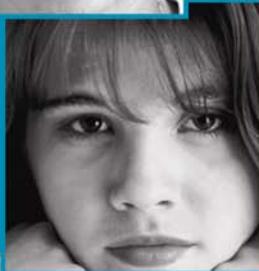


CONNECTICUT
VOICES
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Missing Out: Suspending Students from Connecticut Schools

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Missing Out: Suspending Students from Connecticut Schools

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I. Executive Summary

In 2007, the Connecticut General Assembly passed a law requiring that suspensions be served in school – rather than out of school -- unless the “pupil being suspended poses such a danger to persons or property or such a disruption of the educational process that the pupil shall be excluded from school during the period of suspension.”¹ The law was originally scheduled to go into effect on July 1, 2008. However, under pressure from some school districts, the General Assembly agreed in 2008 to delay the implementation of the new law until July 1, 2009. The new law – and suspension policy in general – remain controversial.

This is the first of two reports examining *out-of-school* suspension policy and practice in Connecticut. (For purposes of this report, the term “suspension” will only refer to out-of-school suspensions.) This report analyzes Connecticut-specific data from the 2006-2007 school year.^a It addresses the following questions:

- How many students were suspended?
- How frequently were students suspended?
- For how long were students suspended?
- For what behaviors were students suspended?
- Were certain categories of students suspended more than others?
- Did suspension rates vary among districts?
- Have suspension rates changed over time?

Our forthcoming report, *Excluding Children from School: The Unintended Costs of Suspension Policy and Practice in Connecticut*, explores the extensive research regarding the costs of excluding children from school. It examines effective alternatives to suspending students and offers guidelines as to how the new law limiting out-of-school suspensions should be interpreted and implemented. It also recommends steps that schools, school districts, the State Department of Education, and the General Assembly could take to promote positive learning environments while minimizing exclusions.

Why Suspension Matters

Whether and when to exclude children from school for disciplinary reasons is an important issue for several reasons.

- 1. There is a significant educational cost to missing school, particularly for children most at risk of educational failure.** Schools cannot teach children who are not in

^a Suspension data for the 2006-2007 school year were provided to Connecticut Voices for Children as a special data request fulfilled by Dr. John Rogers of the Connecticut State Department of Education. This report also analyzes publicly available 2006-2007 discipline data from the Connecticut State Department of Education’s website.

school.² Connecticut has one of the largest achievement gaps in the nation, whether one compares students from low-income to those in higher-income families, or black and Hispanic students to white students.³ Children in low-income districts are already working at a tremendous disadvantage compared to their peers in other districts.⁴ While successful schools have demonstrated that the gap can be bridged, it is only through extraordinary vision and hard work. Children in poor districts simply cannot afford to miss even a day of instruction. As discussed below, data from Connecticut suggest that the children who are most likely to be excluded from school are also the ones who are least able to afford to fall behind.⁵ Moreover, studies suggest that disciplinary infractions, including truancy, often mask underlying learning difficulties.⁶

2. **Suspensions may increase the risk of involvement in the juvenile justice system,** as children and youth who are sent home from school often remain unsupervised when their parents work.⁷ In 2007, Connecticut's Court Support Services Division (CSSD) reported that 89 percent of 16 and 17-year olds involved in the juvenile justice system had been suspended or expelled from school.⁸ While the link between school discipline problems and delinquency is attributable to many factors,⁹ police and others have expressed concern about delinquency when students are unsupervised during school hours.¹⁰
3. **Suspension can lead students to drop out.**¹¹ Over reliance on exclusion as a disciplinary technique frays, and sometimes severs, the relationship between children and adults in the school, particularly when the child's misbehavior is an undiagnosed cry for help.¹² Excluding children too often, or in the wrong context (for example, as a punishment for truancy), can make children feel that they are unwanted and that they do not belong in school.¹³ Many of these children are already struggling academically, and so when they return to school after missing even a few days, they feel that there is no way for them to catch up.¹⁴ Since many of the children who are excluded from school already feel a tenuous link to their education, even a short suspension from the school can have a startling and disproportionate impact, becoming the final "push" in a long process of dropping out.¹⁵ In a knowledge-driven economy such as Connecticut's, the long-term effects of dropping out from high school are devastating.¹⁶
4. **Over-reliance on exclusionary punishments and disproportionate suspension of minorities send the wrong message to children and adolescents and may undermine their confidence in their educational futures.** Public education in Connecticut has never been only about teaching children to read, write, and solve problems. Traditionally, it also has been about instilling moral values and capabilities necessary for citizenship, including an understanding of justice.¹⁷ How we discipline our children, and which children we choose to discipline, is an important lesson in justice.¹⁸ Children, particularly teenagers, are keenly attuned to fairness. Most children accept punishment when the punishment "fits the 'crime'" and when it is fairly administered. But there is little that can do more to undermine an adolescent's confidence in the good intentions of adults than the perception that punishment is disproportionate, arbitrary, or inconsistent.¹⁹ Poorly conceived or administered punishments run the risk of distracting students from reflecting on the wrongfulness of their own actions and taking responsibility for their own behavior.²⁰ They do not "make right" the wrong committed, or address the underlying issues responsible for the misbehavior.²¹

In addition, inappropriate punishments undermine children's faith in their schools and their educational futures.²² This may particularly be the case where there is disproportionate minority representation among the students excluded, regardless of the underlying causes.²³ Many children come from families and communities robust enough to weather a few injustices; an unnecessary suspension is nothing but a passing slight. However, many children grow up in communities in which injustice is a grinding fact of life, and where otherwise slight injustices reinforce their lack of agency and hope.²⁴ For these children, it is particularly important to get the teachable moment right.

5. **Children need a safe and respectful school environment in order to learn. Yet there is little evidence that excluding students is an effective method of promoting discipline.**²⁵ Indeed, there is consensus in the literature that excluding children from school for disciplinary reasons is neither effective nor appropriate, except in a very limited set of circumstances, and that the long-term costs of suspending students significantly outweigh the short-term benefits.²⁶ In particular, suspensions can unintentionally reward and reinforce poor behavior, as students often perceive a few days off from school as a vacation.²⁷ Educators report that when some students feel socially or academically overwhelmed in school and wish to avoid a situation that is stressful, they act out in order to be sent home. Because the threshold for "earning" a suspension is quite low in some districts, students can manipulate the system without having to do anything bad enough to weigh on their consciences or risk being disciplined by their parents.

6. **Preventive measures and non-exclusionary punishments are more effective methods of ensuring a safe and positive learning environment.**²⁸ Research has shown that interventions designed to get to the root of a disciplinary problem and prevent misconduct from escalating (such as positive reinforcement) and non-exclusionary punishments (such as detentions or restitution) are more effective strategies for ensuring a safe and positive learning environment than exclusionary punishments.²⁹ Just as some children come to school already knowing how to read, some children come to school with the social and personal skills necessary to learn productively in a community. Others do not. The only way to change these children's behavior is to teach them the skills they need to maintain self-discipline and to interact positively with others. Excluding a child from school, in itself, is rarely a pedagogically or developmentally sound means of teaching these skills.³⁰

Key Findings

1. On any given day in the 2006-2007 school year, approximately 4,100 children were excluded from Connecticut schools as a result of having been suspended for a disciplinary offense.
2. The percent of students suspended in the 2006-2007 school year varied dramatically among districts, ranging from 1% to 22%, with a state average of 7%.

3. In 2006-2007, nearly two-thirds of suspensions were for “school policy violations” (predominately “insubordination/disrespect,” “obscene language and/or behavior,” and attendance violations), while the remainder were for “serious disciplinary offenses” (such as “fighting/battery” and “physical/verbal confrontation”).
4. Schools in districts with lower socioeconomic indicators suspend substantially higher percentages of students than schools in districts with higher socioeconomic indicators.
5. Black and Hispanic students are suspended at far greater rates than Asian and white students. In the 2006-2007 school year, the suspension rates among black and Hispanic students were at least triple those of the white students: 18% and 13%, respectively. By contrast, the suspension rates among Asian and white students were 2% and 4%.
6. Special education students are suspended substantially more frequently than their peers. In the 2006-2007 school year, 15% of special education students were suspended as compared to only 6% of regular education students.
7. Students with low academic performance are suspended more frequently than their peers.
8. Students in all grades, including kindergarten, are suspended, though the greatest numbers of suspensions tend to happen in the ninth grade. Over one in five (22%) ninth grade students were suspended in 2006-2007.
9. Connecticut’s overall suspension rates and minority suspension rates have remained constant for the last two years. However, the percentage of special education students suspended/expelled for a cumulative total of more than 10 days has jumped dramatically in the last four years.
10. Connecticut ranks 2nd highest in the nation in the percentage of special education students suspended or expelled for a total of more than ten days, and within the top ten in the nation in terms of the disproportionate representation of minority students suspended, according to data from the 2005-2006 and 2003-2004 school years, respectively.

II. Connecticut Suspension Data

This report analyzes and reports Connecticut school disciplinary offense data from the 2006-2007 school year, seeking to understand the reasons why Connecticut students are being suspended from school and what differences exist – if any – among school districts and among different groups of students in the proportion of students suspended. CT Voices analyzed these data to look at suspensions statewide, suspension rates by subgroups of students, and variations among districts in their suspension rates.

Sources of Suspension Data and Technical Notes on Data Analysis

Reporting Requirements

Annually, the Connecticut State Department of Education collects data from each school regarding the types of disruptive behavior encountered and subsequent disciplinary sanctions. Connecticut is required to report these data to the federal government in a number of reports, mandated by the following Acts: Individuals with Disabilities Education; Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities; Gun-Free Schools; and No Child Left Behind. For the 2006-2007 school year, school districts were to report all in-school suspensions and also all suspensions and expulsions for “serious incidents” regardless of the disciplinary sanction issued. For a complete list and definitions of disciplinary behavior, see Appendix A.

Data Publicly Available

The data in this report are from the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (SDE) collection of 2006-2007 disciplinary offense data. Disciplinary offense data are disaggregated by type of offense, type of sanction, gender, race/ethnicity, and special education status. These data categories are available at the state and district levels. SDE publicly releases this data on its website. However, SDE does not make publicly available the *total* number of suspensions issued to various categories of students (racial minorities, special education students), or the total number of suspensions in different grades.

Notes on Calculations

The Connecticut State Department of Education provided Connecticut Voices for Children with unduplicated counts of suspended students within each racial category (Native-American, Asian-American, black, white, and Hispanic) by school district. When there were between one and five students suspended within a racial category, a blank was used. If there were zero students suspended within a racial category, then the category was omitted. As a result, when reporting suspension rates by districts, this report presents a range to account for the presence of blanks within the dataset provided (i.e., the lower value in the range assumes all values in categories that are blank are equal to 1 and the higher value assumes all values in categories that are blank equal 5).

To compare districts fairly, *certain sections* of this paper calculate and compare suspension rates *only* for districts that host at least grades kindergarten through 12th grade. We chose this method of analysis because the majority of suspensions occur in older grades, but SDE does not release data on the number of suspensions by grade for each district. As a result, compared to districts that serve all grades of students, districts that serve only younger grades would have relatively lower suspension rates while districts that served older grades would have relatively higher suspension rates simply because of the age distribution of each district’s students. Accordingly, in these sections of the paper (marked by a footnote) only 113 of 166 school districts were included in our analysis.

A. Statewide Suspension Data

How Many Students Were Suspended?

In total, 41,227 public school students (of a total 574,494) were suspended in the 2006-2007 school year. Suspension rates varied dramatically among districts, ranging from 1 percent to 22 percent, with a state average of 7 percent.^b

How Frequently Were Students Suspended?

In the 2006-2007 school year, 86,019 suspensions were issued statewide. There are no publicly-available data as to how many suspensions each suspended student received. Without these data, it is impossible to know whether a relatively small percent of individual students received a disproportionate share of all of the suspensions, or whether multiple suspensions were distributed evenly. However, these data do demonstrate that *on average* each suspended student received slightly more than two suspensions per year.^c

How Many Days of School Were Lost To Suspension?

In the 2006-2007 school year, 252,028 absences, or 1,400 absences per day, occurred due to suspensions.^d Suspensions lasted from 1 day to 10 days, with an average of 2.9 days.^e

For What Behaviors Were Students Suspended?

Students were suspended for a variety of conduct, from dress code violations and inappropriate language to skipping school and fighting. More serious offenses, like firearms possession or distribution of controlled substances, result in mandatory *expulsion* under Connecticut and federal law.³¹

In reporting discipline data to the State Department of Education, school administrators must classify behavioral offenses either as “serious disciplinary offenses” or as “school policy violations,” depending on the type and severity of the offense. When the behavior falls into both categories, school administrators have the discretion to decide in which category to classify the offense.³²

Appendix A of this report contains definitions for each category of offense.

Connecticut identifies the following behaviors as school policy violations:

^b Suspension rates by district were calculated by dividing the total number of individual students (unduplicated) receiving a suspension by the total number of students enrolled within the district. Only 113 of the 166 school districts were included in this analysis to determine suspension rates by district. The state average suspension rate was calculated by the dividing the total number of individual students receiving a suspension statewide (41,277) by the total number of students enrolled in public school statewide (574,494).

^c We calculated the average number of suspensions per suspended student by dividing the total number of suspensions issued (86,019) by the total number of students suspended (41,227).

^d The average number of absences due to suspensions per day was calculated by dividing the total number of days lost due to suspension (252,028) by the number of days in a school year (180).

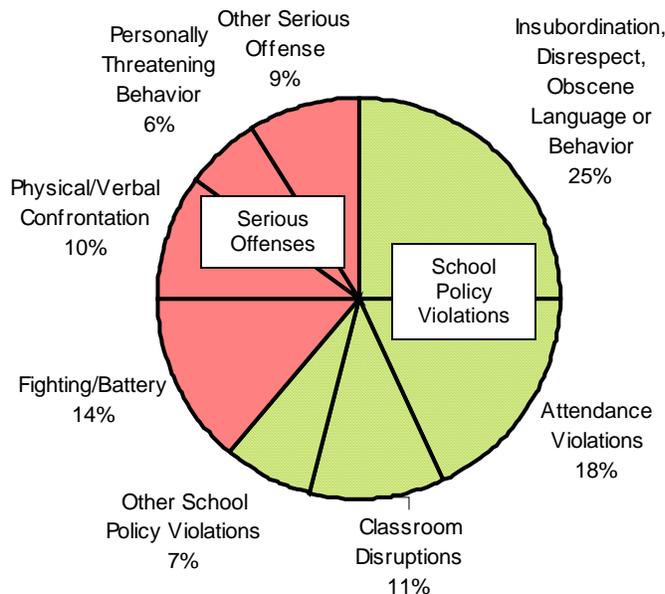
^e We calculated the average length of suspension by dividing the total number of days suspended (252,028 days) by the total number of suspensions issued (86,019 suspensions).

- Insubordination, disrespect, and obscene language and/or behavior
- Attendance violations
- Possession of electronic devices
- Trespassing
- Personal threats
- Academic violations
- School threats
- Other school policy violations^f

Connecticut identifies the following behaviors as serious disciplinary offenses:

- Violent crimes against persons
- Sexual/non-sexual harassment
- Personally threatening behavior
- Theft
- Physical/verbal confrontation
- Fighting/battery
- Property damage
- Weapons involvement
- Drugs involvement

Chart 1. Percentage of Suspensions Resulting From Each Behavior



In the 2006-2007 school year, the most frequent cause of suspensions was “insubordination/disrespect, obscene language and/or behavior;” 25 percent of suspensions were a result of violations in this category. Attendance violations were the second most common cause of suspensions (18 percent). “fighting/battery” (14 percent), “classroom disruptions” (11 percent), and “physical/verbal confrontation” (10 percent) were the next most common categories, with all other violations trailing behind.

^f Other school policy violations include the following offenses: general school policy violations; disobedient/disrespect; public display of affections; motor vehicle violations; bus infractions; dress code violations; accumulations of detentions, suspensions, or demerits; lying; selling food or candy; gambling; playing cards; eating in unauthorized areas; and failing to return school documents.

In total, nearly two-thirds (61 percent) of suspensions were triggered by “school policy violations,” while the remainder were for “seriously disruptive offenses” (39 percent). Table 1 summarizes the various disciplinary offenses that triggered a suspension in the 2006-2007 school year.

Table 1. Suspended Students Were More Often Excluded from School for School Policy Violations than for Serious Offenses

Offense Category	Percentage of Suspensions Resulting from Each Behavior
<i>School Policy Violations</i>	
Insubordination/Disrespect, Obscene Language and/or Behavior	25%
Attendance	18%
Classroom Disruptions	11%
Other School Policy Violations	4%
Possession of Electronic Devices	1%
Trespassing	1%
Personal Threats	1%
Academic Violations	Less than 1%
School Threats	Less than 1%
<i>Total Percentage of Suspensions Resulting From School Policy Violations</i>	61%
<i>Serious Disciplinary Offenses</i>	
Fighting/Battery	14%
Physical/Verbal Confrontation	10%
Personally Threatening Behavior	6%
Drugs, Alcohol and/or Tobacco Involvement	3%
Theft	2%
Weapons Involvement	2%
Property Damage	1%
Sexual/Non-Sexual Harassment	1%
Violent Crimes Against Person	Less than 1%
<i>Total Percentage of Suspensions Resulting from Serious Disciplinary Offenses</i>	39%

Data taken from Connecticut State Department of Education, “Statewide Disciplinary Summary Report,” Disciplinary Offense Data (2006-2007).

B. Suspension Rates Among Different Subgroups of Students

Suspension rates are particularly high for certain subsets of students, including students in communities with low socioeconomic indicators, racial/ethnic minorities, special education students, students with low academic performance, and ninth grade students.

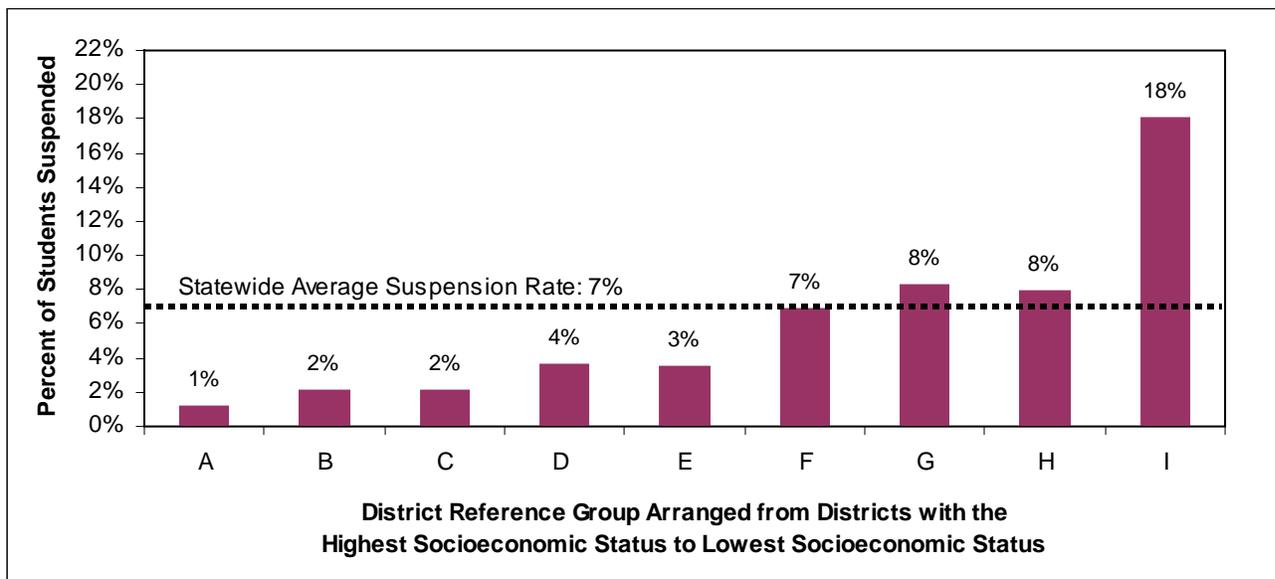
*Students in Communities with Low Socioeconomic Indicators*⁸

⁸ This subsection’s calculations only included districts that host grades kindergarten through 12th grade. Therefore, 113 of the 166 school districts were included in this analysis.

Schools in districts with lower socioeconomic indicators suspend substantially higher percentages of students than schools in districts with higher socioeconomic indicators.

Connecticut’s State Department of Education categorizes school districts into “District Reference Groups” (DRGs). Districts are grouped together on the basis of median family income, parental education, parental occupation, percentage of children receiving free or reduced-price meals, percentage of children whose families speak a language other than English at home, and the number of students enrolled within the district.³³ Districts are classified into DRGs A through I, where districts in DRG “A” contain students generally living in families with the highest socioeconomic status indicators, while districts in DRG “I” contain students living in families with generally the lowest socioeconomic status indicators.

Chart 2. Suspension Rates Are Higher in Districts with Lower Socioeconomic Indicators



Data taken from Connecticut State Department of Education, 2006-2007 Public School Enrollment Data & “Unduplicated Counts of Out-of-School Suspension (2006-2007).” Special Data Request for Connecticut Voices for Children provided by Dr. John Rogers of Connecticut State Department of Education.

Districts in DRGs “G” through “I” – which contain students of lower socioeconomic status – suspend students at a higher than average rate.^h The excessive use of suspensions is particularly high in DRG I, the reference group with students from families with the lowest socioeconomic indicators. DRG I, that includes schools in the districts of Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Waterbury, and Windham, suspended 18 percent of their student body in the 2006-2007 school year. The suspension rate of DRG I is nearly *four times* that of the average suspension rate (5 percent) in the remaining DRGs.

^h Suspension rates by DRG were calculated by dividing the total number of individual students (unduplicated) receiving a suspension by the total number of students enrolled within the DRG.

Also, DRG I has a disproportionate number of *incidents* of suspensions.ⁱ In 2006-2007, DRG I had 437 suspensions per 1,000 students, whereas on average, the other DRGs had 89 suspensions per 1,000 students—*nearly a five-fold difference*.

Notably, another study has demonstrated that the correlation between low socioeconomic indicators and high suspension rates exists in kindergarten, as well.^j The table below, taken from a report published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, presents a comprehensive summary of the behavioral disturbances among kindergarteners in the 2005-2006 school year. Unduplicated counts of “suspension” as a sanction were not reported. Rather, the term “disciplined students” in this summary includes a variety of possible disciplinary sanctions, including suspensions, expulsions, detentions, and parent-teacher conferences. “Disciplined students,” however, is an unduplicated count of students.

Table 2 shows that kindergarten students in districts in DRGs G through I – with 47 percent of the total student population – accounted for 93 percent of all students disciplined. In contrast, schools in districts in DRGs A through C – with 29 percent of the total student population – reported a total of *two* students disciplined. Statewide, reported disciplinary incidents resulted in a total of 1,957 school days lost through suspensions, with over 82 percent of these lost days arising from suspensions from schools in DRG I.³⁴

ⁱ We calculated the incidents of suspensions per 1,000 students within each DRG by dividing the total number of suspensions issued in the DRG by the total student population within the DRG and then multiplying that quotient by 1,000.

^j Exclusionary discipline exists even in pre-kindergarten. In the 1999-2000 school year, Connecticut had one of the highest rates of preschool expulsions in the nation. Pre-kindergarten students were expelled at a rate of 12.31 expulsions/1,000 students. The state’s K-12 expulsion rate that year, in contrast, was 1.18 expulsions/1,000 students. Gilliam, Walter, “Pre-kindergarteners Left Behind: Expulsion Rates in State Pre-kindergarten Systems,” Yale University Child Study Center (May 4, 2005). Available at: http://www.fcd-us.org/usr_doc/ExpulsionPolicyBrief.pdf.

Table 2: Districts with Kindergarteners in Disadvantaged Families Suspend Students More Often than Districts with Kindergarteners in More Advantaged Families

DRG	Number of Kindergarten Students Within DRG	Number of Behavioral Incidents						Number and Percent of Students Disciplined		Total # Days Lost to Suspensions	Average Length of Suspension per Student (in days)
		Serious Offenses ¹	Harassment	Physical Confrontation	Fighting	Theft/Property Damage	School Policy	#	%		
A	2,263	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
B	7,163	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.0	1	1.0	
C	2,904	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
D	6,208	1	5	5	7	1	12	0.3	23	1.4	
E	2,107	0	2	4	2	0	2	0.3	9	1.3	
F	2,264	0	0	3	2	0	10	0.5	13	1.1	
G	5,454	4	8	28	17	3	52	1.2	140	2.2	
H	5,759	1	13	64	7	2	46	1.2	166	2.4	
I	9,009	25	57	91	278	16	222	3.8	1,605	4.6	

(1) Crimes against persons, weapons or drugs

Table taken from Connecticut State Department of Education. "Data Bulletin: Kindergarten 2006-2007." November 2007. Data Bulletin uses 2005-2006 discipline data.

Racial/Ethnic Minorities

As illustrated in Table 3, below, in the 2006-2007 school year black students comprised 14 percent of the total public school population, but constituted 35 percent of all suspended students in Connecticut. Hispanic students comprised 16 percent of Connecticut's public school population, but constituted 29 percent of the total suspended student population. In contrast, white students comprised about two-thirds (66 percent) of the public school population, but only one-third (34 percent) of all suspended students.

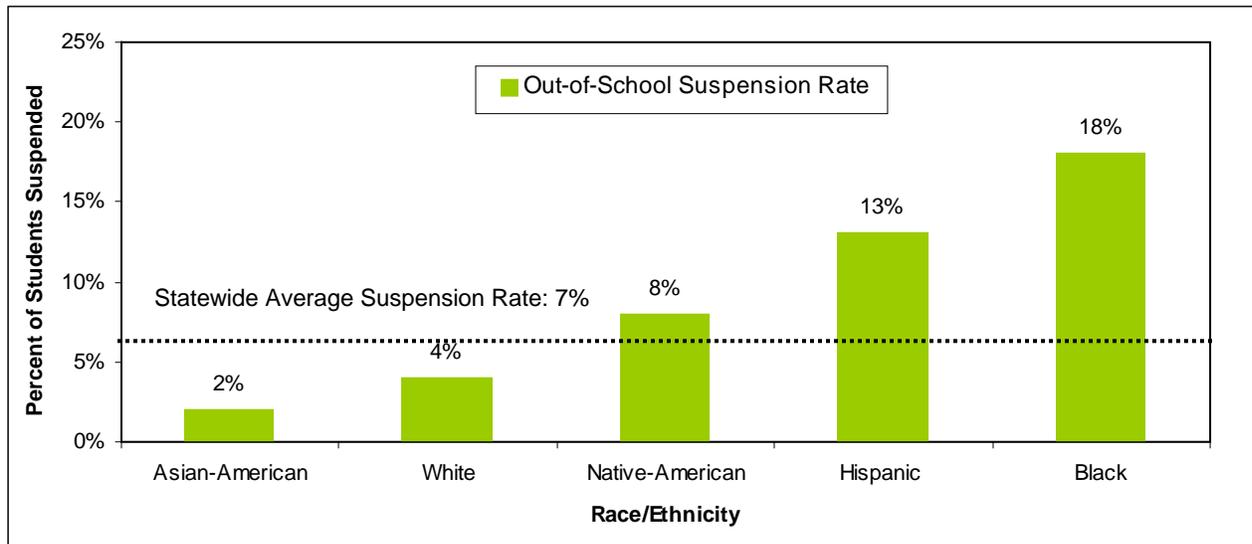
Table 3. Connecticut Schools Disproportionately Suspend Black, Hispanic, and Native-American Students

	Percent of Public School Population	Percent of All Students Suspended
White	66%	34%
Black	14%	35%
Hispanic	16%	29%
Other	4%	2%
Total	100%	100%

Data taken from Connecticut State Department of Education, 2006-2007 Public School Enrollment Data & "Unduplicated Counts of Out-of-School Suspension (2006-2007)." Special Data Request for Connecticut Voices for Children provided by Dr. John Rogers of Connecticut State Department of Education.

This disproportionality could also be expressed in terms of differences in suspension rates. In the 2006-2007 school year, Native-American, Hispanic and black students had the highest suspension rates. Specifically, 8 percent of Native-American students, 13 percent of Hispanic students, and 18 percent of black students were suspended. The suspension rates for black and Hispanic students are at least *triple* the suspension rate of white students (who had a 4 percent suspension rate). In addition, black and Hispanic students were suspended *six times* more often than Asian-American students (who had a 2 percent suspension rate). Chart 3, below, presents statewide suspension rates by race/ethnicity.

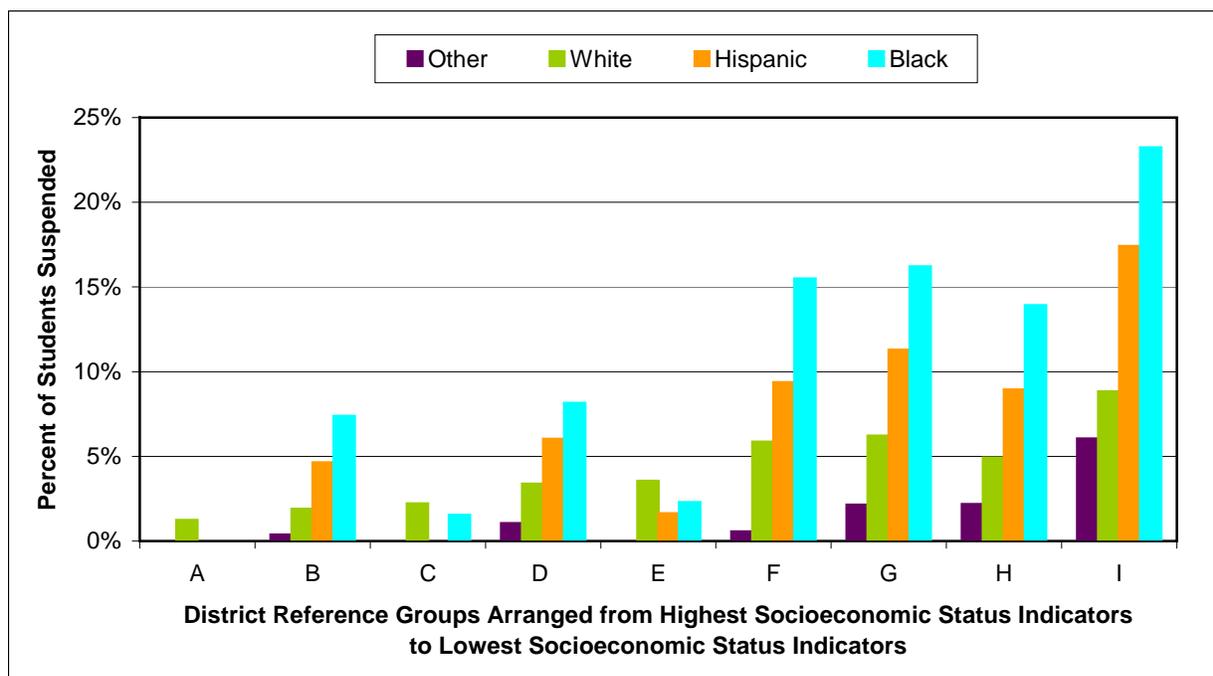
Chart 3. Native-American, Hispanic, and Black Students Have Highest Suspension Rates



Data taken from Connecticut State Department of Education, 2006-2007 Public School Enrollment Data & “Unduplicated Counts of Out-of-School Suspension (2006-2007).” Special Data Request for Connecticut Voices for Children provided by Dr. John Rogers of Connecticut State Department of Education.

Racial/ethnic disproportionality persists when calculating suspension rates by race across DRGs. In nearly every DRG, black and Hispanic students were more likely to be suspended than their white peers. The disparity between suspension rates of black/Hispanic students and white students was highest in DRG B. Black students attending schools in DRG B were four times more likely to be suspended than their white peers. Hispanic students attending schools in DRG B were three times more likely to be suspended than their white peers. Further, the correlation between low socioeconomic indicators and high suspension rates is also demonstrated in Chart 4, below. Regardless of race, students who attend schools with lower socioeconomic indicators have higher suspension rates than their peers who live in districts with higher socioeconomic indicators.

Chart 4. Black and Hispanic Students Have Highest Suspension Rates, Regardless of Their District’s Socioeconomic Status



Data taken from Connecticut State Department of Education, 2006-2007 Public School Enrollment Data & “Unduplicated Counts of Out-of-School Suspension (2006-2007).” Special Data Request for Connecticut Voices for Children provided by Dr. John Rogers of Connecticut State Department of Education.

There are no publicly-available data in Connecticut about the frequency of multiple suspensions disaggregated by race/ethnicity. However, given that districts in DRGs I have the greatest total number of suspensions relative to their total student populations, and that districts in DRG I are majority non-white students, there is a reason to be concerned that minority students are also overrepresented with respect to the frequency of suspensions.

Notably, Connecticut is not unique. Racial disparities in suspension rates persist nationwide.³⁵ However, compared with other states, Connecticut ranks high in terms of racial disparities in suspension rates. In 2004-2005, Connecticut ranked 9th highest in the overrepresentation of black students suspended and 3rd highest in overrepresentation of Hispanic students suspended. Conversely, Connecticut had the highest under-representation in the nation in white students suspended.³⁶ In 1975, the Children’s Defense Fund reported, based on national school discipline provided by the United States Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, that the suspension rates for black students were between two and three times higher than the suspension rates for white students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.³⁷ It is sobering, then, that in Connecticut in 2006-2007 – *three decades* later -- the suspension rate for black students (18 percent) was more than *four* times higher than the suspension rate for white students.

Connecticut’s publicly-available disciplinary offense data do not disaggregate by race the number, length, or causes of suspensions. As a result, we cannot tell whether, in Connecticut, the racial disproportionality in suspension rates exists independently of socioeconomic status. However, studies in other states have found that racial differences do persist, even controlling for poverty, and that minority students are suspended at greater rates and more severely than their white peers for

*similarly or less disruptive behavior.*³⁸ Research regarding the potential causes for such disparities will be addressed in our forthcoming paper, *Excluding Children from School: The Unintended Costs of Suspension Policy and Practice in Connecticut.*

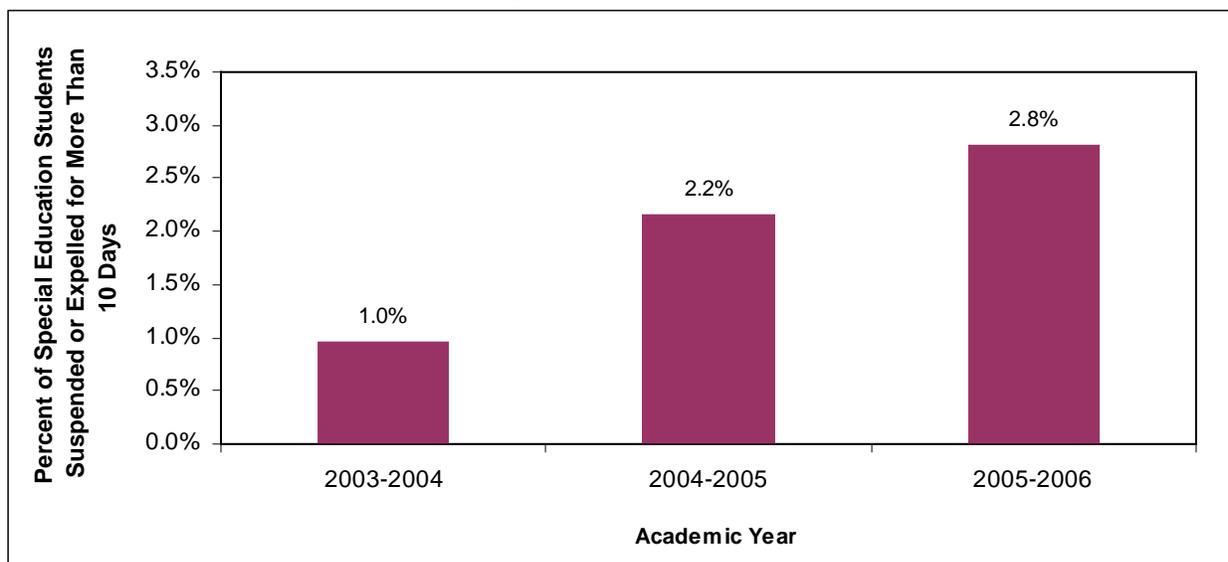
Special Education Students

Special education students in Connecticut are also substantially more likely to be suspended than their peers. In 2006-2007, 15 percent of special education students were suspended as compared to only 6 percent of regular education students.

The percent of special education students who were suspended and/or expelled for a cumulative total of ten or more days has been increasing steadily. The United States Office for Special Education Programs collects data yearly on suspension and expulsions that cumulatively exceed ten days among special education students by state. The graph below summarizes the percent of Connecticut's special education population suspended or expelled for a cumulative total of ten days or more from 2003-2004 to 2005-2006.

As shown in Chart 4, below, the proportion of special education students suspended or expelled for extended periods of time has grown from less than 1.0 percent of special education students in 2003 to 2.8 percent of students in 2006—nearly a three-fold increase.³⁹ Connecticut is tied with Virginia for having the second highest rates in the nation of special education students suspended/expelled for a cumulative total of ten or more days.⁴⁰

Chart 5. The Percentage of Special Education Students Suspended/Expelled For More Than Ten Days Has Increased Steadily in Recent Years



Data taken from IDEAdata.org, "IDEA Part B: Discipline 2004-2006."

Students with Low Academic Performance

There are data to suggest that the most academically vulnerable students in Connecticut are also at the highest risk of being excluded from educational opportunities for disciplinary reasons. Connecticut measures academic achievement through the state's Connecticut Mastery Test (grades

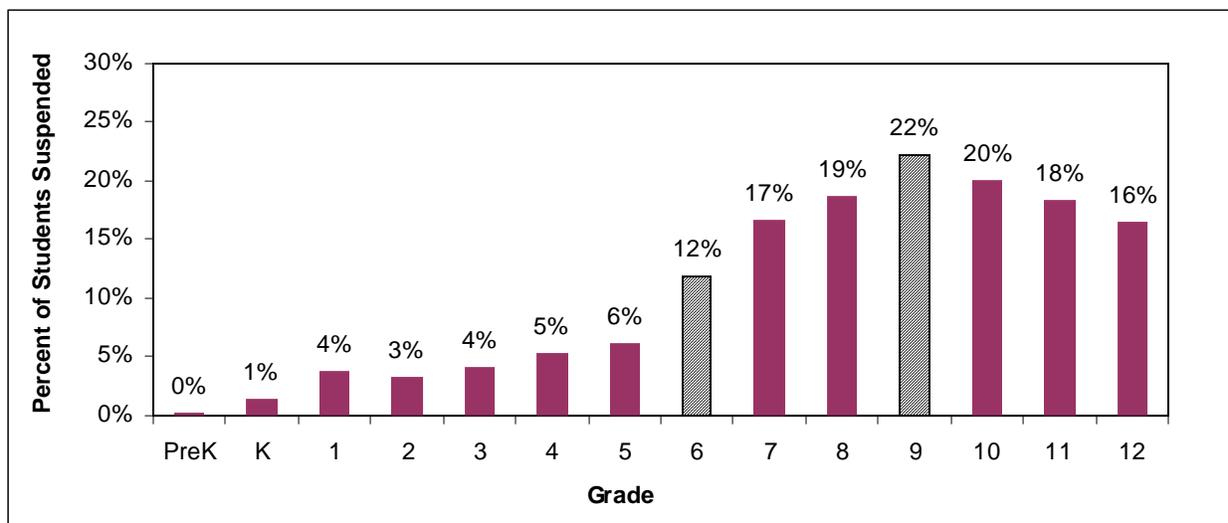
3-8) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (grade 10).⁴¹ In every grade tested, suspended or expelled students scored below proficiency in reading and math at higher rates when compared to the entire grade.⁴² For example, 20 percent of eighth grade students scored below math proficiency, whereas slightly more than 40 percent of suspended or expelled students scored below math proficiency.⁴³

This persistent exclusion of certain subgroups (children from disadvantaged families and racial/ethnic minorities) may be affecting overall achievement. Connecticut has one of the highest achievement gaps in the nation between children of poor and non-poor families and between white students and their black and Hispanic peers.⁴⁴ In the 2005-2006 school year, Hispanic and black students trailed their Asian-American and white counterparts by an average of 32 percentage points or more on reading, math, and writing assessments.⁴⁵ Students in districts with the lowest socioeconomic indicators (DRG I), compared with students in districts with the highest socioeconomic indicators (DRG A) were five times less likely to pass the Connecticut Mastery Test in Grades 4, 6, and 8 and 15 times more likely to drop out of high school.⁴⁶

Ninth Grade Students

Suspensions rates peak in the ninth grade. Chart 5, below, shows the proportion of students suspended by grade in the 2006-2007 school year. In every grade, including pre-kindergarten, a proportion of students were suspended. However, the largest proportion of students suspended occurred in the 9th grade.

Chart 6. Percent of Students Suspended Peaks in 9th Grade and Then Declines



Data taken from Connecticut State Department of Education, 2006-2007 Public School Enrollment Data & “Unduplicated Counts of Out-of-School Suspension (2006-2007).” Special Data Request for Connecticut Voices for Children provided by Dr. John Rogers of Connecticut State Department of Education.

In general, the proportion of students suspended increases with each grade (the exception is between 1st and 2nd grade), but begins to decline after 9th grade. It is possible that some part of this decline after 9th grade in the percentage of students suspended is attributable to some students dropping out of school who would otherwise have been likely to be suspended.

C. Variations Among Districts in Suspension Rates^k

Suspension rates vary dramatically among districts. Rates ranged from 1 percent to 22 percent, with the state average at 7 percent.¹ Of the 113 districts included in this section’s analysis, 27 districts (24 percent) had a suspension rate that exceeded the state average. Tables 4 and 5, below, list the five K-12 districts with highest and lowest suspension rates.

Table 4. K-12 Districts with the Highest Suspension Rates

District	(DRG)	Total Enrollment	Suspension Rate	
			Percent of Students Suspended	Number of Students Suspended ^m
Bridgeport	(I)	21,239	22%	4,613
Hartford	(I)	22,328	19%	4,336
New Britain	(I)	10,940	17%	1,899
New London	(I)	2,953	17%	503-507
New Haven	(I)	19,997	17%	3,336-3,344

Table 5. K-12 Districts with the Lowest Suspension Rates

District	(DRG)	Total Enrollment	Suspension Rate	
			Percent of Students Suspended	Number of Students Suspended
New Canaan	(A)	4,130	1%	37-49
Granby	(B)	2,278	1%	18-26
Simsbury	(B)	4,992	1%	35-43
Westport	(A)	5,571	1%	33-37
Avon	(B)	3,506	1%	23-35

Data taken from Connecticut State Department of Education, 2006-2007 Public School Enrollment Data & “Unduplicated Counts of Out-of-School Suspension (2006-2007).” Special Data Request for Connecticut Voices for Children by Dr. John Rogers of Connecticut State Department of Education.

Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New London, and New Haven had the highest suspension rates. These districts’ rates are contrasted against the much lower suspension rates in New Canaan, Granby, Simsbury, Westport, and Avon.

^k Only districts that contained K-12 grades are included in this subsection. That is, data from a total of 113 districts of the 166 districts are represented in this analysis.

¹ Suspension rates by district were calculated by dividing the total number of individual students (an unduplicated count) receiving a suspension by the total number of students enrolled within the district. The state average suspension rate was calculated by dividing the total number of students receiving a suspension statewide (41,277) by the total number of students enrolled in public school (548,873).

^m The Connecticut State Department of Education provided Connecticut Voices for Children with unduplicated counts of suspended students within each racial category (Native-American, Asian-American, black, white, and Hispanic) by district. When there were between one and five students suspended within a racial category, a blank was used. If there were zero students suspended within a racial category, then the category was omitted. When reporting suspension rates for certain districts, we present a range to account for the presence of blanks within the dataset provided to us.

Association between discipline rates and socioeconomic factors

As noted above, suspension rates tend to be higher in districts with lower socioeconomic indicators. However, this correlation is untrue for some districts with lower socioeconomic status indicators but have relatively low suspension rates. Conversely, some districts in middle-income communities have relatively high suspension rates. The following tables present the suspension rates of districts in lower-income and middle-income communities.

Table 6. Districts in Communities with Low Socioeconomic Indicators with Relatively Low Suspension Rates

District	(DRG)	Total Enrollment	Suspension Rate	
			Percent of Students Suspended	Number of Students Suspended
Windham	(I)	3,674	11%	402-410
Derby	(H)	1,454	8%	116-120
Norwalk	(H)	10,729	8%	801
Danbury	(H)	9,706	5%	507-509
Stamford	(H)	15,041	3%	482

Data taken from Connecticut State Department of Education, 2006-2007 Public School Enrollment Data & “Unduplicated Counts of Out-of-School Suspension (2006-2007).” Special Data Request for Connecticut Voices for Children provided by Dr. John Rogers of Connecticut State Department of Education.

Windham is among Connecticut’s seven poorest districts, and yet its suspension rate (11 percent) is relatively low compared to other districts in DRG I (though it exceeds the state average of 7 percent). Some districts included in DRG “H,” such as Derby, Norwalk, Danbury, and Stamford, have some of the lowest suspension rates in the state. For instance, Stamford, a large urban district, has a suspension rate of 3 percent.

Among the 27 districts whose suspension rate exceeded the state average, four are districts in more middle-income communities. Although none of these districts is among the districts with the *highest* suspension rates in the state, their rates are relatively high given their socioeconomic status indicators.

Table 7. Districts in Middle-Income Communities with Relatively High Suspension Rates

District	(DRG)	Total Enrollment	Suspension Rate	
			Percent of Students Suspended	Number of Students Suspended
Windsor	(F)	4,132	12%	511-515
East Windsor	(F)	1,516	10%	146
Thompson	(F)	1,508	9%	135
Seymour	(F)	2,737	8%	214

Data taken from Connecticut State Department of Education, 2006-2007 Public School Enrollment Data & “Unduplicated Counts of Out-of-School Suspension (2006-2007).” Special Data Request for Connecticut Voices for Children provided by Dr. John Rogers of Connecticut State Department of Education.

D. Trends in School Suspensions

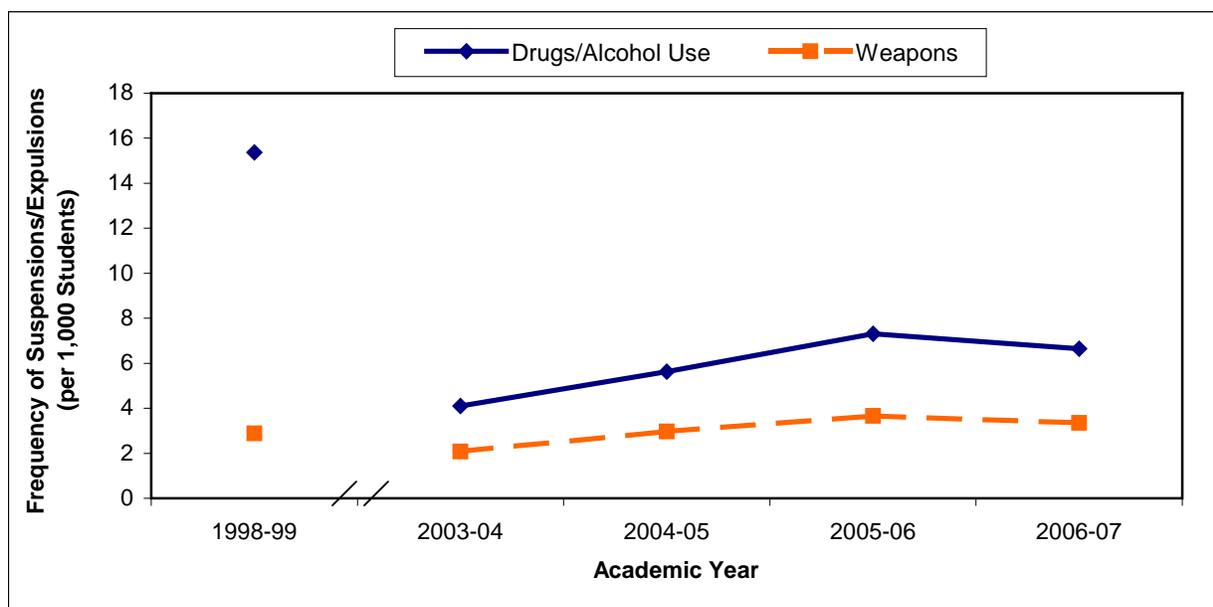
The Connecticut State Department of Education does not have trend data on the number of students suspended, since reporting requirements with respect to non-serious offenses changed in

recent years. However, certain “serious incidents” can be compared over several years, and 2006-2007 suspension data can be compared with 2005-2006.

Weapons Involvement and Drug/Alcohol Involvement

Federal reports under the *Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act* and *Gun Free Schools Act* mandate the collection of data on disciplinary actions taken to address behavior involving drugs/alcohol and weapons in public schools.⁴⁷ The chart below presents the frequency of suspensions and expulsions for disciplinary offenses related to drugs/alcohol and weapons. The data presented show the number of suspensions per 1,000 students over a number of years.

Chart 7. Frequency of Suspensions and Expulsions for Weapons and Drug/Alcohol Involvement^a



Data taken from Connecticut State Department of Education, “Disciplinary Offense Data,” 2003-2004, 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007 and Connecticut Bureau of Student Assessment and Research, “Disciplinary Offense Report Data Bulletin.” 1998-1999.

Comparing 1998-1999 to 2006-2007, there has been a significant drop in suspensions/expulsions for behavior involving drugs/alcohol in public schools. However, since 2003-2004, suspensions/expulsions for drugs/alcohol have gradually increased. This recent increase is similar among offenses involving weapons.

Comparison of 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 Suspension Data

In both the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years, the statewide average suspension rate was 7 percent. Further, the representation of black, Hispanic, and special education students among the

^a Discipline data for these categories was unavailable for the following school years: 1999-2000, 2000-2001, and 2001-2002.

total population of suspended students remained consistent.^o Likewise, in both years, the majority of suspensions issued resulted from school policy violations.

III. Conclusion

As this analysis of school disciplinary data from the State Department of Education has shown, Connecticut schools frequently discipline students by excluding them from school.

Suspension rates are disproportionately high among racial minorities, special education students, students from less advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, and students at-risk of educational failure. Indeed, data indicate that the students at greatest risk of being excluded from school are those who need educational opportunity the most. Data also show that the majority of suspensions issued in Connecticut are for school policy violations; suspensions for behavior that poses a danger to people or property are less common.

The extensive research linking suspensions to poor academic performance, a weakening of the bond between students and their school community, dropping out, and juvenile delinquency raises serious concerns about the educational and social costs of Connecticut schools continuing these suspension practices, particularly in a state with an achievement gap as wide and persistent as Connecticut's. Nor are current suspension practices justified in terms of their disciplinary benefits. Indeed, in terms of promoting discipline and ensuring a positive learning environment, suspensions are, in the majority of cases, not only ineffective, but also counterproductive.

As discussed more fully in our next report, the high social and educational costs of excluding children from school suggest that if we are serious about closing the achievement gap, ensuring positive learning environments, preventing juvenile delinquency and reducing drop out, Connecticut should invest in alternative methods of preventing and correcting school disciplinary problems.

^o "Unduplicated Counts of Out-of-School Suspension (2005-2006) and (2006-2007)." Special Data Request for Connecticut Voices for Children provided by Dr. John Rogers of the Connecticut State Department of Education. From 2005-2006 to 2006-2007 the proportion of black, Hispanic, and special education students within the total population of suspended students stayed relatively unchanged. Black students comprised 35% of the total suspended population both years; Hispanic students comprised 28% of students in the first year of data and 29% of in the second year of data; and special education students comprised 23% of the suspended population in 2005-2006 and 22% of the suspended population in 2006-2007.

Appendix A: Definitions of Types of Disciplinary Offenses

The following pages were taken from a Connecticut State Department of Education document intended to assist administrators in coding various types of disciplinary offenses.^p When reporting discipline data to the State Department of Education, school administrators must classify behavioral offenses either as “serious disciplinary offenses” or as “school policy violations,” depending on the type and severity of the offense. When the behavior falls into both categories, school administrators have the discretion to decide in which category to classify the offense.⁴⁸

^p See “ED 166 General Instructions and File Layout for 2006-2007,” available at: <http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/help/ed-166/ed166files/2006-2007%20Final%20ED166%20General%20Instructions%20and%20File%20Layout%20v09062006.pdf>.

Weapon Involvement

A weapon is any object that is designed to, or may readily be converted to harm an individual or individuals. A weapon offense may involve possession, use, and/or sale. If a weapon is used in the commission of another offense, indicate the offense that was committed in the “Incident Involved” field (e.g., battery), and use the “Weapon Involvement” field to report the weapon that was used in that incident. If a weapon was involved in the incident, you must report the weapon type. A brief description of a number of weapon types is provided in Table 8.

Weapon types include firearms of any kind operable or inoperable, loaded or unloaded including, but not limited to, a handgun or a rifle/shotgun. Weapons are also, but are not limited to, knives, stun weapons, pipes, razor blades or similar instruments with sharp cutting edges or other devices or substances constructed for the purpose of being used as a weapon or which may be readily converted for use as a weapon including, but not limited to, self-defense weapons such as mace or pepper spray. This category also includes any other objects possessed by students with the intent of using them as a weapon (e.g., baseball bat). Fireworks, stink bombs or other explosive devices are also reported in this category.

Handgun – A firearm that has a short stock and is designed to be held and fired by the use of a single hand or has been redesigned or altered to be aimed and fired with two hands and uses the energy of an explosion to fire a projectile through a smooth or rifled bore.

Rifle/Shotgun – A firearm that has been designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of an explosion to fire single projectile or a number of projectiles through a smooth or rifled bore.

Explosive Devices – Any dynamite, nitroglycerine, black powder or other similar explosive material including plastic explosives. An explosive device does not include ammunition or ammunition components such as primers, or percussion caps. Report bombs, grenades, and rockets having a propellant charge of more than four ounces or missiles having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce here.

Report possession of ammunition or ammunition components under “Bullets/Ammunition (3716).”

Other Weapons – may include, but is not limited to, any other tool or instrument which school staff could reasonably conclude as being designed for and/or capable of inflicting bodily injury (e.g., chains, belt buckles, butterfly knives, baseball bats, hockey sticks, etc., or other types of pointed instruments). **If this category (i.e., Other Weapon) is selected then a description of the weapon is required)**

Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco Involvement

The violation of laws or district/school policy prohibiting the distribution and/or use of tobacco products, certain controlled substances and/or intoxicating alcoholic beverages must be reported. Report all Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco sales, use or possession incidences if any type of action is taken by the school or district regardless of whether the incident happened on school property or not. If Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco were involved in the commission of another offense, indicate the offense that was committed in the "Incident Involved" field (e.g., sexual battery) and use the "Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco Involvement" field to report the type of drugs or alcohol involvement in the incident. This category also includes the violation of laws and/or school-district policy regarding the use of prescription medications. **If the Other type of Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco category is selected then a description of the drug, alcohol, and/or tobacco will be required.**

A brief description of the types of Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco Involvement is provided in Table 9.

Table 7. Incident type codes and descriptions

Disciplinary Violation	Incident Type	Description of Incident
Property Damage	Arson	The use of fire to intentionally damage or attempt to damage school or personal property. Trashcan fires are included in this category. If fireworks or any other incendiary devices are a contributing factor to the fire, then you must indicate the weapon type used.
	Vandalism	Willful destruction or defacement of school or personal property (i.e., destroying school computer records, carving on a desk, spray painting walls, damaging vehicles).
Theft	Burglary / Breaking and Entering	Unlawful entry or attempted entry into a building or other structure with the intent to commit a crime. For example, offender breaks a school window, crawls through the window, and steals a laptop.
	Theft/Stealing	The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person without threat of bodily harm or violence. For example, electronic theft or taking a pocket organizer from another student’s open locker. Note: The difference between theft and burglary is that theft does not involve breaking and entering and no victim is present.
	Suspicion of stealing	
	Robbery	The taking or attempting to take, anything of value that is owned by another person or organization under confrontational circumstances using force, fear or the threat of violence. For example, threatening to beat up a student if he does not give up his lunch money. Note: A key difference between robbery and theft is that in a robbery, the victim is present and there is either the threat of or actual physical harm.
	Possession of stolen property	
	Counterfeiting	Possession of counterfeit currency with the intent to distribute/use
	Sale or Intent to sell stolen property	
Fighting/Battery	Fighting/Altercation/Physical Aggression	Participation in an incident involving physical confrontation in which one or all participants receive at least some type of minor physical injury (e.g., black eye, bloody nose or lip, bruises, etc.). This category also includes the situation in which one person strikes another causing minor injuries but the “fight” is broken up prior to the other participant retaliating.
	Battery/Assault	Touching or striking of another person with the intent of causing serious bodily harm to the individual. For example, another person physically attacks a person whether provoked or not, resulting in an injury requiring down on the ground trying to protect him/herself. medical attention. For example, the kicking of a person while he/she is on the ground trying to protect him/herself.
Physical/Verbal Confrontation	Physical Altercation	Participation in an incident involving a confrontation, tussle, or some type of physical aggression that does not result in any injury. This category also includes the situation in which one person strikes another causing no injuries but the “altercation” is broken up prior to the other participant retaliating.
	Verbal Altercation	Participation in an incident involving a verbal confrontation (i.e., shouting match, yelling etc.). This can also be the prelude to a more serious issue.
	Inciting a Fight/Riot	
	Throwing an object	Use this category if there is a victim with any level of injury

Personally Threatening Behavior	Harassment (Non-Sexual)	Repeatedly annoying or attacking a student or group of students or other personnel, creating an intimidating or hostile educational or work environment.
	Threat/Intimidation/Verbal Harassment	Physical, verbal, written, or electronic action, which immediately creates fear of harm, without displaying a weapon and without subjecting the victim to actual physical attack.
	Racial Slurs/Hate Crimes	An incident involving some characteristics or perceived characteristics of the victim including race, gender, religion, color, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, political beliefs, marital status, social or family background, linguistic preference, or disability.
	Bullying	Overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at a school-sponsored activity or on a school bus, which acts are repeated against the same student over time. For example, verbal or written threats of physical harm.
	Hazing	
Violent Crimes Against Persons	Foreign substance (feces; urine, bodily secretions)	Intentionally placing foreign substance in a person's food or drink that could seriously harm the individual.
	Foreign substance (prescription medications)	Intentionally placing foreign substance in a person's food or drink that could seriously harm the individual.
	Foreign substance (Illegal drugs)	Intentionally placing foreign substance in a person's food or drink that could seriously harm the individual.
	Foreign substance (dirt, clay, crayons, etc.)	Intentionally placing foreign substance in a person's food or drink that could harm the individual.
	Foreign substance onto a person	Spraying or other wise placing a foreign substance on a person with the intent of causing harm or making a person uncomfortable (e.g., itching powder; spraying mouthwash into persons face; placing gum or other substance into hair into hair;)
	Homicide	Murder or manslaughter. Killing of a human being. Law enforcement must be notified.
	Self Injurious Behavior	Self-injurious behavior leading to the immediate removal from school/class
	Blackmail	The extortion of money or other valuables from a threat of exposing a criminal act or other discreditable behavior. Law enforcement must be notified.
	Kidnapping (Abduction)	To seize, transport, and/or detain a person or a minor without the consent of his/her custodial parent(s) or legal guardian against their will either by force or fraud (e.g., taking a hostage, leaving school grounds without permission with a minor).
	School Threat/Bomb Threat	Any threat (verbal, written or electronic) by a person to bomb or use other substances or devices for the purpose of exploding, burning, causing damage to a school building, property or harm to students and/or staff (e.g., bomb threat, chemical/biological threat, terrorist threat).
	Stabbing	The intentional puncturing of the skin using some type of sharp instrument. The type of weapon used (e.g., knife, pencil/pen) must be indicated.
Sexually Related Behavior	Harassment-Sexual	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. For example, leering,

		pinching, grabbing, suggestive comments, gestures, or jokes; or pressure to engage in sexual activity.
	Sexual Battery	Oral, anal, or vaginal penetration forcibly or against the will of a person or where the victim is incapable of giving consent. Sexual contact forcibly and/or against the will of a person or where the victim is incapable of giving consents because of his/her youth and/or mental incapacity. For example, rape, fondling, indecent liberties, child molestation, sodomy, or statutory rape.
	Sexual Offense	Sexual intercourse, sexual contact, or other behavior intended to result in mutual sexual gratification. There is no force or the threat of force. Fondling or oral sexual contact are examples.

	School Policy Violation	This category includes all school level policy issues.
Insubordination, Disrespect, Obscene Language or Behavior	Insubordination/ Disrespect	Unwillingness to submit to authority, refusal to respond to a reasonable request, or other situation in which a student is disobedient.
	Obscene Behavior	All other behavior in violation of community or school standards not listed below. For example, lewd behavior, indecent exposure, mooning, “panting” etc.
	Obscene Gestures	A gesture that is offensive or socially unacceptable. For example, “giving” someone the “finger.”
	Obscene Language/Profanity	Language or actions, written, oral, physical, or electronic.
	Pornography	In accordance with school policy.
	Obscene Written Messages	Includes written and electronic communication.
Academic Violations	Cheating	As related to test taking, homework or other educational situations.
	Forgery	As related to parent notes calling in for absent student, etc.
	Plagiarism	In accordance with school policy.
Classroom Disruptions	Breach of Peace / Disorderly Conduct/ Disruptive Behavior	Any behavior or act that disrupts the orderly conduct of a school function or which substantially disrupts the orderly learning environment.
	Behavioral referrals	
	Leaving class without permission	
	Throwing objects	Victimless incident in which student “shoots” a rubber band, or a wad of paper, or throws a paper airplane, etc.
	Sleeping in class	
	Chewing gum	
	Miss-use of hall pass	
	Unprepared for class	
Personal Threats	Spitting	In accordance with school policy.
	Safety code violations	

	Pulling chair out from beneath individual	
	Public urination	
Attendance Violations	Attendance Policy	Violation of state, school or district policy related to attendance.
	Skipping Class	In accordance with school policy.
	Tardiness	In accordance with school policy.
	Truancy	In accordance with school policy.
	Failure to Attend Detention or ISS	In accordance with school policy.
	Leaving Grounds	In accordance with school policy.
Trespassing	Loitering	In accordance with school policy.
	Trespassing	In accordance with school policy.
	Unauthorized Area	Being in an unauthorized area
	Refusal to identify	Refusal to provide student identification
School Threats	False fire alarm	In accordance with school policy.
	Calling 911	In accordance with school policy.
	Crank or harassing phone calls	
Possession of Electronic Devices	Unauthorized use of computers	Violation of technology policy: unauthorized use of computers
	Cell phone	Violation of technology policy: Possession/use of cell phone
	Hand held gaming device	Violation of technology policy: Possession/use of Hand held gaming device
	Electronic music device	Violation of technology policy: Possession/use of Electronic music device (MP3 player)
Other School Policy Violations	Eating in unauthorized area	
	Failure to return school documents	Progress reports, parent letters
	Other Offense	Must provide description of the incident.
	Bus Infraction	In accordance with school policy.
	Dress Code Violation	In accordance with school policy.
	Motor vehicle	Violation of school/district motor vehicle rules
	Displays of Affection	This is in violation of school policy (kissing, etc.).
	Accumulation of suspensions	In accordance with school policy.
	Accumulation of detentions	In accordance with school policy.
	Accumulation of demerits	
	False information/Lying	

	Gambling	Playing a game of chance with stakes involved including, but not limited to, cards, dice, sports pools, horse betting, etc.
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Table 8. Weapon involvement violation codes and descriptions

Weapon Type	Description
Knife 2 ½ Inches or Greater	
Knife Smaller than 2 ½ Inches	
Box Cutters	
Pencil/Pen	As used in stabbing incident.
Razor Blades	
Screwdriver	
Scissors	
Sword/Machete/Long Knife	
Letter opener (knife)	
Shank	Homemade weapon/knife
Handgun	See Description above
Rifle/Shotgun	See Description above
Toy gun/Water gun	
Pellet/BB Gun	
Sling Shot	
Bullets/ammunition	Any bullet or bullet like object than can be fired from a weapon
Stun Gun	
Paint Gun	
Explosive Devices	See Description above.
Stink Bomb/Smoke Bomb	
Fireworks/Firecrackers	
Facsimile of Bomb	Toy grenade etc.
Defensive Device	Gas repellent, mace, chemical/pepper spray
Martial Arts Device	e.g., Chinese Star
Brass Knuckles	
Baton/Billy Club	

Multi-tool	
Facsimile of Weapon	
Laser Pointer	
Lighter/matches	
Other Weapons	

Table 9. Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco involvement codes and description

Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco Type	Description of Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco
Alcohol Sale/Intent to Sell	
Suspicion of Alcohol Sale	
Alcohol Use	
Suspicion of Alcohol Use	
Alcohol Possession	
Drug Possession	
Drug Use	
Suspicion of Drug Use	Either prescription or illegal
Drug Sale/Intent to Sell	
Suspicion of Drug Sale	
Facsimile of Drug	Substance represented as an illegal drug (e.g., oregano)
Drug Paraphernalia	Rolling papers, pipe, clips, etc.
Inappropriate Sale of Prescription Medication	Either over the counter or prescription drugs
Inappropriate Possession of Prescription Medication	Either over the counter or prescription drugs
Inappropriate Use of Prescription Medication	Either over the counter or prescription drugs
Tobacco Possession	Having tobacco on ones person, in a bag, locker, car
Tobacco Use	Smoking, chewing, etc.
Suspicion of Tobacco Use	
Tobacco Sale	Sale of tobacco products (cigarettes, chewing tobacco)
Suspicion of Tobacco Sale	
Tobacco Paraphernalia	Lighter, matches
Under the influence of an unknown substance	

Other type of drug/alcohol/tobacco violation	A short description of the violation must be provided
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Appendix B: Suspension Rates by District

The Connecticut State Department of Education provided Connecticut Voices for Children with unduplicated counts of suspended students within multiple racial/ethnic categories (Native-American, Asian-American, black, white, and Hispanic) by school district, but did not provide us with total number of students suspended within each district. When there were between one and five students suspended within a particular racial/ethnic category, a blank was used. If there were zero students suspended within a racial category, the category was omitted. To factor in the blanks in the dataset when reporting the total number of students suspended by districts, we present a range with the lower number in the range being the value if all blanks in the data equal one student and the upper number in the range being the value if all blanks in the data equal five students.

District	DRG	Grade Range	Enrollment	Number of Students Suspended	Percent of Students Suspended
Andover	C	PK-6	341	0	0%
Ansonia	H	PK-12	2697	262-270	10%
Ashford	E	PK-8	524	9-13	2%
Avon	B	PK-12	3506	23-35	1%
Barkhamsted	C	PK-6	361	1-5	0-1%
Berlin	D	PK-12	3274	62-70	2%
Bethany	C	PK-6	557	1-5	0-1%
Bethel	D	PK-12	3230	72-80	2%
Bloomfield	G	PK-12	2239	370-375	17%
Bolton	C	PK-12	916	26-30	3%
Bozrah	E	PK-10	273	1-5	0-2%
Branford	D	PK-12	3592	103-115	3%
Bridgeport	I	PK-12	21239	4613	22%
Bristol	G	PK-12	9037	529-533	6%
Brookfield	B	PK-12	3032	74-86	2-3%
Brooklyn	E	PK-8	1022	23-27	2-3%
Canaan	E	K-8	101	0	0%
Canterbury	F	PK-8	547	22	4%
Canton	C	PK-12	1728	35-43	2%
Chaplin	E	PK-6	211	0	0%
Cheshire	B	PK-12	5157	86-102	2%
Chester	E	K-6	335	0	0%
Clinton	D	PK-12	2117	55-63	3%
Colchester	D	PK-12	3242	92-100	3%
Colebrook	E	K-6	121	1-5	1-4%
Columbia	C	PK-8	636	1-5	0-1%
Cornwall	C	K-8	129	0	0%
Coventry	E	PK-12	2051	44-52	2-3%
Cromwell	D	PK-12	2007	129-133	6-7%
Danbury	H	PK-12	9706	507-509	5%
Darien	A	PK-12	4614	95-103	2%
Deep River	E	PK-6	378	2-10	1-3%
Derby	H	PK-12	1454	116-120	8%
East Granby	D	PK-12	933	37-49	4-5%
East Haddam	E	PK-12	1406	79-87	6%
East Hampton	D	PK-12	2087	66-78	3-4%
East Hartford	H	PK-12	7636	971-975	13%

District	DRG	Grade Range	Enrollment	Number of Students Suspended	Percent of Students Suspended
East Haven	G	PK-12	3741	313-317	8%
East Lyme	D	PK-12	3217	98-110	3%
East Windsor	F	PK-12	1516	148-156	10%
Eastford	E	K-8	173	1-5	1-3%
Easton	A	PK-8	1149	8	1%
Ellington	C	PK-12	2535	63-71	2-3%
Enfield	F	PK-12	6490	355	5%
Essex	C	K-6	550	0	0%
Fairfield	B	PK-12	9494	180	2%
Farmington	B	PK-12	4251	95-99	2%
Franklin	E	PK-8	238	0	0%
Glastonbury	B	PK-12	6766	123-127	2%
Granby	B	K-12	2278	18-26	1%
Greenwich	B	PK-12	8961	231-235	3%
Griswold	F	PK-12	2216	113-121	5%
Groton	G	PK-12	5238	347	7%
Guilford	B	PK-12	3782	118-122	3%
Hamden	G	PK-12	6258	620-624	10%
Hampton	E	PK-6	165	1-5	1-3%
Hartford	I	PK-12	22328	4336	19%
Hartland	E	PK-8	225	0	0%
Hebron	C	PK-6	1204	10	1%
Kent	E	PK-8	270	0	0%
Killingly	G	PK-12	2764	224-228	8%
Lebanon	E	PK-12	1540	57-65	4%
Ledyard	D	PK-12	2914	125-129	4%
Lisbon	E	PK-8	610	2-10	0-2%
Litchfield	E	PK-12	1261	46-50	4%
Madison	B	K-12	3837	79-83	2%
Manchester	G	PK-12	7082	606	9%
Mansfield	C	PK-8	1333	12-28	1-2%
Marlborough	C	PK-6	651	2-10	0-2%
Meriden	H	PK-12	8864	1082-1086	12%
Middletown	G	PK-12	5075	567-571	11%
Milford	D	PK-12	7509	249-253	3%
Monroe	B	PK-12	4364	91-95	2%
Montville	F	PK-12	2949	179-187	6%
Naugatuck	G	PK-12	5079	378-386	7-8%
New Britain	I	PK-12	10940	1899	17%
New Canaan	A	PK-12	4130	37-49	1%
New Fairfield	B	PK-12	3065	54-59	2%
New Hartford	C	PK-6	617	1-5	0-1%
New Haven	I	PK-12	19977	3336-3344	17%
New London	I	PK-12	2953	503-507	17%
New Milford	D	PK-12	5038	158-162	3%
Newington	D	PK-12	4591	112-120	2-3%
Newtown	B	PK-12	5667	91-103	2%
Norfolk	E	PK-11	176	0	0%

District	DRG	Grade Range	Enrollment	Number of Students Suspended	Percent of Students Suspended
North Branford	E	PK-12	2450	93-105	4%
North Canaan	F	PK-8	369	1-5	0-1%
North Haven	D	PK-12	3963	239-247	6%
North Stonington	E	PK-12	809	32-36	4%
Norwalk	H	PK-12	10729	801	7%
Norwich	H	PK-12	3961	360-364	9%
Old Saybrook	D	PK-12	1580	55-63	3-4%
Orange	B	PK-6	1395	2-10	0-1%
Oxford	C	PK-8	1575	21-29	1-2%
Plainfield	G	PK-12	2800	238-246	9%
Plainville	F	PK-12	2627	142	5%
Plymouth	F	PK-12	1897	79-95	4-5%
Pomfret	C	PK-8	540	9-13	2%
Portland	E	PK-12	1451	40-48	3%
Preston	E	PK-8	498	22-34	4-7%
Putnam	G	PK-12	1339	84-96	6-7%
Redding	A	PK-8	1287	1-5	0%
Ridgefield	A	PK-12	5575	51-63	1%
Rocky Hill	D	PK-12	2581	62-66	2-3%
Salem	C	PK-8	530	6	1%
Salisbury	E	PK-8	311	1-5	0-2%
Scotland	E	PK-6	196	1-5	1-3%
Seymour	F	PK-12	2737	216-224	8%
Sharon	E	PK-8	231	0	0%
Shelton	D	PK-12	5692	171-175	3%
Sherman	C	PK-8	479	1-5	0-1%
Simsbury	B	PK-12	4992	35-43	1%
Somers	C	PK-12	1734	55-67	3-4%
South Windsor	B	PK-12	5020	137-145	3%
Southington	D	PK-12	6933	249-257	4%
Sprague	F	PK-8	335	0	0%
Stafford	F	PK-12	1951	135-139	7%
Stamford	H	PK-12	15041	482	3%
Sterling	F	PK-8	478	14-18	3-4%
Stonington	D	PK-12	2570	56-72	2-3%
Stratford	G	PK-12	7373	532-536	7%
Suffield	C	PK-12	2592	37-45	1-2%
Thomaston	E	PK-12	1275	46-53	4%
Thompson	F	PK-12	1508	140-156	9-10%
Tolland	C	PK-12	3142	84-92	3%
Torrington	G	PK-12	4856	439-443	9%
Trumbull	B	PK-12	6921	164-168	2%
Union	E	K-8	69	0	0%
Vernon	G	PK-12	3782	310-314	8%
Voluntown	F	PK-8	311	1-5	0-2%
Wallingford	D	PK-12	6930	343-347	5%
Waterbury	I	PK-12	18210	2816	15%
Waterford	D	K-12	2967	166-170	6%

District	DRG	Grade Range	Enrollment	Number of Students Suspended	Percent of Students Suspended
Watertown	D	PK-12	3503	170-178	5%
West Hartford	B	PK-12	10117	364-368	4%
West Haven	H	PK-12	6734	678-682	10%
Westbrook	E	PK-12	990	20	2%
Weston	A	PK-12	2610	34-42	1-2%
Westport	A	PK-12	5571	33-37	1%
Wethersfield	D	PK-12	3832	167-171	4%
Willington	E	PK-8	594	18-26	3-4%
Wilton	A	PK-12	4369	78-90	2%
Winchester	G	PK-12	1064	75-79	7%
Windham	I	PK-12	3674	402-410	11%
Windsor	D	PK-12	4132	511-515	12%
Windsor Locks	F	PK-12	1908	83-87	4-5%
Wolcott	F	PK-12	2922	143-147	5%
Woodbridge	B	PK-6	793	1-5	0-1%
Woodstock	E	PK-8	963	9-13	1%
Regional District 01	E	9-12	562	31	6%
Regional District 04	C	7-12	946	73-77	8%
Regional District 05	B	7-12	2509	117-121	5%
Regional District 06	E	PK-12	1083	51-55	5%
Regional District 07	C	7-12	1164	51-55	4-5%
Regional District 08	C	7-12	1645	54-62	3-4%
Regional District 09	A	9-12	962	41-53	4-6%
Regional District 10	C	PK-12	2824	59-63	2%
Regional District 11	F	7-12	327	40-47	12-14%
Regional District 12	C	PK-12	1082	15-19	1-2%
Regional District 13	C	PK-12	2165	54	2%
Regional District 14	C	PK-12	2283	52-64	2-3%
Regional District 15	B	PK-12	4580	118-134	3%
Regional District 16	E	PK-12	2682	96-105	4%
Regional District 17	C	PK-12	2502	33	1%
Regional District 18	C	PK-12	1521	36-40	2-3%
Regional District 19	C	9-12	1201	104-112	9%

Endnotes

- ¹ See, Connecticut Public Act No. 08-160. Under Connecticut law, a “suspension” is “an exclusion from school privileges . . . for no more than ten consecutive school days. . .” Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-233a(a)(d). An “in-school suspension,” in contrast, is an exclusion from “regular class room activity” but not from the school. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-233a(a)(c).
- ² See, March 12, 2007 Testimony of George A. Coleman, Interim Connecticut Commissioner of Education on Raised Bill 1413, *An Act Concerning In-School Suspensions*; American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, “Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations,” (August 9, 2006), p. 34.
- ³ See Education Trust, “Education Watch State NAEP Tables,” (Fall 2006); ConnCan, “Issue Brief: The Achievement Gap” (July 2006), No. 1.
- ⁴ See, Connecticut Voices for Children, “Addressing Connecticut’s Educational Divides: The Key to Success in the Global Economy” (March 2007) (students in the lowest income districts (DRG I) as compared to the highest districts (DRG A) are more than one and half times less likely to attend preschool, five times less likely to pass the Connecticut Mastery Tests in Grades 4, 6, and 8, and 15 times more likely to drop out of high school. Almost half of Connecticut’s English Language Learners live in DRG I school districts).
- ⁵ See, A Adams, “The Status of School Discipline and Violence,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (January 2000), Vol. 567, p. 147 (noting that students who are excluded from school are typically the students who need education the most).
- ⁶ See, E Breon, “Truancy: A Closer Look: The Link Between Unmet Educational Needs and Truancy,” Center for Children’s Advocacy (December 2006) (documenting unmet learning needs of Connecticut students with high rates of truancy and noting that behavioral issues may mask underlying learning difficulties).
- ⁷ See, e.g., A Adams, “The Status of School Discipline and Violence,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (January 2000), Vol. 567, p. 145 (noting potential of exclusionary punishments to lead to increased delinquency when students are unsupervised); R Skiba and P Leone, “Zero Tolerance and School Security Measures: A Failed Experiment,” *Racial Profiling and Punishment in U.S. Public Schools* (2001), Applied Research Center (school suspension and expulsion may increase the risk for both school drop out and juvenile delinquency).
- ⁸ See, Connecticut Court Support Services Division, “Juvenile Jurisdiction Planning and Implementation Committee: Proposed Court and Service System for 16 and 17 Year Olds,” January 4, 2007 Presentation.
- ⁹ See, e.g., R Skiba, “Zero Tolerance, Zero Evidence: An Analysis of School Disciplinary Practice,” *Indiana Education Policy Center* (August 2000), p. 14 (citing to research that the strength of the school social bond is an important predictor of delinquency).
- ¹⁰ See, e.g., M Garriga, “Police, Panel Staffers Will Visit Truant Students,” *New Haven Register* (February 15, 2007); American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, “Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations,” (August 9, 2006), pp. 76-80 (citing data that incarcerated juveniles are likely to have been suspended from school and that states with higher rates of suspensions also have higher rates of juvenile incarceration, and citing models that “suggest that as at-risk youth become alienated from school over time, they will increasingly seek out other anti-social peers, accelerating the course toward juvenile offending,” but taking care to note that research to date is “primarily descriptive” and that there exists “no prospective longitudinal research that could conclusively demonstrate that increased use of suspension makes a contribution to increased rates of juvenile incarceration”).
- ¹¹ See, e.g., R Skiba and P Leone, “Zero Tolerance and School Security Measures: A Failed Experiment,” *Racial Profiling and Punishment in U.S. Public Schools* (2001), Applied Research Center (school suspension and expulsion may increase the risk for both school drop out and juvenile delinquency); R Skiba, “Zero Tolerance, Zero Evidence: An Analysis of School Disciplinary Practice,” *Indiana Education Policy Center* (August 2000), p. 13 (citing studies showing that students who dropped out of school were more likely to have been suspended from school than their peers who remained in school, and that prior engagement with school discipline was one of the strongest predictors of dropout); American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, “Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations,” (August 9, 2006), pp. 49-51 (citing studies investigating the correlations between suspension and dropout).
- ¹² See, e.g., V Costenbader and S Markson, “School Suspension: A Study with Secondary School Students,” *Journal of School Psychology* (1997), Vol. 36, Issue 1; Youth Rights Media, “Book ‘Em: Undereducated, Overincarcerated,” (2006) (two students, including one in foster care, note that teachers did not inquire as to reasons behind their disciplinary infractions).
- ¹³ See, e.g., R Skiba, R Michael, A Carroll Nardo, R Peterson, “The Color of Discipline, Sources of Racial and Gender Disproportionality in School Punishment,” *Policy Research Report #SR51* (June, 2000), pp. 17-18 (citing 1981 study finding significant relationship in urban schools among high rates of minority suspension, minority dropout, and student perceptions of racial discrimination; 1993 paper arguing that “the typical classroom management style in many schools, relying heavily on negative consequences, contributes to school rejection and dropout for African American youth, [for whom] ‘the choice of either staying in school or dropping out may be less of a choice and more of a natural response to a negative environment in which he or she is trying to escape’”); American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, “Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations,” (August 9, 2006), p. 70 (citing survey data that students in grades 7th to 12th grade “rate their teachers as less caring and report lower feelings of school belonging when suspensions are widely used, especially for relatively minor rule infractions” and research that racial disproportionality in discipline is a risk factor for alienation and academic disengagement); The Advancement Project, “Opportunities Suspended: The Devastating

Consequences of Zero Tolerance and School Discipline,” Civil Rights Project, Harvard University (2000), p. 11 (citing opinions of education experts that excluded children interpret suspension as rejection and “a one-way ticket out of school,” making it difficult for them to come back to school); A Adams, “The Status of School Discipline and Violence,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* (January 2000), Vol 567, p. 145 (noting that students may lose respect for school authorities when they are unnecessarily excluded, for instance, for truancy).

¹⁴ See, Youth Rights Media, “Book ‘Em: Undereducated, Overincarcerated,” (2006) (student speaks about how difficult it would be to make up all assignments after a 10-day suspension; 82 percent of students surveyed by Youth Rights Media felt that suspensions made students fall behind in their schoolwork).

¹⁵ See generally Connecticut State Board of Education, “A Review of Programs for Reducing the Dropout and Suspension Rates of Those Students at Risk of Dropping Out or Being Suspended from School,” (March 2007), pp. 13-15 (citing studies finding that repeat suspensions are one of many risk factors for dropping out and describing alienation and feeling among students who drop out that school personnel wanted them to leave); N Blomberg, “Effective Discipline for Misbehavior: In School vs. Out of School Suspension,” Department of Education and Human Service, Villanova University (2004), pp. 4-5 (reviewing literature that suspension does not address root causes of misbehavior and tends to push out the students who are most in need of school supports); Youth Rights Media, “Book ‘Em: Undereducated, Overincarcerated,” (2006) (63 percent of students surveyed by Youth Rights Media believed that suspensions are a push factor leading to dropout).

¹⁶ See, e.g., The Center for Benefit Cost Studies in Education, “The Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for All American Children,” Teachers College of Columbia University (January 2007); J Hero, D Hall, S Geballe, “State of Working Connecticut,” Connecticut Voices for Children (September 2007).

¹⁷ See, *Sheff v. O’Neill*, 238 Conn. at 40-41 (March 3, 1999) (“[S]chools are an important socializing institution, imparting those shared values through which social order and stability are maintained.” citing *Plyer v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202, 222 n.20 (1982)).

¹⁸ The Advancement Project, “Opportunities Suspended: The Devastating Consequences of Zero Tolerance and School Discipline,” The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University (2000), p. 12.

¹⁹ See, Youth Rights Media, “Book ‘Em: Undereducated, Overincarcerated,” (2006) (students speak about the perceived arbitrariness of suspensions for minor offenses, such as dress code violations; 63 percent of students interviewed by Youth Rights Media believed that students were suspended for offenses that were too minor to warrant exclusion from school).

²⁰ See, e.g., R Skiba, “Zero Tolerance, Zero Evidence: An Analysis of School Disciplinary Practice,” Indiana Education Policy Center (August 2000), p. 14.

²¹ See, N Bloomberg, “Effective Discipline for Misbehavior: In School vs. Out of School Suspension,” Department of Education and Human Services, Villanova University (2004), p. 3 (citing a 1997 study finding that 69 percent of suspended students surveyed felt that the suspension was of little use, 32 percent predicted that they would be suspended again, and that 55 percent of students suspended were angry at the person who had suspended them).

²² See, e.g., A Adams, “The Status of School Discipline and Violence,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (January 2000), Vol 567, School Violence, p. 145 (citing 1989 study regarding links between exclusion and feelings of self-defeat, and noting that exclusionary punishments may make students feel “isolated and disenfranchised”); The Advancement Project, “Opportunities Suspended: The Devastating Consequences of Zero Tolerance and School Discipline,” The Civil Rights Project Harvard University (2000), p. 11 (citing opinions of education experts that excluded children interpret suspension as rejection and “a one-way ticket out of school,” making it difficult for them to come back to school).

²³ See, e.g., R Skiba, R Michael, A Carroll Nardo, R Peterson, “The Color of Discipline, Sources of Racial and Gender Disproportionality in School Punishment,” *Policy Research Report #SR51* (June, 2000), pp. 17-18 (citing 1981 study finding significant relationship in urban schools among high rates of minority suspension, minority dropout, and student perceptions of racial discrimination; 1993 paper arguing that “the typical classroom management style in many schools, relying heavily on negative consequences, contributes to school rejection and dropout for African American youth, [for whom] ‘the choice of either staying in school or dropping out may be less of a choice and more of a natural response to a negative environment in which he or she is trying to escape’” and 1996 study finding that both white and minority students in an urban high school perceived racial disparities in the application of discipline, but while white students believed differences in treatment were unintentional or unconscious, students of color perceived differences in treatment based on race to be deliberate, and discipline to be arbitrary); American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, “Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations,” (August 9, 2006), p. 70 (citing research that racial disproportionality in discipline is a risk factor for alienation and academic disengagement).

²⁴ See generally Youth Rights Media, “Book ‘Em: Undereducated, Overincarcerated,” (2006), particularly final segment, “How Close Are You?”

²⁵ See, e.g., American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, “Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations,” (August 9, 2006), pp. 40-51 (citing studies); V Costenbader and S Markson, “School Suspension: A Study with Secondary School Students,” *Journal of School Psychology* (1997), Vol. 36, Issue 1 (survey of 252 suspended students found that 69% percent felt that the suspension was of little use, and 32% predicted that they would be suspended again); S Bock, K Tapscott, and J Savner, “Suspensions and Expulsion: Effective Management for Students?” *Intervention in School and Clinic* (1998), Vol. 34, Issue 1, p. 2 (citing studies that show high numbers of students with multiple suspensions demonstrate a reoccurrence of disruptive behavior); R Skiba, “Zero Tolerance, Zero Evidence: An Analysis of

School Disciplinary Practice,” *Indiana Education Policy Center* (August 2000), p. 13 (citing studies finding that a large percentage of suspensions are due to repeat offenders, that suspension is primarily a predictor of further suspension, and that for some students “suspension functions as a reinforcer. . . rather than as a punisher”); A Adams, “The Status of School Discipline and Violence,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* (January 2000), Vol 567, p. 148 (citing to a National Center for Education Statistics study that found that zero-tolerance policies, of which exclusionary punishments are an important part, had “no appreciable effect on reducing violence”).

²⁶ See, e.g., American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, “Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations” (August 9, 2006).

²⁷ See, e.g., A Smith, “Out of School Suspension Falling out of Favor,” *New Haven Register* (August 26, 2007) (statement from West Haven High School Principal Ronald Stancil, “Kids don’t necessarily mind being suspended (at home) so much. It’s kind of like a reward for them”); R James, “Waterbury: 46 percent of city high schoolers suspended,” *The Republican-American* (May 6, 2007) (“If you have a kid who has more fun on the streets, that’s probably not where you want to send him,” quoting George Sugai, education professor at the University of Connecticut); R Skiba, “Zero Tolerance, Zero Evidence: An Analysis of School Disciplinary Practice,” *Indiana Education Policy Center* (August 2000); A Adams, “The Status of School Discipline and Violence,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (January 2000), Vol. 567, p. 145 (noting that students may manipulate administrators to get themselves suspended); Youth Rights Media, “Book ‘Em: Undereducated, Overincarcerated,” (2006) (showing what one student does for fun when suspended).

²⁸ See, A Adams, “The Status of School Discipline and Violence,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* (January 2000), Vol. 567, p. 146.

²⁹ See, e.g., G Sugai and R Horner, “The Evolution of Discipline Practices: School-wide Positive Behavior Supports,” *Child and Family Behavioral Therapy* (2002), Vol 24, no 1-2 (behavioral improvements in school discipline occurred when a positive and preventative approach was applied. For more information on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports see www.pbis.org); A Adams, “The Status of School Discipline and Violence,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* (January 2000), Vol 567, pp. 150-154 (discussing alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices and recommendations); American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, “Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations,” (August 9, 2006), pp. 85-95 (discussing alternatives to exclusionary punishment models, including restorative justice and positive behavioral interventions and supports).

³⁰ See, American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, “Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations,” (August 9, 2006), pp. 34. 65-71 (discussing educational and developmental repercussions of exclusions).

³¹ See, Thomas B. Mooney, Shipman & Goodwin LLP, *A Practical Guide to Connecticut School Law*, (5th Ed. 2006), pp.282-286.

³² A Monsalve, Program Manager. State Department of Education. Interview, November 29, 2007.

³³ For more information refer to, P Canny, “District Reference Groups (DRGs) Formerly Educational Reference Groups (ERGs),” *Connecticut Voices for Children* (June 2006), available at: www.ctkidslink.org/publications/ecc06drgerg.pdf.

³⁴ Connecticut State Department of Education, “Data Bulletin: Kindergarten 2006-2007,” (November 2007).

³⁵ See R Skiba, R Michael, A Carroll Nardo, R Peterson, “The Color of Discipline, Sources of Racial and Gender Disproportionality in School Punishment,” *Policy Research Report #SR51* (June 2000) (conducting comprehensive review of studies on race and discipline and finding that “racial disproportionality in the use of school suspension has been a highly consistent finding”).

³⁶ See Chicago Tribune, “Disciplinary Action by Race (2004-05),” Available at: www.chicagotribune.com/discipline. The *Chicago Tribune* article analyzed data from the “Civil Rights Data Collection” project under US Department of Education. This analysis is only available for the 2004-05 school year.

³⁷ See, Children’s Defense Fund Cambridge, MA, “School suspensions: Are they helping children?” Washington Research Project (1975), p. 21.

³⁸ See, e.g., R Skiba, R Michael, A Carroll Nardo, R Peterson, “The Color of Discipline, Sources of Racial and Gender Disproportionality in School Punishment,” *Policy Research Report #SR51* (June 2000) (reviewing studies on racial disproportionality in school discipline from 1978-2000 and concluding that racial disparities in school discipline were consistent across studies, regardless of methodology used; that racial disparities persist even when controlling for poverty; that there is no evidence to support the hypothesis that African-American students act out more than other students; and that African-American students appeared to be referred to the office (which often leads to suspensions) for less serious and more subjective reasons than their white peers); S C Wu, W Pink, R Crain, O Moles, “Student suspension: A critical reappraisal,” *Urban Review* (1980), p. 42 (analysis of 1978 School Safety Survey data find that nonwhite students have higher rates of suspensions than white students, even when controlling for types of disruptive behavior).

³⁹ See, IDEAdata.org, “IDEA Part B: Discipline (2005-2006), Table 5-2.” Available at: https://www.ideadata.org/arc_toc8.asp#partbDis. The 2005-2006 discipline data are the most recently available data on the website.

⁴⁰ See, IDEAdata.org, “IDEA Part B: Discipline (2005-06), Table 5-2.” Available at: https://www.ideadata.org/arc_toc8.asp#partbDis.

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- ⁴¹ The Connecticut State Department of Education sets the Connecticut Mastery Test's target proficiency scores in reading and math at 68% and 74%, respectively. Connecticut Academic Performance Test target proficiency scores in reading and math are set at 72% and 69%, respectively. *Connecticut's Accountability Workbook*. Available at: <http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/nclb/faq/index.htm>. Note, however, that the Connecticut Mastery Test's target proficiency scores are set *lower than* the national achievement standards set by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. For more information, see R McAuliffe, "Defining Educational Proficiency and Achievement in Connecticut," Connecticut Voices for Children (November 2007), available online at: http://www.ctkidslink.org/pub_detail_378.html.
- ⁴² See, Connecticut State Department of Education, "Presentation to the Juvenile Jurisdiction Policy and Operations Coordinating Council," Presentation (November 15, 2007), slide 13. PowerPoint available at: www.housedems.ct.gov/jjpoc/JJPOCCfinalppt3.pdf.
- ⁴³ *Id.*
- ⁴⁴ Education Trust, "Education Watch State NAEP Tables," (Fall 2006); ConnCan, "Issue Brief: The Achievement Gap," (July 2006), No. 1; Connecticut Voices for Children, "The Education Budget in Context: An Analysis of the Governor's Proposed FY 09 Budget Revisions" (February 6, 2008).
- ⁴⁵ CT State Department of Education, "Condition of Connecticut Education," August 2007, pp. 48-55. Available online at: http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/publications/condition_of_ed2007.pdf.
- ⁴⁶ See Connecticut Voices for Children, "Addressing Connecticut's Educational Divides: The Key to Success in the Global Economy" (March 2007).
- ⁴⁷ Connecticut State Department of Education, "ED 166: Disciplinary Offense Data Collection/Informational Session," PowerPoint available online at: http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/help/ed-166/ed166files/2006-2007_Training_for_Helpsite.pdf.
- ⁴⁸ Monsalve, Amarildo. Program Manager. State Department of Education. Interview, November 29, 2007.