The Civil Rights Project
Proyecto Derechos Civiles

Instructions and Descriptions of the National Spreadsheets

Three excel spreadsheets are available for download for the national report.

The first spreadsheet, **"Secondary Report District by Gradespan CRDC 0910 FINAL,"** includes multiple tabs with the total number of students suspended and suspension risk percentages for all racial groups, English learners, male and female, and for students with and without disabilities across all districts in the CRDC data sample. In general, each tab highlights a district estimates for a specific subset of schools – secondary, middle, high school, and elementary. These spreadsheets contain both the raw numbers of students enrolled and suspended and the suspension risk percentages, disaggregated by race, gender, and disability.

The second spreadsheet, **"High Suspending Secondary School District Count 4.5 FINAL,"** includes information on the number of high suspending secondary schools in a district. High-suspending secondary schools were those with 25% or greater suspension rates and at least 50 enrollees for *any* of the following groups: all students, students by race, students by gender, students with disabilities, students who are English learners (ELs). We then created counts of the high-suspending secondary schools in each district.

The third spreadsheet, **"Low Suspending Secondary School District Count 4.5 FINAL,"** includes information on the number of low suspending secondary schools in a district. Low-suspending secondary schools were those with 10% or lower suspension rates and at least 10 enrollees for *all* of the following groups: all students, students by race, students by gender, students with disabilities, students who are ELs. Again, we then created counts of the low-suspending secondary schools in each district.

All three spreadsheets contain separate tabs that list those districts excluded from our analysis either because they represented juvenile justice facilities or contained errors. All districts that contain one or more data errors were removed from all the other spreadsheet tabs and placed here in order to provide transparency on the number and type or errors included in this report. A key explaining the types of errors found is provided at the bottom of the tab.

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How to use these spreadsheets:

The downloadable spreadsheets contain multiple tabs or spreadsheets, which separate out district level suspension rates by grade span configuration. Each tab or spreadsheet includes most districts in the nation with the exception of districts that were eliminated according to our methodology and exclusion criteria.

Each spreadsheet or tab is sorted by the school district's ID number from lowest to high**est**, which is an approximate, alphabetical order listing by state and district name. You may search for a district's name by using the search feature (Ctrl-F [PC] or CMD-F [Mac]) in Excel. Alternatively, you may also sort the sheet by any of the columns. For example, the sheet may be sorted by Hispanic suspension rates, highest to lowest, using the Data Sort feature in Excel.

Data filters have also been applied to each worksheet as indicated by the arrows and pull down menu bars next to each column in the header row. By clicking on the arrow next to the desired column, a drop-down list of all entries in the column appears, and you may choose to "filter in or out" all items that meet any of your desired criteria. For example, in order to select all districts that appear in a single state (e.g., Michigan), click on the down arrow in the "State" column, and check the box next to the desired state, and all other states will be "filtered out" or excluded from the active sheet.

At the very bottom of the spreadsheet in a row highlighted in green, totals will appear for all the districts that meet the selected criteria. You may also choose to filter by district or any other criteria you specify. For example, you can choose to select all districts that have suspension rates over 20% or hide any districts that have less than 5%. Any number of possible numerical criteria can be used across one or more columns.

Methods: *A more detailed description of the methods, omissions and treatment of errors is found in the appendices to the report.*

The data used in this spreadsheet comes from the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), a survey administered by the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR). This survey represents all school districts in the nation who responded enrolling over 3000 students and a sample of districts with fewer than 3000 students. Ultimately, it gathered data from 6,835 school districts, including anywhere from 59 to 100 percent of all students, depending on the state. Because the CRDC does not require every district in the state to submit data, the reported absolute number of students suspended represents an undercount for the state.

The district estimates for secondary and elementary school students were calculated by selecting just those schools within each district that conformed to the specific grade-span configuration associated with each level of schooling. The following table summarizes how we categorized the schools into elementary, middle, high, and secondary schools.

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Table 1

Category	Grade-Span Configurations
Secondary	5-8, 6-8, 7-9, 6-12, 9-12, 10-12, 9th-grade academies
High School	9-12, 10-12, 9th-grade academies
Middle School	5-8, 6-8, 7-9, 6th-grade academies
Elementary School	Any school with any combination of kindergarten through 5th, and without a 7th or 8th grade
Other	K-8 and K-12

After we coded and stratified the school-level data by grade configuration, we then calculated the suspension risk for each school and district, based on straightforward percentage calculations. We divided the number of suspended students by the total enrollment; the result is the percentage suspended. We describe this percentage throughout the report as the *risk* for out-of-school suspension. These out-of-school suspension data are exclusive of other discipline data collected by OCR, including the number of students expelled and the number receiving in-school suspension. For this report we analyzed only out-of-school suspension data.

The OCR data included the number of students suspended out-of-school one time and, separately, the number of students suspended out-of-school two or more times. We added these mutually exclusive categories together to report the *unduplicated* number of students suspended one or more times. The spreadsheet published with this report includes three categories of students: all students, students with disabilities, and students without disabilities.

To determine the estimated risk for *all* students, we combined the number of suspended students "with disabilities" and "without disabilities." OCR reports the suspension numbers for these two groups separately; it also provides the total enrollment and the enrollment of students with disabilities, but not the enrollment of students without disabilities. To find the baseline enrollment of students without disabilities, we subtracted the number of enrolled students with disabilities from the total enrollment. This enabled us to report the risk for suspension for every major racial/ethnic group for all students, and to break it down further by students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

In addition to calculating overall district-level suspension rates, we analyzed how many high- and low-suspending secondary schools were in each district. We categorized schools as being either high-suspending "hotspots" or low suspending, according to the following criteria:

- High-suspending secondary schools were those with 25% or greater suspension rates and at least 50 enrollees for *any* of the following groups: all students, students by race, students by gender, students with disabilities, students who are English learners (ELs). We then created counts of the high-suspending secondary schools in each district.

- Low-suspending secondary schools were those with 10% or lower suspension rates and at least 10 enrollees for *all* of the following groups: all students, students by race, students

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by gender, students with disabilities, students who are ELs. Again, we then created counts of the low-suspending secondary schools in each district.

To calculate the national out-of-school suspension averages, we added up all the suspensions in every district sampled for each subgroup and divided that total by the enrollment number of each subgroup. Because of large statewide errors in Hawaii and Florida, all districts from those two states are excluded from the analysis.

Omissions of juvenile justice districts: For our secondary school analysis, we excluded data from 54 state-run, long-term juvenile justice institutions (see Appendix I for our rationale).

School- and district-level data cleaning: In addition to the 54 juvenile justice districts, we removed 208 districts from our secondary school analysis. When the districts reported their data to OCR, each district superintendent was required to certify that the data were accurate and the certifications checked before OCR published the data. Unfortunately, we discovered obvious collection or reporting errors in several districts that forced us to remove them from our analysis. These 208 error districts are listed in a separate tab on our Excel spreadsheet called "Error Districts." The error sheet provides the data as reported by OCR on the data CD.

Some schools and districts may accidentally have reported suspending more students than they enrolled (over reported), some may have underreported their data, and others may have failed to report baseline enrollment data or reported nothing at all in some categories, essentially ignoring the federal requirement that they respond.

- 598 schools were removed from the analysis because they reported more out-of-school suspensions than students enrolled for any of the following subgroups: all students, students by race, and students who are ELs. Schools are required to report their suspension data to OCR as unduplicated counts of the *number of students suspended*. By definition, there *cannot be more students suspended* than *students enrolled*. None of these schools was included in the final calculation of district-level suspension rates.
- 34 districts were removed because they reported suspension rates of over 100% for all students or for any racial/ethnic group included in the K-12 analysis from our August 2012 national report.
- 37 districts were removed because they reported out-of-school suspensions for a racial group although they reported no student enrollment for that same group.
- 55 districts were removed because they reported zero out-of-school suspensions to OCR, despite having reported some suspension numbers on their state or district website.
- 12 districts were removed because 50% or more of their secondary schools reported suspension rates of over 100% for all students or for students by race. Even though we removed all of these schools from our district estimates, we assumed that all data from district that had errors among half their schools was by definition suspect. While we did not remove those districts where between 10% and 49% of their secondary schools reported suspension rates over 100%, we did put asterisks near their name on the spreadsheets posted on the web.

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- 5 districts were removed because they contained more than one of these problems.
- 65 districts were removed in the states of New York, Florida, and Hawaii, including the New York City district, because our review, followed by correspondence with OCR, indicated that these districts had large errors in their discipline data, enrollment data, or both.

Of these errors, it is far easier to detect overreporting of suspension errors than to know if a district reported few to no suspensions accurately. Unfortunately, in most states we found no alternative source to reference that would have helped us flag grossly underreported data. Moreover, it is worth noting that most of the error districts removed were those with large overreporting errors. To the extent that the overreporting districts also may have been high-suspending districts, their removal may have lowered the national and state estimates. We know, for example, that the national estimates were slightly higher before we cleaned the data and removed the state of Florida.

Final note: we excluded from our analysis the risk for suspension of students with disabilities who did not have an IEP, but received supports or services exclusively under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 because the suspension numbers for students in this category were not disaggregated by race or gender and the numbers were typically very low.

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