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Statistical Analysis Center

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# Analysis of Juvenile Complaints Originating at Des Moines Public Schools (2015-2019)

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## Population Data

The population of African American youth increased between 2015-2019 in both Polk County and Des Moines Public Schools. In 2019, African American youth made up 11.6% of the child population of Polk County and 20.4% of enrolled students in Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS)

Throughout the review of juvenile complaints originating at DMPS locations, African American youth were disproportionately represented when compared to the demographic makeup of children in Polk County and enrolled students in DMPS.

### Polk County<sup>1</sup>

Total child population (0-17) went from 117,781 in 2015 to 120,999 in 2019, a 2.7% increase.

- White youth decreased from 70.1% (82,595) of the child population of Polk County to 68.2% (82,470) between 2015 and 2019.
- African American youth increased from 10.9% (12,954) of the child population of Polk County in 2015 to 11.6% (14,038) in 2019.
- Hispanic youth increased from 13.2% (15,563) of the child population of Polk County in 2015 to 14.1% (17,104) in 2019.

### Des Moines Public Schools Enrollment

Total certified student enrollment was 32,582 and 32,545 in school years 2015-2016<sup>2</sup> and 2019-2020<sup>3</sup> respectively.

- Enrollment of White students decreased from 42% in 2015 to 36.8% in 2019.
- Enrollment of African American students increased from 18.3% in 2015 to 20.4% in 2019.
- Between 2015 and 2019, secondary school enrollment increased from 15,644 in 2015 to 16,483 in 2019. An increase from 50.5% of all enrollments in 2015 to 53.2% of all enrollments in 2019.

## Juvenile Complaints Originating at DMPS

Unless otherwise noted, the data in this report is from the Judicial Branch Case Management System (CMS). The data reflects the official records contained in the CMS at the time the information was extracted to the Iowa Justice Data Warehouse (JDW). Some edits to these records may have occurred within the CMS after the extraction and such updates would be made in the JDW during the next upload cycle.

The data below represents juvenile complaints originating at the address of Des Moines Public School buildings. The data provided is incident based data rather than person-based data. A single youth may be represented multiple times in the various counts unless otherwise indicated (e.g. Student A has one complaint, Student B has one complaint, and Student C has three complaints during one year, there would be five complaints counted even though there were only three youth involved).

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<sup>1</sup> Puzzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (2020). "[Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2019.](#)" Online.

<sup>2</sup> [Des Moines Public Schools 2015-2016 Certified Enrollment Report](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Des Moines Public Schools 2019-2020 Certified Enrollment Report](#)

## Complaints

A complaint is an official claim by law enforcement that initiates actions in juvenile court processing. All complaints are referred to Juvenile Court Services, which provides juvenile intake and probation services. There can be more than one charge in a complaint.

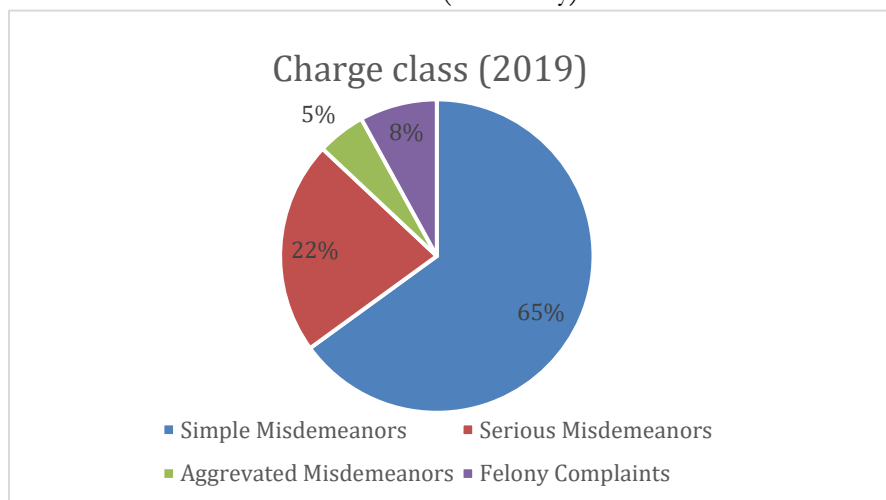
- The total number of complaints originating at DMPS locations went from 273 in 2015 to 590 in 2019, a 116% increase.
- In 2019, high school students made up 59% (346) of all complaints. Middle school students made up 37% (218). Elementary school students made up 4% (26).
- African American youth were overrepresented in the number of complaints received in 2019. African American youth comprised 53% of all complaints in 2019 and comprised 20.4% of the enrolled student population in DMPS.
- White youth were underrepresented in the number of complaints received in 2019. White youth comprised 28% of all complaints in 2019 and comprised 36.8% of the enrolled student population in DMPS.

### **Additional Summary of Complaints by Gender and Race**

	<b>2015 Complaints</b>	<b>2019 Complaints</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Females	91	250	175%
African American females	50	120	140%
White females	26	68	162%
Males	182	340	87%
African American males	88	193	119%
White males	50	96	92%

## Highest Charge Class

A charge/allegation is the description of a law violation in a complaint. There may be one or more charges/allegations per complaint. Charge/offense levels include felonies, indictable misdemeanors (aggravated and serious misdemeanors), simple misdemeanors, and other offenses which are typically local ordinances or scheduled violations (fines only).



- When compared to the certified enrollment of DMPS, African American youth were overrepresented across all charge classes reviewed. White youth were underrepresented across all charge classes except for felony complaints in which White youth were proportionately represented.
- Simple misdemeanors originating at DMPS locations increased from 163 in 2015 to 385 in 2019, a 136% increase.
- In 2019, simple misdemeanors made up almost two thirds of all complaints (65%) originating at DMPS locations.
- African American youth made up 53% (204) of all simple misdemeanor charges in 2019. White youth made up 26% (102).

#### Additional Summary of Simple Misdemeanors by Gender and Race

	Number of simple misdemeanors 2015	Number of simple misdemeanors 2019	% Change
Females	65	185	185%
Males	98	200	104%
White youth	51	102	100%
African American youth	81	204	152%

- Serious misdemeanors originating at DMPS locations went from 75 in 2015 to 128 in 2019, a 71% increase.
- In 2019, serious misdemeanors made up 22% of all complaints originating at DMPS locations.
- African American youth made up 52% (67) of all serious misdemeanors in 2019. White youth made up 29% (37).

#### Additional Summary of Serious Misdemeanors by Gender and Race

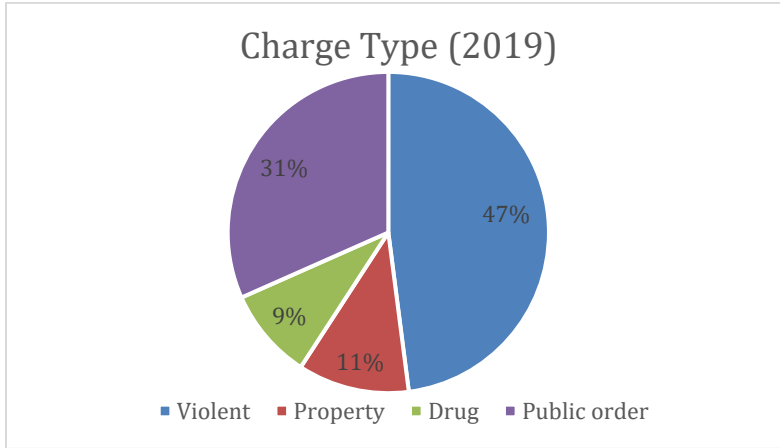
	Number of serious misdemeanors 2015	Number of serious misdemeanors 2019	% Change
Females	19	48	153%
Males	56	80	43%
White youth	17	37	118%
African American youth	38	67	76%

- Aggravated misdemeanors originating at DMPS locations went from 22 in 2015 to 31 in 2019, a 41% increase.
- In 2019, aggravated misdemeanors made up 5% of all complaints originating at DMPS locations.
- African American youth made up 71% (22) of aggravated misdemeanors in 2019. White youth made up 26% (8).

- Felony complaints originating at DMPS locations went from 13 in 2015 to 46 in 2019, a 254% increase.
- In 2019, felony complaints made up 8% of all complaints originating at DMPS locations.
- African American youth made up 43% (20) of felony complaints in 2019. White youth made up 37% (17).

**Highest Charge Type**

Charge types are four broad groupings of charges/offenses and include all charges regardless of charge class/offense level. They include: violent, public order, property, and drug.



- When compared to the certified enrollment of DMPS, African American youth were overrepresented across all charge types reviewed. White youth were underrepresented in violent and public order charge types. White youth were proportionately represented in property complaints and White youth were overrepresented in drug complaints.
- Violent complaints originating at DMPS locations went from 101 in 2015 to 280 in 2019, a 177% increase. Assault was the largest sub-type of violent complaints (268 complaints). The majority of assaults in 2019 (66%) were simple misdemeanor offenses.
- In 2019, violent complaints made up 47% of all charge types originating at DMPS locations.
- African American youth made up 54% (151) of violent complaints in 2019. White youth made up 26% (73).

**Additional Summary of Violent Complaints by Gender and Race**

	Number of violent complaints 2015	Number of violent complaints 2019	% Change
Females	48	115	140%
Males	53	165	211%
White youth	29	73	152%
African American youth	46	151	228%

- Public order complaints originating at DMPS locations went from 68 in 2015 to 184 in 2019, a 171% increase.
- In 2019, public order complaints made up 31% of all complaints originating at DMPS locations.
- African American youth made up 59% (109) of public order complaints in 2019. White youth made up 22% (41).

#### Additional Summary of Public Order Complaints by Gender and Race

	Number of public order complaints 2015	Number of public order complaints 2019	% Change
Females	26	102	292%
Males	42	82	95%
White youth	16	41	156%
African American youth	37	109	195%

- Property complaints originating at DMPS locations were 64 in 2015 and 65 in 2019.
- In 2019, property complaints made up 11% of all charge types originating at DMPS locations.
- African American youth made up 45% (29) of property complaints in 2019. White youth made up 38% (25).

#### Additional Summary of Property Complaints by Race

	Number of property complaints 2015	Number of property complaints 2019	% Change
White youth	18	25	39%
African American youth	39	29	-26%

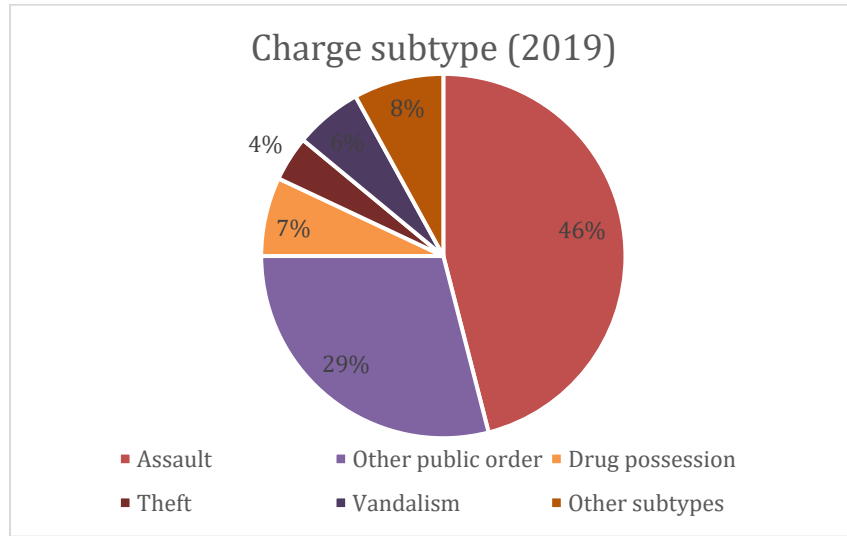
- Drug complaints originating at DMPS locations went from 31 in 2015 to 52 in 2019, a 68% increase.
- In 2019, drug complaints made up 9% of all charge types originating at DMPS locations.
- African American youth made up 40% (21) of drug complaints in 2019. White youth made up 44% (23).

#### Additional Summary of Drug Complaints by Race

	Number of drug complaints 2015	Number of drug complaints 2019	% Change
White youth	6	23	283%
African American youth	15	21	40%

**Highest Charge Subtype**

Similar to charge type, charge subtypes are groupings of charges/offenses, but are narrower than the broad charge type categories (e.g. drug charge type becomes drug possession, drug trafficking, etc. as charge subtypes).



- In 2019, the top 5 subtypes were Assault, Other Public Order, Drug Possession, Theft, and Vandalism. These subtypes made up 92% (536) of the overall charges.
- Simple misdemeanors made up 66% (177) of the assault charges in 2019. This is the lowest charge type and indicates an assault with no injury and no intent to inflict serious injury.

**Additional Summary of Highest Charge Subtype in Complaint**

	Number of complaints 2015	Number of complaints 2019	% Change
Assault	100	268	168%
Other public order	55	169	207%
Drug possession	30	43	43%
Theft	27	22	-19%
Vandalism	13	34	162%

**Summary of Findings**

- Juvenile complaints originating at DMPS locations more than doubled between 2015 (273 complaints) and 2019 (590 complaints).
- African American youth were overrepresented in the number of juvenile complaints originating at DMPS locations. African American youth were also consistently overrepresented in the charge classes and charge types reviewed.
- The highest charge classes of juvenile complaints originating at DMPS locations in 2019 were simple misdemeanors (65% of all complaints) and serious misdemeanors (22% of all complaints).
- In 2019, the highest charge subtypes were public order (29% of complaints) and assault (46% of complaints).