

# School Discipline & Graduation Fact Sheet for Illinois

Maintaining a safe and healthy instructional climate is a critical responsibility of schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Student behavior and academic achievement are inseparable, and safer schools are higher achieving schools. Unfortunately, many schools use only one set of tools—suspension, expulsion, and arrest—to maintain discipline and safety. Rather than contribute to a better learning environment, the overuse of these exclusionary practices has been shown to predict dropout and contribute to an unhealthy school atmosphere affecting students and teachers alike.

The Dignity in Schools Campaign urges communities and policy makers to devote serious attention to school discipline’s impact on the health and academic success of our nation’s students and schools. This fact sheet includes information on graduation and discipline rates for Illinois and Chicago Public Schools.

## School Discipline

(<http://ocrdata.ed.gov>)

### Suspensions:

- Between 2000 and 2006, the percentage of Illinois students who were suspended at least once increased by **46 percent**.

### Expulsions:

- The percentage of students who were expelled increased by **44 percent** from 2000 to 2006.

### Racial disparities:

- Black students in Illinois are suspended and expelled at rates that far exceed their representation in public schools.

|             | African-American | White |
|-------------|------------------|-------|
| Enrollment  | 22%              | 54%   |
| Suspensions | 49%              | 32%   |
| Expulsions  | 50%              | 32%   |

## Graduation Rates

(<http://edweek.org>)

Based on 2007 data (the most recent available for this purpose), *Education Week* ranks Illinois’ graduation rate 19<sup>th</sup> in the US.

Chicago Public Schools performs 19 percentage points below the state average and 13 percentage points below the national average.

| Year     | 2006                         | 2007                         |
|----------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Nation   | 69.2%                        | 68.8%                        |
| Illinois | 74.1%<br>(20 <sup>th</sup> ) | 74.6%<br>(19 <sup>th</sup> ) |
| Chicago  | 49.6%                        | 55.4%                        |

## Spotlight on Chicago Public Schools

- *Education Week* identifies Chicago as one of 25 “drop out epicenters” in the U.S. It projects that 16,731 Chicago students who entered ninth grade in 2007 will not graduate from high school after four years.<sup>i</sup>
- In 2008, Black male elementary school students were suspended at more than five times the rate for their White male peers and more than 10 times the rate for their White female peers.<sup>ii</sup>
- Although Black males represented only 23 percent of 2008 enrollment, they accounted for 61 percent of expulsions.<sup>iii</sup>

## Additional Sources:

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<sup>i</sup> EDITORIAL PROJECTS IN EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTER (2010).

<sup>ii</sup> KARP, SARAH (June 2009). Black male conundrum. *Catalyst Chicago*. Available at <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/news/index.php?item=2593&cat=23>.

<sup>iii</sup> *Id.*