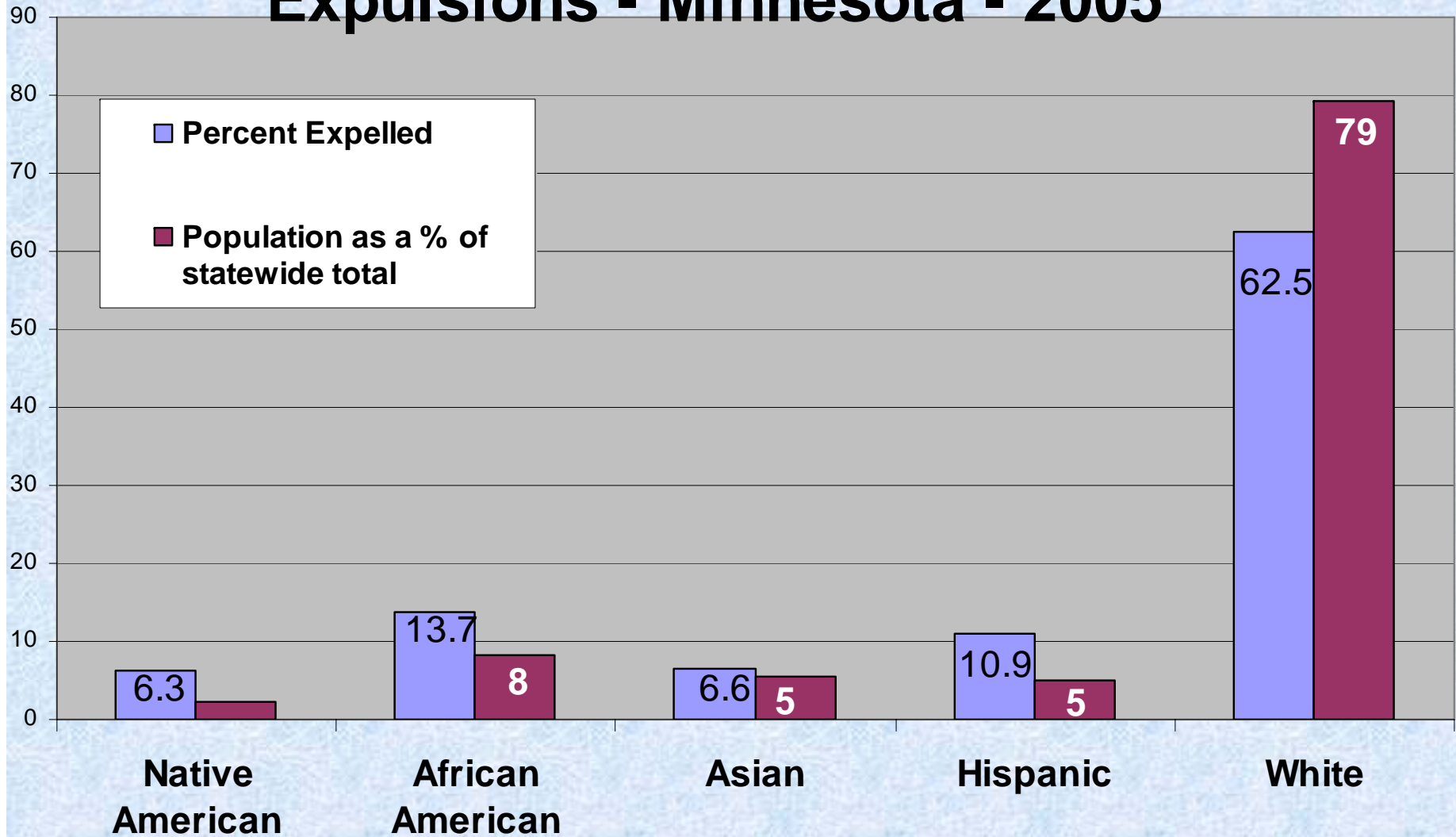
Palm Beach County, Florida

- Black students:
 - 64% of those arrested
 - 29 % of the school population
- Arrests
 - 26% for fights or threats with no injuries or weapons
 - 22% for offenses such as “disruptive behavior”

Minnesota Drop Out Rates 2005-6



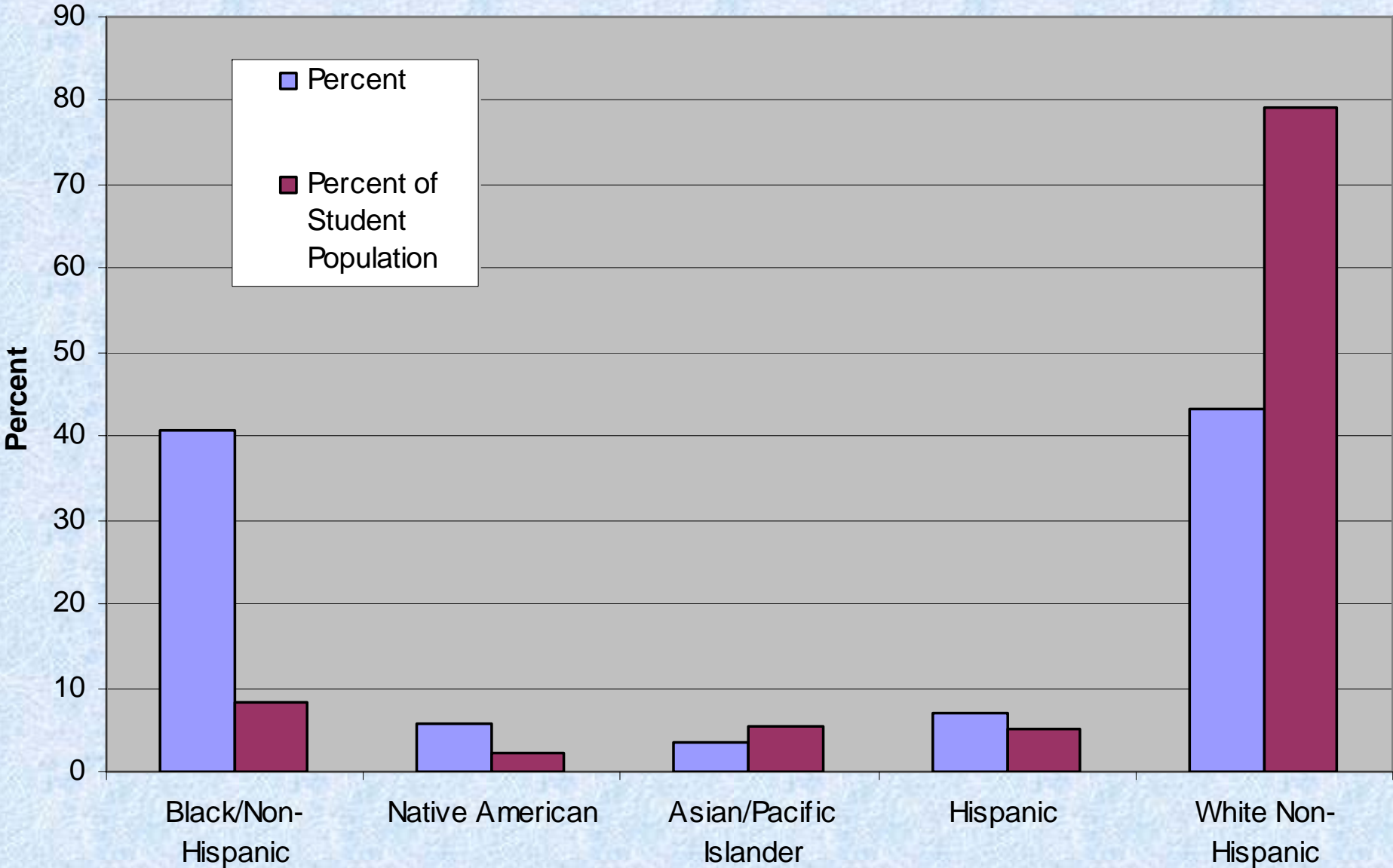
Expulsions - Minnesota - 2005



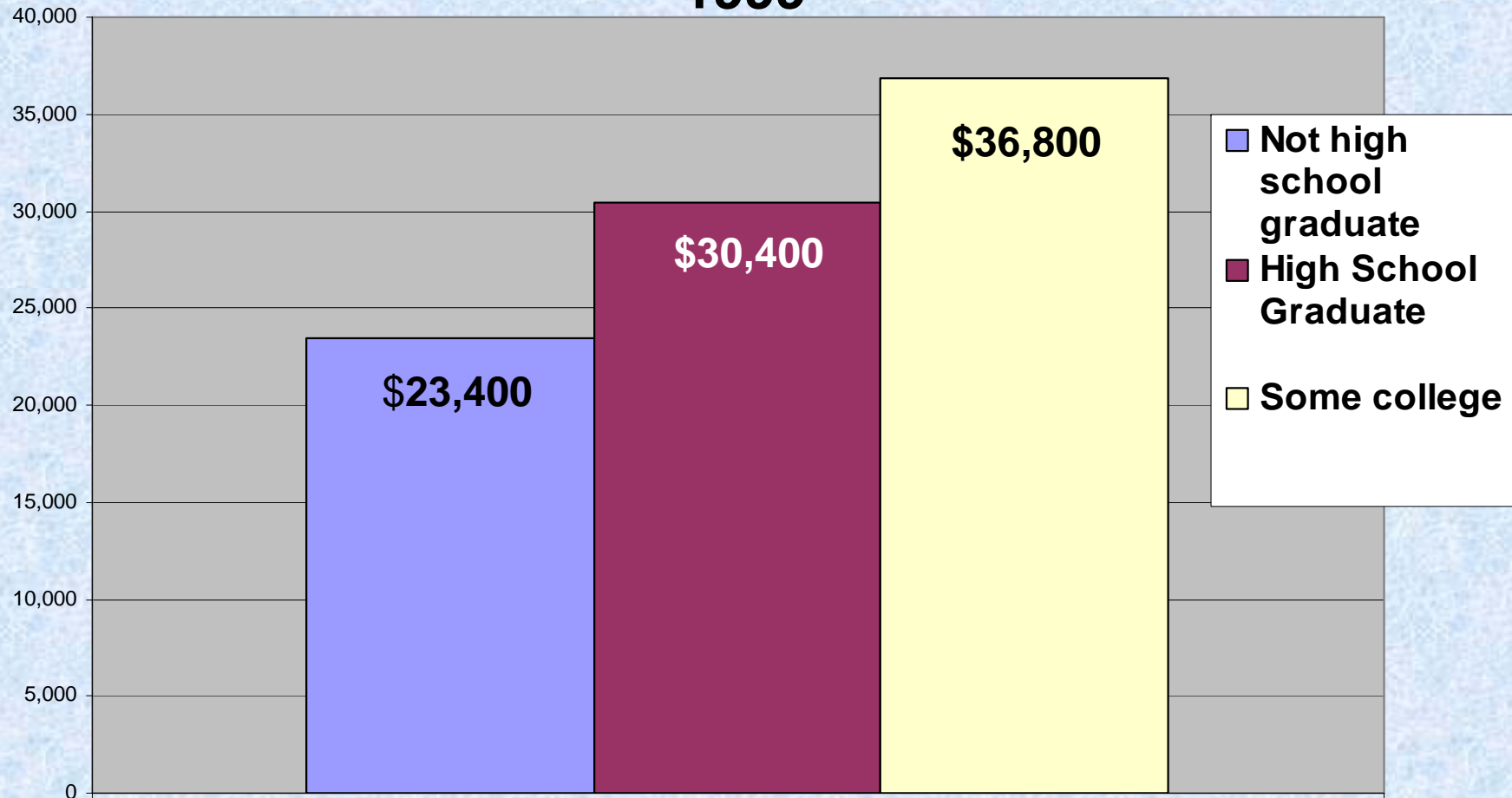
Minnesota Expulsions, 2005

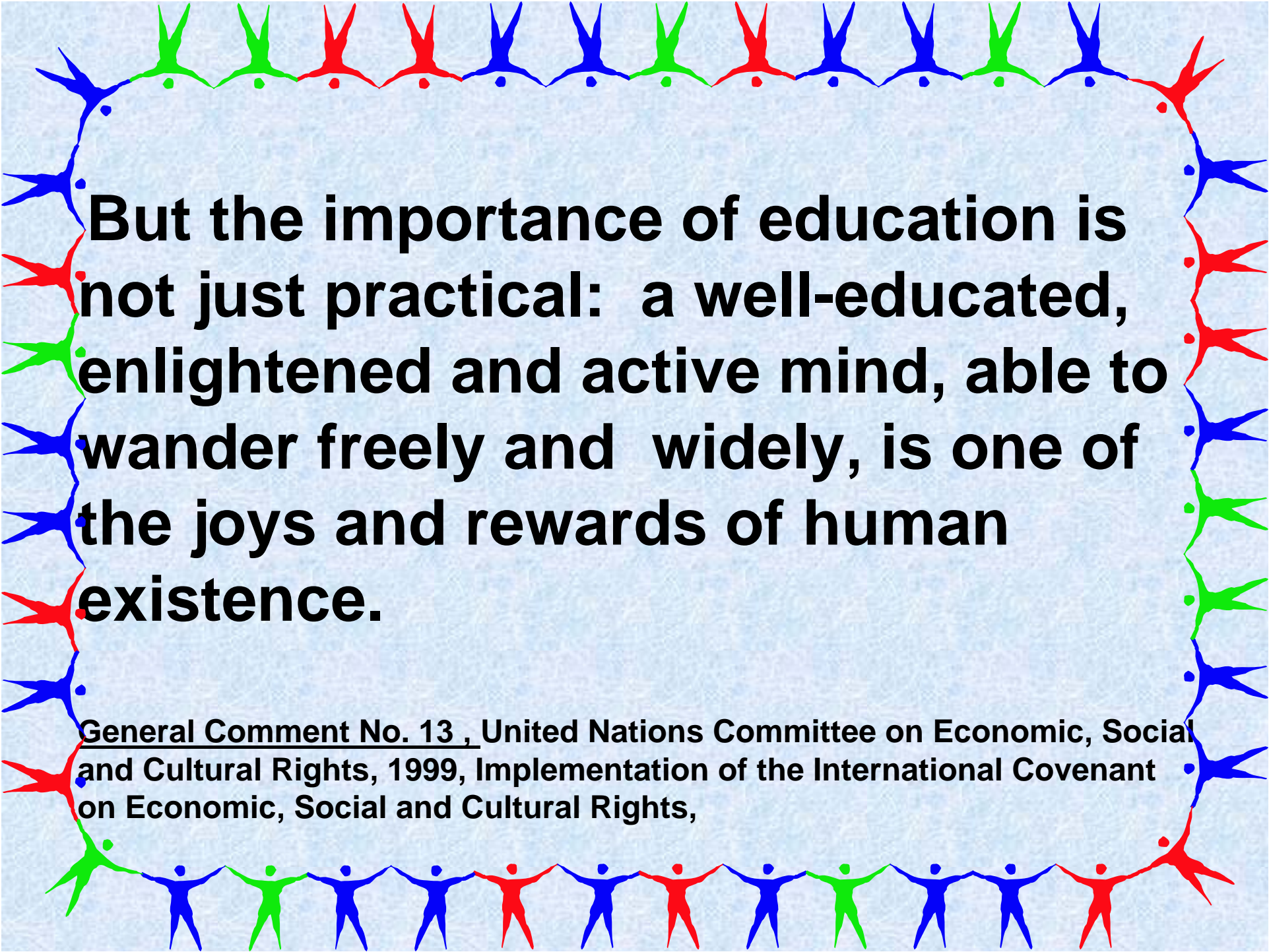
	Native American	African American	Asian	Hispanic	White
Number Expelled	23	50	24	40	226
Statewide population	18,486	45,684	41,582	68,292	664,731

Minnesota Disciplinary Incidents 2004-5



Average Annual Earnings of Full Time Workers age 25-64 by Educational Attainment - 1999



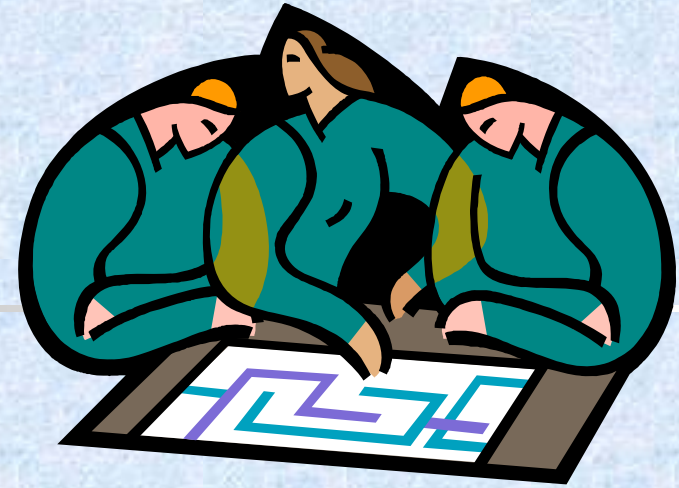


But the importance of education is not just practical: a well-educated, enlightened and active mind, able to wander freely and widely, is one of the joys and rewards of human existence.

General Comment No. 13, United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1999, Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,

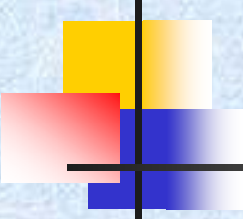


HMMMMMM!!!



- Accessing Services

- Voluntary: Application to local agency for children's mental health services or services for a child who is developmentally delayed.
- Voluntary: Special education services
- Involuntary: Through delinquency or child protection proceedings

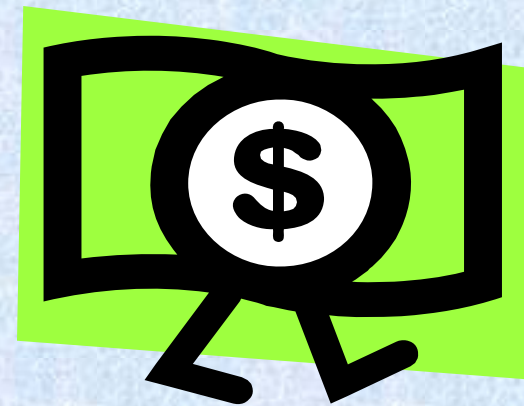


FRAGMENTATION IN THE DELIVERY SYSTEMS

- Each system has procedures and eligibility requirements
- A particular child may be involved in more than one system
- One system may inappropriately refer a child to another system

Why would a “system” refer a kid away????

- Parent or child won't apply or cooperate with voluntary services
- Child needs a consequence
- To shift the cost





What can we do about it?

- Advocates collaborate to force coordination between the systems
- Advocate in the context of each system
- Restrain action of juvenile court and put family back into the voluntary system
 - Avoid stigma of delinquency finding
 - Parent plays a team role in school IEP setting
 - Relieve pressure on courts



History of our efforts

- Juvenile Advocacy Collaborative
 - Public Defenders (PD's)
 - Disability Law Center (DLC, Minnesota's Protection and Advocacy Agency)
 - Youth Law Project of the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis (YLP)

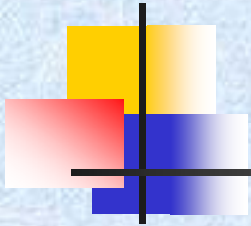


Roles of the Collaborators

- PD's provided representation on delinquency
- DLC and YLP worked with the PD
 - Slow down the delinquency proceeding
 - Bump case back to the school
- DLC and YLP advocated for the youth at school and in connection with applications for social services from the county

Issue with grant funded projects





- Folded the JAC idea into work of the Disability Law Center and the Youth Law Project