School Safety Practices Report, 2001-2002 School Year

Executive Summary

Pursuant to the Revised School Code, 1976 PA 451 (as amended), MCL 380.1, *et seq.*, Michigan school districts reported data regarding various safety practices and incidents of crime as well as the nature of expulsions in their districts for the 2001-2002 school year. Overall, the vast majority of Michigan schools reported a low number of crime-related incidents in 2001-2002 as well as a high prevalence of safety plans and practices intended to reduce or circumvent the possibility of future incidents.

Special points of interest in this report for the 2001-2002 school year include the following:

- The rates of juvenile crime in Michigan schools are drastically lower than juvenile crime rates within the state generally.
- Out of approximately 1.7 million students, there were 1,588 general education students (one tenth of one percent) for which some type of expulsion data was reported.
- Two hundred eighty-nine (36 percent) of Michigan school districts reported at least one expulsion.
- Physical assault, drugs or narcotics, and non-firearm related incidents together accounted for 58 percent of total reported expulsions.
- Approximately one quarter of all expulsions were reported to have involved students in the ninth grade.
- Compared with other ethnic groups, Black/African-American students were reported as receiving a greater percentage of long-term (180-day) expulsions. The percentage of Black/African-Americans reported as expelled was disproportionate relative to the percentage of Black/African-Americans in the general student population.
- There were four types of incidences for which the average per school was greater than one: physical assault, verbal assault, drug use, and alcohol/tobacco.
- For elementary, junior, and senior high schools, physical assault was the most frequently reported incident followed by verbal assault. The most frequently reported incident for special education centers and alternative education settings was verbal assault.
- Schools spent approximately $1,000,000 to cover the costs of vandalism, arson, or theft.

Introduction

Recent state and federal legislation has mandated a new level of stewardship of Michigan's student population. Along with measures of yearly academic progress, this stewardship now includes the acquisition of more extensive and accurate information regarding those students who struggle with school, who act out against its social aspects, and for whom expulsion is sometimes a consequence. In addition to the need for better tracking of such students, issues of school safety have also become a greater national concern; an issue important not only to parents but increasingly to students themselves.[1] There is a need for up-to-date information regarding various aspects of school safety. Do schools have response plans in place in the event of an emergency? Are preventive efforts being made to stop incidents before they occur? What disciplinary problems are actually most prevalent?

This report is the result of two separate data collections. Each collection seeks to address one of the previously mentioned issues: student expulsion and school safety. The first section pertains to various aspects of school safety. Michigan districts submitted building-level safety data for the 2001-2002 school year through the School Infrastructure Database (SID). The School Infrastructure Database collects general or aggregated data regarding the types of incidents that occurred in Michigan schools over the past year, as well as specific school safety procedures currently in place.

In contrast, Michigan school districts were required to submit student expulsion data for 2001-2002 through Michigan's Single Record Student Database (SRSD). The Single Record Student Database is Michigan's Internet-based vehicle for the collection of student-level (i.e., discrete or disaggregated) information such as student grade level, enrollment and exit dates, ethnicity, gender, teacher of record, and categorical program participation (e.g., special education, early childhood, migrant education, and limited English proficiency).

Why are School Crime and Safety Data Relevant?

According to a recently published survey,[2] when Michigan residents were asked to rate the importance of the various criteria they used in evaluating the quality of their schools, school safety ranked high. In fact, school safety (89 percent) ranked only one percentage point below "teacher quality" (90 percent) as a "very important" criterion by which Michigan residents evaluate the quality of their schools. Clearly, school safety – the provision of a safe and protective learning environment for the education of students – is an issue of great concern to Michigan residents.

Knowledge based on empirical evidence is usually the best means for analyzing problems and identifying solutions. However, prior to 1999, no means existed for systematically collecting school safety practices data from Michigan schools on a statewide basis. The Revised School Code, which mandated that Michigan school districts annually report expulsion as well as school safety data, was a direct attempt to address this problem. The need to provide the public with valid data on school safety is increasing, not only statewide, but also on a national scale. The recent federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) legislation directly recognizes that students' educational success goes hand in hand with a sense that their schools provide them with a learning environment that is safe and secure. Under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, it is a federal requirement that states report school safety statistics on a school-by-school basis. Such data will "play a pivotal role" in identifying potential or existing obstacles to improved school safety.[3]

In July of 2002, the U.S. Department of Education published a document entitled *Safety in Numbers: Collecting and Using Crime, Violence, and Discipline Incident Data to Make a Difference in Schools*.[4] As well as providing recommendations on how crime and safety data might be gathered, the document listed purposes such data were intended to serve. Chief among these was that, since a safe academic environment contributes to effective learning and teaching, such information should be used for maintaining and promoting a safe academic environment in schools.

Through school safety data, effective programs can be enhanced, while ineffective practices can be modified or discontinued. Schools can be proactive regarding issues of discipline and safety. Finally, such data can help schools make better use of limited physical, human, and financial resources.

Again, the first section of this report pertains to school safety data. It is based on data gathered through Michigan's School Infrastructure Database and is reported to the state at the building level. In contrast, the second section of the report presents student expulsion data as gathered through Michigan's Single Record Student Database. This data is reported to the state at the individual student level.

School Safety Practices

The following section reports data regarding the status of school safety practices in the state of Michigan for the 2001-2002 School Year. This data was gathered through the School Infrastructure Database.[5]

In October 1999, the *School Safety Response Guide,* a component of the Statewide School Safety Information Policy, was provided to each district in Michigan. The guide identifies reportable incidents and describes the protocol to be followed by building principals and staff when certain crime or safety related events occur. Whenever the protocol requires school personnel to call 911 or the local police/emergency unit regarding an incident described in the *School Safety Response Guide,* the incident is recorded and reported through the School Infrastructure Database. Incidents must be reported even though prosecution may

not have occurred. In addition to satisfying Michigan statutes as well as state and federal reporting requirements, the outcomes of this data submission are intended to:

- Help local and state-level policymakers develop appropriate prevention and intervention programs.
- Provide baseline data for continuous assessment used to revise and refine school safety programs.
- Assist schools in focusing on their most pressing safety issues.
- Foster partnerships among school districts, state agencies, community service agencies, law enforcement, and the media to prevent further violence.
- Ensure a safe learning environment for every student.

Table 1

Crime and Safety Response Rate by School Type				
School Type	Number Submitting Data	Number Failing to Submit Data	Total	Percent Submitted
Elementary	1,853	361	2,214	84%
Junior High/Middle	526	80	606	87%
Senior High	598	89	687	87%
State Total*	3,434	742	4,176	82%

Submission Response Rate

For 2001-2002, at least one school building in 688 of Michigan's 743 school districts responded to the School Infrastructure Database, including Public School Academies (PSAs). Response rates for the different school groups were 84 percent

for elementary schools, 87 percent for junior high/middle schools, and 87 percent for senior high schools (see Table 1). A total of 51,963 incidents were reported for the 2001-2002 school year (Appendix, Tables 2 and 3).

*State totals contain all educational settings, including those listed, as well as all other school facilities.

School Safety Plan

Michigan schools were asked to indicate ('Yes' or 'No') whether a written plan was in place that described the procedures to be followed during a critical incident (Appendix, Table 4). Of the 3,434 schools that responded, 82 percent indicated having a written plan for bomb scares or comparable threats (Figure 1). Likewise, 82 percent reported having a plan for natural disasters such as tornadoes or floods. Moreover, the majority of schools responding indicated having a written plan describing protocols to be followed in the event of a shooting (75 percent), hostage taking (73 percent) and riots or large-scale fights (70 percent).
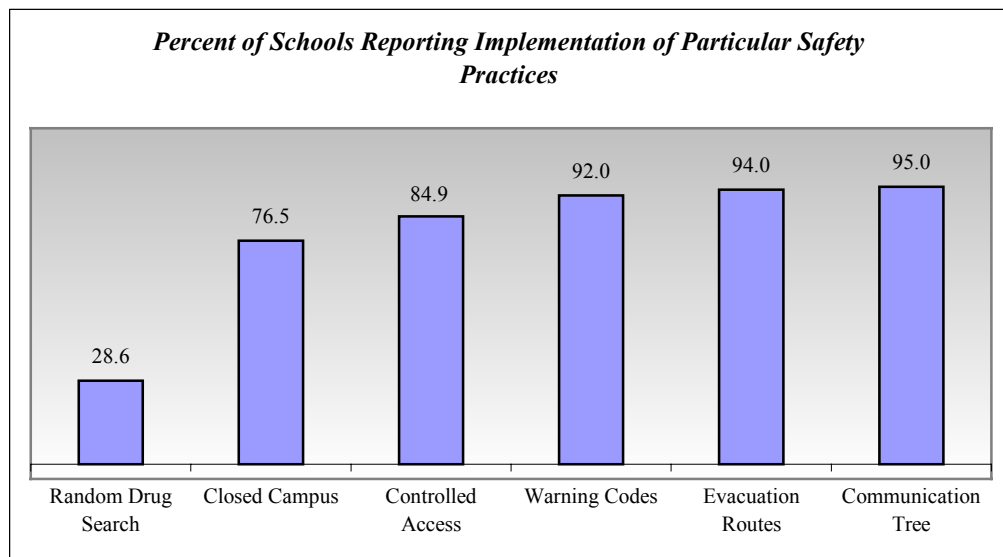
Figure 1

Percent of Schools with Safety Plans by Type of Incident and Educational Setting
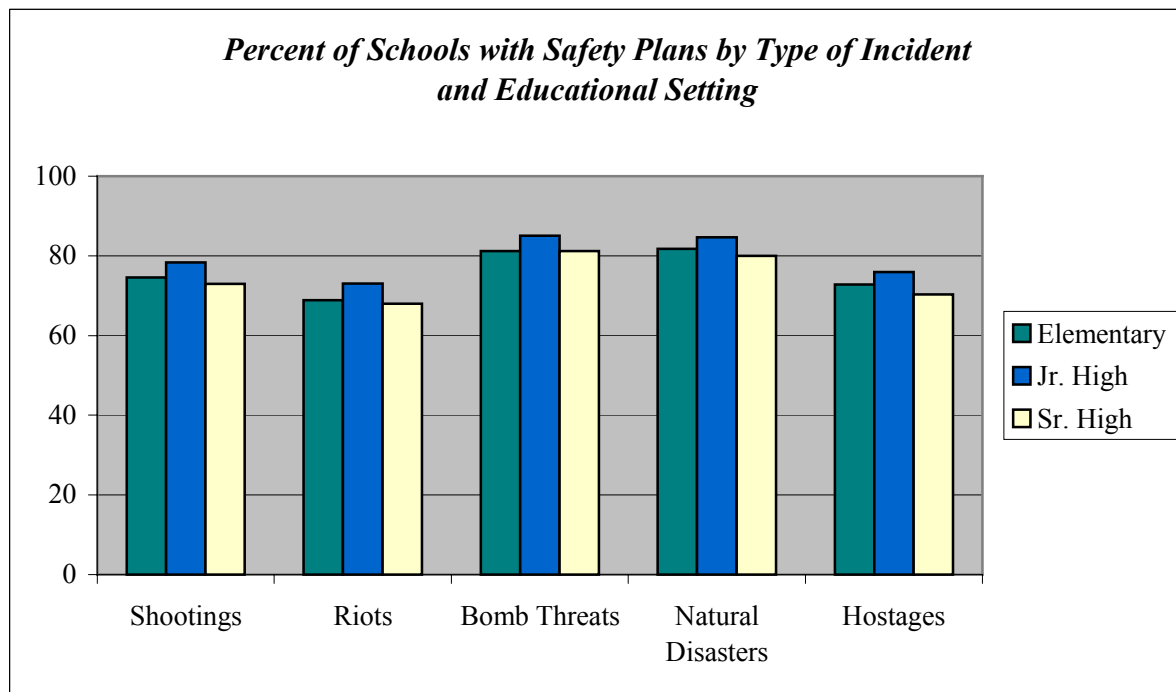
	Shootings	Riots	Bomb Threats	Natural Disasters	Hostages
Elementary	74.6%	68.9%	81.2%	81.7%	72.9%
Jr. High	78.4%	73.1%	85.0%	84.7%	76.0%
Sr. High	73.0%	68.0%	81.2%	80.0%	70.3%

School Safety Practices

Michigan's public schools implemented a variety of school safety practices during the 2001-2002 academic year. Schools were to indicate ('Yes' or 'No') whether a particular safety practice had been implemented in their school over the prior academic year. Ninety-five percent of the schools surveyed indicated having in place an emergency communication tree or plan. More than 94 percent of schools responding reported that tactical evacuation routes for students or entry routes for emergency support teams were in place. Warning codes used to alert faculty of a critical incident were reported for 92 percent of the schools responding. The prevalence of additional safety practices is illustrated in Figure 2. For a complete list, see Appendix, Table 5.

Figure 2

Percent of Schools Reporting Implementation of Particular Safety Practices

Random Drug Search	Closed Campus	Controlled Access	Warning Codes	Evacuation Routes	Communication Tree
28.6	76.5	84.9	92.0	94.0	95.0

School Violence Prevention Programs

Schools reported conducting many types of formal programs intended to prevent or reduce violence in schools (Appendix, Table 6). Schools reported that they had implemented the following programs over the prior school year:

- Revised or reviewed school-wide discipline policy (91 percent).
- Behavior modification/intervention with students (88 percent).
- Training and assistance in classroom management to teachers (85 percent).
- Group counseling (social work) or therapeutic activity for students (84 percent).
- Programs that promote social integration among student (81 percent).
- Conflict resolution training to staff and students (74 percent).

However, less than 50 percent of schools reported implementing the following programs:

- A drug prevention service/program (49 percent).
- Paid law enforcement or security service (41 percent).
- Peer mediation (student court) in resolving conduct problems (37 percent).
- Architectural or environmental modifications to reduce crime or violence (33 percent).
- A hotline for students to report problems (32 percent).

School Disciplinary Problems

Michigan schools were asked to indicate ['High (greater than 75 percent),' 'Medium' (between 25 percent and 75 percent) or 'Low' (less than 25 percent)] how often different types of disciplinary problems occurred in their schools over the past year. The disciplinary problems in Table 2 had a higher rate of occurrence than other disciplinary problems in the survey. With the exception of those incidents listed in Table 2, over 95 percent of those responding indicated a 'Low' frequency of occurrence with regard to other crime and safety events. (See the Appendix, Table 7 for a complete list of the events surveyed.)

Table 2

Event	% Reporting 'Low' number of occurrences	% Reporting 'Medium' number of occurrences	% Reporting 'High' number of occurrences
Bullying	86.9%	11.4%	0.5%
Disrespect for teachers	92.1%	5.7%	0.9%
Misbehavior on bus	87.2%	11.0%	0.5%
Physical Attacks/Fighting	92.4%	5.7%	0.6%
Social tensions	89.4%	8.4%	1.0%
Student insubordination	87.6%	9.3%	1.8%
Verbal abuse of teachers	93.8%	4.2%	0.7%

Property Crimes

Schools also reported an estimate of the funds needed to repair vandalism, arson, or theft of school property during the past academic year (Table 3). Michigan schools collectively spent an estimated total of $1.05 million to repair the vandalism or destruction of school property over the past school year.

Table 3

	Elementary School	Jr. High/ Middle School[1]	Senior High School	Alternative Ed. Center	Special Ed. Center	State Totals[2]
Average Cost of Property Damage	$177	$429	$640	$133	$51	$305
Total Cost of Property Damage	$328,229	$224,211	$381,658	$21,606	$5,504	$1,046,560

1 Junior High Schools and Middle Schools Combined.

2 State totals will sum to an amount greater than the columns to the left. State totals contain all educational settings in addition to those listed here. These include, for example, bus garages, maintenance facilities, and administrative offices.

Other Incidents

For each type of incident, schools were requested to provide the number times such an incident had occurred in their school in the past year. There were only four types of incidents for which the average across schools exceeded one occurrence. These were (a) physical assault, (b) verbal assault, (c) drug use or possession, and (d) alcohol or tobacco possession.

These four categories may be seen in terms of educational setting: elementary, junior high, senior high, special education centers, alternative high schools, and vocational

education centers (Figure 3). In general, differences between settings appeared to be greatest in the areas of physical assault and verbal assault. Regarding physical assault, junior high schools reported an average of 10.38 incidents for 2001-2002, followed by high schools with 7.92. This would seem to be in agreement with the Single Record Student Database expulsion data, which found the highest expulsion rates to center around the ninth grade.

Figure 3

Average # of Incidents by Educational Setting
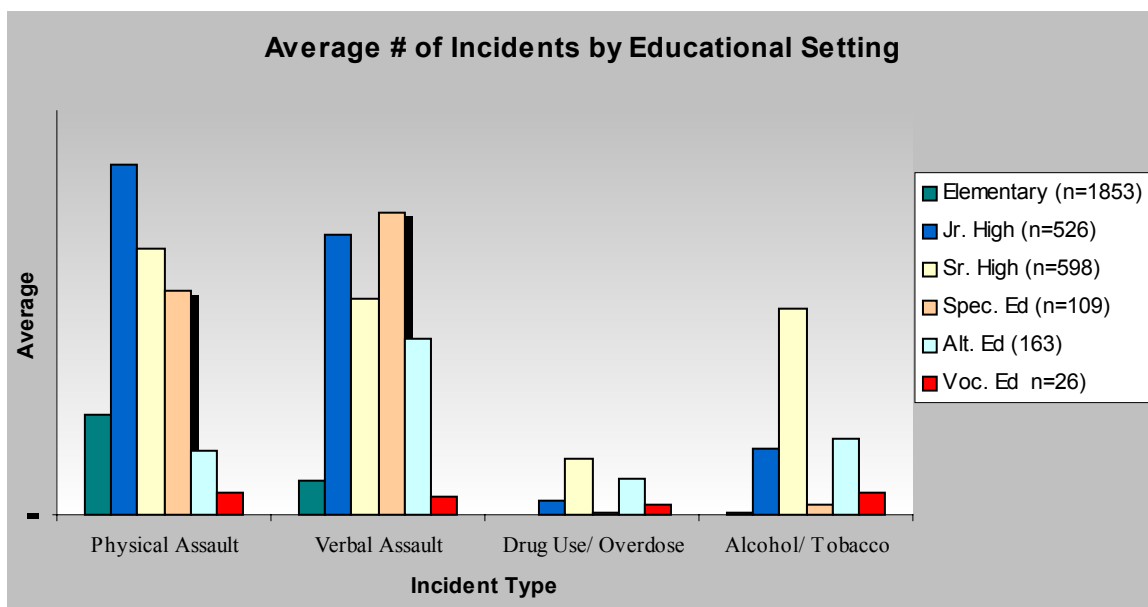
School Type	Physical Assault	Verbal Assault	Drug Use/ Overdose	Alcohol/ Tobacco
Elementary (n=1853)	2.96	1.03	0.01	0.03
Jr. High (n=526)	10.38	8.30	0.44	1.98
Sr. High (n=598)	7.92	6.39	1.68	6.11
Spec. Ed (109)	6.64	8.96	0.08	0.29
Alt. Ed (n=163)	1.90	5.22	1.04	2.23
Voc. Ed (26)	0.65	0.54	0.27	0.65

NOTE: Variation exits between Michigan school districts in the grades encompassed by elementary, junior high, or senior high school settings. For example, some elementary schools are kindergarten through fifth grade; some are kindergarten through sixth grade. Some junior high settings cover grades six through eight while others include only grades seven through eight.

Special education settings reported an average of 6.64 physical assaults, while these numbers were 2.96 and 1.90 for elementary and alternative education settings, respectively. For verbal assault, special education centers reported the greatest average number of incidents (8.96) followed closely by junior high school (8.30) and high school (6.39) settings.

Alternative education settings reported an average of 5.22 verbal assault incidences for 2001-2002. Regarding drug use, high schools had the highest average number of incidents, although still relatively low (1.68). The average number of reported drug violations for alternative schools was 1.04. In contrast, high schools reported an average of 6.11 alcohol and tobacco violations, while the average number of such violations for junior high and alternative education settings was fairly equal (1.98 and 2.23, respectively).

Student Expulsion

Background

There are nine fields in the Single Record Student Database that capture student expulsion data (for example, type of incident, date expulsion occurred, length of expulsion, follow-up after expulsion). According to the Revised School Code, expulsions occur when the local board of education (or its designee) takes formal action to remove a student from contact with the general student population for a specific length of time. Suspension for lesser offenses may involve the separation of a student from a class, subject, or activity for up to one day. The imposition and length of expulsion depends on the severity of incident for which the student is being disciplined. While administrators have the option of expelling students for a discretionary length of time as a result of "gross misdemeanor" (e.g., the possession of alcohol or drugs) or "persistent disobedience," expulsions of up to 180 days are mandatory for students guilty of physical assault against another student.[6] Permanent expulsions are mandated for incidents that involve firearms or other dangerous weapons, physical assault against a school employee, arson, or criminal sexual misconduct. A student who is officially expelled is considered expelled

from all public schools in the state. Parents or guardians are responsible for obtaining alternative educational resources during the expulsion. However, the primary intent of expulsion is not to deprive the expelled student of educational resources but for safety reasons, to separate them from the general student population. Therefore, some expelled students may be permitted to attend a district-operated alternative school for disciplined students if one is available. The district also has the option of providing educational services to the student within his or her home. In most cases, the Revised School Code contains options under which students who have been permanently expelled may petition the expelling school board for reinstatement.

This section of the report presents information on expulsion obtained through the Single Record Student Database across three separate submissions: Fall 2001, Spring 2002, and End of Year 2002. Although some figures and tables appear in the body of the report, more detailed tables can be found in the Appendix.

Expulsion Rates

According to headcount data, there were approximately 1,766,367 students in Michigan's public schools in 2001-02. There were 1,588 (0.10 percent, or one-tenth of one percent) reported expulsions across the three 2001-2002 Single Record Student Database submissions. Of the 792 districts that reported in at least one of the three submissions, 289 districts (36

percent) reported at least one expulsion (see Table 9 in the Appendix for exact participation rates).

Of the approximately 3,713 schools in the state, 538 (14.5 percent) reported at least one expulsion. This included 35 public school academies.[7]

Incident Types

[NOTE: In this report, because districts did not consistently report some fields, the total numbers may vary from one analysis to another, depending on the field being analyzed.] There were 1,525 expulsions for which an incident type was reported. Of these, there were eleven incident types for which a total of 20 or more students were expelled statewide (Figure 4). For a complete list of incident types and descriptions, see Table 10 in the Appendix. The incident type for which the most students were reported as having been expelled was "Physical Assault." Physical assault is defined in Revised School Code as "intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical harm to another through force or violence." There were 350 students in this category (22 percent of the total number of expelled students). Seventy-six percent (266) of assaults were reported to have another student as the victim (for further analysis of victim types, see Table 12 in the Appendix). The category of physical assault was followed closely by violation of laws regarding the use or dissemination of drugs (not including alcohol, a separate category). There were 304 (19.1 percent) expelled students in this category.[8] A number of expelled students (260 or 16.4 percent) were reported for the use of dangerous weapons other than firearms. These included, for example, any type of knife with a blade exceeding three inches, an iron bar, or brass knuckles. Physical assault, drugs/narcotics, and weapons other than firearms accounted for 58 percent of the total general expulsions for the state. A complete list of statewide incident counts is contained in Table 11 in the Appendix.

Figure 4

Incident Types (N= 1,525)
(Total of 20 and Greater)
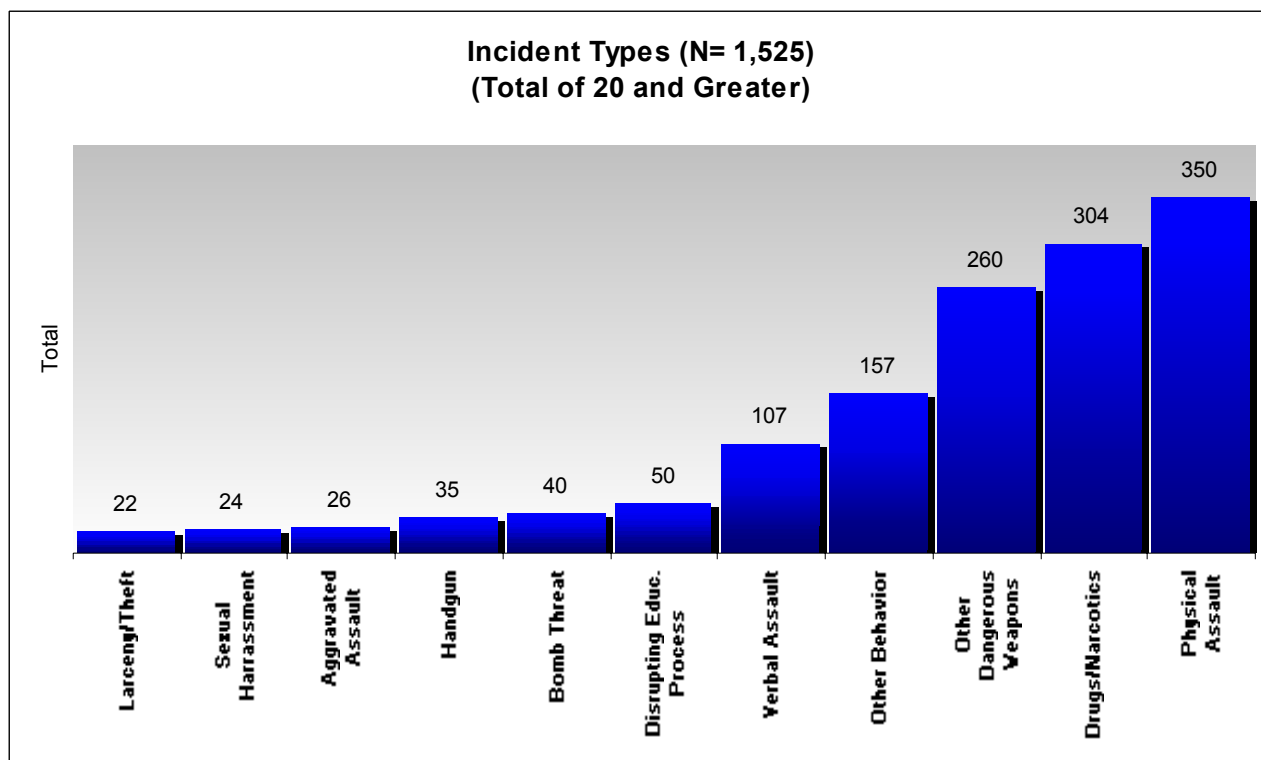
Incident Type, Comparisons with Statewide Juvenile Arrest Totals

There were four incident types in the Single Record Student Database whose descriptions are similar to incident types for which Michigan's Criminal Justice Information Center maintains statewide juvenile arrest records: larceny, narcotics, assault (aggravated), assault (non-aggravated), and violation of liquor laws. The numbers of statewide juvenile arrests for 2001 in these categories were compared to the number of incidents for which students were reported in the 2001-2002 Single Record Student Database as having been expelled. From this comparison, it would appear that such incidents are much more
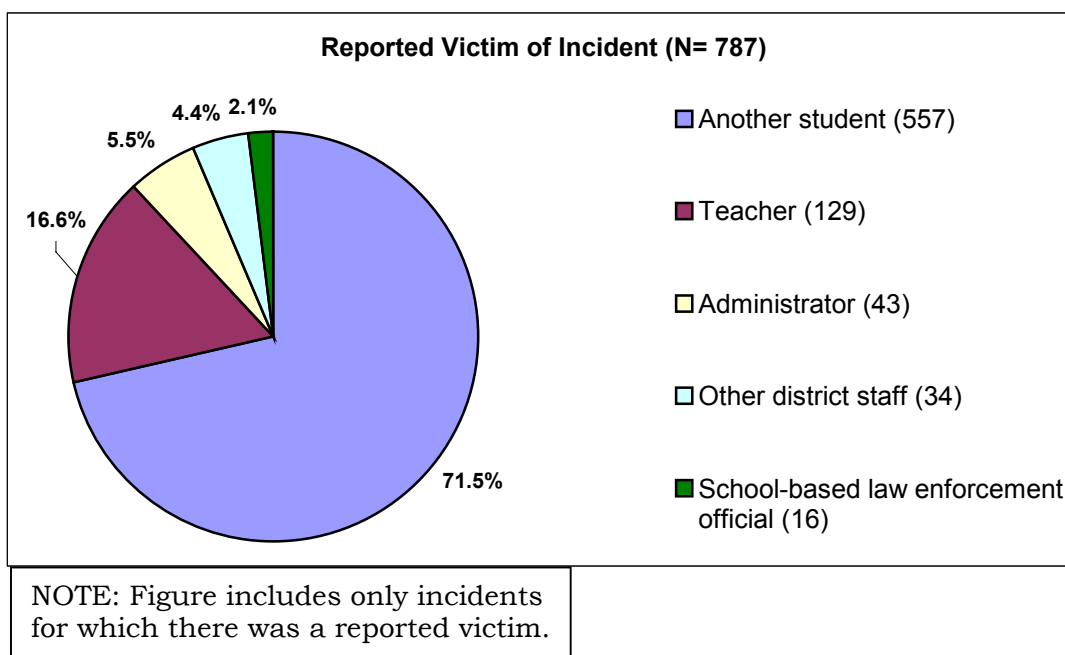
likely to occur away from school than during school (Table 11 in the Appendix). Such results are in line with national findings.[9]

Table 4   Number of incidents leading to expulsion versus number of juvenile arrests statewide.

	Larceny	Assault (Agg)	Assault (Non-Agg)	Drugs	Liquor
Schools	22	26	350	304	18
State	6,996	850	2,877	1,977	2,876

Victims

Figure 5

Reported Victim of Incident (N= 787)

- Another student (557)
- Teacher (129)
- Administrator (43)
- Other district staff (34)
- School-based law enforcement official (16)

71.5%
16.6%
5.5%
4.4%
2.1%

NOTE: Figure includes only incidents for which there was a reported victim.

Seven hundred and thirty-eight (46.5 percent) of all incidents for 2001-2002 were reported as having had "no victim." Approximately three-quarters (528 or 71.5 percent) of these "no victim" incidents could be accounted for by three categories: drugs/narcotics (31.4 percent), weapons other than firearms (27.5 percent), and behaviors listed as "other" (12.6 percent).

The more precise interpretation of "no victim" would probably be no *specific* victim, as in the case of a bomb threat. The fact that the majority of incidents in the *Other Dangerous Weapon* (78.1 percent) and *Drug/Narcotic* (76.3 percent) categories were reported as "no victim" may be the result of the majority of transgressions in these categories being more passive in nature. That is, according to an informal survey of districts, "no victim" indicated that these likely had to do with incidents wherein students were discovered (through a locker search or the report of another student, for example) to have had a drug or weapon in their possession. On the other hand, in the one

out of five cases (20 percent) in which a student was revealed to possess a dangerous weapon and there was a reported victim, the data suggest that the student may have actually wielded that weapon in such a manner as to lead to his or her expulsion.

Regarding the 787 expulsions for which a specific victim was reported, the greatest percentage were reported to have been against another student (Figure 5). This was followed by the victim categories of teacher, administrator, other district staff, and school-based law enforcement. (For an analysis of victims by incident type, see Table 12 in the Appendix.)

Victim by Grade Level

For exemplification purposes, students expelled from the sixth, ninth, and twelfth grade were tabulated according to the four most frequently reported victim types. In Figure 6, it is obvious that there is a sharp increase between sixth and ninth grades in the number of student-to-

student incidents that lead to expulsion. It would also appear that fewer expulsions were the result of attacks against a teacher for twelfth graders relative to other victim types than for sixth or ninth graders. (Appendix, Table 13.)

Figure 6
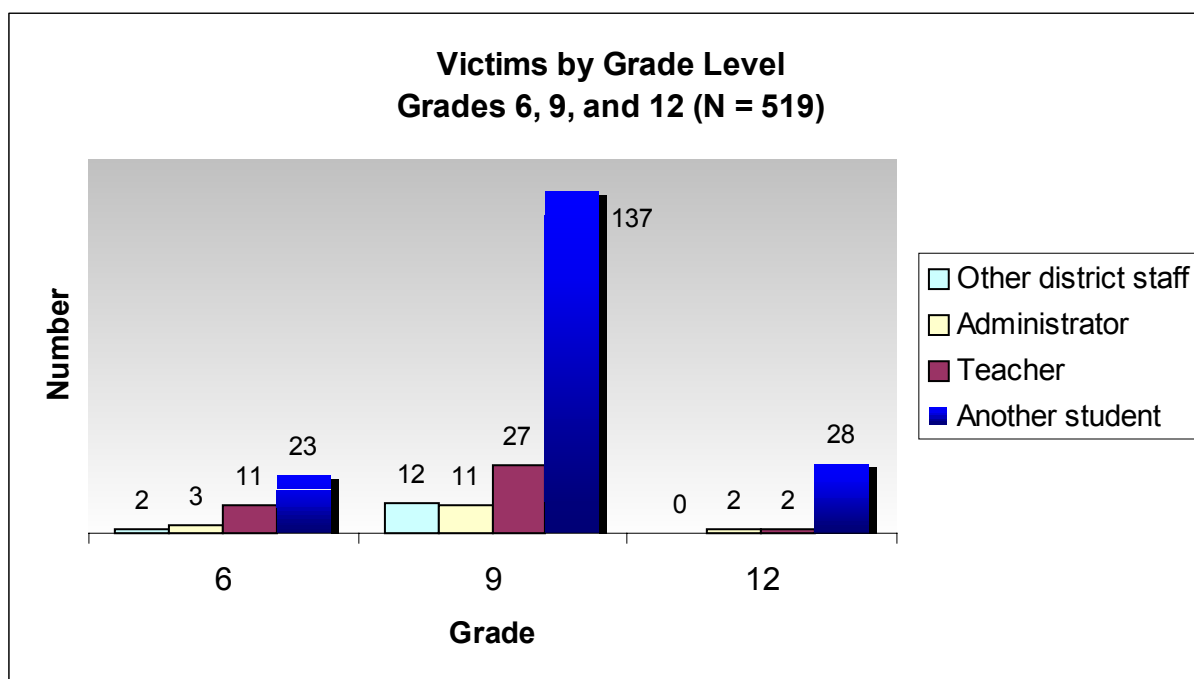
Age

Student age at the time of expulsion was rounded to the nearest whole number. Using this number for student age, it was found that the number of total expulsions (18) for students age 8 and younger was very low (Figure 7). This accounted for only one percent of total expulsions, while the number of expulsions (231) for those students age 9 through 13 accounted for 14 percent. The number of expulsions by age increased steadily until age 16, after which there was a marked decrease. Sixteen-year-olds accounted for the greatest percentage (19.3 percent) of all expulsions.

For further analysis, students were then divided broadly into four age categories: 0-8, 9-13, 14-17, and 18 or older. These correspond roughly to the developmental periods of childhood, pre-adolescence, adolescence, and the beginning of young adulthood. There were 1071 (72 percent) students who fell within the 14-to-17-year-old category (see Figure 8). The difference between the number of students ages 14-17 that were expelled and those in the next lowest (9-13) and next highest (18 and older) age groups was marked. Fourteen percent (231) of those expelled were between the ages of 9 and 13 while a slightly smaller percentage (13 percent) were age 18 or older.

Figure 9 (next page) compares the distribution of the four age groups in the general student population[10] to the distribution of the age groups for those students expelled in 2001-2002. From this figure, one can see that a disproportionate number of those in the 14-17 age group received expulsions. Further, if one combines the two older groups, although together they comprise only 39 percent of the total student population, almost 80 percent of all expulsions could be accounted for by those 14 years of age and older.
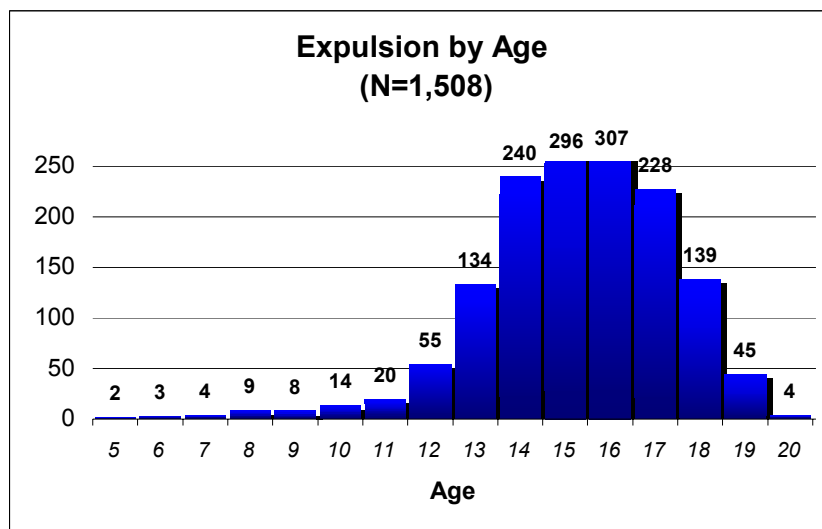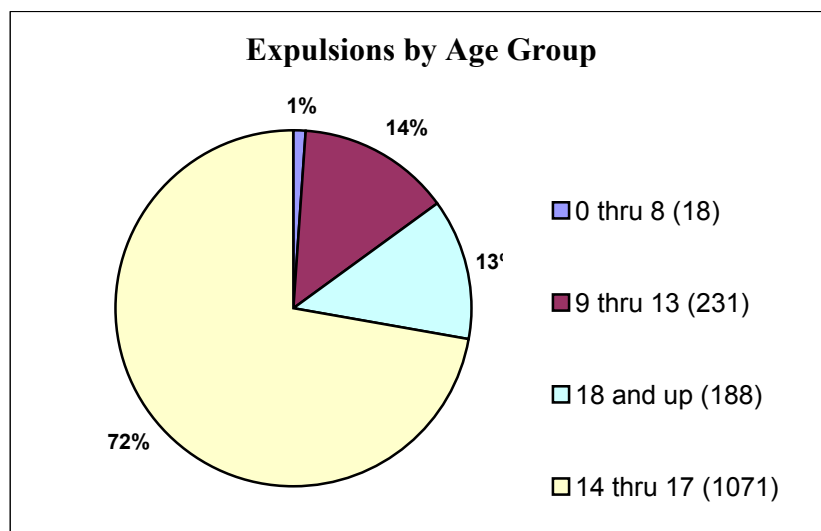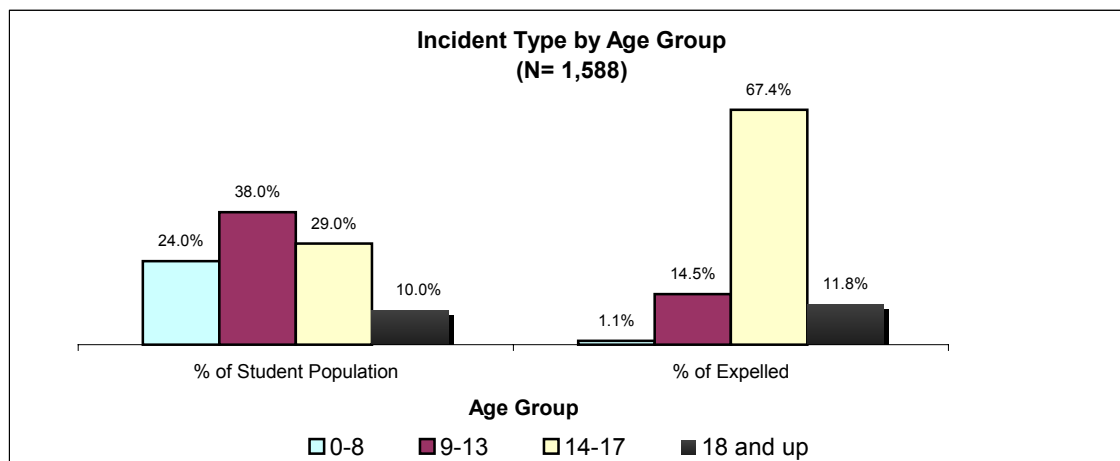
Figure 7

Figure 8

Of course, one important explanation for the above findings is likely to point to developmental factors. Physically, students ages 14 through 17 are experiencing puberty-related change. Socially, mid-adolescence is a time for asserting and defining one's own identity (Erikson, 1950[11]). For some, this is accomplished through acts of rebellion. Regarding the decrease for

ages 17, 18, and beyond (refer to Figure 4, page 11), although the developmental factors discussed may decrease in importance over time, it is also true that the older students may represent a more "self-selected" group. That is, by the time they have reached the age of 17 and beyond, those students who more likely to be expelled *have* been expelled or dropped out and are no longer attending a particular school.
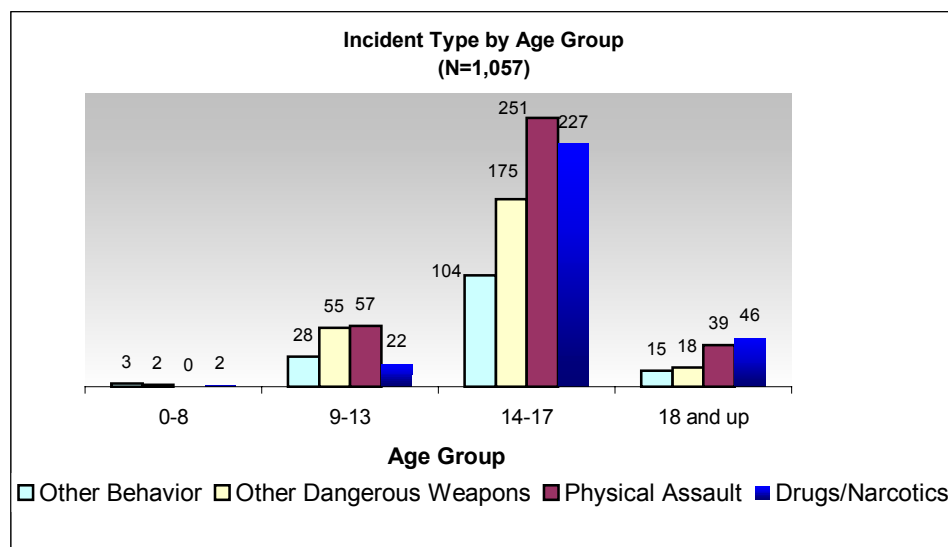
Figure 9

Incident Type by Age Group
(N= 1,588)

Incident Type by Age Group

Looking at the type of incidents that were reported for the four age groups previously defined (Figure 10), physical assaults accounted for the greatest number of expulsions (57) in the 9-to-13 year age group. This was followed closely by expulsions stemming from "other" dangerous weapons (55). Similarly, physical assault was the most frequently reported category (251) for the 14-to-17 year age group. This was followed by drugs/narcotics (227). For those age 18 and above, this order was slightly reversed, with drug/narcotic related expulsions (46) reported most frequently, followed by expulsions stemming from physical assault (39).

Figure 10

Incident Type by Age Group
(N=1,057)

Grade[12]

The influence of age and development on rates of expulsion is also evident if one looks at the number of expulsions by grade (Figure 8, page 14). Students in ninth grade accounted for over one-fourth of all expulsions for 2001-2002. Of course, ninth grade can include a range of ages (see Table 5 for age ranges of expelled ninth graders).

Another important factor may be that, in many school systems, ninth grade represents the transition from junior or middle school to high school, a transition that may initially prove difficult for some. The fact that most students eventually adjust may be borne out by the 10 percent drop in expulsion rates between ninth grade and tenth grade (Figure 11). Of course, as previously mentioned, this may also suggest that older grades represent an increasingly self-selected group. That is, a student who is at risk for expulsion is most likely to be expelled in the
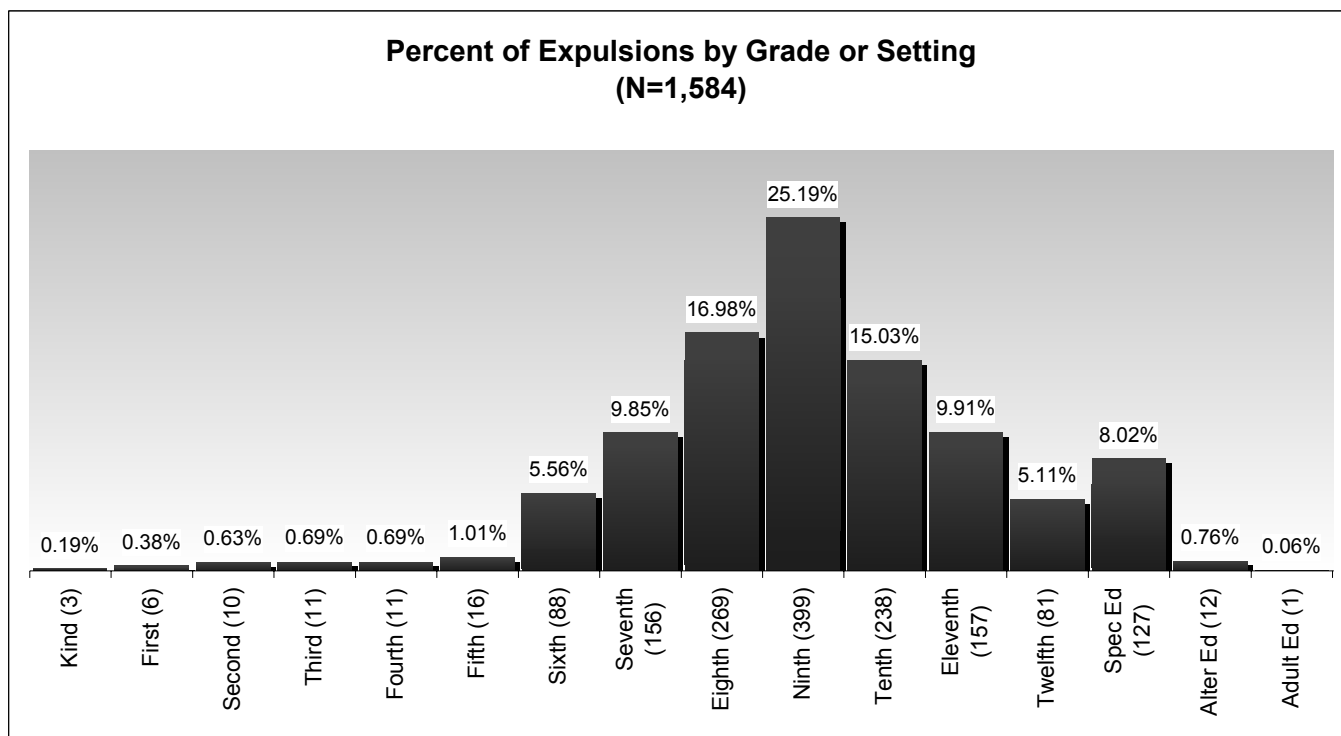
ninth grade, with this likelihood decreasing as the student moves into the higher grades.

Table 5

Age Range of Students Expelled in Ninth Grade

Age	Frequency
14	36
15	157
16	144
17	47
18	6

Figure 11

Percent of Expulsions by Grade or Setting (N=1,584)

Grade/Setting	Percent
Kind (3)	0.19%
First (6)	0.38%
Second (10)	0.63%
Third (11)	0.69%
Fourth (11)	0.69%
Fifth (16)	1.01%
Sixth (88)	5.56%
Seventh (156)	9.85%
Eighth (269)	16.98%
Ninth (399)	25.19%
Tenth (238)	15.03%
Eleventh (157)	9.91%
Twelfth (81)	5.11%
Spec Ed (127)	8.02%
Alter Ed (12)	0.76%
Adult Ed (1)	0.06%

Expulsion Length

Schools were asked to report the length of student expulsions in number of days. As explained previously, expulsion length is discretionary for certain types of incidents (disruption of the educational process, for example) while 180 days was the mandatory expulsion length for more severe types of incidents (e.g., physical assault against another student). Finally, permanent expulsions were mandatory for assault against a faculty member, possession of a weapon or a firearm, arson, or criminal sexual behavior.

Districts reported a total of 737 expulsions with a length of less than 180 days. These discretionary or short-term expulsions ranged from one to 179 days with an average of 60 days.[13] For analysis, the group of short-term expulsions was divided into ranges of 10 (Figure 12). For those expulsions with a length under 180 days, the most frequently reported expulsion range was from 10 to 19 days (16.1 percent of short-term expulsions), with the average for this range being 13.14 days. The next most frequent range of expulsion in the short-term group was from 90 to 99 days. There

were 103 expulsions falling within this range (14 percent of short-term expulsions) followed by those expelled for 20 to 29 days and then those expelled for 60 to 69 days. From Figure 9, page 15, it is apparent that aside from students who appeared to be expelled for a period of around two weeks (the majority), discretionary expulsion lengths were prescribed to students in terms of months, three months being the most frequent length, followed by one month then two months. Only six students were reported as having been expelled for a period of between 170 to 179 days (0.8 percent).

There were 737 expulsions (46.4 percent of total) for which a short-term period of expulsion was reported, while 525 expulsions (33.1 percent of total) were for a length of exactly 180 days. The number of students reported having received permanent expulsions was 214 (13.5 percent). Finally, 64 students were reported with an expulsion length of '0'. Although the meaning of '0' in terms of expulsion length is unclear, it is possible that some of these were attempts to document brief suspensions rather than actual expulsions.
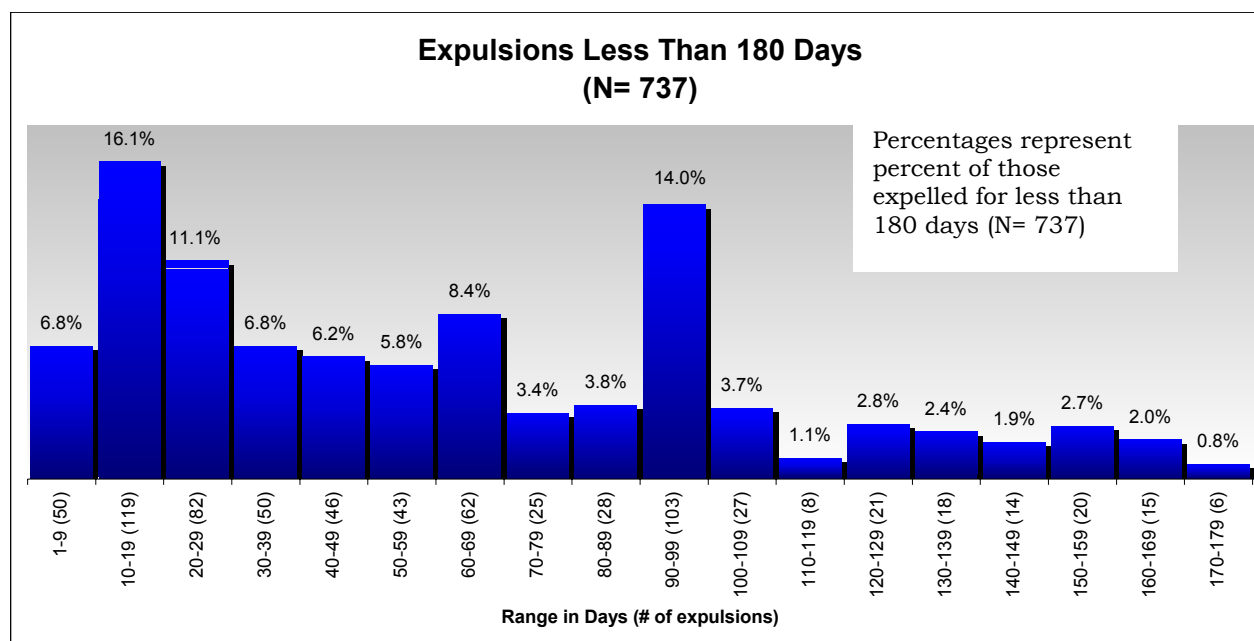
Figure 12

Table 6

Ten Most Frequently Occurring
Incident Types by Length of Expulsion in Days

Short-Term		Long-Term		Permanent	
Drugs/ Narcotics	171	Physical Assault	148	Drugs/ Narcotics	45
Physical Assault	158	Other Dangerous Weapons	137	Other Behavior	42
Other Dangerous Weapons	97	Drugs/ Narcotics	78	Physical Assault	33
Other Behavior	86	Verbal Assault	29	Other Dangerous Weapons	20
Verbal Assault	67	Handgun	25	Disrupting Educ. Process	15
Disrupting Educ. Process	26	Bomb Threat	23	Verbal Assault	8
Truancy	16	Other Behavior	19	Sexual Harrassment	8
Agg/Felon. Assault	12	Sexual Assault	10	Agg/Felon. Assault	7
Larceny/Theft	12	Agg/Felon. Assault	7	Larceny/Theft	6
Bomb Threat	12	Sexual Harrassment	6	Truancy	5

Expulsions could therefore be classified into three different lengths: short-term (discretionary), long-term (180-day), and permanent. Table 6 provides a separate listing of the ten most frequently reported types of incidents within each of three expulsion length categories. The incident type reported most frequently for short-term expulsions were those related to the use or possession of drugs or narcotics, followed by physical assault and "other dangerous weapons." Long-term (180-day) expulsions appeared most frequently to be the result of physical assault, followed closely by "other dangerous weapons," with drug related expulsions ranking third. For those receiving permanent expulsions, drugs or narcotics were reported most frequently, followed by "other behavior" and physical assault.
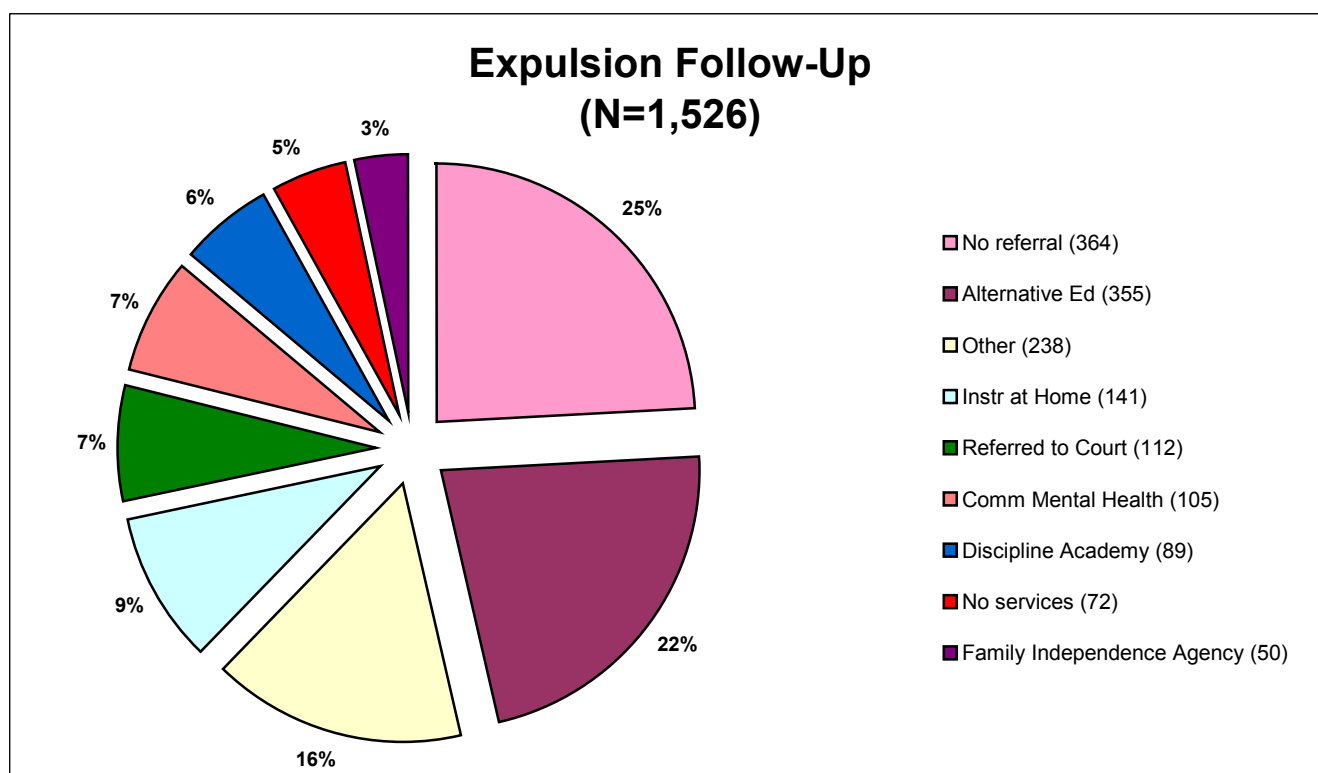
These classifications would appear to be somewhat out of compliance with the Revised School Code. For example, there is no mandatory permanent expulsion in the Revised School Code for drugs or narcotics, yet this is the most frequently reported incident type for those students who were permanently expelled. On the other hand, although possession of dangerous weapons that fall into the "other" category (non-firearms such as knives) constitutes grounds for automatic permanent expulsion under the school code, it would seem that the majority of weapon-related expulsions are actually "long-term" (180-day) rather than permanent in nature. It may be that this lack of alignment between these results and the Revised School Code reflect both variation between districts in how the school code is interpreted, how strictly it is followed, as well as differences between districts in the particular behaviors that reach the threshold for expulsion.

Expulsion Follow-up

Schools were asked to report the nature of referrals that had been provided to expel students. In 22.4 percent of the cases (Figure 13), students who were expelled were referred to an alternative setting. This was defined as a "school for expelled students." An equal percentage of students were reported as expelled without a referral. The "other" category constituted 15 percent of referrals, while 7.1 percent were referred to the court system, implying that some type of legal consequence had ensued.

Figure 13

Expulsion Follow-Up
(N=1,526)

Legend:
- No referral (364)
- Alternative Ed (355)
- Other (238)
- Instr at Home (141)
- Referred to Court (112)
- Comm Mental Health (105)
- Discipline Academy (89)
- No services (72)
- Family Independence Agency (50)

Gender

In general, there was a three-to-one ratio between the number of expelled males and females in 2001-2002; 1172 males (73.8 percent of the total number of expelled students) received expulsions as compared with 414 females (26.1 percent). The nature of the expulsions varied between the sexes on several factors, however.

In terms of expulsions length, an equal percentage of males (49.7 percent) and females (50.5 percent) received short-term expulsions (Figure 14). In terms of long-term expulsions, 37.2 percent of expelled females and 35.0 percent of expelled males were expelled for 180 days. The situation reversed itself slightly for permanent expulsions. A greater percentage of expelled males (15.3 percent) were reported as permanently expelled than the percentage of

females receiving this same consequence (12.2 percent).

The percentages of each gender that were expelled within each expulsion length were very similar for all age groups, with a slightly greater percentage of the expelled females than males falling into the two youngest age groups. For ages 14-17, 74.5 percent (n=284) of the expelled females fell into this age group as compared with 69.8 percent for males (n=787). The situation reversed itself somewhat for expelled students who were 18 years of age and older. Fourteen percent of the expelled males were reported as being in this age group (n=158) as compared with 7.9 percent (n=30) of the expelled females.

Looking at the types of incidences for which each gender was expelled, the various incident types were collapsed into five categories of

Figure 14

Percent Expelled Within Gender by Expulsion Length (N=1,476)
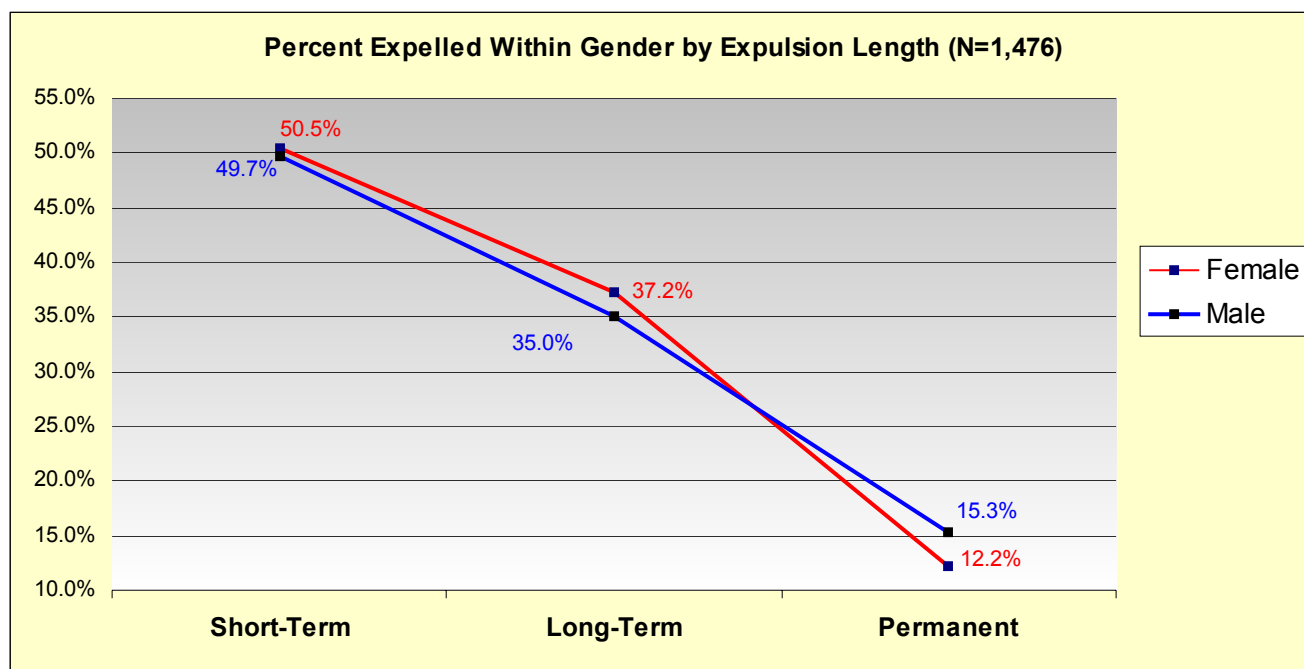
	Short-term	Long-term	Permanent
Male	547	385	168
Females	190	140	46

incident Appendix, Table 10): violence, weapons, substances, behaviors, and bias incidents. These categories were then used to analyze differences in gender in reported incident types. (Since only six students, all male, were expelled for an incident of bias, these were not included in the analysis.)

For expelled females, 41.7 percent were reported as involved in incidences of violence relative to 34.0 percent of expelled males (Figure 15). A greater percentage of expelled females

(22.9 percent) were also expelled for weapons than were males (19.6 percent). The same was true for prohibited behaviors, where these figures were 22.9 percent and 21.8 percent, respectively. However, a much larger percentage of expelled males (24.0 percent) were reported as having been the result of substance-related incidents than the percentage of expelled females disciplined for this same offense (12.5 percent).

Figure 15

Percent Expelled Within Gender By Incident Type (N=1,525)
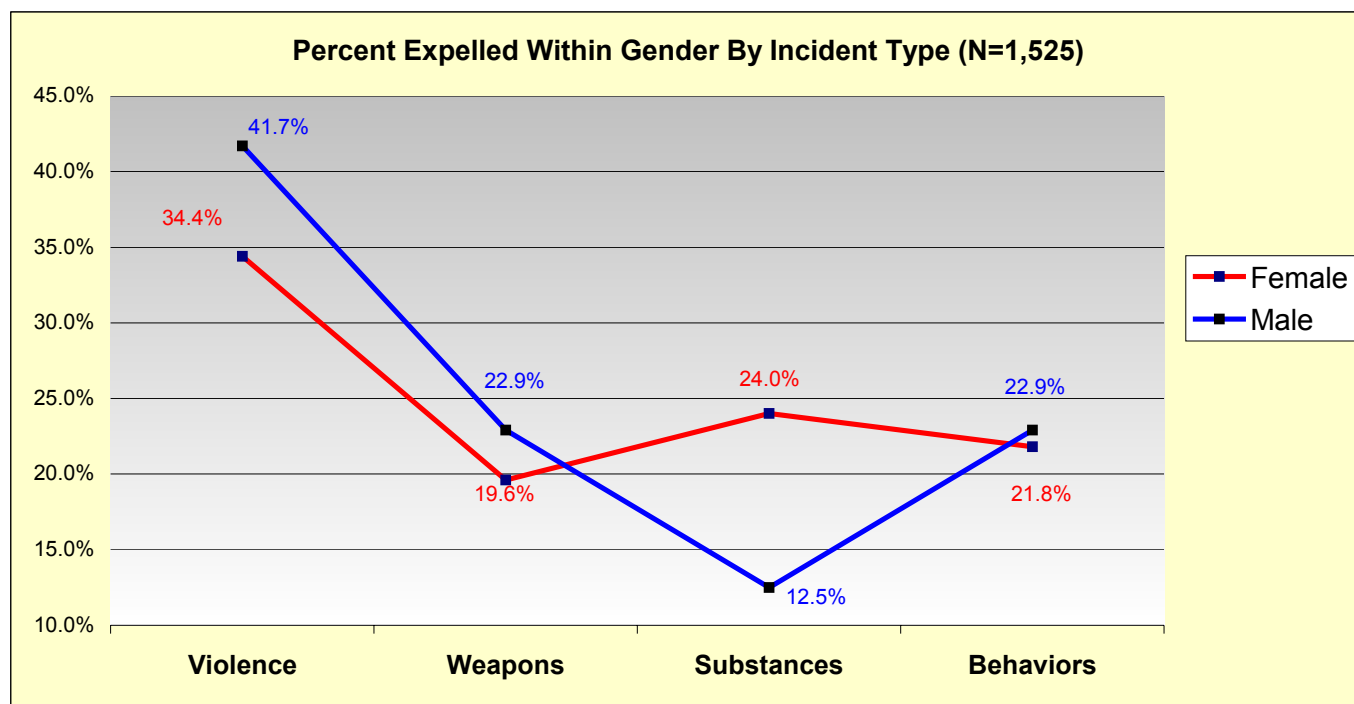
	Violence	Weapons	Substances	Behaviors
Males	388	224	274	249
Females	160	88	48	88

Ethnicity

Districts were asked to report student ethnicity. Over half of those expelled (Table 7) indicated that they were White. Thirty-nine percent of expelled students were reported as Black/African American, followed by 4.7 percent who were reported as Hispanic. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, and multiracial students together accounted for only 3.4 percent of all expulsions. Because of their statistically small numbers, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and multiracial students were not included in subsequent statistical analyses.

Ethnicity by Gender

For those ethnic groups with expulsions numbering greater than ten, it was possible to compare the percent of each ethnic group that were male versus female. (Note: percentages are based on unequal group sizes.)
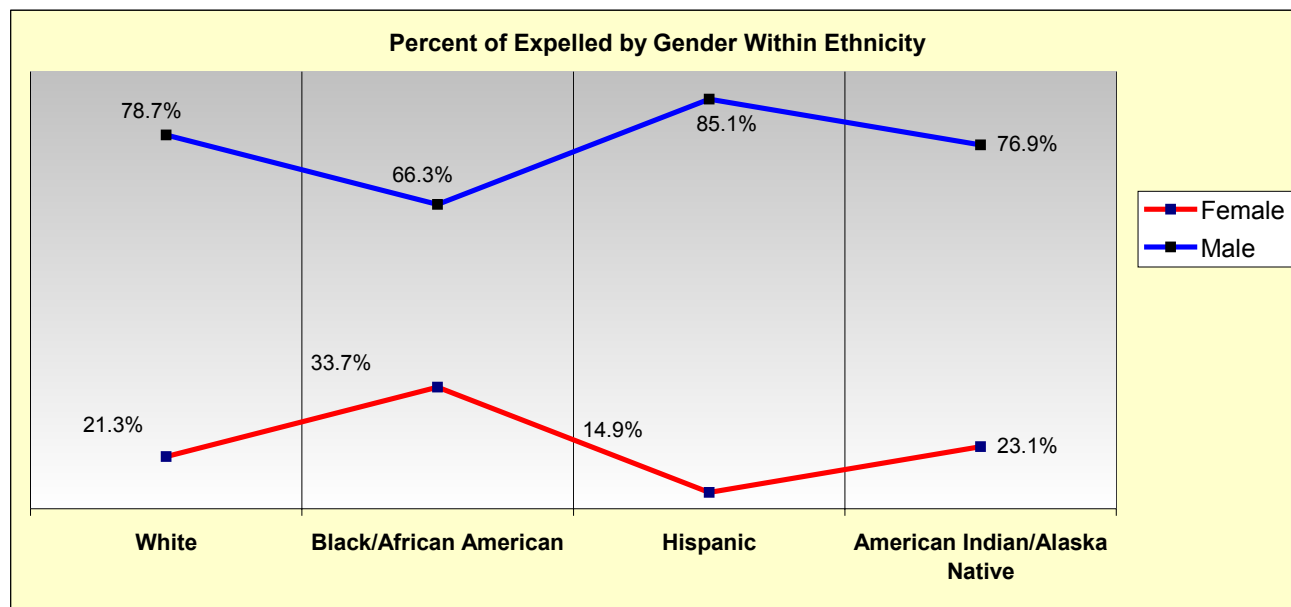
As with expulsions generally, there were a greater number of expelled students who were male within each ethnicity. For White students (Figure 16), 78.7 percent (n=670) of expelled students were male compared to 21.2 percent

Table 7

Race/ Ethnicity	Female	Male	Total	%
White	181	670	851	53.6
Black/African American	205	403	608	39.0
Hispanic	11	63	74	4.7
American Indian/Alaska Native	6	20	26	1.6
Native Hawaiian/Pacific	6	3	9	0.6
Asian	3	7	10	0.7
Multiracial	6	2	8	0.5
Total	414	1172	158	

for females (n=181). This same gap seemed to apply in the case of American Indian/Alaska Native. It was the smallest for expelled

Figure 16

Percent of Expelled by Gender Within Ethnicity

78.7% | 66.3% | 85.1% | 76.9%
21.3% | 33.7% | 14.9% | 23.1%

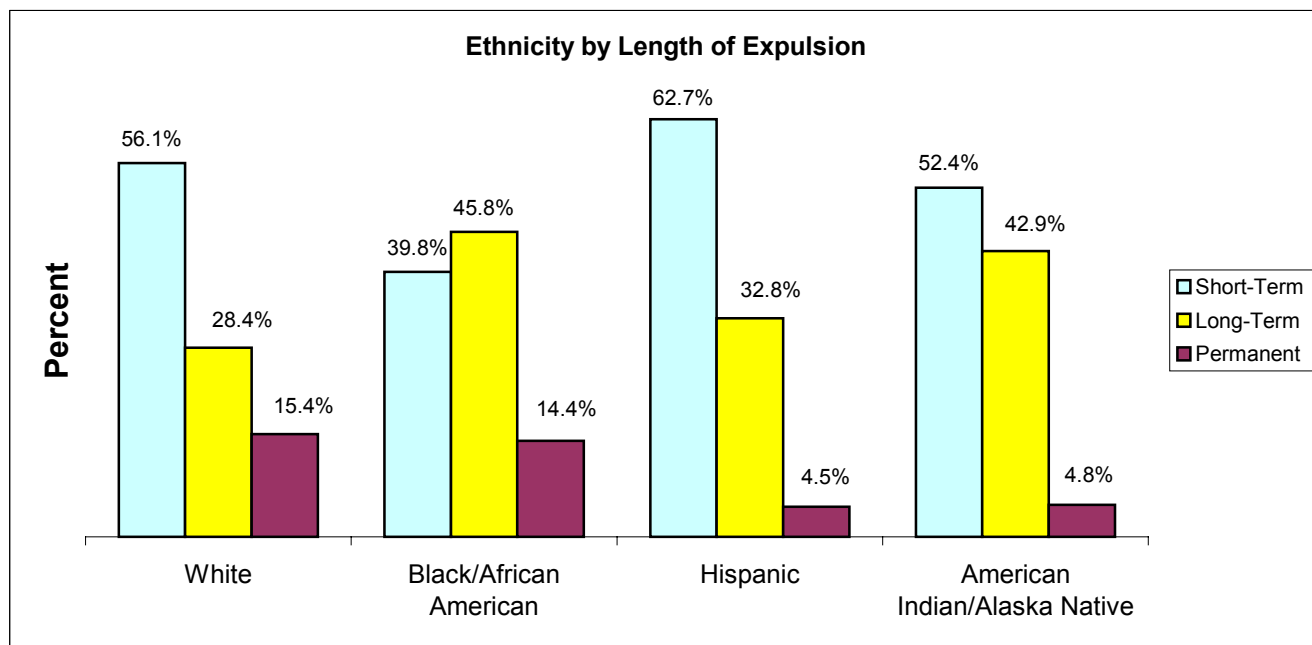White | Black/African American | Hispanic | American Indian/Alaska Native

Female
Male

Black/African American students. In this case, 66.3 percent (n=403) of those Black/African Americans expelled were male, while 33.7 percent (n=205) were female. The largest gap between males and females were for the group of

Hispanic students reported as expelled. The large majority, 85.1 percent (n=63), of these students were male, while only 14.9 percent (n=11) were female.

Figure 17

Ethnicity by Length of Expulsion

Ethnicity by Length of Expulsion

The length of expulsions was examined for each of four ethnic groups: White, Black/African-American, Hispanic, and American Indian (Figure 17). Across the White, Hispanic, and
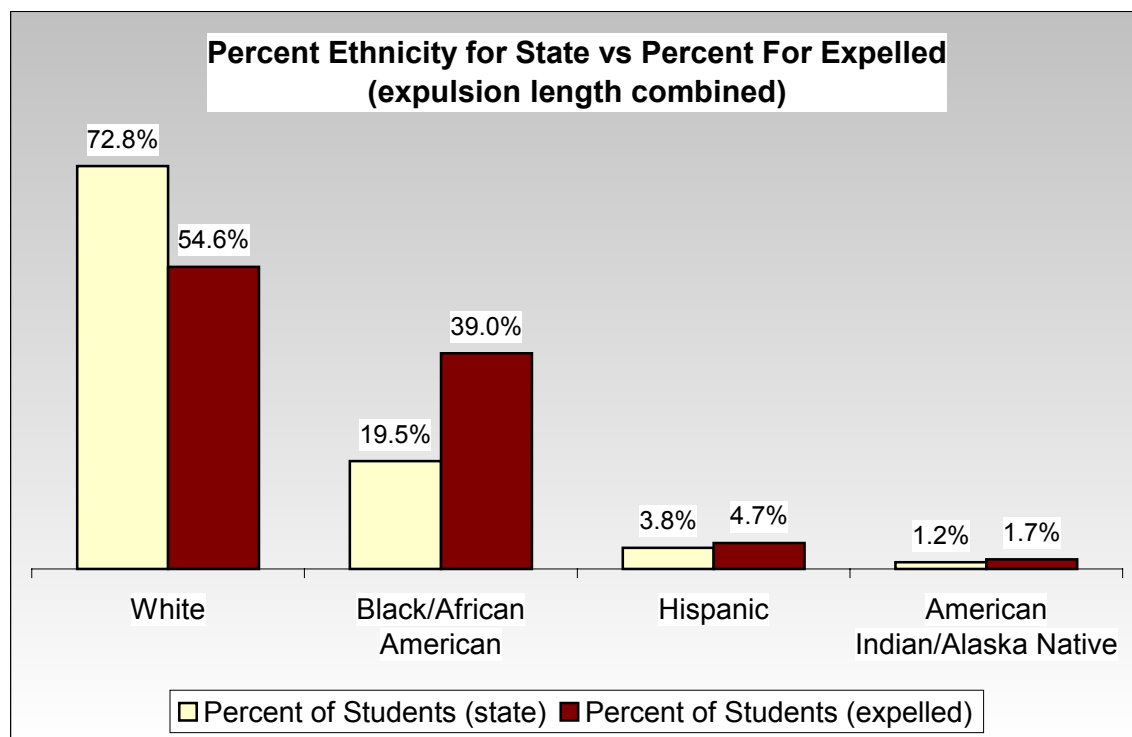
Table 8

Race/Ethnicity	# of Students (state)	% of students in state	# of Students (expelled)	% of expelled students
White	1,410,523	72.8%	851	53.6%
Black/African American	378,177	19.5%	608	38.3%
Hispanic	73,106	3.8%	74	4.7%
American Indian/Alaska Native	23,763	1.2%	26	1.6%
Asian	36,645	1.9%	10	0.6%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	4,842	0.2%	9	0.6%

American Indian groups of expelled students, the majority of students in each group received short-term expulsions (less than 180 days). There were approximately 10 to 15 percent fewer students in these groups that received long-term (180 day) expulsions. For White, Hispanic, and American Indian students, the greatest percentage of expelled students received short-term expulsions, followed by long-term and then permanent expulsion periods. In contrast, the greatest percentage of Black/African American students received long-term expulsions (Figure 17). The percentage of Black/African American and White students receiving permanent expulsions was roughly equal.

Finally, the proportion of each ethnicity in the general student population (based on Spring 2002 Single Record Student Database submission) was compared with the proportion of each ethnicity in the expelled group of students (expulsion lengths combined, see Table 8, page 23).

White students comprised 72.8 percent of all students reported statewide, while accounting for somewhat over half (54.6 percent) of the students in the expelled group. In contrast, while approximately one out of five (19.5 percent) of all students were reported as Black/African American, Black/African American students comprised 39.0 percent of the expelled group of students. Proportions for Hispanic and American Indian students were roughly equivalent between the general and expelled student populations (Figure 18).

Figure 18

Percent Ethnicity for State vs Percent For Expelled (expulsion length combined)

□ Percent of Students (state)   ■ Percent of Students (expelled)

Students with Disabilities

Special education students in the state of Michigan are subject to a different set of discipline procedures than students not formally classified as having a disability.[14] The Office of Special Education currently collects special education expulsion/suspension data independently.

Limitations

A degree of caution should be exercised in interpreting the data contained in this report. In terms of expulsion data reported through the Single Record Student Database, it appears that there is currently a degree of inconsistency between Michigan school districts in how expulsions are defined, carried out, and reported. For example, behaviors that reach the threshold for expulsion in one district may not qualify for expulsion in another. Further, it is not clear that the various expulsion fields, as presented in the metadata, were interpreted in the same way by all districts.

The same qualifications should be kept in mind for the school safety data reported through the School Infrastructure Database. It is not known how closely districts adhered to the definitions of each field as these are presented in the metadata. Further, as with expulsion, there is likely to be variation between districts in the thresholds applied to crime and safety incidents. An incident that qualifies as vandalism in one district may not qualify in another.

The information contained in this report was obtained from submissions for the 2001-2002 academic year. It is not longitudinal. Therefore, it is impossible to address the stability of these findings. Only when several years of data have been collected will it be possible to begin identifying potential trends.

This report seeks to summarize expulsion data for the state of Michigan as a whole. It does not separate out geographic areas within the state, nor does it compare the data submitted by rural versus urban school districts. It is likely that expulsion data may differ between such locales. A comparison of expulsion data by geographic area and local will be the focus of a subsequent report.

Regarding the School Infrastructure Database, the data reported here are based on a limited response rate. Overall, 82 percent of the school buildings in the state were represented in the 2001-2002 School Infrastructure Database submissions.

Expected differences may occur between Single Record Student Database and School Infrastructure Database regarding the totals for a particular incident type. For example, although 113 arsons were reported state-wide through the School Infrastructure Database at the building level, only 12 individual cases of expulsion resulting from arson were reported via the Single Record Student Database. Under the Revised School Code, arson constitutes grounds for permanent expulsion. Another example of apparent differences might be the category of sexual assault. There were 83 sexual assault incidents reported via the School Infrastructure Database at the elementary level while no expulsions for sexual assault at the elementary level were reported in the Single Record Student Database. Why don't these numbers match more closely, especially when pertaining to incidents that require a mandatory expulsion? As well as being two separate, independent data collection processes at the local level, is it likely that many of the incidents reported in the School Infrastructure Database did not rise to the level of expulsion in the judgment of local administrators. Another possibility is that incidents in the School Infrastructure Database may have involved non-students; incidents that would not appear in the Single Record Student Database. In the case of arson, for example, a fire may have been set by a non-student and therefore would not appear in the Single Record Student Database.

Acknowledgements

NOTES

[1] *Are America's Schools Safe? Students Speak Out: 1999 School Crime Supplement.* National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. NCES 2002-331. November 2002.

[2] *School Performance and Accountability in Michigan: Results from the 2001 State of the State Survey.* The Education Policy Center. Michigan State University. Policy Report Number #5 (September 2001). Available online at http://www.epc.msu.edu/publications/report/Report5.pdf

[3] *Statewide Report on School Safety and Discipline Data 2000-2001.* Office of Safe Schools, Florida Department of Education.

[4] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Forum on Education Statistics. *Safety in Numbers: Collecting and Using Crime, Violence, and Discipline Incident Data to Make a Difference in Schools.* NCES 2002-312, prepared by I. Hantman, G. Bairu, A Barwick, B. Smith, B. Mack, S. Meston, L. Rocks, & B. James of the Crime, Violence and Discipline Task Force. Washington D.C: 2002.

[5] Data gathered by the Single Record Student Database is not gathered at the same level as that gathered by the School Infrastructure Database. The Single Record Student Database is a single record database (often referred to as discrete or disaggregated data). Although the data is reported in the aggregate through frequency counts, averages, and so on, these statistics are derived from data obtained on individual students. In contrast, the School Infrastructure Database asks respondents to submit numbers summarizing their buildings as a whole. Therefore, each record in the School Infrastructure Database represents a building rather than an individual student.

[6] Under the Revised School Code, students who are in grade 5 are mandated a lesser expulsion length, generally half the length of that for students in grade 6 and above.

[7] Although public school academies can consist of more than one registered building, the 35 public school academies reporting at least one expulsion did not consist of more than one registered building.

[8] According to a 1999 national report, students from households with incomes of $50,000 or more were more likely than those from families whose income was less than $7,500 to report that drugs were available at their school (41.0% vs. 22.8%, respectively). This would seem to be born out by the statistics for Michigan as well. Expelled students were divided into two groups: one group reported as having received free lunch and another reported as ineligible for free lunch. Those students who were expelled for drug-related incidents accounted for 14.3 percent of the free lunch group while accounting for 21.8 percent of those ineligible for free lunch.

[9] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 2002.* NCES 2003-009. Available online at http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/schoolcrime/

[10] Based on the Spring 2002 Single Record Student Database submission.

[11] Erikson, Erik (1950). *Childhood and Society.* New York: Norton.

[12] A greater emphasis was put on analysis by age rather than by grade to achieve a more definitive grouping of students. Michigan schools are not uniform with regard to the grade ranges that comprise each school type. Some elementary schools are kindergarten through fifth grade, while others are kindergarten through sixth grade. Junior high or middle schools can also encompass a wide variety of grade levels, as can high schools. Finally, while larger districts may have buildings containing a single grade, a single building in a much smaller district may contain grades kindergarten through twelfth grade.

[13] Standard Deviation = 44.80, Median = 54.00, Mode = 90.

[14] See Special Education Considerations in Student Discipline Procedures. Michigan Department of Education. Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services. March 6, 2000.