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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 2021-22 implementation.

- 95% of the students enrolled in SHAPE were Black, compared to 71% enrolled in the district overall.
- 64.7% of SHAPE students were male, compared to 50.5% in the district.
- 70% of SHAPE students were 14-18 years old and 60% were in high school.
- Lowrance School, Kirby High and Cordova High schools made the most referrals to the program.
- Lowrance School and Craigmont High had the SHAPE highest rate of referrals.
- 78% of SHAPE referrals came from school administrators.
- Referrals to SHAPE increased by 64% since inception in 2012-13.
- 21% of students were referred to SHAPE for general disciplinary problems in school and 53% were referred for Simple Assault with No Serious Injury.
- 87% of students in the program were Warned and Counseled as an intervention.
- 79% of referred students successfully graduated from the program.
- 6% of SHAPE students committed another offense that resulted in another referral to Juvenile Court (JC).
- There was a -2% decrease in SHAPE referrals in 2021-22 compared to 18-19 (PRE-COVID)
- There were 25 transports to Juvenile Court in 2021-22.
- 99 Juvenile Court summons were issued in 2021-22.



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 lockups 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 MCSS middle and high school. Using these data, and with consideration of the amount of funding available from TCCY, MSCS' 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 are 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
 - Under the influence
 - 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 Memphis Shelby County Schools (MSCS), the Department of School Safety and was renamed the Department of Safety and Security, and the district added an Advisory Committee comprised of MSCS 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 “Peace Art” curriculum, which focuses on social skills, moral reasoning and anger management. Site Coordinators are trained in dealing with at-risk youth. The SHAPE Advisor is responsible for the overall administration of the project, including hiring and supervising Site Coordinators, to ensure compliance, monitoring evaluation activities, and serving as a spokesperson for the initiative.

Additionally, the SHAPE Coordinator’s extensive experience in behavior modification with minority and at-risk youth contributes to the successful implementation of the program. To further sustain the program, the Shape Advisor 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 letter of notification, along with 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 week, 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 the 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 closed four-to-six-week program that meets twice weekly focusing on the latest research related to resiliency, risk and protective factors. A closed group is where "participants that start the group will also end the group." Each session, which lasts 40-60 minutes, 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 and via Microsoft Teams. MSCS staff who work with SHAPE are trained to administer the curriculum after completing an extensive four-day training with consultants with the Center for Anti-Bullying and Nonviolence.

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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 (95% vs. 71%). Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander and White students were underrepresented in the program compared to their enrollment in the district.

Figure 1.

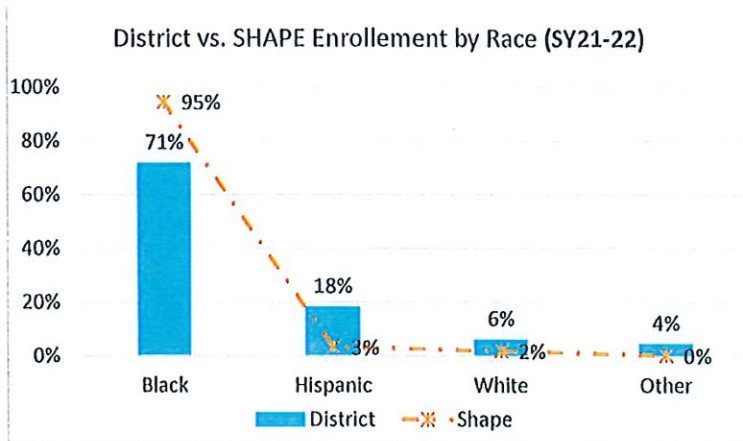
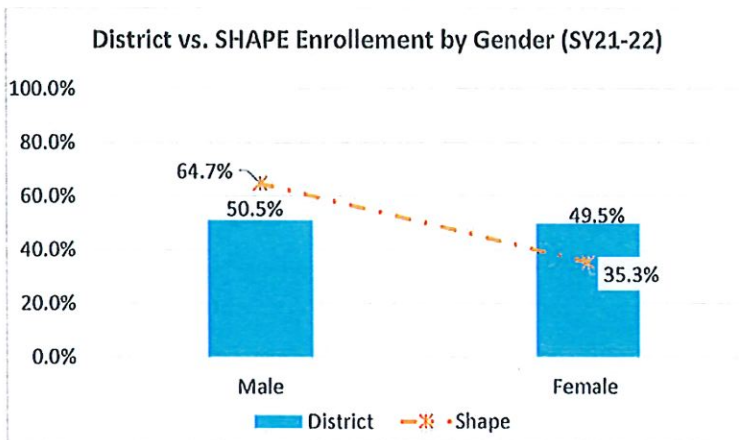


Figure 2 shows that a higher percentage of males than females were enrolled in SHAPE in 2021–22 (64.7% vs. 50.5%, respectively), which was disproportionate to the percentage of males and females enrolled in the district (49.6% vs. 35.3%, respectively).

Figure 2.

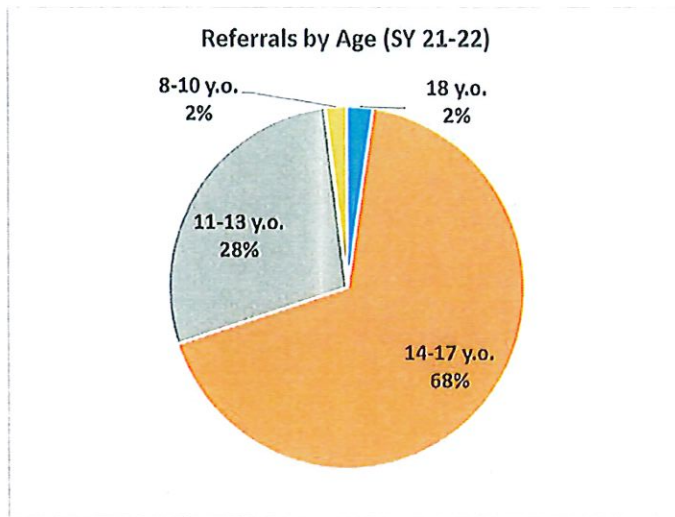


SHAPE Primarily Comprised High-School Aged Students and High-School Participation in the Program Increased Slightly from the Previous Year



Figure 3 shows that most SHAPE participants were between 14 and 17 years old (68%), followed by 11 to 13 years old (28%). This is in line with the grade level referrals shown in Figure 4.

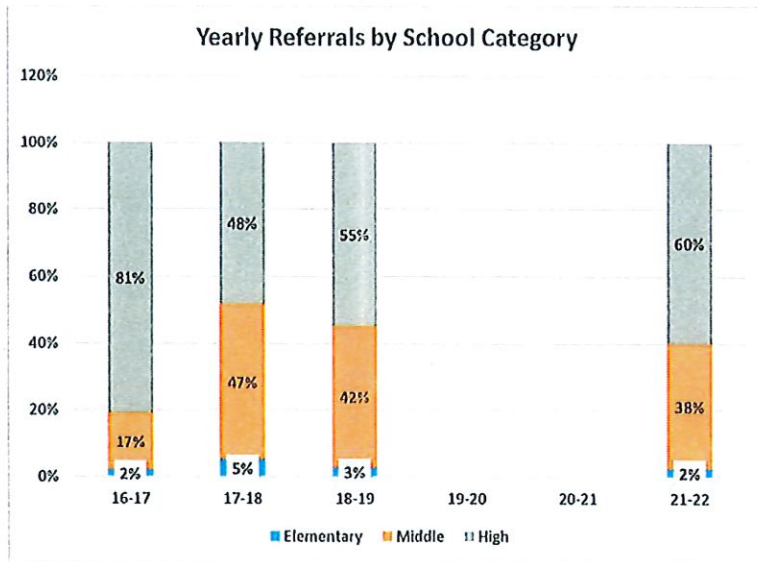
Figure 3.



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. In 19-20 and 20-21, COVID-19 plagued schools resulting in fully remote learning. Much of the data during these time periods is missing. To date, most SHAPE participants still include high school students.



Figure 4.



** Missing Data: Due to COVID disruption in learning for 19-20 and 20-21 school years. **

Most Students Participating in SHAPE Attended Lowrance School. Lowrance School and Craigmont High had the Highest Percentage of Its Student Population Participating in the Program.

Table 1 shows that of all the 2021-22 SHAPE participants, most attended Lowrance, Kirby and Cordova schools. (i.e., the percentage of total referrals includes the number of students enrolled in SHAPE attending a given school/the total number of students enrolled in the SHAPE program).

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

SHAPE SCHOOL	COUNT	% OF TOTAL REFERRALS
LOWRANCE SCHOOL	37	8.83%
KIRBY HIGH	32	7.64%
CORDOVA HIGH SCHOOL	31	7.40%
CRAIGMONT HIGH	29	6.92%
GERMANTOWN HIGH	26	6.21%



BOLTON HIGH	22	5.25%
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Lowrance School and Craigmont High had the highest SHAPE 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
LOWRANCE SCHOOL	37	847	4.37%
CRAIGMONT HIGH	29	665	4.36%
KIRBY HIGH	32	805	3.98%
BOLTON HIGH	22	617	3.57%
WESTWOOD HIGH	10	299	3.34%

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.

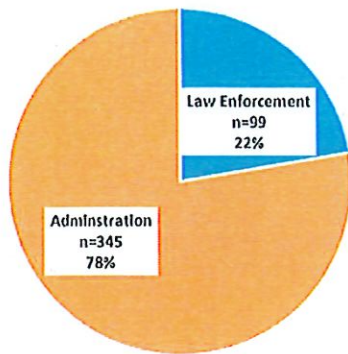
Administrators Referred Most Students to SHAPE

Figure 5 shows that of the known SHAPE referrals, 78% came from school administrators (n=345) and 22% from law enforcement (n=99).

Figure 5.



Referrals by Agency (SY 21-22)



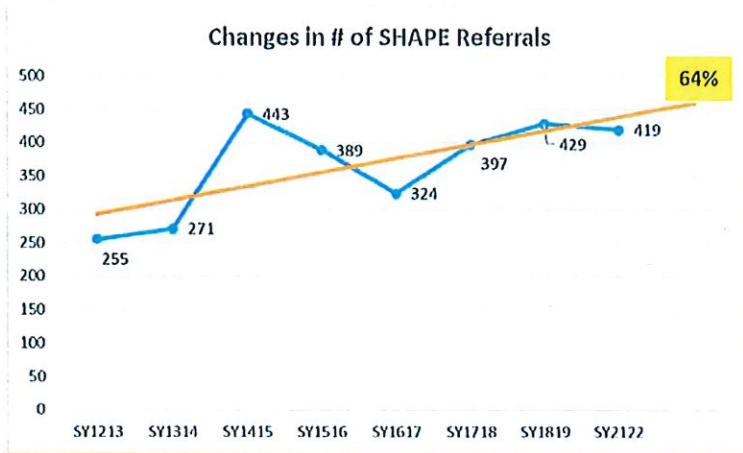
Referrals to SHAPE Have Increased from the Previous Year

Figure 6 illustrates the number of referrals to SHAPE as well as the 46% increase in referrals since the program's inception in the 2012–13 academic year. However, there was a slight decrease in SHAPE referrals for the 21-22 school year (-10) in comparison to 18-19 school year (pre-COVID). Figure 7 shows the corresponding year-over-year percent changes in referrals to the program during the same period.

Figure 6.



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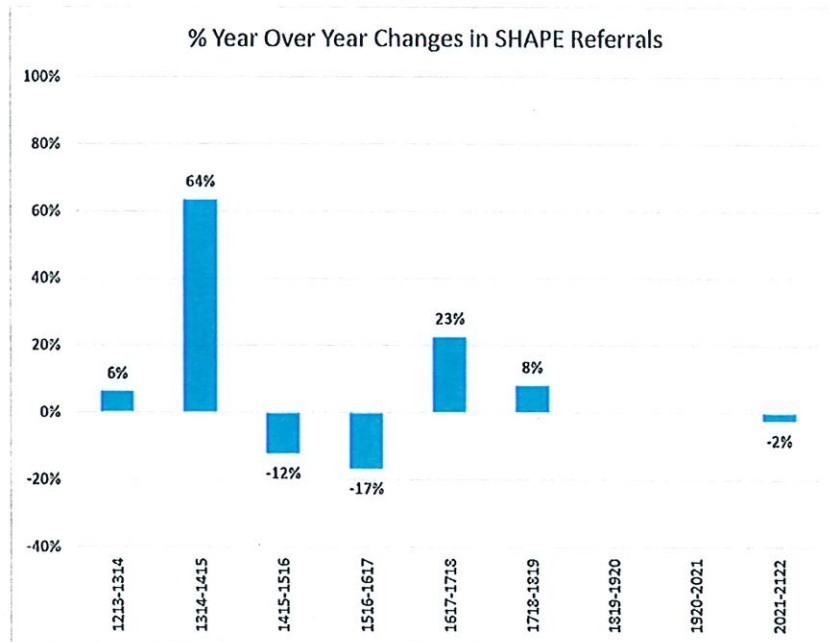


** Missing Data: Due to COVID disruption in learning for 19-20 and 20-21 school years. **



Figure 7 shows that SHAPE has experienced a -2% decrease in referrals between the 2021-22 (n=419) and 2018-19 (n=429) academic year.

Figure 7.



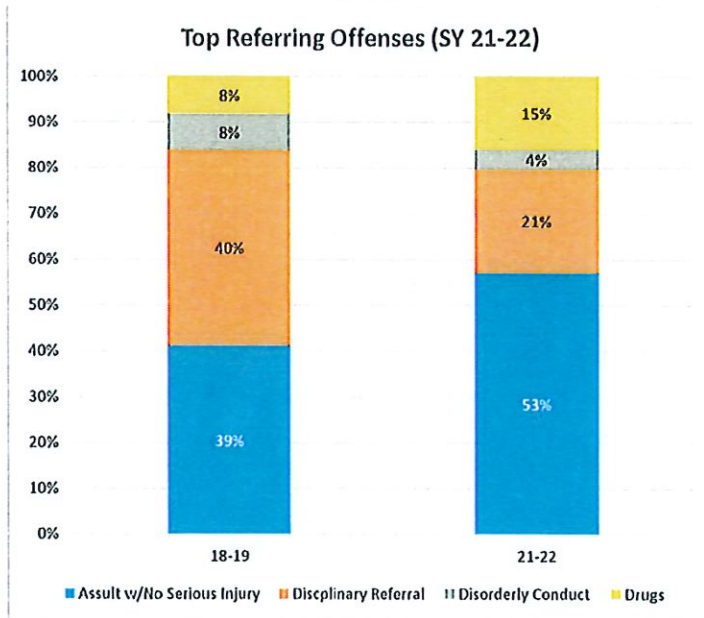
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Assault and Disciplinary Referrals Were the Most Common Offenses for Which Students Were Referred to SHAPE

Figure 8 shows the top reasons for which students were referred to SHAPE in 21-22 as well as the prevalence of these behaviors in the previous year. Assault with No Serious Injury was the most common referral reason at 53% in 2021-22, an increase from the 39% of these type of referrals in during 2018-19 (pre-covid) year. In 2021-22, 21% of students were referred to SHAPE for general disciplinary problems in school, decreased from 40% in 2018-19. Approximately 4% of students were referred to SHAPE for disorderly conduct in 2021-22, an decrease from 2018-19 referrals for these offenses (8%). Fifteen percent (15%) of students were referred to the program for drug related offenses in 2021-22 which is a decrease from 2018-19 eight percent (8%).

Figure 8.



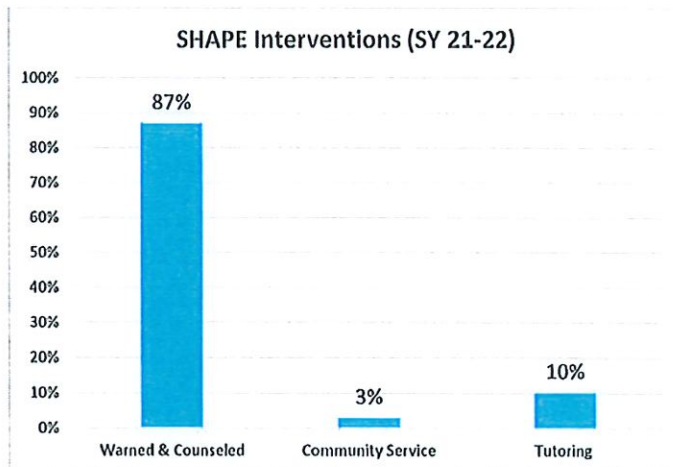


Interventions

Most SHAPE Participants Were Warned and COUNSELED as an Intervention

Figure 9 shows that when students were referred to SHAPE, 87% were Warned and COUNSELED (n=300), while 10% received Tutoring (n=35), and 3% participated in community service (n=10).

Figure 9.





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 79% 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 8% were discharged for non-compliance, and 3% refused to participate. These students were usually issued a juvenile summons to appear in Juvenile Court for their referring charges. In 2021-22, there were 99 in the number of juvenile summonses issued. Finally, less than 2% of students transferred to a non-SHAPE school, and 7% are still enrolled in the program. See the Figure 10 below for details.

Figure 10.

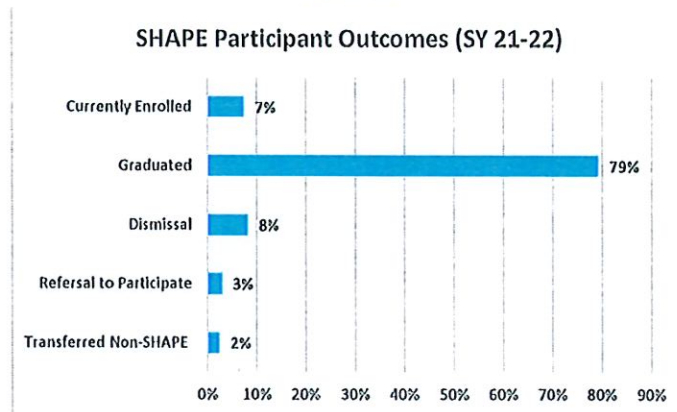
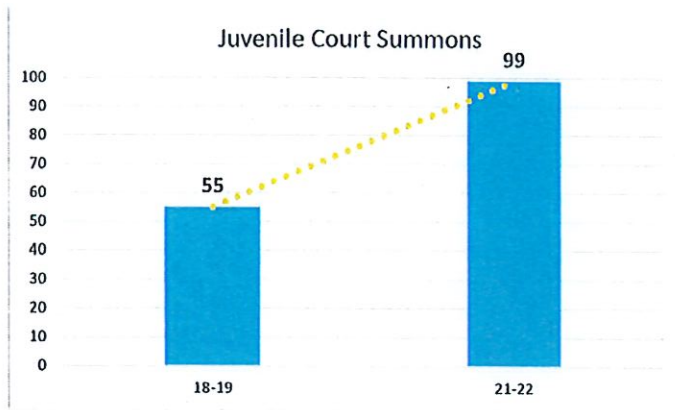


Figure 11.



Transports to Juvenile Court Increased in the 22-23 Academic Year

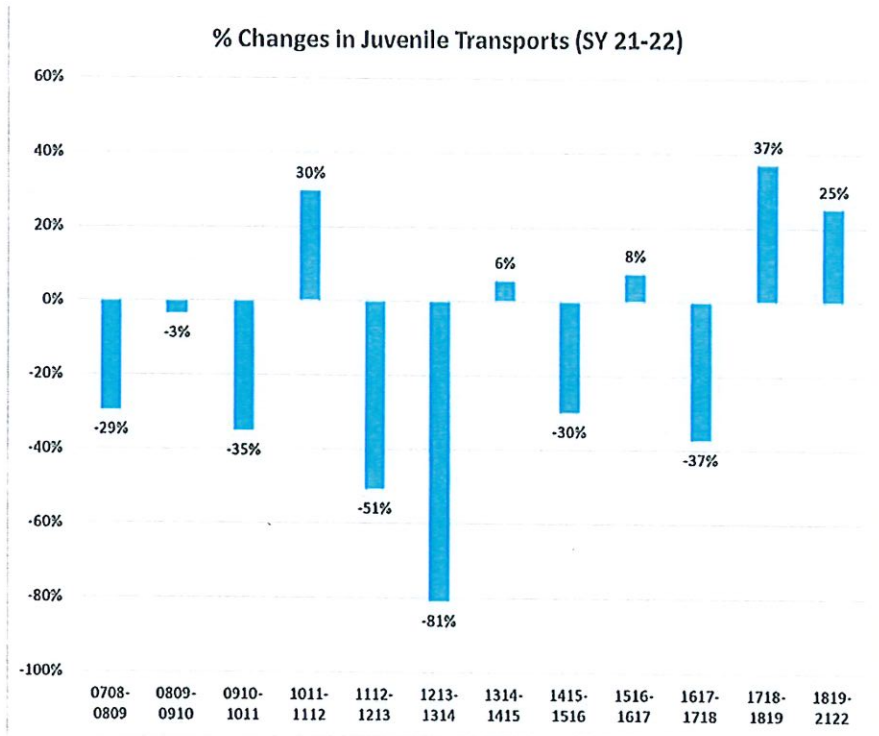
The primary goal of SHAPE has been to reduce the number of minority youth that are transported to Juvenile Court and detained for minor offenses. Of the students referred to SHAPE, only 24 students (6%) committed another offense that resulted in a referral to Juvenile Court. As shown in Figure 11, there was a 25% increase in transport between the 2021-22 (N=25) and 2018-19 (N=20) academic year (pre-covid). Overall, SHAPE has been effective in decreasing transport. However, more research will need to be done to understand the uptick in juvenile transport this year. Gang reduction programs, truancy interventions, and other juvenile programming likely also contributed to the effectiveness of the SHAPE program. Still, the overall reduction in transport 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 12.

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** Missing Data: Due to COVID disruption in learning for 19-20 and 20-21 school years. **