



# 2020-21 Incident Report

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## Key Findings

- A majority of LEAs (93%) reported incident data in SY 2021. 53,934 primary incident records were submitted to USBE.
- There was a 20% decrease in incidents reported in SY 2021 as compared with SY 2020. Many LEAs reported that the reduction in students on site contributed to lower rates of incidents in SY 2021.
- 23,335 students, or 3.3% of enrolled students, were reported with one or more incident.
- 9,175 students, or 1.3% of enrolled students were reported with one or more discipline (suspension or expulsion) as a result of an incident.
- Over a fourth of infraction types reported were disruptions (28.7%).

## Introduction

### Background

Starting in SY 2017 USBE has worked with LEAs to identify and solve problems that contributed to a systemic issue of behavioral incident data underreporting. National data, including SHARP survey data, as well as feedback and anecdotal information received from schools supported the belief that behavioral incident data was underreported to USBE. The primary issues that were identified included complications related to incident data tracking software and student information systems, a need for more clear directives from USBE on what constitutes an incident that must be reported, and misunderstandings about what the data can and will be used for. As a result of this effort there was a large increase in the number of incidents reported to USBE in SY 2018, and steady increases until SY 2020. The decrease in incidents reported in SY 2021 is believed to be primarily a result of changes in school schedules and learning models due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As incident data reporting has improved, including over 90% of LEAs with incident data in the recent three years, USBE's focus is now turning to additional improvements that can be made to data quality.

Over the next few years, USBE and WestED (a research, development, and services agency which works with education agencies) will collaborate on developing and implementing organizational processes and structures that facilitate effective collection and application of data related to Utah's safe and healthy schools initiatives. This work will include a focus on internal data-related processes that inform Utah's strategic plan objectives related to safe and healthy schools: supporting districts and schools in creating and maintaining safe and healthy learning environments; and building educator and stakeholder capacity to meet students' mental, emotional, and social needs.

The collaboration between USBE and WestED will create the following:

- Develop a comprehensive picture of concurrent state data collection initiatives that will inform safe and healthy learning environments
- Develop internal agency structures and processes for sharing data activities related to safe and healthy learning environment objectives
- Develop and disseminate updated incident data definitions, including definitions related to use of restraint and seclusion, that guide data collection at state and district levels
- Review and bolster existing tools used to collect safe and healthy learning environment-related data (from districts, schools, students)
- Identify how changes to data collection protocols might impact USBE data storage

### Incident Data Collection

USBE collects incident data that is entered and reported through the local student information systems and submitted to the Utah Transcript Record Exchange (UTREx). An incident may involve one or more student(s), and each student may be reported with one primary infraction and up to four secondary infraction types, as well as one primary weapon and up to four secondary weapons. If the student receives a suspension or expulsion as a result of the incident the discipline type and total duration should be reported. Information can also be reported for victims of incidents, though very little victim data is reported. Victim data is not included in this report. This report includes only information on primary infractions and weapons. Infraction types include:



- Arson
- Assault, physical or sexual
- Bullying
- Disruption
- Fighting (mutual altercation)
- Harassment, non-sexual (physical, verbal, psychological), or sexual (unwelcomed sexual assault)
- Homicide
- Robbery
- Drug or substance violations, including alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, controlled and uncontrolled substances, and distribution
- Terroristic Threat
- Threat/intimidation (causing fear or harm)
- Truancy
- Weapon (Weapon types include guns: handgun, shotgun, rifle, or look-alike; knife or other sharp object; other explosive device; other object used as a weapon; and substance used as a weapon)
- Other

### Incident Data and the COVID-19 Pandemic

In SY 2021 there was a 20% decrease in the number of incidents reported compared with the previous year.<sup>1</sup> The number of LEAs without any incident data reported increased from 5 in SY 2020 to 11 in SY 2021. Additionally, many LEAs had sizable decreases in the count of incidents reported. Some LEAs with large decreases provided explanations for the decreases, including:

*“We also have been on distance learning part of the year and on hybrid the remainder. We haven't really had incidents with the schedule we have been on.”*

*“We only had about 1/3 of our students in the school buildings at any given time... It was amazing what a difference it made as far as discipline issues go.”*

*“In light of the hybrid model we used this year, incidents have been extremely low because our class sizes were only 10 to 12 students... We have also not done combined recesses or lunches and students have stayed in their same classroom cohorts throughout the day, which has been a huge reducer for student incidents.”*

*“I think there are two bigger factors that are contributing to our lower incident data this year. 1st is a lower student population on campus. We have averaged between 1/4 and 1/3 of our students either doing online classes or a hybrid schedule, so there are less students on campus, at lunches, etc. The 2nd is that we implemented a new PBIS system at our junior high (grades 6-8) and amplified our PBIS system at our high school (grades 9-12), which has transitioned the attitude from punitive discipline to positive rewards and that has helped our student body.”*

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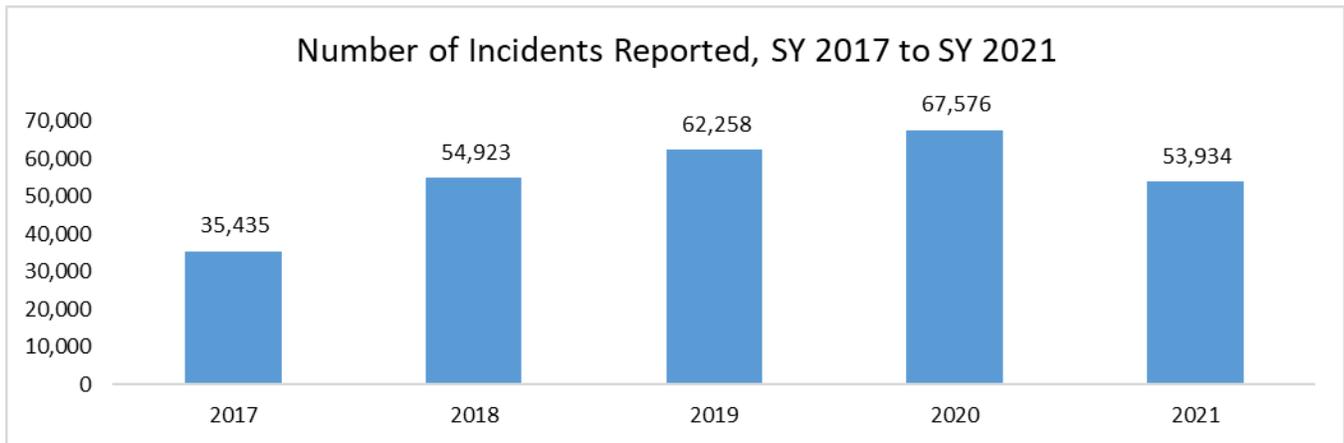
<sup>1</sup> For a review of the COVID-19 Pandemic's impact on incident data in SY 2020 see the 2019-2020 incident report here: <https://schools.utah.gov/data/reports?mid=1424&tid=6>

## Overall Findings

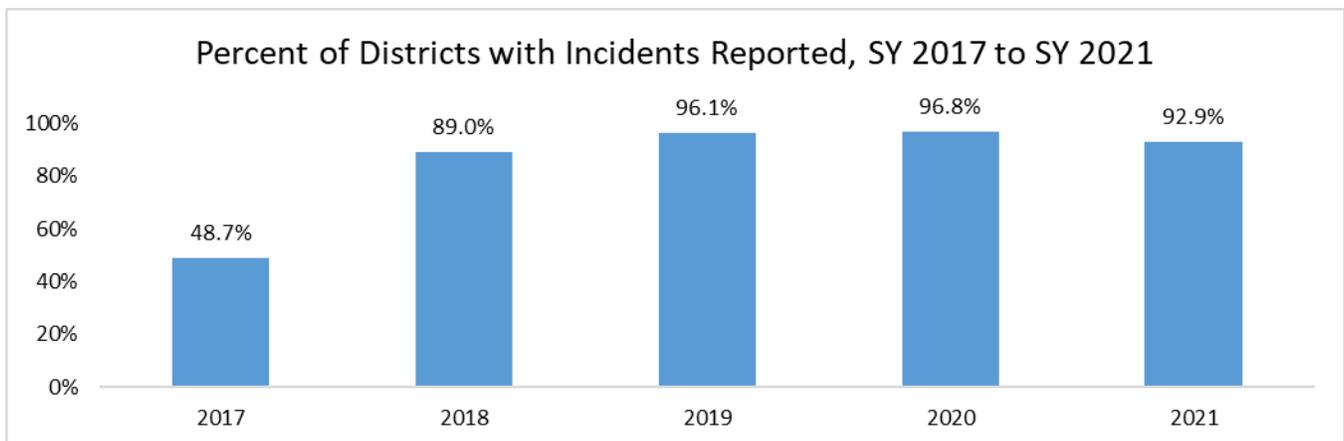
For SY 2021 there were 53,934 records of primary infractions reported to USBE. A total of 23,335 students had one or more incident reported. Of these, 15,342 had only one incident reported and 7,993 had more than one incident reported. The percentage of students with an incident reported in SY2021 was 3.3%. For SY 2021 93% of LEAs (145 out of 156) reported one or more incident to USBE.

## Comparison with Previous Years

There was more than a 50% increase in the number of incidents reported in SY 2021 as compared with SY 2017 (from 35,435 in SY 2017 to 53,934 in SY 2021). The chart below shows the total counts of incidents reported state-wide for school years 2017 to 2021.

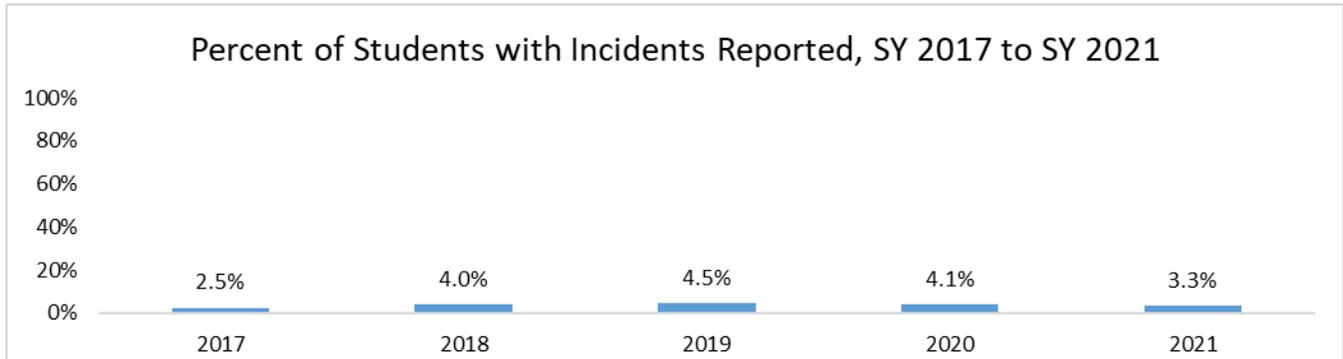


The number of LEAs reporting incidents has remained above 90% from SY 2019 to SY 2021, though the percent of LEAs reporting had a slight decrease in SY 2021.



The percentages of students with an incident reported increased each year, from 2.5% in SY 2017 to 4.5% in SY 2019, then decreased slightly to 4.1% in SY 2020, and decreased further to 3.3% in SY 2021. While there have been big improvements in incident data reporting since SY 2017, SHARP survey data

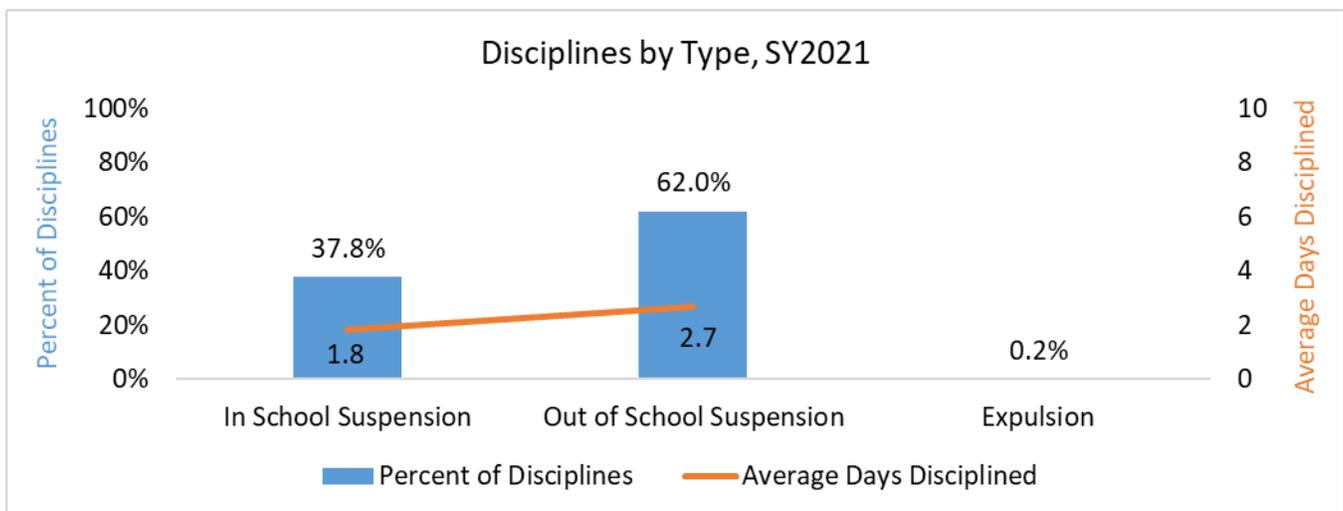
(<https://dsamh.utah.gov/reports/sharp-survey>) suggests that actual incident rates, especially bullying rates, are much higher than this.



### Disciplines Reported

In SY 2021 a total of 13,844 of the 53,934 incidents (26%) were reported with a discipline. Among the 23,335 students with an incident reported, 9,175 (39.3%) had a discipline reported. This is 1.3% of the students enrolled during SY 2021. A majority of disciplines (62%) were out-of-school suspensions, followed by in-school suspensions (38%), and expulsions (0.2%). Suspensions can be reported in increments of one tenth of a day. The average duration for disciplines was 1.8 days for in-school suspensions and 2.7 days for out-of-school suspensions.

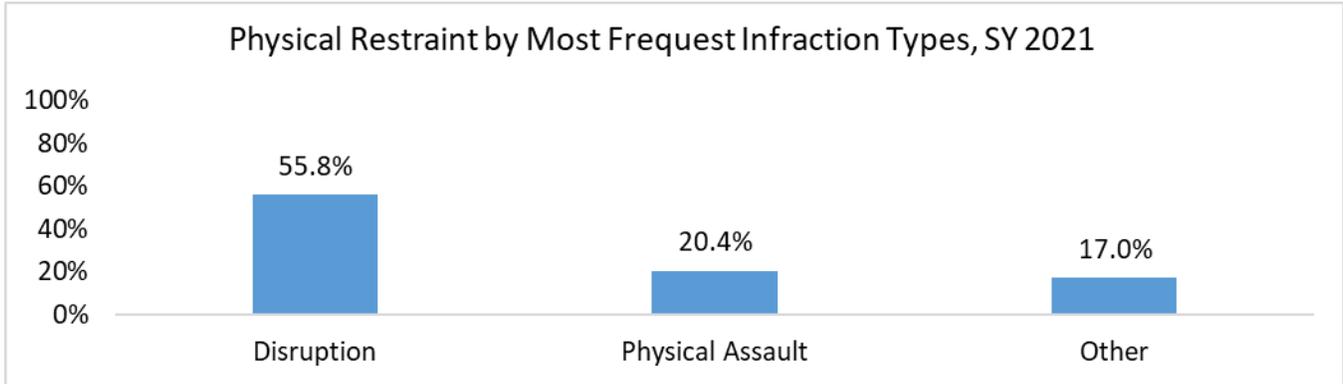
The figure below shows two different measures in a single graph with two axes. The benefit of showing the two measures on the same graph is to better convey that not only do out of school suspensions account for the majority of disciplines (when comparing removals by type), they also have a longer average removal duration. Taken together, these two measures demonstrate that out of school suspensions account for the majority of disciplinary removal days.



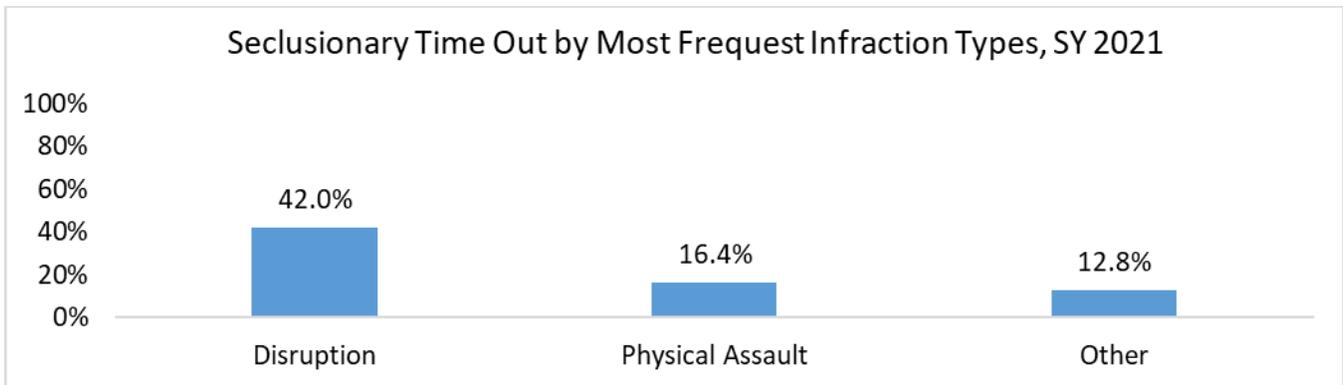
### Emergency Safety Interventions

As defined in [Board Rule R277-609](#) "Emergency safety intervention" or "ESI" means the use of seclusionary time out or physical restraint when a student presents an immediate danger to self or others. (b) An "emergency

safety intervention" is not for disciplinary purposes. USBE recently began collecting information on ESIs. Very few incidents were reported with one or more ESI in SY 2021 – only 0.7% of incidents. Physical restraint was reported to have been used 206 times. A majority of the uses of physical restraints was for disruptions (55.8%), followed by physical assaults (20.4%), and incidents reported as “other” infraction type (17%). The remaining 6.8% of physical restraints were used for incidents of threat/intimidation, weapon, fighting, and harassment.



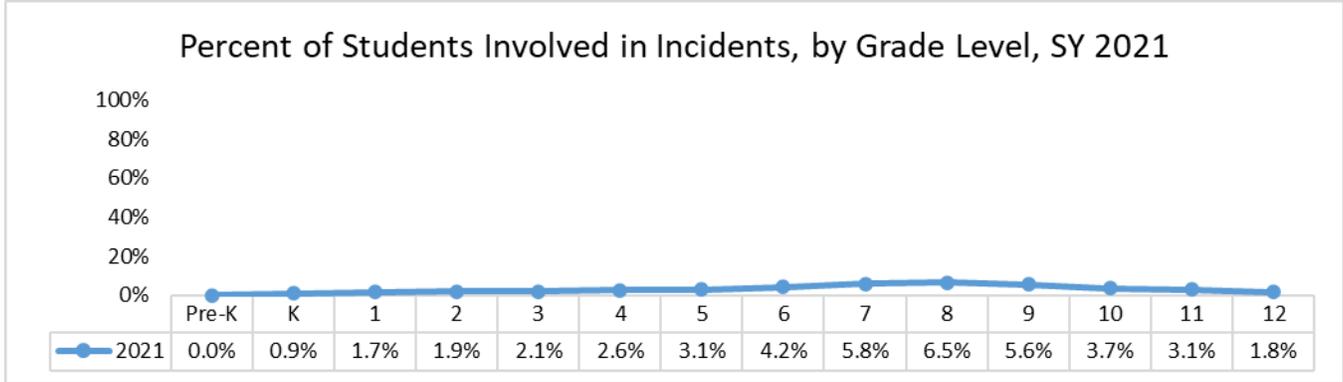
Seclusionary time out was reported to have been used 219 times. A majority of the uses of seclusionary time outs were for disruptions (42%), followed by physical assaults (16.4%), and incidents reported as “other” infraction type (12.8%). The remaining 28.8% of seclusionary time outs were used for threat/intimidation, weapon, fighting, harassment, bullying, and alcohol, tobacco or drug infractions.



## Incidents by Grade Level and Demographics

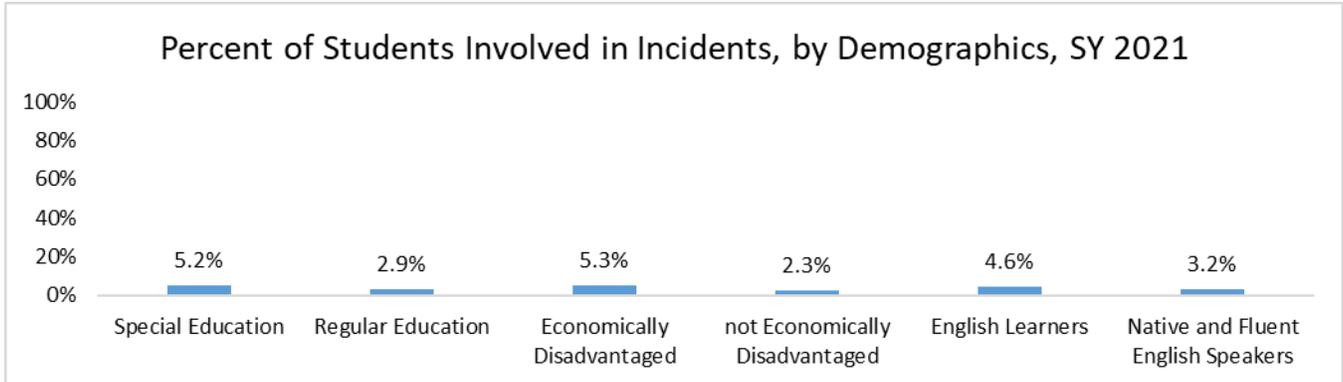
### Incidents by Grade Level

By grade level the percentage of students reported with an incident stayed low in grades Pre-K through five (about 3% or lower), began to climb in grade six (4.2%) and seven (5.8%), and peaked in grade eight (6.5%).



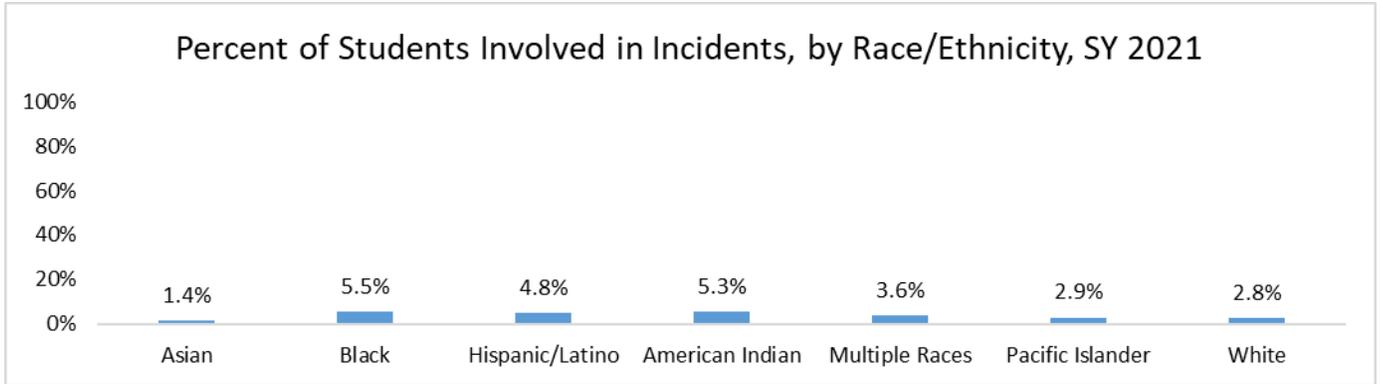
### Incidents by Demographics

By demographic group, students who are in Special Education, economically disadvantaged, or English Learners have higher percentages of incidents reported than the state average. The biggest gap is in the economically disadvantaged student group. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students who have one or more incident reported is more than double the percentage of students who are not economically disadvantaged who have had one or more incident reported (5.3% compared with 2.3%).



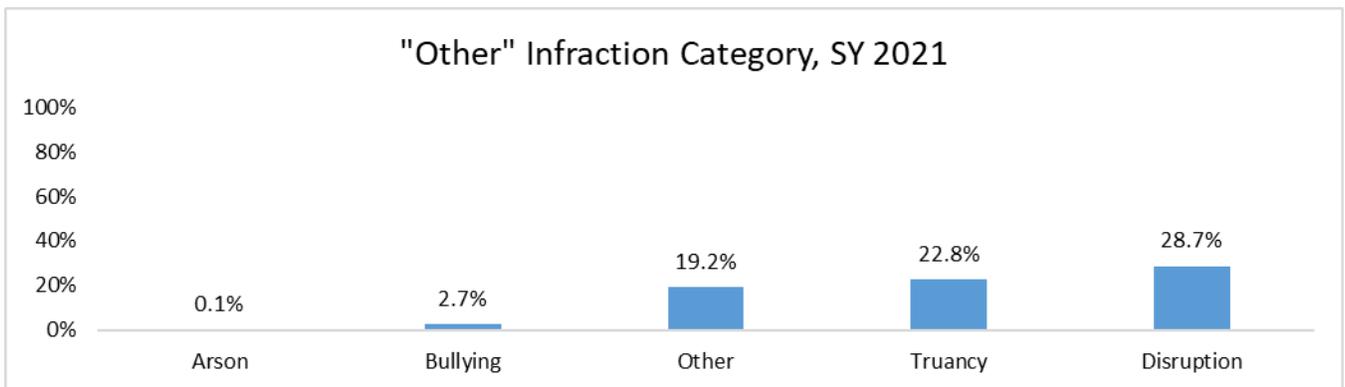
### Incidents by Race/Ethnicity

By racial/ethnic group, students who identify as American Indian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Multiple Race, or Pacific Islander have higher percentages of incidents reported than the state average. The biggest gap is with Black/African American students (5.5% compared with 3.3%). The percentage of American Indian students who have one or more incident reported is second highest at 5.3%. The percentage of Asian students who have one or more incident reported is lowest at 1.4%.

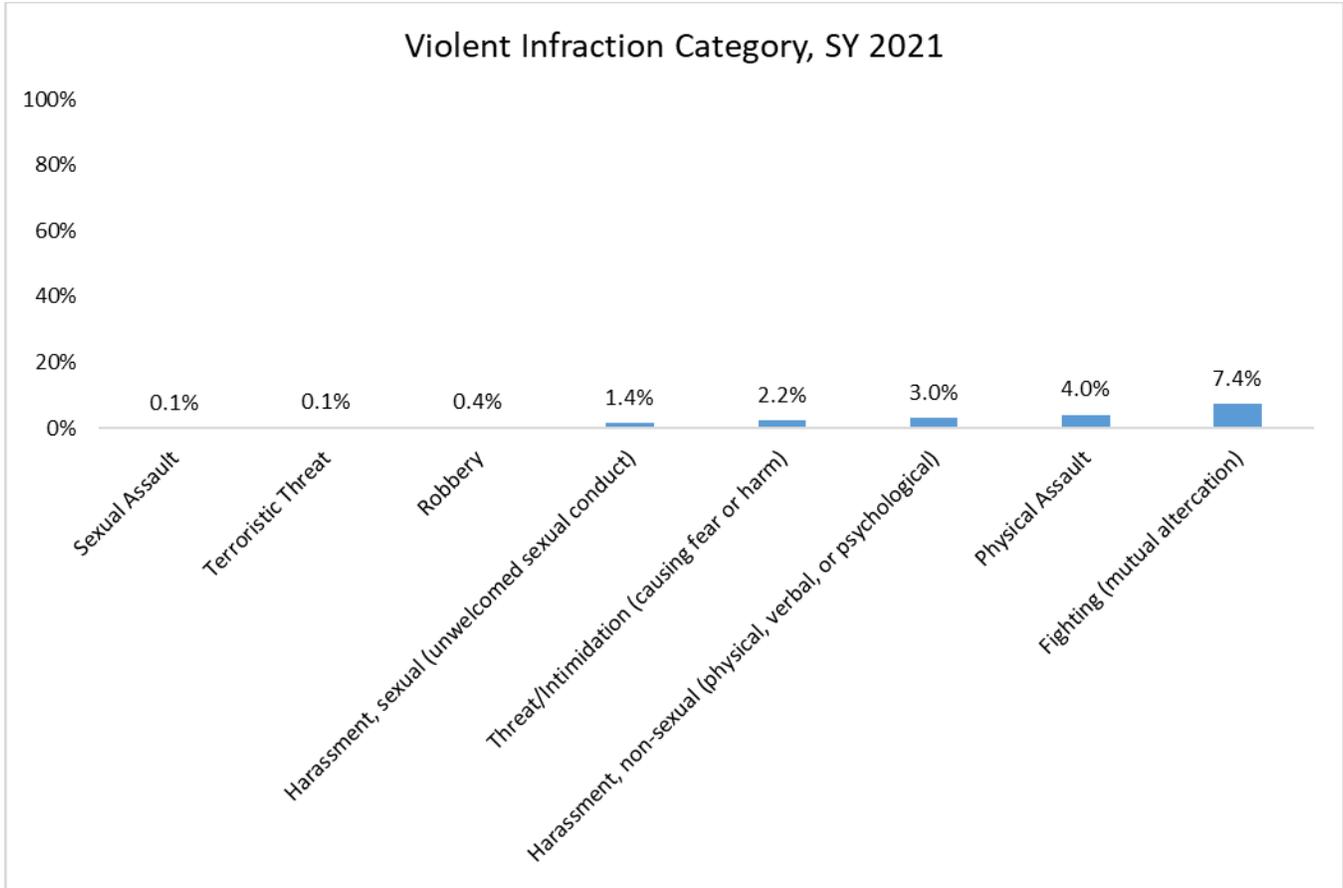


### Incidents by Infraction Category

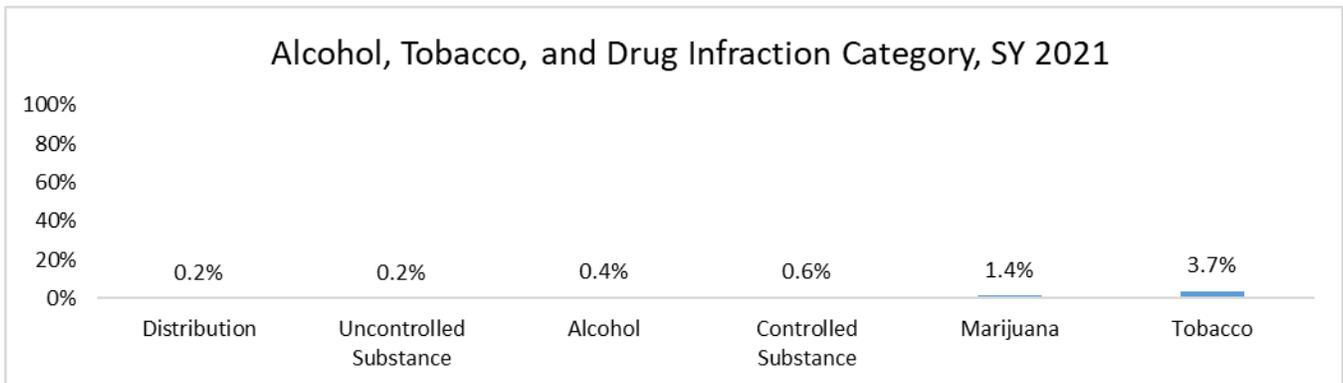
Incidents are grouped into four infraction type categories. In SY 2021, the “Other” infraction category accounted for the majority of the 53,934 infractions reported (39,669, or 73.6%). A plurality of the infractions in the “other” category were disruptions (15,485, or 28.7% of all infractions).



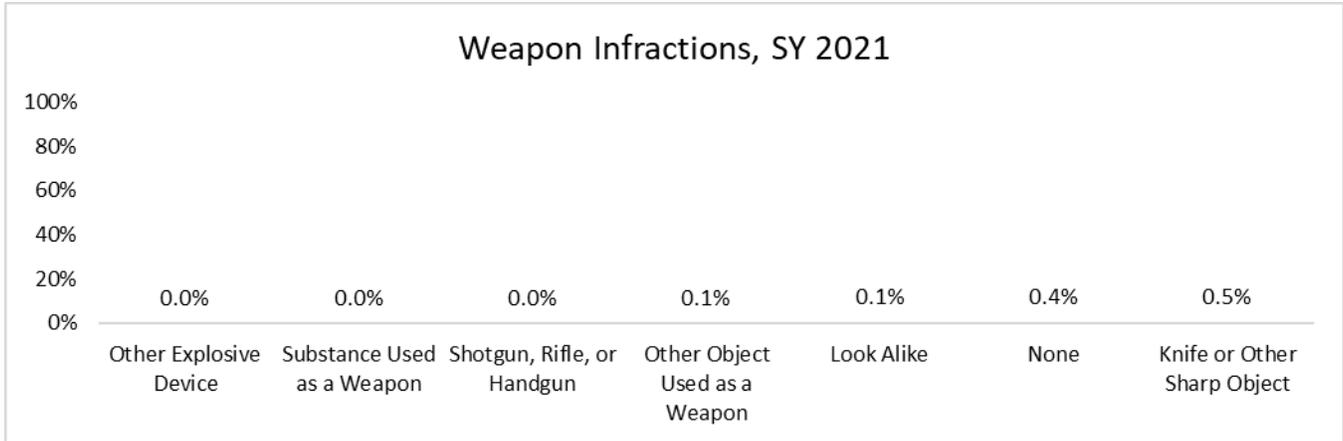
The “Violent” infraction category accounted for the next highest percentage of all infractions reported (10,094, or 18.7%), with a plurality of these infractions being for fighting (4,007, or 7.4% of all infractions).



The “Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug” infraction category accounted for 6.6% of all infractions reported (3,554), with a plurality being for tobacco (1,996, or 3.7% of all infractions), followed by Marijuana (761, or 1.4% of all infractions).



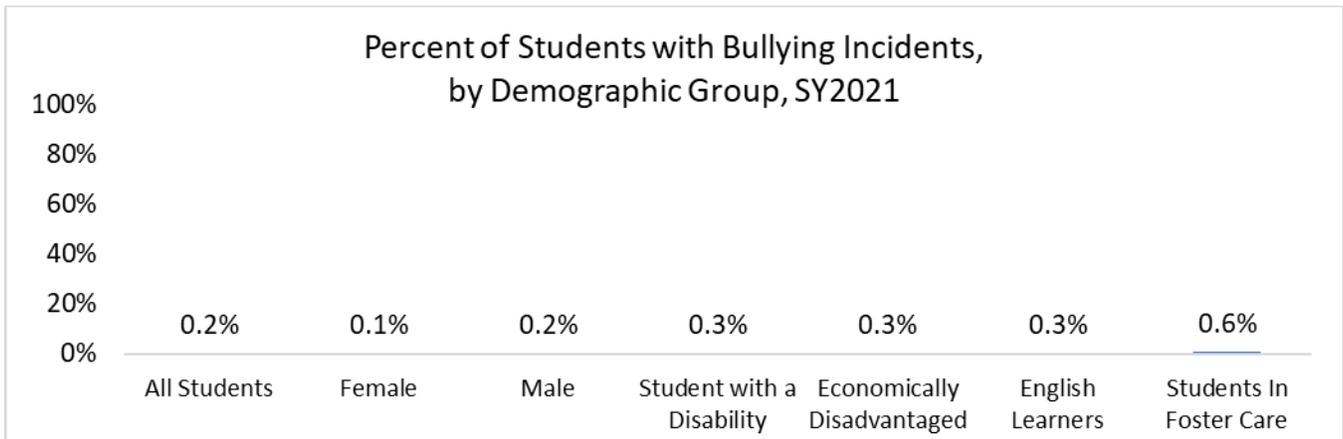
The remainder of infractions were reported as Weapon infractions (617, or 1.1% of all infractions), though a third of the weapon infractions were reported as “none”. A majority of the weapons infractions were reported as “knife or other sharp object” (266, or 0.5% of all infractions), followed by “none” and “look alike” (80, or 0.1% of all infractions).



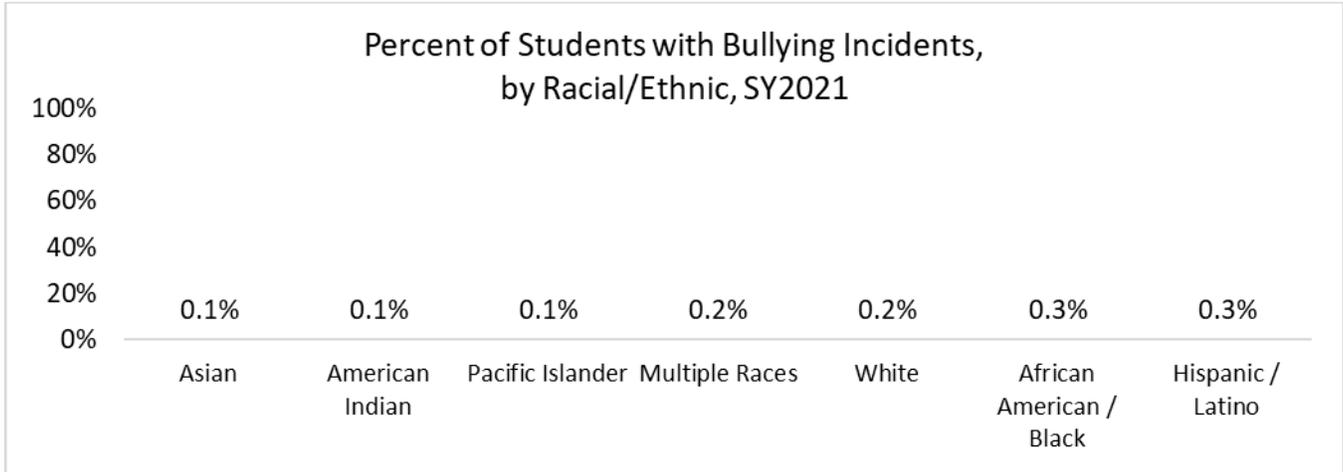
### A Closer Look: Incidents of Bullying

The USBE incident data collection is primarily designed for collecting information on offenders. Data reported about victims of bullying is very limited and is not currently reliable for use in reporting or analyses. As previously noted, all of the incident data in this report is for offenders and victim data is excluded.

In SY 2021 a little over half of LEAs (58%) reported at least one incident of bullying, and incidents of bullying accounted for 2.7% of incidents reported in SY 2021. Very few students were reported with one or more bullying infraction – only 0.2% of students. Looking at students by demographic characteristics, students who are In Foster Care, English Learners, Economically Disadvantaged, and Students with a Disability had slightly higher percentages of students with one or more bullying infraction (0.3% to 0.6%).



By racial/ethnic identity, students who identify as Black or African American, and students who identify as Hispanic or Latino/Latina had higher percentages of students with one or more bullying infraction (0.3%).



USBE recently began collecting information on whether the incident of bullying was alleged to be on the basis of discrimination against a protected class (including religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and race/ethnicity). Five percent of all bullying infractions were alleged to be on the basis of discrimination against one or more protected class. The highest rate of alleged discrimination was for race/ethnicity (2.1%) followed by sexual orientation (1.7%).

