



Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-2021
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by MR HANSON

Ref: Annual Report, Education Directorate, Safe and Supportive Schools

In relation to: Student Wellbeing: Safe and Supportive Schools (AR p 36) and Suspensions Data – Public Schools

The suspension rate for public schools (primary, high and college) in 2016 was 2.3%. In 2019 it was 3.2%. That's an increase of 39% in four years. (Suspensions Data for ACT government schools, ACT Education Directorate).

1. The Budget Estimates Briefing for 19 October 2021 obtained under FOI shows (p 155) that the suspension rate for Indigenous students jumped 46% from 2016 (7.8%) to 2019 (11.4%).
2. The Budget Estimates Briefing (p 156) also showed that suspensions for students with a disability from 2016 to 2019 also rose alarmingly: from 7.5% in 2016 to 10% in 2019 (33%). In 2016 suspension incidents for students with a disability in high school numbered 167, for 657 total enrolments of such students. In 2019, with 730 students, there were 243 suspension incidents.
3. In primary schools, the number of suspension incidents as a percentage of students enrolled has risen by 55.34% over the four-year period 2016-2019.
4. In high schools, the number of suspension incidents as a percentage of students enrolled has risen by 28.25% over the four-year period 2016-2019.

Why is there such a significant increase in suspension incidents across the board over this period for Indigenous, disabled, primary and high school students?

MS BERRY MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

From 2018, suspension data has been obtained through the School Administration System (SAS). Prior to 2018 data was obtained through MAZE. These data sets are not comparable. The implementation of SAS has provided schools an effective and reliable tool to record and monitor suspensions.

Due to the small number of students in the identified cohorts, significant variance in percentages can occur resulting in large fluctuations when measured as proportions. Total numbers of suspensions for small cohorts cannot be published due to privacy concerns for individual students. Schools do however monitor the suspension patterns for individual students and then plan and respond to meet the individual's needs.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a horizontal stroke, positioned over the signature line.

Date: 21/04/22

By the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Ms Yvette Berry