

## Read\_Me for Exclusionary Discipline Dashboard

### General Things to Know

- [This dashboard displays data related to exclusionary discipline](#). Metrics on Hazing Harassment and Bullying (HHB) incidents appear in the [Student Characteristics dashboard](#). These provide counts and percentage of all HHB incidents whether or not the incident resulted in an exclusion.
- **This is our first release of this product.** As always, we welcome feedback. Please use [this form](#) on the [VED main landing page](#).
- Where you see 0% displayed, it indicates a decimal percentage due to small ns. **We round to the nearest whole number for these displays.**
- **We have erred on the side of displaying the most granular disaggregation we can.** This contributes to the amount of suppression you will see due to small ns.
- **Suppression** - Grade was initially included as a slicer in this disaggregation, but almost all rows and cells, even at the state level, in this product would have undergone suppression. This is because, due to our tiny sizes, while grade level isn't in itself a sensitive characteristic, when cross-tabulated with other sensitive characteristics, it would yield identifiable data.

It may be advisable to collapse grades into larger groups like elementary, middle, or secondary so that some of these data would become visible while still enabling privacy to be maintained under FERPA. The same is true for other elements such as race, ethnicity, and FRL status. Students with one or any of these characteristics could be combined into Historically Marginalized/Historically Advantaged student groups as is done for the Annual Snapshot.

This again maybe an aggregation level that allows for more of the information to be released because there is a better chance that the student groups will be large enough to release data without breaching FERPA.

### Reading the Dashboard

- **Incident Type** – Definitions for each incident are provided on p. 2 of the dashboard.
- **Suspension Length** – “Count” includes both in school and out of school suspension. Expulsion is not included as this is assumed to be a more long-term event.
- **HHB incidents would be displayed in the Exclusionary Discipline dashboard if the student received an in school or out of school suspension because of the incident.** Not all HHB incidents result in an exclusionary action, however. For example:
  - In 2020 at the state level for Harassment, resulting in exclusionary discipline, had a count of 102 bullying, 138 for harassment, and suppressed for hazing. The dashboard for Student characteristics shows Bullying and Harassment incidents affecting a total of 1-3% of the student population statewide, meaning that many of these incidents do not result in an exclusion.

### Forthcoming Releases

**Student Support Services** - One disaggregation that will be added in the near future is a disaggregation by student's status as it relates to student support services (IEP eligible, 504 eligible, using Educations support teams, or no student support services).

These data originate from two sources and need careful handling by subject matter experts who are currently deployed to mission critical work that has tight federal deadlines for OSEP. They will participate in the next cycle of the build to incorporate these metrics after the federally required workflows are complete.

### **More on Suppression and Data Privacy**

Although a concept like data suppression may seem simple at first glance, the requirement does get a bit more complicated than simply suppressing small numbers.

When we report on several different subgroups and when we provide subtotals of sensitive data, such as exclusionary discipline incidents, information in one category can make suppressed information in another category calculable.

This means we must often apply complimentary suppression.

For example, if we provide the subtotal of a particular type of exclusion at school, SU/SD (LEA) and State levels, information in one of these areas could reveal information that is suppressed at another level. In this case the agency, under FERPA, needs to suppress that information as well.

AOE maintains a close relationship with federal partners at the [Privacy Technical Assistance Center](#) and Dr. Geller belongs to the federally organized Chief Privacy Officer's Network as a means for VT to ensure we stay abreast of best practices in student data privacy.

There are several ways of mitigating the effects of the necessary data suppression.

It is possible to choose aggregation levels that maximize the amount of information that you can display publicly. This can be achieved by looking at large enough organizational units (e.g., SU/SDs or State Level in VT).

In many cases, for exclusionary discipline in VT, this might mean that data can be displayed only at the state level. It may also be possible to look at the data aggregated to the 5 SU/SD regions.

The blurring of data as is done in the Annual Snapshot is another method for determining or assigning a relative score at the LEA level without revealing information about individual students or small student groups.

Other metrics that may prove useful in this way are looking at average suspension lengths for students.

It may also be helpful to increase the size of student group slicers, like what is suggested for grade above, instead of seeking data at individual grade levels, look at Elementary and Secondary levels, thereby achieving large enough student groups so that data are publicly reportable while still maintaining FERPA compliance.

Employing these strategies may still mean that there is some degree of data suppression, but it may also be useful to view this as a type of information. **If the data are suppressed, you know that the number is small and that statistically it would not be seen as a robust enough measure to draw any conclusions about.**

We welcome input from experts and stakeholders within and outside the agency on this topic.

**Actionable data for school administrators**

Discipline data reported to AOE come from the SU/SDs themselves. This means that administrators have access to those data and can use them to inform their practice. Schools and SU/SD level officials could set up “real time” reports and dashboards from their student information systems (SIS) to have insight into the pulse of discipline within their school or district. This information could help those staff develop on the ground strategies for working through these issues.