




STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools

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

DATE: February 21, 2019

SUBJECT: Position Statement on Reducing Disproportionality in Suspensions and Expulsions
(Exclusionary Discipline)

The *Position Statement on Reducing Disproportionality in Suspensions and Expulsions (Exclusionary Discipline)* supports the Connecticut State Board of Education's (SBE) belief that great schools are safe, welcoming and inclusive environments where students' non-academic needs are met, and students are healthy, happy and ready to learn. The purpose of this document is to address effective approaches to school discipline including guidelines for districts, schools, and other stakeholders to promote a proactive and comprehensive system of support to reduce disproportionality in suspensions and expulsions.

At the February 6, 2019, SBE meeting, the Board approved the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, adopts the Position Statement on Reducing Disproportionality in Suspensions and Expulsions (Exclusionary Discipline), and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

In preparing the position statement, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) invited members of the Connecticut School Discipline Collaborative, the Alternative Schools Committee and Commissioner's Roundtable for Family and Community Engagement in Education to provide feedback and input on the draft statement. The feedback process provided a wealth of information that both confirmed and further enhanced the position statement.

The CSDE presented its annual [Report on School Discipline](#) at the February 6, 2019, board meeting. The Report presents analyses of trends in student disciplinary behaviors in Connecticut public schools. Your efforts over the past five years have contributed to major strides in reducing exclusionary discipline. The total number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions has declined by nearly 22 percent. Incidents coded as school policy violations declined 32.8 percent over the past five years and now accounts for 48 percent of all incidents – down from 71 percent five years ago. However, there is more work to be done as large disparities remain in suspension rates between Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students and their white counterparts. While one out of every 25 white students received at least one suspension, one out of every seven Black/African American students and one out of every 10 Hispanic/Latino students experienced the same sanction.

The *Position Statement on Reducing Disproportionality in Suspensions and Expulsions (Exclusionary Discipline)* is yet another tool that districts can implement to ensure a safe learning environment without relying on the use of long-established exclusionary disciplinary practices. The CSDE and its partners will continue to collaborate to identify and disseminate best practices for disrupting disproportionate exclusionary practices. Additionally, based on stakeholder's feedback, the CSDE will develop an implementation tool to further assist districts and relevant partners with practical application of the responsibilities outlined in the position statement.

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I am confident that the effective implementation of the evidenced-based approaches and guidelines outlined in the *Position Statement on Reducing Disproportionality in Suspensions and Expulsions (Exclusionary Discipline)*, will enhance and expand high-quality systems of support to improve outcomes and learning conditions for all students.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Kimberly Traverso, Education Consultant, at Kimberly.traverso@ct.gov or (860) 807-2057.

DRW:crt

Attachment