



DIVISION OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

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SUSPENSIONS
SUSPENSIONS
in
SECONDARY SCHOOLS
2nd TERM
2004/2005.

A stylized illustration of a school building with a bell tower. The building is orange with white windows and a red roof. A bell is visible in the tower. In front of the building, there are silhouettes of a teacher standing and a group of students running. The scene is decorated with various colored leaves (yellow, green, red) falling around the building. The text 'SUSPENSIONS' is written in large green letters at the top, 'in' is in white, 'SECONDARY SCHOOLS' is in large white letters, '2nd TERM' is in white, and '2004/2005.' is in blue at the bottom.

SUSPENSIONS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

This report, “Suspensions in Secondary Schools” is compiled from the actual suspension notices, which were forwarded to the Minister of Education for approval. However, many suspension notices did not reveal basic information such as: reason(s) for suspension, gender, police involvement, location and time of incident i.e. whether the offence occurred in or outside the school compound and/or during school hours.

Hence, gender was assumed through students’ first name. Police involvement, location of incident and time of incident are omitted from the report.

Many students were also suspended for many reasons. In these cases, the first reason listed on the suspension notice was accepted as the main reason for suspension. These reasons were categorized under the following headings:

- **Possession of Marijuana** – includes smoking and possession of marijuana for trafficking; possession of cocaine; possession of hemp and cigarettes and also the possession of alcohol.
- **Assault with/without Weapon** – refers to attacks to students and/or teachers causing bodily harm.
- **Robbery** – is the taking of other persons’ property without their consent with/without the use of force.
- **Breaking Classes** – refers to students staying away from classes during school hours without official approval.

- **Possession of Weapons** – includes the possession of knives, cutlasses, ice-picks and guns found on the person of the student.
- **Fighting with/without Weapon** – refers to physical confrontations among students.
- **Extortion** – refers to the obtaining of money and valuables through intimidation and threats of violence.
- **Disrespectful to Authority** – includes the use of obscene language towards teachers, security personnel and students; disobeying of instructions given by teachers; causing disruptions in classrooms and generally defying authority.
- **Destruction of School Property** – refers to malicious acts by students to the school and its contents therein.
- **Gambling** – refers to the playing of cards for money on the school compound.
- **Sexual Misconduct** – includes illicit sexual activity, indecent assault, sexual harassment, indecent exposure and possession of pornographic literature and pictures.
- **Miscellaneous** – refers to those suspension notices that did not specify the offence committed and those not elsewhere classified.

NOTE: Previous reports on “Suspensions in Secondary Schools” are:

1. Report #1- “Suspensions in Secondary Schools” – this report was based on the calendar years 2002 and 2003 with an analysis of the first quarter (January to March) of 2004.
2. Report #2- “Suspensions in Secondary Schools – 2002/2003 and 2003/2004” was based on the academic or school- year 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 with an analysis of the 1st term 2004/2005.

The academic (or school) year comprises three (3) terms, which begins in September and ends in July of the following year.

The three terms are:

- Term 1: September to December;
- Term 2: January to March and
- Term 3: April to July.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides a comparative analysis of data on indiscipline in secondary schools by the type of infractions committed and by gender for the second term (January – March) of the 2004/2005 school year.
2. The report is based on suspension notices forwarded to the Minister of Education for approval from the respective schools. The infractions examined are Possession of Marijuana, Assault (with/without weapon), Robbery, Breaking Classes, Possession of Weapons, Fighting (with/without weapons), Extortion, Disrespectful to Authority, Gambling, Sexual Misconduct and others not elsewhere classified (Miscellaneous).
3. The report gives several analyses viz:
 - Number of suspensions by type and sex – January to March 2005.
 - Comparison between the 2nd Term 2004/2005 and the 1st Term 2004/2005.
 - Comparison between the 2nd Term 2004/2005 and the 2nd Term 2003/2004.
 - The number of suspensions by the District level.
4. The report indicates that the majority of students suspended during the 2nd Term 2004/2005 were boys (77.6%) with the main offences being Assault with/ without Weapon (43.5%), Fighting with/without Weapon (21.2%), Disrespectful to Authority (17.6%), and Possession of Marijuana (8.2%). The report also indicates that there was a decrease in the number of students suspended (24.1%) during the 2nd Term 2004/2005 when compared to the 1st

Term 2004/2005 and another decrease in the number of students suspended (24.8%) during the 2nd Term 2004/2005 when compared to the 2nd Term 2003/2004. The report also indicates that the majority of suspension notices are issued to students in the St.George East and Port-of-Spain and Environs Districts.

ANALYSIS: SECOND TERM 2004/2005

The total number of suspensions for the second term 2004/2005 (i.e. January to March 2005) was 85 of which 66 (77.6%) were issued to boys and 19 (22.4%) issued to girls.

The main reasons for suspensions were:

- Assault (with/without weapons) 43.5%;
- Fighting (with/without weapons) 21.2%;
- Disrespectful to Authority 17.6%;
- Possession of Marijuana 8.2% and
- Possession of Weapons 4.7%.

Boys were the main offenders in all the infractions committed by students who were suspended. Of the total number suspended for Assault, 64.9% were boys while 35.1% were girls; Fighting (with or without weapon) – 77.8% boys, 22.2% girls; Disrespectful to Authority – 93.3% boys, 6.7% girls; Possession of Marijuana – 85.7% boys, 14.3% girls and Possession of Weapons – 100.0% boys (Table 1).

**TABLE 1: TOTAL NUMBER OF SUSPENSIONS BY TYPE OF OFFENCE
AND BY SEX 2nd TERM 2004/2005.**

Type of Offence	2 nd TERM 2004/2005					
	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Possession of Marijuana	7	8.2	6	85.7	1	14.3
Assault with/without Weapon	37	43.5	24	64.9	13	35.1
Robbery	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Breaking Classes	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Possession of Weapons	4	4.7	4	100.0	0	0.0
Fighting with/without Weapons	18	21.2	14	77.8	4	22.2
Extortion	1	1.2	1	100.0	0	0.0
Disrespectful to Authority	15	17.6	14	93.3	1	6.7
Sexual Misconduct	1	1.2	1	100.0	0	0.0
Gambling	2	2.4	2	100.0	0	0.0
Miscellaneous	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Totals	85	100.0	66	77.6	19	22.4

Source: Ministry of Education.

COMPARISON: SECOND TERM 2004/2005 AND FIRST TERM 2004/2005.

The total number of suspensions in the second term 2004/2005 decreased by 27 (24.1%) over the first term's total of 112. Mainly responsible for this decrease were decreases in the number of suspensions for all infractions except Assault (with/without weapons) which increased by 48.0% over the previous term September to December 2004.

TABLE 2: SUSPENSIONS BY TYPE OF OFFENCE AND BY SEX
TERMS 1 & 2 School Year 2004/2005

Type of Offence	Term 1			Term 2			% Change(Term 2/Term1)
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	
Possession of Marijuana	11	11	0	7	6	1	-36.4
Assault with/without Weapon	25	22	3	37	24	13	48.0
Robbery	6	6	0	0	0	0	-100.0
Breaking Classes	4	3	1	0	0	0	-100.0
Possession of Weapons	10	9	1	4	4	0	-60.0
Fighting with/without Weapons	30	22	8	18	14	4	-40.0
Extortion	4	1	3	1	1	0	-75.0
Disrespectful to Authority	16	9	7	15	14	1	-6.3
Sexual Misconduct	1	1	0	1	1	0	0.0
Gambling	0	0	0	2	2	0	
Miscellaneous	5	3	2	0	0	0	-100.0
Totals	112	87	25	85	66	19	-24.1

Source: Ministry of Education.

COMPARISON: SECOND TERM 2003/2004 AND SECOND TERM 2004/2005.

A comparison of the data for the 2nd Term 2003/2004 and the corresponding period in 2004/2005 revealed that the total number of suspensions forwarded to the Minister of Education decreased by 28 (24.8%) from 113 in 2003/2004 to 85 in 2004/2005. The number of suspensions for all offences decreased except for Possession of Weapons and Gambling, which showed increases of 300.0% and 100.0% respectively. The number of suspensions issued for Assault with/without Weapons remained unchanged.

TABLE 3: TOTAL NUMBER OF SUSPENSIONS BY TYPE OF OFFENCE
TERM 2 SCHOOL YEAR 2003/2004 and TERM 2 SCHOOL YEAR 2004/2005.

Type of Offence	TERM 2 2003/2004	TERM 2 2004/2005	% change (T 2/ T1)
Possession of Marijuana	11	7	-36.4
Assault with/without Weapon	37	37	0.0
Robbery	1	0	-100.0
Breaking Classes	3	0	-100.0
Possession of Weapons	1	4	300.0
Fighting with/without Weapons	19	18	-5.3
Extortion	4	1	-75.0
Disrespectful to Authority	22	15	-31.8
Destruction of School Property	0	0	0.0
Gambling	1	2	100.0
Sexual Misconduct	4	1	-75.0
Miscellaneous	10	0	-100.0
Totals	113	85	-24.8

Source: Ministry of Education.

ANALYSIS BY DISTRICT- TERMS 1 & 2 - 2004/2005.

An analysis of the data by district level revealed that most of the suspensions are issued to students attending schools in the St. George East and Port-of-Spain and Environs districts. The St. George East district accounted for 34.8% of all suspensions forwarded to the Minister in the 1st Term and 36.5% in the 2nd Term while Port-of-Spain and Environs accounted for 33.9% and 43.5% respectively (Table 4). The other districts are Caroni with 12.5% and 7.1%; Victoria with 9.8% and 9.4%; North Eastern with 6.3% and 0% and St. Patrick with 2.7 and 3.6%. It must be noted that no student got suspensions that were referred to the Minister of Education in the North Eastern district during the 2nd Term.

TABLE 4: PERCENTAGES OF SUSPENSIONS BY DISTRICT AND SEX (ALL OFFENCES).

Gender	POS & Env.		North Eastern		St George		Caroni		Victoria		St. Patrick	
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 1	Term 2	Term 1	Term 2	Term 1	Term 2	Term 1	Term 2	Term 1	Term 2
Boys	23.2	41.2	6.3	0.0	25.9	23.5	10.7	7.1	8.9	4.7	2.7	1.2
Girls	10.7	2.4	0.0	0.0	8.9	12.9	1.8	0.0	0.9	4.7	0.0	2.4
Total	33.9	43.5	6.3	0.0	34.8	36.5	12.5	7.1	9.8	9.4	2.7	3.6

Source: Ministry of Education.