



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 17, 2018

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Kyle L. Guerrant, Deputy Superintendent *KG*

SUBJECT: Reporting Disciplinary Data

On August 24, 2017, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) released a memo explaining that collecting student-level expulsion data, days assigned to suspension, and the type of disciplinary incident for all students is an important step in the process of acknowledging, analyzing, and addressing differential rates of disciplinary action among Michigan's students. This data collection is critical in ensuring that every student has the necessary supports to achieve as learners. This aligns to MDE's Top Ten in Ten goals, particularly Goal 4, which is aimed at ensuring all students have equitable access to resources and quality educational opportunities.

MDE will include both expulsion and suspension data on the upcoming Parent Transparency Dashboard. Expulsion data was released in the January 2018 phase one release of the dashboard and will be followed by a second phase in November 2018, which will include suspension data.

Submitting accurate data into the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) will be critical to this process. To assist, the Steps to Success for Reporting Disciplinary Data document has been created and is attached for your use.

Questions regarding the reporting of disciplinary data may be directed to the School Health and Safety unit at 517-241-4284.

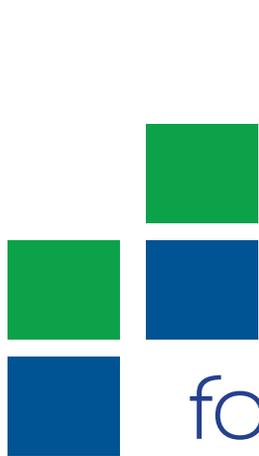
Attachment

cc: Michigan Education Alliance

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Steps to Success for Reporting Disciplinary Data

Submitting accurate disciplinary data in the Discipline Component of the [Michigan Student Data System](#) (MSDS) is critical in ensuring that every student has the necessary supports to achieve as learners. These goals align to the Michigan Department of Education's (MDE) [Top Ten in Ten goals](#), particularly Goal 4, which is aimed at ensuring all students have equitable access to resources and quality educational opportunities.

An [August 24, 2017 memo](#) from the MDE explains that collecting student-level expulsion data, days assigned to suspension, and type of disciplinary incident for all students is an important step in the process of acknowledging, analyzing, and addressing differential rates of disciplinary action among Michigan's students. Since disciplinary action can affect certain groups of students disproportionately, this means those students do not have equitable access to resources and quality educational opportunities. Schools that employ a clean, accurate, and efficient system of reporting data into MSDS for this component help Michigan reach Goal 4.

As a further reason why submitting correct data is important, the MDE will include both expulsion and suspension data on the upcoming Parent Transparency Dashboard. Expulsion data was released in the January 2018 phase one release of the dashboard, and will be followed by a second phase in November 2018, which will include suspension data.

The MDE's School Health and Safety Unit suggests four Steps to Success for ensuring correct data is entered into MSDS for the Discipline Component:

1. Review Your Records
2. Know Your Codes
3. Check Not-So-Obvious Errors
4. Run a Summary Report

Review Your Records

In the MSDS system maintained by the [Center for Education Performance and Information](#) (CEPI), the data to be reported on a student in the Discipline Component includes information such as:

- an identification number created by the school for each incident
- the date each incident occurred
- the type of incident, including optional markers for serious bodily injury and sexual assault
- the disciplinary action, or consequence, imposed by the school

Each incident may be reported with up to three consequences with the dates each was initiated and the number of days per consequence. All incidents resulting in the student's removal from his/her usual education setting for one half of the school day or longer must be reported. While multiple consequences can be reported for a single incident, separate incidents should be reported using multiple instances of this component, with different identification numbers used for each one.

Knowing this, a school should anticipate these data fields in the Discipline Component and be prepared to fill in each of these pieces of information for each student with matching information from their own records. Schools in Michigan may keep disciplinary records in various formats, ranging from handwritten records on forms kept in student files to electronic databases accessible by designated staff with passwords. Regardless of the system for keeping these records, **before reporting on MSDS begins**, a school should review and organize its disciplinary records on each student, ensuring that there is accurate information for each incident that will transfer successfully to the MSDS system, matching that information to the Discipline Component's Characteristic Table in the [MSDS Collection Details Manual](#). This will provide schools with an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of each report, and will eliminate the creation of details after the fact about a disciplinary record for the purposes of satisfying MSDS requirements.

Know Your Codes

Besides ensuring good practices for assigning unique Incident ID numbers, a school whose staff are preparing for reporting disciplinary data to the MSDS system should familiarize themselves with the discipline characteristics and codes required by state law to be reported.

Incident ID

One important note to make when reviewing school-based records and comparing them to the anticipated reporting fields in the Discipline Component of MSDS is that the first data field required by state law is the Incident Identification Number, or Incident ID. The Incident ID is user-created and free-form text, which means that schools are free to create any Incident ID number they choose to report individual incidents, using any system that works for them. For best and most accurate reporting, schools should follow these tips for the Incident ID:

- use a numbering system that is simple to understand among staff who administer discipline at the school
- limit each Incident ID to 10 characters or less
- use a unique number for each individual incident within the same school year, even if there were multiple consequences resulting from an incident
- a combination of letters and numbers is permissible, but letters are not case-sensitive (thus, using a "b" and a "B" would not create unique IDs if the rest of the code were the same for two incident IDs)

- do not include any personally identifiable information in the incident code, such as a last name or social security number (The student data file in MSDS will already include a student’s name, but for the purposes of research and displaying data for the dashboard, personal information will be stripped.)
- ensure that the same incident number is associated with the records the school keeps (write the same Incident ID on the form, include the number as a column in a spreadsheet, etc.) to make a follow-up data check easier

Remember that CEPI only requires disciplinary incidents to be reported if it results in expulsion or suspension for more than one half of the school day. Thus, a school’s numbering system might include part of its code that means “reportable on MSDS,” for example a numerical prefix such as 55- or a suffix such as -01, -02, etc. Alternately, it may choose not to assign ID numbers to disciplinary incidents not reportable on MSDS.

Date of Incident

The date that the incident occurred.

Incident Type

A school may recognize many different types of infractions of student behavior, and not all of them are represented in the table for Type of Incident. Again, remember these are listed codes included on MSDS because they represent infractions most likely to result in expulsion or suspension for one half of a school day or longer.

An important note for this data field is that if Code 60, “Physical Violence with Injury” is selected, the system will ask whether serious bodily injury resulted, and whether the injury is classified as sexual assault. If Code 61, “Physical Violence without Injury” is selected, the system will ask whether the injury is classified as sexual assault. Both of these data fields accept only a yes/no answer.

While these two follow-up fields are optional, it is recommended that they be answered so that the MDE can work toward fulfilling its commitment to Goal 4. It is important to remember that the MSDS does not ask for specific details of incidents beyond the data fields in the Discipline Component, and it does not require that identities of victims or witnesses be shared. In addition, data that identifies the student is stripped for the purposes of conducting research or reporting to public dashboarding systems.

Initial, Secondary, and Other Consequences

In these sections of [MSDS Collection Details Manual](#), the tables for these three consequences are the same—there are five options, from in-school suspension to expulsion. Each row of the table provides a clear definition. However, this list of consequences may not match all of the possibilities for consequences under a school’s policies or contained in its student handbook.

As a result, the MDE recommends that school records pertaining to disciplinary actions clearly separate individual consequences arising from a single infraction, wherever possible. It is easy to

record consequences as a list, including items not otherwise listed in the tables—for example, not only did a student have an out-of-school suspension for a day for fighting with another student, but when the student returned to school, the student was assigned an in-school suspension for three days, had to attend a mediation session with a school counselor, and sign a revised discipline contract. While the first two consequences are reportable on MSDS as separate consequences, the final two consequences are not. In these situations, it is important to remember that the person handling the discipline and assigning the consequences may not be the same person as who reports data into MSDS. For this reason, individual reportable consequences should be clearly delineated in school records.

Note also that a Secondary Consequence cannot be reported unless an Initial Consequence is first reported, and that an Other Consequence cannot be reported unless a Secondary Consequence is reported.

Finally, remember that “Removal by Hearing Officer” and “Unilateral Removal” are only valid codes for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

Initial, Secondary, and Other Days

The start day for the consequences for the incident being reported.

Follow-Up

Reporting a follow-up is required in the case of expulsions. For suspensions lasting one half of a school day or longer, reporting a follow-up is not

required. Additionally, there is a federal requirement to report a follow-up any time that a special education student exceeds 10 days of removals for the school year. However, the MDE strongly recommends reporting a follow-up action so that the MDE can work toward fulfilling its commitment to Goal 4. The MSDS Discipline Component does not include capturing comments or narratives, and it does not ask for rationales of school leaders in deciding upon one type of follow-up action over another. As before, data that identifies the student is stripped for the purposes of conducting research or reporting to public dashboarding systems.

Check Not-So-Obvious Errors

When reporting on any Michigan school data system, CEPI has been careful to include “edit checks” within the programming of the system to filter out “obvious” data errors, such as incident dates within impossible ranges (such as the future or the 1950s), character strings longer than allowed lengths (such as Incident IDs longer than 10 characters), and mismatches between related data fields (such as reporting serious bodily injury when the incident type is “31 – Alcohol”).

However, any data system will not be able to automatically detect information that is wrong or incorrect, but which still conforms to its minimum reporting requirements. For example, the MSDS system will not detect if a school official meant “14532” instead of “14523” for an Incident ID, if an in-school suspension was meant to be reported

instead of an out-of-school suspension as an Initial Consequence, or if the number of days spent in suspension was 3 and not 4.

For this reason, it is recommended that a separate person check and validate the school's information and records for each incident reportable to CEPI before loading into the system, ensuring that not only the information about to be reported is correct, but that it is easy to locate on the paper form or electronic record system kept by the school. Many not-so-obvious errors occur when someone entering data must spend time looking for different pieces of data across multiple records or documents.

Reporting Dates

One easy error to make when entering in data is reporting the date of an incident or consequence. As the [MSDS Collection Details Manual](#) notes, the recommended format for entering a date online is MM/DD/CCYY, even though the system will still accept most common formats. To be sure that the correct date is being reported for a given incident or consequence, it is recommended that users click the "calendar icon" next to the data field and select the date in this way.

Note that an "edit check" the system automatically performs on the Date of Incident will ensure that the date reported for the incident falls within the reported enrollment date ranges of the student. This is not true for dates of consequences—but the system will check to ensure that the dates reported for consequences are later than the date reported for the incident.

The MSDS system will not check if the date selected for an incident or consequence occurs on a day school was not in session. This is not impossible—for example, if a student vandalized school property on a Saturday, that date can certainly be reported in the MSDS system. Other errors could arise, however. If a student's consequence is reported as an in-school suspension for a day the school was not in session, this would be an error, but MSDS would not alert the user. For this reason, it is important that the date that the school intended to be reported as the incident or consequence date is confirmed in their own records as the correct date.

Run a Summary Report

Prior to certifying your data in the MSDS system, review the "Discipline and Consequence Summary" report, which is a staging report within the collection. This tool will be a useful summary of the data to review for accuracy before certifying.

If you have questions about reporting disciplinary data, please contact:

- Mary Teachout, MDE Office of Health and Nutrition Services at TeachoutM@michigan.gov or 517-373-8862
- Nick Thelen, MDE Office of Special Education at ThelenN1@michigan.gov or 517-241-4418