

News Release

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DPI publishes newly available data on seclusion and restraint in schools

State superintendent calls for increasing use of positive behavioral supports

MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction today released information reported by Wisconsin schools on incidents where seclusion and/or physical restraint was used on students during the 2019-2020 school year.

[Pursuant to 2019 Wisconsin Act 118](#), Wisconsin schools are required to submit a report containing information on the use of seclusion and restraint in schools to the DPI annually by December 1. This is the first year this information is required to be submitted to the DPI.

Nearly half of all Wisconsin schools (1,180 schools) reported at least one incident where either seclusion or physical restraint was used on a student during the 2019-20 school year. Statewide, schools reported a total of 8,733 instances of seclusion, and 9,795 instances where physical restraint was used. Students with disabilities comprised of 82 percent of all seclusion incidents, and 77 percent of all physical restraint incidents.

“Each of these incidents represents a lived student experience, that can have a long-lasting impact,” State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor said. “Supporting the individual mental and behavioral health needs of our students is one of the highest priority areas in our schools. The DPI remains dedicated to working with school districts to develop and implement resources and services to aid school staff in better identifying and increasing the use of effective behavioral intervention supports.”

[In her 2021-23 biennial budget request](#), Stanford Taylor called for additional state funding to expand pupil support services, and mental health and trauma-sensitive schools training.

Act 118, which went into effect March 4, 2020, revised [2011 Wisconsin Act 125](#) to further address the use of seclusion and restraint in public schools and private schools where a student is placed by a local educational agency, in addition to private schools participating in the Special Needs Scholarship Program.

(more)

Changes to the law included, but were not limited to, requiring parents to be provided with written incident reports, prohibiting the use of prone restraint, revising required training components, and requiring school staff to hold a meeting after each incident to discuss topics outlined in the law.

For complete seclusion and restraint data reported from schools, and for additional resources, visit <https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/topics/seclusion-restraint>.

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