

**ILLINOIS REGIONAL SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAM**

**FY 05 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

**DATA ANALYSIS AND PROGRESS REPORTING DIVISION  
ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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## Summary of Findings

### Introduction

This report presents aggregated student data and analysis from the FY 05 regional safe schools program (RSSP) end-of-year individual student reports consisting of 45 regional offices of education (ROEs), three intermediate service centers (ISC), and Chicago Public School District 299.

Public Act 89-383, enacted in 1995, provides Illinois with a system of alternative education programs for disruptive students in grades six through twelve. This act known as the **Safe Schools Law** indicates that *“Disruptive students typically derive little benefit from traditional school programs and may benefit substantially by being transferred from their current school into an alternative public school program, where their particular needs may be more appropriately and individually addressed and where they may benefit from the opportunity for a fresh start in a new educational environment”* (Section 13A-1e, PA 89-383). The law describes *disruptive students* as those who are subject to suspension or expulsion based on the disciplinary policies of the school district. With the enactment of the law, these students are now given the option, although voluntary on the part of the school district, to transfer to the **Regional Safe Schools Program** (a program established in 1996 to implement the Safe Schools Law), in lieu of suspension or expulsion. The proponents of the law strongly believed that *“administrative transfers may prove more productive for dealing with disruptive students than out-of-school suspension or expulsion”* (105 ILCS5/13A-1(i)).

### The Regional Safe Schools Program

The Regional Safe Schools Program (RSSP) which was established to serve the educational needs of disruptive students, received an appropriation of \$15 million in 1997. In FY 05, RSSP received \$17,035,500 in state funds. The law provides that at least one RSSP program may be located within each of the Regional Offices of Education (ROE), and this program’s location must be *“far away from any other school buildings or school grounds”* (105 ILCS5/13A-3(d)). The regional superintendent, except for Chicago Public School District, oversees the program. The oversight functions include, but are not limited to, determining the locations of the programs; implementing the programs’ curriculum; hearing cases of parent objections for returning their children to the regular school program; establishing a budget; and disbursing RSSP funds.

### Highlights

- There were 47 RSSP programs with 97 sites operating in the state of Illinois in FY 05. Chicago Public School District 299 served the most students (14.5%), followed by Will ROE (11.8%), and North Cook ISC (5.6%). (See Table 1.)

- Apart from what they received from the general State Aid, RSSP programs received \$17,035,500 in state funds in FY 05, a minimal increase of approximately \$28,000 from what they received in FY 04. Despite a minimal increase in funding, RSSP served 4,709 students in FY 05, 507 students more than the number served in FY 04. The increase in the number of students served resulted in a decrease in cost per student (\$3,618 in FY 05 compared to \$4,048 in FY 04).
- RSSP continues to enroll more expelled or expulsion-eligible students. In FY 05, approximately 60% expelled/expulsion-eligible and 40% suspension-eligible students were administratively transferred to RSSP. The number of expulsion-eligible students served in FY 05, however, declined by 3%, whereas the number of suspension-eligible students increased by 15% from FY 04. The majority of expelled/readmitted students are blacks (64%), while the majority of expulsion-eligible or suspension eligible students are whites (40% and 57%, respectively). (See Table 2.)
- RSSP increasingly enroll minority students. In FY 05, 55% of RSSP students belong to minority ethnic groups. In particular, 39% of RSSP students are blacks and 14% are Hispanics. White student enrollment decreased by about 6% in FY 05 from FY 04. In contrast, black enrollment increased by 5%.
- Student enrollments in RSSP are predominantly male (72%).
- There are students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEP) who are administratively transferred to RSSP. 12% of RSSP students in FY 05 have IEPs.
- The highest enrollment by grade in RSSP is grade 9 (22%). Moreover, RSSP students are predominantly in high school (66%). (See Table 3.)
- The majority of students (21%) enrolled in RSSP are involved in drugs.
- Expelled/expulsion-eligible students were more involved in drugs, possession of weapons, gangs or committed assaults, threats or pranks than suspension-eligible students. Suspension-eligible students were found to have been more involved in exhibiting gross or disruptive behavior and/or robbery/theft than expelled/expulsion-eligible students.
- Practically all students in the program have written alternative education plans (AEP) and/or received academic instruction. However, some services are more important or appropriate than others depending on the major reason for the students' transfer to RSSP. For example, more expelled/expulsion-eligible students received individual and/or group counseling (84%) compared to suspension-eligible students (68%). In contrast, more suspension-eligible students received behavior modification training (76%) compared to 49% of expelled/expulsion-eligible students.

- 72% of RSSP's high school students obtained academic credits, 50% of elementary students advanced to the next grade, 70% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students finished elementary, and 53% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students graduated from high school. Obtaining high school credits remained the highest academic success rate for RSSP. However, these percentages are lower compared to FY 04. (See Table 4.)
- The students' Alternative Education Plans (AEP) are designed to reflect services and outcomes related to the students' referrals. Relative to this process, about 72% of students that received behavior modification training, and/or life skills training, and/or individual/group counseling, improved behavior. The aforementioned services appear to work effectively with expelled/readmitted and expulsion-eligible students.
- The number of students served by RSSP provides information on what could possibly be the expulsion and multiple suspensions numbers at the state if RSSP does not exist. RSSP provides a place for students (for whom educational success may be remote) a chance to attain positive educational outcomes. Charts 1 and 2 show how RSSP could affect the number of expulsions and multiple suspensions in the state. The areas between the broken lines and state numbers are the service gaps that RSSP fills-in.

Table 1. Number of Students Enrolled in RSSP Programs by Type of Eligibility Status, FY 05

Name of Program	Service Eligibility Status			Total	
	Expelled/ Readmitted	Expulsion- Eligible	Suspension- Eligible	Number	Pct
ADAMS/PIKE ROE		6	88	94	2.0
ALXNDR/JOHN/MASC/PULSKI/UNION ROE	1	20	24	45	1.0
BOND/EFFINGHAM/FAYETTE ROE	2	6	29	37	0.8
BOONE/WINNEBAGO ROE	68	4	25	97	2.1
BROWN-CASS-MORGAN-SCOTT ROE	1	3	9	13	0.3
BUREAU-HENRY-STARK ROE	1	5	38	44	0.9
CALHOUN-GREENE-JERSY-MACOU PIN ROE	1	35	22	58	1.2
CARROLL/JO DAVI ESS/STEPHENSON ROE	4	2	45	51	1.1
CHAMPAIGN/FORD ROE	7	25	126	158	3.4
CHRISTIAN/MONTGOMERY ROE	3	25	16	44	0.9
CITY OF CHICAGO	404	279		683	14.5
CLAY-CWFORD-JSPER-LWRNCE-RHLAND	7	30	14	51	1.1
CLINTON-MARION-WASHINGTON ROE		20	23	43	0.9
CLK-CLS-CMBN-DGLAS-EDGR-MLTR-SHLB	9	32	67	108	2.3
DE KALB ROE	11	8	39	58	1.2
DE WITT-LIVINGSTON-MCLEAN ROE	1	56	64	121	2.6
DU PAGE ROE		100	33	133	2.8
EDWD-GLTN-HDIN-POP-SLNE-WBH-WN-WH	6	6	21	33	0.7
FRANKLIN-WILLIAMSON ROE		4	20	24	0.5
FULTON-SCHUYLER ROE	17		11	28	0.6
GRUNDY-KENDALL ROE	9	8	104	121	2.6
HAMILTON-JEFFERSON ROE		5	16	21	0.4
HANCOCK-MC DONOUGH ROE		52	12	64	1.4
HENDERSON-MERCER-WARREN ROE	1	1	7	9	0.2
IROQUOIS-KANKAKEE ROE		16	88	104	2.2
JACKSON-PERRY ROE	3	6	10	19	0.4
KANE ROE	1	108	32	141	3.0
KNOX ROE	9	2	46	57	1.2
LA SALLE	8	24	38	70	1.5
LAKE ROE	9	106	3	118	2.5
LEE-OGLE ROE	3	26	12	41	0.9
LOGAN-MASON-MENARD ROE	2	8	44	54	1.1
MACON-PIATT ROE	28	16	19	63	1.3
MADISON ROE		123		123	2.6
MARSHALL-PUTNAM-WOODFORD	10	21	22	53	1.1
MC HENRY ROE	7	11	16	34	0.7
MONROE-RANDOLPH ROE		4	29	33	0.7
NORTH COOK	6	213	44	263	5.6
PEORIA ROE	145	9	24	178	3.8
ROCK ISLAND ROE	1	18	38	57	1.2
SANGAMON ROE	5	21	62	88	1.9
SOUTH COOK		179	37	216	4.6
ST CLAIR ROE		31	26	57	1.2
TAZE WELL ROE	38	8	8	54	1.1
VERMILION ROE	17	7		24	0.5
WEST COOK	3	122	27	152	3.2
WHITESIDE ROE		13	2	15	0.3
WILL ROE	28	106	423	557	11.8
TOTAL	876	1,930	1,903	4,709	100.0
Percent	18.6	41.0	40.4	100.0	

Table 2. RSSP student enrollments by student ethnicity and eligibility, FY 05

Student Ethnicity	Student Eligibility Status						Total	
	Expelled and Re-Admitted		Expulsion-Eligible		Suspension-Eligible			
	Number	Pct	Number	Pct	Number	Pct	Number	Pct
Native Am		0.0	4	0.2	4	0.2	8	0.2
Asian	1	0.1	22	1.1	11	0.6	34	0.7
Black	556	63.5	739	38.3	561	29.5	1,856	39.4
Hispanic	79	9.0	361	18.7	216	11.3	656	13.9
White	234	26.7	777	40.3	1,091	57.3	2,102	44.6
Multi-racial	6	0.7	26	1.3	21	1.1	53	1.1
Total	876	18.6	1,929	41.0	1,904	40.4	4,709	100.0

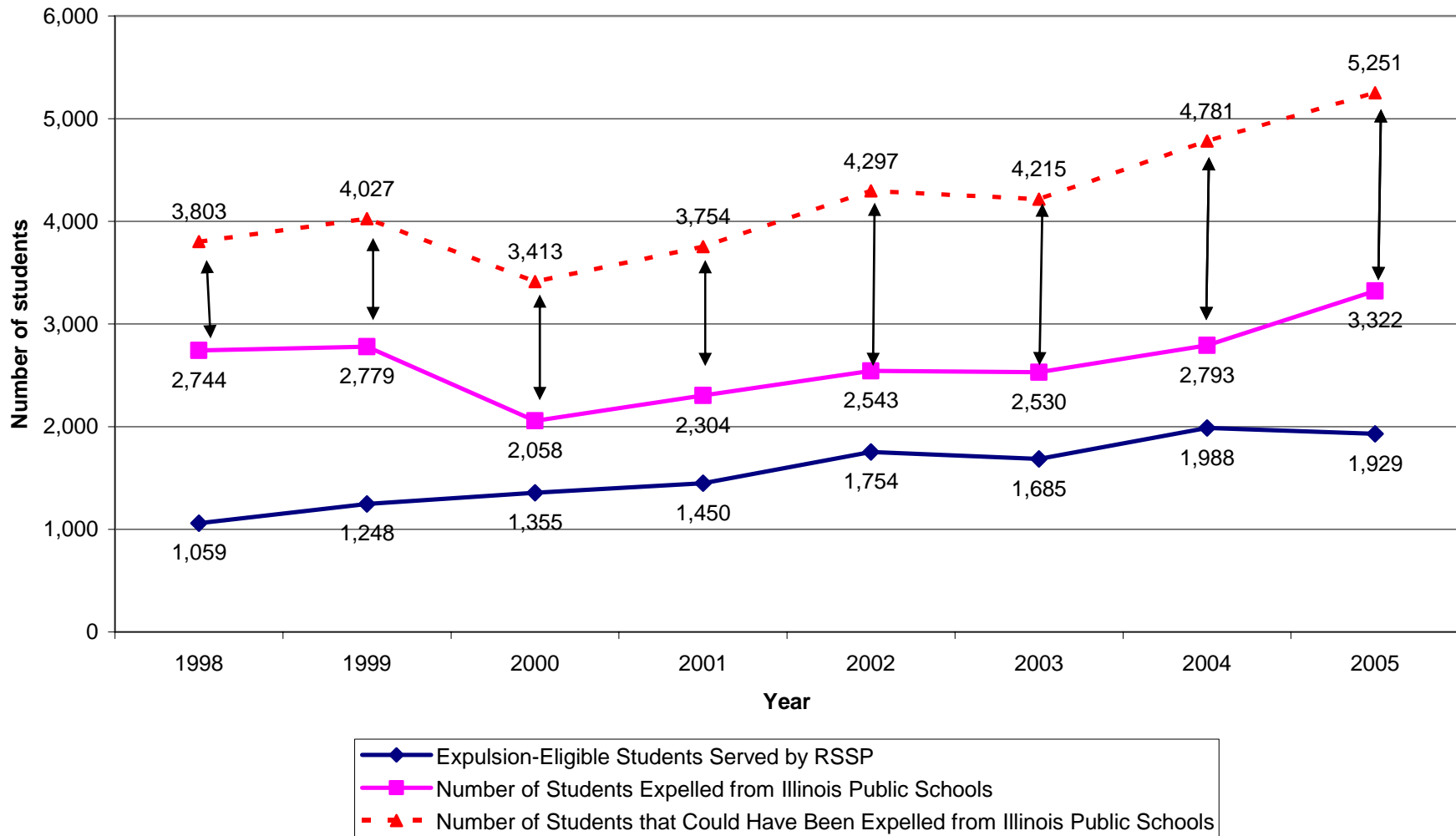
Table 3. RSSP student enrollments by grade level and gender, FY 05

GRADE LEVEL	GENDER				Total	
	Female		Male			
	Number	Col Pct	Number	Col Pct	Number	Col Pct
4th		0.0	1	0.0	1	0.0
5th		0.0	2	0.1	2	0.0
6th	49	3.6	174	5.2	223	4.7
7th	124	9.2	386	11.5	510	10.8
8th	249	18.4	607	18.1	856	18.2
9th	326	24.1	718	21.4	1,044	22.2
10th	287	21.2	673	20.0	960	20.4
11th	168	12.4	416	12.4	584	12.4
12th	148	11.0	381	11.3	529	11.2
Total	1,351	28.7	3,358	71.3	4,709	100.0

Table 4. Academic outcomes of RSSP students, FY 05

Academic Outcome	Number	Pct
High school credits received	2,235	71.7
Advanced to the next grade (6th thru 8th grade)	798	50.2
Elementary graduation (8th grade)	359	70.4
High school graduation (12th grade)	280	52.9
Improved behavior (6th thru 12th grade)	3,002	63.8
Improved attendance (6th thru 12th grade)	2,778	59.0

**Chart 1. Number of Expulsion-Eligible Students Served by RSSP Relative to the Total Number of Students Expelled in Illinois Public Schools 1998 Through 2005**



**Chart 2. Number of Suspension-Eligible Students Served by RSSP Relative to the Number of Students with Multiple Suspensions in Illinois Public Schools 1998 Through 2005**

