



# CARING AND SAFE SCHOOLS REPORT

## 2021 - 2022

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 2021-22 school year. The data presented in this report 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 and staff feel respected, included, and valued in their learning and working environments. In TDSB, 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. Where serious incidents occur, students will face appropriate disciplinary actions as required by the Ministry of Education and TDSB up to and including suspensions or expulsions.

When examining the data in this report it is of critical importance to identify patterns which help to better understand student discipline processes. This examination must be undertaken in a critical way which takes into account the Board's commitments to Truth and Reconciliation, human rights, equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression. This means that this data should not be taken up in ways which problematize, stigmatize and reinforce harmful stereotypes about individual students or groups of students. Rather, the data contained in these reports must be used to examine the Board's policies, procedures and ways of working to interrupt and interrogate systemic and individual biases which exist in student discipline processes and contribute to academic streaming within TDSB. In short, this means that student discipline processes contribute to differentiated outcomes for students based on factors other than their ability and effort.

There were 3,505 suspensions and 20 expulsions in the 2020-2021 school year. For the purpose of drawing appropriate comparisons in this report, the data from the 2020-2021 school year is compared to 2018-2019, the last full school year that was not impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. When compared with the 2018-19 school year (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic), there were 2,207 fewer suspensions, or a 37% reduction, in the 2020-21 school year. There were also 10 fewer expulsions. This data is consistent with the downward trend in the total number of suspensions and expulsions in TDSB since the 2017-2018 school year. Additional data related to suspensions and expulsions in TDSB is found throughout this Annual Report.

Research from pre-pandemic school years which 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. This is the reason that a careful, reflective and collaborative approach to suspensions is necessary and required by law through the Education Act.

Addressing this data and the systemic barriers inherent in student discipline processes will enable more students in TDSB to achieve to their greatest potential while keeping our schools safe. To achieve this goal staff are working through a transparent action plan which emphasizes building positive relationships with internal and external stakeholders in support of positive school climates where students and staff feel valued, heard and cared for irrespective of identity, social standing or postal code.

## 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 2021-22 school year. The data presented in this report 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 the student discipline process;
- Supporting school administrators in the application of Truth and Reconciliation, 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, threat assessment and emergency preparedness.

Through intentional work by the Caring and Safe Schools team, school administrators engaging in professional learning that examines bias, power and privilege and their connection to student discipline. This learning has encouraged school administrators 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 safer, 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.

The result of this will be safer and more welcoming schools for all students and staff.

## Key Findings

In the 2021-22 school year:

- There were 3,505 suspensions and 20 expulsions in the school year. When compared with the 2018-19 school year (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic), there were 2,207 fewer suspensions, or a 37% reduction, in the 2020-21 school year. There were also 10 fewer expulsions;
- The overall student suspension rate is 1.13%. There were only 5 suspensions in the primary grades (Kindergarten to Grade 3);
- School yards, hallways, and classrooms continued to be the most likely locations where incidents occur
- More than one third (37.8%) of the suspensions were one-day suspensions;
- Fighting (15.1%), aid or incite harmful behaviour (14.4%), and physical assault (13.2%) were the top three infraction types;
- 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 74.1% of the suspensions/expulsions;
- Students with special education needs (excluding Gifted) accounted for the 52.8% 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;
- Self-identified Black, Middle Eastern, and Mixed students were disproportionately high in the suspensions/expulsions. When compared with the 2018-19 school year (prior to the pandemic), Black students accounted for 5.5% fewer suspensions/expulsions (from 33.0% in 2018-19 to 27.5% in 2021-22);
- Self-identified Indigenous students accounted for fewer than 20 suspensions;
- Fewer than 10 suspensions were issued to self-identified 2SLGBTQ+ students.

## Addressing Systemic Barriers

When examining the data in this report it is of critical importance to identify patterns which help to better understand student discipline processes. This examination must be undertaken in a critical way which takes into account the Board's commitments to Truth and Reconciliation, human rights, equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression. This means that this data should not be taken up in ways which problematize, stigmatize and reinforce harmful stereotypes about individual students or groups of students. Rather, the data contained in these reports must be used to examine the Board's policies, procedures and ways of working to interrupt and interrogate systemic and individual biases which exist in student discipline processes and contribute to academic streaming within TDSB. In short, this means that student discipline processes contribute to differentiated outcomes for students based on factors other than their ability and effort.

It is important to note students can be and are suspended/expelled from school when they engage in behaviour/activity which warrants this level of discipline. Under the Education Act, students must be suspended (and considered for expulsion) for:

- Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm
- Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person
- Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner
- Committing sexual assault
- Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs
- Committing robbery
- Giving alcohol or cannabis to a minor
- Bullying (if the student has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying, and the student's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person).

In addition, TDSB also requires suspension (and possible expulsion) for the following:

- Possession of an explosive substance
- Sexual harassment
- Racial harassment
- Hate Motivated Occurrences
- Distribution of hate material
- An act considered by the principal to be a serious breach of the Board's or school's code of conduct
- Trafficking in cannabis
- Extortion

### **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 by September 2022. The motion further directed that moving forward, a formal retention schedule be set for all suspensions issued regardless of grade.

It is important to note once again that in the 2021-22 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 TDSB are suspended at rates much higher than their respective representation within the broader TDSB student population.

The Caring and Safe Schools team will continue to intentionally collaborate with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre and the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement 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 team continues to engage in anti-racism and anti-oppression training with a focus on anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism. This training is shared with staff in both formal and informal ways, in combination with additional mandatory training offered throughout the year (section I).

### **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 Schools 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 20 suspensions issued to self-identified Indigenous students in 2021-22.

### **Black Students**

Historically, Black students in the TDSB are suspended at a rate approximately three times that of their representation within the larger student population. While the data for 2021-22 shows a reduction in that rate, this data will continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis to capture relevant trends and patterns. Caring and Safe Schools 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 continue to focus on the intersectionality of the data related to identity. Special Education staff are included in the analysis of student discipline matters as a further step towards ensuring that potential biases in the student discipline process are addressed.

### **Update 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 was created and has been included in PR 697 Promoting a Positive School Climate.

Education Act Incidents	Violent Incident Caring and Safe Schools Incident Report form Part I	Violent Incident Form	Suspension Documentation	Expulsion Documentation
S.306 Incident	1 year	Nil	1 year	Nil
S.310 Suspension	3 years	3 years	3 years	Nil
S.310 Expulsion	5 years	5 years	Nil	5 years

### TDSB Retention Timelines are as follows:

For incidents relating to S.306 of the Education Act, the Caring and Safe Schools Incident Report Form (CSSIR) will be retained for 1 year from the date of the incident. Incidents related to S.306 of the Education Act do not require a violent incident form. If the incident results in a suspension, the suspension documentation will be retained for a period of one year from the date of the incident. For suspension documentation relating to S.310 of the Education Act, the Caring Safe Schools Incident Report Form (CSSIR) will be retained for 3 years from the date of the incident. The violent incident form, if applicable, will be retained for a period of 3 years from the date of the incident. The suspension documentation will be retained for 3 years from the date of the incident. For expulsion documentation relating to S.310 of the Education Act, the Caring Safe Schools Incident Report Form (CSSIR) will be retained for 5 years from the date of the incident. The violent incident form, if applicable will be retained for a period of 5 years from the date of the incident. The expulsion documentation will be retained for 5 years from the date of the incident.

TDSB staff have now fully implemented this motion. To date the total number of suspensions suppressed is 253,971 impacting 102,631 students. The total number of letters sent to active students informing them of the suppression of a suspension/expulsion is 12,382. This affected 5,356 active students.

## A: Student Suspensions and Expulsions in 2021-22

Table 1 shows the overall suspension and expulsion information for TDSB elementary and secondary schools throughout the entire 2021-22 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 2021-22 School Year**

Panel	Total # of Suspensions	# of Students Suspended	Suspension Rate (%)	# of Expulsions
Elementary	1,641	1,222	0.76%	0
Secondary	1,864	1,404	1.98%	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,505</b>	<b>2,626</b>	<b>1.13%</b>	<b>20</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	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
	2020-21*	638	555	0.33%	0
	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>1,641</b>	<b>1,222</b>	<b>0.76%</b>	<b>0</b>
Secondary Schools	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
	2020-21*	214	199	0.28%	5
	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>1,864</b>	<b>1,404</b>	<b>1.98%</b>	<b>20</b>
Elementary and Secondary Schools	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
	2020-21*	852	754	0.31%	5
	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>3,505</b>	<b>2,626</b>	<b>1.13%</b>	<b>20</b>

\*In 2019-20, schools were closed to in-person learning from March 16 to the end of the school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020-21, schools were closed to in-person learning for extended periods, with one-third of students choosing virtual learning for the school year.

Table 3 shows the number of suspensions and suspension rate for each grade/division in the 2021-22 school year.

**Table 3: 2021-22 Suspensions by Student Grade/Division**

Grade	# of Suspensions	# of Students Suspended	Suspension Rate
Junior Kindergarten	0	0	0%
Senior Kindergarten	0	0	0%

Grade 1	0	0	0%
Grade 2	3	2	0.01%
Grade 3	2	2	0.01%
<b>Primary Division</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.01%</b>
Grade 4	91	71	0.42%
Grade 5	187	143	0.89%
Grade 6	274	215	1.31%
<b>Junior Division</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>0.87%</b>
Grade 7	530	389	2.41%
Grade 8	554	400	2.41%
<b>Intermediate Division</b>	<b>1,084</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>2.41%</b>
Grade 9	627	435	2.61%
Grade 10	472	356	2.16%
Grade 11	423	333	1.98%
Grade 12	342	280	1.33%
<b>Senior Division</b>	<b>1,864</b>	<b>1,404</b>	<b>1.98%</b>

## B: Details of the 2021-22 Suspensions and Expulsions

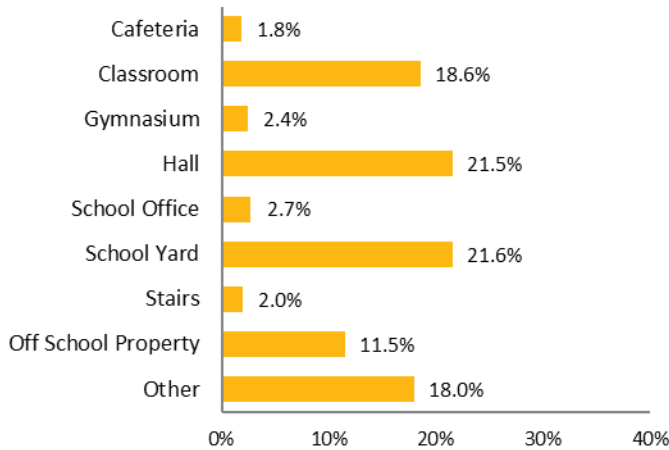
This section provides details of the 2021-22 student suspensions and expulsions, such as incident locations, infraction types, and police involvement. This information can be used when planning for conduct management, prevention-oriented strategies, mediation, and violence prevention at the school, learning network, learning centre, and system levels.

School yards (21.6%), hallways (21.5%), and classrooms (18.6%) were the most likely locations where incidents were to happen (Figure 1). The “Other” category (18.0%) includes spaces such as student washrooms, virtual learning settings, social media, school buses, public transportation, school common areas, park and recreation centres, and private residences.

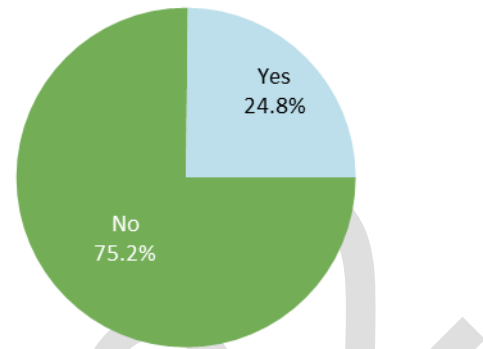
Police were involved in one quarter (24.8%) of the suspensions or expulsions in the 2021-22 school year (Figure 2).



**Figure 1: 2021-22 Suspensions/Expulsions by Incident Location**

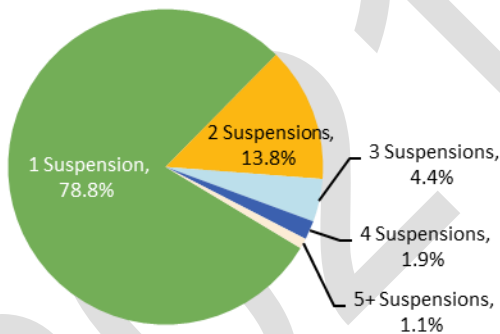


**Figure 2: 2021-22 Suspensions/Expulsions with Police Involvement**

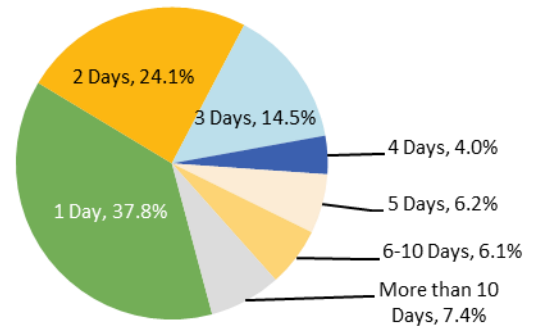


Among the students suspended in the 2021-22 school year, 78.8% had one suspension only, 13.8% had two suspensions, and 7.4% had three or more suspensions during the school year (Figure 3). One-day suspensions accounted for 37.8% of the total suspensions in the 2021-22 school year. Two-day and three-day suspensions accounted for 24.1% and 14.5% respectively (Figure 4).

**Figure 3: % of Students with One or More Suspensions in 2021-22**



**Figure 4: 2021-22 Suspensions by Length in Days**



Tables 4 and 5 show the infraction types of the 2021-22 suspensions and expulsions, as defined by the Education Act. Fighting (15.1%), aid or incite harmful behaviour (14.4%), and physical assault (13.2%) were the top three infraction types in the 2021-22 school year.

**Table 4 2021-22 Suspensions by Infraction Type**

Types Defined by Section 306. (1) of the Education Act	Count	Percent
Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person	112	3.2%
Possessing alcohol, illegal drugs or, unless the pupil is a medical cannabis user, cannabis	62	1.8%
Being under the influence of alcohol or, unless the pupil is a medical cannabis user, cannabis	39	1.1%

Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority	159	4.5%
Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school	23	0.7%
Bullying	134	3.8%
<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	73	2.1%
Use of profane or improper language	212	6.0%
Use of tobacco	41	1.2%
Theft	42	1.2%
Aid or incite harmful behaviour	504	14.4%
Physical assault	464	13.2%
Being under the influence of illegal drugs	15	0.4%
Fighting	530	15.1%
Possession or misuse of any harmful substances	69	2.0%
Extortion	4	0.1%
Inappropriate use of electronic communications or media devices	178	5.1%
An act considered by the school principal to be a breach of the Board's or school code of conduct	120	3.4%
Immunization	0	-
<b>Types Defined by Section 310. (1) of the Education Act</b>		
Possessing a weapon, including a firearm	99	2.8%
Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person	54	1.5%
Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner	96	2.7%
Committing sexual assault	87	2.5%
Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs, or in cannabis	2	0.1%
Committing robbery	20	0.6%
Giving alcohol or cannabis to a minor	1	0.0%
Bullying if, i) the pupil has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying and, ii) the pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person	3	0.1%
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	164	4.7%
<b>Types Defined by the Board According to Section 310. (1) 8. of the Education Act</b>		
Possession of an explosive substance	5	0.1%
Sexual harassment	45	1.3%
Hate and/or bias-motivated occurrence(s)	69	2.0%
Distribution of hate material	3	0.1%
Racial harassment	36	1.0%
An act considered by the principal to be a serious breach of the Board's or school's code of conduct	40	1.1%

**Table 5: 2021-22 Expulsions<sup>3</sup> by Infraction Type**

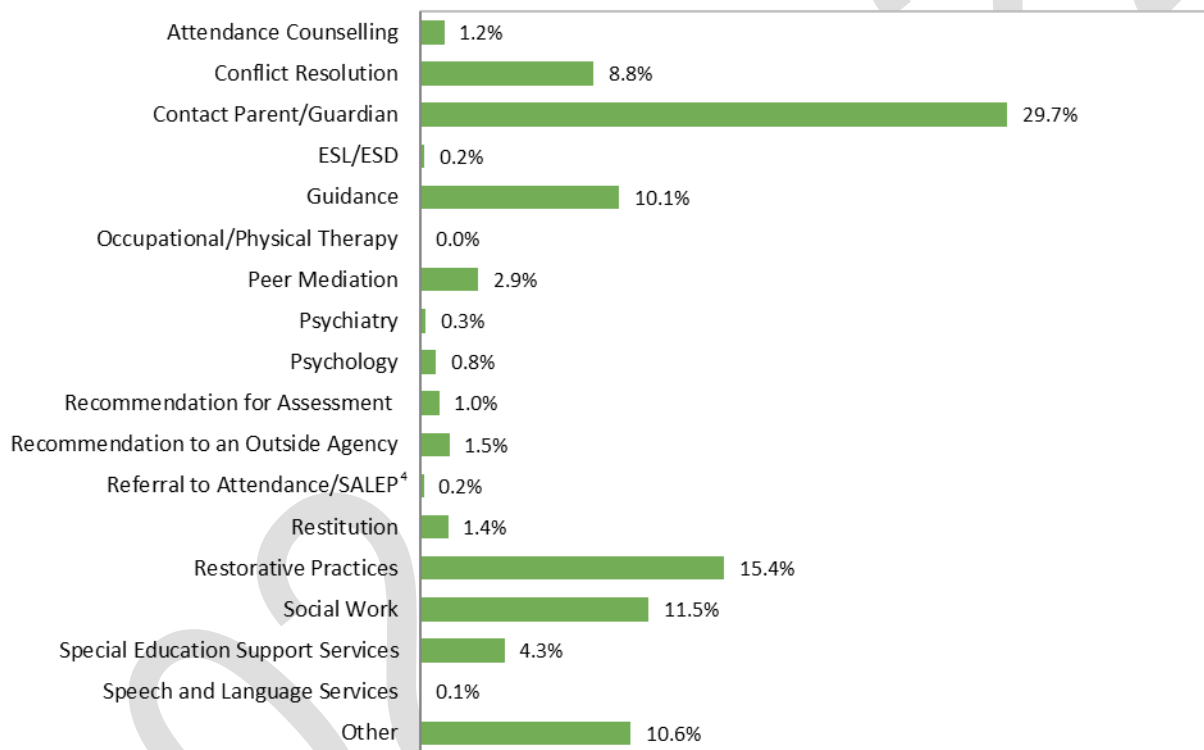
<b>Infraction Type</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner	8	40.0%
Committing robbery	0	-

Committing sexual assault	1	5.0%
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	5	25.0%
An act considered by the principal to be a serious breach of the Board's or school's code of conduct	6	30.0%

## C: Interventions Used by Schools in 2021-22

Of all the suspensions in the 2021-22 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 2021-22 School Year**



A meeting with parents or guardians was the most used intervention (29.7% of all interventions), followed by restorative practices (15.4%) and social work (11.5%).

## D: Suspensions and Expulsions by Student Demographics

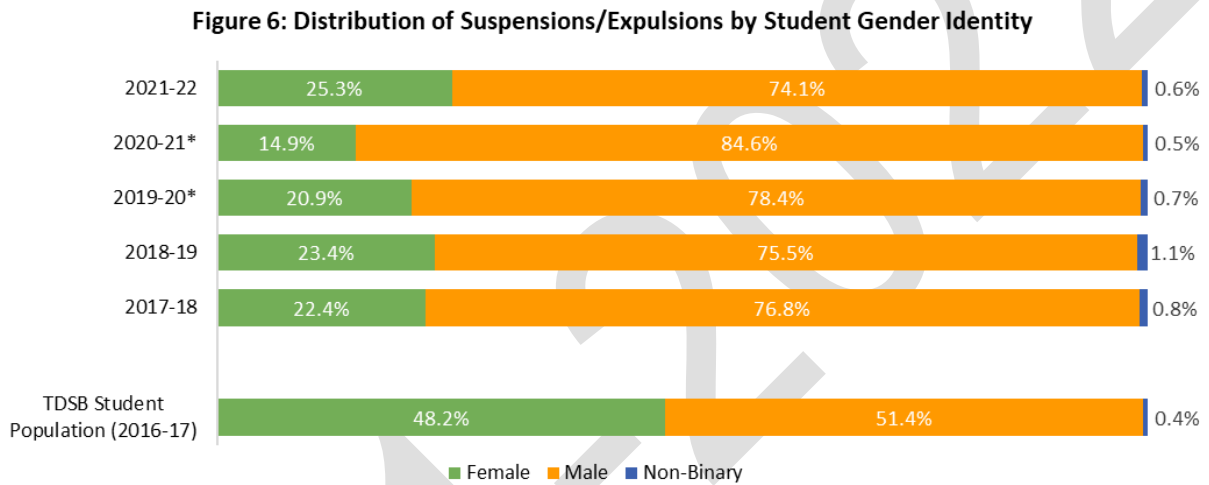
In this section, the 2017-18 to 2021-22 student suspensions and expulsions were analyzed by student characteristics such as gender identity, self-identified ethno-racial background, student and parent birthplace, parent presence at home, language spoken at home, estimated family income, and special education needs, as captured by the Board's School Information System, Student/Parent Census (the most recent one was conducted in the 2016-17 school year), and external data sources. As the number of expulsions is very small, they were combined with

suspensions in the following analyses since expelled students must be suspended first pending their expulsion outcome.

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

### By Student Gender Identity

Figure 6 shows that male students accounted for the vast majority of the suspensions/expulsions (74.1% in 2021-22) in the last five school years.

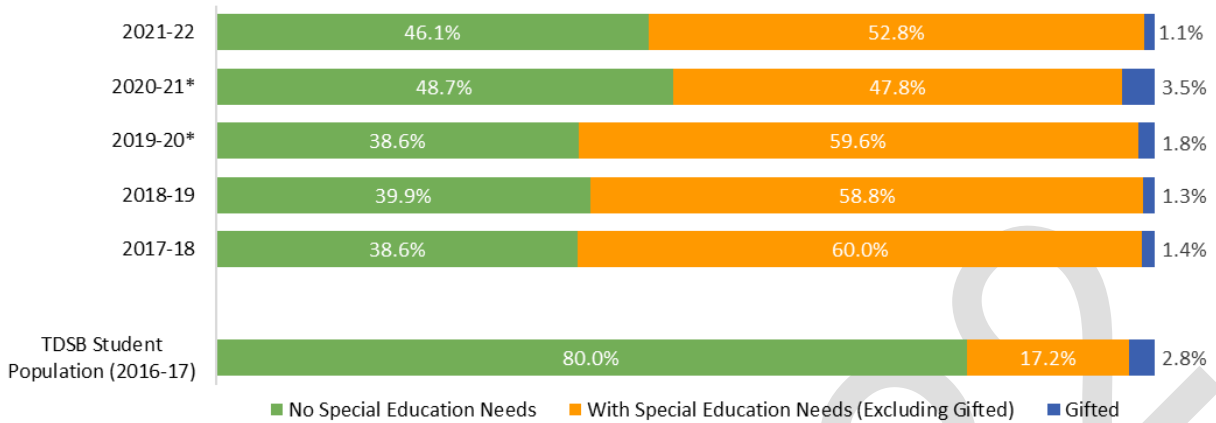


According to the 2016-17 Census data there were 1,067 non-binary students, representing 0.4% of the TDSB student population in that school year. Figure 6 indicates that although they only accounted for about 1% of the total suspensions/expulsions, non-binary students were over-represented in the suspensions/expulsions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

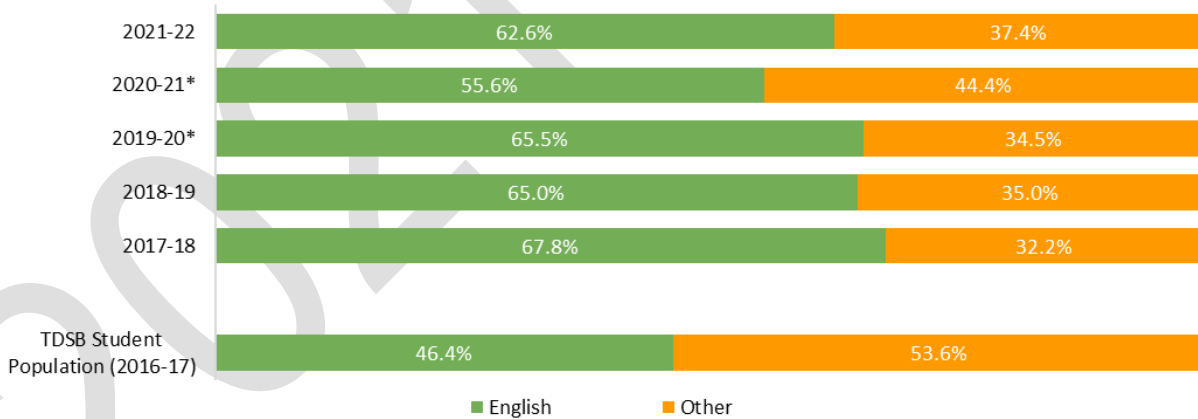


Students with special education needs (excluding Gifted) accounted for about half or more of the suspensions/expulsions. Since they represented about 17.2% of the TDSB student population, they were disproportionately high in the suspensions/expulsions (52.8% in 2021-22).

**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 (62.6% in 2021-22) of the suspensions/expulsions.

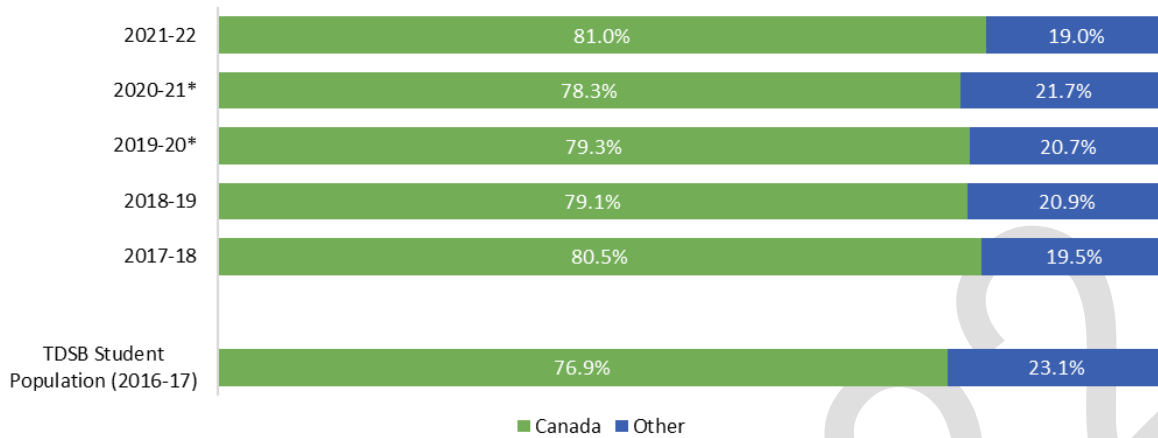
**Figure 8: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Primary Home Language**



**By Student Birthplace**

Over three quarters (76.9%) of the TDSB students were born in Canada. Figure 9 shows that they accounted for the vast majority of the suspensions/expulsions (81.0% in 2021-22).

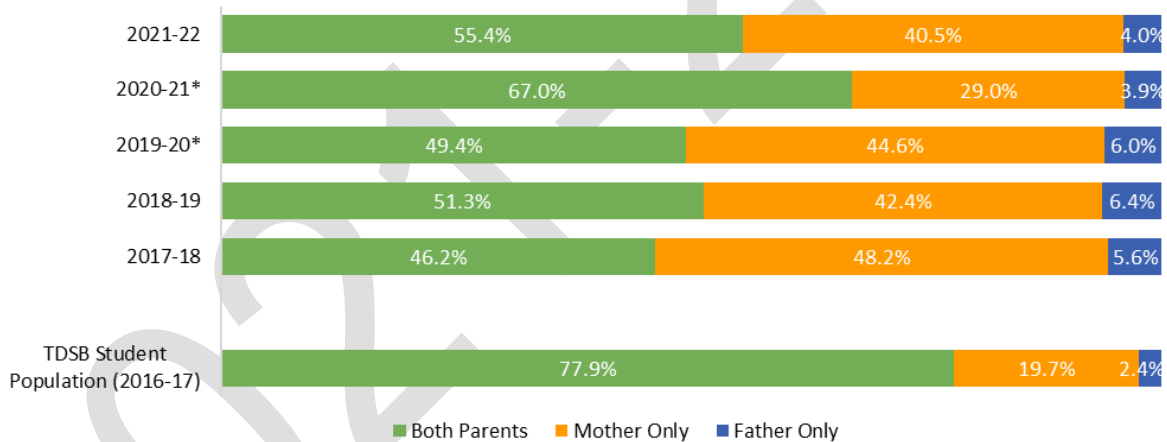
**Figure 9: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Student Birth Place**



### By Parent Presence at Home

According to the student registration data, more than three quarters (77.9%) 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**

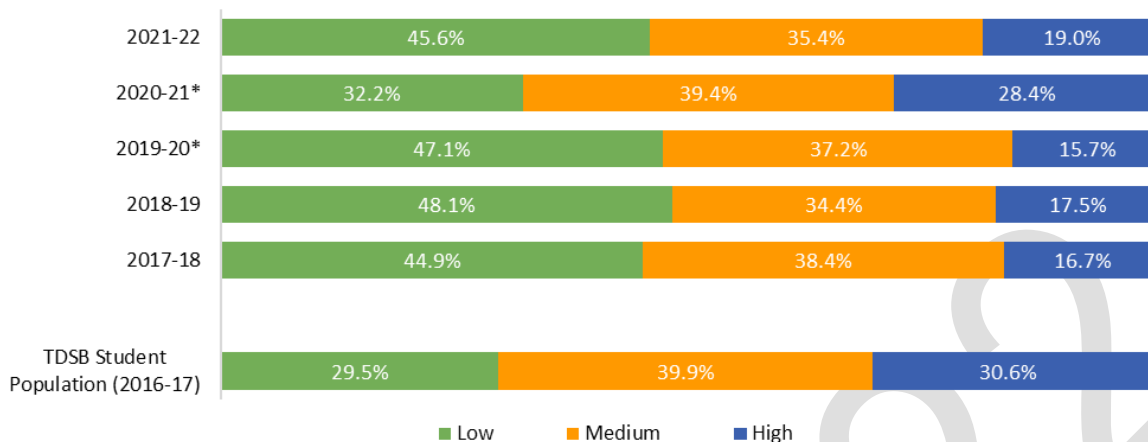


Students who lived with one parent, particularly with mother only, had disproportionately high representations in the suspensions/expulsions in all five school years.

### 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 (45.6% in 2021-22).

### 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 available results were from the 2016-17 school year). As some students/parents did not participate in the Census, over half to three quarters (56-75%) of the suspensions/expulsions in these school years could be linked to the Census data.

As shown in Figure 12, self-identified Black (27.5%), Middle Eastern (7.1%), and Mixed (19.4%) students were disproportionately high 2021-22 suspensions/expulsions, while East Asian (4.0%), South Asian (10.6%), Southeast Asian (2.4%), and White (26.1%) students were under-represented to various degrees.

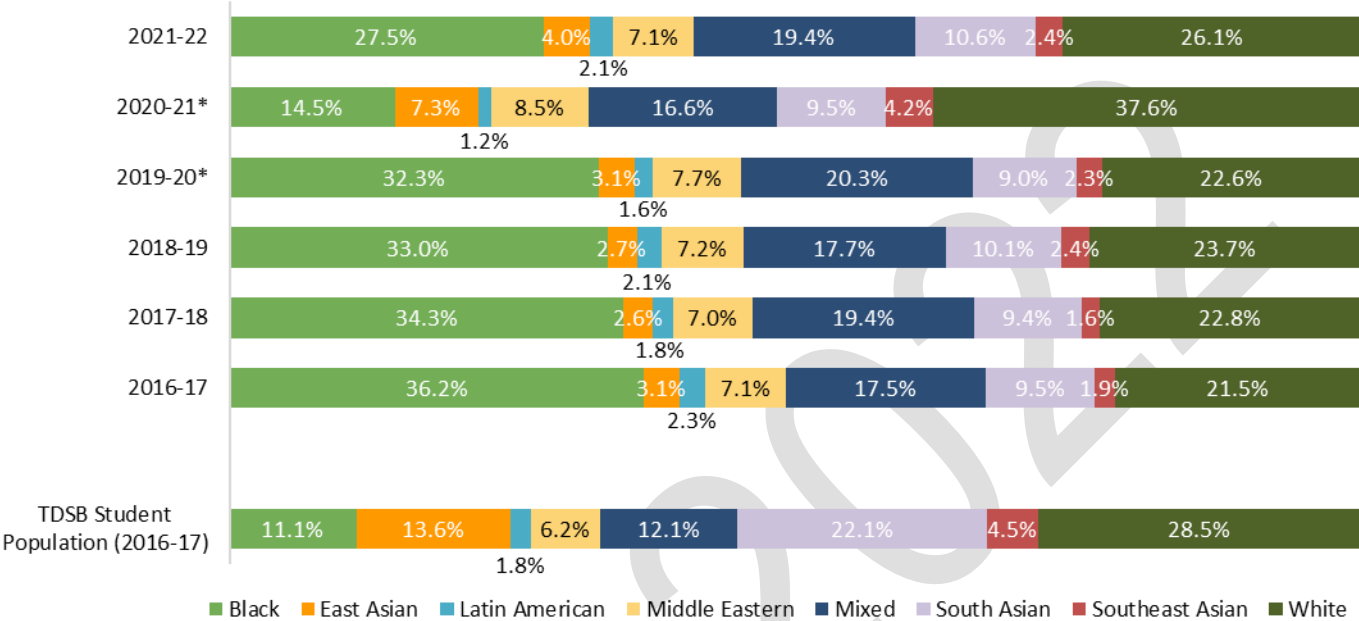
When compared with the 2018-19 school year (prior to the pandemic), Black students accounted for 5.5% fewer suspensions/expulsions (from 33.0% in 2018-19 to 27.5% in 2021-22).

As was previously noted, the rate at which Black students in TDSB are suspended relative to their representation within the larger student population has been gradually decreasing since 2016-2017. This positive trend is encouraging and the rate of improvement is indicative of how systemic change typically occurs in large organizations like TDSB, in moderate increments over an extended period of time.

Despite the positive change, it must be acknowledged that Black students in TDSB continue to be suspended at a rate greater than two times their representation. TDSB acknowledges that there continues to be great urgency in consciously addressing anti-Black racism and its manifestation in student discipline matters. We must build on the positive momentum of the past years to shape a system which upholds the Board's commitments to Truth and Reconciliation, human rights and equity which contribute to welcoming and inclusive school climates for all.

It should be noted that the trend was 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.

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



To protect the privacy of self-identified Indigenous students, who accounted for fewer than 20 suspensions in the 2021-22 school year, this analysis excluded these students.

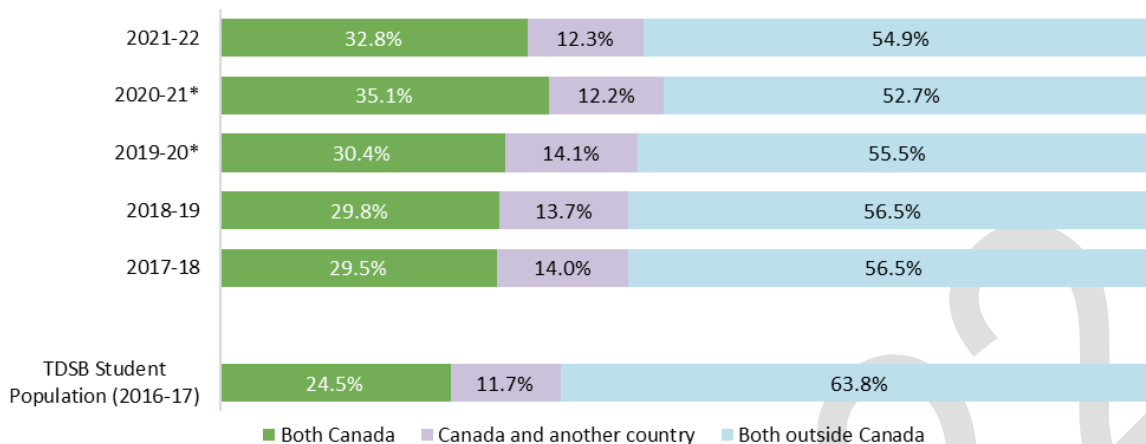
**By Parent Birthplace**

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, while 25% had both parents born in Canada. Over half (55-71%) of the suspensions/expulsions in these school years could be linked to this Census data.

Students with both foreign-born parents accounted for the majority of suspensions/expulsions (54.9% in 2021-22). See Figure 13.



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



## E: 2021-22 Suspensions/Expulsions and Academic Achievement

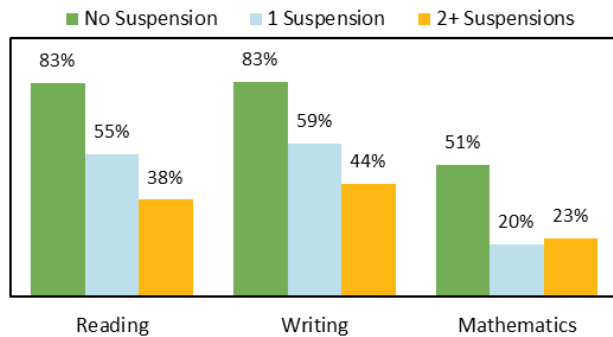
Research from pre-pandemic school years indicates that there are strong correlations between student suspensions and their academic achievement. Suspended students had lower levels of achievement on the provincial standard assessments, report cards, and credit accumulation than students not being suspended. 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 2021-22 school year on the provincial Grade 6 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Assessments of Reading, Writing, and Mathematics, Grade 7-8 provincial report cards, Grade 9 EQAO Assessment of Mathematics, the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), and the Grade 9-12 credit accumulation.

For Grade 6 students with no suspension, 83%, 83% and 51% achieved at or above the provincial standard (Level 3) in the 2021-22 EQAO assessments of Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. The percentages of students achieving at or above the provincial standard was 55%, 59% and 20% for students with one suspension, and 38%, 44%, and 23% for students with two or more suspensions, respectively (Figure 14).

Similar patterns were observed for students in Grades 7-8 based on their achievement on provincial report cards (Figure 15).

**Figure 14: % of Gr. 6 Students Achieving Levels 3 & 4 on the 2021-22 EQAO Assessments by Number of Suspensions**



**Figure 15: % of Gr. 7-8 Students Achieving Levels 3 & 4 on the 2021-22 Report Cards by Number of Suspensions**

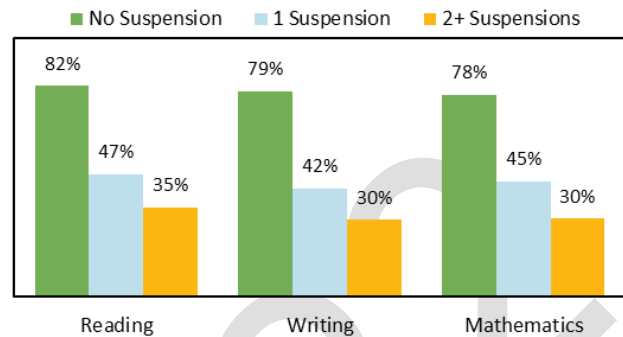
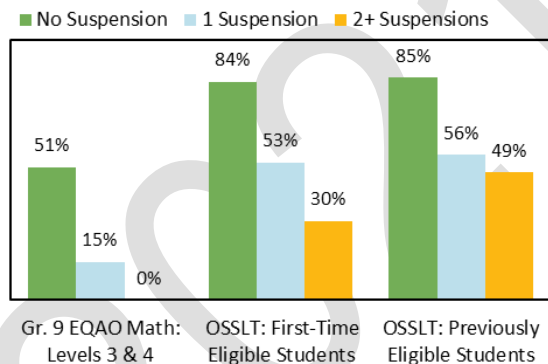


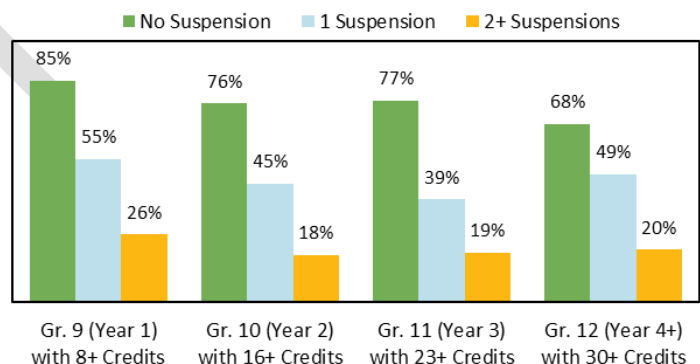
Figure 16 shows that for secondary school students who participated in the 2021-22 Grade 9 EQAO Mathematics Assessment and had no suspension, 51% achieved at or above the provincial standard (Level 3). This is much higher than for students with one suspension (15%), or for students with two or more suspensions (0%).

For secondary school students who participated in the 2021-22 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) and had no suspension, 84% were successful for the first-time. This is much higher than for students with one suspension (53%), or students with two or more suspensions (30%). Similar patterns were observed for previously eligible students. See Figure 16.

**Figure 16: % of Gr. 9-10 Students Meeting Expectations on the 2021-22 EQAO Assessments by Number of Suspensions**



**Figure 17: % of Gr. 9-12 Students Meeting Expectations on the 2021-22 Credit Accumulation by Number of Suspensions**



Patterns in the credit accumulation for students with or without suspensions were very similar in all senior grades. For example, for students in Grade 9 with no suspension, 85% accumulated eight or more credits. The proportion of students meeting expectation was 55% for students with one suspension, and 26% for students with two or more suspensions (Figure 17).

## F: 2021-22 Suspension/Expulsion Appeals

### Suspension Appeals Filed & Outcomes (2021/2022) School Year



Prepared by: Office of Student Discipline Committee

### Expulsions Referred to Discipline Committee & Outcomes (2021/2022) School Year



Prepared by: Office of Student Discipline Committee

## G: 2021-22 Caring and Safe Schools Alternative Programs

Caring and Safe Schools Programs strive to be nurturing, positive, and respectful learning environments that enable all students to succeed and reach their full potential. These 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 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 expanding 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 caring and safe school’s programs are safe and inclusive communities for all.

Table 6 shows the Caring and Safe Schools alternative programs for suspended/expelled students in the 2021-22 school year.

**Table 6: Caring and Safe Schools Alternative Programs 2021-22**

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.  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
C&SS Elementary @ Lawrence Heights MS	Pr./Jr.	LC1	
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.		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 Social Workers and Psychologists provide services to the sites as required.
C&SS Elementary @ Scarborough Centre for Alternative Studies	Pr./Jr.	LC3	
C&SS Elementary @ Scarborough Centre for Alternative Studies	Jr./Int.		
Barrhead Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Barrhead Learning Centre	Sr.	LC1	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	
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 experiences which exist within communities. An important element of these partnerships is that they provide the Board with significant expertise related to underserved communities.

The following community partners support Caring and Safe schools programming:

The Ubuntu Village, TAIBU Community Health, PFlag, Taking Kids out of Poverty, Motion Ball Sports Association, Lay up, Go Green, The Flight Unit, Peacebuilders International (Canada), 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, Think Don't Shoot Inc. and Victim Services Toronto, Urban Rez Solutions, Strides Toronto and Planned Parenthood.

Most of these partners work on “fee for service” model for the programming offered. Some partners provide programming at no cost as they secure external funding.

## I: Action Plan and Associated Timelines

Our emphasis continues to be providing safe, caring, welcoming and inclusive schools for all. 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 Truth and Reconciliation, human rights, equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression.

As part of removing systemic barriers, 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 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 have now fully implemented 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 Schools database 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 Truth and Reconciliation, 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 compulsory learning for staff to be trained in restorative practices; threat assessment and emergency preparedness.
- Additionally, to address issues of community and school violence the Board has committed to an action plan as outlined A Collaborative Approach to School and Community Safety (Appendix B)
- Develop alternatives to suspension programs;
- Work collaboratively with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre and the Centre of Excellence for Black Students Achievement 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 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

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## Endnotes

- \* In 2019-20, schools were closed to in-person learning from March 16 to the end of the school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020-21, schools were closed to in-person learning for extended periods, with one-third of students choosing virtual learning for the school year.
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.

2021-2022