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CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Hartford

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education

DATE: February 6, 2019

SUBJECT: Report on School Discipline

Executive Summary

Please find attached the Report on School Discipline which presents analyses of trends in student disciplinary behaviors in Connecticut public schools. It fulfills the requirements in Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-233n.

Over the past five years, Connecticut has made major strides in reducing exclusionary discipline:

- The total number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions has declined by nearly 22 percent. Incidents coded as school policy violations declined 32.8 percent over the past five years and now accounts for 48 percent of all incidents – down from 71 percent five years ago.

- In the past two years, there has been a six-fold increase in incidents associated with Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) which has contributed to a nearly 65 percent increase in incidents coded as drugs/alcohol/tobacco.

- Large disparities remain in suspension rates between Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students and their white counterparts. While one out of every 25 white students received at least one suspension, one out of every seven Black/African American students and one out of every 10 Hispanic/Latino students experienced the same sanction.

- Among young children in Grades PK through two, in-school suspensions declined by around 39 percent while out-of-school suspensions declined by over 75 percent, especially with the passage of Public Act No. 15-96 which prohibited the suspension or expulsion of students in Grades Pre-K through two unless the incident is violent, endangers others, or is of a sexual nature.

- Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students who receive a suspension or expulsion are involved in more than one incident during the school year at a greater rate than their white peers.

- In certain cases (e.g., select school policy violations or fighting/altercation/physical aggression), Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students receive a more severe sanction (i.e., OSS or Expulsion) at slightly greater rates than their white peers.

The CSDE continues to use the data to implement a statewide, systems approach to address disproportionality in school discipline through targeted interventions, tiered supports, evidence-based resources, policy guidance, and broad stakeholder collaboration.

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CONNECTICUT STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Report on Student Discipline in Connecticut Public Schools

February 2019

Connecticut State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard | Hartford, CT 06103

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Introduction

This report presents analyses of trends in student disciplinary behaviors in Connecticut public schools. It fulfills the requirements in Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-233n.

Improving student academic and behavior outcomes requires ensuring all students access to the most effective and accurately implemented instructional and behavioral practices and interventions. Schools need to create an environment that ensures all students feel emotionally and physically safe. Students lose important instructional time when they receive exclusionary discipline. The use of disciplinary sanctions such as in-school and out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, or referrals to law enforcement authorities creates the potential for significant, negative educational and long-term outcomes, and can contribute to what has been termed the "school to prison pipeline." Studies suggest a correlation between exclusionary discipline policies and practices and an array of serious educational, economic, and social problems, including school avoidance and diminished educational engagement; decreased academic achievement; increased behavior problems; increased likelihood of dropping out; substance abuse; and involvement with juvenile justice systems[1].

C.G.S. 10-233a defines removal, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension and expulsion as follows:

- Removal - an exclusion from a classroom for all or part of a single class period, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond ninety minutes.
- In-school suspension (ISS) - an exclusion from regular classroom activity for no more than ten consecutive school days, but not exclusion from school.
- Out-of-school suspension (OSS) - an exclusion from school privileges or from transportation services only for no more than ten consecutive school days.
- Expulsion - an exclusion from school privileges for more than ten consecutive school days.

Data Collection and Reporting

Local Educational Agencies are required to report to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) all disciplinary incidents that result in any of the following:

- In-School Suspension (ISS)
- Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)
- Bus Suspension
- Expulsion (EXP)

In addition, all "serious" offenses and all incidents involving alcohol, drugs or weapons must be reported regardless of the type of sanction imposed. All bullying incidents must also be reported. Data collected regarding disciplinary incidents are released publicly on CSDE's data portal, EdSight. A detailed explanation of the data collection and reporting processes are included in Appendix A. Comprehensive information about the disciplinary offense data collection (also known as the ED166) is available on the documentation page of the ED166 Help Site.

[1] From "Dear Colleague" Letter: https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.html

Results

Sanctions and Incidents

The total number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions has declined by nearly 22 percent over the past five years. The total number of sanctions (Table 1) is a count of all sanctions (ISS, OSS, and Expulsions) given to all students. It is not a count of students, so if one student received more than one sanction, then all of the sanctions are included below.

Table 1: Total Number of Sanctions

Sanction Type	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Change from 2013-14
In-School Suspension	63,568	58,638	56,866	53,057	49,667	-21.9%
Out-of-School Suspension	40,648	37,701	34,415	32,982	31,834	-21.7%
Expulsion	939	849	848	750	797	-15.1%

The behaviors that are associated with the sanctions received by students are categorized into 10 broad areas (Table 2). In 2017-18, school policy violations accounted for approximately 48 percent of all incidents, down from 71 percent in 2013-14.

While many incident categories showed substantial declines from 2013-14 (i.e., school policy violations declined 32.8 percent, theft related behaviors declined 29.7 percent, weapons declined 18.5 percent, and violent crimes declined 16.1 percent), other categories showed substantial increases (i.e., drugs/alcohol/tobacco increased 64.8 percent, physical/verbal confrontation increased by 17.4 percent, and fighting and battery increased by 14.9 percent).

Table 2: Incidents by Category

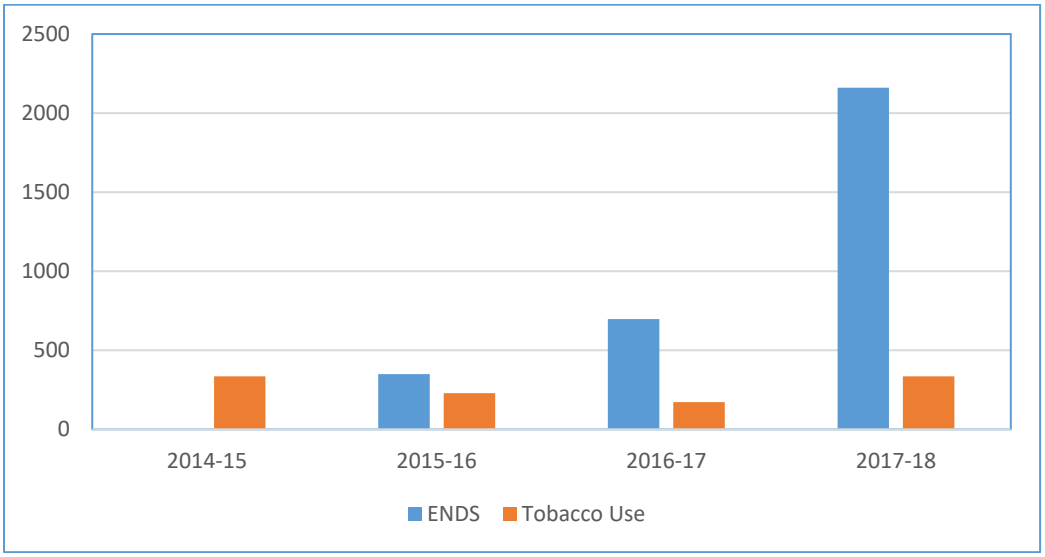
Incident Type	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Change from 2013-14
Violent Crimes Against Persons	576	478	440	392	483	-16.1%
Sexually Related Behavior	1,325	1,367	1,134	1,286	1,329	0.3%
Personally Threatening Behavior	7,234	6,592	6,622	6,870	7,208	-0.4%
Theft Related Behaviors	1,866	1,758	1,669	1,686	1,312	-29.7%
Physical and Verbal Confrontation	12,619	12,955	13,862	14,985	14,811	17.4%
Fighting and Battery	14,748	14,486	15,744	16,744	16,952	14.9%
Property Damage	1,322	1,236	1,234	1,529	1,431	8.2%
Weapons	1,125	1,023	920	936	917	-18.5%
Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco	3,013	3,003	2,551	3,098	4,964	64.8%
School Policy Violations	68,126	61,315	56,281	51,879	45,769	-32.8%

A closer look at the drugs, alcohol, and tobacco category suggests that the increase is due to the use of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), otherwise known as E-Cigarettes, "pens," or "vapes." ENDS incidents increased to 2,160 from 697 during the prior year (Table 3 and Figure 1).

Table 3: ENDS and Tobacco Use

Incident Type	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
ENDS	0	349	697	2,160
Tobacco Use	335	229	172	335

Figure 1: ENDS and Tobacco Use



The use of ENDS was first reported in the 2015-16 school year. Prior to that, no cases had been reported to CSDE. From 2015-16 to 2016-17 the use of ENDS doubled, while tobacco use decreased. In 2017-18, the use of ENDS more than tripled from 2016-17. Tobacco use also increased. Over the past four years, while tobacco use dipped slightly when ENDS were beginning to increase in popularity, tobacco use has now reached the same level as in 2014-15.

Suspension Rates

The Suspension Rate equals the number of students reported with at least one suspension (in-school or out-of-school) or expulsion divided by the unduplicated student enrollment count for the school or district for the given school year.

Overall approximately seven percent of all students receive at least one suspension or expulsion during the school year and this rate has declined slightly over the past five years. In each of the past five years, the suspension rate of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students has significantly exceeded those of white students (Table 4). While one out of every 25 white

students received at least one suspension/expulsion in 2017-18, one out of every seven Black/African American students and one out of every 10 Hispanic/Latino students experienced the same sanction.

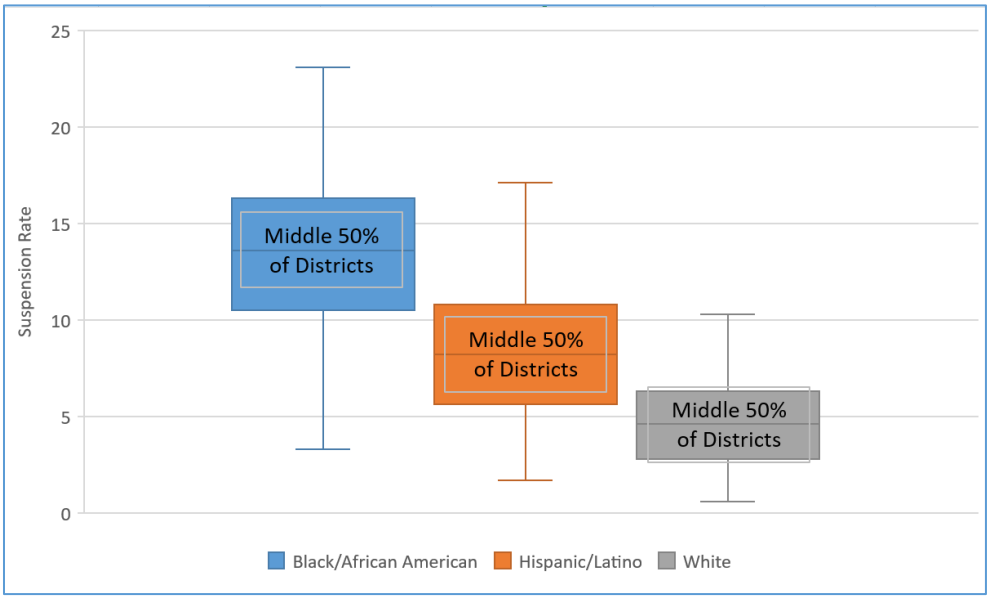
Table 4: Suspension Rates by Race/Ethnicity

	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
Race/Ethnicity	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**
American Indian or Alaska Native	147	9.7	133	8.8	131	7.1	121	8.4	117	8.4
Asian	460	1.8	484	1.8	451	1.7	442	1.6	501	1.8
Black or African American	12,282	17.1	11,699	16.5	11,446	16.2	10,745	15.2	9,884	14.3
Hispanic/Latino of any race	13,906	11.8	13,706	11.2	13,156	10.3	12,710	9.7	12,819	9.4
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	36	7.6	32	6.3	23	4.5	36	6.8	32	5.8
Two or More Races	994	7.5	1,070	7.6	1,067	7.0	1,080	6.7	1,248	7.0
White	13,089	4.1	12,316	3.9	11,826	3.9	11,448	3.9	12,167	4.2
Total		7.4		7.2		7.0		6.7		6.8

Though the suspension rates are higher for students of color, those rates are declining. The Black/African American suspension rate declined from 17.1 percent in 2013-14 to 14.3 percent in 2017-18 while the suspension rate for Hispanic/Latino students declined from 11.8 percent to 9.4 percent during that same period.

The distribution of suspension rates by Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and white students (Figure 2) shows that the pattern of higher suspension rates for students of color occurs in districts across the state.

Figure 2: Distribution of 2017-18 District-Level Suspension Rates by Race/Ethnicity



Males are suspended at substantially higher rates than females (Table 5). Suspension rates for both genders has declined slightly over the past five years.

Table 5: Suspension Rates by Gender

	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
Gender	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Female	12,747	4.8	12,306	4.6	11,886	4.5	11,373	4.3	11,356	4.4
Male	28,167	9.9	27,134	9.6	26,214	9.3	25,209	9.0	25,410	9.1

Students eligible for free- or reduced-price meals, English learners and students with disabilities are suspended at rates that are higher than those of their peers.

Table 6: Suspension Rate by Program Status

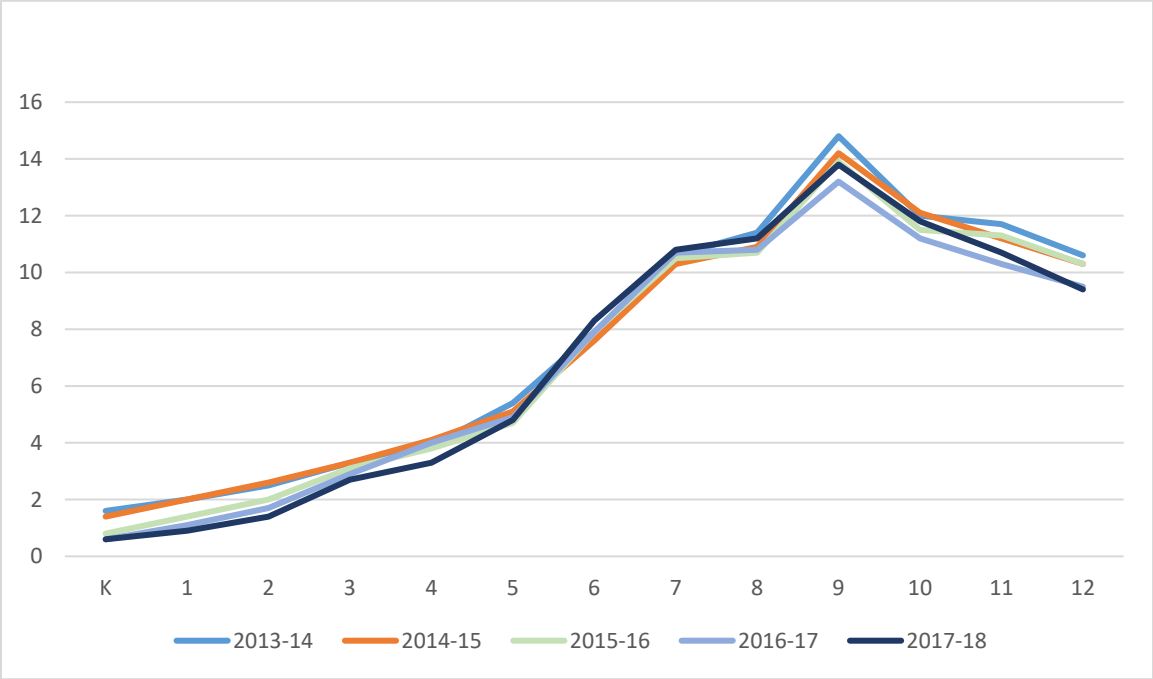
	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals	29,102	13.6	28,260	13.0	26,735	12.4	25,864	11.7	25,585	11.0
English Learners	3,505	10.6	3,494	9.6	3,148	8.5	2,990	7.6	3,154	7.6
Students with Disabilities	9,983	12.6	10,058	12.4	10,199	12.1	10,127	11.7	10,442	11.7

Analyses by grade (Table 7 and Figure 3) reveal that suspension rates increase gradually in the elementary grades and spike in Grade 6. The greatest suspension rates occur in Grades 9 and 10.

Table 7: Suspension Rates by Grade

	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
Grade	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**
K	609	1.6	527	1.4	314	0.8	220	0.6	203	0.6
1	801	2.0	783	2.0	543	1.4	413	1.1	351	0.9
2	971	2.5	1,039	2.6	789	2.0	649	1.7	501	1.4
3	1,299	3.3	1,298	3.3	1,237	3.1	1,144	2.9	1,022	2.7
4	1,573	3.9	1,640	4.1	1,503	3.8	1,593	4.0	1,305	3.3
5	2,230	5.4	2,046	5.1	1,874	4.7	1,929	4.9	1,948	4.8
6	3,186	7.9	3,135	7.6	3,187	7.9	3,195	7.9	3,327	8.3
7	4,409	10.6	4,163	10.3	4,341	10.5	4,354	10.7	4,371	10.8
8	4,811	11.4	4,552	10.9	4,373	10.7	4,484	10.8	4,589	11.2
9	6,763	14.8	6,372	14.2	6,202	13.9	5,735	13.2	6,023	13.8
10	5,058	12.0	5,088	12.1	4,810	11.5	4,679	11.2	4,856	11.8
11	4,737	11.7	4,543	11.2	4,619	11.3	4,195	10.3	4,330	10.7
12	4,441	10.6	4,242	10.3	4,299	10.3	3,987	9.5	3,916	9.4

Figure 3: Suspension Rates by Grade



For a list of districts that have a high, outlier suspension rate in at least one grade K through 12, please see Appendix B. A district is considered an outlier if its suspension rate in a grade is greater than the mean of all districts plus one standard deviation.

Suspensions of Young Students, Pre-K through Grade 2

The number of out-of-school suspensions for students in Grades Pre-K through two has evidenced a steep decline over the past few years (Tables 8 and 9), especially with the passage of Public Act No. 15-96, *An Act Concerning Out-Of-School Suspensions And Expulsions For Students In Preschool And Grades Kindergarten To Two.* This law limited out-of-school suspensions in grades 3-12 and prohibited the suspension or expulsion of students in Grades Pre-K through two unless the incident is violent, endangers others, or is of a sexual nature.[2]

The total number of suspensions and expulsions declined from over 5,000 in 2014-15 to 1,943 in 2017-18 (Table 8). Among these young children, in-school suspensions declined by approximately 39 percent while out-of-school suspensions declined by over 75 percent.

Table 8: Total Number of Sanctions (PK-2) – not a student count

Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
ISS	1,890	1,911	1,477	1,152
OSS	3,216	1,327	983	791
EXP	*	*	0	0

[2] *While the general suspensions statute, Section 10-233c of the General Statutes, continues to include preschool in the grade range for which out-of-school suspensions are permissible, this reference was most likely inadvertent in view of the explicit prohibition, in Section 10-233l, of out-of-school suspensions for students in preschool programs operated by boards of education, charter schools or interdistrict magnet schools.*

Correspondingly, the total number of students (unduplicated count) in grades kindergarten through two who receive at least one suspension or expulsion has also declined significantly from 2,363 in 2014-15 to 1,062 in 2017-18 – a decline of 55 percent (Table 9).

Table 9: Number of Students Suspended/Expelled (PK-2) by Grade

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
PK	12	9	*	7
K	527	314	220	203
Grade 1	783	543	413	351
Grade 2	1,039	789	649	501

When disaggregated by race/ethnicity, the number of students in Grades Pre-K through two receiving at least one suspension or expulsion has declined within all of the student race/ethnic groups (Table 10). The PK-2 suspension rate for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students declined by approximately 60 percent while that for white students declined by approximately 37 percent.

Table 10: Number of Students Suspended/Expelled (PK-2) by Grade

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
American Indian or Alaska Native	*	*	*	*
Asian	24	15	10	12
Black or African American	907	622	481	354
Hispanic/Latino of any race	863	576	446	349
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*
Two or More Races	100	73	64	48
White	465	373	292	291

An In-depth Look at Disparities by Race/Ethnicity

The statewide data clearly illustrate that the suspension rate for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students is substantially greater than for white students. To explore these racial disparities further, two additional questions were explored:

1. How many students are involved in more than one disciplinary incident during the school year? Are Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students involved in multiple incidents at greater rates than white students?

2. Are different sanctions imposed for similar behavior? In particular, do Black/African American and Hispanic students receive more severe sanctions (e.g., OSS instead of ISS) for the same behavior?

A majority of the students who were suspended or expelled (21,330 or 58 percent) experienced only one incident during the school year (Table 11).

Table 11: Number/Percentage of Students Experiencing Multiple Incidents, 2017-18

	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
Only one incident	21,330	58.0%
Two to four incidents	11,699	31.8%
Five to nine incidents	2,958	8.0%
Ten or more incidents	772	2.1%

When the data are disaggregated by race (Table 12), it is evident that Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students are reported for more than one disciplinary incident at significantly greater rates than white students. Specifically, 48.2 percent of Black/African American and 45.1 percent of Hispanic/Latino students who received a suspension/expulsion were involved in two or more incidents as compared to 34.6 percent of white students.

Table 12: Percentage of Students in Multiple Incidents by Race/Ethnicity, 2017-18

	Student Count	% Students 1 Incident	% Students 2 to 4 Incidents	% Students 5 to 9 Incidents	% Students 10+ Incidents
American Indian or Alaska Native	117	53.8	*	*	*
Asian	501	75.1	21.6	2.9	*
Black or African American	9,884	51.8	35.3	10.1	2.8
Hispanic/Latino of any race	12,819	54.9	33.3	9.2	2.5
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	32	63.2	*	*	0.0
Two or More Races	1,248	60.8	30.9	6.2	2.1
White	12,167	65.4	27.9	5.6	1.2
Total		58.0	31.8	8.0	2.1

Are different sanctions imposed for similar behavior? In other words, does the severity of sanction vary based on race/ethnicity?

To answer these questions, an in-depth examination was conducted of four types of incidents:

1. Fighting/altercation/physical aggression
2. Knife 2½ Inches or Greater
3. Sexual Harassment
4. School Policy violations

Fighting/altercation/physical aggression was selected because it is the most common incident reported. A knife of 2 ½ inches or greater was analyzed because it is the most common weapon reported. Sexual Harassment was selected to represent "serious" incidents. Four types of school policy violations were selected for this analysis to evaluate whether there are any disparities with less severe incidents.

The first three incident types are required to be reported to CSDE regardless of sanction, while the fourth type is only reported when the incident results in a suspension or expulsion. In all cases, the analyses were limited to the 2017-18 data and to cases where this was the only incident reported for that student. This was done to eliminate the possibility that the choice of the sanction for a particular behavior was somehow influenced by repeat behavior. Due to small numbers of students across the different race/ethnic groups, these analyses were limited to the three largest groups of Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and white students.

CASE #1: Fighting/altercation/physical aggression

This incident type is reported for a student who participated in an incident that involved a physical confrontation in which one or more participants received a minor physical injury. A minor injury is one that does not require professional medical attention, such as a scrape on the body, knee, or elbow; and/or minor bruising. Medical attention from the school nurse qualifies the injury as minor unless further medical attention is required. This incident type can also be used when one person strikes another (causing a minor injury) and the incident is ended prior to the other participant retaliating.

Among students who were reported with a single fighting/altercation/physical aggression incident during 2017-18 and where this was their only incident, Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students received an OSS or EXP at a slightly greater rate (74.2 and 74.9 percent respectively) than white students (70.1 percent), and this difference was statistically significant (Table 13).

Table 13: Fighting/altercation/physical aggression Incidents Resulting in OSS/EXP

	Total Incidents	Incidents Resulting in OSS/ EXP
Black/African American	1,215	902 (74.2%)
Hispanic/Latino	1,417	1061 (74.9%)
White	729	511 (70.1%)

CASE #2: Knife 2½ Inches or Greater

Regardless of race/ethnicity, all students statewide who were reported with a single weapons incident where the weapon was a knife that was 2½ inches or greater (e.g., a steak knife, hunting knife), received either an out-of-school suspension or an expulsion in the 2017-18 school year.

Table 14: Knife 2½ Inches or Greater Incidents Resulting in OSS/EXP

	Total Incidents	Incidents Resulting in OSS/ EXP
Black/African American	36	36 (100%)
Hispanic/Latino	71	71 (100%)
White	68	68 (100%)

CASE #3: Sexual Harassment

An incident that is reported as sexual harassment involves inappropriate and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other physical or verbal conduct, or communication of a

sexual nature, including gender-based harassment that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment. Examples include leering, pinching, grabbing, suggestive comments, gestures, or jokes; or pressure to engage in sexual activity.

Among students who were reported with a single sexual harassment incident during 2017-18 and where this was their only incident, there was no significant difference among Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, or white students in the rate at which they received an OSS or EXP (Table 15).

Table 15: Sexual Harassment Incidents Resulting in OSS/EXP

	Total Incidents	Incidents Resulting in OSS/ EXP
Black/African American	80	54 (67.5%)
Hispanic/Latino	106	71 (67.0%)
White	103	67 (65.0%)

CASE #4: Select School-Policy Violations

Four school policy violations were examined for this analysis. They are listed below, along with their definitions from the data collection manual:

- Insubordination/Disrespect: Unwillingness to submit to authority, refusal to respond to a reasonable request, or other situation in which a student is disobedient.
- Disorderly conduct: Any behavior that seriously disrupts the orderly conduct of a school function or which substantially disrupts the orderly learning environment.
- Inappropriate behavior: Horseplay, play fighting, playing cards.
- Disruptive behavior: Disruption of class; in the hallway, cafeteria, or any other area of the school.

None of these incidents are classified as "serious," so their reporting to CSDE is required only if the incident results in a suspension or expulsion. Therefore, this analysis was limited to those incidents that resulted in a suspension/expulsion to determine if students of color received OSS at a greater rate than white students. As with the prior cases, the students selected for this analysis were ones that had only one incident type, indicating this is the only issue that took place during the incident. Moreover, this was the only incident for which the student was reported in the 2017-18 school year and the incident was not classified as a bullying incident.

Among students who were reported with a single school policy violation incident during 2017-18 and where this was their only incident, Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students received an OSS or EXP at a slightly greater rate (27.4 and 27.2 percent respectively) than white students (20.1 percent), and this difference was statistically significant (Table 16).

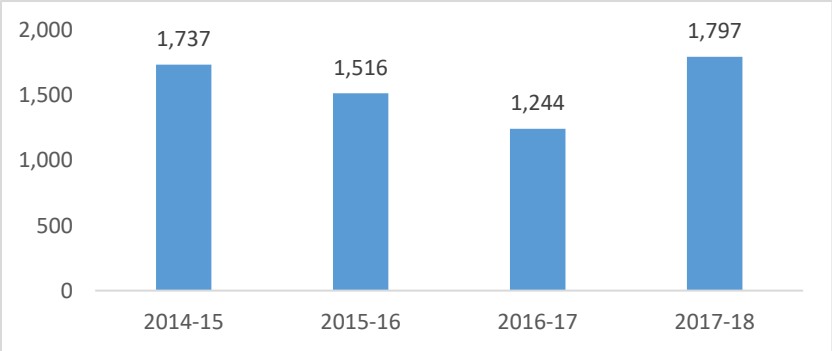
Table 16: Select School Policy Violation Incidents Resulting in OSS/EXP

	Total Incidents	Incidents Resulting in OSS/ EXP
Black/African American	986	270 (27.4%)
Hispanic/Latino	1329	362 (27.2%)
White	1446	290 (20.1%)

School-Based Arrests

Effective July 1, 2015 Public Act No. 15-168, "An Act Concerning Collaboration Between Boards Of Education And School Resource Officers And The Collection And Reporting Of Data On School-Based Arrests", redefined a School-Based Arrest as "an arrest of a student for conduct of such student on school property or at a school-sponsored event." The trend in the total number of school-based arrests reported to the CSDE is presented below (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Total Number of School-Based Arrests



Incidents involving fighting and battery was the most common reason for a school-based arrest in 2017-18 (Table 17).

Table 17: Incident Categories for School-Based Arrests

Incident Categories for School-Based Arrests	Count
Fighting and Battery	598
Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco	319
Physical and Verbal Confrontation	240
Personally Threatening Behavior	204
School Policy Violations	151
Weapons	99
Violent Crimes Against Persons	65
Theft Related Behaviors	60
Property Damage	32
Sexually Related Behavior	29

The majority of students arrested were male. Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students were disproportionately represented among those arrested.

Table 17: Students with School-Based Arrests by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Student Count of School-Based Arrests
Black or African American	419
White	554
Hispanic/Latino of any race	577
Male	1,133
Female	522
TOTAL	1,655

Average number of Days Suspended

Overall, in-school suspensions lasted 1.3 days while out-of-school suspensions lasted 3.4 days. Among the four cases examined in this report, Case # 4 "Select School-Policy Violations" resulted in the shortest ISS while Case # 2, "Knife 2 ½ Inches or Greater" resulted in the longest. Case # 2, "Knife 2 ½ Inches or Greater" resulted in the longest OSS, while Case #4 "Select School-Policy Violations" resulted in the shortest.

Table 18: Average Number of Days Suspended

	ISS	OSS
Total	1.4	3.4
CASE #1: Fighting/altercation/physical aggression	1.5	3.9
CASE #2: Knife 2 ½ Inches or Greater	2.5	7.7
CASE #3: Sexual Harassment	2.1	3.8
CASE #4: Select School-Policy Violations	1.3	2.5

A Statewide Systems Approach to Turning the Curve

Overview

When removed from school and left unsupervised, students lose valuable instructional time, resulting in lower academic achievement, grade-level retention, an increased risk of dropping out, and possible involvement with the juvenile justice system. Therefore, CSDE has reviewed patterns in disciplinary infractions to develop targeted interventions and supports. Below are focus areas and systemic actions that the CSDE has implemented.

Focus on Suspensions and Expulsions in Preschool and Kindergarten to Grade 2

A review of the data revealed that suspension and expulsion of students in preschool and Kindergarten to Grade 2 were occurring in violation of the Connecticut General Statutes.

CSDE actions:

- *Issued a memorandum from the Commissioner of Education to superintendents of schools that clarified state statutes.*
- *Identified 15 districts with the highest numbers of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions for this population for targeted support.*
- *Required the districts' participation in a mandatory webinar, Ensuring Equity and Excellence: Positive and Effective School Discipline for Preschool and Kindergarten to Grade Two. The primary goals were to allow for interactive discussion with other districts and answer essential questions about the use of disciplinary sanctions. The webinar reviewed: early brain development, relevant laws, policy development, information on compliance reporting and coding, and the importance of developing a comprehensive systems approach to address exclusionary discipline for this population.*
- *Collaborated with the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) for two follow-up sessions with districts and community providers regarding alignment practices. Additionally, the OEC*

piloted a new policy to address exclusionary practices for young children in state-funded early childhood programs.

- *Provided a workshop, Enhancing Equity in School Discipline: Practical Strategies and Tools, presented by Dr. Kent McIntosh. The workshop provided evidence-based approaches to address racial and ethnic disproportionality in school discipline.*

Alternative Educational Opportunities for Students Who have Been Expelled

Public Act 17-220 required the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt standards for the provision of an adequate alternative educational opportunity for students who have been expelled.

CSDE actions:

- *Developed standards in collaboration with the Alternative Schools Committee (ASC).*
- *Disseminated the SBE adopted standards to school districts and multiple stakeholders.*
- *Developed, in collaboration with the ASC, and disseminated a companion document to the standards, Alternative Educational Opportunities for Students Who Have Been Expelled: Best Practice Guidelines for Program Implementation. The guidelines and standards are designed to ensure that students who are expelled have access to high-quality programming that will position them for success.*
- *Developed and disseminated a comprehensive document, Guidance Regarding Student Expulsions. The guidance outlines the process and procedures required for expulsions and provides an overview of key legal considerations relevant to expulsions in Connecticut.*

Focus on Charter Schools

A review of public charter school data from the SBE School Discipline Report from May 2017 indicated that 1.7 percent of all students statewide are enrolled in charter schools; however, 5.7 percent of all out-of-school suspensions occur in charter schools.

CSDE actions:

- *Repurposed the Connecticut School Climate Transformation Grant (SCTG) to address school discipline.*
- *Utilized this federal SCTG to provide professional learning for charter schools with high exclusionary school discipline rates of suspensions. Charter school teams were paired with a technical assistance partner and worked on student-level disciplinary data analysis and the development of plans to address the use of exclusionary discipline practices. One attendee provided the following feedback: "…this was by far and away the best training I have been involved in from the SDE. It was relevant, specific, the instructors were knowledgeable and the work actionable."*

Evidence-Based Practice Guide on School Climate

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), emphasizes the use of evidence-based activities, strategies, and interventions as the foundation for education programs and supports.

CSDE actions:

- *Identified leading practices in seven school improvement areas that evidence shows will increase the likelihood of improved student outcomes and developed evidence-based guides in these areas. The guides are intended to inform school and district decision-making regarding instructional and student support programming and to optimize the use of local, state, and federal school improvement funds.*
- *Developed an Evidence-Based Practice Guide on Climate and Culture that includes school discipline and chronic absence.*

Tiered Systems of Supports

One strategy in implementing Goal 1 of the SBE Comprehensive Plan, is to deploy tiered systems of supports, guidance, and professional learning in areas of attendance, school discipline, and restorative- and trauma-informed practices that remove barriers to success and maximize students' potential.

CSDE actions:

- *Developed a data-informed tiered professional learning framework grounded in equity/access and evidence to identify and concentrate resources, expertise, and efforts where they are needed most. The framework provides prevention and early intervention strategies to promote a safe and positive school culture and to identify vulnerable students.*
- *Aligned SBE goals with the SCTG goals to address discipline practices in Opportunity Districts and charter schools. Districts with a higher suspension rate—specifically, preschool and Kindergarten to Grade 2, Opportunity Districts, and charter schools—received more targeted and intensive interventions.*

Connecticut School Discipline Collaborative

The CSDE recognized the need for cross-sector collaboration in addressing major challenges and to achieve sustainable change in school discipline.

CSDE action:

- *Launched the Connecticut School Discipline Collaborative in October 2018 to advise the Commissioner of Education and State Board of Education on strategies for transforming school discipline to reduce the overall and disproportionate use of exclusionary practices. The membership reflects a diverse range of expertise in the field of education, public policy, youth development, and family and community leadership.*

SBE Position Statement on Reducing Disproportionality in Suspensions/Expulsions

A review of statewide discipline data revealed that students of color, males, and students with disabilities are suspended at higher rates than the general school population.

CSDE action:

- *Developed with input from the ASC, Connecticut School Discipline Collaborative, and the Commissioner's Roundtable for Family and Community Engagement in Education, a position statement for adoption by the SBE. The Position Statement on Reducing Disproportionality in Suspensions and Expulsions addresses the components for reducing suspensions and expulsions in Connecticut public schools, which is a critically important step in improving student outcomes.*

Conclusion

Over the past five years, Connecticut has made major strides in reducing exclusionary discipline.

- The total number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions has declined by nearly 22 percent. Incidents coded as school policy violations declined 32.8 percent over the past five years and now accounts for 48 percent of all incidents – down from 71 percent five years ago.

- In the past two years, there has been a six-fold increase in incidents associated with Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) which has contributed to a nearly 65 percent increase in incidents coded as drugs/alcohol/tobacco.

- Large disparities remain in suspension rates between Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students and their white counterparts. While one out of every 25 white students received at least one suspension, one out of every seven Black/African American students and one out of every 10 Hispanic/Latino students experienced the same sanction.

- Among young children in Grades PK through two, in-school suspensions declined by around 39 percent while out-of-school suspensions declined by over 75 percent, especially with the passage of Public Act No. 15-96 which prohibited the suspension or expulsion of students in Grades Pre-K through two unless the incident is violent, endangers others, or is of a sexual nature.

- Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students who receive a suspension or expulsion are involved in more than one incident during the school year at a greater rate than their white peers.

- In certain cases (e.g., select school policy violations or fighting/altercation/physical aggression), Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students receive a more severe sanction (i.e., OSS or Expulsion) at slightly greater rates than their white peers.

The CSDE will continue to use the data to implement a statewide, systems approach to address disproportionality in school discipline through targeted interventions, tiered supports, evidence-based resources, policy guidance, and broad stakeholder collaboration.

APPENDIX A – The Data Collection and Reporting Processes

ED166 Data Collection

Local Education Agencies (LEA's) submit data to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) on an annual basis via an online data collection application known as the ED166 Student Disciplinary Offense Collection. After initial data submission, the CSDE conducts numerous validations to identify potential irregularities in the data. LEAs are expected to review and resolve all anomalies; then, a district administrator certifies electronically that the data are complete and accurate.

Public School Information System (PSIS)

Student demographic data are collected in an application known as the Public School Information System or PSIS. PSIS contains student enrollment and demographic information (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender). Enrollment data, which are used for calculations such as suspension rates, are based on PSIS enrollment.

Race/Ethnicity Information

In PSIS all students must be assigned to a racial/ethnic subgroup for analysis purposes. If a parent or student will not select a category from the five race codes provided, appropriate school personnel are advised select the category for the child. In accordance with the final guidance and regulations issued by the United States Department of Education (USED), race and ethnicity are collected using the following two-part question:

1. Is the respondent Hispanic/Latino? – Yes/No

   Hispanic or Latino is defined as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

2. Is the respondent from one or more races using the following (choose all that apply):
   - American Indian or Alaskan Native - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
   - Asian - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand and Vietnam.
   - Black or African American - A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
   - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands.
   - White - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

CSDE then reports this racial/ethnic data to the USED and the public using the following categories:

- Hispanic/Latino of any race;
- American Indian or Alaska Native;
- Black or African American;
- Asian;
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander;
- White; and
- Two or more races

Race/Ethnicity information can be updated at any time during the school year and be changed as many times as a student or his or her parents or guardian wish.

EdSight

Data collected through the ED166 are released publicly on CSDE's data portal, EdSight, sometime in October. EdSight is available at http://edsight.ct.gov. EdSight provides detailed information about schools/districts and offers information on key performance measures that make up Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System. A variety of reports are available on EdSight. They include:

- The Profile and Performance Reports (also referred to as school/district report cards);
- Numerous interactive reports on topics like enrollment, chronic absenteeism, discipline, educator demographics, graduation rates, and test results;
- The special education Annual Performance Reports; and
- Data and research bulletins on critical topics of interest.

EdSight Data Suppression Guidelines

Data on both EdSight and within this report are suppressed following CSDE's Data Suppression Guidelines. In general, counts less than 5 are suppressed; however there are some instances where other numbers may be suppressed as well. The complete data suppression policy is available online at http://edsight.ct.gov/relatedreports/BDCRE%20Data%20Suppression%20Rules.pdf.

Appendix B – Districts with High Suspension Rates

The table below represents the 47 school districts that have a high, outlier suspension rate in at least one grade K through 12. A district is considered an outlier if its suspension rate in a grade is greater than the mean of all districts plus one standard deviation.

District Name	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	# of Grades Outlier
Achievement First Hartford Academy Inc. District			7.1	7.9	13.8	11.5	21.0	22.1	19.4					4
Amistad Academy District		10.5	7.7	23.9	25.3	31.3	16.5	24.5	14.8	25.7	19.1	29.4		7
Ansonia School District		3.7			8.6	9.4	12.6	21.0	11.7	32.6	20.3	10.2	15.0	3
Area Cooperative Educational Services				6.4	6.5	15.7	14.7	16.5	17.8	22.6	17.9	28.3	14.7	2
Bloomfield School District			5.0			9.5	10.7	26.7	24.1	26.9	17.8	11.0	16.1	4
Bridgeport Achievement First District				7.9		26.5	23.6	24.7	29.3	21.3	14.8	22.2		5
Bridgeport School District		2.5	3.3	7.7	9.6	13.7	15.2	21.0	20.6	36.0	25.8	22.4	15.7	6
Bristol School District	1.9		3.0	4.2	4.9	8.9	9.0	12.8	17.6	12.4	9.9	13.9	7.7	1
Capital Preparatory Harbor School District						28.6	25.0	20.0	30.8	17.0				3
Capitol Region Education Council					1.7	2.2	14.0	18.9	17.4	25.0	21.1	13.4	11.9	2
Connecticut Technical Education and Career System										17.7	17.6	14.2	16.9	1
Danbury School District				1.2	2.1	2.6	8.1	11.0	10.4	24.4	17.6	18.2	16.5	3
Derby School District			6.7			9.2	18.9	21.3	29.6	16.5	14.9	12.9	17.6	5
East Haddam School District												17.3	21.4	1
East Hartford School District				2.7	2.1	3.2	23.9	18.9	18.0	28.3	25.4	21.0	17.1	5
East Windsor School District						20.5	15.7	17.1	12.0	31.9	13.3	20.3	24.5	4
Elm City College Preparatory School District			9.4	22.4	13.8	9.2	13.1	9.4	19.7	27.5	20.8	23.3	20.7	7
Elm City Montessori School District		23.3												1
Explorations District											35.0			1
Great Oaks Charter School District							25.8	29.3	32.6	25.0				4
Griswold School District						5.2		12.6	8.5	21.8	9.9	16.3	8.4	1
Hamden School District			2.4	3.9	2.9	8.7	6.9	22.2	21.2	12.4	13.5	8.8	9.1	2

District Name	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	# of Grades Outlier
Hartford School District		2.4	3.5	6.8	9.6	14.0	17.9	21.2	19.9	25.9	20.8	15.8	12.7	4
Highville Charter School District				33.3	20.6	43.2	28.6	44.8	48.5					6
Interdistrict School for Arts and Comm District							19.1	21.6	21.7					3
Jumoke Academy District		9.6		14.7		14.6	30.3	32.8	37.3					4
Learn		7.6	8.7	10.1	4.3	5.9		16.4	32.1	21.0	17.3	20.3	11.7	3
Manchester School District	1.4	2.6	3.4	3.9	4.9	9.0	17.7	12.6	7.9	22.0	15.8	10.9	10.4	2
Naugatuck School District					2.2	7.8	9.7	7.4	13.2	14.1	17.9	16.7	16.3	1
New Britain School District				3.2	5.7	7.1	12.5	14.2	18.6	38.9	27.1	18.9	10.9	3
New London School District			2.0	3.5	3.4	6.7	21.3	23.2	19.7	20.2	18.5	14.2	16.0	3
Norwich School District	2.0	2.6	2.4	1.7	4.4	9.0	19.0	27.7	24.0					4
Park City Prep Charter School District							19.8	11.6	14.5					1
Path Academy District										21.9	50.0	43.5	36.8	4
Plymouth School District							12.0	12.5	20.7	18.4	7.0	8.5	15.3	1
Regional School District 11								30.4	18.8			17.1		1
Sprague School District						24.4		20.7	19.4					2
The Bridge Academy District								17.0		25.0	14.6			1
The Gilbert School District								18.3	23.5	15.1	18.2	11.9	25.9	2
Thomaston School District						8.5		11.3	20.3	11.1	14.5	19.4	19.4	2
Thompson School District						11.8	17.3	19.4	16.5	15.2				1
Torrington School District					2.3	3.4	12.3	19.3	11.8	24.9	12.3	14.4	10.5	1
Unified School District #2										19.4	22.2			1
Waterbury School District	0.7	1.6	3.0	10.5	13.9	12.4	22.7	28.4	25.2	35.1	33.7	30.5	22.5	8
Willington School District						11.7		22.5						1
Winchester School District			8.5											1
Windham School District		2.7	3.8	4.0	6.7	9.9	20.1	26.7	21.8	37.2	26.6	25.4	20.0	7