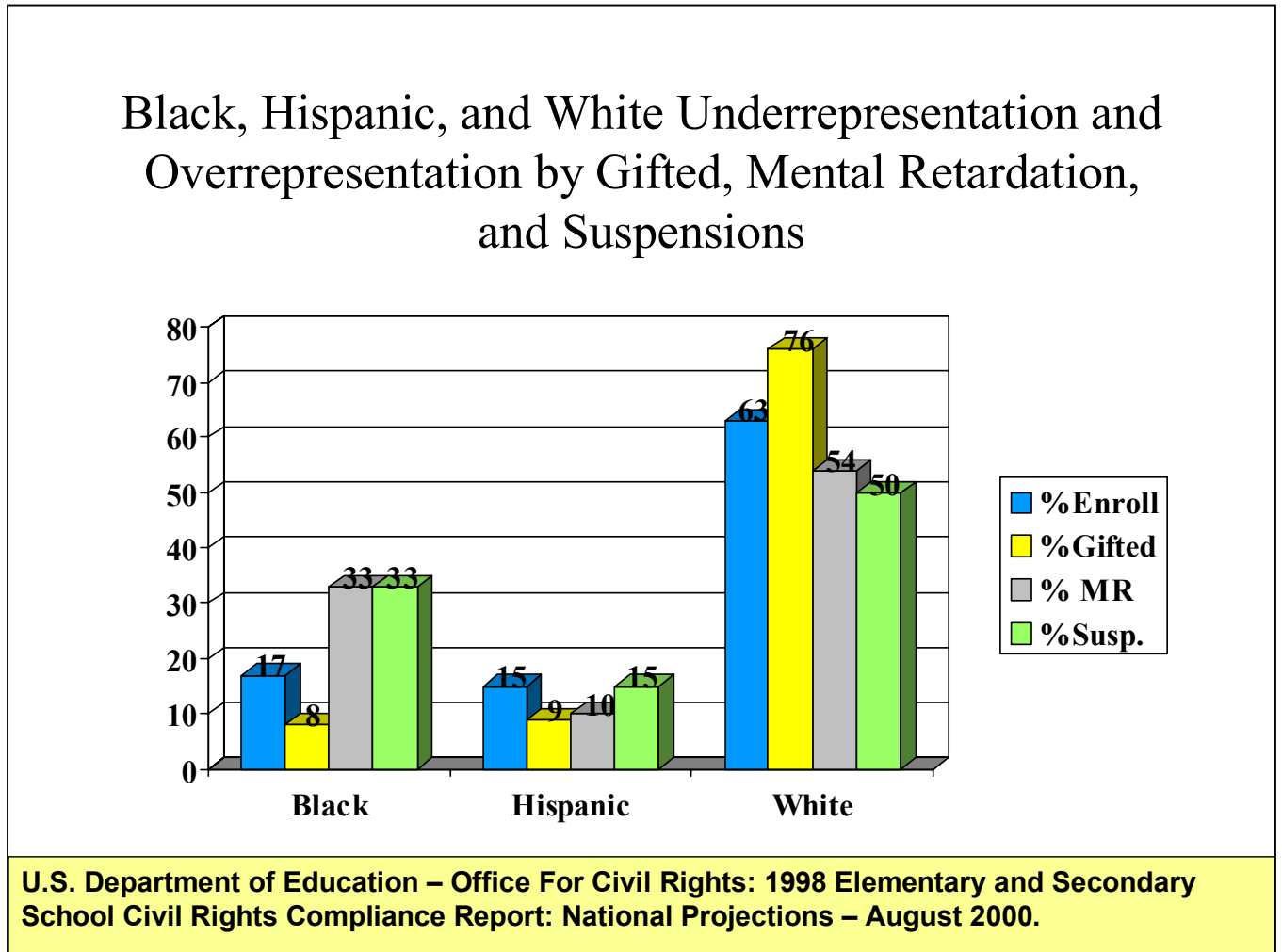


Racial Disparities in Special Education: National Trends

The six charts below depict racial disparities within special education. The issues raised by the disparities depicted are addressed in depth in *Racial Inequities in Special Education*, a book published by CRP in September, 2003.

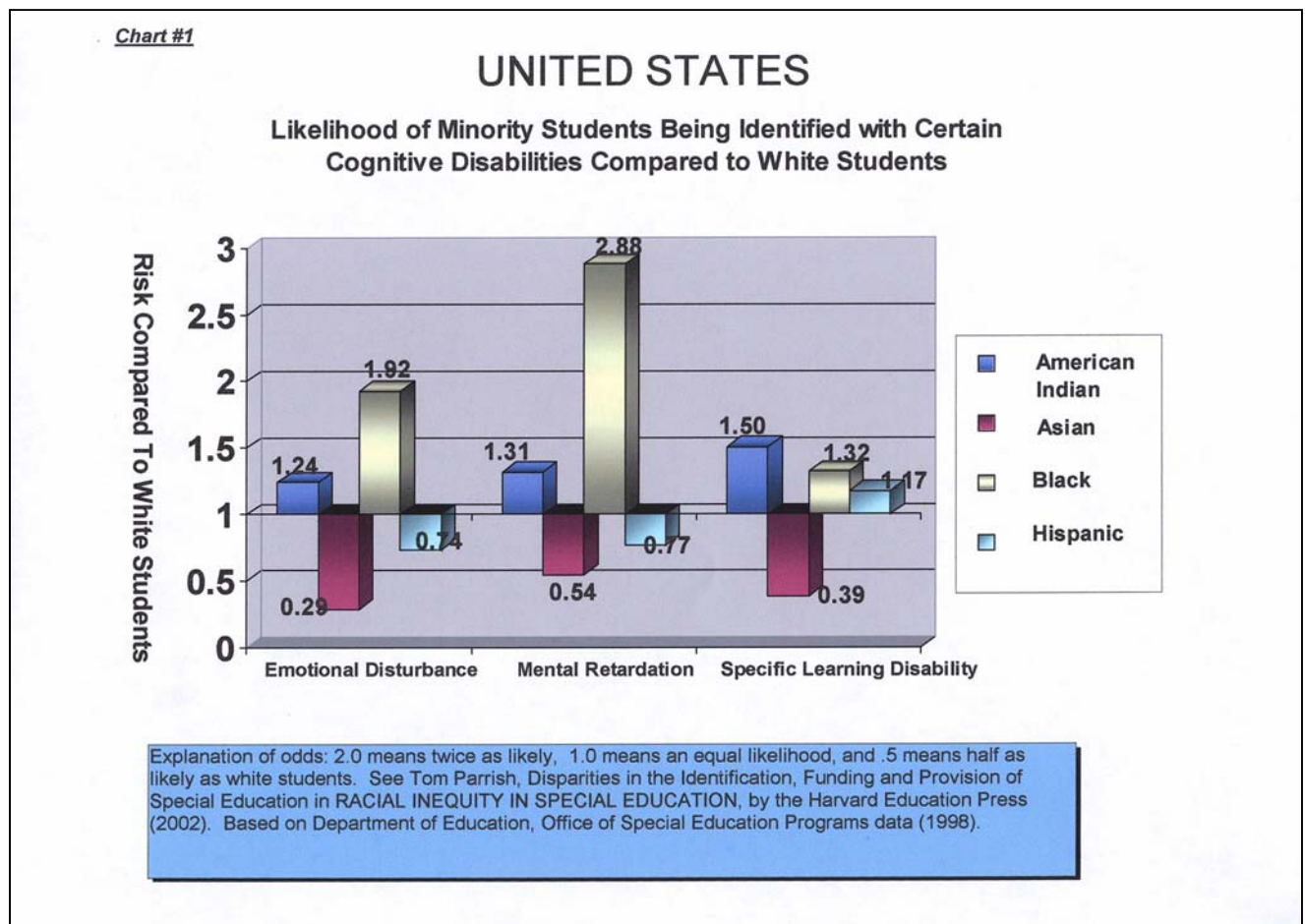
A. Racial disparities in special education mirror racial disparities in other areas.

The chart below highlights the fact that special education belongs to a much larger and consistent trend of racial inequity in education.



B. Racial Disparities in Identification Rates

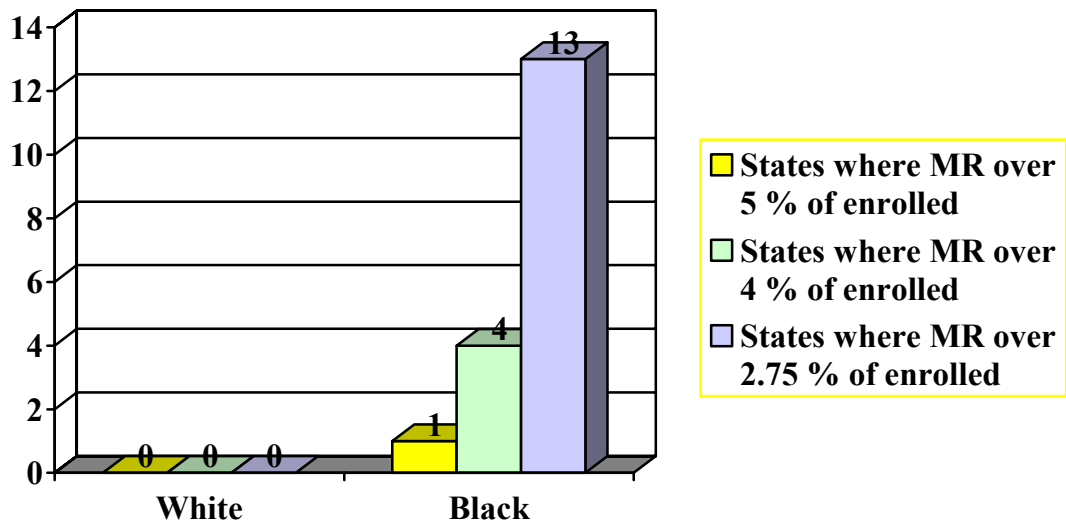
The chart below shows the identification rates for cognitive disabilities by major racial/ethnic groups in comparison to whites. Overrepresentation in special education is most pronounced for black children who are nearly three times more likely to be labeled mentally retarded and nearly twice as likely to be labeled emotionally disturbed. Research presented in *Racial Inequity in Special Education* strongly suggests that these disparities cannot be explained by the influence of poverty or related influences that don't include racial bias, stereotypes and other race-linked factors. Important to note is that there are even more dramatic disparities in some state and district level data. A full discussion of identification rates can be found in the introduction and first three chapters of the book, *Racial Inequity in Special Education*.



C. Black children are at far greater risk for identification for mental retardation in some states than in others.

Risk levels of this magnitude are rare for all other racial and ethnic groups. The prevalence of southern states with such high risk levels has been a persistent demographic trend that is especially troublesome given the South's history of de jure segregation.

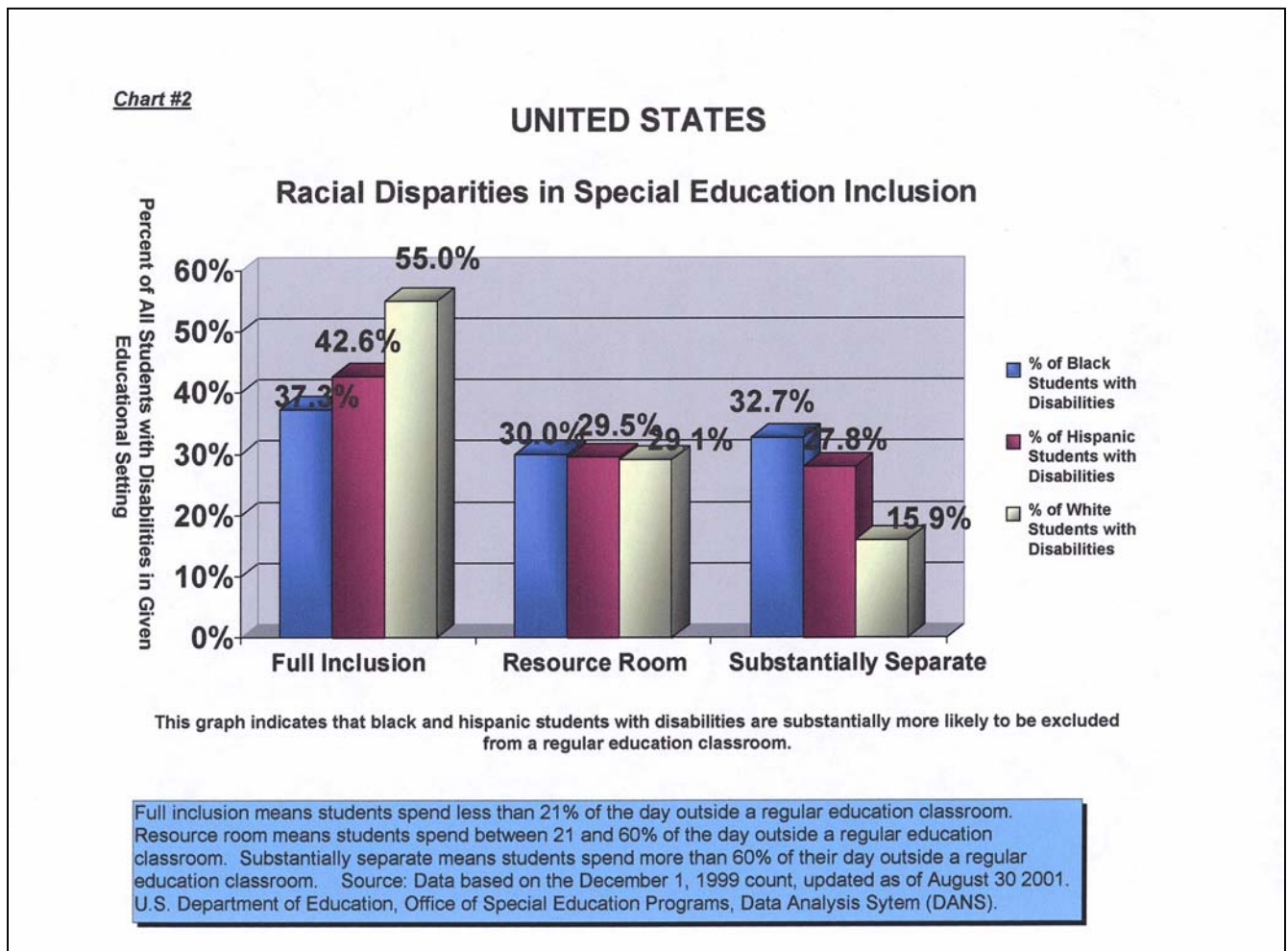
States With Extraordinarily High Percentages of Students with Mental Retardation (MR) are Mostly in the South



OSEP 2000-2001 DATA available at www.ideadata.org. The states are: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, West Virginia (8 of 13 are southern).

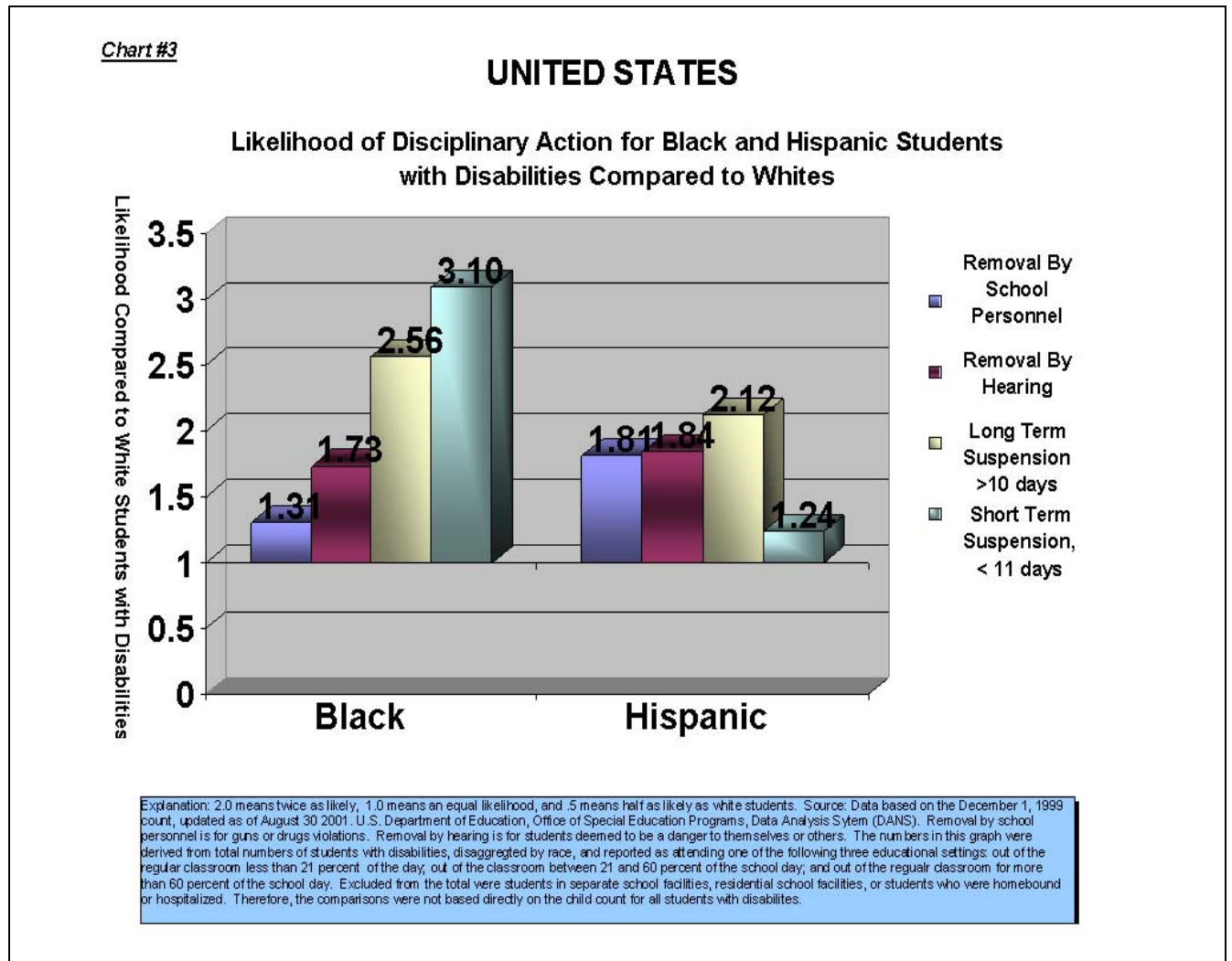
D. Racial Disparities in Placement of Students in Restrictive Educational Settings

The chart below shows the percentages of black, Hispanic and white children with disabilities in each of three common educational settings. The racial disparities are quite stark as whites are far more likely to be educated in inclusive settings and less likely to be excluded from their non-disabled peers. The educational settings are labeled “Inclusive”, “Resource Room”, and “Substantially Separate”. Each label corresponds to a range of time per day that students with disabilities spend in regular classrooms interacting with their non-disabled peers. A comprehensive discussion of this data can be found in Chapter 3 of *Racial Inequities in Special Education*.



E. Racial Disparities for Students with Disabilities in School Discipline

The chart below shows the disciplinary actions experienced by different racial groups of students with disabilities. The ratio of selected minority groups to whites based on the incidence of each disciplinary action. For more information about discipline and racial inequity see CRP's report *Opportunities Suspended*.



F. Racial Disparities in Placement of Students With Disabilities in Correctional Facilities

This chart compares placement in correctional facilities of selected minority children with those of whites with disabilities. It is important to note that the numbers of children who reportedly were placed in correctional facilities was very low for all groups. The chapter by David Osher et al, in *Racial Inequities in Special Education* provides an extensive exploration of factors contributing to the racially disproportionate representation of minority groups in the justice system.

