



DC
**PUBLIC
CHARTER**
SCHOOL
BOARD

DC Public Charter School Board Discipline and Truancy Report SY 2014-15

August 2015

Summary

In order for students to achieve academically, quality schools must create school cultures and environments that promote appropriate student behaviors and encourage consistent student attendance. As part of the DC Public Charter School Board's (PCSB) oversight over DC public charter schools, and pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 38-203, PCSB tracks attendance data at all DC public charter schools and annually publishes a report on that data. PCSB also annually reports on discipline data and trends within public charter schools. The report makes publicly available school-by-school data pertaining to the rates of student suspension and expulsion, truancy and in-school attendance and analyzes trends in public charter school attendance policies.

In school year 2014-15, the DC public charter school sector saw decreases in student suspensions, expulsions and truanancies as well as an increase in the in-seat attendance rate from school year 2013-14. This continues a four-year positive trend for each of these metrics. Specifically:

- Expulsions dropped from 139 (0.38% expulsion rate) in SY 2013-14 to **131 (0.35%) in SY 2014-15**.
- Students with at least one out-of-school suspension also decreased, from 11.9% in SY 2013-14 to **10.9% in SY 2014-15**
- In-seat attendance (for PK–12th) increased from 91.6% in SY 2013-14 to **92.0% in SY 2014-15**. Overall, these numbers mean an average of nearly **150 additional students per day** attending public charter schools across the District.

PCSB does not mandate discipline policies for the 112 public charter schools it oversees. Instead, PCSB uses transparency and incentives to encourage public charter schools to create and implement effective discipline policies that result in every child having the opportunity to achieve academically. While more progress must be made, this approach is paying dividends across the DC public charter school sector, with two-thirds of all public charter schools suspending no students in SY 2014-15.

For attendance PCSB's goal is to assist schools in reducing truancy by improving data processes and transparency. PCSB analysis indicates that in-seat attendance rates are strongly correlated with academic achievement; making attendance oversight an important part of PCSB's mission. SY 2014-15 marked the first year of implementation of a revised PCSB truancy policy. This policy allowed schools to be



notified in real time when they reach attendance thresholds, rather than being notified in quarterly reports, which encouraged schools to implement strategies more expeditiously to address truancy concerns. The thresholds remained the same - 20% for elementary/middle, 25% for high school and 35% for alternative schools.

During the upcoming school year (2015-16), PCSB plans to continue to improve citywide and cross-agency coordination to address the issue of truancy. In particular, PCSB has worked with OSSE and charter LEA's to develop a new and streamlined process for collecting and reporting truancy and discipline data. This will allow charter LEA's, PCSB and OSSE to more easily share data with each other and the public, as well as more easily comply with the new reporting requirements in the Pre-K Student Discipline Amendment Act of 2015.

The remainder of this report contains detailed information on PCSB's discipline and truancy data for SY 2014-15, including a presentation on PCSB's truancy and discipline data, campus-level data and an analysis of trends in public charter school attendance policies.