

Out-of-School Suspensions

Definition

Suspensions for law and board violations is the number and rate per 100 students of temporary removals from educational placements. Law violations count students removed from school because they broke the law. Board violations count students removed from school because of actions that violated school or board of education rules.

Data in context

All students benefit from a safe, comfortable learning environment. Successful schools provide a rigorous course of study to help all students achieve while keeping students safe with clearly communicated, consistently enforced, and fairly applied discipline methods.

While people often look to economic conditions, parent involvement, and staff and administrative practices for indicators of a successful school, the rate of suspensions often provides an indication of the health of a school.¹ Schools with lower suspension rates often reveal an inviting environment with respectful interactions among staff and students and strong relationships among all stakeholders.²

When a student interferes with the learning of other students or jeopardizes the safety of others, school administrators can take action, ranging from student conferences to out-of-school suspensions to expulsions. Board violations range from wearing a hat in the classroom to fighting, while law violations include carrying a weapon, vandalism, and drug possession.³

In Kentucky, disciplinary actions, including expulsion, suspensions, and corporal punishment, decreased for the second consecutive year in 2005-06 to 85,410 total disciplinary actions.⁴ Schools suspended fewer students for both law and board violations in school year 2006, compared to the previous two years.

Disturbing class, fighting, and defiance of authority ranked as the three most common reasons for disciplinary action.⁵ Disruptive behavior and fighting accounted for about half of all suspensions for board



violations. Nationally, punishments are administered to Black and Hispanic students more frequently than to White students for behaviors, such as disturbing class, that are subjective.⁶ Suspensions may also be a factor in the dropout rate of students, underscoring the need for continued monitoring of the fair application of suspensions.⁷

Students depend on fair and equitably applied discipline, yet Kentucky data reflect differences in suspension rates by race, income, and gender. Schools suspended Black students more than twice as often and American Indian students slightly more often than White students. Meanwhile, Asian and Hispanic students were suspended less frequently. Low-income students, those receiving free or reduced-price lunch, accounted for approximately half of all students but 73 and 59 percent of suspensions for board and law violations, respectively. Similarly, males accounted for 52 percent of all students but 72 percent of suspensions for law violations and 73 percent of suspensions for board violations.

Suspensions for law violations occurred much less frequently than suspensions for board violations in SY 2006 (4,736 and 76,825 suspensions, respectively). Among the 102 districts with 6 or more suspensions for law violations in SY 2006, five districts had more than 100 suspensions for law violations each. Another 20 districts had no suspensions for law violations that year.

The number of suspensions for board violations ranged from less than 10 in six districts to more than 4,000 in three districts. In 37 school districts, the rates of suspensions for board violations were less than half the state rate. District rates were more than double the state rate, however, in eight districts, including Christian County (42 per 100), Covington Independent (44 per 100), and Paducah Independent (39 per 100), where rates were more than triple the state rate.

Schools can support academic success and reduce the likelihood of students engaging in risky behaviors by providing support services and effective, non-traditional teaching for students who may need additional assistance; increasing support to students for transitions between schools and grades; and re-engaging students who have become disconnected from learning.⁸ Schools should also review discipline policies to ensure they can be implemented in an equitable way.

Data Source: Kentucky Department of Education.

Data Note: Students may have received more than one out-of-school suspension during the school year. Independent school districts are listed after the school district for the county in which they are located.

Rate Calculation: (number of out-of-school suspensions for law violations during school year 2006 * 100) / (number of students during school year 2006)
(number of out-of-school suspensions for board violations during school year 2006 * 100) / (number of students during school year 2006)

- 1 Christle, C., Nelson, M., and Jolivet, K. (2004). *School Characteristics Related to the Use of Suspension*. Issues Briefs, no. 12. Available at <http://www.kysafeschools.org>. Accessed November 2005.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 May, D., and Chen, Y. (2006). *Kentucky 2006: Safe Schools Data Project*. Richmond, KY: Kentucky Center for School Safety.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Advancement Project and The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University (2000). *Opportunities Suspended: The Devastating Consequences of Zero Tolerance and School Discipline*. Available at <http://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu>. Accessed September 2006.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA (2007). *Youth Risk Taking Behavior: The Role of Schools*. Available at <http://smph.psych.ucla.edu>. Accessed September 2007.

Suspensions for law and board violations (number & rate per 100 students)

	SY 2006			
	Law violations		Board violations	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Kentucky	4,736	1	76,825	12
Adair Co.	23	1	345	12
Allen Co.	25	1	246	8
Anderson Co.	11	0	562	15
Ballard Co.	1	*	102	7
Barren Co.	19	0	243	6
Caverna Ind.	4	*	122	15
Glasgow Ind.	7	0	198	10
Bath Co.	9	0	272	13
Bell Co.	27	1	204	6
Middlesboro Ind.	1	*	103	6
Pineville Ind.	2	*	60	9
Boone Co.	212	1	1,765	10
Walton Verona Ind.	1	*	166	13
Bourbon Co.	56	2	93	3
Paris Ind.	12	2	84	11
Boyd Co.	24	1	217	6
Ashland Ind.	20	1	181	6
Fairview Ind.	2	*	52	7
Boyle Co.	11	0	372	13
Danville Ind.	3	*	184	10
Bracken Co.	2	*	136	11
Augusta Ind.	0	*	31	10
Breathitt Co.	3	*	411	18
Jackson Ind.	0	*	36	7
Breckinridge Co.	5	*	164	6
Cloverport Ind.	0	*	1	*
Bullitt Co.	52	0	1,168	10
Butler Co.	15	1	459	21
Caldwell Co.	12	1	435	21
Calloway Co.	16	1	282	9
Murray Ind.	3	*	88	5
Campbell Co.	31	1	214	4
Bellevue Ind.	7	1	146	17
Dayton Ind.	0	*	34	3
Fort Thomas Ind.	10	0	139	6
Newport Ind.	3	*	480	22
Silver Grove Ind.	0	*	39	12
Southgate Ind.	0	*	10	6
Carlisle Co.	13	2	24	3
Carroll Co.	4	*	117	6
Carter Co.	22	0	1,023	20
Casey Co.	11	0	482	19
Christian Co.	14	0	4,080	42
Clark Co.	26	0	896	16

	SY 2006			
	Law violations		Board violations	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Clay Co.	1	*	240	6
Clinton Co.	2	*	114	7
Crittenden Co.	5	*	113	8
Cumberland Co.	1	*	234	20
Daviess Co.	55	0	627	6
Owensboro Ind.	17	0	557	14
Edmonson Co.	15	1	71	3
Elliott Co.	7	1	215	18
Estill Co.	27	1	470	18
Fayette Co.	413	1	4,898	14
Fleming Co.	12	0	768	31
Floyd Co.	61	1	769	12
Franklin Co.	106	2	1,685	28
Frankfort Ind.	12	1	188	21
Fulton Co.	9	1	39	6
Fulton Ind.	2	*	67	14
Gallatin Co.	3	*	406	23
Garrard Co.	23	1	733	28
Grant Co.	42	1	563	14
Williamstown Ind.	4	*	63	7
Graves Co.	10	0	233	5
Mayfield Ind.	3	*	106	7
Grayson Co.	12	0	90	2
Green Co.	1	*	99	6
Greenup Co.	29	1	435	13
Raceland Ind.	15	1	43	4
Russell Ind.	5	*	176	8
Hancock Co.	4	*	29	2
Hardin Co.	76	1	1,842	13
Elizabethtown Ind.	0	*	327	14
West Point Ind.	0	*	5	*
Harlan Co.	4	*	1,279	27
Harlan Ind.	0	*	58	7
Harrison Co.	24	1	374	12
Hart Co.	6	0	352	14
Henderson Co.	89	1	702	10
Henry Co.	27	1	153	7
Eminence Ind.	0	*	7	1
Hickman Co.	2	*	23	3
Hopkins Co.	52	1	1,427	20
Dawson Springs Ind.	1	*	42	6
Jackson Co.	0	*	243	10
Jefferson Co.	1,292	1	12,144	13
Anchorage Ind.	0	*	2	*
Jessamine Co.	54	1	1,163	16

	SY 2006			
	Law violations		Board violations	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Johnson Co.	6	0	181	5
Paintsville Ind.	1	*	39	4
Kenton Co.	75	1	823	6
Beechwood Ind.	0	*	45	4
Covington Ind.	36	1	1,846	44
Erlanger-Elsmere Ind.	20	1	452	19
Ludlow Ind.	0	*	73	8
Knott Co.	12	0	367	14
Knox Co.	21	0	1,023	21
Barbourville Ind.	2	*	22	3
Larue Co.	13	1	161	6
Laurel Co.	19	0	367	4
East Bernstadt Ind.	0	*	4	*
Lawrence Co.	4	*	264	10
Lee Co.	1	*	333	27
Leslie Co.	7	0	89	4
Letcher Co.	15	0	227	7
Jenkins Ind.	2	*	121	19
Lewis Co.	14	1	281	11
Lincoln Co.	38	1	385	9
Livingston Co.	10	1	127	9
Logan Co.	4	*	75	2
Russellville Ind.	1	*	142	12
Lyon Co.	0	*	110	11
McCracken Co.	3	*	596	8
Paducah Ind.	1	*	1,210	39
McCreary Co.	1	*	789	23
McLean Co.	6	0	72	4
Madison Co.	55	1	659	6
Berea Ind.	5	*	112	10
Magoffin Co.	15	1	408	17
Marion Co.	0	*	351	11
Marshall Co.	46	1	176	4
Martin Co.	2	*	228	10
Mason Co.	31	1	464	16
Meade Co.	30	1	551	11
Menifee Co.	8	1	144	12
Mercer Co.	4	*	118	5
Burgin Ind.	5	*	12	3
Harrodsburg Ind.	3	*	136	15
Metcalfe Co.	11	1	153	9
Monroe Co.	10	0	101	5
Montgomery Co.	47	1	651	14
Morgan Co.	12	1	228	10
Muhlenberg Co.	44	1	167	3

	SY 2006			
	Law violations		Board violations	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Nelson Co.	26	1	279	6
Bardstown Ind.	12	1	210	9
Nicholas Co.	9	1	266	22
Ohio Co.	6	0	187	5
Oldham Co.	154	1	179	2
Owen Co.	1	*	236	12
Owsley Co.	4	*	78	10
Pendleton Co.	30	1	678	24
Perry Co.	3	*	665	15
Hazard Ind.	4	*	53	5
Pike Co.	33	0	346	3
Pikeville Ind.	3	*	72	6
Powell Co.	31	1	197	8
Pulaski Co.	61	1	692	9
Science Hill Ind.	0	*	7	2
Somerset Ind.	9	1	289	19
Robertson Co.	0	*	87	21
Rockcastle Co.	8	0	173	6
Rowan Co.	30	1	315	10
Russell Co.	2	*	76	3
Scott Co.	43	1	1,166	16
Shelby Co.	73	1	383	6
Simpson Co.	26	1	414	13
Spencer Co.	11	0	284	11
Taylor Co.	7	0	133	5
Campbellsville Ind.	2	*	102	9
Todd Co.	8	0	208	10
Trigg Co.	28	1	378	17
Trimble Co.	10	1	151	9
Union Co.	59	2	275	11
Warren Co.	22	0	438	4
Bowling Green Ind.	12	0	442	12
Washington Co.	3	*	153	8
Wayne Co.	26	1	277	11
Monticello Ind.	0	*	45	5
Webster Co.	6	0	145	7
Providence Ind.	2	*	42	11
Whitley Co.	34	1	311	6
Corbin Ind.	1	*	61	3
Williamsburg Ind.	3	*	44	6
Wolfe Co.	4	*	26	2
Woodford Co.	48	1	739	19

* Rates were not calculated for counties with fewer than 6 occurrences.