



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



School Discipline in Connecticut Public Schools
Proactive Practices and Progress

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) strongly believes that every child deserves to be educated in a safe and nurturing environment with their educators and friends. CSDE has made addressing exclusionary discipline a priority over the last decade. As a result, the total number of students in grades kindergarten through two who receive at least one suspension or expulsion has declined significantly from 2,363 in 2014-15 to 1,047 in 2018-19 – a **decline of nearly 60 percent**. Specifically, CSDE’s efforts to address exclusionary discipline in Grades PK-2 have resulted in substantial reductions in the number of students suspended/expelled, especially among students of color. The table below, from our February 2021 report to the State Board of Education, shows the number of PK-2 students who were suspended or expelled.

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

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
American Indian or Alaska Native	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	24	15	10	12	10	*
Black or African American	907	622	481	354	345	228
Hispanic/Latino of any race	863	576	446	349	330	221
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	0
Two or More Races	100	73	64	48	57	37
White	465	373	292	291	302	182

All data points available on [EdSight](#).

As evidenced above, the number of black or African American students in PK-2 who were suspended or expelled declined from 907 in 2014-15 to 345 in 2018-19 – a 62% decline in five years. A similar 62% decline was also evidenced among Hispanic/Latino students suspended or expelled – from 863 in 2014-15 to 330 in 2018-19.

The data states that 1,100 suspensions were issued to 670 students in PK-2 in the 2019-20 school year. This number represents less than 1% of the total enrollment of students statewide in grades PK-2.

We recognize that there is still work to be done. Therefore, CSDE continues to be vigilant in monitoring and mitigating suspensions, providing professional learning for school leaders and training for staff, and addressing concerns in real time. The following highlights a selection of the ongoing efforts:

- CSDE has grouped districts into four tiers based on high rates of suspension or disproportionality in suspension rates by race/ethnicity to provide targeted interventions and supports effective in the 2020-21 school year. Districts with higher rates of suspension or disproportionality will be invited to complete an assessment of their policies, procedures, and practices related to disproportionate suspension rates for CSDE review, as well as to participate in a Community of Practice on School Discipline that will include quarterly progress monitoring and sharing of practices and challenges based on assessment information.

- CSDE conducts data monitoring of suspensions including reviewing and monitoring patterns in disciplinary infractions to develop targeted interventions and supports for school districts.
- CSDE has provided professional learning, technical assistance and supports with select districts over the last two years including Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) - 38 sessions; Charter School intensive trainings on school discipline – 23 sessions year one, 26 sessions year two; Universal Classroom Management – 5-day series; Restorative Practices within a Multi-tiered Behavioral Framework (MTBF) – 2-day session; Aligning and Embedding Trauma Informed Practices in MTBF – 2-day session; Aligning and Selecting Practices for a MTBF – 2-day session; Team Initiated Problem Solving (TIPS) – 2-day session; School Climate and Equity Student Walkthroughs – 7 sessions; Reducing Office Discipline Referrals for Students with Disabilities – 1-day session. Additional professional learning and training sessions continue to be deployed.
- CSDE has developed focused trainings for districts related to Special Education State Performance Plan Indicators under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to address disproportionate use of discipline among special education students.
- CSDE has designed professional learning focused on adult actions, including addressing equity and disproportionality to implement coherent systems to support diffusion and de-escalation strategies.
- CSDE created the Connecticut School Discipline Collaborative in 2018, a statewide stakeholder advisory body on school discipline policies and practices. The purpose of this multi-disciplinary group is to advise the Commissioner of Education and State Board of Education on strategies for transforming school discipline to reduce disproportionate school discipline. The members reflect a diverse range of expertise in education, public policy, law, youth development, and community leadership. The collaborative has completed the following work:
 - [State Board of Education Position Statement on Reducing Disproportionality in Suspensions and Expulsions \(Exclusionary Discipline\)](#)
 - Family Guides on Suspension and Expulsion – explains the rights and opportunities that families have if their students are facing suspensions and expulsions (hardcopies are being disseminated)
- CSDE continues to make significant investments in social-emotional well-being to proactively support students' behavioral/mental health.
 - See: [7 ways SDE is leading with social emotional learning](#)
 - [CSDE launched a K-12 Social-Emotional Learning Assessment System funded with federal emergency relief funds.](#)
- CSDE consistently analyzes district data, and when there is data of concern in PK-2 for out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, CSDE staff connects with these districts to provide training on the law and to put systems in place to address the use of suspensions and expulsions.
- CSDE issued new school discipline guidance for districts in preparation for school year 2020-21: [Addendum 10 - Reframing and Reopening: School Discipline Amidst COVID-19 Guidance](#)
- Additional measures and ongoing work taken by the [CSDE can be found on p.18 of the 2019-2020 Report on School Discipline in Connecticut Public Schools.](#)