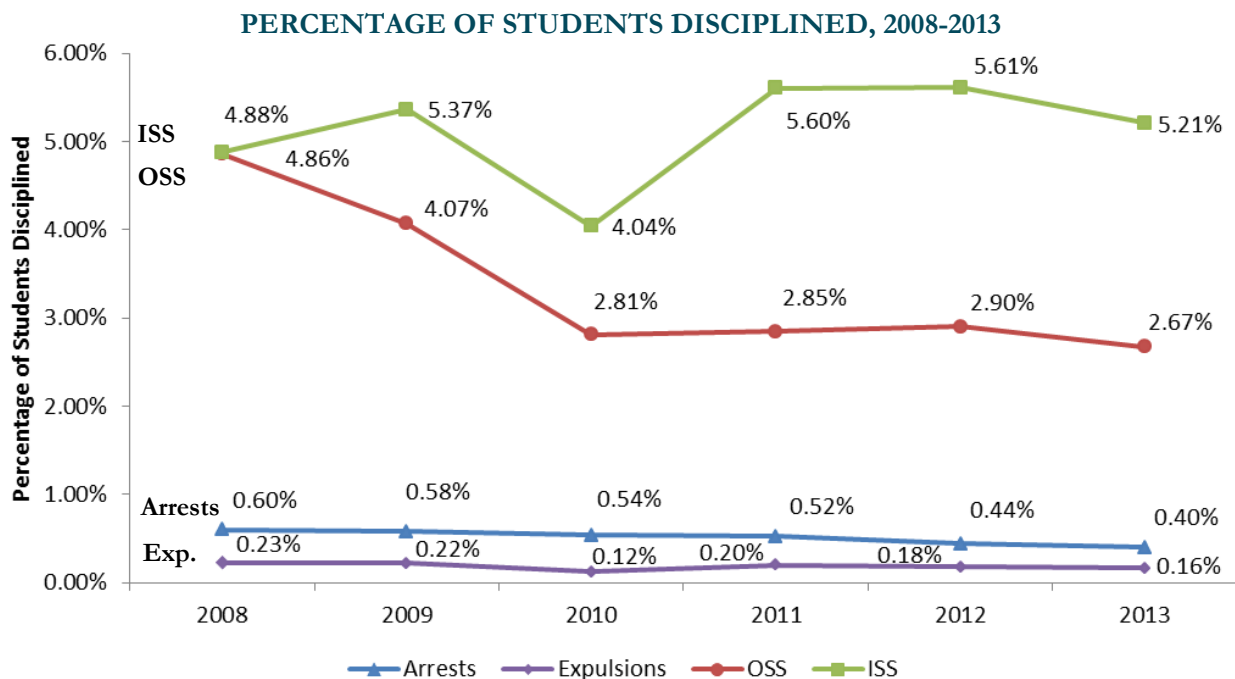


KEEPING KIDS IN CLASS

School Discipline in Connecticut, 2008-2013

Excluding children from school for disciplinary problems is often ineffective and even counter-productive. In many cases, behaviors for which students are disciplined could be prevented through earlier intervention and better access to services, or handled more effectively with school-based sanctions that address the true source of the misbehavior. While Connecticut has made strides in reducing the percentage of students arrested, expelled, and suspended over the past five years, **rates of exclusionary discipline have stayed the same or increased for Connecticut's minority, low-income, and special education students. Connecticut must continue to implement preventative strategies and alternative disciplinary measures that take into account racial and other disparities to ensure that kids stay in the classroom.**

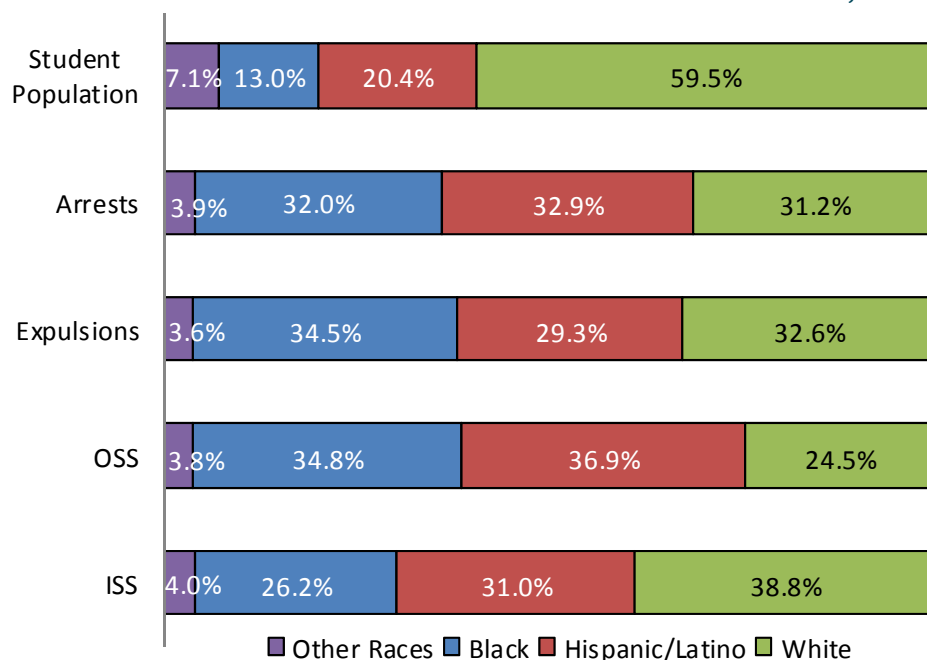


Source: Connecticut Voices for Children's Analysis of State Department of Education (SDE) Data

KEY FINDINGS

- Since 2008, the number of students arrested, expelled, and suspended in Connecticut has decreased significantly.
- Despite the overall reduction in exclusionary school discipline, **too many students are pushed out of school for "School Policy Violations,"** behaviors that could be more effectively addressed in the classroom.
- Schools continue to arrest, expel, and suspend **minority students, special education students, and students from poorer districts** at rates disproportionate to their representation in the student population.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE VS. STUDENT POPULATION BY RACE, 2013



- In 2013, Black and Hispanic/Latino students were arrested, expelled, and suspended at rates disproportionate to their representation in the student population (see figure).

- Black students were **4.7 times** more likely to be arrested than white students, and Hispanic/Latino students were **3.1 times** more likely to be arrested.

Source: Connecticut Voices for Children's Analysis of (SDE) Data

RECOMMENDATIONS

Informed by key elements of successful community programs as well as state and national best practices, key action items for the State Legislature, State Department of Education, local districts and schools, and community members and parents include:

1. Understand the scope of the school discipline problem in order to effectively address it:

- Clearly define "student arrest."
- Collect and publish data on student arrests.

2. Ensure schools, police, and the community work together to keep students in class:

- Implement memoranda of agreement between schools and police.
- Promote police and educator training.
- Establish and support community collaborates/Local Interagency Service Teams across the state

3. Implement preventative strategies and alternative disciplinary measures that take into account racial and other disparities and ensure those excluded from school are provided equal opportunities:

- Conduct ongoing conversations with educators about disciplinary disparities and biases.
- Promote restorative practices and empower students to develop shared behavioral expectations.
- Provide high-quality alternative educational settings and support services for students who must be removed from school.
- Expand and utilize Juvenile Review Boards (JRBs) and ensure access to behavioral and mental health services.

The full report, including the executive summary, is publicly available at www.ctvoices.org.