Delaware Department of Education

Student Support Team

2018

Statewide Summary Report
School Discipline Improvement
Program*

*As required under 14 Del C. Ch. 7, §703

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Background and Overview

The information contained in this report fulfills the requirements outlined in 14 Del.C., Ch. 7, §703, directing the Delaware Department of Education (Department) to collect, evaluate and communicate data related to the use of exclusionary disciplinary practices in Delaware public schools and the efforts being undertaken by our schools to reduce those occurrences.

The main purpose of the information contained in this report is to document the efforts of public schools in the area of school discipline improvement. Schools in the First State have utilized a variety of restorative practices as well as alternatives to suspension in order to reduce the impact of negative consequences upon students during the disciplinary process.

Each school district and charter school in the state of Delaware has its own Code of Conduct that defines what violations would incur what consequences. The Department respects each of these district and charter decisions to determine what acceptable conduct is, and what is not, as it relates to students in their building. This report documents the results of those consequences and provides best practices that our schools in Delaware and around the nation have used to change the culture of exclusionary discipline in education today.

Beginning next year, this report will also note schools that have exceeded the threshold as set forth in Delaware Code. Schools exceeding this threshold, once identified by the Department, shall be required to evaluate their disciplinary practices and develop a corrective action plan using one or several different approved interventions to reduce the disproportionate application of discipline as well as to further reduce the impact of exclusionary discipline as it relates to student achievement.

It is also important to note the origin of the information contained within this report. While the Department collects and reviews this information, the data originates at the district/charter and school levels. Quality controls exist on the school and district/charter level with desk audits and reviews by the Department to help ensure compliance with mandatory reporting laws and regulations. The information contained in this report is solely derived from information entered by the local school personnel. Every effort has been made to provide relevant and useful information while still protecting the rights of students as afforded by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Executive Summary

- Based on the most recent federal reporting (Statistics, 2017), Delaware has the tenth lowest percentage of expelled students across the country, with only **.09%** of Delaware students being expelled during the 2013-14 school year. The Department expects that this figure is likely to reduce further given the reduction in expulsions documented during the previous three years.

- From a statewide perspective, the overall data trends for the previous three school years indicate a reduction in the application of exclusionary disciplinary practices, with 'out of school' suspension days dropping by 22% during this period. The results in a reduction of 19,877 days of 'out of school' suspension for disciplinary reasons.

- There were 13% less' out of school' suspensions issued, resulting in a 3,425 fewer suspensions than three years ago. There were 804 fewer students suspended in the 2017-18 school year than in the 2015-16 school year.

- The State has experienced a significant drop in the number of students expelled from schools in the three years covered by this report. During the 2015-16 school year, 123 students were expelled from Delaware schools, while during the 2017-18 school year only 46 students were expelled. This represents a 63% drop in expulsions. This figure represents an improvement of 9,240 days of education that students received based on the reduced number of expulsions. This achievement in and of itself represents a significant improvement in time in school for Delaware students.

- Using the 20% rate threshold required as a defining metric during the 2017-2018 school year, 20 schools exceeded the threshold in one subgroup with an additional 39 schools exceeding the threshold in more than one subgroup. The breakdown may be found in Table 3. Based upon this information, a primary focus of statewide efforts to improve discipline should be focused upon the middle schools since 19 middle schools statewide exceeded the threshold in two or more subgroups. High schools should serve as another focus area with 15 exceeding the threshold in two or more subgroups.

- Complete data for the state, including breakdown in individuals school information by subgroup, may be found on the School Climate Office Website at: https://www.doe.k12.de.us/domain/470

How your school can use the data?

The very first step in addressing concerns about your discipline process is to review the chain of events that lead a student into your disciplinary process. Where does the cycle begin and where can it be interrupted? By looking at the referral process, you can get a better understanding of where most suspensions originate, and then focus your intervention efforts in those areas. Review how each member of the discipline team issues a consequence and ensure that they all are using the same thought process when issuing discipline. The offense-consequence matrix should look the same across the school if not across the district.

For example, take a middle school who reviews their suspension data and notes that the 7th grade has a significantly higher suspension rate. Drilling down further in the 7th grade, the administration discovers that many referrals for "disruption of the education process" are coming from one of the 7th grade subject teams more than others. This is an opportunity to begin observing these specific classrooms to determine which intervention will assist the teaching staff and reduce the number of students removed from the classroom setting for disciplinary reasons.

The school can review their consequences and test to see if all of their consequences are equal across each aspect of the spectrum. Second and third offense consequences should be reviewed carefully as this is where most discrepancies lie. Also, these are areas where the most opportunities for enhanced interventions can be the most beneficial in breaking the cycle.

Interventions

The enabling legislation noted several interventions that schools could utilize as a way to improve the outcomes of their disciplinary practices. Below is a brief description of what each of those recommended interventions entails.

1. **Restorative Practices**: While most traditional disciplinary practices are focused on rule enforcement and action versus consequence, restorative practices look at relationships and how a person's actions impact them. It shows students that their actions do not just impact them, but also their school community as a whole. Students often use "restorative circles" which are small semi-formal group discussions, which focus on allowing all the people affected by an issue to have a chance to discuss its impact on them. The goal is to reinforce the "community" aspects of school and allow the offending student a chance to resolve his or her conflict within that community. Unlike traditional discipline, which is often viewed as being based on an incident and simply interrupting a student's participation in school, restorative practices seek to

maintain if not strengthen relationships after there has been an offense. These "incidents' become opportunities to heal internal relationships but also strengthen and reinforce the global sense of community within the school.

2. **Trauma Informed Care**: This intervention attempts to take the focus away from simply looking at a student's actions but educating the staff to look beyond what they "see" of a student to understand the whole child and what the student brings into their classroom. Research continues to reinforce the understanding that student behaviors are tied back to their experiences well before they entered our school or classrooms. The impacts of trauma on a student may be demonstrated as outbursts or behaviors that would traditionally simply be looked at as "bad behavior." These efforts focus more on educating the staff about their students and how they can respond differently to students' needs rather than simply referring them for discipline. This practice involves changing the normal mantra of teachers asking, "What is wrong with you," but rather looking at a student and asking themselves, "What has happened to you?"

3. **Implicit Bias Awareness**: This is another intervention based upon changing the perceptions of the staff and better educating them in the nature of their students and more importantly themselves. This is very different from normal "bias or anti-discrimination training." Everyone, regardless of race, creed or color subconsciously possesses implicit bias revolving around their knowledge of others. Some of these biases may be good and some bad. The goal is to make staff members aware that this bias does absolutely exist and that they have the tools and awareness to manage the impact of their own internal bias while limiting the possible negative impact on the kids that they serve.

4. **Cultural Competency**:   While implicit bias training is focused on the individual, cultural competency helps to understand the more global view of our own culture and other cultures served within our school community. This training looks at different norms, values and perceptions as it relates to cultural differences and addresses how we can view these differences as areas of opportunity for increased awareness and understanding of others.

5. **Classroom Management**: This type of training focuses on using the classroom environment to prevent an incident from occurring in the first place. This is accomplished by providing the teacher with the tools to design engaging learning activities that encourage students to focus. In addition, teachers are given some tools and practices that help them see the signs of escalation prior to that escalation becoming a disruptor and requiring action. Teachers will be better equipped to prevent and contain occurrences, which in the past may have required the assistance of a disciplinarian or administrator.

Table 1. **Total Suspensions**

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Number of Students Suspended	17,261	17,051	16,457
Number of days suspended	91,273	88,421	71,396
Total number of suspensions	27,381	26,343	23,956

Table 1 shows the overall trend in the number of students suspended, number of days that they were suspended and the number of 'out of school' suspensions given as a consequence for a disciplinary infraction.

Graph 1. Number of students suspended.

Graph 2. Reductions in Total number of suspensions and number of days suspended.

REDUCTION TRENDS

Legend: 2015 16 | 2016 17 | 2017 18

Category	2015 16	2016 17	2017 18
Suspensions	27381	26343	23956
Days Suspended	91273	88421	71396
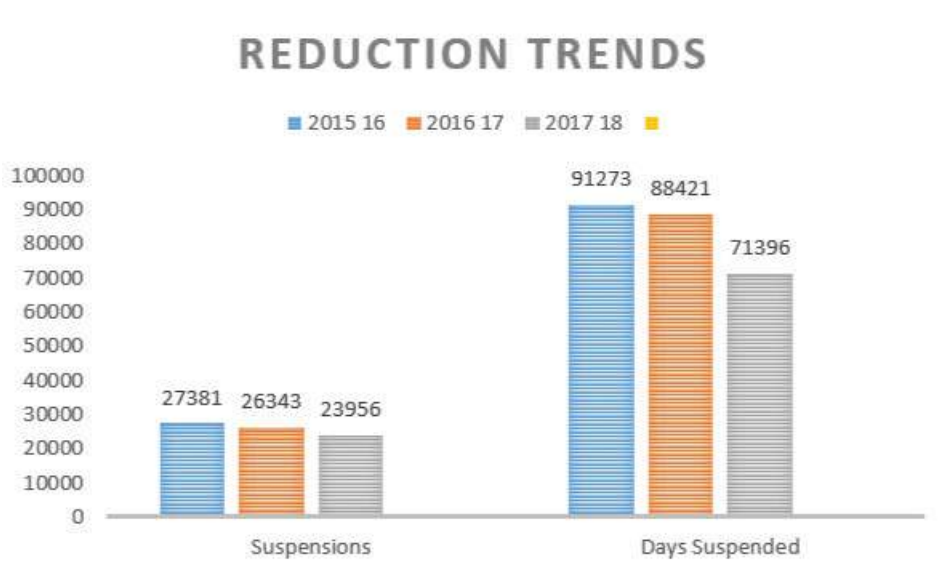
Graph 3. Expulsion reduction trends.

EXPULSION TRENDS

Legend: 2015 16 | 2016 17 | 2017 18

Category	2015 16	2016 17	2017 18
Expulsions	123	98	46

Graphs 2 & 3 demonstrate the current trend statewide toward a reduction in every aspect of 'out of school' suspension and expulsion practices.

Table 2. **Statewide Suspension and Expulsion Rates**

2017-18 Statewide Student Enrollment and Suspension/Expulsion Rates	Enrollment	Out-of-School Suspensions		In-School Suspensions		Out-of-School Suspensions - No CDAP Placement		Out-of-School Suspensions - CDAP Placement		Expulsions	
		Students	Rate	Students	Rate	Students	Rate	Students	Rate	Students	Rate
All Students	**145,506**	**11,196**	**7.69%**	**9,967**	**6.85%**	**11,170**	**7.68%**	**206**	**0.14%**	**46**	**0.03%**
Gender — Male	74,949	7,553	10.08%	6,675	8.91%	7,536	10.05%	125	0.17%	29	0.04%
Gender — Female	70,565	3,643	5.16%	3,292	4.67%	3,634	5.15%	81	0.11%	17	0.02%
Race/Ethnicity — Black	44,962	6,424	14.29%	5,079	11.30%	6,416	14.27%	108	0.24%	28	0.06%
Race/Ethnicity — White	63,260	2,723	4.30%	2,768	4.38%	2,712	4.29%	58	0.09%	13	0.02%
Race/Ethnicity — Hispanic	25,703	1,498	5.83%	1,530	5.95%	1,494	5.81%	26	0.10%	CSC	*
Race/Ethnicity — Amer. Indian	585	54	9.23%	44	7.52%	53	9.06%	<5	*	<5	*
Race/Ethnicity — Asian	5,763	68	1.18%	61	1.06%	68	1.18%	<5	*	<5	*
Race/Ethnicity — Hawaiian	190	9	4.74%	9	4.74%	9	4.74%	<5	*	<5	*
Race/Ethnicity — Multirace	5,574	420	7.53%	476	8.54%	418	7.50%	CSC	*	<5	*
Special Populations — Students with Disabilities	21,865	3,479	15.91%	2,807	12.84%	3,478	15.91%	39	0.18%	12	0.05%
Special Populations — Low Income	51,755	6,471	12.50%	5,609	10.84%	6,454	12.47%	120	0.23%	25	0.05%
Special Populations — English Language Learners	13,781	577	4.19%	567	4.11%	577	4.19%	8	0.06%	<5	*

Table 2 reflects statewide suspension and expulsion rates disaggregated by gender, race and special population designations for the 2017-28 School Year.

Table 3. Number of schools that exceed the 20% threshold during the 2017-18 School Year.

Type of School	Exceeds 20% in one subgroup	Exceeds 20% in two or more subgroups
Elementary	6	4
Middle	4	19
High	10	16
Total	**20**	**39**

Table 3 reflects schools that exceeded a suspension rate of 20% unduplicated students for one or two or more subgroups during the 2017-18 school year. NOTE: There is no required action based upon this information since the requirement for corrective action does not begin until the report for the 2018-19 school year is delivered. This information is for identification and planning purposes only.

Table 4. Schools exceeding the 20% threshold in a single sub-group during the 2017-2018 School Year.

District	School	Category
Caesar Rodney	Fifer Middle	SWD
Cape Henlopen	Mariner Middle	Black
Smyrna	Smyrna High	SWD
Appoquinimink	Middletown High	SWD
Appoquinimink	Appoquinimink High	SWD
Brandywine	Concord High	SWD
Red Clay	Highlands Elem	SWD
Red Clay	Lewis Elem	Black
Red Clay	Warner Elem	SWD
Christina	Kirk Middle	SWD
Colonial	New Castle Elem	SWD
Colonial	George Read Middle	SWD
Indian River	Millsboro Middle	SWD
Delmar	Delmar High	SWD
Vo Tech	Howard High	SWD
Charter	Campus	SWD
Charter	Charter of New Castle Elem	SWD
Charter	Academy of Dover Elem	SWD
Charter	Early College High	SWD
Charter	Design Lab High	SWD
SWD= Students with Disabilities		
	LI= Low Income Students	
	EL= English Learners	

Table 5. Schools exceeding the 20% threshold in two or more sub-groups.

District	School	Sub Groups	Total
Capital	Central Middle	All, Male, Black, SWD, LI	5
Capital	William Henry Middle	Male, Black, Multi, SWD, LI	5
Lake Forest	Chipman Middle	All, Male, Black,Multi, SWD, LI	6
Lake Forest	Lake High	Latino, SWD	2
Laurel	Laurel Sr High	Black, SWD	2
Laurel	Laurel Middle	Male, Black, Multi, SWD	4
Milford	Milford Central Academy	SWD, LI	2
Seaford	Seaford Middle	All, Male, Black, SWD, LI	5
Seaford	Seaford High	Male, Black, SWD, LI	4
Brandywine	Springer Middle	Black, SWD, LI	3
Brandywine	Talley Middle	Black, SWD, LI	3
Brandywine	Brandywine High	All, Male, Black, SWD, LI	5
Brandywine	Mt Pleasant High	SWD, LI	2
Red Clay	AI Middle	Black, SWD	2
Red Clay	Skyline Middle	Male, Black, SWD, LI	4
Red Clay	Stanton Middle	Black, SWD	2
Red Clay	Dickinson High	Black, SWD, LI	3
Red Clay	AI High	Black, SWD, LI	3
Red Clay	McKean High	All, Male, Black, SWD, LI	5
Christina	Bayard Middle	All, Male, Female, Black, SWD, LI	6
Christina	Elbert Palmer Elem	Male, SWD	2
Christina	Stubbs Elem	All, Male, Black, SWD, LI	5
Christina	Gauger Middle	All, Male, Black, SWD, LI	5
Christina	Shue Middle	Black, SWD, LI	3
Christina	Christiana High	Black, SWD, LI	3
Christina	Glasgow High	All, Male, Black, SWD, LI	5
Christina	Newark High	Male, Black, SWD, LI	4
Colonial	Gunning Bedford Middle	SWD, LI	2
Colonial	McCullough Middle	Male, Black, SWD, LI	4
Colonial	William Penn High	Male, Black, SWD, LI	4
Woodbridge	Woodbridge Middle	Black, SWD	2
Woodbridge	Woodbridge High	Black, SWD	2
Indian River	Selbyville Middle	Black, SWD	2
Indian River	Indian River High	Black, SWD, LI	3
Indian River	Sussex Ctrl High	Black, SWD	2
Delmar	Delmar Middle	Black, EL	2
Charter	East Side Charter	All, Male, Black, SWD, LI	5
Charter	Great Oaks High	All, Male, Black, SWD, EL, LI	6
Charter	Friere	Male, Black, SWD, LI	4

The role of the Office of School Climate and Discipline is to assist public schools in Delaware in their efforts to provide every student with a safe and supportive learning environment. As part of that charge, the Office collects and analyzes information from schools in various areas of student behavior in order to develop training and best practice tools that will assist schools in addressing those behaviors.   The Department supports the use of Best Practices as a tool to help schools prevent issues such as these and to address the changing emotional, mental and educational needs of a diverse student population throughout the First State.

Reference

Statistics, N. C. (2017). *Table 233.40 Percentage of Students suspended and expelled from public elementary and secondary schools, by sex, race/ethnicity, and state:2013-14.* Washington: National Center for Education Statistics.