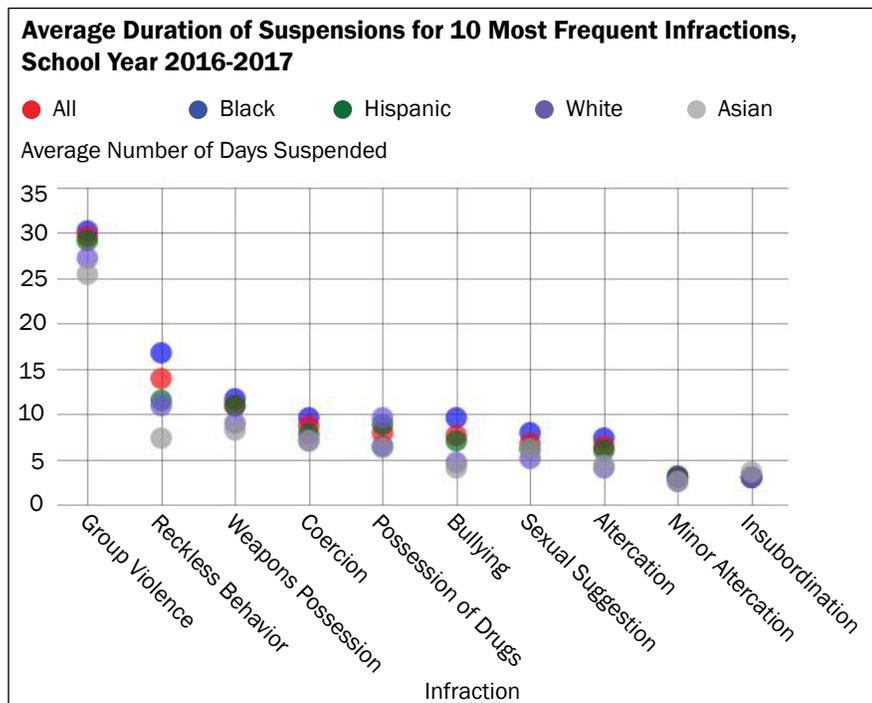


When Students of Different Ethnicities Are Suspended For the Same Infraction Is the Average Length of Their Suspension the Same?

The number of students in grades 6 through 12 suspended for breaking school rules has continued to decline in recent years as the City Council and the de Blasio Administration have fostered policies that promote alternatives to keeping students out of the classroom. In school year 2010-2011 there were about 60,000 suspensions of students in grades 6-12. By 2016-2017, the number of suspensions had fallen to about 30,000. Despite this drop, the Mayor’s Leadership Team on School Climate and Discipline has acknowledged that disparities remain depending upon a student’s ethnicity, special education status, and sexual orientation and identity.

There are two broad categories of suspensions: principal and superintendent. A principal can suspend a student for up to five school days. Superintendent suspensions are typically for more serious infractions, often exceed five school days and must also be approved by an additional Department of Education administrator from outside of the school. The overall decline in suspensions has been propelled mostly by a drop in principal suspensions, which have fallen by more than 50 percent since 2010-2011, but still account for about 75 percent of all suspensions.

IBO has compared the average length of all IBO suspensions for the 10 most frequent infractions—a total of about 25,000 in 2016-2017—for students in the four largest ethnic groups in grades 6-12.



- The 10 most frequent infractions accounted for almost 80 percent of all suspensions in school year 2016-2017. The average number of days for which students were suspended for these 10 infractions ranged from 3 to 30 days.
- Group violence infractions garnered the longest suspensions, an average of 30 days, while minor altercation and insubordination incurred the shortest suspensions—an average of 3 days.
- Black students received longer suspensions on average for 8 of the top 10 infractions, with the exception of insubordination and drug possession. White and Hispanic students averaged longer suspensions for drug possession than black students. There was the least variation across ethnic groups for insubordination.

- Under federal regulations, students with disabilities who are subject to disciplinary charges are entitled to additional safeguards. When students with disabilities are excluded from the analysis, Hispanic students received longer suspensions on average for group violence than black students, but the rest of the findings remain the same.
- Compared with the ethnic group suspended for the fewest days on average, black students were suspended for roughly twice the number of days for bullying, reckless behavior, and altercation.

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