

# Suspensions

## A Guide to Rhode Island Suspension Data as Displayed in InfoWorks Advanced Reports

### WHAT ARE SUSPENSIONS?

Effective teaching and learning depend on disciplined classrooms and proper student behavior. Therefore, [Rhode Island Basic Education Program](#) requires that schools establish “and promote a positive climate with emphasis on mutual respect, self-control, good attendance, order and organization, and proper security.” Sometimes, however, students disrupt the learning environment. Depending on the stipulations in the school’s Code of Conduct, school administrators may choose to remove or suspend a student from their regular classroom setting, or from the school itself.

There are three types of suspensions:

1. Out-of-school suspensions: the student must stay out of school.
2. In-school suspensions: the student still comes to school and is supervised by school staff in an alternate setting which may be anything from a separate classroom with a single staff person, to a comprehensive alternative education program, with a variety of teachers, counselors, and other staff.
3. Interim Alternative Educational Settings (IAES): similar to in-school suspensions, these are for students with disabilities who have committed an infraction so serious they must be removed from their classes without the school going through the normal procedural safeguards otherwise required by law. The federal government requires them to be reported differently because they fall under a specific regulation.

### WHY SUSPENSIONS ARE IMPORTANT

While necessary on occasion, suspensions disrupt students’ education. They are excluded from the learning environment determined to be best for them, whether a regular classroom or, in the case of students with disabilities, from the placement determined by their Individual Education Program (IEP). Again, while occasionally necessary, out-of-school suspensions go against efforts schools are making to keep students in school, lowering absenteeism rates. Furthermore, research shows that out-of-school suspensions rarely reduce the unwanted behavior and can be harmful to students by increasing disengagement, lowering academic scores, and increasing the risk of dropping out. Suspensions are a good indicator of school climate and culture. A high suspension rate indicates a fractious school climate and the limited ability of the adults — for whatever reason — to win the cooperation of the students. A poor school climate either correlates with underperformance or predicts it when there’s been a sudden rise in suspensions. Problems with school climate affect all the students, not just those being suspended.

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) heartily thanks all of our school districts, and particularly those charged with Survey Administration, for the time and effort they put into gathering these important data.



## Rhode Island's Suspension Data

Lastly, numerous studies show large disparities in suspension rates. In Rhode Island schools and the nation as a whole, males, African-Americans, Hispanics, students with disabilities, and English learners are removed from the classroom at significantly higher rates than their peers.

### HOW SUSPENSION DATA ARE REPORTED

Any time a student is removed for disciplinary reasons for one day or more, it must be reported to the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE). RIDE reports these to the U.S. Department of Education.

Every disciplinary record includes information on:

- The student who committed the infraction;
- The nature of the infraction (one of 39 types);
- Whether a weapon was involved, and if so what kind;
- Whether anyone was physically injured, and if so whether it was a minor or serious injury;
- The type of suspension imposed (out-of-school, in-school, or IAES); and
- The duration of the suspension.

RIDE does not collect information on detentions, community service, or other types of disciplinary actions.

Please note that suspension data are “self-reported,” meaning that schools report their counts and these counts have no verification anchor, as do, say, poverty status (verified by eligibility for school lunch) or absenteeism.

### STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS

Many state and federal laws govern how suspensions should be implemented. For example, in 2012, RI General Laws [§16-19-1](#) deemed that no student may be suspended out-of school for truancy or absenteeism, which lowered suspension rates.

Also, RI General Laws [§16-21-27](#) requires districts to develop a plan for alternative education programs to ensure the continued education of students who have been suspended more than 10 days consecutively. Both state and federal law governing disciplinary removals of children with disabilities totaling more than ten days cumulatively over the course of the school year require:

- A plan for continued educational services;
- A determination by the Individual Education Plan (IEP) team of the modified educational setting, a functional behavioral assessment, behavioral intervention services and modifications, a behavioral intervention plan, and a manifestation determination as to whether the behavior was related to the disability or was the result of failure of the school to implement the IEP;
- Additional due process considerations might also apply.

## Rhode Island's Suspension Data

### PREVENTING SUSPENSIONS

Research has shown that a strong, nurturing school climate creates conditions that encourage cooperation and proper student behavior, thus reducing the need for out-of-school suspensions. Strategies for improving climate include:

- **Reviewing school or district policies** and Codes of Conduct to limit the use of suspension, particularly out-of-school, to only the most serious infractions and only when truly necessary;
- **Analyzing school suspension data** to identify causes and patterns of misbehavior to provide targeted supports, interventions, or training;
- Implementing a school-wide **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)** system to be explicit about behavioral expectations and responsive when they are met;
- Implementing **restorative practices** to build relationships and a sense of community schoolwide and in the classroom, promoting empathy and conflict resolution;
- Implementing a **restorative justice system** to ensure getting to the root of the problem(s) signaled by the misbehavior;
- Providing instruction in **Social and Emotional Learning** that instructs students in the social, relationship, and behavioral skills that will help them be successful at school and in life;
- **Mentoring** students to provide them with emotional support and positive feedback;
- Conducting **Functional Behavioral Assessments** to diagnose causes and identify likely interventions to address problem behaviors;
- **Engaging parents** and establishing positive, respectful, and trusting relationships;
- **Training staff** in cultural competency and in effective classroom management to help promote clear, consistent expectations and routines;
- Providing **additional academic supports** to struggling students who might feel frustrated or ashamed, which can result in acting-out behavior; and
- Establishing **behavioral contracts** and **monitoring behavior** to clarify goals and expectations and help ensure students are on track to meeting them.

### ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION

Despite the above strategies and everyone's best intentions, students might still misbehave. Alternatives to suspension include:

- **Detention**, typically during lunch, recess or after school;
- **Restorative justice/restitution**, in which the student is given the chance through a mediation process to come forward to make things right;
- **Counseling and reflection** to analyze the situation and the problem behavior;
- **Parent meetings**, based on the common goal of helping the student be successful;
- **Community service**, either in or out of the school; and
- **Loss of privileges**, such as participation in extracurricular activities or school events, though care should be taken, because for some students, these are a major factor in keeping them engaged in school.

## Core Suspension Data on InfoWorks

On the regular InfoWorks school, district, and state pages, you'll find two charts breaking down certain information regarding suspensions

### 1. THE "SUSPENSION RATE" CHART

Click on icons for access to interactive charts

Safe and Supportive Schools / Incidents of Suspension (2013-14)  
**Suspension Rate (Middle Schools)**  
 Rhode Island

**Charts**  
 ▼ Suspension Distributions  
 ▶ Disciplinary Responses

Printable (permalink)  
 Download data .csv  
 Email this chart

This School	Statewide	Total Students Enrolled	Total Students Suspended	Total Days Suspended	Suspensions per 100 Students
Statewide		32011	4301	20948	37.4
Little Compton	Wilbur & McMahon Schools	257	0	0	0.0
Jamestown	Lawn Avenue School	216	1	3	0.9
Barrington	Barrington Middle School	854	8	18	1.3
North Kingstown	Wickford Middle School	422	5	18	2.4
Independent Charter School	The Compass School	162	4	8	2.5
South Kingstown	Broad Rock Middle School	512	11	17	3.3

These data include yearly totals for each school on:

- The number of incidents of suspension;
- The number of individual students involved; and
- The total number of days they were suspended.

The final column shows a suspension rate for the school – that is, the number of suspensions per 100 students enrolled. Schools vary greatly in size, so the rate can be more helpful than the raw numbers because it eliminates the issue of size.

## Core Suspension Data on InfoWorks

### 2. THE “NUMBER OF INFRACTIONS” CHART

Click on icons for access to interactive charts

Safe and Supportive Schools / Incidents of Suspension (2013-14)  
**Number of Infractions (Middle Schools)**  
 Rhode Island

Printable (permalink) | Download data .csv | Email this chart

▲ Infraction	◆ Category	◆ Out of School Suspensions	◆ In-School Suspensions	◆ Interim Alternative Educational Setting	◆ Total
Statewide Total Number of Incidents		6057	5922	2	11981
Alcohol	Substance Abuse	15	2	0	17
Arson	Disaffection	7	0	0	7
Assault/Battery of Student	Anger/Violence	374	125	0	499
Assault/Battery of Teacher	Anger/Violence	64	11	0	75
Attendance-Cut/Skipped Class	Attendance	0	180	0	180
Attendance-Cut/Skipped Detention	Attendance	0	83	0	83

These data include yearly totals on each of the 39 different infractions and responses:

- The total number of suspensions;
- Those that were served out-of-school;
- Those that were served in-school; and
- Those that were served in IAES.

These infractions are grouped into several broad categories: Anger/Violence, Disaffection, Attendance, and Substance Abuse. Similar information is available for each school or district. Learn more about suspension definitions on [InfoWorks Understanding Data](#).

On the State pages, InfoWorks provides sortable charts for elementary, middle and high schools. Prior years’ data are in the [InfoWorks Data Finder](#), though note that “alternative placement” is a category that is no longer used.

## Advanced Reports on InfoWorks

Go to InfoWorks' homepage and click on the tab at the top marked "Advanced Reports."

Go to the drop-down menu of topic areas and select "Suspensions."

Lastly, select the suspension report of your choice by clicking the icons at the right for the interactive charts. The InfoWorks team will be adding Advanced Reports on an on-going basis, with new clusters of data, such as new survey topics and additional years of data. The InfoWorks team plans to create reports that draw from a variety of data sources, but currently the chart options in any of the Advanced Reports are only those you see when you click the "Category" you wish to explore. (Please feel free to suggest topics and questions that can be answered by the existing data by filling out the [feedback form](#). And thank you!)

home | contact | go to ride.ri.gov | sign up for InfoWorks updates

**InfoWorks!** Rhode Island Education Data Reporting

Statewide Data | School and District Data | Data Finder | **Advanced Reports** | Understanding Data | About InfoWorks

### Advanced Reports

Each Report has several interactive charts, often including a sortable table that shows the specific numbers that were used to calculate the visual representations. Drag your mouse across the bars to see the name of the School or District, along with the specifics represented by each datapoint. Dropdown menus allow you to change the categories on the axes of certain charts.

Select a category. Click the icons under the year columns to view available Reports.

Suspension

Accountability

SurveyWorks

**Suspension**

Uniform Chart of Accounts (UCOA)

disciplinary reasons for one day or more. Suspension Advanced Reports allow of infractions that resulted in suspensions, the type of disciplinary response (in- of students enrolled and the number of suspensions, and rates of suspensions

Group	Report	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Count	Suspensions by Infraction Category	see right	see right	see right	
Count	Suspensions by Disciplinary Type	see right	see right	see right	
Comparison	St				
Rate	S				

**Bar Chart of Total # Suspensions (SY13-14)**

Count of Infractions

Each incident... occurring for one disciplinary infra

**INFRACTION T** groupings of the: anger/violence-n bullying), disaffe abuse-related, at infractions. Prior infraction on som unknown; these separate groupin

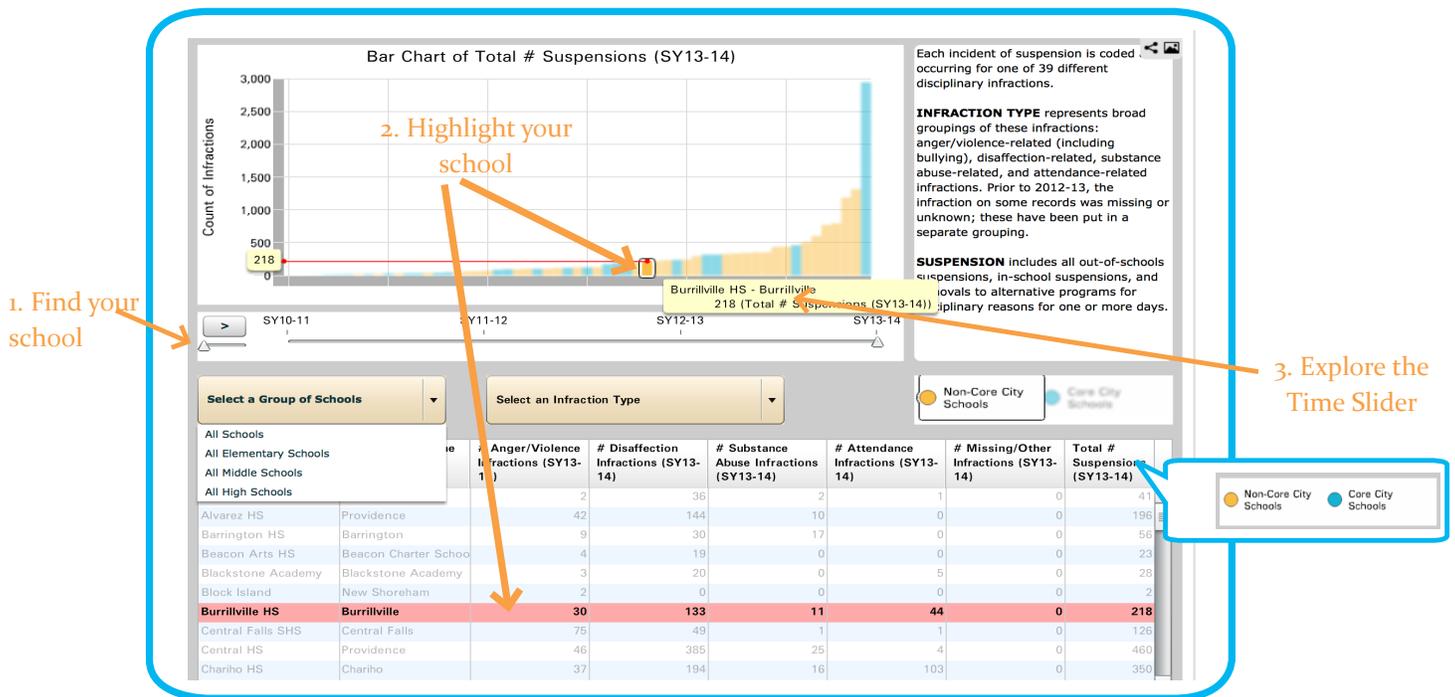
**SUSPENSION** ir suspensions, in-s removals to alter disciplinary reasc

SY10-11 | SY11-12 | SY12-13 | SY13-14

Select a Group of Schools | Select an Infraction Type | Non-Core Cit Schools

School Name (SY13-14)	District/LEA Name (SY13-14)	# Anger/Violence Infractions (SY13-14)	# Disaffection Infractions (SY13-14)	# Substance Abuse Infractions (SY13-14)	# Attendance Infractions (SY13-14)	# Missing/Infractions 14)
ACES (HS)	Providence	2	36	2	1	
Alvarez HS	Providence	42	144	10	0	
Barrington HS	Barrington	9	30	17	0	

## Advanced Reports on InfoWorks



### 1. FIND YOUR SCHOOL

Schools are grouped by level and individual schools are listed alphabetically below the groups. Often, it's best to look at a whole level and find your school among the others statewide.

### 2. HIGHLIGHT YOUR SCHOOL

To focus your exploration, find your school and click once to highlight it.

Hover your mouse and scroll it slowly across the chart to see how your school compares with the others. The names of each school and the exact number of suspensions will appear in a box that corresponds to each bar. You can also click and hold down your keyboard's control key to highlight several schools. Once you have one bar or several highlighted, they will remain highlighted until you click anywhere in the white space above the bars.

Note that the colors correspond to urban core versus non-urban schools. "Core cities" are Providence, Pawtucket, Central Falls and Woonsocket. You can highlight one group or the other using the color legend.

### 3. EXPLORE THE TIME SLIDER

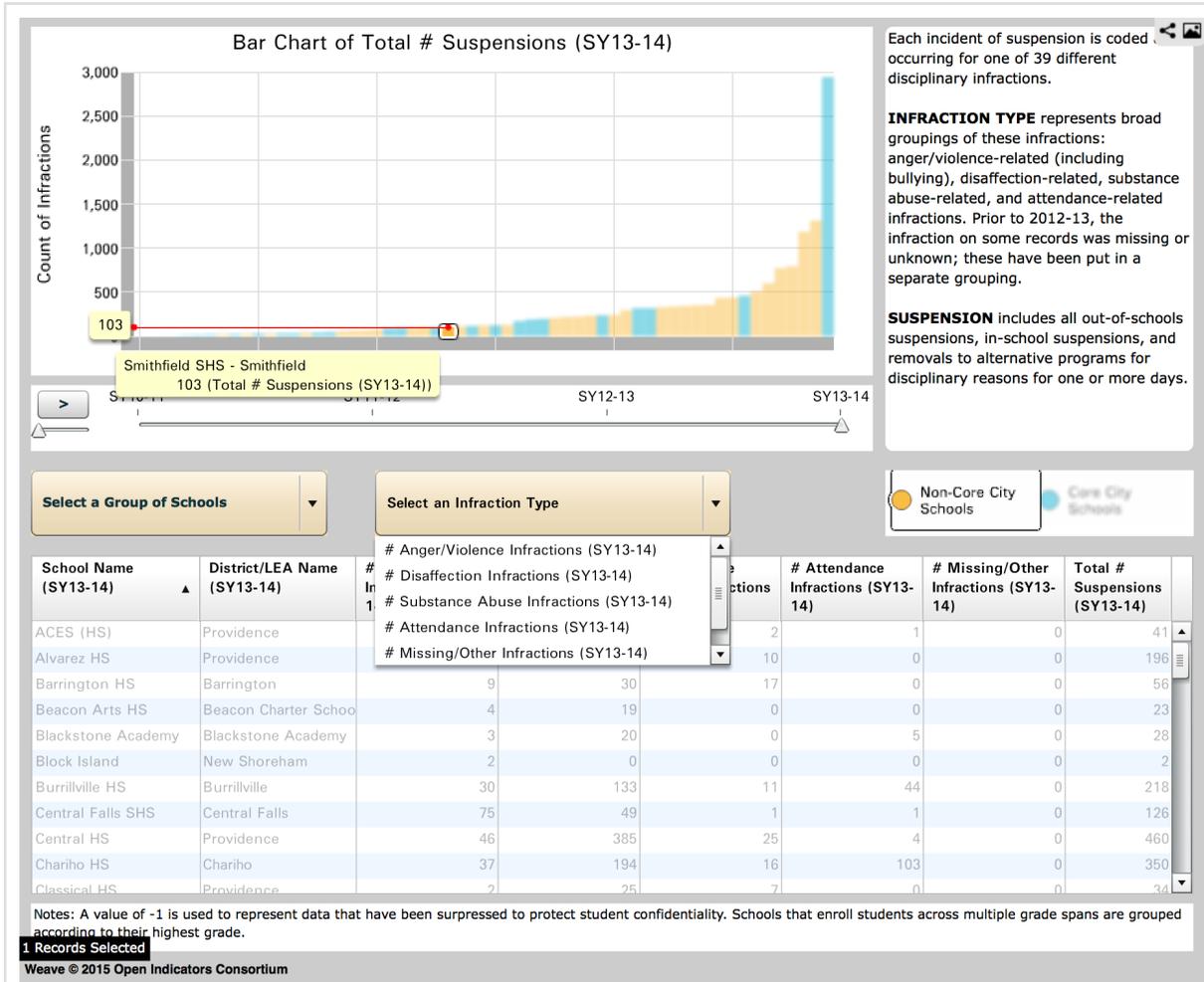
Note that under the graph is a "time slider" that allows you to display the data for recent School Years (SY). Move the triangle or just click your mouse under the desired year in the time-slider bar to see how the school's suspensions might have changed from one year to the next. Do they follow the statewide trend of decreasing numbers?

### 4. SELECT AN INFRACTION TYPE

This allows you to focus on just a particular type of infractions, such as those that are Anger/Violence related.

*In all four of the advanced reports that display suspension data, the term "suspension" includes all disciplinary removals from the classroom: out-of-school suspensions, in-school suspensions and IAES (or, in prior years, alternative program placements).*

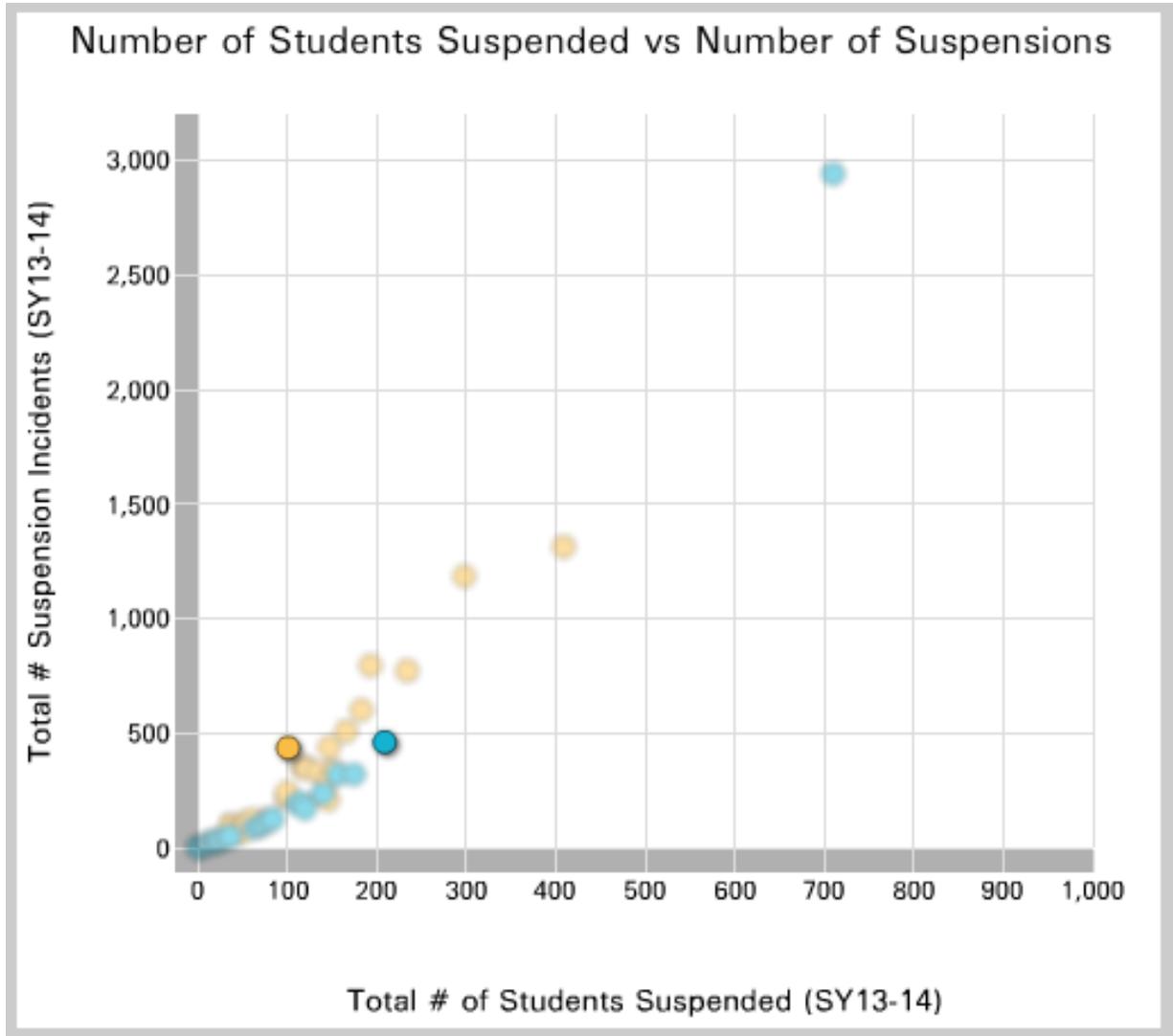
## Explore Suspension Data



### NUMBER OF SUSPENSIONS BY INFRACTION CATEGORY

This chart shows the number of incidents of suspension for each school, broken into the main categories of infractions, Anger/Violence, Attendance, Disaffection, and Substance Abuse.

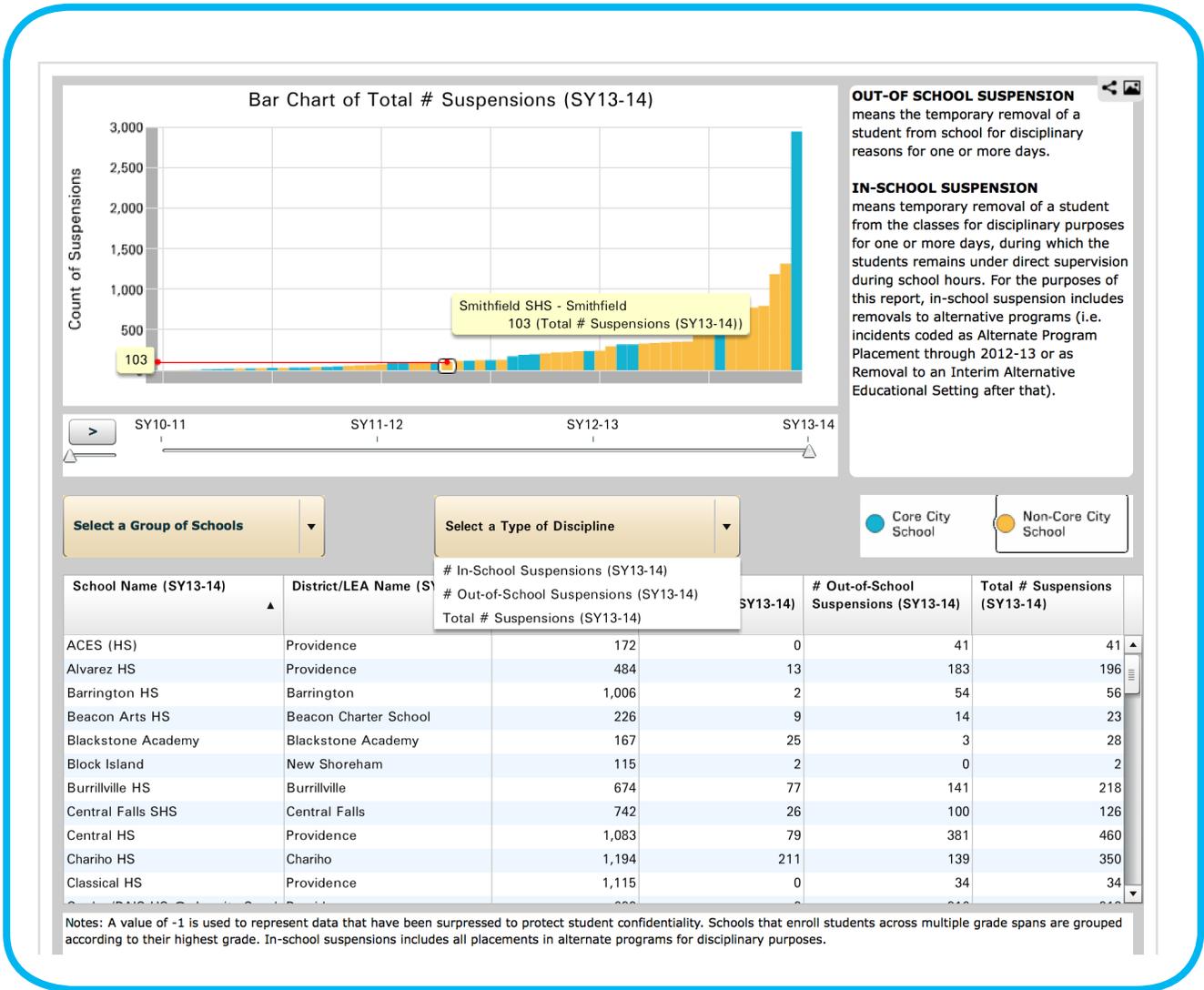
## Explore Suspension Data

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS SUSPENDED VS INCIDENTS OF SUSPENSION**

This chart shows the difference between the number of different individuals who were suspended over the course of the year (horizontal axis), compared to the total number of incidents of suspensions (vertical axis). This can show subtle but important differences between the patterns at various schools.

For example, two similarly sized schools, highlighted in the screenshot above, suspended their students at visibly different ways. One suspends fewer students more often and the other suspends more students less often each. These charts are designed to help schools see such patterns.

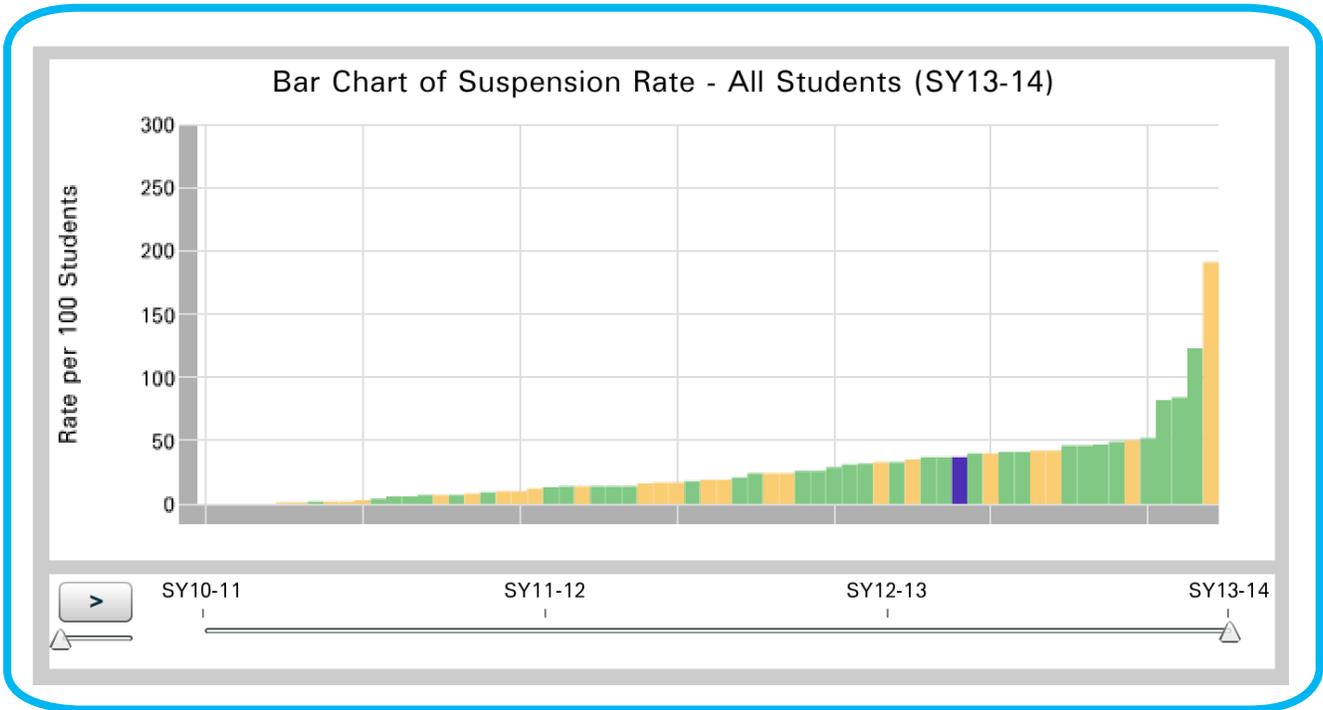
## Explore Suspension Data



### SUSPENSIONS BY DISCIPLINARY TYPE

This chart shows the number of out-of-school vs. in-school suspensions for each school. Remember that out-of-school suspensions are a bigger disruption in a student's education, because the student is not in school at all and usually is not receiving any educational services.

## Explore Suspension Data



### SUSPENSION RATE BY RACE

Again, the rate shows suspensions per 100 students enrolled. This allows for easier comparison across schools of different sizes.

Importantly, you can see the rates for students of different racial/ethnic groups, which can show disparities that are masked when you look only at school-wide numbers. For example, at this school in SY2011-12, Black and Hispanic students were suspended at over twice the rate of White students.

Suspension Rate - Native American (SY11-12)	Suspension Rate - Asian/Pacific Islander (SY11-12)	Suspension Rate - Black (SY11-12)	Suspension Rate - Hispanic (SY11-12)	Suspension Rate - White (SY11-12)	Suspension Rate - All Students (SY11-12)
-1	24	69	61	208	65
-1	0	113	118	55	58
163	22	80	86	74	73

# Suspensions

## Here is where we are now.

- Suspension data are available going back to the 2007-08 school year.
- You can now view suspension rates, as well as raw numbers, for the last few years.
- New dashboards allow you to compare rates for racial/ethnic groups, see breakouts by infraction type or discipline type, or compare number of incidents vs. number of individual students.
- The new reports visualize information in ways that greatly enhance the ability of novice data users to access and understand complex information.
- User-friendly tools will help educators and the public make well-informed decisions about disciplinary practices.

## Here is where we are going.

- As we learn more about suspension practices, we can work towards policies and practices that maintain a safe, orderly respectful learning environment, while minimizing disruptions in the education of students when they violate their school's code of conduct.
- Each year's new data will make the year-to-year comparisons stronger and allow us to see if the recent downward trend in suspension rates will continue.
- In time, the Advanced Reports will display rates for students with disabilities, students from low-income families, and English Language Learners.

Thank you for your continued support of Rhode Island students,  
Deborah Gist, Ph.D., Rhode Island Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

### Rhode Island Board of Education

Barbara S. Cottam, Chair  
Antonio Barajas, M.D.  
Amy Beretta, Esq.,  
Michael Bernstein, Chairman - Council on  
Postsecondary Education  
Colleen A. Callahan, Ed.D.  
Karin Forbes  
Joe Eva Gaines

The Honorable Thomas Izzo  
Marta V. Martinez  
Judy Ouellette  
Lawrence Purtill  
Kerry I. Rafanelli, Esq.  
Lt. Col. (Ret.) Mathies J. Santos  
John J. Smith, Jr.  
Joyce L. Stevos, Ph.D.  
Reverend Jefferey A. Williams

Please convey questions, comments, and suggestions via the feedback form available on the InfoWorks site — <http://infoworks.ride.ri.gov/about/contact>.