

# Trends in Student Suspensions

Winnipeg School Division has, on an annual basis, shared the results of suspensions with the community. As the result of a more robust suspension reporting process in recent years, the division has had more access to data. This has allowed WSD researchers to examine suspensions and learning, in addition to exploring the role of diverse backgrounds of students. As part of WSD's implementation of the Safe and Caring Schools Framework and restorative practices, this examination of suspension reporting provides direction in identifying next steps and supports for students, staff and the school. A safe and caring school community contributes to a positive culture of learning and belonging which is built on proactive behaviour management systems, student specific behaviour plans, safe and caring school communities, and restorative practices in schools.

As the largest school division in Manitoba, our diversity is a function of the unique qualities each student brings. In 2018/2019, Winnipeg School Division served approximately 35,428 students over the course of the academic year – 32,281 of these enrolled on Sept. 30, 2018. As of September 30, 2018, enrolled WSD students spoke over 100 different languages; self-identified just under 170 different ethnicities; and were made up of almost 7,000 immigrants/refugees. As such, providing safe, caring and inclusive schools remains a fundamental objective that the results of the suspension analysis will help inform in a manner that is respectful to WSD students, staff and school communities.

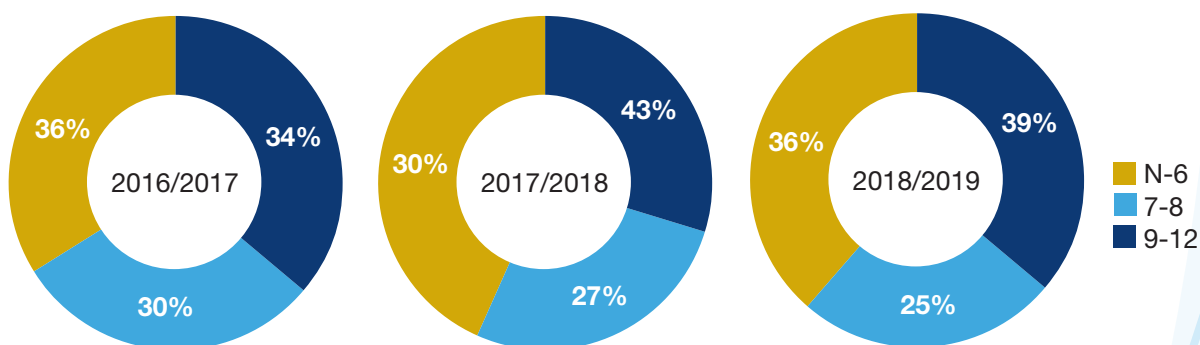
It should be noted that while less than three percent (820 out of 35,428 enrolled students; 2.3%) of students across the division engage in behaviours that lead to suspensions, there is nonetheless an over-representation of Indigenous students among them. This information is shared with both the WSD Indigenous Education Ad-Hoc Committee and the WSD Newcomer Education Ad-Hoc Committee for consultation purposes.

In 2018/2019, self-identified Indigenous students represent 8,625, or 26.7%, of all students in WSD, however, they represent approximately 467 (out of 820 students suspended), or 55%, of suspensions.

The full report can be viewed on [www.winnipegssd.ca/page/8698/research-evaluation](http://www.winnipegssd.ca/page/8698/research-evaluation)

## Comparison of suspensions by grade range per year (all WSD)

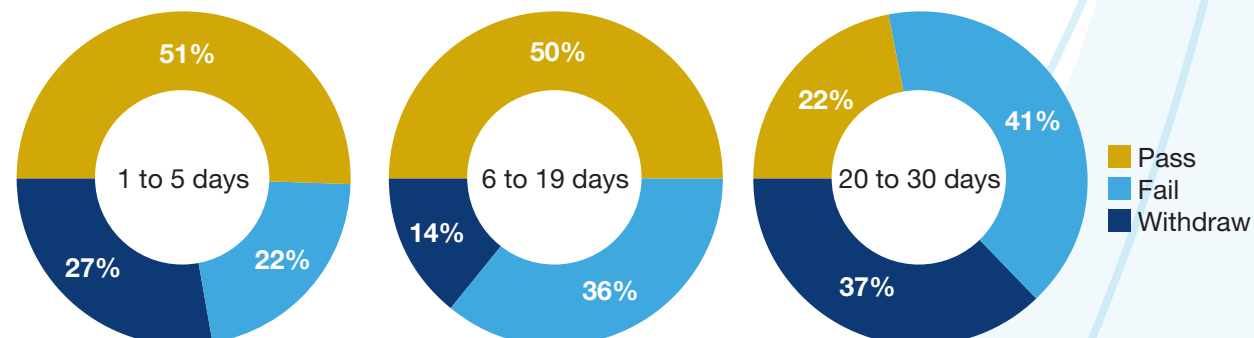
(Three-year suspension rate graph)



The suspension rate for the years 2016/2017 to 2018/2019 was less than 3% across WSD. During this time, WSD introduced extensive mental health supports, increased promotion of anti-bullying strategies, Elder participation in mediation, the School Resource Officer program and the Indigenous Grad Coaching program.

## Course completion rates

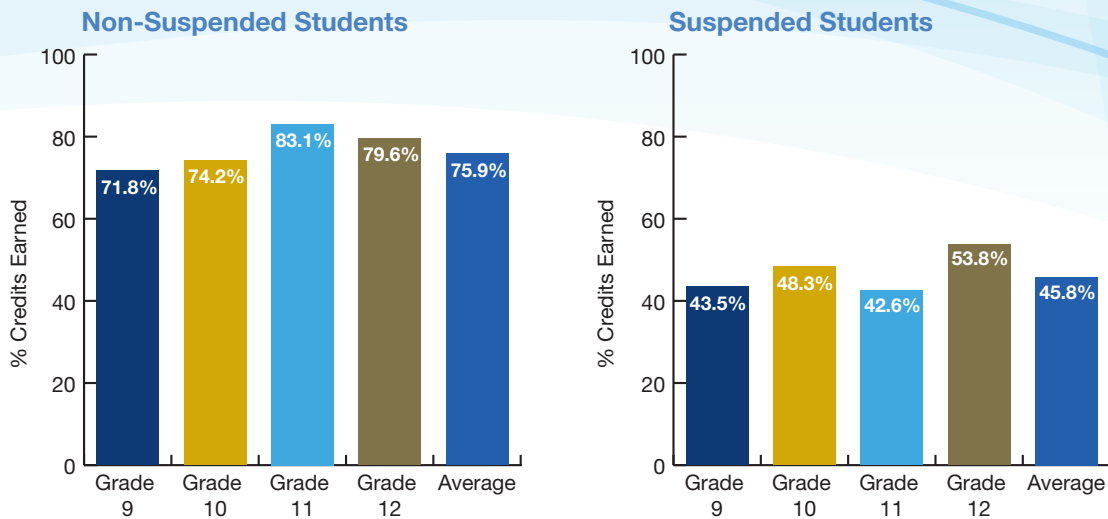
Course Pass/Fail Suspension Length



As shown above, there is a correlation between the longer a student is suspended and a higher likelihood they will fail or withdraw from a course of instruction.



The graphs below shows the comparison of suspended to non-suspended students in overall course completion:

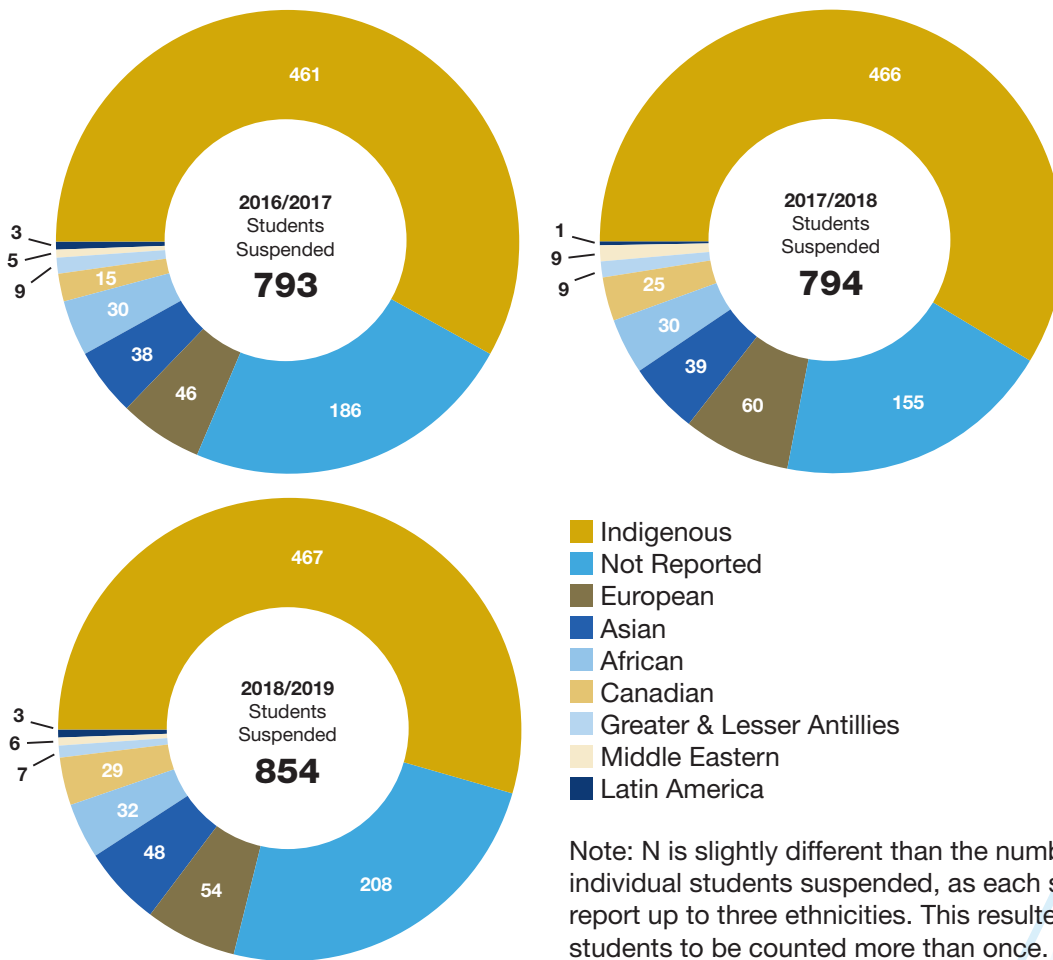


## Student ethnicity

### Regional Ethnic distribution of suspended students

The charts below show that Indigenous students are suspended most often among all students.

Self-identified Indigenous students represent approximately 26.7% of all students in WSD, however, they represent approximately 55% of suspensions.



- Indigenous
- Not Reported
- European
- Asian
- African
- Canadian
- Greater & Lesser Antillies
- Middle Eastern
- Latin America

Note: N is slightly different than the number of reported individual students suspended, as each student may report up to three ethnicities. This resulted in some students to be counted more than once.

## Reason for suspension

An analysis of students with multiple suspensions identified the most common behaviours that led to these suspensions as follows: weapons; physical assault on staff; physical assault on students; verbal assault on staff; verbal assault on students; and misconduct.

## Summary

In terms of trends related to personal characteristics of students, the full report shows that Indigenous students are over-represented in the number of suspensions, and while the suspension rate for Indigenous students is consistent over the three years, female Indigenous students tend to be suspended more often than non-Indigenous females.

Over the three years, an analysis of all suspensions showed that males were suspended most, over 90% of suspended students spoke English at home, most students lived with both parents and physical assault on another student is most often the reason for suspension. In addition, suspension over five days accounted for only 3% of suspensions and those students with longer duration suspensions are often repeat offenders. The data also suggest that suspended students, as a group, have less success at school compared to their peer group (i.e. earn less credits/pass fewer courses). Further, longer duration suspension is associated with poorer performance and an elevated course withdrawal rate. Finally, it is worth noting that out-of-school suspensions have decreased over the past decade.