



CARING AND SAFE SCHOOLS REPORT

2019 - 2020

The total number of suspensions and expulsions in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) decreased for the fourth straight year in the 2019-2020 school year.

2019-20 was an unusual school year; all Ontario public schools, including all schools in the TDSB, were closed to in-person learning beginning March 16, 2020, under an order of the Ontario government due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Teacher-led online learning began on April 6, 2020, with all TDSB schools remaining closed to in-person learning for the rest of the school year.

The school closure contributed to fewer suspensions and expulsions within the Board.

Two data analyses were conducted for this report. In Sections A to C, all suspensions and expulsions were reported for the entire 2019-20 school year and compared to the total numbers for the previous three school years. In Sections D and E, the number of suspensions and expulsions from September 1, 2019 to March 15, 2020 were compared with those from the same period in the previous school years. This data set allows for a more accurate point of comparison year-over-year.

Addressing Systemic Barriers

Suspensions – Students in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3

In August 2019, the Ministry of Education directed school Boards to eliminate discretionary suspensions for students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3. Subsequently, TDSB Trustees passed a motion that directed staff to eliminate all historic suspensions from student records, both electronic and hard copies, issued to students when they were in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3. The motion further directed that moving forward, a formal retention schedule be set for all suspensions issued regardless of grade.

TDSB staff are in the process of implementing this motion and this work should be completed by the end of September 2021.

Reducing Suspension Rates for Black Students, Indigenous Students, and Students with Special Education Needs

Black students and Indigenous students are suspended at rates much higher than their respective representation within the broader TDSB student population.

Board staff continue to work in specific ways to address this serious issue of systemic racism.

The entire Caring and Safe Schools (CSS) team continues to engage in anti-racism and anti-oppression training with a focus on anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism. This training, however, is simply not enough.

The CSS team will more intentionally collaborate with the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement and the Urban Indigenous Education Centre to ensure that discipline matters involving Black and Indigenous students are analyzed thoroughly through an anti-oppressive lens that holds anti-Black racism and anti-Indigenous racism at the centre of all conversations and decisions related to student discipline for Black and Indigenous students.

Further, as many students who receive suspensions are also often receiving special education support, TDSB Special Education staff must also be involved in the analysis of student discipline matters to ensure that any biases in the student discipline process and any subsequent decisions are being acknowledged and eradicated through interrogation and interruption of practices that appear to be automatic responses to student discipline issues.

A: Student Suspensions and Expulsions in 2019-20

Table 1 shows the overall suspension and expulsion information for TDSB elementary and secondary schools throughout the entire 2019-20 school year¹. The suspension rates² were calculated as the number of students suspended during the school year divided by the student enrolment as of October 31st.

Table 1: Suspensions and Expulsions in the 2019-20 School Year

Panel	Total # of Suspensions	# of Students Suspended	Suspension Rate (%)	# of Expulsions
Elementary	1,718	1,244	0.71%	0
Secondary	1,868	1,486	2.05%	12
Total	3,586	2,730	1.11%	12

Table 2 shows the overall suspension and expulsion information in the last four school years. For a more detailed analysis of trends in suspensions/expulsions please see Section D of this report.

Table 2: Suspensions and Expulsions in the Last Four School Years

Year	Total # of Suspensions	# of Students Suspended	Suspension Rate (%)	# of Expulsions
2016-17	7,306	4,927	2.01%	64
2017-18	6,221	4,302	1.74%	51
2018-19	5,532	3,906	1.58%	30
2019-20	3,586	2,730	1.11%	12

Table 3 shows the number of suspensions and suspension rates for each grade and division in the 2019-20 school year.

Table 3: 2019-20 Suspensions by Student Grade/Division

Grade	# of Suspensions	# of Students	Suspension Rate
Junior Kindergarten	4	4	0.02%
Senior Kindergarten	7	6	0.03%
Grade 1	65	40	0.22%
Grade 2	106	73	0.40%
Grade 3	122	87	0.50%
Primary Division	304	210	0.24%
Grade 4	182	127	0.72%
Grade 5	160	116	0.67%
Grade 6	237	182	1.05%
Junior Division	579	425	0.81%
Grade 7	394	286	1.67%
Grade 8	441	323	1.94%
Intermediate Division	835	609	1.80%
Grade 9	525	390	2.37%
Grade 10	518	409	2.44%
Grade 11	449	361	2.16%
Grade 12	376	326	1.44%
Senior Division	1,868	1,486	2.05%

B: Details of the 2019-20 Suspensions and Expulsions

This section provides details of the 2019-20 student suspensions and expulsions, such as incident locations, infraction types, and police involvement. This information can be used when planning for conduct management, prevention-oriented strategies, mediation, and violence prevention at the school, learning centre, and system levels.

Figure 1: 2019-20 Suspensions/Expulsions by Incident Location

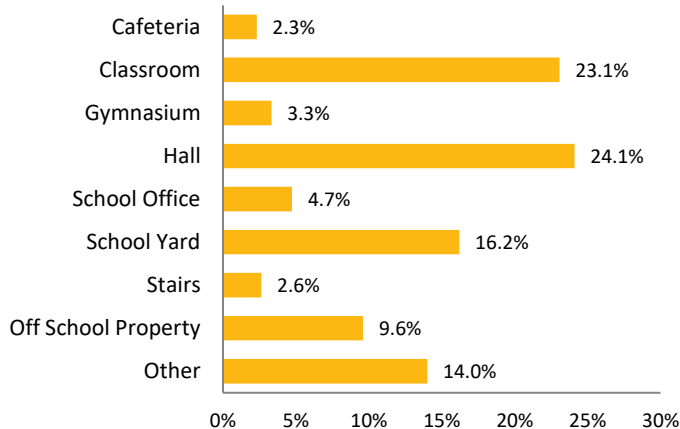
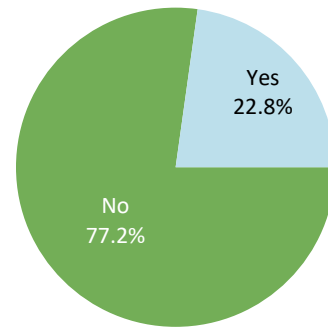


Figure 2: 2019-20 Suspensions/Expulsions with Police Involvement



School hallways (24.1%) classrooms (23.1%), and school yards (16.2%) were the most likely locations where incidents were to happen (see Figure 1). Police were involved in 22.8% of the suspensions or expulsions (see Figure 2).

Among the students suspended in the 2019-20 school year, 79.7% had one suspension only, and 20.3% had two or more suspensions during the school year (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: % of Students with One or More Suspensions in 2019-20

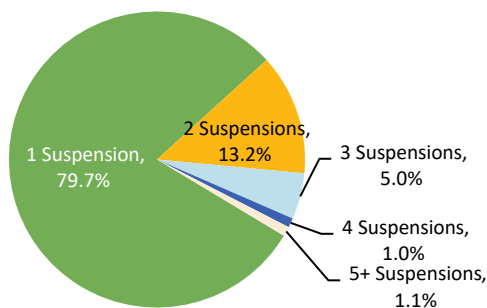
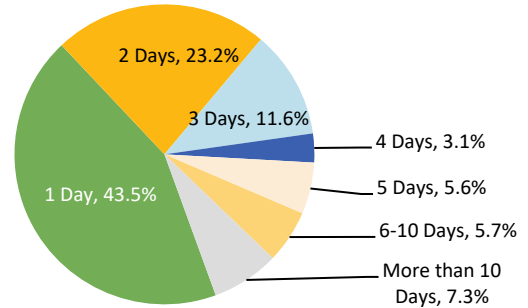


Figure 4: 2019-20 Suspensions by Length in Days



One-day suspensions accounted for 43.5% of the total suspensions in the 2019-20 school year. Two-day and three-day suspensions accounted for 23.2% and 11.6% respectively (see Figure 4).

As seen in Table 4, fighting (17.7%) and physical assault (16.5%) were the top two reasons for suspensions. Bullying accounted for 4.2% of the suspensions.

Table 4: 2019-20 Suspensions by Infraction Type

Types Defined by Section 306. (1) of the Education Act	Count	Percent
Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person	102	2.8%
Possessing alcohol, illegal drugs or, unless the pupil is a medical cannabis user, cannabis	69	1.9%
Being under the influence of alcohol or, unless the pupil is a medical cannabis user, cannabis	49	1.4%
Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority	215	6.0%
Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school	22	0.6%
Bullying	152	4.2%
Types Defined by the Board According to Section 306. (1) 7. of the Education Act		
Willful destruction of school property; vandalism causing damage to school or Board property or property located on school or Board premises	69	1.9%
Use of profane or improper language	234	6.5%
Use of tobacco	40	1.1%
Theft	70	2.0%
Aid or incite harmful behaviour	439	12.2%
Physical assault	593	16.5%
Being under the influence of illegal drugs	12	0.3%
Fighting	633	17.7%
Possession or misuse of any harmful substances	74	2.1%
Extortion	2	0.1%
Inappropriate use of electronic communications or media devices	110	3.1%
An act considered by the school principal to be a breach of the Board's or school code of conduct	145	4.0%
Immunization	0	-
Types Defined by Section 310. (1) of the Education Act		
Possessing a weapon, including a firearm	89	2.5%
Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person	41	1.1%
Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner	118	3.3%
Committing sexual assault	42	1.2%
Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs, or in cannabis	5	0.1%
Committing robbery	19	0.5%
Giving alcohol or cannabis to a minor	3	0.1%
Bullying if, i) the pupil has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying and, ii) the pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person	6	0.2%
Any activity listed in section 306(1) motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor	91	2.5%
Types Defined by the Board According to Section 310. (1) 8. of the Education Act		
Possession of an explosive substance	1	0.0%
Sexual harassment	30	0.8%
Hate and/or bias-motivated occurrence(s)	19	0.5%
Distribution of hate material	4	0.1%
Racial harassment	26	0.7%
An act considered by the principal to be a serious breach of the Board's or school's code of conduct	62	1.7%

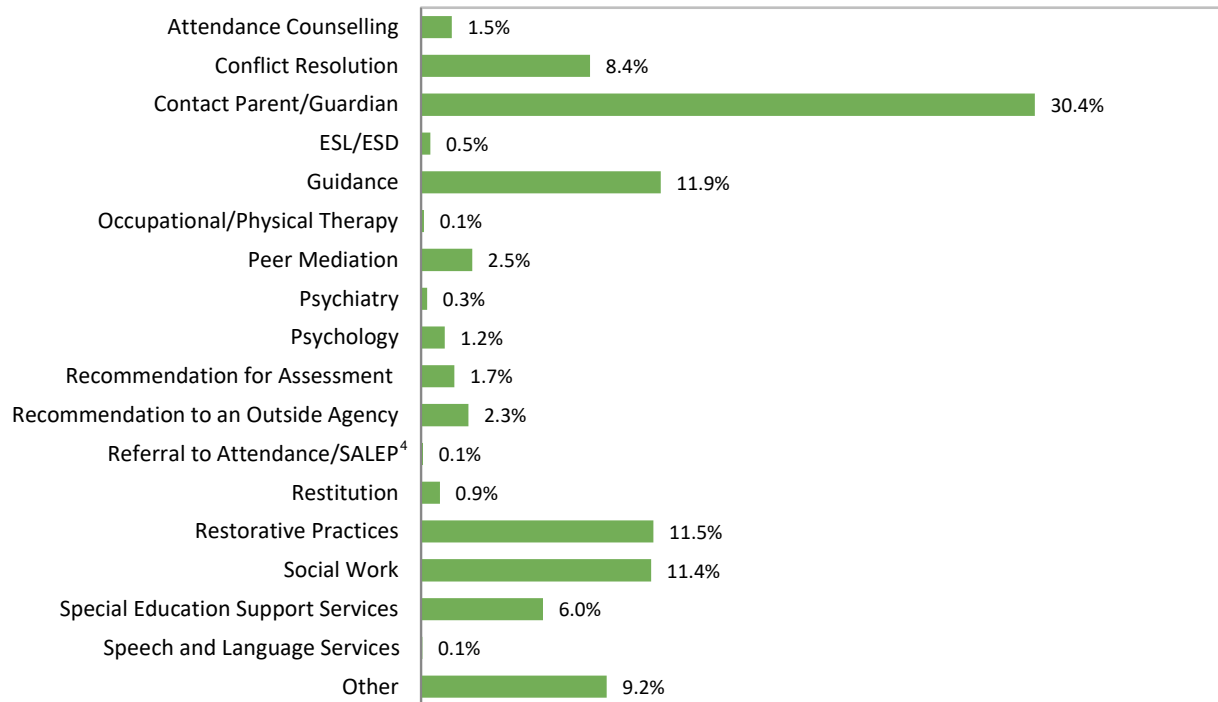
Table 5: 2019-20 Expulsions³ by Infraction Type

Infraction Type	Count	Percent
Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner	2	16.7%
Committing robbery	2	16.7%
Committing sexual assault	0	-
Possessing a weapon, including a firearm	0	-
Sexual harassment	0	-
Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs	0	-
Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person	3	25.0%
An act considered by the principal to be a serious breach of the Board's or school's code of conduct	5	41.7%

C: Interventions Used by Schools in 2019-20

Of all the suspensions in the 2019-20 school year, 97.2% had been followed up with interventions by schools. Figure 5 shows the most used interventions by schools.

Figure 5: Most Used Interventions by Schools in the 2019-20 School Year



A meeting with parents or guardians was the most used intervention (30.4% of the all interventions), followed by guidance (11.9%), restorative practices (11.5%), and social work (11.4%).

D: Student Suspension/Expulsion Trend Analysis

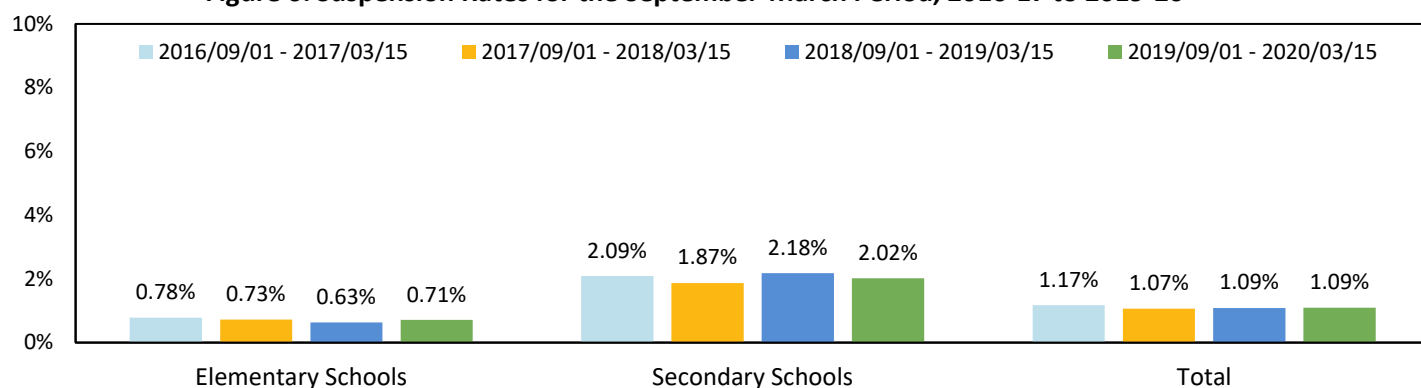
As mentioned above, all Ontario schools had been closed since March 16th in the 2020-21 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Table 6 and Figure 6 show the overall suspension and expulsion information for TDSB elementary and secondary schools during the same period of September 1st to March 15th in the last four school years.

When compared with same period of the 2016-17 school year, the number of suspensions from September 1st to March 15th in the 2019-20 school year dropped 6.4% with 241 fewer suspensions (from 3,790 to 3,549), resulting a lower suspension rate of 1.09% for this period of the 2019-20 school year.

Table 6: Suspensions and Expulsions from September 1st to March 15th, 2016-17 to 2019-20

Panel	School Year	# of Suspensions	# of Students Suspended	# of Expulsions
Elementary Schools	2016/09/01 - 2017/03/15	1,809	1,336	1
	2017/09/01 - 2018/03/15	1,750	1,259	0
	2018/09/01 - 2019/03/15	1,502	1,098	0
	2019/09/01 - 2020/03/15	1,707	1,234	0
Secondary Schools	2016/09/01 - 2017/03/15	1,981	1,541	39
	2017/09/01 - 2018/03/15	1,710	1,377	26
	2018/09/01 - 2019/03/15	2,006	1,588	20
	2019/09/01 - 2020/03/15	1,842	1,463	12
Elementary and Secondary Schools	2016/09/01 - 2017/03/15	3,790	2,877	40
	2017/09/01 - 2018/03/15	3,460	2,636	26
	2018/09/01 - 2019/03/15	3,508	2,686	20
	2019/09/01 - 2020/03/15	3,549	2,697	12

Figure 6: Suspension Rates for the September-March Period, 2016-17 to 2019-20



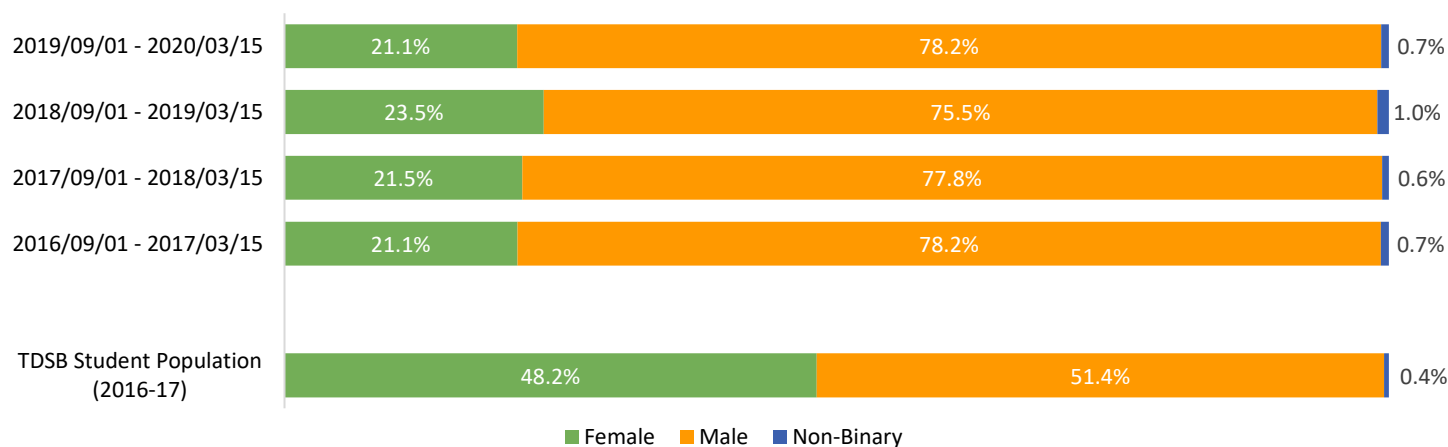
E: Suspensions and Expulsions by Student Demographics

In this section, the 2016-17 to 2019-20 student suspensions and expulsions from September 1st to March 15th were analyzed by student characteristics such as gender identity, self-identified ethno-racial background, student and parent birth place, parent education level and presence at home, language spoken at home, sexual orientation, and special education needs, as captured by the Board's School Information System, and its Student/Parent Census (the most recent one was conducted in the 2016-17 school year). As the number of expulsions is very small, in the following analyses they were combined with suspensions since expelled students must be suspended first pending their expulsion outcome.

By Student Gender Identity

Figure 7 shows that male students accounted for more than three quarters of the suspensions/expulsions (78.2% in 2019-20) from the same period in the last four school years.

Figure 7: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Student Gender Identity

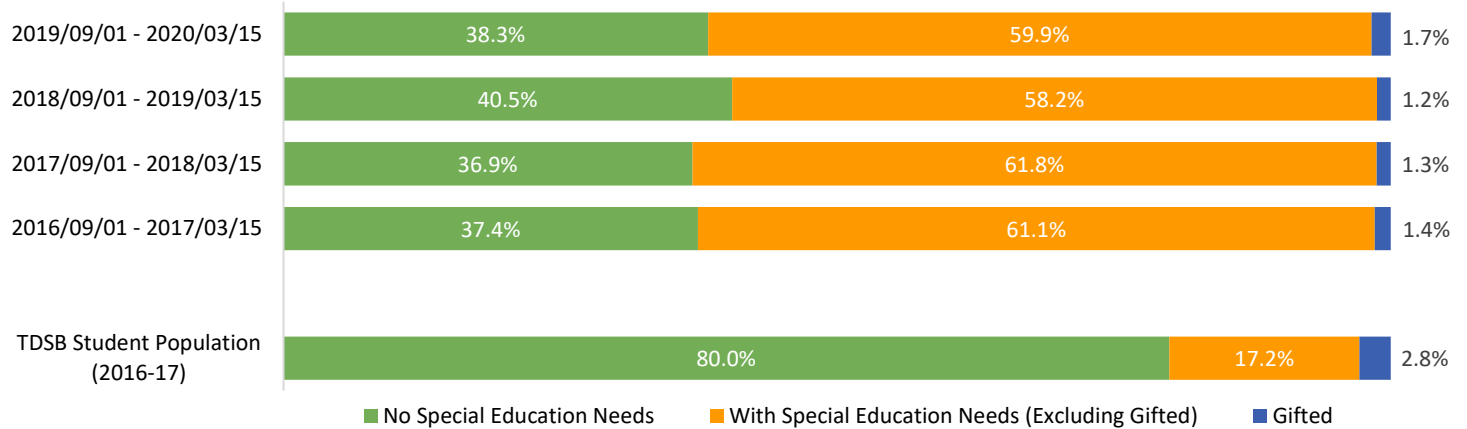


According to the 2016-17 Census data there were 1,067 non-binary students, representing 0.4% of the TDSB student population in the 2016-17 school year. Figure 7 indicates that although they only accounted for about 1% of the total suspensions/expulsions, non-binary students were proportionately over-represented in the suspensions/expulsions in all these school years.

By Special Education Needs

Figure 8 shows the distributions of suspensions/expulsions between September 1st and March 15th in the last four school years by students' status of special education needs.

Figure 8: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Special Education Needs

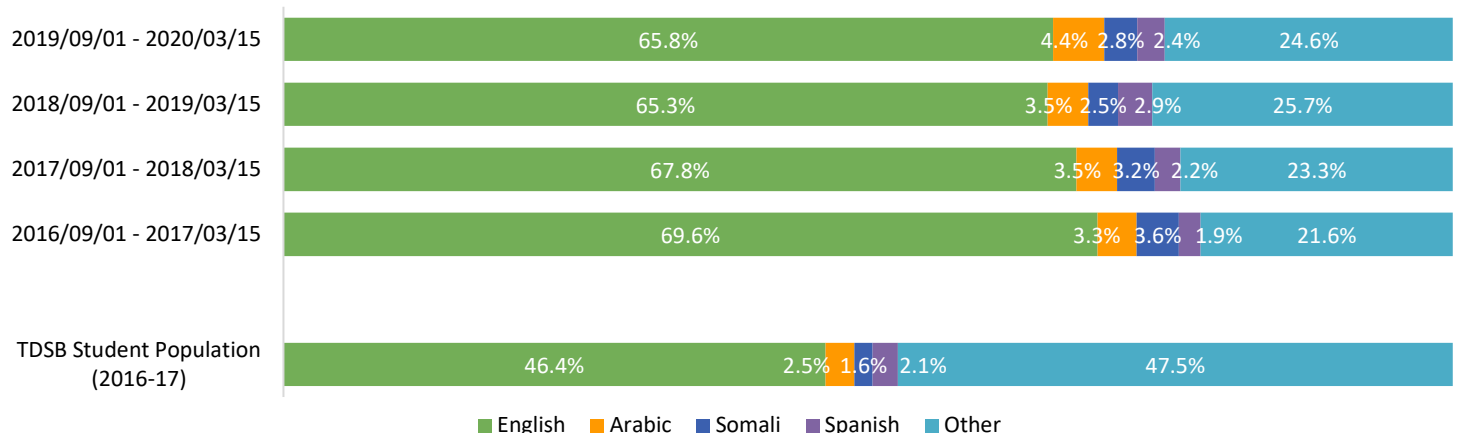


Students with special education needs (excluding Gifted) accounted for the majority (58-62%) of the suspensions/expulsions. Since they accounted for about 17% of the TDSB student population, they were disproportionately high in the suspensions/expulsions (59.9% in 2019-20).

By Primary Language at Home

Figure 9 shows the distributions of the suspensions/expulsions during the same period in the four school years by students' primary language spoken at home. English-speaking students accounted for about two-third (65.8% in 2019-20) of the suspensions/expulsions, while students whose primary home language were Somali, Arabic, and Spanish, the next three large groups in suspensions/expulsions, accounted for about 10% collectively.

Figure 9: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Primary Home Language

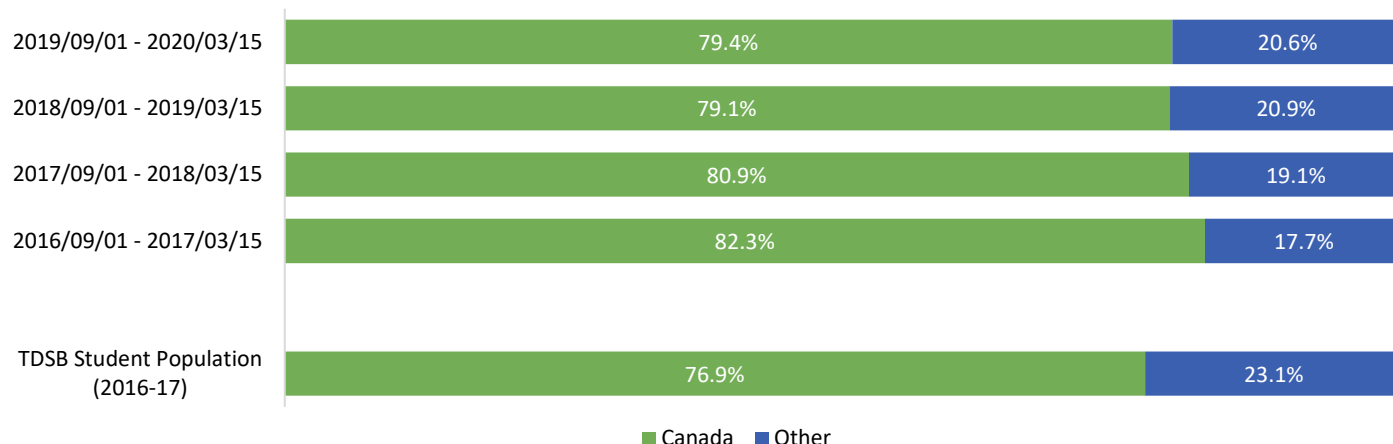


In the 2019-20 school year students whose primary home language were English, Arabic, Somali, and Spanish represented 45.9%, 2.7%, 1.4%, and 2.4% of the TDSB student population respectively. Therefore, English-speaking students, as well as Arabic- and Somali-speaking students, were over-represented in the suspensions/expulsions.

By Student Birth Place

In 2019-20 slightly over three quarters (76.3%) of the TDSB students were born in Canada. Figure 10 shows that they accounted for the majority (79.4% in 2019-20) of the suspensions/expulsions.

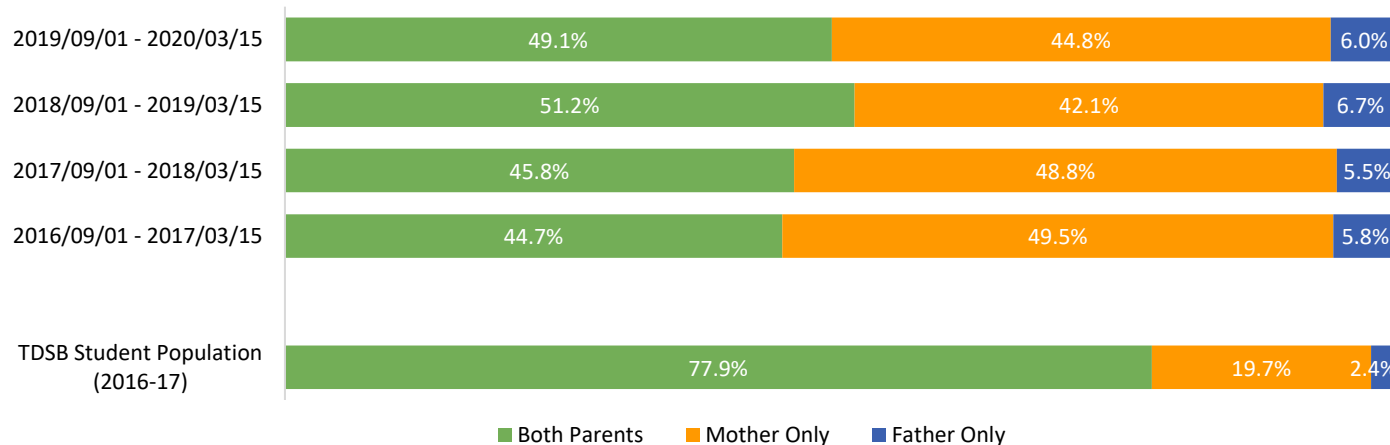
Figure 10: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Student Birth Place



By Parent Presence at Home

Among students in the 2019-20 school year, 79% lived with both parents at home, 19% lived with mother only, and 2% lived with father only, according to the student registration data. Figure 11 shows the distributions of student suspensions/expulsions between September 1st and March 15th in the four school years by their parents' presence at home.

Figure 11: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Parent Presence at Home



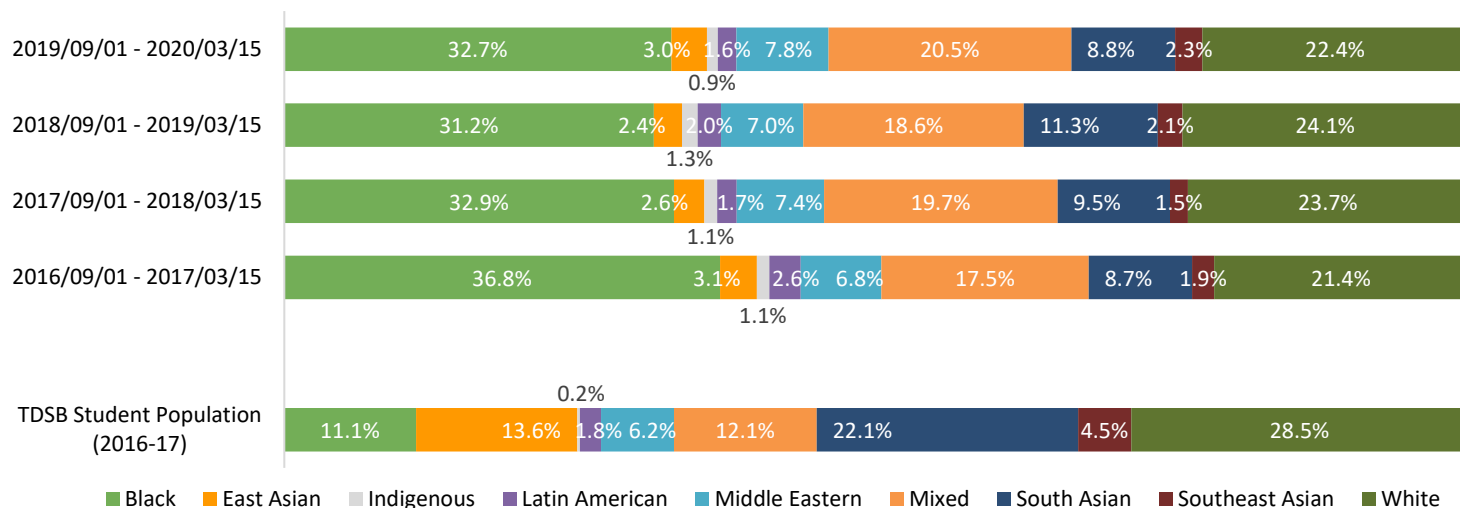
Although about half of suspensions/expulsions (49.1% in 2019-20) were issued to students who lived with both parents, students who lived with one parent, particularly with mother only, had disproportionately high representations in the suspensions/expulsions in all four school years (44.8% in 2019-20).

In the following analyses, students' self-identified ethno-racial background, sexual orientation, and parent education level and birthplace were derived from participants' responses to the TDSB's Student/Parent Census (the most recent one was conducted in the 2016-17 school year). As some students and parents did not participate in the Census, not all the suspensions/expulsions could be included in these analyses.

By Student Ethno-Racial Background

After being linked to the Census data, about 64-74% of the suspensions/expulsions in these school years could be disaggregated by students' self-identified ethno-racial background. See Figure 12.

Figure 12: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Student Ethno-Racial Background



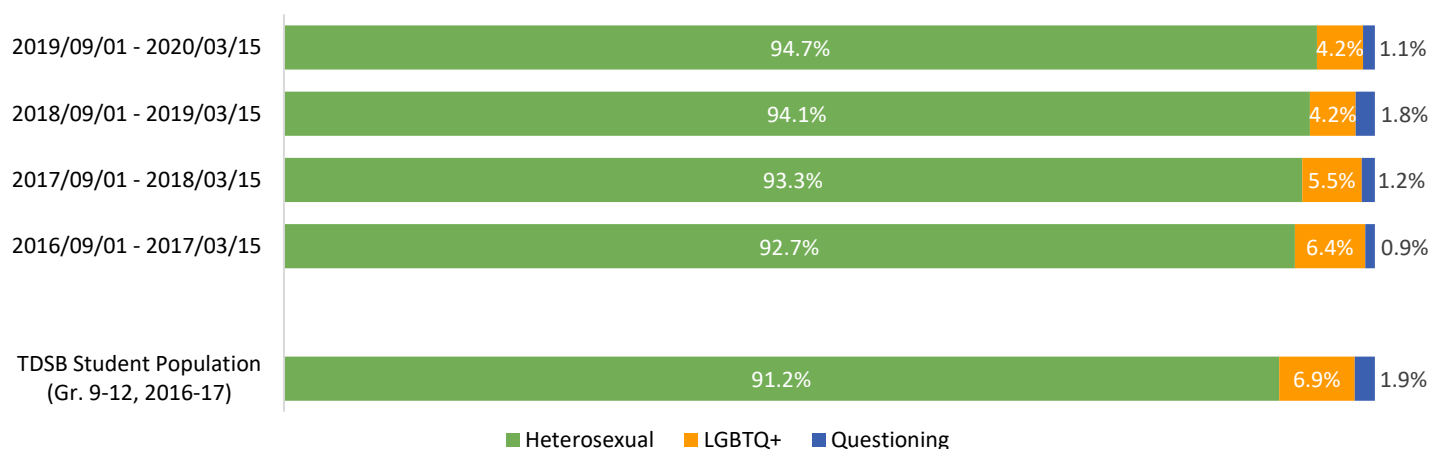
Black students, who accounted for 11% of the TDSB student population, were disproportionately high in the suspensions/expulsions in all four school years (32.7% in 2019-20). Similarly, Indigenous, Middle Eastern and Mixed students were over-represented in the suspensions/expulsions. On the other hand, East Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian and White students were under-represented in the suspensions/expulsions in all four school years.

When compared with the same period in the 2016-17 school year, the proportion of suspensions/expulsions Issued to Black students in the 2019-20 school year decreased by 4.1% (from 36.8% to 32.7%).

By Student Sexual Orientation (Grade 9-12)

In the 2016-17 school year, the vast majority (91%) of the Grade 9-12 students identified themselves as heterosexual, while 7% identified themselves as LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirit, queer, pansexual, or having more than one sexual orientation). About 2% indicated that they were still questioning about their sexual orientation.

Figure 13: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Student Sexual Orientation (Gr. 9-12)

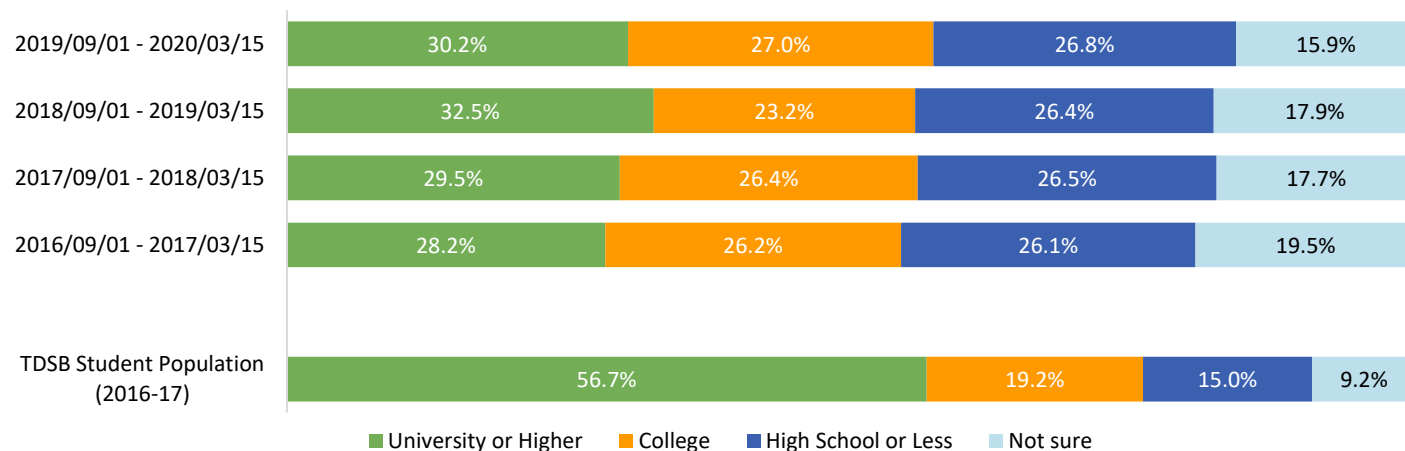


In Grade 9-12, about 45-65% of the suspensions/expulsions in the four school years between September 1st and March 15th could be linked to the student sexual-orientation information. Among them, the vast majority (94.7% in 2019-20) were issued to heterosexual students, while LGBTQ+ students accounted for 4.2-6.4% of the suspensions/expulsions (4.2% in 2019-20). See Figure 13. These proportions are similar to their representations in the general student population.

By Parent Education

In 2016-17 among students who responded to the Census question about their parent(s)' education level, over half (57%) indicated that their parent(s) had a university degree or above (if a student lived with both parents, the higher parent education level was used), 19% indicated that their parent(s) had a college degree, 15% said their parent(s) had a secondary school degree or less, and 9% indicated that they did not know. Over half of the suspensions/expulsions in these four school years could be linked to this variable.

Figure 14: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Parent Education Level

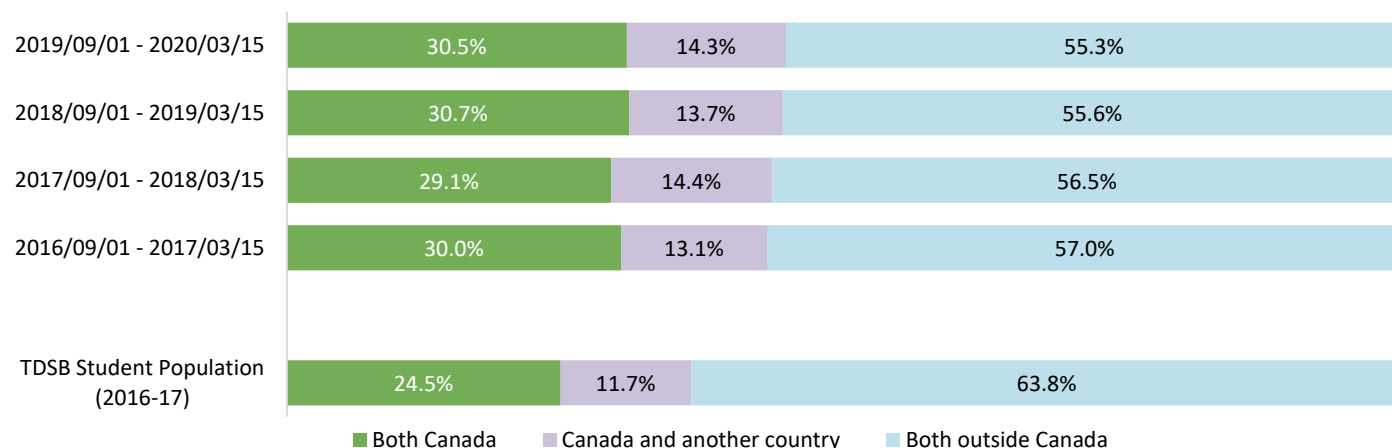


As shown in Figure 14, students whose parents had a university degree or above were under-represented in the suspensions/expulsions (30.2% in 2019-20), while students whose parents had a lower education level (college, secondary school or less) were over-represented in all four school years (27.0% and 26.8% in 2019-20).

By Parent Birth Place

In the 2016-17 school year, according to the Census the majority (64%) of TDSB students had both parents born outside of Canada, 12% had one parent born in Canada, and 25% had both parents born in Canada. Figure 15 shows the distributions of about two-third (63-73%) of the suspensions/expulsions in the four school years that could be linked to this variable.

Figure 15: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by Parent Birth Place

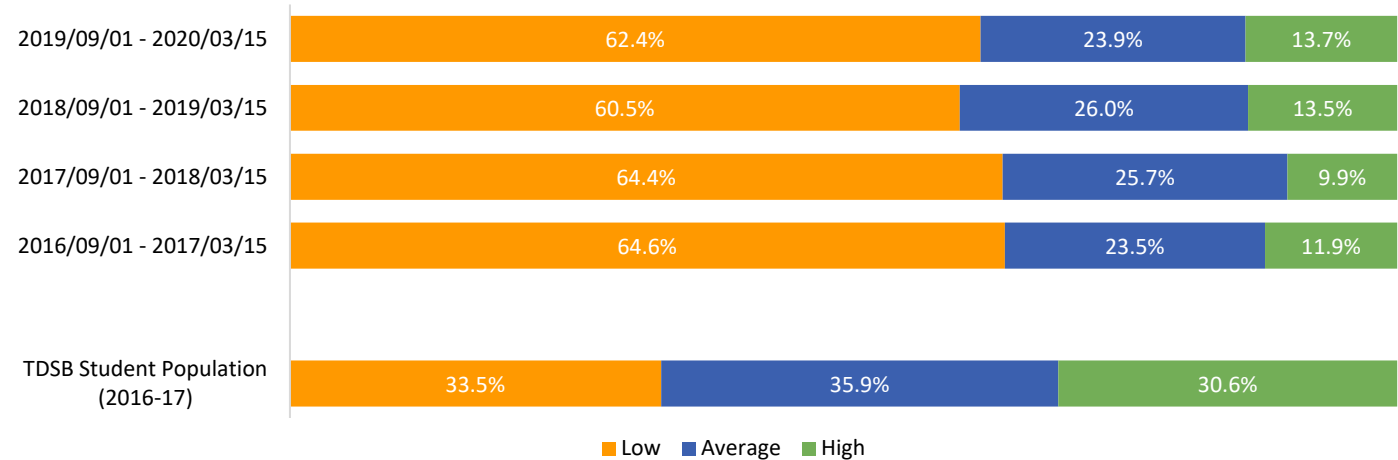


Students with both foreign-born parents accounted for the majority of suspensions/expulsions (55.3% in 2019-20).

By Family Socioeconomic Status

In this report family socioeconomic status (SES) was represented by family annual income in the Parent Census (for Junior-Kindergarten to Grade 6 students), and parent occupations in the Grade 7-12 Student Census, together with parent education level and parent presence at home in both Parent and Student Census. Students were classified into three categories: low, average, and high family SES. About half of the suspensions/ expulsions in the four school years could be linked to this derived variable.

Figure 16: Distribution of Suspensions/Expulsions by SES



Students from low SES families had disproportionately high representations in the suspensions/expulsions in all four school years (62.4% in 2019-20). Students from average SES families accounted for about one quarter of the suspensions/expulsions (23.9% in 2019-20), while students from high SES families accounted for 13.7% of the suspensions/expulsions in 2019-20. See Figure 16.

F: 2019-20 Caring and Safe Schools Alternative Programs

Our schools are safe, nurturing, positive, and respectful learning environments that enable all students to succeed and reach their full potential. Our schools and program sites (see Table 8) are places that promote peaceful problem solving, academic excellence, and a sense of belonging for all students. Students are expected to demonstrate respect for human rights and social justice and promote the values they need to become responsible members of society. The Caring and Safe Schools team of administrators, advisors, child and youth counsellors, and court liaison workers will continuously provide direction and support to administrators, staff, parents, students, and communities through:

- 1. Strong school leadership, with consistent discipline policies and procedures;
- 2. School-wide Caring and Safe Schools programs and instructional components focused on inclusive contributions;
- 3. Evolving and expanded prevention based knowledge and skills;
- 4. Ongoing support and professional growth in emotional intelligence, conduct management, prevention oriented strategies, mediation, and violence prevention;
- 5. Inclusive and developmentally appropriate materials, activities, and programs being championed and utilized;
- 6. Strong efforts to develop relationships and partnerships within the entire school community; and
- 7. Clear assessment, evaluation, and monitoring of student performance, combined with differentiated programming.

Board policies and procedures have been developed in accordance with provincial legislation and Ministry directives to ensure that our schools are caring and safe communities.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all provincial standard assessments were cancelled in the 2019-20 school year. However, research from previous school years indicates that there are strong correlations between student suspensions and their academic achievement. Suspended students had lower levels of achievement on the provincial standard assessments, report cards, and credit accumulation, than students not being suspended. Table 7 shows the Caring and Safe Schools alternative programs for the suspended/expelled students in the 2019-20 school year.

Table 7: Caring and Safe Schools Alternative Programs 2019-20

Program Site	Division	Area	Program Description
C&SS Elementary Itinerant @ Vaughan Rd	Pr./Jr./Int.	LC 1-4	Elementary Itinerant Team – Program Coordinator and Child and Youth Counsellors - provide “push-in” non-academic support in the student’s school.
C&SS Elementary @ Lawrence Heights MS	Pr./Jr.	LC1	Elementary Support Programs (Suspended/Expelled/ Assessment & Support Placements) are provided for elementary school students who have been suspended, expelled, or in alternative placements, and are in need of short- and long-term support. Programs provide both academic and non-academic support. Academic support is provided by a teacher and non-academic support is provided by a Child and Youth Worker at each site.
C&SS Elementary @ Lawrence Heights MS	Jr./Int.		
C&SS Elementary @ Shoreham PS	Pr./Jr.	LC2	C&SS Social Workers and Psychologists provide services to the sites as required. Suspended/Expelled/Assessment & Support students are referred through the Caring and Safe Schools process.
C&SS Elementary @ Shoreham PS	Jr./Int.		
C&SS Midland Elementary @ Scarborough Centre for Alt. Studies	Pr./Jr.	LC3	
C&SS Elementary @ Scarborough Centre for Alternative Studies	Pr./Jr.		
C&SS Elementary @ Scarborough Centre for Alternative Studies	Jr./Int.		
Program Site	Division	Area	Program Description
Barrhead Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Barrhead Learning Centre	Sr.	LC1	Secondary Suspension/Expulsion/Assessment & Support Programs are provided for secondary school students who have been suspended for more than five days or who have been expelled. Site teachers provide academic support and Child and Youth Workers provide non-academic support to students.
Bickford Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Bickford Centre	Sr.	LC4	
Midland Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Scarborough Centre for Alternative Studies	Sr.	LC3	Suspended and expelled students are referred through the Caring and Safe Schools process.
Pharmacy Suspension/ Expulsion Program @ Terraview Learning Centre	Sr.	LC2	Assessment & Support students in need of both academic and non-academic support are referred by Caring and Safe Schools Learning Centre Administrators for placement.
Arrow Rd. Assessment & Support Program – Jamaican Canadian Association (Community Partnership)	Sr.	LC2	Assessment and Support Programs provide both academic and non-academic support to students. The site teacher and Educational Assistant support programming focusing on core curriculum courses (English, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, and Learning Skills). Non-academic support is provided by an agency Child and Youth Worker or a TDSB Social Worker.
Stanley Road Assessment & Support Program	Sr.	LC2	
Operation Springboard Assessment and Support (Community Partnership)	Sr.	LC3	C&SS Social Workers and Psychologists provide services to the sites as required.
East Metro Youth Services Assessment and Support (Community Partnership)	Sr.	LC3	Students are referred through Learning Centre Caring and Safe Schools Administrators.

Contact Us

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Endnotes

¹Reported suspensions and expulsions for a school year may include suspensions and expulsions carried over from the previous school year.

²Suspension and expulsion rates for a school year may include students who came to TDSB schools after October 31st when the total enrolment number was taken and used for calculating the rates.

³Including expulsions carried over from the previous year.

⁴SAL: Supervised Alternative Learning

⁵The overall report card Mathematics result was calculated as the average of the latest results in the five Mathematics strands on the report card.

⁶Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

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