Discipline and Disproportionality
Trends in the Christina School
District through SY 2014-15

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The Context:
CSD Disciplinary Trends
Disciplinary Trends by School Year

Implementation of RAP data collection system.

- # Disc. Referrals
  7-Yr Trend: - 31%
  2-Yr Trend: - 52%

- # Disc. Referrals excluding Class Lateness
  2-Yr Trend: - 23%

- # In-Sch Susp’s
  7-Yr Trend: - 47%
  2-Yr Trend: - 18%

- # Out-of-Sch Susp’s
  7-Yr Trend: - 54%
  2-Yr Trend: + 9%
Suspension Trends (In and Out of School) by School Year

Implementation of RAP data collection system.

- Total Susp's:
  - 7-Yr Trend: -51%
  - 2-Yr Trend: -6%

- # Students Susp'd 1+:
  - 7-Yr Trend: -48%
  - 2-Yr Trend: -4%

- # Students Susp'd 5+:
  - 7-Yr Trend: -54%
  - 2-Yr Trend: -8%
Disciplinary referrals, after spiking in SY 2013-14 (after implementation of new disciplinary policies and introduction of the RAP reporting system), dropped down to pre-2012 levels this past year. The large decline in SY 2014-15 is partially explained by a change in reporting policy which no longer treated Lateness to Class as a disciplinary referral (affecting high school referrals only). However, a look at the disciplinary trend excluding referrals for Lateness to Class indicates that the number of referrals still dropped by 23% from SY 2013-14 to SY 2014-15.

Total suspensions (in and out-of-school combined) are at their lowest point than at any other time across the past eight years, down 6% from last year and down 51% from SY 2008-09.

In-school suspensions decreased by 18% from SY 2013-14 to this past year, with the overall 7-year trend down 47%.

Out-of-school suspensions went up by 9% this past year compared to SY 2013-14 numbers, but the overall 7-year trend is down by 54%.

The number of unique students suspended one or more times declined by 4% from last year, and is down 48% across the past seven years.

The number of unique students suspended five or more times was down 8% this past year and down 54% across the 7-year period.
Disproportionality

(based on disciplinary data reported in RAP through April 30, 2015)
Two Types of Disproportionality

**TYPE 1:** Disproportionality of Disciplinary Referrals and Consequences (e.g., suspensions).

- This reflects the degree to which students in any subgroup are over-represented among disciplinary referrals and/or suspensions—e.g., African Americans are roughly 40% of enrollment but nearly 75% of those suspended one or more times.
- This type of disproportionality does not necessarily reflect bias on the part of adults working in the school. However, it may represent a “cultural disconnect” between staff and students, which factors into whether a given student’s behavior (or behavior pattern—interactions, responses, gestures, etc.) results in a referral or suspension.

**TYPE 2:** Disproportionality in consequence severity, given the same type and order of incident (e.g., differences in out-of-school suspension rates for students referred for first-time fights).

- This type of disproportionality often does reflect some sort of adult/staff bias, since it means that students of certain backgrounds are being “consequenced” more or less severely given the same type of incident and order—e.g., Group A is much more likely to receive out-of-school suspensions for first-time fighting incidents than Group B.
Let’s handle Type 2 Disproportionality first:

For two years, we have consistently found no clear evidence of Type 2 Disproportionality in CSD schools. In fact, if anything, it appears that African American students are slightly less likely, depending on the type of incident, to be suspended than students of other backgrounds, given identical incident types and orders of occurrence.

In the original OCR report, there was some evidence of Type 2 Disproportionality, but this was mainly found among students referred for *Inappropriate Behavior* (general), which was a highly problematic, poorly defined incident category often used a sort of catch-all by school deans and administrators. This made the original findings problematic and indicated the need to modify this incident category to be more specific.
Type 1 Disproportionality:
Over-representation of African American and Special Education Students in Disciplinary Referrals and Suspensions
Probability of Being Referred for Discipline One or More Times

- 21% of all CSD students in grades K-12 were referred for a disciplinary incident at least one time during the 2014-15 school year, much lower than the previous year (32%).

- If we do not consider any other student background factors, African American students were more than twice as likely to be referred (31.5%) as students of other ethnic backgrounds combined (13.8%), but all are down substantially from last year.

Statistically controlling for other student characteristics,

- African Am. students were 2.2 times more likely to be referred one or more times during the year than students of other ethnic backgrounds combined, about the same as last year.

- Special Ed. students were 22% more likely to be referred than Regular Ed. students. This was notably higher than last year, when Special Ed. students were no more likely to be referred.
Probability of Being Referred for Discipline Five or More Times

- 6% of all CSD students in grades K-12 were referred five or more times during the 2014-15 school year. This is half of what it was last year (13%).

- If we do not consider any other student background factors, African American students were more than three times as likely to be referred five or more times (10.9%) as students of other ethnic backgrounds combined (3.1%).

Statistically controlling for other student characteristics,

- African Am. students were 2.7 times more likely to be referred five or more times than students of other ethnic backgrounds combined. This was slightly higher than last year’s figure (2.5 times more likely).

- Special Ed. students were 35% more likely to be referred five or more times than Regular Ed. students. This is slightly worse than last year in which they were no more likely to be referred at this level.
A little more than 3% of all CSD students in grades K-12 were referred 10 or more times during the 2014-15 school year, less than half of that observed last year (7.6%).

If we do not consider any other student background factors, African American students were four times more likely to be referred 10 or more times (5.7%) as students of other ethnic backgrounds combined (1.4%).

Statistically controlling for other student characteristics,

- African Am. students were 2.7 times more likely to be referred 10 or more times than students of other backgrounds combined. This is no different than that found across the previous two years.
- Special Ed. students were 49% more likely to be referred 10 or more times than Regular Ed. students. This is slightly worse than last year in which they were no more likely to be referred at this level.
Probability of Being Suspended One or More Times (either In or Out of School)

- 13% of all CSD students in grades K-12 were suspended (in or out) at least once during the 2014-15 school year, slightly lower than last year.

- If we do not consider any other student background factors, African American students were nearly three times more likely to be suspended (21.6%) than students of other ethnic backgrounds combined (7.6%), roughly the same as last year.

- Statistically controlling for other student characteristics,
  - African Am. students were 2.4 times more likely to be suspended at least once than students of other ethnic backgrounds combined, unchanged from last year.
  - Special Ed. students were 29% more likely than Regular Ed. students to be suspended one or more times than Regular Ed. students, slightly higher than last year.

- However, if we control for the number of disciplinary referrals each student accumulated across the year,
  - African American students were only 71% more likely to be suspended one or more times than students of other ethnic backgrounds, and
  - Special Ed. students were no more likely to be suspended than Regular Ed. students.
3% of all CSD students in grades K-12 were suspended (in or out) five or more times during the 2014-15 school year, slightly lower than the previous year.

If we do not consider any other student background factors, African American students were about four times more likely to be suspended five or more times (5.6%) than students of other ethnic backgrounds combined (1.3%), relatively unchanged from last year.

Statistically controlling for other student characteristics,

- African Am. students were 2.9 times more likely to be suspended five or more times than students of other ethnic backgrounds combined, slightly better than last year.
- Special Ed. students were 54% more likely than Regular Ed. students to be suspended at this level, slightly worse than last year.
- However, if we control for the number of disciplinary referrals each student accumulated across the year,
  - African American students were 2.1 times more likely to be suspended five or more times than students of other ethnic backgrounds combined, and
  - Special Ed. students were not significantly more likely than Regular Ed. students to be suspended at this level.
Probability of Being Suspended OUT-of-School One or More Times

Nine percent of all CSD students in grades K-12 were suspended out of school one or more times during the 2014-15 school year, nearly identical to that found in each of the last two school years.

If we do not consider any other student background factors, African American students were more than three times more likely to be suspended out of school at least once during the school year (15.6%) than students of other ethnic backgrounds (4.8%).

Statistically controlling for other student characteristics,

- African Am. students were 2.6 times more likely to be suspended out of school at least once than students of other ethnic backgrounds combined, slightly improved from last year.
- Special Ed. students were 35% more likely than Regular Ed. students to be suspended out of school at least once, slightly better than last year.
- However, if we control for the number of disciplinary referrals each student accumulated across the year,
  - African American students were just 80% more likely to be suspended out of school than students of other ethnic backgrounds combined, and
  - Special Ed. students were just 24% more likely than Regular Ed. students to be suspended out of school.
Probability of Being Suspended OUT-of-School Two or More Times

### Susp’d OUT of school TWO OR MORE times X African Am: Crosstab

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### Variables in the Equation

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Statistically controlling for other student characteristics,

- African Am. students were 2.9 times more likely to be suspended out of school twice or more than all students of other ethnicities, similar to last year.
- Special Ed. students were 45% more likely than Regular Ed. students to be suspended out of school twice or more, slightly improved from last year.
- However, if we control for the number of disciplinary referrals each student accumulated across the year,
  - African American students were 2.1 times more likely to be suspended out of school twice or more than students of other ethnic backgrounds, and
  - Special Ed. students were not significantly more likely than Regular Ed. students to be suspended out of school two or more times.
Although overall numbers of disciplinary referrals and suspensions (in and out of school) have decreased substantially this year for ALL students, Type 1 disproportionality as it pertains to African American and Special Education students, for the most part, remains significant and unchanged from previous years.
For African American Students:

• African American students continue to be disproportionately represented in both disciplinary referrals and suspensions across the district even after statistically controlling for other background factors, attendance, and cumulative referral history.

• In some cases, this disproportionality has improved slightly, but African American students are still, at minimum, twice as likely as non-African American students to be referred and suspended in the district.

• In all cases, African American disproportionality increases with increasing levels of consequence (i.e., they are more over-represented among students suspended five or more times than among those suspended once or more).
For Special Education Students:

- After Special Education disproportionality in disciplinary referrals virtually disappeared in SY 2013-14, it appears to have returned in SY 2014-15. Although Special Education disproportionality is nowhere near as large as disproportionality for African American students, it still represents a significant challenge for the district.

- Special Ed. disproportionality appears to be more of a factor in disciplinary referrals than in suspensions. Once other relevant background factors, attendance, and cumulative disciplinary referrals are accounted for, Special Ed. students are not consistently more likely than Regular Ed. students to be suspended.
A Graphic Look at Disciplinary Disproportionality
(from the Monthly Dashboard)
District-wide Referral Rates by Subgroup

- District-wide referral rates were down this year for all subgroups at all three levels of schooling.
- High schools saw the greatest declines, in large part, due to the “Lateness to Class” change in policy, while middle schools saw the smallest declines.
- African Am. disproportionality was down at the elementary level only.
- Special Ed. disproportionality was not down at any school level.
• District-wide in-school suspension rates were up slightly compared to last year for all student subgroups at the elementary and middle levels, while down substantially across all subgroups at the high school level.

• No reductions in disproportionality were evident for either African American or Special Education students at any level of schooling.
District-wide Out-of-School Susp. Rates by Subgroup

- District-wide out-of-school suspension rates were up slightly this year for most subgroups at all three levels of schooling, with high school Special Ed. students being a notable exception.
- Special Ed. disproportionality declined at the high school level only.
- While African Am. disproportionality was down slightly at the elementary and middle levels, it was only because out-of-school suspensions increased for students of other ethnic backgrounds as well this year.
District-wide suspension recidivism was up slightly this year for most subgroups at both the elementary (though low) and middle levels, but was down meaningfully at the high school level across every student subgroup.

Disproportionality in suspension recidivism did not decline at any level of schooling. Though all subgroups at the high school level saw declines in recidivism, White and Regular Ed. students saw proportionately greater declines than did African American and Special Ed. students.
The Expanded Monthly Disciplinary Dashboard: A Tool To Empower Schools to Monitor and Compare their Disciplinary Trends and Disproportionality
The original Monthly Disciplinary Dashboard made it easy for schools to monitor their monthly and two-year comparative trends on a variety of disciplinary indicators.

The Expanded Disciplinary Dashboard allows schools to quickly determine their “running” record disproportionality by subgroup on those same disciplinary indicators.

Disciplinary rates (per 100 students), whether referral or suspension, provide schools with a standardized way to compare relative referral probabilities by ethnicity, income, Special Ed. status, ELL status, and gender.

Schools can compare how disciplinary rates in their schools differ —
1. By subgroup
2. By year within and between subgroups
3. By school and at the district level (by grade group)
4. Referral and suspension rates (per 100 students) provide schools with a standardized way to compare relative disciplinary probabilities by ethnicity, income, Special Ed. status, ELL status, and gender.

In SY 2014-15, the Disciplinary Dashboard again expanded to include graphs that provide basic measures of recidivism in referrals and suspensions by subgroup.
MONTHLY DISCIPLINARY DASHBOARD
2014-2015 School Year

Expanded Disciplinary Dashboard for SY 2014-2015. The Disciplinary Dashboard includes monthly counts of referrals and suspensions, as well as cumulative (year-to-date) referral and suspension rates by student subgroup. Rates and counts are based on the period from the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year to the end of the most recently completed month. Subgroup disciplinary rates are presented in the bottom portion of district and school reports.

NOTE: The Delaware Department of Education changes its definition of low income status prior to the 2014-2015 school year. This means that many fewer students are included in the low income category in the Disciplinary Dashboard than has been the case in past years.

DISTRIBUTION

• District Level

PRESCHOOL & EARLY CHILDHOOD

• Christina Early Childhood Center

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

• Bancroft
• Brader
• Brookside
• Downes
If you have questions or comments, please contact:

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