



# **National Black Women's Justice Institute**

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**Why We Center Black Girls**

**Dr. Sydney McKinney, NBWJI Executive Director**

# About NBWJI

The National Black Women's Justice Institute (NBWJI) is a Black women-led nonprofit that leads research, policy advocacy, and capacity-building in partnership with directly impacted Black women and girls to identify and elevate new models of safety, prevention, and justice.

We work to ensure that criminalized Black women and girls may heal from trauma, reconnect with their families and communities, achieve economic independence and wealth, access safe housing, and have every opportunity to live out their dreams.



# **Barriers to Safety & Wellbeing:**

**Mental Health, Gender-Based Violence &  
School Discipline**



# Mental Health

**182%**

**Suicide death rates** for Black teenage girls increased by 182% from 2001 to 2017, (Price & Khubchandani, 2019)

**14%**

Black and Latinx children were about **14 percent less likely** than white youth to receive treatment for their depression (SAMHSA, 2020).

**6x**

**Youth are six times more likely to receive** mental health care in schools compared to other community settings (Nadeem, Jaycox, et al, 2011).

# Gender-Based Violence

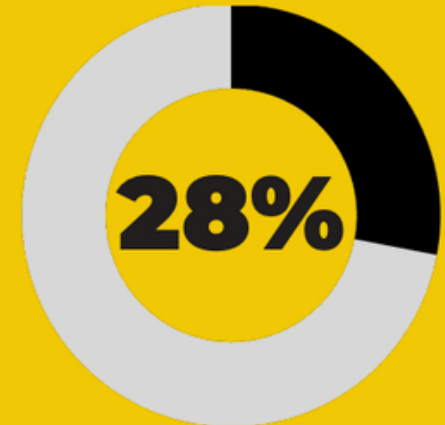
In school and out of school, Black girls report higher rates of sexual harassment than any other group.<sup>6</sup>



of Black girls report having been "touched, grabbed, or pinched in a sexual way" by someone in school.<sup>7</sup>



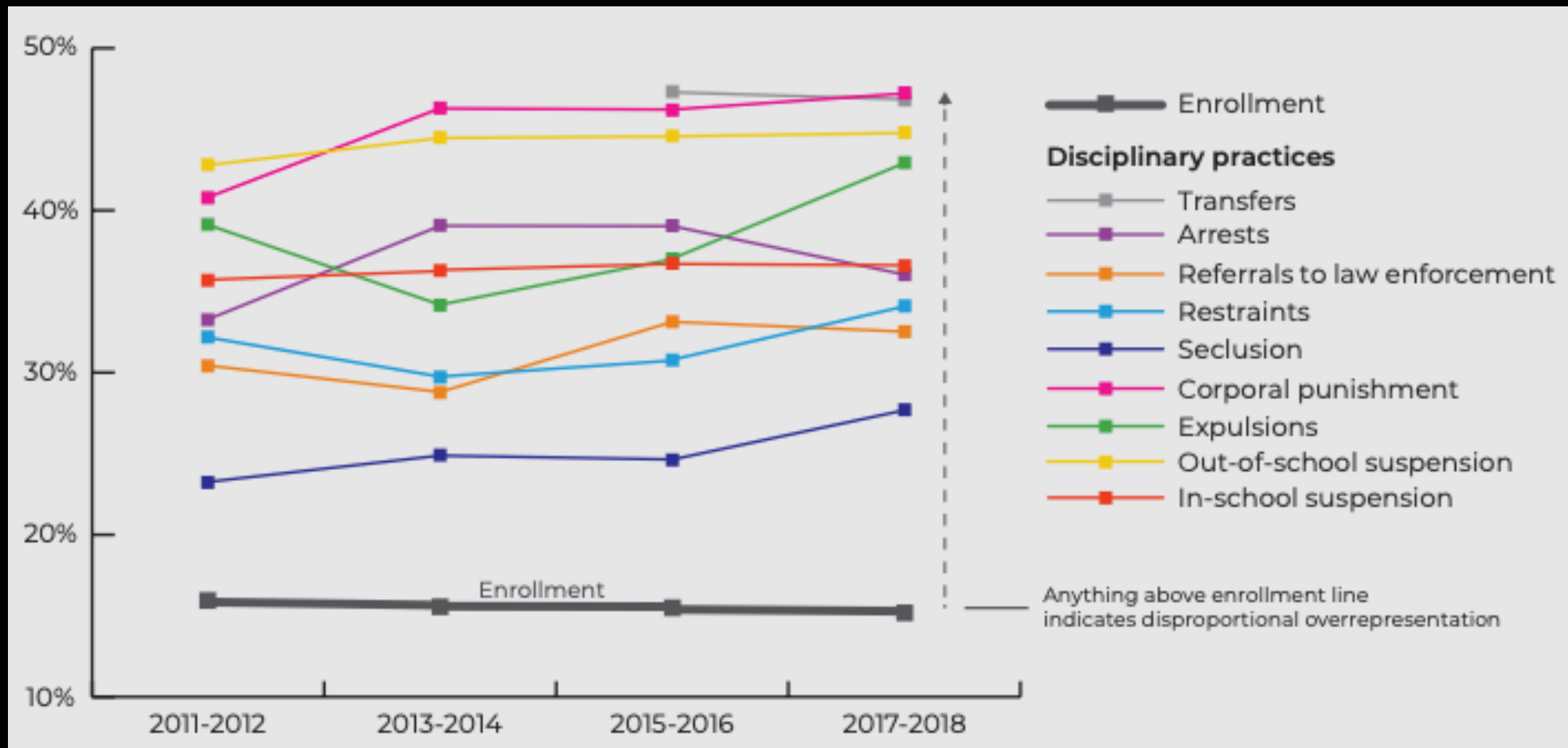
of Black girls report someone in school pulling at their clothing in a sexual way.<sup>8</sup>



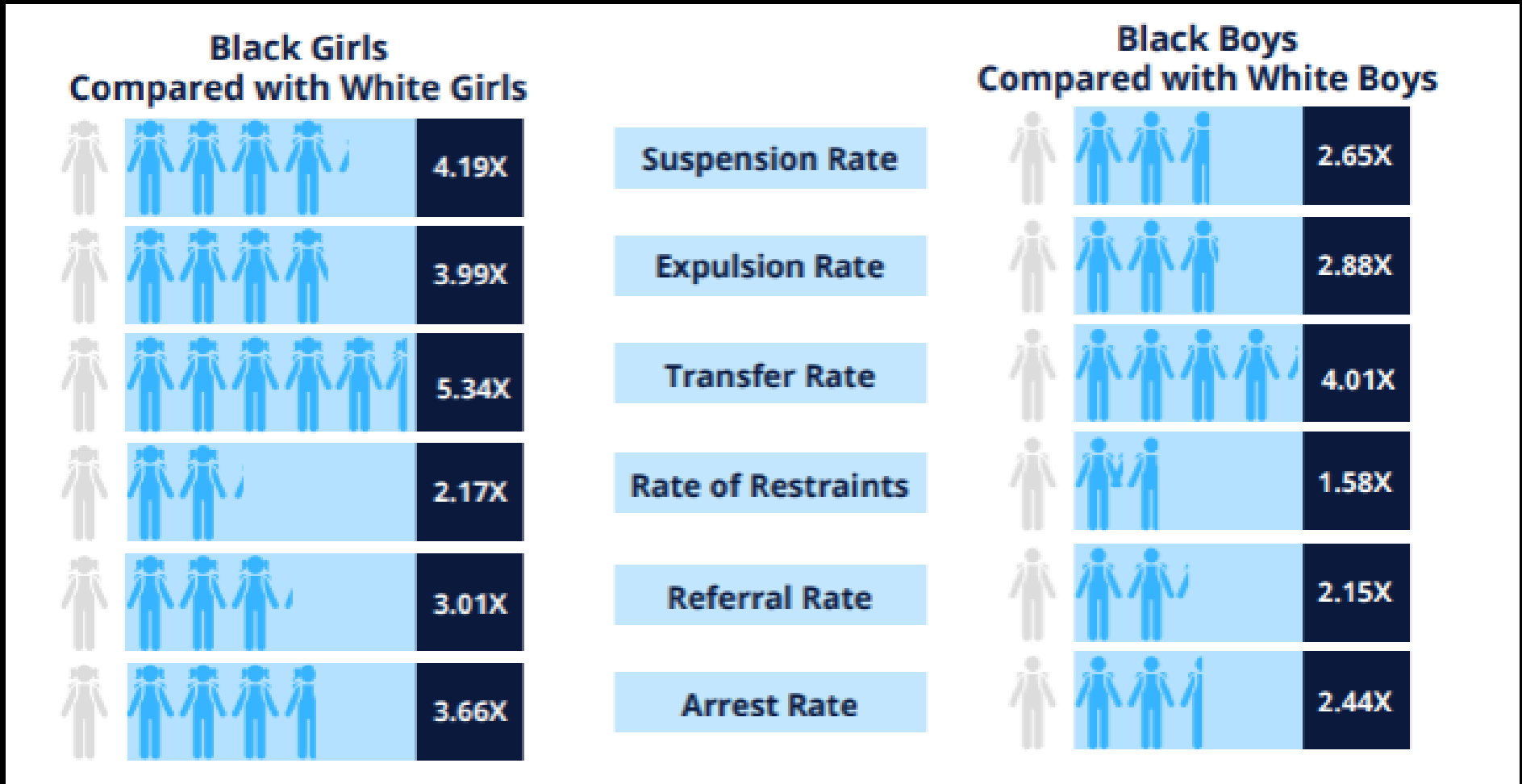
of Black girls report being forced to kiss someone.<sup>9</sup>

# Exclusionary School Discipline

## Black girls % Discipline Compared to % Enrollment



# Exclusionary School Discipline





**What Black Girls &  
Gender-Expansive Youth  
Want & Need**

## What they want & need:

- Safe spaces where they are able to be themselves and feel their identities are affirmed & valued.
- Black women therapists, counselors, and other educators with similar lived experience and from similar backgrounds.
- For students in distress, ensure policies and practices are trauma-informed, prioritizing care over discipline.
- Opportunities to co-create school-policies and programs to center their needs and experiences.

