



DATA OVERVIEW FOR NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL JUSTICE PARTNERSHIPS

A study of seven School Justice Partnerships (SJPs) was conducted in Summer 2020. This was the first study conducted of SJPs by the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC).¹ The study analyzed school discipline data for seven NC counties (Brunswick, Greene, Lenoir, Mecklenburg, New Hanover, Stanly, and Wayne) where SJPs had been established for at least two years prior to July 1, 2020.²

The study evaluated the impact of SJPs on school-based offenses in the seven counties using calendar year data from the Juvenile Justice Division of the [North Carolina Department of Public Safety](#) (NCDPS) and school discipline data from the [North Carolina Department of Public Instruction](#) (NCDPI). A school-based offense is one that occurs on school grounds, school property, at a school bus stop, at an off-campus school sanctioned event, or where the school is the victim. A summary of the findings is provided in the chart below.

Percent Change in School-Based Offenses	
Brunswick	79% decrease from 2016 to 2020
Greene	24% increase from 2017 to 2020
Lenoir	74% decrease from 2017 to 2020
Mecklenburg	39% decrease from 2016 to 2020
New Hanover	23.4% decrease from 2016 to 2020
Stanly	20.3% decrease from 2017 to 2020
Wayne	15.1% increase from 2017 to 2020

¹ The study was conducted by Neisha Williams, a Ph.D. candidate and graduate research assistant, as part of an internship through the State of North Carolina Internship Program.

² The oldest program included in the study was implemented in New Hanover County on November 2, 2015 and was the first SJP in NC. The newest program included in the study was implemented in Stanly County on July 1, 2018.



Overall, five of the seven counties experienced a decrease in the number of school-based offenses from the year prior to the implementation of the SJP to 2020, while two counties experienced a slight increase in school-based offenses in 2020. It is noteworthy that the NC Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Act, also known as “Raise the Age,” became effective December 1, 2019. This legislation increased the maximum age of juvenile court jurisdiction to require that 16- and 17-year-olds be prosecuted in juvenile court for most offenses.³ As a result, the school-based complaint data used in this study does not include 16- and 17-year-olds for time periods prior to December 1, 2019, but it does include this age group in the 2020 calendar year data. This change may have contributed to the increase in school-based complaints to juvenile court, as reported by NCDPS, for Greene and Wayne Counties.

To continue efforts to assess the impact of SJPs in North Carolina, the NCAOC Office of General Counsel and Court Programs Division intend to develop a plan for data collection and analysis.

³ Until December 1, 2019, all 16- and 17-year-olds in North Carolina were automatically prosecuted in adult criminal court regardless of the offense.

