

Connecticut School Discipline Collaborative

Welcome



May 23, 2023

Connecticut State Department of Education



Welcoming Remarks



**Reimagining Schools to
Transform Students' Lives**

*John D. Frassinelli, Division Director
School Health, Nutrition, and Family Services*



Agenda Overview



- **Opening & Welcome**
- **Commissioner of Education Remarks**
- **School Discipline Report**
- **The Collaborative's Voice: Discussion and Reflection on the Data**
- **Statewide School Discipline Efforts and Milestones and the Federal Stronger Connection Grant**
- **Wrap Up and Next Steps**



Mission Possible



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.



Meeting Objectives for Today



**To examine
and reflect on
Connecticut's
current trends
in school
discipline data**

**To advise the
CSDE
regarding the
next phase of
the work on
school
discipline**



Background



Quick look at important Milestones

CSDE Guidelines for ISS and OSS
Revised in 2010 to help districts implement Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-233c

The CSDE presents its first annual School Discipline Report to the State Board

The General Assembly in 2015 enacted restrictions on the use of suspensions and expulsions for young children

The CSDE provided guidance documents, identified districts and provide PD for C.G.S. 10-233I Discipline Report

Commissioner Russell-Tucker launched the Statewide School Discipline Collaborative

State Board Adoption of Position Statement

2008/2010

2013

2015

2015

2018

2019

*Throughout this time the CSDE established targets and program activities for Indicator 4 regarding Students with Disabilities



Background



Quick look at important Milestones

The CSDE develops a tiered system for high suspension rates and disproportionality. Provided professional learning equity series

Reframing and Reopening: School Discipline Amidst COVID-19 Guidance

K-12 Social and Emotional Learning Across Connecticut: A Statewide Landscape Scan

The CSDE launched Statewide K-12 Social-Emotional Learning Assessment System 7 and 16 Ways Documents

The CSDE and Collaborative Family Guides on suspension and expulsion

The CSDE Social-Emotional Habits 4-12

PreK-Two Tips/ Decision Tree guidance and Cohort Support

2020

2020

2020

2021

2021

2022-23

*Throughout this time the CSDE established targets and program activities for Indicator 4 regarding Students with Disabilities

Commissioner's Remarks



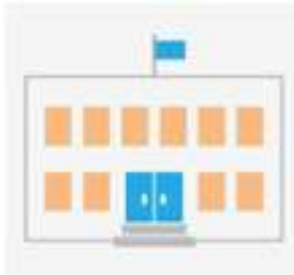
Commissioner Charlene M. Russell-Tucker
Connecticut School Discipline Collaborative
May 23, 2023



Connecticut's K-12 Education Landscape



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



- **Students: 513,513**
 - 52.5% Students of Color (~270,000)
 - 42.4% Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch (~218,000)
 - 17.1% Students with Disabilities (~88,000)
 - 9.7% English Learners (~50,000)
 - More than 180 Languages spoken



Results from Survey on Vacancies March 2023



Organization	Responses	Teaching			Special Service	Paraeducators	
	Number	Number	% Special Education	% Math / Science	Number	Number	% Special Education
Alliance: Opportunity	10	632	26%	23%	93	338	85%
Alliance: Non-Opportunity	25	217	27%	21%	73	314	81%
All Other Districts	158	443	24%	23%	108	652	65%
Districts Total	193	1292	26%	23%	274	1304	74%
APSEP	79	153	75%	10%	38	241	90%



Educator Workforce Development & Diversification Trends



Educators of Color in 2022-23: 11.2 percent (N=6,021)

The percentage of educators of color has increased from 8.3 percent (around 4,372 educators) in 2015-16 to 11.2 percent (6,021 educators) in 2022-23.

Staffing Increase from 2018-19 to 2022-23: 4% (+4,000 full-time)

General education - paraprofessional instructional assistants (12% increase)

Counselors, Social Workers, and School Psychologists (13% increase)

Instructional specialists who support teachers - certified (16% increase)

During that same period, total student enrollment declined more than 3% from 530,612 in 2018-19 to 513,513 in 2022-23

Update on Student Discipline in Public Schools

Excerpts from Connecticut's 2021-22 Report on Student Discipline to the State Board of Education



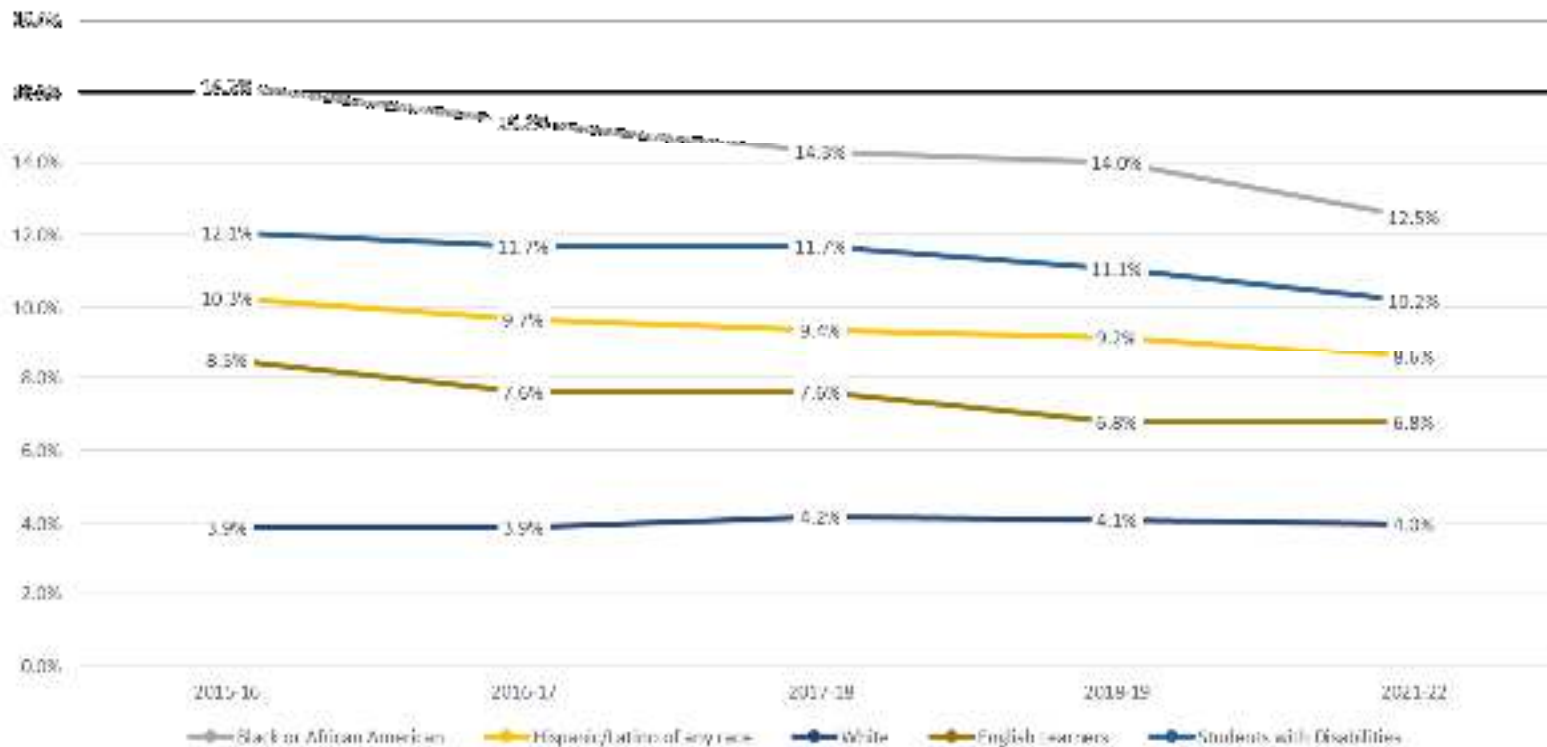
Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer



Data Trends – Highlights from Board Report



Suspension Rates for Select Student Groups



Over the past decade, Connecticut has made major strides in reducing exclusionary discipline... though disparities remain



Sanctions



Table 1: Total Number of Sanctions

Sanction Type	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	% Change	
					2021-22	from 2018-19
In-School Suspension	56,866	53,057	49,667	48,431	38,739	-20.0
Out-of-School Suspension	34,415	32,982	31,834	32,681	34,580	5.8
Expulsion	848	750	797	745	858	15.2

- From 2018-19 to 2021-22 (pre-to post-pandemic) the total number of in-school suspensions decreased by 20 percent while out-of-school suspensions increased by 5.8 percent.



Incidents



Table 2: Incidents by Category

Incident Type	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2021-22	% Change from 2018-19
Violent Crimes Against Persons	440	392	483	398	427	7.3%
Sexually Related Behavior	1,134	1,286	1,329	1,254	1,018	-18.8%
Personally Threatening Behavior	6,622	6,870	7,208	6,787	7,559	11.4%
Theft Related Behaviors	1,669	1,686	1,312	1,217	1,058	-13.1%
Physical and Verbal Confrontation	13,862	14,985	14,811	14,976	15,764	5.3%
Fighting and Battery	15,744	16,744	16,952	18,036	17,165	-4.8%
Property Damage	1,234	1,529	1,431	1,455	2,161	48.5%
Weapons	920	936	917	801	1,298	62.0%
Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco	2,551	3,098	4,964	5,933	6,449	8.7%
School Policy Violations	56,281	51,879	45,769	43,869	36,687	-16.4%

- Some incident categories showed substantial declines from pre-pandemic 2018-19 (i.e., school policy violations declined 16.4 percent, sexually related behavior declined 18.8 percent, and theft related behaviors declined 15 percent)
- Other categories showed substantial increases (i.e., property damage increased 48.5 percent, and weapons increased by 62.0 percent).

In 2021-22, school policy violations accounted for approximately 41 percent of all incidents, down from 46 percent in 2018-19, 48 percents in 2017-18, and 56 percent in 2015-16



Suspension Rate



Table 4: Suspension Rates by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2021-22	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	131	7.1	121	8.4	117	8.4	119	8.3	119	8.5
Asian	451	1.7	442	1.6	501	1.8	530	1.9	446	1.6
Black or African American	11,446	16.2	10,745	15.2	9,884	14.3	9,897	14.0	8,518	12.5
Hispanic/Latino of any race	13,156	10.3	12,710	9.7	12,819	9.4	13,214	9.2	13,574	8.6
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	23	4.5	36	6.8	32	5.8	34	5.7	46	8.5
Two or More Races	1,067	7.0	1,080	6.7	1,248	7.0	1,368	7.0	1,636	7.0
White	11,826	3.9	11,448	3.9	12,167	4.2	11,696	4.1	10,310	4.0
Total	38,100	7.0	36,582	6.7	36,768	6.8	36,858	6.7	34,649	6.5



Suspension Rate



- In 2021-22, over 34,600 students (6.5 percent) or approximately one out of every 15 students statewide, received a suspension or an expulsion.
- Disparities remain in these suspension rates between Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students and their White counterparts.
- While one out of 25 White students received at least one suspension, one out of 8 Black/African American students and one out of 12 Hispanic/Latino students experienced the same sanction.
- In other words, Black/African American students are more than three times as likely and Hispanic/Latino students are more than twice as likely as their White counterparts to be suspended or expelled.
- The likelihood of higher suspension for students of color as compared to White students has declined slightly over the years but remains high, especially for Black/African American students.



Grades PK-2



Table 8: Total Number of Sanctions (PreK-2) – not a student count

Year	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2021-22
ISS	1,911	1,477	1,152	1,032	395
OSS	1,327	983	791	894	599
EXP	*3	0	0	0	0

- Among young children in Grades PreK-2, the number of suspensions declined by 48 percent from 2018-19 to 2021-22. In 2021-22, fewer than 600 students Grades PK-2 (less than one half of one percent) received at least one suspension.
- The total number of suspensions declined from over 5,000 prior to PA 15-96 to 1,926 pre-pandemic in 2018-19 and 994 post-pandemic.



School Based Arrests



Table 18: Student Demographics for School-Based Arrests

Race/Ethnicity	2017-2018 Student Count of School-Based Arrests	2018-2019 Student Count of School-Based Arrests	2021-2022 Student Count of School-Based Arrests
Black or African American	419	390	270
Hispanic/Latino of any race	577	601	421
White	554	468	217
Male	1,133	1,067	649
Female	522	493	313
TOTAL	1,655	1,560	962

- The number of students arrested has declined but disparities remain.
- Males, Black/African American, and Hispanic/Latino students were disproportionately represented among those arrested.
- Over the past three years incidents involving Fighting and Battery are the most common reason for a school-based arrest.



Trend Observations



- In 2018-19, school policy violations accounted for approximately 46 percent of all incidents, down from 56 percent in 2015-16 and down from 48 percent in 2017-18. This trend has continued post-pandemic with school policy violations accounting for 41 percent of reportable incidents.
- Though rates have been declining, suspension rates are higher for students of color.
- While some incident categories showed substantial declines from pre-pandemic 2018-19 (sexually related behavior declined 18.8 percent, and theft related behaviors declined 15 percent), other categories showed substantial increases (i.e., property damage increased 48.5 percent, and weapons increased by 62.0 percent).
- The number of out-of-school suspensions for students in Grades Pre-K through two has evidenced a steep decline. The total number of suspensions declined from over 5,000 prior to PA 15-96 to 1,926 pre-pandemic in 2018-19 and 994 post-pandemic. Also, we have not had a reported expulsion since 2016.



School Discipline Report Reflection



01

Questions from the committee

02

Feedback from the committee

Statewide School Discipline Efforts and Milestones



John D. Frassinelli, Division Director



Focus Areas for School Discipline



Connecticut School Discipline Collaborative	Grades Pre-K to Grade Two	Social-Emotional Learning
Behavioral Health	Alternative Education	Charter Schools
Indicator 4 A & B	Tiers for disproportionate school discipline	Positive School Climate



Cross-Sector Collaboration



Internal and External Collaboration

- Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection-School Safety and Security
- The Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI)-SBDI, and Trauma Informed Care
- Alternative Schools Committee
- Juvenile Justice Partnerships – CCA, CPAC, ConnCASE
- CAPSS
- The CSDE's School Discipline Collaborative
- Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation
- Direct communication with families regarding concerns
- Direct communication with schools and districts



Professional Learning



Three-Part Series

- **New** Addressing Trends in PreK-Two Suspension Rates: Opportunities for Improvement and Strategies for Systemic – Fall 2023
- **New** Promoting a Proactive and Comprehensive System of Support to Reduce Exclusionary School Discipline

Ongoing

- Developing a Secondary System of Supports Series
- Multi-tiered Systems of Support for Behavior Series
- Using Data and Protocols to Determine Effective Behavior Supports for Students' Success
- Pyramid Model Practices Series
- Understanding Disproportionality in School Discipline Series and Tiered Support
- The Impact of Childhood Trauma
- Understanding of Executive Functioning-Strength-Based Approaches



Social-Emotional Learning and Behavioral Supports



- \$183M in District ESSER investments in Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- \$28M in School Mental Health Personnel and Supports
- Statewide Landscape Scan for SEL and Behavior Health
- Social-Emotional Universal and Supplemental Assessment
 - DESSA, SSR and EdSERT
- Social-Emotional and Intellectual Habits: Grades 4 through 12
- The Behavioral Health Pilot
- CT Learning Hub for Social-Emotional Learning
- Webinars and Resources for School Staff and Families



Stronger Connections Grant Program Overview



- Last year, President Biden signed into law the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA), in light of the recent spate of mass shootings in the United States, including in Uvalde, Texas.
- This competitive grant provides funding to select LEAs to enhance student learning and attendance by encouraging schools to implement evidence-based activities, programs, and practices to **create safer, healthier, and more positive learning environments and school climates**.
- Through the BSCA Stronger Connections Grant Program, **Connecticut was awarded \$9.12M** in funding under Title IV, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act **to distribute competitively to “high-need” LEAs**.
- The USED strongly encourages SEAs to use the funds to 1. **implement evidence-based strategies** that meet students' needs, 2. **engage families, students, educators, and community members in the design of the program**, and 3. **design policies that advance equity** and are responsive to underserved students.
- **SEAs are encouraged to solicit public input on 1. its definition of a “high-need” LEA and 2. the activities it intends to fund.**
- **Funding must be obligated by September 30, 2026.**



Connecticut's Proposed LEA Priorities: "High-Need" Criteria



1

Districts with high rates of poverty in 2021-2022

AND

2

Smaller Districts (e.g., less than 4,000 students in 2021-22)

AND

3a

Districts with high rates of chronic absenteeism in 2021-2022

OR

3b

Districts with high or disproportionate rates of suspension/expulsion in 2021-2022



Example Eligible Funding Activities (ESEA Section 4108)



1. **Drug and violence prevention** activities and programs that are evidence-based
2. **School-based mental health services**, including early identification of mental health symptoms, drug use, and violence, and appropriate referrals to direct individual or group counseling services, which may be provided by school-based mental health services providers or in partnership with a public or private mental health entity
3. Programs or activities that **support a healthy, active lifestyle**, including nutritional education and regular, structured physical education activities and programs, that may address chronic disease management
4. Programs that help **prevent bullying and harassment**
5. **High-quality training and professional development for school personnel**, including specialized instructional support personnel, related suicide prevention and school-based violence prevention
6. **Child sexual abuse awareness and prevention** programs or activities
7. Designing and implementing a locally-tailored plan to **reduce exclusionary discipline practices** in elementary and secondary schools and promote **positive and fair discipline policies**.
8. Implementation of **schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports**, including through coordination with similar activities carried out under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
9. Designating a **site resource coordinator at a school or local educational agency** to provide a variety of services

Funds may not be used to arm teachers, provide training in the use of weapons, or on school construction.



Questions and Thoughts



1. What are the types of programs and policies you would like to see implemented or expanded in your school community to maximize safety for students and staff?
2. What information should the CSDE collect from LEAs to determine grant decisions? What criteria would you prioritize?
3. What additional criteria should the CSDE consider for determining LEAs that are eligible for this grant program?



Wrap Up and Next Steps



Save the Date
Next Meeting: TBD
Thank you!