

Surveying the Educational Experiences of Black and Racialized Students in Ontario

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Executive Summary

There is a limited understanding of the educational experiences and needs of disabled and racialized students, including instances of unjust punishment in schools. The Disability Justice Network of Ontario (DJNO) is leading work to develop an educational toolkit and a recommendations report related to unjust punishment. We contributed to this project by analyzing survey data. We aimed to describe examples of unjust punishment in Ontario schools among Black, Indigenous, and racialized disabled students, and suggest supports and resources for students and caregivers/parents.

DJNO developed and distributed two surveys to gather the perspectives of students and caregivers/parents. We used descriptive statistics to summarize numeric data for close-ended survey questions and conventional content analysis to analyze open-ended responses. We categorized participants' responses into themes to explore their perspectives and experiences. We encountered limitations including a smaller than anticipated sample size, several fake responses requiring data cleaning, recruitment bias, survey fatigue yielding minimally detailed open-ended responses, and recall bias.

35 students and 27 caregivers/parents completed the survey. Participants described experiences of suspensions/expulsions (n=25 students, n=18 caregivers/parents), exclusions (n=21 students, n=15 caregivers/parents), seclusions (n=17 students, n=8 caregivers/parents), restraint use (n=7 students, n=5 caregivers/parents), and interactions with police (n=19 students, n=7 caregivers/parents) in schools. Respondents detailed what their experiences of unjust punishment involved (e.g., the duration, location of seclusion, method of restraint used) and how they impacted students. The most frequent factors attributed to all types of unjust punishment were the student's disability and their race, ethnicity, or culture. Few participants spoke to experiences appealing unjust punishment. Participants suggested enhanced learning supports to better accommodate students' diverse needs and greater knowledge among educators of disability accommodations and racial/ethnic diversity.

In conclusion, this report highlighted some examples of unjust punishment within Ontario schools among racialized and disabled students and contributed new information about associated factors. The findings demonstrate the need for interventions to address disparities experienced by disabled and racialized students in learning settings.

Key Terms

Exclusion*	An exclusion is any sort of removal of a student from the school or classroom that is not voluntary, and is not an official suspension or expulsion.
Expulsion*	An expulsion is the permanent removal of a child from a school setting. Expulsions are recorded in the child's student record.
Caregiver/parent	Person(s) with parental responsibility or guardianship of a student.
Restraint*	Restraint is the physical use of force to limit someone's movement, freedom or mobility. Examples include being tied, held or pinned down by a person in an authority position (i.e. teacher, educational assistant, administration, police, etc.).
Seclusion*	Seclusion is the involuntary confinement of a student alone in any room or area. It includes the use of any room or area in which the student is alone and not free to leave (or believes they are not free to leave).
Suspension*	A suspension is the temporary removal of a child from a school setting (recorded in the child's student record). In Ontario, a suspension can range between 1-20 school days.

*As defined by the Disability Justice Network of Ontario

Positionality Statement

We, the research team, acknowledge our standpoint as highly educated individuals pursuing undergraduate and graduate studies at McMaster University. The researchers are not affiliated with the Disability Justice Network of Ontario (DJNO), but some individuals have prior experiences or knowledge related to the topics discussed in this report.

Three researchers identify as members of visible minority population groups, including two who are first-generation immigrants. Based on these identities, we have encountered experiences of ethnicity- and cultural-based discrimination in school settings, challenging language barriers, and stigma. As a group, we acknowledge our perspectives as outsiders regarding disability justice as we do not have personal experiences of pursuing schooling with some form of disability. However, two researchers acknowledge the impact of mental health challenges or diagnoses impacting their learning/schooling. Three researchers have experience working with youth in learning settings (e.g., as a tutor, daycare volunteer, or after-school programming volunteer), including those with various educational needs and cultural backgrounds.

Taken together, our diverse backgrounds and experiences shape our perspectives on education, cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and the importance of supportive learning environments and justice-oriented approaches. We acknowledge that our positionality influenced our analysis and interpretation of survey data as part of this project.

Introduction

Background

The Disability Justice Network of Ontario (DJNO) is a community-led organization that aims to “build a just and accessible Ontario, wherein people with disabilities:

1. Have personal and political agency,
2. Can thrive and foster community, and
3. Build the power, capacity, and skills needed to hold people, communities, and institutions responsible for the spaces they create” (DJNO, 2023).

DJNO operates multiple councils and committees, and members contribute to the organization’s research (e.g., needs assessments, policy research), education (e.g., resource development, workshop facilitation), and advocacy (e.g., campaigning) efforts.

Context

Systemic oppression can exist within institutional structures, including education systems,¹ and promote unjust practices towards people of marginalized identities. Data from the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board indicates that students identifying as Black, Indigenous, or those who speak Arabic as their home language experience higher rates of suspension and expulsion (HWDSB, 2023). Similarly, students with disabilities experience school suspension or expulsion at a rate 3.6% higher than the board average (HWDSB, 2023). Unjust punishment (including suspensions/expulsions, seclusions, use of restraints, exclusions, and other forms of targeted criminalization) in schools has long-term consequences on the well-being of youth and exacerbates the school-to-prison pipeline (HWDSB, 2023).

Rationale

Recent data emphasizes the prevalence of unjust experiences of Black, Indigenous, racialized, and disabled students in the education system (Losen, 2011; Nanda, 2019; Simson, 2013). However, there is a limited understanding of the intersectional experiences of disabled and racialized students within education systems.

With funding from the Laidlaw Foundation, DJNO is researching the experiences and needs of disabled and racialized students in the education system. Within Hamilton and more broadly across Ontario, DJNO intended to investigate:

- The experiences of Black, Indigenous, and racialized disabled **students** who encountered unjust punishment in schools.

¹ In this project, education systems include elementary schools, high schools, special education classes/schools, and adult education settings.

- The experiences of **caregivers/parents** of disabled black, Indigenous, and racialized students who have faced unjust punishment in schools.

Purpose and objectives

This research aimed to describe some examples of unjust punishment in schools among Black, Indigenous, and racialized disabled students. The primary research question, which was determined in collaboration with our community partner, is:

What are the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and racialized disabled students with unjust punishment in schools?

The secondary objective was to understand the needs of students who experienced unjust punishment in schools and their caregivers/parents, including supports and resources. Therefore, our secondary research question is:

What are the opportunities to improve the educational experience of Black, Indigenous, and racialized disabled students and/or mitigate observed harmful practices?

Report structure

In this report, we begin by describing the methods used to collect and analyze survey data. We then summarize the characteristics of survey respondents and describe their experiences of unjust punishment. We detail our interpretations of the open-ended survey responses. Lastly, we conclude with a discussion of potential supports for students and caregivers/parents navigating unjust punishment, and offer some suggestions for future research.

Methodology

Overview

The McMaster Research Shop supported part of a larger mixed-methods research project led by DJNO to develop an educational toolkit and a recommendations report related to unjust punishment in schools. The education project uses data collected from focus groups, surveys, and interviews with students and caregivers/parents. Our project focuses on analyzing the survey data collected from this work.

Data source

DJNO developed and distributed two versions of the survey to gather the perspectives of both students and caregivers/parents (**Appendix 1**). The survey began by gathering background information on survey respondents (e.g., school board, race, ethnicity, cultural background, gender identity, disability status). The survey then asked participants about their schooling experiences, such as the types of classes they attend

and the level of support they receive. Much of the survey was divided into sections to understand participants' experiences on the five types of unjust punishment: suspensions/expulsions, exclusions, seclusion, restraint, and interactions with police.

Both surveys used various question types to gather comprehensive data. Multiple-choice questions attempted to understand specific aspects of the respondents' experiences and identities. Check-all-that-apply questions allowed for a broader range of responses by capturing multiple aspects of identity or experience. Most survey questions were open-ended to provide an opportunity for respondents to detail their experiences and offer personal insights.

Participants

DJNO recruited students and caregivers/parents of students who met the following criteria:

- Had experience in the Ontario education system;
- Self-identify as Black, Indigenous and/or racialized;
- Self-identify as disabled (whether diagnosed or undiagnosed);
- Students aged between 10-25 years old; and
- Students with experience of at least one of the following: suspensions/expulsions, exclusions, seclusion, restraint or interactions with police.

In total, 35 students and 27 caregivers/parents completed the survey.

Survey recruitment

DJNO developed the survey in consultation with the Research Shop manager in Fall 2023, and distributed the online survey to students and caregivers/parents across Ontario. **Appendix 2** includes the recruitment materials. Survey recruitment began in December 2023 and concluded on February 5, 2024. By participating, respondents agreed to the anonymous use of their responses in reports and online materials. DJNO incentivized participants with \$50 gift cards.

Data cleaning

After sharing the recruitment materials to social media in January 2024, we received a large influx of survey responses. Upon inspection, many of these new responses appeared non-authentic given some defining characteristics: the email addresses provided followed similar patterns (e.g., first and last name followed by a number), participants' names appeared suspicious (e.g., random letter series), their responses to subsequent questions in a sub-section did not align (e.g., they responded to not experiencing a type of punishment but then went on to describe an experience), and/or their response to open-ended questions appeared fake (e.g., robotic, inappropriate). The Community Partner and Team Lead reviewed all form responses individually and deleted the subset of responses that were deemed ineligible.

Survey analysis

The close-ended and open-ended survey questions collected quantitative and qualitative data, respectively. We used descriptive statistics (e.g., counts, averages) and measures of central tendency (e.g., proportions, standard deviations) to summarize numeric data. We used conventional content analysis to analyze responses to the open-ended survey questions. We categorized participants' responses into themes, allowing for an exploration of their perspectives and experiences in alignment with our research question. We began by coding the specific experiences of respondents according to the five forms of unjust punishment (i.e., suspensions/expulsions, exclusions, seclusions, restraints, and interactions with police). We added sub-codes to highlight more specific details of these experiences (e.g., timing/duration, communication to caregivers/parents, appeal process, attributed factors). We used data visualization techniques to illustrate data wherever possible.

Limitations

We achieved a smaller than anticipated sample size which prohibited us from conducting sub-group or stratified analyses based on participants' characteristics (e.g., by race/ethnicity or type of disability). While we employed data cleaning efforts to remove fake survey responses, some individuals provided responses that were challenging to discern as authentic or not; these participants may be incorrectly included in our final dataset. Due to convenience sampling primarily through DJNO's channels/network, the sample may not represent the true study population and exhibit some bias (e.g., having a pre-existing relationship/connection to DJNO).

The data collection method of online surveys presents some challenges: humans are susceptible to survey fatigue, so some people have chosen to not participate given the length of the survey, the open-ended questions may not have yielded as detailed responses as desired (particularly for the latter questions), and the self-reported nature may have led to recall bias. Lastly, some participants may not have clearly understood the meaning of and differences between the five types of unjust punishment, and answered survey questions in the various sections inaccurately. While we were able to recode the open-ended responses according to the appropriate type of unjust punishment, any misunderstanding for the close-ended questions could not be identified and corrected for.

Findings

The demographic and educational characteristics of students are presented in **Table 1**. Students had diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and exhibited many types of disabilities. We mainly heard from students and caregivers/parents of students who currently attended high school (i.e., those enrolled in grade 9 or higher). Respondents were affiliated with school boards from different areas of Ontario and varied in the educational supports they received while attending school.

Table 1. Survey respondent characteristics

Characteristics	N (%)	
	Student respondents (n=35)	Caregiver/parent respondents (n=27)
Student demographic information		
Age (years) ^a	18.31 (3.78)	15.19 (2.39)
Gender identity		
Female/Girl/Woman	21 (60.00)	9 (33.33)
Male/Boy/Man	8 (22.86)	16 (59.26)
Gender fluid	1 (2.86)	1 (3.70)
Trans Femme	0 (0.00)	1 (3.70)
Trans Masc	1 (2.86)	0 (0.00)
Not specified	4 (11.43)	0 (0.00)
Race, ethnicity, and cultural background ^b		
Mixed/Multi-Racial/Ethnic	7 (20.00)	3 (7.14)
Afro-Caribbean (i.e. Jamaican, Haitian, etc.)	0 (0.00)	6 (14.29)
Black	11 (31.43)	19 (45.24)
Indigenous	4 (11.43)	5 (11.90)
Latinx (i.e. Mexican, Puerto Rican, etc.)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.38)
South Asian (i.e. Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, etc.)	4 (11.43)	4 (9.52)
Southeast Asian (i.e. Filipino, Thai, etc.)	1 (2.86)	1 (2.38)
White/Caucasian	1 (2.86)	3 (7.14)
Not specified	7 (20.00)	0 (0.00)
Self-identification ^b		
2S-LGBTQIA+	8 (22.86)	5 (16.67)
Criminalized	1 (2.86)	3 (10.00)
Immigrant/newcomer/refugee	3 (8.57)	6 (20.00)
English Language Learner (ELL)	0 (0.00)	1 (3.33)
Muslim	5 (14.29)	1 (3.33)
None of the above	18 (51.43)	14 (46.67)
Diagnoses of disability/exceptionality ^b		
Learning disability	4 (8.16)	3 (7.69)
Attention-deficient/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	10 (20.41)	5 (12.82)
Emotional dysregulation	1 (2.04)	1 (2.56)
Mental health disability	2 (4.08)	5 (12.82)
Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)	2 (4.08)	1 (2.56)
Depression	5 (10.20)	2 (5.13)
Bipolar disorder	1 (2.04)	1 (2.56)
Anxiety	9 (18.37)	3 (7.69)
Neurodivergent	6 (12.24)	3 (7.69)
Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)	3 (6.12)	5 (12.82)
Epilepsy	0 (0.00)	1 (2.56)
Deaf	0 (0.00)	1 (2.56)
Chronic migraine	0 (0.00)	1 (2.56)
Asthma	1 (2.04)	1 (2.56)
Physical disability	2 (4.08)	2 (5.13)
Post-concussion syndrome	0 (0.00)	1 (2.56)
None	3 (6.12)	2 (5.13)
Not specified	0 (0.00)	1 (2.56)
Self-identified disabilities (diagnosed or not) ^b		
Learning disability	3 (7.32)	3 (8.82)
Attention-deficient/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	4 (9.76)	6 (17.65)
Emotional dysregulation	1 (2.44)	1 (2.94)

Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.94)
Mental health disability	7 (17.07)	1 (2.94)
Depression	8 (19.51)	4 (11.76)
Social anxiety disorder	0 (0.00)	1 (2.94)
Anxiety	10 (24.39)	4 (11.76)
Neurodivergent	1 (2.44)	1 (2.94)
Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)	3 (7.32)	3 (8.82)
Tethered cord syndrome	0 (0.00)	1 (2.94)
Epilepsy	0 (0.00)	1 (2.94)
Deaf	0 (0.00)	1 (2.94)
Chronic pain	2 (4.88)	1 (2.94)
Asthma	1 (2.44)	1 (2.94)
Not specified	0 (0.00)	1 (2.94)
None	1 (2.44)	3 (8.82)
Education		
Grade		
Grade 5	0 (0.00)	1 (3.70)
Grade 6	1 (2.86)	3 (11.11)
Grade 7	0 (0.00)	3 (11.11)
Grade 8	2 (5.71)	1 (3.70)
Grade 9	2 (5.71)	1 (3.70)
Grade 10	6 (17.14)	6 (22.22)
Grade 11	1 (2.86)	4 (14.81)
Grade 12	10 (28.57)	7 (25.93)
Grade 13	2 (5.71)	0 (0.00)
Not specified	11 (31.43)	1 (3.70)
School board		
Hamilton Wentworth CDSB	4 (11.43)	2 (7.41)
Hamilton Wentworth DSB	3 (8.57)	4 (14.81)
Toronto CDSB	4 (11.43)	1 (3.70)
Toronto DSB	9 (25.71)	7 (25.93)
Peel DSB	2 (5.71)	3 (11.11)
Durham DSB	1 (2.86)	1 (3.70)
Halton DSB	0 (0.00)	1 (3.70)
York Region DSB	0 (0.00)	1 (3.70)
Waterloo Region DSB	0 (0.00)	1 (3.70)
Lakehead DSB	1 (2.86)	1 (3.70)
Thames Valley DSB	2 (5.71)	1 (3.70)
Private school	2 (5.71)	1 (3.70)
Multiple schools and/or boards specified	3 (8.57)	1 (3.70)
School and school board not specified	4 (11.43)	2 (7.41)
Current schooling experience ^b		
Regular class(es) with no additional support	10 (25.00)	8 (25.00)
Regular class(es) with support from teacher(s) when needed	13 (32.50)	13 (40.63)
Regular class(es) with support from special education and/or resource staff	8 (20.00)	7 (21.88)
Regular class(es), and special education class(es) sometimes	6 (15.00)	1 (3.13)
Special education class(es) most of the time	2 (5.00)	2 (6.25)
Special education school all the time	1 (2.50)	1 (3.13)
^a Mean (average) and standard deviation reported for continuous data		
^b Participants could select multiple responses so count may exceed sample size		
CDSB=Catholic District School Board; DSB=District School Board		

In response to the survey questions, students and caregivers/parents described examples of unjust punishment in schools. We report these experiences by the type of unjust punishment in the following sub-sections. We begin by summarizing the closed-ended responses, followed by our analysis of the open-ended survey questions.

Suspension/expulsion

25 students and 18 caregivers/parents had experiences of suspension, expulsion, or both (**Table 2**). Most participants were suspended or expelled once. Caregivers/parents reported a wide timeframe in which they were informed about suspensions and expulsions: some were informed on the same day or within a few days of the incident, whereas others were informed after a week or never. The most frequent factors attributed to suspensions/expulsions were the student's disability and their race, ethnicity, or culture.

Table 2. Experiences of suspension/expulsion

	N (%)	
	Student respondents (n=35)	Caregiver/parent respondents (n=27)
Experience of suspension or expulsion		
Suspended	21 (60.00)	17 (62.96)
Expelled	1 (2.86)	0 (0.00)
Both	3 (8.57)	1 (3.70)
Neither	10 (28.57)	9 (33.33)
Number of times suspended or expelled		
Once	12 (48.00)	7 (38.89)
Twice	7 (28.00)	4 (22.22)
Three or four times	6 (24.00)	3 (16.67)
Five or more times	0 (0.00)	4 (22.22)
Timeframe in which caregiver/parent was informed about suspension or expulsion		
Same day	1 (4.00)	2 (11.11)
1 day after	2 (8.00)	1 (5.56)
2 days after	4 (16.00)	1 (5.56)
3 days after	1 (4.00)	2 (11.11)
7 days (1 week) after	3 (12.00)	7 (38.89)
More than 1 week after	1 (4.00)	2 (11.11)
Never	3 (12.00)	3 (16.67)
Not specified	10 (40.00)	0 (0.00)
Awareness of suspension/expulsion process		
Yes	13 (52.00)	8 (44.44)
No	12 (48.00)	10 (55.56)
Factors attributed to suspension/expulsion ^a		
Disability	16 (37.21)	14 (41.18)
Race, ethnicity, or culture	20 (46.51)	14 (41.18)
Socioeconomic status	0 (0.00)	2 (5.88)
Religion or faith	2 (4.65)	2 (5.88)
Gender or sexual orientation	5 (11.63)	2 (5.88)

^a Participants could select multiple responses so count may exceed sample size

In the open-ended responses, students and caregivers/parents discussed several factors related to their suspension or expulsion. 14 caregivers/parents believed their student's disability was the reason for their suspension or expulsion. Caregivers/parents expressed that their child's disability made classroom learning difficult for them and that teachers, "tend to not be understanding or accommodating of the students' needs ... they tend to not want to listen to students' sides" (Caregiver/parent #1). Another caregiver/parent explained:

"I don't think there are 'good enough' reasons. If his teachers were to have sat down and talked to him as a human being, and been more understanding, I believe none of this would have happened. He needs understanding and trauma informed care, not people who are quick to dismiss him, make him angry purposely, and then suspend him due to his 'disruptive' behaviour."
– Caregiver/parent #4

Caregivers/parents also claimed that their child, "explained each situation [of suspension or expulsion] very differently than the teachers did" (Caregiver/parent #5). Moreover, caregivers/parents reported that school staff tended to make decisions by judging their child's past behaviour as if, "put[ting] a target on [their] back as a 'bad kid'" (Caregiver/parent #5). 16 students perceived their disability as the reason for suspension or expulsion. They conveyed that school staff did not understand their disability: "Having an invisible disability is really challenging because no one believes you or they think you are making excuses" (Student #4).

Many respondents also attributed their suspensions/expulsions to race (n=33). Caregivers/parents and students reported unfair treatment based on their race from teachers, such as when a student got suspended for, "defending [himself] and others like [them] that were getting bullied and called the N word" (Caregiver/parent #7). As well, students expressed that school staff held racist beliefs against them: "...they believe I am a danger to other students. It is so sad maybe they never care to know what's the issue. Because [I] am Black, they believe I am violent," (Student #32) and that, "the Black students were yelled at often and accused of being disruptive more" (Student #9).

Both disability and race were sometimes reported as coexisting factors that led to suspension (n=12). A caregiver/parent detailed, "students who are not disabled or Black do the same things and don't get suspended," (Caregiver/parent #1) and that a student's minority race combined with their disability makes teachers perceive them more as a threat. Students also reported that their disability combined with race and other facets of identity, such as gender, resulted in their suspension: "I have a learning disability and being an Arab and a woman was a disadvantage" (Student #21).

Caregivers/parents also attributed suspensions to how their child acts or conducts themselves in learning settings (n=5). They reported that the suspension occurred because their child was “distracting their peers and others,” (Caregiver/parent #5) and having a “behaviour outburst, talking back to teachers, fighting” (Caregiver/parent #9). One caregiver/parent discussed the interplay of behaviour and their child’s disability:

“...his disability / emotional regulation played the biggest part because teachers are quick to judge a student they see ‘different’ and put them into a separate box where they essentially are picked on.” – Caregiver/parent #6

Caregivers/parents and students frequently noted the co-occurrence of race and behaviour (n=9). There were some instances where interpersonal conflicts were thought to result from bullying due to gender and race-based discrimination:

“[My child was] sticking up for [themselves] ... [it turned] into a fight or the other student telling the teacher my [child] yelled at them/pushed them.”
– Caregiver/parent #9

“[I was] ‘misbehaving’ or ‘acting out’ and defending myself from transphobia.”
– Student #14

Caregivers/parents and students also reported a lack of accommodations for their disability as a factor contributing to suspensions/expulsions (n=4). Students conveyed that, “they could have given me more warnings or support, but [they] just go straight to the suspension” (Student #23). A caregiver/parent claimed that schools tended to not, “...have anyone to support [them] the way [they needed]” (Caregiver/parent #7). As well, there is reported “stigma against having an IEP [individualized education plan]” (Caregiver/parent #6) that may prevent the student from receiving appropriate support.

Lastly, religion/faith and socioeconomic status interacted with the aforementioned factors and were thought to contribute to suspensions/expulsions. Four caregivers/parents and students attributed religion/faith to their suspension/expulsion. Students disclosed that a school staff member “verbally expressed his dislike towards the Islamic faith” and “...created a very unsafe environment for us” (Student #30). Students expressed, “I had no advocacy from the teachers who were mainly white and didn’t know the customs of my religion or culture” (Student #25). Three caregivers/parents discussed the impact of having a low household income. A caregiver/parent shared, “...due to us being extremely low income, we are just dismissed as problematic people in general” (Caregiver/parent #6). Another caregiver/parent expressed, “the staff there make it known how they feel about students from particular areas and neighbourhoods” (Caregiver/parent #26).

Exclusion

21 students and 15 caregivers/parents of students had experiences of exclusion (**Table 3**). We observed variation in how often students experienced exclusion. Students and caregivers/parents most frequently attributed exclusion to the student's disability and race, ethnicity, or culture.

Table 3. Experiences of exclusion

	N (%)	
	Student respondents (n=35)	Caregiver/parent respondents (n=27)
Experience of exclusion		
Yes	21 (60.00)	15 (55.56)
No	14 (40.00)	12 (44.44)
Number of times students experienced exclusion		
More than 3 days per month	4 (19.04)	4 (26.67)
1 to 3 days per month	5 (23.81)	5 (33.33)
Less than 1 day per month	9 (42.86)	5 (33.33)
Not specified	3 (14.29)	1 (6.67)
Frequency of exclusion from academic or extracurricular opportunities at school		
Rarely	4 (19.05)	2 (13.33)
Sometimes	11 (52.38)	5 (33.33)
Often	6 (28.57)	8 (53.33)
Factors attributed to exclusion ^a		
Disability	13 (32.50)	15 (52.00)
Race, ethnicity, or culture	16 (40.00)	7 (24.00)
Socioeconomic status	6 (15.00)	4 (14.00)
Religion or faith	1 (2.50)	0 (0.00)
Gender or sexual orientation	4 (10.00)	2 (7.00)
Bias and labeling	0 (0.00)	1 (3.00)

^a Participants could select multiple responses so count may exceed sample size

In the open-ended responses, students reported being sent to the principal's office (Student #5), the corner of the classroom (Student #3), isolated in an empty classroom (Student #9), or seated at a desk in the hallway (Student #9) as a form of exclusion. Caregivers/parents reported their children were excluded in another classroom with an iPad (Caregiver/parent #23) or seated at a desk in the hallway (Caregiver/parent #9).

Five students and caregivers/parents reported the reason for their exclusion as being distracting or disruptive in a classroom setting. A student reported they were told they were "disruptive," although they were "trying to get help and felt frustrated" (Student #27). A caregiver/parent reported they would "get called several times a month" to pick up their child due to them being "a distraction to the other kids" (Caregiver/parent #9). Another caregiver/parent explained they would have to pick up their child due to a "toilet accident" or when the child "seemed tired" (Caregiver/parent #10). One caregiver/parent reported that teachers would exclude their child "from class trips, assemblies, parties and other fun stuff [when] they anticipate[d] he will act out" (Caregiver/parent #1). Some

caregivers/parents attributed their child's experience of exclusion to a lack of support available in school (n=4). A caregiver/parent explained,

“It has also happened on field trips and in class activities, especially when the educators have not provided other options that meet their needs. They are currently being excluded from class due to lack of supports and being excluded from joining a specific program that would support them and their disabilities.”
– Caregiver/parent #8

Caregivers/parents explained their child would be removed from the classroom if they were unable to, “keep up with the classroom,” (Caregiver/parent #12) or “do the academic work” (Caregiver/parent #9). A student reported they were removed from the classroom as they were unable to “control [their] emotions with anxiety provoking topics” and felt they didn't belong or were a “nuisance” because they “slowed the class down” (Student #5).

Caregivers/parents (n=7) and students (n=16) highlighted race as a factor towards their exclusion. A caregiver/parent explained: “If my son was white, the teachers would have more patience and be more accepting of him” (Caregiver/parent #9). Another caregiver/parent reported that students from other racial backgrounds have a more “holistic” approach that ensures they are “included” (Caregiver/parent #19). One student highlighted that there were “no black students or teachers” and black students were “treated poorly” (Student #3). Another student felt racialized as many teachers were not from the same racial background as them (Student #31).

One caregiver/parent recounted that their child experienced other students, “stealing his belongings, causing him to be aggravated,” and have, “behavioural problems towards teachers and students,” leading to their exclusion (Caregiver/parent #15). The caregiver/parent expressed that “[the] principal [should] talk to teachers about the student's bullying” and wished they had “investigated the actual incidents” (Caregiver/parent #21). Other students attributed interpersonal conflict (n=2) to their exclusion. One student explained how other students would “provoke” them, leading to conflict and explained that “teachers often don't try to sympathize with you” (Student #31).

12 students attributed their disability as a factor for their exclusion. One student highlighted that “showing signs of a disability” was seen as intentional (Student #3). Another student explained teachers would say students are unable to attend school events if they acted “difficult” (Student #26). Further, two students attributed other medical problems as reasons for their exclusion. Caregivers/parents also highlighted the school's inability to follow their child's doctor's note (n=2).

A caregiver/parent and student highlighted that being a newcomer contributed to the student’s exclusion (Caregiver/parent #21 and Student #6). A student highlighted that the instructors are “not properly trained” to work with newcomers (Student #6).

A caregiver/parent explained that exclusions cause, “peers and teachers/staff [to] categorize excluded students as individuals they don’t want to have around” (Caregiver/parent #9). A student affirmed they “felt regarded as [someone] no one wanted to deal with and a burden” (Student #5) and another expressed that “teachers label them as troublemakers” (Student #28). Caregivers/parents highlighted that exclusions were “isolating,” leading to feelings of depression, anxiety, and lower self-confidence (Caregiver/parent #9).

Three caregivers/parents reported that the school did not notify them regarding their child’s exclusion and expressed “there is no transparency between the school and parents” (Caregiver/parent #15).

Seclusion

17 students and 8 caregivers/parents of students reported experiences of seclusion (Table 4). Both students and caregivers/parents most frequently reported verbal threats of punishment as the cause of seclusion. The longest amount of time that students were secluded for ranged from 30 minutes to a full school day, and principals/administrators and classroom teachers frequently placed the student in a seclusion. Most students experienced emotional trauma or distress resulting from the seclusion. Respondents tended to attribute their seclusion to their disability and race, ethnicity, or culture.

Table 4. Experiences of seclusion

	N (%)	
	Student respondents (n=35)	Caregiver/parent respondents (n=27)
Experience of seclusion		
Yes	17 (48.57)	8 (29.63)
No	17 (48.57)	19 (70.37)
Not specified	1 (2.86)	0 (0.00)
How child was prevented from leaving while secluded ^a		
Locked/blocked doors	12 (44.44)	2 (15.38)
Being physically held	2 (7.41)	4 (30.77)
Verbal threats of punishment	13 (48.15)	7 (53.85)
Longest amount of time secluded for		
Full school day	1 (5.88)	4 (50.00)
3 hours or more but less than a full school day	4 (23.53)	0 (0.00)
2 hours or more but less than 3 hours	5 (29.41)	0 (0.00)
1 hour or more but less than 2 hours	5 (29.41)	1 (12.50)
45 minutes	0 (0.00)	1 (12.50)
30 minutes	2 (11.76)	0 (0.00)
Not specified	0 (0.00)	2 (25.00)
Impact of being secluded ^a		
Emotional trauma or distress	17 (65.38)	7 (77.78)

Restricted access to the bathroom	2 (7.69)	0 (0.00)
Restricted access to food/water	7 (26.92)	1 (11.11)
Physical pain or injury	0 (0.00)	1 (11.11)
Person who placed student in seclusion ^a		
Principal/administrator	9 (36.00)	7 (54.00)
Education assistant	0 (0.00)	2 (15.00)
Classroom teacher	12 (48.00)	3 (23.00)
Hall monitor	0 (0.00)	1 (8.00)
Special education teacher	4 (16.00)	0 (0.00)
Factors attributed to seclusion ^a		
Disability	8 (28.57)	5 (35.71)
Race, ethnicity, or culture	13 (46.43)	7 (50.00)
Socioeconomic status	3 (10.71)	0 (0.00)
Religion or faith	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
Gender or sexual orientation	4 (14.29)	2 (14.29)
^a Participants could select multiple responses so count may exceed sample size		

Five caregivers/parents and eight students associated their seclusion to their disability. According to a caregiver/parent, school staff were unable to comprehend their child's disability, leading to the child being perceived as threat. They claimed: "They didn't understand his disability and saw him as a threat. They think of him as a threat even more because he is a black boy" (Caregiver/parent #1). A student's experience further exemplifies this issue, mentioning a stark and dehumanizing environment of seclusion: "They put me in an empty classroom that was cold [...] They don't know how to deal with the Black, disabled or queer kids, so they punish us faster" (Student #24).

Race emerged as a critical factor attributed to seclusion experiences (n=20). According to Caregiver/parent #9, their child was subjected to verbal abuse alongside physical restraint:

"The people putting him in seclusion or holding him down would say things to him like he was a waste of life, he was going to be nothing but a gangster punk in life, and taunt him by saying 'you aren't so tough now, are you?'"
 – Caregiver/parent #9

Another student who reported the physical and psychological trauma associated with seclusion due to their race shared that,

"It can be embarrassing and traumatic to go through this and I had claustrophobia and couldn't breathe but they didn't believe me. The Black students can't ask questions, or they threaten us to tell our parents"
 – Student #27

Caregiver/parent #2 reported that their child was, "not included in class discussion after being called out by the teacher." Racial disparities were highlighted by a caregiver/parent's observation that "no white student with the same disability as my child has been treated the same way" (Caregiver/parent #22).

Four students reported gender as a reason for their seclusion. Student #8 reported, “I believe gender and race are interconnected, as well because as a brown person I was more heavily policed by my school than my white classmates [...] because I was a girl, acting out and being loud was seen as outside of how I was expected to act.”

Restraint use

7 students and 5 caregivers/parents of students reported instances of restraint in schools (**Table 5**). Principals/administrators and classroom teachers most frequently performed the restraint. Most participants reported their restraint occurring for more than 10 minutes. The majority of participants reported emotional trauma or distress resulting from the restraint use. The most commonly attributed factors to the restraint use were the student’s disability and their race, ethnicity, or culture.

Table 5. Experiences of restraint use

	N (%)	
	Student respondents (n=35)	Caregiver/parent respondents (n=27)
Experience of restraint use		
Yes	7 (20.00)	5 (18.52)
No	28 (80.00)	22 (81.48)
Person who performed restraint ^a		
Principal/administrator	4 (36.36)	3 (25.00)
Education assistant	1 (9.09)	3 (25.00)
Classroom teacher	5 (45.45)	3 (25.00)
Special education teacher	1 (9.09)	2 (17.00)
Not specified	0 (0.00)	1 (8.00)
Longest amount of time restrained for		
More than 10 minutes	3 (42.86)	3 (60.00)
Less than 10 minutes	2 (28.57)	1 (20.00)
Not specified	2 (28.57)	1 (20.00)
Impact of restraint use ^a		
Emotional trauma or distress	7 (77.78)	6 (67.00)
Physical injury or pain	2 (22.22)	3 (33.00)
Factors attributed to restraint use ^a		
Disability	6 (46.15)	5 (36.00)
Race, ethnicity, or culture	5 (38.46)	4 (29.00)
Socioeconomic status	0 (0.00)	1 (7.00)
Religion or faith	1 (7.69)	1 (7.00)
Gender or sexual orientation	1 (7.69)	3 (21.00)
^a Participants could select multiple responses so count may exceed sample size		

Experiences involving the use of restraints were not thoroughly detailed in the survey responses. Students described these experiences as “embarrassing” (Student #20), “painful” (Student #20), and “humiliating” (Student #31). Only two respondents elaborated on their experience of restraint:

“In the moment I kept telling them that they were hurting me and that holding my arms makes me want to move them more (I also don’t like being touched, it feels sharp when people touch me)” – Student #15

“One time a teacher blocked me from leaving and used their body to stop me and kind of push me back into staying in the small room” – Student #26

In the open-ended responses, participants described the duration of their restraint as occurring for less than five minutes (n=1), 10 minutes (n=2), 30 minutes (n=2). Three participants did not specify the length of the restraint use.

Respondents attributed the restraint use to the student’s disability (n=11), race (n=9), physical appearance (n=1), behaviour (n=1), and educators “[not] understand[ing] how to help him when he is struggling” (Caregiver/parent #1). One caregiver/parent described how their child’s behaviour led to the use of restraints,

“When he gets angry to the point of blacking out, he cannot control his behaviour and so he threw something (a pencil case) and was restrained for endangering his class when he didn’t throw it directly at anyone, but just on the floor in front of him” – Caregiver/parent #6

Only one caregiver/parent discussed how they were informed about the use of restraints on their child:

“My child told the principal that he needed to call me and was highly upset that he was physically being restrained. I was upset when I heard the news and I was physically upset seeing the state of my child. I received my child’s phone call as well as the principal and instantly rushed to school and yelled at the school workers for how they instantly decided to go down that route instead of calling me” – Caregiver/parent #21

Interactions with police

19 students and 7 caregivers/parents reported having interactions with police in schools (**Table 6**). The most commonly attributed factors were the student’s disability and their race, ethnicity, or culture.

Table 6. Experiences of interactions with police

	N (%)	
	Student respondents (n=35)	Caregiver/parent respondents (n=27)
Experience of interactions with police		
Yes	19 (54.29)	7 (26.00)
No	16 (45.71)	20 (74.00)
Factors attributed to interactions with police ^a		
Disability	5 (20.83)	2 (22.22)
Race, ethnicity, or culture	11 (45.83)	4 (44.44)
Socioeconomic status	2 (8.33)	0 (0.00)
Religion or faith	1 (4.17)	1 (11.11)
Gender or sexual orientation	5 (20.83)	2 (22.22)

^a Participants could select multiple responses so count may exceed sample size

Caregivers/parents reported instances of “teachers and staff constantly threaten[ing] to call the police or have [students] arrested” (Caregiver/parent #9). Students affirmed that teachers often used police as a threat (n=4). Caregivers/parents were aware of police “monitor[ing and] follow[ing]” students (Caregiver/parent #18). Police were perceived to come into schools only “to scare the youth and as the only alternate option,” (Caregiver/parent #18) and because “the school liked looking at my child [like] he was being a troubled child who needed to be disciplined” (Caregiver/parent #21). Participants described this as “a common fear tactic especially toward racialized students” (Student #15) and “as if being black is a crime on its own” (Caregiver/parent #22). Caregivers/parents attributed police interactions to their child’s race/ethnicity (n=15), interpersonal conflicts (n=3), mental health episodes (n=1), and religion (n=2).

Students reported feeling “uncomfortable” (Student #2) and “nervous” (Student #23) during police encounters. Students expressed that they felt like police “already had an image of what went on and who started the aggression” (Student #2). Students attributed police interactions to race/ethnicity (n=8), interpersonal conflict (n=3), and family income (n=1). A student shared:

“The police only ask questions to the Black youth and how they ask is more aggressive and rude than other kids. They are always thinking we are connected to local gangs or robberies in the neighbourhood and only target low-income black youth and not the white middle class kids or newcomers.” – Student #23

One student perceived police interactions as “even worse” for racialized students with behavioral issues (Student #24) and another shared how police encounters are more common for certain groups of students: “Only the black kids are dealing with police because other kids get sent to talk to the CYW [child and youth worker] or guidance counsellor” (Student #28).

Caregivers/parents reported seeking help from police in response to bullying and one participant reported an officer’s reluctance to lay charges (Caregiver/parent #18). A student reported, “the police were not very helpful” (Student #11) and that they “never have a friendly tone” (Student #27).

Some students reported instances where police were “very aggressive” (Student #9 and Student #24) and how “it’s weird to talk to cops without your [caregiver/parent] there” (Student #13). Caregivers/parents were notified about interactions between their child and police by calls from the school (n=2) or at the end of the school day at pick-up (n=1).

Though nearly all documented interactions with the police were described as negative by participants, it’s worth noting that one parent and child reported an encounter where the officers were informative of their rights and reassuring about not being taken to jail. Despite this, both caregivers expressed alarm at the initial decision to involve the police, attributing it to their child’s race and culture.

Possible reasons for unjust punishment

Students and caregivers/parents attributed different factors to their experiences of unjust punishment. **Figure 1** displays the factors that students attributed to unjust punishment. Students reported their disability and race, ethnicity, or culture as the greatest influences.

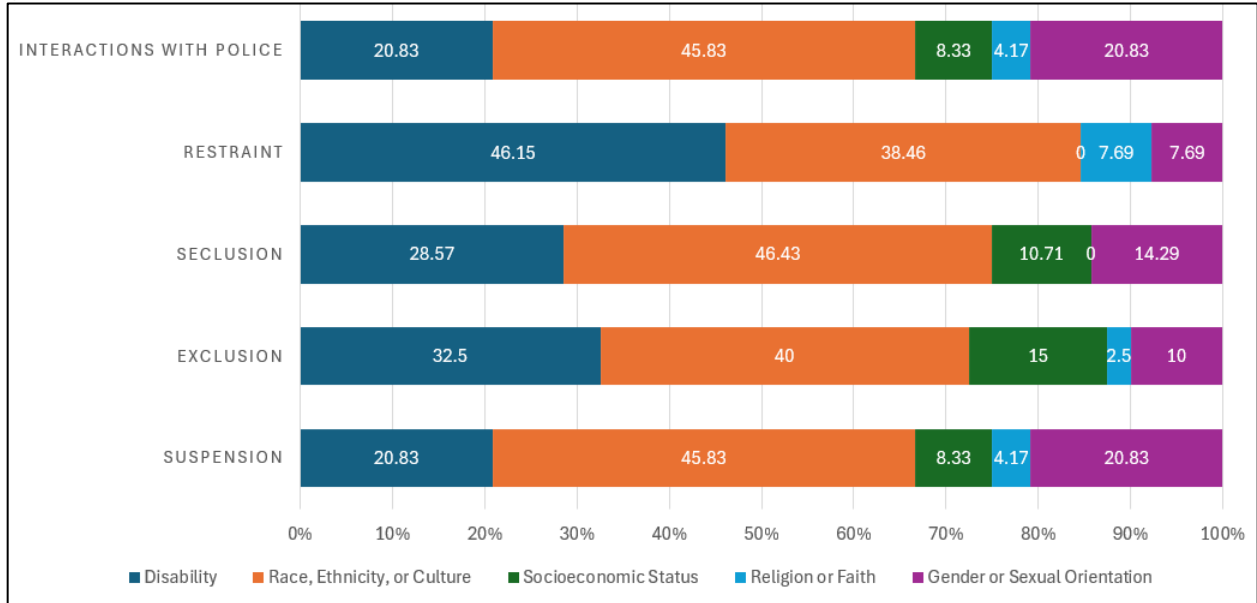


Figure 1. Factors attributed by students to experiences of unjust punishment

Similarly, caregivers/parents most frequently associated their student's disability and race, ethnicity, or culture with experiences of unjust punishment (**Figure 2**).

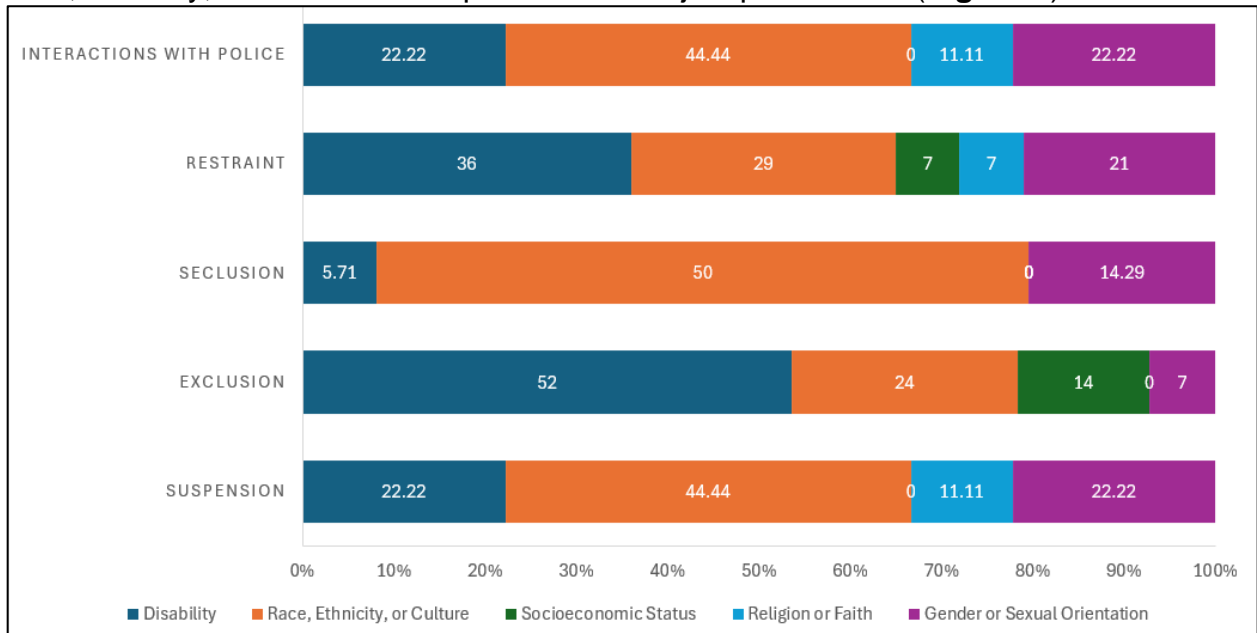


Figure 2. Factors attributed by parents to experiences of unjust punishment

Participants did not always attribute the same *number* of factors to each type of punishment; combinations of factors were often selected. **Table 7** lists the most frequent combination of factors attributed by respondents.

Table 7. Most frequent combination of factors attributed to unjust punishment

Type of unjust punishment	Most frequent <u>combination</u> of factors attributed by		
	Students		Caregivers/parents
	Disability and race/ethnicity	Race/ethnicity and gender	Disability and race/ethnicity
Suspension/expulsion	X		X
Exclusion	X		X
Seclusion	X		X
Restraint use	X		X
Interactions with police		X	X

Under the following headings, we describe the number of factors attributed to each type of punishment. The most reported factor is also listed, as are the frequent combinations of factors discovered when respondents selected two or more factors as the reason for unjust punishment.

Suspension/expulsion

Disability and race/ethnicity were the most frequent pair of factors reported by students (n=12) and caregivers/parents (n=9). Race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status were a combination also frequently identified by students (n=5). One student highlighted their experience:

“A lot of the people that were white and did the same stuff were never suspended for what I did. In elementary school, I got suspended for fighting and the white girl that fought me (she taunted me) got ice cream and was offered support meanwhile I got scolded by a lot of teachers and was suspended for 2 days.” – Student #7

Another student touched on race/ethnicity and religion/faith as a factor in their suspension:

“I 100% believe that my suspension had to do with his [the principal’s] views on muslim/black people” – Student #30

Exclusion

Students attributed one factor to their exclusion (n=8) equally as often as two factors (n=8). Disability and race/ethnicity were listed together frequently (n=10), as well as race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status (n=6). Caregivers/parents identified one factor as the reason for their child’s exclusion the most (n=9), followed by two factors (n=5).

Caregivers/parents indicated disability as impacting their child's exclusion 52% of the time. A student describes this:

"They said that I was acting aggressive and combative for telling them the teacher was being racist and ablest to me" – Student #26

Seclusion

Students most frequently attributed their seclusion to a single factor (n=8), followed by two factors (n=6). Students identified disability and race/ethnicity together most often (n=8). Caregivers/parents often cited a single reason for students' seclusion (n=4). One student attributed the reasons for their unjust seclusion:

"They don't know how to deal with the Black, disabled or queer kids." – Student #24

Restraint use

Students identified that a single factor mainly contributed to their restraint experience; Disability and race/ethnicity were listed as the most frequent combination of factors (n=4). Caregivers/parents cited two factors most often (n=4). Disability and race/ethnicity were also listed as the most frequent combination of factors. One caregiver/parent commented:

"They see him as a threat for his disability and race. They don't understand how to help him when he is struggling." – Caregiver/parent #1

Interactions with police

Students identified a single factor the most (n=11). Students listed gender and race together most frequently (n=4), followed by disability and race (n=3). Caregivers/parents tended to attribute a single factor to police interactions (n=2), although they listed race/ethnicity as a contributing factor 67% of the time. One caregiver/parent spoke of their child's experience interacting with police:

"I think being grouped as a child based on religion and culture definitely played a huge role what happened to my child." – Caregiver/parent #21

Appealing unjust punishment

Participants described their experiences appealing suspensions/expulsions, seclusion, and restraint use. Among caregivers/parents who chose to appeal a suspension/expulsion, the majority expressed that the appeal did not go smoothly (n=9). Some believed their appeal did not go through successfully due to their race (Caregiver/parent #8) or because the appeal was simply "not in [their] favor" (Caregiver/parent #22). Two students shared their experience with school appeal

surrounding suspension/expulsion. One student shared that they were, “able to appeal the suspension and state an apology to the principal” (Student #25). Another student shared that the school staff did not listen to them and, “didn’t believe what [they] were telling them” (Student #30).

Four caregivers/parents shared their experience of appealing a seclusion. A caregiver/parent expressed frustration with the outcome of a conversation with the principal, which they felt was “pointless” and unfairly “focused on [their] child’s behavior as blame” (Caregiver/parent #26). Another caregiver/parent took their appeal one step further by reaching out to the school’s superintendent, sharing that they “wrote an email to the superintendent and was given a promise that the principal and teachers would be spoken and that [their] issue would be addressed” (Caregiver/parent #27). Students claimed that their experiences appealing seclusion did not go well and were stressful (n=3). The students expressed that school did not provide appropriate resource to help their family complete the appeal process: “I told my mom who tried to talk to the school but she doesn’t know English well and they didn’t try to provide an interpreter and pushed the issue away” (Student #24). Students also claimed that school staff threatened additional suspensions if they choose to go through the appeal (n=3).

When attempting to appeal the use of restraints, caregivers/parents reported that school staff often informed them that their use was warranted. Staff claimed they “[did] the right thing,” (Caregiver/parent #9) and “defended their actions as necessary” (Caregiver/parent #28). Among students who chose to appeal, one claimed that when they raised concerns about their restraint, “the school said that [they] were lying and that [they] should be warned or [they] would be expelled” (Student #26).

No participants discussed appealing exclusions or interactions with police.

Supports and resources

Seven caregivers/parents and students reported the need for enhanced classroom supports to assist students with disabilities and mental health concerns. A student explained that there are, “not a lot of supports or places to help disabled youth” (Student #23). A caregiver/parent expressed that “no other options are provided to teachers to deal with behaviours of ADHD or diverse learning styles” (Caregiver/parent #18).

A caregiver/parent highlighted that “teachers should have training, and there should be a student hotline to call and make complaints” (Caregiver/parent #24). Another caregiver/parent expressed, “school staff should learn about and cope with student allergies [and other medical needs] and know how to deal with an emergency” (Caregiver/parent #24).

Caregivers/parents and students also expressed the need for better communication to avoid unjust punishments. A caregiver/parent explained:

“If his teachers were to have sat down and talked to him as a human being, and been more understanding, I believe none of this would have happened. He needs understanding and trauma informed care, not people who are quick to dismiss him, make him angry purposely, and then suspend him due to his “disruptive” behaviour.” – Caregiver/parent #6

A caregiver/parent highlighted, “authorities should also ensure all students are aware of punishment for such acts” (Caregiver/parent #20). Similarly, a student explained that school staff “could have given me more warnings or support” (Student #23).

Caregivers/parents expressed the importance of investigating a situation before punishing students (n=2). One caregiver/parent shared, “it’s very important for the teachers and principal to talk to [other] teachers about the student’s bullying” (Caregiver/parent #21). One student questioned, “how can I keep myself [safe] from bully[ing] in school?” (Student #14). A caregiver/parent reported that “schools should call parents before calling [the] police” (Caregiver/parent #23) or “anytime [a] student has physical complaints” (Caregiver/parent #24).

One caregiver/parent shared their experience with ensuring their child’s medical needs are met:

“Make sure [the doctor’s note] is all in writing and easily understandable [...] Have a meeting with everyone at [the student’s] school [who] needs to know this information, make sure they understand and [are] willing to comply. If they aren’t, then I can go to the district office and speak to the superintendent and see if I can get some results that way.” – Caregiver/parent #25

Caregivers/parents also referred to the need for legal support when appealing unjust punishments. One caregiver/parent explained that “the school maintained that they did the right thing,” when raising concerns about restraint use. Another caregiver/parent expressed they “didn’t know how to properly advocate for [their] child,” and wanted to report “the school workers for their incompetence” (Caregiver/parent #21).

Caregivers/parents and students also highlighted future avenues regarding research about unjust punishment. One caregiver/parent expressed the importance of “connecting with youth to learn their stories and give them help” (Caregiver/parent #26). Another caregiver/parent reported wanting to “[have] more conversations around [unjust punishment] with other BIPOC caregivers” (Caregiver/parent #6). A student expressed the idea to “continue this work with kids and the teachers” and the need to “train the police to work with kids different [than] they do with criminals” (Student #27).

Key Takeaways

Summary of Findings

This report highlighted experiences of unjust punishment within Ontario schools among racialized and disabled students. Students and parents/caregivers described what these experiences can look like, their impacts, and suggestions to avoid future instances. Participants identified several intrinsic factors (most frequently, disability and race, ethnicity, or culture) that may explain or cause unjust punishment in schools. For example, many students reported that their disability accommodations were misunderstood or ignored, leading to punitive actions rather than supportive interventions. Students reported feeling unfairly targeted on the basis of their disability and race, ethnicity, or culture, exacerbating feelings of bias, unjust treatment, and discrimination. These findings highlight many opportunities to improve equity, justice, and inclusivity for disabled and racialized students.

This report provides information about the intersection of factors that are possibly associated with unjust punishment in Ontario schools. Students and caregivers/parents frequently attributed their experiences with exhibiting a disability or belonging to a marginalized race/ethnicity. We provide evidence of the interdependence of factors encompassing students' identities, as participants frequently attributed their experiences to multiple factors.

Some participants suggested recommendations to create more equitable and inclusive learning environments for racialized and disabled students. Comprehensive training for educators on cultural competencies and disability awareness may improve their understanding of diverse students' needs. Administrators can integrate restorative justice practices in their institutions, focusing on repairing harm, restoring relationships, and promoting a culture of empathy and understanding. Schools can enhance their support systems for students with disabilities by ensuring access to qualified professionals and resources tailored to students' unique learning needs. Schools can also connect students with designated mental health professionals to provide ongoing support and intervene when students face emotional or psychological challenges. At a broader level, educational policies can be revised to incorporate justice-oriented principles that prioritize the well-being of students over punitive measures. Guidelines for police interactions in schools can be clarified and communicated with parents to ensure transparency and accountability.

Limitations

We acknowledge limitations to our data that may have impacted the findings and interpretations. Survey respondents primarily attended schools in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA), so these results are not representative of all disabled and racialized students in Ontario. Notably, we did not receive many responses from those of Southeast Asian and Latinx racial/ethnic backgrounds and students with transgender

and fluid gender identities. The limited sample size inhibited analyses for subsets of participants by their type of disability and racial/ethnic group.

Future research can increase efforts to recruit participants from a greater variety of schools and promote the survey outside of DJNO's pre-existing network (e.g., schools/boards can distribute the survey). Stratified sampling can be used to gather perspectives on underrepresented groups and ensure an adequate number of participants can speak to experiences on each type of unjust punishment. In addition, a secure survey platform should be used (e.g., LimeSurvey) to minimize fake respondents and employ language-inclusive survey support. Lastly, more close-ended questions can be used to validate and ensure accurate responses (e.g., when asking about durations/timings). Finally, minimizing the number of survey questions and asking participants if they are interested in completing a follow-up interview to provide more detailed responses may address survey fatigue and improve the quality of open-ended responses.

Conclusion

Overall, this study highlighted experiences of unjust punishment in Ontario schools and can be used to inform efforts to lessen their future occurrence. Our findings substantiate evidence collected in focus groups and interviews as part of DJNO's education project to describe the experiences of disabled and racialized students. We suggest how educational settings can better support disabled and marginalized students. The findings may suggest the need for interventions to address disparities experienced by students in learning settings. Future work can examine how equity- and justice-oriented policies and interventions can better support students and mitigate instances of unjust punishment.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Survey questions

CAREGIVER/PARENT SURVEY:

Understanding the Experiences of Racialized Disabled Youth & their Families in the Ontario Education System: Caregiver/Parent Survey

Background: Through our Education Project (funded by the Laidlaw Foundation), we're leading consultations to identify and address the experiences of Black, Indigenous and racialized (or otherwise marginalized) disabled students (both diagnosed and undiagnosed) with unjust punishment in schools. This project will inform a toolkit for students and families, to be made public by the summer of 2024.

Alongside the toolkit, we are compiling a community-centred, youth-led report to highlight our findings (to be released alongside the toolkit). The report will include a literature review, findings from our focus groups/surveys/interviews, and final recommendations for local school boards, the Ministry of Education and other key institutions. Part of this report and its recommendations will be informed by these surveys.

Where you come in: We are specifically looking for caregivers/parents of Black, Indigenous and racialized disabled (diagnosed OR undiagnosed) students in Ontario (ages 10-25) to complete this survey.

Privacy: By participating in this survey, you are consenting to having your answers shared (anonymously) within our final report, social media content (i.e. literature, infographics, etc) and online (i.e. websites). The McMaster Research Shop will be supporting us with analysis of survey responses. With this, note that you will never be identified in public reports, and any identifying details will be changed to keep you anonymous.

Compensation: If you choose to fill out this survey, you will be compensated with a \$25 gift card to the establishment of your choice. Simply select the gift card you would like to receive after completing at least one section of the survey, and we will follow up with you via email.

Contact us: You can reach out to us any time by emailing education@djno.ca. If you have additional questions (or require additional support) prior to or after completing this survey, we are more than happy to help.

There are five key sections to this survey:

1. Suspensions/Expulsions
2. Exclusions
3. Seclusions

- 4. Restraints
- 5. Interactions with Police

Please note that surveys will be monitored, and only responses from participants who meet the following criteria will be considered valid:

- Caregiver/parent of a youth who has experience in the Ontario education system
- Caregiver/parent of a youth who self-identifies as Black, Indigenous and/or racialized
- Caregiver/parent of a youth who self-identifies as disabled (whether diagnosed or undiagnosed)
- Caregiver/parent of a youth between 10-25 years old
- Caregiver/parent of a youth who has experienced at least one of the following: suspensions/expulsions, exclusions, seclusion, restraint or interactions with police
- Provides detailed responses for *at least* one of the above categories

Email address: Short-answer text

First name: Short-answer text

Last name: Short-answer text

Your child's age:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 10 | <input type="radio"/> 15 | <input type="radio"/> 20 |
| <input type="radio"/> 11 | <input type="radio"/> 16 | <input type="radio"/> 21 |
| <input type="radio"/> 12 | <input type="radio"/> 17 | <input type="radio"/> 22 |
| <input type="radio"/> 13 | <input type="radio"/> 18 | <input type="radio"/> 23 |
| <input type="radio"/> 14 | <input type="radio"/> 19 | <input type="radio"/> 24 |
| | | <input type="radio"/> 25 |

Your child's grade (if applicable):

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 5 | <input type="radio"/> 8 | <input type="radio"/> 11 |
| <input type="radio"/> 6 | <input type="radio"/> 9 | <input type="radio"/> 12 |
| <input type="radio"/> 7 | <input type="radio"/> 10 | <input type="radio"/> 13 |

Your child's school and school board: Short-answer text

Does your child identify as any of the following? Please select all that apply.

- Immigrant/newcomer/refugee
- English language learner (ELL)
- 2S-LGBTQIA+
- Muslim
- Criminalized
- None of the above
- Other...

What is your child's race, ethnicity and/or cultural background? Please select all that apply.

- Black
- Indigenous
- South Asian (i.e. Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, etc.)
- East Asian (i.e. Chinese, Japanese, etc.)
- Southeast Asian (i.e. Filipino, Thai, etc.)
- Latinx (i.e. Mexican, Puerto Rican, etc.)
- White/Caucasian
- Arab/Middle Eastern (i.e. Palestinian, Syrian, etc.)
- Mixed/Multi-Racial/Ethnic
- Afro-Caribbean (i.e. Jamaican, Haitian, etc.)
- Indo-Caribbean/West Indian (i.e. Indo-Guyanese, Indo-Trinidadian, etc.)
- Indo-African
- Pacific Islanders or Polynesian/Melanesian/Micronesian
- Indo-Fijian
- Other...

What is your child's gender identity? Please select all that apply.

- Male/Boy/Man
- Female/Girl/Woman
- Trans Non-Binary
- Trans Masc
- Trans Femme
- Gender fluid
- I don't know
- Prefer not to say
- Other...

Has your child been diagnosed with any disabilities/exceptionalities? Please indicate what they are, and specify.

Examples:

- Neurodivergent (i.e. ADHD, Autism, etc.)
- Learning disability (i.e. Dyslexia, ADHD, ADD, etc.)
- Mental health disability (i.e. Anxiety, OCD, Depression, etc.)
- Intellectual or developmental disability (i.e. Down Syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), Tourette Syndrome, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, etc.)
- Speech and/or language impairment
- Deaf or hard-of-hearing
- Blind or visual impairment
- Epilepsy
- Physical disability (i.e. Cerebral Palsy, Cystic Fibrosis, etc.)
- Chronic or terminal illness (i.e. cancer, autoimmune diseases, etc.)
- Other disabilities (i.e. mood disorders/emotional regulation/behaviour related)

Short-answer text

Do you believe your child to have any disabilities (even if they have not been diagnosed)? Please indicate what they are. If needed, refer to examples in the previous question.

Long-answer text

What situation best describes your child's current schooling experience?

- Regular class(es) with no additional support
- Regular class(es) with support from teacher(s) when needed
- Regular class(es) with support from special education and/or resource staff
- Regular class(es), and special education class(es) sometimes
- Special education class(es) most of the time
- Special education class(es) all the time
- Special education school all the time
- Other...

Suspension/Expulsion

What is a suspension?

A suspension is the temporary removal of a child from a school setting (recorded in the child's student record). In Ontario, a suspension can range between 1-20 school days.

What is an expulsion?

An expulsion is the permanent removal of a child from a school setting (recorded in the child's student record).

Has your child ever been suspended/expelled?

*Note: If you answered 'Neither', please type 'N/A' for the rest of the questions in this section, and move to Section 3.

- Suspended
- Expelled
- Both
- Neither

How many times has your child been suspended/expelled?

Short-answer text

What reasons best explain your child's suspensions/expulsions?

Long-answer text

How long after your suspension/expulsion did you receive an official letter from your school?

Short-answer text

Were you made aware of the suspension/expulsion appeal process (the process to challenge your suspension)?

- Yes
- No

If you chose to appeal, how did that go?

Short-answer text

Do you think your child's suspension/expulsion was influenced by any of the following?
Select all that apply.

- Disability
- Race/ethnicity/culture
- Gender/sexual orientation
- Religion/faith
- Family income
- N/A
- Other...

If you checked any of the above boxes, explain why you think these factors may have informed your child's suspension/expulsion.

Long-answer text

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your child's suspensions/expulsions?

Long-answer text

Exclusion

What is an Exclusion?

An exclusion is any sort of removal of a student from the school or classroom that is not voluntary, and is not an official suspension or expulsion.

Based on the definition above, has your child ever experienced exclusion?

*Note: If you answered 'No', please type 'N/A' for the rest of the questions in this section, and move to Section 4.

- Yes
- No

Please estimate how many full days of school your child missed over this recent school year from being sent home.

- Less than one day per month
- 1-3 days per month
- 4-6 days per month (around 1 day per week)
- 7-10 days per month (around 2 days per week)
- 10+ days per month (more than 2 days per week)

- Other...

Why has your child been sent home?

Long-answer text

How often has your child been excluded from academic or extracurricular opportunities at school?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other...

Do you think your child's exclusion has been influenced by any of the following? Select all that apply.

- Disability
- Race/ethnicity/culture
- Gender/sexual orientation
- Religion/faith
- Family income
- N/A
- Other...

If you checked any of the above boxes, explain why you think these factors may have informed your child's exclusion.

Long-answer text

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your child's experience with exclusion?

Long-answer text

Seclusion

What is Seclusion?

Seclusion is the involuntary confinement of a student alone in any room or area. It includes the use of any room or area in which the student is alone and not free to leave (or believes they are not free to leave) (U.S. Department of Justice, 2023).

Has your child experienced seclusion at school?

*Note: If you answered 'No', please type 'N/A' for the rest of the questions in this section, and move to Section 5.

- Yes
- No

When your child was secluded, how were they prevented from leaving the setting?
Please select all that apply.

- Locked/blocked door
- Being physically held
- Verbal threats of punishment
- Other...

What was the longest amount of time your child was secluded for?
Short-answer text

Describe what the physical space your child was secluded in looked like (i.e. size, colours, windows, etc.),
Long-answer text

When your child was secluded, did any of the following occur?

- Physical pain or injury (i.e. soreness, bruising, etc.)
- Emotional trauma or distress (i.e. sadness, shame, embarrassment, worry, sleep disturbance, shame, not wanting to attend school, etc.)
- Restricted access to food/water
- Restricted access to medication
- Other...

Did you raise any concerns with anyone at the school? If so, who? How did that go?
Long-answer text

Who placed your child in seclusion?

- Principal/school administrator
- Special education/resource teacher
- Classroom teacher
- Education Assistant (EA)
- Nurse/Occupational Therapist (OT)
- N/A
- Other...

Do you think your child's seclusion was influenced by any of the following? Select all that apply.

- Disability
- Race/ethnicity/culture
- Gender/sexual orientation
- Religion/faith
- Family income
- Other...

If you checked any of the above boxes, explain why you think these factors may have informed your child's seclusion.

Long-answer text

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your child's experience with seclusion?

Long-answer text

Restraint

What is Restraint?

Restraint is the physical use of force to limit someone's movement, freedom or mobility. Examples include being tied, held or pinned down by a person in an authority position (i.e. teacher, educational assistant, administration, police, etc.).

Has your child ever been restrained at school?

*Note: If you answered 'No', please type 'N/A' for the rest of the questions in this section, and move to Section 6.

- Yes
- No

Who performed the restraint?

- Principal/school administrator
- Special education/resource teacher
- Classroom teacher
- Educational Assistant (EA)
- Nurse/Occupational Therapist (OT)
- Other...

What was the longest amount of time your child was restrained for?

Short-answer text

When your child was restrained, did any of the following occur? Please select all that apply.

- Physical injury or pain (i.e. soreness, bruising, etc.)
- Emotional trauma or distress (i.e. sadness, shame, embarrassment, worry, sleep disturbance, shame, not wanting to attend school, etc.)
- Other...

Did you raise any concerns about the restraints with the school? If so, who? How did that go?

Long-answer text

Do you think your child being restrained was influenced by any of the following? Please select all that apply.

- Disability
- Race/ethnicity/culture

- Gender/sexual orientation
- Religion/faith
- Family income
- N/A
- Other...

If you checked any of the above boxes, explain why you think these factors may have informed your child's restraint.

Long-answer text

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your child's experience with restraint?

Long-answer text

STUDENT SURVEY:

Understanding the Experiences of Racialized Disabled Youth in the Ontario Education System: Student Survey (Ages 10 - 25)

Background: Through our Education Project (funded by the Laidlaw Foundation), we're leading consultations to identify and address the experiences of Black, Indigenous and racialized (or otherwise marginalized) disabled students (both diagnosed and undiagnosed) with unjust punishment in schools. This project will inform a toolkit for students and families, to be made public by the summer of 2024.

Alongside the toolkit, we are compiling a community-centred, youth-led report to highlight our findings (to be released alongside the toolkit). The report will include a literature review, findings from our focus groups/surveys/interviews, and final recommendations for local school boards, the Ministry of Education and other key institutions. Part of this report and its recommendations will be informed by these surveys.

Where you come in: We are specifically looking for Black, Indigenous and racialized disabled (diagnosed OR undiagnosed) students in Ontario (ages 10-25) to complete these surveys.

Privacy: By participating in this survey, you are consenting to having your answers shared (anonymously) within our final report, social media content (i.e. literature, infographics, etc) and online (i.e. websites). The McMaster Research Shop will be supporting us with analysis of survey responses. With this, note that you will never be identified in public reports, and any identifying details will be changed to keep you anonymous.

Compensation: If you choose to fill out this survey, you will be compensated with a \$25 gift card to the establishment of your choice. Simply select the gift card you would like to receive after completing at least one section of the survey, and we will follow up with you via email.

Contact us: You can reach out to us any time by emailing education@djno.ca. If you have additional questions (or require additional support) prior to or after completing this survey, we are more than happy to help.

There are five key sections to this survey:

1. Suspensions/Expulsions
2. Exclusions
3. Seclusion
4. Restraints
5. Interactions with Police

Please note that surveys will be monitored, and only responses from participants who meet the following criteria will be considered valid:

- Has experience in the Ontario education system
- Has self-identified as Black, Indigenous and/or racialized
- Has self-identified as disabled (whether diagnosed or undiagnosed)
- Is between 10-25 years old
- Has experienced at least one of the following: suspensions/expulsions, exclusions, seclusion, restraint or interactions with police
- Provides detailed responses for *at least* one of the above categories

Email address: Short-answer text

First name: Short-answer text

Last name: Short-answer text

Age:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 10 | <input type="radio"/> 15 | <input type="radio"/> 20 |
| <input type="radio"/> 11 | <input type="radio"/> 16 | <input type="radio"/> 21 |
| <input type="radio"/> 12 | <input type="radio"/> 17 | <input type="radio"/> 22 |
| <input type="radio"/> 13 | <input type="radio"/> 18 | <input type="radio"/> 23 |
| <input type="radio"/> 14 | <input type="radio"/> 19 | <input type="radio"/> 24 |
| | | <input type="radio"/> 25 |

Grade (if applicable):

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 5 | <input type="radio"/> 8 | <input type="radio"/> 11 |
| <input type="radio"/> 6 | <input type="radio"/> 9 | <input type="radio"/> 12 |
| <input type="radio"/> 7 | <input type="radio"/> 10 | <input type="radio"/> 13 |

School and school board: Short-answer text

(Please note that answers from post-secondary students will not be accepted. If you are not currently in elementary, secondary or an alternative school setting, please indicate any schools you previously attended that may meet this criteria).

Do you self identify as any of the following? Please select all that apply.

- Immigrant/newcomer/refugee
- English language learner (ELL)
- 2S-LGBTQIA+
- Muslim
- Criminalized
- None of the above
- Other...

How would you self identify your race, ethnicity and/or cultural background? Please select all that apply.

- Black
- Indigenous
- South Asian (i.e. Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, etc.)
- East Asian (i.e. Chinese, Japanese, etc.)
- Southeast Asian (i.e. Filipino, Thai, etc.)
- Latinx (i.e. Mexican, Puerto Rican, etc.)
- White/Caucasian
- Arab/Middle Eastern (i.e. Palestinian, Syrian, etc.)
- Mixed/Multi-Racial/Ethnic
- Afro-Caribbean (i.e. Jamaican, Haitian, etc.)
- Indo-Caribbean/West Indian (i.e. Indo-Guyanese, Indo-Trinidadian, etc.)
- Indo-African
- Pacific Islanders or Polynesian/Melanesian/Micronesian
- Indo-Fijian
- Other...

What is your gender identity? Please select all that apply.

- Male/Boy/Man
- Female/Girl/Woman
- Trans Non-Binary
- Trans Masc
- Trans Femme
- Gender fluid
- I don't know
- Prefer not to say
- Other...

Have you been diagnosed with any disabilities/exceptionalities? Please indicate what they are, and specify.

Examples:

- Neurodivergent (i.e. ADHD, Autism, etc.)
- Learning disability (i.e. Dyslexia, ADHD, ADD, etc.)
- Mental health disability (i.e. Anxiety, OCD, Depression, etc.)
- Intellectual or developmental disability (i.e. Down Syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), Tourette Syndrome, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, etc.)
- Speech and/or language impairment
- Deaf or hard-of-hearing
- Blind or visual impairment
- Epilepsy
- Physical disability (i.e. Cerebral Palsy, Cystic Fibrosis, etc.)
- Chronic or terminal illness (i.e. cancer, autoimmune diseases, etc.)
- Other disabilities (i.e. mood disorders/emotional regulation/behaviour related)

Short-answer text

Do you self-identify with or believe you have any disabilities (even if you have not been diagnosed)? Please indicate what they are. If needed, refer to examples in the previous question. Please note that your response will not be accepted if you do not identify with some form of disability (whether diagnosed or undiagnosed).

Long-answer text

What situation best describes your current schooling experience?

- Regular class(es) with no additional support
- Regular class(es) with support from teacher(s) when needed
- Regular class(es) with support from special education and/or resource staff
- Regular class(es), and special education class(es) sometimes
- Special education class(es) most of the time
- Special education class(es) all the time
- Special education school all the time
- Other...

Suspension/Expulsion

What is a suspension?

A suspension is the temporary removal of a child from a school setting (recorded in the child's student record). In Ontario, a suspension can range between 1-20 school days.

What is an expulsion?

An expulsion is the permanent removal of a child from a school setting (recorded in the child's student record).

Have you ever been suspended/expelled?

*Note: If you answered 'Neither', please type 'N/A' for the rest of the questions in this section, and move to Section 3.

- Suspended
- Expelled
- Both
- Neither

How many times have you been suspended/expelled?

Short-answer text

What reasons best explain your suspensions/expulsions?

Long-answer text

How long after your suspensions/expulsions did you receive an official letter from your school?

Short-answer text

Were you made aware of the suspension/expulsion appeal process (the process to challenge your suspension)?

- Yes
- No

If you chose to appeal, how did that go?

Short-answer text

Do you think your suspensions/expulsions were influenced by any of the following?
Select all that apply.

- Disability
- Race/ethnicity/culture
- Gender/sexual orientation
- Religion/faith
- Family income
- N/A
- Other...

If you checked any of the above boxes, explain why you think these factors may have informed your suspension/expulsion.

Long-answer text

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with suspensions/expulsions?

Long-answer text

Exclusion

What is an Exclusion?

An exclusion is any sort of removal of a student from the school or classroom that is not voluntary, and is not an official suspension or expulsion.

Based on the definition above, have you ever experienced exclusion?

*Note: If you answered 'No', please type 'N/A' for the rest of the questions in this section, and move to Section 4.

- Yes
- No

Please estimate how many full days of school you missed over this recent school year from being sent home.

- Less than one day per month
- 1-3 days per month
- 4-6 days per month (around 1 day per week)
- 7-10 days per month (around 2 days per week)
- 10+ days per month (more than 2 days per week)
- Other...

Why were/are you being sent home?

Long-answer text

How often have you been excluded from academic or extracurricular opportunities at school?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other...

Do you think being excluded was influenced by any of the following? Select all that apply.

- Disability
- Race/ethnicity/culture
- Gender/sexual orientation
- Religion/faith
- Family income
- N/A
- Other...

If you checked any of the above boxes, explain why you think these factors may have informed your exclusion.

Long-answer text

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with exclusion?

Long-answer text

Seclusion

What is Seclusion?

Seclusion is the involuntary confinement of a student alone in any room or area. It includes the use of any room or area in which the student is alone and not free to leave (or believes they are not free to leave) (U.S. Department of Justice, 2023).

Have you experienced seclusion at school?

*Note: If you answered 'No', please type 'N/A' for the rest of the questions in this section, and move to Section 5.

- Yes
- No

When you were secluded, how were you prevented from leaving the setting? Please select all that apply.

- Locked/blocked door
- Being physically held
- Verbal threats of punishment
- Other...

What was the longest amount of time you were secluded for?

Short-answer text

Describe what the physical space you were secluded in looked like (i.e. size, colours, windows, etc.),

Long-answer text

When you were secluded, did any of the following occur?

- Physical pain or injury (i.e. soreness, bruising, etc.)
- Emotional trauma or distress (i.e. sadness, shame, embarrassment, worry, sleep disturbance, shame, not wanting to attend school, etc.)
- Restricted access to food/water
- Restricted access to medication
- Other...

Did you raise any concerns with the school? If so, who? How did that go?

Long-answer text

Who placed you in seclusion?

- Principal/school administrator
- Special education/resource teacher
- Classroom teacher
- Education Assistant (EA)
- Nurse/Occupational Therapist (OT)
- Other...

Do you think your seclusion was influenced by any of the following? Select all that apply.

- Disability
- Race/ethnicity/culture
- Gender/sexual orientation
- Religion/faith
- Family income
- N/A
- Other...

If you checked any of the above boxes, explain why you think these factors may have informed your seclusion.

Long-answer text

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with seclusion?

Long-answer text

Restraint

What is Restraint?

Restraint is the physical use of force to limit someone's movement, freedom or mobility. Examples include being tied, held or pinned down by a person in an authority position (i.e. teacher, educational assistant, administration, police, etc.).

Have you ever been restrained at school?

*Note: If you answered 'No', please type 'N/A' for the rest of the questions in this section, and move to Section 6.

- Yes
- No

Who performed the restraint?

- Principal/school administrator
- Special education/resource teacher
- Classroom teacher
- Educational Assistant (EA)
- Nurse/Occupational Therapist (OT)
- Other...

What was the longest amount of time you were restrained for?

Short-answer text

When you were restrained, did any of the following occur? Please select all that apply.

- Physical injury or pain (i.e. soreness, bruising, etc.)
- Emotional trauma or distress (i.e. sadness, shame, embarrassment, worry, sleep disturbance, shame, not wanting to attend school, etc.)

- Other...

Did you raise any concerns about the restraints with the school? If so, who did you tell, and how did it go?

Long-answer text

Do you think your being restrained was influenced by any of the following? Please select all that apply.

- Disability
- Race/ethnicity/culture
- Gender/sexual orientation
- Religion/faith
- Family income
- N/A
- Other...

If you checked any of the above boxes, explain why you think these factors may have informed your restraint.

Long-answer text

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with restraints?

Long-answer text

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with restraints?

Long-answer text

Interactions with Police

Have you ever had interactions with the police in school?

*Note: If you answered 'No', please type 'N/A' for the rest of the questions in this section, and move to Section 7.

- Yes
- No

Please outline your experiences with the police in school (i.e. why this occurred, how staff were involved, what happened, how it impacted you, etc.).

Long-answer text

If you checked any of the above boxes, explain why you think these factors may have informed these interactions with police in school.

Long-answer text

Do you believe your interactions with police in school were influenced by any of the following? Please select all that apply.

- Disability

- Race/ethnicity/culture
- Gender/sexual orientation
- Religion/faith
- Family income
- N/A
- Other...

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with police in school?

Long-answer text

Conclusion

Thank you so much for completing our survey. Stay connected with us for updates on the Education Project (including paid focus group opportunities), alongside other projects we're working on!

General Email: info@djno.ca

Education Project Email: education@djno.ca

Website: www.djno.ca

X & Instagram: @djnontario

Do you have any special requests/additional information you'd like to share (i.e. other relevant experiences, requests for follow-up conversations, etc.)?

Long-answer text

Please indicate where you would like your \$25 e-gift card from (i.e. Amazon, Walmart or anywhere else that offers e-gift cards). If your responses are valid, we will follow up with you via email!

Short-answer text

What email address would you like your e-gift card sent to?

Short-answer text

Appendix 2 – Survey recruitment materials

EMAIL TEMPLATE:

Hello [insert name of organization],

We're reaching out on behalf of the Education Department at the Disability Justice Network Ontario (DJNO) with hopes that you can support us in distributing our surveys to any relevant families/networks you work with.

We're specifically looking for Black, Indigenous, racialized (or otherwise marginalized) disabled (diagnosed OR undiagnosed) students in Ontario (ages 10-25) to complete the survey. We're also looking for any caregivers/parents of these groups to complete another variation of the survey.

There are 5 sections within each survey:
suspensions/expulsions;
exclusions;
seclusions;
restraints, and;
interactions with police.

While participants are not required to complete all 5 sections, they **must complete at least 1** if they are to participate. In this case, we are able to offer each participant a **\$25 e-gift card honorarium** of their choice!

We are hoping to close the surveys soon, but are open to keeping them open for a bit longer if you have potential participants who require a bit of extra time. Here are the links:

Student Survey Link: <https://forms.gle/7yQkpUNP4FxH2XoY6>

Caregiver/parent Survey Link: <https://forms.gle/MyKjAEGZeWY5h2Vx8>

CONTEXT:

Through our Education Project (funded by the Laidlaw Foundation), we're leading a few different consultations to identify and address the following within Hamilton and wider-Ontario schools:

The experiences of Black, Indigenous and racialized disabled students with unjust punishment in schools

The experiences of caregivers/parents of disabled Black, Indigenous and racialized students who have faced unjust punishment in schools

This project will inform a toolkit for students and families, to be made public by the summer of 2024. Given their unique experiences with the school-to-prison pipeline, this

toolkit will ultimately center on resource-building/accessibility for racialized disabled youth facing possible arrests from police OR suspensions, expulsions, exclusions, seclusions, restraints and other forms of targeted criminalization within schools.

Alongside the toolkit, we are compiling a community-centered, youth-led report to highlight our findings (to be released alongside the toolkit). The report will include a literature review, findings from our focus groups/surveys/interviews, and final recommendations for local school boards, the Ministry of Education and other key institutions.

Part of this report and its recommendations will be informed by these surveys, but all participant information will be anonymized. This analysis will be conducted by an amazing team of folks at the McMaster Research Shop.

We look forward to hearing back, and thank you so much for all that you do for students and families!

SOCIAL MEDIA POST for Instagram & X accounts (@djnontario):

Graphics:

DISABILITY JUSTICE NETWORK of ONTARIO

OPPORTUNITY ALERT:
PAID SURVEY!

Are you:

- A Black, Indigenous and/or racialized disabled/neuro-divergent youth (ages 10-25) who has experienced unjust punishment in the Ontario education system?
- A parent/caregiver of someone with these identities/experiences?

FOR VALID RESPONSES:
Receive a \$25 e-giftcard of your choice!

Email or DM us for the survey link(s):
✉ education@djno.ca
X @djnontario

LEARN MORE →

DISABILITY JUSTICE NETWORK of ONTARIO

YOU MUST HAVE EXPERIENCE WITH AT LEAST 1 OF THE FOLLOWING TO PARTICIPATE:

SUSPENSIONS/EXPULSIONS: A suspension is the temporary removal of a child from a school setting (recorded in the child's student record), ranging between 1-20 school days. An expulsion is the permanent removal of a child from a school setting (recorded in the child's student record).

EXCLUSIONS: An exclusion is any sort of removal of a student from the school or classroom that is not voluntary, and is not an official suspension or expulsion.

SECLUSION: Seclusion is the involuntary confinement of a student alone in any room or area. It includes the use of any room or area in which the student is alone and not free to leave (or believes they are not free to leave) (U.S. Department of Justice, 2023).

RESTRAINT: Restraint is the physical use of force to limit someone's movement, freedom or mobility. Examples include being tied, held or pinned down by a person in an authority position (i.e. teacher, educational assistant, administration, police, etc.).

INTERACTIONS WITH POLICE: Arrests, carding, harassment, intimidation, etc.

Image descriptions:

[SLIDE 1]

Over a dark blue and bright yellow background reads (in white text): “OPPORTUNITY ALERT: PAID SURVEY!”. Below this, in smaller text (also white), reads: “Are you: A Black, Indigenous and/or racialized disabled/neuro-divergent youth (ages 10-25) who has experienced unjust punishment in the Ontario education system? A caregiver/parent of someone with these identities/experiences?”. To the right of this text is a dark blue clipart of a gift box with bright yellow border and ribbon. In the middle of this clipart reads (in bright yellow text): “FOR VALID RESPONSES: Receive a \$25 e-gift card of your choice!”. To the bottom left is a bright yellow blob which reads (in dark blue text): “Email or DM us for the survey link(s): [@djno.ca](mailto:info@djno.ca)/@djnontario”. To the bottom right (in white text) reads: “LEARN MORE” with an arrow to the right (directing readers to the next slide). To the top left is the DJNO logo, which has the words Disability Justice Network of Ontario written in dark blue. The words Disability Justice Network are in bold, and the words of Ontario are not. Small flower petals are positioned like a crown over the words Disability and Network, in colours yellow, light blue, and dark blue.

[SLIDE 2]

Over a dark blue and bright yellow background reads (in bright yellow text): “You must have experience with at least 1 of the following to participate”. Below this, in smaller white text reads: “SUSPENSIONS/EXPULSIONS: A suspension is the temporary removal of a child from a school setting (recorded in the child's student record), ranging between 1-20 school days. An expulsion is the permanent removal of a child from a school setting (recorded in the child's student record). EXCLUSIONS: An exclusion is any sort of removal of a student from the school or classroom that is not voluntary, and is not an official suspension or expulsion. SECLUSION: Seclusion is the involuntary confinement of a student alone in any room or area. It includes the use of any room or area in which the student is alone and not free to leave (or believes they are not free to leave) (U.S. Department of Justice, 2023). RESTRAINT: Restraint is the physical use of force to limit someone's movement, freedom or mobility. Examples include being tied, held or pinned down by a person in an authority position (i.e. teacher, educational assistant, administration, police, etc.). INTERACTIONS WITH POLICE: Arrests, carding, harassment, intimidation. etc.” To the top left is the DJNO logo, which has the words Disability Justice Network of Ontario written in dark blue. The words Disability Justice Network are in bold, and the words of Ontario are not. Small flower petals are positioned like a crown over the words Disability and Network, in colours yellow, light blue, and dark blue.

Caption:

OPPORTUNITY ALERT!

Are you a Black, Indigenous and/or racialized youth in Ontario who is also disabled (diagnosed or undiagnosed)? Have you experienced unjust/unfair punishment at school/in the education system?

Are you the caregiver/parent (in Ontario) of someone with the above identities/experiences? Complete our survey and receive a \$25 e-gift card of your choice!

Email education@djino.ca or DM us for the survey link (please indicate whether you would like to complete the student OR caregiver/parent survey).

Please note that surveys will be monitored, and only responses from participants who meet the following criteria will be considered valid:

- Has experience in the Ontario education system
- Has self-identified as Black, Indigenous and/or racialized
- Has self-identified as disabled (whether diagnosed or undiagnosed)
- Is between 10-25 years old (for the youth survey)
- Has experienced at least one of the following: suspensions/expulsions, exclusions, seclusion, restraint or interactions with police
- Has provided detailed responses for *at least* one of the above categories