

## The Criminal Justice System in Asheville and Buncombe County

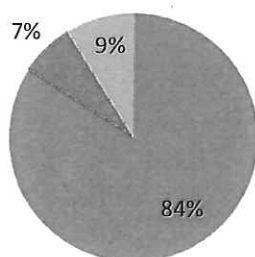
By Benjamin Schmid and James DiAngelo

### Death Row

Just like Death Row the last stage of the criminal justice system, Death Row is the last part of this paper's body of data. As Graph 1.2 shows, currently (April 2014), 22% of all men on North Carolina Death Row that named Buncombe County as their county of residence are black, as opposed to 7% of the population (Graph 1.1). That may seem like an unusually big gap, but in North Carolina, where more African-Americans than whites are on Death Row, the 22% in Buncombe County are just the reflection of a statewide trend. There is no graph for women, because no women from Buncombe County are currently on Death Row.

**Buncombe County Population  
(2012)**

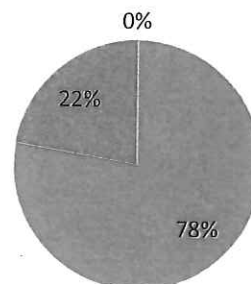
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Graph 1.1

**Number of Buncombe County  
Males on NC Death Row**

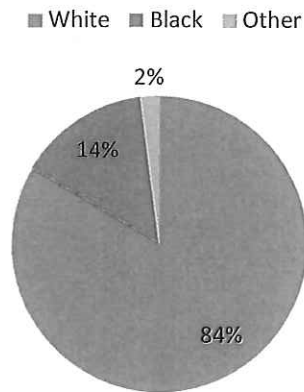
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Graph 1.2

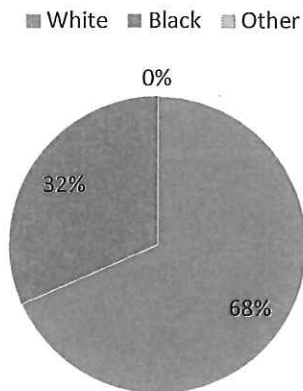
Graph 4.1 shows percentages similar to the ones depicted in Graph 3.1; the number of black women that were arrested on sight during a traffic stop is only slightly higher than the population of black women. On-view arrests of black men, on the other hand, are disproportionately higher (32%).

### APD: On-View Arrests Female



Graph 4.1

### APD: On-View Arrests Male



Graph 4.2

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## Traffic Stops

### Asheville Police Department Traffic Stops in 2013

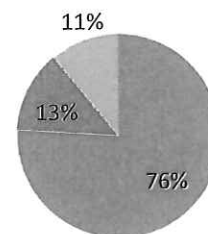
Before taking a look at the APD-data it is crucial to have a basic idea of the general demographics of Asheville. As Graph 1.1 shows, the vast majority of Ashevilleans are white, only 13% are black. Other races, including two or more races, make up 11% of the population<sup>1</sup>.

When contrasted with APD-data<sup>2</sup>, massive racial discrepancies become apparent. Graph 2.1 displays the racial makeup of all females stopped by APD. When comparing the two graphs it becomes apparent that African-American women are stopped by APD more often than the graph 1.1 would suggest; 13% of the population is black, yet 21% of females APD stopped are black.

African-American males are even more likely to be stopped by the police in Asheville: 39% of men stopped are black, as Graph 2.2 shows, making them about 3 times more likely to get into a traffic stop than their white counterparts.

#### Asheville Population (2010)

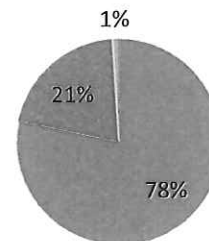
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Graph 1.1

#### APD: Traffic Stops Female

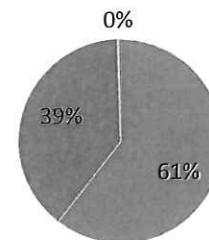
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Graph 2.1

#### APD: Traffic Stops Male

■ White ■ Black ■ Other



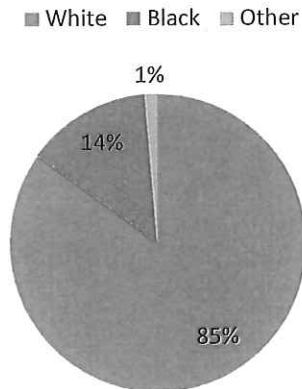
Graph 2.2

<sup>1</sup> Census 2010

<sup>2</sup> All data that does not concern population is from the year 2013, and has been released by the North Carolina Department of Justice

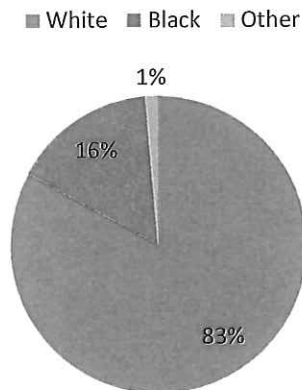
However, a traffic stop is only the first phase of an encounter with law enforcement. The second one is citation issued by the police. When it comes to female African-Americans, as Graph 3.1 shows, there is no notable difference between the population and the women that were issued citations by APD. With black men, however, we see a moderate increase of 3%.

### APD: Citation Issued Female



Graph 3.1

### APD: Citation Issued Male

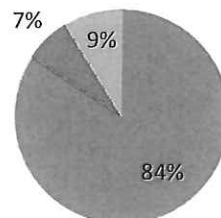


Graph 3.2

When looking at the data from the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office, the most notable thing is that the percentages for females are 7% for both traffic stops and citations issued, and 6% for on-view arrests. So there is no significant difference to the population of African-Americans in Buncombe County. Black males, however, are overrepresented in every category, especially in traffic stops.

### Buncombe County Population (2012)

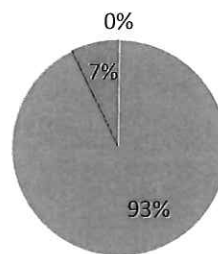
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Graph 1.2

### BCSO: Traffic Stops Female

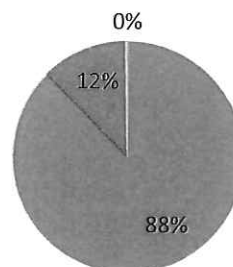
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Graph 2.3

### BCSO: Traffic Stops Male

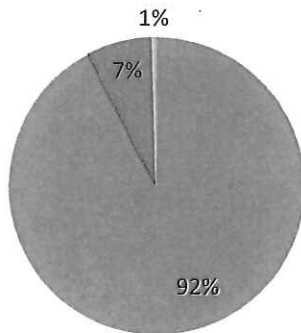
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Graph 2.4

### BCSO: Citation Issued Female

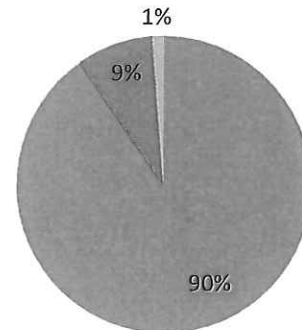
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Graph 3.3

### BCSO: Citation Issued Male

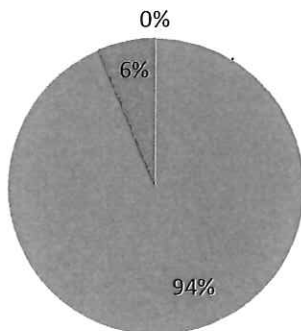
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Graph 3.4

### BCSO: On-View Arrest Female

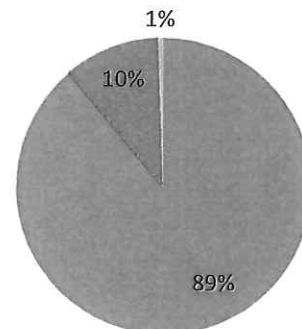
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Graph 4.3

### BCSO: On-View Arrest Male

■ Male ■ Black ■ Other



Graph 4.4

Generally speaking, African-American men make up an over proportionally large number, in APD's and BCSO's statistics. Both law enforcement agencies show the largest racial discrepancies in traffic stops of black men compared to the actual male African-American population in Asheville or Buncombe County. In fact, when it comes to that particular group both institutions show the same pattern of racial discrepancy (massive in regard of traffic stops and on-view arrests; mild in regard to citations issued), varying only in the extent black men are overrepresented in their data. This is not to play down the disproportionately high number of black women in APD's data. Ending on a good note, the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office's statistics show no racial discrepancies for women of color.

## Works Cited

North Carolina Department of Justice

< <http://trafficstops.ncdoj.gov/Default.aspx?pageid=2> >

United States Census Bureau

< <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/37021.html> >

## Works Cited

North Carolina Department of Public Safety

< <https://www.ncdps.gov/Index2.cfm?a=000003,002240,002327,002328> >

United States Census Bureau

< <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/37021.html> >



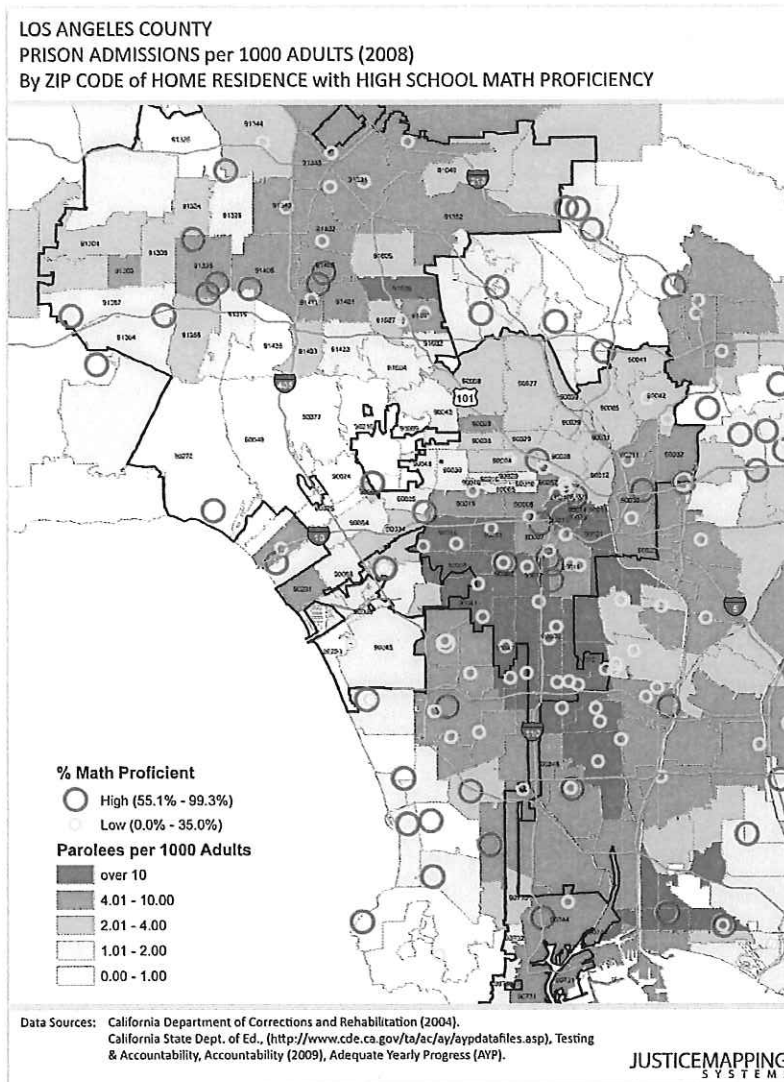
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## Solutions

### Education

Looking at the massive growth of the prison population in the US in the past 40 years,



conventional “tough-on-crime” and “lock-em-up” approaches need to be reevaluated<sup>3</sup>. Education may be the most effective tool to lower the number of people in the prison system; that counts for African-Americans, as well as all other groups. It has shown to be effective, both as a means to prevent crime, since lack of education increases the risk of incarceration<sup>4</sup>, as well as to rehabilitate prisoners<sup>5</sup>. Increasing funding for schooling of inmates can lower the recidivism rate, while investment in public schools lowers the number of people going into prison in the first place.

In fact, school failure correlates with high incarceration rates, which can be seen in Los Angeles, California, where 67% of low-performing schools are in

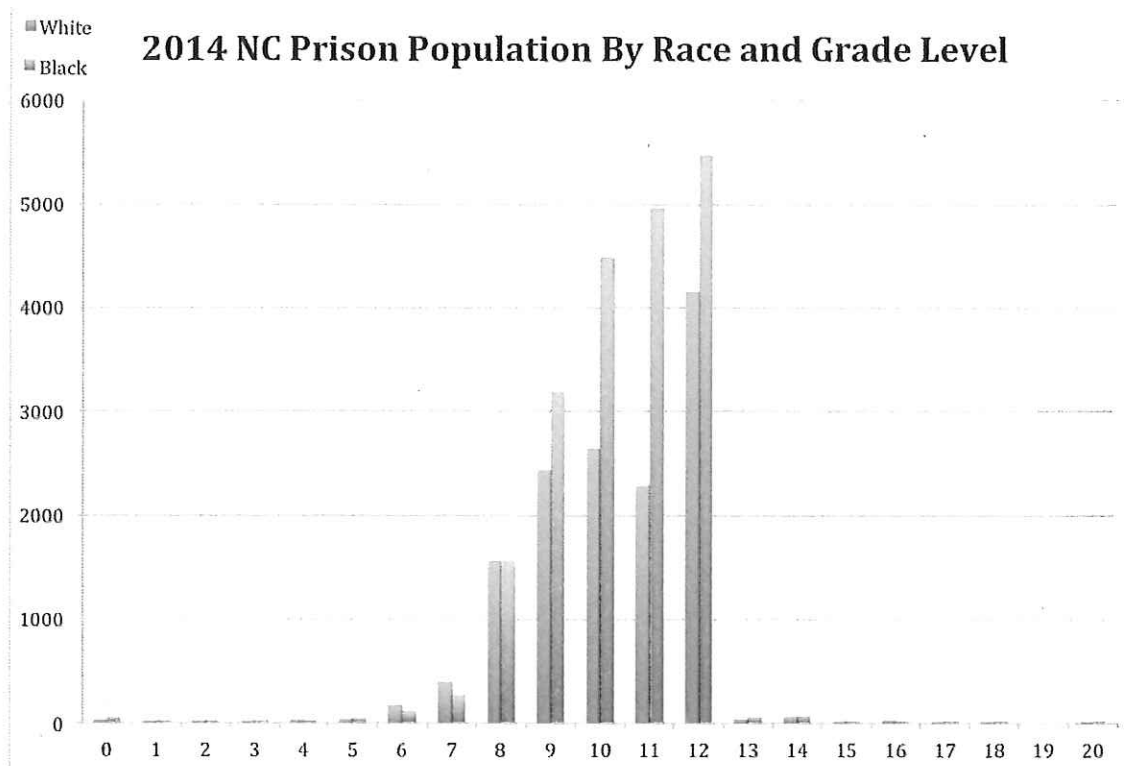
the high-incarceration areas, and 68% of the high-performing schools are in the low-incarceration areas<sup>6</sup>, as Graph 1.1 shows.

<sup>3</sup> Misplaced Priorities p. 9

<sup>4</sup> Misplaced Priorities p. 1

<sup>5</sup> Invest to Educate not Incarcerate p. 6

<sup>6</sup> Misplaced Priorities p. 22



Graph 1.2 displays the grade level of prison inmates. The vast majority of prisoners have not completed 12<sup>th</sup> grade, meaning they are high school dropouts. Contrasting that with the low number of inmates who have completed at least 13 years of school, in other words attended college for at least one year, shows how higher education correlates with not going to prison.

However, public policy in the past years has been going another direction: state funding for the prison system has been growing at a much larger rate than funding for education<sup>7</sup>. In fact, education's share of expenditure for state and local governments has been decreasing<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Misplaced Priorities p. 1

<sup>8</sup> Misplaced Priorities p. 13

## Works Cited

“Invest to Educate, not Incarcerate”

<[http://naacp.3cdn.net/a7d13b90509eca30f1\\_mlbrzfaq8.pdf](http://naacp.3cdn.net/a7d13b90509eca30f1_mlbrzfaq8.pdf)>

“Misplaced Priorities”

<[http://naacp.3cdn.net/ecea56adeef3d84a28\\_azsm639wz.pdf](http://naacp.3cdn.net/ecea56adeef3d84a28_azsm639wz.pdf)>

“North Carolina Department of Public Safety”

<<http://webapps6.doc.state.nc.us/apps/asqExt/ASQ>>