

Outcomes for Suspended and Expelled Youth

Examining Community Involvement, Education, and Support

Background

Dalhousie Youth Support Services is a non-profit organization designed to assist youth involved in the criminal justice system. They are looking to potentially expand their services in the future to assist in supporting at-risk youth, along with criminal youth.

Purpose

- To determine if there is a definite connection between youth being suspended and/or expelled and being involved in the youth justice system
- To determine if at-risk youth can have their needs addressed within the school environment

Research Questions

- Is there a relationship between youth being suspended and/or expelled and youth in the youth justice system?
- Is there a need for preventative services for at-risk youth in Peterborough?

Methods

1. I conducted a literature review on factors leading to delinquency and criminal activity in youth, suspension and expulsion policies in Ontario, and types of effective preventative programs for at-risk youth.
2. I analyzed the suspension/expulsion data from the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board within the context of the information gathered from the literature review.

Preliminary Findings

Factors Influencing Delinquency in Youth



Family or Home Life Conditions:

- Miscommunication or one-sided communication
- Physical, verbal, or sexual abuse towards the youth or another family member
- Poor coping mechanisms displayed by guardians.
- Coercion used frequently in regular communication



School Environment:

- Teachers and peers labelling at-risk youth as delinquents
- Exclusion from the school environment through suspension or expulsion
- Lack of support services that address external influences on at-risk youth



Individual:

- Low academic achievement
- Poor social/interpersonal skills
- Low levels of concern for others
- Mental illness or learning disabilities

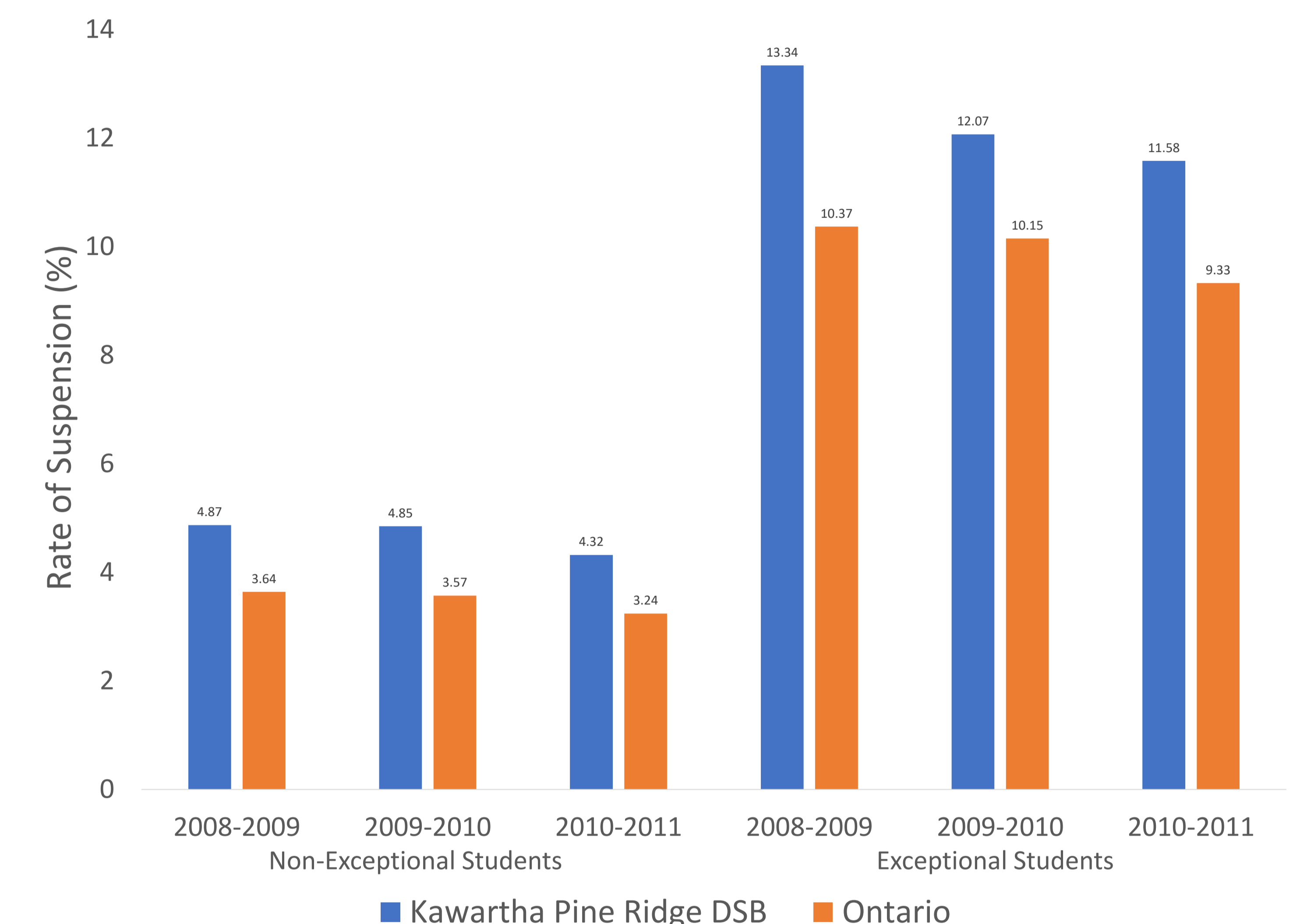


Peers:

- Poor peer relations
- Identifying and interacting with other delinquent peers

Discussion

3-Year Suspension Rates for Exceptional Vs. Non-Exceptional Students



- The rates of suspension have decreased over time, but remain higher than the provincial average.
- Consistently higher rates of suspension indicate a lack in preventative services or programs for at-risk youth.

Recommendations

- Address abnormally high suspension rates through re-evaluation of current codes of conduct, and ensure the rights of the child are being considered.
- Implement new programs and services on the school campus to provide appropriate support for at-risk youth to prevent future delinquency.