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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 2024-25 implementation.

- 632 students participated in SHAPE, up from 432 in 2023–24.
- 6% of participating students had more than one infraction, resulting in 672 total referrals.
- 91% of students enrolled in SHAPE were Black, compared to 70% in the district overall.
- 59% of SHAPE students were male, compared to 50.4% districtwide.
- 69% of SHAPE students were ages 14–17, and high school students made up the majority of participants.
- SHAPE participants had an average school attendance rate of 82%, compared to 92% districtwide.
- Students in SHAPE had a total of 40 ISS, 278 OSS, 51 expulsions, and 48 remands, with most behavioral incidents occurring among high school students.
- Hamilton, Wooddale, Melrose, Cordova, and Kingsbury High Schools generated the largest number of SHAPE participants.
- Craigmont, Wooddale, and Melrose High Schools had the highest SHAPE referral rates relative to school enrollment.
- 33% of referrals came from school administrators, followed closely by 32% from MPD officers.
- Referrals to SHAPE have increased by 164% since 2012–13, the program's first recorded year.
- Referrals increased by 52% from 2023–24 (n=443) to 2024–25 (n=672).
- Assault with No Serious Injury remained the top referral reason (47%), though down from 58% last year.
- Drug related referrals doubled from 8% to 17%, while referrals for students Under the Influence decreased from 8% to 4%.
- 77% of students were Warned and Counseled, making it the most common intervention.
- Approximately 80% of participants graduated from the SHAPE program by completing required sessions.
- Of all participants, 24 students were returned to Juvenile Court in 2024–25, while 160 received continued follow-up from Site Coordinators.
- Transports to Juvenile Court increased slightly from 21 to 25 cases in 2024–25, following an 87% decrease the previous year.
- Student pre-to-post survey scores improved by 19% to 59% on 9 of 11 skill areas
- 58 schools participated in SHAPE in 2024–25: 37 supported by MPD and 21 by SCSO.



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 is a collaborative effort between MSCS, 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 MSCS 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 provides 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.

Parent and Student Survey

Students who participated in the SHAPE program were provided with a pre- and post-survey in the second semester while parents were provided a post-survey measuring social emotional skills ([Appendix A](#)). Across the 11 social emotional skill areas measured, most students demonstrated substantial improvement following participation in the SHAPE program. Pre-to-post survey results show increases ranging from 19% to 59% on nine of the eleven items. The strongest gains were in students’ ability to complain without acting angry (+59%), resist group pressure (+53%), and act in an ethical manner (+57%). Two items, knowing what to do when angry (-4%) and solving problems in a good way (-3%), showed small decreases, suggesting potential areas for targeted support or refinement in future programming.

Overall, the survey data indicates that students experienced meaningful growth in key social emotional and behavioral skills, with most indicators showing moderate to significant improvement from pre- to post program.

Outcomes

Participation

A Disproportionate Percentage of SHAPE Students Were African American and Male

In 2024-25, 632 students participated in the SHAPE program which is a significant increase from the 2023-24 school in which 432 students participated. In total, 672 referrals were made, which indicates that of the 632 students who participated, 41 students (6%) had more than infraction. As shown in Figure 1, a disproportionate percentage of African American students were enrolled in SHAPE than in the district (91% vs. 70%). Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander and White students were underrepresented in the program compared to their enrollment in the district. Behavioral and Attendance Data for participants can be found in [Appendix B](#).



Figure 1.

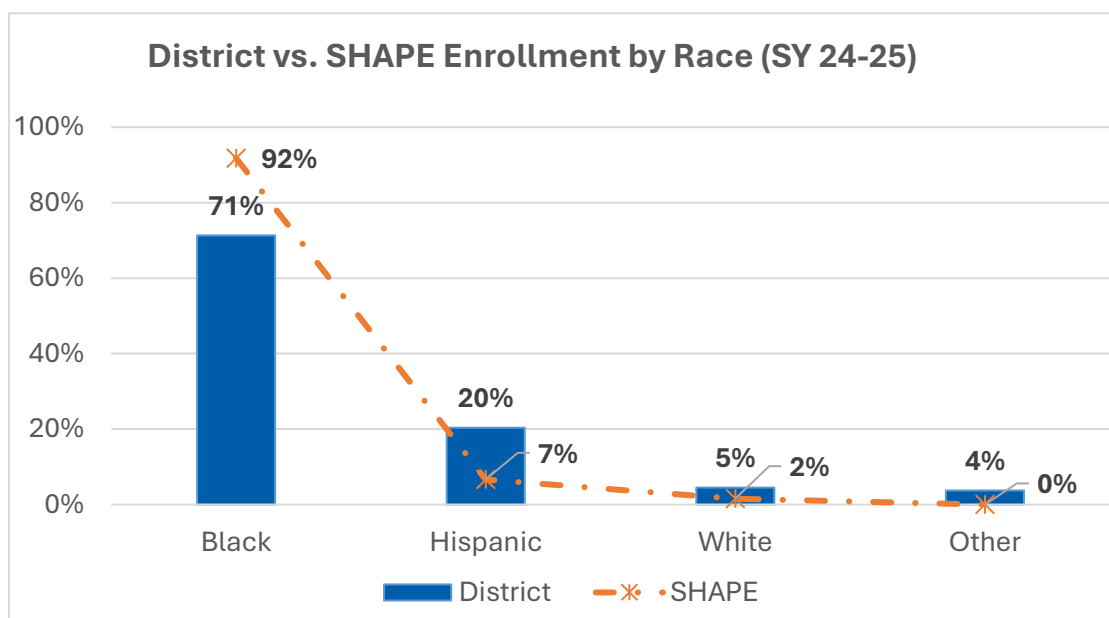
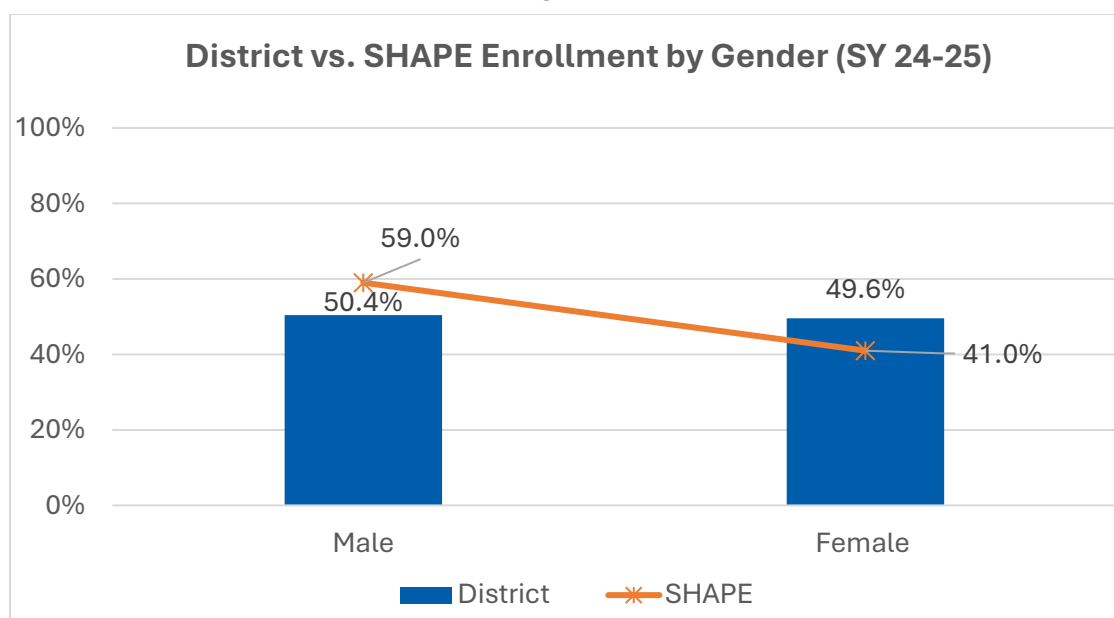


Figure 2 shows that a higher percentage of males than females were enrolled in SHAPE in 2024-25 (59% vs. 41%, respectively), which was disproportionate to the percentage of males and females enrolled in the district (50.4% vs. 49.6%, respectively).

Figure 2.

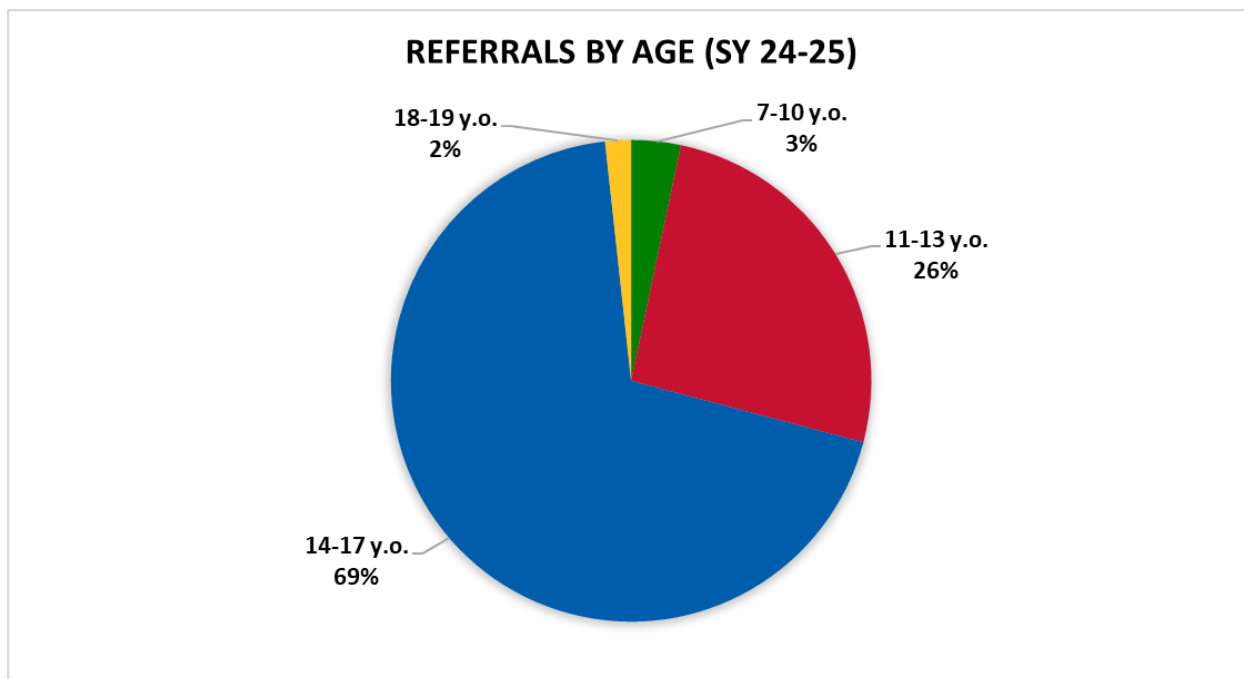




SHAPE Primarily Comprised High-School Aged Students

Figure 3 shows that most SHAPE participants were between 14 and 17 years old (69%), followed by 11 to 13 years old (26%).

Figure 3.

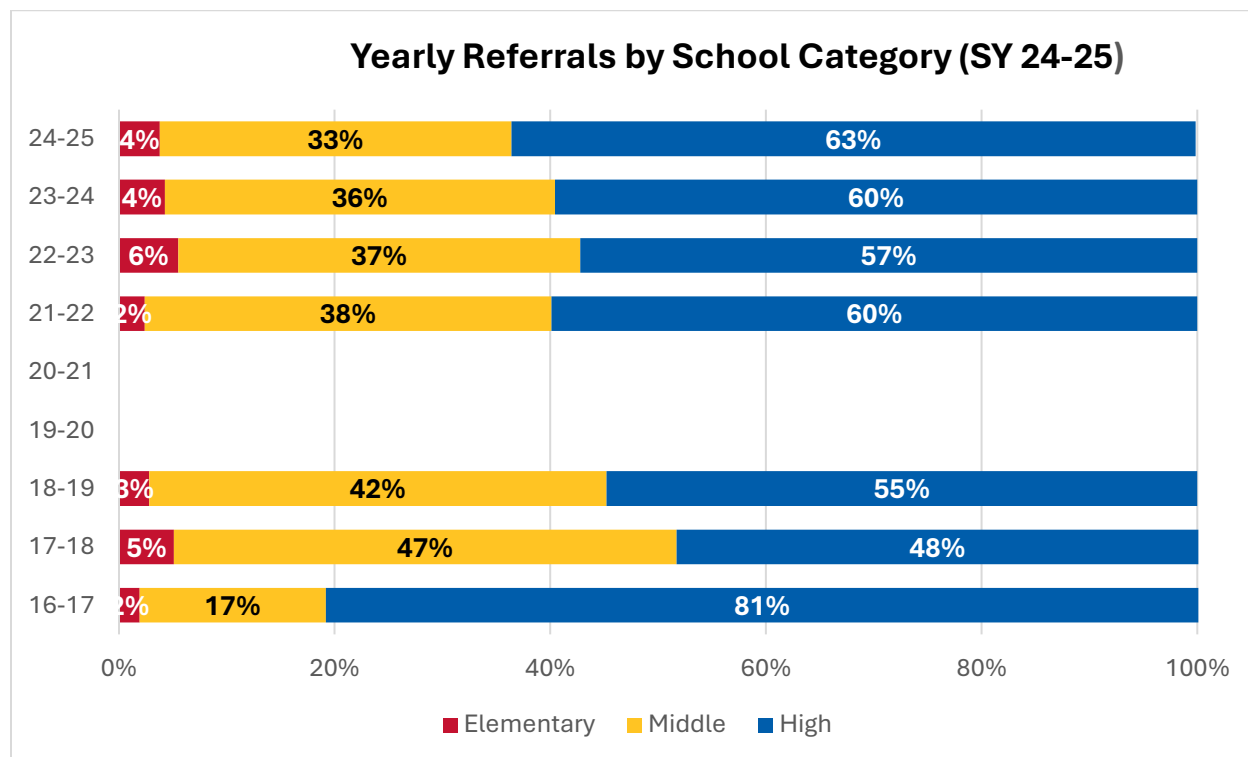


Across 2016–17 and 2017–18, most SHAPE participants were middle and high school students, with a notable increase in middle school referrals in 2017–18. In 2018–19, middle and high school students continued to make up most participants. However, as shown in Figure 4, middle school participation declined from the previous year, while high school participation increased slightly—though it remained below 2017–18 levels.

During 2019–20 and 2020–21, the COVID-19 pandemic shifted schools to fully remote learning, resulting in substantial gaps in participation data. In more recent years, high school students continue to represent most SHAPE participants. From 2022–23 to 2023–24, high school participation increased by 3%. In 2024–25, high school participation rose an additional 3%, while middle school participation continues to decrease (*see Figure 4*).



Figure 4.



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

Hamilton High School had the Most Students Participating in SHAPE and the Highest Percentage of its Student Population Participating in the Program.

Table 3 shows that of all the 2024-25 SHAPE participants, most attended Hamilton, Wooddale, Melrose, Cordova, and Kingsbury high school (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). A complete list of participating schools can be found in [Appendix C](#).



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

SHAPE SCHOOL	COUNT	% OF TOTAL REFERRALS
HAMILTON HIGH	49	7%
WOODDALE HIGH	46	7%
MELROSE HIGH	41	6%
CORDOVA HIGH	35	5%
KINGSBURY HIGH	25	4%

Table 2 shows that 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
HAMILTON HIGH	49	614	8%
WOODDALE HIGH	46	657	7%
MELROSE HIGH	41	602	7%

Diversion

As previously stated, the 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.

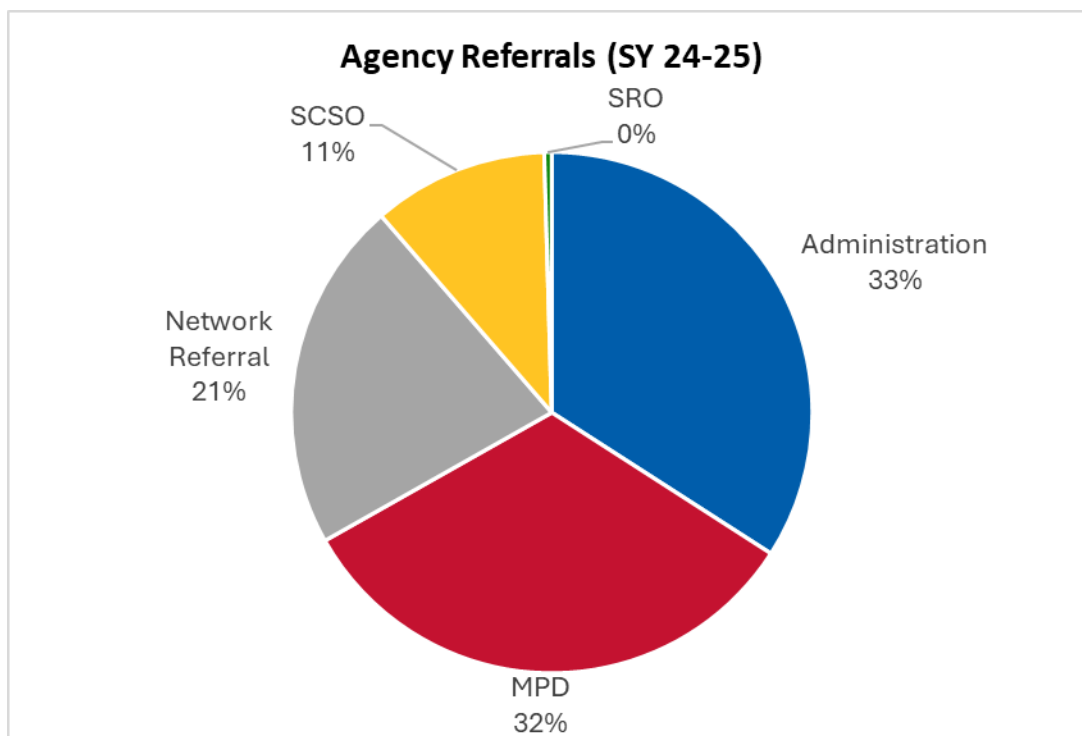
Law enforcement officers have substantial levels of discretion in the decision to transport. SHAPE has reinforced transporting students charged with minor offenses. Discretionary use of summonses in lieu of transport to detention is in agreement with juvenile statutes, according to Tennessee Code Annotated. 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 Slightly More Students to SHAPE

Figure 5 shows that of the known SHAPE referrals, 33% (n=222) came from school administrators. Additionally, several referrals came directly from the Memphis Police Department (MPD) Officers (32%, n=213), Network Referrals (21%; n=142), Shelby County Sheriff Officers (SCSO) (11%; n=71) and Shelby County Resource Officers (SRO) made very few referrals (n=3) in 2024-25



Figure 5.

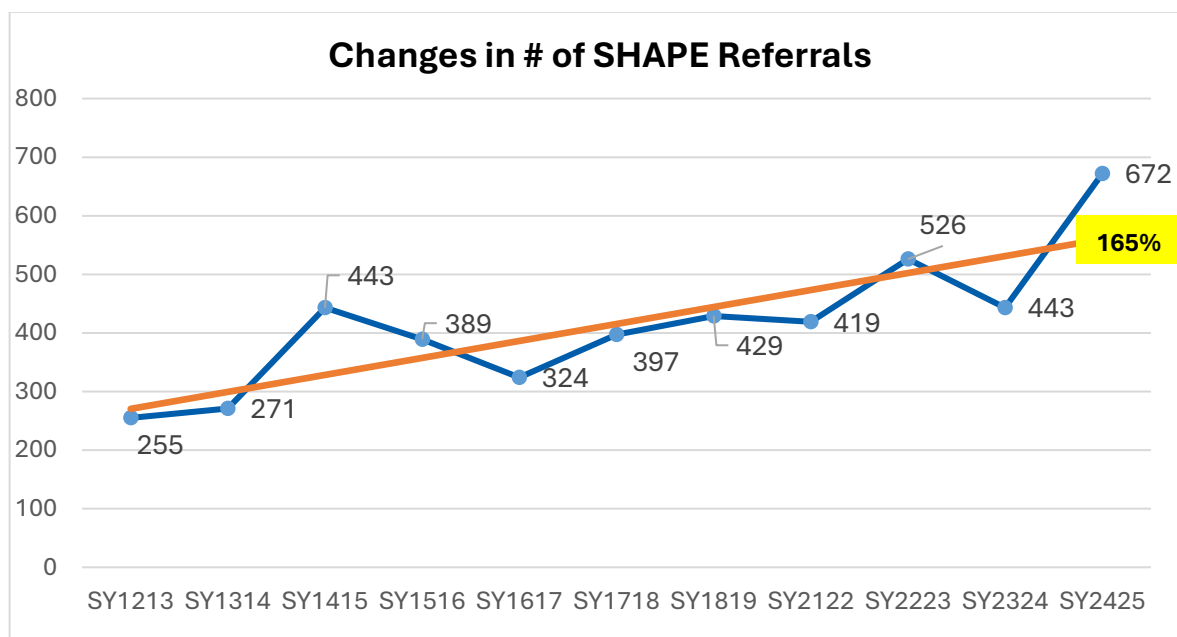


Referrals to SHAPE Have Increased Since Inception

Figure 6 illustrates that participation in SHAPE has increased dramatically over time, rising by approximately 164% from SY1213 to SY2425. This growth indicates that the program now serves more than twice as many students as it did in its first recorded year. Figure 7 shows the corresponding year-over-year percent changes in referrals to the program during the same period.



Figure 6.

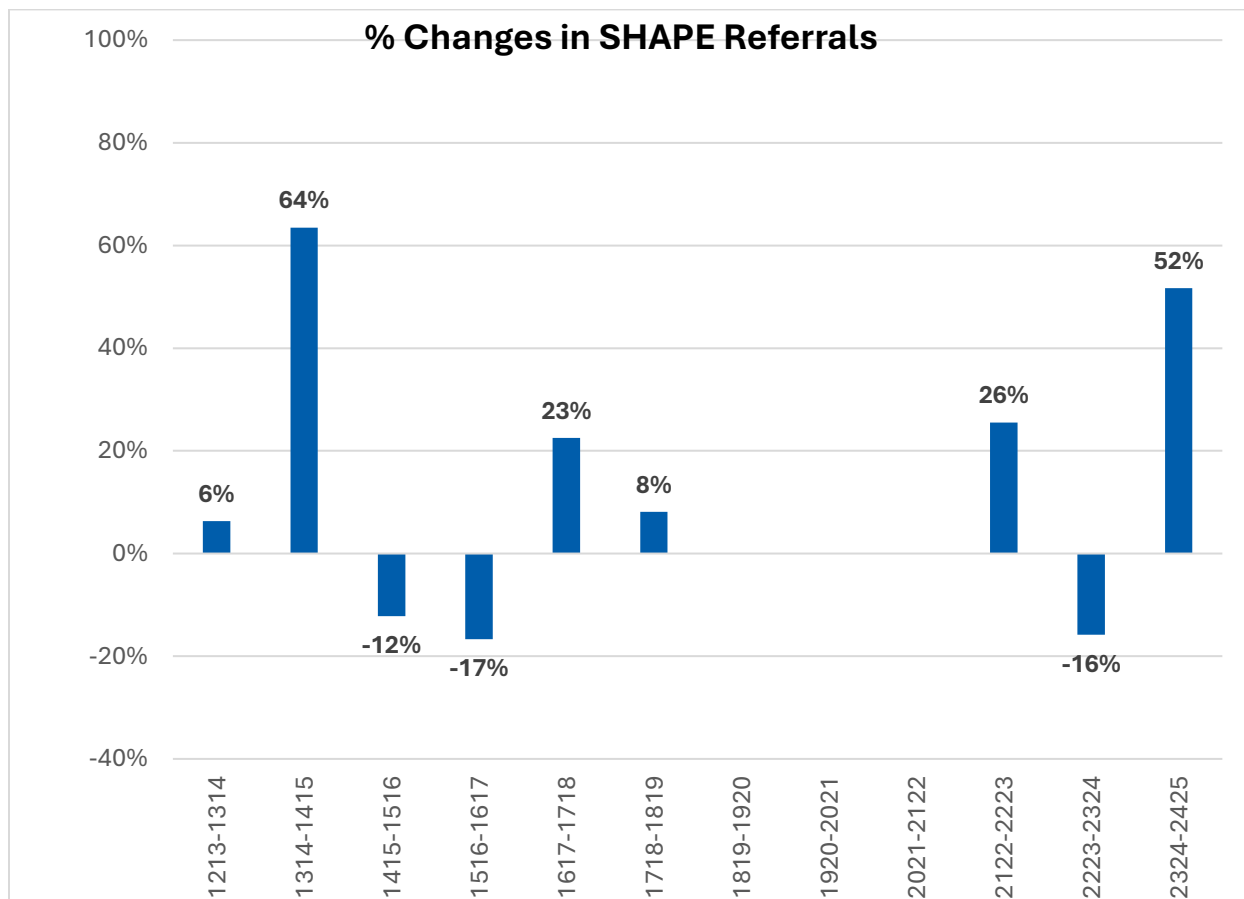


**** Missing Data:** Due to COVID disruption in learning for 19-20 and 20-21 school years. **

Figure 7 shows that SHAPE has experienced a 52% increase in referrals between the 2023-24 (n=443) and 2024-25 (n=672) academic year.



Figure 7.



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

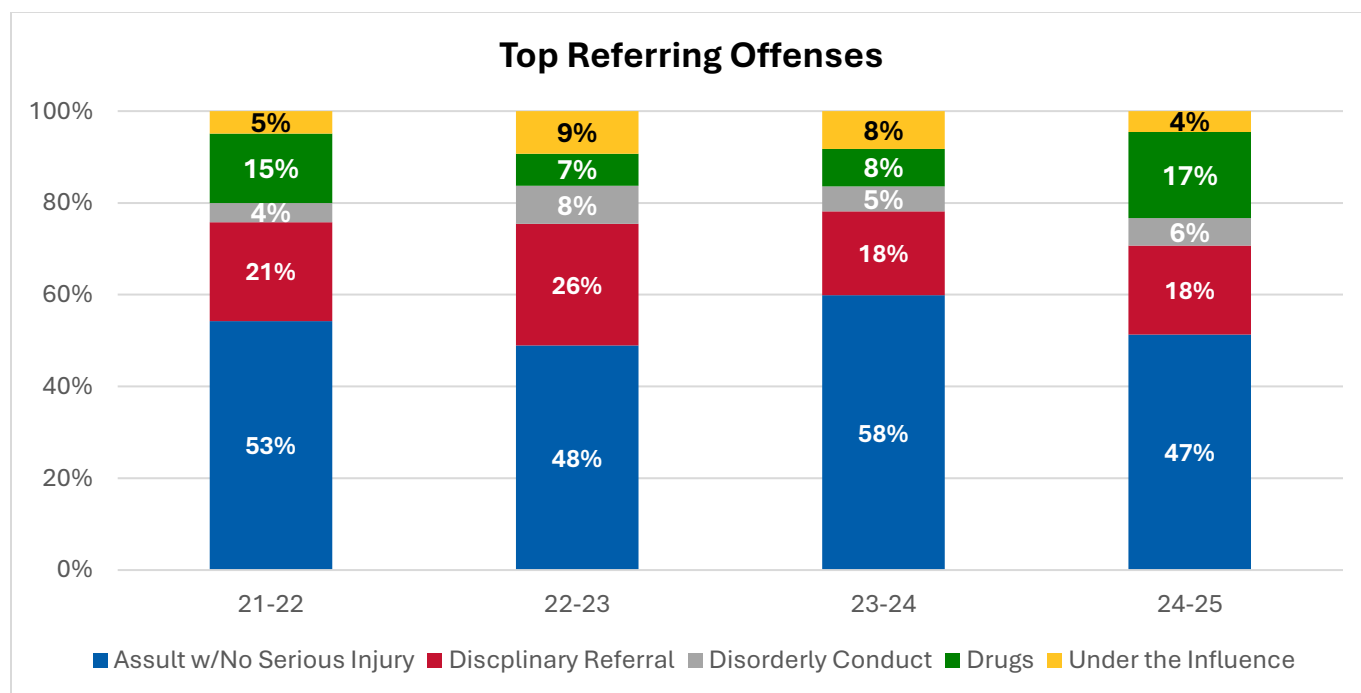


Assault and Disciplinary Issues Remained the Top SHAPE Referral Reasons, While Drug Related Offenses Increased

Figure 8 shows the top reasons students were referred to SHAPE in 2024–25, along with referral trends over the previous three years. In 2024–25, Assault with No Serious Injury remained the most common referral reason at 47%, though this represents a decrease from 58% in 2023–24. Disciplinary Referral accounted for 18% of referrals, consistent with the rate reported in the previous year.

Referrals for Disorderly Conduct increased slightly to 6% in 2024–25, up from 5% in 2023–24. The proportion of referrals for Drug offenses rose substantially to 17% in 2024–25, more than doubling the 8% reported the year prior. Meanwhile, referrals for students Under the Influence declined to 4%, down from 8% in 2023–24. Lastly, referrals categorized as Other increased to 9% in 2024–25, up from 3% in the previous year.

Figure 8.



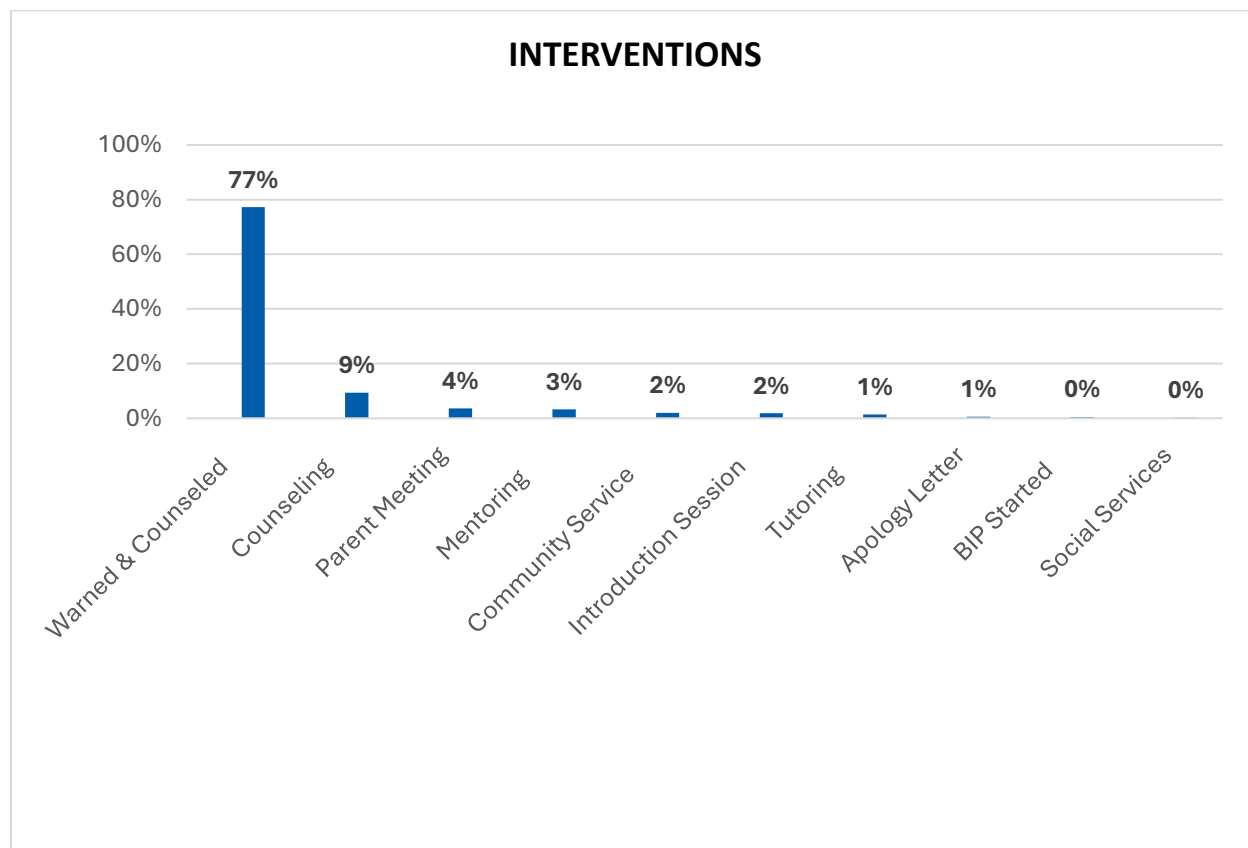
Interventions

Most SHAPE Participants Were Warned and Counseled as an Intervention

Figure 9 shows that students referred to SHAPE often received multiple supports, with some students participating in more than one intervention. The most common response was *Warned and Counseled*, delivered to 77% of referred students.



Figure 9.



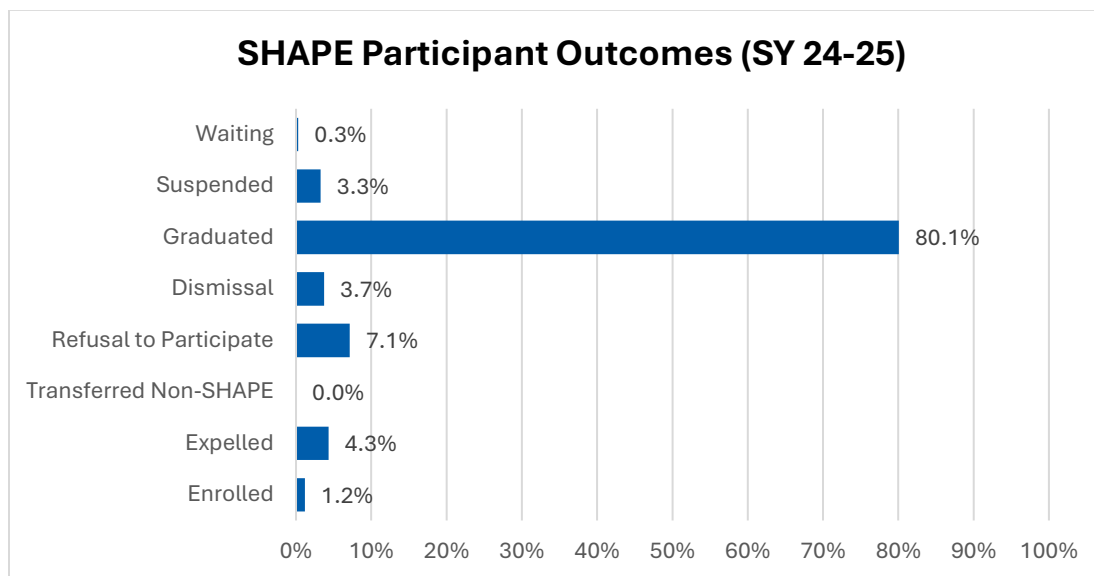
Participant Outcomes

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 80% 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 3.7% were discharged for non-compliance, and 7% refused to participate. See Figure 10 below for details.



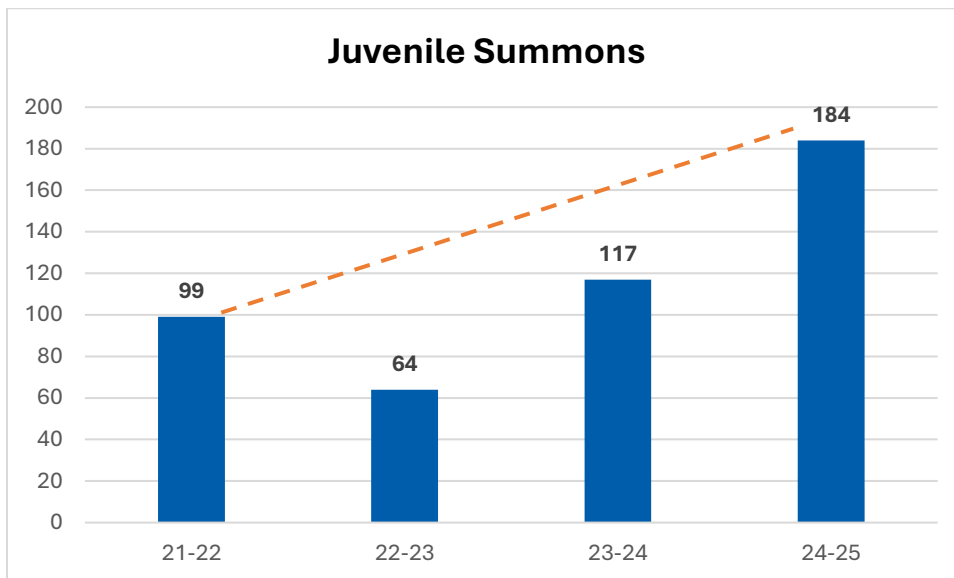
Figure 10.



Students who were discharged from SHAPE for noncompliance or who refused to participate were typically issued juvenile summons to appear in Juvenile Court for their referring charges (see Figure 11). In 2024–25, a total of 184 students were discharged to Site Coordinators, an increase from 117 in 2023–24. Of these, 24 were returned directly to Juvenile Court, while 160 were assigned to Site Coordinators for continued follow-up. This represents a substantial year over year increase in juvenile summons activity, following the already notable rise from 64 in 2022–23 to 117 in 2023–24. This represents a substantial year-up. This represents a substantial yearover-over-year increase in juvenile summons activity, following the already notable rise from 64 in 2022–23 to 117 in 2023–24.



Figure 11.



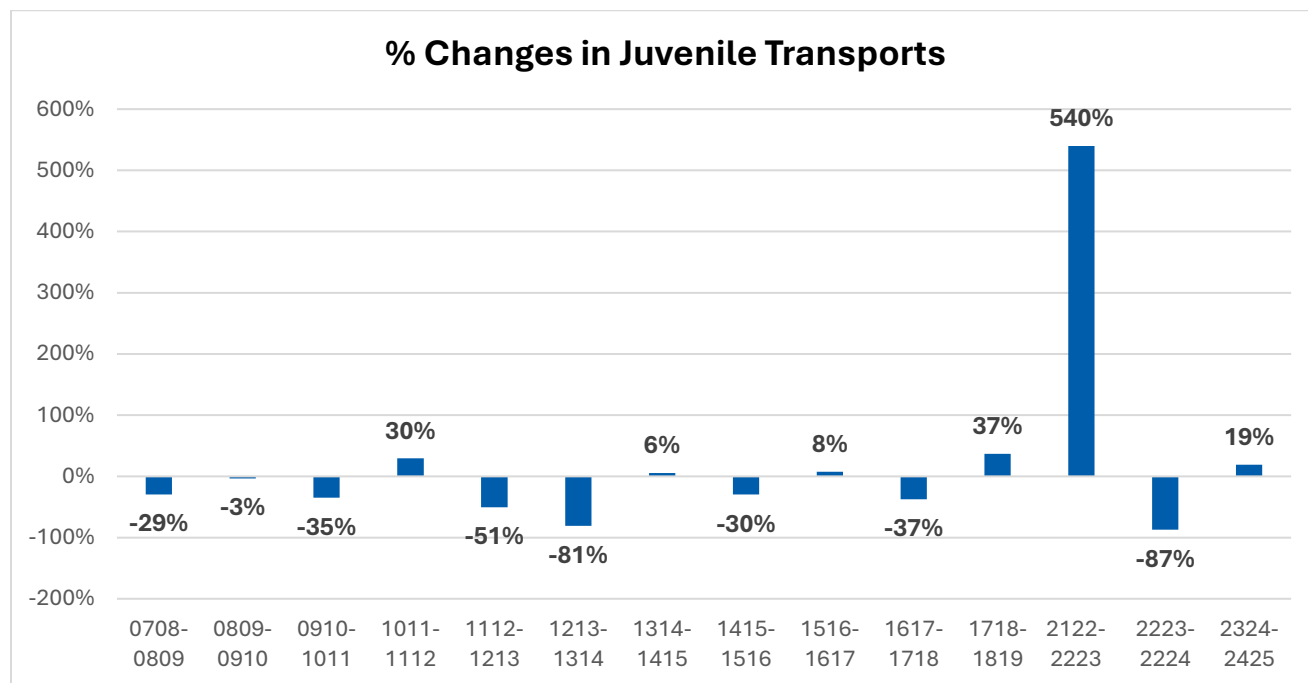
Transports to Juvenile Court Slightly Increased in the 24-25 Academic Year

The primary goal of SHAPE has been to reduce the number of minority youth transported to Juvenile Court and detained for minor offenses. Over the past several years, the frequency of Juvenile Court transports has shifted considerably. As shown in Figure 12, transports increased sharply by 540% from 2021–22 to 2022–23, followed by a substantial 87% decrease between 2022–23 and 2023–24, dropping from 160 to 21 transports. In the most recent year, 2024–25, transports increased again by 19%, rising from 21 to 25 cases.

Overall, SHAPE has been effective in decreasing transports. Gang reduction programs, truancy interventions, and other juvenile programming likely also contributed to the effectiveness of the SHAPE program. 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 12.



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

**APPENDIX A: Parent and Student Survey****Comparing Student Pre-Test Vs Student Post Test****Date Range: August 8, 2024, to June 30, 2025**

Survey Questions		Student Pre-Program	Student Post Program	Pre-to-Post Percent Improvement	Parent Response Post Program
Question 1	I am good at listening to others.	2.06	3.00	46%	3.59
Question 2	I know where and when to get good help.	2.59	3.09	19%	3.64
Question 3	I know what to do when I am angry.	3.21	3.09	-4%	3.64
Question 4	I know what to do when others are angry.	2.28	3.23	42%	3.59
Question 5	I know what to do when I am afraid.	2.52	3.04	21%	3.68
Question 6	I can solve problems in a good way.	3.19	3.08	-3%	3.55
Question 7	I can act with self-control.	2.28	3.04	33%	3.73
Question 8	I know how to stay out of trouble.	2.51	3.27	30%	3.64
Question 9	I can complain without acting angry.	2.00	3.18	59%	3.55
Question 10	I can resist group pressure.	2.14	3.27	53%	3.70
Question 11	I know how to act in an ethical manner.	2.14	3.36	57%	3.65



APPENDIX B: SHAPE Attendance and Behavioral Data

Tables 3 and 4 provide the average daily attendance rates and number of school behavioral incidents of SHAPE participants by grade bands. On average, SHAPE participants had an 82% school attendance rate. Additionally, high school students were more likely to experience a school behavioral referral (OSS, ISS, remand, expulsion, or progressive discipline).

Table 3. Average Daily Attendance Rate of SHAPE participants by Grade Band

	SHAPE Participants	District
Elementary	86%	92%
Middle	86%	93%
High	81%	90%
Total	82%	92%

Table 4. Number of Behavioral Incidents of SHAPE participants by Grade Band

	ISS	OSS	Expulsion	Remand
Elementary	1	3	1	1
Middle	13	98	12	10
High	26	177	38	37
Total:	40	278	51	48



APPENDIX C: Current SHAPE Schools

Managed by MPD (n=37)		
A. Maceo Walker Middle	Havenview Middle	Riverview Middle
American Way Middle	Hickory Ridge Middle	Sheffield High
Bellevue Middle	John P. Freeman K-8	Sherwood Middle
Booker T. Washington High	Kingsbury High	Snowden K-8
Central High	Kingsbury Middle	Southwind High
Chickasaw Middle	Kirby High	Treadwell Middle
Craigmont Middle	Manassas High	Trezevant High
Cummings K-8	Melrose High	Westwood High
Geeter Middle	Mitchell High	Whitehaven High
Georgian Hills Middle	Oakhaven Middle	White Station Middle
Grandview Heights K-8	Oakhaven High	White Station High
Hamilton Middle	Raleigh Egypt Middle	Wooddale High
Hamilton High	Raleigh Egypt High	
Managed by Shelby County Sheriff's Office (n=21)		
Barret's Chapel Middle	Douglass Middle	Kate Bond Middle
Bolton High	Douglass High	Lowrance K-8
Colonial Middle	East High	Mt. Pisgah Middle
Cordova Middle	E.E. Jeter Middle	Overton High
Cordova High	Germantown Middle	Ridgeway Middle
Craigmont High	Germantown High	Ridgeway High
Dexter Middle	Highland Oaks Middle	Woodstock Middle