



# Effects of SB100 on School District Suspension Rates and Climate

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## Introduction

Balancing school safety, effective academic outcomes and the appropriate use of discipline can be a daunting task for school teachers and administrators in public schools. This is particularly true when schools over rely on the use of exclusionary practices (e.g., out-of-school suspensions (OSS), expulsions), before attempting to use proactive preventive strategies. Using national data drawn from the Civil Rights Data Collection, between the 2011-12 and 2013-14 school years<sup>1</sup>, the prevalence of exclusionary practices reveals different outcomes. Examination of OSS data suggests a downward trend, a 17.5% decrease (3,141,294 to 2,590,902).

However, when expulsions, under zero tolerance policies, were examined during the same time period, there was a 117.66% increase (7,367 to 16,035). The effects of these practices have a long-lasting impact on students and the school including reduced learning opportunities, academic disengagement, and deterioration of the school climate. Despite longstanding attention to this issue, the use of exclusionary disciplinary practices remains high (Skiba & Losen, 2016; U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2012, 2014). Further, students of color—particularly Black males—make up the largest proportion of students who receive exclusionary discipline.

Similar trends disproportionately affected African American students attending schools in Illinois at rates exceeding 47 other states examined by the UCLA Civil Rights Project (Losen & Gillespie, 2012). In an attempt to change the trajectory of these trends, the grassroots efforts of Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE), a student advocacy organization, in partnership with State Senator Kimberly Lightford, sponsored discipline reform legislation known as Senate Bill 100, which went into effect September 15, 2016. The purpose of this presentation is to report on the effects of SB100, known as Illinois Public Act 99-456 (PA 99-456), on school districts in two counties in IL (Champaign and Cook). Because of the exploratory nature of this project, analyses will focus at the descriptive level statistics.

Research questions guiding this study:

- What are the trends in the number of out-of-school suspensions and risk index ethnic since the passage of Illinois Public Act 99-456 (PA 99-456) in Cook and Champaign counties?
- What are the trends in the number of out-of-school suspensions and minority student suspension risk index since the passage of Illinois Public Act 99-456 (PA 99-456) across different types of schools?
- What is the relationship between school climate (i.e., supportive environment, effective leader) as measured by the 5 Essential Survey and the risk of minority student suspension?

## Methodology

### Sample

This study included district level data was obtained from a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request made to Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) by Loyola University Law School. The rationale for requesting these data were to understand the impact of PA 99-456. These data were accessible through a Microsoft Excel file containing data from the FOIA request. The file contained three years of data from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Demographic information regarding the district's student population was also included (i.e., gender, ethnicity, grade). Although the file contained the data from all the counties in Illinois, only two counties were coded and analyzed for the purpose of this study.

### Variables of Interest

The dependent variable was the number of out-of-school suspensions for each ethnic group represented in the district. The ethnic groups classified by the ISBE included the following: American Indian; Asian; Black; Hispanic; 2 or more races; White). In order to obtain an understanding of the difference is discipline consequences, all suspensions of students who were the which were American Indian; Asian; Black; Hispanic; 2 or more races were coded at Ethnic, while White students serves as the comparison group.

Additionally, school climate data was obtained for each district collected from the Illinois 5Essentials Survey. The Illinois 5Essentials Survey is collected annually and measures school climate according to five components: Effective Leaders, Collaborative Teachers, Involved Families, Supportive Environment, and Ambitious Instruction.

To understand the impact of disproportionality for out-of-school suspensions for the two counties analyzed for this study risk ratios were calculated. Risk ratios provide an understanding of the likelihood of a certain outcome for one group compared to another. For the this study, the groups of interest were minority students compared to white students. The two ratios calculated were the Risk Index Ethnic and Risk Minority Student Suspension.

### Risk Index Ethnic

Total Number of Minority Students Suspended

Total Number of Minority Students in the School

### Risk of Minority Student Suspension

Total Number of Minority Students Suspended

Total Number of Minority Students in the School

Total Number of White Students Suspended

Total Number of White Students in the School

## Results

There were a total of 51 school districts represented across the two counties (Cook  $n = 23$ ; Champaign  $n = 28$ ). There were a total of 65,378 out-of-school suspensions during the three year period. Examination of the data across the three year period overall shows that the number of suspensions decreased each year (see Figure 1).

Figure 2 shows a similar trend in that the number of ethnic out-of-school suspensions decreased (37%) from 23,829 to 17,387, while the the number of white out-of-school suspensions decreased from (68.7%) 2,231 to 1,322.

Figure 1

Total Number of Out-of-School Suspensions by Year

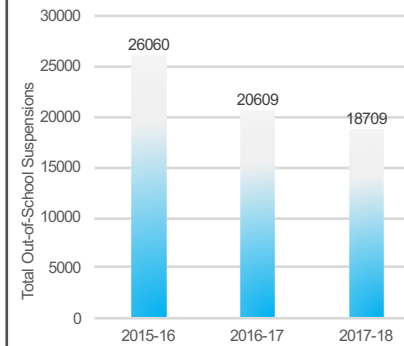
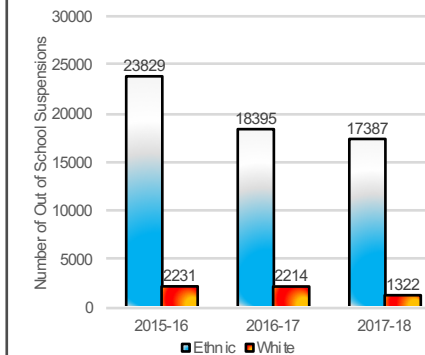


Figure 2

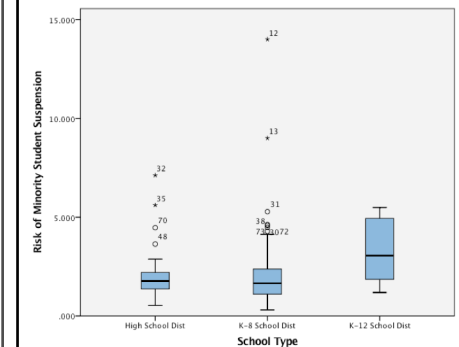
Number of Ethnic and White Out of School Suspension by Year



Examination of the risk indexes across the types of schools (i.e., high school district, K-8 districts and K-12 districts) revealed some interesting results given that there are differences in the types of communities that the districts are within. Overall, high school districts shows the highest risk of minority student suspensions, followed by K-8 school districts (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Risk of Minority Student Suspensions by School Type



Finally, the relationship of school climate, specifically, supportive environment, and risk of minority student suspension indicated a inverse relationship ( $r = -.042$ ) The higher the risk of minority student suspension the lower the rating the school received on the 5Essential Survey. This suggests in schools with a high risk of minority student suspension, students feel less safe in and around the school, feel less trust-worthy of teachers in response to their academic needs, and feel that teachers do not push students towards high academic performance.

In a similar manner, there was a low correlation ( $r = .12$ ) between risk of minority student suspension and effective leader. This finding suggests there is a perception that principals and teachers are less effective with a shared vision of for the school when there is a high risk of minority student suspension.

## Discussion

This preliminary analysis of impact Illinois Public Act 99-456 (PA 99-456) in Cook and Champaign counties on out-of-school suspensions yielded some interesting results. It is somewhat challenging to draw clear conclusions from these data without understanding how schools responded directly to the law. What we do know is that schools appeared to pay attention to the rate at which they suspended students, but they still struggle with the use of proactive strategies versus the use of suspensions to discipline students.