

How do suspension & expulsion impact students, schools, and community?

Students who are suspended lose time in the classroom.

Nearly 4 percent of all Washington public school students—44,655 students— were suspended out of school at least once during 2015. The average length of suspension was 3.8 days.¹

In total, Washington students lost over 169,689 days of class time during 2015.² When students are suspended or expelled, they cannot participate in class, are less likely to complete schoolwork, and are more likely to skip school.³

Students who are suspended struggle academically.

Suspension and expulsion is associated with lower academic achievement at both the school level and the individual level.⁴ Students who have been suspended are twice as likely as their peers to repeat a grade.⁵

Students who have been suspended and/or expelled earn lower grades and perform at lower academic levels compared with their peers. This is especially true for students who have been suspended repeatedly.⁶

Researchers have found that the more exclusionary discipline practices are applied, the worse students perform academically, even after controlling for poverty and other demographic factors.⁷

Students who are suspended are more likely to drop out of school

Being suspended once doubles the chance a student will drop out, raising the risk to 32 percent from 16 percent, which is the dropout rate for students who are not suspended. For those suspended two or more times, the dropout rate is 49 percent.⁸

Higher discipline rates are correlated with lower graduation rates. In analyzing data from Washington school districts with 1,000 or more students, researchers found that, on average, the ones with low suspension/expulsion rates had graduation rates that were 23 percentage points higher than those with high rates of exclusionary discipline.⁹

Students who are repeatedly absent are more likely to struggle academically. They have a harder time mastering reading, passing courses, and earning credits.¹⁰

Students who don't complete high school make less money, impacting their families and communities.

Individuals over age 25 without a high school diploma have the lowest median weekly income and highest rate of unemployment, according to data from Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015 Population Survey.¹¹

People who lack a high school diploma have considerably lower earning power and job opportunities. Over a working lifetime from ages 25-64, high school dropouts are estimated to earn 27.3% less than those that graduated from high school. This makes for an average lifetime earning loss of \$355,380.48 for high school dropouts.¹²

Dropping out has long-term effects on economic productivity. Due to their lower lifetime earnings, people who drop out are less able to participate in federal, state and local tax collection efforts.¹³

Reducing the dropout rate yields economic gains. Each additional high school graduate represents an average of \$36,500 returned to the economy.¹⁴

Suspension and expulsion lead to negative school climate and impact all students.

When a student is suspended or expelled, all students, whether or not they have been disciplined, tend to feel less safe, are less likely to bond with teachers and other staff, and are less likely to get along with each other.¹⁵

The negative school climate that results from exclusionary practices impacts all students, especially¹⁶ students of color.¹⁷

Students in schools that frequently suspend and expel do not perform better academically.¹⁸ Conversely, districts in California saw academic improvements after they lowered rates of suspension.¹⁹

Students who are not in school are more likely to engage in risky behaviors.

Youth who are not in school, for whatever reason, are significantly more likely to become involved in physical fights, carry a weapon, smoke, use alcohol, marijuana and other drugs, and engage in sexual intercourse.²⁰

Students who are suspended are more likely to be involved in the criminal legal system.

Dropping out of school triples the likelihood that a person will be incarcerated later in life.²¹

By analyzing longitudinal data, researchers found that being suspended increases the likelihood of criminal victimization, criminal involvement, and incarceration years later, as an adult.²²

Students who have been suspended are less engaged in their communities as adults.

Disciplinary exclusion can also decrease the odds of future civic and political participation. A study that examined the post-school voting and volunteering behaviors of young adults with a history of suspension in school found that suspended students are less likely than others to vote and volunteer in civic activities after high school.²³

Suspensions and expulsions are costly for school districts.

Because a school district's average daily attendance rate is used to calculate the amount of state aid it receives, districts stand to lose money when students miss school due to out-of-school suspensions. An evaluation of 11 of the largest school districts in Texas showed that this loss, combined with other costs stemming from exclusionary discipline, resulted in a combined \$140 million in expenditures from 2010 to 2011.²⁴

Suspensions fail to deter disruptive behavior

Research has shown that punishment, especially when it is used inconsistently and in the absence of other positive strategies, is ineffective at changing student behavior.²⁵ In fact, a study of middle school discipline records found that students who were suspended at the beginning of 6th grade were more likely to have discipline problems for the next four terms.²⁶ Similarly, a longitudinal investigation revealed that the strongest predictor of a middle school student's number of out-of-school suspensions was the number of out-of-school suspensions she or he received in 4th or 5th grade.²⁷

Endnotes

- 1 *Student Discipline Task Force Final Report 2013-14*. Rep. Washington Department of Education, 2014. Web. 10 Aug. 2016. <<http://www.k12.wa.us/studentdiscipline/pubdocs/StudentDisciplineTaskForceFinalReport2015.PDF>>.
- 2 Using the average length of a suspension and the number of students suspended, it is possible to calculate the minimum total loss of days from school. This is a minimum under the assumption that some students were suspended more than once and that the average is calculated without summing an individual's missed days but from each suspension.
- 3 Fabelo, Tony, Michael D. Thompson, Martha Plotkin, Dottie Carmichael, Miner P. Marchbanks III, and Eric A. Booth. *Breaking Schools' Rules: A Statewide Study of How School Discipline Relates to Students' Success and Juvenile Justice Involvement*. Rep. Justice Center and Public Policy Research Institute, 2011. Web. <https://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Breaking_Schools_Rules_Report_Final.pdf>.
- 4 Arcia, Emily. "Achievement and Enrollment Status of Suspended Students Outcomes in a Large, Multicultural School District." *Education and Urban Society* 38.3 (2006): 359-69. Print.
- 5 Colombi, Greta, and David Osher. *Advancing School Discipline Reform, Education Leaders Report Vol.1 No. 2*. Rep. NASBE, Aug. 2015. Web. <<http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Advancing-School-Discipline-Reform-Sept-2015.pdf>>. ("Disproportionality in discipline is in fact not rooted in disparate levels of student misbehavior.")
- 6 Davis, J.E., and W.J. Jordan. "The Effects of School Context, Structure, and Experiences on African American Males in Middle and High Schools." *Journal of Negro Education* 63 (1994): 570-87. Print.; Arcia, Emily. "Achievement and Enrollment Status of Suspended Students Outcomes in a Large, Multicultural School District." *Education and Urban Society* 38.3 (2006): 359-69. Print.
- 7 Davis, J.E., and W.J. Jordan. "The Effects of School Context, Structure, and Experiences on African American Males in Middle and High Schools." *Journal of Negro Education* 63 (1994): 570-87. Print. (Davis and Jordan 1994; Raffaele Mendez 2003; Ma and Willms 2004; Skiba and Rausch 2006; Tobin et al. 1996; Wald and Losen 2003, Rausch and Skiba 2005; Fabelo et al. 2011; Skiba et al. 2013).
- 8 Losen, Daniel J., and Tia Elena Martinez. *Out of School and Off Track, The Civil Rights Project*. Rep. UCLA: Center for Civil Rights Remedies, 2013. Print.
- 9 Sherbo-Huggins, David. *Collateral Consequences of Exclusionary School Discipline Policies: What Administrators, Hearing Officers and School Boards Need to Know*. Rep. TeamChild, n.d. Web. <<http://www.teamchild.org/stp/CollateralConsequences.pdf>>.
- 10 Balfanz, Robert, Vaughan Byrnes, and Joanna Fox. "Sent Home and Put Off-Track: The Antecedents, Disproportionalities, and Consequences of Being Suspended in the Ninth Grade." *Journal of Applied Research on Children: Informing Policy for Children at Risk* 5.2 (2014): Article 13. Digital Commons. Web. <<http://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/childrenatrisk/vol5/iss2/13>>.
- 11 "Earning and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment, 2015." *Bureau of Labor Statistics*. N.p., n.d. Web. <http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm>. (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey)
- 12 Id. (These numbers was calculated using the 2015 median weekly earnings data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.)
- 13 Northeastern University - Center for Labor Market Studies. *Left behind in America : The Nation's Dropout Crisis*. Rep. Boston, MA: Northeastern University, 2009. Print.
- 14 Levin, Henry, Clive Belfield, Peter Muennig, and Cecilia Rouse. *The Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for All of America's Children*. Rep. Teachers College, Columbia University, Jan. 2007. Web. <<http://cbse.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/2007-Levin.Excellent-educatin-for-all-of-america%C2%B4s-children.pdf>>.
- 15 Perry, Brea L., and Edward W. Morris. "Suspending Progress: Collateral Consequences of Exclusionary Punishment in Public Schools." *American Sociological Review* 79.6 (2014): 1067-087. Print.
- 16 Bickel, Frank, and Robert Qualls. "The Impact of School Climate on Suspension Rates in the Jefferson County Public Schools." *The Urban Review* 12.2 (1980): 79-86. Print.
- 17 Mattison, E., and M.S. Aber. "Closing the Achievement Gap: The Association of Racial Climate with Achievement and Behavioral Outcomes." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 40 (2007): 1-12. Print.
- 18 Perry, Brea L., and Edward W. Morris. "Suspending Progress: Collateral Consequences of Exclusionary Punishment in Public Schools." *American Sociological Review* 79.6 (2014): 1067-087. Print.
- 19 Losen, Daniel J., Michael A. Keith II, Cheri L. Hodson, Tia E. Martinez, and Shakti Belway. *Closing the School Discipline Gap in California: Signs of Progress*. Rep. UCLA: Civil Rights Project, The Center for Civil Rights Remedies, 2015. Print.
- 20 *Health Risk Behaviors among Adolescents Who Do and Do Not Attend School*. Rep. Vol. 43. N.p.: Centers for Disease Control, 1994. Print. MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY WEEKLY REPORT.
- 21 *Abandoned in the Back Row: New Lessons in Education and Delinquency Prevention, Annual Report*. Rep. Coalition for Juvenile Justice, 2001. Web. <www.juvjustice.org/media/resources/resource_122.pdf>.
- 22 Kerrin, Wolf C., and Aaron Kupchik. "School Suspensions and Adverse Experiences in Adulthood." *Justice Quarterly* (2016): n. pag. SSRN. Web. <<http://ssrn.com/abstract=2760336>>.
- 23 Kupchik, A., and T.J. Catlaw. "Discipline and Participation: The Long-term Effects of Suspension and School Security on the Political and Civic Engagement of Youth." The Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice Conference. Washington D.C. Jan. 2013.
- 24 *Breaking Rules, Breaking Budgets: Cost of Exclusionary Discipline in 11 Texas School Districts*. Rep. N.p.: Texas Appleseed, 2012. Print.
- 25 Karson, Michael. "Punishment Doesn't Work." *Psychology Today* (n.d.): n. pag. 14 Jan. 2014. Web. 10 Aug. 2016. <<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/feeling-our-way/201401/punishment-doesnt-work>>.
- 26 Tobin, T., G. Sugai, and G. Colvin. "Patterns in Middle School Discipline Records." *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders* 4 (1996): 82-94. Print.
- 27 Raffaele Mendez, L. M, and H.M. Knoff. "Who Gets Suspended from School and Why: A Demographic Analysis of Schools and Disciplinary Infractions in a Large School District." *Education and Treatment of Children* 26.1 (2003): 30-51. Print.