

## West Hartford Public School District

**Agenda Item:** Safe School Climate and Discipline Report

**Meeting Date:** June 3, 2014

**From:** Tom Moore, Assistant Superintendent for Administration

**Through:** Karen L. List, Superintendent of Schools

This year's discipline report provides data that reflects student behavior in our secondary schools that resulted in suspensions and expulsions. Data is provided for the past five years. Overall, the data indicates that the over-whelming majority of our secondary students conduct themselves appropriately and contribute to a safe and orderly learning environment in our schools. In fact, we have included a chart provided to us by the State of Connecticut as part of a research study they are doing. West Hartford has been recognized as a district that has dramatically reduced our suspensions over the past five years. A representative came and interviewed Tom Moore and Karen List to discuss effective strategies.

In addition to school discipline data, we have reviewed the results of the State of Connecticut safe school climate surveys which show that, overall, students feel safe at our schools.

This year we have reviewed all of our safety protocols with the assistance of the West Hartford Police Department.

Tom Moore and Andrew Morrow will be available to answer questions.

**Agenda Item:**  
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## Safe School Climate and Discipline Report

The chart below indicates the **percentage of students who were suspended** from school for any offense (in-school suspensions and out-of-school suspensions). This data shows a continuous decline in the number of students suspended over the past five years.

The majority of suspensions are served in school for infractions such as inappropriate language, accumulation of unserved detentions, and disruptive behavior.

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
<b>Conard</b>	11%	10%	8%	7%	7%
<b>Hall</b>	11.5%	9.5%	7%	7%	7%
<b>Bristow</b>	5%	3%	3%	2%	4%
<b>King Philip</b>	5.6 %	8%	4%	3%	4%
<b>Sedgwick</b>	7.4%	6%	9%	5%	6%

**Districts with a Significant Reduction in Disciplinary Incidents**

District Number	Report District	2010-11 Count	2011-12 Count	2012-13 Count	Percent Change between 2010-11 & 2012-13
32	Coventry School District	581	337	166	-71%
52	Farmington School District	170	96	N/A (below reporting threshold)	(58.26%)
88	Naugatuck School District	1857	1322	775	-58%
7	Berlin School District	697	451	307	-56%
134	Stafford School District	575	406	N/A (below reporting threshold)	(50.37%)
216	Regional School District 16	400	280	205	-49%
128	Simsbury School District	353	349	191	-46%
40	East Granby School District	51	38	N/A (below reporting threshold)	(44.12%)
139	Suffield School District	353	341	198	-44%
140	Thomaston School District	232	162	132	-43%
7	Berlin School District	697	451	N/A (below reporting threshold)	(42.18%)
80	Meriden School District	5350	4142	3404	-36%
155	West Hartford School District	1063	905	697	-34%
33	Cromwell School District	615	442	411	-33%
14	Branford School District	565	397	383	-32%
43	East Hartford School District	5974	5596	4148	-31%

Infractions

A **summary of serious infractions**, as defined by the State of Connecticut, is included in the following chart. This year there were 188 suspensions for serious infractions in all five secondary schools from a population of approximate 5,250 students. Seventy percent (70%) of all suspensions were served in school, with 30% of suspensions being out of school. Last year at this time there were 170 suspensions for the same type of offenses from a population of approximately 5,200 students. This year there were 13 verified cases of bullying at the secondary level and 10 cases of verified bullying at the elementary level. In 2012-13 there were 20 verified cases of bullying at the secondary level and 6 at the elementary level.

**Detail of Serious Offenses Resulting in a Suspension  
State Definition – 2013-14 School Year – Through 5/22/14**

Serious Offenses Defined by the State of Connecticut

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>BRISTOW</u>	<u>KPM</u>	<u>SEDGWICK</u>	<u>CONARD</u>	<u>HALL</u>
240	Disruption - Physical Altercation	2	5	9	7	5
903	Arson					
906	Burglary					
909	Theft/Stealing	1	0	3	2	3
912	Robbery					
915	Fighting/Altercation	1	11	6	19	9
918	Battery					
921	Harassment-Non Sexual	0	3	0	3	3
924	Threat/Intimidation	0	5	12	9	6
927	Racial Slurs/Hate Crimes	0	1	0	0	0
930	Bullying	0	6	3	3	1
933	Harassment-Sexual	0	2	1	0	7
936	Sexual Battery					
939	Sexual Offense	0	0	0	0	3
942	Homicide					
945	Stabbing					
948	Blackmail					
951	Kidnapping/Abduction					
957	School/Bomb Threat					
960	Vandalism	0	0	0	0	2
972	Weapons	0	0	0	0	1
975	Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco	0	1	1	12	7
980	Verbal Altercation	0	0	4	1	4
985	Incite Fighting/Riot	0	0	0	1	1
990	Throwing Object at Victim	0	2	0	0	0
995	Hazing					
	Totals	4	36	39	57	52

There have been a total of 9 expulsions this year. There were 16 expulsions 2008-09, 12 in 2009-2010, 22 in 2010-11, 10 in 2011-12, and 10 in 2012-13. This year there have been 7 expulsions at the high school level, 2 at the middle school level, and none at the elementary level.

We will continue to support the REACH and STRIVE programs, as well as the Alternative Education Program (AEP) for students who have been expelled, appropriate guidance support, and ongoing professional development programs that have been implemented and have improved the learning environment in our schools. We will also examine new ways and ideas to improve behavior for all of our students, and engage our entire school community in ways to keep our children safe.

For example, any time we see an increase in a particular activity at a school, we meet together to discuss what has happened, case by case, to see if the behaviors could have been headed off. In addition, statistics from surveys, referrals, and suspensions will go to the Safe School Climate Committee for discussion with parents, teachers, and school resource officers.

Our review of discipline in the schools indicates that our schools are safe learning environments for students and staff. The data presented provides statistics over time and gives some indicators of behavior in the schools. Administrators speak frequently with students, parents, teachers and members of the community to gain additional information about the learning environments. Input from all segments of the school community is reviewed and considered in developing and adjusting policies, procedures and programs to improve the learning environment. This discipline data will be used to instruct any necessary changes in professional development and/or programmatic changes necessary to keep our buildings safe learning environments for all students.

#### Safe School Climate Committees/State of CT Surveys

This year each school has had a safe school climate committee comprised of teachers, administrators, parents, and at the high school level, students. Each committee has examined data from their school that speaks to the environment for students there. Each school committee will look at the results of the safe school climate committee survey to tailor specific school plans to meet each building's needs, both for policies and for professional development. There is much to be learned from the State of Connecticut survey that we administered to students in the district.

For elementary students, the views of their school are very positive. Out of the 767 student surveys, a total of 8 children (1%) reported that they did not feel happy at school. Students overall feel like their peers like them (96%), and they like their peers (99%). Three students (less than 1%) replied that they "don't like the other children at all" in their school. Our elementary students feel very safe in the building, with the largest number (13%) saying they feel least safe on the bus.

For our middle schoolers, of the 1,888 students surveyed, 6% said that they did not like coming to school each day, whereas 76% of students said they like coming to school most or all of the time. Ninety-two percent (92%) report that they feel safe at school all or most of the time, while 1% said they do not feel safe at school. Two percent (2%) responded that children at school were never friendly, while over 80% said students were friendly all or most of the time.

Our 2,399 high school students who were surveyed felt that students at their school were, overall, friendly (3% replying students said their fellow students were friendly “none of the time,” almost 70% replied students were friendly “all or most of the time,” and almost 26% said that students were friendly “some of the time.”) Over 88% said they felt safe at school, with 3% of students saying that they did not feel safe at school.

All of these survey results are being provided to each school, question by question, so that the safe school climate committees can look for areas of concern, or celebration, within their own school community. Having the district numbers as a whole will help each school to see where they fit. The fact that this is the state survey will, hopefully, allow us to contextualize our numbers in a larger framework as the state releases its data. This is the benefit of using the state survey.

As we say every year, numbers can be used in a variety of ways, depending on the motivation. What is keenly remembered here is that each number is a child and one student feeling unsafe, or not liking school, or feeling disliked by peers is one child too many. Each school will look at this data so that they can try to find ways to reassure those children who are unhappy, and, if possible, get them the help that they might need.

### School Security

Over the course of the year, we continue to meet with the West Hartford Police Department in order to ensure that our schools, and our children, are safe. Ongoing plans include:

- increased security presence
- increased police patrols/familiarization with school layouts
- reviewed security protocols with all building principals
- upgrading door entry access controls
- upgrading existing exterior camera systems at secondary schools
- new protocols, i.e. “secure the school”
- card access installation
- police training during school year
- joint security /police training in summer
- police summer training
- police/school principal walkthroughs in summer as safety plans analyzed
- “All Hazards” approach training for school leaders
- ICS (Incident Command Structure) training for school principals delivered by West Hartford Police Department

We continue, as a district, to maintain as our highest priority, keeping our children safe. The tragedy at Sandy Hook reminds us all of the incredibly difficult undertaking we task our teachers with. They have to plan, to teach, to discipline, and to protect these children. In West Hartford, we are thankful for our partnership with our families in this endeavor and for the assistance of the West Hartford Police and Fire Departments.