



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

SHEILA A. ALLES
INTERIM STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 29, 2018

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Sheila A. Alles, Interim State Superintendent 

SUBJECT: Student Suspension Data Collection Clarification

The purpose of this letter is to provide clarification on the Michigan Department of Education's (MDE's) collection of student suspension data. While, under the current law, MDE cannot require districts to submit suspension data for students without an Individual Education Plan (IEP), the MDE will continue to encourage all districts to voluntarily submit this important data for all students so Michigan can focus all levels of the education system on improving school climate and equitable access to high-quality learning environments. The MDE will also continue to report data provided by participating districts on its website for transparency purposes and to use this data in collaboration with partners to offer targeted supports to participating districts. MDE will not take adverse action if a district chooses not to submit this data.

According to the most recent Civil Rights Data Collection release, of the 50.6 million students enrolled in public schools in 2015-2016, approximately 2.7 million students received one or more out-of-school suspensions and 120,700 students were expelled. In addition, the collection shows that black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students, while students with disabilities were twice as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension as their non-disabled peers. The relationship of exclusionary discipline to negative outcomes, particularly for racial/ethnic minority students and students with disabilities, has raised questions among policymakers, parents, and other stakeholders about the use and equity of school punishment and whether alternatives may be employed in response to student offences. As a start to address these issues, Public Acts 360-366 of 2016 were signed and took effect August 1, 2017. These Acts amended the Revised School Code to require school officials, before suspending or expelling a student, to consider several situation-specific factors, including whether a lesser intervention or restorative practices would address the student's violation or behavior.

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The MDE is committed to coordinating partnerships and initiatives to improve student supports, including behavioral, as outlined in Michigan's Top 10 in 10 Strategic Plan. To effectively address the negative student outcomes fostered by exclusionary discipline practices, we must better understand Michigan's discipline data, and to that end, it is the goal of MDE to collaborate with and support participating districts conducting discipline data analyses in providing resources and evidence-based practices to improve outcomes for all students.

As concerns about school discipline and its impact on equity and student success become a priority, data analyses can help all levels of leadership understand what types of discipline students receive and for what offenses, whether disciplinary actions are used disproportionately, and the relationship between type of discipline and later student outcomes. If you have questions about reporting suspension data, please contact CEPI Customer Support at 517-335-0505. If you have policy related questions, please contact Aimee Alaniz at 517-241-4292 or alaniza1@michigan.gov .

Cc: Michigan Education Alliance