

POLICY IMPACT ANALYSIS: HB425/SB651 (2017)

OVERVIEW

This research brief examines out of school suspensions for students in Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, first grade, and second grade before and after the enactment of HB425/SB651. The law prohibited the suspension or expulsion of these students except in certain circumstances. It was passed in 2017 and implemented starting with the 2017-2018 school year.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- (1) Out of school suspensions (OSSs) for students in Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 2 were not eliminated in the 2017-2018 and 2018-19 school years.
- (2) As a group, Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 2 students showed statistically significant decreases in out of school suspensions after implementation of the law.
- (3) Each grade individually showed statistically significant decreases in out of school suspensions after implementation of the law.
- (4) Students in most race/ethnicity groups in Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 2 (Black/African-American, Hispanic/Latino, two or more races, and White) showed statistically significant decreases in out of school suspensions after law implementation. Male students, female students, students with disabilities, and students without disabilities in Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 2 all showed statistically significant decreases in out of school suspensions after law implementation.
- (5) Changes at the local level can be reported for 16 local school systems (LSSs). Of these sixteen, fourteen local school systems showed a statistically significant decrease in the number of suspensions per 100 Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 2 students after the implementation of the law; two showed no change. Twelve of the 16 showed a statistically significant decrease in the percent of students suspended; four showed no change. (Data for 8 local school systems cannot be reported due to very small numbers of out of school suspensions.)

BACKGROUND

The Maryland General Assembly passed HB425/SB651 in 2017. The law states that a Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, first grade, or second grade student may not be suspended or expelled unless (1) federal law requires it (ex: carrying a firearm on school property), or (2) the school administration, in consultation with a school psychologist or other mental health professional, determines that there is an imminent threat of serious harm to other students or staff that cannot be reduced or eliminated through interventions and supports. Suspensions may not exceed five days.

Imminent threat of serious harm is defined as “likely and immediate danger of significant physical injury. The inability of the child to de-escalate after an intervention and return to the



classroom without continuing the physical attack on either staff or students would constitute an ‘imminent threat’.”

Schools were directed to strengthen and implement current student-centered support strategies in lieu of simply removing students from school. Support strategies could include positive behavior interventions and supports; a behavior intervention plan; a referral to a student support team; a referral to an individualized education program team; and a referral for appropriate community-based services. School systems shall remedy the impact of a student’s behavior through appropriate intervention methods that may include restorative practices.

The law was first implemented during the 2017-2018 school year.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: Were out of school suspensions (OSSs) eliminated for Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 2 students in Maryland public schools after the implementation of HB425/SB651?

RQ2: Did OSSs decrease for Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 2 students in Maryland public schools after the implementation of HB425/SB651?

RQ3: Did some grades show greater changes in OSSs after the implementation of HB425/SB651, and in what patterns?

RQ4: Did some student groups show greater changes in OSSs after the implementation of HB425/SB651, and in what patterns?

RQ5: Did some local school systems show greater changes in OSSs after the implementation of HB425/SB651, and in what patterns?

DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

This analysis uses data on the number of unduplicated students and total suspension incidents in Maryland’s public schools and each local school system for the 2013-14 through 2018-19 school years. Data were disaggregated by grade, race, gender, disability status, and local school system. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were conducted to compare percentages of suspension outcomes across grades, student groups, and school years before and after law implementation. Two-proportion z-tests were conducted to detect if there was a statistically significant difference between compared group outcomes. Expulsions are not included due to the extremely small number of expelled students.

FINDINGS

RQ1: Were out of school suspensions (OSSs) eliminated for Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 2 students in Maryland public schools after the implementation of HB425/SB651?

During the 2017-2018 school year, 1,251 Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2 students or 0.54% of all students were suspended at least once (Table 1, Figure 1). There were 1,999 total suspensions, or 0.87 suspension incidences for every 100 students (Table 1, Figure 2). Statistics were similar in the 2018-2019 school year. This non-zero result means out of school suspensions were not eliminated in these grades after the implementation of HB425/SB651.

Table 1

Pre-K to Grade 2 Student Suspensions by Academic Year

School Year	# of Suspensions Incidences	Incidences per 100 Students	Prior Year Change: Incidences	# of Students Suspended	% of Students Suspended	Prior Year Change: % Suspended
SY1415	3,593	1.52	N/A	2,006	0.848%	N/A
SY1516	4,234	1.80	+0.28***	2,353	0.998%	+0.15***
SY1617	4,812	2.06	+0.26***	2,572	1.101%	+0.10***
SY1718 ¹	1,999	0.87	-1.19***	1,251	0.541%	-0.56***
SY1819	2,311	1.00	+0.13***	1,254	0.542%	0.00

¹ Highlighted band represents the school year after law was passed and full implementation of law was possible.

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Figure 1

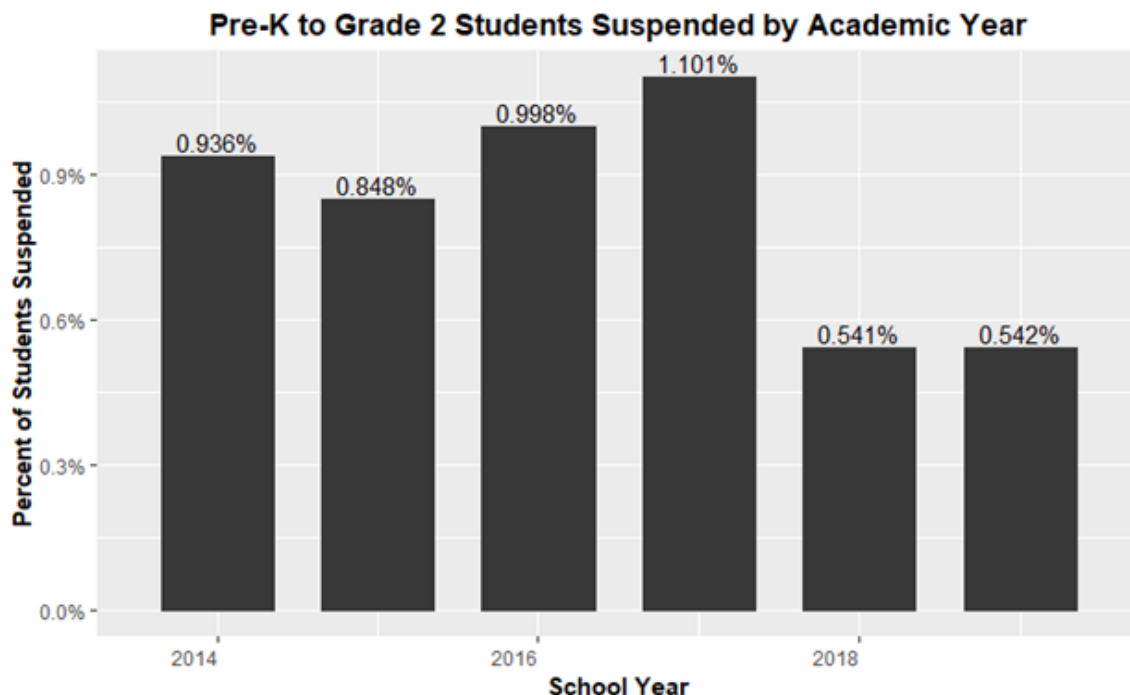
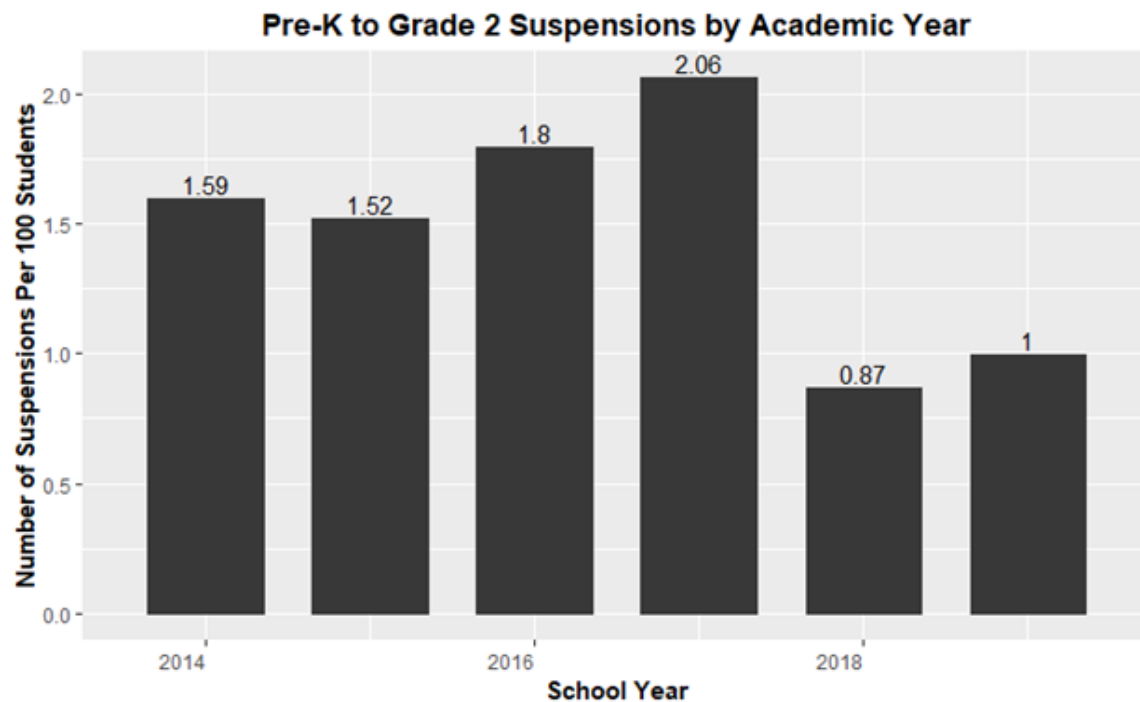


Figure 2



RQ2: Did OSSs decrease for Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 2 students in Maryland public schools after the implementation of HB425/SB651?

Table 1 shows the suspension incidences and number of unduplicated students suspended in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2 during the 2014-2015 and 2018-2019 school years. There was a statistically significant decrease in suspension incidences per 100 students (from 2.06 in 2016-17 to 0.87 in 2017-18). There was also a statistically significant decrease in the percent of students suspended at least once after the implementation of HB425/SB651 (from 1.10% in 2016-17 to 0.54% in 2017-18). However, this was followed by a statistically significant increase in suspension incidences per 100 students (from 0.87 in 2017-18 to 1.00 in 2018-19); the percent of students suspended at least once remained the same.

RQ3: Did some grades show greater changes in OSSs after the implementation of HB425/SB651, and in what patterns?

Table 2 and Figures 3 and 4 show suspension incidences and number of unduplicated students suspended in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 3 before and after the year of law implementation. Grade 3 is provided for comparison, since it was not included in the law.

All grades that were targeted by the legislation (Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 2) showed significant decreases in percent of students suspended at least once after the implementation of HB425/SB651 (Table 2, Figure 3). For example, the percent of Kindergarteners suspended decreased by 0.47 percentage points (pp), from 0.84% in 2016-17 to 0.37% in 2017-18. Grade 1 students showed the largest decrease in percent of students suspended (from 1.39% in 2017 to



0.57% in 2018, a decrease of 0.82 percentage points). In comparison, Grade 3 (which was not targeted by the law) did not see a statistically significant decrease in the number of suspended students.

All grades, including Grade 3 for comparison, showed a significant decrease in suspension incidences between those years (Table 2, Figure 4), with Grade 1 having the largest decrease of any grade (from 2.64 suspensions per 100 students to 0.89).

Table 2

Change in Student Suspensions by Grade Before & After Law

Grade	2017			2018			Change in	
	# of Students Suspended	% of Students Suspended	OSSs per 100 Students	# of Students Suspended	% of Students Suspended	OSSs per 100 Students	PP of Students Suspended	OSSs per 100 Students
Pre-K	70	0.21%	0.39	38	0.12%	0.18	-0.10**	-0.21***
Kinder.	549	0.84%	1.64	242	0.37%	0.62	-0.47***	-1.03***
Grade 1	925	1.39%	2.64	377	0.57%	0.89	-0.82***	-1.76***
Grade 2	1,028	1.50%	2.70	594	0.89%	1.42	-0.62***	-1.28***
Grade 3	1,318	1.88%	3.35	1,239	1.80%	2.92	-0.07	-0.43***

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Figure 3

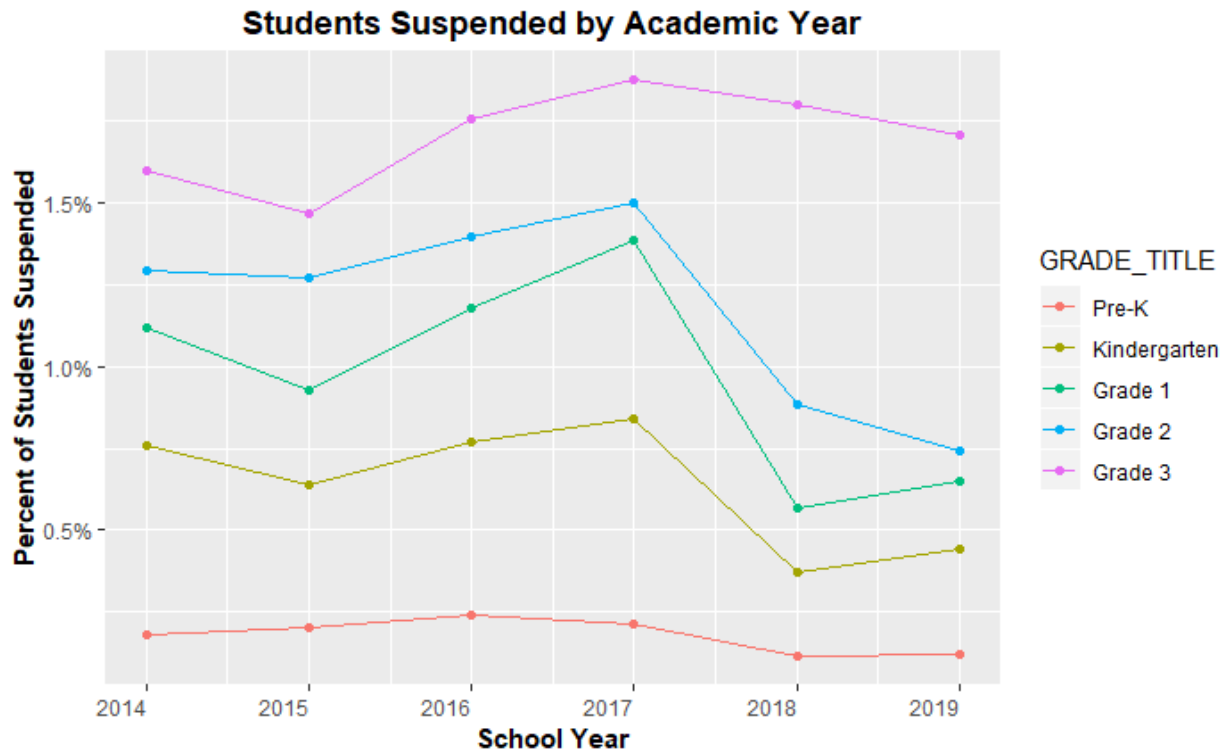
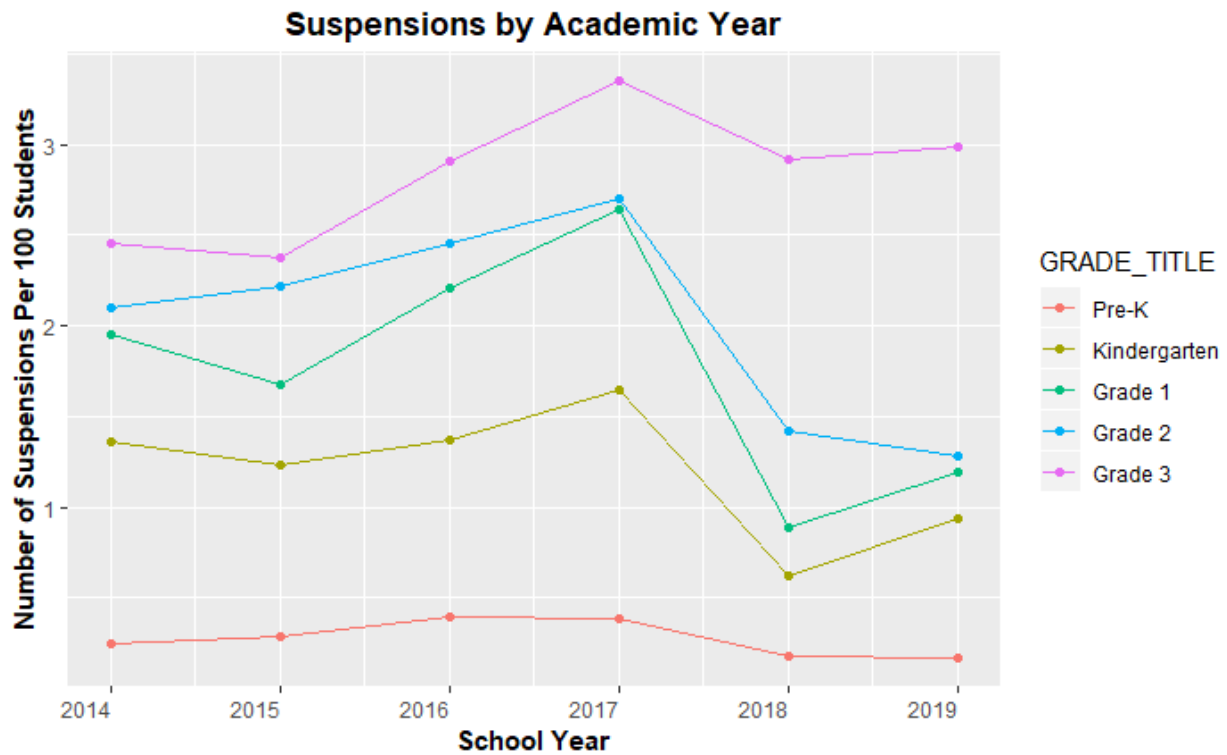


Figure 4



RQ4: Did some student groups show greater changes in OSSs after the implementation of HB425/SB651, and in what patterns?

Table 3 shows suspension incidences and number of unduplicated students suspended in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2 of students in each racial/ethnic group, before and after the implementation of the law. Black/African-American students, Hispanic/Latino students, students of two or more races, and White students all showed a statistically significant decrease in the number of suspensions and students suspended after the law was implemented (Figure 5 & 6).

The percent of Black students suspended at least once dropped by 1.14 percentage points (pp), from 2.21% in 2017 to 1.07% in 2018. The next largest decrease was in students of two or more races, a drop of 0.37 pp from 1.04% in 2017 to 0.67% in 2018. White students decreased 0.31 pp and Hispanic students decreased 0.19 pp. This order mirrored the decreases in suspension incidences per 100 students with Black students decreasing by 2.42 suspensions per 100 students, followed by students of two or more races (1.14), White (0.67), and Hispanic students (0.36).

Table 3

Change in Pre-K to Grade 2 Student Suspensions by Race/Ethnicity Before & After Law

Race/ Ethnic Group	2017			2018			Change in	
	# of Students Suspended	% of Students Suspended	OSSs per 100 Students	# of Students Suspended	% of Students Suspended	OSSs per 100 Students	PP of Students Suspended	OSSs per 100 Students
Amer. Indian	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
Asian	13	0.09%	0.11	#	#	#	#	#
Black/Af. Amer.	1,753	2.21%	4.18	827	1.07%	1.76	-1.14***	-2.42***
Hisp./Latino	188	0.42%	0.69	104	0.23%	0.33	-0.19***	-0.36***
Native Hawaiian	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
Two or more races	121	1.04%	2.25	80	0.67%	1.11	-0.37**	-1.14***
White	492	0.60%	1.10	230	0.28%	0.42	-0.31***	-0.67***

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

- statistics are not reported if the number of students suspended is less than 10.

Figure 5 (American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander student groups are not shown because the number of suspended students is less than 10.)

Students Suspended by Race and Academic Year

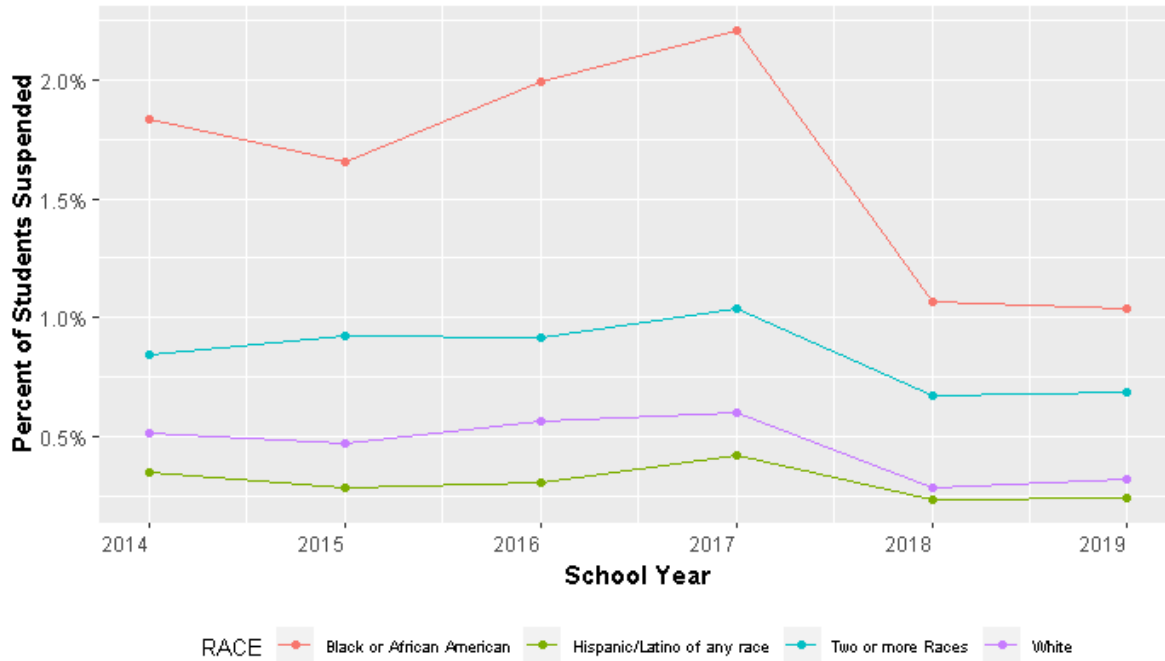


Figure 6. (American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander student groups are not shown because the number of suspended students is less than 10.)

Suspensions by Academic Year

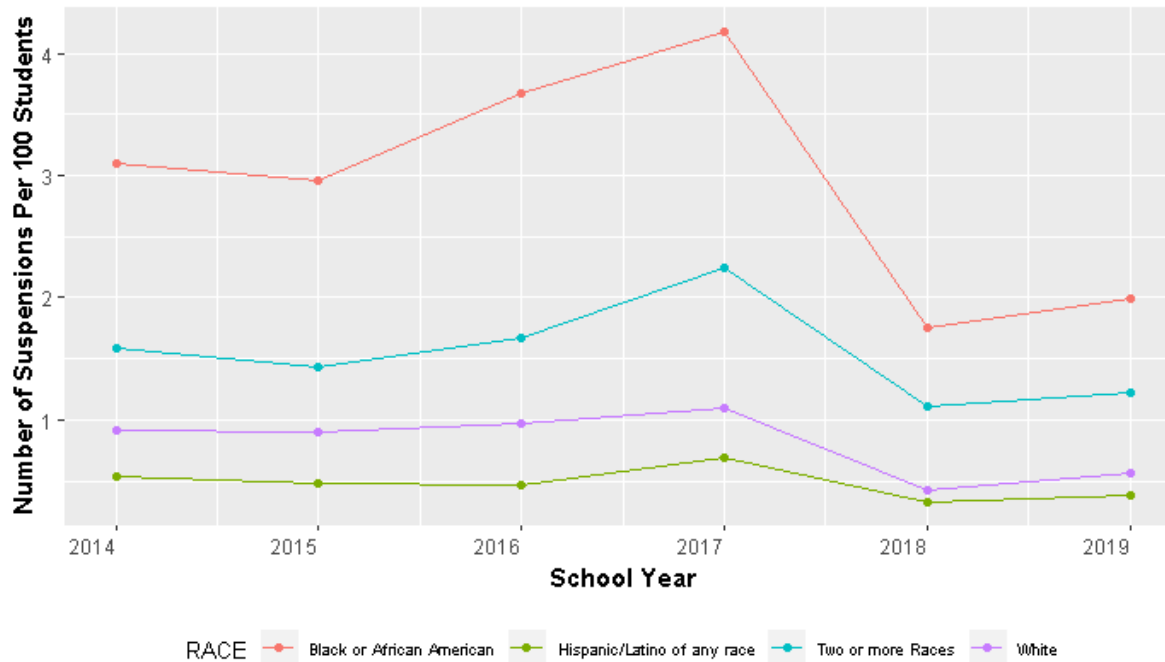


Table 4 shows suspension incidences and number of unduplicated students suspended in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2 by gender and disability status before and after the year of law implementation. Male students, female students, and students with disabilities (SWD) and students without disabilities all showed a statistically significant decrease in the number of suspensions and students suspended after the law was implemented (Figure 7 & 8).

The percent of SWDs suspended dropped by 1.09 percentage points (pp), from 2.68% to 1.58%. The percent of male students decreased by 0.92 pp, from 1.80% to 0.88%. The percent of non-SWD students suspended decreased by 0.50 pp; the percent of female students suspended dropped by 0.17 pp. This order mirrors the decreases in suspension incidences per 100 students with SWDs decreasing by 2.80 suspensions per 100 students, followed by male students (1.97), non-SWD students (0.97), and female students (0.36).

Table 4

Change in Pre-K to Grade 2 Student Suspensions by Gender & Disability Status Before & After Law

Student Group	2017			2018			Change in	
	# of Students Suspended	% of Students Suspended	OSSs per 100 Students	# of Students Suspended	% of Students Suspended	OSSs per 100 Students	PP of Students Suspended	OSSs per 100 Students
Female	394	0.35%	0.64	201	0.18%	0.28	-0.17***	-0.36***
Male	2,178	1.80%	3.38	1,050	0.88%	1.41	-0.92***	-1.97***
SWDs ¹	798	2.68%	5.52	480	1.58%	2.72	-1.09***	-2.80***
Non-SWDs ¹	1,809	0.89%	1.55	781	0.39%	0.58	-0.50***	-0.97***
All Students	2,572	1.10%	2.06	1,251	0.54%	0.87	-0.56***	-1.19***

¹ Students with and without disabilities total do not equal "All Students" due to students entering and exiting status during the year.

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Figure 7

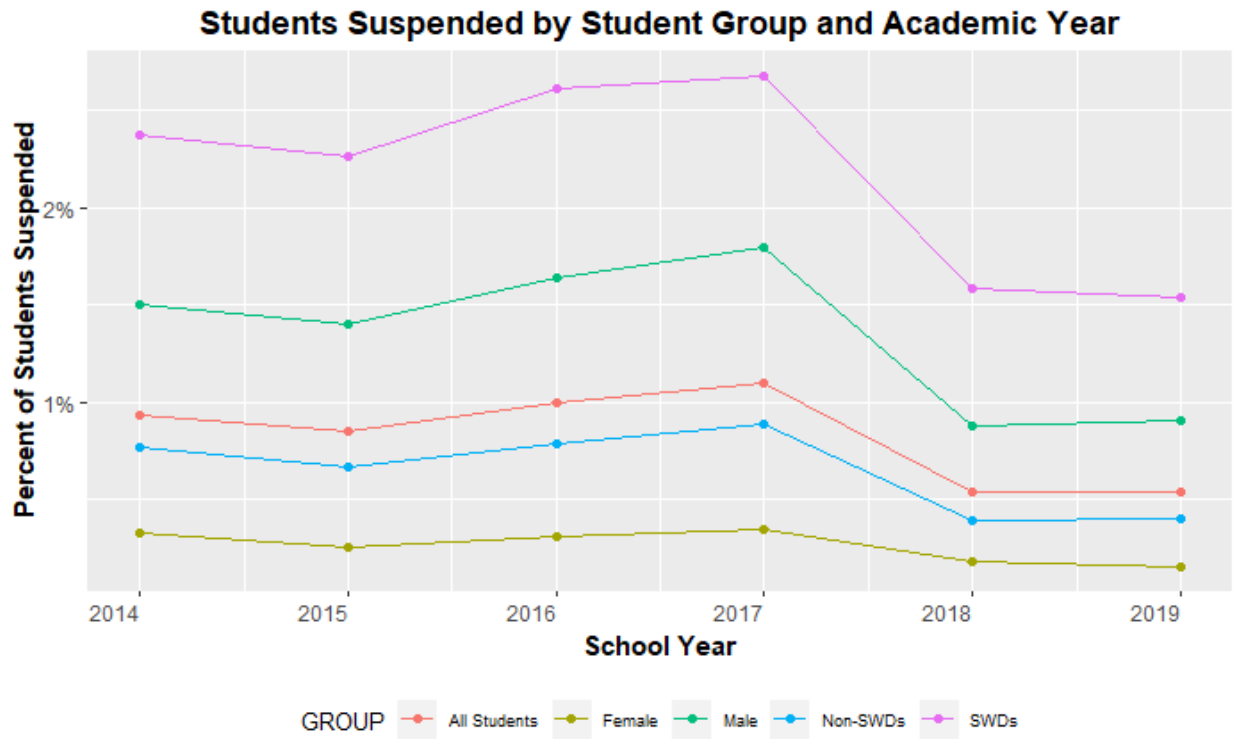
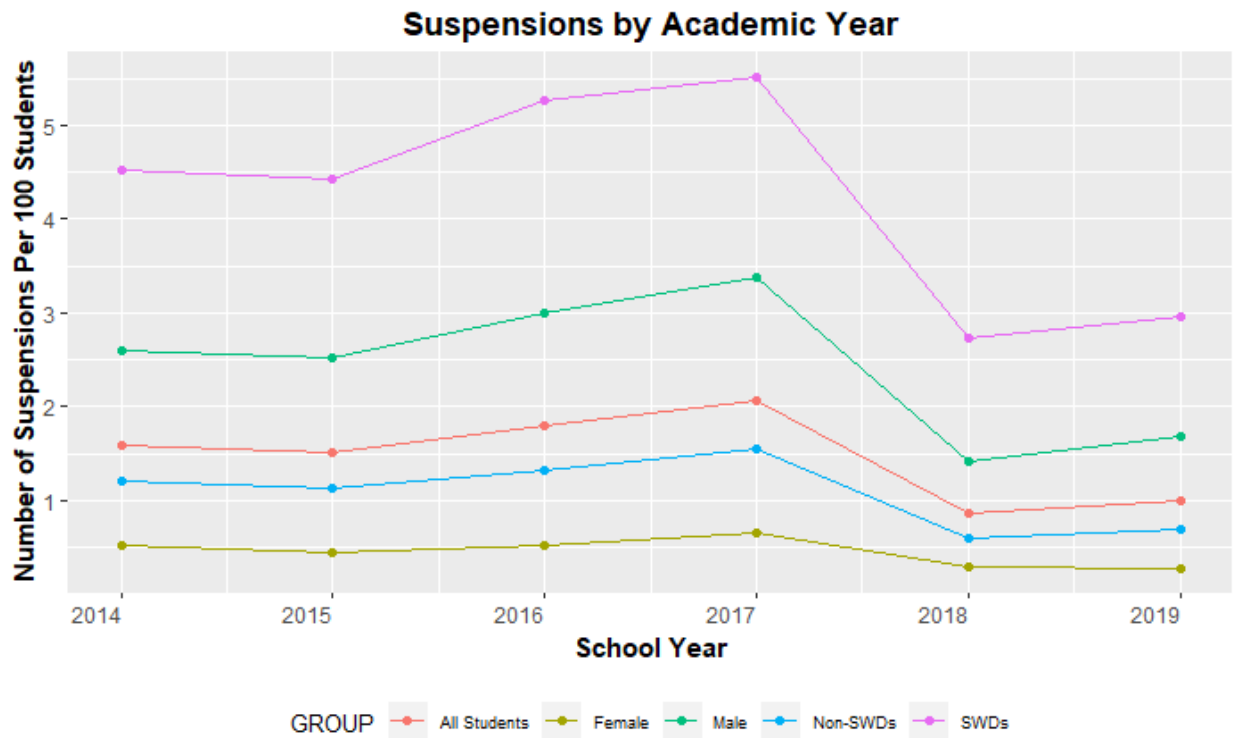


Figure 8



RQ5: Did some local school systems show greater changes in OSSs after the implementation of HB425/SB651, and in what patterns?

Table 5 shows suspension incidences and number of unduplicated students suspended in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2 by local school system (LSS) before and after the year of law implementation. There are 16 school systems for which suspensions can be reported both before and after implementation; the remaining eight school systems had fewer than 10 suspension incidences in one or both years. (Counts less than 10 are not reported at the school system level to preserve student privacy.)

Of the 16 systems for which data are reported, 12 had statistically significant decreases in the percent of Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 2 students who were suspended after the implementation of the law: Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Prince George's, Saint Mary's, and Wicomico (Figure 9 and Figure 10). Four systems had no significant difference: Anne Arundel, Calvert, Montgomery and Somerset. The largest decreases in percent of students who were suspended were Dorchester (from 6.37 percent in 2017 to 1.11 percent in 2018, a decrease of 5.26 percentage points), Wicomico (from 2.99 percent to 0.33 percent, a decrease of 2.66 percentage points), and Baltimore City (from 1.88 percent to 0.48 percent, a decrease of 1.41 percentage points).

Of the 16 systems for which data are reported, 14 had statistically significant decreases in the number of Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 2 suspensions per 100 students: Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Saint Mary's, and Wicomico (Figure 11). Two systems had no significant difference: Calvert and Somerset. Dorchester and Wicomico had the largest decreases in suspensions per 100 students: suspensions per 100 students decreased by 14.98 in Dorchester (from 16.33 to 1.35) and by 5.15 in Wicomico (from 5.56 to 0.40).

Table 5

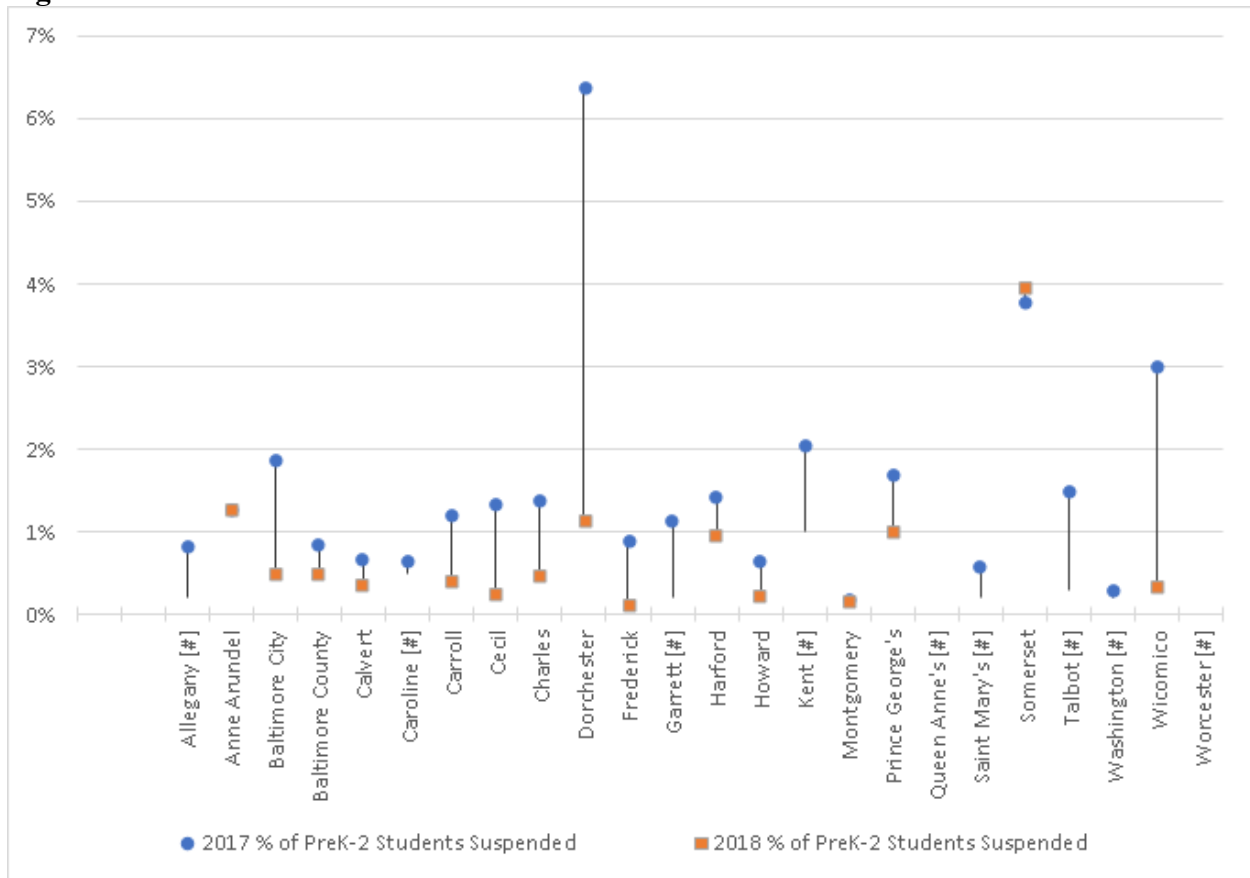
Change in Pre-K to Grade 2 Student Suspensions by LSS Before & After Law

Local School System	2017			2018			Change in	
	# of Students Suspended	% of Students Suspended	OSSs per 100 Students	# of Students Suspended	% of Students Suspended	OSSs per 100 Students	PP of Students Suspended	OSSs per 100 Students
Allegany	19	0.80%	1.51	#	#	#	#	#
Anne Arundel	279	1.28%	2.55	274	1.26%	2.17	-0.03	-0.38*
Baltimore City	462	1.88%	3.08	111	0.48%	0.62	-1.41***	-2.47***
Baltimore County	252	0.83%	1.37	149	0.50%	0.71	-0.33***	-0.65***
Calvert	25	0.68%	0.93	13	0.35%	0.59	-0.34	-0.34
Caroline	10	0.64%	1.02	#	#	#	#	#
Carroll	66	1.19%	3.31	22	0.39%	0.60	-0.80***	-2.71***
Cecil	53	1.35%	2.42	10	0.26%	0.32	-1.09***	-2.10***
Charles	86	1.37%	2.69	30	0.47%	0.68	-0.91***	-2.01***
Dorchester	85	6.37%	16.33	14	1.11%	1.35	-5.26***	-14.98***
Frederick	89	0.88%	1.51	11	0.11%	0.12	-0.77***	-1.39***
Garrett	11	1.12%	1.93	#	#	#	#	#
Harford	126	1.41%	3.00	86	0.95%	1.54	-0.46**	-1.46***
Howard	83	0.62%	0.97	29	0.21%	0.28	-0.40***	-0.69***
Kent	11	2.05%	3.91	#	#	#	#	#
Montgomery	74	0.18%	0.31	53	0.13%	0.21	-0.05	-0.11**
Prince George's	620	1.68%	3.14	355	0.99%	1.73	-0.69***	-1.41***
Queen Anne's	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
Saint Mary's	29	0.58%	0.94	#	0.19%	0.19	-0.40**	-0.76***
Somerset	32	3.77%	8.72	34	3.93%	8.55	0.16	-0.17
Talbot	18	1.46%	5.26	#	#	#	#	#
Washington	15	0.27%	0.33	#	#	#	#	#
Wicomico	126	2.99%	5.56	14	0.33%	0.40	-2.66***	-5.15***
Worcester	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

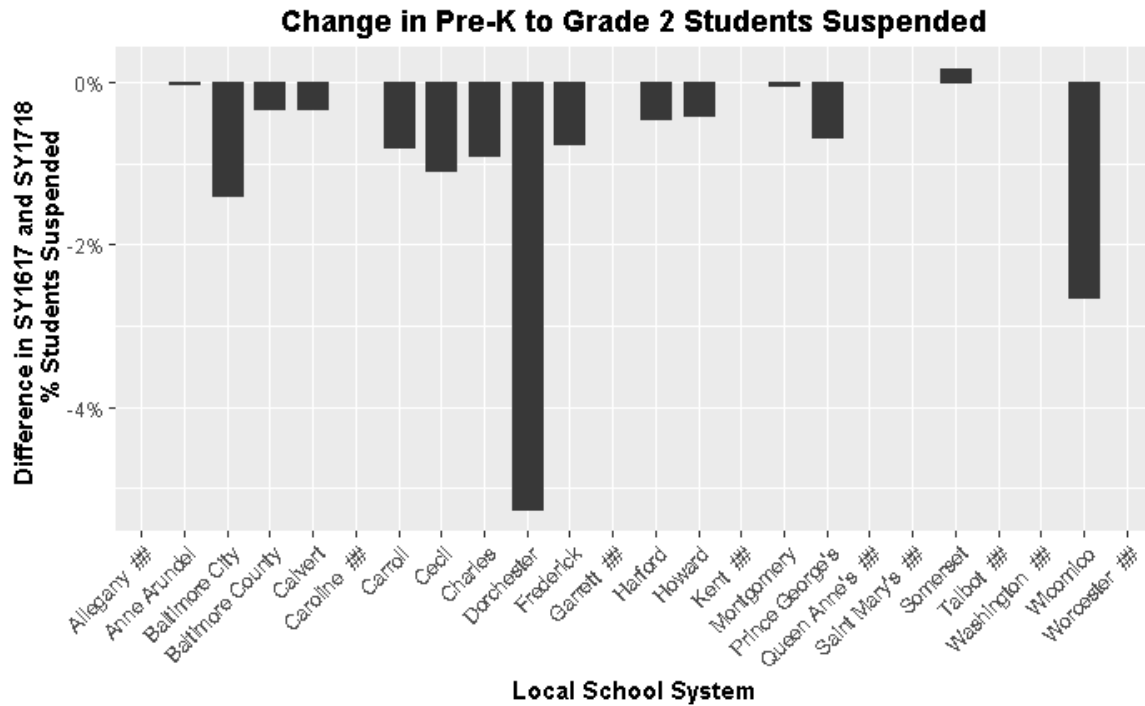
- statistics are not reported if the number of students suspended is less than 10.

Figure 9



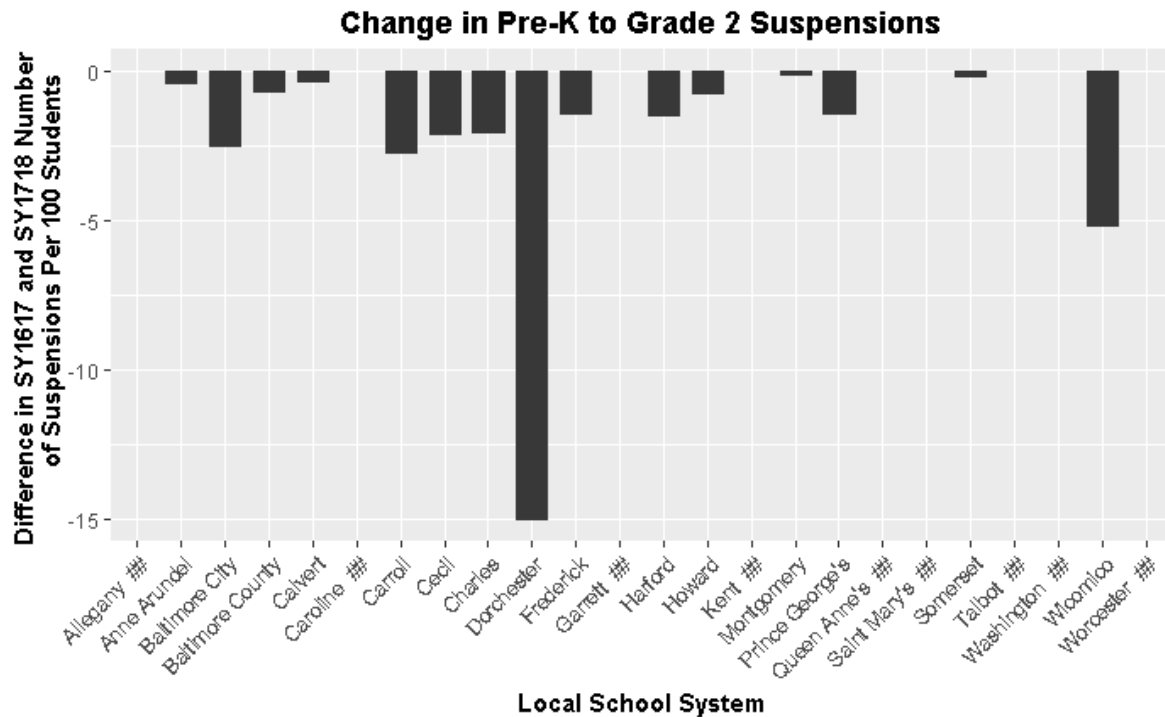
[#] statistics are not reported if the number of students suspended is less than 10; approximate data shown

Figure 10



[#] statistics are not reported if the number of students suspended is less than 10

Figure 11



[#] statistics are not reported if the number of students suspended is less than 10