



## **Caring and Safe Schools: Annual Report 2020-21**

**To:** Program and School Services Committee

**Date:** 11 May, 2022

**Report No.:** 05-22-4318

### Strategic Directions

- Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being
- Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students
- Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being
- Transform Student Learning

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the report be received.

### **Context**

The annual Caring and Safe Schools Report presents an overall summary and an analysis of the suspensions and expulsions that occurred in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) during the 2020-21 school year. One of the most important elements of this report is the consideration that must be given to the unusual circumstances resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Public schools in Ontario, including TDSB schools, were ordered to close to in-person learning for extended periods of time under an order of the provincial government. There were far fewer students in schools during the 2020-21 school year as one third (33%) of TDSB students chose full-time virtual learning. It is significant to note that even students who were learning “in-school” did so through reduced hours. These conditions resulted in a lower number of suspensions/expulsions in 2020-21 when compared to school years before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite the conditions, Board staff continued the work of challenging and interrupting streaming through student discipline processes which impose suspensions and expulsions.

The data presented in this report, albeit impacted by Covid-19, is a valuable tool for helping schools foster a positive learning culture and support evidence-based decision making and accountability. Schools should be safe and welcoming places where all students feel respected, included and valued in their learning environments. In the Toronto District School Board, we are committed to creating these positive environments and recognize their impact on student success. By directly addressing the role that student discipline plays in a school's overall climate as well as the potential in streaming students towards specific pathways and outcomes. We are making positive changes to the lives of students.

### Key Findings

In the 2020-21 school year:

- There were much fewer suspensions than in the years prior to the Covid-19 pandemic: 852 suspensions (to 754 students), and 5 expulsions. The suspension rate is 0.31%;
- There were only 4 suspensions in the primary grades (Kindergarten to Grade 3);
- School yards and classrooms continued to be the most likely locations where incidents were to happen;
- 40% of the suspensions were one-day suspensions;
- Incidents motivated by bias, prejudice or hate accounted for 21% of the suspensions;
- 98% of the suspensions had been followed up with interventions. A meeting with parents or guardians was the most used intervention, followed by restorative practices;
- Male students accounted for 85% of the suspensions/expulsions;
- Students with special education needs (excluding Gifted) were responsible for the 48% of the suspensions/expulsions;
- Students who were born in Canada or spoke English as the primary language at home accounted for the majority of the suspensions/expulsions;
- Students who lived with one parent (particularly with mother only) or were from low-income families, had disproportionately high representations in the suspensions/expulsions;
- In the school years prior to the pandemic, self-identified Black, Middle Eastern and Mixed students were disproportionately high in the suspensions/expulsions, while East Asian, South Asian, and Southeast Asian students were under-represented. The pattern is much different for the 2020-21 school year in which schools were closed to in-person learning for extended periods, and one-third of the students chose virtual learning. In the 2020-21 school year, White students were responsible for 37.6% of the suspensions/expulsions, followed by Mixed students (16.6%), Black students (14.5%), South Asian students (9.5%), and East Asian students (7.3%).
- Self identified Indigenous students accounted for fewer than 10 suspensions;
- Fewer than 10 suspensions were issued to self-identified 2SLGBTQ+ students.

Some groups of students including Self-identified Indigenous students and Black students are suspended at rates much higher than their respective representation within the broader TDSB student population.

Board staff continue to work in specific ways to address this serious issue of systemic racism. The entire Caring and Safe Schools (CSS) team continues to engage in anti-racism and anti-oppression training with a focus on anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism by working more intentionally collaborate with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre and the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement and to ensure that discipline matters involving Indigenous and Black students are analyzed thoroughly through an anti-oppressive lens that holds anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism at the centre of all conversations and decisions related to student discipline for self-identified Indigenous and Black students

### **Action Plan and Associated Timeline**

In August 2019, the Ministry of Education directed school Boards to eliminate discretionary suspensions for students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3. Subsequently, TDSB Trustees passed a motion that directed staff to eliminate all historic suspensions from student records, both electronic and hard copies, issued to students when they were in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3. The motion further directed that moving forward, a formal retention schedule be set for all suspensions issued regardless of grade.

All historic records of suspensions for students in Junior Kindergarten to grade 3 will be removed by September 2022.

It is important to note once again that in the 2020-21 school year there were no suspensions to students in Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten or grade 1.

In response to the Board Motion of November 11, 2020 *Dismantling System Barriers to Inclusion in Discipline Procedures* a suspension/expulsion retention schedule has been developed by staff (Appendix A)

To support students' achievement and well-being, to reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions, and to address the over-representation of some groups who are suspended and expelled, we will continue to:

- More effectively address how issues of identity – such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, special education needs and gender – connect with each other and influence decisions regarding the student discipline process;
- Review the detailed breakdown of suspension and expulsion data to identify trends, patterns and opportunities for improvement;

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- Support the Caring and Safe Schools team and all school administrators to examine bias, power and privilege as they relate to the student discipline process;
- Support school administrators in the application of human rights, anti-racism and anti-oppression principles in student discipline;
- Review Caring and Safe Schools practices to ensure consistency with principles of anti-racism and anti-oppression;
- Provide learning opportunities for more staff to be trained in Restorative Practices;
- Develop alternatives to suspension programs;
- Work collaboratively with the Centre of Excellence for Black Students Achievement and the Urban Indigenous Education Centre to challenge unconscious bias, engage in joint problem-solving and ensure that Black and Indigenous students are treated equitably when it comes to decisions about suspensions and expulsions in each school through collaboration between Principals and Superintendents;
- Consider and act on the intersectionality's of the data provided in this report, Board Special Education staff must also be involved in the analysis of student discipline matters to ensure that any biases in the student discipline process and any subsequent decisions are being acknowledged and eradicated through interrogation and interruption of practices that appear to be automatic responses to student discipline issues and;
- Work with families and community partners to develop relevant approaches and supports for students.
- Explore opportunities for programming for students outside of regular school hours

### **Resource Implications**

Funding will be provided through current existing budget allocations while exploring possible options for partnerships for the provision of programming outside of regular school hours.

### **Communications Considerations**

The Caring and Safe Schools report will be shared with key stakeholders through existing TDSB communication channels.

### **Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)**

- Caring and Safe Schools Policy (P.051)
- Programs for Students on Long Term Suspension or Expulsion (PR586)

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- Police-School Board Protocol (PR698)
- Promoting a Positive School Climate Procedure (PR697)
- Non-Discretionary and Discretionary Student Transfers (PR 540)

### **Appendices**

- Appendix A: Caring and Safe Schools: Annual Report 2020-21

### **From**

Executive Superintendent Jim Spyropoulos, Human Rights and Indigenous Education,  
at [jim.spyropoulos@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:jim.spyropoulos@tdsb.on.ca) or at 416-397-3678



# CARING AND SAFE SCHOOLS REPORT

## 2020 - 2021

The annual Caring and Safe Schools Report presents an overall summary and an analysis of the suspensions and expulsions that occurred in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) during the 2020-21 school year. One of the most important elements of this report is the consideration that must be given to the unusual circumstances resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Public schools in Ontario, including TDSB schools, were ordered to close to in-person learning for extended periods of time under an order of the provincial government. There were far fewer students in schools during the 2020-21 school year as one third (33%) of TDSB students chose full-time virtual learning. It is significant to note that even students who were learning “in-school” did so through reduced hours. These conditions resulted in a lower number of suspensions/expulsions in 2020-21 when compared to school years before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite the conditions, Board staff continued the work of challenging and interrupting streaming through student discipline processes which impose suspensions and expulsions.

The data presented in this report, albeit impacted by Covid-19, is a valuable tool for helping schools foster a positive learning culture and support evidence-based decision making and accountability. Schools should be safe and welcoming places where all students feel respected, included and valued in their learning environments. In the Toronto District School Board, we are committed to creating these positive environments and recognize their impact on student success. By directly addressing the role that student discipline plays in a school’s overall climate as well as the potential in streaming students towards specific pathways and outcomes. We are making positive changes to the lives of students.

This work, guided by our Multi-Year Strategic Plan, has focused on a number of key actions:

- Identifying trends, patterns and opportunities in past suspension data for improvement;
- Supporting the Caring and Safe Schools team to examine bias, power and privilege as they relate to student discipline process;
- Supporting school administrators in the application of human rights, anti-racism and anti-oppression principles to student discipline;
- Reviewing Caring and Safe Schools practices to ensure consistency with principles of anti-racism and anti-oppression; and
- Providing learning opportunities for more staff to be trained in restorative practices.

Through intentional work by the Caring and Safe School team, school administrators engaged in professional learning that examines bias, power and privilege and their connection to student discipline. This learning has encouraged Principals to better understand the lived experiences of each of their students, which has not only led to Principals better exercising their discretion when they have an option to not suspend, but also has helped them identify, confront and remove barriers proactively to create more inclusive and equitable learning cultures.

A positive school environment is the foundation of a culture of trust, high expectations and a sense of belonging. We will continue to emphasize programming that encourages and supports positive behaviour and allows us to intervene early to better engage and support our students.

## Key Findings

In the 2020-21 school year:

- There were much fewer suspensions than in the years prior to the Covid-19 pandemic: 852 suspensions (to 754 students), and 5 expulsions. The suspension rate is 0.31%;
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- Students who were born in Canada or spoke English as the primary language at home accounted for the majority of the suspensions/expulsions;
- Students who lived with one parent (particularly with mother only) or were from low-income families, had disproportionately high representations in the suspensions/expulsions;
- In the school years prior to the pandemic, self-identified Black, Middle Eastern and Mixed students were disproportionately high in the suspensions/expulsions, while East Asian, South Asian, and Southeast Asian students were under-represented. The pattern is much different for the 2020-21 school year in which schools were closed to in-person learning for extended periods, and one-third of the students chose virtual learning. In the 2020-21 school year, White students were responsible for 37.6% of the suspensions/expulsions, followed by Mixed students (16.6%), Black students (14.5%), South Asian students (9.5%), and East Asian students (7.3%).
- Self identified Indigenous students accounted for fewer than 10 suspensions;
- Fewer than 10 suspensions were issued to self-identified 2SLGBTQ+ students.

## Addressing Systemic Barriers

### Suspensions – Students in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3

In August 2019, the Ministry of Education directed school Boards to eliminate discretionary suspensions for students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3. Subsequently, TDSB Trustees passed a motion that directed staff to eliminate all historic suspensions from student records, both electronic and hard copies, issued to students when they were in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3. The motion further directed that moving forward, a formal retention schedule be set for all suspensions issued regardless of grade.

All historic records of suspensions for students in Junior Kindergarten to grade 3 will be removed by September 2022.

It is important to note once again that in the 2020-21 school year there were no suspensions to students in Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten or grade 1.

### **Reducing Suspension Rates for Indigenous Students, Black Students and Students with Special Education Needs**

Self Identified Indigenous students and Black students are suspended at rates much higher than their respective representation within the broader TDSB student population.

The CSS team will more intentionally collaborate with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre and the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement and to ensure that discipline matters involving Indigenous and Black students are analyzed thoroughly through an anti-oppressive lens that holds anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism at the centre of all conversations and decisions related to student discipline for self identified Indigenous and Black students.

Board staff continue to work in specific ways to address this serious issue of systemic racism. The entire Caring and Safe Schools (CSS) team continues to engage in anti-racism and anti-oppression training with a focus on anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism. This training, however, is simply not enough.

#### **Indigenous Students**

It is of critical importance to continuously engage Indigenous Communities with respect to discipline of self identified Indigenous students. The Caring and Safe school team engage staff at the Urban Indigenous Education Centre to ensure that to the greatest extent possible these discipline proceedings are informed by Indigenous ways of working, of knowing and being. There were fewer than 10 suspensions given to self identified Indigenous students in 2020-21.

#### **Black Students**

Historically, Black students in TDSB are suspended at a rate approximately three times that of their representation within the larger student population. While the data for 2020-21 shows a significant reduction in that rate, this outcome may be dramatically impacted by the conditions noted earlier related to the Covid-19 pandemic. This data will continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis to capture relevant trends and patterns. CSS staff will continue to work closely with the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement to deepen their learning related to how anti-Black racism manifests itself in student discipline proceedings. In turn, their work with school administrator colleagues will extend their learning in ways that deepen capacity to arrive at decisions which are more equitable for all students.

#### **Special Education**

The Caring and Safe Schools team is working closely with staff in Special Education to act on the data which shows that students with special education needs are suspended at a rate disproportionately higher than their representation within the larger TDSB student population. To this end, the action plan moving forward will focus on the intersectionality's related to identity. Special



Education staff are being involved in the analysis of student discipline matters as a further step towards ensuring that potential biases in the student discipline process are addressed.

**REVISED**

**Suspension/Expulsion Retention Schedule**

In response to the Board Motion of November 11,2020 *Dismantling System Barriers to Inclusion in Discipline Procedures* the following retention schedule has been created.

<b>Retention Period JK – 12</b>	
<b>Suspensions and Expulsions</b>	
One Year	Any suspension not related to a violent incident as per PPM120
Three years	Suspension related to a violent incident A violent incident is defined as the occurrence of any one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm</li> <li>• physical assault causing bodily harm requiring medical attention</li> <li>• sexual assault</li> <li>• robbery</li> <li>• using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person</li> <li>• extortion</li> <li>• hate and/or bias-motivated occurrences</li> </ul>
Five years	Expulsion for a violent incident A violent incident is defined as the occurrence of any one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm</li> <li>• physical assault causing bodily harm requiring medical attention</li> <li>• sexual assault</li> <li>• robbery</li> <li>• using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person</li> <li>• extortion</li> <li>• hate and/or bias-motivated occurrences</li> </ul>

School Administrators will be notified regarding removal of student discipline records through electronic communication generated by the Caring and Safe Schools database.

**A: Student Suspensions and Expulsions in 2020-21**

Table 1 shows the overall suspension and expulsion information for TDSB elementary and secondary schools throughout the entire 2020-21 school year<sup>1</sup>. The suspension rates<sup>2</sup> were calculated as the number of students suspended during the school year divided by the student enrolment as of October 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Table 1: Suspensions and Expulsions in the 2020-21 School Year**

Panel	Total # of Suspensions	# of Students Suspended	Suspension Rate (%)	# of Expulsions
Elementary	638	555	0.33%	0
Secondary	214	199	0.28%	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>0.31%</b>	<b>5</b>

Table 2 shows the overall suspension and expulsion information in the last five school years. For a more detailed analysis of trends in suspensions/expulsions please see Section D Suspensions and Expulsions by Student Demographics of this report.

**Table 2: Suspensions and Expulsions in the Last Five School Years**

Panel	School Year	Total # of Suspensions	# of Students Suspended	Suspension Rate (%)	Total # of Expulsions
Elementary Schools	2016-17	3,570	2,304	1.34%	1
	2017-18	3,165	2,034	1.18%	0
	2018-19	2,578	1,720	0.99%	0
	2019-20*	1,718	1,244	0.71%	0
	<b>2020-21**</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>0.33%</b>	<b>0</b>
Secondary Schools	2016-17	3,736	2,623	3.55%	63
	2017-18	3,056	2,268	3.08%	51
	2018-19	2,954	2,186	2.99%	30
	2019-20*	1,868	1,486	2.05%	12
	<b>2020-21**</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>0.28%</b>	<b>5</b>
Elementary and Secondary Schools	2016-17	7,306	4,927	2.01%	64
	2017-18	6,221	4,302	1.74%	51
	2018-19	5,532	3,906	1.58%	30
	2019-20*	3,586	2,730	1.11%	12
	<b>2020-21**</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>0.31%</b>	<b>5</b>

\*Schools were closed to in-person learning from March 16, 2020 to the end of the school year due to the Covid-19 pandemic;

\*\*Schools were closed to in-person learning for extended periods; one-third of students chose virtual learning for the school year.

Table 3 shows the number of suspensions and suspension rate for each grade/division in the 2020-21 school year.

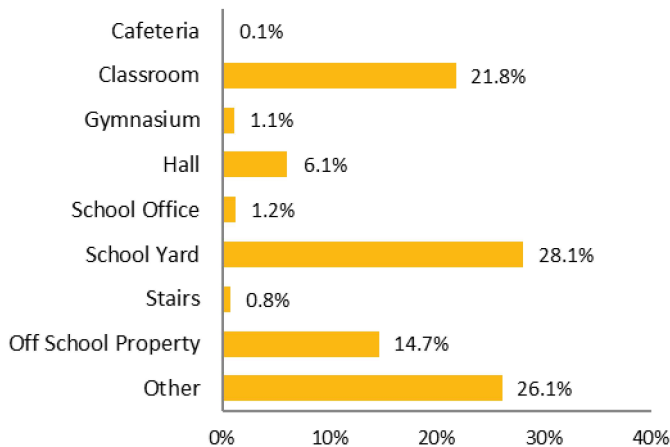
**Table 3: 2020-21 Suspensions by Student Grade/Division**

<b>Grade</b>	<b># of Suspensions</b>	<b># of Students Suspended</b>	<b>Suspension Rate</b>
Junior Kindergarten	0	0	0%
Senior Kindergarten	0	0	0%
Grade 1	0	0	0%
Grade 2	1	1	0.01%
Grade 3	3	3	0.02%
<b>Primary Division</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
Grade 4	41	35	0.21%
Grade 5	82	72	0.42%
Grade 6	127	110	0.65%
<b>Junior Division</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>0.42%</b>
Grade 7	200	169	1.01%
Grade 8	184	165	0.96%
<b>Intermediate Division</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>0.98%</b>
Grade 9	49	45	0.27%
Grade 10	58	52	0.31%
Grade 11	42	40	0.24%
Grade 12	65	62	0.28%
<b>Senior Division</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>0.28%</b>

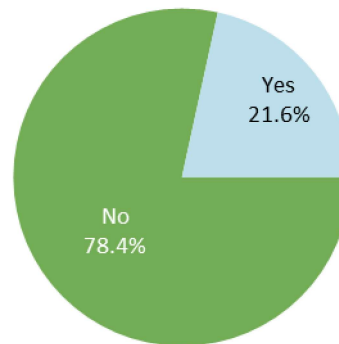
**B: Details of the 2020-21 Suspensions and Expulsions**

This section provides details of the 2020-21 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 1: 2020-21 Suspensions/Expulsions by Incident Location**



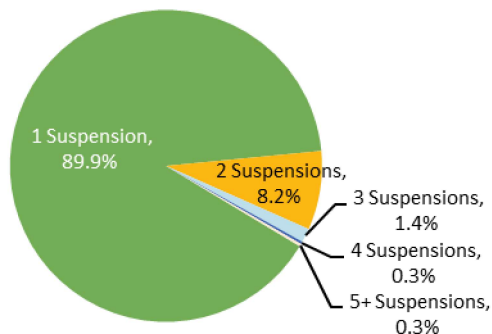
**Figure 2: 2020-21 Suspensions/Expulsions with Police Involvement**



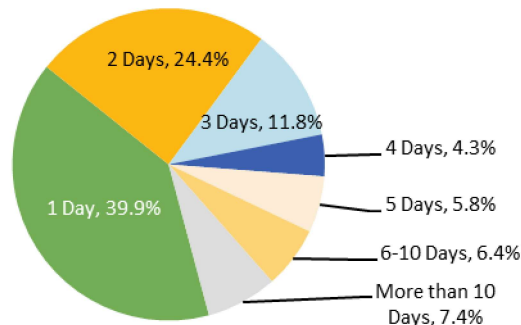
School yards (28.1%) and classrooms (21.8%) were the most likely locations where incidents were to happen (Figure 1). Police were involved in 21.6% of the suspensions or expulsions in the 2020-21 school year (Figure 2). The other category includes spaces such as student washrooms, virtual learning settings, social media, school bus, public transportation, school common area, park and recreation centres and private residence.

Among the students suspended in the 2020-21 school year, 89.9% had one suspension only, and 10.1% had two or more suspensions during the school year (Figure 3). One-day suspensions accounted for 39.9% of the total suspensions in the 2020-21 school year. Two-day and three-day suspensions accounted for 24.4% and 11.8% respectively (Figure 4).

**Figure 3: % of Students with One or More Suspensions in 2020-21**



**Figure 4: 2020-21 Suspensions by Length in Days**



Tables 4 and 5 show the infraction types of the 2020-21 suspensions and expulsions, as defined by the Education Act. Incidents motivated by bias, prejudice or hate accounted for 21.1% of the suspensions in the 2021-21 school year.

**Table 4 2020-21 Suspensions by Infraction Type**

<b>Types Defined by Section 306. (1) of the Education Act</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person	18	2.1%
Possessing alcohol, illegal drugs or, unless the pupil is a medical cannabis user, cannabis	3	0.4%
Being under the influence of alcohol or, unless the pupil is a medical cannabis user, cannabis	4	0.5%
Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority	22	2.6%
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	1	0.1%
Bullying	24	2.8%
<b>Types Defined by the Board According to Section 306. (1) 7. of the Education Act</b>		
Willful destruction of school property; vandalism causing damage to school or Board property or property located on school or Board premises	7	0.8%
Use of profane or improper language	75	8.8%
Use of tobacco	7	0.8%
Theft	0	-
Aid or incite harmful behaviour	32	3.8%
Physical assault	60	7.0%
Being under the influence of illegal drugs	1	0.1%
Fighting	75	8.8%
Possession or misuse of any harmful substances	2	0.2%
Extortion	0	-
Inappropriate use of electronic communications or media devices	81	9.5%
An act considered by the school principal to be a breach of the Board's or school code of conduct	31	3.6%
Immunization	0	-
<b>Types Defined by Section 310. (1) of the Education Act</b>		
Possessing a weapon, including a firearm	25	2.9%
Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person	18	2.1%
Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner	18	2.1%
Committing sexual assault	9	1.1%
Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs, or in cannabis	2	0.2%

Committing robbery	0	-
Giving alcohol or cannabis to a minor	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	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	180	21.1%
<b>Types Defined by the Board According to Section 310. (1) 8. of the Education Act</b>		
Possession of an explosive substance	0	-
Sexual harassment	16	1.9%
Hate and/or bias-motivated occurrence(s)	60	7.0%
Distribution of hate material	0	-
Racial harassment	37	4.3%
An act considered by the principal to be a serious breach of the Board's or school's code of conduct	44	5.2%

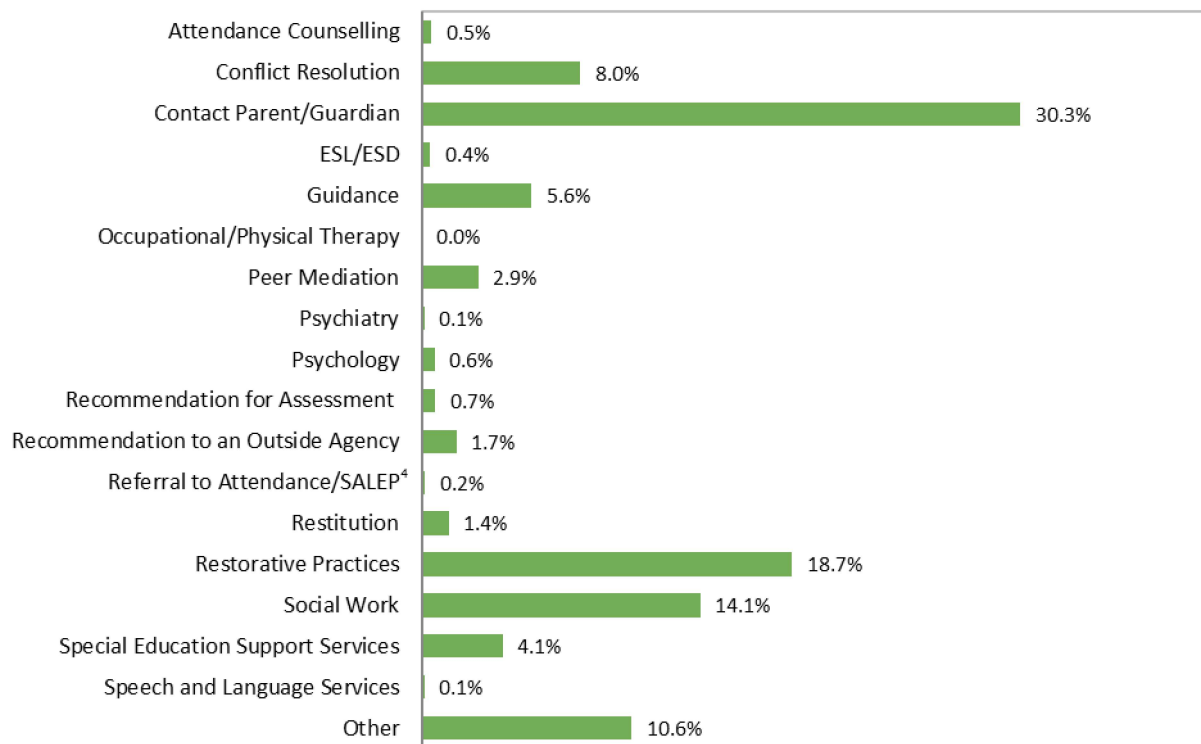
**Table 5: 2020-21 Expulsions<sup>3</sup> by Infraction Type**

<b>Infraction Type</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner	0	-
Committing robbery	0	-
Committing sexual assault	4	80.0%
Possessing a weapon, including a firearm	0	-
Sexual harassment	0	-
Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs	0	-
Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person	0	-
An act considered by the principal to be a serious breach of the Board's or school's code of conduct	1	20.0%

### C: Interventions Used by Schools in 2020-21

Of all the suspensions in the 2020-21 school year, 98% had been followed up with interventions by schools. Figure 5 shows the most used interventions by schools.

**Figure 5: Most Used Interventions by Schools in the 2020-21 School Year**



A meeting with parents or guardians was the most used intervention (30.3% of all interventions), followed by restorative practices (18.7%) and social work (14.1%).

### D: Suspensions and Expulsions by Student Demographics

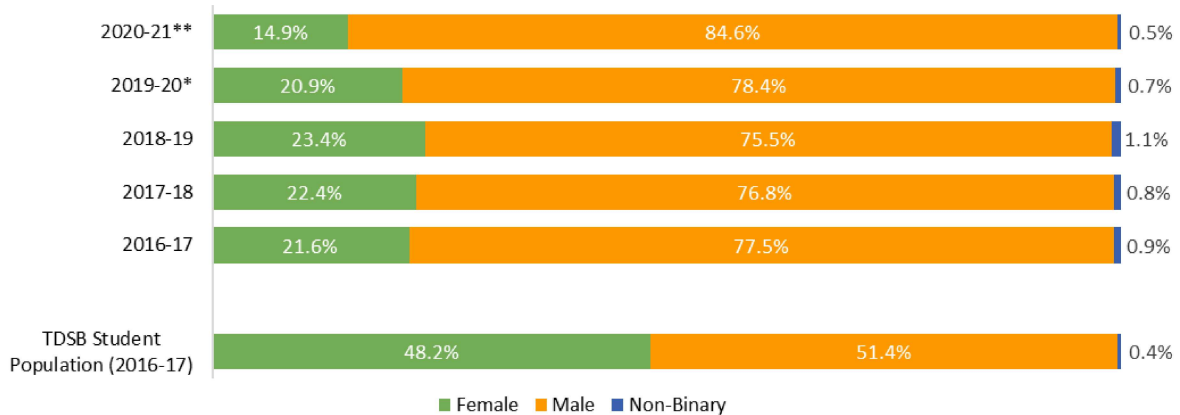
In this section, the 2016-17 to 2020-21 student suspensions and expulsions were analyzed by student characteristics such as gender identity, self-identified ethno-racial background, student and parent birth place, parent presence at home, language spoken at home, estimated family income, and special education needs, as captured by the Board’s School Information System, and its Student/Parent Census (the most recent one was conducted in the 2016-17 school year). As the number of expulsions is very small, in the following analyses they were combined with suspensions since expelled students must be suspended first pending their expulsion outcome.

Since in-person learning had been closed for extended periods in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the data for these two school years, and their comparison with the data from the pre-pandemic years, should be interpreted accordingly.

### By Student Gender Identity

Figure 6 shows that male students accounted for the vast majority of the suspensions/expulsions (84.6% in 2020-21) in the last five school years.

**Figure 6: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Student Gender Identity**

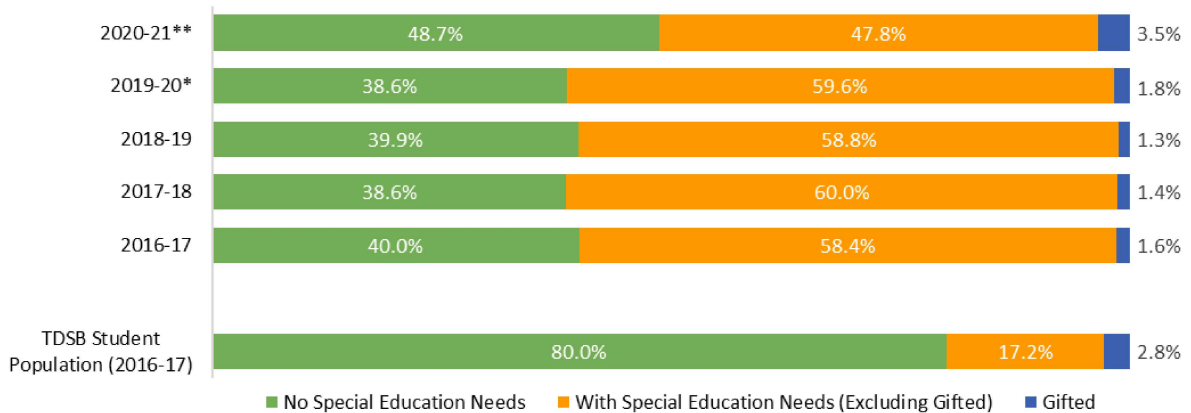


According to the 2016-17 Census data there were 1,067 non-binary students, representing 0.4% of the TDSB student population in that school year. Figure 6 indicates that although they only accounted for about 1% of the total suspensions/expulsions, non-binary students were proportionately over-represented in the suspensions/expulsions in all these school years.

### By Special Education Needs

Figure 7 shows the distributions of suspensions/expulsions in the last five school years by students' status of special education needs.

**Figure 7: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Special Education Needs**

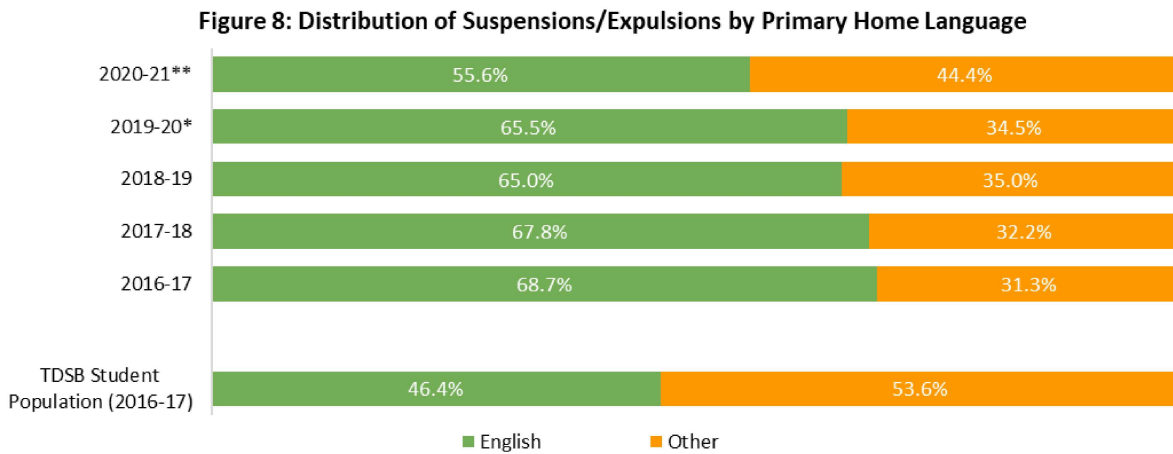


Students with special education needs (excluding Gifted) accounted for the 48-60% of the suspensions/ expulsions. Since they represented about 17% of the TDSB student population, they were disproportionately high in the suspensions/expulsions (47.8% in 2020-21).



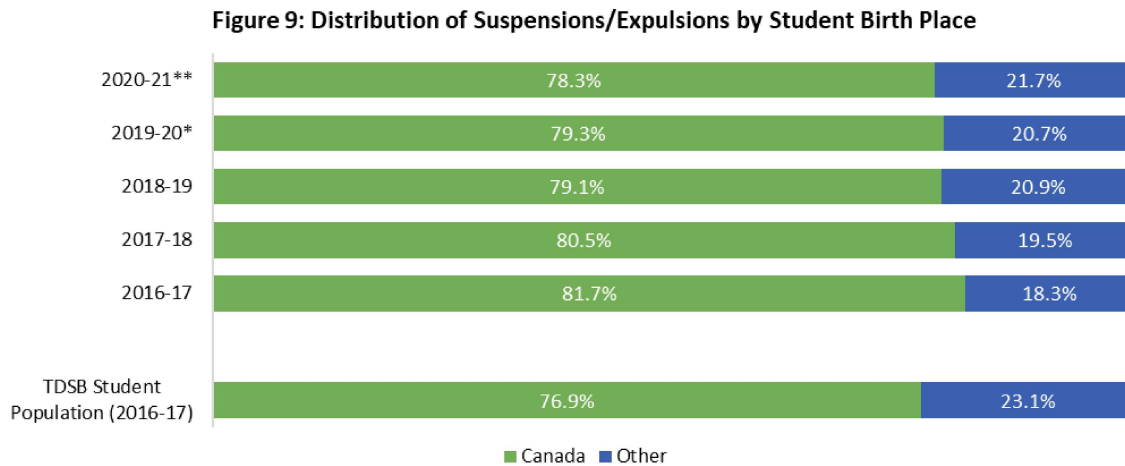
### By Primary Language at Home

Figure 8 shows the distributions of the suspensions/expulsions in the last five school years by students' primary language spoken at home. English-speaking students accounted for the majority (55.6% in 2020-21) of the suspensions/expulsions.



### By Student Birth Place

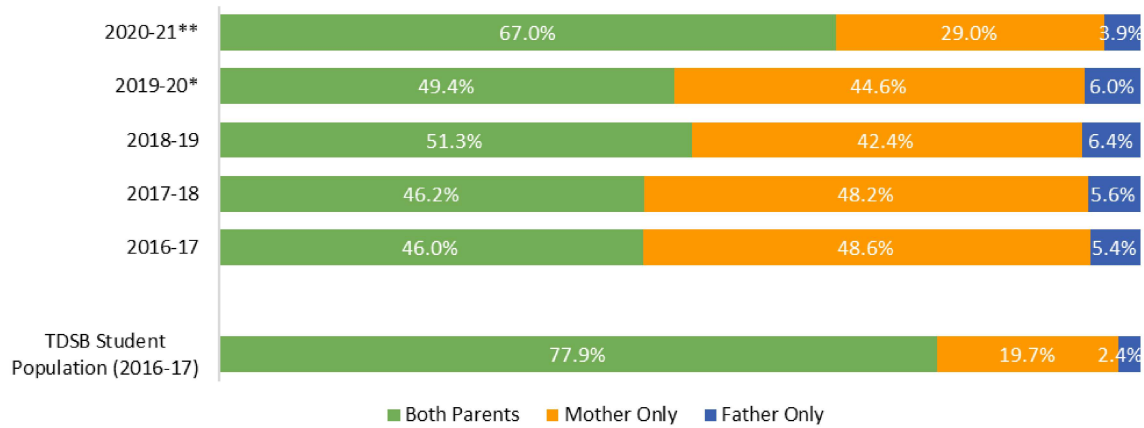
Slightly over three quarters (76.9%) of the TDSB students were born in Canada. Figure 9 shows that they accounted for the majority (78.3% in 2020-21) of the suspensions/expulsions.



### By Parent Presence at Home

According to the student registration data, more than three quarters (78%) of the TDSB students lived with both parents at home. Figure 10 shows the distributions of student suspensions/expulsions in the last five years by their parents' presence at home.

**Figure 10: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Parent Presence at Home**

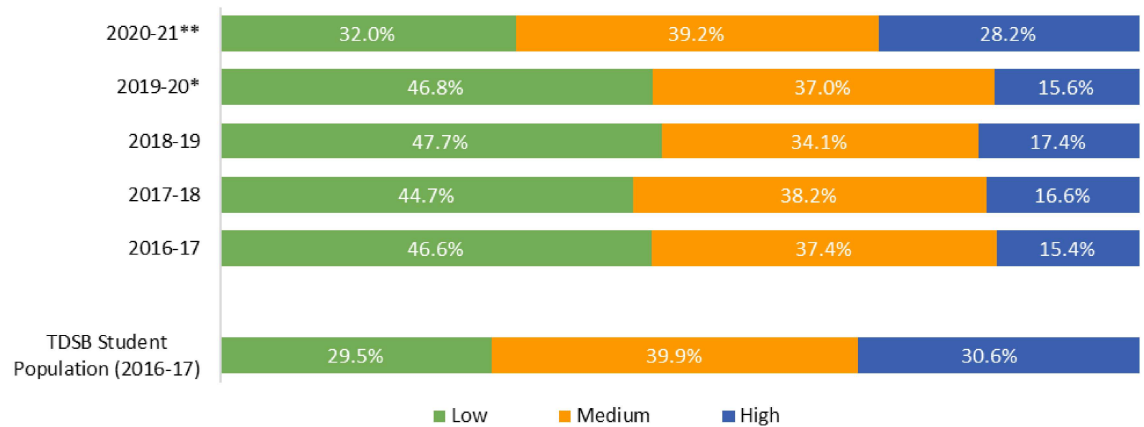


Students who lived with one parent, particularly with mother only, had disproportionately high representations in the suspensions/expulsions in all five school years.

**By Estimated Family Income**

Almost all TDSB students’ postal code information could be linked to the projected median household income data from Environics at the neighborhood level, i.e. for each postal code area in Toronto. This estimated household income data was then classified into ten equal categories (a decile), with Categories 1-3 being low, 4-7 being medium, and 8-10 being high income levels. Figure 11 shows the distributions of student suspensions/ expulsions in the last five years by their estimated family income level.

**Figure 11: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Estimated Family Income**



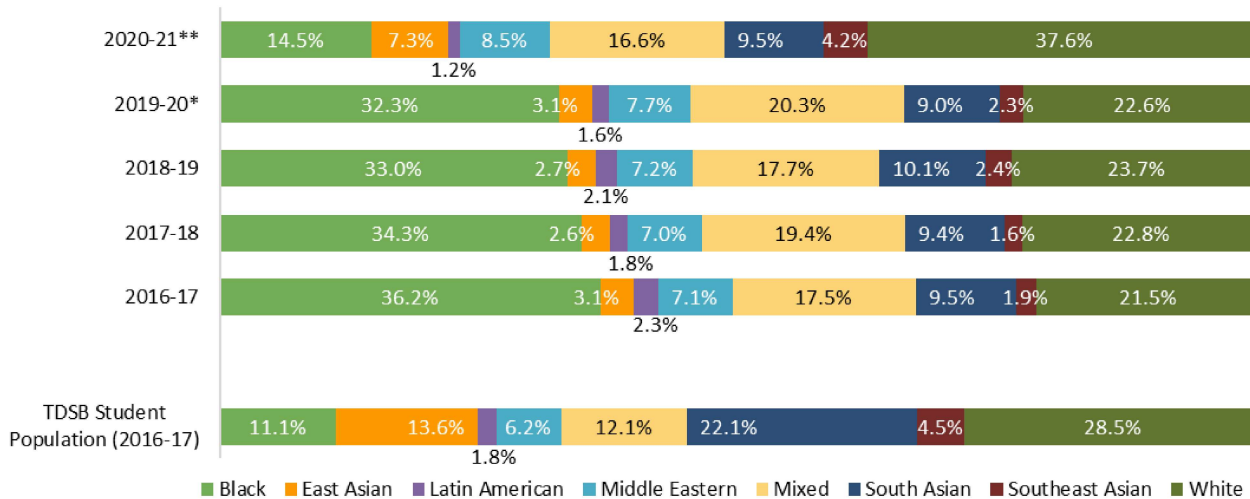
Students from low-income families were over-represented in the suspensions/expulsions in all five school years.

**By Student Ethno-Racial Background**

In this analysis students’ self-identified ethno-racial background was derived from participants’ responses to the TDSB’s Student/Parent Census (the most recent one was conducted in the 2016-17 school year). As some students and parents did not participate in the Census, 59% of the

suspensions/expulsions in the 2020-21 school year could be linked to the Census data.

**Figure 12: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Student Ethno-Racial Background**



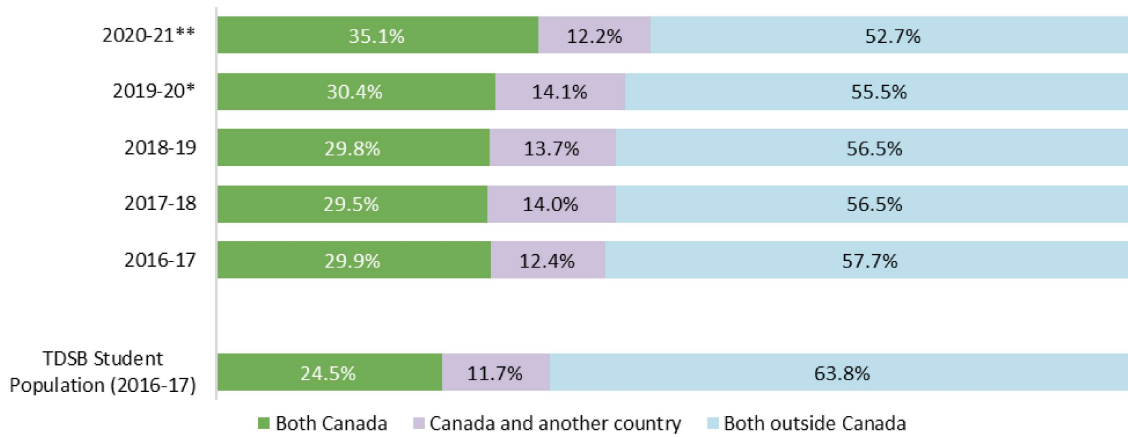
As show in Figure 12, in the school years prior to the pandemic, self-identified Black, Middle Eastern and Mixed students were disproportionately high in the suspensions/expulsions, while East Asian, South Asian, and Southeast Asian students were under-represented. The pattern is much different for the 2020-21 school year in which schools were closed to in-person learning for extended periods, and one-third of the students chose virtual learning. In the 2020-21 school year, White students were responsible for 37.6% of the suspensions/expulsions, followed by Mixed students (16.6%), Black students (14.5%), South Asian students (9.5%), and East Asian students (7.3%).

To protect the privacy of self Identified Indigenous Students who accounted for fewer than 10 suspensions, were excluded from this analysis.

**By Parent Birth Place**

According to the 2016-17 TDSB Census the majority (64%) of students had both parents born outside of Canada, 12% had one parent born in Canada, and 25% had both parents born in Canada. Over half (58%) of the suspensions/expulsions in the 2020-21 school year could be linked to this Census data.

**Figure 13: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Parent Birth Place**



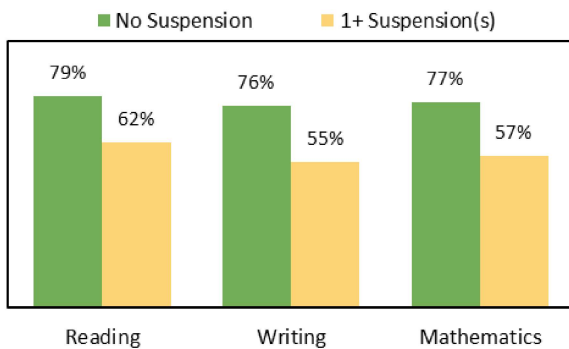
Students with both foreign-born parents accounted for the majority of suspensions/expulsions (52.7% in 2020-21). See Figure 13.

**E: 2020-21 Suspensions/Expulsions and Academic Achievement**

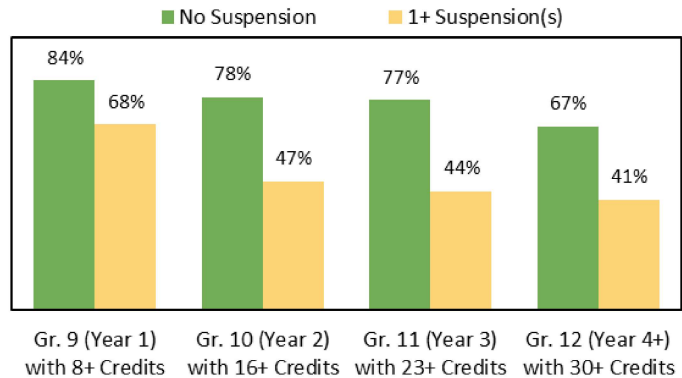
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all provincial standard assessments were cancelled in the 2020-21 school year. However, research from previous school years indicates that there are strong correlations between student suspensions and their academic achievement. Suspended students had lower levels of achievement on the provincial standard assessments, report cards, and credit accumulation than students not being suspended. They also had a much lower graduation rate than students who did not have any suspension during their school years.

Similar trends were observed in the 2020-21 school year with the Grade 4-8 report card results for elementary school students, and with the Grade 9-12 credit accumulation for secondary school students. See Figures 14-15.

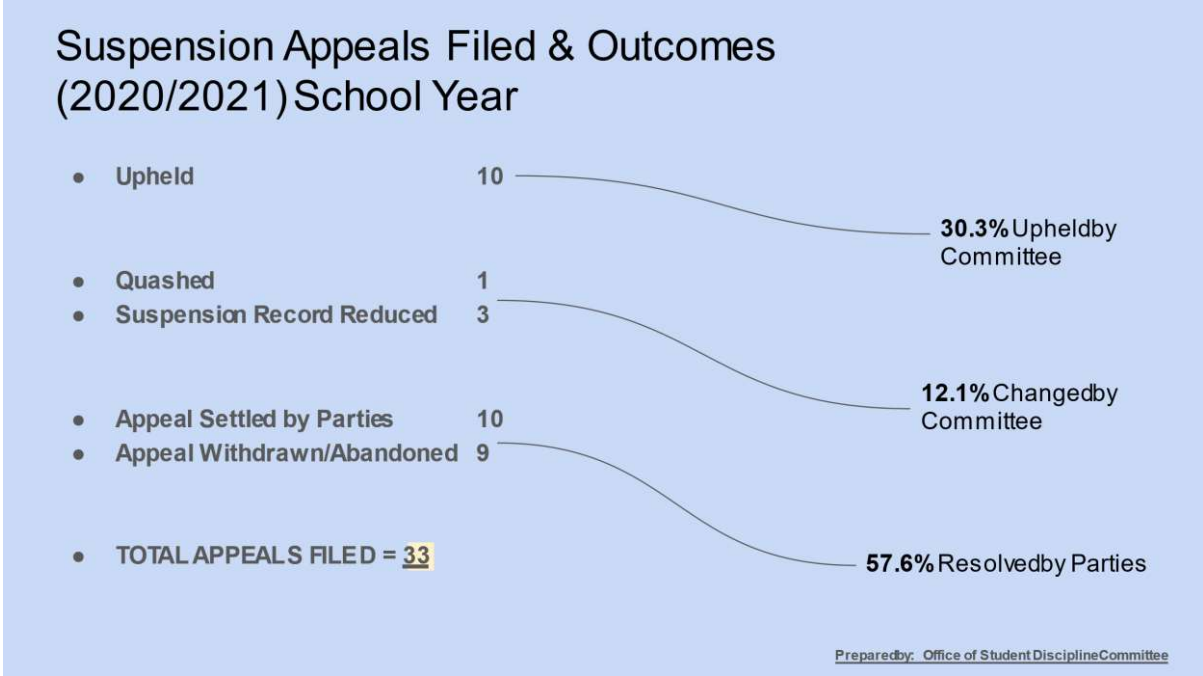
**Figure 14: % of Gr. 4-8 Students Achieving Levels 3 & 4 on the 2020-21 Report Cards by Number of Suspensions**



**Figure 15: % of Gr. 9-12 Students Meeting Expectations on the 2020-21 Credit Accumulation by Number of Suspensions**



**F: 2020-21 Suspension/Expulsion Appeals**



**G: 2020-21 Caring and Safe Schools Alternative Programs**

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 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:

- Strong school leadership, with consistent discipline policies and procedures;
- School-wide Caring and Safe Schools programs and instructional components focused on inclusive contributions;
- Evolving and expanded prevention-based knowledge and skills;
- Ongoing support and professional growth in emotional intelligence, conduct management, prevention-oriented strategies, mediation, and violence prevention;
- Inclusive and developmentally appropriate materials, activities, and programs being championed and utilized;
- Strong efforts to develop relationships and partnerships within the entire school community; and
- 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 suspended/expelled students in the 2020-21 school year.

**Table 6: Caring and Safe Schools Alternative Programs 2020-21**

Program Site	Division	Area	Program Description
C&SS Elementary Itinerant @ Vaughan Rd	Pr./Jr./Int.	LC 1-4	Elementary Itinerant Team – Program Coordinator and Child and Youth Counsellors - provide “push-in” non-academic support in the student’s school.
C&SS Elementary @ Lawrence Heights MS	Pr./Jr.	LC1	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.
C&SS Elementary @ Lawrence Heights MS	Jr./Int.		
C&SS Elementary @ Shoreham PS	Pr./Jr.	LC2	
C&SS Elementary @ Shoreham PS	Jr./Int.		
C&SS Midland Elementary @ Scarborough Centre for Alt. Studies	Pr./Jr.	LC3	

C&SS Elementary @ Scarborough Centre for Alternative Studies	Pr./Jr.		provide services to the sites as required.
C&SS Elementary @ Scarborough Centre for Alternative Studies	Jr./Int.		Suspended/Expelled/Assessment & Support students are referred through the Caring and Safe Schools process.
Barrhead Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Barrhead Learning Centre	Sr.	LC1	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. Suspended and expelled students are referred through the Caring and Safe Schools process. Assessment & Support students in need of both academic and non-academic support are referred by Caring and Safe Schools Learning Centre Administrators for placement. C&SS Social Workers and Psychologists provide services to the sites as required.
Bickford Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Bickford Centre	Sr.	LC4	
Midland Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Scarborough Centre for Alternative Studies	Sr.	LC3	
Pharmacy Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Terraview Learning Centre	Sr.	LC2	
Arrow Rd. Assessment & Support Program – Jamaican Canadian Association (Community Partnership)	Sr.	LC2	
Stanley Road Assessment & Support Program	Sr.	LC2	Assessment and Support Programs provide both academic and non-academic support to students. The site teacher and Educational Assistant support programming focusing on core curriculum courses (English, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, and Learning Skills). Non-academic support is provided by an agency Child and Youth Worker or a TDSB Social Worker. C&SS Social Workers and Psychologists provide services to the sites as required. Students are referred through Learning Centre Caring and Safe Schools Administrators.
Operation Springboard Assessment and Support (Community Partnership)	Sr.	LC3	
East Metro Youth Services Assessment and Support (Community Partnership)	Sr.	LC3	

## H: Community Engagement

Effective community engagement is of critical importance in creating positive welcoming caring and safe schools. The Caring and Safe Schools team continues to engage community partners across the Board to support programming both during the regular school day as well as during off school hours. In order to leverage the wisdom and experience which exists within communities. An important element of these partnerships is that they provide the Board with significant expertise related to underserved communities.

The following Educational Programming community partners support Caring and Safe schools programming:

180 Change Street, Agincourt Community Services Association, Argonauts GP Inc., Brave Education Inc, CAFCAN, John Howard Society of Toronto, Neighbourhood Group Community Services, PEACE BY PEACE, Peacebuilders International (Canada), TAIBU Community Health Centre, Think Don't Shoot Inc. and Victim Services Toronto

## I: Action Plan and Associated Timelines

Our emphasis continues to be providing safe, caring and welcoming schools. Building relationships with students is a key part of that work because knowing who our students are allows us to create learning environments that connect directly with their experiences and needs. This work is underscored by our commitment to human rights, equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression.

As part of removing systemic barriers, in August of 2019 the Ministry of Education directed school Boards to eliminate discretionary suspensions for students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3. Subsequently, TDSB Trustees went a step further and passed a motion that directed staff to eliminate all historic suspensions from students' records, both electronic and hard copies, issued to students when they were in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3. The motion further directed that moving forward, a formal retention schedule be set for all suspensions issued, regardless of the grade.

TDSB staff are in the process of implementing this motion.

Systemic changes like the ones made through the Board motion noted above will make a difference in creating student discipline processes which are more equitable and fair for all students. Other factors which have made a positive difference in recent years have been revisions to the Caring and Safe School data base related to "infraction type", the ongoing commitment to professional learning on how identity impacts student discipline, the expansion of community partnerships and the provision of programming outside of regular school hours.

To support students' achievement and well-being, to reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions, and to address the over-representation of some groups who are suspended and expelled, we will continue to:

- More effectively address how issues of identity – such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, special education needs and gender – connect with each other and influence decisions regarding the student discipline process;



- Review the detailed breakdown of suspension and expulsion data to identify trends, patterns and opportunities for improvement;
- Support the Caring and Safe Schools team and all school administrators to examine bias, power and privilege as they relate to the student discipline process;
- Support school administrators in the application of human rights, anti-racism and anti-oppression principles in student discipline;
- Review Caring and Safe Schools practices to ensure consistency with principles of anti-racism and anti-oppression;
- Provide learning opportunities for more staff to be trained in Restorative Practices;
- Develop alternatives to suspension programs;
- Work collaboratively with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre and the Centre of Excellence for Black Students Achievement and to challenge unconscious bias, engage in joint problem-solving and ensure that Indigenous students and Black students are treated equitably when it comes to decisions about suspensions and expulsions in each school through collaboration between Principals and Superintendents;
- Consider and act on the intersectionality's of the data provided in this report, Board Special Education staff must also be involved in the analysis of student discipline matters to ensure that any biases in the student discipline process and any subsequent decisions are being acknowledged and eradicated through interrogation and interruption of practices that appear to be automatic responses to student discipline issues and;
- Work with families and community partners to develop relevant approaches and supports for students.

## Contact Us

For more information about this report, please contact:

### **Caring and Safe Schools**

Toronto District School Board  
5050 Yonge Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, ON M2N 5N8  
Tel: 416-395-8054

### **Research and Development**

Toronto District School Board  
1 Civic Centre Court, Lower Level  
Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B3  
Tel: 416-394-7404  
Email: [research@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:research@tdsb.on.ca)

## Endnotes

- \* Schools were closed to in-person learning from March 16, 2020 to the end of the school year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - \*\* Schools were closed to in-person learning for extended periods; one-third of students chose virtual learning for the school year.0
1. Reported suspensions and expulsions for a school year may include suspensions and expulsions carried over from the previous school year.

2. Suspension 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
4. SAL: Supervised Alternative Learning
5. Percentages may not add up to 100 due rounding.

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