

Analysis of 2017-2018 Student Suspension Data

Overview

The Ministry of Education collects suspension data for all publicly funded school districts in Ontario through the 30 June OnSIS submission. Suspension rates are calculated based on the total number of students who received at least one suspension between 5 September and 28 June, as a percentage of the enrolment as of October 31.

Table 1 provides a five-year historical overview of enrolment and suspension data, disaggregated for the elementary and secondary panels, using extracts from Trillium. For the 2017-2018 school year, the student suspension rate for the OCDSB is estimated at 3.27% (n=2,406); provincial data is not yet available, but historically OCDSB suspension rates have been lower than those for the province.

A total of 3,753 suspensions were issued in 2017-2018 – 2,310 at the elementary level, and 1,443 at the secondary level – which represents an overall increase of 12.4% from the previous year. The overall suspension rate, based on a student population of 73,571 was 5.1% (compared to 4.6% in 2016-2017). Over a five-year period, it is worth noting that student suspensions at the elementary level have continued to increase at a higher rate than elementary enrolment, while there has been a decrease in the overall suspension rate at secondary.

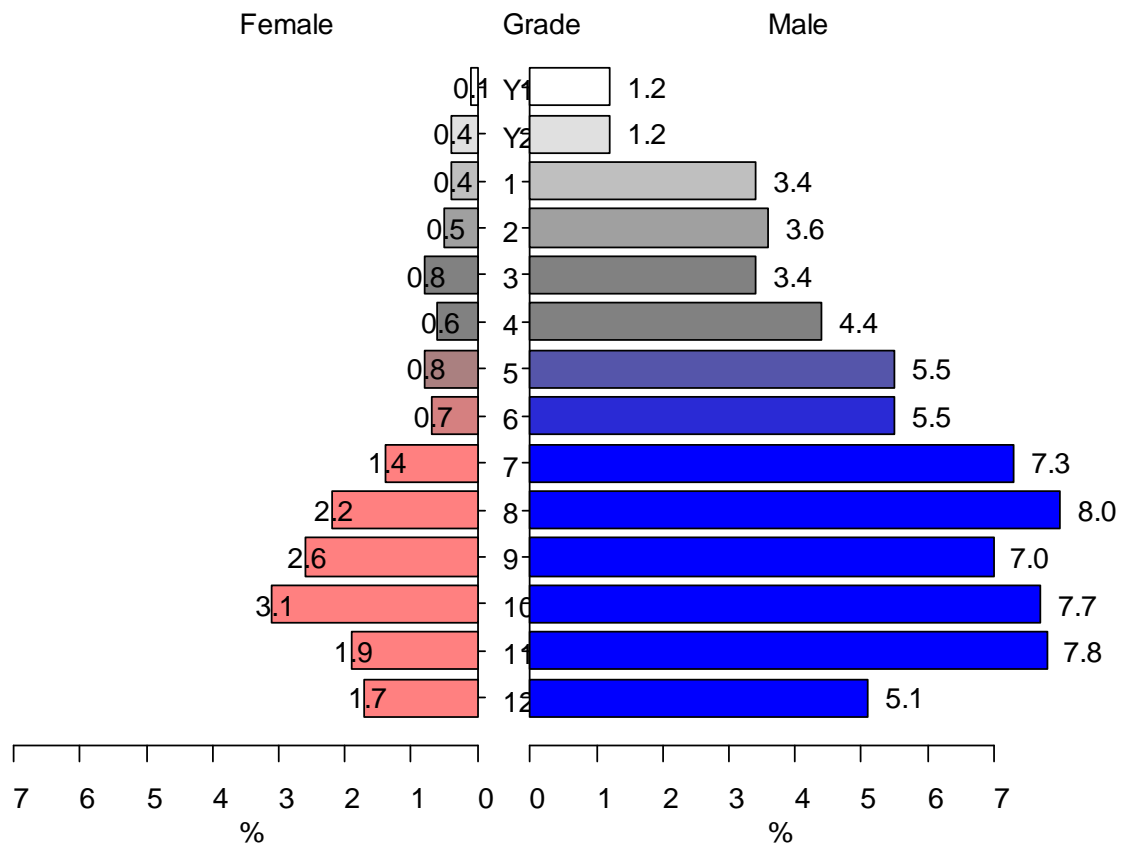
Table 1: Historical Overview of Enrolment and Suspension Data

| Student Enrolment | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <i>Elementary</i> | 48,126 | 48,176 | 47,685 | 48,702 | 49,106 |
| <i>Secondary</i> | 24,252 | 23,978 | 23,886 | 23,790 | 24,465 |
| Total | 72,378 | 72,154 | 71,571 | 72,492 | 73,571 |
| Number of Suspensions Issued | | | | | |
| <i>Elementary</i> | 1,597 | 1,613 | 1,635 | 1,943 | 2,310 |
| <i>Secondary</i> | 1,686 | 1,573 | 1,315 | 1,397 | 1,443 |
| Total | 3,283 | 3,186 | 2,950 | 3,340 | 3,753 |
| Number of Students Suspended | | | | | |
| <i>Elementary</i> | 944 | 936 | 942 | 1,086 | 1,308 |
| <i>Secondary</i> | 1,025 | 983 | 880 | 937 | 1,098 |
| Total | 1,969 | 1,919 | 1,822 | 2,023 | 2,406 |

Suspension Rates by Grade and Gender

Figure 1 shows suspension rates by gender. At every grade level, suspension rates are higher for males than they are for females, with ratios ranging from lowest in grade 10 to highest in Year 1 Kindergarten. The trend that student suspension rates are highest for boys in grades 7 through 11, and for girls in grades 8 through 10 has remained consistent over the last few years.

Figure 1: Student Suspension Rates by Gender and Grade (2017-2018)



Identified Groups of Students

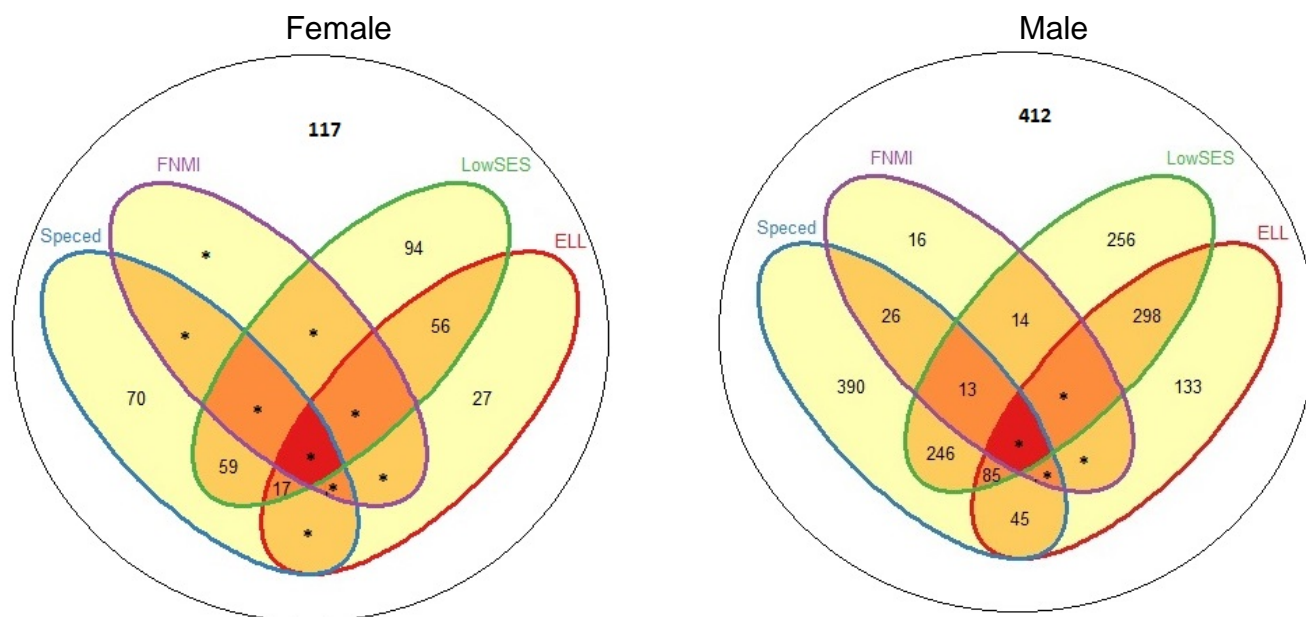
The number of students who received at least one suspension during the 2017-2018 school year, and the total number of suspensions issued, were disaggregated for the groups of students that are currently tracked in the OCDSB (Table 2).

Table 2: Suspension Summary (2017-2018)

| | Enrolment (N = 73,571) | Students Suspended (N = 2,406) | Suspensions Issued (N = 3,753) |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Female | 36,028 | 466 | 655 |
| Male | 37,543 | 1,940 | 3,098 |
| ELL | 11,976 | 672 | 970 |
| Spec. Ed. | 13,259 | 968 | 1,795 |
| FNMI | 1,468 | 98 | 182 |
| Low SES | 19,563 | 1,156 | 1,950 |

Figure 2 shows the overlap (in numbers) across each of the identified groups for females and males. Students who fall within one or more identified group are displayed within the coloured portion of the ellipses; darker shading represents a greater number of groups to which the student belongs. For example, sections with the darkest shading in each ellipse indicate that students have self-identified as Indigenous, reside in a lower income neighbourhood, and have been recorded as both an ELL and as having a special education need in Trillium. While approximately one-quarter of our students live in lower income neighbourhoods, these students account for nearly half of all students suspended.

Figure 2: Number of Students Suspended by Identified Group (2017-2018)



*indicates fewer than 10 students (for females, these areas sum to 26, for males they sum to 6).

Table 3 organizes suspension data into 32 distinct groups; inclusion in a specified group is indicated by the shaded boxes. A disproportionality index has also been calculated in order to better understand the over/underrepresentation of certain groups of students in suspension data relative to the student population; larger index values reflect greater disproportionality. Analysis of this information suggests that for both males and females the greatest disproportionality occurs for students who are English language learners, have special education needs, and who reside in lower income neighbourhoods (5.4 and 1.8, respectively; affecting approximately 100 students overall). Disproportionality rates are also high for students who have special education needs and who reside in lower income neighbourhoods (4.8 and 1.8, respectively; affecting approx. 300 students).

Table 3: Disproportionality Index by Identified Groups

| | ELL | SpecEd | FNMI | LowSES | Enrollment (N=37,543) | Suspended (N=1,940) | Index* | | | ELL | SpecEd | FNMI | LowSES | Enrollment (N=36,028) | Suspended (N=466) | Index* |
|------|-----|--------|------|--------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------|--|--|-----|--------|------|--------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MALE | | | | | 18,255(48.6) | 412(21.2) | 0.7 | | | | | | | 20,072 (55.7) | 117 (25.1) | 0.2 |
| | | | | X | 5,156 (13.7) | 256 (13.2) | 1.5 | | | | | X | | 5,453 (15.1) | 94 (20.2) | 0.5 |
| | | | X | | 285 (0.8) | 16 (0.8) | 1.7 | | | | | X | | 338 (0.9) | * | * |
| | | | X | X | 156 (0.4) | 14 (0.7) | 2.7 | | | | | X | X | 198 (0.5) | * | * |
| | | X | | | 5,463 (14.6) | 390 (20.1) | 2.2 | | | | X | | | 3,229 (9) | 70 (15) | 0.7 |
| | | X | | X | 1,575 (4.2) | 246 (12.7) | 4.8 | | | | X | | X | 1,020 (2.8) | 59 (12.7) | 1.8 |
| | | X | X | | 158 (0.4) | 26 (1.3) | 5.0 | | | | X | X | | 87 (0.2) | * | * |
| | | X | X | X | 92 (0.2) | 13 (0.7) | 4.3 | | | | X | X | X | 58(0.2) | * | * |
| | X | | | | 2,764 (7.4) | 133 (6.9) | 1.5 | | | X | | | | 2,531 (7) | 27 (5.8) | 0.3 |
| | X | | | X | 2,598 (6.9) | 298 (15.4) | 3.5 | | | X | | | X | 2,444(6.8) | 56 (12) | 0.7 |
| | X | | X | | 10 (0.03) | | | | | X | | X | | 16 (0.04) | | |
| | X | | X | X | 23 (0.1) | * | * | | | X | | X | X | 13 (0.04) | | |
| | X | X | | | 511 (1.4) | 45 (2.3) | 2.7 | | | X | X | | | 272 (0.8) | * | * |
| | X | X | | X | 479 (1.3) | 85 (4.4) | 5.4 | | | X | X | | X | 281 (0.8) | 17 (3.6) | 1.8 |
| | X | X | X | | 10 (0.03) | | | | | X | X | X | | * | * | * |
| | X | X | X | X | * | * | * | | | X | X | X | X | * | * | * |

* < 10; grey shaded areas= no data

Figure 3 provides a historical overview of student suspension rates by exceptionality (Table 4 provides additional details). Students with a behavioural exceptionality continue to engage in behaviours that are more likely to result in suspension at a significantly higher rate compared to students identified with any other exceptionality. Suspension rates for students identified with a behavioural exceptionality increased in 2017-2018 after seeing declines for the past few years. A decline in student suspension rates for students identified with a mild intellectual disability have been observed this past year, while higher rates of suspension were observed for students with a language impairment and students receiving special education support who have not been formally identified with an exceptionality (i.e., IEP-only). With the exception of students identified as Gifted, students identified with special education needs continue to engage in behaviours that are more likely to result in suspension compared to students without special education needs.

Figure 3: Historical Overview of Student Suspension Rates for Students with Special Education Needs by Exceptionality and Those Without

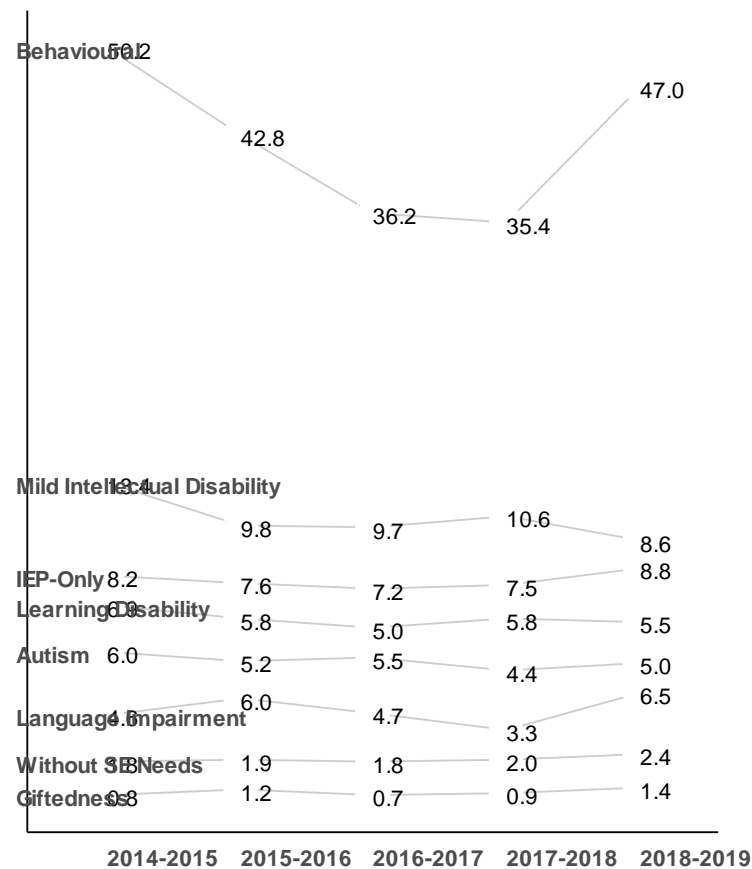


Table 4: 5-Year History of Student Suspensions for Students with Special Education Needs by Exceptionality and by Panel

| Exceptionality | Total | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| <i>Autism</i> | # identified # suspended # suspensions | 716 43 83 | 776 40 89 | 782 43 86 | 745 33 56 | 837 42 75 |
| <i>Behavioural</i> | # identified # suspended # suspensions | 201 101 304 | 187 80 256 | 177 64 161 | 158 56 168 | 149 70 185 |
| <i>Blind and Low Vision</i> | # identified # suspended # suspensions | 23 * * | 22 * * | 20 * * | 14 * * | 17 * * |
| <i>Deaf and Hard-of Hearing</i> | # identified # suspended # suspensions | 105 * * | 99 * * | 95 * * | 97 * 14 | 94 * * |
| <i>Developmental Disability</i> | # identified # suspended # suspensions | 379 * * | 358 * * | 354 * * | 317 * 10 | 347 * * |
| <i>Giftedness</i> | # identified # suspended # suspensions | 2,338 18 21 | 2,215 27 45 | 2,099 14 28 | 1,612 15 23 | 1,736 24 35 |
| <i>Language Impairment</i> | # identified # suspended # suspensions | 325 15 24 | 332 20 38 | 318 15 19 | 276 * * | 293 19 28 |
| <i>Learning Disability</i> | # identified # suspended # suspensions | 2,488 172 289 | 2,195 127 226 | 1,987 100 182 | 1,615 93 152 | 1,550 85 140 |
| <i>Mild Intellectual Disability</i> | # identified # suspended # suspensions | 449 60 102 | 451 44 83 | 414 40 77 | 359 38 92 | 396 34 74 |
| <i>Multiple Exceptionalities</i> | # identified # suspended # suspensions | 26 * * | 26 * * | 33 * * | 28 * * | 28 * * |
| <i>Physical Disability</i> | # identified # suspended # suspensions | 90 * * | 91 * * | 78 * * | 76 * * | 77 * * |
| <i>IEP-Only</i> | # identified # suspended # suspensions | 5,436 444 811 | 5,874 444 794 | 6,569 475 824 | 7,188 539 989 | 7,729 680 1,241 |
| Total | # identified # suspended # suspensions | 1,2578 869 1,656 | 12,626 798 1,551 | 12,926 763 1,397 | 12,488 801 1,518 | 13,259 968 1,795 |

Nature of Suspension

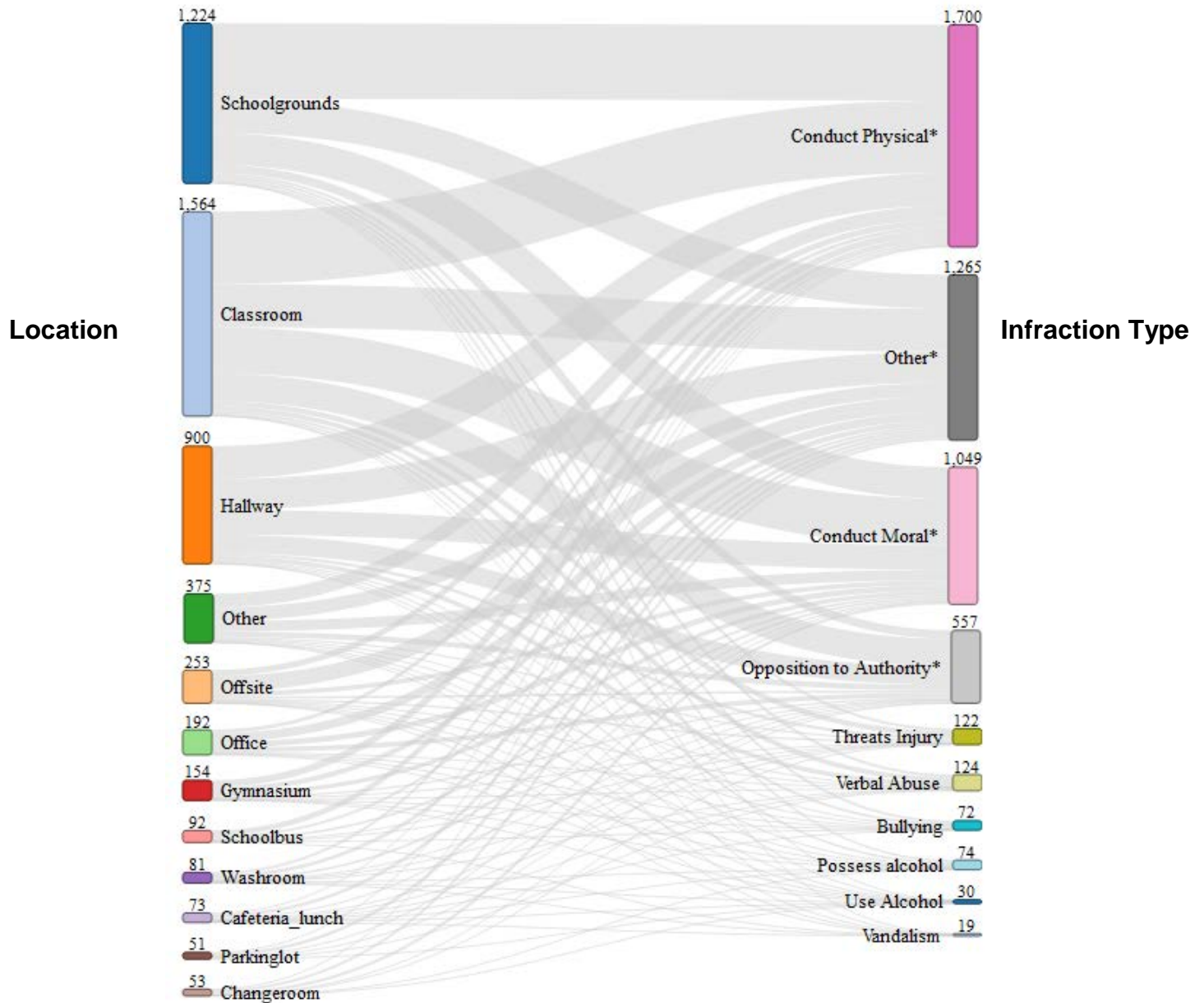
Figure 4 shows the locations in which infractions occurred and the reasons for the suspension (i.e., infraction type¹). It is important to note that a single suspension can include more than

¹ There are 26 codes established and used by the OCDSB that map onto the Ministry-recognized "other" category. In addition to the Ministry-recognized codes, Figure 4 includes OCDSB-established codes that account for at least 10% of the infraction types.

one type of infraction. Consistent with previous years, incidents that resulted in a suspension were most likely to occur:

- in the classroom, on the school grounds, or in a hallway; and
- for a reason coded as “other” by the Ministry – most notably conduct that is physically harmful to another person or to the moral tone of the school, and persistent opposition to authority.

Figure 4: Location in Which Infraction Occurred by Infraction Type, 2017-2018

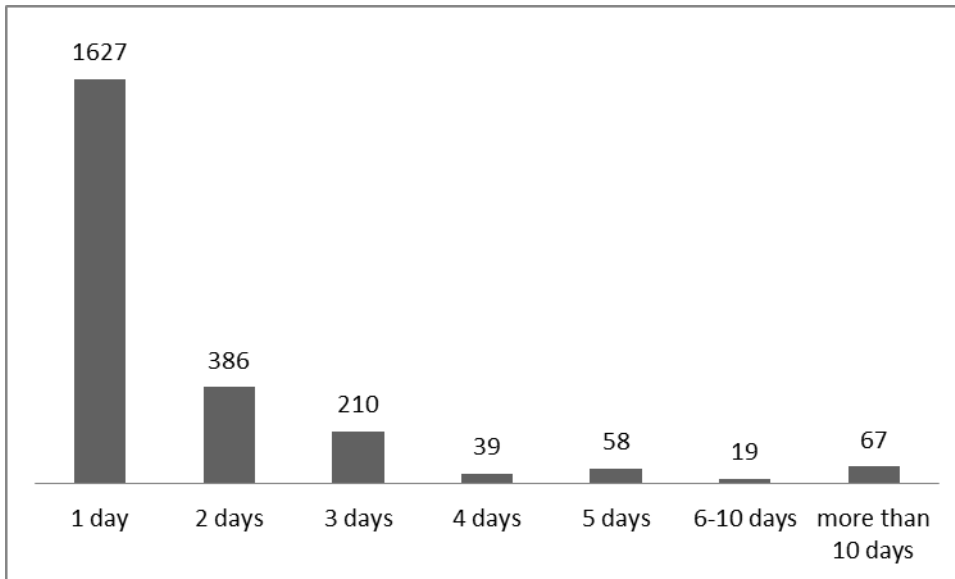


* OCDSB-established infraction codes that the Ministry of Education would also include with “Other”.

Frequency and Duration of Suspensions

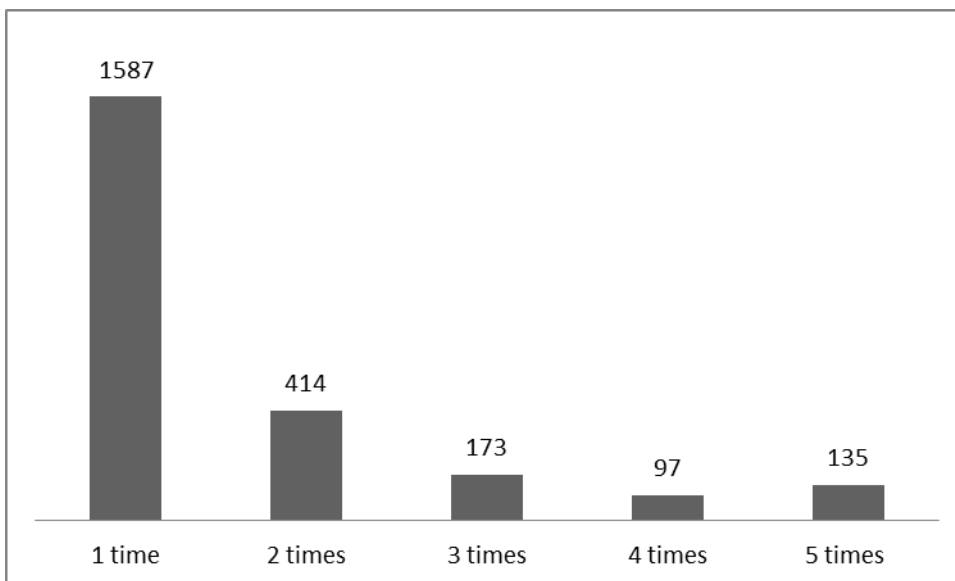
Approximately two-thirds of students suspended (1,627 of 2,406) received a one-day suspension during the 2017-2018 school year (Figure 5); a rate that has been consistent for the past few years.

Figure 5: Duration of Student Suspensions



Approximately two-thirds of students suspended in 2017-2018 (1,587 of 2,406) were suspended only once over the course of the year (Figure 6); this is also consistent with the past few years.

Figure 6: Frequency of Students Suspended Multiple Times



Summary and Next Steps

The analysis of student suspension data for 2017-2018 shows an increase in the number of students receiving a suspension and in the number of suspensions issued overall. General trends continue to show that:

- male students are more likely to engage in behaviours leading to suspension
- students who are identified with special education needs (particularly those with a behavioural exceptionality) and who reside in lower income neighbourhoods are the most disproportionately represented in the data;
- incidents that result in a suspension typically occur in the classroom, on the school grounds, or in the hallway and for reasons associated with conduct that is injurious to the physical or mental well-being of others in the school, conduct that is injurious to the moral tone of the school, and persistent opposition to authority;
- the majority of students suspended in 2017-2018 were suspended only once, and most suspensions lasted for a single day.

The District needs to continue working to better understand the potential reasons for suspensions being issued at disproportionate rates for some groups of students. As the province and District move towards the collection of identify-based data, there may be greater opportunity to consider the intersectionality of these identities in relation to a range of outcomes in order to identify and remove systemic barriers that may be contributing to the practice. Continued monitoring of trends in student suspension data on an annual basis is important in providing programs, supports, and services to students and staff to help promote a safe and welcoming learning environment.