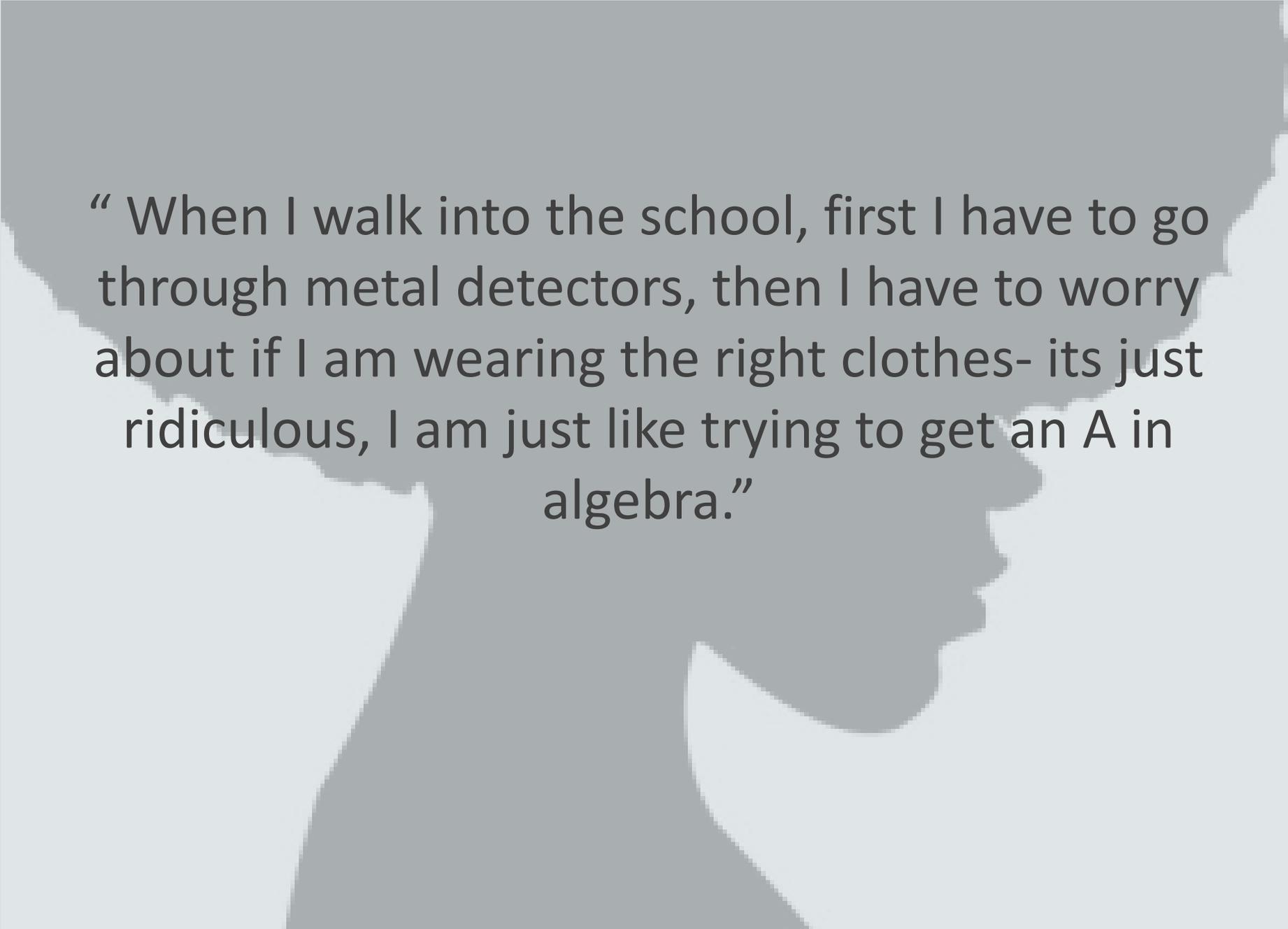


PROJECT FOCUS: GIRLS OF COLOR
ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF GIRLS OF COLOR IN
BOSTON SCHOOLS

From the voices of Girls of Color



“ When I walk into the school, first I have to go through metal detectors, then I have to worry about if I am wearing the right clothes- its just ridiculous, I am just like trying to get an A in algebra.”

“On top of your gender double standards, on top of racial double standards now you’re going to add weight and physical appearance.”

“If you are going to comment on my body, about what I'm wearing- it shouldn't be from a male, I don't want a grown man looking at me like that, its weird and creepy.”

“Some dress code isn't even about race- its about body size.”

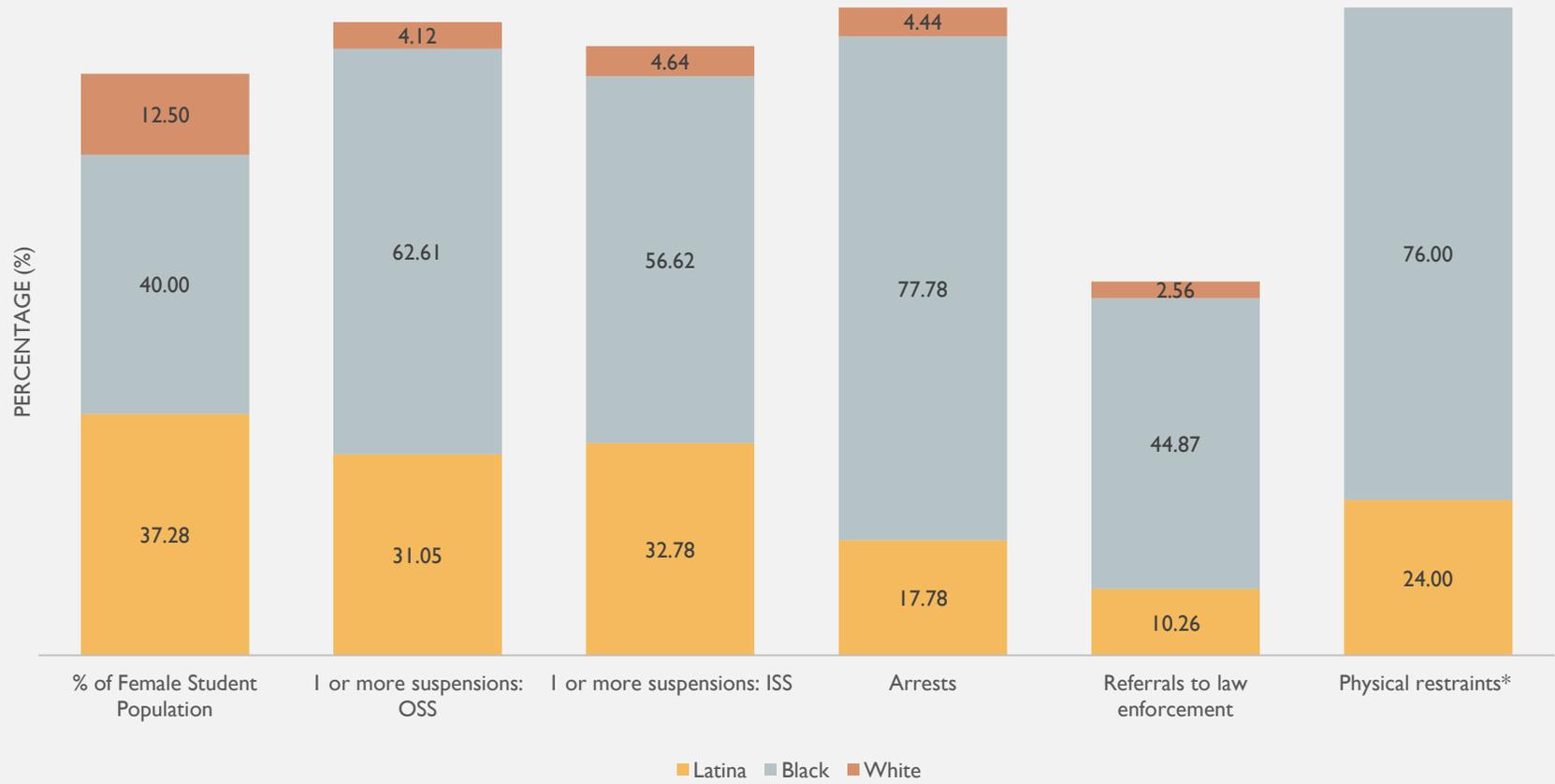
“If your school accepts racist practices, that is not meeting its mission.”

HAIR

“I am black, so my natural hair is big and curly, I wore it out once, and was told to go to the principal’s office to tie it down because it distracted other students. That was the last time I did that- I was really embarrassed, I wanted to shave my head but my mom wouldn’t let me.”



DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES FOR FEMALE STUDENTS IN BOSTON-AREA SCHOOLS



*Note: No White female students were physically restrained in Boston schools

Source: Inniss-Thompson, M.N. (September 2017). Summary of discipline data for girls in Northeastern public schools: An analysis from the 2013-14 U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights Data Collection. National Black Women’s Justice Institute.

SCHOOL BASED ARRESTS

- 40% of Boston-area female students were Latina;
- 37% of Boston-area female students were Black; and
- 12.5 % of Boston-area female students White

YET

**Black girls made up 78% of
school based arrest.**

“Have more
guidance
counselors and
less
cops at school.”

“Our resource officer,
he was a white guy,
he like, walks around,
he is always happy, he
fist bumps the
students. Like, he
makes us feel like,
welcome.”

“no cops at
school, I would
rather
community
policing.”

“My daughter witnessed another child being asked where do you live. And in our community children are taught at a certain age you don't tell anybody where you live because that's gang recruitment type of talk. But a teacher disciplined the child, she said you're being rude not telling us – not telling them where you live. The teacher didn't understand.”

“I had my hair straightened for school pictures, and then this white girl came up to me and she was like I want to pour water on your hair to see if you turn into a true nigger. I told my teacher, and they were like oh it's not that serious, and brushed it off. I was like ...I was the only black kid there, so I was like maybe something is wrong with me, or my hair, or how I look.”

“Sometimes we have diversity person – but they are always white”

DISPROPORTIONALITY DATA

In Boston-area schools:

- Black girls were over **5.5X** more likely than White girls to be arrested or referred to law enforcement by their schools; and
- Black girls were **5X** more likely than White girls to receive 1 or more out-of-school suspensions and;
- Latina girls were **2X** more likely than White girls to receive 1 or more out-of-school or in-school suspensions.

“We had so much to lose for standing up for your self, or calling out teachers and staff for what they are doing. Like if you talk back to an officer there are consequences, we have to think about that.”



“ To make a school safer, you need people that can connect with students- there are METCO kids that are of color, so we need something there that lets us know you care about us.”

“For a Black girl, once you get past quiet, you’re loud. But, if you are white, you can rise up. You can rise up.”

“My friend, he was transitioning, (male to female) and they got stopped in the hall, the cops told the teachers that they were on suspicion for having weed. but she didn’t. So they cut off their hallway privileges. **I didn’t know that it was a privilege to walk down your school hallway until then.**”

WAYS FORWARD

“There may be a reason at home why that student acted out, or a reason on the way to school- why that person is acting that way or whatever. I feel like a conversation always needs to happen first.”

“ Stopping using young people as tokens- you ask us, we have been saying the same things, you just don’t value our opinions.”

“In my classroom, the teachers does a chart, we all choose a rule we want, then we have to vote on what the classroom rules will be, but that is just one class.”

“I have teachers that are white that I like, like they talk to me, try and speak my language, and like pay attention, so I know they care.”