

The Hidden Cost of Suspension: How can kids learn if they're not in school?

Methodology Report

Data Sources

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, The Civil Rights Data Collection, 2011-12

District Geography: U.S. Census Bureau, School District Review Program, 2011

Disability Definitions

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (**IDEA**) is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities.

Children and youth (ages 3-21) receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B.

Map Details

Map 1: Where Are Students with Out of School Suspensions Located?

- Description: Percent enrollment of all students who received an **Out of School Suspension one or more times** (OSSs) by school district.
- Calculation: Total number of students receiving OSSs divided by the total number of students in the district.

$$\frac{\text{Students who received OSSs}}{\text{District Enrollment}} = \text{Percent Enrollment of All Students who received OSSs}$$

Map 2: Disciplining Disability: Addressing High Rates of Removal

- Description: Percent enrollment of all students with disabilities (IDEA) who received an **Out of School Suspension one or more times** (OSSs) by school district.
- Calculations: Total number of IDEA students that received OSSs divided by the total number of IDEA students.

$$\frac{\text{IDEA Students who received OSSs}}{\text{District IDEA Enrollment}} = \text{Percent Enrollment of IDEA Students who received OSSs}$$

Map 3: Don't forget the details! Race, Gender and Disability

- Description of the male map: Percent enrollment of black male IDEA students who received an **Out of School Suspension one or more times** (OSSs) by school district.
- Calculations: Total number of black male IDEA students who received OSSs divided by the total number of black male IDEA students in the district.

$$\frac{\text{Black Male IDEA students who received OSSs}}{\text{District Black Male IDEA Enrollment}} = \text{Percent Enrollment of Black Male IDEA Students who received OSSs}$$

- Description of the female map: Percent enrollment of black female IDEA students who received an **Out of School Suspension one or more times** (OSSs) by school district.
- Calculations: Total number of black female IDEA students who received OSSs divided by the total number of black female IDEA students in the district.

$$\frac{\text{Black Female IDEA students who received OSSs}}{\text{District Black Female IDEA Enrollment}} = \text{Percent Enrollment of Black Female IDEA Students who received OSSs}$$

Limitations of CRDC Data

The U.S Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) strives to ensure CRDC data is an accurate and comprehensive depiction of student access to educational opportunities in sampled school districts. The submission system includes a series of embedded edit checks to ensure data errors are corrected before the district submits its data. Additionally, each district is required to certify the accuracy of its submission. Only a district superintendent, or the superintendent's designee, may certify the CRDC submission. Ultimately, the quality of the CRDC data depends on accurate collection and reporting by the participating districts.

The following caveats should be considered when analyzing the data. Users should be aware that outliers in the dataset may be a function of districts mis-reporting data. Users should exercise caution in analyzing outliers in the data set since districts may have accidentally reported the number of disciplinary incidents versus students disciplined. Additionally, some districts, unable to report complete and accurate data, may have reported zero students in these categories.

The CRDC collects detailed disaggregated discipline data for non-disabled students, students served by IDEA, and Section 504 students. Because the CRDC does not include the race/ethnicity breakdown of students served by Section 504 only, the percentages by race/ethnicity of students receiving each type of disciplinary action are calculated based on students served by IDEA.

The number of students enrolled was collected at the beginning of the school year. The number of students receiving disciplinary actions represents a cumulative count to the end of the school year. Therefore, the cohort of students reported as enrolled and disciplined may be different if students transferred schools within the school year.

Interpreting Percentages. We encourage users to explore both the rate of out-of-schools suspensions and underlying counts of students when examining the story map. For example, a district with 1 black male IDEA student who received a suspension (100%) rate might be interpreted differently than a school district with 5,000 black IDEA males where all 5,000 students received a suspension.

Rounding and Privacy Protections. To ensure the protection of privacy while meeting the purposes of the CRDC, OCR conducted the analysis presented in this document on the privacy protected CRDC data. The CRDC data is privacy protected by rounding student counts in groups of three to prevent the disclosure of individual student information. For example, student counts from 1-3 are rounded to two, student counts from 4-6 are rounded to five.

In previous years, OCR has rounded CRDC data to the nearest five. However, in collaboration with the Department's Disclosure Review Board, OCR implemented a new rounding method for the 2011-12 CRDC to reveal true zeroes where possible and minimize the distortion of rounding. In general, for the 2011-12 CRDC data, the distortion of rounding one student to two would be balanced by the rounding down of three students to two. However, this new privacy protection method may inflate total counts for CRDC data elements in which there are prevalent cases of schools reporting only one student (e.g., one student retained is rounded to two students retained).