



# SUSPENDED PROGRESS 2017

An update on the state of exclusionary discipline in Virginia's public schools

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 LEGAL AID  
JUSTICE CENTER

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## Executive Summary

In 2016, the Legal Aid Justice Center released *Suspended Progress*, an issue brief on the state of exclusionary discipline in the Commonwealth of Virginia's public school system for the 2014-2015 academic year. The results were appalling: hundreds of thousands of students excluded from school for weeks and months at a time, with the vast majority of suspensions issued for non-violent, relatively minor misbehavior. Students with disabilities and students of color were disproportionately suspended and expelled at two-and-a-half and three-and-a-half times the rate of their white and non-disabled peers, respectively. Tens of thousands of suspensions were issued to very young students in elementary grades. These results from the 2014-2015 school year also represented an increase in the Virginia suspension rate after four years of a downward trend.

When we reviewed the disciplinary outcome data reported by local school divisions to the Virginia Department of Education for the 2015-16 academic year, we were hoping the prior year had been an aberration. After doing our homework, our hopes were dashed: **Virginia schools continue to issue a huge number of out-of-school suspensions, posting a slight increase from even the 2014-2015 totals.**

In this update to *Suspended Progress*, which covers the 2015-16 academic year, we found:

- Virginia schools issued over 131,500 out-of-school suspensions to over 70,000 individual students, representing an increase in the overall suspension rate for the second year in a row.
- The short-term suspension rate increased in 2015-16 after years of significant steady decline.
- Virginia schools continue to use exclusionary discipline with very young students at an astonishing rate, issuing over 17,300 short-term suspensions and at least 93 long-term suspensions just to children in pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) through third grade alone.
- The majority of suspensions were issued for minor offenses, with approximately two-thirds of all suspensions given for behavior offenses, such as possession of cell phones, minor insubordination, disrespect, and using inappropriate language.

**Perhaps most disturbing is that Virginia schools continue to disproportionately suspend African-American students and students with disabilities.** The suspension rate for African-American students was 3.8 times larger than for Hispanic and white students. Students with disabilities were suspended at a rate 2.6 times larger than that of their non-disabled peers. When examining the effects of race, sex, *and* disability, the results are especially troubling: African-American male students with disabilities were almost 20 times more likely to be suspended than white female students without disabilities.

**The bottom line: We cannot continue to use access to education as a punishment for student conduct and expect positive results from either students or schools.**

- When children are suspended from school in Virginia, they are more likely to experience academic failure, drop out of school, have substance abuse issues, have mental health needs, and become involved in the justice system.
- When the underlying causes of conduct issues are left unaddressed, students who do manage to return to school have both academic and reputational challenges to overcome.
- Exclusion can also have harsh effects on students' basic care and safety: a suspended student may be alone and/or unsupervised during the day, and may also experience hunger and poor nutrition if they rely on school lunch and breakfast for meals.

- Schools with high suspension rates generally have poor school climate ratings, as well as lower test scores and graduation rates.

**But it doesn't have to be this way.**

Virginia schools' use of exclusionary discipline is myopic and harmful. Suspensions and expulsions place students out of sight and out of mind, but they don't disappear. These are often children who—still forming as people—need academic, social, and therapeutic supports, and positive adult guidance, more than ever.

- When students are struggling, they need more help, not less.
- When students become disconnected from their education, they need more support, not less.
- When students are misbehaving, they need more attention from the adults in their lives, not less.

At both state and local levels, Virginia should scale back use and duration of suspensions and expulsion. In the rare event exclusionary discipline is used, students should still be able to access high-quality educational services that keep them on track toward returning promptly to their home school, achieving a diploma, and having opportunities for higher education and employment. The Commonwealth should direct greater resources toward in-school supports like counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and alternatives to exclusion, like restorative practices, positive behavioral supports, and social and emotional learning. School staff, parents, and students should engage with each other in designing codes of conduct to reframe discipline in ways that focus on strengthening students and schools, rather than defaulting to punishment and isolation, which often lead to students dropping out.

This update to *Suspended Progress* provides detailed school discipline data, both in the aggregate and by locality, for the 2015-16 school year, the most recent year data is available as of this release.<sup>1</sup> We examine current effects of school discipline policy in Virginia and offer timely recommendations for lawmakers, policymakers, and local school boards. This brief serves to accompany, not replace, our original 2016 *Suspended Progress* report.

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<sup>1</sup> The data in this report were obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), VDOE Fall Membership Reports, and VDOE's Safe Schools Information Resource, <https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/pti/>.

# Suspended Progress: 8 Troubling Facts about Suspension & Expulsion in Virginia Schools during 2015-16

## #1: Virginia schools continued to issue a huge number of out-of-school suspensions.

Virginia schools issued: 127,255 short-term suspensions to 70,239 students; 2,965 long-term suspensions to 2,834 students; 282 expulsions to 282 students; and 1,013 modified expulsions to 990 students. Over 10% of ninth graders were suspended at least once. Middle and high schools issued 1.5 out-of-school suspensions for every 10 students. Thousands more students were subjected to bus suspensions, in-school suspensions, reassignments to alternative schools and programs, and other disciplinary consequences that may cause them to miss critical instruction time.

The average length of short-term suspensions, long-term suspensions, and expulsions were three, 62, and 365 school days, respectively.

### Definitions

<b>Short-Term Suspension:</b>	Banning a student from school for up to 10 school days
<b>Long-Term Suspension:</b>	Banning a student from school for 11 school days to 364 calendar days
<b>Expulsion:</b>	Banning a student from school for one calendar year at a time
<b>Modified Expulsion:</b>	Expelling a student from school, but then modifying the expulsion to a lesser consequence, such as a long-term suspension
<b>Reassignment:</b>	Requiring a student found to have committed a “serious offense or repeated offenses” of the code of conduct to attend an alternative education placement

## #2: The short-term suspension rate in Virginia schools has begun to increase.

From 2010-11 to 2013-14, the statewide rate of students short-term suspended declined by over 20%. Then, from 2013-14 to 2014-15, the rate of students short-term suspended remained approximately the same. Most recently, from 2014-15 to 2015-16, the rate of students short-term suspended increased by 1.8%. The long-term suspension rate remained virtually unchanged from 2014-15 to 2015-16. The number of expulsions steadily declined from 553 in 2011-12 to 282 in 2015-16; the number of modified expulsions decreased by 56% during the same time period. In aggregate, students missed 381,765 school days due to short-term suspension alone.

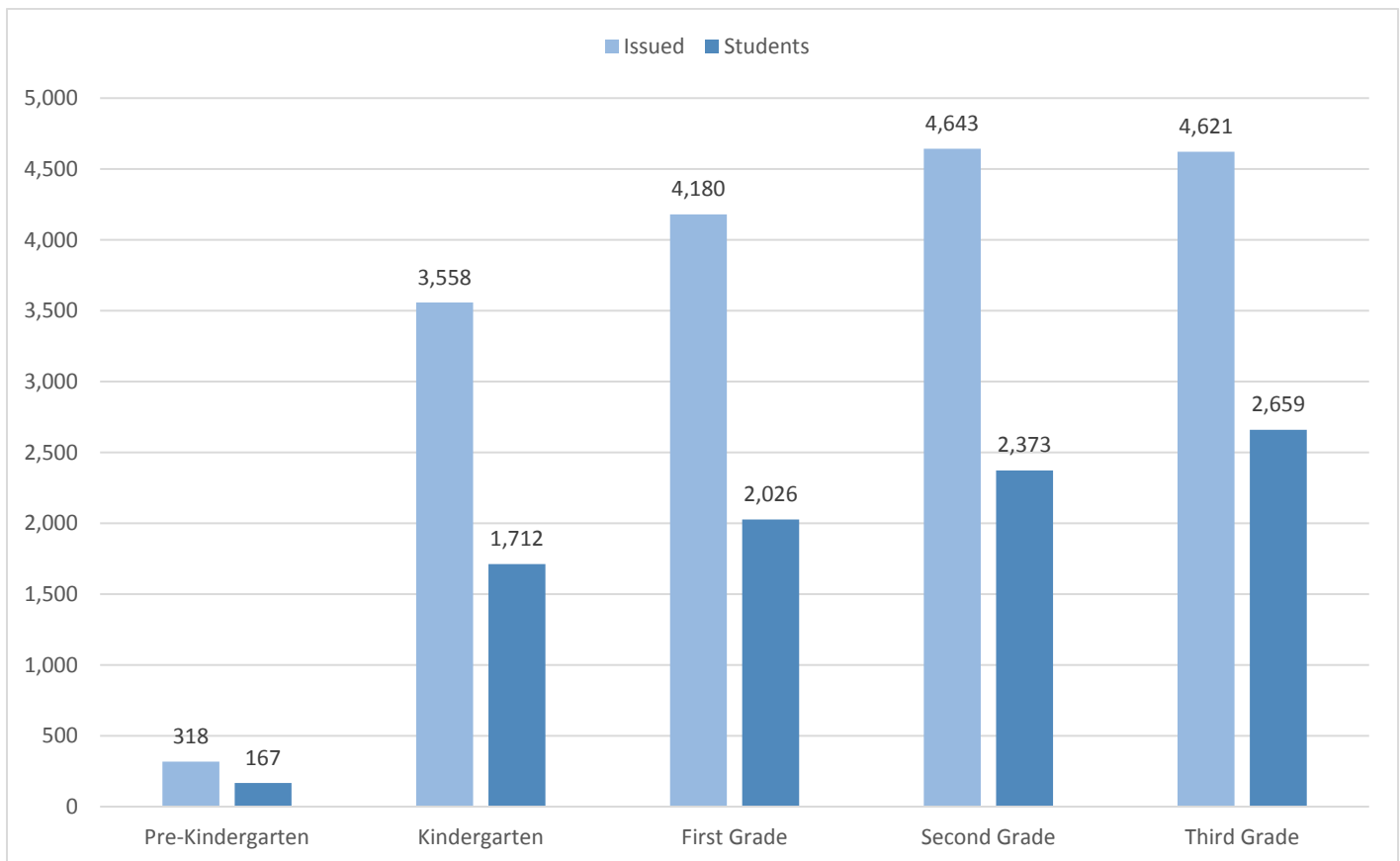
Short-term suspensions may not seem harmful at face value, but they have cumulative effects that can set students (especially very young students) on a direct path to dropping out:

- A short-term suspension can be given for as long as 10 school days, which equates to two full weeks of school—a significant period of academic time, especially for elementary-age students.
- Short-term suspensions can be issued one after another, in unlimited succession and without any requirements on schools to consider interventions.
- After an initial short-term suspension is issued, suspension often becomes the default response for any subsequent behavioral issues, and for longer durations, which creates a downward spiral of exclusion and makes it ever more difficult for a student to catch up.
- Students may appeal a short-term suspension, but by the time an appeal is heard, the suspension has often already been served, the school days already missed. Students—and especially students with disabilities—may receive multiple short-term suspensions before school staff makes critical connections (if ever made) between the student’s behavior and supports that could prevent or address the behavior.

**#3: Virginia schools continued issuing huge numbers of suspensions to very young students.**

Virginia schools issued 17,320 short-term suspensions and at least 93 long-term suspensions to students in pre-Kindergarten through third grade.

Figure 1. Short-term suspensions in pre-Kindergarten to third grade.



**#4: Virginia schools continued to issue most suspensions for relatively minor, non-violent offenses.**

57% of all short-term suspensions and 18% of all long-term suspensions were issued for the ten relatively minor, non-violent offenses in the table below.

Table 1. Suspensions for minor offenses.

Offense	Short-Term Suspensions		Long-Term Suspensions	
	Issued	Students	Issued	Students
Attendance	664	521	*	*
Cellular Telephones	2,087	1,699	*	*
Classroom or Campus Disruption	14,573	11,056	115	115
Defiance of Authority/Insubordination	18,398	12,768	105	104
Disrespect/Walking Away	7,729	6,373	35	35
Disruptive Demonstrations	15,392	11,093	217	214
Electronic Devices	144	143	*	*
Inappropriate Personal Property (food/beverage, clothing, toys, etc.)	389	370	*	*
Minor Insubordination	3,921	2,984	14	14
Using Obscene/Inappropriate Language/Gestures	8,952	7,540	42	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>72,249</b>	<b>54,547</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>523</b>

\* VDOE suppresses data points between one and ten; therefore, these figures cannot be calculated.

**#5: Virginia schools continued to disproportionately suspend African-American students.**

African-American students made up 23% of the statewide student population, but received 59% of short-term suspensions, 57% of long-term suspensions, 43% of expulsions, and 34% of modified expulsions. The suspension rate for African-American students was 3.8 times larger than the suspension rate for Hispanic and white students.

Figure 2. Suspensions issued by race.

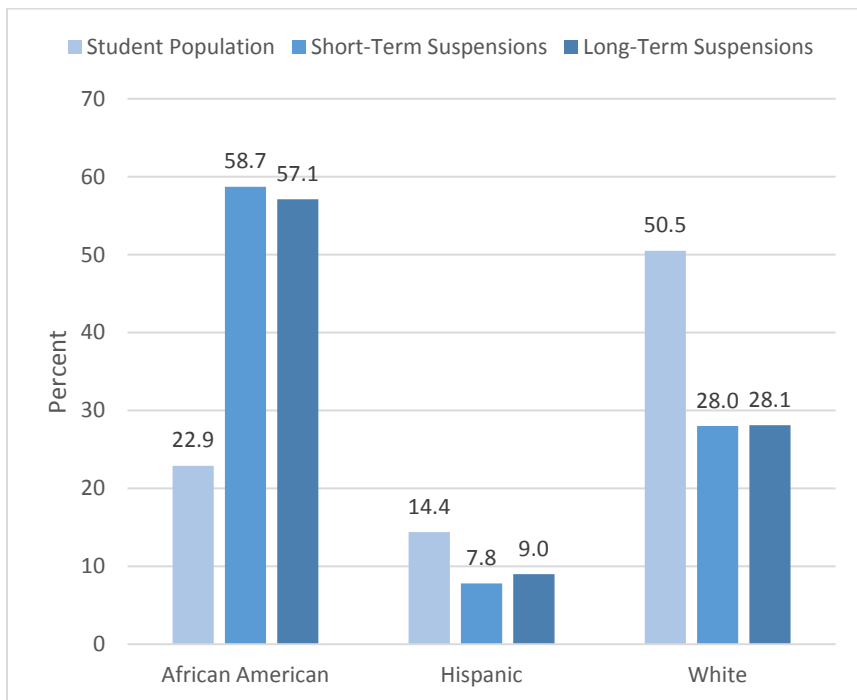
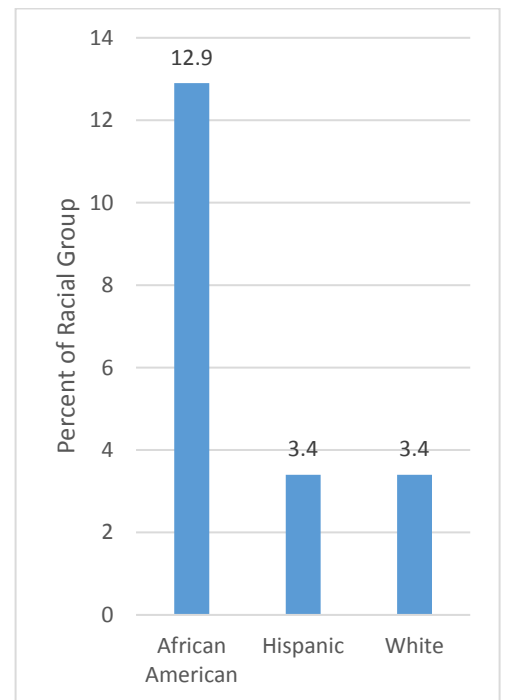


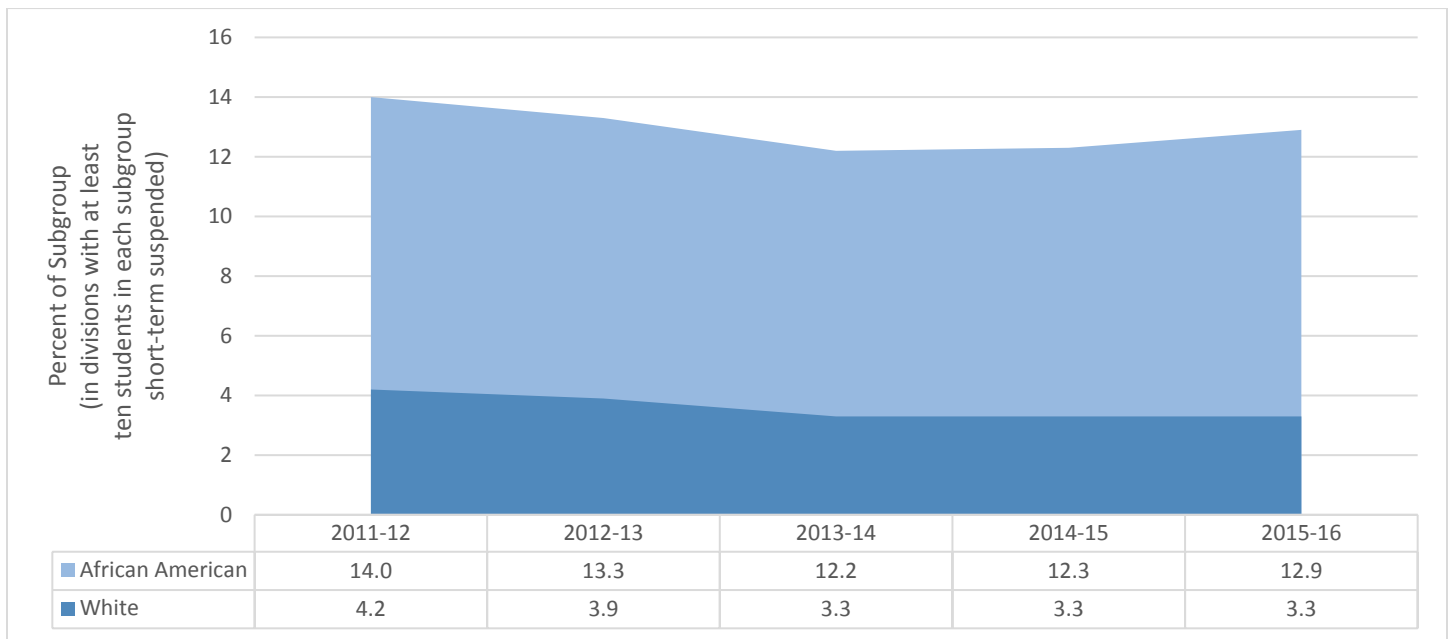
Figure 3. Students suspended by race.





From 2011-12 to 2015-16, the gap between the percent of all African-American students short-term suspended and the percent of all white students short-term suspended (*i.e.*, the African-American to white student “risk difference”) has fluctuated very little—ranging from 8.9 to 9.8 percentage points. **The gap increased from 2014-15 to 2015-16.**

Figure 3. Racial disparity in students short-term suspended.



## #6: Virginia schools continued to disproportionately suspend students with disabilities.

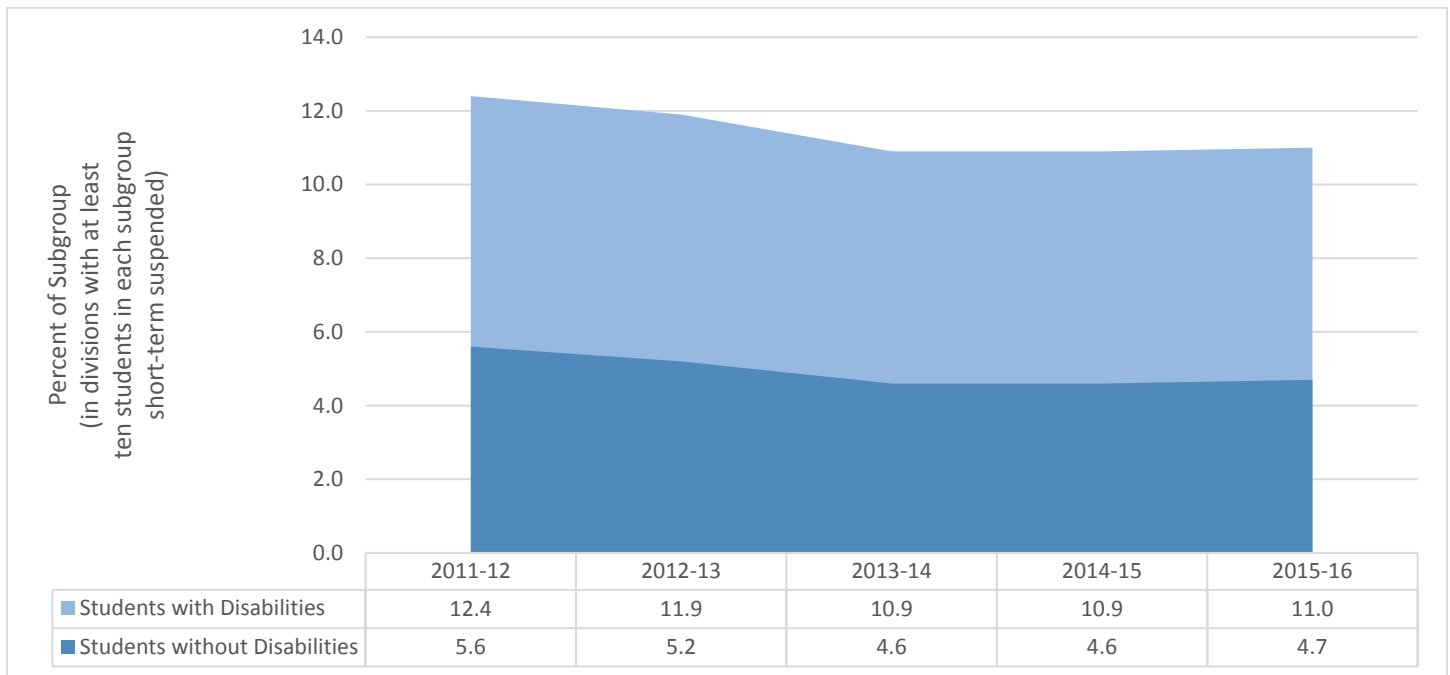
Approximately 10.6% of students with disabilities were short-term suspended at least once, compared to 4.7% of students without disabilities. The rate of short-term suspensions issued to students with disabilities was 2.6 times larger than the rate for students without disabilities. The disparities are the worst in the following divisions (among divisions with at least ten students with disabilities and ten students without disabilities suspended).

Table 2. Divisions with highest disability disparities in short-term suspension.

Division	% of Students with Disabilities Short-Term Suspended	% of Students without Disabilities Short-Term Suspended	Risk Difference
Colonial Beach	33.3	9.2	24.1
Richmond City	29.7	15.0	14.6
Hampton City	26.9	12.4	14.5
Northumberland County	22.5	8.3	14.2
Northampton County	25.5	11.3	14.2
Norton City	17.1	4.4	12.7
Mecklenburg County	26.1	13.8	12.3
Pulaski County	19.1	7.0	12.1
Newport News City	22.8	10.9	11.9
Norfolk City	24.1	12.8	11.4
Nelson County	19.5	8.3	11.2
Nottoway County	18.1	7.0	11.1
Lunenburg County	24.4	13.6	10.7
Mathews County	14.9	4.4	10.5
King and Queen County	17.8	7.4	10.4
Bristol City	16.9	6.7	10.2
Cumberland County	16.5	6.5	10.0

From 2011-12 to 2015-16, the gap between the rate of students with disabilities short-term suspended and the rate of students without disabilities short-term suspended (*i.e.*, the students with disabilities to students without disabilities “risk difference”) has fluctuated very little—ranging from 6.3 to 6.8 percentage points. The gap has been the same since 2013-14.

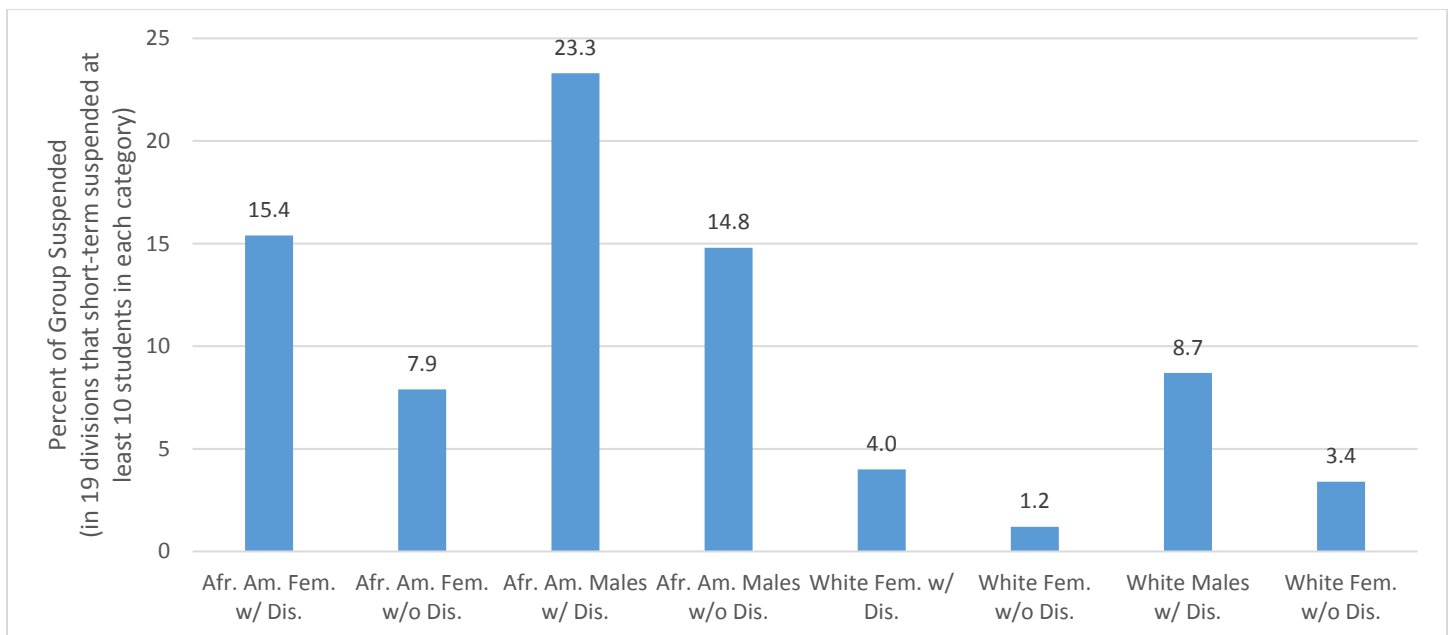
Figure 4. Disability disparity in students short-term suspended.



**#7: Disparities in suspension are especially pronounced when examining the overlap of race, sex, and disability.**

Nearly one quarter of African-American male students with disabilities were suspended at least once. They were almost 20 times more likely than white female students without disabilities to be suspended.

Figure 5. Race, sex, and disability disparities in short-term suspension.



## #8: The same school divisions have high suspension rates year after year.

An entire generation of students is being harmed by exclusionary discipline practices. Many of the divisions with the highest suspension rates are also some of Virginia's most economically disadvantaged divisions—meaning that Virginia's most vulnerable students are also most likely to be pushed out of school.

The following 18 divisions have been among the 25 divisions with the highest short-term suspension rates in Virginia each of the last five years: Brunswick County, Danville City, Franklin City, Greensville County, Hampton City, Hopewell City, Lancaster County, Lynchburg City, Mecklenburg County, Newport News City, Norfolk City, Petersburg City, Portsmouth City, Richmond City, Roanoke City, Southampton County, Surry County, and Sussex County. Charles City and Northampton County have been in the top 25 in four of the last five school years.

Table 3. Divisions with highest short-term suspension rates by year.

Division	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
Danville City	19.70	3	20.75	3	17.69	4	18.26	3	19.49	1
Petersburg City	22.32	2	21.88	2	21.09	1	20.17	2	18.24	2
Franklin City	15.89	10	14.45	11	11.45	18	16.15	5	18.20	3
Richmond City	14.69	14	14.59	19	16.27	6	13.37	13	17.63	4
Lancaster County	12.85	17	14.04	13	13.84	10	13.69	12	16.65	5
Portsmouth City	12.84	18	11.76	19	13.67	12	14.73	8	16.33	6
Brunswick County	19.06	4	17.86	5	19.94	2	22.51	1	16.20	7
Mecklenburg County	15.93	8	17.96	4	14.33	9	16.88	4	15.17	8
Norfolk City	15.53	12	13.18	15	11.52	17	14.21	9	14.23	10
Hampton City	13.29	16	12.43	16	10.42	22	12.64	16	14.18	11
Sussex County	23.24	1	24.85	1	17.45	5	15.41	6	14.17	12
Charles City County	15.05	13	8.72	38	17.77	3	13.24	15	14.05	13
Northampton County	10.39	29	11.85	17	14.36	8	15.38	7	13.00	14
Surry County	15.73	11	14.30	12	13.81	11	13.84	10	12.54	16
Newport News City	11.52	20	11.69	21	11.96	15	10.63	22	12.25	17
Greensville County	16.73	7	15.13	8	9.69	24	10.77	21	11.82	18
Hopewell City	10.64	25	11.31	24	11.64	16	11.65	18	11.75	19
Southampton County	16.77	6	15.99	6	14.43	7	13.79	11	11.74	20
Lynchburg City	16.80	5	15.91	7	13.26	13	12.26	17	10.96	21
Roanoke City	13.90	15	11.48	22	11.14	20	11.35	20	10.73	22

## 5 Recommendations Lawmakers and School Divisions Can and Should Enact in the Next Year

### #1: The General Assembly should pass legislation that limits the use and duration of suspension and expulsion, most especially for elementary school students.

During the 2015-16 school year, Virginia schools issued 17,320 short-term suspensions and at least 93 long-term suspensions to students in pre-Kindergarten through third grade. For these young students, school exclusion can be especially detrimental.

- Schools often label developmentally appropriate behavior in very young children as “misbehavior.” Such behavior can be more effectively addressed with skill building, rather than punitive responses.
- Such behavior *could* indicate unidentified disabilities or other developmental, physical health, mental health, or emotional support needs. Out-of-school suspensions can delay identification and exacerbate symptoms.
- Excluding young children from school can create collateral consequences for families that compound issues or create new problems, especially for parents who lack child care or work leave time.
- Children form their school attendance habits in elementary school. When we use out-of-school suspensions as punishment, we teach young children that attending school isn’t an important, fundamental value they should prioritize.
- Very young students do not necessarily associate staying home from school as a consequence of misbehavior. They perceive time differently than older youth, and the difficult transitions that come from the changes in daily structure can make matters worse.
- Behavioral challenges in young students can be rooted in academic gaps. Excluding children from school worsens both behavioral and academic issues.
- Many families rely on school breakfast and lunch programs to ensure their children have enough nutritious, regular meals to eat. Out-of-school suspension not only takes away education, it prevents students from accessing basic needs like meals, social interaction, and health services.

**The General Assembly should eliminate all out-of-school suspensions and expulsions for students in pre-K through third grade.** Limited exceptions could be made for the extremely rare instances of serious weapon-, drug-, or serious violence-related events. Especially in these early grades, school divisions can and should be employing alternatives to exclusion that *build* skills, including parent conferences, referrals to supports or special education, restorative practices, and evidence-backed in-school interventions that ensure students stay engaged with their education and return to their classroom as quickly as possible.

As we detail in our original 2016 *Suspended Progress* report, the General Assembly should also **significantly reduce the maximum duration of long-term suspensions** to a period of no more than 45 days. Additionally, the General Assembly should **eliminate the use of long-term suspension and expulsion for behavior violations** that do not involve serious injury or serious credible threat to others.

**#2: The General Assembly should direct the Virginia Department of Education to collect and report data on alternative education programs offered by local school divisions to students subject to disciplinary measures like suspension and reassignment.**

Virginia students currently have no statutory right to continued education during a suspension or an expulsion (except in some instances of students with disabilities suspended for more than 10 school days for behavior directly related to their disability).

**Most school divisions offer no meaningful opportunity to maintain educational progress or prevent educational regression while a student is excluded from school.** Missing months, weeks, or even just days of school can leave many students in the stressful situation of feeling isolated and perpetually struggling to catch up. Some students are forced to repeat grades. Tragically, many students who endure out-of-school suspension and expulsion are driven to drop out of school entirely.

For school divisions that provide some form of alternative education, there is currently little accountability or transparency: Virginia does not keep track of the type, quality, duration, outcomes, or student enrollment totals of many programs authorized as “alternative education” offered to students under Va. Code §22.1-277.2:1 and 8 VAC 20-330-10. Such programs may entail anything from a few hours per week of tutoring at home, to an online course, to attending a separate physical school building with dozens of other students whose only common characteristic is having been suspended or expelled. These placements can go on indefinitely.

**Alternative education functions as a shadow school system, in that student data is masked by a school division’s overall performance.** We don’t know what these programs are, how many students attend them, how long students stay or if they ever return to their home school, or how these students fare academically or socially. Students consigned to alternative programs are also often disconnected from opportunities like participating in extra-curricular activities and developing the “social capital” experiences that can help smooth the path to college and employment, like relationships with coaches and teachers who can provide recommendation letters and mentorship. While some alternative education programs provide meaningful services to students who genuinely need instruction in an alternative setting, we need to know more about their scope across the Commonwealth, including the extent to which they segregate and isolate students.

**The General Assembly can and should, through legislation, demand that local school divisions report a variety of performance and attendance indicators of their alternative education offerings to the Virginia Department of Education, which should compile the information and make it public.**

Accountability and transparency are the first steps toward ensuring that “alternative education” isn’t a one-way ticket to a second-rate education.

**#3: The Governor and the General Assembly should fully fund the Virginia Board of Education’s 2016 revisions to the Standards of Quality—most especially lifting constraints on school support staff positions—and should also adjust current targeted funding formulas to better support economically disadvantaged students and schools in high-poverty areas.**

While many of the proven alternatives to suspension and expulsion cost *less* than the current exclusionary school discipline approach, state funding for public education falls far short of student and local school division needs. The General Assembly must allocate adequate funding for Virginia’s schools in order to provide maximum support to students and create a positive school climate.

In the fall of 2016, the Virginia Board of Education issued recommended revisions to the Standards of Quality, the foundational framework for the Commonwealth's public education system.<sup>2</sup> Recognizing a 39 percent increase in economically disadvantaged students over the last decade, the Board recommended changes to the Standards of Quality that would result in nearly \$600 million more per year in additional support for all students. The recommendations included minimum staffing levels for school social workers, school psychologists, and school nurses, who are vital for creating a positive and supportive school climate, implementing positive behavioral interventions and supports, and addressing behavior on an individual basis according to student needs. The Board also recommended lifting the support position cap, an arbitrary, recession-era change to the school funding formula that limits state funding for other crucial support positions, including attendance staff, maintenance workers, and school transportation staff. **The General Assembly should eliminate this cap and fully fund the Board's revisions to the Standards of Quality.**

The General Assembly should also increase the "At-Risk Add-On," which provides school divisions with one to 13 percent more funding for every economically disadvantaged student in the school division, based on the division's concentration of poverty. Virginia's targeting funding lags far behind that of other states; the national average among states that make a poverty adjustment in their funding formula is 29 percent.<sup>3</sup> **The General Assembly should increase the At-Risk Add-On to one to 25 percent.**

#### **#4: Local governments and school divisions should direct resources into proven alternatives to suspension and expulsion, like restorative practices, multi-tiered systems of supports, and social and emotional learning programs.**

There is no evidence to suggest that suspension or expulsion of students deter misconduct or improve school safety. In fact, we already have strong examples of evidence-backed alternatives to exclusion that strengthen students' relationship with school and improve school climate.

**Restorative practices** are non-punitive methods that provide meaningful, appropriate accountability for a student's specific behavior issue.<sup>4</sup> Restorative responses focus on repairing the harm done, developing a workable plan for restoring relationships or damage, and including victims and others affected by the conduct in the process. In many cases, actual restitution can occur—a restorative plan can include property repair, tailored school service projects, and relationship skill-building. We have identified more than a dozen Virginia school divisions that have already employed restorative practices with encouraging results, including Chesterfield, Richmond City, Harrisonburg, Fairfax, Spotsylvania, Loudoun, and Roanoke, among others. In these and other school divisions that implement restorative practices:

- Behavioral incidents decrease;
- Academic achievement increases;
- Students report more positive school climate in general;
- Peer-to-peer accountability increases; and
- Students and teachers learn invaluable conflict resolutions skills.

**The General Assembly, the Virginia Department of Education, and local school divisions should direct resources toward building strong restorative practices in all Virginia schools.**

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<sup>2</sup> Virginia Board of Education, *2016 Annual Report on the Condition and Needs of Public Schools in Virginia*, (Nov. 2016), available at [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/reports/annual\\_reports/2016.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/reports/annual_reports/2016.pdf) (last visited Oct. 3, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Chris Duncombe and Michael Cassidy, *Weighing Support for Virginia's Students*, The Commonwealth Institute, available at <http://www.thecommonwealthinstitute.org/2016/06/01/weighing-support-for-virginias-students/> (last visited Oct. 2, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Trevor Foniou, et. al., *Restorative Justice in US Schools: A Research Review*, WestEd Justice & Prevention Research Center (Feb. 2016), available at [https://jprc.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/RJ\\_Literature-Review\\_20160217.pdf](https://jprc.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/RJ_Literature-Review_20160217.pdf) (last visited Oct. 2, 2017).

**Multi-tiered systems of supports (MTSS)<sup>5</sup> and social and emotional learning (SEL)<sup>6</sup> programs** both use positive, skill-building frameworks that include both students and school staff. MTSS uses academic and behavioral interventions that are tailored and scaled to specific student needs, rather than using a one-size-fits-all (or one-size-removes-all) approach; serious conduct issues, for example, would generate a behavioral assessment, an individualized intervention plan, and wraparound services to address a student's specific needs. SEL helps students and adults develop emotional, behavioral, and social competencies that promote strong relationships, responsible decision-making, and self-management. Our *Suspended Progress* (2016) report outlines both of these approaches, along with several other supportive alternatives, in greater detail.

**#5: Local school divisions, parents, and students should engage with one another in designing codes of conduct to reframe discipline in ways that focus on strengthening students and schools, rather than defaulting to punishment and isolation.**

Local school boards should adopt student codes of conduct that are consistent with adolescent development, promote fundamental fairness, and ensure that students receive consistent, quality education even when under a disciplinary consequence. Such codes of conduct should:

- Be consistent with positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS);
- Describe and emphasize students' rights as well as responsibilities;
- Describe expectations of staff in managing behavior;
- Tier consequences by grade level and offense severity;
- Describe prohibited conduct with adequate specificity;
- Require that administrators consider mitigating factors before meting out discipline;
- Require the use of available interventions and alternatives that are appropriate and tailored to specific offenses in lieu of exclusionary discipline;
- Describe available interventions and alternatives;
- Use clear, simple language, and define uncommon words and jargon; and
- Be comprehensible to students and parents with lower reading levels.

School divisions should also assure that these codes of conduct are developed in partnership with community stakeholders, which should not only include students and families, but also teachers, support staff, community advocates, and service providers. School boards and administrators should regularly engage in conversation with these stakeholders to review codes of conduct, school discipline data, and other aspects of local school policy.

### Recent Positive Developments in Virginia

In 2017, the Virginia General Assembly passed and Gov. McAuliffe signed into law SB829/HB1924, bills that directed the Virginia Board of Education to establish guidelines for alternatives to suspension and expulsion for consideration by local school boards. These guidelines are expected to be issued alongside a "Model Student Code of Conduct" currently under development by the Virginia Department of Education.

<sup>5</sup> Edutopia, *Supporting Behavioral Needs: A Multi-Tiered Approach*, available at <http://www.edutopia.org/practice/supporting-behavioral-needs-multi-tiered-approach> (last visited Oct. 2, 2017).

<sup>6</sup> Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, *What is Social and Emotional Learning?*, available at <http://www.casel.org/what-is-sel/> (last visited Oct. 2, 2017).



# Virginia Suspension & Expulsion Data (2015-16)

## Notes about the Data

The sources of the data in this report are:

Data provided by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) in response to a public records request; VDOE's Safe Schools Information Resource (SSIR); and VDOE's Fall Membership Reports.

"<" is used to represent data points that are less than 10 because the VDOE suppresses such points. "--" is used to represent unreported data from VDOE.

This report does not include data from Virginia regional education centers and programs.

## Suspension and Expulsion Statewide

	# Issued (Students Duplicated)				# of Students (Unduplicated Count)			
	Short-Term Suspensions	Long-Term Suspensions	Expulsions	Modified Expulsions	Short-Term Suspensions	Long-Term Suspensions	Expulsions	Modified Expulsions
<b>Total</b>	127,255	2,965	282	1,013	70,239	2,834	282	990
<b>School Level</b>								
Elementary School Grades	29,837	210	<	<	16,254	190	<	<
Middle School Grades	47,443	1,114	50	192	24,919	1,057	50	188
High School Grades	49,964	1,640	225	801	29,150	1,577	225	782
<b>Grade Level<sup>1</sup></b>								
Pre-K	318	<	<	<	167	<	<	<
K	3,558	15	<	<	1,712	<	<	<
1	4,180	25	<	<	2,026	24	<	<
2	4,643	22	<	<	2,373	22	<	<
3	4,621	31	<	<	2,659	30	<	<
4	5,937	47	<	<	3,389	45	<	<
5	6,580	70	<	<	3,928	69	<	<
6	13,757	280	<	19	7,228	269	<	19
7	16,869	371	23	56	8,617	352	23	53
8	16,817	463	27	117	9,074	436	27	116
9	20,289	617	78	222	10,696	589	78	218
10	13,775	482	72	208	8,120	464	72	203
11	8,690	311	52	205	5,512	301	52	200
12	7,210	230	23	166	4,822	223	23	161
<b>Sex</b>								
Male	92,111	2,129	217	778	49,392	2,035	217	763
Female	35,144	836	65	235	20,847	799	65	227
<b>Race</b>								
African-American	74,682	1,692	120	346	37,971	1,598	120	339
Hispanic	9,888	267	21	210	6,346	259	21	203
White	35,592	833	126	375	21,790	812	126	367
<b>Disability</b>								
Students with Disabilities	35,371	668	66	248	17,520	624	66	240
Students without Disabilities	91,884	2,297	216	765	52,832	2,210	216	750

<sup>1</sup> Does not include additional grade types (e.g., post-graduate, junior kindergarten, etc.).



## Suspension & Expulsion by Division

- <sup>1</sup> Divisions that had at least 10 students short-term suspended at least once and that were in the top quartile of percent of student short-term suspended at least once are noted in purple.
- <sup>2</sup> Divisions with at least 20 students long-term suspended are noted in blue.
- <sup>3</sup> Divisions with at least 10 students expelled are noted in green.

Division	Total Student Population	# of Students Short-Term Suspended at Least Once	% of Students Short-Term Suspended at Least Once <sup>1</sup>	# of Students Long-Term Suspended at Least Once <sup>2</sup>	# of Students Expelled at Least Once <sup>3</sup>	# of Students with Modified Expulsion
Accomack County	5,322	537	10.09	<	<	<
Albemarle County	13,767	460	3.34	<	0	26
Alexandria City	14,729	661	4.49	<	0	--
Alleghany County	2,258	131	5.80	<	0	<
Amelia County	1,827	156	8.54	<	0	--
Amherst County	4,216	320	7.59	25	0	<
Appomattox County	2,294	173	7.54	<	<	--
Arlington County	25,364	255	1.01	0	0	12
Augusta County	10,472	473	4.52	<	0	--
Bath County	574	26	4.53	<	0	<
Bedford County	9,874	476	4.82	70	<	30
Bland County	810	56	6.91	<	0	--
Botetourt County	4,757	138	2.90	<	<	<
Bristol City	2,289	186	8.13	0	<	--
Brunswick County	1,759	285	16.20	<	0	<
Buchanan County	3,004	152	5.06	11	0	--
Buckingham County	2,062	113	5.48	<	0	<
Buena Vista City	1,012	55	5.43	<	0	--
Campbell County	7,948	542	6.82	70	<	--
Caroline County	4,330	228	5.27	<	<	<
Carroll County	3,902	271	6.95	0	<	<
Charles City County	719	101	14.05	<	0	--
Charlotte County	1,941	108	5.56	<	<	--
Charlottesville City	4,377	216	4.93	0	0	<
Chesapeake City	39,943	3,247	8.13	61	53	--
Chesterfield County	59,659	2,909	4.88	14	<	154
Clarke County	2,004	<	n/a	<	<	--
Colonial Beach	608	77	12.66	0	<	--
Colonial Heights City	2,795	169	6.05	<	<	--
Covington City	1,021	31	3.04	0	0	--
Craig County	623	42	6.74	0	0	--
Culpeper County	8,131	495	6.09	11	0	<
Cumberland County	1,399	103	7.36	<	0	--
Danville City	6,249	1,218	19.49	<	0	--
Dickenson County	2,320	104	4.48	<	0	--
Dinwiddie County	4,418	364	8.24	<	<	15
Essex County	1,495	157	10.50	0	<	--
Fairfax County	185,831	2,680	1.44	123	0	239
Falls Church City	2,518	11	0.44	0	0	--
Fauquier County	11,155	295	2.64	32	<	<
Floyd County	2,076	40	1.93	<	0	--
Fluvanna County	3,557	122	3.43	<	0	--
Franklin City	1,132	206	18.20	0	0	--
Franklin County	7,353	336	4.57	<	<	<
Frederick County	13,203	414	3.14	12	0	21
Fredericksburg City	3,532	354	10.02	0	0	<

Division	Total Student Population	# of Students Short-Term Suspended at Least Once	% of Students Short-Term Suspended at Least Once <sup>1</sup>	# of Students Long-Term Suspended at Least Once <sup>2</sup>	# of Students Expelled at Least Once <sup>3</sup>	# of Students with Modified Expulsion
Galax City	1,390	58	4.17	0	0	--
Giles County	2,408	118	4.90	<	<	<
Gloucester County	5,557	358	6.44	31	<	<
Goochland County	2,567	69	2.69	<	0	--
Grayson County	1,684	97	5.76	0	0	--
Greene County	3,192	175	5.48	<	0	--
Greensville County	2,573	304	11.82	<	0	<
Halifax County	5,364	440	8.20	12	0	--
Hampton City	20,618	2,924	14.18	172	<	58
Hanover County	18,061	384	2.13	15	0	<
Harrisonburg City	5,923	328	5.54	<	0	<
Henrico County	51,534	3,201	6.21	57	35	--
Henry County	7,415	637	8.59	<	<	<
Highland County	207	<	n/a	<	0	--
Hopewell City	4,376	514	11.75	<	<	--
Isle of Wight County	5,483	324	5.91	0	0	--
King and Queen Co.	878	74	8.43	<	<	--
King George County	4,385	168	3.83	13	<	--
King William County	2,246	111	4.94	0	<	<
Lancaster County	1,243	207	16.65	<	0	--
Lee County	3,297	108	3.28	<	0	<
Lexington City	492	0	0.00	0	0	--
Loudoun County	76,228	699	0.92	<	0	14
Louisa County	4,876	411	8.43	13	<	--
Lunenburg County	1,585	233	14.70	0	0	<
Lynchburg City	8,587	941	10.96	<	0	--
Madison County	1,829	117	6.40	0	0	--
Manassas City	7,605	352	4.63	<	<	--
Manassas Park City	3,443	47	1.37	0	0	--
Martinsville City	2,186	211	9.65	<	0	<
Mathews County	1,106	66	5.97	0	0	--
Mecklenburg Co.	4,529	687	15.17	0	0	--
Middlesex County	1,232	129	10.47	11	<	--
Montgomery Co.	9,775	384	3.93	<	<	<
Nelson County	1,960	190	9.69	<	0	<
New Kent County	3,042	157	5.16	11	0	--
Newport News City	29,197	3,577	12.25	212	0	55
Norfolk City	32,149	4,574	14.23	243	<	<
Northampton Co.	1,700	221	13.00	<	0	--
Northumberland Co.	1,377	139	10.09	<	0	<
Norton City	835	52	6.23	0	0	--
Nottoway County	2,254	183	8.12	11	<	--
Orange County	5,137	287	5.59	<	0	--
Page County	3,459	93	2.69	0	0	--
Patrick County	2,932	104	3.55	0	0	<
Petersburg City	4,282	781	18.24	0	<	--
Pittsylvania County	9,239	906	9.81	<	31	<
Poquoson City	2,103	46	2.19	<	0	--
Portsmouth City	14,927	2,437	16.33	<	<	--
Powhatan County	4,270	116	2.72	<	0	--
Prince Edward Co.	2,104	188	8.94	<	<	--
Prince George Co.	6,455	481	7.45	<	0	--
Prince William Co.	87,793	2,504	2.85	90	<	<
Pulaski County	4,346	384	8.84	0	0	<

Division	Total Student Population	# of Students Short-Term Suspended at Least Once	% of Students Short-Term Suspended at Least Once <sup>1</sup>	# of Students Long-Term Suspended at Least Once <sup>2</sup>	# of Students Expelled at Least Once <sup>3</sup>	# of Students with Modified Expulsion
Radford City	1,661	74	4.46	<	0	<
Rappahannock Co.	894	13	1.45	0	0	--
Richmond City	23,987	4,228	17.63	452	23	66
Richmond County	1,282	110	8.58	0	0	<
Roanoke City	13,676	1,468	10.73	0	0	42
Roanoke County	14,385	392	2.73	<	<	--
Rockbridge County	2,817	90	3.19	0	0	--
Rockingham Co.	11,876	553	4.66	20	<	15
Russell County	4,062	91	2.24	0	0	--
Salem City	3,808	120	3.15	<	0	<
Scott County	3,817	112	2.93	11	0	<
Shenandoah County	6,075	231	3.80	<	23	<
Smyth County	4,594	298	6.49	0	0	<
Southampton Co.	2,793	328	11.74	0	0	--
Spotsylvania County	23,731	902	3.80	102	<	--
Stafford County	27,841	1,726	6.20	85	<	31
Staunton City	2,660	110	4.14	<	0	<
Suffolk City	14,383	1,479	10.28	<	0	--
Surry County	837	105	12.54	<	0	--
Sussex County	1,066	151	14.17	0	0	--
Tazewell County	6,111	373	6.10	<	<	<
Virginia Beach City	69,777	2,847	4.08	557	0	125
Warren County	5,433	285	5.25	0	0	<
Washington County	7,346	262	3.57	0	0	--
Waynesboro City	3,238	265	8.18	<	0	--
West Point	764	57	7.46	<	0	--
Westmoreland Co.	1,666	173	10.38	0	0	<
Williamsburg-James CC	11,597	433	3.73	49	<	13
Winchester City	4,414	205	4.64	<	0	<
Wise County	6,024	208	3.45	0	0	<
Wythe County	4,237	266	6.28	0	0	--
York County	12,699	478	3.76	31	<	--

## Race and Disabilities Disparities in Short-Term Suspension by Division

- <sup>1</sup> Divisions that had at least 10 African-American students short-term suspended and that were in the top quartile of divisions with the highest percentages of African-American students suspended are noted in **purple**.
- <sup>2</sup> Risk difference is the percent of one subgroup affected subtracted from the percent of another subgroup affected. Divisions that had at least 10 African-American students and 10 white students short-term suspended, and that were in the top quartile of divisions with the highest African-American to white student risk differences, are noted in **blue**.
- <sup>3</sup> Divisions that had at least 10 students with disabilities short-term suspended and that were in the top quartile of divisions with the highest percentages of students with disabilities suspended are noted in **green**.
- <sup>4</sup> Divisions that had at least 10 students with disabilities and 10 students without disabilities short-term suspended, and that were in the top quartile of divisions with the highest students with disabilities to students without disabilities risk differences, are noted in **red**.

Division	% of African American Students Short-Term Suspended at Least Once <sup>1</sup>	% of White Students Short-Term Suspended at Least Once	African American – White Risk Difference <sup>2</sup>	% of Students with Disabilities Short-Term Suspended at Least Once <sup>3</sup>	% of Students without Disabilities Short-Term Suspended at Least Once	Students with Disabilities – Students without Disabilities Risk Difference <sup>4</sup>
Accomack County	16.30	7.63	8.68	15.93	9.20	6.73
Albemarle County	8.14	2.43	5.71	10.16	2.53	7.64
Alexandria City	8.24	2.03	6.21	9.71	3.86	5.85
Alleghany County	7.64	5.81	1.82	11.48	4.83	6.65
Amelia County	9.79	8.42	1.36	17.28	7.58	9.70
Amherst County	9.54	6.99	2.56	10.67	7.10	3.57
Appomattox County	13.95	5.02	8.93	11.95	7.06	4.89
Arlington County	2.80	0.59	2.21	2.92	0.72	2.19
Augusta County	8.55	4.48	4.07	7.87	4.37	3.50
Bath County	0.00	4.94	-4.94	n/a	4.04	n/a
Bedford County	10.16	4.42	5.74	11.62	4.03	7.59
Bland County	n/a	6.92	n/a	9.68	6.41	3.26
Botetourt County	n/a	2.92	n/a	9.16	1.94	7.22
Bristol City	14.04	7.43	6.61	16.87	6.67	10.20
Brunswick County	19.16	9.60	9.55	18.99	15.97	3.02
Buchanan County	n/a	5.03	n/a	8.20	4.41	3.79
Buckingham County	6.75	4.74	2.01	10.47	4.64	5.83
Buena Vista City	n/a	5.37	n/a	8.50	4.89	3.61
Campbell County	11.45	5.87	5.58	8.68	6.66	2.02
Caroline County	8.20	4.09	4.12	9.18	4.72	4.46
Carroll County	n/a	6.89	n/a	11.25	6.09	5.16
Charles City County	13.98	15.35	-1.37	20.22	13.17	7.05
Charlotte County	8.13	4.01	4.11	8.88	5.05	3.83
Charlottesville City	9.01	1.55	7.45	12.22	3.84	8.38
Chesapeake City	15.01	4.40	10.61	15.34	6.75	8.58
Chesterfield County	10.11	2.58	7.53	11.37	4.02	7.35
Clarke County	0.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Colonial Beach	24.00	9.68	14.32	33.33	9.21	24.12
Colonial Heights City	9.94	5.06	4.88	11.09	5.12	5.96
Covington City	n/a	2.74	n/a	n/a	2.73	n/a
Craig County	n/a	6.89	n/a	10.16	5.86	4.30
Culpeper County	10.98	4.97	6.00	13.97	5.26	8.71
Cumberland County	9.50	5.95	3.55	16.53	6.49	10.03
Danville City	24.51	8.09	16.42	24.84	18.57	6.26

Division	% of African American Students Short-Term Suspended at Least Once <sup>1</sup>	% of White Students Short-Term Suspended at Least Once	African American – White Risk Difference <sup>2</sup>	% of Students with Disabilities Short-Term Suspended at Least Once <sup>3</sup>	% of Students without Disabilities Short-Term Suspended at Least Once	Students with Disabilities – Students without Disabilities Risk Difference <sup>4</sup>
Dickenson County	n/a	4.35	n/a	9.59	3.58	6.01
Dinwiddie County	11.58	6.44	5.14	14.65	7.54	7.11
Essex County	13.87	5.49	8.38	15.86	9.54	6.32
Fairfax County	3.93	0.81	3.11	3.96	1.06	2.90
Falls Church City	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Fauquier County	6.50	2.41	4.09	5.32	2.24	3.08
Floyd County	n/a	1.82	n/a	0.00	2.22	-2.22
Fluvanna County	8.01	2.64	5.37	7.65	2.93	4.73
Franklin City	21.25	n/a	n/a	24.79	17.41	7.38
Franklin County	7.26	4.34	2.92	8.24	3.91	4.32
Frederick County	4.83	3.18	1.64	8.19	2.41	5.78
Fredericksburg City	16.81	5.08	11.73	14.88	9.51	5.37
Galax City	n/a	4.13	n/a	10.97	3.32	7.65
Giles County	n/a	5.02	n/a	11.04	3.91	7.14
Gloucester County	9.02	5.91	3.12	9.43	6.07	3.36
Goochland County	4.95	2.19	2.77	4.42	2.42	2.00
Grayson County	n/a	5.80	n/a	10.16	4.97	5.18
Greene County	8.37	5.21	3.15	9.20	4.90	4.30
Greensville County	15.27	4.01	11.27	19.82	10.69	9.13
Halifax County	11.91	5.30	6.61	16.09	6.57	9.53
Hampton City	18.05	7.22	10.83	26.88	12.35	14.53
Hanover County	5.70	1.68	4.02	6.45	1.48	4.97
Harrisonburg City	13.09	3.51	9.58	10.09	5.05	5.04
Henrico County	12.45	2.54	9.91	14.99	5.01	9.98
Henry County	11.66	8.13	3.53	14.54	7.67	6.88
Highland County	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Hopewell City	15.53	6.96	8.57	15.70	11.16	4.54
Isle of Wight County	10.18	4.05	6.13	12.32	5.06	7.26
King and Queen Co.	10.14	8.82	1.32	17.78	7.36	10.42
King George County	7.48	2.87	4.61	9.13	3.22	5.91
King William County	8.46	4.45	4.01	11.35	4.02	7.33
Lancaster County	21.94	9.83	12.11	24.14	15.43	8.70
Lee County	n/a	3.24	n/a	6.33	2.68	3.65
Lexington City	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a	0.00	n/a
Loudoun County	2.23	0.78	1.45	3.17	0.64	2.53
Louisa County	12.51	7.20	5.31	16.25	6.78	9.48
Lunenburg County	20.63	12.48	8.15	24.36	13.65	10.71
Lynchburg City	16.48	4.30	12.18	15.42	10.34	5.08
Madison County	9.32	6.38	2.93	11.30	5.69	5.61
Manassas City	8.60	2.07	6.53	9.53	3.90	5.64
Manassas Park City	n/a	1.99	n/a	3.54	1.08	2.45
Martinsville City	12.66	5.24	7.42	14.10	9.14	4.96
Mathews County	n/a	5.29	n/a	14.91	4.44	10.46
Mecklenburg County	21.58	9.87	11.70	26.12	13.82	12.30
Middlesex County	15.86	8.69	7.17	13.57	10.07	3.50
Montgomery County	7.14	3.94	3.21	10.71	3.32	7.39
Nelson County	15.63	8.82	6.80	19.51	8.28	11.23
New Kent County	11.22	4.39	6.83	11.03	4.23	6.80
Newport News City	17.83	5.12	12.71	22.77	10.89	11.88
Norfolk City	19.16	5.73	13.43	24.11	12.75	11.36
Northampton County	18.59	8.14	10.45	25.49	11.30	14.19

Division	% of African American Students Short-Term Suspended at Least Once <sup>1</sup>	% of White Students Short-Term Suspended at Least Once	African American – White Risk Difference <sup>2</sup>	% of Students with Disabilities Short-Term Suspended at Least Once <sup>3</sup>	% of Students without Disabilities Short-Term Suspended at Least Once	Students with Disabilities – Students without Disabilities Risk Difference <sup>4</sup>
Northumberland County	13.75	7.98	5.76	22.53	8.28	14.24
Norton City	n/a	5.70	n/a	17.07	4.35	12.72
Nottoway County	12.54	4.38	8.16	18.06	7.01	11.06
Orange County	10.53	4.73	5.80	11.72	4.91	6.81
Page County	n/a	2.64	n/a	5.91	2.30	3.61
Patrick County	4.82	3.58	1.25	4.37	3.41	0.96
Petersburg City	19.53	n/a	n/a	25.25	17.51	7.74
Pittsylvania County	15.21	8.25	6.96	17.93	8.65	9.28
Poquoson City	0.00	2.04	-2.04	5.29	1.81	3.47
Portsmouth City	19.60	7.63	11.97	24.41	15.38	9.03
Powhatan County	4.81	2.60	2.21	7.16	2.15	5.01
Prince Edward County	12.16	4.86	7.31	12.54	8.37	4.18
Prince George County	11.40	5.15	6.25	10.86	7.05	3.81
Prince William County	5.55	1.57	3.98	7.19	2.29	4.91
Pulaski County	17.25	8.11	9.14	19.13	7.05	12.08
Radford City	8.78	3.84	4.94	11.06	3.41	7.65
Rappahannock Co.	n/a	1.41	n/a	n/a	1.54	n/a
Richmond City	21.31	3.05	18.26	29.68	15.05	14.64
Richmond County	16.62	5.83	10.79	13.58	7.86	5.72
Roanoke City	15.56	7.44	8.12	17.49	9.62	7.87
Roanoke County	7.38	2.38	5.00	7.13	1.94	5.19
Rockbridge County	n/a	3.22	n/a	5.95	2.80	3.15
Rockingham County	n/a	4.90	n/a	9.35	4.18	5.17
Russell County	n/a	2.24	n/a	5.68	1.69	4.00
Salem City	7.41	2.39	5.02	7.89	2.42	5.47
Scott County	n/a	2.95	n/a	6.69	2.22	4.47
Shenandoah County	n/a	3.80	n/a	9.03	3.10	5.93
Smyth County	15.85	6.22	9.63	11.33	5.68	5.65
Southampton County	17.97	7.60	10.37	19.82	10.63	9.19
Spotsylvania County	6.75	3.14	3.61	9.02	3.12	5.91
Stafford County	11.23	4.93	6.30	14.78	5.30	9.48
Staunton City	6.58	3.41	3.17	5.95	3.89	2.06
Suffolk City	14.87	4.06	10.81	18.27	9.32	8.95
Surry County	14.26	9.93	4.33	20.63	11.11	9.52
Sussex County	14.83	12.04	2.80	20.25	13.11	7.15
Tazewell County	16.77	5.79	10.98	11.14	5.33	5.81
Virginia Beach City	8.92	2.41	6.51	8.25	3.56	4.69
Warren County	8.36	5.31	3.05	10.50	4.52	5.98
Washington County	n/a	3.50	n/a	7.58	2.87	4.70
Waynesboro City	15.46	7.12	8.34	15.73	7.45	8.28
West Point	11.24	8.00	3.24	n/a	7.14	n/a
Westmoreland County	13.13	9.30	3.83	15.46	9.71	5.75
Williamsburg-James CC	9.27	2.33	6.94	8.53	3.03	5.51
Winchester City	10.59	3.44	7.15	8.87	3.94	4.94
Wise County	n/a	3.35	n/a	7.51	2.91	4.60
Wythe County	12.18	6.00	6.18	11.06	5.75	5.32
York County	6.79	3.07	3.73	9.70	3.14	6.56

