



Toronto District School Board

**EXPULSION DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND
EXPELLED STUDENTS' TRANSITION EXPERIENCE IN
THE TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD'S CARING
AND SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAMS AND THEIR
GRADUATION OUTCOMES**

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TITLE: Expulsion Decision-Making Process and Expelled Students' Transition Experience in the Toronto District School Board's Caring and Safe Schools Programs and Their Graduation Outcomes

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A caring, safe, respectful, orderly, and purposeful learning environment in which everyone is engaged and demonstrates personal and social responsibility is essential to student learning. Ontario's *Education Act* prohibits specific behaviours in every school in Ontario and, if no mitigating factors exist, requires mandatory suspensions or expulsions.

During the last five school years between 2011-12 and 2015-16, there were 307 expulsions issued to Toronto District School Board (TDSB) students in total, with the vast majority being issued in secondary schools, and to male students. A further analysis reveals that half of these expulsions were issued to students with special education needs. In addition, Black students, as self-identified in the Board's Student and Parent Census data, accounted for almost half of the expulsions.

Pending an investigation and referral to an expulsion hearing, for which school administrators receive various professional supports and development, students suspended for up to 20 school days were offered a Caring and Safe School (CSS) program, which was attended by about two-thirds of the students. The average length of the pre-expulsion programs was 14.3 school days, while the average length of days actually attended by students was 9.8 days.

There are four TDSB Caring and Safe Schools in the city which were established for accommodating students who had long-term suspensions or expulsions from all schools of the Board. A host of academic and non-academic supports are offered to students in these programs so they can continue their education within a caring, safe and accepting environment. For the 115 expelled secondary school students who attended the four CSS schools over the last five school years, the average length of placements was 74.2 school days, while the average number of days actually attended by these students was 59.2 days.

The amount of credits these expelled students had earned in the CSS schools varied, with one-third of them not earning any credits in their CSS schools regardless of the length of their placement. In addition, the vast majority (84%) of the expelled students did not earn any additional credit in the same school year after they had completed their CSS school placement.

With the exception of the small number of students who transferred out of the TDSB or had other known destinations after their expulsions, close to one quarter (24%) of the retired students graduated with an Ontario Secondary School Diploma, while more than half (58%) dropped out of school or did not have a known destination. In addition, the majority (84%) of these students did not have any suspension in the school years following their expulsions, while 16% had one or more suspensions.

It is recommended that the Board uses the information presented in this report to enhance educational programs so equitable learning environments can benefit every student, including those expelled.

INTRODUCTION

A positive school climate is a prerequisite for student achievement and well-being. The Ontario Ministry of Education defines a positive school climate as “the sum total of all of the personal relationships within a school. When these relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion, and modelled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 6).

Persistent evidence has demonstrated that positive school climate is associated with enhanced academic motivation levels (Eccles et al., 1993), psychological well-being (Ruus et al., 2007; Virtanen et al., 2009), and school attendance (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1989). A sound school climate is also correlated with reductions in secondary school suspension rates (Lee et al., 2011), substance abuse, and mental health concerns (LaRusso, Romer, & Selman, 2008; Ruus et al., 2007), as well as reduced acts of aggression, violence (Karcher, 2002, Gregory, Cornell, Fan, Sheras, Shih, & Huang, 2010), and sexual harassment (Attar-Schwartz, 2009). Furthermore, a positive school climate has been found to mitigate the negative impact of socio-economic factors on academic trajectories (Astor, Benbenisty, & Estrada, 2009).

Motivated by evolving school discipline philosophies, legislation, and research, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has adopted the Caring and Safe Schools Policy (P051) with the objective of affirming the Board’s commitment to creating school learning environments that are caring, safe, peaceful, nurturing, positive, respectful and that enable all students to reach their full potential. Board and school-level Codes of Conduct, School Climate Surveys, reporting of suspensions and expulsions, and the commitment to purposeful, thoughtful and inclusive practices pertaining to all aspects of policy, programming, professional learning, resources, supports, reporting and data collection and relationships stemmed from this policy.

By the same token, and in response to a recent Trustee motion (Appendix A), the Board is committed to fostering understanding among stakeholders and the public regarding the student discipline decision-making process and the student transition experience into and out of the Board’s Caring and Safe School programs, particularly for expelled students. The objective of this report is to provide the aforementioned information along with descriptive statistics, credit accumulation rates, graduation rates, and formal discipline history of secondary school students who were expelled during the five-year period from 2011-2012 to 2015-2016 school years.

BACKGROUND

According to Maslow (1943), all humans share a fundamental need to feel safe, in every sense of the word. In 1970, Maslow adopted his hierarchy of human needs to education and learning. Not surprising, a resounding characteristic of a positive school climate is that students, parents/guardians, and staff, feel safe, welcome, and respected. These stakeholders are key players in contributing to a positive school climate and preventing disrespectful and unacceptable behaviours.

Since Confederation, a shift in the philosophy of school discipline transpired. In Upper Canada, which eventually became the province of Ontario, student misbehaviour was met with a 'reasonable level' of corporal punishment, a commonly perceived effective form of discipline. Corporal punishment was understood as a right possessed and exercised by teachers until the 1970s (Curtis, 1988), owing to *in loco parentis*. This doctrine ascertains that school staff act in place of the parent, including disciplinary responsibilities.

At the turn of the twentieth century, provincially mandated methods of managing extreme student misbehaviour did not exist (Axelrod, 2010). During the same period, young pupils over 14 years of age were exempted from school if they needed to support the home or farm. Students who felt they did not belong or did not want to act in accordance with their school's behavioural or academic expectations voluntarily left school. This deferred the need to systematically address deviant behaviours in schools across the province.

In 1959, the *United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child* marked the first major global consensus on the fundamental principles of children's rights. It resolved that "mankind owes to the child the best it has to give". As such, there was an impetus to abolish punitive and painful disciplinary practices, which violated several principles enshrined in the aforementioned document.

It follows, then, that the *Report of the Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario of 1968* recommended to "abolish corporal punishment and other degrading forms of punishment as a means of discipline in the schools, in favour of a climate of warmth, co-operation and responsibility" (Axelrod, 2010, p. 262). At the Toronto Board of Education, corporal punishment was discontinued during Ronald E. Jones' tenure as director in the 1970s. The report also indicated that exclusionary school discipline without alternative means to learn was at odds with the purpose of education (Hall & Dennis, 1968). This marked a turn in school discipline and punishment approaches for disruptive youth.

While concerns about human rights precipitated a noticeable reduction in corporal punishment (Gagne, 1982), educators were cautioned against exclusionary discipline practices (i.e., suspensions and expulsions) as they robbed students of their right to learn. Meanwhile, the education system observed a gradual rise in bullying, racial and sexual harassment, and student

assaults on peers and educators on and off school property in the 1980s and 1990s (Gidney, 1999).

To address the rise in violence in schools, the North York Board of Education explored constructive approaches to long-term suspensions. In the early 1990s, the board established an Alternative to Suspension Program which supported the holistic needs (e.g., academic, social, psychological, behavioural, etc.) of violent and potentially violent students using health care and community agencies (Cooper, 1998). This program, along with a dozen others occurring across the province at the time, were predecessors to the Ministry of Education's Strict Discipline Program.

School discipline began to crystallize in Ontario. In 1993, the Scarborough Board of Education adopted Safe Schools Policy on Violence and Weapons, the first zero tolerance approach in the province. The zero tolerance philosophy commanded the strict enforcement of predetermined consequences for a range of student offenses, irrespective of contextual factors or mitigating circumstances.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the Progressive Conservative government introduced a zero tolerance policy for unacceptable behaviour in schools. This first materialized in April 2000 with the release of a *Code of Conduct*, and the *Safe Schools Act* a month later across Ontario. The *Code of Conduct* "would make expulsions and suspensions mandatory for serious infractions like bringing weapons or illegal drugs to school, and sets out a zero tolerance policy for bad behaviour" (Ontario Ministry of Education, News Release, 2000). The *Safe Schools Act*, which became operative in September 2001, discriminated between student behaviours that would be punctuated with a mandatory suspension and expulsion and other behaviours for which principals would exercise their discretion. The *Safe Schools Act* also outlined cases in which police involvement was needed and authorized principals and teachers to suspend and expel students.

A suspension was mandatory for students who perpetrated any of the subsequent infractions (Roher & Weir, 2004, p. 28):

1. Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person
2. Possessing alcohol or illegal drugs
3. Being under the influence of alcohol
4. Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority
5. Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school
6. Engaging in another activity that, under a policy of the board, is one for which a suspension is mandatory

An expulsion was mandatory for students who perpetrated any of the subsequent infractions (Roher & Weir, 2004, p. 41):

1. Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm
2. Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person
3. Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner
4. Committing sexual assault
5. Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs
6. Committing robbery
7. Giving alcohol to a minor
8. Engaging in another activity that, under a policy of the board, is one for which expulsion is mandatory

In accordance with the *Safe Schools Act*, school administrators were mandated to consider the following three mitigating factors when determining if the suspension or expulsion of a student is mandatory: the student's ability to control his/her behaviour; the student's ability to comprehend the probable consequences of his/her behaviour; and whether the student's continued presence in the school generates an unacceptable risk to the safety of others (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). Moreover, when determining the duration of a suspension and type or duration of an expulsion, school administrators must consider the student's history among other factors.

In 2004, the Ministry of Education appointed a Safe Schools Action Team to seek feedback from over 700 students, parents/guardians, educators, school administrators, and community members. From a series of consultations, it became evident that stakeholders were uneasy with several areas of the regulatory framework. For instance, the *Safe Schools Act* was inconsistently implemented across the province, there was high variability in suspension rates, and the *Safe Schools Act* emphasized reactive and punitive discipline more so than prevention and correction (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005).

One of the recommendations that stemmed from the Safe Schools Action Team's report was the shift to progressive discipline. This model employs a variety of disciplinary interventions, ranging in progressive severity, so students can learn from their mistakes and improve their behaviour. The "framework of progressive discipline shifts the focus from one that is punitive to a focus that is supportive and corrective in nature" (Ontario Ministry of Education, *Safe Schools Policy and Practice: An Agenda for Action*, 2006, p. 8). Strategies on the progressive discipline continuum include meetings with students and their parents/guardians, taking away privileges, detention, reparations, peer mediation, and restorative practices, among others, with expulsion used as a last resort.

When the *Safe Schools Act* came into effect in September 2001, seven strict discipline programs were up and running in Ontario. The Strict Discipline Program was brought about to tackle the disruption in suspended and expelled students' education. These students were "at risk of losing an important connection to the school community" and such a program would provide "access to learning and treatment programs, behavioural management, [and] individual counseling" (Ontario Ministry of Education, *Safe Schools Policy and Practice: An Agenda for Action*, 2006, p. 14). The academic and non-academic components ensured that suspended and expelled students continued to receive an education and the reasons for their behaviour which warranted disciplinary action were addressed, respectively.

Initially, the Policy/Program Memorandum 130 required that all school boards make arrangements to support expelled students through a Strict Discipline Program within the board itself or with a local provider (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007). This policy was revised in 2008 (Bill 212), stemming from feedback from the Safe Schools Action Team's report, necessitating that Strict Discipline Programs be established in each school board across Ontario since the ultimate goal of these programs was to "re-integrate suspended and expelled students into the school community in a positive manner" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 14). This legislation also included bullying as a behaviour eligible for suspension and required school administrators to consider the following additional mitigating factors: the student's history, evidence of the utilization of progressive discipline, any harassment that might have instigated the student behaviour, the impact of a suspension or expulsion on the student's education, the student's age, and the influence of any Individual Education Plan (Roher, 2007).

These policies, which would eventually replace the Strict Discipline Programs, were prescriptive in nature. It outlined the specific programs boards needed to implement for long-term suspensions and expulsions. Templates of the Student Action Plan document were afforded to school boards in order to provide direction (e.g., academic and non-academic goals) for the student's involvement in the program. Realization of the academic and non-academic goals set in the Student Action Plan determined whether the suspended or expelled student was successful in the program.

"The Ministry of Education is committed to ensuring that all students who are expelled have the opportunity to continue their education. [...] With respect to programs for expelled students, research has demonstrated that positive outcomes for students are related to specific program elements that are tailored to meet the needs of each student."(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 1).

Over the course of the next decade since the *Safe Schools Act*, a handful of pieces of legislation came into effect, further moving school discipline practices from a punitive stance in the early nineteenth and twentieth centuries to a rehabilitative stance as the country celebrates its sesquicentennial anniversary.

STUDENT EXPULSION PROGRAMS IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS

While the aforementioned legislation affects all school boards in the province of Ontario, it is interesting to note the variability in each district's student expulsion program. Placement of expelled students in programs in other jurisdictions in Canada, the United States, and New Zealand will also be explored.

Student Expulsion Programs within Ontario

At Peel District School Board, when a student is expelled from all schools of the Board, they are required to attend a Fresh Start Program. The objective behind this expulsion program is to “teach the skills students require in order to be successful in school, in relationships and in the community; provide a balance between academic and socio-emotional support; assist the students to recognize and accept accountability for their actions; assist the students in the process of seeking forgiveness for their actions; assist the students to restore relationships which may have been damaged; and provide individual and family counselling and to ensure support continues through community services, when required” (Peel District School Board, n.d.). The Fresh Start Program integrates academic, social, psychological, and personal management skills to support students who are willing to change their behaviours. Students are able to achieve up to three credits in a semester in a modified environment (i.e., special learning needs and Individual Education Plans are taken into account) staffed by both teachers and child and youth workers. Prior to starting, the expelled student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) must independently write a letter expressing their commitment to Fresh Start. When an expelled student pledges to attend a Fresh Start program, a Student Action Plan is developed. Students are eligible to return to a Peel District School Board school once they have satisfied the academic and non-academic objectives of the program. At that point, a re-entry plan is created to assist the student transition back into school.

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is also committed to using the curriculum to foster positive student behaviours. As such, expelled students are encouraged to participate in the Gateway Safe and Accepting Schools Program (Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, n.d., 2016). It allows expelled students to continue learning through homework completion and independent study while engaging in restorative practices. Teaching and support staff (e.g., educational assistant, social worker, community agencies) also provide students with various forms of academic and non-academic supports so students can be successful when they return to school. Academic supports include homework completion, independent learning modules, and opportunities for experiential learning. Non-academic supports include anger management, goal setting, bullying prevention and intervention, and substance abuse education. Expelled students are eligible to be re-admitted once he/she has successfully completed the Gateway Safe and Accepting Schools Program and has satisfied the objectives required for completion of the program.

Further west, the Waterloo Region District School Board offers a voluntary program called Choices for Youth to fully-expelled students (Waterloo Region District School Board, n.d., 2013). This program employs a restorative practices-based approach and is delivered through academic and non-academic experiential approaches, such as service learning, adventure-based and group development. Choices for Youth is rooted in the “Potential is Everything” model which draws on expelled students’ assets, while improving skills to correct behaviours that hinder their success (Waterloo Region District School Board, n.d., 2013). Academic support offered to students include remedial assistance in literacy and numeracy, special education and English Language Learners (ELL) support, academic programming, credit and independent learning courses, and credit recovery. Expelled students can choose to develop a host of social and emotional skills through sessions on anger management, conflict resolution, self-awareness, insight development, mediation skills, creative thinking, and social responsibility, among others. Career development workshops and individual support (e.g., counselling, reintegration, etc.) are also offered to students. Similar to Peel Region, Choices for Youth is supervised by a teacher and child and youth worker but works directly with local agencies and community organizations. Following the completion of Choices for Youth, students have the option to re-enter school, the workforce, or a community program.

Student Expulsion Programs Elsewhere within Canada

At the Calgary Board of Education, Alberta, a progressive student discipline approach is also utilized to tackle inappropriate and unacceptable student behaviours. Students may be expelled upon recommendation by his/her principal and if he/she has been offered an alternative education program by the board. While no information could be found regarding the existence or provision of programming specifically for expelled students, re-enrollment following an expulsion may be accompanied by any of the following recommendations: “medical consultation; enrolment by the student or the student’s family in a treatment or counselling program designed to address the behaviour for which the student was suspended or expelled; alternative interventions such as community conferencing and other restorative practices; or any other action which the Board-delegated person or principal consider appropriate” (Calgary Board of Education, 2016).

Edmonton Public Schools is also within the province of Alberta. Upon students’ first expulsion, they are placed at another school. Following their second expulsion, academic programming is offered to non-violent high school students who have a history of difficulties at school (e.g., recurring drug issues, possession of weapons, or other issues such as theft) through New Directions (2016). The goal and mission of New Directions is to create an environment that fosters life skills, academics, and work experience opportunities and to ensure students develop appropriate skills and behaviors in order to become responsible citizens, respectively. Individual student programs are developed at the start of this expulsion program for non-violent students. In order for expelled students to be considered for re-entry into school, they must demonstrate a strong attendance record (75% attendance), positive behaviour (which is based on a points system), and academic achievement (attain a certain number of credits per semester). In the

past, New Directions provided addictions counseling on site on a weekly basis, however, due to staffing constraints, this service is no longer provided.

Student Expulsion Programs in the United States

At the Los Angeles Unified School District, expelled students receive a plan for rehabilitation and are placed in an alternative educational program called AB 922 Program, where they receive educational and support services, as mandated by the state of California (Los Angeles Unified School District, 2017a). The Student Expulsion Support Services Unit is comprised of a team of professionals who work closely with students, parents/guardians, school administrators, and community agencies to help expelled students in achieving reinstatement. The aim of the AB 922 Program is to support students in developing academic and social skills that will enhance their ability to have a successful school experience once they re-enter school. The program monitors students' social, behavioral, and academic progress and also offers services such as case management, counseling, crisis intervention, credit recovery plans, parent education, school visitations, and home visitations. Students are eligible to be reinstated if the expelled student has abided by the rehabilitative contract and is considered to not present potential danger to other students or staff in the District (Los Angeles Unified School District, 2017b).

Next, at Chicago Public Schools, Safe Schools Alternative Program enables expelled students who are removed from their school for behavioural violations to continue their learning and work towards earning a high school diploma (2012). The Safe Schools Alternative Program provides students with academic services, behavioural intervention to improve their academic performance and social behaviours, vocational and career training opportunities, and life-skills training. When a student is prepared to return to traditional school from an expulsion after attending the Safe Schools Alternative Program, a transition meeting is arranged with pertinent stakeholders to discuss the student's return and prepare for a successful transition. During this meeting, a plan is developed to facilitate various elements of the student's transition including "strategies for preventing future behavior incidents, restoring relationships, and addressing the student's ongoing social, emotional, and academic needs" (Chicago Public Schools, 2015, p. 5).

Student Expulsion Programs in New Zealand

In New Zealand, exclusion refers to the formal removal of students under the age of 16 from their school or kura (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2009). School administrators are required to enrol the excluded student at another school. Expulsion refers to the formal removal of students over the age of 16 from their school or kura, in which case, the school administrator is not responsible for finding an alternative placement for the student. Parents/guardians of the expelled student must enrol their child in another school or kura if they are interested in continuing their schooling, however, schools and kura are not obliged to accept a student expelled from another school. Expelled students are reminded of supports available from the Ministry of Education, such as Youth Services (New Zealand Youth Services, n.d.). Youth Services works with community agencies to help teenagers between 16-19 years of age to explore education, employment or training options and transition successfully with guidance, support, and encouragement.

STUDENT EXPULSION PROGRAMS IN THE TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Student Discipline at the Toronto District School Board

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) values and is committed to creating learning environments that are safe, nurturing, positive, and respectful which enable all students to reach their full potential. As such, the Board has adopted and developed policies, procedures, and guidelines in accordance with provincial legislation (i.e., Education Act, Ontario Regulations, and Code of Conduct) and Ministry directives.

Progressive discipline is the foundation of the discipline practices at the TDSB. Progressive discipline involves a whole-school approach that uses a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviours and to build upon strategies that promote and foster positive behaviours. Progressive discipline is effective and can be, in many instances, a step-by-step process. Progressive Discipline requires that mitigating and other factors be taken into account, and it relies on partnerships between school, parents/guardians, and community agencies.

Interventions that support a progressive discipline approach may include but are not limited to: attendance/performance/behaviour contracts, loss of privilege to participate in specified school activities, peer mediation, essay/poster campaign, counselling, community service, and restorative justice practices. For students with special education needs, programs, interventions, supports, and consequences are tailored to students' strengths, needs, goals, and expectations contained in his/her Individual Education Plan (IEP).

As outlined in the Education Act, a recommendation for an expulsion is furthest along the progressive discipline continuum. There are two types of expulsions that a school principal can recommend to the Discipline Committee of the Board: school only and all schools of the Board. A school only expulsion does not entitle the student to attend the school or participate in school-related activities where he/she committed the infraction. If a student is expelled from one school only, a student is eligible to attend another school after their expulsion hearing. An expulsion of all schools of the Board does not entitle the student to attend any school or participate in school-related activities within the Board. A student who is expelled from all schools of the Board is not permitted to attend another school until they have completed the goals contained within their Expelled Student Action Plan.

According to section 310 of the Education Act, when a school principal believes that a student of their school has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity, or in circumstances where engaging in the activity will affect the school climate, the student will be suspended while the school principal investigates and makes a determination

about school discipline. One determination that could be made is a recommendation for expulsion:

1. Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm.
2. Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person.
3. Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner.
4. Committing a sexual assault.
5. Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs.
6. Committing robbery.
7. Giving alcohol to a minor.
- 7.1 Bullying, if,
 - i. the pupil has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying, and
 - ii. the pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person.
- 7.2 Any activity listed in subsection 306 (1) that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor.
8. Any other activity that, under a policy of a board, is an activity for which a principal must suspend a pupil and, therefore in accordance with this Part, conduct an investigation to determine whether to recommend to the board that the pupil be expelled. 2007, c. 14, s. 4; 2012, c. 5, s. 14.

The Education Act delegates the authority to school boards to create a list of additional infractions for which suspension is mandatory and when an expulsion may be considered. The TDSB has put this into effect. According to the Board's Chart of Consequences of Inappropriate Student Behaviour, there are six additional infractions for which a principal shall suspend a student pending possible expulsion:

1. Possession of an explosive substance
2. Sexual harassment
3. Hate motivated occurrences
4. Distribution of hate material
5. Racial harassment
6. An act considered by the Principal to be a serious breach of the Board's or school's code of conduct

When a student commits an offense under section 310 of the Education Act, a principal is required to suspend the student for 20 school days and offer a placement in a Board program for suspended students. Further the Act also requires that a principal promptly notify the parent/guardian of the student (if the student is under 18 years of age), and conduct an

investigation. The TDSB recommends that principals complete their investigations within five school days from when the suspension was issued.

Principal's Investigation

The purpose of the investigation is to gather facts regarding the incident from all parties involved. To do so, the principal must endeavour to speak with the student suspected of misconduct, the student's parent/guardian, and any other individual the principal has reason to believe may have pertinent information. Please note that under the Education Act, the principal must conduct a school-based investigation into incidents that are brought to his or her attention where a suspension or expulsion could be issued. Once the investigation is complete the principal must assess the facts of the case against the incident that occurred.

After the facts have been assessed against an incident, the principal must make a discipline determination. He or she can recommend an expulsion for the Discipline Committee to hear, they can confirm a suspension (1-19 days), or they can quash the matter altogether. During this process, the principal can consult with the Caring and Safe Schools Administrator assigned to the area and the Superintendent of Education, as well as refer to the Guidelines for Conducting a Disciplinary Investigation.

For situations in which the police are involved and they have indicated that the school principal cannot conduct his or her own investigation, the principal must wait until the police have completed their investigation. Once the principal has completed his/her own investigation, he or she shall take the following mitigating and other factors into account when determining an appropriate consequence:

Mitigating Factors:

1. The pupil does not have the ability to control his or her behaviour.
2. The pupil does not have the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of his or her behaviour.
3. The pupil's continuing presence in the school does not create an unacceptable risk to the safety of any person. O. Reg. 472/07, s. 2.

Other Factors:

1. The pupil's history.
2. Whether a progressive discipline approach has been used with the pupil.
3. Whether the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled was related to any harassment of the pupil because of his or her race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or to any other harassment.
4. How the suspension or expulsion would affect the pupil's ongoing education.
5. The age of the pupil.
6. In the case of a pupil for whom an individual education plan has been developed,

- i. whether the behaviour was a manifestation of a disability identified in the pupil's individual education plan,
- ii. whether appropriate individualized accommodation has been provided, and
- iii. whether the suspension or expulsion is likely to result in an aggravation or worsening of the pupil's behaviour or conduct. O. Reg. 472/07, s. 3; O. Reg. 412/09, s. 4.

Ultimately, the standard of proof principals must reach when making a decision is “on a balance of probabilities.” The information collected from the investigation must support and align with the recommendation for expulsion. Once a decision is reached, the principal must be satisfied that the procedural integrity of the investigation can stand the scrutiny of an appeal, should one take place.

As previously mentioned, there are three possible decisions to be made by the principal once his or her investigation has been completed:

1. Confirm the suspension and duration of the suspension even if the suspension has already been served;
2. Withdraw the suspension and expunge the record of the suspension, even if the suspension has been served; or
3. Recommend an expulsion to the Discipline Committee for the Board.

If the principal recommends that an expulsion is warranted, he or she will promptly notify the student and/or the student's parent/guardian (Education Act's age restrictions apply); as well as the Superintendent of Education and the Caring and Safe Schools Administrator of their decision. The principal is also responsible for preparing a report with his/her findings and recommendations (Principal's Brief of Documents).

Expulsion Hearings

Expulsion hearings are scheduled within 20 school days of the date on which the principal suspended the student, unless all parties agree on a later date. The Discipline Committee, which consists of at least three trustees, is authorized to act on behalf of the Board. The parties present at the expulsion hearing may include the student, the student's parent/guardian, the principal, and any other persons specified by the Board policy.

At the hearing, the Discipline Committee must determine an outcome for the recommendation based on the evidence, argument(s), mitigating and other factors, and all submissions made at the hearing. Further, at the completion of the hearing, the Discipline Committee must deliberate the facts heard and reach a decision about the recommendation made by the school principal.

The Discipline Committee will decide if the student is to be expelled (school only or all schools of the Board). If they choose not to expel but uphold the suspension they must decide on the duration of that suspension, even if the suspension has already been served. They are also able

to quash the suspension even if the suspension has already been served - in this case they will also order the records be expunged from the student's files. The Discipline Committee's decision regarding the suspension is final.

After determining their decision, the Discipline Committee will promptly give written notice indicating its decision to every person who was entitled to be a party to the expulsion hearing. In the case of expelled students, this notice must also include rationale for the expulsion, information about programs for expelled students and information about the right to appeal the Discipline Committee's decision and how to do so.

Appeal of Expulsion

In accordance with the Education Act, the Board's expulsion decision may be appealed by expelled students and their parent/guardian to the Child and Family Services Review Board [please refer to Section 5 of Ontario Regulation 472/07 under the Education Act (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/070472>)].

Caring and Safe Schools Expulsion Program Entry Planning

Following the Discipline Committee's decision, students who are suspended long-term or expelled are offered and encouraged, but not compelled, to participate in an appropriate Caring and Safe Schools program. Students facing an all schools of the Board expulsion must successfully complete a program for expelled students prior to returning to a TDSB school. Programs for expelled students are offered at the Caring and Safe Schools program sites.

Once the student and/or parent/guardian have indicated that the student is committed to attending an expulsion program, an intake and planning meeting is scheduled. This mandatory meeting takes place at the program site and is meant to be a collaborative process that includes the student, his/her parent/guardian, Board supporting staff, and if required, appropriate community agency staff. During the meeting, the program goals, program safety protocols, code of conduct and expectations, permission forms, and TTC transportation, are explained.

Another outcome that stems from the intake and planning meeting is the Expelled Student Action Plan (ESAP). The ESAP is developed for every expelled student who makes a commitment to attend the program, with the consideration of the following factors: the needs of the student (e.g., special education needs) and whether any assessment is required, risk factors and protective factors, any types of support that the student may need to continue his/her learning, and the objectives that the expelled student must successfully meet in order to be readmitted. The program for the expelled student will involve individualized academic and non-academic components.

The home school administrator will complete and submit the ESAP document. This is saved in the Caring and Safe Schools database through which the Caring and Safe Schools Program

Office will forward it to the specific expulsion program site. Parents/guardians are also presented with a copy.

In the event that an expelled student cannot attend the program, he or she will be offered the opportunity to receive academic and non-academic support, such as homework packages, e-learning opportunities and online personal support programs.

While participation in the expulsion program is voluntary, students and their parents/guardians must agree to follow the attendance requirements and Code of Conduct and Consequences as stipulated by the Caring and Safe Schools programs and the Board. Students who are not benefitting from the program, not attending regularly, failing to follow the expectations of the program, or are interfering with the rights of others to learn will have their continuance in the program reviewed with their parent/guardian and a Caring and Safe Schools administrator. The program hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The day consists of academic and non-academic sessions as well as nutrition breaks. Students are supervised at all times and remain at the program site all day.

Resources and Supports Provided during the Caring and Safe Schools Expulsion Program

The Caring and Safe Schools program strives to afford expelled students with academic and non-academic support to continue their education within a caring, safe, and accepting environment.

Regarding the academic components of the program, teachers and support staff are on hand to supervise and support students with the completion of their assignments and homework in accordance with the Ontario Secondary Curriculum policy documents, with the overall goal of credit completion/recovery to earn credits toward their Ontario Secondary School Diploma. Students with identified special learning needs (with an IEP) are accommodated with applicable modifications. The academic component includes supervised and independent learning supports as required.

The non-academic component of the program focuses on developing positive attitudes, skills, and behaviours among expelled students in order for them to be successful in school, interpersonal relationships, and in the community. This is primarily accomplished by first identifying and addressing the underlying cause(s) of a student's behaviour(s) that led to the expulsion. For instance, anger management, conflict resolution, developing empathy, impulse control, self-esteem, educational and psychological assessments, and individual counselling are a few examples of non-academic supports offered to expelled students. These support services are provided by a combination of Child and Youth Workers, Educational Assistants, Social Workers, Educational and Clinical Psychologists, and Guidance Counsellors. Appropriate support is also made available through referrals to community agencies and/or through other methods.

Caring and Safe Schools Expulsion Program Exit Planning

Expelled students remain in the Caring and Safe School program until it can be determined that they have successfully met the objectives of the program and the requirements of the TDSB. These objectives are outlined in their ESAP.

An expelled student eligible for consideration of re-admission and/or his/her parent/guardian may apply in writing to the principal of the expulsion program requesting that the student return to a school of the Board. Before being allowed to return to a school, expelled students must have met the objectives of the ESAP and demonstrated: respect for themselves, for others, and for those in authority; that they understand and can accept the consequences of their actions; the ability to participate in school without compromising the safety and well-being of themselves or others at the school; and the ability to comply with the standards set out in the provincial, Board, and local school codes of conduct.

Prior to being re-admitted to school, a re-entry plan is developed. Caring and Safe Schools staff generate a progress report and exit summary as part of the re-entry plan. The purpose of the re-entry plan is to support the student's transition back into school. Caring and Safe Schools staff provide these documents to the receiving school prior to a re-entry meeting with the student and parent/guardian. In some cases, students return to their home school, however, most are placed in a new school setting.

A re-entry meeting with the post expulsion school functions to facilitate the student's transition back to school by, for example, identifying and providing additional academic and non-academic resources that the student may require. Further, to support the transition back to school all students who have been expelled are offered the support of a Child and Youth Counsellor (CYC). This support is provided by the Caring and Safe Schools department. Typically, this transition support is in place for approximately 6 weeks. The CYC can vary the length of time of their support on a case by case basis. The Caring and Safe Schools team strives to ensure that each and every student is transitioned back to school as equitably as possible.

Information relating to the expulsion remains in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR) for five years after the date on which the Board expelled the student, but no longer than five years after the student's retirement from the Board, at which point may be removed.

Professional Supports and Development for Administrators Regarding Student Discipline

To qualify as a principal in Ontario, candidates are required to complete the Principal's Qualification Program (PQP). Administrators from Caring and Safe Schools have presented at various PQP courses. They provide incoming principals and vice-principals with the knowledge and skills surrounding student discipline. In the past, topics presented have included relevant legislation, student rights, school climate, TDSB policies and procedures, mitigating and other factors, progressive discipline, and information about Caring and Safe Schools programs, among others. Aspiring principals could also receive investigation training during the PQP course. Hence, professional development regarding student discipline decision-making and expulsion hearings is provided to individuals prior to serving as school administrators.

During a school administrator's tenure at the TDSB, regular professional development and training are afforded. For example, principals and vice-principals receive guidance on conducting investigations, such as when to contact police, when to contact parents/guardians, when to start their investigation, how to manage incidents occurring off-school property, and the steps taken during and after their investigation. The Caring and Safe Schools team are also regularly invited by Superintendents of Education to present at their schools' leadership training meetings. Caring and Safe Schools Administrators have also presented expulsion hearing information at conferences held by the Toronto School Administrators Association.

In June 2000, the Caring and Safe Schools Database Project was launched in order to facilitate the collection, planning, and reporting of information related to student discipline. The objective of the project was to establish an automated online data gathering and reporting tool. A few derivative benefits associated with this tool have included supporting the implementation of Caring and Safe Schools policies and procedures, and facilitating incident prevention and intervention programming initiatives. For example, when a school administrator submits an online expulsion report through the application, the report can be electronically retrieved by the Superintendent of Education and the Caring and Safe Schools Administrator assigned to the area. In addition, members from Caring and Safe Schools automatically receive an e-mail notifying them of the suspension pending expulsion along with pertinent details. As a result, a cascade of supports is triggered for principals and vice-principals including one-on-one in-person and/or telephone support and guidance to prepare for expulsion hearings. However, the school principal is the ultimate decision maker regarding the level of support and advice he or she will accept. In other words, final decisions regarding all discipline matters rest with the school principal.

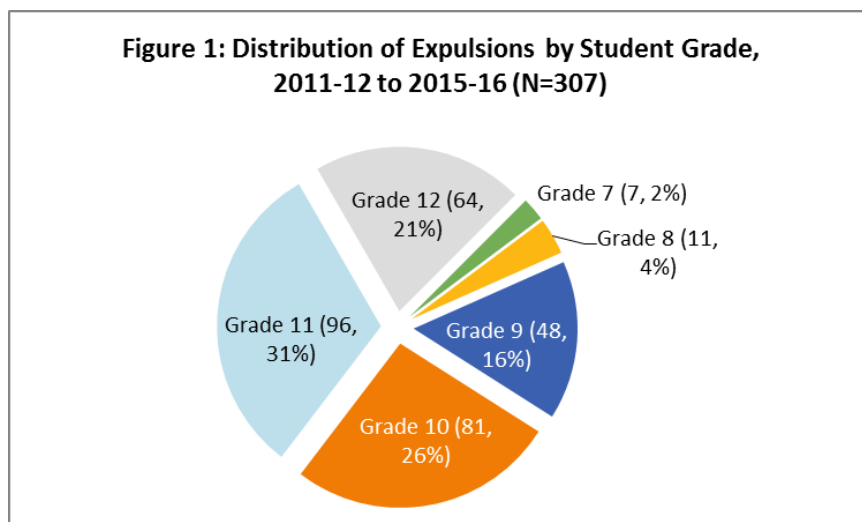
OVERVIEW OF TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD EXPULSIONS IN THE LAST FIVE SCHOOL YEARS

During the last five school years between 2011-12 and 2015-16, there were 307 expulsions issued to TDSB students in total. Table 1 displays the breakdown for the five school years, and Figure 1 shows the distribution of expulsions by student grade during the same period.

Table 1: Total Number of Expulsions in TDSB Schools, 2011-12 to 2015-16

School Year	Elementary Schools	Secondary Schools	Elementary & Secondary Schools
2011-12	3	40	43
2012-13	3	49	52
2013-14	4	59	63
2014-15	2	68	70
2015-16	6	73	79
TOTAL	18	289	307

Figure 1: Distribution of Expulsions by Student Grade, 2011-12 to 2015-16 (N=307)



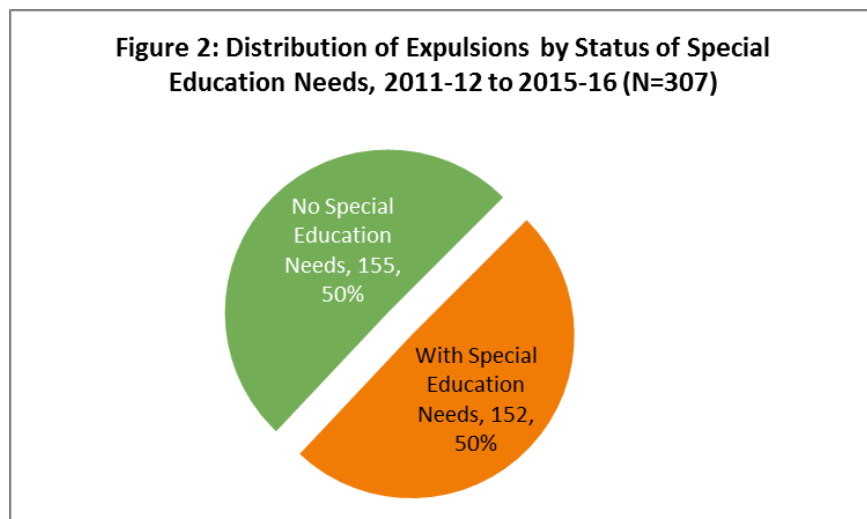
Among the 307 expulsions during the five-year period, half (N=153) were school-only expulsions (i.e., students were expelled from one school only), and another half (N=154) were Board-wide expulsions (i.e., students were expelled from all schools of the Board).

Expulsions by Student Demographics

Among the 307 expulsions, the vast majority (94%), or 289 expulsions, were in secondary schools. Male students accounted for 89% of the expulsions.

Student registration data shows that the majority of expulsions (81%) were issued to students who were born in Canada. In addition, 61% of expulsions were given to students who were from a single-parent family.

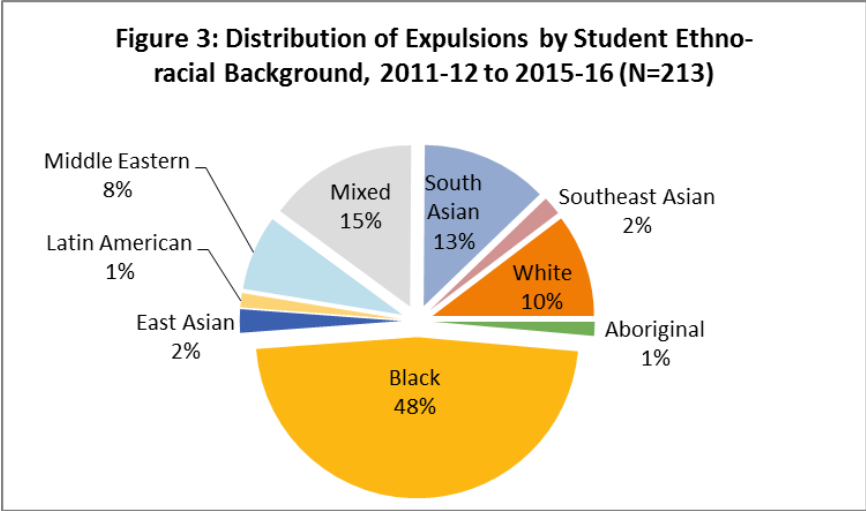
A detailed analysis of student demographic background reveals that out of the 307 expulsions issued in the preceding five school years, half were issued to students with special education needs (see Figure 2). This pattern mirrored what has been observed for the total number of suspensions in recent years: for example, in the 2015-16 school year, 60% of suspensions were issued to students with special education needs (Toronto District School Board, 2016; Appendix B).



The Board conducted its first Grade 7-12 Student Census in the 2006-07 school year, and its first Parent Census (for students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6) in the 2007-08 school year. The second round of Student and Parent Censuses were conducted in the 2011-12 school year.

Linking the student expulsion data to all these Censuses made it possible to further disaggregate student expulsions by other student demographics, such as their ethno-racial background.

After linking, it was found that 213 expulsions, or 70%, had a valid student ethno-racial background. Figure 3 shows the disaggregated results for these 213 expulsions.



Self-identified Black students accounted for almost half (48%) of the 213 expulsions, followed by Mixed (15%), South Asian (13%), and White (10%) students.

Expulsions in Toronto District School Board’s Secondary Schools

In total, there were 289 expulsions in the Board’s secondary schools over the five school years, issued to 282 students (7 students received two expulsions during the five-year period). Among these expulsions, about half (N=142: 49%) were school-only expulsions, and 51% (N=147) were Board-wide expulsions.

Length of Placement in a Caring and Safe School Program Prior to the Expulsion Decision

Pending an investigation and referral to an expulsion hearing, students suspended for up to 20 school days are offered to attend a Caring and Safe School (CSS) program.

Out of the 289 expulsions in secondary schools during the five-year period, 271 expulsions, or 94%, could be linked to the CSS program attendance data. Among them, about one-third (N=92, 34%) were not followed as students declined to attend a CSS program prior to the expulsion hearing.

For the other 179 (66%) expulsions, which were followed by enrolling in a CSS program prior to the expulsion hearing, the average length of pre-expulsion CSS programs offered to students was 14.3 school days, while the average length of days actually attended by students was 9.8 days. There was very little difference between school-only expulsions and Board-wide expulsions (see Table 2).

Table 2: Average Length of CSS Programs for Suspended Students Prior to Expulsion Hearing

Expulsion Type	Average Length of CSS Programs Offered	Average Length of CSS Programs Attended
School-Only (N=93)	14.2 Days	10.1 Days
Board-Wide (N=86)	14.4 Days	9.5 Days

Length of Placement in a Caring and Safe School after the Expulsion Decision

There are four TDSB Caring and Safe Schools in the city which were established for accommodating expelled students. The enrollment for secondary school students varied from school to school and from school year to school year, as displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Grade 9-12 Enrolment of the Four Caring and Safe Schools, 2011-12 to 2015-16

School Name	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total
Caring and Safe School LC1	21	11	8	4	10	54
Caring and Safe School LC2	15	18	17	20	17	87
Caring and Safe School LC3	26	24	21	11	8	90
Caring and Safe School LC4	10	8	10	11	11	50
TOTAL	72	61	56	46	46	281

In addition to the 281 students in Grades 9-12 shown in Table 3, six students in Grades 7-8 also attended these four schools at a certain time over the past five school years. They were not included in the following analyses.

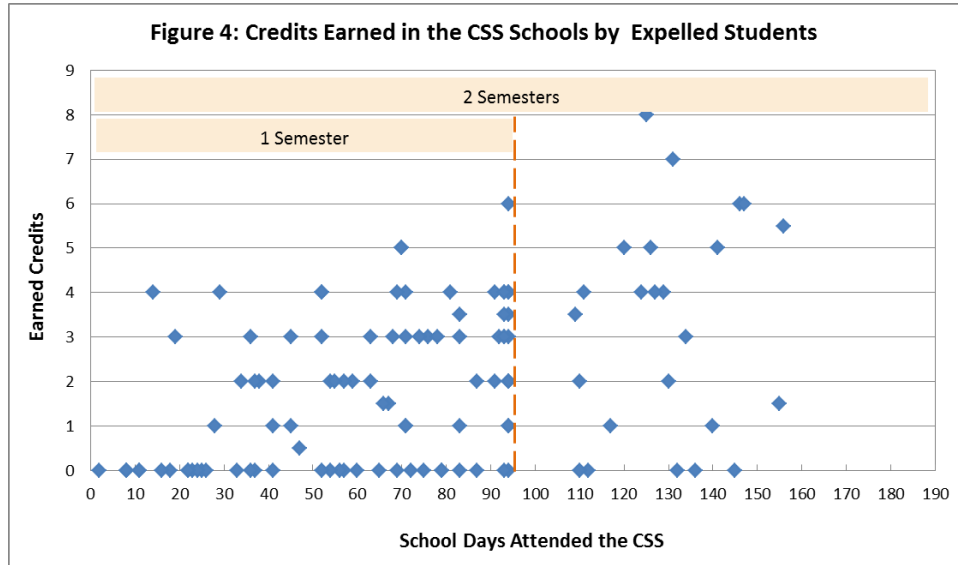
It should be noted that not all the 281 Grade 9-12 students in these four schools over the last five school years were expelled students: over half of them were students who were suspended but not expelled from their schools. After linking the expulsion data to the student registration information extracted from the TDSB’s data warehouse, 115 expelled students were identified as attending one of the four CSS schools over the past five school years.

For these 115 expelled students over the last five school years, the average length of placement in a CSS school was 74.2 school days, which is about 40% of a school year¹. The average number of days actually attended by these students was 59.2 days, which also means that they were absent from the program for 15 school days on average.

¹ A school year typically has 188 school days for secondary school students.

Credits Earned During the CSS School Placement

As the length of placement in a CSS school varied for the 115 Board-wide expelled students whose expulsion information could be linked to the student registration and achievement data, the amount of credits they had earned in the CSS schools also varied - some students earned up to eight credits, while some students didn't earn any credit, as shown in Figure 4.



Students were classified into two groups by the length of placement in the CSS schools: up to 1 Semester and 2 Semesters. Table 5 shows the frequency of earned credits² for each group.

Table 4: Credits Earned in the CSS Schools by the Length of Placement for Expelled Students

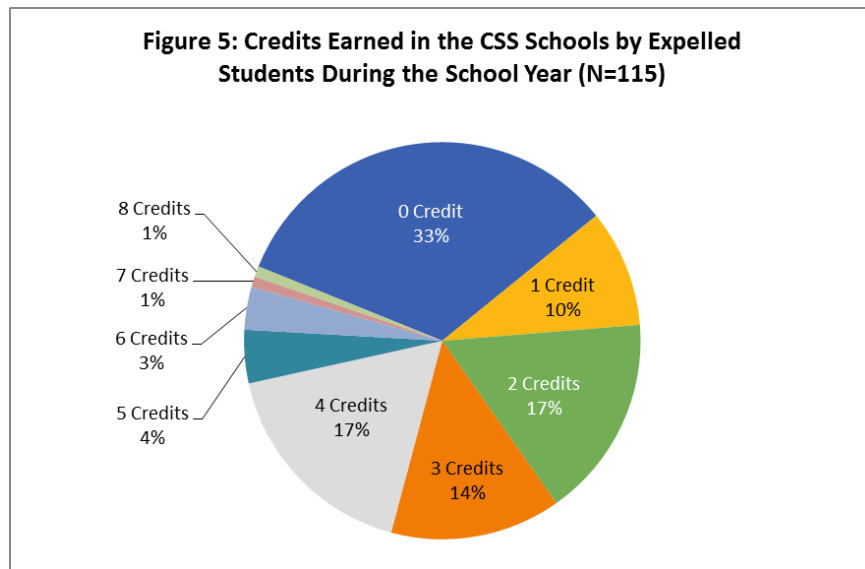
Credits Earned	Up to 1 Semester (N=91)		2 Semesters (N=24)	
	Count of Students	% of Students	Count of Students	% of Students
0	33	36%	5	21%
1	9	10%	2	8%
2	16	18%	3	13%
3	15	16%	1	4%
4	15	16%	5	21%
5	2	2%	3	13%
6	1	1%	3	13%
7			1	4%
8			1	4%

² For reporting purposes, the number of credits was rounded to the nearest integer.

For the majority of the expelled students who were placed in a CSS school for up to one semester, over half (53%) earned two or more credits at a CSS school, but more than one-third (36%) did not earn any credit, and only 19% earned four or more credits (the expected amount of credits for a student to earn in one semester).

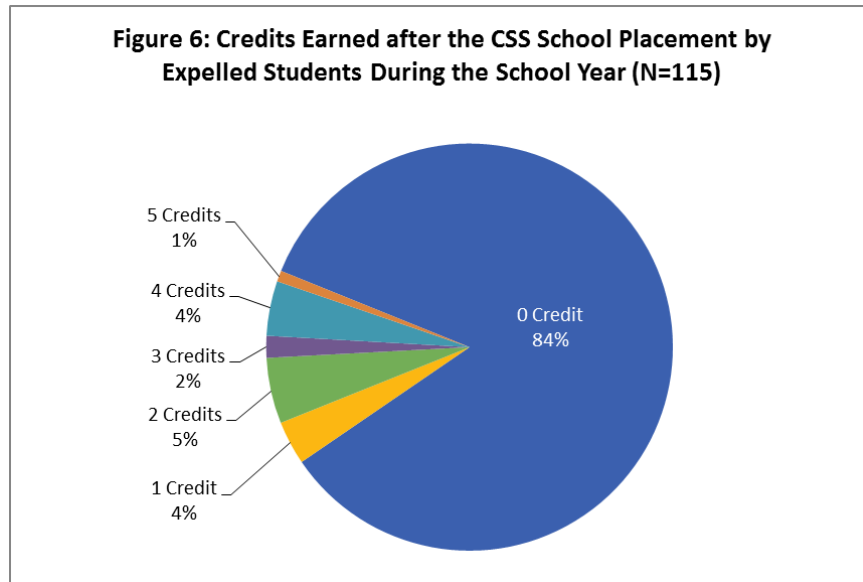
For the 24 students who were placed in a CSS school for more than one semester, more than half (55%) earned four or more credits, with only one student earning eight credits (the expected amount of credits for a student to earn in two semesters). Five students (21%) did not earn any credit.

Figure 5 shows the number of credits earned during the CSS school placement for all 115 expelled students. It can be seen that one-third of expelled students (38 out of 115) did not earn any credits in their CSS placement regardless of the length of their placement.



Credits Earned after the CSS School Placement in the Same School Year

As some expelled students were not placed in a CSS school for the entire school year, it was possible for them to earn additional credits at another school after completing their CSS school placement. However, student registration and achievement data reveal that the vast majority (84%) of the 115 expelled students did not earn any additional credit in the same school year after they had completed their CSS school placement (see Figure 6).



Tracking Credit Accumulation and Graduation Outcomes after Expulsion

It is not uncommon for students to take more than four school years to finish high school, especially for those students who are either newcomers, have special education needs, need better marks for post-secondary destinations, or lag behind in credit accumulation. Therefore, it was necessary to monitor the progress of expelled students from Grade 9 to Grade 12 (referred as Years 1-4), and for at least one more school year beyond Grade 12, which is referred to as Year 5 in this report.

Since the period for this study is between 2011-12 and 2015-16 school years, not all students would have graduation outcomes as some of them are continuing their studies at the time of this report. Table 5 illustrates the tracking process for those students who had graduation outcomes.

Table 5: Tracking Expelled Students' Credit Accumulation and Graduation Outcomes by Cohort

School Year	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	Cohort 5
2011-12		Gr. 9 (Year 1)	Gr. 10 (Year 2)	Gr. 11 (Year 3)	Gr. 12 (Year 4)
2012-13	Gr. 9 (Year 1)	Gr. 10 (Year 2)	Gr. 11 (Year 3)	Gr. 12 (Year 4)	Year 5
2013-14	Gr. 10 (Year 2)	Gr. 11 (Year 3)	Gr. 12 (Year 4)	Year 5	
2014-15	Gr. 11 (Year 3)	Gr. 12 (Year 4)	Year 5		
2015-16	Gr. 12 (Year 4)	Year 5			
2016-17	Year 5				

Based on this tracking process, 209 expelled students including all students in Grades 9-12 in the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years, students in Grades 10-12 in the 2013-14 school year, n students in Grades 11-12 in the 2014-15 school year, and students Grade 12 in the 2015-16 school year had graduation outcomes.

Credits Earned Before, During, and After Expulsions

There were four possible outcomes for the expelled students after tracking their academic progress for five or more school years:

- 1) Continuing their study at a TDSB school
- 2) Graduated with an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)
- 3) Transferred out of the TDSB or had known destinations without an OSSD
- 4) Dropped out or had unknown destinations without an OSSD

With the exception of those students who are continuing their study at a TDSB school in the current school year (2016-17), students' credit accumulation in the school years before, during, and after their expulsions were tracked and analyzed. Table 6 shows the average of their accumulated credits by their grade at which they were expelled.

Table 6: Expelled Students' Credit Accumulation from School Years Before, At, and After Expulsions (N=171)

Grade at Expulsion	# of Students	Average of Accumulated Credits		
		From the School Years Before the Expulsion	From the School Year of the Expulsion	From the School Years After the Expulsion
Gr. 9	17	1.5	1.0	3.5
Gr. 10	35	6.3	4.6	5.9
Gr. 11	62	12.0	4.0	3.6
Gr. 12	57	18.4	4.0	2.3

Tables 7 and 8 show the credit information for students with school-only and Board-wide expulsions, respectively. To protect student privacy, results for fewer than 15 students were not reported.

Table 7: Credit Accumulation from School Years Before, At, and After Expulsions for Students Who Were Expelled from One School Only (N=87)

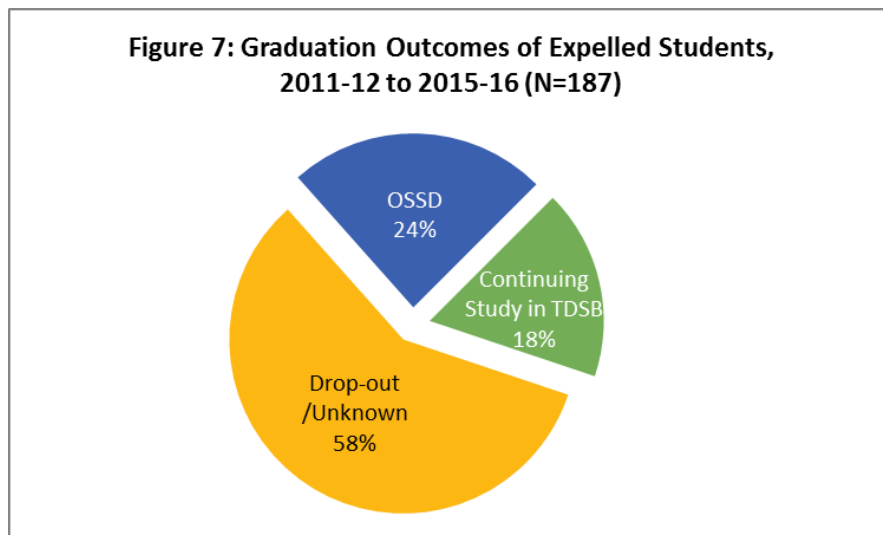
Expulsion Grade	# of Students	Average of Accumulated Credits		
		From the School Years Before the Expulsion	From the School Year of the Expulsion	From the School Years After the Expulsion
Gr. 9	10	-	-	-
Gr. 10	19	7.8	5.5	6.4
Gr. 11	31	12.4	4.2	3.3
Gr. 12	27	19.7	3.9	2.2

Table 8: Credit Accumulation from School Years Before, At, and After Expulsions for Students Who Were Expelled from All TDSB Schools (N=84)

Expulsion Grade	# of Students	Average of Accumulated Credits		
		From the School Years Before the Expulsion	From the School Year of the Expulsion	From the School Years After the Expulsion
Gr. 9	7	-	-	-
Gr. 10	16	4.4	3.5	5.3
Gr. 11	31	11.5	3.8	3.9
Gr. 12	30	17.2	4.1	2.4

Graduation Outcomes of Expelled Students

Out of the 209 expelled students included in the previously mentioned analyses, 22 transferred out of the TDSB or had other known destinations. For the remaining 187 students, close to one quarter (24%) graduated with an OSSD, 18% are continuing their study at a TDSB school in the current school year (2016-17), while more than half (58%) dropped out of school or did not have a known destination (see Figure 7).



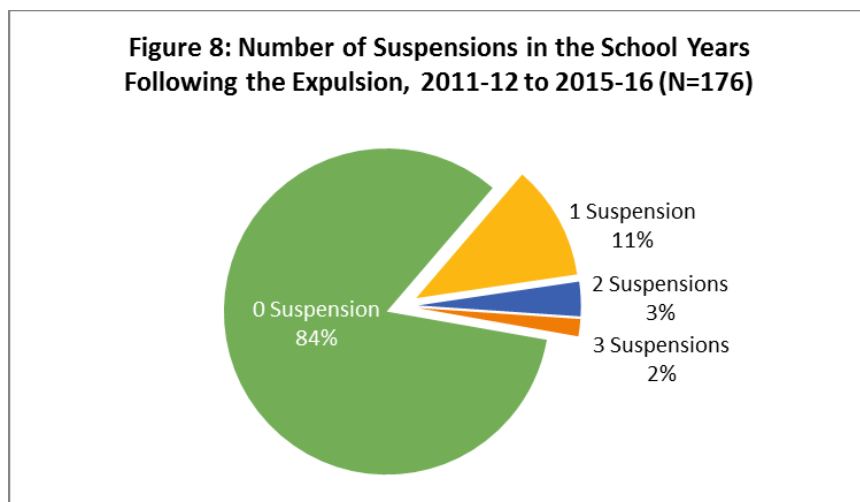
Some differences were observed in expelled students' graduation outcomes between school-only expulsions and Board-wide expulsions (see Table 9).

Table 9: Tracking Expelled Students' Credit Accumulation and Graduation Outcomes by Expulsion Type

Expulsion Type	OSSD	Continuing Study in TDSB	Drop-out/Unknown
School-Only Expulsion (N=90)	29%	17%	54%
Board-Wide Expulsion (N=97)	20%	19%	62%

Number of Suspensions in the School Years Following the Expulsion

For those students who had graduation outcomes (i.e., excluding students who are continuing their study at a TDSB school in the current school year), their suspension information (if there was any) in the school years following their expulsion were further examined. It was found that the majority of them did not have any suspension in the school years following their expulsion, while 16% had one or more suspensions (see Figure 8).



When disaggregating these results by students' expulsion type, students with Board-wide expulsions demonstrated a relatively larger proportion of having no formal disciplines in the school years following their expulsion than students with school-only expulsions (90% vs. 78%) (see Table 10).

Table 10: Number of Suspensions in the School Years Following the Expulsion by Expulsion Type

Expulsion Type	# of Suspensions in the School Years Following the Expulsion	Count of Students with Graduation Outcomes	Percent of Students with Graduation Outcomes
School-Only (N=89)	0	69	78%
	1	14	16%
	2	5	6%
	3	1	1%
Board-Wide (N=87)	0	78	90%
	1	6	7%
	2	1	1%
	3	2	2%

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A caring, safe, respectful, orderly, and purposeful learning environment in which everyone is engaged and demonstrates personal and social responsibility is essential to student learning. Ontario's *Education Act* prohibits specific behaviours in every school in Ontario and, if no mitigating factors exist, requires mandatory suspensions or expulsions.

It has been well documented that student discipline has a direct impact on student learning. Students who were suspended and/or expelled, particularly those who were repeatedly disciplined, were more likely to be held back a grade or to drop out of school (Fabelo et al., 2011). Balfanz, Brynes, and Fox (2015) found that out-of-school suspensions are significantly and negatively correlated with high school graduation, as well as post-secondary enrollment and persistence, resulting in tremendous economic costs for the suspended student, the school, and larger society. Among different racial groups in the United States, Black students were disproportionately suspended/expelled at a much higher rate than their representation in the student population (Smith & Harper, 2015).

During the last five school years between 2011-12 and 2015-16, there were 307 expulsions issued to TDSB students in total, with half being school-only expulsions and another half being expulsions from all schools of the Board. The majority were issued in secondary schools (94%), to male students (89%), students born in Canada (81%), and students from a single-parent family (61%).

A detailed analysis revealed that half of these expulsions were issued to students with special education needs. In addition, Black students accounted for almost half (48%) of the expulsions, followed by Mixed (15%), South Asian (13%), and White (10%) students, as self-identified in the Board's Student and Parent Censuses.

Pending an investigation and referral to an expulsion hearing, for which school administrators receive various professional supports and development, students suspended for up to 20 school days are offered to attend a Caring and Safe School (CSS) program. For the two-thirds of students who attended a pre-expulsion CSS program, the average length of the programs was 14.3 school days, while the average length of days actually attended by students was 9.8 days. There was very little difference between limited expulsions and full expulsions.

There are four TDSB Caring and Safe Schools in the city which were established for accommodating students who had full expulsions or long-term suspensions. A host of academic and non-academic supports are offered to students in these programs so they can continue their education within a caring, safe, and accepting environment. For the 115 expelled students who attended the CSS schools over the last five school years, the average length of placement in a CSS school was 74.2 school days. The average number of days actually attended by these

students was 59.2 days, which also means that they were absent from the program for 15 school days on average.

The amount of credits expelled students had earned in the CSS schools varied, one-third of expelled students did not earn any credits in their CSS placement regardless of the length of their placement. For the majority of the expelled students who were placed in a CSS school for up to one semester, over half (53%) earned two or more credits at a CSS school. For the small number of expelled students who were placed in a CSS school for more than one semester, more than half (55%) earned four or more credits. The vast majority (84%) of the expelled students did not earn any additional credit in the same school year after they had completed their CSS school placement.

With the exception of the small number of students who transferred out of the TDSB or had other known destinations after their expulsions, close to one quarter (24%) of the retired students graduated with an Ontario Secondary School Diploma, while more than half (58%) dropped out of school or did not have a known destination. In addition, the majority (84%) of these students did not have any suspension in the school years following their expulsions, while 16% had one or more suspensions.

It is recommended that the Board uses the information presented in this report to enhance educational programs for Caring and Safe Schools and for Special Education, and to adjust related educational policies if necessary, so equitable learning environments can benefit every student, including expelled students, so all students can successfully complete their secondary school education with the Toronto District School Board.

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Written Notice of Motion for Consideration (Trustee Brown, on behalf of Trustee Chadwick)

From: Denise Joseph-Dowers, Manager, Board Services, Governance and Board Services

In accordance with Board Bylaw 21.1, the following motion was submitted in time to be included on the agenda of this meeting for consideration.

21.1 A matter may be added to the regular meeting agenda by submitting in writing to the Director, at least seven days in advance of the meeting...

Student Discipline

Whereas, one of the duties of trustees is to adjudicate appeals of suspensions and expulsion hearings; and

Whereas, it is important for trustees, the system and the public to understand what happens to a student who is expelled; and

Whereas, at present there is no reporting mechanism that provides information about the outcomes of the caring and safe schools program;

Therefore, be it resolved:

That the Director present an annual report to the Program and School Services Committee in the fall cycle of meetings on the student discipline decision-making and expulsion hearing process and the student transition experience into and out of the caring and safe school program. The type of information being sought on an annual basis to include; but not be limited to:

- (i) What professional supports and development/training are provided to administrators related to preparation for expulsion hearings;
- (ii) Average length of a placement within the caring and safe schools program of a student who has been expelled;
- (iii) Credit accumulation rates of students while in the caring and safe schools program;
- (iv) Credit accumulation rates of students to the completion of their high school careers after they have transitioned out of the caring and safe schools program;

- (v) Credit accumulation rates of students to the completion of their high school careers after they have been expelled from one school only;
- (vi) Graduation rate of students who have been expelled from one school only;
- (vii) Graduation rate of students who have been expelled from all schools of the board;
- (viii) Formal discipline rate history of pupils who have completed the caring and safe schools program to the completion of their high school careers after exiting the program;
- (ix) Formal discipline rate history of pupils who have been expelled from one school only to the completion of their high school careers after that expulsion;
- (x) A summary of the resources and support; both academic and non-academic provided to students in the caring and safe schools program.



CARING AND SAFE SCHOOLS REPORT

2015 - 2016

The Toronto District School Board's (TDSB) mission is to enable all students to reach high levels of achievement and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values they need to become responsible members of a democratic society. By the creation of the four Learning Centres in the 2016-2017 school year, we are committed to creating an equitable school system where the achievement and well-being of every student is fostered through rich, culturally authentic learning experiences in diverse, accepting environments where all are included, every voice is heard, and every experience is honoured. The new Learning Centres will be guided by the Board's five strategic directions:

- make every school an effective school;
- build leadership within a culture of adaptability, openness, and resilience;
- form strong and effective relationships and partnerships;
- build environmentally sustainable schools that inspire teaching and learning; and
- identify disadvantage and intervene effectively.

A caring, safe, respectful, orderly, and purposeful learning environment in which everyone is engaged and demonstrates personal and social responsibility is essential to student learning. To support our collective efforts to ensure continuous improvement and high levels of success for all students through evidence-based decision making and accountability, this Caring and Safe Schools Report provides student suspension and expulsion information for the 2015-2016 school year. The report, together with other information such as students' academic achievement, school engagement and well-being, can be used to inform school improvement, program planning, resource allocation, and professional development.

A: Overall Student Suspensions and Expulsions

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the overall suspension and expulsion information for TDSB elementary and secondary schools for the last three years¹. The suspension rates², as shown in Figure 1, were calculated as the number of students suspended during the entire school year divided by the student enrolment as of October 31st.

Over the past three years (2013-14 to 2015-16), suspension rates are similar in both the elementary and secondary panels.

Table 1: Total Number of Suspensions and Expulsions for the Last Three School Years

Panel	Suspensions			Students Suspended			Expulsions		
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Elementary Schools	2,976	3,114	3,372	1,977	1,970	2,195	4	2	6
Secondary Schools	3,918	3,660	3,599	2,720	2,554	2,530	59	68	73
Total	6,894	6,774	6,971	4,697	4,524	4,725	63	70	79

Figure 1: Suspension Rates Over Time

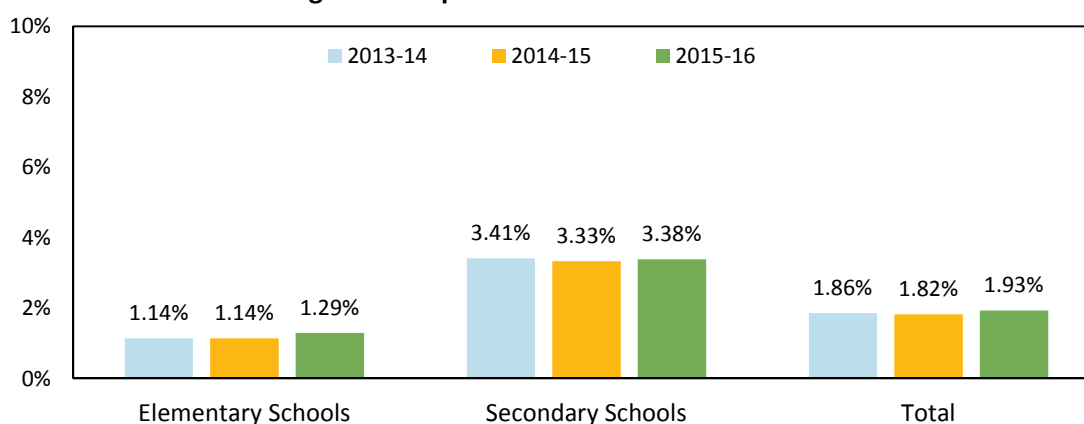


Table 2 shows the number of suspensions and suspension rates for each grade and division in the 2015-16 school year.

Table 2: 2015-16 Suspensions by Student Grade/Division

Grade	# of Suspensions	# of Students Suspended	Suspension Rate
Junior Kindergarten	31	18	0.11%
Senior Kindergarten	97	41	0.23%
Grade 1	198	122	0.68%
Grade 2	248	146	0.81%
Grade 3	278	166	0.94%
Primary Division	852	493	0.56%
Grade 4	372	234	1.37%
Grade 5	368	236	1.43%
Grade 6	441	298	1.84%
Junior Division	1,181	768	1.54%
Grade 7	543	387	2.48%
Grade 8	796	547	3.46%
Intermediate Division	1,339	934	2.98%
Grade 9	859	565	3.52%
Grade 10	1,081	722	4.21%
Grade 11	836	583	3.36%
Grade 12	823	660	2.72%
Senior Division	3,599	2,530	3.38%
TDSB Total	6,971	4,725	1.93%

B: 2015-2016 Suspensions and Expulsions by Student Demographics

In this section, the 2015-16 student suspensions and expulsions were analyzed by student characteristics such as gender and Special Education Needs. This information can be used to understand student suspensions and expulsions, and for the ongoing support at school and at home.

Figure 2 shows that of the 6,971 suspensions given in the 2015-16 school year, the majority (77.7%, or 5,414 suspensions) were given to male students. Seventy three male students were expelled, representing 92.4% of the 79 expulsions in the 2015-16 school year (including three expulsions carried over from the previous school year) (see Figure 3).

Figure 2: 2015-16 Suspensions by Student Gender

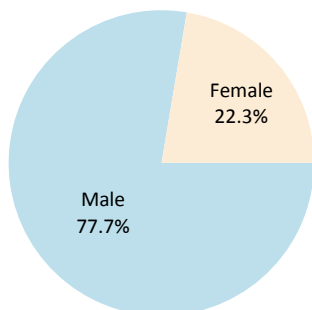


Figure 3: 2015-16 Expulsions by Student Gender

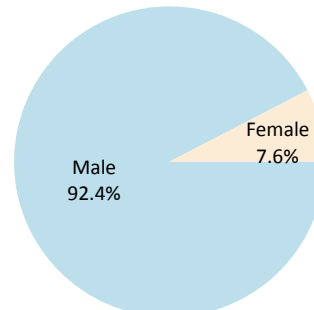
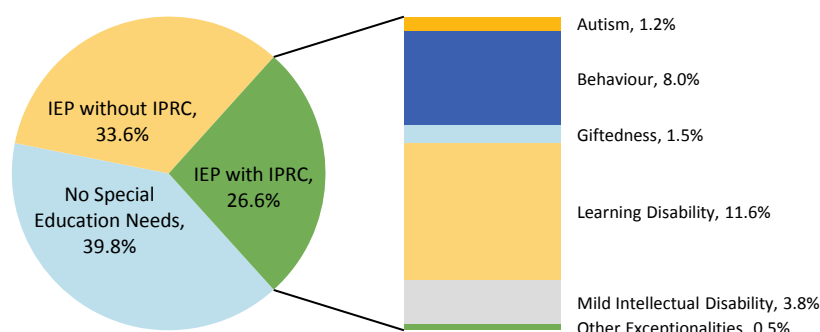


Figure 4 shows that of the total suspensions given in 2015-16:

- 39.8% were given to students who had no Special Education Needs;
- 33.6% were given to students who had an IEP (Individual Education Plan) but no identified exceptionalities;
- 26.6% were given to students who had an IEP and an identified exceptionalty through the IPRC (Identification, Placement, and Review Committee) process. Learning Disability, Behaviour, and Mild Intellectual Disability are the top three exceptionalities in this category.

Figure 4: 2015-16 Suspensions by Status of Special Education Needs

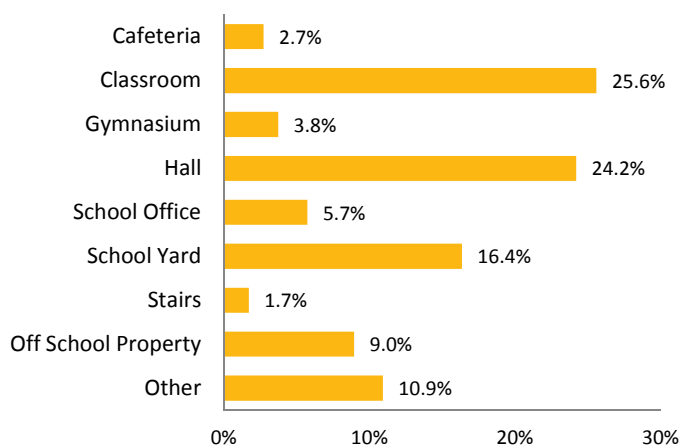


IEP: Individual Education Plan; IPRC: Identification, Placement, and Review Committee

C: Details of the 2015-2016 Suspensions and Expulsions

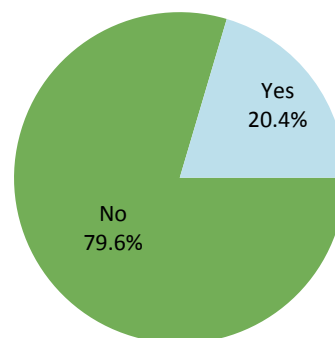
This section provides details of the 2015-16 student suspensions and expulsions, such as incident locations, infraction types, and police involvement. This information can be used when planning for conduct management, prevention oriented strategies, mediation, and violence prevention at the school, learning centre, and system levels.

Figure 5: 2015-16 Suspensions/Expulsions by Incident Location



Classrooms (25.6%), school hallways (24.2%), and school yards (16.4%) were the most likely locations where incidents were to happen (see Figure 5).

Figure 6: 2015-16 Suspensions/Expulsions by Police Involvement



Police were involved in 20.4% of the suspensions or expulsions (see Figure 6).

As seen in Table 3, other than reasons determined by school principals (29.6%), fighting (15.4%) and physical assault (14.0%) were the top two reasons for suspensions. Bullying accounted for 4.2% of the suspensions.

Table 3: 2015-2016 Suspensions by Infraction Type

Types Defined by Section 306. (1) of the Education Act	Count	Percent
Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person	154	2.2%
Possessing alcohol or illegal drugs	132	1.9%
Being under the influence of alcohol	51	0.7%
Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority	428	6.1%
Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school	40	0.6%
Bullying	290	4.2%
Types Defined by the Board According to Section 306. (1) 7. of the Education Act		
Willful destruction of school property; vandalism causing damage to school or Board property or property located on school or Board premises	149	2.1%
Use of profane or improper language	239	3.4%
Use of tobacco	14	0.2%
Theft	228	3.3%
Aid or incite harmful behaviour	512	7.3%
Physical assault	973	14.0%
Being under the influence of illegal drugs	96	1.4%
Fighting	1075	15.4%
Possession or misuse of any harmful substances	58	0.8%
Extortion	10	0.1%
Inappropriate use of electronic communications or media devices	158	2.3%
An act considered by the school principal to be a breach of the Board's or school code of conduct	2060	29.6%
Immunization	0	-
Types Defined by Section 310. (1) of the Education Act		
Possessing a weapon, including a firearm	54	0.8%
Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person	19	0.3%
Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner	64	0.9%
Committing sexual assault	17	0.2%
Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs	0	-
Committing robbery	25	0.4%
Giving alcohol to a minor	2	0.0%
Bullying if, i) the pupil has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying and, ii) the pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person	3	0.0%
Any activity listed in section 306(1) motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor	3	0.0%
Types Defined by the Board According to Section 310. (1) 8. of the Education Act		
Possession of an explosive substance	1	0.0%
Sexual harassment	28	0.4%
Hate motivated occurrences	1	0.0%
Distribution of hate material	0	-
Racial harassment	1	0.0%
An act considered by the principal to be a serious breach of the Board's or school's code of conduct	86	1.2%

Table 4: 2015-2016 Expulsions³ by Infraction Type

Infraction Type	Count	Percent
Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner	19	24.1%
Committing robbery	7	8.9%
Committing sexual assault	7	8.9%
Possessing a weapon, including a firearm	7	8.9%
Sexual harassment	1	1.3%
Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs	3	3.8%
Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person	7	8.9%
An act considered by the principal to be a serious breach of the Board's or school's code of conduct	28	35.4%

Among the students suspended in the 2015-16 school year, 73.3% had one suspension only, and 26.7% had two or more suspensions during the school year (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: % of Students with One or More Suspensions in 2015-16

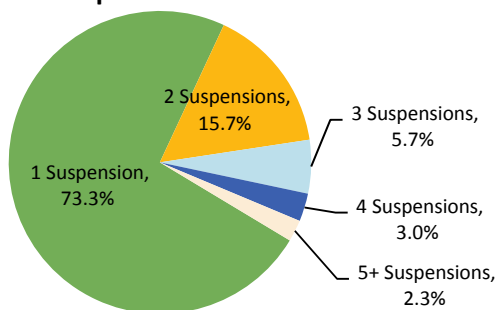
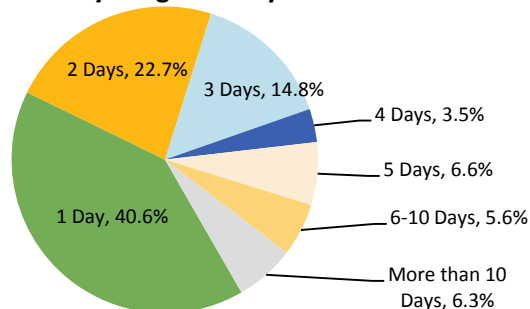


Figure 8: 2015-16 Suspensions by Length in Days

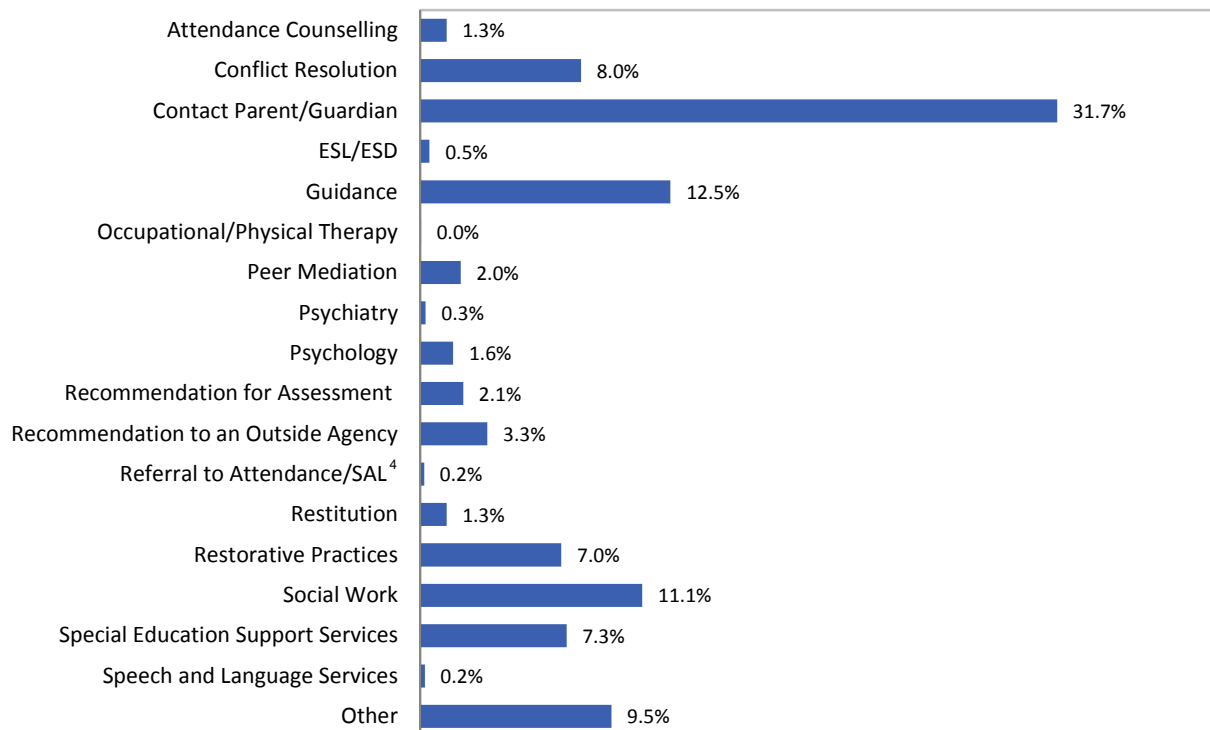


One-day suspensions accounted for 40.6% of the total suspensions in the 2015-16 school year. Two-day and three-day suspensions accounted for 22.7% and 14.8% respectively (see Figure 8).

D: Interventions Used by Schools

Of all the suspensions in the 2015-16 school year, 95% had been followed up with interventions by schools. Figure 9 shows the most used interventions by schools.

Figure 9: Most Used Interventions by Schools in the 2015-16 School Year



A meeting with parents or guardians was the most used intervention (31.7% of the all interventions), followed by guidance (12.5%), and social work (11.1%).

E: Non-Discretionary Student Transfers

Students who were referred to the Board for an expulsion, or received an expulsion from a TDSB school, were offered a program to enable them to continue their education. An individual Expelled Student Action Plan is developed which includes the academic and non-academic objectives that the student must achieve in order for the student to be re-admitted to a school. Generally, students who have court conditions or who are returning from an expulsion require a Non-Discretionary Transfer from their home school to a new school.

Table 5: Non-Discretionary Student Transfers

School Year	Elementary Schools		Secondary Schools		Total	
	Sending	Receiving	Sending	Receiving	Sending	Receiving
2013-14	45	34	242	228	287	262
2014-15	46	39	235	239	281	278
2015-16	34	28	201	221	235	249

“Sending” includes TDSB registered students as well as students coming into the TDSB from outside schools such as the Toronto Catholic District School Board, the Greater Toronto Area school boards, probation, agency section programs, and detention that require Caring and Safe Schools Transfers.

“Receiving” includes TDSB Non-Discretionary Transfers as well as students transferred into the TDSB from other school boards or agencies.

F: 2015-2016 Suspensions and Academic Achievement

This section provides the correlations of student suspensions with achievement results on the 2015-16 provincial Grade 6 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Assessments of Reading, Writing, and Mathematics, Grade 7-8 provincial report cards, Grade 9 EQAO Assessment of Mathematics, the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), and the Grade 9-12 credit accumulation. This information can be used when planning for continuous improvement at the school, learning centre, and system levels.

There are strong correlations between student suspensions and their academic achievement. Students suspended in the 2015-16 school year had lower levels of achievement on the EQAO assessments, report cards, and credit accumulation, than students not being suspended.

Figure 10: % of Gr. 6 Students Achieving Levels 3 & 4 on the 2015-16 EQAO Assessments by Number of Suspensions

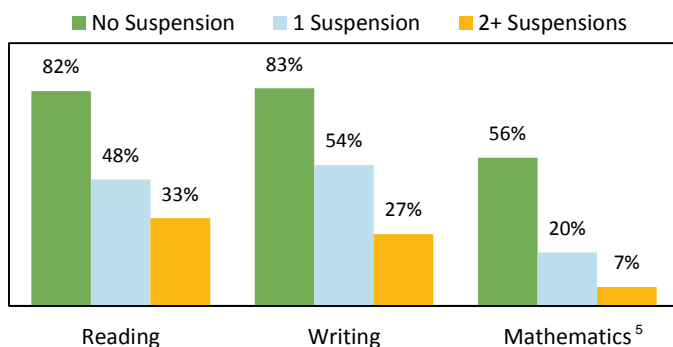
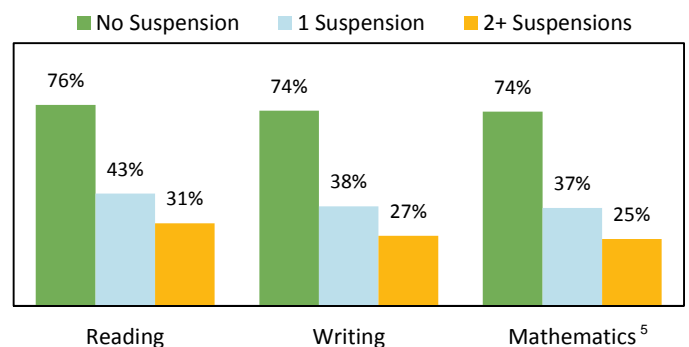


Figure 11: % of Gr. 7-8 Students Achieving Levels 3 & 4 on the 2015-16 Report Cards by Number of Suspensions



For Grade 6 students with no suspensions, 82%, 83% and 56% achieved at or above the provincial standard (Level 3) in the 2015-16 EQAO assessments of Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. The percentage of students achieving at or above the provincial standard was 48%, 54% and 20% for students with one suspension, and 33%, 27% and 7% for students with two or more suspensions, respectively (see Figure 10). Similar patterns were observed for students in Grades 7-8 based on their achievement on provincial report cards (see Figure 11).

Figure 12 shows that for secondary school students who participated in the 2015-16 Grade 9 EQAO Mathematics Assessment and had no suspensions, 72% achieved at or above the provincial standard (Level 3). This is much higher than for students with one suspension (33%), or for students with two or more suspensions (13%). For secondary school students who participated in the 2015-16 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test and had no suspensions, 82% were successful for the first-time. This is higher than for students with one suspension (48%), or students with two or more suspensions (36%). Similar patterns were observed for previously eligible students.

Figure 12: % of Gr. 9-10 Students Meeting Expectations on the 2015-16 EQAO Assessments by # of Suspensions

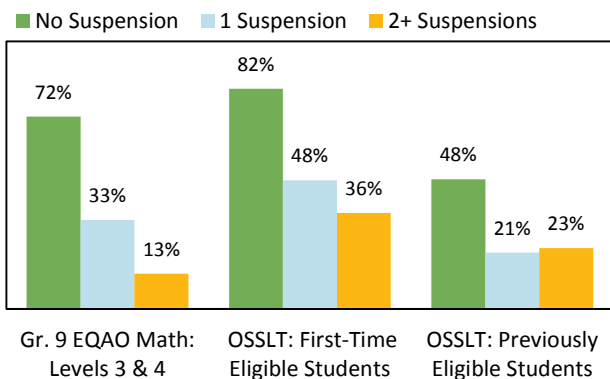
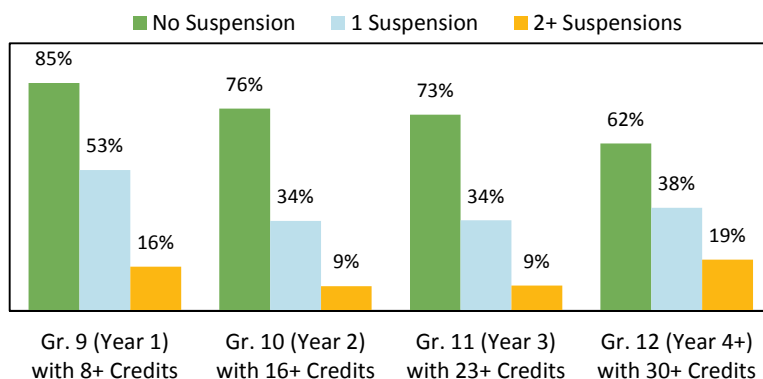


Figure 13: % of Gr. 9-12 Students Meeting Expectations on the 2015-16 Credit Accumulation by Number of Suspensions



Patterns in the credit accumulation for students with or without suspensions were very similar in all senior grades. For example, for students in Grade 9 with no suspensions 85% accumulated eight or more credits. The proportions were 53% for students with one suspension and 16% for students with two or more suspensions (see Figure 13).

G: Next Steps

Our schools are safe, nurturing, positive, and respectful learning environments that enable all students to succeed and reach their full potential. Our schools and program sites (see Table 6) are places that promote peaceful problem solving, academic excellence, and a sense of belonging for all students. Students are expected to demonstrate respect for human rights and social justice and promote the values they need to become responsible members of society. The Caring and Safe Schools team of administrators, advisors, child and youth counsellors, and court liaison workers will continuously provide direction and support to administrators, staff, parents, students, and communities through:

1. Strong school leadership, with consistent discipline policies and procedures;
2. School-wide Caring and Safe Schools programs and instructional components focused on inclusive contributions;
3. Evolving and expanded prevention based knowledge and skills;
4. Ongoing support and professional growth in emotional intelligence, conduct management, prevention oriented strategies, mediation, and violence prevention;
5. Inclusive and developmentally appropriate materials, activities, and programs being championed and utilized;
6. Strong efforts to develop relationships and partnerships within the entire school community; and
7. Clear assessment, evaluation, and monitoring of student performance, combined with differentiated programming.

Board policies and procedures have been developed in accordance with provincial legislation and Ministry directives to ensure that our schools are caring and safe communities.

Table 6 shows the Caring and Safe Schools alternative programs for the 2016-2017 school year.

Table 6: Caring and Safe Schools Alternative Programs 2016-2017

Program Site	Division	Area	Program Description
C&SS Elementary @ Lawrence Heights MS	Jr.	LC1	<p>Elementary Support Programs (Suspended/Expelled/Assessment & Support Placements) are provided for elementary school students who have been suspended, expelled, or in alternative placements, and are in need of short- and long-term support. Programs provide both academic and non-academic support. Academic support is provided by a teacher and non-academic support is provided by a Child and Youth Worker at each site.</p> <p>Elementary Itinerant Team - teacher/coordinator and Child and Youth Counsellors - provide "push-in" non-academic support in the student's school.</p> <p>C&SS Social Workers and Psychologists provide services to the sites as required.</p> <p>Suspended/Expelled/Assessment & Support students are referred through the Caring and Safe Schools process.</p>
C&SS Elementary Itinerant @ John Polanyi CI	Jr./Int.		
C&SS Elementary @ Lawrence Heights MS	Pr.	LC1	
C&SS Elementary @ Lawrence Heights MS	Int.		
C&SS Midland Elementary @ Scarborough Centre for Alternative Studies	Pr./Jr.	LC3	
C&SS Elementary @ Scarborough Centre for Alternative Studies	Jr./Int.		
Barrhead Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Barrhead Learning Centre	Sr.	LC1	<p>Secondary Suspension/Expulsion/Assessment & Support Programs are provided for secondary school students who have been suspended for more than five days or who have been expelled. Site teachers provide academic support and Child and Youth Workers provide non-academic support to students.</p> <p>Suspended and expelled students are referred through the Caring and Safe Schools process.</p> <p>Assessment & Support students in need of both academic and non-academic support are referred by Caring and Safe Schools Learning Centre Administrators for placement.</p> <p>C&SS Social Workers and Psychologists provide services to the sites as required.</p>
Jones Av. Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Jones Av. Adult Centre	Sr.	LC4	
Midland Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Scarborough Centre for Alternative Studies	Sr.	LC3	
Pharmacy Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Terraview Learning Centre	Sr.	LC2	
Silverview Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Silverview Centre	Sr.		
PEACH (Promoting Education and Community Health) Assessment and Support (Community Partnership)	Sr.	LC2	
C&SS Jones Av. Assessment and Support @ Jones Av. Adult Centre	Sr.	LC4	
Operation Springboard Assessment and Support (Community Partnership)	Sr.	LC3	C&SS Social Workers and Psychologists provide services to the sites as required.
East Metro Youth Services Assessment and Support (Community Partnership)	Sr.	LC3	Students are referred through Learning Centre Caring and Safe Schools Administrators.

Contact Us

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Endnotes

¹Reported suspensions and expulsions for a school year may include suspensions and expulsions carried over from the previous school year.

²Suspension and expulsion rates for a school year may include students who came to TDSB schools after October 31st when the total enrolment number was taken and used for calculating the rates.

³ Including expulsions carried over from the previous year.

⁴SAL: Supervised Alternative Learning

⁵The overall report card Mathematics result was calculated as the average of the latest results in the five Mathematics strands on the report card.

⁶Percentages may not add up to 100 due rounding.

