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## **Massachusetts' Students Missed More Than 156,000 Days of Instruction Due to Discipline**

***UCLA Researchers Quantify Suspension-Related Missed Instruction for Every School and District***

### ***Calls on State to Make "Days Missed Due to Discipline" School Accountability Measure***

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.—[A research study re-released today](#) (with notice of corrections) shows that the overuse of suspensions in the Commonwealth's schools is harming educational opportunities for all students, but with the burden impacting black students and students with disabilities more than other groups. The study is the first ever to quantify the school-level days of missed instruction due to discipline, reporting both the black/white gap and the impact on students with disabilities.

The statewide average was 16 days of missed instruction for every 100 enrolled students. This number doubles to 32 days per 100 for students with disabilities and black students missed 34 days per 100. That was more than triple the **10** days missed by white students. When only days missed for minor misbehavior were counted, behaviors that according to the state were non-violent, non-drug related and non-criminal, white students still lost **6** days per 100 enrolled while black students lost 21 days per 100 enrolled and students with disabilities lost 19 days. Minor misbehaviors were the driving reason for most of their lost instruction.

[Suspended Education in Massachusetts: Using Days of Lost Instruction to Evaluate Our Schools](#), uses percentages reported by the state to estimate the total days of missed instruction per 100 students enrolled. The authors argue that this school-level analysis is an ideal indicator for the state's proposed new accountability system because it gives meaningful information to the public about school climate with regard to how much lost instruction is incurred by students, an area that schools have a great deal of control over.

Alternative schools and five charter schools made up a disproportionate number of the 30 schools with the most days of missed instruction (overreach with more than 100 days per 100 enrolled). More than one of these schools came from the districts of Brockton, Fall River, New Bedford, Lowell, Fitchburg and Springfield, and three of the five charters, (Up Academy of Boston and City on a Hill, at Dudley Square, and at Circuit Street) serve students from Boston.

[The report and data supplements](#) also provide district-level analysis. District numbers tend to be much lower because the lower suspending schools balance out the high suspending ones. Our district level analysis focused on where students with disabilities lost the most instructional time and on districts with

at least two schools and 2,500 students. We found that Wareham topped this list with a district average of 110 days of missed instruction per 100 enrolled students with disabilities.

“We want to encourage state policymakers to adopt ‘days of missed instruction’ as either a standalone indicator or as part of a school climate or chronic absenteeism indicator for statewide accountability because it is an area that research has shown is determined by school level policies, practices and leadership,” said Daniel Losen, Director of the Center for Civil Rights Remedies and the report’s lead author, “We are also very concerned about stark disparities for black students and students with disabilities. The findings suggest that excessive discipline creates serious inequities in educational opportunity.” “Further, we were surprised to find in additional analysis after the report’s release indicates that the days of missed instruction have increased since the 2014-15 school year.”

The report is available with a data supplement that enables readers to locate the data on their school or district for all students, black students, or students with disabilities, and make comparisons to other districts. The full report and data supplement can also be downloaded from [www.schooldisciplinedata.org](http://www.schooldisciplinedata.org).

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#### **About the UCLA Civil Rights Project’s Center for Civil Rights Remedies**

The UCLA Civil Rights Project’s Center for Civil Rights Remedies (CCRR) is dedicated to improving educational opportunities and outcomes for children who have been discriminated against historically due to their race or ethnicity and who are frequently subjected to exclusionary practices such as disciplinary removal, over-representation in special education and reduced access to a college-prep curriculum. CCRR has issued numerous reports about the use of disciplinary exclusion. CCRR is an initiative of the Civil Rights Project (CRP)/Proyecto Derechos Civiles, at UCLA. Founded in 1996 by former Harvard professors [Gary Orfield](#) and Christopher Edley, Jr. CRP is now co-directed by Orfield and [Patricia Gándara](#), professors at UCLA. Its mission is to create a new generation of research in social science and law on the critical issues of civil rights and equal opportunity for racial and ethnic groups in the United States. It has monitored the success of American schools in equalizing opportunity and has been the authoritative source of segregation statistics. CRP has commissioned more than [400 studies](#), published more than [15 books](#) and issued numerous reports from authors at universities and research centers across the country.

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