

Suspended Progress: 8 Troubling Facts about Suspension & Expulsion in Virginia Schools During 2014-15

#1: Virginia schools issued a huge number of out-of-school suspensions, which increase academic failure, drop out, misbehavior, substance abuse, and court involvement, and harm school climate and safety. See Appendix A.

Virginia schools issued 123,107 short-term suspensions to 68,802 students, 2,922 long-term suspensions to 2,819 students, and 388 expulsions to 388 students. Over 8% of students in grades 6 to 12 were suspended out-of-school at least once.

#2: The suspension rate in Virginia schools stopped declining after four years of progress.

From 2010-11 to 2013-14, the statewide rate of students short-term suspended declined by over 20%. But then from 2013-14 to 2014-15, the rate remained approximately the same. The rate of students long-term suspended declined by 2% and the rate of expulsion increased by 6% from 2013-14 to 2014-15.

Definitions

Short-Term Suspension: Banning a student from school for up to 10 school days

Long-Term Suspension: Banning a student from school for 11 school days to 364 calendar days

Expulsion: Banning a student from school for one calendar year at a time

#3: Virginia schools issued a huge number of suspensions to very young students.

Virginia schools issued over 27,147 out-of-school suspensions – over one-fifth of all suspensions – to students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. See Figure 1.

#4: Most of the out-of-school suspensions issued by Virginia schools were for relatively minor, non-violent offenses.

Over 58% of all out-of-school suspensions were issued for the 11 offenses listed in Figure 2, including nearly 56,000 out-of-school suspensions for “classroom or campus disruption,” “defiance of authority/insubordination,” “disrespect/walking away,” and “disruptive demonstrations.”

#5: Virginia schools disproportionately suspended African American students.

African American students were 23% of the student population, but were subjected to 58% of short-term suspensions, 60% of long-term suspensions, and 55% of expulsions. They were 3.6 times more likely than white students to be suspended. In some divisions, the disparities were even worse. See Figure 3.

#6: Virginia schools disproportionately suspended students with disabilities.

Students with disabilities were 12.3% of the student population, but were subjected to 27.6% of short-term suspensions, 22% of long-term suspensions, and 21% of expulsions. They were 2.4 times more likely than students without disabilities to be suspended. In some divisions, the disparities were even worse. See Figure 4.

#7: Certain school divisions have high suspension rates year after year after year.

Eighteen school divisions were among the 25 Virginia divisions with the highest rates of students short-term suspended each of the past five school years. See Figure 5. Moreover, 15 divisions long-term suspended at least 20 students and 7 divisions expelled at least 10 students each of the last five school years. See Figures 6 and 7.

#8: We do not even know the half of it.

These data do not include the other ways that Virginia students are removed from the mainstream classroom, including in-school suspensions, bus suspensions, reassignments to alternative programs, and arrests.

Figure 1

Grade	Pre-K	K	1	2	3	4	5
Short-Term Suspensions	295	3,130	3,900	3,834	4,589	5,279	5,930
Long-Term Suspensions	< 10	12	20	18	34	56	50

Figure 2

Offense	Out-of-School Suspensions
“Attendance”	≥ 670
“Cellular Telephones”	≥ 2,119
“Classroom or Campus Disruption”	15,213
“Defiance of Authority/Insubordination”	18,582
“Disrespect/Walking Away”	7,865
“Disruptive Demonstrations”	14,323
“Inappropriate Personal Property (food/beverage, clothing, toys, etc.)”	≥ 509
“Minor Insubordination”	≥ 4,130
“Tobacco”	≥ 889
“Tobacco Possession”	≥ 830
“Using Obscene/Inappropriate Language/Gestures”	8,844
Total	73,974

Figure 3: Examples of school divisions with especially large racial disparities



Figure 4: Examples of school divisions with especially large disability disparities

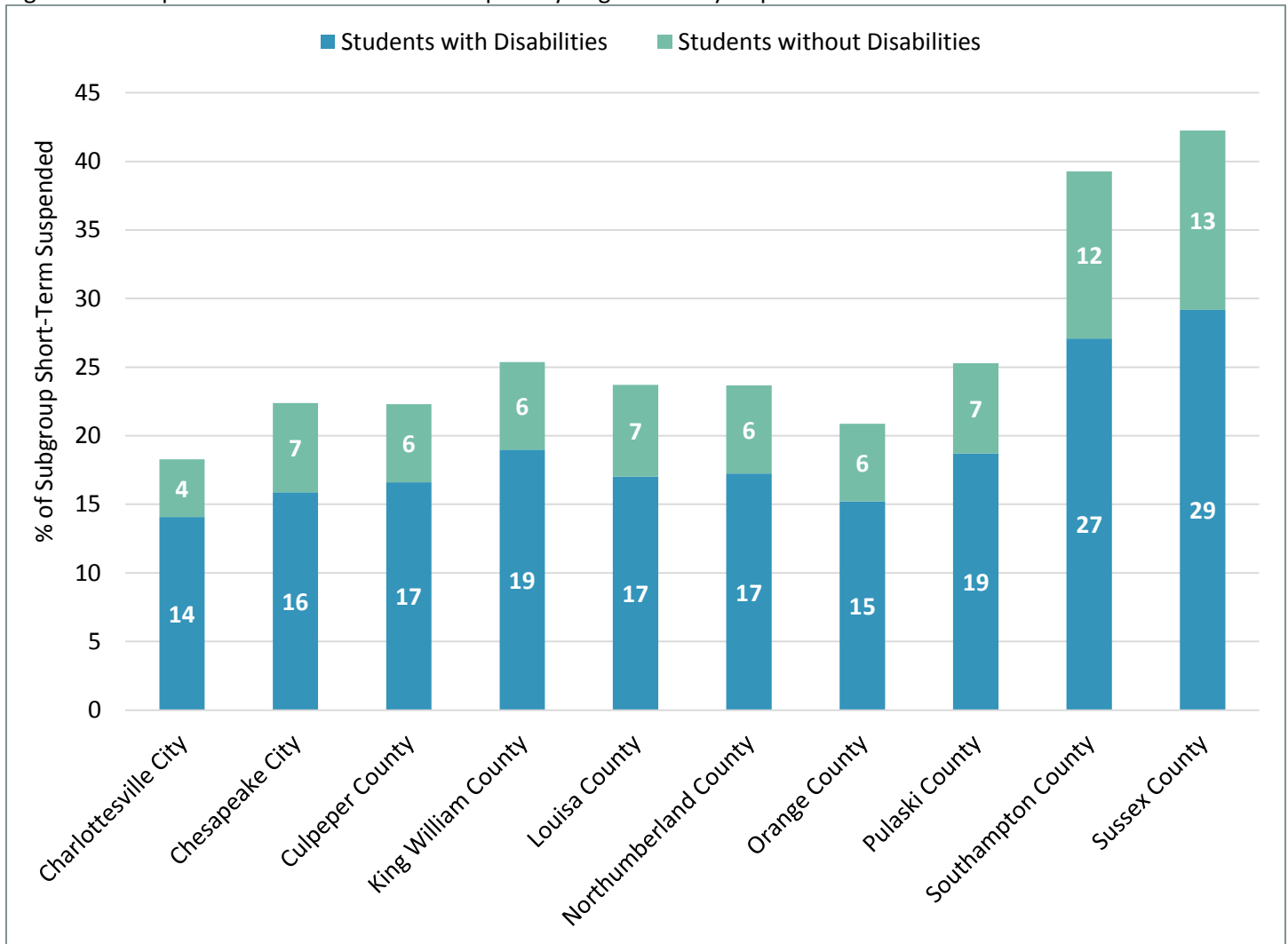


Figure 5: Percent of students short-term suspended in the 18 divisions that were among the 25 Virginia divisions with the highest rates of students short-term suspended each of the last five school years

Division	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Brunswick County	15%	19%	18%	20%	23%
Cumberland County	12%	16%	15%	12%	10%
Danville City	21%	20%	21%	18%	18%
Franklin City	17%	16%	15%	12%	16%
Greensville County	16%	17%	15%	10%	11%
Hampton City	12%	13%	12%	10%	13%
Hopewell City	12%	11%	11%	12%	12%
Lynchburg City	18%	17%	16%	13%	12%
Mecklenburg County	12%	16%	18%	14%	17%
Newport News City	14%	12%	12%	12%	11%
Norfolk City	16%	16%	13%	12%	14%
Petersburg City	20%	22%	22%	21%	20%
Portsmouth City	11%	13%	12%	14%	15%
Richmond City	17%	15%	15%	16%	13%
Roanoke City	13%	14%	12%	11%	11%
Southampton County	15%	17%	16%	14%	14%
Surry County	17%	16%	14%	14%	14%
Sussex County	14%	23%	25%	17%	15%

Figure 6: Number of students long-term suspended in the 15 divisions with at least 25 long-term suspensions each of the last five school years

Division	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	5-Yr. Total	2014-15 Rate (Per 1,000)
Bedford County	46	81	74	61	45	307	4.5
Chesapeake City	37	52	59	43	38	229	1.0
Chesterfield County	214	243	188	102	29	776	0.5
Danville City	91	40	48	30	29	238	4.6
Fairfax County	169	100	201	93	98	661	0.5
Gloucester County	45	50	25	31	23	174	4.2
Hampton City	183	166	169	150	122	790	5.9
Hanover County	82	62	45	50	46	285	2.5
Newport News City	283	258	235	247	223	1,246	7.5
Prince William County	188	150	273	186	148	945	1.7
Richmond City	166	162	175	262	459	1,224	19.2
Rockingham County	58	55	48	50	48	259	4.0
Spotsylvania County	92	99	86	56	94	427	3.9
Stafford County	124	107	97	79	71	478	2.6
Virginia Beach City	582	580	583	503	478	2,726	6.8

Figure 7: Number of students expelled in the 7 divisions with at least 10 expulsions each of the last five school years

Division	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	5-Yr. Total
Pittsylvania County	15	25	27	20	30	117
Newport News City	18	31	34	15	22	120
Henrico County	23	44	40	32	42	181
Chesapeake City	25	25	21	16	30	117
Danville City	35	21	12	11	29	108
Richmond City	50	23	40	30	35	178
Prince William County	85	36	56	20	24	221