



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Center for the Prevention of School Violence

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DJJDP – CENTER’S EFFORTS INVOLVING SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS

The Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention – Center for the Prevention of School Violence (DJJDP – Center), realizing the link between juvenile delinquency and suspensions and expulsions from school, is involved in various efforts aimed at reducing the overall number of students suspended and expelled from school each year.

According to the Department of Public Instruction’s (DPI) *Annual Study of Suspensions and Expulsions: Final Report: 2001-2002*, 261,980 **short-term suspensions** were given in the 2001-2002 school year representing a twenty percent increase from the previous year’s 217,758. DPI also concluded **long-term suspensions** increased twenty-seven percent during the 2001-2002 school year from 2,736 to 3,459. When combined with the 3,459 long-term suspensions, one out of every ten students was either short- or long- term suspended during the 2001-2002 school year. Out-of-school suspensions accounted for approximately one million lost instructional days in the 2001-2002 school year. The 2001-2002 school year also saw a fifty-four percent increase from the 2002-2001 school year in **expulsions**, or permanent removal from a local school system.

DJJDP – Center efforts involving short-term suspensions began in earnest with the passage of Senate Bill 71 (SB71) in 2001. SB71 mandated DJJDP and DPI to collaborate to identify up to five successful short-term suspension programs in North Carolina’s public schools. It also emphasized the need for community involvement in such programming. SB71 involved the joint recruitment of alternatives to short-term suspension programs, a phone survey carried out by DJJDP – Center in order to identify existing short-term suspension programs in North Carolina’s 117 school systems, and a statewide Stakeholders Forum sponsored by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and hosted by Attorney General Roy Cooper.

Additional DJJDP – Center efforts involving suspensions and expulsions include two federal grants: Project EASE (Educational Alternatives to Suspension and Expulsion) and the DISMISS (DISproportionate Minority Involvement of Suspended Students) Project. Project EASE focuses attention on “promising strategies” aimed at reducing suspensions and expulsions, specifically disproportionate minority suspensions and expulsions. The DISMISS Project is an upcoming DJJDP – Center project which seeks to reduce the number of students, specifically minority students, suspended in North Carolina’s public schools as well as enhance the number of alternatives to suspension and expulsion options available. The goals of the project will be accomplished through the implementation of “promising strategies,” identified in previous DJJDP – Center research, in up to fifteen “in-need” schools. An evaluation of the process of implementing “promising strategies” into participating schools will be conducted in order to determine possible “practices to implement” which will be disseminated to all schools requesting information regarding alternatives to suspension and expulsion.

DJJDP – Center, seeing the link between students out-of-school suspended or expelled and involvement in the juvenile justice system, knows efforts are needed to keep students in school. The described efforts are intended to do that. By reducing the number of students suspended or expelled, the opportunity to prevent youth from entering the juvenile justice system is enhanced.