

Connecticut School Discipline Collaborative



Date: March 26, 2024

Connecticut State Department of Education



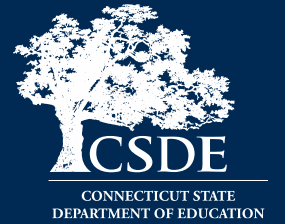
Welcome



John Frassinelli, Division Director



Agenda



- Opening & Welcome
- Commissioner of Education Remarks
- Setting the Stage: Public Act 23-167 and the School Discipline Collaborative
- Overview of the 2022-2023 PreK-Two School Discipline Data (Board Report)
- Panel Discussion Norms
- Panel Discussion Examining District PreK-Two Out-of-School Suspension Incidents
- Open Group Discussion and Questions to the Panel
- Wrap Up and Next Steps





Norms for Today's Collaborative



The Aim: Better Understanding of the Issues and Increase the Collaborative's Awareness

Panel Discussion Norms:

- Active and respectful listening
- Assuming good intent
- Seek to understand everyone's perspectives and be curious about the differences in their views.
- Respectfully challenge an idea, not the person.
- Keep comments concise and to the point.
- Speak respectfully
- Only one conversation at one time. Refrain from side-talk
- Capture off topic items in a 'parking lot'
- Look ahead to positive action, not back on shoulda, woulda, coulda (solution-focused)



Goals and Outcomes



Overarching Goal:

To advise the Commissioner of Education and State Board of Education on strategies for transforming school discipline in Connecticut schools.

Outcome:

To reduce the overall and disproportionate use of exclusionary discipline in Connecticut schools.



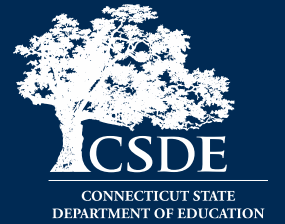
Commissioner's Remarks



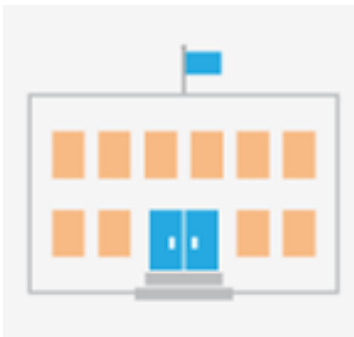
Commissioner Charlene M. Russell-Tucker



Connecticut Education Landscape



- **School Districts: 201**
- **Schools/Programs: 1,516**
- **Certified Staff FTE: 53,436**
- **Non-Certified Staff: ~69,000**



Students: 512,652

- 53.8% Students of Color (~275,000)
- 44.0% Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch (~225,000)
- 17.9% Students with Disabilities (~92,000)
- 10.6% English Learners (~54,000)
- More than 180 Languages spoken
- Over 5,000 Students experiencing homelessness and housing instability



CSDE 2023-24 PRIORITIES



- Recruit and retain a diverse workforce of high-quality educators
- Support a safe and healthy learning environment for students and school staff and ensure students are present and engaged in learning
- Elevate and continuously launch our curriculum frameworks and model curricula
- Promote data transparency
- Expand career pathways and workforce development initiatives
- Evaluate, fund, and sustain programs that work
- Cultivate strategic partnerships that support all our students



Public Act 23-167



John Frassinelli, Division Director



Public Act 23-167 Sec. 82 (b)

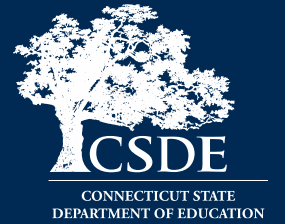


CT School Discipline Collaborative's Role

1. The Department of Education's Connecticut School Discipline Collaborative shall advise the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education on strategies to reduce the overall and disproportionate use of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions.
 - *Developing guidance to reduce the number of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions of students in grades preschool to two.*
 - *Providing evidence-based and developmentally appropriate definitions and examples of conduct that is of a violent or sexual nature in the context that such conduct may allow an out-of-school suspension of a student in grades preschool to two.*



2022-2023 School Discipline Data



Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer
Keryn Felder, Education Consultant



2022-2023 PreK-Two Data: Total Number of Sanctions



- The total *number of sanctions* (duplicated count) has declined significantly, especially with the passage of C.G.S. 10-233l.
- In 2022-23, the counts of both out-of-school (OSS) and in-school suspensions (ISS) is less than that of the 2018-19 pre-pandemic counts.
- The [2022-2023 School Discipline Board Report](#) is available on EdSight.

Total Number of Sanctions (Pre-K through Grade 2) – not a student count

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2021-22	2022-23
ISS	1,911	1,477	1,152	1,032	395	560
OSS	1,327	983	791	894	599	738
EXP	*	0	0	0	0	*

NOTE: The data are suppressed to protect student confidentiality pursuant to the [CSDE's data suppression guidelines](#).



2022-2023 PreK-Two Data: Student Count by Grade



- The total *number of students* (unduplicated count) in Grades PK-2 who received at least one suspension or expulsion has greatly decreased.
- In 2022-23, the number of students suspended is 0.5 percent of students in Grades K and 1, and one (1) percent of students in Grade 2.

Number of Students Suspended/Expelled (Pre-K through Grade 2) by Grade

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2021-22	2022-23
Pre-K	9	*	7	7	*	*
K	314	220	203	198	142	197
Grade 1	543	413	351	337	162	202
Grade 2	789	649	501	504	290	354

NOTE: The data are suppressed to protect student confidentiality pursuant to the [CSDE's data suppression guidelines](#).



Pre-K- Two: Number of Days of OSS



- Over 50% of all Out-of-school Suspensions (OSS) sanctions were for one day or less; over 80% of all OSS sanction were for two days or fewer.
- The average length for OSS pre-and post-pandemic is 1.7 and 1.8 days, respectively.

	2018-19	2022-23
Less than or equal to 1 day	56.2%	55.9%
Greater than 1 and up to and including 2 days	25.1%	25.6%
Greater than 2 and up to and including 3 days	11.4%	10.7%
Over 3 days	7.3%	7.7%

	2018-19	2022-23
Average	1.7	1.8



PreK-Two Survey on OSS Incidents



- Purpose: Get greater detail on the nature of student behavior, beyond the ED166 incident types, that resulted in an OSS
- 40 OSS incidents were randomly sampled, and a brief survey was sent to the 23 districts, asking them to describe the behavior for each incident.



PreK-Two Survey on OSS Incidents Sample Responses



Sample Student Case (Kindergarten):

- 12/2-student became frustrated with a handwriting task and growled, began throwing markers and crawled under easel. Student removed part of the easel and pretended it was gun, made gun noises and said "I'm going to shoot them down"
- 12/15- eloped from art room and proceeded to run around the school building, began throwing items at staff including water
- 3/3- eloped from classroom, running around building went into a staff members office and turned on a microwave with metal inside which caused it to smoke
- 3/17- kicked peer in the groin with no obvious provocation
- When students present with trauma, all staff are often looking for strategies to best assist them. Educator training around trauma informed practices is ever evolving and widely needed.



PreK-Two Survey on OSS Incidents

Sample Responses



Sample Student Case (Grade 2):

- Student sprayed teacher in the face with cleaning product, threw other students' items out of their cubbies, flipped all desks and chairs, threw chairs across the room, destroyed laptop cart, destroyed peer work.
- During indoor recess in general education classroom, the student destroyed classroom property, threw various objects, flipped desks, used phone to try to call 911, removed books from bookshelves and threw them, tried pulling fire alarm. By the end, classroom was described as "destroyed."
- Emergency mobile psychiatric crisis unit was called due to the high level of distress the student exhibited.



PreK-Two Survey on OSS Incidents Sample Responses



Sample Student Case (Kindergarten):

- One reported referral which resulted in an OSS because of the facsimile of a weapon (knife) and the fear of bodily harm to another student.
- A threat assessment was conducted on ... and the SRO was notified but no police involvement was needed after “the parent stated there were no weapons in the home”.
- Since [district] has a “zero tolerance” for all weapons and a threat assessment was conducted, their OSS was considered to be warranted.



PreK-Two Survey: OSS and Violent or Sexual in Nature and ED166



What resonated with you regarding the trend and PreK-Two data?



Panel Introduction and Discussion



John Frassinelli, Division Director



District Panel Discussion Distinguished Guests



1. **Joseph Bordeau**, Principal-Griswold Elementary School
2. **Patricia Sullivan-Kowalski**, Assistant Superintendent and
Daniel Crispino, Principal-Meriden Public Schools
4. **Jamie Bender**, Assistant Superintendent-Norwich Public Schools
5. **Dr. Verna Ruffin**, Superintendent-Waterbury Public Schools

Panel Discussion: *Examining District PreK-Two OSS Incidents*



Facilitated by: Eben McKnight



District Panel Questions



As panelists, the School Discipline Collaborative would be pleased if you could focus your discussion on the following questions based on OSS for violent or sexual in nature (PreK-Two) Survey:

Three-part question:

Describe the student's behaviors that were exhibited during the incident.

What was the student's triggering event that set off the behavior and caused such agitation?

When did the intensity of the behavior increase and become unsafe?



District Panel Questions



As panelists, the School Discipline Collaborative would be pleased if you could focus your discussion on the following questions based on OSS for violent or sexual in nature (PreK-Two) Survey:

2 minutes each

How is your district attending to PreK-Two challenging behaviors, and how can the School Discipline Collaborative help?

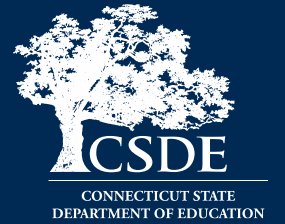


Collaborative Mindful Discussion with Panel





Thank You to Our Panel



Thank You!

*For All Your Hard Work and Dedication
We Appreciate You*



Wrap Up and Introduce the Next Meeting



Next Meeting: TBD
Thank you!



Collaborative Subsequent Meeting



Agenda

- Overview of the School Discipline Collaborative Study
- Discussion on studying current school discipline practices, including but not limited to discipline practices that lead to students becoming justice-involved
- Senate Bill 380
- Establishing roles and logistics
- Next Steps



Overview of the School Discipline Collaborative Study



- **Objective:** The Commissioner of Education shall establish a working group under the Connecticut School Discipline Collaborative to study current school discipline practices, including, but not limited to, discipline practices that lead to students becoming justice-involved.
- **Expected Outcome:** No later than July 1, 2024, such working group shall submit, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education a report concerning the results of such study and any recommendations for school discipline reform.



Discussion on Studying Current School Discipline Practices



1. Any questions regarding the Public Act?
2. What do you think our first step should be?
3. Data collection is important, and we have from the State Discipline Report. What else do we need, and from whom?



Establishing Roles and Logistics



1. Is anyone interested in volunteering to take on a particular roles such as leader, writer, note-taker, and logistic organizer?
2. Identify next meeting



Next Steps



Identify meeting schedule and timeline