

EXPULSIONS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DEFINITION: The total number and rate of expulsions (both in-school and out-of-school) of public school students, disaggregated by race. The number of expulsions per 1,000 students enrolled is not synonymous with the number of expelled students per 1,000 students enrolled.

SIGNIFICANCE

Every Louisiana child deserves a basic education. Article VIII of the state constitution, which established Louisiana's public educational system, calls for a system that provides "learning environments and experiences...that are humane, just, and designed to promote excellence in order that every individual may be afforded an equal opportunity to develop to his full potential."¹ When students are expelled from school, they lose this opportunity to learn and achieve a level of education that is necessary to participate fully in today's society. While some expelled students are able to continue their school year in an alternative school, their education is inevitably disrupted.

Expulsions represent the most extreme form of disciplinary action a school can impose upon a student. While expulsions are sometimes necessary to ensure school safety, research shows that "zero tolerance" policies implemented in schools throughout the country often result in the use of suspension and expulsions to discipline students for non-violent offenses that represent no threat to teachers or fellow students.²

Expulsion rates should not be seen as an indicator of the level of student misbehavior in a given parish because school discipline policies and practices vary from district to district. Instead, this data provides insight into the disciplinary practices of schools in each parish. Among the parishes for which rates were calculated, the use of expulsion as a discipline tactic ranged from a low of zero expulsions per 1,000 students enrolled in Beuregard and West Feliciana parishes to a high of 41 expulsions per 1,000 students enrolled in St. John the Baptist Parish. St. John's expulsion rate was 13.7 times as high as Washington Parish's expulsion rate (3 expulsions per 1,000 students).

DISPROPORTIONALITY

Every child deserves to be treated fairly by their teachers and school administrators. Unfortunately, the data show that black children are far more likely to be expelled from school than white children. In Louisiana, the black expulsion rate is more than three times that of the white rate. There were 20 expulsions of black students for every 1,000 black students enrolled in SY 2006, while there were six expulsions of white students

for every 1,000 enrolled. Racial disparities were evident in every parish for which rates were calculated, though the magnitude of the disparities varied widely among parishes. In St. Landry Parish, the black expulsion rate was slightly more than twice the white rate, but in Lafourche Parish, the black expulsion rate was 6.9 times as large as the white rate.

Schools and school districts can use a variety of techniques and policies to reduce the racial disparities in expulsion rates, as well as to reduce the total number of expulsions. For example, schools can ensure that all teachers have training in cultural competency and regularly review their data to ensure that all children are being treated equitably. Another effective program is School-Wide Positive Behavioral Support, which works to ensure that the school environment fosters positive behavior, as well as provides appropriate interventions for students who experience behavioral difficulties. Louisiana's Juvenile Justice Reform Act (Act 1225) required BESE and local school districts to develop Master Plans that incorporate Positive Behavioral Support techniques. As of September 2008, more than half (809) of schools statewide had implemented PBS.³

RATE CALCULATION

$1,000 * (\text{number of expulsions} \div \text{total number of public school students})$

$1,000 * (\text{number of expulsions of black students} \div \text{black public school students})$

$1,000 * (\text{number of expulsions of white students} \div \text{white public school students})$

DATA SOURCE

Analysis of information provided by Louisiana Department of Education, Division of Planning, Analysis, and Information Resources, by Special Request

DATA NOTE

Data for City of Baker and City of Zachary school districts are reflected in East Baton Rouge data. Data for the City of Monroe are reflected in data for Ouachita Parish. Data for City of Bogalusa are reflected in data for Washington Parish. Data for Lab Schools and all other charters are not included in the parish-level data, but are included in the statewide data.

¹ Louisiana Constitution, Article VIII, Preamble

² NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., "Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline," NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, retrieved from www.naacpldf.org/ on 5/1/2009.

³ Louisiana School-Wide Positive Behavior Support, "Schools Implementing PBS," Louisiana School-Wide Positive Behavior Support, retrieved from www.lapositivebehavior.com/ on 5/1/2009.

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(NUMBER AND RATE PER 1,000 STUDENTS ENROLLED)

SY 2006	TOTAL		BLACK		WHITE		RACIAL DISPARITY RATIO*
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	
LOUISIANA	8,537	13	6,191	20	2,167	6	3.2
Acadia	303	32	192	71	111	16	4.3
Allen	49	11	18	LNE	29	9	n.a.
Ascension	104	6	55	10	47	4	2.5
Assumption	100	23	84	46	15	LNE	n.a.
Avoyelles	116	18	87	30	26	8	3.8
Beauregard	0	0	0	0	0	0	n.a.
Bienville	<5	LNE	<5	LNE	0	0	n.a.
Bossier	165	8	82	14	74	6	2.3
Caddo	404	9	332	12	70	5	2.5
Calcasieu	903	28	510	44	377	18	2.4
Caldwell	19	LNE	13	LNE	5	LNE	n.a.
Cameron	13	LNE	5	LNE	7	LNE	n.a.
Catahoula	<5	LNE	<5	LNE	0	0	n.a.
Claiborne	11	LNE	10	LNE	<5	LNE	n.a.
Concordia	5	LNE	<5	LNE	<5	LNE	n.a.
De Soto	110	22	82	30	28	13	2.3
East Baton Rouge	1,059	19	969	23	78	8	3.0
East Carroll	7	LNE	7	LNE	0	0	n.a.
East Feliciana	16	LNE	12	LNE	<5	LNE	n.a.
Evangeline	54	9	37	14	17	LNE	n.a.
Franklin	100	29	89	49	11	LNE	n.a.
Grant	10	LNE	6	LNE	<5	LNE	n.a.
Iberia	65	5	46	7	18	LNE	n.a.
Iberville	49	11	42	13	7	LNE	n.a.
Jackson	8	LNE	<5	LNE	5	LNE	n.a.
Jefferson	1,125	26	845	39	204	14	2.8
Jefferson Davis	63	11	31	22	32	7	2.9
Lafayette	358	12	257	20	93	6	3.5
Lafourche	243	16	160	49	74	7	6.9
La Salle	11	LNE	8	LNE	<5	LNE	n.a.
Lincoln	55	8	41	12	14	LNE	n.a.
Livingston	183	8	26	18	156	7	2.5
Madison	25	11	23	11	<5	LNE	n.a.
Morehouse	17	LNE	12	LNE	5	LNE	n.a.
Natchitoches	75	11	67	17	8	LNE	n.a.
Orleans	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Ouachita	158	6	128	9	29	2	4.5
Plaquemines	33	9	18	LNE	12	LNE	n.a.
Pointe Coupee	80	26	68	34	12	LNE	n.a.
Rapides	706	29	578	56	120	9	5.9
Red River	33	21	28	27	5	LNE	n.a.
Richland	8	LNE	7	LNE	<5	LNE	n.a.
Sabine	36	9	14	LNE	17	LNE	n.a.
St. Bernard	7	LNE	<5	LNE	6	LNE	n.a.
St. Charles	14	LNE	11	LNE	<5	LNE	n.a.
St. Helena	7	LNE	6	LNE	<5	LNE	n.a.
St. James	122	29	113	40	9	LNE	n.a.
St. John the Baptist	277	41	256	49	20	16	3.0
St. Landry	214	14	161	18	53	8	2.2
St. Martin	256	30	201	49	55	13	3.9
St. Mary	<5	LNE	<5	LNE	0	0	n.a.
St. Tammany	300	9	136	22	153	6	4.0
Tangipahoa	91	5	72	8	18	LNE	n.a.
Tensas	11	LNE	11	LNE	0	0	n.a.
Terrebonne	8	LNE	5	LNE	<5	LNE	n.a.
Union	27	9	11	LNE	16	LNE	n.a.
Vermilion	110	12	55	28	54	8	3.5
Vernon	<5	LNE	<5	LNE	<5	LNE	n.a.
Washington	23	3	13	LNE	10	LNE	n.a.
Webster	27	4	24	7	<5	LNE	n.a.
West Baton Rouge	82	23	60	32	22	13	2.5
West Carroll	13	LNE	8	LNE	5	LNE	n.a.
West Feliciana	0	0	0	0	0	0	n.a.
Winn	6	LNE	<5	LNE	<5	LNE	n.a.

*The racial disparity ratio was calculated by dividing the rate of expulsions of black students by the corresponding rate for white students. A ratio of one would indicate that there was no difference between the expulsion rates of black and white students, while ratios greater than one indicate that the expulsion rates of black students are higher than those of white students. The resulting numbers show, for example, that the rate of expulsions of black students in Louisiana was 3.2 times the rate of expulsions of white students. The ratio was not calculated for any parish that experienced fewer than 20 expulsions of youth of either race.

LNE [low number of events] is used because the rate or percent may be unreliable.

S—Data for Orleans parish was suppressed due to irregularities in the data.