



## Health Factors Social and Economic

### 2010 Snapshot of Social and Economic Health Factors

| MATCH - Buncombe County   | Buncombe Value | NC Value | Target Value |   |
|---|----------------|----------|--------------|---|
| <b>Social &amp; Economic Factors NC Rank 12<sup>th</sup> healthiest</b> |                |          |              |   |
| Community Safety - Homicide Rate  | 5              | 7        | 4            | ↓ |
| College degree (4 year or higher), 2008                                 | 31%            | 26%      | 31%          | ↑ |
| Unemployment, 2009  | 8.6%           | 10.6%    | 5%           | ↓ |
| Children in poverty   | 24.0%          | 22.6%    | 15%          | ↓ |
| Income inequality, 2008   | 0.489          | 0.463    | 0.4          | ↓ |
| Inadequate social support   | 16%            | 20%      | 16%          | ↓ |
| Single-parent households  | 8%             | 7%       | 6%           | ↓ |

Sources URL: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/north-carolina/buncombe>

#### About the Target Value

The arrows help us know whether we should be higher or lower than the targeted value in order to improve health. For example, when looking at Adult Smoking, the Buncombe Value is higher than the Target Value. We need to decrease ↓ the percentage of adults who smoke in order to meet or exceed the Target Value.

#### About the Buncombe Value

The Buncombe Value is calculated using multiple years of data to stabilize the data and offer a good “snapshot” of a particular health behavior. Health behaviors that are highlighted in **Red** are above ↑ the Target Value.

### In this Section...

*Find data from American Community Survey (census data) and other resources about factors that impact health outcomes.*

#### · Income

Income Inequality

Poverty

Unemployment

#### · Other social factors

Community Safety, Bullying

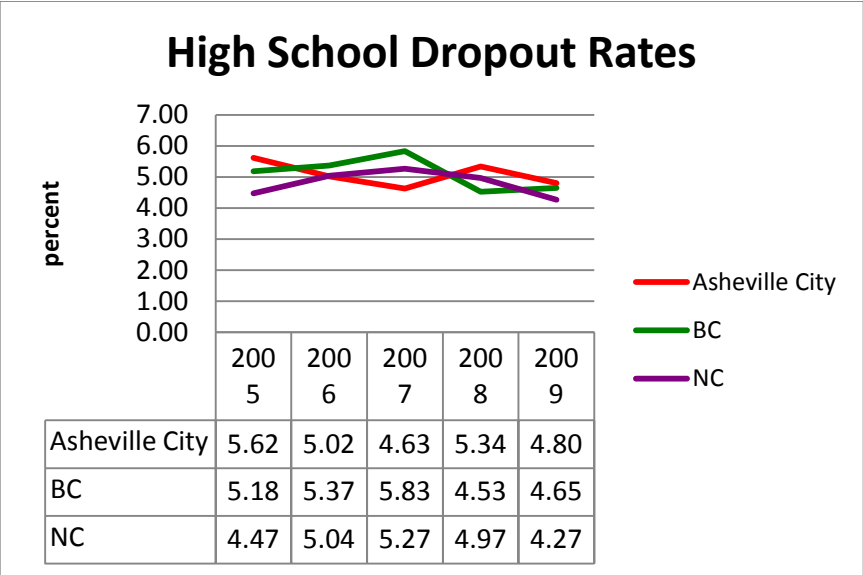
#### · Education

High school graduation

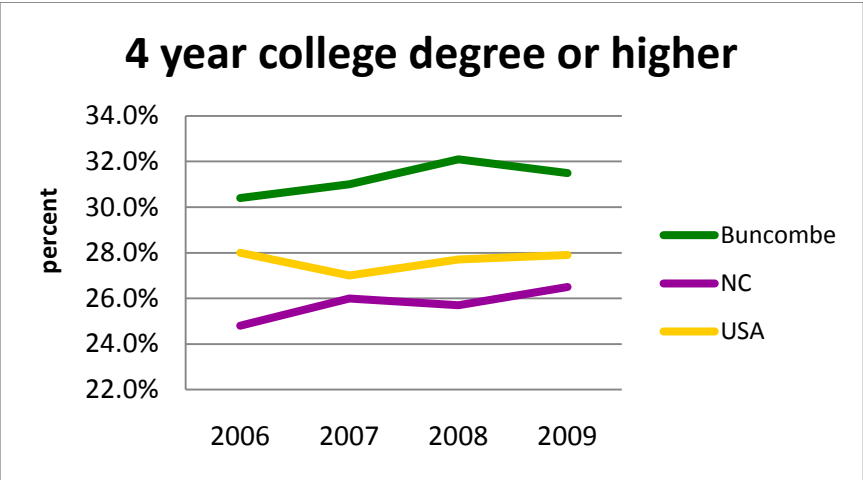
College attainment



|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Category</b><br>Social and Economic | <b>Educational Attainment</b>  |
| <b>Indicators</b>                      | % of students who started 9 <sup>th</sup> grade but did not finish 12 <sup>th</sup> grade; % of residents who have completed a 4 year college degree.  |
| <b>Why is this important?</b>          | A positive relationship exists between higher levels of education and better health. Higher educational levels often result in more opportunities for higher-paid employment and for jobs that offer health insurance. When economic times get tough, is it the workers with lowest levels of education who generally have the most difficulty securing and keeping employment. The financial security that often comes with higher education can expand the resources needed to make healthy choices. |



NOTE : % of students who started 9<sup>th</sup> grade but did not finish 12<sup>th</sup> grade  
 Source: NC Dept of Public Instruction



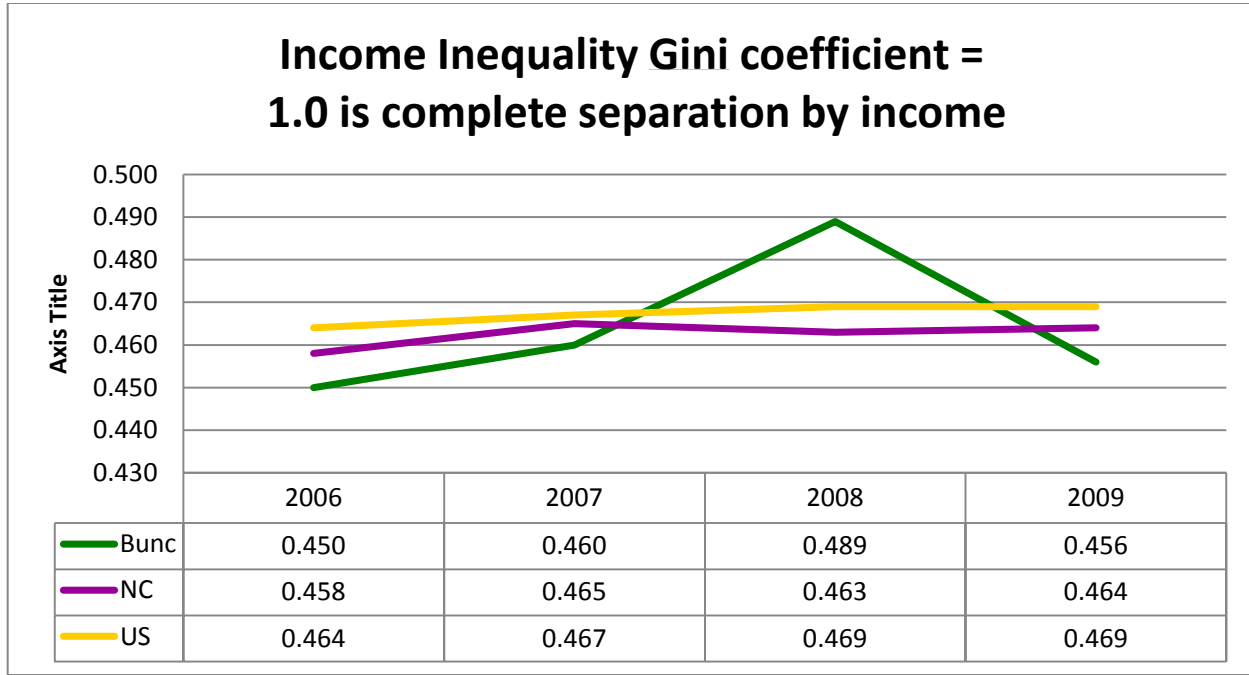
Source: American Community Survey

High school dropout rates have declined slightly in both the Buncombe County and Asheville City school districts during the last five years. Both of the local dropout rates, however, are slightly higher than the state average high school dropout rate.

Buncombe County residents are much more likely to have completed four-year college degrees than either North Carolina or US residents. However, a significant racial and ethnic disparity exists. Over 33% of White residents in Buncombe County have 4 year degrees compared to 12.7% of African American residents and 8.5% of Hispanic residents (US Census Bureau, 2009).



|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Category</b><br>Social and Economic | <b>Income Equality</b>  |
| <b>Indicators</b>                      | Gini coefficient  |
| <b>Why is this important?</b>          | Those communities with lower inequalities in income distribution tend to have healthier residents. In communities where income inequality is rising, the gap between the wealth of the rich and the poor is getting bigger. |



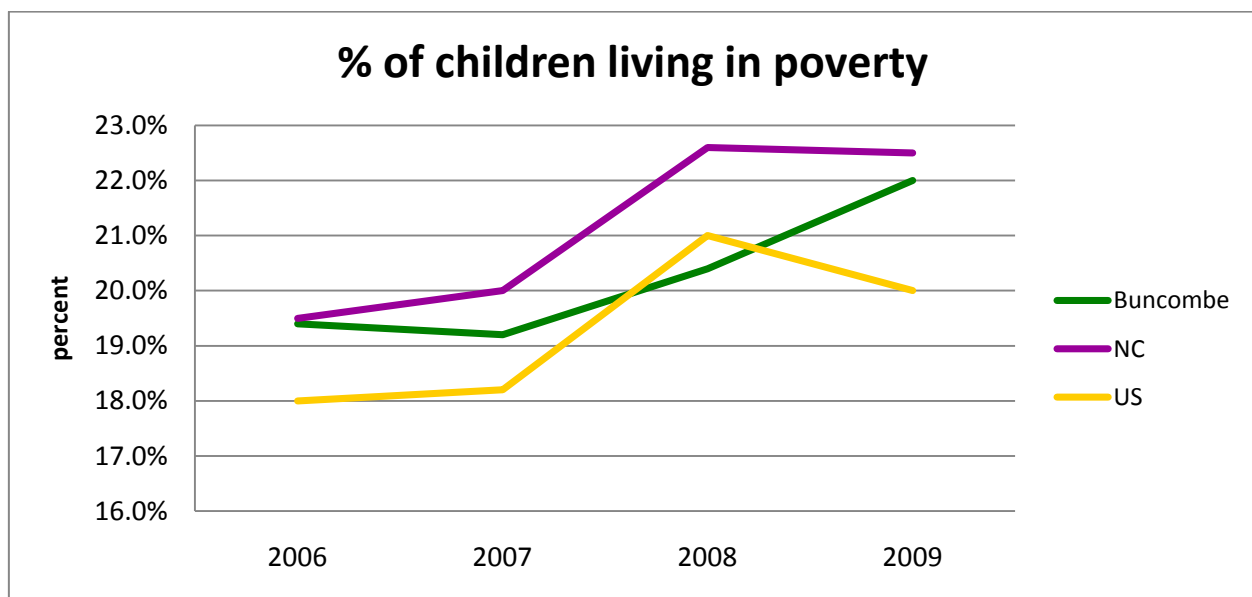
Source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

The Gini Coefficient is the result of a mathematical formula that measures the distribution of income in a county, state, or country. A result of “0” would mean that every individual in the community had the exact same income or wealth (a complete distribution) while a result of 1 would mean that all of the income or wealth of the entire community would be held by one person (complete separation). If the coefficient rises, that means that wealth is more concentrated = the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer.

The Gini Coefficient for Buncombe County fell dramatically in 2009 to a level lower than the state or national average. However, the Gini Coefficient has been on the rise throughout the nation for more than forty years – with the sharpest increases seen since 2000. The United States Gini coefficient has risen from the .3 range (1960 to approximately 2000) into the mid .4 range since 2000 (US Census Bureau).



|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Category</b><br>Social and Economic | <b>Poverty</b>  |
| <b>Indicators</b>                      | % of children living in poverty<br>% of all residents living in poverty   |
| <b>Why is this important?</b>          | The poverty level is a reflection of a community's ability to meet the basic needs necessary to maintain health. Income and financial resources have long been understood as important to health, so that individuals can obtain health insurance, pay for medical care, afford healthy food, safe housing, and access to other basic goods, at least until a certain income threshold is achieved. If poverty were considered a cause of death in the U.S., it could be ranked among the top 10 causes of death. [MATCH County Rankings] |



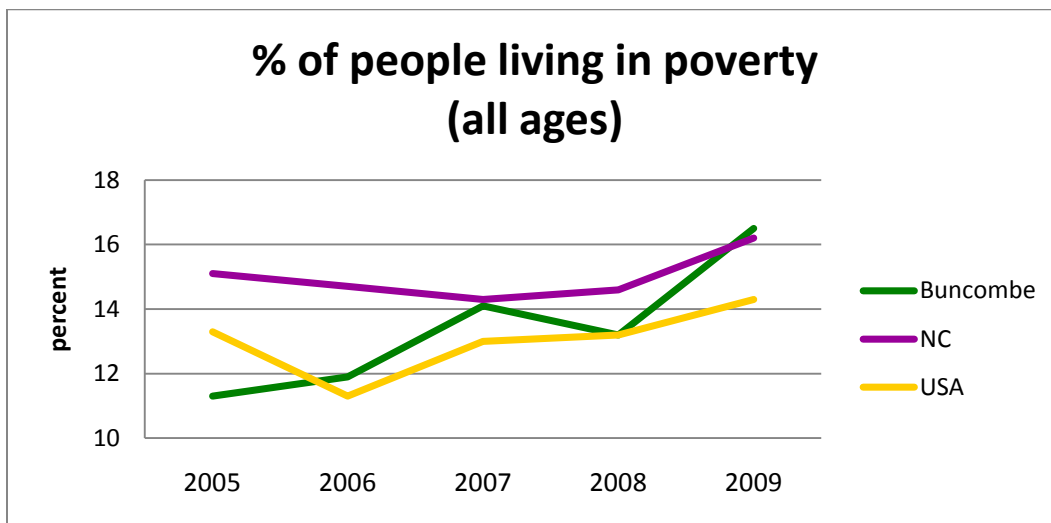
Source: American Community Survey

More than 1 out of every 5 Buncombe County children lives in poverty. The percent of children in poverty has been slowly rising for the past three years. Children who live in poverty often lack the basic necessities such as adequate food; stable, safe homes; or health care. Federal poverty level for 2010 is set at \$22,050 a year for a family of four.

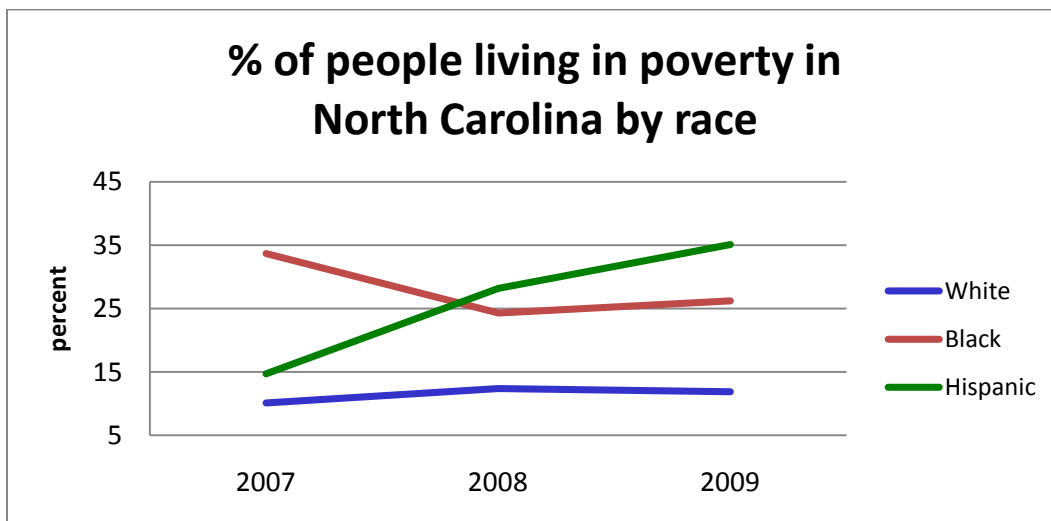
The federal poverty guidelines were originally developed in the early 1960s. The guideline was set as the cost of the US Department of Agriculture's economy food plan for three or more people and multiplied by three. The figures are adjusted each year to account for inflation.



## Poverty



Source: American Community Survey



Source: American Community Survey

The percent of Buncombe County residents (all ages) living in poverty has risen significantly from 11% in 2005 to 16.5% in 2009. In particular, there was sharp increase from 13% in 2008 to 16.5% in 2009.

A significant disparity by race and ethnicity exists in poverty among North Carolina residents. While this data is not available from the US Census Bureau specifically for Buncombe County, the North Carolina numbers are an indication that a significant racial wealth divide exists in our state. In 2009, almost 1 in 8 white NC residents lived in poverty. Among African Americans, the number was over 1 in 4 and among Hispanics, the number was nearly 1 in 3.



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|--|---|
| <b>Category</b><br>Social and Economic | <b>Children in regulated childcare</b>  |
| <b>Indicators</b>                      | Number of children in Buncombe County, number in regulated child care by quality  |
| <b>Why is this important?</b>          | <p>Families and communities benefit when children attend regulated childcare during their preschool years.</p> <p>For Families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps parents to work and attend school</li> <li>• Provides a safe setting for children</li> <li>• Having a good early childhood education experience helps children to be better prepared for school and contributes to being successful in language, math and social skills in school.</li> </ul> <p>For the Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cost of child care subsidy services is offset by the working families' ability to pay taxes.</li> <li>• Parents with stable child care arrangements may be more focused on the job.</li> <li>• Receiving child care subsidy services offers children a chance to receive an early childhood education. This can lead to increased success in school and less costs to the community and state in terms of remedial services</li> </ul> <p>[NC Division of Child Development-DHHS]</p> |

### Children in childcare and childcare subsidies, 2009

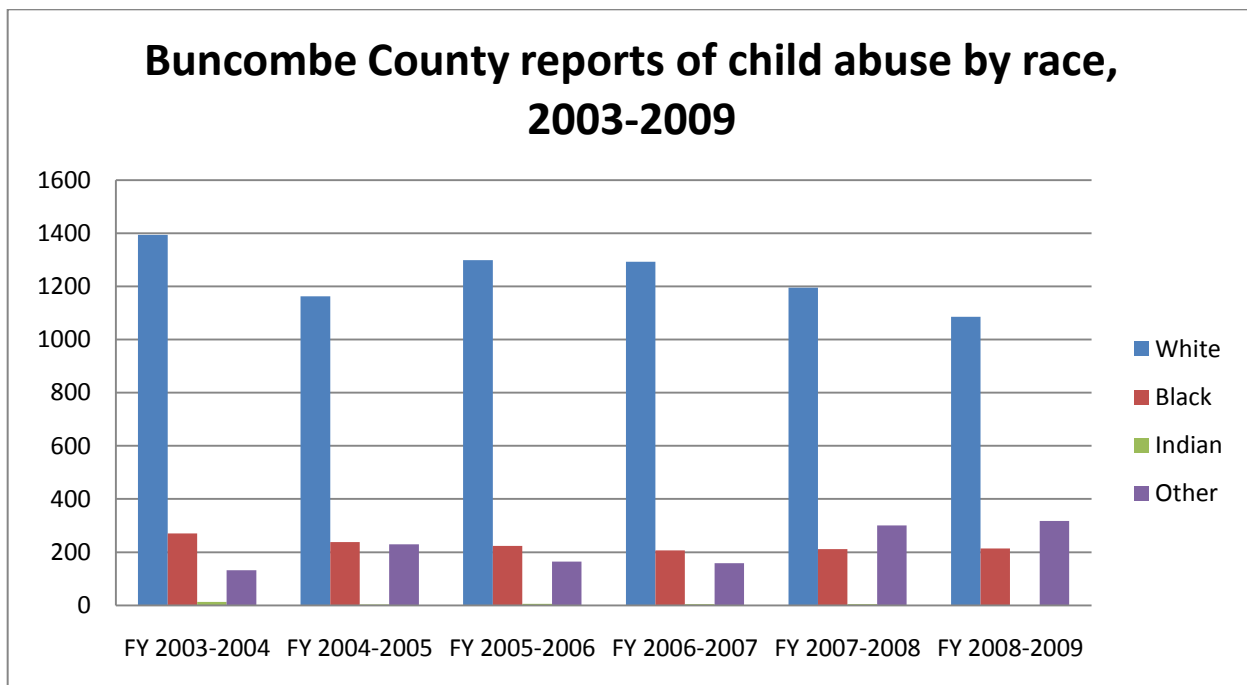
|  | Number       | Percent   |
|--|--------------|---|
| Number of BC children age 0 to 5 <b>enrolled in regulated childcare</b>      | <b>4,280</b> | <b>31%</b> of all Buncombe County children 0-5      |
| Of 0 to 5 children in regulated care, <b>those in 4 or 5 star care</b>       | <b>2,108</b> | <b>54.6 %</b> of all 0-5 children in regulated care |
| Of 0 to 5 year olds in regulated care, <b>children on child care subsidy</b> | <b>1,346</b> | <b>32.4%</b> of all 0-5 children in regulated care  |

Source: Children's First / Communities in Schools

Approximately 1 out of every 6 children in regulated childcare in Buncombe County is receiving a child care subsidy. Without this subsidy, parents or caregivers would likely not be able to return to work or school.



|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Category</b><br>Social and Economic | <b>Community Safety</b>   |
| <b>Indicators</b>                      | Child abuse reports, crime reports  |
| <b>Why is this important?</b>          | The health impacts of community safety are far-reaching, from the obvious impact of violence on the victim to the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and psychological distress felt by those who are routinely exposed to violence. Community safety impacts various other health factors and outcomes as well, including birth weight, diet and exercise, and family and social support. [MATCH County Rankings] |



Source: North Carolina Child Welfare Division

There has been a 10% reduction in reports of child abuse in Buncombe County over the past six years from 1,809 total reports in 2003-2004 to 1,619 in 2008-2009. This reduction in total number of child abuse reports came even though the percent of Buncombe County residents under age 18 rose more than 3% between 2000 and 2009 (US Census Bureau).





## Community Safety

| Crime Data for Buncombe County |       |        |      |         |         |          |         |          |
|--------------------------------|-------|--------|------|---------|---------|----------|---------|----------|
| Year                           | Total | Murder | Rape | Robbery | Assault | Burglary | Larceny | MV Theft |
| 2004                           | 8,967 | 7      | 52   | 296     | 307     | 2,299    | 5,181   | 825      |
| 2005                           | 8,893 | 7      | 33   | 262     | 315     | 2,082    | 5,278   | 916      |
| 2006                           | 8,027 | 5      | 68   | 267     | 399     | 1,997    | 4,537   | 754      |
| 2007                           | 7,993 | 16     | 48   | 267     | 445     | 2,070    | 4,489   | 658      |
| 2008                           | 7,944 | 7      | 59   | 308     | 449     | 1,890    | 4,576   | 655      |
| 2009                           | 6,842 | 7      | 46   | 216     | 339     | 1,792    | 3,962   | 480      |

Source: Unified Crime Report, NC State Bureau of Investigation

**Buncombe County has experienced a 30% reduction in reported violent and serious crime over the last six years.** The largest drops were in burglaries, larcenies, and motor vehicle thefts. Assaults dropped significantly in 2009 compared to 2008 and 2007. Keep in mind that rapes are notoriously under-reported.

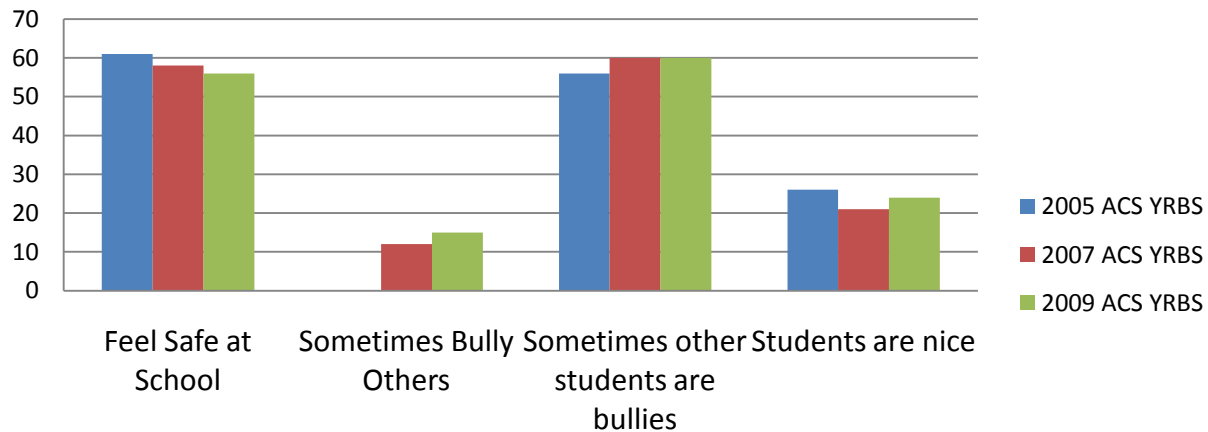
The Unified Crime Report includes data shared by entities including both the Buncombe County Sherriff and the Asheville City Police Department.





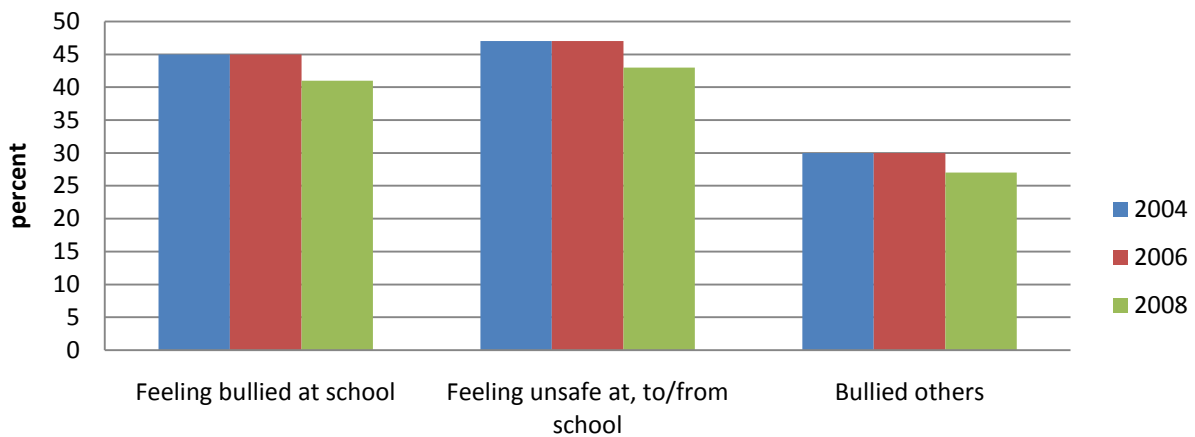
# Community Safety

## Bullying reported by 3 – 5 grades, Asheville City Schools



Source: Asheville City Schools, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2009

## Bullying reported by 6 - 8 graders, Buncombe County Schools



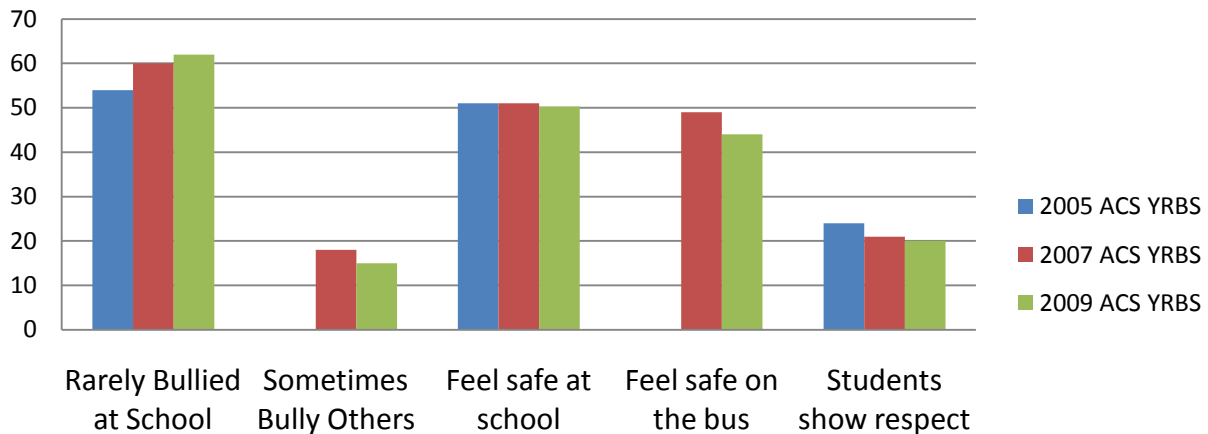
Source: Buncombe County Schools, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2009

Reports of bullying in both the Asheville City schools and the Buncombe County schools are wide spread. In Asheville City elementary schools, for example, nearly 45% of 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders responded that they do not feel safe at school. Buncombe County schools saw a slight improvement in the number of students in middle school who reported that they feel bullied (drop from 45% to 40%).



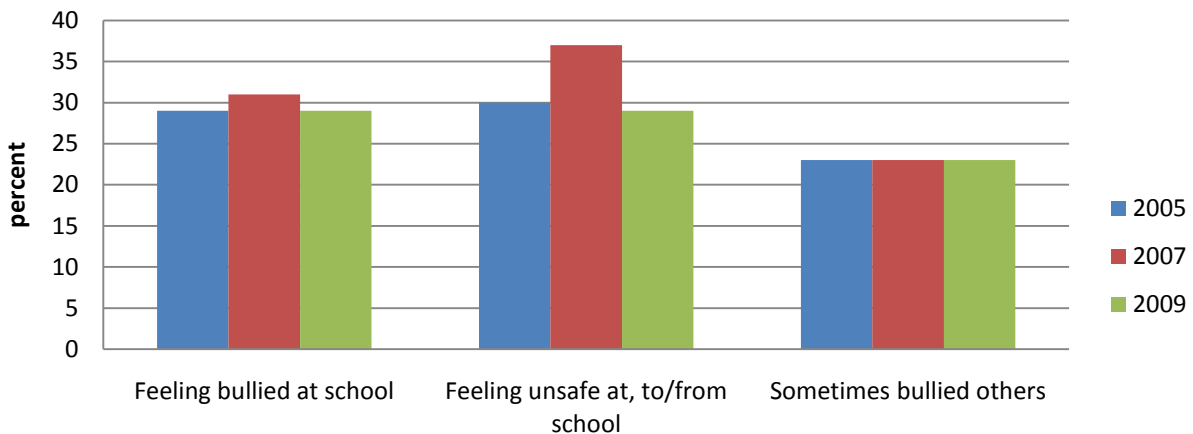
# Community Safety

## Bullying among 6 – 12 graders, Asheville City Schools



Source: Asheville City Schools, Youth risk Behavior Survey, 2009

## Bullying reported by 9 - 12 graders, Buncombe County Schools



Source: Buncombe County Schools, Youth Risk Behavior Survey Report

Only 50% of Asheville City schools students, in 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades, report feeling safe at school. In Buncombe County schools, there is a significant drop in those who feel bullied during middle school (40%) compared to those who feel bullied in high school (less than 30%.) In the County schools, more than 1 in 4 middle and high schools students surveyed report that they sometimes bully others. In the City schools, that number was slightly higher than 15%.



## Summary of Findings

### What does the data tell us?

Secondary data regarding social and economic factors highlights:

- Buncombe County children are sometimes facing challenging situations. The percentage of children in poverty has been steadily increasing in our community over the last few years and is now above the national average, though is still lower than for NC state-wide. About half of students surveyed in upper elementary grades and in middle schools report that they do not feel safe.
- The income gap grew significantly between 2007 and 2008, but then corrected sharply in 2009. We will continue to monitor this metric in future years to determine whether or the gap continues to widen.
- **Community safety has greatly improved in recent years.** Reports of child abuse are down 10% in the past six years and report of violent or serious crime is down 30% in the same time period. Living in neighborhoods where people feel safe is a key component of their ability to make healthy choices such as going out for walks or taking their children out to play in local playgrounds.
- We do continue to see a marked racial and ethnic separation of educational attainment, employment, and poverty. Buncombe County's African American and Hispanic residents are less likely to earn a 4 year college degree, remain employed, and to make it out of poverty.

### What do people care about?

- Health opinion survey results clearly believe that all residents should have opportunity to make healthy choices.

Do social and economic factors really matter to health? YES.

- In a recent analysis, those North Carolina counties with good scores on the Social and Economic measures in the MATCH County Health Rankings report were very likely to be counties that had low rates of death and disease. The correlation was very strong: much stronger than health behaviors and four times as strong as clinical care measures.

### Where can I find more data about social and economic conditions that impact health?

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org)

2008 Documentary film entitled *"Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?"*

