



District of Columbia
Office of the State Superintendent of Education

STATE OF DISCIPLINE

2020-21 School Year

March 2022

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Discipline Landscape	5
Impact of COVID-19	5
Legislative Overview	6
Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018	6
Pre-K Student Discipline Amendment Act of 2015	7
Gun-Free Schools Act	7
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	7
Every Student Succeeds Act	8
Data Collection and Analysis	8
Continuous Education Plans	8
Analysis Approach	9
Data Caveats	10
Findings	11
Discipline Data Collection	14
Student Population for 2020-21 Analysis	15
Findings	15
Looking Forward	17
Resuming Discipline Collection	17
Responding to March 2021 Auditor’s Report	17
Conclusion and Key Takeaways	19
Appendix A: Data Methodology	20
Definitions	20

Data Sources..... 20

Data Cleaning and Limitations..... 20

Counts of Disciplinary Actions..... 20

Appendix B: Continuous Education Plan Textual Analysis – Qualitative Codebooks..... 21

 Expectations 22

 Monitoring..... 23

 Responses..... 23

Appendix C: Data Elements No Longer Required for Discipline Data Collection 25

Appendix D: Discipline Data Validation Errors & Resolution Path 26

Appendix E: Interview Sampling Approach 28

Appendix F: LEA Data/Certification Form Submission Status 30

 LEAs That Did Not Submit Discipline Data or Certification Form 30

 LEAs That Submitted At Least One Discipline Incident Record 30

Executive Summary

This report reflects the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE) commitment to supporting equitable discipline policies and practices in the District. OSSE aims to assist students, administrators, teachers, and parents in ensuring a positive and safe school environment to promote learning and limit missed instructional days due to exclusionary discipline practices. Through this report, OSSE provides the public with the available data on school discipline and fulfills local reporting requirements, specifically the Pre-K Student Discipline Amendment Act of 2015 and the Student Fair Access to School Act Amendment of 2018.

To assess the fair and equitable distribution of disciplinary action during the coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency, OSSE continued to require Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to submit discipline data (as described in the [2020-21 Discipline Data Collection Guidance](#)). LEAs had access to a new disciplinary action type, "exclusion," that was unique to distance learning and was the primary disciplinary action type used by LEAs that had disciplinary incidents. This report will focus on four key takeaways.

Due to the impact of distance learning during the 2020-21 school year, OSSE saw a 98% decrease in the number of disciplinary incident records. OSSE received 125 total disciplinary incident records for the 2020-21 school year, a substantial decrease from the 6,831 incident records during the 2019-2020 school year. The majority (77%) of LEAs chose to submit the [Discipline Data Certification Form](#), which indicates that the LEA did not have any disciplinary incidents to report for the school year. This decrease in disciplinary incidents and increase in submissions of the certification form is due to a shift in the learning environment that led to a reconceptualization of discipline approaches.

The decrease in incidents made it challenging to analyze the use of disciplinary action as OSSE would during a typical year with analyses by race, gender, disability status, and more. To attempt to supplement the quantitative data, OSSE sought to conduct two qualitative analyses to learn more about school discipline in the 2020-21 school year: [a textual analysis of LEAs' Continuous Education Plans \(CEPs\)](#) and a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with school staff. However, OSSE did not move forward with the interviews due to low response rate from LEAs (the sampling and outreach approach for the interviews can be found in [Appendix E](#)).

LEAs prioritized the need for communication with parents/families and the use of positive discipline practices in the CEPs. Through the textual analysis, OSSE found that 65% of LEAs emphasized the importance of communication with parents during the pandemic. In addition, at least half of the LEAs planned to use at least one type of "positive" discipline practice (i.e., positive behavioral interventions and supports, restorative justice practices, or a tiered approach to behavioral interventions). OSSE found that few LEAs planned to use traditional approaches to disciplinary action (i.e., suspension and expulsion) in an effort to adjust to the change in learning environment, which may explain the decrease in disciplinary incidents using the traditional disciplinary action types OSSE collects data on (out-of-school suspension, in-school suspension, school-based intervention, expulsion, exclusion, involuntary dismissal).

RestorativeDC (RDC) saw an increase in participation in their trainings as school communities sought to identify ways to connect and build community with students and among staff members during the pandemic. RDC's approach to school discipline aims to build and maintain healthy relationships, create just and equitable learning environments, and repair harm and transform conflict to ensure students can

learn. RDC is a project of SchoolTalk, which has a partnership with OSSE and provides data on schools' engagement in the initiative. RDC continued to provide restorative justice training during the COVID-19 pandemic on restorative discipline, policies, and practices; facilitating youth engagement; building community engagement; assessing progress; and working with leadership and staff to ensure sustainability.

Willful defiance and disruptive behavior were the [primary reasons](#) why students received disciplinary action in the 2020-21 school year. In addition to other infractions such as improper use of technology and insubordination, willful defiance and disruptive behavior were the main reasons for disciplinary action. The primary student group who received disciplinary action were students in grades 3-8, with the majority being in grades 6-8. For the past three school years, OSSE has found that students in grades six through eight receive the most disciplinary incidents.

OSSE is streamlining and improving its data collection and submission process. The [March 2021 auditor's report](#) highlighted ways OSSE could improve the discipline data collection. At the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, OSSE made improvements to the discipline data collection in response to the report's findings and for the purpose of ensuring data quality. First, LEAs no longer submit the [Discipline Data Certification Form](#) and must use the [Discipline Data Collection Template](#) in order to meet reporting requirements. Second, charter LEAs now submit their data directly to OSSE, not through the Public Charter School Board (PCSB), so that OSSE can independently ensure the quality and validity of charter school discipline data. Third, OSSE now collects discipline data on a rolling basis throughout the school year via a new Integrated Data Submission (IDS) tool, and the data is ushered through the Unified Data Error (UDE) Report process to ensure LEAs are submitting complete and accurate data. In the coming years, LEAs will be able to use the IDS tool to submit data instead of uploading the template OSSE has historically used.

This report further explores the trends in distance discipline policies that LEAs in the District used to adapt to the pandemic, which provides insights into the ways in which LEAs had to pivot their understanding of behavior management and school discipline. In addition, this report reflects on the importance of reporting disciplinary incidents that occur during distance learning, so that OSSE can continue to hold LEAs accountable and offer transparency to the public on the rates at which students are excluded from instruction. This report contains analyses on the reasons for and prevalence of disciplinary actions within the 125 records submitted by LEAs. These analyses, however, are significantly limited because the disaggregated metrics for various student populations OSSE typically calculates cannot be completed due to its [Student Privacy and Data Suppression](#) policy. Nonetheless, this report communicates the efforts OSSE is making to streamline the discipline data reporting process for LEAs and gives the public an understanding of the adjustments LEAs made to their approach to school discipline and the challenges around collecting discipline data during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discipline Landscape

Impact of COVID-19

OSSE supported local education agencies (LEAs) with their discipline practices as they transitioned to remote instruction in response to COVID-19. OSSE needed to understand the new context for the data it was collecting, and therefore required all LEAs to submit a Continuous Education Plan (CEP) detailing operational and instructional changes to promote student safety as well as to support students' social-emotional and mental health needs. In their CEPs, LEAs also outlined how they would monitor student behavior during remote instruction and comply with local and federal laws pertaining to exclusionary discipline.

COVID-19 challenged school communities' understanding and use of traditional disciplinary approaches, leading LEAs to adapt their plans for monitoring and responding to student behavior in distance learning. Expectations of students changed to include behaviors unique to distance learning. For example, the disruptive behavior colloquially referred to as 'Zoom bombing' became a concern, which typically involves an offensive and disruptive interruption that prohibits the continuation of a remote lesson.

In addition to new student behaviors that presented challenges during distance learning, many LEAs also identified disciplinary actions that reflect a new era of discipline approaches. Many LEAs also acknowledged the unique stressors on students during the global health crisis and indicated a desire to ensure students have continuous access to education.

A key initiative OSSE deploys to support LEAs in their efforts to engage in inclusive, equitable, and effective discipline is the aforementioned SchoolTalk project, RestorativeDC, which provides restorative justice training to schools and LEAs. 44 schools and 19 LEAs participated in RDC during the 2020-21 school year. 12 of those schools are what the initiative calls "Whole Schools," meaning those schools engage in a multi-year process that helps school teams review their systems to determine how to reshape the school culture and climate and create a just and equitable learning environment for all teachers and students. The other 31 schools received supplemental technical assistance that supports and guides school communities in their implementation of restorative practices.

When schools in the District closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, RDC shifted their programming almost immediately to respond to distance learning and seek out ways to support schools with their changing contexts. The RDC team adapted their existing curriculum to a Zoom platform, and worked closely with OSSE to communicate to city school staff about the offerings. During Summer 2020 and 2020-2021 school year, the RDC team provided:

1. **Open virtual coaching sessions for staff who wanted informal opportunities to work through specific challenges;**
2. **Three hundred twenty-two (322) hours of virtual professional development (a 15% increase from the 279 hours provided in 2019-20),** including optional professional development sessions, facilitated planning sessions, community building train-the-trainer series, and an additional 12 hours of in-service training for select public charter schools and all DCPS School Mental Health Team Social Work providers. Despite having to provide all sessions virtually during the 2020-21 school year, RDC was able to provide even more hours of programming than in the prior school year in order to meet the evolving needs of school staff during the pandemic;

3. Over **5,000 person-hours¹** of **professional development programming** that focused on virtual community-building, preparation for school teams to lead community-building activities for pre-service/beginning of school, and other activities to support students and staff in a remote setting; and
4. Sessions that were attended by over **1280 unique participants** from **179 public and public charter schools in the District**, along with additional educational support organizations. This includes over 360 individuals from 140 public and public charter schools in the District not formally working with RDC, which means Restorative Justice training and coaching had a significantly wider reach than only in schools with formal partnerships.

RDC found that school staff were eager for anything to support them in the new virtual environment, including how to maintain relationships with students, establish/transition classroom culture to online platform, and keep students engaged. By modelling virtual techniques, RDC staff provided school staff with concrete strategies for immediate deployment in virtual school settings. RDC saw increased participation in its trainings as school communities sought to identify ways to connect and build community with students and among staff members during the pandemic.

Legislative Overview

Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018

The Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018 aims to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline in the District. In short, it is intended to prioritize the receipt of instruction over exclusion. This law defines common terms related to disciplinary actions,² and it requires LEAs, in consultation with schools and communities, to develop, publish, and use school discipline policies that include certain required components.³ The law also limits out-of-school suspension for students in kindergarten through eighth grade except for serious safety incidents, and it bans out-of-school suspensions in high school for minor offenses. Furthermore, the law states that a suspension does not limit a student's right to continue to access and complete appropriate academic work during a suspension.⁴ The law also requires OSSE to establish a School Safety and Positive Climate Fund that is used to provide support for positive school climate and trauma-informed educational settings to LEAs and schools.⁵ Finally, the law requires schools and LEAs to submit specific data on school discipline annually and requires OSSE to report on this data in an annual Discipline Report.⁶

¹ RDC defines "person hours" as: the number of cumulative hours of programming across all participants. For example, if there were 10 participants in a 2-hour training session on one day and 20 participants at a 2-hour training session on a different days, this would equate to 60 person hours.

² D.C. Code § 38-236.01

³ D.C. Code § 38-236.03

⁴ D.C. Code § 38-236.04

⁵ D.C. Code § 38-236.06

⁶ D.C. Code § 38-236.09

Pre-K Student Discipline Amendment Act of 2015

The Pre-K Student Discipline Amendment Act of 2015 prohibits the suspension or expulsion of a student of pre-kindergarten age from any publicly funded pre-kindergarten program. The law also establishes annual reporting requirements for each LEA to report to OSSE on all suspensions and expulsions that occurred during the previous school year.⁷

Gun-Free Schools Act

The federal Gun-Free Schools Act requires states receiving federal education funds to have a state law that requires LEAs to expel students for no less than one year for bringing a firearm to school.⁸ District of Columbia law requires such an expulsion on a case-by-case basis and a referral to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system.⁹

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)¹⁰ provides several procedural safeguards that apply when a student with a disability (or a suspected disability) receives a suspension or expulsion that results in being removed from their current educational placement. A student with a disability who violates a code of student conduct may be removed from his or her current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting, another setting, or suspension, for not more than ten school days.¹¹ If a student with a disability is removed from their current placement for more than ten school days (either consecutively or cumulatively totaling ten days), the LEA must conduct a meeting to determine if the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability.¹² However, schools are permitted to remove a student and place the in an interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability if a student:

- Carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the jurisdiction of OSSE or an LEA;
- Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of OSSE or an LEA; or
- Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of OSSE or an LEA.¹³

⁷ D.C. Code § 38-273.03

⁸ 20 U.S. Code § 7961

⁹ D.C. Code § 38-231—32

¹⁰ 20 U.S.C. §4200, et. seq.

¹¹ 34 C.F.R. § 300.530(b)

¹² 34 C.F.R. § 300.530(e)

¹³ 34 C.F.R. § 300.530(d)

Every Student Succeeds Act

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires state education agencies (SEAs) to develop report cards for the SEA and LEAs in their respective states.¹⁴ ESSA requires states to publish data on school discipline, including rates of in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, school-related arrests, referrals to law enforcement, and incidences of violence, including bullying and harassment. The discipline data reported on the report card is also available by student groups. OSSE released the 2019-20 DC School Report Card on December 3, 2020.¹⁵ Please note that some metrics are unavailable for the 2020 and 2021 Report Card due to the impact of COVID-19 on the number of records reported.

Data Collection and Analysis

Continuous Education Plans

The response to the pandemic and the continued use of social distancing measures to protect public health required LEAs to be prepared to provide both in-person and distance learning for the 2020-21 school year. In preparation for this, OSSE and PCSB asked LEAs to develop Continuous Education Plans (CEPs) for the 2020-21 school year.¹⁶ The CEPs are intended to provide the public with information on how the LEA prepared for the 2020-21 school year during the pandemic. The plans are public and available to view on [OSSE's website](#).

OSSE used the CEPs as a data source for the 2020-2021 discipline data collection. In the CEPs, LEAs shared their policies for monitoring student behavior during distance learning. The distance learning discipline policies had to be compliant with applicable local and federal laws (e.g., limits on total days excluded, restrictions on reasons why a student may be excluded). LEA discipline policies in the CEPs had to include:

- A list of behaviors that could result in a student being excluded from distance learning (e.g., inappropriate conduct on virtual platforms);
- The manner in which the LEA will communicate with families of students who are excluded from distance learning; *and*
- The manner in which the LEA will ensure that students who are excluded from distance learning have access to missed work.

These policies provide helpful context on how the LEAs planned to adapt their disciplinary approaches to distance learning. The plans were approved by OSSE in order to waive the requirement that a school year include a minimum of 180 instruction days at six hours per day as prescribed in 5-A DCMR §2100.3. These plans met certain baseline requirements—namely completion, clarity, alignment with applicable laws and policies delineated throughout this application, and, for public charter schools, alignment with their approved charters. OSSE reviewed and provided feedback on the plans to ensure they met the

¹⁴ 20 U.S.C. § 6311

¹⁵ <http://www.dcschoolreportcard.org/>

¹⁶ [LEA Continuous Education Plans | osse \(dc.gov\)](#)

requirements, and asked LEAs to resubmit as necessary. The 67 plans included in this analysis were approved.

Analysis Approach

OSSE analyzed each of the LEAs' distance discipline policies using a hybrid approach of thematic analysis¹⁷ and inductive qualitative coding¹⁸. This analysis sought to learn more about what behavioral expectations, monitoring, and disciplinary actions could look like during distance learning. Thematic analysis provides a mechanism for identifying common themes across LEAs' distance discipline policies. These themes are broken down into codes that form a composite representation of that theme.

OSSE identified themes and codes through multiple segmented reviews of the distance discipline policies that were tested to ensure they could be meaningfully applied to at least 5 of the LEAs' CEPs. OSSE dropped themes or codes that could only be applied to fewer than five LEAs from the analysis to ensure only prevalent themes were included in the analysis.¹⁹ An exhaustive list of the codes used are listed, in addition to an example, can be found in the codebooks in [Appendix B](#).

LEAs organically structured their discipline policies into three categories, which served as the overarching themes in the analysis:

- Student behavior expectations
- Monitoring of student behavior
- Intended disciplinary actions

LEAs that did not explicitly structure their distance discipline policies using these three categories (using headers or other clear indicators) still had content that fit conceptually into them. These themes reflect LEAs' comprehensive approach to discipline during distance learning. To monitor behavior, clear expectations need to be set. Similarly, disciplinary actions must be based on clear expectations and effective monitoring approaches.

These themes yielded a variety of related codes that capture the nuances between LEAs (see the three lists of codes in [Appendix B](#)). In the discipline policies reviewed, OSSE found:

- Eleven types of student behavior expectations
 - *Note: Some LEAs framed their student expectations positively to indicate what a student should do or negatively to indicate what a student should not do. Codes were applied regardless of this framing as long as the content was related to the coded expectation.*

¹⁷ Fereday, J., and Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1), 80-92.

¹⁸ Cooper, H., Camic, P. M., Long, D. L., Panter, A. T., Rindskopf, D., & Sher, K. J. (Eds.). (2012). *APA handbook of research methods in psychology*, Vol. 2. Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological. American Psychological Association.

¹⁹ Expel (a disciplinary action code) was the only code to be kept in the analysis despite being mentioned less than five times to adhere to reporting requirements.

- Four types of monitoring approaches
- Nine disciplinary action types

For further analysis, the disciplinary action types were grouped into three categories – positive, traditional, and virtual:

- **Positive** disciplinary action types include use of a tiered approach, restorative justice practices, or positive behavioral interventions and supports.
- **Traditional** disciplinary action types include in-school and out-of-school suspension, and expulsion.
- **Virtual** disciplinary action types include assigning students to asynchronous learning, limiting their audio, video, or chat privileges, or not removing a student at all.

Codes for each of the themes were applied to the text within the distance discipline policies using a binary scheme. If a policy mentioned one of the above types of expectations, monitoring, or disciplinary actions, at least one time they were coded with a “1.” Multiple mentions of any of the expectations, monitoring, or disciplinary actions were not coded more than once. Only in specific instances (mentions of out-of-school suspensions, in-school suspensions and expulsions) were the policies coded for verbatim language. Otherwise, they were coded for meaning. OSSE further analyzed the CEPs to identify the prevalence of certain types of expectations, monitoring approaches, and disciplinary actions.

Data Caveats

The findings presented below reflect the proportion of LEAs that explicitly indicated these types of expectations, monitoring approaches, or disciplinary action types in their distance discipline policies. LEAs were given flexibility in what they could include in their policies, meaning each structured its policies differently. An LEA not mentioning one of the coded items does not mean they are not engaging in the practice; it means that they did not write it in their policies. For example, most LEAs did not list expectations around physical harm most likely because of an increased focus on expectations for remote learning. This does not mean that expectations for physical behavior did not exist or were not enforced, they were just not frequently highlighted in LEA plans for disciplinary practices in a remote setting.

The percentages reported below, while representative of what was written in the policies, may not completely reflect all the LEAs do to regulate student behavior. For example, there are various classroom management practices teachers engage in before engaging in formal disciplinary action that are not fully reflected in the data collection, as they are the school’s purview. This data does, however, help to identify what LEAs were focusing on in their transition to and administration of remote instruction.

Remote instruction also makes the differences between out-of-school suspension (OSS), in-school suspension (ISS), and asynchronous learning less straightforward. Many LEAs indicated that they would have students engage in asynchronous instruction if they were being disruptive or breaking student expectations. However, this could not be meaningfully distinguished from OSS and ISS during distance learning because they all result in students not engaging in live instruction.

In previous years, OSS could be easily distinguished from ISS due to the difference in physical environment. In a remote learning environment, the setting remains constant, which makes tracking the differential use

of these disciplinary actions challenging. Asynchronous learning, OSS, and ISS all involve students remaining in their homes and not engaging in live instruction, meaning students are completing their work independently or watching videos to assist with the learning the material. To account for this lack of mutual exclusivity, codes were only applied for these types of disciplinary actions when they were listed verbatim.

Findings

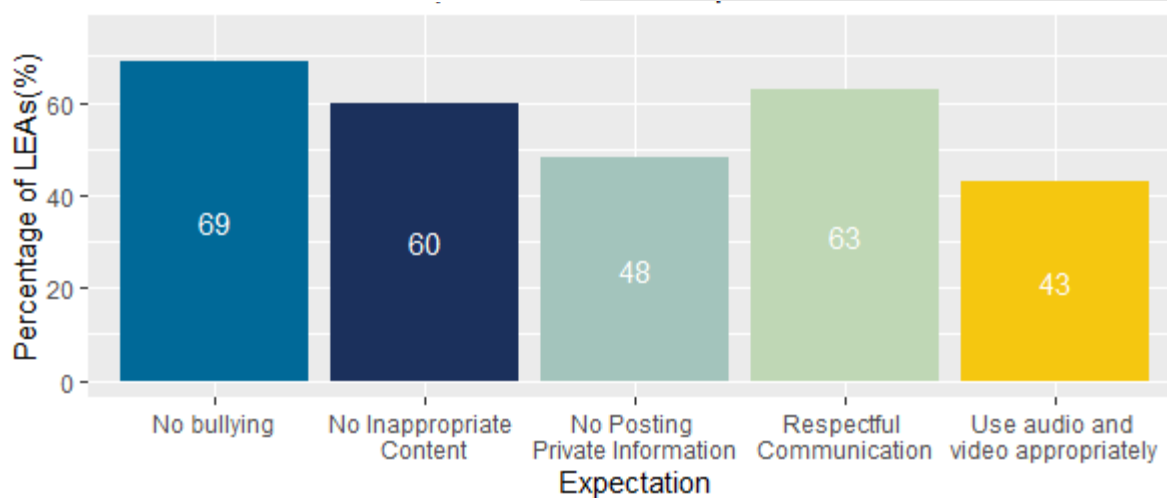
The findings from this analysis highlight what was important to LEAs during their transition to and administration of remote instruction. The percentages listed below are a summation of the number of LEAs that had at least one mention of a code, divided by the number of LEAs that submitted CEPs.

Top 5 expectations during distance learning (Figure 1.1):

- **#1:** Refrain from (cyber)bullying or harassment (68.66%)
- **#2:** Communicate respectfully with classmates and teacher (62.69%)
- **#3:** Refrain from sharing inappropriate content virtually (59.70%)
- **#4:** No posting of private information (47.76%)
- **#5:** Use audio and video appropriately (43.28%)

LEAs were most concerned about bullying or harassment during remote learning, to the point where it was regularly mentioned in the distance discipline policies. LEAs differed in their use of the term “cyberbullying” and “bullying,” and most LEAs did not expound on the differences between these two terms. Four out of the five expectations are unique to distance learning, which shows how the LEAs adapted to this unique context.

Figure 1.1: Top 5 Behavioral Expectations

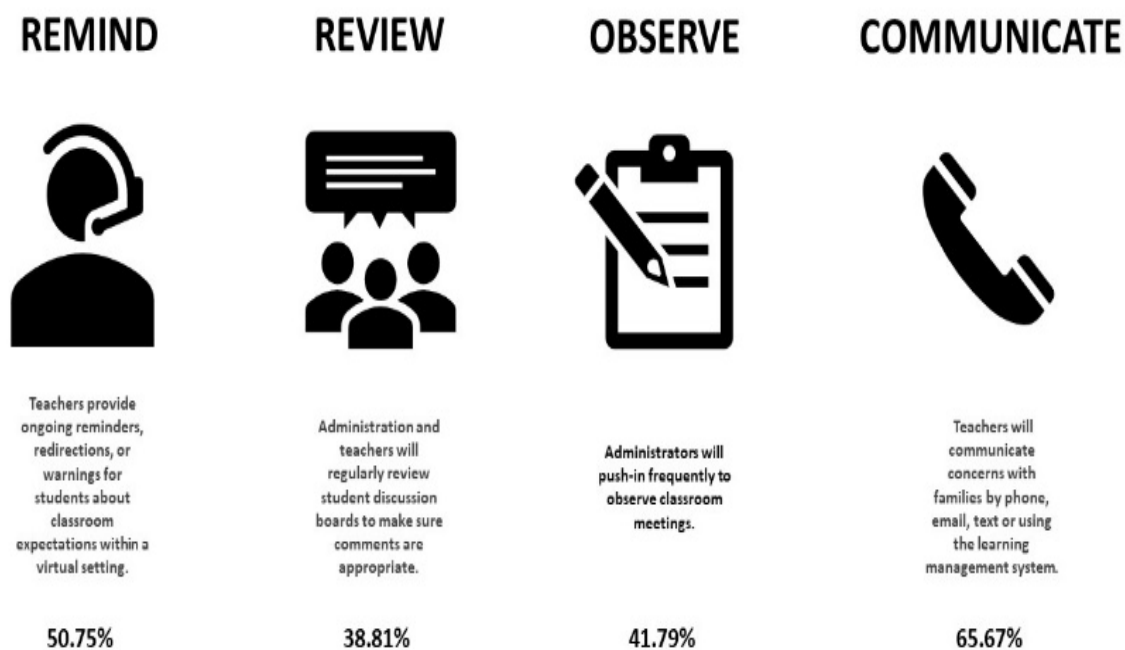


In previous years, fighting and drug use might have been key concerns, but during 2020-21, LEAs were more focused on the appropriate use of technology. In addition, the fact that LEAs were very focused on

fostering an environment that prioritizes respectful communication demonstrates an effort to create a positive school climate during challenging times.

More than half of LEAs intended to monitor students' behaviors using one of four approaches (Figure 1.2). Most LEAs emphasized the need to communicate with parents to monitor students' behavior. Offering reminders is a monitoring approach used prior to the global health crisis and is also viewed as important as students adjust to distance learning expectations. LEAs sought to respond to students' access and exposure to new technology with reminders about expectations prior to disciplinary action. Observing classrooms and reviewing chat and discussion boards were adaptations to monitoring student behavior during distance learning. OSSE did not find in the CEPs any indication of staff monitoring student behavior by requiring that cameras be turned on during class or by tracking app usage.

Figure 1.2: A Four-step Approach to Monitoring



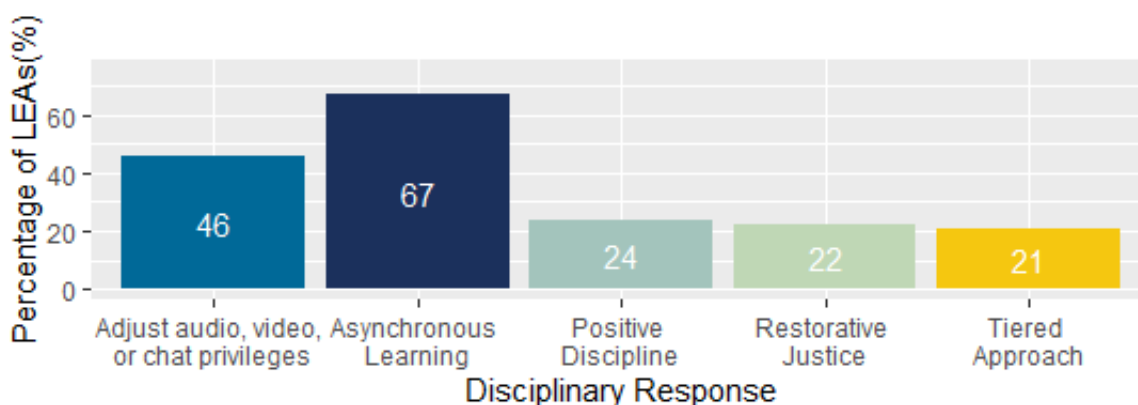
Top 5 potential disciplinary actions during distance learning (Figure 1.3).

- **#1:** Assign students to asynchronous learning (67.16%)
- **#2:** Adjust students' audio, video, or chat privileges (46.27%)
- **#3:** Use of positive discipline practices (23.88%)
- **#4:** Use of restorative discipline practices (22.39%)
- **#5:** Use of tiered approach to discipline (20.90%)²⁰

²⁰ "Use of a tiered approach to discipline" was coded any time an LEA generally mentioned in their CEP using an escalation process where a student would receive gradually more severe consequences if the behavior persisted. This was treated as mutually exclusive from positive and restorative discipline practices, which were coded only if components of those approaches were mentioned.

These disaggregated proportions demonstrate that asynchronous learning was the most mentioned disciplinary action, with adjusting students’ technology privileges being the second. When combined with not removing students at all,²¹ these virtual approaches make up the vast majority of disciplinary actions mentioned. 82.09% of LEAs include at least one type of virtual-specific disciplinary response in their discipline policy.

Figure 1.3: Top 5 Disciplinary Actions in Distance Policies



Each of the three types of positive approaches (positive, restorative, or tiered) were mentioned at similar rates. 49.25% of LEAs include at least one type of positive practice in their distance discipline policy, which does not account for those LEAs that may have mentioned using more than one positive practice.

Three well-known traditional discipline approaches were not in the top five – ISS, OSS, and expulsion. Combined, traditional approaches were only mentioned at least once in LEAs’ distance discipline policies 22.39% of the time. In previous years, these traditional approaches were the most used disciplinary actions. LEAs quickly realized that these approaches were not necessarily the best fit for distance learning, and therefore deemphasized them in their distance discipline policies.

Most of the disciplinary action types listed by LEAs in their distance discipline policies involve discontinuing live instruction for students, which means there is still room to increase the number of LEAs using positive approaches or other approaches to ensure educational continuity. As students return to in-person instruction across the city, LEAs are encouraged to continue to use proactive disciplinary methods rather than resorting to suspensions and expulsions. OSSE will work to support LEAs in this effort by using the Positive School Climate Funds²² to provide professional development opportunities focused on trauma-informed disciplinary practices.²³

²¹ Not removing students at all was a disciplinary response some LEAs used in direct response to the global health crisis, and was coded as virtual because it is conceptually aligned with the other disciplinary action types that arose in response to the global health crisis.

²² D.C. Code § 38-236.07

²³ D.C. Code § 38-236.06

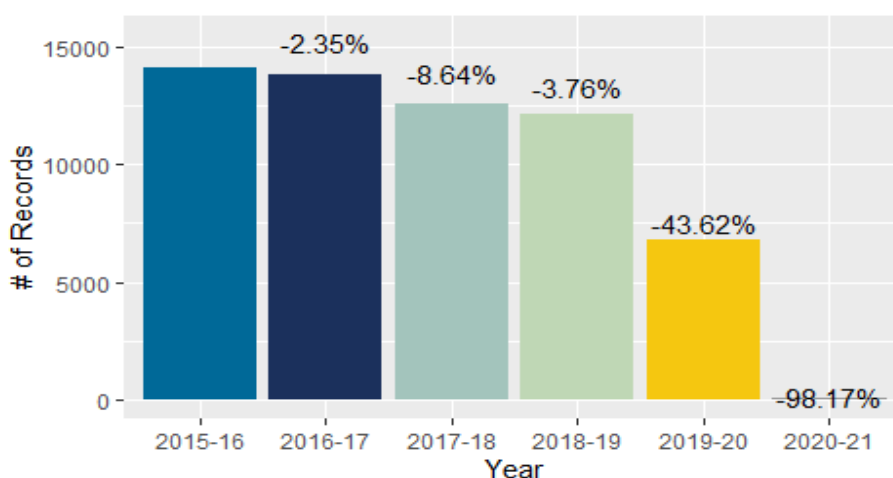
Discipline Data Collection

By August 15th of each year, District of Columbia law requires each LEA to submit a student-level data file to OSSE on all disciplinary incidents, including but not limited to in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and involuntary dismissals.²⁴ OSSE performs data validation checks after LEAs submit data, which means that each record is checked and verified for accuracy. [Appendix A](#) explains these checks in more detail. OSSE also conducts quality control checks on the data that may reveal non-compliance or data inconsistencies and provides an opportunity for LEAs to address those inconsistencies or instances of non-compliance.

OSSE produces and distributes the Student Discipline Data Collection Guidance²⁵ and a collection template in order to provide LEAs with the information they need to submit complete and accurate data on all disciplinary incidents. OSSE released guidance and documentation for the 2020-21 school year and provided data collection training for LEA personnel, as well as year-round technical assistance as requested. Discipline data for the 2020-21 school year include incidents for the entire school year, unlike the 2019-20 school year, which was disrupted due to COVID-19.

However, OSSE has seen an almost 100% decrease in disciplinary incidents since the COVID-19 pandemic began ([see figure 2.1](#)). Discipline data collection stopped on March 13, 2020, which resulted in an almost 44% decrease in disciplinary incidents during the 2019-20 school year. In the 2020-21 school year, OSSE only received 125 disciplinary incident records due to the aforementioned changes in approaches to disciplinary action during distance learning. LEAs wrote their distance discipline policies to incorporate new approaches, which then impacted the number of reported incidents. 77% of LEAs reported no disciplinary incidents during the 2020-21 school year. The rest of the LEAs submitted at least one record.

Figure 2.1: Percent Change in Records Submitted Each Year from 2015-2021



²⁴ § 38-236.09 (b)

²⁵ ["Student Discipline Data Collection Guidance."](#) Office of the State Superintendent of Education.

Student Population for 2020-21 Analysis

The student population for the 2020-21 school year discipline analysis consists of 98,660 students attending 68 LEAs and 311 schools, spanning grades Pre-K3 to adult programs, and limiting students attending nonpublic schools and schools for incarcerated youth. However, due to the large proportion of LEAs who indicated they had no disciplinary incidents, this analysis may not reflect the experiences of the majority of students, staff, schools, and LEAs. This analysis only includes data from the 12 LEAs who had disciplinary incidents ([see Appendix F](#)). LEAs verified enrollment, demographics, and discipline records for the student population analyzed in this report as part of the comprehensive demographic verification process and metric calculation confirmation for the statewide school accountability system.

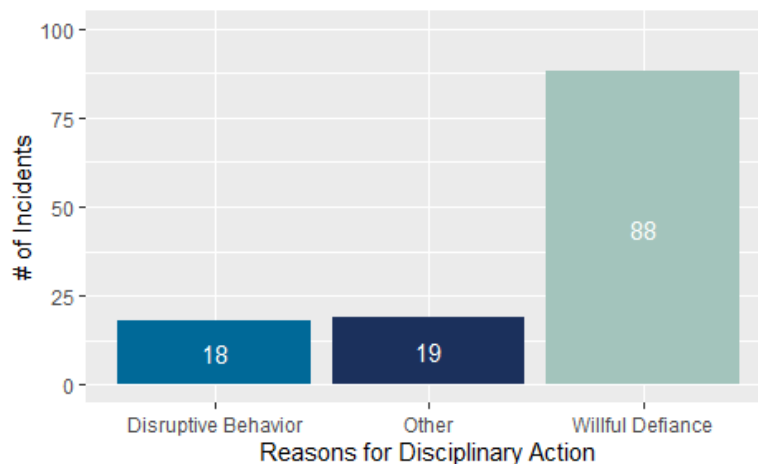
Findings

This report mainly includes analysis at the disciplinary action level, with some analysis at the student level. Analyses at the student-level are unique for each student and disciplinary action type. For example, a student counts once in the total number of students who receive out-of-school suspensions, irrespective of how many of those actions occurred. Analyses at the disciplinary action level include the total number of disciplinary actions for all students, as well as analyses of the reasons for disciplinary action. Analysis of disparities by race, disability, and at-risk status were limited this year due to the significant decrease in disciplinary incidents.

A total of 125 disciplinary actions were reported for the 2020-21 school year. 90% of those disciplinary actions were exclusions, which was a disciplinary action type unique to distance learning identified in [2020-2021 Discipline Data Collection Guidance](#). The other 10% of disciplinary actions were either out-of-school suspensions or school-based interventions ([see definitions in Appendix A](#)).

LEAs are required to report a primary reason for disciplinary action and can provide a secondary reason for disciplinary action when appropriate. Since the 2017-2018 school year, the most common primary reasons for disciplinary action have been fighting and disruptive/reckless behavior. The primary reason for most disciplinary incidents in the 2020-2021 school year, however, is willful defiance, defined in the 2019-20 Discipline Collection Guidance as “Disrupting school activities or intentionally defying the valid authority of school staff.” The shift from primary reasons that can only happen while instruction is in-

Figure 2.2: Number of Disciplinary Incidents (by Primary Reason)

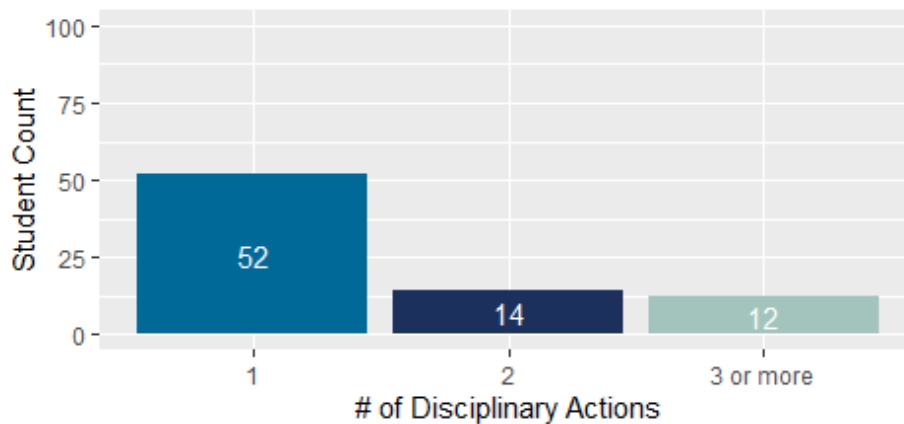


person (fighting) to primary reasons that can occur online (willful defiance and disruptive behavior) are another indication of the impact of distance learning on discipline data for the 2020-21 school year.

“Other” reasons for disciplinary actions, the second most common primary reason for disciplinary action, include, but are not limited to, improper use of technology, insubordination, nonsexual harassment, and more. Specific counts of these reasons must be suppressed to maintain student privacy. Only 19 secondary reasons were reported for the 2020-21 school year, and they were almost evenly split between willful defiance and other reasons.

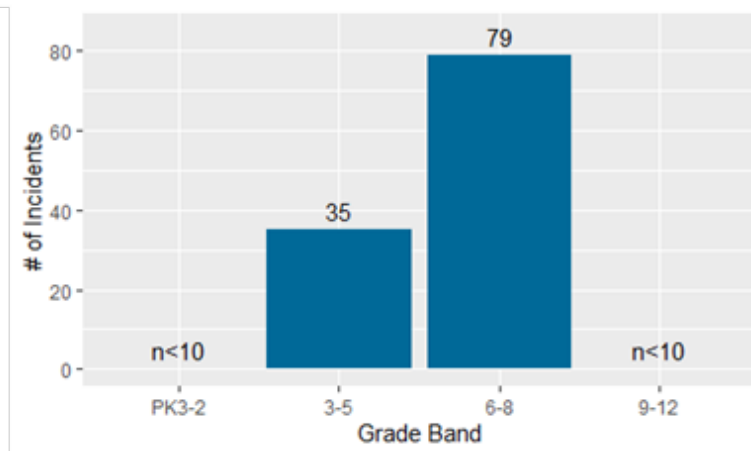
Of the 125 disciplinary incidents, 60 of those incidents were for students who were disciplined for the same reason more than once. Most students who received a disciplinary action during the 2020-21 school year only received one disciplinary action. Fourteen students received two disciplinary actions, and 12 students received three or more disciplinary actions.

Figure 2.3: Number of Disciplinary Incidents (by Student)



Students in grades three through eight accounted for most of the disciplinary incidents in 2020-21, with students in grades six through eight receiving the majority of disciplinary incidents. For the past three school years, OSSE has found that students in grades six through eight receive the most disciplinary incidents. Specific counts by grade must be suppressed to maintain student privacy.

Figure 2.4: Number of Disciplinary Incidents (by Grade)



Looking Forward

Resuming Discipline Collection

As students return to in-person learning, OSSE hopes that schools and LEAs will continue to make a concerted effort to accurately track and report disciplinary incidents using the [2021-22 Discipline Data Collection Guidance](#) and the [Discipline Data Collection Template](#). LEAs can use the available disciplinary action types to categorize disciplinary actions used to manage student behavior in either the distance or in-person learning environments. OSSE has stopped collecting certain data elements to eliminate redundancies and work towards minimizing reporting burden on LEAs ([see list of data elements no longer required in Appendix C](#)).

Responding to March 2021 Auditor’s Report

The [March 2021 auditor’s report](#) highlighted ways OSSE could improve the discipline data collection. The report encouraged OSSE to regain ownership of charter discipline data from PCSB. In addition, the report indicated that OSSE should move away from using a manual template to collect discipline data from LEAs, and towards using an integrated data system instead. At the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, OSSE implemented the following improvements to the discipline data collection in response to the report’s findings.

LEAs no longer submit the [Discipline Data Certification Form](#) to indicate they have no disciplinary incidents. Instead, LEAs certify that they have no disciplinary incidents during OSSE’s data validation process. This change ensures a conversation between all LEAs and OSSE about discipline data, prior to LEAs officially certifying that they have no disciplinary incidents. This change is also a step towards moving away from manual submission of discipline data collection documents.

Charter LEAs no longer submit discipline data through the Public Charter School Board. In prior years, OSSE allowed public charter schools to submit discipline data through the PCSB. At the time, that practice was used to reduce the burden on LEAs, since they needed to report discipline data to their charter authorizer and to OSSE. This is no longer the practice as of the 2021-22 school year. All LEAs are

responsible for providing OSSE complete data for all required elements as reflected in the [OSSE Discipline Data Collection Template](#), including in-school-suspension data, pursuant to federal and local reporting requirements. This change enables OSSE to work directly with LEAs to improve the quality of charter school discipline data.

Discipline data is validated through the Unified Data Error (UDE) Report. Discipline data validation errors and anomalies are identified in the UDE Report in Qlik in the data submitted by LEAs. This report compares information submitted in discipline data to enrollment, attendance, and special education data to reveal any errors or anomalies that need to be addressed before analysis. For example, the UDE report could flag discrepancies between a student’s certified attendance status on a given day in comparison to their disciplinary record. If a student was marked absent on a day when they were present for an in-school suspension, this would be an error LEAs would have to reconcile. If errors like this are not reconciled, the disciplinary record will not be included in analysis and reporting because of the error. For a full list of these errors, along with the description and resolution paths, please see [Appendix D](#). This change is a step towards integrating OSSE’s data collections.

Discipline data is collected on a rolling basis via a new [Integrated Data Submission \(IDS\) tool](#) to ensure LEAs are submitting complete and accurate data. IDS is an OSSE-created tool that LEAs use to submit their discipline data via the Discipline Data Collection Template. The IDS tool immediately flags structural errors in the template. This includes flagging submissions that are missing required fields, have answers in combinations that are not logical, or have duplicate records. The IDS tool is open to LEAs until the end of the school year, meaning LEAs can submit data and fix their errors as frequently as necessary. At the minimum, OSSE requires LEAs to submit data three times throughout the 2021-2022 school year. In prior years, LEAs submitted all of their data once at the end of the school year, leaving LEAs with an abundance of errors to address during the summer. These changes to the discipline data collection have several benefits:

- LEAs immediately know the errors in their data. The IDS tool automatically flags errors in the UDE report, which LEAs previously had to wait until the end of the school year to see.
- Submitting discipline data on a rolling basis using the IDS tool improves data quality by allowing LEAs to address their errors closer to the disciplinary incident, rather than retroactively at the end of the school year.
- OSSE has access to discipline data throughout the year, and can assess the state of discipline proactively. For instance, OSSE can identify early-emerging disparities in discipline practices prior to the end of the school year.
- OSSE receives error-free data earlier, thereby increasing the amount of time OSSE has to analyze data for reporting purposes.

OSSE provided training and a [Frequently Asked Questions document](#) to LEAs to support their efforts in using this new tool. In future years, LEAs will be able to use the IDS tool to submit data directly instead of manually uploading the template. OSSE is committed to streamlining the discipline data collection process, and will work to continue to build the capacity to integrate data collection systems for the purpose of linking important metrics.

Conclusion and Key Takeaways

This report explored trends in distance discipline policies, reflected on the need for increased reporting of disciplinary incidents that occur during distance learning, analyzed the reasons for and prevalence of disciplinary actions within the 125 records submitted for the 2020-2021 school year, and communicated the efforts OSSE is making to streamline the discipline data reporting process for LEAs.

From the 2019-2020 school year to the 2020-2021 school year, OSSE saw a substantial decrease in the number of disciplinary incident records due to the impact of distance learning. When LEAs were adapting to distance learning, OSSE found that LEAs prioritized the need for communication with parents/families and the use of positive discipline practices. Last, willful defiance and disruptive behavior were the primary reasons students were disciplined in the 2020-21 school year.

OSSE was unable to conduct many of the analyses traditionally incorporated in the discipline report regarding race, disability, at-risk status, gender, and more, due to the impact of distance learning on LEAs' reporting and the limited number of cases. Moving forward, OSSE is focused on streamlining the discipline data collection process to reduce the burdens on LEAs, improve the validity of the data, and incorporate qualitative context in future reports and publications.

Appendix A: Data Methodology

Definitions

Exclusion: Removal of a student from the student’s daily class schedule for disciplinary reasons and includes a suspension or a disciplinary unenrollment

Expulsion: Removal of a student from the student’s school of enrollment for disciplinary reasons for the remainder of the school year or longer in accordance with LEA policy.

In-School Suspension: Temporarily removing a student from his/her regular class schedule for disciplinary reasons, during which time the student remains on school grounds under the supervision of school personnel who are physically in the same location as the student.

Out-of-School Suspension: Temporarily removing a student from school attendance to another setting for disciplinary reasons, during which time the student is not under the supervision of the school’s personnel and is not allowed on school grounds.

School-Based Intervention: Temporarily removing a student from the student’s regular class schedule for the purpose of providing the student with school-based targeted supports, such as behavioral therapy, in response to student conduct that would otherwise warrant an in-school suspension.

Continuous Education Plan (CEP): Plans intended to provide the public with information on how the LEA prepared for the 2020-21 school year in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Sources

The student universe and subgroup identification are based on data certified during the data validation process at the end of the 2020-21 school year. Disciplinary action data are based on 12 self-reported data provided by LEAs and PCSB.

Data Cleaning and Limitations

OSSE does not receive discipline data from non-public schools, so students only enrolled in non-public schools were excluded from the analyses throughout this report as were students in juvenile justice programs. The District of Columbia Public Schools submitted disciplinary incident records this year, but due to conflicts with attendance data that had already been certified in data validation, those records had to be imputed from the analysis.

Counts of Disciplinary Actions

Counts of in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, exclusions, expulsions, involuntary transfers, removals to an interim alternative educational setting, and disciplinary actions were obtained from the discipline data collected by OSSE from the LEAs and [can be found in the Discipline Data Collection section of this report](#). Each unique student disciplinary action date and disciplinary action type were calculated once for this report.

Appendix B: Continuous Education Plan Textual Analysis – Qualitative Codebooks

The CEPs analyzed for this report can be found on [OSSE’s website](#). Using the approach listed in the [Analysis Approach](#) section, the codes listed below were developed from and applied to the distance learning discipline policy sections of the plans. Qualitative coding is ultimately a subjective practice, but given the systematic and research-inform approach taken, these codes can be applied consistently to the same text by different users.

Example from a CEP (codes applied in parentheses):

*“If students do not follow expectations for communicating respectfully **(RESPECT)** with school staff or other students:*

1. *School staff will remind students of expectations for distance learning. **(REMIND)***
2. *School staff will conference with families about school expectations not being met. **(COMMUNICATE)***
3. *Teachers may temporarily adjust students audio, video or chat privileges during synchronous meetings. **(LIMIT – would not be used again for the bullet below because codes capture the presence of an expectation, monitoring approach, or response at least once in the plans)***
4. *Teachers may temporarily limit students’ ability to post content on LMS chat or discussion boards.*
5. *If these interventions are not successful in changing students behavior, school staff may temporarily assign students to asynchronous learning opportunities in lieu of synchronous instruction. **(EXCLUDE)”***

As mentioned in the [Data Caveat](#) section, some LEAs list **wanted** behaviors from students (which inform the code descriptions below) and some list **unwanted** behaviors. These codes can be applied either way.

Example from an LEA’s CEP:

- *LEA lists wanted behavior - Students must communicate respectfully with their classmates and their teacher while in all types of live sessions. Codes applied – RESPECT*
- *LEA lists unwanted behavior – hurtful language/teasing/name calling verbally or via chat (i.e, stupid, dumb, fat, stinky, ugly, etc.) Codes applied – RESPECT*

Expectations

Code Name	Description	Notes
ATTEND	Attend class on time, for the expected duration.	
AUDVID	Use audio and video appropriately during class times (i.e., muting, video on, accurate name).	
BREAKOUT	Follow the same rules for whole group class meetings while in breakout rooms. Immediately return to whole group meetings once breakout rooms are over unless otherwise directed by the teacher.	
BULLY	Refrain from any form of bullying or cyberbullying - harassing, threatening or abusing others within the school community while online (or in person, if applicable) - based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, or place of residence or business, including derogatory sexual language	
DISRUPT	Avoid disruptive or off-task behavior/willful interruption of the learning process. Failure to comply.	
DRESS	Wear appropriate/school-friendly clothes. Wear uniform (if required/applicable).	
DRUG	Refrain from possession and use of, and intoxication by, illicit drugs or alcohol.	
INAPPROPRIATE	Refrain from sharing inappropriate pictures or images during classroom meetings or on discussion boards. Refrain from inappropriate sexual behavior (if in person/applicable).	Includes general mentions of sexual behavior that is not harassment of a specific person.
PRIVATE	No posting of any private information such as addresses, phone numbers or passwords on public chat or discussion boards. Keep username and passwords in a safe place and not share them with other students. Log into the LMS using unique log-in information.	
PROPERTY	Students must treat all school property (i.e., electronic devices) with care.	
RESPECT	Communicate respectfully with classmates and teacher while in class meetings, breakout rooms and private/public chat windows and discussion boards.	This is solely about the physical condition of the equipment, not how it is used- use INAPPROPRIATE if the expectation is about the student's use of technology
WORK	Students must complete work on time following the guidelines requested by the teacher for submission. Students must submit their own work and provide citations for work created by others (i.e., no cheating or plagiarism).	

Monitoring

Code Name	Description
REVIEW	Administration/teachers will regularly review student discussion boards to make sure comments are appropriate.
OBSERVE	Administrators will pop/push-in frequently to observe classroom meetings.
REMIND	Teachers will provide ongoing reminders, redirections, or warnings for students about classroom expectations within a remote setting.
COMMUNICATE	Teachers will communicate concerns with families by phone, email, text or using the LMS.

Responses

Code Name	Description	Notes
EXCLUDE	School staff may temporarily assign students to asynchronous learning opportunities in lieu of synchronous instruction.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Includes mentions of providing access to recorded class materials instead of live class. Does not include mentions of providing catch-up work that is solely in substitution of synchronous learning. 2) Asynchronous learning definition: Learning where students learn the same material at different times and locations. Removing a student's access to synchronous distance learning instruction for any amount of time and the student does not meet one of the following standards: (1) If the LEA uses a learning management system (LMS), the student was authenticated and engaged in education consistent with the LEA's prescribed policy. (2) If the LEA does not use an LMS, the LEA made one-on-one contact with the student for the day to authenticate the student's presence AND provided daily evidence of engagement consistent with the LEA's policy.
LIMIT	"Teachers may temporarily adjust students audio, video or chat privileges during synchronous meetings. Teachers may temporarily limit students' ability to post content on LMS chat or discussion boards."	
EXPEL	Removing a student from their regular school for disciplinary purposes for the remainder of the school year or longer in accordance with LEA policy.	Only use this code if the exact word "expel" is used to ensure it is mutually exclusive with EXCLUDE.

ISS	" A student that is removed from the virtual classroom will be assigned to virtual ALC (Alternative Learning Center) which services as an in-school suspension"	Only use this code if the exact phrase "in-school suspension" is used to ensure it is mutually exclusive with EXCLUDE.
LAW	Depending on the type of content shared or the seriousness of the offense, local law enforcement may be alerted to the inappropriate conduct.	
NONE	"Will not exclude any scholar from distance learning as a result of not meeting any behavior expectations."	
OSS	Students may be suspended for participating in synchronous instruction in accordance with the D.C. Student Fair Access to School Act.	Only use this code if the exact phrase "out-of-school suspension" is used to ensure it is mutually exclusive with EXCLUDE.
RESTORATIVE	Restorative circles, peer mediations, groups led by school counselors, mentoring, regular check-ins with a trusted adult.	Will also be used in instances where restorative practices are listed as a way to monitor, mediate, or resolve behavioral challenges - because there is a critical mass of LEAs that use this approach, but they all differ in at what stage in the discipline process they use this approach
POSITIVE	Use of positive discipline or positive-behavioral supports or interventions in response to behavioral challenges. Or social emotional learning.	"Examples: Give student a break (use timer, placing on mute/stopping video) Offer choices OR broad mentions of the use of these frameworks/approaches"
TIER	Use of a tiered approach to discipline.	

Appendix C: Data Elements No Longer Required for Discipline Data Collection

Data Element (No longer being collected)	State of the Data Element Moving Forward
School Year	System generated moving forward
Collection Date	LEA no longer needs to submit this data element. It will be system generated going forward.
Consecutive School Days of Disciplinary Action	Derived from the Disciplinary Action Start and End Dates and the calendar of the school at which the disciplinary incident occurred
Was the student a student with a disability at the time of the disciplinary incident?	Derived from USI match and SEDS records
Disciplinary Unenrollment Incident ID	No longer tracked
Length of Removal (Alternative Education Setting)	Derived from the Date Removal Start and End Dates and the calendar of the school at which the disciplinary incident occurred

Appendix D: Discipline Data Validation Errors & Resolution Path

Error Name	Description	Resolution
Invalid Disciplinary Incident Date	The student has a disciplinary incident date or disciplinary action start/end date that occurred on a non-instructional school day.	The LEA should either: 1) update the school calendar in eSchoolPLUS to reflect correct instructional days; or 2) update the disciplinary incident date or disciplinary action start/end date to fall on an instructional day.
Invalid Disciplinary Action Start Date		The LEA should either: 1) update the school calendar in eSchoolPLUS to reflect the correct instructional days; or 2) update the disciplinary action start date to fall on an instructional day.
Invalid Disciplinary Action End Date		The LEA should either: 1) update the school calendar in eSchoolPLUS to reflect the correct instructional days; or 2) update the disciplinary action end date to fall on an instructional day.
Invalid Alternative Education Setting Start Date	The student has an alternative education setting start or end date occurred on a non-instructional day.	The LEA should either: 1) update the school calendar in eSchoolPLUS to reflect the correct instructional days; or 2) update the alternative education start or end date to fall on an instructional day.
Invalid Alternative Education Setting End Date		The LEA should either: 1) update the school calendar in eSchoolPLUS to reflect the correct instructional days; or 2) update the alternative education end date to fall on an instructional day.
Invalid Date Written Justification Provided	The date written justification provided occurred on a non-instructional day.	The LEA should either: 1) update the school calendar in eSchoolPLUS to reflect the correct instructional days; or 2) update the date written justification to fall on an instructional day.
Discipline Enrollment Conflict	The student has a disciplinary incident that occurred when the student was not enrolled at the school.	The LEA should either: 1) update the student's enrollment dates or 2) if the student was involuntarily withdrawn, then update the student's exit code to reflect.
Attendance Code Conflict: In-School Suspension	The student has a disciplinary incident with an attendance code other than Present- In School Suspension "PIS."	The LEA must update the attendance code for days where the student served an in-school suspension to "PIS."
Attendance Code Conflict: Out-of-School Suspension	The student has a disciplinary incident action type of Out-of-School Suspension, but the student has an attendance	The LEA must update the attendance code for days where the student served an out-of-school suspension to "AOS."

	code other than Out-of-School Suspension "AOS."	
Missing Required Manifestation Determination Review	A student with an individualized education program (IEP) received an out-of-school suspension lasting 10 or more days and is missing a Manifestation Determination review.	The LEA must conduct a manifestation determination review when a student with an IEP has received an out-of-school suspension of 10 or more days. The LEA must also update the Manifestation Determination field to "YES."
Missing Required Field(s): Students with Disabilities	OSSE has found that the student had an IEP at the time of the incident, but the LEA did not complete the required data elements for Students with Disabilities outlined in the data collection template.	The LEA should complete the data elements required in the Discipline Data Collection for Students with Disabilities.

Appendix E: Interview Sampling Approach

OSSE sought to prioritize the voice and experiences of those closest to the administration of disciplinary action by incorporating them into this report. OSSE selected potential interview participants using purposeful sampling design – a technique widely used in qualitative research for the “identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources.”²⁶ A list of purposeful sampling design strategies and how they were used to craft the sample of 30 school personnel contacted follows:

1. **Criterion-i:** The objective of this strategy is to “identify and select all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance” and ensure participants have some level of similarity²⁷. For selection into this sample, LEAs and schools met the following criteria in progressive order:
 - *LEAs must have submitted at least one record indicating they had a disciplinary incident during the 2020-21 school year.* The LEAs that did not meet this criterion certified that they had no disciplinary incidents to report for the 2020-2021 school year. Using this criterion to inform the sample increases the likelihood that schools within these LEAs can speak to the discipline data collection process during this school year (which may not be the case for those who certified that they had no records). Thirteen LEAs met this criterion.
 - *For LEAs that submitted data and have more than 5 schools, schools were chosen at random from a geographically diverse sample list of the LEA's schools.* 50 schools were chosen from 13 LEAs for consideration in the sample.
 - *Schools had to serve elementary, middle, or high school students.* Schools who serve the adult population were not included, given that a vast majority of disciplinary incidents historically occur in grades K-12. In addition, pre-school expulsion is prohibited by the Pre-K Student Discipline Amendment Act of 2015, which is why preschools were not included in this sample. After applying this criteria, 48 schools remained.
2. **Stratified Purposeful Random Sampling:** The objective of this strategy is to increase the credibility of results by randomly selecting 15 schools from the list of 48 schools who met the aforementioned criteria, emphasizing a focus on variation needed to be representative of different experiences and perspectives.²⁸ The strata used for this part of the selection are three grade bands: elementary (K-5), middle (6-8), and high school (9-12). Five schools from each stratum were randomly selected using a random number generator, totaling 15 schools.

²⁶ Patton MQ. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 3rd Sage Publications; Thousand Oaks, CA: 2002. [[Google Scholar](#)]

²⁷ Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research. *Administration and policy in mental health*, 42(5), 533–544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>

²⁸ See footnote 22.

3. **Snowball Sampling:** The objective of this strategy is to “identify cases of interest from sampling people who know people that generally have similar characteristics”²⁹. For this selection, the similar characteristic was proximity to school discipline. Heads of schools were contacted first for an interview because of their proximity to the experience of disciplining students during distance learning, as well as reporting and keeping track of this data. OSSE asked each head of school to recommend one additional staff person (teacher, vice principal, dean of school culture, etc.) to ensure that staff involved in disciplining students were given an opportunity to share their experience and to ensure that this data collection was informed by diverse perspectives.

This sampling approach was used twice, for two separate rounds of outreach, meaning OSSE reached out to 30 schools to share their experience with school discipline over the course of 3 months prior to the submission of this report. Outreach included two emails one week apart describing the opportunity, time commitment, and next steps to confirm the interview time and date. OSSE received a response from 6 individuals contacted – two accepted and 4 declined. The two who accepted did not respond to further attempts to confirm an interview date and time.

Because these two rounds of outreach did not lead to any scheduled interviews. OSSE initiated a different approach to ensure that perspectives from those implementing school discipline were included in the report. OSSE, in partnership with SchoolTalk (the provider for the RDC program), reached out to schools receiving training and technical assistance on restorative discipline practices to schedule interviews. A limitation of this approach is that it introduced a selection bias that the initial, more randomized, outreach approach did not include. It is possible that only including perspectives from schools engaging in restorative justice training and technical assistance may leave out other important perspectives. Due to time constraints with waiting for individuals to sign up and the due date of this report, interviews were not able to be incorporated into the analyses for this report.

In the future, OSSE hopes to incorporate interview data into this report to expound on any gaps in reporting or in the data.

²⁹ See footnote 22.

Appendix F: LEA Data/Certification Form Submission Status

All LEAs were expected to submit discipline data or a discipline data certification form for the 2020-21 school year by August 15, 2021. OSSE reached out to LEAs that did not submit either by this deadline, and gave them until September 30, 2021 to do so. Those LEAs that did not submit either data or a form received a non-compliance letter and are listed in a table below.

LEAs That Did Not Submit Discipline Data or Certification Form

LEA ID	LEA Name
121	Hope Community PCS
126	IDEA PCS
317	Digital Pioneers Academy PCS

Also listed below are those LEAs that submitted at least one disciplinary incident record for the 2020-21 school year. All other LEAs submitted the discipline data certification form indicating they had no disciplinary incidents to report.

LEAs That Submitted At Least One Discipline Incident Record

LEA ID	LEA Name
001	District of Columbia Public Schools
107	Bridges PCS
109	Cesar Chavez PCS for Public Policy
129	KIPP DC PCS
135	Meridian PCS
138	Paul PCS
149	Two Rivers PCS
165	Inspired Teaching Demonstration PCS
171	Mundo Verde Bilingual PCS
173	Ingenuity Prep PCS
190	Goodwill Excel Center PCS
334	Capital Village PCS
340	Girls Global Academy PCS