

### Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsions in PGCPS, 2016-2018

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#### Key Findings

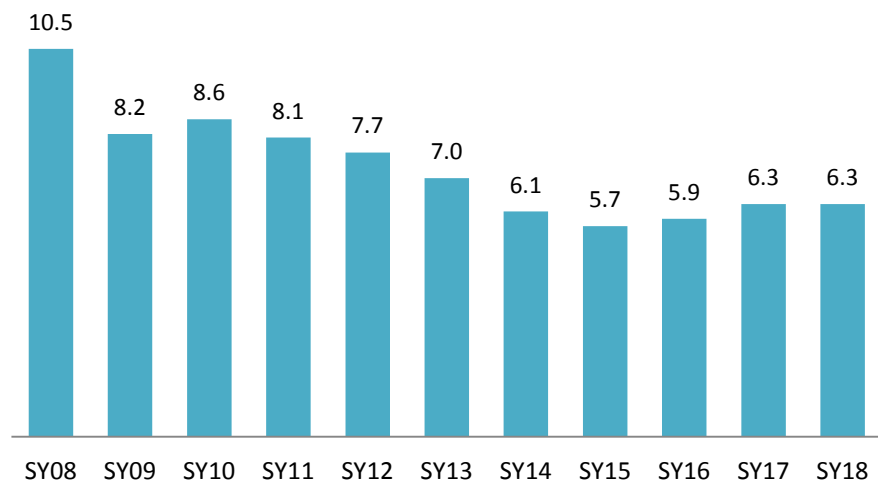
- The PGCPS suspension rate was six percent over the 2017 and 2018 school years.
- About 71-74% of out-of-school suspensions last no more than 3 days, and 96% percent were no more than 10 days.
- Most of the offenses for which students were suspended fall in the Disrespect/Disruption and Attacks/Threats/Fighting categories. Suspensions due to Arson/Fire/Explosives are the least common.
- While students receiving Special Education (SPED) services account for about 11% of the total student population, between 23-24% of students who were suspended in SY17 and SY18 were receiving SPED.

This brief presents data on the out-of-school suspensions and expulsions in Prince George's County School District from 2016 to 2018. Using discipline data from 2016-2017 (SY17) and 2017-2018 (SY18), this report will describe the suspension rate, suspensions by school type, number of suspensions per student, average removal length, offenses, and special education (SPED) and ethnicity breakdowns.

#### The PGCPS suspension rate was approximately 6% in 2016-2017 (SY17) and 2017-2018 (SY18).

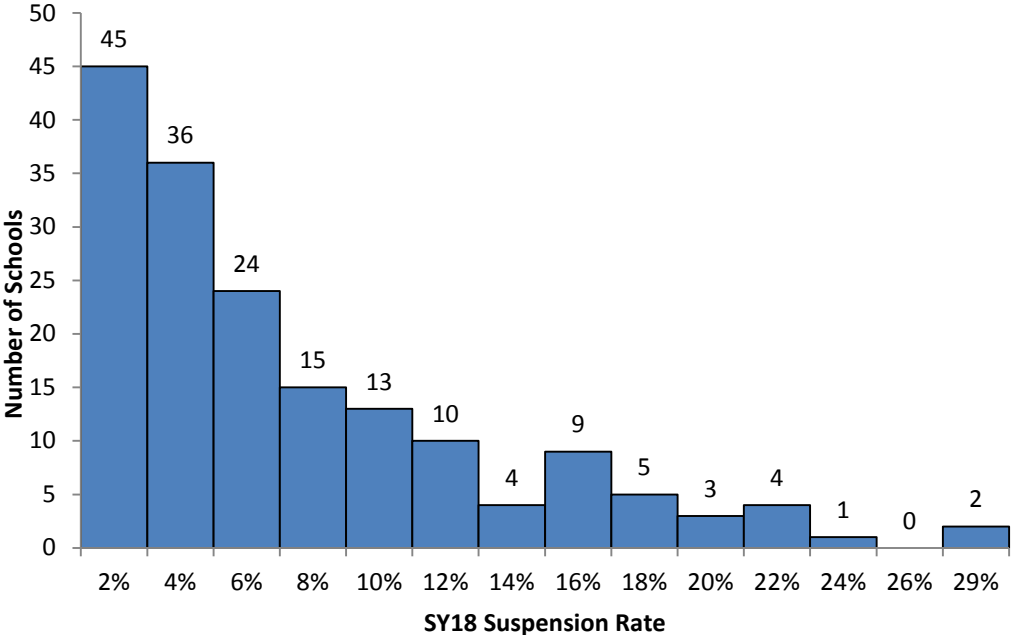
- The suspension rate is defined by the percentage of students ever suspended out of the total population. The suspension rate in Prince George's County School District (PGCPS) was 6.3% for the 2016-2017 (SY17) and 2017-2018 (SY18) school years.
- Figure 1 displays the trend in PGCPS suspension rates since SY08. Based on the data, the suspension rate has decreased over the past decade but has held steady around six percent for the past few school years.

Figure 1: Percentage of K-12 Students Ever Suspended or Expelled from PGCPS, SY08-SY18



- Examining suspension rates for SY18 (Figure 2) by school shows that most schools (N=105) in PGCPSS had a suspension rate lower than six percent. Thirty-eight schools had a suspension rate of six percent or close to 12 percent. Twenty eight schools had a suspension rate 12% or higher and only a few schools (N=7) had a suspension rate over 20%.

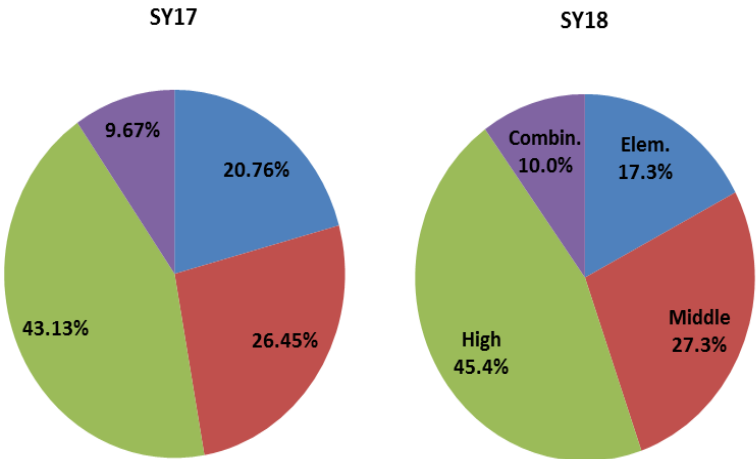
Figure 2: Suspension Rate by Schools, SY18



For SY17 and SY18, most of the removals were from the high school level, while combination schools had the lowest rate of out-of-school suspensions.

- Figure 3 shows the percentage of suspensions or expulsions by school type. About 43-45% of removals were from high school, while 26-27% were from middle school.
- Elementary school suspensions or expulsions made up 17-20% of removals. While combination school removals accounted for only 10% of the suspensions and expulsions.

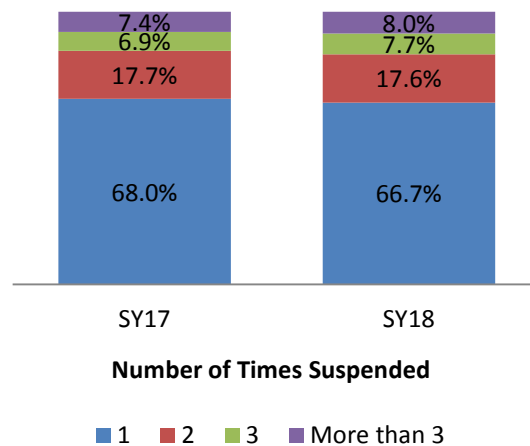
Figure 3: Suspensions or Expulsions by School Type, SY17 and SY18



**Based on both years of suspension data, 71-74% of out-of-school suspensions lasted no more than 3 days, while 96% percent were no more than 10 days.**

- Less than one percent of removals were expulsions.
- Of the students who were suspended from SY17-SY18, most (68% in SY17 and 66.67% in SY18) were suspended from school one time that school year (Figure 4).
- However, close to 18% were suspended twice, seven to eight percent were suspended three times, and seven to eight percent were suspended more than 3 times (Figure 4).

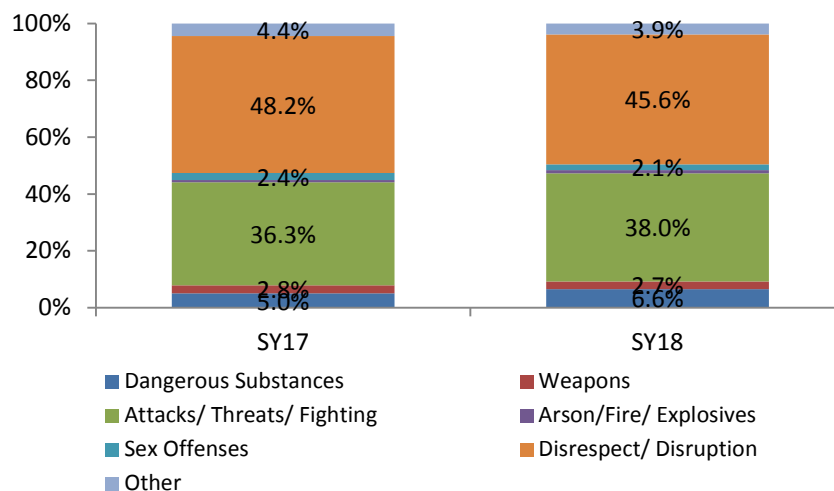
**Figure 4: Number of Times Suspended in PGCPS, SY17-SY18**



**Most of the offenses fell in the Disrespect/Disruption and Attacks/Threats/Fighting categories. Suspensions due to Arson/Fire/Explosives were the least common.**

- The offenses for which students are suspended are grouped into eight major categories. Figure 5 displays the breakdown of the offenses by category for SY17 and SY18. Attendance offenses are not displayed as there were no suspensions for attendance-related offenses.

**Figure 5: Suspension Offenses, SY17-SY18**

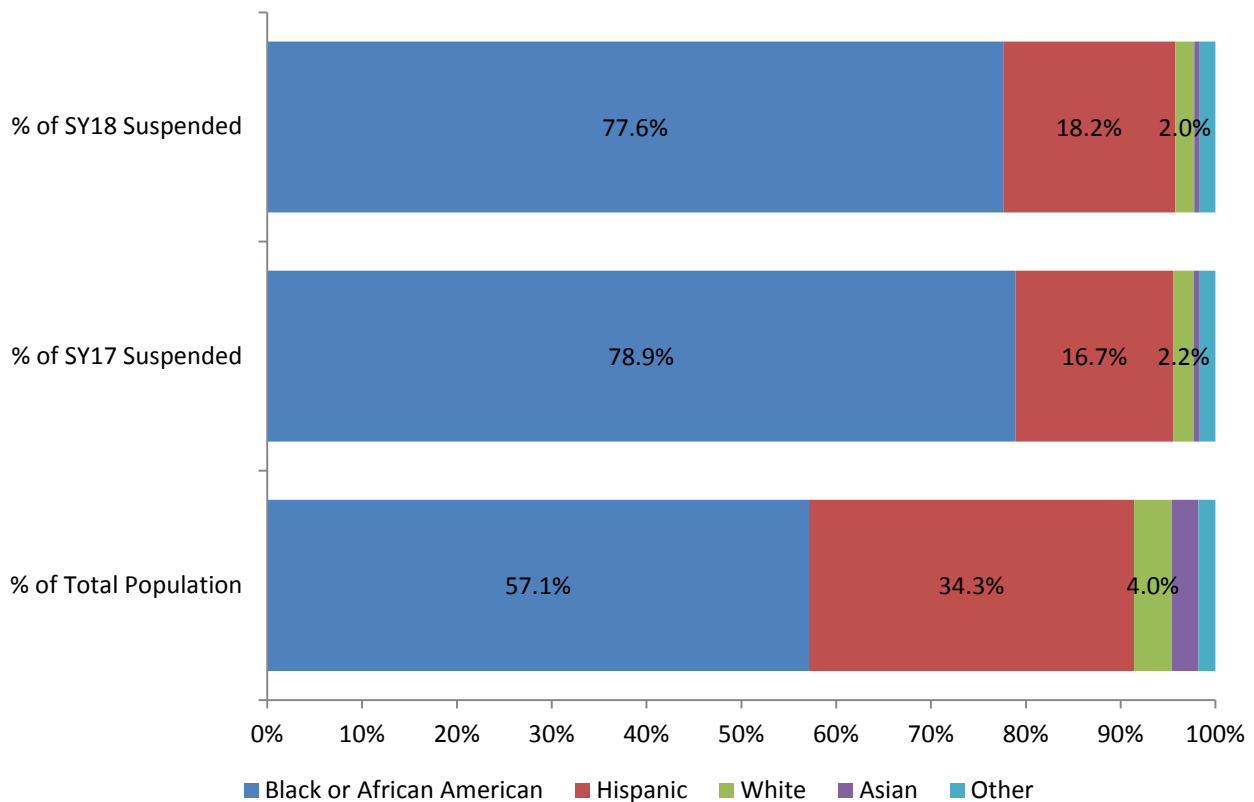


- The Other category includes the following offenses: Academic Dishonesty, Inappropriate Use of Personal Electronics, Theft, Trespassing, and Destruction of Property.
- Most of the offenses fell in the Disrespect/Disruption (48% in SY17 and 46% in SY18) and Attacks/Threats/Fighting (36% SY17 and 38% in SY18) categories. Suspensions due to Arson/Fire/Explosives were the least common (0.8% in SY17 and 1.1% in SY18).

**For SY17 and SY18, African American students represent 78-79% of the students suspended in the county.**

- Although African American students make up 57% of the PGCPS student population, close to 80% of the students who were suspended in SY17 and SY18 were African American (Figure 6).
- All other racial/ethnic groups were underrepresented or proportionate among those students suspended. For example, about 17-18% of suspended students were Hispanic (of any race), compared to 34% of the total student population being Hispanic (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Suspensions by Race/Ethnicity in PGCPS, SY17-SY18**

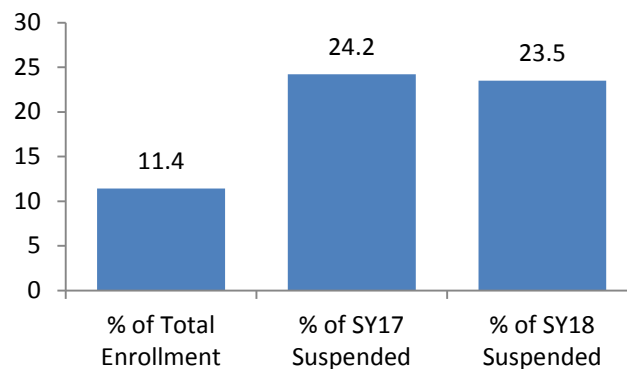


- In addition, 67% of the students who were suspended in SY17 and SY18 were boys. Boys make up half of the total PGCPS student population.

**Students receiving special education services (SPED) represent 24% of the students suspended in SY17 and SY18.**

- While about 11% of PGCPS students received SPED services during SY17 and SY18, 24% of the students who were suspended during that time were in SPED (Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Suspensions by SPED status in PGCPS, SY17-SY18**



## **Conclusions**

- The data does not indicate whether other behavioral interventions or responses are being implemented for students before suspensions are used, or whether repeat offenders are specifically targeted for interventions. If these data are not available or not currently being collected, it would be useful to implement a system to collect and manage data on how schools are using progressive discipline and implementing interventions for students struggling with behavioral issues.
- Further exploring suspensions by school may help unpack the factors that contribute to the differences in suspension rates by school. It would be of interest to explore what distinguishes similar schools with varying levels of suspensions.
- African American students and students receiving SPED services appear to be at a higher risk of being suspended compared to their respective counterparts. However, deeper analysis is needed to unpack if other factors, such as school-level characteristics and teacher characteristics, contribute to this disproportionality.
- A more detailed analysis is needed to determine the amount of instructional time being lost when students are removed from school for behavioral issues and how this lost instructional time is associated with achievement throughout the school year.