



Author: Angelica Thompson, Ph.D.

Key Findings

The School House Adjustment Program Enterprise (SHAPE) is a diversion program that aims to reduce the number of minority youth who are transported and booked into juvenile detention for minor offenses. Below are the key findings from the program's 2018–19 implementation.

- 95.9% of the students enrolled in SHAPE were Black, compared to 74.3% enrolled in the District overall.
- 60.8% of SHAPE students were male, compared to 50.8% in the District.
- 63.4% of SHAPE students were 14-18 years old and 54.8% were in high school.
- Referrals from high schools have risen from 48.4% in 2017–18 and 54.8% in 2018–19.
- Craigmont and Raleigh-Egypt high schools made the most referrals to the program.
- Oakhaven and Woodstock middle schools had the SHAPE highest rate of referrals.
- 54.5% of SHAPE referrals came from school administrators.
- Referrals to SHAPE increased by 68.2% since inception in 2012–13.
- There has been an 8.1% increase in referrals to SHAPE since last year.
- 40.1% of students were referred to SHAPE for general disciplinary problems in school and 38.7% were referred for Simple Assault with No Serious Injury.
- 54.0% of students in the program were Warned and Counseled as an intervention.
- 78% of referred students successfully graduated from the program.
- 8.6% of SHAPE students committed another offense that resulted in another referral to Juvenile Court (JC).
- There was a 37.0% increase in transports to JC from the previous year.
- There was a 96.3% decrease in JC transports since inception in 2012–13.



Introduction

The School House Adjustment Program Enterprise (SHAPE) is a diversion program that works to reduce the number of minority youth detained or confined in secure detention or correctional facilities or jails or lock-ups for minor offenses. SHAPE began in July 2007 when Memphis City Schools (MCS) received the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth's (TCCY) Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Pilot Project grant funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Act. The program was a collaborative effort between MCS, Shelby County Juvenile Court, the Memphis Police Department (MPD), the Shelby County Sheriff's Department, the Shelby County Mayor's Office, the Memphis City Mayor's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the District Attorney's Office, and Shelby County DMC Task Force.

In the proposal, Juvenile Court counted and prioritized the number of transports from each MCS middle and high school. Using these data, and with consideration of the amount of funding available from TCCY, MCS' Department of School Security (DSS) originally selected one middle school and seventeen high schools to participate in the program. In subsequent years, DSS added new schools while dropping others from the program. DSS' decision regarding which offenses and schools to include in SHAPE were based on local staffing issues and emerging transport trends. DSS always targeted schools with the highest number of transports to include in the program. Originally, DSS limited the SHAPE-eligible charges to three types of delinquent offenses – criminal trespassing, disorderly conduct, and simple assault – but later allowed students with other offenses to be eligible to participate as the program expanded. The current SHAPE eligibility criteria is outlined below.

- A pending juvenile charge for:
 - Assault with no serious injuries
 - Criminal trespassing
 - Disorderly conduct
 - Gambling
 - Possession of alcohol
 - Possession of drug paraphernalia
 - Possession of marijuana
 - Theft under \$500
 - Vandalism under \$500
- No assault charges against school staff.
- No felony adjudications, convictions, or pending charges.
- No violent misdemeanor adjudications, convictions, or pending charges.
- No other misdemeanor charges that have occurred within the past twelve months.

SHAPE continues to operate under the auspices of Shelby County Schools (SCS), the Department of School Security was renamed the Department of Safety and Security, and the District added an Advisory Committee comprised of SCS and its partners to help make programmatic decisions.



SHAPE Program Structure

Administration

A Site Coordinator at each school staffs SHAPE. In addition to specific training to deliver the Mendez curriculum, Site Coordinators have training in dealing with at-risk youth. The SHAPE Coordinator is responsible for the overall administration of the project, including hiring and supervising Site Coordinators, ensuring compliance, monitoring evaluation activities, and serving as a spokesperson for the initiative.

Additionally, the SHAPE Coordinator's extensive experience with minority and at-risk youth contributes to the successful implementation of the program. To further sustain the program, he continues his work with the DMC Taskforce as the local and statewide chairman. These efforts are integral to remaining informed of issues and strategies related to DMC, which leads to the success and sustainability of SHAPE.

Admission Process

SHAPE is more than an adjustment in the juvenile justice processes; it is also an early intervention program that includes substantial emphasis on student and parental accountability. When the SHAPE Site Coordinator receives a referral, they send the parent or guardian a Pending Document Form regarding the student's SHAPE-eligible charge and meets with the family within five days to discuss the student's offense, provide program information, and discuss the student's options. The Pending Document Form precedes an actual juvenile summons, and if the student participates in SHAPE, the potential summons remains active for six months and can be filed at any time during this period if the student becomes non-compliant.

If the student meets all eligibility requirements, the student is referred to the program. The student and his or her parent/guardian must agree to voluntarily participate in the program and follow the program's guidelines, including the student agreeing not to commit any future offenses.

Each month, a school-based Site Coordinator tracks the student's attendance, any incidences of misbehavior while at school (i.e., office referrals, suspensions and expulsions), and academic performance in each class. If a student is non-compliant with the conditions of the program, the Site Coordinator can request that juvenile court upgrade the Pending Document Form to a juvenile summons. Conversely, if the student successfully completes the program, the Pending Document Form is destroyed and no record of any involvement is ever recorded with the court. In addition to reducing the number of minority youth transported on minor charges, SHAPE seeks to reduce substantially the number of minority youth who make any contact with Juvenile Court. A true diversion occurs when there is no record of any contact with Juvenile Court.



SHAPE Curriculum

Students and parents who agree to the SHAPE intervention must complete the SHAPE curriculum. The current curriculum is based on best practice models developed by the Center for Anti-Bullying and Non Violence: Reducing Violence in Schools and Communities see (<https://www.wecanco.org/>). The curriculum, known as “Peace Art,” is a six-week program that meets twice weekly focusing on the latest research related to resiliency, risk and protective factors. Each session, which lasts two hours, is designed to equip students with the knowledge and behavioral skills they need to improve conduct, improve decision-making, and achieve positive outcomes. The curriculum is delivered after school; however, SHAPE makes accommodations for students with special circumstances, allowing them to participate during times when school is not in session. SCS staff who work with SHAPE are trained to administer the curriculum.

Outcomes

Participation

A Disproportionate Percentage of SHAPE Students Were African-American and Male

As shown in Figure 1, a disproportionate percentage of African-American students were enrolled in SHAPE than in the District as a whole (93.2% vs. 74.3%). Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander and White students were underrepresented in the program compared to their enrollment in the District.

Figure 1. District vs. SHAPE Enrollment by Race

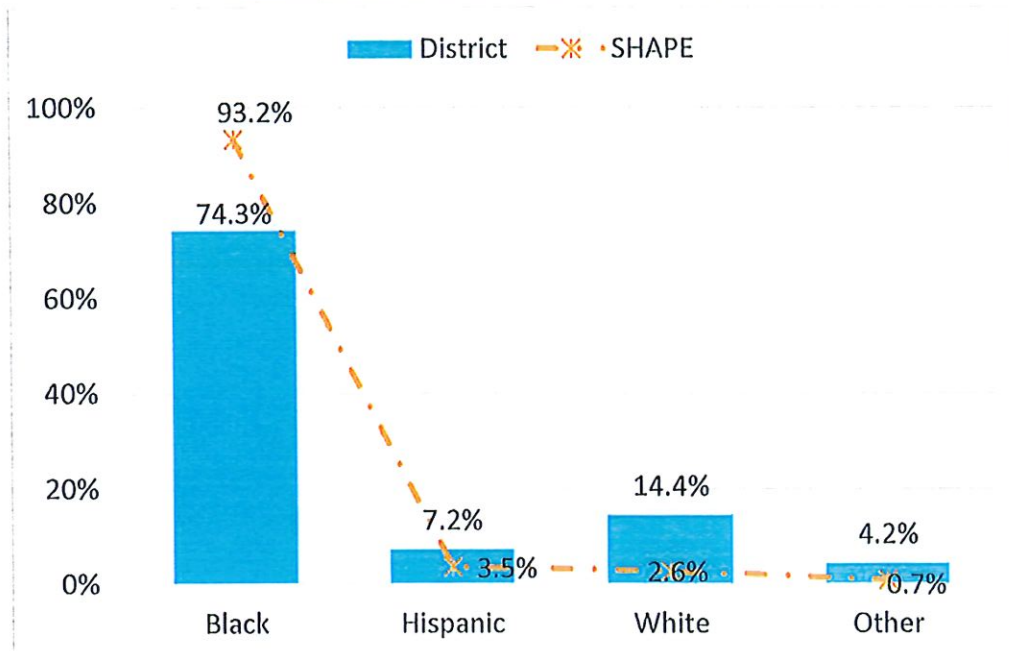
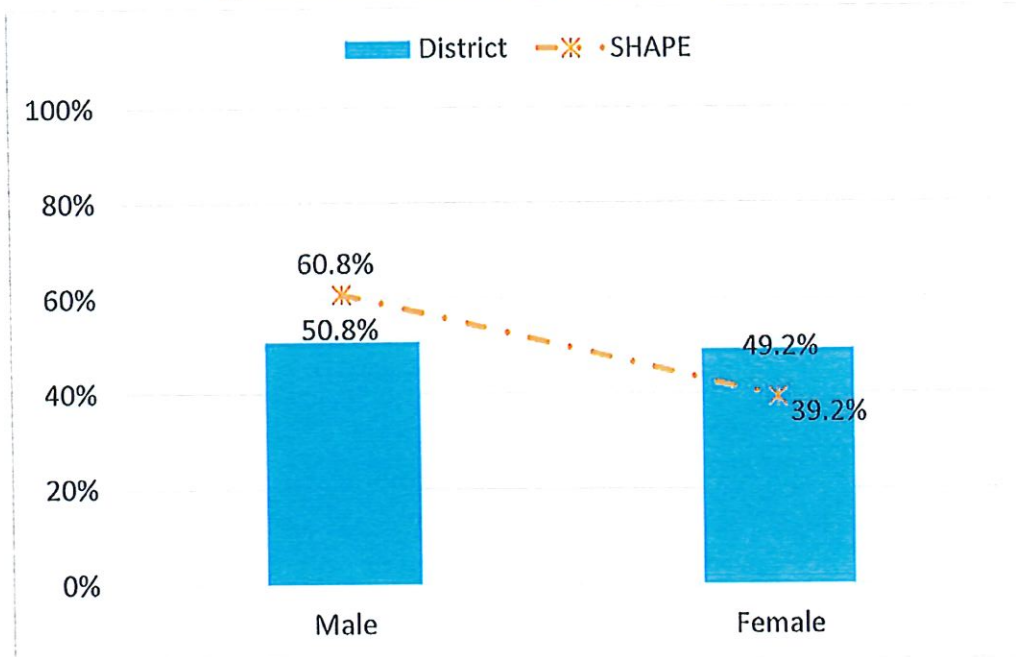




Figure 2 shows that a higher percentage of males than females were enrolled in SHAPE in 2018–19 (60.8% vs. 49.2%, respectively), which was disproportionate to the percentage of males and females enrolled in the District (50.8% vs. 39.2%, respectively).

Figure 2. District vs. SHAPE Enrollment by Gender

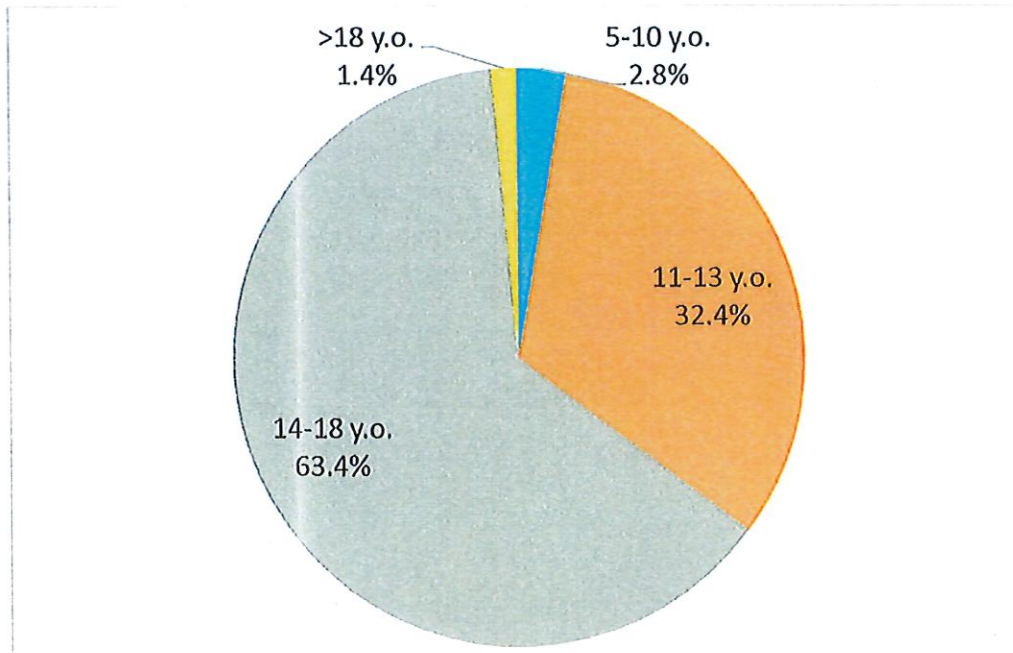




SHAPE Primarily Comprised High-School Aged Students and High-School Participation in the Program Increased Slightly from the Previous Year

Figure 3 shows that most SHAPE participants were between 14 and 18 years old (63.4%), followed by 11 to 13 years old (32.4%). This is in line with the grade level referrals shown in Figure 4.

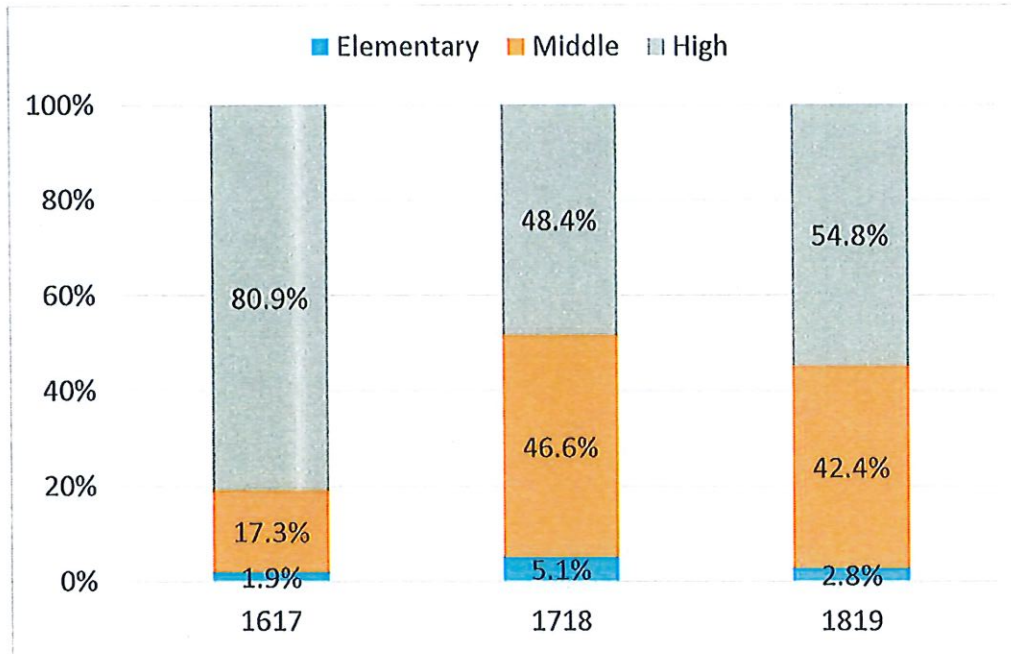
Figure 3: Referrals by Age



In 2016–17 and 2017–18, most SHAPE participants were in middle and high school, and in 2017–18, middle school referrals increased substantially from the previous year. In 2018–19, middle and high school students continued to be the primary SHAPE participants. Additionally, Figure 4 shows that fewer middle school students participated in SHAPE in 2018–19 than in 2017–18. Conversely, more high school students were enrolled in the program in 2018–19 than in the previous year; however, high school participation was still substantially lower than in 2017–18.



Figure 4: Referrals by School Category



Most Students Participating in SHAPE Attended Craigmont High School, While Oakhaven Middle had the Highest Percentage of its Student Population Participating to the Program

Table 1 shows that of all the 2018–19 SHAPE participants, most attended Craigmont and Raleigh-Egypt high schools.

Table 1. Schools with Highest Percentage of Referrals within the Program

SHAPE SCHOOL	COUNT	% OF TOTAL REFERRALS
CRAIGMONT HIGH	38	8.9%
RALEIGH-EGYPT HIGH	35	8.2%
BOLTON HIGH	21	4.9%
CUMMINGS SCHOOL	21	4.9%
KATE BOND MIDDLE	21	4.9%
SHEFFIELD HIGH	21	4.9%



Oakhaven and Woodstock middle schools had the SHAPE highest rate of student participants (i.e., the number of students enrolled in SHAPE attending a given school/the number of students enrolled in that school).

Table 2. Schools with the Highest Rate of SHAPE Referrals

SHAPE SCHOOL	COUNT	ENROLLMENT	REFERRAL RATE
OAKHAVEN MIDDLE	20	292	6.8%
WOODSTOCK MIDDLE	16	302	5.3%
GEORGIAN HILLS MIDDLE	16	319	5.0%
CRAIGMONT HIGH	38	819	4.6%
WESTWOOD HIGH	16	375	4.3%

Diversion

As previously stated, basic premise of SHAPE is that minority youth experience disproportionate levels of contact at all levels of the criminal justice system. However, any student charged with a SHAPE-eligible offense is eligible to participate in the program, irrespective of their ethnicity. Additionally, School Resource Officers (SROs) can refer eligible students to the program in lieu of transporting them to Juvenile Court.

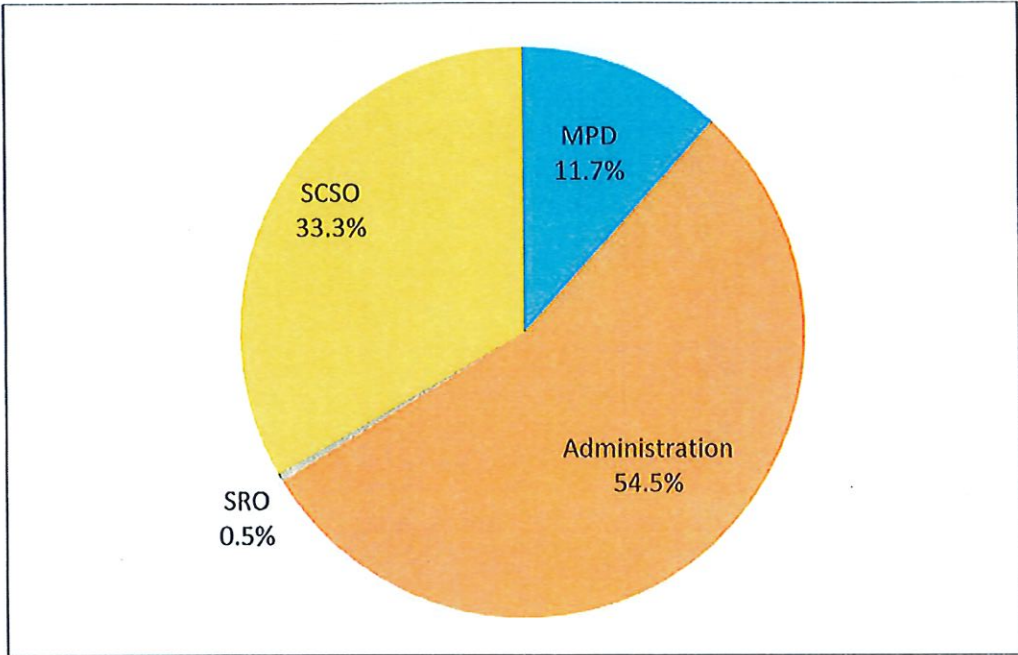
Law enforcement officers have substantial levels of discretion in the decision to transport. SHAPE has reinforced transporting students charged with minor offenses. Discretionary use of summonses in lieu of transports to detention is in agreement with juvenile statutes according to Tennessee Code Annotated. This encourages detention only in cases where the juvenile poses a serious threat to him or herself or the community. Additionally, school administrators can refer eligible students directly to the Site Coordinators, avoiding contact with SROs altogether.



Administrators Referred Most Students to SHAPE

Figure 5 shows that of the known SHAPE referrals, 54.5% came from school administrators and less than 1% came from School Resource Officers (SROs). Additionally, a number of referrals came directly from Shelby County Sheriff Officers (SCSO) (33.3%) and Memphis Police Department (MPD) Officers (11.7%).

Figure 5: Referrals by Agency





Referrals to SHAPE Have Increased from the Previous Year

Figure 6 illustrates the number of referrals to SHAPE as well as the 68.2% increase in referrals since the program’s inception in the 2012–13 academic year. Figure 7 shows the corresponding year-over-year percent changes in referrals to the program during the same period.

Figure 6: Changes in # of SHAPE Referrals

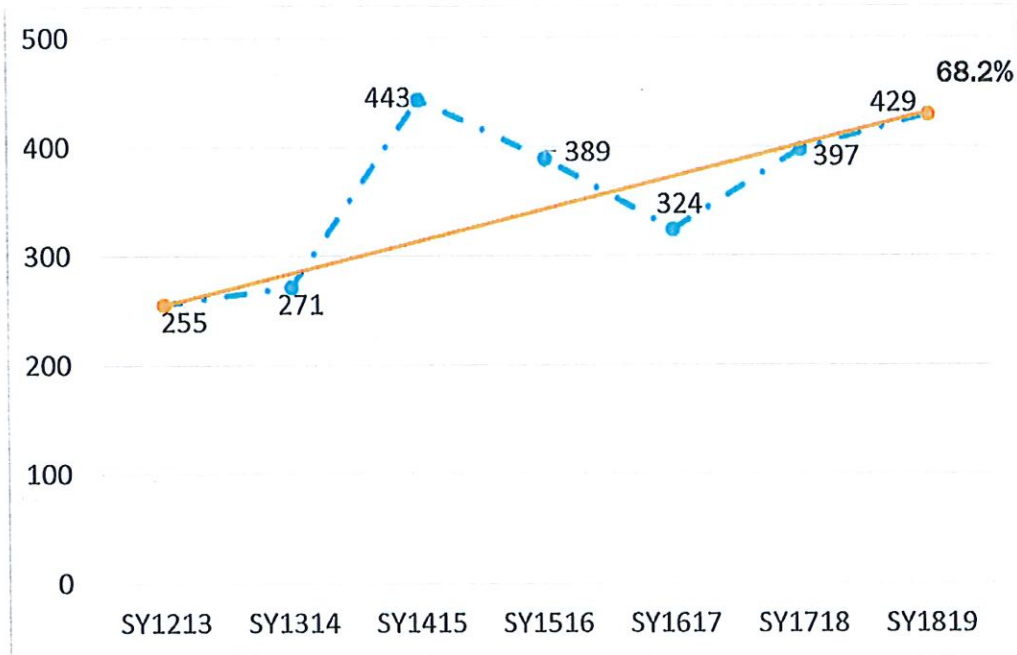
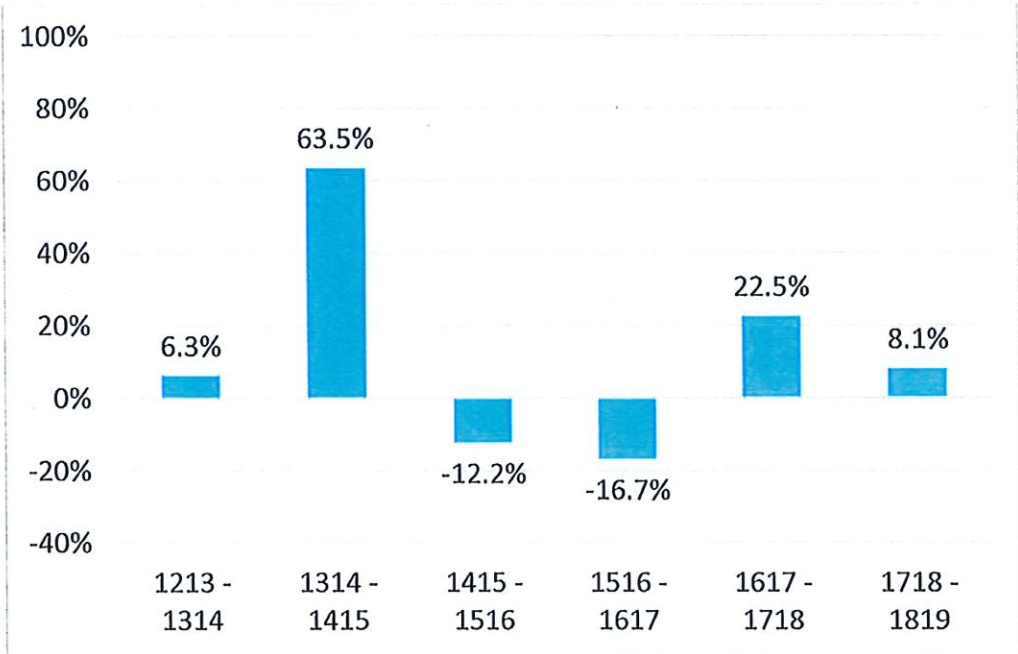




Figure 7 shows that SHAPE has experienced an 8.1% increase in referrals between the 2017–18 (397) and 2018–19 (429) academic year.

Figure 7: % Changes in SHAPE Referrals

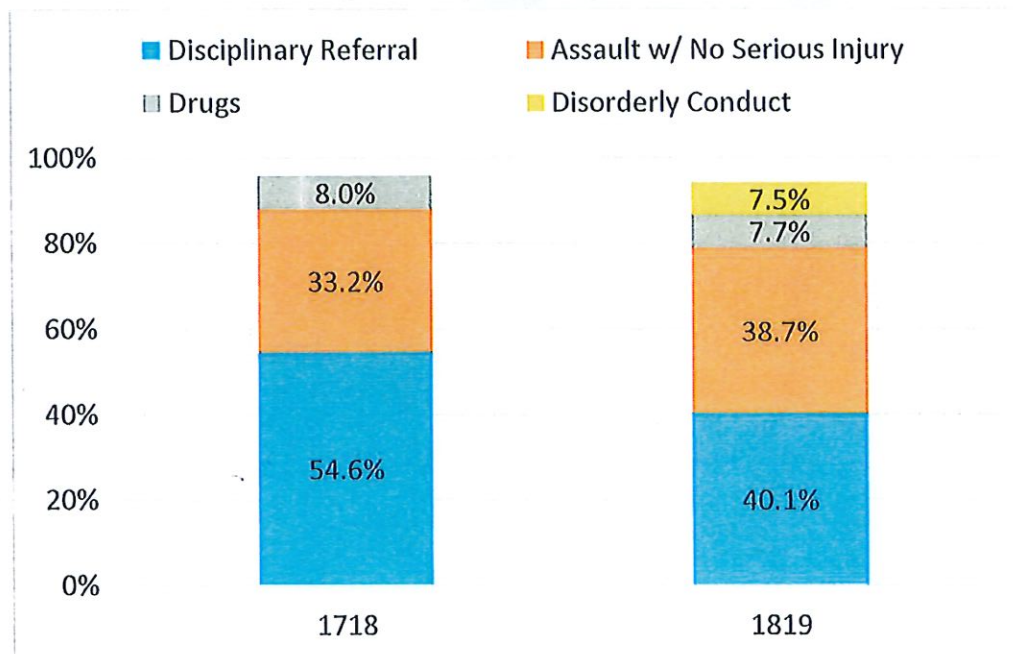




Assault and Disciplinary Referrals Were the Most Common Offenses for Which Students Were Referred to SHAPE

Figure 8 shows the top reasons for which students were referred to SHAPE in 2018–19 as well as the prevalence of these behaviors in the previous year. In 2018–19, 40.1% of students were referred to SHAPE for general disciplinary problems in school, down from 54.6% in 2017–18. Assault with No Serious Injury was the second most common referral reason at 38.7% in 2018–19, a slight increase from the 33.2% of these type of referrals in 2017–18. Approximately 8% of students were referred to SHAPE for drug-related offenses in 2018–19, on par with the 2017–18 referrals for these offenses. Last, 7.5% of students were referred to the program for Disorderly Conduct in 2018–19 and no students demonstrated this behavior in the previous year.

Figure 8: Top Referring Offenses



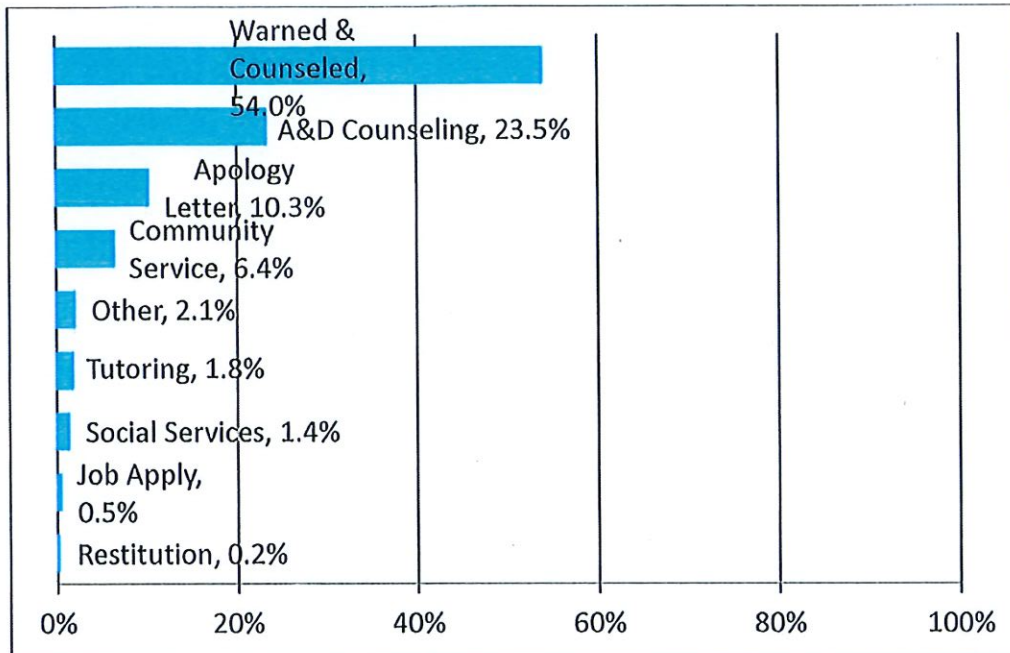


Interventions

Most SHAPE Participants Were Warned and Counseled as an Intervention

Figure 9 shows that when students were referred to SHAPE, more than half (54.0%) were Warned and Counseled, while 23.5% received Alcohol and Drug Counseling.

Figure 9: SHAPE Interventions



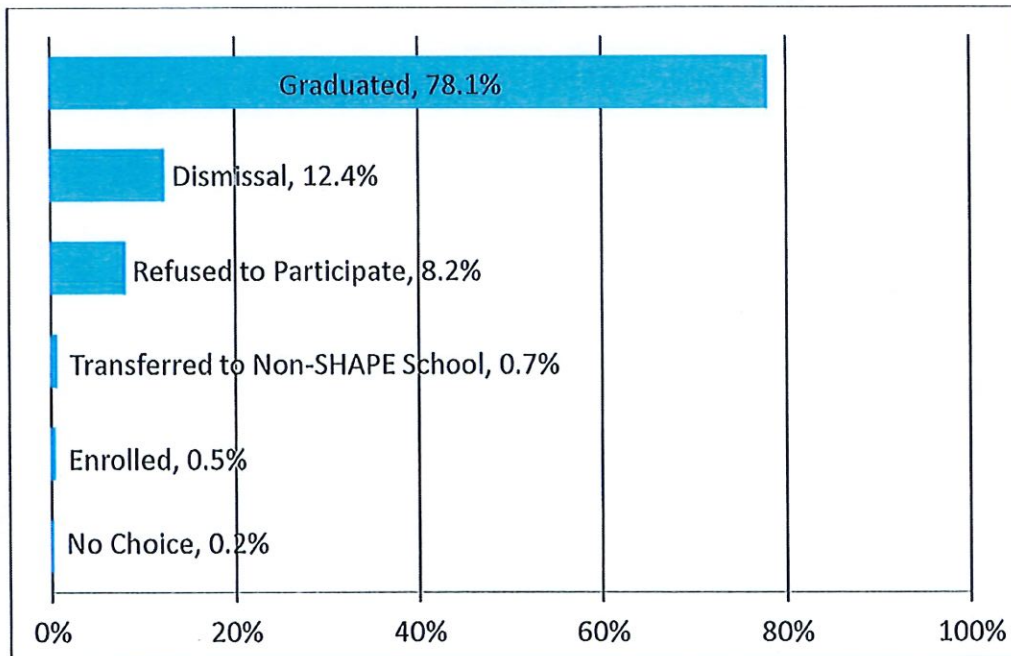


Participant Outcomes

Most Participants Graduated from SHAPE

A premise of SHAPE is that exposure to the interventions provided, especially the Peace Art curriculum, will reduce future delinquency and criminal activity. Approximately 78% of the students successfully graduated by completing at least twelve of the Peace Art curriculum sessions and meeting all other requirements of the program. Approximately 12% were discharged for non-compliance, and 8.2% refused to participate. These students were usually issued a juvenile summons to appear in Juvenile Court for their referring charges. Finally, less than 1% of students transferred to a non-SHAPE school, are still enrolled in the program, and have no identified outcome. See the Figure 10 below for details.

Figure 10: SHAPE Participant Outcomes





Transports to Juvenile Court Increased in the 1819 Academic Year

The primary goal of SHAPE has been to reduce the number of minority youth that are transported to Juvenile Court and detained for minor offenses. Of the students referred to SHAPE, 8.6% committed another offense that resulted in a referral to Juvenile Court. As shown in Figure 11, there was a 37.0% increase in transports between the 2017–18 and 2018–19 academic years. Overall, SHAPE has been effective in decreasing transports by 96.3% since inception; however, these reductions are not solely the result of the SHAPE initiative. Gang reduction programs, truancy interventions, and other juvenile programming likely also contributed. Still, the overall reduction in transports among students attending SHAPE schools does isolate the effects of the program well and illustrates the impact the program has had on reducing disproportionate minority contact with Juvenile Court.

Figure 11: % Changes in Juvenile Court Transports

