



# Students with Disabilities, School Discipline and Engagement of Law Enforcement

OCTOBER 8, 2024

# Students with disabilities have historically faced disciplinary actions — suspension, restraint, seclusion, and referrals to law enforcement — at two to three times the rate of students without disabilities.<sup>1</sup>

**THE UNEQUAL APPLICATION** of disciplinary practices — both those recorded in statistics and informal removals that place conditions on students' participation in school —<sup>2</sup> threatens the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities. In 2022, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights identified this risk specifically, advising schools of their obligation to ensure students with disabilities receive “the support, services, interventions, strategies, and modifications to school or district policies” necessary to manage disability-based behavior and, where possible, avoid disciplinary action.<sup>3</sup>

This fourth of six briefs analyzing data from the 2020-2021 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), released earlier this year, focuses on the experiences of students with disabilities with disciplinary practices at both charter schools and traditional public schools. Though the COVID-19 pandemic was still in its early stages, concerns about the impact of school-based safety measures on student behavior<sup>4</sup> and disproportionate discipline practices<sup>5</sup> were widespread. While this brief shows ongoing declines in suspensions, restraints, seclusion, and referrals to law enforcement, it also demonstrates an unequal and concerning over-application of disciplinary actions for students with disabilities.

**This brief focuses on the experiences of students with disabilities with disciplinary practices at both charter schools and traditional public schools.**



<sup>1</sup> Losen, D. J., & Martinez, P. (2020). *Lost opportunities: How disparate school discipline continues to drive differences in the opportunity to learn*. Palo Alto, CA/Los Angeles, CA: Learning Policy Institute; Center for Civil Rights Remedies at the Civil Rights Project, UCLA

<sup>2</sup> O'Neill, P. (2019). *It Is Time to Unearth and Stop Subterranean Discipline and Exclusion*. Center for Learner Equity. <https://www.centerforlearnerequity.org/wp-content/uploads/Subterranean-Discipline-1-31-20.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. (2022). *Supporting students with disabilities and avoiding the discriminatory use of student discipline under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/504-discipline-guidance.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Education Week. (2021). *The Pandemic Will Affect Students' Mental Health for Years to Come. How Schools Can Help*. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/the-pandemic-will-affect-students-mental-health-for-years-to-come-how-schools-can-help/2021/03>

<sup>5</sup> Tucker, W., & Whittaker, M. (2020). *Disproportionate discipline and COVID-19: A call for change*. The Center for Learner Equity and the National Center for Learning Disabilities.

**The Center for Learner Equity** (CLE) is committed to catalyzing student success and eradicating the complex, pervasive, and systematic barriers that prevent students with disabilities from accessing quality educational opportunities and choices, robust support, and inclusive environments. We accomplish this through research, advocacy, coalition formation, and capacity building with national, state, and local partners.

The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), maintained and released biennially by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) since 1968, publishes data on leading indicators related to access and barriers to education opportunities from early childhood through grade 12. With each biennial release, CLE analyzes similarities and differences in student populations and student experiences in public charter schools and traditional public schools for students with disabilities. Understanding these national-level data supports success for students with disabilities without regard to educational setting and placement.

The findings shared in this brief are based on data reported in the 2020–2021 CRDC, collected from 97,575 schools. This report uses a data-cleaning methodology that selected a sample of these schools. For more information about the methodology used in these briefs, including a data file and accompanying instructions, [see our methodology brief here](#).

Students with disabilities receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and both or neither of those laws. Unless otherwise noted, statistics in this brief refer to students eligible to receive services under IDEA.

## Key Takeaways

- ✓ Rates of suspension, referral to law enforcement, arrests, restraint, seclusion, and corporal punishment all declined in the 2020–21 CRDC.
  - These rates have trended downward since 2011, but trends were likely accelerated by two events: the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting reduction of in-person schooling, and the 2020 protests surrounding the murder of George Floyd and other people of color by police, which put pressure on schools to reduce the presence of law enforcement and unequal discipline practices.
  - Given the strong influence of the pandemic, the downward trend in suspensions may not represent a permanent change. Continued monitoring of this trend is appropriate.
- ✓ Students with disabilities continued to be suspended at disproportionately rates in both traditional public schools and charter schools.
  - In traditional public schools, 2.9% of students with disabilities experienced one or more in-school suspension and 2.9% experienced one or more out-of-school suspensions (compared with 1.5% and 1.1% for peers without disabilities, respectively).
  - In charter schools, 0.7% of students with disabilities experienced one or more in-school suspension and 1.4 % experienced one or more out-of-school suspensions (compared with 0.4% and 0.7% for peers without disabilities, respectively).
- ✓ Charter schools operating as their own LEA reported higher rates of out-of-school suspensions for students with disabilities and without disabilities than charters operating as a part of an LEA.
- ✓ In charter schools, rates of arrest among students with disabilities were near zero in 2021.
- ✓ Students with disabilities in charter schools were secluded 2.11 times more than their peers without disabilities, according to the 2021 CRDC. Students with disabilities in traditional public schools were secluded 1.65 times more than their peers without disabilities.



## Key Questions for Policymakers and Researchers

- 1 How can both charter schools and traditional public schools enact policies that continue to reduce harmful exclusionary disciplinary practices?
- 2 How do inequitable disciplinary practices experienced by students with disabilities intersect with inequitable disciplinary practices experienced by students based on race, ethnicity, gender, multilingual learner status, LGBTQ+, and other student characteristics?
- 3 The out-of-school suspension rate for students with disabilities is now higher in traditional public schools as in charter schools. In-school suspension rates are also lower for charter schools. What explains this difference?
  - Do charter schools have more access to alternative disciplinary policies and processes that may be preventing suspensions?
  - Alternatively, might aspects of this development stem from charter schools lacking the space and resources necessary to support in-school suspensions or documenting suspension practices differently?
- 4 Rates of in-school and out-of-school suspensions vary heavily by state. To what extent are state policies increasing or decreasing suspension rates? Do data quality issues or underreporting potentially explain some state-by-state variations?
- 5 How will the documented challenges of student absenteeism impact state, district and school discipline policies and practices?

# 1. Students with Disabilities and Suspensions by Sector

Time spent in suspension, whether in-school or out-of-school, is time a student spends without instruction. The disproportionate rate at which students with disabilities are suspended threatens their ability to receive equitable instructional opportunities and a free appropriate public education.

Rates of suspension for students with disabilities have trended downward since 2011 (when suspension rates for students with disabilities were above 13% for both public school types), but, like other data points in this brief, this downward trend accelerated between 2018 and 2021. One likely reason for this acceleration is the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting limits on in-person instruction time during the 2020–21 school year. Another likely explanation stems from the 2020 protests surrounding the murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd and other people of color. Among the many results from these protests were concrete policy changes designed to reduce the presence of law enforcement in schools and work to reform inequitable discipline practices.<sup>6</sup>

Despite this progress, students with disabilities are still suspended at higher rates than their non-disabled peers.

- Regarding in-school suspensions, 2.9% of students with disabilities in traditional public schools experienced one or more in-school suspensions, nearly twice the rate of their peers without disabilities (1.5%) in the same school sector. Meanwhile, 0.7% of students with disabilities in charter schools experienced one or more in-school suspensions, also nearly twice the rate of their peers without disabilities (0.4%) in the same school sector.
- Regarding out-of-school suspensions, 2.9% of students with disabilities in traditional public schools received one or more suspensions (compared with 1.1% of their non-disabled peers), 1.4% of students with disabilities in charter schools received one or more suspensions (compared with 0.7% of their non-disabled peers).



<sup>6</sup> Sawchuk, S., Schwartz, S., Pendharkar, E., & Najjarro, I. (2021, June 4). *Defunded, Removed, and Put in Check: School Police a Year After George Floyd*. Education Week. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/defunded-removed-and-put-in-check-school-police-a-year-after-george-floyd/2021/06>.

Figure 1. Percentage of Suspensions by Type and by Student Group by Sector

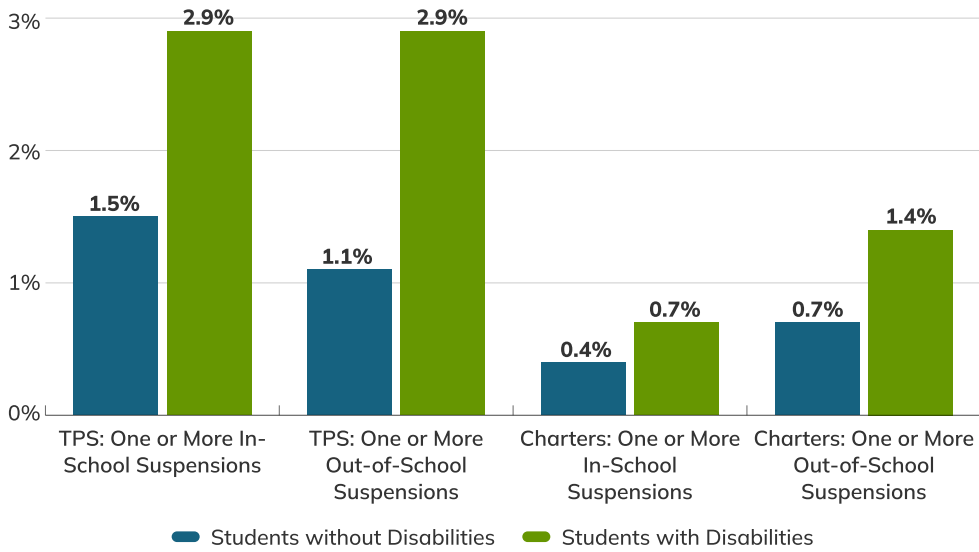
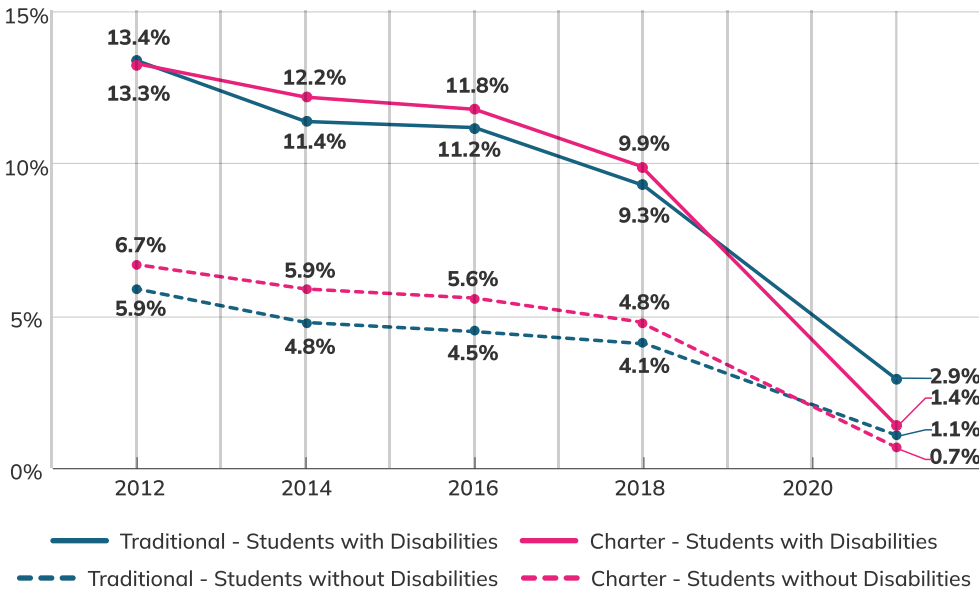


Figure 2. Percentages of Out-of-School Suspensions by School Sector Over Time (2012–2021)



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020–21 Civil Rights Data Collection, released November 2023, available at <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.

A factor in suspension rates largely unique to charter schools is the prevalence of full-time virtual schooling options. Virtual schools do not have the equivalent of out-of-school suspension. Not surprisingly, when removing virtual charter schools from the data set, the percentage of charter school students receiving suspensions increased across all categories. Even in this modified data set, however, students with disabilities continue to face greater rates of suspension than students without disabilities.

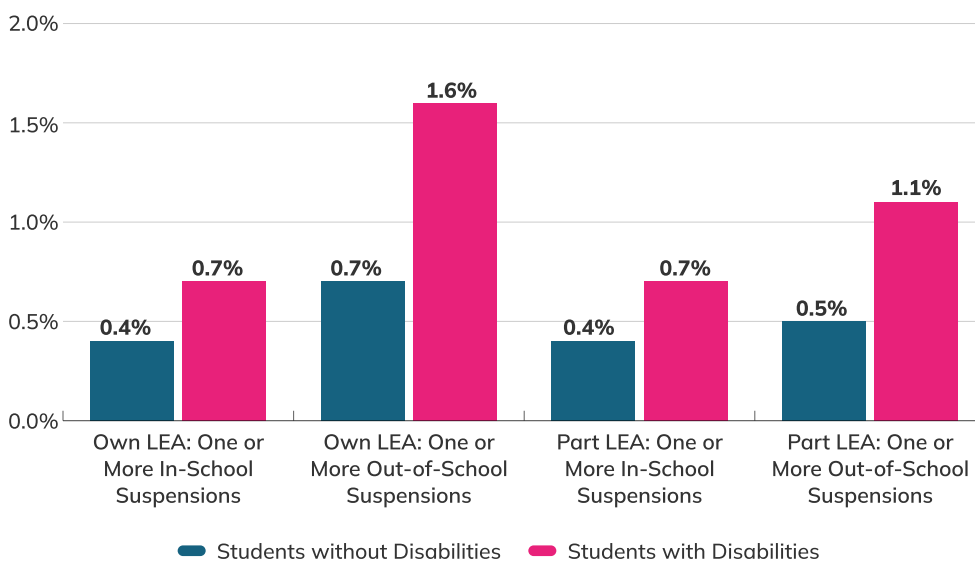
Table 1. Students Who Received Suspension by Type, Student Group, and Inclusion/Exclusion of Online or Virtual Schools for Charter Schools

Students	One or More In-School Suspension		One or More Out-of-School Suspension	
	Including Online/ Virtual Schools	Excluding Online/ Virtual Schools	Including Online/ Virtual Schools	Excluding Online/ Virtual Schools
With Disabilities	0.70%	0.80%	1.40%	1.60%
Without Disabilities	0.40%	0.40%	0.70%	0.70%

## 2. Suspension Rates in Charter Schools by Legal Status

Whether operating as their own LEA or as part of an LEA, charter schools reported higher rates of in-school and out-of-school suspensions for students with disabilities compared to students without disabilities. Charter schools that operated as their own LEA reported higher rates of out-of-school suspensions for students with disabilities (1.6%) than charter schools operating as a part of an LEA (1.1%).

Figure 3. Percentages of Suspensions by Students without Disabilities and Students with Disabilities by Type by LEA and by Student Group



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020–21 Civil Rights Data Collection, released November 2023, available at <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.

### 3. Suspension Rates among Students with Disabilities by State

Historically, state-level suspension rate data presented in the CRDC showed significant differences in the experience of students with disabilities across states for students in both charter and traditional public schools. During the most recent data collection period, reported differences in suspension rates were likely compounded by several related, but independent impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. These include reduced time spent in school buildings limiting in-school suspensions, different policy approaches regarding reopening schools in different states (particularly for students with disabilities), and complications in data collection processes stemming from a rapidly changing school environment. Further, alternatives to suspension during virtual learning (e.g., removing students from a virtual classroom, placing students in separate virtual breakout rooms) that may not be tracked in these statistics may have the same functional impact of removing students from instruction.

For these reasons, we believe the data in Table 2 should be reviewed with caution. We include this data to support ongoing tracking of trends in suspension rates for students with disabilities in future years and to support an ongoing conversation about improving data collection processes moving forward.

Table 2. Rates of In- and Out-of-School Suspension of Students with Disabilities by State and by Sector<sup>7</sup>

State	Traditional	Charter	Traditional	Charter
	One or More In-School Suspensions	One or More In-School Suspensions	One or More Out-of-School Suspensions	One or More Out-of-School Suspensions
Alabama	5.29%	0.00%	5.07%	5.15%
Alaska	1.00%	0.50%	2.40%	1.38%
Arizona	2.22%	1.03%	3.19%	2.71%
Arkansas	8.63%	4.80%	9.46%	7.17%
California	0.09%	0.04%	0.44%	0.14%
Colorado	1.73%	0.94%	3.01%	1.44%
Connecticut	2.21%	0.18%	1.92%	0.54%
Delaware	0.62%	0.35%	1.45%	1.92%
District of Columbia	0.00%	0.00%	0.13%	0.06%
Florida	4.15%	0.84%	4.56%	1.67%
Georgia	5.97%	1.87%	4.57%	1.89%
Hawaii	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
Idaho	3.07%	1.07%	3.21%	2.22%
Illinois	1.33%	0.02%	1.20%	0.12%
Indiana	4.00%	1.75%	5.89%	4.71%

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<sup>7</sup> Seven states, shown as “NA”, did not have operational charter schools in the 2020–21 CRDC. Values referring to between 1 and 10 students are shown as “\*” to limit student identifiability; for more information, please review the technical brief. School-level suspension data for Hawaii was suppressed in the 2021 CRDC.



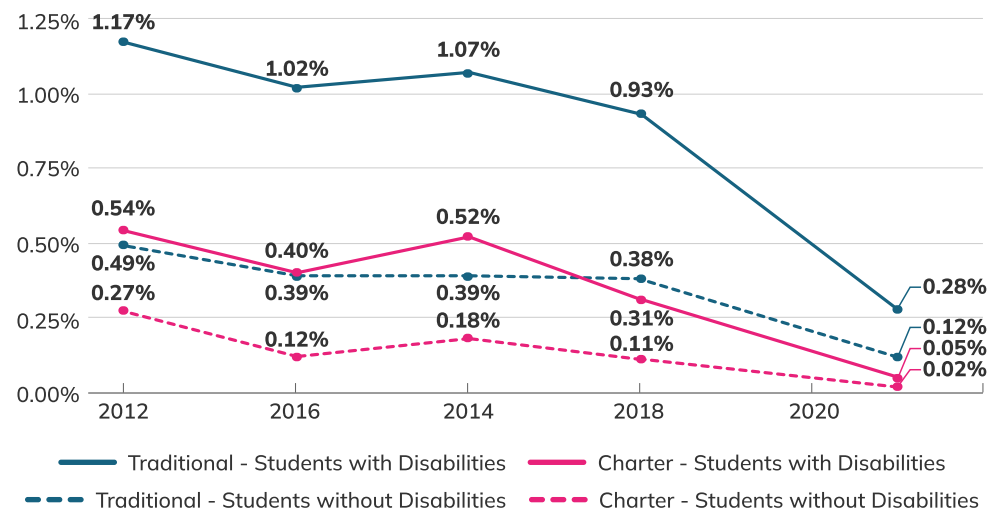
	Traditional	Charter	Traditional	Charter
State	One or More In-School Suspensions	One or More In-School Suspensions	One or More Out-of-School Suspensions	One or More Out-of-School Suspensions
Iowa	4.23%	0.00%	5.85%	*
Kansas	4.11%	0.36%	4.29%	2.16%
Kentucky	2.50%	NA	1.70%	NA
Louisiana	5.20%	1.33%	6.55%	2.70%
Maine	1.39%	0.94%	3.00%	3.96%
Maryland	0.07%	0.00%	0.33%	0.00%
Massachusetts	0.79%	0.61%	1.51%	1.33%
Michigan	1.49%	0.66%	3.74%	2.58%
Minnesota	1.23%	0.97%	1.75%	1.98%
Mississippi	7.11%	0.00%	6.54%	2.04%
Missouri	7.01%	1.44%	4.87%	1.99%
Montana	4.87%	NA	3.96%	NA
Nebraska	5.75%	NA	6.28%	NA
Nevada	0.63%	0.14%	0.79%	0.24%
New Hampshire	2.53%	0.35%	3.81%	2.29%
New Jersey	0.49%	0.31%	0.85%	0.25%
New Mexico	0.21%	0.09%	0.92%	0.55%
New York	1.10%	0.29%	1.52%	0.39%
North Carolina	1.70%	0.35%	2.23%	1.31%
North Dakota	3.59%	NA	4.55%	NA
Ohio	2.81%	0.48%	4.18%	2.65%
Oklahoma	5.31%	0.20%	4.56%	0.28%
Oregon	0.39%	0.30%	0.88%	0.46%
Pennsylvania	2.15%	0.19%	2.60%	0.67%
Rhode Island	0.81%	0.88%	1.83%	1.04%
South Carolina	6.94%	2.71%	7.85%	3.15%
South Dakota	7.68%	NA	4.83%	NA
Tennessee	4.83%	0.15%	3.07%	1.38%
Texas	7.67%	1.55%	3.26%	2.05%
Utah	1.67%	1.63%	3.19%	3.59%
Vermont	1.81%	NA	2.60%	NA
Virginia	0.88%	0.00%	1.16%	0.54%
Washington	0.40%	0.39%	0.83%	1.17%
West Virginia	4.03%	NA	4.34%	NA
Wisconsin	2.23%	0.62%	3.48%	1.28%
Wyoming	5.80%	1.32%	6.63%	2.63%

## 4. Referrals to Law Enforcement among Students with Disabilities

Referrals to law enforcement include reports for any “incident that occurs on school grounds, during school-related events (in person or virtual), or while taking school transportation, regardless of whether official action is taken,” including citations, tickets, court-referrals and school-related arrests.<sup>8</sup> Like other trends in this brief, student referrals to law enforcement have decreased over time, and these trends were accelerated in the 2020–21 school year.

While rates of referrals to law enforcement remain below 1% and are decreasing, these rates still represent large numbers of students: in total, 59,732 students with disabilities and 161,309 students without disabilities were referred to law enforcement in the 2020–21 CRDC. Further, the proportion of students with disabilities referred to law enforcement remains more than twice that of students without disabilities in both charter and traditional public schools.

Figure 4. Referral Rates to Law Enforcement among Students with Disabilities by Sector Over Time (2012–2021)



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020–21 Civil Rights Data Collection, released November 2023, available at <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.

<sup>8</sup> <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov/assets/downloads/2020-21-crdc-school-form.pdf>

**Table 3. Number of Students Referred to Law Enforcement by School Type and Student Group in 2021**

Students	Traditional	Charter
With Disabilities	58,695	1,037
Without Disabilities	158,296	3,013

Of the 44 states with charter schools, only two states (Delaware and the District of Columbia) reported a greater referral rate for students with disabilities attending a charter school than students with disabilities attending a traditional public school. As with data on suspensions, these data may be substantially influenced by school closures during 2020–21.

**Table 4. Proportions of Students with Disabilities Referred to Law Enforcement by School Type<sup>9</sup>**

State	% of Students with Disabilities Referred to Law Enforcement in Traditional Public Schools	% of Students with Disabilities Referred to Law Enforcement in Charter Schools	Difference
National	0.28%	0.05%	0.23%
Alabama	0.16%	0.00%	0.16%
Alaska	0.19%	0.00%	0.19%
Arizona	0.37%	0.08%	0.29%
Arkansas	0.30%	0.17%	0.13%
California	0.05%	0.01%	0.04%
Colorado	0.19%	0.03%	0.16%
Connecticut	0.24%	0.00%	0.24%
Delaware	0.04%	0.06%	-0.02%
District of Columbia	0.00%	0.05%	-0.05%
Florida	0.73%	0.13%	0.60%
Georgia	0.33%	0.07%	0.26%
Hawaii	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Idaho	0.57%	0.18%	0.39%
Illinois	0.19%	0.00%	0.19%
Indiana	0.24%	0.09%	0.15%
Iowa	0.73%	0.00%	0.73%
Kansas	0.29%	0.00%	0.29%
Kentucky	0.05%	NA	NA
Louisiana	0.22%	0.03%	0.19%

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<sup>9</sup> Seven states, shown as “NA”, did not have operational charter schools in the 2020–21 CRDC. Values referring to between 1 and 10 students are shown as “\*” to limit student identifiability; for more information, please review the technical brief.

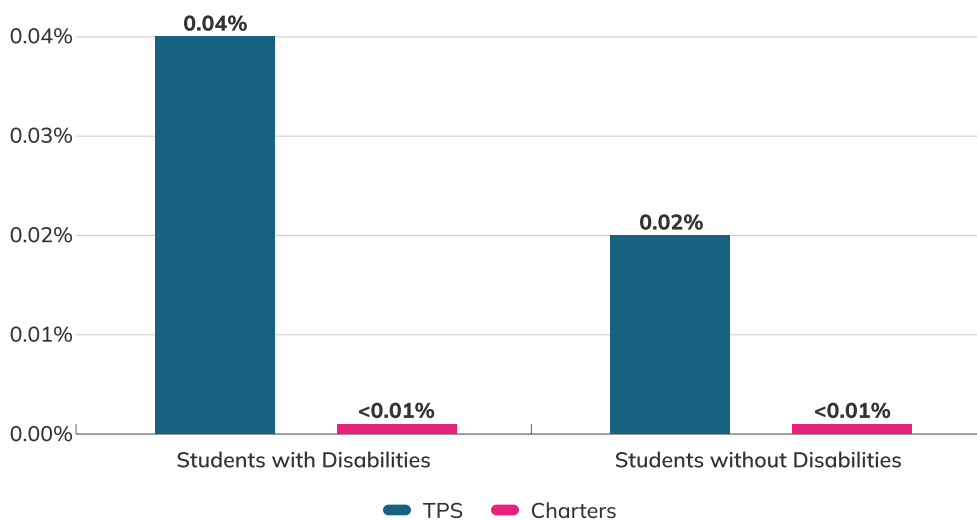
State	% of Students with Disabilities Referred to Law Enforcement in Traditional Public Schools	% of Students with Disabilities Referred to Law Enforcement in Charter Schools	Difference
Maine	0.18%	0.00%	0.18%
Maryland	0.04%	0.00%	0.04%
Massachusetts	0.07%	0.05%	0.02%
Michigan	0.21%	0.02%	0.19%
Minnesota	0.28%	0.10%	0.17%
Mississippi	0.21%	0.00%	0.21%
Missouri	0.48%	0.00%	0.48%
Montana	0.75%	NA	NA
Nebraska	0.37%	NA	NA
Nevada	0.22%	0.00%	0.22%
New Hampshire	0.90%	0.00%	0.90%
New Jersey	0.11%	0.03%	0.07%
New Mexico	0.07%	0.02%	0.05%
New York	0.03%	0.00%	0.03%
North Carolina	0.10%	0.01%	0.09%
North Dakota	0.91%	NA	NA
Ohio	0.24%	0.03%	0.21%
Oklahoma	0.52%	0.02%	0.50%
Oregon	0.08%	0.00%	0.08%
Pennsylvania	0.60%	0.08%	0.52%
Rhode Island	0.04%	0.00%	0.04%
South Carolina	0.32%	0.00%	0.32%
South Dakota	1.83%	NA	NA
Tennessee	0.26%	0.07%	0.19%
Texas	0.33%	0.03%	0.30%
Utah	0.36%	0.13%	0.23%
Vermont	0.09%	NA	NA
Virginia	0.39%	0.00%	0.39%
Washington	0.07%	0.00%	0.07%
West Virginia	0.17%	NA	NA
Wisconsin	0.73%	0.14%	0.59%
Wyoming	1.95%	1.32%	0.63%

## 5. School-Related Arrests among Students with Disabilities

For the 2020–2021 school year, school arrest rates were substantially lower than prior years. Nonetheless, students with disabilities were still arrested at higher rates than students without disabilities. Arrest rates at traditional public schools were twice as high for students with disabilities (0.04%) than for students without disabilities (0.02%). A smaller proportion of students with and without disabilities at charter schools were arrested than students at traditional public schools.

While arrest rates remain low, they still represent a large number of students arrested at school. Overall, 2,587 students with disabilities were arrested in public schools in 2020–21, alongside 6,598 students without disabilities.

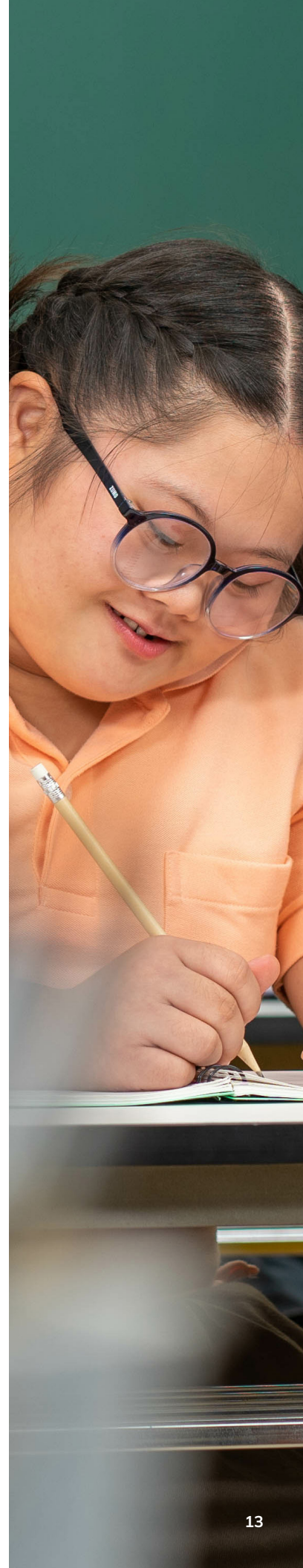
Figure 5. Percentage of Arrests by Student Group and by Sector



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020–21 Civil Rights Data Collection, released November 2023, available at <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.

Table 5. Number of Students who Received a School-Related Arrest by School Type and Student Group in 2021

Students	Traditional	Charter
With Disabilities	2,546	14
Without Disabilities	6,557	41



## 6. Students with Disabilities and Restraint in Schools

The CRDC reports on two different types of restraint: mechanical and physical. Mechanical restraint refers to the use of a device or equipment to restrict a student's movement. Physical restraint refers to a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the free movement of a student. The use of restraint in schools can lead to traumatic experiences for students and has even resulted in injury or death.

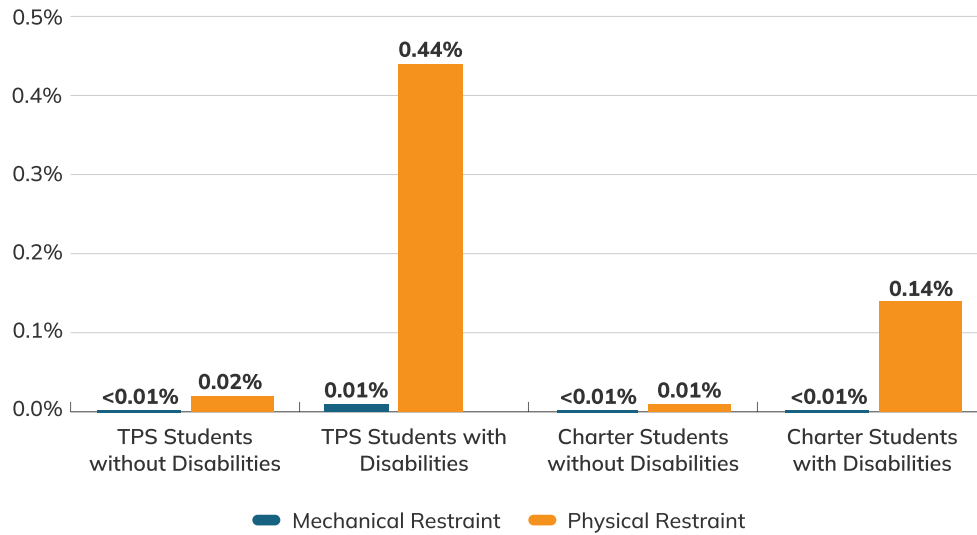
Students with disabilities in traditional public schools were 22 times more likely to be subject to physical restraint than students without disabilities (0.44% vs 0.02%). While a relatively small proportion of all students were subjected to mechanical or physical restraint, students with disabilities were subjected to more of both types of restraint than students without disabilities. Overall, a greater proportion of students with disabilities were subjected to mechanical or physical restraint in traditional public schools than in charter schools.

These ratios represent a large group of students: 28,864 students with disabilities and 8,098 students without disabilities across all public schools were subject to some type of restraint.

Instances of restraint fell from 2018 to 2021 for charter schools and traditional public schools. Rates of restraint have trended downward since 2011, but this trend was likely accelerated in 2021, likely due to less time spent schooling in-person and social distancing requirements.



Figure 6. Percentage of Restraint by Type by Sector by Student Group



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020–21 Civil Rights Data Collection, released November 2023, available at <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.

Table 6. Number of Students Subjected to Restraint by Type, Student Group, and School Type in 2021

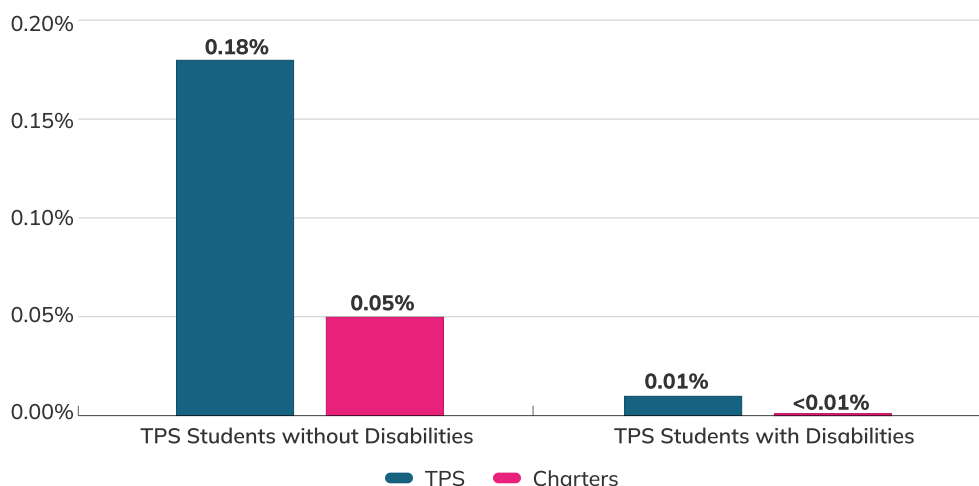
Students	Mechanical Restraint		Physical Restraint	
	Traditional	Charter	Traditional	Charter
With Disabilities	675	5	27,595	589
Without Disabilities	1,445	11	6,450	192

## 7. Seclusion Experienced by Students with Disabilities in Schools

Students with disabilities are much more likely than students without disabilities to be secluded: that is, confined in a room or area where the student is prevented from leaving. Seclusion may lead to a lack of access to instruction and possible trauma and injury.

For students who were secluded, the average number of instances of seclusion per student were much greater for students with disabilities than their peers without disabilities, both in traditional and charter schools during the 2020–21 academic year. Students with disabilities in charter schools were secluded 2.11 times more than their peers without disabilities. Students with disabilities in traditional public schools were secluded 1.65 times more than their peers without disabilities.

Figure 7. Rates of Seclusion by Student Group and by Sector



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020–21 Civil Rights Data Collection, released November 2023, available at <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.

Table 7. Average Frequency of Seclusion per Secluded Student by School Type and Student Group

School Type	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities
Traditional	4.25	2.57
Charter	3.19	1.51



## 8. Corporal Punishment Experienced by Students with Disabilities

Corporal punishments — such as paddling or striking a student — come with the risk of serious physical injury or long-term trauma to students. Although the prevalence of corporal punishment has been on a steady decline and is banned in the majority of states, laws on corporal punishment take a patchwork of approaches and vary widely by state.

As of 2021, 23 states still expressly or implicitly allowed public school personnel to use corporal punishment to discipline students, while five of those states restricted corporal punishment against students with disabilities.<sup>10</sup> Of the 16 states that allow corporal punishment and have charter schools, only 4 of those 16 states reported instances of corporal punishment against students with disabilities in charter schools during the 2020–21 school year, while 10 of those 16 states reported instances of corporal punishment against students with disabilities in traditional public schools.

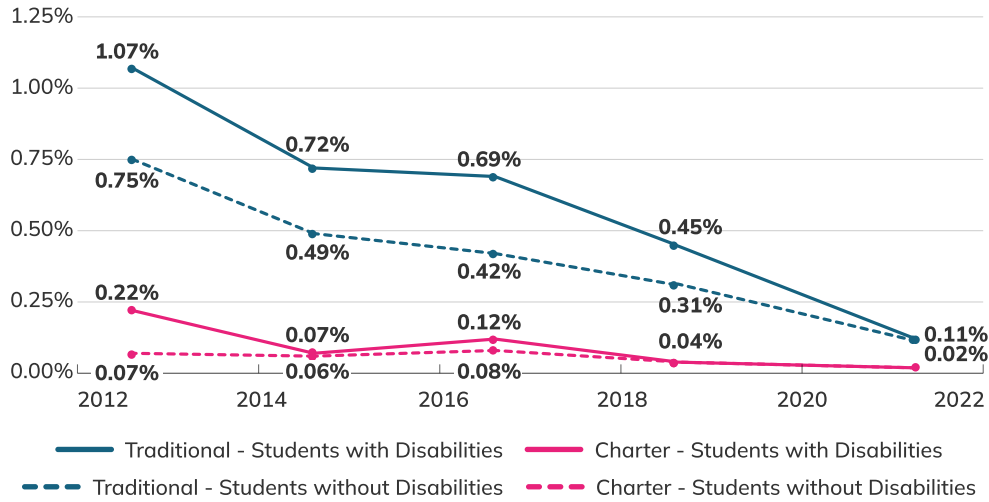
The table and figure below compare the proportion and number of students who received corporal punishment in traditional public schools and charter schools in those states where corporal punishment remained legal during the 2020–21 school year. The percentage of students who have received corporal punishment was less than 1% across all student groups and school types in 2021. Historically, students with disabilities received corporal punishment at a higher rate than students without disabilities in both charter and traditional public schools; however, the difference between these two groups has decreased over time.

Despite noteworthy decreases, 3,167 students with disabilities and 19,624 students without disabilities were subjected to corporal punishment in the 2020–21 school year.



<sup>10</sup> See U.S. Department of Education. (March 24, 2023). [Key Policy Letters Signed by the Education Secretary or Deputy Secretary](#).

Figure 8. Rates of Corporal Punishment by Student Group and by Sector Over Time (2012–2021)



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2020–21 Civil Rights Data Collection, released November 2023, available at <https://civilrightsdata.ed.gov>.

Table 8. Number of Students Who Received Corporal Punishment by School Type in 2021

Students	Traditional	Charter
With Disabilities	3,135	32
Without Disabilities	19,253	371



## About the Center for Learner Equity (CLE)

CLE is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that students with disabilities have equitable access to high-quality public education. CLE provides research, policy analysis, coalition building, and technical assistance to a variety of stakeholders nationwide.

## Mission

We are committed to catalyzing student success and eradicating the complex, pervasive, and systematic barriers that prevent students with disabilities from accessing school choice, educational opportunities, quality support, and inclusive environments.

## Vision

All students with disabilities are respected, learning, and thriving.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge Patrick Gibson, Morgan Considine, and Ashley Robles from the State & School Finance Project for their data cleaning, analysis, and synthesis of findings and Atelier LKS for design and layout. Li Ma, Chase Nordengren, and Lauren Morando Rhim from the Center for Learner Equity contributed to the brief, with review feedback from Wendy Tucker, Jennifer Coco, Amanda Fenton, Laura Kaloi, Erik Robelen, and data verification support from Lauren Davis and Kate Dove.

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Citation: The Center for Learner Equity. (2024). *Fast Facts Brief #4: Students with Disabilities, School Discipline and Engagement of Law Enforcement*.